



MCHB COOP ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024



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The Year in Context

The last half of 2023 saw Canada welcoming nearly 73.7 M travelers, an increase of 46% from 2022, and facilitated the arrival of almost 59,500 asylum claimants.

Alberta's population grew by 4.3 per cent now at 4.87, owed largely to persistent high arrivals of net in-flows of international migrants.

Edmonton population growth reflects a similar trend of about 3.6% by the end of 2023, which means that the city now has 1.14 M people.

Population growth affects all aspects of our lives from economic activity, with increased demand for goods and services, including shelter. Housing has been the major issue in the city from homelessness to unaffordable rents.

An Angus Reid survey of Albertans showed 32% of Albertans say they're "not too happy" with the way things are in their life - they are dissatisfied over their personal financial situation and are experiencing stress. Sixty-five per cent of visible minorities who responded are either "dissatisfied" or "very dissatisfied" overall.

This year saw a rise in discrimination and attacks against trans people and other members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community.

As we welcomed 2024, the global and national outlook remains a period of challenges with two major wars still continuing - the Russian invasion of Ukraine and the Gaza war between Hamas and Israel. While they may be distant from Edmonton, these two global conflicts have local impacts - the continued flow of Ukrainian evacuees and refugees from the Middle East.

Although the effects of a falling inflation rate will still have to reach our kitchen tables, Canada's inflation rate has been steadily declining since last year and employment trends continue to rise. The federal government introduced policies on dental care and pharmacare that are envisioned to ease access to health for many Canadians as well as an increase in investments in affordable housing.

The MCHB Coop as an organization has remained steadfast in its commitment to serve migrant communities, especially those who are most vulnerable and marginalized. Our credibility has afforded us with sustained funding from the provincial government of its anchor programs.

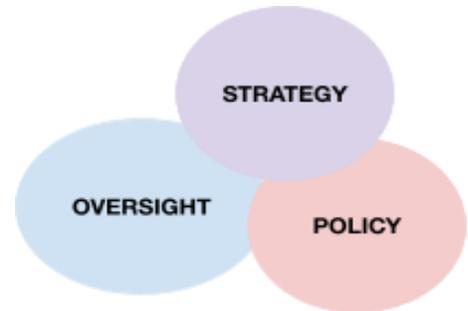
We look forward to 2024-2025 once again with optimism and energy, towards a pandemic-free work environment, rebuilding our connections face-to-face and renewing our promise to foster health and well being among ourselves and most of all, the communities we serve.



Overview of Governance and Operations

Board Activities in 2023-2024

The Board has been busy with its three core functions: Oversight, Strategy and Policy. A few highlights of Board activities in the past year include the following:



Oversight

- Led the engagement of Coop members and workers to better understand and make a decision on the transitioning of the MCHB Coop into a not-for-profit workers cooperative; the Board continues to oversee working closely with the Executive Director to move forward with the formal transition process
- Coordinated the successful 25th Anniversary Celebration with Coop members honouring communities, recognizing cultural brokers and celebrating the MCHB Coop
- Undertaken a Coop wide membership recruitment and education of Coop members and workers with over 100 workers participating in the Coop education sessions and adding 12 new members of close to 50% of all workers
- Reorganized the Coop Health and Safety Committee to meet OHS Act requirements
- Supported the development of 2024-2025 MCHB Coop budget

Policy

- Reviewed the scope of the 2015 MCHB Coop Policy Manual within the current requirements of human resources and other organization management standards
- Identified four policies for development and revision for 2024: OHS Policy, Respectful Workplace Policy, Professional Code of Conduct and Performance Evaluation

Strategy

- Engaged coordinators/project leads and workers in strategic planning discussions for the development of the 2024-2027; to date 16 project coordinators and 72 workers (cultural brokers and admin staff) have participated in these discussions

The Board will continue their work in these three key tasks in 2024-2025 particularly:

- a vigorous membership recruitment and education to reach a membership of 75% of all Coop workers
- steward the formal transition process to a non-for-profit workers coop
- approval of the 2024-2027 MCHB Coop Strategy
- completion of four policies for adoption in 2024-2025



Operations

The MCHB Coop continues to implement a wide range of programs, projects and initiatives which serve people from birth to older years, a cross-section of issues and levels of complexity. The wide diversity of our programs and services can be described as:

Anchor programs

Foundational programs that make our core values come alive, demonstrate the cultural brokering practice at its fullest and provide stability, consistency and security for the Coop even at its most difficult times.

Population-Centred Programs

Population-centred programs aim at responding to specific needs and challenges of populations with common characteristics that require the appropriate care and support responsive to their conditions and context.

Health-Empowering Initiatives

This group of initiatives tackle issues and challenges that impact health and well being of individuals and families. These initiatives focus on specific health issues such as mental health or address broad social determinants of health such as employment.

Legacy Projects

Legacy projects offer an approach or a model that demonstrates achieving equity and inclusion in service provision, meeting a basic need or fulfilling one's hopes and aspirations. These are projects that the MCHB Coop works in collaboration with other organizations that will leave a significant impact nationally, a sector or in the municipality.

Social Enterprise Initiatives

As a cooperative, the MCHB Coop undertakes initiatives that bring revenues to the organization by offering a service or a product that individuals and organizations are willing to pay for.

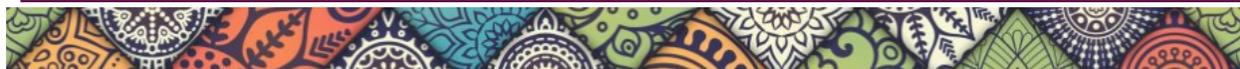


Program Accomplishments

The MCHB Coop has been fortunate to continue with most of its programs, projects and initiatives in 2023-2024. With 18 programs, projects and initiatives serving 6,579 individuals (pregnant moms, children, youth, adults and seniors) and close to 1,500 families served by 127 cultural brokers.

MCHB Coop Programs/Projects/Initiatives by the Numbers: a quick glance

Program/Initiatives	Individuals & Families Served/ Program Participants	Cultural Brokers and Staff
Anchor Programs		
1. Perinatal Health Outreach	677 newcomer moms	34
2. Intercultural Family Resource Networks	600 Referrals matched with cultural brokers 573 families provided support 49 families provided with home visitation supports	
3. Collaborative Intercultural Practice Initiative -Child Intervention & MCHB	622 families accessed CB support (1004 children) 397 families referred for ongoing support 520 active intervention cases 233 Child Intervention workers engaged in collaborative practice	52
4. Early Childhood Development Program	23 parents engaged in creating the research report "Journeys Through Early Learning & Childcare in Edmonton: The Experiences of Ethnocultural Families"	
5. Rural Multicultural Support Program	89 individuals served 7 families with 21 individuals served 4 workshops with 70 participants	
Population-Focused Programs		
6. Multicultural Family Support for Children with Disabilities	190 families served 239 children with disabilities supported	33
7. . Multicultural Seniors Program	568 Seniors on our Active lists 436 Seniors served in the last 6 months 15 Ethnocultural communities reached 1,677 Volunteer Hours from 43 volunteers and students 635 Social Activities held	12
8. Immigrant and Refugee Youth Program	600 youth clients 349 counseling/therapy sessions	15 youth brokers
9. Brokering Support for Ukrainian Evacuees	317 Ukrainian evacuee family members	3



Health Empowering Initiatives		
10. Employment Program	21 Cohorts 210 Participants 70% employed 15% pursued further learning	
11. Mental Health & Wellness Program	883 families and individuals, 3014 sessions across all programs	4 Mental Health Therapists
12. Public Legal Education and Information	427 community leaders and members participating in workshops received brokering support 3 ethnocultural communities: Arabic & Kurdish, Eritrean, and Hispanic Latin American 37 community meetings and workshops	
13. Culturally Responsive Access to Justice (CRAJ) Project	109 families supported by our South Asian Intervention brokers in the last year	10
14. Permanency Project	35 community members from 4 cultural communities participated in workshops 10 Online Workshops	
15. Food Dignity Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Grocery Run • Help Yourself Shelf • Growing Opportunities 	5,183 hampers to families (132 families/228 individuals weekly) 879 individuals 37 volunteers with a total of 1125 hours 91 families growing in 3 urban farm sites	
Legacy Project		
16. National Cultural Brokering Project	16 cultural brokers across Canada as co-design team members to develop a facilitator manual for cultural brokering training	
17. Newcomer Housing Project	40 community members engaged in developing the housing concept A proposal to COE for land acquisition for the housing development	
Social Enterprise		
18. Journeys Program	6 workshops with a revenue of \$16,500	



Program Highlights

Anchor Programs

1. Perinatal Health

During the last year we have seen an increase in refugee claimants and visitors coming to Canada particularly from Mexico, and some African countries such as Nigeria, Ghana and Rwanda. Many of these moms are coming to Canada pregnant and alone. Some have ended up in a shelter due to the lack of housing, a lack of finances and language barriers.

This influx of newcomers and the complex issues rooted in their pre-migration journey almost always require intense one-on-one support more than the traditional prenatal classes. Lack of transportation, limited language skills, minimal income support and lack of support put these moms in a vulnerable situation at their critical time of pregnancy. Concretely, it is more and more difficult to obtain resources such as housing, food, finances, cribs, strollers, car seats, formula, diapers, etc., for them, due to the high demand.

The biggest challenge for MCHB is that there is an overwhelming need with so many families requiring support and with the limited resources we have, it's difficult to provide the one-on-one support needed to navigate all areas of support these moms need.

To support referrals that has tripled in the last two years, the Coop hired an additional intake navigator to help with the high volume of referrals, calls, emails and requests for support

The Perinatal Health Program has been resourceful in meeting the increasing volume of referrals in the midst of limited resources by undertaking the following:

- Connecting clients with other agencies for support
- Creating a list of resources by area in Edmonton so clients can reach out to proper agencies within the areas they live in
- Helping clients navigate systems by phone
- Providing information about resources

2. Intercultural Family Resource Networks

The IFRN Program consists of three key program area: the FRN Hub that takes in referrals from agencies for cultural brokering support; Multicultural Family Connections s and Home Visitation providing a range of support to families;

Key highlights of the program

- Co-hosted a cultural event in spring 2023 with BGCBig's. This event brought the Eritrean/Ethiopian parenting groups with their children, cultural brokers team and BGCBig's staff. The event was attended by approximately 100 people, ranging from infants to teens to adults. This event showed the power of family and community connections - from children getting their parents to attend to parents inviting other parents to attend the event.

This event also introduced the services and support at the Kinsmen Club that parents can use. The Kinsmen Club parents learned about the work of the cultural brokers with the community and opened their programs to them. Twelve moms from the Eritrean/Ethiopian community joined their parenting group including a parent with children with disabilities.



This event was followed by a second joint gathering in November with eight families and 17 children participating in the club activities. These parents are very engaged and appreciative of the additional support to their families and encouraged more families to register for the program.

- The connection between the mom with a child with a disability and the Eritrean/Ethiopian broker has been incredibly fruitful. Through this connection, the family has received FSCD supports, including respite and Behaviour and Developmental Supports (BDS). Through community connections, the broker has found a culturally and linguistically-matched respite worker for the family.

Partnering with the agency providing BDS support and through community connections, the agency has hired a culturally and linguistically matched staff member to support this family, as well as other Tigrinya and Amharic speaking clients of their services.

- Intercultural spaces, such as mainstream youth clubs partnering with community leaders can increase parental confidence as transmitters of culture and can support youth in recognizing the cultural wealth of the communities they come from, strengthening intergenerational relationships and fostering healthy bi-cultural identities.

The connections made at these types of events can foster meaningful and positive change in the lives of families who might otherwise be quite isolated and unable to access essential support for their children. This type of partnership bolsters key protective factors such as intergenerational transmission of culture for children and youth.

- A healing facilitator was hired to provide support to address pre- and post-migration anxiety, trauma and stress experienced by parents and children. She designed a series of modules provided through one-on-one and group work that includes the following:
 - Therapeutic handwork
 - Movement therapies
 - Festivals and birthday celebrations
 - Seasonal field trips and cultural celebrations
 - Storytelling (puppet show) as a healing tool

What's next for this program

The healing facilitator and the Eritrean team of Brokers are working on a pilot youth storytelling club. Through a series of sessions, the youth will be supported to learn to make puppets and create a puppet show based on one of their traditional cultural stories. They will perform the puppet show to the younger children in their community. It is envisioned that this will enhance the mental health of the youth through storytelling that honours the cultural wealth and wisdom of their heritage, the calming effect of the presentation of the puppet show to younger members of their community.

3. Collaborative Intercultural Practice Initiative -Child Intervention & MCHB

This program reached a total of 1,539 families, of which 1004 children were involved; Consultations and ongoing holistic family support were provided by 53 cultural brokers to children and families from 65 countries and 36 primary languages other than English.



A new approach to hiring and recruitment

This year the program tried a cooperative approach in hiring a cultural broker to fill out a vacancy instead of the conventional competitive process. It started with an orientation session on the Liaison Broker role for cultural brokers; those who were interested had individual conversations with the Executive Director and a support team member to explore their level of fit for the current position.

Those who were still interested in the work participated in workshops that further described the role of Liaison Brokers in greater depth, including knowledge and skills that they need to do their work effectively. Those who have attended the orientation, capacity building workshops continued engagement with the support team. The vacancies were filled at the same time a pool of cultural brokers were available in case the program needed staff in the future.

Everyone involved seemed to appreciate the process, and to feel supported in their growth and development rather than unsuccessful in a competition. When another position became vacant, those who participated in these learning activities progressed naturally into these positions. This process enabled the Coop to keep a nurturing and trusting team environment when there are limited positions available, as well as having people ready to ensure continuity of services to our partners, families and communities

Community connections supporting culturally relevant placements: a success story

A family struggling with mental illness and addictions, reached out to a cultural broker, whom they knew for many years in the community, when Children's Services directed that their newborn be placed in care. They wanted their baby to be placed within their cultural community so the cultural brokers through her community connections found another family who was willing to care for the baby.

The cultural broker worked closely with Children Services, the couple and the family caregiver for several months fostering understanding about cultural context and how the systems work, creating trust and enabling communication among all of them. In the end, the baby was very well cared for within the cultural community until they were returned home to the father. Eventually, the father realized that the best place for the baby would be with the mother's sister and agreed to a permanency plan with the extended family as the primary caregivers. , so he voluntarily agreed to the permanency plan of extended family taking

"When you first hear from children's services, it can be threatening. It brings to mind 'the government will come and take my children', and fears of hurting the families. Working with a cultural broker helped me to understand that the government wants to help keep kids safe, but they might not be from the same background, or know where you come from. We need to come together. (The cultural broker) was my angel."

Vital role of an evaluator

The program has been working with an evaluator to help in defining the impact of the program on the individuals and families support. The evaluation process involved the following:

- Review the wealth of knowledge produced from previous evaluations to draft a document for discussion
- A discussion was facilitated among Child Intervention practitioners, regional supervisor and managers, the liaison brokers, cultural brokers and Collaborative Service Delivery agencies. Over the past year, we have worked closely with an evaluator. Some of the questions in this conversation were:



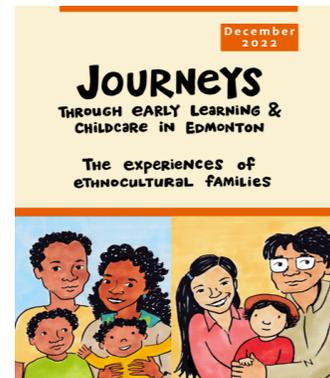
- What have we done, what are the strengths and challenges of the collaboration?
 - What difference has this made for families, for our practice?
 - What are the next steps we can take to build on the strengths, address the challenges, and enhance the positive impact?
- Five families were interviewed from South East Asia, Africa, Middle East, and Latin America who had been referred to MCHB by child intervention.
 - An analysis of the findings from the staff discussions and family interviews is being prepared for presentation to the Edmonton Region Child Intervention Directors to develop a road map for the next years in the collaboration.
 - Document and quantify the impact of the cultural brokering support to child and families as a basis for requesting increased funding to this complex and intense work.

4. Early Childhood Development Program

On April 11, 2023, the Multicultural Health Brokers Co-op, the Community University Partnership for the Study of Children, Youth, and Families, the Edmonton Council for Early Learning and Care, and EndPovertyEdmonton released *Journeys Through Early Learning & Childcare in Edmonton: The Experiences of Ethnocultural Families*, the culmination of two years of collaborative research.

The report features first-hand accounts of the experiences of ethnocultural parents as they navigated the challenges involved in securing early learning and care for their children in Edmonton, and illuminates opportunities to improve early learning and care for ethnocultural families and their children.

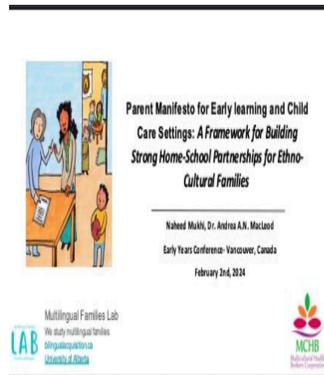
This was one of the many events and learning opportunities that the ECD Program conducted last year to promote the value of cultural context in early childhood development and parenting roles and to advocate for significant support for culturally appropriate ECD and parenting supports.



These learning events included the following:

- **Early Childhood Development (ECD) Festival for Cultural Brokers**
On April 28th an Early Childhood Development (ECD) Festival, was organized in collaboration with the Multilingual Lab, University of Alberta. It helped build capacity for home language and home culture transmission and inspired conversations and aspirations on how to promote home culture and home language of families through engaging early childhood practices. The lab also invited communities to participate in their home language research groups, a 8- week program for home language maintenance for parents of young children.
- **Parent Appreciation & Launch of Parent Manifesto**
On April 28th, a parent appreciation event was held to acknowledge the parents for their contribution towards the Journeys Report; to summarize, validate and reflect on some key findings generated through the Journeys Project and lastly, to introduce and gather feedback from community brokers and families to the Parent Manifesto. There 23 parents and 6 cultural brokers who participated in the discussion about the Journeys Report and the Parent Manifesto.





The Parent Manifesto is a framework to support parents and community leaders in feeling confident in advocating for their child, their culture, and their language in early learning and child care. The Manifesto champions the need to resist dominant systems present in early learning and child care, and to support parents and community members with tools to make their voices heard.

One of the Kurdish speaking mothers expressed how she had brought her golden embroidered dress when she came as a refugee from Syria, but this is the first time she wore it in Canada and she made sure she wore the traditional belts and jewelry that goes with the outfit. She said this traditional outfit was carefully wrapped and stored safely in her closet and the parent appreciation event was the first time she wore it outside of her home proudly.

- Early Years Conference, Vancouver, Parent Manifesto Learning Showcased**
 In February 2024, the initial learnings generated from the Parent Manifesto work was showcased at the Early Years Conference held in Vancouver BC. The conference helped validate the need and importance of such a framework and platforms that help empower families who would not have had their voices heard from the academic communities and the early years educators present at the conference.

For 2024-2025, the Parent Manifesto will be shared with Vietnamese, Chinese-speaking and Ukrainian families in partnership with Multilingual Lab, University of Alberta.

5. Rural Multicultural Support Program(RMSP)

The Rural Multicultural Support Program expands cultural brokering services to rural municipalities to support individuals and families struggling with a range of social and well being issues.

We were able to expand our connections and network in rural Alberta. We developed relationships with 17 new FRNs, 3 settlement agencies, 4 organizations supporting Ukrainian communities and strengthened connection with Alberta Filipino Community Leaders Association (AFCL which is a coalition of grassroots Filipino community organizations in municipalities outside of Edmonton and Calgary.

Since the program started last year, RMSP has achieved the following:

- Strengthened connection in Sylvan Lake through relationship fostered with Sylvan Lake FRN Supervisor who was very open to learning more about Filipino and Ukrainian communities across Alberta and their situations and needs. We were invited to participate/ collaborate on the Multicultural Family Connections event hosted by the FRN and their partners.
- As a result of conversations, the FRN was better equipped to connect with Filipino and Ukrainian families and encourage them in a culturally responsive and contextualized way on why they should attend the event.
- Encouraged community leaders within Sylvan Lake to attend the event. As a result of this connection/ conversation, he became increasingly enthusiastic to attend and to spread the word among the Filipino community in their area.

RMSP looks forward to building on these achievements to sustain the work to serve more municipalities through the following:



- Continue to build relationships with FRNs, settlement organizations and ethnocultural leaders in rural Alberta.
- Develop a pilot capacity building initiative to support the work of ethnocultural leaders in the community. This initial pilot will involve the Filipino and Nigerian leaders.
- Plan an in person capacity building event for FRNs across Alberta in partnership with CIWA in the Fall of 2024.

Population-Focused Programs

1. Multicultural Family Support for Children with Disabilities

The Multicultural Family Support for Children with Disabilities have been great strides in receiving additional funding for our parents groups enabling us to organize more group activities for over 370 families this year.

Program highlights

- Fourteen families are now off from the program and have transitioned to other programs where they can get the appropriate support.
- Supported families to access to a range of supports for children with disabilities from income benefits, mental health support and variety of health and social services providers such as school caseworkers, therapists and clinicians from different disciplines.
- Cultural brokers (33) have participated in many training programs enhancing their capacity to assess needs of children with disabilities and resources for them.

A success story to share

A family from Ukraine to Canada in 2023, first landed at Montreal, experienced an exceedingly difficult situation there. New country, new language, no money, no friends, they are so stressed with the overwhelming changes. Dad committed suicide, mom needed to take care of a disabled child and a teenager with mental health issues. After they moved to Edmonton, they were referred to MCHB. The family attended the parents group.. With the brokers' help, the family accessed all the resources they needed. Since participating in the Health and Play program, the neurodivergent girl showed positive behaviors and was very engaged with craft.. She had a lot of fun and even made new friends in the group. The family are happy with their life in Canada now.

What's next for this program

We will continue to advocate for more funding as we expect more arrivals from Ukraine and refugees as a result of political turmoil in the Middle East. We will increase education opportunities for parents, FSCD workers and cultural brokers to improve their ability to work together as they begin to understand each other's cultural context. We will develop an evaluation tool to capture and document the parents' experience and how we can further improve the program.

2. Multicultural Seniors Outreach Program

The year 2023-2024 marks the 18th year of seniors programming for the Coop. We continue to implement the three core initiatives within the Multicultural Seniors Outreach Program such as the:



- Community Animation Program (January 2023) - seeks to build and support the leadership skills and initiatives of the seniors in our program in collaboration with SAGE and funded by FCSS.
- Seniors Coordinated Outreach - uniquely taps into strengths of MCHB Coop, SAGE and our other partners to provide holistic support to lift migrant seniors from deep isolation as a result of language, cultural, and economic barriers. A team of now 12 cultural brokers work with seniors and their families within the Kurdish, Korean, former Yugoslavian, Spanish-speaking, Eritrean communities, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, South Sudanese, Oromo, and Syrian. The MCHB Coop works closely with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council (ESCC) with funding from FCSS and the Alberta Government to illustrate a model of collaborative care and community development.
- Social Prescribing Edmonton 55+ is a pilot project in partnership with the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council and supported by the Government of Alberta and Healthy Aging Alberta. This project streamlines the process for health care providers to identify seniors who have non-medical health equity needs and to connect them to the help these seniors need.

We continue to advocate for ethnocultural seniors' needs in Edmonton participating in the Seniors Equity Collective (SEC) with SAGE, Drive Happiness and GEF Housing. This collective aims to improve our collaborative work and articulate in a unified voice to address the needs of vulnerable seniors.

Our program success can be described by how vulnerable migrant seniors in our program reported decreased levels of stress and isolation and have learned to:

- Navigate and access the services they need with the help of their cultural broker.
- Have Confidence to see others regularly in person and appreciate the joy of each other's company.
- Help others that they know need help such as carpooling, accessing Edmonton Transit and visiting homebound seniors.
- Maintain connections to family and community supports through limited cell phone plans provided by the MCHB Coop

A key challenge encountered in this program begins with the financial hardships that continue to make life difficult for vulnerable migrant seniors in terms of food insecurity, unaffordable rent and mental health issues while resources to support them have not increased. Notably, seniors who are Ukrainian evacuees have limited access to seniors' support because of their temporary status, unable to find employment and struggling with high levels of stress.

Our learning and insights from the program include the following:

- The importance of connections in seniors' well being. The group activities are essential in reducing their isolation, provide opportunities to help each other and share knowledge which builds their confidence.
- Partner agencies recognize the leadership and the wealth of knowledge of the MCHB Coop. They look to us for information and support to be more responsive to ethnocultural seniors. Making data entry easier and efficient leaves more time to work on cases. We have developed a smartphone-based data entry system for cultural brokers to fill out case reports.

A Success Story

Our client came to Canada 8 years ago after a traumatic experience as a refugee. She was isolated and living in deep poverty. She does speak English,



does not know how to take the bus, open a bank account, buy groceries and use the health care system.

When she was connected to a cultural broker, she was connected to the Coop's Grocery run program for culturally appropriate and nutritious food; access to affordable housing through GEF Housing, including access to the internet and cable TV. She is taking English classes, can now use the transit system, able to pay for her groceries and bills. Most of all, she is connected to her cultural community and started going to the Mosque.

She has started leading an independent life and feels connected to people near her. She is so thankful for the help she has been given and views MCHB as a blessing.

3. Immigrant and Refugee Youth Program

The Immigrant and Refugee Youth Program sought innovative solutions to meet its ongoing struggle to meet increasing demand for services and support for migrant youth within limited resources. These solutions include applying for additional grants and leveraging community partnerships to share resources and support. Collaborative efforts with community organizations, schools, and local government agencies helped to increase awareness of the programs and reach more families in need.

A Success Story to Share:

A particularly inspiring success story comes from a young participant who initially struggled with severe anxiety and isolation after migrating to Canada. The program provided counseling services and encouraged participation in group activities. As a result, this youth developed coping mechanisms, built confidence, and found a supportive community. The tailored support provided by the youth leadership and culturally sensitive programming played a crucial role in their transformation. The young person expressed profound gratitude for the program, stating that the guidance and encouragement they received were pivotal in overcoming their challenges and fostering a sense of belonging and self-worth.

Immigrant and Refugee Youth into the future

Looking forward, the program will focus on key strategic areas to enhance our impact:

- **Technology Integration:** improve access to services for youth who face barriers related to transportation, mobility, or geographic location through online services and virtual support groups.
- **Youth Leadership Development:** increase investment in youth leadership through opportunities for leadership training, mentorship, and decision-making roles envisioned to empower youth to take ownership of the program and become advocates for their communities.
- **Strengthening Advocacy and Policy Influence:** foster youth engagement in advocacy efforts and collaboration with policymakers, the program hopes to influence positive changes at local, regional, and national levels to champion policy changes and systemic improvements that benefit immigrant and refugee youth.
- **Strengthening efforts to engage parents as partners in their children's growth and development** by offering more parent education workshops, family counseling sessions, and supportive resources can enhance parental involvement and support positive outcomes for youth.
- **Expanding Partnerships:** Continued collaboration with community organizations, public agencies, and other stakeholders is crucial for building community capacity and ensuring comprehensive support for youth.



Sustainable funding for this growing program continues to be a priority. We are actively exploring new potential funding opportunities recently announced by the provincial and federal governments. They present a significant chance to scale up the programs and address the increasing demand for services.

We will highlight the success and impact of our programs by writing detailed grant proposals that profile our innovative approaches, successful outcomes, and the critical need for continued and expanded support. We will proactively engage with potential funders and demonstrate the value and effectiveness of our programs, we are optimistic about securing the necessary resources to continue and expand our vital work in the community.

4. Brokering Support for Ukrainian Evacuees

Early in 2024, the Multicultural e Family Resource Society (MFRS) and MCHB Coop were successful in receiving a 12 month grant from the government of Alberta to provide brokering support for Ukrainian evacuees attending MFRS programs. Cultural brokers provided immediate support to meet basic and ongoing needs including systems navigation, financial/income supports, health, housing, education, government services, employment services and employers, community, donation and settlement services.

This program enabled 50% of clients accessing the MCHB Grocery Run and food banks within Edmonton and the surrounding area. We have made referrals associated with family distress and domestic violence as a result of significant pre and post migration trauma, instability and insecurity.

A Success Story

One evening, the mother of the family I am supporting was crying to let me know that she wanted to go home to Ukraine to visit her injured son but she cannot go because her young son's passport was expired. She cannot leave her young son behind in Edmonton. The team helped me connect with an immigration consultant and Anna from the Edmonton Community Legal Centre. We were helping my client to apply online as late as 11:00 PM on a weekend which was a complicated process. We were advised to contact an MP and meet with him the following Monday morning. The MP called the embassy and things moved quickly. Within a day or two they received permission to go! The mom sent me pictures of her with her son at the hospital, she was so grateful for everything the team did.



What's next for Ukrainian Evacuees

The trend among Ukrainian evacuees is that significant inter-provincial migration continues in Edmonton. Although many evacuees are beginning to build new lives, others continue to struggle to make their way. They are still grappling with their collective trauma over their precarious status as Temporary Foreign Workers with uncertain status and few avenues to Permanent Residency status.

We and other agencies across the province, know that evacuees, despite their resilience, will continue to need support to address a wide range of concerns:

- financial precarity from limited access to employment and language barriers and lack of lack of social benefits for the most vulnerable (families with children with disabilities and seniors)
- family dysfunction (pre-post migration) leading to gender-based violence and domestic violence
- isolation of seniors, youth, children
- pre-post migration trauma of adults/children/youth, etc.
- lack of social cohesion

Looking forward means continuing efforts to seek adequate funding, lobbying and advocacy with all levels of government to address policy and programming gaps, and ongoing attentiveness to medium and long-term family wellness critical to evacuee successful settlement and integration.

Health Empowering Initiatives

1. Employment Program

The MCHB Coop's Employment Program has three initiatives:

- First Steps to Integration
- GEDI Hub
- Spiral Up to Success

First Steps to Integration: Language, Culture and Employment Supports for Newcomers and their Employers (2016-present)

First Steps to Integration provides language and employment programming for vulnerable newcomers, who face complex barriers and have very low levels of English. Participants experience holistic support that includes language training tailored to gain entry employment and workplace culture training, skills training specific to the work context and job shadowing. The ultimate outcome is to enable participants to access and retain a job.

An innovative feature of this program is the partnership with an Industry Partner currently the JW Marriott Hotel Chain - a group of 3 hotels (Marriott, the Delta, and the Westin) who are true champions of equitable employment. They offer their facilities for the English language and employment preparation classes and frequent opportunities to have guest lectures by hotel staff about the hospitality industry. At the end of the program, learners have 4 weeks of job shadow opportunities across all 3 hotels which culminates in an elegant graduation luncheon provided by the hotel for graduates and their families.

GEDI- Hub (February 2022- present)

Gateway to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub The GEDI-Hub (Gateway to Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Hub) is the first and only free workplace EDI hub in Alberta. Led by Gateway Association, the MCHB Coop brings the intercultural lens to the work and Community Futures - Treaty 7 in Calgary provides the Indigenous insight.



The GEDI-Hub is a single point, cross-sectoral, employer resource centre which promotes and offers Workplace EDI Resources and capacity building. The GEDI-Hub delivers project services through group/individual training and consultations delivered by a team of Diversity and Engagement Consultants working out of Edmonton and Calgary - and virtually across Alberta - as well as through web-based resources, tools, information, and an EDI-app. More than creating awareness and building capacity in workplace EDI, the GEDI-Hub connects employers directly to job seekers from underrepresented groups through our GEDI-Hub service provider network.

Spiral Up to Success (January 2023- present)

This is a project designed to enhance the capacity of two civil society organizations, MCHB Coop and Gateway Association, to deliver employment connection services to immigrants and refugees with multiple barriers to employment and living with disabilities. MCHB Coop worked with Gateway Association to use an intersectionality and pan-disability inclusion lens to understand and address the vulnerabilities of each of our client groups as we pilot a transformational approach to service delivery.

The success of the Spiral Up project is demonstrated in the following:

- 13 individuals found meaningful work
- 27 Edmontonians who, in the context of their cultural upbringing, never imagined gainful employment as an option because of their disability, now see employment as a realistic possibility.
- 27 families in Edmonton hold a new sense of hope for their loved ones that they could not have imagined before.
- 10+ staff members in 2 civil society organizations have developed relationships, knowledge sharing mechanisms and insight into the intersections of disability, cultural identities, and employment.

The Spiral Up project produced micro-narratives of those who have experienced the projects and key learnings from the project in this video:

<https://mchb.org/spiral-up-to-success/>

In November 2023, CBC did a feature story on this program that aired on TV, radio, and online: **Hands on - Hands-on hospitality training helps Edmonton newcomers pursue Canadian dream.**

<https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/edmonton/hospitality-training-helps-edmonton-newcomers-pursue-canadian-dream-1.7045723>

2. Mental Health Program

For the last two decades, the MCHB's Mental Health program has diligently served newcomer families, offering wrap-around, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed therapeutic services to meet the growing demand for culturally responsive mental health support within ethnocultural communities.

Mental Health Team

There are nine therapists in the mental health team consisting of clinical social workers, a psychologist, and Canadian certified therapists, all with extensive experience working with immigrant and refugee families. Our therapist team is continuing to grow in number and scope of service delivery.

Our Mental Health program consists of the following services:

- Mental Wellness and Screen program funded by Children and Family Services.
- Provincial Mental Health Network funded by the Family Resource Network
- Youth Program funded by Alberta Health Services



- South Asian Network for Addiction and Mental Health which is a 2-year partnership between the MCHB, Covenant Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, and Savera clinic.

Key Program highlights

- We served a total of 883 families and individuals, and provided 3014 sessions across all our programs.
- Expanding the diversity of our therapists, we have welcomed two volunteers to join our team and have been offering practicum opportunities to students.
- Our provincial mental health program is collaborating with FRN funded settlement services to enhance mental health and settlement services across the province.
- Our program is transitioning to a new, more user-friendly and reliable data storage app, PowerApp. While this transition is a positive step, it has been time-consuming and has occupied a significant portion of our capacity.
- We conducted extensive outreach activities throughout the province, delivering workshops to Family Resource Networks (FRNs) and ethnocultural-serving communities on topics such as trauma and PTSD, working with newcomers, vicarious trauma, and adaptive coping skills etc.
- Our outreach efforts also encompassed information sessions held through community outreach initiatives, including visits to churches, gurdwaras, mosques, GP offices, schools, local convenience stores, restaurants, and engagement via social media platforms. Additionally, we actively participated in community events to disseminate information effectively.

Challenges

- We are experiencing a constant stream of referrals, leading to extended wait times that surpass our ability to offer prompt counseling services.
- Financial limitations present a hurdle in delivering in-person support to extremely remote areas within the province, hindered by staff availability and geographical obstacles.
A success story to share (please see attached)

Looking ahead...

- Forming partnerships with initiatives focused on creating and enhancing access to culturally informed mental health and suicide intervention services for BIPOC communities.
- Securing additional funding to address the growing needs of our program.

3. Public Legal Education and Information Project (PLEIP)

The PLEIP continues to provide learning and social support to participating communities in the midst of global turmoil that is impacting local ethnocultural communities in Edmonton. These are the highlights from last year's program activities.

Eritrean community

The Eritrean community's September 2023 meeting was postponed to October 2023 following the conflict and violence at Eritrean festivals last summer, driven by political tensions. The brokers believed it's essential to give the community time to recover, as participants hold diverse political and religious views.

The October meeting with community members focused on the following:

- Discuss the conflict and how to address it despite the differences and centering the conversation on common goal of representing the best of their community
- How to engage the police for insights into how to approach the challenges within the community after the conflict



- Shared experiences with other communities about how they have navigated conflict resolution and maintained safe spaces.

The Eritrean team connected community members who are struggling to find employment with MCHB Coop's English for Employment project. The project provided employment workshops that included resume writing, understanding employment laws and practices, as well as planning a career fair to connect people to employers and job opportunities.

Arabic/Kurdish community

Since October 2023, this has been experiencing a difficult emotional time due to the conflicts in the Middle East and had to postpone public legal education-focused meetings. Most community members attending their meetings have families affected by the wars.

To support the mental and emotional wellness of their community, the project engaged Dr. Sophie Yohani to facilitate a session utilizing the ADAPT model to address the situation within the community and how to deal with it healthily. The impact of this session were:

- Regular support groups started for people to drop in, provide a space to tell stories, be heard, and feel supported.
- Increase community awareness of mental health during these challenging times compounded by stressors, such as unemployment and financial stress, and seeking ways to navigate these issues for both community members and their loved ones.

Hispanic/Latin American Communities

The Hispanic Latin American team has continued their efforts to build relationships with the community. Some of the encouraging progress on cultural organizations and groups beginning to flourish again are reflected in the following:

- A social group for community members to gather bi-weekly over food and informal conversation to facilitate relationship building and begin conversations and information sharing around topics related to legal issues
- A cultural WhatsApp groups that the team has been invited into to share about the Spanish social group
- Support from Spanish-speaking professionals in the community, such as a financial expert and a lawyer, who have learned about our project and will deliver sessions for community members.

A success story to share

A woman was assaulted by her husband who sponsored her to Canada within 15 days upon arrival. She had endured the abuse because religious leaders in her community advised them to stay together and work out their marital problems. She had reported the husband to the police and went to a shelter. When there was no follow-up with her case, the cultural broker contacted the Edmonton Police Services' Domestic Abuse High-Risk Team (DAHRT). The woman was interviewed by a DAHRT constable and charges were laid.

Through the PLEI project's activities, the broker was able to build stronger relationships with police and gain contacts they could reach out to for help. The broker and senior colleague helped the woman filling the restraining order application in English. The restraining order was granted.



What's next for PLEI

- Expand partnerships with professionals in the legal field for mutual learning and their consistent involvement in the project (eg. Legal Aid, EPS, Children's Services, ECLC, Crown Prosecutors, law students etc.).
- Increase legal system knowledge and capacity to navigate it within our brokers, community members, and leaders, as well as increase intercultural learning of service providers and practitioners in the legal sector
- Continue to seek further funding, resources, and partnerships for MCHB to provide legal navigational support for family violence and legal system involvement.

4. Culturally Responsive Access to Justice (CRAJ) Project

The CRAJ Project connected about 40 to 50 Intervention Cultural Brokers to share their experience about the CRAJ project and NALAH Centre's services. This has resulted in the following:

- Increased access to NALAH's legal services and support by bridging cultural and language barriers between culturally diverse clients and Justice Support Workers. For example, not taking calls when the JSW speaks in English, getting consent to initiate legal support such apprehension about signing documents written in English. CRAJ cultural brokers connected with NALAH Centre over the phone with the client to provide interpretation and help clients provide consent.
- Strong working relationships are built between brokers and JSWs enhance support and accessibility for mutual clients, encourage collaboration and facilitate useful information sharing (eg. JSW loops broker in with client's court updates). When a cultural broker is involved, it helps clients build trust with NALAH Centre more readily and understand their services, relying on the broker less for legal system navigation. Clients also become more confident after knowing there's someone who can help and feeling equipped to go through the court process with NALAH Centre's preparation.

A success story to share

A cultural broker received an intense domestic violence referral involving a mom whose husband was threatening to take her and their children's lives. Despite the client's ability to speak English well, she doesn't know how the legal system works. Through our partnership with NALAH, the client was kept up to date with court updates, understood the court process, and was seamlessly transitioned to Edmonton John Howard Society's Domestic Violence Court Assistance Program (DVCAP) to prepare for the criminal trial coming up.

The support of the cultural broker and NALAH's Justice Support Worker enabled the woman to access legal support with their wishes represented to the Crown, made the court experience less difficult and more importantly, accessed the legal system in a meaningful, culturally safe way.

What our clients and community members say about CRAJ

- Nalah's staff members were a source of support, including taking their wishes forward to the court.
"I thought that I would learn about court dates, but the support ended up being much more than that. It was easy to connect with the Nalah worker directly. They have been helping me understand the orders from the court and what I need to take to my lawyer."
- Community members had strong views about what would have happened if the cultural broker or Nalah's justice support worker had not been involved.



If this support [from Nalah] had not been there, it would have been hard to get help with documents, court, understanding questions, and Legal Aid. I didn't know what I was asking for. No matter how educated you are, this can bring down your self-esteem. Friends and neighbours say to call the police, but that is not always the best advice. The police do not provide holistic support. They talk as though there is only one option, but that is not true."

What might be next for this project

As of March 2024, the project's funding has ended and we are continuously looking for resources and funding to continue providing domestic violence and legal system navigation support for our clients.

- Continue our relationships with the Edmonton John Howard Society and NALAH Centre such as exploring co-location of a liaison broker to allow our mutual clients to benefit from their legal navigation supports and our cultural brokering.
- We are planning to host a community-sharing event to share learnings from the CRAJ project with service providers and legal system stakeholders and discuss common challenges and needs for increasing racialized minorities' participation in the legal system. Together with the PLEI project, our stories will strengthen our advocacy for organizations and systems in the legal sector to become more culturally safe and responsive to migrant communities.

5. The Permanency Project

The Permanency Project is an ongoing effort to recognize and nurture a group of community members who are eager to care for children in their cultural communities, in situations where children are not able to remain at home with their parents (often in cases where there is Children's Services involvement). They include Aunties, Uncles, Grandmothers and other kin naturally step informal caregiving roles in their communities and as formal caregivers such as kinship, foster or respite, creating loving environments that ensure cultural, linguistic and religious continuity valued by institutional stakeholder such as Children's Services.

The Permanency Project bridges and builds capacity of community caregivers to understand the formal system and , both on the side of these caregivers, and Children's Services to understand the cultural context of migrant families.

Program Highlights

A series of learning opportunities were provided to community members from the Somali, Sudanese and Sierra Leonean communities that covered topics on building caregiver capacity (the impacts of trauma, internet safety, communication with youth) as well as employment readiness the caregiving sector (resume writing, CPR and first aid, and employment search)

Strengths and learnings this year were:

- Developed stronger relationships among community members through sharing their experiences, guidance and support for one another especially in caring for children with some very difficult challenges and encouraging one another that this is work that has to be done from the heart.
- The depth of connections of cultural brokers within their communities enabled the project to reach out and engage eager and capable caregivers who would have difficulty navigating resources/systems or participate in "mainstream" training.
- Strengthened collaborative partnership with "Mountain Plains Family Resource Society" whose knowledge and experience in the formal caregiving systems



facilitated the development of an effective and culturally relevant model to engage, capacity build, and support culturally diverse caregivers.

Key Project Outcomes:

- For caregivers: Increase access to employment opportunities for caregiving from the knowledge and skills learned from the workshops. More confidence in navigating the caregiving sector as they understood how the legal system works in Canada.
- For children and families: Enable families to have diverse options in finding resolutions in difficult family issues in addition to involving Childrens Services and/or the police. For example, sending the child back to his home country to live with extended family may be a better option than letting him stay in Canada.

A persistent challenge in culturally-based caregiving

The value of caregiving that is culturally appropriate and responsive still has to reach deeply into the formal system, in particular, Childrens Services. Resources are scarce to fund sustained education and training of community caregivers as well as resources to increase chances of employment such as English skills. Financial struggles will force participants to find other employment despite their training.

Looking ahead

The potential for a self-sustaining grassroots model is still a potential possibility. Using low cost learning technology (for example listening to pod-casts related to caregiving or watching videos together), garnering the wisdom and lived experience of the more experienced caregivers in the room , and bringing in volunteer speakers from time to time may be the way forward at this time.

Working together with the MCHB's First Step employment program offers a broader range of capacity building opportunities to see the value of capitalizing on the knowledge and resources internal to the Coop. The next year will hopefully allow us to think in new and creative ways about potential collaborations to continue the program in ways that are smart, efficient and mutually beneficial.

6. Food Dignity Project

The Food Dignity Project frames its work from the belief that **food is a pivotal, central aspect around which healthy and successful children, families and futures are built.** This approach shifts the perception of food as a scarce and limited commodity to a source of abundance. In this reframing,

The MCHB Coop Food Dignity Program provides four action-oriented and pragmatic areas of focus: **Feed, Grow, Innovate and Advocate.**

FEED

FEED means that the right to food is a basic human right. **Regardless of circumstance, each of us has a right to feed ourselves with dignity.** Our key activities include:

- Grocery Run -provide food hampers to the most vulnerable, often with multiple barriers (physical, economic, social and cultural) on a weekly basis. The Grocery Run benefits from the 1,125 volunteers who sort and pack the food into over 5,000 individual and family hampers.
- Help Yourself Shelf - is an innovative client-centred option allowing them to "shop" for what they need from the shelf, and being more pliable to their dynamic life circumstances. A total of 879 have accessed our food shelves.



Grocery Run Program: Our Reflection and Insights

- The demand for food has remained high with unabated increase in food prices and has chronically challenged the Grocery Run Program with decreasing resources. The current operation level is far below the actual internal service demands; because of the level being adjusted for financial capacity and occupation health & safety risk mitigation. New referrals are carefully reviewed for vulnerability level and are often referred out to other agencies or kept at Help Yourself Shelf service only.
- Food insecurity is racialized and is a measure of material deprivation that food hampers are portals for a more comprehensive assessment & complex case management by a collective team is required beyond the scope of food hamper support.
- With uncertain funding, the program plan and staff contract are short-term. The unique skillset required for staffing makes recruitment and retention difficult (e.g. the physical demand associated with coordinating an emergency food program, and soft skills requirements required to work with diverse populations). Staff turnover results in high recruitment and training costs.

What's next for the Grocery Run Program

The Grocery Run Program intends to pursue the following areas:

- Increasing food security is embedded in all the MCHB Coop Program through education and awareness of food resources in the community and building their capacity for navigating food resource systems.
- Research and evaluation is a potent area to glean knowledge from our service delivery model, micro-practicing in dignified food space, and insight into cultural food security and ethnocultural community live experience of food insecurity to support program fundraising, sector learning, and advocacy efforts.
- Exploring a new challenge on our doorsteps - what is our responsibility to serve people struggling with houselessness and/ or addiction while keeping our staffs and volunteers safe.

GROW

Grow means creating growing opportunities to support food access and cultural foodways. Food security means finding spaces where people have the means to growing, sharing, producing, and preparing culturally appropriate foods and in the long-term enhances pride, supports independence and productivity.

Our key accomplishments this year are:

- In 2023 June- 2024 April, with the support from 17 brokers, we connect clients to 3 different stakeholder & growing sites: Prairie Urban Farm, Explore Edmonton Urban Farm, and McCauley Community Orchard and Garden.
- Prairie Urban Farm PUF at the University of Alberta's South Campus - 15 families are registered for Prairie Urban Farm. Estimate that 3 families are regularly engaged in Prairie Urban Farm this growing season.
- Explore Edmonton Urban Farm - a 2-acre farm wheren 76 families, 61 adults and 45 children from 9 different cultural communities/ groups are engaged in urban farming.
- McCauley Community Orchard and Garden - connects with the Eritrean Ethiopian senior group, one Vietnamese family, FSO centre group, and Grocery Run program through 15 volunteers/ community members.

Reflection, Insights and Looking Ahead



- Families connecting to the land for growing support cultural food access and reduce the severity of household food insecurity from reducing grocery costs during summer and preserving food for winter.
- Communal growing reduces the sense of isolation and builds relationships that contribute to good mental health and eases newcomer settlement process..
- Focus on public-transportation-accessible urban growing opportunities resulted in limited available growing spaces, this is especially the case for the well-organized cultural groups that have been growing exclusively for food access.on
- City of Edmonton is currently exploring a potential urban farming program that will increase opportunities for meeting the culturally relevant food needs of newcomers through urban agriculture and diversifying food production for increased economic, and entrepreneurial activity

INNOVATE

Innovate means Community Strength-Based Innovation. The learning and insights from the **Khair for All** Pilot community gathering event gave impetus to an exciting partnership initiative with John Humphrey Centre for Peace and Human Rights called Food Security and Food Justice Ecosystem of Edmonton (FSFJE) in 2024.

System Navigation & Capacity Building Pilot

We initiated pilot initiative with a small group of brokers on the following:

- Financial literacy workshops to help families get out of the financial crisis stage and eventually graduate from the Grocery Run program.
- System navigation (food support) & train-the-trainer on financial literacy to cover topic such as Benefit Wayfinder, Utilities Consumer Advocate, Money Mentor & Credit Counselling Society.

ADVOCATE

Advocate means we amplify the voices of ethnocultural communities to achieve cultural food security and address chronic poverty. The activities we have undertaken were:

- Partnered with Dr. Elizabeth Onyango, Assistant Professor at U of A in a research project titled: "**Navigating Canada's food system: The experiences of BIPOC immigrants in Edmonton, Alberta**" to examines the food insecurity experiences of racialized migrant families in Edmonton and illuminate how intersecting identities in racialized immigrant communities contribute to increased challenges of food insecurity. Data analysis will be undertaken in 2024 from the conversations with clients and brokers and develop knowledge mobilization tools and advocacy tools.
- MCHB Coop a **Good Food Organization** in 2023 which means that we are part of the national movement fighting food insecurity and poverty, including participating in local and national efforts including Food Secure Canada, Prairie Food System Vision Network, Regional Network on Food Insecurity with Community Food Center Canada.
- Close and ongoing collaboration with the Edmonton Social Planning Council to improve our program planning and advocacy capabilities and more effectively act on the 2023 Vital Signs Food Security report jointly.



Legacy Projects

1. National Cultural Project

MCHB is in the last of three years (2022-2025) of the National Cultural Brokers Project, funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. In partnership with the Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop, Laurentian University, and Manitoba Possible, this project seeks to find a common voice for Cultural Brokers working in various sectors across Canada.

Key program highlights

MCHB has been working with a team of 16 cultural brokers from across the country since May, 2023. We meet in bi-weekly zoom meetings to share lived experience of cultural brokering work in various sectors and organizational structures and undertaken the following:

- building a facilitator manual to support capacity building in foundational skills of cultural brokering practice.
- co-creating a framework of the skills and capacities of cultural brokering work, the recommendations for building capacities in these areas, and an ethical statement to guide cultural brokering work.

A challenge that our project has faced is in building a shared understanding of what we mean by cultural brokering practice for people entering the conversation at various stages of the work. Because capacity in cultural brokering practice is often built through natural mentorship, it has been a welcome challenge to try to find ways to share the nuances of the practice in writing, and articulate how people can expand their capacities in skills like building safety and trust, balancing power, and creating innovative, transformative change.

A success story to share

A big success story of our work comes from including two Indigenous colleagues on our national team, and framing our discussion of cultural brokering as a living practice of the question: How can we live well together here on this land? The grounding of cultural brokering work in reconciliation and building relationship, understanding and solidarity with Indigenous communities has been a very meaningful discussion during our sessions and at the two regional gatherings.

Members of our team shared our learning at the Metropolis Conference in March, 2024 and had a huge turnout for the session. Many people, including researchers, followed up to learn more about our work.

MCHB invited Lorne Green, our colleague from Samson First Nation to be an Indigenous Liaison with MCHB as an organization, alongside his work with the Curriculum Team. We are excited to expand our relationship and learning with Lorne in the future.

What might be next

We are hoping to continue this work at the national level, and will be applying for funding to support local communities of practice to support cultural brokering practice across the country.

2. Newcomer Housing Project

The Newcomer Housing Project continues to move towards development and design in a collaborative and participatory process. We have carried out the following activities in the past year:



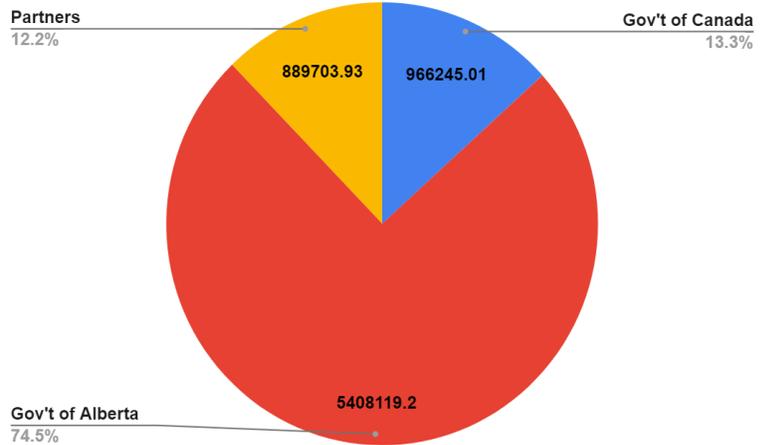
- Engaged 40 community members in 5 five community design workshops facilitated by architects (Synchro Architecture) to identify housing concepts that meet the cultural context of potential residents (concept of home, family size, household activities etc.)
- A concept plan for the housing units
- Identified a site owned by the City of Edmonton for housing development
- Developed and submitted a proposal to access a proposed City of Edmonton land site for the housing development



A Financial Glimpse of 2023-2024

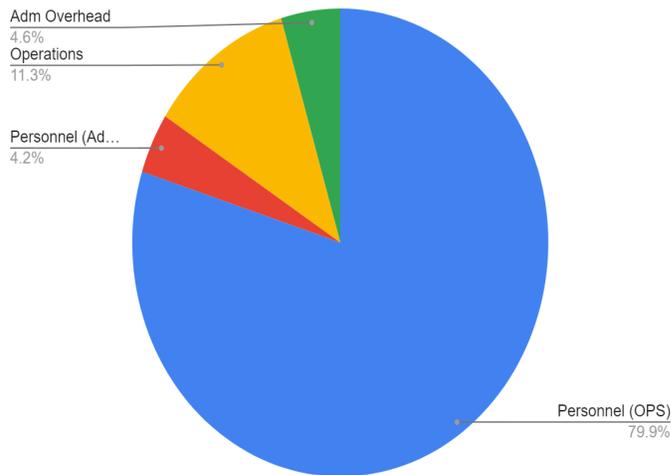
This year the MCHB Coop has been able to keep most of its program funding intact. Our revenue sources had remained stable with the Government of Alberta, mostly from Childrens Services renewing its service contracts with the Coop accounting for 74.5% or \$5,408 M. The Government of Canada contributed 13.3% or \$966, 245. Close to this are the Coop's Partnership Projects with a number of organizations which consists of 12.2% or \$889, 703. The total Coop's revenue for 2023-2024 is \$7,264, 068.

Revenues and Sources 2023-2024



Expenses

The chart below shows the expenses of the MCHB Coop for 2023-2024. As shown on the chart, the Coop's biggest expense item are salaries and benefits for cultural brokers directly involved in the Coop's projects which is 79.9% or \$5,727, 171 followed by Operations or expenses directly related to program implementation which is 11.% or \$811,373. Administrative expenses from salaries and overhead costs account for a total of 8.8% or \$629,123. The total expenses for 2023-2024 is \$7,168,088.



There will be a projected surplus for this year estimated to be over \$100,000.



Looking Forward to 2024-2025

The year 2023-2024 marked a full year that the MCHB Coop has been operating without COVID restrictions but has kept many of the organizational processes intact such as online meetings, use of social media platforms to connect with community groups and other digital tools.

The MCHB Coop is still grappling with increasing demand for services with less than adequate resources. Whether it's more food items to fill up food hampers for a growing population who are food insecure to responding to clients with complex and challenging issues, resources are in constant threat of running out or straining the Coop's workforce.

One exciting possibility is the MCHB Coop's efforts to transition into a not-for-profit workers cooperative to diversify and expand its funding sources giving it flexibility and ample room to grow its current financial resources. It is envisioned that this shift would be completed this year now that the Coop members have approved the transition.

The development of a three-year strategy for 2024-2027 may identify creative ways of nurturing the cultural wealth of cultural brokers and enriching the cultural brokering practice in mediating differences and more importantly, navigating unequal power relations between systems and communities.

