

2021 Toronto Urban Health Fund Allocations and Review Process

Date: June 3, 2021

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

This report outlines the funding priorities, application review process, and funding allocation recommendations for the 2021 Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF). The TUHF provides funding for community-based non-profit organizations to deliver some of these programs and services because they build individual and community capacity to support HIV prevention, harm reduction, and child and youth resiliency.

Based on the recommendations from the 2021 TUHF Review Panel and the TUHF Indigenous Review Panel, this report recommends a total allocation of \$557,725 for eight one-year projects in 2021. This consists of \$518,243 for seven one-year mainstream projects and \$39,482 for one Indigenous one-year project.

This report also recommends a total allocation of \$2,786,318 for second-year funding for 39 projects the Board of Health approved in 2020. The recommended combined total allocation of \$3,344,043 for eight one-year projects and 39 three-year projects is to be used between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. Recommended projects focus on HIV prevention through sexual transmission, harm reduction, child and youth resiliency, and Indigenous health promotion.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Medical Officer of Health recommends that:

1. The Board of Health authorize the Medical Officer of Health to allocate \$557,725 from the 2021 Approved Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health for eight one-year projects, as outlined in Tables 1 and 2 and Attachment 2 to this report.
2. The Board of Health authorize the Medical Officer of Health to allocate \$2,786,318 from the 2021 Approved Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health to carry out

second-year activities for 39 three-year projects, as outlined in Tables 1 and 2 and Attachment 2 to this report.

3. The Board of Health authorize the Medical Officer of Health to execute Funding Agreements with the approved applicants in Recommendations 1 and 2 above.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report recommends an allocation of \$3,344,043 for eight one-year projects and 39 three-year projects, as outlined in Tables 1 and 2 and Attachment 2 to this report.

There is no financial impact associated with this report beyond what has already been approved in the 2021 Approved Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health.

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

DECISION HISTORY

On March 22, 2021, the Board of Health delegated the authority to appoint members for the TUHF Review Panel and TUHF Indigenous Review Panel from the Board of Health to the Medical Officer of Health. In addition, the administration of review panel meetings was shifted from the City Clerk's Office to TUHF Program staff.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.HL26.2>

On June 8, 2020, the Board of Health approved 39 three-year projects to be implemented from July 1, 2020 to June 30, 2023.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.HL17.3>

COMMENTS

The modernized Ontario Public Health Standards (OPHS 2018) from the Ministry of Health mandates the provision of HIV/AIDS prevention and illicit substance misuse prevention (including harm reduction strategies) programs and services through local public health units. The TUHF provides funding for community-based non-profit organizations to deliver some of these programs and services because they build individual and community capacity to support HIV prevention, harm reduction, and child and youth resiliency.

Community-based funding strategically addresses a variety of factors relevant to HIV transmission and substance misuse including cultural and language barriers; stigma and discrimination; distrust of government organizations; and colonization. Community agencies are uniquely positioned to provide accessible, relevant, timely and culturally-safe HIV prevention, harm reduction, and child and youth resiliency programming to marginalized and vulnerable populations in Toronto.

Funding Criteria and Priorities

The Toronto Urban Health Fund provides one and three-year funding opportunities to both mainstream and Indigenous organizations. The objective of one-year funding is to fund innovative interventions or pilot projects that address emerging or short-term public health issues, or to conduct needs assessments in order to increase the understanding of the health and programming needs of high-risk populations. High-risk populations include people who use illicit substances, those who are at-risk of engaging in high-risk sexual behaviours, and Indigenous peoples. The objective of three-year funding is to fund projects that are based on effective interventions and community-based best practices that are flexible and responsive to longer-term trends.

Mainstream funded projects must address the needs of TUHF priority populations through resiliency building, organizational and community capacity building, and health promotion strategies including creating supportive environments, strengthening community action, re-orienting health services, and developing personal skills. Projects funded under the Indigenous stream must use a holistic approach to Indigenous health and healing that is modeled around traditional ways of knowing. Projects funded in this stream must promote Indigenous self-determination, cultural safety, and health, in addition to addressing HIV and/or substance use prevention within Indigenous populations.

In addition, consideration is given to projects servicing high-needs geographic areas, such as City-designated Neighbourhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) or neighbourhoods with a high incidence of HIV, Hepatitis C, or at higher risk of substance use and overdose. Similarly, further consideration is provided to projects with services targeting youth residing in NIAs and African, Caribbean and Black populations. Emphasis is also placed on reducing the duplication of services targeting these populations by other community agencies, funders, and Toronto Public Health.

Community Outreach, Request for Proposals and Support – 2021 Project Solicitation Process

The TUHF application process is a two-phased process involving the submission of an Expression of Interest (EOI) which occurred in October 2020 and the submission of a funding proposal for successful EOI applicants which occurred in February 2021.

Toronto Urban Health Fund staff supported potential applicants by providing one EOI writing workshop for Indigenous organizations, two EOI writing workshops for non-Indigenous organizations, one proposal writing workshop for Indigenous organizations and two proposal writing workshops for non-Indigenous organizations. In addition, TUHF staff were available to applicants for clarification around the applications, review, and allocations process, as well as to provide technical support on the application forms.

In October 2020, TUHF received 32 EOIs requesting \$2.4 million for the 2021 funding year: two from the Indigenous stream, five from the HIV Prevention through Sexual Transmission stream, nine from the Harm Reduction stream, and sixteen from the Child and Youth Resiliency stream. The EOIs were independently reviewed by TUHF staff

using standardized TUHF project eligibility and assessment criteria. Fourteen EOIs did not meet TUHF assessment criteria and eighteen successful EOIs were invited to submit funding proposals.

Of the 18 successful EOIs, seven applicants withdrew from the process and did not submit funding proposals while 11 proposals were received requesting \$647,843 for the 2021 funding cycle: two from the Indigenous stream, two from the HIV Prevention through Sexual Transmission stream, three from the Harm Reduction stream, and four from the Child and Youth Resiliency stream.

Review Process

On March 23, 2021, the Medical Officer of Health appointed six members and three alternate members to the 2021 TUHF Review Panel as well as four members to the 2021 TUHF Indigenous Review Panel (Attachment 1).

Toronto Urban Health Fund staff and Review Panel Members used a matrix to assess proposals based on the following established criteria: evidence informed/based approaches; project planning and development; target population reach; population needs, and risks addressed; and cost effectiveness. In addition, allocation recommendations considered the distribution of funding across the four funding streams, priority populations, geographic areas, and epidemiological needs.

Summary of Recommendations

On April 9, 2021, applicants were informed of preliminary recommendations from the Review Panels. The TUHF Review Panels made preliminary decisions to approve one proposal, conditionally approve eight proposals; two proposals were not recommended for funding. An amount of \$194,763 representing 31% of the allocations budget was set aside for the appeals process.

On April 21 and 23, 2021, the TUHF Review Panel and TUHF Indigenous Review Panel respectively met to consider seven appeal submissions from applicants that received conditional approvals. All seven applicants addressed the conditions set out by the Review Panels and were preliminarily approved for funding. Unallocated funds in the amount of \$77,325 remains in the 2021 TUHF program budget. In total, eight projects are recommended for funding. Table 1 provides a summary of the distribution by TUHF funding streams of projects recommended for funding. Table 2 provides a summary of the distribution of funding to TUHF target populations.

Table 1 – 2021 Funding Allocation Recommendations by Funding Stream

Funding Stream	One-Year Projects \$ Recommended (# projects)	Three-Year Projects \$ Recommended (# projects)	Total Funding \$ (% total)	Total Projects # (%)
Indigenous	\$39,482 (1)	\$380,518 (4)	\$420,000 (13%)	5 (11%)
HIV Prevention through Sexual Transmission	\$46,897 (1)	\$729,369 (10)	\$776,266 (23%)	11 (23%)
Harm Reduction	\$209,168 (3)	\$951,469 (13)	\$1,160,637 (35%)	16 (34%)
Child and Youth Resiliency	\$262,178 (3)	\$724,962 (12)	\$987,140 (30%)	15 (32%)
Total	\$557,725 (8)	\$2,786,318 (39)	\$3,344,043 (100%)	47 (100%)

Table 2 – Funding Distribution by TUHF Target Population

TUHF Population	One-Year Projects \$ Recommended (%)	Three-Year Projects \$ Recommended (%)	Overall \$ Recommended (%)
People who use drugs	\$209,168 (38%)	\$295,877 (11%)	\$505,045 (15%)
Vulnerable and high-risk youth	\$118,568 (21%)	\$365,943 (13%)	\$484,511 (14%)
Indigenous populations	\$39,482 (7%)	\$437,983 (16%)	\$477,465 (14%)
People who Inject Drugs	\$ 0	\$421,377 (15%)	\$421,377 (13%)
Men who have Sex with Men	\$ 0	\$353,136 (13%)	\$353,136 (11%)
African Caribbean Black population	\$82,649 (15%)	\$256,567 (9%)	\$339,216 (10%)
People in prisons	\$107,858 (19%)	\$137,662 (5%)	\$245,520 (7%)
People who engage in Sex Work	\$0	\$172,253 (6%)	\$172,253 (5%)
People who are Street-Involved	\$0	\$136,427 (5%)	\$136,427 (4%)
Sex Partners of High-Risk Populations	\$0	\$94,819 (3%)	\$94,819 (3%)
People who are Transgender	\$0	\$73,928 (3%)	\$73,928 (2%)
People living with HIV/AIDS	\$0	\$40,346 (1%)	\$40,346 (1%)
Total	\$557,725 (100%)	\$2,786,318 (100%)	\$3,344,043 (100%)

Funding Oversight and Management

The management of the TUHF program is aligned with the City of Toronto Grants Policy, the City of Toronto Risk Management Framework, and the Toronto Public Health (TPH) Accountability Reporting Framework. Toronto Public Health staff oversee and monitor funding recipients' service delivery, data collection and reporting, financial reporting, and project evaluation throughout the lifecycle of the funding agreements. Should funded organizations not meet the conditions of their Funding Agreements at any point, TPH will discontinue the funding.

Project Monitoring

Funded projects are bound by the terms and conditions outlined in their Funding Agreements. Material changes to the budget and nature of the contracted activities for which funding has been approved require prior written approval by TPH staff. Project monitoring is conducted by TPH staff through site visits, consultations, and face-to-face, phone and e-mail communications with the funded organizations. Toronto Public Health staff also observe workshops, presentations, and community events, and assess resources developed by funded agencies. Organizations must complete all contracted services to qualify for future funding. All funded agencies are required to submit interim and year-end progress and financial reports for their projects in each year of funding.

CONTACT

Althea Hutchinson, Director, Finance and Administration, Toronto Public Health,
416-338-7840, Althea.Hutchinson@toronto.ca

SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: 2021 Toronto Urban Health Fund Review Panel and Toronto Urban Health Fund Indigenous Review Panel Members Appointed by the Medical Officer of Health

Attachment 2: Project Summaries and Recommended Activities for Each Project Recommended for Funding