



City of Richmond

Report to Committee

To: Planning Committee
From: Kim Somerville
 Director, Community Social Development
Re: Community Services Pop Ups Update

Date: June 15, 2023
File: 08-4055-05/2023-Vol 01

Staff Recommendation

That the staff report titled “Community Services Pop Ups Update”, dated June 15, 2023 from the Director, Community Social Development, be received for information.

Kim Somerville
 Director, Community Social Development
 (604-247-4671)

Att. 2

REPORT CONCURRENCE		
ROUTED TO: Richmond Public Library	CONCURRENCE <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	CONCURRENCE OF ACTING GENERAL MANAGER
SENIOR STAFF REPORT REVIEW	INITIALS: 	APPROVED BY CAO

Staff Report

Origin

In 2020, the Provincial Government launched the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program, which provides funding through the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM) for local governments to engage in projects that reduce poverty in their communities. That same year, the City received a grant through the program to develop a poverty reduction and prevention action plan that resulted in the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond. In 2022, the City received a second grant through the program to develop the Community Services Pop Ups pilot program, which ran from December 2022 to April 2023.

The purpose of this report is to update City Council on the Community Services Pop Ups, including plans to continue the program through 2023.

This report supports Council's Strategic Plan 2022–2026 Focus Area #6 A Vibrant, Resilient and Active Community:

Vibrant, resilient and active communities supported by a wide variety of opportunities to get involved, build relationships and access resources.

6.4 Support vulnerable populations through collaborative and sustainable programs and services.

This report also supports the following actions in the City's 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond:

2.9 Develop programs and services that respond to the specific needs of demographics at risk of or living in poverty; and

3.2 Implement targeted outreach that facilitates connections to community programs and services for residents at risk of or living in poverty (e.g. community navigator programs).

Analysis

On December 6, 2021, City Council adopted the 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond to guide the City's approach, in collaboration with the community, to poverty reduction and prevention in Richmond over the next ten years. During community engagement to support the development of the plan, both residents and community organizations reported that they are not always aware of the types of services available in Richmond or how to access these services. The need to help residents at risk of or living in poverty navigate the different resources, programs and services that are available in the community was frequently noted during engagement sessions.

The Pop Ups were developed to directly respond to this need. Focusing on vulnerable population groups, including recent newcomers, refugees and lone-parent families, the main goals of the program were to increase access to the resources and supports needed to prevent and move out of poverty and to increase community connections and social supports for residents at risk of or

living in poverty. As a result, the community's capacity to respond to the needs of individuals at risk of or living in poverty was strengthened through this collaborative effort that involved multiple sectors and organizations.

Community Services Pop Ups

From December 2022 to April 2023, a series of five Pop Ups were hosted by the City in partnership with the Richmond Public Library, with funding provided by the UBCM grant. Held at the Brighthouse Library on the second Thursday of the month from 3:00–5:00 p.m., these free, monthly drop-in sessions brought together a variety of vital community-based resources and supports for residents at risk of or living in poverty in an accessible location in the city centre.

Throughout the five-month pilot, 22 organizations, including community-based non-profit organizations, public sector agencies, local businesses and the Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction attended one or more of the Pop Ups, in addition to the City and the Library. A variety of supports and resources were available during each session, including affordable housing and addiction services navigation, connections to food supports, assistance with government assistance forms, supports for newcomers and Recreation Fee Subsidy Program application support. A full list of organizations is detailed in Attachment 1.

To ensure the Pop Ups provided relevant and meaningful assistance to people at risk of or living in poverty, a Community Team of individuals with lived and living experience were involved in the development and implementation of the Pop Ups. This team played a vital role in the program by sharing valuable insight and knowledge; building peer-to-peer relationships with Pop Up participants; and increasing the programming team's understanding of their lived experiences. Through their participation, Community Team members gained valuable work experience, developed new skills and confidence, and reported an enhanced sense of positive well-being.

The Pop Ups were widely promoted throughout the community using City, Library and community organization networks. Promotional methods included social media posts, news releases, and e-newsletters. Posters and postcards were distributed at City facilities, libraries and community organizations and more targeted approaches included inserts in social assistance cheques and postcards distributed at community programs, such as community meals and food bank distribution days. Awareness and participation steadily increased during the pilot from word of mouth and referrals from community members and organizations.

Pop Up Participation

A total of 336 participants accessed services and supports at the Pop Ups during the five months, many of whom were unique individuals. While specific demographic information about participants was not gathered, staff and Community Team members observed that young families, newcomers and seniors comprised the majority of those attending the Pop Ups. Based on evaluation forms, feedback from participants and community organizations, key areas of interest included affordable housing navigation, newcomer supports, family supports, employment programs and health services, including dental. A summary of participation is presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Summary of Pop Up Participation by Month (December 2022 to April 2023)

Month	Participants	Organizations
December 8, 2022	54	11
January 12, 2023	64	14
February 9, 2023	63	16
March 9, 2023	71	15
April 13, 2023	84	16

In addition to supporting a growing number of vulnerable community members, the Pop Ups increased the capacity of community organizations to better assist residents at risk of or living in poverty through greater knowledge about the programs and resources available in the community and strengthened connections between organizations. As a result of the Pop Ups, the City, Library and community organizations were able to expand their understanding of the challenges experienced by residents at risk of or living in poverty, including emerging community needs.

Emerging Community Needs

The increasing rate of participation at the Pop Ups has demonstrated greater need for navigational supports in the community and also highlighted that many Richmond households are currently struggling, in part due to current economic pressures and rising cost of living. Many individuals attending the Pop Ups indicated that they had not previously accessed supports in the community and many were seeking assistance to meet basics needs. Community organizations have also communicated that they are experiencing growing demand for their services, including the Richmond Food Bank, which supported almost double the amount of households in 2022 (3,387 households) compared to 2020 (1,881 households).

The Pop Ups have proven to address growing needs and the program has been very well received by community organizations, Community Team members and participants (see Attachment 2). As a result, the City and Library are continuing to host the Pop Ups at the Brighthouse Library, with 120 individuals accessing supports at the May 11, 2023 Pop Up.

Next Steps

Staff will monitor and evaluate participation at the Pop Ups to ensure they continue to meet community need. If demand remains strong for the program and community organizations are able to extend their support, staff plan to offer the Pop Ups in 2024. To further the City's efforts related to poverty reduction, a new grant application has been submitted to the 2023 UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program to develop a peer-to-peer resource navigation program in partnership with the Richmond Public Library. If successful, this new program will

build on the learnings from the Pop Ups and provide another opportunity for individuals to access community-based supports.

Financial Impact

None.

Conclusion

By facilitating connections between community members and community organizations, the Community Services Pop Ups have played a vital role in assisting individuals and families at risk of or living in poverty to get connected to community-based resources and supports. The program has also promoted a greater sense of belonging and community well-being amongst participants, community organizations and Community Team members through increased connections. The Pop Ups have provided significant community benefit and advanced actions in the City's 2021–2031 Collaborative Action Plan to Reduce and Prevent Poverty in Richmond.



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- Att. 1: Community Services Pop Ups – Community Partners
- 2: Community Services Pop Ups – Participant Feedback

Community Services Pop Ups – Community Partners

The following community organizations, public-sector agencies, businesses and government ministries were involved in the Pop Ups:

- Atira Women’s Society
- Back in Motion – Rehabilitation and Employment Services
- BC Lung Foundation – QuitNow program
- Chimo Community Services
- Connections Community Services Society – Indigenous Voice and Vision program
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction
- Richmond Addiction Services Society
- Richmond Cares, Richmond Gives
- Richmond Centre for Disability
- Richmond Family Place Society
- Richmond Food Bank Society
- Richmond Mental Health Consumer and Friends’ Society
- Richmond Poverty Reduction Coalition
- S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
- Telus Communications Inc. – Internet for Good program
- Touchstone Family Association
- Turning Point Recovery Society
- University of British Columbia, Faculty of Dentistry
- Vancouver City Savings Credit Union
- Vancouver Coastal Health – Cognitive Assessment and Rehabilitation for Substance Use (CARSU) program
- WorkBC

Community Services Pop Ups - Participant Feedback

The following feedback was collected from participant evaluation surveys, informal chats with individual participants, formal evaluation meetings with community organizations and the Community Team. Overall, the program received tremendously positive support. Some of the feedback received is provided below.

- “Lots of resources in one place & opportunity to ask questions.” – *Participant*
- “Met other organizations that I have not heard of or encountered before.” – *Community Organization*
- “Found the resources and information provided relevant and useful.” – *Participant*
- “People need information, so the ability to interact with them, genuinely help them, and guide them in the right direction is very fulfilling. It feels like you are making a difference.” – *Community Team Member*
- “Many relevant services for our clients with mental health and substance use” – *Community Organization*
- “Originally came for Recreation Fee Subsidy Program and then found out about subsidy for senior's housing.” – *Participant*
- “Everyone is very supportive, very satisfactory, learn a lot on how to apply for housing. I hope to find a place to stay. I am 82 years old.” – *Participant*
- “The participants themselves have been providing us with a lot of feedback, and they often share it with their networks or groups. The participants are appreciative that these Pop Ups were created, and they want to know if they will continue.” – *Community Team Member*