



Seniors Services Program (NexusBC Community Resource Centre)

<http://www.nexusbc.ca/>

PROGRAM PROFILE: OVERVIEW

June 2017

Type of Program	Information, Referral and Advocacy
Organization	NexusBC Community Resource Centre
Community Served	North Okanagan
Program Goal	To help seniors, their families, caregivers and the community to access services that enable seniors to maintain an independent lifestyle
Services Provided	Information and referral, Assistance with filling out forms to apply for benefits, Income taxes
Target Population:	Seniors 60+
Staffing	2 part-time staff, approximately 18 volunteers
Program Strengths	Operate a community resource centre, Produce resource guides on various topics for seniors, Strong partnership with Interior Health Authority

Program Description

NexusBC Community Resource Centre serves as a clearinghouse of information on programs and services for seniors living in the North Okanagan. In addition to providing services for seniors, NexusBC also serves as a resource centre for volunteers, job seekers, employers and immigrants of all ages. Operating since 1992, NexusBC's Seniors Services Program operates as a drop-in resource centre (Mon-Thurs, 9am-4pm) and provides seniors with information and referral services that include resources and referral, assistance with filling out government forms and income tax clinics.

NexusBC produces various seniors' resources (all available online and in print) including a housing guide, community resource directory, and directory of senior discounts. NexusBC screens the service providers for the community resource directory in order to ensure the resources are reliable. Service providers have to fill out an application form and undergo criminal record and reference checks.

The Seniors Services Program relies on 2 part-time staff and 18 volunteers. Volunteers receive an orientation and training, with a focus on administration and/or providing services to seniors.

The primary funder for the Seniors Services Program is Interior Health Authority, who provide approximately \$53,000 in funding per year (usually renewed through one year contracts). Monetary and in-kind donations contribute approximately \$10,000 to the program.

Impact

The Seniors Services Program assists seniors in addressing issues and completing applications required for government programs (e.g., CPP, OAS, GIS, SAFER, etc.). Filling out government applications can be a very complex and daunting process, and seniors appreciate having someone available to assist them with this process. This assistance can help put their minds at ease and having the forms filled out correctly expedites the application process. The Seniors Services Program provides in-person and phone services to approximately 85 seniors each

month. In the past year, nearly 500 seniors sought help from them in filing their income taxes.

Strengths and Challenges

As a community resource centre, NexusBC is well-positioned to provide information and referral services for seniors. The staff working in the Seniors Services Program are knowledgeable about the resources and services available to seniors in their community. The centre has an extensive collection of resources, including senior-specific guides and directories, which they update on an ongoing basis. Having them available in both print and online formats ensures that they are accessible to as many people as possible.

NexusBC benefits from a strong partnership with Interior Health Authority, who see the value of providing information and referral services and provide annual funding for the Seniors Services Program. NexusBC also runs the local Better at Home program, which complements the Seniors Services Program as referrals can easily be made to Better at Home for services such as light house cleaning, transportation, friendly visiting, light yard work and minor home repair. The Seniors Services Program has close relationships with many local organizations, and cross-referrals (each sending referrals to the other) is common, meaning the needs of seniors can be more effectively met.

While NexusBC greatly appreciates the reasonably stable funding the Seniors Services Program receives, additional resources would allow for the program to expand and become more responsive to changing circumstances. For example, the program would benefit from updated faster computers, as the current ones are quite slow. Additional funds are also needed for printing and marketing, which would allow for more seniors to become aware of the service and for more written resources materials to be produced, especially important for seniors who face challenges with online technology.