



INFORMATION ONLY COUNCIL REPORT

To: Paul Gipps, CAO

Date: December 14, 2021

From: Mike Cain, Bylaw Services Manager

Subject: **UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services – Grant program update**

STRATEGIC AREA(S) OF FOCUS

Foster Safety and Well-being – We will pursue through direct action, advocacy, and partnerships with Westbank First Nation, with government and local service providers to further advance the health of our community. We will continue to advocate for investments in community health, needs-based housing, emergency preparedness, increased police services, and other community services that foster safety and well-being in West Kelowna.

Strengthen Our Community – We will provide opportunities for the residents of West Kelowna to build connections and strengthen the collaboration with our diverse neighbourhood associations. Together with our community, we will celebrate successes and embrace our culture, such as promoting and supporting our strengths and diversity, addressing our shared needs and shaping our community's future.

BACKGROUND

On May 11, 2021 Council gave support for a UBCM grant application for Strengthening Community Services. The goal of the grant was to fund “peer ambassadors” under the existing program operated by Partners in Resources (PIERS) and an assigned Bylaw Officer for specialized populations to join local efforts, seek those who are at risk, bridge positive dialogue, ensure appropriate resource allocation and create a safe environment for all in our community.

The grant received UBCM approval on July 16, 2021. The City moved forward with the creation of the new Bylaw Community Support Officer (CSO) position and PIERS moved forward with the hiring of their additional staff.

CSO Danica Floto was appointed by Council on August 24 2021.

PIERS has provided an update on their newly appointed staff and the progress achieved with their goals (attached).

Summary of the CSO position evolution to date.

Training and Education

The CSO has participated in the following training:

- Turning Points – Overdose recognition and response
- St. John Ambulance – emergency first aid
- Living Works Start– TASC Steps to recognize thoughts of suicide and engage safety resources
- National Harm reduction coalition – engaging people who use drugs
- Alberta Health Services – Trauma informed care
- Indigenous Cultural Safety Foundations
- Decolonizing Addiction/Indigenous harm reduction
- Community Building – Harm reduction
- Suicide Intervention
- Personal Protection

The CSO also spent a day with the Penticton CSO's as their program has been well established for several years, providing a best practices learning opportunity.

Partnership Engagement

The CSO has established working relationships with a wide spectrum of community stakeholders.

- PIERS (Partners in Resources)
- Turning Points – Super 8 and Shelter
- WFN
- RCMP
- Local businesses
- KANDU –(Acknowledging All Nations and Developing Unity)
- Food Bank

As well, the CSO is representative of the City on the following committees:

- HUB (situation table)
- Outreach Circles – City of Kelowna and West Kelowna

The CSO has participated in 23 meetings or community forums with our community stakeholders.

Operational Engagement

- Pro-active patrols of downtown core (bus loop, food bank, schools, parks, shelter, alleys, etc.) on a daily basis in the accompany of a PIERS partner.

- Engagement with the street entrenched or homeless who are creating conflict, involved in unsafe activity, vandalism, or other activities that contribute to a sense of community safety.
- Identification and engagement of those that are sheltering outside or who are living in RV's on City property and unable/unwilling to access other mainstream services, including shelter.
- Clean up of small camps/hangout locations as well as participation in larger team/community clean ups.
- Investigation of 11 complaints directly related to homelessness/street entrenched individuals.

Summary

During the first 3 months of this position, the CSO has been very busy with training, developing the necessary stakeholder relationships as well as gaining an understanding of the scope of the homeless and street entrenched population.

The CSO is now the department go to Officer for dealing with all complaints in regards to homelessness and the street entrenched, having developed a bank of knowledge as to who these individuals are, where they live or congregate, their individual circumstances and what the potential risks are for themselves or public. The CSO is able to quickly determine a course of action for either engaging targeted outreach or appropriate enforcement action.

Our street entrenched individuals with very challenging personal issues can be a daily strain on the department resources and having the CSO officer available to intercede, allows the department to better manage resource allocation.

Attached is a supporting comment from the local foodbank attesting to the value and impact that the CSO position has already had in the downtown core.

REVIEWED BY

Brad Savoury, Director of Legal Services

Shelley Schnitzler, Legislative Services Manager/Corporate Officer

APPROVED FOR THE AGENDA BY

Paul Gipps, CAO

Powerpoint: Yes No

Attachments: Letter from the Central Okanagan Food Bank
PIER Ambassador Program: Quarterly Report