

2023 Update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Proposed Expansion Plan

Date: October 17, 2023

To: Executive Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration

Wards: All

SUMMARY

In March 2022, the Toronto Community Crisis Service launched a 24/7 service to provide a community-based, client centred, trauma-informed, non-police led response to people experiencing mental health crisis and wellness checks. In its first year of operations the Toronto Community Crisis Service received 6,827 calls for service, with 78 per cent of calls transferred from 911 successfully resolved without police involvement.

Data from the Toronto Community Crisis Service's one-year evaluation demonstrates that 95 per cent of clients were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received and 90 per cent indicated that it positively impacted their perception of community safety and wellbeing. In year one, community crisis teams completed 2,936 post-crisis follow up interactions and connected 1,160 service users to ongoing case management supports.

The Toronto Community Crisis Service provides access to ground-breaking transformative care in 64 per cent of all Toronto wards. If approved by Council, the service will be expanded city-wide in 2024 to become the fourth municipal emergency service in Toronto, alongside Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, and the Toronto Police Service.

The expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service is one of the first priority actions of SafeTO: Toronto's Ten-Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan to reduce vulnerability in Toronto through proactive mental health support strategies and community-based crisis support models.

After a successful first year of operations, and the demonstrated need for crisis response services in Toronto, Social Development, Finance and Administration is accelerating the service expansion to city-wide coverage so all Torontonians can access the support they need when they need it most before the end of 2024.

This report will provide:

- an update on the progress of the Toronto Community Crisis Service, including the first year of performance data, service achievements and challenges, public awareness building efforts, as well as the recognition the service has received nationally and internationally as a model for community-based crisis response;
- a roadmap to expand the Toronto Community Crisis Service city-wide, including a proposed approach to strengthening the dispatch and intake functions, which will ensure that dispatching is efficient, effective, and safe as the service expands;
- recommendations for qualified community anchor partners to deliver the service in expanded service areas; and,
- an overview of the additional investments provided through the Strengthening the Community Crisis System grant stream in support of expansion efforts.

RECOMMENDATIONS

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

1. City Council endorse the city-wide expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service as Toronto's fourth emergency service.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate, enter into, and amend any service and funding agreements with the Toronto Community Crisis Service anchor partners (namely, Gerstein Crisis Centre, TAIBU Community Health Centre, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and The Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch) for the provision of the Toronto Community Crisis Service until 2034 on the terms and conditions satisfactory to the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor.
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate, enter into, and amend any service and funding agreements with Findhelp Information Services (Findhelp | 211 Central), as the intake partner for the Toronto Community Crisis Service, on the terms and conditions satisfactory to the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and in a form acceptable to the City Solicitor.
4. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate, enter into, and amend single-and multi-year contribution agreements for not-for-profit organizations funded through the Strengthening the Community Crisis System grant, with funding recipients and grant amounts to be determined through a call for proposals, within the budget allocation for the program, and on such content, terms and conditions as deemed necessary by the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
5. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to negotiate, enter into, and amend single-and multi-year agreements to support program components related to the Toronto Community Crisis Service (e.g.

training, evaluation, outreach campaigns) within the budget allocation for the program, and on such manner, content, terms and conditions as deemed necessary by the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

6. City Council request the Province of Ontario to fund the expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service in alignment with the 75/25 cost-sharing funding model for public health services and to increase investments to close the service gaps in mental health services and addiction recovery programs, including detox beds and broad options for affordable and supportive housing.

7. City Council request the Mayor to consider the city-wide expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service in proposing the 2024 Budget for the Social Development, Finance and Administration division, in consultation with the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration.

8. City Council forward this report to the Toronto Police Services Board for information.

9. City Council to share the Toronto Community Crisis Service One-Year Evaluation Report with the Big City Mayors' Caucus for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The 2023 approved budget includes \$13.754 million (gross and net) and 8 positions for the Toronto Community Crisis Service, reflected within Social Development, Finance and Administration.

The proposed City-wide expansion of the program is estimated to increase costs to a total of \$26.832 million and 13 positions in 2024 and \$34.779 million and 43 positions at full implementation by 2026, as reflected in the table below:

Budget		Proposed 2024		Outlook 2025		Outlook 2026	
		Amt. (\$ Mn)	Pos.	Amt. (\$ Mn)	Pos.	Amt. (\$ Mn)	Pos.
Base*	City Staff to Support TCCS	1.088	8	1.094	8	1.099	8
	Payments to Community Anchor Partners for Mobile Crisis Teams	11.066		11.066		11.066	
	Program Expenses (including dispatch equipment, training, evaluation, public awareness, honoraria)	0.815		0.815		0.815	
	Targeted Community Investments/Grants	1.000		1.000		1.000	
New and Enhanced	City Staff to Support TCCS	0.419	5	2.656	35	4.189	35

	Payments to Community Anchor Partners for Mobile Crisis Teams	12.217		16.312		16.312	
	Program Expenses (including dispatch equipment, training, evaluation, public awareness, honoraria)	0.227		0.298		0.298	
Total		26.832	13	33.241	43	34.779	43
*Base Budget includes Annualization of Prior Year Impacts							

Subject to Council approval of the expanded Toronto Community Crisis Service, it is requested that the Mayor, in consultation with the Interim Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer and Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, consider the city-wide expansion of the program when proposing the 2024 Budget. The Interim Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has been provided the financial impacts associated with the program for review as part of the 2024 budget process.

EQUITY IMPACT

The Toronto Community Crisis Service has a demonstrated positive equity impact on Indigenous, Black, racialized, and 2SLGBTQ+ communities. The service has strengthened confidence in community safety efforts, and led to better outcomes for Indigenous, Black, and equity-deserving communities that face over-policing and concerns about police interactions. This service reduces police engagements and increases community-based solutions that connect people in crisis to much needed mental health and well-being programs and services. This community-based service prioritizes the community safety and well-being of Toronto's most vulnerable populations.

DECISION HISTORY

At its July 19, 2022 meeting, City Council adopted CC47.5 Progress on the Toronto Community Crisis Service authorizing the adjustment of pilot boundaries within existing resources and directed the Executive Director Social Development, Finance and Administration to open the Request for Expressions of Interest process for Service expansion by December 2022, incorporating considerations from the launch of the initial four pilots, recommendations adopted by City Council from the Auditor General, and other relevant community safety considerations.

(<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.CC47.5>)

At its February 2, 2022 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX29.1 from the City Manager on the 2022 Launch of Community Crisis Support Service Pilots and Policing Reform Updates. The directions included a report back to City Council in July, 2022 on the implementation of the Toronto Community Crisis Service Pilots to date.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2022.EX29.1>)

At its February 18, 2021 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX21.2 2021 Capital and Operating Budgets. Directions in EX21.2 included a report back on 911 call 2023 Update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Proposed Expansion Plan

centre operations, Community and Safety Wellbeing work, and additional non-police interventions.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX21.2>)

At its February 2, 2021 meeting, City Council adopted with amendments EX20.1 Community Crisis Support Service Pilot. Additional amendments included a request for a report back by end of 2021 on the Community Crisis Support Service pilots, an analysis of 911 operations, intergovernmental requests, directions on mental health and supportive system coordination, and changes requested to policing services and budget.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2021.EX20.1>)

At its August 18, 2020 meeting, the Toronto Police Services Board adopted 81 decisions related to policing reforms including items requested by Toronto City Council at its June 29, 2020 meeting.

(<https://tpsb.ca/meetings/meetings-past>)

At its June 29, 2020 meeting, City Council adopted CC22.2 Changes to Policing in Toronto that included 36 decisions related to policing reforms covering areas touching on policing, public safety and crisis response. In addition, Council asked the City Manager to report to City Council with terms of reference for an anti-Black racism council advisory body.

(<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2020.CC22.2>)

COMMENTS

SECTION 1: Toronto Community Crisis Service Update

A Successful First Year of Operations

At its June 2020 meeting ([CC22.2](#)), residents, communities and organizations called on City Council to reimagine a non-police model of response that is client-centred, trauma-informed, and reduces harm. In response, City Council directed staff to develop a non-police led, alternative community safety response model for Torontonians experiencing mental health crises. Within its first year, the Toronto Community Crisis Service has responded to those calls to action while beginning to establish itself as a trusted crisis response option for Torontonians.

Service data from year one of operations indicates that the Toronto Community Crisis Service is successfully diverting person in crisis calls from police to a community care response and is delivering on its intended outcomes of:

- Ensuring multiple pathways for service users to access crisis support;
- Connecting those in crisis to appropriate community-based supports; and,
- Providing follow-up care and supporting clients who need more intensive case management.

Social Development, Finance and Administration partnered with the Provincial System Support Program and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health to

conduct a program evaluation co-developed with community anchor partners and the Toronto Police Service. Ongoing monitoring and evaluation of program data has allowed adjustments to be made to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of the service and ensure that it remains aligned with its key goals and principles. Program data for the Toronto Community Crisis Service is collected by Toronto Police Service through transferred calls by Findhelp | 211 Central and community anchor partners, who track mobile crisis team client engagement and follow-up details.

The following section provides a summary of key program data from the first year of the Toronto Community Crisis Service operations from March 31, 2022 to April 30, 2023. The full first-year evaluation report can be found as Attachment 1, which outlines a fulsome description of the evaluation approach and outcomes. Attachment 2 and Attachment 3 present two visual summaries of key program data.

Service User Outcomes

- Service users and support persons (e.g., family member, caregiver, kinship relation, etc.) were satisfied with the service they received through the Toronto Community Crisis Service, with a majority of individuals who participated in one-on-one interviews describing having an overall positive experience with Toronto Community Crisis Service. Overall, 95 per cent of survey respondents indicated they were “very satisfied” or “satisfied” with the Toronto Community Crisis Service.
- High levels of satisfaction with the Toronto Community Crisis Service are reflected in service user experiences of feeling respected, heard, and meaningfully supported by Toronto Community Crisis Service staff, who were often described by many as being non-judgemental and compassionate. Service users also attributed their positive experiences to the individualized care, person-centred and holistic approach taken by Toronto Community Crisis Service staff.
- Accordingly, a majority of interviewees shared that they would or had already shared information about the Toronto Community Crisis Service with others in their community. Many service users who self-identified as Indigenous or Black reported that they could culturally identify with Toronto Community Crisis Service staff, with 90% of service users surveyed indicating that the Toronto Community Crisis Service “very positively” or “positively” impacts their perception of community safety and well-being.

Diverting Crisis Calls to the Toronto Community Crisis Service

- Program performance data highlight that the Toronto Community Crisis Service has successfully diverted 78 per cent of calls received from 911 with no police involvement.
- In the vast majority of cases, the mobile teams did not identify a need to involve other emergency services. The Toronto Community Crisis Service made requests for emergency services at 4 per cent of calls attended (231 of 5,868 dispatches).
- Only 8 per cent (462 of 5,868 dispatches) resulted in a visit to a hospital emergency department: 67 per cent of those being at the client's request or team's recommendation, 11 per cent due to medical emergency or need identified.
- Additionally, data from Toronto Police Services indicates frontline officers requested the Toronto Community Crisis Service attendance at 406 events, demonstrating

commitment by frontline officers to utilize the service when appropriate to support clients.

Service Uptake from Multiple "Doors" and Access Points

- In its first year, the Toronto Community Crisis Service received 6,827 unique calls from all sources (911, 211, and calls that went directly to community anchor partners). Of the total calls received, 86 per cent (5,868 calls) were dispatched to the mobile teams.
- The majority, 55 per cent, of completed calls were received from 911, with 34 percent received by 211 and 12 per cent received directly from community sources (such as the Gerstein Crisis Centre and 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations crisis lines, or outreach done in the community). Notably, while calls received from 911 stabilized over time, calls received directly by 211 steadily increased, indicating 211 may soon overtake 911 as a primary call source. This shift may be in part due to the ongoing public awareness efforts of the City of Toronto and community anchor partners, outlined in more detail below.

Connecting People to Appropriate Supports

- The crisis teams completed 2,936 post-crisis follow-up attempts within the 48 hour service standard. Out of a total 1,160 service users who agreed to follow-up, over one-third (35 per cent) received support for up to 30 days, while over half (56 per cent) of service users received case management for up to 90 days.
- 411 referrals were made for service users during a mobile crisis visit. The five most common referrals included shelter beds (35 per cent), crisis stabilization supports such as food, family support, extreme cleaning, youth services, appointment support, 2SLGBTQ+ services (20 per cent), crisis beds (16 per cent), emergency medical services (11 per cent), and culturally relevant supports (10 per cent). Referrals made to shelter and crisis beds account for over half of all referrals made by mobile crisis teams and were consistently the most commonly made referral across sites.
- 1,996 referrals were made during follow up visits. The three most common types of referrals made during these visits included mental health and substance use referrals (26 per cent), housing referrals (16 per cent) and case management referrals (13 per cent).
- Of the 300 culturally relevant supports provided to service users during follow-up: 50 per cent were Indigenous-specific supports (including access to traditional medicine, wholistic family and kinship care supports and culturally specific wellness programming); 20 percent were Afrocentric and West Indian/Caribbean-centric supports (including access to culturally appropriate foods, referrals to Black physicians and access to culturally specific programming); and 7 per cent were wholistic health supports.

Institutionalizing Toronto Community Crisis Service as the Fourth Emergency Response Service

Over the past year, the Toronto Community Crisis Service has collaborated with the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Paramedic Services and Toronto Fire Services to

strengthen connections and integrate the Toronto Community Crisis Service as a dispatch option within the broader emergency response ecosystem.

Each service has made individual contributions that have helped the Toronto Community Crisis Service mature:

- Toronto Fire Services has supported the procurement of dispatch equipment and radios, in addition to participating in the review panel for the selection of the recommended service expansion partners.
- Toronto Paramedic Services has provided training on first aid and radio usage protocols to Toronto Community Crisis Service staff, in addition to assisting in the selection of current community anchor partners.
- The Toronto Police Service has facilitated opportunities for the Toronto Community Crisis Service to promote awareness within their organization, including: Toronto Community Crisis Service attendance at meetings with frontline officers and 911 operators; developing training for 911 communications staff; participating in the Toronto Community Crisis Service City-wide Advisory Table; participating in a joint training pilot program involving officers and crisis workers; and committing to the development of a Toronto Community Crisis Service learning module as a new component of the Toronto Police College's In-Service Training Program for 2024 (annual mandatory training for all uniformed members).

All three existing emergency services have been active partners in the review of the Toronto Community Crisis Service dispatch function, which is a key prerequisite to service expansion. Collectively, the contributions of each service have been instrumental in advancing integration and institutionalizing the Toronto Community Crisis Service as Toronto's fourth emergency service.

Achievements and Challenges

As a collaboration between the Social Development, Finance and Administration division and community partners, including TAIBU Community Health Centre, Gerstein Crisis Centre, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, the Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, and Findhelp | 211 Central, the Toronto Community Crisis Service has benefited from the immense expertise, networks, and innovation that each organization has brought to the initiative. As a result, the Toronto Community Crisis Service has been able to provide Torontonians with a multi-sector response to address complex challenges with a view toward fundamental system transformation.

Key achievements and challenges from the first year of operations are outlined below:

Achievements

- *Launch of Indigenous-Specific Mental Health Crisis Line*
On May 1, 2023, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations launched an Indigenous-specific mental health crisis support line running during the hours of 2pm to 2am. This crisis line offers an additional entry point for Indigenous community members experiencing mental health-related crises to reach the Toronto Community Crisis Service. The line received 459 calls between May 2023 and September 2023.

- Expanding Low-Barrier Access Through Partnership with Toronto Public Library (TPL)*

Following the successful collaboration on the Toronto Public Library's Alternate Approaches to Safety and Security initiative in 2022, an innovative intervention was designed and implemented to offer direct, free, low-barrier crisis support services to Toronto Public Library patrons. The Social Service Team Pilot launched in July 2023 as partnership between Toronto Public Library and Gerstein Crisis Centre, serving as an additional entry point into Toronto Community Crisis Service. Primarily focusing on servicing the Toronto Reference Library, Lillian H. Smith, Sanderson, and Fort York Libraries, the pilot provides on-site crisis support, referrals and connection to key support services, as well as on-site wellness and recovery groups for patrons experiencing intersecting vulnerabilities related to mental health challenges, substance use, low income and homelessness or precarious housing. The pilot staff work alongside library staff to meet the complex and varied needs of patrons regularly accessing library space, leveraging a client-facing hub to engage clients and deliver specialized programming.
- Partnership for Designated Shelter Bed Access*

Given the need to support service users who are unhoused or who may require access to temporary shelter, the Toronto Community Crisis Service partnered with the City's Shelter, Support and Housing Administration (SSHA) division to designate 8 beds for Toronto Community Crisis Service clients, which are spread across each service area. The Toronto Community Crisis Service Designated Beds are available for 72 hours, during which the Toronto Community Crisis Service team provides follow-up support, assistance with service referrals, and case management, as requested. At any point during their stay, the service user may request a referral to a regular bedded program within the City's shelter system, contingent on availability.
- Awareness Building and engagement with key City first responders and front-line staff*

City staff continued to build awareness about the Toronto Community Crisis Service with both internal and external stakeholders. Organizations that have received awareness building sessions include the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedic Services, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Transit Commission, Toronto Employment and Social Services, Toronto Public Library, and Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration.
- Joint Training with Toronto Police Service*

The Toronto Community Crisis Service piloted joint trainings between crisis workers and Toronto Police Service officers to promote effective collaboration during crisis response. This pilot included training in best practices in communicating efficiently and effectively to share critical information between services during a co-response; debriefing to ensure mutual understanding between services; and scenarios designed to offer opportunities to problem solve and respond to challenging situations.
- Anchor Partner Collaboration*

The engagement and collaboration between the anchor partners and the City of Toronto continues to be pivotal in the success of the Toronto Community Crisis Service. Through regularly scheduled touchpoints and check-ins project partners continue to build collaborative relationships and open communication which has been key in the service's early operational success.

- *Interest from National and International Jurisdictions*
Over the last year, the Toronto Community Crisis Service has established itself as a leader in crisis response and a model for other jurisdictions. Social Development, Finance and Administration and anchor agency staff have been contacted by jurisdictions nationally and internationally to share our experiences and support the research and development of non-police-led community crisis models in their regions. Some of these jurisdictions include: the City of Ottawa, the Regional Municipality of Niagara, Peel Regional Police, the City of Montréal, the Halifax Regional Municipality, the City of Winnipeg, the City of Calgary, the City of Vancouver, the City of Philadelphia, the City of São Paulo, the City of Frankfurt, and the Republic of Finland.

Challenges

- *Improving Data Management Processes*
The six-month evaluation report recommended that the Toronto Community Crisis Service refine documentation practices, data-sharing and reporting processes between the City, Findhelp | 211 Central, and the Toronto Police Service. Accordingly, the Provincial System Support Program at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health undertook a separate Data Process Evaluation to address points of operational efficiency and improvement with the Toronto Community Crisis Service's current data management processes. Recommendations included streamlining and automating data collection processes and developing a standard reporting cycle. City staff, in collaboration with the Toronto Police Service and Findhelp | 211 Central are working to implement these recommendations.
- *Meeting the Staffing and Training Needs of an Expanding Service*
Anchor partners have highlighted the challenges related to the time and resources required to hire crisis workers given the specialized nature of the role. To help address this challenge, Social Development, Finance and Administration in collaboration with community anchor partners, have undertaken a review of best practices to support the development of the community crisis workforce in Toronto. The review identifies best practices to inform long-term planning and identifies strategies for supporting hiring, professional development, and creation of employment opportunities within the sector. In the interim, Social Development, Finance and Administration has supported the anchor partner's recruitment efforts by leveraging the City's networks, website, and social media channels to promote the job opportunities.
- *Addressing Gaps in the Existing Community Mental Health and Substance Use Crisis Infrastructure*
System level gaps in preventative and post-crisis care, as well as the ongoing underinvestment in mental health and substance use services, affect timely access

to care and follow-up supports for Torontonians. Service users often face long waitlists and delays in accessing treatment programs and crisis beds. Recognizing that the Toronto Community Crisis Centre is one component of a much larger system of supports, Social Development, Finance and Administration developed a funding opportunity intended to strengthen and increase the capacity of the current community-delivered crisis infrastructure within the city of Toronto and to ensure resources and supports are readily available and accessible to those who need them.

Building Public Awareness of the Toronto Community Crisis Service

2023 Public Awareness Campaign

Over the course of 2023, the Toronto Community Crisis Service focused on raising public awareness of the service.

From January to March 2023, Social Development, Finance and Administration, supported by Strategic Public and Employee Communications, launched a multi-lingual public awareness campaign in the four pilot areas where the service is currently active. The goal of the campaign was to increase awareness of the Toronto Community Crisis Service in those targeted geographic catchments and explain how to access the service by calling 211. The ads were translated into the top 11 languages spoken in each catchment area. The campaign featured 42 Transit Shelter Advertisements across Toronto Community Crisis Service areas, was featured in 10 local and ethnic print media publications, received 12,569 clicks in online advertisements across major media websites, and reached over 230,000 people on social media. Social Development, Finance and Administration expanded this awareness campaign with an additional 100 posters featured across Transit Shelter Advertisements from August to September 2023.

On the ground, Toronto Community Crisis Service community anchor partners connected with over 228 social service organizations across the city, visiting parks, gas stations, big box stores, libraries, drop-in programs, shelters and warming centres, church foodbanks, courts, community health centres, clinics, pharmacies, and TTC stations to share information about the service. The Toronto Community Crisis Service teams participated in over 1,500 outreach engagements including events for Pride Toronto, World AIDS Day, Toronto Caribbean Carnival, Afrofest, 2 Spirit Powwow hosted by 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health's Patient and Family Learning Space, as well as presenting at numerous conferences.

With a view to expansion, Social Development, Finance and Administration will continue to work with community anchor partners to conduct public awareness and outreach efforts on a city-wide scale and leverage a data-driven approach to ensure Torontonians are aware of the service and how to access it when they need it most.

SECTION 2: The Roadmap to Service Expansion

With a demonstrated successful first year of operations for the Toronto Community Crisis Service, and the need for enhanced crisis response services in Toronto, Social Development, Finance and Administration is preparing the service for city-wide

expansion before the end of 2024. This year, three key actions were undertaken to strengthen the Toronto Community Crisis Service and prepare for city-wide expansion.

1) Bolstering the Toronto Community Crisis Service Dispatch Function

The Toronto Community Crisis Service dispatch function is critical both to the client experience of the service as well as the optimal functioning of the service's underlying infrastructure. With a multi-partner model, clear and efficient communications are paramount to ensuring the safety of the client, the responding staff, and the timeliness of the service. As suggested in the Provincial System Support Program and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health six-month evaluation report, the Toronto Community Crisis Service dispatch model, while adequate for its pilot stage, needs to be assessed and adjusted to ensure it will be able to support the increased volume of calls expected when the service expands.

Social Development, Finance and Administration retained a third-party consultant, PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP., to undertake an analysis of the current state of the mobile crisis team dispatch system and propose an operational model for the efficient, effective, and safe dispatching of the Toronto Community Crisis Service. The following section provides a high-level summary of the Dispatch Review. Attachment 6 presents the full Summary Report.

Expected Increase in Call Volume Demand:

The city-wide expansion of the Toronto Community Crisis Service is expected to significantly increase overall call volumes:

- In its current state, the demand for the Toronto Community Crisis Service services is expected to naturally grow by 3.3 per cent annually, or approximately 8,500 calls per year. With geographical expansion, the Toronto Community Crisis Service can expect an additional 75 per cent increase in call volume or approximately 6,500 additional calls annually.
- With additional marketing campaigns and public awareness efforts, the 211 access pathway is forecasted to handle 70 per cent of the overall Toronto Community Crisis Service call volume directly by 2025. This is anticipated to increase call diversion from 911. Currently, 34 per cent of calls are received through 211, up from 23 per cent during the six-month evaluation.
- Cumulatively, the expected increase in demand resulting from expansion is 25,300 calls per year.

Potential Increase in Call Volume Demand:

By implementing specific policy and process changes, an estimated additional 27,000 annual calls could be diverted from 911 to the Toronto Community Crisis Service. In order to achieve this, the following changes are required:

- Current processes require a caller to 911 to provide consent before being transferred to the Toronto Community Crisis Service for response. This process increases call transfer times and acts as a deterrent to those accessing the

service. Removal of the 911 consent to transfer requirement, would increase the annual number of diverted calls by 49 per cent (or an estimated additional 2,500 calls);

- Development of optimized processes through which additional eligible calls "Person in Crisis" and "Threaten Suicide" event categories could be diverted from Toronto Police Service to Toronto Community Crisis Service (approximately 16,000 calls); and
- Development of a process to divert eligible Toronto Paramedic Services calls (approximately 11,000 calls).

Table 2 below outlines the total projected call volumes (expected increases and potential increases) if the policy and process changes identified in Attachment 6 are implemented.

Table 2: Projected call volume increase over 3 years if policy and process changes are implemented

Expansion Year 1 (2024) Total Projected Call Volume	Expansion Year 2 (2025) Total Projected Call Volume	Expansion Year 3 (2026) Total Projected Call Volume
14,321	36,836	46,205

Future considerations that may further contribute to additional call volumes include partnerships and integration with other mental health phone lines, such as the Distress Centres of Greater Toronto, and 988, a national three-digit suicide prevention number led by the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health slated to launch by November 2023.

Given the significant projected rise in call volumes, the Toronto Community Crisis Service will focus its efforts on meeting this increase in demand before expanding the scope of the service and types of calls to which it responds.

Assessing the Toronto Community Crisis Service's Current Dispatch Model:

As the Toronto Community Crisis Service looks to expand city-wide, its dispatch operations were assessed to identify operational improvements necessary to manage a higher volume of calls. Key findings from the report include:

- The existing staffing resource model for the call intake and dispatch function is adequate for the purposes of the Toronto Community Crisis Service in its pilot phase. As the service expands and call volume increases, dedicated call taking, and dispatch staff will be required.
- Currently, data systems managed by different partners are not integrated. Manual processes are necessary to flow information between these systems creating inefficiencies (e.g., additional call handling time), a repetitive service user experience (e.g., being requested to provide the same information more than once) and increasing the risk of error and/or miscommunication. To address these issues, the report recommends integrating technology system between different intake points (e.g., 911 and 211).

- As part of the current dispatch process, 211 Service Navigators are required to undertake both call taking and dispatch functions. This process requires multitasking, which can result in errors and communication breakdowns. The report recommends dedicating separate groups of staff to manage call intake and dispatch tasks respectively.
- The current dispatch process requires a 911 caller to consent to being transferred to the Toronto Community Crisis Service, which can contribute to delays in receiving service and deters clients from using the service all together. Social Development, Finance and Administration, Legal Services, and the Toronto Police Service are exploring ways to increase the efficiency of the dispatch process, including a model of implied consent for the transfer from 911 to the Toronto Community Crisis Service.
- The Toronto Community Crisis Service must consider a dispatch operating model that can fully support city-wide expansion. Staff will work with Toronto Paramedic Services to explore the feasibility of an integrated dispatch model for Toronto Community Crisis Service to enhance scalability and efficiency.

The next steps in this process are to identify the most appropriate future model of Toronto Community Crisis Service dispatch, the associated projected operational cost structure and service performance framework and develop a transition plan to transform the current model and ensure a sustainable city-wide service.

2) Expanding the Toronto Community Crisis Service's Geographic Reach

The Toronto Community Crisis Service currently serves four major geographic areas across Toronto including Scarborough, Downtown East, Downtown West, and the Northwest of the city. The next phase in service growth involves expanding city-wide. Attachment 4 and 5 outline the recommended partners and proposed expansion areas in more detail.

Process to Identify Expansion Partners

A Request for Expression of Interest process was conducted in April and May 2023 to compile a list of recommended, qualified community anchor partner organizations for Council's consideration and approval. Proponents were asked to demonstrate their qualifications and capacity to deliver the Toronto Community Crisis Service requirements, as well as their budgets to carry out expanded service delivery areas beginning in the third quarter of 2024.

The proponents were asked to identify the expanded catchment area boundaries for which they were applying and to provide a rationale for the chosen geography. The proposed areas include Toronto Police Divisions 53 and 55 in the east, Divisions 22, 11, and 13 in the city's mid-west and south Etobicoke, and Divisions 32 and 33 in North York. Recognizing that distinct populations or communities may access care, services, and supports in a manner not bounded by physical geography, proponents were also allowed to propose a population-specific approach that was not geographically based or limited to any specific area of the city.

Each of the proponents provided a written proposal that was reviewed by an independent evaluation panel composed of City staff and community members.

Applications that hit a minimum score threshold were offered the opportunity to present their proposal and answer questions from the evaluation panel in an interview format. The highest scoring proposals meeting the call requirements had their preliminary budgets reviewed and were placed on a qualified list of expansion partners.

Recommended Community Anchor Partners in Expanded Service Areas

- *Central Toronto and South Etobicoke*

The Gerstein Crisis Centre and its network of partners are recommended as the community anchor partner to deliver the Toronto Community Crisis Service in an area stretching from South Etobicoke to the western boundary of Scarborough and from the southern boundary of North York to Lake Ontario, servicing Toronto Police Divisions 55, 53, 13, 11, and 22 (see Attachments 3 and 4 for additional detail). In expanding their existing downtown catchment area, the Gerstein Crisis Centre has developed local partnerships across the expanded region of service delivery to provide continuity and consistency of service to the different local communities across Toronto. Partners include: Family Services Toronto, Inner City Health Associates, LOFT Community Services, The Access Point, Centre for Addiction and Mental Health, the Empowerment Council, East End Community Health Centre, The Neighbourhood Organization, South Riverdale Community Centre, Wood Green Community Services, East Toronto Health Network, Dixon Hall, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, Davenport Perth Community Health Centre, The Neighbourhood Group Community Services, LAMP Community Health Centre, Albion Neighbourhood Services, West Neighbourhood House.

- *North Etobicoke and North York*

The North York Toronto Community Crisis Services Collaborative, lead by the Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch in partnership with seven service providers, are recommended as the community anchor partner to deliver the Toronto Community Crisis Service in North York, servicing Toronto Police Divisions 32 and 33 (see Attachments 3 and 4 for additional detail). As a central service provider with a long history of providing mental health and addiction services in North York, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch will partner with key organizations that will support local service coordination such as primary care, settlement services and legal support. Partners include Addiction Services Central Ontario, Hong Fook Mental Health Association, North York Community House, North York Family Health Team, North York General Hospital, Unison Health and Community Services. In addition, Black Creek Community Health Centre, Black Health Alliance, Caribbean African Canadian Social Services, Jane/Finch Centre and Rexdale Community Health Centre remain key network partners in order to highlight ongoing commitment to anti-Black racism and access to culturally-relevant supports for Toronto's diverse communities.

- *Indigenous-Specific City-Wide Service*

2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations and its network of partners are recommended to lead the delivery of wholistic, culturally-based crisis services for individuals who identify as Indigenous on a city-wide basis. As Indigenous community members are located across the city of Toronto and in many areas where there may not be Indigenous-specific services available to local residents, 2-Spirited People of the 1st

Nations is proposing to expand their current downtown service provision to remaining regions of the city. This population-specific approach will leverage the existing 2-Spirit Crisis Line, alongside existing intake access points (911 and 211), and referrals from Indigenous and non-Indigenous agencies across the city to ensure rapid, direct access to Indigenous-specific mental health and substance use support for Indigenous-identified community members and their families. The service will also serve as a back-up response team if the other local teams are engaged. Referral partners include ENAGB Indigenous Youth Agency, Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre, PASAN, Anishnawbe Health Toronto, Anduhyaun, Tungasuvvingat Inuit, and Thunder Women's Healing Lodge.

- *Enhancing Service Capacity in Scarborough*

The entirety of Scarborough is currently serviced by TAIBU Community Health Centre and their network of partners. TAIBU Community Health Centre is a multidisciplinary organization grounded in an Afrocentric model of Black health and wellbeing. Partners include Hong Fook Mental Health Association, Strides Toronto, The Black Health Alliance, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, the Centre for Mental and Health Addictions, Scarborough Centre for Healthier Communities and the Scarborough Health Network. Through their strong network of partners, TAIBU Community Health Centre is committed to providing access to culturally-specific services to Toronto's Black communities. Service uptake in this area will continue to increase as public awareness of the service grows.

3) Investing in Community Crisis System Infrastructure

In June 2023, Social Development, Finance and Administration launched the Strengthening the Community Crisis System grant, a \$1.0 million funding envelop intended to strengthen and increase the capacity of the current community mental health and substance use crisis infrastructure across Toronto that the Toronto Community Crisis Service operates within.

The goal of the funding investment is to:

- Improve timely access and connection to appropriate community-based post-crisis supports, wrap-around care, and case management;
- Improve the availability and connection to culturally relevant and population specific supports; and
- Increase the capacity and infrastructure of the crisis service system to address service gaps, such as access to crisis respite spaces and beds.

The review process consisted of two stages: Stage 1 consisted of a review of organizational eligibility by Social Development, Finance and Administration staff and Stage 2 consisted of a further assessment of applications from a review panel representing a diversity of perspectives, including member of the Toronto Community Crisis Service City-Wide Advisory Table, leaders from the service sector, members from Indigenous and Black communities, and Social Development, Finance and Administration staff.

In Stage 1, a total of 71 applications were received representing a total funding request of \$30,083,261.48. Of the 71 applications, 28 applications were shortlisted and invited

to Stage 2. After careful consideration by the review panel, four applications were successful in receiving funding. Below is an overview of the funded projects for the 2023 Strengthening the Community Crisis System Grant.

- The Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, Toronto Community Crisis Service Safe Beds enhancement project will add two 24/7 dedicated crisis beds to the Toronto Safe Bed Network for the Toronto Community Crisis Service. The beds will be available for Toronto Community Crisis Service clients who are experiencing precarious housing, mental health and/or addictions challenges among other wellbeing challenges. This project will leverage existing resources funded by Ontario Health such as 24/7 staff to conduct intakes, provide mental health and addictions support, medication support, to support the two additional beds. The goal of the program is to assist individuals to stabilize their immediate physical and mental health needs and develop a plan for longer-term interventions to mitigate future crises.
- The Eshkiniigjik Naandwechigegamig, Aabiish Gaa Binjibaaying (ENABG) Indigenous Youth Organization- Waan'kiiyendamome - "We Feel Safe" project will enhance existing drop-in services by bridging the current overnight and weekend service gap to offer a safe drop-in space for youth (16-29) Monday to Friday between the hours of 9pm-9am and 24/7 Saturday and Sunday (9am-9am). Indigenous youth accessing the drop-in, referred through the Toronto Community Crisis Service teams, will have access to support staff and a secured safe space to access food, showers, and laundry. Indigenous youth will also have access to case management support and ENABG's existing daytime drop-in programming.
- The Fred Victor Mental Health Crisis Support for African, Black and Caribbean Communities project will expand current capacity to improve access to mental health and addictions case management programs and services for Afro-Caribbean/Black Torontonians and their families. This project will build on the strength and partnerships of the existing program to minimize waitlists and maximize access to case management, case coordination, systems navigation and short and long-term care planning services for Afro-Caribbean/Black service users accessing care through the Toronto Community Crisis Service.
- The Parkdale Community Food Bank-Enriching Mental Health and Community Connectedness Through Food Security & Cultural Cuisine project will increase access to food for Torontonians who are food insecure. The organization will extend its operating hours, hire more food bank coordinators and volunteer navigators, and enhance its culturally appropriate food options for its diverse client base. Access to nutritious, culturally relevant food is an integral pillar of mental health, this project will improve food security within the crisis ecosystem by feeding up to 12,000 individuals.

In its first year, the Strengthening the Community Crisis System grant has demonstrated the need for investment in community crisis infrastructure and the capacity of the community support sector to respond. Recognizing the demonstrated need for funding in this sector, Social Development, Finance and Administration will leverage these

submissions to advocate to other orders of government for increased investment. Intergovernmental investment into a robust mental health, addictions, housing, and the supportive sector ecosystem in which the Toronto Community Crisis Service can operate at its full potential is vital. Social Development, Finance and Administration will continue to engage with provincial and federal partners to identify areas for future intergovernmental coordination and investment to build out necessary crisis prevention and post-crisis intervention supports and activities to support Torontonians in crisis.

City of Toronto's Ongoing Role in Leading the Service

In the expansion phase of the Toronto Community Crisis Service's implementation, Social Development, Finance and Administration will continue to act as the service system manager and provide oversight to ensure consistency in service delivery across the city by:

- providing financial and logistical support,
- monitoring performance, continued service improvement, and reporting on outcomes,
- promoting excellence in service delivery through training and professional development,
- leading public awareness and change management activities, and
- ensuring community engagement through continued engagement with the City-Wide Community Advisory Table and local community advisory tables for each service area.

The Toronto Community Crisis Service's work to increase access to crisis services is further complemented by other efforts across the city, such as the Mental Health, Substance Use and Addictions Strategy being developed by Toronto Public Health in consultation with community and City partners.

Social Development, Finance and Administration, in partnership with leaders from the mental health, supportive service, and community sectors contributed to the development of the THRIVE Toronto Mental Health Plan. Thrive Toronto is a partnership that includes the City, Centre for Mental Health and Addiction, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, Family Services Toronto, Ontario Health Toronto Region, Strides Toronto, United Way Greater Toronto, Wellesley Institute and the YMCA of Greater Toronto. The plan is set to be released October 2023. This strategy outlines a mental health plan for Toronto that builds community capacity to promote mental wellness as well as ensure existing treatment and social supports for mental illness equitably meets Toronto's diverse needs.

Timelines for Expansion and Next Steps

The Toronto Community Crisis Service is on track for full-scale city-wide implementation by 2024. A measured, phased approach to expansion beginning in the third quarter of 2024 with full city-wide expansion complete before the end of 2024 will allow for iterative improvements to ensure ongoing service optimization and success. Immediate next steps will prioritize the implementation of recommendations outlined in the dispatch review in order to integrate the Toronto Community Crisis Service into the current emergency response ecosystem at a level incumbent of the fourth emergency service.

CONTACT

Mohamed Shuriye, Director, Community Safety and Wellbeing, Social Development, Finance and Administration, 416-392-7443, mohamed.shuriye@toronto.ca.

Nicole Watson, Manager, Policing Reform, Social Development, Finance and Administration, 416-392-9797, nicole.watson@toronto.ca.

SIGNATURE

Denise Andrea Campbell
Executive Director
Social Development, Finance and Administration

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1- Year 1 Evaluation Report from Provincial System Support Program and Shkaabe Makwa at the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health
Attachment 2- Toronto Community Crisis Service Infographic on Year One Data
Attachment 3 - Visual Story on Service User Experiences
Attachment 4- Summary of Recommended Community Anchor Partners for Toronto Community Crisis Service Expansion
Attachment 5- Map of Toronto Community Crisis Service Expanded Catchment Areas
Attachment 6- Dispatch Operating Model Review