

Manitoba, A Great Place to Age: Provincial Seniors Strategy

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Manitoba's Seniors Strategy at a Glance

Manitoba's seniors strategy sets the direction for Manitoba as a great place to age and provides a guide for our province to address the challenges faced by some seniors, their families and their caregivers, support all Manitobans in their aging journeys and celebrate and value the significant contributions older adults have and continue to make to Manitoba.

The solutions needed to ensure that Manitobans can thrive as we age will require broad action from across government. The new strategy and actions provide a comprehensive framework to support Manitobans to be healthy, active and age in accordance with our individual goals and ambitions. Given the breadth of this living strategy, implementation will require extensive coordination and collaboration across government, partnership with communities and seniors serving organizations across the province, as well as listening to, and working with, seniors, their families, and their caregivers.



At a glance, the strategy includes:

One Vision

Older Manitobans are valued and empowered to live healthy and productive lives in their communities making Manitoba an ideal place to age.

Seven Focus Areas

1. Support communities to become more accessible, safe, and tailored to the needs of Manitobans as we age.
2. Support communication and navigation so that seniors, their families, caregivers, and service providers are equipped with the knowledge and tools to access information, programs, and services.
3. Continue the work of building mutually respectful relationships between Indigenous communities and peoples from the many different cultures in Manitoba to build trust, affirm historical agreements, support healing and reconciliation, and create a more equitable and inclusive society.
4. Empower Manitobans to be financially secure as we age.
5. Ensure that seniors and families continue to have a voice in planning and decision-making.
6. Support Manitobans to feel valued, celebrated, and seen as important and contributing members of the community, living free from discrimination as we age.
7. Support seniors to have access to a broad selection of high-quality programs and services that provide support at different stages of aging and level of need.

Strategic Initiatives

Strategic initiatives under each of the seven focus areas describe the actions that the Government of Manitoba will take with its partners over the next years to bring the strategic vision to life.

Collaboration and investment in the strategy will help to support Manitobans to live active lives and remain engaged in our communities as we age. It will help to activate and empower local communities to support seniors, families and caregivers. And it will ensure Manitobans have access to the necessary programs and services to support our changing needs and empower us to live at home and in our communities for as long as safely possible. The seniors strategy's actions sets out how the Government of Manitoba will begin to move this vision forward.

Land Acknowledgement

We acknowledge we are gathered on Treaty 1 Territory and that Manitoba is located on the Treaty Territories and ancestral lands of the Anishinaabeg, Anishinewuk, Dakota Oyate, Denesuline and Nehethowuk Nations.

We acknowledge Manitoba is located on the Homeland of the Red River Métis.

We acknowledge northern Manitoba includes lands that were and are the ancestral lands of the Inuit.

We respect the spirit and intent of Treaties and Treaty Making and remain committed to working in partnership with First Nations, Inuit, and Red River Métis people in the spirit of truth, reconciliation and collaboration.

A Message from the Minister



In January 2022, the Honourable Premier Heather Stefanson announced the creation of the Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care, with one of our main priorities to develop and implement a provincial seniors strategy. Through this strategy, the Government of Manitoba aims to establish a more comprehensive, responsive system of programs and policies that provides the supports and services so seniors can live independently in their homes, have active lifestyles, and the ability to stay connected to their families and communities as long as possible.

As Manitoba's Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care, I am delighted to launch Manitoba's seniors strategy – *"Manitoba, A Great Place to Age: Provincial Seniors Strategy"* and actions. This will be a living strategy. As we move into implementation, we will continue to engage Manitobans, and as we continually learn and grow, we will improve what is necessary to best meet the needs of seniors.

Since the announcement of the new department, I and my Manitoba Legislative Assembly (MLA) government colleagues have travelled the province and heard from more than 10,000 Manitobans, seniors and their families, caregivers, community organizations and community leaders.

Repeatedly, I heard that Manitobans want to live vibrant and purposeful lives, with a deep sense of belonging and value, connected to and supported by their communities. I also heard that people want to age in their own homes and communities. You will hear about the idea of a village; this village model will provide Manitobans with a range of supports and services along the continuum of aging that will help people remain in their homes and communities safely.

I believe that this strategy will help to make those desires a reality and the first actions will show how our government will start that journey.

The Government of Manitoba is committed to creating conditions where seniors continue to be valued and empowered to live healthy and productive lives in our communities as we grow older, making Manitoba an ideal place to age. What you will find on the following pages is our plan to deliver on this vision for Manitobans.

We will invest in and support seniors with services and supports that respect our unique needs regardless of where we live, our ethnic and cultural practices, or the languages we speak. We will work across governments and with service providers to design and deliver high-quality services together. We will continue to strengthen our relationships with First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis people to take a distinctions-based approach to co-designing services and supports that address the unique needs of Indigenous seniors.

Thank you to all those who shared their voice and contributed to the development of this strategy. With your input, I believe we will create a Manitoba where we can all age well.

Honourable Scott Johnston
Minister of Seniors and Long-Term Care

Introduction

Older people contribute to our province and have built our society.

As we age, we deserve to live independent, vibrant, and fulfilling lives in a setting of our choosing, and we have heard that most of us wish to age in our own homes as long as possible, connected to our families and communities.

However, we recognize that everyone's needs, and desires are highly personal with service and support needs varying over time as we age. To create an environment that provides the aging experience that Manitobans deserve, it's essential that the right resources exist across the continuum of supports, services and care in all regions of the province to meet individual needs.

The Government of Manitoba has committed to making this a reality with the creation and implementation of a provincial seniors strategy. Over the past year, more than 10,000 seniors, family members, caregivers, service providers, thought leaders, as well as the general public, contributed their thoughts, feedback and stories to the development of this plan. Leading practices from across Canada and the world were examined to understand how they could be applied in Manitoba, and existing seniors services, supports and programs were reviewed to understand their respective strengths, identify gaps and areas for improvement.

When this strategy has been successfully implemented, Manitobans can expect:

- To feel that we can stay active with purpose, connected to our communities, with a deep sense of belonging and value.
- To count on our needs, culture, and preferences being understood and met when accessing care and services.
- To know how to proactively plan for our future and our changing needs through easy to find and accessible information and advice.
- To have options - among safe, accessible, and affordable housing environments – from independent housing solutions to multi-generational villages – that meet our needs and that can be called home.
- To be supported in all aspects of aging including social, recreational, wellness, and health in our communities, close to home, through in-person or digital models.
- To feel recognized and supported for the crucial caregiving and support provided by friends and family that empowers Manitobans grow older with independence, dignity, and respect.

As we move forward, we can build on the remarkable work done every day by community organizations, expert and committed service providers and volunteers, and the incredible number of people providing unpaid support to family members or friends.

This strategy is important to Manitoba because as we grow older, we make immeasurable contributions to our families, communities, governments, the economy and society. Our experiences and knowledge can be a direct benefit to all.

And supporting every Manitoban to remain healthy, independent and engaged in society is the focus of this strategy.



What We Heard: Manitobans' Advice and Input to Seniors Strategy

To understand the needs and aspirations of Manitobans as we age, we launched a comprehensive public engagement process that reached seniors and community partners across the province and incorporated diverse voices into the planning process. This included a minister's tour with community roundtables across Manitoba, with participation of several MLA government members ; interviews and focus groups with Manitobans, caregivers, seniors serving organizations and thought leaders; community-led engagement through volunteer community engagement networks; public surveys; relationship development with Indigenous governments and Indigenous-led organizations; and workshops with partners from across government and community organizations. This process is just the start; we look forward to continued engagement and collaboration throughout the implementation of this living strategy to ensure it's meeting the diverse needs of Manitobans.

Our conversation revealed several important needs that follow below, but most importantly, set a goal for our strategy: Manitobans want to live vibrant and independent lives that allow each to age in our home or communities for as long as we wish and for as long as it is safe to do so.

This is the goal of our strategy.

People's ambitions and desires for aging are diverse. Some want to stay in their owned or rented homes. Others want to continue living with their families. For others, it is about staying connected to a larger community.

We heard that life is getting more expensive for Manitobans as they age and who are dealing with the compounding issues of inflation, fixed incomes, and the lack of affordable services and supports.

Many spoke about gaps in the range of services and supports offered as needs evolved as we age. While this is true across the province, it is especially challenging in northern and rural communities.

We heard tremendous pride in how diverse Manitoba is as a province including First Nations, Red River Metis, Inuit, francophone and other ethnic and cultural communities. There was recognition that serving diverse communities required systems that are more attuned to, and supportive of, the unique needs of seniors with diverse different social, cultural and language backgrounds, beliefs and practices.

Despite the commitment and best efforts of senior serving organizations, Manitobans tell us services and supports are challenging to access and navigate, and frequently operate in silos.

We heard that as people age, they are experiencing increasingly complex care and support needs related to dementia, mental health and multiple chronic conditions, and that this may strain health system resources and other community supports that are already under pressure.

Families and friends provide a significant amount of care and support for seniors. These unpaid caregivers are increasingly challenged to manage the complex needs of those for which they care.

It was also reported that while seniors are often defined as adults 65 and older for the purpose of tax credits and similar defined-benefit programs, there should be some discretion within community programs for providing services for those slightly under this threshold.

Finally, while many Manitobans talk about how they are valued in their community as they age, they also shared that ageism (stereotypes and discrimination based on age) and ableism (the belief that “normal” is preferred and that having aged is not “normal”) exist and need to be reduced.

Broad Provincial Government Collaboration

This living strategy for aging well sets a bold new vision for what Manitobans can expect as we age regardless of our financial situation, culture, language, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender identity, life experiences or geography.

Making this strategy a reality will require the active participation of provincial, federal, municipal and Indigenous governments, seniors serving organizations, elderly people, families and caregivers.

For the Government of Manitoba, this means that every department that provides services to seniors, or offers programs that benefit seniors in some way, will be responsible for driving aspects of the strategy.

Partnerships with Seniors Serving Organizations and Service Providers

Implementing Manitoba’s seniors strategy will include supporting and co-ordinating the efforts of the many valuable organizations and enthusiastic individuals who work for the benefit of seniors today. Whether they are focused on working with Manitobans to co-ordinate services, advocate to end ageism and ableism, or represent and serve the needs of diverse communities – francophone, new Canadians, LGBTQ2S+ and more – we are committed to listening to, learning from and working with diverse people and organizations to ensure their voices are heard and guide our progress.

Partnerships with Indigenous Communities

Recognizing that colonial practices have contributed to intergenerational trauma, reduced access to care and essential services, and resulted in poor outcomes for Indigenous peoples, we are committed to advancing reconciliation by working collaboratively to address these challenges and to ensuring that Indigenous people have the supports to age well in alignment with their traditions and culture. We will do this while respecting Indigenous people's right to self-government and the unique interests and experience of First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis peoples.

Manitoba will continue to build partnerships with Indigenous governments, Indigenous-led organizations and directly with Indigenous communities. A new seniors strategy represents an extremely important opportunity for partnership and collaboration on shared priorities in supporting people to age in their communities, now and into the future.



The Seniors Strategy Framework

The seniors strategy consists of a vision statement, set of values, seven focus areas and corresponding strategic initiatives for each focus area. All elements of the strategy connect and support one another to drive progress towards achieving our vision for seniors to be empowered to lead healthy and productive lives.

VISION

Older Manitobans are valued and empowered to live healthy and productive lives in our communities making Manitoba an ideal place to age

Safe, Inclusive, Accessible Communities

Navigation

High Quality Services

Financial Security

Reducing Ageism & Ableism

Indigenous Engagement & Co-Design

Collaboration and Accountability

VALUES

- Respect, choice, independence, dignity and equitable access
 - Equity, diversity and inclusion
 - Truth and Reconciliation
 - Quality and innovation
 - Person and family-centered
 - Partnership, collaboration and interdependence

A Bold New Vision of the Future

Our vision statement sets the course for our future work on supports and services for Manitobans as we age.

The vision for Manitoba's seniors strategy is older Manitobans are valued and empowered to live healthy and productive lives in our communities, making Manitoba an ideal place to age.

This means all Manitobans, as we age, will be treated with dignity and respect in every interaction. We will have the opportunity to contribute and will be valued for our contributions. We will have equitable access to social, recreational, wellness and health programs and services, regardless of where we live, the language we speak, our financial situation or the health challenges we are facing. We will have options related to our living arrangements and service models that best meet our needs and support our physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Made-In-Manitoba Values Guide the Strategy

Values provide the foundation for the seniors strategy and were developed through conversation with more than 10,000 people from across our province. These conversations guided development of the strategy and will continue to guide decision-making and expectations throughout implementation.

- **Respect, Choice, Independence, Dignity and Equitable Access:** These are basic requirements across everyone that works with older people in Manitoba.
- **Quality and Innovation:** Quality will be determined from the perspective of seniors, families and caregivers and, in response, the government and partners, will drive improvement through new approaches, technology and learning.
- **Equity, Diversity and Inclusion:** Unique life experiences shape an individual's worldview, and we will ensure appropriate diversity of representation among people providing, as well as receiving, services and supports.
- **Person and Family-centred:** The design and delivery of programs, supports and services will always begin with the needs of older residents, our families and our caregivers.
- **Truth and Reconciliation:** Building foundational relationships with Indigenous peoples and working collaboratively to ensure that they have the supports to age well in alignment with their traditions and culture.
- **Partnership, Collaboration and Interdependence:** We will foster and support co-ordination, collaboration and partnership across governments, communities and service providers, recognizing the interdependence of all.



Seniors Strategy at A Glance

Safe, Inclusive, Accessible Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Age-friendly Community Planning and Accessibility • Improved Dementia Support • Physical and Virtual Villages • Continuum of Housing Options • Safe, Accessible Transportation
Navigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activated Communities
High-quality Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesigned Home Care Model • Enhanced Quality in Personal Care Homes • Ecosystem of Community-based and Health Services • Quality Standards • Enhanced Preventive Wellness and Health Assessments • Seniors Serving Workforce • Unpaid Caregivers Supports
Financial Security	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-setting Costs Supports • Older Adult Workforce Participation • Financial Planning and Awareness
Reducing Ageism & Ableism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ageism Prevention Toolkit • Positive Aging Campaign • Intergenerational Programs
Indigenous Engagement & Co-design	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous Collaboration
Collaboration & Accountability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership and Advisory Structure • Performance Framework



FOCUS AREA #1

Safe, Inclusive, Accessible Communities

Seniors should expect the opportunity to remain a part of our communities as long as we choose and it is safe to do so. This will require communities to be safe, inclusive and appropriate for all. By making needed investments in transportation, housing, physical environments, public spaces and initiatives that ensure we are seen, heard and actively engaged, our communities will be more accessible, safe, inclusive and tailored to the needs of each of us as we age. This will enable us to stay engaged and as part of our communities as our needs and capabilities change.

The concept of a village helps shape how we can envision our communities in the future. Village models include:

- Providing residents with support and feelings of belonging and connectedness to a community

- A unique identity: they are defined by those who live in the community together, taking into consideration ethnicity, culture and lifestyle choices
- A design for social interaction
- Functionality, including varied settings from independent living to supportive congregate living settings, including proximity or accessibility to goods, services and programs to support individual villagers' needs
- Intergenerational contact through proximal living and/or interaction

Villages can be considered either as physical or virtual. Physical villages can comfortably be accessed "on foot," and we look to see the development of more of these campus models to support us as we age. Virtual villages bring the attributes of a physical village to people in their connectedness or pathway to their communities, goods, programs and services.

Strategic Initiatives

To make our communities more suitable for seniors, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Age-friendly Community Planning and Accessibility:** Ensure that an age-friendly community includes a comprehensive seniors lens to all aspects of community development and planning. Leverage the program as an opportunity for communities to share best practices and innovations that can be scaled and applied across the province.
- **Improved Dementia Support:** Increased support for people living with dementia, and their families, in the community, enabling them to contribute and be supported in the community.
- **Physical and Virtual Villages:** Promote and support the development of virtual and physical village models that include a range of supports and services and can support us as we age on a continuum of aging.
- **Continuum of Housing Options:** Explore how capacity can be increased and define the role and types of housing settings with services including independent living, assisted living, supportive housing and other options for seniors, leveraging village and multi-generational housing models that include co-locating other services and supports, while taking into consideration affordability and safety.
- **Safe, Accessible Transportation:** Increase access to safe and accessible transportation so that older people can continue to participate in their communities and have access to services, with a focus on rural and northern communities.

We believe these initiatives will deliver:

- More options and increased access and enhanced quality and affordability for transportation and housing options in the community.
- More accessible community spaces and services will improve access to, and engagement with, our communities for older people.
- Capacity in local communities and care teams for people with dementia to contribute and be supported in the community as their dementia progresses.

Age-friendly

Many older Manitobans shared experiences about feeling isolated and disconnected from the day-to-day goings-on of their communities. While we heard there have been improvements to accessibility through the Age-Friendly Communities initiative and the Accessibility for Manitobans Act, many of these improvements have focused on infrastructure, and there is significant opportunity to enhance accessibility through service innovation as well as improve social participation and inclusion.



Dementia Support

Despite rising rates of dementia and intellectual disabilities as the population ages, we heard that many seniors housing options and services were not designed to support the needs of people with dementia. This included an older couple, one of whom was experiencing early symptoms of dementia. The couple described lack of familiarity and preparedness in their community from their local restaurants and retailers to community organizations, to the lack of respite or support programs, and was worried about their ability to stay in their home as the partner's condition progressed. The couple also expressed worry about the options available to them if and when the partner could no longer remain at home.

Lack of Safe and Affordable Seniors Housing

When we spoke with Manitobans, across all regions but most notably outside Winnipeg, they shared common challenges that people face trying to find safe, affordable housing on a fixed income. They shared that while personal care homes are an affordable seniors housing option, there are many seniors in personal care homes who do not yet require the higher level of support that these facilities are meant to provide. Seniors who cannot afford supportive living or assisted living housing arrangements and need support may have no other option but a personal care home. Premature entry into a personal care home can lead to negative outcomes for the individual as well as other residents, and is not the best use of these more intensive resources.

Village Models

There was a strong desire for incorporating village models when planning seniors housing and support services. Many people described feeling very capable of looking after themselves but needed some extra help (e.g., with yard maintenance), preferred more local/conveniently located services, wanted some friendly faces to socialize with, and valued expert advice on matters related to aging. Other people wanted or needed more regular and intensive support and still wanted a sense of community and preferred that more intensive supports were provided in the least disruptive way possible to their sense of home, belonging and community.



Navigation



Seniors, their families and caregivers as well as service providers should expect to access up-to-date information about programs and services in an easy and accessible way that takes into consideration different ways that people consume information. However, we also recognize that sometimes information alone is insufficient, and seniors, families and caregivers need the advice and support

of navigation supports to help us find the right mix of programs and services to help us age in alignment with our goals and desires. This role is often already played by active and expert community organizations that act as local hubs for information, support services, recreation and social connection, but are challenged with outdated information, financial sustainability and demand for services.

Strategic Initiatives

To provide access to information, programs and services through a co-ordinated and central foundation, we will undertake the following initiative:

- **Activated Communities:** Empower and activate existing local community groups and resources to be a network of services and supports for seniors and their caregivers through the creation of seniors hubs and information sources that support navigation, integration and delivery of services and supports.

We believe these initiatives will deliver:

- A central up-to-date information source on programs and services for all aging needs, also taking into consideration ethnocultural perspectives, languages and geography.
- A variety of seniors-friendly communication tools, including paper-based, TV, radio, Internet and phone.
- Community agencies have the role and capacity to support local navigation and access in a way that is reflective of their communities and meets local need.

Navigation

People described that navigating through the range of seniors community and government services to find the right programs for an individual's needs is challenging. We heard about some of the amazing work being led by community organizations and that people come across a program by happenstance. Many seniors were concerned that up-to-date information was only available on-line and preferred the paper seniors guides that used to be available. Throughout the engagement process, people from across Manitoba commended their local seniors centres and senior resource co-ordinators for the critical work they do in providing information and making referrals. However, more intensive navigation support is not a core part of their offerings, is underfunded, and awareness is usually by word of mouth. And for seniors who relocate to a new community, getting "plugged in" to the right channels can be all but impossible.

High-quality Services

Aging well requires a variety of community-based programs that address social, recreational, financial, physical health, mental health and addictions and safety needs. These services need to be accessible, equitable, high quality, affordable, connected to each other and delivered by expert and

experienced service providers. To ensure that programs and services are meeting people's needs, there needs to be a mechanism to guide them towards the best-fit services at the outset with ongoing communication to ensure the selected services are delivering the intended outcomes.

Strategic Initiatives

To ensure our systems deliver supports and services that are high-quality, equitable and accessible, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Redesigned Home Care Model:** Redesign Manitoba's home care model to enhance access, quality, accountability and alignment to person and family preference where possible, in all home settings.
- **Enhanced Quality in Personal Care Homes:** Enhance quality of care and services and accountability in personal care homes. This includes fulfilling all of the recommendations in the Stevenson Review.
- **Developing a Common Ecosystem of Community-based and Health Services:** Define core community-based and health services along a continuum of aging from wellness and prevention to end-of-life, and make investments to address gaps.
- **Developing Quality Standards:** Develop, implement and monitor quality standards, guidelines and governance for seniors services delivered by public, not-for-profit and private providers, with an initial focus on seniors housing, home care and personal care homes.
- **Enhancing Preventive Wellness and Health Assessments:** Offer seniors and their families a supported assessment of their readiness for aging, preventing the need to access services, including home care, prematurely and providing opportunities for self and supported rehabilitation.
- **Strengthening the Seniors Serving Workforce:** Ensure that the people who work with seniors in health-care, community and home settings have the capacity, competencies and resources necessary to deliver high-quality care and services. This includes working with professional associations and organizations that offer education and training options.
- **Expanding Unpaid Caregiver Supports:** Support unpaid caregivers with tools, respite opportunities and other forms of support to empower their essential role in supporting seniors.



Home Care

When we asked seniors “What would you need in order to remain in your home, independently as you age?” home care was usually at the top of the list. When home care services were available, reliable, high quality, appropriately matched to an individual’s needs and delivered by expert and compassionate service providers we heard about the positive difference this made in people’s lives. However, we heard instances where this was not the case including family members who had to fill in at the last minute to compensate for service changes and no shows and who felt that the current model wasn’t adequately meeting their loved ones physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs.

More on Home Care. Home care is in every housing setting — independent living through to supportive housing — with the exception of personal care homes. It is a foundation to be strengthened within the seniors strategy. As an initial step:

- Self and Family Managed Care will be strengthened, increasing consumer choice and control in managing their assessed care needs by increasing access to the program and enabling more clients and their families to accept the responsibility of co-ordinating, managing and directing non-professional services needed to maintain independent living.
- A new model will be introduced to support more complex care outside of the personal care home environment.
- The home care program basket of services will be clarified to improve flexibility for delivery where possible, to better support unique needs (for example those of us with dementia and our families).
- A department advocacy function will be introduced that will co-develop quality indicators for home care and personal care home with stakeholders, oversee the outcomes and advance quality improvement.



Further initiatives will be introduced that will directly and indirectly strengthen our home care foundation, such as the navigation initiatives outlined in the section above, as well as other initiatives such as preventive wellness and health assessments and improved flexibility in respite services.

We believe these initiatives in this section will be far-reaching and will deliver:

- Enhanced choice and access to services and supports along the continuum of aging
- Improved service quality, reliability and accountability
- Better use of information and assessments to inform planning discussions between seniors, their families and care teams
- Enhanced workforce capacity and competencies to support seniors
- Lower levels of caregiver burnout and distress



Unpaid Caregiver Supports

Family members and unpaid caregivers are a backbone of seniors support. Spouses, children (often with jobs and children of their own), grandchildren, close family members and volunteers provide infinite value in answering the need for compassionate care, social interaction, transportation, all the tasks associated with independent and semi-independent living, and more. But each of these caregivers have unique needs of their own and as a group often face considerable stress and insufficient information, training, and financial and mental health supports necessary to continue as required. We heard that unpaid caregivers often aren't looking for someone else to take on their role – they value the opportunity to contribute – but they are looking for someone to help make the work easier.

Financial Security

Leaning on our values around respect and dignity, all people, regardless of age, will be valued in the workforce for as long as we choose to remain in it. Once we leave the workforce, we will also be supported to meet our essential needs and deal with the rising cost of living.

Strategic Initiatives

To ensure we all have opportunity to remain in the workforce for as long as we choose and are supported to maintain our financial security as we age, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Off-set Costs Supports:** Support older residents and those who care for and support us to deal with the rising cost of living.
- **Older Adult Workforce Participation:** Empowering seniors to stay in the workforce as long as we choose by receiving access to training, supports, and tools employers can use to support working older employees.
- **Financial Planning and Awareness:** Educate the public, seniors, families and caregivers about financial planning and available programming for aging to enhance awareness of importance and tools including financial fraud and protection.

This will build on the financial supports already available specifically for seniors (e.g., Seniors Economic Recovery Tax Credit, Affordability Tax Credit for Seniors, Renters Tax Credit and the top-up for low-income seniors), as well as more general supports such as the Education Property Tax Rebate, reduction of vehicle registration fees and elimination of PST on will preparation.

We believe these initiatives will deliver:

- Enhanced affordability of life for older people to support access to necessary supports and tools
- A more equitable and supportive workplace for seniors

Seniors and families will feel more financially prepared for aging well and will be at lower risk of financial fraud and exploitation.

Financial Security

Throughout the engagement process, people described how the combination of fixed incomes, unplanned expenses related to mobility, wellness and safety, and the rising costs of living are putting a tight squeeze on seniors' budgets. In some cases, people are making significant concessions to their standards of living to accommodate must-have supports, up to and including selling homes and moving to congregate settings. In other cases, some people feel that continuing to work, either at their chosen careers or on a part-time basis in a new area, is a way to continue to maintain their lifestyle while also providing opportunity to build new community and co-worker social networks. People who have been seeking work told us that often when they indicate that they would like to continue working, their employers do not have the tools, resources, policies and processes in place to support this type of work arrangement. This can leave little room for seniors to chart their own course and make independent decisions about their lives.



Reducing Ageism and Ableism



Ageism is stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel), and discrimination (how we act) towards others, or even ourselves, based on real or perceived chronological or perceived age.

Ableism is “the belief that it is ‘normal’ to not have a disability and that ‘normal’ is preferred. It is discrimination based on disability.”

Both exist in subtle ways — in wording choices, decisions, actions and basic assumptions and can be re-enforced or exacerbated by policies. They limit opportunities for seniors, divide the population into “us” and “them” and can limit seniors’ participation in social, cultural and civic opportunities.

This can result in fewer opportunities, lower quality of life, physical and mental health challenges and reduced access to services and supports. It worsens social isolation, and for people living in remote settings or in rural areas, this risk is compounded. When seniors start to believe in ageist and ableist ideas themselves, they often stop pursuing healthy and positive behaviours like accessing beneficial programs and services.

There is a lack of a cohesive framework to address ageism and we will work to ensure everyone remains valued and celebrated and that ageism and ableism are reduced.

¹ World Health Organization (2022). Ageing: Ageism. Retrieved from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/questions-and-answers/item/ageing-ageism>

² Inclusion Canada (2022). This is Ableism. [online: web] <https://inclusioncanada.ca/this-is-ableism/>

Strategic Initiatives

To ensure all people are valued and celebrated, regardless of age, and that ageism and ableism are reduced, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Ageism Prevention Toolkit:** Develop ageism prevention tools that support government partners, service providers and private organizations to identify and address ageism and ableism in their policies, programs and services.
- **Celebrating Older Manitoban:** Honour and celebrate the diversity and contributions of seniors and combat ageism and ableism through recognition, training and information.
- **Intergenerational Programs:** Support the creation of more intergenerational programs to increase interactions, understanding and connections through greater volunteer/education opportunities and co-locating programs and services.

We believe these initiatives will:

- Reduce ageism and ableism in public programs and private businesses.
- Increase positive perceptions of aging in the public.
- Improve social inclusion and other outcomes for Manitobans as they age.

Ageism and Ableism

Ageism and ableism are not topics that often came up explicitly during conversations with people about aging in Manitoba. However, these issues are unfortunately deeply engrained in society – western cultures have been socialized to believe that youth is better than age– and these issues are only uncovered when digging into the root causes of many inequities and barriers seniors face. While governments and seniors’ service providers are acutely attuned to these issues, the work that each does in these areas can only make a change within their individual spheres of influence. It became very clear during our conversations that a more coordinated approach – across society and government – is required to shift perspectives away from negative images and stereotypes of aging as something to be feared to one that values and celebrate aging as a normal phase of life and highlights the value of seniors to society.

Indigenous Engagement and Co-design



We respect that First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis people in Manitoba are distinct groups. There is diversity in experience, culture and language depending on the distinction each individual or community is a part of – on or off reserve, remote, urban or rural. We will take a distinction-based approach

and work with First Nations, Inuit and Red River Métis people in a manner that acknowledges the specific rights, interests, priorities and concerns of each, while respecting and acknowledging these distinct Peoples with unique cultures, histories, rights, laws and governments.

Strategic Initiatives

To ensure we address the unique needs of Indigenous seniors, Manitoba Seniors and Long-term Care, alongside other government departments, will undertake the following initiative:

- **Indigenous Collaboration:** Continue to build relationships with Indigenous partners taking a distinctions-based approach to identify and collaboratively address shared priorities through a co-design approach

We believe this approach will:

- Support meaningful partnership and co-design in development and implementation of the strategy.
- Help ensure that programs and policies are inclusive of all Indigenous peoples in our province and reflect their priorities.

Indigenous Engagement and Co-design

As we age it can be critically important, for our own well-being but also for that of our families, loved ones, and communities, that we remain included and embedded in our culture and community. We heard from Indigenous partners throughout the engagement activities that this can be particularly important for Indigenous seniors who are the caregivers, teachers, healers, advisors and counsellors for their community. When the bond between an Indigenous community and a senior is broken, due to lack of appropriate housing, support for chronic conditions or any other reason that means that senior must leave the community, the negative outcomes can be much greater. Not only is the social, emotional, physical and spiritual wellness of the Indigenous senior threatened, but the wellbeing of the community is impacted as well.



Collaboration and Accountability

Seniors, families, caregivers, front-line service providers and seniors serving organizations say they feel disconnected from government. Seniors services cross policy and jurisdictional boundaries but there are few opportunities for collaboration and partnerships and even fewer non-clinical performance assessment and benchmarking tools that support continuous improvement.

Older people and the organizations and individuals delivering critical and valuable supports need better visibility into government policy and investments, greater co-ordination and transparency amongst all service providers, and a voice in decision-making. Making changes to deliver these goals will support an increase in collaborative initiatives with other levels of government, more efficient and effective decision-making, initiative implementation, issues resolution and increased accountability and transparency.



Strategic Initiatives

To ensure older residents, families, caregivers, service providers and partners will have a voice in decision-making and will be kept up to date on the progress and impact of implementation activities, we will undertake the following initiatives:

- **Partnership and Advisory Structure:** Establish a partnership and advisory structure for implementation of the seniors strategy that enables collaboration, integration and communication between older people, families, caregivers, seniors serving organizations and different levels of government
- **Performance Framework:** Establish and publicly report on a performance framework for the implementation and outcomes of Manitoba's seniors strategy.

We believe these initiatives will:

- Increase the number of collaborative initiatives with other governments.
- Improve efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making, initiative implementation and issues resolution.

Collaboration and Accountability

An important learning from the public consultations was the importance that the general public place on understanding, measuring and reporting the performance of key elements of the collection of services and supports that support seniors in aging well. With that in mind, as we met with service providers and policy makers, there was wide-spread support for adequate and transparent performance measurement with the understanding that no single entity in the complex system of seniors services can be made responsible for strong performance metrics; that only a co-ordinated and systematic approach to implementation of the strategy and ongoing performance measurement, and management, will make and sustain the necessary changes across the province.

Strategy Implementation

Roles and Responsibilities

Our bold vision for seniors supports and services will require close collaboration and co-ordination across a wide group including seniors, families, caregivers, service providers, senior serving organizations, the health-care system and multiple levels of government. Each will need to work in concert and are interdependent on others.

While there will be shared leadership and accountability, the Government of Manitoba will take the lead on:

- Providing evidence-based strategy and policy frameworks.
- Supporting coalitions and partnerships, including cross-government and between the public, private and non-profit sectors.
- Providing effective oversight and accountability mechanisms.
- Developing, implementing, maintaining and measuring the effectiveness of any necessary policies or regulations.
- Providing funding to support program and service delivery as well as infrastructure investments.
- Communicating and promoting the strategy and its progress.

The Government of Manitoba will depend on its partners to:

- Add in evidence, and work with us to co-design initiatives.
- Consider collaboratively funding initiatives that are cross- jurisdictional or part of the private sector.
- Deliver direct programs and services.
- Work with us to plan design programs and services.

How We Will Measure Our Success

As we implement this strategy, we will be transparent about our progress. This will include sharing regular updates on performance measures and ensuring that all interested parties are aware of local service changes.

But most importantly, we will measure our success through ongoing conversations with all residents and partners. This strategy will be a living strategy. What this means is that we will regularly seek out Manitobans' thoughts, ideas and concerns to continually improve the experience for every senior in the province as we continue to move the strategy forward.

Conclusion

We have delivered a bold vision for aging in Manitoba and an equally bold strategy and first actions to bring that vision to reality. This bold approach reflects our commitment to, and recognition of, the critical role that seniors play in the lives of each of us, in our communities, our economy and our province.

When fully realized, we will each see that Manitobans can age actively, with purpose, connected to and supported by our community, with a deep sense of belonging and value. Manitobans will tell us that their individual needs, culture and preferences are understood and met whenever possible. Each of us will be able to proactively plan for our futures and changing needs through easy access to information and personal advice. We will have a variety of safe, accessible and affordable housing environments that we can call home — from independent housing to more congregate living settings that meet our changing needs as we age. Our broader needs will be supported, including access to a full spectrum of community-based services in our communities and close to our homes. And we will each agree that families and unpaid caregivers are recognized and supported in the critical role they play in helping Manitobans to age well.

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Minister's Advisory Council

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Gagné, Charles
Janzen, Sherry
Lavin, Rob
Nachtigall, Mari-Jean
Newman, Connie (Chair)
Scott, Kevin
Stapleton, Doreen

Community Engagement Networks

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Strategy Planning Table Members

Albak, Dr. Russ – Minister Advisory Committee
Bartlett, Dr. Judith – Minister Advisory Committee
Bryant, Helga – Northern Regional Health Authority
Chester, Jason - Revera Retirement Living
Coniglio, Vanessa – Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation
Crawford, Erin – Alzheimer Society of Manitoba
Cruz Arado, Myra – Department of Municipal Relation
Dejaegher, Scott – Department of Indigenous Relations
and Northern Relations
Desrochers, Pat– Department of Finance
Durkin-Chudd, Kathryn – Labour, Consumer Protection
and Government Services
Ellis , Marion– Interlake Eastern Regional Health Authority
Fox, Elaine – Department of Environment, Climate and Parks
Gage, Randi – Minister's Advisory Committee
Gagné, Charles – Minister Advisory Committee
Hossain, Robin – Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
Humeniuk, Melissa – Department of Senior and Long-Term Care
Kalupar, Allan – Department of Seniors and Long Term Care
Komlodi, Silvester – Department of Health
Kulyk, Nick – Department of Municipal Relations
Lavin, Rob – Brandon Seniors for Seniors
Macrae, Amanda – A&O: Support Services for Older Adults
Maes Nino, Christina – Manitoba Non-Profit Housing Association
Mathae-Hunter, Michele– Department of Health
Maynard, Juliene – Catholic Health Association of Manitoba
Morrison, Laura – Department of Seniors and Long Term Care
Nachtigall, Mari-Jean - Minister Advisory Committee
Nader, Mike – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Newman, Connie – Minister Advisory Committee
Porter, Dr. Michelle – University of Manitoba
Prosser, Cheryl – Department of Natural Resources
and Northern Development
Rabet, Christina– Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
Rewniak, Dwayne – Manitoba Housing and Renewal Corporation
Rodek, Samantha – Transportation Option Network for Seniors
Russell, Erin – Department of Transportation and Infrastructure
Salonga, Adrian – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority
Schoonbaert, Brian – Prairie Mountain Health
Scott, Kevin – Minister Advisory Committee
Sethi, Vikas – Shared Health Maniotba
Sisler, Danny – Department of Seniors and Long-Term Care
Snider, Frankie – Department of Indigenous Reconciliation
and Northern Relations
Stapleton, Doreen – Minister Advisory Committee
Thacker, Elizabeth – Department of Economic Development,
Investment and Trade
Tharayil, Tara – Department of Sports, Culture and Heritage
Wasilewski, Barb – Department of Health
Weihs ,Kimberly– Department of Senior and Long Term Care
Woods, Marianne– Southern Health-Sante Sud
Yakubchak, Cara – Department of Families
Younger, Pat – Winnipeg Regional Health Authority

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