
For Information

REPORT TITLE: Community Investment Program 2021 Fund Update

FROM: Sean Baird, Commissioner of Human Services

OBJECTIVE

To provide Regional Council with an update on the 2021 Community Investment Program fund allocations.

REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- The Community Investment Program invests in not-for-profit agencies' core operations to strengthen organizational capacity and achieve greater impact on Peel's overall social services system.
 - In 2021 the Community Investment Program administered the following funds: Core, Capacity, Change, Community Hubs and Agriculture fund.
 - As of December 31, 2021, the Community Investment Program expended \$7,040,107 base budget through 158 contracts that reached 1,594,487 residents.
 - In 2021 the Community Investment Program implemented new granting technology, GovGrants, to support a user-friendly, low barrier, and streamlined approach for Peel not-for-profit agencies.
 - Peel's not-for-profit sector has been a critical safety net pre-pandemic and a proven infrastructure for the last two years, absorbing greater demand for service while coordinating to meet the needs of the most vulnerable.
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DISCUSSION

1. Background

The Human Services, Community Partnerships division enables the community and internal Region of Peel partners to effectively plan and implement equitable solutions that contribute to improved outcomes for Peel's vulnerable populations. Community Partnerships delivers a range of community support services such as Poverty Reduction Initiatives, Community Engagement, Anti-Human Sex Trafficking, Affordable Transit, Peel Hunger Relief Network, Peel Community Benefits Network, the COVID-19 Regional Community Response Table, and the Community Investment Program. The Community Investment Program provides funding investments to support an equitable Peel not-for-profit sector that meets the needs of marginalized and equity-seeking populations and enables upstream systems change that addresses complex social challenges.

The 2021 Community Investment Program was comprised of the following funds:

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- a) **Core:** invests in an agency's core operational needs; enabling the organization to develop, maintain and improve its service delivery and programs.
- b) **Capacity:** to strengthen an agency's infrastructure with a focus on COVID-19 priorities related to Adaptive, Operational and Financial Capacity.
- c) **Change:** to empower communities and not-for-profit groups to stabilize and rebuild during the phases of COVID-19.
- d) **Small Capital:** to strengthen an organization's ability to better meet service needs through small capital purchases during COVID-19.
- e) **Community Hubs:** to support community agencies to conduct feasibility studies and develop strong community hub business plans; aligned to Peel's community hub development standards.
- f) **Agricultural:** to focus on increased awareness and education of Peel's agricultural community.
- g) **Social Enterprise (two-year pilot):** to support not-for-profit agencies to develop innovative approaches for employment. Deferred to 2022 (Resolution 2020-239.)

2. 2021 Community Investment Program Allocations

In 2021 the Community Investment Program received 209 applications with a total request for funding of \$12,973,500. As of December 31, 2021, the Community Investment Program expended \$7,040,107 base budget through 158 contracts and 97 unique community agencies reaching 1,594,487 residents. Allocations from each grant can be found in the chart below.

Table 1: 2021 Community Investment Program Funding Streams

Fund	Total Requested Funding 2021	Total Funding Allocated 2021	Number of Investments 2021
Core	\$6,278,545	\$4,947,328	64
Capacity	\$5,709,799	\$1,483,613	74
Change	\$859,156	\$513,166	11
Community Hubs	\$110,000	\$80,000	3
Agriculture	\$16,000	\$16,000	6
Social Enterprise (Two-Year Pilot)	\$0	\$0	Deferred to 2022
Total 2021 Funding	\$12,973,500	\$7,040,107	158

See Appendix I - 2021 Community Investment Program Allocations.

Funding allocations are assessed against a scoring matrix by a review committee. For the Capacity and Change Fund the review committee is comprised of regional staff. For the

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Core Fund the review committee is comprised of provincial, municipal, regional, and sectorial funding partners.

The Community Investment Program does not directly fund agency programs or client services, rather it invests exclusively in agencies' core operations. Regional Community Investment funding represents only a small percentage (up to 20 per cent) of each organization's overall revenue. Agencies leverage the Region's funding to obtain other funding sources from different levels of government, foundations, and private sector funders.

3. Modernization of Granting Service Delivery

In 2021 Community Partnerships launched a new technology, GovGrants, an online granting portal to automate and streamline the funding application process, contract management, funding payment schedules, and reporting. This new technology provides Peel not-for-profits a one-stop portal to apply, manage, store, and reconcile agency information and contracts within a shorter timeline, with the capability of leveraging granting outcomes for additional funding. In January 2022 all one hundred and thirty registered agencies were surveyed. The survey response rate for GovGrants client experience was 60 per cent, of which, 66 per cent responded positively that the new online GovGrants granting portal was 'straightforward' or 'easy to use'.

4. 2021 Community Investment Program Funding Impacts

Peel's not-for-profit sector is an integral part of our human services systems continuum and has been a critical safety net pre-pandemic and a proven infrastructure for the last two years, absorbing greater demand for service while coordinating to meet the needs of the most vulnerable. With the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, the Community Investment Program pivoted to support the not-for-profit sector to adapt their service delivery models.

The 2021 Community Investment Program enhancements and the realignment to COVID-19 priorities resulted in the following:

- a) 15 per cent increase in the number of newly funded agencies.
- b) Supported forty-four agencies to address the impacts of unbudgeted COVID-19 expenses.
- c) 10 per cent of funded Peel not-for-profits agencies are black-led, black mandated or black serving.
- d) Twenty-seven per cent of successful applicants for the Capacity and Change Fund aligned to Peel's Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan priority: Systemic Discrimination.
- e) Fifty-nine per cent of Capacity funded projects were aligned to support capacity building tools to help agencies adapt to hybrid service delivery.

See Appendix II - 2021 Community Investment Program Overview.

5. COVID-19 Agency Pressures

Peel not-for-profits have been agile, resilient, and innovative in adapting to the many phases of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic and emergency response measures from all levels of government have drawn attention to the disparities experienced by marginalized populations and equity-seeking groups across Peel.

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In the January 2022 survey referenced above, Peel not-for-profits identified operational and service pressures at the two-year mark of the pandemic. Many of the agencies are experiencing:

- a) Continued staff fatigue, depleting financial reserves, and decreases to base fundraising revenue.
- b) Increased challenges with both staff and volunteer recruitment and retention.
- c) Increased demand for programs and services as they adapt to a new normal that includes a staged hybrid service delivery model.
- d) The need for increased funding to continue to support innovation in program and service delivery during COVID-19.

CONCLUSION

This has been an unprecedented two-year mark of the pandemic and Peel not-for-profits have been adaptive and responsive to the impacts of COVID-19 within the community and continue to provide essential programs and services to vulnerable residents. The 2021 funding allocations represent important investments in supporting agencies to adapt and strengthen organizational infrastructure and their capacity to deliver programs and services in new ways. In 2022, the Community Investment Program continues to be agile and work with Peel's not-for-profit sector as they face ongoing financial pressures during the different phases of the pandemic.

APPENDICES

Appendix I - 2021 Community Investment Program Allocations

Appendix II - 2021 Community Investment Program Overview

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