



Partnerships & Memorandums of Understanding (MOU): City of Surrey Senior Services

June 2017

Initiative Description

Surrey's Memorandum of Understanding with Community Organizations is one of the tools used to support collaborative efforts that enhance and increase programs and services for seniors, caregivers and families in Surrey.

The City of Surrey believes strongly in the importance of partnerships and collaborations. Surrey partners with community organizations to support and help address the ongoing challenges faced by community organizations in finding adequate space to offer programs and services. The City collaborates in providing programs and services that help to ensure that more community members, particularly more vulnerable and/or isolated individuals, gain access to community centre space and programming opportunities.

Normally, a fee structure is applied for the use of city facilities, however, Surrey has established Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) with several organizations to provide further expansion opportunities for programs and services (and in some cases in-kind support). The partnerships align with the City of Surrey's values and priorities and complement the present recreation programs, services and facilities. All potential formal partnerships go through a process to ensure both parties' values, mandate and priorities are supportive of each other. Each MOU is unique – the specific parameters depend on the individual organization and situation.

MOU Example: Senior Services Partnership

Why was the MOU developed?

One example of an MOU the City of Surrey has with a community-based seniors' service is the Senior Services Partnership agreement with the Seniors Come Share Society. This agreement outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner and highlights their shared goal to work collaboratively to provide resources and services. Prior to forming this MOU, the City of Surrey had a long-standing relationship collaborating with the Seniors Come Share Society. (For example, Come Share has been member of the City of Surrey's Seniors Advisory Accessibility Committee for many years). The creation of the MOU formalizes this pre-existing relationship and creates more opportunities to collaborate. It also acknowledges the mutual goals of the services offered by Come Share Society and the mandate of the City to increase access to city services for seniors who, for various reasons, have not previously participated in recreational programming.

How does the MOU benefit both partners?

Seniors Come Share Society is the only non-profit in Surrey whose mandate is focused exclusively on seniors. It provides services to many groups of seniors with a focus on seniors who are vulnerable, isolated and/or lower income, many of whom do not access city recreational services on their own. However, unlike the City of Surrey that has recreational facilities located in every neighbourhood, Seniors Come Share Society does not have the infrastructure or resources to set up outreach offices across the city. Seniors Come Share Society has been able to significantly increase their capacity to connect with seniors through their collaboration with the City. For example,

one of the areas covered by the MOU is the provision of office space for Seniors Come Share Society in a recreation facility in North Surrey, which enables Seniors Come Share Society to have improved connection with the large seniors population in that neighbourhood, many of whom faces substantial barriers.

Currently, Seniors Come Share Society offers several programs at City of Surrey sites, including the Senior Connectors Program (for more information please see the [Senior Connector Program Profile](#)), Share and Care Programs (for more information please see the [Share and Care Program Profile](#)), Caregiver Support, Community Meal Programs, and seasonal Income Tax Clinics.¹ All of these programs – other than the lunch program which has a minimal fee – are available at no cost to participants. Seniors from these programs receive information on how to access a fee subsidy through the Leisure Access program and are encouraged to join other activities and classes offered through the recreation centre.

The City of Surrey recognizes the value of volunteers and how much they support seniors throughout the community. The Senior Connectors volunteers are able to connect with other seniors, caregivers and families who may not have otherwise had information or a connection to others. These programs have been very successful in bringing in new seniors and supporting volunteers, primarily because of the close working relationship between the recreation staff and the staff at Come Share Society. One recent example is a new Share and Care program, in a largely Mandarin speaking neighbourhood, which has engaged 20 to 30 new Chinese seniors who had previously never used the recreation facility.

As a result of this MOU, seniors in Surrey have more access to programs and services. This partnership builds the capacity of seniors programs, increases volunteer opportunities, supports health and active aging, supports inclusion and social participation, and allows for an integrated continuum of supports to be offered. Being able to provide seniors programming at multiple sites across the city helps to reduce barriers to participation and engages seniors who may not otherwise be able to access municipal services and facilities.

¹ For more information on all their programs please see the Seniors Come Share Society website: <http://comeshare.ca/our-services/>