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## NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release  
2012HLTH0009-000112  
Feb. 7, 2012

Ministry of Health  
Union of British Columbia Municipalities

### **Fifty-two communities receive Age-friendly BC grants**

MAPLE RIDGE – Seniors in every region of B.C. will benefit as 52 local governments receive age-friendly grants to support older residents in staying healthy and active in the community.

One element of Age-friendly BC is a partnership between the Province and the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) to provide grants of up to \$20,000 to local governments, through UBCM's age-friendly planning and project grant program, to help establish or continue a variety of projects, from improved transportation options for seniors to community gardens.

In September 2011, Premier Christy Clark announced the launch of Age-friendly BC, a grant and recognition program to help local governments create environments that support the good health and community participation of seniors. Due to an overwhelming response from communities, the Province has provided an additional \$750,000 to further support age-friendly community planning and projects.

Examples of age-friendly community changes include widening sidewalks, installing benches, maximizing green space, and making information, programs and services more accessible to the older population.

More than 120 B.C. communities have completed some form of age-friendly initiative to date, ranging from setting public policy to making physical improvements to address the needs of older residents. With this round of grants, 100 local governments will have received grant funding for age-friendly planning and projects since 2007.

The Age-friendly BC program 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.

Until Feb. 29, 2012, local governments can apply to be recognized using applications available on: [www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly](http://www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly)

## Quotes:

### **Michael de Jong, Minister of Health –**

“Seniors are the cornerstone of families and communities. Through Age-friendly BC, local governments have worked hard to create programs and tools that allow seniors to be healthier, active members of the community. These communities are demonstrating that even modest improvements can make a real difference in the lives of seniors.”

### **Ron Cantelon, Parliamentary Secretary for Seniors to the Minister of Health –**

“In an age-friendly British Columbia, older people are supported to live active, socially engaged, independent lives. These grants reflect our work with local governments, the Union of British Columbia Municipalities and other partners to achieve a vision where people of all ages and abilities feel included and valued in their communities.”

### **Heath Slee, president, Union of British Columbia Municipalities –**

“We are proud to partner with the Province on the Age-friendly BC program and it is wonderful to see how many B.C. communities completed some form of age-friendly initiative to support the needs of their older residents.”

### **Mayor Ernie Daykin, District of Maple Ridge –**

“In Maple Ridge we have a variety of projects underway to support our elders in the community, and I am thrilled that we have received funding to develop a volunteer program with the Ridge Meadows Seniors Society.”

## Quick Facts:

- By 2031, close to 1.5 million British Columbians, or almost a quarter of the province’s population, will be over 65.
- Since 2007, the Ministry of Health has supported communities across B.C. by providing tools to help them respond to an aging population:
  - In June 2011, the Province – in partnership with the BC Chamber of Commerce – launched a guide entitled ‘Creating an Age-friendly Business in B.C.’ for businesses to address the needs of older customers and employees.
  - In September 2011, B.C. launched ‘Becoming an Age-friendly Community: Local Government Guide’, a new tool for local governments, community organizations or local champions to help them create an age-friendly community.
  - B.C. has 18 BC Seniors Community Parks – located right across the province – that are designed to help older adults stay mobile, physically active, and healthy in their communities.

- The easy-to-read B.C. Seniors' Guide contains information on a range of topics including transportation options, housing, health services and healthy living. It is also available in Chinese, Punjabi and French translations and includes telephone numbers and website information for frequently used resources.
- In 2009, the Province partnered with the United Way of the Lower Mainland to develop and pilot the Community Action for Seniors' Independence (CASI) project in five communities – including Maple Ridge. CASI gives seniors access to a range of non-medical home support services such as transportation, housekeeping, home repair, yard maintenance, friendly visiting and information to help them remain independent longer.

**Learn More:**

For more information on Age-friendly BC, please visit: <http://www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly/>.

Want your community recognized as age-friendly? Learn how:  
<http://www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly/communities/recognition.html>.

Want to know how to make your business more accessible to seniors? The guide, Creating an Age-friendly Business in B.C., is available at any BC Chamber of Commerce or online at:  
[http://www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly/businesses/becoming\\_agefriendly.html](http://www.seniorsbc.ca/agefriendly/businesses/becoming_agefriendly.html).

Looking for general information on seniors and seniors' services? Visit:  
<http://www.seniorsbc.ca>

A backgrounder follows.

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# BACKGROUNDER

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## **Age-friendly BC grant recipients**

Armstrong

Project: Age-friendly Assessment and Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Cache Creek

Project: Seniors' Wellness Equipment and Program. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Campbell River

Project: Walkability Inventory and Assessment. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Capital RD

Project: Seniors' Trail Assessment and Info System. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Castlegar

Project: Seniors-Oriented Transportation Service. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Chetwynd

Project: Voice of Chetwynd Task Force. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Clearwater

Project: Age-friendly Needs Assessment and Plan. Grant Amount: \$17,670

Comox Valley RD

Project: Age-friendly Working Groups, Forums, Resource Guide. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Coquitlam

Project: Multicultural Needs Assessment and Pilots. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Cowichan Valley RD

Project: Cobble Hill Age-friendly Assessment /Housing Study. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Cranbrook

Project: Public Produce Garden. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Creston

Project: Develop Age-Friendly Action Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Duncan

Project: Duncan Age-Friendly Seniors Safety Implementation. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Enderby

Project: Community Garden – Enderby Memorial Terrace. Grant Amount: \$19,500

Esquimalt

Project: Seniors' Outdoor Park and Fitness Programs. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Fraser Lake

Project: Computer Upgrade and Training Classes. Grant Amount: \$13,700

Fraser Valley RD

Project: Age-Friendly Workshop, Report and Official Community Plan Input. Grant Amount: \$16,060

Fruitvale

Project: Seniors Co-ordinator - Activity and Information Project. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Gibsons

Project: Age-Friendly Committee / Official Community Plan Review. Grant Amount: \$19,750

Hudson's Hope

Project: Update Official Community Plan to Include Age-Friendly. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Kamloops

Project: Seniors' Fitness Assessment and Programming. Grant Amount: \$17,780

Kelowna

Project: Develop Community Garden. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Kent

Project: Age-friendly Assessment and Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Kimberley

Project: "GrandFriends" Seniors-Youth Mentoring Program. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Logan Lake

Project: Age-friendly Assessment and Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Maple Ridge

Project: Ridge Meadows Volunteer Management Program. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Metchosin

Project: Metchosin Seniors One-Stop Telephone Referral. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Midway

Project: Food Preparation Area at Community Garden. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Nanaimo

Project: Connecting with New Seniors' Residents. Grant Amount: \$20,000

North Vancouver

Project: North Shore Age-friendly Planning. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Northern Rockies

Project: Seniors Health and Wellness Plan and Fitness Park. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Port Coquitlam

Project: Expansion of Outdoor Gym and Programming. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Qualicum Beach

Project: Age-friendly Transportation Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Revelstoke

Project: Implementation Projects from Age-friendly Action Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Saanich

Project: Seniors Community Kitchen and Nutritional Program. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Salmo

Project: Create Age-friendly Park Plan/ Park Update. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Sechelt

Project: Resource Directory Project. Grant Amount: \$12,480

Smithers

Project: Bulkley Valley Senior Co-housing Project. Grant Amount: \$14,095

Sparwood

Project: Upgrade Kitchen and Cooking Education. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Squamish Lillooet RD/ Pemberton

Project: Four Part Harmony Age-friendly Project. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Stewart

Project: Community Shuttle and Seniors' Mobility Project. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Sunshine Coast

Project: Recreation and Rehabilitation Project. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Surrey

Project: Information and Outreach for Seniors and Mobility Improvement. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Telkwa

Project: Age-friendly Assessment and Plan. Grant Amount: \$4,600

Terrace

Project: Seniors Activity Co-ordinator. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Vancouver

Project: Planning Dialogues for Social Amenity Plan. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Vanderhoof

Project: Engage Seniors in Official Community Plan Update. Grant Amount: \$19,768

Vernon

Project: Seniors Computer Group Support. Grant Amount: \$12,000

Wells

Project: Workshops and Resources Directory. Grant Amount: \$14,000

Whistler

Project: Accessible Community Gardens. Grant Amount: \$20,000

White Rock

Project: Enhance Awareness of Community Resources and Emergency Planning. Grant Amount: \$20,000

Williams Lake

Project: Fall Prevention/Balance Classes. Grant Amount: \$20,000

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