



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2024–2025

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

As I end my tenure as Chair of the Board of Directors at Ottawa Victim Services (OVS), I continue to be in awe of the incredible work done by this organization across Ottawa. OVS staff and volunteers are tireless in their efforts to support thousands of victims and survivors in our community. On a daily basis, they serve our community with compassion and professionalism. Without our dedicated staff and volunteers, the work of OVS fulfilling its mandate would not be possible.

In my final year as Board Chair, I am reflecting on the immense gratitude I have for my fellow members of the Board of Directors. Your ongoing support and unwavering commitment to the organization, to our staff and to our volunteers is deeply appreciated. Although your efforts are most commonly behind the scenes, you are an integral part of the organization providing leadership and strategic direction. I have appreciated the opportunity to learn from all of you.

I also want to express gratitude for 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. It is true collaboration that makes our work effective. I am proud to celebrate many OVS successes in 2024/25 including:

- Providing practical supports, advocacy and financial assistance to 3,755 victims of crime and tragic circumstance across the City of Ottawa;
- Training 39 new volunteer crisis responders;
- Attendance at the LinCT forum on how to support victims of terrorism in Toronto in May;
- Launching a brand new OVS website;
- Hosting a volunteer appreciation dinner during National Victims and Survivors of Crime Week;
- Being part of an East Region Genvis pilot of Cudo/Milli case management & safety app;
- Marching as a team in the Capital Pride parade;
- A Board sponsored holiday breakfast in December;
- Launching See It; Name It; Change It – an educational campaign to prevent intimate partner violence that helps people learn what intimate partner violence is, what it looks like and how to stand up to it.
- Launching our Online Hate Crime Reporting Tool in English, French and Arabic – which offers a secure and confidential way for victims to report these incidents to our team, enabling OVS to provide the necessary support and resources to those affected.

The work of OVS 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 honoured to be part of this organization.

Lastly, I want to offer my sincere thanks to Raja Abdel-Majid for her time and contributions on the Board of Directors in 2024–25. We wish you all the best.

With much respect and admiration,



Matthew Kennedy, Outgoing Board Chair, Ottawa Victim Services (OVS)



A Message from the Executive Director

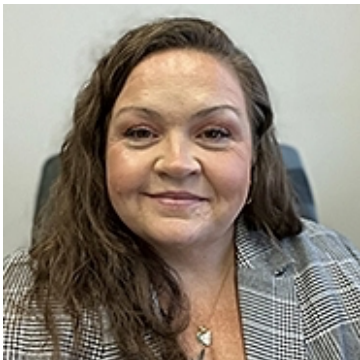
I feel truly humbled to be leading a team that does such incredibly meaningful work to serve the community each and every day. Our paid staff, including our afterhours team leaders, respond to thousands of calls and referrals from community partners with compassionate care and expertise. I want to especially thank ALL OVS' dedicated volunteers, whether members of the Board of Directors, or our amazing volunteer crisis responders, who are on call 24/7 to support the staff in delivering the mandate. We cannot do this without your commitment and selflessness!

Demand for services in 2024-25 remained high for our team at Ottawa Victim Services. The frontline staff provided support services to **3,755 individual clients** delivered through a hybrid work model. While this number is down slightly from the previous fiscal, we are excited to welcome Haley Lee to our team, as the seconded full-time case worker to the Victim Support Unit at Ottawa Police, where 56% of our referrals came from this fiscal.

As ED, I have worked hard to grow the public profile of organization, and seek new funding streams including launching our new BINGO fundraising program this fiscal with support from Alyshah Zoubi, our new Fund Development Officer. We also attended or provided remarks at a number of coalition-building events:

- Sibling Sexual Abuse research & learning event at Algonquin College;
- City of Ottawa event discussing gun violence and the impacts on African, Black, Caribbean communities;
- Canadian Centre for Safer Communities panel on the prevention of crime and victimization at the Senate of Canada;
- Panel on coercive control in gender-based violence at the American Sociological Association (ASA) conference in Montreal;
- Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers AGM in Burlington;
- Welcomed a visiting delegation from Kazakhstan to share about OVS' volunteer and safety planning programs;
- Presentation to the Status of Women Committee at the House of Commons on coercive control in IPV;
- Opening greetings at the 2024 National Restorative Justice conference in Ottawa;
- December 6th vigil for the National Day of Action on Violence Against Women;
- National Office for Victims Roundtable on corrections and parole;
- National Forum on Combatting Anti-Semitism;
- City of Ottawa event on the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination.

Here's to OVS' continued growth, and prosperity for the 2025-26 year,



Heidi Illingworth, Executive Director, Ottawa Victim Services (OVS)



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 stats from 2024-25: 34 Transports to safety; Accompaniment provided 62 times; 39 new volunteers trained; and 11,716 volunteer hours donated. We also established a new memorandum of understanding (MoU) with the Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre (EORC) to collaborate on volunteer support for family court services.

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 stats from 2024-25: OVS provides approx. \$5,000 a month in home and personal safety items alone to survivors across Ottawa.

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 2024-25:** 197 new safety plans developed and 11 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 2024-25:** Police 1,925 referrals = 56% of files coming in from police partners.

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 to 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 2024-25, we served 72 French-speaking clients, as well as 39 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 2024–2025

- **Board Chair: Matthew Kennedy**
- **Vice Chair: Sandy Wooley**
- **Secretary: Jill Broadbent**
- **Treasurer: Harpreet Kaur**
- **Director/OPS Liaison: Heather Lachine**
- **Director/Community Member: Sarah Johnston-Way**
- **Director/Community Member: Megan Cook**
- **Director/Community Member: Jooris Ndongozi**
- **Director/Community Member: Dr. Raja Abdel-Majid**

OVS Staff 2024–2025

- **Executive Director: Heidi Illingworth**
- **Office Manager: Marlene Trunzo**
- **VQRP+ Coordinator: Kristen Piazza**
- **VSCP Coordinator: Aaron Bath**
- **VCARS Coordinator: Aceil Rashid**
- **OVS-VSU Case Coordinator: Kody Moore**
- **OVS-VSU Case Worker: Haley Lee**
- **Victim Support Worker: Lynn Antony**
- **FLS/Victim Support Worker: Catherine Bélisle**
- **Fund Development Officer: Alyshah Zoubi**
- **Afterhours Team Leaders: Malina Seary, April Azor-Gagne, Chris Atkins, Naomi Brito, Lori Leclair, Kristen Black & Max Turner**

Employees who Departed in 2024–2025:

- **Afterhours Team Leader: Lori Leclair**



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) & GBV Leadership table
- Frontline Human Trafficking Committee
- Ottawa Police's Violence Against Women advisory committee
- Ottawa Police's Sexual Assault/Domestic Violence Case reviews
- Algonquin College, Victimology Research Centre
- 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, OVS welcomed placement students from Community and Justice Services, Social Service Worker, Victimology, Social Work, and Criminology. Thank you to Carleton University, UOttawa and Algonquin College 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 (VSU), the Ottawa Hospital Sexual Assault Partner Abuse Care Program (SAPACP), CHEO, the City of Ottawa, OCTEVAW, the Victim Witness Assistance Program (VWAP), Voice Found, Ottawa Muslim Community Services, Eastern Ottawa Resource Centre, Unsafe at Home Ottawa, Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa, Interval House Ottawa, Lanark County Interval House, 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

Eastern Ottawa
Resource Centre
Centre des ressources
de l'Est d'Ottawa



Unsafe
at Home
OTTAWA

text+chat
support for
violence/abus

TEXT
613-704-5535

CHAT ONLINE
UnsafeAtHomeOttawa.ca

Interval House
of Ottawa
Maison Interval d'Ottawa



OMCS

Lanark County
INTERVAL HOUSE
and Community Support

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE



Canadian
Resource Centre for
**VICTIMS
OF CRIME**



Ottawa **voicefound.**

Special Projects

Ottawa Victim Services (OVS) has recently launched two projects:

One project is centered around Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) through a campaign called **See It, Name It, Change It**. Originally launched by Lanark County Interval House & Community Support in 2017, this rural-based campaign was designed to spread awareness, provide steps, and resources on IPV prevention and safe intervention as a result of the many femicides that occurred between 2015 and 2016 in Eastern Ontario. With funding from the City of Ottawa, OVS re-adapted the campaign through an urban context, which considers the unique circumstances that survivors of IPV may face when residing in urban environments, such as population density, higher cost of living, waiting times for services, a lack of community, and language barriers particularly impacting newcomers and immigrant communities. With the rising rates of IPV and femicide, we emphasize the importance of education and awareness in order to create change, while giving individuals a walkthrough on safe intervention methods, leading to a ripple effect of systemic change surrounding IPV. Tip sheets, brochures, resources, and an in-depth look of the campaign itself can be found at www.stopviolence.ca. We are glad to have held a 7-month long ad campaign throughout OC Transpo bus interiors, which broadened our reach to different parts of Ottawa in order to keep the public informed of the work we do. We are pleased to announce that we have received funding to expand this project to include outreach about red flag laws, in order to help survivors know their rights and protections. This expansion also highlights the importance of addressing gun violence and how it can intersect with intimate partner violence in order to ensure community safety and support survivors, especially considering that intimate partner violence has been declared an epidemic in Ottawa.



Additionally, we have recently launched an **Online Hate Crime Reporting Tool**, funded by the Government of Ontario through their Anti-Racism and Anti-Hate Initiative (ARAH). This tool is available in English, French, and Arabic, considering the linguistic diversity of the Ottawa community. This tool is designed for individuals living in Ottawa to submit confidential reports (with an option to remain anonymous), about hate-incidents or hate crimes that they have experienced or have witnessed somebody else experience. In order to submit a report to us, there is no need for a police report, as we understand that many marginalized groups may feel uncomfortable or unsafe to turn to law enforcement when it comes to discrimination or hate-related violence, as they may feel retraumatized in doing so. Once a report is submitted to OVS, we would assess the report for elements of hate, in which the individual impacted may be eligible for emotional support and financial assistance which includes graffiti removal, counselling, and home security items. With the rise in hate crimes and hate incidents in Ottawa, we feel that this tool is particularly timely and can assist those who have felt unheard or unsupported due to many factors.



Funding Updates

Thank you to all of our funders and generous donors for the 2024-25 year! We couldn't do it without your support!

Funding provided by:



OTTAWA VICTIM SERVICES INC.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2025

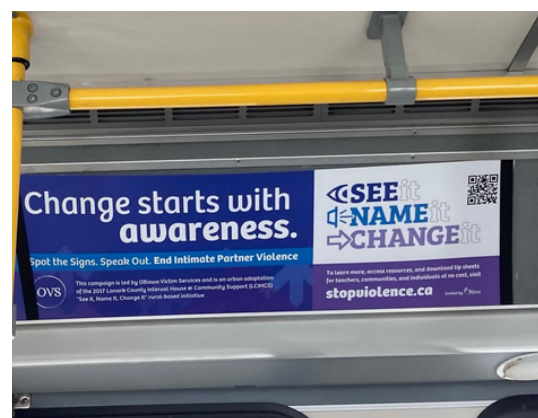
	2025	2024
REVENUE		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	\$ 629,345	\$ 597,452
Fundraising and miscellaneous activities	58,071	31,241
Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (ARAH)	40,000	-
City of Ottawa (SINIC)	22,000	-
Justice Canada (Victims Week)	9,000	9,000
Bingo	8,101	-
Employment and Social Development Canada	5,203	9,551
Justice Canada (SSA)	3,694	-
Gender Based Violence MCSS	-	29,873
	775,414	677,117
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and benefits	561,827	492,855
Project and fundraising costs	48,600	1,162
Volunteer costs	9,186	45,696
Office supplies	22,317	24,836
IT web services	19,568	16,932
Rent	19,277	30,032
Staff expenses	13,960	8,997
Professional fees	9,902	8,000
Communications	8,573	8,554
Advertising and promotion	7,471	-
Client expenses	8,351	4,912
Insurance	6,429	6,000
Translation	8,082	-
Database software	5,353	4,500
Board costs	1,275	1,238
Non refundable sales tax	3,931	3,868
Membership fees	2,411	2,425
Honorarium	3,060	-
Amortization	2,344	2,344
Bank Fees	321	504
Web hosting	-	405
	762,238	663,260
NET REVENUE FOR THE YEAR	\$ 13,176	\$ 13,857



Events from 2024-2025!







Thank you!



343 Preston Street, 3rd Floor,
Ottawa, ON, K1S 1N4



www.ovs-svo.com



613-238-2762



info@ovs-svo.com



ottawavictimservices