

Building Community Connections

*Building Equitable and Collaborative Support
for Seniors*

Coordinated Outreach Initiative Update II



Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) is supporting a collaborative process involving seniors organizations and related non-profits in Edmonton, in which we work together to co-design a coordinated approach to the delivery of outreach services for older adults (55+) in Edmonton.

Coordinated Outreach is a program in which Social Workers and support workers from 12 funded agencies across Edmonton currently provide support to older adults aged 55+. They help seniors to connect with the resources and supports that they need to thrive. See first [project update](#). As part of this redesign, we will be looking to update our [Seniors Home Supports Program](#). This program currently provides seniors referrals to three vetted businesses for services they may need for their well-being such as: shoveling, yard maintenance, home maintenance or personal care. The update of this program will be looking for ways to help seniors flow between this service and outreach, as well as find new ways to make the program more accessible.

Where we are: February 1st, 2023

We have invested time and resources to listen and understand how we are currently serving seniors in Edmonton. 10 programs around the country were interviewed as part of a jurisdictional scan.

SENIOR ENGAGEMENT

45 SENIORS FROM DIVERSE
POPULATIONS PARTICIPATED
IN 5 FOCUS GROUPS

21 ONE-ON-ONE
INTERVIEWS WERE
CONDUCTED

ORGANIZATIONS & DIRECT SERVICE PROVIDERS ENGAGEMENT

20 INTERVIEWS WITH
ORGANIZATIONAL
REPRESENTATIVES

21 ONE-TO-ONE INTERVIEWS
WITH SOCIAL WORKERS AND
SUPPORT STAFF

18 COMPLETED SURVEYS
FROM SOCIAL WORKERS
AND SUPPORT STAFF

16 COMPLETED SURVEYS FROM
ORGANIZATIONAL
REPRESENTATIVES

We have met as a group to review the data and design what success could look like into the future. So far, we have held four data sharing meetings focusing on:

Diversity and Inclusion
Service Delivery
Training, Supervision, Leadership and Governance
Data Management and Evaluation

During these meetings we provided information on how organizations serving seniors are approaching the work so we can learn from one another, as well as look at what seniors are needing from service to thrive.

As we look to new approaches, we will be using four themes to design success metrics for a new model:

Equity	Service Mapping and Referrals
Data & Evaluation	Training, Supervision, Leadership and Governance

What is a good life?



What Seniors Are Facing

In late 2022, seniors (average age: 70) were interviewed to identify what additional senior support they need and want. More specifically, seniors were asked about:

- What they need from their services and supports.
- What additional supports would help them to live a good life.

The infographic below summarizes the seniors services and supports identified by interviewees.



Help with requesting financial assistance (i.e., Alberta Srs Benefit, Income Support, employment)



How to use public transit (multi-lingual), ID low-cost transport, transport b/w seniors centres.



More seniors programs that promote social interaction, are free, and tailored to older seniors



Financial sponsorship (and help with applying for it) to bring family members from war torn countries.



Help with accessing home care (for things like bathing, grooming and other personal care) and family dr.



One place that seniors can access seniors-specific information (by phone and/or in person).



More subsidized seniors housing availability



One person that can help a senior find what they need, will follow up and check-in to confirm they got it.



Home supports (i.e., house cleaning, yard maintenance, snow removal)



Culturally-specific programs (i.e. by faith, gender, and/or identity).



More digital literacy classes and access to low-cost home computers



Help completing forms (e.g., subsidized housing, income support, DATS forms, etc.)



More conversational English classes, tailored for seniors



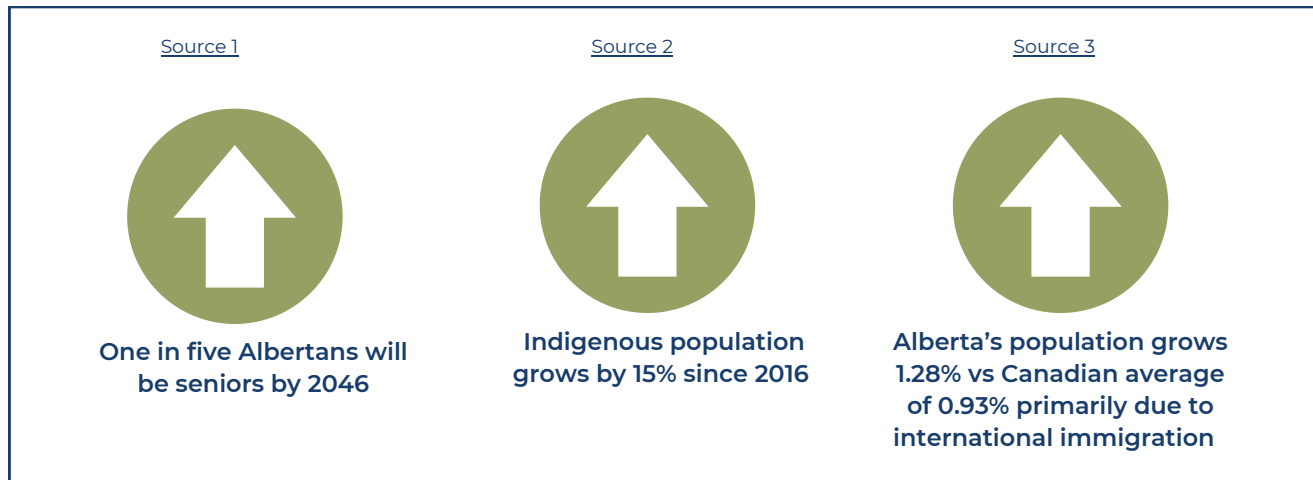
Access to (free) food when they can't afford it or aren't physically able to prepare it.

The Challenge

The Edmonton Seniors Coordinated Council (ESCC), Drive Happiness, SAGE, Jewish Family Services Edmonton, and the Multicultural Health Brokers, have been able to work collaboratively and received funding to continue building towards Social Prescribing in Edmonton. Social Prescribing seeks to present a holistic approach and provides “a means for trusted individuals in clinical and community settings to identify that a person has non-medical, health-related social needs and to subsequently connect them to non-clinical supports and services within the community by co-producing a social prescription – a non-medical prescription, to improve health and wellbeing and to strengthen community connections.”

Family and Community Support Services Edmonton are unable to fund tertiary support, which they define as the intensive interventions that provide support or treatment to those already affected by a problem such as trauma, racism, complicated grief, elder abuse, etc; and it typically involves targeted or individualized activities for people or groups experiencing a specific problem.

Barrier: Funding is not available to address the increased complexities due to a growing population



Social Prescribing enables healthcare professionals to refer patients to local, non-clinical community and social services to address unmet needs, but in order for the social prescribing pathway to be successful, it requires the presence of diverse community-based seniors organizations and supports.

We recognize that social prescribing will provide successful outcomes for many clients, however, will not fill the gap for all interventions. Supports for those facing barriers due to social/emotional concerns from lived experiences such as residential school survivors, seniors with family members in war-torn countries, history of trauma, language barriers and victims of racism are much more complex and require additional resources for successful outcomes. Additional funding will be required for Coordinated Outreach to provide specialized interventions/services to ensure clients from diverse backgrounds and complex lived circumstances have access to service that meet their needs

For many seniors from diverse backgrounds complexities in their emotional lives can lead them to be more likely to only reach out for support after an issue has occurred. Imagine a senior who avoids social support due to previous trauma from residential schools or perceiving discrimination or experiencing homelessness. Imagine a senior struggling with their emotional health due to survivor guilt from leaving children behind in a war-torn country.

Looking Ahead

How can you support our work?

Through this initiative, the Coordinated Outreach project is building collaborative services with organizations across the city to ensure that seniors get the support they need as quickly and effectively as possible. Collaborations will bring together the strengths of agencies to build the most reliable tools and systems .

We aim to improve access for seniors via the places in the community where they gather. We also aim to increase cultural responsiveness and person-centered processes.

To be able to make these changes we need community leaders, funders, and supporters to advocate for our growing population of seniors and support improved funding and resourcing for outreach/home support services, so we can meet the needs of an increasingly diverse aging population.



Reach out to Sheila Hallett at sheila@seniorscouncil.net if you are interested in participating in the collaborative conversation about how we can build financial support for the work ahead.

For more information on data used in this document, please reach out to ESCC at info@seniorscouncil.net.