

Saskatchewan launches Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program

An Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program is being introduced in Saskatchewan to recognize communities that undertake activities or create programming to be more inclusive of seniors, leading to communities that are more inclusive of all people.

“Seniors are an active, vital group in Saskatchewan,” said Health Minister Jim Reiter. “The Age-Friendly Communities initiative promotes healthy, accessible, and inclusive communities. The Ministry of Health is pleased to participate by providing formal recognition of the work done in these areas.”

This program is being offered in partnership with the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism (SSM), a non-profit, volunteer organization that acts as an umbrella to bring together Saskatchewan seniors' groups and advocate for a better quality of life for our province's older adults.

“Age-Friendly Communities, part of a global initiative of the World Health Organization (WHO), involves older adults and others in assessing their communities to make them better places for all people to live and thrive,” said Executive Director of SSM Holly Schick. “The WHO sets out milestones which are used to assess communities’ progress towards becoming age-friendly. Achieving these milestones makes them eligible for recognition, but age-friendly is an ongoing journey. The *féderation des aînés francsaskois* is working with SSM to bring this initiative to francophone communities.”

An Age-Friendly Community understands and meets the age-related needs of seniors, protects vulnerable seniors, and recognizes the importance of including older adults in all areas of community life. An age-friendly community is designed to enable all residents to live safely, enjoy good health and stay involved, and could include:

- sidewalks that are well lit and kept in good shape;
- accessible services;
- buildings with automatic door openers and elevators; and
- seniors taking part in all sorts of community activities, such as arts and cultural activities, taking courses, or volunteering for charities or civic duties.

A plaque will be presented to successful communities during each fall Legislative session, and they will receive public recognition for their age-friendly status.

Applications for the Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program will be accepted by the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism beginning in June.

For more information on the Age-Friendly Community Recognition Program, including the application process, visit the Saskatchewan Seniors Mechanism website at www.skseniormechanism.ca or the Age-Friendly Saskatchewan website at www.agefriendlysk.ca.

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