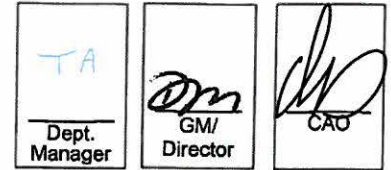


AGENDA INFORMATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Regular Meeting	Date: February 7, 2022
<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	Date: _____



The District of North Vancouver REPORT TO COUNCIL

January 20, 2022
File: 10.5080.00/000.003

AUTHOR: Eirikka Brandson, Community Planner

SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 Application

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report of the Community Planner, dated January 20, 2022, entitled "UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program: North Shore Stream 2 Application" be received;

AND THAT Staff be directed to work with the District of West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver to submit a joint regional application for the North Shore under Stream 2 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program for 2022;

AND THAT Council supports the District of West Vancouver as the primary applicant for the North Shore application to apply for, receive, and manage the 2022 UBCM Poverty Reduction and Action Program grant funding on the District of North Vancouver's behalf.

REASON FOR REPORT:

The purpose of this report is to seek Council's approval to submit an application due February 11, 2022 for Stream 2 funding under UBCM's Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. The grant application would be for \$150,000 so that the District of North Vancouver can work in partnership with the District of West Vancouver and the City of North Vancouver on poverty reduction action. This report outlines the proposed project details and also provides an update on related initiatives that seek to address poverty on the North Shore.

BACKGROUND:

On February 22, 2021, Council directed staff to work with the City of North Vancouver and District of West Vancouver to submit a joint regional application for the North Shore under Stream 1 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program¹. The intent of Stream 1 funding is to support communities to develop or update assessments or plans in order to reduce poverty at the local level. The municipalities were successful in securing a grant in the amount of \$75,000.

¹ Report to Council (February 22, 2021): UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program – North Shore Stream 1 Application <http://app.dnv.org/OpenDocument/Default.aspx?docNum=4694194>

A North Shore Poverty Reduction Task Force has been mobilized to guide the development of a North Shore Poverty Reduction Plan led by municipal staff and supported by CitySpaces Consulting. CitySpaces was selected to support this project as they have extensive experience in developing social policy and planning projects, including the development of Poverty Reduction Plans for other municipalities. The North Shore Poverty Reduction Task Force includes members of the North Shore Homelessness Task Force and other sector partners with mandates relevant to the poverty reduction focus areas. Representatives from the School District, the business community, faith organizations, and non-profit partners also sit on this project specific Task Force.

Development of the North Shore Poverty Reduction Plan will include community engagement. A communications plan and engagement strategy are under preparation. Engagement is anticipated for the spring and all activities will align with the health and safety protocols in place at the time. A completed North Shore Poverty Reduction Plan is anticipated for early summer and will be provided to all member Councils for consideration.

EXISTING POLICY:

Council Directions 2019-2022:

- Increasing Housing Diversity and Addressing Affordability

Official Community Plan (2011):

- 6.0 Social Well-Being objective – to foster a safe, socially inclusive and supportive community that enhances the health and well-being of its residents.
 - 6.3.1 Facilitate the delivery of accessible services and social programs to meet the current and future needs to all District residents

Official Community Plan Action Plan (2021):

- Social Equity Implementation lens – intended to guide decision making and implementation of actions outlined in the OCP Action Plan

Child Care Action Plan (2020)

- Endorsed by Council on December 7, 2020, the Plan identifies four goals to enhance child care services in the District over a 10-year period. Essential services for parents, particularly single mothers, from getting and keeping full time employment.

ANALYSIS:

Eradicating poverty calls for a commitment from all levels of government. In 2018, the federal government published *Opportunity for All - Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy*², which targets a 20 percent reduction in poverty by 2020 from 2015 levels, and a 50 percent reduction in poverty by 2030. Commitments and action items outlined in the strategy are based on three pillars: dignity, opportunity for inclusion, and income resilience and security.

² Opportunities for All: Canada's First Poverty Reduction Strategy (2018):
<https://www.canada.ca/content/dam/canada/employment-social-development/programs/poverty-reduction/reports/poverty-reduction-strategy-report-EN.pdf>

At the provincial level, *TogetherBC – British Columbia’s First-Ever Poverty Reduction Strategy*³ (released in March 2019), sets a path towards reducing overall poverty in BC by 25 percent, and reducing child poverty by 50 percent by 2024. The Strategy is based on four key principles, affordability, opportunity, reconciliation, and social inclusion; and, identifies six priority action areas for reducing poverty. While the legislated targets have already been met, the Province notes that the decline in poverty since 2016 is largely related to provincial investments, a strong economy, and the federal Canada Child Benefit. More work will be needed to address the depth of poverty experienced by specific populations, which includes Indigenous people, people with disabilities, and other marginalized and vulnerable populations. The 2020 Annual Report⁴ notes that the effects of COVID-19 will begin appearing in the poverty rate data which will be released later this year.

On the North Shore, some examples of groups that are struggling include single parent families, people with disabilities, recent immigrants and refugees, First Nations and other equity priority groups. Through recent work of the North Shore Homelessness Task Force, the intersection between poverty and homelessness at the municipal level has been highlighted:

- Nearly 100 percent of homeless community members were experiencing, or have experienced trauma;
- Services related to addressing homelessness are offered solely or primarily in English, which can be a substantial barrier; and
- Income and mental health are the biggest challenge that homeless community members are facing on the North Shore.

The District is an active participant in several North Shore initiatives that seek to address poverty. These are described below. Knowledge gained through these related projects has informed the proposed Stream 2 grant application.

North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI)

The North Shore Homelessness Action Initiative (NSHAI) is a cross-jurisdictional committee that was formed in 2020 to address homelessness on the North Shore. NSHAI provides a forum for coordination amongst governments and agencies with direct and indirect authority for homelessness initiatives, supportive policies, funding and capital investments. District Council adopted a resolution to participate on NSHAI’s Steering Committee (elected and appointed officials) and (staff) Working Group on July 20, 2020.

Three meetings of the Steering Committee took place in 2021. The following activities have been initiated to date:

- Compiling an inventory of opportunities and existing actions to address homelessness;
- Developing a concise list of priority actions and partner roles;
- Exploring alternative options for delivering coordinated services and supports; and
- Launching a coordinated and ongoing communication and advocacy strategy.

³ Together BC <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/download/37C3F286EFED400BBE814DE05B5CBBE6>

⁴ 2020 Annual Report: <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/assets/gov/british-columbians-our-governments/organizational-structure/ministries-organizations/social-development-poverty-reduction/togetherbc-report-2020.pdf>

**SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 – Action Application**

January 20, 2022

Page 4

NSHAI will continue to meet in 2022 with a focus on building a North Shore vision for action. A link to NSHAI is available on the District's website: <https://www.dnv.org/news/north-shore-homelessness-action-initiative>

North Shore Homelessness Task Force

The North Shore Homelessness Task Force (Task Force) is a network made up of social service providers, public and private partners, and community residents that works together to address issues related to homelessness and poverty on the North Shore. The Task Force focuses on support services, communications and information, and advocacy.

In 2021, the Task Force developed a new 10-year Community Action Strategy (2022-32). The strategy was informed by research, local service providers and members of the community including residents who are currently street-entrenched, accessing shelters, in precarious housing, or at risk of being homeless. The Community Action Strategy is grounded by the principle that work on homelessness and poverty must be relationship based, centre the most impacted, and seek to address the root causes.

The project deliverables, including the Strategy, a situational report (with context on homelessness and poverty on the North Shore), an engagement summary and relationship map can be found on the Task Force website: <https://northshorehomelessness.org/>

Strengthening Communities' Services Grant

COVID-19 has had substantial negative implications for unsheltered homeless populations, with the closure and/or significant reduction in capacity of the majority of facilities where services and resources would normally be provided. Within BC's Safe Restart funding, the UBCM Strengthening Communities' Services grants support local governments that wish to take action to support unsheltered homeless populations and address related community impacts.

In 2021, a successful application for \$1.9 million was submitted by the North Shore municipalities, local First Nations, and Lookout Housing + Health Society. Council adopted a resolution to join this project on April 12, 2021. Managed through the City of North Vancouver, the program's activities are based on the provision of additional temporary services to unsheltered individuals where they are currently located, within a delivery framework focused on relationship building and culturally informed responses.

The program is well underway, with key activities noted below:

- An outreach team to engage unsheltered Indigenous individuals;
- The lease of a mobile response unit staffed by Lookout Housing + Health Society in collaboration with the District's Community Access Coordinator and other North Shore service providers;
- Expanded duties for the Coordinator at the North Shore Homelessness Task Force to mobilize a wide range of partners in program activities, community engagement opportunities and public education.

- An “Open Door Community Hub” hosted by the City of North Vancouver library, which provides critical social infrastructure for many unsheltered individuals that is free to use, affordable for anyone, and a safe place of refuge for those who need it most.

Improvements in regional coordination are also planned within the Strengthening Communities grant, along with community engagement and training.

Grant Opportunity – Stream 2 UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program

Stream 2 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Planning Program provides funding to support communities in reducing poverty at the municipal level. The focus is on implementation and funding amounts are \$50,000 for a single applicant and \$150,000 for regional applications.

Stream 2 eligibility requirements call for either a completed poverty reduction plan or demonstration that Official Community Plans are inclusive of poverty reduction principles (such as affordability, opportunity, reconciliation and social inclusion). Although work on the North Shore Poverty Reduction Plan (Stream 1) is still underway, all three North Shore municipalities are committed to poverty reduction through their OCPs. The District’s OCP, for example, is founded on a vision of social well-being and affordable housing and contains policies that strive to address the needs of all citizens, including those who are most vulnerable.

Additionally the three municipalities have other plans and strategies that complement or support poverty reduction principles. Some of the activities the District is working towards include:

- Applying a Social Equity Lens to guide decision making in order to achieve a more inclusive and equitable community;
- Council approval⁵ for the District to:
 - join the [Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities](#) and, in joining the Coalition, endorse the Common Commitments and agree to develop or adapt a unique Plan of Action;
 - support implementation of the municipal-specific [Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada Calls to Action](#);
- Membership in the [North Shore Immigrant Inclusion Partnership](#) (NSIIP), a coalition of community agencies and institutions focused on improving the settlement outcomes of new immigrants. Racialized community members that are often overrepresented in homeless populations, poverty indicators, and face racism when attempting to access services; and
- Supporting the North Shore [Resilience BC](#) initiative, an anti-racism network created to better support communities to address racism.

Proposed Stream 2 Application – North Shore Solutions Navigator Program

The Stream 2 application proposes to deliver a pilot “North Shore Solutions Navigator Program”. The objective of this program would be to assist residents who face, or at risk of

⁵ Report to Council (December 7, 2020): Coalition of Inclusive Municipalities
<http://app.dnv.org/OpenDocument/Default.aspx?docNum=4648306>

**SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 – Action Application**

January 20, 2022

Page 6

facing, conditions of poverty with accessing important programs and services. The Navigator Program would be hosted out of the North Shore Neighbourhood House (NSNH), a welcoming, open to all community hub. NSNH's mission of working together to enhance the lives of North Shore residents, especially the most vulnerable, positions them to help deliver this new program.

Navigators would be hired to work one-to-one with individuals to identify their strengths and goals, create an action plan, build skills, and access resources and income based supports. Services provided by Solutions Navigators would be free and available across the North Shore. This approach is distinctly different from the majority of existing support programs available as most require individuals to meet certain criteria to be able to access services (e.g. be a certain age, family situation, type of issue).

The North Shore Navigators Program would focus on the importance of human to human support. It would include multiple appointments and dedicated follow up in recognition that quality of support is critical in enabling individuals to break the cycle of poverty. The intent is to provide a relationship based service that is welcoming, supportive, and personal. While the Solutions Navigator may refer clients to additional supports or services from other organizations, it is anticipated that many clients seeking support from the program will be able to be assisted directly by the Navigator. As well, clients could be referred to the Navigator Program by other North Shore social service organizations.

Staff from the three municipalities have outlined the following activities and elements of the North Shore Solutions Navigators Program application:

1. Hiring of one or more Solutions Navigators for a period of one year. The positions would sit in the North Shore Neighbourhood House but have a flexible schedule to meet with clients from other non-profit agencies. An estimated range for staffing costs is \$80k-\$100k.
2. Assistance to clients depending on individuals' needs, as follows:
 - Empathetic and encouraging conversation;
 - Information giving and referral;
 - Planning, prioritizing and problem solving;
 - Assistance connecting to services and resources;
 - Paperwork and applications; and
 - Active involvement, advocacy, acting on the client's behalf.
3. The potential for financial supports to individuals for specified matters where no other assistance or resources are available. Potential areas for financial support might include child care while a parent seeks employment, gas money to continue working, rent support (e.g. first month deposit and potentially a rent bank). It is expected that financial support of this nature could have a significant and long standing impact on the client's stability and quality of life. An allocation process will be developed by grant partners to help guide the equitable use of these discretionary funds, estimated at approximately \$30k-\$50k.

**SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 – Action Application**

January 20, 2022

Page 7

4. Project supplies and equipment. These may include mobile phones and laptops for Navigators to keep confidential records and computer station(s) for clients to use (e.g. filling out employment forms, resumes, tax filing). Under the parameter of the grant program, capital costs cannot exceed 25% of the total requested in Stream 2 (maximum \$37,500). Funds could also be used for peer honorariums, for example when 'graduates' volunteer and assist Navigators with new clients. Honoraria must align with current best practices and at least match the current provincial minimum wage as per the grant application guide. An estimate for project supplies and equipment is \$10k-20k.
5. Development of an evaluation tool for the North Shore Solutions Navigator Program. This tool would serve as a road map for the project, beginning with setting goals and objectives, which would identify what data needs to be collected, and then determining some indicators of success.
6. Writing an end of project report. Special attention will be made to capture any trends and nuances between the different clients participating in the program across the region in addition to basic demographic information. It is anticipated that the learnings from this pilot project could be applied to other programs and services to help remove barriers that people face when seeking services. Alleviating poverty starts with creating a culture where people who find themselves in need of services feel welcome and supported. Recommendations could be included in the project report based on these learnings.

The District of West Vancouver has committed to submitting the application on behalf of the three municipalities and would manage the funds including disbursement to the North Shore Neighbourhood House. All of the North Shore Councils would be apprised of the process and findings at key intervals in the process.

Timing/Approval Process:

February 11, 2022 is the deadline for the third (and final) intake of applications to the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. A Council resolution is required and successful applicants will be notified within 90 days of the application deadline. If successful, it is anticipated that proposed project could begin in late spring. The grant requirements stipulate that the project must be completed within one year.

Financial Impacts:

The District's contributions to Stream 2 of the Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program would be comprised of in-kind staff resources. The application request for \$150,000 would be managed by the District of West Vancouver and disbursed to the North Shore Neighbourhood House as the host of the North Shore Solutions Navigator Program.

Any additional project-specific funding requests will be brought forward to Council as required.

**SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 – Action Application**

January 20, 2022

Page 8

Conclusion:

Staff recommend that Council endorse an application under Stream 2 of UBCM's Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program. The North Shore municipalities were successful in obtaining Stream 1 funding and work on a regional North Shore Poverty Reduction Plan is underway. Stream 2 of the program would secure funding for important navigator services that increase opportunities, build social connections, and improve affordability – leading to improvements in the life circumstances of many vulnerable District residents.

Options:

THAT staff are directed to submit an application to Stream 2 of the UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program (District of West Vancouver as primary applicant), for \$150,000 in grant funding to support the implementation of a joint regional North Shore Solutions Navigator Program.

OR, THAT Council provides staff with alternative direction.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Eirikka Brandson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Eirikka Brandson
Community Planner

**SUBJECT: UBCM Poverty Reduction Planning and Action Program:
North Shore Stream 2 – Action Application**

January 20, 2022

Page 9

REVIEWED WITH:					
<input type="checkbox"/> Community Planning	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Clerk's Office	_____	External Agencies:	
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Planning	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Communications	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Library Board	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Development Engineering	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Finance	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> NS Health	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Utilities	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Fire Services	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> RCMP	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Engineering Operations	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> ITS	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> NVRC	_____
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<input type="checkbox"/> Environment	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> GIS	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Other:	_____
<input type="checkbox"/> Facilities	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Real Estate	_____		
<input type="checkbox"/> Human Resources	_____	<input type="checkbox"/> Bylaw Services	_____		
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