

RESILIENT, RESOURCEFUL, READY FOR WHAT'S NEXT.

A year of considerable change across the immigration sector. A year of resilience, resourcefulness, and a continued focus on making immigration work.

Our AGM report is a chance to pause and think about the impact of that work, something we feel every day, but don't always have the opportunity to stop and reflect on.

AGM REPORT 2025-2026

Land Acknowledgement



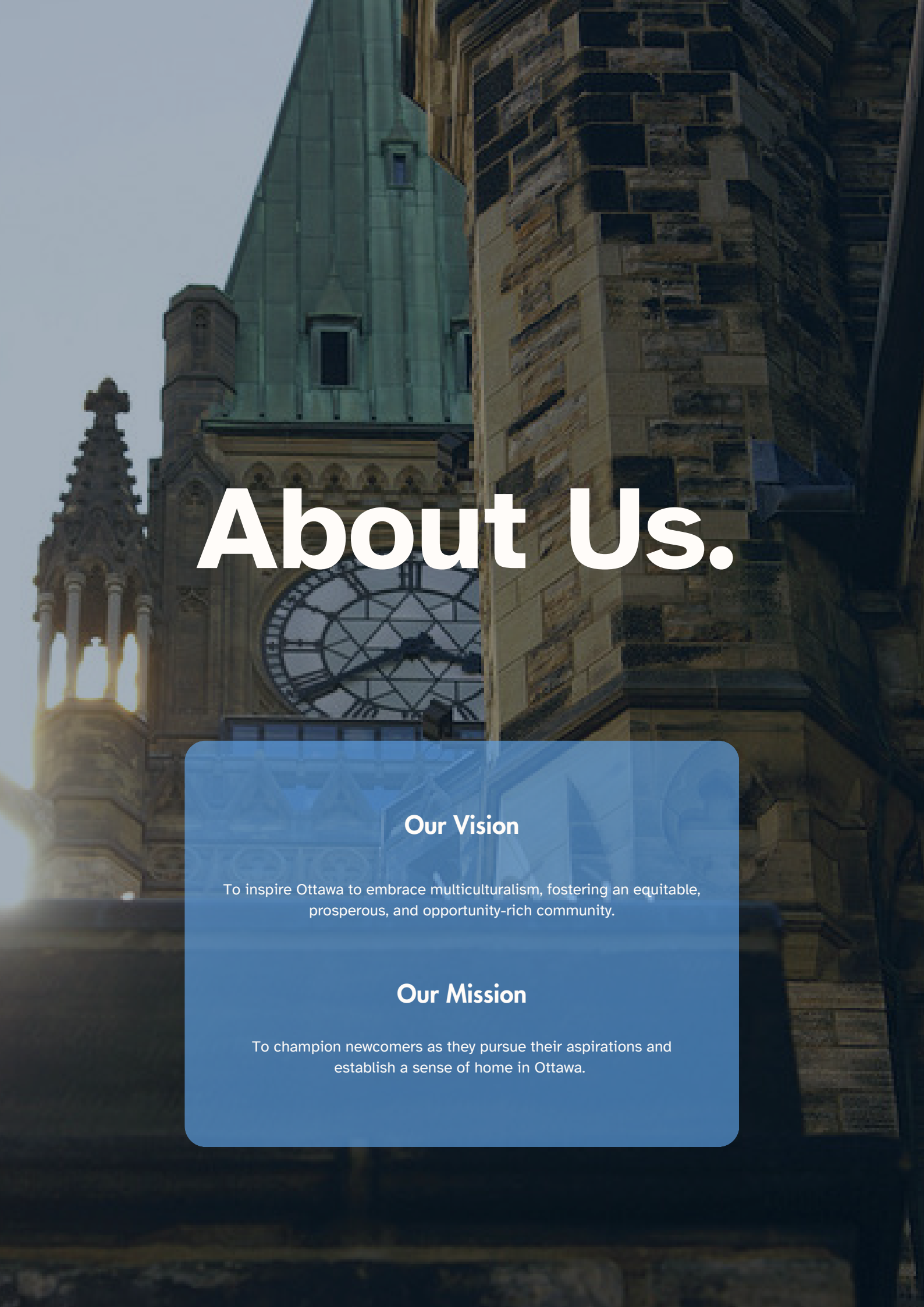
We acknowledge that Ottawa is built on the traditional unceded territory of the Anishinabe Algonquin Nation.

We honour the Algonquin Peoples, who have cared for this land since time immemorial, and whose culture and presence continue to nurture it.

We recognize and respect the enduring relationship that exists between Indigenous Peoples and their traditional territories.

As we gather here, we commit ourselves to the journey of reconciliation and to building respectful partnerships with First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities.





About Us.

Our Vision

To inspire Ottawa to embrace multiculturalism, fostering an equitable, prosperous, and opportunity-rich community.

Our Mission

To champion newcomers as they pursue their aspirations and establish a sense of home in Ottawa.



From our Board Chair

Deacon Charles Fink

I would like to thank all past board members and staff for their hard work and contributions to CCI's work and mission.

This year the nominations committee worked diligently to find new board members and strengthen our governance for maximum impact. We currently have four nominees that will be introduced at this AGM for election. Their diverse expertise, backgrounds, and experience will be of great value to the board going forward.

I am also pleased to report that we have proposed new programs that will enhance our services to newcomers. In addition, we are entering the final year of our strategic plan, and discussions will focus on developing a new strategic plan to guide our work over the next five years.

"I look forward to this coming year with new programs emerging and a healthy board to help imagine and develop a new strategic plan."

As we all know, attitudes have changed with regard to the welcoming of newcomers to our country. The government has substantially reduced the numbers allowed into Canada and with that come funding challenges. However, our finances are healthy as other benefactors have come forward and some have enhanced their financial support.

In my report last year, I mentioned we would be making some structural changes. One of those was the dissolution of CCIF, our foundation, and integrating it with the CCI Board. This has simply eliminated a layer of bureaucracy, enabling the board to more quickly stay abreast of issues and make decisions without delay.

Again, thank you, from a supportive CEO and to all levels of the organization.



From Our CEO



Myriam Mekni

We are all keenly aware that the immigration sector has navigated a period of considerable disruption. This has, understandably, created a degree of anxiety within the settlement sector. While it's natural to have our individual perspectives and identify areas for improvement, this is not a moment for introspection alone. Our fundamental purpose, the reason we are all here, is to ensure that immigration works. And that is precisely where CCI Ottawa is firmly focused.

We recognize that there is always more we can do. However, the sincere and explicit expressions of thanks and appreciation we regularly receive from our clients are powerful testaments to the value and impact of our services.

These are not insignificant acknowledgements. They are proof that much of what we do is both effective and meaningful. Our commitment, therefore, is to maximize our impact with the resources we have, while simultaneously striving for higher ideals.

We understand the common disconnect between policy and the realities faced on the ground. As an organization operating at the nexus of these two spheres, CCI Ottawa is uniquely positioned.

This vantage point allows us to identify the points of disconnection and, crucially, to forge pathways for genuine connection and collaboration.

We must continue to advocate, not as an opposition to the system, but with it. Our approach is to find ways to operate effectively within evolving realities, rather than remaining outside of them and thus unable to address the tangible work before us.

This means prioritizing partnerships over partisanship, and dialogue over disagreement. We must be resourceful, presenting articulate and well-reasoned arguments, rather than succumbing to frustration or assigning blame to inherent bureaucratic complexities.

I firmly believe we are all aligned in our ultimate goals. While we may hold different viewpoints, true innovation arises from the synthesis of diverse ideas into powerful, cohesive solutions. To truly build bridges and move forward, we must resist the urge to simply rail against challenges. Our most significant undertaking is to help reframe the public perception of immigration, showcasing it as the profound force for good that it is.

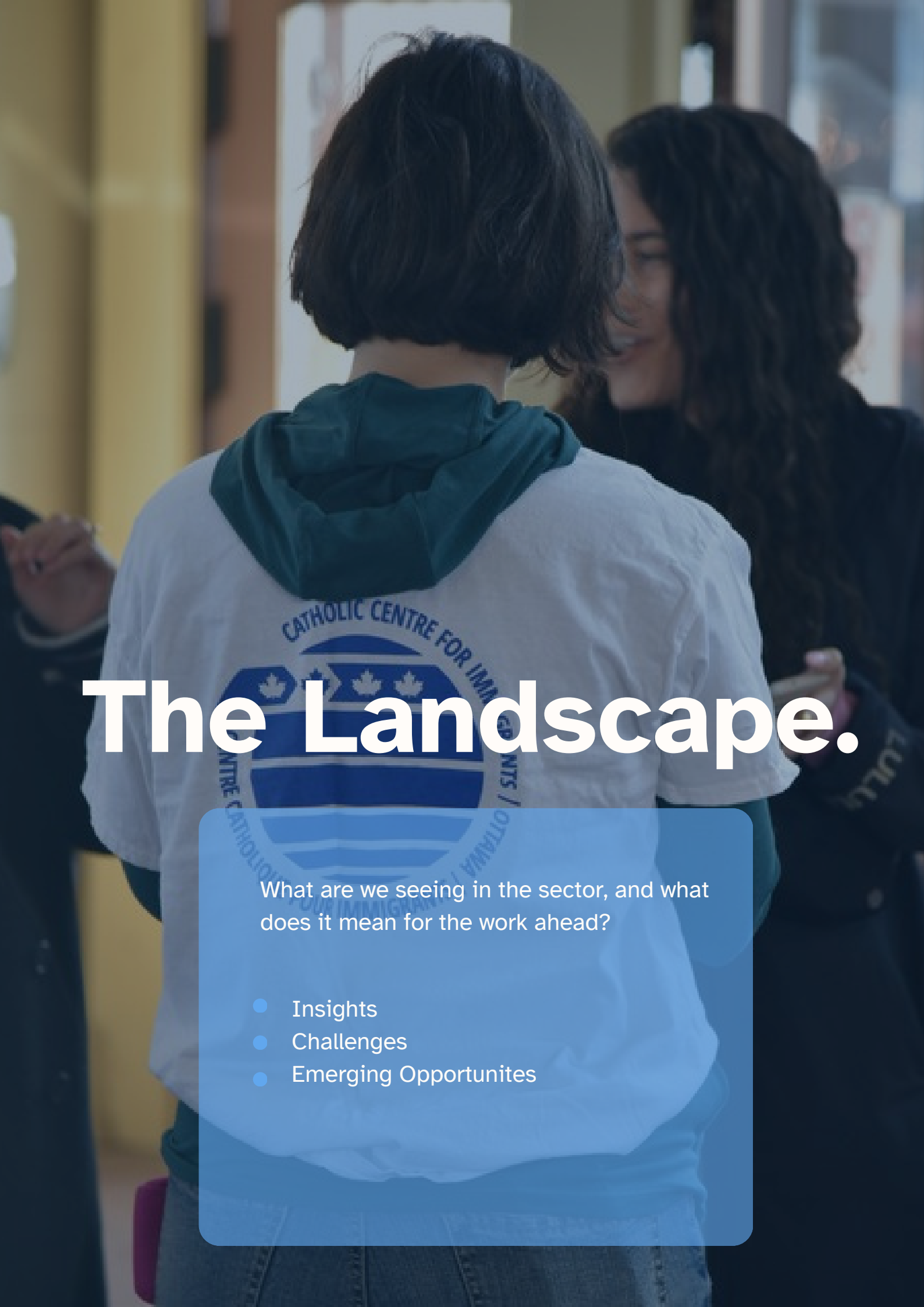
We must actively celebrate, champion, and demonstrably showcase the successes achieved by our clients and within our sector.

In essence, our imperative is clear: we must get on with the vital work of making immigration succeed. Because when we are all aligned and working cohesively, it does.

I look forward to continuing this work, and to partnering with the private and public sectors to make immigration work as it has the potential to. Lasting progress is achieved when organizations move beyond individual priorities and unite around a shared purpose.

By combining our strengths, perspectives, and resources, we can accomplish far more than any one of us could alone. That is the spirit of collaboration that will enable us to meet the challenges ahead and seize the opportunities before us.

This is the power we unlock when we align our efforts, and it's a power CCI Ottawa is dedicated to harnessing as we move forward.

A person with short dark hair is seen from behind, wearing a white t-shirt with a green hood. The t-shirt features a logo for the Catholic Centre for Immigrants, which includes a blue shield with three white maple leaves and the text 'CATHOLIC CENTRE FOR IMMIGRANTS' around it. The person is standing in a room with other people in the background.

The Landscape.

What are we seeing in the sector, and what does it mean for the work ahead?

- Insights
- Challenges
- Emerging Opportunities



Sector Scan

A snapshot of the immigration and settlement landscape at a provincial level, using the most recent data available. While some figures reflect earlier reporting periods, together they help illustrate the broader context in which newcomers and the settlement sector are navigating 2025–26.

42.2%

Ontario welcomed **42.2%** of all immigrants welcomed to Canada in 2025.

Unemployment is highest among recently arrived immigrants, at **10.4%.**



Key Insights for Settlement in Ottawa



Immigration remains central to Ottawa’s future. Newcomers contribute significantly to labour market needs, entrepreneurship, and population growth.



Even if policy numbers decline, settlement services are still experiencing increasing demand alongside evolving client needs.



Integration takes a community. More than ever, strong partnerships across community, government, employers and education help newcomers build successful lives in Ottawa.

Key Challenges



Affordable housing



Access to language training



Recognition of international credentials



Isolation & finding community

Our Response

Making Immigration Work – Our Guiding Philosophy

At a time of change and uncertainty in the settlement sector, making immigration work means staying focused on the core purpose of Canada's immigration system: helping people build successful lives while strengthening the communities and economy they join.

Immigration works when newcomers can turn their talents, experiences, and aspirations into opportunities. It works when barriers are reduced, communities are welcoming, and individuals and families have the support they need not only to settle, but to contribute, lead, and thrive.

At CCI, we believe that achieving this vision requires both steadfast commitment and continuous innovation. Although we have been serving newcomers since 1954, we remain determined to stay on the cutting edge, no matter how the landscape changes and in spite of the challenges before us. After so many years of service, we know that immigration is a force for good, growth, and shared prosperity. As needs evolve and new challenges emerge, we remain focused on improving services and finding new ways to create positive outcomes for newcomers and the communities they call home.

Making immigration work is about more than responding to change.

It is about driving progress, creating opportunity, and ensuring that newcomers, communities, and Canada prosper together.



Strategic Plan.

As we continue our journey through the 2024-2028 Strategic Plan, we are proud of the significant progress made across our strategic priorities.

Many initiatives have been completed or advanced ahead of schedule, reflecting the dedication of our Board, staff, and partners.

The following recap provides a closer look at our progress to date, highlighting key accomplishments, milestones, and the work underway across each strategic priority.



Progress on the Plan

Making immigration work requires more than delivering services. It requires strong organizations that can adapt to change, innovate, and respond to the evolving needs of newcomers and the communities that welcome them. Our 2024-2028 Strategic Plan was developed with this goal in mind: to strengthen CCI's capacity, modernize our approach, and ensure we continue creating meaningful outcomes for those we serve.

While important work remains, we have built strong momentum and are well on our way to achieving our vision of a more agile, innovative, and impactful organization that continues to meet the evolving needs of newcomers and our community.

Re-evaluate our mission and vision to better reflect who we are and what we can do.

- **Refreshed our Mission and Vision** to reflect today's realities and future opportunities.
- **Reaffirmed our commitment** to creating positive change across the National Capital Region.
- **Strengthened our focus on delivering value** to clients and communities.

Refresh our brand as an example of our commitment to becoming a modern, innovative settlement agency prepared to meet the challenges of the future.

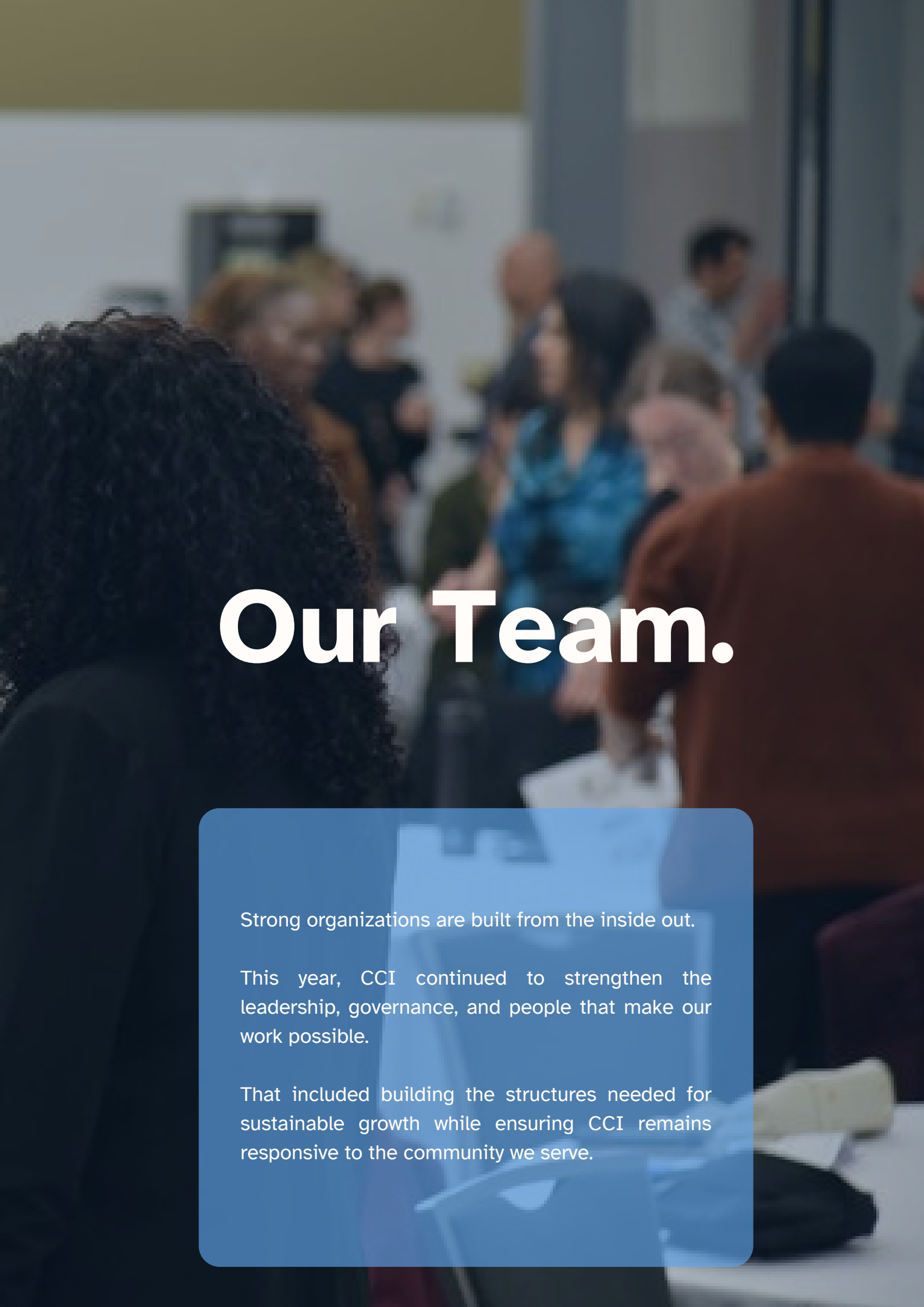
- **Refreshed our brand identity** with a new colour palette, updated logo, and standardized signatures and branding assets.
- **Completely reimagined our social media** presence with a new look, voice, and strategy.
- **Launched a brand-new website** to better showcase our services, impact, and community presence.
- **Strengthened our brand position** with the introduction of our new tagline, *HOME IS HERE*, reflecting our commitment to belonging, stability, and opportunity for all.

Update our infrastructure by establishing policies and procedures that make us more agile, connected, and able to work efficiently

- **Conducted a thorough review and update of organizational policies**, ensuring they are current, consistent, and aligned with best practices.
- **Centralized all policies** in a searchable and accessible repository, improving transparency, ease of access, and staff understanding.
- **Developed comprehensive, organization-wide Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** to promote consistency, efficiency, and knowledge sharing.
- **Created and implemented RACI matrices** to clearly define roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authority across teams.
- **Introduced enhanced HR onboarding procedures** to improve the employee experience and accelerate integration into the organization.
- **Established a new management role** focused on Strategic Initiatives to support organizational growth, innovation, and cross-functional collaboration.

Review programs in consideration of emerging needs, client feedback, and opportunities to reduce duplication within the sector.

- **Ongoing program review and assessment** continues through Leadership Team meetings, Management Team discussions, the Advisory Committee, and the Innovation Team.
- **Engaged an independent third-party** consultant to conduct a comprehensive review of CCI Ottawa's programs and operations, providing recommendations for improvement and future growth.
- **Consulted with an external expert to evaluate workshop offerings, assess participant outcomes**, and develop updated materials that better reflect client needs and current best practices.



Our Team.

Strong organizations are built from the inside out.

This year, CCI continued to strengthen the leadership, governance, and people that make our work possible.

That included building the structures needed for sustainable growth while ensuring CCI remains responsive to the community we serve.

Advancing our Governance

This year, CCI's Board of Directors continued to strengthen the organization's governance framework to support sustainable growth and effective decision-making.

A key achievement was the establishment of a Governance Committee, tasked with reviewing existing policies and developing new ones to ensure the organization's governance practices remain aligned with CCI's evolving needs and strategic priorities.

Recognizing the importance of strong board leadership, the Board implemented enhanced Board Member Recruitment and Onboarding Procedures. These improvements are designed to attract diverse and qualified candidates while providing new directors with the knowledge and support needed to contribute effectively from the outset of their term.

The Board has also completed a review and update of CCI's Bylaws to better reflect current governance best practices. Together, these initiatives demonstrate the Board's commitment to sound governance, continuous improvement, and ensuring that CCI remains well-positioned to fulfill its mission and serve the community effectively.

Our Staff, Our Strength

At CCI, our staff are the foundation of everything we do. Their expertise, dedication, and compassion shape the experiences of the newcomers we serve every day. Reflecting the diversity of our community, CCI's team of 247 staff members speaks more than 35 languages and brings a wide range of cultural perspectives, professional skills, and lived experiences.

Many of our staff have navigated their own immigration and settlement journeys, rebuilding careers, overcoming challenges, and creating new lives in Canada. These experiences deepen their understanding and strengthen their ability to support newcomers with empathy, insight, and respect.

Together, they help bridge cultures, build trust, and create the welcoming environment that enables newcomers to establish roots, find belonging, and thrive in their new communities.

The following story is one example of how lived experience can become a powerful source of empathy, leadership, and service.

Hayfaa's Story

Leaving Lebanon was not a choice. As safety became increasingly uncertain, one staff member made the difficult decision to leave behind home, family, and a career built over many years. Like many newcomers, the journey to Canada meant starting over while carrying the weight of everything left behind.

Before immigrating, she worked as a nurse and later became Head Nurse of a pediatric oncology department, leading teams and supporting children and families through some of the most challenging moments of their lives. The role demanded both strength and compassion, qualities that would continue to guide her long after she arrived in Canada.

The transition was not easy. Unable to immediately continue her nursing career and focused on creating stability for her two children, she faced the reality of rebuilding a life from the ground up. Yet while her career path changed, her sense of purpose remained the same.

Through volunteering and eventually joining CCI as a Settlement Counsellor, she rediscovered that purpose by supporting newcomers as they navigated their own journeys. Whether helping families access housing, food, winter clothing, or community supports, she approached the work with the same care and commitment that had defined her years in healthcare.

Today, as a Program Coordinator in the Settlement Department, she leads a team dedicated to supporting families through some of the most uncertain stages of settlement. Her lived experience shapes her leadership and reminds her daily of the importance of compassion.

As she reflects on her journey, one thought captures it best:

"Before, in Lebanon, I was healing bodies. Today, in Canada, I am healing souls. The work looks different, but the heart behind it has never changed."



Updates & Transformations.

As the needs of our community evolve, so must the ways we connect, communicate, and deliver our work.

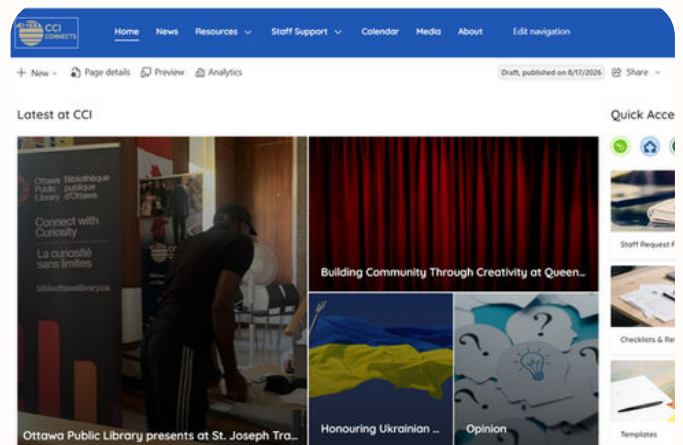
This year, CCI continued its digital transformation, strengthening the tools, systems, and online experiences that help newcomers access information, connect with services, and find a sense of belonging.

Digital Transformation and Systems Modernization

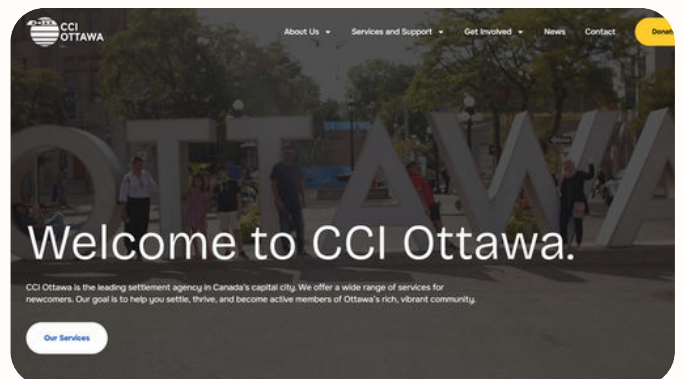
This year, CCI made significant progress in advancing its digital transformation, a key priority identified in the organization's strategic plan to modernize operations, strengthen communication, streamline processes, and better position CCI to meet the evolving needs of the future

In collaboration with **SwiftCore Technologies Ltd.**, efforts focused on improving the use of Microsoft tools across the organization through staff workshops on Microsoft 365 applications, file management, and digital collaboration.

This work also supported the development of **CCI Connects**, an internal hub designed to provide staff with easy access to resources, updates, and organizational information. Piloting an AI-powered knowledge agent to help staff quickly access information, answer day-to-day questions, and navigate organizational knowledge.

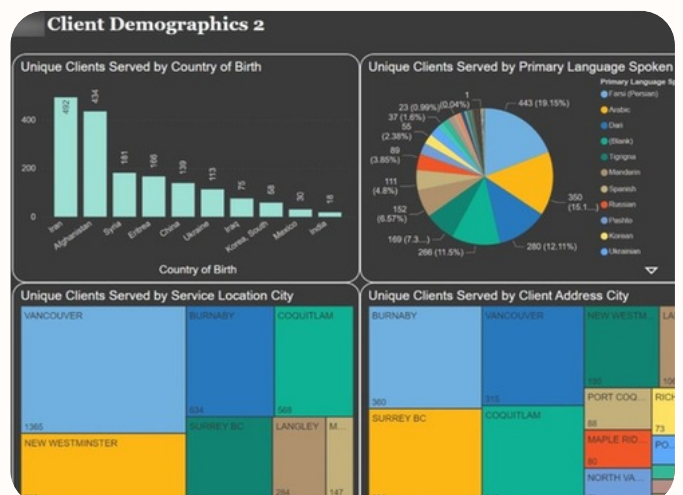


In partnership with **Azuro Digital**, CCI launched a **modernized website** to improve external communications, strengthen its public presence, and make information more accessible to clients, partners, and the community.



Another major milestone was the implementation of a new **Customer Relationship Management (CRM)** system in collaboration with **NewTrack Solutions Inc.**

Phase 1 of the project was successfully completed, including the full transition from the OCMS platform to the NewTrack database. Phase 2 is now underway and will focus on further customization, enhanced reporting, and process improvements to support more efficient service delivery across the organization.



Strengthening Our Workplace to Better Serve Clients

This year, CCI continued to invest in the spaces, systems, and supports that help our staff do their best work. These operational improvements were designed to create a more functional, accessible, and supportive workplace so teams can collaborate more effectively, access the resources they need, and focus on delivering high-quality services to clients.

Key updates included: the creation of a new boardroom to support meetings, collaboration, and virtual engagement; the addition of office space for the Office Manager and Human Resources; and the relocation of the Finance Department to a larger and more confidential area. These changes strengthen day-to-day operations, improve privacy, and provide staff with better spaces to support their work. We have also strengthened internal support for building maintenance, room and resource bookings, general office inquiries, and day-to-day operational needs.

Together, these improvements contribute to a more organized, efficient, and responsive work environment. By investing in the infrastructure that supports our staff, CCI is better positioned to empower teams, strengthen collaboration across departments, and provide welcoming, reliable, and client-centred service to newcomers and their families.



The background of the slide features a blue umbrella and several papers, some of which have QR codes on them. The entire image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

Brand & Marketing.

As we continue to strengthen CCI's presence in the community, our brand and marketing efforts have focused on building greater awareness, consistency, and connection.

From evolving our visual identity and digital presence to amplifying our programs, stories, and impact, we are creating a stronger platform to communicate who we are and the difference we make.



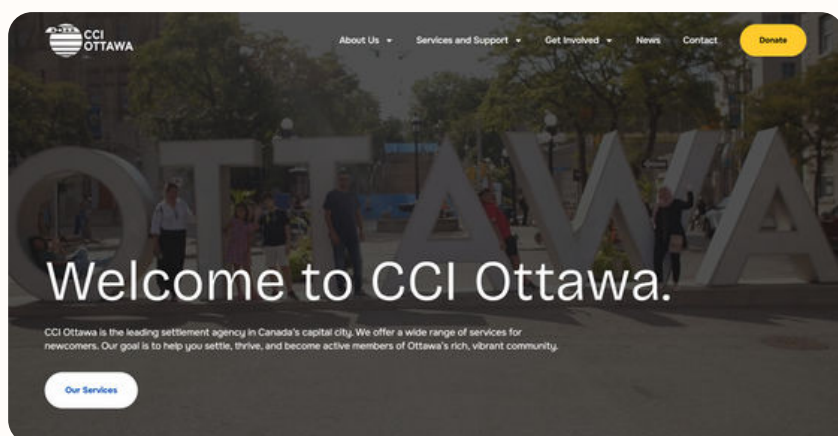
The Home is Here brand

As part of our new brand identity, CCI Ottawa has adopted the tagline *Home is Here*. More than a slogan, it expresses the heart of our mission and the impact we strive to have every day. It reflects our commitment to helping newcomers build a sense of belonging, safety, and opportunity as they begin a new chapter in Canada.

For many newcomers, arriving in Ottawa is both exciting and challenging. They may be leaving behind familiar places, loved ones, and everything they once called home. Home is Here is a message of welcome and reassurance. It affirms that newcomers are valued members of our community from the moment they arrive and that they are not alone in building their future.

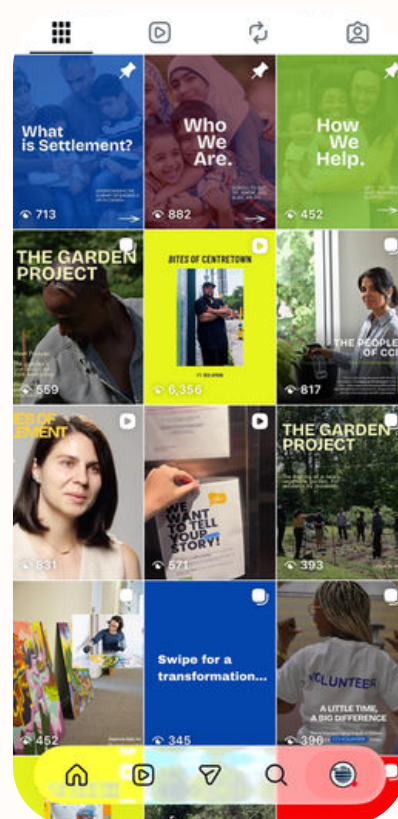
The tagline also speaks to our vision for Ottawa. It is a call to create a city where everyone feels welcomed, supported, and empowered to reach their full potential. Through our programs, services, and partnerships, we help create the conditions where a sense of home can take root and flourish.

Ultimately, Home is Here is a commitment. It reflects our belief that everyone deserves a place where they feel safe, supported, and connected. It captures the warmth, compassion, and dedication that define our organization and the work we do every day, helping newcomers build home, one connection at a time.



Our social media reach has grown from just a few hundred views per month to more than 14,000 (increase of approx. 1,650%,).

Helping us connect with new audiences and bring greater visibility to the people, programs, and impact at the heart of CCI.



A diverse group of people, including a man in a blue cap and a woman in a light blue blazer, are clapping and smiling at an event. In the background, there are colorful sticky notes on a wall.

Department Reflections.

For this year's AGM report, we invited managers to reflect on their departments' achievements, challenges, and impact.

This section highlights key accomplishments, recognizes contributions to organizational objectives, and shares lessons learned and opportunities for future growth.

Together, these reflections show our collective progress and the value each department brings to our mission

Settlement (ISS)

Over the years, the Settlement Department has expanded considerably in both reach and capacity.

Today, the team assists newcomers through needs assessments, information and orientation, settlement planning, counselling, case management, referrals, youth programming, and housing assistance. As client needs have evolved, services have adapted accordingly, with stronger collaborations improving access to local resources.

This work is essential because establishing oneself in a new country often involves navigating unfamiliar systems and challenges. Through guidance, practical information, and individualized assistance, we empower individuals and families to overcome obstacles, access opportunities, and move forward with confidence.

Each year, thousands of newcomers rely on these services as they pursue stability, self-sufficiency, and long-term success.

The department's enduring legacy lies in the groundwork it helps newcomers establish as they begin their journey in Canada. Through trusted relationships and meaningful engagement, the team creates opportunities for growth while fostering stronger, more welcoming neighbourhoods

Program Manager, Sofiane Maghrebi

7092

individual clients
served.

3988

needs assessments
conducted.

22k

internal and
external referrals made.

3137

1166

clients attended the 66
group sessions we
delivered.

447

direct sessions conducted
with newcomer youth.

BY DEPARTMENT

Resettlement Assistance Program

(RAP)

Over the years, the RAP team has continually adapted to the evolving realities of the refugees it serves.

Today, a multidisciplinary staff delivers orientation, life skills training, temporary accommodations, and specialized interventions, including assistance for families with complex medical circumstances. Ongoing enhancements have strengthened the team's ability to provide timely and responsive care.

This effort is meaningful because it enables individuals and families to rebuild their lives during a period of profound change. Through practical aid, direction, and connections to vital services, refugees gain the tools needed to establish independence, develop resilience, and integrate into their new environment. Over the past year, the team facilitated permanent housing for more than 600 individuals.

Its lasting impact is reflected in the strong beginnings it helps refugees create as they build their futures in Canada.

RAP Program Manager, Steven Cote

568

individual clients
served.

619

clients housed.

35

secondary migrants
served.

Client Support Services (CSS)

In 2005, CCI and fellow resettlement organizations recognized that while RAP provided Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) with an important starting point, many continued to encounter complex circumstances requiring ongoing assistance before moving into mainstream settlement programming. Following a successful two-year pilot, CCI became one of five pioneering Ontario sites selected to deliver CSS services in 2007.

The program's value has been demonstrated through its sustained growth and recognition. Regional and national evaluations have consistently highlighted its effectiveness and importance. What began as a small initiative has evolved into a nationwide network of more than 30 locations assisting refugees across Canada. Through collaboration coordinated by the YMCA of Greater Toronto, expertise and best practices are shared across the sector, and CCI is proud to have mentored five of those sites.

CSS is more than a program. It has served as a trusted navigator, advocate, and source of stability for thousands of GARs. What inspires our team is witnessing individuals reclaim their sense of purpose, self-reliance, and belonging as they rebuild their lives and contribute to the places they now call home. Few moments are more rewarding than hearing from former clients after six, twelve, or eighteen months and learning about their achievements: *"I'm a plumber now. I'm a baker now. I'm in university now. I'm a Canadian citizen now."*

CCI's reputation as a leader in refugee resettlement has been shaped in large part by the innovation, expertise, and outcomes generated through the RAP and CSS teams, made possible by the dedication of colleagues and volunteers across the organization.

CSS Program Manager, Paul Soubliere

1514

active Government
Assisted Refugees
Served

2135

assessments conducted
(eligibility, NAMs,
Ongoing, Exit)

6368

direct services delivered

5394

referrals and
accompaniment for
services

1454

info and orientation
sessions delivered

BY DEPARTMENT

Community Connections (CC)

Over the years, Community Connections has become a cornerstone of CCI's work with newcomers.

While linking individuals to services remains important, the program's emphasis has broadened to nurturing relationships, encouraging civic participation, and strengthening belonging. Through Conversation Circles, matching initiatives, workshops, and volunteer-led activities, participants expand their networks and increase their confidence.

The influence of this work reaches far beyond individual activities. Participants can strengthen language skills, build friendships, and become more engaged in community life. Volunteers and community partners are equally important in creating welcoming environments where these relationships can thrive. The program's lasting legacy is the sense of connection it fosters.

By bringing together newcomers, volunteers, and community partners, Community Connections strengthens social bonds, advances inclusion, and helps build a more vibrant and connected community for all.

CC Program Manager, Bryn Johnson

1433

clients served and
connections made

336

conversation circles
delivered, supporting
language learning

110

matching activities
delivered, supporting
mentorship

144

volunteers engaged in
supporting programs

5713

volunteer hours
contributed to
supporting programs

Employment Initiatives (E)

The Employment Department has evolved into a dedicated area of focus, allowing us to provide more specialized support to newcomers through CCI’s two core employment programs: the Health Employment Network and SOPA.

Together with additional employment-focused initiatives, these programs help clients navigate a changing labour market while building expertise in areas such as artificial intelligence, the bioeconomy, alternative career pathways, and employer engagement.

This work matters because employment is a key part of successful integration. Through the Health Employment Network and SOPA, newcomers receive targeted support to prepare for the Canadian labour market, strengthen job-search skills, connect with employers, and pursue meaningful career pathways. Meaningful work provides financial stability while helping individuals build confidence, expand networks, and pursue long-term career goals.

Our lasting contribution is helping newcomers transform their skills, experience, and aspirations into meaningful opportunities. By supporting workforce integration and career development through programs such as the Health Employment Network and SOPA, we help build stronger communities and a more inclusive economy

Program Manager, Anna Larsson Berke



Transitional Housing (TH)

Although still in its early stages, the Transitional Housing Program has quickly become an important part of CCI's continuum of care. Developed in partnership with the City of Ottawa, the program provides safe temporary accommodation and wraparound supports, including settlement, employment, and housing services.

This work matters because housing is often the first step toward stability. Many residents are navigating uncertainty and significant life changes, and the program provides a safe environment where they can focus on their future. By connecting clients with the resources and supports they need, we help strengthen their path toward independence.

The program's lasting contribution will be the support system it provides at a critical stage of the settlement journey. More than temporary accommodation, it offers a pathway toward stability, independence, and belonging. We hope to be known for helping people move beyond crisis, access opportunities, and build successful lives in their new community.

TH Director, Arber Zapluzha

"Since Welcome House first opened its doors, I have seen it become an essential part of Ottawa's settlement services landscape. For me, this work matters because it provides families with stability during what is often one of the most challenging periods of their lives. Welcome House is more than a place to stay.

It is often the first safe home newcomers experience in Canada. It is where children begin attending school, where parents learn that they are not alone, and where families can take their first step toward building a secure future."

Anneke van Nooten,
Manager, Welcome House

"The most rewarding part of this work is seeing residents move from uncertainty to stability. Whether through housing, employment, life skills, or community connections, every step forward reflects the power of creating a supportive environment where people can thrive. We believe everyone deserves a place they can call home.

By providing safety, support, and opportunities for growth, we help residents build the confidence and stability they need to create a stronger future for themselves and their families."

Michael Tay, Manager, Saint Joseph Location

"Transitional housing is about more than providing a place to stay. It is about creating a safe environment where residents can regain stability, rebuild confidence, and start planning for the future.

We take the time to understand each resident's unique circumstances and connect them with the supports they need to feel safe, informed, and confident.

Seeing residents build stability, access opportunities, and move toward independence is what makes this work so meaningful."

Pauline Anderson, Manager, Queen Street Location

144 clients served

53 found permanent housing

211 clients received

633 meals provided daily

140 current residents

46 found permanent housing

Sponsorship Agreement Holder (SAH) Program

CCI has supported the resettlement of refugees through Canada's Private Sponsorship of Refugees (PSR) Program since the 1970s. Established in 2015, the SAH Program has grown steadily and now manages approximately 25 sponsorship allocations annually.

CCI's SAH maintains Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada's Risk Management Plan A designation, the highest level of trust and compliance for sponsorship responsibilities. This reflects the program's consistent fulfillment of obligations and strong operational practices.

During **2025-2026, the program welcomed 30 refugees, including six families** and three single adults, providing vulnerable newcomers with a pathway to safety and an opportunity to rebuild their lives in supportive communities.

As a leading settlement agency in Ottawa, CCI's SAH Program supports individuals and community groups interested in refugee sponsorship by providing guidance, expertise, and practical assistance throughout the process. This year, CCI also partnered with Refugee 613 and the African-Canadian Association of Ottawa (ACAO) to launch the Connectors Project, an initiative designed to strengthen community capacity and enhance support for sponsors and newcomers.

Pastoral Program

One of the few programs of its kind within Ottawa's settlement sector, CCI's Pastoral Program recognizes the important role that faith, culture, and personal identity can play in the settlement journey.

A unique and valued part of CCI's services, the program supports individuals and families from diverse faiths, backgrounds, and traditions. By helping newcomers reconnect with communities that reflect their values and beliefs, it creates opportunities for friendship, encouragement, and support beyond formal settlement services.

As we reflect on the past year, the program's legacy can be seen in the relationships it has helped nurture and the welcoming communities it has helped strengthen. Through its commitment to inclusiveness, the Pastoral Program continues to enrich the settlement experience for newcomers across Ottawa.

28 family units making up 93 clients coming from 10 countries were identified and given information about the faith community of their choice.

A photograph of two people working in a garden. One person, wearing a grey long-sleeved shirt and dark pants, is bent over, using a pickaxe to dig in the soil. The other person, wearing a yellow long-sleeved shirt and grey pants, is also bent over, looking down at the ground. They are working in a garden bed with several small green plants. To the right, there are green wire cages for climbing plants. The background is a lush green field with trees and bushes. The text "Impact Stories." is overlaid in white, bold, sans-serif font across the middle of the image.

Impact Stories.

CCI Ottawa's Ongoing Commitment to Empowering Youth

Thanks to the generosity of Ottawa Rapid FC, a group of newcomer clients, many of them women and youth Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) who rarely have opportunities like this, enjoyed an evening at a professional soccer game. What started as a fun outing quickly turned into a memorable experience. As Ottawa scored, a group of Rohingya clients broke into song and dance, filling the stands with laughter.

For many of these clients, whose journeys to Canada have been shaped by displacement, uncertainty, and significant hardship, moments of community connection are especially meaningful. Their enthusiastic celebration was not only a response to the game but also a reflection of feeling welcomed and comfortable in a shared community space. One of the evening's highlights came when an Ottawa Rapid FC player stopped by to meet the group after hearing newcomers were in the crowd. Sharing that she was also a newcomer to Canada, she spoke with the clients, took photos, and helped create a moment that everyone will remember. Her visit served as a powerful reminder that new beginnings can lead to opportunity, success, and a strong sense of belonging.

Through opportunities like this, CCI helps newcomers move beyond settlement and begin creating positive memories and a sense of belonging in Canada.



A New Chapter Begins



I would like to express my sincere gratitude for everything you have done for me since my arrival in Canada as an asylum seeker. From my first days here, I was welcomed with kindness, respect, and compassion.

Thanks to your support, I found a safe place to live, received help with my daily needs, regained hope, and began rebuilding my life. Your guidance gave me strength during a very difficult time. I would especially like to thank Cherine Barkemel, my employment caseworker, and Edgar, my housing caseworker. Through their dedication, advice, and patience, I am now employed, independent, and preparing to move into my own home.

My gratitude also extends to all CCI staff, including the administrative team, receptionists, cooks, security staff, and fellow residents. Each person contributed to my well-being and journey. You were more than a team. You were a family.

As I leave transitional housing to begin a new chapter, I carry with me deep appreciation for all that you have done. I hope one day to give back and support others as I was supported. The work you do changes lives and restore hope.

*With sincere gratitude,
Fabien Niyongabo*

Small Steps everyday, lead to Big Changes

LANGUAGE & INDEPENDENCE

A client came to CCI unable to speak either official language feeling very disoriented. She gradually found her way with CCI's guidance, which included ESL classes, creche, volunteer opportunities and assistance with her baby's creche registration. She can speak English now and confidently and successfully completed her citizenship test on her own. The client expressed gratitude to her settlement counsellor: **"I felt lost and overwhelmed when I first arrived, but now I feel empowered."** **"Thank you!"**

A BUSINESS DREAM

CSS helped two Syrian GARs clients to achieve their aim of starting a business in Canada. CSS provided advice and information about culinary credentials.

They have since established a profitable café.

FINDING EMPLOYMENT

A senior client, single mother from Afghanistan had limited formal education and no prior work experience, but she took great initiative to get a job as soon as possible as she was responsible for her children.

The client looked for settlement support services and received advice and information about job opportunities. After several attempts and ongoing support, **she successfully secured a job**

A CHANCE TO REBUILD

Yaf and Ama, a Somali family, arrived in Canada in September 2024. They looked for CSS support prioritizing education and a new life. Mrs. Ama. enrolled in Herzing College's Bachelor of Social Work program, while Mr. Yaf worked flexible hour as an Uber driver while caring for their daughter.

While integration presents hurdles, the family remains positive and appreciative for the **opportunity to rebuild their lives in a secure and friendly country.**

FINDING COMMUNITY

A CSS GAR client from Egypt secured full-time work as a chemist assistant while completing university courses, aided by employment services.

Community referrals also allowed her to pursue belly dancing, culminating in a performance at the Canadian Museum of History.

The Financials

CCI's work is supported by a diverse mix of government funding, program funding, donor generosity and other revenue sources, allowing us to provide settlement, housing, employment and community services across Ottawa.

Funding Agreements



Total Funding

\$24,651,918



Operating Expenses

\$24,317,300



Year-over-year growth in funding

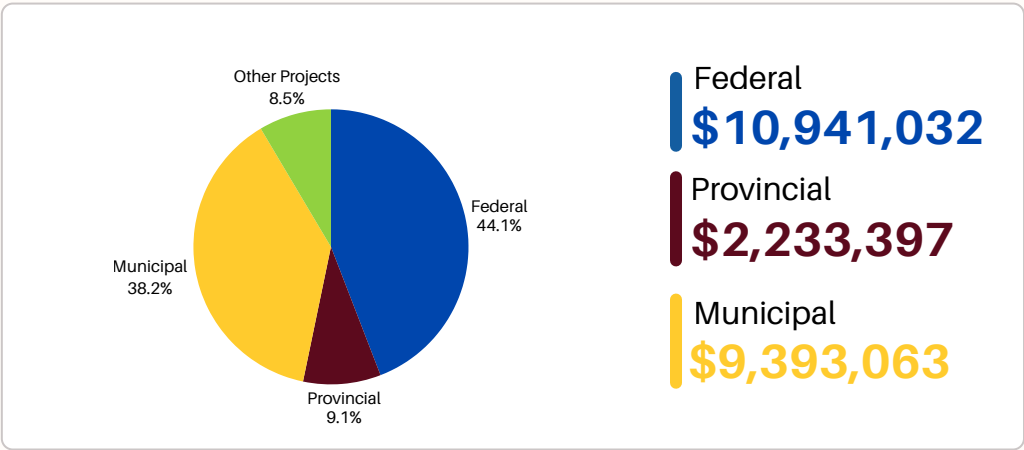
31.4% growth

Community Support



Donor gifting across 12 months

\$192,675.77





in gifts from new donors

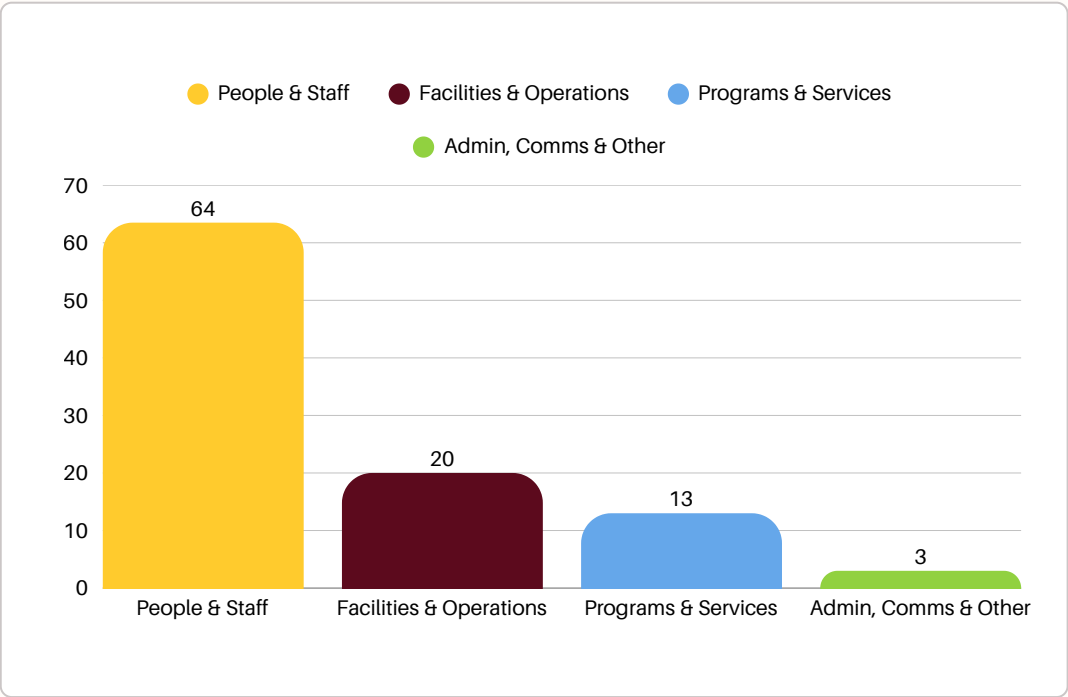
66.52% growth



in gifts per donor, thank you!

20.32% growth

Expenses Categories (%)



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THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & PARTNERS!



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