THEORY OF CHANGE OVERVIEW

A Theory of Change is the cornerstone of FCSS Calgary's contract with an orgnaization for delivering a specific program. For each funded program, FCSS requires a Theory of Change, which includes:

- **Need:** A short paragraph with relevant statistical information about the population to be served. Footnotes are used to cite complete references and data sources.

- **Goal:** A short sentence that clearly states the long-and mid-term outcomes the program is expecting to achieve (not the goals of the organization).

- **Strategy:** The specific strategies that will be used by the program to achieve the goal, including who the program is aimed at (target audience), what will be done (program content), where and how it will be delivered, and when. This should include information on frequency, duration, and program cycle (e.g., runs two hours per day three days per week in quarterly cycles; runs once a week for three hours from September to December and January to June; year-round, ongoing registration with post-testing done every March).

- **Rationale:** A summary of key research findings that support why the strategy that is being used is evidence informed for achieving the program goal. Key research findings are provided in the FCSS Research Briefs, which are posted on the "FCSS Research Briefs" page of the FCSS website at https://www.calgary.ca/research/social-issues-briefs.html. They describe evidence informed practices in the areas of preventive social support programs funded by FCSS. For a deeper understanding of why to use a particular approach, organizations can refer to the original research cited in the FCSS Research Briefs. Footnotes are used to cite complete references.

- **Indicators:** The outcome indicators that will be used to measure the effects of the program strategy in making the changes needed to achieve the program goal are listed. They generally include "FCSS Social Inclusion Indicators" (FSII surveys, listed by number and name) or, less often, indicators of "Policy or Systems Change" or "Community Development Contributions." See the "Organization Resources" page of the FCSS Calgary website at https://www.calgary.ca/social-services/funding/organization-tools.html. In very rare cases, indicators may be designated as "Outputs Only" or as "Infrastructure."

- **Footnotes:** Footnotes are used to provide complete references for the research that identifies the need and provides the rationale to support the program strategy. The intention is to facilitate learning among agencies that wish to explore particular program areas in more depth.