

Bridging Generations

A Guide to Intergenerational Programs
in Newfoundland and Labrador





Acknowledgements

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Available in Alternate Formats

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As Minister responsible for the Department of Children, Seniors and Social Development, I am pleased to present this Intergenerational Program Guide on behalf of the department.

This guide has been developed through consultation with other Provincial Government departments and feedback received through a public engagement process with individuals and stakeholder organizations.

This guide is intended to promote inclusion, information exchange, and meaningful interaction between different age groups throughout Newfoundland and Labrador.

Government aims to promote social inclusion and community participation for all individuals across the lifespan (children, youth, families, seniors) in communities large and small throughout the province. This guide presents ideas and guidance for communities, organizations, and their partners to support and encourage intergenerational programs and activities.

This guide and the interactions it aims to promote are in keeping with government's focus on fostering the overall well-being of all residents of Newfoundland and Labrador.

I hope individuals and organizations find this resource useful as we continue to promote meaningful interactions, increased understanding, mutual respect, and genuine positive relationships across generations.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Paul A. Pike". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized "P" and "A".

Hon. Paul A. Pike
Minister of Children, Seniors and Social Development

Introduction to Intergenerational Programs

In Newfoundland and Labrador, the strength of our communities comes from our ability to connect, share, and support each other. As we face new challenges and opportunities and as our population continues to age, we recognize the importance of fostering relationships across generations. This document is designed to provide practical guidance and resources to communities, community groups and organizations for creating and nurturing intergenerational connections that encourage people of all ages to learn and share with each other.

What is an Intergenerational Program?

Intergenerational programs consist of planned activities that bring together different age groups and often involve the sharing of skills, knowledge, cultures, and experiences between generations.

The Importance of Intergenerational Relationships

Intergenerational relationships enrich our lives and communities, and every generation brings its own knowledge and experience to these relationships. Connecting across generations builds stronger communities, reduces loneliness, and creates a sense of belonging for everyone.

Intergenerational activities enrich the lives and overall well-being of participants and are an important strategy to challenge ageism, which the World Health Organization (WHO) defines as **the stereotypes (how we think), prejudice (how we feel) and discrimination (how we act) towards others or oneself based on age**. The WHO recognizes that meaningful intergenerational connections are one of three evidence-based strategies for reducing ageism, along with policy and law, and education.

The Connection to Well-Being

The Government of Newfoundland and Labrador is focused on building awareness and acting on the social factors that influence health outcomes and quality of life to improve well-being. Well-being is an overall positive quality of life where an individual's needs are met across many aspects, including physical, mental, social, cultural, economic, and environmental. As Health Accord NL shows us, social determinants are major contributors to our health.

This intergenerational program guide is in line with the Provincial Government's focus on overall well-being and age and dementia-friendly communities, which support vibrant, inclusive, and accessible spaces and programs where all people can remain active, independent, and engaged in their communities.





Newfoundland and Labrador's aging population makes it vital that we consider how to improve social, cultural and community inclusion for all, including through intergenerational programs and activities.

Benefits of Intergenerational Activities

Intergenerational activities bring many benefits to individuals and communities, such as:

- Challenging stereotypes and prejudice, and combatting ageism.
- Improving physical, mental, and social well-being.
- Reducing stress and feelings of loneliness.

- Creating a sense of belonging.
- Increasing self-esteem, social connection and intergenerational respect and understanding.
- Enabling the sharing of meaningful activities and skills and celebration of the talents and knowledge of different generations.
- Passing of traditional and cultural knowledge and skills from one generation to the next.

Intergenerational activities help improve overall well-being and quality of life for all involved. Breaking down barriers and dispelling stereotypes helps communities reduce ageism and become more age-friendly while also addressing other types of prejudice and discrimination.

Intergenerational Program Examples

Intergenerational programs and activities do not need to be difficult. Almost any activity that brings people of different ages together in meaningful ways is intergenerational. Often, current programs can be expanded to include people from multiple generations. Sometimes all it takes is an invitation.

The following are some examples of intergenerational activities you may wish to consider:

Community-Based Activities

- **Intergenerational Volunteering:** Organize community service projects where people of all ages can contribute and learn together.
- **Conversation/Storytelling Sessions:** Create a list of questions that different generations can ask each other. Encourage older adults to share personal or historical stories with those who are younger.
- **Games and Movie Nights:** Many games, movies, and other entertainment are ageless and can be a great way for multiple generations to connect.
- **Crafting Sessions:** Ask people of all ages to come together to share their passions and knowledge for any variety of crafts.
- **Pen Pals Letter Exchange:** Pair participants based on interests and hobbies to exchange letters, emails, or video messages. Consider one or more in-person meetings, where possible

(perhaps at the end of a program), to deepen intergenerational bonds.

Educational and Learning Opportunities

- **Shared Learning Experiences:** Bring different generations together to participate in a knowledge exchange on a variety of topics such as cooking, crafts, or technology.
- **Heritage Projects:** Organize local history projects where multiple generations share and document stories and experiences.
- **Intercultural Projects:** Approach Indigenous governments and organizations or various cultural communities to plan events that celebrate and respect different traditions, values, and customs.
- **Ageless Cafes:** Host intergenerational gatherings where people explore thought-provoking topics and questions.

Outdoor and Recreational Activities

- **Nature Walks and Hikes:** Plan accessible, guided walks that encourage conversation and physical activity.
- **Traditional Activity Days:** Host traditional activities like fishing, berry picking or knitting, where skills can be shared.
- **Sport and Active Recreation Programs:** Offer multi-age-friendly active programs or sessions such as pickleball, a walking club, bocchia, or cornhole.

- **Community Gardens:** Engage multiple generations in planning, building, and maintaining a community garden.

Potential Intergenerational Program Locations

Intergenerational programs and activities can take place anywhere that people meet and interact. Schools, community centres, 50+ clubs, church halls, personal and long-term care homes, public libraries, and even outdoor spaces are all options to consider. Selecting an accessible, safe, and convenient location is important. The following considerations will help you identify a suitable location:

- **Accessible:** Ensure the location is accessible to people of all ages and abilities and consider seating, lighting, or other accommodations.
- **Conveniently located:** The ideal location is easy to find with transportation and parking options and is close to other spaces such as parks, libraries, or other community spaces that could be used in programming.
- **Equipped:** Ensure the space has the necessary technology, tools and equipment for the planned activities.

Potential Program Hosts and Partners

There are many organizations and groups in communities throughout Newfoundland and Labrador that are ideally suited to host or partner in intergenerational programming given their membership and mandate.

Organizations focused on social activity and education are already well-positioned to lead intergenerational activities either on their own or by partnering with other community organizations. Some examples include:

- Church groups
- Community centres
- Community recreation departments and committees
- Family resource centres
- Indigenous governments and organizations
- Multicultural organizations
- Municipal governments
- Newcomer-serving organizations
- Personal/long-term care homes
- Post-secondary institutions
- Public libraries
- Schools and childcare operators/service providers
- Seniors-serving organizations
- Youth-serving organizations

When considering partners and participants for programs and activities, it is helpful to identify whether police records and vulnerable sector checks, vaccinations, supervision, or other requirements must be satisfied for the protection of participants. This is particularly important when dealing with children and youth and other vulnerable populations, such as seniors and older adults in care settings.



Planning Intergenerational Activities

Getting Started

In communities big and small, there are usually organized groups that can take a lead role in planning intergenerational programs. This could be a local recreation committee, service or youth organization, a seniors' club, a school, or a long-term care home. Successful and effective intergenerational projects rely on partnerships. For intergenerational activities to happen, someone needs to take the first step.

Recognizing Generational Perspectives

Each generation grows up with unique cultural, technological, and social experiences that shapes its worldview. While some generational differences are unique, many core values, such as family, community, and self-expression, are shared. Recognizing these commonalities while respecting differences helps bridge gaps. Everyone you meet has the potential to be a teacher and a student.

Accessibility, Diversity, and Inclusion

When designing intergenerational programs and activities, it is important to ensure that they are accessible to people of varying ages, abilities, and backgrounds. To be accessible, programs and activities must be easy to access and participate in.

Inclusion is the meaningful participation in all aspects of society, with access to services and opportunities, for persons with disabilities equal to that of people without disabilities; this requires active removal of barriers and provision of disability-related supports. Disability includes physical, mental, intellectual, cognitive, learning, communication, sensory impairment, or a functional limitation.

Barriers to participation and inclusion can be anything that prevents a person from fully participating in society. Barriers include but are not limited to physical, architectural, communication, attitudinal, technological, or a barrier established by policies or practices. Our communities are made up of people of different ages, gender identities, sexual orientations, sensory needs and abilities, as well as varying cultures, races, and beliefs. For programs and activities to be truly inclusive, consideration should be given to ensuring that every individual feels welcome, supported, and included.



Preparing your Project Plan

(see Appendix B for planning and evaluation templates)

It is important to establish a plan for the program to succeed. Your project plan should identify the goals of your intergenerational program or activity, likely participants, facilitator and participant roles, timelines, and location. The plan may change over time as new interests and opportunities arise.

The following steps will be helpful when planning an intergenerational program or activity:

Identify Your Goals: Decide what you want to accomplish and what participants may want to achieve or experience by being involved in this activity. This will help in identifying potential participants, community partners and locations.

Assess Community Needs and Interests: Seek input from those you want to involve. Include participants from multiple generations in the planning process to ensure activities appeal to all involved. This will help to promote participant engagement.

Decide on Activities: Allow the age groups, abilities, cultural identities, and input of participants to guide your selected activities. Where applicable, consider the needs of seniors and people living with dementia and any accompanying family members or care partners.

Build Partnerships: Consider who needs to be involved. Some key partners may include community leaders, community groups, schools, church groups or local businesses.

Consider Accessibility and Inclusion: In order to be accessible, your program must be easily accessed by all, regardless of age, ability, identity, and background.

Consider Barriers to Participation: Barriers can be physical, an attitude, a technology, an architectural barrier, or a communication barrier that prevents a person from fully participating in society. Language and cultural differences, financial constraints, and social and educational status can also impact accessibility and participation.

Consider Diversity: Ensure that everyone feels welcome, included, and engaged in the planning of programs or activities. Programs and activities should be welcoming and inclusive of age, gender, sexual orientation, sensory needs, ability, race, religion, ethnicity, and cultural background. Where applicable, include people living with dementia and their essential care partners in program planning.

Select Date(s) and Time(s): Consider the schedules of all participants, availability of program spaces, traffic cycles and parking availability, among other factors, when choosing suitable days of the week and times of day to avoid conflicts and respect the preferences of all participants.

Choose a Location: Select physical locations that are accessible, safe, conveniently located and adequately equipped with appropriate furniture, equipment, and technology, such as tables, chairs, kitchen equipment, and internet access.

Consider the Role of Technology: Consider activities that can be supported or held virtually, with the use of telephones and the internet for those who cannot participate in person. Current and future technologies, such as apps and programs designed to assist persons with disabilities and others, can be used to reduce barriers to participation and accessibility. Technology, especially when rapidly evolving, can also create barriers for persons with disabilities or lower levels of digital literacy.

Delegate Responsibilities: Identify the tasks and materials that are required to make your program or activity successful. Assign staff or volunteers to complete these tasks or acquire materials.

Consider Budget: Consider potential financial barriers to participation. For example, if participants need to pay for admission to intergenerational bowling, is there a plan to help those who may wish to participate but cannot afford to pay? Consider applying to funding programs that could help support activities or materials (see Appendix A for a list of potential funding opportunities).

Encourage Interaction: Encourage mixed-age groups in events or programs to naturally foster interaction. Consider other ways your activity plan can encourage intergenerational interactions.

Launch Your Program: Consider a kickoff event to generate interest and participation.

Evaluate and Enhance: Consider ways to evaluate your activities to see how well they met your own expectations and those of your participants. Questionnaires, evaluation forms, and informal feedback, such as through conversation, can be used to gauge the experiences of your program facilitators and participants to see what they liked or disliked and provide opportunity to make suggestions for future programs or activities. Use the feedback provided to build upon your successes and modify your programming, where needed, to make future activities even more successful and enjoyable. As noted above, Appendix B contains sample evaluation resources. It is important to remember, however, that depending on age, ability or other considerations, a written questionnaire or survey may not be the most appropriate. Consider using guided discussion sessions or other evaluation measures where appropriate when seeking feedback.

Dealing with Unexpected Departures: Recognize that intergenerational programs and activities will result in the formation of friendships and attachments. Remember, it is possible that individuals may stop participating in programming for various reasons, from loss of interest to illness and even death. Sensitivity and thoughtful planning are needed to ensure a supportive environment for participants to express grief and other emotions.

Celebrate and Spread the Word

Consider ways to celebrate the successes and experiences of programs and activities - take pictures throughout and watch an end-of-project slide show together, share refreshments or a meal, or simply get together to reflect on fun and friendships.

Share your positive experiences and lessons learned with others in the community and throughout the province. If you would like to share your success story on the Well-Being NL website (wellbeingnl.ca), please call **709.729.4284** or email **info@wellbeingnl.ca**. You can play an important role in challenging ageism and supporting well-being communities that include everyone, regardless of age, ability, or identity.



Sources and Helpful Resources

Age-Friendly Edmonton. Intergenerational Programming Toolkit

www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/afe-intergenerational-toolkit.pdf

This resource is a comprehensive guide on planning and implementing intergenerational programming.

Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador

www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/seniors/age-friendly-newfoundland-and-labrador-communities

This resource includes information on how your community can become more age-friendly.

BC Care Providers Association. (2009). Creating Caring Communities: A guide to establishing intergenerational programs for schools, care facilities and community groups

www.bccare.ca/wp-content/uploads/BCCPA-Intergenerational-Toolkit.pdf

This resource provides practical information and resources to support various organizations in coordinating intergenerational programming to promote learning, understanding and mutual respect between generations.

Dementia-Friendly Communities Newfoundland and Labrador

dementiafriendlynl.ca

This resource includes information on how your community can become more dementia-friendly.

Generations United. (2007). Tried and True: A Guide to Successful Intergenerational Activities at Shared Site Programs

www.gu.org/resources/tried-and-true-a-guide-to-successful-intergenerational-activities-at-shared-site-programs

This resource discusses intergenerational programming at a co-located adult day services program and childcare centre. It provides guidance for designing and facilitating intergenerational programs as well as evaluation resources and detailed activity plans.

Generations United. (2021). Staying Connected While Staying Apart: Intergenerational Programs & The Covid-19 Pandemic

www.gu.org/resources/staying-connected-while-staying-apart-intergenerational-programs-the-covid-19-pandemic

This resource provides examples of virtual and remote intergenerational programs and lessons-learned during the pandemic. It also offers guidance to help ensure success of such programs.

i2i Intergenerational Society of Canada

intergenerational.ca

The Intergenerational Society of Canada's website contains a wealth of information and resources related to intergenerational programs and activities including a robust listing of potential intergenerational activities available at

intergenerational.ca/resources/ed-asners-ig-activities

New Brunswick Department of Social Development. (2017). Connecting Generations: A Toolkit for Planning Intergenerational Events

www2.gnb.ca/content/dam/gnb/Departments/sd-ds/pdf/Seniors/ConnectingGenerations.pdf

This resource contains practical information and resources to support educators, care providers, community groups and agencies in coordinating successful intergenerational initiatives.

St. Monica Trust. (2018). Intergenerational Activity: How to be part of it and why

www.stmonicastrust.org.uk/guide

A guide to intergenerational programs from the United Kingdom. It discusses the benefits of intergenerational programs and provides advice for developing programming. The document also discusses a successful program where 10 four-year-olds from area childcare centres spent six weeks with residents of a retirement village.

Well-Being Newfoundland and Labrador

This resource includes information and links related to various areas of well-being including health, education, employment and income, justice, environment, housing, and society.

wellbeingnl.ca

World Health Organization (2023). Connecting generations: planning and implementing interventions for intergenerational contact

www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240070264

This document provides guidance for individuals who wish to use intergenerational activities to combat ageism and promote understanding among generations.

Other Useful Links

Arts and Aging Network - www.artsandaging.com

Alzheimer Society of Newfoundland and Labrador - alzheimer.ca/nl/en

Canada's Food Guide - food-guide.canada.ca/en

Coalition of Persons with Disabilities NL - codnl.ca

Empower, the Disability Resource Centre - www.empowernl.ca

Inclusion NL - www.inclusionnl.ca

Recreation NL - recreationnl.com

Regional Wellness Coalitions - www.gov.nl.ca/hcs/healthyliving/wellnesscoalitions

SeniorsNL - Resources, Connections & Information - seniorsnl.ca

Appendix A

Potential Funding Opportunities

There are several Provincial and Federal funding opportunities available for implementing intergenerational programs and activities.

Funding Programs Offered by the Government of Newfoundland and Labrador

Seniors' Social Inclusion Initiative

Supports seniors' and other organizations to organize and promote activities and programs that support social inclusion, healthy aging, mental wellness, and overall well-being.

For further information: www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/grants/seniors-social-inclusion or call 709.729.1382.

Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Program

The Age-Friendly Newfoundland and Labrador Communities Program supports communities in starting and continuing their journey to become more age-friendly. The program has two funding streams:

Stream 1: Planning - To complete an age-friendly assessment and develop an action plan.

Stream 2: Projects - To implement age-friendly actions (projects) identified in the age-friendly assessment and action plan.

Communities with action plans identifying the need for intergenerational activities or programs may be eligible for Stream 2 funding. For more information, visit www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/grants/age-friendly/ or call 1-888-494-2266.

Grants to Youth Organizations

Provides funding for intergenerational activities, as well as projects that:

- encourage skills and/or knowledge development of youth;
- support youth in contributing to their community or province;
- enhance, promote or support partnerships, collaboration or inclusion; and
- fill a gap in services.

For further information: www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/grants-to-youth-organizations or call 709.729.4349.

Accessibility Grant

Supports organizations, communities, and Indigenous groups to improve accessibility and inclusion including communications, events, built environment and implementing solutions to barriers through innovation. The goal is to move forward by practicing accessibility and inclusion to ensure persons with disabilities participate and contribute to all aspects of society.

For more information: www.gov.nl.ca/cssd/accessibility-grant or call 1.888.729.6279.

ActiveNL

Supports active living. Funding is available to develop, deliver, purchase or upgrade active living infrastructure, equipment, and initiatives that directly increase physical activity, active recreation, sport and/or healthy eating for individuals of all ages.

For more information: www.gov.nl.ca/tcar/funding-programs/active-nl or call 709.729.5270.

Cultural Events Fund

Supports public gatherings and community activities such as festivals, events, and cultural projects that highlight our unique cultural tapestry and creativity and facilitate celebration and/or preservation of local culture through presentation of, and engagement with, arts and heritage.

For more information: www.gov.nl.ca/tcar/funding-programs/cultural-events-fund or call 709.729.3202.

Indigenous Cultural Heritage Program

This program supports Indigenous projects that involve the safeguarding of traditions and culture, including language; traditional knowledge and skills; storytelling, music, games and other pastimes; knowledge of the landscape; customs, cultural practices and beliefs; food customs; and living off the land.

For more information:

www.gov.nl.ca/tcar/funding-programs/indigenous-culture-heritage-program
or call 729.1409

Funding Programs Offered by the Government of Canada

New Horizons for Seniors Program

Provides funding for projects that make a difference in the lives of seniors and in their communities. Program objectives:

- Promote volunteerism among seniors and other generations.
- Engage seniors in the community through the mentoring of others.
- Expand awareness of elder abuse, including financial abuse.
- Support the social participation and inclusion of seniors.
- Provide capital assistance for new and existing community projects and programs for seniors.

For more information:

www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/new-horizons-seniors.html

Enabling Accessibility Funding

Provides funding for projects that make Canadian communities and workplaces more accessible for persons with disabilities.

For more information:

www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/enabling-accessibility-fund.html

Appendix B

Sample Planning and Evaluation Tools

Reprinted/Adapted from Age-Friendly Edmonton's Intergenerational Programming Toolkit
www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/assets/PDF/afe-intergenerational-toolkit.pdf

Program/Activity Planning Sheet

Facilitators/Instructors: _

Contact Information: _

Date(s) and Time(s): _

Program Name:

Location:

Program Description:

Program Goal(s): _



Program/Activity Planning Sheet continued

What equipment is required to facilitate the program?

How will the space be set up?

Have you considered accessibility requirements for persons with disabilities, such as sign language interpreters, captions for video/audio, and building access?

Have you considered people from different cultural backgrounds such as language differences or dietary restrictions?

What staff/volunteer assistance is required?

Program/Activity Planning Sheet continued

What are the minimum and maximum numbers of participants?

Schedule of Activities per Session:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Special Considerations:

Key Conversation/Facilitation Questions:



Facilitator Evaluation Form

Program Name:

Dates:

Location:

Was the location appropriate for the program? Please list any concerns:

Were the supplies and equipment adequate for your needs? Please list any concerns:

Please provide any additional feedback:

Facilitator Evaluation Form continued

Can you give an example of a particularly memorable moment from the program?

What challenges did you encounter during the program?

What changes would you suggest for the future?

What types of follow-up activities or intergenerational interactions could result from this program?



Participant Evaluation Form

Program Name:

Dates and Time:

Location:

How did you find out about the program?

Internet

Newsletter

Word of Mouth

Other (please specify):

Why did you want to participate?

Please provide any additional feedback:

Participant Evaluation Form continued

Did you feel that the following were appropriate?

	YES	NO
Number of sessions		
Number of hours per session		
Time of day		
Ratio of Staff/Facilitators to Participants		
Total Participants Registered		

What did you enjoy about the program?

What would you improve about the program? Please be specific.



Participant Evaluation Form continued

Please list one thing you learned from participating in the program:

Would you participate in this program again? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Why or why not?

If you could describe your experience in 1-5 words, what would you say?

