

August 22, 2023

RMA Releases Report on FCSS Service Delivery Challenges in Rural Alberta

The report was completed in partnership with the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, and with input provided by the Family and Community Support Services Association of Alberta and FCSS providers across the province

For several years, the RMA has heard from members that reduced availability of provincial social services in rural communities combined with stagnation in provincial funding for municipally operated family and community support services has led to unprecedented pressure on Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) agencies to act beyond their mandate.

As social challenges are often over-looked and under-reported in rural Alberta, the RMA prioritized the need to dig deeper into this issue and determine the severity of the issues faced. The RMA partnered with the University of Alberta's [Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities](#) (ACSRC) to develop [a report](#) that outlines the issues faced in local rural FCSS programs. The research team conducted 20 semi-structured one-on-one interviews with rural FCSS service providers. Further, the ACSRC designed and sent out a 38-question survey, which received 80 individual responses from FCSS programs across the province.

The research identified consistent concerns from FCSS service providers that the need for social support had increased in recent years, and much was falling on FCSS. The report groups these concerns into three categories:

- ◆ Insufficient provincial funding.
- ◆ The increasing inaccessibility of provincial social services in rural Alberta.
- ◆ Changing and increasing social needs in rural communities.

The report includes four high-level policy recommendations that will be used by the RMA to support further research and advocacy efforts:

- ◆ Increase in core [FCSS] funding from the Government of Alberta.
- ◆ Increase the accessibility of provincial social support services for rural Albertans.
- ◆ Ensure that future public policy related to social service delivery in Alberta is approached via a rural lens.
- ◆ Ensure that social service policy in Alberta is designed with meaning contributions from rural FCSS programs.

The [full report](#) outlines key evidence that supports the information members have shared with the RMA in the past and will contribute to advocacy efforts moving forward.

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