



RED DEER AND DISTRICT FAMILY AND COMMUNITY SUPPORT SERVICES (FCSS)

# FUNDING GUIDE

SEPTEMBER 2019



# Introduction

# FUNDING REVIEW

## PURPOSE OF THE REVIEW

In October 2017, the Red Deer and District Family and Community Support Services Board resolved to initiate a review of the funding model. The model was first approved by the Board in 2009, and served as the funding guide for three consecutive three-year funding cycles and a two-year additional funding period in 2016 – 2017. The review was intended to determine which aspects of the funding model were working well and which could benefit from reconsideration and/or change to effectively guide future resource allocation processes.

## REVIEW PROCESS

A steering committee provided guidance throughout the design and implementation of the review process on behalf of the Board.

From June to October 2018 consultation sessions were held with key stakeholders, including all Councils represented in the municipal partnership, funded projects and non-funded projects, community and systems partners, the Indigenous community, the Newcomer community, Members of the Legislative Assembly, and citizen representatives.

Sessions focused on components of the model that can be locally influenced: mandate, structure, and adjudication.

A report of the consultation feedback and findings was presented to the Board in October 2018 for consideration in the review process.

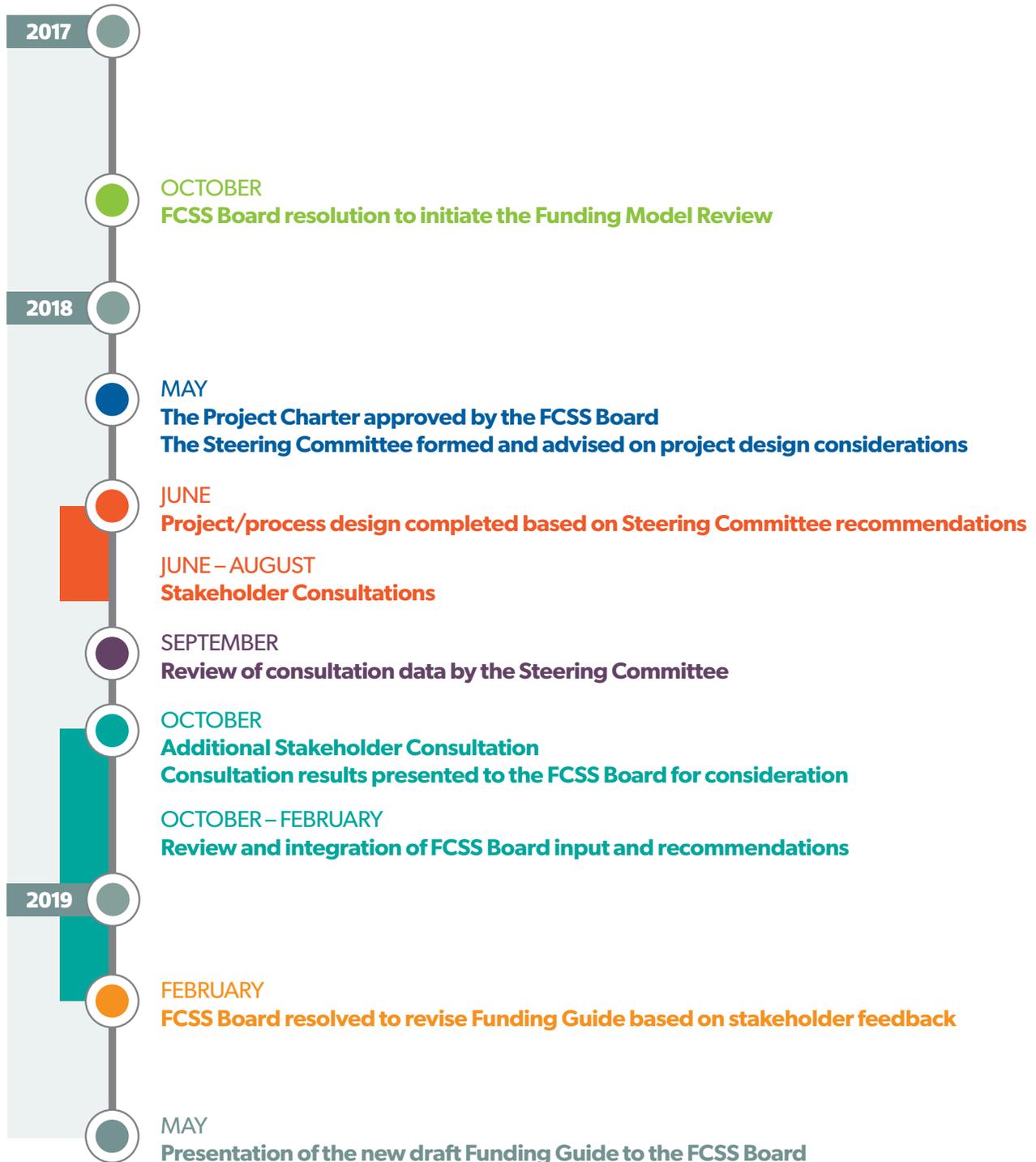
The new Red Deer and District FCSS Funding Guide is based on the findings of the review, including stakeholder consultation, Board feedback and a review of promising funding practices.



***“It’s good that the current model is being evaluated to ensure it remains reflective of the human services environment.”***

Stakeholder Comment

# Funding Model Review TIMELINES & MILESTONES



# Mandate of Funding

## EARLY PREVENTION FOCUS

The distribution of funds of the Red Deer and District regional FCSS partnership is guided by Alberta Regulation 218/94: Family and Community Support Services Act 2.1 (1)a. This provincial regulation provides the framework for FCSS funding that is locally directed. Specifically:

FCSS programs must be of a preventive nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity.

This regulation sets the provincial mandate for FCSS funding, which determines the eligibility of projects to receive project funding from FCSS.

In line with this provincial regulation, the Red Deer and District FCSS Board has developed further guidance on the mandate of FCSS funding directed locally. Considering the feedback from the 2018 consultation process, the Board identified that our local funding will be **focused on early prevention**.

### EARLY PREVENTION FOCUS

**Funding is focused on prevention before problems can be seen or where action is needed to prevent problems that are beginning from becoming worse.**

This early prevention focus means that the majority of funds are allocated to early prevention efforts aimed at reducing the chance of crisis occurring. Some funds can also be made available for efforts for later stage prevention projects, which are aimed at minimizing the impact of crisis and preventing crisis from becoming worse; this allocation is determined by the Board at the beginning of the three year Funding Cycle.

### DISCUSSION

Throughout the consultation process, stakeholders unanimously recognized the value of early prevention in programming, with comments pointing to cost effectiveness, the importance of preventing larger needs, and the unique nature of FCSS funds to focus on preventive work.

At the same time, some stakeholders highlighted the diverse needs of the community and thus the importance for flexibility to address those needs, including situations of crisis.

One stakeholder indicated that it is difficult to divide projects into fundable components that focus specifically and solely on preventing problems from becoming worse, as many programs serve clients across the continuum of care.

On the whole, stakeholders emphasized the cost efficiency and importance of dollars aimed at early prevention, while wishing to create an opportunity for agencies to state a case for funding projects that address crisis as part of their preventative programming, or are designed to address crisis, or both.



# Structure of FUNDS

The funding structure for the Red Deer and District FCSS program is divided into multiple streams and is responsive to community needs through long and short term funding options.

## MULTI-STREAM APPROACH

Red Deer and District FCSS funds are used to support a range of social wellbeing programs and approaches for a variety of target audiences (individual, family, community, and region). The way the funds are used is captured by the term **multi-stream approach**.

### MULTI-STREAM APPROACH

Multiple funding streams support local service delivery, capacity building, community development, regional planning, and a broader community reach.

The funding assigned to each stream is established at the beginning of each Red Deer and District FCSS Funding Cycle. While resources are being reviewed, funds are first allocated to grant administration support funding. Funds are then allocated to municipal funding (i.e. staff and regional projects).

The amount allocated for municipal funding is requested by municipal administrators based on identified need for Board consideration.

The remaining funds are then assigned to external project funding. From Board discussion, it was resolved that percentages of these funds for external project funding are set aside for Indigenous projects, for emerging/innovative projects, and for later stage prevention projects. These three are areas of priority and are distinct funding streams within external project funding. The Indigenous funding stream is for projects run by external agencies that seek to address issues in culturally appropriate ways. The short term project funding is for projects responding to new or arising needs, or pilot projects using an innovative approach that are seeking short term funding (for more on this, see the section titled Responsive). The later stage prevention funding is for projects specifically oriented towards preventing issues from becoming worse. All remaining funds are then distributed through the general call for funding applications for external project funding.

Finally, throughout the funding cycle, the Red Deer and District FCSS Board seeks to support capacity building in local agencies through the distribution of Agency Capacity Building Grants. Agencies, regardless of funding status from Red Deer and District FCSS, can apply for an Agency Capacity Building Grant. These funds may be allocated from surplus dollars if available.

**In short, the multiple streams of funding are:**

- **Grant Administration Support Funding**
- **Municipal Funding**
  - Staff
  - Regional Project Funding
- **External Project Funding**
  - Indigenous projects
  - Short term projects
  - Later stage prevention projects
- **Agency Capacity Building Grants**

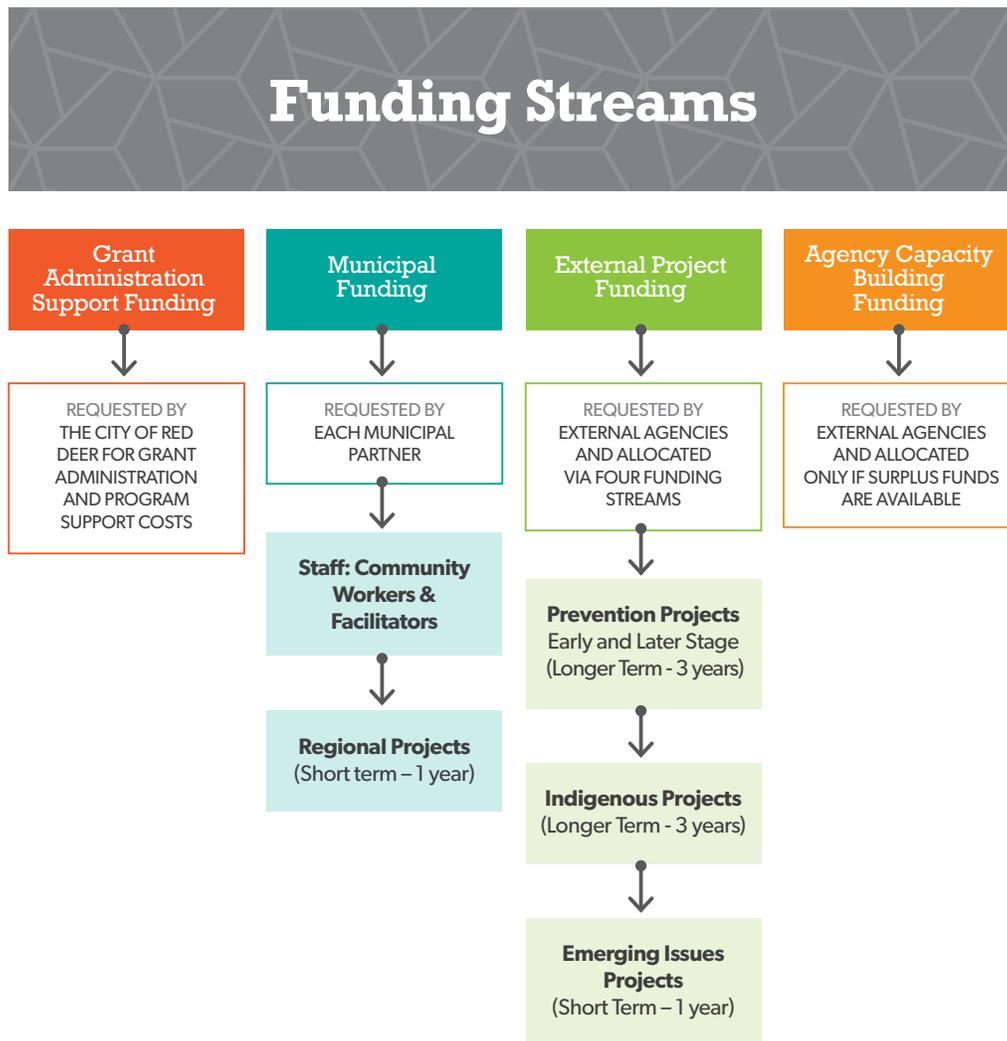
## DISCUSSION

For the last decade, Red Deer and District FCSS used a flexible approach to allocate dollars to the multiple funding streams; this approach is well received by funded agencies, non-funded agencies, municipal councils, and other stakeholders.

Consultation stakeholders noted the importance of a flexible and responsive approach to funding allocation and indicated that they trust the Board to oversee how the money is allocated.

The recognition of a multi-stream funding approach allows the Board to determine how dollars should be allocated in the normal course of business as well as for specific

needs or priorities that arise within the community. For example, there was considerable discussion on the need for funds specifically for Indigenous programming. Some stakeholders noted the difference in needs between the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities and the structural, cultural and capacity barriers that prevent Indigenous projects from being funded. Indigenous stakeholders also noted that the issues faced by the Indigenous community are rooted in intergenerational trauma and so may technically fall outside of the mandate criteria of early prevention and focusing on problems before they can be seen. This increases the barriers Indigenous projects face to accessing FCSS funds.



## RESPONSIVE

Red Deer and District FCSS funds will be available primarily for a three year cycle, with some funds allocated for a shorter one year cycle for projects that address emerging need or use innovative approaches. Additionally, funds will be available to agencies on an 80/20 cost sharing basis, in which funds can be applied for to cover up to 80% of the project budget. This allows Red Deer and District FCSS funding to be **responsive** to emerging issues and to the breadth of projects that respond to those issues in our community.

## RESPONSIVE

Consideration is given to the need for stable funding and the ability to address emerging issues.

Going forward, the majority of funds will remain available on a three year term basis, while a small portion will be available on an annual basis for shorter term projects responding to newly identified or emerging community needs. Previously, funds could only be allocated every three years, as they were locked into three year funding cycles with little exception.

This provided stability for funded projects at the cost of flexibility to address emerging issues or to develop innovative projects that would act as a pilot. The majority of funding will continue to provide stability for longer term projects, while some funds will be available to address emerging issues or support innovative projects for a shorter term.

An agency can apply for Red Deer and District FCSS funds to cover up to 80% of their project cost, with the agency itself providing the other 20% of funds. This 80/20 allocation allows Red Deer and District FCSS funding to be more responsive to the breadth of community needs. Projects that are requesting less than \$10,000 are exempt from this allocation rule (i.e. playschools).

## Three-Year Funding Cycle



## DISCUSSION

The three year funding cycle provides predictability and allows for long range program planning, a feature that is valued by municipal councils, funded agencies, and non-funded agencies alike. The 'long term' nature of the funding allows agencies to focus on their programming without reapplying every year. Stakeholders identified Red Deer and District FCSS as one of the only funders that has the ability to allocate funds in such a committed way.

Stakeholders also recognized that having all the funding locked in to a three year cycle left no opportunity for funding to respond to potentially rapid shifts in community needs. Having a smaller pot of funds available for shorter terms projects allows for agencies to be flexible in responding to their rapidly changing social environment.

Stakeholders expressed concern that the amounts requested for projects have steadily increased over recent years, leading to fewer agencies being funded overall.

This was a concern throughout consultation as it limited the diversity of projects being funded and therefore the responsiveness of the funding to meet dynamic community needs. Other stakeholders noted that there is a tendency for agencies to apply for the maximum amount of funding their project needed with the anticipation that they would be granted less than they applied for; but, this is not the case with Red Deer and District FCSS funding which, up until now, funded entire requests without compromise.

Stakeholders wanted to see agencies diversify their own revenue sources and leverage dollars, as well as be willing to work with the Red Deer and District FCSS Board and Administration to make unleveraged dollars available for other agencies. Funding more projects, even at smaller amounts, may be more responsive to diverse community needs.



# Guidance for **ADJUDICATING PROJECT APPLICATIONS**

Funding applications are adjudicated by members of the Board according to set criteria.

## **FOCUSED ON LOCAL PRIORITIES**

With each funding cycle, the Board provides guidance for the Red Deer and District FCSS administrative team to gather and set what the current, local funding priorities are from all communities in the Red Deer and District regional FCSS partnership. Project applications are then scored according to the project's ability to respond to the identified community priorities.

### **FOCUSED ON LOCAL PRIORITIES**

**Local knowledge and consultation inform funding priorities and decision making.**

Within the external project funding applications, applicants will be asked how their project responds to the priorities of the regional partnership.

Projects are not required to respond to all priorities, but are encouraged to consider how their project helps to meet the needs of the communities they serve, as identified through local engagement and data.

## **DISCUSSION**

Stakeholders identified a variety of data sources that should be considered when setting local priorities, including: environmental scans, needs assessments, focus groups or lived experience feedback, Council consultations, and engagement with community members.

Stakeholders also expressed the expertise held by agency staff who deliver projects, noting that "they should be consulted to identify issues and stressors for their clients and about gaps in services."

There was general consensus that no project should be required to address all priorities or, in stakeholder words, be forced to "do it all." Agencies should be allowed to specialize in their services to better target specific needs.

Concern was expressed over the differences in priorities between Red Deer and neighbouring partner municipalities. There could be very different priorities in each community. As one stakeholder noted, "All these communities have different needs, so how do we structure the priorities to get them to fit?" As funding priorities are set, there is interest in ensuring that the needs of each community are addressed while still identifying protective and risk factors that are common throughout all partner communities.

Stakeholders also identified that the current priority setting process does not work for Indigenous communities because Indigenous People represent less of the population over all and are generally underrepresented on Councils and in the discussions of priority setting. As such, the Indigenous community faces specific challenges that may not be prioritized through the Red Deer and District FCSS process. This is an issue faced by other cultural groups as well.

## PLACE BASED

The Red Deer and District FCSS regional partnership covers over 4,000 square kilometers, 6 communities, and includes almost 130,000 people. Funding will be used to address community needs across this area.

### PLACE BASED

**Funding acknowledges and adapts to local community context within the multi-municipal partnership.**

Within the application process, applicants will be asked what their role is in responding to the needs of the regional partnership. Projects are not required to replicate programming across the region.

Rather, applications should demonstrate how the implementation of the project addresses the need for services across communities or works to overcome the practical realities of providing services to communities that vary in size and distance. This can be through programming in different communities, adapted programming in communities, overcoming transportation barriers, or partnering to expand the reach of projects.

## DISCUSSION

A consideration heard across stakeholder groups was that distance can be a barrier for rural residents to access some programming. This was also discussed as an issue of transportation. Agencies recognized that they cannot provide the same style of programming in every community due to differences in population size and community need. However, they want to be able to show how in their work they are addressing the needs of all the communities in the Red Deer and District regional FCSS partnership in realistic ways through the application process.

The current application process asks agencies to identify the physical location of their programming over the three year funding cycle to show if and how they are addressing needs throughout the regional partnership. Asking applicants to identify where their programming will take place three years in the future was noted as unrealistic for some agencies given their dynamic nature. Agencies also asked for the opportunity to explain that residents across the Red Deer and District regional FCSS catchment come to Red Deer specifically to access services, and so providing such services in Red Deer may in fact be meeting the needs of residents from surrounding communities.

## ACCOUNTABLE

To be fiscally responsible, Red Deer and District FCSS funds require ongoing monitoring and annual reporting. This ongoing engagement between the Board and funded projects through project outcomes assessment, with additional consideration of previous performance, provides the foundation for Red Deer and District FCSS funding to be **accountable**.

### ACCOUNTABLE

Outcomes are assessed through monitoring, evaluation and project performance.

Previous performance of funded projects, specifically in relation to previous successful requests of Red Deer and District FCSS funds and the quality of the previous monitoring and annual reporting that comes with such funding, will be considered in the scoring process in future funding cycles. It is important to note that there will not be a negative impact to new applicants with projects without a historical record. Monitoring and evaluation will continue to be a consideration in determining the viability of ongoing projects to continue to be successful in receiving funding.

## DISCUSSION

The present application process requires agencies to discuss their capacity for evaluation and their internal process improvement processes, but does not specifically request information on previous performance of the project as reflected through Red Deer and District FCSS monitoring and reporting. This means that Red Deer and District FCSS Board members cannot take historical performance of previously funded projects into consideration when adjudicating applications.

Stakeholders identified that reporting from previous funding cycles could be used to inform applications in subsequent funding cycles. Providing a space for a discussion of previous project performance would allow the Board to consider both the positive and negative performance of projects in application scoring.

# Acknowledgments

Mayor Robert Aellen, Village of Elnora  
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Councillor Sandy Gamble, Town of Bowden  
Maggie Gillis, Citizen Representative  
Councillor Vesna Higham, City of Red Deer  
Councillor Ken Johnston, City of Red Deer  
Councillor Tyrone Muller, Town of Penhold  
Councillor Richard Lorenz, Red Deer County  
Gordon Thomas, Citizen Representative  
Milt Williams, Citizen Representative, Chair



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