

john howard society

York Region

2025 - 2026 ANNUAL REPORT



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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

If one word captures 2025/26 for the John Howard Society of York Region, it is impactful.

This was a year that tested our organization's footing. Changes in funding priorities for some of our largest funders meant we needed to pivot to continue meeting the needs of our community, working within our mandate, and also securing resources that help us to continue doing this important work, all while continuing to provide vital services and supports to our clients. The entire JHSYR team worked hard to come up with creative ways to diversify our programming, and we never wavered in our commitments to our community.



That resilience is itself an impact. Our programs continued without interruption, and it means we enter 26/27 on firmer ground than we started.

As we became more settled in our new space at 70 Main Street South, we

started the process of truly making it our own through renovations (some minor, a few major) and plans for an improved outdoor space. As our entire team continues to brainstorm creative and fun ways to utilize our space, we are excited to see all of the changes that happen over the next year.

None of this happens without you: our staff, volunteers, funders, and community partners who stayed the course with us. Thank you for your trust and your patience.

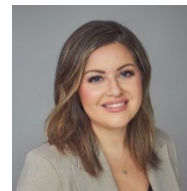
We're proud of the organization we're building, which is one that's resilient enough to weather what's next, and impactful enough to matter while it does.

With gratitude,

Kimberly Thomas
Board Chair



Shannon Speirs
Executive Director



OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kimberly Thomas. Chair/President

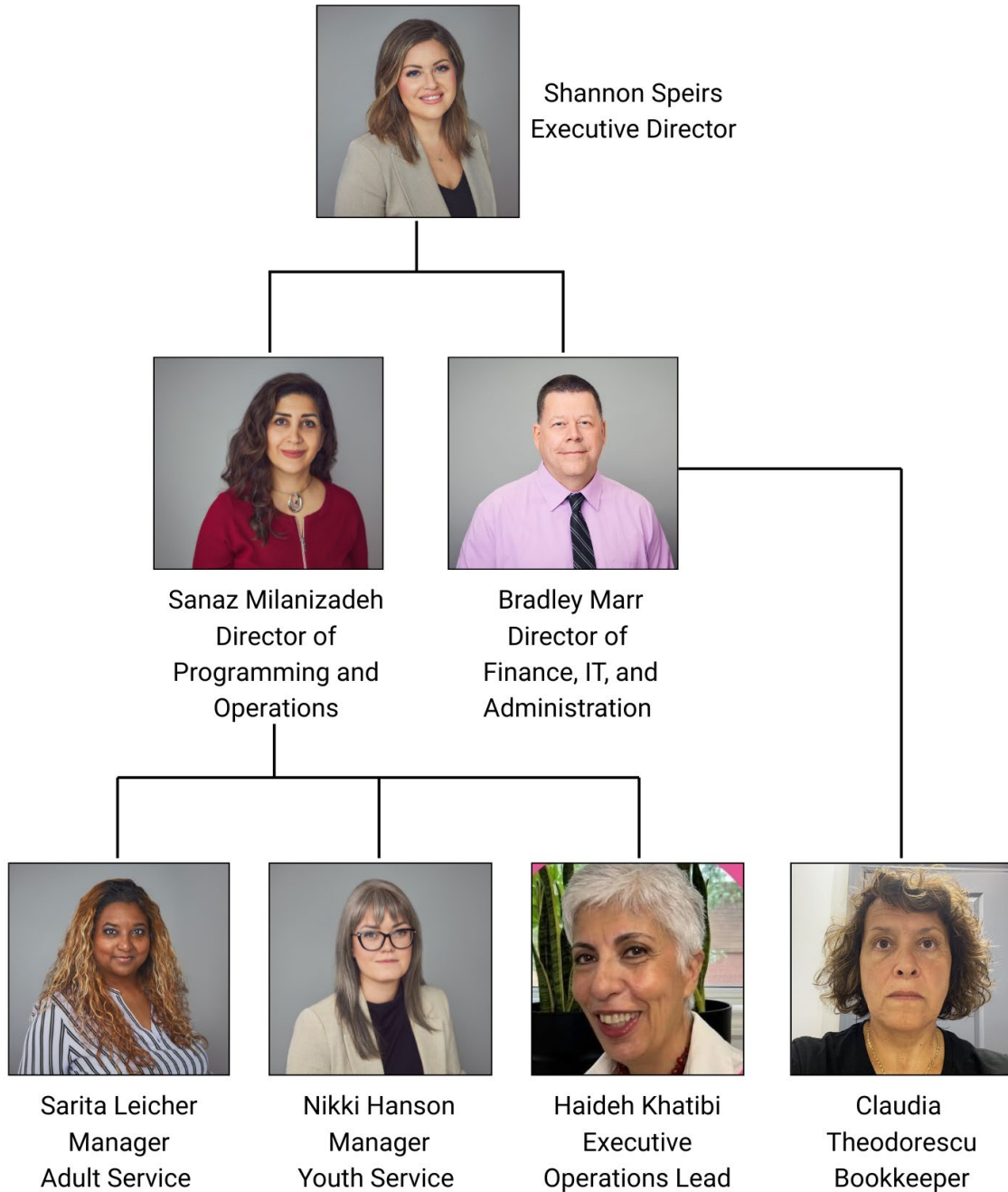
Chong Kiat Ng, Director

Dwayne O'Connor, Director

G. Bansal, Treasurer

Neda Foroughian, Secretary

OUR CORE TEAM



OUR STAFF – ADULT SERVICES

Anishar Nakimera

Carrie MacFarlane

Chandler Chambers-Jones

Cheryl Martin

Christine Iker

David Blow

Erika Pascoal

Giselle Palomo

Habibullah Shinwary

Hillary Kozlowski

Holly Pipher

Huggo Teixeira

Izzie Jones

Jamie Hayashi

Josh Kirstein

Jozef Konyari

Karlee Howe

Karyn Tam

Kiana Namdarpour

Malavikka Sinnarasa

Maryam Eslahi

Michael Wahbi

Narmin Halabchi

Readeat Kerie

Shannon Van Der Valk

Ushani Umachandran

Zoey Ellis

OUR STAFF – YOUTH SERVICES

Arielle Boshi

Irene Tse

David Patrick

Kenzie Wass

Edna Mirembe Namuyiga

MaKayla Pelekis

Elisabeth Dobson

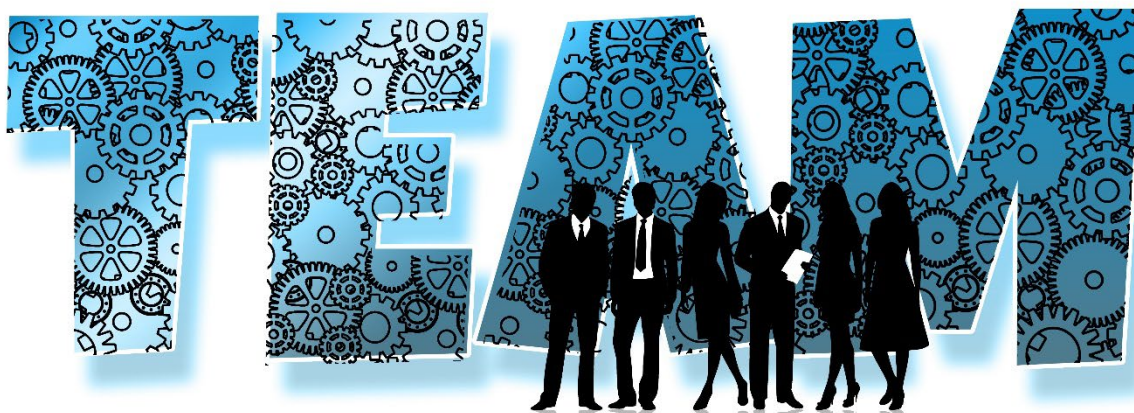
Priya Singh

Francis Gaffney

Sara Gingras

Haley Aldred

Zachary Zurkowsky



OUR AMBASSADORS AND STUDENTS

Bisi Olubiremi (Ambassador)

Brett Southwell (Student)

Carrie Henry (Ambassador)

Chalanda Eubank (Student)

Demi Olubiremi (Ambassador)

Dion Belmont (Ambassador)

Elena Mariani (Ambassador)

Emily Campbell-Reid (Student)

Halima Abdillahi (Student)

Jacqueline Common
(Ambassador)

Jennifer Reno (Ambassador)

Jim Stevens (Ambassador)

Mahyar Saeedabadi (Student)

Mikaela Zilz (Student)

Mina Abbaslou (Ambassador)

Nisa Chaudhry (Ambassador)

Roya Talaei (Ambassador)

Rudolph Persaud (Ambassador)

Sarah O'Neill (Student)

Suzan Challis (Ambassador)

Trinity Claveria (Student)



WHO WE ARE

Working together with other John Howard Society local offices in Ontario and our community partners, we deliver more than 80 evidence-based programs focused on prevention, intervention, and re-integration.

Our services cover a wide range of programs aimed at youth and adults who are facing challenges and difficulties. Our youth-oriented programs aim to assist them in developing life skills to help them realize their full potential.

We also help families navigate issues of criminal justice and provide support for those leaving incarceration so they can become a valued member of their communities and contribute to their community in a meaningful way.

Our experienced staff remain current with community needs and societal trends and can quickly respond to client needs and effect sustainable and meaningful change in our clients' lives.



It is a living system of accountability, correction and growth that must work for the communities and individuals it touches. We believe that when our responses to crime are truly effective, they cost society less and provide us with more. When they are just, they create safer communities. And when they are humane, they reflect the potential everyone has for a better future.

Our priorities are focused on

- 🌟 Creating a framework to guide program design, development, and delivery in each service area.
- 🌟 Respectfully support and champion the human rights of our clients, and deliver on our commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion.
- 🌟 Treat each person with dignity and respect in a non-judgmental manner.
- 🌟 Support our clients to change and grow, to make informed decisions, and to have the agency act on their own behalf.

Whether with policy or programming, advocacy, or service delivery, we strive for supporting and promoting human justice in Ontario.



VISION

- 🌟 Providing our community with the opportunity to thrive through continued improvement, second chances, and fostering connections.
- 🌟 Promoting systemic change through the creation of safe spaces that are responsive, innovative, and inclusive.

MISSION

1. Commitment to Reducing Harm

We strive to reduce harm by building a community of awareness around stigma and nonjudgmental approaches to care.

2. Fostering Community Connections

We believe that the strength of our community lies in strong connections with one another; we seek to elevate agencies committed to inclusion and empowerment and expand program development through enhanced relationships.

3. Person-Centered Care

We are committed to acknowledging the value of every individual and implementing opportunities that contribute to their success.

4. Commitment to Change

We empower our community through the elevation of skills and knowledge. We are dedicated to investing in their stories and being responsive to their needs.

VALUE STATEMENT

1. Commitment to Integrity

We commit to serving our community in a way that is fair and unbiased, promoting dignity and respect with the highest quality of service through evidence-based approaches.

2. Belief in the People We Serve

We recognize and celebrate the intrinsic worth in everyone and are dedicated to a culture of mutual respect and belonging.

3. Accountability and Compassion

We lead with compassion and care for one another, striving to foster accountability through recognizing strengths and promoting positive change.

4. Continuous Learning

We grow through our successes and learn from our evaluations; we are dedicated to listening to our community and responding through informed approaches.



OUR PROGRAMS

ACCESS TO HOME – A2H



Funded through Regional Municipality of York, Access to Home is tailored specifically for adults struggling with housing stability either due to sudden life changes, criminal justice involvement and/or immigration related financial hardship. The program provides support with intensive case management to establish budgeting, discussing goals, addressing barriers with resources and where needed, advocacy through landlord/tenant mediation, community partner collaboration and other supports.

The program is also designed to provide comprehensive case management to individuals who were chronically unhoused and have obtained housing through other programming internally and support them as they strive for housing stability.



During the 2025 calendar year, we supported **105** unique clients through this program, helping them stabilize their financial situation. **51** of these clients retained or obtained housing security during their case management with the team.

BACK TO HOME – B2H



Back 2 Home (B2H) is part of a network of community wraparound resources that aims to provide a collaborative approach to assist those precariously or chronically unhoused.

Through individual and intensive case management for those 16 years of age or older, B2H uses databases such as HIFIS to coordinate services with partner agencies, so clients have one point of access to multiple services. B2H strives to reduce gaps in service delivery which will promote healthier communities and visibility to vulnerable populations.

This joint Adult/Youth Reaching Home program assists clients in multiple ways including the following:

- Temporary shelter solutions
- Housing stabilization assistance
- Financial goal planning
- Agency / organization advocacy and coordination
- Warm transition upon successful completion of program

During the reporting period, we helped:

-  **245** unique clients supported through this program
-  **46** individuals/families with their first/last month's rent
-  **28** program participants reported remaining housed after a 6-month period

"I just wanted to send this email to express how grateful we have been throughout the experience of being homeless and with the support of the John Howard Society [of York Region] successfully finding housing for us. We went in and did the intake. We were told there is about a month waiting list, however within the same week we got a call back... and in about three weeks we were notified of an opportunity at a place. B2H staff made this process convenient and very easy. We wouldn't be where we are without their help and we are truly grateful. I would highly recommend people accessing John Howard Society [of York Region] as they have resources and the proper support to be successful with finding housing. We are truly thankful for everyone who was involved [in] helping us."

This program is partially funded by the United Way of Greater Toronto and Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy.

DIRECT ACCOUNTABILITY PROGRAM - DAP



With the funding support of the Ministry of Attorney General, the Direct Accountability Program is made up of two alternatives to formal charges and/or prosecution for adults over the age of 18 who have been held over for specific minor criminal offences. The program provides resources and alternative ways of handling stressful situations in an effort to reduce crime, at two stages of a person's criminal justice involvement.

- **PRE-CHARGE DIVERSION** clients are referred directly by the York Regional Police (YRP) in response to a call out. Clients are offered the opportunity to participate voluntarily in the program as an alternative to formal charges for specific minor criminal offences. Those opting into the program are provided with community hours, or community-based sanctions intended to hold themselves accountable and make amends for their actions. They are also provided with community resources and counselling support as a means of intervention and a positive response to reducing crime.

🌟 During the reporting period, we helped **696** new pre-charge clients.

- **POST-CHARGE DIVERSION** is an alternative to formal prosecution for individuals who have been charged with specific minor criminal offences. This court-referred program is available as a post-charge alternative for accused individuals to be held accountable through community-based sanctions and/or financial restitution to victims.

🌟 **729** new post-charge clients were helped during the reporting period

Sanctions for the Direct Accountability Program include community volunteer hours, monetary restitution to victims, prevention and education workshops and worksheets, letter of accountability and in-kind donation to an approved list of charities/not-for-profit organizations. We also utilize

Counselling Support Intervention (CSI) aiming to provide clients with space to unpack causes for their action and examine their accountability.

ENDING THE CYCLE – ETC



Ending the Cycle is a free, 10-week early intervention program for female identifying, non-binary and 2SLGBTQS+ youth aged 15–24 who have experienced or been exposed to gender-based violence such as unhealthy or harmful dynamics in their homes or relationships, emotional or physical abuse, neglect, aggression, and high-risk behaviours.

ETC helps young people better understand themselves and their relationships and what it means to feel safe. Through structured weekly sessions, participants explore their beliefs and values, learn to recognize personal obstacles, and build skills to set and maintain healthy boundaries. The program also addresses attitudes related to gender-based violence, with a focus on prevention and positive change.

Sessions are interactive and engaging, combining group discussions, activities, and guided reflection led by trained facilitators. ETC offers a safe, inclusive,

“With the Ending the Cycle program, I found that they actually wanted me there and they wanted to see me, and it allowed me to embrace what I was feeling and feel a sense of trust in what I was saying and that they actually cared. That was the biggest thing for me ... that I was working with people who wanted me to get better.”

“I think being able to recognize the signs and the patterns, knowing what it looks like. I feel like one of the big ‘wow factors’ for me in the program was that even some of the small things that we tend to overlook are signs of the cycle, even if it’s the beginning.”

and supportive space where youth can strengthen emotional resilience, and build healthier relationships/ friendships.

Participants can also access individual counselling sessions, offered both in person and virtually. These sessions provide a non-judgmental, trauma-informed space where youth are encouraged to explore their experiences, engage in self-reflection, and feel heard, validated, and empowered.

The ETC program was featured at the John Howard Society's bi-annual conference in June 2025, highlighting the program's impact and successes.

During the reporting period

- 🌈 **138** individuals were engaged in the program.
- 🌈 **6**, ten-week group sessions were offered across York Region schools and assisting a total of **73** youth in understanding gender-based violence
- 🌈 **42** individuals outside of the school board were supported with 1:1 counselling support

This project is funded by Women and Gender Equality Canada.

MENTAL HEALTH & ADDICTIONS PEER SUPPORT – MHAPS/MAPS



Funded by the Ministry of Solicitor General, Mental Health and Addictions Peer Support utilizes expertise of Peer Support Workers who are individuals with lived experience. These professional peers work with clients on an individual basis exploring recovery goals and connecting them with community supports and services. Peer Support Workers use innovative and sector-relevant strategies to support clients in developing and maintaining daily harm



reduction plans. They are also able to support clients who are attending probation, court, and various appointments in community. MHAPS/MAPS also supports clients in ongoing programming at the agency, when their substance use or mental health is prohibiting them from active engagement with their program. Peer worker will step in to provide support and meet clients' where they are at in community or accessible locations to ensure they are heard and receive ongoing support.

MHAPS works with Probation Officers to advocate for clients' progress, their basic needs and recommended assistance such as connections to mental health services, addiction services, housing support, cultural resources, as well as the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Programs.

We have been able to support our most vulnerable clients with food gift cards and access to other basic needs such as clothing, toiletries and harm reduction supplies. In 2025-2026 we supported **51** new clients

MINDSET



This anger management program for those 18 years of age and older utilizes Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) techniques to help increase clients' capacity to better understand and manage their anger and emotional responses in a more constructive and positive manner. This fee-for-service program aims to develop self-regulation and self-management skills in clients so they can reduce the intensity, frequency and duration of their emotions such as anger and subsequently, help support the end of any patterns of aggression.

During the reporting period we were able to assist **47** adults with their emotional regulation issues.

NEW PATH (formerly known as FAIR Chances)



New Path formerly known as the Family and Adult Intervention and Reunification (FAIR Chances) initiative is funded by the Regional Municipality of York and provides an evidence-based,

trauma-informed program that brings justice-involved and/or individuals at risk of involvement with criminal justice and their families together to promote healing and reunification while reducing stigma.

After a loved one's justice involvement, through group and individual counselling, mentoring, peer support and system navigation, families receive comprehensive wraparound support to increase positive outcomes and prevent future family involvement with the criminal justice system.

To further increase our community's capacity to promote community safety and wellbeing, the program provides newcomers with information/ education and support pertaining to Canadian law promoting awareness on how to remain out of the justice system. Using a lens of prevention, topics such as employment, housing rights, bylaw information, social awareness and parenting are explored and discussed. Newcomers are also provided with information related to system navigation to find relevant support if ever needed.



During the reporting period we

- 🧩 offered **57** FAIR Chances and **24** New Path individual case management
- 🧩 reached out to **145** workshop clients

PARTNER ASSAULT RESPONSE PROGRAM – PAR



Funded by the Ministry of Attorney General, the Partner Assault Response Program is a 12-session domestic violence court initiative that delivers a specialized community-based group intervention program. It gives clients the opportunity to examine their beliefs and attitudes towards intimate partner violence and helps them learn non-abusive ways of resolving conflict.

Each Ministry approved session explores topics relevant to helping participants understand their behaviours and take responsibility for their involvement in incidents that led them to the program. Topics discussed include topics such as understanding the effects of abusive behaviours on family and children, recognizing shame, discovering triggers and anger style, healthy communication and more.

While clients are participating in the program, the survivor of the incident is supported through our Partner Contact part of the program. This voluntary, yet important element ensures survivors are provided with resources, empathy, compassion and guidance by our case workers. They are given updates of the PAR participant's progress and if desired, the survivors can also utilize the materials provided in the PAR sessions to explore their own awareness.



In 2025-2026,

- 🌟 we ran **11** PAR groups, 6 days a week with both female and male participants.
- 🌟 we also completed **680** Intakes and helped **663** clients start their program.
- 🌟 our Partner Contact team connected with **620** survivors, provided **144** safety plans and provided **187** comprehensive community resources and supports.

PEER MISSION PROGRAM 16+

This initiative is funded by a contribution from Health Canada's Substance Use and Addictions Program (SUAP) for individuals 16 years and older and is a shared initiative with John Howard Society of Simcoe Muskoka (JHSSM).

Peer Mission is a harm reduction focused, peer-led outreach program providing individual support and workshops designed for those experiencing involvement with substances. With a commitment to elevating the voices and roles of People with Lived and Living Experience (PWLLE), this initiative prioritizes marginalized and barriered individuals, including racialized communities, individuals transitioning from correctional institutions, individuals experiencing housing instability, those in justice-diversion programs, and those at risk of justice system involvement.



Peer Mission actively participates in important community action tables, Region-led policy committees and community partner outreach support. Through York Region Health, the program is a satellite site for safe-use supplies and naloxone training and kits for drop-in clients. The Program actively trains community partners' staff such as libraries or hubs where clients are likely to frequent, to ensure service providers understand de-stigmatizing language, recognizing signs of substance use as well as de-escalation tips.

In 2025-2026, we

- 🌟 held **5** outreach community partnerships
- 🌟 provided **78** Outreach support
- 🌟 held **5** workshops, and
- 🌟 assisted **42** individual clients

REALYouth formerly known as HYPE (Healthy Youth Preventative Education)



The REAL Youth program is an evidence-based initiative designed to prevent violence and promote positive, healthy relationships among youth aged 11 to 25. Through small group sessions and 1:1 support, the program

addresses a wide range of risk behaviors and addiction-related challenges, equipping participants with the skills needed to foster healthier relationships and build social and emotional resilience.

Program benefits include:

- 🌟 encouraging healthy relationship dynamics
- 🌟 addressing risk behaviors and promoting positive decision-making
- 🌟 supporting social and emotional development
- 🌟 providing a safe and supportive environment for open discussion

In 2025-2026, we

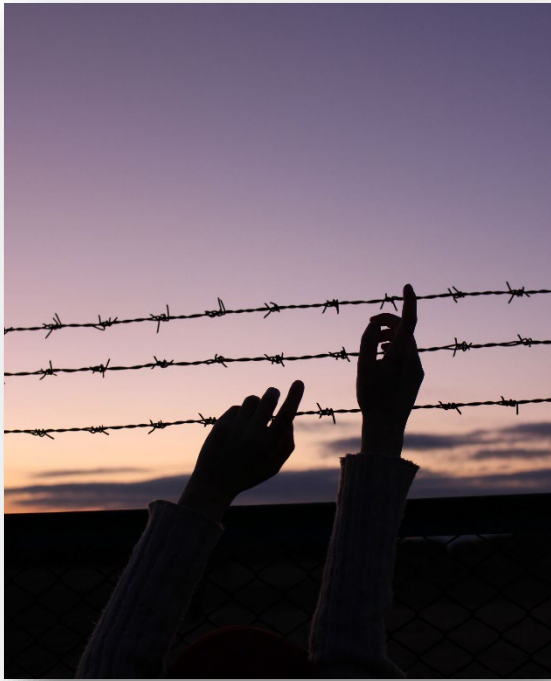
- 🌟 offered **23** clients with 1:1 Client support
- 🌟 held **4** REAL Youth Justice Groups and **10** YRDSB Groups

"I learned everything about healthy relationships. Although it can be hard at times, it's important to maintain boundaries throughout every relationship you have."

REINTEGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ADULTS



With support and funding from the United Way of Greater Toronto and Newmarket Charitable Gaming Association, our Reintegration Program provides no-cost support to adults involved with, or those at risk of involvement with the criminal justice system. The program works with clients on an individual basis to reintegrate them back into their home communities in York Region. Support is provided through case management counselling, immediate temporary housing options such



as emergency hotel/shelter, continued support to secure stable housing, and help with immediate basic needs and housing start-up support.

In 2025-2026, we were able to support **86** new clients. We also extended our assistance to **56** individuals from the previous reporting period who continued to need support and assistance through this program. Additionally, we provided over **45** drop-in court support to newly released individuals seeking guidance with shelter, property retrieval and navigation support.

We continue to work with mental health diversion court through CMHA to provide informal counselling to our clients.

SERVICE NAVIGATOR PROGRAM



The Service Navigator Program supports youth aged 6-26 who are at risk of criminal involvement, victimization, or gang affiliation and their families. Service Navigators are case management experts who provide personalized support to help clients and their families overcome barriers to accessing crucial services.

"My life changed the day the Service Navigator program got involved with me."

Support through this program includes but is not limited to:

- 🧩 assisting clients in navigating social service supports, secondary school or trades applications, OSAP advocacy, government applications and ODSP/OW related concerns or inquiries

- 🧩 providing emotional support to individuals and families through trauma-informed care and referrals to mental health resources
- 🧩 breaking down complex processes to access basic needs, health-related supports, appealing denied applications, advocacy, and mediation support
- 🧩 case conferencing with other service providers/organizations to ensure continuity of care, and client-focused care
- 🧩 basic needs support through referrals and gift cards when funding allows
- 🧩 warm transfers to specialized supports when short-term support concludes

This program operates with the support of 12 passionate and community driven Ambassadors who enhance community engagement and outreach across the following regions in York: Newmarket, Richmond Hill, Markham, and Georgina.

"I am not sure where I would be without your agency's help and guidance—you were the light in a dark time for me."

During the reporting period, the Service Navigator Program supported **302** youth and families, made **286** community referrals engaged with **702** people within the community and through services.

YOUTH REINTEGRATION PROGRAM



The Youth Reintegration Program is another no cost, wrap-around case management program which is funded by the Department of Justice (Youth Justice Fund).

The program supports those between the ages of 12 and 17 who are involved in the justice system and are currently incarcerated and/or are being released. It aims to enhance and extend support to those affected by connecting them with other support programs to increase their chances of reintegrating into the community.

Through this program we provide one-on-one specialized counselling, advocacy and collaboration, individual goal planning and referrals to a variety of community resources. We can help the youth with acquiring stable housing and employment, social and emotional learning as well as access to basic needs including food and rental assistance.

"I felt very good about the program. I got some of my goals achieved and it really helped and I'm thankful for it."

During the reporting period, **37** York Region youth entered the program and were supported with counselling and case management. **50** youth successfully completed the program during this period and our team supported **15** youth currently incarcerated at the Roy McMurtry Detention Centre.

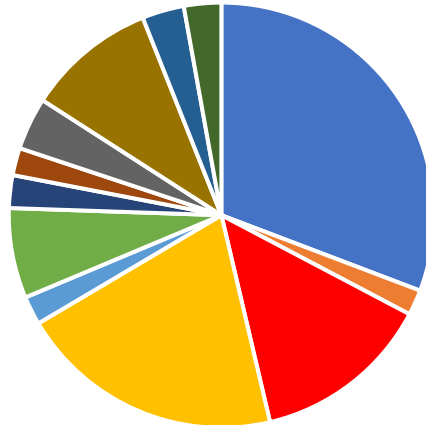


FINANCIAL REPORT

Revenue for the year end March 31, 2026

Revenue has increased by 3.3% compared to the previous fiscal year as a result of new funding and increased funding from existing funders.

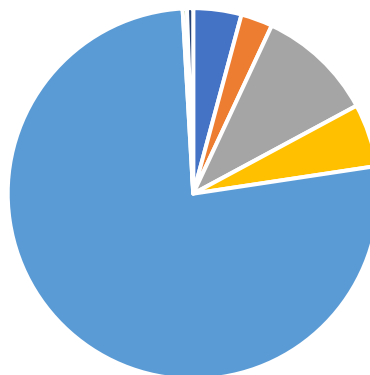
The agency achieved a deficit of \$7,355 for the 2025-2026 fiscal year.



- Ministry of the Attorney General \$964,158 | 30.8%
- Ontario Trillium Foundation \$60,618 | 1.9%
- United Way Greater Toronto \$426,372 | 13.6%
- The Regional Municipality of York \$632,140 | 20.2%
- Ontario Lottery Gaming Corporation \$68,200 | 2.2%
- The Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada \$214,910 | 6.9%

Expenses for the year ended March 31, 2026

Overall expenses have increased by 8.9%. This is primarily due to the expenses related to the new funding received and increased funding from existing funders.



- Office and general \$131,640 | 4.2%
- Amortization of Tangible Capital Assets \$86,809 | 2.8%
- Program expenses \$319,679 | 10.2%
- Purchased services \$172,041 | 5.5%

OUR FUNDERS



Women and Gender
Equality Canada

Femmes et Égalité
des genres Canada



Health
Canada

Santé
Canada



Department of Justice
Canada

Ministère de la Justice
Canada



Ontario
Trillium Foundation



Fondation Trillium
de l'Ontario

An agency of the Government of Ontario
Un organisme du gouvernement de l'Ontario



Ministry of the
Attorney General



Ministry of the
Solicitor General



United Way
Greater Toronto



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