

Social Impact Report

Community Social Development
2024



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The City of Spruce Grove is honoured to acknowledge the land we work, play, and make our homes on as Treaty 6 territory, and the Métis Homeland.

This is sacred land that holds the hearts, footsteps and spirits of many First Nation, Métis and Inuit Peoples, and in particular, Paul First Nation, Enoch Cree Nation, Alexis Nakota Sioux Nation, Michel First Nation, Alexander First Nation, the Lac Ste. Anne Métis, and Métis Nation of Alberta District 8.

We recognize and acknowledge Indigenous values, traditional teachings, ways of being, contributions, and historical inequities. The City is dedicated to Truth and Reconciliation to help in healing, and learning to build reciprocal and trusted relationships.

We commit towards strengthening relations and building bridges with the Indigenous Nations whose traditional territories the City is located within.

Vision:
Spruce Grove is an inclusive, thriving community where residents are empowered, resilient and experience belonging.

Mission:
Fostering social wellbeing through information, collaboration, capacity building, and engagement by supporting community, organizations, and individuals towards enhanced quality of life.

Message from the Director

It is my pleasure to share Community Social Development's (FCSS) 2024 Social Impact Report.

I am incredibly proud of the accomplishments of staff, volunteers, practicum students, community partners and residents.

The collective work, effort, passion, and unwavering support has had a positive impact on the community, and I am excited at what lies ahead. Built on the integrity of relationships, our department is poised to enhance the well-being of individuals, families and community.

Our commitment to prevention, early intervention and timely support fosters positive change and will continue to be vital as we navigate difficult social times. I look forward to celebrating positive change in community, and as always, will look to our community to be part of the solution.

Respectfully,



Scott Rodda, Director
Community Social Development

Department Staffing Listing

Scott Rodda, Director

Danielle Peyton, Manager of
Community Strategies

Annemarie Bakalech,
Supervisor of Community
Development

Ariane Lacelle, Community
Development Coordinator

Carrie Demkiw, Community
Development Coordinator

Brenna Gavel Murphy,
Supervisor of Outreach
Programming

Riley Bates, Community
Outreach Worker

Marina Tran, Community
Outreach Worker

Kirsten Ibsen, Community
Outreach Worker

Shawn Cuff, Community
Peace Officer

Emilee Neilson, Manager of
Individual & Family Support
Services

Natasha Jellow, Community
Social Worker

Kalie Dutchak,
Community Social Worker &
Elder Abuse Case Manager

Lynne Bossmann, Community
Social Worker & Regional
Housing Coordinator

Lindsey Dudgeon,
Community Counsellor

Shelley Tunney, Supervisor of
Strategic Initiatives

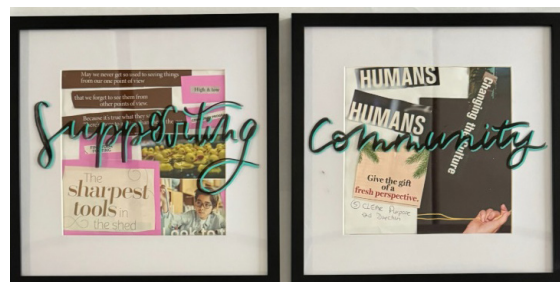
Voirrey Manning, Office
Coordinator

Miriam Gordon, Office
Coordinator

Nicole Lavigne and Brenda
Smith, Practicum Students
and Volunteers

Department Structure and Mandate

The Community Social Development (CSD) department is divided into two primary units/ areas, each having distinct functions. The department is more than just FCSS funded services.



Individual & Family Support Services

Bridging Connections:
Provision of information, referral, navigation, counselling, and specialized social well-being supports.

Community Outreach:
Supports for vulnerable residents who require targeted resources to address their unique needs (such as housing, mental health, and addictions).

Community Strategies

Community Development:
Facilitation of civic participation, non-profit development and volunteerism. Programs and services that enhance connections and sense of belonging.

Strategic Initiatives:
Oversight of grant administration, alignment of local and provincial strategic plans and accountability to outcomes.

Social Sustainability Plan

Social Sustainability Plan - Refresh 2023 continues to be a document that guides our work and aligns well to the priorities of Council and the Provincial Government.

Five key areas were identified:

- Community Connection and Belonging,
- Domestic Violence/Abuse,
- Mental Health and Addiction,
- Meeting Basic needs, and
- Living without Shelter.

Across these areas, 7 goals that were identified with a total of 16 objectives and 41 action statements.

Community Social Development is largely funded through the Provincial FCSS Program which is focused on prevention; and as aligned to provincial prevention priorities, speaks to one of:

- Promote and encourage active engagement in the community,
- Foster a sense of belonging,
- Promote social inclusion,
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships,
- Enhances access to social supports; and,
- Develop and strengthen skills that build resilience.

The key to our department is to ensure we are addressing social issues using a variety of services and programs along the prevention continuum.

Tracking Progress on the

41 action statements

22 actions
Complete/Ongoing

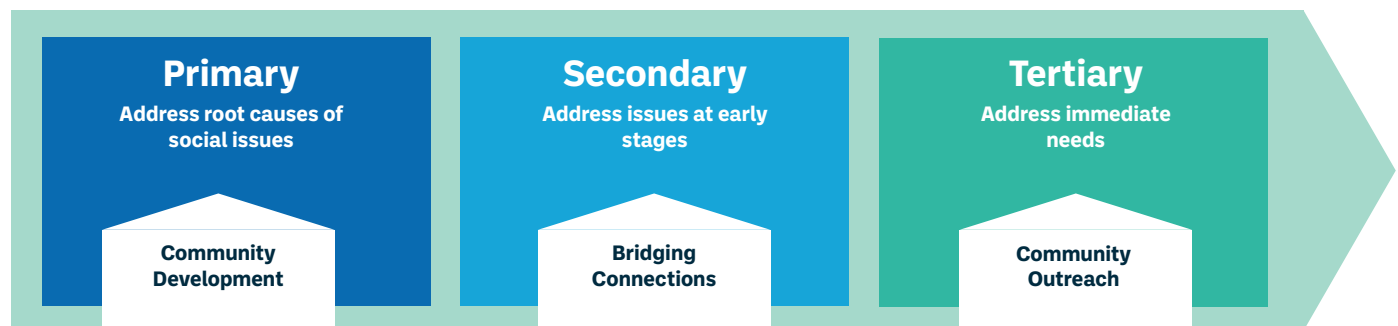
53.7%

17 actions
In Progress

41.5%

1 action
Not Started **2.4%**

1 action
Revised Action **2.4%**



FCSS funding focuses on primary and secondary prevention services and through external grants and support from Council also address issues from a tertiary lens, often thought of as intervention.

2024 Highlights

In March 2024, the CSD department moved to a more accessible space with dedicated community space that will foster greater engagement, enhance connections, and provide enriched programming opportunities for the community.

- 711 **free tax returns** completed
- 853 **Subsidized Home Support Hours**
- 303 **counselling sessions** provided (internally plus through contracted provider)
- 135 participants in the City's first "Hey Neighbour" community event
- 125 Participants attended the International Day of Persons with Disabilities Event
- Enhanced **volunteer program**, including supporting 1500 volunteer/student hours through 2024.
- The Community Outreach team's first full year of operations supported a 50% reduction of related enforcement files.

Don't Just Survive, THRIVE Non-Profit Conference

City of Spruce Grove Recreation and Culture and Community Social Development departments collaborated with Parkland County and Town of Stony Plain to host a regional Non-Profit Conference.

It was a resounding success, providing an opportunity for networking, learning and connection to many supports and resources participants may not have previously known about.



**84 Engaged
Participants
representing
40 dedicated
non-profit
organizations
attended!**



International Day of Persons with Disabilities Event



CSD Department Engagement Space

Community Connection and Belonging

Investment: \$235,900

Research supports that people who are most in need are the least likely to have support from friends, family, and the community, highlighting the importance of community connection and belonging.

In 2024, CSD remained dedicated to fostering community connection and belonging by both enhancing existing programs and exploring innovative approaches to help neighbors build stronger connections.

Neighbourhood engagement programming including Block Parties and “Hey Neighbour” involved more than 1400 Spruce Grove Residents.

“I have lived in this area for over 20 years and finally know some of my neighbours, so nice to have this opportunity”

-Spruce Grove Resident



“Connected communities foster a sense of belonging. Together, we establish connections and build capacity to celebrate diversity within our community. By working together on common issues and opportunities, we can cultivate a strong sense of community. An inclusive approach and reducing barriers are components of community connection and belonging”

Social Sustainability Plan Update
– 2023, page 7

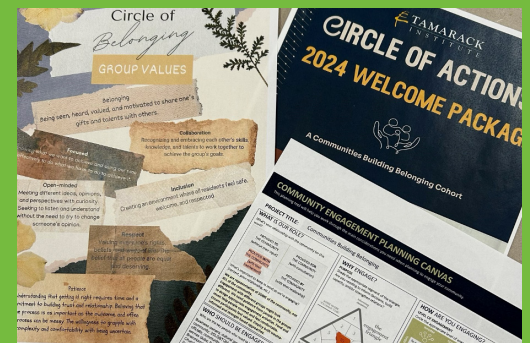
Circle of Belonging

A diverse group of residents, initially strangers, embarked on a seven-month community development learning journey. Through sharing personal stories and valuing each other’s perspectives, they created strong relationships. These connections are now driving meaningful actions to enhance the sense of belonging for all Spruce Grove residents.

One Circle of Belonging member shared why this journey has been meaningful to him:

“The work in Circle of Belonging has highlighted for me just how great Spruce Grove is, and how important it is that every resident gets to fully experience it.”

I’ve understood the intentionality required to connect people with each other and the benefit we all experience when we are well connected.”



Domestic Violence/Abuse

Investment: \$104,130

Estimates show that in Alberta, as much as \$20 can be saved for every dollar invested in preventing family violence.

The department's frontline workers provided over 60 instances of support to local residents experiencing domestic violence.

The Department continued its support of the Finding Our Voices Peer Support program, facilitated by two local individuals with lived experience. It also provided \$30,000 in grant funding to Parkland Turning Points Society (PTPS) and The Today Centre to deliver services for individuals affected by domestic violence and abuse, including emotional, psychological, and practical supports. Emotional and psychological services reached 48 Spruce Grove residents and 25 in Parkland County.

"Everyone should be able to live free from fear in all aspects of their life. Incidents of domestic violence and abuse are comparatively high per capita in the Tri-Municipal Region and the community has continually identified this as a significant concern. A collaborative approach to the prevention, intervention, and recovery from domestic abuse is required to ensure physical and psychological safety in all relationships"

Social Sustainability Plan Refresh
– 2023, p. 7

Family Violence Community Initiatives

On November 20th, CSD and five Tri-Municipal Region partners hosted a film screening and panel discussion at Landmark Cinemas in Spruce Grove for Family Violence Prevention Month, aiming to raise awareness, support affected residents, and educate the public on family violence and available resources.

In addition to this event, the department continues to support the Domestic Abuse Regional Collaborative, a group of 10 organizations and individuals with lived experience, working together to advance coordinated regional efforts to effectively address domestic abuse.



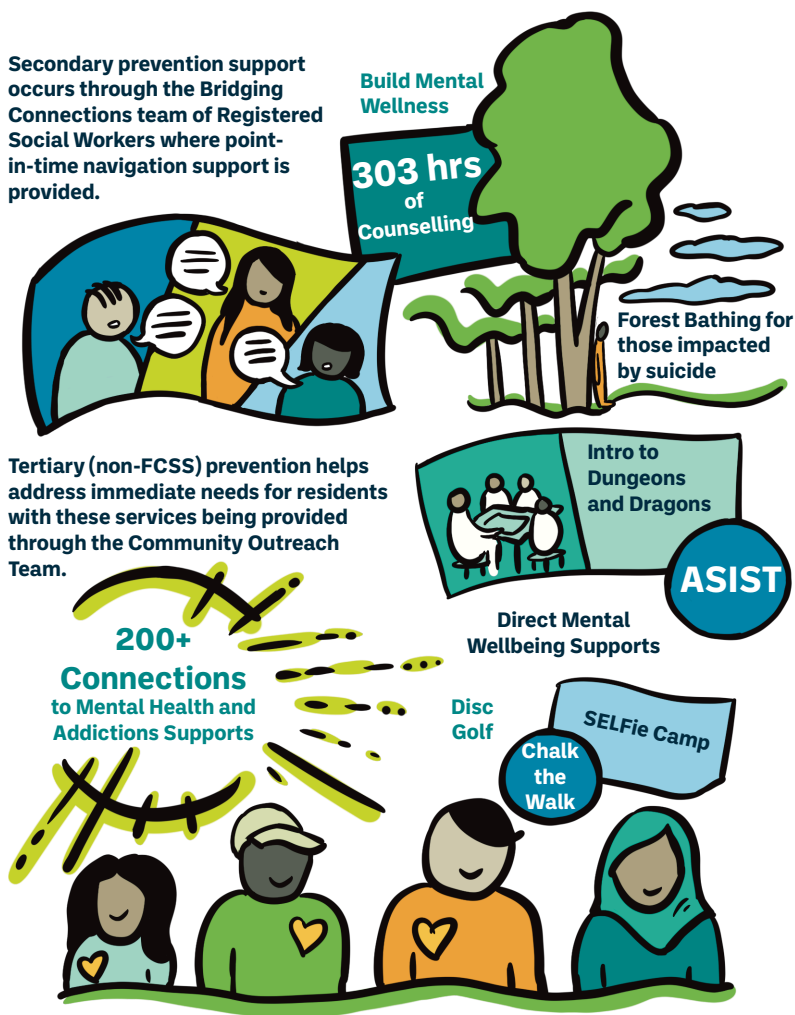
100% of surveyed program participants reported positive change

Mental Health and Addictions

Investment: \$238,310

Research shows that for every \$1 spent on prevention of mental illness and addictions, up to \$17 can be saved.

The Community Social Development Department supports residents experiencing mental health and addictions struggles through primary prevention, which includes preventative programming targeted at the root cause of these challenges.



93% of all individuals who engaged in programming reported positive outcomes in terms of their well-being.

“Supporting mental health is essential to individual well-being, as well as that of the community. This requires understanding the mental health needs of residents, the availability of access to services, and the gaps in service delivery to ensure all residents can access the supports they need”

Social Sustainability Plan Refresh
– 2023, p. 7

In 2024, the Community Outreach team provided 86 instances of support to an individual experiencing significant barriers due to untreated mental health concerns, which resulted in their increased vulnerability and use of substances to cope.

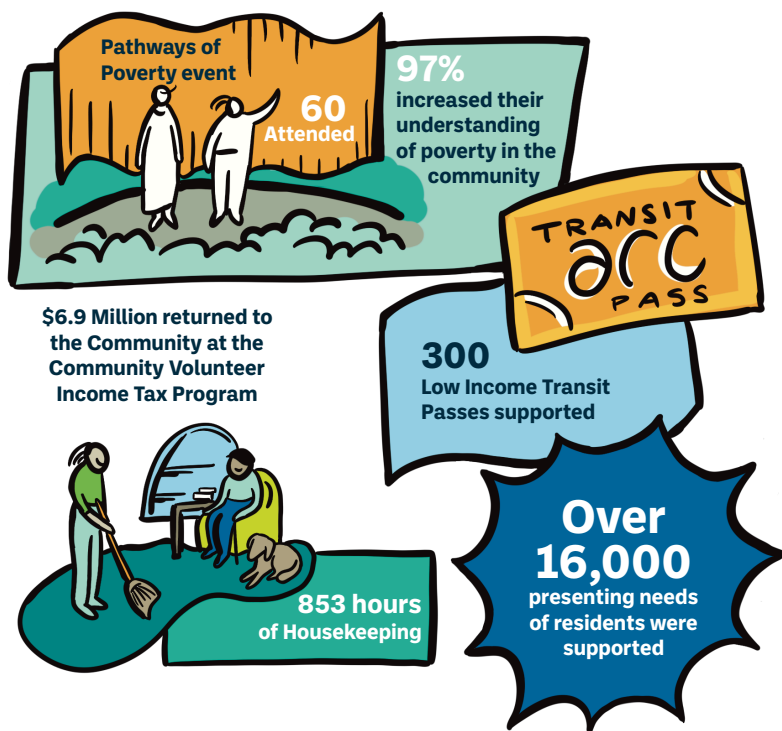
The supports included meeting basic needs and collaborating with other service providers to navigate complex barriers to this individual’s wellbeing.

Due to these collaborative efforts, in summer 2024, this individual received the necessary medical care to support their mental well-being and has since reunited with their family, concluded their legal matters, no longer lives without shelter, and is currently looking for employment.

Addressing Basic Needs

Investment: \$789,100

Research shows that a dollar invested in prevention can yield anywhere between \$7-12 in future costs but more importantly, can reduce social isolation and support healthier individuals.



A 67 year old Tri-Region resident facing elder abuse received support from the Tri-Region Elder Abuse (TREA) case manager to secure funding, housing and independence, including \$10,000 in retropayments.

“To thrive, people must first be able to meet their basic needs. Inflation has made this more difficult for an increasing number of individuals and families.

Many local non-profit organizations are at capacity in terms of available resources and supports due to a drastic increase in service demand and decrease in donations. These realities have emphasized the need for long-term, sustainable change to decrease the reliance on emergency relief services and increase individual financial security.

This change can help support residents to be confident in their ability to meet their needs on an ongoing basis.”

Social Sustainability Plan Refresh
– 2023, p. 13



Pathways of Poverty Event

Actors brought poverty stories to life and facilitators hosted table conversations during Pathways of Poverty, a community event that raised awareness and built empathy around people’s experiences of poverty.

Living Without Shelter

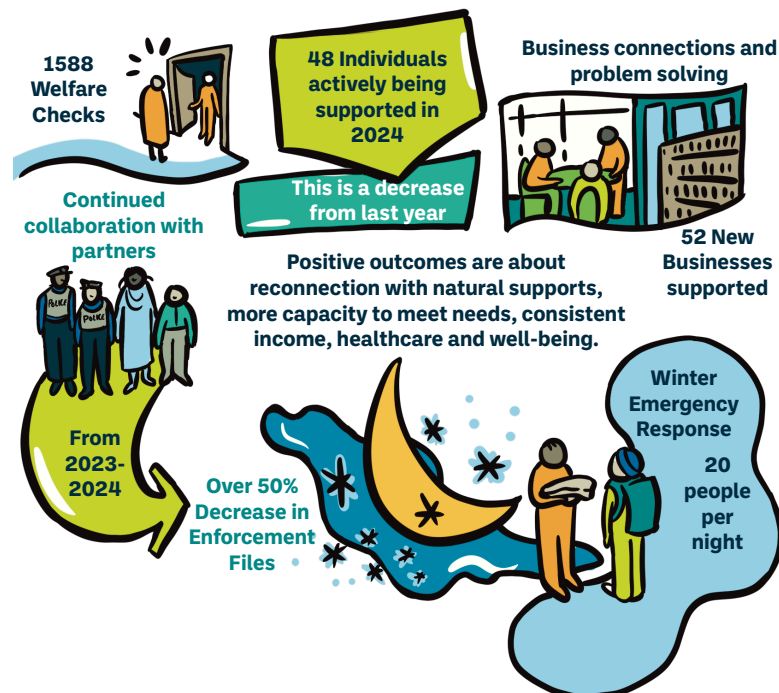
Investment: \$550,000

Research shows that a dollar spent in addressing needs of individuals living without shelter can support up to \$5 of savings in other public services such as healthcare.

The **Regional Housing Program** plays a crucial role in identifying and coordinating efforts between service providers to create a long-term plan to ensure a family's housing stability and provide them with choices and resources for the future, ultimately strengthening their resilience.



In 2024, the **Community Outreach** team provided 5649 instances of support to 214 vulnerable residents including:



"Communities of all sizes across North America are seeing a significant increase in individuals living without shelter.

Systemic factors, like a lack of affordable housing; lack of access to coordinated supports and services, and economic conditions (e.g., employment rates and cost of living), and individual factors like chronic illness; past trauma, and domestic abuse have complex and compounding effects that contribute to being unsheltered.

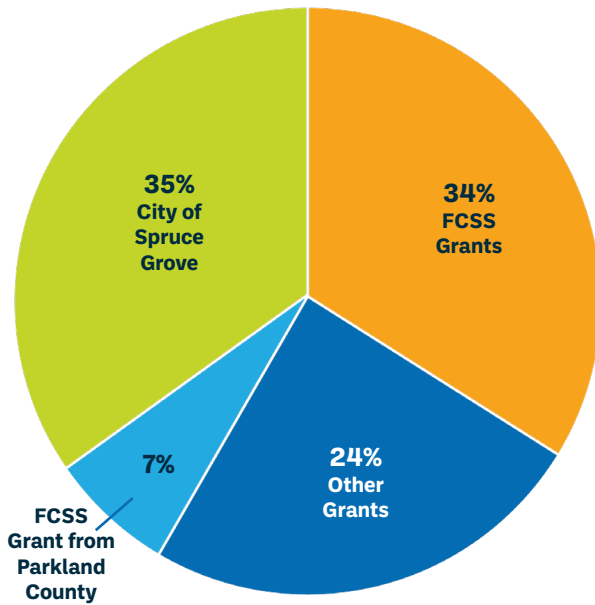
Creating the conditions so that everyone can access housing options that meet their needs require a multi-pronged approach that can address both individual vulnerabilities and systemic failures."

Social Sustainability Plan Refresh
– 2023, p. 13

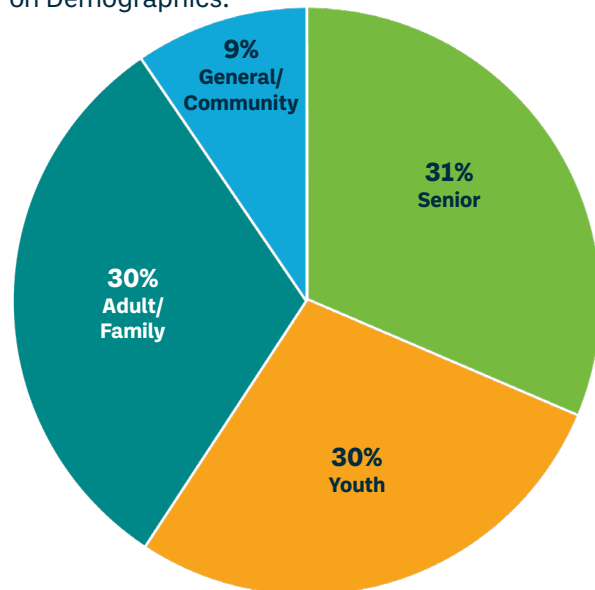


Financial Investment

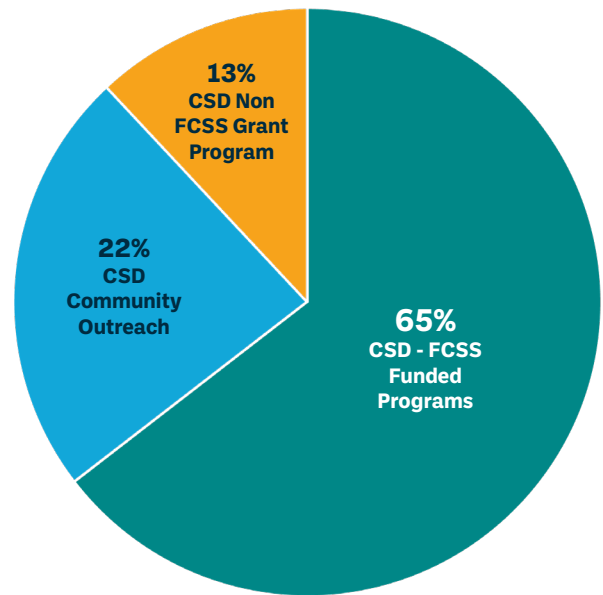
Total Department Revenue
(\$2.5M)



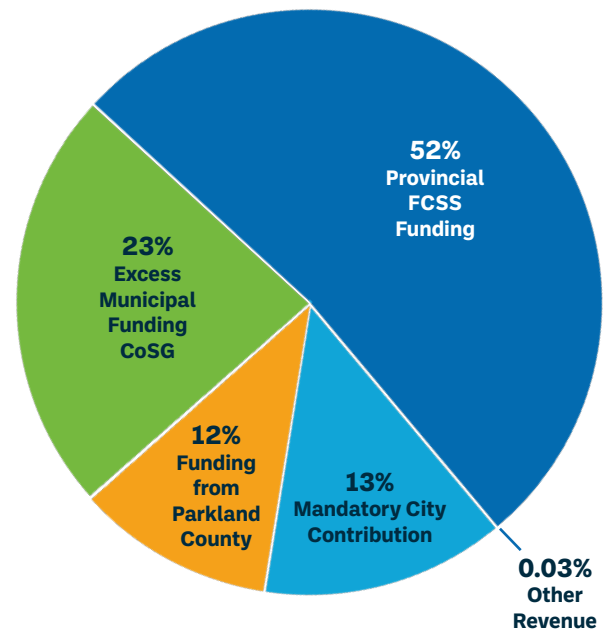
Distribution of FCSS
(\$1.6M) Funding Based
on Demographics:



Department Expenses
(\$2.5M)



Sources of FCSS Eligible
Funding (\$1.6M)



The CSD Department represents about 1% of the total City's budget.

Projects We Are Looking Forward to in 2025

Projects we are looking forward to in 2025 include Youth Integrated Services.

Youth Integrated Services is all about bringing together programs and supports in a way that makes it easy and empowering for young people (ages 11 to 25) and their families to get the help they need.

6 Core Service Streams are offered in one convenient, youth-friendly location that include:

- Mental Health,
- Substance Use Support,
- Physical and Sexual Health,
- Peer Support,
- Indigenous Wellness,
- Social Services



Other Plans for 2025:

- Create a comprehensive neighbourhood development strategy to address community needs and foster belonging.
- Streamline services to ensure individuals can easily access support.
- Explore and advocate for suitable housing options to assist residents with limited financial resources.
- Maximize utilization of the Community Engagement Space to foster greater community participation and connection.

Community Social Development

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