

2025 - 2026

Annual

Report



TRAVERSE
INDEPENDENCE

Celebrating 50 Years

50 Years of Independent Living

Traverse Independence began as Participation House, established in 1975 by determined parents who envisioned independent living for adults with physical disabilities. In partnership with the Ontario Federation of Cerebral Palsy and the Ministry of Health, they created a beacon of hope.

Incorporated in 1977 as Participation House Project Waterloo Region, the organization established the Highpoint building: one of Ontario's first supportive housing sites. Remarkably, some original clients and staff remain part of Traverse today.

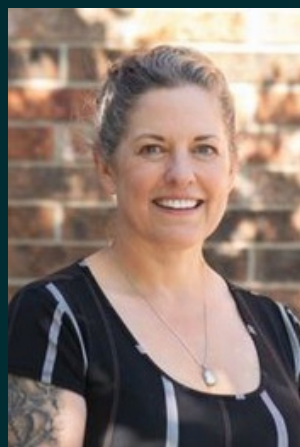
Over the decades, we expanded to serve adults with acquired brain injuries, developed comprehensive brain injury services, and grew across the Region of Waterloo and County of Wellington.

Rebranded as Traverse Independence in 2010, we remain steadfast in our commitment to independent living, honouring the legacy of our founding mothers while adapting to the evolving needs of those we serve.





Message from the CEO & Board Chair



Adrienne Farrell
Board Chair



Toby Harris
CEO

As we celebrate 50 years of service, we reflect on a half-century dedicated to empowering individuals to live independently with dignity and purpose.

This milestone belongs to everyone who has been part of our journey: the families who founded us, the staff who dedicate themselves daily, the community partners who strengthen our work, and most importantly, the people we serve.

Over the past year, we have continued to grow and adapt, expanding our programs while staying true to our founding mission. Our commitment to person-centred care remains unwavering as we navigate new challenges and opportunities.

Looking ahead, we are energized by the possibilities before us. With a strong foundation built over five decades, Traverse Independence is well-positioned to continue innovating and advocating for the communities we serve.

Thank you for being part of our story - past, present, and future.

Our Values

C.A.R.E.S.



C **Compassion**
We lead with empathy in every interaction



A **Accountability**
We take ownership and deliver on our commitments



R **Respect**
We honour the dignity and choices of every individual



E **Excellence**
We pursue the highest standards in all we do



S **Safety**
We create environments where everyone thrives

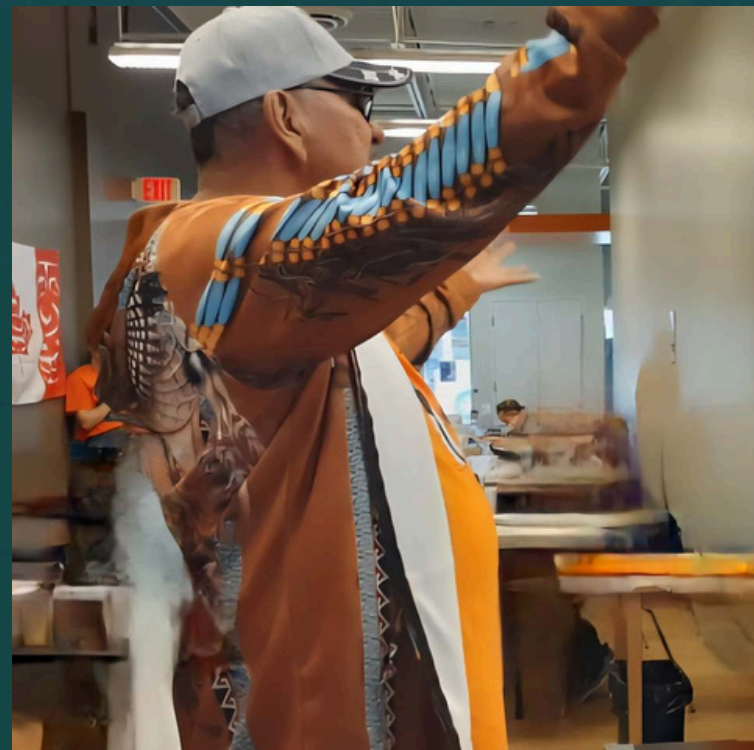




Strategic Priority - Indigenous Culture

We will empower employees and clients to lead diversity initiatives and involve them in shaping the culture. Elevating their opportunities to have input and build trust, cultural safety, and meaningful reconciliation is a critical strategic priority.

"It takes observation, diplomacy, and a willingness to learn from one another. When Indigenous and non-Indigenous people work together to understand each other's perspectives, our differences can become a source of unity and strength" Direct quote by day program client MC



MC
Day Program Client



Without you...we would not exist





THE
FoodBank
OF WATERLOO REGION



Food Security

On behalf of all clients at the Opportunity Centre, as well as those participating in our day programs, we extend our sincere gratitude to our valued partner, the Food Bank of Waterloo Region. Their ongoing support is instrumental in the success and impact of our programs.

The Food Bank plays a vital role in supporting our operations by enabling us to provide between 25 and 60 meals each day. In addition to daily meal service, we prepare take-home hampers to further support our clients' nutritional needs.

10,000+ Meals

Served in 2025/2026



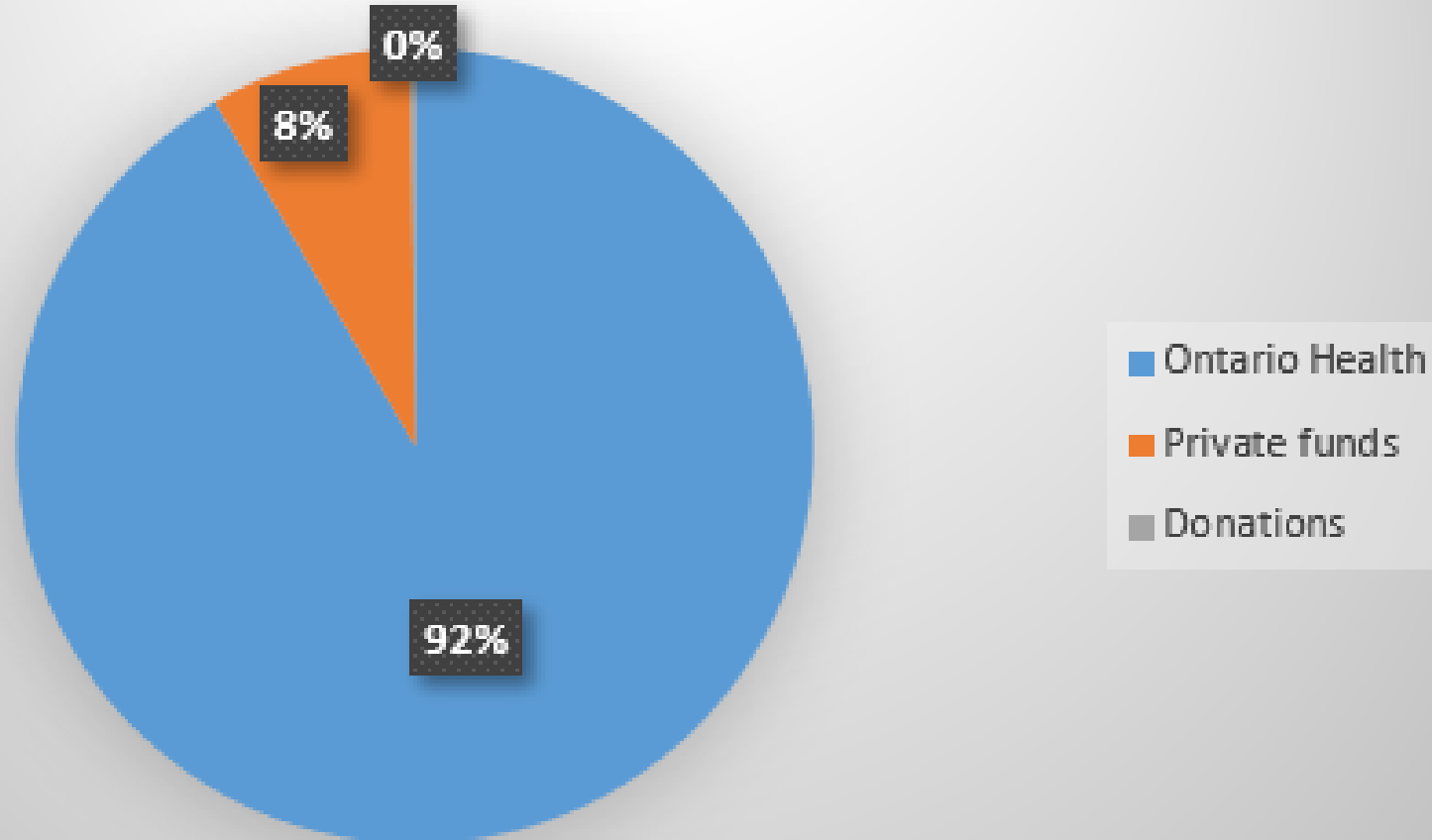
Our Head Office team came together to collect and donate essential items for those in need.

If you're able, please consider donating to these amazing organizations or others in your community. Every little bit helps and makes a real difference!

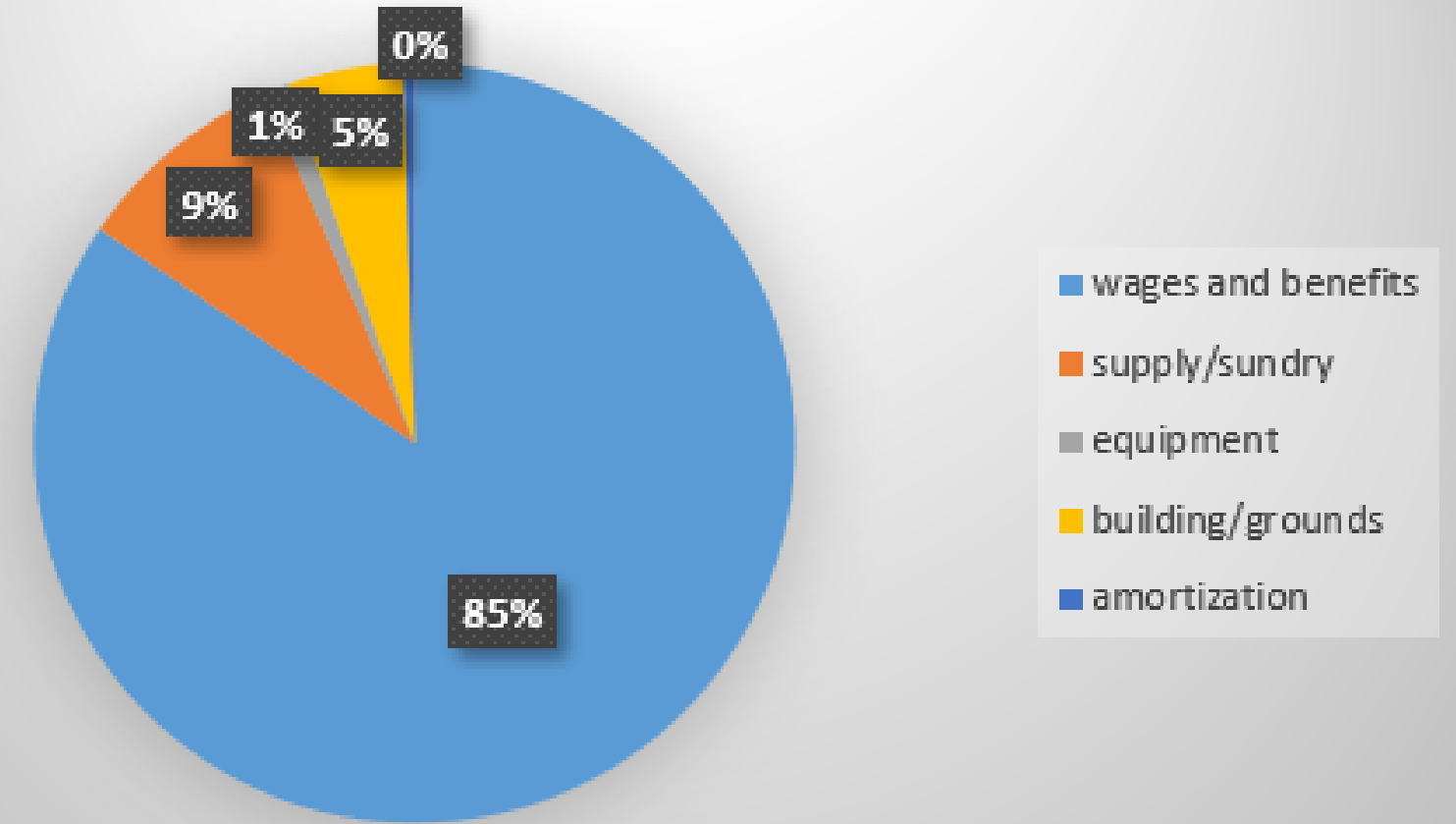
Audited Statements

Full audited financial statements and the 2025/26 Annual Operating Budgets are available on our website at www.traverseindependence.ca

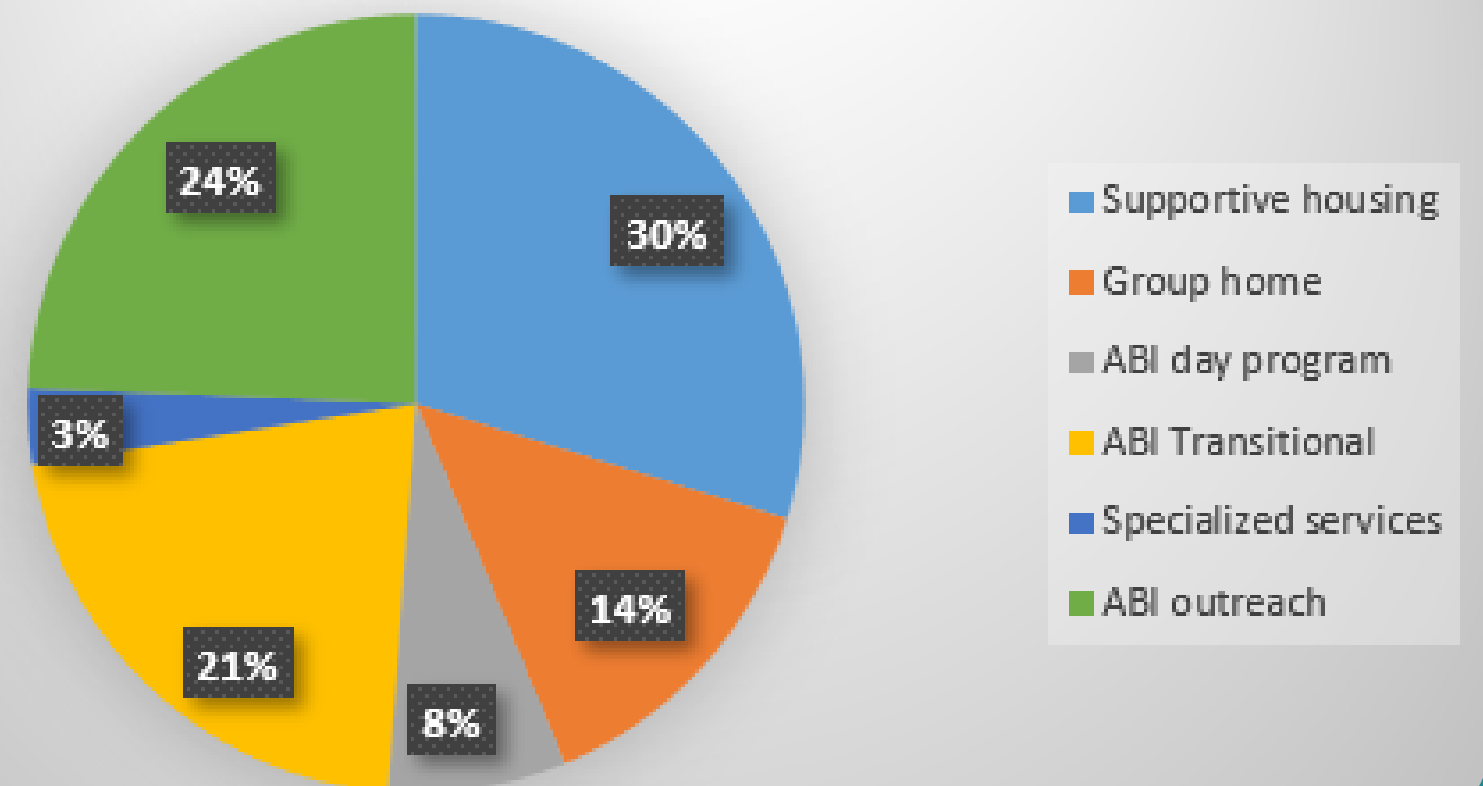
Funding by major source



Total Agency Expenditures by type



Funded Expenditures by Program



Staff Years of Recognition

35 YEARS

Tracy Brown
Attendant Care
(Stanley Avenue)

25 YEARS

Perry Curnew
Attendant Care
(Strasburg Road)

15 YEARS

Adriana Francu
Attendant Care
(Strasburg Road)

Matthew Henderson
Attendant Care
(Tagge Street)

Rosalina (Rosie) Baluyot
Attendant Care
(Strasburg Road)

10 YEARS

Daniel Holisek
ABI Intensive Case Coordinator
and System Navigator (HO)

Sua Ortiz-Yang
Life Skills Facilitator
(Opportunity Centre)

Ranjanbala Christian
Attendant Care (Tagge St.)

Andrew Ziolkowski
Attendant Care (Strasburg)

Elena Arsenault
Community Facilitator (Waterloo Region)

Alexandra (Ally) Beggs
Attendant Care (Opportunity Centre)

5 YEARS

Schyler Hein
Attendant Care
(Tagge St.)

Heather Panico
Attendant Care
(Stanley Avenue)

April Robitaille
Attendant Care
(Strasburg Road)

Mansi Sharma
Attendant Care
(Union Lane)

Yacob Haile
Attendant Care
(Strasburg Road)



Human Resources

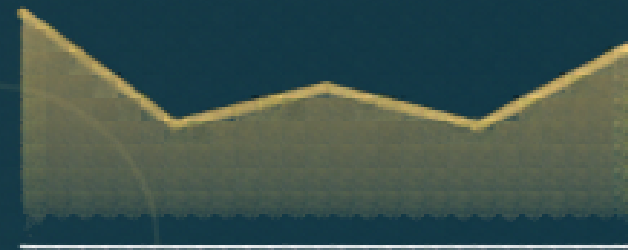
Turnover Rate

9.63%

vs. Previous: 8.1%

Average Vacant Lines

3%



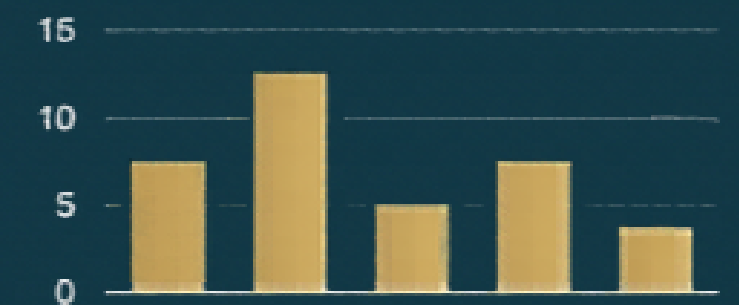
New Hires

31

Period: 2025/26

Placement Students

9



Client Spotlight

1,049 clients served

Lea has lived with a brain injury since she was a small child. Throughout her life, she often felt misunderstood, which added to the challenges she faced.

When she first began receiving supports from Traverse Independence, she described herself as desperate and still actively using substances. She recalled a pivotal moment when Traverse Independence Intensive Case Coordinator, Dan, came to her home. At the time, she said her house was filthy, and she felt unable to carry on. Yet Dan sat with her, listened to her stories for hours, and showed compassion and grace. His willingness to be present in that moment meant a great deal to her.

Following this, Dan referred her to the Traverse Independence day program and by January, she made the decision to begin working toward sobriety. She shared that having access to the day program was a key reason for her ability to get sober. Today, she credits the program for giving her hope and calls it “irreplaceable.”

Now, she feels she is more stable than ever. Emotionally, mentally, and physically. She is hopeful, has goals for her future, and feels the program staff have provided her with the tools needed to be successful. She emphasized that the support she received from staff gave her a life she never thought possible.

In addition to focusing on her own growth, she now actively gives back by volunteering in various ways. She wants to support clients who are in the same place she once was. She shared that staff made her feel supported while still giving her the independence to take ownership of her own journey. She continues to make progress and feels proud of the direction she is heading. Her journey demonstrates resilience, growth, and the impact of compassionate, consistent support.



Our Programs and Services



Stanley Avenue Housing

Residential Services

Supportive Housing - Union Lane, Kitchener
Supportive Housing -Strasbourg Road, Kitchener
ABI Group Home, Tagge Street, Kitchener

Affordable Housing

Bowman Street, Waterloo

ABI Community Services

Drop In Centre Day Program
Scheduled Day Program - Beginnings
Weekend Respite Program
Mainstream Outreach & ABI in the Streets
Intensive Case Coordination and System Navigation
Goal Attainment Program (GAP)
Care to Share Support Groups for Caregivers

ABI Transitional Living Services

Stanley Avenue, Kitchener
Fergusson Place, Fergus



Tagge Street Group Home



Tagge Street Gardening Adventures



Our staff and clients love spending time out in the garden beds planting some delicious favourites like tomatoes, green beans, cucumbers, and red peppers.

There's nothing better than growing your own fresh food!



New Faces



Sarah Thompson
ABI Intake Coordinator

ABI Intake Coordinator

Sarah started with the company in September 2024 as a Community Facilitator for Waterloo Region. Her work most recently has been at the Stanley Ave transitional living program, and supporting CF hours for the caseload of Dan Holisek, our Intensive Case Coordinator. Sarah has also spent time in our mainstream outreach program, and the Goal Attainment Program (GAP).



Naomi Stager
Occupational Therapist

Occupational Therapist

Our OT, Naomi Stager, brings a unique background to her role as an Occupational Therapist by blending her passion for accessibility and inclusive participation with experience across clinical and community settings. She has supported children, youth, and adults in both private and community-based practice, focusing on acquired brain injury, neurodivergence, and mental health.

Naomi earned her Bachelor of Science in Physical Sciences from the University of Guelph and a Master of Science in Occupational Therapy from the University of Western Ontario. Her approach emphasizes accessibility, functional skill development, and meaningful engagement in daily life.

Welcome

Thank You for Your Support

Together, we make a difference in our community!

Traverse Independence

The Region of Waterloo and the County of Wellington