



Immigrant Centre



MISSION

Helping newcomers succeed through personalized settlement plans and community partnerships.

VISION

Changing lives for the better, one newcomer at a time.

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STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY BY HELPING NEWCOMERS SUCCEED

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR OF THE BOARD, MARJ WIEBE, AND CEO, JORGE FERNANDEZ



MARJ WIEBE
CHAIR OF THE BOARD

Mother Teresa famously said, “You can do what I cannot do. I can do what you cannot do. Together we can do great things.” It is exactly this spirit of cooperation and teamwork that consistently helps the Immigrant Centre accomplish our vision of **“Changing lives for the better, one newcomer at a time.”**

Our CEO, management team and staff are second to none. Their knowledge, experience, passion, and kindness ensure that each newcomer who walks through the door is set up for success. Every day, thanks to these amazing people, the Centre delivers on its mission of **“helping newcomers succeed, through personalized settlement plans and community partnerships.”** Those partnerships, to date with over 70 community organizations, are integral to our goal, ensuring that clients can be directed to places and people that will help with their specific needs.

As a Board, what we can contribute is to do the work of good governance; to provide the framework for effective and sustainable operations. We’ve done that this year by confirming our strategic priorities, providing ongoing financial oversight, updating policy and procedures

documents, formalizing a risk management policy, and revisiting a succession planning process. I have been privileged to serve as Chair of a diligent, insightful, and responsibility-focused Board and am grateful for each person who has volunteered their time and wisdom to this task.

In addition to the Board, we have over 200 volunteers who contributed more than 45,000 hours to the work of the Immigrant Centre in the past year. I could not do what they do – supporting English learners, assisting in nutrition and cooking classes, providing translations, and helping to come alongside clients and staff in many other practical ways. We are beyond grateful for them all.

Finally, we all cannot do what you can do. To those outside the organization who are reading this Annual Report, we would be ineffective without you. We require funds, support, community, and interest; so in whatever capacity you find yourself reading these pages, we thank you. We are so appreciative that we have loyal funders, sponsors, donors and supporters. Thank-you for doing what you do, so that we can do what we do. By helping newcomers succeed, we all succeed.

Together, we are doing great things.



JORGE FERNANDEZ
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

It is with great pride that I present the Immigrant Centre’s Annual Report for 2024. As we reflect on this past year, we are reminded of the extraordinary resilience of immigrants and the profound impact our work continues to have in supporting their journeys.

Despite the complexities of Canada’s immigration system and an ever-evolving social and political landscape, our unwavering commitment to empowering newcomers has never been stronger. In 2024, we were proud to support over 20,000 individuals as they built new lives in our community. Through comprehensive settlement services, employment support, language programs, and community integration initiatives, our dedicated staff ensured that every person received the guidance and resources they needed to succeed.

This milestone represents more than a number—it embodies thousands of stories of perseverance, hope, and new beginnings. We are deeply honoured to stand alongside each newcomer who has placed their trust in us.

Throughout the year, we also made significant progress in advocating for the rights of immigrants, expanding access to essential services, and fostering an inclusive and welcoming environment. These efforts reflect our core belief: that every newcomer deserves the opportunity to thrive.

Our achievements would not be possible without the steadfast dedication of our staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, partners, and the generosity of our funders and donors. We are profoundly grateful to each of you for helping us make a lasting impact.

As we look ahead to 2025, we remain committed to advancing our mission and rising to the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead. With your continued support, we will keep building a stronger, more inclusive future for immigrants and their families.

Thank you for being an essential part of this journey.

Sincerely,

Jorge Fernandez
Chief Executive Officer
Immigrant Centre Manitoba Inc.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Executive

Marj Wiebe
CHAIR

Holly Toupin
PAST-CHAIR

Lori Wilkinson
VICE-CHAIR

Gil Garcia
CO-VICE-CHAIR

Yemi Olaleye
TREASURER

Kim Stephens
SECRETARY

Directors

Anastasia Baynova
Daniel Hildebrand
Kerry Swan
Jolomi James

James E. McLandress
Edmund Opoku-Agyeman
Dr. Ray Silvius



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



ADMINISTRATION TEAM

OUR TEAM

EXECUTIVE & ADMINISTRATIVE TEAM

Jorge Fernandez
Anthony Redekopp
Roselyn Advincula
Mike Ficzero
Maria Eugenia Silva
Lori Quiring

MANAGEMENT TEAM

Briana Henry
Walter Luzzi
Poznma Maan
Amie Membreno
Rosa Maria Menjivar
Ann Mohammed

TEAM MEMBERS

Olena Adamenko
Michaellet Adhana
Hamda Ahmed
Tavga Ahmed
Manami Alexander
Rem Badir
Olha Beno
Lola Blazevic
Oksana Bratasyuk
Oksana Chechet
Karina Denysyuk
Olivia Dolinsky
Arija Duke
Lorena Elder
Teresa Espinosa
Filmon Fitwi

Zecarias Gebregziabher
Hidru Hagos
Nataliia Hulimova
Oksana Khudyntsia
Margaret Ko
Gennica Luce
Arshad Nasari
Mirwais Nasiri
Shivani Neeranjana
Claudia Orellana
Tetiana Orlenko
Petro Panin
Yuliiia Panina
Milena Pantou
Sandra Liliana
Perdomo
Damaris Ramirez

Olga Safroshkina
Aditi Sarker
Yevgeniya Severenchuk
Alona Stefanos
Vance Taylor
Sofia Tedros Hagos
Woldetsione
Hanna Tokar
Shanshan Wang
Amy Wang
Omran Zahrab
Dariia Zaitova
Anastasiya Zulyey
Narges
Saadatianderakshandeh

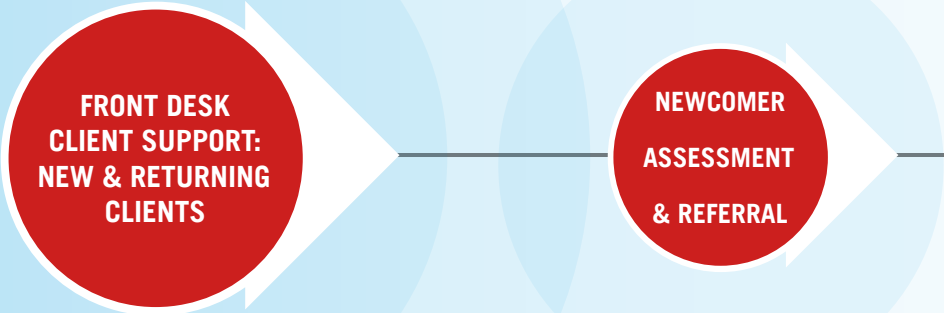
WELLNESS DAY



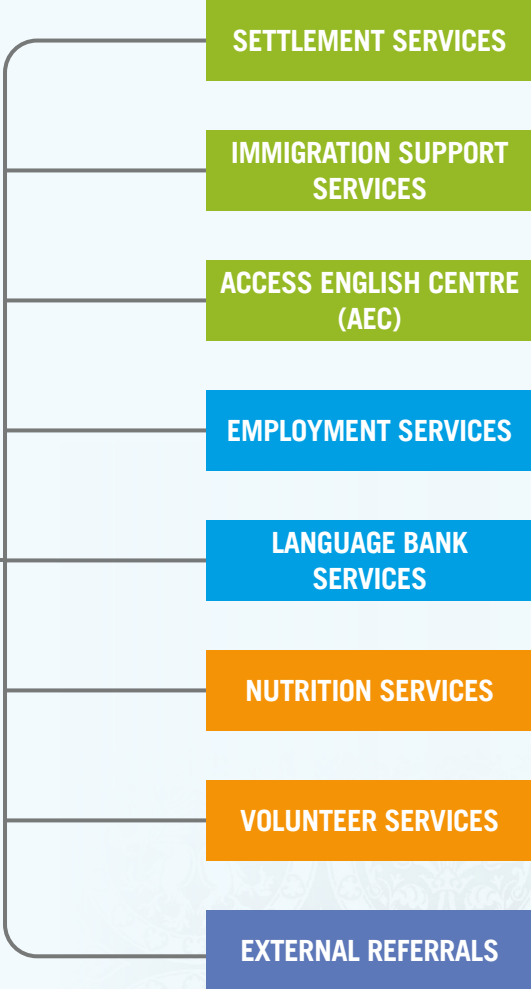
FLOW CHART: THE CLIENT JOURNEY

Upon registration, each client undergoes a comprehensive needs assessment, allowing us to develop a personalized settlement plan and referral pathway that aligns with their unique circumstances. Today, newcomers can begin this process either by registering online through the Immigrant Centre’s website or by visiting our Front Desk in person.

The preceding year presented formidable challenges, yet it also brought about remarkable achievements as our client numbers exceeded all projections. Despite these trials, our commitment to supporting newcomers on their settlement journey remains steadfast and anchored in compassion, professionalism, and a deep understanding of the diverse needs of those we serve.



We invite you to explore the following pages for a detailed overview of our services. They reflect our unwavering commitment to enhancing lives—one newcomer at a time. As our clients work to establish themselves in Manitoba, we remain dedicated to providing personalized settlement support and well-informed partnership referrals tailored to their unique needs.



LANGUAGE BANK SERVICES



LANGUAGE BANK

In the 2024/2025 fiscal year, the Language Bank continued to provide critical language support services to newcomers and community members across Manitoba. A total of 11,465 services were completed, comprising 10,057 translation and Notary Public services and 1,408 interpreter assignments.

The Language Bank facilitated services in 120 different languages,

underscoring the continued linguistic diversity of the clients served. Frequently requested languages included Ukrainian, Russian, Spanish, Czech, Dari, Persian, Polish, Chinese, and Arabic—reflecting the dynamic cultural makeup of our community.

This achievement was made possible through the dedication of 300 volunteer interpreters and translators, as well as the commitment and expertise of the Language Bank manager and staff, whose efforts ensured efficient, accurate, and compassionate service delivery throughout the year. Additionally, the Language Bank processed 28,700 documents, meeting legal, personal, and settlement-related needs with precision and care.

The Language Bank extends its sincere gratitude to all its volunteers, staff, and community partners. As the demand for language services continues to grow, we remain steadfast in our mission to provide accessible, culturally responsive support to all who seek our services.

Language Bank Highlights	2024/2025
Number of Languages Provided:	120
Number of Volunteers Interpreter/Translators:	300
Completed Number of Documents	28,700
Clients	
Completed Translation/Notary Public Services:	10,057
Completed Interpreter Services:	1,408
Total Services Provided:	11,465

SETTLEMENT SERVICES REPORT

In the 2024–2025 fiscal year, the Settlement Services team delivered exceptional support to newcomers, exceeding service delivery targets by significant margins. This translated into direct assistance for over 10,500 new individual clients and the facilitation of more than 19,500 services across all areas of support.

Our dedicated settlement facilitators and Front Desk team played an essential role in ensuring accessible, high-quality service delivery. The facilitators' unwavering commitment was evident in their one-on-one client meetings, group sessions, and pursuit of professional development through training on best delivery practices and Indigenous engagement to support reconciliation. Meanwhile, the Front Desk team, often the first point of contact for newcomers, demonstrated professionalism, cultural sensitivity, and efficiency in managing high volumes of inquiries and appointments.

In response to the evolving needs of the newcomer community, Settlement Services expanded its programming by offering a series of weekly webinars and introducing new in-person information sessions on key settlement topics, based on participant feedback and facilitator insights.

Through strong partnerships with community organizations—including Winnipeg Police Services, Canada Revenue Agency, Service Canada, SEED Winnipeg, Winnipeg School Division, Seven Oaks Immigrant Services, RETIS, RBC, MPI, and New Journey Housing—Settlement Services hosted 70 workshops and webinars, directly benefiting 2,500 clients.

Our ongoing collaboration with Immigrant Women's Counselling Services enabled the continued delivery of on-site, walk-in counselling every Monday morning, alongside specialized programming such as the Women's Wellness Session, which integrates arts and crafts to support emotional well-being.

Thanks to the generous support of The Winnipeg Foundation, we also had the opportunity to offer a series of wellness activities for both clients and staff. These included art and craft sessions, jewelry making, and painting workshops, led by local artists. These sessions not only promoted creative expression but also contributed meaningfully to the mental health and community connection of participants.

Settlement Services staff also took part in over 20 community events, setting up outreach booths and providing on-site information and referrals. This active engagement strengthened awareness of the Immigrant Centre's programs and positioned our team as a visible and reliable support system for newcomers. Additionally, the department was invited by various organizations to collaborate in delivering presentations and co-hosting workshops across the city.

The accomplishments of this fiscal year reflect the dedication, adaptability, and compassion of the Settlement Services team, who continue to play a pivotal role in helping newcomers thrive in their new home.



SETTLEMENT SERVICES

"When I arrived in Winnipeg, I didn't know where to start. The Immigrant Centre helped me every step of the way—from understanding important documents to connecting me with services and programs that made me feel at home. Thanks to their support, I now feel confident, informed, and hopeful about my future in Canada."
 — Nadia, newcomer from Syria

IMMIGRATION SUPPORT SERVICES



The 2024–2025 fiscal year was marked by both profound challenges and meaningful breakthroughs in the settlement sector. At the Immigrant Centre, we witnessed a sharp rise in the number of individuals seeking our support—many arriving from regions affected by conflict, displacement, and climate instability. Clients came from Ukraine, Syria, Afghanistan, and across the African continent, as well as from other global regions. In addition to those fleeing hardship, we also served a growing number of international students, temporary foreign workers, and individuals with precarious or transitioning immigration statuses.

Despite the complex and often overwhelming demands, our team

remained unwavering in its commitment to ensuring every newcomer felt welcomed, informed, and supported. From the guidance of our Board of Directors to the steadfast leadership of our CEO, and the tireless efforts of frontline staff, this year's work was a true reflection of collective resilience and compassion.

At the heart of our programming were our two dedicated facilitators, who played an indispensable role in supporting clients through information sessions and one-on-one guidance. Their work extended beyond sharing facts—they offered a safe space, practical strategies, and vital emotional encouragement to clients navigating life in a new country.

Many clients shared that the personal sessions with our facilitators were life-changing, helping them not only understand complex immigration pathways but also cope with the emotional toll of uncertainty. One such client, a temporary resident who recently became a permanent resident, expressed:

“Before coming to the Immigrant Centre, I felt completely lost. I didn't know if I had a future in Canada. But one of the facilitators took the time to walk me through everything—from paperwork to what each option meant for my life. More than that, they listened to me. They reminded me I was not alone. Thanks to their help, I am now a permanent resident, and I finally feel at peace.”
— Luis, newcomer from Colombia

We are deeply grateful to our funders and donors, whose continued generosity made it possible for us to respond swiftly and effectively to this year's growing needs. Without their support, key programs would have been at risk, directly affecting newcomers during some of the most vulnerable moments of their lives.

Highlights

In 2024–2025, our facilitators led 45 information sessions, reaching over 500 clients with clear, empowering, and compassionate settlement guidance.

ACCESS ENGLISH CENTRE

The Access English Centre (AEC), now celebrating 15 years of service in the province, has kept its main purpose, which is to provide the best-possible service to students to successfully settle in Manitoba. Throughout this time as a service provider, the Access English Centre remains unique in the field as it accepts newcomers from all spectrum of immigration status. For that to be accomplished, this can be possible through our all-inclusive service (IRCC and United Way Winnipeg), allowing newcomers holding any status to attend our classes: permanent residents, work permits, study permits, visitors, and even new Canadian citizens. In other words, we welcome all newcomers without the restrictions found in other learning centres.



Despite the unprecedented influx of immigrants facing displacement from their homeland, the Access English Centre managed to keep its services uninterrupted, assisting newcomers in improving their English language skills. Our Conversation Group sessions, always facilitated by trained volunteer teachers, continued throughout the year with in-person and online platforms to accommodate as many students as possible during such challenging times.

“The AEC is a place where there are lots of opportunities for people to connect and grow. Participants in the conversation circles (in person and online) can make connections with other participants. They can celebrate the steps they have taken to settling into life here in Winnipeg, encourage each other, and practice English together. I think this helps a lot during a challenging time. As a volunteer facilitator I connect with the AEC staff. I am grateful every week for their encouragement and assistance. I continue to volunteer because I value the connections that I have made with everybody at the AEC (participants, staff and Walter). My life is better because of all of you.”
Frances B. (AEC Volunteer Teacher)

“AEC provides newcomers with the support and the opportunity to connect with people from different cultures and learn different perspectives; this contributes to building tolerance, stronger, and more cohesive societies. I genuinely believe in AEC as it provides an inclusive environment for newcomers to practice English, the mutual exchange helps to build tolerance and lifelong friendships. I choose to volunteer with immigrants because I believe in the services the AEC provides. I find the work I do at AEC incredibly meaningful, challenging, and enjoyable while it allows me to connect with students from different cultures. On a personal note, Immigrant Centre (previously International Centre) provided my family support during our transition to Winnipeg in 1980. I feel honored for the opportunity to volunteer for AEC. Thank you, Walter, and his dedicated team for all the support throughout the years.”
Ananh K. (AEC Volunteer Teacher).

EMPLOYMENT SERVICES



The demand for employment services in the 2024–2025 fiscal year was unprecedented. For the first two quarters of the year, we had four temporary Ukrainian-speaking Employment Facilitators, which assisted us in keeping waiting periods manageable despite the high demand from Ukrainian CUAET visa holders.

We also saw a large increase in the number of Permanent Residents from the refugee stream, with the largest number of those individuals coming from Eritrea. To meet this demand, we were fortunate to hire two Tigrigna-speaking Employment Facilitators who were able to attend to these clients and expand services, including more job clubs, employer visits, and workshops for these clients.

We also continued to see a large number of asylum seekers (also known as refugee claimants) coming to Manitoba who were dealing with homelessness. To assist these individuals, we joined the MANSO Refugee Claimant Community Table, working in collaboration with organizations such as Homelessness Winnipeg, Main Street Project, Siloam Mission, Mount Carmel Clinic, Salvation Army, MIIC (Welcome Place), Healthy Muslim Families, as well as other SPOs, the Province of Manitoba, and the City of Winnipeg.

After the temporary contract for the four Ukrainian-speaking Employment Facilitators ended in October 2024, we saw a sharp increase in the length of waiting periods for clients on our waiting list. Employment Facilitators continued to serve as many newcomers as possible and balance that with giving each client the time and quality of services that they require to become independent. Our talented and dedicated team demonstrated time and again that they are determined to put our clients' needs first and to ensure that each client is dignified and supported for the best possible outcomes. We are grateful to our team for their dedication, innovation, and devotion to our clients' success.

Highlights

2024/2025

- 2,036 newcomers received employment services
- 368 clients were still active and carried over to the 2024-2025 service year.
- 9,355 Employment services provided:
 - 5,654 job search, interview, Canadian workplace workshops and appointments
 - 680 clients attended 39 Virtual Employer Events/Information Sessions.
 - 1075 clients were directly referred to employers.
 - 389 clients received Food Handler certification training.
 - 134 clients received Emergency First Aid and CPR certification training.
 - 367 clients received Customer Service/ Loss Prevention training.
 - 272 clients received Commercial Cleaning Training .
 - 1,202 clients reported employment in the 2024-2025 service year.

VOLUNTEER SERVICES



Along with recruitment, screening, and volunteer referral and placement, Volunteer Services facilitated the delivery of three much-needed programs during the 2024–2025 fiscal year: the English Language Partner Program, Citizenship Classes, and Driver’s Education Classes. These programs help newcomers develop essential skills, build confidence, and strengthen their connection to life in Canada, facilitating a smoother settlement journey. Most classes were offered both online and in person, supporting clients who faced barriers to in-person participation, such as transportation or childcare.

English Language Partner Program

Fifty-two newcomers were paired with volunteers to practice English and learn about Canadian life, culture, and current events. As their English improves, participants gain confidence in communicating at work, school, and in everyday situations. The program was particularly impactful for Ukrainian CUAET clients, who made up 62% of participants.

Citizenship Classes

Becoming a Canadian citizen is a significant milestone for many newcomers, and the knowledge gained through these classes offers a valuable opportunity to learn about Canada while helping participants feel more informed and connected to their new home. Sixty-two clients attended Citizenship Classes—each participant moving closer to achieving their dream of Canadian citizenship.

Driver’s Education Classes

Eighty newcomers attended classes to prepare for the Class 5 Knowledge Test and to learn the rules for driving safely in Manitoba. For many, a driver’s licence is not just a legal requirement—it means independence, access to employment and education, and greater opportunities for social connection, all of which are important for successful settlement.

A Heartfelt Thank You!

The Immigrant Centre’s service delivery is strengthened by the continued involvement of volunteers. As we wrap up another successful year, we are incredibly proud of our volunteers and deeply grateful for their generosity, compassion, and commitment. Whether offering one-on-one support, leading group sessions, verifying translations, serving on our Board, or providing administrative assistance, our volunteers are an integral part of achieving our vision.

Thank you, volunteers, for helping us change lives for the better, one newcomer at a time.

Highlights

2024/2025

Total clients in Volunteer Services (VS) programs	194
Total volunteers (all departments)	218
Total volunteer hours (all departments)	45,393

Client Feedback

“We are thrilled to share that we successfully passed the Canadian citizenship test on the first attempt! This milestone wouldn’t have been possible without your guidance, encouragement, and the excellent preparation resources you provided. Thank you for the time and effort you dedicated to helping us feel confident and ready for the test.”

NUTRITION SERVICES



NUTRITION SERVICES MANAGER

Food insecurity remains a pressing challenge for newcomers to Canada, compounded by language barriers, unfamiliar ingredients, and rising living costs. At the Immigrant Centre, our Nutrition Services team is dedicated to mitigating these risks by empowering immigrants and refugees with practical skills, nutrition knowledge, and community connections. Through a blend of onsite programs, outreach initiatives, and innovative projects, we support healthier eating habits while fostering social integration.

Recent Initiatives

The Heritage Plates Project

In collaboration with the President's Student Leadership Program, we launched The Heritage Plates Project, a recipe and resource book celebrating the cultural diversity of Winnipeg's newcomers. Community members, clients, and staff generously shared favourite recipes and cultural stories, while students compiled newcomer-tailored resources. We hope this collection serves as both a practical guide and an inspiration for healthy, affordable cooking.

What we do throughout the year:

We deliver Cooking Matters, an eight-week hands-on program for permanent residents that teaches a new recipe and nutrition topic each week; Themed Cooking Workshops, single-session, partnership classes (with Manitoba Egg Farmers, Manitoba Chicken Producers, and Manitoba Turkey Producers) that demonstrate simple, budget-friendly recipes;

and Heritage Plates Community Events, live demonstrations and book launches where participants cook from the Heritage Plates collection and exchange newcomer-focused cooking and settlement tips.

Outreach & Partnerships

Between April 1, 2024, and March 31, 2025, Nutrition Services delivered 112 programs in collaboration with Cairns Children's Centre, Families 4 Communities, Flora House AfterSchool Program, Freedom International School, IRCOM, LEEP, MITT, RRC LINC, René Deleorme Centre/Louis Riel School Division Settlement Program, Victor Mager School/Louis Riel School Division, and YMCA/YWCA of Winnipeg. These sessions ranged from cooking demonstrations and nutrition label workshops to pop-up kitchen tables at community festivals, reaching over 1,500 participants and strengthening ties between newcomers and established residents.

Support & Acknowledgements

We extend heartfelt thanks to **United Way Winnipeg** for their steadfast support over the past years, and to **IRCC** for its new funding of our Nutrition Services beginning this fiscal year. Without their contributions, expanding our programs and addressing food insecurity among newcomers would not have been possible.

"Joining Cooking Matters taught me to prepare wholesome Canadian recipes on a tight budget—like hearty soups and bannock—without sacrificing flavour or nutrition. Now I'm confident feeding my family healthy meals and stretching every dollar."

- Olga, Cooking Matters participant -

CELEBRATING OUR VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers of the Month

APRIL 2024

Narges Saadatianderakshandeh
“My volunteer experience at the IC has been rewarding. The supportive staff offers great resources and training, and I’ve learned a lot from participants and fellow volunteers. Each session brings new challenges, keeping the experience engaging and meaningful.”

MAY 2024

Tracy Howard

JUNE 2024

Maryna Ponomarenko

JULY 2024

Angela Ortiz

AUGUST 2024

Olga Kasyan
“Volunteering at the Immigrant Centre has been rewarding, as helping others and receiving positive feedback motivates me to work harder for the organization.”

SEPTEMBER 2024

Michele Hodge

OCTOBER 2024

Tiffany Rios
“My experience was memorable as I worked with a diverse group of newcomers, teaching cooking skills, learning about nutrition from Poznma, and appreciating the opportunity to be part of such a fulfilling and educational experience.”

NOVEMBER 2024

Polina Prus

DECEMBER 2024

Andrea Coulling

JANUARY 2025

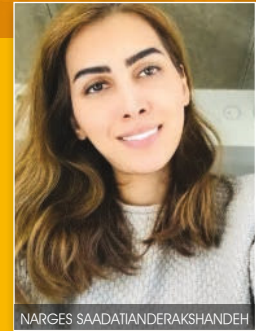
Michele Kading
“I joined the IC after completing the University of Winnipeg’s TESL Certificate Program in 2013, building on my experience as an environmental educator since 1980, and found it fascinating to apply my science teaching skills to teaching English to adults.”

FEBRUARY 2025

Daniel Villalobos

MARCH 2025

Pam Frederick



NARGES SAADATIANDERAKSHANDEH



TRACY HOWARD



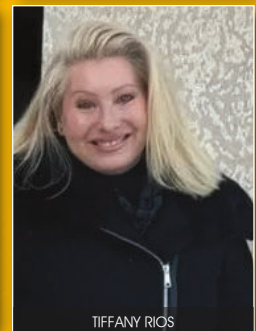
MARYNA PONOMARENKO



OLGA KASYAN



MICHELE HODGE



TIFFANY RIOS



POLINA PRUS



ANDREA COULLING



MICHELE KADING



DANIEL VILLALOBOS

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

IMMIGRANT CENTRE MANITOBA INC. FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025



ACCOUNTING TEAM

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION	2025	2024
ASSETS		
Current assets	625,313	643,409
Capital assets	18,164	28,714
	<u>643,477</u>	<u>672,123</u>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Current liabilities	236,190	330,380
Deferred revenue related to capital assets	16,467	23,663
	<u>252,657</u>	<u>354,043</u>
Net assets		
Internally restricted net assets	390,820	318,080
	<u>390,820</u>	<u>318,080</u>
	<u>643,477</u>	<u>672,123</u>

STATEMENT OF REVENUES AND EXPENDITURES	2025	2024
Operations		
Revenues	3,285,571	3,222,211
Expenses	3,211,186	3,213,691
	<u>74,385</u>	<u>8,520</u>
Other income (expenses)		
Amortization of deferred contributions	12,804	21,172
Interest and miscellaneous	3,232	3,749
Amortization of capital assets	(17,681)	(27,799)
Excess of revenues over expenses	<u>72,740</u>	<u>5,642</u>

AT THE TIME OF PRINTING THIS REPORT, THE ANNUAL AUDIT WAS IN PROGRESS.
A COPY OF THE AUDITED STATEMENT IS AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST.

SUCCESS STORY

Knowledge Is Power, and You Must Honour Yourself: Sandra's Journey



We interviewed Sandra to learn more about her incredible journey. When asked what inspired her to come to Canada, Sandra shared, “Coming to Canada was one of the most courageous decisions of my life. I left my beautiful homeland, Peru, full of expectations and dreams. I wanted to build a better future, but I also carried the pain of leaving my family—the people I love most.” For Sandra, it was a journey driven by hope, but it came with the difficult sacrifice of leaving behind everything familiar.

As part of her preparation, we asked Sandra how she equipped herself for the challenges ahead. She explained, “Before arriving in Manitoba, I found the Immigrant Centre and signed up for English classes and a nutrition program. I wanted to grow, to adapt, and to truly understand the culture of the country I would soon call home.” However, Sandra admitted that the beginning was not easy. “It was far from easy. I heard words like ‘You won’t make it’ and ‘It’s not easy.’ And on top of that, I was facing a painful and abusive relationship.”

When we inquired about the turning point in her story, Sandra highlighted the moment she realized how crucial knowledge was to her well-being. “That’s when I understood the importance of being informed, knowing my rights, and stopping the situation I was in,” she said. This realization led her to meet someone who would change her path—Lorena Elder, a settlement facilitator at the Immigrant Centre. Sandra fondly remembered, “Lorena didn’t just provide me with information; she walked with me through one of the darkest periods of my life. Her kindness and guidance helped me regain my voice.”

As Sandra’s journey unfolded, we asked her what role the Immigrant Centre played in her transformation. She responded with gratitude: “The Immigrant Centre became more than just a place to access services—it became a source of strength. It provided me with the tools and support I needed to move forward, to get a job, and to secure my permanent residency.”

Reflecting on her experience, Sandra shared powerful advice for others facing similar struggles. “Information is power,” she said. “It gave me the strength to fight for my rights and to believe in myself again. Even when I felt lost, I held onto the belief that there is always light at the end of the path.” Her advice to others? “Your voice is your power. Speak with courage, even if your voice shakes.”

Sandra’s journey is ongoing, but she now walks it with resilience and hope. She concluded, “I’m deeply grateful for all the opportunities I’ve been given and for the people who are supporting me. My past has shaped me, but it will not define me. I honour who I am becoming.”





Immigrant Centre

THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS

This organization is funded by the Government of Canada.

Cette organisation est financée par le gouvernement du Canada



Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada

Canada



United Way
Winnipeg

