



Centre des Femmes West Island
West Island Women's Centre

2024 - 2025 ANNUAL REPORT



**Empowering Women
Strengthening Communities**

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT & EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

This past year has been nothing short of transformative. Over the last 12 months, we've experienced meaningful growth and reached milestones that have made a lasting impact in the lives of women across the West Island.

In moments of profound change and vulnerability, our free support groups—like the Postpartum Mothers' Group and the Divorce & Separation Groups—offer a lifeline. These groups bring together women who truly understand one another's struggles, creating safe and supportive spaces to share, heal, and grow. Through honest connection and shared experience, participants find not only comfort but also the courage and resilience to rebuild their lives.

Our much-loved activities for moms and tots continue to lay the foundation for healthy childhood development—fostering socialization, confidence, and cognitive growth. At the same time, they help reduce the isolation many new mothers face, strengthen bonds between parent and child, and contribute to improved maternal mental health.

We've also seen our membership evolve, with a growing number of women of retirement age joining the Centre. Our 55UP Senior Women's Program is bringing positive results for these members, offering a vibrant space for connection, creativity, and engagement. For many, this has been a meaningful boost to their mental well-being and a way to stay active and involved in the community.

All of our programs are designed to create opportunities for women to connect, share common interests, and embark on a journey of learning, growth, and self-empowerment. When a woman is empowered, she becomes a catalyst for positive change—not only in her own life, but also within her family, workplace, and community. In this way, we contribute to building a stronger, more equitable society grounded in healthy relationships and shared opportunity.

As we look to the future, we're filled with excitement and pride as we approach our 50th anniversary—a powerful milestone that reflects five decades of vision, perseverance, and meaningful impact. This celebration is not only a chance to honour our rich history, but also to embrace the future with renewed purpose and optimism. It stands as a tribute to the remarkable women whose dedication, resilience, and generosity have shaped and sustained our Centre throughout the years.

As we reach the half-century mark, our mission remains clear: to offer a safe and welcoming space where women can connect, learn, and grow. We are deeply grateful for the past and inspired by what lies ahead. Together, we look forward to making our 50th year the most memorable yet.

Anne Lajoie, Board President
Isabelle Prosnick, Executive Director

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Vice-President: Samantha Goodman

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Event Coordinator: Cheryl Martin

Childcare Manager: Christa Liesemer

Resource and Support Specialists: CRC team

Fund Development: Viktoria Bobovskaia

Childcare Educators:

1. Nicola Cooper
2. Laura Carfagnini
3. Junko Donovan
4. Denise Fortier
5. Lisa Jarvis
6. Sunyoung Jung
7. Samantha Marsh
8. Anna Renton

MISSION

The West Island Women's Centre (WIWC) is a dynamic and widely-used non-profit community organization dedicated to improving the quality of life of women. We provide educational, social and recreational services for women living in the West Island and the community at large.

FOCUS

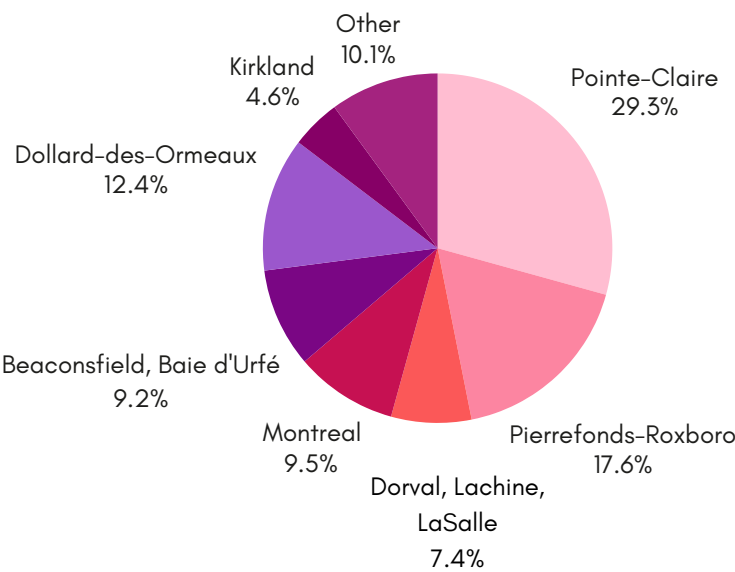
At every stage of life, women navigate a complex and deeply personal journey. Many carry the weight of financial stress, family responsibilities, and the daily demands of parenting. Others quietly face struggles with self-worth, fertility, or the longing to feel seen and understood. For those who are new to this country and culture, the path can seem even more uncertain and isolating. We recognize the courage it takes to move through these moments—and we're here to support women.

Whether it's through community workshops that focus on skill building, creating spaces for socialization and friendship, or providing guidance through the transformative phases of motherhood, we are here to help turn obstacles into stepping stones. Our goal is to build a nurturing environment where women can access the network they need to grow at every turn.



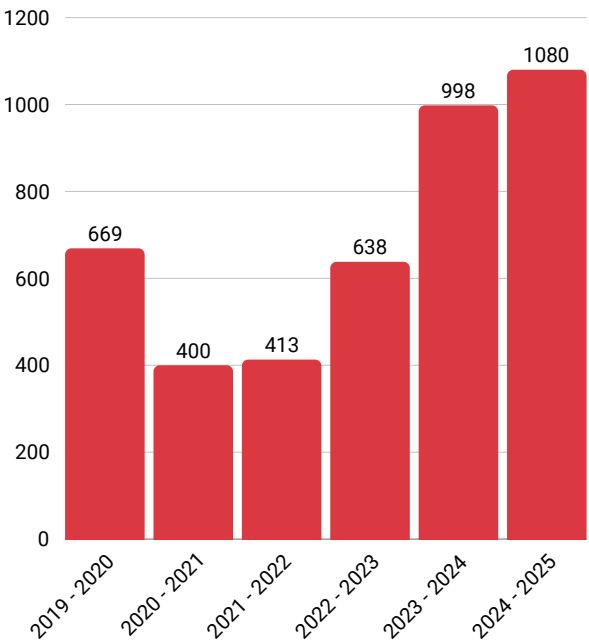
THE YEAR IN REVIEW

Participant Demographics by Sector



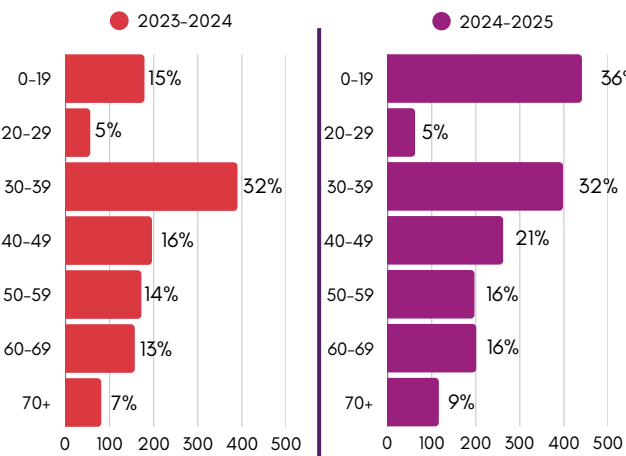
Although we are located in the West Island, **more than 20%** of the women we serve come from surrounding areas. Thanks to our flexible online programs, we're also able to reach women in other provinces.

Membership since 2020



There has been a **61% increase** in membership over the last six years. This figure does not account for individuals who are registered in our free community programs.

Age Profile of Participants



2023-24

Participants
1231

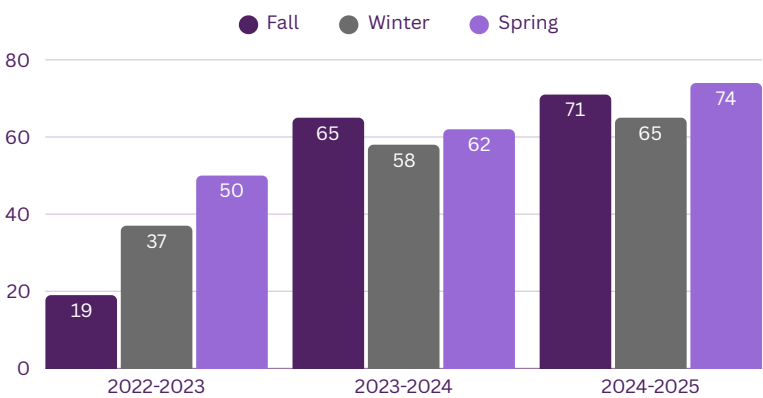
2024-25

Participants
1713

Though women aged 30 - 39 still have the highest participation, there has been a notable rise in attendance among women aged 55 and older participating in our programs. Conversely, we have observed a shift as more women return to the workforce, resulting in lower participation in our daytime programs for stay-at-home mothers. This reflects a broader reality and presents an opportunity for us to diversify our offerings with tailored programs that better support the needs and schedules of working women in our community.

PROGRAMMING HIGHLIGHTS

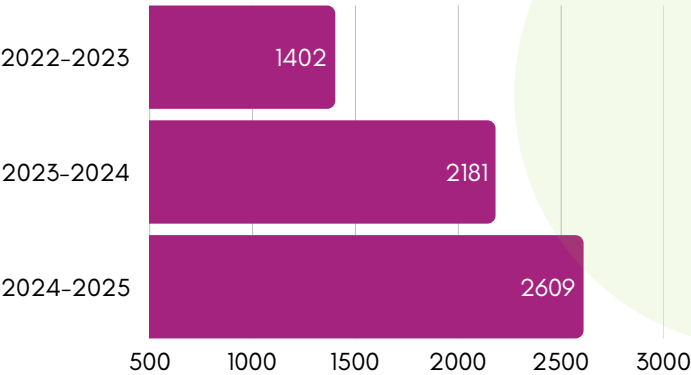
Three-Year Course Growth Trend



In 2024-25, we introduced a series of short, high-impact workshops tailored to participants' interests. Ten sessions on topics such as personal development, parenting, self-defense, and art offered new entry points for members—and were met with high interest and strong participation.

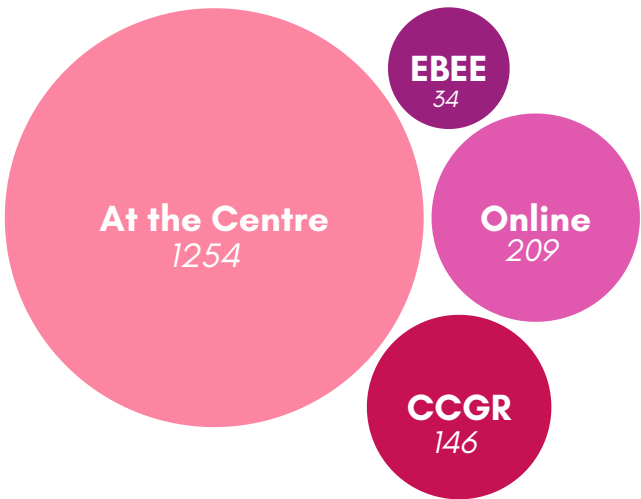


Total Program Attendees



Rising participation shows we are meeting women's evolving needs—demonstrating strong demand and meaningful impact through connection, learning, and personal growth.

Attendee Distribution by Location



CCGR - Gerry-Robertson community centre, Pierrefonds
EBEE - Emmanuel Baptist Church, Pierrefonds

"The theatre workshop exceeded all my expectations—it was truly transformative! I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to participate. The facilitator was outstanding, and created a safe space where I could fully explore my own creativity. I would wholeheartedly recommend this workshop to anyone. It was an unforgettable experience that left a lasting impression!"

- Natalie

COMMUNITY PROGRAMS

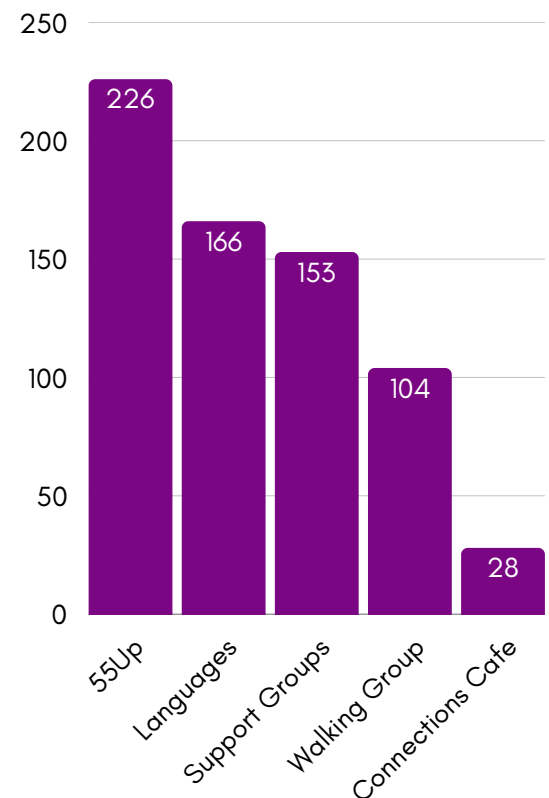
Our community programs are core to our mission of empowering women and strengthening family dynamics. These programs reduce isolation, build resilience, and promote long-term well-being. They lay the groundwork to help create a stronger, more inclusive community for all. Over the past year, we have observed a significant increase in the demand for psycho-social support. As such, we refined the way we collected our data within these programs to better understand the reasons women participate. By asking more targeted questions, we gained deeper insight into the challenges they face. The top needs identified were **mental health, legal issues (particularly custody and divorce), and relationship/ parenting support**. These findings reflect broader community trends and highlight the growing demand for accessible services, peer support, and a strong, connected village for women.



'While shopping at Walmart, I ran into a former student from our Intermediate English Language course. She shared that the course had made a significant difference in her life—it helped her gain the confidence and skills she needed to get a job. She's now the manager of her department at Walmart.'

- Wendy Robinson, Intermediate English Language facilitator

Participants in Programs



INSTRUCTORS & FACILITATORS



Session	No. of instructors
Fall 2024	44
Winter 2025	38
Spring 2025	46



The Women’s Centre is profoundly grateful for the time, dedication, and collaborative spirit of our instructors and facilitators. Their contributions go far beyond teaching—they create spaces of connection, encouragement, and empowerment.

Through their guidance and presence, they help build a vibrant and inclusive community for all women.

Thank you for being a part of our mission!



COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS



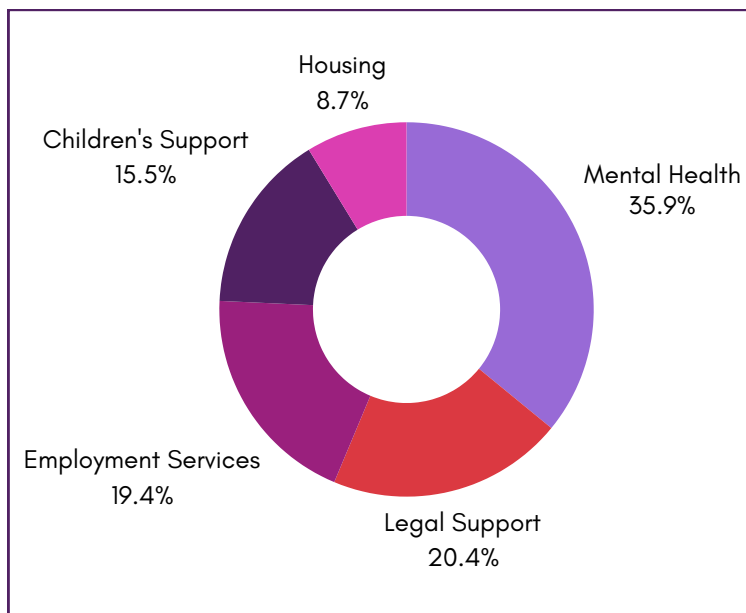
West Island Community Resource Centre (CRC)

The West Island Women's Centre (WIWC) partnered with the West Island Community Resource Centre (CRC) to better support members facing complex challenges beyond traditional programming. Powered by a grant from Centraide du Grand Montreal, their joint initiative, **Empowering Women Together**, combined the Centre's mission to support women in vulnerable situations. With the CRC's expertise in community resources, we were able to expand our reach to the women in the community. This unique collaboration showcased how community organizations can benefit by mutualizing resources to expand their impact.

This program offers:

- Personalized support via phone, email or in-person
- On-site presence in WIWC's Pointe-Claire and Pierrefonds locations
- Community resource referrals and tailored referral tools
- Training and orientation for members, staff and instructors

Key Areas of Support Needed



Impact Areas	Women Reached
Women supported	116
Referrals made	192
Follow-ups conducted	67
Classes attended	20+
Drop-ins offered	10
Resource fair engagement	150+
Trainings conducted	2

The top three areas of need identified were **mental health, legal support, and employment assistance**. This highlights the ongoing challenges many women in our community face as they navigate personal, systemic, and economic barriers.

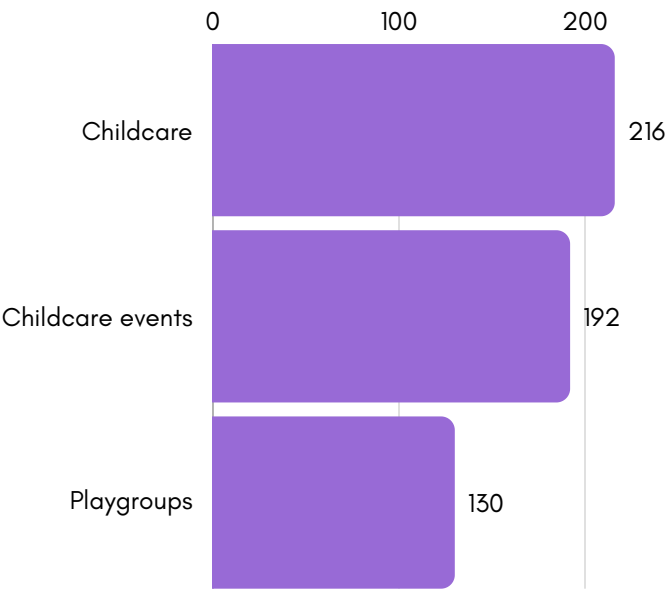
These findings underscore the importance of maintaining and strengthening our programs to address the core needs of women and empower them to overcome these challenges. As we move forward, the Centre remains committed to enhancing access to mental health resources, expanding legal information services, and offering employment-related support. In doing so, we continue to support not just individual women, but also the well-being of families and the broader community.

CHILDREN’S PROGRAMS

Over the past year, our childcare program has supported mothers in our community by offering a safe and nurturing environment for their little ones. With both drop-off daycare and a free playgroup, mothers have the opportunity to attend classes, take time for themselves, and build meaningful connections with other women—knowing their children are cared for, engaged, and having fun.



Childcare and events participation



Expanding Support for New Mothers and Infants

In response to growing demand, we expanded our popular mother-child playgroups by launching Mom and Baby Playdate for infants aged 0-12 months. This free program welcomed 21 mothers and their babies into our childcare room, offering sensory play, early socialization, and a warm introduction to our Centre. In addition to play, parents engaged in expert-led conversations on early parenthood and found connection in a supportive community—helping to ease the isolation many new mothers face.

“Like a warm hug on a Wednesday afternoon, the WIWC playgroup is the perfect place to park for a while. The facilitators; Christa and Sam, have a clear love for what they do, bringing kindness, care, and a creative brand of fun to the group each week. With a rotation of toys for the tots, and chats and/or guest speakers for the moms, we’re always as engaged as we are appreciative of this beautiful community initiative.”
- Emily - mom from the new playgroup

EVENTS AND FUNDRAISING

Events That Build Connection, Raise Awareness, and Drive Impact

This year, our events served as powerful tools for connection, community leadership, and supporting our mission. From smaller member gatherings like our Welcome Event and Fall Book Sale, which foster belonging and friendship, to larger initiatives, every event helped strengthen our community fabric.



Our International Women's Day celebration positioned us at the forefront of local efforts to highlight and advance women's rights and issues. Our 4 guest speakers advocated for improvement for access to services in Women's Mental Health.

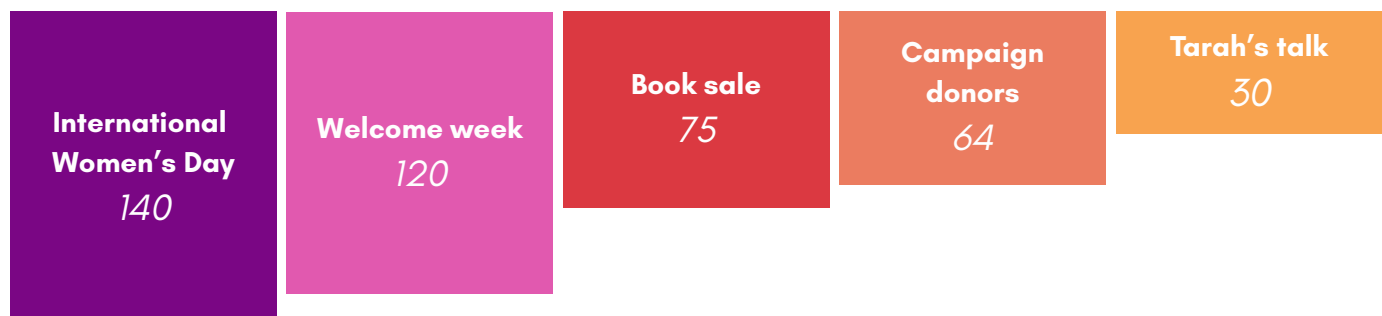


Our speaker series with the Pointe-Claire Citizens' Association, welcomed Tarah Schwartz, who spoke about the topic of fertility, sparking important conversations amongst the attendees.



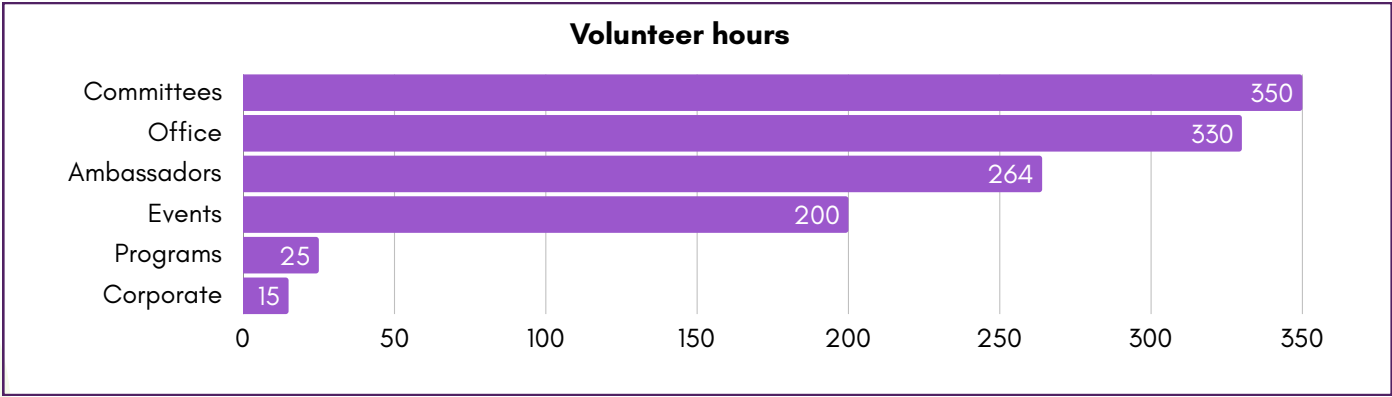
In the fall, we launched our first annual fundraising campaign—an exciting new approach that successfully engaged our members. Moving forward, we aim to diversify our donor base and expand our digital presence to reach a wider audience.

Participation in Events and Fundraisers



VOLUNTEERS

We are deeply grateful to our incredible volunteers, corporate partners, and committee members whose time, energy, and dedication keep our programs and services running smoothly. From behind-the-scenes tasks to frontline support, your efforts truly make a difference. A heartfelt thank you as well to our Board of Directors for their ongoing guidance and leadership. We couldn't do it without you!



FINANCE

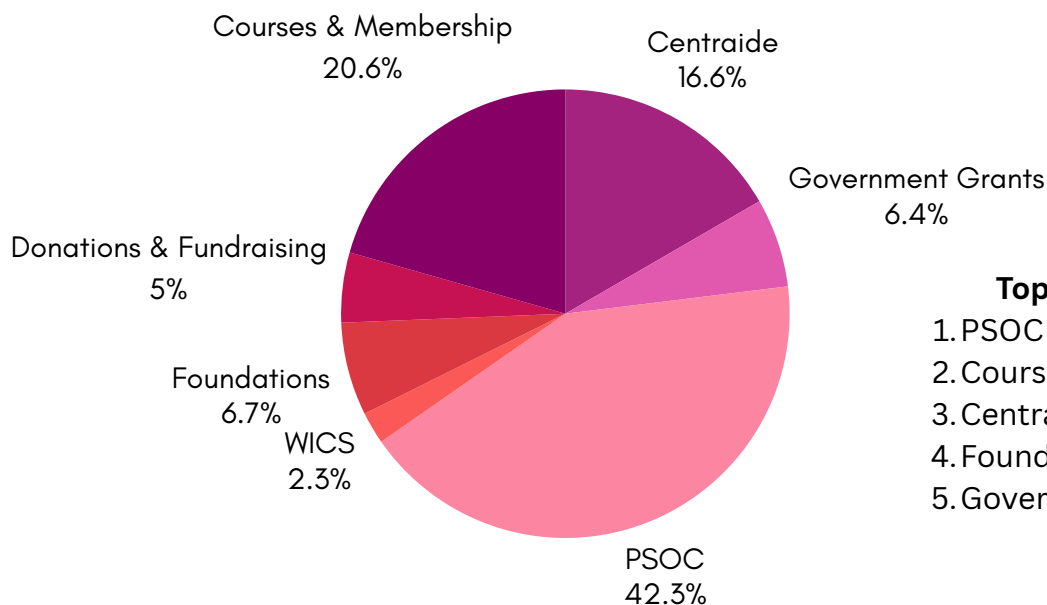
Operations Statement

REVENUES	2025	2024
Grants and subsidies	\$ 446,868	\$ 476,170
Courses	111,637	85,859
Donations	25,489	14,965
Memberships	21,195	10,170
Fundraising	10,809	23,804
	615,998	610,968
EXPENSES		
Activities	\$ 29,823	\$ 42,478
Salaries and subcontractors	499,975	416,389
Administrative	126,407	126,449
Amortization of capital assets	13,284	15,048
	669,489	600,634
Surplus (Deficit)	(53,491)	10,334

This year's finances reflect a deliberate and strategic investment in the growth and long-term sustainability of our organization. As our membership has steadily increased since 2020, so too have the needs of women in vulnerable situations. In response, we are expanding our reach, deepening our impact in the community, and diversifying our funding sources to build a more balanced and resilient financial foundation.

This is a result of proactive decisions aimed at strengthening our capacity, broadening our programs, and ensuring that we can continue to meet rising demand with the highest level of support and care. We view this as a necessary and forward-thinking step in securing our future and deepening our impact.

Breakdown of Funders



Top Funders in 24-25

1. PSOC
2. Course Revenues
3. Centraide du Grand Montréal
4. Foundations
5. Government

WHAT'S NEXT

Over the winter and spring, the board and staff engaged in a thoughtful strategic planning process to guide the direction of the Centre over the next three years. Through member surveys, collaborative meetings, and careful reflection, we gathered valuable insights and created a forward-looking plan designed to carry the Women's Centre into the future with optimism, purpose, and continued growth.

After careful consideration of our ability to impact the lives of women in our community, we established four core values:



INCLUSIVITY



CONNECTION



COMPASSION



EMPOWERMENT

OUR MISSION

The West Island Women's Centre is a community-based organization offering a safe space where women can connect, learn and grow.*

**to be ratified at the Special General Meeting on June 19th 2025*

OUR VISION

In the next three years, we want to be the primary resource for women's well-being in the West Island.

	<i>Strategic Focus</i>	<i>Strategic Goal</i>
#1	Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Enhance our teams and support tools to increase our capacity
#2	Promotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increase our visibility within the community
#3	Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Improve our offerings and retain our members
#4	Financial sustainability	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Develop strategies to diversify our short-term and long-term funding goals

OUR PARTNERS

We proudly welcomed new funders this year to our recurring list of contributors whose generous support directly advanced our mission. **We're deeply thankful for their partnership.**

Centre intégré
universitaire de santé
et de services sociaux
de l'Ouest-de-
l'Île-de-Montréal

Québec



Canada



LA FONDATION
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