Dear members of the EPC

You may have caught the news conference led by Chief Danny Smyth on Thursday March 14, outlining the activities of a group of youth that have banded together and are wreaking havoc and violence on unsuspecting people in Winnipeg. Ground zero for these youths is the downtown, and Spence Neighbourhood. My staff are the ones who know them by name, know where they are (supposed) to live and have some semblance of relationship with them, even though we have had to stop allowing them in the building for the safety of staff and other program participants.

There are many slips and gaps in services that get youth to this point, and I know that it's beyond my ability to fix some of those systems, but one thing I do know that if youth have meaningful relationships and meaningful employment opportunities, they are much less likely to become involved in criminal activities and the justice system. This is borne out by study after study. Youth need activities and youth need employment.

First Jobs for Youth has had as its core funding, $36,000 from Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak. This funding, over the past five years, has placed approximately 100 Indigenous youth in jobs at the City of Winnipeg, many of them longer lasting. Over 90 percent of the youth involved in this program go on to permanent employment in a variety of fields, and many enter post secondary education. This is a wildly successful, relatively cheap program that changes lives and improves our city.

I understand that Oshki Annishinabe Nigaaniwak is also potentially facing a funding cut. In an age of reconciliation where historic wrongs have the opportunity to be righted, I plead with you to reconsider this recommendation. If we want a city that is truly for everyone, then we need to enlarge programs like this, not cut them.

The funding for *First Jobs for Youth* is more of a social investment than it is a grant. I ask you to continue to fund this valuable program, and all the work that is being done by your Indigenous Relations Division.

Thank you

Michele Wikkerink (She/Her)
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Spence Neighbourhood Association – Youth Employment

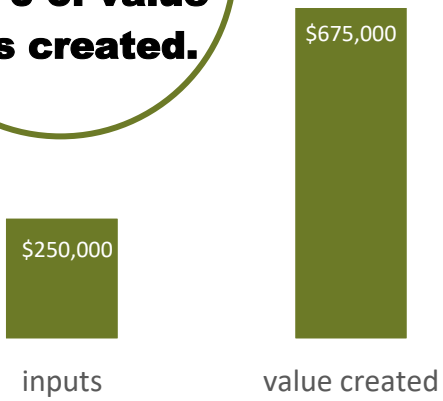
SNA provides youth opportunities to gain skills and earn needed income. Youth ages 9 -15 are engaged in odd jobs (catering meetings, yard maintenance) as a way earn money while avoiding negative influences. From the Youth Employment Hub, youth transition into First Jobs for Youth, a more intensive training program that prepares youth to enter the workforce in higher paying jobs that enhance their self-esteem, support workforce development and reinforce the lasting benefit of meaningful employment.

SNA leverages ~$10,000 of Municipal Relations funding into
$250,000 of community investment into increased youth employment.





For every $1 invested, $2.70 of value was created.



Activities	Key Outputs	Outcomes
Youth Employment Hub: Engage youth in age-appropriate odd jobs around Spence Neighbourhood	89 youth (9 – 15 yrs) complete basic work orders (e.g., lawn care services) Mentorship opportunities for older youth to train younger participants	• Youth without opportunity to earn cash, have access to income • Reduced involvement in harmful activities (steering youth away from gangs or sexual exploitation) • Improved self-esteem, sense of self worth • Positive community engagement and connections established (including inter-generationally)
First Jobs for Youth: Prepare youth for high quality work opportunities	27 youth (15 – 21 yrs) trained annually - Provide 19 hrs/week work prep and incubation at SNA - 5 hrs/week training and resume development 10 week (3 hrs/week) work placement with community businesses and non-profit partners Support accessing local jobs with higher pay, benefits and long-term opportunities (e.g., City of Winnipeg Recreation programs)	• Graduating youth have strong resumes and are highly valued as skilled, work-ready employees • Over 90% graduate into high quality, long-term employment positions • Increased likelihood for post-secondary enrollment • Reduced risk of criminal involvement • Increased creativity • Increased communication skills • Improved self-confidence