



# ANNUAL REPORT

**FISCAL YEAR 2023-2024**

*Ottawa Victim Services provides emotional and practical support to those victimized by crime and tragic circumstances in the City of Ottawa.*



## A Message from the Board Chair

On behalf of the entire Board of Directors at Ottawa Victim Services, I would like to express our heartfelt gratitude and appreciation to OVS staff and volunteers for their tireless efforts to support thousands of victims and survivors in our community. On a daily basis, you serve your community with compassion and professionalism. I truly hope that you feel as proud of yourselves as we do of you because without you, the work of OVS fulfilling its mandate would not be possible.

In my second year as Board Chair, I wish to extend my gratitude to my fellow members of the Board of Directors for your ongoing support and unwavering commitment to the organization, to our staff and to our volunteers. Although your efforts are most commonly behind the scenes, you are an integral part of the organization providing leadership and strategic direction. I continue to be grateful for your time and dedication to OVS. I want to give special recognition and thanks to our Vice-Chair Meagan O'Hare Gordon who is finishing her second 3-year term on the Board.

Our work is not possible without the support of numerous community partners who assist the staff and volunteers on a daily basis to ensure that the victims and survivors in our community who need support receive it in a timely and professional manner. I offer you my sincere thanks and appreciation. OVS cannot do it alone and it is a true collaboration that makes our work effective. We have had many successes in 2023/24 including:

- Providing supports, advocacy and financial assistance to 4,268 victims of crime and tragic circumstance across the City of Ottawa;
- Training 29 new volunteer crisis responders;
- Hosting a successful volunteer appreciation dinner in May;
- Hosting a visiting delegation from Mexico studying criminal harassment & stalking laws;
- Attendance at the 49th NOVA conference in New Orleans;
- Moving to a new office on Preston St. after many years at City Centre;
- Marching as a team in the Capital Pride parade;
- A Board sponsored holiday breakfast in December;
- Implementing our 2023-2026 Strategic Plan.

The work of Ottawa Victim Services is so vital to community safety, health and wellbeing. Our team's efforts to provide survivors across Ottawa with timely interventions and compassionate assistance is unwavering. OVS staff and volunteers, under the direction of our amazing Executive Director, continue to provide a critical service and I am so proud to be part of this organization.

Lastly, I want to offer my sincere condolences to the family of Evan Murphy, a former OVS volunteer turned Toronto Police officer who passed away suddenly in 2024 after a short battle with cancer. His dedication to his community was unsurpassed and his loss is truly heartbreaking.

With much respect and admiration,



**Matthew Kennedy**



# A Message from the Executive Director

From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank OVS staff, including our afterhours team leaders, who serve survivors every day with calm humility and a strong drive to make a difference. They respond to thousands of calls and referrals from community partners with expertise. I am truly so fortunate to lead this dedicated group. Special recognition and thanks goes to our VQRP+ Program Coordinator, Kristen Piazza, on five years of outstanding service to OVS!

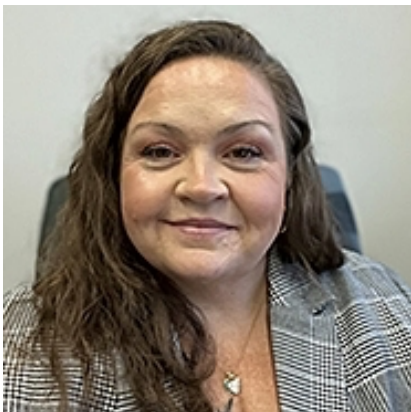
Demand for services in 2023-24 was very high for our team at Ottawa Victim Services. In fact, our amazing frontline staff provided support services to 4,268 individual clients delivered through a hybrid work model. This number more than doubled from the previous fiscal year due to having a worker seconded full-time to the Victim Support Unit at Ottawa Police, where more than 75% of our referrals come from.

Excitingly this year, we moved offices into a brand-new space on Preston Street, which is central and accessible for our clients. We also worked hard to both strengthen existing and build new partnerships with allied activists, community partners, and service providers. We attended a number of coalition-building events:

- Missing and Mised: From Report to Action in Toronto;
- Support for Bill S-265 at the Senate;
- The 49th NOVA conference in New Orleans, Louisiana;
- Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers AGM in Thunder Bay;
- Meetings with OFOVC and New Zealand's Chief Victims Advisor, Dr. Kim McGregor;
- A lecture about criminal justice reform with Dr. Ben Perrin;
- Team training with Ottawa Muslim Community Services;
- December 6th vigil for the National Day of Action on Violence Against Women;
- Madame Arlène Gaudreault's retirement from Plaidoyer-victimes in Montreal;
- Meeting with Hilda Anderson-Pyrz, Chair of the National Family and Survivors' Circle (MMIWG).

Lastly, and most importantly, I want to recognize all the OVS volunteers, who give so much to the organization. I want to thank our Board of Directors, who are a group of dedicated community members supporting operations, overseeing policy and setting the strategic vision for the organization. And, our amazing group of volunteer crisis responders, who give so generously of their time to be on call 24/7 to support the staff in delivering the mandate. Our volunteers never hesitate when called upon to accompany and support victim-survivors. You are selfless and we cannot do this without you!

Here's to OVS' continued growth, and prosperity for the 2024-25 year,



Heidi Illingworth



## Who We Are

Ottawa Victim Services (OVS) provides emotional support, practical assistance, referrals and advocacy to individuals who have been victimized as a result of a crime or tragic circumstance, without judgment in order to lessen the impact of victimization. OVS is a community-based agency committed to treating individuals with courtesy, compassion and with respect for their dignity, privacy and diversity. Clients can access our services through referrals from community service agencies, the Police or self-referrals.

OVS provides emotional support through the criminal justice system, helps clients identify their options and choices and offers information. OVS is also very active in providing practical assistance such as transportation, food sustenance and accompaniment to court or the police station. OVS works with many partners and regularly refers victims to community agencies, legal resources, medical support and Victim Assistance organizations that are out of our service area.



## OVS Programs

**The Victim Crisis and Referral Services (VCARS)** – OVS volunteers, support paid staff members, to respond to requests from police, emergency services and community service providers, to meet short-term practical and emotional needs of individuals who have been victimized as a result of a crime or tragic circumstance, and their longer-term needs by referral to appropriate existing community agencies. VCARS offers crisis intervention services to clients 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. **Key statistics from 2023-24:** 62 Transports to safety; Accompaniment provided 55 times; 29 new volunteers trained; and 12,990 volunteer hours donated.

**Victim Quick Response Program+ (VQRP+)** provides timely financial assistance to eligible individuals who have been victimized by violent crime (homicide, attempted murder, serious physical assault, domestic violence, human trafficking, sexual assault and hate crime) and/or their family members. VQRP can help individuals who have been victimized by violent crime who require immediate financial assistance to access short-term counselling, funeral expenses for homicide victims; emergency home repairs to secure premises for victim's safety, crime scene clean-up, emergency accommodation and meals, etc. **Key statistics from 2022-23:** OVS delivered approximately \$519,505.80 in financial assistance to survivors across Ottawa with \$215,732.31 of the funding going towards survivors of Intimate Partner Violence.

**Victim Safety Coordination Program (VSCP)** offers personalized safety planning and risk assessment, referrals for ongoing support and access to 911 cell phones and/or personal safety alarms. Safety planning is offered to high risk individuals who have been victimized by domestic violence, sexual assault criminal harassment, assault, break and enter, and human trafficking. All individuals qualify for safety planning. The program also provides advocacy and assists victims in filling out various forms and victim statements. We also accompany clients to their hearings. **Key statistics from 2023-24:** 492 new safety plans developed and 39 revised safety plans implemented.

**OVS-VSU Partnership Program:** Since 2015, OVS has worked in partnership with the Victim Support Unit of Ottawa Police Service. An OVS Case worker is seconded to the VSU to transfer files directly to OVS based on a set triaging system. This partnership continues to ensure that more victims than ever before are being offered service in the Ottawa community. We look forward to continuing to grow this partnership to offer more services to victims of crime. **Key statistics from 2023-24:** 77% of our referrals come from the Ottawa Police queue and our partners at the OPS Victim Support Unit.

## OVS Wishlist

Like most charities, our funding doesn't always cover all of our agency expenses. We continue to offer 911 cell phones and personal safety alarms to clients who are accessing our Victim Safety and Coordination Program. If you or someone you know has a gently used smart phone with a charger, please consider donating it the agency. These costs can be quite high and we are in need of sponsorship, or donations, for these items.

## French Language Services Update

Under the French Language Services Act (FLSA), Ottawa Victim Services is an agency required to deliver services in French in areas designated under the FLSA. We have demonstrated capacity to deliver services in French, and continue to maintain quality French Language Services (FLS) year after year. OVS staff ensure an Active Offer of FLS is made to clients and from the first point of contact, there is a mechanism for the client to identify their preference in receiving services in French. We regularly engage with the Francophone community and partners across Ottawa as well. In 2023-24, we served 108 French-speaking clients, as well as 42 clients in other languages. We are grateful to our amazing partners at Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa who provide us with interpretation and translation supports regularly.



## **OVS Board of Directors 2023-2024**

- **Board Chair: Matthew Kennedy**
- **Vice Chair: Meagan O'Hare Gordon**
- **Secretary: Jill Broadbent**
- **Treasurer: Harpreet Kaur**
- **Director: Heather Lachine**
- **Director: Sarah Johnston-Way**
- **Director: Megan Cook**
- **Director: Jooris Ndongozi**
- **Director: Sandra Wooley**

## **OVS Staff 2023-2024**

- **Executive Director: Heidi Illingworth**
- **Office Manager: Marlene Trunzo**
- **VQRP+ Coordinator: Kristen Piazza**
- **VSCP Coordinator: Megan Sesely & Aaron Bath**
- **VCARS Coordinator: Kimberly Roach & Aceil Rashid**
- **VQRP+ Support Worker: Kody Moore**
- **Victim Support Worker: Olivia Jolicoeur & Shae-Lyn Burnett**
- **OVS-VSU Case Worker: Nicholas Perreault**
- **Afterhours Team Leaders: Malina Seary, April Azore-Gagne, Chris Atkins, Samantha Roberts, & Max Turner**

## **Employees who Departed in 2023-2024:**

- **VSCP Coordinator: Megan Sesely**
- **Victim Support Worker: Olivia Jolicoeur & Shae-Lyn Burnett**
- **VCARS Coordinator: Kimberly Roach**



# Community Collaboration

At OVS we truly value collaboration with our community partners. We are currently members of:

- Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW)
- Frontline Human Trafficking Committee
- Ottawa Police's Violence Against Women advisory committee
- Ottawa Police's Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Case reviews
- Algonquin College, Victimology Program
- Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers
- Canadian Femicide Observatory Expert Advisory Panel member
- Canadian Centre for Policing Intimate Partner Violence, Partnership member
- National Organization for Victim Assistance
- International Organization for Victim Assistance

This year, we welcomed placement students from Community and Justice Services, Social Service Worker, Victimology, Social Work, and Criminology. Thank you to all of our amazing University and College partners for providing students who can play key roles in helping the agency deliver services!

We are also proud members of the Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers and our Executive Director continues to be one of the elected Eastern Ontario representatives on the Provincial board of directors.

OVS would like to thank our community partners including the Ottawa Police Services Victim Support Unit, the Ottawa Hospital Sexual Assault Partner Abuse Care Program, CHEO, the City of Ottawa, OCTEVAW, the Victim Witness Assistance Program, Voice Found, Unsafe at Home Ottawa, Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa, Interval House Ottawa, Canadian Resource Centre for Victims of Crime and many more for their continued support and referrals. We cannot thank you enough!



**ON VSP** Ontario Network  
of Victim Service Providers



Unsafe  
at Home  
OTTAWA

text+chat  
support 2025  
violence@abuse

TEXT  
613-704-5535

CHAT ONLINE  
UnsafeAtHomeOttawa.ca

**ALGONQUIN**  
COLLEGE



# Funding Updates

Thank you to all of our funders and generous donors for the 2023-24 year! We couldn't do it without your support!

Funding provided by:



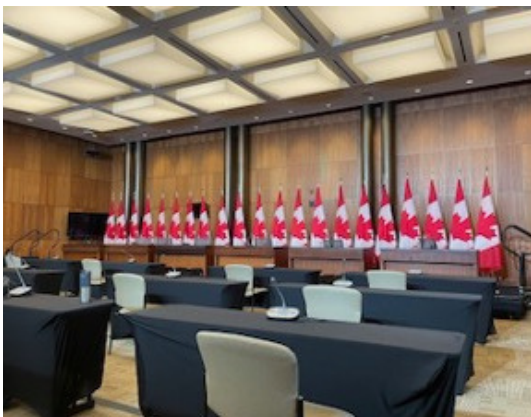
## Ottawa Victim Services Inc. Operations and Net Assets

Year ended March 31, 2024

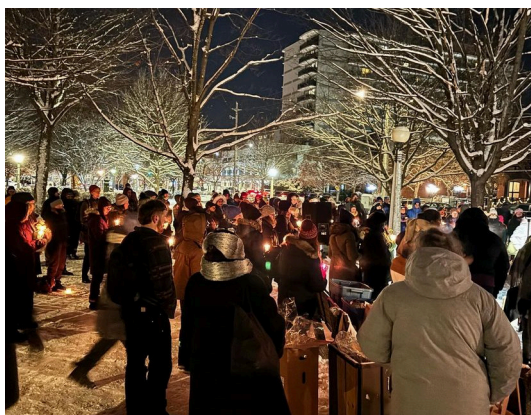
	<u>2024</u>	<u>2023</u>
	\$	\$
<b>Revenue</b>		
Contributions		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	<b>597,452</b>	597,452
Employment and Social Development Canada	<b>9,551</b>	9,401
Gender Based Violence MCSS	<b>29,873</b>	35,000
Justice Canada	<b>9,000</b>	10,000
Fundraising and miscellaneous activities	<b>31,241</b>	30,167
	<b>677,117</b>	682,020
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries and benefits	<b>492,855</b>	517,574
Insurance	<b>6,000</b>	8,932
Rent	<b>30,032</b>	35,809
Staff expenses	<b>8,997</b>	5,293
Volunteer costs	<b>45,696</b>	17,274
Client expenses	<b>4,912</b>	1,526
Web hosting	<b>405</b>	4,643
Office	<b>24,836</b>	10,851
Communications	<b>8,554</b>	14,329
Professional fees	<b>8,000</b>	27,966
Membership fees	<b>2,425</b>	3,075
Bank charges	<b>504</b>	947
Board costs	<b>1,238</b>	1,793
Harmonized sales tax	<b>3,868</b>	3,711
Project and fundraising costs	<b>1,162</b>	8,495
IT web services	<b>16,932</b>	
Database software	<b>4,500</b>	
Amortization of tangible capital assets	<b>2,344</b>	8,124
	<b>663,260</b>	670,342
<b>Excess of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>13,857</b>	11,678
Net assets, beginning of year	<b>65,002</b>	53,324
Net assets, end of year	<b>78,859</b>	65,002



# Events from 2023-2024!







Thank you!



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[www.ovs-svo.com](http://www.ovs-svo.com)



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[ottawavictimservices](http://ottawavictimservices)