
NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release
2015HLTH0074-001548
Sept. 18, 2015

Ministry of Health

Renewed support for Age-friendly grants

Government is committing \$500,000 for 2016 Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants to help local governments establish or continue projects and community planning that supports healthy, active seniors.

"With a growing population of seniors, including many who value their independence, it's important that B.C. communities be equipped to meet their needs," said Health Minister Terry Lake. "The Age-friendly grants make possible innovative programs and municipal planning that greatly benefit seniors throughout British Columbia, including those experiencing mobility and other health challenges."

For the 2016 round of Age-friendly grants, communities are encouraged to consider projects and community planning that focus on accessibility, dementia, elder abuse prevention and non-medical home supports. Applications for 2016 grants are due to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) by Friday, Oct. 30, 2015, and applicants will be notified of the status of their application by Friday, Dec. 11, 2015.

"Currently, almost one-sixth of B.C.'s population is over 65 years old. We are proud to support communities in supporting their seniors with these grants through UBCM," said Darryl Plecas, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors. "As B.C.'s older population is growing, it is key that our local communities are planning ahead to better accommodate seniors' needs and independence close to home."

To date, over 140 local governments in all areas of B.C. have received at least one grant and over 240 projects have been funded. Age-friendly grants provide up to \$20,000 to municipal governments for projects that engage seniors within the larger community.

Some examples of age-friendly projects and community planning include:

- creation of local age-friendly plans;
- senior-focused recreation and social programs;
- community and age-friendly accessibility assessments and official community plan updates;
- senior-friendly information sources; community gardens and healthy eating and wellness programs; and
- community awareness and supports for those living with dementia and their families.

"Age-friendly grants are part of one of UBCM's longest running programs," said Sav Dhaliwal, president of the Union of British Columbia Municipalities. "This provincially funded program has supported local governments and seniors in B.C. since 2005 and we are happy to know that this support will continue."

With today's funding announcement, government's total investment in age-friendly initiatives is \$5.25 million. The Age-friendly BC program is a partnership between UBCM and the Ministry of Health, which supports seniors by encouraging healthy, active aging.

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BACKGROUND

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Age-friendly Grant Projects

Examples of age-friendly initiatives in B.C. communities include:

- A drop-in seniors' support centre in the Village of Fraser Lake;
- A seniors' bus providing accessible, reliable and affordable transportation options in North Delta;
- Elder abuse and "train the trainer" workshops in Tumbler Ridge to raise awareness about how to recognize and respond to elder abuse;
- Pemberton's "Seniors Interacting Through Art" program aimed at assisting seniors to communicate and express themselves more fully;
- Invermere's companion program designed to match seniors with volunteers who will assist with everyday living activities such as shoveling the sidewalk and grocery delivery;
- A seniors' resource fair in Nakusp; and
- An outdoor gym and wellness program for seniors in the Village of Sayward.

Learn more:

To apply for Age-friendly Community Planning and Project grants, please visit:

<http://www.ubcm.ca/EN/main/funding/lgps/current-lgps-programs/seniors-housing-support-initiative.html>

For more information about age-friendly initiatives, please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly

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