

INFORMATION SESSION ON THE SHELTER BENEFIT FOR LOW-INCOME

MANITOBANS - THE RENT ASSIST



Organized by: Neighborhood Empowerment and Resource Centre Incorporated
(NEARC Inc.)

A Community-Based Not-For-Profit-Organization dedicated to successfully integrating Newcomer Families with the boarder
Concept of- Inform, Educate & Empower

Financially Supported by:



United Way of Winnipeg and in partnership with Workforce Development and
Income Support Division of Manitoba Jobs and the Economy

JANUARY 16, 2016

SUMMARY REPORT

INFORMATION SESSION ON THE SHELTER BENEFIT FOR LOW -INCOME MANITOBIANS- THE RENT ASSIST

Prepared BY: Neighborhood Empowerment & Resource Centre Incorporated (NEARC Inc.)



On January 16th, 2016, NEARC Inc. organized an Information Session entitled ‘Shelter Benefits for Low-Income Manitobans’ at Knox United Church, located at 406 Edmonton Street. The purpose of this program was to provide information on shelter benefits for low-income Manitobans. Most importantly, our target participants were Manitobans who were not on Employment and Income Assistance (EIA) and are considered low income working families from diverse communities who have limited English and have no or limited access to internet or no computer know-how. We were successful in getting 90% aimed participants who were working, living in a rented facility and not on EIA. The rest 10% of the participants were on EIA.

Objectives:

- Provide accurate information on Rent Assist
- Help determine if they are eligible for the Rent Assist
- If so, advise how they can apply and the procedure
- Assist them to calculate how much they are entitled to receive
- Update them on approximate processing time for the application
- Assure through facilitators that, they do not have to payback in any form
- It had two-fold objective, first educating them and they can further educate others

Through this two hours’ information session, we were able to better educate the participants about Rent Assist program. They represented seven different communities and low-income Manitobans. The Rent Assist Program is recently introduced Government of Manitoba initiatives for the working poor. There was enough opportunity to ask questions.

The session was financially supported by United Way of Winnipeg and executed in partnership with Workforce Development and Income Support Division of Manitoba Jobs and the Economy. The total participants were 42 representing seven different languages speaking ethno cultural community leaders from around Winnipeg. In order to make the presentation simple and understood, plain language was used and simultaneously interpreted in seven different languages by Arabic, Nepali, French, Karen, Somali, Swahili, and Tigrinia speaking interpreters. Participants were grouped based on their language groups and sitting was arranged in such a way that the interpreter would be heard by all participants. Nepali language group had the biggest number so sat in two groups with two interpreters.

The session was geared towards NEARC's approach for successfully integrating newcomer families in Canadian mainstream. NEARC has coined this as 'Social Integration Initiative'. Through such sessions/workshops/trainings, exposure trips, NEARC Inc. plans to Inform, Educate & Empower newcomer families maintaining cultural harmony while creating a positive experience. Our main objective is to resource leverage and promote active Civic Engagement, promote intergenerational interaction, provide information on Child and Family Services, Cultural Prohibitions and Differences, Incurred Obligations, Legal Systems, Financial Literacy, and facilitating newcomer families in strategically navigating through new career path in the new country. Basically, NEARC serves as a resource pool between various newcomer families and community resources/government services and other resources. Thus, this program was one of the many facets of our commitment through Social Integration Initiatives to the communities we serve.

Outcomes:

The most important message/outcome we got from this two-hour session is that if the program is need-based or community focused, people will participate and fully engage into it. Since many community members had requested to have such information language in plain language and without any language barrier, this was a very successful event despite the short notice, many different communities involved. Since the information session, we have received overwhelming response from various communities and to better serve their concern, we are holding a meeting on January 28 with Catherine Gates, Director, Planning and Policy Development at Workforce Development and Income Support Division of Manitoba.

"It was wonderful being part of the Interpreters to the last Session. It is good information about rent assist and people were very happy for the info. Thanks for associating me and my Community"

Azarias Butariho
Swahili Interpreter

Conclusion and Recommendations:

This is one of the pilot initiatives of NEARC towards neighborhood vitalization approach. We are very happy to share that we received such a positive response and active participation from diverse communities despite very short notice. In the meantime, one of the major challenges was not only to manage eight different language speaking interpreters in such a short span of time, but also getting participants from seven different communities. In the beginning, due to severe weather of the day and short notice, we were hesitant if we were going to get enough participants. However, using our across-the-community social network, and dedication and commitment to work, we were able to have 42 participants, making the program one of the most successful events, as mentioned in the testimonies in Annex 1. The program participants have recommended the following points. We have taken these recommendations as directions for our future endeavors especially as part of our neighborhood vitalization initiative.

- Replicate such sessions in other communities.
- Similar events for other pertinent topics such as Financial Literacy, Community Capacity Building, Child and Family Services related issues, legal system, employment and training.
- NEARC should also initiate sessions bridging the gap on intergenerational and intercultural emergence



One of the Nepali Interpreters raising questions about rent assist on behalf of the Nepali participants

Special Thanks!!

NEARC Inc. would like to humbly thank Mr. Ron Brown, President & CEO of the Boys and Girls Clubs of Winnipeg for connecting with the United Way of Winnipeg.

ANNEX- I

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

SN	Name	S. No.	Name	S. No.	Name
1	Fertuna Maharzghi	2	Madhu Dangal	3	Kamal Giri
4	Prithi Gurung	5	Tika Dangal	6	Yadhav Chhetri
7	Tika Dangal	8	Varin Mohammed	9	Kameran Hussein
10	Jamal Shareef	11	Waleed Mohammed	12	Pee See
13	Ke Doh	14	Mahamat Abdoulaye	15	Manwelle Desanotis
16	Amina Mahamat	17	Azarias Butariho	18	Beatrice Sifa
19	Bangaly Jabateh	20	Adama Konate	21	Mariame Jabateh
22	Mamadi Jabateh	23	Ibrahim Mohammed	24	Misgina Adgawha
25	Wareku Dikar	26	Senait Hadgu	27	Issac Andu
28	Fikadu Fesha	29	Devi Bhattarai	30	Dilli Kharel
31	Narbada Kharel	32	Pabitra Paudel	33	Noe A
34	Elizabeth	35	Suh Day	36	Luka Luka
37	Rami Hanna	38	Abdirahman Ahmed	39	Mahamud Qalib
40	Ahmed Farah	41	Adnan Khattab	42	Abdulhakim Ahmed

ANNEX- II

LIST OF INTERPRETERS

S. No.	Name	Language	S. No.	Name	Language
1	Abdirahman Ahmed	Somali	2	Amine Gabir	Tigrinia
3	Azarias Butariho	Swahili	3	Bangaly Jabateh	French
5	Daya Shrestha	Nepali	6	Jamal Shareef	Arabic
7	Slone Phan	Karen	8	Subas Dahal	Nepali

“We were pleased to be invited by Neighborhood Empowerment and Resource Centre Inc. to participate in this multilingual event providing information about Rent Assist to newcomers. The event was both well organized and well attended. We hope the information provided will help attendees and others in their communities to understand and access government benefits.”

Catherine Gates

Director Planning and Policy Development

Workforce Development and Income Support Division of Manitoba

ANNEX - III
SESSION AGENDA

PROGRAM OUTLINE

Information Session on Rent Assist Program for people on Non EIA

January 16, 2016 @ Knox United Church

13:00 - 13:20

- Arrival
- Registration & networking

13:20 - 13:30

- Welcome and Logistics – Bijaya Pokharel, NEARC Inc.
- Objective of the Session
- Facilitators' Introduction

13:30 - 14:20

- Presentation by Catherine Gates, Manitoba Family Services

14:20 - 14: 35

- Refreshment break & Networking

14:35 - 14:55

- Question - Answer Session (Catherine & Maria)

14:55 - 15:00

“It was truly fruitful and eye opening to Nepali speaking participants. As an interpreter, I felt there was real need of the session and participants were very happy to know about the benefits they are entitled. I was impressed the way facilitators handled participants' questions and answered using simple language. Thank you Bijaya for this unique opportunity on behalf of the participants and Nepali community in Winnipeg.”

Subas Dahal
Nepali Interpreter

**ANNEX - IV
FINANCIAL DETAILS**

S. No.	Particulars	Break-downs	Actual Cost
*1	Venue Rental	\$125 X 1 time	\$125
*2	Equipment Rental (sound)	\$40 X 1 time	\$40
3	Refreshments	\$6 X 55 persons	\$330
4	Bus Tickets	\$4.6 X 42 participants	\$193.20
5	Interpreters' Remuneration	8 Interpreters X \$25 X 2hrs	\$400
6	Stationary	42 X \$5 (financially contributed)	\$210.00
7	Reporting & Evaluation	Kind Contribution	NEARC
Total Actual Expenses			\$1298.20
Funds requested from United Way of Winnipeg			\$1049.00
Venue Rental and Equipment Rental is covered by Small Grants of CNRI			\$165.00
Σ The Difference (Covered by NEARC Inc. through its internal fund)			\$ 84.20

* Venue Rental and the Equipment Rental was covered through the grant from Small Grants Fund of CNRI

Thus, NEARC has deficit budget of \$84.20 direct cost involvement and more than \$500 in terms of kind contributions from volunteers and the NEARC Board during its planning and execution phase. Once again, we would like to thank United way for the financial support in such a short notice and help implement the Information Session with huge success.

“Thank you Bijaya for inviting me and our community people to attained this important information session. It has really cleared so many confusions and assured our people. Best wishes for other such programs for your organization.”

Jamal Shareef
Arabic Interpreter

“The session on Rent Assist was very informative and helpful to many of our community members as we are low income family with high rent. We will share the information with other community members who could not make it to the session as well”

Slone Phan
Karen Interpreter

Annex – V

Some Beautiful Moments Captured During the Session by our Volunteer Photographer Marcelo Ferreira



Executive Director of NEARC, Bijaya Pokharel Shares Session Objectives with Participants



Participant actively responding to facilitators questions using interpreter



Facilitators taking questions from floor



NEARC Members taking a break



Participants raising the question



Doing the registration



NEARC President explaining our activities



Participants being served fact sheet

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success”.

Henry Ford

