
Social Framework Community Grants GUIDELINES

Overview of the Strathcona County Social Framework

Following a comprehensive community engagement process in 2016, Strathcona County adopted a new Social Framework with an overarching vision to create a supported, safe, and connected community by achieving four community-wide outcomes:

- **Affordability** – citizens have an increased capacity to meet their basic needs.
- **Accesses to programs and services** – citizens have straightforward access to programs and services that are easy to find.
- **Safety** – citizens feel physically, emotionally, spiritually, and mentally safe.
- **Connectedness and inclusion** – citizens are connected to one another, and their individual differences are valued and respected.

The Social Framework sets out a new way of thinking, behaving and convening as organizations, community groups and individuals and proposes the following shifts in thinking.

SHIFT FROM	TO
<i>Programmatic Responses: a narrow focus on an issue or group</i>	<i>Systemic Thinking: a broader focus on how this issue impacts the collective</i>
<i>Do for people: a paternalistic view of citizens</i>	<i>Do with people: an empowerment and resiliency view of citizens</i>
<i>Incremental, organization-level outcomes: an inward focus</i>	<i>High aspiration and community-wide outcomes: an outward collective focus</i>
<i>Working in silos: an isolated approach</i>	<i>Collective ownership: a shared, collaborative approach</i>
<i>Focus on symptoms: a reactive, short-term view</i>	<i>Focus on root causes: a long term, proactive and preventative view</i>

A New Direction

Non-profit organizations and citizen groups in the social services sector have historically focused on specific issues or concerns to improve citizen wellbeing. They often addressed these issues through programs aimed at specific groups of citizens to prevent these issues or provide early intervention. Funders often designed their grant programs to fund such targeted programs.

Over time, this approach can create a patchwork of narrow programs that are disconnected and which can confuse citizens. Fragmentation can make it hard for citizens to understand and access

the range of supports they need. It can also lead to services gaps and/or duplication.

When communities learn to think beyond programs to community-level outcomes, a different result can occur. Citizens, groups and organizations can come together to talk about broader community issues and desired community results. Through dialogue, participants come to understand the complexity of issues and barriers to accessing supports. Organizations, groups, and people who thought they had nothing in common can see that their efforts are complementary in promoting desired community outcomes. They may also see the potential for new collaborations and partnerships. And all participants deepen their awareness that they are part of a larger collective working toward shared positive community futures.

Strathcona County citizens, groups and organizations can mobilize and work together for greater effectiveness and reach in order to promote the wellbeing of all citizens.

Why Does Strathcona County Fund Social Framework Community Grants?

In partnership with the Government of Alberta's Family and Community Supports Services Program, Strathcona County Family and Community Services (FCS) promotes and supports community-based prevention and early intervention for Strathcona County citizens and communities. This funding helps Strathcona County citizens and communities to:

- Develop independence, strengthen coping skills, and become more resistant to crisis
- Become more aware of social needs
- Develop the interpersonal and group skills that enhance constructive relationships
- Assume responsibility for the decisions and actions that affect them.

FCS also wishes to integrate the priorities of Strathcona County residents into its funding approach. It is important that FCS grant funding for community-based prevention and early intervention reflects the behaviour shifts and approaches set out in the Strathcona County Social Framework.

FCS understands that traditional funder approaches have also reinforced narrow incremental approaches, "silo-ed" perspectives and reactive initiatives. The FCS funding approach supports:

- A **learning community** of citizens, groups, non-profit organizations, and other stakeholders in Strathcona County by helping to build competencies in fostering systemic community-wide change.
- **Collaboration and social innovation** by bringing together citizens, groups, neighbourhoods and organizations for greater community-wide impact. When people think, share and plan collectively on shared priorities, the impact of the whole can be much greater than the sum of its parts.
- **Creativity and ingenuity** of all Strathcona County citizens in support of community wellbeing. Citizens can have great ideas for social wellbeing, prevention and early intervention. These ideas can be developed and tried out on a small scale to see if there is promise for greater scale.

The purpose of the funding is:

- To support the provision of preventive services that enhance the social wellbeing of individuals and families and strengthen personal or community life through prevention or intervention strategies provided at the earliest opportunity.
- To align grant funding with the Social Framework.
- To provide a range of funding opportunities to enable citizens from community and neighbourhood groups to non-profit organizations to act in support of the Social Framework.
- To support collective learning on how to better work together toward positive community change.

What Types of Social Framework Community Grants Are There?

There are three streams of Social Framework Community Grants. Each grant stream is intended to support current structures and processes to achieve the Social Framework outcomes by helping to shift the way organizations, community groups and individuals think, behave and convene as described above.

Summary of Grant Streams

Funding stream definitions:

1. **Core social funding:** financial assistance to eligible non-profit organizations that that contributes to mandate-relevant operating expenses for a one to three year period.
2. **Collaboration funding:** financial assistance for two to three years to eligible non-profit organizations that form partnerships and relationships to address community social issues.
3. **Community Connection and Community Change funding:** financial assistance to eligible individuals or groups for events (through Connection Grants) or projects (through Change Grants), that contribute to positive change in the community.

	Comparison of Streams		
	Core Social Funding	Collaboration Funding	Community Connection and Community Change Funding
Objectives	To support the non-profit sector to provide prevention and early intervention supports for social needs and contribute to Social Framework outcomes	To mobilize cross-sector partnerships and collective resources to address community-wide social issues	To support innovative, creative projects or events that bring people together around current opportunities in a community or neighbourhood for positive change
Funding timelines	One to three years	Two to three years	One year
Criteria**	Non-profit society registered in Alberta providing a social service in Strathcona County	Two or more non-profit organizations or groups in Strathcona County; at least one must be a non-profit society registered in Alberta Priority to groups that include more than one sector (e.g. social services, health promotion or health care, education, public safety, etc.)	Strathcona County citizens, informal groups, neighbourhood committees or groups, community leagues or halls

*Strathcona County may identify funding priorities or areas of focus as indicated by emerging community needs or opportunities and may shift funding allocations between streams as needed. Grant amount is determined annually based on budget.

**Detailed criteria and requirements provided in the following pages

Note: for each funding stream, there are opportunities for prospective grant applicants to participate in an information session and other learning opportunities.

Guidelines

As part of the application process, prospective applicants are encouraged to connect with FCS to discuss their proposal ideas. Early conversations can help prevent questions later in the process. Conversations are not to be construed as indicators of future approval; they are meant to support well planned and thought out proposals.

Evaluation Criteria

Applicants are encouraged to consider how their services or proposals demonstrate the following characteristics. These characteristics will be used through the application review process to evaluate proposals for potential funding.

- **Strategic:** considers a systems context (e.g. leverages an opportunity), targets a root cause, fills a service gap
- **Evidence-based:** considers research (e.g. brain science), emerging best or promising practice;
- **Accessible and inclusive:** to all Strathcona County citizens
- **Responsive:** timely to individual, family or community needs
- **Collaborative:** proactive in collaboration and/or partnership to build on existing strengths
- **Strength-based:** uses approaches that empower clients and partners
- **Planning:** demonstrates evidence of effective planning and clear description of how activities will be delivered
- **Evaluative:** demonstrates clear approach for assessing and tracking expected results, outcomes or impacts (e.g. program, project and / or collaboration effectiveness)
- **Responsible:** demonstrates sustainable practice including financial responsibility and management accountability.
- **Aligned:** demonstrates alignment with the purpose of the grant, the outcomes and shifts of the Social Framework, and other relevant outcomes

Stream 1: Core Social Funding

Overview

Grants are available for local non-profit organizations to provide prevention and early intervention supports for social needs and contribute to the Social Framework. Core social funding supports a portion of operating expenses for non-profit organizations providing services in Strathcona County. Core social funding builds capacity in the community to empower individuals and families through supports and connections with the wider community.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants must be a non-profit society registered in Alberta and providing a social service in Strathcona County.
- Priority will be given to promotion, prevention and early intervention services.

- Consideration may be given to intervention services as determined by evidence of community need.
- Organizations who receive direct financial assistance through the municipal annual budget processes are not eligible
- Applicants will be asked to indicate on the application form where their proposed service lies on the continuum below.

← Prevention – Early Intervention – Intervention →

Process

- All prospective applicants may participate in an information session that will be held after grants are announced. This is an opportunity to gain an understanding of the purpose and objectives of the grant, to ask questions and clarify expectations, and make connections.
- Successful applicants will be encouraged to participate in ongoing learning and reflection during the year.
- A semi-annual progress update will be required along with an annual progress report and financial expenditures statement.

Application Requirements:

Grant applications must include the following:

- Why the proposed social service and proposed approach are important. What evidence is informing the social service? How will this achieve the desired change or social outcome?
- What is to be done; where and when. Social service activities must be based and delivered primarily in Strathcona County and not substantially duplicate activities of other Strathcona County community organizations.
- Who will be involved? What participants are being targeted for the social service; and what partners and/or collaborative arrangements and relationships are involved?
- What are the desired results and changes for the recipients of the social service and how will the changes be measured?
- How will this social service have an impact on community wide outcomes? How will progress towards the outcomes be tracked or measured?

Stream 2: Collaboration Funding

Overview

Grants are available for local non-profit organizations or groups to mobilize cross-sector partnerships to address community-wide issues. Collaboration funding provides an opportunity for organizations and groups to come together to explore how together they can use the resources, services, and initiatives within their respective organizations for greater collective impact. It's about organizations and groups learning how to meaningfully change the way they work together for positive change in the community. This funding is intended to be flexible and adaptable, to facilitate learning together.

Eligibility Criteria

- Two or more non-profit societies or groups must provide a joint application; applications from single organizations are not eligible.
- At least one of the applicants must be a non-profit society registered in Alberta and providing a social service in Strathcona County.
- Priority will be given to applications that include more than one sector (e.g. education, health, social services, business, faith community, etc.).

Process

- All prospective applicants will be encouraged to participate in an information session that will be held after grants are announced. This is an opportunity to gain an understanding of the purpose and objectives of the grant, to ask questions, clarify expectations, and make connections.
- Successful applicants will be encouraged to participate in ongoing learning and reflection during the year.
- A semi-annual progress update will be required along with an annual progress report and financial expenditures statement.

Application Requirements:

- Grant applications must include:
 - Description of the community issue that will be collectively explored or addressed. Why is this issue important, what is the evidence?
 - Statement of the objective(s) and key activities of the collaboration.
 - Description of how this social service will have an impact on community wide (social framework and regional) outcomes. How will progress towards the outcomes be tracked or measured?
 - Description of the collaborative approach and how the participating groups plan to work, learn and reflect together to tell the story of their collaboration.
 - Description of connections between the respective organizations and how the collaborating organizations' initiatives, activities and resources will be shared or used to achieve the shared objective and activities.

Collaboration example:

Bridging the Gap: community organizations are collaborating, combining local efforts to provide stable, affordable housing to individuals or families in vulnerable situations.

- Heartland Alliance Church and Sherwood Park Alliance Church provide funds to supplement the rent expense.
- Hope in Strathcona is the fiscal agent of the funds.
- Heartland Housing signs the lease for the apartment and acts as an intermediate manager in the early stages of the individual getting back on his/her feet.
- Salvation Army provides furniture, clothing, and small household appliance at no charge as needed.
- A Safe Place and/or other appropriate agencies provide ongoing supports which may include counselling, outreach worker supports, warm hand offs to other service providers, assistance to children (rides to school, child care, etc.) and assistance with applications.
- The Ministerial Association may also provide additional counselling, group supports, spiritual guidance, and debt counselling.

Stream 3: Community Connection & Community Change Funding

Overview

Grants enable groups to undertake projects or events that bring people together around current opportunities in a community or neighbourhood for positive change. Two types of grants are available. Community Connection Grants are grants of under \$500 to help facilitate the costs of hosting a community event such as a block party or community kitchen. Community Change Grants are grants of under \$2,000 to support resident-led innovative projects for positive social change. Examples could include a garden exchange box, community kitchens, or neighbourhood beautification projects.

Eligibility Criteria

- Applicants may be individual citizens, informal groups, community leagues or nonprofit seniors' centres.

Process

- The Strathcona County website will provide information annually for the current year's processes, timelines and deadlines for each grant.
- All successful applicants must submit a final report.

Application Requirements:

- Applicants must meet eligibility requirements and submit a complete grant application by the deadline each year.

What Is Not Eligible For Funding?

Expenses that will not be funded include:

- Capital expenses and infrastructure (buildings)
- Debt retirement, bridge funding
- Expenses incurred prior to application submission
- Expenses not integral to the proposal including travel, training, event sponsorship, operational or staff costs not directly tied to implementing the proposal.

Funding will not be granted to:

- Provide primarily for recreational needs or leisure time pursuits of individuals
- Provide services that duplicate those that are ordinarily provided by a government agency.

The Application Review Process: Strathcona County's commitment to those seeking grants

What You Can Expect

- Strathcona County is committed to making meaningful and lasting impact in the community by working in partnership with many individuals and organizations across Strathcona County.
- Strathcona County believes in fair and transparent processes and that the grant process is grounded in excellence, trust and open communication.

Decision Making

- The Strathcona County website will provide information annually for the current year's grant processes, timelines and deadlines for each grant stream. It is expected the timelines will be generally as indicated below.

Stream	Due Date	Funding Decision
Core Social Funding	Early November	Recommendations: December Council decision: February
Collaboration Funding	Early November	Recommendations: December Council decision: February
Community Connection & Community Change Funding	Mid-April	May

- The Family and Community Services (FCS) Department of Strathcona County administers the grant program.
- When grant applications are received, they are first reviewed by the FCS grant program team.
- The grant program team makes sure the grant application fits with the selected grant stream, is complete, and meets the objective and eligibility criteria.

- The team prepares a grant summary of all eligible grants identifying the funding stream, intended purpose, and amount requested.
- The FCS Department provides the package of eligible grant applications for the core social funding and collaboration funding streams and prepared summary to the Community Grants Advisory Committee. This committee, advisory to FCS Administration, is made up of Strathcona County citizens who have applied through a transparent Strathcona County recruitment process, and who bring competencies, experience and/or knowledge necessary for evaluation of Social Framework Community Grants applications.
- The Community Grants Advisory Committee evaluates each application for the core social funding and collaboration funding streams against the selection criteria and provides its recommendations to the FCS Department.
- The Community Connection and Community Change funding grant applications are also reviewed by the FCS grant program team. Funding decisions are made by FCS Administration.

Approvals

- The FCS Department submits recommendations from the Community Grants Advisory Committee for Core Social Funding and Collaboration Funding to Council for final decision.
- Following the grant decisions for Core Social Funding and Collaboration Funding by Council, FCS will advise all applicants in writing of successful and unsuccessful applications.
- Following Community Connection and Community Change Funding grant decisions by FCS Administration, FCS will advise all applicants in writing of successful and unsuccessful application.

Applications Forms

- Applications, deadlines and submission procedures will be available online at Strathcona.ca/FCSgrants.

Reporting Forms

- Reporting forms will be forwarded to successful applicants.

Social Framework Community Grants Policy and Frequently Asked Questions

- Online at Strathcona.ca/FCSgrants.