<u>Call for Concepts re. Pan-Canadian Projects Under New Horizons for Seniors Program:</u>

On December 6, 2018, the Federal Government announced a new round of funding for pan-Canadian projects to support social inclusion of seniors, particularly those seniors living with significant barriers to full social participation. They are looking for multi-sectoral collaboratives built on a collective impact framework that will involve seniors and communities to address the challenges that seniors face that limit their participation in social and community living that supports their well-being and dignity.

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) has drafted the following Initial/Draft Concept Plan to share with all interested stakeholders in preparation for the development of a final Concept Proposal, which the funder must receive by January 21, 2019. This is the first feedback opportunity that we are organizing for broad stakeholder consultation, and we encourage as many people as possible to offer ideas and suggestions. ESCC will host a facilitated Working Session on Wednesday, January 9 from 1:00 to 4:00 at the Santa Maria Gioretti Centre to examine the Call for Concepts and further develop the Concept Proposal.

Initial/Draft Concept Plan for:
A Community-Based Initiative to Improve Seniors Social Inclusion

Introduction

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) will facilitate a multi-partner, cross sector initiative aimed at increasing the social inclusion and connectedness of seniors in Edmonton and area. We intend to mobilize seniors and community stakeholders to create meaningful and sustainable opportunities for seniors to be active and engaged.

Partnering agencies will be included from the not-for-profit sector, the public service sector and the for-profit sector. Collaborating organizations will create an integrated strategy to achieve shared outcomes. The outcomes must fill needs or gaps which will result in increased social inclusion of seniors. Building on what has been learned from already established networks and partnerships (e.g. Age Friendly Edmonton), we will collectively leverage resources and momentum. By aligning our collective efforts, we will maximize benefits to older adults.

<u>Our Goal</u> = Increased social inclusion of vulnerable seniors

<u>Target Community of Seniors aged 55+</u> = (to be determined)

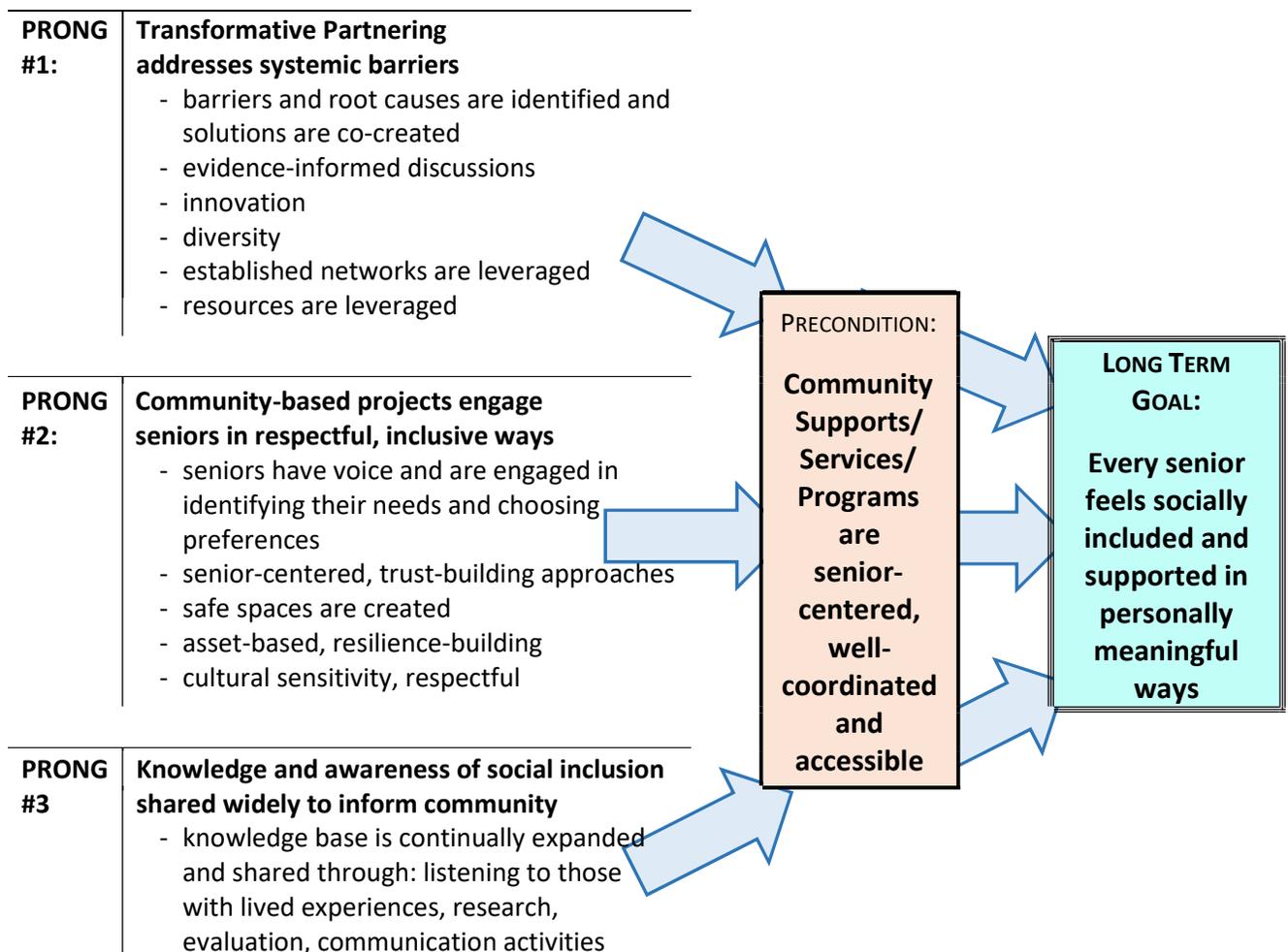| Option A: Broad Population	Option B: Sub-population	
- any senior experiencing vulnerability (due to a variety of age-related risk factors and social determinants of health)	- a specific vulnerable group, for example:	
	○ 80+ years	○ lower income
	○ women	○ LGBTQ2
	○ Indigenous	○ immigrants/newcomers
	○ disabled	○ at risk of abuse

Involvement of Seniors

This initiative will seek to meet seniors where they're at, build relationships and invite their participation in ways that are meaningful to them. We will take an asset-based approach which honors seniors' knowledge, experiences and skills, finding ways to support their resilience and self-efficacy.
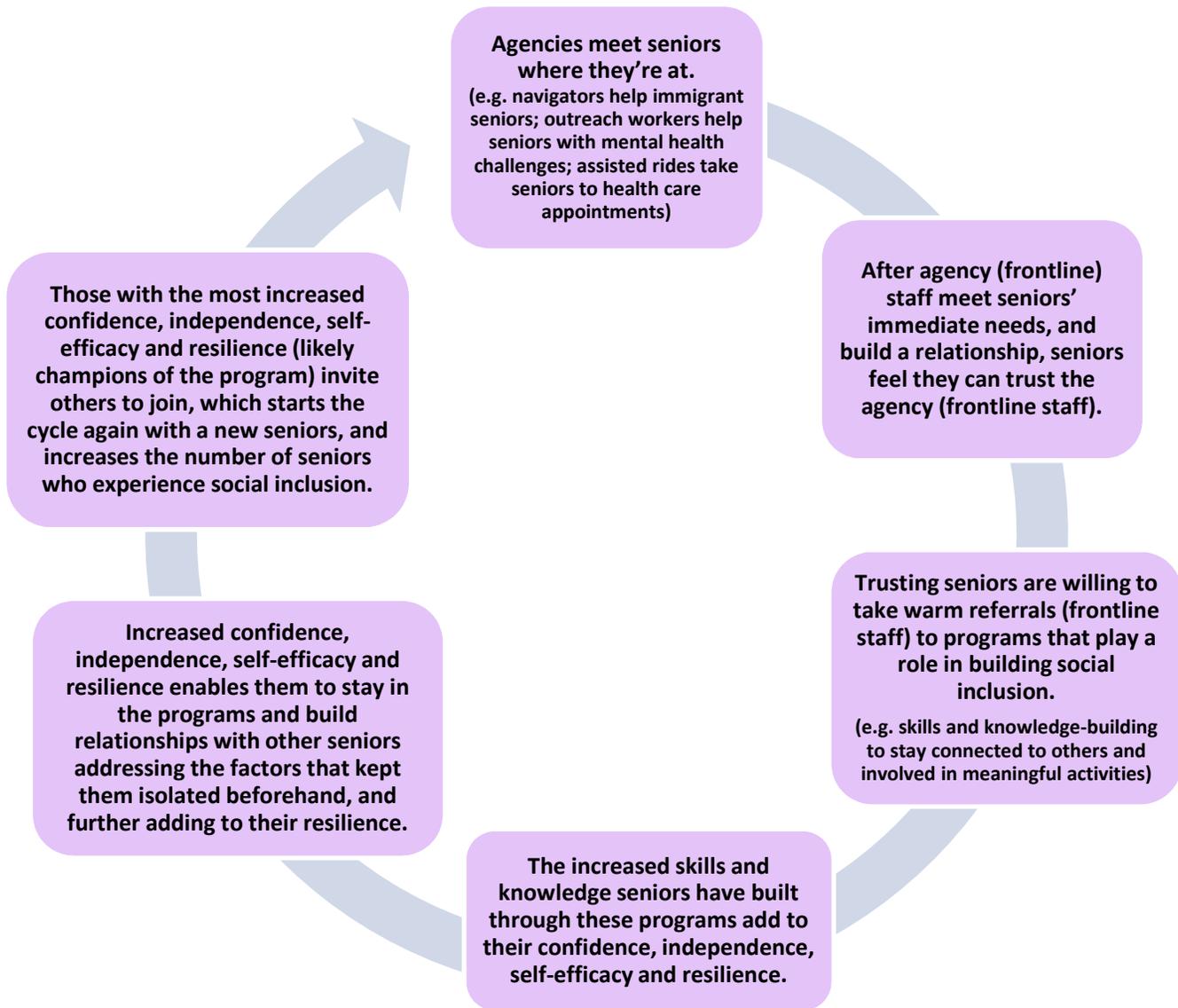
How Change Can Happen

Despite the high quality of existing programs and services in the Edmonton area, many organizations struggle to sustain their services and must expand their capacity to respond to the needs of our growing seniors population. We propose a **three-pronged proactive approach** to increasing our collective community capacity to address systems barriers and fill gaps in the reach, sustainability, quality and effectiveness of services:

1. Through **transformative partnering** we can bring change to the status quo of systemic barriers that contribute to the social exclusion of vulnerable seniors. Partners must be open to change and prepared to collaborate and co-create new ways of working to address needs.

2. By allocating capacity building resources to community-based projects that engage and support vulnerable seniors, we will learn together how to innovate for better services and programs. Stage Two of our proposal development would include a process of soliciting local proposals aligned with our Concept Plan, and involve seniors in adjudicating the proposals based on preselected criteria.

3. Building increased awareness of the importance of social inclusion and connectedness is a foundational step towards affecting change. Well planned, targeted knowledge sharing and interactive communication with many audiences can lead to broad community understanding and responsiveness.

PRONG #1:	**Transformative Partnering addresses systemic barriers** - barriers and root causes are identified and solutions are co-created - evidence-informed discussions - innovation - diversity - established networks are leveraged - resources are leveraged
PRONG #2:	**Community-based projects engage seniors in respectful, inclusive ways** - seniors have voice and are engaged in identifying their needs and choosing preferences - senior-centered, trust-building approaches - safe spaces are created - asset-based, resilience-building - cultural sensitivity, respectful
PRONG #3	**Knowledge and awareness of social inclusion shared widely to inform community** - knowledge base is continually expanded and shared through: listening to those with lived experiences, research, evaluation, communication activities

PRECONDITION:

Community Supports/ Services/ Programs are senior-centered, well-coordinated and accessible

LONG TERM GOAL:

Every senior feels socially included and supported in personally meaningful ways

An example of how multiple agencies worked with seniors to create social inclusion within the collective impact initiative: Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing Social Isolation of Seniors

Agencies meet seniors where they're at.
(e.g. navigators help immigrant seniors; outreach workers help seniors with mental health challenges; assisted rides take seniors to health care appointments)

After agency (frontline) staff meet seniors' immediate needs, and build a relationship, seniors feel they can trust the agency (frontline staff).

Those with the most increased confidence, independence, self-efficacy and resilience (likely champions of the program) invite others to join, which starts the cycle again with a new seniors, and increases the number of seniors who experience social inclusion.

Trusting seniors are willing to take warm referrals (frontline staff) to programs that play a role in building social inclusion.
(e.g. skills and knowledge-building to stay connected to others and involved in meaningful activities)

Increased confidence, independence, self-efficacy and resilience enables them to stay in the programs and build relationships with other seniors addressing the factors that kept them isolated beforehand, and further adding to their resilience.

The increased skills and knowledge seniors have built through these programs add to their confidence, independence, self-efficacy and resilience.

Collaboration/Partnership Approach = Collective Impact Model

The Collective Impact (CI) model is a popular approach to collaborative community action. It recognizes that it takes many people and long-term commitment to solve complex social issues. Here are the five CI conditions:

1. Common Agenda/Community Aspiration – Collectively we must build buy-in at the earliest stage of the initiative, by using intentional processes, allowing adequate time for relationship building, ensuring partners' readiness for collaboration, and by creating a base of knowledge and awareness of the issue/s we are collectively addressing.

2. <u>Shared Measurement/Strategic Learning</u> – We must collectively commit to a community-based evaluation plan that engages the subjects of evaluation in decision making about what will be measured and how. Plan for ways to engage stakeholders in ongoing reflective learning around the 'what'(information gathered); the 'so what'(implications) and the 'now what'(next steps).

3. <u>Mutually Reinforcing/High Leverage Activities</u> – We will share resources and leverage assets for the benefit of the seniors we are collectively serving. We must agree on fair and inclusive processes for determining leadership and for decision making.

4. <u>Continuous Communication/Inclusive Community Engagement</u> – Communication functions are both vital and complicated within collaborative ventures. We must collectively define the levels of community engagement required for us to be inclusive both at leadership tables and with grassroots activities. We must also find ways to centralize core communication functions for efficient use of resources.

5. <u>Backbone Support</u> – A dedicated support/coordination team. The ESCC will take full advantage of what it has learned from its backbone responsibilities on other collaborative projects. It will also draw on the experiences of other local partners, as well as the knowledge sharing networks established between the nine pan-Canadian social isolation reduction projects.