

Appendix A – Equity Investment Fund Initiatives Updates

Reconciliation and Equity Investments Overview

The table below lists some of services funded through the Equity Initiatives Fund. All of the programs and services are specifically dedicated to supporting First Nations, Metis and Inuit, African, Caribbean, Black identifying, racialized and other communities facing systemic racism, discrimination and barriers.

Area of focus	2022 programs	Planned Allocation
Childcare/Early Years	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Caregiver Language and Mentorship Program Child Care Subsidy Caregiver Development Opportunities Capacity building supports for Early Years and Child care CHS Community Based Early Years System Navigator Translated resources for parents and families 	\$1.2M
Housing and Shelter Stability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portable Rent Assistance Program and community based navigator Affordable Housing Emergency Shelter Harm Reduction Integrated Initiative Waterloo Regional Housing Language Identification update 	\$5.4M
Health Equity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inclusive Peer Public Health Program Community Mobile Vaccination Clinic ('Vaccine bus') PHE Mobile Team community outreach Healthy Babies Healthy Child First Nations, Metis and Inuit led support model Coordinated systems focused approach Healthy schools pilot program 	\$1.1M
Arts, Culture and Connection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community based Arts Programming, Museum Curation and Publishing Community history exhibits Community arts funding Reimagining Regional Timeline Food sovereignty and community gardening Diverse Library programs and collections 	\$1M
Transit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affordable Transit Pass expansion 	\$0.1M

Area of focus	2022 programs	Planned Allocation
Government and Governance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Office of Reconciliation, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Client Experience Improvement Strategy through a lens of equity and accessibility Equity in procurement 	\$2.8M
Community Collaborations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Community safety and wellbeing Community partnership development Immigrant and newcomer fund Youth centric actions and support 	\$3.4M

2022 Programs Updates

Programs are in differing stages of planning and implementation, with progress spanning from changes in program delivery and service provision to community engagement and consultation.

New community partnerships

The Region is learning, growing and building the path for change with community. A number of programs have made progress with respect to establishing or strengthening partnerships in the community. Some of the new partnerships include:

- Storyteller in Residence project: Staff team has identified a community member to be the initial 'Storyteller in Residence'. Storyteller in Residence will help connect residents to services as well as amplify the voice of community.
- Portable Rent Subsidy program: Staff team has finalized partnership agreement with Somali Canadian Association of Waterloo Region. SCAWR is building team to support program implementation.
- Black and Free program: Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum is working with community partners for the project.
- Community Gardens: Engaged local youth have been hired to maintain the gardens and an African Caribbean and Black, land-based partnership confirmed.

Community Engagement & Consultation

As we strive to identify new ways of working, building trust and fostering relationships within communities the Region intends to serve is a critical element of the process. Many of the initiatives have undertaken community consultation and engagement to inform planning. Some project with progress in this area, include:

- Emergency Shelter and Harm Reduction Integration Initiative program: Program leads are planning community engagement and to identify potential program partners.
- Indigenous Led Child and Family Support program: Conducting consultation with First Nations, Metis and Inuit families living in Waterloo Region and agencies serving Indigenous families to determine needs and supports for healthy early child development.

Service Delivery

Shifts within the system are starting to happen as a historical number of new, innovative and community-centered programs are delivered. Some of the initiatives with progress towards service delivery changes, include:

- Dibaajimowin: Stories from this Land, an exhibition curated by Emma Rain Smith opened on September 23 at the Region of Waterloo Ken Seiling Museum. Exhibit highlights Indigenous contributions in Waterloo Region often overlooked.
- Affordable Transit Pass: Increase enrollment in the Affordable Transit Pass program. Conducted information sessions at Multicultural Festival to increase community awareness.
- Health School Pilot Project: Staff team has completed a Health Equity Impact Assessment and are working to integrate findings into the approach to be piloted in 2023.
- Citizen Service Client Experience Improvement: Survey launched to assess client experience and inform next steps planning.
- Capacity Building Supports for Early Years and Child Care: Launched the video - 'Awareness of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being' to the Early Years' Community to support the learning journey of educators and caregivers around Truth and Reconciliation.

Capacity Building

To support the system changes and program updates a number of initiatives continue to build capacity with growing teams. Some programs that have increased capacity through the Reconciliation and Equity investments include:

- Vaccine bus and mobile team: Nurses and community developer on boarded to support program delivery.
- Language and Mentorship Program - Home Child Care: New staff on boarded to support the significant community interest and referrals generated for the program.
- Community Services, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion initiative: Departmental Equity Advisor hired. Equity Team established, subcommittees established with PHE, dashboards underdevelopment to support program areas.
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Belonging Strategy: DEIB training pilots for Human Resource and Citizens Service, Housing and Communications, Museums and Libraries.