



**STAFF REPORT
ACTION REQUIRED**

**Bridging High-Risk Gang Involved Youth to Labour
Market Participation – Project Details**

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| Date: | May 29, 2012 |
| To: | City Council |
| From: | Executive Director, Social Development, Finance & Administration |
| Wards: | All |
| Reference Number: | 15898 |

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to confirm design details of the one-year youth gang prevention Bridging Project and to seek approval from City Council to receive a federal project contribution from Public Safety Canada’s Youth Gang Prevention Fund for an amount of up to \$350,000. This project will continue to work with youth and families at high-risk of gang attachment to provide input and help inform the development of appropriate policy and program responses to support young people, families and affected communities in addressing youth gang violence in Toronto. This collaborative initiative will involve City service providers, other orders of government, youth services and the broader community-based health and social service sectors. This project builds upon the learning's out of the City’s recently concluded youth diversion pilot project, Prevention Intervention Toronto (PIT).

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommends that City Council:

1. Authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration (SDFA) to receive and expend funds from Public Safety Canada’s Youth Gang Prevention Fund in the amount of up to \$350,000 gross, \$0 net, to support the development of policy and program responses to support young people, families and affected communities in addressing youth gang violence in Toronto.

2. Increase the 2012 Approved Operating Budget for SDFA by \$260,000 gross and \$0 net to reflect Public Safety Canada's project funding contribution.
3. Increase the 2012 Approved Operating Budget for SDFA by 3.0 FTE temporary positions (2.0 management/non-union positions, 1.0 collective bargaining unit positions) for the duration of the project.
4. Delegate authority to the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate and execute the agreement on behalf of the City with Public Safety Canada, including full responsibility and accountability of funds for the project's duration.

Financial Impact

Approval of the project contribution agreement with Public Safety Canada will increase the 2012 Approved Operating Budget for SDFA by \$260,000 gross, \$0 net. The additional funding will increase the 2012 Approved Operating Budget for SDFA to \$40,047,278 gross, \$29,233,200 net. As well, approval of this agreement will provide for the inclusion of \$90,000 gross and \$0 net in the 2013 Operating Budget Submission, reflecting the twelve month term of the contribution agreement. There is no net impact to the City from this contribution agreement.

Public Safety Canada has indicated the project must conclude by March 31, 2013, consistent with the Government of Canada's fiscal year.

The Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial officer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At its June 23 and 24, 2008 meeting, City Council directed the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, in consultation with the Toronto Police Service, to work with staff from the National Crime Prevention Centre and other relevant federal and provincial ministries to facilitate approval of the City's application for funding for a 'gang exit' wrap around support initiative, in keeping with the goals of the National Crime Prevention Strategy. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.EX21.2>

At its meeting of September 24 and 25, 2008, City Council delegated authority to Social Development, Finance & Administration's (SDFA) Executive Director to negotiate and execute an agreement on behalf of the City with Public Safety Canada for the purposes of funding a new youth gang prevention pilot project. <http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2008.CD18.4>

Subsequently, at the February 6, 2009 meeting of the Community Development and Recreation Committee, City staff provided an outline of the proposed project model and implementation plan for the youth gang prevention pilot project prior to the pilot project's

start. The Committee reviewed the project model and implementation plan and referred them to the Acting Executive Director, SDFA for implementation.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2009.CD22.2>

On November 15, 2011, the Executive Director, SDFA made a presentation to the Economic Development Committee summarizing the efforts of the Prevention-Intervention Toronto Pilot Project's first two program cycles and best practices identified by Project evaluators to date.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2011.ED9.10>

At its April 27, 2012 meeting, the Budget Committee considered a report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration recommending the approvals required to accept funds from Public Safety Canada for a one-year initiative, Bridging High-risk Gang Involved Youth to Labour Market Participation. In considering the report, the Budget Committee adopted Staff recommendations and directed staff to provide additional information regarding the geographically targeted nature of the Bridging project and a process for other Wards to access funds for programming under this spending envelope to the Executive Committee for its consideration.

<http://app.Toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.BU24.2>

At its May 14, 2012 meeting, the Executive Committee considered the supplemental report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration with further information. Executive Committee referred the Budget Committee report and the supplemental report at Executive to City council without recommendations.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2012.EX20.10>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

Social Development, Finance and Administration completed a three-year youth diversion pilot project, Prevention Intervention Toronto, on March 31, 2012. The project was a \$3.4 million project funded by Public Safety Canada, focusing on supporting youth at high-risk of gang attachment to transition to labour market entry. The City contracted with JVS, a community-based youth employment agency, to provide direct case management support to 300 young people. The City, through SDFA, project managed the initiative, meeting all City and Federal financial reporting requirements, as well as direct program development and oversight of the contracted service provider, supplemented by direct city support to a youth group identifying barriers to educational and labour market attainment, parents' support group and broader community consultations. The City worked closely with Public Safety Canada's National Crime Prevention Centre (NCPC) staff to implement the project.

In addition, the City was required to contract with an independent evaluator for the pilot project and did so through the University of Toronto's Centre for Criminology. The Centre has recently submitted its draft evaluation and is currently revising it according to Federal requirements. Although the evaluation is still being completed, NCPC

approached the City to undertake a one-year initiative, building upon the preliminary learning's out of PIT.

Youth gang activity continues to be a concern for many Canadian municipalities. The presence of youth gangs in communities can negatively influence and impact other neighbourhood youth and the community as a whole. Youth gang activity can be seen as a viable income opportunity for young people unaware of or unable to access alternative opportunities for self-sufficiency. Often traditional means of education and/or skills development or labour market entry do not meet the more basic sets of life skills development that are a pre-requisite for successful and positive economic participation.

COMMENTS

Prevention Intervention Toronto

Prevention Intervention Toronto was launched in 2009 with the goal of engaging and diverting youth at high-risk of gang attachment from participating in gang-related anti-social behaviour. Through an integrated, targeted and evidence-based community program emphasizing wrap around supports, the PIT pilot project worked to provide young people with family supports, pro-social skills and pre-employment skills training. By addressing barriers that caused project participants to be located farthest from labour market entry, PIT was able to provide youth participants a credible alternative path to meaningful employment in contrast to the violent lifestyle offered by Toronto youth gangs.

The pilot project operated in the neighbourhoods along Jane St between Eglinton Ave W and Steeles Ave W, as a result of an innovative tool developed in 2009 by S DFA, the Youth Crime Risk Index. The Index was comprised of crime and crime perceptions data provided by the Toronto Police Service (TPS), socio-economic and demographic factors from the 2006 Census data, education factors from the Toronto District School Board, health factors out of Toronto Public Health, and data on the availability of programs and supports at a neighbourhood level obtained from 211Toronto and City services. City staff also worked with TPS to review the findings and confirm neighbourhood selection for the 2009 initiative.

Approximately 300 youth at-risk of gang-involved activities were supported through the PIT pilot project. Approximately 34% of referrals came from community workers; 31% from family and friends; 14% through self-referral and 9% through the school system. The remaining referrals came from parents, probation/parole officers and the youth justice system, and social workers.

Over 50 organizations, representing a range of sectors and City programs, helped support and link young people into the project. These included community-based social services and health sectors, the legal sector, educational sector, including Toronto District School Board and York University, and city operations such as Toronto Community Housing, Toronto Employment and Social Services, Toronto Public Health and the Toronto Public

Library, as well as Social Development, Finance and Administration's Toronto Youth Job Corps and Youth Employment Toronto programs.

The majority of youth participating were male (72%), born in Canada (75%), 18-21 years of age (45%); and African Canadian (82%). As a reminder, the PIT project was part of the City's 2006 Community Safety Plan which involved a focus on addressing the disproportionate number of African Canadian young people who were victims of gun violence; as such, African Canadian youth comprised the significant majority of youth participating in the pilot project.

Of the 300 youth, approximately 66% graduated a 36 week program that included the development plans for project participants, group-based training that encouraged the development of basic life and pro-social skills, and practical supports for the families of youth participants. The measure of success for this program was the ability to maintain youth involvement and completion of the program. This, in itself, is not an easy accomplishment given the perceived lucrative opportunities if participants re-engage in youth-gang activities. Had the project not existed, over 200 young people would have continued to be at-risk or involved in gang-related activities in the pilot project neighbourhoods.

Preliminary evidence from the University of Toronto Centre for Criminology's draft evaluation suggests the PIT program had a positive effect in:

- increasing conflict resolution and anger management skills among program participants and reducing inter-personal aggressiveness;
- reducing criminal offending among program participants, in particular to violent offending;
- reducing pro-crime, pro-violence and pro-gang attitudes among program participants;
- significantly dropping the rate of gang membership after PIT participation;
- increasing youth confidence and self-esteem and participation in pro-social activities;
- improving attitudes towards the police and criminal courts;
- improving school attendance and conduct at school; and
- improving attitudes towards traditional modes of income generation and employment.

Some of the areas that would require further attention include academic performance and family relationships. The preliminary evaluation did identify that most of these accomplishments were of a short-term nature, as the ability to track graduates of the program, especially those from 2009 or 2010, has been difficult given the highly mobile nature of young people, generally.

Bridging Project Model

SDFA has negotiated a one-year Bridging Project for the Federal fiscal year 2012-2013. Over the months of March to May, 2012, SDFA staff have reached an agreement on further work arising out of PIT learning. These involve addressing barriers for such young people furthest from labour market entry, with more specialized support service needs.

Project activities will build on current City partnerships to:

- link with appropriate Federal and Provincial Departments in reviewing existing policies and practices that negatively impact on successful transition out of gang-related, such as criminal record checks, bridging youth to post-secondary education, and apprentice opportunities;
- work, in partnership with other city operations, such as Toronto Employment and Social Services, and private sector business leaders and labour, to support labour force opportunities;
- develop a city-wide understanding of the needs of high-risk young people at-risk of gang involvement to help better inform city service delivery;
- develop knowledge exchanges for active sharing of ideas and information on reducing youth gang violence, and to strategize multi-dimensional and collaborative responses to youth at high-risk of gang involvement, bringing together the range of sectors (education, employment, criminal justice, legal, health, etc.) for high positive impact on high-risk youth, their families and communities; and
- work with young people and their families affected by gang-related activities to help inform governments, sectors and service providers on solutions to alleviating youth gang involvement.

Three temporary full-time staff (1.0 policy development officer, 1.0 community development officer and 1.0 community development worker) will be hired for the duration of the Federal fiscal year 2012-2013, funded 100% through Public Safety Canada.

Originally, the proposal offered to the National Crime Prevention Centre involved further caseworker support to affected young people in the neighbourhoods of Weston-Mt. Dennis, Rockcliffe-Smythe and Dorset Park with an expansion of approximately 11 temporary staff. As the National Crime Prevention Centre continues to review the evaluation results out of youth gang intervention projects that received federal monies through the previous federal funding initiative, including PIT, as well as determine the focus of their future funding, NCPC felt it was important to focus on the activities outlined above to help develop responses to youth gang involvement as well as collective action through existing policy and program measures. As a result, the funding approval requested today is significantly scaled back and with a different focus than the one previously submitted through Budget and Executive Committees. Staff will work with previous participants out of PIT to meet the project intent in a shortened delivery period

of nine months. This reduced period of time and focused attention on policy development, sector alignment and service delivery design will help strengthen City efforts in addressing youth gang violence. It will also form the ground work for a proposal to be submitted to Public Safety Canada as part of its new funding allocations for 2013.

Public Safety Canada Youth Gang Prevention Fund Project Funding

Youth Gang Prevention Fund (YGPF) provides financial assistance to eligible project applicants in the form of short-term project funding. The maximum financial support a recipient can receive per fiscal year is \$1.5 million and cannot exceed a maximum amount of \$7.5 million over a period of five years.

Under the terms of YGPF, Public Safety Canada (PSC) cannot be the sole funder for any specific project. The maximum contribution to the total costs of the project supported by the Fund cannot exceed 85%. It is PSC's expectation that any proposed project's organizations and community partners will contribute to the cost of the project, financially or in-kind through donations of materials, supplies or services. In addition, total government contributions to the project from all sources (federal, provincial and territorial) cannot exceed 95% of total project costs.

Any community organization or municipality may submit an application for YGPF project funding to NCPC. All applications that meet the Fund's eligibility criteria will be considered. However, the YGPF 2012 allocation is capped at \$7.5 million to support both ongoing and new projects. Project allocations are extensively reviewed and assessed to determine which best advances the priorities of the National Crime Prevention Strategy. Additional information on the YGPF and its application process can be found on the YGPF website at <http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/prg/cp/ygpf/ygpf-eng.aspx>.

Conclusion

Building upon the preliminary PIT pilot project learning's identified by City staff, the City will use the one-year funding opportunity provided by Public Safety Canada to identify and enhance how the City, public sectors and community-based sector engages high-risk youth through diverse programming as well as develop policy dialogue and sector and service system alignment across governments and communities, most importantly educational and employment service planning. The project will utilize an integrated inter-governmental and inter-divisional approach to strengthen the City's capacity to address the unique needs of high-risk youth and their families, better positioning the City to engage its community-based service providers to ensure effective targeted employment, social and family supports for high-risk youth at a neighbourhood level.

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