

Community Service Partnerships Grant Allocation Recommendations (2019-2022)

Date: April 12, 2021

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Community funding can be an important tool to advance the City's commitment to reconciliation and equity. This report provides an overview of Social Development, Finance and Administration's work to advance reconciliation and equity through the use of Community Investment funding. Over the past three years, the division's Community Funding Unit has been taking intentional steps to update grant policy and grant making practices and make targeted investments into Indigenous-led and Black-Mandated organizations. This report provides an update on the Indigenous and Black-Mandated Funding Frameworks, both of which are being developed through co-design processes with community leaders and residents, supported by the Indigenous Affairs Office and the Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, respectively.

Additionally, this report speaks to Social Development, Finance and Administration's work to fund for community impact through the Community Service Partnerships investment program.

In July 2019, Toronto City Council adopted the Community Service Partnerships Framework to ensure that, through a Renewal Process, all funded organizations would become aligned with shared outcomes and a strengthened definition of vulnerability to ensure grant funds are meeting the needs of Torontonians who are most vulnerable. Community funding staff anticipated some shifts in the Community Service Partnerships portfolio. However, given the de-stabilizing impact of COVID-19 on the not-for-profit sector and the need to maintain as many organizations serving communities as possible, the review process has been narrowed to focus primarily on organizations and their ability to meet the required eligibility criteria. This report recommends funding approval for all current Community Service Partnerships organizations as a stability measure. The 175 organizations listed in Appendix A are recommended to receive investments totalling \$17,338,720. This funding will support the delivery of 327 community-based programs designed to engage Torontonians who are vulnerable.

While all existing organizations in the portfolio have been recommended to continue receiving Community Service Partnerships funding, there are organizations who are not clearly demonstrating, with verifiable data, that they are serving vulnerable Torontonians, nor are they able to demonstrate through program indicators that they are likely to achieve the shared outcomes that are the basis of the Community Service Partnerships Framework. The report summarizes the plans to address these shortcomings through enhanced monitoring and support to assist groups to meet these standards.

Increasing demonstrable commitment to reconciliation and equity in the City of Toronto requires a re-examination of groups receiving City funding. This will include considering whether the Community Service Partnerships portfolio is reflective of current trends in Toronto that may contribute to vulnerability, including immigration and health trends. Community Funding staff will also identify program models that no longer fit in the portfolio and identify alternative options for future support of this work.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council approve the 2021 Community Service Partnerships allocation recommendations for 175 organizations totalling \$17,338,720 from the 2021 Approved Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration as described in Appendix A to this report.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to allocate the Community Service Partnerships funds until the end of the current four-year grant cycle on December 31, 2022.
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to reallocate or approve and disburse one-time Community Investment grants with funding allocation to be subject to the annual Budget process.
4. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to report annually to the Economic and Community Development Committee on the grants approved through Recommendations 2 and 3 above.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The recommendations in this report will have no financial impact beyond what is included in the 2021 Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

Social Development, Finance and Administration works to advance social and economic equity, building strong and safe neighbourhoods for all Torontonians. The Community Funding Unit provides ongoing and short-term funding to Toronto-based, not-for-profit, grassroots and resident-led groups so that Indigenous, Black and equity-deserving communities have improved access to quality services and facilities.

With the City's support, community organizations, groups and residents deliver community-based programs and services to Torontonians that are socially and/or geographically isolated, living in poverty, and/or experiencing racism and other forms of discrimination. Further, the City is working to ensure that groups providing services to these vulnerable population groups are reflective of the communities they serve and are employing culturally safe and relevant practices.

Given the de-stabilizing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on individuals, families and communities, the work of community-based not-for-profit organizations is critical. Social Development, Finance and Administration has repeatedly leveraged the expertise and services of organizations across communities throughout the pandemic to support residents in heightened vulnerability and recognize the need to maintain as much stability among organizations and communities this year as possible.

DECISION HISTORY

On November 25, 2020, Toronto City Council received an update on the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process and an outline of proposed work regarding the development of Indigenous and Black-Mandated Funding Frameworks.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.EC17.4>

On July 16, 2019, Toronto City Council approved the Community Service Partnerships Framework, as well as an appeals approach for the Community Service Partnerships funding application.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.EC6.20>

On December 5, 2017, City Council adopted The Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism, which outlined 80 actions and 22 recommendations for the City to undertake over five years with funding for required resources.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2017.EX29.11>

On July 6, 2010, Toronto City Council adopted the City of Toronto Statement of Commitment to Aboriginal communities in Toronto.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.EX45.5>

On February 2, 2010, Toronto City Council adopted the Community Partnership Strategy.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2010.CD30.2>

The City of Toronto provides support to the public benefit sector through funding programs under the general authority for making municipal grants provided in Section 83 of the City of Toronto Act, 2006 (S.O. 2006, c.11).
<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/06c11#BK103>.

COMMENTS

1. Advancing Reconciliation and Equity through Community Investment

On October 27, 2020, City Council [adopted](#) both the City Manager's report, [Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto](#), and the Toronto Office of Recovery and Rebuild's report, [COVID-19: Impacts and Opportunities](#). These reports emphasize the need for the City to continue to invest in reconciliation and equity with a focus on Indigenous and Black communities. In particular, these reports and others highlight the historical inequities in funding to Indigenous and Black Communities, resulting in under-resourced community agencies unsupported to respond to the significant negative outcomes experienced in these communities such as: poverty, unemployment, poor health, food insecurities and low education achievement. COVID-19 has further exacerbated¹ these inequities as Indigenous and Black communities experienced higher rates of COVID-19 infection and mortality.

In light of both the movement for Black Lives and the impact of COVID-19, the philanthropic community has increasingly turned its attention to addressing systemic racism and the barriers to Indigenous and Black communities accessing funding.² This has resulted both in specific granting programs to respond to the needs in these communities, as well as scrutiny of granting practices that perpetuate bias, discrimination and a lack of diversity in review panels and boards who make funding decisions.

In the City, updating the Toronto Grants Policy, and specific Indigenous-led training for grant makers are examples of building Reconciliation and Equity Infrastructure across the corporation. City granting divisions have launched Indigenous specific grant streams³ and are developing and implementing Equity Funding Frameworks⁴.

Social Development, Finance and Administration is working with other divisions to build Reconciliation and Equity Infrastructure to drive transformative change using various tools such as equity-based budgets, community benefits agreements, and the Fair Pass program.

¹ The Toronto Foundation's Fall Out Report: <https://www.torontofoundation.ca/FalloutReport/>

² The Association of Charitable Foundations: <https://www.acf.org.uk/policy-practice/stronger-foundations/dei-working-group/>

³ The Toronto Urban Health Fund: https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/97e5-TUHF_IndigenousFramework_AODA.pdf

⁴ The Toronto Arts Council: <https://torontoartscouncil.org/reports-and-resources/toronto-arts-council-equity-framework>

Community Investment is another tool Social Development, Finance and Administration is using to drive this change. Over the past three years, Community Funding has supported the Black to the Future project which provided sovereignty for Black-Mandated organizations to identify and create capacity building activities resulting in a community of practice with 47 member agencies. Similarly, funding has supported Indigenous organizations to develop a shared strategic plan for the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council, has seeded the development of a community symposium, and has supported a group of Indigenous youth to engage their peers to identify solutions to community violence. Investments have provided more on-going, stable funding for the Toronto Aboriginal Support Services Council and various programs for Black youth leadership and Black board governance. Grant practices continue to be analyzed to reduce barriers and bias, and to increase the diversity of perspectives on grant review panels. In the case of granting to Indigenous communities, this includes providing more autonomy and self-determination in granting, completely transforming the process of government granting to one that privileges Indigenous peoples.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, both Indigenous and Black communities have been prioritized for funding as described in Table 1.

Table 1: COVID-19 Investments to Indigenous and Black communities

	Investments to Indigenous-led Organizations	Investments to Black-Mandated Organizations
TO Supports	\$1,335,000	\$3,602,755
Mental Health	\$110,000	\$293,000
COVID Equity Plan	\$500,000	\$2,413,810
Vaccine Engagement	\$1,000,000	\$1,875,000
Total	\$2,945,000	\$8,184,565

The Community Funding Unit within Social Development, Finance and Administration is working with funded agencies to collect the information necessary to increase equity in the following ways:

- In partnership with the United Way of Greater Toronto, phase two of the Data for Good Pilot Project will engage 50 not-for-profit organizations to collect social identity data from service users and utilize this data to improve equity through program changes, enhanced outreach and other organizational training and governance interventions. This peer-led and learning approach will pave the way for further engagement with other grantees and a move to make the collection of social identity data a funding requirement. In this way, the Data for Good Pilot Project aligns with the City's internal Data for Equity Strategy approved by City Council in late 2020.
- The Community Funding Unit is piloting the collection of social identity data with the Youth Violence Prevention grantees and is working with Indigenous leaders to

understand the unique requirements and safeguards in gathering this information from Indigenous peoples being served by non-Indigenous agencies.

- Grantee questions regarding equity have been built into the new on-line grants system, the Toronto Grants, Rebates and Incentives Portal. The collection and collation of this information from grantees will help the Community Funding Unit better understand the impact of investments and who is being served through these investments and is further highlighted in section 2, below.

The priority for the balance of 2021 and 2022 will be to continue building Reconciliation and Equity Infrastructure within Community Investments. A primary way this work will be advanced is through the development and pilot launch of the Indigenous and Black-Mandated Funding Frameworks in 2021.

- The Indigenous Funding Framework is being co-developed with the members of the Toronto Aboriginal Social Services Council. It will build on the development of the Tkaronto Prosperity Plan, and the updating of the Toronto Aboriginal Research Project (TARP) Report.
- The Black-Mandated Funding Framework is being co-developed with an Advisory Committee of leaders from the sector representing not-for-profit organizations, grassroots groups and youth leaders. It will respond to actions in the [Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism](#) and concretizes the City of Toronto's commitment to advance the International Decade for People of African Descent (2015 -2024) themes: justice, recognition, and development. The themes of development and recognition are particularly relevant as the City looks to build a more targeted and purposeful approach to enhancing supports to Black-Mandated organizations.

2. Community Service Partnerships Recommendations

The Community Service Partnerships investment program provides on-going support to Toronto's community-based not-for-profit organizations to offer high quality and relevant services that respond to the changing needs of the community and strengthen the city's well-being. Community Service Partnerships is managed by the Community Funding Unit in Social Development, Finance and Administration, which also provides short-term grants (Investment Grants) through a number of additional grant streams.

This report recommends that 175 community-based, not-for-profit organizations receive investments totalling \$17,338,720 in 2021 (Appendix A). The investment per agency ranges from \$5,590 to \$663,165 and each organization is recommended to receive support for one to five programs. Of this funding, \$442,000 is for Indigenous-led organizations and \$3 million is for Black-Mandated organizations.

Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process

The Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process was designed to ensure that the funding stream accomplishes its ultimate outcome by funding community based not-for-profit organizations to deliver evidence-informed programs and services for and with

Torontonians and communities who are vulnerable. The renewal process was only open to currently funded Community Service Partnerships organizations at current funding levels.

As highlighted in the [Towards Recovery and Building a Renewed Toronto](#) report adopted by Toronto City Council in [October 2020](#), the impact of COVID-19 has been a shock to the community-based sector. The increased demands on community partners to address the urgent and unmet needs of Torontonians who are vulnerable coupled with exacerbated long-term cash flow and funding concerns has had a significant impact. In light of this incredible strain, and the importance of the sector to the City's emergency and ongoing response to COVID-19, the review process for Community Service Partnerships applications was adjusted to increase sector stability and ease concerns regarding funding uncertainty.

Whereas the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process had been designed to review applications against comprehensive, established criteria by both internal and external stakeholders, City staff instead reviewed 175 organization and 327 program applications to ensure that they are eligible to continue to receive funding under the Council-approved Community Service Partnerships Framework, essentially rolling over previous investments. Organizations and/or programs that were identified as requiring improvements will be provided with direct feedback and capacity building supports over the funding period as described below, while the sector recovers from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. This pivot was well received by funded agencies and provided the City with an opportunity to be recognized as a leader within the funding landscape.

Despite altering the review process, the City is able to preserve a number of the 'wins' achieved throughout the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process. These wins include:

- the co-development of the Community Service Partnerships Framework with funded agencies;
- increased capacity within the sector due to a series of engagements and training opportunities;
- the launch of the Toronto Grants, Rebates and Incentives Portal, the City's new online grant management system; and,
- the consolidation of the number of programs funded per agency while maintaining funding levels, essentially increasing the impact of each investment.

Overview of Community Service Partnerships Recommendations

As a result of the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process, 175 community-based not-for-profit organizations are recommended to receive continued funding. These investments will support the Community Service Partnerships program's ultimate goal that envisions a Toronto where all residents live in vibrant, equitable, inclusive, safe neighbourhoods and communities where the needs of people and communities most vulnerable are met. These 175 agencies span a wide range of the sector and include organizations that are:

- Indigenous-led
- Black-Mandated
- Sector-serving

- Multi-service
- Members of the Association of Community Centres
- Neighbourhood hubs
- Community health centres
- Serving an ethno-specific population
- Serving a specific population such as seniors, women, youth, newcomers, LGBTQ2S and people with disabilities

Organizations also range in the size of their annual operating budget, with some having budgets of under \$100,000 and others with budgets in the tens of millions of dollars. Given this variation, Community Service Partnerships funding accounts for a wide range of each agency's annual operating budget.

The Community Service Partnerships funding program is one with outcomes at both the organization and service levels. As such, agencies are able to allocate up to 25% of their Community Service Partnerships funding to support organizational infrastructure costs, a key component to building and sustaining a healthy not-for-profit sector. Ninety-four out of 175 organizations allocated a total of \$2,730,018 in funding to address administrative costs and will work towards outcomes summarized in the following table.

Table 2: Community Service Partnerships Organization Shared Outcomes

Shared Outcome	Number of Organizations (*they were able to select multiple outcomes)
Increased knowledge and skills for service delivery	32
Increased knowledge and skills for organizational development	38
Maintain organizational/day-to-day core operations	86
Increased access to programs/services, resources and space	45

The Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process provided organizations with the opportunity to propose new programs aligned with the shared outcomes in the funding framework. Of the 327 program applications submitted, 15 were for new programs while 312 were for programs organizations has previously run, with many of these already being funded by the Community Service Partnerships funding stream.

The 327 programs recommended to receive Community Service Partnerships will engage a diverse group of Torontonians. This diversity includes the following equity-deserving groups:

- 157 programs will serve seniors
- 136 programs will serve immigrants and refugees
- 121 programs will serve people with disabilities

- 120 programs will serve youth between the ages of 13 and 24
- 105 programs will serve South Asian communities
- 104 programs will serve Black Torontonians
- 82 programs will serve LGBTQ2S people

Applicants were able to select multiple demographic categories when indicating their populations served. Community Service Partnerships funds four Indigenous-led organizations to provide programs and services to Indigenous people. Social Development, Finance and Administration is working with Indigenous-led organizations to ensure that funding for the Indigenous community is provided to Indigenous-led organizations. Funding may only be provided to non-Indigenous organizations where a clear and confirmed partnership with an Indigenous-led organization is demonstrated. This practice was [adopted](#) by Council in the updated Toronto Grants Policy in May 2019.

Programs recommended to receive funding span the geographic landscape of Toronto but are concentrated in neighbourhoods with increased need such as Scarborough Southwest (43 funded programs), Humber River-Black Creek (42 funded programs), Scarborough Centre and Toronto Centre (38 programs each) and Davenport (37 programs). Toronto Centre and Davenport have a high number of funded programs as they are home to many long-standing not-for-profit organizations.

Many programs operate in multiple city wards and 72 programs will operate with a city-wide focus, many of these serving a specific population group not concentrated within a neighbourhood or ward.

Community Service Partnerships funding is intended to meet the needs of Torontonians who are vulnerable. Every Community Service Partnerships funded program will work with at least one of the following groups identified in the Community Service Partnerships funding framework definition of vulnerability⁵ co-developed with funded agencies, subject matter experts and external stakeholders:

- 303 programs will support Torontonians who are living in poverty
- 279 programs will support Torontonians experiencing social isolation
- 194 programs will support Torontonians living in an area of the city that is generally underserved or identified as geographically isolated

Many programs indicated that they would work with two or three of the groups listed above.

All program investments will work towards meeting at least one of the shared outcomes identified below.

⁵ A person's vulnerability or resiliency will depend on structural inequalities (such as but not limited to, the intersectionality of racism and discrimination) as well as their circumstances, environment and resources in the broadest sense. Poverty, social isolation, and geographic isolation (living in an underserved area, such as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area or Emerging Neighbourhood) are essential factors to understanding and demonstrating vulnerability within the Community Service Partnerships funding program.

Table 3: Community Service Partnerships Program Shared Outcomes

Shared Outcome	Number of Programs	Example Program
Increased social connections	188	519 Church Street Community Centre will offer drop-in programming to increase connections with the older adult/50+ LGBTQ2S population
Increased knowledge and skill development	141	Somali Women's and Children's Support Network will increase leadership skills for immigrant women and their children
Increased pathways to services	92	The Centre for Independent Living in Toronto will connect 1,700 Torontonians living with disabilities to community services a year
Mitigation of the effects of living in poverty, primarily through food access	42	The Centre for Immigrant and Community Services will operate the Community Food Pantry, increasing access to food hampers for 100 families a week
Increased perceptions of safety	41	METRAC supports diverse community members to identify often hidden safety issues to create safer communities using a social ecological model and gender-based violence analysis
Increased public awareness about the issues facing vulnerable communities	40	Distress Centres of Greater Toronto will build capacity in community agencies to support individuals, families and communities in the aftermath of a traumatic or violent event

Analysis of Applications

As noted in the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process section of this report, Organization and Program Applications were reviewed by Community Funding Unit staff to ensure that they met eligibility requirements.

The review of Organization Applications found that nearly all organizations have maintained their eligibility. The three organizations where eligibility concerns were identified were given the opportunity to provide clarifications on the issues and the clarifications received demonstrate all organizations remain eligible. The review also identified non-eligibility issues related to organizational health in approximately a third of agencies. These issues included:

- Financial health, for example low reserves and deficits
- Weak strategic planning processes
- Inadequate succession planning and/or review processes for senior leadership and board members
- Weak complaints policies

All but 11 programs were found to be eligible during the review of Program Applications. Like with the Organization Applications, organizations were given the opportunity to provide clarifications when eligibility concerns were identified and the clarifications received demonstrate all programs are eligible. Two key non-eligibility issues were also identified in a sizable minority of program applications:

- Weak logic models that did not clearly connect activities with Community Service Partnerships shared outcomes or that did not provide appropriate indicators to measure the impact of the program
- Provision of inadequate evidence to demonstrate the program will serve vulnerable Torontonians.

The following section describes the actions which will be taken to address the non-eligibility concerns so that Social Development, Finance and Administration Division may be confident that grant funds are achieving their greatest impact.

Next Steps: Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process

In keeping with the goals of the Community Service Partnerships Renewal Process, the balance of 2021 will continue to focus on increasing accountability and impact, and advancing reconciliation and equity.

Founded during the amalgamation process, the Community Service Partnerships funding program wove together a number of funding streams from the former municipalities with a range of funding priorities. With the demand for Community Service Partnerships funding being both robust and persistent, and in consideration of how much the human service sector has grown and changed over the past 23 years, increasing demonstrable commitment to reconciliation and equity in the City of Toronto requires a re-examination of groups receiving City funding. This will include considering where the Community Service Partnerships portfolio is reflective of current trends in Toronto that may contribute to vulnerability, including immigration and health trends. The geographic distribution of Community Service Partnerships-funded programs will also be examined to ensure programs are located in neighbourhoods that have experienced funding inequities while simultaneously being home to Torontonians who are vulnerable and have low access to services. Community Funding staff will also identify program models that no longer fit in the portfolio and identify alternative options for future support of this work.

Increasing Accountability and Impact

Informed by staff reviews of Community Service Partnerships applications and recent annual reports, virtual site visits will be facilitated with organizational senior leadership where concerns were identified with organizational health or program alignment. This will include conveying the importance of providing evidence to demonstrate programs are serving vulnerable Torontonians and the requirement that each program have a

logic model with indicator data to support program impact.

Virtual site visits will identify the supports agencies may need to close the gap between their current capacity and the expectations of Community Service Partnerships-funded organizations. Staff will develop and track progress on workplans to ensure accountability and virtual site visits may result in enhanced monitoring, reports and potentially imposing conditions on future funding

Advancing Reconciliation and Equity

A broad engagement strategy will be developed to share the Community Funding Unit's current work and future plans to advance both reconciliation and equity with senior staff and board members of funded organizations, as well as to hear from funded organizations about the work they are doing in their agencies and networks to advance reconciliation and equity for Indigenous and Black populations.

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A: List of Organizations Recommended to Receive Community Service Partnerships Funding in 2021