

SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL/PARTNERS IN ACTION

January 1 to May 31, 2023

VISION STATEMENT: A safe, healthy and inclusive community in which to live, work and grow

MISSION STATEMENT: To identify and implement manageable solutions to social issues by mobilizing community-based action teams

SOCIAL PLANNER/COMMUNITY DEVELOPER POSITION: Social Planning Council for the North Okanagan

COMMUNITY DEVELOPER FUNDING SOURCE: City of Vernon

COMMITTEES: HART Committee, COOL Team, Housing Action Team, Local Immigration Partnership Council

COMMITTEES/ACTION TEAM FUNDING SOURCES: Provincial and Federal Government, Local Funders and Various Foundations

STRATEGIC GOALS:

- Build awareness and understanding of social issues
- Work collaboratively to problem-solve areas of concern
- Develop resources/policies to address gaps
- Monitor and evaluate the Partners in Action model and outcomes
- Provide sustainability for the Partners in Action model

Action Team	Open/ Closed	Background/Activities	Outputs	Direct Outcomes	Updates/Follow Up
Homelessness/Housing					
Provincial Homeless Count	Closed	Vernon took part in the Provincial Homeless Count in April 2023 with the Social Planning Council taking on a coordination role. Partner organizations hosted survey stations and assisted with the count.	Homeless point-in-time count completed in 2023.	Homeless counts give important baseline information on the estimated number, key demographic and service provision needs of people experiencing homelessness.	Vernon took part in the Provincial Homeless Count on the night of April 27, 2023. Staff from Turning Points Collaborative and Downtown Mental Health and Substance Use (in addition to peer outreach workers), Archway Society for Domestic Peace, Okanagan Regional Library, and the Upper Room Mission assisted with the surveys. The Specialized Bylaw Team provided maps and routes for the outreach teams. Social Planning Council should receive initial data in July or August 2023.

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COOL Team Update	Ongoing	The COOL team is a partnership between bylaw officers and outreach workers for a collaborative approach to addressing homeless campers. Bylaw officers and outreach workers connect campers to services provided by Turning Points Collaborative, emergency food programs and Interior Health.	Census/survey of homeless population. Protocol development and updates.	The COOL team works closely to monitor the health and safety of camps/spaces.	<p>Social Planning Council and the COOL Team have been monitoring the service needs of people sleeping outside and ensuring ongoing access to meals, showers, laundry, harm reduction supplies and referrals to mental health/substance use programs.</p> <p>Turning Points Collaborative staff and peers coordinated a clean up in the north end of town on Friday, April 14, 2023. Truck loads of garbage were taken to the dump and outreach was provided to people sleeping in this area.</p> <p>Bylaw officers also report more intense behaviours involving mental health issues. The Homelessness Crisis Intervention Team is providing assistance to the Specialized Bylaw Team in these types of situations.</p>
Strengthening Communities Grant: Homelessness Crisis Intervention Team (HCIT)	Open	The City of Vernon successfully applied for the second round of the Strengthening Communities Program and has received \$312,500 to support the municipality's efforts to address homelessness. The contract runs from August 1, 2022, until July 31, 2023.	Partnership Development. Completed Grant Application. Grant secured.	<p>Improved health and safety of unsheltered homeless people.</p> <p>Reduced community concerns in public spaces.</p> <p>Improved coordination among health/social service providers.</p>	<p>The main deliverable for the contract is a pilot project called the Homelessness Crisis Intervention Team (HCIT)), designed to support programs and First Responders if they require de-escalation assistance with a client.</p> <p>The HCIT has worked with 275 different individuals since it began in October 2022, and currently have active files for approximately 135 people. They operate seven days per week from 1:00 pm – 9pm, with two staff available for emergency outreach during operating hours. They receive anywhere between 6 to 36 calls/interactions per shift, and have worked closely with the Specialized Bylaw Team and service providers such as the library, the Upper Room Mission and Interior Health. Evaluation is underway to determine the impact of the program.</p>

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Housing Action Team	Ongoing	The housing action team meets quarterly to review the housing inventory, identify gaps and explore opportunities. This provides the non-profit housing sector a chance to network, brainstorm and be strategic with plans for future affordable units.	Quarterly meetings. Updated inventory. Increased collaboration and partnership development.	Increased number of affordable units owned and managed by the non-profit sector.	As part of the implementation of the City of Vernon's Housing Action Plan, the Social Planning Council connected City staff to the Housing Action Team. Of particular interest to the Housing Action Team, is the City's goal of acquiring land for affordable and attainable housing. The Social Planning Council is working with the housing non-profits to provide more detailed information on the needs and capacity of each organization to build more affordable housing. A report will be available to City staff in early June 2023.
Harm Reduction/HART					
Harm Reduction Team (HART)	Open	Vernon receives provincial funding to address the opioid crisis at the local level and support Community Action Teams (known locally as the HART Committee).	Grant secured. Launch of RCMP/OAT Pilot Project. Development and launch of Folks on Spokes Program. Development and launch of Peer Outreach Program.	Reduce opioid deaths and overdoses. Enhance access to treatment, recovery, social stabilization, and supports. Reduce the community impacts of opioid addiction. Strengthen cultural supports/services for Indigenous peoples. Reduce stigma and prevent opioid misuse.	The Social Planning Council and the HART Committee oversee the implementation of the <i>Harm Reduction and Opioid Overdose Response Strategy</i> . The goal of the strategy is to reduce and prevent overdose deaths in Vernon. Tragically, during the pandemic, the number of overdose deaths began to rise significantly with Vernon recording 26 deaths in 2020, 43 deaths in 2021, and 42 deaths in 2022. By comparison, in 2019, 15 people died in Vernon from overdose deaths. These are devastating statistics for the families, friends and coworkers who are impacted by the loss of loved ones.

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Peer Outreach Programs	Open	The main role of this action team was to get direct input from key target populations with lived experience to identify opportunities/priorities and to develop and support peer led programs.	Peer Outreach Program.	Identify and address gaps/barriers. Ensure people know where to access harm reduction interventions, treatment and recovery programs.	The Street Clinic continues to host the peer outreach program which provides harm reduction supplies, overdose prevention services, referrals to treatment, and support services to marginalized people. The team consists of 10 individuals who worked a total of 650 hours within a 12-month period. Peer outreach workers provide visits to areas where people sleep outside, office support within the Street Clinic, and assistance coordinating the laundry and shower programs.
Cultural Audit Team	Open	The Cultural Audit Team is provided with funding to initiate and oversee Indigenous programs and projects to implement the Indigenous peer recommendations within the strategy.	Individual interviews of Indigenous peers. Access to cultural sensitivity training for service providers. New recovery program using Indigenous perspective.	Identify cultural gaps/barriers in service. Identify resources and tools to address cultural gaps. Increase cultural capacity of services and the number of culturally sensitive services.	In conjunction with the Street Clinic peer outreach program, a 6-part Indigenous Wellness Workshop series was co-designed by an elder and an Indigenous peer outreach worker to help participants learn about Indigenous practices and to create safe and inclusive spaces. Monthly Indigenous Women's Nights are being organized in partnership with the Cultural Audit action team and focus on addressing peer wellness and support. A Wellbriety Program is being funded by the HART Committee and the Strengthening Communities grant for Spring/Summer 2023. This is a recovery program that uses Indigenous knowledge and principles to support people seeking to recover from alcohol and/or drug use and make positive changes in their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

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Anti-racism/Inclusiveness/Multiculturalism					
Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC): Immigration and Settlement Strategy for Vernon	Open	The final strategy document as well as supporting research reports are available at www.socialplanning.ca	Vernon Immigration and Settlement Strategy.	<p>Newcomers choose Vernon as their new home.</p> <p>Newcomers participate in the local labour market, broader community and social networks.</p>	<p>The Local Immigration Partnership Council (LIPC) implements and monitors the City of Vernon’s Settlement and Immigration Strategy. The purpose of the strategy is to attract and retain Immigrants to Vernon.</p> <p>The LIPC meets three times each year, to provide input, direction and feedback on the implementation of the strategy.</p> <p>The meetings also provide partner members an opportunity to share information and promote collaboration on initiatives that support newcomers to Vernon.</p>
Rural and Northern Immigration Pilot - Vernon	Open	Support is being provided to Community Futures North Okanagan for the federal Northern and Rural Immigration Pilot (RNIP).	Pilot project that assists employers to attract and retain Immigrant employees.	Newcomers choose Vernon as their new community.	<p>Given the skills shortage and local labour challenges, this program is an important tool to assist employers in recruiting new staff. More than 300 employers have been approved to access the program. To date, over 450 individuals have been approved from approximately 50 different countries.</p> <p>In order to address housing challenges for RNIP participants, a new homestay program was developed by community partners in conjunction with a private home share provider called Happipad. Employers are also assisting employees with their housing search and using their networks to assist in securing rental accommodation.</p>

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Supporting Ukrainian Refugees Action Team	Open	LIPC, VDICSS, Nexus, and local citizen/Ukrainian community representative are meeting regularly to share information and gather resources for possible new arrivals.	Webpage and media release.	Community efforts are coordinated. Ukrainian individuals and families are welcomed and supported.	To date, Vernon and District Immigrant and Community Service Society (VDICSS) has supported over 300 displaced Ukrainian clients, with more anticipated to arrive in the next few months. VDICSS offers multiple services including language classes, conversation circles, women’s group, family activities, settlement worker in schools, employment support and Work BC programs.
Resilience BC Funding	Open	In the Fall of 2022, the Social Planning Council received another \$7500 grant from the Province of BC to coordinate anti-racism projects at the local level.	Equity Brainstorming Sessions Events and Workshops	Identify and address racism at the local level. Provide resources and education to service providers and community members.	SPCNO is hosting quarterly Equity Brainstorming Meetings after the success of the first meeting, which took place on February 14, 2023. The purpose of the Equity Brainstorming Committee is for service providers to network, collaborate and plan anti-racist, anti-oppressive and equity related events, programs, and services. An example of successful collaboration includes the first Sikh Heritage Month Community Celebration. Hosted at the Sikh Temple, and attended by approximately 50 people, the event provided an opportunity to better understand the past and present contributions of Sikhs in the North Okanagan. Partners included the North Okanagan Sikh Society, VDICSS, the Museum and Archives of Vernon, and the Social Planning Council. The Social Planning Council also provided partial funding for the finale of the Indigenous Showcase Event Series at the Towne Theater on May 2, 2023. The feature film was Adaawk, to support awareness for missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and two-spirits.

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Evaluation of Partners in Action Committee					
Indicator Updates	Ongoing	As part of the evaluation process, the Partners in Action Committee collect statistics from local partners as well as regional and national sources on an annual basis.	Indicator data tool on a wide range of topics.	Evaluation and monitoring of data guides informed decision making.	The data is used on an ongoing basis by the Social Planning Council and partners to inform the discussion of social issues in the community and ways to address these problems/concerns.