

REPORT

Parks and Recreation

To: Mayor Johnstone and Members of Council
Date: May 5, 2025

From: Dean Gibson
Director of Parks and Recreation
File: 2677385

Item #: 2025-121

Subject: **Programs to Serve Isolated Seniors Funded by the United Way British Columbia**

RECOMMENDATION

1. *THAT the ongoing implementation of the City's Social Meals, Community Connector and Volunteer Coordination initiatives to be funded by the United Way of British Columbia as described in the report titled "Programs to Serve Isolated Seniors Funded by the United Way of British Columbia" dated May 5, 2025 from the Director, Parks and Recreation, be endorsed; and*
 2. *THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director, Parks and Recreation be authorized to enter into the 2025-2026 project funding agreements with the United Way of British Columbia substantially in the form as included in Attachments A, B and C to the staff report and subject to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.*
-

PURPOSE

1. To recommend, and seek Council's continued endorsement for the implementation of three United Way of British Columbia funded program initiatives intended to address isolation and social determinants of health factors impacting vulnerable seniors in New Westminster.
2. To seek authority to once again enter into a project funding agreement with the United Way of British Columbia for the delivery of the above initiatives.

BACKGROUND

The City of New Westminster is home to 12,680 persons aged 65 and over according to the 2021 census. 16.0% of these seniors were living with low income and 32.6% were living alone. There is a higher proportion of seniors living alone in New Westminster as compared to the 23.4% of seniors living alone in Metro Vancouver, the 24.5% of seniors living alone in British Columbia, and the 25.9% of seniors living alone in Canada. The City of New Westminster was identified by the United Way British Columbia as an area in need of targeted interventions to support food security and to address social isolation for these seniors because of their vulnerability factors.

The United Way British Columbia supports the development of healthy, caring, and inclusive communities by strengthening vital connections that support people in need. The 2025-2026 United Way Healthy Aging Enhancement Grants support non-profits and municipalities to address social determinants of health for seniors. City of New Westminster staff have successfully applied for three streams of grant funding:

Social Meals Enhancement Grants are province-wide enhanced funding opportunities for community-based senior serving (CBSS) organizations to design and deliver services that combine social engagement with the provision of nutritious meals, for vulnerable community-dwelling seniors.

Seniors Community Connector Grants are province-wide funding for a staff position that will work with older adults to connect them with community supports and services through referrals, applications, advocacy, and introductions.

Volunteer Coordination & Supports Grants are province-wide enhanced funding opportunities for community-based senior serving organizations to design and implement strategies for increased coordination of, and supports for, volunteers.

The guiding principles that shape these funding opportunities are:

- Responsive and Flexible
- People-Centred, Seniors-Centred
- Collaborative and Connected
- Innovative and Sustainable
- Learning, Growth & Accountability

In 2024, staff submitted a grant application for this program, which resulted in an award of \$225,000 from the United Way. Council subsequently endorsed entering into the funding agreement.

DISCUSSION

Staff have once again applied for and been awarded funding to continue the above described initiatives for 2025-2026. Council approval is required to authorize staff to enter into formal funding agreements with United Way British Columbia for the coming fiscal year.

Program Proposal

Social Meals

This program offers free community meals, along with social opportunities, diversity programming, and access to valuable resources. We will host at least two Meal Meetups each month, rotating between Century House, Queensborough, and təməsewtxw Aquatic and Community Centres. The goal is to provide meals in different neighborhoods, fostering connections among seniors within their communities. In addition, we will organize weekly Community Connections events, where various Community-Based Senior Services (CBSS) partners and local resources will present their services. These events will include activities, social interaction spaces, and food and beverages. We will collaborate with the Senior Services Society to explore transportation options for seniors with mobility challenges. Each event will have a unique theme designed to create a safe, welcoming environment that celebrates cultural diversity and promotes inclusivity. CBSS partners will be invited to participate in these events as part of a resource fair, and they will assist in identifying and referring vulnerable seniors to participate.

Seniors Community Connector

The Seniors Community Connector (SCC) supports adults aged 50 and older, including those referred by healthcare professionals, community partners, or through self-referral. The SCC assists seniors in connecting with community resources and services through referrals, application support, advocacy, and introductions. In collaboration with each senior, the Community Connector creates a personalized wellness plan tailored to their specific needs, ensuring the support necessary for aging well and staying connected to their community. In addition to directly supporting seniors, the program also provides resources and assistance to caregivers, helping to ease their responsibilities. By addressing key determinants of healthy aging, the program reduces strain on the healthcare system by focusing on preventative measures and improving overall well-being. This approach can lead to fewer health crises and a decreased demand for medical services.

Volunteer Coordination & Supports

This funding will be used for staffing to coordinate and support the Century House Association, City of New Westminster, and Seniors Services Society volunteers. This person would support the recruitment, training, support, recognition and retention of volunteers for all three organizations. The Volunteer Coordinator would provide general training, identify volunteer opportunities in each organization and match volunteers to opportunities. They would spend time engaging with the seniors' population to recruit and recommend placements. They would be responsible for workshops and education on

volunteering, leadership and opportunities. They will coordinate and implement volunteer recognition events and activities as a way of showing appreciation and encouraging retention. The Volunteer Coordinator will be housed out of Century House to support the extensive volunteer program offered at this site.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

Partnerships with CBSS organizations including but not limited to the United Way British Columbia, Century House Association, Senior Services Society, Fraser Health and BC Housing will be developed and strengthened through these grant opportunities that will sustain these program initiatives. A coordination and collaboration of support services will create more readily available resources for seniors in New Westminster.

Full program details are available in the Applicant Guide included as Attachments 1, 2 and 3 to this report.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

United Way British Columbia has considered and approved \$245,000 funding for the program proposal. 100% of the direct project cost is funded by United Way British Columbia. Key provisions of the funding agreements (Attachments #4, 5, 6) include:

Amount:	\$245,000
Term:	12 months, expected start date April/May 2025
Scope:	Increasing deliverable scope in Seniors services, Food services and Volunteer services program areas; hiring of one temporary full-time program coordinator into the senior's community connector position; hiring one temporary part-time volunteer recreation leader attendant; and, auxiliary staff support hours for food services.
City Deliverables:	Quarterly project reporting (progressive use of funds); provision of success stories; engage with CBSS networks; initiate discussions with funder in the third quarter of the project cycle to discuss potential for funding to be extended into future years.

The \$245,000 is considered sufficient to execute on program scope and deliverables, resulting in no incremental impacts on the approved 2025 operating budget. As per the draft Letter of Agreement, the funding will be received through two installments as follows:

Grant Stream	Apr 2024	Oct 2024	Total \$	Total %
Social Meals Seniors in the City	\$25,000	\$25,000	\$50,000	20%
Volunteer Coordination & Supports	\$37,500	\$37,500	\$75,000	31%
Seniors Community Connector	\$60,000	\$60,000	\$120,000	49%
Grand Total	\$122,500	\$122,500	\$245,000	100%

All staff hiring related to the program will be temporary in nature. Any adjustments or extensions to the operating budget or staff hiring beyond the current term of the program will be presented to Council as part of the 2026 operating budget proposal.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL LIAISON

This report was created in liaison with Finance Department, Recreation Services, and the CAO's Office.

OPTIONS

1. THAT Council endorse the continued implementation of the City's Social Meals, Community Connector and Volunteer Coordination initiatives to be funded by the United Way of British Columbia as described in this report titled "Programs to Serve Isolated Seniors Funded by the United Way of British Columbia" dated May 5, 2025.
2. THAT the Chief Administrative Officer and the Director of Parks and Recreation be authorized to enter into the 2025-2026 project funding agreement with the United Way of British Columbia substantially in the form as per Attachments 4, 5 and 6 and subject to the satisfaction of the City Solicitor.
3. THAT Council provide staff with an alternate direction.

Staff recommend options 1 and 2

CONCLUSION

Staff are recommending the continued implementation of the above-mentioned programs funded by the United Way British Columbia to deliver initiatives that provide food security, promote social opportunities, and provide meaningful, supported volunteer opportunities. The intention is to support seniors in New Westminster to be connected to opportunities, engaged in community and thriving as they age in place.

ATTACHMENTS

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| Attachment A | Letter of Agreement for Social Meals |
| Attachment B | Letter of Agreement for Social Prescribing |
| Attachment C | Letter of Agreement for Volunteer Coordination & Supports |

APPROVALS

This report was prepared by:

Erica Mark, Acting Senior Manager Recreation Services and Facilities

This report was reviewed by:

Craig MacFarlane, Manager, Legal Services

Indeep Johal, Manager, Financial Services

This report was approved by:

Dean Gibson, Director Parks and Recreation

Shehzad Somji, CFO/Director of Finance

Lisa Spitale, Chief Administrative Officer