



OUR COMMUNITY. OUR FUTURE.

# Annual Report 2020 - 2021



Land of Dreams Urban Farm | Miskanawah Elders Blessing Ceremony

We gratefully acknowledge the support of our funders and partners:





## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Andre van Dijk | Chris McNelly | Elizabeth Quarshie  
| Elsy Gagné | Imran Gulam | Lauren Andre | Mike  
Maloney | Mike Shaikh | Pat Firminger | Patrick  
Etokudo | Ross Piché | Samer Tahhan



Margaret Chisholm  
Resettlement Centre

23 McDougall Court NE

"Our Community. Our Future."



## Chris McNelly | Chair, Board of Directors

On behalf of the CCIS Board of Directors, I wish to recognize and congratulate CCIS for another successful and inspiring year. It is through the selfless giving and tireless efforts of our incredible team of staff and volunteers that we are able to persevere through many challenges to nurture an inclusive society where immigrants and refugees can reach their full potential. Thank you for inspiring us and for everything you do for CCIS.

Canada continues its legacy as a world leader in the number of immigrants and refugees that are welcomed to our land and are able to call Canada their new home. Since 1980, Canada has welcomed over one million refugees who were forced to flee their homes due to conflict, persecution, human rights violations, violent unrest, and war. Despite such tragic circumstances, our newcomers embrace the opportunity that Canada provides to rebuild their lives and become vital contributors to our economy and our cultural diversity. CCIS is proud to be a part of this legacy as we mark a major milestone this year to celebrate our 40th anniversary. Since our inception in 1981, we have been a community leader with solid experience in the

design and delivery of comprehensive services for our newest neighbours. Last year, CCIS served over 12,000+ people and welcomed 955 newcomers through our Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre (MCRC). MCRC provides refugees with temporary accommodations where they receive basic necessities such as food, shelter, and clothing as well as vital information, orientation and support to ensure they are prepared to begin their new lives in Canada with a sense of belonging and independence, in accordance with our Mission.

We will continue to pursue our Vision through our new 5-year Strategic Plan:

**Funding** | Ensure financial stability and sustainability.

**Programming and Services** | Ensure programming and services remain relevant and responsive to client needs.

**Advocacy and Centre of Influence** | Advocate for clients to the public and the government to demonstrate sectoral leadership that influences decisions and drives innovation, efficiency, and effectiveness.

**Communication** | Ensure effective communications with our internal and external stakeholders.

**Technology** | Leverage technologies to integrate and optimize our business internally and externally, while maintaining the value of traditional approaches.

**Organizational Effectiveness** | Ensure the organization is well positioned to deliver on its mission, mitigate risks, achieve its goals, and perform to its full potential.

I would like to thank my fellow Board Directors for volunteering their time to provide strong governance and ensure CCIS continues its success. Finally, I wish to acknowledge and express my sincerest gratitude to those Directors who are leaving the Board after serving CCIS for the past six years, including Mike Maloney and Samer Tahan. For the past six years, I have been given the honour of serving CCIS, and I have had the pleasure of working with an incredible team of dedicated and passionate humanitarians.

Thank you and all the best in the years ahead.



## Vision

A society where immigrants and refugees can reach their potential.

## Mission

In partnership, we empower immigrants and refugees to successfully resettle and integrate.

At CCIS, we believe that through understanding and appreciation of the Indigenous experience, we will be better positioned to serve our clients and our community.

We acknowledge Calgary and area as Treaty 7 territory, we acknowledge the Treaty 7 nations; the Piikani, Siksika, Kainai, Iyârhe Nakoda and Tsuut'ina First Nations. We acknowledge the ancestral territory of Siksikaitisipi, the Blackfoot Confederacy, and the home of the Métis nation, region 3 of Southern Alberta.

We are all treaty people.

# Fariborz Birjandian | CEO

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, this fiscal year was an unprecedented experience. From the outset, government and social service agencies needed to work quickly to develop protocol and respond to this crisis. We immediately initiated a community-wide conversation, bringing together multiple stakeholders to identify strategies for mitigating the risks associated with COVID-19 among the vulnerable newcomer population. This initiative is still very much alive and has been identified as one of the best community practices in responding to the COVID-19 crisis.

We were also confronted with the decision of whether to close our offices in Calgary and rural Alberta. We determined that hundreds of vulnerable newcomers would be negatively impacted if we were to stop in-person service delivery; we therefore committed to keep our offices open with extensive health and safety protocols in place.

Here are a few key achievements from this landmark year in CCIS' history:

- Successfully transitioned 70% of our programs and services online and continued receiving newcomers. As a result, we served 15% more clients compared to the previous year.
- Reached the end of our five year strategic plan in March 2021 and

initiated the strategic planning process for 2021-2026. The goals and objectives have been decided by the Board, and we are looking forward to the next five years.

- Our CARF accreditation ended in 2020, and a reaccreditation process was completed. All our policies and procedures were reviewed by CARF consultants, and we received full accreditation for the next three years, confirming that we meet the highest standards set by the accreditation body.
- We have been working to obtain a development permit for the expansion of our Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre. We anticipate that the permit will be issued in July 2021. We have committed to building a 16,000 square foot facility to enhance Calgary's capacity to welcome and support refugees.
- Opened an office in Claresholm and began negotiating partnerships with local organizations in Taber to provide local settlement services. These towns join Banff, Okotoks, Airdrie, High River, Brooks, and Drumheller on our roster of rural service locations. We are honoured to support the revitalization of these communities through the attraction and retention of newcomers.
- Selected to lead a collaborative effort with 12 organizations across the

Prairie region to support temporary foreign workers in the Agricultural industry. This initiative ensures that TFWs go through COVID-19 protocols to arrive safely at their destination and access support services, if needed.

The achievements of this past year were made possible by the trust and support of our funders and partners, and the resilience and commitment of CCIS staff and volunteers. I would like to take the opportunity to thank my very engaged and dedicated Board, all of the funders listed in this report, our private donors, and Bishop McGrattan and the Calgary Catholic Diocese for their support of Privately Sponsored Refugees.

The next fiscal year sees CCIS enter its 40th year. During this period, we have partnered with the Calgary Diocese to sponsor over 8,000 refugees, representing all cultures, faiths and nationalities.

Since its humble beginnings when a small group of volunteers came together in a church basement, we have grown to become one of the four largest immigrant serving agencies in Canada, recognized on a local, national and international level. This tumultuous year has served as a reminder of the important work we do, and the vital role that CCIS continues to play in the community, and in the lives of our newcomer clients.

# Clients Served

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Languages Spoken  
Top 3  
Arabic, English & Tigrinya



Countries of Origin  
Top 3  
Eritrea, India & Nigeria



Largest Age Group  
26 - 40 | 62.1%









# Willow Creek Immigrant Services

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Willow Creek Immigrant Services was established in Claresholm, Alberta in August 2020 primarily in response to the IRCC Rural & Northern Immigration Pilot (RNIP) project embarked upon by the Claresholm Economic Development Committee.

In the first of three years, the project would see the committee nominate qualified immigrants and their families both in Canada and abroad to work and set down roots in the town.

As a result, 40 newcomers (applicants and their family members) will be calling Claresholm their new home! Our first family has now received their Permanent Residency status. There are plans in place to nominate and invite up to 40 more applicants in the coming year. With seed funding from

the Provincial Government's Settlement, Integration and Language Project grant, a storefront location was opened in downtown Claresholm and has so far served over 75 clients.

In addition, the Welcoming Claresholm Committee was created and is comprised of community stakeholders, service providers and residents who are actively engaged in creating welcoming spaces and practices in the community.

With an established office and staff, as well as a successful partnership with the Town of Claresholm, the team is working to provide robust settlement services, while building community capacity to support newcomers and residents alike.

## TFW Prairie Region Project

From January to June 2021, CCIS led a tri-provincial project in support of temporary foreign workers (TFWs) affected by COVID-19, which aims to establish a comprehensive

and coordinated approach to meet the unique needs of TFWs across the Prairie Provinces.

Recognizing the essential role that TFWs play in Canada's labour market

and food supply chain, as well as the additional challenges they face as a result of COVID-19, this project has a particular focus on those who are employed in agriculture and its related industries.





Funded by Employment and Social Development Canada (ESDC), this novel project is delivered in collaboration with 13 partnering organizations, including the three provincial umbrella organizations.

This initiative is the first of its kind in the prairies, and it provides newcomer serving agencies, migrant workers support organizations, employer partners and community organizations throughout Alberta, Saskatchewan and

Manitoba, with a special opportunity to collaboratively create a robust and enduring network of support for TFWs across the prairie provinces.





# Resettlement & Integration Services

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## **6,616 newcomers served**

We secured funding through IRCC settlement programming for Client Support Services (CSS) to provide case management to government sponsored refugees (GARs) and privately sponsored refugees (PSRs) with complex settlement and health needs. The CSS program consists of case managers, health navigators, a youth case manager, and a disability resource navigator.

Health navigators support GARs and PSRs with education and navigation on how to access our health care system, including health literacy education, and accompaniment by public transport to various health appointments.

Case managers have been providing supports and education to GARs and PSRs on various aspects of life in Canada either in-home, or in a community setting, while the disability resource navigator assists with education, supports and navigation to access services for clients with special needs.

The main goal of the program is to empower clients and provide them with skills to independently access settlement services. Clients can receive services through the CSS program until they feel equipped to access settlement services on their own, or up to maximum of 24 months.



The Francophone Project had very exciting and successful 2020-2021 year.

Formal partnerships were established with three Calgary based Francophone settlement agencies - CANAF, PIA and RIFA. The aim of the partnership is to connect Francophone newcomers with settlement and language services available through our Francophone partners.

We took part in the province's Francophone and Acadian celebrations by organizing, sponsoring and/or participating in multiple events to celebrate local Francophone and Acadian history and heritage.

CCIS and CANAF also partnered to deliver and coordinate settlement services to Francophone newcomers in the rural areas.





# Family & Children's Services

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## 2,279 newcomers served

After developing a close working relationship with Family Supports for Children with Disabilities (FSCD), Family and Children's Services was requested to become a fee for service provider offering parenting support to FSCD families. Recognizing the lack of first language accredited programming for newcomer families that not only seek, but are also funded to receive, much needed formal and natural supports, FSCD approached CCIS directly based on the positive outcomes of our previous work with FSCD and newcomer families.

The former team from the Parent Link Family Resource Centre was able to pivot accordingly, and focus their

direction in the area of offering parenting support to families navigating the disabilities systems.

Previously, newcomer families, both needing support and already approved for support, were dependent on both the system and agency abilities to deliver programming in first language. In becoming a formal fee for service contractor, the FCS department ensures that newcomer families receive culturally safe programming, and do not wait longer than necessary to benefit from FSCD resources that contribute towards the development of healthy families.

# Community Development & Integration Services

## 1,668 newcomers served

The Centre for Refugee Resilience ran a brief project through funding from City of Calgary's Change Can't Wait initiative.

The project worked with mainstream mental health providers to build capacity for working with newcomers.

The project trained 15 partner

organizations in the skills of working with interpreters and offered free access to CCIS certified interpreters over the course of the project. They were pleased with the ease of access that CCIS had to offer for bookings and found that the trainings enhanced the skills of their staff to offer mental health support with an interpreter present.

One of the goals of the project was to provide opportunities for partners to explore long-term sustainability of paid certified interpreters, through mock invoices to outline costs. Some of the partners plan to utilize the service beyond the end of the project, indicating a better community capacity to work with newcomers.





2019 marked the 40th Anniversary of Canada's Private Sponsorship Program (PSR). Since 1979, Canada has admitted more than 327,000 refugees from all areas of the world that were sponsored by approximately two million Canadians working as private groups and individuals.

CCIS manages the Sponsorship Agreement for the Roman Catholic Diocese of Calgary. In 2019, the Sponsorship Program sponsored 293 refugees and received 82 refugees in 2020.

Since the Calgary Roman Catholic Diocese and CCIS began sponsoring in Aug 1979, a total of 8,782 refugees have arrived under the sponsorship program. Refugees have originated from 26 countries.



# Business, Employment & Training Services

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## 10,206 newcomers served

The Foundational Construction Trades (FCT) training program was envisioned in line with Alberta's Recovery Plan to get Albertans back to work, and to address skills shortages of new entrants to the construction industry. Alberta's government remains steadfast in their commitment to achieve goals of diversification, job creation and financial well being.

The FCT training program covers principal basics in several trades: pipe trades, wood trades, bricklaying, painting and drywalling, sheet metal, insulation and electrical components/basics. Service providers SAIT and AIP Safety Training play a crucial role in providing hands-on training.

Hands-on training is further complemented by CCIS' newly developed operational lab at our main office. The customized labs provided substantial and extensive opportunities for trainees to practice and hone their new skills.

The Honorable Alberta Minister of Labour Jason Copping, and MLA Muhammed Yaseen attended the graduation ceremony to personally congratulate our graduates. The Minister took the opportunity to applaud the efforts and optimism of the CCIS team and instructor, especially during the erratic state of the Alberta economy, and the effects of the pandemic.



This year, we signed a 3-year contract with Service Canada to deliver the new Youth Hub project.

For this project, we leveraged our 25+ years of experience delivering employment services for newcomer youth, to develop comprehensive and customized interventions for three distinct demographics of young newcomers: general newcomer youth, high-needs refugee youth, and young

newcomer professionals.

By focusing on skill building, social engagement, and mental and emotional wellbeing, the Youth Hub project takes a holistic approach to ensuring that all newcomer youth have the skills, connections and support they need to secure their first jobs in Canada, and to successfully integrate into our workplaces, post-secondary institutions, and communities.

# Rural Alberta Services

## 1,875 newcomers served

The move to align all our rural services and make it more integrated and complementary is now complete. We are now fully integrated and all the staff in our different rural locations are one team. Although this was an outcome we were working towards eventually, COVID and the move to remote services expedited that.

Our staff now work in teams based on the services they provide, rather than their location. We have settlement teams, Canada Connects, and volunteer teams. We also have one leadership team that coordinates and supports all staff.

Services like virtual workshops are planned together, and are marketed to the all rural communities we serve. We have seen an uptake in that regard, even from beyond our rural communities.

Another area of integration is in data management. We have embarked on a project to consolidate all our data and create a smooth client management system to support our service delivery.





During spring 2020, our rural communities experienced significant COVID19 outbreaks.

In High River we led a coalition of community organizations to respond to the largest outbreak in North America while in Brooks, we were part of the City of Brooks Emergency Response Centre, and the Community

Response Committee, to respond to a large outbreak representing almost 10% of the population.

In particular, we oversaw the intake and assignment of the COVID isolation hotels provided by the City of Brooks.

Besides dealing with our regular clients through universal outreach to

all clients we served during the last year, our staff was also heavily engaged in community response. Through the collective community response in Brooks and High River, the spread of COVID19 was under control in a very short time and the needs of those impacted were addressed smoothly.



Ibtisam Miiti

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**CCIS Volunteer**



Born in Somalia, Ibtisam had to move with her family at an early age so that her mother could find work. They spent several years in Syria before coming to Canada under the Government Sponsored Refugees (GAR) Program. Ibtisam arrived in Calgary with her family in 2011 and was warmly welcomed by the staff at Margaret Chisholm Resettlement Centre (MCRC). The two weeks they spent at MCRC were filled with fond memories, and led to friendships that will last a lifetime.

When Ibtisam started grade 10 in 2012, she also started to receive tutoring support from the CCIS Immigrant Youth Outreach Project. Soon, our long-time staff and volunteer Thanh Ly, recognized her language skills and empathic nature. Whenever Ibtisam was around and had finished her own homework, Thanh would introduce her to other students who spoke Arabic and Somali and encouraged her to volunteer as a tutor. That was the beginning of Ibtisam's eight (8) year long association with CCIS.

"It felt good to help students with language barriers at IYOP. It felt good to help and guide them. And the students felt good too."

Ibtisam has volunteered in various roles with new immigrants and refugees. She tutored youth in high school, mentored girls on academic and life skills, presented

to university students about the refugee experience, supported event preparation and administration, provided language support for employment counsellors, and assisted newcomers complete job applications. Despite her busy school and work schedule, Ibtisam was always committed to making a difference and was always willing to help.

"Without CCIS, I wouldn't be where I am today."

Through hard work and determination, Ibtisam completed her first university degree this spring. Like many new graduates, she is filled with hope for the future. Ibtisam plans to find work as a human resource professional, starting from entry level positions, then getting her CHRP credential, and eventually completing her master's degree.

Ibtisam continues to have a strong sense of community and looks for opportunities to support new immigrants and refugees. She sees a gap in support for young immigrant and refugee boys, and is especially interested in developing programming to support them.




Ibtisam hopes to pay forward the same mentorship and guidance she had received, so that all youth immigrants can successfully integrate and build their future in Canada.



# Volunteers

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Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant decrease in the number of volunteers we were able to utilize. Volunteer applications also decreased based upon the required health and safety regulations. However, there was an impressive retention rate of past volunteers in our rural offices.

	CALGARY	RURAL ALBERTA
 new volunteers	372	17
 volunteer hours	8,798.75	722.50
 retention from 2019 - 2020	19.87%	96.65%



# COVID-19 Crisis Response for Newcomers

Process and Outcomes | March 2020 - September 2020



**2163**<sup>1</sup>  
households were directly supported to avert crisis.



*"[CCIS] was phenomenal. Access to information in home language was a major priority."*

## Crisis Response Process

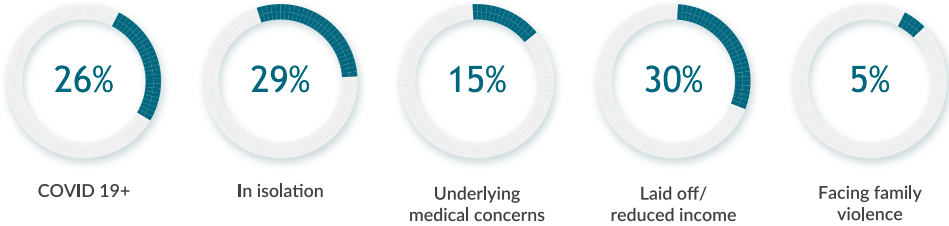
Referral to Crisis Response Team through Community Partners **1**

Referrals **233**  
Supported by the crisis team **163**  
Diverted **70**

*"It was helpful to have someone to talk to."*

## Most Common Underlying Factors

Triage **2**



<sup>1</sup>Based on available data; actual number of individuals serviced is higher as full household data not always documented.

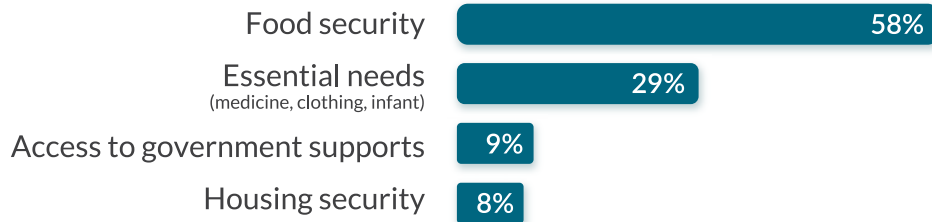
Client Needs Assessment **3**



## Most Common Needs

Individualized Response Plan

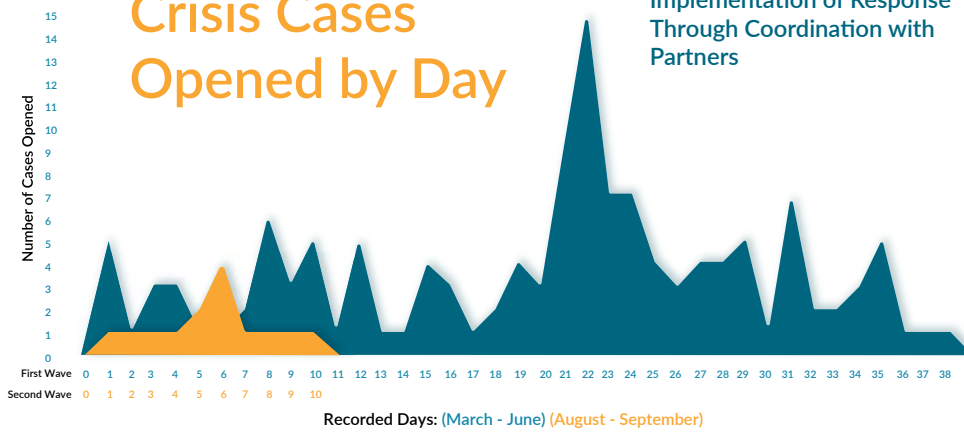
4



## Crisis Cases Opened by Day

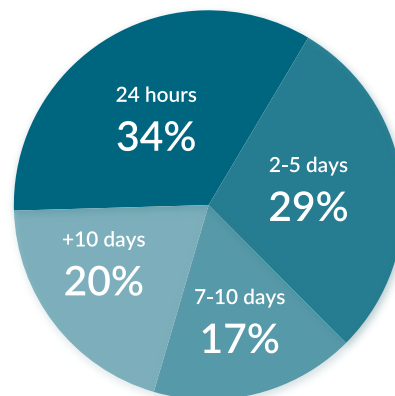
Implementation of Response Through Coordination with Partners

5



## Cases Closed Within

*[The team was] very helpful, really amazing...met all my expectations."*



Follow-up & Internal/External Connections to Ongoing Support

6

# Crisis Response Team



## Leadership Team

Leadership focused on creating and communicating the model and on developing partnerships.



## Triage Team

The triage team reviewed referrals and assigned clients to the Crisis Response Team or diverted to another internal service.



## Crisis Response Teams

The Response Teams were responsible for completing a needs assessment with clients and developing and implementing an individualized response plan; each of the five crisis response teams included one Coordinator.



## Support Positions

Three additional team members provided foundational support, including: Resource Identification, IT, and mobilization of the Interpretation & Translation Team.



## Food Distribution Centre

CCIS established an on-site food distribution centre to facilitate the significant demand for deliveries of culturally appropriate food and other essential supplies.



## Community Partners and Volunteers

Immigrant-serving agencies, Primary Care Networks, social services, ethno-cultural organizations, volunteer groups, and community resources were fundamental to the Crisis Response.

# Notable Outcomes

## Clients

**Diversion from immediate crises** related to food, housing, and health.



Clients experienced a service that was **helpful, responsive, efficient and that ultimately made a difference in their lives.**



**New connections** to community services and resources for ongoing and underlying needs.



**Prevention** of unsafe COVID-19 behaviours, such as breaking isolation to access basic needs.



## System

**Increased awareness** of CCIS services & CCIS increased awareness of community resources.



**Increased cross-departmental awareness and knowledge** among staff.



**New organizational relationship** with the local health system to coordinate support to immigrant and ethno-cultural community members facing an outbreak.



Staff and partners agree that the model was **effective and is replicable.**



# COVID-19 Internal Response

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## Joint Health and Safety Committee Overview

Fiscal 2020-2021 was the year a microscopic red and black virus changed everything. The CCIS Joint Health & Safety Committee (JHSC) quickly responded and set in motion a series of projects designed to inform, and protect, our staff, clients, and stakeholders.

The most immediate requirement was education, and with the quickly changing scientific data and recommendations, the JHSC was consistently responsive and reactive to the most recent guidelines and protocols. The internal Staff Portal was used to steadily provide staff with updated information and ways to stay safe.

A 12-page handbook for staff was developed which established CCIS policies and procedures for three (3) key areas, as required by Alberta Health Services and the Province of Alberta.

1. Safety Measures
2. Administrative Controls
3. Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

This document was uploaded on the portal and e-mailed to every staff person for reference. Mask use and temperature checks were initiated prior to being mandated by the province and city.

Extensive staff and client protocols were developed to maintain contact tracing requirements, and security personnel were hired to assist with entrance to the building, and to further ensure compliance with all established procedures.

Marketing produced hundreds of health & safety related documents, posters, forms, information sheets, many of which were translated into eleven (11) different languages. Many of these documents were re-purposed for all our rural locations or were produced specifically to address unique issues in the region (i.e., Cargill and JBS). This material was shared across all divisions and was posted at the main office in highly visible locations. The JHSC efforts were commended by both an external Safety Auditor and the CARF International Surveyor.

Sanitation stations were established at every location and on every floor at the main office. Every staff member received an individual package of PPE for personal use. Additional masks, shields, gowns, gloves, sanitized wipes, and face masks were provided to staff as requested, to decrease the risk of transmission.

Staff was off shifted to reduce the numbers on-site, and those who could work from home were advised to do so. Many programs successfully transitioned to on-line digital platforms, and staff worked diligently to ensure all clients had the required technology and training on how to use it.

Human Resources and Health & Safety developed comprehensive protocols when cases of COVID were reported and worked collaboratively to respond to these situations quickly and effectively, while maintaining confidentiality. Regular updates were provided to staff to ensure transparency, offer support to staff or clients as required, and to ensure no one was left to deal with COVID alone.





# Donations Report



**\$20,780.25**  
allocated to 30 families

We gratefully acknowledge the individual community members, organizations and foundations which designate our agency as a recipient of their generosity.

100% of all donations go directly to refugee and immigrant families most in need. We retain no administrative fee.

The fall-out from the pandemic left an already vulnerable population in an increasingly dire situation. Job losses in low paying positions, schools moving on-line, and the health challenges around COVID-19, created a perfect storm of financial

and emotional difficulties for many of our families.

Food security, housing & rent, and health care/mental health were areas requiring the most assistance.

Support from various funding agencies and other donations provided CCIS with the additional financial means to respond immediately to the shortfalls reported by many of our clients.

Donations can be made directly on our website via a secure payment link.

Our sincere thanks for your on-going and consistent support.

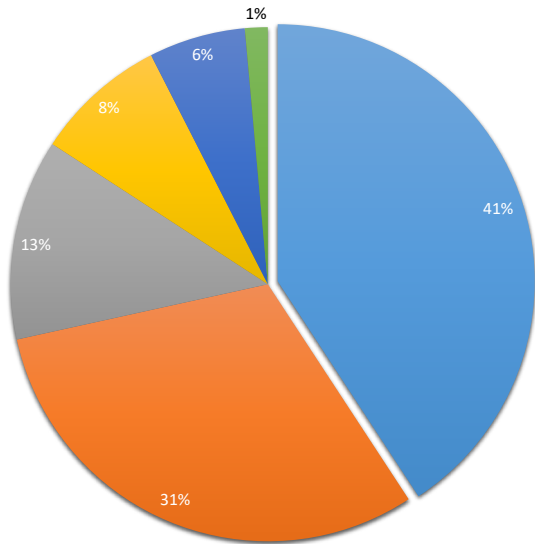


**\$15,948.00**  
COVID-19 grant  
allocated to 21 families



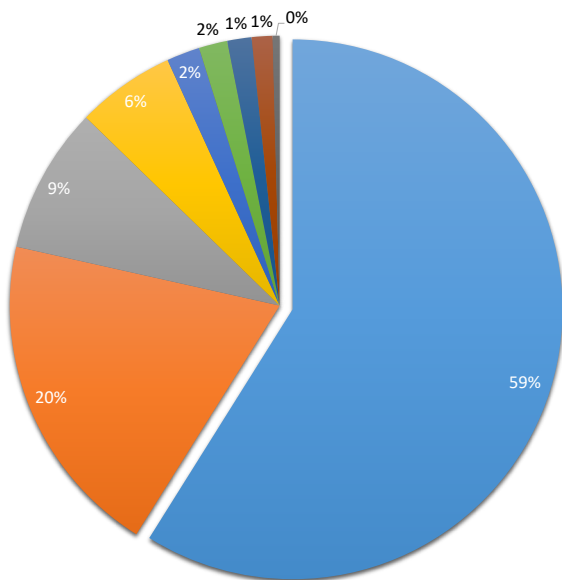
Full financial statements available at: [www.ccisab.ca](http://www.ccisab.ca)

### ALLOCATION OF REVENUES TO PROGRAM AREAS



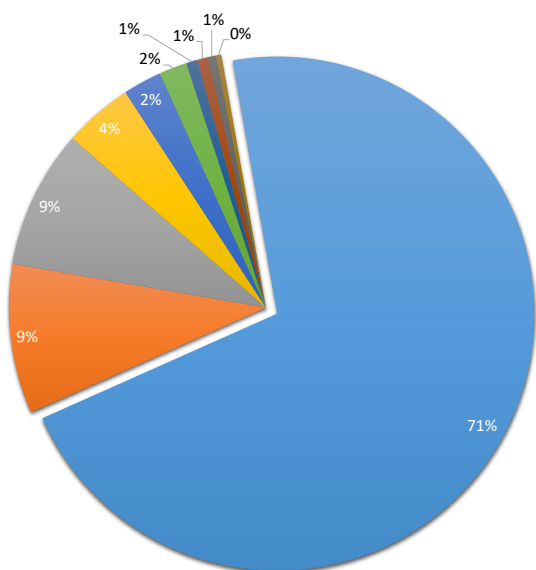
- Business, Employment & Training Services
- Resettlement & Integration Services
- Community Development & Integration Services
- Family & Children's Services
- Rural Programs
- Administration

### REVENUE BY SOURCE



- Federal Programs - IRCC
- Alberta Programs
- Federal Programs - Other
- Revenue - Other
- City of Calgary
- United Way of Calgary and Area
- User Fees
- Alberta Health
- Donations

### EXPENSES BY TYPE



- Wages & Employee Benefits
- Education Training
- Office & Other
- Professional Fees & Program Consultants
- Amortization of Capital Assets
- Rent, Utilities & Others
- Automobile & Transportation
- Conference & Staff Development
- Interest on Long Term Debt
- Non-recoverable GST



[cciswelcomehere.com](http://cciswelcomehere.com)



Calgary Catholic Immigration Society



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