



COMMUNITY SOCIAL PLANNING COUNCIL
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NEWS RELEASE

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Short-term Thinking in Government Community Service Contracting Hurting Service Quality, British Columbia Communities

Victoria – Community Social Planning Council today released a new report, ***Toward a Community Benefit Model of Procurement in Community Services***.

In the early 2000s, contracting for BC government services, including those delivered by the community and social services sector, switched to a model of short-term contracts and competitive bidding. A decade later, the report ***Toward a Community Benefit Model of Procurement in Community Services*** finds that this model, particularly for longer-term critical community services, has damaged the quality of services for British Columbians:

- Inconsistent service, as contracts are cancelled, renewed and transferred between competing organizations – often with time-lags in which vulnerable British Columbians are left without any access to the services they depend on.
- Undermining the financial stability of service providers by forcing non-profits to chase short-term contracts – sometimes at the cost of their financial sustainability
- “Service fragmentation” – a breakdown of the sector’s ability to collaborate with government and with each other, leading to issues and clients “falling through the cracks”

Rupert Downing, Executive Director of the Community Council, hopes that the report will open up a renewed discussion about the relationship between government and the community services sector. “Just as with our schools and hospitals, community services are an essential component of our social infrastructure. However, we treat the community service organizations running our employment centres, mental health programs, shelter beds, and so many other critical services – as if their long-term, community-focused work was no different than hiring a contractor to patch up a highway.”

The Community Council is proposing a “community benefit model” of procurement, in which the government establishes long-term funding relationships with key community service providers, develops a clear policy framework for procuring community services, and establishes regional planning tables to better align community service funding to the needs of each community.

Links

Report: [Toward a Community Benefit Model of Procurement in Community Services](#)

Highlights: [Highlights from Toward a Community Benefit Model of Procurement in Community Services](#)

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