



## CITY OF VANCOUVER

### ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Report Date: November 24, 2005  
Author: Baldwin Wong  
Phone No.: 604.871.6637  
RTS No.: 5595  
CC File No.: 3252  
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TO: Vancouver City Council  
FROM: Director of Social Planning  
SUBJECT: UBCM Community Health Promotion Fund Pilot Project

#### RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council endorse the City's application to the Union of British Columbia Municipalities (UBCM) Community Health Promotion Fund Pilot Project for a grant of \$25,000 to support a community-driven Multicultural Health Fair to be held in Vancouver in February, 2006.

#### GENERAL MANAGER'S COMMENTS

The General Manager of Community Services RECOMMENDS approval of the foregoing.

#### COUNCIL POLICY

There is no applicable Council Policy.

#### PURPOSE

This report seeks a Council resolution to support a City of Vancouver application to the UBCM Community Health Promotion Fund (CHPF) for a \$25,000 grant to host a Multicultural Health Fair in Vancouver in February, 2006. The fair is being organized by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of B.C. (AMSSA), and other community partners. Apart from Social Planning participation on the Steering Committee, there are no financial

implications for the City. Council's support is needed to move this application to UBCM's final approval phase.

## BACKGROUND

In September, 2005, UBCM invited BC municipalities to apply for project funding under a new initiative called Community Health Promotion Fund. The City submitted three Expressions of Interest proposals to UBCM, including one called "Promoting Healthy Living: A Multicultural Health Fair".

On November 18, 2005, the City was advised that the Multicultural Health Fair Project is one of 30 community projects which have been selected and approved, in principle, for funding by CHPF, pending a formal Council resolution in support of the project as well as a final stage project proposal.

The Community Health Promotion Fund is intended to assist communities to address health promotion priorities, strengthen collaboration among local government, health authorities and non-governmental health organizations, and support innovation, best practice and information-sharing among health service providers.

The City's application for "Promoting Healthy Living: A Multicultural Health Fair" is a partnership between Social Planning, AMSSA and a number of other governmental and non-governmental groups. The Project has financial support from various Provincial and Federal groups, and the UBCM funding will be important in contributing required resources to fully implement the planned programs and activities for the Fair.

## DISCUSSION

The City of Vancouver has a significant number of immigrants. The 2001 census showed that 46% of Vancouver residents were foreign-born, making Vancouver a city with the second highest concentration of immigrants in Canada, after Toronto.

Although the immigrant population continues to grow, a lot of new immigrants do not access BC's many health services and initiatives at the same rate as the rest of the population. The BC Nurse Line, for example, has multilingual capacity, but only 1% of service users are identified as immigrants. Many immigrants are completely unfamiliar with the range of health services available and when they do need services, they face language, cultural and other barriers. A recent Statistics Canada report revealed a worrying trend: that after two years in Canada, immigrants' health status is lower than when they arrived. For many minority groups, health disparities can mean lower life expectancy, decreased quality of life and loss of economic opportunities.

The Health Fair will be held in February, 2006, and it is anticipated that 1,000 people from the Lower Mainland's diverse communities will participate. The program of the day will be interactive, with a variety of information sessions, displays and demonstrations (some with language translations). A key focus of the Fair will be to engage participants in interactive discussions on a variety of health topics, with special attention to different cultural norms and barriers experienced by immigrants.

The project will also host strategic planning sessions with senior staff of the Provincial Health Authority, Vancouver Coastal Health, Providence and Fraser Health Authorities and community partners. The objective of these sessions will be to use the lessons learned from health initiatives as well as from available research on barriers and health issues, to develop an action plan among agencies and government partners towards improving health in BC's multicultural communities. Social Planning staff have supported this proposal because the interactive nature of the Fair and engagement of health authorities are both very positive approaches which could support the development of more accessible health services.

This type of initiative, which is intended to support immigrants' access to services and which engages a range of community and local agencies, is also very much in line with the recommendations made in the recent work of the Mayor's Working Group on Immigration.

During the planning of the Fair and subsequent sessions, Social Planning staff will serve as a member of the Project Steering Committee and will provide advice on City's perspective on issues and barriers facing immigrants and refugees.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications. Funding for the Project will be provided by UBCM's Community Health Promotion Fund.

#### **CONCLUSION**

The Multicultural Health Fair will provide an excellent opportunity to promote stronger community participation to discuss access and related issues, and will engage key service providers to continue search for ways to address critical issues facing multicultural and newcomer communities in Vancouver.

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