



What is BC Healthy Communities?

BC Healthy Communities (BCHC) is a province-wide initiative intended to promote healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities. As part of the international Healthy Communities/ Healthy Cities movement, BCHC takes a collaborative learning approach, enhancing existing community capacity to support optimal health, well-being and human development. BCHC has a three-person central office in Victoria and a part-time Regional Facilitator positioned in each of the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island regions of BC. Guidance is provided by a 15 member Steering Committee comprised of representatives of seven provincial organizations and eight community representatives from different parts of the province. Funding for BCHC is provided through the BC Ministry of Health.

Learning Together, Building on Community Strengths

There is no “one size fits all” approach to creating a “healthy community.” Each region has different characteristics and each community has a unique history of supporting collective health and well-being. However, experience both here in Canada and internationally have shown that there are four cornerstones for success:

1. Community Engagement
2. Multi-Sectoral Partnerships
3. Local Government Commitment
4. Healthy Public Policy

BCHC is committed to working with communities to build on existing successes. Together, we can learn how to reach our common goals of building healthy, inclusive and sustainable communities and find ways to address the challenges that prevent us from reaching those goals. BCHC offers an opportunity to create a province-wide learning network in which we can support, teach, learn from and grow with each other as we put the Healthy Communities approach into action.

The foundation of BCHC’s work is capacity-building, focusing on positive change in all areas of human experience, including:

- individual knowledge, behaviours, skills and techniques;
- improvements to policies and infrastructure, funding, staffing and other resources;
- individual self-awareness, attitudes, purpose, worldviews and ethics; and the collective assumptions, attitudes, and worldviews that influence our life in families, groups, organizations and institutions.

By building social, environmental, economic, physical, psychological, spiritual, and cultural capacity together, we are able to address the potential of the whole person within the whole community.

What Can BCHC Offer Communities?

BCHC supports the development of a province-wide learning network by offering:

- Regional facilitators reaching out to communities to identify positive activities already underway and to find out how BCHC can support and help sustain community efforts. Facilitators work with local communities to explore ways to promote and support community health, well-being and healthy human development.
- A central source of information on healthy communities-related activities and resources in BC, other parts of Canada and throughout the world. We are continually updating and expanding our information databases. We also help support a web-based directory of funding sources for communities (see the “Resources” page at www.bchealthycommunities.ca).
- A communications network that you can join to help keep you updated on healthy community activities and opportunities in BC.
- Facilitation of Healthy Communities networks in each of five regions of BC: the North, Interior, Fraser Valley, Vancouver Coastal and Vancouver Island.
- A website, newsletter, and other tools designed to link our collective efforts to create a province of healthy communities.
- A small grants program (\$2,500.00) to support your community in its efforts to move toward the greater health, well-being and optimum development of its residents.
- A central voice to celebrate the many ways in which BC communities are working to develop a more holistic approach to supporting the health, well-being and human development of all their residents.

For more information on BC Healthy Communities contact:

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