



FEDERATION MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ANALYSIS #2

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO:
PROGRAMS, DEMOGRAPHICS,
SERVICES, AND SUPPORTS

REPORT 2 OF 4



FEDERATION MEMBERSHIP SURVEY ANALYSIS #2

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO:
PROGRAMS, DEMOGRAPHICS, SERVICES, AND SUPPORTS

REPORT 2 OF 4



THE FEDERATION
of COMMUNITY SOCIAL SERVICES of BC

AUGUST 2016

#102 - 739 Kings Road

Victoria, BC V8T 1W4

TEL 250.480.7387

FAX 250.480.7396

www.fcssbc.ca

Introduction

At the root of many of The Federation's Strategic Priorities lies the need for good data. If The Federation is to be successful in its efforts to lead the way in social policy and community programs (Priority #1) and to influence public policy by building stronger, better informed, and more supportive connections between the sector, government, and the public (Priority #2), current and accurate information about the sector is required.

In order to gather the information needed to undertake the advocacy required, Federation staff currently:

- Dedicate time to staying abreast of current research on the health and sustainability of the sector.
- Work with other groups to share best practices on information gathering within the social care sector.
- Collaborate with groups sharing research interests in order to coordinate information sharing and advocacy efforts.
- Request timely information from Federation member organizations.

This report is an analysis of the findings from two different surveys completed by Federation membership. The findings are discussed within the context of social sector research in B.C. and other jurisdictions. The two surveys are:

- The Federation Member Survey 2015 ("member survey") which asked questions on a wide variety of topics covering the previous year's data.
- A study done in partnership between The Federation and The University of Victoria's School of Public Administration ("UVic survey") commissioned specifically to compare the financial health of the sector between the 2008 and 2015 fiscal years.

This report (the second in a series of four) focuses on the **programs, services, and supports offered by Federation members** across B.C. as well as the **demographics served by those organizations**.

Who we are and what we do

"For communities to truly thrive, we must care for those among us who need it. British Columbia's dedicated social workers work hard in the most difficult circumstances, touching the lives of thousands of people."

- 2016 B.C. Speech from the Throne¹

The Federation is a province-wide membership organization made up of over 140 community social service providers. Member agencies and organizations provide help and support to the people of British Columbia across all demographics.

As you can see in **FIGURE 1**, Federation members serve families (89% of members), children (80% of members), youth (81% of members), adults (89% of members) and older adults (54% of members) in over 250 communities across B.C. both on and off recognized First Nations territories.

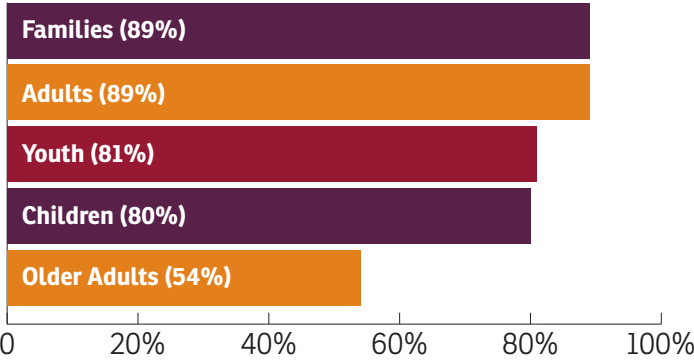


FIGURE 1: Percentage of Federation Members Serving Different Demographics

Our members provide a wide range of services that help the people of B.C. live happy and healthy lives. **FIGURE 2** (on page 6) compiles some of the many services offered by Federation members. The five most common service areas are:

- Family Support
- Youth Services
- Community Development and Capacity Building
- Child and Youth Mental Health
- Early Years

The overview of services provided by Federation members in this report will also be analyzed in relation to the positive affect they have on our provincial education and health care systems.

Federation member program areas

Our members' **Family Support** programs provide services and programs for parents both new and experienced. Families can come to our members for information, support, counselling (for themselves and/or their children) as well as education and after school care. Federation members provide families with extensive supports related to adoption and foster care and many family support programs also include intensive supports for families struggling with the challenges of parenting while involved with child protection services.

Youth Services are designed specifically for youth and can include a range of programs such as counselling, tutoring, training, and education. Federation members provide youth with information and support about issues like housing, school, family problems, relationships, and sexuality. They also provide safe places for young people to stay when they can't live with parents or family members.

Through our members' **Community Development and Capacity Building** services, people of all ages are able to find and access their basic needs when other issues get in the way. Federation member agencies provide vulnerable citizens with food, clothing, housing, transportation, training, education, gainful employment, and work with others in their communities to address gaps in such services. Many of our members also provide programs for older adults and offer supports that enable seniors across B.C. to live happily and independently in their own homes.

Other services provide counselling, information and support to parents, children and youth about emotional well-being through **Child and Youth Mental Health** programs. Through crisis lines and formal counselling, our members help children and youth struggling with relationships, depression, anxiety, sexuality, and many other issues. Our members help young people address their problems with drugs or alcohol, their feelings of being unsafe in a relationship, and desires to do harm to themselves or someone else.

The first years of a child's education are among the most important. Through a number of different **Early Years** programs, parents across the province can access child care services, educational programming, peer support and connection, as well as ongoing support and advice from specialized staff at Federation member agencies.

Above and beyond these specific program areas, Federation members help people of all ages with a massively diverse range of services and support. **FIGURE 2** below outlines a large range of the services available to the people of B.C. through our member organizations. Many of the youth mental health services listed above (e.g. crisis lines, counselling, addiction services and support) are also available to people of all ages.

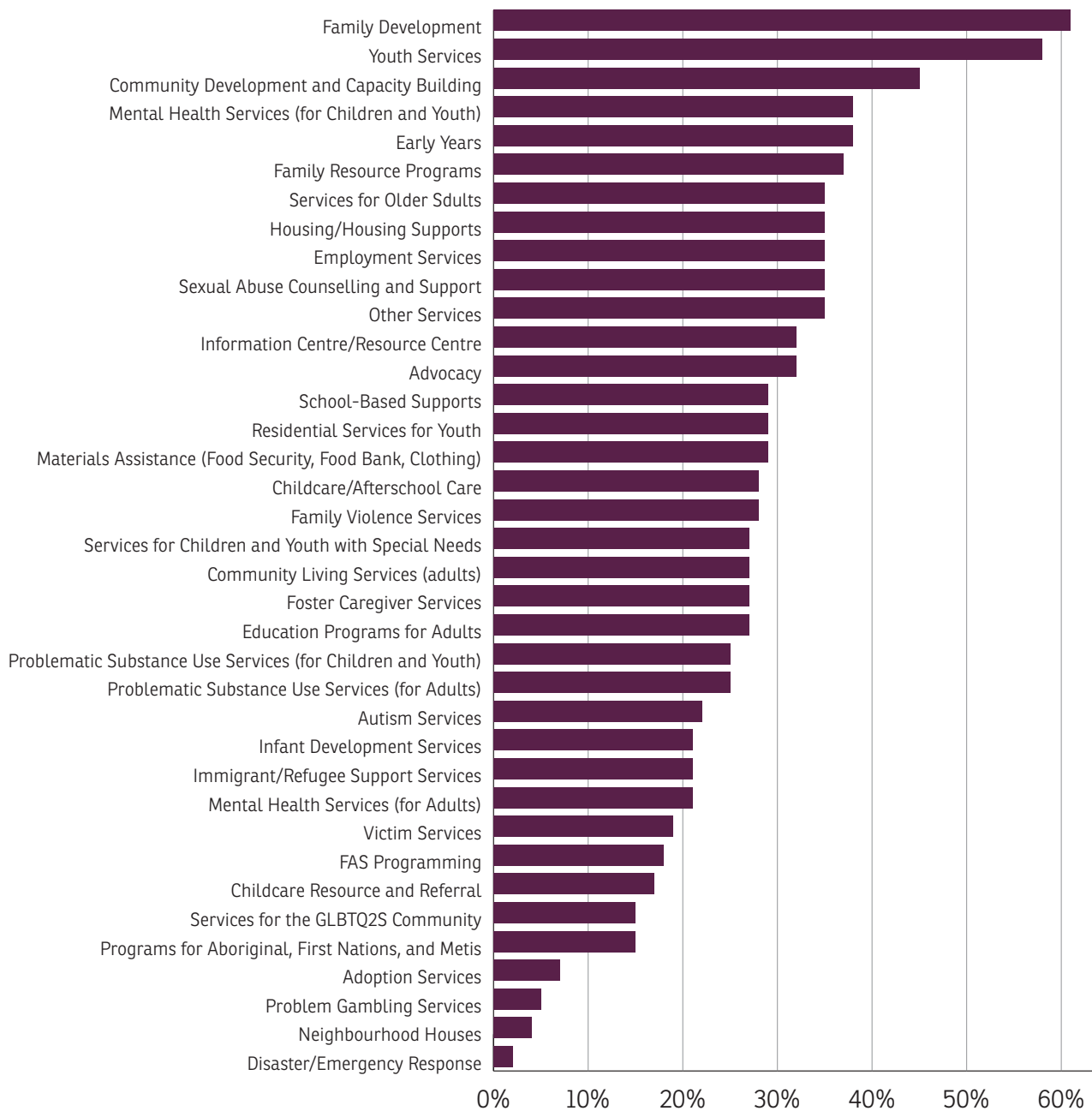


FIGURE 2: Percentage of Federation Members Offering Different Services and Supports

A number of our members also have community living programs and services to support people with disabilities such as fetal alcohol spectrum and autism. Other members have services tailored for specific demographics of the population: women, seniors, recent immigrants, job-seekers, foster caregivers, homeless people, Aboriginal people, First Nations, Métis, and the LGBTQ2S community.

STRENGTHENING OUR EDUCATION SYSTEM

As you can see, Federation members and other community social service organizations help people throughout B.C. across a range of different demographics. As a result, these services also strengthen other, different systems in which these people are involved.

Programs and services offered by Federation members strengthen our province's education system—both locally and provincially. Our members work closely with schools, teachers, and staff to support B.C.'s students and their families.

Our members also provide programs that support parents with pre-school children and infants that would otherwise lack childcare services and access to early childhood education. Our members provide breakfast and school lunch programs, they support school-age children across the province that have developmental disabilities. They provide literacy and tutoring programs as well as childcare and after school care for B.C.'s growing number of working parents.

The positive impact that community social services have on B.C.'s education system is noticeable—even by the students themselves. In a recent report from the McCreary Centre, one student commented that: "Everyone feels uncomfortable at school. We should all have someone to talk to. Like a counselling class for everyone at school."² Another young person participating in an Aboriginal youth gathering on the topic of youth suicide was heartened to hear about the kinds of support offered by community social services: "It was eye-opening to see that there is support available. I personally have lots of struggles. It's just nice to know there are people here who can help."³

In the words of one Federation member: "We are whole people. Everything is interconnected: social, health, education. We are about prevention. We prevent children from becoming troubled teens."

STRENGTHENING OUR HEALTH CARE SYSTEM

Community social service organizations also have a massive impact on our province's health care system. Many services and supports offered by Federation members are preventative and focused on early intervention, thus saving families from trips to the doctor, pharmacy, or emergency room. Our members are also the ones that step in where and when there are gaps in provincial health and mental health services.

Many Federation organizations have family resource centres that provide information, support, and referrals through both drop-in and structured programs. A number of our members also offer treatment programs for mental health and substance use problems for children and/or adults.

Our members offer a range of programs for new parents and families with infants that offer support and information about child development, safety, as well as physical and emotional growth and well-being.

Other programs that are focused on helping children and youth with mental health challenges (and their families) can prevent a range of problems and issues that would otherwise develop later in life. This benefit is also noted in the most recent report from the Select Standing Committee on Children and Youth in British Columbia. According to the report, such services "reduce the consequences of mental illness in our youth population and its impact on the economy and society."⁴

The value to the health care system of community social services has been documented extensively in other research, especially in work addressing the social determinants of health. For example, the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIH) recently noted that early intervention in a person's life can prevent future problems with substance use and their research found that savings from such early investment can range anywhere from \$2.88 per dollar invested to \$25.92 per dollar invested.⁵ Their report concludes that "well-conceived and well-implemented intervention for very young children can not only dramatically improve the quality of life for the children and families involved but also benefit the community and society as a whole."

Conclusion

The goal of these reports is to paint an accurate picture of B.C.'s social service landscape. It is important to have current and detailed information about the sector so that we can continue to be strong and influential advocates with politicians, funders, and decision makers.

This report has identified the massive and diverse populations that rely on B.C.'s community social service sector to live happy, healthy lives. It details the vast range of supports that are available and the benefits that well-funded social services can provide to other important sectors such as health and education.

You are encouraged to use this information to help educate people about the value of our sector and to explain the need for increased funding to these valuable and vital services.

In the coming months, The Federation will share more knowledge gained through these surveys: the size of the sector's workforce, the impact of volunteer contributions, insights into social sector funding patterns and partnerships, as well as the full extent to which Federation member organizations contribute to the strength of B.C.'s communities.

Our thanks to Federation member organizations who contributed a significant amount of their time to provide the valuable information collected by these two surveys. It is because of your commitment to this work that The Federation is truly *Altogether Better*.

Citations

¹ British Columbia Speech from the Throne. (2016). https://www.leg.bc.ca/content/data%20-%20ldp/Pages/40th5th/Throne_Speech_40th5th.pdf

² McCreary Centre. (2016). *Unspoken Thoughts & Hidden Facts: A Snapshot of BC Youth's Mental Health*. p. 33. http://www.mcs.bc.ca/pdf/Unspoken_thoughts_hidden_facts.pdf

³ Lovgreen, T. (April 26, 2016). "Fraser Valley Aboriginal youth talk openly about suicide." CBC News. <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/aboriginal-youth-suicide-prevention-forum-1.3552677>

⁴ Select Standing Committee on Child and Youth Mental Health in British Columbia. (2016). *Final Report Child and Youth Mental Health in British Columbia: Concrete Actions for Systemic Change*. p. iv. https://www.vsb.bc.ca/sites/default/files/16Apr13_op_commlitem1.pdf

⁵ National Institute on Drug Abuse. (2016). *Principles of Substance Abuse Prevention for Early Childhood*. p. 5. https://www.drugabuse.gov/sites/default/files/early_childhood_prevention_march_2016.pdf