City for All Women Initiative

CAWI

2026 ANNUAL REPORT



cawi-ivtf.org

Land Acknowledgment

CAWI's work in Ottawa-Gatineau takes place on the traditional unceded and unsurrendered territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe nation. As uninvited guests on this land, we acknowledge the leadership of Indigenous women from time immemorial and seek to learn and unlearn our own colonial practices as we support just city-building.

Letter from the Board Co-Chairs

Welcome to our 2025-26 annual report! Another bustling year of learnings, relationships, and renewed commitment to our mission. Each year comes with its own patterns. This year reminded us of the unique challenges we face as a community, an organization, and as part of a broader non-profit sector. It also reminded us that we can meet these moments head-on and remain steadfast in our journey toward a city for all.

This year saw the wrapping of the first phase of our Caring Cities Initiative, our Climate Equity project, and a collaboration with Ottawa Community Food Partnership on municipal elections, among many other projects. We continue to be leaders organizing women and gender diverse people to effect change in our neighbourhoods and communities.

As a Board of Directors, we continue to strive towards long-term financial sustainability, diverse representation in our leadership and strong governance. We want to extend our deepest appreciation to our staff for their dedication, hard work, and passion over the past year.

Stepping down this year, we thank Deborah Sogelola, Nayeli Sosa, Khrystal Sturridge, Hodan Egale, Maria Paulo Choque, Rasheedaht Sulaiman, and Sawsan Al-Refaei (ex-officio member) for their contributions to CAWI as board members. We have much gratitude and appreciation for all our supporters who have walked with us side-by-side. And we look forward to another year together!

Darlene and Bonnie



Darlene Kaboni and Bonnie Schroeder

CO-CHAIRS, CAWI BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board of Directors

Darlene Kaboni,
CO-CHAIR

Bonnie Schroeder
CO-CHAIR

Mary Ellen McDonald,
TREASURER

Deborah Sogelola
SECRETARY

Hodan Egale

Jenna Phillips

Khrystal Sturridge

Maria Paula Choque

Mary Ellen McDonald

Mikayla Lochbihler

Rasheedaht Sulaiman

CITY OF OTTAWA BOARD REPRESENTATIVES (EX-OFFICIO)

Sawsan Al-Refaei

Letter from the Co-Directors

Looking back at our year, we can't help but think, "how did we do it all?" It was a year of many many projects, workshops, community walks and mapping, our regular programs Making Voices Count and Maamawe: Women Reducing Poverty Together, new and refreshed training courses on urban planning, gender responsive budgets and Caring Cities, an art exhibition at the Ottawa Art Gallery, community art creation, collective grieving, a theatre production called "Not my job", the development of our policy recommendations report (to be released soon) a microsite dedicated to Caring Cities, and so much sharing and learning from all of you.

With the culmination of our multi-year Caring Cities project coming to a close last March, we held our breath as we dove into the work, sending applications for funding out into the world imbued with positive energy. All the while we listened and learned from each other and told one another, everything will work out. We are CAWI and our history is built on the strength of the incredible women and gender diverse individuals who carried forward a powerful and collective vision for this organization.

We are so honoured to carry on this work and, also, some days we are tired. On the days we are tired, we check-in with each other, are you taking care of yourself? Did you book that doctor's appointment? How will you relax this weekend?

It's these check-ins that really embody CAWI. **Strength through relationships. Caring for one another. Being there for our community when someone is having a hard day.**

We know that as a grassroots organization there will be times of uncertainty ahead and sometimes hard choices. It is so clear to us that our strength and path ahead lies in the creativity, passion and resilience of our people. Hana's brilliance, Cata's heart, Kassidy's curious and creative mind, Meg's tenacity, and all of you - members, partners, funders, friends - your collective energy, drive and commitment to a city for all.

Thank you for being CAWI!

With love,



Hana and Meg

CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS



CAWI'S Caring Cities Initiative

What would our city look like if we planned it around care?

A Caring City is an approach that places care and well-being at the centre of how we plan, design, and deliver our cities and services. It recognizes care as essential social infrastructure, just as important as roads, buildings, transit, and other systems that allow a city to function.

Carework is foundational to life. It is the often-invisible infrastructure that makes households, workplaces, communities, and public institutions possible. Yet carework is still largely unpaid or underpaid, and its unequal distribution has real consequences. It can limit people's time and opportunities for education, employment, economic security, rest, and participation in public life.

Caring Cities asks us to make this work visible and to build a city that supports the people who care for others.

In March 2026, we wrapped up Phase 1 of our Caring Cities initiative, a phase grounded in walking, mapping, and listening with caregivers and care receivers across Ottawa.

We closed this phase with three important activities:

CAWI Action Forum
Cities as Places and Spaces of Care: An evening of reflection, creativity, and dialogue.

In the fall of 2025, CAWI brought together our members, partner organizations, and community to share findings from Phase 1 of our Caring Cities initiative and engage in an interactive countermapping* activity to reimagine underutilized spaces across our city.

This was an evening of connection, learning, and imagining together. Thank you to everyone who came out and helped us collectively imagine a future rooted in care.

*Countermapping: a shared practice of re-envisioning underutilized spaces and creatively imagining how they might foster care and connection, (ex. transforming a parking lot into a community hub!)

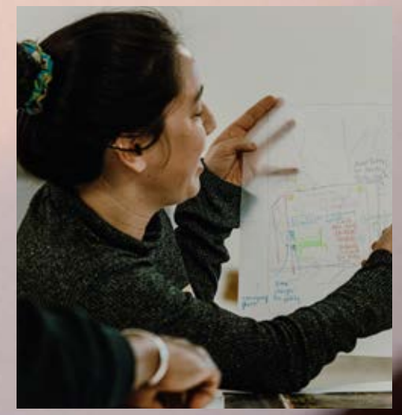












The Places
That Hold Us

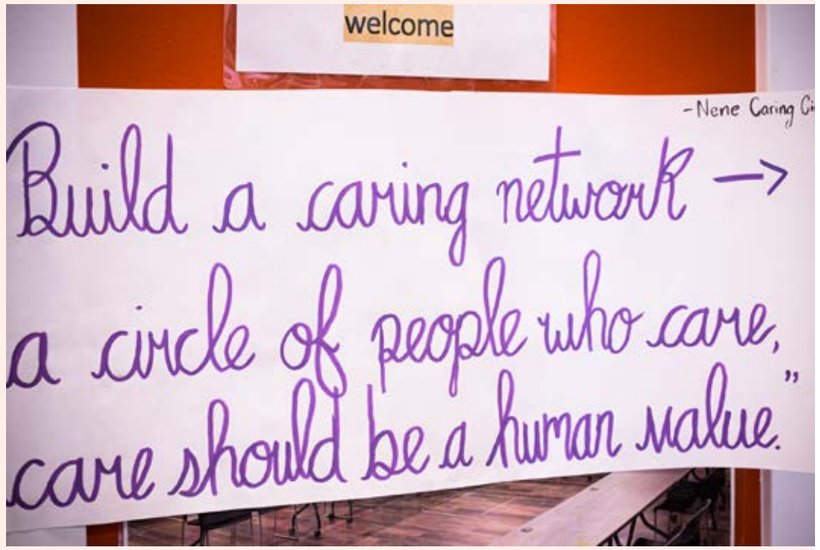
A community art gathering centered on grief, memory, and shared spaces, facilitated by Maureen St. Clair.

Throughout Phase 1 of Caring Cities, caregivers and care receivers shared how Ottawa's neighborhoods are changing, and how the spaces that hold communities are disappearing, changing, or being neglected. This space was an invitation to hold, witness, and express the grief from this loss while held safely in community.

Together, we reflected on the places that hold meaning for us; a park bench where we first met a good friend, a corner store where neighbors can connect, or a home we no longer get to visit. We then painted and collaged our way into memory, each piece becoming a portal to a place that shaped us, marked something significant, or simply meant the world to us.

Thank you to Maureen St. Clair for holding this space so gently, and to everyone who showed up, shared, witnessed, and created alongside us.









Maureen St. Clair (Facilitaor),
The Places that Hold Us.



Caring Cities
Play Reading

"It's Not my Job" was a play written and produced by Naomi Tessler from Branch Out Theatre in collaboration with CAWI. This play was shaped by the voices and experiences shared through Caring Cities' first phase of walking, mapping, and listening with caregivers and care receivers across Ottawa.

Through participatory theatre, the play brought everyday realities to the stage, from unreliable transit to precarious housing, while inviting audience members to help shape the story themselves. As CAWI actors faced hurdles that mimicked everyday life situations, they were met with the repeated phrase "it's not my job", prompting us to imagine together how care can move the dial and transform what is possible.

The play reminded us that we all have a role to play in creating change, and our collective power grows when we come together.

A huge thank you to Iman Al-Khatib, Samira Awad, and Yewande Akalusi, CAWI members, for helping to bring this play to life.

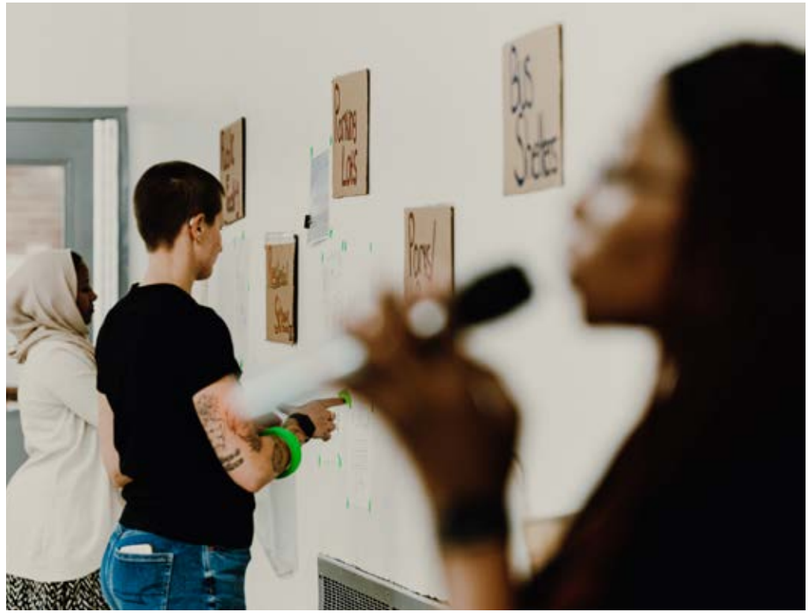




CARING CITIES
GUIDING CIRCLE

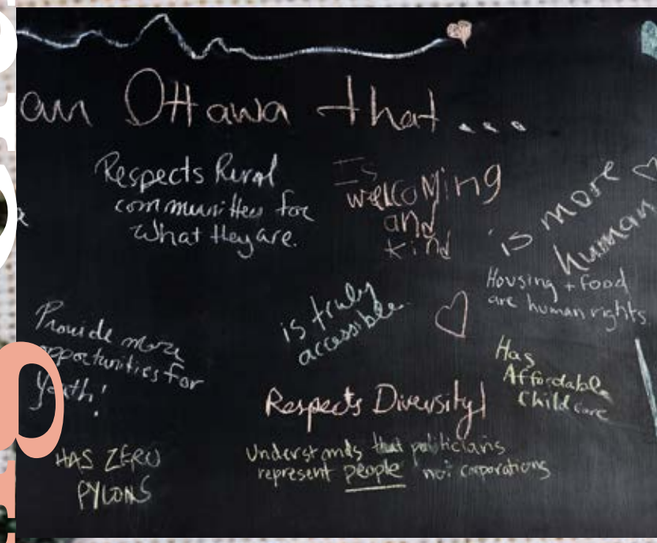
A huge thank you to our Guiding Circle, a collective formed at the beginning of our Caring Cities initiative to steward the work and inform the research process. The circle includes an artist, urban policy and participatory mapping advisors, a member with lived/living experience, and academic research collaborators/advisors. This circle continues to meet on a regular basis and we are so grateful for their support and guidance.

Huge thank you to WAGE for funding this work.









Caring Cities









Empowering Community-Led Climate Action through Equitable, Participatory Development Interventions in Ottawa

Over the past year, CAWI partnered with Ecology Ottawa on a climate equity project focused on urban planning and development, and the opportunity to build a city that is more equitable, climate-resilient, and responsive to the people who live here.

We approached this work is a few different ways:

We built knowledge.

Through a series of workshops, residents learned about climate equity, how buildings and neighborhood design contribute to climate change, how the planning and development process works, and how & when they can use their voices to create change.

We talked and mapped.

We spent time with residents in their neighborhoods, listening to what they noticed, valued, and needed. Through community care walks and participatory mapping, residents shared their knowledge of the places they call home.

We talked about everything from transit and housing, to food, trees, and green space. We learned how residents are already adapting to the impacts of climate change, as well as the worries they hold as we anticipate warmer summers, more flooding, and increasingly unpredictable winters.





We came together to celebrate.

We ended the project with a community celebration that brought these ideas into creative practice through storytelling, zine-making, an embodied environmentalism workshop, and a community mural.

We turned all of this into action.

In collaboration with the participants of the project and Ecology Ottawa, we brought what we learned into action creating a climate equity toolkit for the City of Ottawa, a set of policy recommendations, and a checklist that can be used to support residents in taking action.

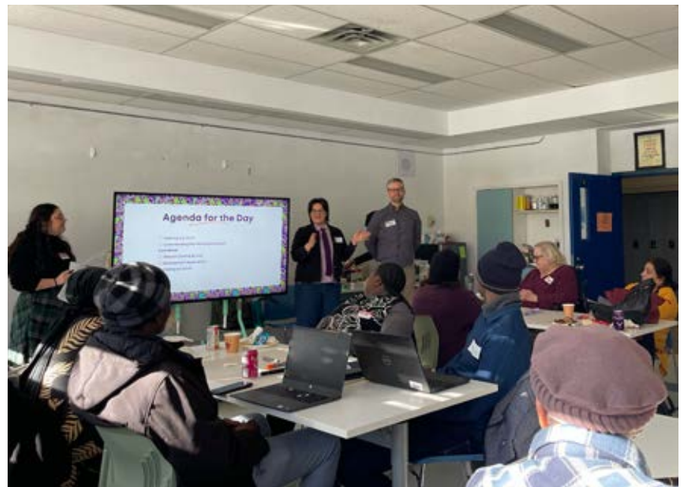
Thank you to the communities who partnered with us on the mapping and walking workshops including Abiwin Co-operative, Vanier Community Service Center, Vanier Community Association, Nepean, Rideau & Osgoode Community Resource Centre, Eastern Ottawa Community Resource Center, and Sandy Hill Community Health Center.

And a huge thank you to all the project participants whose knowledge, experiences, and stories shaped this work beginning to end.

Thank you to OCAF for funding this work.

Thank you to Adrienne Row-Smith and Strast Media for so beautifully capturing all our community activities.







CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Making Voices Count

Over the past year, Making Voices Count (MVC) continued to build civic engagement around the everyday needs and priorities of CAWI members and the communities they are connected to.

MVC continues to work on issues that shape people's daily lives, housing, transit, food access, income support, and accessibility, while creating more opportunities for residents to have their voices heard in municipal decision-making.

This year, many new members joined MVC, bringing new experiences, perspectives, and energy to the group. MVC also deepened its relationship with City Hall through opportunities to attend committee meetings, participate in deputation training, deliver deputations, and meet directly with City Councillors.

MVC also helped create an elections campaign in partnership with Ottawa Community Food Partnership, developing resident engagement tools to support people in understanding the issues that matter to them, asking questions, and making their voices heard during the election.

A huge thank you to all the members of Making Voices Count. Thank you for showing up, sharing your experiences, asking hard questions, and continuing to build collective power for change in our city.

Thank you to United Way Eastern Ontario for funding this work.

Maamawe: Reducing Poverty Together

Over the past year, Maamawe met monthly, focusing on how to build collective care and resilience within the CAWI community. This year's highlights include completing a computer literacy training with iSisters and celebrating accomplishments with one another.

Maamawe also partnered with Ottawa Coalition to End Violence Against Women (OCTEVAW) to contribute to their Fabric of Change program, where CAWI members created quilt squares representing actions to end femicide in Ottawa, and continuing to hold one another up.

Thank you to iSisters and OCTEVAW for being part of our program this year!

A huge shoutout to our members. Your support means the world to us. Thank you for embodying the kindness that keeps us working toward a city rooted in care.









Fabric of Change



Cathy Hamilton, Caroline Andrew Civic Enagegment Award Recipient, 2025

CAROLINE ANDREW CIVIC ENGAGEMENT AWARD

Cathy Hamilton, a compassionate community leader who embodies care. She can regularly be found at her building's food pantry, working alongside a dedicated team of volunteers to organize, store, and distribute fresh produce, groceries and essential toiletries. She grows fresh herbs in her garden, does wellness checks and makes time to socialize and connect with her neighbors. What began as a small project—inspired by a chance encounter with a woman in need—has since grown into a community support network. Today, her grassroots effort has expanded delivering food and resources to families across 14 neighboring buildings.

In recognition of her exceptional dedication to civic engagement and community advocacy, Cathy received the Catherine Andrews Civic Engagement Award last year.

WEAVE CHANGE with CAWI

EQUITY
DIVERSITY
INCLUSION

In 2027 we want to continue to offer our contract services through our incredible WeaveChange Facilitators and CAWI team. This past year we led workshops, civic engagement sessions, presented approaches to gender equitable city planning and municipal budgets and offered training in building community power, caring cities, and gender-responsive budgeting.

We are grateful to our partners for the opportunity to collaborate on this meaningful work.



Georgette Morris and Amanda Palmer co-facilitating a workshop.

Financial Statements

2025-2026

Revenue	2026
Women and Gender Equality Canada	$368,223
City of Ottawa	$75,704
Ottawa Climate Action Fund	$53,785
United Way	$35,000
Catherine Donnelly Foundation	$19,353
McConnell Foundation	$14,350
Douglas Coldwell Layton Foundation	$5,000
Elections Canada	$2,775
TOTAL	$574,190

Expenditures	
Salaries and Benefits	$424,443
Program and Administration	$186,901
TOTAL	$611,344
Reserve Fund	$57,748

Credits and Thank you's!

Photography – Adrienne Row-Smith and Strast Media · **Graphic Design** – Jenny Walker
Translation – Marine Armstrong · **Website** – Annelies van Oers

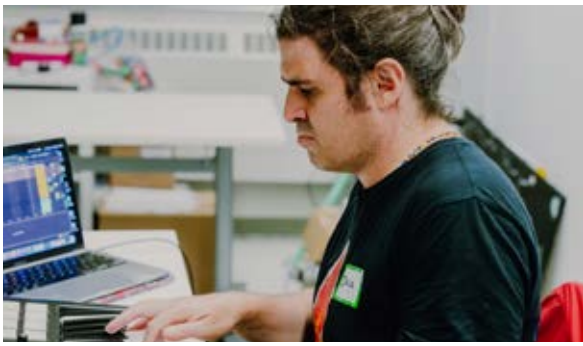
Thank you very much to our partners and our donors that make all this possible.



Zoning Bylaw Workshop









Climate Action Party







