

wjs Canada
strength in people



Spirit of
Our Youth

ANNUAL REPORT 2024





“Our newly expanded management team has shown remarkable resilience as we’ve navigated these shifts. We are now pivoting to reset our organizational foundations for future success.”

▶ **Mike Fotheringham**
CEO, WJS Canada

WJS Canada celebrated 40 years of operations this spring, a massive milestone. We have a long history of dedicated staff giving their best and an employee ownership group that has navigated many turbulent times. Our collective strength is drawn from these lessons and the hard work of so many.

This year was one of many significant changes. Our long-time CEO, Caroline Bonesky, retired in June 2023, followed by the retirement of our CFO, Monty Chew, in September. These departures and the transition to a new Board Chair marked a complete change in senior leadership. Our newly expanded management team has shown remarkable resilience as we’ve navigated these shifts.

We are now pivoting to reset our organizational foundations for future success. We made investments in our front-line staff by doubling our wellness days and offering RRSP matching to employees who were previously ineligible. We sought to increase transparency within our teams by offering quarterly financial updates to all staff. Our focus on persons served was deepened with the rollout of our client reporting software that will help us track our work to strengthen individuals and communities. We also took time to restructure our teams to ensure our front-line workers are at the forefront of our thinking and processes. ▶

► **Mike Fotheringham**
CEO, WJS Canada

WJS has always been rooted in values and this year saw us recertify as a B Corp with a new score over 110 which is a huge improvement from original total of 84.1. We're proud to be part of a family of businesses committed to environmental and social justice. Our commitment to the Truth and Reconciliation journey is unwavering, with monthly meetings where we've been working through the 94 TRC recommendations. This had led to a number of commitments in our program areas where we have been trying to help our youth apply for Jordan's principle funding for instance.

We continue to serve over 1,931 individuals and families in programs throughout BC, Alberta and Ontario and are committed to deepening our work in the communities we serve. We are uniquely positioned in many diverse communities that are looking for solutions to social issues, such as substance use, affordable housing, and seniors' care. We conducted a needs assessment to learn how we can better serve in the future and are using these findings to develop our strategic plan for our next 3-year period.

As we look forward, we have much to be grateful for with committed staff, relationships with the persons served, and support of our funders. We are excited about rolling out a new brand in 2024-25, a new strategic plan and a goal of growing our reach with children and youth. •





► **Gail Stepanik-Keber**
Board Chair WJS/Newco

This past fiscal year has been one of transition and reflection for WJS Canada. As of October 2023, it is a privilege to be the Board Chair, serving the best interests of the company, employees, shareholders, clients, and communities. I want to acknowledge the significant contributions of those who came before me, setting the stage for the future of our organization

First, I want to express my gratitude to Tim Beachy, the Board Chair of WJS Canada and Spirit of Our Youth from 2016 until 2023. Tim was instrumental in building our organization's governance structure and

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acumen. He held the Board accountable by providing oversight to WJS in the best interest of all stakeholders.

I also want to recognize retiring board members Adam Borgida, Monty Chew, and Helen Ambali for their contributions. Their work has shaped the governance systems that will guide WJS Canada into the future. The legacy of our original leaders continues to influence how we operate today.

In June 2023, we said goodbye to our CEO, Caroline Bonesky, who dedicatedly led WJS Canada for six years. Caroline's leadership saw the organization through important milestones, such as achieving B Corp certification, guiding us through the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic, and advancing our Truth & Reconciliation priorities. On behalf of the Board, I extend heartfelt thanks to Caroline for her

outstanding service and accomplishments.

Governance Achievements

This year saw several important milestones in our governance. Following a rigorous recruitment process, we successfully selected and onboarded our new CEO, Mike Fotheringham. The Board is confident in Mike's leadership and his vision for WJS Canada's future.

We strengthened collaboration with NewCo, our parent company, to improve transparency and streamline efforts across the organization. This included reviewing our Board and committee structure to ensure alignment with our strategic objectives and to enhance governance.►

► **Gail Stepanik-Keber**
Board Chair WJS/Newco

To further strengthen financial oversight, we welcomed Julie McGill from NewCo's Board as an interim external member on WJS Canada's Board, filling a critical role in financial expertise.

In September 2023, the Board and management team gathered for a strategic planning session, where we reviewed our progress and laid the groundwork for the final year of our 2022-2024 plan. A key takeaway from this session was reaffirming our commitment to employee ownership and the importance of financial sustainability as part of our mission to be a purpose-driven organization.

Despite the challenges of the past year—leadership transitions, structural adjustments, and managing fiscal constraints—WJS Canada has shown resilience and adaptability, remaining focused on providing personalized, trauma-informed care and culturally respectful support to those we serve.

As always, I want to express my gratitude to our employees for their dedication and the critical work they do every day. I thank my colleagues on the Board for their wisdom and ongoing commitment to WJS Canada's mission; thank you to Lisa LaForge, Donna Phillips, Alex Hayer, Aaron Hachkowski, Helen Ambali and Julie McGill for being open to and advocating for change.

In closing, I would like to honour former board member and CEO, Peter Farnden, and our colleague, Lynn Wanamaker. Their legacies continue to inspire us. May they rest in peace. •



YEAR IN OVERVIEW

This past year at WJS Canada has been one of significant change, growth, and renewed focus. Under the leadership of CEO Mike Fotheringham, we have made meaningful strides in strengthening our operations, enhancing community impact, and preparing for the future.

Here are some of the key achievements and areas of progress:

Expanded Leadership: We diversified our leadership team to better reflect the communities we serve, creating a more cohesive and resilient organization.

Employee Engagement: Our workforce remains highly engaged, with 98% of employees affirming that they understand WJS Canada's strategic goals. This alignment reflects the strength of our internal communication and commitment to involving staff in our mission.

Leadership Transparency: We introduced quarterly financial updates across all levels, fostering a culture of openness and inclusion. 91% of employees reported being satisfied with leadership's transparency, reinforcing trust and engagement across teams.

93% of employees who responded to our annual employee survey agree that WJS Canada promotes an inclusive culture.

Workplace Culture & Referrals: Our efforts to build a robust and inclusive workplace culture have paid off, with 94% of employees willing to refer friends to work at WJS Canada. This demonstrates the positive environment we have created and the pride our staff take in their roles.

Commitment to Inclusion: We have remained focused on fostering a workplace that values diversity, with 93% of staff agreeing that WJS promotes an inclusive culture. This focus on inclusion is a key pillar of our organizational success.

Workplace Safety: Safety remains a priority for us, with 59.72% of employees reporting that they always feel safe at work. We continue to enhance our safety protocols to ensure a secure and supportive environment for all.

Support for Front-Line Staff: We doubled wellness time and introduced a 3% RRSP matching program for PDD workers in Alberta, recognizing the crucial role front-line staff play in our success.

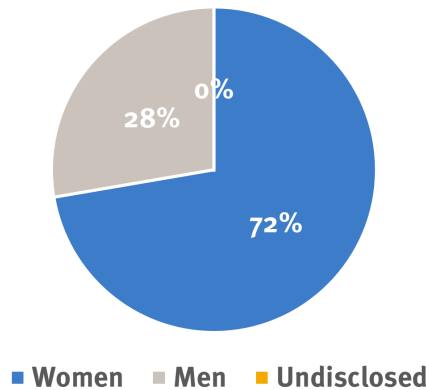
Operational Improvements: We've strengthened our financial and operational health and recertified our BCorp and CARF certifications, reinforcing our commitment to quality and accountability.

Looking Ahead: We've begun rebranding to strengthen community connections and conducted needs assessments to better align our services with those we serve.

With these initiatives, we are well positioned for future growth and impact. •

OUR STRENGTH LIES IN OUR DIVERSITY

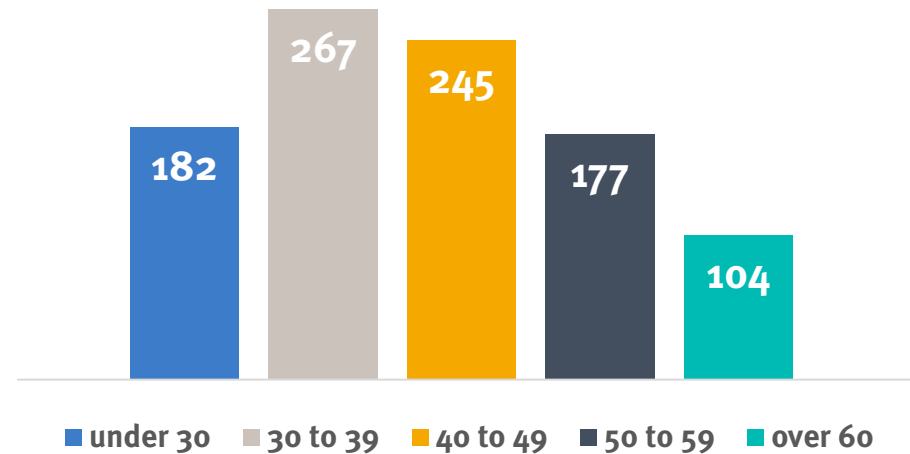
At WJS Canada, we are dedicated to nurturing change and healing in communities across Canada. We recognize that fostering an equitable, diverse, and inclusive environment is crucial to our mission of providing high-quality, personalized, and culturally responsive care.



STAFF DIVERSITY AT WJS

- ▶ Our team reflects a rich diversity of cultures, languages, ethnic backgrounds, gender balance, and age groups. This variety of perspectives enhances our ability to connect deeply with the communities we serve, ensuring that our services are shaped by a broad spectrum of experiences.
- ▶ Intergenerational knowledge-sharing strengthens collaboration and drives innovation across all levels of the organization.
- ▶ We prioritize inclusive hiring practices, ensuring that equity remains at the core of our growth and operations.

AGE DISTRIBUTION AT WJS



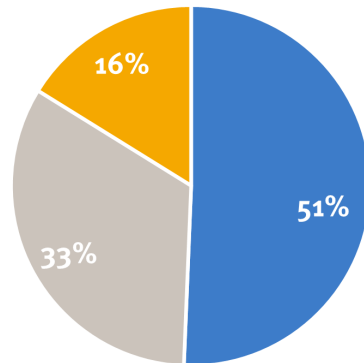
Our people are our greatest asset, and we celebrate the diverse experiences they bring to our work.



OUR PEOPLE

Our employees are the backbone of WJS Canada, embodying the care and dedication that drives our services. This year, we've seen steady growth with 920 employees, comprising 313 non-union and 442 union staff. Our team is made up of 50.7% full-time, 33.2% casual, and 16.2% part-time employees. As an employee-owned organization, each team member has a vested interest in our success, fostering a culture of engagement and accountability.

EMPLOYEE STATUS



EMPLOYEE DISTRIBUTION ACROSS CANADA



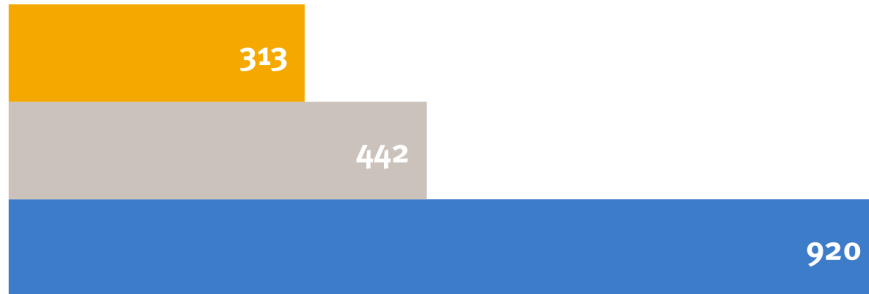
■ Full employees time ■ Casual Employees ■ Part time Employees

■ Ontario ■ SOOY ■ BC ■ Alberta

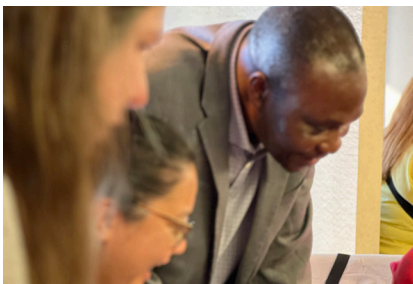
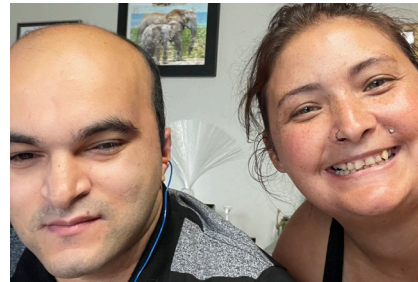


Our balanced role distribution—spanning frontline staff, administration, and management—ensures we stay adaptable and make informed decisions. This structure strengthens our capacity to maintain high-quality services and respond effectively to the needs of those we support.

OUR TEAM STRUCTURE



■ Non Union Employees ■ Union Employees ■ All Employees



EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

Our 2023 Employee Survey revealed many areas to celebrate, demonstrating our commitment to fostering an inclusive, supportive, and dynamic workplace.

What we're celebrating...

89% feel that the agency provides **opportunities to share** their ideas and values their contributions.



83% are familiar with the B Corp values

In 2022, only about 50% reported they had even *heard* of B Corp.

We are a certified B Corp committed to improving our social and environmental impact - visit bcorporation.net to learn more.

98% understand WJS and Spirit's **strategic goals**.

94% say they would definitely (64%) or probably (30%) **refer a friend** to work for WJS or Spirit.

93% agree that the culture at WJS and Spirit is **inclusive**. 83% rate diversity at WJS and Spirit at least 4 out of 5.

91% are satisfied or very satisfied with the **information shared** by WJS and Spirit leadership.

These results showcase the dedication of our staff and the inclusive environment we strive to maintain for both employees and those we serve.



DIVERSE ABILITIES, ALBERTA Donna Phillips, Executive Director

This year, our Diverse Abilities program in Alberta continued to empower individuals with disabilities, promoting independence and fostering community inclusion. In December 2023, we proudly achieved CET accreditation, earning a three-year certificate with no recommendations. The DA team actively participated in key community events, including Metis Fest in Fort McMurray, and helped organize Brain Injury Awareness Month alongside other stakeholders. From April 2023 to March 2024, 62% of Individual Service Plan (ISP) goals were met, demonstrating our commitment to person-centred care and achieving meaningful outcomes for those we serve.

Impact Story:

Raymond Keung is a talented artist who discovered his passion for drawing after joining our Acquired Brain Injury program and overcoming the challenges of his injury. Before coming to the program, Raymond didn't consider himself an artist. Over time, with dedication and support, he developed skills in various forms of art, including drawing, painting, and watercolours. His works now include intricate depictions of animals and landscapes; his art has even been featured in the Art gallery. Raymond is incredibly proud of his accomplishments, which have contributed to his sense of pride, comfort, and fulfillment in his artistic journey. His story is one of resilience, demonstrating how creativity can become a powerful tool for healing and self-expression.





YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES, BC/AB | YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICES, ON
 Rudy Newbury, Executive Director

In British Columbia, our Foster and Kinship Care, Child in Care Services (CIC) program empowered families by addressing emotional, social, physical, and health needs. We provided short-term crisis services and nurturing environments for children and youth unable to live with their families. Over the past year, CIC offered 30 beds in 25 care homes for children with autism or complex mental health challenges. We successfully reunified two children with their families and supported three youths in transitioning to adulthood.

The Transitional Outreach Program (TOP) in BC supported youth aging out of care or in early adulthood with mental health and developmental disabilities. TOP provided housing support, life skills, and community safety, serving 19 individuals in 2024.

Our Staffed Resourced Homes in BC focused on developmentally appropriate, trauma-informed care, providing stable placements for 14 youth.

In Alberta, WJS has 31 Family Support Workers in Northern Alberta and 3 in Red Deer, offering early intervention, family intervention, and lifelong connections.

Impact Story:

A 15-year-old youth came to us struggling with mental health issues, addiction, and criminal justice involvement. Their initial weeks were challenging, but through structured care and a supportive environment, they built trusting relationships with their care providers and peers.

Over time, the youth gained life skills, engaged in community support, and secured employment. They successfully transitioned to independent living, maintaining strong bonds with their foster family, who continue to offer support and guidance.





DIVERSE ABILITIES, BC
Jatinder Aujla, Executive Director

Our Community Living Services program in BC continues to foster personal growth and community connections for individuals with diverse abilities. Key accomplishments this year include acquiring a new accessible van, expanding one-on-one outreach services, and celebrating successful licensing audits and CLBC reviews with no recommendations.

The program also supported individuals in participating in many community events like Peach Fest, Canada Day celebrations, Summerland Action Festival, Cloverdale Rodeo, New Year's Polar Bear Plunge, going to the White Caps games, Vaisakhi Parade, Indigenous Day celebrations, Diwali festival and the Special Olympics, highlighting our commitment to inclusion and personalized care.



Impact Story:

In the Fraser Valley, one of our long-time persons served welcomed twin baby girls into her Home Share. Throughout her pregnancy and the birth, she received continuous support from her Home Share provider, who has cared for her since childhood. The twins were born on April 3, 2024, and after spending some time in the NICU, they returned home, where both mom and babies are thriving.

The dedicated staff at Home Share has supported the person served through every step of this journey—offering emotional guidance, coordinating medical care, and ensuring that the home environment remained nurturing and stable. The entire Home Share family adores the babies, reflecting the deep bonds and lasting connections that our services help create.



SPIRIT OF OUR YOUTH Verna Longmore, Program Director

WJS Canada's subsidiary, Spirit of Our Youth (SOOY), provides culturally-based programs and services to Indigenous individuals, families, children, and youth across Canada. These programs address emotional challenges, abuse, mental health concerns, abandonment, and addictions, offering support to families in crisis.

With the guidance of Cultural Resource Coordinators and community Elders, SOOY incorporates traditional teachings such as sweats, smudging, pipe ceremonies, feasts, dances, language, and customs. These practices help reconnect clients with their Indigenous heritage and support their healing journey. SOOY also operates 19 beds, providing ceremonial and culturally-centred care for Indigenous children from northern communities.

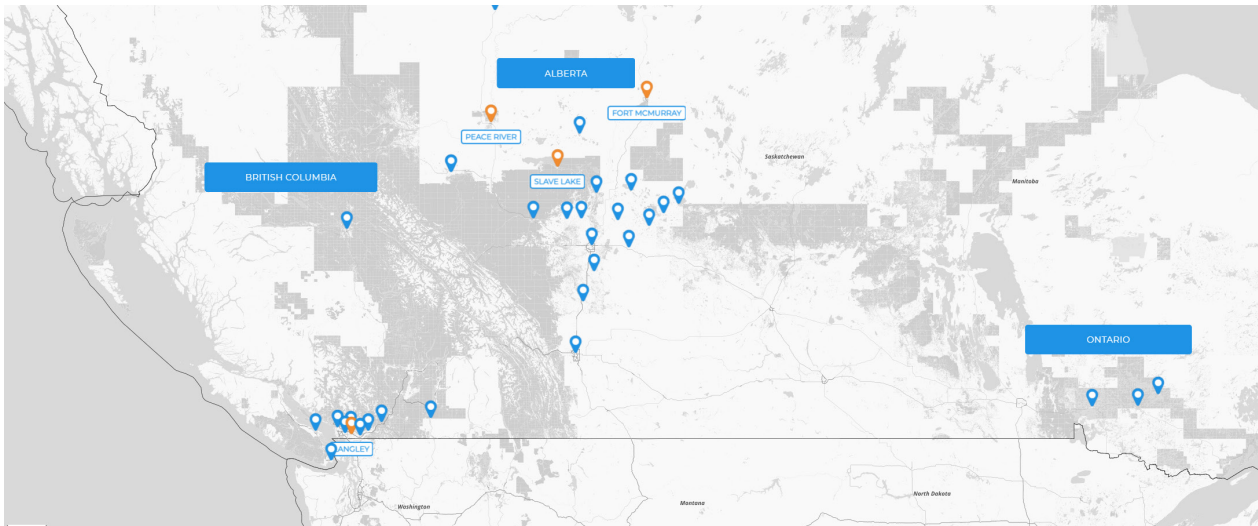
Impact Story:

SOOY aims to stabilize youth and help them reconnect with their families and home communities. Recently, we achieved this goal with two youths who successfully reintegrated with their families after leaving our program. Both returned to live with a parent, and the transition has been positive, showing the strength of family bonds and the support provided by our staff.

This successful reintegration was only possible with our team's dedication and collaborative efforts. Through culturally grounded care and the commitment of our staff, we continue to foster positive outcomes for the youth we serve.



PROGRAM OVERVIEW



214

Individuals served in Fort McMurray

173

Individuals served in Peace River

192

Individuals served in Slave Lake

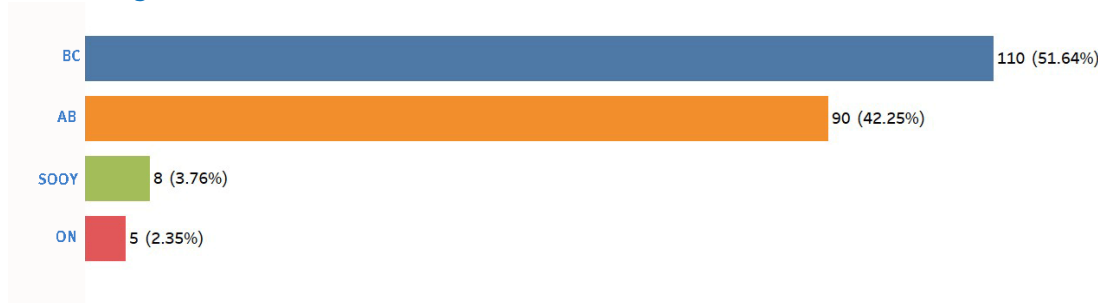
174

Individuals served in Langley

These locations represent the highest numbers of individuals served through our extensive network of programs.

This map and data showcase the distribution of individuals served in our key regions, reflecting our dedication to meeting local needs. Altogether, 1,931 individuals were served across all sites. The distribution of programs across WJS Canada’s regions demonstrates the breadth of our services, with a large number of programs concentrated in British Columbia and Alberta. Spirit of Our Youth (SOOY) and programs in Ontario region also play vital roles, offering specialized, localized support.

Total Programs Across Canada



16 NEW Programs

16 new initiatives this fiscal year reflect WJS Canada’s commitment to expanding our reach and addressing growing community needs.

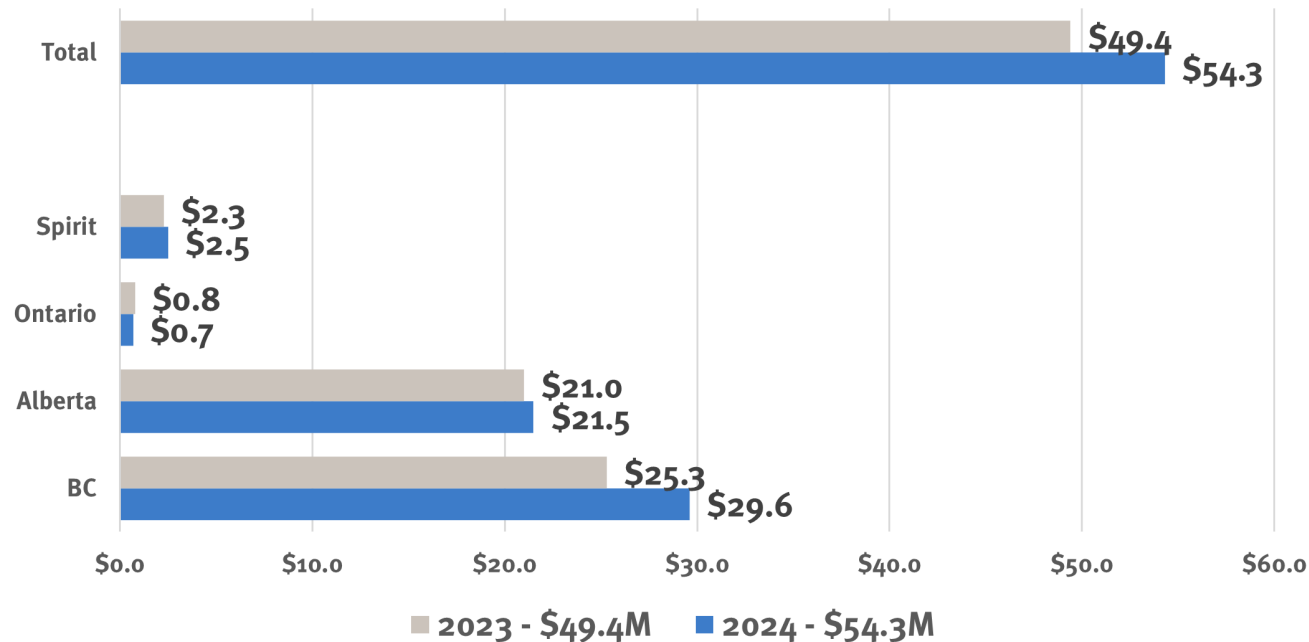
REVENUE & FINANCE

Over the past year, we are pleased to report a revenue increase of \$4.9 million, representing a 9% growth rate. This marks a significant improvement from the previous four years.

Much of this growth is due to increased funding for collective bargaining agreements on existing contracts rather than new program expansion. While funding by program area has remained relatively stable over the past five years, we have seen notable growth in BC, where government funding has increased at a faster rate than in Alberta.

As we move forward, our focus remains on trimming unnecessary costs and strengthening our balance sheet. By stabilizing our working capital, we are positioning ourselves for long-term success, ensuring we can continue to meet the needs of the communities we serve.

Funding Growth 2023 to 2024 (Overall 9% Increase)



FUNDING CONTRIBUTIONS BY REGION & KEY FUNDERS



Community Living BC

\$15,350,279

Ministry of Children & Family Development

\$14,312,362

\$29,662,640



Family and Community Services

\$6,990,897

Persons with Developmental Disabilities

\$14,433,454

\$21,424,350



Ontario Region

\$569,642

\$569,642

Each graphic illustrates the regional funding breakdown and highlights contributions from our funders for the fiscal year 2023-2024.

