

# Communication & Information



# Community Consultations

In 2008, the Manitoba government launched the Age-Friendly Initiative, formally inviting communities throughout Manitoba to join the Initiative and work toward becoming more age-friendly.

Age-Friendly Manitoba Initiative communities are provided with an opportunity to participate in a community consultation as a way of identifying priorities. The consultations are made possible through a partnership between the Manitoba Seniors & Healthy Aging Secretariat and the University of Manitoba's Centre on Aging, as part of the Age-Friendly Community-University Research Alliance (CURA) project. During the community consultations, which are facilitated by CURA staff, people are invited to discuss their views on how age-friendly their community is and what areas need improvement. Prior to the group discussion, a survey is distributed to get individual views on how age-friendly the community is.

By the end of March 2011, the Age-Friendly CURA team conducted consultations in 46 communities. Forty-nine (49) communities completed an age-friendly survey for a total of 1274 surveys. Summarized here are the collective group discussions and survey responses related to communication and information.

## Group Discussion Summary

During the community consultation, participants engage in a facilitated group discussion to identify priorities needed to make their community more age-friendly. By highlighting what is working well in the community and what needs improvement, the CURA team prepares a report for each community reflecting the discussion. The completed report is shared with the community's Age-Friendly Committee.

The CURA team combined and summarized priorities and potential actions from all the community consultation reports (until March 2011). In total, 42 of the 46 communities mentioned priorities related to communication and information. What follows is a summary of the most commonly identified communication and information-related themes that emerged from the discussions.

Community consultation reports can be found on the Age-Friendly Manitoba website: <http://www.agefriendlymanitoba.ca>

# Common Themes

## Availability

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- Develop a Directory (pamphlet/booklet) of available community services.
- Create a newsletter to share information and communities activities.
- Use the community website as a communication tool and way to spread information.
- Publicize community activities/events at a central location (e.g., community billboard).
- Generate partnerships as a way of communicating information (e.g., with local schools, churches, residents, between organizations) .

## Access

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- Ensure adequate font size on all written communication materials (e.g., pamphlets, brochures, telephone books).
- Advocate for more age-friendly automated telephone answering systems (e.g., provide the option of speaking directly to a person; ensure that instructions are given slowly and clearly).
- Approach cell phone providers and advocate for increased coverage.
- Request expanded Internet coverage.

## General

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- Use informal communication methods (e.g., word of mouth, personal contact) to share information.
- Ensure that information and communication notices are updated regularly (e.g., outdated posters are removed from bulletin boards, contact information in directories is accurate).

# Communication and Information Survey Summary

The following section summarizes responses from the 49 communities to the communication and information-related questions of the survey:

- Approximately two-thirds of those that completed the survey felt that information about community events is readily available to seniors.
- Over one-half (57%) of respondents agreed that information about services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors.
- Around 38% of respondents felt that official, written information, such as forms or brochures, is easy to read and understand, and that there is enough assistance available for completing official forms.
- Only 15% of participants felt that public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors, and less than one-fifth indicated that there are enough seniors' advocacy services available in their community.

	Percent Responding (%)		
	Yes	No	Don't Know
Information about community events is readily available to seniors.	66.3	14.1	19.5
Information about the services and programs provided by various organizations is readily available to seniors in my community.	57.0	16.6	26.5
Official, written information, such as forms or brochures is easy to read and understand (e.g., large print, clear language).	38.8	22.5	38.7
Public telephone answering services are adapted to the needs of seniors (e.g., instructions are given clearly and slowly).	15.5	27.1	57.4
There is assistance available for completing official forms (e.g., help with filling out government or income tax forms).	38.4	18.2	43.3
There are enough seniors' advocacy services available (e.g., an ombudsman to inform others of seniors' needs).	17.8	32.0	50.1

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Download the PDF from <http://umanitoba.ca/centres/aging/>

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