





2025-2026

ANNUAL REPORT

Children's Aid Society
La Societe de l'aide a l'enfance
WINDSOR-ESSEX

OUR COMMITMENTS

Land Acknowledgement

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society acknowledges the sacred land upon which we are located. We acknowledge that this land is comprised of the traditional territory of the Three Fires Confederacy, made up of the Ojibwa, Odawa, Odaway, and Potawatomi Nations and the ancestral and unceded territory and waters of Caldwell First Nation, whose people are the original People of Pelee Island, Point Pelee and what is known today as Southern Ontario. We recognize that the Ojibwa, Odaway, and Potawatomi Nations, known as the Anishinaabeg and the Lunaapeew, agreed to share its territory with the British Crown by the 1790 Treaty also referred to as the "McKee Purchase/Treaty of Detroit" and that today, the Anishinaabeg are represented by the Walpole Island First Nation and that the Lunaapeew are represented by the Delaware Nation.

Vision - *"Our Children, Our Future"*

OUR – reflects the collective responsibility of the Society, parents and families, the community, other service providers in working collectively and collaboratively to ensure the best for the community's children. It denotes responsibility and accountability for the well-being of children.

CHILDREN – defines the focus and a clear direction for the organization in terms of intent, priority and responsibility. It also represents the fact that all children are involved in our Vision because any child, at any point in time, could have a need for the programs and services of the Society.

FUTURE – articulates our horizon and our hopes. It identifies that each child's life is vital to the future of our community.

Mission

The Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Society is dedicated to the well-being and safety of every child by advocating for, and partnering with, our children, families and communities.

REPORT FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & BOARD CHAIR



Strengthening Children, Youth and Families Through Challenging Times

As we come together for our Annual General Meeting, it is important to pause and reflect on both where we are and what we have continued to accomplish in the face of extraordinary challenges. This has not been an easy period for child welfare in Ontario. Across the sector, Children's Aid Societies are experiencing unprecedented pressures: increasingly complex needs among the children, youth and families we serve; rising costs of care; significant gaps in community services; workforce pressures; and funding models that have not kept pace with the realities of the work.

Our organization is not immune to these pressures. In fact, we are experiencing them very directly. Yet, despite the challenges, we remain focused on our purpose: **supporting vulnerable children and youth, strengthening families, promoting safety and well-being, and working toward a community where families can access the help they need before they reach a point of crisis.**

Most importantly, **we are not giving up.**



The Reality Facing Child Welfare

The child welfare system exists within a much larger social and community system. When families cannot access mental health services, developmental supports, affordable housing, respite, treatment, addictions services, parenting support, disability services, or other timely interventions, their challenges can escalate.

Too often, families come into contact with Children's Aid Society not because child welfare is the service they need, but because the services they actually need are unavailable, inaccessible, unaffordable, or have lengthy waitlists. This is not the outcome any of us want.

We want families to have access to effective, culturally responsive, community-based supports early — when challenges can be addressed before they become crises. Prevention is not simply an aspiration. It is essential infrastructure for the well-being of children, youth and families.

The Financial Challenge & Multi-Year Deficit

One of the most significant challenges facing our organization is our multi-year financial deficit. We must be transparent with our Board, our community partners, our Ministry, our staff and our community about the seriousness of this situation. A sustained deficit is not simply an accounting issue. It affects our ability to plan, invest, recruit and retain staff, innovate, and ensure long-term organizational stability.

At the same time, we need to recognize that the financial pressures facing child welfare are not occurring in isolation. We are operating in an environment in which the cost of delivering services continues to rise while the complexity and intensity of the work continues to increase. Financial sustainability and quality service are not competing priorities.
We need both.

The Increasing Cost & Complexity of Care

One of the greatest pressures facing child welfare is the increasing complexity of the needs presented by children and youth. We are supporting children and young people whose needs may include significant developmental disabilities, mental health challenges, trauma, behavioural needs, medical complexity, substance use, family violence, disrupted attachment, placement instability and other intersecting challenges. These children require more than a traditional child welfare response. They may require specialized foster homes, intensive treatment, therapeutic supports, specialized residential care, nursing or medical support, respite, educational supports, behavioural expertise and highly coordinated services. And when those services are not available in the community, the cost — both human and financial — can become extraordinary.

The question is whether we are investing in the **right supports, at the right time, in the right place.** A child should not have to enter the child welfare system to access services that could have prevented a crisis. A family should not have to reach the point of exhaustion before help becomes available. And a child should not have to experience a placement breakdown before the specialized support they require is mobilized.



The Need for Stronger Community-Based Services

One of the most important messages we can bring forward is that **child welfare cannot solve these challenges alone.** We need a stronger social infrastructure around children, youth and families. These services need to be available **before families reach crisis**. This is not about reducing the importance of child welfare. It is about ensuring that child welfare can focus on its essential role: protecting children when they are unsafe, while working alongside families and communities to strengthen relationships and promote stability.

Our Staff: Resilience in Action

In the midst of all of this, there is something that must never be lost in the discussion about deficits, pressures and system challenges: **the extraordinary commitment of our staff**. Our staff come to work every day carrying enormous responsibility. Our staff have demonstrated remarkable resilience, strength and perseverance. They have continued to show up. They have continued to care. They have continued to advocate. And they have continued to believe that every child, youth and family deserves the opportunity to do well. **For that, we owe them our deepest gratitude.**

Our Leadership Team

Our leadership team has also carried an extraordinary responsibility. Leading an organization through financial pressure, increasing service complexity, workforce challenges and system transformation requires courage and perseverance. There are no easy answers. There are difficult decisions to make and difficult conversations to have. The leadership team has worked to balance immediate operational pressures with the longer-term responsibility of building a sustainable organization.

That means asking hard questions, examining how we work, identifying opportunities for greater efficiency, advocating for appropriate resources, strengthening partnerships and keeping our focus on outcomes for children, youth and families. Leadership in difficult times is not about pretending that everything is okay. It is about acknowledging what is difficult, facing it honestly, and continuing to move forward.

Our Board of Directors

We also want to recognize our Board of Directors. Board members carry a unique responsibility. They have stewardship responsibility for the organization, but they also carry a deep commitment to the children, youth and families we serve. During difficult financial and operational circumstances, governance requires thoughtful oversight, courage, patience and a willingness to ask difficult questions. Our Board has remained engaged and committed. The Board and leadership team have continued to work together to navigate difficult circumstances while keeping our mission at the centre of our decisions.

Foster/Kin Caregivers & Volunteers: The Backbone of our Organization

We extend our heartfelt gratitude and deepest appreciation to our foster/kin parents and volunteers for the unwavering dedication, compassion, and support they provide to vulnerable children and youth in our community.

Foster/Kin Caregivers - By opening their homes and their hearts, they create safe, nurturing environments where children and youth can experience stability, belonging, and the opportunity to thrive. Their patience, advocacy, and dedication—often during times of significant uncertainty and change—make a profound difference in the lives of the young people entrusted to their care.

Volunteers - By generously giving their time and energy, they provide a vital safety net, a listening ear, and a source of stability for children, youth, and families when they need it most. Whether they are mentoring a young person, assisting behind the scenes, or helping families navigate challenging times, their kindness creates a lasting, positive impact that shapes brighter futures.

We simply could not carry out our mission without the hopeful hearts and helping hands of our foster/kin parents and volunteers. Thank you for being the true backbone of our organization and for making a meaningful difference every single day.

We Must Hold on to Hope

It would be easy, looking at the challenges before us, to become discouraged. The deficit is real, the service gaps are real, the costs are real, the pressures on our staff are real, the needs of children and youth are real. But so is something else.
Our determination is real.

Every day, we see children who make progress; we see families who find their footing; we see caregivers who keep going; we see youth who discover their voice and their potential; we see staff who go the extra mile; we see community partners who step forward; and we see people who refuse to give up on children. And this is what gives us reason to continue.

Looking Forward

Our path forward must be grounded in several commitments.

First, **we will remain financially responsible and transparent.** We will continue to address our multi-year deficit with discipline and a clear focus on long-term sustainability.

Second, **we will continue to advocate for the resources required to meet the increasingly complex needs of children and youth.**

Third, **we will continue to advocate for stronger community-based services and prevention.** Families should have access to help before they reach crisis and before child welfare involvement becomes necessary.

Fourth, **we will invest in our people**. Our staff are our greatest strength, and their well-being, development and ability to do this work effectively must remain a priority.

Fifth, **we will strengthen partnerships**. No single organization can meet the complex needs of children and families. We need health, education, mental health, developmental services, housing, Indigenous partners, community organizations, government and other sectors working together.

And finally, we will continue to put children, youth and families at the centre of our work. **We Are Not Giving Up**, that is our purpose, that is our responsibility, and that is our commitment.





Derrick Drouillard,
Executive Director

Debbie Cercone,
Board Chair

2025 – 2026 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Kulveer Virk, Chair (resigned February 2026)
Debbie Cercone, Board Chair (from December 1, 2025 – present)
Cst. Shane Renaud, Vice Chair (January 2026 – present) and Services Planning Committee Chair
Melissa Cuzzocrea, Treasurer
Stephanie Williams, Secretary
Stephanie Savoni
Michael Brown
Noah Campbell
Dr. Nila Das
Kendall Dunlop
Princess Small
Marium Tolson-Murty
Michael Wills
Amy Fordham, Youth Representative

SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Derrick Drouillard, Executive Director
Olivia Carlini, Director of Finance and Administration
Jaclyn Beaudoin, Director of Human Resources
Leonardo Gil, Senior Director of Services
Jacqueline Bobyk-Krumins, Director of Intake and After Hours
Loran Dutka, Director of Family Services
Hugo Vega, Director of Equity & Program Services
Dorothy Watson, Director of Children Services & Permanency
Claudine Wilson, Director of Legal & Privacy Services



Our Service Impacts

SERVICE

2,812
Investigations Completed

236
Community Links

3,628
Families Served in Community with Protection Concerns

816
Average Families Served at Ongoing Protection

PEOPLE & PARTNERSHIPS

289.1
Staff

100
Volunteers



CARE HOMES

152
Kinship Service Homes

82
Foster and Kinship Care Homes

213
Children and youth in care

165
Youth served through RSG program

152
Children and youth in kinship service

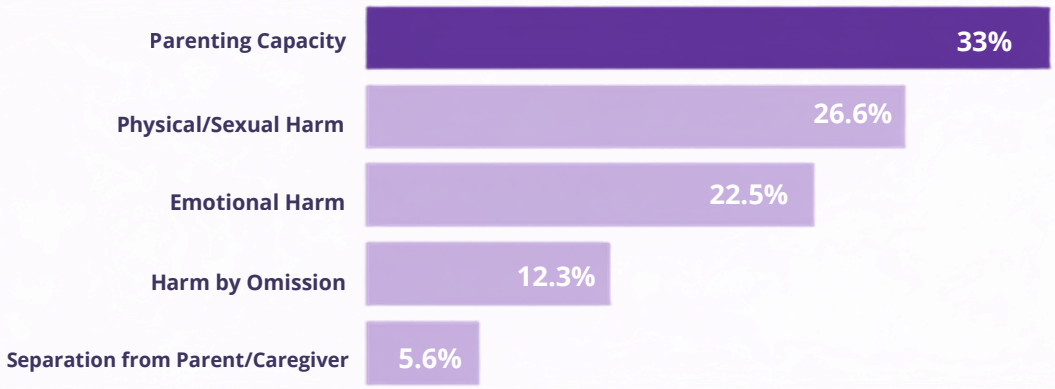
3
Transitional aged youth

10
Adoption completions

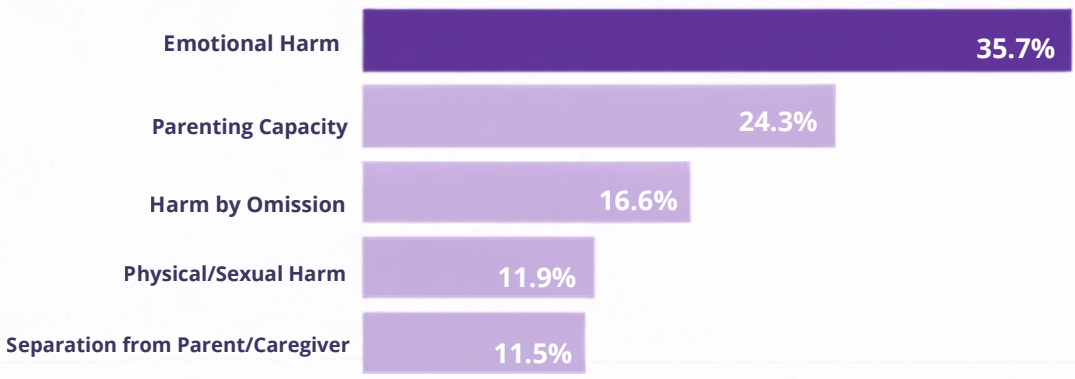


Primary Reasons for Child Welfare Service & Community Links Referrals

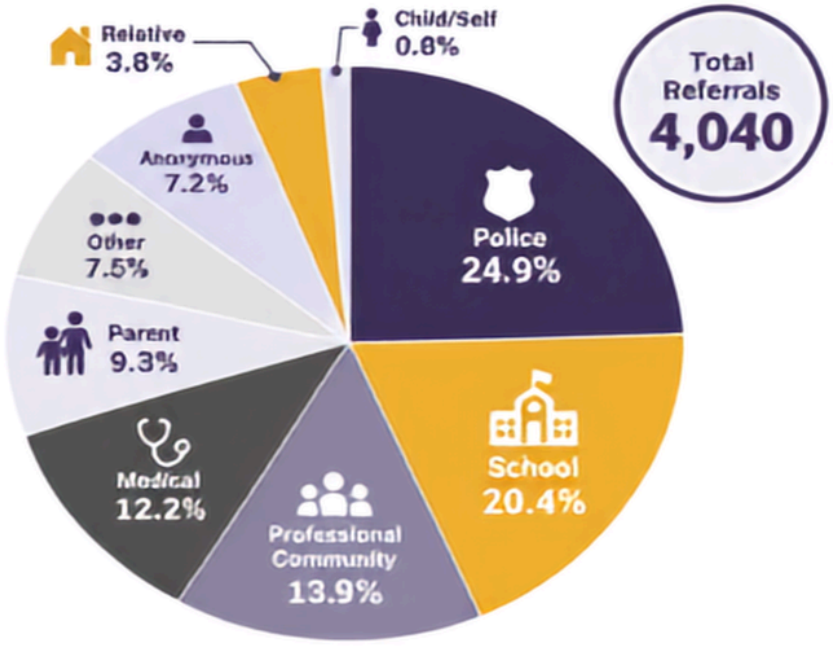
Eligibility Spectrum Codes for Referrals (Cases Served)
TOTAL: 2,443



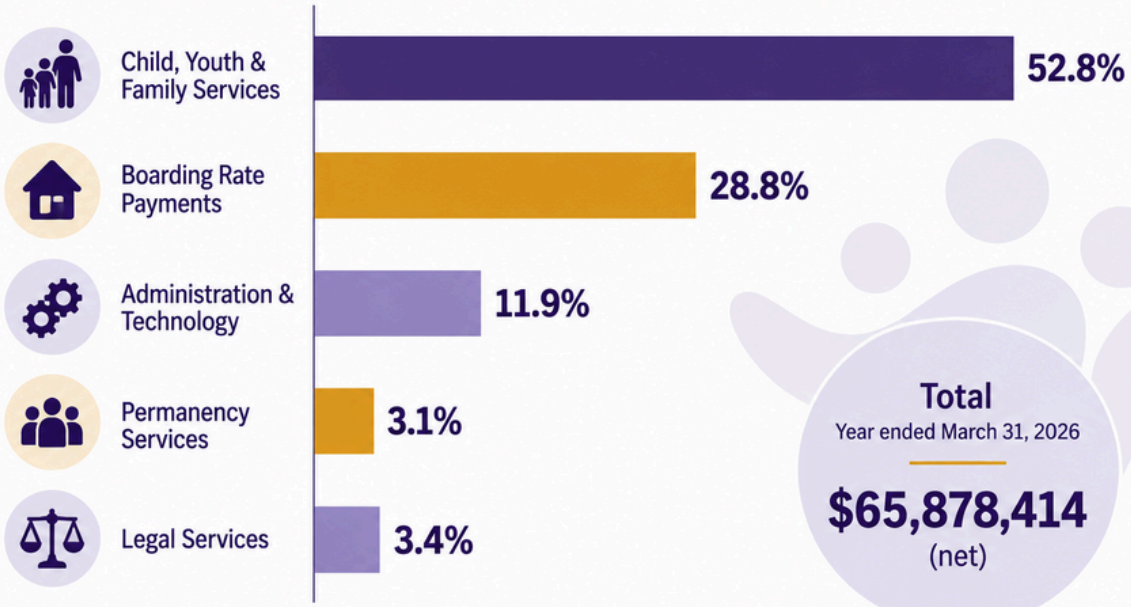
Community Links Referrals
TOTAL: 236



Referral Sources



How the Dollars Were Spent



Total
Year ended March 31, 2026

$65,878,414
(net)

Financial Summary

REVENUE	2025-2026	2024-2025
Province of Ontario	**$67,870,715**	$57,442,051
Other Income	**412,909**	624,725
Non-Retainable Revenue & Expenditure Recoveries	**2,612,442**	1,785,652
Total Revenue	**70,896,066**	**59,852,428**
EXPENDITURES		
Salaries, Benefits, Travel and Training	**41,087,765**	43,454,542
Boarding Rate Payments	**18,972,154**	15,179,602
Child, Youth and Family Costs	**4,589,227**	4,842,017
Administration and Technology	**3,841,710**	4,303,385
Total Expenditures	**68,490,856**	**67,779,546**
Surplus (Deficiency) of Revenue Over Expenditures	**$2,405,210**	**$(7,927,118)**

Audited financial statements available at **wecas.on.ca**

THANK YOU

As we move forward, we remain committed to creating meaningful and lasting impact for children, youth, and families. Through collaboration, innovation, and strong community partnerships, we will continue to strengthen supports, reduce barriers, and create opportunities that help families thrive and empower children and youth to reach their full potential.



WINDSOR-ESSEX Children's Aid FOUNDATION

Learn more about the the programs delivered by the Windsor-Essex Children's Aid Foundation

WECAF 2025 - 2026 Annual Report

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