



Poverty Reduction Strategy Update – City Report

| | |
|--------------|------------------------------|
| Date: | September 21, 2015 |
| To: | Toronto Public Library Board |
| From: | City Librarian |

SUMMARY

This report presents the City of Toronto's TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy adopted in principle by Council on July 7, 2015. Council also requested that Toronto Public Library Board along with other city agencies, boards and divisions, consider service implications, in time for inclusion in the final Poverty Reduction Strategy in Fall 2015.

Service enhancements proposed for 2016 are outlined in the 2016 Operating Budget Submission report (Agenda Item No. 9).

FINANCIAL IMPACT

There is no financial impact to the 2015 operating budget arising from this report.

Service enhancements proposed for 2016 are outlined in the 2016 Operating Budget Submission report.

The Director, Finance & Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial impact information.

DECISION HISTORY

At the March 23, 2015 meeting, the Board adopted the 2015 operating budget as approved by Council, including two Poverty Reduction Initiatives. Funding of \$0.375 million net (\$0.250 million gross) was approved for two Toronto Public Library initiatives. The Library Access – Fines Forgiveness program is a program to improve access to library services for children and youth whose library privileges have been suspended due to unpaid fines. Funding of \$0.175 million net (\$0.050 million gross) allows the forgiveness of outstanding fines for children and youth at library branches located in Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, restoring full access to borrowing and other library programs and services.

Youth Hubs provide much needed community space in neighbourhood improvement areas where there are large numbers of youth attending library branches. The Hubs are open during the school year, after school and in the summer months, and staffed by on-site library coordinators and volunteers from the community. The Hubs focus on providing homework assistance, and programs to help develop social and leadership skills, in a safe and welcoming environment, where youth can engage in fun and meaningful activities under the supervision of adults. With a budget of \$0.200 million in 2015, the Library has set up Hubs at the Cedarbrae and York Woods branches, and is starting to operate them in September with two additional staff. The expectation is to increase the funding by an additional \$0.200 million in 2016, which will allow two additional Hubs at the Fairview and Maria A. Shchuka branches and two additional staff.

<http://www.torontopubliclibrary.ca/content/about-the-library/pdfs/board/meetings/2015/mar23/10.pdf>

At its meeting of July 7, 2015, Council adopted, in principle, TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy and requested that Toronto Public Library Board along with other city agencies, boards and divisions, consider service implications in time for inclusion in the final Poverty Reduction Strategy in Fall 2015.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2015.EX7.2>

ISSUE BACKGROUND

The Poverty Reduction Strategy is aimed at creating greater equity in Toronto by mitigating the impacts of poverty for those with low incomes and in helping them move out of poverty as well as preventing others from falling into poverty. In April 2014, Council unanimously adopted recommendations to develop Toronto's first Poverty Reduction Strategy and initiatives, including TPL's Fine Forgiveness Program and Youth Hubs at Cedarbrae and York Woods; these were incorporated into the 2015 operating budget.

TPL staff participated in and supported the public consultation undertaken in developing the Strategy. As well, the Director, Branch Libraries is a member of the Senior Staff Steering Committee comprised of senior management staff from across the city to guide the development of the strategy and internal engagement.

Following Council's adoption of the Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy, the intent is to develop an Implementation Plan with Outcomes, Indicators and a Financial Strategy that will go to Council for approval in Fall of 2015 along with the final version of the Strategy (Attachment 1).

COMMENTS

Toronto Public Library programs and services are closely aligned to the vision and objectives of the Poverty Reduction Strategy, and the Interim Strategy provides examples of how TPL supports people living in poverty. With the development of the Library's new strategic plan, there is an opportunity to incorporate major initiatives with outcomes, including those tied to the Poverty Reduction Strategy.

CONTACT

Anne Bailey, Director, Branch Libraries; Tel: 416-397-5944;
E-mail: abailey@torontopubliclibrary.ca

SIGNATURE

Vickery Bowles
City Librarian

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment 1: TO Prosperity: Interim Poverty Reduction Strategy