



2025-26

ANNUAL REPORT



McLaren Housing
Society of British Columbia



McLaren Housing Society is privileged to work on the unceded ancestral territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skxwú7mesh (Squamish) and sə́lilwətaʔt (Tsleil-Waututh) people and honoured that our work extends to surrounding lands of diverse First Nations, Inuit and Métis peoples.

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Message from the Leadership Team at McLaren Housing Society



Mike Hoche,
Board President
McLaren Housing Society



Ilm Kassam,
Executive Director
McLaren Housing Society

The past year has been one of movement, transition, and renewed responsibility for McLaren Housing Society of British Columbia (MHS). In a period marked by rising costs, changing public policy, and growing pressure on housing and health systems, MHS has remained focused on what matters most: ensuring that people living with HIV have access to housing that is safe, stable, affordable, and connected to supports that help them live with dignity.

This year brought changes within our organization. We said thank you to two long-serving staff members in our Finance and Maintenance departments, each of whom contributed more than a decade of service to MHS. Their work helped build the systems, relationships, and day-to-day reliability that residents and staff depend on. As new leaders step into these key areas, we are strengthening internal processes, supporting succession planning, and preparing the organization for its next stage of growth.

We also acknowledge Rob O’Dea as he concludes his service on the Board after six years, including executive contributions. Rob has been part of decisions during a period of significant change for MHS, and we are grateful for his commitment, leadership, and support. This is not simply a goodbye, but a sincere “see you around,” as his connection to MHS and our mission will continue to be valued.

A major milestone this year was the completion of the Helmcken House retrofit, a project first initiated in 2017 and formally started in 2024. This work represents a long-term investment in the building and in the residents who call it home. With a new roof, energy-efficient windows, and other critical upgrades, Helmcken House is better positioned to remain safe, sustainable, and welcoming for years to come. Completing this project required patience from residents, persistence from staff, and support from partners.

Looking ahead, our partnership with Community Land Trust at 981 Davie continues to be one of the most significant opportunities in MHS’s future. The project will increase our housing stock and strengthen our housing continuum by creating 31 new subsidized homes operated by MHS for individuals and families living with HIV. This will allow us to support people who may no longer require a higher level of supportive

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housing, while also creating space in existing programs for those with greater and more complex needs. Across our programs, demand for housing continues to increase. We are also seeing that many people on our waitlist are facing challenges that extend beyond housing alone, including mental health concerns, substance use, aging-related needs, poverty, isolation, and barriers to accessing health and social services. Housing remains one of the most important social determinants of health, but housing on its own is not the full answer. A home provides the foundation. Wraparound supports, connection, stability, and appropriate care help people remain housed and stable.

This work is becoming more difficult as costs continue to rise. Food, maintenance, utilities, insurance, materials, and operating expenses have increased rapidly. At the same time, many residents live on fixed or limited incomes that have not kept pace with the cost of living. As reliance on community supports grows, funding reductions and uncertainty in government programs have affected partnerships and made planning more challenging. Global conflict, trade pressures, and political

instability continue to influence costs and the environment in which non-profit housing providers operate.

Despite these pressures, MHS has continued to provide safe, stable housing and responsive support during turbulent times. Our staff have adapted, our Board has remained engaged, and our partners have continued to work alongside us. We have focused on practical solutions while continuing to advocate for funding, services, and policies that reflect the needs of the people we serve.

As we move forward, MHS will continue to be guided by its mission, values, and strategic plan. We will protect the homes we operate, prepare for new housing opportunities, strengthen internal systems, and advocate for residents whose needs are too often overlooked. The year ahead will require discipline, creativity, and collaboration, but we enter it with clarity and purpose.

To our residents, staff, Board, volunteers, partners, funders, and supporters: thank you. Your commitment makes this work possible. Together, we will continue building housing, community, and stability for people living with HIV.

Building Community at 981 Davie: Affordable Housing, Sustainability, and Inclusion in the Heart of Vancouver



Rendering courtesy of ZGF Architects

McLaren Housing Society is proud to be a partner in the residential component of the 981 Davie development, located at the corner of Davie and Burrard in Vancouver. Developed by the Community Land Trust with support from BC Housing and the City of Vancouver, the project will provide 154 homes, including 31 subsidized units operated by McLaren Housing for individuals and families living with HIV. Situated in the heart of Vancouver’s West End, the development represents an

important investment in affordable housing, sustainability, and community connection. The building is being constructed with mass timber, an innovative, environmentally sustainable method that reduces carbon emissions while creating warm, welcoming living spaces. As one of the world’s tallest buildings that combines passive house and mass timber construction, 981 Davie reflects a commitment not only to housing affordability but also to building healthier, more sustainable communities for the future.

The project will also include a new community centre for QMUNITY, BC’s queer, trans, and Two-Spirit resource centre. For decades, QMUNITY has provided vital support, connection, and advocacy for 2SLGBTQIA+ communities across the province. The inclusion of QMUNITY’s purpose-built community space within the development will help strengthen Davie Village as an important hub of belonging, inclusion, and support for diverse communities in Vancouver.

For many people living with HIV, access to stable housing remains one of the most significant factors influencing health, well-being, and long-term stability. The 981 Davie project will create homes where residents can feel safe, supported, and connected to their community. McLaren Housing acknowledges that this work is taking place on the unceded traditional

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territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) peoples.

For McLaren Housing, the 31 subsidized homes at 981 Davie are an important addition to our housing continuum. Our mission is to provide housing options and associated services to support the wellness and dignity of those living with HIV/AIDS in a community that is tailored to their specific needs. Our programs are designed to respond to people’s changing support needs over time, recognizing that housing is not one-size-fits-all and that stability often looks different at different stages of life.

The homes at 981 Davie will create new opportunities for residents who are ready for greater independence to transition from more supportive housing environments into affordable, community-based housing while remaining connected to the neighbourhoods, services, and relationships that are important to them. Remaining within a familiar and affirming community can play a critical role in maintaining stability, health, and social connection, particularly for people who have experienced housing insecurity or stigma.

At the same time, these transitions will help create space within McLaren Housing’s more supportive housing



programs for people living with HIV who are currently in urgent need of housing and additional supports. By expanding options across the continuum of care, the project will allow McLaren Housing to serve more people while ensuring that residents are matched with housing that best supports their current needs and goals.

The 981 Davie development also reflects the importance of partnerships in addressing Vancouver’s housing crisis. Projects of this scale and impact are only possible through collaboration between non-profit organizations, government partners, and the broader community. McLaren Housing is grateful to the Community Land Trust, BC Housing, the City of Vancouver, and QMUNITY for their shared commitment to creating inclusive, affordable housing and community spaces that support dignity, health, sustainability, and long-term stability for people living with HIV and the broader community.

As construction progresses, we look forward to welcoming future residents to 981 Davie and continuing to build stronger, healthier communities through housing.



Celebrating the Life of Dan Wurzer, Beloved as Sister Diversity Rains

We honour the life and legacy of Dan Wurzer, beloved community elder, fierce advocate, and radiant spirit known to many as Sister Diversity Rains.

Dan was a cornerstone of Vancouver's 2SLGBTQIA+ community, someone whose presence brought both comfort and courage to those around them. As Sister Diversity Rains, they embodied the heart of chosen family: offering kindness without condition, standing up for those pushed to the margins, and reminding people, simply by being themselves, that authenticity is powerful.

As Diversity Rains, Wurzer served as Reverend Mother of the Vancouver chapter of the Sisters of Perpetual Indulgence, the Abbey of the Long Cedar Canoe. They carried the Sisters' spirit with grace and purpose, guided by their enduring motto: *one joy, more joy, always joy*. Through this role, they helped create spaces of celebration, protest, healing, and radical inclusion.

They carried history with them. Through decades of activism, Dan witnessed

immense change, but they never lost sight of the work still to be done. They showed up at events, on the streets, in quiet conversations, bringing visibility, humour, and deep compassion. Whether mentoring younger community members or holding space for those in need, they gave generously of themselves.

What made Dan truly unforgettable was not just what they did, but how they made people feel. Seen. Valued. Safe. Loved. Their warmth was immediate and lasting, and their ability to connect across generations helped strengthen the fabric of the community they cherished so deeply.

Their passing leaves a profound absence, but their impact remains woven into Vancouver itself, in its people, its activism, and its spirit of resilience and pride.

May we honour them by continuing the work they believed in: building inclusive spaces, lifting one another up, and celebrating the full diversity of our community.

Rest gently, Sister Diversity Rains. You are deeply missed and forever remembered.



310
people housed



OUR IMPACT

Between April 1 2025 and March 31, 2026
McLaren Housing Society provided or assisted with:

In March 2026 our waitlist had

1326
active applicants



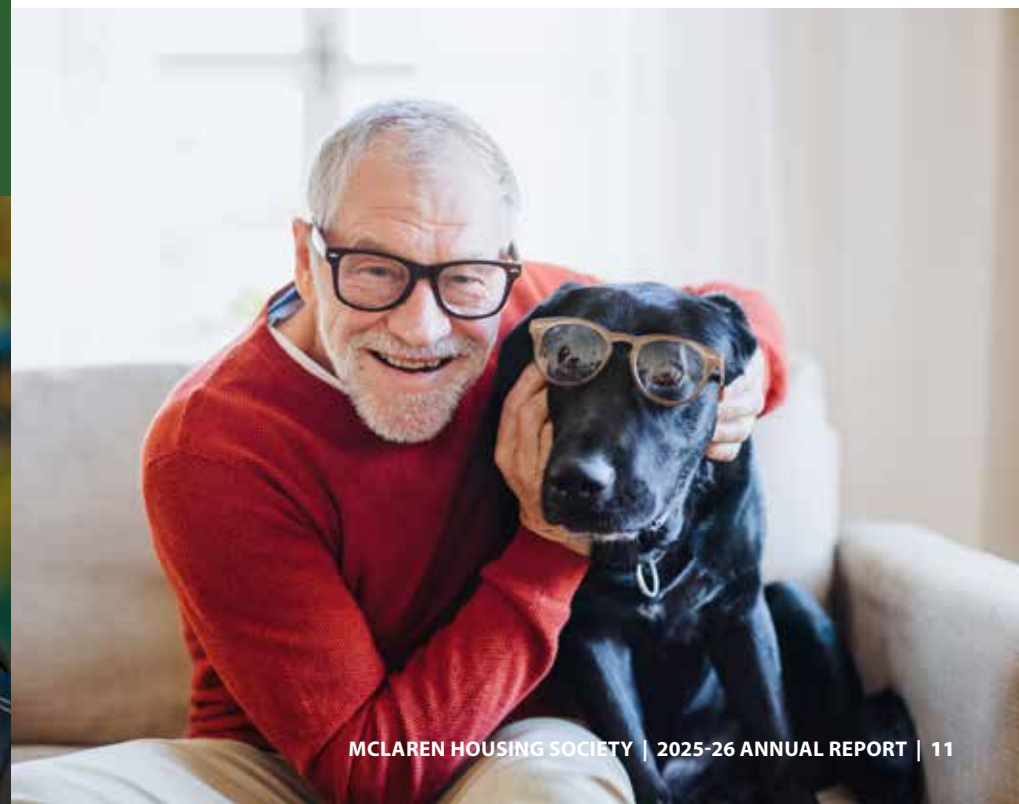
424
grab
and go
grocery
shops

Harm Reduction

1784 smoking kits	20475 syringes
4095 injection kits	351 naloxone kits



3037
meals served



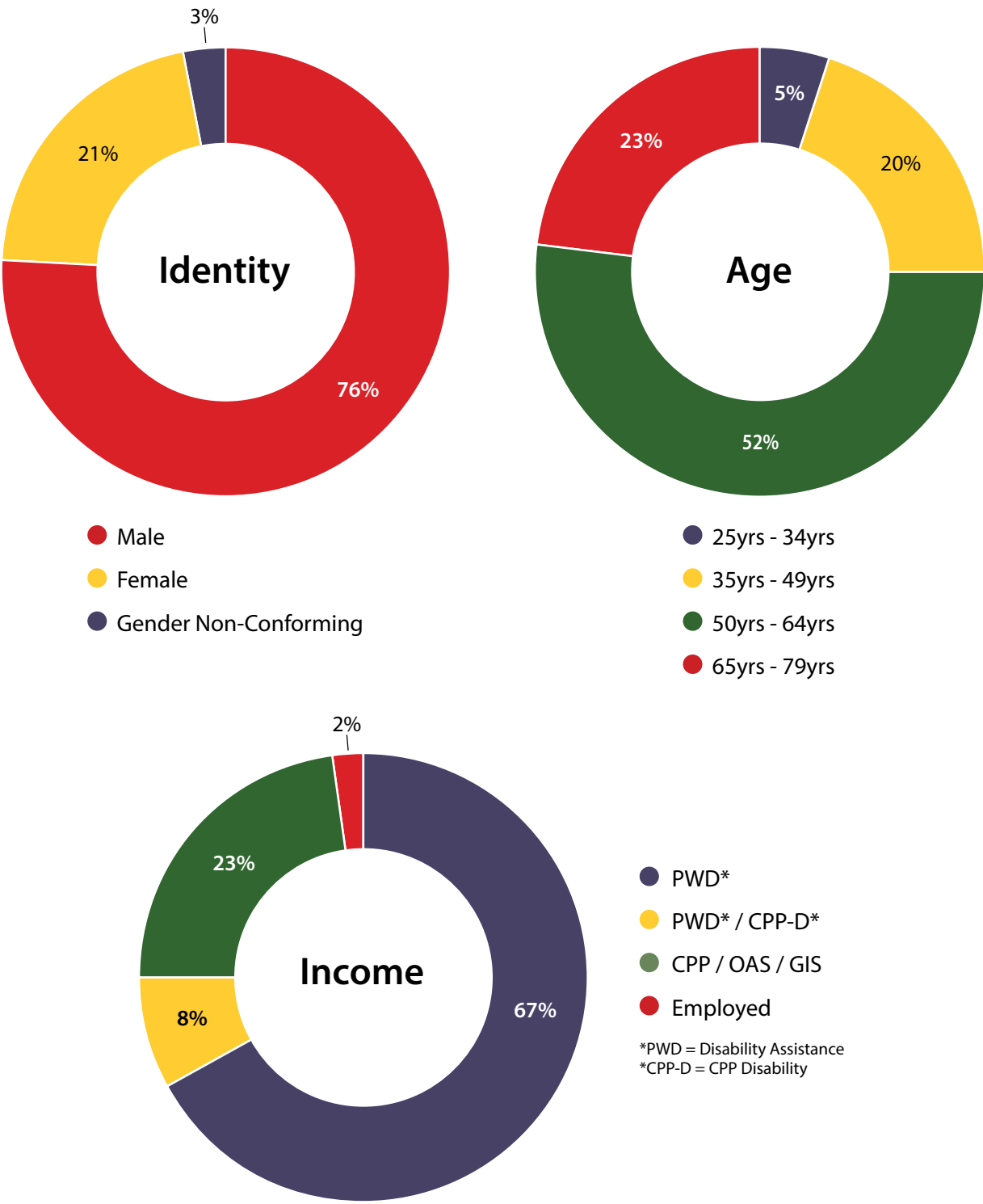
Thank you to our
2025-26 Board of Directors

Michael Hoche , President
Dale Buote, Vice-President
Georgia Hutchison, Treasurer
Rob O’Dea, Secretary
Beide Bekele, Member at Large
Willow King, Member at Large
Barbe Pickering, Member at Large

We would also like to thank the following board members for their service and commitment to MHS:

Marissa Marr, Member at Large, 2023 – 2025
Flavia Mpagi, Member at Large, 2023 – 2025

Demographics





Pride Barbecue



Thanksgiving



Pride Barbecue



Pet Day



Christmas



Howe Garden



Truth & Reconciliation



Sunday Breakfast

Staff Spotlight: Ryan



My name is Ryan; I joined the McLaren team in September 2020. I began my work with McLaren as a Building Attendant and, in 2022, joined the Resident Support Team. Looking back on the last 6 years with McLaren, it has been a privilege to be part of the growth we've seen within this organization.

I grew up in a small rural town in Ontario, right near Lake Erie. My parents wanted to raise their children in nature and teach us the value of environmentalism, stewardship and autonomy. I come from a family of helpers who passed down the teaching that kindness humanizes, and that humanizing is healing. I have a younger brother who, even being far away in Ontario, I am still very close with.

Growing up, there was no one like me around, no language to communicate the way I ebbed and flowed through gender. Years later, I found my identity as non-binary. Being a part of the queer community has been so important to me and a source of great pride.

I learned about McLaren through volunteering at Ribbon Community (formerly AIDS Vancouver). I had just moved to Vancouver and seized the opportunity to get back into support work when a position at McLaren became available.

Before McLaren Housing, I had not worked in HIV support before. After I graduated from the University of Western Ontario, I worked in a group home assisting individuals with developmental disabilities. The idea of working in HIV was interesting to me because I wanted to tailor my support experience to the queer community. Little did I know that HIV touches many communities.

Throughout my time at McLaren, I have come to realize how diverse our residents are, how unique their experiences are, and I have gained so much wisdom through our work together. As someone who has been othered in their life, I find connection in our collective otherness. My experiences here at McLaren have undoubtedly shaped who I am as a person.

While many of you know me as a Resident Support Worker, I am also a student, a partner, a daughter, a sibling, and

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a pet parent. I am currently working on completing my master's degree in counselling. I visit my family in Ontario as often as I can, and I go home to a loving partner and our dog every night. My life is very full, and my time and growth at McLaren are a part of that.

I was invited to write this so we can honour the work I do at Howe Street, but

there would be nothing to honour if our residents at Howe did not show up with the openness to let me into their worlds. It is the residents at Howe who inspired me to get my master's degree, and my connections with coworkers who pushed me to continue growing in my helping career. A career that I hope, one day, looking back, will be a giant love letter to the communities that took me in and taught me everything I know.

Resident Spotlight: Deb

My name is Deb. I'm 64 years old and originally from Sarnia, Ontario. I moved to Vancouver when I was 27 and was diagnosed with HIV at 29. The doctor told me I had five years to live. After that, I stopped caring about myself or the people around me. Addiction became my only friend for the next 30 years. I was in toxic relationships, homeless, and hated everything about myself.

In 2013, my support team helped me get my first apartment at McLaren Housing. Even then, I was still struggling. I became a hoarder, and my apartment became unsafe. My partner overdosed and died of a heart attack, and my own health was failing. My HIV was close to becoming AIDS. I weighed 90 pounds.

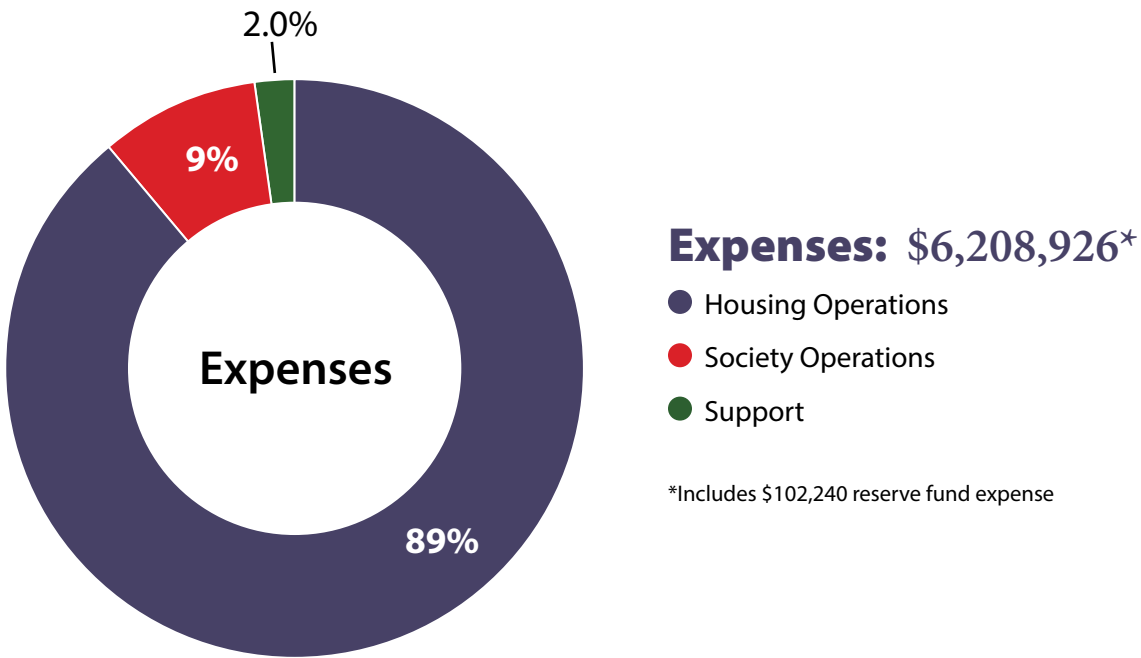
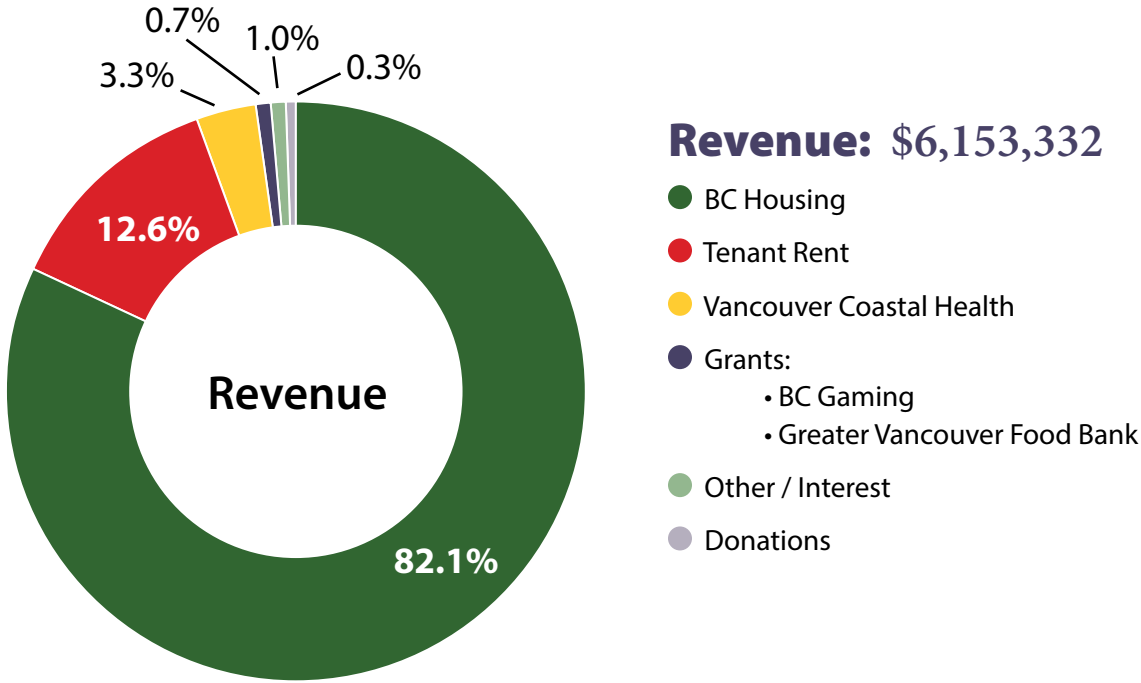
My doctor asked me if I wanted to live or die. I told her I wanted to live, and she arranged treatment for me. While I was away, McLaren cleaned my apartment and



made it feel like a home. They never said no when I needed help.

Today, my Hep C is cured, I'm undetectable, and I take pride in my home. I'm proudly in my 11th year of sobriety. The staff at McLaren and my medical team are my earth angels. Life is wonderful now.

Financial Snapshot 2025-2026



Thank you to our funders:



Thank you to our donors:





McLaren Housing
Society of British Columbia



Connect with us:

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