

# Unleashing the Potential of Cities in Preventing and Strengthening Social Cohesion in North America

## Canada-Focused Impact

### Introduction

Strong Cities is an independent global network of 290+ cities and local governments committed to addressing all forms of hate, extremism and social polarisation and strengthening social cohesion. Through in-person and online convenings, exchanges and trainings, Strong Cities enables local leaders to share best practices and strengthen their prevention efforts. Its North America Regional Hub fosters city-led efforts to achieve these goals across Canada and the United States. Driven by priorities and needs of the cities themselves, the Hub:

- **Building Local Government:** Multi-actor coordination and local stakeholder convenings encourage increased cooperation and coordination within cities to advance local prevention efforts and bring in new relevant stakeholders to prevention efforts, in line with the [public health approach](#) to prevention.
- **Promoting City-to-City and Peer-to-Peer Learning:** Regional and transatlantic peer-to-peer learning opportunities serve as a platform for sharing practical city-led approaches and strategies for addressing shared challenges while bringing global learnings to the local level.
- **Operating Sustained Technical Assistance Initiatives:** Sustained engagement with select cities combine peer learning with technical assistance, informed by practices of cities around the globe, to help cities build on existing and/or develop new prevention policies, programs and practices.

Leveraging the Hub's strategic partnerships, Strong Cities has engaged with cities across the region, including 50 member and dozens of other cities that are not yet members.

**30+ local, regional, and virtual convenings** across continents, including Transatlantic Dialogues, since August 2024



**50 member cities** across North America since 2015, with membership *doubling* between June 2023 and November 2025

## Building Local Government Capacity

Working directly with local officials, Strong Cities delivers city-specific support to build local government capacity to prevent and respond to threats to social cohesion and enhance public safety through convenings with local stakeholders and offering insights into both the local hate and social polarizations landscapes and approaches to prevention. Strong Cities convenings are often the first-time assembled government and community-based partners have gathered to discuss these challenges. This helps catalyse city-wide action and collaboration that would likely not exist without Strong Cities' involvement. In October 2024, to help Edmonton (Alberta, Canada) develop new tools to manage the rapidly evolving hate landscape, Strong Cities [convened](#) city leaders, community-based organisations, law enforcement and front-line practitioners to examine Edmonton's hate landscape and discuss community-based solutions for strengthening cohesion across the city.

In June 2025, Strong Cities hosted a [two-day workshop](#) in Brampton (Ontario, Canada) to help municipalities across the Peel Region navigate the challenges to social cohesion arising from ongoing global crises through strengthening cross-sector collaboration. The Hub further leverages the capabilities of its host organisation, the Institute for Strategic Dialogue, to provide city-specific, threat detection, monitoring and analysis to create and deliver contextualised threat briefings for individual cities. More than 20 in North America have so far received briefings and many more have benefited from threat overviews presented at webinars and in-person events. The Hub drew on this experience in building local government capacity and surveying threat landscapes to produce a [toolkit](#) containing 130 recommendations to support local elected officials and municipal staff in Manitoba experiencing anti-government hate and harassment.

## Promoting City-to-City and Peer Learning

The North America Regional Hub has provided city-to-city learning opportunities, including regional and transatlantic, to foster an environment of collaboration and sharing among local leaders across geographies. With a unique focus on addressing global threats at the local level, Strong Cities shares insights from around the world that cities would otherwise not have access to. Mayors and other officials from more than 50 cities across North America have so far participated in and benefited from the numerous in-person opportunities the Hub has facilitated. In October 2024, in Victoria (British Columbia, Canada) Strong Cities [hosted](#) more than 65 mayors, council members, officials and experts from cities across the western United States and Canada for the first-ever exchange of its kind. Meeting topics ranged from addressing underreporting of hate crimes to building trust with and across communities and to strengthening prevention-related cooperation between federal, provincial, municipal and community stakeholders.

**“The issues that [Strong Cities] deals with – online, hate, the rise of extremism – are ones that we can see happening in all of our communities. So learning from our fellow communities about the approaches they’ve taken in their municipalities is critical.”**

Garth Frizzell, Councillor, Prince George, British Columbia

## Sustained Technical Assistance Initiatives

The North America Hub works with cities to deepen their understanding of and commitment to hate and violence prevention. Through sustained interaction with cities, the Hub assists with policy and programme development and rollout. These initiatives allow cities to enhance whole-of-city coordination and collaboration and develop solutions tailored to each city's unique needs and priorities as threats evolve.

In October 2024, the Hub launched its first [Prevention Academy](#) in the United States to help city leaders and other local government officials better understand and identify threats, needs and vulnerabilities related to hate and targeted violence in their communities and operationalise a public health approach to prevent and respond to them. In 2025, the Hub launched two more Prevention Academies, building on the success of and lessons learned from the inaugural US-based academy. [Prevention Academy Canada](#) engages nine-municipalities across four provinces to train local officials and civil society leaders on whole-of-society approaches to hate and social polarisation prevention, and offers monthly peer-to-peer dialogue opportunities and webinars that deliver innovative prevention practices across a range of topics and access to a Help Desk and local subject-matter experts to receive rapid advice on emerging crises. The [Prevention Academy for British Columbia Municipalities on Countering Online Harms](#) offers two tracks: a General Track featuring bi-monthly webinars and online resources open to all municipalities, and a Deep Dive Track that offers customised training, unique peer-learning opportunities and support to eight British Columbia municipalities over 20 months.

**“The Strong Cities Network] has been a great opportunity for us to learn, and I think the peer-to-peer aspect of this is obviously one of the most basic components of learning... we’ve really seen some extraordinary examples of how to do this work and how we can adapt it to a local Victoria, BC key perspective.”**

Marianne Alto, Mayor of Victoria, British Columbia

## About Strong Cities

Strong Cities is an independent global network of more than 290 cities and other local governments dedicated to addressing all forms of hate, extremism and polarization, while promoting a human rights-based prevention framework. Through in-person and online convenings, exchanges and trainings, Strong Cities facilitates sharing and learning among mayors, other local leaders and municipal-level practitioners. By doing so, it helps local authorities leverage their full potential in prevention, while complementing national, regional and global efforts. Learn more: [www.strongcitiesnetwork.org](http://www.strongcitiesnetwork.org).

For more information about the Strong Cities North America Regional Hub, or to connect with the Hub team, email: [na.regionalhub@strongcitiesnetwork.org](mailto:na.regionalhub@strongcitiesnetwork.org).