

"Working Together" Series – Paper #2

**Working together
WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES
AND MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS**

**Family and Community Support
Services Association of Alberta**

1999

Family and Community Support Services

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a municipal-provincial program through which a municipality or Métis settlement may provide preventive support and community development services. The province funds up to 80% of the net cost of FCSS programs, while local governments contribute at least 20%.

FCSS is an optional program – municipalities and Métis settlements choose whether or not they wish to participate. Within the broad guidelines of the *Family and Community Support Services Act and Conditional Agreement Regulation*, municipalities determine how they will organize their FCSS program, what community issues they will address, and what FCSS services, if any, will be developed in response to local priorities.

Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta

The Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta ("FCSS Association") is a provincial organization of FCSS programs. The Association is private, non-government, not-for-profit and voluntary (that is, membership in the Association is optional). The Association is a registered society operated by and for the member FCSS programs.

The mission of the FCSS Association is to unite and strengthen the FCSS community by representation and advocacy on behalf of member boards. The FCSS Association fosters networking, education, and advocacy; investigates issues of common concern to community FCSS programs; and develops critical tools to assist communities and local programs to meet local mandates and needs.

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THANK YOU

- To Alberta Family and Social Services, whose support made this project possible.
- To the 41 provincial and municipal FCSS representatives and municipal Community Services managers, administrators, and elected officials who participated in interviews and contributed experience, insight and examples.
- To the 33 individuals who volunteered to review draft versions of this paper.

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The FCSS Association "Working Together" project

The FCSS Association's "Working Together" research project grew out of frequent questions and discussions among FCSS programs, about ways to work together within and between municipalities, and with regional authorities that affect communities.

With the support of Alberta Family and Social Services, the FCSS Association conducted a research project to learn the experiences of FCSS programs in working with others, in order to identify models of working together.

The FCSS Association board appointed a "**Working Together**" Committee to oversee the project:

- Sheryl Fricke, Strathcona County
- Colleen Jensen, Red Deer and District
- Greg Pratt, Barons-Eureka-Warner
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Consulting team members for this paper were:

- Bonnie Hutchinson, project manager, writer
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This is one of six papers developed to assist FCSS programs in working together with others. The papers are:

Theme One: Working together overview

- Paper #1: Working together in FCSS – gifts and challenges

Theme Two: Working together in FCSS communities

- Paper #2: Working together within municipalities and Métis settlements (*this paper*)
- Paper #3: Working together between municipalities
- Paper #4: Working together with community organizations

Theme Three: Working together with regional authorities

- Paper #5: Working together with Child and Family Services
- Paper #6: Working together with Health Authorities

All papers are available on request from the

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"Working Together" Series – Paper #2

Working together WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES AND MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS

Organizing FCSS within local government

Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) is a program through which Alberta municipalities and Métis settlements provide preventive support and community development services. Although up to eighty percent of FCSS dollars come from the province, FCSS programs are locally directed. Municipal and Métis settlement councils decide how their FCSS program will be organized and managed, and what the program priorities will be.

One of the local government decisions is the degree to which an FCSS department is separated from, or integrated within, the municipal or Métis settlement structure. Frequent questions to FCSS Association board members indicate that many municipalities are considering the advantages and disadvantages of different organization structures for FCSS within their local government structure.

This paper explores different options that are currently used for FCSS programs in different communities. The over-all purpose of this paper is to provide information that will assist FCSS programs who are considering how best to organize their FCSS program within their municipality or Métis settlement. Based on information from interviews and documents gathered and analyzed during the "Working Together" project, this paper summarizes:

- What are patterns of organizing FCSS within a municipality or Métis settlement?
- What are advantages and disadvantages of each pattern, as perceived by people in FCSS programs and municipalities?
- What have FCSS programs learned about working together within their municipality or Métis settlement?

1. Three patterns of FCSS organizational structure

The three most common patterns of FCSS organizational structure are:

1. **Separate FCSS department:** A separate FCSS program, with separate FCSS Board and staff, not part of any other municipal or Métis settlement department.
2. **Combined ("community services") department:** FCSS is part of a larger municipal department that manages a variety of services.
3. **Direct municipal management (no FCSS department):** FCSS is managed directly by municipal staff who have many responsibilities including FCSS. The municipal council acts as FCSS board. There is no FCSS board and usually no FCSS staff.

Given the diversity of Alberta communities and FCSS programs, variations within each of the three structures do occur. However, most variations are slight.

2. Different patterns in single- and multi-municipality FCSS programs

As of January 1999, there are 190 FCSS programs in Alberta. Of these, 167 are single-municipality programs and 23 are multi-municipality FCSS programs.

When municipalities or Métis settlements are deciding how to organize their FCSS program, single- and multi-municipality FCSS programs tend to make different choices about organizational structure.

The **separate FCSS department** structure (FCSS as a stand-alone municipal department) is more likely to be the organizational choice for **multi-municipality** FCSS programs.

- Almost three-quarters of multi-municipality FCSS programs operate as a separate department, while about a third of single-municipality FCSS programs operate as a separate department.
- In total, 70 of Alberta's 190 FCSS programs (37% of all FCSS programs) operate as a separate department within the municipality or Métis settlement.

The **combined ("community services") department** structure (FCSS included as part of a larger department which provides a variety of services) is more likely to be the organizational choice in **single-municipality** FCSS programs.

- Of the 42 FCSS programs which are part of a larger "community services" department, 36 are in single-municipality FCSS programs and 6 are in multi-municipality FCSS programs.
- The combined ("community services") option is chosen by about one-fifth (22%) of FCSS programs.

Direct municipal management (no FCSS department) is most likely to be the organizational option for **single-municipality programs with a small population**.

- Of the 167 single-municipality FCSS programs, 78 (46%) are organized using the direct municipal management option (that is, they do not have a distinct FCSS department or FCSS board, and may have no designated FCSS staff).
- On the other hand, no multi-municipality FCSS programs are organized using direct municipal management.

The three diagrams on the next page illustrate the different patterns in single- and multi-municipality FCSS programs, and are based on information taken from the FCSS Contact List of June 23, 1998. Interviews with representatives of FCSS programs with all three types of organizational structure indicate that organization structure does affect how FCSS programs work together within their municipality or Métis settlement. Each of the three options has benefits and challenges which are described in the sections which follow.

Organization structures of all 190 FCSS programs

**Separate
FCSS Department
37%**
(70 FCSS programs)

**Combined
(Community Services)
Department
22%**
(42 FCSS programs)

**Direct municipal management
(No FCSS Department)
41%**
(78 FCSS programs)

Organization structures of 167 single-municipality FCSS programs

**Separate
FCSS Department
32%**
(54 FCSS programs)

**Combined
(Community Services)
Department
21%**
(35 FCSS programs)

**Direct municipal management
(No FCSS Department)
47%**
(78 FCSS programs)

Organization structures of 23 multi-municipality FCSS programs

**Separate
FCSS Department
74%**
(17 FCSS programs)

**Combined
(Community Services)
Department
26%**
(6 FCSS programs)

**Direct municipal management
(No FCSS Department)
0%**
(0 FCSS programs)

Option One: SEPARATE FCSS department

We have a great political link; great alderman support. We regularly get calls from councilors asking us for answers to questions they've been asked by citizens. This shows we have a good profile in the community and at the council level. Politicians see a personal benefit in FCSS, as well as a community benefit, so they end up enthusiastic and supportive of FCSS. This support helps FCSS do its job, and also helps FCSS credibility when dealing with other agencies. – FCSS Director

If we are too separated from other municipal services, FCSS may be seen as "fluff." We have to guard against this. – FCSS Director

Though we have a separate FCSS board and the program is managed as a separate department, it is important that we maintain our relationship with the municipal administration. They manage our personnel and financial matters and they are our administrative link to the province. – FCSS Director

1. Description and frequency

By "separate FCSS department" is meant that there is **no formal administrative connection** between FCSS and other municipal departments or services. However, separate FCSS programs often enjoy informal cooperation with other municipal departments. Since most FCSS Boards include elected councilors among their members, and are ultimately accountable to council for their operations, separate FCSS departments usually have a **formal political connection** between FCSS and municipal or Métis settlement councils.

The separate FCSS option is more common in multi-municipality programs:

- 73% of multi-municipality FCSS programs (16 of the 22 multi-municipality FCSS programs) are organized as separate FCSS departments.
- 37% of all FCSS programs (70 of the 189 FCSS programs) are organized as a separate FCSS department.
- 32% of single-municipality FCSS programs (54 of the 167 single-municipality FCSS programs) are organized as separate FCSS departments.

2. Rationale

- **Size of community** – Larger communities are allocated more FCSS dollars, so separate FCSS departments are **more affordable**. FCSS programs in larger communities may also be perceived as **more complex** and dealing with numerous community issues, and therefore in need of separate management.

- **The multi-municipal program experience:** Although some multi-municipal programs operate successfully under a combined ("community services") structure, most prefer to operate FCSS as a separate department. Multi-municipal FCSS Boards must include representation from partner municipalities. Adding inter-departmental representation adds another level of complexity.

3. Organizational structures of separate FCSS departments

- **FCSS board:** Some separate FCSS boards (usually in multi-municipal programs) are composed entirely of elected councilors, to ensure that the partner municipalities are well represented at the political level. Other FCSS boards (more often in single-municipality programs) are made up entirely of citizen volunteers. Most FCSS boards are a mixture of both. An FCSS board's connection to its municipal or Métis settlement council(s) is usually stronger if council has membership on the board.
- **FCSS staff:** The director of a separate FCSS department may be accountable to council through the FCSS board, or through the municipal administration. The director may work independently of the municipal or settlement administration, in that he or she may not report to the administrator. However, informal cooperation between FCSS directors, municipal administrators and other municipal department heads is common.

In some separate FCSS departments, the FCSS director and staff are accountable to both the board/council and the administration, but for different functions:

- Accountable to the FCSS board and council for program goals, direction and accomplishments;
- Accountable to the municipal administration for financial and personnel procedures.

More information about organizational structure of FCSS programs is in "Module Four: Managing Your FCSS Program" in the FCSS Association's *Orientation Modules* (June 1998).

4. Benefits and challenges

Benefits of the separate FCSS department model include:

- **Decreased threat:** Other municipal departments may be less likely to perceive FCSS as "encroaching" on their territory and/or resources if FCSS programs are managed separately. Lack of perceived threat can actually enhance cooperation and partnership.

- **Precise boundaries and mandates:** On the whole, separate FCSS programs are probably better able to maintain autonomy with respect to program boundaries and mandates than either combined or directly managed FCSS programs. This may result in a more strongly defined FCSS program, and a clearer story to present to council, in terms of what FCSS does and how FCSS benefits the community.
- **Increased ability to work on inter-municipal cooperation:** A strongly grounded, separate FCSS program may turn more to external sources for partnership and support, notably to other FCSS programs.
- **Enhanced community profile?** Whether or not separate FCSS programs enjoy stronger community profiles than either "combined" or "directly managed" FCSS programs is open to question. Varied opinions were expressed in interviews.

Separate FCSS departments may have a stronger profile than FCSS programs managed directly by the municipal staff. However, interview comments indicate that both "separate" and "combined" FCSS programs can experience difficulty maintaining a sense of community presence. Indeed, small separate FCSS programs often struggle to be recognized and supported by their councils and communities.

FCSS programs that are part of a strongly supported and highly visible Community Services department may have a stronger presence.

A challenge that is unique to the "separate" organizational option is the **risk of over-independence.**

Separate FCSS departments busy going about their separate activities may be blind to partnership opportunities. With little connection to other municipal departments, FCSS can be marginalized or seen as irrelevant by the municipal administration and council.

Sometimes separate FCSS programs may view other municipal departments, services and the general town administration with a degree of suspicion. This suspicion can spill over into municipal politics, with some councilors being perceived as "friends of FCSS" and others clearly the opposite. Within this context, internal municipal partnership and cooperation can be more challenging, and FCSS programs weaker, than they need otherwise be.

5. Examples of collaboration with other municipal departments

Separate FCSS programs do cooperate with other municipal departments and programs. Though a few FCSS programs would operate entirely independent of their municipalities if it were not for their ultimate accountability to council, that degree of separation is not common. Examples of collaboration include:

- Town administration offices perform bookkeeping and other administrative support duties for separate FCSS programs.
- FCSS programs are able to use recreation and other municipal facilities for FCSS presentations and workshops free of charge. Coordinated scheduling is necessary.
- Like their "combined department" counterparts, separate FCSS programs support the prevention side of recreation and leisure activities, which usually means some degree of cooperation with those particular departments or services.
- FCSS directors attend regular inter-department meetings that resemble the more formalized meetings of a Community Services Department. Meeting participation helps foster both formal and informal ways of working cooperatively.
- FCSS in the County of Leduc has worked with the County to assist the County in planning strategies to deal with issues related to health and safety in the workplace; workplace violence; and developing a critical incident stress debriefing process for the County Fire Department.
- Tofield-Ryley-Beaver FCSS organizes that community's "Don't Hibernate Fair" (a fall registration extravaganza) in conjunction with Parks and Recreation.
- Camrose and District Support Services (CDSS) works cooperatively with the City of Camrose's police department in support of the local D.A.R.E. program.

Option Two: COMBINED ("Community Services") department

The FCSS focus on community development and community planning can take many forms. It's often as simple as, say, seniors services. Recreation provides the recreation/leisure services; FCSS contracts independent living and outreach support; community services coordinates planning and seniors are served.
– FCSS director

The flavor of our department is that we take on more than FCSS: family day homes, social housing, transport and "true FCSS programming." The will of the people involved makes it work. We make it into a team effort. No one takes the lead.
– FCSS director

Recreation and FCSS have different working styles. We noticed recreation tends to have more fun. Recreation issues aren't as pressing; they don't have to be in 'caring' mode all the time; they can laugh at things. This was a good thing for us to experience.
– FCSS director

Community services is like a shotgun marriage – an at-risk marriage – because partners don't have time to get to know each other. When the autonomy of individual departments is allowed, it works better. Our municipal administration wanted one integrated department, but it didn't work out as just one. The less they tried to create one department, the stronger everybody could work together. Maintaining identity and autonomy facilitates working together.
– FCSS director

1. Description and frequency

Combined FCSS management occurs when FCSS programs are part of a larger municipal department that includes other human services. Within the FCSS community, combined FCSS management is often known as "community services." However, according to the FCSS Contact list dated June 23, 1998, there are several different names for what is a very similar department. These names include:

- Community Development
- Community Services
- Community and Corporate Services
- Community and Family Services
- Community and Social Services
- Family and Human Services
- Parks, Recreation and FCSS
- Recreation and FCSS
- Regional Community Services Council
- Social Enhancement Program

Most combined FCSS departments are in single-municipality programs.

- 42 FCSS programs (22% of all FCSS programs) are organized as part of a larger municipal department, often called "community services."
- Of these 42 FCSS programs, 36 are in single municipality FCSS programs and 6 are in multi-municipality programs.

Types of services or programs included in combined human service departments vary in different municipalities. Recreation is almost always included in community services structures. Beyond that, services can include any or all of the following:

- Agricultural Services Board
- Community development
- Community foundations
- Culture
- Children's day care (re: municipal involvement)
- Education support
- Facilities (i.e., use of facilities)
- Information and referral services (if separate from FCSS)
- Landlord and tenant relations
- Libraries and/or library boards
- Parks (i.e., use and maintenance)
- Police services projects or contracts (e.g. community policing project)
- Recreation
- Seniors' services (including housing and transportation)
- Social housing
- Social planning (sometimes another name for FCSS)
- Special transportation (in addition to seniors' transportation); transit
- Tourism and economic development

2. Rationale for combined organizational structure

Municipalities choose combined community service structures as a way to maximize the benefit of both funding and expertise. Four common reasons are:

- **The need to reduce costs due to provincial cut-backs:** In some cases, combined management was the municipal response to provincial cut-backs to municipal grants. Councils now seem to view consolidated administrative costs as intrinsically good, and may keep combined management even if grants are increased in the future.
- **The community services family "naturally" goes together:** The services of a combined department often relate to similar community issues, so it makes sense to combine them into one department. Many municipalities believe that their communities are better served by an integrated approach to delivery of human services.
- **A new/renewed interest in social planning and community development:** Some councils have discovered or re-discovered the importance of social planning and community development. Combining human services into one department is done to improve service delivery and community development in these areas.

- **The need to reflect a neighborhood-based or community-based service delivery system:** Combining human services may make possible different but integrated approaches in different neighborhoods or communities.

For example, Edmonton has about 200 listed neighborhoods and 150 Community Leagues. From their point of view, human services are integrated. They don't want a "cookie cutter approach" to service delivery, but rather an approach which allows for neighborhood flexibility.

The same logic applies to large rural areas or multi-municipality programs, where human services must be adaptable to meet diverse needs.

3. Functions of combined (Community Services) department

The primary function of community services departments is to integrate administration of the programs that belong to them. This basically means community services departments handle common administrative functions at the points where sub-departments intersect. Specific functions include:

- **Strategic planning:** Community Services Departments "do" the strategic planning for their respective municipal human services. This is usually done at the board level with the assistance of appropriate staff as resource people. As well, Community Services facilitates input from community agencies and the public.
- **Operational planning:** Most Community Services Departments integrate aspects of operational planning that relate to common service delivery objectives, implementation strategies and evaluation. This need not exclude (and may even depend upon) operational planning by individual departments.
- **Coordinated program delivery:** Community Services Department staff coordinate program delivery as applicable, and share information about separate programs and services.
- **Community Development:** To perform the above functions well, Community Services Departments must engage in some form of community development, which usually entails a combination of the informal networking and consultation done at the board level, and the formal and informal activities of management and staff. FCSS usually plays a strong role in helping to involve community agencies and the public.

FCSS programs can influence the workings of a Community Services Department. As a partner within the combined department, FCSS can foster coordinated planning and cooperative opportunities. FCSS experience in community development and fostering collaboration among community groups is an asset to combined management structures.

A goal of many FCSS programs operating within a combined management structure is to balance a sense of FCSS autonomy and identity with the need to work for the common good of all community services programs.

4. Organizational structures within combined models

Municipalities have organized their community services departments in a wide variety of ways. Factors that influence organizational choices include:

- Size of municipality and number of municipalities involved;
- Size and number of municipal departments and services (including staff);
- Availability of councilor and citizen representation on boards/committees;
- History of partnership and cooperation within the municipality or settlement.

Attachment #2 of this paper includes examples of community services organizational structures. Among the variations in community services organizational structures are:

Community Services Board

- May be an over-all Community Services Board which oversees the direction of all programs included in the community services department.
- May be a number of program advisory committees, each of which have representation on the Community Services Board.
- May be a number of program advisory committees which are all accountable to Council, with no over-all Community Services Board.

Community Services Manager

- A senior manager responsible for overseeing operations of all services included in the community services department.
- May be accountable to Community Services Board, to council, or to municipal administration.
- May be advisory to program advisory committees and/or to community services board.

Community Services staff and programs

- May be completely integrated, with little separation of different programs included in community services department.
- May be completely independent, with little or no contact between different programs
- May share information, resources, joint planning and some projects, while retaining separate functions for some areas.

5. Benefits and challenges of combined (Community Services) departments

Benefits identified by people interviewed include:

- **Cooperation and partnership within municipalities and Métis settlements:** Much of this benefit is due to the level of **integrated planning** in a Community Services Department. Integrated planning is probably best achieved when the department is headed by one board and one manager. It includes regular meetings of those involved, who naturally develop the networks and inter-program knowledge that allow for informal collaboration. Integrated planning also produces more formal partnerships.
- **Enhanced organizational efficiency and cost-saving:** Combined management can efficiently connect programs within the "big administrative picture." If there are fewer chains of command, or less overlapping management, decisions can be made quickly and services delivered more efficiently. Administrative costs may be reduced.
- **Stronger FCSS profile and "voice" within the municipality or Métis settlement:** The experience of some FCSS programs is that there really is strength in numbers. When separate human services combine to form one municipal department, it is hard for council to overlook them.

"Community Services Department" can be more memorable than "FCSS Program". As an equal player in the combined system, FCSS can end up with greater say in service delivery and, eventually, more clout with respect to council and the community at large.

Potential challenges to the combined department model include:

- **Threat of sub-departmental rivalry:** If sub-departments feel coerced into combined operation, especially if they are competing for resources or perceive resource distribution as inequitable, in-fighting can result. In-fighting frequently results in entrenchment and narrow interpretations of mandates, and creates barriers to cooperation.

- **Blurring of boundaries; diversion of FCSS resources:** Opposite to the first challenge, collaboration risks a blurring of boundaries. Thus, FCSS could end up contributing excessive dollars and staff time to support recreation/leisure or other program activities. This would reduce resources for other kinds of preventive programming, and may also create problems with regard to accountability at the provincial level.

During interviews, some community representatives gave examples of situations where it appeared to them that FCSS resources were diverted into services which seemed not to fit the FCSS mandate.

- **Reduction in FCSS profile:** Even when FCSS programs are operated separately, FCSS may struggle against being over-shadowed by other services. The FCSS profile can be at greater risk when FCSS is part of a Community Services Department. Some people interviewed said that in some cases, FCSS has no identity at the community level -- everything related to human services is perceived as being "Community Services."
- **Creation of unwieldy bureaucracies:** Community Services directors reported there can be bureaucratic headaches, especially when a department is run by one manager who must work with several boards, oversee separate staff, maintain separate accounts, and respect differing (competing?) autonomies – all the while nurturing collaboration!
- **Limited FCSS cooperation between municipalities/ Métis settlements:** Combined management can mean a strong focus on internal partnership-building, with less interest in inter-municipal collaboration of FCSS programs with one another.
- **Limited identity and "voice" beyond municipalities/Métis settlements:** This consideration involves putting the previous challenge into a broader perspective. A low FCSS profile may have no bearing upon a community satisfied with its human services. But a low profile can have ramifications beyond local concerns.

A low profile can present special challenges when it comes to convincing MLAs of the importance of FCSS – if or when local programs find it necessary to do so. At the provincial level, too many "low-profile" FCSS programs could hamper the activities of the FCSS community.

Some people interviewed during the "working together" project said that a low FCSS profile may also pose special challenges when it comes to working with Regional Health Authorities and Child and Family Services Authorities. Are regional authorities as likely to take seriously a low-profile FCSS program that is part of a community services department, compared to a high-profile separate FCSS program?

6. Examples of collaboration within a combined ("community services") department

- **Skateboard Park, Gibbons:** This is a collaborative effort of FCSS and Recreation programs of Community Services. FCSS identified that a skateboard park would be one way to meet the needs of Gibbons youth. As part of their Recreation function, they are developing plans on how the issue can be addressed. Youth are involved in the planning.
- **Rural Women's Conference, Yellowhead:** In the absence of a district home economist, FCSS, the Agriculture Services Board and other services of the "umbrella" Community Services Department, collaborate on the Rural Women's Conference.
- **Youth Conference and Women's Conference, Hinton:** This was a joint venture involving FCSS and Recreation.
- **Homeless Housing, Red Deer:** FCSS and Social Housing helped develop housing services for Red Deer's homeless people. FCSS community development played a key role in initiating the service, which is now managed by a separate non-profit agency. FCSS now funds an outreach worker who works with homeless people. The operation of the facility is funded by donations (primarily from churches) and other government funding (Alberta Family and Social Services and Municipal Affairs).
- **Facilities sharing, various communities:** Under a Community Services department, FCSS can use the facilities of other programs (Recreation, Libraries) free of charge.

Option Three: DIRECT municipal management (no FCSS department)

With a budget of about \$10,000 per year, it doesn't make sense for us to set up a special FCSS committee or staff. We want to use our limited funds for services to the community, not infrastructure. – Municipal administrator

FCSS is a very small portion of my job. I'm probably not ever going to make a special trip to take in an FCSS conference or Directors' meeting. But I meet regularly with other municipal administrators, and many of us are involved with FCSS. These meetings could easily provide a forum for us. I really recommend that FCSS tap into the municipal associations.

– Municipal administrator

1. Description and frequency

With option three, there is no FCSS staff and no FCSS board. Responsibility for administering FCSS funds is assigned to the municipal administrator or other designated employee. FCSS-related duties are in addition to regular municipal duties, and the time spent on FCSS must be fit into many other tasks. The municipal or Métis settlement council performs board governance functions and acts as the sole accountability link between the province, the program and the local community.

Communities that opt for direct management have small populations, with equally small FCSS budgets. The existing administration tends to act primarily as an FCSS funding agency, allocating FCSS dollars to support local groups rather than establishing new FCSS services.

About 40% of FCSS programs use the direct management option:

- 77 FCSS programs (41% of all FCSS programs) are managed directly by the municipality, with no FCSS board and usually with no designated FCSS staff.
- All 77 are in single municipality FCSS programs with small populations.

2. Why municipalities choose the "direct municipal management" option

- **Separate FCSS management is not viable:** Incorporating FCSS management into regular administration makes sense for tiny communities. With budgets of about \$10,000, separate FCSS program administration is not perceived to be affordable. Staff salaries alone could eat up FCSS dollars, leaving little room for anything else.

- **The municipality prefers that limited dollars are channeled into local programming:** Small communities do have community groups that provide some preventive social services that fit within the FCSS mandate. Decision-makers feel it best to channel all FCSS dollars to support existing local groups, rather than establish additional FCSS services.
- **Established community presence of councilors and administrators:** Because municipal administrators and elected councilors get to know their small community, they believe the FCSS community link can be established under the direct management option.
- **Established provincial network of municipal administrators:** Municipal administrators responsible for managing FCSS funds under the "direct" option do have opportunities to share FCSS ideas and concerns with other administrators at their regular provincial meetings. The perception is that there is no need to burden FCSS dollars by supporting separate networking for a separate FCSS director.

3. **Examples of types of programs offered under direct FCSS management**

Administrators of directly-managed FCSS programs often act as funding channels for local groups. The administrator reviews proposals and makes recommendations to council, who may then approve or reject the recommendations. Follow-up and accountability are assured through informal contact with the funded groups as well as annual reports to council.

Typical funded projects include preventive activities such as Moms and Tots, seniors' groups, youth organizations, and presentations related to preventive issues.

In the Starland County area, the small directly managed FCSS communities of Delia, Morrin, Munson and Starland County turn over all their FCSS dollars to the Prairie Land Regional School Division #25, which administers a Family School Liaison Project with Mental Health and Family and Social Services. The municipalities receive monthly reports and are pleased with the arrangement.

4. **Benefits and challenges of the direct management option**

Representatives of municipalities that have chosen the "direct management" option identify three main **benefits:**

- **No unnecessary bureaucracy:** Small communities with small budgets and limited services don't like excessive bureaucracy. When FCSS dollars are spent on direct services, there is no addition to local bureaucracy. Among small communities, this is generally thought to be a good thing.
- **Perceived "cost-saving" benefit:** There is often a perception that reduced or eliminated administrative costs result in increased dollars available for direct programming.

- **Informal partnering based on community connections:** In small communities, the informal networking and links pursued by municipal or settlement staff may result in fostering cooperation between community groups and within municipal services – particularly when a program is well-received because it is bureaucracy-free!

Challenges to the direct management option include:

- **Limited promotion of community development, volunteerism or partnerships:** An FCSS program administered directly by municipal staff is not well-positioned to do extensive community development, or to foster volunteerism or partnership with other community organizations. Some municipal staff may pursue these activities, but that is not what they were hired to do, and not their primary responsibility.
- **Reduced visibility and/or creation of partnering opportunities within the municipality:** By acting as funding agents for a small pot of money, administrators risk "tunnel vision" in terms of the broader FCSS mandate. They can easily spend most of their limited FCSS time on the bare necessities – responding to requests, reviewing proposals and reports, and completing paperwork – and not see or nurture potential partnership opportunities with other municipal services or with other sources of revenue.
- **Low FCSS profile at the council level:** The primary responsibilities of municipal administrators are in areas other than FCSS. The incentive to promote FCSS to the council may be quite low, which can result in a council that is uninterested and inactive in FCSS. This may pose problems in an organizational structure in which the council acts as the FCSS Board.

5. Variations of direct management

Direct management of FCSS suits the needs of many small municipalities. In some cases, however, small municipalities and Métis settlements may not think they have another option. Establishing a separate FCSS program is not affordable, and integrating FCSS into a community services department is not realistic in communities that are too small to departmentalize.

Alternatives that may be worth considering could be:

- Have an FCSS advisory committee which could also foster community links and partnerships with other organizations.
- Cooperate with another community organization to provide FCSS services (such as the "school" example listed earlier).
- Form an agreement with another municipality to provide services in this municipality.
- Enter into informal partnership with neighboring "directly managed" FCSS communities to pool resources and make available services which would not be affordable by any single municipality.

Variations such as these may help amplify the benefits of FCSS to a small community.

In summary: Eleven factors that make cooperation work within municipalities

All three types of FCSS organization structure have challenges in common. They deal with the demands of cooperation and community development generally. They face the uncertainties of a rapidly changing provincial social service environment. They balance community needs with finite funding.

No matter how municipalities choose to administer their FCSS funds, FCSS programs have much in common when it comes to working cooperatively with other municipal departments. Forging partnerships can produce a great sense of satisfaction but partnerships do not happen automatically. What makes partnership work? Eleven factors were identified during the interviews conducted for this project.

- **Support of Councils:** Internal municipal cooperation seems to work best when Councils support and participate in the whole collaborative process. If Council support is perceived as less than enthusiastic, the various programs need to find ways to get Council on the team. It is also important that Council's support for separate or individual programming is not overshadowed by support for collaborative work.
- **Good administrative systems:** All FCSS structures need administrative systems that are understandable and appropriate. Roles, responsibilities, lines of authority, communication procedures, and understanding common and separate mandates should be clear. The system should reflect the administrative culture of the organization it serves, as well as the greater community's "way of doing things."
- **Goal-oriented cooperation:** Maintaining sight of program goals and vision helps keep collaborating partners on track when disagreements risk developing into territorialism.

- **Shared vision of healthy, happy communities:** When collaborating partners share the same sort of vision of healthy, happy communities, and see how their separate and combined efforts help produce those communities, cooperation is more likely to succeed and continue.
- **Shared location:** Sharing the same location seems to nurture the relationship-building and informal cooperative links that give rise to more formal collaborative ventures.
- **Regular meetings:** The various members of Community Services departments do meet together regularly. Separate FCSS programs that work collaboratively with other municipal departments are also able to participate in inter-departmental meetings. Separate FCSS programs wishing to develop or enhance internal municipal cooperation need to look at ways to meet with, and get to know, people in those other departments.
- **Equal voices:** Despite differences in budgets and community "allure," having an equal voice in planning and setting program priorities is important to the well-being of all the partner programs. It is especially important to FCSS, which (according to some people interviewed) is not always taken as seriously as other departments.
- **Team players:** Team-building is important to ensure successful partnership, especially in the case of Community Services Departments. The skills of "natural" leaders might be used in facilitating team-building rather than in leading meetings directly.
- **Appropriately separate FCSS identity:** From the FCSS point of view, it is helpful to consider how important a separate FCSS identity is when entering into partnerships with other municipal or Métis settlement departments. This is especially true of FCSS programs integrated into Community Services Departments.
- **Flexibility with respect to FCSS mandate and guidelines:** A flexible approach to interpreting FCSS guidelines can help open eyes to collaborative opportunities.
- **It all comes down to people:** Cooperation is often described in terms of networking and relationship-building. What this really means is working with other people. Finally, it all comes down to basic human kindness, trust, tolerance (especially for our own and other people's imperfections), respect, patience, the ability to speak less and listen more, and the courage to embrace "weirdness," a common human trait and probably the source of most of the world's best ideas.

"Working Together" Series – Paper #2

**Working together
WITHIN MUNICIPALITIES AND
MÉTIS SETTLEMENTS**

ATTACHMENTS

- 1. Examples of Community Services structures**
- 2. Special multi-municipal program examples**
- 3. People who participated in developing this paper**

Attachment #1: Examples of Community Services structures

First Example: One Community Services Board; one Manager; fully integrated

Community Services Board

- An umbrella board that recommends policy; develops and recommends the global budget; coordinates planning; provides support.
- Appointed by and accountable to council; a link to the community.
- Comprised of councilors and/or citizens who may or may not represent different interests of the "umbrella" department.

Community Services Manager

- Senior manager responsible for overseeing operations of all the services and staff.
- Resource person to Community Services Board.

Fully integrated services:

- No sub-departments as such.
- Department staff have responsibility to ensure that within the integrated department, designated funds are allocated to appropriate use (for example, FCSS funds go to preventive community services).

Second Example: One Community Services board; one manager; several distinct programs with advisory committees and/or staff; services partly integrated

Community Services Board

- An umbrella board that recommends policy; develops and recommends the global budget; coordinates planning; provides support.
- Appointed by and accountable to council; a link to the community.
- Comprised of either:
 1. Elected officials and citizens who may or may not represent the different interests of the "umbrella" department; OR
 2. Representatives of advisory committees and/or boards of the sub-departments that fall under the "umbrella group" (councilors or citizens); OR
 3. Some combination of 1. and 2.

Note: Some municipalities believe representation of special interests helps battle "territorialism" since each sub-program has an equal voice. Other boards believe "territorialism" is avoided when members represent the whole.

The second approach can be nurtured even in Community Services Boards with designated representation; the first can occur even without designated representatives.

Community Services Manager

- Senior manager responsible for overseeing operations of all the services and staff.
- Resource person to Community Services Board.

(Most Community Services Departments have a community services manager. However, some have a management group comprised of the directors of the major sub-departments.)

Program advisory committees and/ or coordinators

- Program committees and staff (*illustrated in the diagram*): Program advisory committees are likely to work only with the program staff and not with the Community Services Manager. Program committees connect with Community Services Board through delegated representation on that body.

Variations on this structure are:

- Program staff only: Responsible for the program operation. Develops relevant portion of the global budget; supports the Community Services Manager and Board as a planning resource person; accountable to the Community Services Manager; OR
- Program committee only: Supports the Community Services Manager in an advisory capacity; acts as link to the community as a whole; may have representation on the Community Services Board.

Partly integrated services

- Individual programs have separate identity and name and retain some autonomy.
- Programs are linked for coordination of inter-departmental planning and service delivery.

Third Example: One manager; several programs with separate committees and staff; loosely integrated services

Community Services manager

- Senior management responsible for overseeing activities and staff of sub-departments.
- Accountable to and/or resource person to several program committees.
- May be Community Services manager or manager of some other combination of human services (i.e., Parks, Recreation and FCSS).

Program committees

- Recommend policy and budgets specific to program.
- Support the Community Services Manager and program staff.
- Appointed by and accountable to council.
- A link to the community.
- Comprised of councilors and citizens representation.

Program staff:

- Usually coordinators of each program are accountable both to program committee and Community Services manager.
- May include additional staff for each program and/or support staff for the whole Community Services department.

Loosely integrated services:

- Program committees and staff act fairly independently of one another.
- Cooperative partnerships occur, but are almost as between separate entities.
- Community Services manager can encourage partnership or maintain separate identities.

Attachment #2: Two multi-municipal program examples

Most FCSS programs that are included within a Community Services Department are single municipal/Métis settlement programs. Considering that multi-municipal programs must ensure representation of partner councils and communities on the FCSS Board, it may seem hard to imagine how that Board could translate into an inter-departmental, inter-municipality Community Services Board. But, it has been done!

1. Red Deer Community Services

Red Deer Community Services is a loosely integrated division that includes Recreation, Parks and Culture; Transit; Parkland Planning; an RCMP Contract; other small contracts; and Social Planning. FCSS falls within Social Planning (along with day care, special transportation, Landlord and Tenant Relations; and Seniors and Social Housing). FCSS enjoys much autonomy within Social Planning, with its own manager, staff, and twelve-member regional Board.

The Red Deer and District FCSS Board is composed of councillors and citizens representing the partner communities. Links to the communities are provided by the FCSS board and by staff responsible for FCSS, including part-time community workers located outside of Red Deer. Because the partner communities have representation on the Board, they do not feel threatened by the larger management structure. In fact, they probably benefit by Red Deer's choice to integrate, to the extent that integration helps strengthen the FCSS program.

2. Lac Ste. Anne Regional Community Services Council

The Lac Ste. Anne Regional Community Services Council is a regional community services system with six cooperating municipalities: Village of Sangudo, County of Lac Ste. Anne, Town of Mayerthorpe, Summer Village of Alberta Beach, Village of Onoway and M.D. of Woodlands (Blue Ridge and Anselmo). The Regional Community Services Council is comprised of one elected and one appointed representative from each of the cooperating municipalities' community services boards. The Regional Council has two coordinators in the areas of FCSS and Recreation.

Each participating municipality has its own community services board which oversees FCSS and Recreation in its own community. Typically, municipal community services boards are comprised of at least one elected municipal council representative and a number of community citizens. Each municipal community services board makes decisions about local requests for funding for FCSS eligible programs. As well, each municipal community services board makes recommendations about the programs and services in its own community. Aspects of administration and other decisions are ratified by the Lac Ste. Anne Regional Community Services Council.

Ultimately there is a strong coordination of both separate and integrated FCSS and Recreation activities throughout the region.

Attachment #3: People who participated in developing this paper

Between April and November of 1998, the consulting team of Hutchinson Associates had contact with 57 representatives of FCSS programs and municipalities, through interviews, letters, faxes and E-mail messages. Of these 57, the 38 people listed below discussed working together with other departments in their municipality or Métis settlement, and their perspectives of advantages and disadvantages of different organizational structures.

Information from the interviews was analyzed to identify patterns of organization, and then to summarize advantages and disadvantages of each. A draft of this paper was circulated to 33 FCSS representatives who volunteered to review the paper. The paper was then revised based on feedback.

*CAO = Chief Administrative Officer or
Municipal Administrator*

Alberta Family and Social Services

- Veronica Facundo
- Mic Farrell
- Debbie Trachimowich

Barons-Eureka-Warner FCSS

- Greg Pratt, Director

Buffalo Lake Métis Settlement FCSS

- Terry Burke, Director Community Services

Calgary Community and Social Development

- Frank Hoebarth, Manager

Camrose and District Support Services (CDSS)

- Wendy Gregorwich, Director

Claresholm Community Services

- Randy Ell, Director

Coronation and District FCSS

- Linda Bunbury, Community Liaison

Didsbury FCSS

- Evan Parliament, CAO

Edmonton Community and Family Services

- Kathy Barnhart, Director (FCSS)

Flagstaff Family and Community Services

- Gail Watt, Director

Fort Saskatchewan Community Services

- John Bruijn, Director

Gibbons Community Services

- Marg Clark, Director

City of Grande Prairie FCSS

- Lana Wells, Director

County of Grande Prairie FCSS

- Mary Ann Eckstrom, Councillor

Hanna Community Services

- Kim Neil, Director

Hinton Parks, Recreation and FCSS

- Betty Osmond, Director

Innisfail FCSS

- Valaine Vienneau, Director

County of Kneehill FCSS

- Shelley Jackson, Director

Lac Ste. Anne Regional Community Services
Council

- Donna Geiger, Coordinator (FCSS)

Lakeland (Cold Lake) Community Services

- Claire Crawford, Director

City of Leduc FCSS

- Ted Tymchuk, Manager

County of Leduc FCSS

- Betty Ann Nemish, Director

Lethbridge Family and Human Services

- Rosalind Annis, FCSS Coordinator

Morinville FCSS

- Cathy Clarke, Director

Paddle Prairie Métis Settlement FCSS

- Joanne Ducharme, Coordinator
Community Services

Provost and District FCSS

- Cindy Morrow, Program Coordinator

Red Deer and District Social Planning

- Colleen Jensen, Manager

County of St. Paul FCSS

- Linnette Newby, Director

Town of St. Paul FCSS

- Cheryl Snider, Director

Stettler and District FCSS

- Faye Blakely, Administrator

County of Strathcona FCSS

- Sheryl Fricke, Coordinator
Community Development
- Jackie Winter, Manager

Tofield-Ryley-Beaver FCSS

- Yvonne Allan, Director

Viking-Beaver FCSS

- Joanne Stewart, Director

County of Wheatland FCSS

- Ken Larson, Reeve
- Sharon Thibeau, Program Coordinator

Village of Trochu

(County of Kneehill FCSS)

- Maureen Makala, CAO

Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo FCSS

(Fort McMurray)

- Joe Bath, Superintendent

Yellowhead Community Services

- Debbie Charest, Director

