



Hamilton

# INFORMATION REPORT

<b>TO:</b>	Chair and Members Emergency and Community Services Committee
<b>COMMITTEE DATE:</b>	June 15, 2023
<b>SUBJECT/REPORT NO:</b>	Building Safer Communities Multi Year Plan (HSC23033) (City Wide)
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	City Wide
<b>PREPARED BY:</b>	Rachelle Ihekwoaba 905-546-2424 ext. 5909
<b>SUBMITTED BY:</b>	Jessica Chase Director, Children's and Community Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
<b>SIGNATURE:</b>	

## INFORMATION

In May 2022, the Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (“Public Safety Canada”) identified the City of Hamilton as an eligible recipient of nearly \$4M from April 2023 to March 2026 through Public Safety Canada’s Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). The BSCF is a funding stream of Public Safety Canada in support of community-based programs to prevent gun and gang violence by tackling its root causes.

The BSCF has three principal objectives:

- Support municipalities and Indigenous communities to develop community-based prevention and intervention strategies and initiatives to tackle gun and gang activities;
- Increase the knowledge of the nature, scope and challenges of the identified recipients to tackle gun and gang activities; and
- Support recipients to develop a plan to sustain successful prevention and intervention activities upon completion of the five-year program.

Given the synergies between goals, it was decided to align planning and community partnerships for the Public Safety Canada Grant with the Community Safety and Well

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OUR Vision: To be the best place to raise a child and age successfully.

OUR Mission: To provide high quality cost conscious public services that contribute to a healthy, safe and prosperous community, in a sustainable manner.

OUR Culture: Collective Ownership, Steadfast Integrity, Courageous Change, Sensational Service, Engaged Empowered Employees.

Being Plan. The CSWB System Leadership Table has been providing advice and guidance to the development of the Public Safety Canada grant workplan and related planning processes. In September 2022, the City entered into an agreement with Public Safety Canada to move forward with BSCF. The focus for the remainder of the first fiscal year April 2022-March 2023 was to implement a community-led process to develop a comprehensive multi-year plan to reduce and prevent youth gun and gang violence through trauma-informed and healing-centred community engagement and through the building of strong community partnerships.

### **Local Approach**

To commence the Building Safer Communities initiative, Hamilton undertook a rapid granting process to engage local community organizations to support the development of the multi-year plan by:

- Engaging with youth from the project's priority populations (Indigenous youth, Black youth, newcomer youth, and young women), community members, and service providers;
- Mapping existing services and resources related to youth violence, guns, and gangs in Hamilton;
- Facilitating partner relationship building activities;
- Applying a trauma-informed, healing-centred approach to community engagement; and,
- Creating a plan to assist the City and partner organizations to become trauma-informed in their service delivery and policy development.

As part of this process, nine local community agencies were funded to conduct consultations with youth and other stakeholders in the fall of 2022. These agencies completed a range of consultations that were both in person and virtual and included focus groups and surveys. The focus of these engagements was to receive feedback to inform community priorities for the use of the granting funds over the three-year grant period.

Using an intersectional approach, sessions were organized for various cultural groups including African descended communities, Indigenous, newcomer, and female identified youth. Over 500 youth and over 70 caregivers, service providers and community leaders, including representatives from the project's priority populations participated in these sessions.

In January 2023, the City's Children's and Community Services Division hired consultants from EMPOWER Strategy Group to develop the multi-year plan for the Building Safer Communities initiative. EMPOWER Strategy Group reviewed the above engagement reports, convened an advisory committee made up of community leaders, reviewed approaches from other municipalities, and completed a comprehensive review of existing programs and services to inform the key priorities that would drive the funding distribution.

## **APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

None

### **Environmental Scan**

In Hamilton, gun and gang violence has been a growing concern in recent years. From 2020 to 2021, there was a slight increase in youth violent crime at 2.3%. In 2021, 352 youths were involved in violent crimes with 135 charged (32 females and 103 males). The remaining 217 or 61.6% received an extrajudicial measure<sup>1</sup>. Although Hamilton has seen a steady decrease of youth involved in crime since 2009, in the past year Hamilton has not seen as large a decrease as the rest of Canada (13.8% versus 23%)<sup>2,3</sup>.

A gap analysis was completed by EMPOWER Strategy Group to identify areas for coordination, expansion, enhancement, and introduction of services or programming to address youth gang involvement in Hamilton. Although there are a significant number of programs/services being offered in the city that aim to increase protective factors, provide early intervention and redirection pathways, and improve reintegration supports, opportunities exist to expand and coordinate these services. The following areas were identified as opportunities:

- Increase system coordination to enhance existing collaboration and create system pathways
- Amplify programs that improve youth awareness and education around the realities of gang involvement
- Strengthen formal supports to parents and caregivers of older youth (16+) and youth-aged parents
- Leverage key community partners and partnerships to enhance culturally appropriate program options and apply a lens of anti-racism and anti-colonialism to programming and services
- Offer tailored mentorship opportunities between individuals with lived experience, peers, and caring adults and specific at-risk populations such as young females and Indigenous youth
- Explore subsidization of at-cost programs/services during 'out of school' timeframes

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<sup>1</sup> "Extrajudicial" means "outside the court." Thus, extrajudicial measures aim to hold a young person accountable without proceeding through the formal court process.

<sup>2</sup> Hamilton Police Services (2021). Youth Services Annual Report. Retrieved from: <https://pub-hpsb.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=816>

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada. (2021) The Daily. Retrieved from: <https://pub-hpsb.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=816>

## **Priorities for Hamilton**

Following community consultation and research, it is recommended that the funds available through the grant for the fiscal years 2023-2026 be used to advance three goals:

- Priority 1: Expand and launch preventative programs that facilitate youth and community connections, strengthen youth capacity, build positive pathways including employment, recreation, mentorship as well as awareness and education around the realities of gang involvement.
- Priority 2: Expand and launch programs that support youth exiting gangs through comprehensive wraparound services.
- Priority 3: Increase system coordination to enhance existing collaboration and create system pathways among organizations that support youth to develop protective factors related to involvement in guns and gangs.

With respect to process to allocate remaining grant funds and implement the agreed-upon workplan, it is recommended that a call for applications be issued to community organizations to ensure transparent and fair funding allocation process, and reinforce a community-led approach. With regard to governance, it is recommended that the City convene a small volunteer committee to review funding applications allowing for community voices to inform decision-making.

## **Next Steps**

This multi-year plan developed collaboratively with community partners will be implemented from 2023 to 2026 with a remaining anticipated budget of about \$3.6M. To move this work forward, the Children's and Community Services Division will hire a temporary 1.0 FTE Senior Project Manager to support the planning and implementation of the Building Safer Communities initiative in Hamilton. This position will be funded by the Building Safer Communities funding and will have no net levy impact.

The City will work closely with community leaders to establish a volunteer committee to inform a transparent process to distribute funding for this initiative according to the three priorities. Successful candidates for the volunteer committee will represent the community of Hamilton and include youth, racialized community members, Indigenous leaders and other stakeholders from health, education and employment sectors. This committee will meet to review applications and make decisions around funding. Applications will be made available in Q3 and evaluation and selection of successful applicants will be completed through the volunteer committee by Q4.

Successful applicants will be responsible for providing ongoing evaluation of the programs supported through BSCF. The program evaluations will align with measures and outcomes informed by the BSCF Advisory Committee and City. Ongoing reporting

to Public Safety Canada will continue with the final wrap up anticipated for March 2026. The City will work with community partners to ensure sustainability for effective programs is embedded in planning over this period. The Children's and Community Services Division will provide an update to Council about the progress of the Building Safer Communities Multi Year Plan by Q1 of 2024.

**APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED**

Not Applicable