

Social Programs

Led by: Director of Recreation & Social Programs

Service Description

Social Programs provides accessible and equitable programs and services that improve quality of life, contribute to inclusive communities, and promote social, mental, and physical wellbeing of Calgarians. We give Calgarians skills to build social resiliency and the supports they need to thrive. We leverage funds from other orders of government and private foundations through contractual agreements and collaborative partnerships. We offer social recreational programming for families, children and youth; career planning and employment support for youth; coordination of the delivery of senior's home maintenance services; and the administration of the Fair Entry Program.

Service Updates

Key service results

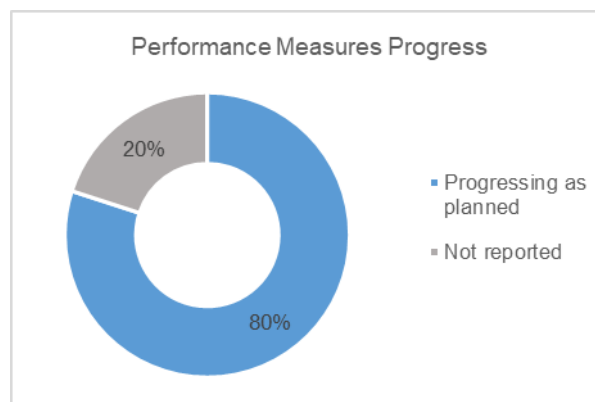
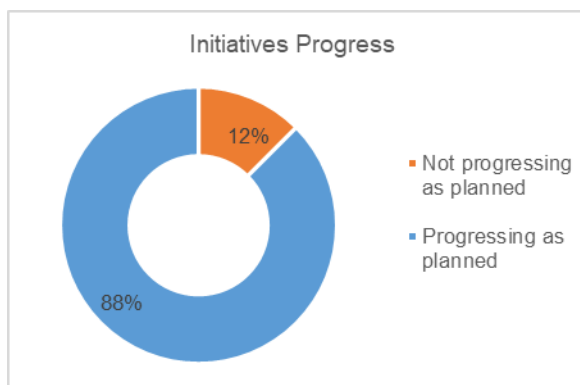
More Calgarians are facing challenges due to the lingering effects of the COVID-19 pandemic and economic pressures. Nearly 62,000 individuals applied for Fair Entry between January and May, an 18 per cent increase from the same period in 2023. To respond to current demand, the following actions have been implemented: activating a downtown mobile Fair Entry site, maximizing staff complement through on-call and overtime pay and deploying Social Support Workers and Crisis Intervention Specialists. (Initiative 8)

Recreation & Social Programs (RS&P) prioritizes equity to create safe spaces, programs and services for all. To further this work, RS&P established an Equity & Innovation team to innovate Social Programs service delivery through an equity lens. (Initiatives 1-8)

A Program Strategy to provide staff with programming direction received endorsement and is in the implementation phase. (Initiatives 1-8)

Staff capacity has delayed some projects, including the Calgary AfterSchool amalgamation. To mitigate this and other capacity challenges, a new business unit organizational structure was launched, including new positions created to address under-resourced and emerging work.

Progress summary



Risk(s) impacting the progress

Psychological safety of employees
Increased demand on front-facing services



Measuring Our Performance

Legend

— Actuals

■ Expected Future Performance

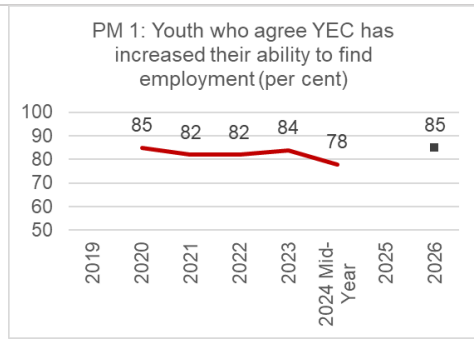
➔ Progressing as planned

⊖ Not progressing as planned

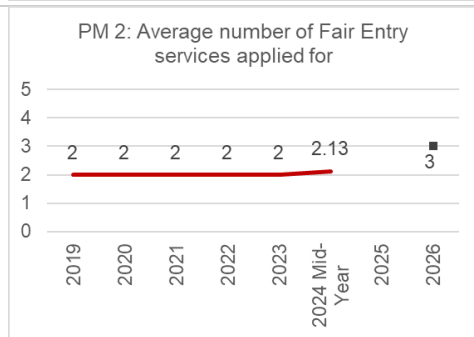
Performance Measures

Story behind the numbers

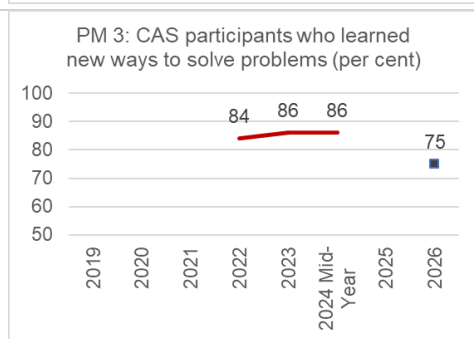
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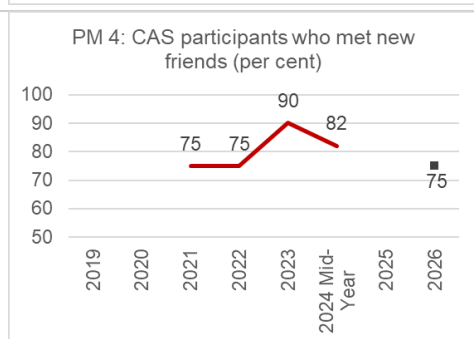
The Youth Employment Centre (YEC) provides Calgarians ages 15-24 with employment readiness skills to secure jobs, which in turn provide investment in the local economy and strengthen economic resilience. In May, Alberta had the highest youth unemployment rate in Canada (16.6 per cent vs. the national average of 12.6 per cent). Current economic and local labour market conditions make it difficult for youth to secure employment in Calgary. Although a slight decrease has occurred in the per cent of youth who agree YEC has increased their ability to find employment, nine out of 10 clients are satisfied with the overall service provided by YEC.



Launched in November 2023, the High-Speed Low-Cost Internet subsidy is now the third most requested service through the Fair Entry program, behind only the Low Income Transit Pass and Recreation Fee Assistance. Fair Entry is seeing a higher-than-average uptake from Calgarians living with low-income. Comparing 2023 January – May to the same period in 2024 there has been an 18 per cent increase in applications to Fair Entry. Increased levels of international and interprovincial migration, combined with the current affordability crisis, continue to drive high demand for Fair Entry.



Calgary After School (CAS) offers no-cost programs to children and youth with a focus on social-emotional learning through sports, arts, healthy living and leadership development. Programing is designed to help participants perform better in school, learn new skills and make friends. Participants gain problem solving tools, social skills and strategies that build resiliency when facing challenges. More than eight in 10 participants identified learning new ways to solve problems as a benefit of the program.



An important component of CAS is providing opportunities for participants to meet new people and make connections. More than eight in 10 CAS participants identified meeting new friends as a benefit of the program. CAS locations are selected based on need in the community and those locations did not change from 2023 to 2024. Many of the participants knew each at the start of the year, and therefore may not have identified as meeting 'new' friends in 2024.



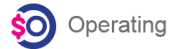


Progress on Service Delivery










PROGRESS STATUS



FUNDING TYPE



Initiative 1	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Support social wellbeing by providing no- and low-cost, local and equitable programs for Calgarians facing negative social conditions.		
UPDATE 	<p>Participation in no- and low-cost programs continues to increase, up 10 per cent at mid-year (11,128) compared to the same time frame in 2023 (10,091).</p> <p>While staff capacity has delayed projects, such as the Calgary AfterSchool amalgamation, the business unit organizational structure was adjusted to help build leadership capacity, balance portfolios, resource longstanding un-resourced and emerging work, clarify accountabilities and drive performance.</p>	
Initiative 2	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Provide Indigenous cultural opportunities for children and youth to further Truth and Reconciliation actions by delivering targeted programming.		
UPDATE 	<p>The Elder-in-Residence pilot was selected for the 2024 Equity in Service Delivery Fund. The pilot aims to increase the number of Indigenous based programs offered to be more equitable for Indigenous children, youth and families.</p> <p>The Indigenous Calgary AfterSchool pilot project was a success. Starting in fall 2024, the program will implement the Mother Earth curriculum and arrange for one Elder visit at each program site.</p> <p>Development of staff training to deliver on Calls To Action is underway, including Land Acknowledgements and Understanding Reconciliation in the Workplace.</p>	
Initiative 3	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Support youth with employment readiness, skills development and employment through the Youth Employment Centre to help them successfully transition into meaningful employment.		
UPDATE 	<p>Continued high youth unemployment rates (16.6 per cent, compared to 11.5 per cent at mid-year 2023), has driven strong demand at the Youth Employment Centre.</p> <p>Over 20,000 youth connected with the Youth Employment Centre to attend workshops, employment fairs and access the resource area. This is a five per cent increase from 2023, including 1,294 new clients.</p> <p>Since 1999, the Youth Hiring Fair has hosted over 1,900 employers and benefited more than 92,000 youth. The 25th Annual Youth Hiring Fair in March hosted a record 5,800 youth and 80 employers.</p>	
Initiative 4	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:
Provide career development opportunities for at-risk youth by partnering with and supporting potential employers.		
UPDATE 	<p>The Youth Employment Centre worked with 200 national and local employers, such as the Calgary Humane Society, Calgary Public Library and Itinerante Flowers, to pre-screen youth candidates for interviews.</p> <p>This Way Onward is a pre-employment program developed in partnership with Old Navy. Forty-nine youth attended pre-employment workshops and 28 youth were hired at locations throughout the city.</p>	
Initiative 5	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type:

		
Improve service delivery to clients of Seniors Services Home Maintenance Program through file digitization.		
UPDATE 	<p>Projects supporting file digitization are underway and are included in a larger Subsidy Assistance Management System project.</p> <p>A new Information Technology Account Manager has been onboarded to support continued work on existing projects, including Robodial. The Robodial program will allow clients of the Seniors Services Home Maintenance program to opt-in to receive telephone messaging related to their service delivery, to provide faster customer service to clients, reduce in-house volume of calls and increase staff capacity.</p>	
Initiative 6	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Support community connections for students and their families by streamlining the process for providing access to free and low-cost school space.		
UPDATE 	<p>The City's school database allows not-for-profit groups to find and book spaces to offer low-to-no cost programming.</p> <p>Enhancements to the database software in 2023 enabled a 25 per cent increase in the number of programs compared to 2022 and a 138 per cent growth in the number of partners who have joined since 2021.</p> <p>Funding to deliver additional software enhancements has been identified, including a streamlined school principal approval list and improved program application view for staff.</p>	
Initiative 7	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Deliver culturally appropriate and trauma-informed programming for refugee children and youth facing complex social situations.		
UPDATE 	<p>In partnership with the Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, the Newcomer Kids program delivers programming to refugee families in hotel spaces by specially trained staff who speak the same language as participants.</p> <p>In partnership with the Alberta Institute for Wildlife Conservation, tailored environmental education programs were provided to raise awareness of Canadian wildlife in the city. Participants learned how to responsibly interact with the different types of wild animals they are likely to see in community parks and the importance of environmental protection.</p>	
Initiative 8	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Meet the needs of low-income Calgarians by maintaining Fair Entry service levels, providing access to City services at reduced rates.		
UPDATE 	<p>The total number of applications to Fair Entry from January to May increased 18 per cent compared to the same time frame in 2023, resulting in significant lineups at Fair Entry counter locations.</p> <p>Several Fair Entry projects were advanced in the first half of 2024, including investigating potential new subsidy programs and activating a downtown pop-up mobile Fair Entry site.</p> <p>Council's investment last November allowed for the hiring and deployment of social support workers and crisis intervention specialists to respond to clients with complex needs.</p>	
Initiative 9	Impact Area: City-wide	Funding Type: 
Improve the resilience of children, youth and young adults at-risk of gang involvement and criminal activity by partnering with the Calgary Police Service, Alberta Health Services and the Calgary Police Youth Foundation to provide early intervention and prevention programs (Multi Agency School Support Team (MASST), Youth at Risk Development (YARD) and ReDirect).		
UPDATE	The MASST & YARD 2023 Evaluation Outcomes meeting was held in May. Children and families in the MASST program reported positive change in all outcome areas, including decision making, social skills, mental health and wellness and family well-being.	



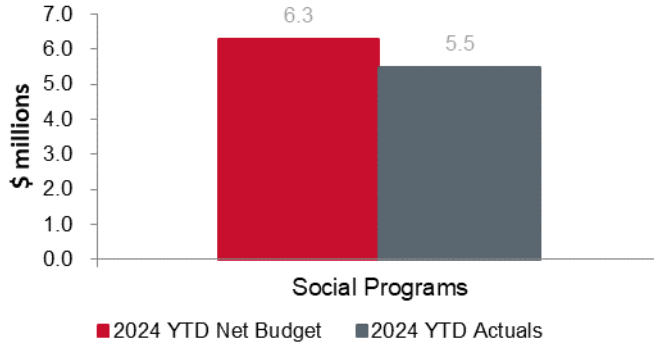
In the YARD program, positive changes were reported in several outcome areas, including interpersonal relationships, increased life skills and independence, improved mental health and wellness, as well as a 68 per cent decrease in criminal offences.

ReDirect relaunched in January, with evaluation outcomes available for reporting next year.



Service Updates on Financial Performance

Net Operating Budget and Actuals as of June 30, 2024



Operating Budget Updates - 2024 YTD net operating budget vs actuals:

Social Programs has a favourable operating variance of \$0.8 million. Factors contributing to the variance include: discrepancies between when expenses were projected to occur and actuals incurred by Calgary AfterSchool programs, Equity in Service Delivery initiatives and the Youth Employment Centre – these discrepancies will be resolved by the end of the year; and savings associated with vacancies in newly created positions in 2024 – recruitment is underway and all positions are expected to be filled by the end of the year.

Capital Budget Updates - 2024 total capital budget vs 2024 YTD spend:

Social Programs has no capital budget in 2024.