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Ministry of Health

Surrey receives Age-friendly BC grant

SURREY – Surrey seniors will benefit from a \$20,000 Age-friendly grant to help create programs or tools that address the needs of the city's older residents.

The City of Surrey is one of 27 communities receiving grants for 2013.

“As I get out in the community and talk to seniors throughout the province, I’ve heard over and over from seniors how important it is to have the opportunity to stay at home, close to friends, family and community. It is great news that the work Surrey is doing will support local seniors in remaining independent longer,” said Minister of State for Seniors Ralph Sultan. “As a senior, I know firsthand that age-friendly supports can make life easier for senior residents and their families and caregivers.”

The City of Surrey will use the grant to expand the A Roof Over My Head workshop series, which provides information for seniors on home adaptations, rental and ownership. Workshops will be modified to include information on a variety of topics, including financial issues and getting affairs in order. The city will also hold caregiver forums in partnership with the Seniors Come Share Society, the Seniors Advisory and Accessibility Committee, and the United Way of the Lower Mainland, to address issues for caregivers and to discuss tools and resources on caregiving.

“Like other communities in the Lower Mainland and throughout B.C., the number of seniors in Surrey continues to rise,” said Surrey-Tynehead MLA Dave S. Hayer. “Seniors are active, vital members of our community, and it is great news for local seniors, families and caregivers that this funding will allow the city to expand programs which are supporting the health, well-being and independence of senior residents and those who care for them.”

The Age-friendly Planning and Project grant program is a partnership between the Government of B.C. and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM). Grants of up to \$20,000 are provided through UBCM to help establish, or continue, a variety of projects that support healthy, active seniors.

“This funding will help us ensure that we are providing improved access to crucial information on housing and finances that can help Surrey’s senior residents remain independent longer,” said Mayor of Surrey Dianne Watts. “We recognize that isolation can affect seniors even in urban areas, which is why we are also ensuring that our materials are available in additional languages, and that we include outreach components for seniors living in more isolated areas of the community.”

Applications for Age-friendly Planning and Projects grants were reviewed by staff from UBCM and the Ministry of Health. They were scored on a variety of factors, including: goals, proposed activities, involvement of seniors and other key partners, budget, and innovation and sustainability.

Since 2007, 117 B.C. communities have received funding to support age-friendly planning and projects. Examples include: age-friendly assessments, ensuring services are more accessible, supporting transportation and social connection to help prevent social isolation, and improving the community by increasing garden and green space.

In September 2012, government announced \$500,000 in funding was available for the 2013 round of grants. Fourteen of the 27 successful applicants for 2013 have not received previous funding through the program.

The Age-friendly grant program is just one aspect of Age-friendly BC, which focuses on providing communities with support, information and recognition to help meet the needs of an aging population. Local governments can achieve age-friendly recognition and officially become an Age-friendly BC community once they have completed four basic steps that focus on community engagement, commitment, assessment and action. To learn more about Age-friendly B.C. and the Age-friendly Planning and Project grant program, please visit: www.gov.bc.ca/agefriendly

The Age-friendly grant program reflects the goals of B.C.’s Family Agenda, which supports seniors by encouraging healthy, active aging. To learn more, visit: www.familiesfirstbc.ca

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