MANITOBA ASSOCIATION OF SENIOR COMMUNITIES

2021/22 Age Friendly Manitoba New Horizons

Summary Report

Summary Observations from Consultations and Community Meetings

The New Horizons Pilot Project, "Critical Linkages - the Isolated Person and the Place They Live", includes Manitoba jurisdictions of various sizes and locations. The following observations are from community meetings and consultations based on proposed project outcomes. (July 2022)

Engage and Better Connect Key Community Organizations:

- The most critical learning from this pilot project is the importance of networking among community organizations, demonstrated both during initial consultations and community meetings.
- The interest in and willingness to commit to ongoing networking meetings ensures information continues to be shared among organizations and community residents. Communities identified additional groups that should be invited to participate.
- It is important to engage organizations such as churches, legions, service clubs and multicultural groups that may have connections to people not served by other organizations.
- Municipal governments are an important link among organizations and source of timely information.
- This type of organizational networking and collaborating could help maximize financial and human resources.
- Local services directories, both print and on line, are important tools which need to be maintained and updated.
- 211 Manitoba is a valuable telephone or Internet resource for people both in the community and those outside the community accessing services for local clients or loved ones. Community organizations must provide current local information to the provincial 211 service for it to be useful and viable.

- "Services to Seniors" organizations are a critical link and need to be adequately resourced to continue their vital services and community networking.
- Most organizations are aware of their provincial counterparts but some don't have a strong linkage. Though provincial organizations make information available, it is not always accessed at the local level. Local organizations are not aware of provincial interagency networking. This could be strengthened both by provincial organization outreach and local lobbying for information and service. The recent broadened mandate of the Manitoba Association of Senior Communities could assist these linkages.
- Ongoing networking will strengthen Age-Friendly initiatives and share leadership among organizations not just individuals.

Communication Mechanisms:

- Generally, organizations are working toward increased use of web sites, social media, meeting platforms, email and other computer-based communication methods.
- However, not all residents access information from these sources due to
  - cost and access to equipment;
  - cost and /or reach of Internet or cellular service;
  - lack of technical skills; or
  - aversion to technology.
- Therefore, organizations should continue using "traditional" information sharing methods such as posters, bulletin boards, newsletters and word of mouth.
- Telephones are an important communication link for older and isolated people. Telephone trees and regular calling networks are critical to ongoing social interaction and access to information.
- Local radio is an important source of information as they offer public service announcements and low-cost advertising for local organizations.
- Local newspapers and flyers are also an important information sharing tool.
- Access TV is available for organizations to post information, but residents require Cable service for access, which may be cost prohibitive or not a service choice.
- Online member only groups such as Facebook groups can be methods for organizations to maintain contact with members and clients, providing that everyone has access to the technology.
- Ongoing education opportunities on use of technology are needed to support residents to access and use information. Communities should explore various

venues and methods of providing training to make it comfortable & accessible, particularly for older and isolated people.

Assess if people receive information:
- This topic is difficult to assess. However, this project raised awareness among organizations of the need to if know the information they circulate is being received, particularly by more isolated people.
- It is very important that information be repeated to help it reach intended audiences and increase its impact.
- There is concern that local information must be available and accurate to offset wider public media that may not be applicable to the area or open to speculation and misinterpretation.

Moving forward: New Horizons 2022/23:

There was some discussion about emergency preparedness and communication of special alerts. This project lays the groundwork for the next project, which will include the role of communication and information sharing mechanisms in safety and security for older adults and isolated people.