

Community Strategies

Led by: Director of Community Strategies

Service Description

Community Strategies creates and implements policies, strategies, action plans and funding frameworks for community partners, non-profit social service providers, City services and the public. The outputs are used to advance the wellbeing and safety of communities to make Calgary a great city for everyone. We take a holistic view of addressing complex problems and emerging issues that impact the social wellbeing of our community. We work for all Calgarians to create equitable outcomes, particularly for those experiencing vulnerabilities, by advancing strategies that improve social inclusion, reduce poverty, enhance safety, address mental health challenges and remove systemic racism.

Service Updates

Key Service Results

Funding enabled in 2023:

\$41 million through Family and Community Support Services | \$750,000 through Coordinated Community Extreme Weather Response | \$2.7 million through Public Safety Canada and City of Calgary | \$18 million through Community Safety Investment Framework. Over 42,000 Calgarians benefited from participating in funded programs. For every dollar The City contributed to this work, another \$1.57 was leveraged in the community.

Impacts to Calgarians:

155 prevention programs to increase social inclusion | 925 transports to shelters on the coldest nights | 37 community initiatives responding to social issues | 13 programs for youth in or at risk of joining a gang.

The City hosted a Mental Health and Addiction Forum that brought together nearly 300 sector partners and participants with lived experience to share knowledge and connect Strategy action to mental health and addiction researchers in order to ensure actions are informed by evidence.

A “First winter in Calgary” website was launched to provide new Calgarians with easy to access tips and resources.

Service Challenges

Community safety is a significant priority to all orders of government, but there is jurisdictional blurring and no formal framework in place to coordinate efforts. The City will work to develop an advocacy plan to ensure City investments will complement those of the Province.

Community Strategies partner organizations continue to be negatively impacted by rising operational costs and recruitment / retention challenges, limiting services available to those who need it most. Lack of core funding for capital, adequate technology infrastructure and cybersecurity are also challenges.

Death from drug poisoning has risen in Alberta. Effects of a toxic drug supply for both clients and staff in downtown shelters is extreme. The City is working with the Drop-In Centre to strengthen their mental health and addiction navigation program, with the view to quickening access to available services for those with severe and acute needs.

Trends & Potential Uncertainties

Connecting and leveraging collaboration opportunities between partner organizations and business units have been effective to better understand and respond to the needs of Calgarians.

Affordability of essential goods and housing, and timely access to social supports such as mental health and addictions services remain major challenges for Calgarians and especially for those experiencing vulnerabilities. When people lack what they need to thrive through social connections, equitable access to supports, information, and resources, they are more likely to be impacted by mental health and addiction issues, or be involved in crime.

An Angus Reid poll identified that 60% of Canadians believe there has been more crime in their community in recent years.



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

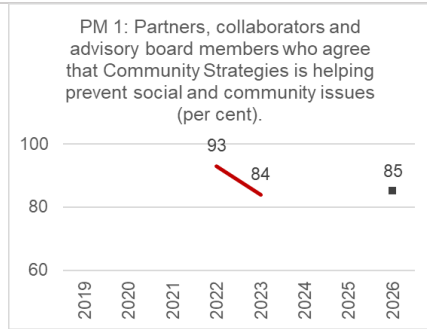
➔ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

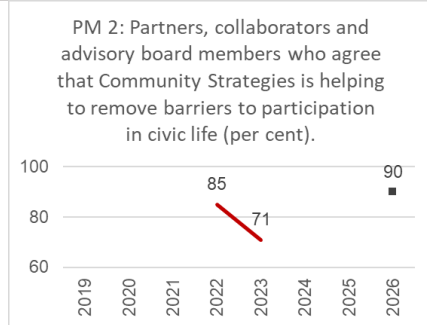
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

Status

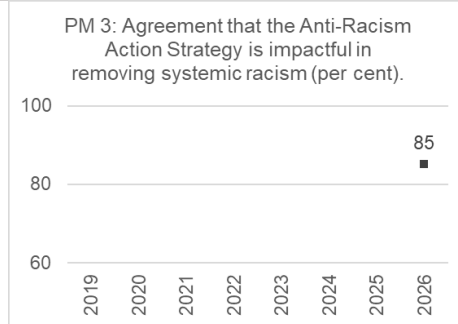


84 per cent of responding partners, collaborators and advisory board members agreed that Community Strategies is helping to prevent social and community issues. Some of the groups surveyed include the Critical Service Provider Group, Emergency Wellness Response Team, Beltline Community Investment Fund Committee and the Older Adult Advisory Committee. Survey response rate was lower than desired and changes are planned to address this in the future.

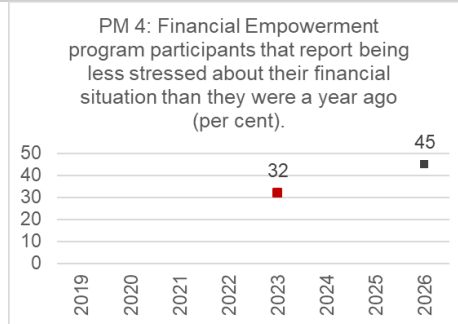


71 per cent of responding partners, collaborators and advisory board members agreed that Community Strategies is helping to remove barriers to participation in civic life. In 2023, many Albertans were impacted by climate events and many City partners and collaborators shifted their focus to providing basic needs support, allowing less resourcing to be used for removing barriers.

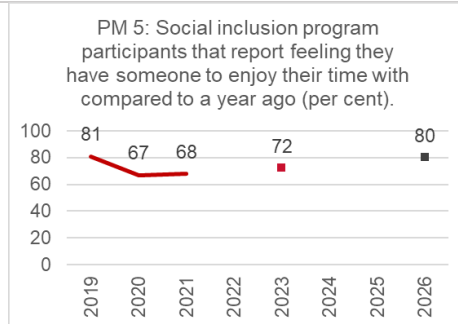
Moving into 2024, we will continue to focus on practical plans to remove barriers to participation in civic life.



This performance measure will be amended at the Mid-Cycle Adjustments to Service Plans and Budgets.

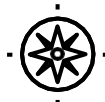


Family and Community Support Services programs are multi-jurisdictional (75 per cent Government of Alberta funded, 25 per cent City of Calgary funded). This performance measure gauges the effectiveness of programs in the outcome area of economic self-sufficiency. When people have what they need to thrive, they are less likely to be impacted by mental health and addiction issues or be involved in crime. 32 per cent of respondents felt less stressed about their finances than a year ago after participating in financial empowerment programming. This result is influenced by the current economic climate, particularly the impact of inflation.



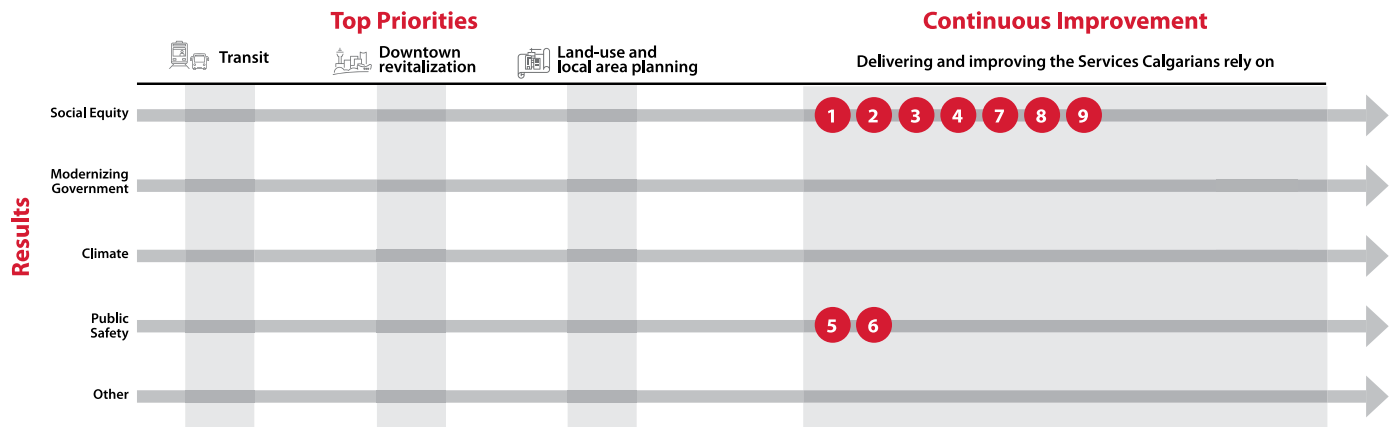
This performance measure gauges the effectiveness of Family and Community Support Services programs in the area of positive social ties. 72 per cent of participants in social inclusion programming reported feeling that they have someone to enjoy their time with compared to a year ago. This indicates an increased sense of community belonging, which contributes to overall wellbeing.








Progress on Service Delivery

Alignment with Council Refined Priorities and Result Areas



- Legend**
- Completed
 - Progressing as planned
 - Not progressing as planned
 - Not started
 - Initiative number

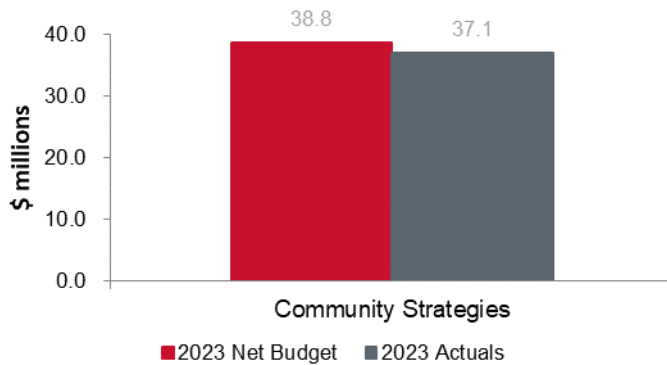
Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
1 Reduce poverty and remove barriers for those experiencing poverty to participate in civic life by advancing the Enough For All Strategy in partnership with Vibrant Communities Calgary (VCC), and other community collaborators working in the poverty reduction and homelessness space.	<p>Vibrant Communities Calgary's (VCC) focus for 2023 is on affordable housing, justice, and health. With the University of Calgary, VCC has critical research underway and continues to convene Champions, and lead on policy and systems change within these levers.</p> <p>The Emergency Shelter Shuttle expanded operations to 7 days a week to transport persons from LRT stations to emergency shelters during colder months.</p>	
2 Improve access and strengthen support for Calgarians experiencing mental health and addictions through the implementation of actions in Calgary's Mental Health and Addiction Strategy.	<p>The Mental Health and Addiction (MHA) Strategy identified system gaps and opportunities, reduced system silos through collaboration, improved funding practices and hosted a forum that brought sector partners together to share knowledge and connect programs to research. The City invested \$7.8 million through the MHA Investment Framework and moving into 2024, will continue to invest, convene to build capacity and amplify the work of the sector advancing Strategy actions and will work to develop an advocacy plan to ensure investments made complement those of the Province.</p>	
3 Increase the capacity of community organizations to prevent social issues and respond to emerging community need by developing and implementing investment frameworks such as the Family & Community Support Services fund (FCSS) and the Crime Prevention Investment Plan (CPIP).	<p>155 programs approved for Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) funding received their allocations in Q2 and began serving Calgarians. Funded programs are expected to report on the impact of their programs in Q1 2024. Planning for the next FCSS funding call began in Q4 2023 with an expected launch early 2024.</p> <p>Another capacity-building call for funding proposals was launched in Q3 2023 with 198 applications received, with a total request of \$9.8 million. Assessment of these applications began in 2023, with funding allocations to be made in Q1 2024.</p>	
4 Increase the equity and accessibility of City services by supporting the understanding of the unique needs of Calgary communities and equity-deserving groups through policies, research and evaluation tools such as the Social Wellbeing Policy, the Equity Index, Equity Analysis Tools and the Equity in Service Delivery Fund.	<p>The Equity Program's Social Research staff have consulted with City service lines to increase their understanding of the Calgary Equity Index and its applicability to their own services.</p> <p>The Equity Program funded 28 projects and programs across City services, through the Equity in Service Delivery Fund.</p> <p>This knowledge sharing and Equity in Service Delivery funding have created diverse opportunities across City service lines to make equitable service delivery improvements, be more aware of data gaps and improve overall service design for new programs.</p>	

Initiative	Initiative Update	Status
<p>5 Improve community safety through collaborative investments such as the Community Safety Investment Framework (CSIF) which guides investment in crisis prevention and improved crisis response; and the Building Safer Communities Fund, which seeks to further develop and enhance community-based prevention and intervention programs that reduce gun and gang violence.</p>	<p>The Community Safety Investment Framework (CSIF) is a collaborative investment effort between The City and the Calgary Police Service. In 2023, \$17.8 million was invested in 37 community initiatives with the long-term outcome to improve the wellbeing of Calgarians through an equitable and effective crisis response system (including continued work on the REACH Up and Action Table projects).</p> <p>The City and Public Safety Canada funded 13 organizations who operate programming for youth involved in or at-risk of joining gangs.</p>	
<p>6 Improve the resilience of children, youth and young adults at-risk of gang involvement and criminal activity by partnering with the Calgary Police Service, Alberta Health Services and the Calgary Police Youth Foundation to provide early intervention and prevention programs (MASST, YARD and ReDirect).</p>	<p>In 2023 the Multi-Agency School Support Team has refined and will continue to refine data collection processes, the Youth at-risk Development Program piloted an improved intake process, and the ReDirect Program underwent a full redevelopment, shifting its focus from radicalization in youth/young adults to addressing ideological and hate-motivated conflict among youth under 18. All program areas provided early intervention support to at-risk youth and families to reduce the likelihood of justice involvement, and all are seeing increases in referrals and level of complexity with clients.</p>	
<p>7 Improve racial and social equity by taking actions to eliminate systemic racism in The City's processes, programs, services, practices and policies. We will accomplish this through the development and implementation of an anti-racism strategic plan and framework created in collaboration with internal and external partners.</p>	<p>This initiative will be amended at the Mid-Cycle Adjustments to Service Plans and Budgets.</p>	
<p>8 Improve access and social inclusion of diverse populations through the development and implementation of actions related to the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership, the Gender, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy, and the Seniors Age Friendly Strategy.</p>	<p>Age-Friendly Calgary - a collaborative group of stakeholder organizations and citizens preparing for Calgary's aging population - have coordinated with the Calgary Local Immigration Partnership on access and social inclusion issues which impact both the seniors' and newcomers' communities in Calgary (accessibility, snow and ice control initiatives, and the Winter City Strategy). Coordinated event planning and information sharing has amplified the reach in both communities.</p>	
<p>9 Prevent social issues from escalating in severity and complexity for The City's ability to respond by monitoring and addressing emerging trends, and connecting with community members, community organizations, partners and advisory committees.</p>	<p>Calgary Local Immigration Partnership (CLIP) hosted a collaborative Winter Information Fair with the Age Friendly Strategy and community partners to address safety as well as orientation for newcomers who may not have experienced a winter city nor understand the supports that are available to make winter safe and enjoyable.</p> <p>CLIP engaged with non-profit community organizations which support immigrants and refugees living in Canada, to develop a community-based plan that will inform the call for proposals to Immigrant Refugee and Citizenship Canada for the next 5 years.</p>	



Service Updates on Financial Performance

**Net Operating Budget and Actuals
as of December 31, 2023**



Operating Budget Updates - 2023 net operating budget vs actuals:

Community Strategies Service has a favourable operating variance of \$1.7 million. The main reasons of the variance were:

- Staff turnover, delays in hiring and staff redeployment to support the Northwest Territories wildfires resulted in overall salary savings (\$1.2 million)
- Program savings associated with external grant prioritization (\$0.2 million)
- Delays in technology solutions scoping and procurement (\$0.3 million).

With more turnover and increased time to fill vacancies, there was increased pressure on staff and delays to some project deliverables. However, Community Strategies Service spent 96 per cent of its operating budget, workforce has stabilized, key service results were achieved, and business initiatives and performance targets are progressing as planned.

Capital Budget Updates - 2023 total capital budget vs 2023 spend:

Community Strategies Service has no capital budget in 2023.