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FAMILY SERVICES OTTAWA
SERVICES À LA FAMILLE OTTAWA



Family Services Ottawa

Strengthening individuals, families, and the Ottawa community since 1914.

FSO Report to the Community | 2025-26

A Message from the President



For more than a century, Family Services Ottawa (FSO) has evolved alongside our community, responding to changing needs while remaining grounded in our purpose: to strengthen our communities by supporting the mental and emotional well-being of people and families.

In 2025–2026, the need for accessible, high-quality counselling and support services continued to grow. Against this backdrop, our strategic priorities provided a clear focus for FSO: delivering service excellence, supporting a strong team, being a trusted partner, ensuring resilient funding, and creating a stable and welcoming home for our work.

As a Board, we are proud of the progress made across each of these areas. FSO continued to strengthen the quality and accessibility of services, invest in the people who make this work possible, and build partnerships that extend our reach and impact. During the year, the organization also secured new investments, strengthened funding relationships, and continued to build the organizational stability and infrastructure needed to serve our community well into the future.

FSO's priorities are interconnected and reinforcing. Excellent services depend on skilled and supportive staff. Meaningful impact depends on strong partnerships. Our ability to respond to changing community needs depends on a stable and sustainable organization. Together, these priorities guide FSO so we can continue to most effectively serve the people and families in our community.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, I extend our sincere appreciation to FSO's staff and leadership, our volunteers and students, and the many funders, donors and community partners who contribute to this work. Most importantly, we thank the individuals and families who place their trust in Family Services Ottawa.

Since 1914, FSO has been strengthening individuals, families and the Ottawa community. We are proud of what we have accomplished together this year and of the strong foundation we are building for the future.

With deep gratitude,



Lori Bender
President,
Board of Directors

Throughout the year, individuals, children, youth and families came to Family Services Ottawa seeking support for mental health concerns, family violence, parenting challenges, family conflict, housing instability, social isolation and other complex issues affecting their well-being. Increasingly, people are navigating several challenges at once, reinforcing the importance of services that are accessible, flexible and responsive to the realities of people's lives.

Across FSO, our teams provided counselling, parenting supports, anti-violence services, mediation, supervised access, outreach, education and system navigation. We remained focused on providing services that are trauma-informed, culturally responsive and centred on the needs and experiences of the people we serve.

This year also marked important progress in strengthening how services and systems connect around individuals and families. With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, we expanded supports for families involved with the child welfare system, increasing access to counselling, parent coaching, financial coaching, advocacy, system navigation and community supports. This work builds on earlier investments and partnerships and helps families access a broader range of support when they need it.

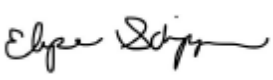
We also strengthened connections between health, mental health and community services. A new collaboration with the Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic is helping connect primary care and counselling more closely, while our longstanding partnerships across healthcare, child welfare, education, legal services and the community sector continue to support coordinated care and more effective pathways to services.

Alongside responding to immediate needs, we continued to invest in prevention and early intervention. We developed new group programs, expanded supports for children, youth and families, and secured funding for Youth Voices for Respect & Prevention, a new initiative that will help young people build healthy relationships, strengthen peer support skills and prevent intimate partner violence.

The accomplishments in this report are significant, but so are the challenges ahead. Demand continues to outpace available resources in many areas, and the needs of individuals and families are becoming increasingly complex. Our responsibility is not simply to respond to that demand, but to continue improving how people access support, how our services respond to diverse needs, and how we work with partners to make the best use of the resources available in our community.

We are proud of what our team accomplished this year, particularly in the face of growing demand and increasingly complex needs. We are immensely grateful to our staff for the expertise, care and commitment they bring to this work, and to our community partners for working alongside us to strengthen and extend the support available to people and families across Ottawa.

Sincerely,



Elyse Schipper
Executive Director



Rebecca Fromowitz
Associate Executive Director





Our Purpose

To strengthen our communities by supporting the mental and emotional well-being of people and families.

Our Mandate

To offer accessible counselling, workshops and educational programs to adults, youth and families to increase their knowledge and skills, adopt healthy strategies, build human connections and increase resiliency.

Our Strategic Priorities & Vision

Service Excellence

We are committed to consistently delivering high-quality, compassionate, and effective services that meet the unique needs of our clients.

2025-26 Progress Measures:

- 90%+ of clients reported that they received the help they needed, and increased their knowledge and/or skills related to the challenge that led them to seek support.

A Strong Team

We aim to attract, develop, inspire, and retain the best people to deliver maximum impact for our clients, community, and organization. We're a great place to work, where great people work.

2025-26 Progress Measures:

- 90%+ of staff reported being proud to work at FSO, would recommend FSO as a great place to work, believe FSO positively impacts people's lives and feel motivated by our purpose and mandate, are comfortable being themselves at work and asking for help when they need it, and feel appropriately recognized for their good work.
- 93% retention rate

A Trusted Partner

We are committed to being a trusted resource for community members seeking support and knowledge, a valuable collaborator for sector partners and colleagues, and an impactful choice for donors.

2025-26 Progress Measures:

- Of 40+ partners who responded to our survey (including clinicians, organization leadership, funding partners, legal and protection staff), 100% trust FSO to provide high-quality care, would recommend FSO to colleagues or clients, and see us as a reliable community partner that is responsive to community needs.
- 93% of clients would recommend FSO to others who would benefit from our services.

Resilient Funding

We work to create and maintain reliable financial resources that allow us to thrive over time without compromising future stability or mission objectives.

2025-26 Progress Measures:

- 4.2% year-over-year growth in overall revenue
- 34.3% year-over-year growth unrestricted revenue

A Stable, Welcoming Home

We are committed to providing a welcoming environment that is easily accessible for clients, optimized for our team and services, and our long-term stability.

2025-26 Progress Measures:

- 98% of clients reported feeling welcomed and treated with respect

Our Values



2025-2026 at a Glance

Throughout 2025-2026, FSO continued to respond to growing and increasingly complex community needs. Across all programs and services, individuals, children, youth, and families accessed support for mental health concerns, family violence, parenting challenges, family conflict, social isolation, housing instability, and other issues affecting their well-being. These services continued to create real, positive impact in people's lives:

More than 90% of clients reported excellent outcomes and service – they received the help they needed, increased their knowledge or skills, felt welcome and respected, and would recommend FSO to others who would benefit from our support.

What Defined This Year

✓ Expanding Integrated Supports for Families

FSO expanded access to integrated counselling, parent coaching, financial coaching, advocacy, and navigation services to better support individuals and families facing increasingly complex challenges. Through a significant Ontario Trillium Foundation Grow Grant, these coordinated supports were further expanded for child welfare-involved families through a comprehensive, family-centred model of care.

✓ Strengthening Partnerships.

FSO continued to strengthen partnerships across healthcare, child welfare, education, and community services, while launching a new collaboration with the Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic to support more integrated and coordinated care.

✓ Investing in Prevention

FSO secured Ministry of the Attorney General funding for Youth Voices for Respect & Prevention, a new initiative focused on healthy relationships, violence prevention, and youth leadership that will launch in 2026-2027.

✓ Responding to Emerging Needs

In response to needs identified by clients, families, and community partners, FSO introduced new group programs, including Together in Loss, a grief and loss support group for the 2SLGBTQI+ community, and a support group for older adult women experiencing intimate partner violence and abuse. These programs were designed to address identified gaps in support and improve access to specialized services.

By the Numbers

7,000+

individuals, children, youth, and family members supported

21,300+

service interactions, counselling sessions, visits, workshops, group sessions, exchanges, and client contacts delivered

285+

therapeutic and psychoeducational group sessions



I came here feeling hopeless. My counsellor listened, helped me make sense of my feelings, and connected me to resources I didn't even know existed. I'm starting to see a path forward."

Strong mental health is built through connection, support, and access to the right resources at the right time. By combining counselling, mental health services, practical supports, service navigation, workplace wellness supports, advocacy, and community partnerships, FSO helps individuals and families access support that was responsive, coordinated, and focused on their unique circumstances.

What We Achieved

✓ Delivered counselling and mental health services through a continuum of care ranging from brief walk-in intervention and crisis supports to longer-term therapeutic services.

✓ Expanded group counselling and psychoeducational programming focused on mental health, emotional well-being, managing grief and loss, healthy relationships, and resilience-building.

✓ Continued to provide integrated navigation, advocacy, and practical supports addressing housing, income, settlement, legal, and social service needs.

✓ Strengthened collaboration with hospitals, primary care, CMHA, Family Service Agencies, Community Health Centres, and child and youth-serving organizations to improve access to integrated client-centred care.

✓ Increased capacity to support children, youth, families, newcomers, transitional-aged youth, men, and equity-deserving populations.

✓ Continued to provide workplace mental health and wellness services through Family Services Employee Assistance Program (FSEAP).

By the Numbers

Community Mental Health and Counselling

4500+
individuals accessed mental health counselling services.

15,800+
mental health counselling sessions and service interactions delivered.

147
mental health therapeutic groups delivered.

97%
of clients reported improved mental health outcomes.

97%
achieved their counselling goals.

93%
reported improved coping skills and reduced distress.

91%
reported stronger social and community connections.

Workplace Mental Health and Wellness

59
organizational clients supported through FSEAP, up from 30 organizations the previous year.

40,000+
covered employees and eligible family members are now within FSEAP's expanded reach, with access to workplace wellness, counselling, and support services.

Impact in Depth: Strengthening Families and Relationships

Parent coaching changed the way I see my role as a parent. I gained confidence, practical skills, and a better understanding of how to support my child during a difficult time."

Strong families are built through connection, support, and early intervention. When caregivers have access to practical tools, guidance, and resources, they are better positioned to strengthen relationships, navigate challenges, and create stable environments where children and youth can thrive. Throughout the year, families turned to FSO for support with parenting challenges, separation, family conflict, mental health concerns, changing family dynamics, and other life transitions that can affect family relationships and overall well-being. Our work recognizes that supporting children and youth often means supporting the adults who care for them.

What We Achieved

✓ Expanded parent coaching and family-centred supports across multiple programs.

✓ Continued delivering parenting programs that helped caregivers strengthen relationships and respond more effectively to challenges.

✓ Increased support for children, youth, and families affected by trauma, family conflict, separation, and life transitions.

✓ Strengthened family-centred approaches across counselling and mental health services.

✓ Expanded integrated supports for child welfare-involved families through Ontario Trillium Foundation funding.



By the Numbers

800+ individuals

received parenting support through parent coaching and parenting groups.

87%

of parent coaching and parenting course participants reported increased ability to deal with challenges.

88%

reported increased parenting knowledge and skills.

83%

reported greater awareness of how their behaviour affects their children's well-being.



Spotlight: From Innovation to Impact

Support from the Happy Roots Foundation enabled FSO to develop and refine a parent coaching model grounded in family-centred, evidence-informed practice. Building on this success, Ontario Trillium Foundation funding allowed FSO to expand and integrate parent coaching with counselling, navigation, advocacy, and financial coaching services for families involved with the child welfare system.



Impact in Depth: Promoting Safety, Healing and Recovery

The support and guidance I received made a meaningful difference in my life. Through the experience, I developed greater confidence, healthier boundaries, and a stronger sense of self-worth. I feel better equipped to navigate challenges, make informed decisions, and move forward with resilience."

Individuals and families experiencing violence often face complex and interconnected challenges affecting their safety, well-being, relationships, housing, finances, and mental health. FSO continued to provide specialized, trauma-informed supports that helped clients increase safety, strengthen resilience, navigate complex systems, and move toward healing and stability.

What We Achieved

✓ Expanded specialized anti-violence services for women, children, youth, and families impacted by intimate partner violence.

✓ Strengthened violence prevention efforts as a service delivery partner in Men's Counselling Link, working alongside Family Service Ontario and Family Service agencies across the province to connect men at risk of causing harm with timely counselling and support.

✓ Launched Year One of the Ontario Trillium Foundation initiative supporting families involved with the child welfare system.

✓ Enhanced coordination with the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa.

✓ Introduced financial coaching as part of a comprehensive wraparound support model.

✓ Piloted a new support group for older adult women experiencing abuse, coercive control, social isolation, and relationship challenges.

✓ Secured funding to launch Youth Voices for Respect & Prevention.

By the Numbers

530+

women received anti-violence counselling and support services.

235

family members accessed services through the Children's Aid Society of Ottawa Intimate Partner Violence Referral Partnership and the Ontario Trillium Foundation-funded program expansion launched in September 2025.

3000+

service interactions and counselling sessions delivered through anti-violence programs.

100%

of clients reported satisfaction with FSO services and said they would recommend them to others.

98%

of clients reported receiving support with an issue that was important to them.

94%

of clients increased their awareness of available community supports and services.



Spotlight: Expanding Integrated Supports for Families Impacted by Violence

This year marked the successful launch of Year One of FSO's Ontario Trillium Foundation initiative, Support for Families involved in the Child Welfare System. Families accessed counselling, parent coaching, financial coaching, advocacy, system navigation, psychoeducation, and referrals to community resources through a comprehensive wraparound model.

Spotlight: Youth Voices for Respect & Prevention

Funded by the Ministry of the Attorney General, Youth Voices for Respect & Prevention is a new peer-led initiative focused on healthy relationships, consent, digital safety, bystander intervention, and violence prevention. Through education, mentorship, and youth leadership, the initiative will help create safer communities and stronger prevention networks as implementation begins in 2026-2027.



Impact in Depth: Creating Connection, Inclusion and Belonging

This group provided a welcoming space where I could connect with others, learn from shared experiences, and feel supported. It reminded me that I am not alone."

Belonging is a powerful protective factor that supports mental health, resilience, and well-being. By creating affirming spaces and strengthening inclusive communities, FSO helps individuals and families build meaningful connections, reduce isolation, and access the support they need to thrive. Through our Around the Rainbow program's broad range of services, supports, and community partnerships, FSO is uniquely positioned to support not only people in the 2SLGBTQI+ community, but also parents, caregivers, family members, allies, and professionals who play an important role in fostering acceptance, understanding, and inclusion.

What We Achieved

✓ Expanded supports for 2SLGBTQI+ children, youth, adults, and families.

✓ Deepened collaboration with community partners to improve access to affirming, inclusive services for 2SLGBTQI+ children, youth, and families.

✓ Launched Together in Loss, a grief and loss support group for 2SLGBTQI+ community members.

✓ Enhanced caregiver supports and youth programming.

✓ Delivered training and education opportunities that strengthened inclusive practices across the community.

By the Numbers

770+

individuals supported through our Around The Rainbow Programs.

35+

organizations and 400+ professionals participated in Around the Rainbow's training and educational initiatives.

100%

of group program participants reported stronger connections to community.

100%

of group program participants reported improved mental health and well-being.



Spotlight: Together in Loss

Recognizing a gap in specialized grief and loss supports, FSO launched Together in Loss, a group created specifically for 2SLGBTQI+ individuals navigating loss, change, and transition. The program provided opportunities for connection, reflection, and healing within a supportive community environment.



Impact in Depth: Supporting Stability Through Conflict and Change

Families experiencing separation, conflict, child welfare involvement, or other significant transitions often require support that prioritizes both family participation and children's well-being. Through mediation, supervised access, counselling, and other family-centred services, FSO helps families navigate change, maintain important relationships, reduce conflict, and promote greater stability for children and caregivers.

What We Achieved

✓ Continued to provide Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) services that promoted collaborative decision-making and family participation.

✓ Maintained safe, child-focused supervised access services for families navigating separation and conflict.

✓ Supported parents and caregivers through counselling, coaching, and parenting programs that strengthened communication and problem-solving skills.

✓ Increased opportunities for children, youth, adults, and families involved in legal and child welfare processes to participate in planning and decision-making that affects their lives.

✓ Connected families with community resources and supports that promoted long-term stability.

By the Numbers

150+

new ADR referrals received.

300+

individuals participated in ADR processes.

73

families accessed supervised access services.

400+

supervised visits and exchanges facilitated.



No single organization can address complex social challenges alone. Strong partnerships and innovative approaches make it possible to provide more coordinated, accessible, and effective services for individuals and families. By strengthening relationships across sectors - including child welfare organizations, healthcare providers, schools, shelters, community agencies, and family service organizations - and investing in integrated models of care, FSO is helping build a more connected and responsive community.

What We Achieved

✓ Launched a new integrated service partnership with the Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic.

✓ Enhanced referral pathways and system navigation supports.

✓ Continued investments in service integration, evaluation, and quality improvement.

✓ Expanded opportunities for collaboration through training, consultation, and community engagement.



Spotlight: Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic Partnership

This year, FSO launched a new partnership with the Ottawa Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic that brings mental health, social service, and healthcare supports closer together. Through a shared staffing model, FSO clinicians work directly within the clinic environment, improving coordination, referrals, and access to care.




PAST to PRESENT..
OTTAWA WELFARE BUREAU
BREADLINES
HELPING THOSE WITHOUT HOMES and STILL DOING IT!
REMOTE AND IN-PERSON
...FEEDBACK AND FOLLOW UPS!
...RESPONDING TO ALL NEEDS.
...IMMEDIATE HELP!
Welcome!
WELCOMING RECEPTION...
SYSTEM NAVIGATION
...PATHWAYS TO MORE CARE...
MENTAL HEALTH
HOME
SCHOOL
ART FOR MENTAL HEALTH...
Holistic Care!
FAMILY SER
SERVICES À L
FSO
Client-centered Care
PAST to PRESENT...
...from NURSING INFLUENZA to COUNSELLING DURING COVID!
SUPPORTIVE AND RESPONSIVE TEAM!
Community
All-of-famil
FEEL LESS ALONE!
interconnec
CARE and BELONGING
...ACTIV LISTENIN
CELEBRATING ACHIEVEMENT!
Common goals!
FSO+SFO
SHARING CULTURE AND EVENTS
CARING FOR OUR SPACE...
DEBRIEFS!
MAKE SURE YOU GET Lunch!
...THROUGH UPS AND DOWNS...
open & generous staff
PAST to PRESENT...
HELPING WOMEN in NEED!
...for DECADES!
...SUPPORTING FAMILIES THROUGH LIFE'S CHALLENGES...
How can I help!
I feel better!
GROUNDED WITH NATURE WORKSHOP


RVICES OTTAWA
A FAMILLE OTTAWA
SFO
PAST to PRESENT...
...FAMILY THERAPY THEN...
...and NOW...
PROVIDING ACROSS LIFESPAN and NEEDS
WRITING WORKSHOP
..CONNECTING PARENTS...
Over a Century of Service
FAMILY GROUP CONFERENCING
FAMILY SPACES...
FAMILY COUNSELLING
GUIDING TRANS YOUTH and PARENTS
...SUPPORTING KIDS...
...HEALTHY RELATIONSHIP WORKSHOP...
Belonging
Accountability
Wellbeing
...IDENTIFYING BEST PRACTICES...
INNOVATIVE!
BRIDGING GAPS...
OPEN EMOTION and HONEST CONVERSATION...
CONNECT with PEERS!
...COMMUNITY CONNECTORS...
COFFEE
...COMMUNITY PROVIDER CONNECTIONS...
DECADES of PARTNERSHIPS
MEN'S HELPLINE!
We're a team!
PAST to PRESENT...
...HELPING FAMILIES THROUGH TRAUMA...
PAST to PRESENT...
EVOLVING COMMUNITY NEEDS...
ALL FAMILY CONSTELLATIONS
Every detail mattered... I felt so heard!
FSO
Art by:
JORDANA GLOBERMAN

Thank you !

Family Services Ottawa extends sincere thanks to our clients, families, staff, volunteers, students, Board of Directors, funders, donors, and community partners. Together, your trust, commitment, and support help make this work possible.

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Our Funders

- ✓ **The Province of Ontario**
  - Ministry of Children, Community, and Social Services
  - Ontario Health
- ✓ **Ontario Trillium Foundation**
- ✓ **City of Ottawa**
- ✓ **United Way of East Ontario**
- ✓ **Happy Roots Foundation**

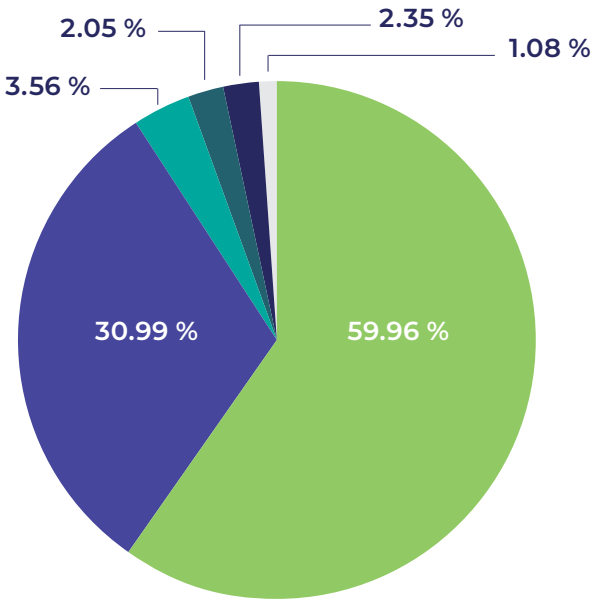
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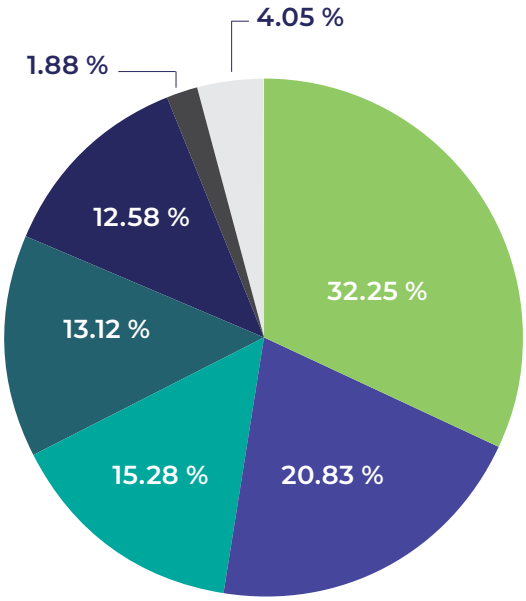


Where the money comes from:

- Government Funding: 59.96%
- Earned Income: 30.99%
- United Way: 3.56%
- Grants: 2.35%
- Donations: 2.05%
- Interest & Other: 1.08%



How the money was spent:



- Mental Health Counselling Programs: 32.25%
- Parenting & Family Programs: 20.83%
- FSEAP: 15.28%
- Gender-Based Violence/VAW: 13.12%
- Administration: 12.58%
- Fundraising: 1.88%
- Other Programs: 4.05%

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SERVICES À LA FAMILLE OTTAWA

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