



What Is FCSS?

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a unique 80/20 funding partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities or Métis Settlements. Provincially, the FCSS Program receives its mandate from the *Family and Community Support Services Act* and *Regulation*. The *Regulation* sets out the service requirements or broad parameters that a municipality or Settlement must meet to be eligible for funding. At the local level, a municipality or Métis Settlement Council chooses whether to establish a program and enters into an agreement with the Government of Alberta to jointly fund projects and/or services. Under FCSS, communities design and deliver social programs that are preventive in nature to promote and enhance well-being among individuals, families and communities. These programs depend on community resources, often involving volunteers in management and delivery.

The FCSS philosophy is based on a belief that self-help contributes to a sense of integrity, self-worth and independence. Programs developed are intended to help individuals in their community to adopt healthy lifestyles, thereby improving the quality of life and building the capacity to prevent and/or deal with crisis situations should they arise.

One of the key principles of the FCSS Program is local responsibility in priority setting and resource allocation. FCSS emphasizes local decision-making for programming based on the belief that communities have the desire, energy and resources to build community capacity. Each municipality or Métis Settlement therefore determines how the dollars they receive should be allocated to best meet local needs.

Who Participates?

FCSS funding is available to municipalities and Métis Settlements within the Province of Alberta that choose to develop and deliver social programs that are preventive in nature. FCSS programs directly reach 99.8% of the province's population. Less than 6,800 Albertans live in communities that are not participating in FCSS.

Funding and Reporting

The provincial budget for grant allocations to municipalities and Métis Settlements in 2007-08 is \$67.5 million. Each participating municipality or Métis Settlement matches its provincial grant with a 20% contribution and is required to submit an annual report to the Ministry detailing local expenditures for projects and services that are eligible under FCSS legislation. For further information, visit the Children's Services website at www.child.gov.ab.ca (go to "What We Do" and click on the Family and Community Support Services link).

Eligible Services

FCSS uses a “people helping people to help themselves” approach and offers a wide range of programs and services at the community level. Following are examples of programs or services offered at the community level through FCSS:

1. Services to assist communities to identify their social needs and develop responses to meet those needs, including:
 - raising public awareness around community issues,
 - developing strategies for community advocacy,
 - developing comprehensive social community plans and initiatives,
 - environmental scans, service reviews, strategic planning, program planning, or
 - in-kind support to community-based groups (until they are able to sustain themselves) such as provision of office space, printing, photocopying, help with preparing proposals, etc.;
2. Services to promote, encourage and support volunteer work in the community, including:
 - recruitment, training and placement services,
 - resources to support volunteers, or
 - coordination of volunteer services;
3. Services to inform the public of available services, including:
 - information and referral services,
 - community information directories,
 - newcomer services, or
 - interagency coordination;
4. Services that promote the social development of children and their families, including:
 - parent-child development activities,
 - temporary or occasional parent relief services, or
 - support services for young school age children;
5. Services that enrich and strengthen family life by developing skills so people can function more effectively within their own environment, including:
 - parenting and family life education and development programs,
 - marriage enrichment,
 - retirement planning,
 - programs for single adults and single parents,
 - courses designed to enhance self-awareness and personal growth,
 - individual, family and group counselling services that are educational and not treatment oriented, or
 - youth development services;
6. Services that enhance the quality of life of the retired and semi-retired, including:
 - home support services,
 - education and information services,
 - outreach and coordination services, or
 - self-help socialization activities.

Ineligible Services

Services provided under a program must not provide primarily for the recreational needs or leisure time pursuits of individuals, offer direct assistance (including money, food, clothing or shelter) to sustain an individual or family, be primarily rehabilitative in nature, or duplicate services that are ordinarily provided by a government or government agency.

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

FCSS is supported by local Councils and/or Boards and by a province-wide association, known as the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta (FCSSAA). The FCSSAA unites and strengthens the FCSS community by representation and advocacy on behalf of member boards. The FCSSAA has created a strong network of local programs for sharing information, providing province-wide direction and problem solving, and ensuring that the value of FCSS resources, and the FCSS “way of working” is well understood at all levels of government. Visit the FCSSAA website at www.fcssaa.ab.ca.

FCSS Program Advisory Team

FCSS has a unique joint management partnership between the FCSSAA and Children’s Services. The FCSS Program Advisory Team (PAT) is composed of representatives from each organization and provides advice on program delivery issues, undertakes joint projects to support and develop the Program and proposes policy amendments to both the Association and the Ministry.

Measuring Outcomes

The capacity of FCSS to report on tangible outcomes (determining the difference a specific project or service has made to an individual, family or community) continues to be developed. Participating municipalities and Métis Settlements have been working with the Canadian Outcomes Research Institute, the FCSSAA, and the Ministry of Children’s Services to implement an outcome measurement system known as “Making a Difference.” The system includes two components:

1. Program Logic Model
 - developed by individual programs
 - articulates short, medium and long term outcomes for individuals, families and communities
 - demonstrates if identified goals and strategies of program delivery are being achieved
2. Database
 - includes tools for measuring the success of the Program Logic Model
 - collects, analyzes, and aggregates the information gathered to measure success

Contact Information

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