

**Regional Municipality of Waterloo
Community and Health Services Committee
Agenda**



Date: Tuesday, November 5, 2024
Regular Session: 9:00 a.m.
Location: Council Chambers

Should you require an alternative format please contact the Regional Clerk at Tel.: 519-575-4400,
TTY: 519-575-4605, or regionalclerk@regionofwaterloo.ca

Pages

1. **Call to Order**
2. **Land Acknowledgement**
3. **Declarations of Pecuniary Interest under the “Municipal Conflict of Interest Act”**
4. **Presentations**
None.
5. **Delegations**
None.
6. **Regular Agenda**
 - 6.1 **Strategic Priority - Equitable Services and Opportunities**
 - 6.1.1 PHP-SPS-24-002, Building Safer Communities 3
For information.
7. **Information/Correspondence**
 - 7.1 **Council/Committee Tracking List** 18
For information.
8. **Other Business**
 - 8.1 **Notice of Motion - Councillor C. Huinink**
Recommended Motion:
WHEREAS the Canada Disability Benefit Act received royal assent in June, 2023 with a commitment to begin providing payments for the Canada Disability Benefit to eligible Canadians starting in July 2025, following successful completion of the regulatory process and consultations with persons with disabilities.

WHEREAS the Canada Disability Benefit is expected to be \$200/month to eligible recipients.

WHEREAS the Low Income Measure (LIM) is used by Statistics Canada to define the poverty line was \$2,330/month in 2022.

WHEREAS the average monthly rent for a one-bedroom apartment in Waterloo Region in 2023 was \$1,359/month.

Be it resolved that the Regional Municipality of Waterloo call on the Province of Ontario to raise, or at least maintain, ODSP rates for qualified individuals once the new Canada Disability Benefit begins in 2025.

9. Next Meeting - December 3, 2024

10. Adjourn

Recommended Motion:

That the meeting adjourn at x:xx x.m.

Region of Waterloo
Public Health and Paramedic Services
Strategy, Partnerships & Performance

To: Community and Health Services Committee

Meeting Date: November 5, 2024

Report Title: Building Safer Communities

1. Recommendation

For information.

2. Purpose / Issue:

To provide an update on the Building Safer Communities (BSC) Project and share the success of the Youth Decision Making Team that allocated \$990,000 to community organizations in support of upstream mental health and addiction crisis prevention activities.

3. Strategic Plan:

Equitable Services and Opportunities: The Building Safer Communities Project explores new models of service for mental health and addictions crisis response for First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (Indigenous), and African, Caribbean, Black identifying (ACBi) youth. The project focuses on funding grass roots organizations and increasing trauma-informed and culturally appropriate supports for youth.

4. Report Highlights:

- The Community Safety and Wellbeing plan consultations showed that alternate crisis response models are needed in our community. One way to begin to address this need is through the Building Safer Communities project.
- This project aims to support community partners to improve safety and wellbeing of their youth through investing in culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous and ACBi youth and bringing mental health and addiction organizations and systems partners together to begin co-designing an alternative mental health & addictions model of care with community.
- Earlier this year, 22 Indigenous, ACBi, and racialized youth came together as the Youth Decision Making Team to review grant applications for upstream mental health & addictions crisis prevention activities. They allocated \$990,000 to 17

community-based organizations (Appendix A).

- The Youth Decision Making Team, modelled after the Upstream Fund Community Change Committee, supports young people to participate in decision making and allocate funds based on what is important to them. Connections were also made with the Children and Youth Planning Table Youth Impact Project.
- The Youth Decision Making recruitment was supported by grassroots and community organizations and the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan partners. There was an application process and youth were selected by a group of ACBi and Indigenous youth workers and advisors.
- In order to make these important decisions, the Youth Decision Making Team received orientation, training, and support from an external facilitator as well as Regional staff. The process involved individual review and scoring of each grant application, group discussion, and final ranking in alignment with the granting criteria.
- The Building Safer Communities project, including the granting process, funded activities and model development, are being evaluated in partnership with Wilfrid Laurier University.

5. Background:

The Building Safer Communities project presents an opportunity to work alongside communities to fund grass roots organizations providing upstream mental health & addictions supports for youth. The project will also bring system partners and mental health and addictions organizations together to co-design with community a crisis response model that would connect youth to culturally appropriate and trauma informed supports.

6. Communication and Engagement with Area Municipalities and the Public

Area Municipalities: Area municipalities will be engaged as the crisis response model is developed with system partners to help identify needs and supports from their perspective.

Public: Throughout 2023-2024, conversations and engagement occurred with ACBi-led, Indigenous-led organizations, system partners, and mental health and addiction community organizations. Partners emphasized the importance of investing in prevention supports along side co-designing the crisis response model. Based on these consultations, the Youth Decision Making Team, granting process was initiated. Conversations and engagement will continue throughout the duration of the project.

7. Financial Implications:

This project is fully funded by a federal grant awarded to Region of Waterloo between March 2023-March 2026.

8. Conclusion / Next Steps:

Later this year, the BSC project will launch a final round of grants that will incorporate youth decision making to determine where the funds should be allocated in the community. The BSC project will also continue to engage community, municipal, and system partners to begin co-designing the alternative crisis response model.

9. Attachments:

Appendix A: List of Projects Funded by Youth Decision Making Team

Appendix B: Building Safer Communities (BSC) Project Presentation

Prepared By: Zainab Mahdi, Health Promotion and Research Analyst

Katie McDonald, Manager Health System Integration and Strategic Partnerships

Reviewed By: Rhonda Nicholls, Director, Strategy Performance and Partnerships

Approved By: Dr. Hsiu-Li Wang, Commission/Medical Officer of Health

2024 Building Safer Communities

Abab Education

The Fatherhood Program connects youth with father figures in the communities. It draws on our belief that the solution to our youth challenge is in the wisdom buried in our communities. This program empowers black youth, young adults, and leaders to thrive in a cultured environment fostering key personal and professional development mechanisms.

Adventure4Change

Adventure4Change will create a safe space where children and youth can connect, engage with their culture and build a sense of belonging and self-worth through the following programs:

- The Connect program creates activities that prevent or reduce the potential of mental health and addiction for ACBi and racialized youth in the neighbourhoods.
- Young Queens Collective provides a space for black and racialized female youth to embrace their culture and learn about other cultures through connection.
- The Mentorship program pairs youths with willing adults. These mentors regularly with youths to support and guide them to achieve set goals.

African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region

African Women's Alliance of Waterloo Region will offer opportunities for Black and African youth to build relationships, promote physical activity and foster a sense of belonging through the following programs:

- Ojo Ola Wa will promote resilience and well-being through martial arts
- Elders' Wisdom, Youth's Future facilitates intergenerational exchanges between youth and respected elders to foster cultural identity

AFRO

AFRO will provide mental health supports, foster skill development, physical activity and belonging for ACBi youth through:

- Offering culturally tailored support from psychotherapists;
- Creating support networks and encouraging help-seeking through a martial arts and boxing program; and

- Empowering youth to enter the workforce through recruitment and training programs

Building Brilliance

This program will create opportunities for youth to connect with tutors to develop skills and help close the academic gap for racialized students. This program will link academics and culture using a variety of media and materials.

Crow Shield Lodge

The Migisi Bizindan (Eagle's Nest) project will empower Indigenous youth to reconnect with their culture, land, and community through a holistic, mentorship-based program. Through land-based experiences we will strengthen the relationships to community and authorities and foster a culturally comfortable space for youth to address their challenges. With positive connections to culture, we will help youth stay on a good path in community and build positive relationships with all.

iHelp International

This program aims to address the pressing challenges of mental health issues and addiction crisis by engaging youth in both physical and mental activities like science, math and physical training.

Kinbridge Community Association

Kinbridge Community Association programs will empower youth and give them a safe place to connect and keep learning.

- The Youth Council initiative provides Black and culturally and economically diverse youth a platform to voice their concerns and aspirations while building their skills
- The Mixed Drop-in program offers a welcoming space where youth come together and encourages youth to collaboratively shape its direction and content by curating program topics, inviting guest speakers, and organizing workshops.

Level Up

The Step-Up and Step-Out Program is an experiential learning opportunity designed for Black, Indigenous, and racialized youth. This program offers behind-the-scenes access to social institutions and inspiring community projects through field trips and guest speakers. It serves as a platform for youth to gain insights into the inner workings of our social institutions, enabling them to advocate for their needs and aspirations effectively.

Muslim Empowerment and Unity

The LeadHER Initiative is designed to address the mental health needs of Black youth. It will provide a safe space for Black Muslim girls to gather, facilitated by mental health professionals and community leaders who share similar experiences and identities.

Preston Heights Community Group

The City-to-City program offers leadership development to youth by exploring a variety of spaces, environments, and themes. Youth within the program will also experience life skill development around cooking, first-aid, resume development, and volunteer opportunities.

Rhythm & Blues Cambridge

The Young Black Men Thrive program will establish a safe and supportive environment where participants can openly discuss strategies to break generational patterns and trauma responses.

Rohingya Centre

The Rohingya Youth Mental Health Program will address health and social inequities as well as stigma that create barriers to accessing services and community resources for the Rohingya youth. This program aims to reduce barriers and provide culturally appropriate community resources for Rohingya youth.

The Healing of The Seven Generations

Healing of the Seven Generations programs will focus on culture and tradition to promote healing and wellness and move youth away from the justice systems:

- Land Based Summer Camp which will provide a sense of community belonging and provide a safe space to share stories and experiences.

- The youth mentoring program which will provide employment opportunities for Indigenous youth.
- The Back Pack Program will provide a sense of community belonging and assist with basic needs.

The Wisahkotewinowak Collective

The Indigenous Food Share Strategy supports youth to develop and implement a strategy for sharing Indigenous foods with the Indigenous community. Youth will also gain skills in growing, processing and storing foods and medicines for distribution. The project will build relationships with new and existing partners to increase pathways for food distribution so that Indigenous youth are gaining hands-on experiences of growing food in culturally aligned ways within our community setting.

White Owl Native Ancestry Association

White Owl Native Ancestry Association will support teaching and mentorship of traditional arts and crafts and food skills development through two programs:

- The Regalia and Cultural Arts program will seek to teach regalia building, traditional beadwork, quill work, leatherwork, basketry, and other forms of crafting. Youth will create and build with each other in a peer supported network.
- Food Security and Food Sovereignty program gives youth access to food share program, multiple gardens and the ability to learn traditional food skills in workshops.

Youth Smile-Link

This youth-led program fosters skill development and community connections through workshops, personal development sessions and community involvement opportunities. Youth Smile-Links creates a supportive environment that promotes cultural diversity while addressing the common struggles faced by local youth, such as finding volunteer opportunities, resume help, and assisting with personal development.

Building Safer Communities (BSC) Project

Council Presentation November 5



Region of Waterloo

Project objectives



Provide youth with culturally anchored and practical community-based support (e.g., land-based or arts-based therapy)



Create opportunities that prevent youth from entering the criminal justice system by prioritizing counselling, fostering skill development, and promoting recreational activities



Where possible, redirect mental health and addiction crises to trusted community health and social service providers.



Youth Decision Making and Prevention Grants

- A call for proposals was launched to support upstream mental health and addiction crisis prevention activities for local youth
- A Youth Decision Making Team was established and consisted of 22 African, Caribbean and Black-identifying, First Nations, Inuit and Métis, and racialized youth
- The Youth Decision Making Team reviewed over 50 applications and awarded nearly \$1M in funding to 17 organizations

2024 Building Safer Communities Grant Recipients

- Abab Education
- Adventure4Change
- African Women's alliance of Waterloo Region
- AFRO African Family Revival Organization
- Building Brilliance
- Crow Shield Lodge
- iHelp International
- Kinbridge Community Association
- Level Up
- Muslim Empowerment and Unity
- Preston Heights Community Group
- Rhythm and Blues Cambridge
- Rohingya Centre
- The Healing of the Seven Generations
- The Wisahkotewinowak
- White Owl Native Ancestry Association
- Youth Smile-Link

Youth experiences in decision making

Community Partner initiative



Next steps

- Convene a new Youth Decision Making Team
- Launch a second open call for grant applications
- Crisis response model conversations and development

Thank you

Council Enquiries and Requests for Information				
Community and Health Services Committee				
Meeting date	Requestor	Request	Assigned Department	Anticipated Completion Date
12-Sep-23	R. Deutschmann	Staff will provide statistics on the number of individuals that are experiencing chronic homelessness.	Community Services (Housing)	Fall 2024