Microgrant Spending Guidelines

Links2Wellbeing (L2W) provides funding to participating Seniors Active Living Centres (SALCs) to support both administrative needs as well as referred clients who identify financial barriers to social participation. L2W microgrants will now allow for greater flexibility in spending to support your specific needs. Centres are free to decide how the overall microgrant is best spent, balancing the subsidies required for participating L2W clients alongside the administrative spending needed to support the implementation of your social prescribing project.

This document provides guidance on how SALCs can develop a plan for the use of their yearly funds to support their social prescribing clients and program needs. To consider the long-term sustainability of your funding, please see this Sustainability Document.

Subsidies

If referrals to your SALC are very active, funding can be directed primarily towards providing client subsidies. Subsidy support may be used, at your discretion, in various ways, including:

- Direct program, drop in, special event or membership fees
- Program supplies/materials for either an individual or group of L2W participants
- Instructor fees for a group of participants (e.g., if your program is full and you need to add an additional class to accommodate new referrals)
- Transportation costs for referred L2W participants
- Meal programs offered directly by the centre

Eligibility Criteria: Links2Wellbeing only requires a referral from a health care provider to be eligible for a subsidy. Some SALCs may have other organizational criteria or processes related to a client's request to receive subsidy (e.g., income level, proof of disability, etc). It is at the discretion of your SALC as to whether you utilize your in-house subsidy criteria for L2W clients or develop something different for this special funding pot.

Factors to Consider for Managing Subsidy Funding

Participating SALCs should develop a plan for the use of their yearly funds. L2W project funding is primarily intended to focus on the first year of a referral's participation. You may wish to provide full subsidies for all new clients. Depending on their financial barriers, however, not all referrals may require a subsidy–or the same amount of funding–to participate in your programs.

Things to consider for your management of yearly funds:

- Number of current participating L2W clients
- Number of new referrals/new participating L2W clients
- Cost of your SALC membership and/or program fees
- How much subsidy you provide to each client (i.e., full coverage, partial, etc.)
- Whether you have other subsidy funding to draw from

All of these factors should be considered when determining how best to support each L2W participant. Having conversations with your clients to determine their needs is critical to assessing whether you are supporting each person with the right subsidy amount, aligned with their needs and participation interests, and according to the total funding you have available.

Encouraging Transition from Subsidies

As noted, L2W funding is intended to focus on the first year of a referral's participation. After this time, a SALC may decide to continue support for another year, if L2W funding is available.

If referrals are high and you have many L2W members, you may need to consider moving ongoing (> 1 year) L2W participants to other subsidy programs or to begin offering partial subsidies so that new referrals have access to the funding they may need to participate.

How a SALC plans for, and allocates, partial subsidies is at your discretion. Centres have approached this planning in various ways, including:

- Providing a percentage of subsidy to support ongoing participation (e.g., 25-75% sliding scale coverage)
- Providing limited-access coverage for ongoing participation (e.g., 1 free program per season, or capped at a dollar value)
- Allocating subsidies for limited durations of time (e.g., 3-6 months), after which you reassess need as well as a client's level of participation

Whatever criteria suits your centre, discussing your current clients' needs alongside the number of new referrals who may also benefit from financial support is key to managing your funding.

<u>**Administrative Costs**</u>

If referrals to your Centre are low, or you are just launching your project, funding should be directed towards supporting the administrative needs of your social prescribing program. For new centres, focus will be on outreach and relationship building with new referral partners.

Funding may be used for administrative activities, such as:

- Outreach materials specific to social prescribing at your centre, printing, distribution costs
- Mileage to visit referral partners, attend meetings or give project related presentations
- Lunch and learn or education-type events to promote your Links2Wellbeing project (e.g., a networking breakfast for health care providers near you, drop-in coffee and chat for potential referral partners to visit your centre)
- Volunteer appreciation activities - small honorarium, appreciation gifts or events
- Training opportunities for staff/volunteers
- Advertising costs (radio, print, social media)
- Technology (e.g., a workstation or iPad for a VLA, costs related to e-referral encryption, platforms or e-fax)

Funding may not be used to cover staff salaries.