

SOCIAL & ECONOMIC SUCCESS
MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS **RESPECT**
CLIENT-CENTRED **DIVERSE & ACCESSIBLE**

The Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre, Employment Solutions, & The Multicultural Services Network of Niagara Falls

ANNUAL ✨
GENERAL
REPORT

2023
Exceeding
2024
The Vision



Mission:

Integrating newcomers and Canadians by delivering diverse and accessible programs and services that empower them to reach their full potential and provide resources and supports so they may contribute to the success of a growing and inclusive community.

Vision:

Design and deliver diverse & accessible programs and services to assist individuals in achieving social and economic success in the Niagara Region.

Values:

- Client-centred Service
- Professionalism
- Building & Maintaining Meaningful Relationships
- Respect

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A MESSAGE FROM THE INTERIM BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

As we reflect on the past year, we are filled with a deep sense of pride and optimism for the future of our multicultural centre. Situated in the heart of our Niagara Region, our centre has been a beacon of hope and support for countless individuals and families seeking a new beginning. Our commitment to fostering an inclusive and welcoming community remains unwavering, and we are dedicated to continuing our journey toward excellence and empowerment.

Our centre has made significant strides in enhancing the lives of those we serve through our diverse range of services. Our settlement and integration programs have been instrumental in helping newcomers navigate the complexities of their new environment, providing them with the tools and resources necessary to build a successful and fulfilling life. Our emergency shelter has been a sanctuary for those in urgent need, offering safety, support, and a pathway to stability. Our language training initiatives have empowered individuals to communicate effectively, breaking down barriers and fostering connections within the community. Through our foreign credential recognition services, we have enabled skilled professionals to reclaim their careers and contribute meaningfully to our local economy. Additionally, our Employment Solutions division has provided comprehensive support to job seekers, guiding them toward meaningful employment opportunities and career growth while assisting local employers to fill the labour market needs.

Simunic

We are excited to introduce our new **3-year strategic plan**, built on four key pillars:

- Building and developing our staff team;
- Enhancing our brand and communication strategies;
- Diversifying and strengthening our funding and;
- Enhance and celebrate our clients' outcomes

(continued next page)

Our staff is the backbone of our organization, and we are committed to investing in their professional growth, providing them with the training, resources, and support they need to excel. We will focus on strengthening our marketing efforts to share our story, highlight our successes, and connect with potential clients, partners, and supporters. By raising awareness of our impact, we aim to attract new opportunities and foster a deeper connection with our community. Financial sustainability is crucial to our ability to deliver high-quality services, and we will explore new funding avenues to ensure a diverse and stable financial base. By building robust relationships with stakeholders and demonstrating the value of our work, we aim to secure the resources needed to expand our services and reach more individuals in need. Our client's success stories are a testament to our programs' effectiveness and our team's dedication. We will enhance our efforts to track, measure, and celebrate these outcomes, using data-driven insights to continually improve our services.

As we embark on this new chapter, we are inspired by the resilience and determination of those we serve. Our vision is to create a community where everyone, regardless of their background, has the opportunity to thrive. We are committed to breaking down barriers, fostering inclusion, and empowering individuals to achieve their full potential. This year, under the theme 'Exceeding the Vision,' we have supported newcomers and empowered Canadian citizens, ensuring that our services and programs benefit the entire community.

We invite you to celebrate with us the stronger, more inclusive community we have already built together. Thank you for your continued support and belief in our mission. With your partnership, we look forward to exceeding our vision and creating an even brighter future for all.

Sincerely,



Janet Madume

**Executive Director
WHCMC
Employment Solutions**



John Cartier

**Interim Chair
Board of Directors**

HISTORY AND CONTINUED PARTNERSHIPS

Over the past 48 years, the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre has been a steadfast pillar, helping thousands of immigrants overcome barriers to integration and witnessing their successful journeys to building new lives in Canada. Our most significant contribution is empowering immigrants with the essential skills to live and work in Canada, transforming them into thriving, contributing members of our society.

We take immense pride in seeing many of our former clients become valued volunteers, staff members, and board members, actively shaping a stronger, more culturally aware community. As a vital link to Niagara's economic growth, we assist newcomers in settling within our communities and offer continued support as they embark on their Canadian endeavours. For over 24 years, we have also provided employment support through Employment Solutions, our employment division, to both Canadians and newcomers. Established in 1995, the Multicultural Services Network of Niagara Falls extends our reach by providing settlement services in Niagara Falls. Our fundraising activities sustain critical programs and foster stronger partnerships within the business community. Developing a robust network with other organizations in the Niagara Region has proven our best strategy for consistently delivering quality services to the community.

In alignment with our philosophy of diversity and inclusion, our network of community partners spans the public, private, and non-profit sectors. We collaborate closely with ethnic halls and cultural associations, actively participating in Niagara Region inter-agency groups, sharing information resources, and exploring opportunities for closer collaboration.

Effective communication with our organizational members occurs through formal channels like regular meetings, joint ventures, and partnerships and informally through the myriad of working relationships we have cultivated over time. Our commitment to fostering a thriving, diverse, inclusive community remains unwavering.

Together, we continue to build a vibrant future, celebrating the richness of our diverse heritage and ensuring every newcomer finds a place to call home in Niagara.

2023-2024

SNAPSHOT

Settlement Unique clients: 1855

Settlement Client Interactions: 9546

Settlement referrals to other services: 1835

Workshops and info sessions: 226

“The Labour Market Orientation Program served 379 clients this fiscal year, more than doubling our expected outcome”

Programs

Ukrainian Settlement Services

Unique Clients Served: 106

Client Interactions: 251

Settlement Plans Developed: 35

Referrals to Other Services: 55

“Our Language Training Program is thrilled to announce the addition of a fifth course for literacy level students!”

SETTLEMENT COUNSELLING AND IMMIGRATION SERVICES

Our commitment to comprehensive settlement services remains unwavering as we continue to focus on ensuring the seamless and successful integration of newcomers into our community. Central to our efforts is the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP), generously funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development. This program offers a wide range of essential support services.

The NSP embraces a holistic approach, providing a variety of services such as information and referral, advocacy, needs-based workshops, engaging group sessions, one-on-one counseling, and other forms of support. These services are carefully designed to empower our clients in their journey toward citizenship, enhance their ability to not only enter but also thrive in the Niagara Region, and help them build meaningful connections within our diverse community.

Offering services through our hybrid model ensures that clients throughout our service area can access our support with confidence in their safety and privacy. We remain steadfast in our dedication to empowering newcomers and look forward to continuing our crucial work in facilitating their successful settlement and integration within our vibrant community.

We continue to observe a significant influx of asylum seekers, many of whom are still accommodated in hotels. While the numbers have decreased, we remain dedicated to supporting individuals transferred from other cities across Ontario. Additionally, Ukrainian newcomers continue to arrive, with many seeking assistance before the March 31 application deadline. We extend a warm welcome to them, providing essential support to facilitate a smooth transition into their new home in Canada. Our commitment to their success is anchored in our belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive in their new environment.



2023/2024 SNAPSHOT

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LABOUR MARKET ORIENTATION PROGRAMS

Niagara Region welcomes many highly skilled internationally trained professionals every year. Our program supports them to be able to return to using their valued skills here in Canada. The Labour Market Orientation Program, part of our Newcomer Settlement Program, assists internationally trained individuals to know about international credential assessment and the process of how to return to their profession or to select an alternative. We are often needed to advocate with the regulatory bodies and licensing processes of professions so that newcomers understand the requirements, receive additional supports, and do not give up mid-process.

All clients receive the Employment Opportunities, Rights, and Requirements workshop that includes information about the Employment Standards Act and Workplace Health and Safety in multiple languages.

The Labour Market Orientation Program served 379 clients this fiscal year, more than doubling our expected outcome for a second year.

With so many needing to leave their countries of origin due to wars, natural disasters, and oppression, they arrive to Canada not knowing where to find the information needed to return to their careers. We are grateful to our funders for the opportunity to be there to provide this information and referrals to needed services, while continuing to give support until professional goals are achieved.

It takes an entire community of partnerships to help newcomers succeed, thank you to every one!

CONTRACT OF EMPLOYMENT

WELLAND HERITAGE COUNCIL AND MULTICULTURAL CENTRE

Important Employment and Financial Information for Newcomers

Welcome to Canada! We want you to have a safe and successful start in your new home. Here are some crucial things to know about working legally and protecting yourself financially

Always Work with a Contract: It's essential to have a written contract with your employer that outlines your job responsibilities, wages, and working conditions. This protects both you and your employer.

Get a SIN Number: A Social Insurance Number (SIN) is required for legal employment in Canada. Make sure you apply for your SIN as soon as possible to avoid any issues.

Access to Medical Help: Working under the table means you will not have access to benefits like workers' compensation if you get injured on the job. You may also face challenges getting medical assistance when needed without proper documentation.

Tax Compliance: Failing to pay income tax can have serious consequences. If you work without reporting your income and paying taxes, you could be flagged by the government. This can lead to legal issues, including being unable to renew your immigration status.

Immigration Consequences: Working illegally can impact your immigration status. If caught working without authorization, it may jeopardize your chances of staying in Canada or applying for refugee status or permanent residency.

Seek Help: If you are unsure about your employment rights or need assistance with legal matters, do not hesitate to seek help from reputable settlement/employment service providers, social assistance offices, community organizations, or legal professionals. They can provide guidance and support tailored to your situation.

Compliance with Income Assistance Programs: Working under the table while receiving income assistance from programs like Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) is fraud and can lead to severe penalties, including benefit suspension, fines, and legal consequences. Be transparent about your employment to avoid negative impacts on your case, and seek advice from relevant agencies or legal professionals if you have concerns.

STAY SAFE AND LEGAL: DO NOT WORK UNDER THE TABLE

Remember, working legally protects your rights and positively impacts your integration into Canadian society. Stay informed, stay safe, and build a bright future in Canada.

LANGUAGE TRAINING

Formerly, English as a Second Language (ESL), our Language Training Classes are offered to adults aged 18 and older. The 2023-2024 academic year came with a significant shift in funding. Classes are now funded directly through the Ontario Government Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development, rather than being subcontracted under the District School Board of Niagara (DSBN).

Classes run from Monday to Friday, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM. We offer a range of levels, from pre-Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) to level eight CLB. Our classes have been thoughtfully designed to teach the four essential language skills: speaking, listening, reading, and writing; with an emphasis on bringing real world scenarios into the classroom, such as health and safety, employment, Canadian culture, and housing. We have had the pleasure of having guest speakers, such as Niagara Regional Police, to help students understand their rights and freedoms in Canada.

Our Language Training Program is thrilled to announce the addition of a fifth course for literacy level students (pre-benchmark). This class has been designed to specifically help students gain foundation level skills that can be built upon in their language acquisition journey. This class has helped us better meet the needs of Pre CLB-clients as we now have a class curriculum specifically built with literacy levels in mind, helping to decrease students feeling overwhelmed.

We are proud to offer flexible delivery models of both hybrid and online learning for students. Currently, we offer hybrid model classes to literacy and levels 1-4 as we see the value for students to interact with instructors and peers face-to-face. Hybrid Classes are offered in Welland and Niagara Falls. Online courses are offered for levels 5-8, and have eliminated transportation barriers and have allowed students from across the Niagara Region to participate. We are proud to serve a diverse population of students and are excited to continue serving the community through language services.

"A married couple who moved on to good jobs in Toronto wrote to tell us, *I wish to thank you and the teachers of the Welland Heritage Council for all the patience and dedication that you had with me and my wife during the 15 months that we studied. During those times we learned many important and interesting aspects of Canada – its political life, culture, and geography. Those classes had a strong influence on us and we have learned to love this country and its people. Thank you. We now have a better preparation and confidence with the language and we want to give to the country the best of us. You and the teachers will always be in our hearts.*"

UKRAINIAN ACCELERATED ENGLISH COURSE

Accelerated English courses have been a crucial support for Ukrainians who arrived in Canada after the war began in their homeland in 2022. These courses prioritized efficient English language teaching, led by a bilingual English-Ukrainian tutor. The primary goal was to equip students with practical English skills for interpersonal and intercultural communication, focusing on speaking, listening, writing, and comprehension.

The lessons were designed to enhance memory and personal engagement with the language through gestures, mimicking, drawing, singing, and detailed descriptions. Students overcame their fear of speaking English and translated audio and video materials within a six-week program conducted in small groups of six.

The intensive English classes involved rigorous daily sessions with homework, facilitating a rapid learning pace. Students built a strong vocabulary foundation and learned new words independently, continually expanding their lexicon. Personal grammar instruction in their native language helped them converse fluently and confidently.

The program emphasized spoken English, the most effective method for developing verbal communication skills. Students simulated real-life situations, practiced dialogues, and engaged in practical scenarios to prepare for everyday interactions. This approach enabled them to understand spoken English and master intonation through audio and video exercises.

The results were remarkable: 60 students successfully mastered vocabulary and topics relevant to their lives and professions in Canada. They became proficient in conversational English, understanding interlocutors in various contexts, and effectively handling business correspondence, resumes, applications, and phone conversations.

All students successfully passed job interviews, secured employment, and settled in Canada with their families. They are building their futures in this beautiful country, confident in their ability to thrive and contribute to their new communities.

EMERGENCY SHELTER

Throughout the year, we've focused on promoting self-reliance and improving housing stability amidst a severe housing crisis. Our Emergency Shelter, consistently at full capacity, has been pivotal in offering refuge to those in need.

We enhance our clients' chances of securing stable housing by connecting them with specialists and available properties, providing invaluable insights, especially to newcomers unfamiliar with the local housing market. Every interaction is designed to advance their journey towards independence and long-term solutions.

Our success is driven by the diligent efforts of our staff and clients, utilizing community resources to foster self-sufficiency. We handle emergencies by providing immediate housing and support, educating clients on their rights, and helping them integrate into the community.

We're proud to report that our shelter served 15 families or 52 individuals this year, all of whom have maintained their housing stability. Our shelter remains a critical lifeline in the community, ensuring safety and support in challenging times.



HOUSING PROGRAM – ASYLUM SEEKERS

Our program is dedicated to assisting asylum seekers in transitioning from shelters to their first rental homes in Canada. By providing tailored information and resources, we empower clients to navigate the rental market independently, promoting swift and successful transitions to stable living conditions. Our goal is to empower clients to become independent and integrate smoothly into Canadian society.

Program Overview and Strategy

We focus on educating clients about the rental market, assisting them in their housing search, and providing insights into Canada's rental system. Leveraging our extensive housing knowledge and strong relationships with landlords and property managers, we have significantly increased the availability of suitable housing options for newcomers.

Key Accomplishments and Impact

- Client Empowerment: Enhanced the understanding of the rental process among asylum seekers, enabling them to secure housing independently.
- Partnership Development: Strengthened relationships with landlords and property managers to increase the availability of rental properties for newcomers.

Service Delivery Metrics:

- Individuals Served: **518** asylum seekers assisted.
- Total Interactions: **1013** interactions providing targeted support.
- Reduced Shelter Stays: We have observed a reduction in the average duration of shelter stays, reflecting a more efficient housing placement process.

Outreach and Collaborations

Our engagement with community partners and property managers is crucial, enhancing our program's adaptability and responsiveness to the needs of asylum seekers.

Challenges and Ongoing Efforts

Expanding our property listings remains a challenge due to high demand. We continue to adapt by focusing on training and development to meet the needs of our clients effectively.

HOUSING PROGRAM - UKRAINIAN

Our housing support program aims to assist Ukrainian newcomers in the Niagara Region, focusing on securing stable and affordable housing and facilitating their integration into Niagara Region society. Through this initiative, we aim to provide comprehensive support to Ukrainian newcomers, assisting them in navigating the challenges of settling in a new country.

Mission and Goals

The mission of our housing support program is to ensure that Ukrainian families and individuals arriving in Canada under challenging circumstances receive the necessary assistance to find and maintain suitable housing. Our goal is to secure stable, affordable housing, support their integration into the community, and facilitate access to necessary services that enhance their quality of life and employment prospects.

Key Accomplishments

Apartments Secured: 11 furnished and unfurnished apartments for various family configurations.

Immediate Housing Solutions: Provided housing for new arrivals, ensuring affordability.

Comprehensive Support: Assisted new residents with housing, employment searches, and language courses.

Transition Assistance: Helped families move from temporary to permanent housing and supported their employment searches.

Impact and Metrics

Unique Clients Served: 106

Client Interactions: 251

Settlement Plans Developed: 35

Referrals to Other Services: 55

Outreach and Partnerships

We have strengthened our program through partnerships with local organizations like the Ukrainian Congress and Niagara Support Ukraine. These collaborations have expanded our reach and improved our service delivery, ensuring that we meet the diverse needs of our clients effectively.



EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS

Employment Solutions, funded by Employment Ontario in partnership with Fedcap Canada (Service System Manager for the Hamilton-Niagara Region) through the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre, is dedicated to empowering job seekers and employers in the Niagara Region. We offered services through our two accessible locations: one in Welland Seaway Mall, and the other Niagara Falls at 7188 Dorchester Road.

The 2023-2024 fiscal year was unique. We had the pleasure of working with the Asylum Seekers demographic as thousands of them are now in the Niagara Region. Additionally, we had the pride of opening a new office in Niagara Falls to expand our service to our community. For these reasons, we conducted many job fairs that allowed more than 3000 job seekers to attend and find jobs. Also, we participated in the Hiring Day that Fedcap Canada organized, which provided the chance for many job seekers to get jobs.

Client-Centric Approach:

- *Reducing Stress:* Job searching can be challenging, and we understand the complexities involved. At Employment Solutions, we prioritize our "Client First Approach," aimed at alleviating stress, setting clear goals, and guiding clients through their job search journey.
- *Customized Solutions:* Our highly trained staff work closely with clients to conduct comprehensive assessments, identifying their unique goals and needs. We then tailor our approach to create personalized strategies for success.
- *Referral Services:* Recognizing that securing employment is not always the immediate solution for every client, we provide assessments to determine if a referral to other community partners will support clients to achieve their goals such as Contact North, that assisted our clients to become more employable through accessing online training. We have also referred clients to Better Jobs Ontario (formerly Second Career), or alternative forms of skills development that are better suited to their needs.

Employer Engagement:

- *Comprehensive Support:* Employment Solutions actively supports Niagara's employers by assisting with job postings, applicant screening, interview coordination, and organizing job fairs.
- *Serving Small Businesses:* Many of the employers we collaborate with are small businesses that benefit greatly from our free services. Our strong relationships with employers enhance our clients' job prospects, giving them a competitive edge.
- *Training Incentive Placement Agreement (TIPA):* Funds used toward workforce development and skill enhancement. We have completed successful TIPAs helping clients get sustainable jobs.

EMPLOYMENT SOLUTIONS CONT'D

Canada Ontario Job Grant (COJG):

- Skills Development: Employment Solutions administers COJG, a program funded by the Province of Ontario and the Government of Canada. This grant empowers Niagara employers to invest in training for their staff, leading to skill development, promotions, and increased compensation. In the 2023-2024 fiscal year, we spent over 83% of our budget allocation between the two locations, supporting Ontario's journey toward having the most highly skilled workforce in Canada.

Highlights:

- We served over 530 clients throughout the fiscal year to achieve their employment goals.
- More than 185 clients got meaningful jobs.
- Conducted Job Fairs for over 3000 jobseekers
- Client Satisfaction is very high at both sites.
- We supported more than 1500 individuals in our Resource and Information areas.

“Employment Solutions remains dedicated to serving the Niagara region. Our commitment to clients and employers, our customized approach, and our valuable partnerships continue to drive our success. We look forward to another year of empowering clients, supporting employers, and contributing to the region's economic growth. Contact us if you are seeking to upgrade your team's skillset or if you are a job seeker in need of support. Thank you for your ongoing trust and collaboration.”



INTERNATIONALLY EDUCATED HEALTH PROFESSIONALS HUB PILOT PROJECT

The IEHP Hub Pilot Project launched in January of 2024. This project, funded in part by the Government of Canada's Foreign Credential Recognition Program, supports internationally educated health professionals to return to employment with referrals, resources, and career pathway planning. IEHPs in professions such as physician, nurse, pharmacist, physiotherapist, social worker, medical lab technologist, dentist, paramedic and more will be supported over the next 4 years throughout their credential assessment and licensing processes.

IEHPs will receive Diversity and Inclusivity Training as well as Canadian Workplace Culture Training to be set up for long term success in the workplace. Employers of IEHPs will also receive Diversity and Inclusivity Training to create safe workplaces for the success of IEHPs.

After 2 years, the project training resources will be made available to any agency that would like to replicate it, with Train-the-Trainer sessions provided.

The project will be completed in 2027, at which time a key finding report of the results will be made available.

The announcement of this project has been met with great enthusiasm by our community. Thank you to everyone who has requested to learn more and partner together, to support the IEHPs in Niagara Region to be able to use their vital skills here.



DIVERSE VOICES SAME MESSAGE PROJECT

The Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre's "Diverse Voices Same Message" initiative, funded by the Canada Heritage Multiculturalism and Anti-Racism Program, is set to make a significant impact in Welland, Fort Erie, and St. Catharines, Ontario. This project will offer workshops, events, and immersive cultural exchanges designed to celebrate and honor Indigenous and Black knowledge, fostering greater cultural understanding and inclusivity among youth.



A key element of this initiative is the Youth Council, composed of Indigenous and Black youth leaders from the region. The Youth Council will play a pivotal role in guiding the project, from designing and leading workshops to organizing community events. Their leadership ensures that the perspectives and experiences of their communities are central to the project, enhancing its relevance and impact. By empowering these young leaders, the initiative not only promotes their active engagement but also leverages their insights to address cultural and social issues effectively.

The "Diverse Voices Same Message" initiative is aligned with the objectives of Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiatives. The expected results include increased awareness of Canada's cultural diversity, a deeper understanding of the challenges related to cultural, ethnic, and religious participation in society and the economy, and enhanced community capacity to address racism and discrimination. The project aims to eliminate discrimination, racism, and prejudice, provide meaningful opportunities for youth engagement, and foster collaborative efforts to build awareness and change attitudes.



So, get ready for an exciting blend of workshops, events, and cultural exchanges that will not only build connections but also create lasting memories. With the passionate Youth Council leading the way, this initiative promises to be a dynamic and inspiring journey toward greater inclusivity and understanding. Let's make waves of change and have fun while doing it—because when diverse voices come together, the possibilities are endless!

MIGRANT WORKER PROGRAM

This impactful program was made possible through the generous support of The Neighbourhood Organization (TNO). Their commitment to empowering migrant workers was instrumental in enabling WHCMC to deliver this vital service, contributing to the overall well-being and integration of migrant workers within the Niagara Region.

WHCMC, in collaboration with migrant worker service providers within the Niagara Region, successfully implemented a Conversational English program tailored for migrant workers. This initiative, which began in 2022 and concluded in its final year, was designed to eliminate barriers and improve this demographic's economic and social determinants of health.

Through the provision of an experienced Instructor, WHCMC ensured that the program was seamlessly integrated with the efforts of existing service providers. This collaboration significantly enhanced participant engagement, allowing WHCMC to follow up directly with the workers and address any attendance-related issues. The program operated during the evenings from Monday to Friday and on Saturdays, catering to the unique schedules of migrant workers.

The program equipped participants with essential English language skills, empowering them to understand better and communicate their rights, read and comprehend contracts, documents, and other vital resources presented to them, operate within a healthier and safer working environment, enhance communication between employers and employees, and overcome barriers related to communication, mobility, and other limitations.

CANADA SUMMER JOBS

The Canada Summer Jobs program sponsored by Service Canada enabled us to hire a student in the summer of 2023 to assist with the work of the Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre (WHCMC).

Our student was looking to increase cultural competence, preparing to apply to medical school. At summer's end, he reported:

"This was my first experience in a not-for-profit organization; I learned a lot about what it means to work in such a setting. It involves being extremely passionate for the organization's mission, being extremely resourceful while working with limited funding/grants, being able to collaborate effectively with peers, being able to network with various community partners for effective information and referral provision, being able to advocate for the needs of clients, being able to manage several projects, being resilient and adaptable when faced with challenges, being up-to-date with everchanging policies and news, and most importantly, being empathetic with the newcomers through their immigration journey.

I am extremely grateful to have had the opportunity to work at the WHCMC. The staff has been nothing short of amazing and inspiring, and I am thrilled that this the organization and experience has been a part of my journey through life. I cannot wait to carry my experience and the lessons I have learned through my future endeavours."

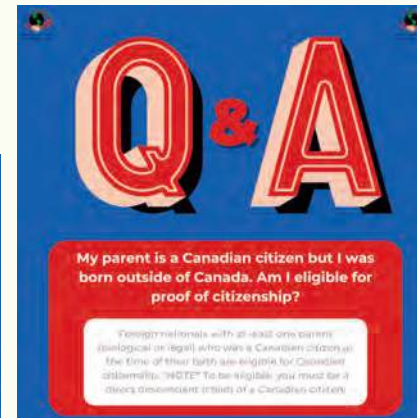
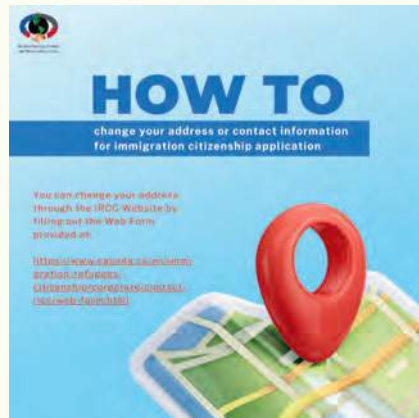
ENABLING MODERNIZATION OF ADAPTATION TO ONLINE SERVICE PROVISION

In 2023, Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre (WHCMC) was honored to receive a generous grant from the Community Services Recovery Fund (CSRF), facilitated by United Way Niagara. This critical funding has enabled our organization to undertake the pivotal project of modernizing and adapting our service delivery to meet the evolving needs of our community.

The grant, which came into effect on May 1, 2023, and will continue through June 30, 2024, has allowed us to purchase essential equipment necessary for transitioning to online service provision. This investment ensures that WHCMC remains responsive to the unprecedented client needs that have emerged in recent times.

By equipping our organization with the tools required for digital service delivery, we are now better positioned to support our diverse client base, ensuring continued access to vital resources and services. This project represents a significant step forward in our mission to provide seamless and accessible support to all members of our community, both now and in the future.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to United Way Niagara and the Community Services Recovery Fund for their invaluable support in helping us adapt and thrive in an ever-changing landscape.



MULTICULTURAL SERVICES NETWORK OF NIAGARA FALLS

We have adapted our services in Niagara Falls to better cater to newcomers. With support from the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training, and Skills Development through the Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP), we offer a range of services aimed at helping newcomers integrate into the community and pursue citizenship pathways.

Our services include information and referral, advocacy, needs-based workshops, group sessions, one-on-one counseling, and other forms of support. We strive to empower newcomers to establish themselves successfully in the Niagara Region and foster meaningful connections within the community.

To ensure the safety and privacy of our clients, we have made necessary modifications to our service delivery. We have also embraced technology, utilizing platforms like Zoom to regularly provide information and orientation sessions to our ESL students in Niagara Falls.

Our goal is to support newcomers as they embark on their journey in the Niagara Region, facilitating their integration and helping them build a strong foundation in their new home.

Welland Multicultural
Festival

Black

History Month

Events

International

Women's Day

Welland Dragon

Boat Festival

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

This year's Black History Month celebration took place at Casa Dante on the morning of February 20, 2024, where we enjoyed a delicious breakfast together. The stunning ballroom provided the perfect backdrop for an inspiring and memorable event.

The opening ceremony began with a warm welcome, the singing of our national anthem by Wafa Sarwari, a thoughtful and acknowledging led by a colleague Madeleine Mackenzie, and greetings from political officials MP Vance Badawey, Mayor Frank Campion, and Meridian Credit Union representative Richard Madume.

Our keynote speaker, Lezlie Harper, brought attendees to their feet with her captivating address on "Celebrating Black Resilience." Lezlie's heartfelt connection to the stories of Freedom Seekers in the Niagara area and her dedication to preserving and sharing the region's rich history deeply resonated with everyone present.

Powerful artistic performances added to the vibrancy of the celebration. Veshone Cunningham, a sensational hip-hop Christian musician, delivered soul-stirring beats and uplifting lyrics that energized the audience. Our Settlement Team Lead, Marsha Whittaker, captivated us with her spoken word poetry, adding a profound and personal touch to the event.

The impact of this celebration extends far beyond the event itself. All funds raised during this event are dedicated to providing scholarships for the post-secondary education of promising marginalized youth in Welland. These scholarships, awarded at their secondary school graduation ceremony in June, represent a tangible investment in the future of our community. They serve as a testament to our commitment to nurturing talent, promoting education, and ensuring that the legacy of Black history continues to inspire and empower generations to come.

We thank all our donors, volunteers, and participants who made this event possible. Your support and dedication to celebrating Black excellence and resilience are deeply appreciated.



INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

On March 8 we celebrated our 20th Annual International Women's Day event at the Welland Civic Square. Every year the newcomer men and women who attend honour the achievements of a woman who came to Canada, whose story then inspires the other newcomers in attendance that they can succeed as well.

Our event began with an explanation of the origin of International Women's Day with this year's theme being "Inspire Inclusion".

This was followed by our inspirational speaker Rabilla Waqar, who inspired through sharing her journey which included an immigration story that resonated with attendees. Rabilla's tenacity and commitment to excellence served as a beacon of empowerment. We are grateful for her immense contributions to our community which includes serving as a member of the WHCMC Board.

Our International Woman of the Year for 2024, Lidiia Bulaivska, came to Canada from Ukraine in 2022. Since her arrival she has worked tirelessly to assist other Ukrainians with all their settlement needs. She approached our Executive Director with an idea for an English program to fast-track Ukrainians into employment that became funded with amazing results. She has brought her theatre company to Canada providing joy to Ukrainians and the community alike, as well as started a catering company with the goal of becoming a restaurant.

Our Executive Director Janet Madume presented the trophy to Lidiia. The trophy is inscribed with our winners' names and remains at our centre throughout the year.



WELLAND DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

It was wonderful to be able to return to our large community events in 2023. The Welland Dragon Boat Festival raises funds to support our agency and the needs of the Emergency Shelter and its occupants,

Our Welland Dragon Boat Festival was held on June 10, 2023. The event took place at the world class Welland International Flatwater Centre. Teams signed up to participate in a day of races, culminating in the awards ceremony. Food vendors as well as other vendors sold products and services. The festival is an excellent way for us to reach out to the community, with free admission and no experience required to enter a team.

Photo Credits: Anthony Gallaccio



WELLAND MULTICULTURAL FESTIVAL

The Welland Multicultural Festival took place on Saturday, June 20, in partnership with the Welland Rose Festival's Days in the Park at Welland's Merritt Park, featuring cultural musical entertainment. Performers included Indigenous dancers organized by David Grand, Niagara Song & Dance Ensemble, Tara's School of Highland Dance, and Arts Group Lingua Vaudeville, enjoyed by all ages.

The Welland Multicultural Festival brings our community together in celebration of the cultures represented in our community. We are grateful to Canadian Heritage for the grant that made it possible for this event to be accessible to all at no cost.





DAYS IN THE PARK

SATURDAY JUNE 17th

Afternoon of cultural performances

Phil McCarty
11:30 AM - 1:00 PM

Additional Scottish dance

Additional Ukrainian dance

located at the Merritt Park Amphitheatre



The Welland Heritage Council & Multicultural Centre Presents:

Welland Dragon Boat Festival 2023

Early Bird Deadline: April 7, 2023
Price: \$795.00
After April 7, 2023: \$895.00
Discounts for multiple team registration

June 10

Welland International Flatwater Centre
www.wellanddragonboatfestival.ca



Join Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre for our annual

20 FEB | Black History Celebration | 2024

Black History Celebration

Black Resilience with Lezlie Harper

strength. unity. resillience.

victory. power. triumph.

Highlights &
legacy. heritage. excellence.

empowerment. inspiration.

Financials

HIGHLIGHTS

2023-2024 REFLECTIONS

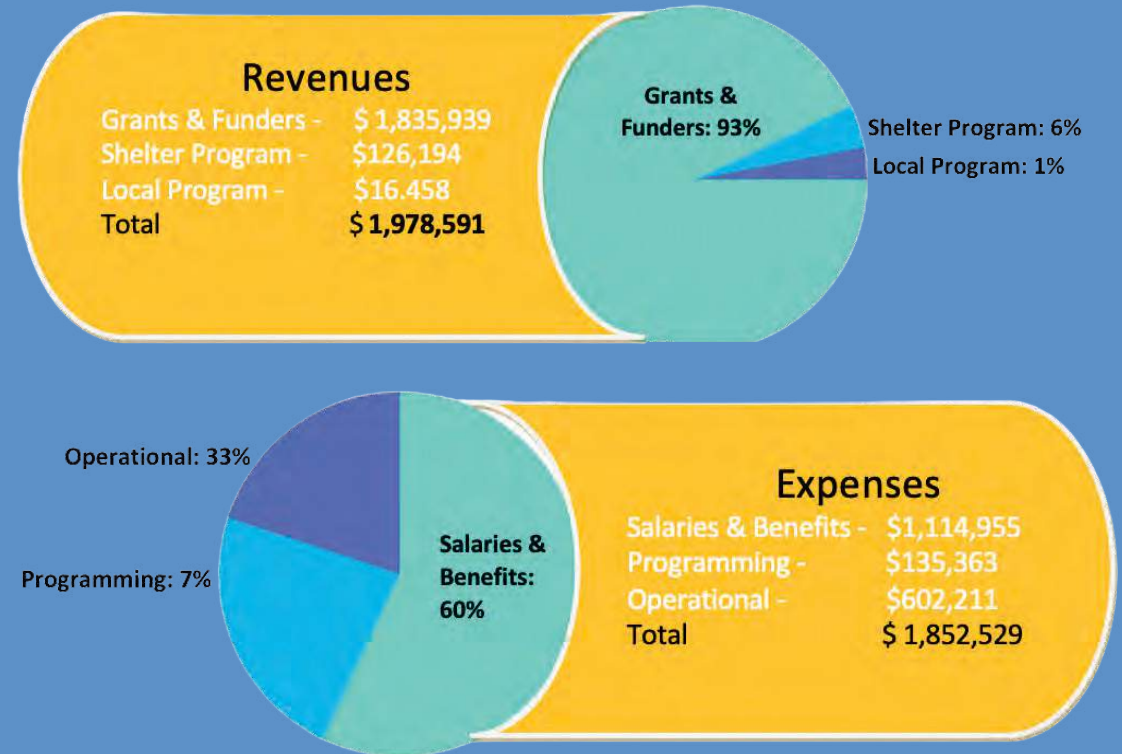
Our theme “Exceeding the Vision” was accomplished as our expanded team continued to meet the challenges of supporting continual new arrivals to Niagara and added new innovative programs to accelerate their success. Our employment services at our new Niagara Falls location have similarly exceeded the vision with their results.

2024-2025 LOOKING FORWARD

Larger numbers of new arrivals to Canada settling in Niagara Region will be a continuing trend as we grapple with affordable housing supply. We look forward to providing services to the clients of our community that sets them up for success with employment, housing, and language acquisition, to be able to contribute their valued skills that is a win-win for Niagara.

FINANCIALS

TOTAL ASSETS: \$883,488



Thank You

Thank You

Thank You

Thank You

TO OUR FUNDING PARTNERS:

Government of Canada

City of Welland

District School Board of Niagara

Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development

Service Canada

Fedcap Canada

United Way Niagara

Meridian Credit Union



Funded in part by
the Government of Canada's
Foreign Credential Recognition Program



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Thank you to our Board of Directors who volunteered extensive hours to govern this organization and make decisions to assist with all our extensive programs in Welland, Niagara Falls, and across the region

Executive

Board Chair: Ann Simunic

Vice Board Chair: Toni Tosti

Treasurer: Margita Galat/ Rabilla Waqar

Secretary: Paula Esposito

Directors

Debi Anderson

John Cartier

Michael Charles

Christine Clarke Davis

April Jeffs

Jim Larouche

Rabilla Waqar

THE TEAM

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our exceptional staff for consistently exceeding expectations and demonstrating unwavering commitment to our organization, its mission, and the individuals who benefit from your expertise and dedication. Your loyalty and dedication are instrumental in the success of our programs and in enriching the lives of our clients through the valuable knowledge you generously share. Thank you for your outstanding contributions and continued dedication to our shared goals.

Executive Director: Janet Madume

Financial Coordinator: Bhaskar Pathak, Rana Bshara

ESL Teachers: Elham Meleka, Sherry Main, Alysia Felker-Penner,

Kate Agar, Laura Rojas, Naheel Al Jawabreh

ESL Coordinator: Rana Bshara, Olivia Karner

Ukrainian Accelerated English Program: Lidiia Bulaivska

Migrant Worker Program Instructor: Kate Agar, Laura Rojas

Lead Settlement: Marsha Whittaker

Settlement Counsellors: Juan Pablo Vicentes Perez, Karina Kufta, Viviana

Carolina Rubio Vega, Emine Yonden-Pehlivan

Housing Coordinator: Nataliia Nikishova

IEHP Hub Pilot Project/Labour Market Orientation: Lori Webster

Youth Coordinator: Madeleine Mackenzie

Social Media Strategist: Kelsie Chasse

Canada Summer Jobs Student 2023: Ashton Nademi

Employment Solutions Program Manager: Abdullah Rophael

Team Lead Employment Services: Katana Bosetti

Employment Advisors: Paula Gongora, Kristin Jongman, Madeleine Mackenzie,

Geleen Laforga, Susan Sarko, Olivia Karner, Maja Dobric, Brian Fletcher,

Olha Yevtushenko, Frederick Sheardown

Job Developers: Brian Fletcher

Retention Specialist: Kristin Jongman, Liudmyla Babina, Olha Yevtushenko

TO OUR MEMBERSHIP COUNCIL

Canadian Slovak League • Casa Dante Lodge 19 • Club Rheingold • Francophone Group • Croatian National Home • Hungarian Self Culture Society of Welland

TO OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are an integral part of our services and have been generous with their time. They have been very committed to our programs and events

TO OUR SUPPORTERS & PARTNERS

Bowes IT Solutions • Brock University • Canada Revenue Agency • Canadian Mental Health Association • Canadian Tire Store • Centre de Santé Communautaire • CERF Niagara • CEVAW Member Agencies • City of Welland • Community Living • Contact North • District School Board of Niagara • École Secondaire Confédération • Employment Help Centre Beamsville, Grimsby, Smithville • Fort Erie Chamber of Commerce • Fort Erie Multicultural Centre • Fort Erie Native Friendship Centre • Good Shepherd • Greater Niagara Chamber of Commerce • Habitat for Humanity • Job Gym • John Howard Society • Literacy Link • Meridian Credit Union • Metis Nation of Ontario • Niagara Catholic District School Board • Niagara Chapter-Native Women • Niagara College • Niagara Community Legal Clinic • Niagara Employment Help Centre • Niagara Falls Chamber of Commerce • Niagara Falls Public Library • Niagara Folk Arts Multicultural Centre • Niagara Peninsula Homes • Niagara Region • Niagara Women's Enterprise Centre • Niagara Workforce Planning Board • Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants • Open Arms Mission • Port Cares • ProKids Program • Port Colborne/Wainfleet Chamber of Commerce • Rose City Kids • Salvation Army • Scotiabank • Seaway Mall • Sofifran • St. Vincent de Paul • The Hope Centre • The Residence and Conference Centre • Thorold Public Library • Tony Gallaccio • Venture Niagara • Welland Downtown BIA • Welland International Flatwater Centre • Welland Museum • Welland/Pelham Chamber of Commerce • Welland Public Library • Niagara This Week • Welland Rose Festival • Welland Rotary Club • Welland Tribune • Workforce Collective • Workplace Safety Group • YMCA Niagara • Youngs Insurance Brokers • YWCA...and the many, many businesses and social agencies who contribute their time to our workshops, and who donate prizes or monetary gifts for our events.

TO OUR CLIENTS AND THE CITIZENS OF WELLAND AND NIAGARA FALLS

Who continue to participate in our fundraising events and who share in the experience of meeting, welcoming and appreciating the talents and skills that our country's newest citizens and Canadians bring to our community.

Thank you for contributing to the success of our organization and helping us make dreams a reality for both newcomers and Canadian Citizens.



Welland Heritage Council and Multicultural Centre

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