

REPORT

Office of the Mayor

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council,
Regular Council Meeting

Date: February 13, 2023

From: Denise A Tambellini Intergovernmental and Community Relations Manager

File:

Item #: Report Number

Subject: **Programs to Serve At-Risk Youth - Building Safer Communities Program funded by Public Safety Canada**

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the four year implementation plan for the Building Safer Communities Program for At-Risk Youth valued at **\$1,736,800.23** and funded by Public Safety Canada; and

THAT Council direct staff to amend the 2023 budget and 2023-2027 Five Year Financial Plan to include the additional funding from Public Safety Canada for the Building Safer Communities Program.

PURPOSE

Staff are recommending the implementation of the following four year implementation plan for the Building Safer Communities Program (BSCP) funded by Public Safety Canada to deliver programs to target and serve at-risk youth in New Westminster. The intention is to decrease gun and gang violence and provide comprehensive support and positive alternatives for at-risk youth. A City Wide strategy to address the needs of youth at-risk being recruited into gangs or gang entrenched will be developed

BACKGROUND

Public Safety Canada has identified New Westminster youth (defined as ages 12 – 25 years) at high risk of being involved in gangs and using guns in violent crime. Through the recent announcement of the Minister of Public Safety, the Building Safer Communities Program will provide 21 British Columbia cities with program funding for four years. As the BSCP is a targeted, evidenced-based approach, there was not a formal call for proposals. Communities identified through the funding methodology were contacted directly by Public Safety Canada Program Advisors to begin discussions and develop best practice based programs. Public Safety Canada will sign contribution agreements with recipients once an implementation plan is approved by local city councils and the federal government. Plans were to be developed based on desired outcomes and best practices identified by Public Safety Canada.

As this has not been a competitive process, staff were able to discuss program ideas and work through the submission development with a Federal Program Advisor and identified stakeholders.

To advance the negotiations, on May 9, 2022 Council approved the beginning of negotiation including the intention to enter into a funding agreement with Public Safety Canada to serve at-risk youth, for the Building Safer Communities Program for up to \$1,736,800. It was supported that the program details would be released to the public once there is approval from the Government of Canada. The four year plan for the program continued to be developed.

On June 27th, 2022 Council approved the draft four year implementation plan for the continued negotiation with Public Safety Canada, for the Building Safer Communities Program for up to \$1,736,800 in Closed Council. It was also recommended that the final plan be released to the public once approved by the Federal Government.

The Government of Canada has now approved the proposed four year implementation plan developed by staff. This report will share the proposed implementation plan to develop a City-Wide strategy to address the needs of youth at-risk being recruited into gangs or gang entrenched, provide preventative programs to support the needs of youth and provide positive recreation and employment alternatives.

BSCF PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The objective of the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) is to support Municipalities and Indigenous (First Nation, Inuit or Metis) governments in their efforts to address gun and gang prevalence. The program provides a determined funding allocation for community led projects to combat gun and gang violence and address knowledge gaps concerning the impacts of interventions in gun and gang violence.

Eligible recipients may further distribute funds to ultimate recipients of their choice to:

- Develop local and community-based strategies and initiatives
- Build capacity to better understand the nature, scope and impacts of the

- types of prevention and intervention initiatives implemented
- Enhance evidence-based and targeted prevention and intervention activities
- Advance knowledge and evidence of what works, and
- Develop a data collection strategy and system.

BSCF objectives:

- Development of a strategy on gun and gang violence
- Development and delivery of prevention intervention initiatives addressing risk factors associated with gun and gang violence, including but not limited to mentoring, counselling, skills development and recreational opportunities;
- Development or enhancement of data systems to support data gathering/reporting on gun and gang crime or on results achieved;
- Development of knowledge to fill gaps at the community/recipient level, including research, and sharing of information and/or best practices related to gun and gang violence;
- Outreach and recruitment of preventative initiatives or intervention participants;
- Public awareness and education;
- Collaboration and integration of horizontal initiatives related to gun and gang violence;
- Development of a plan to sustain successful preventative initiatives or intervention activities beyond the end of the contribution agreement;
- Any other prevention and intervention initiatives as developed in consultation with the program authority.

Public Safety Canada identified program staff to work with the City to develop the four year proposal and secure a commitment from the City. This confidential award of funding was not approved until the New Westminster program submission was completed and approved by the Government of Canada.

Public Safety Canada will only fund new initiatives that meet the established objectives and staff have finalized the opportunities the Federal Government will fund.

ANALYSIS

Based on the above criteria, staff have conducted discussions with numerous community organizations including the New Westminster Police Department, the Lower Mainland Purpose Society, Dan's Legacy, Lookout Society, the Canadian Mental Health

Association, the School District and others. Staff have identified several organizations who are qualified and ready to start new programs to meet the identified funding criteria and the meet the identified needs of this target population. After discussing options with Public Safety Canada for what they will fund, a plan for implementation was developed.

The program staff encouraged the city to work with community organizations that have expertise working with at-risk youth, are focused on decreasing gang involvement and gun violence and have new, innovative programs to move forward. New Westminster is the only city in the province to date, receiving four year program funding for the BSCP from Public Safety Canada. The remaining cities have chosen a one year plan and some are using the template developed by New Westminster to advance youth programming for the remaining three year commitment.

Based on completed negotiations with Public Safety Canada, the following plan is recommended:

1. Develop a City Wide strategy to address the needs of youth at-risk being recruited into gangs or gang entrenched or involved in gun violence.

Desired Outcomes

- a. Complete an anti-gang City-wide strategy to decrease gun violence and decrease gang involvement by local youth.
- b. Hire a Program Manager to support the project and facilitate key outcomes
- c. Develop key performance indicators (specific, measurable, actionable, and timely) for each component of the project.
- d. Jointly develop performance criteria with Public Safety Canada.
- e. Create an at-risk Youth Collaboration/ Situation Table
 - i. Develop a terms of reference and strategic deliverables
 - ii. Develop referral system for at-risk youth for the youth outreach program
 - iii. improve communication and coordination of resources of those working to serve at-risk youth
 - iv. Facilitate the involvement of key stakeholders
- f. Create a youth advisory committee.
- g. Facilitate the involvement of youth in the program.

2. Create the New Westminster Youth HUB (502 Columbia Street)

Desired Outcomes

- a. Work with the Lower Mainland Purpose Society to create a safe, welcoming space in the downtown core for youth at 502 Columbia Street.
- b. Provide outreach and take referrals from a broad range of individuals, organizations and stakeholders including the New Westminster Police department, Youth Services and other key stakeholders including those at the Youth Resources Consultative Planning Table to support at-risk youth.
- c. Provide wrap around services for at-risk youth and integrate at the HUB including fitness, trauma informed counselling, nutritious food, housing support, medical and dental support, employment training, outdoor recreation opportunities, cultural experiences and the like.

- d. Integrate other successful targeted programs into the strategy and integrate potential programs like those recommended by the New Westminster Police Department such as: Game Ready Fitness: <https://gamereadyfitness.com/#>, End Gang Life: <https://www.cfseu.bc.ca/end-gang-life/> and Her Time: <https://thewkf.com/our-programs/her-time/> and similar type programs.
- e. Integrate mental health resources and include a safe space for de-escalation.
- f. Integrate innovative, active programming elements into the program such as fitness and mentorship, digital programming – blogging and social media, outdoor recreation and wilderness camps managed by local First Nations.
- g. Decrease gang recruitment in New Westminster and youth involved gun violence.

3. Develop Dan's Café, a Social Enterprise Café Storefront for At-Risk Youth (131 11th Street).

Desired Outcomes:

- Work with Dan's Legacy to launch a youth run social enterprise café at 250–131 11th Street to serve low or no cost meals to the community and provide training and support to at-risk youth;
- Provide youth, with known barriers to education and employment, a unique opportunity to learn a trade, secure employment, become self-sufficient and maintain their mental health;
- Launch the pilot phases of the Warehouse Management module for food collection;
- Launch the Commercial Driving module to expand surplus food collection;
- Provide bicycle mechanics training for youth to increase opportunities for trained bike mechanics in the industry;
- Generate food for the New Westminster Youth HUB;
- Provide gang awareness training and assistance with gang extraction; and
- Decrease gang recruitment in New Westminster and youth involved gun violence.

4. Develop a Youth Component for the Peer Assisted Care Team

Desired Outcomes

- a. Provide support for the Peer Assisted Care Team Pilot Project through resources to serve at-risk youth; and
- b. Advocate for the needs of youth to secure additional resources where needed.

5. Increase preventative programs at local middle schools

Desired Outcomes

- a. Integrate a gang awareness program into recreation programs;
- b. Encourage positive recreation alternatives to gangs; and
- c. Provide referral to the outreach program for at-risk youth.

Contract Development and Oversight

Now that the project has been approved by Public Safety Canada and if Council approves the implementation plan, it is recommended that the following contracts be developed for 2022/2023 to implement the project:

- Program Manager
- The Lower Mainland Purpose Society
- Dan's Legacy
- The Canadian Mental Health Association

Due to the short timeline, staff are recommending approval of single source contracts to ensure program delivery and funding is distributed prior to the end of the 2022/2023 federal fiscal year (March 31). The City's existing procurement process will be followed in 2023/2024 until the end of the project. Oversight will be provided by the Manager Intergovernmental Relations.

Regional Collaboration

There are several other cities across the Lower Mainland that have also received BSCP funding from Public Safety Canada. There is currently a network of cities and other levels of government working toward collaborative support for at-risk youth. The team is committed to working together, sharing resources and expertise and ensuring there is a coordinated effort to support youth across the Lower Mainland in order to provide positive alternatives to gang life and gun violence.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

This project will promote a holistic approach to supporting at-risk youth.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The 2022-2026 Approved Five Year Financial Plan does not include the Grant Funding and planned expenditures. Staff will be bringing the 2023-2027 Five Year Financial Plan to Council and will include the Grant Funding and associated expenditures for years as per the breakdown below:

*FY 22/23 (April 1 2022 to March 31 2023)	\$173,680.02
FY 23/24 (April 1 2023 to March 31 2024)	\$607,880.08
FY 24/25 (April 1 2024 to March 31 2025)	\$607,880.08
FY 25/26 (April 1 2025 to March 31 2026)	\$347,360.05
Total	\$1,736,800.23

*2023 - \$173,680.02 as the funding timeline is fast approaching, staff have advanced a sole source exemption. The Contribution Agreement with Public Safety Canada (PSC) approved on January 13, 2023 will not include a carry forward, which means that funding that is unspent at the end of a fiscal year cannot be carried forward into the next

fiscal year and will therefore will be lost. As Public Safety Canada was delayed in their approval process of this project, there is limited time to allocate the first year of funding.

Federal funding will offset up to 100% of eligible costs up to \$1,736,800 over four years after the spending has occurred.

City expenses to support the project can be directly offset by the project if it meets the federal funding criteria. No overhead costs, like the staff time to administer the grant or oversee the Program Manager, are eligible for reimbursement for the city or its partners. Identified support from the city will include staff time from the finance department for financial oversight, procurement and expense reconciliation, from the communications section for news releases, from the legal section for contract oversight and from intergovernmental relations for project oversight, facilitation and contract management. The project will reimburse expenses where there is a direct connection to the project implementation. The estimated cost to the City to administer this grant if costs are not recoverable is approximately 15% of the total program value or \$200,000 over four years and will be managed within City budgets.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report was created in liaison with Finance Department, Climate Action, Planning and Development Services, Recreation Services, New Westminster Police Department and the CAO's Office.

OPTIONS

1. Council approve the four year implementation plan for the agreement with Public Safety Canada, for the Building Safer Communities Program to serve at-risk youth for up to **\$1,736,800.23**
2. Council direct staff to amend the 2023 budget and 2023-2027 Five Year Financial Plan to include the additional funding from Public Safety Canada for the Building Safer Communities Program.
3. Provide other direction to staff.

Options 1 and 2 is recommended.

CONCLUSION

Staff are recommending the implementation of the following four year implementation plan for the Building Safer Communities Program (BSCP) funded by Public Safety Canada to deliver programs to target and serve at-risk youth in New Westminster. The intention is to decrease gun and gang violence and provide comprehensive support and

positive alternatives for at-risk youth. A City Wide strategy to address the needs of youth at-risk being recruited into gangs or gang entrenched will be developed

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

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This report was approved by:

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer