



# VACFSS ANNUAL REPORT 2025



## ABOUT THE COVER PAGE ILLUSTRATION

Following this year's theme on reigniting our commitment to the *Calls to Action*, the image depicts Elder hands passing down sage, cedar, sweet grass, and an eagle feather onto the hands of the youth. The medicine represents the resilience, knowledge, and teachings guiding the way for the next generation.

As we mark the 10-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission *Calls to Action*, we reflect on the ongoing journey of truth and reconciliation. In remembrance of the late Honourable Justice Murray Sinclair, we go forward in strength and carry the torch in achieving reconciliation.



*VACFSS acknowledges, with deep respect and gratitude, that our work takes place on the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the hən̓qə́m̓iṇ̓əm̓ -speaking Musqueam Peoples, the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) and Səlilwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations. We recognize the past, present, and future generations of the Coast Salish Peoples who help us steward this land, as well as honour and celebrate this place.*

# VACFSS ANNUAL REPORT



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

*Our Children, Our Future, Our Responsibility*

SEPTEMBER 2025



## IN REMEMBRANCE OF DARLENE WILLIER

It is with deep sadness that we share with you that our friend and dedicated Director Darlene Willier passed in June 2025. Please join us in reflecting on her contributions to VACFSS and the community.

Darlene was a member of the Sucker Creek Band in Alberta. Fluent in the Cree language, she taught at various universities in BC and Alberta in their language and linguistic departments. Her work in linguistics, education, and cultural revitalization touched the lives of countless students and colleagues, and her contributions will continue to ripple for generations. She worked with the language, translating and voicing over episodes that focus on environmental issues in national and international Indigenous communities. Darlene was a living vessel of language and culture. She believed that language is more than communication — it is identity, history, and spirit — and she worked tirelessly to keep it alive for future generations. Her knowledge was vast, but she shared it with humility, patience, and grace.

Her greatest pride was not her academic achievements, but the continuation of her family and culture. Despite the interruption that colonialism and, in particular, the residential school system imposed, she was actively involved in ceremony. She lived her life grounded in Native spirituality and saw it as her life's duty to restore and replenish her family's connection, to guide them back to their roots, their stories, and their ancestors.

A volunteer on boards and committees that work closely with Indigenous Peoples, she joined the VACFSS board in 2014. Her contributions to the agency will continue to be felt for many years to come. Her friendship and her immense wealth of knowledge and experience will be sorely missed.

We hold up our hands to her and join her family, friends, and community in remembering and honouring her.







## OUR LOGO

Laurence Wilson, from the Nisga'a Nation, designed the Vancouver Aboriginal Child and Family Services Society logo in 1993. The translation for the logo is "Human and Wolf Child." As the wolf represents family, this is a perfect symbol for our Agency, which has been established to strengthen Indigenous families. Laurence Wilson was born in 1954 in Nass River, an area located near the North Coast of British Columbia. Laurence has apprenticed under Norman Tait, a highly regarded West Coast artist, for three years and attended the prestigious Native art school, 'Ksan, from the beginning of 1978 to the end of 1979. He prefers to use such mediums as wood, canvas and hide in order to produce original paintings, drums and two-dimensional carvings. With his extensive background in design and form informed by his culture, Laurence Wilson has become one of the many prominent Native artists in British Columbia.





# OUR MISSION, OUR VISION

## Our Mission Statement

Provide holistic service delivery that culturally and spiritually strengthens Aboriginal children and families.

## Our Vision Statement

A balanced and harmonious Aboriginal community.

## Our Policy Statement

An Aboriginal perspective will be acknowledged, respected and legitimized through policy. An Aboriginal presence of knowledge and thinking will be reflected throughout VACFSS programs, policies, and practice.

## Our Philosophy of Service Delivery

We ensure that the rights, safety, well-being and spirit of Aboriginal children and families are upheld, honoured and protected. We strive to eliminate oppression, discrimination and marginalization within our community. We acknowledge and honour the inherent wisdom, capacity and resourcefulness of our community in designing programs and services to care for our own children and families. Accordingly, we are dedicated to planning, developing, and implementing creative and innovative Aboriginal programs and services in collaboration with members of our community and other agencies.

# OUR VALUES

## Humility

Humility is putting others first by giving up what you think you deserve; Mother Earth for she provides our every need and loves us even when we do not listen to her; a newborn baby coming into this world with nothing but their small presence asking only to be loved and cared for; recognizing what we give in our lives and being thankful for each new day.

## Strength-Based Practice

VACFSS incorporates a strength-based approach to service delivery. We believe in empowering people to trust that they have both the capacity and mastery to take responsibility for their own healing. By carrying the teachings of our ancestors and incorporating Aboriginal cultural customs within our social work practice, we can facilitate healing opportunities and share in the successes of Aboriginal children, families and the community that are involved with VACFSS.

## Respect

Respect flows freely from the Creator to and through everyone and everything without judgment, from the tiniest child to the oldest Elder. It is the basic law of life that allows feeling and showing honour for all the creator's creations; all cultures, all ways and all paths to the creator which keeps the circle flowing in a good way.

## Integrity

Integrity is doing the right thing even when nobody's watching.

## Belonging

Belonging is creating authentic connections that encourages healthy and caring relationships with our children, families and community.



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# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

**Chair** Linda Stiller

**Co-Chair** Madeleine MacIvor

**Treasurer/Secretary** Richard George

**Director** Virge Silveira

**Director** Darlene Willier\*

**Director** Bernice Albert

**Director** Aaron Christoff

**Director** Andres (Lix) Lopez



*\*In remembrance of Darlene Willier - Page 4*





MESSAGE FROM  
THE CHAIR



Dear Members,

In keeping with this year's theme, "Reigniting our commitment to the Calls to Action", I wish to reflect on the 10-year anniversary of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action.

Specifically, VACFSS has been implementing restorative child welfare policy since it was founded, with the intent of reducing the number of Indigenous Children in Care and placing, returning and keeping children connected to extended family wherever possible. Part of the challenge has been reframing and augmenting the Child, Family, and Community Services Act, based on practices that are congruent with the lived experiences of our families, and Indigenous approaches to helping.

I raise my hands to our dedicated social workers, who prioritize the safety and well-being of children, in collaboration with the child's circle. I am particularly proud of how VACFSS social workers conduct themselves with professionalism, humility, and integrity, even in the most difficult circumstances.

It is progressive to see the enactment of Federal Child Welfare legislation, finally created and in response to the Calls to Action. This year, VACFSS was pleased to withdraw from a Temporary Care Order proceeding to uphold Indigenous jurisdiction in the BC courts, and to transfer the case to the Tsq'escan Nation. It is wonderful and significant to see legislation come into fruition that also sets out minimum national standards for the delivery of child and family services to Indigenous people and an established pathway for Indigenous Nations to enact their own child and family laws.

We seek to renew our Delegated Services Agreement within the context of the Federal Act and to ensure that we receive full support of the Director of Child Family and Community Services Act for all costs associated to providing holistic services. I wish to acknowledge and to thank my fellow board members who have dedicated countless volunteer hours to stay true to our values as we endeavour to provide best services to the hundreds of urban children and families that we represent and serve.

All My Relations,

*Linda Stiller*







# MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

*Bernadette Spence*

It is with deep gratitude that I present the management reports for the 2024/25 fiscal year to our membership. As in previous years, the reports are reflective of the respectful service and strength-based practice to children, youth and families served by VACFSS. Practice is guided by the requirements under the CFCSA, the principles of the Federal Act and the restorative policies of VACFSS.

Our theme this year is of reigniting our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to Action. The image on the Annual Report cover page depicts an elder passing a shell containing sage, cedar, sweet grass, and an eagle feather onto the hands of the youth. As an Urban Indigenous agency, we honor the cultural diversity and multiple identities of the children, youth and families served by VACFSS. The medicine represents the resilience, knowledge, and the diverse teachings and cultural practices guiding restorative pathways for the next generation.

As we mark the 10-year anniversary of the TRC, we celebrate our achievement in meeting the five calls to action for child welfare. To mark the anniversary, we updated our compliance indicators to the Calls to Action while engaging our multiple service partners towards reconciliation.

VACFSS endeavors to keep ahead of the challenges that our families face within the community through trauma informed engagement and interventions including concrete support. Since 2017, a considerable number of parents served by VACFSS have died from toxic drugs and many struggle to recover from substance use. We are grateful for the relatives and communities who have offered permanency for the children left behind and whose parents are not able to provide consistent care for them. The growing number of kinship care providers is represented in the Child Safety Program and the Resources Program. Engagement, support and coordination of kinship care for children and youth is vital for permanency and developmental health.

Since 2016, the need for child specific staffed specialized placements has continued to increase resulting in the need for intensive short-term intervention and ongoing stabilization placements. Engagement with contracted Specialized Resource Providers has been initiated to ensure that children receive services specific to their needs and rights through consultation and review of outcomes.

The implementation of *Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment* (SAJE) is in its third year and expected to grow each year as youth age into community. SAJE is a much-welcomed resource for young people aging into community either independently or remaining within their long-term placements. Eligible benefits ensure that youth remain supported as they transition into adulthood. We are grateful to provide this continuity for our young people, many of whom remain connected through the years with VACFSS.

In addition to expanding the Kinship Care Program, we also recognize the invaluable role of foster parents who provide daily care for our children and youth in care within the Inclusive Foster Care Policy. VACFSS caregivers understand and support the need for ongoing contact between children and their biological family. To this end, caregivers attend and participate in the numerous annual events and programming that create community for our children and youth in care. This includes the homecoming ceremonies hosted by

the Nations and VACFSS' annual cultural events, child and youth engagement programs, and the reunification of children with their biological families.

Parents remain connected to their children in care through the ACCESS Policy and Procedures. This policy pertains to the provision of transportation and supported visitation. The transportation program has been contracted to the Pacific Association First Nations Women (PAFNW) since 2008. In 2022, VACFSS entered into a contract with Atira to provide a therapeutic visitation program for infants and parents within a home like environment. This year VACSSS entered into a contract with West Coast Family Services, to provide weekend transportation and supported visitation. VACFSS Social Work Assistants augment the contracted services to ensure there is sufficient support for keeping children connected to family while in care.

There are many other outstanding efforts and outcomes achieved in the past year that I cannot highlight in this summary; however, the most important message annually is for me to commend the integrity of the staff, and their dedication to the children, youth, and families served. The achievements and outcomes outlined in these reports represent their ongoing commitment to restorative child welfare practice. Each employee is guided by and strives to uphold our values of respect, integrity, belonging, humility, and strength-based practice.

Finally, I once again raise my hands to the dedicated Board of Directors at VACFSS. They understand deeply and personally the complexity of child and family services and the commitment required by staff who dedicate their lives to helping. We also recognize the immense trust placed on VACFSS by our community and the families, children and youth we serve.

All my relations,

*Bernadette Spence* 🙏

# HUMAN RESOURCES

*Jeremy Bara, Director of Human Resources, IT & Communications*



## MANDATE

The Human Resources Department is responsible for developing and administering Recruitment and Staffing, Employee Training and Development, Performance and Labour Relations, Compensation and Benefits, Records and Information Management, Occupational Safety and Wellness, and compliance to the Indigenous Core Cultural Competencies. These functions are designed to support a culturally grounded, safe, and inclusive workplace that reflects the values and vision of VACFSS.

## Staffing

As of 2024/25, VACFSS employed 154 regular staff, 15 casual employees, and one seconded staff member, totaling 170 employees.

Recruitment efforts remained strong, with 1,888 applications received. This resulted in 43 new hires. Additionally, 20 internal selections were made. The turnover rate decreased significantly to 13.0%, down from 21.9% in 2023/24. Over five- and ten-year periods, turnover has remained stable at approximately 16%.

## Education and Training

Training and development remained a cornerstone of HR initiatives. Delegation training continued through the Indigenous Perspectives Society, with 12 social workers participating virtually. New Employee Orientations welcomed 29 new staff and co-op students, followed by Indigenous Core Cultural Competency training led by the CEO.

The Collaborative Leadership Training Program, developed with the Justice Institute of British Columbia (JIBC), was piloted with two cohorts (40

staff). Grounded in Restorative Supervision and Indigenous Core Cultural Competencies, the program emphasized trauma-informed leadership, conflict resolution, interpersonal communication, and relationship-based supervision. A celebration at JIBC honored the participants' achievements.

VACFSS is pleased to introduce the Master's Tuition Assistance Policy, formally approved by the Board of Directors and launched in 2025. This initiative reflects our deep commitment to continuous learning and acknowledges both the personal investment and financial cost associated with postgraduate education.

The policy supports eligible full-time employees who are actively pursuing Master's-level studies on a part-time basis by offering tuition reimbursement of up to \$1,500 per year, for a maximum of three consecutive years totalling up to \$4,500.

Advanced education is essential for several specialized roles across the agency and supports succession planning. By supporting academic advancement, VACFSS strengthens staff development, leadership capacity, and the quality of services delivered to Indigenous children, youth, families, and communities.

Additional leadership development was supported through MyLeadershipHub, offering self-paced modules on performance management, progressive discipline, and duty to accommodate. Staff also participated in specialized training on complex trauma, pension planning, and decolonizing workplace relations.





Doris, Jeremy, Virginia, and Lexy (left to right) pause to capture a joyful moment together during the Annual Update Meeting.

## Labour Relations

VACFSS maintained a collaborative relationship with the BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU), implementing changes from the Indigenous Services Collective Agreement effective April 1, 2024. Bi-monthly Labour Management Committee meetings provided a forum for discussion between the employer and union. The agency also began essential services planning in preparation for any potential labour action as the Collective Agreement expires March 31, 2025.

In alignment with the 2022–2025 Indigenous Services Collective Agreement, VACFSS issued the final Retention Incentive Payment to eligible staff. This initiative developed in partnership with the Community Social Services Employers Association and the Community Social Services Bargaining Association was designed to support recruitment and retention within Indigenous Services agencies, acknowledging the unique demands of delivering culturally responsive and trauma-informed services to Indigenous communities.

The retention incentive has provided meaningful recognition of the dedication and contributions of

our staff across all roles. VACFSS remains committed to exploring the continuance of this incentive beyond the current agreement, recognizing its value in supporting organizational stability and staff wellness.

## Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

The Occupational Health and Safety Program continued to ensure safe working environments across three locations. New employees received comprehensive health and safety orientations, and core training included Workplace Violence Prevention, WHMIS, Earthquake Preparedness, Fire Warden Training, and Fire Extinguisher Use.

The Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) Team was refreshed, with eight staff certified to provide peer support. While COVID-19's impact has lessened, communicable disease prevention protocols remain in place.

## Wellness: Living a Healthy Aboriginal Lifestyle (LAHAL)

VACFSS continued to promote holistic wellness through the LAHAL program, offering massage therapy, Amethyst BioMats, and CISM peer

support. In October 2024, the agency honoured the retirement of Cultural Clinical Counsellor and Elder, Orene, who provided years of cultural and emotional support. Her role has since been backfilled to ensure continuity of care and staff support.

The Cultural Immersion Camp at Cheakamus Centre, led by Len Pierre (Katzie Nation) and Jamie and Henry Williams (Squamish Nation), offered staff a deepened connection to Indigenous teachings through workshops on Coast Salish culture, history, and healing practices.

Four two-day workshops titled 'Living with Hope and Clearing: Working with Complex Trauma' provided valuable insights into trauma's impact on Indigenous families and strategies for resilience.



VACFSS celebrates Admin Appreciation Week, by gifting the administrative team with floral bouquets, personalized cards, and a luncheon at ChongQing on Commercial.

## Community Engagement and Agency Events

VACFSS hosted and participated in numerous events that fostered cultural connection and community, including the annual Sage Picking event, Staff Update Meeting at Musqueam Cultural Centre, Staff Barbecue, and Cultural Committee Meetings.

The agency participated in the Moose Hide Campaign and hosted a Red Dress Day Gathering to honour missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls, and 2SLGBTQQIA+ individuals. The annual Burning Ceremony at Musqueam offered a space for healing and reflection.

VACFSS also observed National Indigenous Peoples Day (June 21) and the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation (September 30), reinforcing its commitment to cultural awareness and reconciliation.

## LOOKING AHEAD

VACFSS will continue to prioritize leadership development, restorative practices, trauma-informed care, and respectful communication training. These efforts are essential to fostering a safe, supportive, and culturally grounded workplace that supports the agency's mission and the communities it serves.





This year, VACFSS took part in the annual Women's Memorial March—a gathering dedicated to honouring the lives of women, girls, and LGBTQ2S+ individuals lost to violence, poverty, and systemic oppression. Led by women, the event shines a spotlight on the realities Indigenous women, girls, and 2S+ people confront every day, including high rates of physical, emotional, mental, and spiritual harm.

# CHILD SAFETY

*Alison Grundle, Manager*  
*Claudia Liddle, Manager*  
*Kim Louie, Management Consultant*

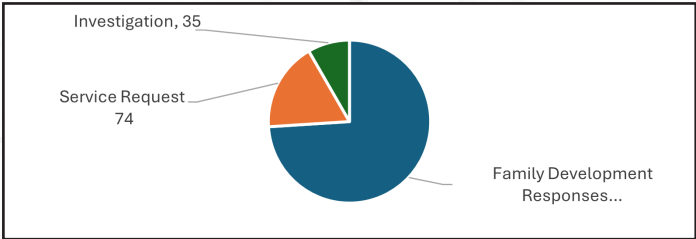
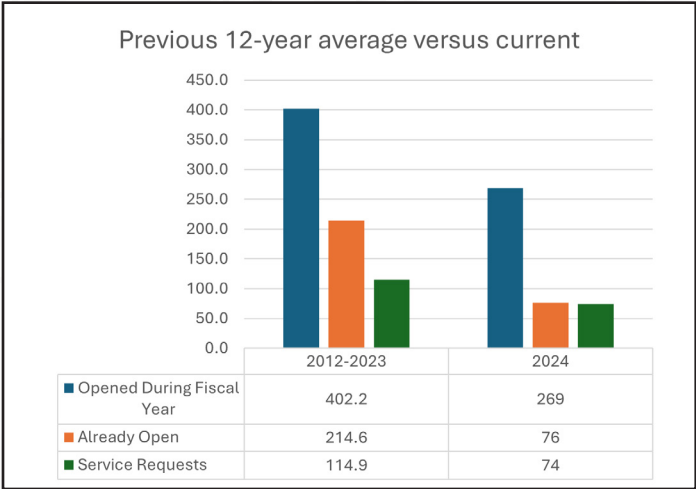


## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

As per the TRC’s Calls to Action for child welfare, Child Safety continued to implement Restorative Child Welfare policy and practice by utilizing the least intrusive measures, prioritizing placements with Kith and Kin options to keep children safe, utilizing collaborative practice and mediation where possible instead of the court system, and ensuring ongoing access for parents to keep children connected to family in cases where removal was necessary.

## PROGRAM ACTIVITY

Overall, there was a slight 6% decrease in 2024 related to the number of child safety incidents (from 356 to 334) and a 12% decrease (from 84 to 74) in Service Requests for a total of 408 cases, compared to 440 in the previous reporting period. Of the total number of incidents, 92% were assessed as Family Development Responses (FDR) and 8% were coded as Investigation (INV). An FDR allows for the intake team to provide services over a longer period of time, as well as through a restorative practice approach in which Social Workers are working in support to and collaboration with families.



## Analysis

As in previous years, the number of incidents continues to decrease; the decrease/ increase in Service Requests fluctuates over time, although there is an apparent downward trend. Also, as in previous years there was a significant number of After-Hours reports (approximately 278 per month), an increase of 9.5% (3050 to 3339) from last year. The After-Hours reports require generating new reports or following up on open files.



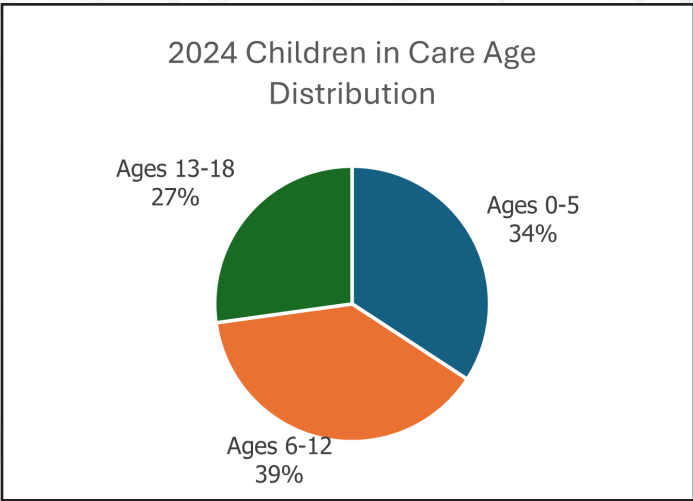
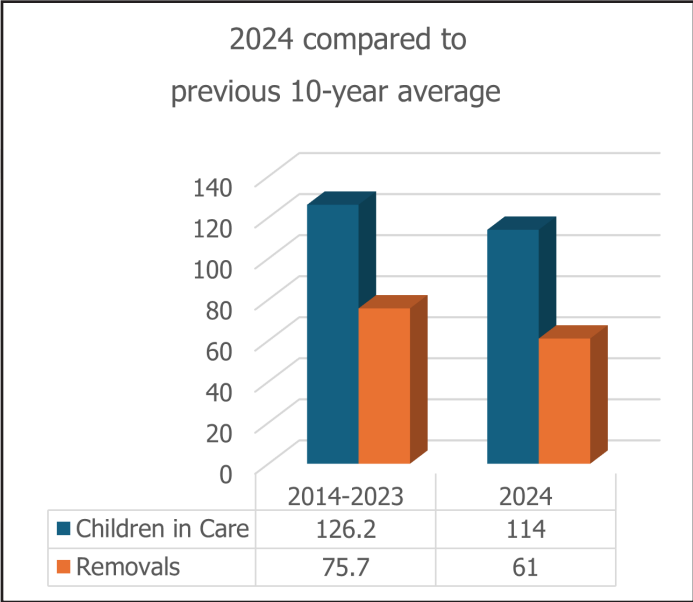


Winter Solstice Dinner Party Hosted by our Child Safety & Family Preservation Departments, this heartwarming evening brought families and children together in celebration of connection, culture, and community. The gathering was illuminated by the inspiring presence of Elder Roberta Price, whose wisdom and storytelling added depth and meaning to the festivities.



CHILDREN IN CARE

61 children were legally removed from their guardian this past fiscal year, compared to 42 last year, for a total of 114 children in care this year compared to 124 children last year. This represents an increase in removals of 8%. Of the 61 children, 32 (52%) were removed from a least intrusive measure, which include Supervision Orders (four children), Voluntary Care Agreements (12 children), Extended Family Agreements (six children), Special Needs Agreement (one child), Temporary Care Agreements to Other (four children), or other family arrangements (five children).



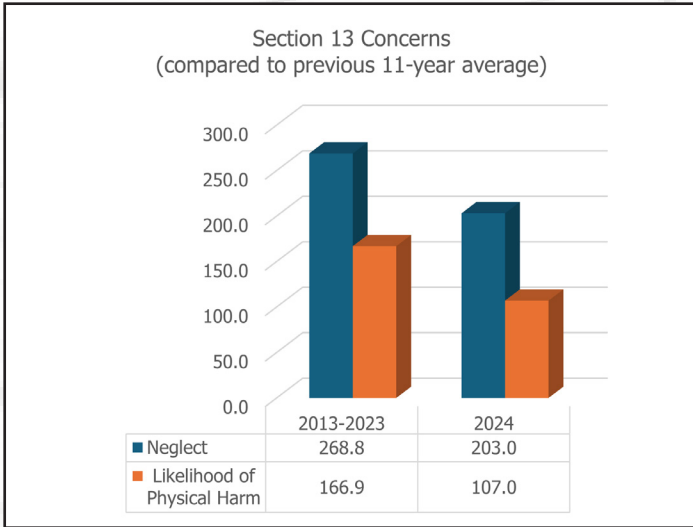
Analysis

The reason for removing children from Voluntary Care Agreement (VCA) or Temporary Care Agreements to Other (TCO) was due to the agreements and orders reaching their end date and/or parents not providing further consent. In cases where reunification was not possible, children were removed to achieve permanency under other legal status. The other 29 children (48%) were removed due to safety concerns in which a least intrusive measure could not be identified 14% of whom were placed with family.

66% of the removals were due to parental problematic substance use, with a parent being unable or unwilling to care leading to chronic neglect or a child being subject to the likelihood of physical harm due to neglect. Six children were removed due to the parent passing from an accidental drug poisoning, and two of these children were subsequently placed with family.

CHILD PROTECTION CONCERNS: YEARLY COMPARISON

Consistent with the Canadian Incidence Study, the concerns regarding Neglect (203 concerns) are almost double (127 concerns) that of Physical Abuse, Emotional Harm, Sexual Abuse and other.



Analysis

The Physical Harm data includes incidents of Domestic Violence and likelihood of physical harm. While the incidence of Neglect is the main cause, which is also reflected in the national data, the categories of maltreatment are interrelated.

The Child Safety program continues to mitigate the impact of neglect due to poverty, socio-economic hardships, and parental health challenges. The advent of the new Federal Legislation, An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families, is intended to shift the system from apprehension to prevention; however, the issues are broad and systemic.

An Act specifically indicates that a child should not be apprehended solely due to their socio-economic conditions including poverty, lack of adequate housing, or the state of health of the parent. VACFSS, however, has limited resources to address these areas. Specifically, VACFSS is able to alleviate some hardship through the administration of funds for items required for the health and safety for families, and to avert children from coming into care. In the last fiscal year, Child Safety spent approximately \$670,000 on Concrete Needs, a fund intended to support the well-being of our families, as well as delivered Family Preservation and Reunification services. Our community partnerships remain vital and integral for delivering ancillary services to support families.

CASELOADS

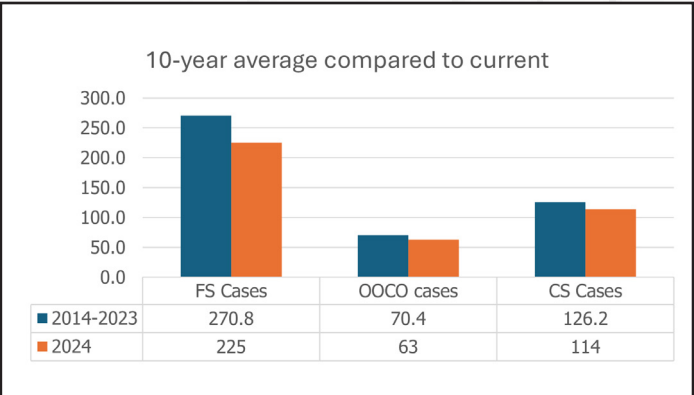
Over the past fiscal year, the average number of files opened were:

- 225 Family Service Files
- 114 Children in Care Files
- 63 Out of Care children Files

*(The Data Warehouse does not include files for children in Section 54.01 Agreements)*

The average number of cases being carried by a Social Worker irrespective of their delegation level was 25. Over the past year, this number ranged from 19 to 30 cases.

Additionally, CS obtained 29 Continuing Custody Orders in the fiscal year. The children were subsequently transferred to the Guardianship team to provide permanency planning.



Analysis

CS caseloads numbers remain high and complex; they exceed the MCFD standard of 20 cases and are more proportionally complex.

## OUT OF CARE OPTIONS

(Extended Family Placements, Section 54.01, 35.2d, and 41.1b Agreements)

Out of Care Options homes is a provision of homes with family or community members with whom the child has a significant relationship, as an alternative to foster care. This year, a total of 135 children were with Kin in an Out of Care Option representing 104 caregivers.

Also, in the reporting period, 22 new assessments and contracts were signed and one Enhanced Out of Care Agreement was completed. A further 10 more assessments were completed, but the children were not placed because the caregiver was not approved or plans changed.

The total number of Out of Care placements in the Greater Vancouver area was 85 homes, while 44 homes were placed in other areas of BC, one home in Nova Scotia, three homes in Ontario, and two homes in Saskatchewan.

	# of Children		# of Homes	
	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23	2023/24
Court Order				
54.01	74	72	58	55
EFP	37	35	45	27
35.2.D and 41.1.B	35	28		22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>136</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>103</b>	<b>104</b>

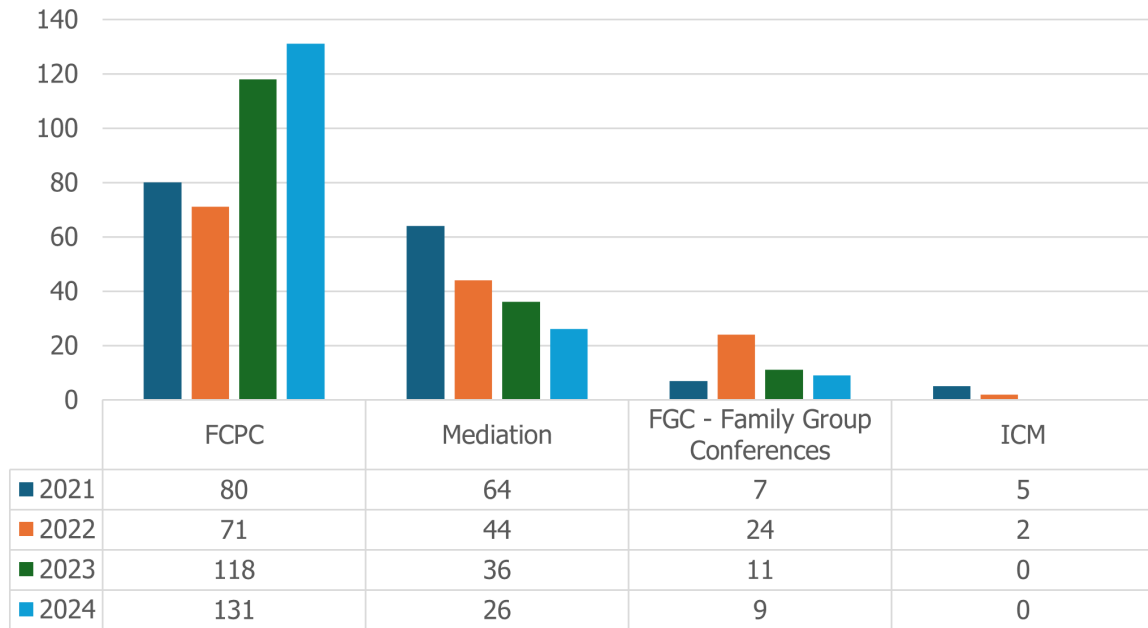
## Analysis

Out of Care placements numbers have remained relatively the same, and continue to exceed the total number of children in care in the CS Program. The use of alternatives to care continues to be a key priority and an integral part of upholding the Calls to Action, and keeping children connected to their families. To ensure VACFSS' commitment to this restorative practice, a Social Work Assistant position was added to the Out of Care Options Team to provide support and enhancement to the anticipated growth in cases. The full complement of staff will also enable the further roll out of the Enhanced Out-of-Care Policy to provide supports and to recognize families who are caring for children with special needs, filling in the gaps in services and preventing children from coming into care to get these needs met.

## COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

The Collaborative approach of including everyone in the child's circle is a cornerstone to restorative practice. In the last fiscal year, the number of Collaborative Practice processes (124) and Mediations (26) remained the same, despite the fact that the team was down to one facilitator in the Spring of 2023. The data reflects the number of Collaborative Legal Family Care Planning Circles (FCPC) which occur within the court process in addition to the facilitated processes that occur outside of the court process.

## Collaborative Practice



## STAFFING

The CS program was approved to increase staffing by two Social Work Assistants and three summer students. As part of VACFSS' commitment to enabling and implementing the Access directive, the workers provided direct transportation and supervised visits. In the last fiscal year, they provided a total of 2337 hours of service to enable children to visit with their families.

## PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT

### Indigenous Jurisdiction and withdrawing from the CFCSA to uphold Indigenous Law

On March 19, 2025, VACFSS' child safety team withdrew from a CFCSA temporary custody order (TCO) proceeding to uphold the Indigenous laws and jurisdiction of the Tsq'escen First Nation.

On December 21, 2024, the Tsq'escen First Nation's laws came into effect in BC, and on January 21, 2025, VACFSS was notified by the Nation that they were planning to assume jurisdiction. The Collaborative Practice team facilitated a transition planning meeting with child safety, the family, and the

Nation, supported by legal counsel, on February 14, 2025. On February 20, 2025, the child safety team began collaborating with the Attorney's General office on the court withdrawal, and on March 19, 2025, VACFSS officially withdrew from the CFCSA proceedings in order for the Nation to fully assume responsibility. VACFSS was the first in BC to withdraw from a TCO proceeding to uphold Indigenous jurisdiction in the BC courts.

The Tsq'escen laws, as stated in their notice letter, are an expression of their inherent jurisdiction and legislative authority over child and family services and are focused on nurturing, maintaining, and restoring connection to family and community.

Currently, CS is working with other Indigenous communities who have coordinating agreements for child welfare jurisdiction for their children and families, namely Splatstin, Cowichan Tribes, and Sts'ail'es.



# Family Preservation & Reunification



*Doris Peters, Director of Operations and Community Engagement (CS & FMP)*

This report presents a strategic overview of the Family Preservation and Reunification (FPR) program, emphasizing our commitment to supporting families. The intersecting challenges of trauma, poverty, food insecurity, systemic discrimination, and underrepresentation in preventative services inform our approach to practice. This document outlines our current practices, identifies areas for improvement, and proposes strategic goals and recommendations for the upcoming years.

## STRATEGIC GOALS

**Goal 1:** Maintain and support the family unit where safe and possible, while also prioritizing the needs of the children.

**Goal 2:** Foster collaborative practices across programs, service providers and modalities to enhance service delivery.

## GUIDING PRACTICES

1. Trauma-informed care that addresses historical and multi-generational trauma through specialized training and comprehensive support services.
2. Collaborative approaches that engage multiple systems (health, justice, education) to create a unified responsive support network for families.
3. Cultural competency that looks to systematically incorporate Indigenous perspectives/approaches/practices in service delivery.

## FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION:

As a program we intentionally choose engagement and collaboration to increase the opportunities for our families to engage in ways that allow for empowerment and autonomy. To increase the cultural competency of our staff and bring to life the Indigenous Cultural Core Competencies, we established a committee approach to planning

events that involved both staff and families. The Family Preservation Counsellors who attend group events witness the families in a safe and supported environment; as a result, VACFSS employees and families feel energized after the event. This is also an opportunity to engage with our families in a new way and they get to associate VACFSS with these preventative and trust-building activities which can shift the energy and relationship. Events included MMIWG Day of Awareness and the Winter Solstice events for families. Our next MMIWG event will be organized by a committee that includes staff from across the agency. The Winter Solstice is a shared event between Child Safety and Family Preservation.

We planned our 2nd annual Spring into Wellness event for the families who reported many benefits. The services we arranged included chair massage, table massage, hair braiding, rock painting, powwow dance teaching, lunch, gifts, and multiple resource tables (FNHA, Kettle Society, Reach, ACCESS). Family Preservation Counsellors are encouraged and supported to bring their ideas to monthly meetings and often their ideas are enacted within the programming. An example of this is bringing families sage picking in Merritt. After attending the sage picking event one of our counsellors identified that this event would be beneficial for our families to attend. We rented a bus for the families to travel to Merritt, and we organized the event around the concrete needs of the families. There were in-depth discussions that occurred to anticipate what would be needed for the trip to be successful. In addition, families were brought back to debrief what went well and what could be strengthened for next year. Several comments that stood out included: “more time with the Elders”, “the food, hats, water, sunscreen were needed!!”, “we make the gifts for the Elders”. Families were celebrated for their attendance at the debrief. The committee is planning

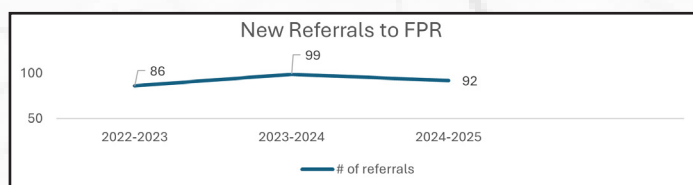




this year's event and have made several changes based on the suggestions by the families which includes families having teaching from Elders before going sage picking.

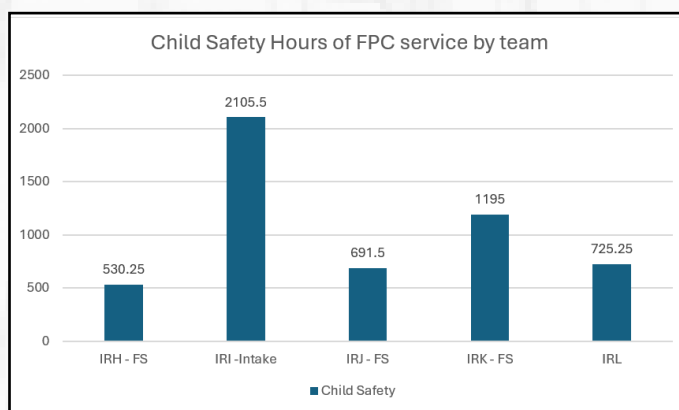
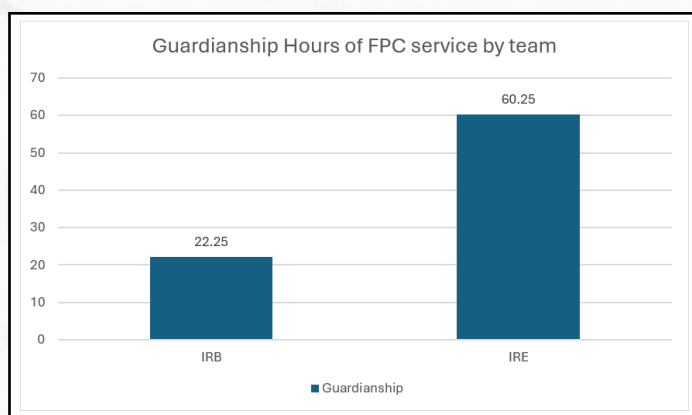
## NEW REFERRALS AND HOURS OF SERVICE

New referrals to Family Preservation Counsellors remain around the same each year; we consistently manage caseloads and waitlists to assure timely responses to referrals. The referrals within the program are prioritized based on need with higher prioritization for families to reduce risk of children coming into care.



When we look at the hours of service provided to each program (Guardianship & Child Safety) consistently a higher number of referrals are received from the Child Safety Teams, therefore a higher number of service hours are provided to the Child Safety program. When looking at the hours broken down by team provided to the Child Safety program it is also understandable and consistent that the Intake team receives the highest number of service

hours from the Family Preservation Counsellors. This is a result of new families being assessed at Intake to determine the needs of the family and referrals to Family Preservation and Reunification program would then assist the family to reduce the risk of removal or to decrease the time that children are in care.



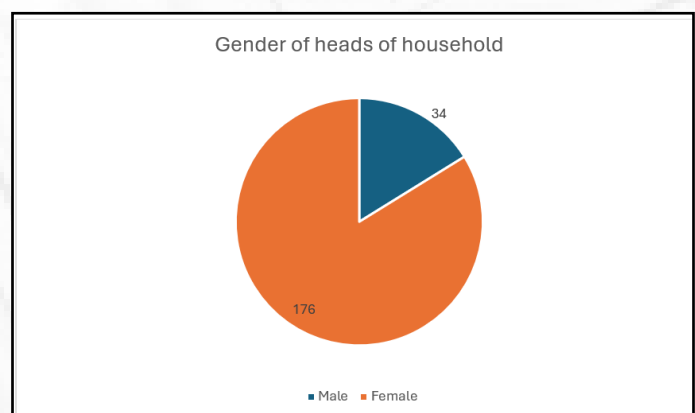
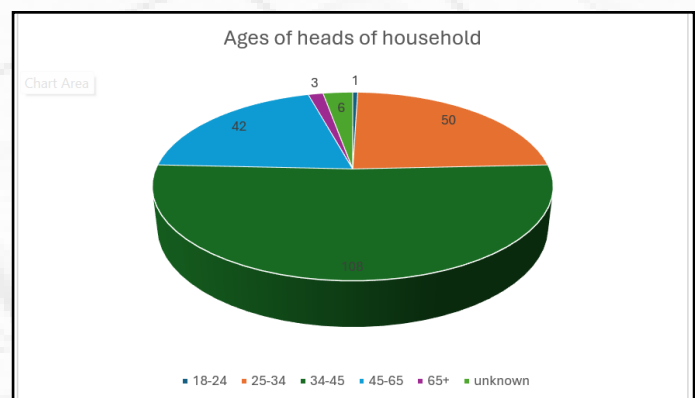


The Family Preservation & Reunification team recognizes Red Dress Day through a powerful performance from JB the First Lady and First Ladies Crew.

## DEMOGRAPHICS

When looking at a referral we identify the most suitable Family Preservation Counsellor to work with a family depending on several factors including: the goals, the history of the family, and the demographics within the family. As Family Preservation Counsellors attend the family home, meet in the community, support visits with children, meet with the referring social worker, attend community events, and make home visits as ways to ensure families can engage in environments they choose. It is imperative this information is factored into how the work begins. A family might need more time to develop trust with a Family Preservation Counsellor in order for them to be invited into the family home and this planning and assessment is discussed with the FPC to increase opportunities for developing a successful working relationship. Further, we offer flexible service delivery to accommodate the unique circumstances of each family. This might include varying meeting times, remote support options, and culturally relevant activities that allow families to engage at their own pace. In addition, there is an extensive engagement plan where opportunities are identified, and all

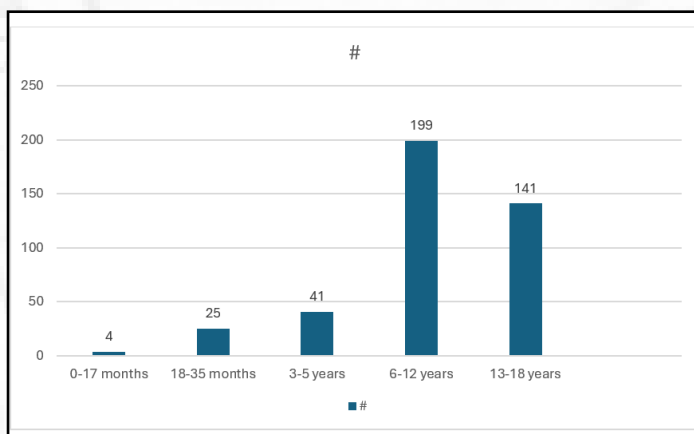
opportunities are utilized prior to closing a referral due to no contact. This is done purposefully, again, to assure increased chances of success while working with the family.





## ENGAGEMENT AND INTENSIVE SUPPORTS

We are aware of child safety concerns and the risks for families and provide extensive support to engage families and/or to keep families engaged, including looking at a phased approach to readiness for services and supports. We use this approach with families who identify a continuum of readiness to allow us to take incremental steps toward service access. The nuanced work and the amount of time we spend trying to innovatively engage families is not captured in these hours.



## CONCRETE NEEDS

Concrete Needs funds have been a valuable resource allocated to our program to allow us to be responsive to the needs of our families, which has included mobilizing resources to address gaps for the families (for example: food security, clothing, household, and services). We use concrete needs to mitigate issues that increase stress in the family; this allows us to develop trust and relationship with families more quickly. Integrating these elements into our programming and policies allows us to create a more supportive environment that fosters trust, engagement, and ultimately contributes to positive outcomes for families.

### ***Strengthening Families and Strengthening Fathers***

The Strengthening Families program is an evidence-based, family-focused, and culturally competent program. The parenting sessions review developmental ages and stages, appropriate developmental expectations, behavior, and

attachment. The children's sessions include communication skills to improve parents, peer, and teacher relationships, hopes and dreams, and feeling identification.

The family sessions allow the parents and children to practice what they learn in their separate sessions. This is also a time for the group leaders to observe, coach, encourage and model the skills (active listening, praise, attention) for the parents and children. This is often done during the dinner period as families are all together.

### ***Strengthening Fathers***

The focus of the group sessions is peer support, understand the traditional role of dads, increase capacity of fathers to parent, increase positive parenting skills, improve interactions through skill development, and enhance father-child relationship. Each group has 11 weekly sessions, and the families are provided dinner prior to each group session. Childcare is provided by licensed Early Childcare Educators. These groups have been successfully running for over a decade and this coming year we will be focusing on the following:

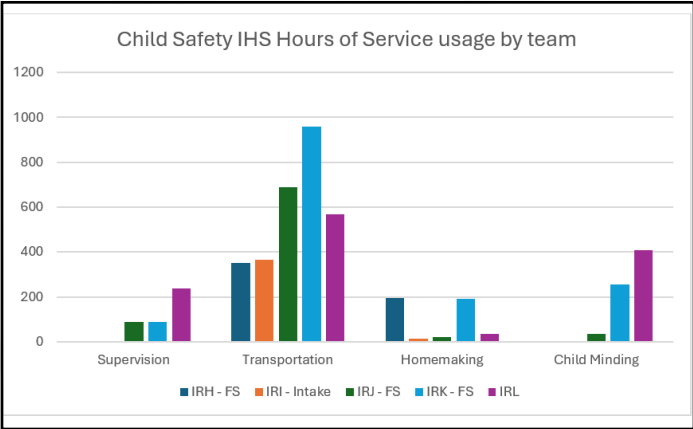
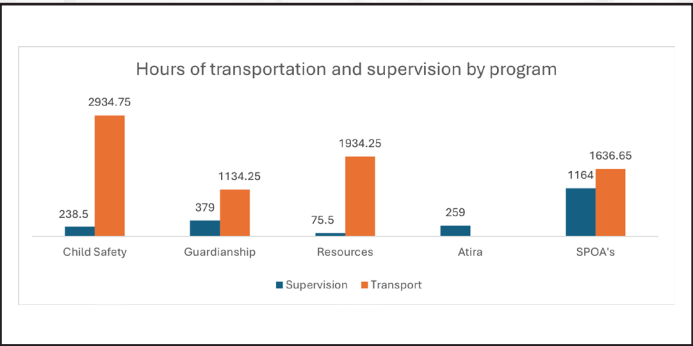
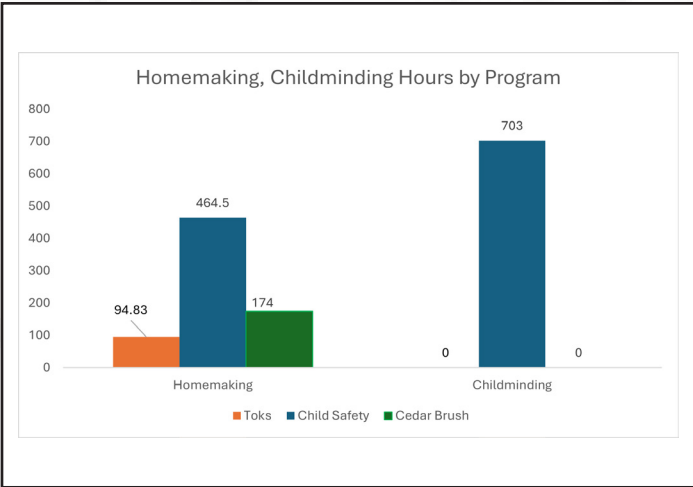
- Meeting and planning with facilitators beginning in August for the upcoming year; and
- Developing a framework for the program to increase communication, collaboration and feedback processes.

### ***Cultural Care Coordinator***

In response to staff feedback, we engaged in developing a roster of Elders. We held an orientation for the Elders identifying the support, training, and work we may engage them in. We ensure we have Elder support at our events and are looking to increase our cultural supports and services across the programs. One of our main goals is to ensure that we increase access to cultural programming for families and that some of the events occur onsite at both offices.

**In Home Supports**

In Home Supports has had a very busy year with an increase of two contractors and tracking of the services provided to the programs. We are tracking the supervision and transportation that are provided by the Social Program Office Assistants (SPOAs) and all the supervised access that could be transitioned to the SPOAs have been transferred. The increase in contractors allow for increased and intensive services to our families.



**AREAS OF FOCUS OVER THE COMING YEAR:**

1. Identifying and addressing families’ immediate concrete needs.
2. Documenting services families are accessing, including concrete needs.
3. Identifying indicators of positive outcomes for families.
4. Expand training for staff around working with complex family dynamics and needs. This will result in increased retention as social workers feel more competent in their roles.
5. Foster increased communication across programs to ensure seamless service delivery.
6. Increase access to contractors and support services to develop a responsive list of service providers who work with the families we serve.
7. Establish feedback mechanisms for families to express their needs and experiences within VACFSS. This can inform ongoing adjustments to programming, services and policies.
8. Continuously assess the effectiveness of our programming, services, and policies. Model a willingness to adapt based on what is learned from families and the community, ensuring that services remain relevant and effective.

**CONCLUSION**

This report highlights the vital intersection of child safety, family support, and cultural competency in our programs. By focusing on collaborative practices, a unified vision, and the integration of data-driven strategies, we can create a more effective framework for supporting families in our community. As we move forward, it is crucial we remain adaptive, responsive, and committed to the best interests of the children and families we serve, ensuring their needs are met holistically and equitably.



In honour of the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, staff at the 745 Clark office took part in a Cedar brushing —a meaningful act of remembrance, respect, and connection to Indigenous



# Resources

**Donald Robertshaw, Resources Program Manager**



## OVERVIEW

The VACFSS Resource Program is dedicated to ensuring children in care maintain strong connections with their parents, extended family, and community. Through our collaborative efforts with other programs, we have successfully enabled children to stay at home with their families, supported through respite services. For those in continuing care, we focus on maintaining relationships with parents, families, and community through the Inclusive Foster Care Agreement. VACFSS Resources supports the Child Safety and Guardianship programs requests for foster care placements, child specific placements, respite for parents, and relief for out of care providers.

The year 2024/25 has been remarkable, marked by the resumption of in-person ceremonies, events, celebrations, and caregiver recruitment activities. The cultural camp offered in July 2024 for caregivers, children, and families on the Tsleil-Waututh Nation territory focused on Indigenous cultural teachings and activities. The Caregiver Appreciation Event in October 2024 was a resounding success, with over 140 caregivers, partners, and VACFSS staff in attendance. The blanketing of new caregivers and in person connection with long-term caregivers lifted our spirits, deepening our appreciation for their commitment to the children and youth. Inclusive caregiving has been strengthened by the “Gathering Our Medicine” circle, which centers around healing and strengthening relationships among Indigenous children, youth, caregivers, and their kinship circle.

Resources undertook a specialized Indigenous caregiver recruitment campaign this year with the goal of increasing the number of Indigenous caregivers in the next fiscal year. While we are buoyed by the increase of kinship care through

the Out of Care program, we continue to engage the greater community to provide relief for foster parents and respite care for parents.

The Resources Recruitment team engages with the Vancouver Indigenous community by providing information on the VACFSS family caregiver program and how to apply. The Indigenous community engagement effort has focused on attending Indigenous cultural events, conveying small group community discussions, and engaging the community through social media.

Under the new *Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment* (SAJE) provisions, Resources provides assistance to Youth in Care aged 19 to 21 years to remain with their caregivers. This support has been crucial for youth in care as they transition into supported community living.

Resources, along with Guardianship and the Child Safety Programs, are continuing to review all child/youth specialized placements to ensure these homes are implementing Inclusive Family Care and ensuring, wherever possible, extended family, community, and family care homes are being utilized.

To address the increasing number of infants, children, and youth with special needs, the recruitment of family caregivers and skilled caregivers has been a priority. Continued engagement with the Indigenous Vancouver community has been beneficial. Specific advertising through Facebook and other social media platforms has been helpful.

The program’s community partnerships remain strong and proactively support our caregivers to provide improved lived experiences for our children in care.



VACFSS hosts the Caregiver Cultural Camp, an annual initiative that connects caregivers and children in care to Indigenous practices. Events and services such as this camp are all crucial parts of VACFSS' restorative service model and provide opportunities for staff members.

## RESOURCES CASELOAD AND RECRUITMENT ACTIVITY

The average number of children in care has decreased over the last 14 years, from 489 (2010-2011) to 382 (2024-2025).

The number of children in care by age group has had modest changes over the last two years. The number of adolescents in the 15 to 18 year old group has remained constant at 113 from last year. There is moderate increase in the age group of 10 to 14 years, and a moderate decrease in the 5 to 9 year old group. There was also a moderate decrease in number of children in the 1 to 4 year old group. This signifies a continuing decline of children coming into care.

The percentage of children in care residing with family care caregivers compared to children in staffed residential resources is currently 89% and has been consistent over the last 14 years. The family caregivers' long-term commitment to children and youth contributes to positive relational and developmental outcomes.

The total numbers of children in care placed with kith and kin family care homes (extended family care homes) remains the same from 36 children in 2012-13 to 36 children in 2024-2025.

The program remains committed and responsive with 151 family caregivers. The skill level of the caregivers, as indicated through the "Levels of Care System", has increased with caregivers increasing their skill, knowledge, and abilities, and most caregivers achieved levels 2 or 3. The family care levels system consists of three levels: level one (new family caregivers) to level three (full-time family caregivers with experience caring for children who have significant emotional, behaviour, and physical care needs).

The provision of respite care (short-term care for children while in their parent's care) is a critical support service for families. Respite services continue to be provided by family care homes from 87 children in 2023-24 to 60 children in 2024-25. The Children's Corner Respite Home increased child placement from 192 children in 2023-24 to 249 in 2024-25.





Board Director Lix Lopez attended the Caregiver Appreciation Dinner, representing the organization's commitment to community engagement and governance excellence.

The contracted caregiver support service provider continues to provide pre-service training, core caregiver education, and specialized training for VACFSS family caregivers. 168 family caregivers attended various training modules (including Indigenous cultural education) in 2024 from 150 family caregivers the previous year. The direct support (family support counselling and registered clinical counsellors) to VACFSS caregivers increased from 457 hours in 2023 to 1231 hours in 2024. Direct support included 210 support hours for Out of Care Options caregivers. Family caregivers have participated in cultural teachings such as the new program called “Gathering Our Medicine” which focuses on strengthening cultural relationships with the children in their care. The Vancouver Coastal Health’s Foundation Program has helped support family caregivers who have children with mental health issues and suicidal ideation.

The availability of affordable housing is a barrier to increasing the VACFSS caregiver network within the city of Vancouver. The Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children’s Village (Lu’ma Native Housing), Kiwassa Neighborhood House, and BC Housing continue to provide safe and community housing with 24 family care homes and six youth suites. There is one apartment at the Dave Pranteau Aboriginal Children’s Village dedicated to providing a home for infants and the search continues for approved caregivers who can reside in the dedicated units

The main challenges faced by the VACFSS Resource program includes aging family caregivers, caregiver retention, housing costs, and the recruitment of both Indigenous and non-Indigenous caregivers. Additionally, the complex care needs of children and youth, requires a review of our strategies for supporting caregivers to meet the needs of children and youth in care.



Caregiver recruitment, and in particular Indigenous caregiver recruitment, is a priority for VACFSS. The recruitment team is fully staffed and has dedicated community recruitment social workers and home study social workers. The recruitment social workers engaged the Vancouver community by participating in numerous local events and promotional activities. The program responded by engaging the Vancouver Indigenous community with opportunities to learn about becoming a caregiver. There is a renewed caregiver recruitment focus in the city of Vancouver and surrounding communities. Some of these community engagement events include the National Indigenous Peoples Day, Hoobiye celebration, community engagement sessions with Indigenous community members (Friendship Centre and partner housing venues), Italian Days, PRIDE Celebration, and Khatsahlano Day. The recruitment team is highly motivated to continue with the above events and undertake intensive caregiver community engagement.

A special focus also included recruitment of family caregiver applicants who can care for infants, infants with special needs, sibling groups of three or more, and provide care for children with special needs (significant mental health and development challenges).

## PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS AND GOALS:

- **Enhance Family Caregiver Recruitment:** Continue to target both Indigenous and non-Indigenous family caregiver applicants, including placements for special needs children.
- **Implement Inclusive Childcare Planning and Monitoring System:** Continue to ensure full compliance and accountability to inclusive care across every resource in the program.
- **Continued Cultural Experiences and Training for the Caregivers:** Opportunities such as the VACFSS caregiver cultural camp and providing support for cultural events, ceremonies and Home Coming experiences are essential for our children and youth.
- **Review and Coordinate Child-Specific Specialized Placements:** Continue to review and coordinate specialized placements with directors, managers and social workers.
- **Focus on Family Caregiver Retention and Capacity Building:** Strengthen efforts to retain family caregivers and build their capacity.
- **Staff Retention, Recruitment, and Training:** Prioritize the retention, recruitment, and training of staff.
- **Increase Inter-Program Child-Focused Planning:** Enhance child-focused planning through collaboration between the Resources/Guardianship and Resources/Child Safety placement committees.

# Guardianship

**Holly Anderson, Director of Integrated Practice & Operations, Guardianship & Reunification and Quality Assurance**

**Marcia Cummings, Guardianship Manager**



## PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Guardianship Program currently provides delegated services to 267 Indigenous children and youth in continuing care. Our work is grounded in the Calls to Action for Child Welfare from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the recommendations from the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, and the principles of *An Act Respecting First Nations, Métis and Inuit Children, Youth and Families*.

Our program is rooted in restorative, trauma-informed practice that prioritizes relationship-based social work. We focus on developing holistic care plans centered on connection to family, community, and culture, with a strong emphasis on permanency. Children and youth are supported within a circle of care that includes family, community, and child-centered services.

Our team includes 15 social workers, 3 team leaders, a guardianship consultant, two Lifelong Connection Workers, and a Child and Youth Engagement Coordinator. We also have two part-time Indigenous wellness counsellors who provide support to children and youth navigating trauma, grief, and loss.

We are committed to reducing the number of Indigenous children in care. We aim to do this by promoting specific lifelong plans rooted in family and cultural connection, and by supporting youth who leave care with a strong sense of Indigenous identity and a vision for their future.

## PRACTICE-BASED DATA COLLECTION

To support best practices and accountability, our program uses a longstanding database that tracks the journey and outcomes of children and youth in care. For over 15 years, this tool has supported evidence-based planning and service delivery. It reflects the diversity of experiences and unique needs of Indigenous youth while providing a framework for evaluating outcomes and understanding real-time impacts of our practice.

In recent years, we've expanded this data collection to include permanency planning outcomes such as legal transfers of custody, adoptions, placements with extended family, or returns to parents. This helps us track the full trajectory of care and guide planning with youth and families.

## OUTCOMES FOR YOUTH LEAVING CARE

Our practice has always emphasized supporting youth beyond age 19, recognizing the unique challenges Indigenous young adults face after aging out of care. Prior to any formal provincial mandate, our program provided informal post-19 support rooted in relationship, identity, and connection.

As the provincial framework to support youth post-19 evolved, our team worked alongside the Youth Advisory Committee to formalize our commitment through written policy. This policy reflects our continued dedication to supporting Indigenous youth as they navigate early adulthood, grounded in cultural safety and the importance of lifelong connection.



In a touching moment at the CRUW graduation ceremony, April and Kelsey come together in a warm embrace. Here, April is honoured through a traditional blanketing ceremony, recognizing not only her steadfast commitment to the community, but also the compassion and wisdom she has shared along the way. The ceremony serves as a heartfelt tribute to her contributions and the lasting impact of her presence on those around her.





VACFSS staff and families gathered once again in Merritt for our annual Sage Picking Event—a day of reconnection, reflection, and tradition. We're deeply grateful to the Conayt Friendship Centre for their warm hospitality and for walking with us on this meaningful journey.

## YOUTH TRANSITIONS & SAJE SUPPORTS

In 2022, the Ministry announced the creation of SAJE (*Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment*), a new Youth Transitions Program to support youth and young adults between the ages of 14 and 27 with expanded services and benefits as they transition in and out of care. The program includes funding to enhance support for youth transitioning from care, expanded eligibility, and the introduction of post-19 SAJE Guides who work alongside young adults to help them access services and achieve their goals through to their 27th birthday.

VACFSS has been developing its own approach to SAJE, which is reflective of our restorative practice, culturally grounded policies, and youth voice. We created and implemented two new positions to support youth transitioning out of care: one focused on young adults aged 19–27, and another supporting youth aged 14–19.

Currently, Guardianship is supporting 30 youth over the age of 19 who have SAJE housing agreements or SAJE support agreements. These agreements allow youth to remain in their homes and receive support past the age of majority. We continue to work with these young people to support their transition into adulthood, including accessing post-secondary

education, building life skills, and connecting with adult services that align with their long-term goals.

VACFSS also continued to support youth transitioning into the community through either CLBC or extended post-19 supports. Many of these youth's caregivers chose to transition to caregivers under CLBC resulting in no further moves for these youth. This outcome reflects the strength of the relationships developed between youth and their caregivers, and the value of belonging that was fostered through consistent, culturally safe placements.

This year also saw a strong rate of academic achievement among youth leaving care. 22 youth (66%) of the 2024 cohort graduated with high school diplomas or leaving certificates. This success reflects the program's emphasis on strong partnerships with culturally responsive and flexible educational programs. Guardianship continues to collaborate with Indigenous-focused schools such as Cedar Walk, as well as with Indigenous education support workers across the Lower Mainland. These partnerships ensure youth receive tailored educational supports and develop key life skills as they journey out of care.

## PERMANENCY WITHIN A CHILD'S CIRCLE

Indigenous children have the right to maintain strong, meaningful relationships with their families, communities, and mentors. We make concerted efforts to protect these connections and to support each child's journey back to family whenever possible. Currently, approximately one in five children in our care (53 children) are living with relatives in formal kith-and-kin placements. This achievement demonstrates our commitment to restorative practice and our belief that Indigenous children have an inherent right to be raised within their own family and community.

In alignment with the board's strategic priorities, the Calls to Action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), and the principles of federal legislation affirming Indigenous child welfare jurisdiction (*An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families*), the Guardianship program has developed a strong, concerted approach to return children to their circles and seek permanency. This approach effectively moves children beyond Continuing Custody Orders and into permanent family arrangements. Permanency planning always begins by exploring a return to the child's family, extended family, or broader Indigenous community. A plan is reached by consensus, involving everyone in the child's circle and centering the voices of the family, the Nation, and the youth themselves.

Our Lifelong Connections workers actively track each child's permanency progress through regular monthly meetings with social workers. We also emphasize partnering with First Nations bands and communities at every stage of planning. These collaborative efforts ensure that permanency plans are developed and advanced with the full involvement of each child's family and community.

## CULTURAL JOURNEYS

The Guardianship program is committed to upholding the principles of *An Act Respecting First Nations, Inuit and Métis Children, Youth and Families* (which affirms Indigenous jurisdiction in child and family services) and to working in true partnership with each Nation in planning for their children. For Nations that have a cohort of children in our care, we have established formal annual planning reviews in partnership with those Nations to review and refine each child's plan.

This year, our Nation partnerships and cultural planning meetings included:

- Wet'suwet'en Nation – In-person planning session
- Lake Babine Nation – In-person planning session
- Heiltsuk Nation – In-person planning session
- Lil'wat Nation – Virtual planning session
- Gitxsan Nation – Virtual planning session
- Siksika Nation – Virtual planning session



We were privileged to welcome the Hon. Natalie Cook MP, the South Australian Minister for Human Services and Minister for Seniors and Ageing Well, to our VACFSS Head Office. During her visit, she spoke with our agency's Directors, managers, and Youth Advisory Council (YAC) to discuss the services VACFSS provides to keep at-risk youth safe through policy and programs.



Children and youth in our care are supported to develop strong Indigenous identities grounded in the teachings of their home communities, while also fostering a positive urban Indigenous identity when they are away from home. This culturally connected work is supported by all of our social workers and is coordinated by our Lifelong Connections Coordinators.

## YOUTH ENGAGEMENT

Ensuring our youth are developing a strong Indigenous identity, leadership skills, and a vision for their future is an essential part of the work that guardianship does. We continue to engage youth in a variety of creative and cultural ways to ensure they experience opportunities to heal from trauma, to have voices heard, and prepare them for adulthood.

### Youth Advisory Committee (YAC)

The Youth Advisory Committee (YAC) continues to serve as a vital leadership body within VACFSS, ensuring the voices of Indigenous youth in and from care are central to agency policy development, programming, and advocacy. Made up of 12 dedicated young leaders, YAC remains embedded within VACFSS and plays a pivotal role in shaping best practices and driving systemic change both locally and nationally.

Over the past year, YAC expanded its advocacy efforts, contributed to multiple initiatives, and broadened its presence in critical conversations impacting youth in care. Members shared their experiences and recommendations through presentations at Douglas College and the University of British Columbia. In the fall, they were invited to present at the *Our Children, Our Way Conference*, where they highlighted the significance of relationship-based social work, cultural healing, and youth-led change. YAC was also honored with the Spirit Bear Award from the First Nations Caring Society—an affirmation of their impact across community and macro systems.

In alignment with their strategic plan, YAC prioritized housing as a critical advocacy issue,

identifying it as a major barrier for youth aging out of care. They continue to amplify youth voices in policy discussions, with a strong stance that safe, affordable, and sustainable housing is a fundamental right. YAC is actively cultivating relationships with housing stakeholders to support solutions that reduce barriers for Indigenous youth.

In addition to advocacy, YAC played a central role in all VACFSS annual events, reinforcing their leadership within the agency. Each year, they host their annual Summer BBQ in June, a signature event celebrating connection and community among youth in care.

YAC remains a cornerstone of youth advocacy at VACFSS—offering critical insight, challenging systemic inequities, and inspiring change.

### Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness (CRUW)

The Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness (CRUW) program continues to affirm the right of Indigenous youth in urban settings to remain connected to their culture through land-based practices. Now in its 14th year, CRUW provides a vital space for cultural connection, wellness, and community building.

CRUW operates at the xʷčičəsəm Garden on the unceded territory of the Musqueam people at the UBC Farm. The garden's name, from the həŋqəmiŋəŋ language, means “the place where we grow.” Established in 2007 by Dr. Eduardo Jovel, this space is now stewarded by UBC's Indigenous Research Partnerships, ensuring respect for its cultural and ecological significance.

Throughout the year, participants engaged in traditional plant cultivation, medicine harvesting, ceremonies, and land-based teachings passed down through generations. These experiences promote respect, stewardship, and identity—strengthening youth connection to land and culture. CRUW also supports holistic wellness by integrating mental, emotional, and physical health through mentorship, teamwork, and cultural learning. The relationships built through CRUW foster belonging and healing.





Honouring the Journey of our Youth is a yearly celebratory gathering at the Native Education Collage. Coordinated by Elder April, Denise, and administrative staff, this gathering welcomes youths turning 19 this year. In view of family, caregivers, and loved ones who have supported their growth, the youth were blanketed and honoured with cedar headbands and boxes – filled with medicine and gifts.

## Children's Indigenous Rights, Culture, and Languages Education (CIRCLE)

### *Vancouver*

The Children's Indigenous Rights, Culture, and Languages Education (CIRCLE) program continues to offer meaningful cultural engagement for Indigenous children, emphasizing the lifelong journey of cultural identity. By connecting children with Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and Cultural Educators, CIRCLE creates a vibrant community rooted in diverse traditions from across Turtle Island.

Now in its 8th cycle, CIRCLE operates as an after-school program at Lu'ma Housing, where children engage in traditional practices facilitated by Knowledge Keepers and Elders, alongside mentors and peers.

This year, children participated in land-based learning, traditional harvesting, language revitalization, Indigenous food preparation, and expressive cultural arts such as drumming, singing, and storytelling. These activities help build cultural pride, knowledge, and identity.

### *Surrey*

In 2024, VACFSS expanded the CIRCLE program to Surrey in response to the growing need for culturally grounded programs for children in VACFSS care residing in the region. Launched in October, CIRCLE Surrey provides monthly sessions for Indigenous children aged 6–12, offering land-based learning, cultural teachings, and opportunities for connection.

Following the same foundational values as the Vancouver program, Surrey CIRCLE centers Indigenous knowledge and cultural identity. The response from families and community members has been overwhelmingly positive, highlighting the importance of expanding such programs beyond Vancouver.

As the program grows, continued partnerships will be essential. Plans include deepening land-based learning, strengthening relationships with local Indigenous organizations, and ensuring all youth and families have equitable access to cultural programming through VACFSS.

# Finance

*Jatinder Toor, Manager of Finance*



## SOCIETY FINANCIAL SUMMARY

Revenue for the year ending March 31st, 2025, increased to \$73,019,951 which translates to an increase of approximately \$11.3 million from the 2024 fiscal year total of \$61,731,769. Expenses mostly attributed to child specific placements increased by just over \$11 million to \$72,770,200, from \$61,695,187 in 2024.

The revenue and expense increase corresponds with a \$11,095,322 increase in Direct Program Costs. Child Specific Placements costs increased by \$10,254,711 (2025 - \$26,061,717 & 2024 – \$15,807,006) and the remaining \$0.8 million is spread out among the rest of the Direct Program Costs.

The operational impact on the Net Assets of the agency resulted in an increase of \$249,750, of which is primarily comprised of the agency being in a surplus position at the end of the fiscal year.

The Agency is in a healthy financial position to handle expected and/or unexpected cost increases in the short and medium term.

## OVERVIEW

For the year ended March 31, 2025, the Society's Net Assets have increased by \$249,750, with a total increase of cash and accounts receivables of \$2,784,044.

Costs for Children in Care and out of care continue to increase, resulting in increased funding in accordance with the Standardized Funding Agreement. Funding for these increases has been adjusted and VACFSS is in a good position to carry the eligible maintenance costs.

Inflationary factors are not impacting the costs of client food, transportation, travel, and staff related expenses as much as they have in the past few years. This is evidenced throughout the financial reports as the increases have been significantly lower this past fiscal year.

Operational funding has been adjusted and is closely aligning with the agency's expenditures.

## GUARDIANSHIP/RESOURCES

Total funding has increased by \$2,341,916 (2025 – 8,766,002 & 2024 – 6,424,086). Guardianship costs increased by \$503,300 and this is primarily due to the introduction of the Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE) program. Guardianship/Resources operated as budgeted in 2025.

## INFRASTRUCTURE

Infrastructure funding is based on a percentage calculation of program wage funding and operational costs as identified in the Standardized Funding Agreement (SFA). Funding increased by \$249,667 bringing the funding to 2,977,309 in 2025, from \$2,727,641 in 2024.

Training expenditures increased by \$56,054 due to the continuation of leadership training that was implemented in 2024.

Other expenses are consistent with past years, with some minor increases as the result of inflationary factors.





With tongs in hand, Director of Finance Toor steps up to the grill, preparing for the annual staff BBQ at 745 Clark.

## RESIDENTIAL RESOURCES

Residential Resources costs increased by about \$8.7 million from \$39,686,938 in 2024 to \$48,401,094 in 2025. Residential Resources operated as budgeted in 2025.

## FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION

Funding has slightly increased in 2025 from 2024, and costs have increased as well. Family Preservation and Reunification operated as budgeted in 2025.

## CHILD SAFETY

Funding decreased by \$50,069 in 2025 from 8,934,458 (2024) to 8,884,389 (2025). Overall, most costs have remained relatively consistent with notable decreases in Child-in-care costs and operational costs.

## CONCLUSION

VACFSS operated generally as expected for the year ended March 31, 2025, and anticipates operating as budgeted for the upcoming year.



# AUDITOR'S REPORT

Financial Statements of  
VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY  
An Independent Auditors' Report

Year ended March 31st, 2025







**KPMG LLP**

PO Box 10426 777 Dunsmuir Street

Vancouver BC V7Y 1K3

Canada

Telephone (604) 691-3000

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## **INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT**

To the Members of Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society

### ***Opinion***

We have audited the financial statements of Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society (the "Entity"), which comprise:

- the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2025
- the statement of operations for the year then ended
- the statement of changes in net assets for the year then ended
- the statement of cash flows for the year then ended
- and notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies

(Hereinafter referred to as the "financial statements").

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Entity as at March 31, 2025, and its results of operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations.

### ***Basis for Opinion***

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the **"Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements"** section of our auditor's report.

We are independent of the Entity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Canada and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

### ***Responsibilities of Management for the Financial Statements***

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for private enterprises, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.





In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the Entity or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

### ***Auditor's Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements***

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards will always detect a material misstatement when it exists.

Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit.

We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the Entity's internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Entity's ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditor's report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditor's report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Entity to cease to continue as a going concern.



- Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves fair presentation.
- Communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that we identify during our audit.

### **Reporting on Other Legal and Regulatory Requirements**

As required by the Societies Act (British Columbia) we report that, in our opinion, the accounting policies applied in preparing and presenting financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations have been applied on a basis consistent with that of the preceding period.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'KPMG LLP'. The signature is written in a cursive, stylized font and is underlined with a single horizontal stroke.

Chartered Professional Accountants

Vancouver, Canada  
July 9, 2025

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

## Statement of Financial Position

March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024


	Note	2025	2024
<b>Assets</b>			
Current assets:			
Cash and cash equivalents		\$ 6,006,203	\$ 5,242,099
Accounts receivable		3,677,911	1,620,867
Prepaid expenses		381,384	418,488
		10,065,498	7,281,454
Security deposits paid		74,951	74,951
Capital assets	2	889,367	1,083,385
		\$ 11,029,816	\$ 8,439,790

**Liabilities, Deferred Contributions and Net Assets**

Current liabilities:			
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	3	\$ 3,968,595	\$ 1,533,067
Payroll liabilities		1,066,423	998,408
		5,035,018	2,531,475
Deferred contributions	4	17,000	180,267
		5,052,018	2,711,742
Net assets:			
Invested in capital assets	6	889,367	1,083,385
Internally restricted capital acquisition		2,289,940	2,289,940
Unrestricted		2,798,491	2,354,723
		5,977,798	5,728,048
Operating lease commitments	7		
Contingencies	8		
Economic dependence	13		
		\$ 11,029,816	\$ 8,439,790

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

Approved on behalf of the Board:

DocuSigned by:  
  
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Director

Signed by:  
  
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Director



# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Note	2025	2024
Funding revenues:			
Provincial government contributions			
- Principal funding		\$ 72,551,982	\$ 61,378,331
Deferred contributions:			
Related to capital assets amortization	5	-	13,995
		72,551,982	61,392,326
Expenses:			
Direct program costs:			
Automobile expenses		252,569	229,018
Caregiver expenses		525,928	542,241
Child in care costs		3,205,688	2,531,529
Client assistance		73,288	91,729
Collaborative practice costs		28,940	8,653
Contract services		493,657	338,754
Cultural support costs		539,107	390,422
Family support expenses		821,380	688,847
Out of care caregivers		23,737	39,040
Out of care children		40,235	48,900
Out of care maintenance		3,080,994	3,372,689
Program supplies and miscellaneous		171,823	133,386
Residential resources cost		44,615,763	35,158,600
Salaries and benefits		11,403,855	10,611,808
Telephone and cellular		72,263	68,289
		65,349,227	54,253,905
Service costs:			
Amortization		174,918	228,124
Bank charges and interest		225	75
Equipment leasing		18,927	17,310
Office and general		247,884	314,115
Public relations and community services		-	245
Rent and repairs		1,636,894	1,732,646
Salaries, labour and benefits		1,651,925	1,562,519
Special events		2,163	2,404
Staff related costs		68,786	57,550
Telephone, fax and cellular		128,227	121,123
		3,929,949	4,036,111

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Statement of Operations (continued)

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	Note	2025	2024
Expenses:			
General and administration expenses:			
Amortization		32,042	45,108
Annual general meeting		1,480	-
Bank charges and interest		11,357	11,990
Board expenses		49,901	74,890
Computer supplies		101,224	81,391
Contract services		59,718	26,107
Equipment leasing		2,380	2,446
Insurance		65,747	56,383
Office and general		72,222	72,590
Professional dues and membership		31,355	34,104
Professional fees		143,031	123,095
Public relations and community services		22,683	25,105
Rent and repairs		201,343	189,731
Salaries, labour and benefits		2,336,400	2,361,376
Special events		13,218	15,492
Staff related costs		314,605	253,725
Telephone, fax and cellular		32,320	31,638
		3,491,026	3,405,171
Deficiency of revenue over expenses before undernoted		(218,220)	(302,861)
Other revenues:			
Other income	10	467,970	339,643
Excess of revenue over expenses		\$ 249,750	\$ 36,782

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Statement of Changes in Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Net assets, beginning of year	\$ 5,728,048	\$ 5,691,266
Excess of revenue (deficiency) over expenses:		
Guardianship of resources (schedule 1)	287,993	58,743
Infrastructure (schedule 2)	(161,061)	114,187
Residential resources (schedule 3)	(311,762)	(252,509)
Family preservation (schedule 4)	(105,239)	650,320
Child safety (schedule 5)	539,819	(533,959)
	\$249,750	36,782
Net assets, end of year	\$ 5,977,798	\$ 5,728,048

See accompanying notes to financial statements.



# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Statement of Cash Flows

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Cash provided by:		
Operations:		
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 249,750	\$ 36,782
Items not involving cash:		
Amortization	225,779	291,771
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	-	(13,995)
	475,529	314,558
Changes in non-cash operating working capital:		
Accounts receivable	(2,057,044)	174,020
Prepaid expenses	37,104	(107,986)
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	2,435,528	44,857
Deferred contributions	(163,267)	18,958
Payroll liabilities	68,015	343,727
	795,865	788,134
Investing:		
Acquisitions of capital assets	(31,761)	(57,493)
Increase in cash and cash equivalents	764,104	730,641
Cash and cash equivalents, beginning of year	5,242,099	4,511,458
Cash and cash equivalents, end of year	\$ 6,006,203	\$ 5,242,099

See accompanying notes to financial statements.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

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Vancouver Aboriginal Child & Family Services Society (the "Society" or "VACFSS") was incorporated on May 28, 1992 under the laws of British Columbia. On May 3, 2017, the Society transitioned to the new Societies Act (British Columbia). The Society is a registered charitable organization under the Income Tax Act and accordingly is exempt from income taxes, provided certain requirements of the Income Tax Act are met.

The purposes of the Society are to:

- (a) supply essential social services to aboriginal children and families who are at risk, and their communities, by:
  - (i) providing delegated child welfare and related services on behalf of government agencies.
  - (ii) acting as a liaison between government agencies and aboriginal children, families and communities.
  - (iii) assisting aboriginal children and families to reconnect with their communities, culture and heritage.
- (b) promote the wellbeing of aboriginal children and families, and encourage their full participation in Canadian society;
- (c) enter into contracts which may be conducive to the Society's aims with any person, corporation or government agency;
- (d) solicit, collect, receive, acquire, hold and invest money and property, both real and personal, received by gift, contribution, bequest devised, or otherwise, sell and convert property, both real and personal, into cash, and use the funds of the Society and proceeds, income, rent, and profits derived from any property of the Society in furtherance of the purposes set out above,
- (e) purchase, lease, sell or hold such property, equipment and materials as are deemed necessary to accomplish the Society's purposes; and
- (f) do all such things as may be necessary or conducive to the attainment of these purposes. The Society must primarily but not exclusively service aboriginal children, families and communities in the lower mainland of British Columbia.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

### 1. Significant accounting policies:

These financial statements have been prepared by management in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations in Part III of the Chartered Professional Accountants Canada Handbook and include the following significant accounting policies:

(a) Cash and cash equivalents:

Cash equivalents consist of high interest savings accounts held within investment portfolio.

(b) Capital assets:

Purchased capital assets are recorded at cost of acquisition plus any directly attributable cost of preparing the asset for its intended use. Amortization is provided using the declining balance method and following annual rates:

Asset	Rate
Office equipment	30%
Vehicles	30%
Computer	30%
Telephone equipment	30%
Computer software	100%

Leasehold improvements are amortized on a straight-line basis over the term of the lease.

The Society reviews the carrying amount of capital assets for impairment whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that the asset no longer contributes to the Society's ability to provide services, or that the value of future economic benefits or service potential associated with the asset is less than its carrying amount. If such conditions exist, an impairment loss is measured and recorded in the statement of operations at the amount by which the carrying amount of the net asset exceeds its fair value or replacement cost.

(c) Revenue recognition:

The Society follows the deferral method of accounting for contributions.

Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue in the appropriate fund for the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Contributed capital assets or contributions restricted for the construction or purchase of capital assets are deferred and amortized into revenue on a declining balance basis, at a rate corresponding with the amortization rate for the related capital assets.

Revenue received for maintenance funding shortfalls of prior periods is recognized as revenue in the period received as the amount is not reasonably determinable at year end.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue when received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Interest income from cash and investments is recognized over the terms of the respective investments using the effective interest method.



# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

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### 1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

#### (d) Employee future benefits:

The Society offers a pension plan with a defined benefit provision which covers all employees of the Society. The plan is administered by the Government of British Columbia and annual contributions to the pension plan, as advised by the plan administrators, are expensed when paid (note 8).

#### (e) Financial instruments:

All financial assets including the Society's short- and long-term investments, except for investments that are quoted in an active market are measured at amortized cost. Amortized cost is the amount at which a financial asset is measured at initial fair value plus financing fees and transaction costs that are directly attributable to their acquisition. These financial assets are thereafter carried at cost plus the cumulative amortization of any difference between that initial amount and the maturity amount using the straight-line amortization method.

Equity instruments, if any, that are quoted in an active market are stated at fair value. Changes in fair value are recognized in income in the period the changes occur. Transaction costs to acquire or dispose of these securities are recognized in net income in the period during which they are incurred.

Financial assets are assessed for impairment on an annual basis at the end of the fiscal year if there are indicators of impairment. If there is an indicator of impairment, the Society determines if there is a significant adverse change in the expected amount or timing of future cash flows from the financial asset. If there is a significant adverse change in the expected cash flows, the carrying value of the financial asset is reduced to the recoverable amount that could be realized from selling the financial asset or the amount that the Society expects to realize by exercising its right to any collateral. If events and circumstances reverse in a future period, an impairment loss will be reversed to the extent of the improvement, not exceeding the initial carrying value.

Financial liabilities, including accounts payable and accrued liabilities are measured at amortized cost.

#### (f) Measurement uncertainty:

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities and the disclosure of contingent liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenue and expenses during the reporting period. Management reviews all significant estimates affecting its financial statements on a recurring basis and records the effect of any necessary adjustments in the year in which the estimates are revised. Actual results could differ from the estimates.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

### 1. Significant accounting policies (continued):

#### (g) Donated materials and services:

The Society and its members benefit from donated services in the form of volunteer time for various programs. Because of the difficulty in determining their fair value, these contributed services are not recognized in the financial statements.

Donated goods and other donated services are recorded in these financial statements only when used in the normal course of the Society's operations and would otherwise have been purchased and a fair value can be reasonably estimated.

### 2. Capital assets

			2025	2024
	Cost	Accumulated amortization	Net book value	Net book value
Office equipment	\$ 302,338	\$ 287,492	\$ 14,846	\$ 20,117
Vehicles	208,736	143,491	65,245	67,517
Computer	985,770	833,220	152,550	191,423
Telephone equipment	57,434	50,979	6,455	8,746
Leasehold improvements	1,326,772	676,501	650,271	795,582
Equipment and furnishings	\$ 2,881,050	\$ 1,991,683	\$ 889,367	\$ 1,083,385

Amortization for the year amounted to \$225,779 (2024 - \$291,771) which consist of amortization expense of \$18,819 (2024 - \$18,539) recognized in Child in care expense under Direct program costs, \$174,918 (2024 - \$228,124) in Service costs and \$32,042 (2024 - \$45,108) in General and administration expenses.

### 3. Accounts payable and accrued liabilities:

Included in accounts payable and accrued liabilities are government remittances payable of \$58,200 (2024 - \$53,408), which includes amounts payable for payroll related taxes.

### 4. Deferred contributions:

Deferred contributions represent unspent resources externally restricted and unrestricted operating funding received in the current period that is related to the subsequent period.

Pursuant to a board resolution passed on March 25, 2014, it was resolved that effective April 1, 2013, future surpluses arising from restricted programs be transferred to the unrestricted fund to be used for any programs that require additional funding. Any deficits in restricted programs will be funded by the unrestricted fund. All the surpluses remaining after interfund transfers have been transferred to the unrestricted fund which is consistently followed on an annual basis.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

### 5. Deferred capital contributions:

Deferred contributions related to capital assets represent the unamortized portions of equipment and leasehold improvements acquired with restricted contributions.

The changes for the year in the deferred contributions balances are as follows:

	2025	2024
Balance, beginning of year	\$ -	\$ 13,995
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	-	(13,995)
Balance, end of year	\$ -	\$ -

### 6. Invested in capital assets:

(a) Invested in capital assets is calculated as follows:

	2025	2024
Capital assets (note 2)	\$ 889,367	\$ 1,083,385

(b) Change in net assets invested in capital assets is calculated as follows:

	2025	2024
Deficiency of revenue over expenses:		
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	\$ -	\$ 13,995
Amortization of capital assets	(225,779)	(291,771)
	(225,779)	(277,776)
Net change in investment in capital assets:		
Purchase of capital assets with unrestricted funds	31,761	57,493
	\$ (194,018)	\$ (220,283)

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

### 7. Operating lease commitments:

The Society occupies leased premises in various buildings under operating leases. The annual charges consist of the basic rent and the proportion share of operating expenses. The Society also leases various office equipment and automobiles which are held under operating leases.

The future minimum operating lease payments in respect of office premises, automobiles and equipment for each of the next five years and thereafter, are as follows:

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2026	\$ 775,188
2027	522,324
2028	416,280
2029	364,884
2030	100,566
	\$ 2,179,242

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### 8. Contingencies:

Since 2023, the Society has been involved in a judicial review pertaining to a human rights ("HRT") complaint which resulted in a \$150,000 award to the complainant. That award was set aside by the BC Supreme Court but restored by the BC Court of Appeal, and has since been paid to the complainant subsequent to year-end. During the year legal claims have arisen against the Society, the Province of BC and additional defendants that are factually related to the original HRT complaint. Management continues to defend itself against these allegations, however the ultimate outcome is not determinable and accordingly no provision has been made in these financial statements.

The Society is involved in an ongoing civil litigation matter brought by a parent whose child is currently in the Society's care. In April 2024 the plaintiff, a self-represented litigant with an ongoing child protection matter, filed a civil claim against the Society at BC Supreme Court. The plaintiff seeks damages for alleged physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect and racism. The Society's management believes the claim against the Society is without merit and the Society denies all allegations. As the outcome of the lawsuit and any liability to the Society cannot be reasonably determined at this time, no provision has been made in these financial statements.

Additionally, from time to time, in connection with its operations, the Society is named as the defendant in actions for damages and costs allegedly sustained by the plaintiffs. As the outcome is indeterminable, no provision has been made. Settlements of claims, in excess of those provided and/or insurance coverage, are accounted for as current period transactions.



# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

### 9. Pension plan:

VACFSS and its employees contribute to the Public Service Pension Plan (a jointly trustee pension plan). The Public Service Pension Board of Trustees, representing plan members and employers, is responsible for administering the plan, including investment of assets and administration of benefits. The plan is a multi-employer defined benefit pension plan. Basic pension benefits are based on a formula. As at March 31, 2024, the plan has about 76,000 (2023 - 71,000) active members and approximately 57,000 (2023 - 55,000) retired members.

The latest actuarial valuation as at March 31, 2023, indicated a funding surplus of \$4,491 million for basic pension benefits. The next valuation will be March 2026 with the result included in the March 2027 financial statements.

Employers participating in the plan record their pension expense as the amount of employer contributions made during the fiscal year (defined contribution pension plan accounting). This is because the plan records accrued liabilities and accrued assets for the plan in aggregate, resulting in no consistent and reliable basis for allocating the obligation, assets and cost to individual employers participating in the plan.

VACFSS paid approximately \$1,071,099 (2024 - \$1,014,316) for employer contributions to the plan during the year ended March 31, 2025.

### 10. Other income:

	2025	2024
Culturally Relevant Urban Wellness ("CRUW") grants	\$ 177,142	\$ 2,083
Developing The Gifts of Children Fund	12,428	8,238
Interest income	266,202	270,530
Miscellaneous income	12,133	58,767
Memberships	65	25
	\$ 467,970	\$ 339,643

### 11. Healthcare benefit plan:

Healthcare Benefit Trust ("HBT") is a not-for-profit health and welfare trust that provides group health and welfare benefits on behalf of participating employers for nearly 100,000 eligible employees, their eligible dependents, and beneficiaries employed in health care and social services in British Columbia and the Yukon. The Trust was established in 1979 by the Health Labour Relations Association ("HLRA"), now part of the Health Employers Association of BC ("HEABC").

VACFSS is a member of the Community Social Services Employers' Association that entered into a contractual agreement with the trustees of the HBT as a participating employer to participate in the Community Social Services Group Benefits plan.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

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### 11. Healthcare benefit plan (continued):

Under the agreement, if the Society was to leave the plan for any reason, it will be subject to an exit levy representing its share of any unfunded actuarial liabilities in respect of all the benefit programs that the Society participated in, as of the termination date.

As at March 31, 2025, there was no exit levy payable that was associated with VACFSS as the Society doesn't expect to leave the HBT.

### 12. Financial risks and concentration of credit risk:

#### (a) Liquidity risk:

Liquidity risk is the risk that the Society will be unable to fulfill its obligations on a timely basis or at a reasonable cost. The Society manages its liquidity risk by monitoring its operational requirements. The Society prepares budget and cash forecasts to ensure it has sufficient funds to fulfill its obligations. There has been no change to the risk from the prior year.

#### (b) Credit risk:

Credit risk refers to the risk that a counterparty may default on its contractual obligations resulting in a financial loss. The Society is exposed to credit risk with respect to its cash, investments, and accounts receivable. The Society assesses, on a continuous basis, accounts receivable and provides for any amounts that are not collectible in the allowance for doubtful accounts. Cash and investments are held with a large Canadian bank and credit risk is considered low. There has been no change to the risk from prior year.

#### (c) Market risk:

Market risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market prices. Market risk comprises three types of risk: currency risk, interest rate risk and other price risk. It is management's opinion that the Society is not exposed to significant currency risk or other price risk. There has been no change to the risk from prior year.

#### (d) Interest rate risk:

Interest rate risk is the risk that the fair value or future cash flows of a financial instrument will fluctuate because of changes in market interest rates. The fair values of fixed rate financial instruments are subject to change, since fair values fluctuate inversely with changes in market interest rates. The cash flows related to floating rate financial instruments change as market interest rates change.

### 13. Economic dependence:

The Society is dependent on the Ministry of Children and Family Development to provide sufficient funds to continue operations, replace essential equipment and complete its capital projects.

# VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY

## Notes to Financial Statements

Year ended March 31, 2025

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### 14. Disclosure of remuneration:

The information requirements, under section 36(1) of the Societies Act (British Columbia) with regards to the disclosure obligations of the society's directors, employees and contractors, remuneration are as follows:

#### Directors and officers:

No director or officer received remuneration in current year.

#### Employees and contractors:

For the fiscal year ended March 31, 2025, the Society paid total remuneration of \$51,746,884 (2024 - \$39,233,745) to 182 (2024 -175) employees and contractors for services, each of whom received total annual remuneration of \$75,000 or greater.

### 15. Comparative information:

Certain comparative information has been reclassified to conform with the presentation adopted in the current year. This had no impact on previously reported excess of revenue over expenses or net assets.

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Guardianship and Resources (R00139809)

## Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 1

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 8,576,432	\$ 6,413,765
CRUW grant	-	-
Other income	189,570	10,321
	8,766,002	6,424,086
Deferred contributions:		
Related to capital assets amortization	-	9,404
	8,766,002	6,433,490
Direct program costs:		
Automobile expenses	78,187	89,222
Contract services	120,627	81,478
Client assistance	39,708	35,701
Cultural support costs	409,578	278,353
Program supplies	-	1,471
Salaries and benefits	4,483,674	4,169,772
Telephone and cellular	28,750	29,433
	5,160,524	4,685,430
Child-in-care costs:		
Allowances/dental	84,902	62,586
Client minding costs	31,426	26,062
Client travel	388,674	433,015
Clothing grant	18,358	19,123
Equipment	36,866	49,780
Education/school events	200,956	203,391
Foods and household	66,107	71,046
Living with family and friends	65,915	104,722
Medical expenditures	135,425	102,864
Medical/Dental expenses	14,177	5,353
Others	143,775	235,639
Professional support and services	415,648	309,545
Recognizing milestones	22,938	14,747
Strengthening Abilities and Journeys of Empowerment (SAJE)	516,006	-
	2,141,173	1,637,873
Developing the Gifts of our Children	20,280	19,118
Integrated services	75,335	80,135
	2,236,788	1,737,126
Net funding excess contribution	\$ 1,368,690	\$ 10,934



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Guardianship and Resources (R00139809) (continued)

## Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 1

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Services costs:		
Amortization	\$ 34,685	\$ 54,050
Equipment leasing	8,545	5,679
Office and general	113,250	118,164
Rent	597,174	580,642
Salaries, labour and benefits	628,413	594,486
Special events	24	2,335
Staff related costs	25,125	23,004
Telephone fax and cellular	52,881	42,540
	1,460,097	1,420,900
Deficiency of revenues over expenses before transfers	(91,407)	(1,409,966)
Interfund transfers	379,400	1,468,709
Excess of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ 287,993	\$ 58,743

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Infrastructure (R000139810)

## Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

## Schedule 2

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 2,977,309	\$ 2,727,642
Other income	278,400	329,321
	3,255,709	3,056,963
Deferred contributions:		
Related to capital assets amortization	-	4,590
Net funding contributions	\$ 3,255,709	\$ 3,061,553
General and administrative expenses:		
Annual general meeting	\$ 1,480	\$ -
Amortization	32,042	45,108
Bank charges and interest	11,358	11,990
Board expenses	49,901	74,890
Computer support	101,224	81,390
Contract services	59,718	26,107
Equipment leasing	2,380	2,446
Insurance	65,747	56,383
Office and general	72,222	72,590
Professional dues and memberships	31,355	34,104
Professional fees	143,031	123,095
Public relations and community services	22,683	25,105
Rent and repairs	201,343	189,731
Salaries, labour and benefits	2,336,400	2,361,376
Special events	13,218	15,492
Staff related costs	314,605	246,317
Telephone fax and cellular	32,319	31,639
	3,491,026	3,397,763
Deficiency of revenues over expenses before transfers	(235,317)	(336,210)
Interfund transfers	74,256	450,397
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ (161,061)	\$ 114,187

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Residential Resources (R000139808)

## Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 3

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 48,401,094	\$ 39,686,938
Direct program costs:		
Out of care maintenance	3,080,994	3,372,690
Residential resources costs	44,615,763	35,122,478
	47,696,757	38,495,168
Child-in-care cost:		
Integrated services	110,771	36,122
Caregiver costs:		
Caregivers expenses	345,820	416,404
Foster parent appreciation night	47,568	18,626
Foster parent recruitment	45,185	29,803
Kiwassa Housing	87,355	77,408
	525,928	542,241
Excess of revenues over expenses before transfers	67,638	613,407
Interfund transfers	(379,400)	(865,916)
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ (311,762)	\$ 252,509

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Family Preservation (R000139806)

Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 4

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 3,712,757	\$ 3,615,529
Direct program costs:		
Automobile expenses	37,567	27,147
Client assistance and travel	33,580	47,651
Contract services	362,853	168,319
Cultural intervention costs	31,122	13,825
Program supplies	171,823	129,361
Salaries and benefits	1,893,806	1,500,163
Telephone and cellular	10,752	8,037
	2,541,503	1,894,503
Net funding contributions	\$ 1,171,254	\$ 1,721,026
Service costs:		
Amortization	\$ 4,889	\$ 6,605
Bank charges and interest	75	-
Equipment leasing	2,248	1,878
Office and general	36,468	21,740
Rent and repairs	278,598	263,556
Salaries, labour and benefits	272,333	224,085
Special events	250	1,064
Staff related costs	18,440	11,415
Telephone fax and cellular	26,936	27,330
	640,237	557,673
Excess of revenues over expenses before transfers	531,017	1,163,353
Interfund transfers	(636,256)	(513,033)
Excess of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ 105,239	\$ 650,320



**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Child safety (R000139811)

Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 5

Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Revenues:		
Provincial government contributions - Principal funding	\$ 8,884,389	\$ 8,934,458
Direct program costs:		
Automobile expenses	136,816	120,057
Contract services	10,177	88,957
Salaries and benefits	5,026,375	4,941,873
Telephone and cellular	32,760	30,815
	5,206,128	5,181,702
Child-in-care costs:		
Allowances for inter/out provincial transfers	-	8,905
Camp costs	22,875	19,420
Client minding costs	24,555	32,954
Client travel	239,941	181,710
Clothing grant	26,497	19,258
Education/school events	17,879	6,455
Equipment	40,537	29,225
Foods and household	43,660	68,029
Good and services	66,844	38,096
Integrated services	250,892	356,752
Medical/dental expenses	91,924	34,866
Others	5,210	8,869
Recognizing milestones	12,881	8,983
Professional support and services	14,432	-
	858,127	813,522
	6,064,255	5,995,224
Carried forward	\$ 2,820,134	\$ 2,939,234

**VANCOUVER ABORIGINAL CHILD AND FAMILY SERVICES SOCIETY**

Child safety (R000139811) (continued)

Schedule of Revenues and Expenses

Schedule 5

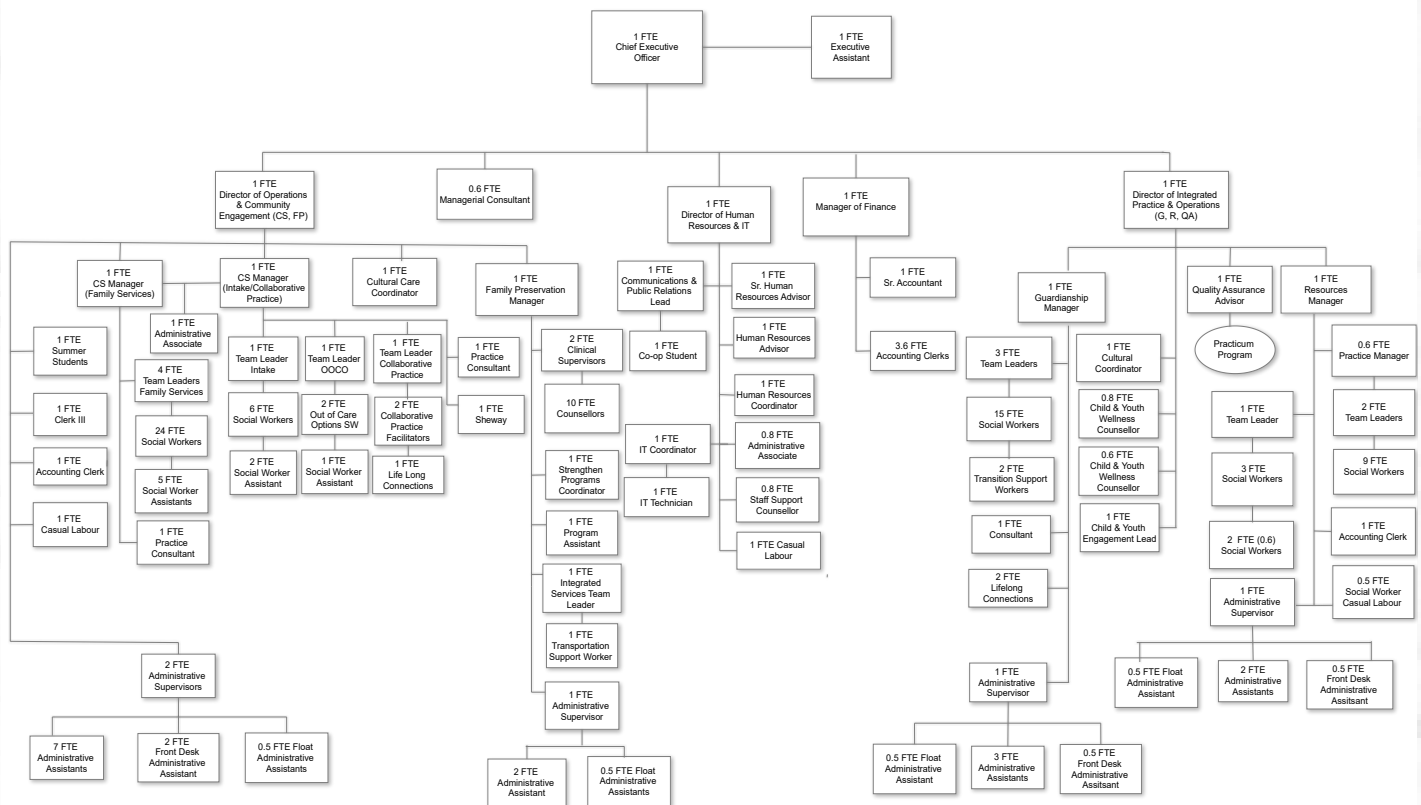
Year ended March 31, 2025, with comparative information for 2024

	2025	2024
Brought forward	\$ 2,820,134	\$ 2,939,234
Other program costs:		
Out-of-care children	40,235	48,900
Out-of-care caregivers	23,737	39,040
Family support expenses	821,380	669,728
Cultural Support Costs	98,407	98,244
Collaborative practice costs	28,940	19,445
	1,012,699	875,357
Net funding contributions	1,807,435	2,063,877
Services costs:		
Amortization	135,344	167,469
Bank charges and interest	150	75
Equipment leasing	8,134	9,753
Office and general	98,166	173,152
Public relations and community services	-	245
Rent	761,123	872,490
Salaries, labour and benefits	751,179	760,698
Special events	1,889	68
Staff related costs	25,220	22,475
Telephone fax and cellular	48,411	51,254
	1,829,616	2,057,679
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses before transfers	(22,181)	6,198
Interfund transfers	562,000	(540,157)
Excess (deficiency) of revenues over expenses for the year	\$ 539,819	\$ (533,959)

# COMMUNITY PARTNERS

- Aboriginal Front Door Society
- Aboriginal Mother Centre Society
- Aboriginal Wellness Program
- ACCESS
- Alan Cashmore Centre
- ARCUS Community Living
- Asante Centre
- Association of Neighbourhood Houses BC (ANHBC)
- Avocette Technology Together
- BabyGoRound
- Battered Women's Service Society
- BC Federation of Foster Parent Associations
- BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Region
- BC Women's Hospital & Health Centre
- Big Brothers of Greater Vancouver
- Big Sisters of BC
- Boudreau and Jang
- Boundaries Program
- Broadway Youth Resource Centre
- Cedar Brush Site Services & Janitorial Inc.
- Cedar Valley Community Services
- Centre for Sustainable Food Systems - UBC Farm
- Child & Adolescent Response Team (CART)
- Child & Family Clinic (BC Children's Hospital)
- Children's Foundation
- Community Living British Columbia
- Community Social Services Employers Assoc.
- Connexus Family & Children Services
- Crabtree Corner
- Douglas College Social Work & Child and Youth Care
- Downtown Eastside Women's Centre (DEWC)
- Esémkwu Thereapeutic Access (a program of Atira Women's Resource Society)
- Family Services of Greater Vancouver
- Federation of BC Youth in Care Networks
- First Nations Health Authority
- First United Church
- Fostering Early Development Program
- Foundry
- Greater Vancouver Food Bank
- Healthiest Babies (Coastal Health)
- Helping Spirit Lodge Society
- Hollyburn Family Services
- Indigenous Perspectives Society
- Indigenous Research Partnerships with the Faculty of Land and Food Systems
- Indigenous Services Canada
- John Howard Society of North Island
- Kettle Society
- Kids Up Front - Vancouver Chapter
- Kílala Lelum Health and Wellness Cooperative
- Kiwassa Neighbourhood House
- Legal Services Society
- Lu'ma Native Housing Society
- Metro Vancouver Aboriginal Executive Council
- Metro Vancouver Indigenous Services Society
- Milieu Children and Family Services
- Ministry of Children & Family Development
- MOSAIC
- Native Courtworker and Counselling Association of British Columbia
- Naturfect Natural Solutions Inc
- Nicola Valley Institute of Technology
- North Shore Disability Resource Centre
- PACE Society
- Pacific Association of First Nations Women
- Pacific Legal Education Association (PLEA)
- Quest Food Exchange
- Raven Song Community Health Centre
- RayCam Co-operative Centre
- REACH Community Health Centre
- Recovery Café
- Representative for Children & Youth
- Safe Babies Program
- Sanctuary Stabilization Program
- Sheway
- Sorella Housing for Women (a program of Atira Women's Resource Society)
- St. Leonard's Society
- St. Paul's Hospital - Providence Health Care
- Stone House Child & Youth Services
- Strive Living Society
- Sunny Hill Health Centre for Children
- The PACE Program
- The Treehouse
- UBC Indigenous Legal Clinic
- Union Gospel Mission
- University of British Columbia School of Social Work
- Urban Native Youth Association
- Vancouver Aboriginal Friendship Centre Society
- Vancouver Aboriginal Health Society
- Vancouver Coastal Health / Mental Health Services
- Vancouver Resources Society
- Warriors Against Violence Society
- Watari Counselling & Support Services
- Westcoast Family Centres Society
- WJS | Shortstop Youth Resources
- All Indigenous Child and Family Services Agencies
- Our Children Our Way Secretariat

# ORGANIZATIONAL CHART



VACFSS Organization Chart - Authorized Positions	
FTE	TITLE
21.8	Executive/Infrastructure
72.5	Child Safety
20.5	Family Preservation
23.3	Resource
32.4	Guardianship
170.5	FTE Total 01 April 2025







# CONTACT INFORMATION

## HEAD OFFICE | INFRASTRUCTURE | FAMILY PRESERVATION AND REUNIFICATION SERVICES

745 Clark Drive, Vancouver, BC V5L 3J3  
Phone: 604-872-6723 Fax: 604-872-6768

## GUARDIANSHIP | RESOURCES

3284 E. Broadway, Vancouver, BC V5M 1Z8  
Phone: 604-216-6150 | Fax: (G.) 604-215-0273 |  
(R.) 604-215-0176

## CHILD & FAMILY SERVICES | COLLABORATIVE PRACTICE

2020 Yukon Street, Vancouver, BC V5Y 3N8  
Phone: 778-331-4500 | Fax: 778-331-4515

Toll Free: 1-877-982-2377  
CP Toll Free: 1-877-331-4505  
AFTER HOURS: 604-660-4927  
E-mail: [info@vacfss.com](mailto:info@vacfss.com)  
Web: [www.vacfss.com](http://www.vacfss.com)

DESIGNED AND EDITED BY:  
Tatiana Rasco and Michelle Houle

