

FCSS Regional Application Guide 2026

Diamond Valley, Foothills County, High River, Okotoks



The Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities and Metis Settlements to design and deliver local preventive social services to improve the well-being of individuals, families and communities. Each of the FCSS offices within the Foothills Region offers grants to local non-profit organizations that fit within their strategic priorities and the FCSS Accountability Framework.

This guide will help your organization complete the Foothills Region FCSS funding application. Each section explains what is expected, why it matters, and includes tips or examples. Information is also extracted from the following documents, which are included for reference as needed:

- [Family and Community Support Services Accountability Framework](#)
- [Family and Community Support Services Act and Regulation](#)

Application Deadline and Submission

The deadline to apply is **November 14, 2025**. The funding application is a fillable PDF document. If you need help completing it, contact your local FCSS office (see contact details at the end of this document).

Applicants must submit the signed application and all required attachments to each of the FCSS offices they are seeking funding from by the deadline. Late applications will not be accepted.

1. Organization Information

Provide details about your organization. Include: organization name, contact information, mission, vision, and a short history. This section gives reviewers important background on who you are and how your work aligns with the program goals.

Eligible Applicants – to be eligible for funding, applicants must fall into one of the following categories:

- Registered non-profits under the Societies Act
- Registered charities
- Groups that are *fiscally sponsored* by a registered non-profit, charity, or government agency*
- Local chapter of a provincial or federal non-profit organization

*Note: If your group is not a registered non-profit or charity, you may still apply through a fiscal sponsorship arrangement. In this case, the sponsoring organization must"

- Be a registered non-profit, charity, or government agency
- Submit the application on your group's behalf
- Be legally and financially responsible for the administration of the grant funds
- Provide their registration number and contact information in the application

2. Program Information

Provide a high level, short summary of your program, including what it is, who it serves and how it works (avoid the use of jargon). This is important as reviewers need a quick snapshot before reading more details.

Example: "This program offers (service/approach) for (who) to (intended benefit)."

3. FCSS Mandate Alignment

In this section, check all that apply to your program. Eligible programs must be of a preventive¹ nature that enhances the social well-being of individuals and families through promotion or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity.

Programs must do one or more of the following:

- Help people develop independence, strengthen coping skills and become more resistant to crisis
- Help people to develop an awareness of social needs (e.g. Social Needs Assessments)
- Help people to develop interpersonal and group skills which enhance constructive relationships among people
- Help people and communities to assume responsibility for decisions and actions which affect them
- Provide supports that help sustain people as active participants in the community

4. FCSS Provincial Prevention Priorities & Strategy Alignment

Starting in 2026, FCSS programs are asked to report on how their local funded programs align with the provincial preventative priorities and strategies. Prevention strategies are ways that local programs can address social issues at the earliest stage, and they are how FCSS programs respond to the Provincial Prevention Priorities.

****Information & Referral programs DO NOT need to complete this section of the application**

Step 1: Choose ONE provincial priority that best matches your program:

- **Homelessness and Housing Insecurity**
Homelessness and housing insecurity in Alberta are complex and growing challenges driven by factors such as rising housing costs, economic instability, mental health and addiction issues and systemic barriers to support services. Many individuals and families struggle to access stable, affordable housing, leaving them at risk of eviction, temporary shelter reliance or living in unsafe conditions.

¹ FCSS defines prevention as: A proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empowers them to meet the challenges of life.

- **Mental Health and Addictions**

Many Albertans experience challenges related to mental health and addictions. The province also continues to face an opioid crisis, with alarming rates of drug poisoning and overdoses. These issues have profound impacts on the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

- **Employment**

Unemployment remains a challenge in Alberta, affecting individuals and families across the province. Job losses and economic uncertainty contribute to financial instability and can create barriers to long-term employment. Fluctuations in the job market impact many Albertans, highlighting the ongoing issue of unemployment and its broader effects on communities.

- **Family and Sexual Violence**

Family and sexual violence are critical concerns that can lead to significant and lasting physical, emotional, and psychological effects. These impacts can create substantial barriers to safety, well-being and stability. Survivors often encounter difficulties in obtaining necessary support and the repercussions can extend beyond individuals to affect families, workplaces, and the wider community.

- **Aging Well in Community**

Alignment of health, housing, and community-based services can create safe and supportive environments for Albertans to age well in the community. It is estimated that 22% of people in long term care could be avoided with the right community-based supports in place. Approaches to integrate healthcare and community-based supports are essential to enable Albertans to age in their homes and communities and lower their risk of seeking hospitalization and/or long-term care.

Step 2: Select one or more prevention strategies your program aligns with:

- Promote and encourage active engagement in community
- Foster a sense of belonging
- Promote social inclusion
- Develop and maintain healthy relationships
- Enhance access to local supports
- Develop and strengthen skills that build resilience

5. Program Goal

Write one sentence that clearly states the overall goal of your program.

- This is the broad statement of what your program is working toward, the intent, what you are trying to do.
- Keep it simple and specific.
- Example: "Our goal is to provide volunteer-led programs that help older adults build friendships, stay connected, and feel a sense of belonging."

6. Program Outcome

Describe the positive difference (change) your program will make for participants or community if your goal is met. It is important to demonstrate the impact of your program. This is not about listing your program activities or repeating your goal. Instead, focus on the impact or the resulting change that will happen because your program is successful.

- Think of it as answering the question: What difference will this program make?
- Describe the expected change in people's knowledge, skills, attitudes, behaviors, or well-being (the difference in people's lives because the program worked)
- Use clear, plain language, imagine explaining it to someone who has never heard of your program.
- Avoid just restating your program's goal or listing activities (e.g., "we will run workshops" is an activity, not a change).
- Example: "As a result of (program), seniors will feel more connected, experience less isolation, and have stronger support networks to maintain independence."

7. Statement of Need

Describe the social need your program addresses. Connect the need to the FCSS mandate, provincial priorities, prevention strategies which you identified in questions 3&4. This is also the opportunity to align with local priorities which are outlined in social Needs Assessments and other locally available data.

*Tip: Be concise, focus on the need and connect it to local and provincial priorities.

Example: "The program addresses the social issue of isolation among seniors due to mobility limits, loss of friends or living alone. This aligns with the provincial priority of Aging Well in Community and the local priorities around community connections and belonging."

8. Evidence of need

Provide data or evidence to demonstrate the need. Use local data or reports when possible (e.g. Social Needs Assessments, surveys, or research). Do not repeat your Statement of Need.

Example: "Survey data (Okotoks Social Needs Assessment) shows that X% of older adults report feeling isolated or disconnected from the community. This program offers volunteer led social activities and transportation supports that make it easier for seniors to participate. As a result, seniors are more connected, less isolated, and better able to stay independent."

9. Program Design & Delivery

Describe how your program will run. Include activities, location, format, frequency and duration. Show how activities connect to the need and outcome.

Example: "We delivery weekly workshops for 8 weeks at the community center to help participants build confidence and reduce isolation."

10. Community Partners

List existing partners who support your program and explain their role. This is important to show collaboration with other community partners and avoids duplication of effort. Be clear about the roles and note formal as well as informal partners.

Example: "We will collaborate with local health services for referrals, seniors' clubs for feedback, and volunteers for event support."

11. Promotion

Explain how participants will hear about your program and how you will acknowledge FCSS as a funder. Examples include posters, social media, referrals, or community events. Include how you will use the FCSS logo or acknowledgement statement.

Example: "We will promote the program through (channels) and acknowledge FCSS by (method)."

12. Volunteerism

Describe how volunteers will be engaged, supported and recognized. List roles and how volunteers are utilized in the program. If you don't utilize volunteers, explain why.

Example: "Volunteers will support program delivery by (specific tasks, e.g. lead activities, mentoring participants or providing logistical help). They will receive orientation and role specific training to feel confident in their contributions. We will recognize their efforts through ongoing appreciation and a volunteer celebration during Volunteer Week.

13. Primary Audience & 14. Community Group

Starting in 2026, FCSS funded programs must identify their primary age group and community group served. Choose ONE main audience group and ONE community group from the lists in the application form.

****Information & Referral programs DO NOT need to complete this section of the application.**

15. Anticipated Outputs

Starting in 2026, the province has **CHANGED** the way program participants are counted, moving from unique participants to overall engagement and has specified parameters around the definition of volunteer. For the FCSS application, you are recording anticipated participation counts and will report actuals during year end reporting.

- **Anticipated Participant numbers** counting includes anyone who engages in the program, including registered or drop in participants. Participants are accounted for in every engagement. For example, if two participants register for a program that has five sessions, the result is 10 total for participation (captures engagement, not unique individuals)
- **Anticipated Volunteers** is the number of volunteers and volunteer hours that support FCSS programs. Defined as someone who contributes their time without receiving

monetary compensation. This does not include an organization's employees who dedicate time above and beyond their paid roles.

- **Anticipated Information & Referral numbers** - Referral services will be reported as the number of interactions (e.g. in person referrals, phone referrals, indirect referral service through 211). The reporting for referrals will indicate the total number of referral (interactions, rather than the total number of individuals served). Information services include services such as community directories, information booths, etc. and are **NOT** counted as part of referral services.
- **Volunteer Programs** Volunteer programs only need to complete the volunteer number and volunteer hours of the chart in the application. You do not need to break down the volunteers into age category section unless the program has both volunteers (counted in volunteer number/hours) as well as program participants (counted and divided into age categories of the table).

16. Evaluation

Explain how you will know if the program is successful. A well thought out plan demonstrates accountability and describes how you will use evaluation findings to make changes to your program to enhance its impact.

***Note: FCSS outcome measurement will be finalized with FCSS staff after funding decision and included in funding agreements.**

17. Program Budget

Provide the anticipated budget for your program only (not your entire organization). **FCSS prioritizes funding for direct program delivery and does not provide funding to sustain organizations. Indirect/administrative expenses can be included but should not exceed 15% of the total funding request.**

When applying for funding, it is important to understand which expenses are eligible.

Eligible Direct Program Expenses:

These are costs that are directly attributable to the program for which funding is intended.

Program Expenses may include:

- Salaries/wages for staff directly delivering the program (list MERCs/benefits separately)
- Staff travel to deliver the program
- Participant transportation (if part of program delivery)
- Program materials/supplies (e.g. workbooks, software, snacks)
- Volunteer recognition
- Program specific training
- Programming space

Eligible Indirect/Administrative Expenses

These are necessary for program success but not tied directly to program delivery. They may be included but cannot exceed 15% of the funding request. Examples include:

- Insurance
- Audit and accounting
- Memberships or dues
- Management/administrative salaries
- Office space and supplies
- Staff recruitment

****Please do not bundle these indirect/administrative expenses in the budget, show specifically what these expenses will be used for in the "other" rows of the budget.**

Ineligible Expenses

FCSS Funding **cannot** be used for:

- Capital Costs (e.g. construction, renovation, purchase of land, buildings, or the purchase/modification of motor vehicles)
- Municipal taxes or levies
- Board/committee payments
- Any costs to sustain the organization that aren't directly related to program delivery.
- Fines, penalties or legal fees
- Any expense incurred prior to the start of the agreement term
- Any program or service that:
 - provide primarily for the recreation needs or leisure time pursuits of individuals,
 - offer direct assistance with money, food, clothing or shelter necessary to sustaining an individual or family,
 - are primarily rehabilitative in nature,
 - duplicate services that are ordinarily provided by a government or government agency

Important Budget Notes

- Eligible expenses must fall within the time frame of the funding agreement
- Expenses should be reasonable/necessary to carry out the program for which the funding is granted
- It is the responsibility of the funded organization to comply with all laws and regulations applicable while using funding (includes federal, provincial and municipal laws as well as regulations specific to the program)
- Expenses must be documented, auditable, and supported by appropriate records (i.e. receipts, invoices, timesheets).

Application Process

Complete the application form and submit a separate application to each FCSS office you are requesting funding from.

Each municipality has a slightly different funding process. For more details, contact your local FCSS office. Contact information can be found below.

Funding Requirements

1. Funding received from Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) program must provide preventative social programs that directly benefit its residents.
2. **All funds must be spent by December 31st of the funding year.**
3. FCSS Outcomes and Key Performance Measures (KPM) will be selected with the agency at the time of completing funding agreements.
4. Outcomes must be measured, and data included in a **Year End Final Report by January 31 following each year of funding.**

Need Help?

If you require further clarification or support in completing your application, please contact your local FCSS office:

- Diamond Valley: SuzanN@diamondvalley.town 403-933-3059
- Foothills County: fcss@foothillscountyab.ca 403.603.6229
- High River: fcss@highriver.ca 403.603.3425
- Okotoks: fcss@okotoks.ca 403.995.2773