

Annual Report

2024-2025



Centre de ressources
communautaires de la *Basse-Ville*
Lowertown Community
Resource *Centre*

Thank you to our generous donors and supporters

Our Funders



Many of our accomplishments would not have been possible without the invaluable help of volunteers and interns who generously contributed their time and energy to the community. We are deeply grateful – thank you!

Our partners

- ACFO Ottawa Bilingue
- Action Housing
- Algonquin College
- Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa
- Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario (AFO)
- BAMB's Snack Shack
- Boys and Girls Club Ottawa (BGCO)
- ByWard Market District Authority (BMDA)
- The Caring and Sharing Exchange
- Carleton University
- City for All Women Initiative (CAWI)
- Coalition of Community Health and Resource Centres of Ottawa
- Collège Boréal
- Collège La Cité
- Community Development Framework (CDF)
- Conseil des écoles catholiques du Centre-Est (CECCE)
- Conseil des écoles publiques de l'Est de l'Ontario (CEPEO)
- EBO Financial Education Centre
- École secondaire publique De La Salle
- Jumpstart
- Kiwanis Club of Ottawa
- Lowertown Community Association (LCA)
- Lowertown East Residents Committee (LERC)
- Mazon Canada
- Multicultural Arts in Schools and Communities (MASC)
- Options Housing
- OSEG Foundation
- Ottawa-Carleton District School Board
- Ottawa Coalition of Community Houses
- Ottawa Community Housing (OCH)
- Prezidental
- Sandy Hill Community Health Centre
- Social Planning Council of Ottawa
- Toy Mountain
- University of Ottawa
- Vanier Community Services Centre (Expérica & Millenium Learning Centre)
- York Street Public School

Team Members

(including seasonal workers)

Social Support and Food Bank

Vilès Alizar
Alta Alphonse
Laetitia Degraff
Tékisha Denis
Flora Engbe
Gracia Kadja
Sarah McGirr
Shoon Omar
Malika Oumou Moumouni
Sonde
Bermuda Vilbrun

Youth

Gaetjeans Anier
Brice Arcel
Fatoubobo Balde
Heritier Bilaka
Maria del Carmen Lazzaro
Xavier Desrochers
Jean-Marc Désir Ottock

Hana El Abd
Hannah Gauthier-MacDonald
Stéphanie Guingané
Schilove Gustave
Abdichakour Hadi
Adnane Ilich
Amine Ismaili Alaoui
Joseph Jethro Sérémé
Houda Kammoun
Martial Maweja
Alexander Mongrain
Cindy Morquette
Chiwishi Mpoyi
Vayola Moise
Mary Nikunda
Mafi Ouattarra
Nelvie Ovoula
Milleina Pagnou
Salah Raouf Ouslimani
Vanessa Salome
Daniella Talombo

Community Development

Mirfat Abdoukader
Eddy Niyonkuru
Mélissa Thibault-Cañas

Administration and Management

Camalia Abdoukader
Ahmed
Karina Ah-Yu
Matthew Beutel
Françoise Drouin-Soucy
Marie-Christine Gauthier
Catherine Mageau-Walker
Carmen Oprea

13
full-time
EMPLOYEES
34
part-time



Pride parade



Gracia and Mirfat



Team retreat

Message from the President and the Executive Director



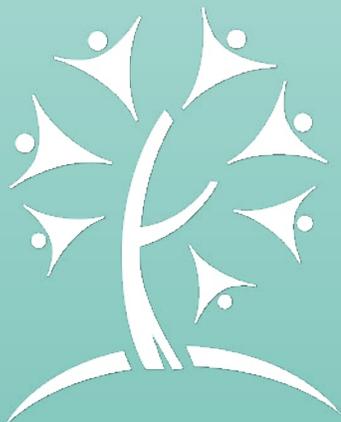
Jolane T. Lauzon

Jolane T Lauzon
PRESIDENT,
BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Matthew Beutel

Matthew Beutel
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



It is with great **pride** and **appreciation** that we present the 2024–2025 Annual Report of the Lowertown Community Resource Centre (LCRC). This year has brought its share of changes and challenges, but also **inspiring** accomplishments that reflect the **vitality** and **resilience** of our community.

One of the year’s major milestones was the relocation of our **food bank**. While the move did not take place in the originally anticipated space, it nevertheless brought significant improvements. The new location is more spacious, better organized, and more accessible, which has had a positive impact on the experience of users, volunteers, and staff alike. The transition required **flexibility and adaptation**, but the benefits have been clear and meaningful.



This relocation also had another important impact: it freed up our **community house**, allowing it to truly fulfill its mandate at the heart of the neighbourhood. With this space reclaimed, we were able to expand our programming and **strengthen connections** with residents. And it is but a beginning! We will continue to develop interesting programming that meets the diverse needs of our community. Despite these improvements, a real solution for the location of our food bank remains on hold.

Among our notable accomplishments this year: our **summer camp** once again provided a safe, enriching, and joyful experience for local children. Our **income tax clinic** saw a record level of participation, with 413 returns filed. Our **community events**, such as the Holiday Dinner and Lowertown Celebration, were a great success and offered moments of **joy and connection**.

We’re also proud of the vitality of our **youth programming**: sports activities for girls, youth-led podcast production, and new funding from the City of Ottawa allowing the return of the drop-in and the after-school program for 13-14-year-olds. These initiatives reflect our commitment to creating **inclusive, safe, and empowering spaces** for young people.



We would like to express our **heartfelt thanks** to our **staff** and **volunteers** for their dedication, patience, and outstanding commitment. Their unwavering presence, especially during times of transition, has been essential to the continuity and quality of our services.

Finally, we extend our sincere **gratitude** to our **funders** and **partners**. Your financial and human support is essential to advancing our mission. Together, we are building a **more just, inclusive, and connected** community.

Thank you all for your continued trust and support.



LCRC Board of Directors (2024–2025)

Jolane T Lauzon, President (Member)

Marty Mudie, Vice-President (Resident Member)

Désiré Kabore, Secretary-Treasurer (Member and Lowertown business owner)

Nadia Baro (Resident Member)

Jean-Paul Gagnon (Resident Member)

Guylaine Gratton (Resident Member)

Kendra Hughes (Resident Member)

Lisa Ker (Member)

Martha Labarge (Member)

Janhabi Nandy (Resident Member until January 2025)

Herman Ntawe (Resident Member until January 2025)

Dalia Tejeda Alix (Member)

Matthew Beutel, Executive Director (ex officio)

Marie-Christine Gauthier, Staff Representative (ex officio)

\$1,146,443
returned to Lowertown
residents via our
tax clinic

Community Development

Building a Stronger Lowertown Together

Community development is at the heart of our mission. It creates **spaces for connection**, encourages **mutual support**, and empowers residents to take an **active role in shaping their neighbourhood**.

This year, our community came alive with **citizen-led initiatives** and vibrant, **unifying events**: a tax clinic, Lowertown Celebration, Winterfest, Movie Nights in the park — each one offering a chance to **strengthen bonds** and **nurture neighbourhood spirit**.

Our **community gardens** also flourished — both in produce and in social connection. They've become places of **mutual aid, pride, and empowerment**, where more than just vegetables are cultivated.

Each of these projects reflects a shared vision: a **strong, inclusive, and engaged community**. And this is only the beginning!



Multicultural meal



Lowertown Celebration



Winterfest (photo Stéphanie Plante)

Highlights of the Year:

1 – 413 Tax Returns Filed

Our tax clinic helped over 400 people **regain control of their finances**, delivering \$1,146,443 back into residents’ pockets and into the community.

2 – Stronger Partnerships

Our local collaborations expanded, **growing our impact** and strengthening the **network of solidarity** across Lowertown.

Key Moment of the Year: A Heartwarming Holiday Meal

In December, the second floor of 40 Cobourg was filled with laughter, lively conversations, and smiling faces. Over **500 residents** gathered to share a holiday meal in an atmosphere of magic, generosity, and kindness.

Local restaurant BAMB’s, neighbourhood youth, dedicated residents, LCRC staff members, and our partners at the City of Ottawa — all contributed to making this evening a **true collective gift**. It was, quite simply, the magic of the holiday season... and the true spirit of community development.



“ The Centre helps us a lot, and that’s why we want to give back to the community and why we want to volunteer — to contribute in our own way.”

AMINE, LOWERTOWN RESIDENT

After-School Program

Move, Share, Grow Together

The **Club 310 After-School Program** is a **free** service offered to children and families in the Lowertown neighborhood. Aimed at youth aged 6 to 12, it runs from 2:30 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. on school days. The program provides a safe, consistent, and stimulating environment where children can build skills in several key areas: **physical activity, healthy eating, mental health, and overall well-being**.

Our dedicated team includes **seven bilingual youth workers** who communicate with each child in their preferred language — **French or English** — fostering an inclusive and accessible space for all.

Highlights of the Year:

I Love to Dance – 25 children enthusiastically took part in this vibrant artistic activity, offered by the City of Ottawa in collaboration with the Jumpstart Foundation.

I Love to Swim – 80 participants took advantage of this opportunity to learn how to swim and have fun safely.

“ [Working in the program is] a profoundly human experience—both impressive and enriching—filled with genuine exchanges, spontaneous laughter, and sometimes, moments of reflection.

Every day, for 4 hours, I lead activities and support these youth emotionally. By listening to them, I rediscovered a simple yet essential truth: children—regardless of their background or culture—all need love, respect, attention—and a clear structure. A warm but firm framework that teaches them to live alongside others, recognize their limits, and cooperate without infringing on the rights of their peers or workers.

Working with them reminded me of the importance of patience, attentive listening, and the positive regard an adult can offer a child. This role goes beyond activity facilitation—it’s a heartfelt commitment. Together, we are building a space where every child can grow, express themselves, and feel welcomed just as they are.”

SCHILOVE, YOUTH WORKER IN THE AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM (TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH)



11,417
contacts
in the after-
school program

Key Figures:

- Children enrolled in the Club 310 After-School Program: **128**
- A remarkable **50% francophone** and **50% anglophone** participation!
- A total of **85 youth from 5 different schools** regularly participate daily in the program!

“As a newcomer in Canada, I was afraid for my son. I was worried how he’s going to cope and adapt to this new environment but he was given a way to connect with his community with these excellent programs.”

LOWERTOWN MOTHER



Musical chairs at summer camp

Summer Camp
Enriching activities for the children of Lowertown



Last summer, **100 Lowertown youth** had the opportunity to take part in a dynamic summer camp.

The program included two healthy meals per week, regular park outings, and one of the most successful activities was Kevin Smith’s fantastic magic performance. Thanks to the dedication of **six** staff members from Summer Employment Opportunities program and **4** from Youth Futures program, we were able to offer enriching activities to **three groups** of Lowertown youth, aged 6 to 12.



“I Love to Dance”

The Community House

A Place of Inclusion, Services, and Collaboration

The Community House offers residents of Lowertown a **welcoming, inclusive space** that plays a key role in strengthening the local social fabric. It helps **identify community needs, encourages social integration, fosters harmony** among neighbours, and supports **rich and diverse** community engagement.

Through a wide **range of social services**, the Community House **responds to residents' needs** in tangible ways, while creating lasting connections and supporting initiatives that enhance quality of life in the neighborhood.



Haunted House



Highlights of the Year:

1 – The Haunted House

Our favorite fall tradition! Many volunteers, senior residents, and youth from the Youth Connected group came together to transform the Community House into a **true haunted house** for an afternoon filled with laughter and thrills. It was a **fantastic collaboration between our various programs** — 118 children from our after-school program came for a visit!

2 – More Space for the Community

The **relocation of the food bank** freed up **valuable space in the Community House**, making it possible to plan the expansion of our programming for Lowertown residents.

3 – Community Gardening

This year, we celebrated not only our **existing community gardens**, but also the expansion of a **brand-new garden** in front of the Community

House. A huge thank-you to our visionary volunteer **Mike Soulière** and to **OCH** for their contributions to this nourishing **beautification of the neighborhood**.

Key Moment of the Year:

The **development of the community gardens** perfectly reflects the **strong partnership between the Community House and Lowertown residents**. These flourishing gardens are a symbol of **shared commitment to a greener, more connected, and more vibrant neighborhood**.



Community Gardens

Key Figures:

- Computer access: **500+ uses**
- Emergency laundry service: **88 contacts**
- Use of kitchen for community cooking: **70 contacts**

These services were **delivered despite the food bank occupying over 90%** of the Community House's space and resources throughout the year.

“ We are a family of 4 from Nigeria. Life took a new turn the moment we decided to flee from our country, and we landed in the emergency family shelter here in Canada. The fact that we can't cook was the greatest fear we nurtured until we found out about the Lowertown Community Services located at 145, Beausoleil Dr. I remember when I first picked up my phone to call after weeks of starving and eating junks... (an employee) answered the call to book an appointment for me, she was so pleasant and was ready to help with emergency supply... We can't thank you, all the staff, enough for your care, love, patience and support thus far, this is a journey we just started and with the help of the community we are getting settled gradually.

Thanks for the opportunity for cooking and the constant food supplies, thanks for the clothing given to us, thanks for laundry services, thanks for the opportunity to print and make photocopies, thanks for making life more comfortable for us. Thank you for making Lowertown community our second home, we are so grateful.”

IBIDUNNI, LOWERTOWN RESIDENT

“ I am low income family and the computer room helps me a lot to print out my document like resumé.”

LOWERTOWN RESIDENT, MILLENIUM CENTRE USER

Food Bank

Nourishing with Dignity, Serving with Heart



Lowertown’s food bank aims to provide **emergency food support** to individuals and families experiencing challenging moments. It offers balanced food options tailored to the diverse needs of local residents. The service is accessible by appointment and delivered in a manner that **respects users’ dignity and privacy**.

Our food bank operates three times a week—on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays—thanks to the strength of our community partnerships (especially with the Ottawa Food Bank), the generosity of donors, and the invaluable dedication of volunteers. Its dual mission is to **combat food insecurity** while **promoting social inclusion and solidarity**.

Highlights of the Year:

1 – A New Space, New Energy

On February 25, 2025, we **moved into a larger, more functional space**, better suited to welcoming residents in a warm, confidential environment. Although not the best option or the promised one, the new location does allow us to welcome more volunteers, improve logistics, and better **meet the needs** of Lowertowners.

2 – More Fruits, Vegetables, and Culturally Relevant Foods

Thanks to strong partnerships, we expanded our offerings to include more fresh fruits, vegetables, and culturally diverse food products. This approach promotes **healthy eating** and respects the **cultural backgrounds** of our clients, helping them reconnect with familiar tastes and strengthen their sense of belonging.

“ I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Lowertown Food Bank for the exceptional service I had the honour to receive. As a beneficiary of this invaluable resource, I feel compelled to share the positive impact it has had on my life, my family’s, and that of many others in our community. The warm welcome I received helped ease my worries, and I saw firsthand how every staff member is trained to handle all situations with empathy and compassion. They embody values of solidarity, listening, and growth that truly honor our community.”

JOÃO, LOWERTOWN RESIDENT





3 – Strengthened Community Engagement

We were proud to welcome passionate new volunteers and witness the development of heartwarming **team cohesion**. Their energy, solidarity, and commitment have become essential drivers in fulfilling our mission.

Key Moment of the Year:

The most meaningful moment this year was undoubtedly welcoming residents into our new space for the first time. After an intense week of preparation, organization, uncertainty, and stress, seeing people walk through the doors—some curious, others visibly moved—was deeply touching. Many expressed relief and appreciation for the warm, accessible, and well-organized environment. Some shared how much of a difference the larger, brighter, and more structured space made to their experience. **This moment confirmed that the move was far more than a logistical change — it represented a meaningful improvement in our services and a strong statement of respect for the dignity of those we serve.**

Key Figures:

- Number of unique households served: **985**
- Number of unique individuals served: **2,321**
- Total service contacts: **11,841**
- Food bank volunteer hours: **2,360** with the support of **58** volunteers
- New registrations: **927**

Youth Connected

Young People Committed to a Stronger Neighbourhood

Lowertown’s Youth Connected is a dynamic group of **young leaders** who meet every Friday from 5 to 7 p.m. at the **Friel Street Youth Centre**. This **free LCRC program** brings together around **twenty youth** aged 14 and up who are eager to **speak up and play an active role in shaping life in Lowertown**.

They exchange ideas and propose **recreational, educational, and safe activities**, which they then share with partners from the **Lowertown Our Home** community roundtable—an initiative focused on improving youth well-being in the neighbourhood.

 *Highlights of the Year:*

1 – A Bilingual Podcast by Youth, for Youth

With support from ACFO Bilingual Ottawa, Youth Connected imagined, wrote, and recorded five episodes of a **bilingual podcast**, under the guidance of a professional producer.

2 – Community Collective Cooking to Bring People Together

Thanks to funding from the Harry P. Ward Foundation, the youth launched a series of **community kitchens** for **families living at Econolodge**. These communal cooking activities promote the sharing of knowledge, skill building, intergenerational connection, and stronger local solidarity.

“ It’s inclusive—it allows us to realize projects I never thought we’d be able to do. It gives us the sense that we, as youth, can achieve great things when we have the right support.”

DANIELLA, YOUTH CONNECTED PARTICIPANT



“ Being part of Youth Connected is like opening a door into a world where anything can happen. You meet people you might never have crossed paths with otherwise—and they leave a mark. I love going there because every moment is different: sometimes we laugh, sometimes we reflect, sometimes we just ride the group’s energy. It’s a place where I feel like I belong, even when I feel a little lost elsewhere.

What I love is that we’re not just doing activities to kill time—we’re experiencing things together. There are projects, ideas, little adventures and they break up the routine and that makes me feel more alive. We learn to understand each other, to listen, to help. We’re building something, even if it’s invisible.

Above all, this group gives me balance. It helps me understand others better—and myself too. There’s a kind of warmth in being surrounded, even quietly, by people moving forward together. It’s gentle. And in a world that often feels blurry, it’s a real comfort to have a place like this.”

GRACIA, YOUTH CONNECTED PARTICIPANT (TRANSLATED FROM FRENCH)



Lowertown/Strathcona Rising

Youth Sports and Recreation Program



Basketball

Our sports and recreation program, offered in collaboration with Sandy Hill CHC, aims to engage youth **aged 6 to 18** in a variety of activities such as **soccer, basketball, and track and field**. It **promotes health and teamwork**, helps **build community connections**, and ensures that sports remain **accessible and free** for low-income families.

Thanks to our partnership with **Kids Up Front**, we were also able to offer many families **free tickets** to cultural and sporting events, including movies and hockey games.

 **Highlights of the Year:**

1 – Halloween Painting Activity

A festive and highly popular event! Spaces filled up quickly—50 young participants and their families enjoyed a fun and creative experience.

2 – The Lowertown Lions Are Born!

With the involvement of local residents and coordination from our community development officer, our **very first community soccer club** came to life! The Lowertown Lions (LT.LIONS.BV) now have a name, a logo, **official jerseys**, and boundless energy. They are ready to roar—on the field and in the neighbourhood!

Key Moment – Track Meet at Terry Fox Field

Our youth participated in a **track and field** competition organized in partnership with the **Ottawa Lions**, where they even had the chance to meet **Olympic athletes**. It was an unforgettable moment for the youth and their families!

Key Figures:

- Total number of youth registered in sports activities: **300**
- Number of girls participating in soccer: **22**



Track and field

“ I really enjoyed playing soccer at the event. I also liked playing with my friends. Being a goalie was my favorite position. I’m so excited for another match!”

LYLIA (GIRLS’ SOCCER)

“ I had a lot of fun playing soccer. I usually play with my little brother, but I really enjoyed playing with the other girls. I’d love to join the girls’ team and have another event like that.”

ILAF (GIRLS’ SOCCER)



Sports program team

4,438
social support
contacts



Volunteer program

Social Support

Being There, Listening, Supporting

The Social Support program offers a **safe, non-judgmental** space where Lowertown residents can receive attentive **listening, practical help, and personalized support**.

Whether it's navigating administrative processes, accessing essential resources, or simply having someone to talk to, our team is there — every day — to meet the needs of Lowertowners.

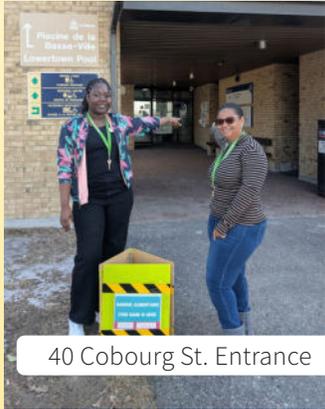
Highlight of the Year:

Programming for Seniors

Activities held at 160 Charlotte, such as dance workshops with MASC and monthly coffee chats, brought together 119 unique participants, strengthening social ties among seniors.

Key Figures:

- **4,438 one-on-one** support contacts with **649 unique clients**
- **158 backpacks** distributed during the *Back to SCOOOL* event, in collaboration with **OCH, Caring and Sharing, Lowertown/Strathcona Rising, our community house, and community developer**
 New this year: Children were able to personalize their backpacks on-site with patches, markers, and fun accessories!
- **221 households registered for our Holiday Program**
 - 214 toy bags distributed to **125 families**
 - **\$8,213** in Giant Tiger gift cards distributed



40 Cobourg St. Entrance



PO James, partner

“ So pleased to see you again for this year’s tax season. You really helped me last year. Thank you so much for being here and offering this service!”

ANGE, LOWERTOWN RESIDENT

“ I am so thankful to have these services. Being A SINGLE PARENT would be hard without them! Thank you LCRC staff for all you do for us.”

LOWERTOWN MOTHER



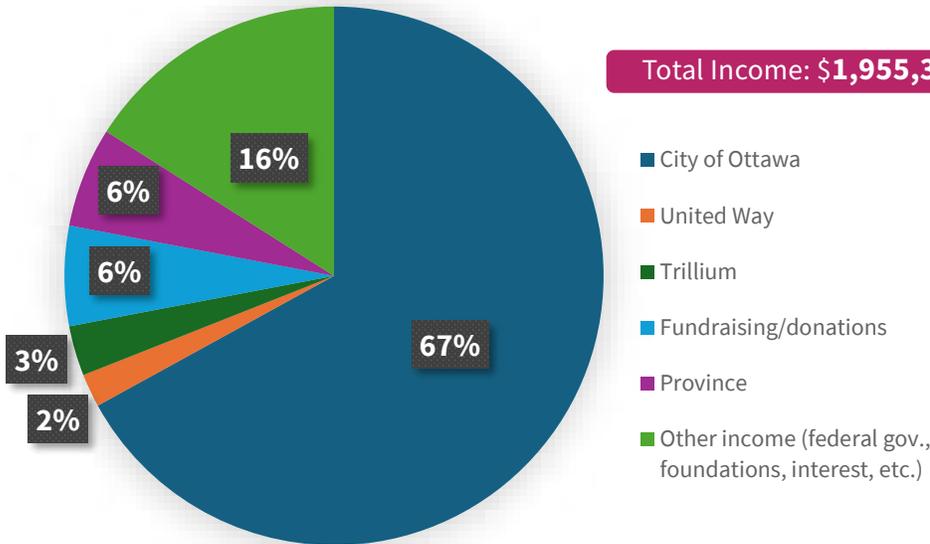
Toy Mountain

Financial Report

End of financial year March 31, 2025

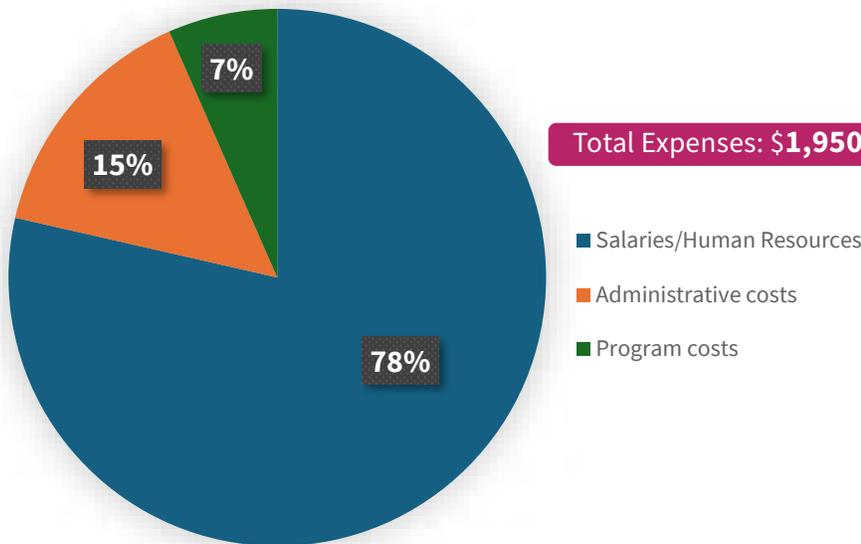
Income

Total Income: **\$1,955,379**



Expenses

Total Expenses: **\$1,950,430**



11,841
food bank
contacts*

7,370 total
volunteer hours
175 total
volunteers across
programs*

2,321
unique food
bank clients*

* statistics for 2024

Lowertown Community Resource Centre



Main office and food bank
40 Cobourg Street



Lowertown Good
Neighbours Community
House
145 Beausoleil Street



Youth Centre
201 Friel Street



613.789.3930
reception@crcbv.ca
www.crcbv.ca



Charitable organization number:
896719796RR0001