

Background: In June 2016, the Crime Prevention Council, in partnership with the City of Thunder Bay's Recreation and Culture Division, submitted a Letter of Intent (LOI) to Public Safety Canada to access funds to develop and implement a Youth Inclusion Program model in Thunder Bay. This is an evidence-based model that was originally developed in the UK, and brought to Atlantic Canada. The program aims to support youth who find themselves at risk by increasing protective factors and connecting them to any required supports. On August 28, 2018, Public Safety Canada announced that, over the next five years, the City of Thunder Bay will receive \$5.6 million to implement a Youth Inclusion Program in Thunder Bay.

Work done to date:**Staffing**

YIP currently employs two Program Supervisors, two Youth Navigators, two Program Coordinators and a Program Manager. These staff are currently all working in the first priority neighbourhood: Limbrick/Vale. In the fall of 2019 work will commence in the second priority neighbourhood: Windsor, Picton, Blutchter.

Community Partner Involvement

Community partners have been engaged with YIP through two community forum sessions, during these sessions partners gave valuable input into the needs of youth in priority neighbourhoods and in Thunder Bay. To date, the Project Manager has met with all primary community partners; these are partner organizations who wrote letters of support for YIP. Outreach to secondary partners has also begun. During these introductory meetings discussions focused on: where partners saw gaps in service, how they felt YIP could address those gaps, and what potential overlap existed between the partner and YIP.

Fort William First Nation

Extensive effort had been made to build relationship with Fort William First Nation Chief and Council, and community members. Five YIP youth participants have been invited to participate in the six week Mountain Keeper Program this summer on Fort William First Nation. This program consists of a cultural component where youth learn spruce root harvesting, birch bark harvesting, and canoe construction. A training component includes receive WHIMS, ORCA certification, and First Aid. As well, an education component is that youth will receive summer co-op credits.

Nishnawbe Aski Nation, Dennis Franklin Cromarty, Matawa

Relationships have been developed and continue to be fostered with NAN, DFC, and Matawa. Through the YIP Contribution Agreement DFC and Matawa will receive funds. Work has been done with both groups to determine allocation of funds and opportunity for YIP support. NAN has offered input in governance structure and model.

Governance

With input from community partners it was clear that a circular governance structure would be best suited to YIP. Currently work is being done with knowledge keepers to implement a governance model based on the Anishinaabe clan system.

Programming

Current programming is focused in priority neighbourhood of Limbrick/Vale. A weekly schedule has been created for the summer months consisting of: two drop in-days (Monday and Saturday) and one community BBQ day (Thursday) at the TDSSAB Tenant Resource Centre in Limbrick. YIP is also creating a schedule for additional pro-social and pro-recreational activities through the summer: these activities include: archery and boxing with TBPS, Standing Bear leadership camp with ISWO, Kinsmen mural project with CAHEP. Contact and visits with schools feeding into the priority neighbourhood has also happened. YIP supported the Matawa grade 8 student transition, supported Pikangikum First Nation youth evacuees, and have plans to support DFC welcome activities.

Referral Process/ Framework

Participation is voluntary on the youth/family front. Referrals are made through self referral, schools, community organizations/partners, etc. Once a youth is referred to YIP, initial contact will occur within the first 72 hours. Referred primary participants will receive wraparound service from navigators. They will work with youth to develop relationships with youth and their families in order to learn more about their individual needs. Youth will be connected with community supports and services on an as needed basis. The Youth Navigator will assist the youth and their family through the process of accessing necessary support.

Evaluation

The Centre for Rural and Northern Health Research (CRaNHR) at Lakehead University has been contracted to conduct a comprehensive evaluation of the Youth Inclusion Program. Corporate Strategic Services staff and Public Safety Canada will work with CRaNHR research leads to oversee the implementation of evaluation efforts over the next five years.

Regular updates on implementation of the Thunder Bay Youth Inclusion Program are being provided at Crime Prevention Council meetings.