

Rural Community Program Rural Community Innovation Initiative

What is the Rural Community Innovation Initiative?

As part of the Rural Community Program at CDSS, the Rural Community Innovation Initiative will encourage and support new ideas to address the social goals of Municipal Sustainability Plans (MSP's) as developed with Villages and Camrose County residents and that satisfy the mandate of FCSS.

Objective and Priorities

The objective of the Rural Community Innovation Initiative is to help residents, service clubs, community boards, non-profit organizations and municipalities to experiment with ideas that address both current and potential future barriers as they pertain to the social goals set out in their community.

Proposals for support will identify work with community partners to address or advance one of the following FCSS priority areas as well as encourage community collaboration and engagement:

- **Improved social well-being of individuals** related to resilience, self-esteem, optimism, capacity to meet needs, autonomy, competence, personal engagement, meaning and purpose, that individuals will develop positive social relationships, have knowledge of social supports available, and/or experience increased trust and belonging.
- **Improved social well-being of families** related to positive family relationships, positive parenting, positive family communication, increased quality social networks and access to resources as needed.
- **Improved social well-being of community** related to individual municipal social sustainability goals, social engagement, social supports, awareness of the community, positive relations and attitudes toward others and the community, awareness of community social issues, understanding of community social issues, collaboration with agencies or community members to address social issues.

Funding Categories

Category 1 – Workshops

Workshops engage and mobilize community and stakeholders to work together on social sustainability goals at a particular event or a series of events. All funded workshops will fall within the objectives and priorities of the Rural Community Innovation Initiative and will require output information (# of people, organizations, other community partner contributions and actions for next steps). **Funding for Workshops will not exceed \$ 200.00.**

Category 2 – Partnerships

Partnership initiatives will engage local communities and community groups to promote partnering initiatives to enhance local capacity or build collaborative approaches to address the community social goals, challenges and opportunities. **Funding for Partnership Development will not exceed \$ 200.00.**

Category 3 – Development Initiatives

Development Initiatives should engage community groups in the implementation of concrete development activities that generate tangible benefits for the community. All projects must provide evidence that activities are part of the social goals of the community's MSP or the result of a significant consensus within a community or amongst several communities but still adhere to FCSS local mandate. **Funding for Development Initiatives will not exceed \$ 500.00.**

Category 4 - Community Wellness

Community wellness initiatives should provide community members with information regarding potential resources and/or referral sources in their community that address one or more of the

Rural Community Innovation Initiative priority areas. **Funding for Community Wellness activities will not exceed \$ 500.00.**

Rationale

“The definition of crazy is to do the same thing over and over and expect a different result.”

The idea behind “Small Bets” is to provide an opportunity for as many as possible small initiatives to be explored with some recognition that these investments may or may not produce the necessary “Big Ideas” to address the social goals of the community. However, we should never expect a big idea to come to us in perfect form instead we should provide the environment small and large for these ideas to be built upon. The belief that we have to have a big idea in order to start something is a myth. If communities don’t start until they have a big idea, they will never start. The intent of the initiative is to start an idea, any idea, figure out what works and build from there.

The critical point of small bets is that they are little – so if they don’t work, we don’t lose too much but if the ideas are powerful enough for a community to have autonomy and support to implement and build upon our small bet could turn into a big idea.

This initiative is intended to be innovative by being creative and creating connections between ideas and encounter a diversity of ideas by providing some encouragement to consciously building links with people and groups that may not think the same way. It also acknowledges the differences in community and between communities by allowing opportunities for locally generated ideas to come from anyone.

By following this approach we can explore possibilities faster by shortening the feedback loop as quickly as possible and by marshalling the information and resources/funding toward other small ideas that require further work.

Funding for the Rural Community Innovation Initiative

As part of the CDSS approved allocation to the Rural Community Program for the 2019 budget year an amount of \$ 2500.00 was earmarked for special projects. Through mind-full discussions and research into innovation it became apparent that this process would allow for equal opportunity of our participating communities, potentially address community social goals, encourage collaboration and engage those that may have been marginalized in the past.

The process used in this initiative adheres to the fundamental principles of FCSS, CDSS philosophy and strengthens the opportunities for positive personal and community outcomes while supporting volunteerism and respecting local autonomy.