

Reinvent & Build Forward

Annual Report 2020-2021



CIWA
Calgary Immigrant Women's Association

Accelerating Innovations

Fulfilling outcomes during the pandemic year

Before the pandemic, immigrant women faced many challenges in the workforce and home life. CIWA persistently advocated for customized gender-specific services due to the reality of settlement challenges women face in everyday life, from cultural differences and role reversal, to employment, caregiving and parenting in Canada. COVID-19 further exacerbated social and economic inequities immigrant women face.

Women were hit harder by the pandemic as a result of the economic downturn, disproportionate share of job loss, increased exposure to health risks in the workplace and additional family responsibilities due to limited childcare options and children attending school online. CIWA was also not immune to the impact of the pandemic. As an agency comprised of 99% female staff, women employed at CIWA shared the same challenges experienced by its clientele.

The 2020-2021 Annual Report highlights how CIWA as an organization, community partner and collective of individuals continued to reinvent its approaches and build forward. In the past year, clients, volunteers, and staff exhibited an extraordinary level of resiliency and ability to adjust to the ever-changing circumstances of the pandemic. Challenges did not deter CIWA from delivering services and meeting outcomes while forging ahead and navigating these unprecedented times.



A Message from CIWA's Board of Directors



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Throughout its 39 year history, CIWA has proven that it can effectively and efficiently recognize, respond to, and focus on the unique concerns and needs of immigrant and refugee women, girls, and their families.

CIWA embraced the challenges of the past year, successfully transitioning through innovation to provide virtual customized services, alternative childcare options, while continuing to ensure that our clients achieve their settlement outcomes. These successes are attributable to a clear strategic plan that guides our decisions and actions; the remarkable leadership of CIWA's CEO; and the dedication and devotion of all staff and volunteers. We are grateful for the support of our funders, donors, and business partners. With these partners by our side, CIWA was able to provide high-quality, equitable, and inclusive services to our clients. Finally, thank you to CIWA's clients who have shown tremendous resilience, enthusiasm, and commitment this past year despite formidable challenges.

In January 2021, CIWA's board and senior management collaborated at a virtual retreat focused on the "CIWA of the Future". We look forward to building on CIWA's successes as we embark on the strategic planning period of our governance cycle. To my fellow board members and committee volunteers, thank you for your leadership, strong governance, and most of all your dedication this past year. Your collective knowledge, experiences, and expertise supports CIWA's important contributions.

As we transition to a post-pandemic world, Canada's short-term economic recovery and long-term economic growth will dependent on immigration and the successful settlement of newcomers. CIWA will play a key role in our country's economic recovery as a leader in outcome-based, gender-specific settlement services. We will continue to live by our vision to empower immigrant women and enrich Canadian society.

Elmien Wingert
Board Chair

Reconfiguring Service Delivery

Overcoming amplified barriers

CIWA's 50+ programs remained accessible to immigrant women and their families during the pandemic.

Collectively, CIWA staff pivoted from in-person to contactless service delivery and seamlessly transitioned to provide curbside, virtual, outdoor, and hybrid services for clients.



Curbside & Contactless Services

Curbside Settlement

Our settlement team enhanced their scope of services to address the unique vulnerabilities of immigrant women by providing curbside deliveries of care packages, basic essentials, groceries, gift cards, and diapers.

Contactless Delivery

CIWA staff curated program materials such as laptops, kitchen equipment and ingredients, notebooks, and art kits to enable clients to attend virtual workshops and complete their English language classes and employment training.

Drive-by Caravans

Home visitors traversed the city in their decorated vehicles to celebrate the accomplishments of preschool aged youngsters and their families, as Kindergarten-ready children embark on the next milestone of their life despite pandemic limitations.



Virtual Services

Employment Training

CIWA's employment bridging programs adopted the Virtual Instructor-Led Training (VILT) model to ensure clients were prepared for successful and productive engagement in the labour market.



Practicum Placements

Employment programs partnered with local businesses to provide remote work opportunities to help clients expand their skills and gain professional Canadian experience.



Home Visitations

Our staff provided virtual home visitation services to support families facing complex issues around financial security, isolation, literacy, and cross cultural parenting.



Counselling Services

CIWA counsellors used various apps to ensure vulnerable clients had immediate access to supports that address family conflict, domestic violence, as well as settlement and employment related challenges.



Literacy Classes

Teachers and the learning support specialist helped adult literacy learners use electronic devices in order to transition to a virtual learning classroom and complete their training successfully.



Digital Awareness Campaigns

CIWA programs leveraged various social media platforms to overcome physical isolation, promote social connections and maintain the mental health and overall wellbeing of clients.



Porch & Backyard Home Visitations

In the comfort and privacy of their backyards and porches, immigrant families received in-person supports to strengthen family relationships and address risk factors that impact the healthy development of immigrant children.

Outdoor Graduations

Together with their peers, our seniors and employment bridging programs clients safely celebrated personal achievements through graduations organized and hosted by our staff in green spaces in Calgary.

Youth Summer Camp

In collaboration with Jays Care Foundation, newcomer and immigrant girls learned about baseball and the benefits of healthy lifestyles and active living during the pandemic.

Educational Sessions in the Park

Youth and seniors overcame isolation and developed a sense of belonging in the community by engaging in outdoor activities that promoted civic engagement, leadership, and self-esteem.

Outdoor Services



Hybrid Services

Employment & Language Training

Classroom instructors adopted various teaching approaches to facilitate classes to mixed groups of virtual attendees and in-person participants in order to foster an inclusive learning environment for all.



Tax Services

Settlement counsellors delivered in-person and remote tax filing services for low-income immigrant families so that they can access resources and supports available to them.

Childcare Services

Childcare staff nurtured social connection among children aged 2 to 6 through online and in-person early learning activities supporting continued child development during the pandemic.

Crisis Counselling

Family counsellors supported clients impacted by domestic violence through virtual, over-the-phone, and in-person meetings in community locations, police stations, hotels, and shelters.



2020-2021 Funding Partners

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Financé par le
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Canada

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Canada Summer Jobs
Emergency Community Support Fund
Justice Canada
New Horizons for Seniors Program
Women and Gender Equality Canada
Youth Employment and Skills Strategy



Advanced Education
Children's Services
Community and Social Services
Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women
Health
Labour and Immigration



Along with:
Tamaratt Term Fund
Daryl K. Seaman Foundation Fund
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Scholarships and Awards Contributors

Gerda R. Bloemraad Scholarship Fund



Shirley Turnbull
Jivanya Reddy
Elmien Wingert

CALGARY IMMIGRANT WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Statement of Operations

Year ended March 31, 2021, with comparative information for 2020

	2021	2020
Revenue:		
Program grants	\$ 13,732,954	\$ 13,962,613
Service fees	105,862	152,919
Partnership grants	150,308	151,310
Donations	109,789	115,088
Casino	6,042	40,812
Fundraising	8,673	27,691
Interest income	11,866	16,107
Merchandise sales	1,350	3,048
Other income	2,053	727
Membership	726	670
Amortization of deferred contributions related to property and equipment	171,855	170,478
	14,301,478	14,641,463
Expenses:		
Salaries and benefits	10,728,663	10,689,510
Rent	1,076,090	1,333,611
Materials and supplies	1,034,193	1,130,646
Contract fees	387,003	320,570
Repairs and maintenance	319,872	193,108
Travel	105,201	308,120
Telephone, postage and courier	65,996	38,019
Professional fees	65,686	38,871
Miscellaneous	50,468	53,409
Photocopying and printing	43,641	119,628
Staff and volunteer development	43,469	56,691
Insurance	36,772	31,646
Goods and service tax	29,587	34,562
Equipment and equipment rental	22,459	38,850
Advertising and publicity	11,057	6,737
Memberships and fundraising	6,226	6,394
Meetings	4,347	48,815
Amortization	171,855	170,478
	14,202,585	14,619,665
Excess of revenue over expenses	\$ 98,893	\$ 21,798

A Message from CIWA's Senior Management Team



CIWA's leadership team would like to thank our funders, donors, partners, volunteers, and staff for the phenomenal work that we all collectively achieved through COVID-19. It was amazing to be a part of the collective community response with hundreds of other agencies in Calgary and our funding partners - all of us doing what we do well for marginalized populations living in Calgary.

It was a difficult time but we managed to ride out the storm, and we are stronger and more resilient for this experience. As for the clients' outcomes and our contractual obligations in the past year, we have achieved them all. On that particular front, last year was just another day in the office for us. All our programs served clients without interruption due to the smooth transition to virtual service delivery. While we had limited options for effective outreach during the pandemic, our services attracted new clients who required customized responses to meet their needs. In fact, 64% of the individuals who came to CIWA in 2020-2021 were new clients.

Although the pandemic may have altered to some extent how the social service sector delivers services for many years to come, the notion of creating long lasting impact through targeted, holistic, and innovative programs that address the needs of immigrant families remains the focal point of CIWA. As Calgary recovers from this once-in-a-lifetime pandemic event, we are committed to staying the course, harnessing our collective resilience, and continuing to create customized gender-specific solutions that support the integration of all women and their families into Canadian society.

Lastly, we want to say a word about our clients' contribution to the solutions to end this pandemic. We are proud to say that CIWA client participation in the COVID-19 vaccination program has been steadily increasing from the launch of the program and continues to grow to this date, with the vast majority of immigrant families taking the initiative to book their own appointments. This speaks about our commitment to building the culture of trust in the institutions and collective contributions that immigrant women make for their own and the wellbeing of their families. And our neighbours' wellbeing. And yours. And the wellbeing of the global community.

Support immigrant women. Enrich Canadian society.

Donors & Supporters

ABC Life Literacy Canada
 Aboriginal Friendship Centre of Calgary
 ActionDignity
 Active Start Childcare - Sage Hill
 Acumen Capital Partners
 Adventurers School Age Care
 African Label Inc.
 AgeCare
 Alberta Association of Immigrant Serving Agencies
 Alberta Chinese Cultural Education Society
 Alberta Educational Centre
 Alberta Health Services - Community Education Services
 Alinea International
 Allied Universal Security Services
 ALSA Road Construction Ltd.
 Alzheimer Society of Calgary
 AM PM Properties Inc.
 Ambrose University
 AMETEK Canada LP
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 Arctic Canadian Diamond Company Ltd.
 Ari P Sanders Professional Corporation
 Artem Financial Ltd.
 ArtOverMatter Creative Inc.
 Association of Translators and Interpreters of Alberta
 Assure Community Services
 Atco Group
 Atria Retirement Canada
 AwSUM Outcomes Inc.
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 BAPS Charities
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 Basha Foods International
 Bay River College
 Beauty by Bryan Francisco
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 Big Fish & Open Range
 BitWide
 Boardwalk Real Estate Investment Trust
 BottomLine
 Bow Valley College
 BOWEN Group
 Braineer Academy
 Bredin Centre for Career Advancement
 Brentwood Childcare Centre
 Bridlewood Out of School Care
 Bright Futures Preschool & Daycare Ltd.
 BrightPath Kids
 Burnet, Duckworth & Palmer LLP
 Burns Memorial Fund
 Business Link
 Busy Bee Daycare
 Calgary Alternative Employment Services
 Calgary Board of Education
 Calgary Catholic Education Foundation
 Calgary Catholic Immigration Society
 Calgary Catholic School District
 Calgary Church of Christ
 Calgary Communities Against Sexual Abuse
 Calgary Counselling Centre
 Calgary Fetal Alcohol Network
 Calgary Fire Department
 Calgary Food Bank
 Calgary Housing Company
 Calgary International Film Festival
 Calgary Jiang Zhe Shanghai Association
 Calgary Legal Guidance
 Calgary Meals on Wheels

Calgary Opera
 Calgary Public Library
 Calgary Region Immigrant Employment Council
 Calgary Women's Emergency Shelter
 Calgary Zoo
 Callow & Associates Management Consultants Inc.
 Canada Advantage
 Canada Revenue Agency
 Canadian Mental Health Association
 Canadian Pakistani Support Group Association
 Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society
 Southern Alberta Chapter
 Canadian Skin Cancer Foundation
 Canadian Wildlife Federation
 CanaDream
 Candy Event Consulting
 carya
 Catalyst Research and Development Inc.
 Catholic Family Service
 Centre for Newcomers
 Centre for Public Legal Education
 Alberta
 Centre for Race and Culture
 Centre for Research & Education on Violence Against Women & Children
 Centre for Sexuality
 Certarus Ltd.
 Certus Developments Inc.
 Chartered Professional Accountants of Alberta
 Chianti Café
 Children's Cottage Society
 Children's Link Society
 Children's Place Daycare
 Chrysalis Accounting Solutions Ltd.
 Cintas Corporation
 City of Calgary
 CivicAction Leadership Foundation
 Cleaning Girl Trustworthy Services
 Closer to Home Community Services
 Club Demonstration Services
 Colpitts Ranches
 Columbia College
 Concorde Airport Services
 Connect Local & Global Inc.
 Copy Repro Inc.
 Costco Wholesale Canada Ltd.
 Country Hills Toyota
 Country Living Furnishings & Design Inc.
 Covenant Christian Reformed Church
 Cross Cultural Children's Centre
 CSS Office Solutions Inc.
 Cultural Interpretation Services for Our Communities
 Curve Distribution Services
 Dairy Queen
 Dalhousie Church
 Deaf and Hear Alberta
 Diligent Assistant
 Directions for Immigrants
 Discovery House
 Distress Centre Calgary
 Diversified Staffing Services
 DMA Global
 Domino's Pizza of Canada Ltd.
 Drizzle Honey
 Dulux Building Maintenance Ltd.
 East Calgary Registry
 Edgemont Childcare Centre
 Effortless Marketing
 EFW Radiology
 Eighty-Eight Brewing Co.

Electronic Recycling Association
 EmergiTEL
 Empower Me
 ENMAX Corporation
 Equation Staffing Solutions
 ESG Child Playcare Centre
 Exceedia Consulting Ltd.
 Families Matter Society
 Families of Alberta for Conductive Education
 FANS Foundation
 Fifth Avenue Place Toastmaster's Fun Club
 Fine Machine Works Inc.
 First Book Canada
 Focus Bubble
 Fountainhead Mechanical Inc.
 Freebridge Cleaning Services
 G4S Canada
 Gateway Association Calgary
 Gauntlet Publications Society
 Genesis Centre of Community Wellness
 Genesis Geomatics Inc.
 Global Gathering Place
 Good Companions 50 Plus Club
 Good Food Market Corp.
 Good Start Daycare
 Graham Construction & Engineering Inc.
 Grounded Tea
 Grow and Learn Childcare and Preschool
 GYMVMT
 H&W Produce
 Hallmark Housekeeping Services Inc.
 Healthy Babies Network
 Heartfulness
 Hillhurst-Sunnyside Out Of School Care
 Hilltop Accounting & Tax Services
 HIV Community Link
 Holistic Institute of Health and Fertility
 Honeycomb Solutions
 Hull Services
 Hyatt Regency Calgary
 Immigrant Council for Arts Innovation
 Immigrant Services Calgary
 Impact Security Group - Calgary Office
 Incredible Florist YYC
 Informed Paralegal Services Ltd.
 Intercare Corporate Brentwood Care Centre
 IronOak IT Inc.
 iShine Childcare
 Italian Supermarket Ltd.
 Jacaranda
 Jays Care Foundation
 Just 4 U Family Services
 Just for You Daycare
 Kaleidoscope Kids Preschool
 Kentucky Fried Chicken
 Kerby Centre
 Kiddies Daycare Centre
 Kids & Company
 Kids First Creative Childcare Centre
 Kids R Fun
 Kids Stop Children's Centre Auburn Bay
 Kids U Centennial
 Kids Up Front
 Kids@ Bright Lights Child Care Centre
 Kids@ Churchill Park Child Care Centre
 Kinette Club of Calgary
 Kiyooka Ohe Arts Centre
 Knox United Church
 La Coccinelle Preschool

Lake Bonavista Village Retirement Residence
 Languages in Motion Ltd.
 Leap n' Learn Preschool Inc.
 Lethbridge Family Services
 Lina's Italian Market & Café
 Little Lebanon Pita Pies & Donair
 Little Treasures Inc.
 Loblaw's Companies Limited Ltd.
 LOUD Marketing
 Lumens Courage Consulting
 Lycee Louis Pasteur Society
 Mahogany Scholars Preschool
 Making Changes Association
 Malayalee Cultural Association of Calgary
 Manchester Community Association
 Mango Maids
 Maple Leaf Academy
 Maple Leaf Daycare, Preschool & education Centre
 Maskan
 Mason-Vanguard Consulting
 McDonald's
 McElhanney
 Meals on Wheels
 MENTOR Canada
 Metrie Canada Ltd.
 Mission Thrift Store
 Momentum
 Montreux Childcare Centre
 Monogram Coffee
 Mothers Matter Centre
 Motion Focus & Sports Clinic Inc.
 Mount Royal Residence
 Mount Royal University
 Multicultural Health Brokers
 Cooperative
 Muslim Association of Canada - Calgary Chapter
 Natology - Integrative Skin Therapy Inc.
 New Canadian Friendship Centre
 Noble Pie Pizza
 Northern Hills Community Association
 NPower Canada
 NurtureCare Early Learning Centre
 Ohana Care
 Ollia Macarons & Tea
 Osuji & Smith Lawyers
 Pacekids Programs
 Padgett Business Services
 Paladin Security
 Philippine Consulate General, Calgary
 Philippine Festival Council of Alberta
 Picture Perfect Cleaning
 Popeyes
 Portail de l'Immigrant Association
 Prairie Neurohealth Clinic
 PrimeAsia TV
 Punjabi Community Health Services
 Calgary
 Rabboni Support Services Inc.
 Randstad Interim Inc.
 Real Estate Council of Alberta
 RED 106.7FM Calgary
 RedSage Consulting Ltd.
 Regina Immigrant Women Centre
 Renfrew Educational Services
 Resolve Accounting Professional Corporation
 Revera Inc.
 Ricky's All Day Grill
 Rise Education
 River East Transcona Immigrant Services
 River Valley School
 RNDSQL

Robert McClure United Church
 Royal Bank of Canada
 Sagesse
 Seafood City Supermarket
 Seedlings Early Learning
 SerVantage
 ServiceMaster Clean
 Shaw Communications
 Shoppers Drug Mart
 Shory Law
 Silvera for Seniors
 Sleep Country Canada
 Sock Rocket
 Sodexo
 Sonshine Communiy Services
 Sonshine Family Day Homes
 South Calgary Primary Care Network
 Southern Alberta Institute of Technology
 St. John Reception Centre
 Stargate Physical Therapy
 Strides Running Store Inc.
 Subway
 Summit Kids
 Sunterra Market
 Sweet as Candy Inc.
 T&T Supermarket
 Talent Pool
 Tamara Ross Professional Services
 TD Canada Trust
 TD Wealth
 TECTERRA
 TELUS Spark
 The Alex Community Food Centre
 The Blossoms Daycare
 The Brenda Strafford Centre
 The Calgary Bridge Foundation for Youth
 The Canadian Poverty Institute
 The Children's Place
 The Colour Factor
 The Immigrant Education Society
 The Magic of Christmas
 The Mustard Seed
 THENINES
 The Owen Hart Foundation
 The Salvation Army
 Thornhill Child Care Society
 Tim Hortons
 TOPP KIDS Out of School Clubs
 Trellis
 True North Accounting
 Tuk Tuk Thai
 Ullaco Corp
 United Way of Calgary and Area
 University Child Care Centre Society
 University of Calgary
 University of Calgary Student Radio Society
 University of Guelph
 Urban Fare
 Vibrant Communities Calgary
 Vision Live Studio
 Visions Electronics
 Whitefield Daycare
 Willowbrae Academy
 Workers' Resource Centre
 WorldServe Thrift Store
 Young Women of Power
 Youth Helping Youth Alberta
 YWCA Calgary
 YYC Beeswax
 Zelos Capital
 Individual and anonymous donors

2020-2021 Highlights of Outcomes & Impact

Employment Supports

- CIWA supported 2,960 immigrant women through a suite of 14 employment focused programs
- More than 600 immigrant women graduated through our employment bridging programs
- CIWA provided over 700 occupational specific certifications to immigrant women
- Our programs helped over 400 immigrant youth between the ages of 15 and 29 prepare for future employment in Canada
- CIWA worked with 231 business partners in the past year of which 95 were new to us
- Together with our partners, we transitioned 79% of employment skills and bridging programs' clients to employment

Settlement Supports

- CIWA provided 11,750 individual services in 42 languages to address the settlement and integration needs of immigrant women and their families
- Hundreds of volunteers representing 77 countries contributed a total of 11,870 hours to support our work
- Our settlement team provided food supports worth over \$103,000 to 190 immigrant and refugee families in Calgary
- Community partners, private donors, and businesses donated over \$72,000 in cash and goods to provide Christmas hampers and toys to 70 families and 567 children

Family, Youth & Senior Supports

- CIWA supported nearly 3,500 parents, youth, seniors, and families in adjusting to a new culture during pandemic
- Our home visitors provided 6,148 in-person and virtual home visits to families facing literacy barriers, intergenerational conflict, and domestic violence challenges
- Experienced family counsellors provided intervention supports to 2,368 clients impacted by family conflict during the pandemic
- Over 130 youth mentees accessed mentorship supports to gain career development skills
- One-on-one counsellors provided culturally sensitive supports to 224 immigrant seniors to address physical and mental health issues

Immigration Category Percentage

Economic	28.96%
Family class	26.54%
Citizen	18.6%
Refugee	19.62%
Other	4.5%

Country of Origin Percentage

Philippines	15.34%
India	12.28%
China	7.28%
Nigeria	6.82%
Eritrea	5.07%

15,679
clients served

First Language Percentage

Tagalog	14.73%
Arabic	10.88%
Spanish	10.21%
Mandarin	6.70%
Tigrinya	5.58%

Language & Childcare Supports

- CIWA provided 700 immigrant women and men with language and childcare supports
- Our learning support specialist provided individualized instruction to 67 clients to address their unique learning needs
- Language instructors successfully transitioned 475 adult language and literacy learners to online learning platforms
- Our instructors also provided various experiential learning opportunities through virtual and in-person field trips to 293 learners
- Over 180 parents participated in the HIPPY program to support the school readiness of their preschool aged children

Revolutionizing Partnerships

Transforming the ways we collaborate

Almost half a million Canadian women lost their jobs during the pandemic – a lot of them immigrant women that require gender specific support to address clashing roles and associated losses that they have been exposed to during the pandemic. Many of these women were earning low-income wages and worked in hard-hit sectors like hospitality, retail, food or tourism.

Data from Statistics Canada also shows that there were 117,837 active businesses in Alberta in February 2020. By January 2021, the number declined by approximately 4,700 businesses.

CIWA's employment services quickly shifted our partnership approaches during the initial stages of the pandemic to address and support the changing needs in the business sector. We pivoted to virtual engagements to provide alternative solutions that support both our clients and business partners impacted by the economic stress. Subsequently, more than 230 businesses engaged in 608 initiatives to support the labour market participation of immigrant women looking to find employment in line with their skills, education and career goals. As a result of these strategic collaborations, 79% of CIWA clients were successful in securing employment this past fiscal year.



Business Partnerships

Practicum Placements

Hundreds of our bridging program clients entered into virtual practicums in roles such as office administration, human resources, bookkeeping, program assistance, research, event coordination and marketing.

Networking Meetings

More than 300 immigrant women participated in virtual Networking Breakfast meetings with over 40 employers to support our clients' employment search and to help bridge our business partners' staffing needs.



Family Resource Network

One of the most exciting developments for CIWA during the 2020-2021 fiscal year was our agency becoming an Immigrant-supporting Family Resource Network (FRN). CIWA's FRN #9 is one of the 15 Family Resource Networks in the Calgary Region, and the only center specifically mandated to deliver high quality prevention and early intervention services and supports for immigrant children aged 0 to 18.

Through a 'hub and spoke' model, our Family Resource Network provides and coordinates a range of services and supports that focus on strengthening parenting and caregiving knowledge, social support, coping and problem-solving skills, access to community supports and resources, improving child and youth development, building resiliency and fostering well-being. CIWA's FRN offers a continuum of prevention and early intervention services including universal, targeted and intensive programs. Our approach reflects, recognizes and reflects the perspectives of diverse cultural identities and linguistic groups as we focus on addressing the needs of Alberta's most vulnerable infants, children, youth and families.

During its first year of operation, CIWA's FRN provided services to 569 newcomers across Calgary, facilitated 647 referral coordination activities, offered 296 advocacy supports and 97 individualized supportive counseling sessions. Additionally, 180 care packages complete with baby care items, school essentials, gift cards and transit tickets were provided to low income immigrant families with complex needs.

Our designated, family-focused and child-centered space on the sixth floor of the First Street Plaza is open to families on a drop-in basis and is committed to helping immigrant families access supports and navigate service systems.



Rising with Resilience

Confronting Gender-based violence

As an immigrant serving agency with a gender-specific mandate, CIWA witnessed firsthand what the United Nations has referred to as the **'shadow pandemic'**. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the number of clients accessing domestic violence prevention services at CIWA has had a historical average increase of 7% per year. However, since the start of the pandemic, we had over 45% increase in the number of clients facing domestic, gender-based, family and intimate partner violence. This is fully in alignment with the World Health Organization identifying gender-based violence as a 'global health problem of epidemic proportions' which has further underscored the need of providing customized counseling services and supports to those impacted by the COVID-19 crisis.



Gender-based violence has significantly impacted the social inclusion, mental health, healthy relationships and socio-economic well-being of immigrant women living in abusive situations. To address this, CIWA offered both prevention and early intervention supports to immigrant families dealing with family and intimate partner violence issues during the pandemic. Our family counsellors provided services virtually and in-person to accommodate the unique needs of clients in crisis. We offered equal access to supports for perpetrators of abuse and violence through counselling and educational workshops in an effort to equip them with strategies to better manage their anger and stress. In total, CIWA provided over 2,900 counselling sessions to 913 individual men and women, 72 couples, 322 families, 18 youth and children whose lives have been impacted by family conflict.

Canada's Feminist Response and Recovery

CIWA presented on the thematic challenges among immigrant women at Canada's Feminist Response and Recovery Summit and recommended a recovery plan to ensure that all segments of population have access to equitable opportunities as we bounce back from the pandemic.

Equally Safe

CIWA offered a coordinated response to domestic conflict through a cross-sector and cross-systems collaboration with Calgary Police Services through the Equally Safe initiative.

National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence

CIWA hosted community engagement sessions to solicit community feedback for Canada's National Action Plan to End Gender-Based Violence.

Economic Security Alliance for Vulnerable Immigrant Women

CIWA launched an information portal for employers, community organizations, service providers and individuals seeking resources to respond to domestic violence in the workplace. Find out more about it here.

Champions for Victims of Family Violence

CIWA produced videos to raise the awareness of employers and community members about family violence among immigrant women. Find out more here.

Rejuvenating Vitality

Connecting with immigrant youth

Data from Statistics Canada has shown that youth aged 15 to 24 have experienced the greatest decline in mental health during the pandemic. Post-secondary students were impacted academically and financially by COVID-19. These factors are said to likely contribute to lower mental health among youth and increased use of different forms of substances.

Throughout the year, CIWA's Youth Collaborative staff regularly connected with youth to identify their needs and address any challenges that have come to the forefront. We rapidly transitioned services over to virtual platforms, including social media, to offer virtual afterschool homework, career mentorship, as well as academic and mental health support for immigrant girls. Our program staff connected with youth to identify any barriers related to program participation and challenges with accessing technology, and customized online programming to incorporate creative activities to keep youth engaged. Youth program staff engaged 1,330 immigrant girls and boys through sessions around civic engagement, employment, empowerment, leadership, mental health, mentorship, and summer camp.



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Annual Report
2020-2021

Redefining Readiness

Delivering despite disruptions

According to Statistics Canada labour force data analyzed in an RBC report, almost half a million women who lost their jobs due to the pandemic hadn't returned to work as of January 2021, and more than 200,000 of them were considered long-term unemployed. Another 100,000 above the age of 20 have exited the labour market, meaning they're no longer looking for work. (Rosa Saba, 2021 March, thestar.com)

The report further argued that for many of these women, the jobs they lost will no longer be available as companies implement adaptations to cope with their own challenges. To amplify the scarring impact of COVID-19, many find themselves unemployed for a long period of time and consequently experience 'skills erosion', where their skills and networks deteriorate.

With a composition of 99% female staff, CIWA was at risk of losing to the challenges imposed by the pandemic. In the past year, however, CIWA staff collectively demonstrated remarkable resilience as they defied these challenges and forged ahead to serve other women in our community while tending to our own family needs.

CIWA staff successfully managed home and work through pandemic challenges to deliver outcomes by linking our clients to employment and skills upgrading, providing basic necessities to families' doorsteps, and supporting our clients' mental health and overall wellbeing.

Calgary Immigrant Women's Association
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