

ASSIST

Community
Services Centre



the power of
Connection

Annual Report 2023|2024

Our Vision

Bridging People and Communities

Our Mission

To enhance the lives of individuals and families through quality programs and services

Our Core Values

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are responsible for our actions and our words towards persons served, stakeholders, communities, and each other.

GROWTH

We commit to ongoing learning and adapting to improve our service, practice and for personal growth.

RESPECT

We treat everyone with dignity, and build relationships based on trust by being transparent, empathetic and non-judgemental.

INCLUSION

We actively embrace diversity by acknowledging everyone's identity, ability and experience. Everyone's voice and story are valued, and we create opportunities for them to be heard.

INTEGRITY

We act honestly and are guided by professional ethics.

SERVICE

We strive to provide high quality support and assistance to meet the needs of persons served and the community.

Message from Kevin Dons President, Board of Directors

As we reflect on the past year, it is evident that “The Power of Connection” has been the driving force behind our achievements and growth. At ASSIST Community Services Centre, we have harnessed this power to enhance an environment where individuals and communities thrive.

Our programs have continually adapted and evolved, offering creative solutions to meet the diverse needs of our community. Whether through our LINC classes, settlement services, youth programs, or senior services, we have been proactive in assessing needs, identifying gaps, and addressing them as necessary. This year, we have continued a hybrid model for our services and staff that promotes equitable access for our clients and work-life balance for our staff.

Compassion remains the cornerstone of our mission, and we are dedicated to caring for our community. Through our services, we have supported newcomers and naturalized citizens with empathy and understanding, ensuring that everyone feels valued and respected. We celebrate the rich tapestry of cultures and experiences that make up our community. By leveraging this diversity, we create welcoming spaces where everyone can contribute and belong.

This year marks significant milestones for many of our programs and services. A key achievement is obtaining Accreditation with the Canadian Accreditation Council for our Governance and Management and three of our programs: LINC, Settlement, and LINC Childcare. Each achievement is testimony of the dedication of our staff, volunteers, and partners.

Our goal is to successfully lead ASSIST through focusing on key strategic goals, such as diversifying revenue streams, promoting inclusion, expanding, and enhancing programming using GBA Plus and EDI lens, and elevating the organization’s profile. While the full impact of these efforts may not yet be fully achieved, we are already seeing positive changes taking hold.

The support that ASSIST has received from our clients, stakeholders, funders, and staff is truly remarkable. Thank you for your unwavering support and commitment. We remain devoted to our mission of serving as the bridge between people and communities and growing forward in pursuit of our goals. Together, we will continue to build strong, connected communities.



ASSIST Board of Directors 2023-2024

Executive

Kevin Dons President
Games Choy Vice President
John Yee Treasurer
Nancy Tran Secretary

Directors

William Lau	Samuel Tam	Allan Mah
Peter Wong	Gloria Gao	Al Cheung
Wing Choy	Angelica Loo	Sam Ling

Statement of Operations

For the Year Ended December 31, 2023

	2023	2022
Revenue		
Grants and funding (schedule 1)	\$4,823,719	\$3,723,974
Book sales and other	\$87,790	\$78,192
Casino	\$43,901	\$55,493
Donations and others	\$21,232	\$15,285
Tuition and activity fees	\$36,755	\$32,209
Fundraising	\$25,188	\$24,877
Interest	\$27,349	\$5,677
Memberships	\$615	\$480
Total revenue	\$5,066,549	\$3,936,187
Operating expenses		
Payroll expenses	\$3,937,603	\$3,041,360
Space rent	\$423,056	\$389,276
Office expenses	\$152,710	\$116,816
Telephone, utilities and wastage	\$120,883	\$133,770
Program activities and expenses	\$215,055	\$109,656
Amortization of tangible assets	\$37,705	\$38,213
Insurance	\$25,832	\$25,057
Renovation-operation	\$0	\$2,921
Accounting, audit and professional fee	\$16,316	\$11,225
Repairs and maintenance	\$10,570	\$20,313
Advertising and promotion	\$2,935	\$3,401
Fundraising and donation expenses	\$4,562	\$3,355
Property taxes	\$48	\$100
Reserve expenses	\$95,000	\$25,000
Total operating expenses	\$5,042,275	\$3,920,463
Excess (shortfall) of revenues over expenses	\$24,274	\$15,723

Message from Fion Lee

Executive Director

Helen Keller’s words, “Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much,” inspire me to reflect on what truly connects us. While collaboration is ingrained in ASSIST’s culture, real connection has resulted from our deliberately nurturing genuine relationships and an environment that values everyone’s voices and contributions. We are a community of like-minded individuals, each with their own gifts, who share common goals and are passionate about their endeavours. We have been blessed with devoted board members, staff, and volunteers who passionately serve newcomers, and make a meaningful impact in the community.

Last year we saw challenges, which included funding instability, which paradoxically strengthened the bonds within the organization. We saw how the power of connection—trust, mutual respect, effective communication, and shared values—motivated us reach our common goals of enhancing the lives of newcomers and achieving accreditation. We continued to see staff dedication, compassion and creativity shown throughout client service. Our focus on minimizing accessibility barriers, drives us to present services and language training using flexible delivery formats. Funding from IRCC, helped us acquire interactive panels for classrooms, which allow simultaneous in-person and online teaching. This innovation helps us accommodate different learning preferences and means students can continue classes from different locations.

We also focussed on strengthening our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion, and revised our policies to better reflect these principles. We expanded our bereavement policy to recognize significant persons in our staff’s lives, not limited to immediate family, acknowledging that many staff members, as immigrants, do not have close family nearby. We also added two additional wellness days to support staff’s mental, emotional and physical well-being. Our Taste of Heritage event has become an important celebration of diversity, that is led by LINC students who come from many backgrounds. This event fosters collaboration and connections across the organization, and between staff and students.

In November 2023, ASSIST received accreditation for governance and management and three key programs: LINC, Settlement, and Childcare Services, from the Canadian Accreditation Council. While the accreditation process spanned nearly two years and was intensive and challenging, working together to align our policies with accreditation standards and implement new standards effectively was a unifying experience. In the accreditation review panel interviews we received overwhelming support from clients and volunteers who shared their positive experiences, while the final report from the onsite review acknowledged staff’s commitment, supportiveness and passion. Achieving accreditation is not only a significant milestone for ASSIST, but it also marks the beginning of a journey that requires ongoing commitment.

Reflecting on the past year, we are profoundly grateful to our funders, donors, volunteers, board members, staff, and clients for the unwavering support that has helped ASSIST succeed another year in serving our community. Thank you to all you.



“Diverse
Supportive
Inclusive”

The ASSIST 2023 annual report was conceived through a lens of inclusivity. We asked staff to help us shape our theme by giving us three words that encapsulated their view of the past year at ASSIST – words that reflected their experiences, achievements and aspirations. The full set of words staff gave us made a powerful picture of the vision and commitment staff share. You will find these sprinkled throughout the pages of the report.



the power of Connection

Fostering Creativity & Innovation

The fostering of creativity and innovation was paramount this past year. The LINC and Settlement programs at ASSIST have updated their technological tools, and adapted to using them very well, with the goal of meeting our clients' needs. More and more newcomers are accessing ASSIST's services, so accommodating our clients with the most effective tools is extremely important to us. Establishing recent programs - digital literacy, LINC orientation, and the targeted seniors outreach program, to name a few - have demonstrated our ability to think outside of the box. We are constantly evaluating new and existing programs to make our programming more responsive to clients' needs; to identify gaps; to develop new programming; and to improve our service delivery processes. Our staff continually face challenges and find creative solutions to overcome those challenges. Staff's creative and innovative approaches have further encouraged clients to become a driving force themselves, to take the initiative, feel empowered, and pursue their goals – for example, our clients are the leaders behind the Taste of Heritage event.

Leveraging Diversity

As an organization, we are pursuing our goal of equity, diversity, and inclusion, leveraging our diversity to make ASSIST both a great place to work and a safe and welcoming place for our clients. We value the diversity of our staff and the variety and richness of experience each of us brings to ASSIST. We are intentional in improving our understanding and embracing of each person's unique background, for example, by updating ASSIST's policies regarding EDI. As the number of newcomers to ASSIST has increased, so has our diversity. The number of different countries represented in our client body has grown, along with the number of different identities and experiences our clients bring to our community. The diversity of our clients and staff means that we are multilingual and can serve clients in their first language, which reduces barriers for new clients accessing our services. ASSIST's upper-level LINC learners have found volunteer opportunities in assisting those learners in lower levels and with translation. The staff's training and focus on intentional listening have contributed to both clients' and staff's desire to attend class and work. So effective is our commitment to EDI that some clients at ASSIST have availed themselves of long-term employment opportunities here. Our staff participate in multicultural and inclusive professional development, confident that ASSIST is genuine in our EDI pursuits.

“Progress
Journey
Vision”



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Anchored in Compassion

ASSIST adopts a client-centered approach, which is anchored in compassion. We care about everyone, regardless of their ethnicity, gender, age, sexuality, religion, etc., because we genuinely believe every person and each person's experience is valuable and needs to be heard. From management to staff to clients, we all have a caring and kind nature—a warmth that makes understanding and helping each other easy and necessary. There have been many times in the past year when staff have come together immediately to support a colleague or their families in a time of need, and when clients have organized themselves, unprompted, to send care packages to a fellow newcomer facing an emergency. Clients and staff together have celebrated one another's special life events and successes. ASSIST staffers go out of their way for their clients, and clients do the same for each other, because our safe environment provides a place for compassion to flourish.

Celebrating Milestones

ASSIST takes pride in acknowledging the personal milestones of our team members and our organization's collective achievements. Over the past year, our staff members have reached significant milestones, such as expanding their families, witnessing their children graduate, and achieving artistic accomplishments. Moreover, the entire staff collaborated to attain accreditation for the governance and management of ASSIST. Furthermore, three of our programs—LINC, LINC childcare, and Settlement—secured accreditation with an exceptional score of zero non-compliance, demonstrating our compliance with all standards mandated by the Canadian Accreditation Council. This underscores our commitment to consistently adhering to our policies, meeting the service delivery standards of accredited programs, and engaging in ongoing professional development to maintain excellence. ASSIST remains dedicated to upholding this high standard, recognizing that achieving accreditation is just one milestone in our ongoing pursuit of exceptional service delivery.

“Fulfilling
Challenging
Fun”

“Caring Supporting Organizing”



Settlement Program

- 2110** newcomers helped
- 4123** services
- 113** complex case clients
- 446** complex case services

The Settlement Program remains dedicated to supporting a diverse newcomer population, nurturing individual competence, building trust among team members, and promoting inclusivity. Utilizing both in-person and virtual one-on-one support sessions, as well as group information sessions, we offer essential assistance to newcomers striving to integrate into Canadian society. In addition to addressing basic settlement challenges, our team adeptly navigates complex barriers such as family violence, mental health, disability etc. to meet the evolving needs of families. Despite the complexity of these challenges, our settlement team maintains unwavering dedication to professional development and supporting newcomers in their journey to enhance community well-being.

LINC Program

- 1443** students (all)
- 23** classes (CLB 1–6)
- 401** CLB Certificates (promoted students)
- 556** CLB Certificates (all learners)
- 121** children attended childcare program

The LINC Program teaches adult newcomers vital English language skills necessary for settling in Canada, aligning with the Canadian Language Benchmarks (CLB) and adhering to PBLA guidelines. Participants improve their listening, speaking, reading, and writing abilities while learning about practical topics such as housing, shopping, healthcare, education, and community services. We provide full-time and part-time classes (morning and evening sessions), from Monday to Friday, in four different formats: fully online, in-person, blended/hybrid (a mix of in-person and online), and HyFlex (in-person and online students simultaneously). We also offer free childcare services for students attending in-person classes. Our childcare services are licensed and available for children aged 19 months to 5 years old.

Coordinated Senior Outreach Program

- 861** seniors
- 1034** services
- 188** seniors received one-on-one support
- 7500** weekly aged-friendly activity services

The Coordinated Senior Outreach Program began in July 2023, with two outreach workers dedicated to assisting seniors through one to one in-person and virtual session, especially outreach services. While most clients are from the Chinese community, we welcome referrals and serve a diverse senior population. This program has enabled us to collaborate with 12 other agencies, addressing gaps in senior services collectively. Its aim is to foster supportive relationships and mutual understanding, establishing an equitable care system for healthy, dignified, and interconnected aging experiences.

Weekly seniors' activities were led, planned and delivered by volunteer seniors. A variety of free activities run on every Tuesday and Thursday all year round delivered in-person at the downtown centre and through Zoom.





Responding to Family Violence Program

84 clients

50 service providers

4 educational workshops on healthy family relationships & legal issues

This program provides free services to individuals of all genders who are experiencing family violence to access confidential, emotional and practical support. This program began in 1999 and continues to provide linguistically and culturally appropriate support offered in English, Mandarin and Cantonese through two outreach workers. In the last fiscal year, we have served 84 individuals impacted by family violence in providing court support, safety planning, risk assessment and information about healthy relationships. We have also provided support to 50 service providers through case consultation, collaboration meetings and referral of clients.

Multicultural Parent Education Program

355 parents & caregivers

870 Children impacted

22 programs delivered

3 families received one-on-one intensive support

2100+ service hours

This program provides a full spectrum of ongoing Parenting Education to newcomers and refugee families with children 18 years old and younger. The program consists of five core

components including Nobody's Perfect, Fatherhood Initiative, Preteen Parenting, Youth Parenting and Triple P (Positive Parenting Program). It aims to promote protective factors in early childhood development, strengthen social network connections, foster caregiver resilience building, and reduce risk factors of child maltreatment and children intervention. The program is delivered to ten ethnic groups including: Arabic, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Pakistani, Eritrean, Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya and Ukrainian Communities with ongoing support to assist these families across Alberta.

“I really learned a lot from this online class and the credit goes to my teacher who made our online classes very interesting. I am now very confident of my communication in English.”

**“Dedication
Service
Community”**

“Diverse
Accommodating
Accepting”

“Adaptability
Empowerment
Inclusivity”

TANG Youth Program

309 youth
7 unique programs

This program supports the social, physical, and mental well-being of immigrant youth by promoting positive attitudes, interpersonal skills, and supportive relationships. The program aims to meet the many unique needs and challenges of youth face today. Youths between eleven and fifteen years of age are encouraged, supported, and mentored to help foster resiliency skills. Programs include Personal Growth Sessions, Homework Help, Afterschool Drop-Ins, Spring Break camps, Winter Break camp, Summer camp and school partnership.

Children’s Summer Camp

105 children participated

The 2023 Children’s Summer Camps delivered six weeks of affordable and high quality programming to children from all around Edmonton. Campers between the ages of six and eleven years old participated in many diverse activities ranging from science experiments to outdoor sports. Camps continued to provide opportunities for children to try new things, improve their leadership skills, learn age-appropriate social skills and work towards being independent.

Volunteer Program

225 volunteers
7801.25 hours

Volunteers are essential to making ASSIST a welcoming and supportive place for newcomers and immigrants. We are committed to providing opportunities for volunteers to learn, grow, and develop their skills. The unique talents, skills, and time contributed by our volunteers help many newcomers we served adjust better to their new lives in Canada, enabling them to give back to the community. None of our programs or services would be possible without the dedication and hard work of our volunteers.

“Volunteering with ASSIST has allowed me to share my experiences with newcomers to ensure they have a smoother transition into Canada’s multicultural community.”





Informal English Program for Adults

Daily English for Beginners

- 132** learners
- 3** sessions Level 1
- 3** sessions Level 2

The program offers practical weekly English classes that aim to help newcomers develop their language and social surviving skills. It is specifically designed for English learners with little or no prior knowledge of English and want to enhance their listening and conversation abilities. The program provides flexible and friendly learning environment and encourage students to practice what they've learned in small group settings. The goal is to

Digital Literacy

- 155** Learners
- 2** sessions Basic Level
- 2** sessions Intermediate Level

The Digital Literacy class is designed as an instruction to aid English language learners to overcome digital literacy barriers. The course will help learners to understand and use digital systems, tools, applications and online platforms more proficiently, learning netiquette, and to protect themselves from cybercrime.

ELL English Learning

New Program started January to March 2024

- 78** learners
- 1** session Essential Class Level 1 (Basic)
- 1** session Essential Class Level 2 (Intermediate)

ELL Essentials Level 1 begins by teaching practical English for daily survival fostering confidence in new learners. Level 2, for intermediate learners, enhances vocabulary, communication and grammar, focusing on real-life applications to advance towards fluency.

Smart Choices Program

- 215** Children
- 101** Adults
- 15** presentations

This program helps children in grades one to twelve better understand the impacts of problem gambling, and teaches them how to avoid becoming a problem gambler. Content is provided through a variety of media including drama presentations and games, workshops, videos, and display boards. The workshop session also helps adults to understand best practices for children to save them from gambling practices.

READI

(Rural employers' awareness on Diversity and Inclusion)

- 2** in-person sessions
- 6** online sessions
- 48** SPOs/ employers participated
- 88** individuals attended training

The READI project, an 18-month collaboration involving the Rural Development Network (RDN), Lethbridge Family Services (LFS), and ASSIST Community Services Centre, aimed to empower rural employers in attracting, integrating, and retaining newcomers. Targeting managerial, HR, and leadership roles across various industries in northern, central, and southern Alberta, the project began with an environmental scan and needs assessment. It identified common challenges such as resource limitations and coordination for settlement services. Seven online modules, complemented by recorded sessions and customized workbooks, were developed. In-person workshops facilitated information exchange and networking among stakeholders. Post-project, a toolkit synthesizing best practices was disseminated, fostering ongoing support for rural employers and promoting inclusive practices.



ASSIST Community Services Centre

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VALID UNTIL
OCTOBER
2026 CLICK
FOR DETAILS

2023-2024 FUNDERS

ASSIST receives funding from federal, provincial and municipal governments to support our services and programs provided to the community. We are thankful to our funders:

**Government of Canada-
Community Services
Recovery Fund**

**Immigration, Refugees
& Citizenship Canada**

**Employment & Social
Development Canada**
New Horizons for Seniors
Summer Jobs Program

**Alberta Children &
Family Services**

**Alberta Arts, Culture
& Status of Women**

Alberta Health Services

**Alberta Public Safety
& Emergency Services**

The City of Edmonton
Family & Community
Support Services

ECALA

