

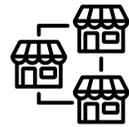
# REACHING OUT TO DOWNTOWN BUSINESSES

## Assessing the Effectiveness of the Unity Project's Outreach Program in Downtown Peterborough

From Jan 17- Feb 17, 2024



2 Outreach Workers



608 Business Visits



14 Calls for Support



19 Referrals for Supports



35 Naloxone Kits  
3 Sharps Clean Up

### WHAT IS THE UNITY PROJECT?

The Unity Project delivers rapid outreach assistance in downtown Peterborough, aimed at aiding individuals facing crises, as well as supporting downtown business owners and their staff through:

- De-escalation support
- Mediation between downtown employees and individuals needing support
- Connecting unhoused individuals with resources to support their well-being and obtain housing
- Sharps cleanup & disposal
- Harm reduction & naloxone training

### PROJECT GOALS

- Assess the current outreach needs of Peterborough's downtown businesses compared to services being provided by the Unity project.
- Assess the presence of outreach workers and the response provided by the Unity Project
- Determine if there is a need for future funding to expand the Unity project's outreach efforts

### METHODOLOGY

#### Literature Review

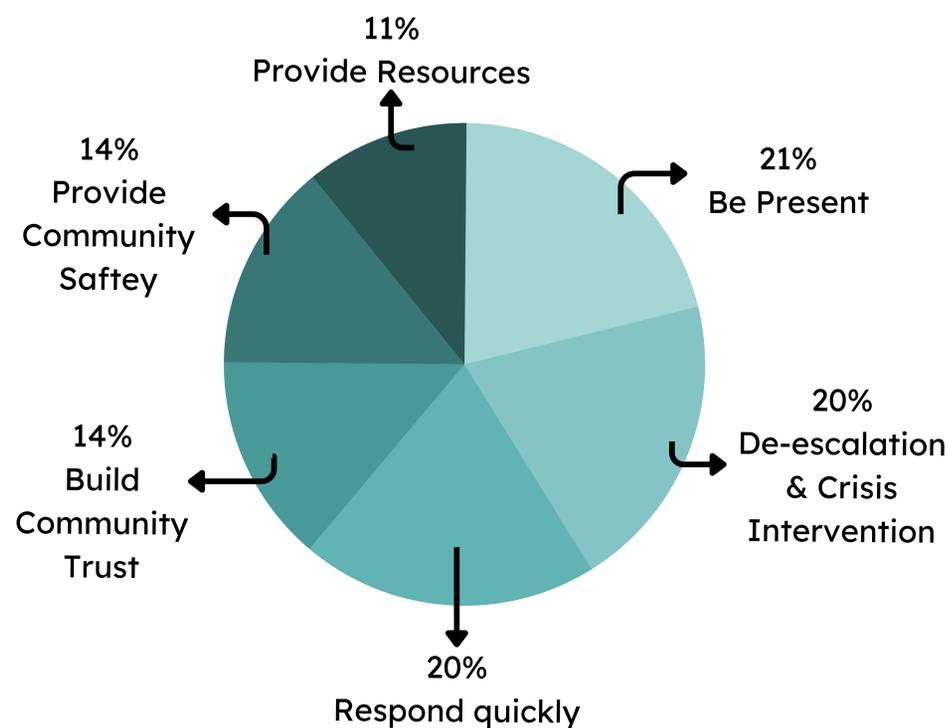
Topics: Peterborough policing response, alternative policing strategies, Best outreach practices, coordination between outreach workers, healthcare, addiction, and mental health.

#### Survey's

1. Welcome: General questions regarding familiarity with the project and business's current needs
2. In-depth: Current issues, how the outreach workers can provide specific support, critiques of the program, if funding be provided for future years
3. Feedback: To gain insights after an outreach worker responds

### THEMATIC ANALYSIS

#### HOW CAN ONE CITY'S OUTREACH WORKERS BEST MEET THE NEEDS OF BUSINESS DOWNTOWN?



#### LONG-TERM BENEFITS

- Increased resources for individuals needing housing, addiction support, and mental health/wellness support
- Decrease in theft
- Help customers and employees feel safe & supported
- Less dependence on the police
- Bring more people downtown

#### CRITIQUES

- Hours the outreach workers are present downtown do not fit business needs
- Limited amount of outreach workers
- Not enough awareness about the program
- Lacking a social media presence

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### DISCUSSION

The literature and survey findings highlight the critical role of outreach workers in implementing alternative policing strategies. Their effectiveness lies in their ability to cultivate trust and meaningful relationships within marginalized communities fostering effective crisis management and prevention measures. Outreach workers can prioritize a multidisciplinary approach to comprehensively support those who need it.

Businesses in downtown Peterborough emphasize the need for sustained funding and expansion of initiatives like the Unity project. Their support shows such programs' unique and valuable contribution to community well-being and safety. Steps need to be taken to increase community awareness and break the stigma surrounding unhoused individuals within downtown cores.

### NEXT STEPS

- Spread more awareness of the project through social media, news articles, and community information sessions
- Expand the hours of the program to include more evening hours
- Add more outreach workers to expand outreach efforts

