



STAFF REPORT ACTION REQUIRED

Social and Crisis Support Services – Award of Contracts

Date: April 20, 2026
To: Toronto Public Library Board
From: City Librarian

SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to seek Toronto Public Library Board approval to award non-competitive contracts to Gerstein Crisis Centre and TAIBU Community Health Centre to continue and expand Social and Crisis Support Services in select TPL branches. These contracts will support the ongoing operation of this successful and well-used service in the downtown core and allow for expansion into additional areas of the city beginning in 2026.

The initial contract term with Gerstein Crisis Centre is for a period of two years and eight months from May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028, with two optional one-year extensions to December 31, 2030. The total potential value of the contract with Gerstein Crisis Centre is \$5,242,987 excluding Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) over the full-term including option years. The initial contract term with TAIBU Community Health Centre is for a period of one year and eight months from May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027, with three optional one-year extensions to December 31, 2030. The total potential value of the contract with TAIBU Community Health

Centre is \$1,413,410 excluding Harmonized Sales Tax (HST) over the full-term including option years. The combined total potential value of both contracts is \$6,656,127 excluding Harmonized Sales Tax (HST).

TPL's Social and Crisis Support Services provides on-site crisis intervention, peer-led programming, and certified training opportunities that build community capacity and resilience. This integrated approach reduces barriers to care, supports individuals in spaces where they already feel safe, and contributes to more equitable and accessible mental health supports across Toronto.

The service launched in July 2023 as a two-year pilot at four branches and expanded to twelve locations by 2025, all within Gerstein Crisis Centre's downtown Toronto Community Crisis Service catchment area. Beginning in 2026, TPL will be incorporating this as a base service and expanding it to additional areas within TAIBU Community Health Centre's Toronto Community Crisis Service catchment area.

This award is being made in accordance with TPL's Procurement Policy, Section 6 Non-Competitive Solicitations which allows for the provision of deliverables for non-competitive procurement exceptions authorized by the Board. These contracts are being awarded through a non-competitive process as Gerstein Crisis Centre and TAIBU Community Health Centre are Toronto Community Crisis Service anchor partners working within assigned geographic catchment areas, under contract with the City of Toronto and serving the geographic areas where the selected TPL branches are located.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Librarian recommends that the Toronto Public Library Board:

1. award a contract to Gerstein Crisis Centre for Social and Crisis Support Services for a total potential value of \$5,242,987 excluding HST, comprised of:
 - a) base term from May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028, for \$2,935,848; and
 - b) two one-year optional renewal periods, subject to satisfactory performance and at the sole discretion of the City Librarian, for a total potential additional contract value of \$2,307,139, covering periods:

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- (i) January 1, 2029, to December 31, 2029, for \$1,142,148
 - (ii) January 1, 2030, to December 31, 2030, for \$1,164,991
2. award a contract to TAIBU Community Health Centre for Social and Crisis Support Services for a total potential value of \$1,413,140 excluding HST, comprised of:
- a) base term from May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027, for \$490,911; and
 - b) three one-year optional renewal periods, subject to satisfactory performance and at the sole discretion of the City Librarian; for a total potential additional contract value of \$922,229, covering periods:
 - (i) January 1, 2028, to December 31, 2028, for \$301,342
 - (ii) January 1, 2029, to December 31, 2029, for \$307,369
 - (iii) January 1, 2030, to December 31, 2030, for \$313,517

FINANCIAL IMPACT

The total potential value of the commitment with Gerstein Crisis Centre is \$5,242,987 excluding HST, as detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 –Gerstein Crisis Centre

Term	Total (Excl HST)
Base Term – May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2028	\$2,935,848
Option Year 1 – January 1, 2029, to December 31, 2029	\$1,142,148
Option Year 2 – January 1, 2030, to December 31, 2030	\$1,164,991
Total value of award	\$5,242,987

The total potential value of the commitment with TAIBU Community Health Centre is \$1,413,410 excluding HST, as detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 –TAIBU Community Health Centre

Term	Total (Excl HST)
Base Term – May 1, 2026, to December 31, 2027	\$490,911
Option Year 1 – January 1, 2028, to December 31, 2028	\$301,342
Option Year 2 – January 1, 2029, to December 31, 2029	\$307,369
Option Year 3 – January 1, 2030, to December 31, 2030	\$313,517
Total value of award	\$1,413,140

Funding for these service contracts is included in TPL's approved 2026 operating budget. In prior years the pilot and expansion of the service was funded within TPL's operating budget through a combination of base City funding and donations received through the TPL Foundation. In 2026, as this moves to a base service TPL plans to continue to provide, funding has been included in the base operating funding from the City. Funding for this service will continue to be incorporated into TPL's base operating budget through future year budget processes.

The Director, Finance & Chief Financial Officer has reviewed this financial impact statement and agrees with it.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PLAN

This service supports TPL's 2025-2029 strategic plan priorities of Learning and Growth through increasing programs and services that offer expert health, wellness and recovery support; and Shared Community Spaces through increasing opportunities for access to expert agencies so customers can conveniently connect with specialized services.

EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT

TPL's Social and Crisis Support Services was developed as an equity-focused, trauma-informed response to vulnerability. It offers direct, free support to customers experiencing mental health challenges, recovery and addictions, low income, homelessness, and other intersecting forms of vulnerability. The model is informed by people with lived experience and helps reduce structural barriers that can make it difficult for vulnerable customers to navigate community resources.

DECISION HISTORY

At its meeting on March 24, 2025, the Library Board considered the report [Social Service Team – Extension of Contract](#) and approved a contract extension to the existing contract with Gerstein Crisis Centre of \$1,067,000, for a total revised contract value of \$1,938,408, excluding HST, covering the period from April 1, 2023 to December 31, 2025.

ISSUE BACKGROUND

A 2019 Community Needs Assessment conducted by TPL identified the need for Social and Crisis Support Services.

At its November 8, 2023 meeting, City of Toronto Council approved EX9.10 - 2023 [Update on the Toronto Community Crisis Service and Proposed Expansion Plan](#) authorizing the negotiation and execution of service and funding agreements with Toronto Community Crisis Service anchor partners, including Gerstein Crisis Centre, and TAIBU Community Health Centre.

TPL launched a pilot in 2023, initially funded by the TPL Foundation, and later expanded the service in 2025 with additional TPL Foundation support. The pilot and subsequent expansions were at TPL branches within the Gerstein Crisis Centre catchment area. TPL has contracted with Gerstein to provide these services since the pilot has launched.

COMMENTS

Social and Crisis Support Services provides low-barrier access to crisis and mental health supports and helps build library capacity to support vulnerable populations. While available to all customers, the initiative is designed for Torontonians who are most vulnerable and may have difficulty accessing community resources. This initiative serves as an access point for library users, connecting them to resources outside the library setting such as mental health, primary care, housing, and recovery supports as well as to library programming options. The service supports library staff by offering clear referral pathways and access to specialized expertise when responding to complex customer needs.

By 2025, services had expanded to twelve downtown branches with services focused at Toronto Reference Library, Lillian H. Smith, Bloor/Gladstone, Parkdale, Parliament Street, High Park and Sanderson, with additional resources and programming available at City Hall, Fort York, Northern District, Spadina Road, and St. Lawrence.

2025 Service Results

In 2025, TPL's Social and Crisis Support Services supported over 6,300 individuals with one-on-one crisis support sessions and provided 1,120 programs for over 8,580 participants. Program satisfaction measures included:

- **96%** of respondents found the information helpful
- **93%** of respondents would recommend the service to others
- **91%** of respondents would access this service again
- **83%** of respondents expressed satisfaction with the services
- **81%** of respondents reported increased confidence in managing their wellness

2026 Service Expansion

In 2026, TPL identified additional branches in Scarborough/East Toronto and the central area to expand the service and improve geographic access, bringing the total to seventeen. Programs and services will include drop-in crisis support, peer-led wellness programs, and skills-based mental health and recovery workshops. Onsite crisis workers will provide immediate support and referrals to longer-term services.

Gerstein Crisis Centre and TAIBU Community Health Centre are being selected as TPL's Social and Crisis Support Service providers because their assigned Toronto Community Crisis Service geographic catchments align with TPL's service location priorities. Maintaining this alignment supports consistent customer pathways to mental health, primary care, social service and housing supports.

TPL has an existing contract with Gerstein Crisis Centre, which was extended to April 30, 2026, under the City Librarian's delegated authority to maintain continuity of service while 2026 budget funding was secured. TPL will establish a new contract with Gerstein Crisis Centre, covering TPL branches within its catchment area for a base term from May 1, 2026 to December 31, 2028, with two one-year optional renewal periods, potentially bringing the contract to December 31, 2030.

TPL will also enter into a contract with TAIBU Community Health Centre to service branches within its catchment area for a base term from May 1, 2026 to December 31, 2027, with three one-year optional renewal periods, potentially bringing the contract to December 31, 2030. The initial term for TAIBU Community Health

Centre is shorter to allow TPL to review and evaluate the service during this first-time partnership before considering the optional extension years. These contracts will incorporate lessons learned through the pilot phases of these services and from previous engagements.

The award of these contracts is being made in accordance with TPL Purchasing Policy, Section 6 - Non-Competitive Solicitations. These contracts are being awarded through a non-competitive process as Gerstein Crisis Centre and TAIBU Community Health Centre are Toronto Community Crisis Service anchor partners working within assigned geographic catchment areas, under contract with the City of Toronto and serving the geographic areas where the selected TPL branches are located.

Approval of these contracts will allow TPL to deliver Social and Crisis Support Services at the defined service level through December 31, 2030.

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SIGNATURE

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