



# ANNUAL REPORT



**2019–2020**



**FAMILIES CANADA**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS



<b>1.0</b>	Message from the President
<b>2.0</b>	Our Team
<b>3.0</b>	Vision and Mission Statement
<b>4.0</b>	Our Impact
<b>5.0</b>	Responding to COVID-19
<b>6.0</b>	Funders and Partners
<b>7.0</b>	Initiatives
<b>8.0</b>	New and Upcoming Resources
<b>9.0</b>	Financial Report
<b>10.0</b>	List of Donors
<b>11.0</b>	Connect with Us



# 1.0 Message from the Chair

Families Canada (FC) is an award-winning charity that stands unique in its ability to reach out to family support centers and those they assist across Canada. With the unprecedented challenges presented by COVID-19, FC has pivoted to directly respond to the new circumstances faced by our members and others in the family support sector.

Informed by member surveys, FC shifted its priorities in response to COVID-19. Innovation was spawned as we experimented with new platforms for those working in the field. This facilitated a coast to coast exchange of struggles as well as ideas on how best to support families, especially those without online capacity at home. With centers shut and therefore programs unavailable, FC has repositioned itself to help. Topical webinar series, planned virtual training, and an e-store under construction have pushed the envelope on our digital journey.

- Innovation was spawned as we experimented
- with new platforms for those working in
- the field.

As with many charities, COVID-19 financial challenges are a reality given that projects and plans have all been upended, especially in Q4 of this past fiscal year. However, our finances are solid enough to withstand some loss in favour of keeping staff paid and working remotely. We are confident that we can weather this pandemic storm.

Bolstered by funder flexibilities and with a huge thanks to our experienced capable team, our committed Board, and strong partnerships, we are nimbly responding to new needs, in new media. We believe that members will continue to welcome FC's high-quality resources and services. And, as family support centres gradually reopen in fall 2020, FC will be there ready to offer support. We are proud of our work and of the special position we occupy in the national fabric of family service.

Finally, I would like to recognize Barb Lillico (former Board Chair), Janice Nathanson and Nathanael Patriquin for their years of dedicated service as they retire from the FC Board of Directors.

Sincerely,

**Karen Burpee**  
Chair, Board of Directors

# 2.0 Our Team

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Karen Burpee**  
Chair

**Shane Pospisil**  
Vice-Chair

**Sye Mincoff**  
Treasurer

**Debra Armstrong**  
Secretary

**Dr. Janice Nathanson**

**Nathanael Patriquin**

**Zach Gaunce**

**Dr. Paul Roumeliotis**

**Barb Lillico**

**Gabrielle Lepage**

**Brenda Lohrenz**

**Lyne Charlebois**

## STAFF



**Kelly Stone**  
President & CEO

**Zindu Salih**  
Director of Operations

**Clare Pama, CPA, CMA**  
Virtual CFO

**Zoe Chen**  
Bookkeeper

**Mitzie Constant**  
Administrative Officer

**Hilary Allen**  
Program Manager

**Rebecca Balcerzak**  
Senior Project Officer

**David Agbaire**  
Project Officer





## 3.0 Vision and Mission Statement

### VISION



A Canada committed to building **strong families**.

### MISSION STATEMENT



To champion the priorities, policies and programs that **build the strength** of Canada's families.



# 4.0 Our Impact



## Who we are

FC is the national association of family support centres. Our members are community-level organizations who provide hubs of services, programs, and resources to primarily low-income and disadvantaged families in communities across Canada. Through our 500+ members, we impact the lives of more than half a million families annually.



## What we do

For 45 years, we have helped our members meet the evolving and complex needs of families by:

- Piloting, adapting, and scaling evidence-based programming
- Developing and disseminating resources for service providers and families
- Providing professional development opportunities

We partner with private, public, non-profit and academic organizations to turn knowledge into practice: a multisector approach is essential for addressing barriers and strengthening families.



## Our accomplishments this year

By strengthening the family support sector, FC positively impacts the health and well-being of families across the country. This year, among other things, FC: addressed senior isolation by finalizing a programming guide and rolling out a pilot intergenerational programming model across the country; brought together financial literacy leaders and practitioners for a forward-looking workshop to help women living on low-incomes; increased

- “The workshop was lively and
- interactive, well-planned, and had good
- representation from different sectors.”

online and in-person training opportunities; and launched a plethora of new partnerships to support our knowledge mobilization efforts.

Specifically, this past year our work included:

22  
formal partners

7  
ongoing initiatives

11  
new and upcoming resources

Initiated an unprecedented new partnership with our American counterpart, the **National Family Support Network**

We also champion a family-centric Canada through our CEO’s contributions to various boards and advisory committees:

- Vice Chair* ••••• **North American Board of Directors, Great Kids Inc**
- Member* ••••• **National Financial Literacy Working Group for Indigenous Peoples**
- Member* ••••• **Advisory Board, Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children’s Rights, Carleton University**
- Member* ••••• **Child Rights Academic Network**
- Member* ••••• **Advisory Committee, Until the Last Child**
- Member* ••••• **Advisory Committee, Healthy Weights for Children Project, The Bridge Youth & Family Services**
- Member* ••••• **Expert Advisory Committee ParticipACTION**



## What people are saying about our work:

### Newcomer mother participating in our “Supported Parents: Supportive Parenting” project:

“I am very new to Canada. Cultural difference, language barrier and no support from family and friends have made settling in Canada quite challenging. Thanks to *Nobody’s Perfect* program, I have met other moms who are facing the same challenges. I have learned many ways to handle parenting problems and helping me grow as a mom. Sharing community resources are also extremely helpful, especially during COVID-19 when we are all stuck home. I gained confidence and I don’t feel nervous anymore. Thank you!”

### Parent whose son participated in our Intergenerational Volunteering initiative:

“IT’S BEEN SO FUN & REWARDING to see my little boy do crafts and sing songs alongside such joyful and kind seniors who adore him! The first time he ever painted was with the seniors in this program; the first time ever coloured on fabric was with his senior friends. As a parent who doesn’t have much family or grandparents around, this warms my heart in a very personal way. We love this



program and [my son] has been able to do some really cool art that is on display in our home. In fact, each time he notices his canvas on the wall, he points to himself and says his name with pride and it’s heart melting. We so appreciate the warmth and fun this program provides our little [boy]. Thank you so much!”

### Feedback from our Early Childhood Development in a Time of Pandemic webinars

“This is an outstanding opportunity and platform. Thank you so much!”

“Thank you for the topic. I found it very useful for me and my group at school.”

### Feedback from our Planning for Change workshop on financial literacy

“The facilitation and format allowed and provided input and sharing from so many different contexts (cross-sector, non-profits, government, credit unions...)”

“This was fantastic and well-organized!”

“The workshop was lively and interactive, well-planned, and had good representation from different sectors.”



# 5.0 Responding to COVID-19

Thanks to a robust scenario planning process, our dedicated staff were quick to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic by introducing new activities to meet the evolving needs of families and our members.

- **Membership survey:** FC surveyed family support centres across Canada on their biggest challenges to ensure that our COVID-19 activities met real on-the-ground needs.
- **Newsletter:** Keeping family support centres across Canada informed was a top priority. Frequent email updates and a weekly newsletter made sure those on the frontlines had the information they needed at their fingertips.
- **COVID-19 resources webpage:** FC introduced a curated webpage of exclusive pandemic-related resources to help service providers find information they need in one place.
- **Blog posts:** FC's COVID-19 blogs provided a space for family support practitioners and parents to reflect and receive ideas for responding to the challenges exacerbated by the pandemic.
- **Adapt resources:** FC adapted many resources so they could be accessed online.
- **Let's Talk webinars:** FC launched facilitated discussions on the pandemic's impact on Canada's family support sector. Practitioners across the country connected, shared concerns



and challenges, and learned about promising practices to help their organizations and families cope.

- **Early Childhood Development in a Time of Pandemic webinars:** This series, created in partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development, proved to be invaluable for practitioners. It highlighted the potential pandemic effect on young children's behaviors and emotions.
- **Zoom Dancing for Seniors:** In partnership with Frog Hollow Neighbourhood House, FC ran dance sessions for seniors via Zoom. Every Monday afternoon in June, an instructor led 60-minute fun-filled sessions inspiring seniors to move and groove.
- **Zoom Connecting with Grandfriends:** In partnership with Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network, FC ran Zoom events of virtual storytelling, movement and music for seniors and children every Friday in June. These activities allowed participants to connect with each other to reduce social isolation.
- **Executive Dialogue pilot program:** In this fiscal year, FC completed early planning for a pilot program, which helps executives of family support centres navigate the crisis. It has since launched.

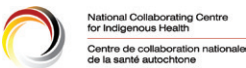


# 6.0 Funders and Partners

## Funders:



## Partners:





7.0 Initiatives

7.1 Financial Literacy

April 2018 – March 2021  
Increasing Financial Literacy Opportunities for Women Living on Low Incomes: An Action Plan for Change

Like all Canadians, women living on low incomes need basic financial literacy knowledge, skills and confidence to improve their quality of life.

Through efforts to connect family support centres with existing financial literacy programs, we realized that most programs do not adequately address gender-specific barriers that prevent access by women living on low incomes.

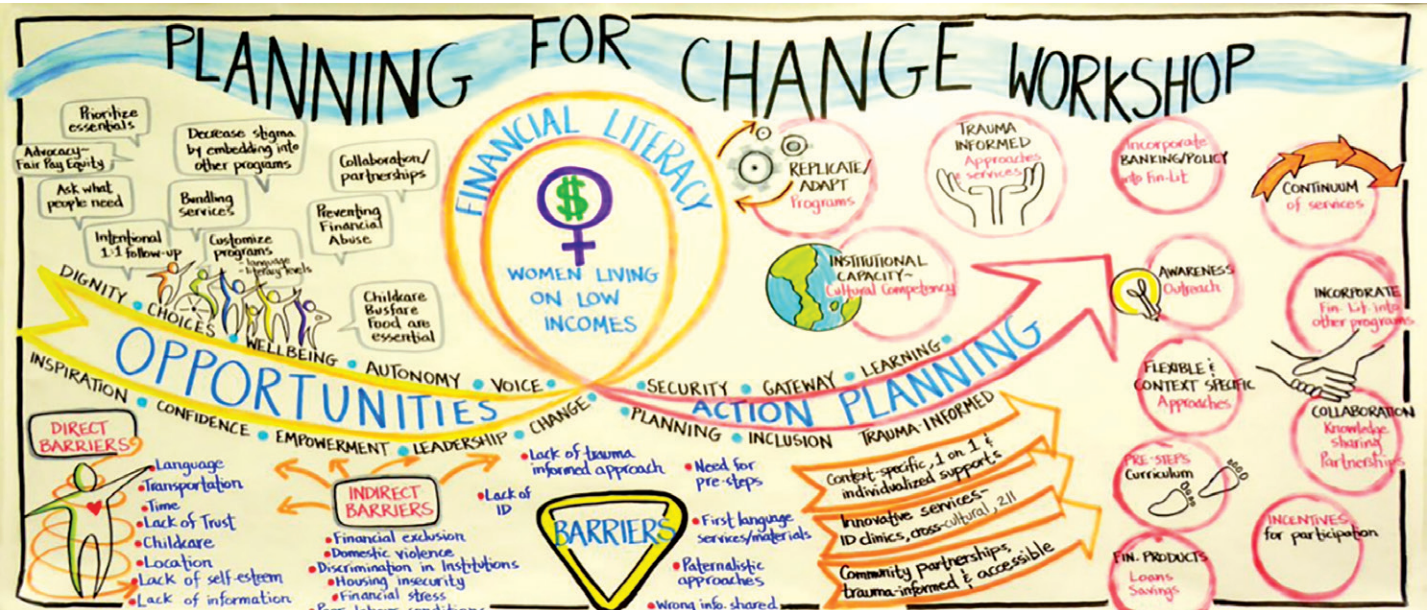
This FC project is identifying gender-specific barriers and encouraging other organizations to change how their financial literacy programs are delivered, so that women living on low incomes can also benefit from them.

- This year FC:
- Conducted research on barriers that prevent women from accessing financial literacy programs
    - A Gender-Based Analysis Plus (GBA+) approach was adopted



The "Planning for Change" workshop, in action!

- Seven focus groups with 60 diverse women living on low incomes were held
- 10 key informants were interviewed
- Hosted the Planning for Change workshop where 30+ corporate, non-profit, and government organizations brainstormed how to overcome barriers
- Developed an e-module titled *Empowering Women and Communities Through Financial Literacy*
- Many thanks to funder, Women and Gender Equality Canada, and our partners the Canadian Credit Union



A summary of ideas exchanged during the Planning for Change workshop.

Association and Vancity for taking this journey with us! Next year, we will continue to communicate our research findings and turn the ideas that came out of the Planning for Change workshop into a concrete action plan.

7.2 Food Safety

March 2020 – March 2022  
Promoting Health and Inclusion of Seniors Newcomers Through Food

This new project aims to support the healthy aging of newcomer seniors by identifying and addressing challenges they face in accessing services, resources, and information on food safety and nutrition.

In the coming year, FC will engage newcomer seniors in interactive virtual workshops to identify these challenges and develop helpful multilingual brochures. Consultations for partnerships are underway.

7.3 Children's Rights

FC champions children's rights in all our work. The *Nobody's Perfect* and the *Positive Discipline in Everyday Parenting* programs, which we actively support, are founded on a rights-based approach. When FC trained new facilitators for our national *Intergenerational Volunteering* program, we engaged children's rights experts. Children's rights principles are also weaved into the program's activities and programming guide. Further, FC's commitment to uphold children's right to play is demonstrated in our work to promote play, especially in an outdoor unstructured context. We continue to work in partnership with the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, and many others, to actualize Canada's commitment to the *United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child*.



Activity sessions between seniors and children!



7.4 Intergenerational Volunteering  
June 2018 – March 2021  
Integrating Newcomer Seniors through Intergenerational Volunteering at Family Support Centres

This year FC piloted an Intergenerational Volunteering program in eight family support centres across Canada: the intent is to reduce isolation of newcomer seniors.

FC trained 30+ program facilitators in *Positive Discipline for Everyday Parenting* program communication tools and trauma-informed care to support activity sessions between preschool-aged children and newcomer seniors. The eight centres brought together 70+ seniors (40 languages spoken, combined!) and 60 preschool-aged children for



fun and simple activities on a weekly basis. They also hosted events to help newcomer seniors meet Canadian seniors to expand their social networks.

This year, FC developed a:

- Programming guide filled with engaging, low-cost activities for intergenerational volunteering programs
- Personal needs assessment tool to help connect seniors with social services and resources in their community

This program was made possible thanks to funding from Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC). FC also appreciates partner contributions of: Mosaic Newcomer Family Resource Network; The Council on Aging of Ottawa; A&O Support Services for Older Adults; Positive Discipline in Everyday Life; Space Pirates; the LIFE Research Institute; and the International Longevity Centre Canada (April – November 2019).

Through funding provided by the Ottawa Community Foundation, FC partnered with the Vanier Community Service Centre and Council on Aging of Ottawa to organize Intergenerational Volunteering activity sessions between preschool children and Canadian seniors at the Chartwell Rockcliffe Retirement Residence.

In 2020-2021, FC will be doing a further round of Intergenerational Volunteering programming under the IRCC funded project. FC looks forward to producing a culturally adapted version of the Intergenerational Volunteering programming guide in Arabic and Simplified Chinese.

### 7.5 Parenting

April 2018 – October 2021

#### Supported Parents: Supportive Parenting

FC is working to increase parents and caregivers' parenting skills in Ontario's minority language speaking communities by scaling up the *Nobody's Perfect* parenting program. The program is designed to meet the needs of parents who are young, single, socially or geographically isolated, who have low income or limited formal education and who have children under the age of five.



*Nobody's Perfect* facilitator training in Ottawa, Ontario.

Independent evaluations show that *Nobody's Perfect* parenting effectively promotes positive parenting, improves understanding of children's health, safety and behavior and helps to prevent family violence. Evidence also shows effective parenting programs reduce social and mental health challenges experienced by children later in life.

With funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, FC has:

- Translated the *Nobody's Perfect* parent kits into Arabic, Simplified Chinese, Punjabi and Spanish
- Trained 40 new bilingual program facilitators
- Signed up 22 family support centres in Ontario to deliver the program
- Held a *Nobody's Perfect* facilitator training in Ottawa

FC has helped partners deliver the program virtually during COVID-19 by organizing online refresher trainings for facilitators.

### 7.6 Play

March 2018 – May 2021

#### ECD Science to Practice: Knowledge Mobilization

In partnership with the Centre of Excellence for Early Childhood Development (CEECD), FC is developing new accessible resources drawn from the evidence-based online Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development. Vulnerable families, community-level organizations, and service providers who work directly with parents and children are beneficiaries under the *ECD Science to Practice: Knowledge Mobilization* project funded by Employment and Social Development Canada's Social Development Partnership Program. Partners on the project include West Island Association for the Intellectually Handicapped (WIAIH), University of Northern British Columbia's National Collaborating Centre for Indigenous Health (NCCIH), Andrew Fleck Children's Services, Lawson Foundation, Margaret and Wallace McCain Family Foundation Inc, The Science of Early Child Development (SECD), Red River College, DR. PAUL Roumeliotis, Université Laval, and Storypark Inc. For examples of the new resources, see our section on new and upcoming resources.

### 7.7 Social Inclusion of Newcomers

Every year, family support centres across Canada welcome newcomers and help them build ties in their community.

#### Children's Rights in Canada



#### Being a Teen in Canada



With the help of partners, this year FC widely shared our recent *Family Life in Canada* video series. The series aims to help newcomers adjust to life in Canada and encourages them to access community information, programs, services and resources.

The *Families Life in Canada* videos include:

- *Being a Dad in Canada*
- *Being a Teen in Canada*
- *Children's Rights in Canada*
- *Introduction to Positive Discipline*
- *Parenting with Positive Discipline*

A big thank you to our partners: Dad Central Canada, The Students Commission of Canada, the Landon Pearson Centre for the Study of Childhood and Children's Rights, and Positive Discipline in Everyday Life.

This year, we also promoted the social inclusion of newcomers through our very popular Intergenerational Volunteering program where the majority of participating seniors identified as newcomers.





# 8.0 Resources

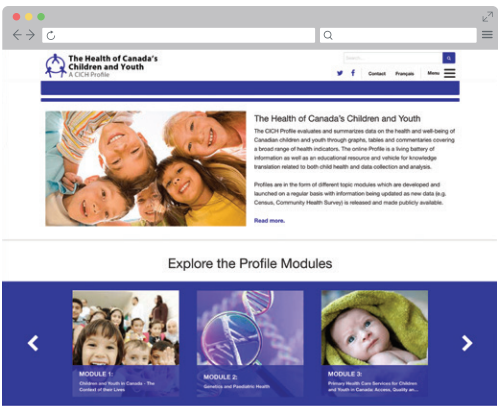
## New Resources



**Guide: Bringing Together Seniors and Children in the Community: Intergenerational Activities Programming Guide**  
Culturally adapted versions of the Intergenerational Volunteering programming guide will be available to download for free on our website in Arabic and Simplified Chinese.

### CICH Profile

Through an agreement with the Canadian Institute of Child Health (CICH), FC now proudly hosts *The Health of Canada's Children and Youth: A CICH Profile*. This online resource evaluates and summarizes data on the health and well-being of Canadian children and youth through graphs, tables and commentaries covering a broad range of health indicators.



## Upcoming Resources



**Video: Being a Senior in Canada**  
Keep an eye on our YouTube page for a new video about the lived experiences of newcomer seniors in Canada.

**Brochures: Food Safety for Newcomer Seniors**  
FC looks forward to developing informational brochures to help family support centres work with newcomer seniors on food safety.

**e-Module: Empowering Women and Communities Through Financial Literacy**  
An upcoming e-module will introduce family support

practitioners to the Each One, Teach One financial literacy program designed by Vancity and promoted by the Canadian Credit Union Association. By hosting Each One, Teach One workshops at family support centres, practitioners can help empower women to reach their goals and strengthen their financial wellness.



**Why Play? Activity Cards**  
This set of 24 cards complements our *Why Play?* series. They suggest simple and fun activities that parents can do with their children. The activities are based on scientific evidence curated by the Encyclopedia on Early Childhood Development (ECD) and are designed to support children's healthy development.

### Why Play? Spotlight Series

FC will be releasing a new set of *Why Play?* pamphlets this year with each focusing on the following topics: language development, pro-social behaviours, self-regulation, and emotional expression.



**Why Play? Growing at My Own Pace**  
All children deserve equal opportunities for healthy development. That is why we are adapting our original *Why Play?* pamphlets to promote play for children with intellectual or developmental disabilities.

### Why Play? for First Nations Families

FC's *Why Play?* pamphlets adapted specifically for First Nations families will be available soon. We thank our partners at the National Collaborating Center for Indigenous Health, University of Northern British Columbia. We also thank the First Nations parents and practitioners who participated in our focus groups and directed the redesign of the pamphlets' format, messaging, and suggested activities.

### Podcast: Supporting Families – Latest Science, Best Practices

This podcast series will discuss challenging and sensitive topics aimed at those working in the family support field. The first five episodes will cover: outdoor experiences, supporting identity, positive discipline, mental health, and technology.

### E-Modules on Early Child Development

These e-modules will be brief, micro-lessons on ECD topics. The content will be sourced from Science of Early Child Development (an initiative of Red River College) and the Encyclopedia for ECD.

### Webinar series: ECD and Resilience

A second ECD webinar series in response to the evolving COVID-19 pandemic. The provision of evidence-based information will support young children's resilience and recovery as the pandemic evolves, including some reopening of family support centres and programs. These webinars provide a forum to discuss challenges faced by family support practitioners and promising practices.



# 9.0 Financial Report

The diagrams offer an encapsulation of the audited FC financial statements for the year ending March 31, 2020. Copies of the complete financial statements are available at: [www.FamiliesCanada.ca](http://www.FamiliesCanada.ca).

The Auditor Kelly Huibers Mcneely Professional Corporation has provided FC with a clean audit opinion on the 2019-2020 Financial Statements.

## Contingency Fund

This fund has been established to ensure the continued operation of the Association in the event of a disruption in its core funding or a deterioration in its operations. This fund can only be used towards operations with the approval of the Board. As operations allow, the fund will be increased to an amount equal to three months of core expenses.

## Legacy and Building Funds

In the interest of simplicity and accountability, by unanimous motion the FC Board of Directors amalgamated these two historical funds into the Contingency Fund. Both the Legacy and Building funds are therefore discontinued.

## Project Funding and Government Contributions

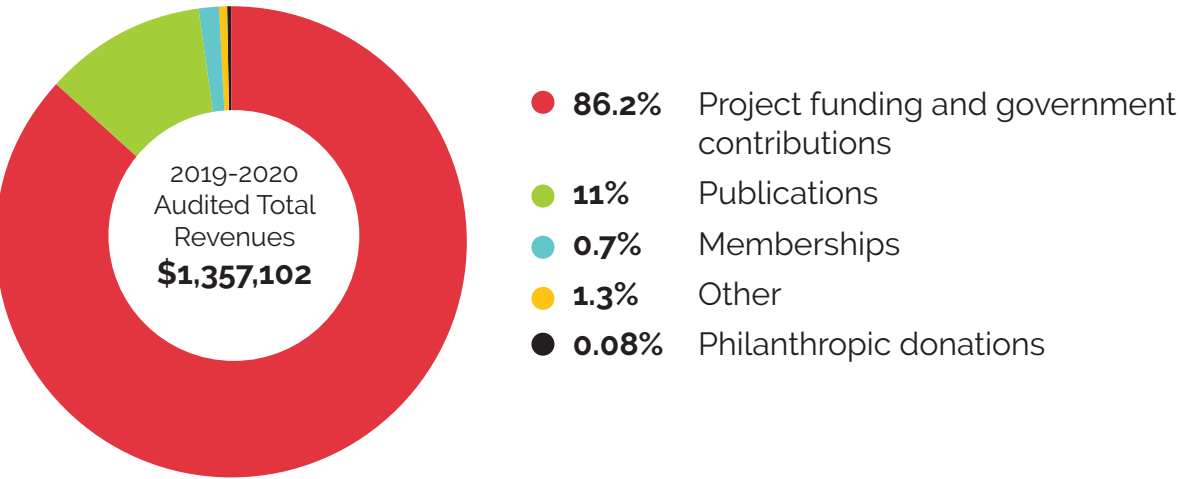
Project Funding and Government Contributions have decreased in 2020 over 2019 by 34% (or \$395K). This is mainly due to a decrease in grant applications approved in this fiscal year. This can partly be attributed to funders' exercising caution as the COVID-19 pandemic emerged in the final quarter of the year.

In this fiscal year, contributions were gratefully received from:

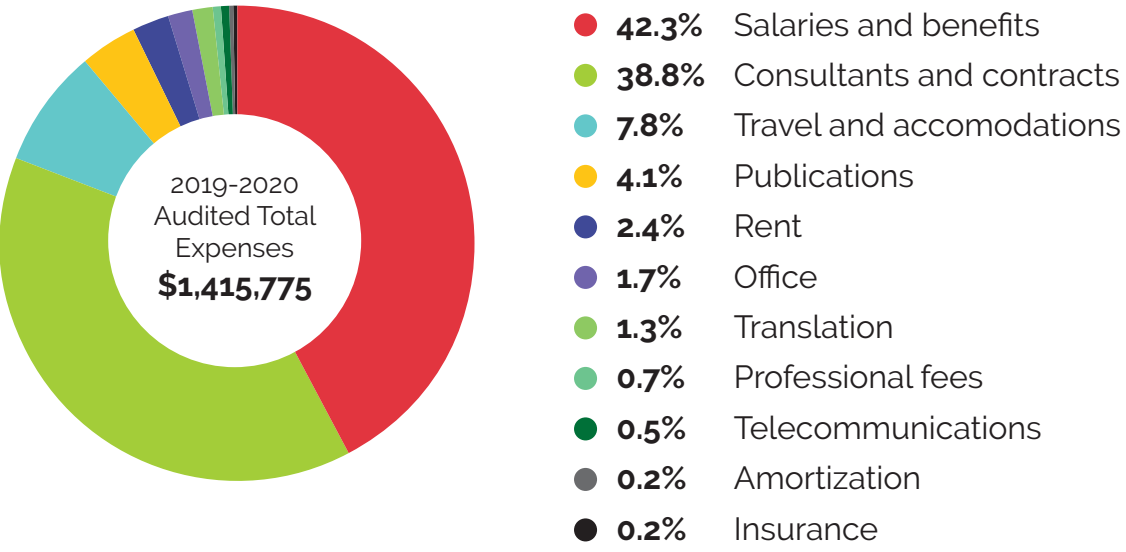
- The Lawson Foundation
- Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Ontario Trillium Foundation
- Ottawa Community Foundation
- Carleton University - Arthur Kroeger College
- Women and Gender Equality Canada

## Financial Information

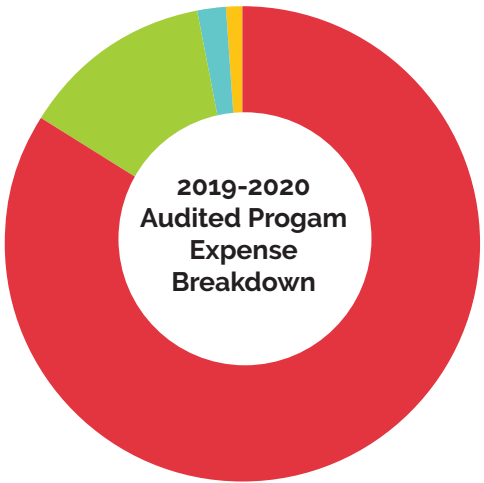
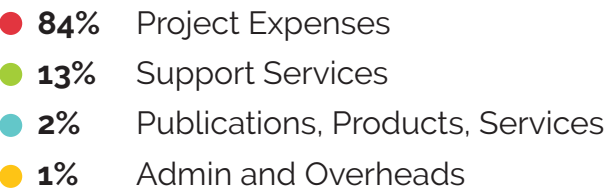
FC continued to generate a significant portion of revenue through projects. The low membership revenue was anticipated as FC intends to hold membership drives in the next fiscal once we renovate our membership structure and move to digitalize its management. Publications sales revenue increased this fiscal owing to growth in variety of resources and lower associated publications expense.



FC staff salaries are mostly covered by project funds as our staff provide technical and professional expertise in addition to management and oversight. Most projects also include significant allocations for engaging consultants and industry expertise.



Overall, expenditures in this fiscal year are lower compared to 2018-2019 due to financial controls put in place in response to the decrease in revenue. In addition, as most FC expenditures are directly related to project delivery under grant funding, a decrease in project activity resulted in a corresponding decrease in expenditure. At the same time, FC increased activities to kick off fundraising and membership drives for next fiscal year, which resulted in a small increase in Support Services expenses. These fundraising and membership drives have faced delays due to disruptions related to the pandemic.





## • • • List of Donors

**We are thankful for the generous support of the following 2019-2020 donors:**

- Halpenny Insurance Brokers
- Canada Revenue Agency, Government of Canada
- Other private donors

## • • • Connect with Us

**Visit our website and follow us on social media!**

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