

Working Skills Centre

ANNUAL REPORT 2025-2026

Chairperson's Report

Highlights for 2025-2026

Still Standing. Still Serving. Continuing to Grow.

As we reflect on another year at Working Skills Centre (WSC), I am filled with gratitude and appreciation for the dedication, resilience, and collective efforts of everyone who continues to support our mission.

The past year has been one of learning, adaptation, and growth. The transition to our new Employment Program in 2025 brought significant challenges, requiring adjustments to operations, processes, and service delivery.

With the completion of the program's first year in March 2026, we emerged with valuable lessons, greater experience, and a renewed determination to move forward. Rather than allowing these challenges to define us, we used them as opportunities to strengthen our organization and continue growing.

I would like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the entire Working Skills Centre team, whose hard work, flexibility, and unwavering commitment have been instrumental throughout this journey. Despite the demands of the transition and ongoing funding pressures, our staff continued to support our clients and students with professionalism, compassion, and dedication. Their perseverance is a true reflection of the values upon which WSC was built.

To my fellow Board of Directors, thank you for your leadership, guidance, and continued commitment to the organization's sustainability and future. Your collective wisdom and willingness to navigate challenges have been invaluable.

I would also like to recognize our students and student volunteers, whose enthusiasm, generosity, and willingness to give back remind us that WSC is more than a place of learning and employment support. It is a community where individuals grow, build confidence, and support one another.

A special acknowledgement goes to our former Board members, past members, and long-time supporters who stepped forward during challenging times to offer their assistance, ideas, and expertise. I wish to recognize those who initiated efforts to establish a fundraising team. Their willingness to reconnect and contribute reflects the lasting relationships and strong sense of community that make WSC special. These fundraising efforts represent an important opportunity to diversify our resources, strengthen partnerships, and support our long-term sustainability.

As we look ahead, our focus remains on building upon the lessons learned, strengthening our programs, supporting our staff, and exploring new opportunities for collaboration and growth. While challenges remain, so does our determination to ensure that Working Skills Centre continues to provide meaningful opportunities for the individuals and communities we serve.

The strength of Working Skills Centre has always been its people. To our staff, board members, students, volunteers, former members, and community partners, thank you for your dedication, generosity, and continued belief in our mission.

We have learned from the challenges of yesterday, grown stronger through our experiences, and remain committed to building a sustainable future together.

We are still standing. We are still serving. And together, we will continue to grow and thrive.

Jo Anne Rabanillo
Chairperson - Board of Directors
2025-2026

Management Report

Highlights for 2025-2026



The 2025–2026 year has been a period of significant change, transition, and adaptation for WSC. One of the most important developments was the provincial transition, implemented in March 2025, of employment services for Ontario Works (OW) recipients from Toronto Employment and Social Services (TESS) to Employment Ontario (EO) under the province's Integrated Employment Services (IES) model.

Impact of the Transition on WSC Program

While the provincial restructuring was intended to integrate and streamline employment services, it also resulted in the discontinuation of funding streams that had supported WSC's employment programming. Among the most significant changes were:

- Purchase of Employment (POES) Services: Direct TESS-managed POES funding streams officially ended on June 30, 2025. These funds had provided important resources to assist clients in overcoming employment-related barriers and accessing opportunities to enter the workforce.

- Wraparound (WRAP) Program: The program was discontinued in March 2025, resulting in the loss of additional resources that had supported clients through individualized and complementary employment-related services.

The discontinuation of these funding streams presented additional challenges for WSC, affecting the resources available to support clients with complex employment needs. It required the organization to reassess its operational priorities, adapt its service delivery approach, and explore alternative opportunities to sustain and strengthen its programs.

As with any major system transformation, the transition required organizational flexibility, operational adjustments, and a willingness to embrace new approaches. WSC responded proactively to these developments, demonstrating resilience and commitment to maintaining quality employment services while adapting to the new service delivery framework. Despite the uncertainties, funding changes, and demands associated with this transition, we remained focused on our mission and the needs of the individuals and communities we serve.

New Opportunities and Program Development

In addition to navigating these significant changes, WSC achieved an important milestone through the successful application for the Walk Out Working (WOW-Youth) project, funded by the TK Foundation, an international foundation based in the Bahamas with a commitment to supporting youth.

This initiative provides young people with meaningful opportunities to explore their potential, develop skills, and move towards sustainable career pathways. The WOW-Youth project embraces innovative approaches to youth development, including experiential learning, customized career planning, individualized guidance, and comprehensive support. By helping young people identify their strengths, overcome barriers, and establish realistic career goals, the project aims to create meaningful opportunities for their personal and professional growth.

Securing this funding represents an important achievement for WSC, demonstrating our continued ability to identify new opportunities, develop partnerships, and diversify program funding in response to an evolving employment services environment.

Acknowledgements and Appreciation

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the dedication, professionalism, and expertise of WSC's skilled team. Their commitment, adaptability, and willingness to embrace change have been instrumental in guiding the organization through a particularly challenging year. We sincerely recognize and appreciate their hard work and continued commitment to the individuals and communities we serve.

We also extend our sincere appreciation to the WSC Board of Directors for their continued guidance, confidence, and unwavering support throughout this period of transition. Their leadership and commitment have provided stability and encouragement as the organization navigated new challenges and opportunities.

Marina Nikova
Executive Director
2025-2026

Treasurer's Report

Financial information has been extracted from the Audited Financial Statement as of March 31, 2026
(Rashidi LLP | Chartered Professional Accountants)

ASSETS & LIABILITIES

	2026	2025
CURRENT ASSET		
Cash	$ 314,308	$ 362,624
Accounts Receivable	27,010	12,250
Grant Contributions Receivable	19,115	8,029
HST Recoverable	8,029	14,759
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	7,520	15,008
	367,953	397,911
Capital Assets	47,367	57,814
	$ 415,320	**$ 455,725**
LIABILITIES & Net ASSETS		
A/P & Accrued Liabilities	$ 31,171	$ 13,107
Deferred Revenue	-	400
Deferred Grant Contributions	25,000	89,998
	56,171	103,505
Deferred Capital Contributions	19,895	24,869
Net Assets	339,254	327,351
	$ 415,320	**$ 455,725**

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

REVENUE		
Governments Grants	$ 706,643	$ 294,358
TESS Skills Training & Employment Incentive -non-vocational	56,641	290,442
TESS Skills Training & Employment Incentive - vocational	5,700	129,803
Certificate (Part-Time) Programs	18,195	65,790
Fundraising, Donations and other Income	26,340	55,867
-	813,519	836,260
EXPENSES		
Bank Charges & Interest	4,894	4,490
Computer Software, Supplies & Technical Services	21,491	22,789
Employee and Trainee Benefits	34,966	41,174
Equipment Leasing & Maintenance	7,444	11,001
Insurance	22,298	13,298
Occupancy Costs	95,026	100,418
Office Supplies	20,359	20,963
Outreach/Marketing	380	1,483
Professional Fees	28,617	10,420
Program Resource Materials	10,899	15,699
Program Cost	56,485	-
Telephone	8,457	8,112
Travel & Participant Expenses	308	658
Salaries	483,279	539,813
	794,903	**790,318**
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses before amortization	18,616	45,942
Net Amortization	(6,713)	(8,236)
Excess (deficiency) of revenue over expenses	**$ 11,903**	**$ 37,706**

History and Mandate

Working Skills Centre (WSC) was established in 1978, incorporated on May 1, 1980, and received charitable status in March 2003. Originally mandated to serve immigrant women from Spanish and Portuguese-speaking communities, the organization quickly expanded to serve immigrant women from any country of origin. The Letters Patent was revised in 2005 to expand the mandate to serve individuals, primarily immigrants, who are unemployed or underemployed, and to assist them in obtaining the skills needed to become self-sufficient. While mandated to serve a broader clientele throughout the Greater Toronto Area, the Mission Statement reflects the emphasis on programs for immigrant women:

> *Working Skills Centre (WSC) is an innovative, community-based, non-profit, charitable organization that empowers immigrants, primarily women. Our purpose is to prepare our clients to fully participate in Canadian society by providing education, work experience, and settlement services that ultimately lead to employment.*

Location and Contact Information

Address: 703 - 55 Eglinton Ave E
Toronto, ON M4P 1G8
Phone: (416) 703-7770
Fax: (416) 703-1610
Website: www.workingskillscentre.com

2025 -2026 Board of Directors & Officers

Jo Anne Rabanillo	Chairperson	**Vida Arshad**	Member at Large
Denise Hinds	Past Chairperson	**Shideh Dianetnejad**	Member at Large
Chista Daneshmand	Secretary	**Stephanie Pavlich**	Member at Large
Maggie Yu	Treasurer (until June 19)	**Rikka Antonia Vescio**	Member at Large
Alexander Rudnev	Treasurer (from June 19)		

List of Staff 2025-2026

Marina Nikova
Executive Director

Ansuya Chetty
Settlement Counsellor / Coordinator

Claudia Bargellini
Employment Services Manager

Tuan Farook
Financial Manager

Sanaz Ghadiri
Program Coordinator

Michael Jor
Job Developer

Dian Liu
Employment Services Coordinator

Isabel Laparra
Education Manager

Kevin Wilson
Microsoft Office Instructor

Silva Mardirossian
Office Procedures/Reception Instructor

Shodan Nadkarni
SAP End User Project Manager

Helen Woldegeorgis
Accounting Coordinator

Acknowledgments

Working Skills Centre would like to acknowledge our 2025-2026 volunteers, funders and partners.

Volunteers 2025-2026

WSC recognizes the many volunteers who so generously and willingly give of their time. You are an important part of this organization - we couldn't do it without you. On behalf of the staff of the Working Skills Centre, thank you. Your contribution is greatly appreciated, and we wish you all the best in your future endeavors!

Rafath Ali-Khan
Bolaji Akinde
Ammara Arsalan
Francis Austin
Hanan Bakir
Alice Bonavia
Gary Brigden
Ana Cecilia Carillo Vargas
Souria Chaabo
Brad Clarke
Gloreen D'Ornellas
Kiara Fine
Nancy Giles
Shaghayegh Haririan
Tom Hatcher
Farzaneh Hossein
Betty Ho
Christy Ijiola
Anne Ilugbo
Archana Jaiswal
Edmund Kim
Sophie Kohn Kaminsky
Deepa Kotapati
Natalya Krylova
Susan Le Roy
Tanya Macmillan
Theresa Masson
Pary Momeni
Mark Moskalenko
Mohammad Musa
Zenab Naqvi
Bolatito Olatundun
Kolawole Ogunlade
Bob Ottaway
Amina Salihi
Florence Segbaya
Suzan Shath
Yasmin Shath
Tatiana Shulgina
Sahar Soroushmehr
Alex Sternin
Teresa Szymanski
Laquan Tang-Nian
Gaurav Thakur
Andrew Toller
Tetiana Yanchuk
Lynn Wolverton
Natalya Zemlyanska

Placement Students

Kingsley Clarke

Grants and Contributions were received from:

Government of Canada

- Employment and Social Services Development Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program

Province of Ontario

- Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development, Newcomer Settlement Program
- WCG Services (Employment Ontario)
- The Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility, Ontario Seniors Community Grant Program

Foundations and Other Grants

- Toronto Foundation
- Shum Vourkoutiotis Fund
- TK Foundation
- OCASI

Acknowledgments

Community and Private Sector Partners who supported us in our work

- Acces Employment
- Brands for Canada
- Building Up
- Canadian Centre for Rehabilitation and Work (CCRW)
- Canadian Mental Health Association (Opening Doors Project)
- Community Living
- Credit Canada Debt Solutions
- Don Valley Community Legal Services
- Don Valley Health and Wellness Centre
- March of Dimes
- Multilingual Community Interpreter Services
- New Circles
- NPower Canada
- Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre
- Toronto Community Employment Services
- Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation
- Unison Health and Community Services
- United for Literacy
- Up with Women
- West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Services
- Willowdale Community Legal Services
- Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic
- YWCA Employment Services

And the many employers who provided work experience for our graduates, especially those who hired a graduate.

The umbrella groups who provide valuable information and lobby for systemic change on behalf of our clients:

- Ontario Council of Agencies Serving Immigrants
- Northeast Toronto Local Immigration Partnership
- Youth Employment Partnership

Skills Training 2025 - 2026

Walk Out Working (WOW) Program

In 2025, Working Skills Centre (WSC) launched a vital partnership with the TK Foundation to deliver skills training programs for youth aged 18–30. Under this initiative, WSC successfully delivered two cohorts of the **Walk Out Working (WOW) Program**. Participants built advanced office technology skills, earned industry-recognized certifications, and accessed optional bookkeeping training.

Success Overview

The WOW Program has made a meaningful impact on participants' employment outcomes. Across just two cohorts delivered between July 2025 and March 2026, WSC achieved an average employment rate of 86%, demonstrating the program's success in preparing youth to take the next step toward meaningful employment.

WOW- Program Summary		
2025-2026	Group 1	Group 2
Intake	18	32
Completed	14	21
Employed	14	16
Higher Education	3	8
Volunteer/ Placement	4	3
Incomplete	4	8
Success	100%	100%
100% of program participants achieved an employment, education, or volunteer, placement outcome after they completed their program.		





WOW Graduation Ceremony (June 2026)

Challenges

While participants continue to face barriers such as rising living costs, limited access to childcare, housing challenges, mental health concerns, and immigration-related employment restrictions, WSC remains committed to providing support and connecting them with community resources to help them overcome these obstacles and stay on track toward their career goals.

Continued Opportunities

Having successfully achieved our performance targets, WSC is pleased to announce the renewal of funding for 2026–2027. Building on this success, we look forward to expanding the program's reach, strengthening participant engagement, and fostering a long-term partnership with the TK Foundation to create continued opportunities for youth.



WOW Graduation Ceremony (June 2026)

Part-Time Training

To better serve the broader community, WSC provided Employment Ontario clients with access to short-term, part-time training opportunities. These courses allowed job seekers to earn Canadian credentials, upgrade their skills to intermediate and advanced levels, and strengthen their qualifications to improve their employment prospects.

Employment Services 2025 – 2026

Employment Ontario - First Year of Service Delivery

The 2025–2026 reporting year marked an important milestone for Working Skills Centre (WSC) as the organization completed its first year delivering Employment Ontario (EO) services to job seekers and the broader community.

Employment Ontario is Ontario's network of publicly funded employment services, connecting individuals with employment counselling, job search assistance, resume and interview preparation, training opportunities and local employers. Through its partnership with WCG Services, the Service System Manager for Toronto. WCG plays an important role in administering service provider agreements and funding, supporting service delivery and coordinating the broader local employment services network.

Launching the program required considerable planning, coordination and adaptation. During the first three quarters, the team focused on establishing service delivery processes, implementing a new client-tracking system, developing community referral relationships and building the operational capacity needed to support clients effectively.

By the final quarter, January to March 2026, the team had developed greater familiarity with the program's requirements and strengthened its service delivery approach. Staff became increasingly confident with the new system.

Community and employer partnerships strengthened, with the addition of a dedicated Job Developer in January 2026 playing a key role in developing relationships that created pathways for clients to access relevant training programs and connect directly with employment opportunities

As this was WSC's first year delivering Employment Ontario services, the results establish an important baseline for evaluating performance, identifying opportunities for improvement and guiding future program development.

First-Year Performance

During its first year of Employment Ontario service delivery, WSC recorded 250 service volumes, and achieved 70 job starts.

A key achievement was exceeding the annual target for three-month employment outcomes, recording 40 against a target of 38. This highlights WSC's efforts to support clients beyond their initial job placement and encourage employment retention.

Annual Performance Highlights

Performance Indicator	Actual	Target	Achieved
Service volumes	250	300	83.3%
Clients served	73	132	55.3%
Job starts	70	107	65.4%
Three-month outcomes	40	38	105.3%
EAP outcomes	71	106	67.0%
Brokered Incentive Agreements	7	16	43.8%

Fourth-Quarter Performance January–March 2026

In the final quarter, WSC recorded 76 service volumes against a target of 74, exceeding its quarterly target. This reflected progress in service delivery as staff became more familiar with program requirements, referral relationships strengthened and community engagement expanded.

Continued Opportunities:

- Welcome 30 new clients monthly, deliver quarterly information sessions and deliver free workshops through community partners.
- Continue the Job Developer position, provide one professional development day for staff each quarter.
- Organize more community job fairs and expand outreach through social media.

These priorities build on the progress made during WSC's first year while addressing opportunities to improve job placements, client engagement and employment retention. As the department enters its second year, it remains committed to strengthening partnerships, improving service quality and helping more individuals achieve meaningful employment.

Settlement Services 2025- 2026

Newcomer Settlement Program

WSC's settlement services are funded by the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development. This was the fourth year of a five-year contract covering 2022-2027.

Key Accomplishments for 2025-2026

1. A major achievement for the year was that we achieved the targets for all deliverables. This was despite a decline in usual client traffic following the end of the Purchase of Employment Services (POES) a valuable program for clients and an important funding source for WSC.

2. We served 465 clients, and provided over 1157 one-on-one services, including needs assessments, settlement planning, and referrals to community resources.

3. We conducted 96 settlement workshops covering a wide range of topics including: Employee Rights; Financial Literacy; Managing Stress and Anxiety; Volunteering and Your Job Search; Indigenous Awareness; 2SLGBTQIA+ Digital Literacy Series, Business Writing Series, Aloud Series, Orientation to Services for Newcomers in Ontario and Orientation to Programs for Internationally Educated professionals.

4. The new Speaking Aloud series focused on public speaking and building participants' confidence in oral communication. Volunteer coaches supported our MLITSD-funded staff, enhancing the sessions and helping participants expand their knowledge of Canada. We delivered the six-workshop series twice.

5. We continued to integrate language learning into our digital literacy workshop series for newcomers. In addition to developing digital skills, participants expanded their vocabulary, strengthened their grammar, and increased their knowledge of Canada and Ontario.

Acknowledgements

Our settlement program benefited greatly from the support of community partners. A special thanks to the Canadian Centre for Rehabilitation and Work, Yonge Eglinton Community Centre, Toronto Community Employment Services, the Opening Doors Project, Workers Health and Safety Legal Clinic, Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre, and West Scarborough Neighbourhood Community Services for their practical assistance. We also sincerely thank the Northeast Toronto Local Immigration Partnership), which offers a platform for information sharing, networking, and professional development, activities that ultimately strengthen our settlement program.

NSP Client Profile

Gender

Gender	% of Clients 2024-2025	% of Clients 2025-2026
Male	34%	35%
Female	65%	64%
Other	1%	1%

Top Ten Countries of Origin

Ranking	Country of Origin 2024-2025	Country of Origin 2025-2026
1	Nigeria	Iran
2	Ukraine	Nigeria
3	Pakistan	Bangladesh
4	Iran	Uganda
5	Bangladesh	Ethiopia
6	Afghanistan	Ukraine
7	Sri Lanka	India
8	Jamaica	Kenya
9	India	China
10	Eritrea	Afghanistan

Immigrant Status

Immigrant Status	% of Clients 2024 - 2025	% of Clients 2025 - 2026
Permanent Residents	23%	30%
Refugee Claimants	55%	36%
Canadian Citizens	12%	22%
Other	10%	6%

Length of time in Canada

Time Category	% of clients 2023-2024	% of clients 202024-2025
Less than 1 year	37%	8%
1 to 3 years	38%	44%
3 to 5 years	4%	15%
Over 5 years	16%	32%
Undisclosed	1%	1%

WSC Seniors Program

The project, **Senior Volunteers Supporting Seniors and mentoring Newcomers** was implemented with funding from Employment and Social Development Canada, New Horizons for Seniors Program. 2025-2026 was our sixth year of funding.

Project objectives were:

a) Promotion of volunteerism among seniors and other generations; recruitment and training of volunteers.

b) Supporting the social participation and inclusion of seniors through a schedule of recreational and educational activities.

c) provide opportunities for seniors to mentor others through communication coaching sessions.

d)Expand awareness of elder abuse, in particular awareness of fraud.

2025 -2026 Seniors Program Highlights

1. We recruited a team of 29 senior volunteers who who helped plan, promote and deliver a schedule of activities. Twenty (20) non-senior volunteers, primarily newcomers, supported the implementation of classes and activities and were mentored by the senior volunteers.



Volunteers helping with special winter social café event for seniors. (Dec 2025)

2. At least 168 community members (120 seniors and 48 non-seniors) benefited from project activities.



Winter neighbourhood walk led by Kiara Fine (Feb 2026)

3. We hosted over 60 activities for seniors including exercise classes and social cafes, music workshops, art and craft lessons, sewing lessons, neighbourhood walks and presentations on benefits for seniors and senior abuse prevention.



Music class at Montgomery Place (Jan 2026)



WSC Seniors Program

2025 -2026 Seniors Program Highlights





Fabric art classes at Janet Magee Manor (April 2025)

4. We organized 24 digital literacy workshops for seniors. The workshops, focusing on office applications were aimed at seniors still in the workforce or looking for work and who needed to improve their digital literacy. We also held over 20 individual coaching sessions. to help seniors with day-to-day tasks, including navigating websites, filling out online forms, and looking up information.

5. One component of the project was about engaging seniors in mentoring others. Senior volunteers hosted 24 communication workshops. They coached newcomer participants from different generations in oral communication and writing skills.

6. Some activities were presented at WSC and others at Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation buildings including 71 Merton Street, 1567 Yonge Street and 130 Eglinton Avenue. A special thank you to Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation and tenant volunteers for collaborating with us on numerous successful events.



Fraud awareness and prevention session at Janet Magee Manor (Mar 2026.)

All project activities provided a space for social interaction. The social cafes provided opportunities for creative expression, sharing knowledge and engaging in discussions with others. The exercise classes promoted physical fitness and were an activity that seniors could enjoy together. Several of the activities provided opportunities for social interaction across generations.



The social café included sewing classes hosted at WSC. (Nov and Dec 2025.)

The engagement of seniors in planning project activities allowed them to use their knowledge and experience in building community. According to our client satisfaction surveys, 91% of respondents said that the activities helped them feel more engaged in the community.

Testimonials

Coming to Canada meant starting my career over, and Working Skills Centre became an important part of that journey. Through their administrative training, resume and interview coaching, and support in earning my Microsoft Office Specialist certification, I gained not only practical skills but also the confidence to pursue opportunities I once thought were out of reach.

The encouragement and guidance I received helped me present my experience more effectively and ultimately secure permanent employment as a Support Assistant with the City of Toronto. I am sincerely grateful to the dedicated staff whose belief in my potential made a real difference.

To current and future students, my advice is simple: embrace every opportunity, stay committed, and believe in your abilities. The skills you gain today can open doors you never imagined tomorrow.

Ngozi Obi
WSC Alumni - EO - Program Client

My experience with the Working Skills Center has been excellent and has made a meaningful difference in my life.

When I first connected with Dian, I was in a difficult period, given the challenging job market, and was trying to figure out my next steps. I received support, encouragement, and guidance that helped me regain confidence in myself and recognize the skills and experience I already had.

I received intensive support to help me prepare for employment, including identifying my strengths, refining my resume, and improving my interview skills.

This directly led to me becoming employed with the City of Toronto a few months later. This is a significant accomplishment for me, and would not have been possible without the support and encouragement I received.

I am very grateful to Dian and the entire Working Skills Center for believing in me, encouraging me, and helping me move forward in my career. \

CJ
EO - Program Client

My experience with Working Skills Centre has been a meaningful part of my journey toward finding employment. When I first connected with the centre, I was looking for support with my job search and wanted to find a position where I could build on my education, experience, and administrative skills.

Throughout my time at Working Skills Centre-Employment Ontario, I had the opportunity to work with Isabel, Dian, and Claudia through. Each of them provided encouragement, guidance, and resources that helped me move forward. From reviewing my resume and discussing employment opportunities to preparing for interviews and strengthening my skills, I always felt that I had people supporting me throughout the process.

The training opportunities were also an important part of my experience. I completed my Microsoft Office Specialist Certificate and Medical Terminology & Billing training through Working Skills Centre. These programs allowed me to strengthen my technical and administrative skills whilegiving me greater confidence in what I could bring to an employer.

I am grateful to share that this support has led me to an opportunity that means a great deal to me. I have accepted an Administration Trainee position with the City of Toronto in the Public Health Division. This role represents a meaningful step toward building a long-term career in public service, something I take pride in.

My background in Public Health has always shaped the way I approach work, with a strong sense of responsibility and a focus on supporting the well-being of others. I am excited to bring that perspective, along with my administrative and customer service experience, into this new role.

Looking back, the job search was not always easy but having people who encouraged me and helped me recognize my strengths made a real difference. I am sincerely grateful to Isabel, Dian, Claudia, and the Working Skills Centre team for their support and for helping me move closer to my career goals.

I would encourage anyone looking for employment support or skills training to connect with Working Skills Centre. Sometimes, having the right people guide you, encourage you, and help you see what you are capable of can make all the difference.

Samantha Liang
WSC Alumni - EO - Program Client

Testimonials

Before joining the WSC program, I was unemployed and struggling to understand the Canadian job market. In my home country, I had four years of experience as a language instructor and was passionate about helping students learn and grow. However, after arriving in Canada, I often heard that my experience from back home would not be recognized or that it would not help me find employment here. Hearing this repeatedly discouraging and affected my confidence. Despite my qualifications and experience, I spent almost one and a half years searching for work and was unable to secure even a survival job. I wanted to grow professionally and build a career in Canada, but I did not know where to start or who could guide me in the right direction.

Around September–October last year, I learned about the administrative programs at WSC. When I first met Marina, the Executive Director, something changed for me. After arriving in Canada, I had gradually lost confidence in myself because of the challenges I faced. Marina helped me believe in myself again and showed me a path forward. Her encouragement and guidance gave me hope and motivation to continue pursuing my goals.

The program truly helped shape me both personally and professionally. Through my classmates and facilitators, I learned so much about the Canadian workplace, career development, and professional growth. Hearing the journeys of others inspired me and showed me that success was possible with the right support and determination.

I gained valuable technical skills as well. Kevin taught us Excel, Word, and PowerPoint, and his passion for teaching was very inspiring. Sanaz provided hands-on learning and was always there to support us whenever we needed help. I am also very grateful to Tuan, who taught bookkeeping. Coming from a science background, accounting was completely new to me, but his teaching helped me understand the subject and achieve an 85% grade.

One of the biggest achievements for me was rebuilding my confidence. Before joining the program, I doubted my abilities and felt discouraged. Through hard work, support from the WSC team, and the knowledge I gained, I achieved grades of 95% or higher in most of my courses. That was the moment I discovered a new version of myself—more confident, capable, and ready to move forward.

After completing the program, I applied for a volunteer opportunity with the WSC. This experience was incredibly valuable because it gave me the chance to gain Canadian work experience at a time when many employers were not willing to give me an opportunity due to my lack of Canadian experience. Through this role, I was able to continue developing my skills, build professional connections, and gain practical experience that strengthened my confidence even further.

I am truly thankful to everyone at WSC for the opportunities and support they provided, especially Marina. WSC gave me the chance to rebuild myself, regain my confidence, and believe in my future again. The program did not just teach me new skills—it helped me rediscover my potential.

I am deeply grateful for everything WSC has done for me, and I sincerely hope this program continues to receive support so that more youth, newcomers, and individuals facing similar challenges can benefit from it. I believe WSC will continue creating meaningful opportunities for people who want to develop their skills, build confidence, and successfully integrate into the Canadian workforce.

Thank you to Marina and the entire WSC team for making such a positive difference in my life.

Tajkia Fujla
Graduate, Walk Out Working

I would like to share my testimonial as a client of the Working Skills Centre. I am grateful to have been part of the (Walk Out Working) WOW program, where I had the opportunity to meet wonderful people and develop valuable skills.

Sanaz played an important role in supporting me throughout the program. Thanks to her guidance and recommendation, I secured a part-time position with the City of Toronto as a Recreation Worker.

Even after the program concluded, the team continued to stay in touch and provide support whenever needed. Their ongoing commitment to my success made a meaningful difference in my career journey.

I am truly thankful to have been part of the Working Skills Centre and appreciate all the support, encouragement, and guidance I received.

Hamsa Lekha
Graduate, Walk Out Working Program

Testimonials

I'm really grateful for my experience with Working Skills Centre in Toronto. When I first started, I wasn't completely sure about my next steps, but the support and guidance I received made a big difference.

The staff were friendly, patient, and always willing to help. They took the time to understand my situation and helped me build my confidence, improve my skills, and feel more prepared for the job search. I especially appreciated having someone to turn to when I had questions or wasn't sure what to do next.

This experience gave me a better sense of direction and made me feel more confident about moving forward with my career. I'm thankful to my employment counsellor Dian Liu and to everyone at Working Skills Centre for their support and encouragement, and I would definitely recommend their services to anyone who is looking for help with employment and career development.

Victoria Macheev
WSC Alumni - EO - Program Client

My experience at this school was extremely valuable and rewarding. The program provided me with strong practical skills for office and accounting-based work, which have helped prepare me for a professional work environment.

The instructors were very supportive, knowledgeable, and genuinely committed to helping students succeed. What stood out most to me was their dedication to ensuring we fully understood the material without overwhelming us. They created a learning environment that was structured, encouraging, and focused on building real-world skills and confidence.

The skills learned have strengthened my resume which has highly impressed interviewers and allow me to apply to higher positions.
I recently got employed due to these skills and for that, I am grateful for what they taught me and fortunate to have taken this program. What I found to be the most impactful was learning the expert level of Microsoft office. There was so much I had not yet known before taking this program.

I would highly recommend this school to anyone who is looking to gain the proper training, skills, and knowledge needed to succeed in an office-based career

Rasheed Watson
Graduate, Walk Out Working Program

Prior to joining WSC, I earned a Bachelor's degree in Finance from York University and obtained my IFIC certification.

In today's job market, proficiency in Microsoft Office is essential for many roles. The WSC program provided me with the opportunity to further develop my skills in Microsoft Excel and Microsoft Word, while also strengthening my customer service abilities.

Additionally, I received valuable support in refining my resume. As a result of this experience, I was able to build confidence in my technical and professional skills, which I now apply in my current role as a Financial Sales Representative at CIBC.

I believe the program is highly beneficial for youth entering the job market, as it equips participants with practical tools and skills that are often not emphasized in traditional school or university settings.

Sergey Arzumanyan
Graduate, Walk Out Working Program

Testimonials

As a participant in the WSC Youth program, I would like to share some of my experiences and my opinion about the program.

Prior to joining the WSC youth program, I was a high school student focused on bridging the gap between my academic goals and the practical demands of the Workforce. While working at Shoppers as a part time employee, I recognized that I needed a more specialized set of skills to truly be competitive in today's labor market and prepare for the program that I wanted to pursue in post-secondary education.

The WSC program provided exactly the structure and support I needed. The comprehensive training in the Microsoft Office Suite was transformative; gaining proficiency in these essential tools gave me the confidence to handle data management and documentation with ease.

Furthermore, the customer service and receptionist courses refined my communication skills and my understanding of office setting. This helped me accept a job that was being offered to me as a receptionist in a Dentistry. One of the most valuable aspects of the program was its focus on financial literacy through bookkeeping and QuickBooks. These lessons combined with a dedicated typing course, rounded out my technical toolkit. It helped me a lot during my time working at the Dentistry.

The counselors helped me keep being dedicated to my goal of becoming a medical professional. They helped me with my university application and made sure I chose the best programs considering my situation.

Thanks to this program I earned the position of cosmetician at Shoppers. From resume writing skills and interview skills for various types of fields, all the team backed me and supported me. I'm incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have participated in this cohort.

Yekta Farshidnejad
Graduate, Walk Out Working Program

