



**Canadian
Cancer
Society**

BRITISH COLUMBIA AND YUKON

**BC Healthy Living Alliance
Community Capacity Building Strategy
Frequently Asked Questions**

Who is the BC Healthy Living Alliance?

The BC Healthy Living Alliance (BCHLA) is a provincial coalition of organizations working together to improve the health of British Columbians by promoting physical activity, healthy eating, and living smoke-free. In partnership with the BC government, BCHLA is striving to make BC the healthiest region to ever host the Winter Olympic and Paralympic games. Recognizing the alignment between ActNow BC and BCHLA, the Province invested \$25.2 million in BCHLA to start working towards their shared vision of a healthier future.

How is BCHLA using this one-time grant to support this vision?

To generate the best return on investment, BCHLA analyzed the research, examined best practices, and developed four complementary strategies to achieve its targets:

- *Healthy Eating Strategy* – Providing knowledge, skills, and easier access to healthier food choices at school, work, and play so families can make better food choices;
- *Physical Activity Strategy* – Creating opportunities and overcoming barriers to make physical activity a priority for everyone;
- *Tobacco Reduction Strategy* – Reaching young adults where they work, learn, socialize, and live with smoking prevention, protection, and cessation initiatives;
- *Community Capacity Building Strategy* – Building stronger networks, leadership, and skills to support the development of healthier communities.

BCHLA is undertaking a series of comprehensive initiatives under each strategy until the end of 2009. BCHLA members have stepped up to lead initiatives in areas where they have demonstrable expertise and networks. For more information about the Alliance and its strategies and initiatives, please visit www.bchealthyliving.ca.

What is the Community Capacity Building Strategy?

Led by the Canadian Cancer Society, the purpose of the strategy is to:

- Support, align, and expand interventions under BCHLA's three pillars (healthy eating, physical activity, and tobacco reduction);
- Enhance regional and community capacity to achieve and sustain community health.

What is “community capacity building”? Why dedicate a strategy to it?

Community capacity building aims to enhance the skills, abilities, resources, and commitment of communities and community members to care for each other, nurture unique talents and leadership, and act on challenges and opportunities the community faces. As a result, individuals and groups increase their ability to impact the health and vitality of their communities in a positive, sustainable manner through collaboration, education, communication, and cooperation.

BCHLA has identified capacity building as a critical element of health promotion and a population based approach to addressing risk factors related to tobacco, physical activity, and healthy eating. A review of the evidence clearly supports capacity building as a necessary condition for the development, implementation, and maintenance of effective community-health promotion and disease prevention programs.

What is the role of the regional Community Capacity Facilitators?

Regional Community Capacity Facilitators (as bounded by the health authorities) are working to:

- Foster collaboration and commitment to build community capacity;
- Facilitate networking and partnerships across communities and regions;
- Enhance skills and resources to help build healthier communities;
- Link BCHLA initiatives with other community initiatives and seek opportunities to integrate efforts;
- Provide financial support and leverage other resources to assist communities in undertaking capacity building projects.

What kind of support is available and who will be eligible to receive it?

Once Community Capacity Facilitators work with regional stakeholders to identify geographic areas or population groups to target capacity building efforts additional resources will be made available. Community Capacity Facilitators will engage these communities and work with them to determine their capacity building needs and assist them in accessing appropriate resources, including human resources, training and skill-building, and financial support. Communities will receive assistance in preparing requests for financial support for capacity building activities in the following areas:

- Community planning and network development;
- Pilot or enhancement projects that build skills and increase sustainability;
- Environmental or policy interventions that promote healthy eating, active living, or tobacco reduction;
- Leverage additional funds or in-kind support to sustain capacity building efforts.

\$200,000 will be made available per region to be distributed amongst the identified communities until the end of December 2009.