

A scenic photograph of a park at sunset. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and light blue. In the foreground, a paved path leads towards the background. On the right side of the path, there are several wooden benches with black metal frames. A hammock is strung between two large trees in the middle ground. Several people are visible: two people standing near a stroller on the left, and a group of people sitting on a bench in the middle ground. In the background, there are more trees and a building on a hillside.

# Family & Community Support Services 2023 Annual Report

**FCSS**  
Family & Community  
Support Services

**Edmonton**

## Land Acknowledgement

*The City of Edmonton acknowledges the traditional land on which we reside, is in Treaty Six Territory. We would like to thank the diverse Indigenous Peoples whose ancestors' footsteps have marked this territory for centuries, such as the Cree, Dene, Sauleaux, Nakota Sioux, and Blackfoot peoples. We also acknowledge this as the Métis' homeland and the home of one of the largest communities of Inuit south of the 60th parallel. It is a welcoming place for all peoples who come from around the world to share Edmonton as a home. Together we call upon all of our collective, honoured traditions and spirits to work in building a great city for today and future generations.*

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# Introduction

## What is FCSS?

The Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and participating municipalities to provide local preventive social services to improve the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities. The program is governed by the Family & Community Support Services Act and Regulation, as well as the FCSS Accountability Framework. The City of Edmonton has been involved since the beginning in 1966.

The overarching priority for Edmonton FCSS is to increase social inclusion and equity by funding preventive programs and services, community development initiatives and social infrastructure. This includes working with funded organizations to ensure their organization and programs reflect our community and those we serve.



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# Introduction

FCSS programs and services are required to be focused on primary (universal) prevention that addresses root causes, promotes protective factors and enhances social inclusion and community connections; and secondary prevention that addresses issues at an early stage, strengthens capacity to reduce risk factors and connects people to appropriate resources and skill development.

**Prevention** is a proactive process that strengthens the protective factors of individuals, families, and communities to promote well-being, reduce vulnerabilities, enhance quality of life, and empower them to meet the challenges of life.

**Social inclusion** means creating an environment in which all individuals feel like they belong and are valued for their unique perspectives and skills; differences are considered opportunities for individual and organizational growth; and everyone has equal access to opportunities and resources that can contribute fully to our city's success.

## A Fresh Start in 2023

This was the first year of the 2023-2025 funding cycle in which we funded programs based on the new FCSS program priorities. The realignment work was done to ensure FCSS was working towards achieving the preventive social outcomes that are important to our community.

We explored new opportunities to improve program delivery, collaboration and community impact. Examples include the following:

- Funding the Edmonton Seniors' Coordinating Council to develop and implement a new outreach model to help reach seniors who are marginalized and isolated.
- Renewed focus on partnerships and collaborations through our Evolving the Social Sector Funding.
- Offering FCSS Learning Series sessions to provide funded programs the opportunity to see work happening in the sector and to network.

## A Fresh Start in 2023

As a result of a funding increase from the provincial Government, Edmonton FCSS was able to distribute funds as follows:

- Community programs received a 4% increase in funding, encouraging investment towards well-being of front-line staffing.
- Remaining funds were used for emerging issues (i.e., identified collaborative issues and other requests for support).

We appreciate the leadership and support of the Community Services Advisory Board (CSAB) and the FCSS Committee in supporting community to provide preventive programs and services in our community.

# Theory of Change

## Increasing Social Inclusion & Equity through: Preventive Programs and Services | Community Development Initiatives | Social Infrastructure

### TO STRENGTHEN RELATIONSHIPS & CONNECTIONS FOR:



#### Resilient Individuals & Thriving Families

Are able to “bounce forward” from challenges and stress, and support each other holistically.



#### Welcoming & Engaged Communities

Are equitable, diverse and inclusive; they support strong relationships and connections.



#### A Strong Sector

Ensures individuals, organizations, and broader civil society have the knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to provide a coordinated, collaborative and connected web of support, also able to facilitate policy and systems change.

**RESULTING IN ENHANCED SOCIAL WELL-BEING  
OF INDIVIDUALS, FAMILIES & COMMUNITIES**

By providing funding for preventive programs, services, and community development initiatives, Edmonton FCSS will strengthen relationships and connections, which creates:

- **Resilient Individuals and Thriving Families**
- **Welcoming and Engaged Communities**
- **Social Infrastructure**

This provides our community with enhanced social well-being.

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# Strategic Priority Areas

## HEALTHY SOCIAL EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT



## POVERTY REDUCTION AND HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION



## POSITIVE MENTAL HEALTH



## HEALTHY RELATIONSHIPS



Edmonton FCSS initiated a strategic alignment in 2019.

To identify program priorities, FCSS engaged with community agencies, community funders, internal partners, the Community Services Advisory Board, FCSS Committee, and the Government of Alberta.

It was important to ensure that the program priorities would align with the City of Edmonton's goals and priorities, including the Social Development Branch and Provincial FCSS program expectations.

Research included a literature review and snapshots on specific issues. The project also used existing community-based research, outcomes data and trends, and issues identified through a wide variety of sources, including data and research on the impacts of COVID-19.

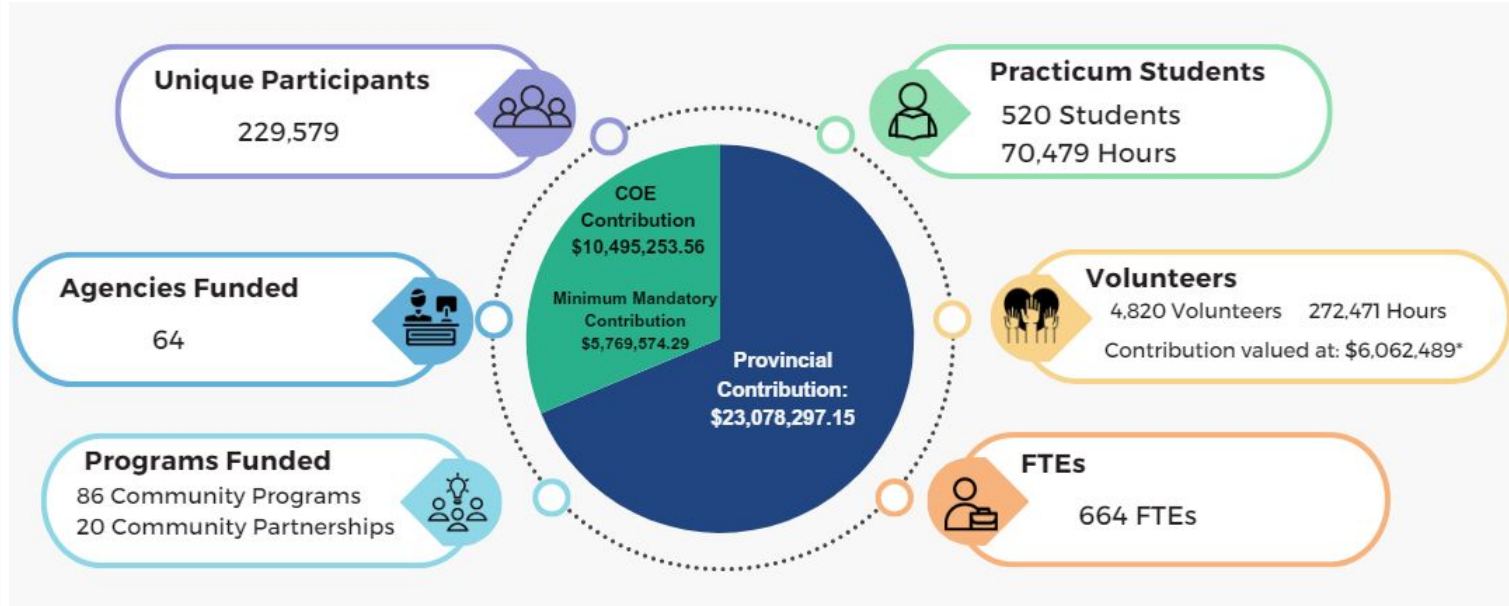
The FCSS Committee influenced the work and recommended to the Community Services Advisory Board these priorities that were also approved by City Administration.

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# FCSS data at a glance



\*Using a living wage calculation of \$22.25/hr

# How Did We Do?

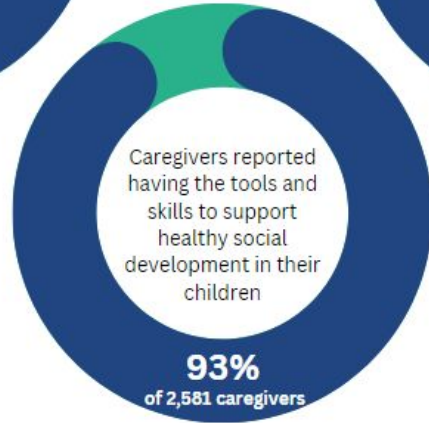
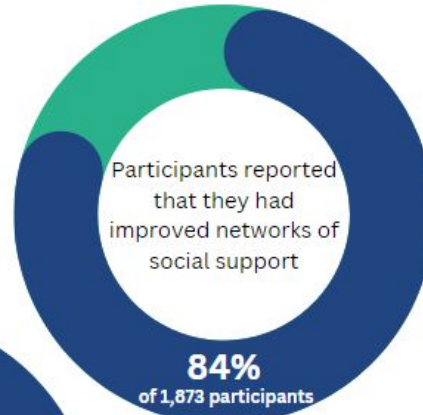
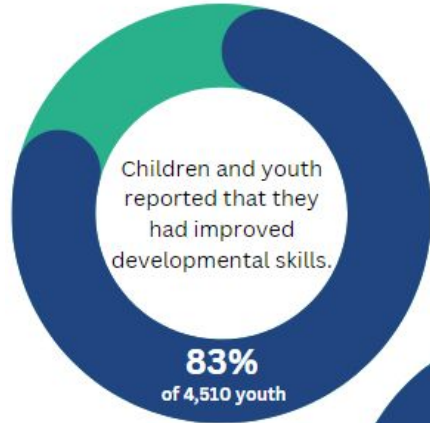
## Outcomes Summary



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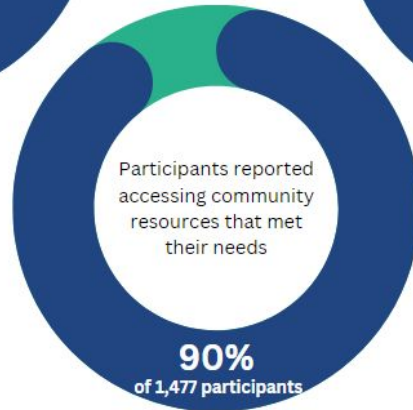
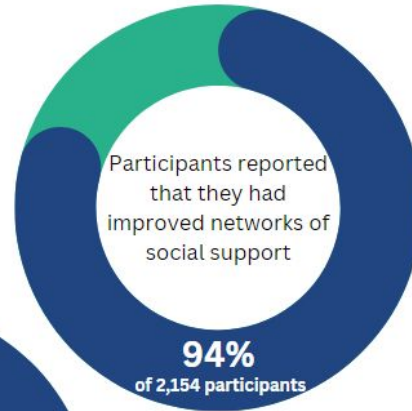
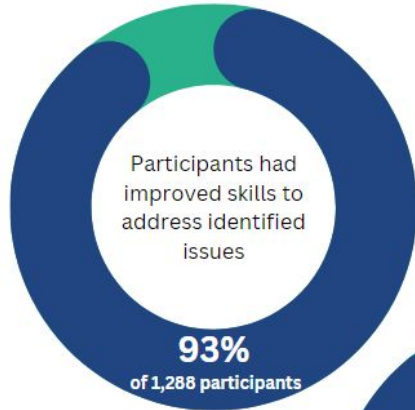
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# Healthy Social Emotional Development



*"Our daughter's vocabulary has grown leaps and bounds from all the songs and rhymes that she has learned from attending the program! She is learning words related to that I would not even think to teach her, I have even learned some new vocabulary. Your programs have given us a strong start and we are so thankful."*

# Poverty Reduction & Homelessness Prevention

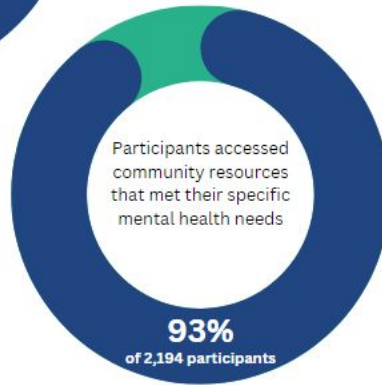
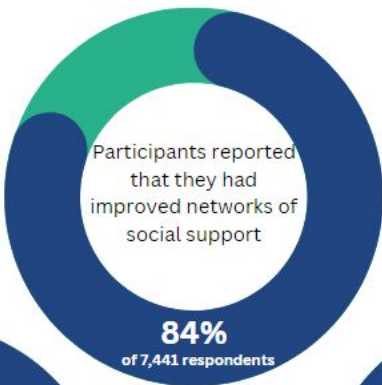


*"The programs offered have equipped me with valuable knowledge and skills, providing practical insights into budgeting, financial planning, and accessing resources for improved food security."*

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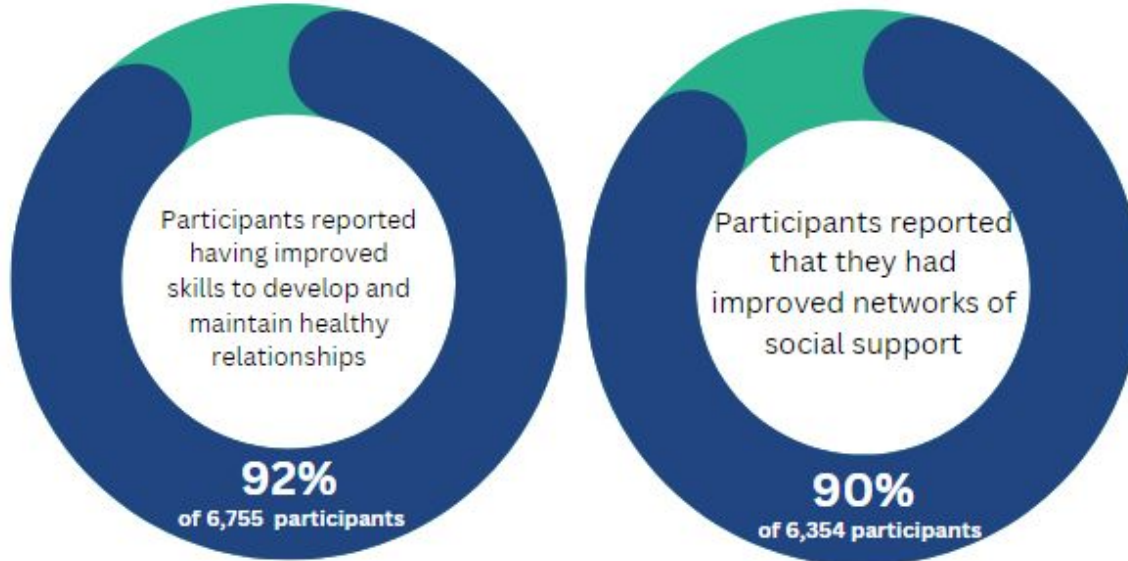
# Positive Mental Health



*"I learned how to identify it early and seek help. I am not alone. Mental health issues can happen to everyone. There is help. Learn to recognize of mental health issue. We all can have mental health issues no matter what colour we are. I understand myself when I have these symptoms."*



# Healthy Relationships



*"I started working on myself and how to use the knowledge gained through the girl's circle. Through this program, I learned to make my relationships better."*

# Evolving the Social Sector & Capacity Building



*"I have expanded my skills in community-based participatory research, engagement with community partners, data collection and analysis, and the translation and mobilization of knowledge to community."*

*"The program has helped us to access/obtain important data that provides a deeper understanding of the risk factors and experiences of many older adults in our community, especially those living with multiple risk factors."*

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# Spotlight: Edmonton Seniors' Coordinated Outreach

In July 2023, phase one of the Seniors Coordinated Outreach Program began with ten partnering agencies. These agencies were connected in a variety of ways including an outreach worker community of practice, a leadership committee, as well as shared processes and practices.

The intent of shifting how we funded Outreach was to build consistency in how services are provided and to reach those seniors who are currently disconnected to existing services.

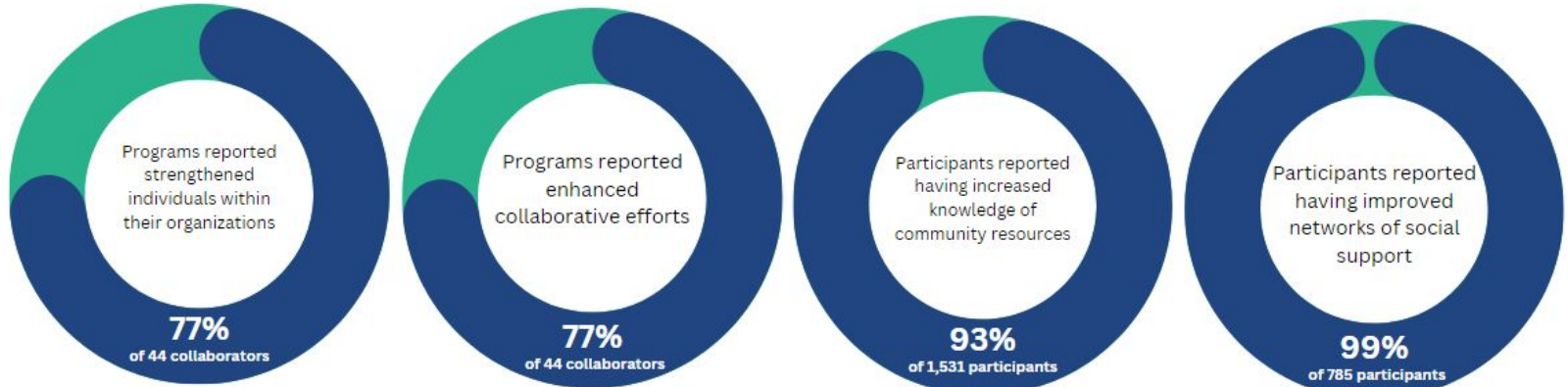
***Outreach*** is a supportive service to help seniors 55 and older connect with supports they need to improve their well-being.



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## Spotlight: Edmonton Seniors' Coordinated Outreach



Working together as a collaborative, with ESCC as the backbone, service providers involved in the new service delivery model reported strengthened skills in their organizations and enhanced collaborative efforts.

In part, as a result of these collaborative efforts, those accessing services reported increased knowledge of community resources and improved networks of social support.

*"A survivor of domestic violence, I was shattered, depressed, burdened by multiple challenges, unable to work due to a broken foot. I felt very alone. I was referred to Shaama Centre. They guided me through income support applications, provided counselling, physiotherapy and legal connections. They got my English proficiency assessed and linked me to a part-time school, reconstructed my resume, and assisted with job applications. Just a couple of months back, I was questioning my life's direction. Today, I feel calm, hopeful, motivated and supported. Thanks to the Shaama Centre, my future looks brighter. I'll soon start school. The center has been my lifeline, helping me rise from the ashes of a harrowing past." – Participant*

*"Attending the monthly community of practice meetings make me feel like I belong to a bigger community, I feel surer that if I am not able to meet the need of someone there are always other places a person can go and access." - Outreach Worker*





# Advancing Equity and Intersectionality

As part of the 2023 funding cycle, Edmonton FCSS had a stated goal in funding organizations that demonstrated an ability to plan programs with an intersectional lens and/or that are equity led. The goal has been to work with our funded organizations to support them in looking more like our community at all levels, and the ability to provide services to anyone that walks through their doors.

**Equity-Led:** An equity-led organization includes all of the following:

- Equity seeking cultures central to daily operations.
- Equity seeking leadership at all levels - board, management, and staff.
- Programs developed with people with lived experience.
- Programs delivered by equity seeking people.
- Organization and program has legitimacy and profile with key beneficiaries, neighbourhoods and partners.

**Intersectionality** is a concept that says people can face different types of unfair treatment, like racism or sexism, all at once. It's about how these different kinds of unfairness can mix together and make things even harder for someone, because of who they are, like their race, gender, or sexual identity.

## Advancing Equity and Intersectionality

### Some examples of actions organizations are taking:

- “We are taking the approach that Equity, Diversity & Inclusion (EDI), anti-racism and truth and reconciliation need to be woven into all business plan items. We want to have staff in every department that can mentor new staff on EDI so managers are all taking EDI training. We are also working to get part-time, frontline staff trained and are paying them extra to attend training. We feel that we are strengthening the sector by increasing the EDI knowledge and skills.”
- “In the spirit of reconciliation, we have trained all staff on how to smudge and there are smudge kits in all rooms. We also have Elders to do blessings. Our Truth & Reconciliation committee, comprised of staff and board members, aims to be Indigenous-led and offer culturally appropriate programs throughout the organization.”

## Advancing Equity and Intersectionality

### Some examples of actions organizations are taking:

- “Our partnership with other organizations has enabled the creation of a new sexual violence prevention program for newcomers.”
- “Our Organization has developed and implemented an Equity Diversity and Inclusion operations policy, including an anti-racism policy.”
- “An Indigenous practice framework will be implemented throughout an organization and all programs.”

# FCSS Internal Contributions

The FCSS partnership involves shared resourcing – the Province contributes 80% and the City provides a mandatory contribution of 20% to the program. The City of Edmonton FCSS contribution consists of existing programs, services, and initiatives within the Social Development Branch of the Community Services Department and any other funding provided by City Council to programs and/or projects that meet the provincial eligibility requirements.

This includes:

- Edmonton FCSS Program Team
- Community Development Social Workers
- Community Capacity Building
- Tenant Support Services
- Community Safety Team
- Poverty Reduction initiatives, including funding to EndPovertyEdmonton
- Gender Based Violence Prevention
- Family Violence Prevention Team
- Community Wellness Team
- Suicide Prevention - Living Hope
- Homelessness Prevention
- Community Development with newcomer, refugee, and Indigenous communities
- Community Services Advisory Board - FCSS Committee

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## FCSS Feedback from City staff

*"Over the past five years, Safe and Healthy Communities has developed a primary prevention model to engage citizens, especially men, in fostering healthy, non-violent relationships. Men's Sheds emphasizes a non-programmatic method to motivate men toward positive behavioural outcomes. We've successfully reached out to a group typically hard to engage in personal development."*

*"In this new home, he has found purpose in taking care of the property, mowing the lawn and gardening in the summer and shovelling snow in the winter. He has found safety, community and stable, long-term housing at Hope Terrace and represents the goal of Affordable Housing and Homelessness: to end homelessness through housing and support."*

*"In 2023 through the FCSS Learning Series, we organized larger group gatherings around specific topics and agencies could self-select which topic was relevant to attend and which staff should attend. It is important to the FCSS team that agencies are engaged in ways that are meaningful to them, and we believe the learning series approach has been very successful in this regard. We were also very happy to see non-FCSS funded agencies attending learning series sessions as it increases the reach of the important preventive work happening in our city."*

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# 2023 FCSS Committee

## Community Members:

- Victoria Smith
- Bonnie Chan-Maier
- Mary Frances Smith
- Vicki Van Vliet Vaitkunas
- Sarah Barber

## FCSS Association of Alberta:

- City of Edmonton Representative:  
Vicki Van Vliet Vaitkunas.

## Community Services Advisory Board Members:

- Donna Brock (co-chair)
- Luke Statt (co-chair)
- Ashton Raeyr
- Azumme Degun
- Francisco Yu
- Samuel Mammen
- Shane Scott
- Shaun Percival

For more more information regarding the City of Edmonton FCSS Program,  
visit **[edmonton.ca/FCSS](https://edmonton.ca/FCSS)** .

For questions about this report, please contact **[fcss@edmonton.ca](mailto:fcss@edmonton.ca)** .

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