



Interior
Community
Services

Enriching Lives, Strengthening Communities

Annual Report 2024

interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca

Contents

A Year of Community Partnership

4	Message from our Executive Officer
5	History and CARF Accreditation
6	A word with Penny Ouchi
8	Community Living BC
10	Kamloops Immigrant Services
12	United Way British Columbia
14	TNRL Merritt
16	ICS Merritt
17	Child, Youth and Family Services
20	City of Kamloops
22	Housing Department Highlights
24	Mount Paul Community Food Centre
26	Kari Beppe and Tracy Hoot
28	Human Resources
30	Community Living Services Highlights
32	Foundry Kamloops
34	Financial Profile

In 2024, Interior Community Services provided services for 3,299 individuals.



Land Acknowledgement

Interior Community Services (ICS) is an agency that offers services in many areas in what is recognized as the acquired name of British Columbia, Canada. We respectfully acknowledge that these services, and areas in which we work, are on land situated in traditional territories steeped in Indigenous history and home to many First Nations, Métis, and Inuit people.

ICS is committed to becoming a better ally and support system to Indigenous communities and First Nations people. We recognize that we can do better by continuing to engage in decolonizing our practice, having difficult, sometimes uncomfortable conversations, and seeking to enhance our practice of reconciliation.

With great humility and commitment to increasing our knowledge and awareness of the impact, both historical and present, of colonization on First Peoples, ICS would like to acknowledge the people whose land we are located on and the communities that we offer service to.

ICS offers service to many Nations in the following unceded, ancestral, and traditional territories of the First Peoples:

- Secwepemc (Kamloops, Barriere, Chase, Savona)
- Nlaka'pamux, Syilx, Secwepemc (Merritt), (Ashcroft)
- Ktunaxa (East and West Kootenays)
- Tsilhqot'in, Secwepemc (Williams Lake and surrounding areas)
- St'at'imc (Lytton, Lillooet)
- Syilx, Ktunaxa, Secwepemc, Sinixt (Revelstoke)
- Metis' Nations: in each of the communities served
- Urban Indigenous peoples residing out of their traditional territories

A Thank You to Our Community

Val Janz - Executive Officer

As I reflect on 2024, I'm filled with pride and gratitude for the resilience and dedication of our staff, as well as the invaluable support of our community partners.

2024 was a year of significant change and growth for Interior Community Services (ICS), and the collaborative efforts of the community have helped us successfully navigate new challenges and opportunities.

In 2024, ICS embraced significant changes to reinforce our structure and enhance service delivery. New leadership roles, specialized positions, and streamlined processes have improved our efficiency, positioning us to better serve our community and fulfill our mission: Enriching Lives, Strengthening Communities.

Our staff's commitment is the foundation of our progress, ensuring our services continue to meet the needs of the individuals and families we serve. From implementing new initiatives to enhancing existing programs, their work has been instrumental in driving positive outcomes. The collaboration across teams, combined with the unwavering support of our community, has fostered innovation and adaptability, allowing us to respond effectively to the evolving needs of those we serve. Together, we have upheld our shared commitment to building stronger, healthier communities.

At the core of our work is the community we serve. Your support—through volunteering, donations, or advocacy—has been invaluable. Your belief in our mission inspires us to do better every day, and we are deeply grateful for your trust and partnership.

As we move forward, we remain dedicated to fostering collaboration, embracing change, and making a lasting impact. Enriching Lives, Strengthening Communities is not just a statement—it's the guiding principle behind our efforts to create an environment where individuals thrive, families find stability, and communities grow stronger.

Thank you for being part of ICS. Your continued support and partnership inspire us to strive for excellence as we work together to build a brighter future and create lasting positive change in the lives of those we serve.

With gratitude,

Val Janz



Our History

The history of Interior Community Services (ICS) is rooted in the legacies of two Kamloops based non-profit organizations: Kamloops Youth Resources Society and Kamloops Community Support Services. In 1997, the two organizations partnered to deliver family services under the Provincial Government's Building Blocks initiative. This successful collaboration led to their official amalgamation in 2003, forming Interior Community Services. Since then, ICS has grown significantly, expanding its programs to meet the needs of children, youth, families, seniors, and individuals with diverse abilities. Today, ICS continues to connect individuals to essential resources, fostering a stronger, more supportive community.



CARF Accreditation

For the last 20 years, programs and services at Interior Community Services have been accredited through the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF) Canada. The purpose of accreditation is to ensure standards of quality, effectiveness, and safety are met.

Accreditation serves to recognize and validate organizations that consistently adhere to these standards, promoting trust and confidence among collaborators, including clients, families, funding agencies, and the public. Through a rigorous process of evaluation every three years, and continuous improvement, accreditation fosters accountability, drives organizational excellence, and ultimately enhances the quality of care and outcomes for the individuals served.

Building a Brighter Future:

A Personal Journey of Community Partnership

As the President of the Desert Gardens Seniors' Community Centre (SCC), I have always believed in the power of community and the importance of giving back. Our mission at SCC has been to enrich the lives of seniors, and now, we are extending that mission to support the younger generation. This is why the SCC chose to donate the ground floor of our building, known as Desert Gardens, to ICS.

This donation valued at \$3 million will support Community Living BC programming and serve as the future location for Foundry Kamloops—a gesture that represents our commitment to the community.

Our relationship with ICS spans over a decade. During this time, we've developed a strong bond based on mutual respect and shared goals. We wanted to continue giving back to the community by donating this property to ICS, focusing on future generations. I know ICS is dedicated to honouring the work of SCC and carrying the legacy of community partnership forward. This partnership truly embodies the spirit of community, and we couldn't think of a better way to honour the legacy of the Seniors' Community Centre.

ICS was awarded the contract to deliver Foundry BC programming at Foundry Kamloops in 2022 and has been searching for a suitable downtown location since then. Community and youth engagement groups identified the downtown core as the ideal location for Foundry Kamloops. This location is perfectly situated, accessible, and visible.

Kamloops and area youth between 12-24, and their caregivers, will access critical services and supports in this space. Foundry Kamloops is a comprehensive health facility dedicated to serving youth aged 12-24.

As I reflect on this journey, I am filled with pride and hope. It takes a community to build a village, and by working together with the many resources available to us, we can enable our future generation to develop and flourish. It is our dream that everyone will support the village being Foundry Kamloops, allowing them to develop and provide the love and care required for our future.

ICS has launched a fundraising campaign to raise \$4.5 million for the renovation of the donated space. This partnership between SCC and ICS is a testament to the power of collaboration. By working together, we continue to build a brighter future for the next generation, ensuring everyone can thrive.

Penny Ouchi
Seniors' Community Centre, President





Building Stronger Communities: The Power of Partnership

Community Living BC

CLBC and ICS have been partners since 2003, when ICS was formed through an amalgamation of two separate non-profits.

“ICS is a great partner,” said Sonja Williston from Community Living BC (CLBC). She has worked with Interior Community Services (ICS) for about a year and finds the team collaborative. “CLBC comes with a problem, and ICS comes to the table with creative solutions and goes the extra mile. ICS does great work for the community.”

“ICS aligns seamlessly with our values. CLBC’s philosophy integrates people into the community, and ICS excels at meeting people where they are and including them in the community whenever possible.”

“ICS is community-oriented and has a finger on the pulse of what is happening,” Sonja said. “They are reliable and involved with housing placements, sharing information, and presenting opportunities to CLBC.”

“Our contributions enrich the lives of individuals and families in the communities ICS serves,” Sonja explained. “We try to be responsive to ICS’s needs to help the folks being referred. The partnership is always aimed at making things work, taking a collaborative approach to meet the needs of managers, staff, and individuals, with creative solutions.”

A good example of this responsiveness is the collaborative approach to helping an independent suite be moved into a more stable living environment, despite some resistance.

“The whole work has been rewarding,” Sonja reflected on the partnership. “Seeing individuals flourish in their environment through housing and day programs shows the flexibility and support being provided.”

“Forward-thinking and creativity excite us about the ongoing partnership with ICS,” Sonja said. “Their willingness to come to the table to solve crises with CLBC as a partner is invaluable.”

“Teamwork is vital in making things work,” Sonja emphasized. “We appreciate the collaboration and willingness to come together in complex situations. The breadth of experience is an asset in offering a variety of effective solutions.”

“Advocate for ICS,” Sonja encouraged other organizations and individuals. “ICS has a pulse on what is happening in the community.”



Partners in Settlement

Kamloops Immigrant Services

“Collaboration and fair partnerships inspire us to support Interior Community Services (ICS),” said Saejin Sage Chang (Sage), the Settlement Team Lead at Kamloops Immigrant Services (KIS). For many years, KIS has worked closely with ICS to provide the right support at the right time.

“Ensuring individuals are able to access equitable, diverse, and inclusive services aligns with our values,” Sage explained. Both organizations aim to help people in the community thrive.

“During the Ukrainian crisis, ICS helped newcomers settle in Canada,” Sage shared, recalling an instance where ICS provided a car seat for a newcomer.

“We’ve been partners with ICS for a long time and the organization plays a crucial role in building a stronger community.” By reaching for resources within each other’s organizations, there is a strong focus on collaboration and referrals which helps bridge gaps in services, ensuring individuals receive the support they need.

“Our contributions enrich the lives of individuals and families in the communities ICS serves,” Sage said. She emphasized the importance of working together to achieve common goals. “When our organizations aim for the same results, those connections for support happen almost telepathically.”

“Supporting clients and being client-focused excites us about the ongoing partnership with ICS,” Sage said, looking forward to collaborating on programs in Merritt and other areas. “We always focus on the client, helping them navigate through their life and journey.”

Other areas of community support and new initiatives KIS would like to collaborate on with ICS include housing opportunities, child and youth services, LGBTQ+ support, and seniors’ programs.

“I’d also like to send a big thank you to the volunteers,” she added, acknowledging their hard work and dedication.

“To other organizations or individuals considering supporting ICS, I would say ICS is a great partner to have,” Sage encouraged. “There is no need to reinvent the wheel. Working together, we can achieve so much more.”



Stronger Together

The Lasting Partnership with United Way British Columbia

United Way British Columbia (UWBC) has supported Interior Community Services (ICS) for over 12 years. Kristi Rintoul, Director, Community Impact and Investment, UWBC shares why this partnership is so important.

“United Way has had the privilege of working with ICS for a long time and are grateful to have been part of the many programs ICS runs in our community,” Rintoul explained how ICS helps connect different groups of people, like seniors, children, and youth, and provides important services like food security.

“Both organizations want to make communities stronger and help people build better lives. We believe in giving a hand up, not just a handout.” UWBC and ICS share similar goals and UWBC supports ICS by providing funding, workshops, and leadership development to help them grow.

Kristi shares an experience which reinforced her belief in supporting ICS.

“United Way ran a program helping seniors with yardwork, we collaborated with ICS through the Better at Home program, to connect with those seniors looking for help. Tammy R, an ICS staff member, helped us identify and connect with those clients and her advocacy and how she represented those seniors really demonstrated the integrity of ICS,” Kristi says.

ICS helps people of all ages and Kristi points to the gardening program at the Mount Paul Community Food Centre as an example of how ICS strengthens the entire community.

“ICS provides essential services to the wider community, not just those at risk,” she says. UWBC’s funding helps keep these programs running, ensuring that everyone can access the resources they need. “ICS is a trusted partner that makes a big impact,” she adds.

Kristi is excited about the future of the partnership between UWBC and ICS. “We want to extend programs to more communities like Merritt, Ashcroft, and Cache Creek,” she says. New initiatives like Foundry Kamloops are also important for both Kamloops and the smaller surrounding communities.

Kristi thanks the ICS staff, volunteers, and community members for their hard work. “The work can be hard, but there is so much joy. ICS brings that joy into their work,” she says. She encourages others to support ICS, noting, “ICS is a safe investment, and it is an honour to be associated with their impact.”

The partnership between UWBC and ICS shows how working together can build stronger, more connected communities. Through their shared vision, they continue to make a big difference in the lives of many people.



Kristi Rintoul
Director, Community Impact and Investment



Growing Together

The Partnership Between TNRL Merritt and Interior Community Services

Supporting Interior Community Services (ICS) is a great opportunity to connect with people in the community, said Claire Sabastion from the Thompson-Nicola Regional Library (TNRL) in Merritt.

“It’s a chance to get to know participants and staff, learn their interests, and make a welcoming space.”

TNRL is all about creating community connections and spaces for people to engage with literacy, activities, and resources. Their mission aligns perfectly with ICS’s goals, offering opportunities to help build a stronger community.

“We are all about creating community connections and spaces for people to come and engage with literacy or activities and resources,” Claire explained.

Last summer, TNRL worked with the garden program. Seeing the excitement on participants’ faces as they watched their work come together, grow, and being able to take it back with them was truly rewarding.

TNRL has partnered with ICS for several years, starting with an adult day program in 2022. Every Wednesday morning, the adult day program participants come in to tend to the garden, watering and harvesting.

“It’s really rewarding to see the partnership at work, and TNRL is excited to continue this collaboration.”

ICS programs are designed to provide enrichment. Whether it’s outings, developing new skills, learning crafts, or socializing, having these groups come to the library gives them a chance to strike up conversations with community members.

TNRL youth programs provide an opportunity to refine creative skills and for TNRL to get to know them and encourage youth to come to the library and make connections with both the library and community.

“Watching the kids become more comfortable and mature, seeing their art skills develop, and getting to know the adults better is exciting,” Claire added.

The Better at Home seniors’ programs have also allowed participants access the library and utilize their services. Looking to the future, TNRL would like to focus on seniors, seeking opportunities to host events with Better at Home. Seniors are a group in the community that requires extra support, and TNRL wants to help build that with ICS.

“We would like to focus on seniors, looking for opportunities to host events with Better at Home,” Claire said.

TNRL welcomes input and ideas on how they can continue to collaborate on new initiatives and maintain communication. Accepting input from ICS staff and clients helps further build the partnership between the library and ICS.

“Keep up the good work—ICS is a very crucial organization in our community!”

Claire praised the ICS staff, volunteers, and community members and encouraged other organizations and individuals to support ICS, noting that their experience has been extremely rewarding. Staff have been excellent to work with, and any opportunity to include ICS staff and participants in activities will likely be extremely rewarding, just like it has been for TNRL.



THOMPSON-NICOLA
REGIONAL LIBRARY



A message from Susan Kell

Director of Merritt and Community Engagement

Reflecting on 2024, ICS Merritt has seen many changes. We've faced challenges, enjoyed good times, and experienced sad moments. However, the dedication of our staff to provide services and inspire has been evident every day.

In August 2024, we completed extensive renovations at the Merritt office, merging the Child and Family Services (CFS) and Community Living Services (CLS) into one large, bright, and welcoming space. Visitors have praised the new office, both inside and out. The commitment, positive relationships, and perseverance of our staff during this time have been remarkable.

Throughout 2024, we've received tremendous support from the Merritt community. One highlight was the annual 'Chilli and Coats' event in Spirit Square. ICS staff and CLS program participants served 150 cups of chilli, coffee, and sweet treats to the community. More importantly, ICS provided many people with warm winter clothing, thanks to donations from our community partners and Merritt residents. This event's success wouldn't have been possible without the support of local businesses, the City of Merritt, and its residents.

Strong connections and community building are crucial to ICS's success in Merritt. Our increased presence and visibility have strengthened existing relationships and formed new partnerships, enriching the lives of Merritt's community members through our CFS and CLS programs.

Our collaborations extended further, involving CLS programs in Merritt, Kamloops, and Barriere. Together, we organized spring dances, afternoon high teas, BBQs, and holiday-themed parties, with excellent participation from all areas.

I am incredibly proud of all the programs and staff here in Merritt. We've faced many challenges over the past few years, but the resilience, commitment, and passion of our staff are truly inspiring.

As the Director of Merritt, I appreciate coming to work at ICS and with all the staff teams and participants in Merritt every day. I look forward to enhancing our partnerships with funders, community partners, and residents.

Susan Kell
Director, Merritt and Community Engagement



Child, Family, and Youth Services

2024 Reflections



Dear Partners and Community Members,

On behalf of the Child, Family, and Youth services of Interior Community Services, I would like to express our appreciation and gratitude for the collaboration we practiced together in 2024. We believe collaborative relationships are key in addressing the diverse and complex needs of families and in supporting frontline workers in not feeling alone in the challenging work of creating positive change.

Our Early Years programs were as busy as ever in 2024. The uncertainty of pre-natal services in the Kamloops area resulted in the referrals to the Baby's Head Start program doubling! This led to an increase in referrals across all of ICS Early Years programming. As many of us are aware, prevention work is a large part of the solution for several issues our community faces and this complement of ICS programs are working at maximum capacity to meet the need for early years support.

A focus area of 2024 in our Family Service Programs has been the development of anti-violence programming. Intimate partner violence continues to be a prevalent issue with families who are accessing services. In 2024, ICS moved forward with development and training of the Family Development Response Team. This team's focus is on supporting families involved with MCFD and experiencing violence to lower risk and increase safety.

2024 saw two newer program developments in our Youth Services area. A Youth Mobile Crisis Response Team was launched and works closely with our Youth Outreach Program to support youth who are at high risk with one of the goals being crime prevention. Foundry Kamloops - a hub for youth services - continued to move closer to reality with a downtown space being secured and the capital campaign for \$4.5 million ramping up. With a projected opening date of summer 2026, all Youth Services programming will be actively engaged with being a part of this service to ensure youth access the service they need in a warm and welcoming space.

Thank you again to all our partners connected to ICS programs. The power of the collective is a key path forward in helping families navigate and find their way through many challenges and we look forward in continuing to work together in supporting the needs of families in our community!

Sincerely,
Idris Marican
Director of Child, Family, and Youth Services



A Strong Partnership

City of Kamloops and Interior Community Services

“The breadth and quality of ICS services are essential to our Kamloops community,” said Ashley Ekelund, Social and Community Development Supervisor, City of Kamloops [the City].

The City of Kamloops has supported Interior Community Services (ICS) for many years, and Ashley and Natasha Hartson, the Community and Emergency Supports Supervisor, shared why this partnership is so important.

“ICS staff are committed and caring, and their ability to manage growth and change is exceptional,” Ashley said. She believes the missions of ICS and the City of Kamloops are very similar.

“Strengthening community and enriching lives is what both ICS and the City of Kamloops aim to do. Our values are almost parallel,” she explained. She listed shared values like integrity, respect, inclusivity, and collaboration.



“We’ve been a partner with ICS since its inception,” Natasha added when asked how long the city had been collaborating with ICS. Ashley estimated it had been at least 14 years, possibly since ICS started.

“ICS supports everyone from youth to seniors with life skills and essential needs,” Ashley explained the role of ICS in building a stronger community. “Your housing programs, youth outreach, and youth shelter program are extremely valuable. Our funding helps ICS achieve its vision and helps our community thrive.” Natasha added that the city’s strategic plan aligns closely with ICS’s work, focusing on livability, sustainability, and community safety.

Ashley Ekelund
Social and Community Development Supervisor



“These partnerships help better our community through health, wellness, and housing,” said Natasha, highlighting the partnership between community service officers and ICS for youth outreach.

Ashley noted the city’s contributions to ICS, such as funding for the management of community gardens and the Reaching Home program.

“I’m excited to learn more about ICS’s programs for seniors and youth and involve the city in these programs,” Ashley said, expressing excitement about the future of the partnership. Natasha values the ongoing collaboration and the many aspects of ICS’s work that the city is involved in, like food security.



“We can’t solve these issues on our own. A healthy and robust not-for-profit, like ICS, helps us achieve our goals,” said Ashley, emphasizing the importance of the non-profit sector and social service agencies in tackling social issues. “We value and appreciate the contributions of ICS staff and their impact on our community. Their work is incredibly important,” Natasha added.

Ashley was inspired by the recent Foundry Kamloops 2024 Christmas luncheon, which brought together community partners in support of Foundry Kamloops, a provincial program operated locally by ICS.

“It was incredible to see the enthusiasm and excitement for the Foundry initiative,” Ashley said. “There were attendees from all walks of life in Kamloops and their passion for partnership and collaboration showed why ICS is an excellent provider in our community.”

“Please, please do,” Ashley encouraged other organizations and individuals to support ICS.

Key Highlights of the Housing Department at ICS

The Housing Department at ICS is a dynamic and multifaceted division, ensuring the well-being and maintenance of numerous housing units and facilities and that tenants have access to quality homes.

Here are some key highlights from 2024:

New Positions in Housing

The department is expanding with new positions to enhance operations and support, including:

Manager of Housing and Tenant Relations:

To assist with tenant relations and administrative tasks. The Housing Manager oversees tenant relations across various properties, managing a total of 356 units. This role works closely with the Maintenance Manager and reports to the Director of Housing and Facilities.



Ashley Eaton
Manager of Housing and Tenant Relations

Manager of Maintenance and Facilities:

To support the overall maintenance and property management needs in addition to overseeing renovations and project management. The Maintenance Manager handles all building issues across multiple properties, including supervising janitorial staff and managing vehicle maintenance. This role also works closely with the Housing Manager and reports to the Director of Housing and Facilities.



Kevin Thompson
Manager of Maintenance and Facilities



Director of Housing and Facilities

The Director of Housing and Facilities supervises maintenance contractors and building managers, oversees all building and housing program budget proposals and contracts, and supervises both the Housing and Maintenance Managers.

John Trotta
Director, Housing and Facilities

Key Projects

- Shuswap Illahee Lodge: Phase 2 envelope renovations in Spring 2025.
- Glenfair Re-Development: Expanding to 280-320 units, ongoing from 2025.
- Sheridan Manor: (100 Mile House): Balcony and railing projects from 2025 to 2026.
- Crestline Renovation Project: Enhancing accessibility and adding capacity for another long-term resident.
- Foundry Kamloops: Desert Gardens main floor renovations from 2025 to 2026, estimated at \$4.5 million.
- 400 Tranquille Road: New build project starting in October 2025, providing 42 new housing units, estimated at \$25 million.

The ICS Housing Department is committed to providing quality housing and maintaining high standards across all its properties.



Mount Paul Community Food Centre



In 2024, the Mount Paul Community Food Centre offered 1029 programs and recorded over 16,400 volunteer hours.



2024 was an exciting year for at the Mount Paul Community Food Centre (CFC). If there was one word to capture this time, it would be growth. From programs to the staff team and physical space, the CFC had an incredibly full year adapting and expanding.

Highlights for the CFC included:

- The addition of an advocacy support position and the introduction of Friday Socials with a focus on both advocacy and building social engagement.
- Partnerships flourished as we extended further into the community by connecting with numerous social service agencies and local businesses.
- The Food Skills program expanded into a full-time position, offering comprehensive skills-based curriculum weekly.
- The Market and Garden position expanded to a full-time position responsible for maintaining the affordable produce market and developing a comprehensive garden program for the 2025 season, including presentations, workshops, garden club and garden gatherings.
- The onsite learning garden underwent an immense transition with the addition of greenhouses, accessibility features, and amenities.
- Several smaller indoor projects were carried out to accommodate the large schedule of programming that the centre now offers.

It's been another amazing year at the CFC and I want to thank our community for all the generous support from participants, volunteers, partners, and funders.

Looking ahead to 2025, the CFC will continue our focus of creating a truly inclusive space where people can grow, cook, share and advocate for good food.

Dawn Christie
Director, Mount Paul CFC

Empowering Voices and Building Community

Kari Beppe

What drew you to work at Interior Community Services?

What drew me to the work at Interior Community Services was the Support to Family Care Network program - where we educated, trained and supported Foster Parents in a large part of the Interior Region. At the time, I had been fostering for 5 years and I knew that the position was integral in supporting the hard work of caregivers and social workers in a really difficult system.

What is your current role at ICS and what position did you start in (If not your current position)?

My current position is the Program Coordinator for the Support to Family Care Network which I have held for the last 10+ years.

I was the last team member hired on June 4, 2003 as a Network Facilitator for Kamloops and area, working 25 hours per week initially. After only a month, my hours increased to 35 hours per week. After working a few years, I applied to cover the Safe Spaces maternity leave and eventually took on that job part-time (17.5 hours), as well as (20 hours) in STFC when the member didn't return to that position.

Please provide a standout memory from your tenure working at ICS:

I have many fond memories of my time at ICS, however one of the highlights I have been privileged to do for the last 21 years that fills my cup is as the Auctioneer for the BCFPA (BC Foster Parents Association) AGM to raise money for youth in care to go to camps. Each \$250 raised sends one kid to camp. Over the last 10 years I have sponsored at least one bursary myself and have helped raised over \$80,000. Attending with my team every year has been a program highlight as it brings folks from different areas of our service delivery areas together for team building, aids in staff development with yearly workshops and the networking with caregivers and social workers from across the province has been invaluable. My Program Coordinator at the time saw the value in working collaboratively with the BCFPA and they continue to invite me back each year to help raise money for the kids.



Can you describe an occasion where additional funding or collaboration with a community partner has made an impact in your program?

In 2013, as part of my social justice work for the BCGEU I was sent to World Pride in Toronto where I became good friends with Wally Chan (a UFCW1518 member) who was an amazing drag queen named "Sushi Bar". I told him about Safe Spaces and after hearing about the impact it had on the youth attending and the communities it served, he organized the first of 3 drag shows to benefit Safe Spaces. Wally was a fierce supporter of programs like Safe Spaces which were non existent when he and I were growing up as part of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. He felt that it was saving lives and didn't hesitate to lend his support.

If you could share a message with the community, what would you say?

I am proud to be a part of Interior Community Services and have seen firsthand how our agency is making such an impact for folks in all of the communities we serve. As a proud social justice activist, I'm passionate about keeping kids on this planet and helping them find their voice to speak their truth. I've been able to do a lot of good work in the Support to Family Care Network program as well as the local 305 Chair for the BCGEU.

Psychologist and writer, Ram Dass once said, "everybody you have ever loved is part of the fabric of your being now... we're all just walking each other home."

A Message from the Board President

As we reflect on the achievements of 2024, I'm filled with immense gratitude for the dedication and hard work of our community partners, staff, and volunteers. Your unwavering commitment has been the cornerstone of our success and the driving force behind our mission of enriching lives and strengthening communities.

Having served on the Board for over 20 years, I'm particularly proud of the progress we've made and the impact we've had. Together, we have made significant strides towards our mission, and through your collective efforts we continue to make a difference in the lives of those we serve.

Looking ahead, I'm excited about the continued support for our key projects—including the Foundry Kamloops capital campaign. I encourage everyone to join us in these efforts, whether through volunteering, donations, or spreading the word about our initiatives. Your support is vital to our success and creating positive community change.

Thank you for your passion, your perseverance, and your belief in our shared vision. Here's to another year of growth, collaboration, and positive change!

Warm regards,

Tracy Hoot
Board President, ICS



Human Resources

In 2024, Interior Community Services (ICS) continued to invest in building a workforce rooted in collaboration, resilience, and shared values. Our HR efforts focused on nurturing internal talent, expanding inclusion efforts, and making our systems work smarter, so our people can focus on what they do best: supporting our communities.

Workforce Development and Engagement

In 2024 we celebrated six internal promotions across ICS, with colleagues stepping into Program Coordinator, Manager, and Director roles – proof of our commitment to growing talent from within. We also welcomed new HR Coordinator (Oct 2024) to strengthen recruitment and staff development efforts.

We launched a hybrid Mandt training model, enabling flexible access to non-violent crisis intervention training across teams. Behind the scenes, we modernized internal systems – introducing more user-friendly tools and optimizing onboarding workflows through our HR Information System, to help staff spend less time on paperwork and more on purpose.

While we still have much to learn and achieve, our onboarding, engagement efforts, and strong camaraderie are helping us retain skilled staff and foster long-term commitment.

Equity, Inclusion, and Organizational Culture

We launched a multi-phase project to build a comprehensive Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Framework, guided by an external consultant and shaped through conversations with staff, volunteers, and Board members.

This work includes reviewing policies, gathering organization-wide input, and drafting a roadmap that will guide future training, metrics, and tools. In 2025, we'll begin rolling out more IDEA training and resources to support our teams in embedding more inclusive practices into their everyday work – laying a strong foundation for lasting culture change.

Recruitment and Employer Branding

Our recruitment strategy in 2024 focused on connection, not just capacity. We attended multiple job fairs in Kamloops and Merritt to engage directly with candidates who align with our values and leveraged our community connections to attract diverse talent.

Key Highlights:

- Averaged 10 hires per month
- 57% internal hires, 43% external, with 12% from employee referrals
- 14 casual hires through year-round postings
- Optimized job ads for mobile use (now 61% of job seeker traffic)
- Our Employee Referral Program continues to bring in strong candidates from trusted networks, and ICS consistently ranked among the top 10 most-clicked employers on Indeed in Kamloops – peaking at #2 in December.

NEW HIRES	2024	2023	2022	2021	2020
Full Time	63	35	26	19	11
Part Time	32	27	18	18	11
Casual	14	16	35	14	16
Total	109	78	79	51	38
Staff Employed in Year	306	286	275	248	233
Staff Employed Year End	239	232	204	200	200

Looking Ahead: 2025 and Beyond

- As we look to the future, our priorities remain clear:
- We're developing leadership training programs for supervisors at all levels, embedding the IDEA Framework into daily operations, and continuing to embrace technology that reduces administrative burden, giving our teams more time to focus on what matters most – serving our communities with heart.
 - As we close out the year, we celebrate the individuals behind every success. Their passion and dedication drive everything we do, and investing in their growth remains our most important work.



2024 Highlights Kamloops Community Living Services

Community Living Services provides essential support and resources to individuals with diverse abilities, promoting independence, inclusion, and enhanced quality of life within their communities. The ICS Community Living team is thankful for another year of working with Community Living BC (CLBC). We have focused on building relationships and person-centered planning in all our programs.

2024 was a year of connection and building relationships. We reconnected with TRU to host practicum students, joined New Horizon's Amazing Race to Community Inclusion, and worked on internal ICS collaborations.



Lightwell residence provides a safe and nurturing cluster housing environment designed to promote independence and increased quality of life for all residents.

In 2024, residents have increased their food security with staff support and programming of budgeting, grocery lists, support from the CFC and community gardening.



The Mount Paul Community Food Centre was one of our most used resources. Participants attended Food Skills classes, delivered Meals on Wheels, enjoyed our dances, and accessed weekly meals to improve food security.

Our Supported Housing programs ran at full capacity, with any vacancies quickly filled by CLBC. Good communication and problem-solving with our funder helped us provide safe and supportive living options.

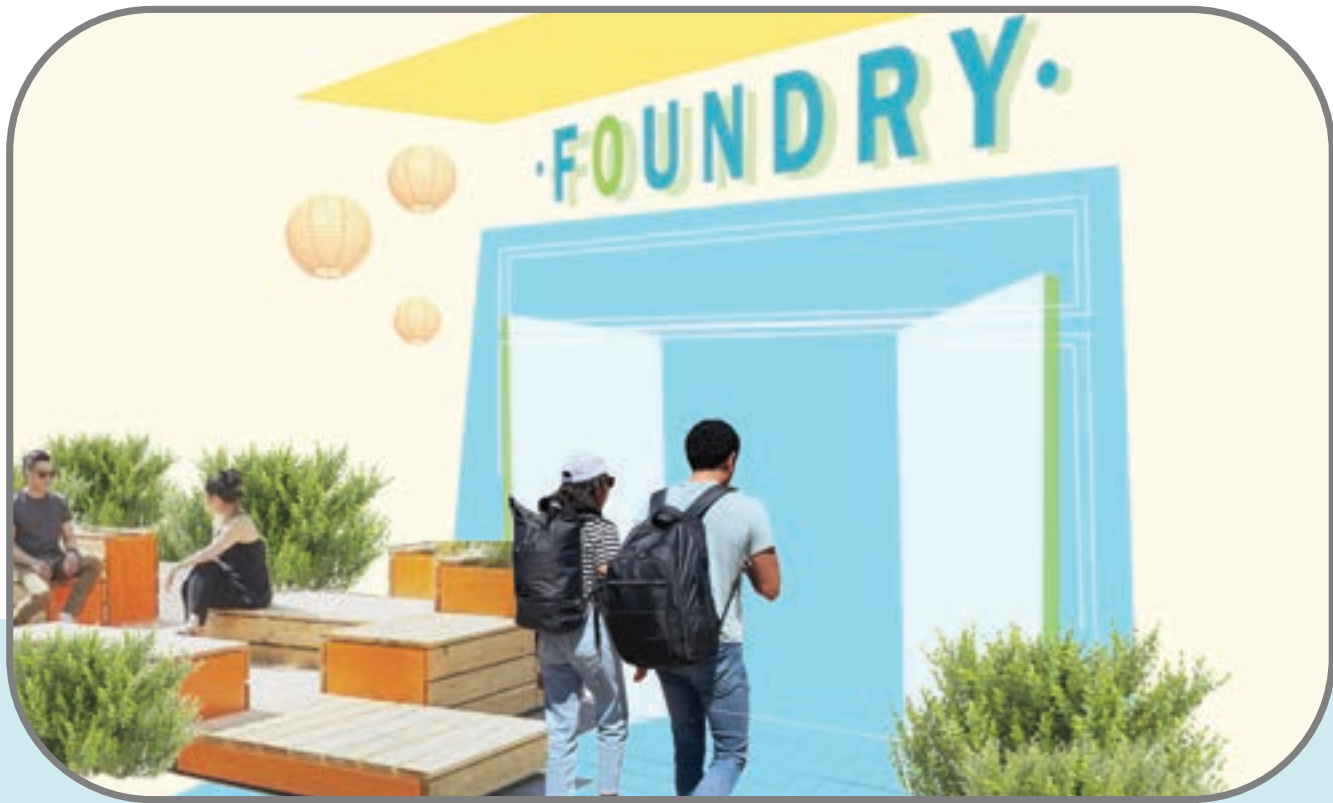
Desmond House and the short-stay bed were valuable resources. They offered a stable place for people transitioning from hospital to a long-term home, meeting community needs and ensuring continuity of care.

The space for CLBC day program Options and Opportunities got new flooring and paint, and we look forward to bathroom renovations in 2025. A highlight of 2024 was buying a new accessible bus. The Community Inclusion (CI) team focused on cultural connections, community, and personal goals. They hosted a big Holiday Dance and Pizza Lunch at Desert Gardens, attended by all our CLS programs and friends from VISTA Community Services. We also collected a lot of cold weather gear for ICS Youth Outreach.

Our focus for 2025 is to find sustainable and creative ways to support an aging population. We plan to partner on renovations to create accessible spaces for aging in place. We will also increase our staff's knowledge and advocacy skills to work with CLBC and the people we support.

Ashley Heighes
Manager of Community Living Services

Transforming Youth Services: The Future of Foundry Kamloops



Impact on our community:

Our community, youth, and service provider feedback is clear—there is a need for an upstream, integrated youth-focused space and programming in Kamloops. A place designed and programming informed by young people - where they can feel safe, included, and welcome as they are.

The future Foundry Kamloops location will be at 540 Seymour Street, on the south shore in downtown Kamloops. This location is ideal in terms of nearby access to transit, bike lanes and various services and amenities. The space for Foundry Kamloops was donated to Interior Community Services by the Senior's Community Centre (SCC), and is valued over \$3M.

This transformational intergenerational gift - from a Senior's Society to supporting a youth-focused initiative like Foundry Kamloops - is an incredible act of generosity and highlights their vision of ensuring that future generations are valued and supported.

Foundry Kamloops is ultimately a community project. The Foundry Kamloops governance table is composed of major youth serving organizations and sectors, the Foundry Kamloops Youth and Family Advisory Committees are actively informing on the design of our space and on future programming to provide that direct contact and touchstone with what our young people and community needs.

What's next?

In order to bring Foundry Kamloops to life, we need to raise a total of \$4.5M by summer 2026.

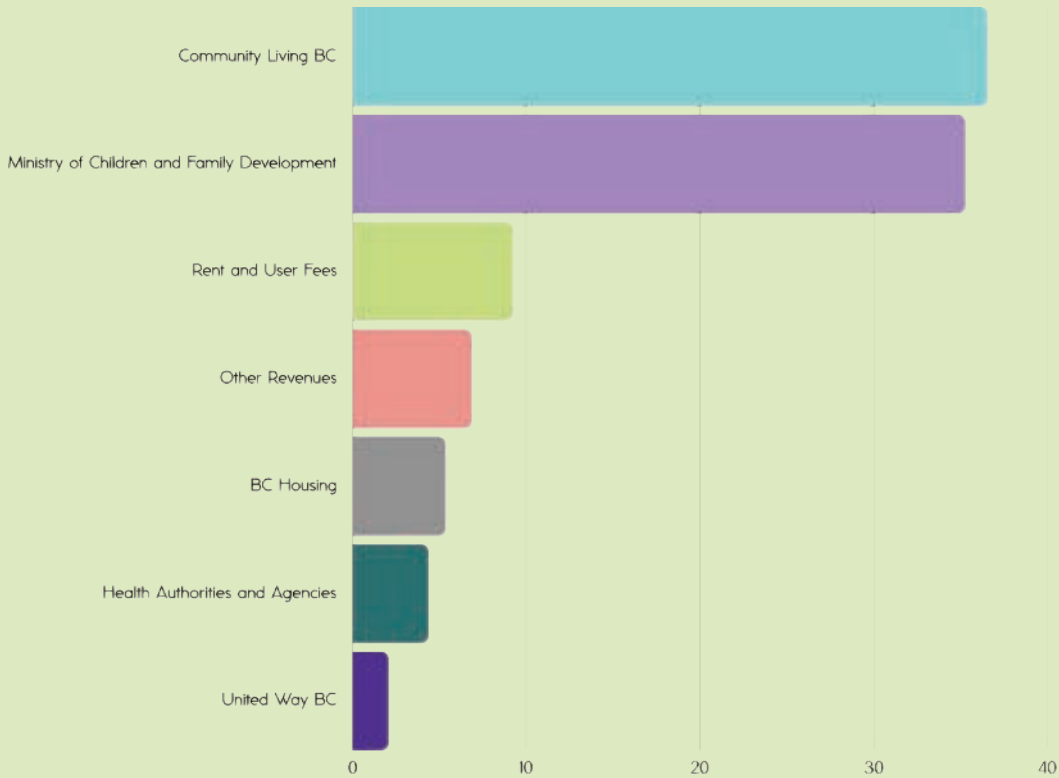
We are halfway to our Capital Campaign goal but we need your help to cross the finish line! Every dollar brings us one step closer to creating a vital space where local youth can access life-changing mental health, peer support, and wellness services.

In the next year, we will be starting renovations on our future Foundry Kamloops space, to create a space that has been designed for young people, by young people. We are solidifying various partner commitments and beginning the work of integrating various sectors and service streams within Foundry, creating referral pathways and building connections. Importantly, we are building a Foundry Kamloops culture where young people and caregivers are seen, heard, valued and respected as they are. Where opportunities can be provided and supports accessed in a timely way. We are looking forward to this upcoming year and getting closer to bringing this Foundry Kamloops vision to life.

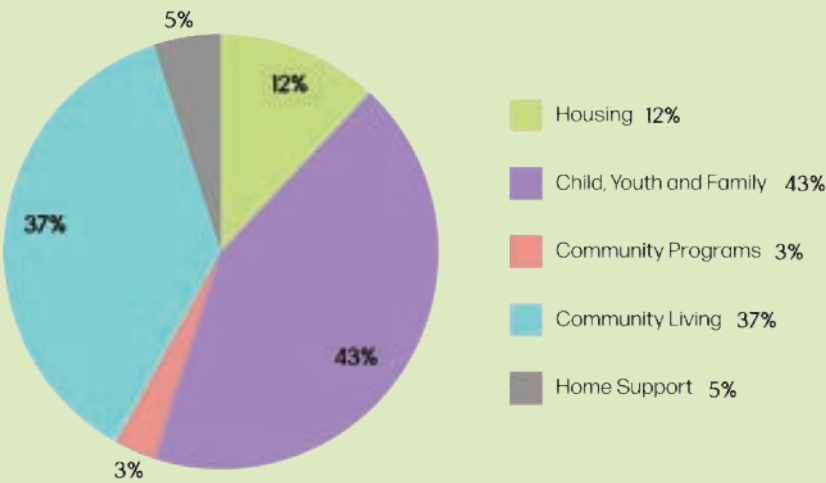


Financial Profile

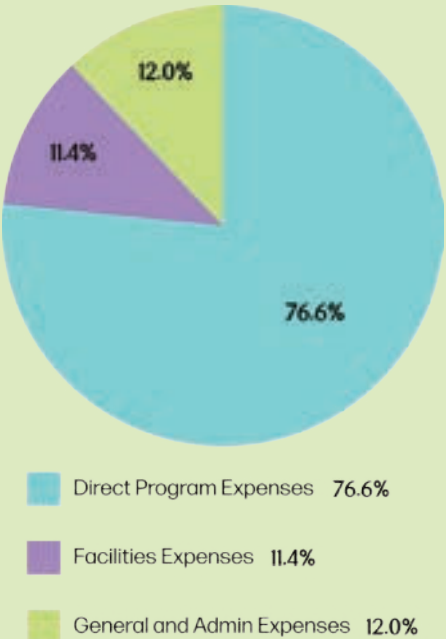
Percentage of Revenue by Source



Percentage of Revenue by Program



How Funds are Spent





Enriching Lives, Strengthening Communities



250-376-3660



adm@interiorcommunityservices.bc.ca



Main Office: 765 Tranquille Rd, Kamloops



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