

Annual Report

2024/2025



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Executive Report

The Atlantic Region Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies (ARAISA) is proud to present this year's Annual Report, highlighting our efforts to support and strengthen the immigrant and refugee serving sector that plays a critical role in ensuring newcomers are welcomed and supported.

This year marked key milestones for our organization. We launched a new five-year strategic plan to guide our direction and deepen our impact, and we adopted a set of core organizational values that reflect our purpose and principles.

The past year has also been one of significant change. Public attitudes toward immigration shifted amid rising concerns about affordability, housing, and pressure on public services. In response, the federal government announced reductions to immigration levels - decisions that will directly impact the settlement and integration sector for years to come. Broader political shifts, both nationally and globally, have added to a growing climate of uncertainty.

The role of ARAISA in navigating these changes is critical to supporting our members and the sector. We helped by delivering targeted training, facilitating timely information-sharing, and ensuring national representation for our region. We also fostered connections and collaboration through regional initiatives and sector-wide engagement.

We are deeply grateful to our members, stakeholders, funders, board and staff. Your dedication, insight, and continued support make it possible for us to navigate change with intention and advance a shared vision of more inclusive, resilient communities across Atlantic Canada.



Carolyn Whiteway



Paula Knight

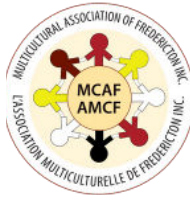
Carolyn Whiteway
Executive Director

Paula Knight
Chair



Thank You Members!





Strengthen Capacity

Professional Development

ARAISA aims to provide member organizations engaging opportunities for professional development and skill improvement to strengthen service delivery.

May 2024 – Cybersecurity

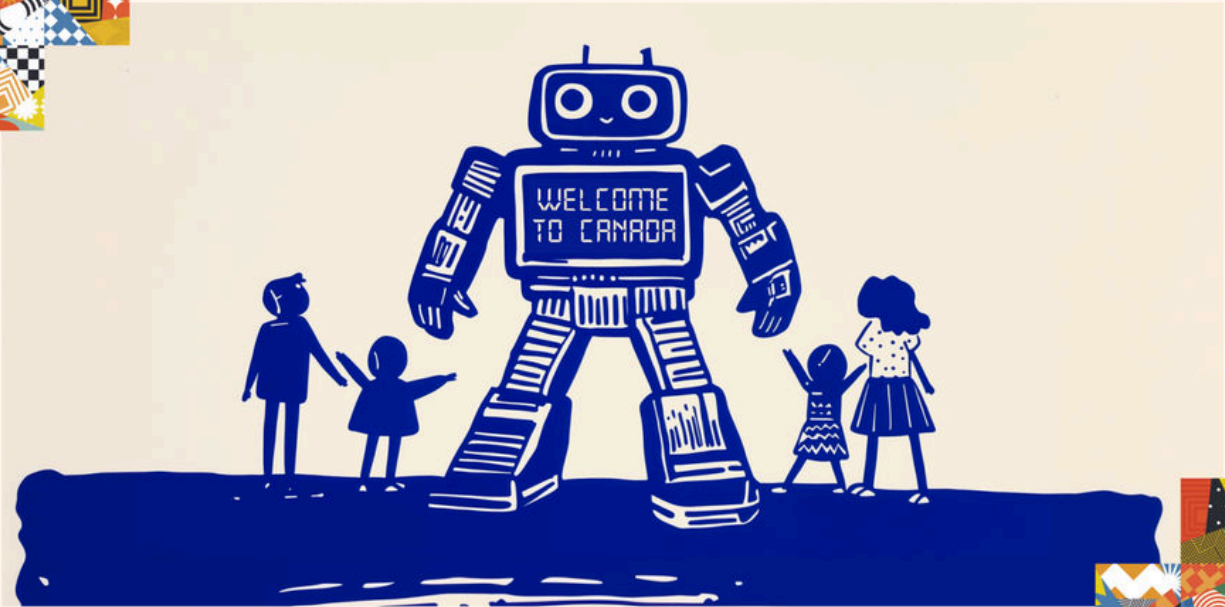
Organized by **ARAISA** and the **Société Nationale de l'Acadie (SNA)**, the Cybersecurity and Data Protection webinars aimed to raise awareness of privacy and data security principles, focusing on cybersecurity, safeguarding client information, and complying with provincial privacy laws. Over **200** participants, anglophone and francophone, attended the different webinars.

June 2024 - Sight Loss Integration – Teacher Toolkit

This webinar provided an opportunity to present the Sight Loss Integration Teacher Toolkit, developed by **ISANS**, to support the effective inclusion of learners with sight loss in **LINC** and **CLIC** classrooms. Ten participants attended the session.

August 2024 – Establishing Our Trauma-Informed Practice

Delivered by **AURORA Family Therapy Centre**, this session explored trauma-informed and culturally attuned practices for Service Providing Organizations (SPOs) in the settlement sector. Of the **183** attendees, **71%** of survey respondents strongly agreed the topic was important to their organization. In terms of impact, **74%** reported an increase in their understanding of trauma-informed practice.



September 2024 to March 2025 – FA.I.R For All Webinar Series

This innovative webinar series, developed by **ISANS** in partnership with **ARAISA**, was dedicated to guiding and demonstrating the potential of generative AI technology in the settlement and integration sector. Participants from Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) were invited to join monthly webinars to learn how AI can significantly enhance the settlement and integration experience for clients and service providers in the language learning process.

The **7** webinars were attended by **650+** participants from **125+** organizations and governments across the Atlantic provinces and beyond (including repeat attendees). In the satisfaction surveys, respondents indicated that the webinars effectively shared knowledge and best practices, with 28% strongly agreeing and 53.6% agreeing.

November 2024 – Reimagining Governance

This dynamic and interactive session, facilitated by Lisa Villeneuve, was tailored for executive and managing directors, CEOs, senior leaders, and board chairs/directors. Participants explored emerging approaches and practices for purpose-driven governance, discussed governance myths, and learned about enhancing strategic decision-making.

The session had **30** attendees. All participants reported improved knowledge of emerging governance practices, and **100%** agreed that the event fostered connections and dialogue within the sector.

January 2025 - Tools to Support Internationally Educated Healthcare Professionals (IEHPs): A presentation by N4

This webinar provided an overview of the N4 resources to ensure the settlement sector has the tools it needs to promote optimal employment of clients and support internationally educated health professionals.

Two sessions were delivered, one in English with **23** participants and one in French with **11** participants.





Empowering RAP Staff: Innovative Strategies and Best Practices for Atlantic SPOs - February 2025

February 2025 - Breaking Barriers: Supporting Diverse and 2SLGBTQI+ Newcomers

This annual ARAISA PD session, designed by and for frontline staff, focused on key topics including barriers faced by diverse newcomers, support for 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, and strategies for effective client service while maintaining staff well-being. The session also promoted knowledge-sharing and recognized the vital contributions of frontline workers.

The event drew **81** attendees from **26** organizations. It received **100%** overall satisfaction, and **84%** of participants reported the training would enhance their organization's capacity to meet newcomer needs.

February 2025 - Empowering RAP Staff: Innovative Strategies and Best Practices for Atlantic SPOs

Hosted by ARAISA, this PD session brought together staff from the eight Atlantic Resettlement Assistance Program (RAP) service providers for RAP-specific training, networking, and knowledge-sharing. It covered best practices, including housing and staff onboarding. Participants gained insights from IRCC and the National RAP Working Group, looked at RAP to-settlement coordination, and attended a workshop on the Trauma of Money approach. The event strengthened regional networks and recognized RAP staff dedication.

44 attendees | **100%** overall event satisfaction | **76 %** indicated they were very likely to apply the training in their work | On a scale of 1 to 10, the training's impact on organizational capacity averaged **9**.

February 2025 - Enhancing Employment Outcomes for Refugees and Newcomers

This workshop had approximately **45** participants and explored ways that service providers can support their refugee clients in finding meaningful employment. The workshop included a keynote address by the Honourable Andrew Cardozo, who provided a **national perspective on refugee hiring and employment**, and a presentation by Jumpstart Refugee Talent and ISANS on unique hiring models. Three employers from the Atlantic region contributed to a panel discussion touching on topics such as recruiting refugee talent, collaborating with local settlement organizations, challenges when hiring newcomer talent, and strategies for decreasing barriers to employment for refugees with limited English and French skills. **[View the webinar's infographics here.](#)**



Shaping Perspectives, Bridging Divides: A Toolkit

In response to growing misinformation and shifting public sentiment around immigration, we launched **the Shaping Perspective, Bridging Divides toolkit** in March 2025. This practical resource equips communications staff, frontline workers, and leadership in the settlement sector with tools to share impact, engage meaningfully, and respond effectively to negativity. The toolkit includes storytelling frameworks, key messages, FAQs, media contacts, and ready-to-use templates. This resource was well-received and helped amplify the essential work of service provider organizations across Atlantic Canada.



Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus

This fiscal year marked the end of the Enhancing National Sector GBA Plus Capacity project, culminating in the launch of the **GBA Plus National Resource Guide**. This comprehensive, bilingual toolkit provides newcomer-serving organizations with practical resources to embed GBA Plus into their policies and operations. ARAISA contributed **two key tools**: a board diversity survey template and an employee readiness assessment for GBA Plus integration. In November 2024, we hosted the **Gender-Based Analysis (GBA) Plus: Practical Tools for SPOs** webinar featuring insights from pilot partners, the Association for New Canadians and the Saint John Newcomers Centre. This initiative marks a significant step toward more inclusive practices in the settlement sector.



Coordinate & Engage

Regional Engagement

ARAISA hosted **3 Regional Sector Meetings** on behalf of IRCC. **Seventy** attendees participated in June 2024, **93** joined an early December 2024 meeting, and around **60** participants for another call in late December. During these discussions, IRCC provided important updates, and organizations were able to raise questions and concerns and share their operational perspectives.

Communities of Practice

ARAISA facilitated three communities of practice that fostered connections among member organizations. These groups provided a platform for sector professionals to learn from each other, exchange valuable insights, and strengthen their ties.

- **Communications Hub:** 5 meetings / 13 member organizations represented throughout the year
- **English as an Additional Language-Literacy:** 9 meetings / 8 member organizations represented
- **Portfolio-Based Language Assessment:** 6 meetings / 8 member organizations represented



Truth and Reconciliation

ARAISA has been working to advance **truth and reconciliation** in the Atlantic region. Since May 2024, we have hosted a **community of practice** to explore how the sector can contribute to reconciliation and build respectful relationships between Indigenous peoples and newcomers. In October, the group convened in Tatamagouche, NS, for an in-person workshop.



Atlantic Immigration Program (AIP)

A PD event for the AIP Intercultural Competency Training (ICT) facilitators was held in February 2025. Between the English and French training sessions, **29 participants** participated. The topic was **How to Have Difficult or Sensitive Conversations in a Diverse Environment**. The event was organized through the Université de Moncton, and Bruce Joshua was the facilitator.

ARAISA organized a **virtual AIP interest-holder meeting** which took place in January 2025 and had **96 attendees**.

As of March 2025, **7,293 certificates** have been issued to employers who have attended the ICT. These employers have been from **5,477 businesses**. (March 2022-March 2025)

Migrant Workers Support Program

In 2024-2025, ARAISA supported a range of key initiatives and events focused on **migrant worker rights and advocacy**. This included participating in ESDC Quarterly Meetings, consultation sessions with the Canadian Council for Refugees' Precarious & Exploited Migrants Committee, and the CCR's Migrant Worker Forum.

ARAISA also contributed to **national discussions** at the 27th Metropolis Conference and took part in NBMC's Migrant Worker Consultation Day.

Additional engagements included the Canadian Association of Refugee Lawyers' roundtable event at Dalhousie University, ARAISA's Migrant Workers Support Program **Knowledge Sharing Webinar**, and Amnesty International's Conference on Migrant Labour and Contemporary Forms of Slavery in Canada, featuring the UN Special Rapporteur.



Site visit to our partner: Cooper Institute, December 2024

A New Website and a New Look

In December 2024, we launched ARAISA's **redesigned website** and **refreshed visual identity**, creating a modern, user-friendly hub for the immigrant and refugee-serving sector. The new site features a growing and updated **resource library**, an **events calendar**, **on-demand webinar recordings**, and **online courses**. We also introduced an **interactive acronyms tool** to help users navigate sector terminology. Since the launch, we've seen a noticeable increase in website visits and received great user feedback.

Information Sharing

ARAISA continued to support the sector through consistent and timely information sharing. We published our **weekly newsletter** for the fifth year, delivering **47 issues** in 2024–2025 with sector news, opportunities, and resources. This year, we welcomed over 450 new subscribers and reached a **59% open rate** and a **26% click-to-open rate**, above industry averages.

On **LinkedIn**, we increased our efforts by posting more frequently and engaging with our audience in new ways. As a result, we gained over 550 new followers and achieved a **14% engagement rate**. These numbers reflect our commitment to being a trusted source of relevant and helpful information for immigrant and refugee serving organizations in Atlantic Canada and beyond.



Collaborate and Represent

Sector Representation

ARAISA participated in consultations, provided representation on national bodies, presented at conferences, and contributed as a member of several advisory committees, organizations and networks. This included:

- National Settlement and Integration Council
- Settlement and Integration Policy and Program Committee
- Pathways to Prosperity
- OUSH National Steering Committee
- SettleNet.org National Advisory Committee
- Canadian Council for Refugees
- 27th Metropolis Canada Conference
- Enhancing and Embracing EDI in the Canadian Labour Market Symposium (MUN)
- New Brunswick Multicultural Council's Intersectionality Forum
- Enhancing National Sector Gender-Based Analysis Plus Capacity
- Settlement and Integration 2030 Webinar



Research Highlights

In 2024, we launched the **Atlantic Immigration Spotlight on Data**, a quarterly publication that provides brief, practical summaries of immigration-related data. We published four issues which address a variety of topics including retention, the gender wage gap, countries of origin, and population growth.

In March 2025, we published a research report **“Growing Our Region: The Impact of Immigration in Atlantic Canada.”** Drawing on both demographic data and newcomer voices, the report highlights key ways that immigration is shaping social, cultural, and economic growth in the region.

ARAISA published four **research blogs**. They addressed topics including participatory photography, the implications of AI, promising practices for research with newcomers, and building partnerships with academic partners.

In January 2025, we delivered a webinar **“Immigration Data 101: An Introduction to Databases and Datasets.”** This webinar provided an introduction to several immigration-related databases including Open Government, the Longitudinal Immigration Database, Census of Population, and ARAISA’s research library.

ARAISA produced **two policy studies**. One addressed the 2025-27 Immigration Levels Plan, and the other focused on the 2024 federal budget.

As part of our new website, we have updated our Research Library.

ARAISA partnered with the Jarislowsky Chair in Cultural and Economic Transformation at **Memorial University of Newfoundland** on a research project, **“Disparities in Settlement and Integration of Racialized Newcomers in Atlantic Canada.”** This project aimed to understand the challenges faced by racialized newcomers in Atlantic Canada and identify how service providers can better support them. The project included nine focus groups with newcomers as well as interviews with service provider staff.

Strengthen Our Organization

New Members

ARAISA welcomed **4 new members** in 2024-2025, with an overall increase of 12%

- **Association multiculturelle de l'intégration des nouveaux arrivants (AMINA)**
- **Équipe d'alphabétisation Nouvelle-Écosse**
- **Multicultural Association of Carleton County (MACC)**
- **Réseau de santé Vitalité**

We thank the ARAISA Membership Committee members Bernadette Reynolds, Normand Bourdeau, and Maria Gentle for their guidance on the Membership policy, procedures, and strategies for recruiting, retaining, and engaging ARAISA members throughout the year.





Annual Member Survey

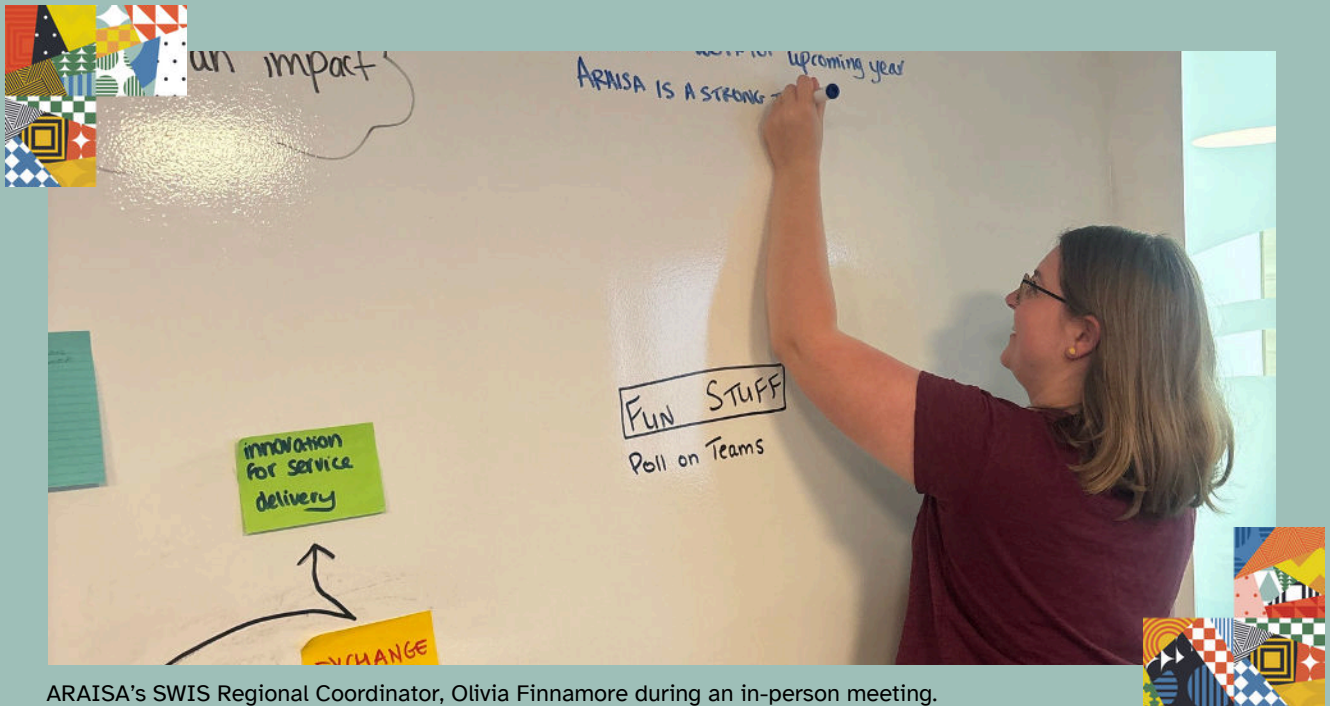
Every year, we prioritize hearing from our members through our annual survey—an important opportunity to reflect on how well we're meeting your needs and identify areas for growth. We're excited to share a highlight from last year: **94%** of respondents agreed that ARAISA provides training that strengthens their organizational capacity. To view the full survey, [click here](#).

Francophone Engagement

This year, we continued our commitment to providing our content in English and French. To support all our members, we offer simultaneous interpretation for the majority of our virtual meetings, webinars, and events. We also make sure that most of our outgoing communications and reports are available in both official languages.

A New Strategic Plan

In October 2024, ARAISA unveiled its **2024–2029 Strategic Plan**, a roadmap designed to guide our efforts in strengthening the settlement and integration sector across Atlantic Canada. For the first time, we've articulated our organizational values: collaboration, continuous learning, accountability, and leadership. We took a comprehensive approach to ensure that we remain responsive to the evolving needs of the organizations that support newcomers.



ARAISA's SWIS Regional Coordinator, Olivia Finnamore during an in-person meeting.

Staff Professional Development

ARAISA's staff actively engaged in professional learning and dialogue, such as **Threads: Cultural Conversations**, a gathering focused on exploring cultural identity and connection and **The Art of Hosting**, a multi-day training on collaborative leadership and facilitation practices designed to support inclusive and transformative conversations. Two staff participated in a Digital Transformation community of practice and management staff benefited from a course in coaching and mentorship.

Wellness Committee

The committee introduced the **Not Myself Today program** to raise awareness and reduce stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace. Prioritizing the mental health and well-being of ARAISA staff, a **Calm Room** was created as a dedicated space for rest and relaxation.

EDI Committee

ARAISA's internal Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee continued its important work in 2024–2025, supporting a more inclusive workplace. The committee facilitated **year-long Truth and Reconciliation Learning**, with monthly team discussions exploring key themes. ARAISA proudly became **Rainbow Registered**, a national accreditation recognizing inclusive practices for 2SLGBTQI+ communities. The committee also coordinated an **anti-Arab racism learning session**. As our team grew, the group also began redefining its goals and guidelines to ensure they reflect our evolving organizational context, a process that is ongoing.



Staff Retreat, September 2024



Staff Retreat

ARAISA organized its second staff retreat in Hubbards, NS. The retreat was a great opportunity for the staff to **come together, plan for the year ahead, and teambuild**. During the retreat, the ARAISA team also had the pleasure of having a session with Gerard Murphy from Barefoot Facilitation about **Personality Dimensions**, providing us tools for working together as a team and strengthening the organization internally.

New Team Members

In 2024, ARAISA welcomed new team members.
We were excited for these three skilled people to be part of ARAISA:

- Nadiia Kulyk: Project Administrator
- Yasmine Wasfy: Communications Coordinator
- Victoria Pike: Program Support Assistant



Nadiia Kulyk



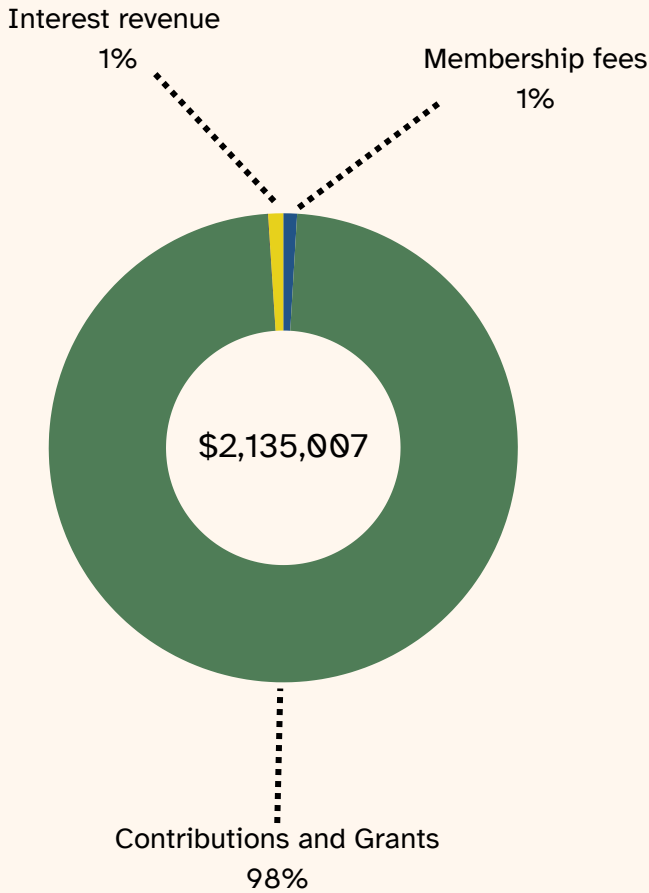
Yasmine Wasfy



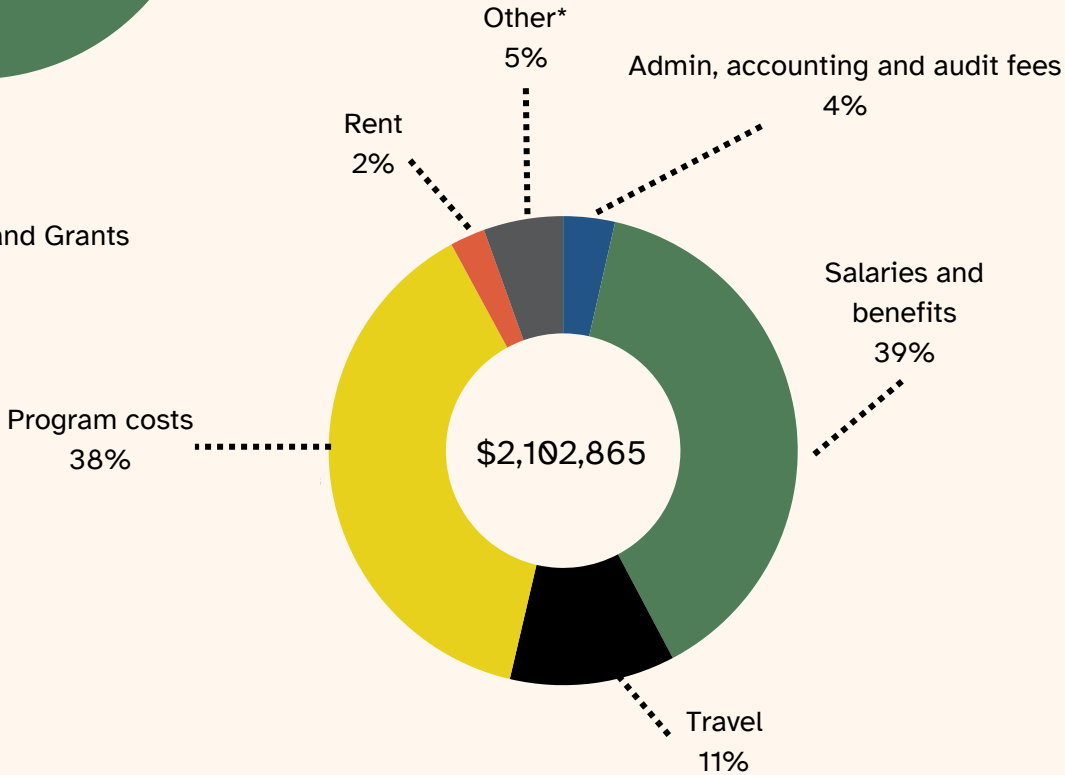
Victoria Pike

Financial Highlights

Revenue



Expenses



[Click here for the complete financial statements](#)

* Amortization, Bank and other service charges, Insurance, Meetings and events, Office and computer expenses



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