



Seniors Centre Investment Program (SCIP)

Edmonton

Summary Report 2024

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Background

The Seniors Centre Investment Program (SCIP) was initiated in 2008 to provide funding to Seniors Centres that support the City of Edmonton in achieving the goals set out in the [Seniors Declaration](#). These include:

- Individuals are respected regardless of age. All generations have much to teach and learn from each other.
- People of all ages feel safe, empowered, and supported as individuals so that they can age well, connect with, and enrich the community.
- Urban spaces are intentionally designed to be vibrant, inclusive, and accessible to meet the interests and needs of older adults.
- Older persons have access to information, programs, and services that promote engagement.

Seniors Centres are Edmonton-based, not-for-profit public facilities designed to meet the needs of people 55 years and older. They offer a diverse range of accessible programs and services and have regular hours of operations. Programs and services offered include:

- Recreation
- Wellness
- Creative arts
- Education
- Social events
- Information and referral
- Volunteerism and social support

This program is unique. Edmonton is one of the few cities across Canada that offers operating funding specifically for seniors centres. City operating grants, like SCIP, provide funding to help offset an organization's operations based on the eligible operating costs (e.g., rent, facility maintenance, utilities, staffing, volunteer coordination, etc.) from the previous year, not fund the entirety of operations or expansion of services. Operating grants are flexible, as they allow organizations to decide where they want to focus the funding within their budgets. Not-for-profit organizations are independent entities and are responsible for the financial stewardship of their organizations' operations.

Grant Overview

As in previous years, applications for the 2024 Seniors Centre Investment Program were by invitation to organizations that met the definition of a seniors centre. Total funding distributed through the SCIP 2024 was approximately \$1,907,333. The deadline to apply for the SCIP grant was March 13, 2024. Upon receipt, applications were reviewed to ensure continued eligibility for the SCIP funding and that all 2023 Final Reporting had been completed.

In 2024, SCIP provided limited funding to support 16 Seniors Centres under three streams:

1. Operating Stream - Assists with general operating expenses. The operating funding stream was allocated through a formula based calculation where organizations were awarded up to 25% of their eligible expenses.

2. Volunteer Coordination Stream - Supports costs related to coordinating volunteer programs (up to a maximum of \$40,000). This was the final year of a two-year transition funding (available in 2023 and 2024 only) and was given to centres that had received Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program funding for their volunteer program in 2022, allowing them time to secure alternative funding.
3. Facility Conservation Stream - Assists with preventive maintenance and renovation of the facility and purchase of minor capital items such as furniture or computer equipment. The facility conservation stream was available for up to \$40,000.

Appendix 1 provides a complete list of the Seniors Centres and the approved funding amounts they received.

Reporting

Overview of reporting requirements

Organizations were required to submit final reports by March 1, 2025. Reporting consisted of information specific to the funding impact, demographics, collaborations, volunteer data, and how the funding helped to advance efforts in addressing two specific Determinants of Healthy Aging:

- **Physical and Mental Health** - Programs and services include: physical health and wellness, physical fitness, healthy life choices, mental health and wellness, and brain health.
- **Personal Well-Being** - Programs and services focus on resiliency, emotional wellbeing, personal services, food and nutrition.

How did the 2024 SCIP Operating dollars help you achieve your mandate?

Many organizations emphasized that the funding was essential and critical for their operations, allowing them to continue providing programs, services, and activities for seniors. The funding helped cover operational costs like rent, utilities, staff salaries, maintenance, and program supplies. Several organizations highlighted specific impacts of their programs on seniors, such as combating social isolation, improving their quality of life, enhancing mental and physical well-being, and facilitating community engagement.

SCIP funding is not merely supplemental; it is fundamental to ensuring seniors centres remain open and serve their communities effectively.

Like many not-for-profit organizations, seniors centres are facing rising operational costs, and the City continues to support them through ongoing funding such as the SCIP grant.

The flexibility and reliability of the SCIP funding was also valued for providing financial stability and allowing the organizations to adapt to changing needs and demands. Specific achievements mentioned include reaching thousands of seniors, distributing resources, maintaining affordability and accessibility of programs, and supporting volunteer efforts. Some organizations also noted challenges like increased demand for services and operational costs, emphasizing the importance of ongoing and continued funding.

SEESA: A Beacon of Community and Connection
South East Edmonton Senior Association (Final Report 2024)

For countless seniors in Edmonton, SEESA isn't just a building; it's a lifeline. It is a bustling community where seniors find belonging, improve their mental and physical well-being, and give back to the community. The center offers lifelong learning opportunities, facilitates volunteerism, and provides a space for social engagement, fulfilling its mission to empower seniors. However, this vibrant community faces a critical challenge. Maintaining the SEESA building—covering custodial wages, utilities, repairs, and office supplies—comes with significant costs. Despite receiving some revenue from partnerships, the organization runs on a tight budget. The SCIP funding has been essential, but rising costs and the lack of a sustainable funding model threaten SEESA's long-term stability.

Regardless of these challenges, SEESA remains a beacon of hope. The dedication of its staff and volunteers, coupled with the support of grants like SCIP, ensures that seniors have a place to thrive. SEESA's story highlights the profound impact such centers have on individuals and the broader community, and it emphasizes the urgent need for reliable, equitable funding to sustain these vital services. When seniors thrive, so does the community. And with continued support, SEESA will keep its doors open, changing lives and strengthening the fabric of Edmonton.



Number of Volunteers and Volunteer Hours Reported by Senior Centres

Volunteers represent an invaluable asset for seniors centres. Without volunteers the breadth of programs offered would not be possible. Volunteerism within the centres contributes to increased social inclusion, belonging, and ensures that seniors are active and engaged, making it a powerful resource both for the individual volunteer and for the organization.

	2024 (16 Centres reporting)	Value* Calculated using 2024 Living Wage
Number of Volunteers	2,438	\$1,235.76
Number of volunteer hours	144,498	\$3,012,783

Demographic Information

Most organizations, which provided their final report, indicated that significant portions of their clientele were seniors in the 65-74 and 75-84 age groups. Some had members in their 90s and even 100s. A few organizations also noted younger members attending programs. There's a clear majority of female members in most organizations, often around 70-80%, compared to males.

Most seniors centre users are female along with a significant representation of low-income seniors. These groups have specific needs, highlighting the importance of targeted programs and funding. Future planning should consider this demographic to ensure services are accessible and effective for those who need them most.

Many organizations served diverse populations, including various ethnic, cultural, and racialized groups. Some specifically mention serving Indigenous communities (First Nations, Métis, Inuit), South Asian communities, LGBTQ2S+ seniors, and seniors from various countries of origin. Issues like social isolation, loneliness, poor health, disabilities, and housing/food insecurity were mentioned as challenges faced by the seniors served. Organizations reported varying membership numbers, ranging from hundreds to thousands, indicating a wide reach within the senior population.

Fostering Belonging and Wellness for Immigrant Seniors and Women

The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women (Final Report 2024)



"The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women is a not-for-profit organization. The mandate of the organization is to provide programs and services to immigrant seniors, women, and their families to integrate into Canadian society. The program offers: one-on-one support, outreach services, help with navigating government and legal systems, educational workshops, information, referrals, language and skill classes.

Numerous activities and events are organized so seniors have opportunities to build support, stay healthy and connected and are not isolated. There is special focus on south Asian communities who face many social and cultural barriers. To ensure accessibility, we offer translation services in Urdu, Hindi, and Punjabi, thus breaking down language barriers. Our goal is to promote physical, mental, and emotional wellness, enrich quality of life, and cultivate a sense of belonging. By fostering integration and active participation, we help individuals thrive as valued members of Canadian society."



Collaborations

Organizations indicated they were actively engaged in numerous collaborations with businesses, other not-for-profits, community leagues, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and various cultural groups. These collaborations covered a wide range of activities including:

- Providing programs and services at different locations (community leagues, churches)
- Bringing in experts and speakers for presentations (finance, health, education)
- Organizing events and outings (theatre, music performances, educational trips)
- Supporting specific demographics (Indigenous seniors, Francophone communities)
- Offering essential services (tax clinics, health screenings, food programs)
- Engaging in intergenerational activities (working with schools)
- Providing volunteer opportunities for youth and seniors
- Addressing social issues (isolation, loneliness, fraud prevention)

Some frequently mentioned partners included:

- Alberta Health Services (AHS)
- Edmonton Public Library (EPL)
- Various community leagues
- Educational institutions (University of Alberta, Norquest College)
- GEF Seniors Housing

The overall goal of these collaborations was to expand reach, enhance services, address diverse needs, and strengthen community connections for seniors. Organizations emphasize the importance of working together to effectively support and engage seniors.

Empowering Seniors, One Day at a Time: The Impact of SCIP Funding at Edmonton Seniors Centre

Edmonton Seniors Center (Final Report 2024)



Today, 91 year old Doreen took the LRT to reach us because she was interested in one particular program we offer. She attended the program, loved it, immediately signed up to become a member, and started looking at other things that matched her needs. In the same afternoon she was able to access much needed foot care and she also participated in coffee and socialization. She can't wait to return tomorrow!

This is true and it happened today! I think if you were to visit ESC any day next week you would find a delighted Doreen here! Meeting her social, emotional, physical and even aesthetic needs. Of course, all the seniors we serve are individuals with varying abilities and needs, but Doreen is representative of many.

Because ESC exists, with thanks to SCIP funding, we are able to reach and support many individuals who are disadvantaged physically, mentally, emotionally, socially and financially. We fill a need that would be a yawning chasm of emptiness without our presence. That sentence may sound dramatic. But it's true. And we are told, everyday, what our presence, and what we do, truly matters to our members and the wider community.

Outcome Reporting - Determinants of Healthy Aging

Each senior centre reported on the following two Determinants of Healthy Aging: Physical and Mental Health and Personal Well-being. The table below presents a summary of some of the activities offered by seniors centres in 2024, along with the number of centres (out of 16) reporting each activity. This table highlights some of the types of activities the seniors centres offer which contribute meaningfully to seniors' overall well-being.

Determinant of Healthy Aging	Focus Areas	Activities	% of Centres Reporting (n=16)
Physical and Mental Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors have increased capacity to live independently by enhancing physical wellness. Seniors have increased capacity to live independently by enhancing mental wellness. Seniors have increased engagement in creative pursuits and intellectually stimulating activities to keep the mind interested and alert. 	Physical Health and Wellness	Dance classes	18.75% (3/16)
	Physical Fitness	Online fitness and resistance classes, Yoga for Arthritis	25% (4/16)
	Mental Health and Wellness	Drop-in counselling services, music classes	18.75% (3/16)
	Brain Health	Fiber arts classes, poetry writing	31.25% (5/16)
Personal Well-being <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seniors have increased ability to cope with challenges and life transitions. Seniors have an increased sense of meaning, purpose, and connection to the larger world. Seniors have increased access to information, programs, services and supports to manage activities of daily living. Seniors have increased capacity to live independently by enhancing physical wellness. 	Resiliency	Seniors Outreach and Multicultural Seniors Outreach Programs, Intensive Case Management, Seniors Safe House	12.5% (2/16)
	Health and Personal Support Services	Dentures, Home Care, Eye Health, Caregivers Circle, Alzheimer's Support, Foot Care Clinics, Grief Support, Book Club	25% (4/16)
	Social and Emotional Wellbeing	Coffee Talk Program	12.5% (2/16)
	Nutrition and Food Security	Cooking classes, holiday celebrations, Frozen Meal Program, Hot Lunch Program	31.25% (5/16)

Although seniors centres participating in the SCIP 2024 program were specifically instructed to report on how their initiatives addressed the two distinct Determinants of Healthy Aging, many organizations observed a significant overlap and interconnectedness in the outcomes of their programs. It is evident that a single activity or service could simultaneously impact both categories of determinants.

For instance, a yoga program, while designed with a primary focus on improving physical fitness, flexibility, and mental tranquility—which falls under the Physical and Mental Health determinant—invariably contributes to an individual's overall sense of Personal Well-being. The practice of yoga promotes stress reduction, fosters social interaction among participants, and enhances self-esteem, all of which are critical components of emotional health and personal fulfillment. This demonstrates the holistic nature of many seniors programs, where the physical and mental benefits inherently spill over into emotional and social spheres, ultimately reinforcing the integrated approach necessary for promoting comprehensive healthy aging.

From Strength to Stories: The Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre Thrives

Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre (Final Report 2024)



The air buzzes with energy every Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday at the Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre. Thanks to the 2024 SCIP Operating grant, the fitness classes are not just about physical activity; they're a vibrant hub of connection. The Centre's impact extends far beyond fitness.

The "Lunch & Learn" program, held every Tuesday and Thursday, addresses diverse interests, offering valuable presentations on topics requested by the members themselves. Then there's the "Not Boring Book Club," hosted by Edmonton writer Debby Waldman. It has become a portal to the world of literature, bringing contemporary authors and publishers from around the globe right to their Zoom screens. It's more than just discussing books; it's about intellectual stimulation and connection.

Language clubs provide spaces where members practice Yiddish and Russian, sharing jokes and memories. This not only keeps their minds sharp but also strengthens their bond, with participants volunteering to help in the kitchen, office, and with food delivery.

The Centre also benefits from University of Alberta students, who bring fresh perspectives and youthful energy, creating an intergenerational bridge. The inclusive and intercultural environment fostered by the Centre was best exemplified when the Lieutenant Governor of Alberta, Honourable Salma Lakhani, visited. She remarked, "It is such a pleasure to be at the Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre, the most culturally diverse senior centre I have ever visited." This success is directly attributable to the support from the City of Edmonton. The SCIP grant allows the Centre to provide essential programs that enrich, enlighten, and support multicultural seniors, fulfilling its mandate and creating a thriving community.

Looking Towards 2025 and Beyond

Based on applicant feedback and in an effort to continuously improve on granting processes, Administration partnered with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) in early 2024 to engage with the leadership of the seniors centres that received SCIP funds in 2024. They hosted four engagement sessions and conducted two surveys to:

- Determine areas of improvement for SCIP processes;
- Confirm seniors centres' level of alignment with the [Alberta Healthy Aging Framework](#);
- Identify funding needs/priorities; and
- Develop recommendations for SCIP.

It was determined that for the next grant intake, 2025 SCIP funding will be based on the Senior Centres' 2024 SCIP application, to allow groups to receive their funding earlier in the calendar year.

To be eligible for SCIP funding, seniors centres have to meet all of the following criteria:

- Public facility that is available to all seniors
- Operated by a not-for-profit organization
- Minimum 15 program hours per week (in-person and online combined)
- Minimum 12 drop-in hours per week
- Targeted to people 55 and older
- Offer a diverse range of programs, services, and activities that take place or originate from a facility built or designed to meet the needs of seniors; and
- May not have more than 2 years of unrestricted cash reserves or restricted but available for operating expenses.

Administration communicated the following changes to SCIP to seniors centres:

- Facility Conservation stream is now combined into a single operating stream, increasing flexibility to cover a wider range of operating expenses (e.g. rent, maintenance, staffing, volunteer coordination).
- New funding levels were introduced: Centres are now placed into funding categories based on eligible operating expenses from the past year, improving predictability in funding to be received. Annual award amounts may vary based on the number of centres per category, overall SCIP budget, and City/community priorities.

Conclusion

The Seniors Centre Investment Program (SCIP) is a crucial funding source for non-profit seniors centres in Edmonton, enabling them to provide essential programs and services for individuals aged 55 and older. The 2024 SCIP funding of approximately \$1,907,333 supported 16 seniors centres through Operating, Volunteer Coordination, and Facility Conservation streams. This funding has a significant impact on the well-being of seniors by promoting physical and mental health, personal well-being, and community engagement. SCIP funding directly supports the operational stability of these centres, allowing them to combat social isolation, improve quality of life, and enhance mental and physical well-being for seniors, ultimately strengthening the community fabric in Edmonton. As SCIP looks towards 2025 and beyond, continued efforts to improve processes, align with healthy aging frameworks, and respond to evolving funding needs will be essential in ensuring the ongoing impact and sustainability of Seniors Centres in the city.

We sincerely thank all the seniors centres for sharing their insights, successes, and challenges, and for highlighting the significant impact SCIP has had on their organizations and the seniors they support in Edmonton.

Appendix 1. List of Seniors Centres that received the SCIP 2024 Dollars

In 2024, SCIP provided funding to support 16 Seniors Centres under three streams:

1. Operating Stream - Assists with general operating expenses.
2. Volunteer Coordination Stream - Supports costs related to coordinating volunteer programs. Volunteer Coordination funding was only provided to those who had previously been receiving FCSS funding for this work specifically. This was the last year of two year transition funding.
3. Facility Conservation Stream - Assists with preventive maintenance and renovation of the facility and purchase of minor capital items such as furniture or computer equipment.

Organization	Operating	Facility Conservation	Volunteer Coordination	Total Funding Amount
Central Lions Seniors Association	\$106,012	\$0	\$0	\$106,012
Edmonton Aboriginal Seniors Centre	\$137,747	\$8,486	\$0	\$146,233
Edmonton Seniors Centre	\$58,848	\$0	\$16,000	\$74,848
Ital-Canadian Seniors Association	\$58,613	\$15,628	\$0	\$74,241
Jewish Senior Citizen's Centre	\$49,789	\$40,000	\$0	\$89,789
Mill Woods Seniors Association	\$81,256	\$0	\$0	\$81,256
North Edmonton Seniors Association	\$164,853	\$0	\$40,000	\$204,853
North West Edmonton Seniors Society	\$56,524	\$0	\$35,100	\$91,624
Operation Friendship Seniors Society	\$0	\$0	\$40,000	\$40,000
Sage Seniors Association	\$250,000	\$0	\$40,000	\$290,000
Seniors Citizens Opportunity Neighbourhood Association	\$32,190	\$0	\$13,040	\$45,230

South East Edmonton Seniors Association	\$100,481	\$0	\$40,000	\$140,481
SouthWest Edmonton Seniors Association (SWESA)	\$61,765	\$0	\$0	\$61,765
Strathcona Place Society	\$74,192	\$0	\$33,056	\$107,248
The Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women	\$56,839	\$0	\$15,000	\$71,839
Westend Seniors Activity Centre	\$241,914	\$40,000	\$0	\$281,914
Total	\$1,530,023	\$104,114	\$272,196	\$1,907,333