Sent: Wednesday, July 3, 2024 7:15:04 PM

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Delegation information
Committee: Council
Committee - council: Opposed to the recommendations
Committee - other: N/A
Agenda item (number and title): CUT TO COMMUNITY GRANTS

Service inquiry: Submit Comments in writing
Participation preference: N/A
Comments in writing: Urgent Appeal to Maintain Community Grants in Winnipeg I am writing to express my profound concern regarding the proposed cuts to community grants in Winnipeg. As a dedicated human rights activist and a member of this community, I firmly believe that these grants are crucial for the well-being of our youth and the overall safety and prosperity of our community.

Research has consistently shown that providing youth with recreational activities significantly reduces youth crime rates. When young people have access to positive outlets such as sports, arts, and community programs, they are less likely to engage in criminal activities. These programs not only keep them occupied but also provide them with essential life skills, mentorship, and a sense of belonging (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). According to the Fight Crime: Invest in Kids organization, structured after-school programs can lead to a 30% reduction in juvenile crime (Fight Crime: Invest in Kids, 2000).

Cutting community grants would be a short-sighted decision with long-term negative consequences. The cost of police intervention and incarceration far exceeds the investment in preventative measures such as recreational activities and community programs. According to the Justice Policy Institute (2010), every dollar spent on prevention and early intervention saves taxpayers seven to ten dollars in future costs. By increasing funding for these grants, we can reduce youth crime and enhance community safety more effectively and economically.

Investing in our youth is investing in the future of our city. Programs funded by these grants provide young people with opportunities to develop critical thinking, leadership skills, and a sense of responsibility. These are not just recreational activities; they are essential components of youth development that help prevent delinquency and promote positive social behaviors (Lerner et al., 2005). For instance, after-school programs have been shown to improve academic performance, increase school attendance, and decrease behavioral problems, all of which contribute to a reduction in crime rates (Afterschool Alliance, 2014).

Moreover, community grants support a wide range of services beyond youth programs, including mental health support, family services, and neighborhood improvement projects. These services collectively contribute to a safer and more cohesive community (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997). Reducing these grants would undermine the social fabric of Winnipeg, leading to higher social costs in the long run. According to the Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA), community-based mental health services play a critical role in reducing the burden on emergency services and improving overall public health (CMHA, 2018).

The importance of these grants is also evident in the context of socio-economic disparities. Winnipeg, like many other cities, has neighborhoods where economic hardships and lack of resources can lead to higher crime rates. Community grants help bridge this gap by providing equitable access to resources and opportunities. This not only helps in crime prevention but also promotes social equity and justice (Putnam, 2000).

Furthermore, community programs funded by these grants foster a sense of community and collective efficacy, which is crucial for neighborhood safety. Research by Sampson, Raudenbush, and Earls (1997) highlights that communities with strong social cohesion and trust among residents have lower rates of violence and crime. These programs encourage community engagement, volunteerism, and civic responsibility, all of which are vital for a thriving society.

In light of these points, cutting community grants would be a detrimental move that could set back the progress we have made in building a safer and more inclusive city. The economic argument is clear: investing in preventive measures is far more cost-effective than dealing with the consequences of increased crime and social disintegration.

I urge you to reconsider the proposed cuts and instead increase funding for community grants. By doing so, we can create a safer, more vibrant, and inclusive Winnipeg for all. Our youth deserve the chance to grow in a supportive environment that fosters their potential and steers them away from negative influences.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. Your support in maintaining and increasing community grants will ensure a brighter future for Winnipeg

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File:
Public engagement preference: Yes