

2024-2025

Annual Report



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From Cindy:

A message from the Executive Director.

As we look back on another incredible year at CLGW, I want to sincerely thank our staff, volunteers, and community partners. Your passion, care, and dedication truly make a difference in the lives of the people we support.

As one of our staff said, “Seeing someone achieve their goals makes every challenge worth it.” That really captures the heart of what we do—helping people live their best lives while creating meaningful change in our communities.

This past year has flown by, filled with both accomplishments and challenges that we’ve navigated together as a team. Some of the highlights include the launch of our Connect and Plan Services (CAPS), which helps Direct Support Professionals spend more time with the people they support by reducing paperwork and streamlining processes. Also, with the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF), we developed a comprehensive Learning Lab, which includes a mobile lab, so we can provide training across Wellington County.

We’re also proud of the progress made with our Everyone Counts campaign, which has given us more opportunities to participate in community events, connect with others, and share the impact of the work we do at Community Living Guelph Wellington.

But, not everything has been easy. Like many organizations, we continue to face serious challenges, with underfunding being the most pressing. This crisis has pushed us to make difficult but necessary decisions to ensure we can continue delivering quality services.

We've had to carefully review our spending and take restraint in expenses. For example, Community Participation Support was closed for four weeks—two during the summer and two over the holidays—to help ease financial pressures.

We've also reduced our fleet of vehicles, and our operations team remains understaffed.

Despite these challenges, our staff have continued to show incredible resilience, going above and beyond.

I want to highlight once more my deep appreciation for the hard work, adaptability, and commitment of our team. These have been challenging times, but your dedication has ensured that the people we support continue to receive the care and opportunities they deserve.

Together, we remain focused on building an inclusive community where everyone belongs.

Warm regards,

Cindy

Executive Director.



Who we are

We Believe In Community First

Community Living Guelph Wellington supports more than 900 adults with developmental disabilities across Guelph and Wellington County. We believe that everyone has unique strengths, talents, and something valuable to offer. That's why we focus on helping people build meaningful connections in their community—through work, volunteering, finding a home, and enjoying recreation.



Our Mission

We support people with developmental disabilities to live their lives to the fullest.



Our Vision

People with developmental disabilities live their best life.

Services For People We Support

Each person we support, comes to us with their own hopes and dreams. The best part of what we do, is discovering what their hopes and dreams are, and then working alongside them to make it possible.

All our services are delivered from a person-centered approach. This means we put the person's voice and decisions at the center of any support we provide. They direct their life, and we support them to do so.



**Community Participation
Supports**



Campus Friends



**Purchased Services and
Passport Funding**



EmployMENT Options



Group Living



Supported Independent Living

Retirement

Honouring Years of Dedication

We want to take a special moment to celebrate and recognize our incredible retirees this year. Each of you has dedicated more than 20 years of service to CLGW, bringing your passion, hard work, and unwavering commitment to our mission. Through your knowledge, compassion, and determination, you have made a meaningful difference in the lives of the people we support, strengthened our teams, and helped shape the caring and inclusive culture we are so proud of today.

As you step into this exciting new chapter of life, we wish you a retirement that is every bit as rewarding as the years you've given to CLGW. May it be filled with joy, relaxation, and new adventures, surrounded by family, friends, and the communities you love. Please don't be strangers, once you are part of the CLGW family, you will always be part of it.

Kathy Cookman

February 21, 1983 to February 26, 2025

42 
Years of service

Sue Harbin

November 7, 1988 to January 3, 2025

37 
Years of service

Eleanor Beam

February 19, 1996 to September 19, 2024

28 
Years of service

Susan Upper

January 26, 1998 to June 26, 2024

26 
Years of service

Jane Martin

September 17, 2001 to
January 10, 2025

24 
Years of service

Trudy Allen

June 3, 2002 to
November 14, 2024

22 
Years of service

Angela Bukowski

May 18, 2004 to
March 5, 2025

21 
Years of service

Funding Constraints and Actions

We're concerned about the future for people with developmental disabilities and developmental service providers.

The ongoing funding crisis is pushing our organization and the people we support to a critical and unsustainable level. These services are not luxuries — they are lifelines that assist people with developmental and intellectual disabilities in their daily activities, enabling them to live and work in their communities while also offering support and respite for their families.

With growing demand and limited resources, the message is clear: it's time for the people of Ontario to act now and ensure no one is left behind!

Key Issues



80%

of Ontario DS organizations will experience a deficit in 2025-2026



28,000+

people are waiting for housing related support in Ontario.



+52,000+

on waiting lists for critical supports and services in Ontario.



> 70%

of people with a developmental disability in Ontario are living in poverty



>60%

increase in cost of living since 1993 in Ontario, while our budget has only increased by 7%



Supporting Individuals Within Today's Realities

This year, like many before, we continue to face financial challenges in our organization, ending the year in a deficit. As you may know, this situation is not new in our sector, but we remain committed to delivering high-quality, person-centered services, just as we have for over **67** years. To do this, we have had to make some difficult but necessary decisions that keep us on track with our mission of supporting people to live their lives to the fullest.

One of these decisions has been reducing our vehicle fleet. We realized that large vans were often being used for only one or two people, which was not cost-effective. By transitioning to smaller, more efficient cars and SUVs, people can continue to get into the community comfortably, without impacting their schedules or freedom.

Our finance team has also been working hard to review contracts and find vendors who best meet our needs, ensuring we get the best value for every dollar we spend.

We have also strengthened our fund development strategy, applying for more grants and funding opportunities to support projects that directly benefit the people we serve. A highlight this year was receiving \$98,000 from the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF) to upgrade computer hardware and create a comprehensive Learning Lab. This includes a mobile training lab that will not only train our staff but also serve as a resource for other organizations in our community.

At the same time, we've had to make difficult decisions around services. Community Participation Supports were closed for four weeks last year—two weeks in the summer and two during the holidays—to help alleviate financial pressure. We also closed two homes in 2024 due to attrition, as people either passed away or moved. In these cases, we were able to relocate the one or two remaining residents to other homes, ensuring their housing needs were fully met. No one was left without support. The reduction in the number of homes helped reduce operating costs, allowing us to remain focused on quality care.

Through these challenges, one thing remains constant: our commitment to the people we support. We are deeply grateful to our staff, volunteers, and community partners who continue to go above and beyond, ensuring that even in difficult times, we remain true to our values of inclusion, compassion, and respect.



DEFICIT
SURPLUS



Everyone Counts

Advocacy & Awareness Campaign

Unfortunately, many people aren't aware of the vital work the developmental sector does. The truth is, unless someone has a family member or close friend with a developmental disability, they often don't realize the type of services and supports we provide, or how essential they are to building an inclusive and caring community. To help change that, we've focused our efforts on two main pillars: **advocacy** and **awareness**.

Our advocacy work includes building relationships with all levels of government, Media, engagement, storytelling and coalition building. While, our awareness efforts are focus on education and community outreach.

This campaign is helping us build stronger connections, raise awareness, and inspire action across our community.



This crisis is putting pressure on other essential services like long-term care, EMS, public health, mental and physical health, substance use treatment, and social services. These systems are already at capacity, and it could affect you or someone you love when support is needed most.



Government Relations

We sent a letter and follow-up communication to Minister Michael Parsa and Premier Ford, but unfortunately did not receive a positive response. We also met one-on-one with local politicians—Mike Schreiner, Matthew Rae, and Ted Arnott—to highlight the impact and consequences of this ongoing funding crisis.



Community Engagement

We hosted our first Board event with families and the public, where concerns were shared directly with local politicians. A second event took place before the elections—a dance party—where the people we support and their families had the chance to speak with candidates and share their stories and concerns.



Media Communications

As part of our advocacy efforts, we connected with local media and took part in interviews with Guelph Today, The Wellington Advertiser, and podcasts like The Politico Podcast to help amplify our message. Several articles were published, including: “We have a ‘crisis of caring,’ says MPP Mike Schreiner” and “Community Living facing \$3-million deficit, closing two group homes.”



Marketing Materials

We created graphics, brochures, postcards, and flyers to share at events and help spread the word. Storytelling has also played an important role—several videos were made and posted on social media to raise awareness. One of these, “John’s Story,” features his family sharing how essential our services are, and what could happen if the people we support no longer had access to them.



Community Living Month 2024



We also
were part
of the Take
a break
Campaign



Every May, we celebrate Community Living Month by recognizing both the successes and challenges that bring us closer to our mission. It's a time to reflect on the positive changes we've made and to remind ourselves why true inclusion matters.

In May 2024, we hosted one of our first in-person events since the pandemic. It was a wonderful opportunity to come together, enjoy some fun activities, and have meaningful conversations. We were thrilled to see so many familiar faces, along with new ones. Between staff and the people we support, more than **100** people joined us.

We also held smaller, internal events to recognize the amazing work of our employees and to celebrate the passion they bring to the team every day. From a pancake breakfast in the morning to a wings night in the evening, these gatherings gave us a chance to connect, show appreciation, and share a few laughs together.



Learning Computer Lab

Funded Provided by the Ontario Trillium Foundation (OTF)

We're excited to share that, thanks to the generous support of the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we received \$98,000 to develop a comprehensive Learning Lab by upgrading the technology in both our computer lab and auditorium.

This upgraded facility, along with a mobile learning lab, will provide over **7,000** hours of annual training and orientation sessions.

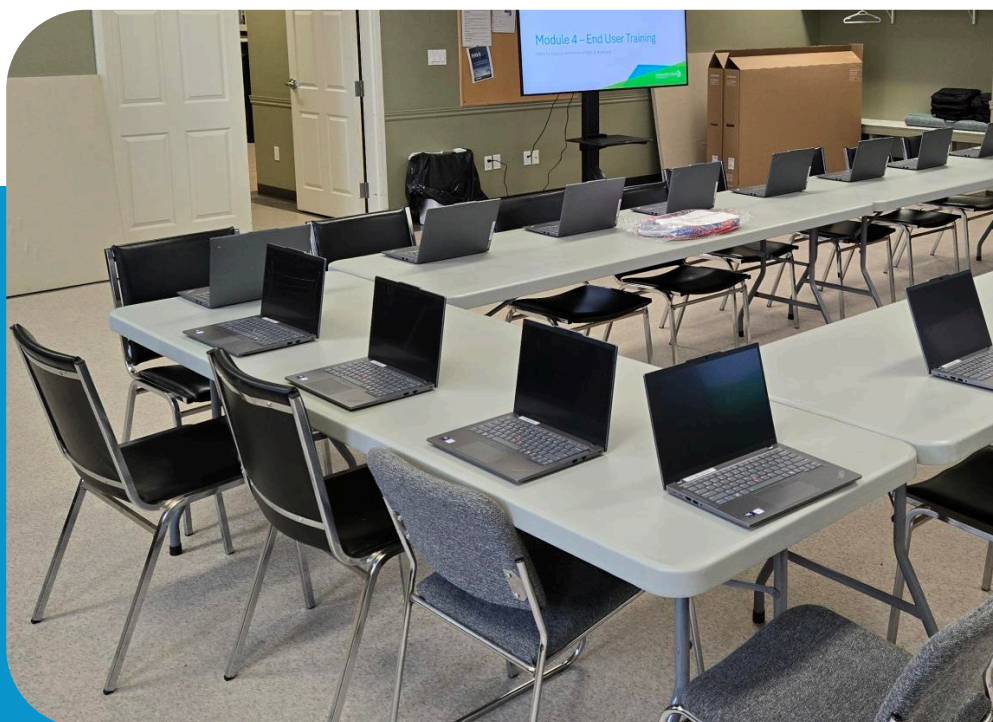
We have been able to train our **+450** Frontline workers in Alayacare platform, part of our Connect and Plan Services (CAPS) digital transformation to serve more efficiently the people we support.

The mobile lab will make training more accessible by eliminating the need for frontline workers to travel to centralized training locations across Wellington County's **2,600** square kilometers. It will also be a valuable tool for community engagement, giving our teams the ability to host educational sessions and workshops for families, caregivers, and community members—building awareness about developmental disabilities and encouraging a more inclusive community.

We can't wait to celebrate this milestone at our ribbon-cutting ceremony in October and share the news with the community and media.

"Technology is best when it brings people together."
– Matt Mullenweg.

Thanks to OTF funds our organization will not only enhance its own capacity but also serve as a community hub for other non-profits and Developmental Services providers, thereby strengthening the Social Services sector as a whole.



Connect and Plan Services (CAPS)

At CLGW we know Direct Support Professionals (DSPs) play an essential role in our organization. We have heard many stories about our DSPs, and the real joy they experience when what they're doing makes a real difference for the person they are supporting.

The time they spend directly supporting people matters. It is why so many of them have made long-lasting careers with CLGW and in disability services.

We want to support our DSPs to spend more time with the people we support and less time on paperwork. To make this possible, our IT and Service teams explored new ways to save time, and this led us to the implementation of **Connect and Plan Services (CAPS) — the name of our digital transformation at CLGW.**

CAPS is powered by a platform called **AlayaCare**, which is designed to improve processes and make information easier to manage. It offers features that will simplify the DSP role and provide quicker access to the tools they need. These include: a digital library with important documents that can be accessed on the go, Individualized Support Plans that track progress towards goals, centralized compliance tracking, digitized schedules, and improved collaboration across CLGW services.

By digitizing and automating many tasks, CAPS will reduce time spent on documentation and give DSPs more time to focus on the people they support.

To guide this work, we created a Steering Committee and a Working Group to shape AlayaCare to meet our unique needs. Since this is a big change, we're rolling it out in phases. On the next page, you can see the project timeline and what's coming next.



CAPS Timeline

The first phase of this project was made possible with the support of the Canadian Red Cross Society through the Community Services Recovery Fund, received in 2023.



April 2024

The CAPS team has started developing introductory CAPS training modules.

January 2025

Phase 1 of training was developed and delivered online.

May 2025

Phase 1 of training was developed and delivered online.

June 2025

Phase 2 of training was developed and delivered in-person.

July 2025

Developed the ISP form and other forms.

Current

Identifying and developing other features for CAPS.

Review CAPS at the Staff Town Hall in September 2025.

Community Living Hubs

You'll find us in Guelph, Fergus, Erin, Harriston and Mount Forest.

We have 5 Community Living Hubs – These act as a welcoming spaces where people can connect, learn, and grow together. Whether you're looking to attend a workshop, or simply meet new people, the hub offers a range of inclusive activities and resources designed to support connection, creativity, and community well-being.

Goals of CLGW Community Hubs

CLGW community hubs bring services together in one place—health, social, and recreational—making it easier for people we support to access what they need. By working in partnership with other organizations, we improve outcomes and experiences, while also encouraging people to build social connections. The hubs create collaboration among staff, strengthen community ties, and help us work more efficiently.

Current Partners

Mount Forest
community Hub -
Albert Street.

Hopewell Support
Services

Traverse
Independence

County of
Wellington

Highlands Youth
Hub

Second Chance

Women in Crisis

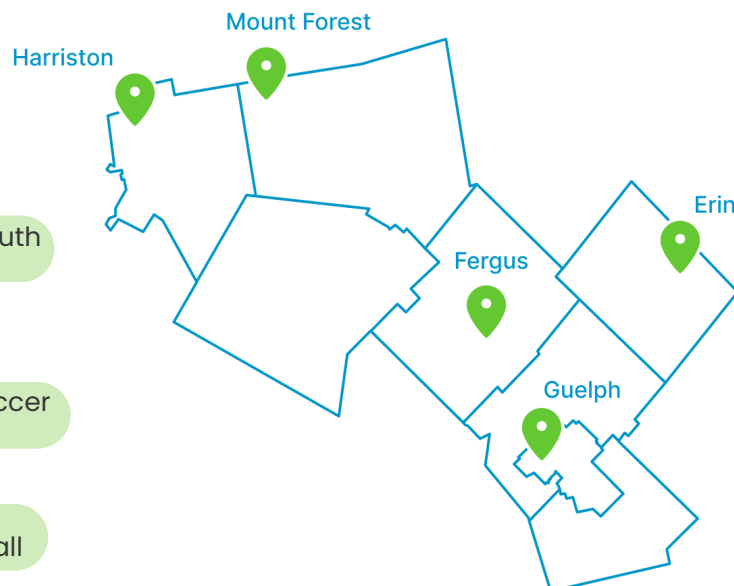
Special Olympics

Guelph Pickleball
Association

Guelph Soccer
Club

The Grove Wellington
Guelph Youth Wellness
Hubs Ontario

Game ON Sports &
Entertainment Basketball



Joint Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (JEDI) Committee

Having an ARDEI (Anti-Racism, Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion) Committee is important because it helps us create a workplace and services that are fair, welcoming, and accessible for everyone.



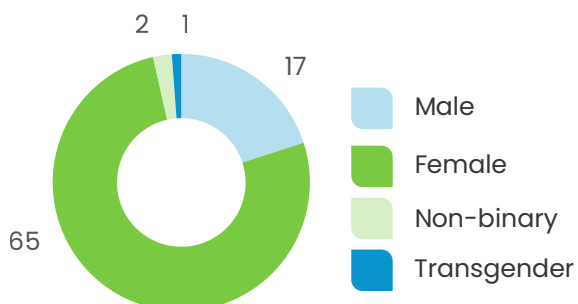
For an agency that supports people with disabilities, the committee plays a key role in identifying and removing barriers, guiding staff training, and making sure our policies and practices reflect equity and inclusion.

In May 2024, the (JEDI) Committee had their first meeting, since then they meet once a month to look at gaps in equity, diversity, and inclusion across the agency and suggest possible solutions. This past year, they hosted their first event on September 30th in honour of Truth and Reconciliation Day, recognizing the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, acknowledging the harm caused by residential schools, and reminds us of our shared responsibility to build a more respectful and inclusive future.

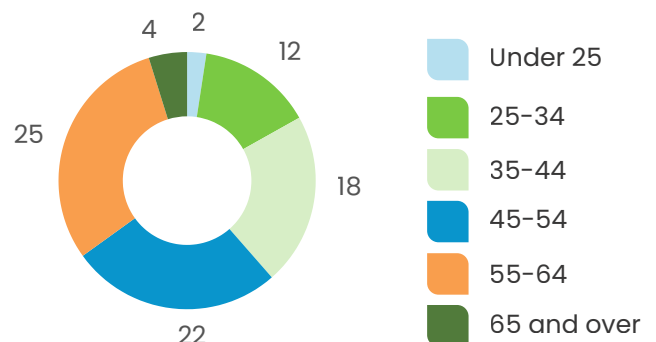
The committee also led a staff survey to better understand experiences and behaviours around anti-racism, diversity, and inclusion. With **83** people participating, the survey provided valuable insights and helped us identify areas where we can continue to grow and improve together.

Anti- Racism, Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Survey results.

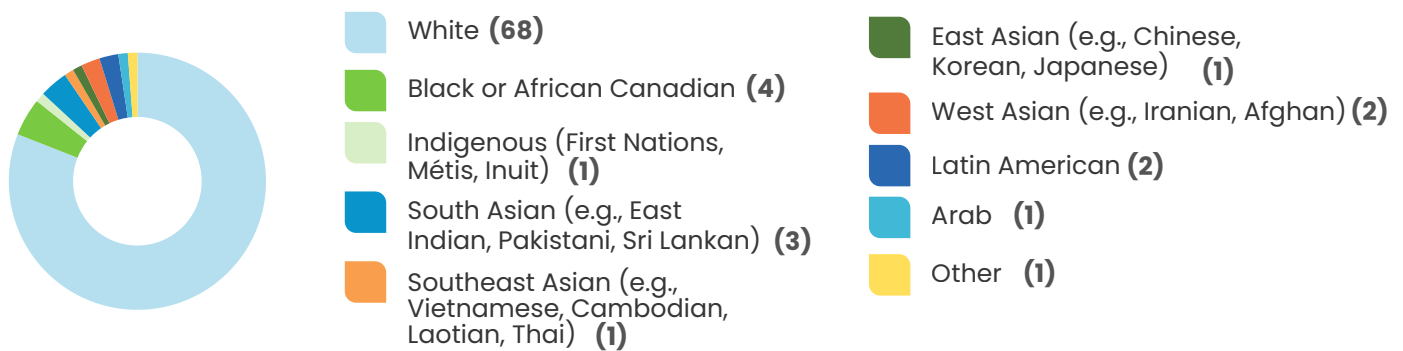
What is your gender identity?



Which age range do you belong to?



What is your race/ethnicity?



On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate our organization's representation of diverse backgrounds and identities?



7.59
Average Rating

On a scale of 1 to 10, how well does our organization promote diversity during the recruitment and hiring process?



7.42
Average Rating

77%

of respondents (63 people) said they have never experienced any form of racism or discrimination at CLGW, while 19 people shared that they have had such experiences.

▲ 81%

of respondents (65 people) said they feel a sense of belonging at CLGW, and 84% (68 people) shared that they feel comfortable being themselves at work.

▼ 69%

of respondents (25 people) said they feel afraid of negative consequences when sharing a different opinion.

The JEDI Committee is reviewing the survey results to develop actionable recommendations to help close gaps in the organization. Staff feedback highlighted ideas such as offering monthly awareness or education tips on being more inclusive, including ARDEI training in the hiring and onboarding process, creating more opportunities to celebrate our differences, ensuring diverse representation among frontline staff, and holding people accountable for derogatory comments. The committee is using this input to propose practical steps that will make CLGW a more inclusive and welcoming workplace for everyone.

Five Star Partnership

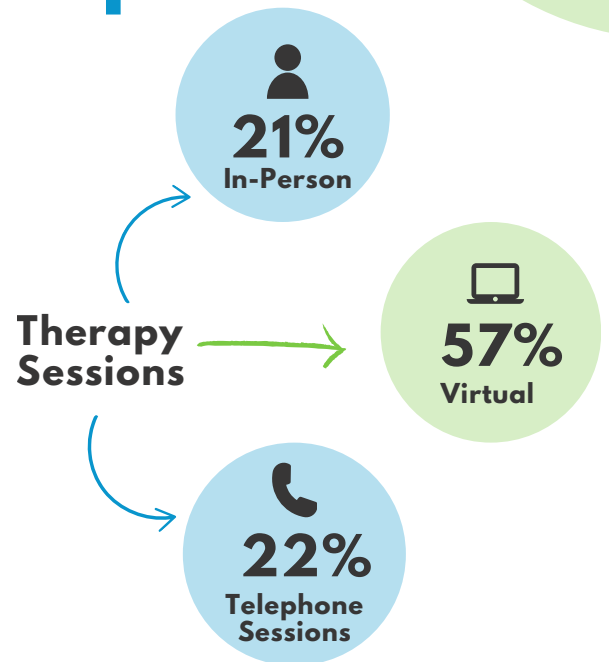
In 2020, CLGW partnered with Five Star Relationships to expand mental health supports. This partnership gives the people we support access to individual counselling, as well as opportunities for team relationship building.

While our Employee Assistance Program has always been available for staff, we saw a growing need to provide people we support with mental health resources.

Through Five Star, individuals can choose in-person, virtual (Zoom), or phone therapy sessions, and can also request a therapist based on gender.

Sessions typically run between 30 minutes to an hour, with **5–10 sessions** provided. If more support is needed, individuals can usually request 2–3 extra sessions. Nearly half of participants ask for additional sessions or to return to the waitlist, showing just how important ongoing therapy is.

About **95%** of those using Five Star come with concerns such as feeling a lack of control in decision-making, grief, difficulty adapting to change, challenges in relationships (especially with roommates), and struggles with social connection. Most participants are from Residential supports (**88%**), followed by SIL (**11%**), and CPS (**less than 1%**). Across CLGW's 39 homes, anywhere from one or two people—or more—are reaching out for Five Star support.



Guelph Public Library Partnership

Libraries plus communities. Put these two words together with Community Living Guelph Wellington, and it adds up to a partnership – and what a grand one it is!

This partnership is a great example of how working together makes us stronger. By collaborating with organizations like the Guelph Public Library, CLGW is able to offer more opportunities, build stronger connections, and move closer to our mission of supporting inclusion and belonging for everyone. Community collaboration allows us to do more than we could ever do alone, and it reminds us that together, we can achieve greater impact. As Margaret Mead once said, *“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

A staff member and co-facilitator of this partnership from the Guelph Public Library shared the following message:

On behalf of the Library, it has been a pleasure to partner with Guelph-Wellington Community Living over the past year. As partners, we have promoted belonging, inclusivity, and social connection in our community. We have developed community-informed programs and events, and through this collaboration, the Library has developed relationships with People4People and the wider Community Living community. We thank CLGW for partnering with us to develop and deliver accessible and diverse services at the Library, and we look forward to deepening our partnership and further enriching the lives of community members.



Board Of Directors

Joe Evers

Chair / Secretary Treasurer

Elizabeth Lowenger

Director

Kerri O'Kane

Vice-Chair

Pauline Busby

Director

Leslie Eckel

Director

Peter Routliff

Director

Areas of expertise



Finance/Fund
Development



Governance/ Board
Development



Knowledge of Broader Health
& Social Services Sector



Experience with
Diverse Populations



Legal



Strategic Planning
& Visioning



Marketing &
Communication



Leadership



Personal
Experience

Our Board of Directors plays a vital role in guiding the mission and vision of our organization. They generously volunteer their time and expertise to help shape the future of CLGW and the lives of the people we support.

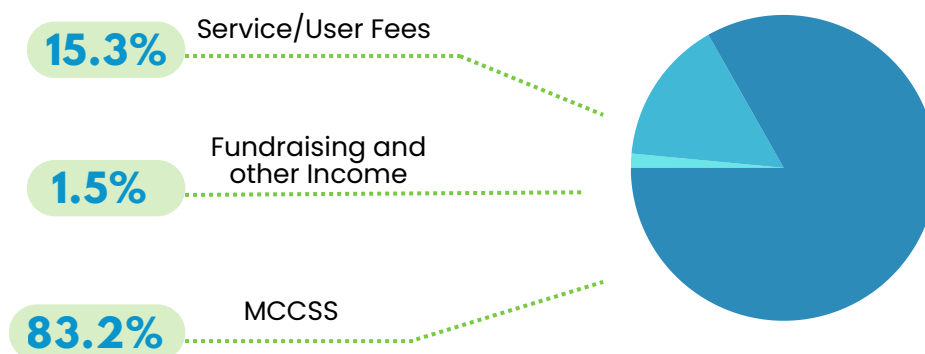
We are grateful for their efforts in keeping the organization running smoothly, advocating for the people we serve, and supporting initiatives like the Everyone Counts campaign. Their involvement includes connecting with politicians, meeting with families, and participating in community events to raise awareness about the impact of the ongoing funding challenges while amplifying the voices of the people we support.

Many of our board members have personal experience with people we support and their families. This brings valuable insights and perspectives, combining professional expertise with lived experience. Their understanding of the daily challenges faced by families and the people we support helps guide our decisions and ensures our programs are both effective and compassionate.

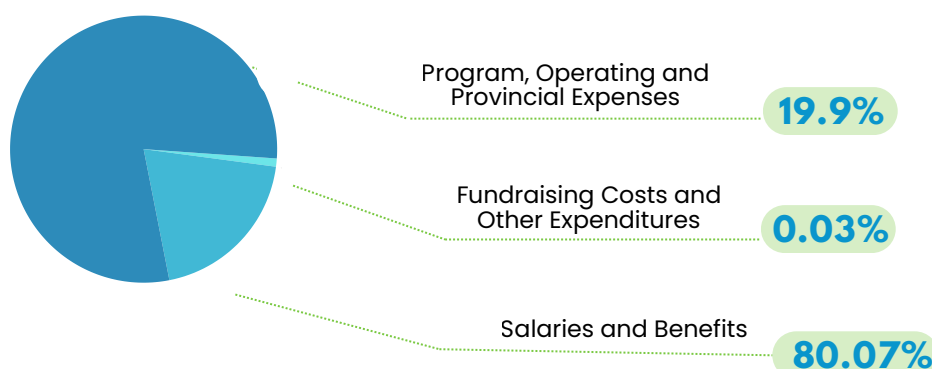
Financial Summary

Revenue	2024-2025	2023-2024
Provincial subsidy	\$25,456,471	26,914,768 85.8%
Sales and user fees	\$4,680,633	4,121,742 13.1%
Fundraising and other income	\$291,368	345,358 1.1%
Total	\$30,595,016	31,381,868 100.0%
Expenses	2024-2025	2023-2024
Salaries and benefits	\$24,550,252	24,823,305 79.8%
Program, operating and professional expenses	\$6,102,734	6,254,168 20.1%
Fundraising costs and other expenditures	\$9,339	19,347 0.1%
Total	\$30,662,325	31,096,820 100.0%
Year-End Net (Deficit) Surplus (67,309)		

WHERE THE MONEY CAME FROM



WHERE THE MONEY WAS SPENT



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