Annual Impact Report

2024/2025

COSTI

Empowering Communities

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Letter from the President of the Board

Pina Alberelli-Arone

COSTI has a long and rich history of serving the most vulnerable, a longstanding commitment to provide services to our clients since 1952. It is the foundation upon which COSTI was built and has grown to help over 51,000 people annually.

Clients were able to take part in almost 135,000 service interactions across 38 programs. Each of these numbers reflect an individual or a family in the Greater Toronto Area taking actionable steps toward building a home, a career and a sense of belonging in Canada.

Once again, this past year has shown what is possible when people come together with strong intentions and purpose. The COSTI team is dedicated to their client outcomes and successes. The team understands our clients, their needs and how to help them integrate into the community while reaching their full potential.

At COSTI, we know that creating a home is about more than housing or employment. It is about belonging, feeling welcome and having the chance to thrive. Now, in our seventh decade of service, COSTI continues to grow and adapt to changing times and client needs. The COSTI team and Board of Directors have launched a five-year Strategic Plan (2025–2030), which strengthens our commitment to expanding access, removing barriers, ensuring sustainability and sharing our impact with clarity. This is an important step to ensure our programs evolve with changing needs and create even more pathways for those seeking support.

In the pages ahead, you will see how each statistic reflects real impact and the trust our clients place in COSTI. Our digital reach grew impressively, allowing us to connect with people wherever they are, whenever they need us the most. There are many to thank—our team, Board, funders, donors, friends and the 163 volunteers who provided approximately 20,000 hours of their time. Everyone has helped to ensure that no one felt alone in their journey.

I would like to welcome our new CEO, Anita Stellinga, who recently joined the team, and offer a special note of appreciation to our Acting CEO, Refat Jiwani, who has returned to his retirement.

Soon, COSTI will be welcoming a new President. As I look back on the past decade on the Board and six years as President, I am truly honoured to have served as a volunteer and to have been part of a very talented Board of Directors who generously donate their time and expertise.

Together, we are building a stronger and more inclusive Canada where everyone has the opportunity to flourish and truly call Canada home.

Year at a glance

Mission

To empower people from diverse communities to succeed and achieve their full potential by providing educational, employment and social services.

Vision

A prosperous and inclusive Canada built on the success of every individual.

Values

Leadership: We stand and take action for positive change in our community.

Diversity: We value and respect each person's differences and unique contributions.

Empowerment: We acknowledge the potential of every person and facilitate their growth and self-sufficiency.

Excellence: We are committed to high standards in all we do.

Innovation: We embrace change, support continuous improvement and encourage new solutions.

Compassion: We support and care for each other.

Accountability: We do what we say we will.

134,687 Service interactions

51,027 Clients served

17 Service locations

38 Programs delivered

579 Employees

201 Partnerships and collaborations

163 Volunteers engaged

19,703 Volunteer hours contributed

45.84% Increase in website users

126.22% Increase in social media interaction

Awards & recognitions

We are so excited to report that COSTI's impact for its work last year was recognized across the sector with multiple awards celebrating the strength of its programs, people and partnerships.

COSTI received the Community Impact Award at the CanadianSME National Business Awards 2024 for the second year in a row. As one of the few non-profits recognized on this national platform, the award highlights the measurable difference COSTI continues to make in the lives of newcomers and Torontonians in need.

The City of Toronto named COSTI a 2025 Community Champion, one of just seven organizations selected from over 250 nominees. The award recognized the work of COSTI's frontline staff, acknowledging our long-standing service to equity-deserving communities and its city-wide impact.

COSTI was also recognized by United Way Greater Toronto as a Local Leader 2024 for surpassing its workplace fundraising goal by 200%, driven by strong staff engagement and shared purpose. And the Vaughan Welcome Centre was also recognized with Achēv's 2025 Community Service Partner Award for its work in supporting newcomer communities in York Region.

Each award reflects COSTI's commitment to people, partnerships and progress.

Success in action

Kira's Canadian Classroom

When Kira Herzhanovska arrived in Canada from Ukraine with her husband and a teenage son, she brought decades of experience as an early childhood educator, though her English-speaking skills were limited. "Without a good level of English, it was difficult to communicate, solve everyday issues or find any job, let alone re-enter my profession," she recalls from her early days in Canada.

COSTI changed that.

Kira enrolled in our English classes, joined the Conversation Club and completed Workplace Language Training designed for early childhood education. With guidance from her instructors and career specialist, she improved her English, prepared for interviews, created a strong resume and obtained the certifications she needed to return to her profession.

Today, Kira is employed in a kindergarten, applying her 20 years of expertise in child development in a new setting. She continues to grow in Canada's education system.

"COSTI gave me more than education. It gave me support, motivation and a path forward" she expresses joyfully.

Success in action

Mr. Raguseo’s Home Away from Home

84-year-old Stefano Raguseo was one of the first clients to join the Calabrian Benevolent Seniors Day Program when it was first launched in October 2016, attending the centre just twice a week. On seeing how much he enjoyed the activities, care and friendships he built here, his family soon increased his visits to five days a week.

Unfortunately, the onset of pandemic in 2020 led to closure of this program. This disrupted his routine and paused the support that had become so important and integral to him and his family.
When the program reopened in 2024 at a new location, his family acted quickly to re-enroll him despite the long travel from Maple, York Region. Now, Mr. Raguseo attends the daycare centre every day, enjoying renewed connections and meaningful engagement.

"You have no idea how happy I was when I heard the program reopened at this new site. I knew my dad would be happy again. You and your team at Calabrian Benevolent Seniors Day Program took such good care of him, that it was heartbreaking when we learned of the closure during the pandemic. Thank God, everything is over, and he is able to return to your care. I am so thankful!" exclaims his daughter.

The Calabrian Benevolent Seniors Day Program was founded by the Calabrian Benevolent Association of Ontario and is managed by COSTI.

Success in action

Froogh's New Canadian Roots

Froogh Sadeqi and her family arrived in Canada in November 2024, facing loneliness as newcomers without relatives or contacts in the country. COSTI's Resettlement Assistance Program welcomed them warmly and provided essential support, right from helping them open their Canadian bank accounts to finding housing, all within their first month of landing.

Since then, COSTI has continued to guide Froogh's family with professional counselling and ongoing support. Froogh has progressed rapidly through language courses and is preparing to start high school. She is also advancing through COSTI's Newcomer Entrepreneur Women program, aiming to launch her own business with government support.

"Thank you, Canada, for saving our lives. And thank you, COSTI, for standing beside us throughout our journey," Froogh said.

At COSTI, we believe that creating a home is more than meeting basic needs. It's about belonging, growing and contributing to the fabric of Canada. Froogh's story is one of many where hope is turning into an opportunity with COSTI's support.

Volunteer reflection

Volunteers are at the heart of COSTI. They bring their talents, experiences and compassion to everything they do, helping newcomers feel welcome and supported as they begin their lives in Canada. Through their commitment, they foster belonging, build stronger communities and remind our clients that they are never alone in their journey.

One of our most dedicated volunteers is Mariam Elsawy. Since January 2025, Mariam has given her time to support online ESL classes in Brampton, where she offered encouragement and one-on-one help to students learning English. She has also assisted newcomer families through our Community Connections Program, providing interpretation support and helping them adjust to the everyday skills needed to settle. With her background in health sciences and psychology from Carleton University and her experience as a student leader, Mariam continues to be a compassionate guide for others who are working to make Canada their home.

“

I started volunteering with COSTI because I saw myself in its clients. I immigrated to Canada on my own in 2016, so I know the struggles that come with being a newcomer. From mastering the language to familiarizing yourself with the culture, it really does take a lot of effort and can often feel isolating. Looking back, I wish I had someone who could hold my hand and walk me through all of it. Today, I am glad I can be that someone for others who are going through the same challenges. Even more, I am grateful for all the amazing friendships I made along the way!

- **Mariam Elsawy**

Service pillars

Education Services

Helping newcomers and community members build the skills they need to succeed, Education Services delivers language and skills training designed to support newcomers from literacy to Canadian Language Benchmark 6. Flexible course options include in-person, online and hybrid formats to fit diverse needs. Alongside English language instruction, we provide digital skills development and employment-related training tailored to the needs of refugees, asylum claimants, visitors and work permit holders. Key programs include LINC, Enhanced Language Training (ELT), English as a Second Language (ESL), Workplace Language Training, Pre-Arrival Services and specialized initiatives such as LINC for Women and Seniors, CELPIP exam preparation, Microsoft Word and Excel training and women's EmpowerHer Horizons.

Employment Services

COSTI connects individuals from varied backgrounds, including newcomers, youth and internationally trained professionals with the resources they need to succeed in today's competitive and challenging job market. Our comprehensive support includes pre-employment workshops, skills training, job placement, career development and workplace culture orientation. Delivered both in person and online, these services help clients secure, retain and grow in stable and meaningful employment. We also partner with employers to build pathways that meet labour market needs. Programs such as Employment Ontario Services, netWORKS, Pathways to Employment, Mindset Makeover, and others address the unique challenges faced by the Greater Toronto Area's diverse communities.

Social Services

As a leader in Canada's settlement sector, COSTI supports newcomers, including refugees and asylum claimants, in starting their new lives in the Greater Toronto Area. To provide holistic, trauma-informed care, our Social Services Division offers compassionate, culturally responsive programs that address settlement, housing, family and mental health, domestic violence, and the unique needs of seniors, youth and women. Alongside direct client support, the division builds sector capacity through staff training, partnerships and public education. Digital tools like webinars, toolkits, chatbots and mobile apps help broaden access. Key programs include Orientation to Ontario, International Student Connect, housing support, seniors' day programs, family and mental health counselling, newcomer settlement services and creative art groups that promote healing, inclusion and long-term well-being for our clients.

Refugee Services

In a world where crises force thousands to leave everything behind, COSTI stands ready to welcome refugees with practical support and compassion. Our Refugee Services Division helps newcomers find safety and stability through temporary housing, intensive case management and resettlement assistance across the Greater Toronto Area. We guide individuals and families as they navigate local systems, connect with community resources and adjust to life in Canada. Operating three core programs, namely Resettlement Assistance Program, Client Support Services and Hostel Services, we provide comprehensive care that includes orientation, housing support and wraparound services. This approach ensures refugees can build a new life with confidence and hope.

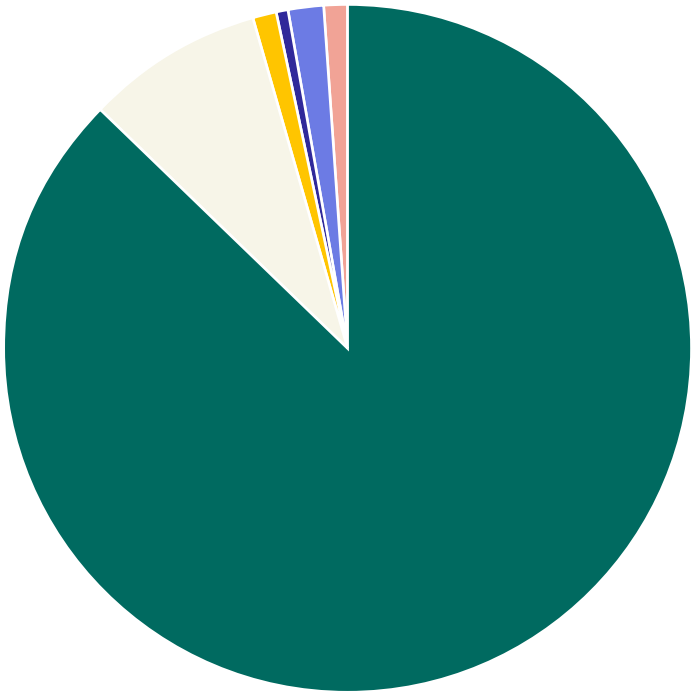
Financial summary

	Year Ended March 31,2025 (in $ 000's)
Income	
Grants	
Federal	25,787
Provincial	5,343
Municipal	47,439
	78,569
WCG International Consultants	7,410
United Way Greater Toronto	914
Partnerships & Foundations	565
Investment Income	1,392
Fees & Other Income	950
	89,800
Expenses	
Salaries & Benefits	35,922
Newcomer Support	38,883
Employment Support	2,107
Program Partnerships	354
Building Occupancy	3,695
Office & Other Expenses	5,669
Amortization	665
	87,295
Excess of revenue over expenses	**2,505**

View full audited statements

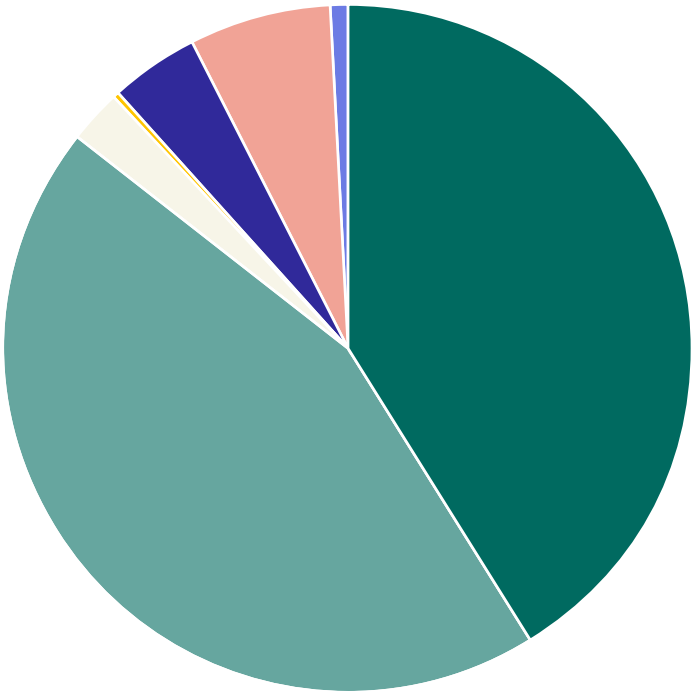
Financial summary

Income



- Grants
- WCG International Consultants
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Partnerships & Foundations
- Investment Income
- Fees & Other Income

Expenses



- Salaries & Benefits
- Newcomer Support
- Employment Support
- Program Partnerships
- Building Occupancy
- Office & Other Expenses
- Amortization

Funders, partners & donors

Funders

***Listed under multiple categories.**

1. Calabrian Benevolent Association of Ontario (CBAO)
2. City of Toronto
3. EDSC/ITIs-BR & VGH
4. EDSC/New Horizons
5. Employment and Social Development Canada / Government of Canada
6. MERCK Canada Inc
7. Minister for the Department of Women & Gender Equality/Gender-Based Violence (GBV)
8. Minister of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD)
9. Ministry for Seniors Affairs and Accessibility (MSA)
10. Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services (MCCSS)/Violence Against Women (VAW)
11. Ministry of Immigration, Refugee and Citizenship (IRCC)
12. Ministry of the Attorney General (MAG)/Partner Assault Response (PAR)
13. Ministry of Seniors Affairs (MSA)/Elderly Persons Centre (EPC)
14. Ontario Health Toronto
15. Region of Peel
16. Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
17. The Regional Municipality of York
18. Toronto Employment Social Services (TESS)
19. United Way Greater Toronto*
20. WCG International Consultants Ltd (WCG Services): MLITSD
21. World Skills Employment: Federal Internship for Newcomers (FIN)

Partners

***Listed under multiple categories.**

1. Abundant Life Assembly Church
2. Access Alliance
3. Achēv
4. Afghan Women's Organization
5. African Community Services of Peel
6. Algoma University
7. Arab Community Centre of Toronto
8. Association des francophones de la région de York
9. Black Creek Community Health Centre Women's Interaction Next
10. Brock University
11. Canadian Centre for Refugee and Immigrant HealthCare
12. Canadian Centre for Victims of Torture
13. Canadian Council for Refugees
14. Canadian Mental Health Association, York Region and South Simcoe (CMHA)
15. Canadore College
16. Canary Landing – Tricon
17. CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses
18. Carleton University
19. Catholic Community Services of York Region (CCSYR) – Welcome Centre Partner
20. CAYR Community Connections
21. Centennial College
22. Centennial Infant and Child Centre Foundation
23. Centre for Canadian Language Benchmarks
24. Centre for Immigrant and Community Services (CICS) – Welcome Centre Partner
25. CICan (Colleges and Institute Canada)
26. City Church
27. Commucare
28. Community Legal Clinic of York Region
29. Confederation College
30. Connect City
31. EPAM
32. Faithful Companions of Jesus (FCJ) Refugee Centre
33. Furniture Bank – Toronto
34. Futuretek
35. George Brown College
36. Georgian College
37. Glendon College - English
38. Glendon College - French
39. Help Mobility
40. Holiday Hampers
41. Humber College
42. International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY Canada)
43. Istituto Nazionale Assistenza Sociale (INAS)
44. JIAS (Jewish Immigrant Aid Services)
45. Job Skills – Welcome Centre Partner
46. Kids Up Front*
47. Labour Community Services of Peel
48. Lakehead University
49. Lambton College – Toronto
50. Let's Get Together
51. Lumens Community Services
52. Loyalist College in Toronto
53. Mabelle Arts
54. Makeway Charitable Society

Partners

***Listed under multiple categories.**

55. McMaster University
56. Mennonite New Life Centre
57. Midaytna Community Services (HomeSafe York Program)
58. Mohawk College
59. Muse Arts
60. Music from Hope
61. New Circles Community Services
62. New Language Solutions
63. Newcomer Women's Services Toronto
64. Niagara College
65. North York Community Housing
66. Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)
67. Ontario Health: Cancer Care Ontario and the Institute of Better Health at Trillium Health
68. Ontario Not For Profit Network
69. Ontario Works
70. Oriole Community Centre
71. Precise Solutions
72. REACH Program
73. Rexdale Community Health Centre
74. Sault College
75. Scholastic*
76. Seneca College
77. Service Canada
78. Sheridan College
79. Social Enterprise for Canada (SEC) – Welcome Centre Partner
80. Sparkling Smile
81. St. Clair College
82. St. Lawrence College
83. S.U.C.C.E.S.S.
84. Toronto Catholic District School Board (TCDSB)
85. Toronto District School Board (TDSB)
86. TESL (Teachers of English as a Second Language) Association of Ontario
87. The Association for Canadian Studies - Metropolis Institute
88. The Housing Help Centre
89. Toronto ACT
90. Toronto Metropolitan University
91. Toronto Police Services - 33 Division*
92. Toronto Public Health
93. Toronto Public Library
94. Tropicana Employment Services
95. United Way Greater Toronto*
96. Vaughan Community Health Centre
97. Vaughan Public Library
98. Volunteer MBC
99. Willowdale Legal Clinic
100. York Catholic District School Board (YCDSB)
101. Young Men's Christian Association (YMCA) of Greater Toronto
102. York Region Children's Aid Society
103. York Region Municipal Government
104. York Regional Police
105. York University

Donors

***Listed under multiple categories.**

1. Bennett Family Foundation
2. Goodera
3. Holiday Helpers
4. Kids Up Front*
5. Maktab Tarighat Oveyssi (MTO) Sustainability
6. Scholastic*
7. The Canadian Children's Centre
8. The National Ballet of Canada
9. Toronto Police Services*
10. Welcome to Canada Project

COSTI Partners

Canada

Ontario

Toronto

United Way Greater Toronto

York Region

Peel Region

RBC

Our locations

Toronto

Head Office: Bruno M. Suppa Corporate Office
Administrative Office only. No services are delivered from this location.
416.658.1600

Calabrian Benevolent Seniors Day Program
2115 Finch Avenue West,
Suite 100, Toronto
289.843.3212

Corvetti Education Centre
760 College Street,
Toronto
416.534.7400

- Settlement Services
- Language Programs
- Client Support Services
- Canadian Adult Achievement Test (CAAT) – Level C and D

Wilson Avenue Hub
1263 Wilson Avenue,
Toronto
416.789.7925

- Employment Services
- Settlement Services
- Language classes
- Mentoring

North York Hub
Sheridan Mall, 1700 Wilson Avenue,
Suite 105, Toronto
416.244.7714

- Family and Mental Health Services
- Settlement Services
- Seniors Services
- Housing Services
- Language Programs
- Skills Training
- Language Programs

The Ralph Chiodo Family Reception Centre
Toronto
416.922.6688

- Refugee Support Services

Weston Road Hub
1885 Weston Road,
Toronto
416.588.2240

- Employment Services
- Youth Programs
- Mentoring Programs

Peel Region

Brampton North and Surrounding Areas
10 Gillingham Drive
Suite 300, Brampton
905.459.8855

- Employment Services
- Language Programs and Skills Training
- Mentoring Programs

10 Gillingham Drive,
Suite 109A, Brampton
905.451.7147

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Brampton South and Surrounding Areas
7700 Hurontario Street,
Suite 601, Brampton
905.459.6700

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Mississauga Centre
6750 Winston Churchill Boulevard,
Unit 8A, Mississauga
905.567.0482

- Employment Services
- Mentoring Programs
- Language Programs

York Region

Vaughan Centre Hub
3100 Rutherford Road,
Suite 102, Vaughan
905.669.5627

- Employment Services
- Settlement Services
- Violence Against Women Services
- Youth Services

Our locations

Markham North Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
8400 Woodbine Avenue,
Suite 102-103, Markham
289.846.3597, 289.846.3645

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Markham South Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
7220 Kennedy Road (Hollywood Square),
Markham
905.305.4118, 905.479.7926

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Newmarket Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
16655 Yonge Street,
Unit 26, Newmarket
289.841.3032

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Richmond Hill Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
9325 Yonge Street,
Richmond Hill
289.842.3151, 289.842.3124

- Enhanced Language Training Services

Vaughan Welcome Centre Immigrant Services
9100 Jane Street, Building H,
Unit 56-67, Vaughan
416.238.1025, 416-238-1033

- Enhanced Language Training Services

In addition to these 17 service locations, COSTI also provides Refugee Support Services in five locations across Toronto, Peel Region and York regions.

Looking ahead

In November 2024, COSTI's Board, committees and senior leadership came together to set the course for our next chapter. We listened closely to the voices of our clients, staff members and community partners, using their lived experiences to shape a five-year plan that responds to what matters the most, the real needs and everyday challenges.

The 2025-2030 Strategic Plan builds on our strengths while sharpening our focus on access, removal of barriers, sustainability and clearer reporting of results. It will guide how we design services, deepen partnerships and invest in tools that make support faster and more useful.

At COSTI, our commitment is to ensure that no one feels left behind. This plan embodies that promise to help newcomers and diverse communities to successfully integrate and thrive in their new lives, and proudly call Canada their home.

Over the next five years, our work will center on these four strategic pillars:

- Expand the Reach of Services and Resources
- Eliminate Barriers, Unlock Success
- Build Financial and Operational Sustainability
- Communicate Impact, Highlight Successes and Promote Inclusivity

COSTI

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At COSTI, we believe that home is more than a place.
It’s a place of belonging.