

2026 Pre-Budget Consultation: Report submitted by the Montreal Defund The Police Coalition



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May 21, 2025
Commission sur les finances et l'administration
City of Montréal
275 Notre-Dame Street East
Montréal (Québec) H2Y 1C6

Introduction:

Dear Members of the Commission,

The Defund The Police Coalition is a Montreal-based group of individuals and organizations committed to social justice, community safety, and the transformation of systems that perpetuate structural violence. We advocate for a fair redistribution of municipal resources to address the real needs of communities, especially the most marginalized.

We submit this written opinion as part of the 2026 pre-budget consultation, to demand a significant reallocation of funds currently allocated to the Service de police de la Ville de Montréal (SPVM) towards community organizations whose work is based on prevention, care, solidarity, and human dignity.

For decades, the police have been used as a solution to a wide range of social problems that they cannot solve, and police budgets have increased while funding for other solutions has diminished. We call for a reversal of this dynamic: a substantial transfer of funds from the police to community responses for the many issues that police cannot solve — a reallocation of resources that will reduce the need for police interventions. This is about correcting the *overfunding* of the police apparatus and the *underfunding* of essential services that promote real and lasting safety: social housing, mental health care, youth programs, harm reduction services, support for houseless individuals, crisis intervention and accompaniment, and much more.

We reject the idea that public safety is achieved through increased police presence. It is well known, for example, that only a small percentage of police interventions—about 30%—deal with crime or safety issues. Most are social interventions, responses to social needs that were once met by non-police services. Using the police in this way tends to turn social problems into criminal issues and applies the only tool the police have: the use of force. As a result, police interventions—often repressive and always violent—contribute to the criminalization of poverty, mental health issues, substance use, and the occupation of public space by racialized, Indigenous, or marginalized people.

We firmly believe that safety must be rethought as collective access to dignified living conditions. This means supporting individuals and communities through stable, accessible resources led by and for the populations concerned.

We urge the City of Montreal to take concrete actions aligned with its 2030 Strategic Plan by reinvesting in community services, supporting social justice initiatives, and reducing reliance on the police model as a response to social issues.

Overview of the Municipal Budget for Public Safety:

Our report focuses on public safety funding in Montreal. Traditionally, the “public safety” budget includes only two institutions: the Montreal Police Service (SPVM) and the Montreal Fire Department (SIM). However, there is a growing consensus among experts and frontline actors that public safety is a collective matter, not simply a question of law enforcement and police repression.

This vision has been adopted by the City of Montreal, but only rhetorically. [According to the mayor](#), “the Montreal Model for a Safe City proposes a united front against violence.” Yet, the municipal budget reveals a different reality: Montreal’s approach to public safety remains entirely rooted in police action (see Figure 1).

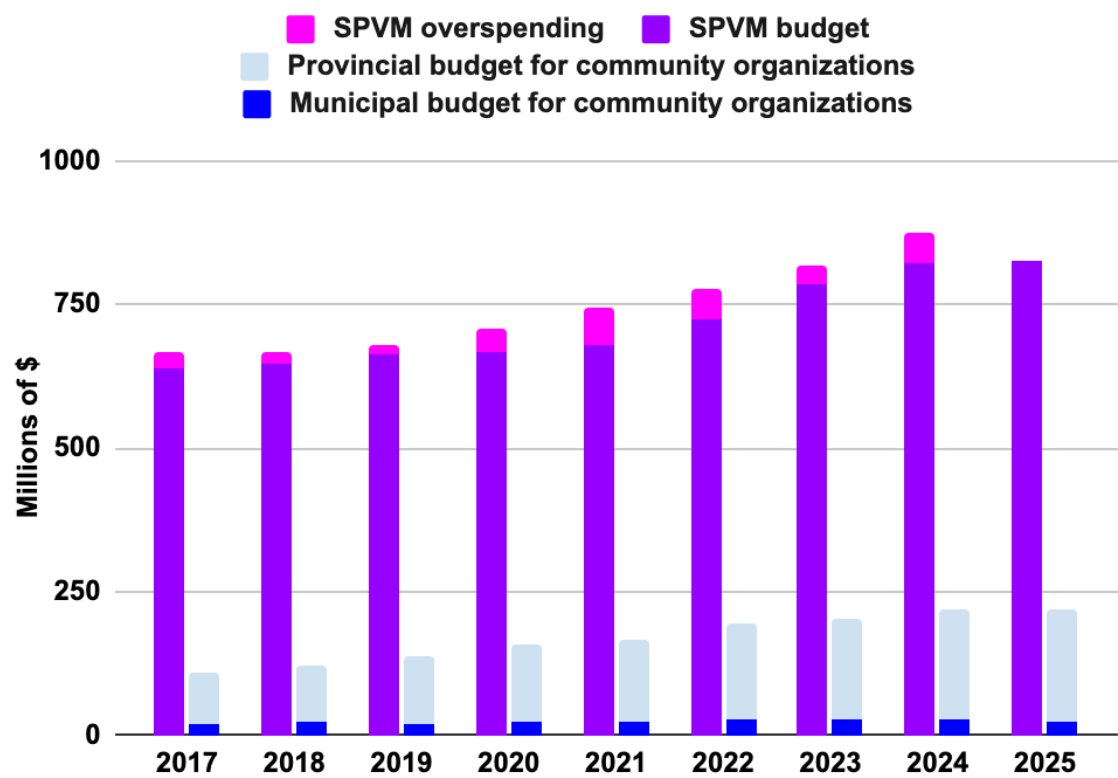


Figure 1: Comparison between the SPVM budget and the budget for Montreal's 540 community organisations (including municipal and provincial funding)

- The City invests an average of \$25M annually in community organizations (nearly half of this amount comes from the provincial government via the Alliances pour la solidarité). In contrast, the City invested \$824M in the SPVM in 2025.
- The SPVM’s budget has increased by nearly \$200M since 2017, while the community sector’s budget has remained stable. **The increase in the SPVM’s budget over this period equals the entire budget allocated to the community sector.** Moreover, these \$200M were almost entirely used to hire more police officers and raise their salaries, two measures that have [no positive impact on public safety](#).

- The SPVM has exceeded its budget by an average of \$40M annually since 2017. It is the only police force in Canada allowed to go over budget by any amount. **The SPVM's annual overspending is twice the entire annual community sector budget.**
- Including provincial funding through the Programme de soutien aux organismes communautaires (\$198M in 2025), **the 540 community organizations in Montreal share less than one-third of the SPVM's budget.**
- According to the Regroupement intersectoriel des organismes communautaires de Montréal (RIOCM), [Montreal groups need](#) an additional \$133M per year to do their work adequately. While the provincial government must increase its contributions, the City of Montreal must also take responsibility. This report offers possible solutions.

Our main argument is simple: public safety is not the function of the police but of a vast network of programs and organizations. We demand a budget that reflects this reality. According to our Coalition members, achieving public safety requires both increased funding for community organizations and defunding of the SPVM. To create real public safety, the Coalition calls for a 50% reduction of the SPVM budget by eliminating harmful or counterproductive police activities. This would free up about \$400M to be reinvested in the creation of sustainable and collective safety for all Montrealers.

We suggest a three-tiered approach:

1. Eliminate police activities that cause insecurity:

The City is aware that a significant portion of SPVM's work violates human rights: this includes street checks, racial and social profiling, forced evictions of encampments, and the criminalization of drug possession and sex work. From our point of view, the City has no choice but to put an end to these discriminatory practices in order to comply with its constitutional obligations. From a public safety point of view, the City can achieve a double objective: reduce the insecurity of Montrealers targeted by these institutional aggressions, while freeing up considerable resources to manage social challenges in a humane and effective way.

2. Transfer certain police responsibilities to more competent community-based organizations:

The City and the SPVM know that some police tasks should be handled by other agencies. For example, for more than 10 years the SPVM has wanted to offload the 33,000 annual calls (3% of total) related to mental health crises. These interventions have led to the death of many Montréalers who needed help, including a young father called Abisay Cruz killed in March 2025. Similarly, the SPVM claims it does not want to respond to psychosocial issues, such as visible distress, neighbor disputes, and other cohabitation challenges. The City acknowledges that police intervention is inadequate in these situations, but its solutions (notably the mixed squads and the Équipe mobile de médiation et d'intervention sociale (EMMIS)) are [counterproductive](#): they hinder the work of the community sector, they remain repressive and rooted in policing, and they are negligible in impact (for example, the Équipe de soutien aux urgences psychosociales (ESUP) has intervened in only 6% of crisis calls over its 10 years of existence). We therefore propose ending police involvement in the psychosocial field and developing a non-violent, civilian, community-based intervention network to replace the police as first responders.

3. Prevent insecurity by addressing its root causes:

Finally, the City recognizes that violence prevention is more effective than repression and that it requires long-term work on the socio-economic roots of insecurity. That is precisely the point of the “Modèle montréalais pour une ville sécuritaire”. But realizing this vision is impossible without adequate funding for community groups. These are the actors working daily to protect vulnerable people, prevent violence and suffering, and build collective well-being.

Funding and Defunding Priorities:

Homelessness		
Police actions to eliminate	Community support to fund	Organizations to fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● End social profiling practices such as street checks and fines for “incivilities”, “proactive” police interventions, and police patrols in areas where unhoused people live. ● End the forced evictions of encampments. ● Abolish mixed squads (EMIC, EMRII, ECCR). ● Abolish the “civilian” EMMIS squad and redirect its funds to teams rooted in the independent community sector. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Ensure the presence of street outreach workers in all neighborhoods. ● Create livable encampments with essential amenities (e.g., toilets, access to water and food, waste collection, services), as recommended by the Canadian Human Rights Commission. ● Establish resources in all neighborhoods: day centers, shelters, urban health clinics. ● Increase 24/7 shelter options for people living on the streets or in precarious situations. ● Create community-managed storage spaces for belongings. ● Develop a range of housing options: transitional housing; supportive housing for people managing substance use; transitional housing for youth aging out of child protection. ● Invest massively in the development of social housing. ● Give financial support to organizations that defend tenant rights, in order to oppose evictions and minimize their consequences. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Association Québécoise pour la promotion de la santé des personnes utilisatrices de drogues (AQPSUD) ● Action Santé Travesti(e)s et Transsexuel(le)s du Québec (ASTTeQ) ● En marge 12-17 ● First Peoples Justice Centre of Montreal ● Head and Hands ● Pact de rue ● Plein milieu ● Maison Benoit Labre ● Native Harm Reduction ● Native Women's Shelter ● Projet d’Intervention auprès des mineurs-res prostitués-ées (Le PIAMP) ● Resilience Montreal ● Réseau d’aide aux personnes seules et itinérantes de Montréal (RAPSIM) ● REZO santé ● Spectre de rue ● Stella, l'amie de Maimie

Public Transit

Police actions to eliminate	Community support to fund	Organizations to fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eliminate the EMIC mixed squad. • Eliminate the SPVM's "metro" section. • Disarm STM special constables. • Drastically reduce or eliminate the presence of STM special constables. • Eliminate bylaws targeting or discriminating against unhoused people in public transit (e.g., anti-loitering bylaws). • Eliminate bylaws used to harass and exclude marginalized groups (e.g., racialized youth) from the metro. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in community-led outreach and mediation in the metro. • Make metro stations accessible for all (e.g., accessibility for people with reduced mobility, public toilets, rest areas). • Make public transit accessible and free. • Increase STM funding to maintain frequent service and avoid dangerous crowds, extend metro hours, renovate infrastructure, increase cleaning staff, and increase wages. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cactus • Climate Justice Montreal • En Marge 12-17 • Le PIAMP • Pact de rue • Plein milieu • REZO Santé • Spectre de rue • Stella, l'amie de Maimie • Société de transport de Montréal (STM) • Travail de rue/Action communautaire (TRAC)

Drug use

Police actions to eliminate	Community support to fund	Organizations to fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decriminalize drug possession in Montreal. • End police harassment of people forced to use drugs in public spaces due to lack of alternatives. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invest in harm reduction organizations. • Increase supervised consumption sites and other safe consumption spaces. • Support distribution sites for tested and safe substances. (21 people die of drug overdoses every day in Canada.) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anonyme • AQPSUD • ASTTeQ • Black-Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance • Canadian Students for Sensible Drug Policy (Montreal)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support recovery, mobility, and drug-use management programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cactus • Coalition des organismes communautaires québécois de lutte contre le VIH/sida (COCQ-SIDA) • Dopamine • Head and Hands • Indigenous Harm Reduction • Maison Benoit Labre • Native Women's Shelter • Plein Milieu • REZO santé • Stella, l'amie de Maimie • Table des organismes montréalais de lutte contre le sida (TOMS) • Spectre de rue • Ville Sans Surdose
Crisis intervention		
Police actions to eliminate	Community support to fund	Organizations to fund
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • End the police response to mental health crises, psychosocial distress, and cohabitation conflicts. • Abolish mixed squads (e.g., ESUP). • Abolish the “civilian” EMMIS squad. (We question the city's decision to invest in EMMIS. On the one hand, this funding does not come from the police budget, but from the global budget envelope, and is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create non-violent teams of first responders that are rooted in the autonomous community sector. • These teams would: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Respond to 911 calls for psychosocial crises; 2. Provide immediate support to de-escalate distress/crises; 3. Offer 24/7 crisis line support; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AQPSUD • ASTTeQ • Black-Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance • Burgundy Urban Mediation Project (BUMP) • Café jeunesse multiculturel • COCQ-SIDA

<p>not directed towards the community organizations already working in the field. Additionally, by being there to respond to complaints from shopkeepers and citizens and provide immediate solutions, the EMMIS teams are ill-equipped to provide concrete, sustainable support to organizations tackling real social cohabitation issues; instead, they serve to hide problems out of sight, and add to the surveillance and coercion already faced by people in precarious situations.)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Provide crisis intervention, suicide prevention, and grief support; 5. Offer referrals and follow-ups; 6. Ensure language and cultural understanding. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● These teams would be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Civilian; ○ Unarmed; ○ Trauma-informed, with a non-physical and non-violent approach; ○ Composed of social and mental health workers, peers, elders, knowledge keepers, healthcare providers, and grief support workers; ○ With a varied expertise on: mental health and suicide prevention; cultural safety and trauma-informed approaches; non-violent intervention and restorative justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Collectif opposé à la brutalité policière (COBP) ● Exeko ● First Peoples Justice Centre of Montreal ● Head and Hands ● Le PIAMP ● Native Harm Reduction ● Native Women's Shelter ● RAPSIM ● Resilience Montreal ● RÉSEAU de la communauté autochtone à Montréal ● REZO santé ● Stella, l'amie de Maimie ● TOMS ● Tracom Crisis Centre ● L'Autre Maison – Montréal South West Crisis Intervention Centre ● Association IRIS ● La Maison sous les Arbres ● Suicide Prevention Centre of Montreal (SPCM) ● West Island Crisis Centre
<p style="text-align: center;">Violence prevention</p>		
<p>Police actions to eliminate</p>	<p>Community support to fund</p>	<p>Organizations to fund</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● End police street checks. Researchers have shown that this practice only has a 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Compensate racial profiling victims. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black Coalition of Quebec

<p>negative impact on public safety, and that eliminating stops is a necessary condition for ending racial profiling.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● End arbitrary traffic stops, another major source of racial profiling. ● End SPVM “anti-gang” strategies and “anti-gun” squads, which operate discriminatorily. ● Reduce excessive and harassing police presence in some neighborhoods. ● End “prevention” programs managed by the police. ● Remove police from schools. ● End the City's unconditional political support to SPVM. The City was recently ordered to pay hundreds of millions of dollars in compensation to victims of racial profiling, and new class action lawsuits are underway. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fund outreach work with youth involved in crime. ● Fund organizations that support criminalized people. ● Expand youth centers. ● Invest in recreational infrastructure, especially in neighbourhoods that have suffered under-investment. ● Increase funding for “by and for youth” programs. ● Invest in school-based community prevention (e.g., transformative justice, mediation, therapy). ● Support education and employment programs. ● Support families navigating youth protection. ● Provide transitional housing for young adults, especially those aging out of youth protection. ● Provide food assistance for families. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black Community Resource Centre (BCRC) ● Burgundy Urban Mediation Project (BUMP) ● Café jeunesse multiculturel ● Coalition Pozé ● Collectif opposé à la brutalité policière (COBP) ● DESTA Black Community Network ● First Peoples Justice Centre of Montreal ● Iskweu Project ● Head and Hands ● Hoodstock ● Intervention Network for Persons Affected by Organized Violence (RIVO) ● Montreal in Action ● Project Genesis
<p>Advocacy and self-defence</p>		
<p>Police actions to eliminate</p>	<p>Community support to fund</p>	<p>Organizations to fund</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Reduce or eliminate the SPVM riot squad and strictly control the deployment of police resources during protests. The excessive and violent police presence at 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Fund organizations that advocate, defend the rights, and promote political power for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Criminalized people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● AlterHéros ● AIDS Community Care Montréal (ACCM) ● ASTTeQ

<p>protests violates civil rights and is financially wasteful (according to the SPVM, protests are the reason why they overspend by tens of millions of dollars every year).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Racialized communities ○ Indigenous communities ○ Unhoused people ○ People who use drugs ○ People living with HIV/AIDS ○ People living with disabilities ○ Women ○ 2SLGBTQIA+ communities ○ Sex workers ○ People with a precarious immigration status ○ Protestors and other political activists 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Black-Indigenous Harm Reduction Alliance ● Black Mental Health Connections Montreal (BMHC MTL) ● Burgundy Urban Mediation Project (BUMP) ● Centre communautaire LGBTQ+ de Montréal ● Centre des travailleurs et travailleuses immigrants (IWC-CTI) ● COCQ-SIDA ● Coalition contre la répression et les abus policiers (CRAP) ● Collectif opposé à la brutalité policière (COBP) ● Collectif Soignons la justice sociale ● Conseil québécois LGBT ● Exeko ● First Peoples Justice Centre of Montreal ● Fondation filles d'action ● Head and Hands ● Hoodstock ● Iskweu Project ● Justice for Victims of Police Killings ● Le PIAMP ● Ligue des droits et libertés ● MTL Sans Profilage ● Police pas la palestine / No over policing Palestine (PPP/NOPP) ● Prisoner Correspondence Project
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		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Comité autonome du travail du sexe (CATS) ● RAPSIM ● RÉSEAU de la communauté autochtone à Montréal ● REZO Santé ● South Asian Diaspora Action Collective (SADAC) ● Solidarité sans frontières ● Stella, l'amie de Maimie ● TOMS
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Conclusion:

What we are calling for is a transformation of municipal priorities: less repression, more care and services. When we speak of defunding the police, we mean creating true safety. We mean reallocating public funds from police to practices and services that prevent harm, hold people accountable for harm they cause, and support the kinds of personal and social transformation necessary for genuine safety — something the police do not do.

The budget consultation should be a tool to redistribute resources where they are most needed, not to uphold an unjust status quo.

We invite the City to listen to the voices of communities who experience the direct consequences of police overfunding and to invest in community-based, humane, and sustainable solutions.

Coalition to Defund The Police

defundlapolice.com

