



EDMONTON FCSS PROGRAM

FCSS
Family & Community
Support Services

Edmonton

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EDMONTON FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (FCSS) OVERVIEW

FCSS is a joint municipal–provincial funding program designed to establish, administer, and operate preventive social services. The program emphasizes prevention, volunteerism, and local oversight. It is governed by the [Family & Community Support Services Act and Regulation](#), with the City of Edmonton being involved since the beginning in 1966.

An important part of this partnership is the Government of Alberta's recognition of the municipality's role in identifying and addressing the needs based on the local context and research. The Government of Alberta and City of Edmonton share the costs of the program—the Province contributes 80 percent of the program cost and the City covers a minimum of 20 percent. The City of Edmonton uses the majority of their provincial funding to partner with community social service providers to offer preventive programming.

Social well-being is defined as a state of living where people experience acceptance, appreciation, connection, contribution and compatibility within themselves and in a reciprocal relationship with others.

EDMONTON FCSS

Edmonton FCSS's purpose is to enhance the social well-being of individuals, families, and community through prevention. FCSS provides supports designed to help people gain a level of balance that prevents them from falling into unhealthy patterns of behaviour and relationships, or to regain well-being as problems start to emerge.

The overarching priority for Edmonton FCSS is to increase [social inclusion](#) and equity by funding preventive programs and services, community development initiatives, and supporting the social sector.

Prevention is a proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empower them to meet the challenges of life.

The combined efforts of funded programs and City activities are working toward achieving Council's strategic plan, priorities and goals, and those of the Social Development Branch with focused efforts on social inclusion.

Prevention is a proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empower them to meet the challenges of life.

Primary prevention is the active pursuit of individual, family and community protective factors that lead to the well-being of self and others.

Secondary prevention occurs when these protective factors address or modify risk factors before restorative supports are required.

ALIGNMENT WITH CITY OF EDMONTON STRATEGIC PLANS

The Edmonton FCSS Program aligns with three City strategic documents:

1. CONNECT(ED)MONTON – Edmonton's Strategic Plan 2019 – 2028

- **CONNECTED:** We create as a community to connect people to what matters to them. We care about the impact of our actions on our social, economic, cultural, spiritual and environmental systems. We serve those here today and those who come after us.
- **Healthy City Goal:** Edmonton is a neighbourly city with community and personal wellness that embodies and promotes equity for all Edmontonians.

2. Edmonton City Plan – charts out how we will get to a future city, a city that has the benefits we enjoy today with new opportunities for the future.

1. I want to BELONG and contribute
2. I want to LIVE in a place that feels like home
3. I want opportunities to THRIVE

3. Community Safety and Well-being (CSWB) – All Edmontonians benefit when more people in our city feel safe and included. Community safety and well-being is a responsibility shared by everyone. As Edmonton moves towards becoming the safest city in Canada by 2030, the Community Safety and Well-being strategy was developed to help achieve this objective and takes a whole-system approach, having all members of the community working together.

THEORY OF CHANGE

By providing funding for preventive programs, services, and community development initiatives, Edmonton FCSS will strengthen relationships and connections, which creates:

- 1. Resilient Individuals & Thriving Families** who are able to bounce forward from challenges and stress. Together they learn and develop the capacity to support the physical, social, psychological, emotional, and spiritual (cultural) development of children, youth, adults or seniors.
- 2. Welcoming and Engaged Communities** that are equitable, diverse and inclusive. Community members are active, connected and supported in achieving their goals. These communities support strong relationships and connections, where all people can thrive and contribute. They can be geographic or interest-based.
- 3. Impactful Collaborations** ensures individuals, organizations, and the broader civil society working within, have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to provide a coordinated, collaborative, and connected web of support. It facilitates policy and systems change, in particular to support equity-deserving individuals.

Accessible resources that develop and maintain **protective factors** (for instance, parenting programs) help individuals, families, and communities build resiliency. They also help “push back” against **risk factors** (such as isolation or early childhood trauma) that increase vulnerability. The result is a benefit to the whole community—enhancing the social well-being of individuals, families, and communities.

INCREASING SOCIAL INCLUSION & EQUITY THROUGH:

**Preventive
Programs &
Services**

**Community
Development
Initiatives**

**Strong
Sector**

TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTIONS FOR:



Resilient Individuals & Thriving Families

Are able to "bounce forward" from challenges and stress, and support each other holistically.



Welcoming & Engaged Communities

Are equitable, diverse and inclusive; they support strong relationships and connections.



Impactful Collaborations

Ensures individuals, organizations, and broader civil society have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to provide a coordinated, collaborative and connected web of support, also able to facilitate policy and systems change.

**RESULTING IN ENHANCED SOCIAL WELL-BEING
OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES**

COMMUNITY PROGRAM PRIORITIES ¹

Healthy Social Emotional Development

Social Emotional Development is foundational to child development and education—the approach by which children gain skills and knowledge to develop identity, manage emotions, build relationships, and make responsible decisions later in life (CASEL, 2020; CDCHU, 2016).

Outcomes to achieve:

- Children and youth have improved social emotional developmental skills.
 - *Indicator: Participants demonstrate developmentally appropriate skills in one or more of the following areas: personal/social skills, communication skills, problem solving skills, or coping skills.*
- Caregivers have the tools and skills to support healthy social emotional development in their children.
 - *Indicator: 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, or transferring traditional knowledge or skills.*

Positive Mental Health

Positive mental health is the capacity of individuals to feel, think, and act in ways that enhance their ability to enjoy life and face challenges. “It is a positive sense of emotional and spiritual well-being that respects the importance of culture, equity, social justice, interconnections and personal dignity” (PHAC, 2014).

Outcomes to achieve:

- Participants have improved skills to develop and maintain positive mental health.
 - *Indicator: Participants demonstrate characteristics likely to help them maintain positive mental health (e.g., resiliency, optimism, positive self-esteem, and/or sense of meaning/purpose).*
- Participants access resources to address their specific mental health needs.
 - *Indicator: Participants access mental health resources that are culturally and/or socially responsive (e.g., mental health resources for 2SLGBTQIA+, Indigenous, and/or newcomer persons).*
- Participants have improved networks of social support.
 - *Indicator: Participants report having sources of personal, cultural, community, or professional support.*

¹We want to acknowledge Edmonton Social Planning Council and MAPS Alberta for their contributions to the research that helped inform the priorities.

Healthy Relationships

Healthy relationships are formed through positive and trusting interactions. They are based on “respect, trust, support, accountability, honesty, responsibility, conflict resolution, fairness and non-threatening behaviour” (Government of Alberta, 2019).

Outcomes to achieve:

- Participants have improved skills to develop and maintain healthy relationships.
 - *Indicator: Participants demonstrate skills likely to help them maintain healthy relationships (e.g., conflict resolution, problem solving, healthy communication, decision making).*
 - Participants have improved networks of social support.
 - *Indicator: Participants report that they feel safe (physically, emotionally, financially) with people in their lives.*
-

Poverty Reduction and Homelessness Prevention

There are deep-rooted structural causes of poverty and homelessness. People tend to “experience poverty when they lack, or are denied, economic, social and cultural resources to fully and meaningfully participate in the community” (Ngo & Kolkman, 2019b). Poverty reduction and homelessness prevention involve implementing policies, practices, and programs that support full and meaningful participation by addressing individual situational factors and structural or systemic factors (Gaetz & DeJ, 6, Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2021).

Outcomes to achieve:

- Participants have improved skills to address identified issues.
 - *Indicator: Participants demonstrate skills in money management/financial literacy (e.g. knowledge related to budgeting, asset building, financial literacy, government benefits and subsidies, savings, decreasing debt).*
- Participants access community resources that meet their needs.
 - *Indicator: Participants access resources that promote financial stability (e.g., employment opportunities, career counselling, financial literacy training, accessing benefits and/or subsidies).*

STRONG SECTOR PRIORITIES

Within Edmonton, the not-for-profit sector is critical to creating an integrated and connected web of support made up of individuals and organizations that have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required for success. This system must be a connected one, harnessing the strengths and skills of others to provide the best possible services for those we serve.

The focus going forward is on integrated service coordination to provide more effective preventive social services to citizens. Formal partnerships between researchers and community organizations will generate knowledge and inform actions in the preventive social services space of the FCSS priorities and mandate.

Outcomes to achieve:

- Effective Service Delivery.
 - *Indicator: Participants of the collaborative/partnership report that they are able to more effectively meet community needs due to working together.*
- Knowledge Generation for Service Delivery.
 - *Indicator: Participants of the collaborative/partnership report that they are able to more effectively meet community needs due to working together.*

INTERSECTIONALITY: A KEY CONSIDERATION IN PREVENTION

While FCSS programs and services are available to all Edmontonians, FCSS-funded programs must be particularly mindful of **intersectionality** – considering the many identities of participants – when designing programs, so that they are inclusive of **equity-deserving groups**.

Some communities and individuals affected by multiple risk factors, including intergenerational trauma, systemic racism, persistent poverty, or displacement, may seem to be ineligible to access preventive programs. Yet, given Edmonton FCSS's focus on equity and inclusion, these populations with such risk factors (sometimes referred to as equity-deserving) are of primary importance to this program.

Of course FCSS-funded programs must be distinctly preventive, not intervention-focused, but promoting protective factors such as resilience or parenting skills and mitigating risk factors such as early childhood trauma or social isolation can benefit anyone.

Impacts of COVID-19

The ripple effects of the COVID-19 pandemic are still being felt throughout the social sector. Broad-reaching, preventive programs like those funded by FCSS can help support Edmontonians—as our city recovers from the pandemic's effects and impacts. Moving forward, these impacts must be taken into consideration when planning and administering preventive programs and services to those who need it most.

FUNDING PROCESS

The FCSS Program works on a three year funding cycle to align with the Province of Alberta funding agreement. Each funding cycle may focus on different priorities and the process to determine funding may also change. A funding guide is created for each new application period and is available on the [Edmonton FCSS website](#).

The Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB) is a delegated authority of City Council that works with City Administration to determine FCSS funding priorities, support the assessment process, make funding recommendations and provide policy direction. CSAB is supported in this work by their FCSS Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Advisory Board.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Community Development is the practice of building connections and capacity with people so they can work together on common issues and opportunities. (https://www.edmonton.ca/programs_services/for_communities/community-development-in-neighbourhoods).

Equity-Led: An equity-led organization includes **all** of the following:

- Equity-deserving cultures central to daily operations.
- Equity-deserving leadership at all levels – board, management, and staff.
- Programs developed with people with lived experience.
- Programs delivered by equity-deserving people.
- Organization and program has legitimacy and profile with key beneficiaries, neighbourhoods and partners.

Equity-deserving groups: “are communities that face significant collective challenges to participating in society. This marginalization could be created by attitudinal, historic, social and environmental barriers based on age, ethnicity, disability, economic status, gender, nationality, race, sexual orientation and transgender status, etc. Equity-deserving groups are those that identify barriers to equal access, opportunities and resources due to disadvantage and discrimination, and actively seek social justice and reparation.” (https://www.edmonton.ca/sites/default/files/public-files/ZoningBylawRenewal_GBA_Equity_CommunityConversations.pdf?cb=1736281436 pg 4)

EQUALITY VERSUS EQUITY



In the first image, it is assumed that everyone will benefit from the same supports. They are being treated equally.



In the second image, individuals are given different supports to make it possible for them to have equal access to the game. They are being treated equitably.



In the third image, all three can see the game without any supports or accommodations because the cause of the inequity was addressed. The systemic barrier has been removed.

Homelessness Prevention “refers to policies, practices, and interventions that reduce the likelihood that someone will experience homelessness” (Gaetz & DeJ, 6). Homelessness prevention initiatives “work to ensure people don't experience homelessness. It is made up of policies and strategies that impact homelessness at the structural and systemic levels, as well as early intervention practices that address individual and situational factors.” (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness, 2021)

Impacts are the larger goals we are working to achieve together.

Intersectionality:

Many people experience more than one form of discrimination (such as racism, sexism, ableism and classism). Coined by American academic Kimberlé Crenshaw, the term intersectionality recognizes how those multiple forms of discrimination combine and overlap in complex and cumulative ways, based on the many aspects of a person's identity (like gender, race, and sexual identity).

Other resources on Intersectionality:

[Intersectionality and Health Explained](#)

[Kimberlé Crenshaw The Urgency Of Intersectionality, TedWomen2016](#)

Outcomes are statements describing desirable changes for people, organizations, and communities.

Poverty Reduction: People tend to “experience poverty when they lack, or are denied, economic, social and cultural resources to fully and meaningfully participate in the community” (Ngo & Kolkman, 2019b). Poverty reduction is the implementation of policies and programs to reduce the occurrence of this type of exclusion.

Prevention is a proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empower them to meet the challenges of life.

Primary prevention (Universal) is the active pursuit of individual, family and community protective factors that lead to the well-being of self and others.

Protective factors are conditions or attributes of individuals, families, communities, and the larger society that mitigate or eliminate risk leading to enhanced well-being.

Risk factors are characteristics, conditions or behaviours that increase the likelihood of harm among individuals, families, communities, and the larger society.

Secondary prevention (Targeted) occurs when protective factors address or modify risk factors before restorative supports are required.

Social inclusion means creating an environment in which all individuals feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and skills; differences are considered opportunities for individual and organizational growth; and everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources that can contribute fully to our city's success.

Strong sector is a set of organizational structures, societal investments and relationships that empower a community to build a more resilient, just, equitable, and sustainable future. This sector integrates social, economic, environmental, and cultural resources and connections.

Social well-being is a state of living where people experience acceptance, appreciation, connection, contribution, and compatibility within themselves and in a reciprocal relationship with others.

Tertiary prevention which is defined as: Intensive interventions that provide support or treatment to those already affected by a problem or issue to address immediate needs and to reduce the impact of the issue after it has occurred. Tertiary prevention typically involves targeted or individualized activities for people or groups experiencing a specific problem.