

## Background

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund (LPRF) is a six-year initiative launched in 2015, as part of Ontario's Poverty Reduction Strategy, to support community-driven projects that improve the lives of those most affected by poverty. Funded initiatives support and evaluate poverty reduction initiatives, create partnerships, and help forge a body of evidence of programs that work for Ontarians living in poverty. In Round 2 of the LPRF, Ontario is investing over \$16 million in 30 new projects that focus on:

- breaking the cycle of poverty for children and youth
- employment and income security for people in, or at risk of being in, poverty
- preventing and reducing homelessness
- projects within Indigenous communities and Indigenous-led organizations both on and off reserve

The City of Greater Sudbury (City) was successful in the application for the LPRF in the amount of \$529,000 which covers a 32 month period from September 2017 to June 2020. The City is working with the Ontario Trillium Foundation, who is responsible for managing and administering the LPRF grants on behalf of the Province of Ontario.

The Local Poverty Reduction Fund Project (Project), which focuses on breaking the cycle of poverty for children and youth, is intended to evaluate the impact of school-based and community-based extracurricular activities on academic achievement and school success for up to 100 children in Grade 4 (2017/18) identified as being in need and living within deprived neighbourhoods.

The City has partnered with all four local school boards, representing 8 schools in high need areas, and incorporating English, Francophone and Indigenous students. Grade 3 Education Quality and Accountability Office (EQAO) scores will function as a baseline measurement and the corresponding Grade 6 EQAO scores will be used as one indicator of a series of indicators, to quantitatively evaluate the program.

Other project indicators to be tracked include but are not limited to:

- delinquency
- truancy/absenteeism
- school participation
- leadership
- belongingness
- behavioural incidents

## Current Project Status

At the May 15, 2017 Community Services Committee meeting, the report entitled Local Poverty Reduction Fund – Round 2 Grant was presented and some key developments since then are:

- Public Health Sudbury & Districts (PHSD) has been selected as the project evaluator, and will be involved throughout the project.
- An Advisory Group has been established, including all participating agencies and partners to support the work of the project team.
- A Coordinator has been recruited to liaise with the project lead, the evaluator, school partners and parents/guardians for the project term.
- Registration packages have been developed for the participants and the parents, which have been reviewed and approved by the ethics committee from the PHSD and school boards.
- Information sessions have been held in February of 2018 at each of the 8 participating schools:
  - Chelmsford Public School
  - Queen Elizabeth Public School
  - St. David School
  - St. Anne School
  - Ecole St. Joseph
  - Ecole Notre-Dame
  - Ecole publique Foyer-Jeunesse
  - Ecole publique Pavillon-de-l'Avenir
- Recruitment of Program Instructors is underway.
- The Project team will also include early years professionals from our licensed child care and EarlyON Child and Family Centre community with whom the City of Greater Sudbury has purchase of service agreements.

Programming will be offered in 6 to 8 week blocks during the school year, one day per week for 2 hours immediately at the end of the school day, and will alternate between recreation and leisure activities ( ie: ball sports, photography, cooking, etc...) reflecting the interests of parents/guardians and the children participating. The first block of programming will begin in April 2018 and will follow the school year calendar, with a

break for summer, Christmas and March Break. Opportunities for unique summer programming will be explored and implemented where feasible.

All programs offered will be based out of the participating schools and transportation home will be available for the children by school bus at the end of the program, thereby removing barriers for participation for parents/guardians.

The initial response to the registration and evaluation packages was very positive, with all registrants agreeing to participate in the evaluation component. While it is the intent to evaluate all registered students in the program, parents/guardians not wishing to participate in the evaluation component of the project will still be able to have their child(ren) participate in the project, which will follow the same group of children (Grade 4 in 2017/18) until the end of the project in June 2020. Parents/guardians may choose to participate in the evaluation component at a later date once they have experienced the benefits of the program for their child(ren). New children enrolling in those specific classes (Grade 4 in 2017/18, Grade 5 in 2018/19 or Grade 6 in 2019/20) over the next three years will be invited to register and participate as well.

## **Next Steps**

Ongoing monitoring of the program by the Children & Citizen Services Division and PHSD will continue through surveys and interviews conducted throughout the project with parents/guardians and children to gauge ongoing interest, assist with program planning and to measure the impact of the programming on academic success.

Further progress reports will be submitted to the Community Services Committee throughout the term of the project.

## **Reference**

Community Services Committee: Local Poverty Reduction Fund – Round 2 Grant  
<http://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&agenda=report&itemid=2&id=1202>