

At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Working Group – Status Update as of March 23, 2020

The following is a preliminary listing of actions to date related to the At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Working Group. In some cases, these actions have been completed and, in others, they are in exploration, underway or ongoing. Given the fluidity of the situation, the listed actions and their status are subject to change at any time.

The At-Risk and Vulnerable Population Working Group, in which the terms of reference have been circulated to Council and which meets at 9:00 a.m. on March 26, will use this preliminary listing of actions as a foundation and starting point for other actions in which to better meet the needs of at-risk and vulnerable populations in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.

| Actions | Status | Notes |
|---|-----------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop terms of reference for the At-Risk and Vulnerable Populations Working Group, which will include government, faith and non-profit representatives. | Completed | First meeting is 9:00 on March 26 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Retain the services of Courtney Pankratz, Overdose Prevention Community Action Team Project Coordinator, to assist and resource the working group. | Completed | Contracted for 17.5 hours per week |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a key contacts listing of non-profit organizations serving at-risk and vulnerable populations. | Almost complete | To be circulated to EOC on March 24 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and distribute a survey to faith and non-profit organizations as to their preparedness, capacity and needs in serving at-risk and vulnerable populations. | Completed | Currently tabulating surveys |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Document non-profit closures and service reductions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic and track the implications for at-risk and vulnerable populations. | Ongoing | To be communicated to EOC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request better prepared and resourced non-profits share their Pandemic Response Plans and other documents with less prepared and resourced non-profits. | Ongoing | To be posted |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Install portable toilets in the Downtown (2) and Uptown (2) and review needs in other neighbourhoods (e.g., Sapperton). | Ongoing | |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the installation of sanitation stations or kiosks in the Downtown, where public washrooms are scarce, and in other neighbourhoods (e.g., Sapperton, Uptown). | Ongoing | There is a scarcity of product and supplies |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operationalize all drinking fountains and contact faith and non-profit organizations regarding the distribution of bottled water. Bottled water will be distributed next week, with future deliveries based on demand. | Completed | Regularly monitor and update EOC |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Contact existing food security programs to determine what is required to maintain their current operations and to scale-up if there is increasing demand. Union Gospel Mission exploring an evening and weekend take-away food program. | Ongoing | Regularly monitor and update EOC |

| | | |
|--|-----------------|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore possibility of establishing a warming centre in the Downtown and review need in other neighbourhoods. Lookout Health and Housing Society exploring establishing a warming centre at the Cliff Block. | Underway | There is a need for volunteers to support the centre. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend operating season and hours for Extreme Weather Response Program at the Cliff Block and look at re-operationaling program for at-risk and vulnerable women as the Elizabeth Fry Society. | Underway | Discussions with BC Housing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Explore the possibility of enabling people who are homeless and who have had contact with someone who has been exposed to the virus to self-isolate. Contact the owners of the Corporate Inn as to whether their hotel, which has been sitting empty for an extended period of time, could be used for this purpose, possibly on a lease basis. | Underway | Discussions with BC Housing |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create an information portal on the City's website which will be a central access point for information and resources for faith and non-profit organizations serving at-risk and vulnerable populations. | Underway | In development with Communications |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revive and regularly update and circulate the City's 'Survival Guide' for the Street Entrenched, which lists food and meal programs, drop-in and shelters, and essential health and medical services. Distribute through the Extreme Weather Response Program distribution notification listing. | Underway | Portable and accessible to people on the street |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expand the loan capacity and relax the eligibility criteria of the New Westminster Rent Bank Program, enabling it to meet the increased demand of renters who may not be able to pay their rent or essential utilities. | Underway | Report to Council on March 23 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a public awareness campaign to request that the public donate to faith and non-profit organizations and consider supporting or volunteering for these organizations. | Underway | To be posted on-line and through social media on March 25 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategy for addressing the needs of at-risk and vulnerable youth, particularly those who are living in abusive or dysfunctional family situations, and on the street or in uncertain or unstable living arrangements. Consider on-line and outreach support, including crisis information and counselling services, and explore a possible role for the Youth Centre (e.g., resource centre, food hub, etc.). | Just commencing | Informed by Paolo Zenone, Youth Recreation Leader |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Others ... | | |