

CELEBRATING **25** YEARS OF SERVICE

CARE CARE CENTRE FOR
INTERNATIONALLY
EDUCATED
NURSES 

Supporting IEN Careers in Canada

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Supporting IENs
Strengthening Health Care

Ontario 

Funded by:

Financé par :



Immigration, Refugees
and Citizenship Canada

Immigration, Réfugiés
et Citoyenneté Canada

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OUR VISION

Internationally educated nurses are leaders in the profession and integral to the effectiveness of Canada's healthcare system.

OUR MISSION

To strengthen Canada's healthcare system by leading in the development and integration of a culturally diverse, inclusive, and effective healthcare workforce in which internationally educated nurses contribute their expertise and fulfill their leadership potential.



IENS' SUCCESS IS OUR SUCCESS

A Message from our Executive Director

It was my great honour to be appointed Executive Director of CARE Centre for Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs) in the organization's 25th anniversary year. I want to congratulate Dr. Ruth Lee on her retirement from the role after nine years of service to IENs. I thank the Board of Directors, chaired by Lesley Hirst, who is an IEN from the U.K., for their confidence, as we enter a new era for CARE Centre. It's the first time two IENs are in CARE Centre's leadership positions, and together with the staff and board we will ensure many more years of outstanding service to IENs and heightened collaboration with stakeholders right across Canada.

We thank our funders, the Government of Ontario and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, for their on-going support, and their recognition that CARE Centre's specialized focus on newcomer nurses is needed now more than ever. To CARE Centre's dedicated, hardworking staff, who set new performance standards every year, you have my daily gratitude for your immense talents and the creativity you employ in all your efforts. CARE Centre could not accomplish all that we do without the support of our partner organizations, from educators and employers to professional organizations, regulators and everyone in the health care and settlement sectors.

Thank you, and we look forward to all future collaborations. As we face the increasing demands on our health care system, with an aging population and the needs of rural, remote, and Indigenous communities, our IENs fill important nursing roles to build human health capacity to serve all our Canadians. Moving forward from our 25th anniversary year, CARE Centre is well positioned to be a national voice for IENs, to amplify their important contributions and future impacts on health care in Canada. IENs' success is CARE Centre's success!

“As CARE Centre marks 25 years of service, we are proud to enter a new era of leadership and collaboration in support of internationally educated nurses.”



**Rola El Moubadder RN, BScN,
MQM, CNE, FSIEN**
Executive Director

A MESSAGE OF GRATITUDE, GROWTH, AND CONTINUED SERVICE

A Message from our Chairperson

It has been my great privilege to step into the very large shoes of Past Chairperson Phil Schalm as CARE Centre's new Chair of the Board of Directors. Phil provided CARE Centre with impactful leadership for many years, bringing his insight and experience to benefit the organization. I was grateful to work with CARE Centre's past Executive Director, Dr. Ruth Lee, who took her well-deserved retirement at the end of the last fiscal year. I have enjoyed a close professional relationship with Ruth, and I know she will continue to support CARE Centre from her perspective of nine years as leader.

I am thrilled to be working with the new Executive Director, Rola El Moubadder, who is a fellow IEN like me. Rola is also a CARE Centre member who has first-hand experience taking the IEN journey to significant levels of accomplishment.

CARE Centre is celebrating 25 years of service to IENs in Ontario with provincial government funding, and 10 years of supporting IENs coming to Canada through the IRCC-funded PASS program, which now stands for Pre-Arrival and Post-Arrival Supports and Services. PASS now assists IENs across Canada, a goal CARE Centre always had on the horizon.

The Board of Directors has every confidence in CARE Centre's staff to achieve national excellence in its services to IENs. They are such a dedicated team, many of whom have been with the organization for many of those 25 years. Happy Anniversary CARE Centre! The Board of Directors looks forward to collaborating on our continued success across Canada and internationally.

“PASS now assists IENs across Canada, reaching a goal CARE Centre always had on the horizon.”

Lesley Hirst,
RN, BScN, MNP, MSc
Chairperson





STAFF AND OFFICE CHANGES

At the end of the fiscal year in March 2026, we wished former Executive Director Dr. Ruth Lee all the best in her retirement after serving CARE Centre for nine years. We welcomed Rola El Moubadder, formerly the STARS Program Manager, and a CARE Centre member IEN, as the new Executive Director. A fellow IEN, Lesley Hirst, became the new Chairperson of CARE Centre's Board of Directors, when former Chair Phil Schalm stepped down from the role. We are grateful to Phil for all his hard work and guidance, along with all board members, past and present, who give so much of their time and expertise. Faith Hatchett, an RN with a community nursing background, is the new Program Manager for CARE Centre's Ontario services moving into the next fiscal year.

Joining the STARS team as case managers this past year are Farah Barakat, BA,MA, an experienced immigration professional, working in Ottawa, Deronni Augustus, RN, BScN, case managing in Peel Region, and Mary Strong, RN, BScN, MN, seeing clients in Windsor-Essex.



Meghan Wankel , BA, MA, became the PASS Program Manager to head up the exciting expansion of the program across Canada, with five case managers joining the team across the country. Nicholas Ghadiri, BA is now the PASS Program Co-ordinator and continues as Technology Lead. This is the 10th anniversary of the program. Tina Novotny, BA, BJ, MA, who has worked with CARE Centre in various capacities for 15 years, case manages for Ontario and Quebec from Toronto. In the Atlantic Provinces, Susan Hunt, LPN, has extensive experience working with IENs, is the case managers for all four provinces and is based in Saint John, New Brunswick.

Loy Asheri, RN, MSc, a former CARE Centre case manager in Ontario, and a member IEN, was the first Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award-winner. Loy is case managing PASS clients in British Columbia and the Yukon Territory from Vancouver, working along the side the Career Path's team with Douglas College. Rana Sleem, BSc, MSc, an experienced professional in the employment and settlement sectors, is case managing clients in Alberta and the Northwest Territories. Elmar Dionisio, MBA, the case manager for Saskatchewan and Manitoba working out of Regina, has a background in human resources and previously worked with the SK government to assist IENs settling in rural and remote areas of the province.

CARE Centre is grateful for the contributions of various contract personnel including Saba Honari assisting our Client Services department and Salwa Musa, RN, BScN, MScN, CHE, PhD(c) who conducted research working with Professional Practice Lead Ruth Wojtiuk, RN, BScN, MEd Ruth MacLeod, RN, BScN, CCHN (C), supported PASS case management in Ontario, while Blake Webster, RN, BScN, MHSc and Anne Goh, RN, BScN, worked in STARS case management in Toronto. For updates on office locations, please visit the website: care4nurses.org/contact



Dr. Ruth Lee, RN, MScN, PhD
Former Executive Director



WHY WE UPDATED OUR LOGO

As CARE Centre continues to expand its support for internationally educated nurses across Canada, we refreshed our logo to strengthen brand recognition and better reflect our national impact.

The updated design places greater emphasis on the CARE Centre name, creating a clearer visual identity across digital and print platforms. Enhanced typography and a simplified layout improve scalability and visibility, while the addition of a Canadian flag element reinforces our commitment to supporting internationally educated nurses as they build their careers across Canada.

As part of this refresh, CARE Centre transitioned away from individual program logos to a unified brand identity, creating a more cohesive and recognizable presence and reinforcing CARE Centre as the umbrella organization behind all programs and services.

SUPPORTS, TRAINING AND ACCESS TO REGULATED-EMPLOYMENT SERVICES: STARS PROGRAM

The STARS Program, CARE Centre's Ontario-based services to IENs, celebrates 25 years in 2026. One of the first bridge-training programs to be funded by the Ontario government, the STARS program welcomed 390 new members this year and has served 5771 since opening its doors in 2001. STARS members must be Canadian citizens, permanent residents, convention refugees or refugee claimants to be eligible to join. Additional immigration status eligibility can be found on the website. They must also have a Canadian Language Benchmark of 6, or equivalent English language proficiency.

STARS is based on a case management model, with member IENs working one-on-one with a designated case manager who knows their unique circumstances, challenges and goals. STARS presently employs 11 case managers, many of whom are themselves member IENs. Their combined skill sets, and mutual support, provide clients with the direction and opportunity to achieve registration, sustainable employment, professional development and career advancement.

STARS cornerstone programming includes in-person and virtual professional development. Many workshops focus on nursing language and communication. Further education is available on the Canvas learning platform for self-directed learning.

There are also in-person clinical workshops delivered by expert nurses. Advanced practice nurses also participate in the Observational Job Shadowing program, which offers in-person mentoring placements with employer partners from various health care sectors. The Virtual Mentoring program has continued beyond the COVID-19 pandemic to offer additional opportunities for IENs to gain insights from specialized nurses sharing their experience. Exam preparation courses are delivered online and in person. CARE Centre and STARS staff also teach the mandatory Transition to Practice course for CNO registration with university partners University of Toronto and Toronto Metropolitan University. The course is also offered by Colleges Ontario.

CARE Centre offers **Meet the Employer** sessions, which can be online Zoom presentations or in-person workshops exploring recruitment opportunities. The **Workplace Integration Program** has offered employers additional human resource and staff education on the effective orientation, integration and retention of IENs.

For more information, visit <https://care4nurses.org/stars-home/>





PRE-ARRIVAL AND POST-ARRIVAL SUPPORT : PASS PROGRAM

PASS has been funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada since 2016 as the exclusive nursing-focused program. Celebrating 10 years of service in 2026, PASS has now extended into post-arrival program delivery to IENs across the country, with service to all provinces and territories. Over the last year, 681 IENs joined PASS, either pre-arrival or after landing in Canada. Since 2016, 2,603 IENs have participated in PASS.

Each IEN works with an assigned case manager and some STARS programming is also open to PASS clients. Assistance with nursing registration is a focal point of the program, as the credentialling process can begin pre-arrival. Additional PASS program offerings include language and communication education, professional development workshops, mentoring and employment assistance. To join PASS, IENs must show completion of a nursing education program and approval for permanent resident or convention refugee immigration status.

Over the past year, PASS has developed and delivered new webinar content for participants to better understand the Canadian nursing landscape, sector issues and advances in the Canadian health care system. PASS premiered five important webinars on Indigenous history and health care equity, long-term care and community nursing.

Other core webinars in regular rotation introduce IEN newcomers to important information on settling in Canada and re-establishing nursing careers. Resources on resume and cover letter preparation were updated and expanded, to support clients in obtaining non-regulated roles pre-registration, as well as regulated positions. PASS' five case managers can also assist with exam preparation and regularly refer clients to community resources, such as IEN navigators and settlement agencies.

PASS revived the Mentoring program, which began as a partnership with the Canadian Nurses Association, and has continued to broaden to welcome more expert nurses. Thanks to funding from IRCC, PASS has begun to present CARE Centre's Workplace Integration Program to employers across Canada, better preparing staff at all levels to incorporate appropriate IEN orientation, transition, integration and retention strategies in the workplace.

For more information, please visit <https://pass4nurses.org/>

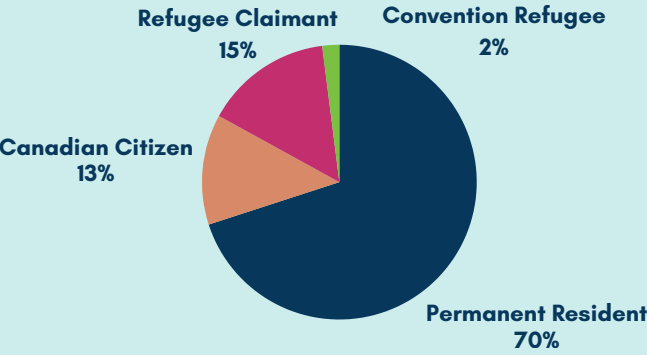
CLIENT PROFILE

* Map statistics are combined PASS/STARS data

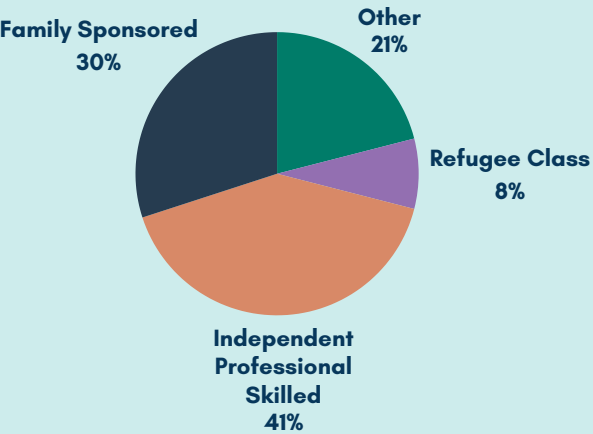


STARS CLIENT STATS

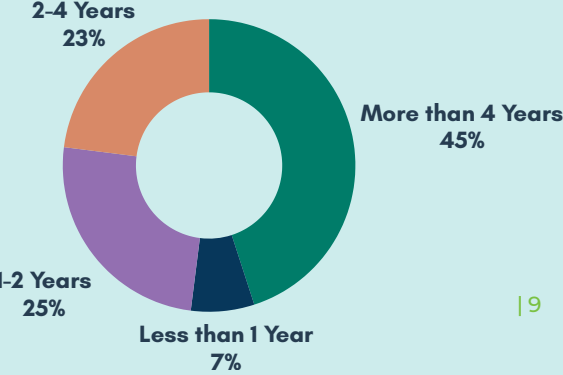
IMMIGRATION STATUS



IMMIGRATION CLASS



LENGTH OF TIME IN CANADA



CONFERENCES & EVENTS

Apr. 23, 24 PIE-IEN Annual Conference

May 28 Toronto Newcomer Day

May 29, 30 RAO AGM

Jun. 11 CPC Pre-Arrival

Jun. 27 Canadian Immigration Fair

Jun. 27 RAO General Meeting

Aug. 8 Grange Festival - Immigration

Aug. 16 TIIC Summit

Sep. 11 ACCEP-IEHP Open House

Sep. 19 ACCEP-IEHP Virtual Booth

Sep. 20 Healthdaq - Nursing Fair

Oct. 22 - 23 OCASI Conference

Oct. 23 - 24 We RPN

Oct. 23 SOPA Newcomer Fair

Oct. 29 - 30 Metropolis

Nov. 1 Filipino Professionals Convention

Nov. 14 AEIP Newcomers Virtual Fair

Nov. 17 - 18 CPC General Conference

Nov. 22 Pegasus Conference

Nov. 24 - 26 P2P Conference

Dec. 10 Nursing the Future

Jan. 20 British Columbia Interior Health Careers

Jan. 21 Manitoba (Virtual) The College of Registered Nurses of Manitoba

Jan. 22 Manitoba (Virtual) Health Care Retention and Recruitment Office

Feb. 3 Government of Nunavut Virtual Healthcare Career Fair

Feb. 5 Embracing Anti-Racism Approaches in Integrating Immigrants & Refugees

Feb. 11 - 12 Health Workforce Conference

HR Solutions in Healthcare Conference

Mar. 11 - 13 Metropolis Canada Conference

Mar. 11 -14 IEP Conference

Mar. 26 CARE Centre Connects: Nursing Job Fair for IENs



THE WORKPLACE INTEGRATION PROGRAM

The Workplace Integration Program (WIP) launched with the participation of multiple employers and staff members, thanks to special funding from the Ontario government. WIP offers customized, innovative learning sessions, focusing on diversity, equity, and inclusion, thereby facilitating successful recruitment, seamless workplace integration of IENs and, ultimately, improving retention rates. The broad topic areas for audiences from HR, leadership teams, educators, preceptors, existing nursing staff and IENs, are designed to equip participants with the skills and knowledge to facilitate a smooth transition and successful integration of IENs into their workforce, and to empower IENs to ask for and receive the tailored supports they need for success. WIP was originally delivered to 22 organizations, with 926 healthcare professionals participating in 47 educational sessions during the pilot. The majority of employers (61%) were from acute care. Organizations from long-term care formed 14% of participants with 21% from community care. Most participants were from administration, (77%) with existing staff and IENs also attending (23%).

Building on the success of WIP in Ontario and with surveys revealing participants' strong desire for institutional as well as systemic change, WIP is now available across the country supported by PASS' regional case managers. For more information on WIP visit: care4nurses.org/workplace-integration-program



**FACILITATED WORKSHOPS FOR
920+ IENS, EDUCATORS,
PRECEPTORS & HR MANAGERS**



**90% OF PARTICIPANTS
STATED THE WEBINARS
MET THEIR LEARNING
NEEDS**

MENTORING

CARE Centre provides mentoring opportunities through two STARS programs, Observational Job Shadowing (OJS) and Virtual Mentoring. OJS is conducted with formal employer partners, many of which have participated since OJS was created in CARE Centre's early years. Placements of two to three in-person shifts with an expert nurse are available in acute, long-term and community care. Virtual Mentoring initially offered during the COVID-19 pandemic has continued with three STARS members meeting on Zoom with an expert nurse with a specific area of specialization. The PASS program offers mentorship opportunities across Canada with advanced practice members of the Canadian Nurses Association and other mentors in various provinces and territories. Pairings are based on geographic location as well as nursing specializations. CARE Centre is grateful to all individuals and organizations who support IEN employment and integration giving generously of their time and expertise to enhance CARE Centre members' orientation. For more information visit: care4nurses.org/mentorship-programs



“ I highly recommend CARE Centre to all internationally educated nurses; it is an invaluable resource that provides essential knowledge and saves vital time and resources.”

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT (PD)

CARE Centre offers professional development (PD) webinars and workshops through the STARS program, with additional webinars delivered online through the PASS program. STARS PD teaches attendees about topics such as nursing communication skills, leadership development, artificial intelligence in health care and human rights. Various presenters deliver the PD sessions, including staff members, guest hosts, and facilitators. Regular “Meet the Employer” sessions are held with follow-up recruitment opportunities.

PASS clients receive a regular rotation of informational webinars on Canadian culture including legal safeguards, workplace norms, and an introduction to various aspects of the Canadian health care system. Specialized PASS webinars are now offered in community and long-term care nursing, Indigenous reconciliation and health with other topics such as mental health care and interprofessional communication being offered in collaboration with partner organizations. For current programming visit: care4nurses.org/event



THE JOAN LESMOND IEN OF THE YEAR AWARDS

The Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Awards celebrates 15 years in 2026. CARE Centre has presented The Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Awards to RNs since 2011, expanding the program to recognize one RN and one RPN in its fourth year. To date 25 member IENs have been recognized as Joan Lesmond Award-winners. Employers are also honoured with an award for their support of IENs.

In 2025, CARE Centre was delighted to present the RN IEN of the Year Award to Alyssa Macarandang, RN at our employer partner Schlegel Villages at the Village of Aspen Lake in Windsor, Ontario. Alyssa is Director of the Behavioural Supports Ontario Outreach Program, supporting eleven long-term care homes in Windsor.

“Receiving the Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Award is an incredible honour, recognizing both my personal journey and the collective support that has shaped it. I remain dedicated to advancing the profession, supporting colleagues, and providing compassionate, person-centred care to residents. I am grateful for these opportunities and committed to carrying forward the values and principles that guide my work every day.”

The RPN IEN of the Year Award was presented to Mary Grace Felix RPN, a CARE Centre member and former case manager who currently works as Professional Practice Associate at WeRPN, the Registered Practical Nurses Association of Ontario. Grace received her award at the WeRPN Annual General Meeting.

“I share this award with my family, friends, and all IENs and nurses. Your support, encouragement, and shared commitment to excellence continue to inspire me every day. Together, we uplift one another, create meaningful change, and strengthen the future of nursing. As an IEN, this recognition reflects the resilience, dedication, compassion, love, and care that IENs and all practical nurses bring to the health care system.”

CARE Centre recently launched a Mentorship Excellence Award, honouring an outstanding mentor to CARE Centre and its member IENs. The most recent recipient was PASS mentor Jeannie Hare, an RN in Alberta, who has been supporting clients since the PASS program began in 2016.

Nominations are open for the Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Awards 2026. More information and the online form are available on the CARE Centre website with a deadline of Friday, September 11th. Member IENs should speak with their case managers to submit a nomination. For more information visit care4nurses.org/joan-lesmond-awards





STARS

NEW MEMBERS

390

WORKSHOP ATTENDANCE:

1977

1:1 EMPLOYMENT COUNSELLING
PARTICIPANTS:

312

MENTORING PARTICIPANTS

76



PASS

NEW MEMBERS

681

WEBINAR ATTENDANCE:

4140

LANGUAGE COURSES
COMPLETED:

300

TOP DESTINATIONS

ON, BC, AB

BOARD MEMBERS

Lesley Hirst, RN, BScN (Hons), MNNP, MSc, Chairperson
Founder and Principal Consultant,
Hirst Health Care Consulting

Phil Schalm, BEd, MEd, Past Chairperson
Phil Schalm Consulting
Former Associate Director, University of Toronto
School of Continuing Studies (Retired)

David Kilburn, BA, CFA, Vice Chair
Senior Investment Counsellor and Market Leader
CIBC Private Investment Counsel

Murray Krock, RN (Non-Practising) BScN, MScN, Secretary
Former Senior Director, Nursing Practice and Education,
Interprofessional Practice, Unity Health Toronto (Retired)

John R. Vespa, MBA, CHRL, Finance and Audit Committee
Former HR Director, Princess Margaret Cancer Centre
and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (Retired)

Dr. Gwendolyn Williams RN, MSN, DNP
Acting Chair, Joan Lesmond IEN of the Year Awards Committee
Clinical Nurse Educator, William Osler Health System

Ella (Helen) Ferris, RN, MBA
Nurse Advisor, Spectrum Health Care
Former Executive Vice President, Clinical Programs and Chief Nursing and
Health Disciplines Executive, St. Michael's Hospital (Retired)

Dr. Emilene Reisdorfer, BScN, RN, MPH, PhD, FSIEN
Associate Professor and Associate Dean,
Dept. of Professional Nursing & Allied Health, MacEwan University

Sean McGrady, BA (Hon.)
Account Director, Strategic Communications
Ontario Medical Association

Joe Pedulla, RRT, B.A.Sc., MHSc, PMP, CHE
Independent Consultant
Professor, Conestoga College

Stephanie Girard-Fraser, BBA
Executive Director, Health and Community Care
Workforce Sector Council

Dr. Paula Mastrilli, RN, MScN, PhD
Former Chair of Nursing,
George Brown College (Retired)

To learn more about the
CARE Centre team and our partner
organizations please visit <https://care4nurses.org>



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

Year End March 31

Revenue	2026	2025
Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development	\$2,225,129	\$ 1,594,273
Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada	1,014,272	547,035
Services	52,127	51,910
City of Toronto	-	9,101
Expense recoveries and rebates	10,274	5,922
Investment income	67,167	77,044
Fundraising and donations	2,065	7,498
	3,371,034	2,292,783
Staffing costs	2,432,384	1,797,196
Professional fees and contract services	146,016	128,749
Occupancy	151,804	98,723
Resources and materials	117,538	51,832
Meetings, travel and training	94,773	41,095
Office equipment and database	124,037	56,015
Outreach and promotion	50,994	27,709
Communications	25,817	19,402
Insurance	19,644	19,328
	3,163,007	2,240,049
Excess of revenue over expenses for the year	\$208,027	52,734

CONNECT WITH US



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