

**To:** Chair and Members, Community and Protective Services Committee

**From:** Blair Henry

**Date:** April 10, 2026

**Re:** Endorsement of 519Pursuit Umbrella Relief Programs Inc.

Dear Chair and Members,

I am writing to strongly endorse 519Pursuit Umbrella Relief Programs Inc. for the provision of outreach supports for outdoor basic needs in London, and to urge the Committee to adopt Option 3, the phased service approach.

I come to this not only as a resident, but as someone who has spent many years working alongside fellow Londoners who are unhoused. Through that experience, I have seen what works, what doesn't, and—most importantly—what builds trust and connection over time.

City staff have identified that 519Pursuit plays an important role within the broader outreach system by connecting with individuals who are often disengaged from traditional services, increasing system reach and enabling pathways into housing and supports. This ability to build trust and facilitate connection is not incidental—it is central to the effectiveness of the model.

At the same time, this decision comes at a critical moment. With the expiry of time-limited federal funding and increasing seasonal demand as more individuals return to unsheltered living conditions, the choice before Committee will directly impact the City's ability to maintain continuity of outreach services in the months ahead.

What I want to emphasize—based on direct observation over time—is how 519Pursuit has grown.

This organization did not begin as a fully scaled service. It started simply: bringing food to unhoused friends. Then came socks. Then small, thoughtful additions based on what people actually needed. At each step, their leadership made careful, grounded decisions—expanding only when they had the capacity, the relationships, and the logistical understanding to do so well.

That pattern demonstrates a disciplined approach to growth, risk, and capacity—an approach that is especially important in the current funding environment.

In reviewing the service delivery options before Committee, Option 3—the phased approach—most closely reflects this demonstrated model of leadership.

It allows service to begin at a sustainable level based on confirmed resources, while creating a structured pathway to scale as partnerships are secured. It balances immediate need with operational stability and reflects a measured, adaptable approach to service delivery.

While Option 3 introduces some variability in service levels as partnerships are developed, it avoids the greater risk of overcommitting to a model dependent on unconfirmed resources. It also allows for ongoing monitoring, adjustment, and accountability as the program evolves—ensuring that any expansion is both intentional and sustainable.

By contrast, a full-service model that relies heavily on unconfirmed partnerships introduces the risk of disruption if those partnerships do not materialize. A reduced model, while more stable, risks diminishing support at a time when need remains high and visible.

We also know that when outreach services are reduced, the need does not disappear—it is displaced into more acute and costly parts of the system, including shelters, healthcare, and emergency services. Maintaining a strong outreach presence is therefore both a compassionate and practical approach.

At a time when our community and our country are wealthier than in previous generations, it is deeply troubling that more people are being pushed into hardship, not less. Glen Pearson recently observed in the *London Free Press* that as we have become more prosperous, we have also too often forgotten our responsibilities to those in need.

If we expect a prosperous city to be a fair and just city, then we must ensure that people living unsheltered are not left to survive without consistent outreach, basic needs, and a pathway to support.

As Pearson reminds us, a society can measure growth in wealth while still failing in its duty to protect those who are most vulnerable.

Sincerely,  
Blair Henry

London Citizen