

FCSS



Context and overview for research briefs

The City of Calgary has adopted the FCSS Funding Framework to provide a strategic direction to guide funding allocations 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. The Framework aligns with the City Council-approved Social Wellbeing Principles, which include equity, Truth and Reconciliation, culture, and prevention. A summary of the Framework is provided in the "Context" section of this document. The full FCSS Funding Framework can be found on the City of Calgary's website.

Overview

This research brief is one of six originally commissioned by FCSS in 2009, updated in 2014, and most recently updated in 2020 to include advances in research. The information in the briefs was gathered through:

- A search of large academic search engines (including PubMed, CINAHL, Cochrane Library, Campbell Library, JSTOR, PsycINFO, SSRN and Google Scholar) for articles published since 2014 on the key topic areas and since 2001 on disability-related program research.
- A review of published research citing the most important publications included in the 2014 editions of the briefs to identify any updates or changes to content of the earlier research briefs.
- A search of the best and promising practice websites and databases for updates since 2014.
- A review of articles and websites submitted by FCSS funded organizations.

The research briefs are not intended to serve as program development toolkits. The purpose of the briefs is to provide guidance from the research, where it exists, to organizations working to influence the long and mid-term outcomes outlined in the FCSS Funding Framework.

Context

The FCSS Funding Framework provides a strategic direction to guide FCSS Calgary 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. *Appendix B – FCSS funding framework at a glance* from the FCSS Funding Framework provides a brief overview:

Vision	A great place to make a living, a great place to make a life.
Mission	Making life better every day.
Long-term outcome	Increase the social inclusion of Calgarians experiencing vulnerabilities.
Mid-term outcomes	<p>For programs and services</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased positive child and youth development 2. Enhanced economic self-sufficiency 3. Growth in social capital/social participation 4. Improved family functioning and positive parenting 5. Enhanced Indigenous healing and wellbeing <p>For community development</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased leadership capacity 2. Increased sense of belonging 3. Improved economic participation <p>For policy/systems change</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An equity-based social policy agenda 2. Integrated service coordination 3. Evidence informed policy and systems change
Short-term outcomes	Short-term outcomes will be defined and tracked at the program level, in relation to specific mid-term outcomes.
Guiding principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equity • Truth and reconciliation • Culture • Prevention
Priority populations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children/youth • Families • Indigenous peoples • Newcomers to Canada • Seniors

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It is acknowledged that disability is an attribute that increases people's vulnerability. For FCSS's purposes, people with disabilities are people with long-term physical or intellectual impairments that hinder their full participation in society.

In keeping with FCSS's prevention mandate, the focus of the briefs is on effective prevention programming, i.e. programming that directly prevents the onset or development of a problem, intervenes at a very early stage in its development, or works to prevent or mitigate risk factors. It may also increase or strengthen protective factors that prevent a problem from occurring or escalating.

A risk factor can be defined as a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level that precedes and is associated with a higher likelihood of problem outcomes. Conversely, a protective factor can be defined as a characteristic at the biological, psychological, family, community or cultural level that is associated with a lower likelihood of problem outcomes or that reduces the negative impact of a risk factor.

It is strongly recognized that many social, economic, and other problems experienced by groups and individuals of all ages are caused, or exacerbated by, inequality and discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, age, sex, gender, sexual orientation, marital status, family status and/or disability. However, it is beyond the scope of the briefs to provide a comprehensive review of the myriad of ways in which inequality and discrimination play roles in the genesis and development of such problems.

Each research brief provides an overview of the issue to be prevented, and the best ways of preventing it as identified by research, with several caveats:

- In the briefs, it would be impossible to provide an overview of every possible prevention initiative for every target group and each dimension of every issue. Rather, the briefs focus on the most prevalent and widely researched issues and interventions, with a strong focus on interventions that prevent the onset of problems. Some briefs include a quick mention of interventions or programming outside of FCSS's funding mandate or, possibly, within its mandate but not current funded. This information has been included to provide readers with a fuller picture of the ways particular issues or problems can be prevented, as it may be useful to them in framing or making the case for their own services, shaping their FCSS-funded programs, developing programs supported by other funders, or developing policy initiatives.
- It is widely recognized most of the social, economic, and other problems experienced by individuals of all ages are best prevented early in life. This is not to say that prevention initiatives should only target children and families, but it does mean there is a much richer body of research on evidence-based programs for children and families than for any other group across the lifespan. This is reflected in the content of the research briefs.
- In some areas, we simply don't know what works. If a particular type of programming or intervention is not included in the briefs, it does not necessarily mean that it is ineffective; it may simply mean it has yet to be rigorously evaluated. In addition, in some areas it has been possible to identify both evidence-based programs and evidence-based practices. In other areas, there is no solid research to guide programming efforts, and including speculative promising practice that might soon be proven to be ineffective is not within the scope of these briefs.
- Due to the overwhelming volume of research published on programming for people with disabilities, wherever possible the briefs draw on information provided in research summaries, reviews of literature, and research meta-analyses.
- Programming and interventions for Indigenous peoples are not included in the five briefs. Rather, they are addressed in a stand-alone Indigenous brief.