



# 2023 FCSS Annual Report

## Investing in social inclusion

In partnership with

Calgary







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# Background

The City of Calgary partners with the Government of Alberta to jointly fund the Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) Calgary program. FCSS Calgary provides preventive social services to tens of thousands of Calgarians and leverages millions of dollars through volunteer contributions and fundraised dollars.

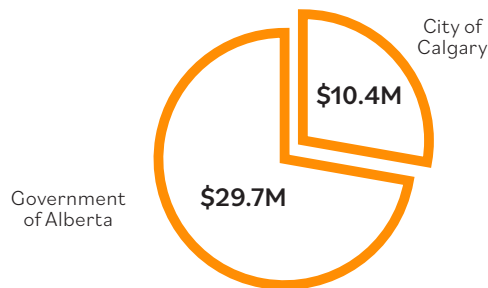
FCSS funds programs that build resiliency. The initiatives help people develop independence, strengthen coping skills and become resilient in times of crisis. Investing in FCSS programs means:

- Young people feel a sense of pride in who they are.
- Calgarians feel a sense of belonging, meaning, security and control over their lives.
- Families feel safe, secure and know who they can count on in times of crisis.
- Communities are more welcoming of all cultures, ethnicities, ages, sexual orientations and income levels.

FCSS Calgary also invests in organizations to build their effectiveness, increase the impact of their programs, and address emerging social issues and trends that are impacting Calgarians.



# 2023 at a glance



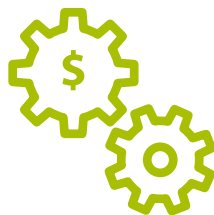
**\$41.1 million**

FCSS Calgary budget



**51,048**

Calgarians benefitted  
from participating in  
funded programs



**\$0.7 million**

capacity-building funding for  
organizational effectiveness  
and emerging issues



**13,211**

volunteers engaged in  
funded programs



FCSS Calgary partnered with  
**95 organizations**  
to deliver

**156 programs**



**545,825**

volunteer hours  
contributed, valued at  
**\$18.2 million**

This FCSS funding cycle began on April 1, 2023. Reporting data represents programming from April 1, 2023 to December 31, 2023.





## 2023 in review

2023 was a year of change for the FCSS Calgary program. Following the first open call for FCSS funding in several years, many programs received FCSS funding for the first time. Several organizations that had previously received FCSS funding modified their programs to respond to the changing needs of Calgarians. Calgary's preventive social service sector has demonstrated its ability to be adaptive and responsive.

Affordability pressures were a challenge for both Calgarians and the organizations that support them. FCSS-funded programs continued to see increasing demand as more Calgarians reached out for support. This demand did not go unnoticed, and Calgary City Council responded by increasing the FCSS Calgary budget for the 2023-2026 budget cycle. The Government of Alberta subsequently increased the provincial contribution, bringing FCSS Calgary's budget to \$41.1 million. This represented a 3.8 per cent increase in funding to FCSS Calgary programs and services.

While this increase was welcome, it wasn't sufficient to meet the demand for funding for preventive social services in Calgary or across the province. As a result, FCSS Calgary worked alongside the FCSS Calgary Forum and the FCSS Association of Alberta to advocate that the provincial government index the FCSS budget to inflation and population growth.

Despite the challenges of delivering programs with rising costs, FCSS-funded programs continued to work to meet the needs of Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities. More than 50,000 people benefitted from FCSS-funded programs in 2023. Success stories from some of these programs are highlighted in the pages that follow.

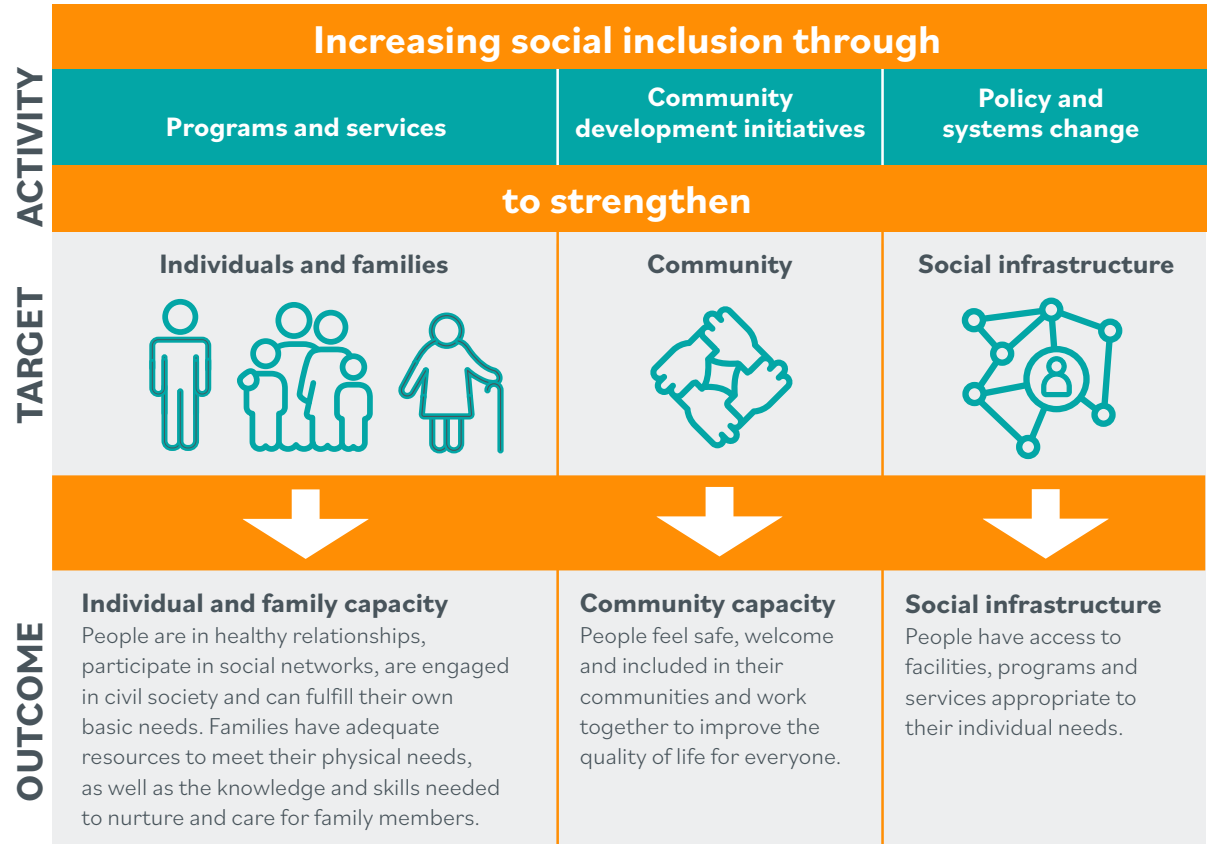
# FCSS Funding Framework

The **FCSS Funding Framework** provides a strategic direction to guide FCSS funding in a way that's responsive to emerging trends in the community, while also being flexible to incorporate new knowledge in the area of prevention science. The Framework's long-term outcome is to increase social inclusion, which is the ability of Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities to participate in, contribute to and benefit from all aspects of society. Research demonstrates that social inclusion is linked to improved social and economic outcomes, as well as increased civic participation.

FCSS Calgary uses three approaches to achieve the long-term outcome of increased social inclusion:

- Programs and services for individuals and families
- Community development initiatives
- Policy and systems change initiatives

To help assess progress toward the long-term outcome of increased social inclusion, mid-term outcomes have been identified for each of the three approaches.





## Programs and services

Evidence-informed preventive programs and services contribute to the following five mid-term outcomes:

- Increased positive child and youth development.
- Growth in social capital/social participation.
- Enhanced economic self-sufficiency.
- Improved family functioning and positive parenting.
- Enhanced Indigenous healing and wellbeing.

The impact of these programs is assessed using the FCSS Social Inclusion Indicator (FSII) surveys. Pre-test and post-test surveys are conducted by the programs and the surveys are analyzed for statistical significance to see the impact of FCSS-funded programs.

Each year, FCSS-funded programs share success stories in their year-end reports that demonstrate the positive impact of their programs on the people they serve. The success stories on the following pages share more about the impact that FCSS-funded programs are having in the community.





## Positive child and youth development

**4,133 participants in grades 4 through 12 in all child and youth programs**

**Featured organization: Trellis**

**Featured program: Community clubs**

Trellis' community clubs provide affordable, accessible and quality out-of-school programs for children, youth and families. Participant Kyle began attending Trellis' summer programs and then asked his mom if he could continue attending the community club's afterschool programming in the fall. Once school started, there were some big changes in Kyle's home life which led to many new emotions and feelings. The staff at Trellis' community club had become safe people for Kyle and his mom to seek support from. When Kyle's mom saw him exhibiting concerning behaviours, she reached out to club staff for help.

Trellis' program staff are trained in teaching social and emotional learning, and they worked with Kyle to improve his awareness of when he was having big feelings and identify coping strategies. The team also connected Kyle and his mom to the Trellis clinical team and they were able to start counselling immediately. Kyle has shared with other club participants how awesome therapy is, and he continues to improve his social and emotional skills at the club with coaching from staff.

**After participating in a program, 82 per cent of children and youth participants reported they could manage their emotions, which represents a statistically significant increase of 7 per cent compared to the start of programming.**



### Social capital and positive social ties

**8,997 participants in positive social ties programs**

**Featured organization: Calgary Immigrant Women's Association**

**Featured program: Volunteer program**

The Calgary Immigrant Women's Association (CIWA) offers volunteer opportunities for newcomer women of all ages. Sarah, a new immigrant, faced difficulties adjusting to her new life in Canada. She felt isolated and uncertain about forming social connections, leading to withdrawal and depression.

Sarah discovered CIWA and its programs and began volunteering with CIWA's 55+ art group. Over the course of two years, Sarah improved her English skills, gained confidence, made friends and found a sense of purpose and fulfillment. Recently, she achieved Permanent Residence status and is looking forward to more English classes. CIWA's welcoming and supportive environment reassured Sarah and encouraged her to step out of her comfort zone and engage with others in her new home.

**After participating in a program, 70 per cent of participants reported doing volunteer work for an organization, which represents a statistically significant increase of 25 per cent compared to the start of programming.**





## Economic self-sufficiency

**6,605 participants in individual and economic self-sufficiency programs**

**Featured organization: Rise Calgary**

**Featured program: Financial coaching and matched savings program**

Rise Calgary works with clients to ensure their basic needs are met and builds resilience by strategizing with them through empowerment programs. Estevan immigrated to Canada with the hope of completing schooling to get a job. Shortly after moving to Calgary, he found it difficult to pay for school and basic living costs. He fell on hard times and applied to Rise Calgary's Basic Needs Fund program. The Rise Advocate helped Estevan secure his first month's rent and damage deposit, to ensure that he would be stably housed.

Through discussions with the Rise Advocate, Estevan learned about Rise Calgary's other programs, including Financial Coaching and Earn and Learn. The Rise Advocate helped Estevan review his budget, find expenses that he could cut down on, and make a plan to increase his income. The Rise Advocate encouraged Estevan and he was able to get a job and apply for subsidy programs. Estevan is now halfway through the Earn and Learn program and is hoping to graduate in the next few months. He says, "I still have a ways to go, but my future is looking brighter every day."

**After participating in a program, 58 per cent of participants reported currently having a personal budget, spending plan or financial plan, which represents a statistically significant increase of 22 per cent compared to the start of programming.**



### Family functioning and positive parenting

**2,816 participants in family functioning and positive parenting programs**

**Featured organization: Punjabi Community Health Services Calgary Society**

**Featured program: Sahara Family Support Program**

PCHS takes a holistic and culturally sensitive approach to providing family counselling, mental health and addiction services to stabilize and empower South Asian clients and their families. Gurinder, a young adult, was referred to PCHS by Alberta Health Services after struggling with his mental health. He dropped out of school due to his mental health concerns and conflict between his parents due to his father's addiction.

Gurinder began counselling through PCHS, and the counsellor contacted his mother as part of the 'Circle of Care' framework that PCHS uses in its programs. This framework considers the needs of individuals within the context of their family and support systems, to address the concerns of clients and enhance the health and well-being of their families.

Gurinder's mother was experiencing challenges as well, including emotional and physical abuse from her husband and father-in-law. She began attending PCHS' Women's Growth Circle and Mental Health and wellness groups. Gurinder and his mother both worked on ways to support each other emotionally, since Gurinder's father is not ready for counselling yet. Gurinder has been able to develop goals for his future and his mother has gained confidence and developed strategies to take care of her mental health.

**After participating in a program, 86 per cent of participants reported that, in times of crisis, their family can turn to each other for support, which represents a statistically significant increase of 10 per cent compared to the start of programming.**





## Indigenous healing and wellbeing

766 participants in Indigenous healing and wellbeing programs

**Featured organization: Miskanawah Community Services Association**

**Featured program: Nitsanak Mamawintowak  
(Families coming together in Cree)**

The Nitsanak Mamawintowak program offers Indigenous families with children a combination of individual family supports, groups, and community events and ceremony. Diana is a single mother with four children who had few natural supports in Calgary and was quite socially isolated before joining Nitsanak Mamawintowak. The program has given her a reason to get out of the house and meet other moms in a positive and safe environment.

Nitsanak Mamawintowak has also given Diana and her family access to Indigenous culture and ceremony, which they had few opportunities to partake in before joining. Diana has been able to connect with Indigenous cultural teachings to assist her and her children with walking a good path and has learned skills such as moccasin making and beading. Diana has shared that she is proud of the new skills that she has developed in the program and that she enjoys attending with her family

**After participating in a program, 80 per cent of participants reported being involved in traditional Indigenous cultural teachings and ceremonies that were led by a traditional Indigenous mentor or role model, which represents a statistically significant increase of 42 per cent compared to the start of programming.**



# Community development

FCSS investments are used to support community development initiatives so that people feel safe, welcome and included in their communities, and work together to improve the quality of life for everyone. Community development initiatives contribute to the following three outcomes:

- Increased leadership capacity
- Increased sense of belonging
- Improved economic participation

Success stories from community development initiatives demonstrate how FCSS-funded programs can increase community capacity, contributing to the long-term outcome of increased social inclusion. The success stories on the following pages share more about the impact of FCSS-funded programs in the community.



## Featured organization: The City of Calgary Featured program: Community Social Work

The Community Social Workers' Community Connector initiative is a community development strategy where residents are paid to be in community leadership positions. With the support of the Community Social Workers (CSWs), the Community Connectors connect with their neighbours to gain an understanding of local needs and resident interests.

Lylah, a resident of the downtown core who lives in a transitional housing program, was hired as a Community Connector to help foster belonging and build a stronger sense of community in her residence. Through her natural abilities to connect with others and plan thoughtful and meaningful events, she has excelled in getting people who are often structurally marginalized and socially isolated to participate in events and become involved as volunteers. The role has strengthened her own capacity, skills and confidence to be a leader in the community.

From April to December 2023, community development initiatives of the Community Social Work program took place in 23 priority neighbourhoods and achieved the following:



**15,200**  
volunteer  
hours



**276**  
resident  
projects



**23**  
priority  
neighbourhoods



**25,497**  
contacts with  
residents



### **Featured organization: The Alex**

### **Featured program: Community Food Centre**

The Alex Community Food Centre (CFC) provides high-quality food to Calgarians at risk of food insecurity, social isolation, and social exclusion by offering free community meals and an affordable produce market. Karla, a local resident, first learned about the CFC from a friend. Karla and her husband and two children signed up for several programs and completed family classes together. Karla credits these programs for building friendships with other families, making meals a “family sport” and deepening the family’s connection to the community.

As staff began to develop relationships with Karla, it was evident that she had many skills and the desire to contribute to community life. In fall 2023, staff engaged Karla as an Annual Program Survey Assistant to interview area residents. Karla’s experience with this was so positive that she signed up for the 10-week Community Action Training program in 2024, with the option to become a Peer Advocate after program completion. Karla and her family have all grown through their involvement with the CFC and Karla wants to create the same sense of community for others that she and her family enjoy.



# Policy and systems change

Policy and systems change is a strategy for increasing social inclusion. Change is influenced at the local, provincial and national levels through outreach, issue advocacy and research. These initiatives are most effective when organizations work together to advance, and act with/for, populations experiencing vulnerabilities.

Policy and systems change initiatives contribute to the following three outcomes:

- An equity-based social policy agenda
- Integrated service coordination
- Evidence-informed policy and systems change

Success stories from policy and systems change initiatives demonstrate the how FCSS-funded programs can strengthen social infrastructure, contributing to the long-term outcome of increased social inclusion. The success story that follows shows the impact that FCSS-funded programs are having in the community.







### **Featured organization: Women's Centre of Calgary**

#### **Featured program: Work for Change:**

#### **A Women's Policy Agenda**

The Women's Centre Work for Change initiative focuses on affecting change to broad systems and specific policies to improve the status of women in Calgary. During the recent election, the organization hosted election engagement opportunities, including a leader's debate screening. Jordan, a Women's Centre visitor, attended the screening hosted by the Centre and desired to learn more about the election process.

Jordan identified as Indigenous and her family had never engaged in the voting process. With support from the Women's Centre, Jordan learned more about the party platforms and became excited to cast an informed ballot. When it was time for advanced voting, the Women's Centre hosted a Vote Walk, which Jordan joined.

At the polling centre, there were problems with Jordan's ID, address and voter registration. Women's Centre staff were able to support Jordan with her registration and she was able to cast her ballot. Jordan informed staff that she would have left without voting had they not offered their support. She shared with staff how proud and involved she felt after voting for the first time and intends to cast a vote in all future elections.

## Capacity-Building and Emerging Issues Fund

The Capacity-Building & Emerging Issues Fund supports one-time initiatives that build the capacity of organizations to effectively address the emerging needs and interests of Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities. Funds are used to strengthen an organization's effectiveness or service delivery, so it can better respond to the changing needs of Calgarians.

In 2023, \$750,000 was approved by Council for the Capacity Building and Emerging Issues Fund. Additionally, The City partnered with the United Way of Calgary and Area to leverage an additional \$60,000 from the United Way of Calgary and Area to extend the reach and impact of the fund. In total, 31 initiatives received a total of \$807,307 in Capacity Building funding in 2023.

Organizations that were led by and for Indigenous, Black and/or Racialized communities were encouraged to submit proposals within either funding stream, to implement initiatives leading to positive change for the communities they serve. As a result of this focused approach, over half of the 31 funded initiatives were offered by organizations led by and for Indigenous, Black and/or diverse Racialized communities.

All funded initiatives will allow organizations to strengthen their organizational effectiveness, increase their programs' impact, and address emerging issues and trends that are impacting Calgarians.





### Featured organization: ECSSEN Career School

### Featured project: ECSSEN Organizational Optimization Strategies

ECSSEN Career School (ECSSEN) supports newcomers and disadvantaged immigrants by providing career development opportunities, social service programs and other community-based support. With an initial focus of supporting Chinese immigrants with career development, the volunteer-based organization has grown over the last two decades to offer other services, such as food delivery and a crisis hotline. Each of these programs developed independently and, as a result, had different processes and policies. These inconsistent approaches became an obstacle to providing quality service to the community.

The goal of ECSSEN's Organizational Optimization Strategies project was to build a single management system across the organization that could integrate all programs consistently, increase operational efficiency and enhance client satisfaction. To accomplish this, ECSSEN surveyed community members, hired consultants to conduct workshops and identify operational improvements, sourced professional reports on operational strategies, and developed standard procedures that could work across the organization. The operational improvements have helped ECSSEN provide more efficient services to community members in need, leading to better client satisfaction. ECSSEN was also able to identify a strategic focus for the next one to three years, helping ensure its long-term success.

FCSS Calgary and its partner organizations play a critical role in supporting Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities by building their resiliency and social connections. For more information on FCSS, including a list of partner organizations, funded amounts and success stories, visit [calgary.ca/fcss](https://calgary.ca/fcss).

If you have questions, comments or suggestions, contact us by **email:** [fundingproposals@calgary.ca](mailto:fundingproposals@calgary.ca), **call:** 311 or **mail:** P.O. Box 2100 Stn. M (116), Calgary, AB T2P 2M5.

*\* Names in this report have been changed to maintain confidentiality*