

Establishing a Toronto Community Crisis Service Training Centre to Strengthen Toronto's Fourth Emergency Service

Date: November 18, 2025

To: Economic and Community Development Committee

From: Executive Director, Social Development and Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management

Wards: All

SUMMARY

Toronto is advancing its commitment to non-police-led mental health crisis response by establishing a dedicated Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) Training Centre. This investment marks a critical step in expanding the City's emergency response system and advances SafeTO, Toronto's ten-year community safety plan's vision to prioritize prevention, equity, and community wellbeing.

The establishment of the TCCS Training Centre marks a critical step in embedding TCCS as a permanent and professionalized component of the City's emergency response system, alongside the Toronto Police Service, Toronto Fire Services, and Toronto Paramedics Services, each of which operates its own dedicated training facility.

The TCCS Training Centre establishes Toronto as a national leader in equity-focused crisis response, reducing reliance on enforcement-led models and addressing the disproportionate impacts of traditional emergency services on Indigenous, Black, racialized, and other equity-deserving communities. To be operated by Gerstein Crisis Centre in partnership with TAIBU Community Health Centre, 2-Spirited People of the 1st Nations, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, and Findhelp 211, the Centre will build sector-wide capacity by extending training to City staff, community partners and residents and embedding equity, collaboration, and consistency at the heart of Toronto's emergency response system.

This report seeks City Council authority to:

- negotiate and execute a nominal, long-term lease agreement (the "Lease") with Family Service Toronto, as landlord, for the fourth floor at 355 Church Street (the "Leased Premises") to establish the TCCS Training Centre;
- negotiate and execute a funding agreement with Family Service Toronto, as owner and landlord, for the construction and fit-out of the Leased Premises to

make the space fully functional for occupancy and use as the TCCS Training Centre;

- negotiate and execute funding agreements with the Toronto Community Crisis Service training delivery partners for the provision of services for the TCCS Training Centre;
- designate the Leased Premises as a Municipal Capital Facility; and,
- negotiate and enter into a service agreement with Gerstein Crisis Centre and other partners to lead the training delivery and provide operational oversight of the TCCS Training Centre.

These measures will enable immediate construction and support a Q4 2026 launch of a dedicated TCCS Training Centre that embeds excellence and strengthens Toronto's emergency response system.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Executive Director, Social Development, and the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, recommend that:

1. City Council authorize Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management and in consultation with the Executive Director, Social Development to negotiate, enter and execute a lease agreement (the "Lease") with Family Service Toronto for the premises located at 355 Church Street, on terms and conditions set out in Appendix "C" and on such other or amended terms and conditions that are acceptable to the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, in consultation with the Executive Director, Social Development, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, to negotiate, enter into, and amend any required agreements, including funding agreements, with Family Service Toronto for up to a total of \$2.5 million for the construction and fit-out of the premises located at 355 Church Street, to make the space fully functional for occupancy and use, on the terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director, Social Development and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
3. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, to negotiate, enter into, and amend any service and funding agreements with Gerstein Crisis Centre, TAIBU Community Health Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, and 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations for the provision of the Toronto Community Crisis Service training services, on the terms and conditions acceptable to the Executive Director, Social Development and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor, subject to all related expenditures being funded within the Social Development operating budget.
4. City Council pass a By-law pursuant to Section 252 of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, providing authority to:

- a. enter into a Municipal Capital Facility Agreement with Family Service Toronto, the landlord, which will lease approximately 7,500 square feet of space on the fourth floor at 355 Church Street (the “Leased Premises”), to the City of Toronto, used for the provision of social and health services; and
 - b. exempt the Leased Premises from taxation for municipal and school purposes, with the tax exemption being effective from the latest of:
 - (1) the commencement date of the Lease;
 - (2) the date the Municipal Capital Facility Agreement is entered into; and
 - (3) the date the Municipal Capital Facility By-law is enacted.
5. City Council direct the City Clerk to give written notice of the By-law to the Minister of Finance, the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation, the Toronto District School Board, the Toronto Catholic District School Board, le Conseil scolaire Viamonde, and le Conseil scolaire catholique MonAvenir.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The establishment of the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS) Training Centre will follow a phased financial approach to support both the development of the training space and the delivery of ongoing programming. The City will provide up to a total of \$2.5 million in funding to Family Service Toronto, with up to \$1.5 million in 2025 and up to \$1.0 million in 2026, to support the construction and interior fit-out required for the fourth floor of 355 Church St., as outlined in Appendix “B”.

In 2025, up to \$1.5 million will be repurposed from within the existing TCCS operating budget in the 2025 Operating Budget for Social Development to initiate the transformation of the fourth floor, including design development, permitting, and early-stage construction. This will continue in 2026, where up to \$1.0 million will be allocated from within the existing budget to complete the fit-out and commissioning of the space, pending council budget approval. The funds will be transferred to Family Service Toronto, the property owner, under a formal agreement that may outline, among other things, reporting requirements, performance standards, and accountability measures.

The proposed Lease will provide the City with the Leased Premises for nominal rent during the initial 10 year term and in accordance with the terms of the Lease. The City will be responsible for all operating costs for the Leased Premises, including utilities, maintenance, and shared building costs, which will be managed through the Lease Agreement with Family Service Toronto. There will be incremental operating expenses of using the leased premises as the TCCS Training Centre. Any financial impacts arising from operating the Training Centre will be submitted through future budget processes for Social Development, as required, for consideration along with other City priorities, subject to the City's financial and resource capacity.

The Training Centre will be operated by Gerstein Crisis Centre, in partnership with TAIBU Community Health Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch and 2 Spirited People of the 1st Nations under a Service Agreement with the City. The

Agreement will define roles in training delivery, staffing, program integration with TCCS operations, and governance.

The property is already exempt from taxation under section 3(1)(12)(iii) of the Assessment Act. The leased premises will be designated as a Municipal Capital Facility under the *City of Toronto Act, 2006*, resulting in no net impact to the City in property tax revenue.

The Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer have reviewed this report and agree with the information as presented in the Financial Impact section.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

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 have historically been impacted by over-policing. This service reduces police engagements and increases community-based solutions that connect people in crisis to much-needed mental health and wellbeing programs and services. This community-based service prioritizes the community safety and wellbeing of Toronto's most vulnerable populations. The proposed Toronto Community Crisis Service Training Centre will continue to have a positive equity impact on Indigenous, Black, and other equity-deserving communities by creating an expert, sustainable workforce to ensure residents receive a client-centred, trauma-informed, non-police-led response.

DECISION HISTORY

On October 9, 2025, City Council adopted the report, entitled "Expanding Toronto Community Crisis Response to the Toronto Transit Commission", authorizing the Executive Director, Social Development to negotiate, enter into, and amend any agreements to implement the TCCS-TTC pilot in the U-line of Line 1 (Yonge-University). <https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/cc/bgrd/backgroundfile-258946.pdf>

On November 9, 2023, City Council adopted the report titled "2023 Update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Proposed Expansion Plan". This authorized the Executive Director, Social Development to expand TCCS city-wide and to negotiate, enter into, and amend service and funding agreements with anchor partners. It also enabled the development of single-year and multi-year agreements to support core program components such as training, evaluation, and outreach. <https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2023.EX9.10>

On July 19, 2022, City Council adopted the report, entitled "Progress on the Toronto Community Crisis Service", authorizing the adjustment of pilot boundaries within existing resources and directed the Executive Director, Social Development 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>

On February 2, 2022, City Council adopted the report, entitled "Launch of Community Crisis Support Service Pilots and Policing Reform Updates", requesting a report back to City Council on July 19, 2022, on the implementation of the Toronto Community Crisis Service Pilots to date.

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

COMMENTS

The Need for a Toronto Community Crisis Service Training Centre

Transforming Crisis Response Through Community-Led, Trauma-Informed Care

As a SafeTO priority action, Social Development launched the Toronto Community Crisis Service (TCCS), a 24/7 community-based, client-centred, trauma-informed, non-police-led response to wellness checks and people experiencing mental health crises. Initially piloted in four areas of the city in March 2022, the TCCS now operates city-wide as Toronto's fourth emergency service.

Since its inception, the TCCS has responded to more than 34,000 mental health crisis calls, resolved 78 percent of calls transferred from 911 without police involvement and in 2023, contributed to a 4.5 percent decrease in mental health-related 911 calls. Data from the TCCS' one-year evaluation demonstrates that 95 percent of service users were satisfied or very satisfied with the service they received, and 90 percent indicated that it positively impacted their perception of community safety and wellbeing.

Beyond crisis intervention, TCCS teams have completed over 8,000 post-crisis follow-up interactions, connecting 1,400 service users to ongoing case management and making 6,191 referrals to wraparound supports. This integrated model responds to immediate crises while also strengthening long-term pathways to recovery and stability. TCCS represents Toronto's commitment to reimagining community safety and wellbeing through prevention and public health.

Building a Skilled, Sustainable Workforce to Anchor Toronto's Fourth Emergency Service

The demonstrated success of the TCCS underscores the critical role non-police led responses play in providing compassionate, effective community-based support to residents in crisis. By centring trauma-informed care, cultural safety, and community-based approaches, the service builds community trust and positions Toronto as a national and international leader in progressive crisis intervention models.

Social Development has identified key challenges with the current delivery of TCCS training, including high rental costs and limited access to suitable training environments.

These issues hinder training quality and scalability, particularly as TCCS continues to expand. To address this, Social Development is proposing a dedicated, purpose-built Training Centre to ensure cost-effective, standardized, high-quality training that meets current and future service needs.

The dedicated Training Centre will ensure TCCS staff meet consistent standards of excellence and are equipped with the specialized knowledge, skills, and competencies required to deliver trauma-informed, culturally safe, and evidence-based care. As is the case for Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedics Services and Toronto Police Service, a dedicated training centre will support the continued professionalization of the TCCS workforce to seamlessly integrate within the emergency service ecosystem at the level of professionalism expected of Toronto's fourth emergency service.

Building Sector Capacity for Long-Term System Sustainability

Objectives of the Training Centre

Establishing a permanent, accessible hub for training will ensure consistent delivery of high-quality, evidence-informed, and culturally safe training, formalize and enhance the existing TCCS training program, provide the infrastructure needed to support monthly and annual training cycles, accommodate service growth, and respond to emerging needs.

The Training Centre will also serve as a platform for intersectoral collaboration by leveraging City resources to strengthen the capacity of partner agencies and reinforce the shared commitment to a non-police, community-led approach to mental health crisis response in Toronto.

Developing a Highly Trained Workforce to Improve Outcomes

The Training Centre is a foundational investment in building and sustaining the capacity of the TCCS workforce. It is expected to deliver the following outcomes:

- **Professionalize Community-based Crisis Response:** Establish consistent standards and certification across all TCCS staff, ensuring reliability, trust and public confidence in Toronto's fourth emergency service.
- **Enhance Service Quality:** Establish consistent care outcomes for individuals in crisis through standardized, evidence-based, trauma-informed practices.
- **Promote Equity and Inclusion:** Deliver culturally safe, anti-oppressive training tailored to Toronto's diverse populations, addressing systemic barriers in mental health response.
- **Improve Collaboration:** Strengthen coordination between TCCS, Toronto Police Service, Toronto Paramedic Services, and Toronto Fire Services through joint training.
- **Support Workforce Resilience:** Build capacity for staff wellbeing, peer support, and debriefing to mitigate burnout and enhance retention.
- **Advance Research and Innovation:** Position Toronto as a world-class leader through continuous evaluation.

The Training Centre will also extend capacity-building opportunities to City staff, community organizations and residents. By fostering knowledge and proactive intervention, the Training Centre will strengthen community capacity to respond to and prevent crises at the local community level. This approach reduces reliance on emergency services and supports an effective, coordinated and sustainable response model.

Institutionalizing TCCS as Toronto's Fourth Emergency Response Service

With city-wide expansion, the TCCS has become a permanent component of Toronto's emergency response infrastructure. To maintain public trust and ensure ongoing high-quality service delivery, the City must invest in building a highly trained, professional workforce with consistent standards and sustained capacity. The proposed Training Centre is a critical investment—serving as the foundation for a resilient and effective system—where all TCCS staff will receive standardized, trauma-informed preparation, supervision, and ongoing professional support.

Furthermore, the Training Centre will facilitate ongoing collaboration between TCCS and other emergency service partners in the development of joint training to promote effective collaboration during crisis response. This will not only enhance operational efficiency but also promote a culture of mutual respect, shared accountability, and collective problem-solving, key elements in delivering a safer, more integrated, and person-centred emergency response system for the residents of Toronto.

Delivering a Purpose-Built Training Centre with Speed, Value and Impact

To support the expansion of TCCS city-wide, the City requires a purpose-built operational base that provides training, coordination, and long-term service delivery. Leasing 7,500 square feet at 355 Church Street offers a timely, cost-effective solution that supports readiness, equity, and fiscal responsibility.

An Effective Real-Estate Solution

Entering a nominal, long-term lease for space at 355 Church Street is the most effective and timely option for establishing the TCCS Training Centre. The proposed lease is structured as an initial ten (10) year term, with multiple conditional renewal periods up to a total maximum term of 50 years. This longer-term structure ensures the City can recover the value of its upfront capital investment through the initial term, while also maintaining flexibility to align future space use with evolving program needs. The decision is grounded in three key considerations:

1. **No Suitable City-Owned Alternatives:** Following an exhaustive scan of the City's real estate portfolio by Corporate Real Estate Management and Social Development, it was determined that no comparable City-owned property of similar size and characteristics is available that meets these requirements within the project timeline. The fourth floor at 355 Church Street offers a full-floor configuration with existing base infrastructure, enabling rapid fit-out and occupancy.

2. **Strengthening Community Partnerships:** Family Service Toronto is a long-standing, trusted partner with shared community service values and program delivery priorities. Co-locating with Family Service Toronto and its partner non-profit agencies strengthens collaboration and integration across community-based mental health and crisis response services.
3. **Location Drives Equity and Access:** The building's central, transit-oriented location ensures maximum access for delivery partners, City staff, and TCCS program participants, supporting equitable service delivery across Toronto.

This approach balances operational readiness, partnership alignment, and fiscal responsibility, while advancing City Council's direction to expand TCCS as a permanent component of Toronto's emergency response ecosystem. Key terms for the proposed lease are summarized in Appendix "C".

Towards Implementing Sustainable Governance and Partnership Structures

The successful activation and operation of the TCCS Training Centre at 355 Church Street depends on a coordinated set of agreements and governance measures, as outlined in Table 1.

Table 1. Agreements and designations for the activation and operation of the Training Centre.

Governance Element	Details
Lease Agreement	The proposed lease agreement terms with Family Service Toronto, set out in the attached Appendix "C", are at nominal value for an initial ten (10) year term, with four additional ten-year renewal options, enabling a maximum term of 50 years. Under the proposed lease, the City as tenant would be responsible for its proportionate share of building operating costs, while any capital improvements to the building would remain the responsibility of Family Service Toronto as the landlord. To preserve flexibility, the lease includes a termination clause in favour of the City, exercisable with sixty (60) days' written notice should a suitable City-owned space become available for relocation of this use.
Funding Agreement	The City will allocate up to \$2.5 million in funding to Family Service Toronto, disbursed in two installments. These funds will support the construction and interior fit-out of the fourth floor, based on a floor plan co-developed by Social Development, Corporate Real Estate Management, Family Service Toronto, and Gerstein Crisis Centre, and validated through an initial Class D Cost Estimate ¹ . Design approvals, reporting protocols, and performance monitoring will ensure alignment with City Council direction.
Service Agreement	A service agreement with Gerstein Crisis Centre, TAIBU Community Health Centre, Canadian Mental Health Association Toronto Branch, and 2 Spirited People of the 1 st Nations will formalize roles in managing day-to-day operations of the leased fourth floor, leveraging expertise in crisis intervention and training delivery. Gerstein will lead curriculum development, staff onboarding, service standards, integration with TCCS operations, and performance oversight. The Agreement will outline funding commitments, operating responsibilities, City access to the space, and governance mechanisms to ensure accountability and alignment with Council priorities. The term of the Agreement is ten years.

¹ A Class D estimate is a preliminary cost assessment prepared during the earliest stages of project planning. It is based on a high-level statement of requirements or a functional program, rather than detailed design or specifications. This type of estimate is intended to provide an indicative range of potential costs to support feasibility analysis, option evaluation, and early decision-making. Due to the limited project definition at this stage, Class D estimates typically carry a design allowance of $\pm 30\%$ account for uncertainty.

Governance Element	Details
Municipal Capital Facility Designation	The leased premises is eligible to be designated as a Municipal Capital Facility under the <i>City of Toronto Act, 2006</i> ² as a facility used for the provision of social and health services. This designation will exempt the space from municipal and school property taxes, significantly reducing long-term operating costs and reinforcing the financial sustainability of the Training Centre. While the property is already exempt from taxation under section 3(1)(12)(iii) of the Assessment Act, the Municipal Capital Facility designation service delivery.

Next Steps for Implementation

Staff will proceed with the legal and operational arrangements required to establish the TCCS Training Centre. Corporate Real Estate Management, in consultation with Social Development, will finalize the nominal lease agreement with Family Service Toronto for the fourth floor of 355 Church Street. Social Development will enter into a funding agreement with Family Service Toronto to support the build-out of the Training Centre, and a service agreement with Gerstein Crisis Centre and other partners to formalize roles in training delivery, governance, and performance oversight.

Design development will begin in late 2025, with phased fit-out continuing into early 2026. Remaining funding requirements will be advanced through the 2026 budget process in coordination with Financial Planning. The leased premises will be designated as a Municipal Capital Facility to support long-term financial sustainability and reduce operating costs. Staff will also initiate preparations for curriculum development, onboarding protocols, and integration with Toronto Community Crisis Service operations.

The Training Centre is targeted to launch in Q4 2026. Implementation will be monitored through existing interdivisional governance structures, with progress updates provided to City Council as required.

CONTACT

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² Section 252 of the *City of Toronto Act, 2006* allows City Council to exempt from taxation for municipal and school purposes land or a portion of land on which a Municipal Capital Facility is or will be located once the City enters into an agreement with the landlord or tenant for the provision of a Municipal Capital Facility. Ontario Regulation 598/06 prescribes facilities providing social and health services as eligible Municipal Capital Facilities for Section 252.

SIGNATURE

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ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Location Map of the Leased Premises
Appendix B – Floor Plan of Leased Premises
Appendix C – Major Terms and Conditions of Lease