



BACKGROUND:

Spark Program for Enhanced Youth Safety and Wellbeing

The City has been awarded \$750,000 from Public Safety Canada’s Crime Prevention Action Fund to support its new Spark Program for Enhanced Youth Safety and Wellbeing.

This multi-partner initiative is designed to prevent crime and violence and support increased safety and wellbeing among children and youth under 30 years of age in Victoria.

Collaborating with local organizations is key to building a safe, inclusive and connected community for all residents – including children, youth and families.

The 16 local partner organizations and their respective Spark projects and funding include:

- **[Aboriginal Coalition to End Homelessness](#)** – Provide a culturally supportive homelessness prevention initiative, strengthening circles of care for Indigenous youth leaving the child welfare system. This project also provides Elder-led activities, Land-Based Healing and family-centred gatherings to build strong community and mentorship networks and the foundation for lasting stability, belonging and wellbeing. \$41,000.
- **[AVI Health and Community Services, Crisis Response Community Led \(CRCL\) Team](#)** – Increase crisis support and outreach services downtown by improving staffing levels and developing new program materials to reach youth under 30, as well as deliver new training for staff. \$86,000.
- **[Beacon Community Services](#)** – Increase support for employment case management for youth who reside in youth supportive housing and have been involved with the criminal justice system and/or have experienced homelessness. Includes improved access to clinical counselling for youth who have experienced trauma, family disruption, violence and homelessness. \$56,000.
- **[Big Brothers Big Sister of Victoria Capital Region](#)** – Include delivery of programs such as “BYou; Healthy Bodies, Healthy Minds” for female-identifying and gender diverse youth, as well as in-school and community mentoring for youth facing systemic barriers such as trauma; Safer Spaces training for volunteer mentors and staff; and program support and supplies for mentoring coordinators. \$25,000.

- **[Capital Bike](#)** – Expand their Bike Lending Library to enable more children, youth and families to borrow a bike at no cost. Includes increased awareness of this opportunity through organizations that support children, youth and families. \$7,500.
- **[The Cridge Centre for the Family](#)** – Strengthen protective parenting education classes in the context of healing from family violence. Dedicated sessions include body and online safety, emotional repair and cultural parenting as protection. Includes counselling support for children and youth experiencing family violence. \$25,000.
- **[Good Night Out](#)** – Enhance services in downtown Victoria through a late-night outreach team helping curb incidents of gendered and harassing sub-criminal acts and supporting broader safety of young women and other vulnerable youth populations from 11:30 p.m. to 3:30 a.m. \$19,000.
- **[Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria](#)** – Provide training to frontline youth workers, including trauma-informed care. The project also supports newcomer, immigrant and refugee youth and families access sport, art, cultural activities and nature programs and provides training and support for emerging newcomer youth leaders to contribute to their community. \$22,000.
- **[John Howard Society of Victoria](#)** – Strengthen KidStart, a community-based youth mentorship program for vulnerable children and youth. The project includes volunteer recruitment and training, as well as increasing early intervention services and reinforcing protective factors for youth through education activities, life skills, tutoring, literacy and employment support. \$50,000.
- **[MakeSpace For Art Society](#)** – Offer structured, supervised access for youth to a community woodworking shop and makerspace where they can build skills, confidence and belonging through creative, hands-on projects. MakeSpace workshops and near-peer mentorship strengthen resilience, support positive identity and introduce youth to MakeSpace as a community hub. \$56,000.
- **[Mustard Seed Victoria](#)** – Provide fresh or non-perishable goods to Spark program partners to help them deliver enhanced wrap-around support for youth participants. \$30,000.
- **[Power to Be Adventure Therapy Society](#)** – Deliver two unique Wilderness School spring break excursions for under-resourced youth who face multiple risk factors such as struggling in school, poor social or academic performance, challenges at home or mental health struggles. \$15,000.
- **[Restorative Justice Victoria](#)** – Improve and digitize tools to support youth engagement to increase accessibility and to ensure dignity, confidentiality and consistency; review and update

practice frameworks related to youth work, including seeking legal guidance, where appropriate, to ensure confidentiality and best practices. \$11,000

- **Thrive Social Services Society** – Enhance an online youth-engagement platform and deliver a spring break employment-readiness camp. The Rise UP Youth Employment Program addresses employment-related challenges faced by at-risk youth by providing job-readiness training, mentorship and work experience. \$40,000.
- **Umbrella Society for Addictions and Mental Health** – Expand recovery-oriented outreach for youth under the age of 30, supporting navigation to detox treatment and counselling, including wrap-around supports for stabilization. Includes expanding recovery-oriented, school presentations on harm reduction and the recovery journey led by individuals with lived experience. \$53,000.
- **Victoria Youth Empowerment Society** – Increase case management to support youth entering the justice system, helping them understand their rights, comply with conditions, reduce breach and incarceration, and connect them to community resources and recovery programs. The project also expands the pantry to support youth with access to basic needs and supplies. \$29,404.

Below are the three City of Victoria-led Spark projects:

1. **City of Victoria – Parks and Recreation** – Increase access to aquatic programs at Crystal Pool and Fitness Centre by reducing barriers for children and families from equity-deserving groups, including newcomers to Canada, individuals with disabilities and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. The project also introduces new family sessions that teach essential swimming and water-safety skills that families can use both at the pool and at home. \$17,000.
2. **City of Victoria – Corporate Planning & Strategic Partnerships** – Enhance youth access to established arts, culture, recreation and science-based attractions in Victoria such as the Emily Carr House, Royal BC Museum, Art Gallery of Greater Victoria, Crystal Pool, Chinatown Museum and more. \$25,000
3. **City of Victoria: Arts, Culture and Events** – Enhance cultural experiences for youth and families over the Family Day weekend, from February 13 to 15 between 5 and 9 p.m. *Victoria at Dusk* is a free winter arts event offering illuminated installations, music and interactive experiences. \$90,000.