
MOUNTAINSIDE HARM REDUCTION SOCIETY
CHECK IT - PEER-LED DRUG CHECKING



CHECK IT

MOUNTAINSIDE
Harm Reduction Society

SUMMER '22
July - October

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50K

**FNHA
HARM REDUCTION GRANT**

FNHA Harm Reduction Grant was made available to Mountainside to train our team of peers as certified drug checking technicians in order to lead and staff our peer-led drug checking program in the Eastern Fraser Salish region.

Three of our board members at Mountainside - including Executive Director of Operations, Tanis Oldenburger; Vice President, Will McLellan; and Youth Engagement Lead, Haley Hodgkinson - became Check It's first cohort of peers to be trained on the FTIR, guided by Fraser Health's drug checking coordinator, Jana Baller. We began with 2 full days of training with Jana at the Purpose Society's drug checking site in New Westminster, where we learned about Fourier Transform Infrared Technology, how to use the OPUS software and DCBC database.

We are able to pay our technicians for their training hours at \$25/hr as well as reimburse gas money through an industry and union standard of \$0.56/km. As people with lived and living experience we also find it

important to provide stipends or reimbursement for lunch, especially on long days in different communities. We have now trained our second cohort of peer support workers as certified drug checking technicians, including an in-kind member of our Board of Directors - keeping with arms-length policies - who works as a volunteer technician on an on-call or casual basis as well as our new site supervisor, who has an impactful story of resiliency and overcoming traumatic brain injury due to overdose.

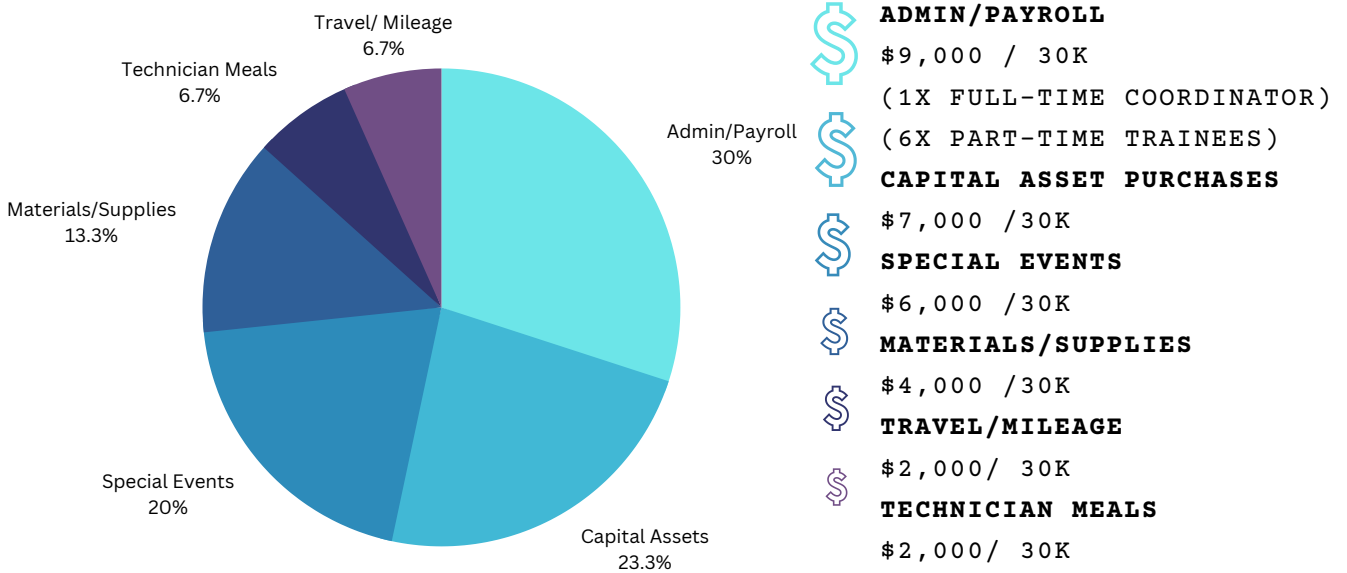


First Nations Health Authority was able to provide Mountainside Harm Reduction Society with \$50,000 in March of 2022, for the training & development (phase 1) of our peer-led drug checking project. This allowed for our project management team to work extra hours every week while arranging for the inception of this project. This money also supplemented Mountainside's core operational funding so that we could bolster our marketing, branding and overall presence in our community.

50K

APRIL - SEPTEMBER
6 TRAINEES

We trained two cohorts of 3 technicians between April and September of this year. The separation of the two phases of the project having been supported through two separate funding streams allows us to really show the differing costs for the two phases of this pilot project.



The entire 50k did NOT go towards this program, but has helped immensely to support our core operational costs in order for our team and board to focus on strong partnership engagement as well as development of the society and its leadership team so that we could better support this project. We also still have some of these FNHA Harm Reduction funds remaining in order to train any new technicians that we might need before the end of this pilot in March. We also received a \$2,000 supplement from the First Nations Health Authority to help support our August 31st International Overdose Awareness Day event. We are incredibly grateful for the support from FNHA which has allowed for a unique and autonomous, collaborative and gradual development of this project.



MOU

PARTNERSHIPS WITH
BCCSU & FRASER HEALTH

We began bi-weekly working group Zoom meetings with our project partners, BCCSU & Fraser Health. Together we came up with a Memorandum of Understanding that outlined the payment schedule for our Health Authority funding.

MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING

WHEREIN THE BCCSU

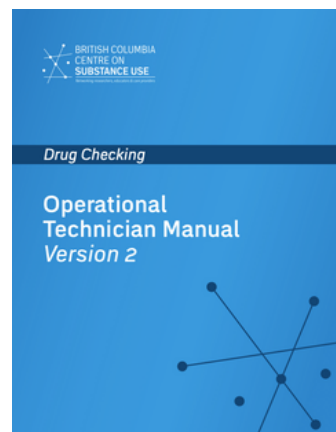
- WILL PROVIDE FISCAL ADMINISTRATION AND SUPPORT TO MOUNTAINSIDE
- WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO ONLINE TRAINING WEBINARS AND TECHNICIAN CERTIFICATION
- WILL PROVIDE ACCESS TO THE DCBC DRUG CHECKING DATABASE
- WILL ANALYZE AND EVALUATE THE DATA COLLECTED

WHEREIN FRASER HEALTH

- WILL PROVIDE PILOT PROJECT FUNDING TO MOUNTAINSIDE
- WILL PROVIDE THE FTIR AS WELL AS BTNX FENTANYL AND BENZODIAZEPINE TEST STRIPS
- WILL REGULARLY MONITOR DATA COLLECTION WITHIN ITS JURISDICTION
- WILL COORDINATE AND PROVIDE FTIR TRAINING, TECHNICAL AND INTERPRETATIVE SUPPORT

WHEREIN MOUNTAINSIDE

- WILL CREATE FINANCIAL REPORTS, PROMOTIONAL MATERIAL AND PRESENTATIONS
- WILL PROVIDE POINT-OF-CARE DRUG CHECKING SERVICES AS PER SERVICE AGREEMENTS WITH RELEVANT PARTNERS
- WILL COMMIT TO ENTERING ALL DRUG TESTING DATA INTO THE DESIGNATED DATABASE.
- WILL ENSURE THE FTIR IS OPERATED, STORED, AND TRANSPORTED ACCORDING TO USER AGREEMENTS



JUN

VISITING PROPOSED SITES

In June, once our program managers were FTIR certified, we began to visit local drug user groups for FTIR demonstrations as well as engagements around potential service structure & locations. We went to MOCAT's SAFE twice, as well as Abby Drug War Survivors to engage local drug users regarding service delivery models.

We now attend Abby DWS' bi-weekly drug user group meetings and provide drug checking. We also visited potential sites in Chilliwack, such as Ruth & Naomi's ReVive shelter, which we now work out of most Wednesdays. We utilized our partnership with the Chilliwack Community Action Team and were able to reserve the board room at Pacific Community Resources Society(PCRS) for group training sessions as well as some FTIR drug checking services. Our team of technicians also attended the Provincial Peer Network, Fraser Salish, Vancouver Coastal & Island Health Convergence at the Sheraton Guilford Conference centre. We spent time with peers from across the province and quickly learned that our Check It initiative is unique in that there are no other peer-led organizations or initiatives that have our level of autonomy over their FTIR, scheduling, finances and staffing.



The highlight for our trainees at Mountainside is when they get to visit our valued partners at "Get Your Drugs Tested".

They are industry leaders located on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. They receive samples from across the country and have workload and client traffic like no other drug checking site in BC. This makes for unparalleled technician training days as well as front-line harm reduction work experience.

DEVELOPING SITE PARTNERSHIPS

JUL

NEW SITES, NEW PARTNERS

In July our partners at Fraser Health helped to initiate new site partnerships in Abbotsford and Chilliwack, and our intimate team was able to take a breather from the bustling schedule and go on holidays! Our FTIR even went on holidays to Shambhala with FHA Coordinator, Jana.

Several of our team members were able to shadow Fraser Health's drug checking coordinator, Jana, at SafePoint, a drug checking site in Surrey, where they were able to bolster their skills and acquire more shadow hours needed to successfully complete their training and write their exam.



PCRS

ran ruth
and
naomi's
mission.ca



In July We made various asset purchases, including a custom event tent and various pieces of luggage for transporting our equipment and supplies. These pieces were chosen to work with our mobile model, as we have to attend our storage unit before and after every drug checking site.

We also made some other start-up purchases, including branded tote bags, pin-back buttons, t-shirts and promotional print materials.

Mountainside's powerhouse couple with their new custom event canopy and drug checking gear!
Executive Director of Operations - Tanis Oldenburger & partner Will McLellan, Mountainside's Vice President and Project Manager of Check It!



AUG



August was full of exciting events for Check It! We started our music festival career at a small, local, Indigenous youth led music festival in Hope. We had a booth at Chilliwack PRIDE festival alongside the Chilliwack CAT. Then we boosted our festival game with Altitude music fest, in Boston Bar!

At the end of August, came our biggest and most logistically complex event yet: Altitude, a brand new four-day long electronic dance music festival at the Tuckkwiowhum campground in Boston Bar. The venue, owned and operated by the surrounding Indigenous community - was breathtakingly beautiful - with 3 stages and an exciting layout of activities, food and vendors. The site sat next to the mighty Fraser River, beneath a huge, active CPR train bridge that is perched over the famous gravel bar that gives the community its name.

The long, unique hours and setting of this festival would both test our organizational capacity and give our team unparalleled front line drug checking and peer support experience. We were able to set up and break-in a plethora of new equipment and gear! Our custom canopy tent was set-up in the designated Harm Reduction and First Aid area called the "chill zone". Mountainside partnered on the event with another local peer-run organization called, Ready Harm Reduction, and by day 2 of the festival we were testing 20 samples per day. From this vantage point we were able to disseminate multiple facets of harm reduction and information, from distinguishing MDA from MDMA (important for dosage determinations), to giving away oral syringes for more accurate GHB dosing, to helping distribute free harm reduction supplies ranging from condoms to cannabis to very bougie snorting kits - our presence helped ensure that the whole party was practicing safer use.

We quickly found that the demographic of drug users as well as the types of drugs present at the festival were much different than those we see at our regular community sites. We had definitely broken through the hidden population barrier to the weekend warrior types! We tested numerous samples of ketamine, cocaine, and MDMA, as well as other party drugs. We even found a new Tryptamine, a synthesized psychedelic, that was not yet in the BCCSU library! When a festival goer showed up late on Sunday evening showing signs of toxicity seemingly unrelated to what she presumed to have taken. She had a collection of fourteen substances on her which we analyzed in an effort to determine the source of her state.

We ended up finding a counterfeit tablet containing fentanyl! ...



AUG

INTERNATIONAL OVERDOSE AWARENESS DAY

After our foray up the Fraser Canyon, we had a quick turnaround as co-hosts at the Chilliwack Community Action Teams's International Overdose Awareness Day event, which was held at the Shxwha:y Village community hall and band office grounds, another Indigenous space we were able to provide harm reduction in!



... She recovered well and (as she is a close friend of the festival organizers) there was no doubt in their minds that Mountainside would be a key partner when planning for Altitude 2023! Our partnership with Ready Harm Reduction is also growing, as we are planning to train their founder and harm reduction coordinator on the FTIR, who is another partner who sings praises of the unprecedented level of autonomy that a peer-led organization has over their access, funding and training for FTIR drug checking!

CHECK IT

August 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9	10	11	12	13	14
15	16	17	18	19	20	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

ALTITUDE

MOUNTAINSIDE
Harm Reduction Society



Our CCAT partners came together to host a large International Overdose Awareness Day event, which was held at the Shxwha:y Village community hall. This event allowed us to collaborate with another team of peers called Autonomous Accountable Peer Initiative (AAPI) to run an OPS tent which we were able to support with our FTIR drug checking services. This day was a huge success!



SEPT

5 DAYS A WEEK
4 COMMUNITIES

September saw us move from 2-3 scheduled sites a week to 4 semi-permanent locations and now 5-6 days a week of drug checking in all 4 of our expected communities; Mission, Chilliwack, Abbotsford & Hope! We have renewed all 3 of our part-time technicians' contracts for the next 3 months.

September 2022

MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT	SUN
			1	2	3	
	MOUNTAINSIDE Harm Reduction Society				The Hub - Abbotsford (2-6)	
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
	PHU - Chilliwack (2-6)	Abby DWS - Abbotsford (1-4) Trinity Memorial	RAN - Chilliwack (12-4)		The Hub - Abbotsford (2-7)	
	12	13	14	15	16	17
	PHU - Chilliwack (2-6)		RAN - Chilliwack (12-4)		The Hub - Abbotsford (2-7)	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
Diamondhead - Mission (2-6)	PHU - Chilliwack (2-6)	Abby DWS - Abbotsford (1-3) Trinity Memorial			The Hub - Abbotsford (2-7)	
25	26	27	28	29	30	Oct1
Diamondhead - Mission (2-6)	PHU - Chilliwack (2-6)		PCRS - Chilliwack (2-6)		The Hub - Abbotsford (2-7)	Fraser Canyon Clinic - Hope - 11am-3pm

NOTES

MISSION COMMUNITY SERVICES

ran ruth and naomi's mission.ca

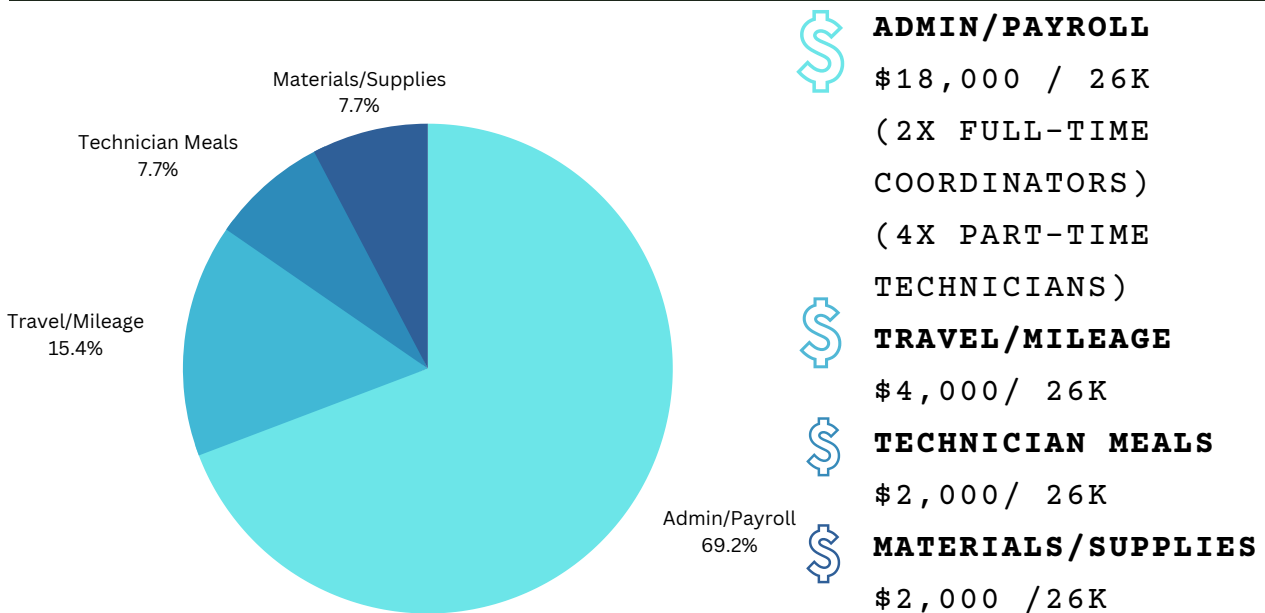
AMONG FRIENDS CREATING CONVERSATIONS WITH DRUG SUPPLIERS

We have now moved from serving Chilliwack & Abbotsford to also attending Mission Community Services "Haven in the Hollow" shelter every Sunday afternoon. This has been a very successful move into Mission and this site is a high traffic area that allows us to see shelter members as well as the general public at their hub. We also began serving Hope on Saturday, October 1st at the Fraser Canyon OAT clinic. The uptake for this site has been quite slow and we will be looking at other possible days to visit the clinic.

60K

**INSTALLMENT 1/3
60K/160K
JULY - OCTOBER**

We were able to save some money during the summer due to the opportunity to pay our trainees with funds from FNHA. Thus, we only spent about half of our first installment actually between the months of July & August. Also, with the schedule having evolved significantly since June, we now have exponentially more hours per week which are being paid out from this funding. All certified technicians are now on payroll from FHA:BCCSU.



Our certified technicians make \$30 an hour. Once the 3 month probation period is over we move technicians to \$32/hr. We also reimburse mileage at an industry standard of \$0.61/km. Our board of directors at Mountainside feel that because our service is provided in various locations and requires travel from each of our team members, that in order to provide accessible and flexible opportunities for people with lived and living experience, assistance with vehicle related expenses was a top priority! We also write it into our contracts that technicians working under 4 hours are entitled to a healthy beverage and snack paid for by the society, and if the shift is longer than 5 hours, a healthy meal! We are very proud to be able to provide this level of support to our staff! Also - we only have 6-7 4hour long shifts available a week, though this will still evolve further, having a high hourly rate allows for our technicians to function in todays economy with limited part-time hours.

NOV

A CONSISTENT SCHEDULE

November is shaping up to be the most consistent month for our drug checking initiatives Tetris-like scheduling yet! We are looking forward to having an equitable schedule for all of our technicians as well as some new payroll and paid sick day addendums to their contracts!

November 2022

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
	CHECK'IT MOUNTAINSIDESIDE Harm Reduction Society	1 Fraser Canyon Clinic (12-4)	2 Ruth&Naom's (12-4)	3	4 Riverside - (9-1) The Hub - (2-6)	5
6	7	8	9	10	11 Remembrance Day	12
The Haven - MCSS (2-6pm)	Public Health Unit FHA (2-6)	Abby Drug War Survivors - (1-3)	Ruth&Naom's (12-4)			
13	14	15	16	17	18 Riverside - (9-1) The Hub - (2-6)	19
The Haven - MCSS (2-6pm)	Public Health Unit FHA (2-6)	Fraser Canyon Clinic (12-4)	Ruth&Naom's (12-4)			
20	21	22	23	24	25 Riverside - (9-1) The Hub - (2-6)	26
The Haven - MCSS (2-6pm)	Public Health Unit FHA (2-6)	Abby Drug War Survivors - (1-3)	Ruth&Naom's (12-4)			
27	28	29	30			
The Haven - MCSS (2-6pm)	Public Health Unit FHA (2-6)	Fraser Canyon Clinic (12-4)	Chilliwack CAT Peer Training Day Public Health Unit			

www.mtinsidesociety.ca/check-it-drug-checking For more details

At the end of October we get to take our entire board of directors and staff on a mini-retreat for a weekend of team building. This capacity building event has been supported by Urban Matters micro-grant that we were awarded through our Provincial Peer Network. We will be revising our bylaws to get them finalized to finally register at our 2023 AGM. We will be looking to the future and setting some goals for the new year! Including starting to plan for a permanent Mountainside drop-in centre and office. We will also begin planning for our AGM in January!