

TO: Mayor Savage and Members of Halifax Regional Council

SUBMITTED BY:

Original Signed by 

Jacques Dubé, Chief Administrative Officer

DATE: August 30, 2022

SUBJECT: Building Safer Communities Fund – Public Safety Canada

ORIGIN

Staff-initiated report due to receiving unsolicited funding from Public Safety Canada.

LEGISLATIVE AUTHORITY

HRM Charter Section 74 – permits HRM to enter into agreements with the Province or the Government of Canada to provide or administer municipal services.

Administrative Order #58, section 16(1) provides that revenue generating agreements for the municipality must be approved by Council when HRM is receiving more than \$500,000.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that Halifax Regional Council accept funding from the Building Safer Communities Fund and authorize the Chief Administrative Officer to sign the contribution agreement when received from Public Safety Canada.

BACKGROUND

On March 16, 2022, the Minister of Public Safety Canada (PSC), the Honourable Marco Mendicino, announced the creation of the [Building Safer Communities Fund](#). The Fund is an initiative to bolster gang-prevention and intervention programming at the local level. The Public Safety Advisor (PSA) was notified that Halifax Regional Municipality (HRM) would be receiving approximately \$3.3 million over four years (commencing in 2022/23) due to a rise in gun and gang related activity in the municipality. On April 12, the PSA received official notice of the funding (see Attachment 1).

According to PSC guidelines, the funding must be used to address prevention or intervention of gun and gang related activity. The funding cannot be used to augment existing programs or supplement program funding from other government agencies (such as the province). Sustainability plans must be developed.

On June 7, PSC advised the PSA of annual allocations (see the Financial Implications section of this report) and requested the PSA to submit a comprehensive proposal and budgets for the annual funding allocations for year 1 of the funding (2022/23). After internal consultation with key HRM stakeholders and the Public Safety Strategy renewal working group, a proposal for year one (current fiscal) funding and budget was submitted to PSC on June 17.

DISCUSSION

Funding for 2022/23 from the Building Safer Communities Fund will be allocated as follows:

Two new positions with the Youth Division of Parks and Recreation: one FTE Youth Counsellor and one FTE Youth Navigator. Both positions will enhance services available to at-risk youth commencing this fiscal year and throughout the duration of the BSCF (terminating March 31, 2026).

- The Counsellor position will provide counselling support to youth in HRM spaces. In addition, they will be able to respond to gun and gang activities in community by offering debriefing and immediate counselling support to youth.
- The Community Youth Navigator will work within HRM youth spaces to connect young people to social programs and services. While also responding to gun and gang activities in communities, they will work with youth to connect them to longer term supports.

Intended outcomes of these new resources include:

- Increased access to low barrier, youth friendly counselling support
- Increased access to social services and supports
- Reduced trauma impact following a community crisis event
- Enhanced collaboration between municipal youth services and community organizations (measured by number of new collaborations/partnerships)

The PSA intends to allocate the remainder of funding toward:

- A Social Policy Strategist that will develop a plan for the remainder of the BSCF, including implementation, sustainability and evaluation plans
- A Community Outreach Coordinator that will work with high-risk communities to connect community members impacted by gun and gang activities to programs and services
- A Youth Services Review to better understand the range of services available to at risk youth across HRM and investigate the feasibility of creating a coordinated access system for at-risk youth. This work will be guided by advisors (both internal and external) that work with youth in the Municipality.
- A Drug Policy Public Education and Community Conversation series with the Nova Scotia Criminal Justice Association to develop and facilitate a speaker and panel series on the relationship between drug policy and gun and gang activity.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Funding from the Building Safer Communities Fund will be allocated to HRM over the four years as outlined below.

2022-2023 TO 2025-2026				
Total (Y1-Y4)	10% Year 1	35% Year 2	35% Year 3	20% Year 4
\$3,305,459.41	\$330,545.94	\$1,156,910.79	\$1,156,910.79	\$661,091.88

→ There is no net cost to HRM as all expenditures will be externally funded by this grant.

RISK CONSIDERATION

No significant risk considerations were identified.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

There was no community engagement in the preparation of this report. Community input into subsequent funding years will be initiated in the fall of 2022 and aligned with community engagement for the Public Safety Strategy renewal.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

No environmental implications were identified.

ALTERNATIVES

Regional Council could choose not to approve the recommendation.

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1 - Letter from Public Safety Canada

A copy of this report can be obtained online at halifax.ca or by contacting the Office of the Municipal Clerk at 902.490.4210.

Report Prepared by: Amy Siciliano, Public Safety Advisor, Office of the CAO, 902.210.0102



Amy Siciliano
Public Safety Advisor, Halifax Regional Municipality

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
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Dear Amy Siciliano,

We are reaching out to you about the recent Government of Canada announcement on the creation of the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF).

This program will provide eligible municipalities and Indigenous communities with funding to support prevention and intervention initiatives that address gun and gang violence in their communities. Communities have been identified using firearms and gang related crime statistics.

Through this evidence-based approach Halifax Regional Municipality has been identified as a recipient to receive time-limited funding ending March 31, 2026. This funding will be conditional on complying with the program requirements and developing a Contribution Agreement. Public Safety regional staff will be reaching out to provide additional information regarding the BSCF and to discuss the requirements to access the funding.

We look forward to working closely with you during this process to ensure that you are supported in establishing a plan that will best meet the unique needs of your community.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

Kevin Miller
Regional Director, Atlantic Region
Public Safety Canada