



Persons Community Solutions Ltd.

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Local Workforce and Community Knowledge as the Foundation for Resilience

For five years, a hospital, a public library system, a community health centre and a downtown business district have paid for the same thing: a team of people hired from the street they work on, trained and licensed, whose job is to keep that street working for everyone on it. This year the International Downtown Association, the body for the people who run downtowns and business districts worldwide, [gave the team its highest award](#).

The team was built by two organisations, [Zoongizi Ode](#) in Winnipeg's North End and Persons Community Solutions. Then a smaller city a few hours away asked for something different, an outreach team for its main street, on short notice. It was running almost immediately, because the trained people and the software already existed.

Most of the people on those teams were hired from the neighbourhoods they work in, and many faced significant barriers to sustainable employment before this work. Many had no data on their phones. PCS has run its teams in those conditions for five years, and everything it builds was shaped there, including the software.

The software is the clearest case. PCS built it and owns the platform; a community's data stays with the community. It keeps working when the internet does not. It is what made the second build fast, and it is what makes the next one possible.

PCS is looking for the next communities that have named a need and want to build for it, and for the people who can make that introduction.

The Community Safety Host Initiative

A shop calls about a shoplifter. A security guard would stop the theft. A Community Safety Host gets there and finds a woman in crisis, cold, with no coat. The host talks with her, then walks her up the street to a clinic that gives out warm clothing, and she leaves with a jacket and gets on a bus. The shop got what it called for, she got what she needed, and the neighbourhood handled it itself.

A guard contract covers the first call and ends there. A host is paid to see the whole street. That is the job, and it is why the clients keep paying for it: hosts make a space work for the people who were being pushed out of it and for everyone else at the same time, which is something their own staff and their security contracts could not do.

What hosts know about the streets they were hired from is the expertise the job runs on, and it is backed by serious training, a security licence, a living wage and a team that answers when they call. More than fifty people do this work today.

The initiative is the work of two organisations. Zoongizi Ode, an Indigenous-led organisation in Winnipeg's North End, brings the neighbourhoods, the relationships and the standing to say who should be hired and why.

PCS brings the way of turning that into a licensed, paid, dependable service, and the tools to run it. The award, the Pinnacle in Public Space Management and Operations, is judged by the practitioners who run downtowns, and it was given to both organisations by name, for showing that safer public spaces can be built through relationships, de-escalation, lived experience and community leadership.

Dauphin

Dauphin, Manitoba, had the problem most towns have. A small number of people were living without housing on and around the main street, some with addictions, some with mental health struggles, most of them from the area. The rest of the town saw them as more numerous and more dangerous than they were. That perception was a safety problem in its own right: how people feel on a street changes how they use it, how business does there, and how neighbours treat each other.

Dauphin had never had an outreach service. When the call came, the service was running almost immediately. The technology was already built, so there was nothing to set up. The first team included people who had already done this work, so it was running from the first day while local hiring began. More than a dozen local agencies already worked in the town, from shelters and social services to the library. They know Dauphin; the team was built to work with them from the first day, and PCS brought the trained people and the tools.

What changed first was how the two halves of the main street see each other. The people who were being avoided are treated as neighbours, in public, every day, and the people who had been avoiding them watch that happen. The agencies and the town say the same thing: the street feels safer and more connected. And Dauphin is testing an idea many towns are weighing right now, that a town does better when someone is paid to do the human work first, so that enforcement is kept for the cases that need it.

The point of Dauphin is that **it worked again, somewhere else, quickly, with different people and a different problem**. A community can stand this up in weeks, staff it from its own people, and keep it.

The technology

Every PCS team runs on a platform PCS develops and owns, shaped over five years by the Winnipeg team and the neighbourhoods it works in. Many of the people PCS employs do not have data on their own phones, so the platform was **built from the start to work without it**. Anyone on the team can take a call, log what happened, see where the rest of the team is and ask for help, with or without a signal.

It runs the whole working day of a field team and the supports around the people on it: dispatch with a map and call intake, so a shopkeeper's call reaches the nearest team member; onboarding, scheduling and shift notifications; coverage planning from what has happened before, so the team is where it is needed; and daily field reports that roll up into reports a client's board can read, so a library or a business district sees what the team did for them without anyone retyping it.

The next piece is a small portable box that carries the platform when the internet is gone. Put it in a room, a vehicle or a backpack, and a team on their own phones can call, text and look things up through it. Alongside it PCS is building locally run language models, so the box can answer a question, sort incoming requests and write up the day without sending anything anywhere.

The platform is PCS's own, built and refined over five years of daily use. The box extends it onto established hardware and locally run models.

Where this goes

The Winnipeg hosts and the Dauphin outreach team are two different programs built the same way, and PCS builds others: the community names the problem and says who should do the work, through the organisations already there, as Zoongizi Ode does in Winnipeg; PCS builds the business around that and the technology behind it, and the plan from the start is for the community to own it. The Winnipeg hosts are in that transfer now, to a community-governed organisation, and the platform keeps running for them after it. PCS also does the IT and development work behind them today. Where that goes is small local IT businesses, built the same way, each looking after the technology for the teams in its own region and working on the same platform as the others, so that every community has people nearby who can keep it running if a disruption cuts it off from everyone else.

A flood, a wildfire or a conflict puts many more people in the position the teams were hired from, all at once. The platform already runs without the internet, and the training and daily routine of a team already live inside it rather than in a head office. That is what lets a community grow a team from its own people quickly, with no outside connection, when it needs to.

Working with us

If you run a community, a district or an institution with a need nobody is meeting, bring it to us, and PCS will build the business and the technology for it with you. **If your work is research, development or civil preparedness**, the platform and the box are developed with partners, and PCS is looking for the next ones. And **if you simply know someone** who should see this, introduce us.

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