

2024-2025  
**ANNUAL REPORT**

# Belong & Grow

isans



**Land acknowledgement**

ISANS acknowledges that we are in Mi’kma’ki, the ancestral and unceded past and present territory of the Mi’kmaq people. We are all treaty people.

At ISANS, as we help settle newcomers to Nova Scotia, we also teach them about the history and rights of Indigenous Peoples in Mi’kma’ki. We honour the enduring presence and contributions of the Mi’kmaq people, and we are dedicated to fostering meaningful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities.

**African Nova Scotian Affirmation**

We also acknowledge that people of African descent have been in Nova Scotia for over 400 years, and we honour and offer gratitude to those ancestors of African descent who came before us to this land.

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## Our Mission

Helping immigrants build a future in Nova Scotia

## Our Vision

A community where all can belong and grow

## Our Values

### Collaboration

We demonstrate collaboration by building relationships in which we can share responsibilities and ideas, and work together to enhance opportunities for all.

### Respect

We demonstrate respect by encouraging an environment of fairness, honesty, and integrity for all clients, partners, and colleagues.

### Inclusion

We demonstrate inclusion by welcoming and respecting the diversity in our community and fostering a sense of belonging in all.

### Diversity

We demonstrate diversity by valuing and respecting differences in experiences and perspectives, believing in everyone's ability to enrich Canadian society through their unique contributions.

### Innovation

We demonstrate innovation through service excellence by being creative and flexible, by being responsive to clients and partners, and by continually seeking new opportunities.

### Accountability


We demonstrate accountability by acknowledging responsibility for our services, tools, actions, and decisions by being transparent and principled in our approach to people and situations.

Immigrants





# Message from Board Chair and CEO



“Belonging at ISANS means more than arriving in a new place; it is about feeling truly welcomed, having access to the resources and support needed to succeed, and being empowered to participate fully in community life.”

**Rick Power**  
Chair, Board of Directors

“Our unwavering commitment is to ensure that newcomers are not only welcomed but also empowered with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to grow, pursue their goals, and contribute meaningfully to our province.”

**Paula Knight**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Message from our Board Chair



At ISANS, we believe that the journey of growth begins with a profound sense of belonging. As Chair of the Board, I am honoured to reflect on a year where these values shaped every aspect of our work and impact. In 2024–2025, ISANS supported over 17,500 clients—individuals and families—who are actively shaping Nova Scotia’s future by building lives rooted in purpose, connection, and opportunity.

Belonging at ISANS means more than arriving in a new place; it is about feeling truly welcomed, having access to the resources and support

needed to succeed, and being empowered to participate fully in community life. From the first point of contact through every stage of settlement, ISANS delivers client-centred programs that not only address immediate needs but also foster long-term growth and integration.

Over the past year, we expanded and strengthened our services across all areas—language training, employment support, entrepreneurship, health and wellness, and family, children, and youth programming. We introduced and enhanced initiatives

that empower immigrants to lead with confidence, contribute meaningfully to their communities, and realize the futures they envision for themselves and their families.

This year’s theme—Belong and Grow—has been reflected in every story and every milestone. The ongoing success of the Immigrant Women Entrepreneurship Network, the expansion of sector-specific bridging programs in Healthcare and Construction, and our sustained, culturally informed settlement support are just a few highlights. Our deepened collaboration with employers through work-based competency assessments and targeted training has helped address labour shortages and foster more inclusive workplaces.

The true impact of ISANS’ work is seen in the stories behind the numbers: a family finding safety and hope through the Resettlement Assistance Program, a newcomer entrepreneur opening their first storefront, or a youth discovering their voice through leadership initiatives. ISANS has helped thousands find not just a new home, but a place where they can stay and build a future.

Behind every achievement is a dedicated team of staff, volunteers, partners, and funders whose commitment and compassion are the foundation of ISANS’ success. On behalf of the Board, I extend my heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributes to our vision of a community where all can belong and grow.

The Board of Directors remains steadfast in providing strong governance, thoughtful oversight, and strategic direction. We are proud to champion ISANS’ efforts and to ensure its long-term sustainability and responsiveness in a rapidly evolving world.

Looking ahead, we know that immigration will continue to shape the economic and cultural vitality of Nova Scotia. Inclusion and belonging must remain at the heart of this journey. ISANS is well-positioned to lead this vital work, committed to building a province where newcomers are not only welcomed but celebrated for their talents, contributions, and aspirations.

**Rick Power**  
Chair, Board of Directors

ISANS



# Message from our CEO



As I reflect on my first year as CEO of ISANS, I am filled with immense pride and gratitude for the remarkable community we serve and the dedicated team I have the privilege to lead. Every day, I am inspired by the strength, determination, and diversity of the individuals and families who come to ISANS with hopes, dreams, and the courage to build new lives in Nova Scotia.

This year’s theme, *Belong and Grow*, truly captures the essence of our mission. At ISANS, we know that genuine growth is only possible when people feel a deep sense of belonging. Our unwavering commitment is to ensure that newcomers are not only welcomed but also empowered with the tools, resources, and opportunities they need to grow, pursue their goals, and contribute meaningfully to our province.

ISANS assisted more than 17,500 clients from over 180 countries in the last fiscal year, including settlement support, language training, employment, business development, and community integration services. Our impact goes beyond numbers, resonating through the stories of clients and families who have found safety, opportunity, and a sense of belonging here.

A major milestone this year was the launch of our innovative Youth and Family Centre—a welcoming hub designed in partnership with newcomer youth and families to provide tailored programs, support, and a sense of home. This centre offers educational, career, and social programming, helping youth explore their identities, build skills, and gain confidence, while supporting parents and children with family-based services.

Our work with refugees, families, children, and youth remains at the core of our approach. Specialized programs address the unique needs of each group, from trauma-informed care and crisis support to community integration and leadership development. We ensure that newcomers and refugees—regardless of age or background—can communicate, connect, and participate fully in their new community.

Meaningful inclusion does not happen by chance; it requires intention and ongoing effort. Through equity, diversity, and inclusion-focused programming, staff development, and strong community partnerships, we are building an organization where everyone feels respected, valued, and empowered to grow. Our commitment to equity is woven into every aspect of our work, from program design to service delivery.

We have responded to evolving community needs with innovative programs for Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals, Early Childhood Educators, and Skilled Tradespersons, creating equitable pathways for immigrants to use their talents and experience to benefit all Nova Scotians. Our Business and Workforce Integration team has made significant strides in supporting immigrant entrepreneurs, connecting newcomers with employers, and helping organizations foster more inclusive workplaces. Programs like the Immigrant Women Entrepreneurship Network showcase the leadership and innovation within our community.

Collaboration is at the heart of everything we do. By partnering with community organizations, educational institutions, employers, government, and volunteers, we amplify our impact and provide wraparound support that meets newcomers where they are. Our language and settlement teams deliver foundational, person-centred services, ensuring every client feels seen, supported, and connected.

This year, we renewed our focus on digital accessibility and innovation, piloting hybrid service models and developing interactive resources to better serve clients in rural and remote communities. These efforts will guide our future service delivery, ensuring flexibility and responsiveness for the diverse communities we serve.

None of this would be possible without our exceptional staff and volunteers, whose dedication and compassion are the heart of ISANS. I am deeply grateful for their commitment to the success of our clients and excellence in service delivery.

To our clients: thank you for trusting us with your hopes and dreams. Your stories inspire us and shape the future of Nova Scotia. To our funders, supporters, and partners: thank you for believing in our mission and investing in this essential work.

As we celebrate 45 years of service in December, ISANS remains dedicated to supporting immigrant settlement and integration across Nova Scotia. Our mission is clear: to help immigrants build a future here—a mission that strengthens not just individuals, but entire communities.

Together, we are building a stronger Nova Scotia—one that celebrates diversity, champions inclusion, and creates opportunities for all to belong and grow.

**Paula Knight**  
Chief Executive Officer





# Our Impact

Our comprehensive range of services includes language services, settlement support for families and children, employment programs, business development, community integration, and pre-arrival services, offered both in person and online. Our dedicated and caring team offers services in English, French, and more than 24 other languages, ensuring accessibility and support for all.





# Get Settled: Belonging for newcomers and refugees



ISANS provides a comprehensive range of personalized Family and Children Specialized Settlement services aimed at helping newcomers transition smoothly into life in Nova Scotia, so they feel included within their communities. The Refugee Resettlement team plays a crucial role in welcoming and supporting government-assisted refugees, guiding them through every stage of integration. All these teams use a holistic approach providing information, advocacy, and solution-focused support tailored to each family’s unique needs, including in-depth settlement needs assessments, customized case management, and ongoing referrals to both internal and external resources.

Many refugees who are supported by ISANS overcome significant barriers and often become active leaders and volunteers, demonstrating resilience and a commitment to giving back to their communities. The story of Marisa Carolina Enriquez Ramos and her family, who fled Guatemala while navigating a hearing impairment, highlights the impact of these services. Facing communication barriers and limited access to tailored supports, Marisa and her family engaged with ISANS’ Refugee Resettlement programs, as well as literacy and health navigation services. Through these programs, among others like the Private Refugee Sponsorship, newcomers overcame obstacles and built a strong sense of inclusion, belonging, and unity within their new community.

Programs like Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) play a key role in supporting families by equipping children for school and empowering parents in their

educational roles, fostering both personal growth and community cohesion. Since 2024, HIPPY has supported Marisa and her daughter Alexa, addressing challenges related to Spanish and ASL communication and ensuring effective school readiness. Regular home visits and group meetings provided Marisa with resources and encouragement, helping her grow in confidence as her child’s first teacher. Over the past year, Marisa participated in 23 home visits, attended nine parent group meetings, and read seven HIPPY books with Alexa, emerging as a strong, resilient, and ambitious individual.

During initial intake, Marisa expressed her concern about finding a school, fostering English language skills, and her ability to teach Alexa, particularly as they were new to Canada and needed time to settle in Nova Scotia. The Home Visitor’s regular check-ins provided vital support and resources, which facilitated Marisa’s significant growth in confidence as her child’s first teacher.

By fostering a sense of belonging and providing opportunities for growth, ISANS creates a supportive environment where newcomers are empowered to actively contribute to Nova Scotia’s future. The unique talents and experiences of newcomers enrich the province’s cultural and economic life, strengthening communities and building a more vibrant, inclusive society for all.

### HIPPY Program

**43** parents (42 moms and one dad) and **46** children were supported through the HIPPY Program

**652** hours supporting parents doing HIPPY curriculum with their children

HIPPY parents come from **16** countries and speak over 15 languages

### Resettlement Assistance Program

**583** government-assisted refugees arrived in Halifax in 2024

**169** Permanent accommodation units were secured

**1,716** government-assisted refugees received settlement services

**1,373** government-assisted refugees and 159 privately sponsored refugees were supported in their first year

**50** applications were submitted to sponsor 124 privately sponsored refugees





### **Marisa Carolina Enriquez Ramos's: A journey of hope and healing**

**"I feel safe here. I am happy with my family. I like winter, and I enjoy snow. I go on walks with my daughters. It makes me happy to see them smiling. I know life is not easy for refugees, but I see hope here and positivity around me. I am happy that I found ISANS; otherwise, we might have felt lost."**

**[Read full story](#)**





# Learn English: The key to belonging



Our comprehensive language services are designed to help newcomers build the English skills they need for a successful and confident settlement in Nova Scotia. Our programs begin with a personalized language assessment to identify each learner’s unique needs, skills, and goals. This individualized approach ensures that every newcomer receives tailored instruction, whether through foundational literacy classes, English for everyday living, or advanced courses for work and business. This individualized approach allows newcomers to progress at their own pace and according to their aspirations, supporting both their personal and professional growth.

Through interactive classes, conversation groups, and specialized programs like Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC), ISANS supports learners in developing practical communication skills for daily life, citizenship, and employment. The LINC program equips newcomers with essential language abilities and cultural understanding, empowering them to navigate Canadian society and become active participants in their communities.

The impact of these services is reflected in stories like that of Dmytro Kantsurov, who, with the support of ISANS’ high-quality teaching materials and guidance, was able to confidently manage complex tasks such as navigating the banking system, an experience that might have been overwhelming without strong English skills. Dmytro’s journey demonstrates how language learning at ISANS goes beyond the classroom, providing the tools and confidence needed for real-life success.

Beyond classroom instruction, ISANS offers conversation circles, language counselling, and accessibility support, creating a comprehensive environment for language acquisition and integration. This holistic approach not only improves language proficiency but also empowers newcomers to participate fully in their communities, pursue employment, and build meaningful connections in Nova Scotia, increasing their sense of belonging.

By focusing on each individual’s circumstances and ambitions, ISANS’ language programs not only improve language proficiency but also foster confidence and independence. This inclusive approach helps newcomers settle in while enriching Nova Scotia’s communities through diversity, cultural exchange, and collaboration, ultimately strengthening the province’s social fabric.

- 2,842** clients attended CLB 1-7 class
- 14** continuous classes, **463** clients attended CLB 3 classes
- 202** Young Adult clients in summer 2024, **206** clients outside of the summer
- 50** applications were submitted to sponsor **124** privately sponsored refugees





### **Dmytro's success: Learning, adapting, growing**

**“I wanted to improve my English skills. Many years ago, I learned English at school, but over time, I had forgotten much of the grammar and had not built a strong vocabulary.”**

**[Read full story](#)**



Sans



# Connect with Community: Fostering belonging and connection



The Community Integration Services (CIS) at ISANS plays a vital role in supporting newcomers as they settle into life in Nova Scotia. Through a diverse volunteering program, CIS pairs volunteers with immigrants to foster meaningful relationships that help newcomers adapt to their new community. To address the various challenges immigrants face, ISANS offers a range of volunteer support initiatives such as Canada Connects, language tutoring, and mentorship programs. These last ones are supported by the CIS team and housed with the Business Workforce Integration team. These initiatives are designed to enhance the integration experience and nurture a strong sense of belonging among newcomers.

Volunteers are essential to ISANS, contributing significantly to the successful settlement and comfort of immigrants in the province. One standout program, Canada Connects, matches newcomers with local volunteers who provide personalized guidance and support. For example, Osman Mohamed, paired with volunteer Miles Leznoff, received invaluable assistance in understanding Canadian work culture and social dynamics. Similarly,

newcomers Hakimeh, Zeynab and Zahra Alizada, matched with volunteer Ewa Adedeji, participated in activities around Halifax, including visits to the Museum of Natural History and ice skating at the Emera Oval. These experiences helped them feel welcomed and fostered a sense of community connection.

The volunteer experience at ISANS is rewarding for all involved, creating a supportive environment that benefits both newcomers and volunteers. Patty Russell, whose parents were immigrants, finds deep personal value in helping newcomers on their settlement journeys. Volunteer Shynn De Juan has not only formed meaningful friendships but also gained valuable career skills through her involvement. Meanwhile, Nangialai Ibrahim discovered a strong sense of purpose tutoring newcomers in English, witnessing significant improvements in his students' confidence and language abilities. These stories highlight the powerful and lasting connections formed through the program.

ISANS' mentorship initiatives have also proven highly effective. For instance, Parnian Hajimomenian, who once received support from ISANS, now mentors other immigrant professionals, assisting them in navigating their career paths and fostering a sense of belonging in Nova Scotia. Through these volunteer programs, ISANS cultivates an inclusive environment where volunteers and newcomers learn from one another, grow together, and ultimately build a strong, welcoming community for all.

**400+** active volunteers

**600+** newcomers supported through volunteer-led initiatives

**4,000+** volunteer hours contributed

**200+** newcomers placed in volunteer roles, increasing their community involvement and employment readiness





## Osman Mohamed feels home again: Connections to rebuild his life in Nova Scotia

“Coming to a new country as a refugee is not easy, everything is unfamiliar, and it’s easy to feel lost. But organizations like ISANS don’t just provide service, they give people hope. Hope that things will get better. Hope that we can build a new life, find meaningful work, and feel at home again.”

[Read full story](#)



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# Find Employment: Building careers and strengthening workforce



ISANS employment services are vital in supporting newcomers’ growth and success in the Canadian workforce. Through personalized career counselling, job-readiness workshops, and networking opportunities, ISANS helps immigrants reach their professional goals and make meaningful contributions to Nova Scotia’s economy.

One of the standout programs, the Work-based Trades Practical Assessment (WTPA), offers a comprehensive pathway for tradespeople. Participants undergo a complete skills assessment, receive certified safety training, including First Aid/CPR, Workplace Hazardous Materials Information System (WHMIS), and fire safety, and complete a paid 12-week on-the-job practical assessment with Nova Scotian employers. This hands-on experience allows clients to demonstrate their competencies, identify skill gaps, and gain valuable exposure to Canadian trade practices.

Throughout the process, participants benefit from structured study groups, access to a trades question bank, and English in the workplace support, helping them start or advance their apprenticeship journey. In August 2024, with the support of the WTPA coordinator, David Asare secured a trade placement as a level 1 apprentice automotive service technician at Coffill’s Auto Repair in Canning, Nova Scotia. He is now preparing to take the level 1 exam, marking a significant milestone in his professional development.

ISANS also supports internationally educated professionals through programs like the Internationally Educated Nurses (IEN) Orientation Program. This initiative provides mentorship,

training, and guidance to help internationally educated nurses navigate the licensing process while offering valuable networking opportunities and career advice.

Elizabeth Obeng Nkrumah, a registered nurse with Nova Scotia Health, is a shining example of the program’s impact. With the support of the IEN program, Elizabeth successfully integrated into Nova Scotia’s healthcare system, where she now contributes to healthcare delivery and community support. Beyond her clinical role, she actively mentors other internationally educated nurses and advocates for culturally responsive healthcare. She helps her peers overcome the challenges of integrating into the Canadian healthcare system, fostering a more inclusive and supportive environment.

Nova Scotia Health, as the province’s primary health authority, provides comprehensive health services across hospitals, health centres, and community programs, supported by a dedicated team of healthcare professionals, researchers, learners, and volunteers. The integration of internationally educated professionals like Elizabeth strengthens the healthcare system and enriches the communities they serve.

In 2024, ISANS’s employment and bridging programs successfully connected over a thousand newcomers with potential employers in Nova Scotia, including 133 refugees and 165 Ukrainian nationals. Remarkably, 70% of employed clients secured jobs in their field or a related area, demonstrating newcomers’ positive growth and integration as they work toward achieving their dreams and building new lives in Nova Scotia.

- 164** Clients hired by employers after completing WTPA placements
- 152** Clients registered as apprentices with the Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency (NSAA)
- 82** Clients progressing towards technical exams or participating in the trade qualifier process
- 11** Clients successfully completed exams and received Red Seal certifications
- 68+** Employers supported WTPA participants
- 150+** clients gained employment in the construction field





### David Asare's success as automotive service technician in Canning

“The WTPA program helped me start my career as a mechanic in Nova Scotia, where I could apply the skills and experience I earned back home. ISANS supported me every step of the way, from connecting me with an employer to providing safety shoes, tools, and everything I needed to begin working. I am deeply grateful for the support that helped me settle in and provide for my family.”

[Read full story](#)

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“Dexter Construction Company and the Municipal Group of Companies work with ISANS to continue to build the capacity necessary in supporting immigrants and refugees through our partnership. Since 2011, Dexter Construction Company has hired over 100 clients from ISANS, and through programs such as Bridge to Construction and Engineers, through work-based competency programs. Dexter Construction has come to rely on ISANS to provide labour-ready individuals to join the construction sector during a period of acute labour shortages and an aging demographic across the industry. We look forward to working further to expand these programs and hire more clients for ISANS.”

**Ryan Kidney**  
Director of Human Resources,  
Dexter Construction Company



“Nova Scotia Health is honored to collaborate with ISANS in support of the One Person, One Record initiative, the largest healthcare transformation in Nova Scotia’s history. Through this partnership, we are committed to facilitating the integration of internationally educated healthcare & IT professionals into the workforce, ensuring they contribute their expertise to enhance patient care and improve the healthcare system. This alignment with the province’s health transformation efforts is a key step toward building a more inclusive, efficient, and sustainable healthcare sector. Thank you ISANS!”

**Jenn Williams**  
Recruitment Consultant,  
Provincial Planning at Nova Scotia Health



“ISANS has been instrumental in providing support to our employees for the past several years. It has been a good resource for anyone who is starting a new life in Canada. They are continuously evolving, especially with the current changes in immigration and they offer support to people even before they arrive in the country. Collaborating with them is a rewarding experience. Their commitment and passion to work truly shows in how they deal with everyone --- their employees, clients and partners.”

**Ron Garcia**  
International Recruitment Manager,  
Shannex







## Empowering change: Elizabeth's journey to healthcare leadership in NS

“ISANS truly helped me navigate my path to licensing. The program was incredibly accommodating, offering support at every turn. That level of support truly makes a difference. It's not an easy road to get your license, but it is achievable. I have done it, and many others have too. Don't give up. There are countless opportunities, and once you earn your license, the rewards are well worth the effort.”

[Read full story](#)



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# Do Business: Empower, connect, grow



Many immigrants arrive in Nova Scotia with the ambition to launch a new business, revive a previous venture, or bring a bold vision to life. ISANS’ business development services are designed to support immigrant entrepreneurs at every stage of their journey, helping them achieve their goals and drive economic growth in the province.

Our dedicated team of business professionals provides tailored mentorship, practical workshops, and dynamic networking opportunities, empowering newcomers to transform innovative ideas into successful enterprises. In the past fiscal year, ISANS delivered over 1,370 one-on-one counselling sessions on essential topics such as financial planning, marketing strategies, and legal requirements, ensuring entrepreneurs have the knowledge and confidence to succeed. Our ongoing training and support help clients develop the business skills, resilience, and adaptability needed to grow in Nova Scotia’s diverse marketplace.

Recognizing the diverse backgrounds and experiences of our clients, we prioritize cultural competence and inclusivity in all training and support. Our programs are adaptable and accessible, ensuring every entrepreneur receives guidance that reflects their unique needs. Through platforms like ISANS Business Marketplace, we also connect entrepreneurs to vital resources, mentor-matching, and a growing network of peers and potential customers.

In 2024 and early 2025, ISANS delivered nearly 48 workshops to more than 790 participants, and over 500 business clients attended networking events, building valuable connections within the local business community.

For our clients, belonging in a new environment is crucial, not only for acquiring business skills but also for building meaningful relationships and feeling valued within their community. Through our holistic approach, ISANS helps immigrant entrepreneurs develop the confidence, positive mindset, and support networks needed to overcome challenges and make lasting contributions to Nova Scotia’s economic and social vitality.

30

Women participated in IWEN training

31

Women showcased at markets

1

pitch competition with 9 participants

19

networking events organized by ISANS with 320 participants







### Through the lens of resilience: Neetu Singh's journey as a woman entrepreneur

“What really touches me about ISANS is the genuine care they show in helping newcomers succeed. It's not just about providing resources; it's about truly believing in people and their potential to build new lives here. More than just business training, IWEN has given me meaningful collaborations, deep friendships, and a true sense of belonging in this new chapter of my life.”

[Read full story](#)



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# Diversify the Workforce: Spaces where newcomers belong and grow



In today’s fast-changing job market, building strong, diverse workplaces is more important than ever. At ISANS, we are proud to support employers on their journey to create inclusive environments where newcomers not only contribute but also truly belong and grow.

Our Employer Support Services are designed to help businesses connect with talented newcomers who bring fresh perspectives, innovation, and global experience to the workplace. Whether through customized training, cultural competency workshops, or hands-on recruitment support, we offer flexible solutions that meet the unique needs of each employer and foster a sense of belonging for all employees.

At the heart of these efforts is our Employer Engager, a critical link between businesses and the wide range of programs ISANS offers. Whether in Halifax or rural communities, these experts provide tailored guidance to employers, helping them build teams that reflect and celebrate the diversity of their communities. This includes support with navigating the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) and the Economic Mobility Pathways Pilot (EMPP), especially for high-demand sectors like healthcare and trades.

We recognize that every business is different, so our approach is always customized. Employers can host placements through our Professional Practice Program to address immediate workforce needs, connect newcomers with experienced professionals through our Mentorship Program, use the ISANS SkillsMatch recruitment tool to access a robust talent pool, or participate in Intercultural Workplace Program workshops to strengthen E, D, I, and A (EDIA) strategies.

Employers are essential partners in helping newcomers feel welcomed, supported, and able to reach their full potential. By offering on-the-job competency assessments for sectors like construction, engineering, long-term care, early childhood education, and trades, and by facilitating youth placements supported by wage subsidies, our approach is built on empowering newcomers to gain confidence, build professional networks, and grow in their careers. In turn, businesses benefit from the creativity, resilience, and fresh ideas that newcomers bring, strengthening their teams and their communities.

Over the past year, ISANS expanded our efforts to connect employers with immigrant talent by hosting 13 Online/Onsite Recruitment and Information Sessions (ORIS), bringing together over 400 job-ready clients and a wide range of employers. We also launched our first annual Employer Forum and held targeted focus groups, providing opportunities for employers to share insights, discuss challenges, and exchange strategies for building more inclusive workplaces. These initiatives ensure our programs remain relevant and responsive to the evolving needs of local businesses.

At ISANS, we believe that when employers invest in welcoming and supporting newcomers, they are not just filling positions; they are building vibrant, resilient communities where everyone has the opportunity to belong and grow. With ISANS by their side, Nova Scotia’s employers are leading the way in creating a future where diversity is celebrated and everyone can thrive.

549

employers received employer support, 387 of whom are from rural areas

167

employers engaged in the Atlantic Immigration Program, 41 of whom are from rural areas

403

community connections were facilitated for employers in rural areas

32

employers hosted professional practice placements





## Attract, Retain & Support: ISANS Employer Supports with Clifford MacDonald

“What I found was that having people from diverse backgrounds truly enhanced the dynamic of our team. It opened us up, brought different cultures into play, and enriched everything we did. We weren’t just filling positions—we were gaining new perspectives. Since then, I’ve become a strong immigration champion. For anyone considering hiring from diverse backgrounds, it’s important to think beyond staffing needs and consider how you’ll support and onboard people from different cultures.”

**Stephanie Jones**  
Owner/ Operator at McDonald’s

[Listen full podcast](#)

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# Pre-Arrival and Employment Transition: Helping newcomers belong from day one



At ISANS, we know that the journey toward belonging and growth in Canada starts well before newcomers arrive. Our Pre-Arrival programs are thoughtfully designed to prepare skilled immigrants and their families with the knowledge, skills, and confidence they need to make informed decisions and transition smoothly into their new lives.

Through the Settlement Online Pre-Arrival (SOPA) program—delivered in partnership with six settlement agencies across Canada—we offer personalized, destination-specific support. SOPA provides newcomers with information sessions, orientations, job search training, one-on-one guidance, and practical tools for understanding Canadian workplace culture and regulations. By connecting clients with resources before they arrive, SOPA helps build confidence and lays a strong foundation for successful integration and meaningful employment.

The story of Mickey Flemix and her family exemplifies the transformative power of preparation, support, and a sense of belonging. Before leaving South Africa for Halifax, Mickey’s family accessed ISANS’ pre-arrival settlement services through SOPA, receiving targeted employment support and valuable insights into Canadian workplace norms. With essential information on housing, transportation, schooling, and healthcare, they navigated their transition with confidence and ease, fostering a true sense of belonging and laying the groundwork for growth in their new home. Our Pre-Arrival Settlement Counselling further assists refugees and internationally trained healthcare professionals as they prepare for successful integration into Nova Scotia’s workforce and community.

ISANS also supports newcomers who have already landed in Canada with opportunities to upskill and adapt through programs like Job Search Strategies (JSS), Working in Canada (WIC), and Canadian Workplace Integration (CWI). These initiatives educate participants about workplace rights, culture, safety, and standards, enhancing their job search, performance, and long-term career growth.

Recognizing that digital skills are essential for full participation in Canadian society, our computer skills training program offers comprehensive technology courses for newcomers at all levels. With flexible scheduling and both in-person and online options, we help newcomers build digital confidence for employment, education, and daily life, ensuring they are ready to thrive in every aspect of their new lives.

At ISANS, we are dedicated to ensuring that every newcomer feels welcomed, supported, and empowered to belong and grow from the very first steps of their Canadian journey.

**795** clients upgraded their job search and soft skills to better participate in the Canadian labour market

**408** clients upgraded their computer skills

**15** clients began their foreign credential recognition process pre-arrival

**227** general employment counselling services delivered pre-arrival





## Preparing for new life in NS: The Flemix family's story

“ISANS helped turn our dream into a real, practical plan. They understood what newcomers truly needed and supported us every step of the way. I was able to secure a job the same week I applied, and my son found work just two weeks after arriving. That would not have been possible without the guidance and resources we received... Don't underestimate the power of being prepared. Immigration is more than a dream, it's a journey that requires guidance, support, and knowledge. Without support, we might still be wondering what to do next, but instead, we are building a life here and feeling we belong here.”

[Read full story](#)

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# Empowering Digital Innovation



As technology rapidly evolves, so too does our approach at ISANS, ensuring a connected, inclusive, and successful future for newcomers. Access to technology is vital for immigrants as they establish their lives in Nova Scotia and across Canada. By enhancing digital innovation, we empower newcomers to access job opportunities and essential services and actively participate in their communities, creating pathways where they can truly belong and grow. Employers play a crucial role in this digital journey. By embracing digital tools and inclusive hiring practices, they help newcomers integrate seamlessly into the workforce, build confidence in their digital skills, and contribute meaningfully to their teams. Through collaboration with ISANS, employers support newcomers in developing the competencies needed to succeed in today’s technology-driven workplaces, fostering environments where everyone feels valued and has the opportunity to advance.

Our Digital Transformation and Technology Support (DTTS) team, which includes IT Infrastructure Specialists, Instructional Designers, Learning Management System Administrators, Curriculum Developers, Database Coordinators, and Digital Navigators, has been at the forefront of this innovation. This year, we prioritized initiatives to strengthen the security systems, enhance digital

learning and accessibility, improve data management, and provide superior digital navigation support to help immigrants acquire essential technology skills.

The IT Infrastructure team has focused on making our systems more secure, accessible, and user-friendly, while our Digital Learning and Design team leverages innovative technologies to ensure that immigrants can easily access career training, resources, and support services. Our premier online learning platform, Settlement Online, now features five new career-specific training pathways for youth, pre-arrival clients, prospective nurses, and disability support workers, further supporting newcomers’ readiness for employment and integration into Canadian society.

Our Database team remains dedicated to enhancing data management and security, ensuring that critical information is available and efficiently structured to support service delivery. Meanwhile, the Digital Navigation team guides immigrants in developing digital competencies, helping them navigate online platforms and access valuable resources.

Employers are key partners in this digital transformation. By working with ISANS to recruit, train, and support newcomers, they help create workplaces where digital skills are nurtured and every employee has the chance to grow. Initiatives like on-the-job digital competency assessments, sector-specific training, and mentorship programs ensure that newcomers can contribute fully and confidently while employers benefit from fresh perspectives and innovative problem-solving.

As we look to the future, the DTTS team remains committed to strengthening infrastructure, advancing e-learning, and driving innovation to support ISANS’s growth. Together with employers, we are building a more interconnected and resilient community, one where newcomers have every opportunity to belong, grow, and succeed.

- 2,855** total new enrolments in the settlement online
- 1,790** digital support sessions held
- 3,064+** hours logged on digital support sessions
- 4,645** total clients served



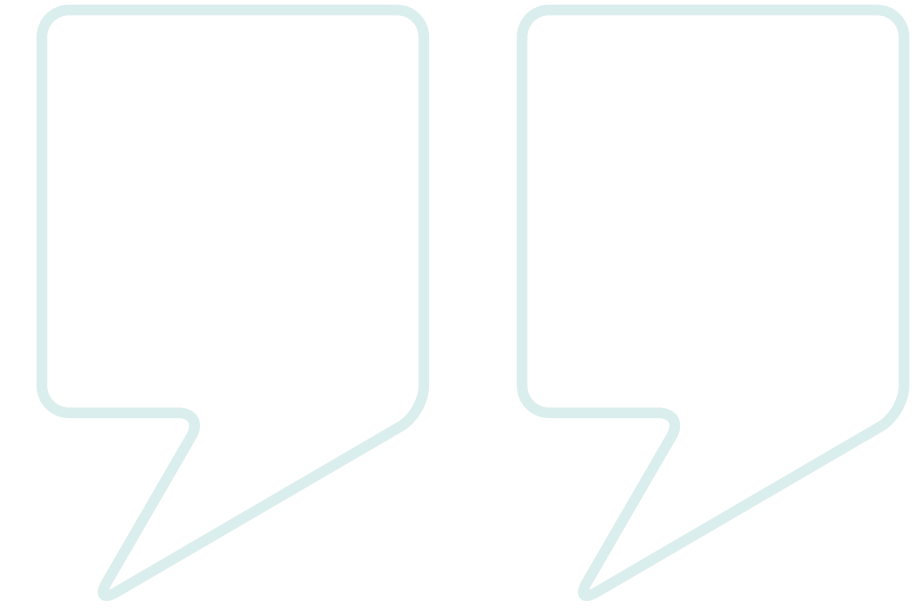


## Elevating communication skills for patient-centred care

“Excited to share my recent experience with the communications strategies for patient interaction course taught by the phenomenal Carolyn Duvar; this course has been an absolute game-changer for me as an International medical graduate preparing for the NACOSCE. This course isn’t just about passing exams; it’s about equipping myself with the skills needed to excel as a physician in Canada. It’s about continuous improvement and a commitment to delivering the highest standard of care to every patient I encounter. I wholeheartedly recommend this course to fellow IMGs who are looking to elevate their communication skills and embrace patient-centred care.”

**Tanya Aujla**

Communication Strategies for Patient Interactions on Settlement Online





# Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion: Building a community to belong and grow



At ISANS, we are committed to fairness, respect, and making sure everyone feels welcome and included. We want to create spaces where people’s unique backgrounds and identities are celebrated. Through advocacy, special programs, and workshops, we work to support fairness and give diverse voices a chance to be heard. Our goal is to build a strong, inclusive community where everyone can succeed.

We believe that real change happens one person at a time. By working closely with community members, we are helping create a future where everyone who lives in Nova Scotia feels they belong.

Since 2013, our Intercultural Workplace Program has helped employers across Nova Scotia create welcoming and respectful workplaces. As businesses and communities change, we update our programs to meet their needs. We provide safe spaces where everyone can share their ideas, and our facilitators understand that each person’s experience is different.

We offer live workshops online and in person, both general and customized for different workplaces and industries across the province. We also answer questions and give advice like consultants would, sharing our knowledge about many workplace situations. We learn from employers every month to keep improving our programs. Anyone working in Nova Scotia is welcome to share their experiences as we help build stronger intercultural skills across all sectors.

The Welcoming Communities Program helps service providers and community members make Nova Scotia safer and more welcoming for immigrants. Through interactive workshops and community

projects, participants learn how to move from just understanding the issues to taking real action. The program helps people build better relationships across cultures and break down barriers.

A key part of the program is the Building Intercultural Competence workshop, a full-day session that helps people understand immigration, settlement, and integration better. Participants learn practical ways to welcome newcomers and improve communication across cultures.

We also offer workshops on topics like fairness and inclusion, unconscious bias, micro-aggressions, power and privilege, and the immigrant experience. One special workshop, celebrating our Black Heritage, focuses on the history and contributions of African Nova Scotians and Black immigrants, encouraging respect and conversation.

Whether you work on the front lines, make policies, teach, or are an active community member, the Welcoming Communities Program gives you tools to help build welcoming, diverse communities where everyone feels at home.

The Welcome Ambassador Program (WAP) helps build welcoming and inclusive communities across Nova Scotia through hands-on learning. Participants learn how to support refugees and newcomers with skills in trauma-informed care, cultural humility, communication, and empathy. This safe learning space encourages self-reflection and growth, preparing participants to be active community leaders after their training.

WAP treats participants as partners in learning, not just learners. Through personal reflection and group discussions, participants talk about what makes a safe space, focusing on respect, listening, honesty, and kindness. This shared understanding gives Ambassadors the knowledge and tools they need to make a lasting positive impact in their communities.

At ISANS, we know that fairness, respect, and inclusion are key to building a stronger Nova Scotia. Through these programs and partnerships, we are proud to help create a province where everyone feels valued, supported, and truly at home.

- 78** people participated in the welcome Ambassador training (in 10 cohorts)
- 58** workshops on equity, diversity, and inclusion
- 1,071** people participated in our equity, diversity, inclusion, and accessibility workshops
- 2,060** attendees in DEIA-themed training delivered by the Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP) and Intercultural Workplace Program (IWP).





## Intercultural Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Video Series

“Inclusion is a Shared Responsibility. Growth happens through awareness, humility, and consistent action. Encourage open and respectful conversations in your workplace so everyone feels safe to share their experiences and concerns. Creating space for these dialogues helps address issues early and fosters a more inclusive, respectful, and supportive environment for all.”

**Colleen Belle**  
Coordinator, Welcoming Communities

[See full video](#)

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# Our Year in Numbers:

April 1, 2024 - March 31, 2025

**17,540**

immigrants  
received ISANS  
services

**186**

countries of origin  
among ISANS  
clients

**431**

community  
members  
volunteered at  
ISANS, and

**207**

ISANS clients  
volunteered in the  
community for  
a total of 11,656  
hours





## Family, Children, and Specialized Settlement Services

**10518** interpretations facilitated  
**794** personal documents translated  
**538** unique children were cared for in our early childcare education centres  
**393** children used Short Term Care  
**215** children used Long Term Care  
**719** clients received **1,508** Family Support services  
**664** clients received **2,095** Newcomer Wellness services

## Refugee Resettlement

**583** government-assisted refugees (GARs) arrived in Halifax in 2024  
**169** Permanent accommodation units secured  
**1,716** government-assisted refugees received settlement services  
**1,373** government-assisted refugees and **159** privately sponsored refugees were supported in their first year  
**50** applications were submitted to sponsor **124** privately sponsored refugees

## Language Services

**4,758** language learners in **220+** active classes  
**1,361** ISANS clients supported through language advising  
**35** specialized language programs for vulnerable populations, skills in the workplace, and specific career sectors

## Community Integration Services

**106** families participated in community gardens  
**50** community partners and organizations  
**873** immigrants took part in **84** Community Connections activities  
**526** ISANS clients were registered for **41** recreational and social activities in the community

## Employment and Bridging

**1004** ISANS clients gained employment  
**70%** of all employed clients gained employment in their field or a related one  
**25** IMGs accessed the medical field (Residency, Med-Clerkship, Practice Ready Assessment, and Clinical Assistants)  
**18** IENs became licensed and employed as Registered Nurses, and four as Licensed Practical Nurses  
**11** IPGs became licensed and employed as pharmacists  
**59** clients completed the Trades Practical Assessment 2-year project  
**11** trade clients became journeypersons with the Red Seal  
**19** clients secured employment in the construction field, with opportunities for apprenticeship

## Business Development Services

**1,769** ISANS clients received business services  
**794** ISANS clients participated in business training – **48** training sessions  
**36** ISANS clients started a business  
**45** Women joined IWEN program  
**505** clients participated in networking events

## Employer Support Services

**774** Nova Scotian employers were engaged in ISANS employer support  
**367** employers in rural Nova Scotia and small centres were engaged in ISANS employer supports  
**171** employers were engaged in the Atlantic Immigration Program  
**76** Intercultural workshop sessions delivered with **1386** attendees

## Pre-Arrival and Employment Transition (PET)

**795** clients upgraded their job search and soft skills to better participate in the Canadian labour market.  
**408** clients upgraded their computer skills.  
**15** clients began their foreign credential recognition process pre-arrival.  
**227** general employment counselling services delivered pre-arrival.

## Digital Support

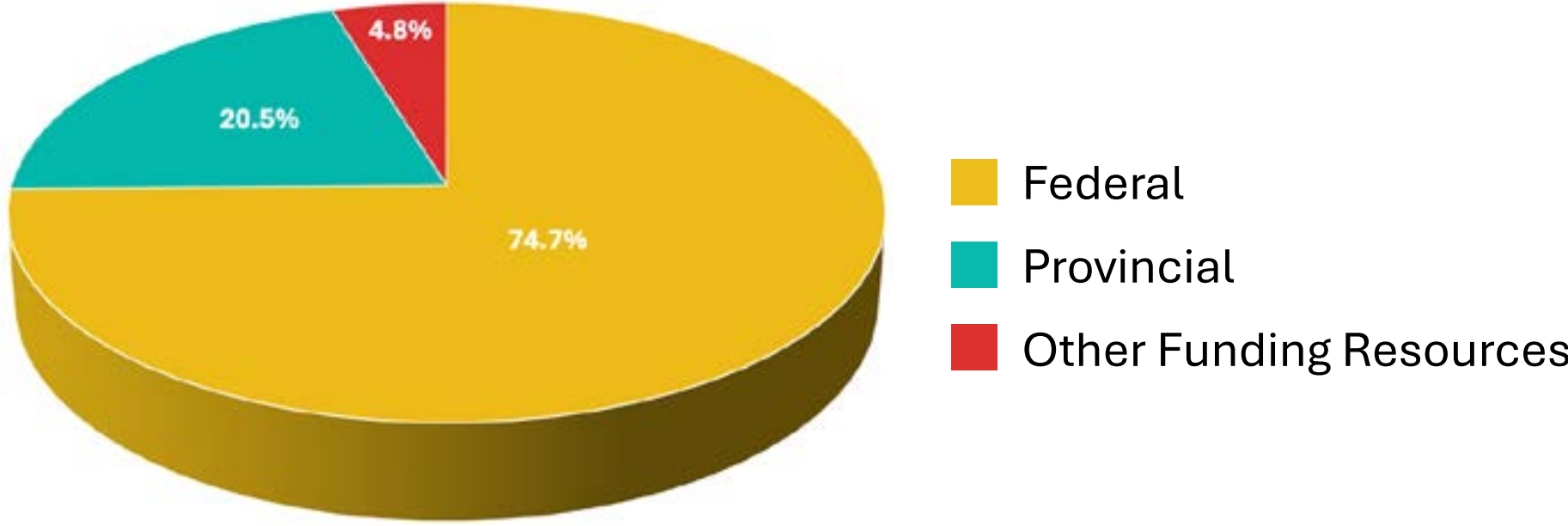
**2,855** total new enrolments in settlement online  
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**3,064** total hours logged in digital support sessions  
**4,645** total clients served by DTTS



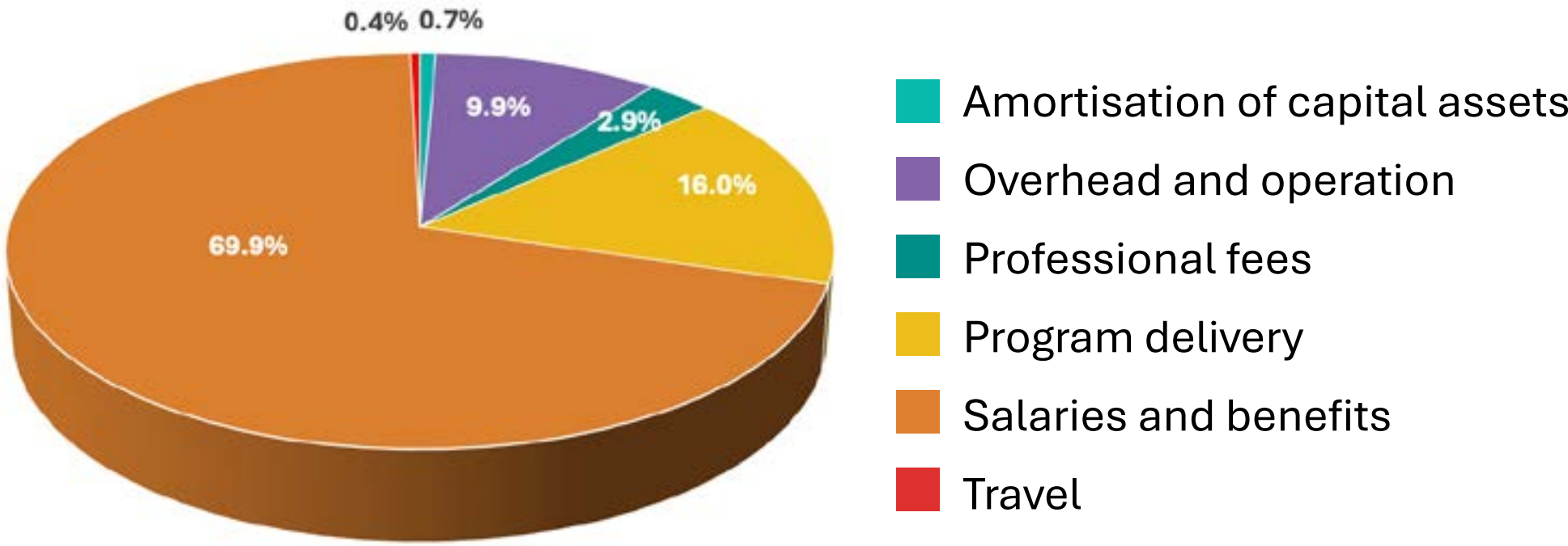


# Highlight from the 2024-2025 Financial Report

Revenue	2024-2025	2023-2024	% Change	Percentage
Federal	\$ 23,843,863	\$ 34,858,027	-31.6%	74.7%
Provincial - Nova Scotia	\$ 6,528,456	\$ 6,173,258	5.8%	20.5%
Other Funding Resources	\$ 1,527,208	\$ 1,220,913	25.1%	4.8%
Total	\$ 31,899,527	\$ 42,252,198	-24.5%	100.0%



Expenses	2024-2025	2023-2024	% Change	Percentage
Amortisation of capital assets	\$ 268,096	\$ 302,898	-11.5%	0.7%
Overhead and operation	\$ 3,211,200	\$ 3,708,835	-13.4%	9.9%
Professional fees	\$ 956,218	\$ 778,190	22.9%	2.9%
Program delivery	\$ 5,190,602	\$ 13,582,175	-61.8%	16.0%
Salaries and benefits	\$ 22,671,546	\$ 22,516,322	0.7%	69.9%
Travel	\$ 117,272	\$ 117,128	0.1%	0.4%
Total	\$ 32,414,934	\$ 41,005,548	-20.9%	100.0%







# Thank you to our Funders and Partners

## Funders

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)  
Department of Canadian Heritage  
Divert NS  
Emera  
Employment & Social Development Canada (ESDC)  
Immigration, Refugees & Citizenship Canada (IRCC)  
Women and Gender Equality (WAGE)  
J & W Murphy Foundation  
Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia  
Nova Scotia Apprenticeship Agency

Nova Scotia Department of Opportunities and Social Development  
Nova Scotia Department of Education and Early Childhood Development  
Nova Scotia Department of Health & Wellness  
Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration  
Nova Scotia Health Authority  
Nova Scotia Office of Addiction and Mental Health  
Office of Healthcare Professionals Recruitment  
RBC Royal Bank Foundation

## Partners

Colleges and Institutions Canada (CiCan)  
Dalhousie University  
Halifax Chamber of Commerce  
Invest Nova Scotia  
Nova Scotia Community College  
Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants (OCASI)  
Ottawa Community Immigrant Service Organization (OCISO)  
S.U.C.C.E.S.S. AEIP  
University of Alberta  
World Skills Employment Center



**isans** | Immigrant Services  
Association of Nova Scotia