



March 3, 2021

To whom it may concern:

RE: City of Victoria Report – Transit Assistance Program for Sheltering Outdoors

Background:

In the fall of 2020, the Community Social Planning Council was approached to support individuals sheltering outdoors during the pandemic with transit access. The project was targeted for those in homelessness sheltering outside of the downtown core to encourage sheltering at a distance while ensuring access to needed services. The Community Council approached PEERS to partner as the operational lead on this project to help with the distribution as they were already working with individuals who were street engaged and had the ability to reach the community sheltering outdoors. PEERS is as an organization of sex workers for sex workers and does not normally provide services to the broader population sheltering outdoors. We are very grateful they were able to volunteer to go beyond their normal scope of work to help with the program.

CSPC's Low-Income Transit Assistance (LITA) Program Background

Since 1997, the Community Social Planning Council has operated a program with support from the Regional Transit Authority and community partners to offer transit for free to low-income individuals accessing programs and services at partner agencies in the region. The LITA program provides a select number of transit tickets and passes to over 70-member social service non-profits from the Greater Victoria Area. The program reduces barriers to programs and services for vulnerable populations in low income. Recipients access a broad range of programs from employment preparation, medical, counselling and court appointments, to child-care and immigrant and newcomer language programs. Through the pandemic many of the LITA community partners have not been running their programs and thus, not distributing transit tickets/passes that would normally be distributed through their regular programs.

Three of the LITA partner agencies also joined this City of Victoria Bus Ticket project to help to distribute tickets to the community sheltering outside. The new City funded tickets are being distributed in addition to their regular programs, and in the case of PEERS, to a different population than they would normally serve.

Individuals who receive the tickets are using the program for a variety of purposes as per the attached letter from a community partner (see the attached letter).

Below is a report of the tickets distributed by agency partner.

Peers and City of Victoria Unsheltered Bus Ticket Program - January 26, 2021	
Organization	Tickets
By-Law	1 Book (250 tickets)
LLEOHN	2 Books (500 tickets)
Community Care Tent	2 Books (500 tickets)
Our Place Society	0.8 Books (200 tickets)
Fairfield Gonzales Community Association	0.2 Books (50 tickets)
Peers Outreach	4 Books (1000 tickets)
TOTAL	10 Books (2,500 tickets)
*Also gave out 2 books (500) of our own tickets to meet demand	

Peers and City of Victoria Unsheltered Bus Ticket Program - February	
Organization	Tickets
Community Care Tent	2 Books (50 sheets)
Indigenous Harm Reduction Team	2 Books (50 sheets)
Howard Johnson	1 Book (25 sheets)
Our Place Society	1 Book (25 sheets)
BC Housing Outreach	1 Book (25 sheets)
Peers Outreach	15 Sheets
SAFER	10 Sheets
Night Laundry Program	15 Sheets
Red Cedar	10 Sheets
Harbour	10 Sheets
SOLID	15 Sheets
TOTAL	10 Books

As long as we are in the pandemic and asking individuals experiencing homelessness to shelter at distance from core services, there will be a need for this program. All of the allocated tickets have been distributed and there have been enquiries from other groups who are not yet participating.

Sincerely,



Diana Gibson
Executive Director

LETTER- City of Victoria sheltering outdoors bus pass program

I am writing to express our thanks for the recent bus tickets our outreach team received from Peers through the CSPC and City of Victoria initiative.

As you may be aware Red Cedar has an outreach team that delivers hot meals to people sheltering in our parks and with this initiative we were also able to distribute bus tickets to people in need. I can assure you these tickets were well received and were put to very good use.

We know that people used these tickets for the normal day-to-day reasons we all access public transportation for: to go to work, doctor's appointments, to access laundry facilities. They also used these tickets to improve their situation like accessing showers, food banks and income assistance resources. We also heard that people were able to view housing.

Having their transportation costs covered meant individuals could afford to access these basic needs and resources in our community without spending their limited funds.

Thank you for your continued support to improve our community for the most vulnerable,

Margaret Forbes

Co-Executive Director,

Red Cedar Cafe