

# BUILDING SUSTAINABLE FUTURES

Employment in a Changing Workforce







*Max Enkin (centre)  
testing at Bergen  
Belsen Displaced  
Persons Camp, 1947.  
Ontario Jewish  
Archives, Blankenstein  
Family Heritage Centre.*

## OUR HERITAGE

JVS Toronto was founded in 1947 by a group of Jewish business leaders to provide employment and vocational services to Holocaust survivors and veterans of the Second World War.

Sewing a buttonhole was a lifeline and the spark that ignited the creation of JVS Toronto. Max Enkin, the Agency's founder, met with Holocaust survivors living in Displaced Persons Camps. Known as **The Tailor Project**, if they could sew a buttonhole, they were considered tailors and were permitted entry into Canada. As a result, 2,000 Jewish garment workers came to Canada to rebuild their lives.

For over 77 years, JVS Toronto has impacted the lives of thousands of individuals by helping them find meaningful employment, plan their careers, and build sustainable livelihoods. Our deep connection to the Jewish community continues to guide our work, especially during these challenging times.

Just as we were in our founding days, we remain dedicated to serving all vulnerable groups, whether newcomers, individuals with disabilities, or those facing barriers to employment, while staying rooted in the values that have defined us since 1947.

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## WE ACKNOWLEDGE

At JVS Toronto, we are mindful that our work takes place on the traditional territories of Indigenous Peoples who have cared for this land for generations. Our offices and staff operate in the areas now known as Toronto and York Region, which are part of the traditional territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit, the Anishinabeg, the Chippewa, the Haudenosaunee and the Wendat peoples.

We acknowledge the enduring presence and resilience of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis Peoples, and we are committed to fostering respect, inclusion, and reconciliation. As we reflect on the work we do, we honour the knowledge and histories of the original caretakers of this land and the ongoing contributions of Indigenous communities.



# Empowering Individuals in an Evolving Workforce

## A Message from Our Leadership

At JVS Toronto, we support individuals on their journeys to meaningful employment, but our mission goes beyond just helping them find jobs. It is about empowering them to build sustainable futures in an ever-changing workforce.

As the job market evolves, with four generations working side-by-side and new technologies reshaping industries, navigating careers has become more complex. Our diverse clients face unique challenges from generational differences in communication styles to the need for continuous skills upgrading.

We recognize these dynamics and provide tailored support that equips individuals to succeed, whether they are re-entering the workforce, changing careers, or adapting to the demands of a modern job market. We ensure our clients have the tools to adjust, grow, and succeed in the labour market over the long term.

### Breaking Barriers and Building Careers

JVS Toronto continues to innovate and grow. Over the past year, we've developed over 20 new industry and community partnerships, engaged top employers and formed key collaborations, strengthened our support systems, and streamlined our services to better meet the unique needs of the clients we serve.

We are collaborating with government officials and community leaders to address key challenges our clients face. Whether it's helping newcomers and refugees who lack local experience or supporting youth in securing their first jobs, we strive to create a job market where everyone has opportunities for success. We are focused on the challenges faced by vulnerable people re-entering the workforce,

single parents balancing work and caregiving, and individuals coping with mental health struggles that may impact their job search. Our goal is a job market where everyone gets a fair shot.

In this report, you'll find inspiring stories like **Perrier's** – a young entrepreneur from our Youth Entrepreneurship Program who came back to JVS Toronto to turn his passion into a successful barbershop. You'll meet **Mina**, a newcomer and single mom who found a job in the competitive IT field, and **Frank**, a single father in his 60s who found joy working in a synagogue kitchen and giving back to his community. These stories show the heart of what we do – helping people find not just jobs, but build sustainable careers with resilience and hope.

### Responding to Crisis and Looking Ahead

This past year has been especially challenging, with the war in Israel deeply affecting many in our community. As an agency founded to help Holocaust survivors and World War II veterans, the rise in anti-Semitism and hate is something we do not take lightly. We remain deeply connected to our Jewish roots and the value of helping others.

Our Jewish Community Programs, which support Jewish individuals facing unemployment and poverty, have been crucial during this crisis. We saw a staggering **300% increase** in demand from Israelis seeking safety in Canada, unprepared for the challenges of immigration.

We are proud of our swift response, like in many crises, JVS Toronto stepped up by connecting those affected with jobs and employment support to help them rebuild

their lives. This reflects our broader commitment, which has endured for over 77 years, to support vulnerable groups in need – whether newcomers, individuals with disabilities, or those facing barriers to employment. Our ability to adapt quickly is made possible thanks to the unwavering support of our community.

### The Impact of Your Support

Your contributions, this past year, have made a real difference. The support from our donors, funders, and community has allowed us to serve **16,632 clients**, guiding them through job searches, skill development, and building meaningful connections. We've launched new services like a Skilled Trades program, introduced a Canadian Securities Course for women in banking and hosted job fairs attended by over **1,700 job seekers** and more than **50 employers**. Just as importantly, we continued to support clients through over **30 programs** at nine locations across the GTA, including bridge training programs for newcomers, mentoring, youth programs for entrepreneurs, recent graduates and at-risk youth, specialized employment and inclusion programs for people with a variety of disabilities, and sector specific workplace training. These achievements are a testament to the power of community.

Thank you for your ongoing support of JVS Toronto. Your contribution helps us continue to serve with the same compassion and commitment we've had for the past 77 years, and ensures a sustainable future, for our clients, our community and the Agency.



*Allison Steinberg*  
**Allison Steinberg**  
Chief Executive Officer

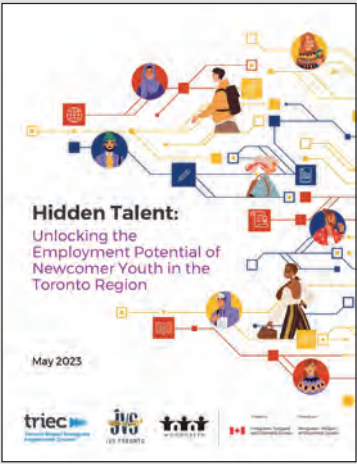


*Ariella Fuhrmann*  
**Ariella Fuhrmann**  
Chair, Board of Directors

## 2023-2024 Research Reports



*"Breaking Barriers and Empowering Change: Unveiling the Triumphs, Challenges, and Identity Struggles of Skilled Immigrant Women in Pursuit of Employment" uncovers the multifaceted challenges immigrant women encounter in their quest for employment in Canada.*



*"Hidden Talent: Unlocking the Employment Potential of Newcomer Youth in the Toronto Region" offers actionable recommendations to foster better employment outcomes for newcomer youth in the GTA.*







**203**  
donors and  
funders

**157**  
dedicated  
employees

“The time, effort and care that JVS Toronto invests in ensuring the success of each individual is remarkable. There are hundreds individuals who are working to their full potential because of their exceptional efforts.”

- JVS Toronto Client

# Our Vision & Mission

**VISION**

To be a leading employment services provider spearheading innovation in local communities and across the country.

**MISSION**

JVS Toronto empowers people from diverse backgrounds and communities to achieve their employment potential and partners with employers to develop a strong and inclusive workforce.

**16,632**  
individuals  
were served at  
JVS Toronto last year.

**6,802**  
employers worked  
with JVS Toronto.





"I highly recommend JVS Toronto. This is a place where unique people work. People whose life calling is to help others. And they do it amazingly."

- JVS Toronto Client



**Accredited**  
IMAGINE CANADA

JVS Toronto is accredited under Imagine Canada's National Standards Program of organizations dedicated to operational excellence.

# Our Values

## EXCELLENCE

We are dedicated to realizing our organization's potential, actively pursuing opportunities for improvement to deliver unparalleled quality of service and become leaders in our field.

## INTEGRITY

Ethical conduct is at the heart of our service delivery. Our work is based on the highest standards, emphasizing transparency in communication with both those we serve and collaborate with.

## RESPECT

Recognizing the diverse needs of each individual, we tailor our services to provide relevant and personalized support. We treat everyone with dignity and compassion, fostering an environment where all feel valued and heard.

## COLLABORATION

We work effectively with our donors, volunteers, government, businesses and the community to build an inclusive workforce in an environment of trust and shared values.



# Focused on Excellence

## Working With Perrier Youth Services



Starting a new business can be both a challenging and rewarding journey. Prior to joining JVS Toronto's **Youth Job Connection (YJC)**, Perrier was interested in becoming a barber, so through the program, he secured a job placement in a local barbershop to gain hands-on experience.

Perrier thrived in the barbershop and continued to apprentice under another barber after his placement ended. His dedication paid off when he obtained his barber's license and proudly opened his own barbershop in January 2024. However, like many new business owners, Perrier quickly encountered challenges. Without the financial and educational privileges to access certain opportunities, he lacked business mentors, financial coaching, and a foundation of understanding of how to manage a business. To add to the complexity, Perrier was also balancing his responsibilities as the full-time guardian of his niece.

Fortunately, Perrier discovered JVS Toronto's **Youth Entrepreneurship Program (YEP)**, a six-month initiative, generously funded by the Freedman Family, designed to help youth launch their own businesses and develop crucial entrepreneurial skills. Fully committed to his journey, Perrier actively participated in the program, attending business-training sessions that featured guest speakers and assignments tailored to the needs of young entrepreneurs. His strong work ethic and eagerness

to learn helped him learn valuable lessons, which he applied directly to his business plan.

In addition to the training, the program provided a grant to be invested Perrier's barbershop and arranged a six-month mentorship with two experienced business owners. These resources provided Perrier with the financial support and guidance he needed to overcome his initial obstacles. By the end of the program, he had developed a deeper understanding of branding, marketing, and financial management, leading to the creation of an actionable business plan that he presented during his graduation ceremony.

Perrier's journey through YEP and his ongoing success as a skilled business owner serves as an inspiring story for other youth with dreams of entrepreneurship. His story is a powerful reminder that with unwavering support, a strong work ethic, and community assistance, anything is possible.

**"Being a part of YEP has helped tremendously with my entrepreneurial journey. The support and teachings have helped me grow so much and have honestly set me up for success."**

- Perrier



803

individuals participated in specialized programs for vulnerable youth.



2,501

referrals where made by JVS Toronto to ensure individuals were connected with the right services.





# Focused on Discovery

**Working with Marc**  
Career Exploration & Counselling



Many underemployed individuals face the challenge of balancing multiple part-time jobs just to make ends meet. For Marc, this struggle was all too familiar. Working as a church music director, piano teacher, and caterer, he found himself stretched thin, with insufficient income to cover his expenses. Despite working seven days a week, financial hardship became a constant reality, and the pressure left him with little time to pursue more stable work. Marc was left feeling desperate to regain control of his finances.

A referral to JVS Toronto was a turning point in Marc's career. **Career Exploration** workshops provided the tools and guidance he needed to take a more targeted approach to his career development. With the help of JVS Toronto's Employment Experts, Marc identified his core values and explored potential career paths.

Marc's open-mindedness and strong communication skills stood out in the workshop, where he inspired fellow participants and worked collaboratively. Marc's perseverance and outstanding interpersonal abilities were contagious – others often looked to him for encouragement. His growth throughout the program left a lasting impact on everyone he worked with.

One career that caught Marc's attention was becoming a butler. With JVS Toronto's support, he crafted a standout resume and approached a butler agency for training, leading to his first interview and job offer.

The new role was life-changing. Marc went from working seven days a week to a stable 40-hour workweek, and his income increased significantly. Today, Marc has been working as a House Manager and finally enjoys the stability he had long sought.

His experience with JVS Toronto was so positive that he has referred over a dozen people, confident that they too would benefit from our services.

Marc also achieved complete financial recovery, clearing his debt within five years. He attributes much of his success to the support he received from JVS Toronto.

By no longer being burdened by debt and working in a role that provides the security he needed, Marc has built a strong foundation for his future.

**“I wasn't sure what to do or where to turn. Now, because of the experience and support I received from JVS Toronto, I have people reach out to me with opportunities – I'm no longer the one chasing after jobs.”**

- Marc



**62,374**  
services or supports  
were accessed at JVS  
Toronto last year.



# Focused on Community

## Working With Frank

### Jewish Community Services



The internet has created great opportunities for job searching and connecting to employers, with many companies posting job openings on platforms like LinkedIn. However, for some individuals, the shift toward online applications can create barriers. Frank, a single father in his 60s, faced just that.

The weight of financial pressure and the responsibility of caring for his children all while being unemployed took a toll on Frank's mental health. He found himself feeling hopeless and overwhelmed, as he worried about his future and ability to provide for his family. Despite his struggles, Frank remained determined to find stability.

That's when Frank was referred to one of JVS Toronto's Jewish Community Programs through Jewish Family & Child Services. Through the **EMETemployment** program, generously funded by UJA Federation, Frank began receiving guidance and personalized support, helping him overcome his technology struggles. The staff team worked closely with Frank to identify opportunities that matched his experience and needs.

Their efforts led to a kitchen job at a local synagogue, a role that matched Frank's skills and offered the compensation he was seeking. This job was especially meaningful to Frank because of his Jewish identity. Working in a space where his values were understood

and respected made the opportunity even more special. The synagogue also allowed him to observe Shabbat, which was deeply important to him and his family.

Frank is thrilled about his role, where he can draw on his deep knowledge of Jewish food and give back to his community. The synagogue provided him with a welcoming and supportive environment, even delaying his start date so he could spend the summer with his children.

Frank's story is a powerful example of how JVS Toronto helps job seekers overcome barriers to meaningful employment. By connecting Frank with an employer that aligns with his values, lifestyle, and needs as a father, JVS Toronto has ensured that Frank is not only set up to succeed but also to thrive in the long term. This strong match lays the foundation for sustainable employment, enabling Frank to build a future where he can provide for his family and contribute to his community.

**"I was crying almost every night. I was so worried about my kids and our future. JVS Toronto found me a job and coached me through everything – they even helped me get clothes for the interview. It was more than I could have hoped for."**

- Frank



**950**

**individuals were served in Jewish community funded programs.**



**1,235**

**employers actively worked with EMETemployment.**

\*Stock image used to protect the client's identity at their request.





# Focused on Momentum

Working with Mina  
Newcomer Services



Adapting to a new culture and finding employment can be a difficult task for newcomers to Canada – especially if they have a family to support. Mina, an experienced IT professional, came to Canada from Jamaica in March 2023. She sought a better life for herself and her three-month-old child.

With six years of experience in the IT field and several post-secondary qualifications, Mina thought her transition into the Canadian job market would be straightforward, especially since she spoke fluent English. However, after six months of job searching without success, Mina realized she needed extra support to overcome the challenges she was facing. That’s when she joined JVS Toronto’s **Road to Employment for Immigrant Women** program – a specialized initiative designed to build resilience, motivation, and preparedness for the Canadian labour market.

Through various classes, the program provided Mina with the necessary tools and guidance to overcome the barriers she faced in securing employment in the IT industry. In class, Mina refined her already strong communication skills to be better prepared for the Canadian workplace and job interviews. She explored effective ways to present her resume, found networking opportunities and received interview coaching.

The program also offered resilience-building sessions that helped Mina manage the personal challenges that added to the stress of her job search, such as securing childcare and maintaining financial stability. Without a support network in Canada, Mina relied solely on her savings while searching for employment. Despite not being able to find childcare, she was committed to her journey, attending every class with her baby in tow.

Outside of class, Mina continued networking and applying to job openings, while receiving ongoing coaching to improve her interview skills. Her

perseverance paid off. Over time, she started receiving more interview requests, and eventually, she was offered positions at two top-tier companies.

Today, Mina is working full-time in the IT industry and has achieved the stability she came to Canada seeking. Wanting to give back to the community, Mina has committed to being a guest speaker for future cohorts at JVS Toronto. Her story of resilience and successful integration into Canadian society will undoubtedly inspire future newcomer women to achieve their dreams.

**“JVS Toronto helped me to see new perspectives and stay positive. Now I can say I have grown, settled into a job, and my son is thriving. I recommend the Agency to all newcomer women trying to navigate their way in Canada.”**

- Mina



237

internationally  
trained professionals  
participated in bridge  
training programs.

\*Stock image and pseudonym used to protect the client’s identity at their request.



# Focused on Inclusion

## Working With George Disability Services



Finding employment with limited experience can be tough for anyone, and George faced additional hurdles when he began his journey with JVS Toronto's **Youth Community Choices for Success (YCCS)**. YCCS is a specialized pre-employment program for individuals aged 18 to 29 with a dual diagnosis, which in George's case included Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and a developmental delay.

George is naturally outgoing and friendly, easily making connections with people wherever he goes. However, when he first joined YCCS, he often struggled with staying focused, had trouble remembering routines, and would sometimes get caught up in conversations about his favourite topics, distracting himself and others. Despite these challenges, George's determination to improve his skills and gain work experience never wavered.

With the guidance of JVS Toronto's Disability Employment Experts, George applied for a gate attendant position at the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE). The team supported him throughout the process, helping him prepare his application, coached him on proper interview etiquette, and even conducted mock interviews to boost his confidence. Thanks to this support, George aced his interview and landed the job.

As a gate attendant, George became the welcoming face of the CNE, greeting guests, scanning tickets, and answering questions. With ongoing support from YCCS staff, George quickly learned his responsibilities and thrived in the role. His employers noticed that George's friendly demeanor left a lasting impression on guests, many of whom entered the park with smiles on their faces after interacting with him. His hard work and enthusiasm led to an invitation to return the following year – a role George has proudly held for four summers.

When George came to JVS Toronto in 2019, he had no prior work experience and little self-confidence. Now, he has a regular role at the CNE and, with that customer service experience on his resume, he was also able to secure a job at Sheridan Nurseries. George now enjoys steady employment with two companies eager to have him on their team. He continues to strive for self-improvement and is focused on building his new skills.

**"The program improved my skills – time management, working with other people, learning to respect others, knowing each other's strengths and weaknesses."**

- George

\*Stock image used to protect the client's identity at their request.



  
**227**

**individuals served through specialized employment and inclusion programs for people with a variety of disabilities.**

  
**315**

**employers partnered with our Disability Services programs.**





# Focused on People

Working with  
Pelman Foods  
Employer Services



Every employee pictured was once a client at JVS Toronto.

Pelman Foods, a family-owned and operated business, has been serving authentic Eastern European pierogis and pelmeni for nearly 25 years. Beyond their delicious products, they have also shown a deep commitment to their community by partnering with JVS Toronto's **Employer Services Division**. They provide stable and supportive employment opportunities for Ukrainian refugees who face significant language and cultural challenges upon arriving in Canada.

For newcomers with low English proficiency, finding a job can feel impossible. Several Ukrainian clients of JVS Toronto faced this barrier. Pelmen Foods, however, believes in creating opportunities for all. They partnered with JVS Toronto to offer employment opportunities to multiple clients, some with no prior work experience and limited English.

JVS Toronto clients consistently provide positive feedback about their experience with Pelmen Foods. They highlight the company's safe working conditions, good benefits, and excellent job perks. Pelmen Foods' leadership, originally from Ukraine themselves, understands firsthand the struggles of starting over in a new country. This personal connection has fostered a strong sense of community within their team, helping Ukrainian employees better integrate into the workplace.

In addition to offering employment, Pelmen Foods participated in a JVS Toronto-hosted job fair. Our in-person and virtual hiring events offer opportunities for employers to connect with candidates, with our Employment Experts preparing participants for success at these events.

JVS Toronto has built a strong relationship with Pelmen Foods, who continues to offer job opportunities to Ukrainian newcomers. To date, Pelmen Foods has hired 17 JVS Toronto clients saying, "One of the most

rewarding parts of working with JVS Toronto has been helping people who've escaped the war in Ukraine. These incredibly brave individuals have gone through so much, leaving behind their homes, loved ones, and everything they knew, but with the support of JVS Toronto, those challenges turn into stepping stones on their path to success."

**"JVS Toronto helped us connect with talented individuals who might otherwise face barriers to employment. Their dedication and support have made a real difference, allowing us to create a welcoming and supportive workplace."**

- Diana Hecht  
VP at Pelman Foods



**1,733**  
job seekers and 55  
employers attended  
hiring events.



# Focused on Motivation

## Working With Ramin Pre-Arrival Services



Every newcomer to Canada has a unique story, yet many share similar challenges - language barriers and the lack of Canadian work experience make it difficult to find jobs beyond survival roles. Ramin had extensive experience in the construction industry in his home country of Iran, but he moved to Canada in search of better opportunities.

While researching skilled trades in the Canadian job market, Ramin quickly became overwhelmed by the regulations, requirements, and industry-specific terminology. Doubt crept in, and he began to worry about his ability to find a suitable job after arriving. That's when he discovered **Canada InfoNet** – JVS Toronto's pre-arrival employment acceleration and mentoring program for professionals immigrating to Canada.

Still in Iran, Ramin connected with an Employment Expert who assessed his skills and helped him explore career options in Canada's skilled trades sector. Together, they researched several potential career paths, and Ramin was drawn to the plumbing sector, motivated by the high demand, good job security and potential for growth in the field.

Eager to get started before his July 2024 arrival, Ramin was paired with a mentor in the plumbing industry through Canada InfoNet. His mentor provided first-hand information about the profession, job

prospects, and the certifications he would need to work in Ontario, while his Employment Expert helped him access English Language Training.

By the time Ramin landed, he was prepared for his new career. He had a clear understanding of the plumbing trade, its current job market, working conditions, and employer expectations. His communication skills have improved and he has built a network of professionals in the field. Ramin is set to take the Red Seal Exam in October 2024. This certification will open doors to plumbing jobs and even entrepreneurship opportunities, should he decide to start his own business.

The support JVS Toronto offers is tailored to each client's needs and that has a significant impact on skilled immigrants trying to make their way in a new country – ensuring that people, like Ramin, can build sustainable, prosperous careers in Canada.

**“Learning from someone already in the field gave me valuable insights to develop my skills and build a stable career in a new environment.”**

- Ramin



**1,691**

**individuals received occupation-specific job search support and/or mentoring prior to arriving in Canada.**



**250**

**volunteer mentors dedicated their time to helping new Canadians.**



# Thank you for your generous support

## Our Funders

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Immigration, Refugees and  
Citizenship Canada  
Service Canada

**PROVINCIAL**  
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Immigration, Training and  
Skills Development  
Ministry of Children,  
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<sup>z"l</sup> identifies those who have passed away and means "of blessed memory" in Hebrew.  
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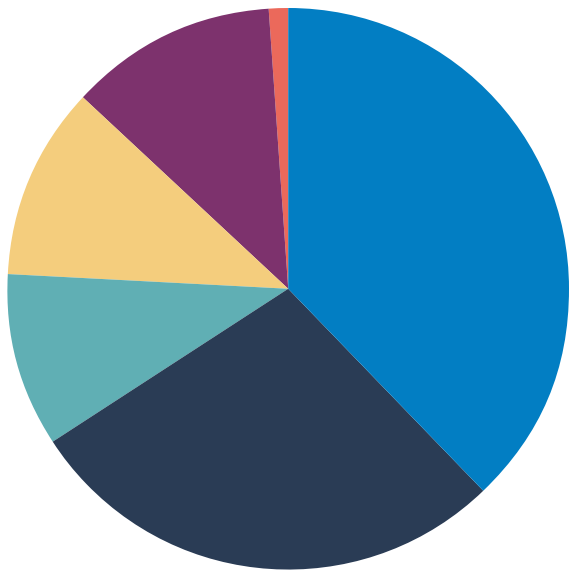
# Financial Summary

REVENUE	2024	2023
Federal, Provincial and Municipal Grants	16,580,720	15,614,963
Fees For Service and Other	394,540	871,883
UJA Federation	308,987	415,580
United Way Greater Toronto	558,205	571,985
Donations Recognized per the deferred contribution method	666,124	511,092
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$18,508,576</b>	<b>\$17,985,503</b>
Total Donations Received in Fiscal Year	669,387	485,788

EXPENSES	2024	2023
Employment and Career Services	6,712,724	7,116,120
Newcomer Services	4,916,275	4,531,304
Disability Services	1,724,531	1,659,392
Youth Services	2,048,748	1,784,899
Administration	2,243,814	1,921,891
Amortization and other	175,493	249,492
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$17,821,584</b>	<b>\$17,263,099</b>
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	686,992	722,404

## How we spent our revenue

- 38% Employment and Career Services
- 28% Newcomer Services
- 10% Disability Services
- 11% Youth Services
- 12% Administration
- 1% Amortization and other



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Elana Hagi  
Prabhas Jha  
Mana Nikaeen  
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Viren Patel  
Tori Peacock  
Janet Schoel  
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Jordan Wong

Allison Steinberg,  
*Chief Executive Officer*

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