

The Difference CPEF Makes

The Capital Region CPEF has strived to make a difference for children and families in our Region from the “Get-Go”. Early meetings that were held were all about how to channel the resources we had to the community.

When we met with Deborah Morrison in the early stages of developing our model, her priority and ours was to help develop partnerships that were community based.

The move to fund the MAPS project and the deployment of Deborah to help develop the local area networks was a signal of our intent to use a community development approach to our work.

MAPS Capital Region provided the resources to do community based planning across the region and it provided a starting point. From its start until now MAPS has been an essential part of partnership planning. It has led to the development of 13 Local Area Networks (LANS) across the region. Feedback from the LANS provided in 2009 suggests that the mapping support and Deborah’s coordination and facilitation efforts have made a significant difference in the development of effective partnerships across the Region. The LAN partnerships have increased the importance and understanding of program planning within the context of the larger community for the mutually funded CFSA and FCSS agencies. Prior to the LAN the focus of the networks was more of an interagency sharing which tends to provide information that front line staff use in connecting families to other resources, etc. The LAN has provided opportunities: for sharing of community information; reduction of or duplication of needs assessment or other information gathering strategies; for more accurate interpretation of community information because of multiple and diverse perspectives and analyses; more effective responses to community needs; to serve greater numbers or hard to reach clients because of collaborative efforts; identification of gaps and issues that may have gone undetected; and a greater ability to respond to gaps and issues that could not be solved by a single service provider.

The other important part of our plans involved funding local partnership projects across the Capital Region. Catriona Gunn-Graham put together a list of communities and their populations that covered the entire Capital Region. Based on population, we offered funding for partnerships in large and small communities across the region. We created a minimum grant of \$3,000 dollars so that there would be funding available for small as well as large projects. The 60 large and small projects that have been funded have made a positive difference in the communities that we serve.

The Tale of Two Systems project involved creating more effective partnerships between the City of Edmonton Community services Department and Region 6 CFSA. It began in April of 2007 when a joint meeting of about 30 reps from the two systems met to talk about how to develop more effective partnerships (see appended report). It was decided that in order to work more effectively, staff from both systems would meet together on a number of priority areas that included: Support to Aboriginal communities, work with multi-cultural communities and family violence prevention. These meetings took place and a number of joint projects were developed that helped to establish stronger partnerships. Reps from the Early Intervention and FCSS programs met to develop a more “user-friendly” application process for those seeking funding support.

Patti Johnson and Harry Oswin also started holding regular meetings with upper management reps from both systems which has also assisted in the development of stronger partnerships. From the CFSA's perspective these meetings have greatly assisted and supported on the ground work to develop common funding process between the CFSA, City FCSS and the United Way of the Alberta Capital Region. This work has been underdevelopment for the past couple of years and now with more senior support is moving along more quickly. The outcomes of a more streamlined reporting processes for commonly funded programs will include: less administrative for time for agencies spent on completing reports, resulting in more direct contact with clients; increased ability on behalf of funders and the sector to analyze and understand client and sector impact, resulting in improved services for children, youth and families.

In 2009, the province of Alberta decided to cease funding for CPEF. Their initial commitment was to fund CPEF for three years and they ended up providing funding for six year. The province is to be congratulated for their willingness to fund CPEF for as long as they did.

An important part of the governance for CPEF was the development of a Regional Committee that featured membership from Region 6 CFSA and FCSS representatives who were appointed by the Edmonton/Evergreen FCSS Regional Directors Committee. The Regional Committee has been meeting since 2004 when Donna Mah, the Region 6 CEO at the time, attended and committed that the CFSA would be an active partner. Both the FCSS and Region 6 Managers have stayed involved in spite of very busy schedules. The Regional Committee has been a solid mainstay of the Capital Region CPEF project.

Recent meetings have been held with the Capital Region United Way and the City of Edmonton that suggest that funding for MAPS will continue. CPEF will continue to meet for the time being although it may morph into a different entity in order to meet the needs of the current funders. What we will take into the future is a new and more effective way to develop and maintain partnerships in support of children, seniors and families that is based on a neighbourhood model of community development.

Thanks to Deborah, the Regional Committee members and all of the LAN folks who make a difference every day in support of their communities.

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