



City of Richmond
**Youth Strategy Highlights
Report 2023–2024**





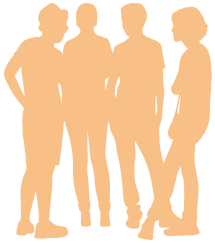
Introduction

On July 24, 2023, City Council adopted the City of Richmond Youth Strategy 2022–2032 (Youth Strategy), which guides the City’s approach to addressing the priority needs of youth and young adults in Richmond. Developed through research, youth engagement and a demographic analysis of Richmond’s youth population, the Youth Strategy outlines five strategic priorities and 36 actions to guide policies and initiatives for youth and young adults aged 13-24 years. The Youth Strategy is framed by a vision that “all youth in Richmond are safe, valued, respected and have the supports, opportunities and resources to live rich and fulfilling lives.”

Implementation of the Youth Strategy relies on the input, expertise and collaborative efforts of key partners, including:

- The Government of Canada
- The Province of BC
- The City of Richmond
- Richmond Community Associations and Societies
- Richmond Youth-Serving Community Organizations
- Public Partners and Government Agencies
- Richmond Youth

The City of Richmond Youth Strategy Highlights Report 2023-2024 provides a snapshot of the progress and achievements that have occurred during the first two years of Youth Strategy’s implementation.



Strategic Priority 1: Foundation

Meeting youth’s basic needs is crucial for their success and well-being. When communities provide these resources, youth can thrive, pursue education and develop important life skills. Prioritizing these needs empowers young people and strengthens the entire community, fostering a healthier society.

The following actions support **Strategic Priority 1: Foundation**:

- 1.1** Continue to foster positive and meaningful connections between youth and safe, supportive adults in the community.
- 1.2** Increase opportunities for youth to connect with peers and develop supportive positive relationships and a sense of belonging including youth from equity-deserving groups.
- 1.3** Align youth mental and physical health promotional tools and use common language to increase youth engagement, understanding and well-being.
- 1.4** Promote community safety initiatives to increase youth feelings of safety at home, at school, online and in their neighbourhood.
- 1.5** Ensure the provision of safe, welcoming and inclusive programming and services for youth in the community.
- 1.6** Increase clarity of and access to resources for all youth and their families to meet their basic needs (e.g. food, housing, medical care, education, child care).
- 1.7** Raise awareness of the existing emergency and crisis services for youth in the community and how to access them.
- 1.8** Share information and resources to support youth and their families who are navigating housing insecurity and require a shelter, safe house or transitional housing.



Highlights

- In January 2023, Public Safety Canada announced that the City of Richmond was awarded \$2.68 million from the Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF). Grant funding supported the development of a three-year City of Richmond’s BSCF Strategy, adopted by Council and approved by Public Safety Canada in July 2023, and will fund several initiatives identified within the plan. The BSCF Strategy incorporates research and evidence-based initiatives tailored to Richmond, focusing on gun and gang violence prevention and intervention through mentorship, counselling, rehabilitation, skills development and recreational opportunities.
- To-date, through the BSCF Strategy, utilizing BSCF grant funding:
 - The City has distributed Organized Crime Agency of British Columbia End Gang Life educational materials, facilitated an End Gang Life workshop for City and partner youth workers and hosted two information sessions for parents; and
 - Youth “Micro Hubs” were established at South Arm, City Centre and Cambie Community Centres. The Micro Hubs, staffed part-time with Touchstone Family Association (TFA) Youth Workers, provided new equipment to enhance existing youth spaces. TFA staff work closely with Community Association Youth Development Coordinators to provide resource referrals and drop-in opportunities for youth, including crafts, games, special events and workshops in areas of financial literacy, resume writing, and interview skills.
- In July 2023, the Richmond RCMP formally launched the Yankee-30 Youth Partnership Car program (Yankee-30), in collaboration with the Ministry of Children and Family Development’s (MCFD) Youth Justice Services and Child Protection Services. Through collaboration between a police officer from the Richmond RCMP Youth Section and a probation officer or social worker from MCFD, Yankee-30 identifies and provides support to youth who are considered at risk due to their behaviour, vulnerability or exploitation by others.



- In October 2023, the City, Richmond Multicultural Community Services, City Centre Community Association and the Minoru Seniors Society completed a series of initiatives, funded by a \$92,000 grant from the Department of Canadian Heritage’s Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives. This project brought together youth and senior participants from diverse cultural backgrounds to discuss multiculturalism, diversity and racism through storytelling, performance and the arts. Youth from equity-deserving communities, including newcomers and racialized groups, reported a greater sense of safety and belonging due to participating in the project, which culminated in two public “guided play” performances that focused on participants’ personal migration stories.
- In March 2024, the Fearless Youth Leadership group at City Centre Community Centre organized She-nanigans; a four-hour event where 25 youth learned about gender equity and gender roles through various activities and whole-hearted discussions about how to better support women, transgender and non-binary folks in the community.
- In 2024, the City, in partnership with Aspire Richmond and the Richmond Public Library, facilitated Express Yourself, a free, year-long community-engaged artist project by Keely O’Brien that invited Richmond youth aged 12-19 years to explore their emerging identities. This project guided youth through a variety of art mediums, including collage, drawing, printmaking, storytelling, and zine creation to recognize neurodiversity and the differences and similarities among us. It aimed to build a vibrant community of young artists exploring the possibilities of creative self-expression.
- Throughout the year, free youth hangout events are held weekly at all community centres to provide safe, welcoming and inclusive opportunities for Richmond youth to connect with their peers and participate in a variety of activities. Community Association Youth Development Coordinators work closely with youth to develop these events and support youth participation. In addition, the City’s Youth Outreach Workers host youth mega hangouts at various locations across the City during the summer and other school breaks. In 2024, these included an open mic night at the Cultural Centre Annex, a barbecue at West Richmond Community Centre, a water fight at Thompson Community Centre, and Camp Cambie at Cambie Community Centre.



Strategic Priority 2: Voice

Youth possess valuable insights into their own needs and challenges, making their involvement in decision-making essential for effective community programs. By prioritizing their perspectives, youth are empowered and create solutions that resonate with their own experiences. Engaging young people ensures that interventions are relevant and impactful, fostering a sense of ownership in their community.

The following actions support **Strategic Priority 2: Voice:**

- 2.1** Increase opportunities for youth to provide meaningful input into City-related matters that impact them including youth from equity-deserving groups.
- 2.2** Promote and seek youth engagement in program, service and facility development and on topics in the community that impact youth.
- 2.3** Increase public awareness and education of the positive contributions youth make in the community.
- 2.4** Continue to provide and enhance formal opportunities for recognition and celebration of youth in Richmond (e.g. through events and communication campaigns) including specific youth identified from equity-deserving groups.
- 2.5** Engage in further collaboration with Indigenous youth, their families and Elders regarding the Youth Strategy and its implementation.
- 2.6** Include youth in the development of an implementation plan and promotion of the Youth Strategy.



Highlights

- In January 2024, City Council approved the creation of the Richmond Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) to act as a resource and provide advice to City Council regarding the planning, development and implementation of policies, programs and services that directly impact youth and young adults in Richmond. The YAC is comprised of up to nine youth and young adults 13-24 years and one individual of any age who plays a significant role in a young person's life and/or has a significant interest in positive youth development in Richmond. The committee has a total of four organizational representatives from Aspire Richmond, Foundry Richmond, Richmond Addiction Services Society, Richmond School District and Vancouver Coastal Health. The YAC held its first meeting in May 2024.
- The City's U-ROC (Richmond Outstanding Community) Awards formally recognize youth for their contributions to community, volunteerism, leadership and resilience; and recognize supportive adults, known as "Asset Champions". In 2023 and 2024, 105 youth and 43 Asset Champion received U-ROC Awards. The City's U-ROC Scholarship, awarded to one outstanding youth each year to help with expenses related to their post-secondary education such as tuition fees and cost of textbooks, increased from \$500 to \$1,000 in 2024.
- BC Youth Week is an annual celebration held from May 1-7 that highlights the diverse interests, accomplishments and valuable contributions of youth in the community. Free and/or low cost events are held throughout the week, including recreational activities and a city-wide Youth Swim to celebrate and recognize the positive contributions of youth. Over 850 youth participated in the Youth Week events held across the city throughout 2023 and 2024.
- To strengthen opportunities for youth input into transportation planning, the City hosted three engagement sessions with youth at Thompson, West Richmond and Cambie Community Centres from April to September 2024. The sessions focused on promoting walking, cycling and taking transit to and from school, and youth were able to share their current travel habits. The feedback received will help to inform the City's active transportation plans and initiatives to foster increased sustainable transportation trips to and from school by Richmond students.



- The annual Richmond Arts Awards program recognizes the achievements and contributions to the arts by Richmond residents within five categories, including Youth Arts. In May 2024, Opal Chen, a seventh-grader in Richmond was recognized for her creative use of recycled materials, promoting environmental sustainability and raising awareness through her art. For her artwork and its positive impact on conservation advocacy and the community, Opal received a \$300 scholarship from the Richmond Arts Coalition.
- The Positive Ticket (POSI-ticket) program, a collaboration between the City, Community Associations and Societies and RCMP that provides community service providers an opportunity to recognize positive behaviours, reward good deeds and build positive relationships with youth by awarding them with a POSI-ticket, was relaunched in 2023. POSI-tickets can be redeemed for one free drop-in session at a participating community centre or facility of the recipient's choice. Since the program relaunched, there have been 196 visits to six different facilities across the city.
- In 2024, Richmond Arenas Community Association (RACA) created \$1,000 bursaries for graduating high school students to use towards any post-secondary schooling. One bursary was awarded to a student in each of the RACA minor sport organizations: Richmond Ravens, Richmond Ringette, Connaught Figure Skating Club, Richmond Lacrosse, Richmond South Delta Ball Hockey and Richmond Jets.



Strategic Priority 3: Collaboration

Richmond’s youth sector thrives on strong collaboration among agencies, creating a strong network of service providers. This integrated approach, involving non-profits, public partners, and local government, prioritizes comprehensive support for positive youth development in the community.

The following actions support **Strategic Priority 3: Collaboration:**

- 3.1** Develop tools and practices to support robust information sharing with front line youth service providers.
- 3.2** Identify opportunities to collaborate with post-secondary institutions regarding the delivery of programs and services for young adults.
- 3.3** Utilize a systems-based approach to address the needs of vulnerable groups and individuals including: a) Reducing barriers to participation; and b) Avoiding duplication of youth services.
- 3.4** Facilitate increased cross-agency information sharing regarding youth programs, supports and resources, especially those related to mental health.
- 3.5** Identify and implement strategies to eliminate gaps and address the needs of youth across the developmental continuum and during transitions.
- 3.6** Dedicate appropriate staff resources to adequately plan for and meet the current and evolving needs of an increasingly complex population of youth in Richmond.
- 3.7** Advocate to senior levels of government to enhance funding for community-based services and supports for youth in Richmond.



Highlights

- In August 2023, as part of the City of Richmond’s Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF) Strategy, utilizing BSCF grant funding, a number of initiatives were implemented in collaboration with Touchstone Family Association (TFA), including:
 - The creation of three new TFA Youth Outreach Worker positions to engage with at-risk youth 12-24 years and their families. These positions aim to promote access to prosocial opportunities, focusing on off-site programming and case management.
 - The expansion of TFA’s StreetSmarts program to provide targeted mentorship and programming for a larger number of at-risk youth in Richmond.
 - A new Workforce Readiness Initiative, implemented by TFA, to support at-risk and gang-involved youth aged 12-24 years. This initiative offers vocational training, job readiness skills, resume development, and interview preparation support tailored to individual career goals, helping participants secure sustainable employment and contribute positively to the community.
- In August 2024, the Ministry of Public Safety and Solicitor General announced that the City of Richmond was awarded \$50,000 to assist with the implementation of a youth situation table. Situation tables enable front-line workers to proactively identify risks through information sharing, use and coordinate existing community resources and relationships between health supports and culturally safe services, plan and deliver collaborative interventions and reduce increased risk in youth’s lives. The City’s situation table is anticipated to begin in late 2025.



- The City’s Richmond Youth Media Program, in collaboration with community partners, offered a variety of programs that provided equity-deserving youth with opportunities to gain skills in media arts and connect with the City’s Youth Outreach Workers at the Media Lab. These programs include:
 - In 2023, a bi-monthly skill session on media arts for equity-deserving youth from the TFA School Readiness Program.
 - From September 2023 to June 2024, the Richmond School District’s Integrated Child and Youth (ICY) Program’s Outreach Workers provided over 100 hours of mentorship at the Media Lab. In addition, three students from the Richmond School District volunteered over 150 hours at the Media Lab.
 - In May 2024, Kwantlen Polytechnic University’s Entertainment Arts Program provided a youth with the unique opportunity to lead a skill session workshop on Video Game Design.
 - In 2024, the Photovoice Project, a collaboration with Richmond Addiction Services Society, taught grade seven students, who take part in Blundell Elementary School’s School’s Out program, basic photography skills.
- The City of Richmond’s Film Office works with a number of post-secondary institutions in the region that offer Film Programs to provide education and training on the City’s filming processes. Students from these programs are able to apply for student film permits and fees for filming are often fully waived. The Richmond Film Office worked with 15-25 student groups per year in 2023 and 2024.
- Throughout the 2023/24 school year, Richmond Fire Rescue staff attended staff at J.N. Burnett, Hugh Boyd and McMath Secondary Schools, engaging with nearly 1,000 students, to provide information on firefighting as a career option, and to provide information on emergency services and community involvement.



Strategic Priority 4: Opportunity

Providing youth with meaningful activities that foster skill development, social engagement and community contribution is essential for promoting Positive Youth Development. Prioritizing diversity, equity and inclusion ensures that all young people feel safe and welcomed. Access to a wide range of culturally relevant and inclusive programs is crucial, particularly for equity-deserving groups, addressing opportunity gaps and supporting youth through their transitions from adolescence to adulthood.



The following actions support **Strategic Priority 4: Opportunity:**

- 4.1** Ensure a range of programs and services that prioritize wellness, learning and skill development are available for youth.
- 4.2** Align and promote community-wide youth services through a common framework (e.g. the 40 Developmental Assets Framework).
- 4.3** Expand provision of relevant programs, services and resources to include individuals aged 19-24 years in collaboration with young adults.
- 4.4** Develop additional volunteer and paid opportunities for personal growth and development and for youth to gain job readiness skills, training and employment.
- 4.5** Continue to provide a range of programs and services that prioritize accessible and inclusive recreation and social connection for youth.
- 4.6** Continue to provide youth with safe, welcoming and accessible places to gather, socialize and engage within new and existing indoor and outdoor spaces in the community.
- 4.7** Investigate funding opportunities to help facilitate the development of new or expanded youth spaces within the community.
- 4.8** Expand initiatives that provide leadership and mentorship for youth including refugees, new immigrants and youth who are at risk of or experiencing vulnerability.
- 4.9** Expand opportunities for youth to learn about and engage with local government.
- 4.10** Involve youth in advancing City initiatives such as sustainability and climate-action projects.

Highlights

- The Richmond Green Ambassadors is a youth volunteer program coordinated by the City of Richmond in partnership with the Richmond School District. In 2023 and 2024, the City's 144 Green Ambassadors hosted ten symposiums and four training sessions for team leaders, participated in eight City and community events, and provided support to eight secondary school green teams, contributing a total of 3,138 volunteer and training hours. The Richmond Green Ambassadors program fosters communication, teamwork and leadership development through learning or skill-based opportunities and experiences such as public speaking, critical thinking, networking and leadership training. As part of the program's review in 2024, City staff hosted a workshop for interested Green Ambassadors to provide feedback on opportunities for program enhancements.
- In 2023 and 2024, Community Associations and Societies received \$275,000 in Canada Summer Job Grants to fund youth employment positions, primarily in summer day camp programs. The Richmond Nature Park Society received an additional \$4,400 through the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association Youth Employment Experience Grant in 2024 to help support funding towards four summer day camp leader positions at the Richmond Nature Park. The summer leaders gained valuable people, leadership, supervisory and team skills in their roles caring for and educating children throughout the summer.
- In 2023, the Media Lab was awarded \$360,000 in grant funding from the Ministry of Jobs, Economic Development and Innovation. This funding allowed for a comprehensive upgrade of equipment and software, greatly enhancing the variety and quality of programs offered to youth. Examples of items purchased included music creation and recording devices, iPads and computers for graphic design and two state of the art 3D printers. This equipment helped make the expansion of the Richmond Youth Media Program's free, weekly drop-in sessions possible by adding two new sessions: Create Space and Music Jam. This expansion increased opportunities for youth to connect with each other over similar interests, expand their learning and network with the support of Youth Outreach Workers.
- In February 2024, the Minoru Seniors Society was awarded \$25,000 in federal New Horizon's grant funding to implement "Now and Then – A Journey through the Eras," an intergenerational program geared towards bringing together children, youth and seniors. Dining through the Decades gave youth and seniors an opportunity to create a healthy and delicious meal and discuss past and present dining habits. In July and August 2024, the Technology through the Times program worked with youth and seniors to learn about what technology was like in the past and present, and create a fun technology based project. These projects aimed to build mentorship and provide leadership and experience for youth while reducing ageism.



- In 2023/24, the City's Transportation Department hired seven Engineering students from the University of British Columbia and the University of Victoria for four to eight month co-op terms. Students gained skills and training experience in transportation related design and development while working on active transportation planning projects.
- Richmond RCMP's annual Youth Academy, jointly coordinated with the Richmond School District, is a week-long event where youth in Grades 10-12 can explore their interest in policing as a potential career. Participants engage in practical police-related scenarios and have the opportunity to speak with police officers from various specialized sections, including the Integrated Police Dog Services and Emergency Response Team. In 2023 and 2024, a total of 60 youth participants experienced an RCMP-style Regimental Dinner and attended a formal graduation ceremony with their parents.
- In 2024, a new Girls Only Fitness program was launched at Minoru Centre for Active Living. This registered program introduces female youth to different fitness activities, equipment and classes, in a safe and welcoming environment. Thirteen youth participated in the first program.
- New in 2024, the City offered Empower Her, a free, referral-based program for female-identifying youth 13-24 years interested in taking part in physical activities and outings. Through low-barrier introductions to activities such as hiking, kickboxing and volleyball, the City's Youth Outreach Workers supported participants to overcome barriers to participation, build positive relationships and access other community supports, as needed.
- The City's Youth Outreach Workers work across the City to engage with youth and youth-serving agencies to develop youth driven opportunities and support youth participation. For example, in March 2024 10 youth referred from youth-serving agencies in the community attended a ski/snowboard lesson at Whistler Snow School with the City's Youth Outreach Workers. Youth who had never been to Whistler had an opportunity to make positive, impactful memories and feel a sense of pride and accomplishment in trying something new. This trip was made possible through an in-kind donation by Zero Ceiling Foundation.

- From March 2023 to December 2024, 17 youth were enrolled in the Instructor/Lifeguard Subsidy Program. This program provides training courses offered by the City at a 90% subsidized rate to residents 13 years and older who are experiencing financial hardship and who are interested in a career or position as an Instructor/Lifeguard.
- Introduced in 2023, the Richmond Sports Council Active Recreation and Sports Fund provides funding support for youth 18 years and younger in financial need to participate in sports and recreation activities that are not affiliated with a provincial sport organization and not delivered directly through the City. By the end of 2024, 26 children and youth have received a combined \$8,375 of funding support.
- In February 2024, City Centre Community Centre facilitated a Leadership Through a Reconciliation Lens workshop with 110 youth in attendance. During the workshop, youth learned about significant historical topics such as Residential Schools, Day Schools and the Sixties Scoop. Youth were also given an opportunity to learn more about decolonization and colonization and ask questions related to reconciliation.
- In 2023, 1,094 youth volunteers contributed 31,680 volunteer hours and in 2024, 1,271 youth volunteers contributed 36,232 volunteer hours through various opportunities that support Parks, Recreation and Culture programs and events, including those provided by the City and Community Associations, as well as the Richmond Public Library and other City initiatives. Through these volunteer opportunities, youth are able to develop leadership skills and contribute positively to their community. Certificates of appreciation and accomplishment are issued by the City and Community Associations and Societies to recognize the volunteer contributions of youth.
- Richmond Community Association and Societies offered a number of opportunities focused on skill development and job support in 2023 and 2024, including:
 - South Arm Community Association hosted Resume & Interview Skill Building sessions to educate youth on how to update a resume, review job postings and learn fundamental interview skills.
 - Thompson Community Association hosted interactive “Peek into Business” workshops that introduced youth to basic business skills, including marketing, budgeting and developing draft business plans.
 - Steveston Community Society launched a Special Events Volunteer Team that allowed youth to gain hands-on leadership experience in event facilitation, program management and community development.

Strategic Priority 5: Awareness

Access to information is crucial for youth and their families to engage with community programs and services. Providing this information in various formats and through multiple platforms ensures that everyone can access the resources available in Richmond. It is a priority for the community to raise awareness of the diverse services and supports for youth.

The following actions support **Strategic Priority 5: Awareness:**

- 5.1** Create youth-related content for City communication platforms that is culturally relevant, digitally equitable and meets the needs of youth, their families and the community.
- 5.2** Explore and implement safe, equitable and effective communication tools to increase knowledge of local youth resources for youth and their families.
- 5.3** Monitor and evaluate the implementation of the Youth Strategy and report out on progress on a biennial basis.
- 5.4** Monitor the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and other emerging global or local exceptional events on Richmond youth including impacts to both mental and physical well-being.
- 5.5** Research and analyze trends and innovative practices to understand and respond to the changing needs of youth and share findings with the community.



Highlights

- The City created various youth-related materials and promotions to advertise programs and services available to youth, create awareness of ongoing City projects and promote youth engagement. This information was shared with youth through the City’s website, social media channels, digital transit ads and at community centres across the city.
- The City’s Youth Outreach Workers and Community Association and Society Youth Development Coordinators utilized the City’s @CityofRichmondYouth Instagram account to share information directly with youth, and promote programs and services available to them. In 2024, the Instagram account reached over 4,200 accounts, with over 2,000 content interactions, 290 new followers, and over 3,900 profile visits.
- Throughout 2023 and 2024, the City, in partnership with Richmond Addiction Services Society, facilitated a Youth Network Table comprised of approximately 35 youth-serving organizations across the city. Organizations represented at the table include Vancouver Coastal Health, Richmond School District, Richmond Public Library, Pathways Clubhouse, Touchstone Family Association and Richmond Multicultural Community Services. The table meet regularly to share program information, discuss youth trends and promote collaboration to ensure emerging youth needs are being addressed.
- In 2024, the City initiated research to establish an inventory of grant funding programs available to the City that support the actions outlined in the Youth Strategy. This work is expanding, with input from community partners, to include funding programs available to government, health authorities, not-for-profit organizations, and groups of youth, with the goal of enhancing collaborations and new coordinated responses to addressing youth needs in the Richmond.





Next Steps and Conclusion

Since the Youth Strategy was adopted, several initiatives highlighted in this report have contributed towards achieving the strategic priorities and outcomes identified in the Youth Strategy. Progress towards Youth Strategy implementation reflects the ongoing commitment and collaboration between the City, Community Associations and Societies, partners, youth serving organizations and Richmond youth themselves.

The City and its partners continue to monitor the evolving needs of youth in the community and collaborate closely to ensure these needs are effectively addressed. Most importantly, the voices of Richmond youth will continue to be prioritized and amplified through planning and initiatives that impact them. By listening to and responding to what Richmond youth are saying, the Youth Strategy will continue to guide collective actions towards the vision that “all youth in Richmond are safe, valued, respected and have the supports, opportunities and resources to live rich and fulfilling lives.”



City of Richmond

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