



MCHB COOP ANNUAL REPORT

2024- 2025

The Year in Context

The MCHB Coop in 2024-2025

Organizational Accomplishments

Our Program Accomplishments

A Financial Glimpse of 2024-2025 and 2025-2026

Looking Forward to 2025-2026

The MCHB Coop in 2024-2025

The MCHB Coop in 2024-2025 weathered local, national and global turmoil and managed to protect our many clients - individuals and families we serve, participants in our education and learning activities, people across age groups and cultural communities from the weighty impact of a turbulent time. Our workers - cultural brokers, coordinators, support teams and administration staff all worked hard together to alleviate urgent issues, navigate to tackle persistent challenges and bring joy and relief to difficult situations. This report is a testimony of their arduous work dedication and commitment to serve the people!

Organizational Accomplishments

The MCHB Coop values a fundamental cooperative value - democratic governance. We are committed to ensuring that members and workers have the right and opportunity to participate in making important decisions in the organization. This has guided the Board in undertaking three key initiatives that impact our organization.

- **Transforming the MCHB Coop from a for-profit to a non-for-profit workers coop**

The year long-process of workers engagement from small group presentations and conversation to a large group in 2024 culminated changes to our Bylaws which was approved by Members on January 20, 2025. As of June this year, we can declare our coop as not-for-profit - an opportunity to explore more opportunities for funding and partnerships!

We are also in the process of applying for charitable status with the hope that it will be approved before the year ends.

- **MCHB Coop Strategy 2025-2028: Sustaining our Growth towards Equitable Outcomes**

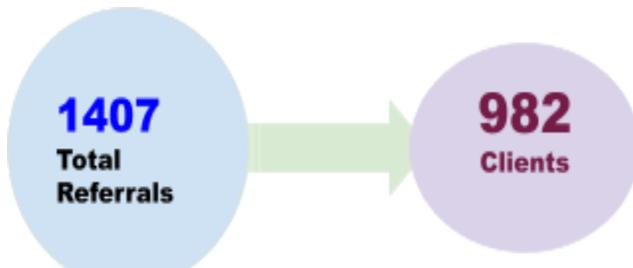
Our first conversation on a strategy for the Coop for the next three years began in November, 2023. A total of 86 participants were engaged in 6 sessions, including validation sessions of the first draft of the strategy until February 2025. The final strategy approved on April 7, 2025 presents a vision of: **Sustain the growth and viability of the MCHB Coop to nurture cultural brokers, strengthen the cultural brokering practice and achieve better outcomes for migrants, their families and communities.**

To fulfill the vision, the strategy identifies 4 strategic objectives, 5 core priorities and 19 actions in the next three years. The Board will oversee the implementation of the strategy and ensure that we fulfill the actions promised in the strategy.

- **Updated MCHB Policy Handbook**

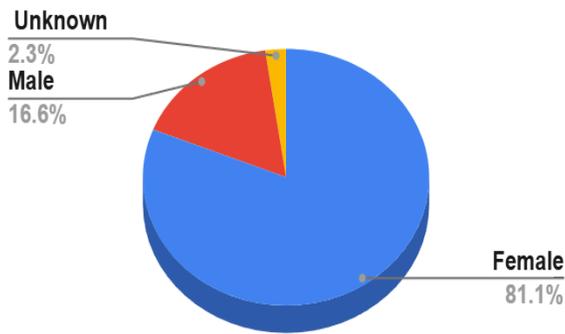
The last year our Coop Policy Handbook was updated was in 2015. So many changes have happened in the last 10 years in the workplace environment. The work of updating the policy is almost done with inputs from our consultant, committees and coordinators to be included and presented to the members and workers at the end of this year.

The MCHB Coop by the Numbers (From our Intake Data)



14
Programs/
Projects

Clients by Gender



- Top languages:**
- 196 English
 - 100 Ukrainian
 - 99 Arabic
 - 77 Somali
 - 68 Tigrinya
 - 65 unknown
 - 65 Spanish
 - 63 Oromo
 - 55 Punjabi
 - 54 French
 - 43 Amharic
 - 43 Mandarin
 - 40 Hindi
 - 34 Vietnamese

- Reasons for referral**
(referrals can list multiple reasons)
- 425 Few community supports
 - 390 few family supports
 - 309 Minimal English - needs interpreter
 - 292 Low income
 - 226 Mental Health concerns
 - 223 Isolation
 - 215 Employment/Income
 - 174 Food Insecurity
 - 153 Minimal English - limited conversation skills
 - 147 Immigration challenges

6
Completed
Projects
2025

2
New
Projects
2025-2026

MCHB Coop Programs/Projects April 2024-March 2025: A quick Glance

Program/Initiatives	Individuals & Families Served/ Program Participants
Anchor Programs	
1. Perinatal Health Outreach	804 pregnant women
2. Intercultural Family Resource Networks	1,990 families
3. Collaborative Intercultural Practice Initiative -Child Intervention & MCHB	620 families 867 children (0-18 years old)
4. Rural Multicultural Support Program	38 families served 125 individuals participated in workshops across different organizations 115 individuals accessed consultation, coaching and information
Population-Focused Programs	
5. Multicultural Family Support for Children with Disabilities	189 families served and supported 210 children with disabilities 39 new families referred
6. Multicultural Seniors Program	535 seniors supported one-on-one 272 seniors participated in 7 groups activities
7. MCHB Youth Program	540 youth participated in group-based activities 120 youth were supported one-on-one 400 participated in Physical Literacy Programs
8. Brokering Support for Ukrainian Evacuees	103 families one-on-one brokering support 45 families secured stable housing 30 individuals received employment support 10 evacuees accessed mental health services 200+ received grocery gift cards 35 children supported with school registration
Health Empowering Initiatives	
9. Employment Program	36 newcomers attended classes 50 more accessed employment supports 65% graduates employed within 3 months of completion
10. Mental Health & Wellness Program	399 families and individuals
11. Public Legal Education and Information	433 participants - Arabic-Kurdish-speaking communities 202 participants - Eritrean communities 189 participant -Hispanic Latin American communities
12. Culturally Responsive Access to Justice	113 individuals gained access to legal support
13. Bridging the Divide, Empowering Ethnocultural Community Leaders	26 ethnocultural community leaders participated in learning workshops
14. Food Dignity Program <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Grocery Run ● Help Yourself Shelf ● Growing Opportunities 	6974 hampers 448 individual 127 families

Anchor Programs

Perinatal Health Program

Highlights of the Perinatal Program

804 pregnant women were served and supported in 2024-2025

325 (45%) women at the start of April 2024

448 (55%) new registrations until the end of March 2025.

525 (65%) pregnant women completed the Perinatal Health Program

278 (34.5%) still continuing with the program

Most significant accomplishments

The Perinatal Program has truly been a blessing for first time moms in Canada. One of the most impactful outcomes this year is how consistent, culturally grounded support has helped newcomer mothers feel safer and more confident navigating pregnancy in Canada. Many women in the program are adjusting to a new country, healthcare system, and language—while carrying the emotional and physical demands of pregnancy.

A pregnant mother with one child and her husband moved to Canada after being sponsored. The first few months were difficult due to differences in expectations with their sponsors. She moved to a new place but was unclean and unsuitable for raising children. She connected with a cultural broker who helped her to find safe and comfortable housing and provided perinatal health support. Alone, overwhelmed, and stressed by so many changes, the MCHB's assistance in securing housing, covering the first month's rent allowed her to ease some of her stress at this important time in her pregnancy.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved

In 2024, there was a huge uptick in pregnant moms arriving in Canada on tourist visas and student permits hoping to find a way to become permanent residents after they give birth to their child here. Cultural brokers help women who don't have health coverage to access proper health such as referring them to a clinic for non-status migrants, identify which hospital to go to when she's in labour with less chance of being turned away and advocate for negotiating terms for payment of the cost of labor and delivery.

One of the recurring challenges we have encountered is the emotional barrier some pregnant women experienced when they assigned a male provider. For example, a woman was skipping appointments out of discomfort with interacting with a male health staff. Cultural brokers learned more about her experience, and worked to transfer her to a female OB. This small change made a big difference in how they engaged with her care. She began attending her visits regularly again and said she felt more "seen" and respected. It was a reminder of how listening and gentle advocacy can go a long way.

A hope and aspiration

A common thread among the mothers is the hope that their children will grow up feeling both proud of where they come from and confident in their place here. One mother said: *"I want my baby to feel proud of who we are and still belong here."* There's such a strong desire among parents to raise their children with cultural pride, emotional security, and the tools to thrive in both their heritage and Canadian society. It's a powerful aspiration, and it really affirms how vital our work is in supporting that vision.

**Intercultural Family Resource Network
(Multicultural Family Connections, Home Visitation, and Hub/General Intake)**

The Intercultural Family Resource Network (IFRN) focuses on prevention and early intervention supports for families with children 0-18. The IFRN partners replenish and provide collective support through capacity building, sharing community and collaborative wealth, and achieving needed systemic change.

Key program highlights

Hub/General Intake	Multicultural Family Connections	Home Visitation
<p>1297 referrals received 848 referrals matched with MCHBs and partners supports</p>	<p>869 families supported 217 new families matched to brokers 178 files closed</p>	<p>56 families supported 8 new families matched to brokers 11 files closed</p>

The Intercultural Family Resource Network (IFRN) focuses on prevention and early intervention support for families with children 0-18. The initiative includes

- Hub Services through MCHB
- MCHB – Multicultural Family Connections and Home Visitation programs
- ASSIST Community Services – Parent Education programs
- BGCBiggs – Clubs throughout Edmonton
- Crystal Kids – Youth Mentorship
- Islamic Family – Outreach and Youth Services

Most significant achievements/outcomes

A key area of focus in MFC and HV is fostering positive bi-cultural identity development in families. Positive bi-cultural identity development is a significant protective factor for bi-cultural children and youth growing up in Canada, and can be healing for caregivers needing to find new ways of being in a new land. Becoming bi-cultural, however, is a developmental process supported by families, communities, service providers, in early learning and schools. Without care and attention to this developmental process, invisibly, over and over again, our children and youth encounter an essential identity and existential pain.

Bringing to light the inherent cultural wealth of families and communities , including cultural pride, resistance power, and intercultural wellbeing is essential in bicultural development:

“We are working with ethnocultural minorities, and we want them to be integrated into the community to belong. But that also means they're having to adapt. And as they're adapting, they are also losing their culture ... to incorporate themselves into this Western world. Right? So, I find that when we start to get in touch with that cultural treasure that we've always known, you know, trying to teach them that it is in itself powerful. It is in itself knowledge that you can still pass on to your kids, that it's not necessarily lost as you live in the Western world.”
 (Cultural Broker)

A story to share

A family of three was privately sponsored by an aunt and arrived in Canada this past winter. As a sponsored refugee, they are not eligible for many government support, as the sponsor's responsibility. As such, when the living situation deteriorated very quickly, the family found themselves in crisis.

The aunt is reported to have been hitting the young child in the head, despite the parents' objections and advocating for the child's safety. After a month, with the situation deteriorating further, the family were kicked out of the home. The small family found temporary shelter with a community member and was connected to a cultural broker by a community member. She attended a parenting group; accessed expedited Income Support, and successfully set up a new home for themselves. Needing support to set up their own place. Mom was referred to MCHB's English for Employment program. Language and employment support for mom, combined with existing skills and competencies has given the family a lot of hope for the future. At the group, it's been noticed how happy the family is now, and what a change this is since they first came to the group.

This is a remarkable journey in a very short time facilitated by MCHB brokers and the strengths of the family. The vulnerability of privately-sponsored families is highlighted by this story, and unfortunately, not all privately sponsored families have access to the support that made such a difference for this family in a time of crisis. From an unhealthy living situation and family relationship (that would have had led to child intervention involvement), connected with community - including MCHB brokers, was able to meet their basic needs - income, housing and employment and more importantly a sense of connection in her parents and her cultural community.

A challenge/issue/barrier you were able to resolve or address

While parent education options in Canada are abundant, supporting parents in fostering positive bi-cultural identity through their parenting, personal well being, and engaging systems is largely lacking. In addition to service providers and systems, parents building confidence in sharing their intergenerational wisdom with their children, in loving and supportive ways, as well as deepening their understanding of their children's experience and context is essential. In 2024-25, MFC and HV brokers came together to pilot a draft curriculum, consisting of three key pillars: 1) Wellbeing and Healing; 2) Bi-Cultural Parenting; and 3) System Engagement.

A hope and aspiration expressed by your clients or participants

A hope/aspiration for 2025-26 is to complete the curriculum, including its implementation by interested brokers.

Collaborative Intercultural Practice Initiative -Child Intervention & MCHB

Project highlights in numbers

Overall, MCHB consulted or supported a total of **631** unique families. Of these:

- **494** unique families consulted with Liaison Brokers and child intervention staff
- **368** unique families were assigned to a Cultural Broker for holistic family support, with 904 children in these families
- **249** different child intervention staff consulted or collaborated with Cultural Brokers
- **52** different cultural brokers worked with families referred by child intervention (20 FTEs)
- **500-580** active clients of intervention brokers in 2024-2025 for an average caseload of 25 to 30 families per FTE (home visitation standards 8-15 cases per FTE)

Most significant achievements/outcomes

This year, our *National Research Project* team involving four Canadian universities identified four key positive elements of Collaborative Practice that provide a basis for co-training cultural

brokers and CFS workers in effective collaboration grounded in trust and sharing power as daily practices. These elements are:

1. *Building Trust and Reducing Fear*: Trust is actively negotiated in the relational space between families, brokers, and Children and Family Services (CFS) workers. The role of cultural brokers go beyond simply mediating language or information; they rescript the relational tone of the encounter, using cultural cues to interrupt tension and fear and invite trust. In moments of relational strain, CFS workers yield the conversational lead to cultural brokers—recognizing their capacity to de-escalate tension and reframe institutional intent through culturally situated communication and reframe the role of the CFS worker from an authority figure to that of support, allowing families to move from resistance to participation.
2. *Case Management as a Site of Negotiated Authority*: The relational continuity provided by the long-term, holistic support offered by cultural brokers strengthens crisis response, leads to more effective safety planning and earlier case closure, and balances power resulting in more culturally responsive and achievable expectations. There is an evolving ethic of shared responsibility and a willingness to hold each other accountable in ways that prioritize the family's lived experience.
"One thing I really appreciate is the ability to collaborate even if we don't agree on a next step. There is openness to have difficult conversations and to keep working in partnership" (CFS Intervention Manager).
3. *Diverting Families from Formal Intervention: Prevention and Reduced Intrusiveness*: CFS managers, supervisors, front-line staff and Cultural Brokers agree that many cases are successfully diverted from becoming 'open files'. New data highlights the conditions that enable prevention to become embedded practice: *early broker involvement, continuity across the service spectrum, and culturally competent engagement that reframes misunderstandings before they escalate within a combination of front-line discretion, relational trust, and cultural fluency*. When brokers are engaged at intake, they triage whether presenting concerns stem from cultural misunderstandings or systemic barriers rather than imminent risk, allowing families to find supportive pathways that reduce the need for formal intervention.
"Families diverted at intake are stabilized, connected, and need no further involvement. We don't have to open files because the brokers help us to see that many of the issues are misunderstandings...the broker becomes a resource for the family, so they are less likely to come back into the system" (CFS worker).

Early involvement of brokers combined with relational continuity increases systemic capacity for upstream prevention, grounded in brokers' ability to assess contextual risks and draw on community strengths.

"If the brokers are involved, it helps families to be independent and interdependent with the community, we see less recidivism" (CFS worker).

When brokers are fully integrated, the system becomes more responsive, less punitive, and more attuned to the lived experiences of immigrant and refugee families.

"We're not opening as many files and we're not being as intrusive because we don't have to be. The broker helps to lessen intimidation and provides a strong foundation to develop rapport with the families" (CFS worker).

4. *Enhancing Communication and Cultural Competency*: Brokers are described as critical bridges to build mutual understanding between families and CFS workers—especially where language barriers, trauma histories, or cultural misalignment complicate service delivery. Families often invite brokers into the role of “sisters” or familiar figures enabling brokers to shift from assessment to support, attune to the emotional subtext of conversations, in ways that allow families to voice concerns without fear. Confused and worried about boundaries, system colleagues look to experienced cultural brokers to reassure them that they still understand their role as service providers but professional boundaries are unfamiliar concepts alienating to many of the families. Being able to understand and articulate relational ethics is part of a culturally safe and responsive practice that invites relationships as a vehicle for redistributing authority, not only between families and service providers, but also within families.

A broker praising a father’s caregiving capacity while simultaneously emphasizing mutual respect between spouses , in this case, the need to respect his wife’s boundaries avoiding reinforcing traditional gender hierarchies. In this way, cultural communication is not simply about translation or reassurance— it is a dynamic negotiation of values, power, and possibility.

The challenge lies in institutionalizing these practices so that they become structurally embedded. Doing so holds the promise of not only improving outcomes for immigrant and refugee families, but also renewing the system’s capacity for care.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or addressed

A key challenge is a request to demonstrate with clarity the intensity of the workload by developing a way of sharing how many hours cultural brokers spend working with each family every month. This is no small challenge when we have between 500 and 600 active cases in intervention at any one time. The intervention team is working towards a new database which holds promise for us being able to deliver on this request. However, it will only be possible when brokers both understand and are given support required for thorough documentation.

A hope and aspiration

“People like me, immigrants, we feel shy ... we are scared to find that person rude, and that makes us immigrants feel down. Feel weighted. I don’t even want to talk ... we don’t have somebody, we can’t go back home, they can’t help us ... we need way more people like (the cultural brokers). Make it easier for people to find you.”

Rural Multicultural Support Program

Program highlights in numbers

- **38** families served
- **66** Family Resource Network (FRN) staff participated in workshops
- **125** individuals participated in workshops across different organizations
- **115** individuals accessed consultation, coaching and information

Most significant achievements

- Connected community leaders experiencing a crisis to local agencies for support
A fire incident in Trochu at a meat processing plant had a lot of Temporary Foreign workers on staff, majority of whom are from the Philippines. The Filipino natural leaders reached out to MCHB for support, and we connected them to the Drumheller FRN,

which is the closest FRN to Trochu and to the Kneehill Adult Learning Society and the FCSS as well as the MCHB Provincial Mental Health team.

The Kneehill ALS and the FCSS helped the Filipino leaders in completing any necessary documentation and providing space for activities as required by the community. They provided an office for the MCHB therapist to see families who require mental health support. The RMSP team would continue to provide any capacity support needed through our Filipino Brokers and to individuals from other communities that were also impacted by the incident.

- Supporting Ukrainian Families in Vegreville with seamless collaboration
The RMSP team responded to a request for support for a Ukrainian mother facing significant marital issues. The mother, a recent Ukrainian evacuee, was dealing with financial control by her husband and escalating family conflicts, which were impacting their two teenage sons (aged 12 and 14). The situation was further complicated by the family's pending Permanent Residency application under the Alberta Opportunity Stream.

Recognizing the urgency of the situation, the RMSP team immediately connected with Yuliia Kalutska, Hub Facilitator at Kalyna Family Resource Network (FRN) in Vegreville. Yuliia, provided these supports to the mother:

- maintained open communication, discussing the best ways to support the family while respecting their privacy and preferences.
- RMSP and Kalyna FRN focused on building trust with the mother, offering tailored resources without pressuring her to make immediate decisions.
- Yuliia facilitated a referral for counseling services, which the RMSP team quickly coordinated once the mother decided to seek mental health support for her children, recognizing the impact of the ongoing marital conflict on their well-being.
- RMSP provided a comprehensive list of resources, including legal aid contacts, employment opportunities, and a hotline for Ukrainian evacuees that the mother had requested.

By the end of August, the mother made a difficult but empowering decision to separate from her husband and relocate for a job in Edmonton but could not find housing. The RMSP team reached out to the Red Cross for emergency housing and access emergency support from the Alberta Support Centre, translating and navigating the application process. By September, the mother moved to permanent housing in Edmonton with her children. This was a significant step toward stability and safety for the family, showcasing the effective partnership between the RMSP and Kalyna FRN. The seamless collaboration, from the initial referral to the ongoing support and resource sharing, played a crucial role in helping the family overcome a challenging period and start a new chapter in their Canadian journey. This success story highlights the importance of culturally responsive, trauma-informed care, and the impact of a coordinated support network. The collaboration between RMSP and Kalyna FRN not only provided immediate assistance but also empowered the family to make informed decisions for their future.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or addressed

Over the last year, the RMSP has begun to build intentional bridges between the Family Resource Network organizations, Ethnocultural associations/organizations and the Settlement sector. This connection is providing learning to everyone involved trying to support Newcomer families thrive in Rural Alberta cities.

A hope and aspiration

Ethnocultural Leaders have expressed a desire to receive support from MCHB to build their capacity in serving families and also support in understanding systems and how they function in order to adequately navigate them for families. MCHB will be resuming the Leadership Peer Support Project in Fall 2025 for leaders from the Filipino and Nigerian communities.

Population-Focused Program

MCHB Immigrant and Refugee Youth Program

Program highlights in numbers

- **540** individuals received group-based support
- **120** individuals provided one-on-one Support
- **400** participated in Physical Literacy Programming
- **67** participated in Youth-Led Healing Dialogues
- **250** participated in Large-Scale Activities and Camps

Most Significant Accomplishments

As economic strain, social division, and the ongoing impacts of global conflict shaped the everyday realities of immigrant and refugee families, youth found themselves carrying immense emotional and practical burdens. In response to these realities, our youth programming remained rooted in relationship, cultural grounding, and flexibility.

Group-based programming continued to be the foundation of our approach

We create consistent and culturally grounded spaces where youth could gather, learn, and build trust. They served as entry points to healing, connection, and identity-building. These include:

- Homework clubs that supported their academic growth and in sports programs that nurtured physical well-being and teamwork
- Art-based gatherings invited youth to express themselves through storytelling, body mapping, and creative exploration, offering both release and reflection.
- Cultural events, field trips, and seasonal celebrations helped strengthen ties across generations and within peer groups, reinforcing a sense of rootedness and shared pride.

These group programs were designed by the youth participants with young leaders guiding activities, supporting peers, and helping to ensure that each space reflected the needs and values of their communities. In all the places where these happen, they created rhythms of care, joy, and solidarity that became vital to youth well-being over the years.

One-on-one support played an essential role for youth navigating more complex and sensitive circumstances

Cultural brokers and youth leaders offered individual accompaniment in moments of crisis, transition, or vulnerability. Whether supporting a youth through a difficult school meeting,

helping them access mental health care, or addressing urgent family or housing needs, this personalized support through regular check-ins, home visits or late night texts, grounded in trust, cultural understanding, and relational continuity. They feel seen beyond the group, ask for help without fear, and access services that may otherwise feel distant or unwelcoming that could lead to deeper healing or a bridge to reconnect with education, family, or themselves.

Youth Research Group

Youth from multiple communities reflect on their lived experiences and shape the direction of programming itself. Through healing dialogues, peer-led inquiry, and arts-based research, these are spaces to explore racism, belonging, and post-migration identity. These sessions blended support and research, becoming places of collective meaning-making where youth could both process their own realities and contribute to broader community learning.

A hope and aspiration

Many of the youth shared a profound hope - that the care they received, the trust they found, and the voices they were encouraged to use would not end with them, that it would ripple outward. One day, someone else, a younger sibling, a new student, or a friend who had not yet found the courage to speak, might also find a place where they feel safe enough to be heard, strong enough to dream, and supported enough to begin again.

Some of the youth aspires to be someone others could count on so that they would not have to go through certain things alone again. This reflects a deep understanding of community, knowing that we all do better when we are cared for, and when we care for one another - quiet building blocks of a more loving world. In all their honesty and simplicity, they remind us that the work we do matters, not just because of what is achieved, but because of who it reaches and how it makes them feel.

Multicultural Seniors Outreach Program

Program highlights in numbers

- **535** seniors helped
- **272** seniors participated in 7 groups in 63 events
- **14** students
- **31** volunteers who donated **2083** hours.

The year 2024-2025 marks the 19th year of seniors programming for MCHB Coop. It consists of four initiatives involving 12 Cultural brokers serving seniors within the following communities: Kurdish, Korean, Karen, former Yugoslavian, Spanish-speaking, Eritrean, Russian, Ukrainian, Romanian, South Sudanese, Oromo, and Syrian.

Most significant accomplishments

Our success can be described by how vulnerable ethnocultural seniors reported decreased levels of stress and isolation.

Social Prescribing Edmonton 55+

A project supported by Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, in partnership with SAGE Seniors Association, Jewish Family Services Edmonton, Drive Happiness, Edmonton Meals on Wheels, and Caregivers Alberta funded by the Government of Alberta and Healthy Aging Alberta. The project links the healthcare system with community-based senior serving

organizations through an established referral pathway through the following - navigation services, case management and non-medical community support to seniors residing in the community to maintain their health and support their wellbeing.

Hello Seniors

Led by Edmonton Senior Coordinating Council in partnership with 10 organizations and MCHB Co-op, this initiative builds resilience, fosters understanding and supports diverse older adults aged 55+ to identify and get help with their personal needs and goals. Cultural Brokers provide one-on-one holistic support in navigating systems, bridging cultural and linguistic gaps, filling out forms for government programs, accessing housing, food and transportation as well as connecting older seniors to community resources and information that support their wellbeing.

Community Animation Program

This program seeks to build and support the leadership skills and initiatives of the seniors in our program through group activities and community engagement efforts. It is a collaboration with SAGE Seniors Association and funded by FCSS.

SAGE Seniors Association's Organizational Capacity Building Project

Funded through the United Way, this project builds upon the longstanding relationship between Multicultural Health Brokers Cooperative and Sage. MCHB supports SAGE's by sharing anonymized data about our seniors' experiences and narratives to help Sage staff better understand the needs and experiences of vulnerable ethnocultural seniors. The overall goal is to generate learning and greater capacity toward strengthening mental wellbeing amongst these seniors.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or addressed

Financial hardship continues to make life difficult for vulnerable migrant seniors in terms of food insecurity, unaffordable rent often leads to mental health issues. 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. Cultural brokers continue to explore all options to help them address their needs by:

- Navigating and accessing the services they need with the help of their MCHB.
- Building their confidence to participate in group activities regularly in person and appreciating the joy of companionship with others.
- Encouraging them to help others that they know to meet different needs such as providing transportation through carpooling, teaching others to navigate Edmonton
- Maintaining connections to family and community supports through limited cell phone plans provided by MCHB Coop

A Success Story

In the words of the senior (translated):

Without my broker I would have been completely lost and my life much more difficult. I met my broker after 6 months being in the hospital. A hospital social worker connected me to this program. A visit from a broker was the first visit that I received in these 6 months. From then on, I felt I was not alone anymore. I felt connected, encouraged, I had somebody to listen to me as I do not have any family or friends in Canada. I have learned a lot about resources and how to access them. I was appropriately housed and introduced to the new community in my building. This is a good feeling knowing that I have somebody to turn to.

Multicultural Family Support with Children with Disabilities (FSCD) 2025

Program Highlights in numbers

- **189** families served and supported
- **210** children with disabilities
- **39** new families referred
- **39** cultural brokers in 26-30 cultural communities
- **10** families left/files closed (8 families successful in Guardianship and Trusteeship, AISH, PDD
- **138** indoor and **28** outdoor activities in 4 communities
- **40** presentations to **340** families (FSCD and Non-FCSCD)
- **12** trainings to **39** cultural brokers on FSCD resources, funding and appropriate disability services for families with children with disabilities

Most significant accomplishments

Sustained trust of families of cultural brokers

Cultural brokers remain a trusted support for many families. From finding a school and culture-specific respite care workers to applying for AISH, preparing invoices for claiming funding for FSCD services, cultural brokers are committed to helping families achieve positive outcomes. They have brought professional specialist services to provide a broad spectrum of high quality specialized support for children with special needs.

Active and engaged parent groups

Parents groups in the Chinese, Eritrean/Ethiopian, Eastern Europe and Arabic-speaking communities regularly meet and organize various group activities decreasing families' sense of isolation and promoting peer-to-peer connection and support. A unique feature involved inviting first-language professionals to speak such as dietitians, psychologists and medical doctors that made the sessions well received and impactful.

Effective collaborations that bring more resources

Collaboration with the Gateway Association has increased access to more resources such as linguistic assistance to 15 in different languages (French, Spanish, Tigrinya, Tagalog, Arabic, Nuer and Nigerian).

A success story

A single mother has twin girls diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder, both of them exhibited aggressive behaviours that made it challenging for her to manage their care especially with the school frequently asking her to bring her daughter's home when they are unruly. Upon connecting with a cultural broker, the mom was able to apply for specialized services to get a 24 respite care, participated in the parents to learn and be in a supportive environment. She began applying strategies to build her daughter's developmental skills such as proper toilet training, diet and nutrition. The results were astounding in improving her daughters' behaviours - better sleep at night, school called less frequently and relief and satisfaction for the mom.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or address

Many families with multiple children living with disabilities and complex mental and physical health conditions are reluctant to seek help from the FSCD program. The cultural brokers have been able to build connection and trust with them - being patient and empathetic and encouraging them to join parents' group's learning sessions. Over time, some families have become receptive to seeking out services.

A hope and aspiration

This program will continue to sustain and improve the good work of the culture brokers by capturing this work in a survey among parents to document their perspectives and insights on the benefit and impact of the support they have accessed. The parents' groups will be strengthened with more learning sessions to increase their capacity and confidence to nurture their children. Training for service providers will continue to grow so that they can truly understand the context of the migrant families supporting children with disabilities and provide culturally appropriate services.

Brokering Support for Ukrainian Evacuees

Program highlights in numbers

- **103** families received dedicated one-on-one brokering support
- **45** families secured stable housing
- **30** individuals received employment support; 2 hired through job placement
- **10** evacuees accessed mental health services
- **200+** grocery gift cards distributed
- **35** children supported with school registration
- Multilingual navigation tools and referral kits created

Our Significant Accomplishment

Cultural Brokers acted as trusted intermediaries between Ukrainian evacuees and a wide array of mainstream services and community-based resources. Overall Ukrainian evacuees were supported with housing, employment, education, legal matters, health care, transportation, food security, and mental health referrals. We delivered personalized one-on-one support tailored to the specific needs and vulnerabilities of each family.

A Success Story

One family came from BC. It's very expensive in Victoria. They found another family who came here from BC and they helped them find an apartment. People are communicating with each other and helping introduce each other to managers and apartments.

Family who came from BC, a mother and her grown daughter, were doing cleaning jobs and side jobs but it was still not enough to get by. They couldn't find work here. I told the wife, you have to go to the closest hotel with a resume, you were doing this work in BC. Go bug them all the time so they can see you're looking for a job, that you really want one. She did – she went once, and then she went again with her resume, and they offered her a full time job! It's a hard job but she's not worrying all the time about the next day. She was so happy and now her daughter is working in a factory. I have some friends who help. So now at least mom has full time and they can survive.

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or addressed

The overarching issue for all of the evacuees is immigration status and financial precarity. Evacuees are no longer eligible for IRCC settlement programs and specialized provincial health and social benefit programs have ended. Many are still not able to meet the eligibility criteria for PR status and many are deeply concerned about the future of their families. Many families who are continuing to struggle to find employment, affordable housing, manage inter-generational issues, and pre-migration trauma. Food security continues to be an issue with a significant number of evacuee families looking to the Grocery Run program to meet their basic needs.

Transportation barriers are prevalent, especially amongst families without vehicles and elderly evacuees. Seniors are ineligible for AB Senior Benefit programs and many arrived with chronic health issues.

Health Empowering Initiatives

MCHB Employment Programs

Program highlights in numbers

- **36** newcomers attended classes; 50 more accessed employment supports
- **65%** graduates employed within three months of completion
- **17** different cultural groups accessed the program
- **1000** hours of program delivery
- **5** staff (brokers and teachers) provided English for Employment program and wrap-around employment supports

Most significant accomplishments

The First Steps to Integration: Language, Culture and Employment Supports for Newcomers and their Employers is an innovative user-centred program guided by community insights and demonstrates the nuanced ways in which people more accustomed to non-formal learning can find success in a classroom setting. It provides language and employment programming for vulnerable newcomers, who face complex barriers and have very low levels of English as well as holistic support, language training, workplace culture training, skills training specific to the work context and job shadowing. The program involves a partnership between MCHB and an employer- partner, namely, the JW Marriot Hotel chain, which includes the JW, the Delta and the Westin Hotel in downtown Edmonton. Classes and job shadows are held onsite in the hotels, giving the participants a valuable immersion experience as they gain exposure to workplace culture and practices in a Canadian workplace setting without the immediate demands of job performance.

A story to share

A man from Cameroon registered in the program after only being in Canada a few months. Despite his very low English-speaking skills, he was able to convey that he heard that this class gives lots of speaking practice, and that he could learn a lot about how things work in Canada around employment.

In his own words from a speech he made at graduation, "I will remember the most about my time in this class. Soft skills and connection in Canada are just as much as hard skills. You always have the right attitude and be smiling. Anything is possible. Small conversations will help me to gain confidence and feel like I can accomplish my goals. Upon graduation, he found employment and continues to improve his English language skills by attending evening classes.

Mental Health Program

(Mental Wellness and Screen Program, Provincial Mental Health Network, Youth Program, South Asian Network for Addiction and Mental Health)

Program highlights in numbers

- **399** families and individuals

- **3276** sessions across all our programs.

Our most significant accomplishments

The MCHB Coop's Mental Health Program represents a mosaic of funding from provincial agencies (Children and Family Services, Provincial Health Network and Alberta Health) and partnerships (Covenant Health, Canadian Mental Health Association, and Savera Clinic). A have a dedicated team of diverse professions for newcomer families, providing holistic, people-centred, culturally sensitive, and trauma-informed therapeutic services. Highlights of this year are:

- Increased consistency in attendance at therapy sessions, along with reports of positive changes, which had meaningful improvements in the overall functioning of the family system.
- Improved collaboration with other community-serving organizations, strengthening the network of support available to families.
- 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.
- Developed and implemented with community leaders a train-the-trainer model aimed at building local capacity, enhancing mental health literacy, and equipping community members with the tools to provide peer support and promote mental well-being within their own communities

A challenge/issue/barrier that was resolved or addressed

The absence of a coordinated referral pathway with Family Resource Networks (FRNs) has posed challenges in collaborating effectively with other FRN service provider partners. To address this, a Community of Practice is being initiated with FRN partners to strengthen collaboration, improve communication, and develop a more streamlined and consistent referral process across regions.

A hope and aspiration

- Foster a collaborative relationship with communities to implement a train-the-trainer model that empowers local leaders to sustainably support mental health and wellness initiatives.
- Enhance preventative intervention by collaborating with communities to address growing challenges related to youth mental health, addictions, and suicide concerns within ethnocultural populations.
- Advocate for and secure more resources and funding to expand culturally responsive programming and community-based support.

Bridging the Divide, Empowering Ethnocultural Community Leaders

Project highlights in numbers

- **26** ethnocultural community leaders participated in learning workshops (faith leaders, natural community leaders/Brokers, mental health practitioners, mental health advocates, anti-racism educator/activists, and 2SLGBTQ+ settlement counsellor).
- **2** toolkits for CMHA Distress Line Staff and for Ethnocultural Leaders

Most significant accomplishments

A partnership between Canadian Mental Health Association - Edmonton Region (CMHA), the Edmonton Anti-Racism Lab (EARL) and MCHB, two toolkits were developed: Toolkit for CMHA's Distress Line staff and volunteers on effective response callers with racial trauma and Toolkit for ethnocultural community leaders for supporting those experiencing racial distress. These two tool kits consist of the following "knowledge sets":

1. The collective insights and themes of learning generated by the participants as foundation for future capacity building and acting taking in support of ethnocultural community leaders.
2. An emerging resource inventory of community practices, resources & initiatives which the participants have identified as being effective and already exist amongst themselves.
3. A relational landscape model in which those providing formal and informal support to community members experiencing racial distress can be situated along a continuum of care: spanning prevention to crisis response to long-term healing.

This model can be used to analyze what exists, what is lacking, what can be scaled up and where pockets of potential can be found.

Most essentially, the participants emphasized that healing work within our communities involve a refined understanding of what effective and meaningful support looks like:

"Unwavering personal support: the healing journey requires people who love us and share our experience, and are beside us. This means mutual transformation through relationship; knowing that we are all healing, walking besides rather than talking at; receiving support to find one's own voice and agency, and to self-advocate".

Public Legal Education Initiative (PLEI)

Project highlights in numbers

- **433** participants in the Arabic-Kurdish-speaking communities
- **202** participants from the Eritrean communities
- **189** participant from Hispanic Latin American communities

Most significant accomplishments

This initiative held information sessions in three focus communities at least once per month where participants shared their appreciation for learning more about the root causes of legal issues and the legal context in Alberta. Many community leaders made commitments to bring the learnings back into their community organizations. Among the initiative's accomplishments were:

- Initiated partnership with Crown Prosecutors office – 26 cultural brokers attended a participatory workshop with the Assistant Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor and a colleague on Role of Crown Prosecutor and considerations in decision-making
- Invited Edmonton Police Services and Child Intervention to sessions to engage with community leaders and members on legal context of family violence and parenting
- Community learning sessions hosted and co-facilitated by leaders in the Eritrean and Arabic/Kurdish-speaking, on domestic violence and the legal context of family life in Alberta and the importance of peaceful families and forgiveness in troubled times.
- Partnered with MFRS to increase knowledge and skills of Afghan Brokers about legal issues and legal services and support

- Developed linguistically and culturally relevant resource materials on family, criminal and immigration law, the Canadian legal system and presentation resource materials by volunteer lawyers and students.

A story to share

One of the community leaders in the Eritrean group reflected on how their church sponsors 350 refugees each year to come to Edmonton. He is devising ways to support church members to provide information to families as they arrive. In all of the groups, participants approached cultural brokers with either their own or other community members' legal issues, and brokers supported them to navigate to resources, or to navigate the legal system.

A hope and aspiration

- Approval of a proposal to Public Health Agency of Canada to prevent and address child abuse in collaboration with Edmonton Police Service and Edmonton Region Children and Family Services
- Engage an Indigenous Elder to share teachings on peacebuilding and circle justice that can help us prevent, address and restore relationships for families experiencing domestic disharmony or intergenerational conflict
- Increase the capacity of cultural brokers, community members and leaders to navigate the legal system and for other service providers and legal system stakeholders to build their cultural capacity and understand our racialized communities.
- Maximize opportunities to bring forward practice, program, and policy shifts that are needed to tackle inadequate and incompetent court interpretation including sufficient time allocation; translating forms requiring informed consent; and exploring system navigation options such as engaging volunteer law students.

Culturally Responsive Access to Justice (CRAJ)

Project highlights in numbers

- **84** referrals of families from 32 different countries of origin supported in partnership with Nalah (April 24 - Dec 25)
- **29** referrals of families from 18 different countries of origin (Dec 24 - March 25)
- Family violence with the family violence was the presenting issues supported by the cultural brokers
- Families from the South Asian communities represent 45.1% or 51 of all clients

Most significant accomplishments

CRAJ provides all migrants impacted by domestic violence equitable access to the justice system through the cultural brokering practice in partnership with enCompass through their Nalah initiative and the Edmonton Police as part of the Domestic Violence Justice Response (DVJR) initiative.

New project funded until September 2026

In December 2024, MCHB successfully received funding until September 2026 which meant . that liaison cultural brokers will work onsite with Nalah two days per week. This project supports survivors with minor children from South Asian communities with a relatively higher incidence of family violence. The project's objectives is focused on the following areas”

- Support for survivors through cultural brokers on information access and navigation of the criminal court system
- Capacity building for cultural brokers in court system navigation and for court system workers on culturally safe and responsive practice
- Intercultural capacity development with those involved in the project:
 - Nalah JSWs through co-location to support culturally safe and relevant approaches.
 - Domestic Violence Justice Response (DVJR through participation of cultural brokers in the Early Case Conference (ECC) Table.
 - Engagement and relationship building among legal system actors
- Build a knowledge base from project learnings leading to policy, program and practice shifts

A hope and aspiration

We are looking forward to continuing to build relationships with legal system stakeholders in the DVJR initiative, and strengthen the collaborative practice both to better support survivors of domestic violence as well as engage in mutual capacity building that sees Nalah caseworkers and other legal system stakeholders increasing their intercultural competence, as well as cultural brokers increasing their capacity to support survivors’ meaningful participation in the legal system.

Food Dignity Program

(Grocery Run, Help Yourself Shelf and Growing Opportunities)

Grocery Run	Help Yourself Shelf	Growing Opportunities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6974 hampers ● 448 individual ● 127 families 41 % - 0 - 18 yrs old 40 % - 19-60 yrs old 17 % - over 60 yrs old ● 1096 volunteer hours 	<p>910 individuals accessed the Grocery Run shelf</p>	<p>Growers participating in 3 growing sites:</p> <p>76 families</p> <p>61 adults</p> <p>45 children</p> <p>9 participating cultural communities/ groups</p>

Most significant accomplishments

- The Cultural Food Security in Diverse Ethnocultural Immigrant Communities: A Community Based Participatory Research (CBPR) Project
Using interactive participatory tools such as photovoice and persona stories highlighted the struggle, resilience, and validates our experiences at the Grocery Run programs and framed food as a means of culture and connection, medicine - for mind, body, spirit, and community as well as strategies for families get help and support for ongoing challenges.
- Improved fundraising capacity through partnerships on training and developing a fundraising plan (Meldrum and Associates) and designing communication materials to promote the Grocery Run program with a communication specialist (Mary Pat Barry).

- The three growing sites: Prairie Urban Farm, Explore Edmonton Urban Farm, and McCauley Community Orchard and Garden remain as a unique place for growing food and learning about growing food as well as fresh food donors for the Grocery Run.
- Nine cultural communities/ groups continue to be engaged in our growing sites and Grocery Run program

A hope and aspiration

We hope to tackle this emerging challenge: what is our responsibility to support our clients with increasing financial hardship in the midst of tight financial capacity; what does it mean to be a good neighbour in a physical location where are people with many folks struggling with houselessness and/ or addiction while keeping our staffs and volunteers safe.

Legacy Projects

National Cultural Brokering Project

Funded by IRCC and in partnership with the Umbrella Multicultural Health Coop, Laurentian University, and Manitoba Possible, the MCHB completed this 3-year in 2025.

Most significant accomplishments

A team of 15 cultural brokers across Canada shared their lived experience of cultural brokering and created the following resources that can be shared with partners and systems:

1. Building Bridges: The Art and Practice of Cultural Brokering that includes a Facilitators Guide for Community of Practice sessions and Nine Chapters of curriculum content
2. Participants handouts for the training
3. Detailed content facilitators can give to participants as appropriate for each session
4. Building Bridges Handbook connects cultural brokering, reconciliation, and working towards a wider sense of belonging for all who live on this land.

A framework of recommendations for building capacities ,ethical commitments to guide cultural brokering work, and the orientations and capacities of cultural brokering work were also put forward. As a culminating activity of the project, the Cultural Brokering Curriculum was piloted in a 4 day training with cultural brokers at the Coop.

Challenges that were resolved or addressed

The Community of Practice model is recommended to honor the lived experience of participants, and creates opportunities for natural mentorship through dialogue and story telling. Inspired by the National Curriculum Team, MCHB supported local network building around the practice of cultural brokering in Ottawa, Winnipeg, Edmonton/Calgary, and Vancouver.

A hope and aspiration

The cultural brokering resources developed in the project can be used and applied extensively across the country. The MCHB Coop and Action Dignity cultural brokers involved in network and relationship building evolved into a sustainable community of practice in Alberta.

A Financial Glimpse - 2024-2025 Financial Report Summary

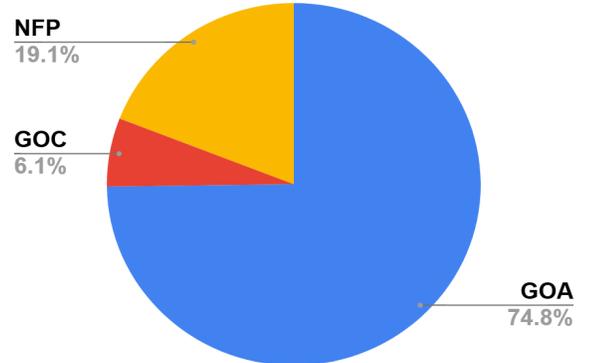
Revenues

The last fiscal year the MCHB Coop has a total revenue of \$ 7.3 M from three key sources:

1. Government of Alberta (GOA) - provides close to \$ 5.5 M or 75% or two-thirds of our revenues.

This funding comes from 6 ministries:

- Children Services - IFRN, Collaborative Intercultural Practice for Children and Families, Rural Multicultural Support Program, Mental Health Program
- Alberta Health Services - Perinatal Health
- Mental Health and Addictions - Immigrant Youth Mental Health
- Seniors and Community Services - FSCD
- Public Safety & Emergency - Anti-Human Trafficking
- Immigration and Employment - First Steps to Employment



2. Government of Canada (GOC)

Provides \$444, 482 to two programs:

- Public Health Agency of Canada Youth Broker Program
- Justice Canada - Public Legal Education

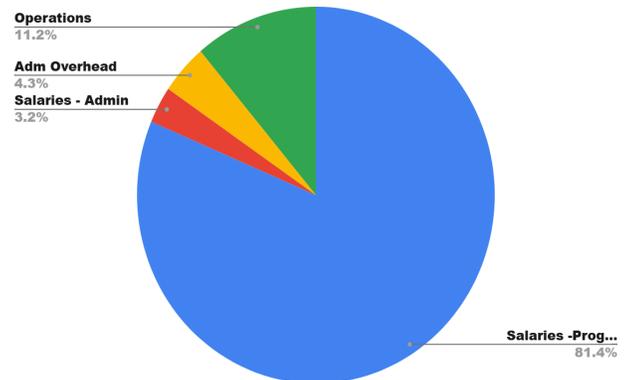
3. Not-for-Profit Agencies (NFP)

The MCHB Coop has partnered with 11 agencies and organizations on a range of programs and initiatives with a total revenue of \$1.388 M funding of 15 programs and projects.

Expenses

The MCHB Coop has a total expenses of \$7.283 M broken down into four major expenses:

1. Salaries for Program Staff - 81.4% or \$5.9 M
2. Salaries for Admin Staff - 3.2 % or \$230K.
3. Operations - these are expenses related to program delivery such as supplies, travel, venue rentals etc. This is 11.2 % or \$813K.
4. Administrative Overhead - expenses related to keep our office running such as office rental, telecommunications, office cleaning etc. This is 4.3% or \$313K.



Projected Budget for 2025-2026

The MCHB Coop's projected budget for 2025-2026 is **\$6.85 M** consisting of 22 continuing programs and 2 new projects.

Looking Forward to 2025-2026

Once again, 2024 -2025 was a busy year! The challenges that the Coop has experienced remained persistent and oftentimes, overwhelming. We continue to be sought out by service agencies and organizations with increasing referrals that our current capacity cannot meet and thus compelling us to send them to other agencies. It is a testament to the good work of our cultural brokers - solidly grounded on the most essential principles of caring and serving, seeking the most appropriate choices for the people we serve and ensuring that there is a path towards a better life.

There are certainly promising things to look forward to. Our shift to a not-for-profit workers coop opens many opportunities for diversifying our funding sources aiming for long-term financial sustainability. We remain steadfast to keep our cooperative status - a cornerstone to remind us that we all have power and voice in how we create an organization culture of love, service and dignity.

We will strive to deliver on the promise we collectively agreed on - the many actions in our strategy that 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.

Finally, in celebration of the International Year of Cooperatives, we are reminded that cooperatives were created to find solutions to human problems of inequality and oppression by redistributing wealth among the many, ensuring that we bring those at the margins to the centre and that we at the Coop are one of the so many that seeks to build a better world!