



Centre des Femmes West Island  
West Island Women's Centre

# ANNUAL REPORT

2025-2026



INCLUSIVITY



EMPOWERMENT



CONNECTION



COMPASSION

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# A Message From Leadership

*As community needs continue to grow, the WIWC remains a trusted and welcoming space where women can find connection, support, and a sense of belonging.*

Fifty years ago, the West Island Women's Centre was founded to help break the isolation many women experienced as a result of weakened support networks, caused by distance and the loss of the traditional help once provided by large families.

Today, our mission remains the same, but it has evolved to meet the needs of our clients and the realities of the 21st-century society. We continue to offer programs that help women empower themselves, build new connections, and grow. In doing so, we help break the isolation experienced by many at different stages of their lives.

We launched our 50th anniversary year with a well-attended and successful celebration, and the Centre is now thriving on that momentum. Jessica Weiss, our newly appointed Executive Director, with the support of our passionate team and dedicated Board of Directors, is successfully leading the Centre into its next fifty years of service in the community.

On behalf of the Board, I would like to express our gratitude to Jessica and the entire team for their commitment to the Centre's success. Thank you!

Joining the West Island Women's Centre as Executive Director in October 2025 has been both an honour and a privilege. In the months since, I have had the opportunity to meet many of the women, families, volunteers, staff, and community partners who make this Centre such a special place.

What has stood out most to me is the strong sense of connection that exists here. The Centre truly feels like a home away from home. It is a welcoming space where women can learn, grow, find support, and build meaningful relationships. Every day, I see the positive impact our programs have on the lives of women and families across the West Island.

I am grateful to our dedicated staff, volunteers, Board of Directors, and supporters whose passion and commitment make this work possible.

As we celebrate our 50th anniversary, I am excited about the future. Together, we will continue building on our strong foundation, responding to the needs of our community, and ensuring the Centre remains a place where women can connect, learn, and grow for years to come.



**Anne Lajoie,  
Board President**



**Jessica Weiss,  
Executive Director**

# A Legacy of Support for Women: Celebrating 50 Years of Impact

1977

## Community Support Grows

In 1977, Centraide du Grand Montréal provided core funding support to the Women's Centre, helping secure its future after a challenging year.



1997

## First Executive Director Hired

In 1997, the Centre hired its first Executive Director, Debra Spring. Her arrival brought the number of paid office staff to two and marked an important step in the Centre's growth.



1975

## Doors Open

The West Island Women's Centre is founded following a women's conference at John Abbott College.



1979

## Growing Membership

Membership surpasses 125 women as programming and community engagement expand.



For five decades, the West Island Women's Centre has been a trusted space where women can connect, grow, and support one another through every stage of life. What began as a community initiative has evolved into a vital hub of programs, services, and connection for women across the West Island and beyond.

2010

### New Home

The Centre relocated to St. Columba-by-the-Lake Church to better accommodate its growing membership and bringing all services together under one roof.



2000

### Programs Expand

Under the direction of Karen Henchey, the Centre continued to grow and evolve, expanding its services to include wellness initiatives, support groups, outreach programming, childcare, newcomer support, and activities for seniors.



2025

### 50 Years Strong

Today, we serve approximately 1,700 women annually across the West Island and surrounding communities, offering more than 230 courses and workshops each year. Free childcare remains an important part of our commitment to accessibility.



# Our Mission

The West Island Women’s Centre (WIWC) is a vibrant non-profit community organization dedicated to enhancing the quality of life of women. We offer educational, social, and wellness-focused programs and services for women living in the West Island and the wider community, creating welcoming spaces for connection, support, learning, and personal growth.



# Our Vision

At every stage of life, women navigate unique and deeply personal experiences. Many face financial pressures, family responsibilities, the demands of parenting, or feelings of isolation and disconnection. For women who are new to the country or community, these challenges can feel even more overwhelming. At the West Island Women’s Centre, we recognize the strength it takes to move through these moments, and we are here to offer support along the way.

Through educational workshops, wellness programs, opportunities for social connection, and support for women and mothers at different stages of life, we create welcoming spaces where women feel supported, empowered, and connected. Our goal is to be the primary resource for women in the West Island, offering diverse programs and workshops that support their well-being and respond to their evolving needs.

# Our Values



INCLUSIVITY



EMPOWERMENT



CONNECTION



COMPASSION

# A Year in Review



**4570**

Total program registrations



**1543**

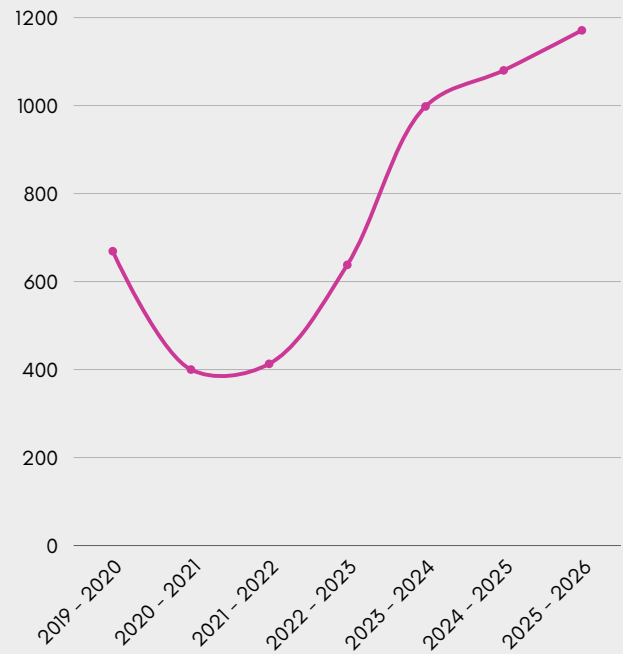
Total participants



**1073**

Waitlist registrations

## Membership Growth Since 2020



Over the past seven years, membership at the WIWC has grown by 74%, which reflects an increasing need for connection, support, and community among women.

*This number does not include participants who take part in our free community programs and services.*

## Programs offered

**172**

Courses & Workshops

**52**

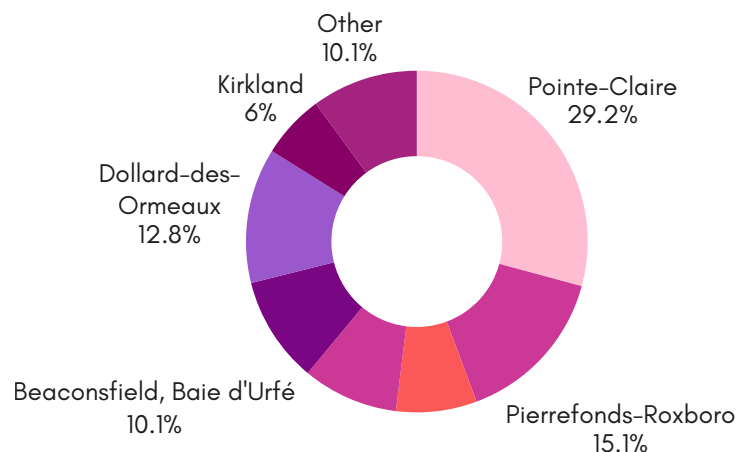
Children's Courses

**47**

Community initiatives & Support Groups

## Community reach

The Centre continues to serve women and families from across the West Island, with the strongest participation coming from Pointe-Claire, followed by Pierrefonds-Roxboro and Dollard-des-Ormeaux. Registrations from a wide range of neighbouring communities and beyond, which reflect the growing reach of our programs.

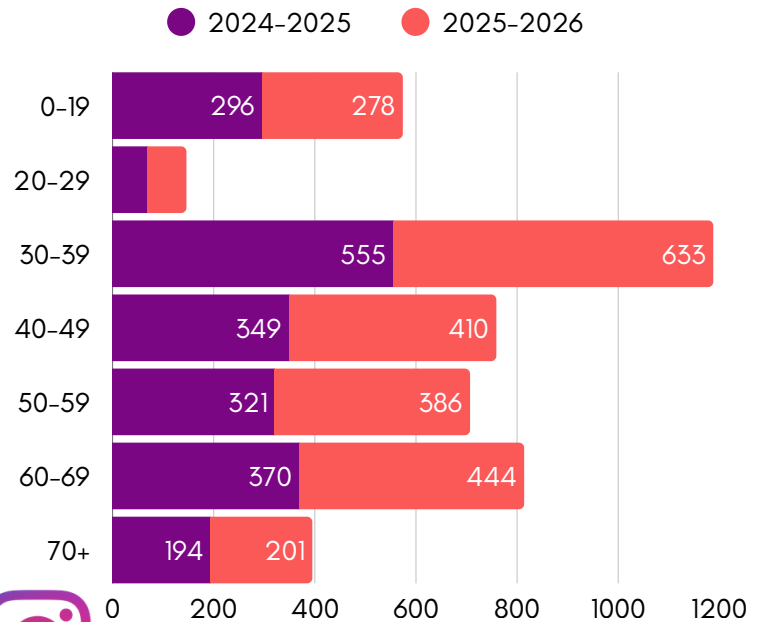




## Registrations by Age Group

Total # Registrations:  
3515

Total # Registrations:  
4570



While women aged 30-39 continued to represent the strongest level of participation, reflecting the ongoing demand for childcare and family programming, the Centre also saw growing participation among women aged 40-69. This increase highlights the continued need for connection, wellness, learning, and support at every stage of life. These trends reflect the important role the Centre plays as an inclusive, multi-generational community space for women and families across the West Island.

## Community Engagement on Social Media



# of Followers

7,642

1,788



Reach

20,160

1,691



Monthly Avg Growth

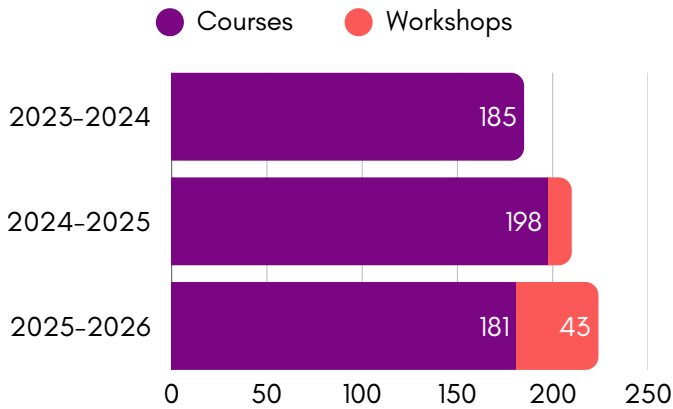
80 followers/month

29 followers/month



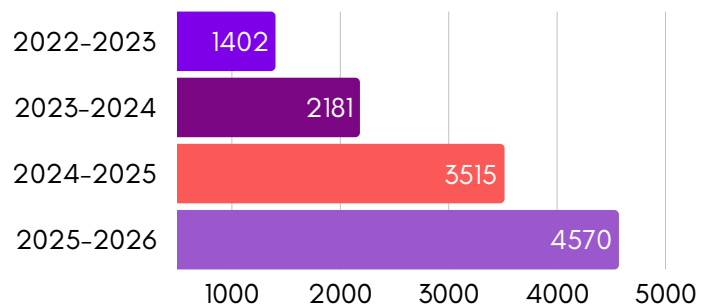
# Courses & Workshops

## Expansion of Course Offerings



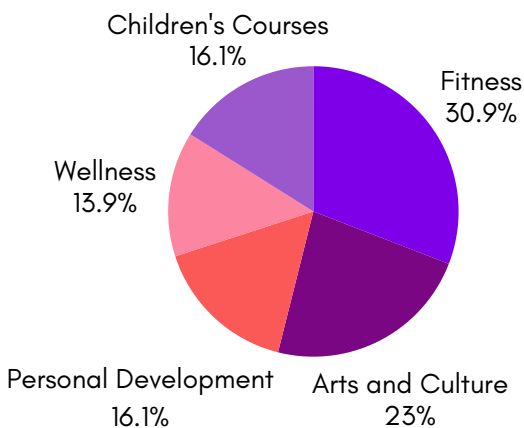
The format and scheduling of courses were revised this year to better reflect the availability and evolving needs of our members. In particular, the Centre introduced more flexible program options, including paid single-session workshops and additional evening fitness classes, making it easier for women to participate despite busy work schedules, caregiving responsibilities, parenting demands, and other competing commitments. This shift reflects the Centre's ongoing commitment to offering accessible and responsive programming that meets women where they are and supports the realities of their daily lives.

## Increase in Program Registrations



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

## Program diversification



The Centre continues to offer diverse programs that support wellness, creativity, personal growth, and connection. The variety of offerings reflects our commitment to creating accessible and meaningful spaces for women, children, and families at every stage of life.

*The "Car Seat Clinic" workshop was a great "know the essentials" for carseats. I wish I had something like this when I was pregnant to have made informed decisions before obtaining my carseats. The group setting also allowed for questions that I had not thought of myself, but were extremely relevant.*

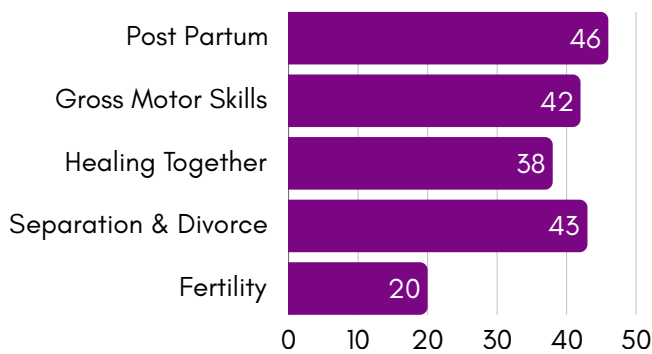
*Nathalie Le Conte-Good, Participant*

# Community Programs & Support Groups

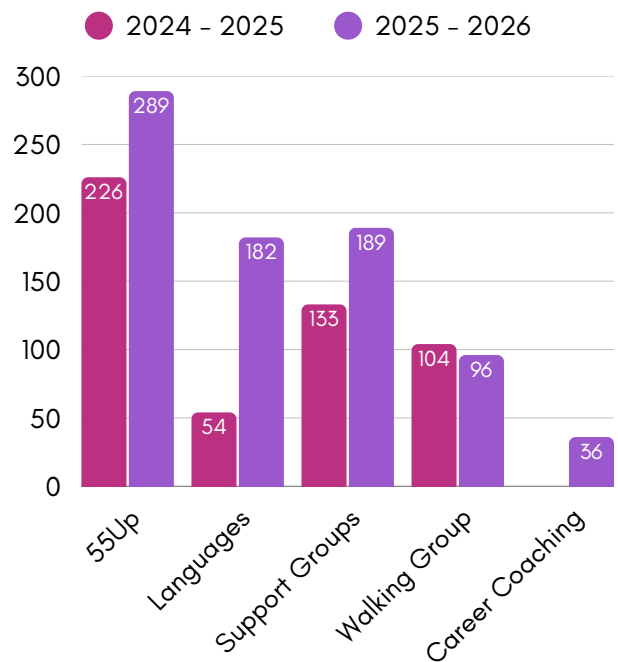
Our community programs remain central to our mission of empowering women and strengthening the community. Over the past year, participation grew significantly, reflecting an increasing need for connection, support, and accessible services. We continue to see strong demand for psychosocial support, particularly for mental health, legal, relationship, and family-related challenges, reinforcing the importance of inclusive and responsive programming that supports women at every stage of life.



## Participation Across Support Groups



## Community Program Registrations



*"I joined Ann's WIWC separation/divorce support group in January 2024.*

*At a time when fear and uncertainty about the future felt overwhelming, the group gave me a safe space to share, heal, and move forward with greater understanding, clarity, and support alongside women experiencing similar situations at different stages of their journey.*

*The Women's Centre created a caring and supportive community that helped me feel less alone. Through the support group, and through Ann's ongoing work, podcasts, book, and resources, it's clear how deeply invested she is in helping women heal and move forward."*

*— Maria S., WIWC Support Group Participant*

# Childcare & Children's Programming

Free childcare removes barriers for women.

Women are able to attend fitness classes, workshops, support groups, and personal development programs while their children enjoy a safe, nurturing environment. This support allows mothers to invest in their own health, learning, and social connections without the added stress of finding or paying for childcare.



## Childcare and Activity Participation



**709**

Childcare hours



**240**

Activity registrations



**149**

Children in childcare



**93**

Children participated in playgroups



Playgroups and postpartum support groups support mothers during a vulnerable life stage.

Through programs such as support groups, workshops, and parent-and-child activities, the Centre provides a welcoming space where new mothers can find encouragement, practical resources, and meaningful connections with others experiencing similar challenges.



Support Groups



Connection



Resources & Information



Care & Understanding

## Children's programming that supports healthy development and social connection

Through playgroups, workshops, and parent-child programs, children have opportunities to explore, learn, and build important social, emotional, and developmental skills in a safe and nurturing environment. From developing gross motor skills and confidence to learning through play and interaction, these experiences help lay the foundation for healthy growth and development.

At the same time, caregivers benefit from opportunities to connect with others, creating a stronger sense of community for the whole family.



*The Women's Centre became such a special part of our postpartum journey, and the care, kindness, and warmth from your team made a world of difference. A heartfelt thank you to Christa, Pamela, Sarah, Lisa, and Junko for creating such positive memories for us. This community has meant more than I can express.*

*— Anonymous, mom at the West Island Women's Centre*



# Community Partnerships



The West Island Women's Centre (WIWC) continued its partnership with the West Island Community Resource Centre (CRC) through the Empowering Women Together initiative, supporting women facing increasingly complex social, emotional, financial, and family-related challenges. Throughout the year, the collaboration focused on improving access to personalized support, community resources, referrals, and information through outreach, relationship-building, and low-barrier community engagement.

## The partnership provided:

- One-on-one support and referrals
- Outreach visits within WIWC classes and activities
- Resource navigation and information sharing
- Community workshops and educational initiatives
- Informal support through trusted community spaces



## Program Highlights

- 668 connections with WIWC women
- 40 WIWC classes and activities visited
- 19 Legal workshop participants
- 25 individualized support meetings
- Approximately 228 women identified needs related to support, referrals, or resource navigation
- 130 survey responses collected to better understand emerging community needs

Throughout the year, mental health, legal information, family support, employment stress, caregiving responsibilities, and social isolation emerged as key concerns among women accessing services. These findings reinforced the growing need for accessible, relationship-based support embedded within trusted community spaces.

The partnership continued to demonstrate the value of collaboration, trust-building, and integrated community support in helping women navigate increasingly complex realities while fostering stronger community connections across the West Island.

One of the year's key initiatives was the free family law information session, *Separating Fact from Fiction in Family Law*, held in February 2026. Developed collaboratively with the Bar of Montreal's *Visez Droit* program, the workshop provided practical legal information and resources to women navigating separation, divorce, custody, and family-related concerns. The event welcomed 19 participants and highlighted the importance of accessible educational opportunities that combine practical support with emotional safety and community connection.

# A Dedicated Team

The West Island Women's Centre is guided by a dedicated Board of Directors and supported by a passionate team of staff members who work together to create welcoming, supportive, and meaningful experiences for women and families in our community. Through their leadership, care, and ongoing engagement, they help ensure the Centre remains a vibrant and inclusive space for connection, learning, and support.

## Board of Directors

- President:** Anne Lajoie
- Vice-President:** Samantha Goodman
- Treasurer:** Paola Delgado Ramirez
- Secretary:** Marlyne Monahan
- Director:** Jessica Lawson
- Director:** Politimi Karounis
- Director:** Shannon Willcocks
- Director:** Heather Redfearn
- Executive Director:** Jessica Weiss



## WIWC Team

- Executive Director:** Jessica Weiss
- Operations Manager:** Donna Paré
- Bookkeeper:** Wendy Wong
- Community Initiatives Coordinator:** Nadia Prevost
- Programming Coordinator:** Jessica Gallschutz
- Event Coordinator (part time):** Sarah Burnell
- Grant Writer:** Patricia MacDonald
- Administrative Assistant:** Aila El Djabri
- Childcare Manager:** Christa Liesemer
- Childcare Educators:** Laura Carfagnini, Nicola Cooper, Junko Donovan, Denise Fortier, Lisa Jarvis, Sunyoung Jung, Samantha Marsh, Anna Renton



We would like to recognize and thank the staff members who contributed to the Centre during part of the 2025-2026 year. Their work, dedication, and support helped strengthen our programs, services, and community impact:

**Isabelle Prosnick** (Executive Director)  
**Viktoria Bobovskaia** (Grant writer)

**Cheryl Martin** (Communications and Events Coordinator)  
**Alexandra Bourdé** (member relations specialist)

# Instructors & facilitators

The Women’s Centre is deeply grateful for the time, dedication, and collaborative spirit of our instructors and facilitators.

The Centre is proud to work with a diverse group of certified professionals, skilled instructors, and passionate facilitators. Their expertise helps ensure we continue to offer high-quality, meaningful, and engaging programming for our members and participants. Through their guidance and presence, they help foster a vibrant, inclusive, and supportive environment where women can learn, connect, and thrive. We thank them for being part of our mission.



Car Seat Clinic with Pamela Dinunzio

## Number of Instructors and Facilitators

	2025-2026	2024-2025
Fall	59	52
Winter	64	46
Spring	61	54

# Volunteers

We are deeply grateful to the volunteers, partners, and committee members whose time, support, and dedication strengthen every aspect of our work. Your involvement helps sustain our programs, enrich the experience of our members, and expand the Centre's impact within the community.

We also extend our sincere thanks to our Board of Directors for their leadership, guidance, and continued commitment to the Centre's mission. Together, your contributions help create a welcoming, supportive, and connected community for women.



675

Volunteer hours



68

# of Volunteers



# Events and Fundraising

This year, our events focused on bringing the community together, raising awareness, and supporting our mission. Through key initiatives, we created opportunities for connection, engagement, and meaningful dialogue around issues affecting women.



Book Reading with Tania Chomyk

Our fall fundraising campaign was launched online in support of the Centre's support groups and community services. Thanks to the generosity of 79 donors and supporters, a total of \$10,750 was raised to help cover the cost of offering accessible and meaningful support groups for women in our community. We are deeply grateful to everyone who contributed and helped make this campaign a success.



50<sup>th</sup> Anniversation Celebration



International Women's Day Celebration

Our International Women's Day celebration remained a central event, highlighting important issues impacting women. Through engaging guest speakers, we created space for thoughtful discussion around women's mental health and access to services, helping to bring these conversations to the forefront of our community.

## Participation in Special Events and Fundraising Activities

International Women's Day  
140

50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary  
120

Online Fundraising  
79

Family Law 101  
25

Tania Chomyk Book Reading  
19

# Financial Overview

## Operations Statement

REVENUES	2026	2025
Grants and subsidies	\$523,655	\$445,631
Courses	\$124,395	\$111,637
Memberships	\$24,248	\$21,195
Donations	\$18,118	\$25,489
Fundraising	\$17,038	\$10,809
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$707,454</b>	<b>\$614,761</b>
EXPENSES		
Salaries & contractors	\$563,136	\$505,481
Administrative	\$137,096	\$124,027
Activities	\$38,273	\$25,818
Amortization of capital assets	\$13,321	\$13,284
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$751,286</b>	<b>\$668,610</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$ (44,372)</b>	<b>\$ ( 53,849)</b>

In 2026, our organization continued to deliver meaningful programs and partnerships that create lasting community impact.

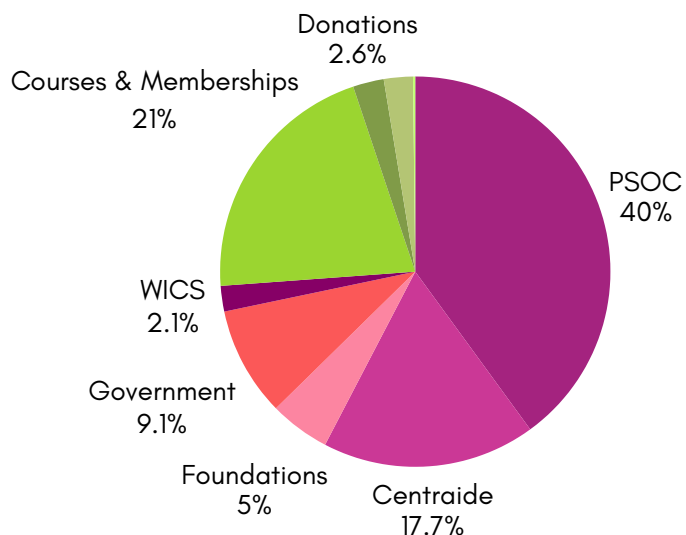
Revenues reached \$707,454, largely supported by core funding, grants, and subsidies, alongside contributions from courses, memberships, donations, and fundraising initiatives. While total expenses of \$751,286 resulted in an operating deficit of \$44,372, this reflected our commitment to sustaining services during a year of growth and transition.

Looking ahead, we are implementing targeted strategies to strengthen and diversify revenue streams and optimize operations. With the continued support of our diverse funders; including government funding, private foundations, corporate partners, and individual donors, we are aiming to diminish this deficit while sustaining and optimizing our diverse programs

## Breakdown of Funders

### Top Funders in 25-26

1. PSOC
2. Courses & memberships
3. Centraide du Grand Montréal
4. Government
5. Foundations



# Looking Ahead

As we look to the future, the West Island Women's Centre remains committed to evolving alongside the needs of our community. Our key priorities for the year ahead include:

## Key Priorities

	<b>Focus</b>	<b>Goal</b>
#1	<b>Mental Health &amp; Wellness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expanding opportunities for women to access support, education, and wellness-focused programming.</li></ul>
#2	<b>Community Connection &amp; Belonging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Creating meaningful opportunities for women, families, and seniors to connect and build supportive relationships</li></ul>
#3	<b>Women's Health</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Developing new initiatives focused on topics such as menopause, breast health, healthy aging, and overall well-being.</li></ul>
#4	<b>Support for Newcomers &amp; Vulnerable Populations</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Ensuring women and families have access to the resources, connections, and opportunities they need to build confidence, independence, and community.</li></ul>
#5	<b>Staff &amp; Volunteer Development</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Investing in training and professional development to ensure our team is equipped to respond to the diverse needs of our participants.</li></ul>
#6	<b>Organizational Excellence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Enhancing policies, procedures, reporting practices, and financial systems to strengthen accountability and long-term sustainability.</li></ul>
#7	<b>Funding &amp; Community Partnerships</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Expanding relationships with funders, corporate partners, donors, and community organizations to support the Centre's growth and impact.</li></ul>

Together, we look forward to continuing to build a stronger, more connected community for women.

# With Gratitude to Our Sponsors and Partners

The West Island Women's Centre is deeply grateful to the sponsors, partners, donors, and community supporters whose generosity helps make our programs and services possible. Their support strengthens our ability to provide welcoming spaces for connection, wellness, learning, and support for women and families across our community. Together, we are helping build a more connected, inclusive, and empowered community.



Thank you to members of the National Assembly representing the following electoral districts:

Nelligan: Mr. Monsef Derraji

JRobert-Baldwin: Mrs. Brigitte Garceau

Marquette: Mr. Enrico Ciccone



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