



**ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2015-2016**



**MAKING CANADA HOME** 

# WELCOME TO CANADA!

*COSTI helped over 1,900 Syrian newcomers settle in their first home in Canada.*



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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT



As President of COSTI, I am very proud of what our Board, volunteers, donors and staff have accomplished over the past year. Most significantly, our involvement in a historic and massive initiative that began in November 2015, when the Canadian government undertook a commitment to bring 25,000 Syrian refugees to Canada by the end of February.

Toronto was the largest destination in the country. With the support of all three levels of government, foundations, service providers, local Syrian community organizations and generous Canadians, we were able to help 1,900 Syrian newcomers settle in their first home in Canada.

While the work of resettlement has only just begun, we are confident that new and existing partnerships and the generosity of thousands of Canadians will continue throughout the coming years, helping not only Syrian newcomers, but all refugees and immigrants coming to Canada from around the world.

In addition to our work with Syrian newcomers, COSTI continued to expand our programs and services within the greater Toronto area, Ontario and overseas. Our Orientation to Ontario program launched the delivery of webinars to clients overseas in July 2015; Pre-arrival Services were enhanced to streamline services and provide effective coordination overseas; and a new partnership with the Calabrian Benevolent Association of Ontario was established to operate a Seniors' Day Centre in Vaughan for seniors with mild dementia.

*With the support of all three levels of government, foundations, service providers, local Syrian community organizations and generous Canadians, we were able to help 1,900 Syrian newcomers settle in their first home in Canada.*

COSTI provides immigrants and refugees with knowledge, access and skills that accelerate their ability to engage broadly and deeply in all aspects of Canadian society. Our Vision could not be accomplished without the countless hours of commitment and dedication from our Board, volunteers and staff, and the generosity of hundreds of donors. Our thanks to everyone who has helped make the dreams of thousands of newcomers become a reality this past year.

**Bruno M. Suppa**  
President

# EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT



All 1,900 newcomers are safe in their new homes because of everyone involved. No one person or organization was solely responsible.

The historic initiative by the Canadian government to fast-track the arrival of 25,000 Syrian newcomers to Canada was a transformative experience for COSTI. We were responsible for receiving and resettling 1,900 newcomers in the span of three months. By the end of April, the majority had moved out of their temporary accommodation and into their new homes.

Two key reasons for the success of this initiative, was the unprecedented cooperation and coordination by all three levels of government and the involvement and mobilization of grass-roots organizations and individuals. The community's involvement and contribution has been outstanding, as thousands of Canadians stepped forward to help. Volunteers came together to help in many ways – providing interpretation, transportation to medical appointments, searching for homes, hosting events and dinners, making monetary donations and providing clothing and household goods.

The stories of support offered by volunteers and the appreciation of Syrian newcomers across Canada are countless. In March, a volunteer approached me and mentioned that she had asked a family of newcomers what had impressed them most about Canada. The response was spontaneous, “the generosity of Canadians.” In December, I was at the Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre where I helped hand out winter toques, mittens and scarves that were knitted by volunteers. Some of the knitters had left personal messages with the packages. A man came to me asking if we had the address of the particular knitter because he wanted to send a thank you note. He showed me the card that had accompanied his toque. It read, “I have not knit in forty years, but I thought that you were a good reason for me to start. I hope this keeps you warm. Welcome to Canada.” My emotions run high as I recount this experience. Imagine what this woman did, and what all the volunteers have done, extending their talent, their time and good will to total strangers. That to me is the noblest of virtues. All 1,900 newcomers are safe and in their new homes because of everyone involved. No one person or organization was solely responsible. The community collectively achieved the remarkable goal of quickly providing safe and secure homes for the Syrian newcomers.

COSTI has always had strong institutional partners, from settlement agencies to Community Colleges, to complement our work with newcomers. The Syrian refugee initiative has provided a greater opportunity to work more directly with civil society for the benefit of refugees. This has allowed us to provide a more robust service to our clients while at the same time educating community members, through their engagement, on the value of immigration. We feel that this can only contribute to the formation of a more welcoming community for newcomers. We currently have a Stakeholder Engagement Manager that is working with mosques and other civil society groups to provide enhanced services to our clients. Out of a challenge came an opportunity to be of greater service.

**Mario J. Calla**  
Executive Director

# COSTI AND THE COMMUNITY

*COSTI's work in the community continues to be a high priority.*

**Through active participation in local, provincial and national committees, advisory and working groups and ad hoc coalitions, we have represented the voice of immigrants, refugees and the immigrant serving sector in planning and coordination, public policy, research and public education.**

COSTI's over-arching goal is to create conditions that enable immigrants and vulnerable populations to become valuable and contributing members of society. COSTI's leadership team works to promote public policies that facilitate the integration of immigrants and support their communities to build internal leadership and capacity.

As the organization responsible for the resettlement of over 1,900 government-assisted Syrian refugees to Toronto, our community work expanded in order to better respond to the immediate needs of our clients. Over 45 new partnerships were developed with community health organizations, grass-roots community groups, faith-based organizations, and settlement agencies.

With the hiring of a Stakeholder Engagement Manager, COSTI collaborated with partners to deliver services to Syrian newcomers that supported their integration: housing support services; activities, events and workshops that engaged children and parents; help with introducing them to services available in their local community; and donations of food, clothing and household items.

In addition, a family-matching initiative that saw Canadian host families paired with a Syrian newcomer family was established. Host families provided invaluable support and assistance to Syrian newcomers – from the day they moved from temporary housing to their new home. They provided support in receiving furniture; setting up their households; shopping for essential items such as food, bedding etc.; escorting families to local financial institutions, grocery stores, parks and community centres; exploring nearby public transportation routes, and help in registering children in school. Having the host family by their side proved to be a great comfort to many families. The family-matching initiative continues today – welcoming and helping all recent refugee arrivals at our Ralph Chiodo Family Immigrant Reception Centre.

In 2015/16, COSTI supported the continued development of local community groups, such as Lifeline Syria and the South Asian Women's Rights Organization, serving Bangladeshi women in Scarborough. COSTI worked with hundreds of partner organizations to coordinate the International Student Connect Program, Problem Gambling, Orientation to Ontario Project and the Welcome Centre Immigrant Services network in York Region. Collaborative and innovative approaches to service delivery allows COSTI and key partners the opportunity to meet the needs of under-served communities and also develop internal capacity to build, enhance and sustain services.

# 2015/16 SNAPSHOT

## Service Partners

Partnership and collaboration amongst organizations is key to the successful integration of newcomers. COSTI is represented on many community planning networks, umbrella organizations and advisory committees. We work in partnership with organizations and service providers across Ontario in the planning and delivery of services to the community.

*A breakdown of our various partners:*

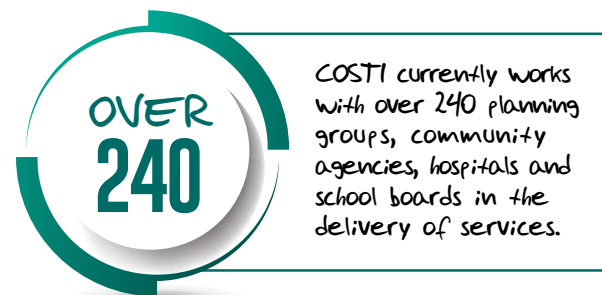




*His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston, Governor General of Canada, addresses guests at an awards presentation hosted by COSTI to recognize and honour community partners and volunteer organizations, who, together with COSTI, welcomed and helped settle over 1,900 Syrian newcomers to Toronto.*

## COSTI & THE COMMUNITY

COSTI is proud to have been a part of key organizations including the Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC), the Consortium of Agencies Serving Internationally-trained Persons (CASIP), Local Immigration Partnerships in Toronto, Peel and York Region, Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI), the Service Delivery Advisory Group to the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, the National Settlement Council, Canadian Council for Refugees, the Peel Syrian Refugee Settlement Support Working Group, Ryerson University Employment Round Table, and the Resettlement Adaptation Program Working Group.



His Excellency the Right Honourable David Johnston  
Governor General of Canada

## PARTNERSHIP AND COLLABORATION

*is key to the successful integration and engagement of newcomers*

### *A Path to Home: Supporting Housing Needs for Newcomers*

A Path to Home: Supporting Housing Needs for Newcomers is a national pilot project funded by the government of Canada and coordinated by the YMCA. The objective of the pilot is to reduce the visible and invisible barriers faced by newcomers by providing a case management and holistic approach to services that not only assists individuals with access to housing, housing stabilization and eviction prevention but also addresses additional needs or services that individuals new to Canada may face, such as locating English classes and medical care in their community.

### *International Student Connect*

The International Student Connect Program initiated by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade to support international students wishing to settle in Ontario, represents an innovative collaboration between settlement service providers and post secondary institutions. The program offers resources, information sessions and workshops on a variety of settlement topics. The workshops and sessions address issues such as features of life in Ontario, accessing local services, consumer awareness, housing and health care. The program is led by COSTI, in partnership with 10 settlement agencies and 14 colleges and universities in eight Ontario communities: Barrie, Brantford, Hamilton, Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, and Waterloo.

### *Neighbours, Friends and Families (NFF)*

NFF is a province-wide public education campaign that raises awareness of the signs of woman abuse so that those close to a woman at-risk can recognize the signs of abuse and know what actions to take in response. COSTI participated in the public awareness campaign and delivered culturally and linguistically sensitive training to community workers at participating community agencies working with immigrants and refugees.

### *Orientation to Ontario (O2O)*

A bilingual initiative, O2O was designed to ease the transition of newcomers by providing access to standardized information about settlement in Ontario and connecting newcomers to community services upon arrival. O2O is being delivered by 19 community agencies across the province. COSTI, in partnership with College Boreal, OCASI and George Brown College, provided program development, evaluation, promotion and staff training to support the delivery of the program.

A webinar component was launched in July 2015 for the delivery of the program overseas.

### *Problem Gambling*

COSTI provides advice and expertise on newcomer problem gambling issues to service providers who provide mental health and addiction services to ethno-cultural communities in need of culturally and linguistically appropriate treatment and services.

### *Welcome Centre Immigrant Services*

The Welcome Centre Immigrant Services is a one-stop service in York Region, designed to guide and support immigrants through the maze of information and resources. Core services provided at each of the five Centres by a partnership of agencies include: settlement and integration services; language training and enhanced language training; accreditation and qualifications assistance, and employment supports.

# Responding to the needs of ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS

Last year COSTI helped over 4,700 newcomers integrate faster by exploring new learning models and program features that help newcomers to develop the English language skills necessary to secure employment and settle successfully in Canada. In York Region, the Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) Program focused on specialized skills such as pronunciation, every day conversation, grammar and writing, and language for work.

Our Enhanced Language Training Program (ELT) continued to develop and standardize materials and procedures and developed stronger connections with employers in order to enhance placement opportunities for Internationally Trained Individuals.

Many newcomers understand that it is very important to speak English so they can effectively go about their daily activities and advocate on behalf of their children and themselves. Our goal is to offer programs and services that help newcomers feel engaged and part of the community.

Imad El Hasan considers himself one of the lucky ones, coming from a nightmare, to experiencing a dream-like life here in Canada, unlike many of his Syrian friends in Turkey who tragically died while attempting to cross the sea. Many times during the day, he stops and thinks that someone is going to wake him up and tell him that everything has been a dream and that he is back in Turkey, experiencing hardship and a limited future with no opportunities. Imad, his wife Hanan and their four children call Mississauga their home now and are excited about their future in Canada.

Syrian newcomer Imad El Hasan, his wife Hanan and their four children. Attends English classes. Studying for his driver's licence. Living a dream.

**4,700** newcomers improved their English language skills by attending English language classes at all levels, including literacy, pronunciation and grammar in Conversation Classes, Enhanced Language Training or computer courses.



of clients who graduated from the Enhanced Language Training Program or studied English at COSTI in 2015/16 have a college, university, or post-graduate degree.

"My family and I are adapting well to Canada and Mississauga. My children are going to school, learning English and making new friends, while my wife and I attend English classes and also volunteer in the community when time allows. As a professional who worked in real estate and construction in Syria, I understand that learning English is important for me in order to find employment in the same field here in Canada. It's also important to be able to speak English to help with every day tasks, like going to the bank or shopping at the local grocery store.

We have had so much help from community groups and COSTI since we first arrived in the winter of 2016. Before we began studying English, Arabic-speaking employees at COSTI and community volunteers were able to help us settle in our new home and register our children for school and introduce us to different shops and activities in the community. Mirna El Sabbagh helped us with our day-to-day needs and connected us to community groups that we could turn to for help. She still continues to visit and help us, even when it is not part of her job.

We have made learning English a priority. Today, as we learn more and more English, we have become more independent and rely less on COSTI staff and community groups to help us with our day-to-day activities. We are adapting and integrating well. In fact, I am studying for my driver's license and my wife Hanan already has her food handling certification, and works once a week at the Newcomer Kitchen in Toronto, sometimes taking public transit from our home in Mississauga to downtown Toronto all by herself.

A year from now, I hope to be fluent in English and working in a job that suits my profession, or where I can be productive, not just working in a 'survival job.' My wife hopes for the same. But my biggest hope for the future is to see my children happy and for my youngest daughter to sleep peacefully through the night because she feels safe in her new home in Canada, no longer experiencing nightmares that have her screaming and yelling in her sleep."

## Language & Skills Training Services

### LANGUAGE TRAINING

English language classes available at all levels, language training in the workplace and enhanced English language training in the administration and customer service, health care, teaching, accounting and finance fields, including language terminology, job search and placement.

### SKILLS TRAINING

Skill and special courses, including computer courses, citizenship acquisition courses.

### CARE FOR NEWCOMER CHILDREN

Child-minding support for LINC students at the North York Centre and Welcome Centres.

## Locations

### CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE

760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

### ENHANCED LANGUAGE TRAINING SERVICES, BRAMPTON

10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 109A | Tel: 905-451-7147  
227 Vodden Street East, Suite 3 | Tel: 905-459-6700

### LANGUAGE AND SKILLS TRAINING SERVICES, NORTH YORK

1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 206 | Tel: 416-244-9980

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM NORTH

8400 Woodbine Avenue, Suites 102-103 | Tel: 289-846-3645

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM SOUTH

7220 Kennedy Road | Tel: 905-479-7926

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, NEWMARKET

16655 Yonge Street, Unit 26 | Tel: 289-841-3032

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, RICHMOND HILL

9325 Yonge Street | Tel: 289-842-3124

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, VAUGHAN

9100 Jane Street, Building H | Tel: 905-761-1155

# CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS

The Syrian newcomer initiative has necessitated a focussed approach within COSTI's Employment Services to ensure these newcomers quickly engage with the labour market. In 2015/16, a refugee support program was developed by COSTI, with a focus on employment-related supports to help Syrian newcomers learn how to navigate employment services in Ontario.

In order to facilitate their successful economic integration, our work will further expand next year by connecting them to employers as well as appropriate services or training in their local communities. The faster newcomers find employment, the quicker they engage and become self-sufficient members of the community.

Last year, over 10,000 internationally trained individuals, young adults, high school and university graduates were one step closer to achieving their goal of finding the right career and job. Our Employment Services team is committed to helping clients achieve their employment goals.



adults and youth came to COSTI looking for employment, retraining or advancement in education.

**Martha Ebanks' relationship with COSTI started over nineteen years ago when she attended her first workshop on résumé writing. She returned as an older adult, looking to secure permanent employment.**

*"After I upgraded my résumé, I was immediately hired by Walmart Canada as an Assistant Store Manager and worked there for eight years before I went on to work at Shoppers Drug Mart for seven years. Wanting to improve my opportunities, I went back to school and found part-time employment as a Medical Office Assistant.*


*Parents sometimes struggle to be able to support their children and provide them with opportunities that were not always made available to them growing up. As a single mother on a part-time salary, I quickly realized that the opportunities available to my child would be limited. That's when I came back to COSTI, where I met with Employment Consultant Terri Foley who encouraged me to update my résumé and attend career workshops.*

*Every morning, from 9:00 am to 1:00 pm, I would send out résumés and Terri would help me prepare for my interviews. Within two weeks I received four job offers, one of them a full-time position with Clera Windows and Doors. Although the position at Clera was not in the medical field, Terri advised me that the office experience in a well-established company would help build on my previous experience. I couldn't have made a better choice, I would have still been working part-time if I hadn't made the decision to get help and advice from COSTI Employment Services for a second time!*

*I was very motivated to improve my life and the life of my child. It takes commitment, hard work and patience to move forward with your career goals...it also takes commitment from an organization like COSTI and Employment Consultants like Terri, who believe in you and share in your dreams of achieving success in your life."*



**715**  
unemployed and under-employed individuals accessed our online e-facilitated workshops to help improve job search skills.

 **Martha Ebanks**  
Employed. Clera Windows and Doors.

## Employment Services

Career Assessment and Planning, Job Search and Placement, Job Maintenance Support services for adults (including internationally trained professionals/tradespeople) and youth are provided through a comprehensive and integrated service model intended to address individual needs. Services include: individual assessment, counselling, pre-employment training, group workshops and employment and job maintenance placement. Individuals can also benefit from a range of on-the-job placement and training opportunities relevant to their specific career goals. Exploration of trades apprenticeships, customized job searches and mentoring opportunities are available.

The Canada-Ontario Job Grant (COJG) provides resources to employers to undertake training and professional development in their workforce. COSTI is a designated provider of the COJG.

### LIFE SKILLS TRAINING

Employment preparation workshops to develop life and management skills and career exploration options. Services for residents of York Region or social assistance recipients include career planning, résumé development, interview skills and creation of a personal job search plan.

### ONLINE SERVICES

Using an interactive online platform e-facilitated by Employment Consultants, online services are available to unemployed and under-employed individuals who face multiple barriers and cannot otherwise access on-site services. An Employment Resource room is available for specific job search techniques and tools, and a Virtual Library listing key websites related to employment research and job search.

### HOMELESS INITIATIVES FUND - EMPLOYMENT

Supports individuals accessing COSTI's Housing Help programs. Participants undergo an employability assessment, individualized return-to-work action plan, pre-employment workshops and career exploration that lead to self-improvement and/or employment.

## Locations

### BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 300 | Tel: 905-459-8855

### CALEDONIA CENTRE

700 Caledonia Road | 416-789-7925

### JANE STREET HUB

1541 Jane Street | Tel: 416-645-7575

### ONTARIO WORKS

The Hospitality Options Program Essentials (HOPE) and Internationally Trained Individuals Program, provide basic training on career planning, résumé development, interview skills and creation of a personal job search plan. Services for job-ready social assistance recipients include assessment, four weeks of group instruction, individual job placement and follow-up support.

### RESOURCE AND INFORMATION

Individuals access information on careers and occupations, the local job market, training opportunities, and job search strategies to successfully find and maintain employment. Resources include: computerized job banks, internet access, fax/photocopier, video library, audio tapes and written materials. Workshops and individual assistance available.

### MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482

### VAUGHAN CENTRE

3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

### WESTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

35 King Street, Suite 106 | Tel: 416-588-2240

# FROM HOPE TO OPPORTUNITY

At COSTI, we believe that refugees who receive individualized settlement interventions early when they first arrive in Canada develop a greater sense of security, well-being and opportunity, and ultimately contribute to a more harmonious and just society.

Our priority in 2015/16 was to deliver effective settlement services to our immigrant and refugee clients and enhance our support services, so that we would be better prepared to provide intensive case management and counselling services to Syrian refugees arriving in the greater Toronto area. An example of this is the expansion of services delivered through our Client Support Services, enabling us to help Syrian newcomers with their resettlement needs including employment and mental health services.

Khaled Abdulwahed arrived in Canada the winter of 2016. He had fled from Syria to Lebanon three years earlier. The war in Syria and the threat that something terrible would happen to him because of his political activism left him with little or no choice, he had to leave. While Khaled was presented with a number of options for relocation, he wanted to come to Canada where he believed that as a young adult of 22, a good education, opportunities for personal growth and a happy life were attainable.

**2,564** refugees from around the world were welcomed to Canada and received temporary accommodation and a range of settlement services.



Khaled Abdulwahed and Lana Qadoumi  
Syrian Newcomer. Attending English classes. Pursuing employment and a University education.

Counsellors from COSTI's two key services involved in the Syrian Refugee Initiative, the Resettlement Assistance Program and Client Support Services were involved in welcoming over 1,900 Syrian refugees in four months. Khaled was one of the newcomers COSTI helped, along with the support of countless community groups and organizations.

*"When I first arrived in Canada, I felt safe, happy and excited to start my English classes. And now? Now I'm already looking for employment and feel confident because I know the city of Toronto much better so I'm much more comfortable travelling throughout the city alone. I've become friends with people who are from countries all around the world, and am more accepting of people from different cultures because of my new friendships and understanding. The biggest struggle for me is being alone and not having my family with me to support me."*

*Lana Qadoumi, Client Support Services Support Worker and volunteer with the Syrian Canadian Foundation, connected with Khaled well before he found his first home in Canada, providing him with information on services and activities available to him. "He has a lot of potential. He is enrolled in English language classes and is looking forward to the future, pursuing university studies. I initially helped him find his first home, through the generosity of two women willing to share their accommodations with him. I continue to connect with him and check-in to make sure that he has everything he needs and that he is still on track with his educational and employment goals."*

*"Canada is the country of my dreams and I hope to achieve those dreams," says Khaled. "For me, COSTI is like a beehive, with staff buzzing from flower to flower spreading their pollen, helping those in need flourish. From the moment I arrived I felt welcomed and cared for. I hope to be able to do the same for others one day, with my family by my side."*

**OVER 9,530** immigrants came to COSTI for help with their settlement needs in Ontario. They received counselling and help with accessing government services, completing government forms, finding a home, with translation and interpretation and referral services to supports in their local communities.

## Settlement Services

### ART THERAPY PROGRAM

Directed to the psycho-emotional needs of refugee children and youth and offers traumatized refugee children the opportunity to express themselves through art.

### CLIENT SUPPORT SERVICES

Government-assisted refugees receive life skills, assessment, information and referral, group orientation, interpretation, advocacy, completion of government documents, and supportive counselling through a case management approach.

### SERVICES FOR REFUGEES

Government-assisted refugees receive temporary accommodation and a range of initial settlement services, including orientation, completing applications for essential documents (OHIP, SIN), medical referrals, housing acquisition and life skills support. Refugee Claimants are provided with temporary accommodation, settlement services and housing assistance.

### SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Services include assessment, orientation, referral, information, interpretation, completing of government documents, advocacy, supportive counselling for new immigrants and settled immigrants.

Planning for Canada and the Active Engagement and Integration Project (AEIP) provide information and referral and initial orientation online to overseas clients to help them prepare for settlement and employment processes prior to arrival in Canada.

## Locations

### CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE

760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

### NORTH YORK CENTRE

1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480

### RALPH CHIDO FAMILY IMMIGRANT RECEPTION CENTRE

100 Lippincott Street | Tel: 416-922-6688

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, MARKHAM NORTH

8400 Woodbine Avenue, Suites 102-103 | Tel: 289-846-3645

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, RICHMOND HILL

9325 Yonge Street | Tel: 289-842-3124

### WELCOME CENTRE IMMIGRANT SERVICES, VAUGHAN

9100 Jane Street, Building H | Tel: 905-761-1155

### VAUGHAN CENTRE

3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

# INVESTING IN THE FUTURE



Through our community connections, mentoring, settlement, employment and recreation programs, COSTI staff work to ensure that all children and youth, regardless of personal barriers, are provided with equal access to the services and supports they need to achieve their goals and dreams.

Our Children and Youth Services are designed with the understanding that all young people have the right to be provided with support, guidance and opportunity.

Young children have little control over the violence and terror that they are exposed to and this lack of control results in an assault on their self-esteem and feelings of safety and trust. They are the most silent, vulnerable victims of war and, in order to shield themselves from these painful experiences, they develop protective defenses to avoid and deny what has happened. It is this blocking of emotions through disassociation and denial that disrupts their normal course of development and that can negatively affect their entire lives.

COSTI's Art Therapy Program is about helping all refugee children recover from their trauma by helping them get in touch with and overcome their fears through the objective language of their art. It combines the languages of art with psychotherapy.

In 2016, over 450 children were provided with a lifeline and the opportunity to work through their fears. Many experienced the atrocities of war and have faced tragic loss – of home and community, and of family and friends.



1,043 youth were given a new direction away from street life and away from risky behaviour through our mentoring and youth-at-risk programs.



OVER  
350

Syrian newcomer children participated in the Art Therapy Program to express themselves and work through their pain.

Happy to be in Canada and Toronto  
5 year old girl from Syria.



2,600 young women and men received employment support services, including placement.

## Children & Youth Services

### PLAYING FOR KEEPS

Provides micro grants of \$50 to youth to develop and host one-day physical activity events and recreation projects in the community. Activities engage youth, develop their leadership qualities and increase their community awareness and connections.

### YOUTH JOB CONNECTION

Assists young people between the ages of 15 to 29 facing multiple and/or complex barriers to employment build better futures. Participants receive a minimum of 60 hours of paid training to prepare them for the workplace, a job for up to 6 months and mentorship, job-coaching and help with the transition from school to work, or to ongoing employment once the service ends.

### YOUTH JOB CONNECTION - SUMMER

Offers high school students planning to stay in or return to school, or to move on to post-secondary education with at least 20 hours of paid training to prepare them for the workforce, mentorship, job coaching and help in securing summer jobs that last up to 8 weeks; and part-time and after school jobs. This service is available at our 700 Caledonia Road location only.

### YOUTH JOB LINK

Participants improve their knowledge of career options and today's labour market; building the life skills to successfully plan and manage a career; write a résumé, search and apply for jobs and prepare for interviews; prepare for the workplace by learning about team work, customer service, health and safety and labour rules. A job-matching component to help connect participants with employers offering job opportunities that match their skills and interests is also available.

## Locations

### BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

10 Gillingham Drive, Suite 300 | Tel: 905-459-8855

### BIRCHMOUNT STADIUM (April to July and September to October)

100 Birchmount Road | Tel: 647-827-1462

### VARIETY VILLAGE (November to March)

3701 Danforth Avenue | Tel: 416-367-2828, ext. 270

### CALEDONIA CENTRE

700 Caledonia Road | Tel: 416-789-7925

### JANE STREET HUB

1541 Jane Street | Tel: 416-645-7575

### YOUTH MENTORING

Program matches out-of-school unemployed youth with older mentors. Mentors provide advice and coaching on career planning and life skills.

### YOUTH LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Empowers youth by encouraging and building leadership skills through positive engagement in physical activities and sports, healthy eating, and dialogue on issues such as risky personal behaviours for youth between the ages of 13 and 24. Youth and seniors come together to grow, cultivate and cook vegetables from a community garden. This exciting initiative engages participants in a dialogue and activity where they will gain a better understanding of their similarities and differences and come to value the importance of both generations.

### YOUTH SETTLEMENT SERVICES

One-on-one help and group workshops provide orientation, referral, information, interpretation, completion of government documents, advocacy and supportive counselling for immigrant youth between the ages of 16 and 24 who need assistance. Youth Community Connections focuses on youths' recreational and social needs as well as promoting respect, addresses issues such as conflict and anger management, racism and sexism through mediation activities, education and community engagement activities. The program builds character and enhances the mentorship skills of the participants.

### MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482

### VAUGHAN CENTRE

3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

### VODDEN CENTRE

227 Vodden Street East, Suite 3 | Tel: 905-459-6700

### WESTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES

35 King Street, Suite 106 | Tel: 416-588-2240



# TRANSFORMING LIVES

one person at a time

5,200

women found employment or pursued further opportunities towards employment.



Many immigrant women to Canada are well educated and experienced professionals, but are overlooked by employers because they are not able to articulate and clearly explain their past work experience. The aim of the Women's Employment and Life Skills Workshops is to help develop self-confidence and to act as a bridge to employment.

Sonia Raquel Martins De Oliveira lived in Portugal for many years and returned to Canada in 2015. While she was thrilled to be back, she was overwhelmed – with credentials that go unrecognized in Canada, and with no Canadian work experience, she began to feel that she would not be able to build a productive and fulfilling life in Canada.

*"The process of looking for employment and trying to fit into the Canadian workforce was quite challenging, so I decided to go to COSTI and ask for advice where I was told about the Women's Employment and Life Skills program. I signed-up and learned a lot of valuable 'how-to's' regarding résumé writing and interview skills. The interview skills component of the program was especially helpful considering that in Portugal the interview process is much more casual. Going for an interview in dark jeans and flashy jewelry is perfectly acceptable... in Canada, not so much!"*

*The Assertiveness & Self-esteem Workshop was especially helpful. It's difficult adapting to a different culture, even one that I was previously familiar with. One's self-esteem does get shaken-up and through this training, I realized that both my studies and work experience are still useful.*

*My program colleagues (who came from Eritrea, India, Russia and Mexico) and I were taught the importance of promoting ourselves and our accomplishments as well as being assertive. This is quite important since we all came from different cultural backgrounds and for some of us, self-promotion and assertiveness is frowned upon. Many in the program received additional help in improving their English pronunciation, business writing and communication skills. Personally, the self-esteem and assertiveness training along with the interview skills component were the most valuable. With the support received from Cynthia Pichette, the Life Skills and Pre-Employment Consultant, I feel better prepared going to an interview. The program helped me change my mindset regarding the fact that I now know that I have a lot to offer the Canadian job market and my future employer!"*

**Sonia Raquel Martins De Oliveira**  
*Confident. Prepared for interviews. Ready to enter the labour market.*



## Services For Women

Operating with the shared objective of developing the full and equal participation of women in all facets of our communities, COSTI staff help women of diverse background and experiences in overcoming economic, health, legal and cultural barriers.

The goal of COSTI's programs and services for women is to address systemic and personal barriers that impact on immigrant women and provide a supportive environment that move women from a situation of dependency and isolation to a more empowered state.

Immigrant women have access to workshops on topics relevant to their wellbeing: health, parenting, domestic violence, etc. COSTI's Trauma Group for Spanish-speaking Women offers individual and group counselling for Spanish-speaking women and their children experiencing trauma.

The Lifeskills Counselling Program provides workshops combined with individual counselling for women to improve their self-confidence and increase their employment potential. Located in the Region of Peel, Pathways to Success provides low-income women opportunities to explore self-employment and stabilize their personal and family situation. Women in need of housing support services are provided childminding and travel supports in order to access services.

### WOMEN OF COURAGE PROGRAM

Provides women with a college certificate in office administration. Combined with group counselling, life skills workshops and job search activities, women are prepared for employment. Offered in partnership with Humber College.

## Locations

**BRAMPTON EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
10 Gillingham Drive | Tel: 905-459-8855

**CALEDONIA CENTRE**  
700 Caledonia Road | Tel: 416-789-7925

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 105 | Tel: 416-244-7714

**MISSISSAUGA EMPLOYMENT SERVICES**  
6750 Winston Churchill Blvd., Unit 8A | Tel: 905-567-0482

# FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES

## Family Counselling

Individual, couples, and family counselling; groups for women victims of violence and for men who abuse their partners; psychiatric assessment and follow-up services for individuals of Hispanic and Italian background.

## Problem Gambling Service

Culturally and linguistically appropriate counselling for individuals experiencing gambling problems. Services are available to individuals and family members of Hispanic, Italian and Portuguese background.



Italian, Spanish and Portuguese-speaking women who experienced abuse received counselling and participated in support groups.



individuals accessed psychiatric services.



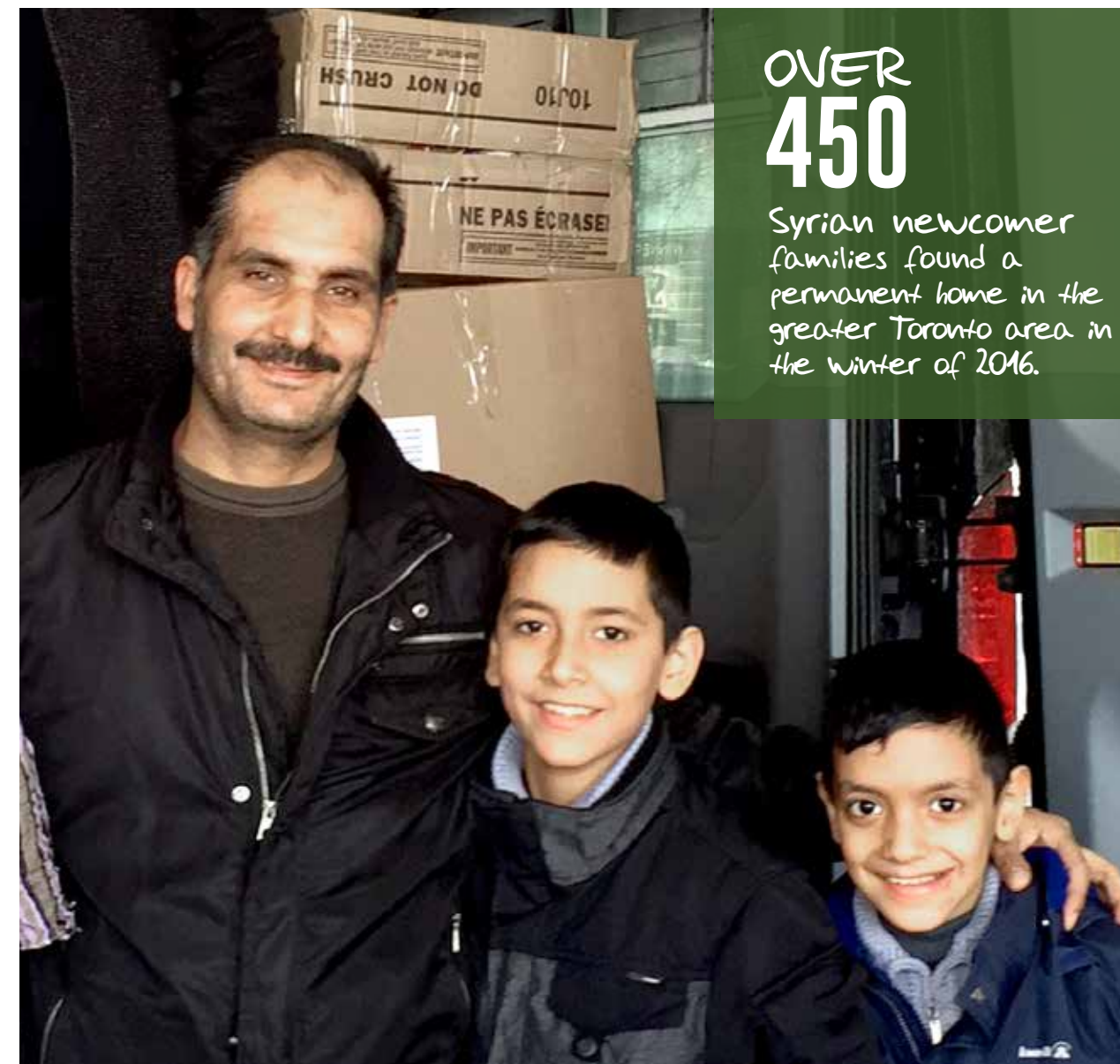
## Family and Mental Health Services Locations

**FAMILY AND MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 105 | Tel: 416-244-7714

**VAUGHAN CENTRE**  
3100 Rutherford Road, Suite 102 | Tel: 905-669-5627

# HOUSING SERVICES

## Housing Help Program



OVER  
450

Syrian newcomer families found a permanent home in the greater Toronto area in the winter of 2016.

Mosbah Matar and his family found their first permanent home in Canada in March 2016. Move-out day was filled with excitement...and boxes!



We worked with 2,340 individuals who were homeless or at risk of homelessness to help them secure permanent affordable housing.

## Housing Services

Housing search assistance, eviction prevention, housing stabilization, crisis intervention, information, referral, education workshops for tenants and landlords, Rent Bank and Low-Income Energy Assistance Program and an Identification clinic.

The Housing Program provides meaningful volunteer work experience, mentoring and workplace training to people who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless in an effort to increase their housing and employment opportunities.

## Location

**NORTH YORK CENTRE**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480

## Seniors' Services

Organizational support provided to the Canadian Italian Family Assistance Association (CIFAA) and to seniors of the Caravelle Club, Bosnian Seniors' Association and the Association of Spanish-speaking Seniors to assist them in their social, educational, and recreational activities.

Elderly Persons' Centre allows Italian seniors the opportunity to take part in daily social, cultural, recreational and educational activities; Encuentro Latino, a group for Spanish-speaking seniors is designed to provide socialization, reduction of social isolation and mutual support in the settlement process. In addition, workshops and information sessions are offered to Chinese and South Asian communities.

Operated by COSTI and funded by the Calabrian Benevolent Association of Ontario (CBAO), the Seniors' Day Program supports Italian-speaking elderly who have been diagnosed with early-stage dementia and/or Alzheimer's disease as well as their families and care partners.

## Locations

**CORVETTI EDUCATION CENTRE**  
760 College Street | Tel: 416-534-7400

**NORTH YORK CENTRE**  
1700 Wilson Avenue, Suite 114 | Tel: 416-244-0480

**CBAO SENIORS' DAY PROGRAM**  
7730 Islington Avenue | Tel: 647-299-6591

# INCREASING INDEPENDENCE

and reducing isolation

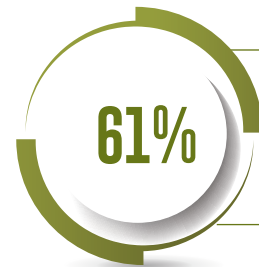


**71%**

of seniors who come to COSTI for help and guidance are women.



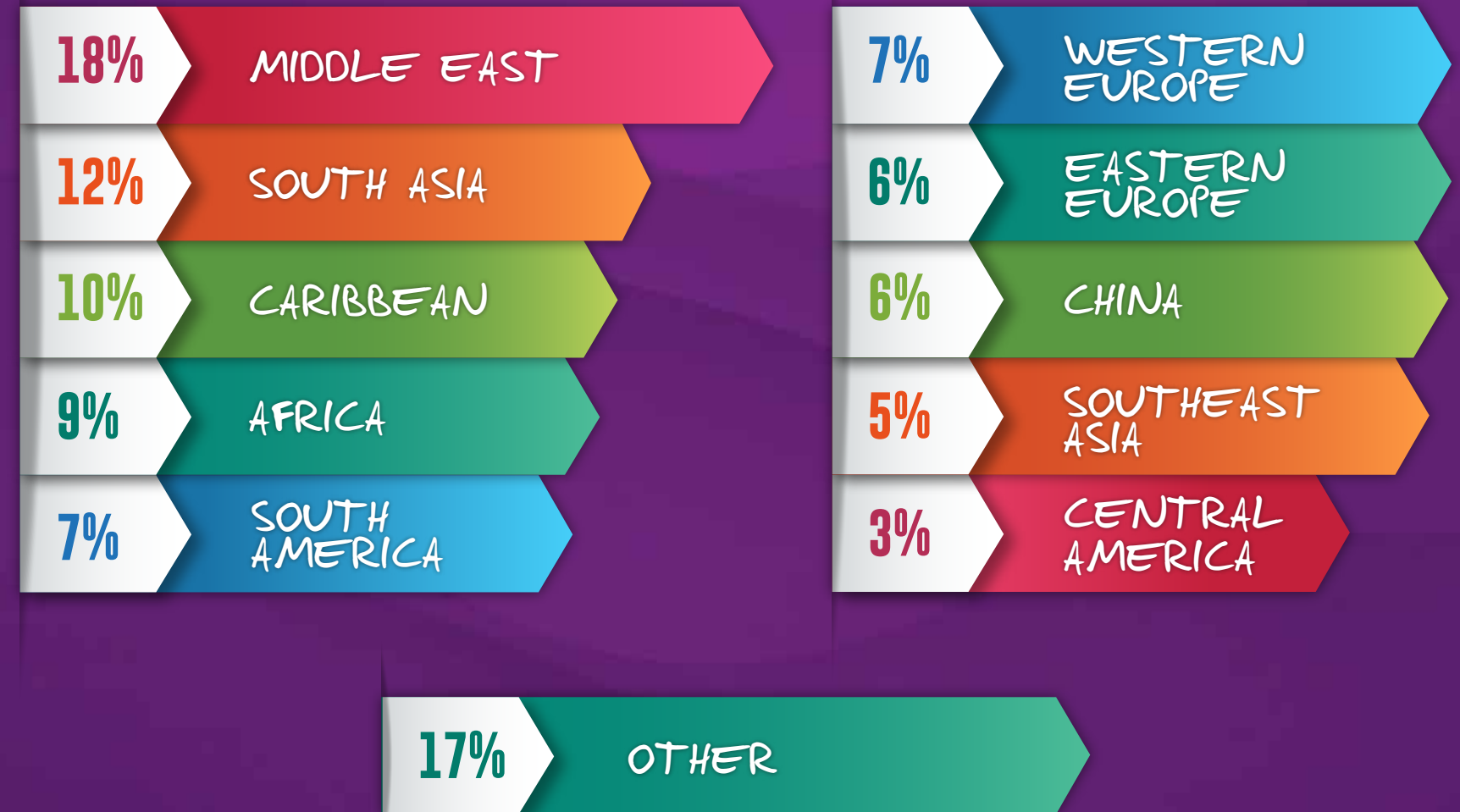
seniors attended English classes, received help with accessing government income maintenance programs or community and health services, while others engaged in activities that help them stay active and independent.



of clients who access our psychiatric services are seniors.

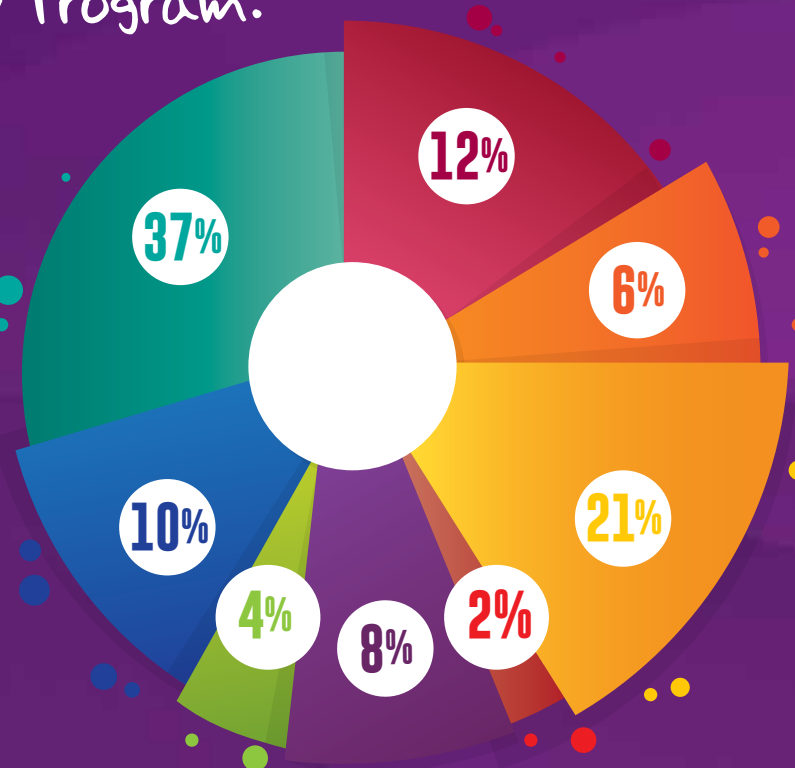
# WHO WE HELP 2015/16

By Country of Origin:



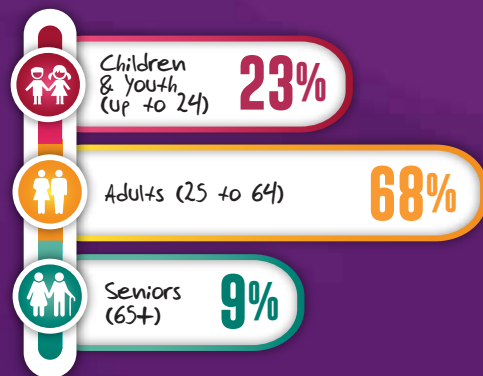
# WHO WE HELP 2015/16

## By Program:

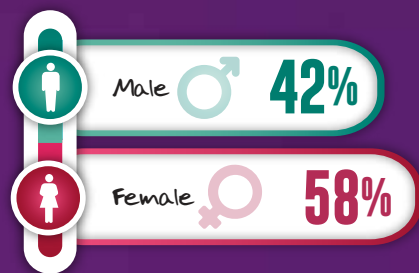


- **Employment Services**  
Career Assessment and Planning, Job Search and Placement, Job Maintenance Supports, Resource and Information, Online Services
- **Settlement Counselling, Community Planning/Coordination, Public Education, Policy Development**  
Canadian Immigrant Integration Project, Community Connections Program, Information and Referral, Interpretation, Documentation and Life Skills
- **English Language Instruction & Skills Training**  
English Language Classes, Enhanced Language Training, Computer Courses
- **Housing Supports**
- **Family & Mental Health Services**  
Domestic Violence, Psychiatric Services, Problem Gambling, Counselling and Support Groups
- **Refugee Shelter Services**
- **Youth & Recreation**  
Crime Prevention & Substance Abuse Workshops, Leadership Development, Track & Field Program, Employment Supports
- **Counselling, Support Groups, Drop-in Services**  
Women's and Seniors' Services

## By Age:



## By Gender:



# THANK YOU

The Board of Directors of COSTI Immigrant Services acknowledges with thanks, the outstanding contributions, support, and inspiration received from our funders, donors, partners, clients, volunteers, and staff, for over six decades.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Bellissimo Law Group

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## FUNDERS

### Government of Canada

#### Employment and Social Development Canada

- Summer Career Placement Program

#### Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

- A Path to Home - YMCA
- Job Search Workshops Program
- Labour Market Access
- Language Training
- Orientation
- Orientation to Ontario
- Resettlement Assistance Program

### Government of Ontario

#### Ministry of the Attorney General

- Ontario Victim Services Secretariat

#### Ministry of Citizenship, Immigration and International Trade

- Newcomer Settlement Program
- Ontario's Refugee Resettlement Plan
- Orientation to Ontario

#### Ministry of Community and Social Services

- Domestic Violence, Violence Against Women Program
- Ontario Disability Support Program - Employment Supports

#### Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

- Addictions Programs, Mental Health and Addictions Branch
- Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network

### Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport

- Ontario Sport and Recreation Communities Fund

### Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities

- Canada-Ontario Job Grant
- Employment Services
- Youth Job Connection
- Youth Job Connection - Summer
- Youth Link

### Ontario Seniors' Secretariat

- Elderly Persons' Centre
- Seniors Community Grant

### Ontario Women's Directorate

- Neighbours, Friends and Families
- Women in Skilled Trades and Information Technology

### The Ontario Trillium Foundation

#### Workplace Safety and Insurance Board

### City of Toronto

- Community and Neighbourhood Services, Shelter, Housing & Support
- Community Services Partnerships Program
- Homeless Initiatives Fund
- Housing Help Services to Syrian Privately Sponsored Refugees in Toronto
- Ontario Works Employment Programs and Supports

### York Region

- Life Success Strategies
- Transit Ticket Program

### Colleges and Institutes Canada

#### Prosper Canada

#### S.U.C.C.E.S.S.

#### Toronto Catholic District School Board

#### York Catholic District School Board

#### United Way Toronto & York Region

#### YMCA Toronto

### Foundations

- Calabrian Benevolent Association of Ontario
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Children's Aid Society Foundation
- Community Foundation of Mississauga
- The BLG Foundation
- Toronto Foundation
- Weston - Seeding Stronger Communities

# MISSION STATEMENT

COSTI provides educational, social, and employment services to help all immigrants in the greater Toronto area attain self-sufficiency in Canadian society.

COSTI, founded by the Italian community to meet a shortage of services for immigrants in the post war era, is today a multicultural agency that works with all immigrant communities having a shortage of established services.

## HEAD OFFICE

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A United Way Member Agency