HMC Connections

2026 ANNUAL REPORT

April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026

Building Bridges- Strengthening Communities

Settlement Services as a Foundation for Belonging

Land Acknowledgement

We begin by acknowledging the land and our responsibility to care for and respect all that provides us with life. This land upon which HMC Connections is situated is on the ancestral, treaty and title lands of the Anishinaabek Ojibwe Michizaagiig Nation, now known as the Mississaugas of the Credit. Michizaagig territory in the past and present continues to host both Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples.

The HMC Connections is committed to continuous knowledge building with respect to actions that address and resolve the ongoing impacts of colonialism. We do this by learning & understanding the true history, treaty obligations, duties and responsibilities & Indigenous Rights while actively maintaining mutually beneficial relationships & collectively respecting & caring for the land.

Welcome to HMC Connections

We are a community-based, non-profit organization providing settlement, language, employment, and community integration services that help individuals and families thrive across Halton.

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Executive Director's Message



Welcome to HMC's Annual Report. This represents a picture of our work over the past year – it is like a snapshot only of the living tapestry where we are blessed to interact with and assist people on their journey to successful life in Canada. HMC serves over 10,000 people annually and a deep thank you to our extraordinary staff who put their time and effort into caring for clients and for each other. HMC is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors and we are thankful for their trust, guidance and strategic perspective. We would also like to deeply thank all of our funders and partners who are listed in the back of this annual report, your trust in us is appreciated and we do our best to return every dollar by supporting our community and to lift people to reach their full potential.

We stand at a defining crossroads – it is difficult to know how to prepare on the scale of changes happening. What we do know is the need for settlement services in our community is essential and we will continue to fulfill the role in our community of advocates and champions for newcomers and their issues.

At HMC Connections, our vision of building a welcoming and inclusive community is more critical than ever. Partnerships and participation in the larger social fabric of our community is essential – no one can weather the coming years in isolation. To move forward, we must deliberately choose radical empathy, robust collaboration, and sustained action. We get through this not by closing doors, but by opening them wider—investing in one another, dismantling obstacles for our newest neighbours, and recognizing that individual resilience is built on communal belonging.

Let us meet the years ahead with courage and purpose, ensuring that compassion and connection guide every step we take together.

Kim Jenkinson
2026 AGM

HMC is proud to acknowledge the following Funders

Funded by: Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
Financé par : Immigration, Réfugiés et Citoyenneté Canada
Canada
Employment Ontario
Ontario
Halton Region
United Way Halton & Hamilton
FEDCAP

Financial Report

Halton Multicultural Council

Income Statement	CAD $ 2025/2026	CAD $ 2024/2025
Revenue	8,831,770	7,377,849
Expenditures		
Salaries and Benefits	6,415,401	5,320,895
Other Operating Expenses	1,947,824	1,761,576
Amortization	193,396	154,559
Net Operating surplus(deficit)	**275,149**	**140,819**

Balance Sheet	CAD $ 2025/2026	CAD $ 2024/2025
Expenditures		
Current Assets	1,398,412	1,039,998
Capital Assets	2,573,209	2,021,226
Total Assets	**3,971,621**	**3,061,224**

Liabilities	CAD $ 2025/2026	CAD $ 2024/2025
Current Liabilities	202,214	332,935
Deferred Grants	1,135,665	369,696
Fund Balances	2,633,742	2,358,593
Total Liabilities and Fund Balances	**3,971,621**	**3,061,224**

A Year of Welcome, Connection, and Results

From April 2025 to March 2026, our program remained a trusted point of welcome for newcomers building new lives in Halton. Through one-to-one settlement support, information sessions, group activities, community outreach, and referrals, we helped clients understand local systems, identify priorities, and take practical steps toward stability and belonging. Our results are reflected not only in services delivered, but also in clients becoming better informed, more confident, and more connected to their new community.



The people we serve come to Halton from many regions of the world and represent diverse cultures, languages, family structures, ages, educational backgrounds, and work experiences. Their immigration statuses also vary and may include permanent residents, refugees, protected persons, temporary residents, and others navigating complex pathways. Each person arrives with different strengths, barriers, and needs—from language learning, employment, housing, health care, education, transportation, and legal information to social connection and emotional well-being.

For someone new to Canada, finding a warm and welcoming person can make an enormous difference. Meeting a Settlement Specialist who speaks the client's language can reduce anxiety, build trust, and make important information easier to understand. This human connection assures newcomers that they do not have to navigate unfamiliar systems alone.

4,261
Clients Served

16,488
Services Provided

One of the greatest strengths of our Settlement Specialists is their knowledge of resources across Halton Region. They help clients understand requirements, prepare for important appointments, avoid preventable mistakes, and access timely referrals to employment, language, housing, health, education, legal, and community services. By connecting people to the right support at the right time, they help turn uncertainty into a clear plan of action.

Halton's newcomer population is both significant and changing. The 2021 Census identified 31,385 recent immigrants who settled in Halton between 2016 and 2021, including 15,490 in Oakville, 9,080 in Milton, 5,965 in Burlington, and 850 in Halton Hills. Asia was the birthplace region for 67% of these recent immigrants, while refugees, families, youth, working-age adults, and seniors all contribute to the region's diversity. Urdu, Mandarin, Arabic and Spanish are among Halton's most common non-official mother tongues. These demographics reinforce why accessible, culturally responsive, and language-aware settlement help is essential: early guidance can support independence, participation, safety, and a lasting sense of belonging.



The past year unfolded amid conflict and displacement around the world, as well as a challenging local political and economic environment. These pressures affected clients while also increasing demands on community organizations. Yet we continue to see courage, generosity, and cooperation every day. Looking ahead, we are hopeful: by listening carefully, strengthening partnerships, and keeping every newcomer at the centre of our work, we can help build a Halton where all people are welcomed, supported, and able to thrive.

Quote from client

"My name is ZY. I have previously attended various HMC events, including settlement seminars for newcomers, English training classes, and workshops on workplace rights. Over the three years since I arrived in Canada, HMC has provided me with a great deal of support and deepened my understanding of the local community service system; I have long wanted to take this opportunity to express my gratitude."



Youth Settlement -YSP

Through our partnerships with the Halton school boards, our SWIS team is stationed in several schools across both boards, allowing them to connect effectively with newcomer families.



Since our Youth Settlement program transitioned to SWIS (Settlement Workers in Schools), we have continued serving new families while placing increased emphasis on supporting newcomer students.

As a result, we now serve both groups equally. Our work with families focuses primarily on settlement needs, including housing, employment and access to community resources. For youth, our main priorities are engagement and fostering a strong sense of belonging. We support these goals through leadership group sessions offered primarily in Halton schools and at our offices.

A These initiatives include summer and March Break camps, art sessions, conversation circles, We All and other youth-focused programs. For the fiscal 2025/26 we provided total of 11846 services to 3157 clients, including 1186 families.

Here is the example of the YSS began supporting newcomer family, parents and their daughter. Daughter is the only child in the family, and at the time, her father was seriously ill with late-stage liver cancer. As the family adjusted to life in Canada, they were also coping with serious illness, language barriers, and emotional stress. Because the mother does not speak English, daughter took on a major role in supporting the family by interpreting at the hospital, helping at home, and managing daily communication.

In fact, the student was referred to YSS by her school because her family situation had begun to affect her mental health, attendance, and academic performance. She missed school, failed exams, and was struggling emotionally while also supporting her parents. After student's father passed away, YSS worked closely with school staff to support student's return to class and help her re-engage in her studies.

Once she graduated from the high school she began applying to university. When a lack of formal volunteer hours became a barrier, YSS advocated for recognition of the many hours student had spent supporting her father and mother through caregiving and translation in the hospital, at home, and in daily life. As a result, student was accepted into her dream school. Her story is a powerful example of resilience and of how SWIS support, school collaboration, and advocacy can help newcomer youth overcome complex barriers and achieve success.

Client Top 10 Languages

1	Arabic
2	Urdu
3	Mandarin
4	Spanish
5	Tagalog
6	Korean
7	Punjabi
8	Hindi
9	Farsi
10	French

YS **3,147** Clients Served

YS **11,846** Services Provided

Language Program

The HMC Language Program continues to break down language and cultural barriers, empowering newcomers to build confidence, integrate into Canadian society, and thrive in their new home.



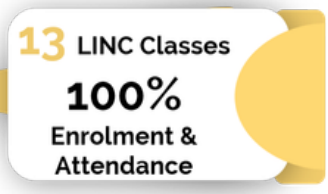
This year, all 13 LINC classes achieved 100% enrollment and attendance based on contracted seats clearly demonstrating the strong demand for our program. Within our continuous intake program of 153 contracted seats, 166 students advanced their CLB level in at least one skill area, and 94% of survey respondents said their English had improved and they were able to communicate confidently in daily Canadian life. HMC's offering of in-person, blended, and online formats keeps our training flexible and accessible for every learner. Just as importantly, our classrooms remain places of connection, where clients build friendships, support one another, and grow together on their language journey.

The recent IRCC cuts to English language training are having a direct and serious impact on newcomers. Cancelling CLB 4–6 classes disrupts one of the most critical stages of a newcomer's settlement journey. These are the levels that open doors — to jobs, to college and university programs that require CLB 6 or above, and to full participation in Canadian life. These are clients who have worked hard, shown up, and are so close to reaching their goals. The cuts leave them stranded halfway through their journey — not yet fully integrated, but suddenly without the support they were counting on to get there.

Statistics

- Successfully ran 13 LINC classes (Pre CLB to CLB 6)
- Achieved 4,962 instructional hours
- Achieved 100% average enrollment and attendance based on contracted seats
- 425 clients attended LINC classes









Success Story - From Struggling to Thriving: One Family's Journey with HMC Language Program

"When I first arrived in Canada, I felt like a drowning man clutching at a straw — struggling in unfamiliar waters, searching for any support to survive and thrive in a new culture. When my wife and I discovered HMC, we registered for the HMC Language Program to improve our English. There, we found far more than language lessons: practical skills for daily life, growing confidence in conversations and community involvement, and a deeper understanding of Canadian culture and values. The Language Program also gave us a sense of belonging alongside fellow newcomers. Today, I see it as the foundation for our future — our challenges now feel like stepping stones toward a brighter future."

We are helping newcomer job seekers to help themselves

For the period from April 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026, HMC Connections' Employment Support Services continued to help newcomer job seekers build the confidence, skills, and connections needed to pursue meaningful employment in Canada. Every newcomer deserves the opportunity to contribute their experience, support their families, and establish a stable future. Employment remains a vital part of the settlement journey, offering a pathway to independence, belonging, and long-term success. Over the year, the Employment Specialists served 1,890 job seekers, completed 730 assessments, & hosted 122 workshops with 1,116 participants. Mock interviews provided clients with opportunities to practise responding to interview questions, receive constructive feedback, & build confidence before meeting with potential empoyers.

As a result of these supports, 144 clients successfully found employment. Employment Support Specialists provided resume and interview coaching, job-search guidance, training referrals, and connections to employers and professional networks. Flexible in-person, virtual, and hybrid services helped clients overcome transportation, childcare, technology, and scheduling barriers. Staff used accessible communication methods including phone, email, text, WhatsApp, and online meetings to maintain engagement. As a result, 85% of surveyed participants reported greater confidence connecting with employers and a stronger understanding of Canadian workplace culture.





Thank you, **Sophy, Oleh, Meghna, Farahnaz, Danya, Micky, and Arleen,** for your outstanding contributions to the Employment Support and Job Coaching programs. In a highly competitive job market where many clients felt discouraged and frustrated your dedication and creativity empowered them to stand out, successfully navigate every stage of the interview process, and secure meaningful employment during the last fiscal year.

From Discouragement to Data Analyst - Success Story

RA was referred to Sophy Rizkalla in February 2026 after months of frustrating, unanswered applications for Data Analyst roles. From their first session, Sophy provided clear and energizing support. She helped RA rebuild her job search strategy, identified high-fit employers and industry job boards, and shared targeted contacts for recruiters and professional networks aligned with RA's expertise. Sophy did not just advise, she actively researched and passed along specific opportunities, creating a focused path where RA had previously felt stuck. The turning point came when Sophy discovered **Accenture's first Canadian Data Analyst internship program**, highly competitive, with only **four spots nationwide**, and encouraged RA to apply despite the odds. Sophy worked closely with her to craft a sharp, targeted resume and a compelling cover letter, then guided her through intensive preparation for a rigorous three-stage interview process. Through consistent coaching, constructive feedback, and unwavering belief in RA's potential Sophy helped her transform uncertainty into confidence, culminating in RA earning one of the four coveted positions. Sophy's support turned a seemingly impossible opportunity into the beginning of RA's next chapter in her Canadian career.

ES - Client's Testimonial

"I am truly grateful to HMC Connections Employment Support Program for helping me secure an amazing internship opportunity with Accenture. The support and guidance I received throughout the process meant a lot to me and helped me move forward with confidence in my career journey. I especially want to thank Sophy Rizkallah for all her help and encouragement. She shared this opportunity with me and supported me throughout the process with kindness, professionalism, and genuine care. Her guidance made everything feel much more manageable, and I really appreciated how invested she was in helping me succeed. HMC Connections is doing meaningful work by connecting people with valuable career opportunities and providing support every step of the way. I am very thankful for this experience and would highly recommend their program to others looking to grow professionally."



Empowering Success Through Job Coaching and English for Employment

Personalized coaching and language support help newcomers turn their goals into action. Through our Job Coaching and English for Employment, clients received the guidance, encouragement, and communication skills needed to succeed in Canadian workplaces.

Over the past year, Employment Coaches provided 1,105 individual coaching sessions. Beyond resumes and interview preparation, coaches served as trusted mentors and accountability partners using regular follow up calls and messages to keep clients motivated and on track. **Services were offered in English, French, Arabic, Russian, Ukrainian, Dari, Pashto, Farsi, Tagalog, Hindi, and Urdu.** This multilingual approach helped clients communicate clearly, understand guidance, and participate confidently in their workplaces. The English for Employment program further strengthened workplace readiness.



Empowering Success Through Job Coaching and English for Employment

With 20 clients attending weekly sessions, participants practiced speaking and listening through role-plays and peer discussions focused on interviews, meetings, customer service, and everyday workplace conversations. Clients consistently identified coaching as a catalyst for personal and professional growth.





English for Employment

69 Clients attended

530 Hours

362 Weekly Groups

Coaching interventions emphasize accountability, motivation, and individualized action planning. Regular follow-ups reinforced commitment to employment goals and responded to evolving client needs.

Ultimately, job coaching and English for Employment are about more than preparing for interviews. They are about building confidence, unlocking hidden potential, and creating resilience. By empowering clients to voice their skills and stay accountable to their goals, these services help transform job seekers into valued contributors in their new Canadian workplaces. Despite many challenges and obstacles, your dedication and creativity have made a real difference in empowering job coaching clients to find meaningful employment.

Job Coaching Client's Testimonial

My journey here in Canada as a permanent resident has not been an easy one. It was a difficult decision, & adjusting to a new culture, environment, & way of life has been a constant struggle. Despite the challenges, I always remind myself of my dreams & goals, which motivate me to continue learning, developing myself, & doing my best to survive & succeed. When I arrived in Canada, one of the first things I needed to do was find a job. I also wanted to explore organizations that could help me understand the process of finding employment & provide information about the Canadian working environment.

I reached out to HMC and connected with Arleen Pangan, who helped me maximize my skills & make use of available technology & resources as part of my job search. She also gave me valuable knowledge about the Canadian working environment & guided me on how to answer questions during job interviews. She provided me with links & resources where I could submit my applications & look for employment opportunities.



144
Obtained Employment

The guidance & support I received from HMC, especially from Arleen Pangan, empowered me to build my confidence & develop my skills. Her support encouraged me to keep moving forward until I finally found a job. I have now been working for six months, & there are still many adjustments that I need to make every day. It is a continuous learning experience, & there are times when it can be challenging. However, my dreams & goals are always greater than the challenges I face. They give me the confidence & motivation to perform my duties & do my best in my current job.. Thank you for your support and for empowering immigrants like me. Your guidance makes a meaningful difference in the lives of newcomers who are trying to build a better future in Canada.
More power to HMC, & thank you for being there for immigrants like me. We truly need your support and guidance.

Community Connections

Community Connections plans, coordinates, and manages a wide range of programs throughout the year, including New Year's Around the World, Tax Clinic and Multiculturalism Day. Programming is delivered across four seasonal terms to provide newcomers with consistent opportunities for learning, skill development, social connection, and community engagement.



Community Connections delivered 122 programs, with the highest volume of programming offered during the Fall term (40 programs), followed by Winter (36), Spring (28), and Summer (18). This year-round programming model allowed newcomers to access a variety of opportunities and supports.

During this fiscal year, several new programs were introduced to respond to the evolving needs and interests of newcomers and their families. New offerings included **Indigenous History for Newcomers, Charter Rights, Financial Education for Business, Money Basics and planning for Children's Future**, as well as community trips to the **Recreation Centre, local sports centres, and library tours**. These initiatives provided participants with opportunities to build knowledge, develop practical skills, and strengthen their understanding and connection to the local community.

The **Family Connect Program** continued to gain popularity, providing families with meaningful opportunities for social connection, recreation, cultural learning, and community engagement. Activities included Gardening: Grow Food Together, delivered in partnership with Sustainable Milton; family hockey game nights in partnership with Milton Menace Junior Hockey; visits to the Oakville Museum; riding local transit and Sixteen-Mile Creek boat trips with CharterAbility. These activities helped newcomers experience local services and attractions while building relationships and a stronger sense of belonging.

791
Clients Served

The Digital Clinic and the Community Integration for Arabic Speakers continued to attract new participants. These programs provided targeted support and helped address participants' digital, social, and community integration needs..



550 Group Sessions
3,757 Participants

4,862
Services



284 Active Volunteers
3,137 Hours Contributed

CC - Client's Testimonial

"The English Conversation Circle has helped me build confidence speaking English while providing the practical and emotional support I need to feel more connected to my community."

Mentoring Services

The Mentorship Program also demonstrated strong engagement and impact, facilitating 117 career matches and 22 language matches. During the reporting period the program included 185 mentors and 149 mentees, including participants who were awaiting a suitable mentor match. Through these connections, the program continues to support newcomers in developing professional networks, improving language skills, gaining confidence and strengthening their pathways toward employment and community integration.



117 Career Mentoring Matches

22 Language Mentoring Matches

CC - Client's Testimonial

"The welcoming, family-like atmosphere and encouragement from the facilitator have helped me build confidence and inspired me to support others in the community."

CC - Client's Testimonial

"The Computer Training Program gave me practical skills, confidence, friendships, and the independence to use technology in my everyday life."

Transitional Housing Highlights

The Transitional Housing Program is important in assisting newcomers facing homelessness in our Region because it provides more than temporary shelter—it creates a safe and supportive bridge toward long-term housing stability and community integration. Newcomers may face additional barriers such as limited knowledge of the local housing system, language barriers, unfamiliarity with available community resources, limited employment opportunities, and difficulty navigating social and settlement services. Transitional housing can provide a stable environment while clients work toward securing permanent housing, accessing income and employment supports, improving their understanding of local services, and addressing other immediate needs.



- This program reduces barriers to housing, promotes self-sufficiency, supports successful settlement, and helps newcomers transition from housing insecurity towards stable and independent living.
- An additional 3-bedroom unit was added to our inventory
- 15 families in a situation of homelessness were placed in our TH units
- 5 families who finished their term in the program moved from transitional to permanent housing
- 8 individuals found full- or part time job
- 10 individuals attended English language learning
- 12 families received supports with access to food and clothing





Success story:

As a survivor of domestic violence and homelessness, I have deep gratitude and appreciation for the incredible support I received from the Halton Multicultural Council. When I first arrived in Canada, I was facing many uncertainties and challenges as I worked to build a new life for myself and my family. Through your compassion, guidance, and unwavering support, you helped make that journey possible. I am especially thankful for the assistance you provided with transitional housing. Having a safe and stable place to live during such an important time gave me the foundation I needed to begin rebuilding my life with hope and confidence.

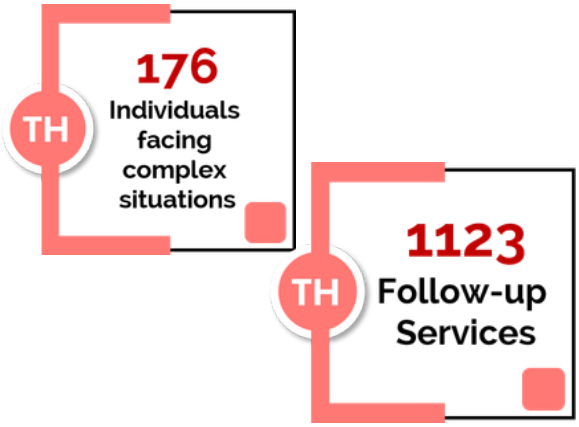
Your kindness, patience, encouragement, and dedication went far beyond your role as a caseworker. You listened without judgment, answered my questions, connected me with important resources, and supported me through every step of the process. Knowing that someone genuinely cared made a tremendous difference during one of the most challenging periods of my life.

Today, I am proud to say that I have established a stable home, I am working, and I continue building a brighter future for myself and my family here in Canada. None of this would have been possible without the support, encouragement, and opportunities that the Halton Multicultural Council provided.

Thank you for making such a meaningful impact on my life. I will always remember your kindness and the difference you made in helping me achieve the stability and hope I enjoy today.

Crisis Case Management

The Crisis Management Program supports clients with urgent, complex needs through timely assistance, access to essential services, and connections to resources that help stabilize their circumstances. The Crisis Intervention Specialist supported 176 individuals facing housing instability, homelessness, family breakdowns, domestic violence, legal service access, and employment challenges. Clients completed 1123 follow-up visits, reflecting sustained case management, & participated in 12 group sessions.



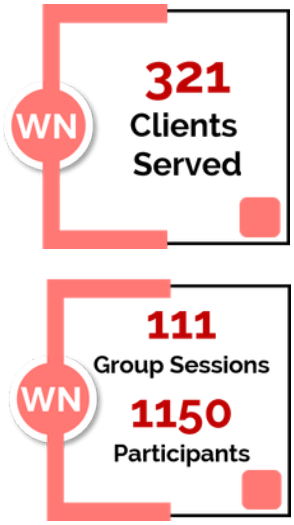
Success Story

A single mother of two children who experienced domestic violence faced severe financial hardship, limited resources, and no work experience. With HMC's Crisis Worker, she secured safe housing, legal aid, essential supports, employment and housing services, and community activities for her children.
She was approved for portable housing benefits, gaining housing stability while rebuilding her life.
She graduated from college as a Social Worker, achieved financial independence, completed a local agency placement, and obtained a part-time job. This success story shows how support, advocacy, and community resources help survivors move from crisis to stability, education, employment, and independence.

Wellness Navigation

During this fiscal year, this program exceeded the targets required by our funder. This is a great organizational achievement, but also highlights the vulnerability of the newcomer population and the high need for appropriate and time-sensitive services.

- Group session participations: 1,150 participate. 143% achievement
- Information Sessions: Delivered 111 sessions. 111% achievement)
- Referrals & Coordinated Care: Facilitated 14 referrals for specialized 1:1 support, strengthening integrated service pathways
- Community Outreach & Engagement: Conducted 16 outreach sessions, reaching over 100 participants across diverse platforms
- Additional Client Reach: Supported 46 NSP clients based on identified needs



Client's Testimonial

"I would like to sincerely thank HMC Connections for the valuable support provided through the Wellness Navigation sessions. Before attending these sessions, I sometimes felt stressed, isolated, and unsure about how to adjust to a completely new society and lifestyle in Canada. Like many newcomers, I faced challenges with integration, understanding available services, and maintaining emotional well-being while adapting to many changes in my life. After attending the sessions, I started to feel more confident, supported, and connected to the community. The sessions made a real positive difference in my life. They gave me supportive opportunities and guidance to better face the challenges of settlement and integration into Canadian society. The environment during the sessions was welcoming, respectful, and encouraging. I truly appreciated the kindness, understanding, and care shown by them. These sessions helped improve my mental well-being and gave me hope, motivation, and a stronger sense of belonging in Canada. I would also like to give special thanks to Mrs. Noor Afroz for her wonderful efforts in organizing the sessions and for her continuous emotional support for newcomers. Her guidance, compassion, and positive attitude were truly meaningful and helpful. She always tried to provide thoughtful solutions for the emotional stress and challenges that newcomers may experience, especially when adapting to a new society with different values, systems, and ways of life. Her support made many participants feel understood, respected, and encouraged."

Employment Ontario



The Employment Ontario (EO) program is funded by FEDCAP and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development (MLTSD). The program is dedicated to assisting, empowering, and enabling job seekers, including internationally trained professionals, to successfully integrate into the Canadian labour market and find meaningful employment in their respective fields.
The EO program provides a wide range of pre-employment services, including job search support, career exploration, resume building, interview preparation, employability skills training, The Power of Possible Workshop, and Better Jobs Ontario (BJO).

In addition, the program offers employment benefits and financial supports, including wage subsidies and a wide range of micro-credentials based on each job seeker's career goals and position of interest. These credentials include Phlebotomy, Intramuscular Injection, Electronic Medical Records, CPR, BLS (Basic Life Support), Forklift certification, Agile certification, and many others.
Financial assistance is also available to help job seekers overcome barriers to employment. This includes support for bus passes, PRESTO cards, interview attire, grooming, and gas cards.



To help our job seekers access the resources they need, the EO program also offers a resource room with free access to computers, printers, scanners, fax services, a phone line, and complimentary Wi-Fi.
Our support does not end when a client finds a job. EO provides career development and in-work support for up to 12 months, helping clients successfully transition into employment, retain their jobs, and continue progressing in their careers.

From April 1 of last year to March 31 of this year, the program served 781 job seekers, and 286 job seekers successfully secured employment. Our clients found employment in a wide range of positions, including Clinical Assistants, Physician Assistants, Shippers and Receivers, Pharmacy Assistants, Bankers, Human Resources professionals, and many other roles. These achievements are the result of the collective efforts of the entire HMC organization, with a special acknowledgment to our incredible EO team.

I, Nilofar Yousof, the manager of the EO program, would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to Samantha, Aatika, Sakshi, Alma, Loretta, and Yang. Their remarkable dedication goes far beyond their regular responsibilities. Every day, they go above and beyond to support our job seekers, help them overcome barriers, build their confidence, and move closer to their employment goals. Their commitment, compassion, and hard work have made a meaningful difference in the lives of many individuals and families in our community.

Employment Ontario

From April 1st, 2025, to March 31st, 2026, the following financial support services were provided to our Job Seekers:

	Items	Clients	Payments
1	Employment-Related Transportation	147	466
2	Certification Charges	117	193
3	Academic Credential or Professional Accreditation Assessment	9	9
4	Short-Term Skills Training	4	4
5	Translation of International Academic Documents	2	2
2~5		132	208
6	Work Clothing and/or Grooming	77	129
7	Employment-Related Special Equipment and Supplies	41	52
8	Specialized Hardware	37	37
9	Accommodation Needs - Assistive Devices and Adaptive Technology	2	3
10	Diagnostic Assessment	10	10
7~10		90	102
11	ERFS Pilot – Mental Health Worker	8	41
12	ERFS Pilot – Interpreter Services	6	7
13	Accommodation Needs - On-the-Job Supports	2	2
14	Emergency/Infrequent Child Care	1	1

Interpretation and Translation Services



HMC Connections provides **professional interpretation, translation, and cultural brokering services** to help organizations communicate effectively with the diverse communities they serve. HMC completed 5425 hours of Interpretations and 540 translation projects. The language data highlights the significant need for these services, with **Arabic (25%), Mandarin (17%), Spanish (11%), Urdu (8%), Turkish (4%), Farsi (4%), and Ukrainian (4%)** among the most requested languages. However, **effective communication is more than translating words**. Cultural brokers help bridge the gap between language, culture, beliefs, family practices, and the healthcare or service system. They help providers better understand the client's context while helping newcomers understand and navigate services, build trust, and feel respected. Research also identifies cultural brokers as important partners in improving communication, access, navigation, and culturally responsive care.

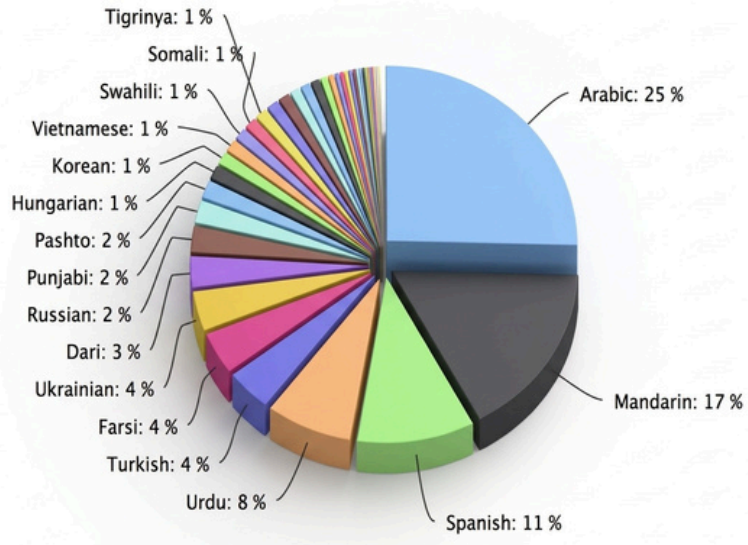
The Interpretation and Translation Services program creates **transitional employment opportunities for newcomers** while they navigate the accreditation and recognition process for their foreign education and professional credentials. By hiring newcomers as **language interpreters and providing certification aligned with Ontario requirements**, the program enables them to gain meaningful Canadian work experience while using the language skills and professional knowledge they already possess. This year HMC hired 35 language interpreters and they were successful within their certification as Community Language Interpreters.

> *As a newcomer, I felt lost because I could not explain my needs clearly. Having someone speak my language helped me feel understood, supported, and more confident accessing the services I needed. The cultural broker also understood my background and helped bridge the gap between my culture and the Canadian system.*

5,425
Interpretation Hours

540
Translation projects completed

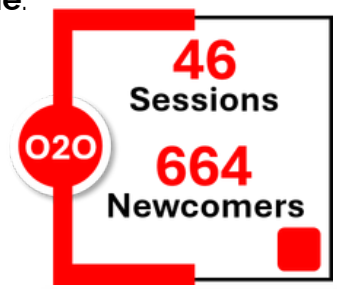
Top Requested Languages Chart



Orientation to Ontario (O2O)

Whether you are just starting to think about moving to Ontario or have already arrived to the province, Orientation to Ontario (O2O) can smooth the transition. Our resources and the settlement planning tools will guide you through the settlement process and connect you with your local community.

HMC Connections delivers **Orientation to Ontario (O2O)** to help newcomers understand Ontario, establish themselves, and connect with essential resources **as soon as they arrive**. O2O provides practical information on healthcare, housing, employment, education, transportation, finances, and community services, with resources available for newcomers to **self-access online at any time**. HMC adds a valuable **personal and culturally responsive connection** by having settlement workers deliver O2O sessions in multiple languages, allowing newcomers to ask questions, clarify information, and better understand how to navigate Ontario's systems and services. In **2025–2026, HMC Connections delivered 46 O2O sessions, reaching approximately 664 newcomers**, helping them take their first steps toward successful settlement and greater independence. Newcomers enjoyed the gathering with each other and building social and professional connections in person but also the online option supported the flexibility of this delivery model.





O2O is more than information, it is a roadmap that helps newcomers know where to go, what to do, and how to access the support they need to build their new life in Ontario. www.orientationontario.ca

International Student Connect

International Student Connect is an important program supporting international students as they navigate life, education, and employment in Canada. In **2025 - 2026, the program delivered 16 sessions and reached 199 international students**, providing them with practical information, resources, and connections to services that are often difficult for international students to access.

The program addresses a wide range of needs, including **immigration pathways and updates, taxes, workplace rights and expectations in Canada, understanding life and systems in Canada, discrimination and inclusion, employment resources, settlement supports, housing /accommodation, volunteering, short term employment, public transportation, private health coverage and community services.** Sessions help students better understand their rights and responsibilities while building the knowledge and confidence they need to successfully navigate Canadian systems.

Through culturally responsive and accessible programming, International Student Connect **bridges information and service gaps for international students**, helping them connect with the right resources at the right time and supporting their successful integration into the Canadian community. The model of online delivery supported a lot the student in accessing those sessions while they are in their colleges or between lectures.





Cultural Diversity Training

HMC also expanded its impact by providing **cultural awareness, cultural humility, and self-awareness** training to community agencies, healthcare organizations, municipalities, and service providers across Halton Region and beyond. These professional development sessions help organizations strengthen their understanding of **how personal values, assumptions, biases, lived experiences, and cultural perspectives can influence the way services are delivered.**

Cultural Diversity Training
Virtual, In-Person & Self Learning



The training was developed and delivered by **Hanadi Al Masri, Social Innovation Director at HMC Connections**, through a series of **10 professional development sessions reaching 225 participants** across Halton and other regions. The sessions focused on practical self-awareness tools that enable professionals to reflect on their own internal awareness including their intentions, assumptions, and biases and their external awareness, including their communication, skills, and approaches to service delivery.



Through this training, HMC supported organizations in moving beyond simply understanding diversity toward **building culturally responsive and inclusive services**. Participants learned practical strategies to recognize barriers, avoid assumptions, improve communication, and better understand the diverse identities and needs of the newcomers, families, children, seniors, and communities they serve.

Training engagements included organizations such as the **City of Brantford, EarlyON Child & Family Centres Oakville Parent-Child Centre, Services for Seniors/Social & Community Services, St. Joseph's Villa Dundas, and other community and healthcare organizations.** HMC provided the session too as an activity where service providers can learn from the Ambassadors by visiting their booth onsite such as Post Inn Village Longterm Care for seniors. These partnerships demonstrate the growing recognition of self-awareness and cultural responsiveness as essential skills for professionals working with diverse communities.



Adding to this is being member on different committees with many service provider where we affected the building of policies EDIAB annual planning and looking for inclusivity with many delivery modules in healthcare, social services, road safety with the partnership of Ministry of Ontario, Halton School Boards, City of Burlington and many more. HMC's involvement on boards, advisory committees, and community leadership tables reflects its commitment to **bringing the newcomer voice directly into decision-making and community planning**. Rather than working in isolation, HMC builds relationships with healthcare, municipal, social service, education, employment, and community organizations to identify gaps and create solutions that are more inclusive and responsive to the communities they serve.

For **Hanadi Al Masri, Director of Social Innovation at HMC Connections**, serving on boards and community committees is an extension of her work in social innovation and systems change. Her role allows her to bring the **lived experience of newcomers, cultural perspectives, and frontline knowledge of service barriers** into strategic conversations where policies, programs, and services are being developed.

This involvement creates a two-way bridge: **HMC brings community needs to the table, while bringing information, opportunities, and resources back to the community**. It also allows HMC to identify emerging issues early, build partnerships, influence service design, and advocate for more culturally responsive and equitable systems.



HMC Youth Employment Program

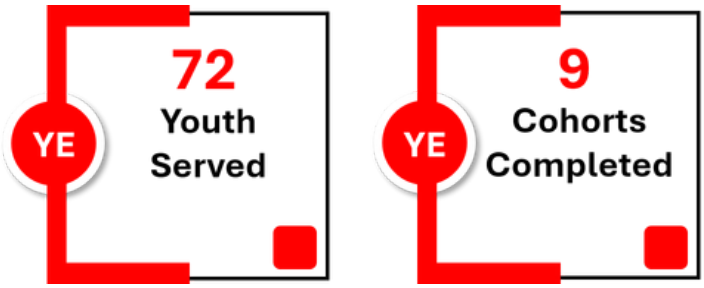
Today's youth have, and continue to face, strong headwinds:

- COVID's negative impacts on education and development milestones
- isolation through increased technology and social media use
- impacts of AI on critical thinking and problem-solving

This is in addition to youth being at the very start of their career journeys, where they are still figuring out their interests, starting to think about the expectations of employers and the workplace, and determining what skills and knowledge they'll need to build.

In early 2025, HMC was successful in obtaining one year's funding for the Youth Employment program through Employment and Social Development Canada. This program provides youth aged 15-30 with an opportunity to build workplace readiness skills over 4 weeks in the HMC classroom and through 8 weeks of paid work placement.

In the first year of funding, HMC overachieved the program's goals and was able to add a 'sprint' version of the program. Subsequently, the funder rewarded HMC's success by extending the agreement, currently to January 2028. As of October 2026, the Youth Employment program has helped 72 young people to develop key skills employers are looking for, such as adaptability, critical thinking, communication, innovation, responsibility and initiative, and to help them get started in a workplace where they can apply those skills. There have been 9 cohorts to date, with 4 more planned for 2027.





YE - Client's Testimonial

I would strongly recommend the HMC Program to all youth. My overall experience was excellent, and the support I received from the staff at HMC was beyond exceptional. As a person with a disability, I was initially nervous and unsure whether I would be able to find a workplace that would understand and accommodate my individual needs and style of working. However, the team at HMC supported me every step of the way and helped me feel more confident in identifying and achieving my goals. The team at HMC truly cares about the success of their clients. They took the time to understand me as an individual, provided valuable resources and guidance, and helped me navigate the process of finding a workplace where I could feel supported and succeed. Thank you, Sophy, Christine, and Arlene, for all your time, resources, encouragement, and genuine support!

YE - Client's Testimonial

Taking part in the Youth Employment Program was a worthwhile experience that supported my personal and career development, especially as someone who had recently arrived in Canada. The program helped me build confidence and develop important skills in professionalism, teamwork, customer service, communication, and time management. It also gave me a better understanding of Canadian workplace expectations and prepared me for future employment opportunities. I am especially grateful to my instructors, Treena, Christine, Arleen, and Naz, for their patience, guidance, and encouragement throughout the program. Their support helped me feel more confident as I adjusted to a new environment. I truly value this opportunity and will carry these skills forward in my career."

HMC Healthcare Careers Program

Canada continues to face shortages of healthcare workers, creating gaps in access to care and putting pressure on the healthcare system. Internationally educated health professionals (IEHPs) - including physicians, nurses, pharmacists and dentists - bring valuable skills and experience that can help address these gaps. Helping newcomer IEHPs navigate licensing, credential recognition and other barriers enables Canada to make better use of the talent already here.

In September 2025, HMC launched the Healthcare Careers Program to help IEHPs move toward meaningful employment in their fields. The program provides individualized support through:

- Career exploration and planning
- Credential recognition and licensing guidance
- Job search and workplace readiness training
- Technical skills and micro-credential training
- Mentorship opportunities
- Vocational opportunities through work placements

Two-thirds of Healthcare Careers clients identified with experience in one of the top five healthcare fields: physicians (60), pharmacy (15), dentistry (14), nursing (6), and laboratory technology (3)

2 IMGs matched to residency with McMaster University, Family Medicine and the University of Toronto, Family Medicine.

These early results demonstrate the significant pool of healthcare talent among newcomers and the opportunity to help more IEHPs contribute their skills to Canada's healthcare workforce.





Finance & Operations



HMC's Manager of Finance and Administration, Finance Administrator, and Operations and Finance Specialist, work to take care of the finance and operational needs of HMC. They ensure timely invoicing/ collections, and payments to vendors including staff reimbursements. The team manages payroll & benefits administration, ensures compliance with statutory bodies and funder requirements. Thank you to the whole team for managing accounting/ reporting, audits and employee needs.

Administrative Assistants

The Administrative Assistant team at HMC Connections is the backbone of our frontline service skillfully managing high-volume inquiries, defusing challenging client interactions with professionalism and grace, and seamlessly supporting multiple service teams. Thriving in a fast-paced environment, they handle sensitive and confidential information with the utmost discretion and care. Their unwavering dedication embodies HMC's mission: helping newcomers integrate into a welcoming, inclusive community with compassion, respect, and integrity.

They seamlessly transition between a wide range of responsibilities, including welcoming clients, coordinating appointment referrals, responding to emails and web-chat inquiries, processing intakes, and maintaining accurate data entry and documentation. Their adaptability and responsiveness keep the office running smoothly, even during periods of constant activity and competing priorities.



Through strong organizational skills, attention to detail, and calm professionalism under pressure, they help maintain a safe, respectful, and inclusive workplace. Their efforts ensure that daily office operations remain efficient while clients and staff receive timely, reliable support.

1,183
Responded Chats

99
Commissioner of Oath Appointments

1,684
New Intake Completed

Community partners and contributors list (Apr 1, 2025 to March 31, 2026)

- Accenture
- Achev
- Advancement of Women Halton
- Akwaba Cultural Exchange
- Alzheimer's Society
- Appleby College
- Aria Blu Inc.
- Burger King / Sabrina Investment Inc.
- Burlington Centre
- Burlington Chamber of Commerce
- Burlington Health Family
- Burlington Ontario Health Team
- Burlington Public Library
- Burlington Transit
- CAMH
- Canadian Civil Liberties Education Trust
- Canadian Foundation for Financial Planning
- Canadian Technical and Management College
- Canadian Tire
- Canadian Tire Trafalgar Oakville
- Catholic Cross-cultural Services
- CCI Ottawa (H.E.N.)
- Chartability
- Charter Professional Accounting (CPA) Canada
- Childre Aid Society
- City of Burlington
- Community Condominium of Ontario
- COSTI
- CWB Group
- Dixie Electronics and Appliances
- ELCO, English Language Club of Oakville
- Food for Life
- Georgetown Library
- Global Expereince Canada
- Goodwill Career Centre
- Halton Catholic District School Board
- Halton Children's Aid Society
- Halton Connected Care Ontario Health Team
- Halton District School Board
- Halton Healthcare
- Halton Hill Public Library
- Halton Industry Education Council-Career Centre
- Halton Legal Services
- Halton Newcomer Stragey – Settle Group
- Halton Newcomer Strategy
- Thomas Merten Adult School
- Tomatoes Bazar
- World Education Services (WES) Gateway Program
- YMCA Burlington
- YWCA Toronto
- Shoppers Drug Mart
- Situation Table
- St. John Ambulance
- Stride
- Support House
- Sustainable Milton
- Halton Region
- Halton Region Police Services
- Halton Situation Table
- Halton Violence Prevention Council
- Healthy Babies Health Children
- Ice Cream 4U
- Ihome Design&Renovation Inc.
- IRCC Peel and Halton Labour Market Information Partnership
- ISANS
- Joseph Brant Hospital
- Just Platters
- KeenMD Medical Clinic
- Maple Lodge Farms
- Maple Lodge Farms
- McMaster Manufacturing Research Institute (MMRI)
- Milton Chamber of Commerce
- Milton Library
- Milton Mall
- Milton Public Library
- Ministry of Transportation
- Momiji Health Care Society
- Nigerian Community of Halton
- NPower Canada
- Oak Park Centre
- OakPark Neighbourhood Centre
- Oakville Blades Hockey
- Oakville Chamber of Commerce
- Oakville Gallery
- Oakville Museum
- Oakville Public Library
- Oakville Transit
- Olanrewaju Medicine Professional Corporation
- Older Adult Isolation Action Table
- Ontario Personal Support Worker Association
- Ontario Society of Professional Engineering
- Optimal Health
- Orange Auto Services Oakville
- Our Kids Network
- Panago Pizza Oakville
- Polycultural Immigrant & Community Services
- Reach Out Centre for Kids (ROCK)
- Royal Bank of Canada (RBC)
- SAVIS
- Service Canada
- Sheridan College