

DATE OF MEETING SEPTEMBER 13, 2023
AUTHORED BY CHRISTY WOOD, SOCIAL PLANNER
SUBJECT NANAIMO YOUTH RESILIENCE GRANTS 2023

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To present to the Finance and Audit Committee the recommended Nanaimo Youth Resilience Grant allocations with funds provided by Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Fund for distribution from 2023-OCT-01 to 2026-MAR-31.

Recommendation

That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve a total of \$1,611,149 of Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Funds to be distributed between 2023-OCT-01 and 2026-MAR-31 as follows:

- a) Big Brothers Big Sisters - \$80,000
Project: Mindful Mentoring – Nurturing Resilience in Youth
- b) BGC Central Vancouver Island - \$177,386
Project: Nanaimo South Youth Hub
- c) Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society - \$177,386
Project: Connections
- d) City of Nanaimo - \$201,425
Project: Parks, Recreation & Culture Youth Initiatives
- e) Nanaimo Foodshare - \$84,952
Project: Food for Youth
- f) Nanaimo Hornets Rugby Club - \$90,000
Project: RugbyWorks
- g) School District 68 - \$500,000
Project: Uy' Sqwalawun (Good Heart & Mind)
- h) Snuneymuxw First Nation - \$300,000
Project: Space for Youth Resiliency & Snawaylth

BACKGROUND

The City of Nanaimo has been allocated \$1.8 million from Public Safety Canada (PSC) through the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSC) until March 2026 to develop and implement a strategic plan to address gun and gang violence. At the 2022-JUL-04 Regular Council meeting, Council accepted the funds from the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) and directed Staff to use Year One funds to build a 3-year strategic plan. At the 2023-MAY-01 Regular Council meeting, Council endorsed the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy (the Strategy) (Attachment C).

The Strategy outlines six focus areas to prevent youth from engaging in gun and gang violence. The six focus areas include:

- Safe Youth Gathering Spaces – safe, free youth gathering spaces within existing facilities.
- Youth Outreach – to expand youth outreach to provide basic needs.
- Connecting Youth to Land and Water through Snawaylth (Teachings) – connections to land and water to strengthen mental, emotional, spiritual, and cultural resilience.
- Youth Mentoring – connect youth at risk with diverse role models and significant, caring adults.
- Enhancing Existing Programs – improve existing programs by adding new components that fill gaps and build protective factors.
- Media & Communications – develop key messaging to highlight successful youth programs and to address discrimination and stigma against youth.

At the 2023-JUN-05 meeting, Council directed Staff to proceed with a 3-year contribution agreement (from 2023-OCT-01 to 2026-MAR-31) with PSC, and to use the BSC funds to implement the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy including the six focus areas. |

DISCUSSION

On 2023-JUL-10, the City launched the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Grant application process, including a website, press release, email update to stakeholders, and an information session on 2023-JUL-12. The information session was recorded and posted on the City's website. The closing date for applications was on 2023-AUG-14, and 23 applications were received.

At the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy Steering Committee meeting on 2023-JUN-28, members developed evaluation criteria and a committee to evaluate grant applications received from the community. The grant guidelines and criteria are provided in Attachment A. The Evaluation Committee consisted of Steering Committee members who did not submit grant applications, and sector representatives from Parks, Recreation & Culture, Community Planning, and the business community. Each application was scored based on the following criteria:

- **Relevance (25%)** – Does the program reflect the focus areas in the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy and work to address the identified risk factors?
- **Accessible and Equitable (25%)** – Does the program incorporate most of the criteria identified to ensure that children and youth at risk can access programming?
- **Impact (25%)** – What difference will the program make for the intended audience?
- **Efficiency (15%)** – How well are resources utilized?
- **Sustainability (10%)** – Will the benefits for the programs last beyond the funding cycle?

A list of all grant applications received is provided in Attachment B. Applications that received the highest scores were selected by the Evaluation Committee and presented to the Steering

Committee on 2023-AUG-23 for consideration. The top-scoring applications addressed the six focus areas and included opportunities for partnerships and coordination of activities. Eight of the applications received were ineligible for funding under the BSC program because they requested funds for ineligible activities or for existing programs without significant enhancements (as listed in the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy).

Based on the evaluations, the Steering Committee is recommending that \$1,611,149 be allocated over the next 3-years (2023-OCT-01 to 2026-MAR-31) to the following initiatives:

Program/Initiative	Agency	Focus Area(s) Addressed	Amount
Mindful Mentoring: Nurturing Resilience in Youth – multifaceted program integrating yoga, mindfulness meditation, and cognitive therapeutic techniques.	Big Brothers Big Sisters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Outreach Youth Mentoring Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$80,000
Nanaimo South Youth Hub – drop-in youth spaces at Fifth Street and Nanaimo Aquatic Centre providing registration-based options, navigation services, case management, and activities for the most vulnerable youth.	BGC Central Vancouver Island	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Youth Gathering Spaces Youth Outreach Youth Mentoring Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$177,386
Connections – interactive workshops empowering youth to build a sense of belonging and create positive networks and coping strategies.	Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Mentoring Youth Outreach Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$177,386
Parks, Recreation & Culture Youth Initiatives – City Staff support to a drop-in space with enhanced opportunities for recreational programs targeted to youth at risk.	City of Nanaimo	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Safe Youth Gathering Spaces Youth Outreach Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$201,425
Food for Youth – providing food security, cooking, and growing educational opportunities in safe youth gathering spaces.	Nanaimo Foodshare	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Outreach Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$84,952
RugbyWorks – incorporating mentorship and positive socialization activities by providing a visible presence in neighbourhoods, leveraging social media, and volunteerism.	Nanaimo Hornets Rugby Club	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Youth Outreach Youth Mentoring Enhancing Existing Programs Media & Communications 	\$90,000

Uy' Sqwalawun (Good Heart & Mind) – drop-in youth spaces at Woodlands Secondary, Pleasant Valley Elementary, and Georgia Avenue Community School with opportunities to connect with local Indigenous teachings, art, recreation, music, and caring adult mentors.	School District 68	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Youth Gathering Spaces (3 locations) • Connecting Youth to Land & Water • Youth Outreach • Youth Mentoring • Enhancing Existing Programs 	\$500,000
Youth Resiliency & Snawaylth – drop-in space at Snuneymuxw Gym with socio-emotional learning opportunities, life skills, and traditional teachings.	Snuneymuxw First Nation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safe Youth Gathering Spaces • Youth Outreach • Connecting Youth to Land & Water • Youth Mentoring 	\$300,000
Total Funds			\$1,611,149

To receive funds, each organization will enter into a service agreement with the City. The funds will be distributed bi-annually starting on 2023-OCT-01. Service agencies will receive funds in advance every six months once reporting requirements for the prior period are received. Reporting requirements will be outlined in the service agreement and will include financial and program performance reports. In addition, where applicable, service agreements will include the requirement to coordinate activities between service providers to ensure the alignment of programs and youth gathering spaces.

OPTIONS

1. That the Finance and Audit Committee recommend that Council approve a total of \$1,611,149 of Public Safety Canada's Building Safer Communities Funds to be distributed between 2023-OCT-01 and 2026-MAR-31 as follows:
 - a) Big Brothers Big Sisters - \$80,000
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 - h) Snuneymuxw First Nation - \$300,000
Project: Space for Youth Resiliency & Snawaylth
 - The advantages of this option: The eight recommended programs and initiatives will implement the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy and will support youth at risk.
 - The disadvantages of this option: A number of organizations who submitted Nanaimo Youth Resilience grant applications that rated lower based on criteria will not receive funding.
 - Financial Implications: The proposed programs and initiatives through the Nanaimo Youth Resilience grants are funded 100% through the Building Safer Communities Fund. The Building Safer Communities fund is provided annually over the next 3-years.
2. That Council provide alternative direction to Staff. |

SUMMARY POINTS

- The City of Nanaimo has been allocated \$1.8 million from Public Safety Canada through the Building Safer Communities Fund until March 2026 to develop and implement a strategic plan to address gun and gang violence.
- At the 23-MAY-01 Regular Council meeting, Council endorsed the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy, which outlines six focus areas to prevent youth from engaging in gun and gang violence.
- Staff, along with the Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy Steering Committee, are recommending that \$1,611,149 be allocated over the next 3-years (2023-OCT-01 to 2026-MAR-31) to the eligible applicants with the highest rated scores.

ATTACHMENTS:

ATTACHMENT A: Nanaimo Youth Resilience Grant Guidelines and Criteria

ATTACHMENT B: Nanaimo Youth Resilience Fund Requests

ATTACHMENT C: Link to Nanaimo Youth Resilience Strategy |

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