

City Council

Motion without Notice

MM32.36	ACTION			Ward: All
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CityServeTO - A Youth-based Community Service Initiative - by Mayor Olivia Chow, seconded by Councillor Jon Burnside

** This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate.*

Recommendations

Mayor Olivia Chow, seconded by Councillor Jon Burnside, recommends that:

1. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development, to allocate up to \$700,000 to each of the two lead community agencies, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities and Rexdale Community Health Centre, for the implementation of the first cycle of the Youth Community Service Initiative from September 2025 to June 2026.
2. City Council authorize the Executive Director, Social Development to negotiate and enter into new agreements, including any necessary amending, renewal and extension agreements, to support the implementation of the Youth Community Service Initiative, within the resources approved in Social Development's annual operating budget, upon terms satisfactory to the Executive Director, Social Development, and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.
3. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development to report back in the first quarter of 2026 on program outcomes, including:
 - a. completion rates;
 - b. community service and mentorship hours delivered;
 - c. employment and education outcomes; and
 - d. partner and participant feedback.
4. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development to work with Parks and Recreation, Toronto Community Housing Corporation, Toronto Transit Commission, People and Equity, Solid Waste Management Services, Museums and Toronto Public Library to establish an interdivisional table to support hiring efforts for CityServeTO.

Summary

Every day in Toronto, there are young people standing at a crossroads. Some have grown up surrounded by instability, systemic barriers, and cycles of harm. Others have been in and out of

the justice system or have lost friends to gun violence. Too often, these youth, full of potential, creativity, and strength, have been written off, excluded from the very systems meant to support them.

CityServeTO is a response to that reality and a bold investment in something different. Co-developed by the Youth Development Unit (YDU) and local partners as part of the Mayor's Youth Safety Task Force, CityServeTO is a local, year-round youth community service initiative that provides paid, team-based service, mentorship, and job readiness support for youth aged 16–24 who are most impacted by violence, poverty, and exclusion.

These aren't just volunteer opportunities. This is about giving young people a real job, a reason to show up, and a community that sees their worth. It will give these youth a real employment pathway, including opportunities for placements in City divisions. In exchange, Toronto's neighbourhoods benefit from their energy, leadership, and service, and most importantly, we disrupt the trajectory that leads youth from isolation into crisis.

CityServeTO builds on successful models like City Year and ServCanada, but it's made-in-Toronto, rooted in the wisdom and reach of grassroots partners like the CEE Centre for Young Black Professionals, Scarborough Centre for Healthy Communities, Rexdale Community Health Centre, Think2wice, Youth Association for Academics, Athletics, and Character Education (YAAACE), Forgiveness Project, and Impact N' Communities. These organizations are experts in engaging youth who have been hardest to reach and furthest from opportunity. They know the names, the families, the histories, and they know how to support healing and hope.

Reason for Urgency:

This motion is urgent as program planning, partnership development, and staff recruitment must begin immediately to ensure that the Youth Community Service Initiative will launch on schedule in September 2025. Delays in Council approval could jeopardize recruitment timelines, corporate sponsorship commitments, and overall program readiness, impacting vulnerable youth in need of immediate support and meaningful opportunities for skill development and employment.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM32.36