



CCS
Catholic Crosscultural Services

JOURNEYS OF HOPE

**ANNUAL REPORT
2023**

Head Office
55 Town Centre Court, Suite 401
Scarborough, Ontario, M1P 4X4
Tel: 416.757.7010

www.ccs.ca



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Mission Statement

Catholic Crosscultural Services (CCS) provides services to assist immigrants and refugees of all faiths, ethnicities, countries of origin, immigration status, sexual orientation, or political affiliation to develop the skills and acquire the necessary knowledge to settle, integrate and succeed in Canada.

Our Guiding Principles

1. Respect for Human Dignity
2. Respect for Human Life
3. Association
4. Participation
5. Preferential Option for the Poor & Vulnerable
6. Solidarity
7. Human Equality
8. Subsidiarity
9. Stewardship
10. Common Good



Our Vision

A Canada where newcomers feel at home, thrive, and can contribute to society

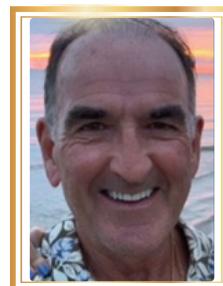
President's Message

I am honoured by the trust and faith reposed in me by the Board of Directors to lead CCS this past year. The composition of the Board's membership changed with the expiry of terms and the addition of new members who have greatly contributed to the purposes of our agency, and I thank them for their support.

It has been a most eventful year on other fronts. Foremost, changes in provincial legislation enacted in 2021 governing both for-profit and not-for profit companies, like CCS, compelled us to reorganize our basic corporate status. We will be in compliance well before the law's effective date in October 2024. These changes will allow our agency to amalgamate its eight by-laws, enacted since our creation in 1959, into one, affording our governance structure greater stability and flexibility to face the challenging directions that may confront us in the future.

Also on the governance front, for some years now CCS has spearheaded a consortium of commercial concerns and religious orders to create a wholly-separate corporate entity, known as The Gathering Place, whose sole focus will be the creation and development of affordable housing for the clients we serve. Its incorporation is imminent, and I am very pleased to announce that past president Angela Gauthier will be its inaugural president. Angela will be joined by CCS's former finance committee chair Jim Leon on the new board, ensuring our close connection in meeting our clients' needs. I wish them both the best of luck in their new roles.

Claudio Ruiz has proven to be a great addition as our Executive Director. I thank him for bringing his enthusiasm and innovative ideas to our agency, and his efforts to maintain and enhance secure sources of funding for CCS operations. Of course, he was clearly assisted by a dedicated and wonderful staff, all of you, who shine as the hallmark of CCS's service offerings to our new neighbours in need. Thank you all.



Sean M. Kennedy
President

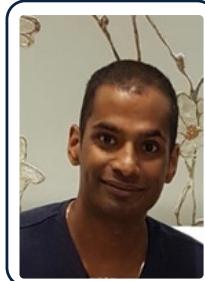
Board of Directors



Leah Barrett
Vice President



Marisa Zanini
Treasurer



Prevain Devendran
Secretary



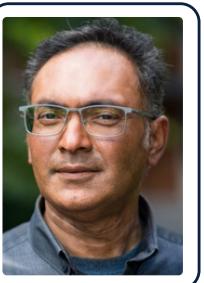
Rev. Dr. Marc Doucet
Director



Fr. Obinna Ifeanyi
Director



Sr. Patricia Grant
Director



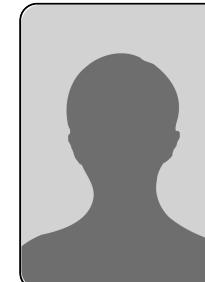
Darrell Pinto
Director



Joseph Macdonald
Director



Reginald Alvares
Director



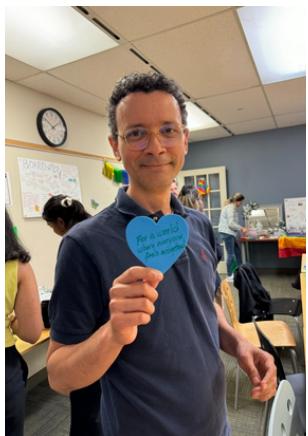
Libero Papagni
Director



Angela Gauthier
Immediate Past
President



Executive Director's Message



Claudio Ruiz
Executive Director

Dear Friends, Supporters, and Community Members,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with immense gratitude and pride for the incredible work we have done together this year. Our goal to support immigrants and refugees in their journey to establish a new home in Canada has been more vital than ever, and it is through your unwavering dedication and support that we continue to make a meaningful impact.

We have witnessed firsthand the resilience and strength of the individuals and families we serve. From navigating the complexities of resettlement to building new lives in a new country, our clients have demonstrated extraordinary courage. Their stories inspire us daily and reaffirm the importance of our work.

Our dedicated team has been at the heart of our efforts, working tirelessly to provide essential services such as settlement counselling, skills development, language training, and community-building programs among others. We have expanded our outreach, launched new initiatives, and strengthened partnerships with local stakeholders to ensure that the voice and mission of CCS is amplified in the community.

Highlights from this year include:

- 1. Expanded Programs:** We collaborated with the Asian Business Management Program at York University to deliver "[**Skills Bridge: Linking Newcomers to Ontario's Manufacturing Future**](#)," a training program for newcomers seeking jobs in manufacturing, supply chain, and logistics. Funded by the Province of Ontario through the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development of Ontario (MLITSD), the program provided skills training, employer site visits, and job search support for four cohorts, with 80% of participants achieving employment. Additionally, we provided Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) training to 15 employers to enhance their capacity to hire and retain a diverse workforce.
- 2. Community Engagement:** Our outreach efforts have strengthened connections among diverse organizations in Scarborough and the Peel region, creating a supportive network for those we serve. In the [**Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Collective Project**](#), we collaborated with the University of Toronto - Scarborough Campus to engage over 180 stakeholders in designing a community-informed funding process aimed at improving newcomer service delivery and decision-making.
- 3. Advocacy and Awareness:** We increased our advocacy efforts to build relationships with stakeholders, including elected officials, to influence government policies affecting immigrants and refugees and raise awareness of their challenges.

These achievements were made possible by the incredible support from our funders, staff, volunteers, and partners. Your commitment has been the foundation of our success. As we look ahead, we remain dedicated to empowering newcomers with the tools and support they need to thrive.

We are excited for the coming year as we embark on vital projects to enhance our effectiveness. Guided by the needs of those we serve, we will continue to innovate towards a more inclusive and compassionate society.

Thank you for being an essential part of our community. Together, we are making a difference, one life at a time.

By the Numbers



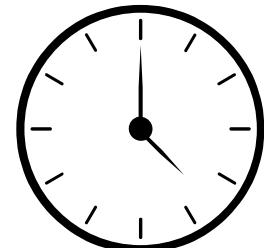
48,465 Clients Served



2,279 Group Sessions



273 Volunteer & Student Placements



16,646 Volunteer & Student Placements Hours

Top Communities Served



List of Communities

Afghan	Mexican
Bengali	Nigerian
Chinese	Pakistani
Colombian	Philippines
Eritrean	Sri Lankan
Indian	Syrian
Iranian	Ukrainian
Iraqi	

CCS's Services

Language & Employment Support

We provide **English classes for all levels**, helping refugees and immigrants settle, **secure jobs**, access services and **integrate smoothly**.



Refugee & Other Support

We assist **groups across Canada** in sponsoring refugees globally, lead community-driven efforts to streamline resources for **effective newcomer integration** and have a **robust volunteer base** supporting GTA's newcomers.



Settlement Services

We aid newcomers in Canada for **successful integration**. Our services provide personalized support and group sessions in **30+ languages** across the GTA



Women & Youth Services

We offer **confidential support for newcomer women and children** facing domestic abuse ensuring safety, housing and mental health. Settlement workers in schools assist newcomer youth and **families with community integration** and school support.



Our Programs

Settlement Integration Place

- ▶ Provides personalized settlement support and self-serve resources, aiding newcomers to become self-sufficient and foster community connections.

Newcomer Settlement and Language Training Program (NSLT)

- ▶ Facilitates newcomers' engagement in all facets of Canadian social, economic, and cultural life.

Families in Settlement Together

- ▶ Provides holistic support to families with children including children with special needs, through assessments, one-on-one support, and group activities.

Settlement Services

Highlight

The Newcomer Women Settlement and Resource (WSR) initiative produced **multilingual resources to improve access to services for women and girls** in Peel. Supported by the Canadian Women's Foundation, **CCS also created a guide for Settlement Workers**, covering essential services and offering strategies to empower and support women.

New at CCS

Under our NSLT program, **support for asylum seekers was added** to enhance access to settlement and integration supports for asylum claimants.

“I was about to return to my country of origin because I could no longer afford my expenses and I can't even buy a winter jacket for my son. This money (Child Tax Benefits) gives me relief and financial security for a few months.”

Newcomer Client

Our Impact

Client J arrived in Canada in June 2023 with his two young children under the Government-Assisted Refugees (GAR) program. Without the children's mother, he **faced unemployment, financial challenges, and had limited English skills**. He sought assistance from CCS, referred by Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services, and requested a Spanish-speaking settlement worker.

We **connected him to** our Language Instructions for Newcomers in Canada (**LINC**) program to improve his English and provided **job search support** and **Food Handling training** through CCS's Employment Coach. We also assisted with his children's **school registration** and **helped him secure winter clothing** and gifts for them through the Holiday Helpers organization.

Highlight

In partnership with COSTI, **International Student Connect supported students at Centennial College** and, recently expanded to Loyalist College. Services include one-on-one and group sessions for settlement assistance.



Our Programs

Financial Literacy

- Empowers confident money management through individual and group sessions, helping newcomers understand their finances, alleviating stress, and instilling confidence in achieving personal goals and family needs.

LGBTQ+ Settlement

- Assists LGBTQ+ newcomers addressing unique settlement challenges; connecting them with resources and creating a smoother settlement

Welcoming Communities

- Offers specialized settlement assistance based individual needs, creating safe spaces that promote learning and empowerment.

Settlement Services

CCS has been an indispensable guide on my journey to settling in Canada. They provide me with resources, they offered a lifeline of support and encouragement. With their unwavering dedication, I not only found employment but also discovered a profound sense of belonging... CCS didn't just transform my journey, they transformed my life, turning uncertainty into empowerment and fulfillment.

Newcomer Client

New at CCS

CCS has opened its ninth site location, the **Settlement Resources Networking Hub**, which offers newcomers a variety of services. These include settlement assistance, pre-employment support, financial literacy programs, **networking opportunities**, **community connections**, wellness initiatives, **Indigenous programs**, the **Golden Agers Club**, and diversity and inclusion initiatives.

Our Impact

When Alex, a **transgender youth** newcomer, arrived in Canada, she **faced significant challenges** in **finding employment, securing housing, and connecting with her community**. She needed tailored housing guidance, job search strategies, and support for integrating into the LGBTQ community. Systemic barriers and discrimination further complicated Alex's journey.



With the comprehensive **support from CCS**, she was able to **secure a job** and engage in community-building activities, including day trips with LGBTQ groups. Furthermore, the stress she faced required **mental health support**, which she received from a Youth Wellness Worker at CCS. These experiences enabled Alex to **socially integrate** and **foster a sense of belonging** in her new environment.

Our Programs

Newcomer Mental Health Program

- ▶ Provides a wide array of mental health and wellness support services, including short-term crisis counseling, a Women's Wellness Program, and youth mental health support. In partnership with libraries, schools, and community organizations, these services are delivered using anti-oppressive, linguistically and culturally sensitive, client-centered approaches, helping individuals navigate their mental health journey during the settlement process.



Mental Health Services



Women's Wellness Expo

Our Impact

Ahmed, a recent refugee claimant, was **struggling with frustration, low confidence**, and **dissatisfaction with his job** as an Uber driver. He also **felt isolated** from his spouse and lived with extended family.

Referred to **CCS Peel Crisis Intervention**, Ahmed **engaged** in a three-month **mental wellness counselling** program. The sessions provided coping strategies, **improved his self-esteem**, and helped him understand his emotions. This support **empowered** Ahmed to enroll in a college course to enhance his English and **pursue a career as a mechanic**.

In a follow-up, Ahmed **expressed gratitude for the counselling**, noting that it helped him regain confidence and clarity. He valued the **safe space** to explore his strengths and plan for a better future.

Highlights

- ▶ Our work with the **OCASI Mental Health Promotion Project** and other collaborations continues to break barriers and support community wellness.
- ▶ Our Newcomer Youth Wellness Project supported skill development and community integration through mentoring. Over the past year, **324 youth received one-on-one support** and participated in **54 settlement-related group sessions**.
- ▶ The Peel Newcomers Settlement & Wellness Expo **engaged 50 newcomers with sessions on Women's Wellness and Financial Literacy**, offering support in family, mental health, and diabetes education through partnerships with Bridgeway Family Centre, JFJ Hope Centre, and Bramalea Community Health Centre.

Our Programs

Language Instructions for Newcomers in Canada (LINC)

► Provides support to newcomers through free English classes at both the Toronto and Peel locations. This caters to language levels from beginner to advanced, effectively reducing barriers and facilitating a seamless settlement process across the GTA. Recognizing its students' needs, the CCS LINC program also offers child minding services.



Language Support

New at CCS

Four new LINC Peel classes were launched in Mississauga and Brampton for literacy and advanced English learners. These classes, designed for diverse needs, enhanced engagement and progress.



Family Day with LINC Toronto

This year, we introduced Family Day events at both Scarborough locations.

Highlights

- To assist LINC instructors in supporting students with learning disabilities, the workshop "Understanding Learning Disabilities - Unlock Potential" was offered, providing practical guidance on identifying and accommodating diverse learning preferences to enhance students' classroom experiences and success.
- Our LINC program strengthened partnerships with organizations like the **Opening Doors Project and the Canadian Mental Health Association**. Through over 140 presentations, workshops, and training sessions, we empowered students and newcomers to engage with their communities and integrate into Canadian society.
- Support services, and Online Technology and Basic Computer Skills sessions surpassed targets with 2,220 participants.

Our Programs

The Employment Access Program (EAP)

- Enhances the employability of newcomers through targeted initiatives, fostering self-employment and facilitating effective job placements to empower workforce integration.

Acronyms:

- **SDF:** Skills Development Fund
- **SDI:** Service Delivery Improvement



Employment Support

Highlight

In February 2024, the Employment Access Program held its 14th **Annual Employment Resource Day (ERD)**, connecting 12 organizations and employers with over 80 CCS service recipients. The event, themed "Connect, Belong & Thrive," **facilitated connections** for newcomers and **explored job opportunities**, providing vital support for their settlement and employment needs.

New to CCS

The EAP began offering tailored services for refugee claimants. These services include career planning, job search assistance, resume and interview preparation, and understanding Canadian workplace culture. The program also helps service users use CCS's **JobConnect portal** to connect with employers.

Highlight

The SDI team partnered with the University of Toronto to present their three-year study on online vs. in-person/hybrid occupation-specific language training at the 26th Metropolis Canada Conference in March 2024. **Their findings will help improve service delivery through virtual learning.**

Our Impact

Through our Newcomer Women's project, over **81% succeeded** in securing **volunteer or employment** roles in their desired sectors.

 We facilitated **two DEI trainings** for 15 employers to enhance their ability to **support a diverse workforce** and create inclusive workplaces.

 Through our SDF-Supply Chain Training program, **80% secured employment** and many achieved **professional certifications** like Project Management Professional.



In March 2024, York University celebrated the graduation of 25 SDF Project participants, in collaboration with the Asian Business Management Program, each earning a credit-bearing certificate.

Our Programs

Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)

► Offered at 193 TDSB and TCDSB schools in Scarborough. SWIS helps newcomer families integrate into the Canadian education system. It supports in navigating school environments and accessing settlement services which fosters smooth transitions and enhances students' academic and social success.

Women's Mental Health

► Our mental health and wellness initiatives have strengthened community connections and empowered clients. Collaborating with libraries, schools, and community organizations, we've offered tailored wellness sessions and counseling that promote mental health discussions.

Women and Youth Services

The 'Girl Boss' program **helped youth address social anxiety** and assertiveness, **boosting their confidence**.

An art therapy workshop for **multicultural women** at an elementary school successfully **showcased their artwork**, despite language barriers.

Clients served: 537
Group Sessions: 108
Participants: 989

224

Activities hosted at the community connections hub, with **1,404** visits total

70

Youth assisted with resumes and job skills at Summer Job Networking Event

520

Families in the GTA received gifts and essentials from Holiday Helpers



New at CCS

The Community Connections Hub was launched at Stephen Leacock C.I., providing a range of activities including arts, sports, and mental health support.

New at CCS

The 'Mural Art Project,' funded by the Toronto Arts Council **engaged youth in creating murals on mental health and self-belief** at Stephen Leacock C.I. and St. Joan of Arc Catholic Academy, promoting creativity, teamwork, and community engagement.

Our Programs

Women's Support Services (WSS) and Transitional Housing Support Program (THSP)

► We assist newcomer women experiencing domestic violence with in-person counseling, shelter, housing, legal aid, and emotional support. Our program also offers short-term and long-term goal-oriented counseling to help them understand and cope with the impacts of abuse.



Women Support Services

New at CCS

A WSS counselor launched an open group for women who had experienced intimate partner violence (IPV), starting with 8 participants and growing to 24. The group offered tailored workshops and expert guest speakers, fostering regular communication that helped women understand their experiences and provided support and resources from others in similar situations.

Our Impact

Beverly faced years of human trafficking and felt hopeless about caring for her three children. After confiding in a friend, she learned about CCS and reached out for help. She connected with a THSP worker who provided resources and support for a funding application through the Women Support Network. Within a week, she received housing support, allowing her to move into a safe home with her children, away from her trafficker.

Grateful for the quick assistance, Beverly was also referred to CCS's Christmas programs and participated in a focus group to share her housing experiences in Canada.

Our Impact

A 36-year-old woman from Colombia, who arrived in Canada on August 8, 2019, endured severe abuse and control from her husband. Seeking help on November 7, 2023, she was supported by our Orientation Worker, who noticed her distress and created an emergency plan.



With guidance, she separated from her husband, secured Legal Aid, and obtained visitation rights. She moved into a subsidized unit after initially staying with a friend and is now pursuing a career in Photography. Her story demonstrates the vital role of support services in overcoming abuse and building a new life.

Our Programs

The Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP)

- Enhances Canada's refugee sponsorship and resettlement efforts with training, support, and information sharing to sponsoring groups via online sessions, in-person training, inquiries assistance, and publications.

Refugee Sponsorship Support Program (SSP)

- Offers pro bono legal assistance for those privately sponsoring refugees. Aiding in the initial application process and we connect sponsors, with sponsorship experts and pro bono lawyers.

Volunteer Program

- Dedicated volunteers and students have played a pivotal role in sustaining our services for newcomer, immigrant, and refugee communities across the GTA and beyond.

Refugee and Other Services

332

Training sessions conducted online and in-person for 7,490 participants

49

Live training sessions on new policy and program requirements were launched in fall 2023

9,793

inquiries were addressed by RSTP to assist sponsors in the refugee sponsorship process



At our 2023 volunteer appreciation event, we awarded the "Volunteer of the Year" for the first time. This recognition was given to a volunteer who contributed over 160 hours to CCS.

Your passion for helping individuals like me shines through in every interaction. Your patience in addressing my queries, no matter how big or small is truly commendable. Your commitment to ensuring that I understand every aspect of the process is I hold in high regard.

Sponsorship Agreement Holder Representative



New at CCS

In June 2023, RSTP launched a toll-free helpline, improving accessibility for sponsors. The helpline operates Monday to Friday from 9 AM to 7 PM Eastern, allowing sponsors to receive timely assistance from the RSTP team.

Our Programs

Toronto East Quadrant Local Immigration Partnership (TEQLIP)

- Enhances newcomer integration in Scarborough through local strategies, efficient resource use, and partnerships, uniting diverse experts to create a more inclusive environment.

Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Collective

- In partnership with TEQLIP, this is a 2-year effort to develop a community-based newcomer service model in Scarborough.

Service Delivery Data Hub

- Facilitates data collection and analysis to improve newcomer services in Scarborough, offering local insights through bi-annual reports, a data dashboard, and analytics training for participating agencies.

Refugee and Other Services

The **BRIDGES Forum** provides a key platform for GTA service providers to **discuss innovative strategies** for supporting newcomers during challenging economic times. The 2024 event, themed “Innovating Service Design, Delivery, and Partnerships,” took place in February at the Centennial College Event Centre. It drew over 170 in-person and 30 virtual participants from 75 organizations.



The Scarborough Newcomer Settlement Collective project wrapped up in March with an event to celebrate the **collaborative efforts of over 180 newcomer stakeholders in Scarborough**. The final report and model of participatory governance were completed and shared.

The Data Hub successfully developed and launched a data dashboard for its participating organizations. This new tool allows them to securely and conveniently access the collaborative's findings with ease.



Funders

Federal

- ▶ Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- ▶ Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC)

Provincial

- ▶ Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development
- ▶ Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)
- ▶ Ontario Trillium Foundation

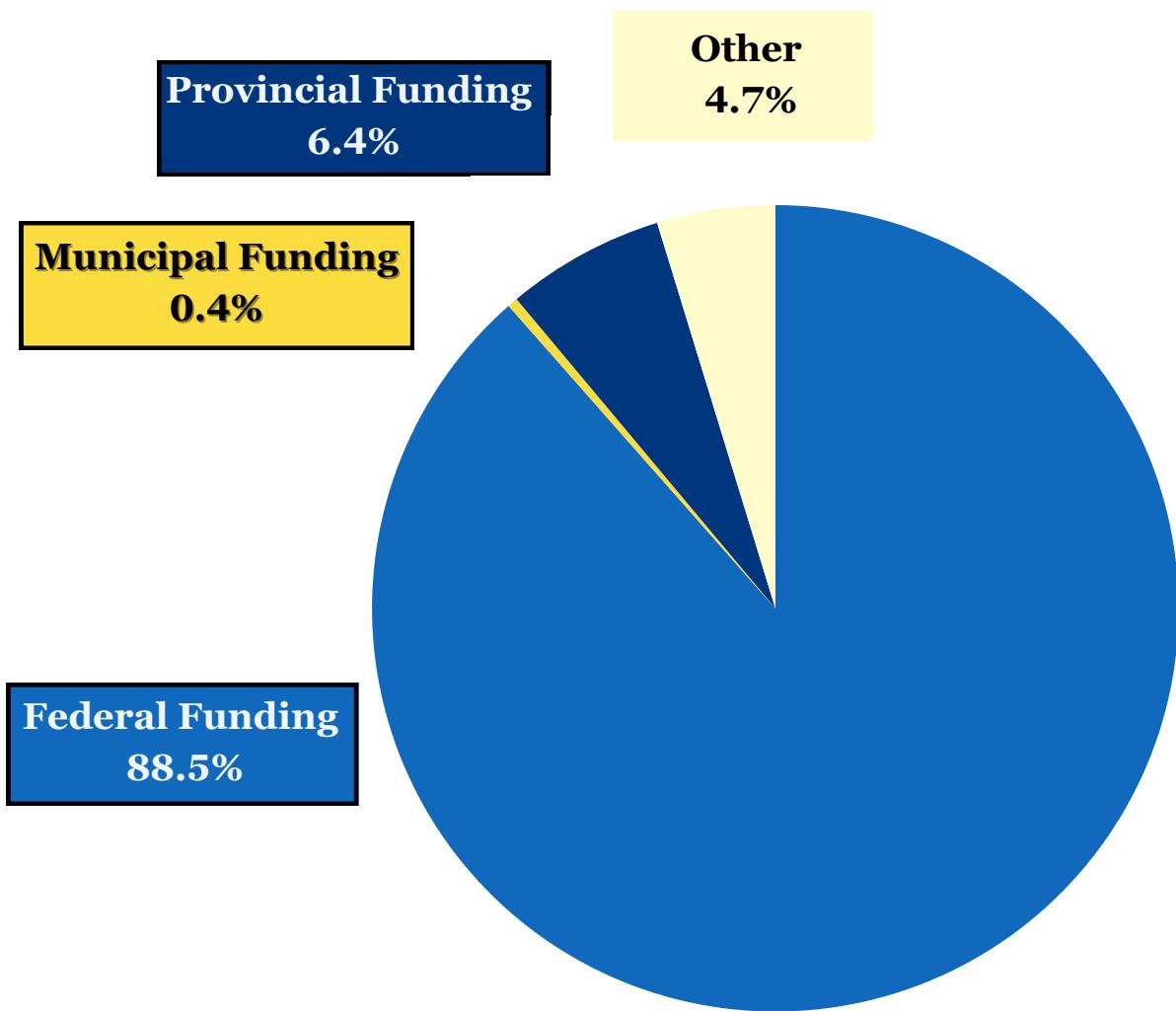
Municipal

- ▶ City of Toronto

Other

- ▶ Catholic Charities
- ▶ Canadian Women's Foundation

Funding Sources



Total: \$19,850,725

CCS Locations

Scarborough Locations

1200 Markham Road, Suite 503
Scarborough, Ontario M1H 3C3
Tel: 416.289.6766

2206 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 124
Scarborough, Ontario M1L 4S7
Tel: 416.759.8800

3227 Eglinton Avenue East, Unit 135
Scarborough, Ontario M1J 3M5
Tel: 416.266.7200

Cedarbrae Mall, Basement Level
3495 Lawrence Ave E,
Toronto, Ontario M1H 1B2
Tel: 416.757.7106

Refugee Sponsorship Training Program (RSTP) National Office

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 401
Scarborough, Ontario M1P 4X4
Tel: 416.757.7010

Head Office

55 Town Centre Court, Suite 401
Scarborough, Ontario, M1P 4X4
Tel: 416.757.7010 (call for appointment)

Mississauga Locations

3660 Hurontario Street, 7th Floor
Mississauga, Ontario L5B 3C4
Tel: 905.273.4140

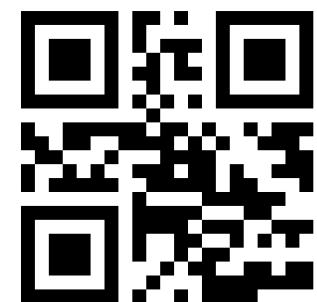
4557 Hurontario Street, Unit B11
Mississauga, Ontario L4Z 3M2
Tel: 905.272.1703

1477 Mississauga Valley Boulevard
Mississauga, Ontario L5A 3Y4
Tel: 905.232.7010

Brampton Office

164 Queen Street East, Suite 306
Brampton, Ontario L6V 1B4
Tel: 905.457.7740

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@CCSNewcomers



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@CommunicationsCCS



A Canada where newcomers feel at home,
thrive, and can contribute to society.