Building Community Advancing Justice

A Year of Collective Impact

2025-2026



A Safer, More Just Ontario Is Possible.

The past year has reinforced a simple truth: creating lasting change in Ontario's criminal justice system depends on collective action and shared solutions. Across the province, communities are grappling with rising homelessness, growing mental health and substance use crises, and persistent barriers to housing, employment, and successful reintegration for people leaving custody.

As we enter the final year of our three-year strategic plan, we are proud to share the John Howard Society of Ontario's first-ever Impact Report. It highlights how we have spent the past year bringing people together, building evidence, and advancing practical solutions that strengthen communities and improve outcomes for justice-involved people.

Collaboration is at the heart of this work. Through partnerships with our 18 local offices, people with lived experience, researchers, employers, policymakers, and community organizations, we connect knowledge, action, and shared purpose. Whether through research and evaluation, policy leadership, or training that helps organizations respond to emerging needs, we are working to turn evidence into impact.

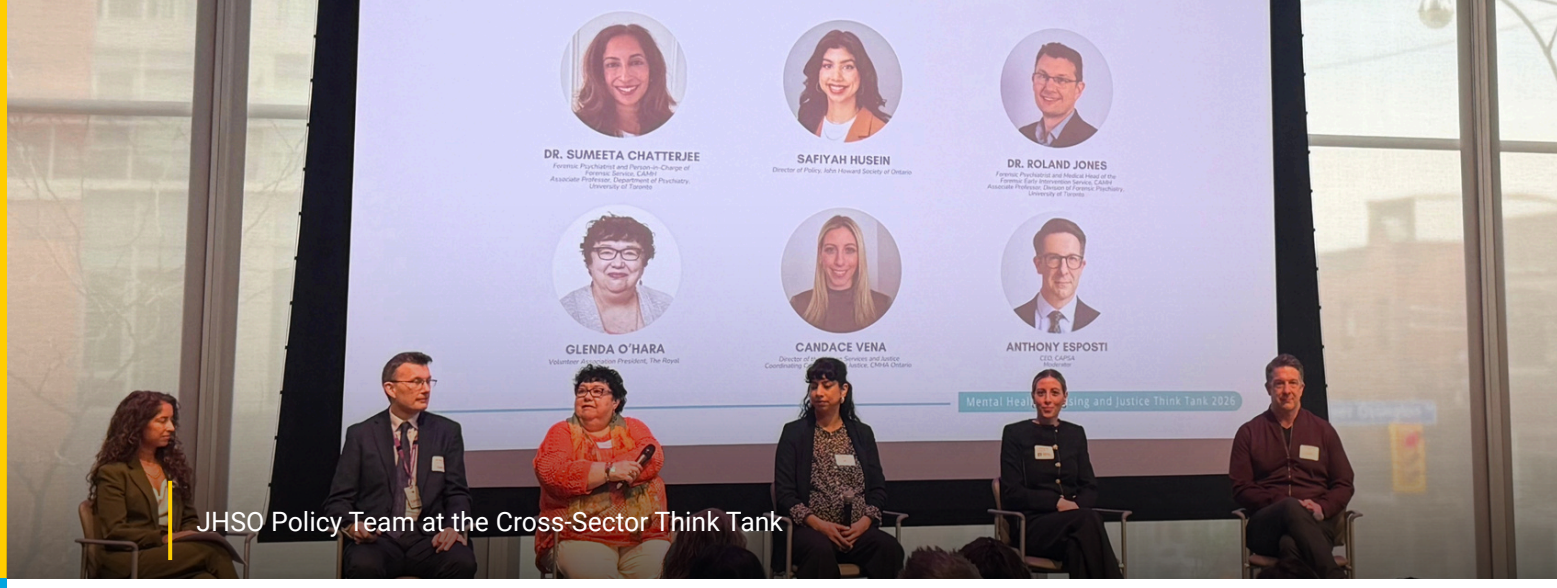
None of this would be possible without the support of our staff, board members, funders, partners, volunteers, and supporters. Thank you for being part of this work. We invite you to keep reading to learn more about the impact we've created together and the opportunities ahead.



Christin Cullen
Chief Executive Officer



Ron Cuthbert
President



JHSO Policy Team at the Cross-Sector Think Tank

Driving Systems Change, Together.

Solving complex social challenges requires intentional collaboration. This year, we brought together leaders, researchers, service providers, employers, and people with lived experience to advance practical solutions that improve outcomes at the systems level for justice-involved individuals.

Cross-Sector Think Tank

In partnership with CAMH and Mental Health Partners, we convened leaders from across Ontario to explore how systems can work better together for people with complex needs.
The discussions identified shared challenges, practical solutions, and a path forward through a newly established cross-sectoral Collaborative Action Council.

Fair Chances Leaders Roundtable

In collaboration with the Black Opportunity Fund and the Coalition of Innovation Leaders Advancing Respect (CILAR), we brought together senior leaders committed to expanding employment opportunities for the 1 in 9 Canadians with a criminal record.
The Fair Chances Leaders Roundtable creates space for organizations to learn from one another, share promising practices, and explore more inclusive hiring approaches.

> I love that John Howard does the Fair Chances [Leaders Roundtable]. We're bringing together different businesses, working directly with them, and actively nurturing a dialogue around these topics in the private sector. We need to keep talking about how complex the needs of individuals are, and the multiple disadvantages they face.
>
> – Fair Chances Leaders Roundtable Member



Thunder Bay, Ontario

Research Rooted in Community.

Northern Toll Report

Released in April 2026, *Northern Toll* highlighted how barriers to care, housing instability, and service gaps can increase the risk of fatal drug poisoning for people leaving custody. The report amplified local voices and called for a coordinated, health-focused response in Ontario's Northern communities.

Re:Thinking Justice Report Series

Our *Re:Thinking Justice* series examined:

- **Housing**
- **Employment**
- **Bail and remand practices**

19 recommendations to strengthen reintegration

Developed through extensive consultations with community partners, JHS staff, and individuals with lived experience, the series generated 19 recommendations to strengthen pathways back into community following incarceration.

Our Voice, Our Impact.

Through research, training, advocacy, and public education, JHSO continues to be a trusted voice on issues affecting justice-involved individuals and communities across Ontario.

500+
people trained

100+
meetings with government

30+
conferences, symposiums, and speaking engagements

33
policy recommendations advanced to government

26
active research and policy projects including 16 program evaluations

25+
media appearances

800+
newsletter subscribers

6,500+
online followers

A Growing Voice

From media interviews and report launches to conferences and sector events, JHSO continued to expand its reach and influence throughout the year.

> John Howard Society has always been there, will continue to be there - extremely effective. And not only in changing the perspective and outcomes of folks who have been involved with the criminal justice system, but also the organizations and systems that interact with those people as well.
>
> – Rohan, Director of Culture & Inclusion at the Region of Peel

Strengthening the JHS Network Through Evidence.

This year, we continued to work alongside our network of local offices to evaluate programs, build evidence, and share promising practices. Together, we are strengthening services and improving outcomes in communities across Ontario.

Connecting Knowledge Across Ontario

4 Communities of Practice

100+ JHS staff

18 local offices

This year, we convened four Communities of Practice, bringing together over 100 JHS staff from 18 local offices to share expertise, solve challenges, and advance best practices in housing, record suspension services, youth programming, and Indigenous issues.

Building Employment Pathways

Opening doors to opportunity is about more than finding a job. It is about creating pathways to stability, independence, and long-term community reintegration. This year, we began evaluating two Fair Chance employment pipeline projects in Toronto and London that will connect more than 40 justice-involved job seekers directly with anchor employers.

These projects are helping people:



Find work
Directly connecting them to employers



Support families
Building stability and independence



Reduce reoffending
Creating safer and stronger communities

Equally important, the evaluation will document lessons learned to refine future pipelines and build a model employers can replicate.



JHSO Research Team on site evaluating the Pathways Supportive Cabins Project

Pathways Supportive Cabins Project

We evaluated the Pathways Supportive Cabins Project, a Brockville-based housing initiative that provides supportive, short-term accommodation and pathways to permanent housing.

Where
Leeds and Grenville

Who it supports
Individuals experiencing chronic homelessness

Operated by
John Howard Society of Kingston & District

Our evaluation supported

→ Enhanced program delivery while documenting participant experiences and outcomes

> This past year, [we] partnered with the JHSO Evaluation Team to evaluate outcomes and measure the impact of Pathways to Housing's Cabins Community. Their expertise strengthened our ability to support continuous improvement through evidence-based service delivery while capturing and sharing the lived experiences and stories of the individuals we serve.
>
> – Julie, Executive Director of John Howard Society of Kingston & District



JHSO's Director of Policy, Safiyah Husein, appears on CBC Radio

From Policy to Practice.

Influencing Policy

Our research and policy work continued to inform conversations on how services are delivered in Ontario. This year, we proposed changes to the Coroners Act, including broadening the scope of the annual review to include natural deaths, to provide a more accurate picture of systemic and health-related challenges within institutions. Our housing research was cited by the Ontario Chamber of Commerce in its call to repair fragmented service systems, and we appeared before the Standing Committee on Justice Policy to share our concerns about Ontario's move to a "cash bail" system. Through our work on preventing hate and extremist violence, we also advocated for coordinated, community-based responses that address the underlying factors contributing to harm and support safer, healthier communities.

Training & Knowledge Sharing

More than 500 people participated in JHSO training sessions this year focused on practical strategies for supporting justice-involved individuals and reducing barriers to reintegration.

5,300+

downloads of the Fair Chances Toolkit

> This was a wonderful, relevant and useful presentation that I will definitely be utilizing in my role. It was very well laid out and practical and easy implementations were offered.
>
> – Fair Chances Job Developer Toolkit training participant