

## **Proposed Collective Impact Initiative on Social Inclusion**

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) recently submitted a Concept Plan to the **New Horizons For Seniors Program** (NHSP) Pan-Canadian Projects Call For Concepts to improve social inclusion among seniors. The Call for Concepts was only open to organizations that were willing and capable of filling the Backbone role<sup>1</sup> for Collective Impact projects. There are several steps in this process:

A. ESCC submits a Concept Plan	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> completed
B. Wait for NHSP invitation to submit a fully developed Collective Impact proposal	Expected late April 2019
C. ESCC invites collaborative proposals from across Edmonton	As soon as NHSP invitation received
D. Adjudication panel evaluates proposals for inclusion in final Collective Impact Proposal from ESCC	Projected May 2019
E. ESCC submits fully developed Collective Impact Proposal to NHSP	Projected June 2019
F. NHSP awards Pan-Canadian project funding	Projected Summer 2019

IF we are invited to proceed to Step ‘C’ of this funding opportunity, we will have a very short window of opportunity to receive community-based collaborative proposals for activities that will align with NHSP objectives and our Collective Impact Plan. We will put out a Call for Proposals along with our Impact Plan, and establish an adjudication panel made up of community leaders, researchers and seniors. The panel will evaluate all collaborative proposals received for best alignment with the Impact Plan, reach into the diverse communities of Edmonton, and potential for impact and sustainability. The proponents of the selected proposals will be invited to work with ESCC to develop the final Collective Impact Proposal to be submit to NHSP, likely toward the end of May or early June.

### **Pending Call for Project Proposals**

With this document, we are inviting neighbourhoods, communities, organizations and individuals to consider ways that we could work together on projects that would engage seniors and increase their social inclusion. We hope to catalyze a diverse range of interests and experiences.

The first part of the document is an abridged version of the Concept Plan we submitted to NHSP in January 2019. The second part, titled “How to prepare for the pending Call for Project Proposals” outlines some things to consider when planning potential partnerships and projects that could be submitted to ESCC if we proceed to Step ‘C’. (More detail on the collective impact model appears in Appendix 1.)

If we don’t get invited to the next step (B), ESCC will explore alternative funding sources for the Concept Plan.

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<sup>1</sup> See page 6 for Collective Impact definitions and roles

## Concept to Address Community Needs

**The goal** for this initiative is to increase social inclusion of seniors, individually and collectively, regardless of gender, sexual identity or orientation, race or ethnicity, religion or place of origin.

**Our objective** is to transform systems and provide community involvement opportunities to reduce gaps and barriers that prevent the inclusion of seniors.

The ESCC mandate is to bring people, ideas, and information together to build collaborative approaches to services, supports to affect change for older adults. We will facilitate a multi-partner, multi-sector initiative aimed at increasing the social inclusion and connectedness of seniors. We will build on what has been learned from established networks and partnerships, including Age Friendly Edmonton and the Pan-Edmonton Group Addressing the Social Isolation of Seniors (P·E·G·A·S·I·S) to align efforts, gain momentum and create a collective impact that maximizes benefits to older adults.

Exclusion or feeling unwelcome is not simply about a lack of programs or services, but also the assumptions underlying existing programs and services. Systemic problems include intolerant attitudes, lack of understanding of ‘the other’, and exclusionary policies and processes. The P·E·G·A·S·I·S work to address social isolation of Edmonton seniors has illuminated several system barriers that contribute to isolation: lack of affordable transportation and housing, lack of mental health supports, restrictive policies that exclude people from financial support, and the sector’s limited capacity to respond to needs beyond mainstream language and culture. Increasing social inclusion requires promotional activities to improve awareness, activities to engage seniors and creation of safe and welcoming spaces for people with diverse backgrounds and identities.

Social isolation is the strongest predictor of hospitalization of the elderly. In Edmonton, we estimate that there are over 25,000 people 55 and older who are socially isolated. They often live in poverty. They may be victims of elder abuse, or they may be caregivers. They may be members of populations such as indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, or immigrant, refugee or newcomers (IRN), and members from any of these groups may also live with physical and/or mental health challenges. Identifying those most excluded, providing systems navigation, and supporting complex needs requires not only more sector capacity, but also a coordinated response involving education, social services, business, the health sector and community-based senior serving organizations.

Changing demographics with an increasing proportion of seniors, unsustainability of current medical models, and need for more inclusive community-based supports for people make this the critical time to catalyze partnerships to address systemic barriers. Despite local initiatives for collective impact and cross-sector networking, many organizations need increased capacity to collaborate around the issue of social inclusion and root causes of exclusion. Agencies are so busy working on the pressing needs of their clientele that they struggle to have time and resources to join collaborative partnerships. If we are not more strategic in working together, we will lose ground and miss the opportunity for Edmonton to define a path of senior support that can be scaled out provincially in partnership with the health sector, and other supportive sectors.

## **Our Theory of Change**

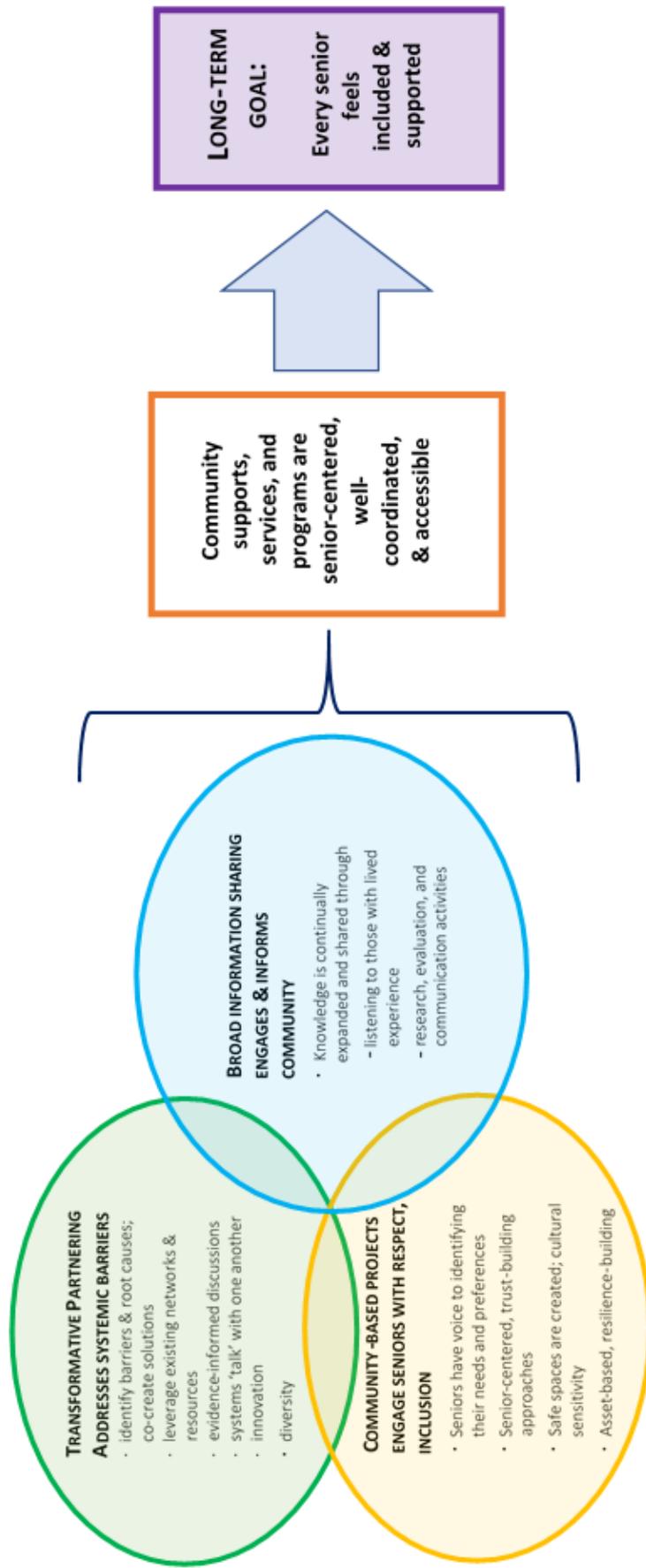
We will achieve change using a three-pronged strategic approach:

1. Transformative partnering to address systemic barriers and gaps;
2. Broad exchange of information and know-how to create more engaged and informed community; and
3. Community-based projects that engage seniors with respect and inclusion.

These collective actions will increase the opportunities for vulnerable seniors to be included, engaged, and participate in personally meaningful activities. This initiative will be community-based and senior-centered, intended to engage older adults in the design and implementation of projects. Keeping seniors at the heart of the work means we meet seniors where they're at, practice deep listening, build trusting relationships, and invite their participation in ways that are meaningful to them. We will use an asset-based framework which values and honours seniors' knowledge, experiences and skills, finding ways to support their resilience and self-efficacy. Adaptability and flexibility are key; we need to respond effectively to the diversity found in the senior population, both individually and culturally.

We will engage partnering groups, organizations and individuals from the not-for-profit sector, the public service sector and the for-profit sectors. Collaborating organizations will participate in the integrated strategy to achieve shared outcomes. We will leverage partners' existing expertise, research, resources, and relationships. We will transform how we work together to address systems barriers.

See graphic illustration of the Theory of Change on page 4



## How to prepare for the pending Call for Proposal

ESCC hopes to be invited to submit a fully-developed Collective Impact Proposal (invitation expected in late April). We will likely have only six (6) weeks to put the proposal together. Until then, we encourage community conversations; many people and organizations gathering to think and talk about potential partnerships for projects which engage seniors and help build our community's collective capacity to increase social inclusion of seniors. Here are some guidelines to consider for any project proposal:

1. Projects should focus on including and engaging seniors who are not otherwise being included or engaged.
2. Projects may target specific populations - neighbourhoods, linguistic and ethnic communities, etc., but must be designed to be inclusive and welcoming to the broadest possible population and seek to increase the understanding of different origins, backgrounds, experiences, perspectives and needs.
3. Projects should identify and address barriers to social inclusion experienced by specific populations, and work to find broad-based, sustainable solutions to breaking down those barriers.
4. Projects should be built around partnerships with other organizations from other sectors such as health (medical), business, academia, and not-for-profits from other sectors such as anti-poverty, indigenous, LGBTQ2S+, and/or immigrant, refugee, and newcomer (IRN) communities.
5. NHSP funds will be used to help groups/organizations build capacity that they can sustain after the funding ends.
6. Projects must identify resources (i.e. staff, volunteers, facilities, or funds) that participating organizations will commit to the initiative(s), independently of NHSP funding.
7. Collaborating Organizations will contribute to the development and implementation of communications plans that support the collective activities. Proposals should include ideas for communicating to target populations, Edmonton as a whole, and to other potential partners.
8. Projects should include an evaluation component, identification of indicators for measuring outcomes and openness to learning and making changes as needed.

For now, these things do not need to be defined or carved in stone, but they will need to be considered and included in proposals that are submitted when we put out the call for proposals later this Spring.

Please feel free to contact Tim Henderson ([Tim@Seniorscouncil.net](mailto:Tim@Seniorscouncil.net)) or Sheila Hallett ([Sheila@Seniorscouncil.net](mailto:Sheila@Seniorscouncil.net)) if you want more information or assistance to pull a community conversation together.

## Appendix 1: NHSP Collective Impact

From [Employment and Social Development Canada](#)

### Introduction of the Collective Impact approach

In May 2015, Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC) launched the New Horizons for Seniors Program (NHSP) pan-Canadian projects Call for Proposals for fiscal year 2015 to 2016. This process aimed at addressing seniors' social isolation using the Collective Impact approach. The program funded 9 impact plans that include 48 associated projects (each for 2 to 3 years). This was the first time ESDC implemented a program using the Collective Impact approach.

Collective Impact is a collaborative, multi-partner approach that brings together a group of collaborating organizations from different sectors to commit to a common agenda designed to produce significant changes in their community.

### 5 core conditions of the Collective Impact model

1. **Common agenda**
  - A common agenda requires a shared vision for change that includes a common understanding of the problem, a joint approach involving agreed upon actions and a common set of outcomes.
2. **Shared measurement**
  - All participating organizations agree on the ways success will be measured and reported, with a short list of common indicators identified and used for learning and improvement.
3. **Mutually reinforcing activities**
  - Collaborating organizations work as a team on coordinated actions that support each other. Mutually reinforcing activities ensure that each collaborator's specific set of activities in which they excel are aligned towards achieving the common agenda and shared measures.
4. **Continuous communications**
  - All players engage in frequent and structured open communication to build trust, assure mutual objectives, and create common motivation.
5. **Backbone**
  - The backbone organization guides and supports the Collective Impact collaborating organizations as they work collectively to reach their common agenda. The backbone leads the collection of data and develops shared measurement systems that serve the needs of the collaborative. The backbone organization also leads communications and brings partners and key external stakeholders together to share information and seek opportunities for alignment with other community efforts.

## Appendix 2: Proposed Shared Leadership Structure With Backbone Support

Several organizational and partnership elements will be critical for the success of this initiative:

- A Strategic Leadership Committee (SLC) made up of senior leaders from Collaborating Organizations will be responsible for overseeing the initiative. Members will be expected to leverage their networks and resources to the benefit of the initiative.
- A Project Management Committee (PMC) made up of the Project Leads from the Collaborating Organizations will meet regularly to ensure that projects are mutually supporting and consistent with the Collective Impact Plan.
- A community advisory group made up of seniors with lived experience from stakeholder communities and groups will help to support information sharing and ensure that seniors' voices are heard by the SLC and PMC.
- As the administrative body (Backbone Organization) to the initiative, ESCC will develop a preliminary budget for the collective impact proposal approved by the funder. The preliminary budget will be approved by the SLC, and the PMC will then be responsible for funding allocations for projects and activities undertaken by Collaborating Organizations and their partners. In addition to financial management, the Backbone will coordinate evaluation of the community-based projects. Collaborating Organizations will be accountable to the SLC through the PMC for project expenditures, along with reporting on additional resources from other sources spent on project activities.
- To optimize mutual accountability and leadership, proposals will have to acknowledge and agree to participation at all levels of the collective impact initiative, including senior leadership and strategic tables, project management tables, and front-line staff at relevant collaborative working groups as needed.
- ESCC will coordinate monthly reporting to the PMC, quarterly reporting to ESDC, and semi-annual reporting to the SLC which will ensure that there is accountability and that the Backbone and Collaborating Organizations have the flexibility to adjust projects and activities based on data and lessons learned, and emerging issues and opportunities.