



Committee of the Whole

Meeting Date: June 24, 2025

Submitted by: Cindy Howard, General Manager of Finance & Community Services
Joe Winser, Manager Social Services

Subject: Middlesex Supports 2025-2026

BACKGROUND:

From 1999 to 2008, funds clawed back from the National Child Benefit Supplement (NCBS) on Ontario Works (OW) cheques were redirected to support a variety of local programs for children in Middlesex County. The core goals of this NCBS reinvestment strategy were to reduce the depth of child poverty and support parental reattachment to the workforce.

In 2009, the Province stopped deducting the NCBS from client cheques and introduced the Ontario Child Benefit (OCB). This policy change shifted funding for children's basic needs from the OW cheque to the OCB, generating substantial municipal savings — approximately \$112,000 annually for Middlesex County. Municipalities were directed to reinvest these savings into community programs aligned with the original intent of the NCBS strategy. Since then, the program has been renewed annually through the budget process and has evolved over time, with updates to funded initiatives.

All current programs were approved in the 2025 budget, and contracts for subsidized services concluded on March 31, 2024

ANALYSIS:

Middlesex County continues to receive funding requests from six core community partners participating in the Middlesex Supports Program.

Attached is a summary of each program, including requested funding, the number of children and families served in 2024–2025, and projections for the upcoming fiscal year ending March 31, 2026. Collectively, these programs served 96 children and 255 families in the 2024–2025 period. Each initiative continues to address service gaps for young residents with measurable success in delivery and outcomes.

The total funding requested for 2025–2026 is \$96,900 — already approved in the 2025 Social Services budget. All funded partners are required to report on outcomes.

Funding will only be disbursed once program operation is confirmed and verified to be serving Middlesex County residents. In keeping with past practice, funding may be adjusted based on program start dates or interruptions in service.

In 2024–2025, \$6,336 in approved funding was not allocated due to valid circumstances beyond the control of the service providers. Recognizing the value of sports and recreation for child and youth development, it is recommended that this unallocated amount be distributed equally among Middlesex County’s eight lower-tier municipalities to support access to recreation and sport programs for children and youth.

2025-2026 projected number served and funding allotments are as follows:

Name of Program and area served	Program description	Projected numbers of children and families served in 2025-2026	Funding Request 2025-2026
FAMILY SERVICES THAMES VALLEY Family Counselling Services (Parkhill, Strathroy, Lucan, Glencoe and Dorchester)	Family and credit counselling available to all low income families throughout Middlesex County	91 children 168 families	\$64,900
MERRYMOUNT CHILDREN’S SERVICES Strathroy Mutual Aid and Parenting Program (MAPP)	These are very vulnerable families with no community supports. They are usually young mothers who rely on the mentoring received to learn how to parent and increase their self-esteem and their self-sufficiency	70 Children 44 Families	\$10,000
MUNICIPALITY OF SOUTH-WEST MIDDLESEX “Can I Play Too?”	Registration costs for low income families so that all children may participate in municipally run sporting activities	27 Children 16 Families	\$6,500



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MUNICIPALITY OF STRATHROY CARADOC “Can I Play Too?”	Registration costs for low income families so that all children may participate in municipally run sporting activities	60 Children 45 Families	\$10,000
CHILDREN’S AID SOCIETY Swim Passes	Swim passes for low income families	24 family passes 42 individual passes	\$500
THE WESTERN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS’ COUNCIL (USC) Early Outreach Conference	The Early Outreach Conference (REACH) is an annual USC initiative intended to introduce approximately 250 youth in London, Middlesex and the broader community to post-secondary education opportunities. This program recognizes that many students begin thinking about their future at an early age, and serves to provide them with the guidance, information, and tools necessary to support their decision- making process. Western collaborates with the City of London, Middlesex County, Thames Valley District School Board, Fanshawe College, and a diverse range of non-profit community organizations to ensure the conference addresses the various needs of students during this transitional time from middle-school to high school.	50	\$5,000

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

Funding has been allocated in the 2025 budget. No further financial implications.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC FOCUS:

This report aligns with the following Strategic Focus, Goals, or Objectives:

Strategic Priority	Goal	Objectives
<p>Collaboration & Partnerships</p> 	<p>Strengthen collaboration with local municipalities and regional partners to improve economic efficiency, enhance service delivery, and support regional development in alignment with community priorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimize service delivery through inter-municipal collaboration and shared services to improve efficiency and seamless operations.• Build and enhance relationships with municipal, regional, First Nations, community, and private sector partners to align priorities, share resources, and implement joint initiatives that improve community well-being and economic growth.
<p>Adaptability and Agility</p> 	<p>Modernize the County's administrative capabilities to strengthen decision-making, improve service delivery, and achieve better community outcomes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Transform, modernize and continuously improve administrative systems and processes to increase efficiency and enhance the experience of residents and partners.• Strengthen internal administrative capabilities to ensure key support services have the necessary resources to meet community needs and support organizational growth.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the Middlesex Supports 2025-2026 report be received for information;

THAT County Council approve the allocation of the unspent \$6,336.00 to be divided evenly (\$792.00 per municipality) among the eight lower-tier Middlesex County municipalities, to support children and youth in accessing sports and recreation opportunities.

AND THAT the General Manager of Finance and Community Services be authorized to execute, on behalf of the County of Middlesex, all agreements and other documents necessary to allocate the remaining funding as described in the Middlesex Supports 2025-2026 Report on confirmation that such agreements and other documents be in a form satisfactory to the County Solicitor.