

April 8, 2009

Government supports important work of voluntary sector and community agencies

Continued investment in building strong communities

Edmonton... The Alberta government is continuing to support the important work of the non-profit, voluntary, community and contracted agencies sectors. Program investments will help with the cost of police information checks for volunteers, leverage individual charitable donations, support recruitment and retention and provide additional funding for preventive social services.

“Whether they are small, medium or large organizations, Alberta’s non-profit, voluntary and community agency sectors, help make our communities strong and vibrant and deserve our support,” said Premier Ed Stelmach.

Budget 2009 will support:

- \$20 million to continue the Community Spirit Program donation grant available to non-profit organizations and registered charities;
- \$2.4 million to fund a three-year pilot project that will cover the costs of police information checks for volunteers working with children, seniors and people with disabilities;
- approximately \$80 million for the enhanced charitable tax credit which encourages giving and allows Albertans to receive a 50-cent tax credit for every dollar donated over \$200;
- \$35 million to help recruit and retain staff in not-profit and for-profit agencies contracted by government to provide services to children and families and Albertans with developmental disabilities; and
- \$74.8 million to support community-based prevention and early intervention programs through Family and Community Support Services - an increase of \$3 million or 4.1 per cent.

“A key part of the foundation that makes our province such a great place to live and raise a family is the non-profit and voluntary sector,” said Lindsay Blackett, Minister of Culture and Community Spirit. “These programs will help to give a hand up to non-profit and voluntary organizations so they can continue to carry on their important work.”

The Community Spirit Program, launched in 2008, is a donor-driven program that benefits non-profit and charitable organizations across the province. It provides grants up to \$25,000 based on the amount of eligible donations made by Albertans.

The Volunteer Police Information Check Program puts in place a system for reimbursing police agencies for the costs of conducting police information checks for volunteers dealing directly with at-risk individuals, allowing non-profit organizations to direct more funding to front-line and core services. Funding for the \$2.4-million, three-year Volunteer Police Information Check Program is

being provided through the Alberta government's Safe Communities Secretariat.

Overall Culture and Community Spirit provides over \$164 million in community investment grants that are helping to build stronger and more vibrant communities. This doesn't include the approximately \$80 million enhanced charitable tax credit. For more information visit www.culture.alberta.ca.

"Our Ministry remains strongly committed to supporting persons with developmental disabilities, and we are pleased to be able to provide \$24 million from the Persons with Developmental Disabilities program to help contracted agencies recruit and retain staff," said Mary Anne Jablonski, Minister of Seniors and Community Supports.

"Preventive and early-intervention services are critical to building and sustaining healthy families and communities," said Janis Tarchuk, Minister of Children and Youth Services. "That's why, during these difficult economic times, we worked hard to find the additional funding for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS)."

FCSS is a unique 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities or Métis Settlements. Under FCSS, communities design and deliver social programs and services to promote and enhance the well-being of individuals, families and their communities. Currently, 317 municipalities and Métis Settlements are involved in Family and Community Support Services.

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Backgrounders: Details on funding to benefit community groups and the Volunteer Police Information Check program.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

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Additional funding benefits community groups across Alberta

Budget 2009 will see \$35 million to help recruit and retain staff in not-profit and for-profit agencies contracted by government to provide services to children and families and Albertans with developmental disabilities.

An additional \$11 million will be provided through Children and Youth Services to assist contracted agencies, including not-for profit agencies, providing child and family services, address staff recruitment and retention challenges. This includes \$9.2 million for agencies that deliver child protection, family enhancement, foster care, youth shelter services, or supports for families of children with disabilities; \$1.3 million for women's shelters; and \$540,000 for Parent Link Centres across Alberta. Family and Community Support Services' direct grant will increase by \$3 million, for a total of \$74.8 million.

Funding of \$24 million will be provided through Seniors and Community Supports to help contracted agencies recruit and retain staff who provide services for persons with developmental disabilities.

Community Spirit Program

Non-profit and charitable organizations in Alberta will once again be able to apply for the Community Spirit Program donation grant, with an announcement of \$20 million for the program in Budget 2009.

The goal of the Community Spirit Program is to help increase private charitable donations by individual Albertans to Alberta's non-profit and charitable organizations. The program is donor-driven, meaning Albertans decide where they want their donations to go. It's made up of two components: the donation grant and the approximately \$80-million enhanced charitable tax credit, which allows Albertans to receive a 50-cent tax credit for every dollar donated over \$200.

The donation grant is available to all eligible non-profit organizations and charities registered and incorporated in Alberta. The maximum grant is \$25,000 per year, with total donation grants not to exceed \$50,000 over three years. The grant can be used to support operations, programs and/or capital projects.

Donation grants are calculated on a proportional basis by dividing the program budget by the amount of eligible cash donations received by eligible organizations over a 12-month period.

For more information on the program, visit www.communityspiritprogram.ca

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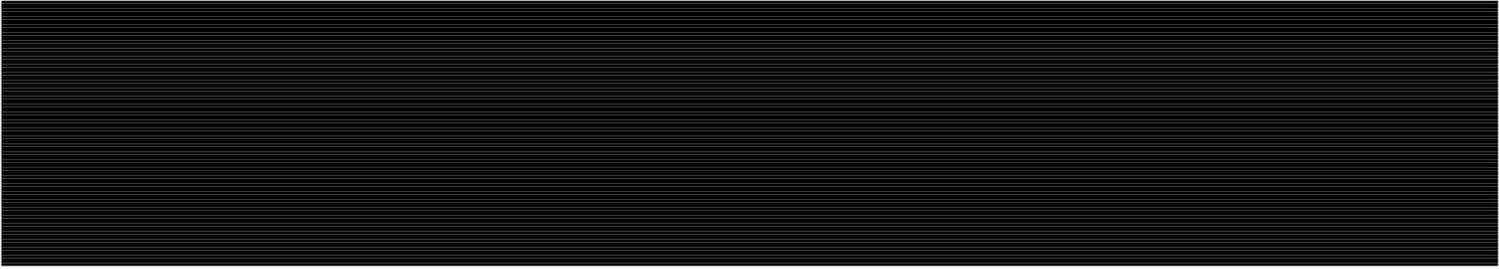
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Province covers costs of police information checks for volunteers working with at-risk individuals

The Government of Alberta, in partnership with Volunteer Alberta, is launching a new pilot project that will cover the costs of police information checks for thousands of volunteers who directly engage with children, seniors and people with disabilities.

The new Volunteer Police Information Check Program will be jointly administered by Culture and Community Spirit and Volunteer Alberta. Volunteer Alberta will assess the eligibility of non-profit/voluntary sector organizations and assign eligible organizations with a Volunteer Organization Authorization Number (VOAN). These organizations will present their unique VOAN to their local police agency when requesting a police information check for an eligible volunteer. The police agency will not charge a fee for obtaining a police information check to organizations with a valid VOAN. Culture and Community Spirit will reimburse the police agency \$15 for each eligible police information check provided.

Eligibility

The program will cover the costs of conducting police information checks for non-profit/voluntary sector organizations meeting the following three criteria:

- The organization must perform a community service in Alberta;
- The organization must be a registered non-profit organization under the Alberta *Societies Act*, the Alberta *Business Corporations Act*, Part 9 of the Alberta *Companies Act*, or a Special Act of the Alberta Legislature; and
- The services provided by the organization involves volunteers in eligible circumstances.

Eligible circumstances

Volunteers in eligible circumstances are those who engage in volunteerism with individuals who are at a greater risk of being harmed than the general population because of:

- age (those under age 18, and those 65 years of age and older); or
- disability (including a physical or mental disability, or a mental illness);

And the individuals the volunteer engages with are:

- in a position of dependence on others; or
- in the care of persons in a position of authority or trust relative to them.

For more information on the Volunteer Police Information Check Program visit www.volunteeralberta.ab.ca

The Safe Communities Secretariat is a partnership of nine government ministries working collaboratively to oversee the implementation of the Crime Reduction and Safe Communities

Task Force recommendations and address crime in a meaningful way. For more information on the Safe Communities Secretariat visit www.justice.gov.ab.ca/safe

This pilot project is helping to achieve the goals of the Alberta Non-Profit Voluntary Sector Initiative - a partnership between the Government of Alberta and the non-profit sector to work collaboratively to build healthy, active and sustainable communities.

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