

OTTAWA COALITION OF
COMMUNITY HOUSES

YEAR 2024

ANNUAL REPORT 2024

LATEST INFORMATION AND UPDATES
ABOUT OCCH



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A WORD FROM THE COORDINATOR

As we wrap-up 2024, let's pause to take a collective big breath!

In 2024, OCCH continued to be a strong partner in advancing the City of Ottawa's Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Plan, with a focus on food security, mental health, youth social development, and support to priority neighbourhoods. These areas remain cornerstones of our work, and we are deeply committed to ensuring that every resident, particularly those living in social housing, has access to the services, opportunities, and supports they need to thrive.

This past year, we also made significant progress in strengthening our infrastructure and organizational capacity, notably through key IT upgrades. These investments support our collective ability to track, measure, and evaluate programs more effectively, helping us to tell a stronger story about impact and need. This work moves us closer to a more cohesive and coordinated approach to service delivery across all member community houses. A major milestone in 2024 was the increase to our Community Child & Youth funding envelope through the United Way East Ontario. This was the first increase in many years and comes at a crucial time, as we continue to deliver responsive, community-based programming that supports children and youth in their development and builds a strong sense of belonging.

Another highlight this year was the OCCH Youth Symposium, which brought together young leaders, youth workers and service providers from across the city to learn, connect, and strategize around systemic change. While we briefly pivoted to support the City of Ottawa's Youth Forum, we are energized to return to our community youth-led approach, fostering civic engagement and amplifying the voices of youth in decision-making processes.

Even though we have had some small successes this year, the Coalition staff understand the last few years have been difficult and straining for community house staff and volunteers and most importantly the communities. We will continue to strive to support the member community houses, whether it be in resources, representing at system change levels or simply to offer support when needed.

Beth Tooley
Coalition Coordinator



OVERVIEW OF OCCH STAFF ROLES

OCCH staff work together to create a wide range of support to Coalition members while also working to build capacity and strengthen networks.

Convening the OCCH:

- Monthly OCCH General meetings;
- Monthly Leadership Team meetings;
- Monthly Incorporated Houses meetings;
- Monthly CCYN meetings;
- Strategic planning.

Individualized Support to Community Houses:

- Advice and coaching;
- Onsite staffing for operations or child and youth programs;
- AGM support;
- Outreach;
- Establishing partnerships;
- Facilitations and trainings;
- Funding support;
- Evaluation design and processes.

Community House Child and Youth Network Development:

- Dedicated staff to focus on building the CCYN and supporting community house child and youth programming;
- Creating a resource hub for child and youth staff to use for various programming and mental health support (i.e., staff and program participants);
- Facilitating events, workshops and activities relevant to skill development for children and youth;
- Establish new community partnerships for program facilitations and events.

Evaluation:

- Community House needs assessments;
- Identifying collective trends;
- Common evaluation (includes collective programs and services, City of Ottawa and Ottawa Community Housing);
- Evaluations and reports for Community Enhanced Homework Clubs:
 - One on one assessments for literacy, numeracy and STEM, followed by a comprehensive report outlining trends and recommendations moving forward.

Program Support:

- Supporting collective programs with best practices and guidelines;
- Program development and activity planning for after-school programs
- Seeking program funding to meet the needs of the communities;
- Project coordination, donor relations and accountability;
- Partnership development and maintenance;
- Training facilitations:
 - Child and youth staff training on programming and safety, DEI workshop for children and youth.

Systems Work:

- Advocacy:
 - Ensuring the assets and needs of Community Houses are brought to tables/committees across Ottawa;
- Placement on city-wide tables/committees.

OCCH CORE FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

City of Ottawa:

Equitable Systems and Structures Funding \$78,642

The OCCH was funded to support social infrastructure for 2022-2026. This funding is aimed to support the the following outcomes

- Improved organizational capacities and sustainability
- Equitable infrastructure assets are built and sustained, responding to needs, and enhanced or expanded opportunities to plan, innovate, evolve or address needs
- The social infrastructure of Ottawa is strengthened and resilient

United Way of Eastern Ontario:

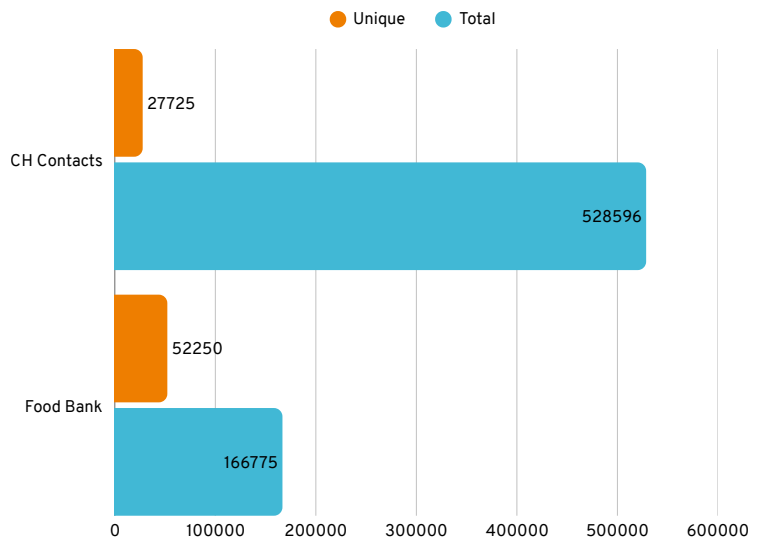
Agency Capacity \$24,000

The OCCH was funded to support agency capacity.

This funding supports the administration of the OCCH to cover the backbone support for collective impact work. This includes ongoing communication, shared agenda and common evaluation. Funds from UWEO go directly to supporting collective programming across the Community Houses, specifically food security programs and children and youth programs.

Capacity building efforts OCCH staff have supported community houses in program and service design and delivery.

In 2024, 16 OCCH member organizations had **27,725** unique individuals access programs and services for a total of **528,596** contacts.



OCCH PROJECT & INITIATIVES FUNDING HIGHLIGHTS

Ottawa Community Foundation: Community House Summer Nutrition Grant \$25,000

This funding supported the distribution of healthy meals and snacks to programming across 15 community houses in the summer of 2024. Funding was equitably distributed to each house based on the number of children attending programming. Each house was allowed flexibility with funds to purchase ready-made meals from a community partner or purchase food items to prepare on-site.

Community Services Recovery Fund: Human Resources and Policy Development Grant \$46,000

Commencing in June 2023 and ending in June 2024, this funding supported the development of individualized policy and procedure manuals across five incorporated community houses (Banff Avenue, Blair Court, Britannia Woods, Confederation Court, Debra Dynes and Russell Heights). Funding allowed for the engagement of an HR service firm (TAP Strategy and HR) to audit and assess needs for policy and HR resources in individual community houses.

United Way of Eastern Ontario: All That Kids Can Be \$96,343

In 2024, we saw a significant increase in United Way funding for after school programming, from \$68,000 to \$96,343. This marks the first increase in over 10 years.

Split between 15 Community Houses, these funds are used to deliver critical hours programming directly within the neighbourhoods. The funding provides staffing dollars to support 2 hours a week of children's programming in the Community Houses. The \$6,422/yr each Community House receives is helpful in leveraging additional funds to run programs that meet the needs of the communities

Program indicators include:

- Children and youth are connected to their community
- Children develop soft skills
- Participants eat healthier, increase their physical activity
- Children have improved emotional well-being
- Children practice pro-social behaviours

OCCH staff provide coordination of the funding, support individual Community Houses with programming, ongoing program evaluation and reporting. In addition, OCCH staff are always seeking out and applying for funding to support this program. Examples include OCDSB and OCSB tutoring funds, May Court Club, etc.

**Community Services Recovery Fund:
Building Shared IT Systems \$68,880**

Commencing in June 2023 and ending in June 2024, this funding supported the development of a shared database between five incorporated community houses (Banff Avenue, Blair Court, Britannia Woods, Confederation Court, Debra Dynes and Russell Heights). Funding allowed for the engagement of an IT service firm (TOOSTS) to design, develop and implement a database for community houses to work more effectively in tracking and reporting trends.

**Ottawa Community Foundation: French
Programming Supports \$23,090**

Through two separate grants, 15 Community Houses were supported with this funding opportunity. Building the capacity of Community House after school and summer programs to increase their ability to offer French language supports within existing programming. This funding has allowed for Community Houses to minimally address the need for French language supports, as we are seeing the numbers of French speaking families growing in our neighbourhoods.

**Ontario Trillium Foundation: Resilient
Communities Grant - IT Infrastructure
\$192,700 (June 2024-June 2026)**

This funding supports the expansion of our IT infrastructure to 10 additional community houses, resulting in a uniform and consistent case management system across the network. Funding allowed for the continued engagement of IT service firm TOOSTS to continue database development and designing a referral database.

**Rotary Club of Nepean-Kanata:
Community House Food Program
Support \$42,000**

This funding provided relief to community house food programs during the ongoing food crisis this year. Funds went directly to staffing so that there was continued critical frontline service in distributing food in the community.

**Ottawa Community Foundation:
Community Child & Youth Coordination
\$24,000**

Build capacity of community child and youth programs. This funding includes the development of the Community Child and Youth Network, staff training and program support.

This funding is instrumental in the OCCH's involvement with OCYI and strategic partnership development.

Organize and host a youth symposium convening key stakeholders, children and youth, and youth workers.

Develop a resource hub for child and youth staff workers to utilize for diverse programming, tutoring, and creating a safe space for children and youth.

Ottawa Catholic School Board \$17,000

The OCSB continued funding to the five Community House Tutoring programs to support OCSB students in the community with literacy and numeracy development.



OCCH PARTNERSHIP PROJECTS & INITIATIVES

Research Project Partnership with Health Canada and University of Ottawa (*Feasibility Study of Community Engagement Approach to Recruitment and Retention of Marginalized Populations in Longitudinal Biomonitoring Research on Environmental Chemicals*)

- Role as anchor agency in the City of Ottawa for the project
- Planned and participated in conversation circles in February 2024
- Weekly meetings to lead and provide input on community-based approach and recruitment strategies for next phase of the project heading into 2025

Ottawa Community Housing Lease and Partnership Agreement

- Initiation of discussions around lease and partnership agreements with OCH representatives, ongoing negotiations with OCH representatives and community house/health and resource centre representatives

Unity Sports Tournament:

- Partnership with OSEG Foundation and Centre for Resilience and Social Development (CRSD) to provide food, prizes, transportation hosted at the Tomlinson BGC gym.
- Organized a full day basketball tournament for male youths aged 14-18 from the following community houses: *Banff-Ledbury Community House, Confederation Court Community House, Debra Dynes Community House and Russell Heights Community House.*

CCYN Youth Symposium: Exploring Community-Driven Systems Change for Black & Racialized Youth in Ottawa

- Partnership with Centre for Resilience and Social Development (CRSD) and the City of Ottawa to plan and host an all-day Youth Symposium in June
- Weekly meetings to lead and plan panel discussions covering youth and systems players
- Recruitment of youth to attend event, plan transportation
- Coordination of partnerships to fund and support this initiative
- Over 138 people were in attendance
- Symposium Report written



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

Strategic partnerships are vital to the success and sustainability of Community Houses. Through these partnerships, we are able to strengthen connections and realize opportunities to work together towards common goals and outcomes, identify opportunities to support and contribute to initiatives and share ideas and experiences.

**AFRICAN, CARIBBEAN &
BLACK (ACB)
PEER SUPPORT GROUP**



ACB Peer Support Network

Represented community program



**Algonquin College Bachelor of Early Learning
and Community Development Advisory Committee**

Represented community program



Community Development Framework (CDF)

Represented at the Steering Table, Mental Wellbeing Working Group, OTF Resilient Communities Funding Working Group, CDF Resource Allocation Working Group, CDF Learning Forum Planning, Family Neighbourhood Strategy



Food Security Task Force

Ottawa Food Bank, City of Ottawa, Food programs: Developing a play book for City declared emergencies to ensure food security and emergency readiness



Ottawa's Guiding Council for Mental Health
and Addictions
Conseil d'orientation sur la santé mentale et
les dépendances d'Ottawa

Guiding Council for Mental Health and Addictions

Development of an alternative crisis response strategy to address mental health and substance use in Ottawa
Bi-weekly meetings reviewing best practices from other jurisdictions, OPS and EMS crisis responses, community mental health and substance use resources
Supported the selection and recruitment of individuals onto the People with Lived and Living Experience Reference Group
Development of the ANCHOR pilot project



Heron Gate Steering Table

Opportunity to meet with partners and gain knowledge of initiatives and opportunities happening in the South end of Ottawa (OCCH has 4 houses in this area)



Ottawa Child & Youth Initiative (OCYI)

Coalition Coordinator Co-Chaired the Critical Hours Task Group, Child and Youth Network Facilitator were Steering Committee members.



Ottawa Community Food Partnership

Member of the OCFP Coalition. Elected onto the Stewardship Committee, guiding the work of the OCFP.



Ottawa Community Housing Foundation

Monthly check-in meetings; Pack-A-Sack, food support, Youth Futures, scholarships.



Ottawa Food Bank
La Banque d'Alimentation d'Ottawa

Ottawa Food Bank

Member of the Network Steering Table that meets monthly, Co-Lead of the Wraparound Support Action Group meeting every second week.



United for All

United for All is a coalition of 44 organizations representing 150+ partners who are all committed to overcoming hate-based violence, racism, and extremism in East Ontario; Rapid Response Committee member; U4A Coalition member.



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT & CAPACITY BUILDING

City of Ottawa Project Funding

An additional six Community Houses applied for and received project funding to offer the community family support services.

City of Ottawa

Community Safety Wellbeing Plan Fund \$398,772 (per year/3 years)

Six Community Houses* applied for and received funding from the City of Ottawa's Community Safety Wellbeing Plan.

The 3 year project funds support services for Black/racialized young people and their families to support healthy development and wellbeing.

A wide range of wraparound supports are available, including opportunities to be involved in their community.

OCCH staff were instrumental in the application process, developing the project framework and providing ongoing program evaluation.

**Banff Ave, Blair Court, Britannia Woods, Confederation Court, Debra Dynes, Russell Heights.*

Trainings

Summer Staff Training

- Program Planning 101
- Incorporating Literacy into Summer Programs
- OCYI Three Pillars Training
- Anti-Racism & Anti-Oppression Training: Creating Liberatory Camp Spaces

- Presented at City Hall
 - Food Systems delegations at the Community Protective Services Committee
 - Community Safety and Wellbeing Plan Community Protective Services Committee
- Development of Interactive Mapping Tools (ESRI/ARCGIS)
 - Mapping food banks and boundaries, city serving food programs
 - Mapping community housing, low-income areas and services
- Development of CCYN Website
 - Tutoring tools
 - Academic documents and activities
 - Various activity documents and resources
- Literacy Kits and STEM kits for AFP
- Community Black Mental Health Wellness Expo 2024
 - Represented OCCH at event hosted by Ottawa Black Mental Health Coalition
 - Shared details of Community Safety and Wellbeing funding from participating houses: Banff & Blair Court



ATTEMPTED AND UNACHIEVED INITIATIVES

Laidlaw Foundation

The Laidlaw Foundation was funding youth-led projects aimed towards systems change in justice, child-welfare and/or education system.

The proposed project would bring together youth to address inequities in education and justice systems through centering experiences, fostering leadership and advocacy.

UW Mental Health

The proposal was to increase access to critical culturally appropriate mental health services and supports for children and their families.

The goal was to build capacity of families in high needs communities to better identify and respond to mental health challenges early to ensure positive outcomes.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

OCCH funding is held by the sponsor organization, Britannia Woods Community House. In 2024, Confederation Court Community House sponsored three project grants and Blair Court Community House sponsored one.

Below are some highlights that reflect the budget in 2024.

\$616,288

Amount brought in by OCCH in 2024 through core funding and grants

\$165,860

Total OCCH staffing costs

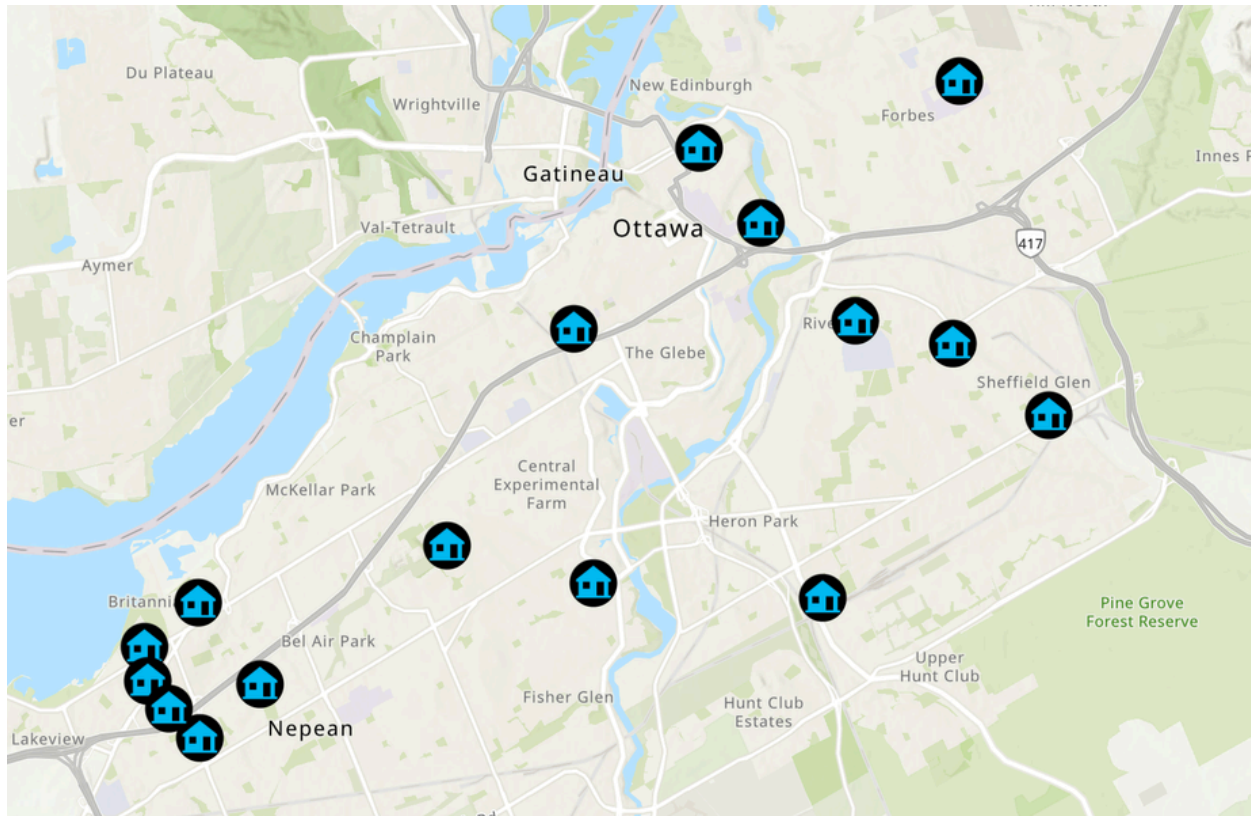
\$214,342

Program funding distributed to Community Houses

\$148,617

Contracts to support collective projects

2024 Admin/Overhead: \$13,436
Supplies and Expenses: \$21,133
Carry forward to 2025: \$52,900



Locations Across Ottawa

- Banff Avenue Community House
- Blair Court Community House
- Britannia Woods Community House
- Caldwell Family Centre
- Carson's Community House
- Confederation Court Community House
- Debra Dynes Family House
- Foster Farm Family House
- Lower Town Good Neighbours
- Michele Heights Community House
- Morrison Gardens Community House
- Pinecrest Terrace Community House
- Rochester Heights Community House
- Russell Heights Community House
- Strathcona Heights Community House
- Winthrop Court Community House