



2025/26 **IMPACT REPORT** BELONGING IN ACTION



Central Vancouver Island
Multicultural Society

Land Acknowledgment

CVIMS operates on the unceded land of the Coast Salish and Nuu-chah-nulth Peoples. We are settlers on their land and receive the advantages and privileges of colonization.

Our Commitment to Reconciliation and Equity

We acknowledge that colonization established systems of hierarchy that did not affect all settlers equally. While many benefited from white settler privilege, racialized settler communities in particular were subjected to discriminatory laws and systemic barriers designed to exclude, control, and marginalize them.

We are committed to:

- Educating ourselves and newcomers about our colonial history and the impact of colonization that continues to today.
- Challenging colonial structures and oppression, in alliance with Indigenous Peoples.



Funder Acknowledgment

We gratefully recognize our funders whose trust and investment enable CVIMS to support newcomers, strengthen belonging, and create lasting impact across our communities.

Thank you to our funders:

- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC)
- Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills
- City of Nanaimo
- Nanaimo Foundation
- Department of Justice Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Resilience BC

Report Development by CVIMS

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OUR MISSION

We are committed to promoting the values of equity, diversity, inclusion and respect for all peoples.

OUR VISION

An inclusive community where newcomers and diverse peoples thrive.

SERVICES WE PROVIDE

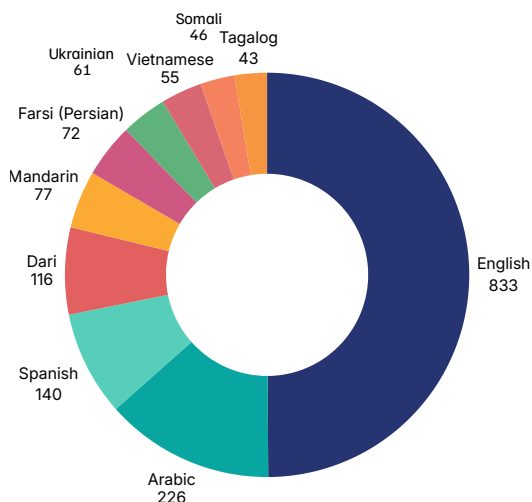
- Settlement
- Employment
- Family
- Language
- Community

2,145 Unique Clients

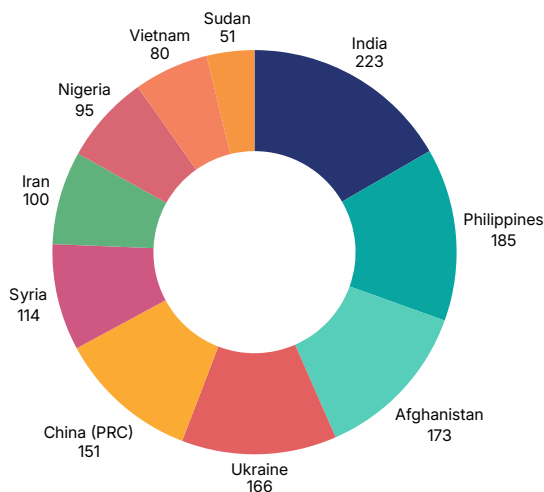
35,529 Services

37,397 Interactions

LANGUAGES SPOKEN



COUNTRIES OF ORIGIN



CVIMS BOARD CHAIR MESSAGE



The 2025–26 year was one of growth, transition, and meaningful impact for the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS).

As our communities continued to welcome newcomers from around the world, CVIMS remained committed to its mission of fostering inclusion, belonging, and opportunity through settlement, employment, language, family, and community services.

This year marked an important leadership transition for the organization. We extend our sincere appreciation to former Executive Director Mikaela Torres and former Board President Mark Seneviratne for their dedication, vision, and service to CVIMS. Their leadership helped strengthen the organization and position it for continued success. We are equally pleased to welcome our new Executive Director, Angelika Valchar, whose experience and commitment will help guide CVIMS into its next chapter.

The strength of CVIMS lies in its people. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank all current and past board members for their commitment and service throughout the year. We also extend our heartfelt gratitude to departing board members Arooj and Steve for their years of dedicated service to CVIMS.

I am especially proud of our staff and volunteers whose compassion, professionalism, and commitment make this work possible every day. Their efforts are at the heart of CVIMS' impact in our community.

Throughout the year, CVIMS continued to build strong partnerships and create opportunities for newcomers to thrive while fostering greater understanding and connection across our communities. Beyond the numbers and programs, the true impact of CVIMS can be seen in the lives transformed, the relationships built, and the sense of belonging created.

Looking ahead, CVIMS is well positioned to build on its strong foundation. With dedicated staff, volunteers, community partners, and board members, we will continue working toward a more inclusive, welcoming, and vibrant Central Vancouver Island for all.

Best regards,
EJ Jang

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Growing Impact, Strengthening Belonging



The fiscal year 2025–2026 was a year of growth, leadership, and strengthened community impact for the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS).

As newcomer needs continued to evolve, we remained committed to delivering responsive, high-quality services while expanding our role as a leader within the settlement and integration sector.

A significant milestone was securing a new three-year agreement with Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), ensuring continued delivery of Resettlement and Settlement services while launching the Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP) for Central Vancouver Island. As a new initiative, NLIP brings together municipalities, employers, educational institutions, service providers, and community organizations to strengthen collaboration and advance welcoming, inclusive communities across the region.

This year, CVIMS strengthened its presence on provincial and national stages. Staff attended and presented at conferences focused on Case Management, Resettlement, Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS), and the national Metropolis Conference. Through these engagements, we shared promising practices, contributed to sector-wide learning, strengthened professional networks, and helped advance newcomer-serving practices across Canada.

CVIMS was also proud to host the first-ever Settlement Service Providers Conference on Vancouver Island, welcoming 150 participants from across the Island. This landmark event fostered knowledge exchange, partnership development, and stronger regional collaboration among organizations supporting newcomers.

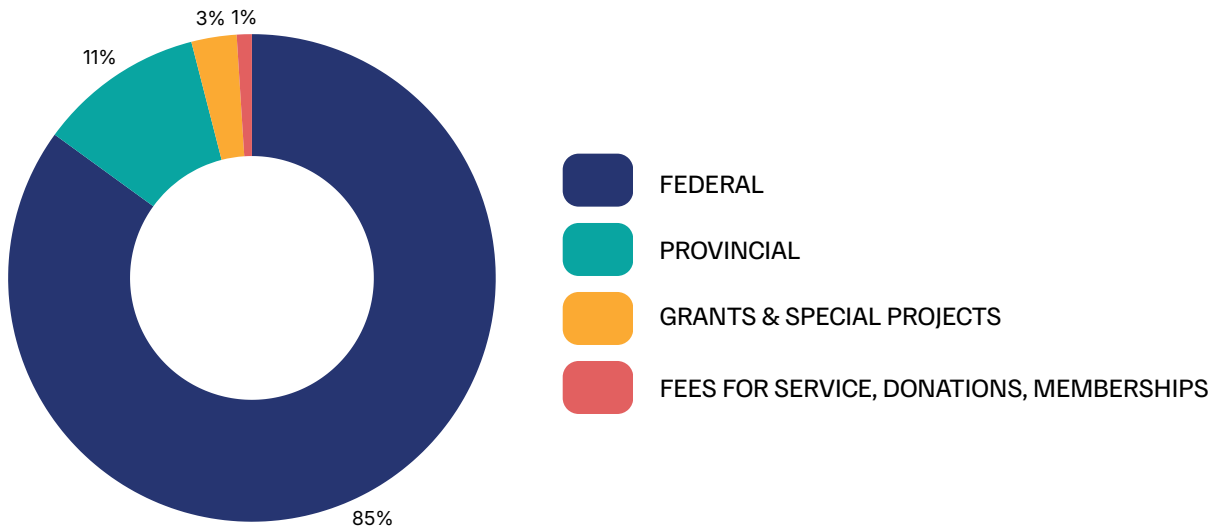
Locally, community connection remained at the heart of our work. Through partnerships, cultural celebrations, youth engagement initiatives, entrepreneurship and wellness programming, and a citizenship ceremony held for the first time in thirteen years, we helped foster belonging and strengthened community ties for newcomers and long-time residents alike.

This fiscal year also marked a leadership transition. We extend our sincere gratitude to outgoing Executive Director Mikaela Torres for her dedication and leadership. Her contributions helped strengthen CVIMS' programs, partnerships, and community presence, creating a strong foundation for future growth and impact. We also recognize the commitment, professionalism, and passion of the entire CVIMS team. Every day, our staff go above and beyond to support newcomers, foster belonging, and respond to evolving community needs with compassion, expertise, and care. Their dedication is the driving force behind our impact.

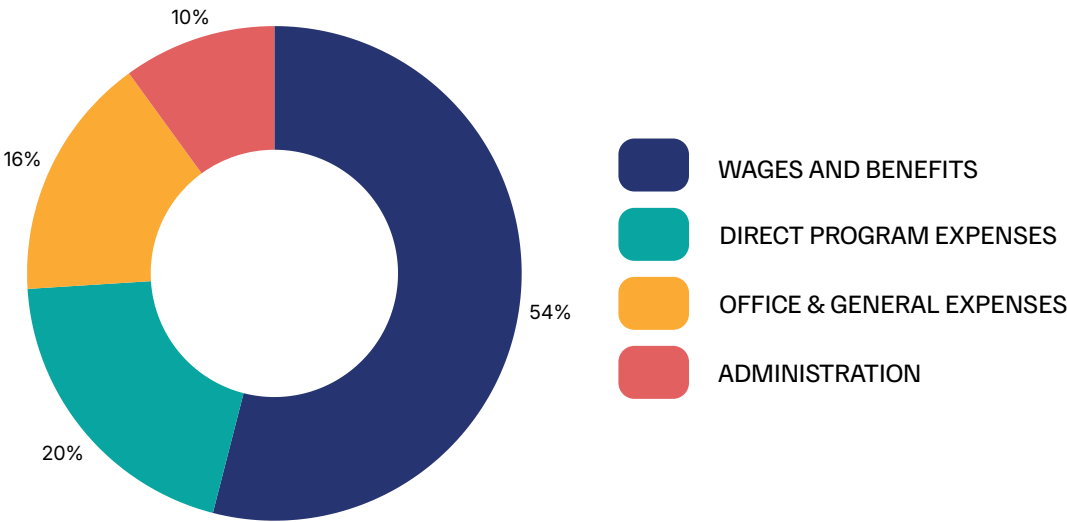
As we reflect on the achievements of this fiscal year, we are grateful for the support of our funders, donors, volunteers, partners, and community members. Together, we continue to build a welcoming region where newcomers can thrive and contribute fully to the social, cultural, and economic vitality of Central Vancouver Island.

Warm regards,
Angelika Valchar

CVIMS 2025-26 REVENUE SOURCES



CVIMS 2025-26 EXPENSES



RESETTLEMENT & SETTLEMENT SERVICES

Beginning a new life in a new country is a journey that requires trusted support, meaningful connections, and opportunities to build confidence and independence. Throughout the year, CVIMS' Resettlement and Settlement teams supported newcomers at every stage of their settlement journey, helping individuals and families establish safety, stability, and belonging in Central Vancouver Island.

Services began with comprehensive needs assessments that informed personalized settlement plans and connected clients to the supports most relevant to their goals. Through information and orientation sessions, case management, well-being navigation, mentorship, community connections, and group activities, newcomers gained the knowledge, skills, and relationships needed to navigate life in Canada. Staff also provided guidance in accessing housing, healthcare, education, employment, language training, and other community resources, working collaboratively with partners to deliver coordinated, culturally responsive support.

Whether supporting Government-Assisted Refugees, refugee claimants, temporary residents, permanent residents, or naturalized citizens, CVIMS remained committed to empowering newcomers to overcome barriers, strengthen resilience, and build lasting connections. Together, these services helped individuals and families move from uncertainty toward confidence, participation, and a sense of belonging in their new communities.

"Your support helped my family feel safe and welcomed when we arrived in Canada."

- CVIMS client

"The staff treated me with respect and helped me find solutions during a difficult time." - CVIMS client



Bikes for kids

"Because of your help, my children are settled in school and doing well."
- CVIMS client

"I did not know where to start, but the program guided me every step of the way."
- CVIMS client



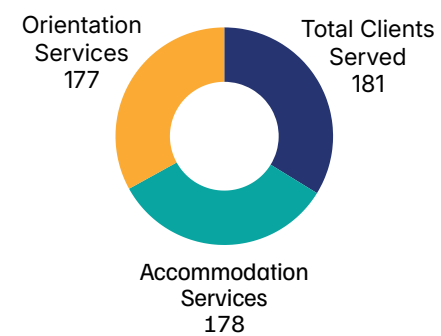
BC Safe Haven – LUSH Refugee Day

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

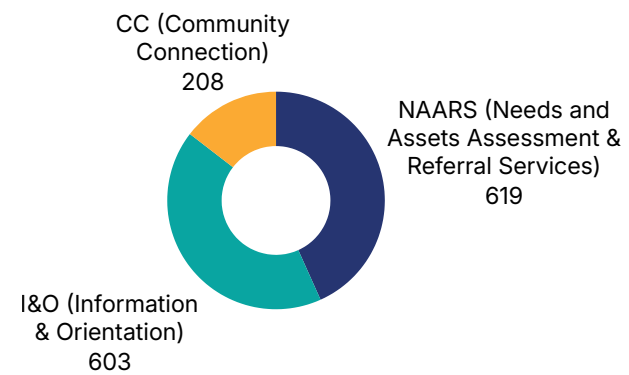
- **Expanded outreach and relationship-building** at VIU, in Ladysmith, Parksville, and Port Alberni to identify newcomer support gaps and strengthen community connections.
- **Strengthened support for international students** by contributing to a community-based network of services and referrals.
- **Supported community engagement** through the June 14 Refugee Day event with LUSH Nanaimo.
- **Built and maintained partnerships with key organizations and service providers**, including the Nanaimo Division of Family Practice, Ministry of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, WorkSafeBC, Nanaimo Family Life Association, BC Refugee Hub, AMSSA, and the Nanaimo Coordinator for Community Safety.
- **Participated in professional development and sector learning opportunities**, including trauma-informed leadership training, the SPO conference, BC Refugee Hub webinars, and regional workshops on gender-based violence and human trafficking.
- **Engaged local businesses and community partners** through Chamber of Commerce luncheons and information-sharing opportunities to increase awareness of newcomer and refugee claimant needs.

"This program gave me confidence to build a new life and become independent."
 - CVIMS client

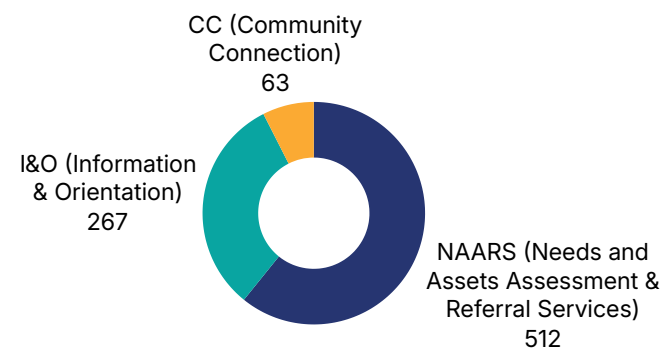
RESETTLEMENT SERVICES IRCC



SETTLEMENT SERVICES IRCC



SETTLEMENT SERVICES BC



EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMS

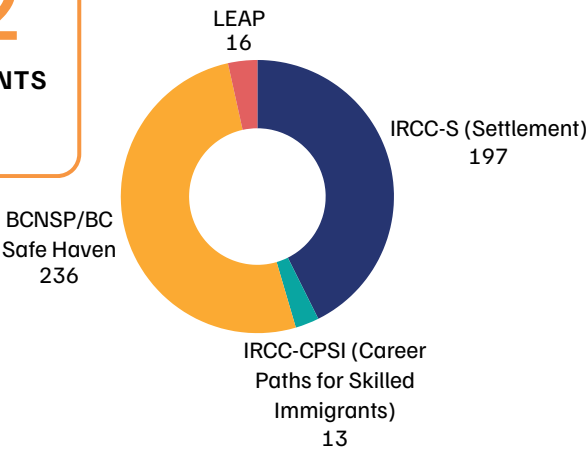
Meaningful employment is about more than securing a job—it is about building confidence, creating stability, and establishing a sense of purpose in a new community. Throughout the year, the Employment Team supported newcomers at every stage of their career journey by providing practical guidance, individualized coaching, and opportunities to connect with employers and industry partners.

Serving clients with a wide range of immigration pathways and career goals, the team recognized that each person's employment journey is unique. Through one-on-one career planning, résumé and interview preparation, workshops, referrals, and ongoing encouragement, clients gained the knowledge and confidence needed to navigate Canada's labour market and make informed decisions about their professional futures.

“... I am very grateful for the communication with you today. This meeting was very helpful and enabled me to start a new career plan with confidence and preparation. Especially for your patience and detailed introduction of the program. All of these make me feel very warm and full of power to face the challenges of the new environment...” - CVIMS client



CLIENTS BY PROGRAMS



Collaboration was central to the team's success. Employment consultants worked seamlessly across multiple funding streams to ensure clients received coordinated support regardless of eligibility. Partnerships with employers, educational institutions, and workforce organizations created opportunities for newcomers to learn directly from industry leaders while expanding professional networks and increasing awareness of career pathways available within the region.

The Employment Team also strengthened relationships with employers through job fairs, workshops, and regional networking events, helping build greater understanding of the value newcomers bring to local workplaces. These connections not only increased employment opportunities but also encouraged more inclusive hiring practices throughout the community.

Every successful interview, career transition, and new job represented more than employment—it reflected renewed confidence and the beginning of greater independence. By equipping newcomers with practical skills, trusted guidance, and meaningful connections, the Employment team continues to help individuals build sustainable careers while strengthening the economic and social vitality of our region.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Newcomer-Centered Job Fair:** We were proud to host a successful job fair, with employers and clients alike describing the event as valuable and informative. We also participated in job fairs across Ladysmith, Parksville, and Courtenay, and welcomed partners including CIBC and WorkSafeBC to deliver employment workshops for clients.
- **Nanaimo Employer Forum:** Attending this forum with the Immigrant Employment Council of BC and the Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria provided a valuable opportunity to strengthen partnerships and share insights.
- **CIBC Career Paths:** Connecting newcomers with employment opportunities and career pathways.
- **Comox Valley Career and Education Fair:** Expanding employment and education connections for clients.
- **Vancouver Island Economic Alliance (VIEA) Conference and the ASPECT Conference:** Strengthening partnerships and staying informed on workforce trends.
- Presentations from **Employment Standards BC and the BC Federation of Labour** to enhance staff knowledge.
- **WorkBC case management meetings, outreach initiatives, and job fairs** in Ladysmith, Nanaimo, Parksville, Courtenay, and Campbell River strengthened regional collaboration.



“... I am absolutely convinced that this success is, in large part, thanks to your incredible support. I wanted to take a moment to sincerely thank you for everything you’ve done for me. The mock interview sessions we did, your detailed preparation tips, and your constant encouragement were game-changers for me. You helped me navigate the Canadian interview process with confidence and clarity. The way you shared your expertise and helped me refine my answers truly made all the difference during the interview.

Thank you again for believing in me and for your exceptional help. I’m so excited to start this new chapter!” - CVIMS client

“Thanks for all the insightful help...I really appreciate all the good work you are doing.”
- CVIMS client

LOCAL ENTREPRENEURIAL ACCELERATOR PROGRAM (LEAP) FOR NEWCOMERS

Every successful business begins with an idea—and the confidence to pursue it. Through the Local Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program (LEAP), newcomer entrepreneurs gained the knowledge, mentorship, and community connections needed to transform their business aspirations into reality. Over the past year, LEAP continued to empower newcomers to contribute their talents, innovation, and entrepreneurial spirit to Nanaimo's growing economy.

Demand for the program remained exceptionally strong, reflecting its growing reputation as an accessible and supportive pathway to entrepreneurship. More than 75 newcomers expressed interest across two cohorts, with participants selected through information sessions and individual interviews that assessed readiness while ensuring equitable access to the program. Ultimately, 16 entrepreneurs joined LEAP, representing a diverse range of professional backgrounds, lived experiences, and business ideas.

Participant commitment was reflected in outstanding completion rates, with every member of the first cohort and nearly all participants in the second successfully completing the program. Even more significantly, 12 graduates launched new businesses, creating meaningful economic opportunities for themselves while enriching the local business community.

"The LEAP program sharpened my business mindset and gave me the confidence to operate successfully in a new country. I'm committed to giving back to the community that welcomes me, through quality work, fair hiring, and volunteer initiatives, and I'm excited to build relationships that create local impact."

- Shihad Usman Nowfal, LEAP cohort 2 alumnus

"The Local Entrepreneurial Accelerator Program has been instrumental in my growth as an entrepreneur in Canada, providing essential business skills, valuable resources, opportunities, and mentorship, while surrounding me with a community of like-minded individuals who offer support, guidance, and encouragement - and who I now call friends."

- Joy Monteverde, LEAP cohort 1 - LEAPers alumnus

LEAP entrepreneurs brought perspectives and expertise from around the world, including China, Egypt, El Salvador, India, Iran, Iraq, the Philippines, Sri Lanka, and Ukraine. Their ventures reflect the diversity and innovation newcomers contribute to our region, spanning fields such as childcare, architectural design, natural skincare, autism education, home maintenance, furniture restoration, logistics support, travel technology, fitness, beauty services, and landscaping.

Beyond business creation, LEAP fostered confidence, resilience, and a strong sense of belonging. By supporting newcomer entrepreneurs to build sustainable businesses, the program strengthens individual livelihoods, creates local economic opportunities, and demonstrates that when newcomers succeed, the entire community benefits.

We extend our sincere thanks to our partners, Community Futures and the Nanaimo Foundation, whose generous support makes this program possible.

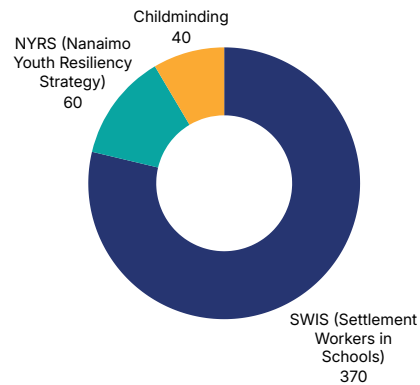


FAMILY

For newcomer families, feeling at home often begins with a child's first day at school. Throughout the year, the Family Team supported children, youth, and parents as they navigated unfamiliar education systems, built new relationships, and developed the confidence to participate fully in their community.

Working closely with School District 68 and community partners, the Family Team provided coordinated, family-centred support tailored to each family's needs. SWIS Workers guided families through school registration, settlement planning, and school-based programming that helped children build friendships, strengthen English language skills, and develop a sense of belonging. The Family Liaison empowered parents through the Strong Families, Strong Futures series and practical workshops, while the Childminding Centre reduced barriers to participation by providing safe, nurturing childcare during English classes, settlement appointments, and workshops.

FAMILY STATS



470
TOTAL CLIENTS
SERVED



ELL youth enjoying the Lanterns and Lights event.



Families enjoying outdoor activities at Family Camp

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Coordinated School & Family Settlement Support:** Supported 129 parents, 164 children, and 55 youth through coordinated SWIS services, including school registration, settlement planning, parent education, school-based programming, and intensive youth case management, creating seamless pathways of support for newcomer families.
- Strengthening Families Through Parent Education & Childminding:** Empowered newcomer parents through the Strong Families, Strong Futures series and practical workshops while reducing barriers to participation through the Childminding Centre, which provided safe, nurturing childcare for 40 children during English classes, settlement appointments, and workshops.
- Building Resilient & Connected Youth:** Engaged 60 newcomer youth through Connections, CVIMS' youth program funded by the City of Nanaimo through the Nanaimo Youth Resiliency Strategy (NYRS). Through Library Club, Youth Lounge, English Clubs, sports, art therapy, leadership opportunities, and peer mentoring, youth strengthened resilience, confidence, leadership skills, and community connections.
- Leading Through Collaboration & Innovation:** Strengthened partnerships with School District 68 and numerous community organizations to expand opportunities for newcomer families while representing CVIMS provincially and nationally through the AMSSA Regional Conference and the National SWIS/TÉE Forum Planning Committee, sharing innovative practices in collaborative settlement service delivery.

For youth requiring additional support, the SWIS Youth Case Manager provided intensive, individualized case management, working collaboratively with schools, families, and community partners to address complex needs. Youth opportunities were further expanded through Connections, CVIMS' youth program funded by the City of Nanaimo through the Nanaimo Youth Resiliency Strategy (NYRS). Through Library Club, English Club, Youth Lounge, art therapy, sports, camps, leadership opportunities, and peer mentoring, newcomer youth developed confidence, resilience, meaningful friendships, and stronger connections to their community.

Together, these layered supports created seamless pathways for newcomer families, strengthened partnerships across Nanaimo, and fostered lasting belonging. Every child welcomed, every parent empowered, and every young person connected contributes to stronger families, stronger schools, and a more inclusive community.



Children exploring through hands-on experiments at Spring Camp.

"Our family has benefited so much from the Family Team. Our teenager works with the Youth Case Manager, our younger children attend programs run by the SWIS Worker, and we as parents have grown through the Family Liaison's workshops. It has been a great boost for our integration and helped us build confidence."
- Newcomer parent



Youth engaging in Arts and Crafts

"This is a safe space where I can hang out, share meals, and just be myself with people who understand." - Youth participant

"The Family Team brings tremendous value to our ELL program. Their support for newcomer families, children, and youth strengthens what we do in schools and helps students thrive."
- ELL Team partner



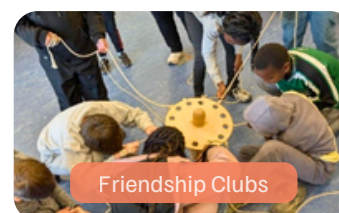
Youth enjoying the Library Club program

"I am so happy that S. has this team. For the first time, I don't feel alone, I feel supported. I am grateful to everyone for everything you've done for my child. I can finally breathe easier, and I am truly thankful for all the care and support you've provided." - SWIS client

"The program allowed me to develop new hobbies, build confidence, and make real friends. I feel heard and respected here."
- Youth participant



Friendship Clubs



Friendship Clubs



Year-end potluck at Maffeo Sutton Park

LANGUAGE

Language is more than communication—it is the foundation for independence, confidence, and belonging. Throughout the year, CVIMS language programs helped newcomers strengthen their English skills while building the confidence to participate fully in work, education, and community life. Whether learners were taking their first steps toward literacy or advancing their language proficiency, each achievement opened new opportunities for connection and success.

A significant accomplishment this year was the continued growth of literacy programming. Learners progressed from foundational literacy into higher-level language classes, demonstrating remarkable perseverance and determination. Their progress reflected not only increased language proficiency but also greater confidence navigating everyday life, accessing services, pursuing employment, and participating more actively in their communities.



Meeting students in Duncan

Innovation also strengthened the learning experience. New hybrid classroom technology and expanded online learning options increased accessibility for students across the region, while dedicated digital literacy support helped learners develop the technology skills needed for both education and daily life. By integrating digital learning into classrooms, students gained practical skills that will continue to support their success long after their language studies.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

Despite significant changes to language programming this year, our team successfully adapted while continuing to deliver high-quality services.

- **Expanded regional outreach** through partnerships and monthly visits to Duncan, providing PBLA support, Avenue navigation, tablet training, and individualized assistance to help learners succeed.
- **Expanded access through online classes**, reaching learners across the region, including Duncan and Port Alberni, while providing tablets to learners who required technology to participate.
- **Strengthened digital literacy** with the addition of a Digital Skills Navigator, who provided classroom instruction, one-on-one coaching, technical support, and digital resources. Digital skills were integrated into all class levels, helping learners confidently use Avenue, complete online assessments, and build essential technology skills.
- **Increased assessment capacity** by training two in-house assessors in the Streamlined Canadian Language Benchmarks Placement Assessment (CLBPA) and Remote with Assessor (RWA), improving scheduling flexibility and client access.

“What I enjoy most about my class is working together and helping each other. My favourite part is meeting new people and getting to know them.” - CVIMS client

The Language Team also demonstrated leadership beyond the classroom by sharing expertise with colleagues across British Columbia and continuing to build professional knowledge through provincial collaboration. These opportunities strengthened the quality of programming while contributing to innovation across the language training sector.

Every lesson, conversation, and milestone represented more than language acquisition—it reflected growing confidence and independence. As newcomers developed the skills to communicate, advocate for themselves, and build meaningful relationships, they became increasingly active participants in the life of their communities. Our language programs continue to open doors that help newcomers build fulfilling lives in Canada.

“I really appreciate all your help. Even though I still face many challenges, I feel I have improved so much since I started classes here.” - CVIMS client

“I greatly admire the work you do. I also appreciate that everyone here comes from somewhere else. We are all the same here.” - CVIMS client



**TOP 3 COUNTRIES
OF LANGUAGE
STUDENTS:
AFGHANISTAN,
ERITREA, AND
SUDAN**

240

**CLBPA
ASSESSMENTS
CONDUCTED**

68

**CLBPT
ASSESSMENTS
CONDUCTED**

CLIENT SUCCESS STORY

KJ participated in CVIMS' Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC) program from 2020 to 2021 to improve his English communication skills as a newcomer to Canada.

During the program, KJ also practiced conversational English with a dedicated CVIMS volunteer, Pam. These one-on-one sessions helped him build confidence in speaking English and laid a strong foundation for settling and growing in Nanaimo.

Today, KJ proudly serves the Nanaimo community as a bus driver with the City of Nanaimo. His journey demonstrates how language education and volunteer support can empower newcomers to gain confidence, build meaningful careers, and contribute to their local community.



“I remember my first day at the Multicultural Society when I came for my English assessment. The assessor welcomed me by saying, “Welcome to Nanaimo. We're glad to have you at our Centre.” Those words immediately made me feel comfortable and, for a little while, I forgot how much I missed the people I had left behind. Thank you for everything you have done for me who came to Canada with so many hopes and dreams. I now believe those dreams can come true. I am so grateful that I found you.”

- CVIMS client

COMMUNITY

Communities thrive when people feel they belong. Throughout the past year, the Community Development & Engagement team focused on creating opportunities for newcomers and long-term residents to connect, learn from one another, and build a more welcoming Central Vancouver Island. Through collaborative partnerships and community-led initiatives, we helped strengthen the relationships that make inclusive communities possible.

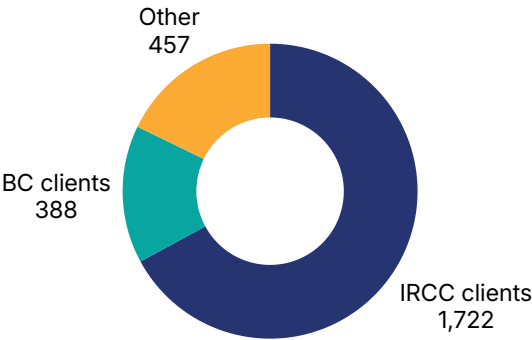
A defining milestone this year was the launch of the Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership (NLIP), which brought together organizations from health, education, local government, business, and the non-profit sector around a shared vision for inclusion. By convening partners, amplifying newcomer voices, and fostering collaboration, the NLIP has strengthened community coordination while reducing duplication and encouraging collective action to address barriers facing newcomers.

Beyond partnership development, our work created spaces where people from diverse backgrounds could build genuine relationships. Cultural celebrations, community dialogues, leadership opportunities, and intergenerational initiatives encouraged meaningful conversations, challenged stereotypes, and fostered mutual understanding. Newcomers were not only participants—they became contributors whose lived experiences helped shape community priorities and informed future planning.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

This past fiscal year included many positive changes for Community Development & Engagement:

- The launch of **the Nanaimo Local Immigration Partnership** including a council of over twenty organizations, community advocates, and newcomers.
- Hosting **the Island Belonging: Paths to Community & Inclusion conference** for all newcomer serving organizations on Vancouver Island.
- Securing multiple **grants to support anti-racism and belonging in Nanaimo.**
- The development of two cohorts of a ten-week **Digital Literacy for Seniors program** that matches senior newcomers with newcomer youth mentors.



This year also saw significant investment in community innovation through external funding that supported anti-racism initiatives, belonging-focused programming, and digital inclusion. Collaborative projects with municipalities, libraries, Indigenous partners, schools, healthcare providers, and community organizations expanded opportunities for participation while creating lasting resources that will continue to benefit the region.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on strengthening partnerships, elevating newcomer leadership, and creating opportunities for people to connect across cultures. Together with our community partners, we are helping build a region where everyone feels welcomed, valued, and empowered to contribute their unique strengths.



“The Indigenous welcome and the immigrant story were both excellent - they set a powerful tone and deeply influenced how participants experienced the conference... There were many thoughtful details I really appreciated... and other small touches that made the atmosphere warm and engaging. I also heard a lot of positive feedback about the Indigenous sessions, which I echo. People really loved them, they sparked meaningful discussions and helped build genuine connections among participants.”

- Island Belonging Conference attendee



Elder Lolly Good at the Island Belonging conference



Ukrainian storytelling at the library

PARTNERS

- Snuneymuxw First Nation and Elders
- L'Association des francophones de Nanaimo
- Community Futures
- School District 68 (SD68)
- Island Health
- City of Nanaimo
- Vancouver Island Immigrant Welcome Centre Alliance
- Island Work Transitions Inc. (WorkBC–Port Alberni)
- Ineo Employment Services
- Career Centre (WorkBC–Parksville)
- Vancouver Island University
- Ethos Career Management Group (WorkBC–Ladysmith)
- Immigrant Employment Council of BC (IEC-BC)
- Literacy Central Vancouver Island (LCVI)
- Loaves and Fishes
- Reaching Out Assisting Refugees
- Nanaimo Foodshare
- Haven Society
- Vancouver Island Regional Library (VIRL)
- Clay Tree Society
- Nanaimo Museum
- Vancouver Island Vocational Rehabilitation Society (VIVRS)
- Nanaimo Community Hospice
- Nanaimo Primary Care Network
- Bikes For Kids
- North Island Employment Foundations Society (NIEFS – WorkBC Campbell River)
- RCMP
- Nanaimo Foundation
- Nanaimo International Film Screening Society
- Port Theatre
- Art Gallery of Nanaimo
- Achev
- AMSSA (Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC)
- Greater Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce
- Justice Education Society
- Migrant Workers Centre
- BC Federation of Labour
- WorkSafeBC
- Creative Employment Access Society (WorkBC–Courtenay)
- Together Against Poverty (TAPS)
- Immigration and Refugee Legal Clinic
- Multi Agency Partnership (MAP)
- BC Refugee Hub
- Safe Haven Transitional Housing
- Pacific Care
- SOS Parksville
- Nanaimo Disability Resource Centre
- Nanaimo Family Life Association
- Nanaimo Foodbank
- Volunteer Nanaimo
- Volunteer BC
- Volunteer Victoria
- Habitat for Humanity
- Nia Counselling
- University of Victoria
- The Port Theatre Society
- St Vincent de Paul
- The Grand Hotel Nanaimo
- Paola Flores Counselling
- MOSAIC
- Archway Community Services
- Island Clinical Counselling
- Integral Counselling
- No Fear Counselling
- Helix Art Therapy
- And many others

VANCOUVER ISLAND PARTNERSHIP (VIP)

The Vancouver Island Partnership (VIP) brings together six immigrant-serving organizations with a shared goal: ensuring newcomers across Vancouver Island receive welcoming, coordinated, and high-quality support. Supported by the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies of BC (AMSSA) and funded by the BC Ministry of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills, the partnership unites the Central Vancouver Island Multicultural Society (CVIMS), Inter-Cultural Association of Greater Victoria (ICA), Vancouver Island Counselling Centre for Immigrants and Refugees (VICCIR), Cowichan Intercultural Society (CIS), Immigrant Welcome Centre (IWC), and Victoria Immigrant and Refugee Centre Society (VIRCS). By sharing knowledge, resources, and ideas, the partnership strengthens services and helps create more welcoming communities across the region.

This year marked an exciting milestone as VIP members came together for their first in-person regional meeting. Gathering face-to-face provided an opportunity to strengthen relationships, celebrate successes, identify shared priorities, and reaffirm a collective commitment to supporting newcomers across Vancouver Island.



Learning together remained at the heart of the partnership. Throughout the year, staff participated in training focused on conflict resolution, children's rights, family safety, immigration stability and employment standards, building knowledge and practical skills that enhance the support provided to newcomers every day.

The partnership also launched regional Settlement and Employment Working Groups, creating ongoing opportunities to share expertise, collaborate on emerging challenges, and strengthen service planning across the Island.

Through continued engagement with provincial partners and participation in sector meetings and conferences, VIP ensured Vancouver Island perspectives helped inform conversations shaping newcomer services across British Columbia.

Together, these efforts reflect more than a year of meetings and training—they demonstrate the power of collaboration to strengthen organizations, build sector capacity, and create more responsive, connected, and welcoming communities for newcomers across Vancouver Island.

"Hearing immigrants' success stories was incredibly moving and served as a powerful reminder of why I do this work. It was a truly valuable and inspiring experience."

- VIP partner



"The in-person Vancouver Island Partnership (VIP) meeting and PD training were excellent opportunities to connect with other frontline support workers, share challenges and successes, and feel supported in the work we do."

- VIP partner

VOLUNTEERS

Behind every successful newcomer journey is often someone who simply showed up—with a warm welcome, a listening ear, or an offer to help. Throughout the past year, the CVIMS Volunteer Program created opportunities for volunteers and newcomers to build meaningful relationships rooted in trust, mutual learning, and community connection. More than 130 active volunteers contributed their time, skills, and compassion, helping transform everyday interactions into lasting experiences of belonging.

This year marked an exciting new chapter as the Volunteer Program was re-established under renewed leadership with a vision that extends beyond traditional volunteer placements. New initiatives, including Mentor Matching and informal language learning opportunities, encouraged volunteers and newcomers to learn from one another while building friendships, confidence, and stronger social networks. These relationships reduced social isolation, strengthened language development, and helped newcomers feel more at home in their new community.

Volunteers supported programs across settlement, language, employment, family, youth, and community engagement, extending the reach of CVIMS services while creating welcoming and culturally responsive spaces where newcomers could thrive. At the same time, volunteers gained valuable leadership experience, intercultural understanding, and a deeper appreciation of the resilience and contributions newcomers bring to our region.

The program also strengthened its presence within the broader community by developing partnerships with Volunteer Nanaimo and Volunteer BC and participating in regional volunteer initiatives and community events. These collaborations increased awareness of volunteerism while creating new opportunities to work collectively in support of inclusion and belonging.

The impact of the Volunteer Program is measured not simply in hours contributed, but in relationships formed, confidence restored, and communities strengthened. Together, volunteers and newcomers are helping create a more welcoming, connected, and inclusive Central Vancouver Island—one meaningful relationship at a time.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- Re-established the **Volunteer Program under new leadership** with a renewed focus on mentorship and community engagement.
- Launched **Mentor Matching** and informal language learning opportunities.
- **Strengthened partnerships** with Volunteer Nanaimo and Volunteer BC.
- **Increased community visibility** through events such as the Nanaimo Night Market.
- Celebrated volunteer contributions through **Volunteer Appreciation Night**.



“Volunteering at CVIMS has been an incredibly meaningful journey. Working alongside newcomers and supporting LINC classes has helped me grow both personally and professionally. Being recognized during Volunteer Appreciation Night reminded me how valuable volunteering truly is. I encourage anyone considering volunteering to take the opportunity - you'll make a difference while growing yourself.”
- CVIMS volunteer

130+	Active Volunteers
510	Volunteer Hours
\$16,320	Estimated Community Matching

“Supporting newcomers is my personal way of contributing to a Canada that welcomes and includes people from every background.”
- CVIMS volunteer



Volunteers at CVIMS' annual Volunteer Appreciation Night

“Helping support language training at CVIMS is not a sacrifice - it is something I genuinely look forward to every week. Watching newcomers become confident in their English and realize they will be OK living here is the greatest reward.” - CVIMS volunteer



Volunteers at Volunteer Nanaimo annual event

“Participating in the Lunar New Year celebration was a meaningful opportunity to share culture and connect with the community. Seeing participants engage with the activities in such a welcoming environment reminded me how community events bring people together and create lasting connections.”
- CVIMS volunteer



Volunteer and staff member at the Island Belonging Conference

The Island Belonging Conference demonstrated the power of coming together to build more welcoming and connected communities. Our volunteers bring this spirit to life every day, showing that belonging is created through connection, participation, and action.

DONORS

Our heartfelt thanks to our generous donors for their continued support. Your generosity helps us create welcoming communities and provide newcomers with the resources, opportunities, and connections they need to thrive.

A huge thank you to the Farooq family and their extraordinary generosity, which makes our life-changing Newcomers Emergency Fund possible. Their ongoing commitment ensures that no newcomer has to face an emergency alone. Their kindness continues to provide hope, security, and a warm welcome to individuals and families as they build new lives in our community.

The CVIMS Newcomers Emergency Fund provides immediate, compassionate support to newcomers and refugee families facing unexpected financial hardship during their first steps in Canada. From emergency groceries and essential household items to medical and dental expenses, temporary accommodation, and other urgent needs, the fund helps restore stability and dignity during times of crisis.

A huge thank you to our donors Chaundra Willms, Dave Travers, Sabrina (Qiannan) Liu, Mandeep Kumar, Imogene Lim, Jairaj Savant, Sydney Snyder, Tamorah Trickett, Julie Foster, and Farai Simbabure.



Donate Today

Your one-time gift helps newcomers build safe, connected, and successful lives in our community.



Give Monthly

Provide reliable, ongoing support that helps sustain essential programs and services year-round.



Corporate Giving

Partner with CVIMS to create meaningful community impact while demonstrating your organization's social responsibility.



Sponsor an Event

Help bring communities together by supporting events that celebrate diversity, inclusion, and belonging.

Donate Today: www.cvims.org/community/donation



BECOME A CVIMS MEMBER

At CVIMS, our members are more than supporters—they are champions of inclusion, belonging, and vibrant communities. Membership is an opportunity to become part of a growing network of individuals who believe that everyone deserves the opportunity to thrive, regardless of where they come from.

As a CVIMS member, you help shape the future of our organization by electing the Board of Directors, participating in our Annual General Meeting, and supporting our mission and strategic direction. Whether you are an individual, a family, a community partner, or someone who simply believes in building welcoming and inclusive communities, we invite you to join us. Together, we can continue creating opportunities, fostering belonging, and making Central Vancouver Island a place where everyone feels valued and connected.

Becoming a member is easy.

Visit cvims.org/community/memberships to learn more.





We were excited to welcome Jenni Otilie Keppler to the Island Belonging Conference, where she brought conversations to life through visual scribing. By capturing key ideas, themes, and moments visually as they emerged, Jenni created a unique record of the conversations and connections shared throughout the day. Her work helped participants see how ideas came together and reflected the collective spirit of learning, connection, and belonging at the heart of the conference.

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**Central Vancouver Island
Multicultural Society**