

2024-25

Annual Report



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

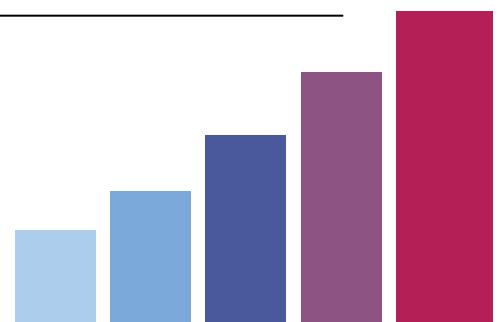


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Table Of Contents

About Us	4
Leadership	5
Board of Directors	6
Volunteer Spotlight	7
Impact	8
Top Countries of Origin	9
Women's Programs	10-11
Community Engagement	12-13
Programs for Newcomers	14-15
Family Health and Wellness	16-17
Our Funders	18
Our Partners	19
Our Donors	20
Financials	21
Contact Us	22



About Us

We exist to help newcomer women and their families begin the next chapter of their lives in Toronto.

Over the last 50 years, we have supported over 500,000 newcomer women and their families through a full range of services ranging from education, to settlement, language, food security and beyond. By supporting women, we enable them to build their capacity so that they can be active participants and contributors to their communities.

...Because when women thrive, their communities rise.
When communities rise, society flourishes.



Leadership



VANDA HENRIQUES
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This year has been another incredible chapter in our journey of supporting women and families across Toronto. Together, we have helped thousands of newcomers find stability, opportunity, and a sense of belonging. Every success story reflects the strength of our community and the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners. Thank you for standing with us as we continue to build a future for the women and families we serve.

This year we have shortened our Annual Report with brief highlights of some of our programs and services under our four service areas: Women's Programs, Community Engagement, Programs for Newcomers and Family Health and Wellness. More detailed information on our activities is available from blogs on our website main page. Using blogs gives us more space to tell you about everything we are doing throughout the year. I hope you enjoy this new set up. Please let us know your thoughts!



EMILY CHIU
PRESIDENT, BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Serving as Board President has been an incredible experience, and I am continually inspired by the dedication and impact of Working Women Community Centre. Each day, our team works tirelessly to support women and families, creating spaces where newcomers feel welcomed and empowered. Witnessing this transformation reminds me why our mission matters so deeply.

As we look ahead to next year—our 50th anniversary—I am filled with gratitude and excitement. This milestone is not just a celebration of our history, but a commitment to the future. Together, we will continue building strong, inclusive communities where every woman has the opportunity to thrive.



Board of Directors

Many thanks to our amazing volunteer Board of Directors for
your many hours, expertise and guidance!

Emily Chiu	President
Mariette Matos	Vice President
Lia Whyte	Treasurer
Julie Davidson	Secretary
Rozana Kalil	Member
Karen Sun	Member
Laura Peñalosa	Member
Christal Huang	Member
Lechin Lu	Member
Noemi Chanda	Member
Sherry Bagnato	Member

Volunteer Spotlight



Murui Yu: Uplifting Newcomers Through Conversation and Compassion

At the Working Women Community Centre, volunteers play a vital role in supporting newcomer communities. Among them, Murui Yu stands out for her dedication and empathy.

Murui began volunteering with us at just 14 years old, becoming the youngest facilitator of our Chatting Hour program. Now in Grade 12 at Earl Haig Secondary School majoring in Film Arts, she continues to lead engaging English conversation sessions for newcomer seniors, bringing warmth, creativity, and patience to every interaction. Her sessions do more than teach language - they build confidence, foster connection, and create safe spaces for newcomers to thrive.

Murui's impact is felt deeply by participants who look forward to her vibrant energy and thoughtful activities each week. Balancing school, hobbies like badminton and skating, and her passion for storytelling, Murui still finds time to give back. Her commitment reflects the heart of our work: supporting women to build their capacity and contribute to their communities.

“Volunteering here feels like a two-way street. While I’m helping others grow, I’m also growing alongside them.”

We are proud to celebrate Murui's journey and excited to see the difference she will continue to make. Thank you Murui for being part of our family!

Impact

17,706 People Assisted Last Year



1,450 women assisted through women's support services

286 amazing volunteers donated **9,160** hours to help children and families

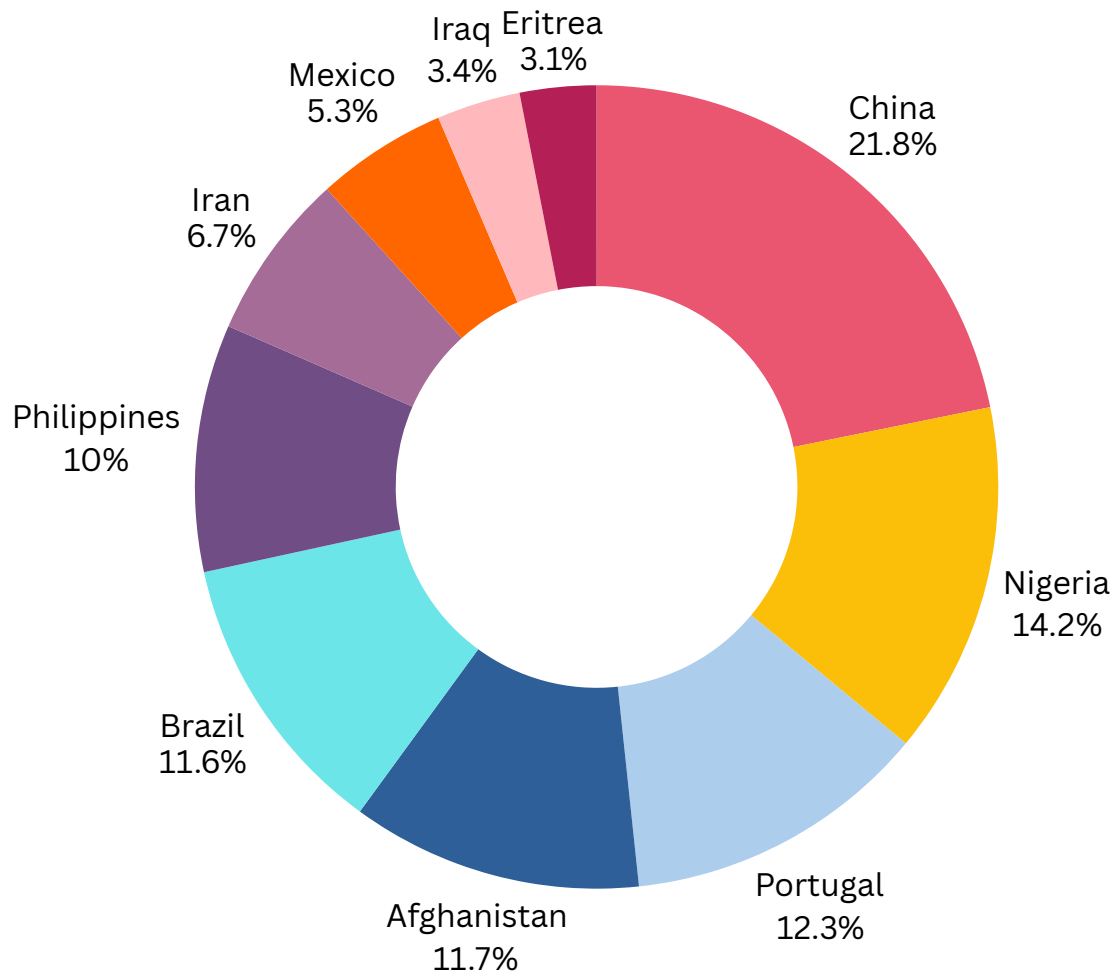


1,800 people improved their food security

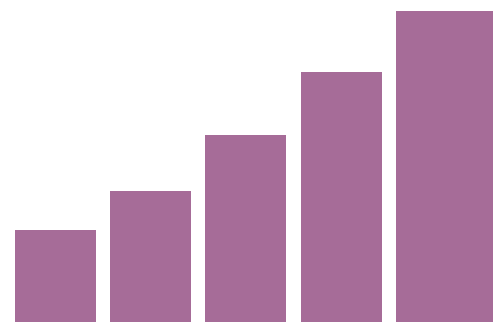
877 children assisted through education programs



Top Countries of Origin



Each year we serve people from more than 100 countries across the globe. Many of our services are offered in multiple languages.





Women's Programs

When women thrive, their communities rise.

"Thank you so much for being in touch with me during my worst moments. I'm glad to be part of this program and grateful to receive your support."

"I want to thank you so much for helping me. Our conversation provided me with great insights. Your expertise, knowledge, and working style helped me a lot. Thank you for taking time out of your busy day to answer my questions. Your positive aura and friendly approach really ease the clients who come to you for solutions."

"With the HIPPY program, things were different and easier. I spent more time with my children, began reading them stories, and teaching them how to play. We've become more connected."

Women's Programs



HIPPY FOR YOUNG MOTHERS

The Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) program is an internationally recognized initiative offered exclusively in Toronto by the Working Women Community Centre. HIPPY offers mothers 30+ weeks of training each year for three years, helping them gain skills to assist their children ages 3 to 5.

Last year, HIPPY for Young Moms equipped 33 mothers with the tools and guidance they needed to support their children's early learning and ensure a successful start in school. Through this program, young mothers gained confidence and skills that helped their children thrive academically and socially. This program was available to Canadian-born and newcomer mothers aged 16–29 who were pursuing personal and educational goals while facing financial challenges and limited access to services. Working Women also operated HIPPY for newcomer families, which assisted another 210 mothers.



WOMEN'S SUPPORT GROUPS

Our Women's Services program provided safe, culturally responsive spaces for 87 newcomer women to share experiences, build resilience, and strengthen community. Weekly groups offered guidance on housing, immigration, mental health, and wellness, while creative activities and partnerships with local agencies enriched support. Many participants left empowered and eager to continue peer-led groups—proof that when women thrive, communities rise. We also provided one-on-one counseling for over 400 women last year, including helping women experiencing domestic violence.



CAREGIVER SUPPORT PROGRAM

The Caregiver Support Program is a lifeline for individuals holding Temporary Work Permits in caregiving roles under the Caregiver Pathways program. This program assists them on their journey towards permanent residence and citizenship, recognizing the challenges they face, such as isolation due to long hours of work in private homes far from their loved ones. Last year we coordinated 50 online and in-person events to help caregivers feel supported, learn important information, and build new friendships.

Community Engagement

"Fridays have become my favorite day of the week! I can't wait to see everyone, share laughs, and lose myself in painting. These classes aren't just about art — they're about friendship, joy, and a little escape from the everyday routine. Every Friday fills me with so much happiness and inspiration."

"Living with my in-laws and having no friends or family here in Canada, I really enjoy being part of the program and the opportunities it offers! It's such a nice break for me."



"I had so much fun connecting with the community. It's hard to make connections in the city as a newcomer. These events really help me make long-lasting connections. I look forward to the community events. I had never heard of Edwards Gardens, but I loved it and will be back! Thank you 😊"

"I learned about the history and culture of Canada through the visit which was great and I really liked it. Thank you."

Community Engagement



COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Our Community Development Program thrived thanks to 52 incredible volunteers who led weekly group activities like yoga, sewing, conversation circles, and art classes. These gatherings helped 1,000 newcomers build friendships, connect with others, and feel truly at home in their community. Volunteers also coordinated events that helped participants learn about their local community and Canadian culture, including neighborhood walks, Canada Day celebrations, and ROM visits.



VICTORIA PARK COMMUNITY HUB

Last year, the Victoria Park Community Hub continued to be a trusted space where residents felt safe, supported, and connected. As we prepared to celebrate its 15th anniversary, the Hub remained a vital part of the neighborhood—bringing people of all ages and backgrounds together to learn, grow, and build meaningful relationships.

Through programs such as fitness and wellness classes, digital literacy training, cooking workshops, arts and cultural activities, language supports, settlement services, and food security initiatives, the Hub empowered residents to build confidence, develop new skills, and strengthen community ties. Career-focused opportunities—including construction info sessions, pre-apprenticeship workshops, and networking events helped participants explore pathways to employment and economic resilience.

As we marked this milestone, we celebrated the thousands of lives touched by the Hub and reaffirmed our commitment to deepening its impact and expanding programs that foster belonging and opportunity.



COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Working Women Community Centre provides educational programs and events across Toronto that inform and empower thousands of participants each year, covering subjects such as employee rights, family law in Ontario, child protection, CRA benefits, and Canadian government systems. Last year, we organized more than 350 educational events that reached over 4,000 people across our three locations.

Programs for Newcomers



*"Thank you to this school and my teachers
For giving me more than just English
You gave me strength.
You gave me wings."*

"I was so thrilled to join this amazing team! As a newcomer in Canada, I've learned so much that can help accelerate my growth and expand my knowledge about education in this country. I'm excited to continue learning and highly recommend this platform to any newcomer in Canada. Stay connected to this platform because there's so much to gain. A big thank you to the fantastic team behind it! "

"Thank you for guiding me through my PR application. Our meeting gave me light in a difficult time."

*"The team was supportive, clear, and very informative throughout the process. I gained valuable guidance that helped me understand my options and plan my next steps with confidence in bridging program from P.S.W to practical Nursing, which was difficult to get started. I am very happy to share my positive experience as a testimonial — thank you for your excellent support and dedication.
Blessing"*

Programs for Newcomers



LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION FOR NEWCOMERS TO CANADA

Over the past year, our Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program supported more than 1,100 learners across literacy to advanced English levels, helping them build essential language skills for life in Canada. Through flexible in-person and online formats, learners engaged in practical lessons focused on workplace English, digital literacy, citizenship, and community connection. We expanded literacy support for those with limited prior education and continued to remove barriers through our Care for Newcomer Children program. With enhanced HyFlex technology and ongoing teacher training, we ensured high-quality instruction in every format.



SETTLEMENT COUNSELLING

Our Settlement Counselling Services continued to be a vital source of support for more than 4,800 newcomer women and their families as they navigated the challenges of building a new life in Canada. Through one-on-one case management, orientation sessions, women's support groups, and help with essential documentation, we empowered clients to become confident, informed, and connected members of their communities. The full rollout of our digital booking system improved accessibility and reduced wait times, while expanded internal referrals ensured seamless transitions across WWCC programs. From securing permanent residency to learning to navigate new systems, our clients' stories reflect the strength, resilience, and transformation made possible through compassionate, culturally responsive support.

Family Health and Wellness



"We are so happy for Brianna and all of her accomplishments; she has come so far in her academics and personal life thanks to this great opportunity in being part of On Your Mark. We will be forever grateful to you and the team for all your dedication, support, compassion and understanding.... Never know, one day she can be a volunteer for On Your Mark."

"I want to thank all those who are part of and contribute to the success of the On Your Mark program, their commitment and support are fundamental to the progress of each student. To the tutors, thank you very much for the time, patience and dedication you have invested in each of the students. Thank you for the scholarship and opportunity to help my son at this stage of his academic development, as this program has been very helpful."

"We thank you for the incredible opportunity you provide to the children—for enriching their learning and for the great motivation you give them through passes to sports and cultural events. Many of us do not have the means to go or pay for these experiences, and the fact that you provide them is such beautiful and important work."

Family Health and Wellness



ON YOUR MARK TUTORING

On Your Mark continues to help families with school-aged children by offering free, high-quality tutoring and mentoring in reading, writing, and math. Thanks to overwhelming volunteer interest and the flexibility of our online format, we expanded our reach across Ontario and beyond—matching students with tutors from cities like Ottawa, London, and Vancouver.

This year, volunteers continued to show their dedication, offering extra sessions and last-minute support to help students stay on track. We also reintroduced in-person tutoring at WWCC for students who needed additional support, ensuring no one was left behind. By supporting children in their learning journey, we help families build their capacity to thrive.



FOOD SECURITY

At Working Women Community Centre, food security is more than access—it's about dignity, connection, and empowerment. Through the Oriole Food Space, a long-standing partnership with Flemingdon Health Centre and North York Harvest Food Bank, we provide direct access to food supports including local food banks, community kitchen workshops, and our vibrant Oriole Community Garden. This garden offers free plots to residents in high-rise buildings, giving them the opportunity to grow fresh produce, reconnect with nature, and connect with neighbours.

In collaboration with Aramark Canada, we hosted community events that brought people together around food, fostering learning, celebration, and shared experiences. These initiatives not only addressed systemic barriers to food access but also created spaces where newcomer women and families could build relationships, share skills, and feel at home in their communities.



PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION

Through a partnership with North York Toronto Health Partners and the North York General Hospital, we helped coordinate and host health fairs and education events that connected women and families to health services and raising awareness on issues including diabetes prevention and breast cancer.



Our Funders

Federal

Department of Women & Gender Equality (WAGE)
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada (HRSDC)
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC)

- LINC
- Welcoming Communities

Provincial

Ministry of Citizenship

- Newcomers Settlement Program (NSP)
- Ontario Women's Directorate (OWD)
- Pay Equity Funding

Municipal

City of Toronto

- Community Service Partnership
- Investing in Neighbourhoods
- Toronto Public Health-Community Food Works

United Way of Greater Toronto

Foundations/Organizations

- Brookfield Foundation (Hippy YMP)
- Canadian Red Cross
- JVS Toronto
- North York Community Fund (VET Program)
- Ontario Trillium Foundation (Capital Program/Resilient Communities)
- Regional Government of the Azores
- Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)
- Toronto District School Board (TDSB)



Our Partners

Chinese Canadian National Council of Toronto Chapter
Chinese Integration Networking
City of Toronto/United Way Greater Toronto Cluster
City of Toronto/United Way Greater Toronto Newcomer Table
City of Toronto/United Way Greater Toronto North East/West Clusters
City of Toronto/United Way Greater Toronto South Scarborough Cluster
Civic Action Network (SCAN)
Don Valley East Vaccine Engagement Team
East York/Don Valley Coordination Cluster
Fairview Interagency Network (FIN)
Golden Mile Impact Network & GMIP Steering Committee
Inclusive Local Economic Opportunity Table (ILEO)
Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto
Mothers Matter Canada
N.E.T. Local Immigration Partnership
North Western Toronto - Ontario Health Team
North York General Hospital
North York Toronto Health Partners
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
OCASI Women's Caucus
Oriole Food Space
Righting Relations
Scarborough Executive Directors Network
Social Planning Toronto
South Scarborough Vaccine Engagement Team
Toronto Neighbourhood Centres

Our Donors

\$200,000+

Anonymous Donor Family

\$25,000+

Interac

\$1,000 - \$9,999

Aramark Canada

Grant Thornton Foundation

Lusogolf Fundraising Inc

Nu Trend Construction

Simon Bishop

The First Narayever Congregation

Well Grounded Capital Inc.

\$500 - \$999

Benjamin Hoff

Steve Lavery

Mariette Matos

Lauren Pettapiece

Mary Sheridan

\$100 - \$499

Diana Abraham

Laura Allan

Cristiane Aloise

Susan Bilhete

Lorraine Boucher

Goetz Bramesfeld

Marco Coffa

Julie Davidson

Lara El Mekau

Leslie Arthur English

Rheina Firdiawati

Eleanor Fish

Marc Francoeur

Howard & Barbara Freedman

Vanda Henriques

Ofelia Isabel

Sheryl Kennedy

Vanda Klumper

Christina Kwicza

Susan Lieberman

Deborah Lobbezoo

Janet McGill

Melissa Michel

Judith Moses

Diana Oliveira

Judith Parker

Kirk Rintoul

Catalina Vargas

Brent Vickar

Lia Whyte

Barbara Zeller

On Your Mark Tutoring Scholarship Sponsors

Barbara Jackel

Robert & Helen Kenedy



BMO Latino Alliance

Financials

REVENUES	2025		2024	
Federal	\$4,125,489	63.2%	\$ 3,969,384	62.8%
Provincial	340,890	5.2%	340,890	5.4%
Municipal	339,393	5.2%	359,771	5.7%
United Way	654,757	10.0%	635,932	10.1%
Foundations	669,410	10.3%	615,812	9.7%
Others	392,636	6.0%	394,857	6.3%
Total Revenues	\$6,522,575	100.0%	\$ 6,316,646	100.0%
EXPENDITURES	2025		2024	
Personnel	\$4,581,085	71.8%	\$ 4,413,714	71.6%
Building Occupancy	1,061,903	16.6%	1,047,668	17.0%
Program Expenses	266,331	4.2%	281,122	4.6%
Equipment	148,644	2.3%	133,918	2.2%
Purchased Services	125,235	2.0%	138,801	2.3%
Administration	59,709	0.9%	39,600	0.6%
Insurance	19,664	0.3%	19,170	0.3%
Staff Related Expenses	37,474	0.6%	20,846	0.3%
Amortization	83,030	1.3%	71,866	1.2%
Total Expenditures	\$6,383,075	100.0%	\$ 6,994,866	100.0%
Excess Revenue over Expenses	\$139,500		\$149,941	

Contact Us



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