

2023 Toronto Urban Health Fund Allocations and Review Process

Date: June 19, 2023

To: Board of Health

From: Medical Officer of Health

Wards: All

SUMMARY

The Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF) provides grants to community-based HIV prevention and substance use initiatives. Projects funded through TUHF complement existing Toronto Public Health (TPH) programs to provide effective services that focus on HIV, substance use and harm reduction programming to populations and groups that TPH cannot access due to linguistic, cultural and geographic barriers.

This report outlines the TUHF's program criteria and priorities, application review process, and 2023 grant recommendations for Board of Health approval. The 2023 TUHF Review Panel and the TUHF Indigenous Review Panel recommend granting \$61,637 for one one-year project and \$1,849,676 for seventeen three-year projects. The grants total \$1,911,313 for the eighteen projects and are to be used between July 1, 2023 and June 30, 2024. The 2023 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 \$1,911,313 in 2023 for one one-year project totaling \$61,637 and seventeen three-year projects totaling \$1,849,676, \$1,867,746 in 2024 and \$1,870,409 in 2025, as recommended by the Toronto Urban Health Fund (TUHF) Review Panels and as outlined in Tables 2 and 3 and Appendix 2 to this report.
2. The Board of Health authorize the Medical Officer of Health to execute Grant Agreements with the applicants identified in Appendix 2 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

This report recommends an allocation of \$1,911,313 for one one-year project totaling \$61,637 and seventeen three-year projects totaling \$1,849,676 from Toronto Public Health's 2023 Operating Budget for projects outlined in Tables 2 and 3 and Appendix 2 to this report.

Funding of \$1,911,313 is available in TPH's 2023 Approved Operating Budget and funding for future years will be included in the 2024 and 2025 Operating Budget Submissions.

The TUHF is funded by the Ministry of Health (70%) and the City of Toronto (30%).

Table 1: Estimated Financial Impacts

	2023		2024		2025	
	Gross	Net	Gross	Net	Gross	Net
One Year	\$61,637	\$18,491	-	-	-	-
Three Year	\$1,849,676	\$554,903	\$1,867,746	\$560,324	\$1,870,409	\$561,123
Total	\$1,911,313	\$573,394	\$1,867,746	\$560,324	\$1,870,409	\$561,123

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the information as presented in the Financial Impact Section.

DECISION HISTORY

On June 20, 2022, the Board of Health authorized the Medical Officer of Health to allocate \$483,677 from the 2022 Approved Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health for seven one-year projects and to allocate \$2,852,659 from the 2022 approved Toronto Public Health Operating Budget for Toronto Public Health to carry out third-year activities for 35 three-year projects.

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2022.HL38.5>

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>

COMMENTS

The Ontario Public Health Standards outline the expectation that public health units implement programs to prevent and control sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections, including HIV/AIDS, and to provide substance use prevention and harm reduction. The TUHF provides grants for community-based non-profit organizations to deliver some of these programs and services as they build individual and community capacity to support HIV prevention, harm reduction, and child and youth resiliency. Community-based programs strategically address a variety of factors relevant to HIV transmission and substance use 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.

Grant Criteria and Priorities

The Toronto Urban Health Fund provides one and three-year grants to both Indigenous and non-Indigenous organizations. The objective of one-year grants 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 populations at higher risk, including people who use substances and those who are at-risk of engaging in high-risk sexual behaviours. The objective of three-year grants is to fund projects that are based on effective interventions and community-based best practices that are flexible and responsive to longer-term trends.

Non-Indigenous 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 under the Indigenous stream must demonstrate the connection of the programs to Indigenous ways of knowing and approaches to health and wellness. Projects in this stream must promote Indigenous self-determination, cultural safety, and health while addressing HIV and/or substance use prevention within Indigenous populations.

Consideration is given to projects serving high-needs geographic areas, such as City of Toronto-designated Neighborhood Improvement Areas (NIAs) or neighborhoods 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 focused on these populations by other community agencies, funders, and TPH.

Community Outreach, Request for Proposals and Support – 2023 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 2022, and the submission of proposals for successful EOI applicants, which occurred in February 2023.

Toronto Public Health provided three full-day workshops on project planning to potential applicants. In addition, applicants received support throughout the application, review, and allocation process. In October 2022, TUHF received 40 EOIs: fifteen under the Child and Youth Resiliency stream, seven under the HIV Prevention Through Sexual Transmission stream, sixteen under the Harm Reduction stream and two under the Indigenous stream. The EOIs were independently reviewed using standardized TUHF project eligibility and assessment criteria. Thirteen EOIs did not meet the eligibility criteria and 27 EOIs proceeded to the full grant proposal phase.

Of the 27 applicants that advanced to the second phase, three withdrew from the process. Twenty-four proposals were submitted requesting \$2.7 million for the 2023 cycle: two proposals under the Indigenous stream, three under the HIV Prevention through Sexual Transmission stream, ten under the Harm Reduction stream, and nine under the Child and Youth Resiliency stream.

Review Process

On March 14, 2023, the Medical Officer of Health appointed eleven members to the TUHF Review Panel and four members to the TUHF Indigenous Review Panel (Appendix 1).

The TUHF Review Panel members are citizen members in the fields of HIV prevention; harm reduction; and child and youth resiliency. The TUHF Indigenous Review Panel members are people who identify as Indigenous. Toronto Public Health and Review Panel members used standardized proposal assessment tools 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.

The TUHF Review Panel used standard committee meeting procedures. A committee chair and co-chair were elected by members and allocation decisions were made through the submission of scores and majority vote. The TUHF Indigenous Review Panel was facilitated by a rotating chair and adopted the consensus decision-making approach that was developed by the TUHF Indigenous Advisory Circle.

Summary of Recommendations from the TUHF Review Panels

In April 2023, all 24 applicants were informed of preliminary recommendations from the Review Panels. Of the 22 proposals reviewed by the TUHF Review Panel, eleven proposals were approved upon first review, three proposals were not recommended, and eight applicants were asked provided additional information as part of an appeals process. The TUHF Indigenous Review Panel made a preliminary decision to fund one project and invited the other applicant to participate in a discussion circle to review suggestions for improvement to their proposal.

In May 2023, the TUHF Review Panel met to consider nine appeal proposals: eight were from applicants that were invited to appeal, while one was from an applicant that was not recommended for funding. Six of the appealed proposals were recommended

for a grant. In May 2023, the TUHF Indigenous Review Panel held a discussion circle with the applicant mentioned above. Concerns raised by review panel members were addressed and the applicant’s proposal was subsequently recommended for a grant.

Table 2 summarizes the distribution of funding by the TUHF funding streams. Table 3 summarizes the distribution of funding by TUHF target populations.

Table 2 – 2023 Grant Recommendations by Stream

Stream	One-Year Projects Amount Recommended (# of projects)	Three-Year Projects Amount Recommended (# of projects)	Total Grant Amount (% of total)	Total Projects Number (% of total)
Indigenous	\$0 (0)	\$295,854 (2)	\$295,854 (15%)	2 (11%)
HIV Prevention through Sexual Transmission	\$0 (0)	\$214,521(2)	\$214,521 (11%)	2 (11%)
Harm Reduction	\$0 (0)	\$777,728 (7)	\$777,728 (41%)	7 (39%)
Child and Youth Resiliency	\$61,637 (1)	\$561,573 (6)	\$623,210 (33%)	7 (39%)
Total	\$61,637 (1)	\$1,849,676 (17)	\$1,911,313 (100%)	18 (100%)

Table 3 – Grant Distribution by TUHF Target Population

TUHF Population	One-Year Projects Amount Recommended (% of total)	Three-Year Projects Amount Recommended (% of total)	Overall Amount Recommended (% of total)
People who use drugs	\$0 (0%)	\$715,839 (39%)	\$715,839 (37%)
Vulnerable and high-risk youth	\$0 (0%)	\$561,573 (30%)	\$561,573 (29%)
Indigenous populations	\$0 (0%)	\$295,854 (16%)	\$295,854 (15%)
Men who have sex with men	\$0 (0%)	\$145,969 (8%)	\$145,969 (8%)
People in prisons	\$0 (0%)	\$68,552 (4%)	\$68,552 (4%)
People who inject drugs	\$0 (0%)	\$61,889 (3%)	\$61,889 (3%)
People who are transgender	\$61,637 (100%)	\$0 (0%)	\$61,637 (3%)
Total	\$61,637 (100%)	\$1,849,676 (100%)	\$1,911,313 (100%)

CONTACT

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SIGNATURE

Dr. Eileen de Villa
Medical Officer of Health

ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Toronto Urban Health Fund Review Panel Members Appointed by the Medical Officer of Health

Appendix 2 – 2023 Project Summaries and Recommended Activities for Approved Applications