

BRANDON, MANITOBA

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Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC) is a not-for-profit organization that is dedicated to strengthening its community by improving the quality of life for residents in Brandon's core residential neighbourhoods.

Taking a holistic and long term view of community renewal and poverty reduction, BNRC has prioritized their work into five key categories: Neighbourhood Capacity & Empowerment, Housing & Homelessness, Economic Development, Crime & Safety, as well as Recreation, Arts, Leisure and Wellness. Partnerships are critical to BNRC's ability to collectively leverage the capacities and resources required to achieve their goals. As a result, the BNRC has pursued partnerships with all levels of government, community organizations, and the private sector. The BNRC is funded through a partnership arrangement by the Province of Manitoba (via the Neighbourhoods Alive! Program) and the City of Brandon.

Since its inception in 2000, BNRC has successfully facilitated \$21 million of investment in com-

munity renewal to Brandon's core residential neighbourhood. Although BNRC takes a holistic and integrated CED approach to their work in Brandon, they also work directly on specific initiatives aimed at achieving change in their priority areas.

In terms of their housing strategy, BNRC delivers Residential Rehabilitation Assistance (RRAP) Programs that provide assistance in the form of a fully forgivable loan, which does not have to be repaid provided the owner meets the conditions of the operating agreement to improve the quality and affordability of housing in Brandon. RRAP programs include the RRAP Homeowner Rehabilitation, ➔



→ which assists low-income households who own and occupy substandard housing to enable them to repair their dwelling to a minimum level of health and safety in accordance with the RRAP Standards. The RRAP Rental Rehabilitation is another program that assists low-income households who live in substandard rental properties, by providing financial assistance to landlords to repair or rehabilitate the property to a minimum level of health and safety. The RRAP Conversion Rehabilitation program provides assistance to convert non-residential properties into affordable self contained rental housing units.

BNRC also delivers a “Front and Paint” program that assists homeowners in the BNRC District with funding for exterior painting and renovations. For residents who want to fix their own properties, BNRC offers a 16 week Home Repair Program to provide training for basic home maintenance.

In an initiative designed to create jobs and training opportunities for individuals with barriers to employment, BNRC runs the Brandon Energy Efficiency Program (BEEP). BEEP is dedicated to combining environmental stewardship and poverty reduction by providing skill training to individuals with limited experience in the formal labour markets. Participants of BEEP are primarily hired to conduct energy retrofit projects, which provided valuable experience to prepare them for jobs in the construction industry. BEEP work includes assuring appropriate insulation levels in basements and attics, and installing water saving fixtures that result in annual energy

and water savings to low income earners.

With an eye toward improving health and environmental conditions in Brandon, the BNRC facilitates other programs meeting the community’s needs including a Neighbourhood Watch program to enhance community security; a “Greenway Project” promoting bicycling as a safe, environmentally friendly and economical means of alternative transportation; a “Cultural Awareness Network;” as well as a “Storefront Paint and Graffiti Removal Program” to support the local business community.

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To support additional initiatives beyond their capacity, the BNRC offers Community Projects Grants to support community projects for up to \$5,000. BNRC also provides access to the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF), which is a fund by Neighbourhoods Alive! (NA!) to assist neighbourhood organizations representing residents and

other local interests in strengthening local capacity and revitalizing designated urban neighbourhoods through a broad range of locally planned and supported initiatives.

The Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation is a great example of a Community Renewal Corporation rooted in a CED approach to community renewal and poverty reduction committed to comprehensive community-led approaches to development.