



Grant Guide

Age-Friendly Communities

Alberta

The Rural Development Network (RDN)

sincerely acknowledges that our physical office is located on the Traditional Territories of Treaty 6 and home to Métis Nation Region 4.

From coast to coast to coast, we acknowledge the ancestral and unceded territory of all the Inuit, Métis, and First Nations people that call this land home and who have gathered on these lands for centuries.

We do this to reaffirm our commitment and responsibility to improving relationships between nations and to improve our own understanding of local Indigenous peoples and their cultures.

We are all Treaty People.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Funding

The Age-Friendly Grant Program initiative has been made possible with funding provided by the Government of Alberta through the Ministry of Assisted Living and Social Services. The Rural Development Network serves as the primary contact for all grant-related inquiries.



Guiding Frameworks and Resources

The criteria and framework outlined in this guide have been informed by and adapted from the World Health Organization's Global Age-friendly Cities Guide and the Government of Alberta's age-friendly resources.

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ABOUT RDN

We are a non-profit organization that works with rural, remote and Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada. We collaborate to identify and bring focus to rural issues, build local capacity, and develop innovative, rural-based solutions to social and economic challenges.

Mission

Working with communities and partners, through networks we build capacity by developing tools and resources, implementing projects, facilitating access to funding and trusted data, while amplifying the rural voice.

Inclusion Statement

Diversity and inclusion are our greatest assets, fostering strength and unity – whether within the RDN, in the rural landscapes of Alberta, or across Canada. We acknowledge and support the unique needs of our diverse team, clients, and stakeholders. RDN recognizes that diversity is a crucial element in the work that we do, and sees it as the foundational ingredient to success in rural communities.

Our work

Our work includes:

- Developing capacity-building how-to guides and resources
- Providing expertise, capacity, training, and community engagement
- Advocating on key issues and amplifying the rural voice
- Supporting access to projects and capital



Groups we work with include:

- Municipalities
- Non-profit organizations
- Indigenous communities
- Housing providers
- Service providers
- Post-secondary institutions
- Employers



Check out the Rural Development Network's website to learn more about the work we've supported in rural communities.

www.ruraldevelopment.ca



1. Grant overview

This Age-Friendly Communities program is funded by the Government of Alberta and supported by the Rural Development Network.

Age-Friendly Communities are shaped from the ground up by the people who live there, by community for community. Since every community has unique strengths and requirements, success depends on leveraging local insights to better support older adults. When you prioritize the needs of older adults, you naturally build a more inclusive environment where everyone, regardless of age, feels supported and engaged.

Eligibility Note

While the Rural Development Network oversees this grant, it is open to all Alberta communities regardless of size; you do not need to be a rural community to apply.



1.1 Government of Alberta Age-Friendly Community Program

This grant is part of the Government of Alberta's Age-Friendly Community program. If all provincial criteria for Age-Friendly Communities is met, municipalities are eligible for provincial recognition, a feature on the official website, acknowledgment from the World Health Organization, and an invitation to join the international Age-Friendly Global Network.

Funding Objective

This funding is provided to create or renew Age-Friendly action plans. This funding is not to be used towards completed action plans or other Age-Friendly programs.



1.2 Four Key Milestones

Due to the unique needs of each community, the milestones for this project will be met at different points of the grant cycle.

1. Establish an Age-Friendly Committee

This milestone includes recruiting community members and subject matter specialists to collaborate towards creating an Age-Friendly community ensuring representation of the diverse needs of older adults, which is the foundation of Age-Friendly work.

2. Conduct a Community Assessment:

This milestone focuses heavily on community engagement to identify your community's specific support needs, leveraging existing local strengths to identify the starting points for your action plan.

3. Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan:

This milestone builds on the community assessment and involves developing a clear, practical action plan with identified priority areas for making the community more age-friendly. The committee will work with partnering organizations to support the future implementation of identified age-friendly initiatives. Including subject matter specialists on your committee can help with action planning and streamline actionable items.

4. Resolution (Optional)

This milestone provides municipalities with an opportunity to formally recognize the importance of Age-Friendly work by passing a resolution. While this is a required step for provincial Age-Friendly Recognition, it is optional under this grant but highly recommended.

1.3 Applicant Eligibility

Before submitting your application, review this document carefully and ensure both your organization and project fit the eligibility criteria.

The following are eligible to apply:

- Municipalities
- First Nation Communities
- Metis Communities
- Non-profit organization
- Seniors drop-in centres
- Community committees, provided an organization has agreed to serve as the backbone organization and provide financial oversight



Ineligible organizations

- For profit organizations
- Organizations operating outside of Alberta

1.4 Funding

Funding of up to \$25,000 is available per year for a total of \$75,000 for three years, with only one grant being awarded per municipality. If multiple organizations or groups from one municipality submit applications, RDN can support and facilitate a conversation among the applicants to explore opportunities to collaborate and work toward a shared application. Collaboration is a core principle of age-friendly work, as it tends to be most successful when organizations work together. Funding must be used towards creating or renewing Age-Friendly action plans.

1.5 Eligible Expenses

- **Project staff:** Staff costs related to the Age-Friendly initiative, including coordinating the Age-Friendly committee, overseeing project activities, and acting as a liaison between the community, partners, and the grant funder.
- **Communications/advertising:** Costs associated with advertising community engagement opportunities and supporting other data collection or outreach activities.
- **Meeting/engagement expenses:** Costs associated with committee meetings and community engagement activities, including space rental, food and refreshments.
- **Education and training:** Costs related to workshops, training, or learning opportunities that build the committee's knowledge and capacity in areas such as community development, engagement, and age-friendly practices.
- **Data collection:** Costs associated with gathering and analyzing community information, including community assessments, surveys, asset mapping, engagement activities, and project-related software or tools.
- **Contracted services:** Costs directly related to the Age-Friendly work, such as hiring a consultant or organization to facilitate community engagement, conduct assessments, analyze findings, or support action planning.
- **Volunteer Honoraria:** Honoraria provided to volunteers in recognition of their time and contributions, up to a maximum of 10% of the total project budget.



1.6 Non-Eligible Expenses

- Activities that have already taken place.
- Direct client work or case management.
- Existing Age-Friendly plans; unless you plan on reassessing your community to update your plan.
- Admin cost exceeding 10% of the overall budget: financial and accounting services, administration staffing, facility expenses.
- Entertainment of personal expenses.
- Feasibility studies, design drawings.
- Fundraising activities.
- Infrastructure projects.
- One time event; that are not part of a larger strategy such as festivals, conferences, programs.
- Furniture, equipment, or other capital costs that exceed 5% of the project.

1.7 Funding Disbursement

Funding will be provided to successful applicants in three stages. The first payment will be disbursed in February 2027, with the second payment scheduled for January 2028, and final payment scheduled for June 2028.

To receive the second payment, communities must demonstrate progress toward the milestones identified in their approved project timeline and financial template. If milestones have not been met by the scheduled payment date, the second/third payment may be delayed until the milestones are completed.

RDN recognizes that project timelines may need to change as the work progresses. Reasonable adjustments to milestones and timelines may be approved in consultation with RDN's Program Specialist.



1.8 Reporting Requirements

Funded partners will be required to complete quarterly reporting throughout the grant period. Quarterly reports will include financial reporting, project updates, progress toward milestones, and key deliverables.

In addition, semi-annual reporting will gather input from Age-Friendly committee members to highlight community collaboration, successes, lessons learned, and stories that demonstrate the impact of the community's Age-Friendly work.



Stay connected: Monthly check-ins with the Program Specialist are available for coaching, questions, and project support. These meetings are optional but encouraged.



2. Background

What is an Age-Friendly Community?

In 2007, the World Health Organization established a guide defining eight core focus areas that help communities support older adults, ensuring they remain active and engaged. The Rural Development Network's approach to Age-Friendly Communities is informed by this guide, as well as resources from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada.

2.1 Eight Core Focus Areas

1. Communication and Information
2. Social Participation
3. Transportation and Mobility
4. Outdoor Spaces and Public Places
5. Housing and Aging in Place
6. Civic Participation, Volunteerism, and Employment
7. Respect and Community Belonging
8. Community Support and Health Services

Learn more at the **World Health Organization's Age-Friendly website**
<https://extranet.who.int/agefriendlyworld/age-friendly-cities-framework/>

2.2 Benefits of Age-Friendly Communities

Healthier residents: Practicing age-friendliness is one of the most effective ways to promote healthy and active aging. People in age-friendly communities are supported in maintaining their independence and preventing illness and injury, and have access to the community supports and services they require.



- **Stronger community connections:** In an age-friendly community, residents are able and encouraged to actively participate in the community. This includes participating in the workforce, recreational opportunities, social activities and volunteer opportunities. People of all ages, backgrounds and circumstances can interact, share experiences and contribute.
- **More optimal use of public resources:** Designing and delivering public services in Age-friendly ways can lead to improved use of tax dollars. Age-friendly public facilities and infrastructure (such as buildings and parks) can be used by more citizens. Services become more accessible to residents and have a greater impact. All this helps communities get more value from their public resources.
- **Greater opportunities for business:** Having an age-friendly business creates additional opportunities for business owners and operators. Age-friendly businesses are more accessible and feel more welcoming to a greater range of community members. If people have a comfortable and respectful experience shopping for goods or receiving services, they are more likely to frequent the business and recommend it to others. Age-friendly businesses are also more attractive places to work for mature workers and persons with disabilities, offering another source of labour for employers facing a tight labour market.
- **Enhanced citizenship:** Pursuing age-friendliness leads to a community that recognizes, appreciates and values the contributions made by different members of the community and engages them in all aspects of community life.



Government of Alberta. (2023). Building age-friendly communities: A guide for local action. Seniors, Community and Social Services. [This content is based on resources provided by the Government of Alberta's Age-Friendly Communities program.](#)



Age-Friendly Recognition

The Age-Friendly Alberta Recognition Award acknowledges communities that have taken steps to become more age-friendly. Recipients will receive:

- Written acknowledgement of your community's accomplishment from the Ministry;
- National and international recognition for your community's commitment to becoming an age-friendly community; and
- Pre-approval to join the World Health Organization's (WHO) Global Network of Age-Friendly Cities and Communities (Global Network)

You can learn more by clicking the below image or visiting:

<https://www.alberta.ca/age-friendly-alberta-recognition-award>



Age-Friendly Alberta Recognition Award

Get recognized for taking steps to make your community more age-friendly.

 Alberta.ca



3. Application Details

Application Window	Decision on Applications	Project Timeline
October 23rd 2026– November 20th 2026	January 11th 2027	February 2027–March 2029

3.1 How to apply

Fill out the online application that can be found on the Rural Development Website: <https://ruraldevelopment.ca/get-involved/call-for-applications>

3.2 What to Include in Your Project Description

- **Project timeline:** Clearly outline when key activities will take place.
- **Key milestones:** Identify three key required milestones and explain how they will be achieved within your community.
- **Community partners:** Identify the organizations, groups, or individuals you will work with and how they will contribute to the project.
- **Community-specific data:** Include relevant local data that demonstrates the need for Age-Friendly work in your community.
- **Provide enough detail:** Answer each application question fully and provide enough information for reviewers to clearly understand your proposed project.

Timeline Example: This timeline is provided as a guide only. Each community is unique and may be at different stages in its Age-Friendly journey. Your timeline should reflect your community's needs, priorities, and current progress.

Establish an Age-Friendly Committee	Conduct a Community Assessment	Develop an Age-Friendly Action Plan
February 2027– May 2027	May 2027–December 2027	January 2028–March 2029



3.3 Application review

To ensure that there is no ethical bias, each application will be based on a scoring rubric that will be assessed by a committee with a variety of experts.

3.4 Submitting grant application

All grant applications are to be submitted by November 20th 2026, at 4:30 pm MST to aleeshac@ruraldevelopment.ca Applications must have the required documentation submitted within the same email; if documents are missing, they can not be submitted after the deadline. The following documents must be submitted to be considered for funding:

- Financial template completed with tentative expenditures and revenues
- Grant application
- Two letters of partnerships from other organizations or groups
- A registered CRA number (if you are a committee applying for funding, you must have a backbone agency willing to oversee the financials)

3.5 Unsuccessful applicants

If your application is not successful, RDN will follow up with you and can connect you with provincial Age-Friendly program staff for additional guidance and support. Our goal is to help communities identify other opportunities and resources to continue advancing their Age-Friendly work.

3.6 Questions

If you have specific questions regarding this grant opportunity please contact Aleesha Cabay at: aleeshac@ruraldevelopment.ca