

IMPACT REPORT



FROM OUR CEO & BOARD CHAIR



As we reflect on 2024-25, we wish to recognize the unwavering dedication of our staff, students, leadership team, and Board of Directors. Through the amazing efforts of all, it appears we have, at last, fully rebounded from the challenges experienced throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. We have successfully replenished our collective capacity and are forging ahead with fresh energy and a renewed commitment to providing the highest quality services to people in need within the communities we serve.

Key Operational Highlights from 2024-25 included:

- The introduction of a new anchor Support Service at 2195 Jane St., in collaboration with Toronto Community Housing
- Success in our efforts to:
 - Improve connections among clients within four geographic areas of the City, to help combat social isolation
 - Refresh and launch a fund to offer some limited financial support to clients

- experiencing specific needs that cannot be met through other available services/programs
- Pilot efforts to assist clients struggling with food insecurity
- Pilot the addition of Individual Support Worker and Peer Specialist roles within our Integrated Service Teams to provide additional levels of support for specific client, such as in the area of accompaniment to appointments
- Significant efforts by our People & Culture team, our Staff Recognition and Wellness Committee and our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee to foster a positive work culture, a 14-point improvement in our Total Engagement Score (as independently surveyed/measured by Kincentric) and much improved recruitment and retention trends
- Office moves and consolidations to reduce commercial real estate lease costs and redirect savings to other internal areas of need
- The selection of TREAT as our new electronic health record system, which will be fully implemented by December, 2025

We are also proud of our continued active participation in many sector tables of influence, which include seven (7) of the Ontario Health Teams within Toronto, the Toronto Developmental Services' Regional Planning Table and the Toronto ABI Network.

As we look to the future, we will stay true to our mission of assisting people to live well within their communities which, for many, requires finding a place to call home and access to supports to maintain that home. In 2025-26 we will be focussing on possible housing acquisitions and developments to create net new housing capacity in this regard.

Key Board Highlights from 2024-25 included:

- Recruitment of two new members and a new community participant, who bring a wealth of expertise to the board
- Refreshed and updated the CEO performance management framework and established a salary band, for the first time
- Board member attendance at several events throughout the year, including at the Danforth Safe Bed site open house and at all SUFAC committee meetings
- Held a successful annual retreat, exploring future visions for the organization
- Worked closely with senior management to set new housing procurement goals

Thank you, once again, for your continued support of COTA and the services we provide – it helps us stay motivated as we work to inspire positive change in the lives of the people we support.

Sincerely,
Paul Bruce, CEO & William Noble, Board Chair

COTA BY THE NUMBERS

TOTAL NUMBER OF SERVICE USERS

5,006

PEOPLE SERVED BY SERVICE TYPE



64%
Case
Management

24%
Other Community
Services

12%
Supportive
Housing

PEOPLE SERVED BY POPULATION



81%
Mental
Health

10%
Developmental &
Dual Diagnosis

9%
Acquired
Brain Injury

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BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE FUTURE TOGETHER



Launching Our IDEA Roadmap

In September 2024, we unveiled our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Roadmap. This 18-month plan guides our efforts to foster positive change—both as an employer and a service provider. It outlines our goals, deliverables, and strategies to embed IDEA principles across our organization.

Our Journey So Far

As part of our 2023–26 Strategic Plan, we introduced Equity as a core value, deepening our commitment to fairness, dignity, and inclusion. The IDEA Roadmap builds on this foundation by setting out clear, actionable steps to bring these values to life.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed to the development of the roadmap—especially the IDEA Committee, whose insights helped align it with our Strategic Plan and Health Human Resources Plan.

“I’m proud of the work the IDEA Committee has done this year, particularly as part of our new IDEA Roadmap. Step-by-step, this group of Cota staff are working together to take meaningful action in achieving Cota’s Inclusive, Diverse, Equitable, and Accessible vision”

- Mikayla Segriff, IDEA Committee Co-Chair

IDEA Roadmap Focus Areas:

- Building inclusive practices in recruitment, onboarding, and daily operations
- Enhancing equitable career advancement by addressing barriers faced by underrepresented groups
- Expanding accessibility in our employment practices, workspaces, and programs
- Offering new IDEA-related learning opportunities and resources for all staff



IDEA Accomplishments During the 2024–2025 Fiscal Year

Over the past year, the IDEA Committee has worked to turn vision into action—embedding inclusion, diversity, equity, and accessibility into Cota’s daily operations. From new learning initiatives to equity-focused policy reviews, we’ve aimed to create lasting change that supports both our staff and the individuals we serve.

Some highlights include:

- **New Mandatory Training:** We identified and launched IDEA-focused training modules for all full-time and part-time staff. These sessions—centered on anti-Black racism and Indigenous cultural awareness—aim to foster understanding and inspire positive change across the organization.
- **Calendar of Awareness and Monthly Articles:** Our internal Calendar of Awareness highlights days of significance, including cultural and religious observances. Paired with monthly articles shared via SharePoint, this initiative promotes education and awareness of important, and sometimes overlooked, moments throughout the year.
- **Updated Land Acknowledgement:** We reviewed and revised Cota’s land acknowledgement to add historical context and deepen understanding of its purpose. The Committee also created supplemental resources to support staff, including guidance on delivery tone, frequency, and pronunciation.



We remain committed to meaningful, ongoing progress—and with our IDEA Roadmap as a guide, we are confident in our path forward.

2195 JANE STREET

Expanding our Anchor Support Program

In late spring 2024, the City of Toronto selected Cota through a competitive Request for Proposals to provide Anchor Agency Services & Supports at 2195 Jane Street, a Toronto Community Housing (TCH) building. This expansion builds on Cota's successful programs at 220 Oak Street and 250 Davenport Road, where our teams have been offering targeted support to improve housing stability, foster social cohesion, and address the unique needs of each tenant community.



Anchor Support Program Team
Fall 2024

“The building has come to life again— we have things to do and people to turn to when we need help.” - Service User

Our Anchor Support Program at 2195 Jane Street was initiated in October 2024 and aims to strengthen the well-being and housing stability of residents through comprehensive, on-site services. These include one-on-one case management, community engagement activities, and crisis management, all designed to support a thriving, inclusive, and supportive community.

The Cota team, including four Site Support Workers and two Case Managers, are available at 2195 Jane Street Monday to Tuesday 10am to 6pm and Wednesday through Saturday 10am to 8pm to provide support and resources. They work closely with TCH and tenant leaders to address community needs, prevent evictions, and facilitate connections to health services and other community resources.

Cota and Black Creek Community Health Centre have collaborated to provide onsite physical health and preventative health services to people in the building. Soon, Cota is collaborating with Unison to provide Soca, Zumba and Yoga classes for the residents in the building. Jane and Finch Center has partnered with Cota to provide mental and physical health workshops to tenants of 2195 Jane.

Robert, the Program Manager for 2195 Jane Street, shares his thoughts on the launch of this new site and the positive impact the program hopes to achieve:

(continued)

"The residents in the 2195 Jane Street community have expressed gratitude that Cota is here to provide support. One resident said, 'The building has come to life again—we have things to do and people to turn to when we need help. Everything has changed since Cota arrived.'... Through person-centered support, staff have helped residents maintain housing stability, improve their mental health, and increase access to community supports."

One example of building successful staff and service user relationships at 2195 Jane Street has been between resident Fancy and her Case Manager, Cristalee.

For Fancy, having someone she could talk to and trust changed everything.

"Cristalee is really kind and relatable. I feel like I'm talking to an older sister," she shared. "She was there for me when I was grieving... and helped me get a lawyer when I was overwhelmed. She's always smiling, always helping somebody."

Their connection goes beyond formal supports. Fancy recalled Cristalee helping her and a group of tenants create a vision board at the start of the year- something simple, but full of hope.

"I asked her if we could do it, and she said, 'Bring your magazines and we'll make one together.' It was really fun."

For Cristalee, building that kind of trust adds a lot of meaning to her work.

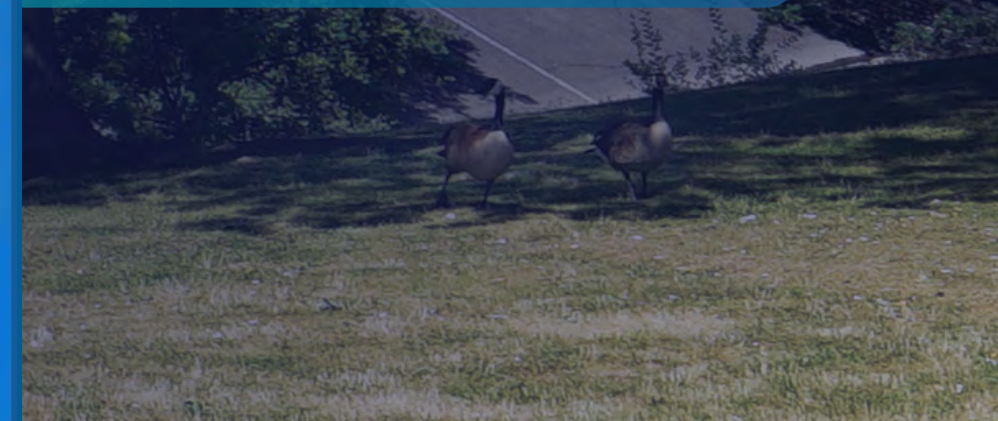


"At first, people didn't know what we were here for. But once the trust came, everything changed. Fancy's been great- not only has she embraced our support, but she's also become a voice in the building. She tells people, 'They helped me, they can help you too.' She's a leader."

What began as a connection built on immediate needs grew into a relationship grounded in encouragement and mutual respect and is an excellent example of how Cota staff and building residents are bringing new energy and connection to 2195 Jane Street.

"Cristalee was there for me when I was grieving... and helped me get a lawyer when I was overwhelmed."

- Fancy, Service User



NEW OFFICE & PROGRAM SPACE IN SCARBOROUGH

In Fall 2024, we relocated (and co-located) our Scarborough satellite office and ABI Day Service (ABI ADS) to 50 Fairfax Crescent, near St. Clair and Warden in Scarborough. This space now serves as a hub for some of our community-based programs and services, including the Scarborough Integrated Service Team (IST), Scarborough Housing, and the ABI ADS.

This new location unifies our Scarborough programs, fostering connection and enhancing service accessibility. With its proximity to Warden Station, public transit and WheelTrans access, it is now much easier for service users to get to and from our ABI ADS.

This new satellite office is a result of a space-sharing arrangement with Community Living Toronto, and features a mix of private, shared and specialized facilities. Along with a dedicated programming room for ABI ADS, it includes bookable spaces such as an auditorium and games room. With nearly a dozen workstations, a large boardroom and seating areas, it promotes a flexible work environment.

Jennie, who manages several programs out of 50 Fairfax remarked, *“People are excited about the ease of meeting with service users here! I can already see that everyone is more connected.”*

With improved accessibility and opportunities for collaboration, 50 Fairfax Crescent has become a vibrant center for Cota’s services in Scarborough—where both clients and service providers can grow, connect, and thrive.

“My team is enjoying being around other Cota staff, which really brings a sense of community. It’s a fresh start and our service providers are doing an amazing job!”

- Kelly, Manager





COMBATTING FOOD INSECURITY

Over the past year, service users and staff alike have raised concerns about growing food insecurity. Through Town Halls and feedback surveys, we’ve heard loud and clear that access to affordable, nutritious food is one of the most pressing challenges facing those we serve. Cota is responding!

Food insecurity is rising across Toronto, with over 3.5 million food bank visits in 2024 alone — a record-breaking and deeply troubling number. Many of our service users already face severe financial hardship, and this crisis is hitting them especially hard.

EFFORTS IN FISCAL YEAR 2024-24 REGARDING FOOD SECURITY

Opt-in Meal Program at our Modular Housing Sites

At our Modular Housing sites (11 Macey and 321 Dovercourt), Cota successfully advocated to the City of Toronto for funding to launch a pilot meal program. Launched in January 2025, this program offers tenants the option of affordable lunch and dinner, seven days a week. Over 50 tenants are currently participating.

Emergency Food Support for Community-Based Service Users

To further support individuals living independently in the community, Cota initiated an emergency grocery gift card pilot program by drawing in its own reserves. Distribution is planned for Summer 2025, with evaluation and the potential to expand this initiative through a fundraising campaign to sustain it in the 2025–26 fiscal year and beyond.

Fresh Food in Supportive Housing

Cota’s longstanding partnership with Second Harvest continues to play a vital role in supporting our meal programs across several supportive housing sites. Through regular deliveries of rescued food, including fresh fruits and vegetables- we are able to offer nutritious options to service users.

Food insecurity remains a critical issue— but through advocacy, partnership, and targeted supports, Cota is committed to helping meet this basic need for the people we serve.

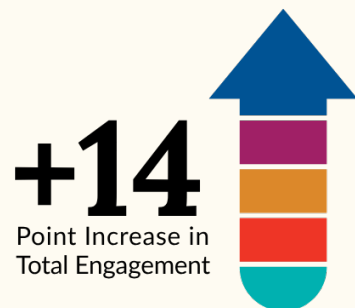


REVITALIZING OUR COLLECTIVE CAPACITY

People & Culture Update

Cota, like many other community health and social service organisations, experienced the toll that the COVID-19 Pandemic had on our workforce. During the pandemic we needed to maintain essential services while a number of people made personal decisions to pursue work elsewhere or leave the field altogether. Our collective capacity at Cota became diminished as a result.

“Revitalizing Our Collective Capacity” post pandemic, has been an area of strategic focus since 2023, and the results to date are a testament to the power of intentional engagement and investment in our people. With a vacancy rate now sitting below 5%, we are not only attracting strong talent but retaining it and this speaks to the hard work of the People and Culture team along with the positive health and sustainability of our work culture.



Our most recent employee engagement survey resulted in a 14 point increase to our Total Engagement, seeing it rise from 43 in 2022 to 57 in 2024. This represents a clear and promising upward trend and

reflects a deepening sense of connection, trust and shared purpose across our organisation.

A key contributor to this positive momentum has been our commitment to creating meaningful opportunities for staff to connect and feel valued. The Board of Directors authorized management access to a portion of the investment earnings of our own reserve funds to help increase staff engagement through celebrations like summer barbeques and a high-energy, well-attended Staff Recognition Event at the legendary El Mocambo, where our staff walked away with amazing Cota swag.

These events are more than social gatherings, they are moments of connection and team building that reinforces our collective spirit and demonstrates our appreciation towards our wonderful teams. The *“Superstar”* recognition program has also seen renewed interest, with more nominations and shout-outs, spotlighting the everyday contributions and differences our staff make.

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Additionally, we've enhanced our commitment to student placements, which not only supports the next generation of professionals but also provides fresh energy and ideas to our programs and teams. With 11 placements last year, we were able to support several service users, while providing the students with a dynamic learning environment. Through these efforts, we are not just filling roles but building a resilient, inspired workforce that is connected to our mission and each other.

Finally, we launched our Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Accessibility (IDEA) Roadmap in September 2024. This document has begun guiding our efforts for the next 18 months as we take meaningful actions to promote positive change both as an employer and a service providing organization. Much consideration has gone into developing this roadmap—from aligning it with our Strategic Plan and Health Human Resources Plan, to incorporating valuable feedback from the IDEA Committee. We're grateful to everyone who contributed their time and expertise to make this a reality.

Assertive Housing First Team
Summer 2024



SOCIAL DROP-IN GROUPS



"I love the group, and the space is very welcoming!" - Service User

We are excited to announce the launch of a new initiative to foster connection and community among our service users! In January 2025 we began facilitating weekly social groups in each of our geographical locations: Scarborough, North York, Toronto East and Toronto West.

This initiative is designed to create opportunities for service users across all programs to come together, meet new people, strengthen social connections and engage in recreation. Each group offers a variety of activities aimed at enhancing overall wellbeing—from arts and crafts to board games, bingo, movies, and more.

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

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Wes Iqbal

Cota Executive Leadership

CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Paul Bruce

SENIOR DIRECTOR, FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

Lynne Geris

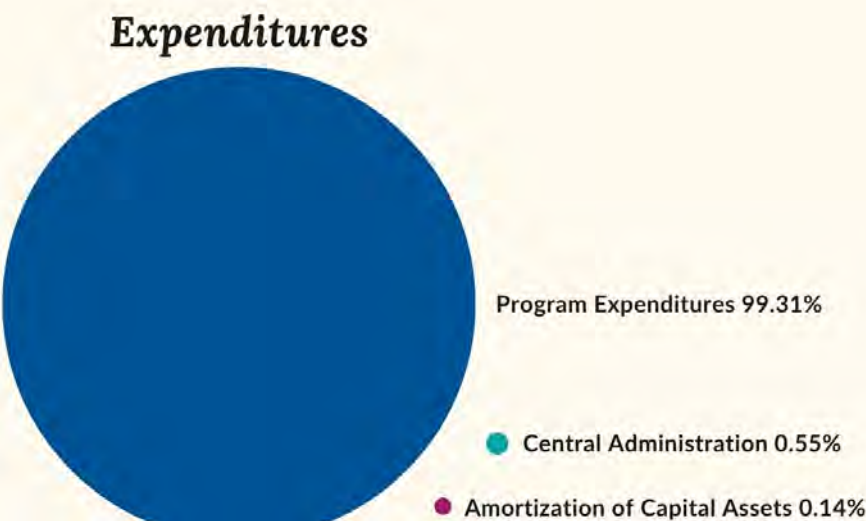
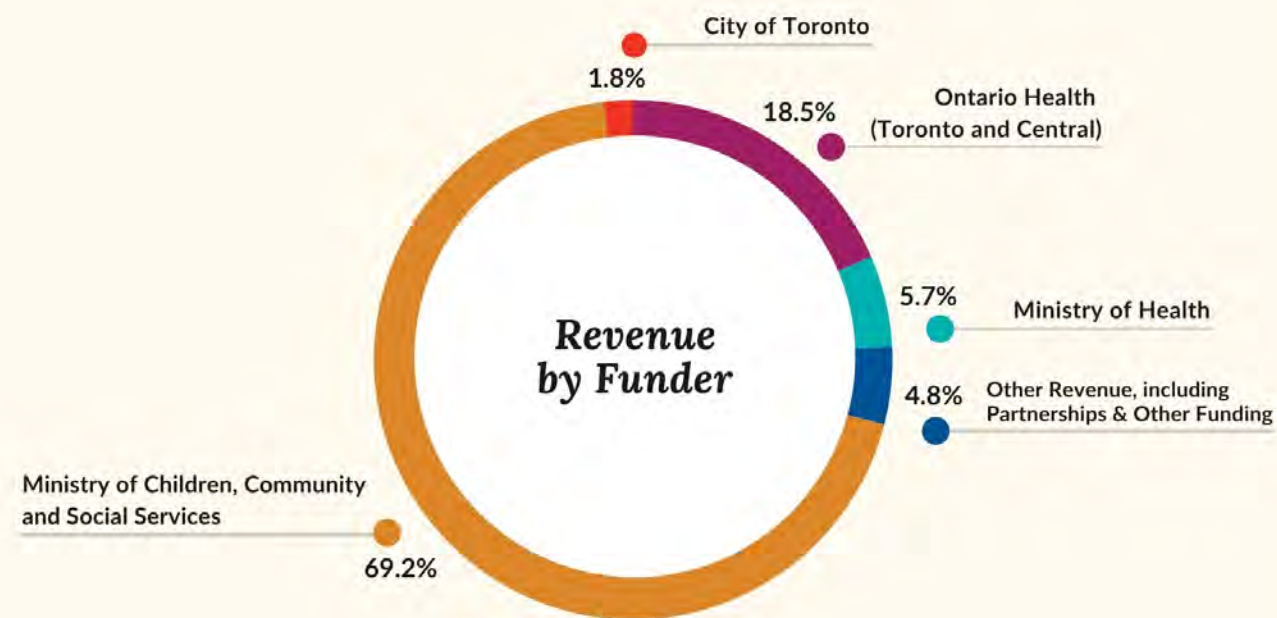
SENIOR DIRECTOR, PEOPLE & CULTURE

Rachel Stanford



FISCAL YEAR 2024-25

FINANCIAL STATEMENT



REVENUE

Transfer Payments and Grants	
Ontario Health (Toronto and Central)	20,289,252
Ministry of Health	6,281,898
Ministry of Children, Community and Social Servic	76,026,633
City of Toronto	1,990,680
Other revenue	
Partnership and other funding	1,730,653
Other revenue	3,008,348
Amortization of deferred capital contribution	58,472
Investment income	472,515
Total Revenue	109,858,451

EXPENDITURES

Program Expenditures	107,391,877
Central Administration	593,894
Amortization of Capital Assets	150,748
Total Expenditures	108,136,519
EXCESS OF REVENUE OVER EXPENDITURE	
before Investment gain / loss	1,721,932
Change in net realized gain / (loss) on investments	496,538
NET	2,218,470

FUNDERS & FORMAL COLLABORATIONS



Ministry of Children,
Community and
Social Services



Ministry of Health
Ministry of Long-Term Care

