



2022-2023 ANNUAL REPORT



35 Years of Building
Thriving Communities

[CULTURELINK.CA](https://culturelink.ca)



Land Acknowledgement

We at CultureLink acknowledge the land we are on is the traditional territory of many nations, including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishnabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee, and the Wendat peoples, and is now home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis. We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13 signed with the Mississaugas of the Credit.

Our Vision

At CultureLink, we envision diverse, inclusive, and thriving communities.

Our Mission

At CultureLink, we inspire newcomers and their communities through innovative programming that promotes wellbeing, elevates skills and contributes and fosters community connections and belonging.

Our Values

Our words and actions reflect our values:

Compassion – We care for each other and treat everyone with respect.

Impact – We continuously learn, improve, and adapt so that we can deliver services and programs that make a difference.

Collaboration – Because we are stronger together, we embrace teamwork and partnerships.

Integrity — We are reliable and trustworthy, and hold ourselves accountable.

Letter from the Board Chair and Chief Executive Officer

As we proudly celebrate 35 years of building thriving communities, we are continually inspired by our resilient clients. Their adaptability and strength are what drive us to continue charting new and exciting paths of service excellence and innovative programming.

Over the past year, we have set the stage for a bright future. First and foremost, we made a gradual return to in-person programs and services. While the technology introduced during the pandemic will continue to play an important role in service delivery, virtual connections are not always as beneficial as those made face-to-face. Meeting in person gives our staff greater opportunities to build rapport and trust with our clients, and it further reduces barriers they may face (such as minimal digital literacy skills or limited access to technology). Staff and volunteers have also been eager to once again collaborate across programs to the benefit of all.

Our key initiatives continued to make a substantial impact and deliver impressive results in 2022-2023.

- ***The Women of Courage* exhibition** at four Toronto museums was the culmination of work after an intensive program of creative expression, anti-racism training, and self-care. It showcased the real-life experiences of racialized immigrant women after arriving in Canada. The creative journey empowered the participants and helped build stronger intergenerational connections; their children were better able to relate to their experiences and saw their parents' immigration stories in a new light. Due to the originality of the program and the significance of the exhibits, we were featured on CBC Radio, bringing awareness and inspiration to an even larger audience.
- **Our work with Ukrainian arrivals** continued to grow in 2022-2023, as we adapted to the expanding need in our community. We hired additional Ukrainian-speaking staff across all areas of our programming. This enabled us to foster more personal connections and provide both practical and emotional support to help our clients cope with the traumatic circumstances that brought them to Canada.
- **Our new youth employment services**, launched in May 2022, made a swift impact in our communities. We connected unemployed youth to employers eager to hire. The team exceeded the funder targets, with 95% of participants (including many Ukrainians) finding employment.

Late in 2022, we embarked on a new **strategic planning** process that focused on two core areas: service excellence and growth. Canada is poised to welcome more newcomers than ever before, and our five-year plan will guide us as we continue to innovate, enhance existing programming, and implement new activities. This will allow us to effectively respond to changing community needs, address service gaps, and prioritize our clients.

Our commitment to supporting newcomers and connecting them with the community requires many helping hands. Thank you to everyone who has stood alongside us, always believing in our mission and supporting our work. We are so grateful for the unwavering support of our funders and donors—your contributions allow us to make a real difference in our community. We also deeply appreciate our Board of Directors, whose visionary leadership keeps us both grounded and forward-thinking. And, of course, we could not do this work every day without our amazing team of staff and volunteers—your dedication and passion are the driving forces behind our success.

As we look to our next 35 years, we will continue to refine and develop the programs and services that support and empower newcomers to build thriving communities. Together, we will continue to create ripples of positive change that will extend far into the future.



J. J. Sabapathy

Jemima Sabapathy
Chief Executive Officer



Helen Latimer

Helen Latimer
Board Chair

From Isolation to Inspiration: Barbora Gomezova



Arriving in Toronto with her family in 2002, Barbora struggled with isolation, loneliness, and a profound sense of loss—an aching grief for the life (along with the feelings of security, belonging, and identity) that she'd left behind in the Czech Republic. She didn't know where to find support for newcomers, so she learned to navigate systems and make connections on her own.

This formative experience sparked a passion for helping newcomers get settled and find a community, and it led Barbora to pursue a social work degree at Toronto Metropolitan University. When a student placement introduced her to CultureLink, everything clicked. "It felt like exactly where I wanted to be," she recalls.

For the past few years, Barbora has been supporting newcomers who are dealing with the same emotions she once faced. As a Mental Health Counsellor for the Newcomer Mental Health Program, which launched shortly before the pandemic, she is applying lessons from her own experiences—as well as the feedback of

I wish I knew about CultureLink years ago. I didn't have this opportunity.

Using her Czech and Slovak language skills, Barbora helped many Roma newcomers who turned to CultureLink, and she gained valuable experience in coaching and providing support. The placement was transformative, giving her a new outlook on her own identity and showing her how she could best help other newcomers.

Shortly after graduating, Barbora joined CultureLink's staff, first working as a receptionist, and then quickly advancing to supporting programs such as our Newcomer Settlement Program, Community Connections Mentoring Program, and Settlement Workers in Schools.

She saw firsthand the difference it makes for newcomers when someone offers guidance with respect and dignity. **"I heard many say, 'I wish I knew about CultureLink years ago. I didn't have this opportunity. Now, I see how helpful this is going forward, to help me feel like I belong here.'"**

participants—to create better outcomes.

The impact is impressive. Participants have shared that the program has helped them feel empowered. And there's a ripple effect: Those who were in the initial cohort have become mentors in their communities, telling their friends and neighbours about CultureLink's programs and sharing what they learned.

Barbora went from coping with challenges to driving positive change. Her personal journey speaks to the power of support and safe environments, and it shows other newcomers how they can turn struggles into growth and impact.

And while she's been at CultureLink for a decade, Barbora is continually striving to improve the newcomer experience. **"With every person I work with, I'm always thinking about what I can offer that would be even better."**



Programs that Help Build Thriving Communities

Over the past 35 years, CultureLink has supported thousands of newcomers and their communities through innovative programming that promotes well-being, elevates skills, and contributes to and fosters community connections and belonging. As we step into a promising future, we reflect on the impact of our programs and the number of people we've supported over the last year and look forward to the potential to expand our impact even further.

Our Impact by the Numbers in 2022-2023

Program	# of Unique Clients Supported
Newcomer Settlement Program (NSP)	1295
Library Settlement Partnership (LSP) & Settlement Workers in Community Spaces (SWCS)	1841
Settlement Workers in Schools (SWIS)	8061
Summer Settlement Program (SSP)	862
Newcomer Mental Health Program (NMH)	627
Community Connections Mentorship Program (CCMP)	591
E3 Youth (Educate, Empower, Elevate)	107
Labour Market Assistance Program (LMAP)	108
IT Security Bridge Training Program	181
Youth Employment Skills Strategy (YESS)	62
Youth Settlement Services	648
Wintegration	38
Active and Connected Seniors Program	1603
Sankofa	142
Skills for Youth Success (SYS)	276
Community Bike Hub	2818
Cycling Mentorship Project	82
Anti-Racism Action Program (ARAP)	61
Innovative Arts Programming (IAP)	162

Inspiring and Empowering Newcomers

Every settlement experience is as unique as the person living through it. CultureLink programs support the full spectrum of life stages and individual needs across their journey toward integrating in Canada. Our services are flexible as we support each person in getting settled, building connections, finding employment, and creating a community in Canada.

Each program hosts a number of events throughout the year, offering opportunities to develop knowledge and skills, as well as to network, so that each person can get the most out of their new life in Canada.



Getting Started

Newcomer Settlement Program

Our Newcomer Settlement Program provides information and referrals as well as a wide range of services, from filling out forms and applications, to orientation sessions and a reassuring contact who can answer any questions in the settlement process.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 11

Library Settlement Partnership & Settlement Workers in Community Spaces

Working from Toronto Public Library branches or public spaces provided by the City of Toronto, our Settlement Workers help newcomers access information and resources to support their journey. Service is provided in different languages, based on community needs.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD BETWEEN THE TWO PROGRAMS: 116

Settlement Workers in Schools

The Settlement Workers in Schools program helps newcomer students seamlessly integrate into the education system. While students settle into Canadian school life, their families can receive personalized support to facilitate their access to information.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 353

Newcomer Mental Health Program

Our team assesses newcomers' needs, offering a compassionate ear, referrals to resources, and support-oriented group activities. Our participants are empowered by sharing coping strategies and nurturing a positive outlook throughout their settlement journey.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 35

Building Connections

Community Connections Mentorship Program

Led by a team of qualified volunteer mentors, the activities in our Community Connections Mentorship Program offer newcomers a variety of opportunities to connect with people and services, equipping them with a strong support system and the confidence they need to develop a sense of belonging to their new home.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 626

E3 Youth (Educate, Empower, Elevate)

In E3, we match vulnerable youth with mentors to guide them in their education and employment goals. With their mentor's support, our youth discover resources and exciting opportunities, putting them on a positive path.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 139





Connecting to Employment

Labour Market Assistance Program

The program staff in our Labour Market Assistance Program offer one-to-one support and practical guidance that put newcomers on the path to employment. Participants walk away with a tailored plan highlighting their skills, experience, and circumstances.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 9

IT Security Bridge Training Program

For newcomers interested in IT, our free 10-week cybersecurity training prepares them to navigate the Canadian job market, provides a greater understanding of the opportunities in cybersecurity, and enables them to work toward a career in the field.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 115

Youth Employment Skills Strategy

The Youth Employment Skills Strategy program equips young people to find a placement in their chosen field. The program begins with building essential career skills, from job-searching tactics to crafting the perfect resumé. Participants also collaborate with a program worker to discover employment opportunities, including leveraging CultureLink's network of hiring managers.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 82

Building Community

Youth Settlement Services

Children and Youth programs provide engaging educational, artistic, and recreational activities that help participants establish community connections and improve skills that prepare them for the future. Through our programming, we aim to increase self-esteem and promote physical and emotional well-being among children (6-12) and youth (12-24).

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 275

Parkdale Information Community Connections

Parkdale Information Community Connections coordinates programming with a focus on seniors and youth to break social isolation and build relationships. The program enriches the lives of the entire community.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 86

Sustainable Communities

We are passionate about cycling and creating happier, and healthier, more eco-friendly communities. Those attending our Cycling Mentorship Project events explore their neighbourhood with a local guide. Newcomers can even get their bike road-ready at our Community Bike Hub, and they even learn to do this themselves.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 29

Anti-Racism Action Program

As part of the Anti-Racism Action Program, the Women of Courage Project was an arts and digital-based project for racialized newcomer women, engaging them in personal narrative, storytelling, and drama. It culminated in a digital publication and exhibitions at four Toronto History Museums.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 8

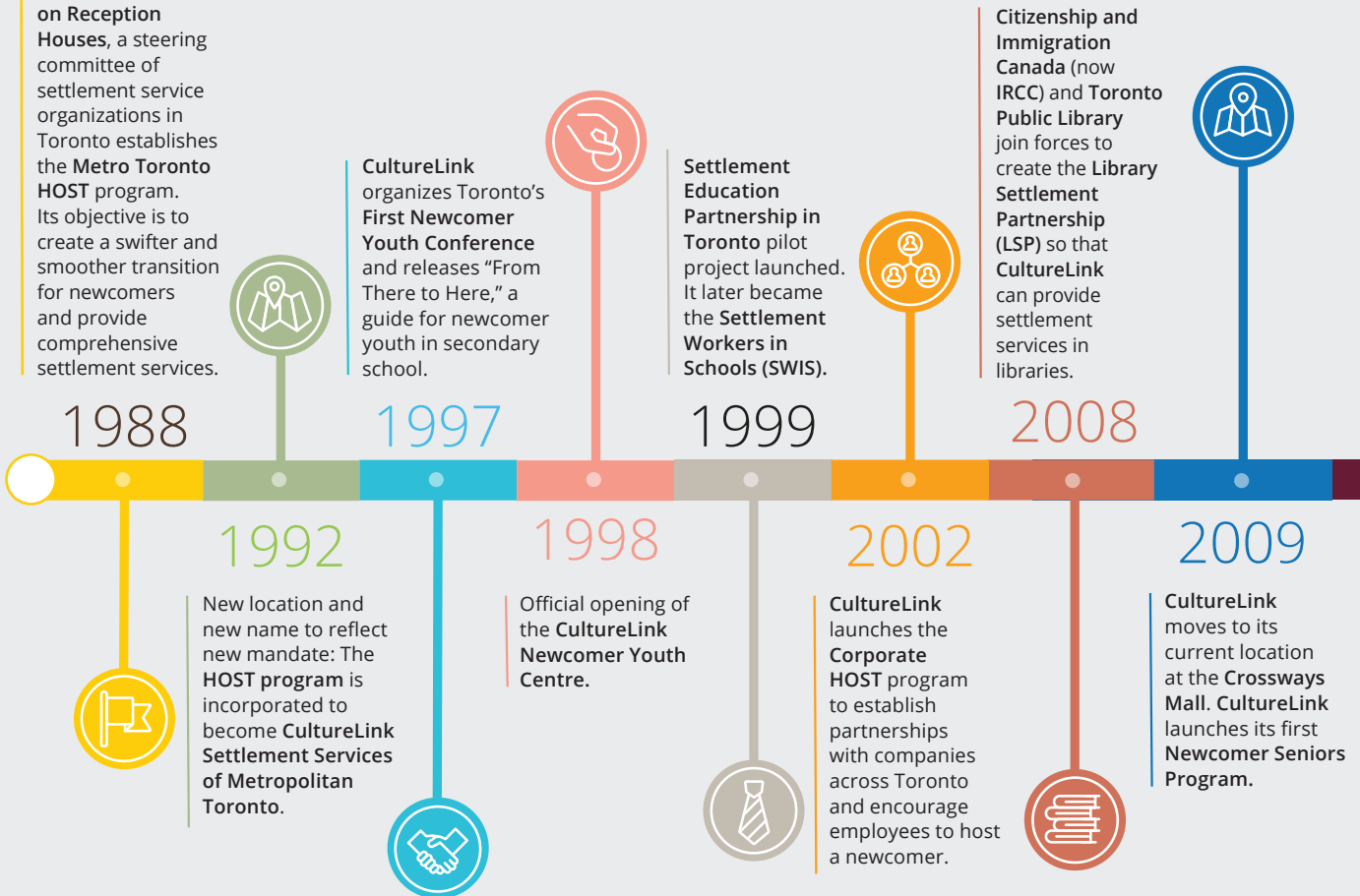
Innovative Arts Programming

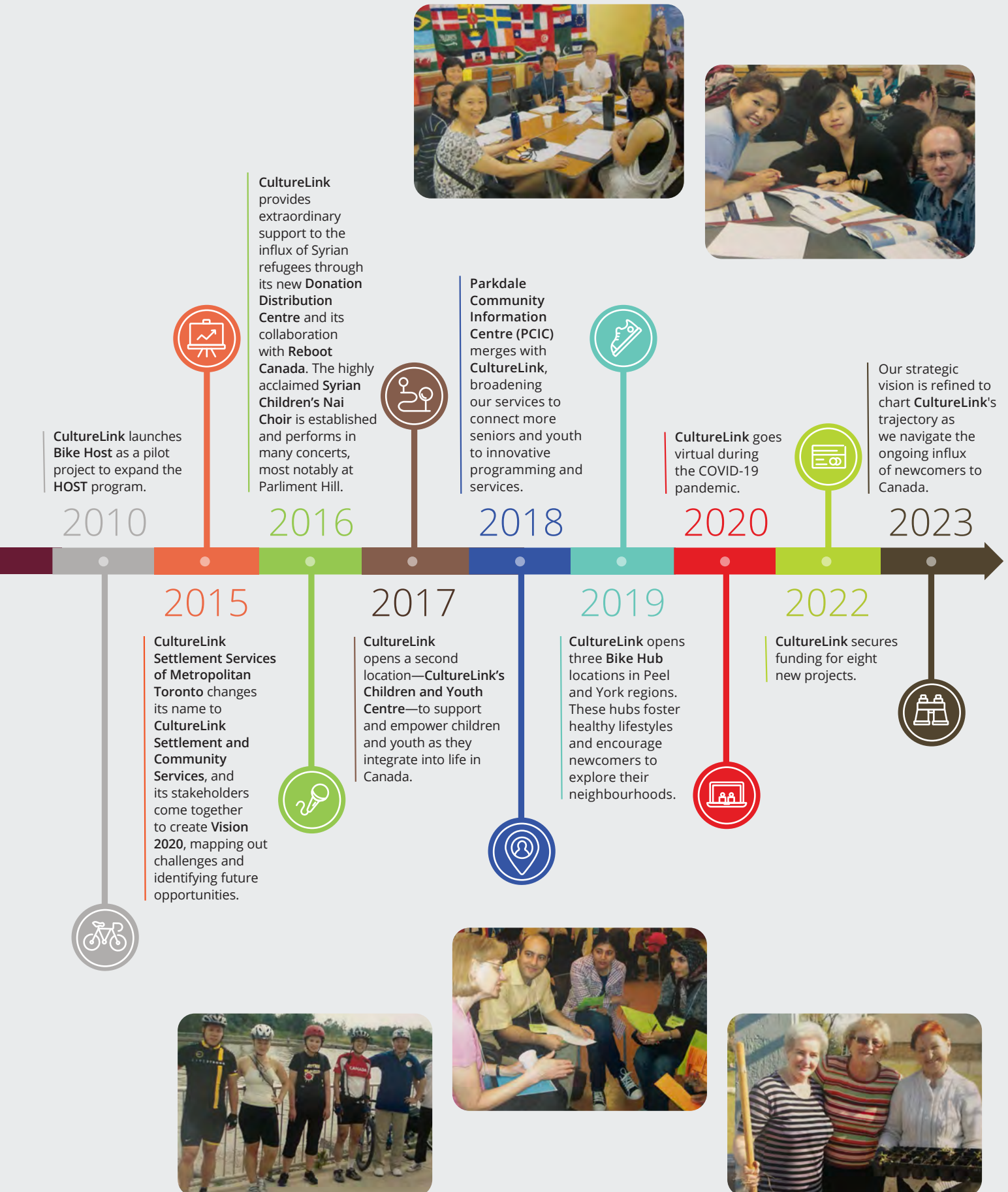
Art-related activities are an important way to empower newcomers. We are currently evolving our innovative arts programming based on the community's feedback, with fun and exciting opportunities for children and youth to explore cultures, forge connections, and express themselves creatively.

NUMBER OF EVENTS HELD: 3

Celebrating 35 Years of CultureLink

In response to recommendations from **Employment and Immigration Canada** and the **Ontario Consultation on Reception Houses**, a steering committee of settlement service organizations in Toronto establishes the **Metro Toronto HOST** program. Its objective is to create a swifter and smoother transition for newcomers and provide comprehensive settlement services.





Thank You to Our Volunteers!

Thank you to all the individual volunteers, board members, and corporate and affiliated groups who made 2022-2023 possible at CultureLink. Without you, we would not have been able to provide the support newcomers need to build thriving communities.

Volunteers helped facilitate workshops for newcomers, mentor and tutor youth, put bikes together for donations, and so much more. We are so grateful for all of your support. Thank you.





At CultureLink, we know the power of a strong community, and none of what we do would be possible without you, our funders, donors, and volunteers. Thank you for your generous contributions and support. Your commitment and willingness to give has made a remarkable impact on the lives of those we serve, and has been instrumental in easing the transition for all newcomers, young and old.

Funders 2022-2023

Immigration, Refugees and
Citizenship Canada
Government of Ontario
City of Toronto

United Way of Greater Toronto
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Canadian Heritage

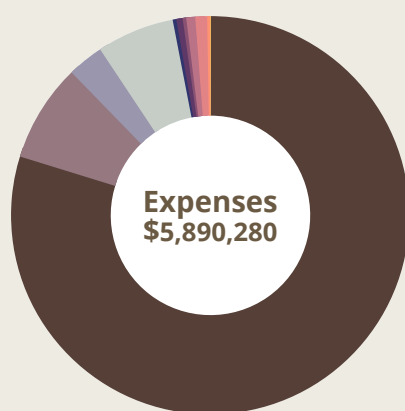
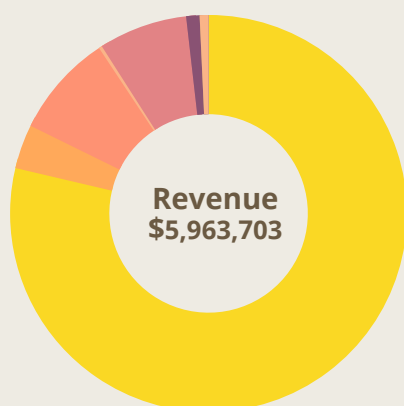
Partners 2022-2023

Access Alliance
Achev
Better Life Counselling
Centre
Bikes Without Borders
CAMH - Slaughter Centre
Catholic Crosscultural
Services
Canadian Centre for
Victims of Torture
Centre for Immigrant
and Community
Services
Chill Foundation
CIBC
COSTI
Cycle Toronto
Davenport Perth
Neighbourhood &
Community Health
Centre
Dixon Hall
Earth Rangers
Earth Seedlings Yoga
East Scarborough
Storefront
Fairview Interagency
Network
Family Services
Toronto
For Youth Initiative
Harbourfront Centre
Hear Right Canada
Hispanic Development
Council

Humber Institute
of Technology and
Advanced Learning
IG Vital Health
ISACA
Kababayan
Multicultural Centre
LAMP Community
Health Centre
LATCA (The Literary
and Artistic Association
Canada)
Learning Enrichment
Foundation
Luminato
Malton
Neighbourhood
Services
Mercer Canada
Museum Shevchenko
New Circles
Community Services
Next-Steps
Employment Centre
NPower Canada
Oasis Dufferin
Community Centre
Parkdale People's
Economy
Peel Multicultural
Council
Project Canoe
PTP Adult Learning and
Employment Programs
ROMA - LAO
Renewed Computer
Technology of Ontario

Royal Ontario Museum
Royal Care Medical
Centre
Seneca College
Service Canada
Sherbourne Health
Shields O'Donnell
MacKillop LLP
Toronto Catholic
District School Board
Toronto District School
Board
The 519 Community
Centre
The Neighbourhood
Organization (TNO)
The Ontario Tourism
Education Corporation
The Stop Community
Food Centre
Todmorden Mills
Toronto Community
Housing
Toronto Public Library
Toronto South LIP
Tropicana Employment
Centre
Vida Activa
VPI Working Solutions
Women's Cycling
Network
WoodGreen
Working Women
Community Centre
YMCA

Financial Report



The Federal Government is the largest funder of CultureLink and provides 78.25% of the agency's revenues. The Federal Government funds are mainly received from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada.

These funds are used for the settlement of newcomers to Canada.

Other sources of funding include the Province of Ontario, United Way Greater Toronto, the Ontario Trillium Foundation and the City of Toronto.

CultureLink's expenses are mainly directed to staffing (81.3%) and program-related expenses.

Statement of Operations	2023	2022
Revenue		
Federal Grants	4,666,583	3,796,980
Provincial Grants	213,952	186,482
Municipal Grants	498,538	444,338
Donations	15,774	24,729
Foundations	429,388	363,558
Fundraising Income	0	0
Productive Enterprises	64,196	27,692
Miscellaneous Income	470	645
Amortization of Deferred Contributions	42,640	33,191
Total Revenues	\$5,963,703	\$4,885,034

Expenses		
Salaries and benefits	4,698,514	3,879,149
Administrative Overhead	468,820	294,472
Sponsorship	172,841	118,651
Rent	370,806	362,543
Promotion and Publicity	17,552	19,060
Staff Development	30,088	9,898
Repairs and Maintenance	16,825	8,618
Amortization	42,640	33,191
Program Expenses	56,300	31,865
Insurance	12,965	12,382
Interest	710	636
Security	1,815	2,038
Police check	404	494
Total Expenses	\$5,890,280	\$4,772,997
Surplus (+)/ Deficit (-)	\$73,423	\$112,037

Breakdown of Admin Overhead		
Office Equipment	91,561	75,002
Office Supplies	88,707	87,774
Telephone	43,529	39,053
Professional Fees	160,906	37,380
HST	51,021	45,007
Travel	17,045	1,362
Membership Fees	8,785	3,700
Bank Charges	2,780	2,764
Postage	4,486	2,430
	\$468,820	\$294,472

Vision for Tomorrow

At CultureLink, we are helping newcomers build a sense of belonging, empowering them to confidently embark on their settlement journey. The unwavering support of our generous funders and donors has made a lasting difference, and we are excited to continue this vital work together.

As we look to our future, our new five-year strategic plan charts a course toward service excellence and growth. With Canada set to welcome more newcomers than ever before, our new strategic plan will guide us in adapting to evolving client and community needs, bridging gaps, and addressing shifting priorities. This plan not only builds upon past accomplishments but also paves the path for growth.

One of our top priorities is amplifying the voices of marginalized communities, and we have already taken steps in this direction. Last year, the ***Women of Courage*** exhibit illuminated the narratives of racialized women, helping them in processing their experiences, and offering fresh perspectives to younger generations and society at large. We are committed to building on this achievement and expanding our impact even further.

As we envision the future of our programs, we remain committed to meeting the evolving needs of newcomers and the broader community, both now and in the years to come. We will continue to modernize and grow our organization to meet these dynamic needs.

Our mission is to shape a future where all newcomers and their communities feel welcomed and possess every opportunity to succeed. We aim for communities to flourish, enriched by our remarkable diversity.

CultureLink has supported countless individuals over the past 35 years, and our commitment to continue providing extensive support remains resolute. As we move forward with vigor, we will continue to leverage our past strengths to build a path towards growth and service excellence.





Contact Us

MAIN OFFICE

2340 Dundas St. W., Suite 301
Toronto ON M6P 4A9

CHILDREN AND YOUTH CENTRE

3535 Dundas St. West
Toronto ON M6S 2S7

PARKDALE INFORMATION COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS


1303 Queen St. West
Toronto ON M6K 1L6


WINTEGRATION AFTER-SCHOOL PROGRAM

49 Mabelle Avenue
Toronto ON M9A 5B1

COMMUNITY BICYCLE HUB


15 Tobermory Drive
North York ON M3N 2R5

 416-588-6288

 reception@culturelink.ca

 culturelink.ca

   /CultureLinkTO

 /company/cuturelinkto

Charitable Registration #: 892339979 RR 0001