Fort St. John, British Columbia:

Community Program and Service Inventory Report



October 2018







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Acknowledgements

This report is part of the research and data collection carried out by The Forge. The results inform the social framework for Fort St. John.

We would like to thank the participants of the Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory survey and acknowledge the time and effort spent by service providers to share their information.

Availability

This report will be available at the Community Development Institute of the University of Northern British Columbia.

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Related Documents

- * Fort St. John Community Profile, 2018
- * Fort St. John Community Indicators, Forthcoming
- * Fort St. John Community Survey, Forthcoming







Introduction

The online Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory Survey was a part of the work being undertaken in Fort St. John by the University of Northern British Columbia's (UNBC) Community Development Institute (CDI) via The Forge. In consecutive phases, The Forge aims to gather, process, and present data and information about the community of Fort St. John as a way of meaningfully informing local and regional decision-making. The Fort St. John Community Profile constituted Phase One of this effort. The program and service inventory, together with a community indicators program as well as a community survey, is a part of Phase Two. The Community Program and Service Inventory is a living document which will be updated regularly.

The aim of the program and service inventory was to compile a comprehensive list of available programs and services and create an opportunity to identify possible gaps and overlaps. In combination with the community profile, this information can help service providers determine community needs and allocate resources effectively. As it is based on a voluntary survey, the inventory cannot be a complete representation of all programs and services offered in Fort St. John. The weakness of our data collection was the limited ability of service providers to find time to participate.

Despite some gaps in service representation, the data collected in the survey created a snapshot of the type and number of available services and the population they serve. This information was used to create a service delivery map, which identifies:

- The number of programs and services by type;
- The numbers and types of services by target age group;
- * The numbers and types of services and their enrolment capacity by target population group;
- The service types facing unmet demands as expressed by enrolment compared to available spaces;
- The cost associated with services for certain target groups;
- * Program delivery and opportunities for volunteer involvement by target groups; and
- Funding sources for programs and services.

Methodology

The Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory Survey was launched at the Social Program and Service Networking Event hosted by The Forge at the Northern Lights College in January 2018. The online survey was initially open throughout February and March 2018. A preliminary analysis of the data revealed that there were critical gaps in the information collected due to some organizations not being able to participate. The survey was re-opened throughout June and July 2018, while the organizations were encouraged to use the chance to participate.







Synopsis

The voluntary online Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory Survey registered 253 programs entered by approximately 72 program providers. The survey could not provide a complete list of programs and services as participation was voluntary, and time restraints limited service providers' ability to participate. The resulting snapshot of entered programs available to Fort St. John and area residents provided the following insights.

- * When grouped by service type, the largest categories were community events with 76 entries and indoor recreation with 64 entries. This was followed by children and family programs (45) and fitness (41). Fifty percent of all program types featured less than ten programs. It should be noted that each program could represent multiple program types.
- * Adults aged 20 to 64 were the most targeted, or served, age group with 157 programs indicating that they serve adults. Preschool aged children from zero to five years old were the least targeted group with 95 programs serving them. Apart from community events and indoor recreation, which were the most common program types for all age groups, children up to age 12 were commonly targeted by children and family programs, while adults and seniors were the main age groups for fitness programs and general interest education.
- * The vast majority of programs reported not targeting a particular population group and being directed at the general population. Among the target groups, families-at-risk were the most targeted group (23 programs), while new immigrants were the specified target group with the fewest programs directed at them (15 programs).
- * Health services, early childhood development, seniors housing, and respite were among the types of services which reported being over-subscribed. Some recreation programs, such as lessons for kids, as well as entertainment, for example performing arts, were also affected by demand exceeding available space. While the general population was affected by program shortages, programs targeting children and youth, seniors, and Aboriginal community members were more likely to report over-subscription.
- * The majority of programs and services in Fort St. John were free of charge. When looking at target population groups, the responses indicated that programs targeting specific groups, especially those focusing on at-risk groups, were more likely to be free of charge.
- * A total of 117 programs indicated that they were operated by paid staff. Sixty-three featured both paid and volunteer staff, while 16 programs were exclusively run by volunteers. Volunteer opportunities were available with 88 programs, mostly those not targeting a specific population group, especially not the most vulnerable groups.
- * Municipal funding was the most common source of funding (116) for programs in Fort St. John. This was followed by user fees (80) and fundraising (68). The less common provincial funding sources contributed mostly to education, Aboriginal resources, children and families, health, housing, and safety services. Federal funding was the least reported source of program funding and focused mainly on business supports and career and skill development.

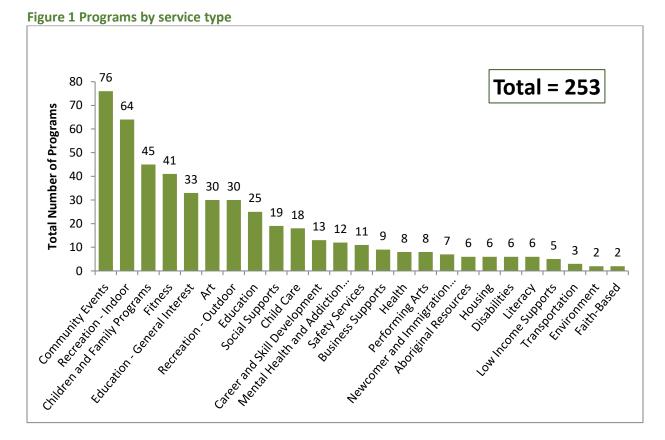






Program and Service Type

Survey respondents entered 253 programs and services into the online Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory. The inventory survey identified 25 program and service types. When choosing the types of programs and services they represented, respondents were encouraged to check all that applied. This resulted in 495 program type entries. As Figure 1 shows, there were notable differences in how well specific types of programs and services were represented in the community. A small number of program types were very well represented, while about half have only a small number of programs. Not surprisingly, the types which appealed to, or targeted, the general population were most represented among the programs and services. Service types targeting more specific population groups, on the other hand, were offered by fewer programs.



- * The largest number of programs (76) fell into the community events category. These included arts, children and family, education, fundraising, and recreation events. The data suggests that almost one-third of all programs and services were connected to community events.
- * Recreation and fitness categories also ranked high. As may be expected in a northern location, indoor recreation (64) was leading this group of program types and ranked second overall, constituting one-quarter of all programs. Fitness (41) and outdoor recreation (30) were also represented in the top one-third of all types.
- * Children and family programs (45), which included infant, parenting, specialized, and other programs, were another well-represented service type and ranked third overall. Meanwhile,





- child care (18), including child care, after school care, and playschool, ranked lower but still fell into the top half of all types.
- * In terms of education, general interest education (33) ranked in the top five program types. Education (25), including K-12, post-secondary, and adult basic education, followed closely, while career and skill development (13) was less represented.
- * Art (30), such as classes for crafts, culture, dance, heritage, and music, was in the top onequarter of all types. Performing arts (8), however, ranked much lower.
- * When looking at programs directed at vulnerable population groups, social supports (19) ranked in the top half, while low income supports (5) were among the four least represented types.
- * The survey identified 12 programs in the mental health and addictions category and eight programs and services in the general health category. General health included medical, alternative, dental, home care, and other health categories. It is recognized that the survey must not have captured all health programs and services offered in Fort St. John.





Programs by Age Group

The online Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory asked respondents to identify the age group, or groups, they serve allowing them to check all groups that applied. Among the 253 programs, there were a total of 625 age group entries. The age groups included preschool, elementary, youth, adult, and senior. Figure 2 shows the number of programs serving each age group and identifies the age ranges.

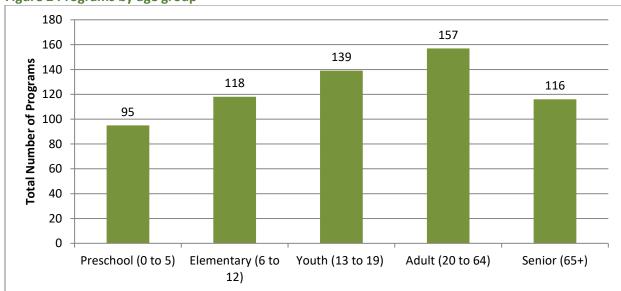


Figure 2 Programs by age group

Preschool Age Children

A total of 95 programs and services in Fort St. John reported serving or targeting children from birth to age five. This represented about 38% of all programs and shows that this age group was the least targeted or addressed age group.

- * The largest number of programs and services serving preschool age children fell into the community events category (49), followed by indoor recreation (31), children and family programs (29), outdoor recreation (22), art (19), and child care (16).
- Other program types, which included preschool age children in their clientele, and which may be of particular interest in the context of available services for young children, were, for example, Aboriginal services (6), social supports (6), performing arts (5), and mental health and addiction services (4).
- * Early development and intervention programs, health care, Aboriginal resources, family programs, and arts and sports classes were among the programs targeting preschool age children which reported over-subscription.

Elementary School Age Children







There were a total of 118 services and programs in Fort St. John which targeted or included elementary school age children from six to 12 years of age. With close to 47% of all programs, this age group is more strongly represented among the program and service clientele in Fort St. John than preschool age children.

- * About one-half of all program and service types serving elementary school age children were community events (60). Other types which were highly represented in serving this age group included indoor recreation (42), children and family programs (32), outdoor recreation (25), and art (22).
- Fitness (16), education (15), general interest education (13), and child care (10) were further types available to children aged six to 12 years.
- * It should be noted that the less represented types, those with less than ten entries, were similar to those for preschool age children but were slightly more available to elementary school age children.
- * Among the programs serving elementary school age children, the ones dealing with oversubscription included abuse intervention, early intervention, health care, Aboriginal resources, family programs, and arts and sports classes.

Youth

The youth age group refers to ages 13 to 19 years. A total of 139 programs and services reported serving this age group. This constitutes 55% of all programs and makes youth the second most served age group in Fort St. John.

- * As with the younger age groups, community events (65) were the most represented program and service type. Although significantly lower, indoor recreation (45), fitness (30), and outdoor recreation (26) were the next highly represented types. This indicated a prevalence of physical activities among the opportunities for youth in the community.
- * As can be expected, children and family programs (27) were less significant for this age group compared to younger children. This was followed by art (25), general interest education (18), and education (15).
- * Representation of the other types was similar to the younger age groups. Notably, mental health and addition services (8) increased for this age group compared to younger children.
- * Abuse intervention, early intervention, health care, Aboriginal resources, family programs, and arts and sports classes for youth reported being over-subscribed.

Adults

A total of 157 programs and services reported serving adults aged 20 to 64 years. With over 62% of all programs serving this age group, adults had the most services available to them out of all age groups.

- * As for all other age groups, and for service types in general, community events (70) were the highest represented service type for adults.
- * Also mirroring the other age groups, indoor recreation (42) held second place among adultoriented service types. Fitness (32) and outdoor recreation (22) were represented in the top one-quarter as well.







- In comparison to younger age groups, general interest education (28) gained in significance for the adult age group. At the same time, children and family programs (21) were much less represented, indicating that many of them were focused on children in a family context rather than the adults in families.
- * Mental health and addiction services (9) showed a slight increase in the number of services offered to the adult age group; however, they were surpassed by social supports (15), career and skill development (12), and safety services (10), which all featured more adult-oriented services than other age groups.
- * Health care, family programs, and Aboriginal resources, as well as special interest, arts, and sports programs for adults were frequently over-subscribed.

Seniors

The seniors age group referred to the population 65 years of age and older. Of all programs and services, 116 reported serving the senior population. This constituted around 46% of all programs and made seniors the second least targeted, or served, age group after preschool age children.

- * Despite a smaller number of community events (56) targeting seniors, they still remained the most represented type of service for this age group.
- * Similarly, although there were a smaller number of indoor recreation programs (30) for seniors than for most other age groups, it remained in second place among the types of services available to seniors. Fitness (17) and outdoor recreation (17), on the other hand, were less represented among the programs for seniors.
- * Art (24) and general interest education (23) were among the top four types of senior-oriented programs and services.
- * Services that may respond to age-related needs among seniors were mostly found in the middle or the lower half in terms of representation, including health (9), disabilities (5), housing (4), low income supports (3), and transportation (3). These numbers were comparable to the other age groups.
- * Health care, housing, family programs, Aboriginal resources, and respite, as well as arts, music, sports, and special interest classes were among the programs for seniors which faced oversubscription.







Programs by Identified Target Population Group

The Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory survey identified four common target groups based on their specific needs, including people with disabilities, youth at-risk, families at-risk, and new immigrants. Furthermore, service providers could indicate that they were not targeting any particular population groups or specify other groups. From the responses indicating other target groups, Aboriginal people emerged as an additional target group to be included in the data. Each program or service indicated all target groups that applied, resulting in multiple responses per program and a total of 261 entries.

Of the 261 target group responses, close to 60%, or 155, indicated that they were not targeting a particular population group. As Figure 3 demonstrates, the rest of the responses ranged between 15 (new immigrants) and 23 (families at-risk) programs per target group. A further 10 responses indicated other target groups.

In terms of program types that targeted particular population groups, both specified crisis prevention and response services, and general community activities ranked high, while education and careerrelated programs were less represented.

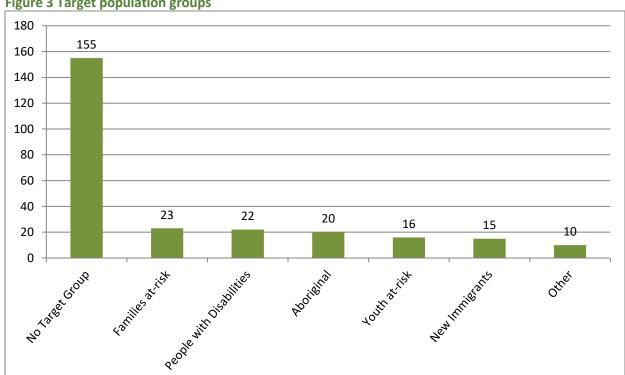


Figure 3 Target population groups

Families at-Risk

By a small margin, families at-risk were the most targeted population group with 23 programs focusing on them. That constituted 22% of all programs which targeted specific population groups.





- * As can be expected, the majority (14) of programs targeting families at-risk fell into the children and family program type.
- * With a gap, those were followed by social supports (7), which indicates a focus on specific needs; Aboriginal resources (6), which may hint at an overlap with the Aboriginal target group; and community events (6), which shows an inclusion of vulnerable groups in general community activities.
- * Mental health and addiction services (4), low income supports (4), and safety services (3) were examples of more crisis-oriented services.
- * Health services; some children and family programs, including early childhood development; Aboriginal resources; and some safety services for vulnerable population groups reported oversubscription, meaning families at-risk were affected by program capacity shortages in Fort St. John.

People with Disabilities

A total of 22 programs and services in Fort St. John reported targeting people with disabilities. That constituted over 20% of all services which targeted specific population groups.

- * The by far most commonly represented type of service among those targeting people with disabilities was community events (13). This was followed by social supports (7) and a variety of recreational program types, including indoor recreation (6), outdoor recreation (6), and fitness (5), as well as career and skill development (5).
- * Some of the service types which are essential parts of day-to-day routines for many people with disabilities, such as health, housing, and transportation, were among the less represented service types targeting this population group.
- * In terms of enrolment, health programs, early intervention, and respite, which constitute critical services for many people with disabilities, were among the programs experiencing needs exceeding capacity.

Aboriginal

Around 19% of programs targeting specific population groups, a total of 20 programs, reported targeting Aboriginal people. This included First Nations and Métis.

- * The leading types of programs and services targeting Aboriginal people were children and family programs (11) and community events (10).
- * Art (8) ranked higher for this target group than for most of the other ones, while social supports (7) and Aboriginal resources (6) were comparable to some of the other target groups.
- * Aboriginal resources, in particular family programs, were among the services dealing with oversubscription.

Youth at-Risk

Youth at-risk were targeted by 16 programs, which equaled 15% of all programs focusing on target population groups.







- * While no program type stood out among those targeting youth at-risk, there was a focus on community involvement, including children and family programs (6), community events (5), and art (5).
- * As in most other target groups, social supports (4) fell into the top four program types available for this group. Youth at-risk, however, were one of only two population groups for whom targeted career and skills development (4) options ranked in the top one-quarter of program types.
- * Youth activities as well as some safety services for at-risk individuals were affected by oversubscription.

New Immigrants

With a total of 15 programs targeting new immigrants, this was the least targeted population group. Unlike most other groups, and in accordance with the need to integrate this population group into the community, the main focus of programs and services for new immigrants was on recreation and career support.

- * With community events (7) leading the program types targeting new immigrants, the aspect of inclusion in community activity was highlighted. This group was, furthermore, the only one targeted by indoor recreation (6) and fitness (4) programs in the top four among all programs focusing on immigrants.
- * Another well represented program type for immigrants was career and skill development (5), which distinguished this group from most others.







Programs and Services by Enrolment

The inventory survey asked service providers how well enrolment in their programs matched the spaces available. The objective was to identify potential unmet needs and program and service gaps. Out of all programs, 218 provided information for this question.

The voluntary nature of the survey meant that, while the entries included a broad range of services, and a sizable sample of Fort St. John programs and services were represented, it was impossible to capture every program that existed in the city. A closer look at the data, and a comparison to anecdotal evidence from lived experience and conversations in the community, revealed that enrolment information could not be accurately expressed by our numbers. One reason was that those programs which faced a much higher demand than they could provide spaces were significantly less likely to have had the time to participate in the survey. Another explanation was that large organizations with exceptionally high workloads and high rates of over-subscription were more likely to summarize all their programs and services in one survey entry, thereby reducing the number of entries for certain responses like enrolment. However, the survey results did allow clear conclusions in terms of what types of programs and services were most likely to experience enrolment demand exceeding available capacity. Therefore, this section does not present statistics and graphs but focuses on the qualitative information provided by the survey.

Naturally, the program types which were numerous in the community and commonly featured open access and unlimited participation numbers, such as community events and general interest activities for families with children, were dominant in many survey sections. This should, however, not distract from the responses of more specialized program and service types and their capacity and enrolment experiences, especially because specialized services often address critical needs. Generally, larger programs and events that were designed for the entire community tended to have space available at most times, while the more specialized, or needs-based, services tended to find that enrolment questions were not applicable or did not provide an answer.

Sometimes or Always Over-Subscribed

The categories sometimes over-subscribed and always over-subscribed represented a group of services ranging from recreational programs and services of interest to the general public to critical services addressing issues of health, safety, development, and day-to-day support. Children and youth, seniors, and Aboriginal community members were the target and age groups especially affected by program over-subscription. However, service capacity shortages in some program areas also affected the general population of Fort St. John.

- * Some of the narrowly focused special interest classes tended to be over-subscribed. This was also true for some of the indoor recreation opportunities that offered basic kids lessons, such as swimming or skating. Over-subscription, furthermore, occurred in the area of music lessons as well as performing arts.
- * In addition, children and families were affected in program areas that represented critical services, in particular early child development and youth activities.
- * In the context of children and families, Aboriginal resources were also among those facing oversubscription in their programming.





- * Furthermore, safety services, in particular programs serving abuse victims, reported oversubscription.
- * In regards to housing, seniors housing programs reported demands exceeding availability.
- * Another over-subscribed area that affected seniors but also the general population were health programs and services, including a broad range of public health service types as well as respite.

Enrolment Matches Space Available

A relatively small segment of all program types reported that their enrolment matched the spaces they had available. These included children and family programs, as well as community events. The latter tended to be designed to accommodate community-wide participation. Other program types reportedly operating at capacity encompassed Aboriginal resources, art, child care, fitness, indoor recreation, and social supports.

Sometimes or Always Space Available

A wide range of programs reported sometimes or always having space available. Many of them belonged to program categories which are inherently open to large or unlimited participant numbers.

- * Since community events are often designed to allow big crowds to participate, it is not surprising that they usually had space available.
- * Outdoor recreation programs are less likely to have limited space and, consequently, were less likely to be affected by over-subscription.
- * Other program types in the categories that were able to match community demand and need included children and family programs, fitness, and indoor recreation.





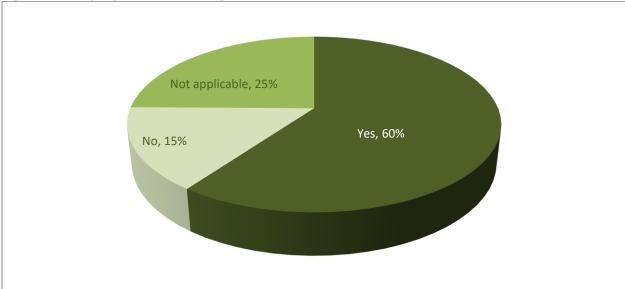


Cost or Free-of-Charge

The online Fort St. John Community Program and Service Inventory asked program and service providers whether their program was free-of-charge or involved a cost or user fee. A total of 210 programs provided an answer, and 60%, or 126, reported providing free programs or services. As shown in Figure 4, for 15%, there was a cost involved for program subscribers and users.

- * Generally, free programs and services included community events, recreation and fitness offers, children and family services, health, education, arts programs, Aboriginal resources, and supports.
- * Programs involving a cost mostly represented special interest classes, art and music classes, adult education programs, and some recreation and fitness programs.
- * In terms of target groups, over 80% of programs for youth at-risk and approximately three-quarters of all programs for Aboriginal people and new immigrants were free-of-charge. For families at-risk and people with disabilities, 65% and 55% respectively were free.
- * Of programs open to the general public, less than one-half was free-of-charge.



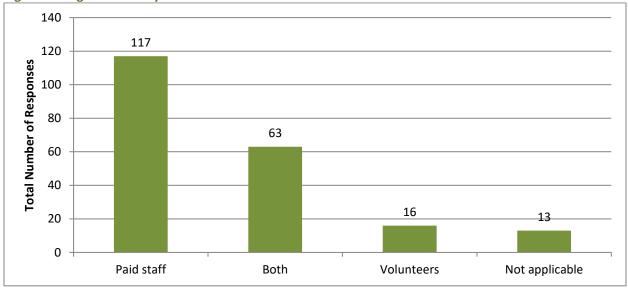




Program Delivery and Volunteering Opportunities

The inventory questionnaire inquired about program delivery and volunteering opportunities. Out of 209 responses, a total of 117 reported that their program was delivered by paid staff, 16 were run exclusively by volunteers, and 63 featured a combination of both paid staff and unpaid volunteers (see Figure 5). A total of 88 programs featured volunteer opportunities. More than half of those (45) could be found in programs directed at the general population, while 15 programs targeting people with disabilities and 12 targeting Aboriginal people offered volunteer opportunities. The programs least likely to use volunteers were programs targeting youth at-risk.

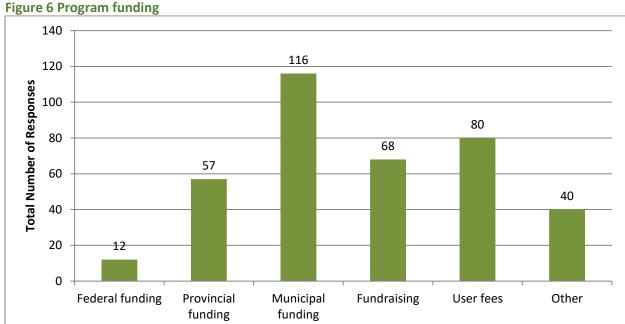






Program Funding

In the survey, respondents were asked to indicate the funding sources for their programs. Multiple responses were encouraged where applicable. Figure 6 demonstrates that municipal funds (116) were the most common source of funding to support programs and services in Fort St. John. This was followed by user fees (80), fundraising (68), and provincial funding (57). Federal funding (12) played a role in fewer local programs and services. Note that the survey tracked funding sources but not amounts; therefore, the numbers only express which sources contributed to which programs but do not provide any information about the distribution of funds in terms of monetary value.



Federal Funding

While federal funding was the least represented source of funding overall, it provided resources for about one-third of business supports and almost one-fifth of career and skill development programs.

Provincial Funding

Provincial funding was the second least represented source of funding. However, due in part to jurisdiction, provincial funding contributed to many programs and was particularly likely to be found among certain program types.

- Provincial funding was particularly represented in education and career-related programs. It supported over half of the business support programs, about one-third of literacy programs, and over one-quarter of career and skill development, and education programs.
- In terms of targeted services, 44% of all Aboriginal resource services received provincial funding, as well as over one-third of disability services.





- * Among programs for the broader population, over one-quarter of all children and family services and close to one-quarter of all art programs were in part supported by provincial funds.
- * When it came to health services, 50% of mental health and addiction services and 46% of health services received provincial funds.
- * Crisis intervention and alleviation programs also reported provincial support. Over one-third of safety services and social supports respectively received provincial funds.
- * Considering provincial bodies like BC Housing, it is not surprising that 50% of housing programs reported being supported by provincial funds.

Municipal Funding

Municipal funding was the most frequently reported source of funding for local programs and services. Naturally, it mainly focused on community-related programs, which also happened to be the most represented local program types. Consequently, municipal funding also constituted the most notable source of funding among program which did not target specific population groups.

- * Municipal funding stood out in the areas of community events (40%), as well as recreation and fitness program types (close to or over 50%) program areas which commonly fall into local government jurisdiction.
- * Less than one-quarter of children and family programs indicated municipal funding sources.
- * In education-related program types, municipal funds contributed to close to one-third of literacy programs, as well as around one-quarter to general interest education.

Fundraising

Fundraising represents community initiative and an effort to fill gaps in otherwise available funding. As such, knowledge about the reliance on fundraising can hold valuable information about funding needs and gaps. As a source of financial program support, it was slightly more common than provincial funding. In some cases, this may have included grants.

- * Community events (29) and children and family programs (25) most commonly reported fundraising as one of the funding sources.
- * Forty-two percent of education programs (16), including K-12, post-secondary, and adult basic education, reported fundraising as one of their funding sources.
- * In the area of health care, 40% of funding sources for mental health and addiction services (8) and 23% of other health care services (3) constituted fundraising efforts.
- * Fundraising contributed to two-thirds of the small number of environment programs (2) as well as 50% of low income supports (4).
- * Other, less represented, program types for which fundraising constituted around one-third of all funding sources included art, disabilities, housing, safety services, and transportation.
- * Almost 40% of services for families at-risk, and over 30% of programs for youth at-risk, also reported relying in part on fundraising.

User Fees







User fees as a way of supporting programs was the second most commonly mentioned source of funding. They were mostly found in programs aimed at the general population, in cases where affordability and need were less in the forefront and the main focus was entertainment and activity.

- * Indoor recreation (42) and fitness (35) showed the highest occurrence and reliance on user fees.
- * In the area of education and employability, 27% of funding sources in career and skill development and general interest education were based on user fees.
- * Art classes and programs reported user fees. In the case of performing arts, that most likely referred to ticket sales.
- * In the area of child care, user fees constituted close to one-third of all funding sources.





