



The Corporation of the City of Courtenay

# Staff Report

**To:** Council

**File No.:** 1845-20

**From:** Director of Recreation, Culture, and Community Services

**Date:** June 11, 2025

**Subject:** BC Healthy Communities PlanH Community Connectedness Grant Application

**PURPOSE:** To seek Council's endorsement for the City to partner with the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative (CVEYC) in submitting a proposal to BC Healthy Communities (BCHC) for a PlanH Healthy Communities - Community Connectedness grant.

## **BACKGROUND:**

As a member of the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative (CVEYC), Recreation, Culture, and Community Services (RCCS) staff have been approached to partner with CVEYC in applying for a \$5,000 PlanH grant offered by BC Healthy Communities (BCHC) through the Community Connectedness grant stream. The objective of this stream is to enhance a sense of belonging within local community.

The proposed grant activities will enhance community connectedness and well-being amongst Comox Valley families with young children through the organization and implementation of a second annual Early Years Family Support Fair to occur in the spring of 2026. The grant will help establish the Early Years Family Support Fair as an annual event, which aligns with the CVEYC mission to engage, educate, and inform the community and enhance supports and services for families with children from conception to age eight.

The goal of the PlanH program is to support Indigenous and local governments to advance policies, programs, and strategies aimed at improving health equity and well-being. As such, municipalities are eligible to apply for the grants however community groups and non-profits are not eligible to apply as the primary applicant. The City previously partnered with the Comox Valley Social Planning Society in a successful application for the PlanH Healthy Public Policy grant stream that focused on building community collaborations towards creating equity in policy-making initiatives.

## **DISCUSSION:**

The Early Years Support Fair was successfully relaunched on April 2nd, 2025, revitalizing community engagement following the COVID-19 pandemic. The event featured over 30 community partners and attracted more than 160 attendees, offering families essential connections, information about support networks and available services. The fair effectively connected families and strengthened community ties.

Building on this success, the goal is to establish the fair as an annual event that supports families and reinforces connections within the community. The fair will include interactive activities and informative sessions aimed at connecting new and young families with each other and the valuable supports and resources available in our community.

The anticipated impacts of the fair include:

- Strengthened relationships between early years families and the community support services and resources available to them.
- Increased community access to diverse supports and resources.

The event will provide the City with an opportunity for the promotion and/or research of related city initiatives such as parks and recreation services and planning and building neighbourhood networks.

Table 1 provides an overview of proposed project timelines.

*Table 1: Project Timelines*

<b>Dates</b>	<b>Activities</b>
Sept 2025	Form Early Years Support Fair Planning Committee from CVEYC members
Oct-Dec 2025	Coordinate monthly planning meetings to secure space; invite organizations; plan activities for children, plan out food and beverages, create signage for day of fair.
Jan-Feb 2026	Prepare advertising/social media, continue final planning, continue organizing and contacting community champions that will support and enhance to experience for families.
March 2026	Hold Fair
April-May 2026	Analyze feedback from Fair; Submit Report for BCHC with financial report

CVEYC will write the grant proposal and following a review by City staff, RCCS would submit the grant application to BCHC. The City will be identified as a primary partner on the application and if successful, RCCS will be responsible to provide administrative and fiscal oversight.

If successful, the City will initially receive the funds and then transfer them to the CV Family Services Association (fiscal host for and member of CVEYC). This means invoices will be submitted to CVFSA, paid by CVFSA and financial accounting will be the responsibility of the CVFSA.

RCCS staff currently participate in CVEYC and will continue to do so, including supporting planning and participation in the Early Years Support Fair as capacity allows.

At the end of the project CVEYC would be responsible for writing a final report and submit it to the City with the final financial accounting from CVFSA. The City will review the report and financial records and then submit the documents to BCHC.

**POLICY ANALYSIS:**

The fair aligns with Courtenay's OCP cardinal directions of Community Well-being and Equity, as well as strategic priorities of Strong Neighbourhoods, A City for Everyone and Investing in Relationships.

#### **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:**

The grant funding request is for \$5,000. In-kind support is not required but is encouraged. The City will provide in-kind support through its already occurring participation in CVEYC. There are no direct financial implications for the City.

#### **ADMINISTRATIVE IMPLICATIONS:**

RCCS staff will provide administrative and fiscal oversight of the grant, however grant activity implementation, evaluation, and accounting will be the responsibility of CVEYC and its fiscal host, CVFSA.

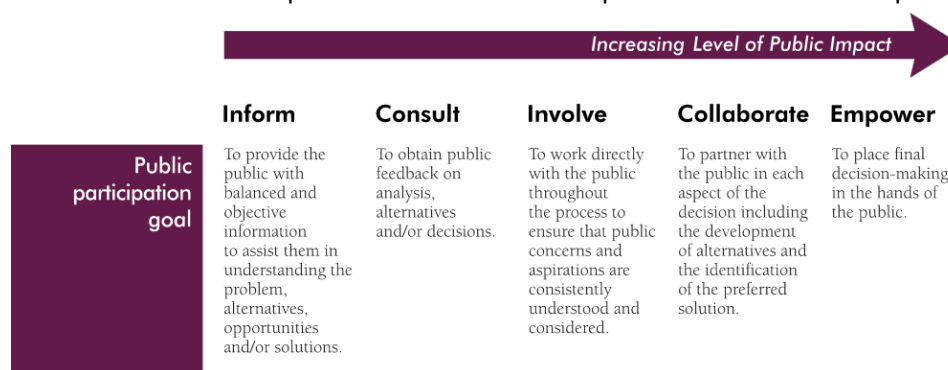
#### **STRATEGIC PRIORITIES REFERENCE:**

This initiative addresses the following strategic priorities:

- Social Infrastructure - Participate in discussion on regional childcare space development, and explore incentives to support development of childcare spaces
- Parks and Recreation - Review recreation programs and engage with community on current and future needs, changing demographics

#### **PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT:**

Staff would inform the public based on the IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation:



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#### **OPTIONS:**

1. THAT Council support an application to the BC Healthy Communities PlanH Community Connectedness grant stream in partnership with the Comox Valley Early Years Collaborative for the provision of an Early Years Family Support Fair.
2. THAT Council not support an application to the BC Healthy Communities PlanH Community Connectedness grant stream at this time.

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