

FOR: COUNCIL MEETING
MEETING DATE: February 2, 2026
DEPARTMENT: PUBLIC SAFETY
SUBJECT: **NANAIMO ACUTE RESPONSE TABLE UPDATE**

OVERVIEW

Purpose of Report

To provide Council with an update on the Nanaimo Acute Response Table and request a letter of support for a Supplemental Grant Application for \$30,000 in funding from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to support ongoing training and other expenses. |

Recommendation

That Council authorize the Mayor to issue a letter of support for a \$30,000 Supplemental Grant Application to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to fund ongoing training and operational expenses for the Nanaimo Acute Response Table.

BACKGROUND

At the 2024-JAN-15 Regular Council Meeting, Council authorized the City to enter into an Integrated Program Agreement with the Province of British Columbia, represented by the Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, the Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, and the Minister of Children and Family Development. This agreement supports the activities of the Nanaimo Acute Response Table (N-ART), also known as Nanaimo’s Situation Table. As part of this commitment, the City provides approximately eight hours of Staff time per week to coordinate and facilitate N-ART activities for the duration of the Integrated Program Agreement, ending on 2031-MAY-01.

The N-ART is one of 37 Situation Tables across British Columbia. It is a multi-agency team focused on addressing situations where vulnerable individuals or families face imminent and significant risk of harm, and where coordinated support from multiple social agencies are required to reduce those risks. The N-ART brings together front-line staff from the public safety, health, and social service sectors to identify vulnerable people and collaboratively, rapidly connect them to appropriate services before they experience a negative or traumatic event (e.g. victimization, overdose, eviction, criminalization, etc.). Through this coordinated approach, the N-ART helps agencies mitigate a broad range of risks that may impact a person’s well-being and safety.

The N-ART’s first meeting was on 2023-JAN-31 and has continued to meet bi-weekly on Tuesdays at 2pm using meeting space provided by the City of Nanaimo. The N-ART is

coordinated and facilitated by Staff from the Social Development team and co-chairs the meetings with the City’s Community Policing Coordinator and a professor from Vancouver Island University’s Criminology Department.

The N-ART currently has representatives from the following 25 organizations:

- BGC Central Vancouver Island
- Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA) – Mid-Island Branch
- Cedar Woman House
- Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)
- City of Nanaimo - Community Safety Officers / Bylaws, Social Development, Community Policing
- Community Living BC
- Connective Society
- G.O.A.T. Support Services LTD.
- Haven Society
- Island Crisis Care Society
- Island Health - Discovery and Youth Short Term Assessment and Response (YSTAR), Adult Counselling Services, and Mental Health and Substance Use Outreach
- Kw'umut Lelum Child & Family Services
- Ministry of Children and Families Development
- Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General - Community Corrections
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Nanaimo Association for Community Living
- Nanaimo Family Life Association
- Pacifica Housing Advisory Association
- Provincial Health Services Authority
- Royal Canadian Mounted Police
- Salvation Army New Hope Centre
- Nanaimo Ladysmith Public Schools
- Snuneymuxw First Nation
- Vancouver Island Mental Health Society
- Vancouver Island University - Criminology Department

DISCUSSION

Between 2023-JAN-31 and 2025-DEC-31, the N-ART received a total of 99 referrals, including 40 referrals in 2025. The table below summarizes the number of referrals, gender distribution and top age range for each year from 2023 to 2025: |

Table 1: Summary of N-ART Referral Statistics 2023-2025

Category	2023	2024	2025
----------	------	------	------

Number of Referrals	28	31	40
Female	20	18	21
Male	7	13	19
Families	1	0	0
Top Age Range	30-39	30-39 & 60-69	30-39
	8 files	6 files each	9 files
Youth <24	12	9	11

Of the 40 referrals received in 2025, 21 involved females (52.5%), and 19 involved males (47.5%). The most common age range was 30-39, representing nine referrals (22.5%), and 11 referrals (27.5%) involved individuals under the age of 24.

The top three common risk factors identified in 2025 was “Housing – person does not have access to appropriate housing” (85.0%); “Drugs – drug abuse by person” (47.5%); and “Basic Needs – person is unable to meet own basic needs” (35.0%).

Of the 40 referrals:

- 22 individuals were connected to services or personal supports that reduced their overall level of risk.
- Nine individuals declined the services that were offered, and an additional three were informed of available services but had not yet been connected.
- Five individuals relocated to other communities.

Successes and Challenges

The N-ART continues to experience a range of successes and challenges including the following:

Nanaimo Acute Response Table – Successes

- Improved information sharing and collaboration: information sharing, networking and relationship building among service providers continues to offer significant benefits for individuals at risk. These partnerships help reduce levels of risk, both when referred to the table and between meetings. This includes coordinated support for the City’s Emergency Support Services when evacuations affect precariously housed or uninsured residents, particularly those in crisis due to house or building fires.

- Supportive environment for frontline professionals: the table provides a collaborative and supportive environment for frontline professionals serving individuals with complex social needs. It helps agencies work together to locate vulnerable individuals, supports team-based decision-making about who is best suited to make personal contact, and offers an opportunity to gain deeper insight of a referral's experiences and behaviour.
- Expansion of participating agencies: four new agencies joined the table in 2025, increasing service delivery options and expanding pathways for new referrals:
 - Cedar Woman House
 - Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS)
 - Provincial Health Services Authority (Correctional Health Services)
 - G.O.A.T. Support Services LTD.

Nanaimo Acute Response Table – Challenges

- Gaps in youth support: noticeable gaps in support services for youth with a need for earlier interventions to prevent substance use.
- Limited housing options: limited options for appropriate housing with an increasing demand for support services, especially for individuals who need complex care.
- Hesitation to bring forward referrals: some hesitation to bring referrals forward knowing housing or other services are not available.
- System pressures and reduced capacity: one of the most significant challenges is the increasing demand for services, which places additional pressure on already limited organizational resources and front-line capacity. This has contributed to reduced follow-up on some referrals, high staff turnover and organizational restructuring. To avoid service gaps at the table, more time and coordination has been required to track and assess attendance and communicate with agency staff and senior leadership to identify new table members for training.

Training Requirements and Capacity Building for N-ART Members

Before joining the N-ART, all new members are required to complete two key components of training:

1. Continuing Education 0001 – Situation Table Online Course:

This two-hour, self paced course is offered through Wilfred Laurier University and provides a foundation in the four-filter process used to determine whether a situation meets the acute elevated risk threshold. The course also covers decision making related to when and how to share confidential information, as well as the principles of collective intervention to mitigate identified risks.

A small administrative fee has recently been implemented during registration.

2. In-Person Mock Scenario Training:

New members are also required to attend a one-hour, mock scenario training session facilitated quarterly by the N-ART co-chairs. This session allows participants to solidify their understanding alongside peers by reviewing real life examples and practicing the referral process from initial consideration through to completion. Quarterly training has supported agencies in maintaining consistent representation at the table and has helped new members feel prepared and confident in actively participating and bringing forward referrals.

2025 Training Summary

Across the four sessions hosted in 2025, a total of 37 new table members were trained, including members from four new agencies. These numbers demonstrate the ongoing need for regular training to ensure consistent representation and participation at the table.

Funding and Future Training Needs

The City initially received \$30,000 on 2021-MAR-11 from the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to support N-ART's launch, including training for new members, meeting refreshments, and technology required for table operations. These funds were fully utilized by early 2025. Given the ongoing need for regular training and operational support, the Province has offered an additional one-time grant of up to \$30,000. Accessing this funding requires a letter of support from Council. As these funds are not time limited, they present an ideal opportunity to support ongoing training, meeting refreshments, data collection and tracking equipment and other material needs of the N-ART. |

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

|This initiative does not require a statutory notification or include community engagement activities. |

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY PLAN

|The report is aligned with the following City goal in the [City Plan](#):

- A Green Nanaimo: Resilient and Regenerative Ecosystems
- A Connected Nanaimo: Equitable Access and Mobility
- A Healthy Nanaimo: Community Wellbeing and Livability
 - C3.1 Community Safety & Security
- An Empowered Nanaimo: Reconciliation, Representation and Inclusion
 - C4.2 Equity & Inclusivity
- A Prosperous Nanaimo: Thriving and Resilient Economy |

ALIGNMENT WITH COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

|The report is aligned with the following Council Strategic Framework as identified in [Council's Strategic Framework](#):

- Implementing City Plan Action Plans and Key City Management Plans

- Social, Health and Public Safety Challenges
- Maintaining and Growing Current Services
- Capital Projects
- Communicating with the Community
- Governance and Corporate Excellence

OPTIONS

1. That Council authorize the Mayor to issue a letter of support for a \$30,000 Supplemental Grant Application to the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General to fund ongoing training and operational expenses for the Nanaimo Acute Response Table.
 - The advantage of this option: The Nanaimo Acute Response Table participating agencies will continue to support vulnerable individuals and families living in acutely elevated risk without incurring any financial implications for staff training.
 - The disadvantage of this option: None
2. That Council provide alternate direction.

KEY MESSAGES

- The Nanaimo Acute Response Table (N-ART), also known as Nanaimo's Situation Table, is a multi-agency team focused on addressing situations where vulnerable individuals or families face imminent and significant risks of harm, and where coordinated support from multiple social agencies are required to reduce those risks.
- Between 2023-JAN-31 and 2025-DEC-31, the table received 99 referrals, including 40 referrals in 2025.
- 22 individuals were connected to services or personal support that reduced their overall level of risk.
- Ongoing training is required to ensure consistent participation and reduced service gaps within the 25 participating organizations.

ATTACHMENTS

ATTACHMENT A: Nanaimo Acute Response Table Update PowerPoint Presentation

Authored by:

Rosalie Sawrie
Social Planner

Concurrence by:

Christy Wood
Manager, Social Development

Dave LaBerge
Director, Public Safety

Wendy Fulla
Director, Finance

Art Groot
Director, Police Services

Laura Mercer
General Manager, Corporate Services

Lisa Bhopalsingh
Acting Chief Administrative Officer