



**City of Kingston
Report to Council
Report Number 26-061**

To: Mayor and Members of Council
From: Jennifer Campbell, Commissioner, Community Services
Resource Staff: Ruth Noordegraaf, Director, Community Development, Wellbeing & IIDEA
Date of Meeting: May 5, 2026
Subject: H'art Centre Annual Service Level Agreement Renewal

Council Strategic Plan Alignment:

Theme: 4. Foster a Caring and Inclusive Community

Goal: 4.1 Enhance community safety and well-being.

Executive Summary:

Council approved Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with the H'art Centre in 2024 and 2025 ([Report Number 24-128](#) and [Report Number 25-110](#)), supporting a community service partnership to provide high quality and relevant services and programs that respond to community needs. This report seeks Council's direction to renew the SLA with the H'art Centre in 2026.

The [H'art Centre](#) is a registered not-for-profit organization that provides programming for adults with disabilities and those facing barriers, creating opportunities to build skills and connections through arts and culture. The H'art Centre also functions as a community hub, creating a physical space that is safe and welcoming for its programming participants, their families and support circles, as well as volunteers and audiences.

The SLA outlines the key objectives and direction for the H'art Centre and identifies the services to be delivered on behalf of the City that align with City-approved strategies and plans such as the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, The Multi Year Accessibility Plan, the work on the Age Friendly Plan and the work on the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion portfolio. Staff have

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reviewed the H'art Centre's 2025 final report and are satisfied it has met its obligations as required by the 2025 SLA.

Staff are requesting that Council support the renewal of the SLA with the H'art Centre in 2026. The agreement will include \$40,000 in financial support to assist the H'art Centre in delivering the services outlined within the SLA. The proposed funding in 2026 maintains the 2025 SLA budget contribution and was included in the approved 2026 operating budget of the Community Development, Wellbeing & IIDEA department.

Recommendation:

That Council approve entering into a one-year Service Level Agreement with the H'art Centre from April 1, 2026 to March 31, 2027, for an amount of \$40,000 for the services identified between the City of Kingston and the H'art Centre.

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Authorizing Signatures:

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY COMMISSIONER

Jennifer Campbell,
Commissioner, Community
Services

ORIGINAL SIGNED BY CHIEF

ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER

Lanie Hurdle, Chief
Administrative Officer

Consultation with the following Members of the Corporate Management Team:

Paige Agnew, Commissioner, Growth & Development Services	Not required
Neil Carbone, Commissioner, Corporate & Emergency Services	Not required
David Fell, President & CEO, Utilities Kingston	Not required
Desirée Kennedy, Chief Financial Officer & City Treasurer	
Jenna Morley, City Solicitor	Not required
Ian Semple, Commissioner, Transportation & Infrastructure Services	Not required

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Options/Discussion:

Background

The H'art Centre understands that people with developmental disabilities in the Kingston community have much to offer, and the arts are a valuable vehicle to help create strong connections and well-being. Over the last 20 years, the H'art Centre has grown from a small organization in a storefront studio to a thriving community hub with a vision to nurture inclusive arts for all abilities and to promote health, community relationships and skills development for adults with disabilities. The H'art Centre is providing a unique service in the Kingston community by filling a need that is currently not provided by the City or any other organization.

Prior to the first SLA in 2024, the H'art Centre received City of Kingston funding for many years through various City granting programs such as the Community Investment Fund (project funding) and the City of Kingston Arts Fund (operating and project funding). Alongside of these grants, approximately 50% of the H'art Centre's operational funding comes from fees paid by program participants. Under the terms of the prior (2024-2025) and proposed (2026) SLAs, the H'art Centre now receives \$40,000 in operating funding and is thereby ineligible to receive other City of Kingston grants.

The SLA reflects that key services have been identified to be delivered by the H'art Centre on behalf of the City and in alignment with City strategic plans. A key priority in the City's Strategic Plan (2023-2026) is to foster a caring and inclusive community where everyone can be safe, healthy, nourished and welcomed. The SLA outlines the key objectives and direction for the H'art Centre and identifies the alignment with City-approved strategies and plans such as the Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan, The Multi Year Accessibility Plan, the Age Friendly Plan and the work in the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion portfolio.

Analysis

Staff received the 2025 Impact Report (Exhibit A) from the H'art Centre that summarizes the various accomplishments in 2025 and the connection with the various City priorities. In 2025 H'art was able to support 57 participants aged 18-65 ,114 caregivers were directly impacted and over 4,000 program hours were delivered. H'art was able to hire 27 contract artist-facilitators, and 58 volunteers/board members supported programming that directly reached 490 residents. It hosted 19 post-secondary placements, and partnered with over 20 community agencies. Staff have highlighted below some key updates from the H'art Centre reporting that highlight the continuing service partnership with the City:

- Provided low or no barrier access to learning, skill-building and development opportunities for adults with disabilities and their families, to help nurture greater inclusion, community connection and well-being;
- Delivered training and education through community facilitators, working to build capacity of organizations and practitioners in working with adults with disabilities;

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- The H'art Centre moved to a new location at the Providence Village in the Spring of 2025. This move has strengthened both H'art and Providence Village Inc.'s mission as they endeavour to provide care and services to support, uplift and empower equity-deserving populations in the Kingston and area community. H'art occupies more than 4,200 square feet of space, providing ample room for their variety of inclusive arts programs, including the H'art Studio and those focused on outreach, collaboration and training.
- The Director of Community Development, Wellbeing & IIDEA continues to attend, in an observer capacity, the H'art Centre's monthly board meetings, resulting in increased alignment, communication and collaboration between the H'art Centre and the City.
- The H'art Centre board of directors finalized its first five-year Strategic Plan, supporting further sustainability, impact measurement and accountability.
- H'art hosted 'Connecting Canadians 2025' with 17 inclusive arts organizations from across Canada and a dozen study tour participants from the City of Kingston Creative Cities Summit, fostering national collaboration.
- In 2025, the Board initiated recruitment for a new Executive Director following the planned retirement of the founding Executive Director at the end of 2025. A new Executive Director has since been hired and is scheduled to begin in the summer of 2026. An interim leadership plan is in place to ensure continuity of operations and governance.

The 2025 SLA funding has continued to assist the H'art Centre in ensuring sustained community programming as they moved through this transition to a new location. The H'art Centre has continued to raise funding both through program fees where appropriate, as well as through fundraising campaigns, non-City funded grant applications and sponsorship campaigns as their board see appropriate.

If Council approves the SLA renewal, the H'art Centre would continue delivering partnership-based arts programming that aligns with and supports key City priorities, including Community Safety and Wellbeing, Age-Friendly planning, Indigenization, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion, and accessibility planning. The Centre would also report regularly to the City on program impacts using agreed-upon measures, including participant reach, artist employment and fees, diversity of participants and programming, number and type of programs delivered, breadth of partnerships, and qualitative feedback from participants, audiences and families.

Indigenization, Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility (IIDEA) Considerations

The SLA between the H'art Centre and the City of Kingston continues to support the IIDEA mandate that includes engagement with the community around equity, diversity and inclusion through information exchange, knowledge sharing and partnerships.

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The agreement also supports various strategies included in the City's Multi-Year Accessibility Planning including the removal of barriers that improve access to creative and arts-based experiences. It also aligns with strategic intents around developing free therapeutic recreation programming and opportunities for those with disabilities and supporting those programs to partner on information sharing with other relevant service programs. The SLA acknowledges the intersectionality of social issues and the value in providing creative opportunities for people with disabilities to create community bonds and learn and gain new skills. Moving forward, the program will continue to be assessed in alignment with the new accessibility office.

Existing Policy/By-Law

None

Notice Provisions

None

Financial Considerations

Funding of \$40,000 to support the SLA with the H'art Centre has been included in the Community Development, Wellbeing & IIDEA 2026 operating budget.

Contacts

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Other City of Kingston Staff Consulted

None

Exhibits Attached

Exhibit A H'art Centre Final Report 2025