

## 2024 Community Organization Investment: Funded Initiatives

The Gordie Howe International Bridge project is a once-in-a-generation undertaking. Not only will the project deliver much-needed transportation improvements for international travellers, it is providing jobs and opportunities for growth to the Windsor, Ontario, and Detroit, Michigan region. A key project element is the inclusion of a Community Benefits Plan.

The \$23 million Neighbourhood Infrastructure Strategy of the Community Benefits Plan includes the Community Organization Investment, an annual commitment to provide \$200,000 (CDN) in funding to community organizations located in or serving Sandwich/west Windsor or Delray/Southwest Detroit (the host communities). The initiative runs from 2020 to 2025 to support events, programming and/or infrastructure improvements that benefit the host communities and align with one of the community investment priorities: community partnerships, community safety and connections, economic benefits and/or aesthetics and landscaping.

From November 2023 to January 2024, registered non-profit and charitable organizations were invited to apply for the program's fifth year of funding. Twenty-four eligible applications were reviewed and prioritized by members of the Local Community Group, which includes stakeholders representing various perspectives from Windsor and Detroit. The prioritized applications were reviewed by senior project representatives from Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA), Bridging North America (BNA) and the State of Michigan to determine funding recipients.

In July 2024, the Community Organization Investment will divide \$200,000 (CDN) to seven organizations in Canada and six in the US.

### CANADIAN INITIATIVES

#### **2024 Higher Grounds Festival**

**Organization:** CJAM Student Media

**Funding:** \$25,000

**Initiative Type:** Event/programming

A one-day event will be held at Mackenzie Hall, showcasing local musicians of various genres and visual artists. The event will include live music performances, visual arts programming and storytelling.

#### **Education, Community Outreach and Concert Programming**

**Organization:** Windsor Symphony Orchestra

**Funding:** \$25,000

**Initiative Type:** Event/programming

Musical arts programming will be hosted throughout the Sandwich community including quartet visits to Marlborough Public School, musical performances for residents in care facilities, retirement homes and social agencies and concerts in community spaces.

### **Kickstarting the West**

**Organization:** Windsor-Essex Community Housing Corporation (WECHC)

**Funding:** \$20,000

**Initiative Type:** Infrastructure

A vacant lot in Sandwich will be transformed into a soccer field for use by the local community. The soccer field will be informed by community engagement with WECHC tenants on topics such as cultural elements and design preferences.

### **Virtual Guided Bicycle Tours**

**Organization:** Bike Windsor Essex

**Funding:** \$9,000

**Initiative Type:** Programming

Two virtual guided bike tours will be developed that focus on the Sandwich area's role in Underground Railroad and local Black History. These tours will complement similarly themed bike tours in Detroit, creating an international tour of shared stories.

### **Family Activities and Events**

**Organization:** Sisters of the Holy Names of Jesus and Mary

**Funding:** \$4,000

**Initiative Type:** Programming

New events and activities such as cooking classes, recreational exercise days and increased swimming times will be added to the organization's existing programming, providing a safe space for families to meet and learn from each other and fostering a sense of community and belonging.

## **US INITIATIVES**

### **Transformational Teen Life Internship Program**

**Organization:** New City Kids

**Funding:** \$25,000 (CDN)

**Initiative Type:** Programming

Grade nine students will be offered paid, internships where they serve as tutors, music instructors and leaders in New City Kids' After School Center. Interns will receive education on leadership, financial stewardship, workforce readiness and attainability of post-secondary education while positively engaging with younger community members in the afterschool programming.

### **Fridge/Freezer Purchase and Programming Support**

**Organization:** Society of Saint Vincent de Paul

**Funding:** \$12,000

**Initiative Type:** Infrastructure/programming

A new commercial fridge/freezer will be purchased for the Caring Hearts food distribution program to enhance storage of perishable foods. Additionally, funds will support program expansion and increase participant capacity of the Helping Hands Friendship Centre.

### **Father Joe Quinn Education Series**

**Organization:** Assumption University

**Funding:** \$5,000

**Initiative Type:** Programming

Local students of all ages will learn about social issues in their community from area experts while deepening their understanding of their role in making society a better place.

### **Grants for Youth in Sports in Southwest Detroit**

**Organization:** Hispanic Police Officers' Association of Michigan – Detroit Chapter

**Funding:** \$21,000 (CDN)

**Initiative Type:** Programming

Funding will support grants for Southwest Detroit youth who wish to participate in group sports but face financial challenges. Grants can be used to subsidize team registrations, fees, equipment, uniforms, travel and related expenses.

**Experience Southwest Detroit****Organization:** Southwest Detroit Business Association**Funding:** \$18,000 (CDN)**Initiative Type:** Programming

A community engagement process will be facilitated to support the goal of making Southwest Detroit a tourist destination, in its own terms. Three taskforces will be formed focusing on tourism, branding and marketing and streetscaping and signage to help create a roadmap for future work.

**Let's Get Moving****Organization:** Unity in Our Community Timebank**Funding:** \$11,000 (CDN)**Initiative Type:** Programming

A series of physical and cultural activities including Zumba, community bike rides, yoga classes, a field day and Fiesta event, will encourage residents to explore local parks and recreational spaces in Southwest Detroit, promote physical activity and create community connections.

**Feed the Homeless****Organization:** Trinity-St. Mark's Pantry and Gardens**Funding:** \$15,000 (CDN)**Initiative Type:** Programming

Funding will help to provide at least 300 lunches to unhomed individuals per month. Funding will also be used to provide boxed food to local families in need.

**Literacy Programming at Campbell****Organization:** Southwest Economic Solutions**Funding:** \$10,000 (CDN)**Initiative Type:** Programming

A series of literacy activities will occur at Campbell Library to complement the branch's Back to School events including digital asset mapping of community resources, family bookbinding workshops and children's story time. These events will engage local families and support registration for library cards for local residents.

The 2025 Community Organization Investment will launch in late fall 2024, with funding released to successful applicants in July 2025. Learn more about the program at [GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com](https://GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com).

**PUBLIC REPORTING**

The Community Benefits Plan includes a robust documenting, tracking and reporting structure that demonstrates accountability to the region. The Community Benefits Plan is posted on [GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com](https://GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com), along with quarterly reports on initiative progress and results. Updates on initiatives funded through the 2024 Community Organization Investment will be provided during the respective project's delivery period.

**For more information about the Gordie Howe International Bridge project visit**

[GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com](https://GordieHoweInternationalBridge.com) or call 1-844-322-1773. Follow us on X at [x.com/GordieHoweBrg](https://x.com/GordieHoweBrg), like us on Facebook at [facebook.com/GordieHoweBridge](https://facebook.com/GordieHoweBridge) and connect with us on LinkedIn at [linkedin.com/company/wdba-apwd](https://linkedin.com/company/wdba-apwd).