

The Region's Community Response Evaluation: Executive Summary

December 2020

COVID-19 and the Region's Community Response: Key Initiatives

On March 11, 2020 the WHO declared a pandemic as the COVID-19¹ disease spread around the world at rapid rates². Soon after, on March 17th and 18th respectively, the Province of Ontario and Region of Peel (ROP) declared a State of Emergency in response to the pandemic. Restrictions put in place to reduce the spread of COVID-19 (e.g., quarantining, physical distancing, etc.) had significant impact on Peel's not-for-profit sector, particularly those supporting vulnerable and at-risk populations. In response to the challenges being experienced by Peel community organizations, stakeholders and residents, 7 initiatives were implemented by the ROP beginning March 23, 2020:

1. COVID-19 Community Response Table (CRT)
2. CRT Sub-groups
3. ROP's COVID-19 Emergency Fund (\$1,000,000)
4. Federal and Provincial COVID-19 Community Fund (\$11,835,021)
5. CRT Inquiries Support: Contact Line
6. Communication and Resources
7. CRT Regional Emergency Operations Centre (REOC) Dashboard

The delivery of the 7 community response initiatives has been evaluated since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic, including needs of the community, success and challenges of the initiatives, and lessons learned. This executive summary outlines the recommendations and findings produced from the evaluation.

¹ World Health Organization. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19). October 12, 2020.

² Infection Prevention and Control Canada. Coronavirus (COVID-19) SARS- CoV-2.

Outcomes, Successes, Opportunities and Lessons Learned	
Key Findings	High-level Outline
Outcomes	
1 Transformation across CRT Table, sub-groups and stakeholders involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Evolution of CRT members and Table ▪ Evolution of Sub-groups ▪ Shifted, improved and clarified organizations form and functions ▪ 87% of CRT organizations reported CRT was integral in filling a gap in our communities' collaboration efforts during the COVID-19 pandemic
2 Synthesizing, disseminating and exchanging information and resources supporting collective learning and further information-resource sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 77% of CRT members reported that their organization was better supported during the COVID-19 pandemic because of their participation in the CRT ▪ 73% of CRT members reported that participating in CRT enhanced their ability to better respond to the needs of the vulnerable populations served by their organization
3 CRT provided a forum to gather real-time feedback, identify community needs and address issues through action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Community insights informed ROP programs and services, and support coordination of efforts to support Peel community ▪ 78% of CRT members reported issues identified by the community were addressed/are being addressed through the CRT ▪ 78% of CRT members reported participating in the CRT allowed them to identify/raise issues related to their organization's client populations
4 Rapid development of Emergency Response Fund (\$1,000,000) to support community agencies during the first 4-8 weeks of the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The emergency funding was designed to issue one-time grants to support agencies in the provision of services focused on the necessities of life. As of May 8, 2020, the COVID-19 Community Fund has provided \$1,216,533 in funding to 65 agencies.
Successes	
1. Rapid response to assess needs and developed CRT within the first week of the State of Emergency being declared	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ First virtual CRT meeting occurred on March 23, 2020 with over 90 community organizations and stakeholders in attendance ▪ As of November 30th, CRT has hosted 55 virtual meetings
2. Diversity of stakeholders participating in CRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Variety of stakeholders provided unique expertise and resources to form Community of Practice-like Table and support the Peel community
3. Leadership, project management and Working Group support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Region of Peel leadership, project management skills and coordination, and support from the CRT Working Group aided in the effectiveness of the Region's Community Response Initiatives
4. Collecting feedback through CRT check-ins to inform meeting content	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Feedback was gathered throughout CRT (check-ins, surveys) to adjust meeting content and frequency
5. Communication and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 92% noted that the CRT consistently provided

developed and disseminated quickly via social media, webpages and email	<p>relevant, up-to-date information for their organization</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 97% reported using the info/resources they learned about through CRT to support themselves, their organizations’ and clients during the pandemic ▪ 96% reported sharing the information and resources with others
Opportunities and Lessons Learned	
1. Adapting CRT to phases of the pandemic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Adaptions to the CRT meeting structure in response to phases of the pandemic (E.g. reduce formal structure, provide more time for informal dialogue, etc.) are needed in order to better respond to community needs
2. Co-design model informing design and delivery of CRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ CRT members and users of the Region’s other community response initiatives were only consulted as information was gathered from CRT members through a one-way design to inform planning
3. Enhanced connection between sub-groups and CRT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A better connection between the sub-groups and the larger CRT table is needed

Going Forward in 2021:

1. Develop an agile community response plan for pandemic waves
2. Continue to empower Peel’s not-for-profit sector by enhancing community development and building capacity through the co-creation of an innovative post COVID-19 collective
3. Utilize knowledge translation best practices to enhance collective learning and practical application of information

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