



REQUEST FOR SUPPORT APPLICATION FORM

Date of Request	2025-09-24
Organization/Group making the request	AVI Health and Community Services
Contact Person	Corey Ranger RN BN
Address	102-55 Victoria Road, Nanaimo BC, V9R5N9
Telephone	250-754-9111
Email Address:	corey.ranger@avi.org
Type of Support Requested (Select one)	<input checked="" type="radio"/> Letter of Support in Principle <input type="radio"/> In-Kind Contribution <input type="radio"/> Partnership <i>Note: This policy is not applicable to requests for grant funding by the City, including Permissive Tax Exemption requests, or in-kind funding for facility rentals (see Grants Policy and Guidelines for further details)</i>

IF APPLICABLE:

Name of grant or program for which you are applying:

Publicly Funded Community Health Centre

Amount of Funding Requested: N/P Grant Due Date: N/P

Grant Organization: BC Ministry of Health

Address: 1515 Blanshard Street BC

City: Victoria Postal Code: V8W 3C8

Telephone: 604-660-2421

Please provide an executive summary or short narrative that addresses each of the points outlined in the "Council Support policy". Include a draft letter, any supporting documents or materials and a detailed list of other funding partners (if applicable).

Please submit this form, with accompanying materials, to the attention of the Corporate Officer, Legislative Services, City of Nanaimo, 455 Wallace St. Nanaimo, BC V9R 5J6, or by email to: legislative.servicesoffice@nanaimo.ca.

Respecting Your Privacy

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (FOIPPA) – Information collected on this form is done so under the general authority of the *Community Charter* and FOIPPA, and is protected in accordance with FOIPPA. Personal information will only be used by authorized staff to fulfill the purpose for which it was originally collected, or for a use consistent with that purpose. For more information, please visit the Legislative Services Department at 455 Wallace Street, call 250-755-4405, or email foi@nanaimo.ca.

AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre

Request for Support – Executive Summary

AVI Nanaimo is seeking support to establish a publicly funded Community Health Centre (CHC) that will expand our existing wraparound services to include low-barrier, team-based primary care. For over 25 years, we have provided essential health and social supports in downtown Nanaimo to individuals experiencing poverty, homelessness, substance use, and mental health challenges. With this expansion, we will strengthen health equity by attaching more than 2,700 underserved residents to primary care and reducing the strain on acute care services.

1. That the request is from a local non-profit and/or recognized community organization or other location government

AVI Nanaimo is a well-established, local non-profit health organization operating in downtown Nanaimo for the last 30 years. The organization provides low-barrier substance use care, HIV and Hepatitis C treatment, and broader health and social services for marginalized populations.

2. The name of the contact person, mailing address, email address and telephone number of the person applying for the grant on behalf of the particular organization

- a. Wes Taylor, Director, AVI Nanaimo, Westaylor@avi.org, 102-55 Victoria Rd, Nanaimo BC, V9R5N9
- b. Corey Ranger, Clinical Director, AVI Health and Community Services, corey.ranger@avi.org, 102-55 Victoria Rd, Nanaimo BC, V9R5N9

3. Background information on the organization requesting the letter

AVI Nanaimo is part of AVI Health and Community Services, with decades of experience in delivering wraparound, low-barrier healthcare. Its services include opioid agonist treatment (OAT), HIV primary care and prevention, hepatitis C treatment, and supports for sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBIs). The organization is recognized for serving populations facing poverty, discrimination, mental health, and substance use challenges.

4. Funding source of the proposed program, including any grants from other governments

Current funding includes support from Island Health for HIV, Hepatitis C, and STBBI services. Additional grants have been received from the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the BC Ministry of Health and the United Way for specific service programs. Future program expansion is dependent on provincial funding through the BC Ministry of Health's Community Health Centre (CHC) funding initiative.

5. Services that will be offered

The proposed Community Health Centre will provide:

- Low-barrier, team-based primary care attachment.
- Substance use-focused health services.
- Mental health care.
- Chronic disease management.

- Integrated social supports through a multidisciplinary team (family physicians, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, community health workers, and peer support workers).
- Extended hours and weekend service options, with both in-person and virtual appointments.

6. Target groups to be served, including the number of individuals to be served and where the services will be offered

The CHC will serve approximately 2,700 Nanaimo residents—primarily those who are unattached to primary care, experiencing homelessness, or living with complex health needs. Special emphasis will be placed on services for Indigenous peoples, the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, and individuals facing barriers to traditional healthcare. Services will be provided at AVI Nanaimo’s accessible downtown location.

7. Timeframes or dates of when the proposed program is expected to be administered

Upon securing funding, the program is expected to scale up rapidly, with the infrastructure, team, and space already in place. Expansion will proceed in line with provincial timelines for CHC implementation (targeted for fiscal year 2025–2026).

8. Anticipated outcomes of the program

- Increased primary care attachment for 2,700 residents.
 - Reduced emergency and acute care utilization.
 - Improved health outcomes for marginalized populations.
 - Enhanced stability, wellness, and recovery opportunities.
 - Stronger integration of mental health, substance use, and primary care services.
9. The proposed budget, in detail

Staffing expansion will include:

- 2.0 FTE Family Physicians – 1,600 patients.
- 1.0 FTE Nurse Practitioner – 600 patients.
- 3.0 FTE Registered Nurses – 500 patients.

Total capacity: 2,700 patients.

(Line-item details on salaries, overhead, and operations are not included in the provided summary but are assumed as part of the Ministry of Health funding request).

10. Indication of whether or not similar programs exist in the Regional District of Nanaimo area

While other health services exist in the region, there is no comparable low-barrier CHC offering integrated primary care, mental health, substance use care, and wraparound services tailored for highly marginalized populations.

11. Indication, if known, of other organization(s) applying for the same funds

The summary does not identify specific other organizations applying for the same funding stream. However, given the province-wide CHC expansion initiative, it is expected that other communities and organizations may also be submitting applications.

12. If this is an on-going or continuation grant or project, indicate results of previous years

While this request represents a program expansion, AVI Nanaimo has a proven 25+ year track record delivering successful health services funded by Island Health, PHAC, and the United Way. Existing programs demonstrate the organization's ability to provide effective, low-barrier, wraparound healthcare and to scale up quickly.

13. Coordination with other entities

The proposed CHC will be a partnership with Nanaimo Primary Care Network (PCN), Island Health, and the BC Ministry of Health. Collaboration with Indigenous communities, 2SLGBTQIA+ representatives, and other local service providers is central to the CHC's model.

AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre



July 2025

Request for Support

SUMMARY

We are seeking your support for AVI Nanaimo to become a publicly funded Community Health Centre. This would enable us to add low barrier primary care attachment to our existing substance use, STBBI and mental health services and provide comprehensive team-based care to more than 2500 Nanaimo residents who live with complex health challenges.

The City of Nanaimo is facing overlapping crises of homelessness, drug poisoning and lack of access to primary care. Our Community Health Centre will be a welcoming space tailored to the needs of individuals facing mental health and substance use challenges. It will not only provide immediate care but also focus on long-term stability, wellness, and recovery. At AVI Nanaimo, we are already providing many of the wraparound supports needed to address these issues but are missing the longitudinal primary care services that are vital to improving health outcomes.

We are ready to innovate and expand our services; we have the space, the team, and the experience needed to effectively expand primary care capacity for the people we serve in Nanaimo. We are strategically located in a space where there is a demonstrable need for services, improving accessibility for those most marginalized and without access to transportation. Not only would we expand primary care attachment capacity, but we are also well-positioned to expand that attachment capacity for complex populations. Our track record, both in Nanaimo and elsewhere on Vancouver Island, demonstrates that we are the ideal operators to implement and scale up programming in a timely manner.

NEED FOR CHC SERVICES IN NANAIMO

The BC Ministry of Health, in collaboration with the BC Green Party, is currently assessing BC's Primary Care System and will be establishing targets and priority communities for funded Community Health Centres. In Nanaimo, there is a demonstrated need for both primary care attachment, and low barrier care for people with complex health needs including substance use. The per capita rate of drug poisoning deaths in Nanaimo continues to exceed Central Island, Island Health, and provincial death rates. The City of Nanaimo's Health and Housing Action Plan estimates that up to 1800 people experience homelessness over the course of a year.

Also, the number of people in Nanaimo who are living without a primary care provider has been estimated at around 20,000. With proper funding to address the gap, AVI anticipates being able to add the following positions to meet the primary care needs of 2700 of Nanaimo's most vulnerable citizens. AVI has already been in conversations with physicians keen to work in this model and has existing physicians as part of our current services.

Provider	Net New FTE	Panel Size Per FTE	Subtotal
Family Physician	2.0	800	1600
Nurse Practitioner	1.0	600	600
Registered Nurse	3.0	300	1500
		Total	2700

AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre



July 2025

Request for Support

A CHC MODEL FOR NANAIMO

The AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre will provide integrated health and social programs to the region's populations experiencing poverty, discrimination, mental health and substance use challenges. The Centre will not only increase primary care attachment, but reduce acute care utilization, and act as a hub for low-barrier primary care with a substance use focus for the Nanaimo Primary Care Network (PCN).

Services will be delivered by a multi-disciplinary team of family physicians including substance use specialists, infectious disease specialists, nurse practitioners, nurses, social workers, medical office assistants, and community health workers, including peer support workers. Guided by the principles of relational continuity, patients and their families will be attached to the practice of a primary care provider and their team, who will provide the majority of the care. The AVI Nanaimo CHC will operate extended hours and on weekends, with a blend of in-person or virtual, pre-booked and same day drop-in appointments.

The proposed CHC will be a partnership between Nanaimo PCN, Island Health, AVI Health and Community Services, and the Ministry of Health (MOH), designed to improve access to primary care in Nanaimo through a comprehensive approach to address the needs of residents who are unattached, those with complex health needs, those who have barriers to accessing care, with specific consideration of the needs of Indigenous people and communities and the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

ABOUT AVI

AVI Nanaimo has operated a Health Centre in the downtown Nanaimo area for more than 25 years, providing low-barrier substance use care, Opioid Agonist Treatment (OAT), HIV primary care, HIV prevention, HCV treatment, and a range of STBBI services and supports. We receive funding from Island Health for HIV, Hepatitis C and STBBI services. We also receive a number of smaller grants from Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), the United Way for specific services.

ABOUT COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRES (CHCs)

Community Health Centres (CHCs) are non-profit primary care organizations that provide integrated health and social services, with a focus on addressing the social determinants of health. CHCs provide integrated primary care, mental health and substance use services, health promotion and chronic disease management programs in a trauma-informed, culturally safe environment. They especially benefit people who experience multiple barriers to care including people who live with mental health and substance use challenges, those who are un-housed and members of the LGBTQ2S+ community. For more information:

<https://www.policyalternatives.ca/news-research/chcs-in-bc/> .

KEY CONTACT

Wes Taylor
Director, AVI Nanaimo
Westaylor@avi.org

City of Nanaimo Letterhead

[Date]

The Honourable Josie Osborne
Minister of Health

Re: Support for AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre Proposal

Dear Minister Osborne,

On behalf of the City of Nanaimo, Mayor and Council wish to express our unequivocal support for the proposal by AVI Nanaimo to transition into a fully funded Community Health Centre (CHC).

Nanaimo is confronting a trio of pressing public health and social crises: homelessness, toxic drug poisoning, and inadequate access to primary care. With roughly 20,000 residents unattached to a family physician and up to 1,800 individuals experiencing homelessness annually, our community is under significant strain. These factors place heavy burdens on emergency departments, hospital resources, and social service systems.

AVI has long been at the forefront of providing essential, low-barrier, trauma-informed health services in our city. Through their downtown facility, they serve many who face systemic barriers to accessing typical health services—those experiencing poverty, substance use, mental health challenges, HIV, Hepatitis C, and other complex health issues. Under a CHC model, AVI proposes to expand and integrate primary care, mental health and substance use services, and social supports in a cohesive, community-based framework.

With provincial funding, AVI's CHC has the capacity to attach more than 2,700 underserved individuals to continuous, team-based care. This model promises not only to reduce unnecessary emergency room visits and hospital admissions, but also to elevate health equity—particularly for Indigenous peoples, 2SLGBTQIA+ residents, and others who often face discrimination and exclusion in mainstream health settings.

We note that AVI already has the necessary infrastructure, existing staff, community partnerships, and experience to mobilize rapidly. A commitment from the Ministry will enable this transition to proceed swiftly and efficiently, maximizing positive health impact for those in greatest need.

In light of the province's commitment to expanding Community Health Centres across British Columbia, the City of Nanaimo urges your Ministry to prioritize and approve funding for the AVI Nanaimo Community Health Centre. Such an investment will not only strengthen primary care access and health equity in our region, but also relieve pressure on acute care, lower costs over time, and build a healthier future for our community.

Thank you for your leadership and attention to this vital initiative.

Sincerely,

Leonard Krog
Mayor of Nanaimo

On behalf of Nanaimo City Council