



TITLE SUB-TITLE SETTLEMENT NARRATIVE REPORT

Organization Name: YMCA of Greater Toronto
Contribution Agreement Number: S218716015
Project Title: National GAR Case Management –
Client Support Services
Reporting Period: October 2024 – March 2025



Progress on Planned Activities

For each activity indicated in Schedule 1, please identify whether targets are being met based on planned outputs for the reporting period.

General Guidelines:

- If there are multiple activities under a single program component, please complete separate responses for each activity, to match the contribution agreement (CA).
- All information included in this report should be specific to the reporting period referenced.
- It is not necessary to provide numerical responses. This is an opportunity to provide context to data that is already being collected in iCARE.
- There are suggestions and recommendations for the type of information to be provided in each section, but it is normal that details will vary based on activity, program or circumstances. Please review any questions with your program officer.
- This report is meant to capture progress on activities and provide organizational updates to inform regular communication with your program officer. Please ensure that your program officer is notified of time-sensitive issues as they occur.
- The narrative report is for the program officer's reference. It is advised that focus be placed on deliverables that are directly tied to the CA, and solutions that can be addressed with the program officer as part of the CA. Broader issues relevant to the entire fiscal year should be identified on the Annual Project Performance Report (APPR), which is reviewed by both the program officer and the Settlement and Integration Policy (SIP) branch of the Department.

Please note that you should still identify broader issues to your program officer as part of regular communication, but it is not necessary to do so formally on the narrative report.

- This report should not reiterate activities that are already outlined and understood to take place as part of the CA. Responses can be short and simple if activities are running as expected and targets are being met.

INDIRECT ACTIVITIES

Activity # 1: Service Standards and Guidelines

The National Coordination Team at YMCA of Greater Toronto is mandated to ensure the standardization of the CSS program across all 25 Sites including developing and updating service standard, policies and guidelines in consultation with national partners.

Service standards, policies and guidelines:

Standard tools development is facilitated by The National Coordination Team and is essential in supporting CSS staff in better serving GAR clients. It is also a key factor in ensuring CSS standards across the country.

These tools are developed collaboratively across the National Program Network through staff consultations and review processes. During the reporting period, the following guidelines were created/updated:

a. Improvements to Learning Management System: Moodle

The CSS learning management system, Moodle has recently undergone some improvements whereby the content has been updated and folders have been better organized to make the information more accessible and user-friendly.

b. CSS Contact List

The CSS Contact List provides an extensive overview of all CSS partner Sites by province and includes staff names, titles, contact information and site locations. This document can be accessed on CSS LMS Moodle.

The CSS Contact List has been updated to include:

- New Site locations and contact information.
- New staff contact information at pre-existing CSS partner Sites.

c. List of CSS Program Delivery Sites

This document was created to provide a comprehensive overview of all 25 CSS partner Site locations across Canada organized by their respective provinces and can be accessed on CSS LMS Moodle.

Administrative and coordination support to existing Program Sites:

The activities delivered by The National Coordination Team at the YMCA of Greater Toronto aim to support CSS Sites in the delivery of direct services to GARs.

During this reporting period (October 2024 - March 2025), The National Coordination Team continued to focus on providing program delivery, support, and training to CSS Sites across the country. The Team delivered virtual trainings to many CSS staff across the country.

Provided administrative and coordination support to existing program sites

During the reporting period, The National Coordination Team continued to provide administrative and coordination support to existing program Sites.

The National Coordination Team hosted one Steering Committee Meeting during the reporting period on March 19th 2025. The purpose of this meeting was to discuss the new changes to iCare that will be taking place over the upcoming fiscal year:

- Changes to the Forms and Updates
- Touchpoint Modifications
- Preparing for the transition from the old iCARE to the new one

Mentorship Initiative

The Client Support Services (CSS) Mentorship Initiative was piloted in 2019-2020 with a goal to bring all CSS Sites closer to a similar level of implementation of the CSS model. With the program expanding from provincial to a national program in 2017, this initiative allowed long time CSS partner sites to mentor new sites in effectively implementing aspects of the CSS model and provide best practice advice based on experience with the approach. The pilot was deemed successful based on the satisfaction of all involved, with Sites especially appreciating greater opportunities for connection and information sharing. Based on this outcome and success, the mentorship initiative was continued in the 2024-2025 fiscal year, with new sites joining the CSS network assigned a mentor.

The CSS National Coordination Team is responsible for providing support to sites in connecting for virtual visits, goal setting and check in meetings and covering potential related expenses to the mentorship initiative (based on funds availability). Additionally, they are responsible for reporting on the initiative and providing additional support to Mentors and Mentees as required.

The COVID-19 context has impacted the ability to model the initiative to include in- person shadowing opportunities for all mentorship pairings. The program has been successful in a variety of ways including fostering cross-agency learning, supporting new CSS sites in the implementation process, and building a more cohesive, involved national network of GAR serving professionals.

Given the success of previous year's mentorship initiatives, the objectives of the program were kept the same:

- Identify gaps of current practices and implementation of the CSS model at new sites (and find ways to bridge the gaps).
- Share lessons learned, innovative ideas and best practices based on previous and current CSS initiatives and experiences.
- Strengthen relationships with CSS sites and build on partnerships.

Mentors are responsible for working with mentees to provide support in the process of implementing the CSS model in their organization. Mentors and CSS National Coordination Team are responsible for supporting mentee sites in identifying clear goals in terms of implementing the CSS model and in establishing smaller benchmarks of success in meeting these goals.

Mentees on the other hand are responsible for working collaboratively to help the mentor site understand organizational realities and how they impact the implementation process along with perspective on areas of program implementation that would benefit from mentorship support. Both mentors and mentees rely on the CSS National Coordination team to facilitate the goal setting and check-in meetings, virtual shadowing and covering potential related expenses if shadowing takes place in-person.

The CSS National Coordination Team is responsible for reporting on the initiative and providing additional support to the Mentors and Mentees as needed.

Prior to this pandemic, the Mentorship Initiative was divided into two phases. Phase I included mentees visiting mentor sites and working collaboratively to develop goals for the fiscal year through virtual meetings facilitated by The CSS National Coordination Team. Mentees shared barriers that they are experiencing in effective implementation of CSS, while mentors shared best practices and offered support to help Mentees overcome those challenges. During Phase II, mentors visited mentees focusing on ensuring the implementation of learned best practices and fostering a two-way learning process. Due to budgetary constraints, Phase II had been put on hold for the interim but will resume this coming fiscal year.

a. YMCA of Northern Alberta (YMCA NAB, the mentee) x Catholic Social Services, Red Deer (CSS, the mentor) Alberta.

On October 17, 2024, the CSS National Coordination Team hosted an introductory meeting between the YMCA of Northern Alberta and CSS Red Deer. The meeting started with a recap of the mentorship program, highlighting its objectives, expected outcomes, and the roles and responsibilities of all participants. This was followed by an overview of the organizational structures of both the mentor and mentee sites.

During this discussion, the mentor shared insights into the initial implementation challenges they faced upon joining the CSS network, along with the strategies that helped overcome them. The meeting concluded with a discussion on the implementation challenges faced by the YMCA NAB in rolling out CSS.

The mentee shared two ETO-related concerns:

- Issues with I&O reports
- Case note verification

The National Team addressed these concerns, proposed solutions, and collaborated with the database vendor to implement solutions. CSS Red Deer reflected on their own implementation journey and highlighted the benefits of shadowing a caseworker conducting a needs assessment. They offered to support YMCA NAB in hosting a similar experience. The mentee site agreed and expressed interest in shadowing a needs assessment session with the mentor site. Due to ongoing scheduling constraints and other priorities identified by the mentee, The National Coordination team plans to schedule a shadowing session with the mentor site in the upcoming fiscal year 2025-2026.

b. Le Conseil Économique et Social d'Ottawa Carleton (CÉSOC the mentee) x Catholic Centre for Immigrants (CCI the mentor) Ottawa

The CSS National Coordination Team has previously facilitated two shadowing sessions for the mentee site, covering iCARE bulk uploads, client exits, and a live needs assessment. CÉSOC staff found the session on questioning and interviewing techniques highly valuable, which attracted the interest of other staff members to participate in a similar training. Consequently, another opportunity to shadow a live needs assessment and ETO data entry with CCI is being planned in the first quarter of the new fiscal year 2025-2026.

Activity # 2: National Steering Committee and/ Community of Practice

The Steering Committee is comprised of CSS program managers from 25 CSS partner agencies and is facilitated by the National Coordination Team (YMCA). Frequent meetings are held with this group to identify program action; strategy plans and program responses to GAR client needs. Its purpose is to engage CSS leadership staff in the ongoing enhancement of the CSS program model, tools and resources and to inform the direction and priority for the national program. This group also leverages expertise from across the country to address challenges in staff supervision and program management.

The National Coordination Team hosted one Steering Committee Meeting in this reporting period to facilitate engagement and knowledge sharing with 37 representatives from CSS Sites in attendance.

1. March 19th, 2025 (Virtual)

Agenda:

- Changes and updates to iCARE Long Forms
- Impacted ETO Touchpoints

- Case Management Activity
 - Information & Orientation
 - Needs and Assets Assessments & Referrals
 - Employment Services
 - Community Connections
- Plan to implement these changes to ETO

The CSS National Coordination Team discussed the upcoming changes required in ETO to align with the new iCARE Long Forms. They shared that two options are being considered for moving forward:

1. Modify the existing touchpoints in April during which they would be temporarily unavailable
2. Create entirely new touchpoints (with the changes) and make them available when ready

The CSS National Coordination Team will consult with the YMCA IT team to determine which option would be best for Sites in terms of speed and minimal disruption. CSS Sites will be informed through the SC members about next steps and their impact on Sites.

The National Coordination Site also facilitates a Community of Practice (CoP) whereby the goal of this initiative is to serve as a supportive space for frontline workers and leadership staff to come together to discuss shared challenges, exchange information and best practices and collaboratively explore possible solutions. Members of the CoP are nominated from each Site and can expect to engage with other SPO staff in the network every quarter to share knowledge and learn from diverse experiences while building a deeper understanding of collaborative work and leveraging each member's strengths and expertise.

The National Coordination Site hosted it's 1st CoP meeting this reporting period followed by a subsequent 2nd meeting.

1. November 6th, 2024 (virtual)

Agenda:

- Process of Registering Family Members with UNHCR
- OYW process for relatives trapped in conflict areas
- Affordable Housing – Client Transition from RAP to Provincial Support
 - Supplemental avenues for seeking additional financial assistance
- CCB Delays and the Negative Impacts

- Advocacy for clients with CRA
- Managing client expectations
- Delays in School Registration for Clients in Edmonton
 - Advocacy for clients with the School Board
 - Awareness of CoPR and Single-Entry documents with the School Board

This introductory CoP meeting was attended by 27 participants from across the network and was very well received in terms of the productive and solution-oriented discussions that took place. Attendees praised the interaction among members and appreciated the knowledge sharing, best practices and practical tips that were exchanged between Sites.

The feedback survey results from the inaugural CoP meeting were overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of participants reporting that the facilitated discussions were highly productive and that the meeting format was exceptionally effective.

2. January 15th, 2025 (virtual)

Agenda:

- Delayed/Missing T5 Forms
- Absence of Pre-departure Medical Records for High/Complex Needs Clients
- Implications of PR Card delays
 - Lack of Valid Identification
- Budgeting Workshop for GAR Clients – Facilitated by Calgary Catholic Immigration Society

The second CoP meeting had 20 participants in attendance. A large part of the discussion was centered around IRCC's new updated means of sending T5 tax slips electronically to clients. Sites discussed how they have been navigating this new process and the challenges it poses for GAR clients. Sites shared best practices and discussed the ways in which they are supporting clients in adapting to these new changes through the assistance of tax clinics, local CRA offices and private accountants.

The 2nd CoP meeting wrapped up with a workshop hosted by CSS partner Site Calgary Catholic Immigration Society on budgeting and skills in financial management for GAR clients. The workshop discussed key aspects of budgeting, including financial literacy, strategies for empowering families through active engagement in financial decision-making, and practical tips for managing household finances. Sites found this information session incredibly helpful as it was aimed to provide clients with practical tools to enhance their money management skills.

Activity # 3: ETO Database Management and Reporting

During the reporting period, 7 new staff training sessions were delivered to 71 staff. Aside from delivering trainings, The National Coordination Team was also involved in conducting the following ETO-related activities:

- Multiple new languages were added to the dropdown option for both the demographics form and the touchpoints.
- A customized report on the clients' location was provided to the Ottawa site.
- A customized report on Education statistics was provided to the Wesley site.
- A customized report on open and closed cases was provided to the Ottawa site.
- Algeria was added to the "Country of Birth" dropdown list on the intake form for the Ottawa site
- iCARE reports focusing on case management activities, need assessments, information & orientations for the month of January was provided to the Fort McMurray site.
- The postal code option was made mandatory on the Information & Orientation and Case Management Activity touchpoints.
- A customized report on clients over the age of 55 was provided to the Hamilton site.
- Data reports on the total number of clients served, total number of referrals, total number of assessments and case management activities for the 2024 fiscal year were provided to the Toronto site.
- The interpretation field on the Case Management Activity touchpoint was made mandatory.
- Mauritania was added to the "Country of last residence" dropdown list for the intake form.
- A new Case Notes report was created, compiling data from the case management activity and case notes touchpoint, focusing on contact type, language used, translation needs, and activity type. A unique feature of this report is that it can extract data for a specific date range.
- Presented the feature of "Alerts" on ETO to the Calgary site.
- Data quality reports were shared quarterly with all Sites throughout the reporting period

Activity # 4: Professional Development

Annual Training and Professional Development Plan:

The purpose of the Client Support Services Training and Professional Development Working Group is to create a space for The National Coordination Team (YMCA), as well as CSS program delivery staff to collaborate in the identification, research, planning, and execution of the professional development trainings that the CSS network staff will receive over the course of fiscal year.

The Working Group will collaborate to source needs-driven, outcomes-focused training and professional development to the CSS network, to ensure staff are consistently able to learn and/or strengthen existing professional skills that contribute to high quality, consistent, and standardized services for GAR clients across Canada.

This year's PD Action Plan was as follows:

- To receive feedback from CSS staff on the trainings most relevant to their day-to-day work
- To ensure that, at minimum, three (3) trainings are provided for all staff: one (1) of them at each local site, two (2) to three (3) for Annual Meeting and webinars as needed.

Training and Professional Development Activities

Some of the topics that were identified by the PD Working Group during the initial May 23rd, 2024 meeting included the following:

- Burnout
- Domestic Violence
- Cultural Awareness while serving immigrant populations
- Serving clients with substance abuse/addiction issues
- Introduction to GBA +

Based on these suggestions, The CSS National Coordination Team worked diligently to source trainers on the requested topics.

To promote collaboration, all potential trainers provide a workshop proposal that is then shared and reviewed by PD WG members and The National Coordination Team. PD WG members provide written feedback, suggestions, and share relevant examples/case studies for the trainer to incorporate and address during their respective trainings.

During the reporting period, the following 3 trainings were hosted during the CSS Annual Conference in November 2024:

1) Motivational Interviewing Part I: Supporting Engagement and Guiding Change by Christine Urquhart

2) Motivational Interviewing Part II: Supporting Engagement and Guiding Change by Christine Urquhart

The overall aim of these webinars was to introduce frontline service providers to a motivational interviewing approach and to begin generating ideas on how an MI approach could support their work with newcomers and evoke a curiosity to learn more.

Through this webinar series, learners were able to:

- Define Motivational Interviewing (MI) and distinguish between MI and non-MI styles
- Explore the role of ambivalence and the influence of communication style on motivation
- Highlight beginning skills to support engagement
- Expand on skills and strategies used in each task of an MI conversation
- Consider how the learning can be adapted and integrated into practice
- Highlight resources for further learning

The CSS National Coordination Site also provided a list of specific questions in advance to the trainer from the Needs Assessment Matrix Survey to include as part of the discussion for these sessions.

3) Stigma Ends With Me –The Foundations (Substance Use) by Ashleigh Hyland

This evidence- based training uncovered biases and shift perspectives towards people who use substances. This training provided a blend of evidence-based information and lived/living experiences, in order for participants to understand the impacts of stigma related to substance use. The three main areas covered were, stigma, language (how to talk about substance use in a non-stigmatizing way) and a new, health-focused approach to substance use, known as Substance Use Health. The session included videos, discussion and interaction.

Learning outcomes for participants included the following:

- Develop Enhanced Awareness of personal biases
- Gain a Comprehensive Understanding of Stigma
- Acquire Practical Strategies to actively eliminate Stigma both in professional life and daily life
- Learn New Language regarding substance use health
- Build Compassion by ultimately making a positive impact on the health outcomes of individuals who use substances and the wider population

In addition to these trainings, the CSS National Coordination Team also offered the following workshop on December 3rd 2024:

Cultural Humility for Fostering an Inclusive Workplace and Services by Sinela Jurkova

This interactive session explored how culture, intersectionality, individual characteristics, and contextual factors can influence our interactions in a culturally diverse workplace. Workshop Goals for Participants included:

- Understanding humility, culture and diversity beyond ethnicity and religion (intersectional holistic approach that considers the role of our different identities, such as age, profession, education, gender, sexual orientation, etc.)
- Exploring and reflecting on cultural values, beliefs, stereotypes and biases, and how they impact our daily life and work, the way we navigate through.
- Reflecting and self-reflecting on our transformative journey toward cultural humility and fostering a safe space with trust, respect and sense of belonging.

This workshop was attended by 60 participants and the feedback from attendees was very positive towards both the content of the workshop and the trainer being outstanding. Participants rated the trainer’s knowledge on the topic as 4.8/5 with many commenting on the valuable takeaways beneficial to their work from this session.

One participant highlighted that:

“Learning about cultural humility and about speaking up or taking action whilst observing something, were very valuable.”

PD Working Group Evaluation Results:

At the end of the fiscal year, members of the 2024 – 2025 PD Working Group completed an evaluation survey to share their overall experience. The results of the feedback from the survey were as follows:

- 100% of respondents indicated their experience with the PD Working Group met their expectations
- 100% of respondents indicated their contributions were actively taken into consideration by The National Coordination Team.
- 100% of respondents indicated the working group promotes a collaborative environment for members to share feedback.
- 80% of respondents indicated the feedback they provided was incorporated in the content of trainings

CSS Annual Conference

The CSS National Coordination Team held its two-day Annual Conference from November 14th – 15th 2024. This conference was hosted virtually over Zoom. CSS network members from across Canada were able to digitally connect with their peers to share best practices, attend training and professional development workshops and learn more about the work being done within the CSS network from coast to coast.

Day 1: November 14th, 2024

The CSS Annual Conference commenced with opening and welcome remarks from the Program Manager of the CSS National Coordination Team. Following this, one of the CSS Program Analysts at the YMCA GTA provided a Land Acknowledgement and introduced the first official session of the conference which was an Information session titled:

Challenges and Best Practices in Serving Rohingya Newcomers

This session provided an in-depth exploration of the origins of Rohingya refugees, tracing their journey from displacement to resettlement in Canada. It addressed the unique challenges faced upon arrival, including linguistic barriers, limited education, lack of formal life skills, and the impact of trauma from persecution/displacement. In addition, the session highlighted best practices/lessons learnt and strategies for service providers to effectively serve, support and engage with this community. By considering their religious, cultural, and social backgrounds, participants gained valuable insights on how to provide culturally sensitive and appropriate services that meet the specific needs of Rohingya refugees in Canada from the perspective of 2 Case Managers at Reception House Waterloo Region, one of whom was a former Rohingya refugee.

James Swaka and Yasmin Akter hosted this session and it was attended by the highest number of participants in any given session at the conference with 145 attendees. It also received a rating of 100% by participants in terms of its relevance and importance of content and collaboration moving forward.

The second half of the day was dedicated to the first of a 2 -part training and professional development workshop on Motivational Interviewing offered to the CSS network:

Motivational Interviewing Part I: Supporting Engagement and Guiding Change by Christine Urquhart

Day 2: November 15th, 2024

The morning session on Day 2 of the Annual Conference commenced with a training and Professional Development workshop titled:

Stigma Ends With Me –The Foundations (Substance Use) facilitated by Ashleigh Hyland from CAPSA (Community Addictions Peer Support Association)

The training was designed to challenge biases and transform perspectives on individuals who use substances. Participants gained insights into the harmful impact of stigma, learn practical strategies for eliminating it in both professional and personal settings, and explore the importance of using person-first language. The training combined research with lived experiences to deepen participants' understanding of stigma, language, and the emerging health-centered approach to substance use, known as Substance Use

Health. Moreover, the trainer facilitated this compelling workshop by drawing from her own personal lived experience with substance use. This 2- hour evidence-based session was attended by 122 participants.

Participants rated the content of this training as 4.8/5 with the trainer knowledge of the subject matter ranked as 4.9/5. Survey feedback further highlighted the increased awareness and education participants attained around personal biases, language and stigma around substance use.

One participant commented:

“The session was so enriching not only for the work environment but also for our personal life. Now my perspective has changed for good. Thank you so much for this incredible opportunity to learn more about substance use.”

For the final session of the Annual Conference participants attended Part 2 of the training and professional development workshop:

Motivational Interviewing Part II: Supporting Engagement and Guiding Change by Christine Urquhart

This second workshop continued to build on the foundational skills covered in Part I of Motivational Interviewing, offering advanced strategies to enhance both the technical and relational skills for participants when facilitating conversations with newcomer clients. Participants deepened their skills in each phase of a motivational interviewing conversation, and explored ways to adapt these techniques into practice, and review additional resources for continued learning. On average, 122 participants attended Parts I and II on both days of the Motivational Interviewing workshops.

Conference Evaluation Feedback:

This year’s Annual Conference hosted a high number of participants with an average of 120 – 145 participants in attendance for each session. Based on the event feedback, the Annual Conference 2024 received an overall score of 4.3/5 with regards to the relevance and timeliness of the topics presented. Furthermore, the most requested feedback from attendees in terms of future suggestions was to have the next conference in-person for a more engaging and enriching experience.

New Staff Orientation to Intensive Case Management:

The National Coordination Team continued to deliver virtual new staff orientations to Intensive Case Management during the reporting period to CSS Staff.

Between October - March 2025, approximately **7** orientations were provided to over **50** staff members. Upon completion of the trainings, CSS staff members are provided with the Guide to Intensive Case Management and the NAM Appendixes. These documents

were created to complement the training and serve as a reference point, should any questions arise. They were also provided in French to Sites that work with francophone clients.

File Documentation Training:

In this reporting period, there were 2 File Documentation Trainings that took place. The 1st training was held on December 4th 2024 and was attended by 19 staff members. The 2nd training took place on March 6th 2025 and had 17 staff members attend.

Activity # 5: Sector Engagement and Coordination:

During this reporting period, The CSS National Coordination Team in collaboration with Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS), submitted a workshop proposal for the upcoming 7th Metropolis Identities Summit on Renewing Canada: Migration Intersections and Evolving Identities in Vancouver, October 2024. The workshop proposal was accepted, and the CSS Team presented a workshop titled “**Navigating the Housing Crisis: Advocating to Secure Accessible Housing for Vulnerable GARs**”. The aim of this workshop was to promote the CSS program, share housing challenges and best practices related to specific GAR profiles, with reference to senior and disabled clients in hopes to foster dialogue and advocacy among peers.

Top 8 Challenges: Direct Services, 25 national partners

1. High Complex Needs

CSS Sites located across the entire network have all reported a growth in their high needs’ clients base. Sites are experiencing an influx of vulnerable clients with complex needs, many of whom are struggling to develop essential life skills amid other overlapping challenges. As a result, they require more targeted support, which is critical to their successful settlement and integration into the community.

To begin with, CSS Sites Fredericton and St. John’s have both reported an increase in clients arriving in the Atlantic Provinces with complex/high needs, whether indicated in the NAT or not. Due to prolonged stays in refugee camps before coming to Canada, many of their CSS clients struggle with basic life skills and unfamiliarity with aspects of urban life upon arriving, which include household maintenance, use of appliances, navigating public transit, understanding important documents, filling out forms, paying bills, financial literacy/budgeting and making appointments. CSS St. John’s has further added the increased burden these challenges have had on their Site’s staff in terms of the high caseloads and lack of time to adequately address everyone’s needs. This has led to burn-out, compassion fatigue and vicarious trauma for many staff members. CSS Site Windsor has also shared similar concerns, observing an increase of clients who have significant

difficulty managing everyday tasks and require extensive support to handle basic life skills. Some of the Site's clients struggle with organizing their day, using transportation, managing online banking, and attending medical appointments. Clients often miss appointments or do not attend them on time, which impacts their overall well-being and care. They have limited support from the community, making it even more challenging to improve their life skills. Healthcare providers often contact the case manager when clients miss appointments, expressing frustration—particularly in cases involving larger families—due to the loss of billable services. Sometimes service providers refuse to rebook the family and other times the service provider will not book all family members at the same time in order to avoid similar situations from repeating again.

CSS Site London has highlighted a significant influx of clients presenting with multiple concerns in recent months. This trend has placed an additional burden on the Site's case managers, who are striving to secure the appropriate support for these individuals. Moreover, several families arrive with multiple members requiring high levels of care, further increasing the demand on our resources and staff. High-need clients and large families face significant challenges due to limited transportation options. The lack of reliable transportation creates barriers, often resulting in missed or canceled appointments. Recent observations also indicate a troubling increase in incidents of domestic violence and child neglect. Children's Aid Society (CAS) has become more frequently involved in these cases, highlighting the urgent need for intervention and support. Several families are struggling with adaptation challenges, which may contribute to heightened stress and conflict within their home. In addition to the alarming rise in domestic violence and neglect, CSS London has also observed a concerning trend of school refusal among children in these families. Many children are displaying reluctance or outright refusal to attend school, which could have long-term implications for their academic and social development. A recently arrived youth client was also involved in an altercation with law enforcement, which has required significant support and intervention from the assigned case manager. Due to the client's limited English proficiency and young age, navigating the legal processes and providing appropriate assistance has been particularly challenging.

CSS Sites in Calgary, Red Deer, Saskatoon, Cornwall, Hamilton & Brantford have all reported challenges associated with service provision for clients living with disabilities and or special needs. Processing times for disability-related applications for services that are essential for clients with disabilities are severely elongated. Also, clients living with a disability are oftentimes allocated the same monthly allowances financially as non-disability clients. CSS Site Red Deer has highlighted a recurring and significant challenge: the difficulty in securing appropriate wheelchairs for children. Oftentimes, families must wait for custom-made solutions, which can take considerable time and effort to secure. Addressing these situations, heavily impacts the work of case managers in the struggle to find the right solutions as clients with disabilities require extra intensive supports. CSS Saskatoon has also found it increasingly difficult to serve this demographic of clients, noting in their reporting that they do not view Saskatoon as an effective or suitable location for meeting the needs of these clients. Their claims are supported by several factors, including extended wait times for mobility aids and wheelchairs, delays of 6–12 months

for specialist appointments, and a minimum three-month wait to consult language, physical, or occupational therapists—services that are only accessible through a referral from a family doctor, which itself presents significant challenges and delays.

CSS Sites in Edmonton, Fort McMurray, Calgary, Brooks, Regina, Toronto and Hamilton & Brantford have also reported the overlapping challenges of mental health concerns along with language barriers their high needs clients have upon arriving. The lack of differential diagnoses for mental health conditions, and the difficulty obtaining medical assessments has created a gap in the timely delivery of critical supports. Moreover, the stigma surrounding mental health issues and a lack of available resources tend to discourage individuals from seeking necessary support. This has placed significant demands on staff, requiring swift, adaptive, client-centered responses requiring extensive coordination and resources. For example, within the context of Rohingya Clients, there is a serious lack of resources for them as their needs are complex and underserved. Many arrive with limited education, no English proficiency, and traumatic migration histories, requiring personalized, trauma-informed care. CSS Sites St. John's and Red Deer have echoed these same concerns in their reporting this period. Both Sites emphasize in their reporting that their Rohingya clients require continuous, attentive support and an intensive case management approach to address their complex needs. These clients face a range of health challenges, including physical disabilities, chronic illnesses such as diabetes and hypertension, as well as significant mental health concerns.

CSS Brooks has reported that clients with mental health issues tend to move out of Brooks to other cities due to the lack of resources in their community. CSS Regina also noted that the rising intake of clients with complex mental health concerns—often compounded by financial hardship, language barriers, or legal issues—has made it increasingly difficult to transition clients out of CSS services within the recommended timeframe, due to the continued need for support.

CSS Site Kitchener has reported 120 clients with complex health needs. This has made supporting them, particularly in relation to out-of-town medical appointments, both challenging and labor-intensive. Coordinating these appointments usually involves extensive follow-ups, arranging transportation, and securing interpretation services, and, in some cases, organizing temporary accommodation for clients in need of staying overnight. These logistical demands have placed a significant strain on staff time and resources.

CSS Site Edmonton has reported on having a significant number of clients requiring guardianship applications due to cognitive delays and other conditions that impact individual function. Guardianship applications are legally complex and outside of settlement, typically completed by legal professionals. Once these applications are submitted, the response time can take anywhere from 12-18 months and can require timely communication and amendments. Affected clients are unable to access basic services without a guardianship application and the costs associated with legal professionals can range anywhere from \$400.00 and upwards to review these documents.

It is clear from unanimous reporting across Sites in the network that there has been a significant increase in the number of clients arriving in crisis, indicating a need for more robust early intervention and mental health supports to prevent situations from escalating.

2. Housing Affordability and Insecurity

Another top challenge unanimously across Sites remains finding affordable, safe and secure housing options for clients given the rise in cost of living.

CSS Sites Leamington, Fort McMurray, Brooks, Fredericton, Hamilton & Brantford have all reported on how rent prices continue to be high, proving to be a challenge in trying to find rental units that meet clients' budgets. The expectation to find clients affordable housing at the one-year mark when clients don't have the means to pay high rents, weighs heavy on CSS Managers and Case Workers. The escalating cost of housing, food, and transportation places additional strain on newcomers and limiting their resources. CSS Fredericton has reported on inadequate suitable housing options, particularly for large families. Any affordable home options that become available, come with low energy efficiency and high heating costs.

CSS Site Brooks has further reported that the Brooks community is not only suffering from high rents and a lack of available homes but also the lack of well-maintained homes as well. Some landlords are taking advantage of this situation and what exacerbates this problem further is the lack of a formal governing body or regulatory authority where one can complain about these abuses in the Brooks community. CSS Site Red Deer has echoed similar challenges clients experience with local landlords and property management in their community. Many landlords and property owners in Red Deer are reluctant to rent their properties to clients who lack credit history, rental history, or stable employment, creating significant challenges for high-need families.

CSS Sites in Red Deer, Calgary, and Fredericton report that the limited availability of accessible housing in their communities remains a chronic issue, adding another layer of complexity to the challenges faced by clients with disabilities. Securing affordable housing adaptive devices to install, such as ramps, wide doorways, or elevator access has been incredibly challenging. This impacts the client's safety and hinders their ability to function independently. Most of the affordable housing options are not equipped for persons with physical disabilities, therefore CSS Staff encounter significant obstacles in finding affordable and suitable housing for these clients. As a result, stress and frustration have been observed due to prolonged clients' stay in temporary accommodation. CSS Fredericton has highlighted the added challenge of evictions when it comes to clients with disabilities. When these clients are evicted it is extremely challenging to support them in accessing new housing that encompasses all their needs.

CSS Sites in Ontario, specifically Toronto and Ottawa have both reported on significant housing challenges for clients transitioning from the Resettlement Assistance Program to Ontario Works. As clients transition from RAP to OW, many endure heightened housing

vulnerability due to limited income, rising rents, and a lack of affordable options. The changes to Ontario Works (OW) application have also caused several weeks of delays for social assistance for clients transferring from RAP to OW. The support provided often falls short of covering full rental costs, especially in high-demand areas. Newcomers also face barriers like no credit history, language challenges, and limited knowledge of tenant rights, increasing the risk of eviction or substandard housing. To address the housing challenges faced by clients, caseworkers in CSS Sites Toronto and Ottawa are also reporting higher than usual rates of food insecurity and are having to offer ongoing support by referring clients to food security programs to alleviate grocery expenses. Clients are also being connected with additional community resources for essentials like clothing, school supplies, and household items.

CSS St. John's has reported a troubling rise in evictions, driven by the sharp increase in the cost of living, which has pushed many of their clients into severe financial hardship. Clients who transition from IRCC Income Support to Newfoundland and Labrador Income Support, see an average decrease in their monthly income of \$750. Many clients who accepted the Housing Top-Up faced evictions due to not being able to afford their rentals anymore. Subsidized housing in Newfoundland and Labrador comes with lengthy waitlists. While the province's Housing Corporation does offer subsidies to eligible applicants, those who decline the subsidy in hopes of securing a subsidized unit are removed from the waitlist.

CSS Windsor has noted that some clients, facing insufficient budgets to cover rent, request an advance on their RAP monthly income support—often without fully understanding the implications of such a request. As a result, the Site is having to provide further education and additional budgeting sessions to ensure their clients have a clear understand of what their decision entails.

3. Language Support/LINC Wait Times

Securing assessments for English proficiency and wait times for enrollments of English language classes has been a highly reported challenge amongst Sites this reporting period.

CSS Sites Fort McMurray, Kitchener, Hamilton & Brantford and London have all reported on the ripple effects of long waiting lists for Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) and Community Adult Learning Program (CALP) classes for their newcomer clients and their ability to integrate effectively. With long ESL waitlist times – clients begin to experience higher levels of anxiety with the delay in learning the English language. Additionally, clients who face language barriers struggle to navigate transportation services, often getting lost, arriving late or not reaching their appointments at all. Long wait times for paratransit services further exacerbate these challenges. Clients are also unable to get jobs when they aren't speaking English yet and are unable to learn English as classes are full. In CSS Fredericton's reporting, the Site has highlighted that many of their clients rely heavily on staff for important phone calls and written

communication with government representatives due to their limited English language proficiency.

CSS Brooks reported an increase in clients feeling isolated as a result of not having connections, thereby affecting them emotionally. For clients that are enrolled in English classes during the winter months, transportation is posing to be a major issue because of the costs. The Brooks community does not have public transportation. Clients are required to take taxis or walk to their English Language Schools and classes, which is extremely challenging during winter months with long distances and extreme weather conditions.

For CSS Calgary, the loss of funding for multiple English language learning programs in Calgary has posed a significant challenge for their clients, hindering their settlement and integration into society. Clients were notified that the classes they were attending were discontinued and that they would be back on waiting lists. Clients expressed concerns that limiting their access to language training will impact their communication efficiency, which is crucial for building social connections, accessing services, and securing employment. Additionally, this barrier will negatively impact the clients' well-being, increase isolation, and can lead to mental health challenges. This all makes it harder for clients to fully contribute and thrive in their new community.

For CSS Sites in Toronto, Kitchener, Cornwall and Red Deer, the long wait between language assessment and enrollment in LINC classes has been a key barrier for case management clients. CSS Site Kitchener highlighted that in this reporting period alone, out of the 89 clients currently on the waiting list for language classes, there are 65 clients assessed at lower Canadian Language Benchmark (CLB) levels (0–3). Wait times can last weeks or months, delaying clients' ability to integrate, work, or pursue education. This issue has particularly compounded for parents or single mother clients with children, as limited on-site childminding often prevents this demographic from accepting available class spots. For CSS Red Deer clients, a lack of childcare options for school-aged children continues to heavily impact clients who are mothers, extending their waiting periods even longer before they can access essential language training. As a result, many are left in limbo, unable to begin language training or move forward in their settlement journey.

CSS Edmonton reported on how the demand for LINC courses continues to increase for their client base whereby they can be placed on waitlists for 8 months or longer. With many clients unable to speak even basic English, this heavily impacts their employment timeline and almost guarantees that the affected families will require provincial income support once their RAP period ends. Clients on waitlists are also not considered to be in classes when applying for provincial income support, and many of their applications are rejected and require appeal as a result. This also increases the workload for the CM counsellors, who then have to reapply for income support and engage in additional advocacy conversations. Course frequency in Edmonton has also been reduced, thus when clients are finally able to enroll and attend classes, many clients who require more intensive instruction find the class frequency insufficient for learning.

4. Access to Healthcare

CSS Sites Fort McMurray, Leamington, London, Cornwall, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina, Fredericton and Windsor have all reported on the continuing challenges to client access and navigation of the Canadian Healthcare system. Navigating the Canadian healthcare system continues to be overwhelming for clients as they often lack knowledge about available services and face language barriers. Long wait times for family doctors and specialist appointments further complicate their ability to receive timely medical care.

CSS Fredericton has reported that many of their clients who have chronic illnesses or disabilities have to travel across the province and Atlantic region to access specialized healthcare services. Their Intercity Bus Services are limited and user unfriendly for their most vulnerable clients. Moreover, the shortage of doctors in the Fredericton area, coupled with limited and often delayed access to primary healthcare across New Brunswick, has led to growing frustration—and, in some cases, has even prompted clients to relocate.

For CSS Sites London and Saskatoon, one of the most concerning trends currently being observed is the increase in the number of instances where medical staff such as physicians are conditionally accepting patients based on their proficiency in English, often declining those who face language barriers. In some cases, physicians have included language declarations in their intake applications, which further complicates the situation. CSS Site Saskatoon has echoed a similar concern where psychologists and psychiatrists are refusing to provide assessments to clients who cannot speak English. This challenge remains as one of the Site's top list of issues in need of immediate attention for years, but despite advocating for these vulnerable clients at multiple levels and tables, it remains an unresolved issue.

Despite the ongoing advocacy efforts of CSS London's case managers, many physicians are unable to accommodate new patients due to capacity constraints. As a result, clients with high medical needs frequently resort to seeking assistance in hospital emergency rooms, where they have extensive wait time – sometimes upwards of 12 hours. This poses an additional challenge for single parents who struggle to arrange childcare during these prolonged waits. Some clients have even chosen to forgo seeking medical help in emergency rooms due to the lengthy wait times, despite their pressing health issues. In addition, the Interim Federal Health Program (IFH) is sometimes rejecting certain medications and hearing aids. This causes a lot of confusion among service providers and disrupts the high-needs medical care for the Site's clients. CSS Site London is also reporting that many clients are exiting their services without securing a family doctor.

For CSS Leamington, clients with severe issues concerning vision, have to make multiple trips to Toronto to seek urgent medical care. This experience takes an increasing financial and emotional toll on families. CSS Windsor has highlighted the difficulties their case management team is encountering in navigating access to the Canadian Dental Care Plan Program for their younger clients. One of the eligibility criteria is that the family must have filed their income tax for the previous year. This criterion has posed a barrier for

some of the Site's newcomer clients, particularly families in need of support who did not reside in Canada the previous year and, therefore, have not filed an income tax return. This means that they cannot apply to this program until the next taxation year when they file their income tax, which delays children from receiving treatment.

Francophone CSS Sites in Cornwall, Prince Albert, Saskatoon, and Regina have reported a shortage of adequate French-language services for francophone newcomers with specialized health needs, such as access to French-speaking family doctors. In some cases—particularly in Cornwall—certain health services are entirely unavailable, forcing clients to travel to Ottawa for care.

5. Delays in Canada Child Tax Benefits (CCB)

Multiple CSS Sites in Saskatoon, Kitchener, London and Hamilton & Brantford have reported challenges related to delays in receiving CCB payments and the subsequent negative impacts of this on clients.

CSS Kitchener has reported in detail on how the delays in CCB applications process by CRA remains a major source of stress for both clients and staff. Families continue to receive rejections for valid applications due to inconsistencies within the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). In some cases, it takes months for the clients to receive their Child Tax Benefits payments. At times, clients have been showing up to the Site with eviction notices. Case managers have also been witnessing empty fridges upon home visits to clients. In some instances, clients have resorted to using overdraft amounts provided by financial institutions which results in increased debt accumulation. Kitchener Site staff are observing a snowball effect of these financial issues which is leading to bigger social and psychological problems profoundly affecting not only families but also Site staff who support these families. The Site is also hearing directly from its community partners and schools regarding the dire financial situations their clients are facing.

CSS London echoed similar concerns regarding the negative ripple effects of delays in receiving CCB payments. The Site is observing an alarming rate of scenarios of child poverty in schools where children are indicating signs of malnourishment due to lack of funds in affording to purchase more nutritious foods.

CSS Hamilton and Brantford have highlighted an additional challenge concerning CCB payments for clients arriving in Canada with pre-existing errors on their documents, such as incorrect dates of birth, names, or ages. The process of correcting these documents can only commence once clients receive their CCB benefits hence a delay in CCB payments not only further delays this process but negatively impacts the clients' ability to pay their rent and purchase food as well.

6. Interpretation

Several Sites have reported challenges in finding interpreters or having access to translation services for some of their clients.

Francophone CSS Sites Prince Albert, Saskatoon, Regina and Cornwall have all reported the challenge of limited interpreters available to provide sufficient services available for translation in French for francophone newcomers as well as a lack of interpreters for allophone clients. The accuracy of translation software for case managers has also presented limitations and accuracy issues.

CSS Toronto has reported a major gap in the lack of Rohingya-language interpreters, especially for critical medical appointments even when funding for travel is available. The absence of culturally and linguistically appropriate resources, including service providers and materials, has increased client isolation and places added strain on frontline staff trying to bridge these gaps without adequate support.

CSS Site London has reported limited access to interpreters for Kinyarwanda, Rohingya and Somali languages which has become particularly challenging for the Site's case managers.

CSS Edmonton has reported on the effects of increased demand for specific languages on their Site Staff. Somali and Arabic continue to be the languages most frequently requested by clients. This high demand stems from the growing number of individuals from these linguistic and cultural communities seeking case management support. As a result, counsellors fluent in these languages often carry heavier caseloads compared to their colleagues, creating an imbalance within the team.

In Windsor and Essex County, CSS Site Windsor has reported challenges with interpretation when clients have appointments at area hospitals. Oftentimes, these appointments require interpretation support to overcome language barriers. While hospitals are meant to provide interpretation services, often this support is not made available to clients. Additionally, during this reporting period, CSS Windsor has also observed an increase in arrival of clients who speak Hausa for which there is limited interpretation support in the area. Area settlement organizations try to collaborate with each other to support the clients as best as possible, and staff who speak Hausa may step in to assist. However, it has been challenging to provide services with this limited interpretation support. When clients are unable to access the services they need in the community or feel inadequately supported due to language barriers, they often turn to their case manager to address all of their needs. External language supports that provide Hausa interpretation support such as RIO may be used, however they come with increased costs for the Site. Case managers are then required to reach out to the community to assist with the recruitment of Hausa speaking interpreters/language aids.

7. Barriers to Employment

CSS Fort McMurray, Red Deer, Brooks and Windsor have all reported on the prevalence of challenges related to employment opportunities for clients in their respective communities. Employment barriers pose a significant challenge for newcomers, especially in a challenging job market. Many clients are facing issues with these barriers due to insufficient Canadian work experience, and limited language skills.

In this reporting period, Case Managers have witnessed an increased difficult time for many clients with variables out of their control. CSS Red Deer has reported on the disproportionality between employment vs. capacity issues within the Red Deer community. Employment remains a long-term need for many clients in Red Deer, extending beyond just resume preparation. Many individuals require hands-on support with job searching and understanding the complexities of the Canadian job market. This has been a challenge and barrier to many clients trying to navigate the Canadian employment system and securing employment.

The Brooks community is suffering from a lack of employment opportunities for newcomers. Clients have had the opportunity to meet with employment counselors, and learn how to prepare resumes, cover letters and develop interviewing skills. However, there were no employment opportunities for them even after interviewing with any major employers in the community. This has also been affecting single mothers that are applying to work yet don't have any opportunities to get selected.

In Windsor and Essex County, CSS Site Windsor clients seeking employment are referred to employment support services, where they receive assistance with resume creation and job readiness. Despite these efforts, clients are reporting difficulties finding employment or face challenges applying for positions due to transportation issues. Their lack of English skills has also significantly been hindering their ability to secure jobs.

8. Secondary Migrants

CSS Sites in Edmonton and Moncton have both reported on challenges related to secondary migrants. With the arrival of some secondary migrants becoming clients at CSS Moncton's Site, many clients were not aware of the responsibilities they held when making the decision to move to another city. Unfortunately, due to restrictions on services for secondary migrants, CSS Moncton was only able to assist clients within a limited capacity for select needs.

The case management team at CSS Edmonton, continues to receive secondary migrants from various cities in Canada, mainly from the Somali community. Because secondary migrants often arrive without notice, it has been challenging for the Site to plan for this. As secondary migrants are more likely to come with complex needs and urgency, this continues to place additional pressure onto CSS Edmonton's counsellors; this is

especially true for Somali-speaking counsellors, as that continues to be the most in-demand language among their clients.

Recommendations for IRCC:

- Support plans for more focused capacity-building for different teams: e.g. understanding new, high-need populations; immigration processes for emerging groups of newcomers; enhanced case management skills, including supervision/mentoring/coaching
- Support for Financial Literacy Workshops – Providing newcomers with essential knowledge on budgeting, banking, credit management, and financial planning to help them navigate the Canadian financial system
- Support for additional Mental Health and Well-being Supports – Offering culturally sensitive counseling services and wellness programs to address the emotional challenges of settling in a new country
- Support Staff Training for Sites delivered by the Office of Guardianship and Trusteeship to help increase efficiency and capacity assessments for clients with diminished capacity due to cognitive and physical disabilities
- Consider having more funds available for clients with specific needs example single mothers or clients with disabilities
- Support the provision and expansion of the Life Skills Support Program across Sites to meet the growing needs of clients
- Maintain efforts to reduce caseloads to align with reduced staffing levels, the IRCC Framework for Case Management and the new contribution agreement activity targets
- Create a softer transfer between RAP and CSS at time of move-out
- Increase funding and resources for language training programs to expand class capacity and prioritize access for low-CLB clients
- Increase funding for interpretation services in healthcare settings to address ongoing language barriers and making interpretation an integral part of the healthcare service delivery
- Consider to implement a direct-billing model for out-of-town medical transportation costs
- Targeted funding for employment services for clients with low levels of English skills as these services are critical for resume building, job search assistance, and successful labour market entry
- Support for provincial and national initiatives that enhance access to primary healthcare, including appropriate employment pathways for internationally trained healthcare professionals

Outstanding Advances

N/A

Follow-up

N/A

Successes/Promising Practices

Indirect Services – Coordination team:

- Increasing Sector Awareness on CSS Program Model

During the reporting period, The CSS National Coordination Team presented its workshop proposal at the Metropolis Identities Conference in Vancouver, held on October 30th - 31st 2024.

A member of The CSS National Coordination Team along with CSS network partner Calgary Catholic Immigration Society (CCIS) hosted a workshop at the conference on October 30th, 2024. The workshop was titled, **“Navigating the Housing Crisis: Advocating to Secure Accessible Housing for Vulnerable GARs,”** highlighting its impact on disadvantaged populations, including disabled and senior government-assisted refugees in the National GAR Case Management- Client Support Services Program. The goal of this panel was to educate participants through supportive case studies, promote advocacy and propose solutions to ensure accessible and supervised housing for these groups with complex needs.

The session focused on housing challenges faced in particular by Senior GAR clients and GAR clients with disabilities. The impacts of this on the mental health and well-being of clients along with the systemic challenges & intersectionality were also illustrated using case studies.

A member of the CSS National Coordination Team chaired this workshop by introducing the panel with an overview of the CSS approach and program. Additionally, participants were presented with key findings and national trends from the Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) database across the CSS network, focusing on the profiles mentioned above. The workshop concluded with an interactive discussion, as the audience brought forward a wide range of thoughtful questions and inquiries. Their enthusiastic participation and feedback made it clear that the topic resonated deeply and is currently a pressing issue for communities across the country.

Two staff members from the CSS National Coordination Team also attended the 27th Metropolis Canada Conference in Toronto from March 13-15, 2025. This year's theme

was "**Resetting Canada's Immigration Plan and Program for a New Era.**" The conference gave the team valuable insights into Canada's changing immigration system, including policy updates, best practices, and collaborative strategies. The event focused on finding innovative solutions to immigration issues and offered an opportunity to connect with experts/peers.

- Client Support Services Annual Conference 2024-2025

The CSS Annual Conference was held on November 14th – 15th 2024, with close to 150 CSS staff members from across the country in attendance. This conference was hosted virtually over Zoom which made it possible for The National Coordination Team to offer multiple sessions with ease. During the two-day event, CSS staff members from across Canada were able to attend professional development workshops, discussion panels and trainings. Based on evaluation survey results, participants provided positive feedback with a highly repeated and keen interest in attending the next Annual Conference in-person.

Direct Services: 25 national partners:

Below are highlights of some of CSS Sites' successes:

Wesley, Hamilton and Brantford

- CSS Site Hamilton and Brantford have met with Service Canada and managed to coordinate a few of their staff to come to Wesley on a monthly basis to complete client SIN applications in house. This will prevent the clients from having to wait when their applied online and even longer wait times when they are rejected.
- CRA has agreed to send 2 of their volunteers to complete income tax returns for GAR clients with T5 slips. The CRA staff came to the CSS Site's office for 2 days which resulted in many returns being completed.

COSTI, Toronto

- **Successful Civic Engagement Events:**

During this reporting period, COSTI had a few Civic Engagement Events that were successfully delivered to support newcomer integration and empowerment. These events focused on educating clients about their rights, responsibilities, and the structure of civic life in Canada, while encouraging active participation in community and democratic processes. These events were delivered in partnership with local organizations and guest speakers whereby the sessions offered culturally responsive, accessible information in a welcoming environment. The events were well attended and received positive feedback. Clients engaged actively, sharing experiences and showing interest in community initiatives. These events highlighted the importance of

civic education for newcomers and the impact of strong community partnerships in fostering inclusion and participation.

London Cross-Cultural Learner Centre, London

- LICHC and MLHU are collaborating on child vaccination clinics for the Site's clients. This has streamlined the immunization requirement by the school.
- The collaboration between the London Intercommunity Health Centre (LICHC) and CSS has proven to be highly effective in meeting the complex needs of clients. Through this partnership, all high-needs clients undergo comprehensive screenings to identify specific health requirements. As a result, services are efficiently streamlined, ensuring timely and appropriate support for everyone.
- CSS Site London also benefits from a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the Consistory Club. This collaboration enables the Site to provide essential mobility aids—such as walkers and wheelchairs—at no cost to clients who require them. The convenience and accessibility of this service have significantly enhanced the quality of life for many individuals in the SPO's care.
- In partnership with the Schulich School of Dentistry at Western University, CSS Site London is proud to offer access to dental care for our clients. The clinic, located at 505 Dundas Street, facilitates initial dental screenings. Clients with identified oral health needs are referred to Western University's dental school for further assessment and treatment, ensuring continuity and quality of care.
- Mental health support remains a critical component for services at this Site. CSS Site London is pleased to work with Dr. Amjed Abojedi, PhD, RP, who provides psychotherapy services for both children and adults at the Resilience Clinic. His expertise and compassionate approach have contributed significantly to improving the mental well-being of the organization's clients.

Catholic Centre for Immigrants, Ottawa

Assistance and support from CSS Staff for GARs with CRA income declarations went well this year despite systemic changes and digital challenges for GARs.

Collaboration between CSS Site Ottawa and their IRCC site was incredibly productive with regards to sending T5s via email.

Tailored group sessions were provided for GARs with disabilities and LGBTQ GARs.

Brooks & County Immigration Services, Alberta

Over this reporting period, CSS Site Brooks has formed partnerships with different organizations in the community. One specific partnership this quarter was with Cantara Safe House. Several ethnic communities were having experiencing some challenges

with life skills with day-to-day activities. Cantara provided group sessions on different topics to address these challenges for the Arabic community in Brooks. These included some of the following:

- RCMP in Canada
- Positive parenting
- Budgeting in Canada
- Sexual Health
- Healthy relationships
- Addiction and Mental Health
- Family violence prevention

Partnerships such as the one mentioned above with Cantara, reinforces the Site's commitment to providing excellent services to their clients despite the challenges.

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary

- Enhanced the safety of domestic violence survivors through client-centred safety planning, trauma-informed approach, and support with legal procedures. This helped clients overcome barriers, access protection, and reduce further harm for clients and their children.
- Expanded the clients' knowledge about budgeting and money management skills. Given the limited financial resources available to the clients, designing and delivering budgeting sessions in small groups helped foster financial literacy and promote practical, sustainable money management skills tailored to their socioeconomic circumstances. The sessions are delivered to case-managed clients in an interactive way that encourages active participation, real-life application, and collaborative problem-solving.

Reception House, Kitchener

- **Family Doctor & Community Capacity Building:** Dr. Peter Ogbemudia is a family physician that has recently started his practice at Hunter Clinic in Kitchener. CSS Kitchener has been able to refer over 300 Reception House clients to this new family doctor. All referred clients have been accepted, intakes completed and ongoing follow-ups scheduled. Case managers have played a key role in supporting the new family doctor through client registration and intake, ensuring a smooth onboarding process.
- **Community Capacity Building:** CSS's efforts and advocacy to promote shared responsibility for newcomer settlement in the community are producing visible results. CSS Kitchener is noticing that more and more service providers keep building capacity and getting engaged in providing settlement support to newcomers. As an example, Public Health nurses are now regularly visiting Reception House sites to support clients, they are using interpretation services to

better serve refugee and immigrant clients. Schools, churches, and community organizations are becoming more actively involved in supporting newcomers. Notably, KidsAbility has stepped in by attending client intakes at Refugee Health Clinic, helping to reduce service delays and easing the process for families through collaborative assessments. In addition, St. Mary's General Hospital has provided us with an interpretation device, allowing clients to access care at walk-in or urgent care clinics rather than resorting to the emergency room due to a lack of interpretation support.

- **Targeted Programming:** In partnership with CAMINO, CSS Kitchener has offered a financial literacy orientation for clients in February, with the next session scheduled for April. These orientations are delivered in clients' first language to ensure accessibility. CSS is also planning a series of orientations in partnership with Women's Crisis Services. The sessions for adults will focus on recognizing different forms of violence, understanding Canadian laws related to family and safety, and accessing local support services. A separate youth-focused session will promote healthy relationships. An added benefit of these orientations is that they introduce and connect clients to these service providers.
- **Evaluation of Post-Exit Client Experience:** In partnership with the Centre for Community Based Research (CCBR) and the Rohingya Centre of Canada (RCC) CSS Kitchener has conducted a small-scale evaluation of the Rohingya Clients' Post-Exit experiences. The evaluation took place between February and March this year and was led by CCBR. The findings affirm that the program is achieving many of its core objectives, with clear outcomes tied to IRCC's intended goals. Clients report feeling safer, more connected, and better equipped to navigate life in Canada independently. These outcomes reflect the positive impact of the strong foundational support provided to the clients through the CSS program. However, the evaluation also highlights ongoing challenges for clients' post-exit. While some of these barriers extend beyond the scope of our program, they provide critical insight into where CSS can continue to evolve to better prepare clients for long-term success.

Catholic Social Services, Red Deer & Edmonton

- **Medical Clinic Connection:** CSS Site Red Deer has established a successful partnership and collaboration with Dr. Peter Mah at Parkland Medical Clinic in organizing a newcomer clinic that continues to yield positive outcomes. All newcomers are scheduled for initial medical assessment and referred to specialists for additional consultations, completed needed tests, and received their treatments immediately. This efficient process improves their overall healthcare needs.
- **Technology and Settlement Services:** Supporting Rohingya clients has been particularly challenging due to extreme language barriers. However, settlement counselors have successfully bridged this gap by using tools like Google Translate to facilitate communication. Despite initial difficulties, this approach has allowed Site staff to provide essential support services effectively. Over time, they have

become more comfortable with their counselors, fostering trust and positive connections. This success demonstrates the power of dedication in overcoming language barriers, ensuring that even the most vulnerable clients receive the guidance and support needed to navigate their new lives in Canada.

Association for New Canadians (ANC), St. John's

- A cohort of 48 clients and former clients has started seasonal work at fish plants in multiple communities across the island. This is part of a program organized by ANC's employment services team. This is the second year for several of the clients. The clients who went last year thought it was a good opportunity. They were happy to be able to earn money and gain independence. They were also interested to see other areas of the province and to work with locals in smaller communities. Working with locals also helped a lot of clients to improve their spoken English.

Global Gathering Place, Saskatoon

In-house mental health counselling has been incredibly beneficial for clients. GGP has a partnership with Mental Health Services for them to provide a mental health counsellor on-site one day per week. Although this is a much-appreciated service, many clients struggle to relate to the SHA Mental Health Counsellor. Our own counsellor is able to bridge the gap and connects well with clients. She is very busy and now receives referrals from all areas of GGP. Her presence has been very successful in overcoming the stigma associated with accessing mental health services.

Multicultural Association of Fredericton (MCAF), New Brunswick

- MCAF accessed new funding from Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada (ISED) to deliver a province-wide initiative focused on building digital and future-ready skills among youth project, titled YouTech NB. This project will reach approximately 89,000 non-unique students from kindergarten to Grade 12 across New Brunswick. To ensure long-term impact and sustainability, around 5,900 non-unique educators, including teachers, librarians, and community leaders—will participate in Train-the-Trainer (TTT) programs, enabling them to independently deliver digital skills training within their communities.
- In ongoing partnership with UNB, FDCHC, Horizon Health, and others, MCAF continues to work on the recommendations of the study “An Integrated Care Pathway for Newcomers” and advocacy for the establishment of Newcomer Health Clinics in Fredericton and across NB in order to tailor and provide culturally competent healthcare services for Newcomers with efforts to reduce systemic barriers
- MCAF continues to reach out to the community to recruit and train cultural brokers/community Interpreters who then enhance new immigrants' access to

culturally and linguistically appropriate and culturally sensitive government and community programs and services

- MCAF works in close partnership with CRA to ensure that their most vulnerable clients file their income taxes on time. CRA provides training and orientation for MCAF clients, volunteers and staff on updated CRA programs and requirements. MCAF staff support our clients to open and navigate their CRA accounts throughout the year. In the months of March and April MCAF delivers one of the CRA Community Volunteer Income Tax Clinics CVITC.

Multicultural Council of Windsor-Essex County, Windsor

- **Triple P Parenting:** A single parent required a parenting session to increase her parenting skills. One of the CSS case manager's, who is a Triple P Parenting trained facilitator provided this training in a one to one session. The Triple P Parenting program gives parents simple and practical strategies to help them build strong, healthy relationships, confidently manage their children's behavior and prevent problems developing. This program is also offered in group sessions but when the need is presented, it is provided one-on-one.
- **Psychotherapy sessions in partnership with the University of Windsor:** Clients who required counselling support, have been referred and connected to the University of Windsor clinical psychology program operated under the supervision of Dr. Chantal Boucher, which is a partner of the MCC. The CSS – U of Windsor initiative, is a partnership since the inception of CSS in Windsor, in 2007. This year, 7 clients received counselling support from this program on a weekly basis to address her mental health needs with interpretation support set up by the case manager. The client appreciates the support which has a positive effect on her overall health and emotional well-being.
- **Community Building – Group wellness sessions:** Over 8 families attended the Community Building Wellness session, a 5-week CSS initiative focused on family wellbeing through art, music and language led by Psychologist Dr. Annette Dufresne. Families report an improvement in their well-being and sense of community during their first year in Canada.

Client Success Stories:

London Cross-Cultural Learner Centre, London

During needs assessment, the case manager inquired about client's previous work experience and interests related to employment in Canada. The client shared that she had worked as a Personal Support Worker (PSW) in Lebanon and expressed an interest in continuing in the same field. She was informed about the PSW program offered at Anderson College and explained the application process, including how the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) works. Working collaboratively with the London

Intercommunity Health Centre, CSS Site London assisted the client in preparing the necessary medical documentation required for college admission. As a result, she is now set to begin her studies at Anderson College on May 5th. She is extremely excited about this new chapter and has expressed deep gratitude for the guidance and support she received throughout the process. She has also mentioned that if she had the opportunity to leave a review for the services received, she would give her designated CSS Staff Case Manager "at least 10 stars."

COSTI, Toronto

Client Success Story #1:

The client, seeking employment and overcoming barriers, faced challenges such as limited resources and lack of training. With guidance from the CSS program caseworker, he accessed training programs and support services through referrals. With support from COSTI Client Support Services and targeted referrals, the client completed a relevant training program, gained essential skills, and boosted their confidence. This led to securing a job in their desired industry, setting them on a path to a stable career.

Client Testimonial - "With the support and encouragement of my COSTI caseworker, I was able to secure a job. The assistance I received was invaluable, and I am truly grateful for the guidance and resources provided throughout my journey. Thank you for helping me reach this important milestone".

Client Success Story #2:

Client, originally from Myanmar, arrived in Canada under the GAR program after living in Thailand for five years. He is married and left his wife and daughter behind. The CSS Caseworker contacted client, who urgently needed help. Along with a Life Skills Worker, they found him in severe pain and called an ambulance. After being checked, client was discharged and advised to see a specialist. The Caseworker contacted his doctor, who quickly scheduled his surgery.

Client faced conflicts with his roommates due to his illness and moved in with a friend. The caseworker arranged temporary housing and with help from the Housing Help Center, found a suitable room in Scarborough. After negotiating with the landlord, client signed the lease. Two days later, he underwent surgery, and Life Skills Workers helped him home and monitored his recovery. They also assisted with his One Year Window application for his wife and child and advocated with the Housing Help Centre to help cover a \$300 rent shortfall. The caseworker arranged an English assessment, found a family doctor, and connected client to resources for clothing, mental health support, and food banks.

Client has fully recovered and become more independent. He recently found a new place on his own and has started searching for a job.

Client Testimonial - "You were very patient and kind with me, and helped me to have my surgery."

His words highlighted the compassion and support that were provided to him throughout his challenging journey. Client appreciated not only the practical assistance he received but also the emotional support and understanding that helped him navigate the difficulties of his health and settlement process. This feedback reflects the positive impact of COSTI's work together and the trust built over time, ultimately helping him achieve a crucial milestone in his recovery and settlement.

Wesley, Hamilton and Brantford

Client Success Story #1:

GAR senior couple who arrived in April 2024— a kind and thoughtful senior couple who have always been cooperative and open to making any necessary adjustments in order to reach their goals in their new home Canada. As they were approaching the end of their 12-month support with Wesley, they became increasingly worried about their ability to afford rent. The income they would receive from ODSP would not be enough to cover rent, food, and other basic needs. Due to this, they began to consider returning to their country of origin, as they felt they had no other way to manage financially here in Canada.

They received case management support from Wesley's CSS program and were connected to many community resources. One of the referrals made, was applying to the City of Hamilton's Housing program and not long after, they received an offer. The couple was successfully approved, as their situation was considered high-risk and prioritized. They have now received the keys to their new apartment and will be moving in mid-April. The GAR Senior couple will now pay rent that is geared towards their income. They are grateful and look forward to living a more peaceful life—one that reflects the dignity and rest they deserve at this stage in their lives.

Client Success Story #2:

A one-year window application was completed in August 2024 for a 10- year old son, that was separated from his biological father. The family arrived from Turkey in 2024 as GARs to Hamilton. The CSS ICM team supported the family with the OYW application process and other settlement needs. In January of 2025 the young boy was reunited with his father and his family. The family is beyond grateful to IRCC and the CSS program for their guidance and support. Since January, the family has also welcomed a new baby in the family. The family is doing well and feeling blessed to be together in a safe country.

New Canadians' Centre of Excellence, Leamington

Successfully assisted client who was a pregnant single mother of 3 children with receiving supports related to her 4th pregnancy. Supports were provided by community partners upon delivery of her newborn. Site staff are continuing to work closely with this client, ensuring that she is able to navigate through what can be at times an incredibly challenging relocation process to not only a new country but as a single parent as well caring for a newborn at the same time.

Le Conseil Économique et Social d'Ottawa Carleton (CÉSOC), Cornwall

A female client who arrived in Canada within the last six months has secured a job with La Cité college. She now teaches French as a Second language (CLIC) to newcomers.

Regina Open Door Society, Regina

Client Success Story #1:

Client needed support for a child with Autism. Client was worried about not having support for her child with autism, as resources were not available to her as a newcomer. Complicating Factors for this case included being a newcomer to Canada and unsure of the types of supports available for a child with special needs. CSS Staff assisted client with necessary information and referred her to the Autism Navigation Centre. CSS Staff were also able to support the client with applications for provincial funding for Autism and client was supported financially by securing more than \$5,000 in funding for her child's needs and medical appointments.

Quote from Client: "I am so happy and thanks for your support."

Client Success Story #2:

Client was informed by their landlord of mold in their home and was required to vacate as soon as possible. Client was really concerned because they had just moved there two months ago and had to start looking for a new place all over again. Client was also concerned about the budget and whether he would be able to find another place within his budget. Complicating factors with this case included a language barrier, finances and a limited understanding of community resources to find housing. CSS Staff supported the client and client was able to secure a place and move out of the old home. The new place was within the client's budget.

Quote from Client: "Jazakallahu Khairan" in Arabic, which means "Thank you for your support."

Client Success Story #3:

Client didn't receive his Child Tax Benefit for 8 months due to incomplete documents and other complexities. Client was really worried as he was experiencing financial hardship without CTB as his government money alone was not sufficient enough to care for his children and large family. Complicating Factors in this case included a language barrier, lack of necessary documents and a large family. CSS Staff supported the client and he was able to finally receive his CTB after a very long wait and multiple complexities involved.

Quote from Client: "We really appreciate all the support provided during this process to receive our CCB. We think there will be no CCB for our children anymore."

Calgary Catholic Immigration Society, Calgary

Client is a 49-year-old single (widowed) client who struggles with multiple physical health conditions and severe trauma due to an extreme adverse past experience that limited his capacity to secure employment. The client's only source of income is the provincial income support, which is not adequate to cover his rent expenses and leaves him with no money to cover his other expenses like food and clothing. This worsened his overall health and negatively impacted his mental health. During this challenging time, the case manager provided moral support, connected the client with community resources, referrals to mental health support, and helped with grocery gift cards. With significant efforts and the advocacy of the case manager, subsidized housing with lower rent cost was secured for the client. After several follow-ups and outreach efforts, the client was finally approved for Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH), which made him more financially stable and gave him relief that had a positive impact on his well-being.

Brooks & County Immigration Services, Alberta

In January 2024, client arrived in Canada as a government assisted refugee. Adapting to a new environment, culture, and life skills in Canada were a big challenge for him. He was connected to Brooks Community Adult Learning Centre and was enrolled in English language classes. Whenever he was available, he attended workshops and information sessions through the Case Management Program in order to learn new skills and knowledge especially regarding job searches, community connections and about life in Canada. While he was enrolled in the Case Management Program, he was connected to the employment team to assist him in building the right resume and for applying to various job postings in the city of Brooks. With his patience and determination, he was hired recently at the JBS Food Canada, a major employer in the region that regularly hires newcomers and refugees. He quickly adapted to the physically demanding work and demonstrated willingness to learn.

Client said that he didn't know what to do when his refugee-allowance from the government ended. The reality of having no money in his bank account, no money to pay for rent and financial instability increased his levels of stress when thinking of ways on how to support himself.

Quote from Client:

“Canada gave me a second chance. I lost everything back home, but here, I found hope, work, and purpose. I'm thankful for all the support that BCIS provided to me. “

Catholic Centre for Immigrants, Ottawa

- Two GARs teamed up and are in the process of enrolling in an HVAC certification program.
- An emotional moment for CSS Site Staff: A Sudanese family was reunited at the end of December.
- A single mother client expecting her 3rd child was matched through CCI-Ottawa's Matching Program. The volunteer visits the mother twice a week and is helping her navigate the health system and Canadian parenting norms.
- An LGBTQ GAR client thanked CSS Site Ottawa's Indigenous facilitators for giving her a home after being rejected by so many other countries.
- An Afghan family whose file recently closed succeeded in buying their first house in Ottawa.

Multicultural Agency of the Greater Moncton Area (MAGMA), New Brunswick

MAGMA is currently offering an English class that focuses on childcare. After the students have completed the class, they are put into the Site's CNC as a placement. One of the Site's clients went through this process. She did so well that the organization hired her for a full-time position. In the new year MAGMA opened a public daycare center, and the same client was asked to work in the daycare center.

Catholic Social Services, Red Deer & Edmonton

Client Success Story #1:

Client, originally from Afghanistan, fled to Pakistan with her parents due to civil unrest. She lived in Pakistan for over 30 years as a refugee under harsh conditions. She got married and had five children. However, due to financial hardships, they were unable to pay for their children's education. Fortunately, client was approved for resettlement and arrived in Canada on December 20, 2023, with her five dependent children as government-assisted refugees with the hope to establish a new life and future. However, she came to Canada without her husband. She explained that they were separated after

he left for Iran in search of work and tragically never returned. Upon arriving in Canada, client expressed a deep longing for her husband and hoped he could be found and reunited with the family.

A few months after her arrival, her brother-in-law, who had been living in Pakistan, also came to Canada and joined the family. While he has been a great support, her love and bond with her husband remained strong and hoping to reunite with him in the near future.

After six weeks in Canada, client was assessed as a high-needs case due to mental health challenges, language barriers, lack of basic life and financial management skills, and the complexities of her husband's disappearance and immigration process. Client arrived in Canada carrying deep layers of trauma, primarily due to the sudden and prolonged separation from her husband. She explained that in 2019, while her husband was crossing an Iranian border town in search of work in Iran, he was kidnapped by armed robbers and was unable to communicate with his family. As a result, client struggled with mental health challenges and was later diagnosed with clinical depression, for which she began attending counseling sessions.

During client's resettlement process to Canada, her marital status was recorded as separated. However, in April 2024, her husband unexpectedly returned to Pakistan and discovered that his wife and children had been resettled in Canada. Through relatives still residing in Pakistan, he was able to reconnect with his family. Due to her limited skills and knowledge, client was unable to complete the One-Year Window (OYW) application process on her own. With the help of her settlement counselor, the application was initiated in May 2024 and submitted for processing, but IRCC requested for additional information regarding her husband's case. Client, with the assistance of her counselor, provided the required documents and a detailed explanation of her husband's disappearance. After careful review, the Resettlement Operations Centre in Ottawa forwarded the case to the Overseas IRCC Office in Islamabad for processing.

Throughout the OYW application process, the settlement counselor worked closely with the client, providing guidance and assistance with correspondence from the IRCC Office in Islamabad. The process proceeded smoothly, and on March 12, 2025, client's husband successfully arrived in Canada, reuniting with his wife and children. The counselor also assisted him with immediate settlement services.

Although the reunion was a moment of relief and joy, it was an emotional encounter. After years of separation, client experienced mixed emotions and some difficulty adjusting to her husband's return. However, as they spent time together and accessed support services, the couple gradually rekindled their relationship. Today, the family continues to receive settlement and integration support as needed and is making significant progress in their new community.

Client Success Story #2:

Client's journey to Canada is a remarkable tale of resilience, determination, and the power of support. In January 2021, client, a senior originally from Somalia, arrived in Canada with his six children and two grandchildren after spending nine years in Uganda. Despite the challenges of relocating across continents, the client was committed to building a new life for his family.

Upon their arrival, client and his family stayed at Reception House, where they received a warm welcome and essential guidance from their RAP counsellor. The counsellor worked diligently to ensure the family obtained Alberta Health Cards and Social Insurance Numbers (SINs) while introducing them to the basics of life in Canada, including banking, shopping, and navigating public transportation. These initial services provided the foundation for their successful settlement.

When it came time to secure permanent housing, the RAP counsellor and housing team coordinated multiple apartment viewings. Client's family ultimately selected a unit that felt like home—a crucial step in establishing stability and comfort. Client also took a significant step toward integration by undergoing a language assessment and beginning LINC classes, showing a strong commitment to adapting to his new environment.

During the client's early medical appointments, several health concerns were identified, necessitating follow-up care. Recognizing the importance of addressing these issues promptly, the CM counsellor connected client with the Refugee Health Promotion team and the New Canadians Health Centre, where he received comprehensive medical attention and ongoing support.

However, client faced an emotional challenge that weighed heavily on him. The needs assessment revealed that he had left behind his wife and eight children, causing immense distress. Determined to reunite his family, client shared his desire to bring them to Canada. His CM counsellor stepped in to assist, embarking on the complex journey of completing an OYW (One-Year Window) application. The process was particularly challenging due to the size of client's family, which added layers of complexity to an already rigorous application procedure.

Despite these obstacles, the client and his CM counsellor worked closely together to ensure every detail was addressed. Their persistence paid off—the OYW application was approved, an exceptional outcome given the rarity of approvals for such large family requests.

In March 2025, the client's dream finally became a reality. His wife and eight children arrived in Canada, marking the culmination of years of effort, hope, and perseverance. FO brought his reunited family to the Colak Centre for initial services and expressed heartfelt gratitude for the unwavering support of his CM counsellor and the multidisciplinary CSS team.

Today, the client is thriving alongside his family, deeply satisfied with the successful reunification and continuing to make progress in his settlement and integration journey. His story stands as a powerful testament to resilience, teamwork, and the transformative impact of dedicated support systems.

Client Success Story #3

A Rohingya family with a child who has a severe disability has made remarkable progress since arriving in Canada. Initially, the child was unable to sit, eat, or drink without lying down. Through intensive medical care, rehabilitation, and physiotherapy, the child can now sit for 45 minutes, eat, chew, and swallow upright. Seizure medication has also significantly reduced seizures. The child has received a wheelchair, specialized seating, a bathing tub, and standing equipment. Once the customized wheelchair arrives, they will be able to start school.

Global Gathering Place (GGP), Saskatoon

This month, GGP assisted a single client who was living alone and struggling with loneliness and depression due to having no family or social connections in the city. She often expressed feeling isolated and unmotivated. To support her, she was referred to mental health sessions at our organization, and we worked together to identify her interests and strengths.

She demonstrated a strong willingness to improve her situation, and with the Site's support, she applied for and successfully started a new job. This role not only provides financial stability but also gives her a sense of purpose and daily routine. She shared that working has helped lift her mood and reduced her feelings of loneliness. This shows a positive shift in her emotional well-being and her ability to take steps toward independence and improved mental health.

Multicultural Association of Fredericton, New Brunswick

Client Success Story #1:

A client from Eritrea, who had never received formal education in her home country, has made remarkable progress since arriving in Canada. Through dedication and support from MCAF, she reached ESL Level 4 and successfully completed the Skills Launch for Adults program. In addition to her academic achievements, she also obtained her driver's license, gaining both independence and confidence.

Client Success Story #2:

A client from Syria achieved a major milestone by enrolling in a PhD Studies at the University of New Brunswick. Despite facing numerous challenges and barriers, he demonstrated exceptional perseverance. Today, he successfully balances both work and studies, setting an inspiring example for others in the newcomer community.

Association for New Canadians (ANC), St. John's

Client Success Story #1:

27-year-old Eritrean female client who has been working with ANC as an interpreter recently started a LPN program at Academy Canada.

Client Success Story #2:

32-year-old Congolese male completed a two-year ABE program in four months with an average in the 90s. He is going to attend post-secondary school, but hasn't decided on a program. Currently, he has been accepted to both a nursing *and* an automotive repair program.

Client Success Story #3:

31-year-old Afghan female was able to secure a NL Housing unit after successfully advocating with her MHA. These units are very difficult to obtain at the moment and the waitlist is considerable.

Multicultural Council of Windsor-Essex County, Windsor

In December 2023, a young woman from Afghanistan arrived in Canada alone, without any family members. She faced numerous challenges, including physical health issues, mental health struggles, and a significant language barrier, all of which hindered her ability to access essential healthcare services and adapt to her new environment.

Recognizing her urgent needs, the CSS case manager provided immediate support by connecting her with settlement programs and healthcare resources. Referrals were made to specialized medical and mental health services, ensuring she received comprehensive assessments and tailored care. Additionally, language support services were arranged to help her navigate her new surroundings and communicate effectively with service providers.

By addressing her healthcare and language needs promptly, the case manager created a pathway for her to begin building stability in her new life. This foundation allowed her to

gradually focus on integration into Canadian society and access other settlement services critical to her long-term success.

After her arrival in Canada, the client faced significant challenges related to chronic health concerns that required urgent attention. These issues were compounded by her limited English proficiency, which made it difficult for her to communicate effectively with healthcare providers and advocate for her needs.

The client's situation was further complicated by anxiety and fear, exacerbated by her isolated circumstances and health struggles. These mental health barriers influenced her decision to miss a critical medical appointment, resulting in her placement on a long waiting list for treatment. This delay created additional stress and urgency, making it even more challenging for her to navigate the healthcare system independently.

Recognizing the complexities of her situation, the CSS case manager intervened to provide immediate support. The case manager coordinated with healthcare providers to reschedule her appointments and arranged for interpretation services to ensure effective communication. Additionally, the client was connected with mental health support to address her anxiety and build resilience in managing her health and settlement challenges.

By addressing these barriers and ensuring access to necessary healthcare and support services, the case manager helped the client take important steps toward stabilizing her health and well-being. This holistic approach created a foundation for her to focus on her long-term settlement and integration into Canadian society.

The client's overall well-being has significantly improved following a series of coordinated interventions and support. Despite initial challenges, the case manager, Layousa Farahi, successfully advocated with the hospital to reschedule the client's missed surgery, which was completed on October 3. This allowed the client to begin follow-up care at the appropriate medical center, ensuring continuity in her treatment.

When the client later required additional surgery, the case manager communicated with the healthcare system to facilitate the necessary tests and ensure the client understood the importance of undergoing the procedure. The case manager also collaborated with the client's counselor, Patricia Carter, to address her mental health concerns and empower her to make confident health decisions.

With these combined efforts, the client overcame her fear of surgery and was able to proceed with the necessary operation. After recovering from both procedures, the client returned to the settlement office feeling healthier and more confident. She expressed gratitude for the support she received throughout the process.

The client's mental and physical recovery has not only improved her health but has also prepared her to pursue education and further integrate into Canadian society. She

reported feeling ready to move forward without the need for ongoing counseling, signaling her increased confidence and sense of independence.

Thanks to the tailored support and advocacy provided through settlement programming, the client has transitioned from a place of fear and health challenges to one of recovery, self-sufficiency, and optimism, positioning her for sustained success and long-term integration into her new life in Canada.

Organizational Updates

Please identify any changes over the course of the reporting period, or impending changes to the following. Please only provide a response if applicable.

1) Staffing

Identify relevant staffing changes related to program delivery, as well as any changes to administrative staff or board members. Identify the position(s) that were or will be vacated, the planned staffing action(s) to fill the position(s), and dates.

2) Overhead

Identify relevant changes in areas related to current rent, lease agreements and repairs as applicable. Specific overhead issues related to programming are to be identified in the Progress on Planned Activities section.

NA

3) Upcoming events or meetings

Identify new events or meetings that did not form part of the original CA schedules or those that will be removed from the approved CA activities. Please include dates and locations of upcoming events or meetings where your organization may request a Department representative to attend or to speak.

4) Professional development

Please identify conferences or professional development activities that have not previously been identified to the department. Please also identify any resulting program closures or interruptions (if known).

NA

5) Documentation on file

Please confirm that the following forms on file are up-to-date. If not, please include an updated version when submitting this report.

- Basic Recipient Information form
- Annual Financial Statement
- Legal History Form
- Lease agreements
- Licenses (as applicable)