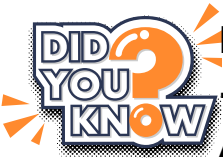




Mission: To facilitate healthy aging by providing leadership and encouraging collaboration in creating age-friendly places (communities) that optimize the ability of all older Manitobans to do the things they feel are important.



Making Manitoba More Age Friendly - New Series Of \$10,000 Grants Now Available To Municipalities

October is Seniors' Month in Manitoba and the Age Friendly movement is calling on municipalities to do more to improve the quality of life of older people as their numbers continue to grow. With more than 17 per cent of Manitobans over 65, Age Friendly Manitoba's inaugural community grants aim to give municipalities added incentive to make real changes that are more age inclusive.

"The single greatest purpose of any municipal government has to be to make their community a place where everyone can live a long, healthy, happy life," said Connie Newman, Executive Director, Manitoba Association of Senior Communities, the organization that manages the Age Friendly Manitoba initiative.

"Since Age Friendly Manitoba was launched in 2008, we've seen some progress on this important initiative, but not enough. It's time for municipalities of all sizes to recommit to making themselves age friendly so we can all expect longer, more independent lives."

Age Friendly Manitoba is currently accepting applications for its Community Collaboration grants with a combined value of \$100,000. The organization will give out 10 grants of \$10,000 each to projects put forward by municipalities in collaboration with at least three local organizations. Municipalities can collaborate with non-profits, volunteer groups, businesses, Indigenous groups or other organizations to make improvements such as upgrading accessibility, enhancing intergenerational connections, reducing social isolation among older adults or improving transportation options. **Deadline for applications is December 3, 2023.**

"When communities, including their municipalities, invest in these kinds of initiatives, they become better places to live. It's as simple as that," said Newman. "Being age friendly means encouraging physical exercise, better nutrition and more social interaction for everyone throughout their entire lives. For too long, we've tended to treat seniors as unneeded and unwanted people, which leads to more loneliness, more chronic illness, and shorter lives."

Kam Blight, President of Association of Manitoba Municipalities (AMM) said that embracing age friendly initiatives means lowering health care costs and improving the quality of life for all ages.

"Age Friendly initiatives not only benefit seniors but also enhance the overall well-being of all residents. AMM wholeheartedly supports efforts aimed at engaging residents of all ages to live and participate fully in their communities," said Blight.

To be eligible for the grants, municipalities must already be on the Age Friendly pathway, and the application has to improve at least two of the eight Age Friendly domains: outdoor spaces and buildings, transportation, housing, social participation, respect and social inclusion, civic participation and employment, communication and information, community support and health services.

"It is imperative that we focus on building communities that are inclusive and supportive of people of all ages," said Winnipeg Mayor Scott Gillingham. "By making our municipalities more age friendly, we create communities that promote accessibility, active aging and a high quality of life for everyone."

Facts About Aging in Canada - We Need To Do Better!

A Statistics Canada survey showed that between 2016 and 2021, the number of Canadians aged 65 and older rose 18.3 per cent. The same survey showed the number of people aged 85 and older has doubled since 2001 and it predicts that number could triple by 2046.



Danger Of Social Isolation

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in the United States, social isolation significantly increases risk of premature death, dementia, heart disease, stroke, depression, anxiety and suicide. The same source says the risks associated with social isolation rival those of smoking, obesity and physical activity. The National Poll for Healthy Aging says one in three adults aged 50 – 80 reported feeling isolated in 2023.



Barriers To Exercise And Good Health

A 2021 Statistics Canada survey showed that 56.2 per cent of adults aged 50 to 64 and 40.4 per cent of adults aged 65 and over exercised for at least 150 minutes per week. Barriers to exercising for older people include fear of getting injured, having no one to exercise with, cost, lack of facilities, lack of transportation and more, according to a 2013 Singapore Medical Journal survey.



Age Discrimination Is Real

A 2012 survey by Revera on ageism found that eight in 10 Canadians believe people aged 75 and older are seen as less important and more ignored than younger generations.

The survey said that the three most common forms of age discrimination faced by Canadian seniors are:

1. Being ignored or treated as though they are invisible (41 per cent)
2. Being treated like they have nothing to contribute (38 per cent)
3. Assuming that seniors are incompetent (27 per cent)

It found that 27 per cent of older Canadians said they've experienced age discrimination from the government, saying programs, policies and services don't consider the needs of seniors.

One-third of respondents also said they've faced discrimination from health-care professionals and the health-care system because of their age.



Embracing the Benefits of Aging

While there are numerous things to be against – such as discrimination, drug abuse, oppression, poverty, and sickness – aging should not be one of them. We all need to become advocates for aging and welcome the unique opportunities it brings.

The Age Friendly Manitoba Initiative serves as a comprehensive guide to facilitate municipalities in developing accessible and efficient services for all.

What actions will you take next to enhance your community?



Our consultants are ready to work with you!

Connect with Connie Newman at (204) 792-5838 or info@manitobaseniorcommunities.ca and hello@agefriendlymanitoba.com or visit our website: www.agefriendlymanitoba.com



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