

MPP's report

Help for seniors and the disabled

By NORAH STONER, M.P.P.
Durham West

Increasing physical access by disabled persons and senior citizens to existing community facilities is the aim of the Ontario Government's Access Fund.

Under the program, which has been established jointly by the Office for Disabled Persons and the Office for Senior Citizens Affairs, matching grants of up to \$50,000 can be obtained for approved renovations.

A publication explaining the program says organizations (such as service clubs, senior citizens' centres, and consumer and religious groups,) which open their halls and meeting rooms to the disabled or senior citizens could be eligible for grants under the Access Fund.

The organization has to be private, non-profit and have been incorporated for at least a year prior to applying for a grant. Senior citizens and disabled persons centres which are municipally-sponsored are also eligible. However, some non-profit organizations (schools, hospitals, universities and colleges,) are not eligible because a significant portion of their funding comes from government ministries or they are primarily providing residential care (group homes and homes for the aged for example).

The access fund will provide grants for renovations such as ramps, elevators, grab bars, alert and emergency systems, washroom redesign and door-widening, which improve access to facilities for seniors and disabled persons.

The provincial contribution to a renovation project will match dollar for dollar (up to \$50,000) the approved costs of the project. An organization's matching contribution can not come from the federal or provincial governments.

The next deadline for applications for funding under the program is April 1.

For more information you can call 1-800-387-4456 or write Access Fund, Office for Disabled Persons, 700 Bay Street, 2nd Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M5G 1Z6.

Norah's Notes:

The Office for Senior Citizens Affairs has published a Directory of Accommodation for Seniors in Ontario, which is a comprehensive guide to accommodation facilities for senior citizens.

The office says the directory is designed to assist agencies and organizations involved with activities concerning seniors and their families. As well, the publication can be used as a reference resource by libraries, municipal offices, hospitals and community information centres.

A copy of the directory is available for use at my constituency office, 2 Randall Drive, Office Unit 1, Pickering Village.

My congratulations go to Rod Davies of Pickering. The 18-year-old Dunbarton High School student won the Laser Class Event at the World Youth Championships in sailing, which took place off the coast of Sydney, Australia in late January.

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