

ASSIST
COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Annual Report
2024|2025

Expanding
Our Horizons



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 the Board President



As we gather for this year's Annual General Meeting, I would like to express my appreciation for your continued support of ASSIST Community Services Centre. The past year has been one of meaningful progress, shaped by both longstanding values and evolving community needs.

Throughout the year, we have worked diligently to strengthen our services, enhance organizational capacity, and respond thoughtfully to the challenges facing the individuals and families we serve. From supporting newcomers as they navigate settlement and integration, to addressing the mental health and social inclusion of seniors, our focus remains firmly on providing respectful, culturally informed, and accessible supports.

Much of our progress this year has been guided by the development of a renewed strategic direction. Building on extensive input from staff, clients, and community partners, we have taken steps to clarify our priorities, improve internal systems, and deepen our outreach. These efforts reflect our ongoing commitment to serving diverse communities with integrity and responsiveness.

In addition to program delivery, we have continued to invest in organizational sustainability. This has included expanding our funding sources, strengthening operational processes, and nurturing collaborative relationships with other service providers and public institutions. These measures will help ensure that ASSIST is well positioned to meet future demands in a changing social landscape.

I would like to acknowledge the dedication of our staff, the generosity of our volunteers, and the trust placed in us by our funders and community partners. Their contributions are central to our ability to deliver meaningful, high-quality services.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to advancing inclusion, equity, and well-being across the communities we serve. We do so with humility, determination, and a strong sense of shared purpose.

Sincerely,

Kevin Dons

President, ASSIST Board of Directors

ASSIST Board of Directors 2024-2025

Executive

Kevin Dons President

Games Choy Vice President

John Yee Treasurer

Nancy Tran Secretary

Directors

William Lau

Wing Choy

Gloria Gao

Allan Mah

Sam Ling

Peter Wong

Samuel Tam

Angelica Loo

Al Cheung

Statement of Operations

Year Ended December 31, 2024

	2024	2023
Revenue		
Grants and funding (schedule 1)	\$5,347,684	\$4,823,719
Book sales and other	\$126,820	\$87,790
Casino	\$25,674	\$43,901
Donations and others	\$26,158	\$21,232
Tuition and activity fees	\$44,000	\$36,755
Fundraising	\$22,874	\$25,188
Interest	\$38,065	\$27,349
Memberships	\$1,205	\$615
Total revenue	\$5,632,480	\$5,066,549
Operating expenses		
Payroll expenses	\$4,384,006	\$3,937,603
Space rent	\$432,769	\$423,056
Office expenses	\$182,653	\$152,710
Telephone, utilities and wastage	\$117,078	\$120,883
Program activities and expenses	\$318,598	\$215,055
Amortization of tangible assets	\$36,696	\$37,705
Insurance	\$27,335	\$25,832
Renovation-operation	\$0	\$0
Accounting, audit and professional fee	\$10,012	\$16,316
Repairs and maintenance	\$16,315	\$10,570
Advertising and promotion	\$2,800	\$2,935
Fundraising and donation expenses	\$7,548	\$4,562
Property taxes	\$36	\$48
Reserve expenses	\$66,000	\$95,000
Total operating expenses	\$5,601,846	\$5,042,275
Excess (shortfall) of revenues over expenses	\$30,634	\$24,274

Executive Director's Message



In her book *Daring Greatly*, Dr. Brené Brown defines vulnerability as “uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.” Working in a non-profit organization that relies heavily on government funding can make us feel vulnerable. This emotional weight can be draining and, at times, frightening. However, when we acknowledge these feelings with courage we can find power within vulnerability, that can help us push boundaries, and continue to strive for excellence, not perfection, which is often unrealistic and demoralizing.

Over the past year, we have weathered storms caused by uncertainty and funding cuts. We recognized that standing still was not an option, and that stability is a luxury. So we prepared ourselves by leaning into the collective strengths, knowledge, and experience of our team. This was a year focussed on *Expanding Horizons*, as we re-framed adversity into an opportunity for growth, innovation and deeper impact. We challenged ourselves to think outside the box, and seize opportunities to submit new funding proposals that addressed emerging service gaps.

Thanks to new funding, we were excited to launch a few new programs last year. *Elevate Youth*, supported by the Edmonton Community Foundation, broadened our reach by providing intensive English instruction to newcomer youth aged 16 to 25. *ESL Financial Success Journey*, funded by AMICO Foundation, are free financial literacy courses for adult newcomers, including a women-only class, that combine financial education with English language learning. *Enhancing Safety and Well-being*, is a two-year initiative funded by the City of Edmonton that focuses on crime prevention and crisis intervention for victims of domestic violence, racism, hate crimes and other forms of discrimination.

Toward the end of 2024, the settlement sector across Canada was hit hard by federal funding cuts, following the government's announcement of a 20% reduction in immigration targets through 2025–2027. This was a devastating time. Though we've faced funding cuts before, this round brought immense sadness and uncertainty, especially to our Settlement and LINC program teams. Being open and transparent with our team about the potential impact of the cuts on our services and staffing, resulted in us using a collaborative approach to strategizing change. This helped minimize layoffs and preserve services.

We take pride in our resilience and the strong collaborative spirit that continues to carry us forward. We will keep evolving to enhance our capacity to support the individuals and families we serve. We truly believe that strong families build strong communities, which in turn contribute to a healthy and stable nation.

None of this would be possible without the continued support of our funders, donors, Board members, staff, volunteers, families, and friends. Thank you for walking with us through moments of challenge and uncertainty gives us hope. Your continued support makes it possible for us to keep embracing risk, growing through uncertainty, and moving forward together.

With deep gratefulness to all of you,

Fion Lee
Executive Director

Expansive strategies

Diversify funding sources

This year we strengthened our resolve to pursue grants and funding opportunities across diverse sources. Expanding our financial base will help ensure the continuity of essential services and create the space to launch bold new initiatives, pilot creative ideas, and expand the horizons of individuals and families seeking connection, support, and opportunity.

Key efforts included securing support through the City of Edmonton's Enhancing Safety and Wellbeing initiative to strengthen Anti-Racism programming and outreach. The LINC program also sought additional funding for literacy and language initiatives, including ECALA's ELL, Literacy, and Digital Literacy grants.

ASSIST launched new programs such as the *Ethnic Culinary Garden Project*, supported by a Wellbeing Grant, blending cultural heritage, mental health, and community engagement. Funding was also pursued for the *Elevate Youth Program*, offering tailored support for high school students and young adults navigating integration, education, and employment.

To address community needs for accessible financial education, ASSIST applied for AIMCo Foundation grants to deliver customized financial literacy workshops for women and mixed adult groups.

Looking ahead, the management team remains dedicated to exploring, securing, and leveraging new funding to meet the complex realities of today's diverse newcomer communities, positioning ASSIST for long-term impact and continued growth.

Grow partners & partnerships

Meaningful collaborations continue to expand our horizons and demonstrate that growth through partnerships is made possible by mutual trust, shared goals, and a commitment to community-building.

Over the past year, we've built strong partnerships that deepen inclusion and broaden our reach. Our Senior Coordinated Outreach Initiative, with 10 partner organizations, connects underserved seniors to community resources and supports. The T.A.N.G. youth program grew through partnerships with Twillegar and Meadows Recreation Centres and Henry Ainlay High School, fostering inclusive learning and leadership.

In the LINC program, collaboration with Edmonton Academy created intergenerational learning between Grade 9 students with special needs and senior learners. We partnered with Cité des Rocheuses to better serve Francophone newcomers, and continued our collaboration with RBC to deliver financial literacy in classrooms. Recognizing the importance of Canadian work experience, we formed new partnerships in construction, warehousing, and senior retirement facilities. These hands-on opportunities provided our employment-focused LINC learners with real-world training, workplace exposure, and—most notably—led to job offers for graduates in the construction and personal caregiver sector.

As part of our Community Safety and Wellbeing project, a new partnership with Centre High School supports vulnerable youth with early intervention and culturally responsive services.

Together, we are breaking down barriers, amplifying learner voices, and creating vibrant, inclusive pathways



Use design thinking to create effective programming

We believe that expanding horizons means more than simply adding new programs — it's about thinking creatively, questioning assumptions, and designing services that truly meet the evolving and complex needs of our diverse clients.

Over the past year, our team has embraced innovation with purpose, crafting programs that not only respond to immediate needs but also tackle deeper, systemic challenges such as racism, social discrimination, child intervention pressures, and family violence that continue to affect many in our community.

We listened carefully to the voices of our clients and identified critical service gaps, responding with thoughtful, tailored solutions. For example, we reimagined financial literacy training by offering separate women-only and mixed-group classes, creating safe, empowering spaces where all participants could learn confidently. We also introduced digital literacy training, equipping clients with the essential online skills needed to fully participate in today's digital landscape — from accessing services to staying connected with loved ones.

Recognizing the unique needs of youth, we adapted English as an Additional Language (EAL) instruction to align with Alberta's curriculum while integrating valuable employment skills. We created welcoming spaces specifically for youth aged 10–12 and for young adults aged 19–25, where they could not only strengthen their language abilities but also build social connections, gain confidence, and navigate the challenges of integration into Canadian society.

For our senior learners, we developed a specialized LINC class focused on enhancing communication and digital skills — a response shaped directly by survey feedback, where seniors shared their longing to better connect with grandchildren and family members overseas but felt held back by limited digital knowledge.

We also launched two innovative LINC employment-focused classes: one designed for aspiring personal caregivers, and the other for individuals interested in construction and warehouse work. Participants gained critical English language skills, earned industry-relevant certificates, and benefited from hands-on Canadian work experience through field trips to real job sites. The success of these programs was reflected in the proud achievements of several students who secured employment in retirement homes and the construction sector, transforming their learning into real-world opportunity.

By continuously reimagining and redesigning our services, ASSIST demonstrates its unwavering commitment to helping clients overcome barriers, build resilience, and form meaningful connections — strengthening not only their individual journeys but the fabric of our entire community.

Expansive strategies

Stretch & adapt with creativity and an unwavering commitment to our community

This past year challenged us in ways we could not have anticipated. It was a year of constant ups and downs—of stretching beyond limits—pushing ourselves to grow programs and capacity while staying rooted in our mission.

We began with momentum—rapid growth marked by an increased number of classes in the LINC program and bold new initiatives. These additions reflected our commitment to expanding access and meeting diverse learner needs.

However, by the year's end, reductions in funding forced us to face a difficult reality: continuing to deliver essential programs and services with a reduced number of staff. The demands did not lessen, but neither did our resolve. We stretched beyond what we thought possible, adapting with creativity, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to the communities we serve.

With fewer hands on deck, our team demonstrated extraordinary commitment, fulfilling their responsibilities with grace, adaptability, and quiet strength. Staff went above and beyond to ensure that programs remained strong and that clients continued to feel supported, seen, and valued. Every effort, large or small, reflected a shared dedication to our mission and to the communities we serve.

Despite these changes and limitations, what emerged was a powerful reflection of who we are at ASSIST: a resilient, compassionate, and united community. In the face of adversity, we did not retreat—we leaned in. Teams reimaged

how services could be delivered, streamlined processes, and supported one another in meaningful, heartfelt ways. Every challenge was met with the same question: "How can we make this work—together?"

We witnessed countless moments of collaboration, creativity, and quiet courage. Staff members stepped in for each other, shared responsibilities, and found new ways to lift one another through exhaustion and uncertainty. In these efforts, we rediscovered the strength of unity and the importance of holding space not just for tasks, but for each other.

Amidst it all, hope remained our guide—hope that our collective actions would carry us through the storm, and that a more inclusive, connected, and resilient future was still within reach. We did more than maintain—we evolved. We stretched beyond what we thought possible, grounded in the belief that we are always stronger together.

As we continue expanding our horizons, this spirit of perseverance and partnership reminds us that growth is not only measured by what we build, but by how we rise—together—when it matters most.

Essential Programs

Settlement for Newcomers

- 2550** newcomers helped
- 5492** services provided
- 199** complex cases
- 1349** complex case services provided

The Settlement Program is dedicated to supporting diverse newcomers through inclusive, strength-based, and trust-building services. We offer in-person and virtual one-on-one and group sessions to guide clients in settling and integrating into Canadian life. Our team also addresses complex issues like parenting, family violence, mental health, and disabilities with tailored, holistic support. Committed to continuous learning, we ensure newcomers feel safe, supported, and empowered throughout their journey.

Language Instruction for Newcomers to Canada (LINC)

- 1655** students (all)
- 30** classes (CLB 1–6)
- 688** CLB Certificates (promoted students)
- 604** CLB Certificates (all learners)
- 135** children attended childcare program

The LINC Program teaches adult newcomers vital English language skills necessary for settling in Canada. 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

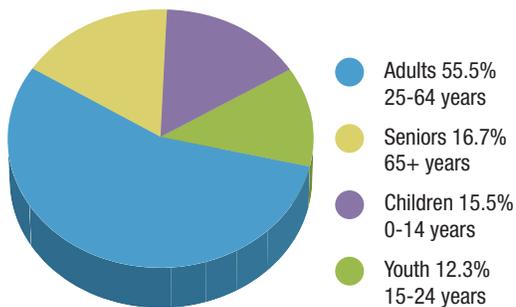
and evening sessions), from Monday to Saturday, in four different formats: fully online, in-person, blended/hybrid (a mix of in-person and online), and HyFlex (in-person and online students simultaneously). We also offer free childcare services for students attending in-person classes for children aged 19 months to 5 years old.

Rural employers' awareness on Diversity & Inclusion (READI)

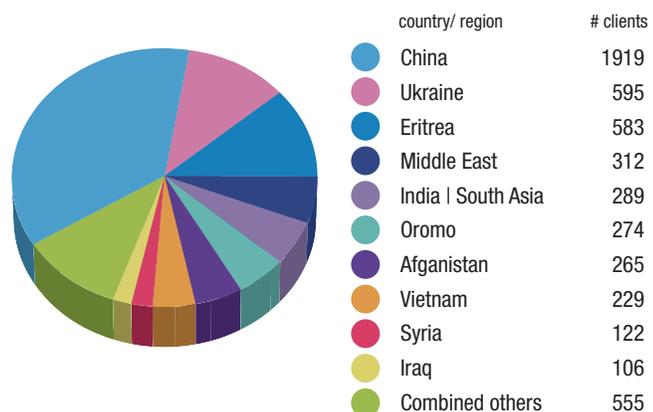
- 3** in-person sessions
- 5** online sessions
- 110** Employers/organizations served

An 18-month initiative ending in March 2025, was a collaboration involving the Rural Development Network (RDN), Lethbridge Family Services (LFS), supported rural Alberta employers in attracting, integrating, and retaining newcomers. It began with an environmental scan identifying key settlement service challenges. Seven online modules, recorded sessions, and tailored workbooks were created, alongside in-person workshops for networking. A Post-project toolkit synthesizing best practices was disseminated, fostering ongoing support for rural employers and promoting inclusive practices.

Client's served- by age



Client's served- by geographic origin



Unique clients served 6268*

*origin data was not collected from 1019 clients.

Multicultural Parent Education

459 parents & caregivers
1122 Children impacted
23 programs delivered
4 families received one-on-one intensive support
2100+ service hours

This program provides a full spectrum of parenting education to newcomers and refugee families with children aged 18 years and younger. It includes five core components: *Nobody's Perfect, Fatherhood Initiative, Preteen Parenting, Youth Parenting, and Triple P*. The goal is to strengthen caregiver resilience, social support and early childhood development, while reducing risks of child maltreatment. Delivered in various ethnic communities across Alberta, including: Arabic, Korean, Chinese, Filipino, Pakistani, Eritrean, Oromo, Amharic, Tigrinya, and Ukrainian.

Responding to Family Violence

181 individuals
3 educational workshops

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.

Volunteer Program

372 volunteers
8429 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.

Coordinated Senior Outreach

783 seniors
1874 services

Created in July 2023, this program's two outreach workers are dedicated to assisting seniors through one-on-one in-person and virtual sessions. 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 10 other agencies, addressing gaps in senior services collectively. Its aim is to foster supportive relationships and mutual understanding and establish an equitable care system for healthy, dignified, and interconnected aging

Weekly Seniors' Activities

80 seniors on Tuesdays
100 seniors on Thursdays
8100 services

All program activities were led, planned and delivered by volunteer seniors. Free activities run every Tuesday and Thursday year-round and are delivered in-person at the downtown centre and through Zoom.

ESL Financial Success Journey

45 students
2 classes

The courses are free to adults, with one specifically for women starting in February 2025. They cover money basics, budgeting, saving, online banking, avoiding scams, tax benefits, and improving financial English—empowering participants to plan ahead and make informed financial decisions



Towards A New Generation (TANG)

516 youth
10 unique programs.

The T.A.N.G. youth program supports immigrant youth aged 11–15 by promoting well-being, resilience, and positive relationships. It addresses their unique challenges through mentorship and activities like personal growth sessions, homework help, drop-ins, seasonal camps, and school partnerships.

Children's Summer Camps

124 children

Our six-week Children's Summer Camps offered affordable, high-quality programming in July and August for Edmonton children aged 6–10. Campers enjoyed activities from science experiments to outdoor sports, building leadership, social skills, and independence

Evaluate Youth

65 youth
2 classes

Free weekly English language education for youth in Grade 10 to 12 and ages 19 to 25. The program offer an exciting and comprehensive English language learning that focuses on enhancing : communication and writing skills, life & work skills, cultural integration and structural learning follow the AB EAL curriculum.

Informal English for Adults

Daily English for Beginners

152 learners
3 sessions - Levels 1 to 3

This program offers weekly English classes for newcomers with little or no prior English experience, focusing on listening and conversation skills. It provides a flexible, supportive environment that encourages practice in small groups. The goal is to build learners' confidence and motivation

to use English in daily life. By the end, students will understand basic grammar, everyday vocabulary, and be able to hold simple conversations.

English Learning (ELL)

New January to March 2024

206 students
9 classes

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.

Digital Literacy

157 students
6 classes

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.

Enhancing Safety and Well-being

20 families supported
32 files managed
285 outreach visits
910 Services Delivered

This two-year project (July 2024–July 2026) aims to enhance community safety and well-being in Edmonton through crime prevention and crisis intervention. It supports individuals and families impacted by domestic violence, hate crimes, racism, Islamophobia, homophobia, bullying, and child intervention involvement. Services are delivered in Somali, Arabic, and English, ensuring culturally and linguistically sensitive outreach, tools, and direct support.





ASSIST Community Services Centre

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VALID UNTIL
OCTOBER
2026 CLICK
FOR DETAILS

2024-2025 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:

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 Public Safety & Emergency Services

The City of Edmonton

- Family & Community Support Services
- Community Safety and Wellbeing Grant Program

ECALA

Edmonton Community Foundation

AMICO Foundation