



ANNUAL REPORT

FISCAL YEAR 2025–2026

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

What a privilege to complete my first year, as Chair of the Board of Directors at Ottawa Victim Services (OVS). It has been my honour to support the team here at OVS and the incredible work done on a daily basis. The team assists thousands of victims and survivors of violence and tragedy in our community each year. Both paid staff and volunteers serve our community with the utmost compassion and professionalism, and I thank them for their dedication to fulfilling our mandate.

I must also acknowledge and thank my fellow members of the Board of Directors. Your unwavering commitment to the organization, to our staff and to our volunteers is deeply appreciated. You are all an integral part of the organization providing governance and strategic direction. I truly appreciate the chance to learn from all of you.

I also want to express my gratitude for the support of numerous community partners who work alongside our team on a daily basis to serve shared clients. I offer you my sincere thanks and appreciation for your partnership and collaboration. It is this community of care for our clients that makes our work effective.

OVS is celebrating many successes in 2025/26 including:

- Providing practical supports, advocacy and financial assistance to **2,909 victims of crime and tragic circumstances** across the City of Ottawa & **training 63 new volunteer crisis responders**;
- Hosting our annual volunteer appreciation dinner in May;
- Launching Ask for Angela; a province-wide campaign in Loblaws-affiliated stores, including Shoppers Drug Mart, that allows survivors to discreetly ask for help if they are feeling unsafe due to intimate partner violence;
- Launching a free monthly walk-in counselling program for victims of crime and survivors of gender-based violence;
- Recipients of funding from Public Safety Canada to expand our See it; Name it; Change it campaign to socialize information about Red Flag laws in Canada;
- Welcoming MCCSS Minister Parsa at the OVS offices;
- Hosting our annual Board sponsored holiday breakfast in December;
- Receiving and distributing 800+ cell phones from the City of Ottawa for survivors of gender-based violence; and lastly
- The expansion of our community-based hate crime reporting tool into Mandarin, Somali, Spanish and Farsi.

The work of OVS is vital to community safety, health and wellbeing. Led by our amazing Executive Director, OVS staff and volunteers provide survivors across Ottawa with timely interventions and compassionate assistance. These services are critical and I am so honoured to be part of this organization.

Warmly,



Sandy Wooley, Chair of the Board of Directors



A Message from the Executive Director

It is truly meaningful to me to lead OVS in the delivery of services across the Ottawa community each and every day. As an organization that works 24/7 to respond to victims of crime and tragedy, we simply cannot do so without the commitment and selflessness of our paid staff, including our afterhours team leaders, and our many volunteers. Together, we respond to thousands of crisis calls and referrals from community partners with compassionate care and expertise. Our volunteers are dispatched on hundreds of calls, supporting clients through court proceedings, to make police reports or by delivering groceries, cell phones and basic needs in the aftermath of violence. Frontline staff provided aid to **2,909 individual clients**, representing thousands of hours of emotional support, practical assistance, and advocacy provided to victims and survivors in need.

As ED, I continuously strive to grow the public profile of organization, and seek new funding streams, grants and contributions to allow us to reach and serve even more community members affected by violence. We also work diligently to grow partnerships by attending coalition-building events:

- United for All coalition meeting presentation about OVS' hate crime reporting tool;
- A Gathering of Hearts; A community event to unite together and end gun violence;
- Carleton University's School of Social Work agency fair;
- The Ontario Network of Victim Service Providers AGM in Kingston;
- Inaugural Waller lecture at University of Ottawa with Dr. Etienne Krug from the WHO;
- Key partner agency in the launch of a national research survey looking at Public Understanding of Coercive Control;
- Safety Synergy Resource Fair in Centretown with OCH partners;
- Delivering 3 educational webinars on sibling sexual abuse & creating 1 resource guide for the community;
- Welcoming MCCSS Minister Parsa at the OVS offices;
- UOttawa Criminology student association fair;
- Opening greetings at the 20th National Restorative Justice conference in Ottawa;
- Ottawa Police Service annual Human Rights Forum;
- Meeting with Ottawa Mayor Sutcliffe to discuss OVS' important work;
- Safer Together conference hosted by the Children's Aid Society; and
- Collaborative Justice Program event and training on the potential use of Restorative Justice for cases of sexual violence.

I am also very grateful to all the members of OVS' Board of Directors, who dedicate their time to oversee operations and provide unrelenting support to my team in delivering our mandate. Here's to OVS' continued growth, and prosperity in the 2026-27 fiscal year.

Warmly,



Heidi Illingworth, Executive Director



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 Program
- Lanark County Interval House & Community Support
- 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
- Domestic Violence Court Advisory Committee
- United for All Coalition, United Way East Ontario
- Prevention of Violence Canada

This year, OVS welcomed placement students from programs such as Social Services 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 would like to thank our community partners, including: Ottawa Police Service 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, United for All, 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

Interval House
of Ottawa
Maison Interval d'Ottawa



Canadian
Resource Centre for
**VICTIMS
OF CRIME**



Lanark County
INTERVAL HOUSE
and Community Support

ALGONQUIN
COLLEGE

Ottawa



OCTEVAW - COCVFF
END VIOLENCE



United Way
East Ontario

voicefound.



The Ottawa Hospital
L'Hôpital d'Ottawa

About Us

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.

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 need sponsorship, or donations, for these items.

Key 2025-2026 Stats – OVS Programs:



The Victim Crisis and Referral Services (VCARS) – OVS volunteers, support paid staff members, to respond 24/7 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.

Key statistics from 2025-26: 5 Transports to safety; Accompaniment provided 30 times; 63 new volunteers trained; and 11,258 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 2025-26:** OVS disbursed more than \$146,000 in financial assistance to survivors and suppliers to provide items or pay for services such as meals/groceries, and basic needs after fleeing intimate partner violence; dental repairs; serious injury supports; eye glasses/exams; travel and transportation; emergency accommodations; cell phone activation/minutes/simcard/charging cables; home and personal safety items; home repairs and clean up; and storage fees.



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 2025-26: 251 new safety plans developed and 8 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 2025-26: Police 1,680 referrals = 56% of files coming in from police partners.

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 2025-26, we served 96 French-speaking clients, as well as 39 clients in other languages than English or French. We are grateful to our amazing partners at Immigrant Women's Services Ottawa who provide us with interpretation and translation supports regularly.

Charitable Gaming & OVS

As an official charitable gaming partner, OVS receives funds which directly support our crisis-trained volunteer program and help sustain our ability to provide services 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Our volunteers play such an important role in providing compassionate and immediate support to victims and survivors of crime and tragic circumstances. Their presence helps ensure that people in crisis are not alone during some of the most difficult moments of their lives. We are especially grateful to our charitable gaming volunteers; whose time and dedication make this partnership possible. We are also grateful to the Overbrook Bingo Palace for their continued support.

Those interested in supporting OVS in a non-crisis volunteer role, including through charitable gaming at Overbrook Bingo Palace, can learn more at: www.ovs-svo.com/volunteer



2025–2026 Special Project & Highlights

Ask for Angela: A Community–Based Safety Initiative

Ask for Angela is a community–based safety initiative that helps people experiencing gender–based violence discreetly signal for help at participating locations.

OVS is proud to be a partner organization in the Ask for Angela campaign, which is a province–wide Victim Services initiative designed to create a pathway of support for individuals experiencing Gender–based Violence (including sexual violence, intimate partner violence, stalking, or human trafficking).

Through this campaign, individuals can discreetly seek help by entering participating Loblaw Companies Limited banner locations, including Loblaws, Joe Fresh, Real Canadian Superstore, Real Canadian Wholesale Club, Shoppers Drug Mart, No Frills, Valu–Mart, Your Independent Grocers, and Fortinos, and asking staff for “Angela.”

All participating store staff have received training on how to respond to this request. When someone asks for Angela, staff will guide them to a private and safe space where the survivor can be connected with OVS staff through our emergency pager number.

OVS’ Walk–In Counselling Program

In August, OVS launched our monthly walk–in counselling designed to support individuals affected by crime and tragic circumstances, with a particular focus on those impacted by gender–based violence, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, stalking, and human trafficking. While priority will be given to survivors of these forms of violence, the program is open to anyone in need of support. Community members are welcome to walk in and speak with a trained social worker about any distressing experiences, including recent or historical trauma.

The initiative offers safe and confidential 50–minute counselling sessions, at no cost, provided on a first–come, first–served basis. Services will be provided by registered social workers in order to address long waiting lists for mental health supports. It offers a safe and supportive environment where individuals can speak freely and confidentially, receive compassionate care, and be connected to additional resources if needed.

We are grateful for generous funding from the [Ottawa Community Foundation](#).



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FOUNDATION

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FONDATION
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D’OTTAWA

investir pour le bien



2025–2026 Special Project & Highlights

Three-part webinar series on sibling sexual behaviour & abuse (SSB/A)

Ottawa Victim Services (OVS), in partnership with Counselling Family Services Ottawa (CFSO) and #SiblingsToo, hosted a three-part international bilingual webinar series on the often-overlooked issue of sibling sexual abuse (SSA). With funding from the Department of Justice Canada, this series brought together experts, practitioners, those with lived experience, and the public, to:

- Raise public awareness about sibling sexual abuse
- Reduce stigma and encourage open dialogue
- Provide professionals, caregivers, survivors, and community members with tools to support survivors and families

The sessions were held in September, October, and November 2025, with each webinar focusing on a unique perspective and audience:

- Session 1 (September): Engaging Professionals Working with Children & Families
- Session 2 (October): Engaging Adult Survivors and Professionals Working with Adults, including those who have caused harm
- Session 3 (November): Engaging Parents, Communities, and Society.

Email fdo@ovs-svo.com for links to the recordings of these events.

CFS • SFC
OTTAWA



2025–2026 Special Project & Highlights

Red Flags Awareness

Ottawa Victim Services received funding this year from Public Safety Canada to expand our "See It, Name It, Change It" public awareness campaign to help communities better understand Canada's Red Flag laws and how they may be used to prevent weapons-related harm.

Alongside project partners Lanark County Interval House & Community Support (LCIHCS) the Victimology Research Centre (VRC) at Algonquin College, the new campaign builds on an intimate partner violence education initiative originally created by Lanark County Interval House & Community Support for rural communities, and launched in 2017 following seven murders in rural eastern Ontario between September 2015 and February 2016. It was relaunched in 2022 in recognition of the inquest into the 2015 femicides of Carol Culleton, Anastasia Kuzyk, and Nathalie Warmerdam in Renfrew County.

Its message is simple but powerful: when people see violence, they must be able to name it before they can help change it. The campaign was designed to help individuals recognize signs of intimate partner violence, identify harmful behaviours, and understand how to intervene safely and effectively.

In 2024, OVS worked with LCIHCS to adapt and urbanize the rural campaign for Ottawa. The urban version reflected the needs of a larger and more diverse population while preserving the original focus on education, prevention, and safe community action, as intimate partner violence was deemed an "epidemic" in 2023.

Now, the three organizations have come together to develop and incorporate education about Red Flag laws into the campaign. The project will expand agency websites to explain that legal options may be available when someone's access to weapons creates a serious risk to themselves or others, including in situations involving intimate partner violence, gender-based violence, coercive control, suicide risk, or escalating threats. We will also be creating billboards, and radio ad campaigns.



Public Safety
Canada

Sécurité publique
Canada



2025–2026 Special Project & Highlights

Enhancement of OVS' hate crime reporting tool into new languages: Mandarin, Somali, Spanish and Farsi

With additional funding from the City of Ottawa, OVS was able to enhance our online Hate Crime Reporting Tool, a confidential, accessible, third-party reporting platform, strengthening access to support for individuals and communities impacted by hate crimes and hate-motivated incidents across Ottawa.

Originally launched in early 2025, the reporting tool was initially available in English, French, and Arabic, the three most commonly spoken languages in the city. Because of its ongoing success and community impact, OVS has expanded the tool to include four additional languages: Farsi, Spanish, Mandarin, and Somali. This expansion seeks to reduce language barriers and ensure more residents can safely and confidentially report experiences of hate.

Given the hesitation of some cultural and ethnic communities to report to the police, OVS' tool allows individuals to report experiences of hate without filing a police report, and submissions can be made anonymously or on behalf of another person. Recent changes have improved accessibility and comprehensiveness, including the addition of more detailed incident-type and location-based questions to support the collection of non-identifying demographic data, which allows OVS to better understand trends in hate incidents and inform targeted prevention and response efforts.

Where an impacted person shares their contact information, OVS team members will reach out to assess submissions for elements of hate and provide trauma-informed supports, including emotional support and financial assistance for eligible needs such as counselling, graffiti removal, and home security items. For individuals under the age of 15 seeking support services, parental or guardian consent is required.

To access the Online Hate Crime Reporting Tool, please visit:

English: <https://ovs-svo.com/hate-crime-reporting-tool/>

French: <https://ovs-svo.com/fr/outil-de-signalement-d-actes-de-haine/>

Arabic: <https://ovs-svo.com/ar/hate-crime-reporting-tool/>

Farsi: <https://ovs-svo.com/fa/hate-crime-reporting-tool/>

Spanish: <https://ovs-svo.com/es/herramienta-para-denunciar-delitos-de-odio/>

Mandarin: <https://ovs-svo.com/zh-hans/hate-crime-reporting-tool/>

Somali: <https://ovs-svo.com/so/qalabka-warbixinta-dembiyada-nacaybka/>



OVS Board of Directors 2025–2026

- **Board Chair: Sandy Wooley**
- **Vice Chair: Matthew Kennedy**
- **Secretary: Jill Broadbent**
- **Treasurer: Harpreet Kaur**
- **Community Member & OPS Liaison: Heather Lachine**
- **Community Member: Sarah Johnston-Way**
- **Community Member: Megan Cook**
- **Community Member: Jooris Ndongozi**
- **Community Member: Luke Ffrench**
- **Community Member: Cynthia Hannigan-Thaw**

OVS Staff 2025–2026

- **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**
- **Fund Development Officer: Alyshah Zoubi**
- **French Language Support Worker: Catherine Bélisle**
- **Afterhours Team Leaders: Malina Seary, April Azor-Gagne, Chris Atkins, Naomi Brito, Sarah McArdle, Kristin Black**

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.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2026

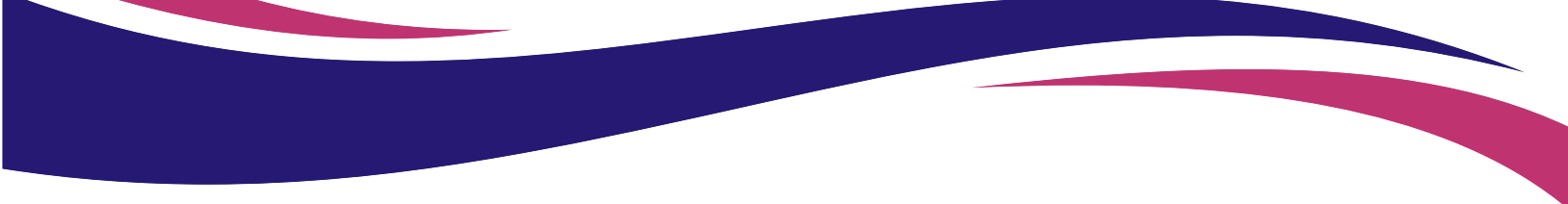
	2026	2025
REVENUE		
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services	\$ 662,055	\$ 629,345
Department of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness	99,679	-
Fundraising and miscellaneous activities	26,969	58,071
Ministry of Citizenship and Multiculturalism (ARAH)	-	40,000
City of Ottawa	11,945	22,000
Justice Canada (Victims Week)	8,000	9,000
Bingo	25,433	8,101
Employment and Social Development Canada	5,386	5,203
Justice Canada (SSA)	30,506	3,694
Ottawa Community Foundation Grant	9,000	-
	878,973	775,414
EXPENDITURE		
Salaries and benefits	595,011	561,827
Project and fundraising costs	61,342	48,600
Volunteer costs	9,742	9,186
Office supplies	12,475	22,317
IT web services	23,529	19,568
Rent	19,670	19,277
Staff expenses	9,058	13,960
Professional fees	18,690	9,902
Communications	13,236	8,573
Advertising and promotion	38,147	7,471
Client expenses	7,828	8,351
Insurance	9,567	6,429
Translation	10,608	8,081
Database software	6,264	5,353
Board costs	1,125	1,276
Non-refundable sales tax	5,498	3,931
Membership fees	2,505	2,411
Honorarium	9,750	3,060
Amortization	-	2,344
Bank fees	(16)	321
Web hosting	5,752	-
	859,781	762,238
NET REVENUE FOR THE YEAR	\$ 19,192	\$ 13,176

Events from 2025-2026!









Thank You



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