Muslim Social Services
Waterloo Region

2025 Annual Report

A comprehensive review of our impact, financial performance, and strategic progress

Message from Our Board Chair and Executive Director

Dear Friends, Partners, Funders, Volunteers, and Supporters,

Khalid Khokhar
Board Chair

Duaa Al-Aghar
Executive Director

As we reflect on 2025, we are deeply grateful for the trust, partnership, and community commitment that made this year possible.

Muslim Social Services Waterloo Region exists so individuals and families—particularly newcomers, refugees, and underserved communities—do not have to navigate settlement, hardship, or healing alone. Through culturally responsive programs, mental health supports, and community connection, we create spaces where people feel seen, supported, and able to thrive.

In 2025, MSSWR served more than 9,175 individuals. This included year-round programming, culturally responsive counselling, community events, professional training, direct support, and outreach. We supported 980 counselling clients, delivered more than 865 hours of programming, and reached thousands of community members through programs, events, workshops, and essential-support initiatives.

This year also marked important organizational growth. MSSWR expanded counselling services, strengthened program and client-tracking systems, implemented EMHware, joined the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region, renewed its Imagine Canada Accreditation, and relocated to a more accessible community space.

Behind every number is a person seeking safety, belonging, stability, or hope. Our programs helped children and youth build confidence, supported families in accessing care, connected newcomers and seniors to community, and provided culturally responsive mental health support in spaces where lived experience, language, culture, and faith were respected.

While we are proud of the progress made, the need continues to grow. Too many community members still face barriers related to affordability, language, trauma, isolation, and access to trusted support. Our commitment remains unwavering: to break down those barriers, strengthen families, and build a community where no one suffers in silence, no one faces hardship or healing alone, and every person is met with dignity, compassion, and hope.

None of this would be possible without our dedicated staff, counsellors, Board members, volunteers, funders, donors, partners, and community members. Your support turns compassion into action and helps build a stronger, healthier, and more connected Waterloo Region.

Together, we are restoring hope, strengthening families, and building a healthier, more compassionate community.

With sincere gratitude and hope,

Duaa Al-Aghar
Executive Director

Khalid Khokhar
Board Chair

WHO WE ARE

Mission, Vision, Values & Our Role

VISION

To create a healthy, thriving, and inclusive region where all people can live with dignity and respect.

MISSION

To build community capacity through education, empowerment, advocacy, and collaboration, while providing mental health supports and services grounded in spirituality and the values of the Islamic faith.

VALUES

- Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion
- Respect and Compassion
- Social Justice
- Confidentiality
- Collaboration
- Celebration
- Accountability

OUR ROLE

MSSWR exists so individuals and families do not have to navigate settlement, hardship, or healing alone. Through culturally responsive programs, mental health support, and community connection, MSSWR bridges gaps that mainstream systems often cannot.

Our Board of Directors

Meet the leaders guiding our mission with expertise, dedication, and a shared commitment to making a positive impact in the community.

Idrisa Pandit
Founder

Khalid Khokhar
Chair

Brice Balmer
Vice Chair

Qadir Ahmadi
Treasurer

Anwar S. Arkani
Board Member

Tina Baksh
Board Member

Asima Roohi
Board Member

Rihanat El-Alawa
Board Member

Takhmina Shokirova
Board Member

Sehrish Haroon
Board Member

Asu Negash
Board Member

2025 YEAR IN REVIEW

A snapshot of the difference we made this year.

9,175+
Individuals Served

6,335+
Program Participants

2,705+
Community Support -
Family, Youth, Individual, Attendance, and Direct-Support Interactions

2,100+
Families Supported Through Initiatives

1,388+
Community Event Attendees

472+
Workshop Attendees

865+
Hours of Programming

COUNSELLING IMPACT

980
Total Counselling Clients

3,160
Total Counselling Hours

62
Group Therapy Sessions

5
Counselling Languages

COMMUNITY IMPACT

260
Back-to-School Backpacks

55+
Community Events & Outreach Events Hosted

425+
Meals Served

100
Ramadan Food Hampers

100+
Halal Grocery Gift Cards

100+
Winter Warmth Kits

1,620+
Volunteers Engaged

650+
Essential Items Distributed

Strategic Priorities & Progress

One strategy connecting organizational strength, community relationships and service excellence.

OUR STRATEGIC DIRECTION

01 ENHANCE ORGANIZATIONAL CAPACITIES

02 BOLSTER COMMUNITY & PARTNER RELATIONS

03 ACHIEVE PROGRAM EXCELLENCE

VISION

A healthy, thriving. and inclusive region where all people can live with dignity and respect.

MISSION

MSSWR is a charitable organization that provides culturally- and spiritually sensitive humanitarian and social services to the Muslim and non-Muslim communities of the Waterloo Region. Our mission is to build community capacity through education, empowerment, advocacy, and collaboration, along with providing mental health supports and services that are grounded in spirituality and values of the Islamic faith.

STRATEGIC GOALS

01 Be a confident, thriving organization

02 Build, strengthen & broaden partnerships

03 Be a pulse for the community

04 Lead in culturally responsive programming

05 Be an accessible, diverse service hub

Values

- Diversity, Equity and Inclusion
- Respect and Compassion
- Social Justice
- Confidentiality
- Collaboration
- Celebration
- Accountability

Strategic Priorities & Progress

In 2025, our strategic priorities became tangible progress—strengthening our organization, expanding community partnerships, and increasing access to culturally responsive programs and services.

01 Be a Confident, Thriving Organization

Governance, people, systems, financial sustainability and accessible space

STRATEGY & GOVERNANCE

- Annual Operational Plan approved
- Board meeting practices standardized
- Imagine Canada accreditation renewed

PEOPLE & DIGITAL SYSTEMS

- Three new operations hires
- Website and communication systems upgraded
- RACI and core documentation systems introduced

FINANCIAL & ACCESSIBLE SPACE

- Financial sustainability strategy completed
- Grant and expense tracking strengthened

02 Build, strengthen & broaden partnerships

Collaboration expanded referrals and shared delivery.

79+
Partners & Supporters

100%
Partnership Target Achieved

03 Be a pulse for the community

Increasing presence through events, outreach activities, and professional training.

55+
Community & Outreach Events

1,388+
Event Attendees

12
Organizations Trained

04 Lead in culturally responsive programming

Program quality improved through responsive design and evaluation.

25+
Programs

310+
Program Sessions

6,335+
Program Participants

865+
Programming Hours

05 Be an accessible, diverse service hub

Multilingual counselling capacity and access grew.

980
Counselling Clients

3,160
Counselling Hours

1,631
Counselling Sessions

5
Service Languages

Counselling Overview

Overview of counselling services and client outcomes

980	3,160	1,631	5
Total Clients	Counselling hours	Sessions Held	Counselling Languages

Service Breakdown

190
Individual Counselling Clients

790
Family Counselling Clients

62
Group Therapy Sessions

Languages Offered

- English
- Arabic
- Urdu
- Punjabi
- Hindi

Behind the Numbers

"I came to counselling feeling broken and alone. MSSWR gave me a safe place to talk, heal, and believe in myself again. I learned that I am stronger than I thought. My children and I now have hope for the future."

"Before coming to MSSWR, I felt lost, alone, and unsure of who I was. Through counselling and youth programs, I began to see hope, discover my purpose, and feel proud of my identity. Meeting other hijabi girls who understood my experiences showed me that I was not alone. MSSWR gave me a safe place to heal, belong, and believe in the future. Today, I feel stronger, more confident, and hopeful about the person I am becoming."

Programs Overview

25+
Programs Delivered

310
Program Sessions Delivered

865+
Hours of Programming

6,335+
Program Participants

PROGRAMS BY FOCUS AREA

Youth & Children	106 Sessions
Family & Wellness	65 Sessions
Community Support	56 Sessions
Education & Skills	50 Sessions
Spiritual & Cultural	33 Sessions

TOP PROGRAMS

PROGRAM	SESSIONS	PARTICIPANT ATTENDANCES
Mindful Gardening	44	1,760
Tutoring Program	28	840
Neighbours Helping Neighbours	28	560
Healing Through Art (Kids)	28	476
Healing Through Art (Parents)	25	625
Girls in Sport	30	480
Summer Camp	20	320
Al-Nour Project	7	140

HOW WE SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY

- Build confidence, skills, and independence
- Strengthen family and community connections
- Access safe spaces for learning, healing, and belonging
- Develop leadership, creativity, and healthy routines
- Stay connected to culture, faith, and community support

HOW WE CREATE IMPACT

Building skills, confidence, and brighter futures.

Supporting mental health, parenting, and well-being.

Meeting immediate needs and strengthening families.

Creating learning opportunities for personal growth and employment.

Nurturing faith, values, and cultural connection.

"Muslim Social Services is a truly remarkable organization that embodies diversity and inclusivity in every aspect of its work."

"This [MSSWR] is one of the most helpful services associations we have in the region. They are caring, respectful, understanding and very accommodating to the community needs."

"One of the most beautiful aspects of this organization is how it brings together individuals from various cultures, allowing us to make new friends and build connections across different communities."

Community Engagement & Events

A snapshot of our community presence and outreach activities

1,388+

Event Attendees Reached

26+
Community Events Hosted

29+
Community Outreach Events Hosted

1,620+
Volunteers Engaged

79+
Community Partners & Supporters

15+
School Presentations

30+
Workshops/Training Sessions

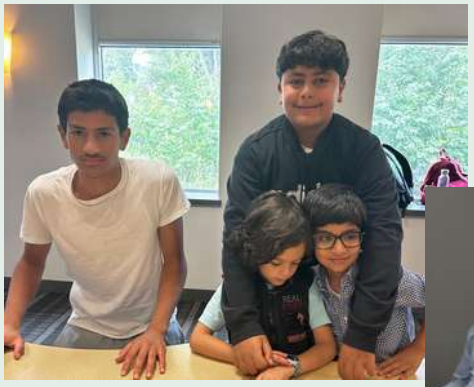
12+
Organizations Trained

700+
Job Fair Attendees

"We appreciate your efforts in providing valuable and important programs for newcomers to learn more about this country, as well as recreational activities that bring us together from all segments of society and foster friendships."

"Muslim Social Services goes above and beyond in their mission to support and uplift the community. Their dedication to fostering a sense of belonging and understanding among all members of society is truly inspiring."

"She [my daughter] got a lot of experience with these programs and had really fun with the field trips the summer camp took them and gained more confidence from the nour program. "



Workshops Overview

Empowering individuals and families through guided support

30 Workshops Hosted

472+ Workshop Attendees

8 Counselling and Mental Health Focused Workshops Hosted

COUNSELLING WORKSHOPS

New Year, New You

Partner: Clear Mind Therapy

4-week online group therapy series focused on goal-setting, overcoming limiting beliefs, building healthy habits, and accountability.

60+ attendees

Mental Health Crisis Response Workshop

Led by Dr. Rabia Siddiqui and Rosina Kharal. Covered crisis intervention, psychiatric assessments, Form 1 procedures, stigma reduction, and available supports.

40+ attendees

Navigating Identity: Being Muslim and Canadian

Delivered by MSSWR counsellors at Waterloo Collegiate Institute for high school girls in Grades 9–12.

30 attendees

Coping with Loss: Community Feedback and Reflections

Delivered by MSSWR counsellors and focused on grief, coping strategies, emotional wellbeing, and community reflection.

30+ attendees

Warm Hearts, Open Minds

A community learning session focused on mental health, wellbeing, connection, and reducing stigma.

35+ attendees

MEMORABLE HIGHLIGHTS

SAFER FAMILIES PROFESSIONAL TRAINING

MSSWR organized a two-part workshop series focused on culturally responsive and faith-informed support for individuals and families affected by family violence. The series equipped professionals with practical tools and knowledge to provide culturally responsive, faith-informed, and trauma-aware support to Muslim individuals and families affected by family violence.

Safer Families Professional Training — June 9, 2025

Focused on culturally responsive and faith-informed support for individuals and families affected by family violence.

16 participants

Second Safer Families Professional Training — July 4, 2025

Continued professional learning on culturally responsive and faith-informed family violence support.

20 participants

36 Professionals Trained

12 Distinct Organizations Participated

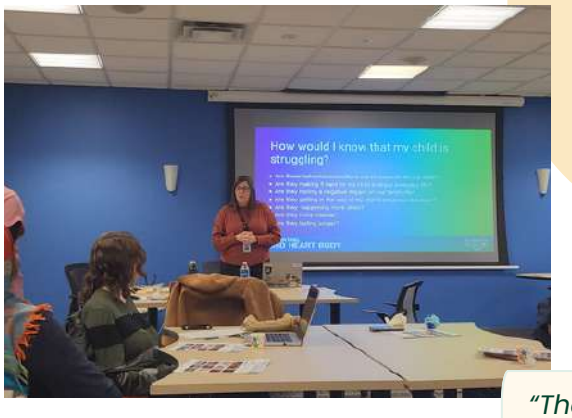
COMMUNITY LED NEEDS ASSESSMENT

In 2025, MSSWR joined 15 partner organizations in a regional Community-Led Needs Assessment to identify community strengths, priorities, service gaps, and emerging needs. Through Arabic translation, outreach, surveys, interviews, and focus groups, MSSWR helped ensure future programs and services are shaped by community voices.

100 Survey Respondents Targeted Through MSSWR Outreach

Arabic Language and Culturally Accessible Materials Developed

15 Project Partners



"The training helped me understand the specific religious, cultural and familial contexts that Muslim clients live in. The Muslim Wheel of Domestic Violence was a really valuable tool, and I couldn't stop talking about all I was learning and unlearning. There is so much value in connecting with other agencies."

"The workshop reminded me that there is no single or right way to cope with loss. Hearing from others made me feel less alone, and I left with ways to support better support myself."

Milestones, Awards & Recognition

Awards & Public Recognition

In 2025, MSSWR and members of its leadership received significant recognition for their contributions to community well-being, inclusion, and culturally responsive service.

King Charles III Coronation Medal

Top 25 Canadian Immigrant Award

MSSWR's United Way Community Impact Award Nomination

MSSWR's CTV News feature through Upstream Collective

KW Oktoberfest Women of the Year: Group Achievement Category Nomination

Organizational Milestones and Updates

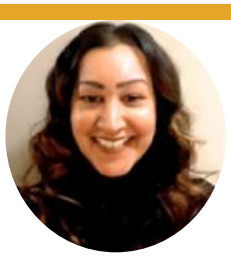
MSSWR's 2025 impact extended beyond service totals and attendance figures. The organization continued to build visibility, strengthen partnerships, and receive recognition for its leadership and community contributions.

- Relocating to a More Accessible Space at 480 Charles Street East
- Joining the Counselling Collaborative of Waterloo Region
- Imagine Canada Reaccreditation
- New Board Members
- The Greenhouse and Food-Pantry Unveiling
- Joining OCASI as a Member Organization
- Receiving National and Regional Recognition
- Updated Counselling Fee Structure
- Expanding Staff, Board, and Community Partnerships
- New Staff and Increased Operational Capacity
- Increasing Professional-Development Opportunities for Staff and Facilitators
- Being Featured by CTV News
- Strengthening MSSWR's Presence at Community Fairs, Conferences, Wellness Events, and Regional Tables

Organizational Growth & Capacity Building

NEW BOARD MEMBERS

Joined in 2025



Tina Baksh

Sehrish Haroon

Asima Roohi

New Operations Hires

Ibrahim Kassem
Strategy and Financial Officer

Manahil Khan
Communications Coordinator

Samaana Anwar
Outreach Coordinator and Volunteer Director

Volunteers

1,620+
Volunteers Engaged

2,500+
Total Volunteer Hours

> *"Volunteering at the Muslim Social Services was a rewarding and memorable experience. The team's warmth, professionalism, and care for the children created a safe, fun, and educational environment."*

WANT TO VOLUNTEER WITH US?

Scan the QR code to apply!

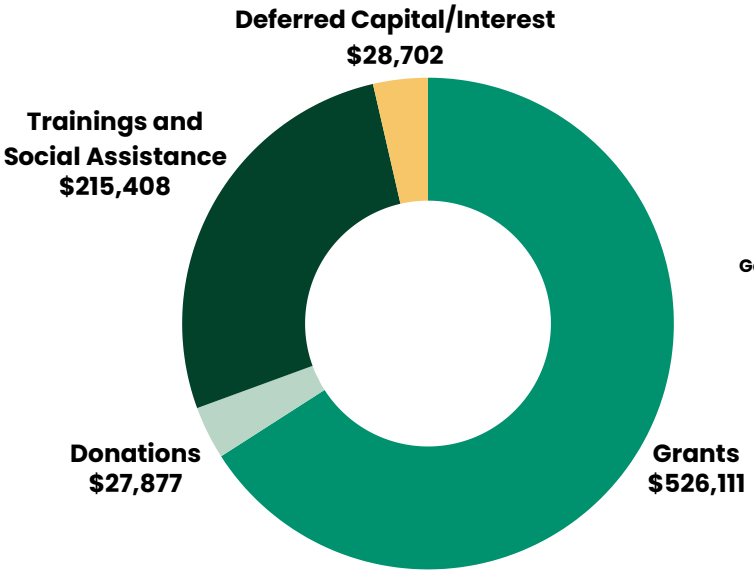
- Make a Real Difference
- Develop Valuable Skills
- Expand Your Network
- Personal Fulfillment

Financial Overview

Revenue and expenses summary for the fiscal year

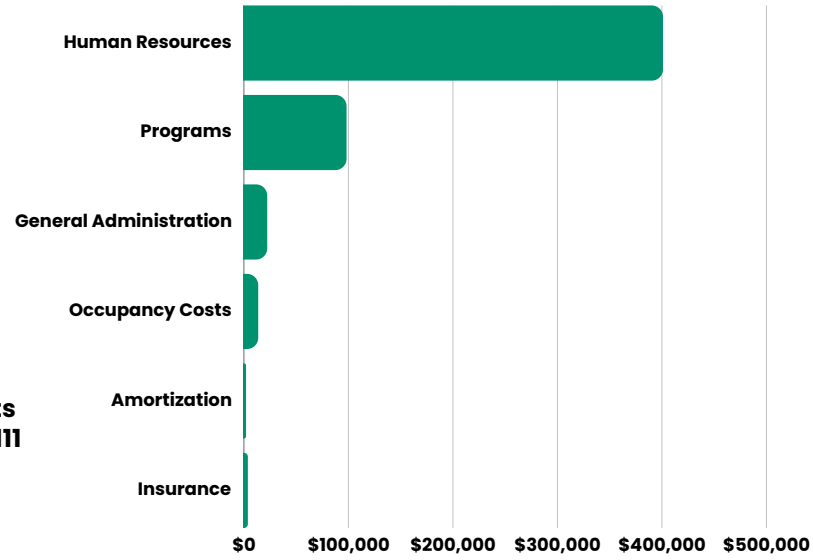
Total Revenue	Total Expenses
$798,098	$541,086

Revenue Breakdown



- Grants
- Trainings and Social Assistance
- Donations
- Deferred Capital/Interest

Expenses Breakdown



Human Resources	$401,021
Programs	$98,212
General Administration	$22,327
Occupancy Costs	$13,704
Amortization	$2,045
Insurance	$3,777

Excess of Revenue over Expenditures for the Year	$257,012

Funders, Donors & Supporters

We are grateful for the generous support of our community funders, donors, and partners. Their collaboration and commitment help MSSWR strengthen community wellbeing and expand access to culturally responsive services.

Region of Waterloo

Accredited IMAGINE CANADA

Ontario

Waterloo Regional heritage FOUNDATION

KINDRED FOUNDATION

Astley Family Foundation

Waterloo Region Community Foundation

Greater KW Chamber of Commerce - Corporate Challenge Fund

Upstream Fund

Waterloo Region Community Foundation

The Waterloo Region Record - Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund

camino Wellbeing + Mental Health

United Way Waterloo Region Communities

L.S. HALLMAN foundation

KITCHENER

THE CITY OF Waterloo

CAMBRIDGE CANADA PEOPLE • PLACE • PROSPERITY

Waterloo Region Community Foundation

The Alice (Braley) Judges - Walter Judges Fund

Supported by Jumpstart Bon départ Avec le soutien de

Waterloo Region Community Foundation

The Waterloo Region Record - Lyle S. Hallman Foundation Kids to Camp Fund

Community Partners

Together, these organizations, institutions, and community supporters helped strengthen MSSWR's impact across Waterloo Region in 2025.

We extend our sincere thanks to all our partner organizations for their support throughout the year. Your collaboration and dedication have been instrumental in helping us achieve our goals and strengthen our impact across the community. We look forward to continuing this work together and building on the meaningful initiatives ahead.

- Adventure4Change
- African Family Revival Organization (AFRO)
- Arab Women's Society of Guelph
- Bridges to Belonging
- Camino Wellbeing + Mental Health
- Capacity Canada
- Centre for Mutual Wellbeing (CMW, previously Coalition of Muslim Women)
- Child Witness Centre
- City of Kitchener
- Clear Mind Therapy
- Community Justice Initiatives
- Conestoga College
- Counselling Collaborative Waterloo Region
- Crow Shield Lodge
- Dumbo Octopus Consulting
- Eritrean Islamic Community of Waterloo Region
- Family & Children's Services of Waterloo Region
- Focus for Ethnic Women (FEW)
- Forest Hill United Church
- Greenway Chaplain Community Centre
- House of Friendship
- Imagine Canada
- Immigration Partnership Waterloo Region
- Interfaith Counselling Centre
- Interfaith Grand River
- Islamic Relief Canada
- KW Multicultural Centre
- Mennonite Central Committee
- Mayors
- Members of Parliament
- Members of Provincial Parliament
- Muslim Legal Support Centre
- Muslim Women of Cambridge
- Peace4All Canada
- Porchlight Counselling and Addiction Services
- Project READ Literacy Network
- Ray of Hope
- RBC
- Reception House
- Research Institute for Aging (RIA)
- Regional Chair & Regional Councillors
- Rohingya Centre
- Ruh Care
- Shalom Counselling Services
- SHORE Centre
- Starling Community Services
- The Resilience Project
- United Festival Organization
- University of Waterloo
- Victim Services Waterloo Region
- Waterloo Region Catholic School Board (WRCSB)
- Waterloo Region District School Board (WRDSB)
- Waterloo Region Police Service (WRPS)
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- Wisahkotewinwak
- Women's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region
- Woolwich Counselling Centre
- Workforce Planning Board (WINWR)
- YMCA of Three Rivers
- Yorkville University
- YWCA Waterloo Region

Muslim Social Services
Waterloo Region

THANK YOU

To our staff, volunteers, funders, and community members who make this work possible.

DONATE NOW

@muslimsocialserviceswr

@kwmuslims

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