



2021 COMMON OUTCOMES INITIATIVE

DATA SUMMARY REPORT



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This document was prepared by the Common Outcomes Initiative Working Group. This is a living document and in order to accommodate new information and learnings from our funded partners this document may be updated as needed. Please be sure to download the most recent version found here: <https://www.myunitedway.ca/common-outcomeagencies/> or www.edmonton.ca/fcss



ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Common Outcomes Initiative embraces our connection to each other here on Treaty 6 Territory and Métis Nation of Alberta Region #4. We honour and thank the diverse Indigenous peoples including the Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, and Saulteaux, whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries and whose histories, languages, and cultures continue to influence our vibrant community. As treaty people we recognize the harms caused by colonialism and systemic racism, honour the knowledge and wisdom that has been shared with us, and endeavor to work in this spirit of community and relationship.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edmonton Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and numerous funded community agencies work together to provide a continuum of programs and services to meet the needs of vulnerable community members within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. Together, these groups form the Common Outcomes Initiative (COI).

This *2021 Common Outcomes Data Summary Report* aims to share the story of these programs and provide a window into the region's Social Services Sector, based on data collected through annual reporting, sector meetings and agency visits. The report reflects the perspectives, activity, and impact of 99 agencies reporting on 190 programs through the following domains:

- **Funding:** While 30% of programs experienced funding increases in comparison to 2020, programs reported that many of these increases were related to one-time grants that do not reflect stability in the Sector moving forward. Meanwhile, 45% of programs experienced decreases in funding.

- Human Resources: The number of FTEs serving COI programs decreased by 5% from 2020 to 2021 while the number of participants served increased by 9%. Programs expressed significant concern over high rates of staff burnout and turnover and the ways in which this impacts service delivery.
- Participants: Programs report that not only are community needs significant and escalating, the complexity of need is also increasing. Overall, programs identified Access to Computers/Technology, Mental Health & Addictions, Transportation, and Housing Supports as the top barriers participants faced in 2021, but emphasized that barriers are not experienced in isolation but are often intertwined.
- Evaluation: Programs shared the importance of adequately resourcing data collection and evaluation activities to ensure data quality and meaningful impact on program delivery.

When asked how funders could support them, COI agencies said the following:

1. Provide consistent, flexible funding which allows them to adequately resource their organizations from an administrative and operational perspective.
2. Support collaboration through facilitating connections and conversations across the Sector, and further, fund collaborations and wrap-around models.
3. Support equitable access to funding. Ensure wide distribution of calls for funding applications and provide support to those agencies requiring additional skills and capacity (i.e., grant writing sessions).
4. Use flexible reporting requirements and reduce the administrative burden of reporting. Provide additional support for data collection if requiring specific information to be reported.
5. Advocate for agencies and for the community, and accompany this with funding.

Despite the challenges experienced through 2021, agencies and their program staff engaged in difficult, meaningful work with participants and together created significant positive life impacts. The adaptability and resiliency of agencies, staff, and community deserve to be celebrated. However, agencies warn that increasing community need, along with funding and human resource challenges, should be addressed with long-term solutions that ensure that the Sector can effectively serve community in 2022 and beyond.

INTRODUCTION

Edmonton Family and Community Support Services (FCSS), United Way of the Alberta Capital Region and numerous funded community agencies work together to provide a continuum of programs and services to meet the needs of vulnerable community members within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. Together, these groups form the Common Outcomes Initiative (COI). In order to provide a summary of the social impacts and outcomes these partners are achieving, funders and funded agencies continue to work together to implement a common outcomes reporting form aimed at simplifying data collection and highlighting the positive difference programs are making in the community (the Common Outcomes Report, or COR).

In the spring of 2022, the COI Working Group released a [2021 Data Summary Sneak Peek Report](#) as a summary of quantitative data submitted through the Common Outcomes Report on 2021 program activity and impact. To gain a deeper understanding of the program-reported data, the working group convened a co-analysis session for interested programs in June of 2022. At this session, attendees used their first-hand Sector knowledge and experience to provide feedback and analysis, and thereby make meaning of 2021 COR data.

This 2021 Common Outcomes Data Summary Report aims to share the story of COI programs in 2021 based on 2021 COR data, and the perspectives, themes, and meaning made during this co-analysis session. These themes were echoed by programs during agency visits with funders in 2022.

2021 was a year of significant challenge for the Edmonton Metropolitan Region. During the second year of the pandemic, our community saw heightened mental health needs, costs of living, evictions, and domestic violence, the opioid crisis, a lack of safe and affordable housing, and concerns for the impact of the pandemic on child and youth development. In all, programs report that both community need and complexity of need has increased.

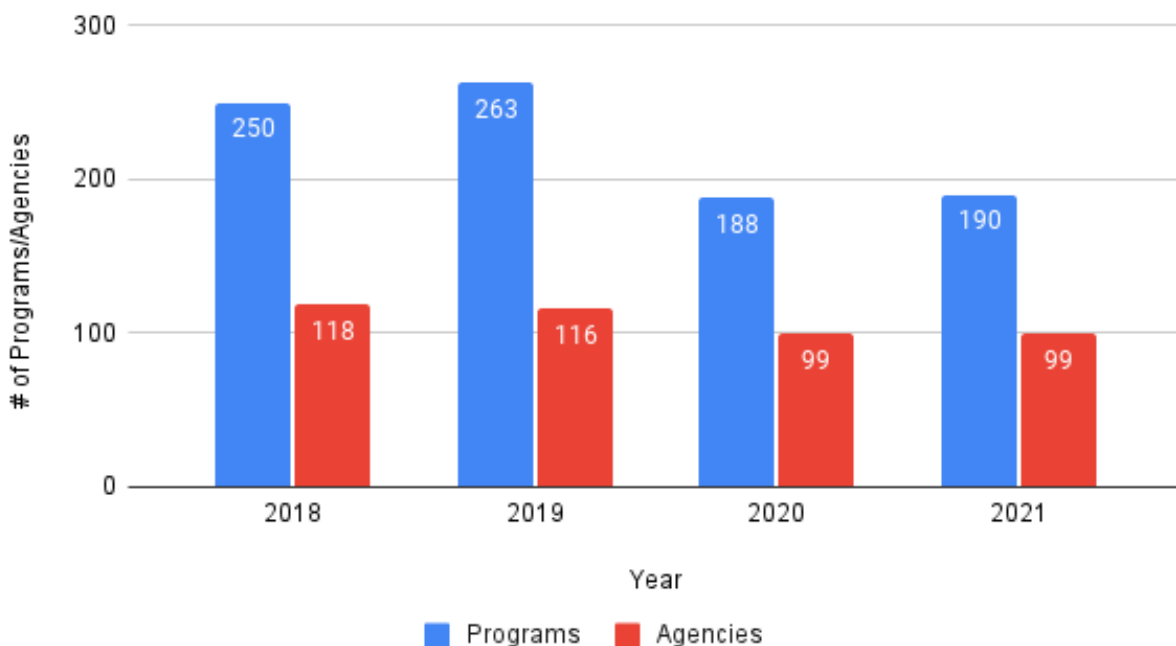
Through significant efforts from agency staff, the Social Services Sector rose to meet these challenges. Programs shared that this effort was not without cost, however, facing staff burnout and turnover, coupled with funding challenges in the midst of the pandemic. This report intends to share the perspectives agencies have provided on the current state of the Sector and what it needs to effectively serve community in 2022 and beyond.

SETTING THE STAGE

This report reflects the perspectives, activity, and impact of 99 agencies within the Edmonton Metropolitan Region, reporting on 190 programs in 2021. This provides an important window into the Social Services Sector in our region that nonetheless has some limitations. When considering longitudinal COI data, it is important to note that the programs providing data to the report may fluctuate based on the programs funded by the COI funders: currently, Edmonton FCSS and United Way. (However, in recent years, a small number of programs have reported voluntarily in order to contribute to this Sector-level data pool.)

Programs reporting to COR have remained relatively consistent between 2020 and 2021. Beginning in 2020, programs funded by Government of Alberta, Children's Services (CS) no longer report to COR, accounting for the significant shift in the number of agencies and programs between 2019 and 2020. In certain graphs and discussions in this report, CS data has been removed from 2018 and 2019 data for comparison purposes. When this is the case, this adjustment is identified in the discussion.

Figure 1: Year-over-Year COI Programs and Agencies

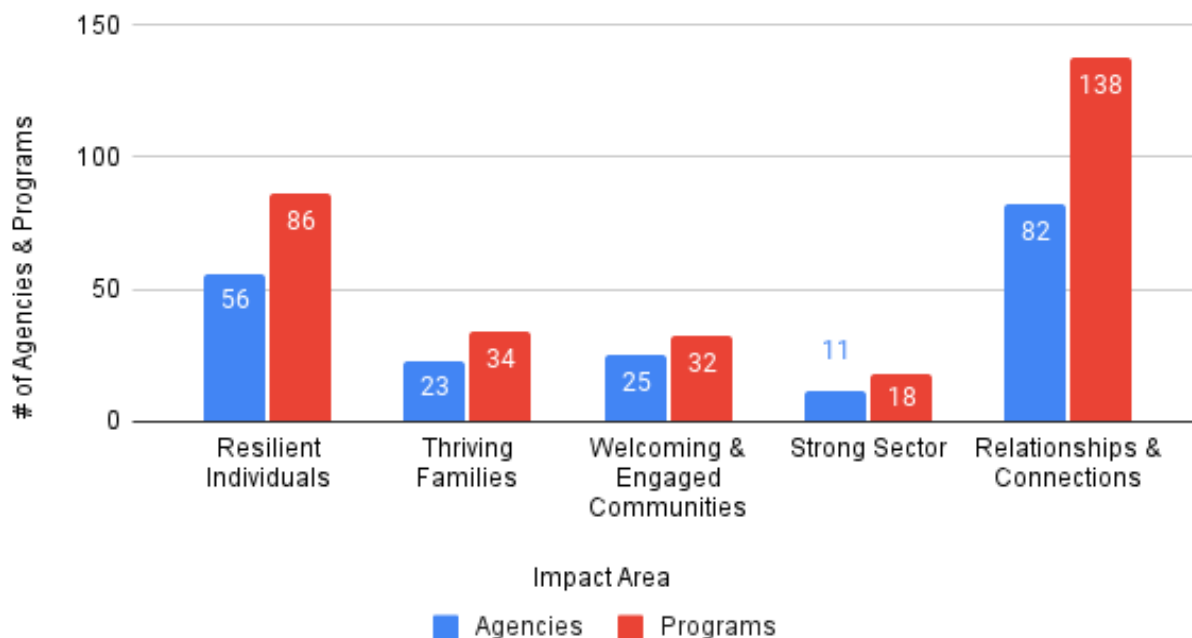


Programs work within the [COI Model](#), which organizes efforts into five Impact Areas:

Theory of Change		
Strong individuals, families, and communities create a vibrant and caring society where everyone is able to thrive and succeed.		
Impact Area Definitions		
Resilient Individuals	<i>Outcomes related specifically to building up the skills of individuals</i>	Resilient Individuals have the ability to bounce back from challenges and stress that they face. According to Michael Ungar, resilience is “the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways (Ungar, 2008 and Ungar, 2011, http://resilienceresearch.org/about-the-rrc/resilience/14-what-is-resilience).
Thriving Families	<i>Outcomes related specifically to supporting the family in becoming stronger</i>	Thriving Families work together to overcome challenges, learn, and develop. Caregivers within the family have the capacity to support the physical, social, psychological, emotional and spiritual development of the children, youth, adult or senior. Creating stable environments that promote quality interactions support achieving the goals for the family group.
Welcoming and Engaged Communities	<i>Outcomes related specifically to community awareness and involvement</i>	Welcoming and Engaged Communities are open, diverse and inclusive. They ensure that all community members are active, connected and supported in achieving their goals. They can be geographic or interest based depending on the program focus area.
Strong Sector	<i>Outcomes related specifically to supporting the sector & staff to better serve participants</i>	Individuals, families and communities exist and function within society. Within Edmonton and area the not for profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of supports to reduce and eliminate people falling through the cracks. Ensuring that the individuals and organizations working within the sector have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful and healthy is critical.
Strong Relationships and Connections	<i>Outcomes that often cross all program areas and programs where relationships are built and participants are connected to people, services and resources.</i>	Strong Relationships and Connections are the glue between individuals, families, communities and the not for profit sector. It is through relationships that we can achieve a strong and supportive community where all people can thrive and contribute. Individuals and families have access to a network of community and social supports that can address their needs.

Looking at how efforts toward these impacts are distributed, programs most often work in supporting Strong Relationships & Connections and Resilient Individuals. FCSS-funded programs all have Strong Relationships & Connections as part of their activity and reporting mandate. A program may contribute and report to more than one Impact Area.

Figure 2: COI Agencies and Programs by Impact Area



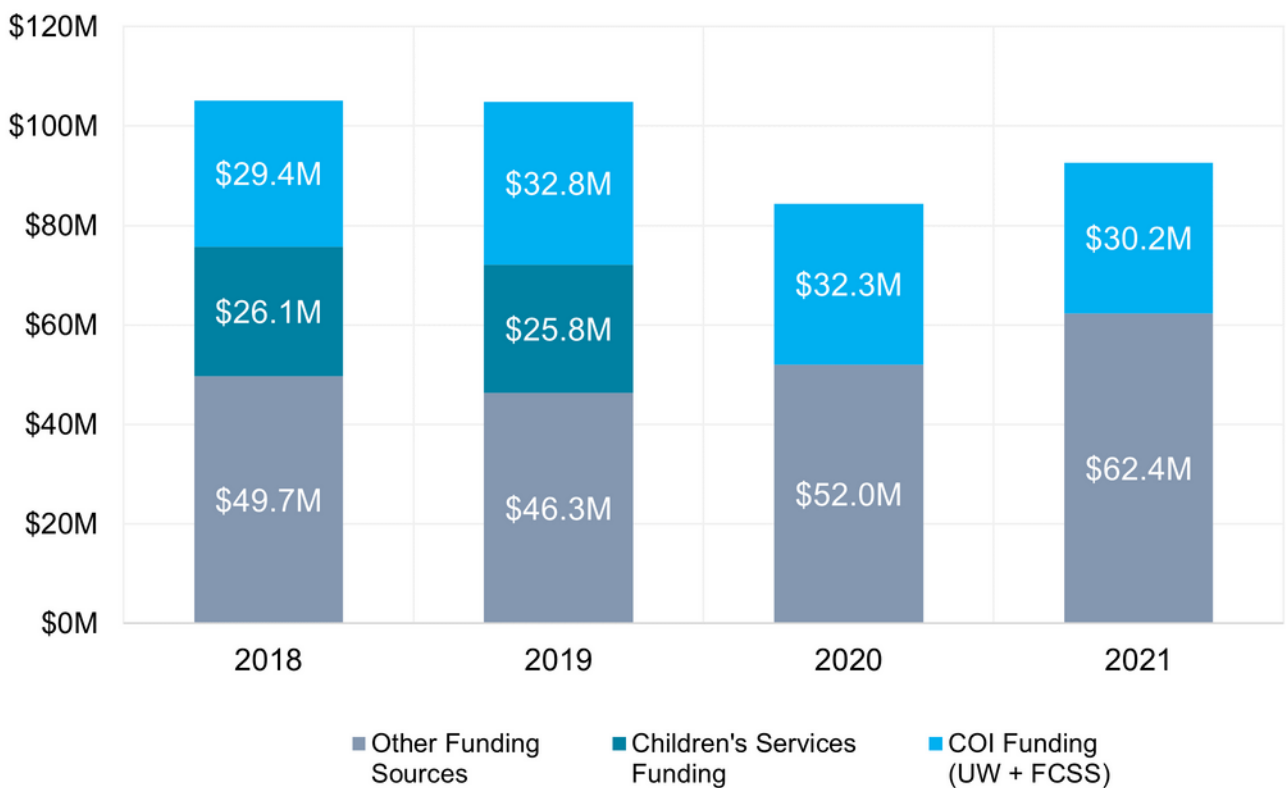
SECTOR SUPPORTS

FUNDING

In 2021, the Common Outcomes Initiative provided \$30.2M in funding to 190 programs (averaging \$159K per program). That represented one third of the total funding those programs received.

While COI funding was down -5.5% year-over-year (\$30.2M vs. \$32.3M), overall program funding was up 10.4% (\$92.6M vs. \$84.3M), due to an increase of 20.1% from other sources. Many programs reported, however, that much of these increases can be attributed to one-time funding, often related to COVID-19 related grants. This has created additional challenges and uncertainty in the Sector which may not be reflected in the overall numbers.

Figure 3: COI Program Funding by Year (2018-2021)



Additionally, funding increases were concentrated in an overall smaller number of programs, with 45% of funded programs seeing decreases in funding in 2021, compared to 30% of programs which saw increases. Figure 4 below shows this distribution. For context, Figure 5 shows the distribution of total funding across Impact Areas in 2021. As programs and their funding are reflected in each of the Impact Areas that they contribute to, the total program counts and funding in these graphs do not reflect overall program counts and funding amounts.

Figure 4: Program Counts by Increase/Decrease of Year-Over-Year Funding

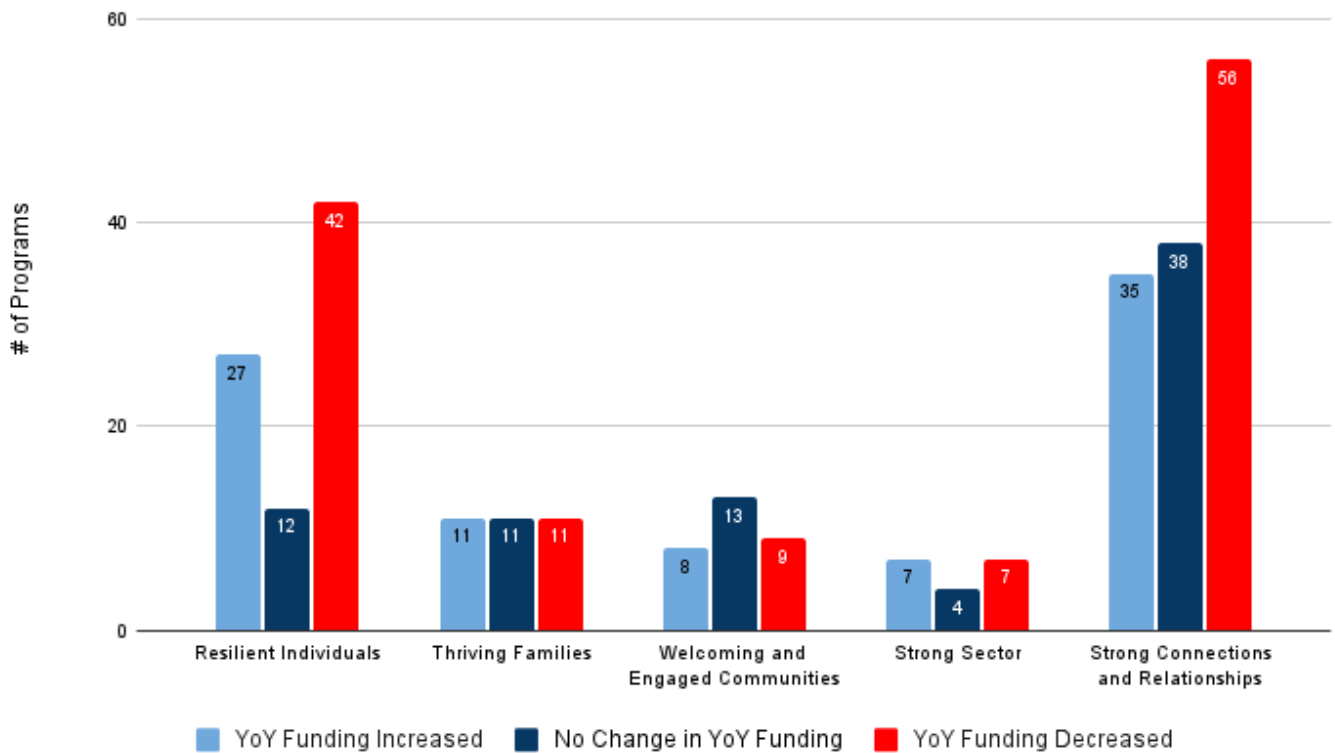
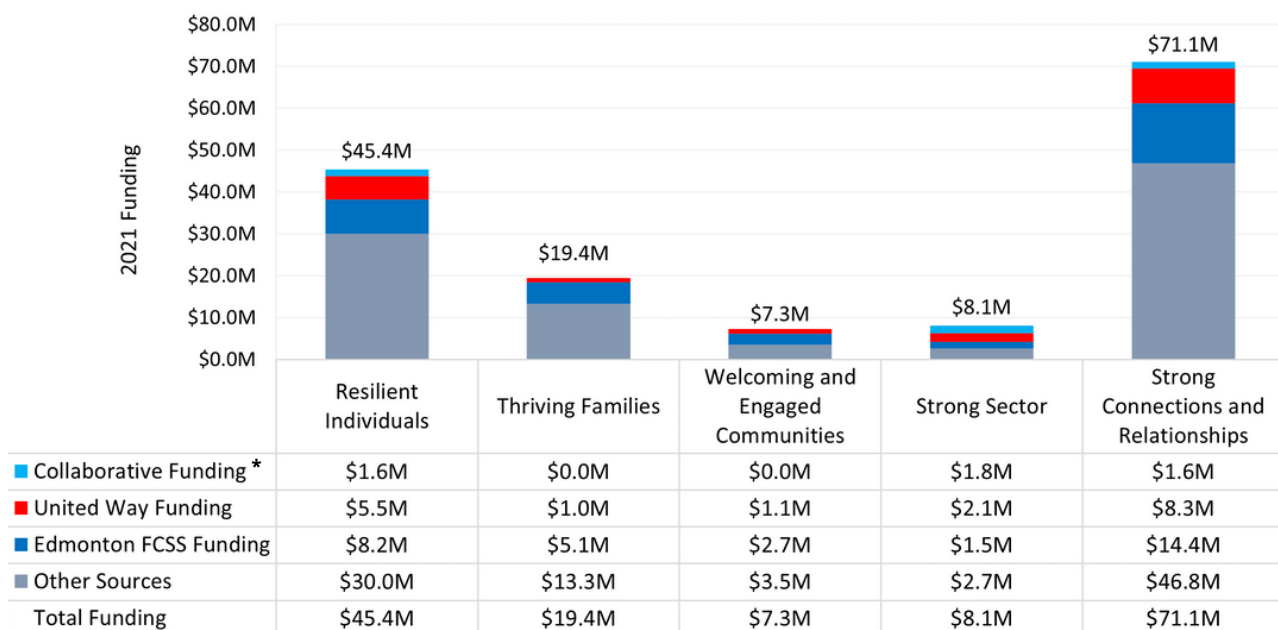


Figure 5: 2021 Funding by Source and Impact Area



*Collaborative funding refers to funding provided in collaboration between FCSS and United Way.

These funding challenges, when combined with increased service demand and increasingly complex cases, led to many programs reporting that they felt that they were being asked to “do more with less” in 2021 despite the overall topline increase in funding, and that the Sector is increasingly challenged in terms of managing that growing complexity.

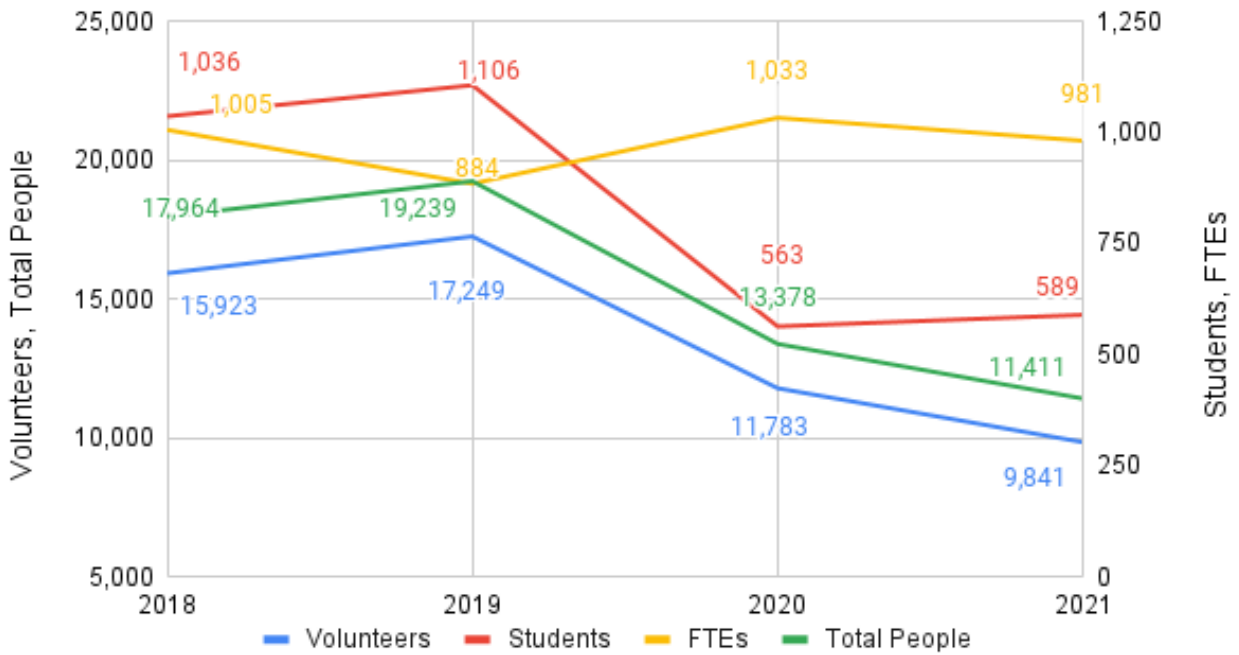
Agencies are looking to offset these challenges in a number of different ways, including better tools, more collaboration and more coordinated approaches to service delivery in the coming months and years.



HUMAN RESOURCES

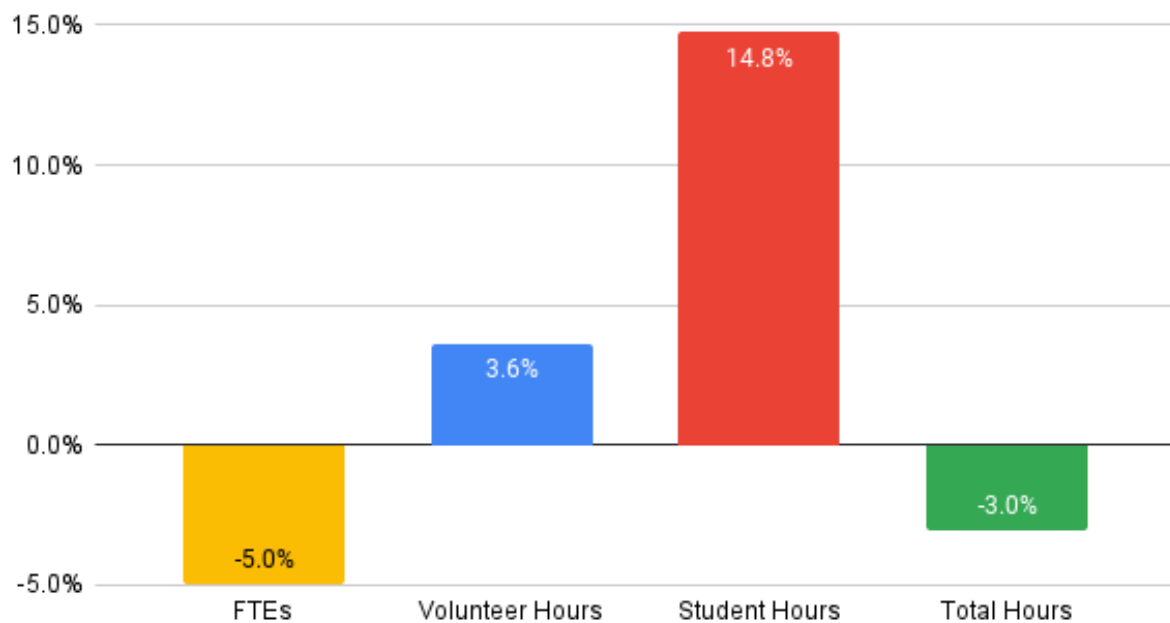
As a result of these funding constraints, many agencies are also experiencing significant challenges in the people power supporting their services. Figure 6 on the following page shows the number of people supporting COI funded programs from 2018 to 2021. For comparison purposes, programs funded only by Children’s Services have been removed from 2018 and 2019 data. Due in large part to the loss of safe volunteer and practicum opportunities during the pandemic, the number of people serving the Sector decreased by 30% - nearly 6,000 people - between 2019 to 2020. This decrease was accompanied by a smaller increase of 148 FTEs. 2021 saw a continued decrease in volunteers, and significantly, a decrease in FTEs serving the sector.

Figure 6: Year-Over-Year People Input



While the number of volunteers decreased and number of students remained relatively steady, the total number of volunteer and student hours increased. However, this was not enough to make up for the loss in FTEs, and the total number of hours serving COI programs decreased by 3% or 81,088 hours.

Figure 7: Hours Variance, 2020-2021



Programs consistently shared that this decrease in FTEs and total hours represents significant challenges in their ability to serve community. While human resourcing to their programs is decreasing, need and complexity of need is rising. In the midst of these decreases, COI programs served 28,475 more people (a 9% increase) in 2021 than in 2020.

"Staff have had many demands put on them, are working in more complex environments, with access to fewer resources, but often experiencing an increase in demand from clients."

- COR Respondent

Challenges related to FTEs are also more significant than the 5% decrease may initially suggest. After years of pandemic and rising community need, agencies shared that staff are experiencing burnout at high rates. As one program summarized in their COR, "Staff have had many demands put on them, are working in more complex environments, with access to fewer resources, but often experiencing an increase in demand from clients."

Now, facing rising costs of living in addition to prior burnout, staff turnover is high. Programs explained that agencies experiencing reduced - or in our current environment of inflation, maintained - funding are unable to provide wages that keep pace with cost of living, much less compete with salaries outside of the Sector. As a co-analysis participant described, "We are seeing a decrease in the number of qualified people applying for positions" which is "going to compound the issue we are already experiencing with burnout."

Ultimately, programs emphasized, all of these factors impact service delivery. Burnt out staff cannot give from an empty cup. Services provided by short-staffed teams or teams with new staff members will have longer response and wait times. Participants cannot develop trusting relationships with staff if the staff team continually changes. And, particularly in an environment where participants are experiencing a greater complexity of need and may need a variety of supports, challenges in one program affect others. Programs' ability to refer to other needed services is reduced due to waitlists or other capacity challenges in those services. This results in gaps in service that staff struggle to bridge.

"We are seeing a decrease in the number of qualified people applying for positions" which is "going to compound the issue we are already experiencing with burnout."

- Co-Analysis Participant



PARTICIPANTS

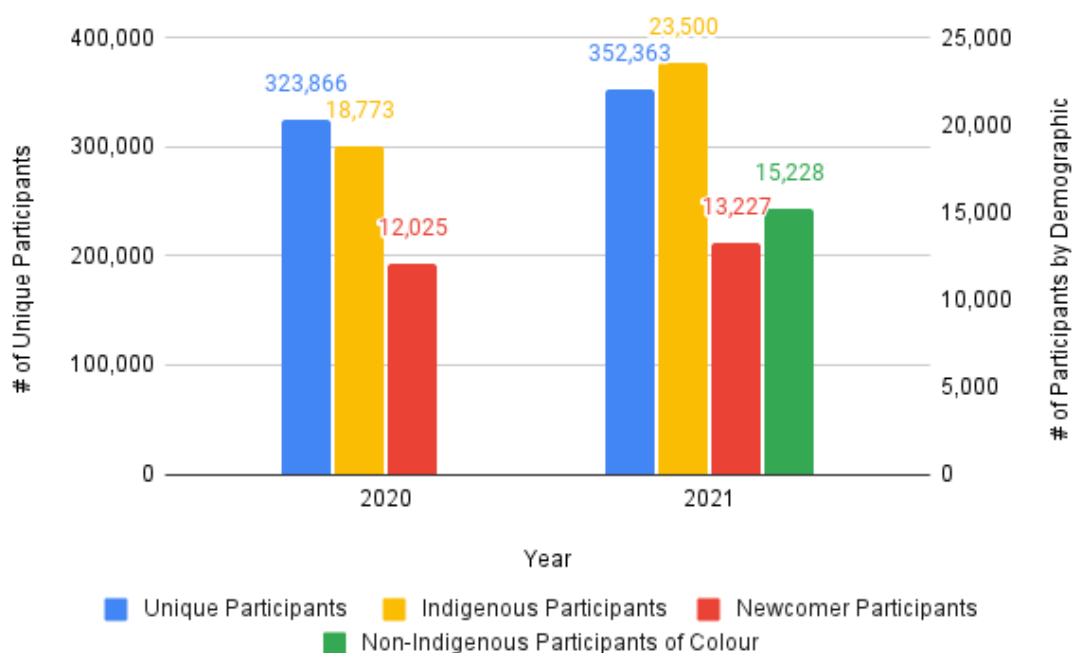
Given this context of reduced resources and capacity in the Sector, we turn to understand the experience of those utilizing its services. Who is the Sector serving, what are they facing, what impact is being made, and how do we know?

DEMOGRAPHICS: WHO ARE WE SERVING?

COI programs have the opportunity to report the number of participants served based on a variety of demographic categories. With the exception of participant age brackets, programs are not required to report demographic information but are asked to share it in their COR if they collect it. As such, the following data are not an exhaustive picture of who COI serves, but provide some indication of the diversity of participants accessing programs.

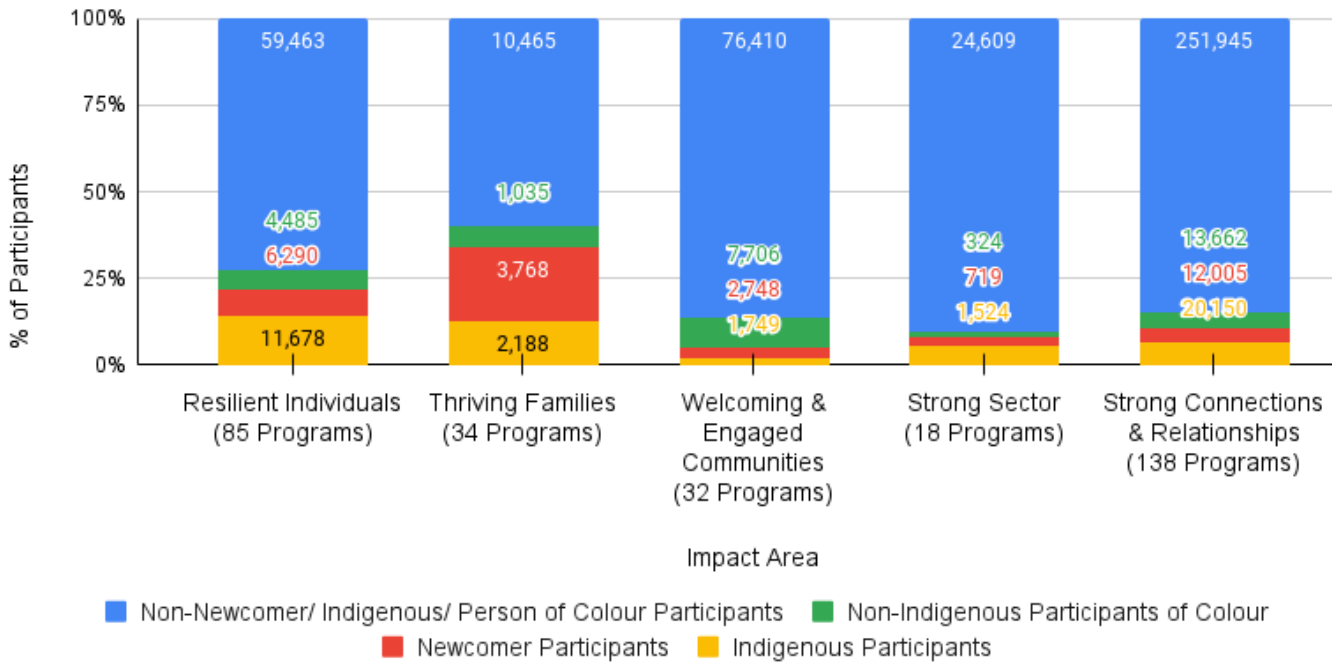
COI programs are serving an increasingly diverse number of participants, requiring additional, culturally appropriate resources to ensure participant need is being met. The number of unique participants increased 8.8% (+28,497) between 2020 and 2021. During the same time period, the number of Indigenous participants accessing COI programming increased 25% (+4,727) and the number of participants identifying as Newcomers increased by 10% (+1,202). In 2021, programs reported that 15,228 non-Indigenous Participants of Colour accessed their programming, a new reporting category this year.

Figure 8: Unique Participants by Demographic



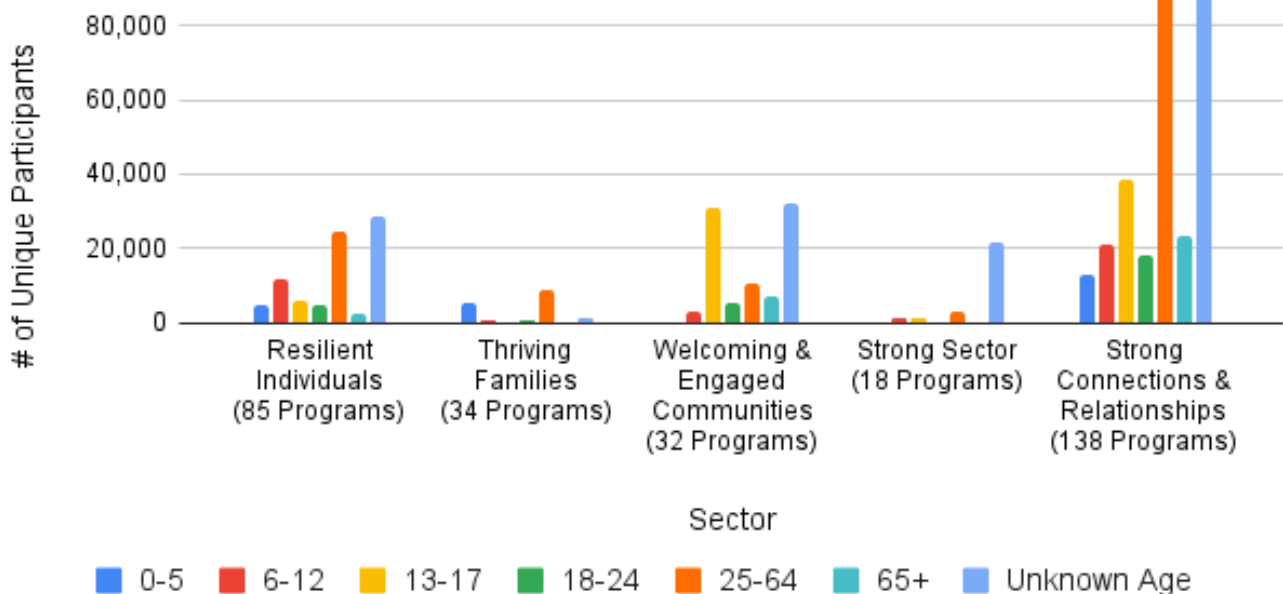
Programs reporting to the Thriving Families & Resilient Individuals impact areas were more likely to serve those identifying as Indigenous, Newcomers, or Non-Indigenous Participants of Colour than the remaining impact areas.

Figure 9: Unique Participants by Impact Area



Programs reporting to the Strong Connections & Relationship impact area indicated that 297,762 participants accessed their programming during 2021. These participants were typically between 25 and 64 years of age. Programs reporting to the Welcoming & Engaged Communities impact area served the second largest number of participants at 88,613 despite being the second smallest impact area in terms of included programs.

Figure 10: Participant Age Range By Impact Area

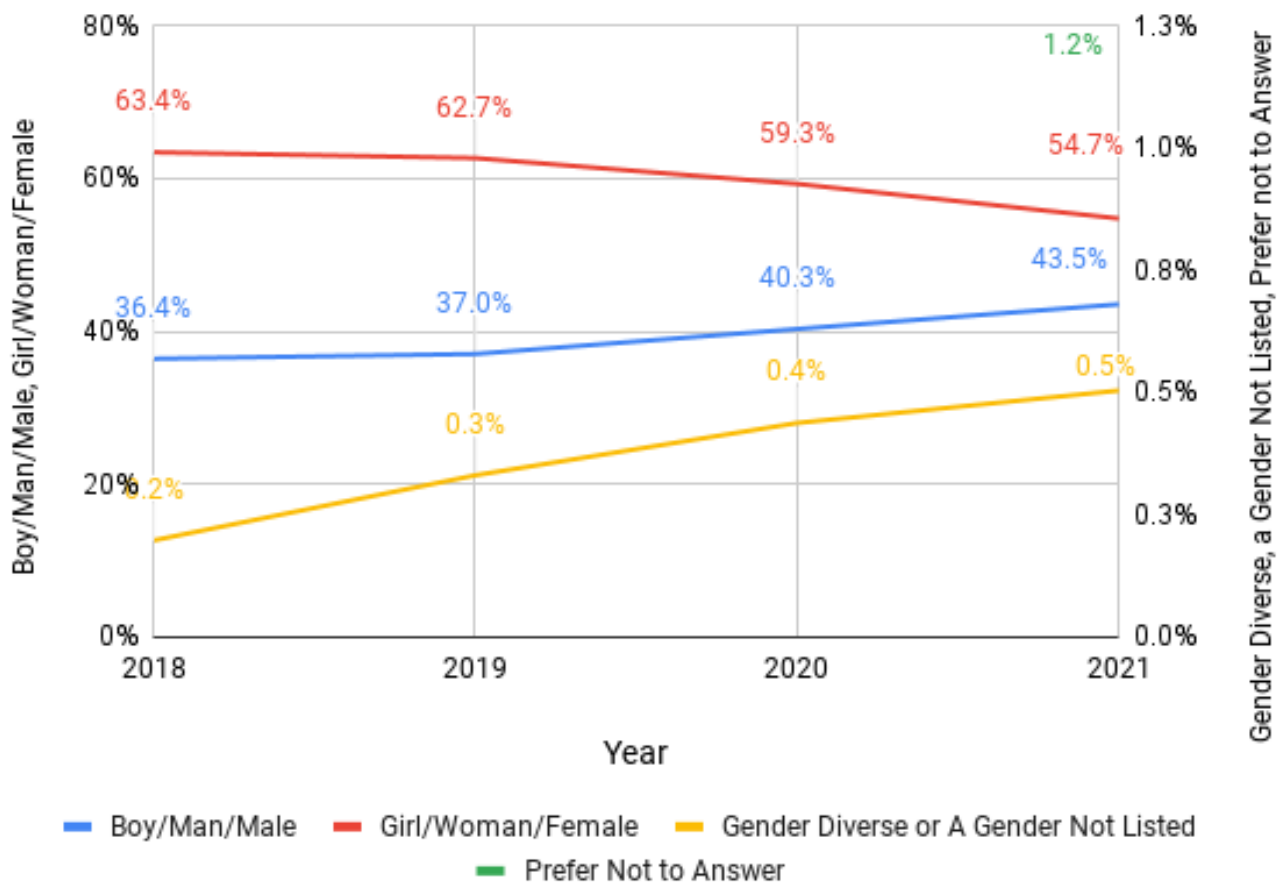


The breakdown of participant gender has slowly been shifting in recent years. Within COR, programs are able to identify participants as: Boy/Man/Male, Girl/Woman/Female, Gender Diverse, or as someone for whom gender data was not gathered. In 2021, two additional categories were added: A Gender Not Listed and Prefer Not to Answer.

Programs tend to serve more people identifying as girls or women than those identifying as boys or men. However, the gap between these two demographics has decreased from 27% to 11.2% between 2018 and 2021.

The number of Gender Diverse individuals has also steadily increased from 201 individuals (0.2%) in 2018 to 606 individuals (0.4%) in 2021. This year, an additional 108 individuals (0.1%) who were a Gender Not Listed were also served. Figure 11 shows these two categories combined for the purposes of showing broader trends, as A Gender Not Listed is a new category this year.

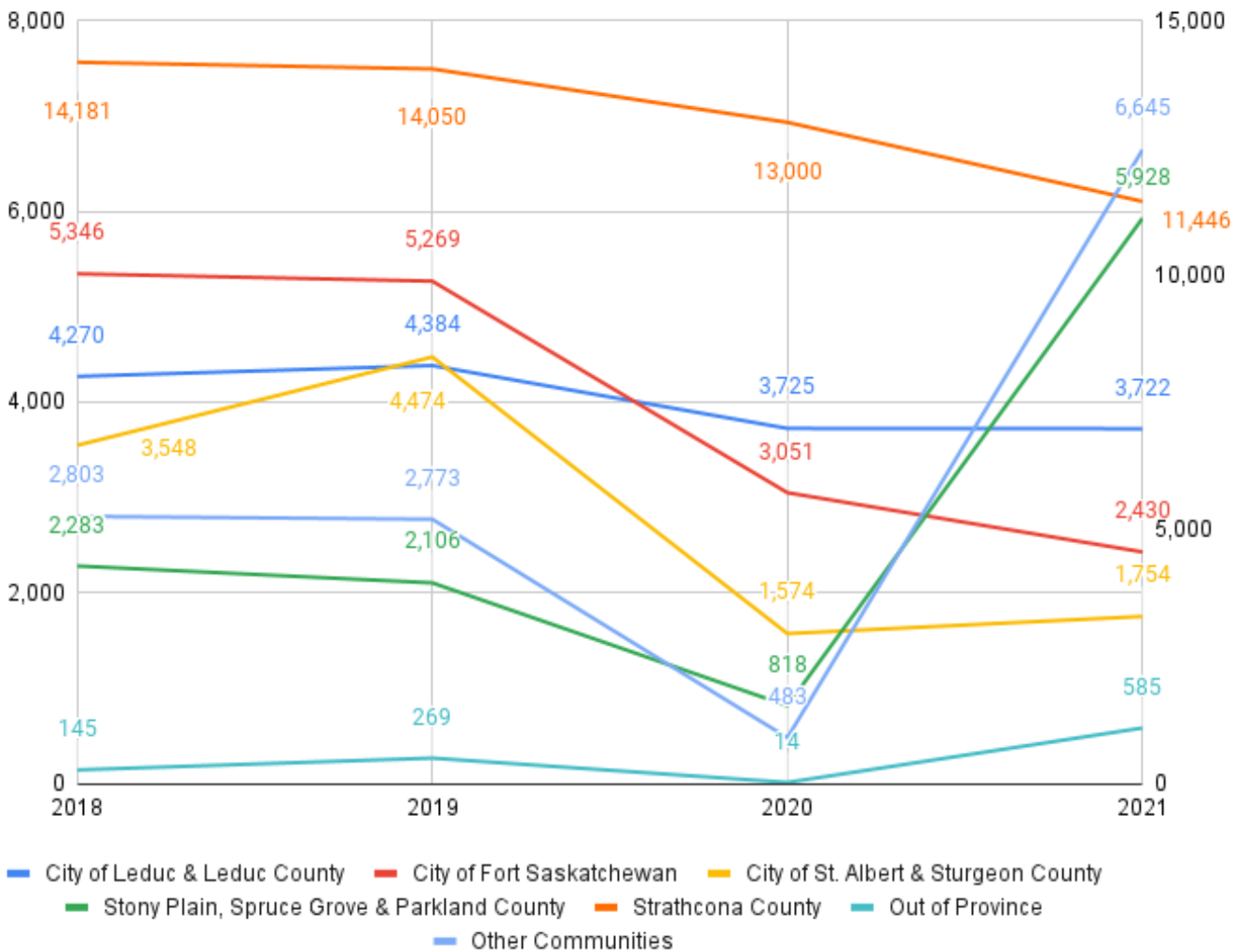
Figure 11: Year-over-Year Participant Gender



Programs receiving United Way funding have the opportunity to report on the “home” geographic community of their participants. Figure 12 below shows the trends in participants from outside of the City of Edmonton accessing United Way-funded services since 2018. Some participants access programs in their home community, while others may travel to access services in other parts of the Edmonton Metro Region. Decreases in participants from the majority of communities between 2019 and 2020 roughly correspond with the general decrease in participants served in 2020 due to the pandemic. Beginning in July 2021, United Way began funding programs located in Stony Plain, Spruce Grove & Parkland County, resulting in a large increase in participants from these areas being served.

Figure 12: Unique Participant by Geographic Community

*Edmonton FCSS serves Edmonton only, whereas United Way serves Edmonton and region



WHAT ARE THEY FACING?

Programs were asked to identify barriers that their participants faced outside of the program’s scope, and to distinguish whether or not the program was able to address those barriers. Overall, 2 out of 12 barriers saw year-over-year increases in 2021 (Clothing and Childcare). In the co-analysis, agencies noted that the community’s ability to address these two barriers has evolved in 2022. The federal-provincial childcare agreement hopes to be a lever for childcare as a barrier moving forward. Some agencies suggested that the prominence of clothing as a barrier in 2021 may be related to issues around participants sorting through clothing amidst concerns over high-touch surfaces during COVID.

Figure 13: Year-over-Year Participant Barriers

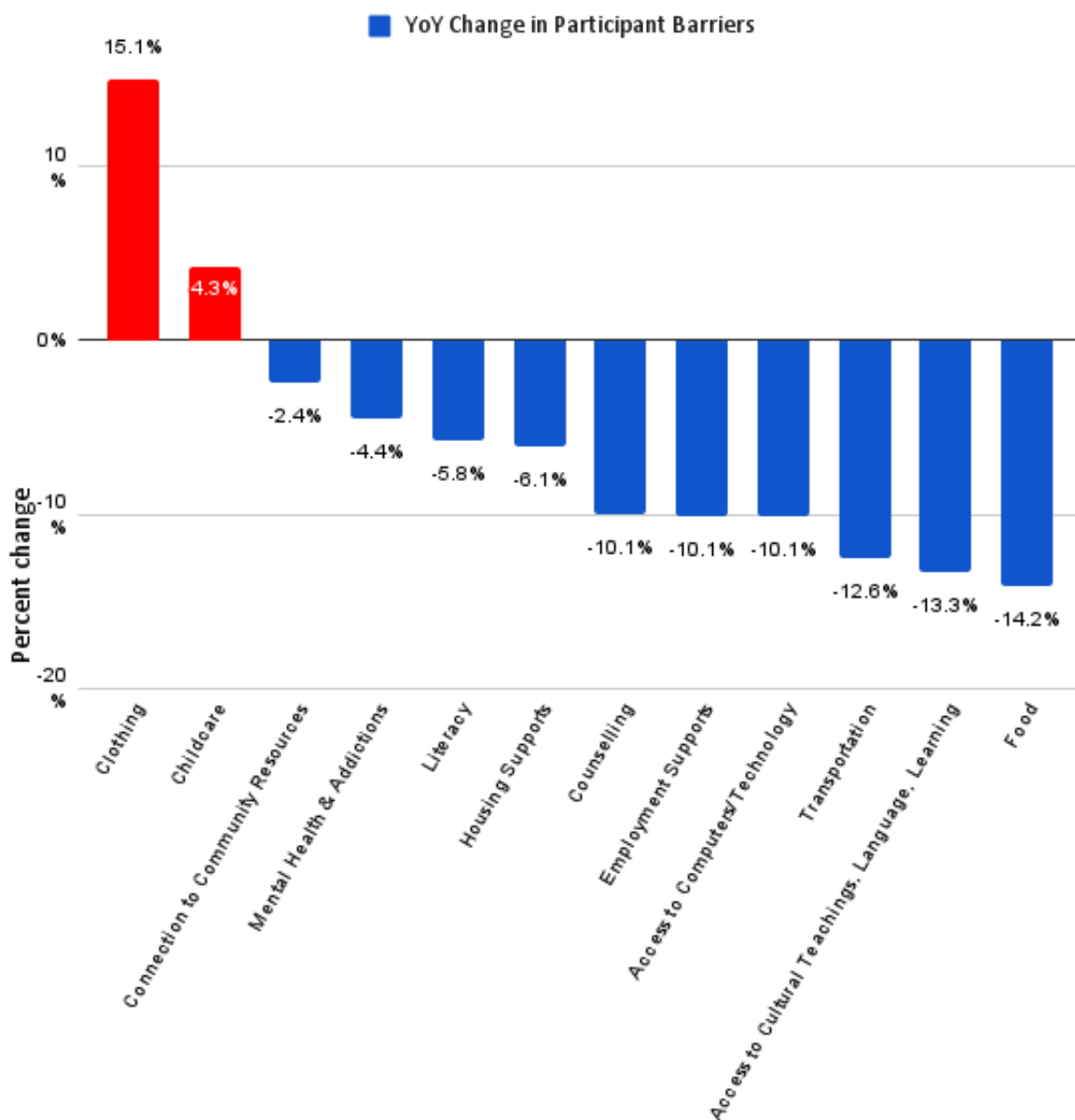
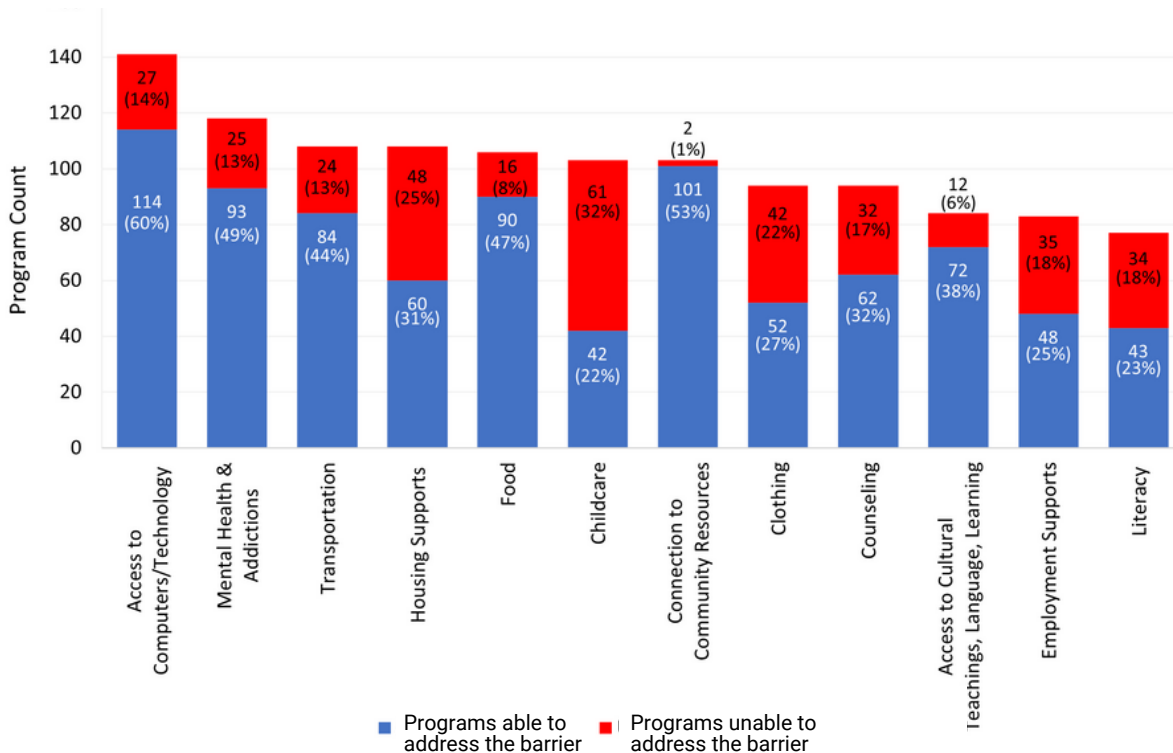


Figure 14 on the following page shows how in 2021, a lack of supports for basic needs including Childcare (noted by 32.1% of programs), Housing Supports (24.7%) and Clothing (22.1%) were among the highest barriers facing program participants that were not adequately addressed.

Programs were more successful, however, in at least partially addressing other barriers including Access to Technology (59.5%), Connections to Community Resources (52.6%), and Mental Health & Addictions (49.0%).

Figure 14: Participant Barriers Addressed vs. Unaddressed - Program Counts (and % of Programs) in 2021



Programs consistently emphasized Mental Health & Addictions as an area where more support is deeply needed. More participants are needing mental health support, mental health cases are often more complex, and more time is required per participant. There is an increased demand for counselling, and programs stated that the sector is challenged in meeting this demand.

Similarly, qualitative COR data as well as co-analysis discussions emphasized Connections to Community Resources as an area where further support is required. As discussed in the Human Resources section of this report, programs experience difficulties referring participants to other agencies due to capacity issues and waitlists. Further, agencies described challenges in participants accessing government supports, including issues around eligibility, where participants are ineligible for particular government supports based on their income but still unable to make ends meet as inflation skyrockets. Programs suggested that bolstering system capacity as well as more responsive thresholds for government support are important for meaningful change in this area.

In discussing these barriers, agencies emphasized how participants do not experience barriers in isolation, but that they are often intertwined. For example, mental health may be a barrier for a participant, but in order to access mental health supports, they would need not only a free or low-cost service, but also transportation and childcare. Agencies noted that as barriers exist within a system, a systems approach is needed to effectively address them.

HOW ARE WE HELPING?

Despite the significant challenges described thus far, agencies and their program staff engaged in difficult, meaningful work with participants and together created significant positive life impacts. In general, participants in COI programs were likely to report positive change across all 14 outcomes of the [COI Model](#), with positive change ranging from 86% (Participants have improved skills to address identified issues) to 99% (Caregivers have increased knowledge of positive parenting; Participants access community resources that meet their needs).

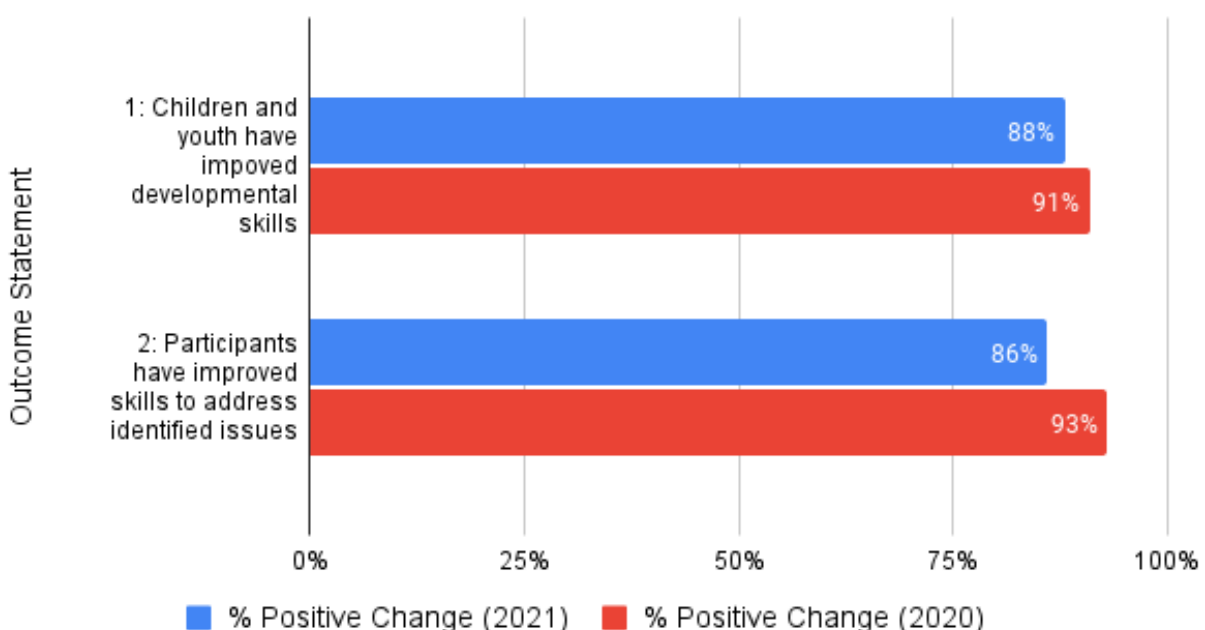
In 2021, programs in most impact areas reported decreases in positive change when compared to 2020. Those reporting to Strong Relationships and Connections were the exception. Over the next several pages, we will explore outcome summaries by Impact Area. A full breakdown of impact by indicator is included in Appendix 2.

Resilient Individuals

Resilient individuals have the ability to bounce back from challenges and stress that they face. According to Michael Ungar, resilience is, "the capacity of individuals to navigate their way to the psychological, social, cultural, and physical resources that sustain their well-being, and their capacity individually and collectively to negotiate for these resources to be provided in culturally meaningful ways" (<https://resilienceresearch.org/about-resilience/>).

While rates of change remained relatively high for both outcomes in the Resilient Individuals impact area, both outcomes saw a decrease year over year, with a notable drop in the percentage of participants who improved skills to address identified issues.

Figure 15: Resilient Individuals Outcomes Summary



When asked what positive change looks like in program participants, the following themes emerged:

- **Youth and children:** Many programs spoke to the growth that children and youth experienced in the program. This growth was most often related to skills (i.e., communication skills, social skills, language skills, etc.). There was also a large emphasis placed on youth having improved strong relationships with adults, caregivers, and peers, and an improvement in the skills that go along with developing relationships.

“The children, youth and families we work with have expressed feeling empowered, supported and have shared that they have better knowledge of what healthy relationships look like and feel like, having a clear understanding of healthy boundaries, and can show increased ability in communicating more assertively and effectively with peers and adults. They have expressed having a reduction struggling with addictions and mental health issues too.”

- **Improved social and emotional skills:** Through almost all of the feedback provided, responses referenced participant growth in the following areas:
 - A general increase in the ability to address mental health and addiction concerns
 - Increased coping skills and resiliency
 - Increased self awareness
 - Increased ability to advocate for self
 - Increased self-esteem, sense of purpose, confidence

These skills provided a foundation that supported participants in making positive changes in their lives.

“Though change is gradual, over time, we see participants quitting abusive relationships, living lives of their own accord, asserting boundaries, communicating more effectively, leaving the streets behind, freeing themselves from the bonds of addiction, managing and overcoming mental illness, and discovering and pursuing their values.”

Success Story

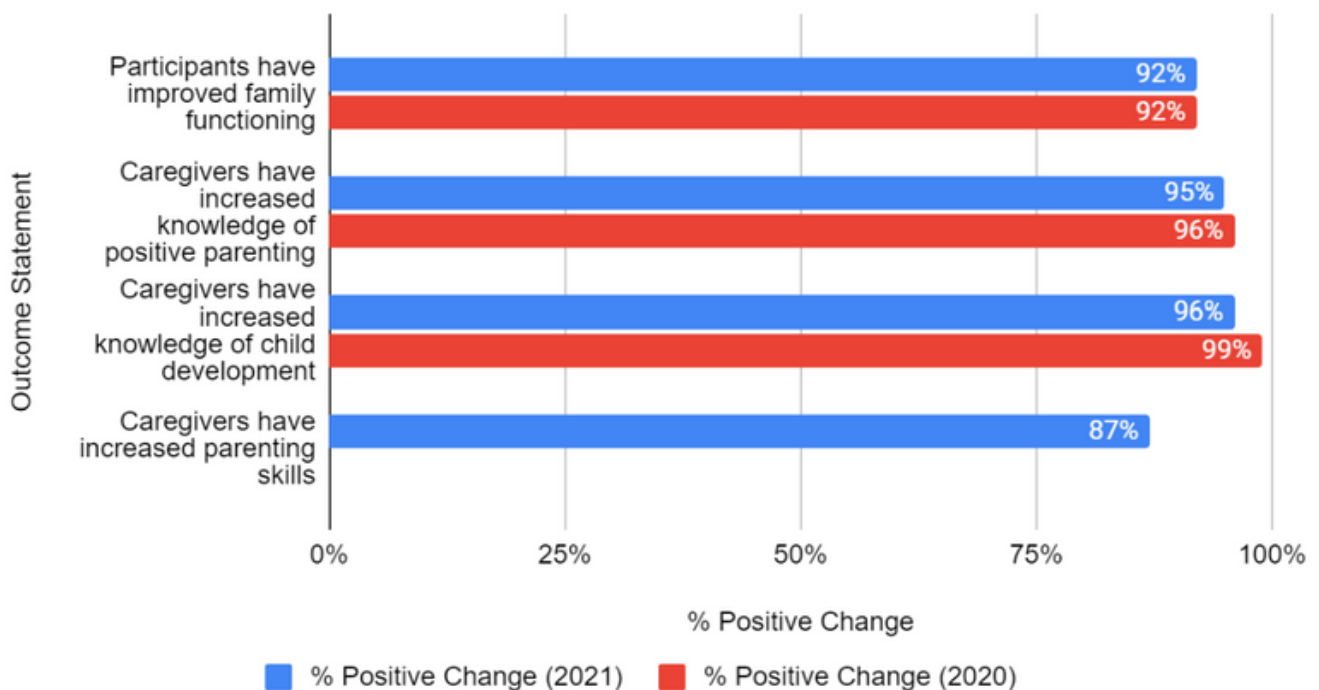
Christine was extremely shy and reserved. She lacked self-esteem and confidence and did not have a positive outlook on her future. She did not have coping skills to manage her feelings and there were concerns she may make unhealthy decisions in the future. After being made aware of Christine's challenges, staff and volunteers worked with her on improving her self esteem and helping her build confidence in her abilities. She attended workshops with other youth where they were given opportunities to reflect and practice to help build their skills. She started to recognize that she had more potential than she believed and started to come out of her shell. With ongoing encouragement, she started to see her personal strengths and abilities. Despite still having conflicts with family and barriers to success at home, Christine became happier and more outspoken as the time spent in the program increased. There was a safe space for her to access support, ask questions, and to be heard. Christine is now back to attending school in-person and uses skills she learned in the program in her life to make friends, stay positive, and to not be so hard on herself when things don't go right. She focuses on things she can control in her life and is motivated to do well in school and to find healthy ways to be happy in her life. She still attends the program from time to time to check in and ask for help and advice. She feels confident she now has more tools to help her when difficult situations arise in her life.

Thriving Families

Thriving Families work together to overcome challenges, learn, and develop. Caregivers within the family have the capacity to support the physical, social, psychological, emotional and spiritual development of the children, youth, adult or senior, creating stable environments that promote quality interactions to support achieving the goals for the family group.

In general, rates of positive change are high across all four reported outcomes in the Thriving Family impact area, despite some small year-over-year variation.

Figure 16: Thriving Families Outcomes Summary



When asked what positive change looks like in program participants, the following themes emerged:

- **Increased self-confidence and worth for family members** - Many programs reported that participants used strategies and tools provided to them to help develop positive self-esteem and provide encouragement to parents and children, alike.

"Child Development Activity Kits were a good idea from the Norwood Centre. It gave me as a parent projects we can do with my daughter at home. I love all of the parenting advice and support because my son has severe expressive language delay and had I been left by myself to discover his, it would have been difficult to advocate for him. I have more confidence as a parent because of this assistance. Our communication is much better. He comes to me to talk about things like school and friends." (Edited for clarity)

- **A focus on developing positive relationships within the family unit** - Beyond increasing self-confidence and worth, programs illustrated numerous examples of families developing stronger relationships as a result of program participation.

"We had a single father in program who began eagerly learning about parenting and child development. He regularly attended groups and programs at Norwood, and with support, he was able to apply for affordable rental housing. He was committed to fostering a nurturing relationship with his daughter - spending time outside, swimming, enrolling her in dance lessons and always asking about her day. He always kept his child at the center of decisions, ensuring she received what she needed to thrive."

- **Development of new skills** - Program participants learned skills to help with healthy development of children as well as to build skills to help develop improved parenting strategies. Participants developed these new skills in part by using developmentally appropriate activities such as the one illustrated below.

"One of the activities that our family enjoys doing is playing the different memory games you taught us. I have noticed...that my daughters use different criteria to sort the matches. It is really interesting the way they explain their criteria to us and to each other. I love that they are working together and learning from each other in the activities. It is great to have new games to play together, especially ones that we can make together at home." (Edited for clarity)

- **Providing critical familial support** - Many participants required significant support and resources during difficult periods in their lives. Programs reporting to the Thriving Families impact area were able to provide this support and ease participant burden.

Success Story

"I arrived in Edmonton with my three boys. I had no financial resources because as a newcomer, I had not secured employment. My neighbours in the apartment complex complained that my children made a lot of noise. As a mother, I didn't know what to do. I didn't know the language to talk to the neighbours, the children's playground wasn't close.

One night, the neighbours called the police. We were scared, I thought the police wanted to arrest us, I didn't know the language to communicate, but the policeman referred us to an immigrant service agency.

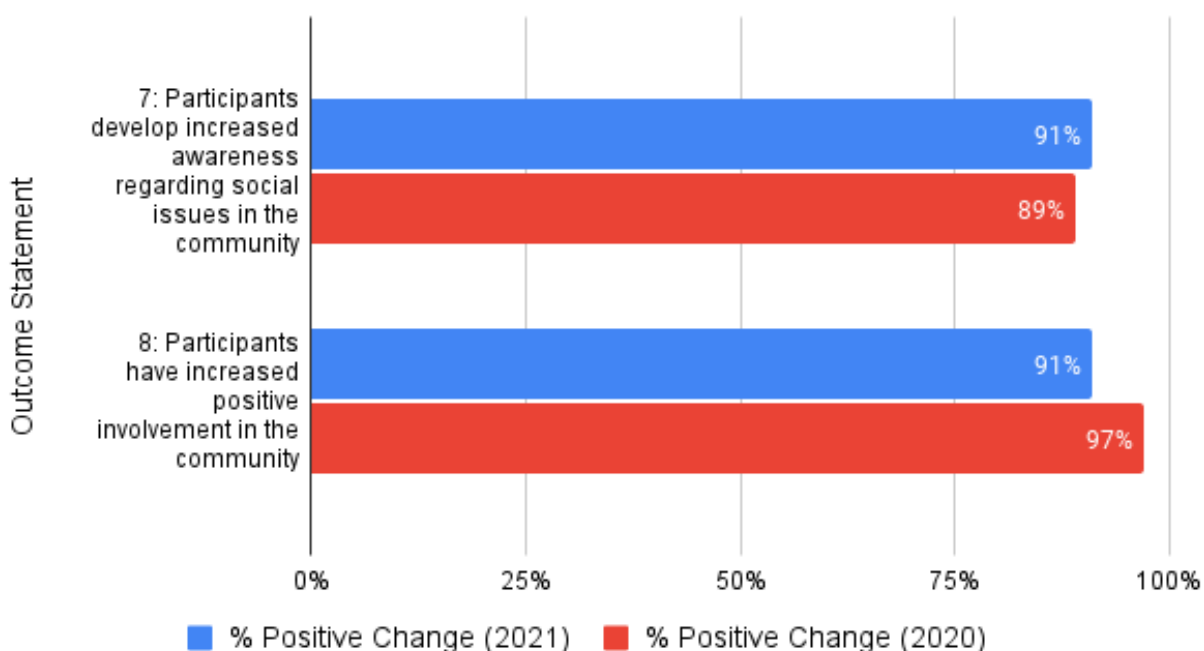
Since then, our lives have changed. [The staff] invited us to participate in the parent-child program, where my children and I found friends who spoke the same language as us. The parenting group provides us with a variety of activities such as cooking classes. When I have questions or need help in any aspects, I can find the necessary help in this group. Now we are no longer isolated, scared of our neighbours and strangers, and we know who we can turn to for help. And, my children can't wait for the next time when we will meet the other children in the group."

Welcoming and Engaged Communities

Welcoming and Engaged Communities are open, diverse and inclusive. They ensure that all community members are active, connected and supported in achieving their goals. They can be geographic or interest based depending on the program focus area

Rates of positive change remained high for both outcomes in this impact area. While participants were generally more aware of social issues in their communities, year-over-year, they were generally less involved in their communities in 2021 compared to 2020.

Figure 17: Welcoming and Engaged Communities Outcome Summary



When asked what positive change looks like in program participants, the following themes emerged:

- **Increased connection to their communities and increased sense of belonging** - Participants reported that being afforded the opportunity to volunteer and work in their community helped with isolation they were experiencing and provided them with the opportunity to connect with others within their communities

"Riverbend ROCKS helped me to get involved in the community doing things I enjoy while helping others to learn by sharing my experience and knowledge with my neighbours."

- **Increased sense of purpose, dignity and self-confidence** - Beyond connection, participants felt an increased sense of purpose, dignity and self-confidence as a result of the work they were doing.

"I know that I am valued and appreciated at Meals on Wheels and by the clients. With each delivery I know I am making a positive difference in someone's life; people depend on me. I know that without volunteers, Meals on Wheels could not make and organize the hundreds of meal deliveries each day...Volunteering helps me feel a sense of purpose in my life. I feel good helping someone who can no longer shop or prepare meals...Food security and poverty are issues for many people. I've gained more empathy for vulnerable people."

- **Increased positive involvement in the community** - As a specific subset of participants in general, many youth also reported increased positive involvement in their community.

"When we made the design for the t-shirt, I felt like I was doing something helpful. I love that we are helping to try and stop poverty in Edmonton!" (grade 4 student - Make Your Mark On Poverty Program)

- **Increased awareness of the impact of abuse, trauma and sexual violence** - Programs illustrated numerous examples of their participants accessing the resources and support required to escape abusive situations and learn about the impacts of past traumas.

"Clients report greater understanding of their personal trauma history, have come to accept that previous relationships are abusive, and have learned how to recognize the signs and symptoms of abuse in their family, friends, and work relationships. Many clients have even gone on to refer their friends and loved ones to YWCA Edmonton Counseling Services."

Success Story

For many Muslim communities, there are complex and lasting relationships with colonization and displacement. Over the past year, we asked ourselves: what would a land acknowledgment look like if it were written as a prayer? This encouraged us to launch the #MuslimonTreaty6 campaign during the month of Ramadan. What began as a series of workshops co-facilitated by Muslim and Indigenous communities in Ramadan, grew into months of community engagement, online conversations, and... story-sharing [along with numerous summer events] all while reflecting on personal stories of land, place, and belonging. On World Refugee Day and Indigenous People's Day we built upon our multi-year collaboration with [numerous agencies] to honor and celebrate the resilience of Indigenous, refugee, and newcomer communities. In addition to the many stories shared about community and resilience, we also hosted a cross-cultural drumming session with Syrian and Cree community members which was filmed by Muslim youth. The exciting stories and conversations that came about as a result of this ongoing work, converged into a single collection of du'as (prayers), reflections, and stories written by and for the community on Treaty 6. We decided to publish this collection in a pocket-sized book of prayer called: Prayers for the Land and the People.

[One of our youth shared the following reflection]:

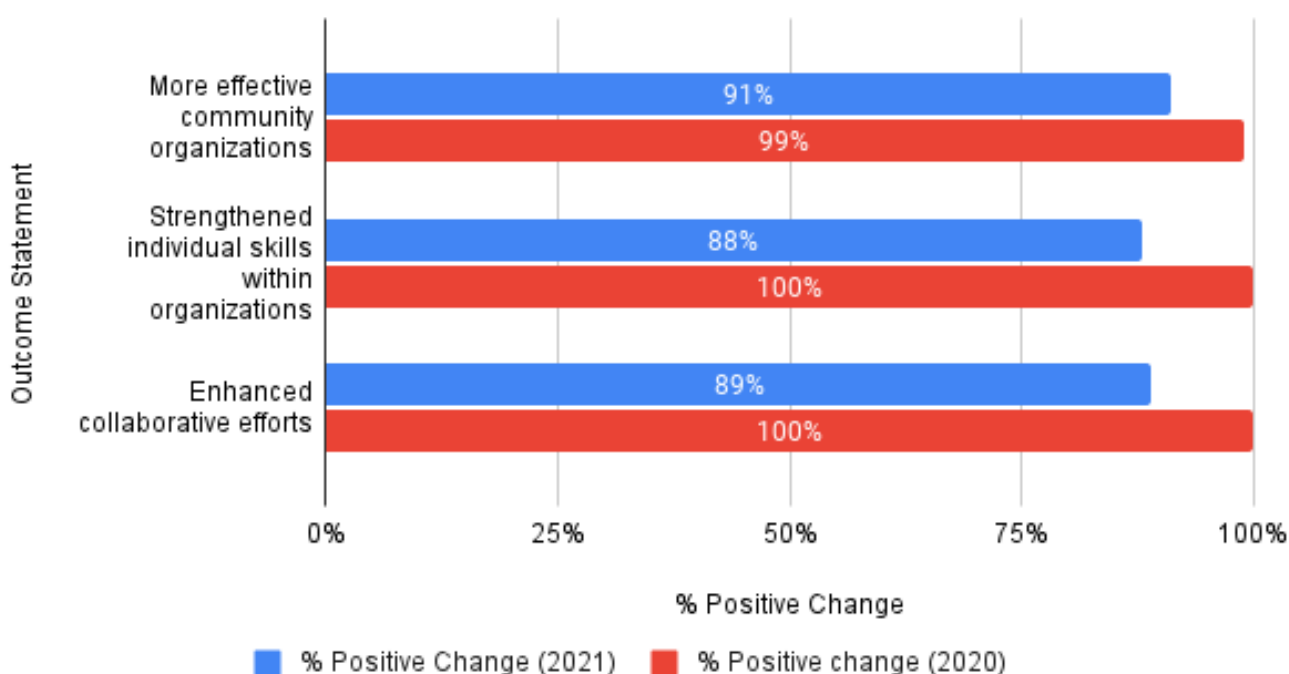
"Over time many elders have shared teachings with me about this land, traditions, and customs of the First Nation people and now I can say that I try my best to live the 7 sacred teachings and I'm so thankful that I get to live my life and embrace the freedoms this land has to offer. Thank you to all those who welcomed the newcomers from other lands and I will try my very best to honor you in a kind and gentle way".

Strong Sector

Individuals, families and communities exist and function within society. Within Edmonton and area the not for profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of support to reduce and eliminate people falling through the cracks. Ensuring that the individuals and organizations working within the sector have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to be successful and healthy is critical.

Rates of positive change tended to decrease between 2020 and 2021 for Strong Sector programs. Many programs in this impact area emphasized the impact of burnout on their agency participants, the subsequent difficulty in getting responses from evaluation surveys this year, and the ways in which this negatively affected the impact they were able to measure.

Figure 18: Strong Sector Outcome Summary



When asked what positive change looks like in program participants, the following themes emerged:

- **Collaboration, trust, and relationships**

- A key impact of Strong Sector programs was to create improved networks and connections between individual staff and organizations as a whole. Programs spoke to how building trust was key and that these relationships supported information sharing between organizations that enhanced staff's ability to effectively refer their participants to services at other agencies. The linkages created between organizations further helped to avoid duplication of work and advance a systems-level approach.

- Programs and their staff participants emphasized the value of collaboration and the way it allows for developments at a systems level that would not otherwise be possible. However, in a period where agencies are experiencing significant challenges and stress, the capacity to participate in collaborations and relationship-building has been limiting for some.

"The need to work with others becomes more apparent but the time commitment to attend meetings is challenging many organizational leaders and their staff (and Boards)."

- **Increased capacity for data collection, research and evaluation at both a staff and agency level**

- Programs highlighted the ripple effect of this increased capacity and how it:
 1. Enhanced agency participants' ability to communicate about their work and outcomes and thereby help them to secure and sustain funding.
 2. Supported evidence-informed decisions to better serve community.

"One partner [of a COI program] commented that they have embedded 'better research practices' across all of their projects suggesting that evidence-based decision-making may expand beyond the specific project. Another partner stated that the collaboration with another program has influenced their organizational strategic direction and goals".

- **Decolonization**

- Many Strong Sector programs spoke to the ways that they, as well as the agency participants they serve, are working to decolonize their ways of working and being in the community. This includes co-creating learning opportunities and tools with community, supporting equity-deserving groups in developing and structuring their organizations in ways that are accessible and inclusive to their community, and centering lived and living experience in program and partnership development.

Success Story

The following email came from a volunteer Executive Director/Board Member. They were part of the team that moved a 20-year passion project into reality. As an organization representing a marginalized group, they struggled with traditional governance frameworks as they prevented the equity and inclusion they were seeking in their decision-making. Through accessing multiple programs at ECVO they were successful in making their passion a reality and finding ways to structure their organization in a way that was accessible and inclusive to their community. "It is no easy task to start a nonprofit with no formal training nor experience, especially for a marginalized group of people who face great barriers due to the stigma associated with our community. If it wasn't for the assistance of the ECVO we wouldn't have had an opportunity to support such a diverse, yet isolated, community during a time when each and every one of them was hit hard by the pandemic. Some have gone as far as expressing that the support we were able to provide them was life-saving. We owe a great debt of gratitude to the ECVO and their extraordinary staff."

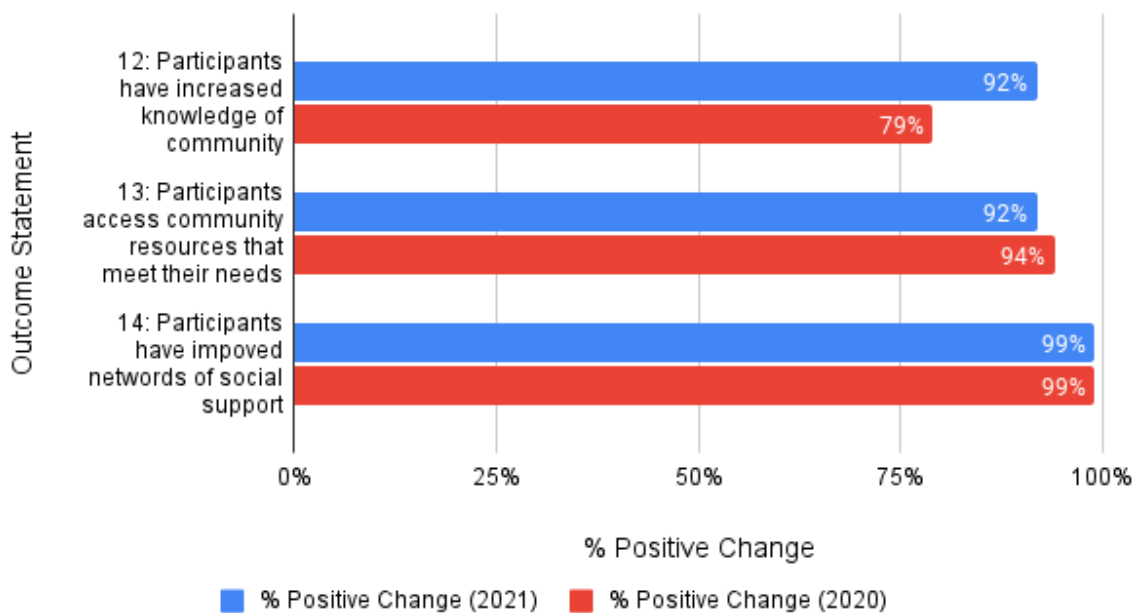
Strong Relationships and Connections

Strong Relationships and Connections are the glue between individuals, families, communities and the not for profit sector. It is through relationships that we can achieve a strong and supportive community where all people can thrive and contribute. Individuals and families have access to a network of community and social supports that can address their needs.

In 2021, the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic created many challenges for programs seeking to create Strong Relationships and Connections within our community, helping participants to deal with increased mental health challenges, financial strain and need for basic supports, often while having to dramatically alter their program delivery in the face of ever-changing public health and safety requirements.

These challenges made the outcomes in this impact area more important than ever in 2021, not just for program participants, but for staff and volunteers as well. That may be part of why the rates of reported positive change were highest overall for this impact area, with the “Increased knowledge of community” outcome seeing the most improvement year-over-year, increasing from 79% in 2020 to 92% in 2021.

Figure 19: Strong Relationships & Connections Outcome Summary



When asked what positive change looks like in program participants, the following themes emerged:

- **Reduced stress and improved mental health in unprecedented times** – Many programs described how meaningful it was for participants to learn about the supports available to them in the community, and the relief of knowing that they could access resources to ensure that their basic needs would be met.

“Most of the respondents indicated that through the services they received while using the Outreach Program they feel more connected in their community. Referrals and advocacy are there for them; at the same time, they feel more hopeful that things will work better for them. Seniors also expressed that Outreach program support has reduced stress and sense of overwhelm in their process.”

- **Overcoming feelings of isolation** – The pandemic made it much more difficult for people to stay connected to their communities and their neighbours. Programs offered a way to maintain social connections and overcome feelings of separation and loneliness.

“Participants discussed meeting peers through virtual programming and forming new, supportive personal relationships during a time of increased isolation and loneliness – this included helping each other with transportation and errands in their personal time. Many noted that these connections have been important in maintaining their mental health, wellbeing, and a sense of structure as the pandemic continues. Participants have shared that Sage programming is the highlight of their day”.

- **Increased independence and sense of self** – Thanks to the supports offered through these programs, many participants can continue living independently and stay in their homes when they might not otherwise be able to. This is especially true for seniors.

“My mother in law is having difficulty living independently. Outreach gave resources to help her in the home and also information was provided for assisted living. [She] was very happy to know that [West Edmonton Seniors Activity Centre] Outreach was checking in on seniors.”

- **Building friendships and strengthening communities** – For many participants, these programs offered not only a way to connect with needed resources, but also to make new friends and deeper cultural connections within their communities, creating a stronger system of social support.

“In 2021 a number of events centred around personal, cultural, and community support took place for the first time since the start of the pandemic...Participants expressed a sense of joy and feeling of enrichment in being able to take part in cultural practices like a round dance, beading, drumming, and singing of traditional songs with their fellow community again.”

Success Story

Montreal natives Ginette and Evan fell in love in 1989, settling in Edmonton in the early 1990s. Since then, the couple have experienced their fair share of bumps in the road. “Evan lost his sight in 2001,” explains Ginette. “In an instant, our lives changed completely.” As the pandemic began to impact our all of our daily lives, they made the decision to reach out for community help. “We signed up for daily meals in May 2020,” recounts Ginette. “We had heard it was a meal service for older people, but we didn’t realize how much you had to offer!” Since then, Ginette and Evan have enjoyed the peace of mind that our volunteers help make possible, with delicious, nutritious meal offerings and regular social connections that enrich their day-to-day lives. “I lost a lot of weight dealing with my eating disorder, and Evan suffers from high blood pressure and is unable to access exercise equipment,” Ginette says. “We don’t have a vehicle, so grocery shopping is hard for us. We were relying on our son to help provide food, and planning meals for the two of us was becoming stressful. It was an emotional roller coaster, and we joined the Daily Meal Program at just the right time.” Today, Ginette and Evan have enjoyed getting to know their delivery drivers, and the daily deliveries have helped the couple “rediscover a sense of freedom” they weren’t sure they’d ever get back. “Your volunteers are the kindest of people who always check to see if everything is ok. It is so nice to have some conversation as we don’t get out much at all...Meals on Wheels has made our lives a lot easier,” Evan says. “To your staff and volunteers, thank you so much, and keep up the great work. To those considering signing up or volunteering, go for it! Do not give it a second thought. Your volunteers make a tremendous difference to us older folks! These last few years have been difficult, but your volunteers have shown us the power of people coming together for the greater good. Thank you.”



EVALUATION

HOW DO WE KNOW WE ARE HELPING?

Data collection and evaluation play an important role within COI. At a program level, they are mechanisms to understand successes and areas for improvement. They can also be used - as this report aims to do - to more broadly understand the landscape of the Sector and its impacts and needs. However, to be effective, data collection and evaluation must be meaningful and responsive to program and participant realities. Programs are invited to share their evaluation learnings as part of their COR. Additionally, co-analysis participants engaged in a discussion of data collection and evaluation, focusing on the following topics:

- Using data to inform programming
- Challenges of data collection
- Utility of the Common Outcomes data collection exercise and suggestions for improvement

The primary concern among program representatives were the tensions between collecting data that is expected from funders and the practicality of collecting it. Programs are already struggling to ensure resources are available for effective program delivery. The requirement to carry out data collection activities often exists as an additional, under-resourced burden. Further, concern was expressed around understanding the intentionality of the data collection, with one participant stating:

"It's important for us to know why we are asking these questions. It's important for clients to understand why we are asking these questions. They need to know this."

Participants also identified the quality of the data collected as a concern, partly as a consequence of minimal resourcing available for evaluation activities and partly as a consequence of the data itself. Many expressed that a better balance needs to be struck between the use of quantitative and qualitative data. The former being more readily available and easier to collect while the later being more resource intensive to collect and analyze but a critical component in highlighting the depth of the Sector's impact. To illustrate this concern, one participant posed the following question of the group:

"What if a program served 200 people less than last year, but the ones that we targeted had incredible support. Does it matter that we were 200 people short?"

Collecting demographic data was also flagged as a concern. Some shared that participants in some contexts were reluctant to provide their demographic data to program staff. Others indicated challenges with data accuracy if demographic data was not being collected:

"[We] can't report that we have Indigenous participants if they don't self identify, but it doesn't mean we aren't serving Indigenous peoples."

Programs reiterated the importance of common standards or practices for collecting race-based data. Further, they emphasized that collecting demographic data must be done in a trauma-informed way, and described the impacts that this type of data collection may have on the participant-staff relationship. More support for the Sector is needed in this area.

Some programs questioned the generalizability of the outcome results, suggesting that COI indicator wording is interpreted differently across programs and agencies. Specifically, program understanding of "positive change" was context-specific and varied from situation to situation, program type to program type, population to population. Further, the response rates to many evaluation activities were low. One group summarized this sentiment, along with sentiments regarding the challenges endured as a result of COVID-19 with the following:

"Our team had evaluation learnings in 2021. We learned that when people are overworked and experiencing stress, which happened in 2021 due to the pandemic, it is difficult for them to find time to participate in our evaluation activities."

Programs provided the following suggestions to COI funders to address the discussed evaluation and reporting challenges:

- Provide subsidized tools and professional development opportunities.
- Provide more opportunities for COI programs to meet throughout the year to discuss challenges and successes.
- Allow opportunities during evaluation activities to reflect not just on successes, but on what went wrong.
- Take time to work with programs to ensure data is usable not just for reporting requirements, but to facilitate effective program delivery.

Based on this feedback and further feedback provided through a survey to co-analysis attendees, the Common Outcomes Initiative will undertake the following actions over the next year:

- Provide a series of free learning opportunities on evaluation (Eval 101 Lite) in November - December 2022. These virtual sessions will include opportunities for agencies to connect with each other and share strategies.
- Host a co-analysis session to review 2022 COR data in the spring of 2023 to invite a more timely discussion, including opportunities for programs to share their learnings with each other and discuss emerging needs.
- Undertake an evaluation of the Common Outcomes Report through

2022 and 2023. This evaluation will allow for more exploration of what reporting and program evaluation is reasonable, meaningful, and helpful for program delivery, and will support changes to the Common Outcomes Report in the future.

CONCLUSION

This report aims to share a picture of the Social Services Sector based on the reporting and feedback of COI programs. Programs indicated that not only have community needs escalated through 2021 and 2022, the complexity of need that participants face is also increasing. At the same time, agencies report significant funding and human resource strain.

COI agencies suggested that funders could support them through these challenges in the following ways:

1. Provide consistent, flexible funding which allows them to adequately resource their organizations from an administrative and operational perspective.
2. Support collaboration through facilitating connections and conversations across the Sector, and further, to fund collaborations and wrap-around models.
3. Support equitable access to funding. Ensure wide distribution of calls for funding applications and provide support to those agencies requiring additional skills and capacity (i.e., grant writing sessions).
4. Use flexible reporting requirements and reduce the administrative burden of reporting. Provide additional support for data collection if requiring specific information to be reported.
5. Advocate for agencies and for the community, and accompany this with funding.

In light of the needs, feedback, and recommendations agencies have shared, over the next year the Common Outcomes Initiative Working Group will focus on the following:

1. Providing agency capacity building opportunities,
2. Supporting connections between COI agencies, and
3. Undertaking an evaluation of COR to implement a framework that better meets agencies' needs for feasible, meaningful reporting that supports effective program delivery.

The Common Outcomes Initiative celebrates the important work that agencies, their program staff, and participants engaged in through 2021 and the impact that they created together. Agencies warn that solutions need to be developed to ensure that the sector can effectively serve the community into the future. We share their feedback and commit to supporting these solutions in the ways we are able.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: DATA COLLECTION METHOD/TIMING

Programs were asked to report on their primary data collection methodology. The majority of the data continued to be collected through surveys/questionnaires (63%). A change this year was that direct observations (12%) and group discussions (9%) were more frequent than interviews (7%). Lastly, participants also used administrative statistics (6%).

Programs may collect data more than once with each participant. In total, data collection was attempted with 46, 446 participants.

Data collected:

During program: 32%
During & Post: 22%
Post: 21%
Pre, During & Post: 11%
Pre & Post: 6%
Follow Up: 6%
Pre: 1%

APPENDIX 2: INDICATOR SUMMARY

Overall Average Positive Change in the Five Impact Areas = 91.8%

Common Outcomes	# of programs reporting	# of participants asked	% of participants with a positive change
Impact Area: Resilient Individuals	Positive Change = 87.2%		
1: Children and youth have improved developmental skills.	49	11,066	88.1%
1a: Participants demonstrate developmentally appropriate skills in one or more of the following areas: personal/social skills, communication skills, gross motor skills, fine motor skills, problem solving skills, coping skills, literacy, numeracy.	28	3,099	89.6%
1b: Participants demonstrate/report behaviours or feelings that are consistent with some of the following of the eight developmental assets: support, empowerment, boundaries & expectations, constructive use of time, commitment to learning, positive values, social competencies, positive identity.	44	7,967	87.6%
2: Participants have improved skills to address identified issues.	42	12,223	86.3%
2a: Participants demonstrate being able to positively cope with day-to-day stress	1	50	44%
2b: Participants demonstrate an increased capacity to solve day-to-day problems and challenges (problem-solving skills).	12	5,272	77.1%
2c: Participants demonstrate skills in one or more of the following areas: money management/financial literacy (i.e. knowledge related to budgeting, asset building, financial literacy, government benefits and subsidies, savings, decreasing debt.); self-care; community involvement; socialization; self-advocacy; interpersonal/relationships; parenting; literacy; refusal skills.	17	5,423	95.0%
2d: Participants demonstrate characteristics that are likely to help them address their identified issues - e.g., resiliency (ability to 'bounce back' from setbacks), optimism (positive outlook for future), positive self-esteem (feeling good about self, seeing own strengths), sense of meaning/purpose - e.g., pertaining to family/friends, broader community, belief systems (e.g., spiritual), healthy sense of identity	4	428	86.5%
2e: Participants report being involved in activities that support or assist with education (degrees, certificates, credentials or qualified for continuing education) or employment readiness (job relevant licences, resume writing support, interview skills, accessing proper equipment, skills training, gaining proper ID).	11	922	88.3%
2f: Participants demonstrate that they have the capacity to navigate the options and resources available to them (i.e., understand the information and how it could apply to their situation, feel they have the 'tools' to make an informed decision).	1	12	100%
2g: Participants increased their wages or found employment	1	116	94.8%

Common Outcomes	# of programs reporting	# of participants asked	% of participants with a positive change
<i>Impact Area: Thriving Families</i>	<i>Positive Change = 92.0%</i>		
3: Participants have improved family functioning.	26	5,071	92.0%
3a: Participants report a positive change in their family's routine (more structure & stability).	-	-	-
3b: Participants demonstrate increased positive interactions among family (e.g., listening to each other, accepting each other for who they are, praising each other, solving problems together, supporting other family members to feel good about themselves/each other).	23	4,271	92.9%
3c: Participants report doing more activities together as a family	4	800	86.9%
4: Caregivers have increased knowledge of child development	5	338	96.2%
4a: Caregivers identify activities that are appropriate for their child(ren)'s development (e.g., what activities they would encourage children to do, or do with their children, at a particular age/stage).	2	33	84.9%
4b: Caregivers identify ways they can interact with their child(ren) in a way that matches their level of development (e.g., read to child(ren), engage in interactive play in home or community).	-	-	-
4c: Caregivers identify the developmental stages that can be expected of their child in relation to: communication, physical development, attention, focus.	3	305	97.4%
5: Caregivers have increased knowledge of positive parenting skills	8	1,667	95.0%
5a: Caregivers identify aspects of a nurturing environment for their child(ren) at home (e.g., defining home, have books, toys in the home, play with child(ren), engage in conversations about things of interest to the child, create social opportunities for child(ren) with peers).	4	908	98.5%
5b: Caregivers identify strategies to apply in one or more of the following areas: providing a nurturing environment, helping their children develop age-appropriate skills, providing positive feedback to children, addressing children's behaviour challenges, setting boundaries, transmission of traditional knowledge or skills.	4	846	91.4%
5c: Caregivers report understanding of positive cultural parenting practices.	-	-	-
6: Caregivers have improved positive parenting skills	5	811	86.9%
6a: Caregivers use developmentally appropriate strategies learned during the program (e.g., healthy attachment behaviours, positive feedback, constructive criticism/behavioural alternatives, etc.).	3	440	85.2%
6b: Caregivers report using positive parenting strategies at home (e.g., have books, toys in the home, play with child(ren), engage in conversations about things of interest to the child, create social opportunities for child(ren) with peers).	2	371	89.0%

Common Outcomes	# of programs reporting	# of participants asked	% of participants with a positive change
Impact Area: Welcoming and Engaged Communities	Positive Change = 90.8%		
7: Participants develop increased awareness regarding social issues in the community.	15	28,624	90.8%
7a: Participants identify social issues that impact their quality of life or that of others in their community (e.g., poverty, family violence, bullying, broader personal safety, crime, addictions, mental health, sexual health, healthy relationships, homelessness, physical disabilities/chronic health conditions).	13	19,605	89.5%
7b: Participants identify ways they could get involved in addressing social issues that impact their quality of life or that of others in their community (e.g., volunteering for or organizing events/activities, advocacy in areas like respect for human rights, policy changes to support or protect people, specific types of programs/services to fill gaps).	2	8,901	92.9%
7c: Participants understand the history of colonization and its impact on Indigenous people in Canada.	2	118	86.9%
8: Participants have increased positive involvement in the community.	19	1,901	91.1%
8a: Participants report or demonstrate becoming more interested in community activities or groups (e.g., try activities that are new to them, get involved in volunteering for or organizing community activities, become part of a group of people with common interests).	6	1,288	90.1%
8b: Participants report that they enjoy spending time in their community.	1	9	100%
8c: Participants report that they feel a sense of belonging/citizenship in their community.	1	14	100%
8d: Participants report being involved in cultural events/ceremony/teachings that are meaningful and significant to them.	1	21	100%
8e: Participants report way(s) in which their volunteering has made a positive difference in the community (- e.g., safety, community connectedness, access to supports (food, transportation), beautification, etc)	2	142	91.6%
8f: Volunteers identify what they have learned about their community and/or themselves through volunteering (e.g., community issues, how they can match their own interests or skills with volunteer opportunities).	10	427	93.0%
8g: Volunteers demonstrate skills that could assist in or enhance their contribution to other paid or unpaid work.	-	-	-

Common Outcomes	# of programs reporting	# of participants asked	% of participants with a positive change
Impact Area: Strong Sector	Positive Change = 89.2%		
9: Strengthened individual skills within organizations.	14	427	87.6%
9a: Organization staff or volunteers report new knowledge to serve their participants.	-	-	-
9b: Organization staff or volunteers report new skills to address identified needs.	-	-	-
9c: Organization staff or volunteers report commitment to and/or confidence in implementing knowledge and/or skills.	-	-	-
9d: Organization staff or volunteers report relationships/connections have been enhanced	14	427	87.6%
10: More effective community organizations.	6	323	91.3%
10a: Organizations report training has strengthened organizational capacity (e.g., board and financial governance, succession planning, evaluation support).	1	68	92.7%
10b: Organizations report resources (e.g., research, tools and templates) have strengthened organizational capacity (e.g., board and financial governance, succession planning, evaluation support).	5	245	93.1%
10c: Organizations report making evidence informed decisions.	-	-	-
10d: Organizations report making improvements to their practice/policy.	1	10	40.0%
11: Enhanced collaborative efforts.	13	241	89.2%
11a: Organizations report increased capacity to engage in collaborative efforts.	-	-	-
11b: Participants of the collaborative report that they are better able to meet community needs due to working together.	13	241	89.2%
11c: Participants identify how their communities (as a whole) are demonstrating progress in one or more of the following domains of community capacity: Participation; Leadership; Community structures; External supports; Asking why; Obtaining resources; Skills, knowledge, and learning; Linking with others; Sense of community.	-	-	-

Common Outcomes	# of programs reporting	# of participants asked	% of participants with a positive change
Impact Area: Strong Connections and Relationships	Positive Change = 89.2%		
12: Participants have increased knowledge of community resources.	39	25,375	92.4%
12a: Participants identify community resources that could address their information or service needs (e.g., could be for caregiving, relationships, mental health, physical health, basic needs, abuse, community connections, intergenerational trauma or other issues).	18	11,570	95.0%
12b: Participants ask for information about or referral to one or more community resources that address their information or service needs.	-	-	-
12c: Participants report awareness about the options and resources available to them (e.g., types of housing, counselling, safety-related information/support, financial information/support, community involvement, health-related services).	22	13,805	90.3%
13: Participants access community resources that meet their needs	46	85,453	98.5%
13a: Participants access nutritious food (e.g. fruits, vegetables, multiple food groups).	15	73,951	99.7%
13b: Participants access housing that is safe, adequate, affordable, permanent -- in either independent or supported living arrangements, as appropriate to their needs (e.g., their physical, mental or social health; economic situation).	4	133	87.2%
13c: Participants access appropriate clothing.	1	31	87.1%
13d: Participants access transportation.	-	-	-
13e: Participants access resources that promote safety (e.g., protection from physical emotional, or financial abuse; assistance with daily living tasks as needed).	2	211	64.0%
13f: Participants access mental health resources (e.g., counselling).	1	104	48.1%
13g: Participants access resources that promote social inclusion (e.g., group activities, outings, home visits).	7	1,768	92.5%
13h: Participants access resources that promote financial stability (e.g., employment opportunities, career counselling, financial literacy training, accessing benefits and/or subsidies).	8	4,486	98.7%
13i: Participants report referrals provided were relevant to meet their needs.	13	4,769	84.6%
14: Participants have improved networks of social support.	94	21,145	92.2%
14a: Participants report making positive social connections with peers in the program or in the broader community (through the program).	33	2,598	92.7%
14b: Participants report having sources of personal, cultural, community, or professional support.	47	10,027	91.3%
14c: Participants report that they feel safe (physically, emotionally, financially) with people in their lives.	3	1,108	96.8%
14d: Participants report feeling heard/understood/respected by program staff, volunteers and/or participants.	19	7,412	92.7%

APPENDIX 3: FCSS-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

FCSS Partnerships and Collaborations Summary		
Primary Focus of Partnership	# of Agencies	Total # of Partners Involved
Poverty Reduction	4	75
Senior Wellness	1	6
Community Mental Health	1	38
Homelessness	1	5
Inclusion and/or Diversity	1	6
Common Service Access	1	27

Partnership/Collaboration Accomplishments
<p>The Youth Agency Collaboration agencies participated in seven engagement sessions, producing details for a city model for the prevention of youth homelessness in Edmonton. Their ideas are captured in a final report, which outlines guiding principles for the model, an evaluation framework (metrics), coordinated workflows and next steps for implementing the model. The Coordinated Youth Response (CYR) brought together 24 agencies, coordinating their service delivery during the pandemic to help vulnerable youth (16-24) through use of a shared client database with single client records and through common workflows like consent. Agencies participated in several training and continuous improvement meetings. A total of 2,000 interactions with youth took place (Sept. 2020 - June 2021). This project served as an experiment for coordinating services in the long term, generating many learnings that will help YAC move forward with a sustainable city model.</p>
<p>Implemented the expansion of the Explore Edmonton Urban Farm, in partnership with MCHB, Explore Edmonton, and the Butler Family Foundation, to double the size of a centrally located urban farm. Created and delivered Level 3 curriculum and two rounds of programming for Market Ready - a program to empower local entrepreneurs to expand their markets and scale up their businesses. Worked with AHC and FILMR Media to creatively support 10 local businesses and develop promotional products for future support. Worked with Skillcity, BGS Enterprises, Matchwork, IFSSA, and C5 to deliver diverse youth programming focused on job skill/search development, coding, digital skills, and career development. Worked with Bangel PR and MCHB to develop local fundraising strategies and activities - with a focus on promoting the Grocery Run. Worked with IFSSA and C5 to deliver youth programming focused on job readiness, digital skills, and career development.</p>
<p>As agencies became more comfortable and familiar with program and service delivery during COVID, we were able to offer more opportunities to partner and collaborate. We offered our online Lunch & Learn series as a platform for agencies to share information about some of the programs and supports they provide for people in Edmonton and engage with the public.</p>

Partnership/Collaboration Accomplishments - continued

With the Seniors Home Supports Program operating since 2016, we were able to analyze five years of data, looking at service provision and vulnerability factors of the users such as age, gender, poverty, and risk of isolation (i.e., living alone). In the summer we engaged with our evaluator partner, KRD Consulting Group, to design and implement an evaluation and research project to understand any effects of demographic vulnerability factors on seniors' participation in the program and outcomes they experience. We shared the findings of this evaluation at a sector learning session named 'Data Dive, Serving Edmonton Seniors'. This session was designed to help people learn more about vulnerability factors that effect a senior's ability to age well.

Developed/piloted Workplace Wellness training for social services (4 part series) to support mental health, & Intergenerational Wisdom training to connect Indigenous with non-Indigenous people & shift lens from trauma to include strength/wisdom/resiliency. Continued QPR suicide prevention training with Living Hope. Co-created Peer Working Group with E4C Wellness Network & worked on peer governance, in context of enhancing user-focus of CMHAP's work. Collaborated on multiple events (e.g., Connecting the Dots - > 200 community members engaged in conversation on youth mental health). Broadened distribution of Need Help tool across sectors. Launched Information Sharing Toolkit & hosted webinar on use. Launched Resilient Minds Adaptation for Social Services, focused on building peer support capabilities for staff with trauma lens. Relaunched Social Media & updated website for greater accessibility. Created mental health resource pages for LGBTQ+, Youth & Caregivers, Indigenous populations.

Due to COVID-19, and the system response, many of our housing resources were shifted to the Tipinawaw location in the fall of 2020. Upon the closure of Tipinawaw, in May of 2021, our housing resources again were shifted to the Community Space Activation here at the Bissell Centre. From here Housing Navigator hours were extended and we were able to isolate the data we were collecting to highlight the housing work being done at this specific location. Since May 4, 2021, from this location specifically, we have had housing conversations with 693 people. 107 of these individuals have been confirmed as having secured stable housing.

Maintained essential programming for students, families and schools during the pandemic when needs escalated and we were able to sustain mental health, food, familial supports, mentoring, academic support and more. This ensured that kids and families were able to access their community of support and rely on consistent services during a challenging and unpredictable time. These supports are credited with preventing more families from falling further into poverty and distress.

We are reporting specifically on an initiative of this project that was delivered in 2021 -- a 8 session training for FCSS-funded agencies on Building Anti-Racism and Equity into Community Services and Programs -- and a Community of Practice for this training that continued for 6 months afterward. This training and model was highly successful in being relevant and accessible to FCSS agencies as it related to anti-racism and equity issues that affect the organization.

Empower U successfully completed its 10th year by adding a new partner to the collaborative, IFSSA works with newcomers to Canada and they provide the Empower U program in various languages to address their clients language barriers. All nine Empower U service delivery partners found innovative ways to continue delivering the program under health restriction measures. The Collaborative is working on improving collective decision making processes and reviewing partners' responsibilities. This exercise has helped Empower U members ratify their commitment to the work and strengthen their roles in the partnership. We created an evaluation advisory committee which is comprised of national, provincial and local partners. This group has provided insight in strengthening our current evaluation framework and aligning participants outcomes and indicators to the National Financial Empowerment Indicators.

How Partnership is Contributing to Identified Focus

The YAC committee now has actionable steps it can take to move forward with implementing a city model for the prevention of youth homelessness in Edmonton. Strategic direction has been identified in a Final Report, assisting YAC to take action such as governance and policies, engagement with youth and Indigenous communities and building the data infrastructure to support the coordination of services under the city model. The Coordinated Youth Response highlighted many learnings to assist YAC in moving forward. Key themes from success stories shared by staff from participating agencies highlight the effectiveness of coordinating services, thus confirming the need for the city model. The top two themes from their stories show the benefits of service coordination are improved access to services for youth and increased knowledge about agencies' services along with building trust among agencies. A top key lesson learned is securing adequate funding for agencies participating in the model.

Through the Urban Farm, we are addressing food insecurity by connecting people to community, growing opportunities, nutritional education, and fresh produce. This decreases spending on food while creating opportunities to promote food security. Through Market Ready, we are supporting new and emerging entrepreneurs. We are supporting their businesses, improving their chances of economic success, increasing their market representation, and expanding their local networks. Through our entrepreneur promotional efforts, we are elevating the online presence of local businesses while creating accessible promotional materials for other Edmonton entrepreneurs. Our youth programming efforts are equipping youth with skills to succeed in the modern workplace and with strategies to find meaningful employment opportunities. Our work with MCHB and Bangel PR has generated increased donations for the Grocery Run - connecting local families to regular food deliveries.

We provide resources and information to all FCSS-funded agencies through the City FCSS Liaisons, which ultimately improves agencies' understanding of the impacts of the pandemic, of policy changes, and an indication of current needs or trends in the sector. In 2021 this was enhanced through the development of a Literature Review and four research snapshot documents for agencies to access, housed on the City of Edmonton FCSS website. Furthermore, many of our capacity building efforts (such as the Lunch & Learns) related to providing support focused on improving agencies' capacity for increased audience education and awareness.

One of the evaluation cohorts of the 2021 summer research project were repeat users. We sought a deeper understanding of the impact of the program in their lives. Through focus groups, they identified what led them to use SHSP, and we were told: a commitment to age in place, frailty-related challenges in home-maintenance tasks, and challenges with safety. The impact of the program is primarily preventative, acting as a stabilizing force to absorb the shocks of age-related changes and increased resiliency, allowing them to age in place safely for a longer period of time. The personal connection component of the program design was also a key success factor, leading to trust in the program. The research has confirmed that SHSP continues to be an effective resource for the needs for which it was designed (aging in place, safety and social inclusion) and is able to create positive impact across a variety of demographic vulnerabilities for Edmonton's seniors.

Steering Committee partners undertook a strategic review to develop actions and priorities for the year and further connect with collaborating organizations who contribute time/energy/expertise via Leadership Teams &/or Task Groups. These are diverse across sectors (health, social, education) pop'ns (newcomers, seniors, children/youth) reflect a mix of community, government, & business. Key people with lived/living experience of mental health challenges are part of the Peer Working Group. Many minds/hands collaborate on Action Plan resources, tools, training, & relationship-building to shift practices & policies at service delivery & system levels to benefit community mental health, such as the development of the Information Sharing tool to help inform professionals at a system level. Key partners & collaborators tell us how the Action Plan work enhances their practices, policies, and system change efforts.

How Partnership is Contributing to Identified Focus - continued

The Outreach Housing Team, along with its partners, has supported 254 individuals to secure stable and permanent housing in 2021. Early intervention when newly homeless as well as eviction prevention is a critical part of this work. The Housing Outreach Team's expertise in the continuum of housing resources provides invaluable support to our partners and those they support by eliminating barriers that often result in chronic homelessness. Barriers such as property owner mediation, government financial reporting and securing damage deposits are mitigated by our team, using minimal resources, resulting in the prevention of trauma related to eviction and the subsequent public expense of chronic homelessness.

By using a multi-disciplinary network, we are able to provide a wrap-around supports for students, families and schools to address a variety of needs and remove barriers. We have a shared accountability model that ensures clients do not fall between the cracks and that they access to supports to address their wellbeing and achieve future success.

When a collective of FCSS organizations has a shared understanding of anti-racism (power, privilege, prejudice, etc.) and equity and can "speak" that language together, it is powerful because it enables organizations and programs to recognize, interrupt, and dismantle structures of racism and inequity. The eight sessions were important as they allowed the application and discussion of the theories of anti-racism and equity and also developed a cohort that was able to form social ties across and within organizations. The Community of Practice that followed also enabled practitioners to strengthen their knowledge and networks.

Empower U is a financial empowerment initiative and a poverty reduction strategy that helps improve the financial capability and financial stability of people living with low income. Through financial literacy education, matched savings and one-on-one financial coaching, program participants are able to increase access to government benefits and tax credits, pay down debt, increase savings and build their credit score. Our latest evaluation shows that participants have precarious financial health with most participants living below the low-income threshold. 64.7% of participants have incomes below \$25,000 and 1 in 4 have annual incomes below \$10,000. In terms of household debt, participants' total debt varied widely, 48% had debts under \$10,000, while 13.3% of participants have debts exceeding \$30,000. In addition, participant savings are very limited, 49.7% indicated having no savings at all and 26.6% have savings of less than \$500.

Steering Committee partners undertook a strategic review to develop actions and priorities for the year and further connect with collaborating organizations who contribute time/energy/expertise via Leadership Teams &/or Task Groups. These are diverse across sectors (health, social, education) pop'ns (newcomers, seniors, children/youth) reflect a mix of community, government, & business. Key people with lived/living experience of mental health challenges are part of the Peer Working Group. Many minds/hands collaborate on Action Plan resources, tools, training, & relationship-building to shift practices & policies at service delivery & system levels to benefit community mental health, such as the development of the Information Sharing tool to help inform professionals at a system level. Key partners & collaborators tell us how the Action Plan work enhances their practices, policies, and system change efforts.

FCSS Information and Referral Summary

Type of Information / Referral Requests Received	# of Agencies	# of Requests
Phone Calls	3	76,998
Emails	3	1,249
Walk-ins	2	61
Homelessness	1	5
Inclusion and/or Diversity	1	6
Common Service Access	1	27
Information Sharing Mediums	# of Agencies	# of Participants Reached
Newsletters	3	6,586
Website Hits	2	123,683
Information Fairs/Evenings/Sessions	2	696
Social Media Interactions	# of Agencies	# Followers
Facebook	2	21,691
Twitter	2	2,911
Instagram	1	7,568
Radio Advertisements	1	0
Text Message Interactions	1	5,066

APPENDIX 4: UNITED WAY-SPECIFIC QUESTIONS

New this year, programs receiving United Way funding were asked to report on one or more outputs. The intention of this reporting was to help donors to United Way understand program impact in a more tangible way.

The outputs reported below reflect activity from July 1 - December 31, 2021, the reporting period under United Way's current funding cycle.

Output Category	# provided
Basic Needs - Food Security	
Meals	1,080,426
Food Baskets/Hampers	66,967
Other Food Security Support	36,483
Basic Needs - Housing	
Contact Sessions	234
Nights of Shelter	365
Other Housing Supports	42
Basic Needs - Emergency Funds	
Emergency Funds	42
Housing Supports	148
Transportation Trips (bus tickets, ride fare)	1302
Utility Supports	6
Other Emergency Fund Supports	14
Educational Supports	
Contact Sessions	1332
Devices (computers & personal devices)	57
Supported Referrals	137
Other Educational Supports	1782
Employment Services	
Employment Training/Workshops	80
Resume/Interview Supports	389
Other Employment Supports	773

Output Category	# provided
Financial Empowerment	
Information/Financial Counselling/Coaching Sessions	1449
Financial Counselling Referrals	908
Financial Education/Literacy Sessions	316
Tax Returns Prepared and Submitted	3,292
Other Tax Preparation Supports	3,258,828
Information & Referral - Staff member(s) connect participants to resources (systems navigation, supported referral)	
Inquiries	5,310
Other Supports	200
Information & Referral - Traditional Information & Referral phone or web interaction	
Calls/Web Inquiries	36,221
Other Traditional Information & Referral Supports	749
Mental Health & Wellness - Group Counselling	
Group Sessions	297
Other Group Counselling Supports	10
Mental Health & Wellness - Individual Counselling	
Counselling Sessions	17,229
Supported Referrals	2,756
Mental Health & Wellness - Public Education	
Mental Health Workshops/Presentations	278
Other Public Education Services	57
Parenting/Caregiver Supports	
Caregiver/Child Activity Kits	3,836
Caregiver Workshops/Sessions	519
Contact Sessions	2,057
Other Parenting/Caregiver Supports	414
Personal Safety	
Intakes	596
Safety Plans	2,685
Other Personal Safety Supports	369

Output Category	# provided
Reducing Social Isolation - Bringing supports to people who are isolated and who may not be able to participate in community-based group activities due to various barriers (seniors in residences with mobility issues, low-income single parents, people in domestic violence shelters) but the program comes to them through individualized supports/outreach/check ins.	
Contact Sessions	1,704
Outreach Visits	68
Transportation Trips	103
Devices (computers & personal devices)	166
Other Reducing Social Isolation Supports	164
Social Inclusion - Increasing community connections and building strong relationships by bringing people together in groups. This could be through a culturally-based youth program, peer support group, recreation opportunities for families, etc. These programs reduce barriers for low income individuals and families so they can participate in society in a more fulsome way.	
Outreach Visits	3,604
Social Activities	1,628
Learning Devices (computers & personal devices)	83
Contact Sessions (one on one)	23,513
Other Social Inclusion Supports	9,356
Strong Sector - Collaboration	
Collaborative Meetings	468
Collaborations/Networks facilitated	30
Partners Engaged	800
Other Collaboration Supports	27
Strong Sector - Evaluation	
Partners Engaged	20
Trainings/Workshops Completed	17
Evaluations Completed	3
Strong Sector - Research	
Partners Engaged in Research	5
Research Projects	2
Workshops/Presentations	24

APPENDIX 5: LIST OF AGENCIES

This report is based on the activities and reporting of the following agencies. Our sincere thanks for the important work that they continue to do in the community, and for the information that they have provided that has made this report possible.

Abbottsfield Youth Project (AYP) Society
ABC Head Start Society
Aboriginal Counseling Services Association of Alberta
Action for Healthy Communities
Alberta Caregivers Association O/A Caregivers Alberta
Alberta Parenting for the Future Association
ASSIST Community Services Centre
Ben Calf Robe Society
Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society
Beverly Day Care Society & Family Resource Centre
Bissell Centre
Boyle Street Community Services
Boys & Girls Clubs Big Brothers Big Sisters of Edmonton & Area
Boys and Girls Club of Leduc
Boys and Girls Club of Strathcona County
Canadian Arab Friendship Association
Canadian Mental Health Association - Edmonton Region
Canadian National Institute for the Blind
Candora Society of Edmonton
Catholic Social Services
Centre for Family Literacy Society
Centre to End All Sexual Exploitation (CEASE)
CHANGE Health Alberta
City West Childcare and Community Support Society
Community Options - A Society for Children and Families
Community-University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, University of Alberta
Connect Society
Council for the Advancement of African Canadians O/A Africa Centre
Dickinsfield Amity House
Edmonton Chamber of Voluntary Organizations
Edmonton City Centre Church Corporation (e4c)
Edmonton Immigrant Services Association
Edmonton John Howard Society
Edmonton Meals on Wheels
Edmonton Mennonite Centre for Newcomers
Edmonton Multicultural Coalition Association
Edmonton Seniors Centre
Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council
Edmonton Social Planning Council
Edmonton's Food Bank: Edmonton Gleaners Association
Elizabeth Fry Society of Northern Alberta
Family Centre of Northern Alberta
Family Futures Resource Network Society
Fort Saskatchewan Boys & Girls Club
Fort Saskatchewan Families First Society
Free Play for Kids Inc.

Fulton Child Care Association
Gateway Association
Governing Council of the Salvation Army
iHuman Youth Society
Inner City Youth Development Association
Institute for Sexual Minority Studies and Services (iSMSS)
Institute for the Advancement of Aboriginal Women
Islamic Family & Social Services Association (IFSSA)
Jasper Place Child and Family Resource Centre
Jasper Place Wellness Centre
Jewish Family Services
KARA Family Resource Centre
Lansdowne Child Care & Family Centre Society
Leduc & District Food Bank Association
Linking Generations Society of Alberta
M.A.P.S. (Mapping and Planning Support) Alberta Capital Region
Métis Child and Family Services Society
Mill Woods Seniors Association
Momentum Walk-In Counselling Society
Multicultural Family Resource Society
Next Step Senior High II - Fort Saskatchewan
North Edmonton Seniors Association
North West Edmonton Seniors Society
Norwood Child and Family Resource Centre
Old Strathcona Youth Society
Oliver Centre Early Learning Programs for Children & Families Society
Operation Friendship Seniors Society
P.A.L.S. - Project Adult Literacy Society
Parents Empowering Parents Society
Parkland Food Bank Society
Pride Centre of Edmonton, The
Riseup Society Alberta
Riverbend Reaching Out to Community & Kids Society
Saffron Centre LTD.
Sage Seniors Association
Senior Citizens Opportunity Neighbourhood Association
Sexual Assault Centre of Edmonton
Shaama Centre for Seniors and Women
South East Edmonton Seniors Association
Spinal Cord Injury Alberta
St. Albert Community Village and Food Bank
St. Albert Family Resource Centre
Strathcona Place Society
Strathcona Shelter Society Ltd.
Terra Centre for Teen Parents
Today Family Violence Help Centre (Today Centre)
United Way of the Alberta Capital Region
Volunteer Program Association
Westend Seniors Activity Centre
Women Building Futures
YMCA of Northern Alberta
Youth Empowerment and Support Services
YWCA Edmonton