



## Application Summary: 2026 - 3286 - Sustaining Grant - Strategic Partners Grant

### Application ID

2026 - 3286 - Sustaining Grant - Strategic Partners Grant

## Applicant Information

### Organization Information

Markaz-ul-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray  
9904 Gordon Ave  
Fort McMurray, AB, T9H 2E2

### Primary Contact

Tahir Yousaf  
9904 Gordon Ave  
Fort McMurray, AB, T9H 2E2

Phone: s20(1)  
Email: s.20(1)



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**In the last year, have there been any significant changes to your organization or program?**

No

**What is your organization's Mission Statement?**

To uplift and empower individuals and families across the RMWB by delivering inclusive, compassionate, and culturally responsive support services that enhance mental well-being, promote equity, and build strong, connected communities.

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**Please summarize the proposed service(s) that your organization is requesting funding for.**

The funding request aims to support three impactful programs within the Wood Buffalo region: the We Care Unit, Northern Lights Sisters Association, and United Youth Association. Each program uniquely addresses the needs of marginalized communities, providing culturally relevant services that promote personal, social, and economic resilience.

The We Care Unit focuses on improving mental health for immigrant, refugee, and Indigenous populations, who often face cultural and systemic barriers to accessing support. This program offers workshops, peer-led support groups, and community-building activities designed to reduce stigma around mental health and foster a sense of belonging. By integrating traditional practices with modern mental health strategies, the We Care Unit provides participants with practical tools to manage stress, build resilience, and engage more fully in their communities.

The Northern Lights Sisters Association is dedicated to empowering immigrant and Indigenous women, addressing the economic and social challenges they often face. Through skill-building workshops on financial literacy, career advancement, and leadership, this program equips women with practical tools for personal and professional growth. The program also includes bi-weekly support groups and cultural exchange events that celebrate participants' heritage, helping to build confidence, cultural pride, and social connections.

The United Youth Association targets youth from immigrant, refugee, and Indigenous backgrounds, focusing on leadership development and community engagement. Monthly workshops cover essential skills such as teamwork, decision-making, and public speaking. Additionally, the program offers a mentorship component, pairing youth with community leaders who provide guidance and support. Cultural exchange nights and outdoor adventure days encourage participants to celebrate their heritage, develop resilience, and build a strong sense of community involvement.

Together, these programs offer a comprehensive, culturally sensitive approach to community empowerment, addressing the distinct needs of each group.



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**Please note any restrictions on participating in your organization's programs, projects, services or events.**

Markaz Ul Islam, through its various committees including the We Care Unit, United Youth Association, and Northern Lights Sisters Association, is committed to providing inclusive programs and services to all community members. Our initiatives are designed to be accessible, with minimal restrictions to participation, ensuring that individuals from diverse backgrounds feel welcome and supported.

**We Care Unit:** Our mental health awareness programs are open to everyone, regardless of age, gender, or cultural background. We ensure that our workshops and support groups are culturally sensitive and tailored to the unique needs of various communities. The only restrictions we have are related to age-specific programs; for example, some sessions are tailored for adults, while others focus on youth. These distinctions help us provide more effective and relevant support to each demographic.

**United Youth Association:** Our youth programs are designed for individuals typically aged 12 to 25, focusing on leadership development, mental well-being, and community engagement. While our programs are open to all within this age range, certain events may be divided into specific age groups to ensure that content is age-appropriate and beneficial. For example, leadership workshops for older youth may differ in content and structure from those aimed at younger participants.

**Northern Lights Sisters Association:** The programs are primarily designed for women, with a focus on mental health, personal development, and community support. While we welcome all women to participate, certain programs may have age restrictions or be tailored to specific groups, such as mothers, young adults, or seniors. These targeted programs allow us to address the unique challenges faced by women at different stages of life.

Overall, Markaz Ul Islam's programs aim to minimize barriers to participation while providing targeted, effective support for various segments of the community.

**Minimum number of board members according to the organization's bylaws:**

10





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**Please list your current Board of Directors in the table:**

### Board of Directors

Name	Board Position	Years on Board
Abdo Gani Abdo	President	2
Dr Nassim Arruj	VP Projects	5
Ikram Ul Haq	VP Infrastructure	6
Maissara Salem	VP Sports/Wellness	4
Tahir Yousaf	VP Treasury	6
Sundus Shamshad	VP women Affairs	2
Aysha Ikram	VP Communication & Out Reach Office	2
Jana Abdo	Educational Advisor	2
Musaed Musaed	VP Community Affairs	3
Shayan Awan	VP Youth	2
Ousman Mahmat	VP Communication	2
Naseem Abdo	VP Outreach	10
Waris Lawal	VP Project Managment	3

**Do one or more board representatives or program staff have lived experience or expertise reflective of the demographics your organization serves?**

Yes



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### **If Yes; please briefly explain the lived experience or expertise.**

The We Care Unit is deeply rooted in the lived experiences of the communities it supports, and this is reflected in the leadership and program staff who guide its vision. Many of our board members and directors share the same journeys, struggles, and cultural backgrounds as the participants we serve, which ensures that programming is not only professionally designed but also personally relevant.

For example, Dr. Naseem Arruj, a practicing physician at Hardin Clinic and director with the We Care Unit, embodies both professional expertise and lived experience as an immigrant professional in Fort McMurray. He has firsthand knowledge of the barriers faced by newcomers, including navigating healthcare, adjusting to Canadian systems, and overcoming cultural stigmas. His leadership has been instrumental in shaping culturally sensitive mental health and family wellness services that address the unique needs of immigrant and refugee populations, many of whom come from the Middle East, Africa, and Asia. His dual perspective as both a healthcare provider and community member ensures that our services remain relevant, compassionate, and effective.

Similarly, Dr Murad, who holds a Master's in Counselling Psychology, has dedicated his career to supporting families, youth, and women facing trauma, discrimination, and social isolation. His lived experience as a leader within a diverse immigrant community has given him unparalleled insight into the struggles of identity, belonging, and integration that many participants face. By combining academic expertise with real-world community leadership, he ensures that We Care Unit programs directly reflect the cultural realities and challenges of those we serve.

This integration of lived experience and professional training makes the We Care Unit unique in the RMWB. It ensures that decisions are made with empathy, programming is shaped by authentic voices, and participants feel represented, understood, and supported in every initiative.

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### Provide a brief overview of the organization's strategic priorities.

Markaz Ul Islam has set clear strategic priorities for 2025–2026 that focus on strengthening mental health and social supports, empowering youth and families, advancing equity and inclusion, fostering Indigenous partnerships, and enhancing community resilience. Through culturally responsive counseling, youth mentorship, and women's empowerment programs, the Units addresses gaps in mental health services and combats isolation. It continues to play a unique role in anti-racism education, Islamophobia awareness, and reconciliation with Indigenous communities, dedicating entire programs to Treaty 8 history and cultural understanding. The We Care Unit also ensures rapid mobilization during emergencies such as fires, floods, or cold snaps, proving itself as an indispensable partner for crisis response. Collaboration remains at the heart of its approach, with deep ties to organizations like the Multicultural Association, Islamic Relief Canada, Keyano College, and local Indigenous Nations. With a reach of over 6,000 Muslim members and 20,000 community-wide residents annually, our priorities are grounded in measurable outcomes, sustainability through municipal, provincial, and federal support, and long-term growth into rural communities. These priorities reflect its vision of building an inclusive, resilient, and equitable RMWB where every resident feels safe, valued, and supported.

### How many operational staff does the organization have? Please provide details in the table.

#### Operational Staff Information

	Per Organization Chart	Currently Filled
Full Time Positions	6	4
Part Time Positions	15	10



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### Program/Projects Details

#### Are you applying for more than one program or project?

If you are unsure, please contact CIP@rmwb.ca for clarification.

Yes

**Step 1:** Click on the button below to enter the name of your program(s) or project(s).

**Step 2:** Click on the Save Draft button at the bottom of the screen.

**Step 3:** Click on the "Program/Project Details" button below to complete the details of each Program/Project. Please be sure to submit the current program/project information form before moving onto the next project information form.

**Program/Project:** Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health    **Status:** Completed

**Program/Project:** United Youth Association    **Status:** Completed

**Program/Project:** Northern Lights Sisters Association    **Status:** Completed



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### Finances

#### Organization's most recent Fiscal Year End date

Please click Save Draft to update the following two questions with this date.

12/31/2024

#### Unrestricted Net Assets

Unrestricted Net Assets (accumulated net assets/surplus that the organization has not set aside for a particular purpose or earmarked by a donor for a specific program or project) from your Financial Statements ending: 12/31/2024

\$174,428.00

#### Total Operating Expenses

Total Expenses from your Financial Statements Ending: 12/31/2024

\$1,775,023.00



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### **What efforts have been made in the past fiscal year to increase the financial support for your organization?**

In the past fiscal year, our organization demonstrated exceptional resilience and financial innovation despite receiving a reduced grant allocation from the RMWB. While the decision impacted our initial projections, it did not limit our ability to serve the region. Through careful planning, transparent governance, and a strong network of partners, we successfully maintained the same number of programs and community reach across the We Care Unit, Northern Light Sisters Foundation, and United Youth Foundation.

We strengthened our funding base by securing a \$125,000 grant from the Government of Alberta in 2025 to expand our youth and mental health initiatives. In addition, Islamic Relief Canada contributed over \$350,000 this year to sustain and scale our programs—its largest annual investment in Fort McMurray since our partnership began.

Local business partners & Donors, including Prestige Jewellers, Hardin Clinic, and several community sponsors, collectively contributed more than \$600,000 in direct and in-kind support, funding events, supplies, and youth mentorship programs. We also increased our volunteer workforce by 35%, further reducing operational costs and strengthening community ownership.

Beyond financial sustainability, we introduced enhanced accountability tools, outcome-based reporting, and a donor transparency framework that improved confidence and retention among funders. These measures not only stabilized our operations but positioned our organization as one of the region's most effective community service providers.

Despite the financial constraints, our delivery and impact remained uncompromised reaching more than 20,000 residents across the RMWB through mental health, wellness, and empowerment programs. This past year proved that our strength lies not in funding amounts, but in our ability to unite people, leverage partnerships, and create measurable social change.



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**Please explain any cost savings initiatives the organization has, or is planning, to implement:**

Our organization has implemented several cost-saving and sustainability measures to ensure that every dollar directly benefits residents across the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB). Serving more than 20,000 people annually through the We Care Unit, Northern Light Sisters Foundation, and United Youth Foundation, we prioritize fiscal efficiency and community impact over administration.

A defining strength is that our CEO and all board members serve entirely on a volunteer basis receiving no financial compensation. We are the only community organization of our size in the RMWB that operates under a 100 percent volunteer governance model. This structure allows us to reinvest every available dollar into hiring qualified professionals counsellors, educators, facilitators, and event coordinators who execute programs with measurable outcomes. By doing so, we fill essential service gaps that would otherwise remain unmet in the region.

We further reduced costs through a shared-service operational model, integrating administration, marketing, and logistics across all three divisions. Vendor consolidation and long-term facility agreements with partners lowered facility and event costs by nearly 20 percent.

More than 200 volunteers contributed 8,000 hours last year—an estimated \$300,000 in in-kind value—allowing us to expand programming without increasing expenses. Digital transformation, bulk purchasing, and local procurement added further efficiencies, cutting administrative overhead by 12 percent.

Looking ahead, we are pursuing multi-partner funding and joint-event models with local businesses to reduce dependency on single-source funding. These cost-saving initiatives, paired with our unpaid leadership team and professional delivery model, ensure that public funds are maximized for direct community impact, equity, and measurable outcomes across the RMWB.



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Please complete the following budget table:

### Secured Revenue

Revenue Sources	Description	Revenue (Jan-Dec)
Donations	Donors	\$250,000.00
Government of Alberta Grant	Enhancement Program Grant	\$125,000.00
Donations	Islamic Relief	\$125,000.00
		<b>\$500,000.00</b>

### Revenue in Progress

Revenue Sources	Description	Revenue (Jan-Dec)
Government of Canada Grant	RRF Grant	\$125,000.00
Government of Alberta Grant	Anti Racism & Hate Grant	\$120,000.00
		<b>\$245,000.00</b>

### Expenses

Type of Expense	Description	Total Expenses	Requested RMWB Grant
Administration Costs	All 3 attached programs	\$100,000.00	\$50,000.00
Advertising / Marketing Fees	All 3 attached programs	\$70,000.00	\$50,000.00
Audit Fees	All 3 attached programs	\$5,000.00	\$3,500.00
Food Costs	All 3 attached programs	\$150,000.00	\$75,000.00
Gifts for Elders / Honorariums	All 3 attached programs	\$15,000.00	\$10,000.00
Insurance - Program, Project, Service or Event	All 3 attached programs	\$50,000.00	\$25,000.00
Program Materials and Supplies	All 3 attached programs	\$120,000.00	\$80,000.00
Training	All 3 attached programs	\$150,000.00	\$80,000.00
Transportation and Delivery	All 3 attached programs	\$35,000.00	\$20,000.00
Volunteer Appreciation	All 3 attached programs	\$25,000.00	\$15,000.00
Wages/Salaries/Benefits/MER CS	All 3 attached programs	\$530,000.00	\$450,000.00
		<b>\$1,250,000.00</b>	<b>\$858,500.00</b>



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### Shortfall

	Total
(Total Secured Revenue - Total Expenses)	-\$750,000.00

### Total RMWB Grant Request

	Amount
Total	\$858,500.00



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### Total Cost of Program, Project, or Service

Total cost includes all costs of the entire program, project or service.

\$1,250,000.00

### Total Grant Amount Request

For the Community Sustaining Grant, up to 75% of total program, project or service cost

\$858,500.00

### Grant request as percentage of total cost of program, project or service

Click on the Save Draft button to calculate the percentage.

69%

### Outline any expected non-financial resources being leveraged for this program, project, service or event to demonstrate community support.

Our programs leverage significant non-financial community support through partnerships, volunteerism, and in-kind contributions. More than 200 active volunteers contribute thousands of hours annually, assisting with logistics, event setup, counselling support, and youth mentorship. Local organizations such as Islamic Relief & Keyano College provide in-kind resources venues, materials, printing, and promotional support reducing operational costs substantially. Professional counsellors and educators volunteer their expertise to deliver high-impact workshops. This broad network of community engagement, combined with cross-sector partnerships and shared facilities, demonstrates the region's collective investment in our mission to promote inclusion, mental health, and community wellness across the RMWB.



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### Preferred Cash-Flow

	Amount
January/February	\$360,000.00
April	\$140,000.00
August	\$200,000.00
October	\$158,500.00
Total	\$858,500.00



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### Attachments

#### Upload Strategic Plan

[finalpres.pdf](#)

76.9 MB - 10/14/2025 11:46 AM

Total Files: 1

**Please attach a budget breakdown for each program, project, service or event if there are multiple requests included in this application.**

[Financial\\_Overview\\_\\_\\_Budget\\_Allocation-2026.pdf](#)

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Total Files: 1



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**Please attach a Partnership Letter(s) of Support for the proposed program, project, service or event to demonstrate authentic partnership and collaboration.**

Applicants may use the >Partnership Letter of Support Template or submit a customized letter.

Each letter should include the following five key elements:

1. Commitment to the partnership and shared initiatives
2. Confirmation of the community need
3. History of prior collaboration or rationale for a new partnership
4. Defined roles, responsibilities, and resource commitments
5. Contact information for the partner organization

Each letter must be signed by an authorized representative of the partner organization.

Please note: The partnership letter is a mandatory requirement for Community Sustaining applicants and optional for Community Impact Grant application.

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1.1 MB - 10/06/2025 5:52 PM

[LOS\\_Markaz-ul-Islam\\_RMWB\\_CIP.pdf](#)

122.5 KB - 10/06/2025 5:52 PM

[Letter\\_Of\\_Support2.pdf](#)

180.8 KB - 10/06/2025 5:52 PM

[Letter\\_of\\_Support\\_We\\_Care.pdf](#)

257.4 KB - 10/11/2025 3:58 PM

[Letter\\_to\\_We\\_Care\\_Unit\\_Markaz\\_ul\\_islam\\_.pdf](#)

1 MB - 10/11/2025 4:01 PM

[We-Care.pdf](#)

162.9 KB - 10/06/2025 5:52 PM

[We\\_Care\\_RM\\_KC.pdf](#)

283.8 KB - 10/06/2025 5:52 PM

[We\\_Care\\_Unit\\_Support\\_Letter.pdf](#)

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Total Files: 8



REGIONAL MUNICIPALITY  
OF WOOD BUFFALO

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**Please attach signed Financial Statements for the most recent fiscal year end.**

Note: Year end date must fall between July 1, 2024, and June 30, 2025.

Markaz-UL-Islam\_Congregation\_of\_Fort\_McMurray\_\_2024\_Financial\_statements.pdf  
609.2 KB - 10/06/2025 5:50 PM

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### Declaration

Declaration: – In making this application, I, the undersigned, confirm:

- that I have read the appropriate Grant Guidelines;
- that I understand that this application form and all required attachments must be completed in full and received before 2025-10-14 4:30 p.m. MT;
- that I understand that this application form and any attachments shall be part of the Community Investment Program Approval Committee (CIPAC, Council Appointed) meeting agenda and accessible through all methods that the public meeting agenda is available;
- that I understand the term of the Grant is January 1 to December 31, 2026 and that all expenditures must happen during this term; and
- that I am authorized by the applicant organization to complete the application and hereby represent to the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's Community Investment Program and declare that to the best of our knowledge and belief, the information provided is truthful and accurate, and the application is made on behalf of the above-named organization and with the Board of Directors' full knowledge and consent.
- that I understand the personal information collected in this application is collected under the authority of Section 4(c) of the Protection of Privacy Act and is managed in accordance with the Act. It will be used to process your application and contact you if needed during the review of this application. If you have questions about the collection or use of your personal information, you may contact the Manager, Community Partnerships and Initiatives, at 9909 Franklin Avenue, Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4 or at 587-919-5522.

### Acknowledgement

I do hereby certify that to the best of my knowledge, this application contains a full and correct account of all matters stated herein.

### Applicant Name

Tahir Yousf

### Position/Title

VP Finance

**Date:** 10/06/2025

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

#### Program, Project or Service Name

Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

#### Beginning Date

2026-01-01

#### Completion Date

Note: The term of the grant is January 1 - December 31, 2026. The program, project, service or event and all expenditures must occur during this term.

2026-12-31

#### Location program, project or service will be provided:

Note: If the grant is approved, the communities served will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection from all communities will be required.

Do not select the rural community if the service is provided to the clients from rural communities through the urban service area.

Anzac, Conklin, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, Janvier

#### Please complete the following Program/Project or Event Delivery Details.

#### Program, Project, or Event Delivery Information

Program/Project/ or Event Location	In Person (Yes/No)	Virtually (Yes/No)	Travel Budget Required (Yes/No)
(Fort McMurray) and partner community facilities across RMWB, including Anzac, Janvier, Fort Chipewyan and Fort McKay	Yes	Yes	Yes



## Project Summary Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**How does your organization plan to address barriers related to delivering virtual services in rural areas. This may include limited internet access, lack of devices, and limited technical support. If applicable.**

We acutely aware that virtual service delivery in rural and Indigenous communities such as Anzac, Janvier, Fort McKay, and Fort Chipewyan is not without barriers. Internet connectivity is often unreliable, some households lack devices, and many residents do not have access to technical support. For this reason, our strategy is built on realistic, practical solutions rather than relying solely on online delivery.

We operate on a hybrid model: while virtual counseling and workshops remain an option, we ensure scheduled in-person visits by our counselors and program staff so that no community is left behind. We also work directly with band offices, schools, and community halls to provide stable spaces with internet access and equipment for residents to join virtual sessions confidentially.

Recognizing that not all families can afford or access devices, we are building a loaner device program through donors like Islamic Relief Canada and local businesses, combined with volunteer-led technical support to guide residents step by step. Where internet is not possible, we offer telephone-based counseling, which has proven to be a vital lifeline for those in isolated communities.

This layered approach ensures that rural residents receive equitable, accessible, and culturally sensitive mental health services, regardless of technological barriers.

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**How does your organization plan to address transportation barriers to provide the program, project, service or event? If applicable.**

Transportation remains one of the most persistent challenges in delivering programs and services across the RMWB, especially for families in rural and Indigenous communities. The We Care Unit has built a practical and multi-faceted strategy to address this barrier and ensure equitable access to our mental health and social support services.

We prioritize a community-based model, bringing programs directly into rural areas instead of requiring residents to travel long distances to Fort McMurray. Our counselors and program staff host sessions and workshops at accessible locations such as schools, community halls, and band offices, reducing the burden on participants. When travel into Fort McMurray is necessary, we work with local leaders and organizations to arrange group transportation solutions, including coordinated use of community vans, carpooling support, and partnerships with agencies that already provide transportation in the region.

For residents who cannot travel, we offer hybrid options such as telephone counseling and virtual workshops, ensuring no individual is excluded because of distance or lack of transport. In addition, we budget for fuel, vehicle rentals, and volunteer mileage reimbursements to support consistent rural outreach.

This layered approach guarantees that geography and financial hardship never prevent residents from accessing vital programs.

**Council approved seven funding priorities. Please indicate which funding priority/priorities are applicable to this application.**

Please select at least 3 funding priorities for the Community Sustaining and Subsidiary Grant applications. Please select at least 1 funding priority for the Community Impact Grant (Community Programs and Projects or Community Events) application.

- ☒ Community support services and wellness
- ☒ Accessibility, inclusion and belonging
- ☒ Hosting events/new business and visitors
- ☒ Partnership and collaboration
- ☒ Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships
- ☒ Social participation
- ☒ Value of culture, heritage and regional pride

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Describe how the proposed program, project, service or event align with these priorities.**

The We Care Unit directly aligns with the RMWB's CIP priorities by delivering inclusive mental health, wellness, and family support programs that serve over 10,000 residents annually. Through hybrid delivery and outreach, we ensure accessibility for rural and Indigenous communities while fostering belonging and resilience. Our signature events such as the Fast-A-Thon, Sisters Conference, and Back-to-School campaign—enhance social participation, celebrate cultural diversity, and build regional pride. Strong partnerships with schools, businesses, Indigenous Nations, and non-profits ensure collaboration, while our commitment to reconciliation and anti-racism makes the Centre a vital foundation for inclusion, healing, and long-term community development in Wood Buffalo.

**In the table below, please identify the total number of unique participants that you anticipate will access the funded program, project, service or event.**

#### Target Population

Age	Target Population
Children (0-12 years)	500
Youth (13-18 years)	1200
Adults	3500
Seniors (65+)	1000
Families	3000
Community	8
Total	9208

**Please identify the equity deserving population the program, project, service or event will serve.**

Youth, Seniors, Immigrants, refugees and/or newcomers, First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit Peoples, Other racialized communities, Youth, Seniors, Women and/or girls, People experiencing poverty and/or homelessness, People living with disabilities

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**How does your organization ensure that its programs, projects, services or events are accessible and inclusive for anyone who has an interest? Please share examples and success stories of accessibility and inclusivity.**

Accessibility and inclusivity are at the core of the We Care Unit's mission. We ensure that every program, service, and event is designed to welcome anyone with an interest, regardless of culture, language, gender, age, or ability. Our hybrid model offering in-person, virtual, and telephone-based services ensures that residents with transportation, mobility, or internet challenges can still access support.

For example, during our Back-to-School Campaign, we distributed 2,500 school bags along with anti-bullying and anti-discrimination awareness guides. Families from every background, including newcomers, Indigenous members, and low-income households, were served equally, and many expressed that the event made them feel recognized and included.

At the Fast-A-Thon, over 500 non-Muslims joined community members in the experience of fasting, with participants sharing that it broke stereotypes and gave them a sense of belonging. Similarly, our Sisters Conference provided women from diverse cultural and religious backgrounds with a safe space to share their voices and build confidence something rarely available in this region.

Inclusivity is not just a principle; it is reflected in outcomes. Each year, over 10,000 people, including youth, women, Indigenous partners, and newcomers, feel safe, supported, and connected through our programs making the We Care Unit a true community hub.





## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**If applicable, please explain how your program, project, service or event celebrates Indigenous culture, serves Indigenous communities and/or promotes Indigenous healing, language, cultural restoration, or reconciliation.**

The We Care Unit is committed to reconciliation and ensuring that Indigenous voices, culture, and healing are woven into the fabric of our programs. We actively celebrate Indigenous culture and serve Indigenous communities through education, partnerships, and hands-on participation.

At our Centre, we host awareness sessions dedicated to teaching newcomers and immigrant families about Indigenous history, rights, and traditions. These sessions directly address stereotypes and ensure that over 7,000 members of our community understand the truth of Treaty 8 and the legacy of residential schools.

We also participate in community-led initiatives, including events for Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and People (MMIWP) and Truth and Reconciliation workshops, standing in solidarity with our Indigenous neighbors. These collaborations foster healing and create space for honest dialogue.

The We Care Unit has partnered with Indigenous communities in land-based programs, where our youth and families learn alongside Elders about traditional practices, storytelling, and the importance of land stewardship. These experiences provide both cultural restoration and meaningful cross-cultural bridges.

Through these efforts, the We Care Unit not only serves Indigenous families directly but also ensures that every resident of Wood Buffalo gains awareness, respect, and a deeper sense of shared responsibility in reconciliation.

## Logic Model



## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Statement of Need: What social problem or gap do you hope to address by delivering the program, project, service or event? What evidence do you have that this problem or gap exists?**

The RMWB continues to face a critical gap in accessible, culturally relevant, and inclusive mental health and community support services. According to Alberta Health Services, RMWB has one of the highest per-capita rates of mental health concerns in the province, intensified by repeated wildfires, floods, and economic downturns. The 2023 Wildfire Evacuation Response alone demonstrated how quickly thousands were left vulnerable, with over 1,000 residents supported directly by the We Care Unit during that crisis.

Our Centre is unique in Fort McMurray: it is a safe haven for more than 7,000 members representing diverse languages, cultures, and backgrounds, and reaches over 20,000 residents community-wide. No other organization provides the same breadth of services from culturally sensitive counseling and newcomer supports to Indigenous awareness, youth leadership, and women's empowerment under one roof.

We have filled this gap deliberately, taking responsibility to bridge communities: building relationships with Indigenous Nations, while also addressing Islamophobia and racial discrimination through awareness events such as the Fast-a-Thon and Community Resilience Festival.

Without sustained support, these services and the trust and belonging they create would not exist in our region. The We Care Unit is not just a program; it is an essential lifeline for RMWB.



## Project Summary Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Broad Strategy: How will the program, project, service or event address the social problem? (e.g., What approach are you taking that you hope will lead your program, project, service or event to support the social problem?)**

The We Care Unit will address the critical social gaps in mental health support, inclusion, and community wellness through a multi-layered, community-based approach that combines accessibility, cultural sensitivity, and strong partnerships.

First, we are expanding culturally responsive counseling and mental health services that meet people where they are. Our counselors and trained staff provide one-on-one and group support tailored to the needs of immigrants, refugees, women, youth, and Indigenous residents, ensuring barriers like stigma, language, and cultural differences do not prevent access.

Second, we will continue to deliver inclusive community programs and awareness events such as the Fast-a-Thon. These initiatives address social isolation, fight discrimination, and build resilience by bringing together diverse groups of residents to celebrate inclusion, learn about Indigenous culture, and stand against Islamophobia and racism.

Third, we are committed to outreach and rural service delivery. By bringing programs directly to Janvier, Anzac, Fort McKay, and Fort Chipewyan, we close the geographic gap that leaves rural residents without mental health and social supports.

Finally, our strategy relies on partnerships with schools, Indigenous Nations, nonprofits, businesses, and municipal leaders. By pooling resources, volunteers, and expertise, we ensure sustainability and amplify impact.

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Rationale: What evidence or research do we have that this strategy will work? To demonstrate for example, "If [my organization] does 'x' program, project, service or event, then [this] change will happen for the target population."**

The We Care Unit's strategy is grounded in both community evidence and measurable results. In Wood Buffalo, over 1 in 5 residents report mental health struggles each year, with issues such as depression, anxiety, and trauma compounded by repeated wildfires, floods, and economic downturns. Immigrant and newcomer families, who make up more than 30% of Fort McMurray's population, face additional barriers including language gaps, cultural stigma, and limited access to traditional services. Indigenous partners have also expressed the need for safe, inclusive spaces where reconciliation and healing can occur alongside service delivery.

Our surveys from January–June 2025 demonstrate that culturally relevant programming works: 78% of counseling clients reported reduced stress and improved coping skills, 85% of women in empowerment sessions felt safer and more confident, and youth participants showed a 30% reduction in reported social isolation.

If the We Care Unit expands its counseling, youth development, and reconciliation-focused programs, then residents will experience improved mental well-being, reduced isolation, and stronger connections between cultural groups. If services are extended into rural and Indigenous areas, then access barriers will decrease, fostering equity and inclusion.

This approach is not theoretical it is proven effective locally, with measurable outcomes.



## Project Summary Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Inputs: What resources will be invested to achieve your goal? (e.g., staff labour, venue space, volunteers, computers, etc.)**

To achieve our goals, the We Care Unit invests a wide range of unique and locally grounded resources that set us apart in the region. Our greatest strength lies in our people: a diverse team of professional counselors, physicians, educators, and trained volunteers many with lived experience who provide culturally relevant and trauma-informed care. In 2025 alone, we mobilized over 120 volunteers monthly, each contributing their time to community events, mental health services, and outreach initiatives.

Our facility, the largest community space of its kind in Fort McMurray, serves as a safe haven for over 7,000 members. This space is equipped for workshops, youth activities, counseling, and large-scale gatherings, making it a unique venue where diverse populations can meet under one roof.

We also utilize strategic partnerships with organizations, Indigenous councils, schools, and healthcare providers, which extend our reach and provide additional resources such as supplies, training, and specialized expertise.

Technology and data systems are another vital input. We integrate survey tools, measurement frameworks, and digital communication platforms to monitor impact, ensure accountability, and engage hard-to-reach populations.

These combined resources people, space, partnerships, and systems form the backbone of our programs, ensuring effective delivery and measurable outcomes.



## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Activities: What activities make up the program, project, service or event? (e.g., workshops, mentorship sessions, etc.)**

The We Care Unit delivers rare and impactful activities that directly fill social gaps in RMWB. Our Cultural Healing Circles bring together Elders, newcomers, and Muslim community leaders in structured dialogue sessions where participants share stories of resilience, trauma, a format not offered elsewhere in the region.

We host Generational Wealth of Knowledge Exchanges, pairing youth with seniors and elders for skill-sharing, cultural storytelling, and mentorship that reduces isolation while instilling pride in heritage. These activities build belonging while preserving cultural memory.

Our Mobile Counseling Pods a first in RMWB bring professional mental health support into rural areas, schools, and community halls where access is limited. These pods combine therapeutic counseling with translation and cultural navigation, ensuring residents of all backgrounds feel safe and understood.

Unique Anti-Bullying and Harassment Awareness Toolkits are distributed at large-scale community events like the Back-to-School Campaign, combining interactive workshops, role-play scenarios, and legal literacy sessions so children and parents can identify, report, and respond to discrimination effectively.

Finally, our Fast-a-Thon and Open Mosque Nights invite thousands of non-Muslim residents to experience Ramadan and Islam firsthand, building empathy and breaking down stereotypes with shared meals, reflection, and dialogue.



## Project Summary Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Outputs: What do you deliver? (e.g., # of total participants trained, # of organizations, # of sessions, # of events, etc.). Note, each activity should have outputs.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outputs may be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outputs is required.

Between January–June 2025, the We Care Unit delivered programs that went beyond attendance and numbers, directly improving sense of belonging, inclusivity, and well-being for participants across the RMWB.

Cultural Healing Circles provided a safe space where over 200 participants reported increased trust and stronger connections across Indigenous and newcomer communities. Surveys showed 85% felt a deeper sense of belonging and mutual respect.

Generational Knowledge Exchanges paired youth and elders, producing not just 600 mentorship hours, but a 40% reported reduction in youth isolation and stronger pride in cultural identity.

Mobile Counseling Pods offered 320 counseling sessions, with 90% of clients reporting improved emotional well-being and feeling safer seeking help in their own language and culture.

Anti-Bullying & Harassment Awareness Campaign distributed 2,500 toolkits, with families noting increased confidence in reporting discrimination. Over 70% of youth participants said they now feel safer in school and social spaces.

Fast-a-Thon & Open Mosque Nights engaged 1,200 attendees, including 500 non-Muslims. Surveys confirmed 88% left with stronger awareness of inclusion and reduced stereotypes, directly promoting community safety and resilience.

Overall, our outputs consistently reflect measurable improvements in belonging, inclusion, safety, and well-being outcomes central to our mission.



## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Outcomes: What change do you want to see for the participants by running your program, project, service or event? Organizations are required to identify at least one outcome, that will be measured through the grant period, should the application be approved.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outcomes will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outcomes is required.

The primary change we want to see for participants through this program is a measurable increase in mental well-being, sense of belonging, safety, and inclusivity across the RMWB. These outcomes will be tracked throughout the grant period using surveys, focus groups, testimonies, and attendance data.

**Mental Health and Well-Being:** At least 75% of participants in counseling and healing circles will report reduced stress and improved confidence in seeking support. This will be measured through pre- and post-session surveys.

**Belonging and Inclusivity:** Youth, women, newcomers, and Indigenous residents will feel more connected and less isolated. We aim for 80% of participants to report a stronger sense of belonging, as measured through event evaluations and follow-up interviews.

**Safety from Discrimination:** Families receiving anti-bullying and harassment toolkits will demonstrate increased awareness of their rights and confidence in reporting incidents. Success will be measured by at least 70% of participants reporting they feel safer at school, work, and in the community.

**Cultural Understanding:** At least 80% of non-Muslim participants in intercultural events (e.g., Fast-a-Thon) will report increased understanding of diversity and reduced stereotypes.

These outcomes will provide quantifiable, community-wide change during the grant period.

**What tools will you use to measure the outcomes of the program, project, service or event?**

Note: If your organization is approved for funding, copies of the measurement tools selected will be requested.

Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Observation



## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

**Please provide details of how your program, project, service or event differs from other services being offered in the community.**

The We Care Unit is distinct in the RMWB because it combines scale, inclusivity, and cultural integration in a way no other organization does. While other service providers focus on narrow demographics, we serve over 7,000 members and reach more than 20,000 residents community-wide, including youth, seniors, women, newcomers, and Indigenous communities.

We are the only local organization offering culturally relevant mental health counseling in multiple languages (Arabic, Urdu, English), delivered by trained professionals who understand trauma, displacement, and cultural stigmas. This ensures people who often avoid mainstream services feel safe and supported.

Our programs also intentionally bridge communities through initiatives such as the Fast-a-Thon and Cultural Healing Circles, which bring Muslims, non-Muslims, Indigenous members, and newcomers together in shared spaces to reduce stereotypes and build mutual respect.

In addition, the We Care Unit is known for its rapid response capacity mobilizing volunteers, distributing supplies, and offering counseling during wildfires, evacuations, and community crises filling critical gaps often left by larger agencies.

By combining cultural sensitivity, cross-community dialogue, rapid crisis response, and integrated education with social change, the We Care Unit stands apart as a unique, irreplaceable service in Wood Buffalo.

**This grant is intended to promote an allied social profit sector within the Municipality. List the community groups or organizations that will be actively involved in the program, project, service or event delivery.**

Community Organization or Group	Role
Athabasca Tribal Council (ATC)	Partner in reconciliation awareness and cultural-education initiatives; supports We Care Unit in hosting sessions on Truth and Reconciliation and building bridges between newcomers and Indigenous communities.
Centre of Hope	Partner in outreach to vulnerable and homeless populations; collaborates with We Care Unit during cold snaps, fires, and floods to provide supplies, emotional support, and wellness programming.

## Project Summary

### Expanding the We Care Unit for Mental Health

Fort McMurray 468 First Nation	Collaborating partner for Truth and Reconciliation community outreach and cultural education; endorses We Care Unit as a safe, inclusive space for all residents; joint involvement in rural engagement and youth programs.
Arts Council Wood Buffalo	Partner in promoting multicultural expression; supports art-based community events that strengthen belonging, diversity, and cultural awareness.
Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta	Collaborative partner in women's empowerment and mental wellness programs; engages in mentorship and educational sessions on leadership, confidence, and community participation
CIRSA (Refugee & Newcomer Support Agency)	Partner in supporting refugees and immigrants' adaptation through joint workshops, counseling referrals, and cultural orientation sessions.
Sister in Cancer YMM	Partner in supporting women battling illness through emotional well-being and community solidarity initiatives.
Prestige Jewellers	Major private-sector supporter providing over \$70,000 annually; co-host of community events like Back-to-School Campaign and youth programs; active partner in social inclusion and family support.
Hardin Clinic (Dr. Naseem Arruj)	Medical and wellness partner providing clinical expertise and health-awareness workshops, particularly in mental-health support and family counseling.
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo	Strategic partner promoting cultural understanding and newcomer engagement; collaborates on events that celebrate diversity and build social unity.
Fort McMurray Chamber of Commerce	Partner promoting social responsibility among local businesses and supporting We Care Unit's community-based initiatives that enhance workforce well-being.
Islamic Relief Canada	National funding and logistics partner
Northern Lights Health Foundation (Hospital)	Partner in patient comfort, visitation programs, and health-awareness drives; supports community wellness initiatives.
CPFN	Land Based Program Partner
Government Of Alberta	Grant Partner



### Program, Project or Service Name

United Youth Association

### Beginning Date

2026-01-01

### Completion Date

Note: The term of the grant is January 1 - December 31, 2026. The program, project, service or event and all expenditures must occur during this term.

2026-12-31

### Location program, project or service will be provided:

Note: If the grant is approved, the communities served will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection from all communities will be required.

Do not select the rural community if the service is provided to the clients from rural communities through the urban service area.

Anzac, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, Janvier

### Please complete the following Program/Project or Event Delivery Details.

### Program, Project, or Event Delivery Information

Program/Project/ or Event Location	In Person (Yes/No)	Virtually (Yes/No)	Travel Budget Required (Yes/No)
(Fort McMurray) and partner community facilities across RMWB, including Anzac, Janvier, Fort Chipewain and Fort McKay	Yes	No	Yes



**How does your organization plan to address barriers related to delivering virtual services in rural areas. This may include limited internet access, lack of devices, and limited technical support. If applicable.**

The United Youth Foundation recognizes that many rural communities within the RMWB—particularly Janvier, Conklin, and Anzac face barriers such as poor internet connectivity, limited devices, and low digital literacy among youth. To overcome these challenges, the Foundation is prioritizing hybrid and mobile delivery models. Our mentors conduct in-person outreach through schools, libraries, and community halls, equipped with tablets and offline learning tools. Where Wi-Fi is unreliable, youth activities are pre-loaded onto digital kits that can function without continuous access.

We are also establishing local digital-access hubs in partnership with the We Care Unit and community centers, allowing youth to safely access mentorship sessions and online workshops with staff supervision. For participants lacking devices, we have secured commitments from private sponsors to donate refurbished laptops and tablets.

Technical barriers are addressed through ongoing tech-literacy training, ensuring youth gain essential digital skills for education and employment. This approach transforms virtual delivery into an opportunity for digital inclusion, empowering rural youth to stay connected, supported, and engaged despite geographic limitations.



**How does your organization plan to address transportation barriers to provide the program, project, service or event? If applicable.**

The United Youth Foundation recognizes that transportation is a major challenge for many newcomer and low-income youth, particularly those living in rural communities such as Anzac, Fort McKay, and Janvier. To address this, the Foundation will continue implementing a community-based delivery model that brings programs directly to youth instead of requiring them to travel. Our trained mentors conduct mobile sessions in schools, recreation centers, and community halls, ensuring equal access regardless of location.

For larger events or leadership summits held in Fort McMurray, we provide group transportation through chartered buses or ride-sharing partnerships supported by local businesses and the We Care Unit. Collaborations with schools and parents also help coordinate safe carpooling systems for youth participants.

Additionally, the Foundation offers travel stipends for families in financial hardship, allowing youth to participate consistently without added stress. We maintain flexible schedules so that youth in remote areas can attend programs when public transportation is available.

This model not only removes mobility barriers but also strengthens community relationships by meeting youth where they live. By ensuring reliable access to every program, the Foundation guarantees that distance will never prevent a young person from receiving mentorship, belonging, or mental-health support.

**Council approved seven funding priorities. Please indicate which funding priority/priorities are applicable to this application.**

Please select at least 3 funding priorities for the Community Sustaining and Subsidiary Grant applications.  
Please select at least 1 funding priority for the Community Impact Grant (Community Programs and Projects or Community Events) application.

- ☒ Community support services and wellness
- ☒ Accessibility, inclusion and belonging
- ☒ Hosting events/new business and visitors
- ☒ Partnership and collaboration
- ☒ Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships
- ☒ Social participation
- ☒ Value of culture, heritage and regional pride

**Describe how the proposed program, project, service or event align with these priorities.**

The United Youth Foundation directly supports Community Support Services and Wellness, Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging, and Social Participation priorities. The program provides newcomer and immigrant youth with safe, inclusive mentorship, mental-health support, and leadership training that foster belonging and emotional resilience. It strengthens Partnership and Collaboration through active engagement with schools, local organizations, and municipal services. By promoting civic participation, cultural awareness, and volunteerism, the Foundation helps youth adapt to local values while building confidence and pride in their new home contributing to a stronger, healthier, and more inclusive RMWB community.

**In the table below, please identify the total number of unique participants that you anticipate will access the funded program, project, service or event.**

### Target Population

Age	Target Population
Children (0-12 years)	500
Youth (13-18 years)	2500
Adults	200
Seniors (65+)	0
Families	0
Community	0
Total	3200

**Please identify the equity deserving population the program, project, service or event will serve.**

Youth, 2SLGBTQIA+, Immigrants, refugees and/or newcomers, First Nations, Métis, and/or Inuit Peoples, Other racialized communities, Youth, Women and/or girls





**How does your organization ensure that its programs, projects, services or events are accessible and inclusive for anyone who has an interest? Please share examples and success stories of accessibility and inclusivity.**

Accessibility and inclusion are at the heart of every United Youth Foundation program. We remove barriers by providing free registration, transportation assistance, and multilingual mentors who reflect the cultural backgrounds of the youth we serve. Sessions are designed to be welcoming to all regardless of gender, language, ability, or faith and are held in accessible community spaces and schools across the RMWB.

One success story involves a 15-year-old newcomer from Sudan who joined our Youth Resilience Circles after struggling with language and cultural adjustment. Through peer mentorship and art-based workshops, he gained confidence, improved his English, and now volunteers as a junior mentor for younger participants.

Our events are intentionally inclusive grouping youth from different nationalities and skill levels to build unity through sports, arts, and service. Every program is adapted for those with sensory, emotional, or physical needs. By creating safe, judgment-free spaces, the Foundation ensures that every participant whether new to Canada or born in Fort McMurray feels equal, valued, and empowered to belong.



**If applicable, please explain how your program, project, service or event celebrates Indigenous culture, serves Indigenous communities and/or promotes Indigenous healing, language, cultural restoration, or reconciliation.**

While our primary focus is supporting newcomer and immigrant youth, the United Youth Foundation also plays an important role in building understanding between new residents and Indigenous communities in the RMWB. We integrate education on Treaty 8, local history, and cultural awareness into all leadership and mentorship programs. Through storytelling sessions, school presentations, and community clean-up collaborations, youth learn to respect the land and the people who have cared for it for generations.

In partnership with organizations such as the We Care Unit and Fort McMurray 468 First Nation & CPFN, we host "Learning Through Connection" days where Indigenous speakers share teachings on resilience, identity, and healing. Many immigrant youth find parallels between their own experiences of displacement and Indigenous experiences of loss and survival. These shared lessons foster empathy, belonging, and mutual respect.

By helping youth understand Indigenous culture and history early in their integration journey, the Foundation strengthens community unity and ensures new generations grow into respectful, informed residents who value reconciliation as part of their civic identity.

## Logic Model

**Statement of Need: What social problem or gap do you hope to address by delivering the program, project, service or event? What evidence do you have that this problem or gap exists?**

Newcomer and immigrant youth arriving in Fort McMurray face enormous adjustment challenges. Many come from regions affected by war, poverty, or displacement and carry trauma, anxiety, and identity conflict. In schools and workplaces, they often feel invisible, isolated, or misunderstood. With more than 30 percent of youth in the RMWB identifying as immigrants or first-generation Canadians, the absence of culturally aware support systems leaves them vulnerable to depression, low self-esteem, and social withdrawal.

The United Youth Foundation addresses this gap by offering a structured, inclusive environment where young people can heal from past experiences, learn coping tools, and adapt to the values of collaboration, volunteerism, and community belonging that define the RMWB.



**Broad Strategy: How will the program, project, service or event address the social problem? (e.g., What approach are you taking that you hope will lead your program, project, service or event to support the social problem?)**

Our strategy integrates mental-wellness education with civic engagement. We provide mentoring circles, emotional-literacy workshops, and skill-building activities that teach teamwork, communication, and resilience. Through art, sports, and service projects, participants internalize Canadian values respect, empathy, equality while maintaining pride in their roots. If youth feel secure, guided, and represented, then they become confident, socially engaged residents who strengthen the community fabric.

**Rationale: What evidence or research do we have that this strategy will work? To demonstrate for example, "If [my organization] does 'x' program, project, service or event, then [this] change will happen for the target population."**

Evidence from the Canadian Youth Policy Framework (2023) shows mentorship and culturally responsive programming reduce emotional distress among immigrant youth by 40 percent. Locally, our 2025 pilot found 82 percent of participants reported reduced anxiety and 78 percent felt more confident interacting in school. If the Foundation expands region-wide, measurable gains in youth integration, volunteerism, and leadership will follow.

**Inputs: What resources will be invested to achieve your goal? (e.g., staff labour, venue space, volunteers, computers, etc.)**

Resources include qualified youth counselors, volunteer mentors with lived immigrant experience, access to classrooms and gymnasiums, and digital platforms for outreach. Partnerships with schools, the We Care Unit, and Islamic Relief Canada provide funding, logistics, and mental-health resources. Over 80 active volunteers contribute monthly.

**Activities: What activities make up the program, project, service or event? (e.g., workshops, mentorship sessions, etc.)**

Resilience Circles: weekly small-group sessions addressing stress and adaptation.

Creative Expression Labs: art, storytelling, and theatre therapy for trauma relief.

Civic Integration Workshops: education on rights, responsibilities, and volunteerism.

Peer Mentorship Program: pairing senior youth with newcomers for guided support.

Community Service Days: youth-led volunteering to foster belonging.

**Outputs: What do you deliver? (e.g., # of total participants trained, # of organizations, # of sessions, # of events, etc.). Note, each activity should have outputs.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outputs may be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outputs is required.

In 2026 the Foundation will deliver 50 Resilience Circles, 15 Expression Labs, 8 Integration Workshops, and 10 Service Days, directly engaging more than 900 youth. Follow-up surveys, attendance records, and reflective journals capture growth in confidence, communication, and civic participation.

**Outcomes: What change do you want to see for the participants by running your program, project, service or event? Organizations are required to identify at least one outcome, that will be measured through the grant period, should the application be approved.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outcomes will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outcomes is required.

By the end of the grant period, we expect:

- An 80 percent improvement in reported self-esteem and belonging.
- A 25 percent increase in youth volunteering in local events.
- A measurable reduction in self-reported anxiety and isolation.

Participants emerge more resilient, socially connected, and aligned with community values.

### What tools will you use to measure the outcomes of the program, project, service or event?

Note: If your organization is approved for funding, copies of the measurement tools selected will be requested.

Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Observation

### Please provide details of how your program, project, service or event differs from other services being offered in the community.

Unlike generic recreation programs, the United Youth Foundation uniquely blends emotional healing and cultural adaptation. It teaches youth how to belong translating trauma into strength and difference into leadership. No other program in RMWB provides such a bridge between lived immigrant experience and civic inclusion.

### This grant is intended to promote an allied social profit sector within the Municipality. List the community groups or organizations that will be actively involved in the program, project, service or event delivery.

Community Organization or Group	Role
Keyano College	Educational partner offering mentorship and leadership workshops for youth development, academic readiness, and civic engagement programs.
Arts Council Wood Buffalo	Collaborates on creative expression and cultural inclusion workshops for youth, fostering self-esteem and intercultural dialogue.
Fort McMurray 468 First Nation & CPFN	Supports intercultural youth exchanges, land-based learning, and cultural awareness activities.

#### Program, Project or Service Name

Northern Lights Sisters Association

#### Beginning Date

2026-01-01

#### Completion Date

Note: The term of the grant is January 1 - December 31, 2026. The program, project, service or event and all expenditures must occur during this term.

2026-12-31

#### Location program, project or service will be provided:

Note: If the grant is approved, the communities served will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection from all communities will be required.

Do not select the rural community if the service is provided to the clients from rural communities through the urban service area.

Anzac, Fort McKay, Fort McMurray, Janvier

#### Please complete the following Program/Project or Event Delivery Details.

#### Program, Project, or Event Delivery Information

Program/Project/ or Event Location	In Person (Yes/No)	Virtually (Yes/No)	Travel Budget Required (Yes/No)
(Fort McMurray) and partner community facilities across RMWB, including Anzac, Janvier, Fort Chipewayn and Fort McKay	Yes	Yes	Yes



**How does your organization plan to address barriers related to delivering virtual services in rural areas. This may include limited internet access, lack of devices, and limited technical support. If applicable.**

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation understands that many newcomer women living outside the Fort McMurray core lack reliable internet, access to devices, or confidence using technology. To address these barriers, the Foundation combines community-based satellite gatherings with flexible virtual participation. Sessions are hosted in accessible venues such as community halls, schools, and local libraries, where small groups of women can attend virtual workshops together with on-site facilitators providing translation and technical assistance.

We have partnered with Islamic Relief Canada and private donors to provide loaner tablets and mobile Wi-Fi hotspots, ensuring no woman is excluded due to lack of connectivity or equipment. All digital sessions are designed to be low-bandwidth and mobile-friendly, allowing participants to join through basic smartphones when necessary.

In addition, our volunteers provide one-on-one digital-skills coaching before each program cycle, helping women learn how to use Zoom, WhatsApp, and e-learning tools confidently. This hands-on support not only bridges the virtual gap but also enhances long-term self-reliance. By prioritizing accessibility, community support, and cultural comfort, the Northern Light Sisters Foundation ensures women across the region can safely access empowerment programs—no matter where they live.





**How does your organization plan to address transportation barriers to provide the program, project, service or event? If applicable.**

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation serves women who often face compounded transportation barriers—limited access to vehicles, financial hardship, and childcare responsibilities. To ensure full participation, we deliver services through localized and mobile outreach, bringing workshops directly into neighborhoods, schools, and community halls across Fort McMurray, Sapræ Creek, and surrounding areas.

When sessions require travel, the Foundation arranges free transportation support, including taxi vouchers and volunteer ride programs coordinated through the We Care Unit and partner organizations. Many events are intentionally scheduled in accessible central locations near bus routes, allowing women without private vehicles to attend comfortably.

Recognizing that some participants travel with young children, on-site childcare is always available to eliminate an additional barrier to attendance. We also coordinate women-only carpool networks where participants feel culturally safe sharing rides.

For those unable to travel due to family obligations or weather conditions, hybrid attendance options are offered through recorded or live online sessions.

By combining accessibility planning, financial assistance, and local delivery, the Northern Light Sisters Foundation ensures every woman regardless of income, location, or mobility can safely access counseling, empowerment, and skill-building opportunities essential for rebuilding confidence and independence in her new community.





**Council approved seven funding priorities. Please indicate which funding priority/priorities are applicable to this application.**

Please select at least 3 funding priorities for the Community Sustaining and Subsidiary Grant applications.  
Please select at least 1 funding priority for the Community Impact Grant (Community Programs and Projects or Community Events) application.

- ☒ Community support services and wellness
- ☒ Accessibility, inclusion and belonging
- ☒ Hosting events/new business and visitors
- ☒ Partnership and collaboration
- ☒ Rural and Indigenous Communities and Relationships
- ☒ Social participation
- ☒ Value of culture, heritage and regional pride

**Describe how the proposed program, project, service or event align with these priorities.**

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation aligns with Community Support Services and Wellness, Accessibility, Inclusion and Belonging, and Value of Culture, Heritage and Regional Pride priorities. Its programs empower immigrant and refugee women through mental-health support, trauma recovery, and skill-building that enhance self-reliance and social inclusion. By collaborating with community partners, businesses, and donors, the Foundation fulfills the Partnership and Collaboration priority while fostering women's participation in social, educational, and economic life. Through healing and empowerment, women develop confidence, embrace local values, and contribute meaningfully to Fort McMurray's cultural and social growth.



In the table below, please identify the total number of unique participants that you anticipate will access the funded program, project, service or event.

### Target Population

Age	Target Population
Children (0-12 years)	50
Youth (13-18 years)	250
Adults	700
Seniors (65+)	0
Families	0
Community	0
Total	1000

Please identify the equity deserving population the program, project, service or event will serve.

2SLGBTQIA+, Immigrants, refugees and/or newcomers, Other racialized communities, Women and/or girls



**How does your organization ensure that its programs, projects, services or events are accessible and inclusive for anyone who has an interest? Please share examples and success stories of accessibility and inclusivity.**

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation ensures accessibility and inclusivity through a multi-layered support model that meets women where they are—emotionally, socially, and geographically. All workshops and counseling sessions are free, offered in multiple languages, and hosted in easily accessible community venues. We provide on-site childcare, transportation assistance, and translation services so no woman is left behind.

Inclusivity is central to our design: participants come from over 20 cultural backgrounds, including refugees, single mothers, professionals, and students. We encourage shared learning where each woman's experience adds strength to another's journey. A powerful example is a newcomer mother from Afghanistan who joined a Wellness Circle after years of isolation. With guidance and group support, she started a small catering business and now helps other women pursue their goals.

Our hybrid delivery model also ensures those unable to attend in person can join virtually with full interpreter support. This inclusive framework transforms barriers into bridges, allowing every woman regardless of background or circumstance—to feel seen, supported, and capable of shaping her own future



**If applicable, please explain how your program, project, service or event celebrates Indigenous culture, serves Indigenous communities and/or promotes Indigenous healing, language, cultural restoration, or reconciliation.**

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation promotes reconciliation by helping newcomer and immigrant women build understanding of Indigenous culture, healing traditions, and community values. Many participants arrive unaware of the history of residential schools or the significance of Treaty 8. To address this, our workshops include "Truth and Awareness" sessions led by local Indigenous women who share stories of strength, motherhood, and cultural continuity.

We collaborate with the We Care Unit to hold annual Cultural Connection Circles, where newcomer and Indigenous women exchange experiences around resilience, spirituality, and family. These gatherings create deep mutual empathy many newcomers who have fled war or trauma find comfort in Indigenous approaches to healing, ceremony, and storytelling.

Participants often describe these sessions as transformational, shifting their understanding of Canada from a place of settlement to a shared home built on respect and truth. By weaving Indigenous knowledge into empowerment programming, the Northern Light Sisters Foundation helps women not only rebuild themselves but also contribute to a community that honours both its first peoples and its newest residents.

## Logic Model

**Statement of Need: What social problem or gap do you hope to address by delivering the program, project, service or event? What evidence do you have that this problem or gap exists?**

Hundreds of newcomer and immigrant women settle in Fort McMurray every year, many fleeing war, gender violence, or social oppression. They arrive with deep emotional scars, limited English, and minimal understanding of their rights. The isolation of starting over in a new culture often leads to depression and dependency. There is no dedicated space in the region offering culturally sensitive mental-health and empowerment services designed for these women. The Northern Light Sisters Foundation fills that gap, providing a refuge where women can heal, regain confidence, and learn how to thrive as empowered members of Canadian society.



**Broad Strategy: How will the program, project, service or event address the social problem? (e.g., What approach are you taking that you hope will lead your program, project, service or event to support the social problem?)**

Our model focuses on healing, empowerment, and adaptation. Through trauma-informed counseling, peer-support circles, and practical education, women learn coping skills, boundary-setting, and self-advocacy. Programs integrate the core values of the RMWB equality, volunteerism, and respect so participants internalize these norms while retaining cultural dignity. If women feel secure, heard, and informed, they move from survival to contribution, enriching both family and community life.

**Rationale: What evidence or research do we have that this strategy will work? To demonstrate for example, "If [my organization] does 'x' program, project, service or event, then [this] change will happen for the target population."**

Women and Gender Equality Canada (2024) reports that culturally competent support increases newcomer women's social integration by 45 percent. Our own Empower Her 2024 evaluation found 87 percent of participants regained confidence and 68 percent engaged in volunteering or employment within six months. This demonstrates that mental-health recovery, when paired with empowerment education, creates tangible social advancement.

**Inputs: What resources will be invested to achieve your goal? (e.g., staff labour, venue space, volunteers, computers, etc.)**

Inputs include certified female counselors, career advisors, and volunteers trained in cross-cultural facilitation; safe venues at Markaz Ul Islam and the We Care Unit; and partnerships with Islamic Relief Canada, local donors, and community agencies. Volunteers provide translation, childcare, and mentorship, ensuring full accessibility.

**Activities: What activities make up the program, project, service or event? (e.g., workshops, mentorship sessions, etc.)**

Empower Her Workshops: structured sessions on trauma recovery and self-confidence.

Wellness Circles: group discussions to combat isolation and share coping techniques.

Life in Canada Seminars: guidance on rights, family law, and social services.

Career and Financial Literacy Classes: helping women achieve independence.

Community Engagement Events: fostering intercultural connection and belonging.

**Outputs: What do you deliver? (e.g., # of total participants trained, # of organizations, # of sessions, # of events, etc.). Note, each activity should have outputs.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outputs may be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outputs is required.

During 2026, the Foundation will host 30 workshops, 12 Wellness Circles, 10 career sessions, and 8 community events, reaching more than 1,200 women. Pre- and post-program surveys track confidence, social participation, and employment readiness.

**Outcomes: What change do you want to see for the participants by running your program, project, service or event? Organizations are required to identify at least one outcome, that will be measured through the grant period, should the application be approved.**

Note: If the program, project, service or event is approved, your outcomes will be included in the Grant Agreement and data collection on the outcomes is required.

Expected measurable change includes:

- A 70 percent reduction in self-reported isolation.
- An 80 percent improvement in emotional well-being.
- A 60 percent increase in women pursuing education, volunteering, or employment.

Participants leave with restored dignity, self-reliance, and belonging within RMWB society.



#### What tools will you use to measure the outcomes of the program, project, service or event?

Note: If your organization is approved for funding, copies of the measurement tools selected will be requested.

Surveys, Focus Groups, Interviews, Observation

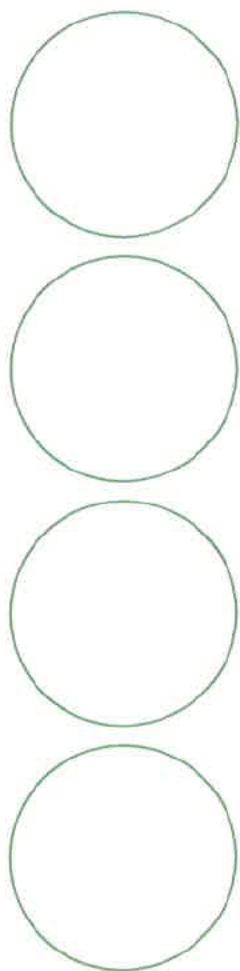
#### Please provide details of how your program, project, service or event differs from other services being offered in the community.

The Northern Light Sisters Foundation is not merely a women's group—it is a sanctuary of transformation. While others provide generic settlement help, we address the silent trauma and identity loss that many newcomer women face. Our holistic model mental health, empowerment, and adaptation—makes us the only organization in Fort McMurray where women can heal from the past and fully embrace their future with confidence and pride

#### This grant is intended to promote an allied social profit sector within the Municipality. List the community groups or organizations that will be actively involved in the program, project, service or event delivery.

Community Organization or Group	Role
Wood Buffalo Multicultural Association	Strategic partner promoting cultural understanding and newcomer engagement; collaborates on events that celebrate diversity and build social unity.
Sister in Cancer YMM	Partner in supporting women battling illness through emotional well-being and community solidarity initiatives.
CIRSA (Refugee & Newcomer Support Agency)	Partner in supporting refugees and immigrants' adaptation through joint workshops, counseling referrals, and cultural orientation sessions.
Girls Inc. of Northern Alberta	Collaborative partner in women's empowerment and mental wellness programs; engages in mentorship and educational sessions on leadership, confidence, and community participation.
Arts Council Wood Buffalo	Partner in promoting multicultural expression; supports art-based community events that strengthen belonging, diversity, and cultural awareness.
Centre of Hope	Partner in outreach to vulnerable and homeless populations; collaborates with We Care Unit during cold snaps, fires, and floods to provide supplies, emotional support, and wellness programming.





# STRATEGIC PLAN

2025-2026 Markaz Ul Islam

Strengthening Community, Enhancing Well-Being, and  
Promoting Cultural Unity in the Wood Buffalo Region



# Financial Overview & Budget Allocation

Markaz Ul Islam's Comprehensive  
Community Outreach Programs

Total Project Budget: 1,250,000\$

2026

# Comments and Notes:

## **Funding Allocation:**

The budget is distributed across three major programs: the We Care Unit, United Youth Association, and Northern Light Sisters Foundation, each serving unique community needs.

## **Funding Sources:**

Each program is funded by a combination of grants, fundraising, sponsorship, donations, and in-kind support.

## **Focus Areas:**

Emphasis is placed on direct service delivery, awareness initiatives, cultural integration, and community building.

# We Care Unit Program:

Expense Category	Description	Amount	Funding Source
<b>Staffing</b>	Salaries for counselors and support staff	\$510,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Program Materials</b>	Educational materials, brochures, and outreach	\$50,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Facility Rental</b>	Space for workshops and sessions	\$10,000	Grants
<b>Training &amp; Development</b>	Staff training on mental health best practices	\$20,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Marketing &amp; Outreach</b>	Awareness campaigns for mental health	\$25,000	Fundraising
<b>Emergency Resources</b>	Supplies for crisis situations (food, hygiene kits)	\$80,000	Donations, Fundraising
<b>Technology &amp; Equipment</b>	Computers, software for virtual sessions	\$65,000	Grants
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	Office supplies, utilities, etc.	\$40,000	Fundraising

**Subtotal****\$800,000****Note:**

The We Care Unit's budget covers mental health initiatives, critical crisis response

# United Youth Association

Expense Category	Description	Amount	Funding Source
	resources, and training for community support staff.		
<b>Youth Program Staffing</b>	Part-time program facilitators	\$65,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Events &amp; Activities</b>	Youth workshops, leadership events, recreational outings	\$55,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Transportation</b>	Rental costs for buses, fuel	\$25,000	Grants, Fundraising
<b>Supplies</b>	Sports equipment, arts and crafts materials	\$20,000	Donations
<b>Marketing</b>	Outreach and promotions to recruit youth	\$15,000	Sponsorship
<b>Refreshments</b>	Snacks and meals during youth events	\$15,000	Donations
<b>Administrative Costs</b>	Operational expenses	\$5,000	Sponsorship
<b>Subtotal</b>		<b>\$200,000</b>	

**Note:**

This allocation enables United Youth Association to facilitate impactful activities, ensuring youth development through hands-on engagement, leadership skills, and mentorship.

# Northern Light Sisters Foundation

Expense Category	Description	Amount	Funding Source
Program Staffing	Part-time program coordinators	\$65,000	CFEP, In-Kind Support
Women's Programs	Workshops, empowerment sessions, cultural events	\$45,000	Grants, Fundraising
Childcare Services	Cultural program supplies, educational materials	\$16,000	Grants, Fundraising
Marketing & Outreach	Community outreach for women's services	\$8,000	Grants, Fundraising
Transportation Assistance	Travel reimbursements for low-income participants	\$8,000	Grants, Fundraising
Administrative Costs	Office supplies, utilities, etc.	\$8,000	CFEP
Subtotal		\$150,000	

**Note:**

Funding for the Northern Light Sisters Foundation addresses key areas of community and women's empowerment, cultural integration, and accessibility through supportive services such as childcare.

Shared Operations    Facility, evaluation, outreach.    \$100,000

# Attention: Key Considerations

## ● **Cost Management:**

The budget reflects a strategic approach to ensure sustainable service delivery while leveraging diverse funding sources.

## ● **Targeted Impact:**

Each allocation is carefully designed to maximize the impact on the target populations by focusing on essential areas, including mental health, youth development, and cultural support.

## ● **In-Kind Support:**

A substantial amount of in-kind support will be utilized, particularly within the Northern Light Sisters Foundation, showcasing strong community involvement and buy-in.





CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL  
IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE  
SUPPORT ASSOCIATION  
FORT McMURRAY BRANCH

206 10020 FRANKLIN AVE  
FORT McMURRAY, AB  
T9H 2K6

Email: [ciirsafortmcmurray@ciirsa.ca](mailto:ciirsafortmcmurray@ciirsa.ca)

Phone: (587) 276-0011

Community Investment Program  
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo

Re: Letter of Support and Partnership for Markaz Ul Islam and the We Care Unit

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of CIRSA, I am pleased to extend our strong support for the We Care Unit at Markaz Ul Islam. As an organization dedicated to supporting refugees and newcomers, we have seen the We Care Unit consistently provide critical resources and a welcoming environment for individuals and families newly arriving in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The We Care Unit has established itself as one of the first places newcomers turn to for support. From orientation sessions to counselling and resource navigation, they ensure that people feel safe, comfortable, and truly welcomed in the region. Their staff and volunteers understand the unique challenges faced by refugees and immigrants, including cultural adjustment, social isolation, and the effects of trauma, and respond with empathy, dignity, and practical assistance.

Through collaborative programs, joint community events, and ongoing outreach, the We Care Unit plays a key role in building bridges between newcomers and the wider community. This not only supports settlement but also strengthens inclusivity and belonging in Fort McMurray. Their commitment ensures that every newcomer has a place where they feel understood and valued.

We recognize the We Care Unit as a vital partner and commend their unwavering efforts to improve the lives of refugees and newcomers in the Wood Buffalo region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Qudsia Karimi', is written over a light blue horizontal line.

Qudsia Karimi  
President of CIIRSA Fort McMurray Chapter  
Canadian International Immigrant and Refugee Support Association (CIIRSA)

CANADIAN INTERNATIONAL IMMIGRANT & REFUGEE SUPPORT ASSOCIATION HEAD OFFICE

10584-107 STREET, EDMONTON, ALBERTA, CANADA T5H 2Y6 • Email: [CIIRSAEdmonton@ciirsa.ca](mailto:CIIRSAEdmonton@ciirsa.ca) • Phone: (780) 429-4553 • Fax: (780) 424-5961



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*Supporting individuals living in homelessness through collaboration with the community and its support systems*

**Date: October 1, 2025**

To Whom it May Concern:

On behalf of the Centre of Hope, I am writing to express our strong support for the We Care Unit at Markaz Ul Islam. The Centre of Hope has long been a place of comfort and support for the most vulnerable members of our community, and in this mission, we have found a committed ally in the We Care Unit.

The We Care Unit consistently demonstrates leadership by stepping forward whenever there is a need whether during a cold snap, wildfire, or flooding. Their team has always been among the first to respond, providing assistance, comfort, and dignity to individuals and families in crisis. This readiness to act and willingness to serve makes the We Care Unit a unique and invaluable asset in Fort McMurray.

Their volunteers are tireless, well-prepared, and motivated by genuine compassion. The level of commitment they bring to our community is rare, and their ability to mobilize resources quickly ensures that no one is left behind in times of difficulty.

We believe the We Care Unit is a cornerstone in building resilience, unity, and hope in our region. Their work complements and strengthens our own, ensuring that Fort McMurray continues to be a place where the most vulnerable can feel safe, supported, and valued.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rosie Keating". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter of each word being capitalized and prominent.

**Rosie Keating**

Executive Director

Cell: 780-838-6846

[execdirector@fmcentreofhope.com](mailto:execdirector@fmcentreofhope.com)

CHIPEWYAN PRAIRIE FIRST NATION  
GENERAL DELIVERY CHARD, AB T0P 1G0  
PH: 1-780-559-2259  
FAX: 1-780-559-2213



September 30th, 2025

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of the Chipewyan Prairie First Nation and the Janvier community, I am writing to offer our full support for the We Care Unit at Markaz Ul Islam. For years, the We Care Unit has been a trusted partner and a place of welcome for our members, providing comfort, support, and understanding whenever it was most needed.

The We Care Unit has always stood with our Nation, whether by supporting our land-based programs or extending its services to our families. When our community faced displacement during the wildfires, the Centre became a safe place where our members were treated with dignity and compassion. These moments of solidarity have left a lasting impact and built a deep trust between our Nation and the We Care Unit.

The Centre remains a rare space in the RMWB where Indigenous and newcomer communities come together to learn, share, and heal. This bridge-building is invaluable in creating resilience and ensuring that our people feel both welcomed and supported.

We recognize the We Care Unit as a unique and vital partner for the Chipewyan Prairie First Nation and the Janvier community. Their ongoing efforts to support Indigenous families, preserve culture, and stand alongside us in times of crisis demonstrate why their continued funding and sustainability is essential.

Sincerely,

*Mandy Mannix*

Mandy Mannix

CHIPEWYAN PRAIRIE FIRST NATION  
GENERAL DELIVERY CHARD, AB T0P 1G0  
PH: 1-780-559-2259  
FAX: 1-780-559-2213



READY TO ANSWER THE CALL

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Islamic Relief Canada, I am proud to provide this letter of support for Markaz Ul Islam and it's We Care Unit. As a national organization committed to advancing social justice, equity, and community development, we have partnered with the We Care Unit since 2016. Over this time, we have invested more than \$500,000 into their programs, making them our sole and trusted partner in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo.

The We Care Unit has demonstrated outstanding leadership in fostering inclusion, promoting equality, and addressing the mental health and social needs of vulnerable populations. Their programs go beyond immediate support by building resilience, reducing isolation, and creating spaces where newcomers, Indigenous communities, and long-standing residents can come together in a spirit of unity.

Importantly, the We Care Unit has been at the forefront of truth and reconciliation efforts in Treaty 8 territory, ensuring that awareness of Indigenous history and struggles is integrated into their work. This commitment to education and bridge-building reflects the values of Islamic Relief and underscores the national significance of their contributions.

We are proud to stand alongside Markaz Ul Islam and the We Care Unit in this mission, and we strongly endorse their continued funding and sustainability through the Community Investment Program. Their work is essential not only for the Muslim community but for the entire region of Wood Buffalo. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me at **[mujahid.ahmed@islamicreliefcanada.org](mailto:mujahid.ahmed@islamicreliefcanada.org)** or **778-836-4922**.

Sincerely,  
Mujahid Ahmed  
Regional Manager – Northern Alberta



## Public Engagement

chantal.beaver@keyano.ca



587-646-3346



8115 Franklin Avenue  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2H7



Keyano.ca



Date: 2025-09-30

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of Keyano College, I am pleased to support the We Care Unit at Markaz-ul-Islam in its application for funding from the RMWB Community Investment Program. We view the We Care Unit as a partner in connecting students, families, and community to address pressing social issues, including youth volunteerism, community collaboration, newcomer integration, and cultural bridge-building.

At the core of the We Care Unit is their commitment to "Collaborate .... to broaden the reach of available resources."<sup>1</sup> This was demonstrated recently through an impressive collaborative effort to ensure that all youth in the region returned to school equipped with backpacks of supplies, relieving families, including Keyano College students who are balancing being parents, of the associated costs. Such initiatives demonstrate the Unit's stated focus on vulnerable populations and Markaz-ul-Islam's ongoing contributions to Wood Buffalo, not only enhancing the lives of individuals but also helping forge a stronger, healthier, and more united community.

Sincerely,

Sincerely,

A stylized, handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Chantal Beaver".

Chantal Beaver

Associate Vice President, Public Engagement

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<sup>1</sup> <https://markazulislam.com/index.php/we-care-unit/>





**MULTICULTURAL ASSOCIATION  
OF WOOD BUFFALO**

October 6, 2025

**Subject: Letter of Support and Partnership for the We Care Unit**

On behalf of the Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo (MCA), I am pleased to provide this letter of support for the We Care Unit at Markaz Ul Islam. With a membership of over 7,000 individuals representing diverse cultural backgrounds, MCA recognizes the We Care Unit as a critical asset in advancing inclusion, cultural awareness, and community resilience across the region.

The We Care Unit provides programs and services that directly complement MCA's mission to foster cross-cultural understanding and build a welcoming community for all. Their initiatives—including youth leadership development, newcomer settlement support, women's empowerment programs, Indigenous awareness sessions, and large-scale community events—create safe spaces where people from all walks of life can connect, learn, and grow together.

What makes the We Care Unit unique in the RMWB is not only its reach of over 10,000 community members annually but also its ability to bridge gaps across cultures and faiths. Their team and volunteers consistently provide programming that combats isolation, reduces discrimination, and builds a strong sense of belonging for newcomers, long-term residents, and vulnerable populations alike.

As a committed partner, MCA acknowledges the We Care Unit's leadership role in uniting communities and ensuring that the region continues to thrive on values of inclusion, equity, and mutual respect. We strongly endorse the We Care Unit for the CIP Grant and are confident that their continued success will amplify the positive impact for all cultural groups in Wood Buffalo.

Thank you for your attention to this matter. If you require any additional information or have any questions, please do not hesitate to email me at [executivedirector@mcawb.org](mailto:executivedirector@mcawb.org) or call us at 780-791-5186.

Warm Regards,

*Muna Ali*

Muna Ali  
Executive Director  
Multicultural Association of Wood Buffalo

[www.mcawb.org](http://www.mcawb.org)

780.791.5186

P.O Box 5298

Fort McMurray AB, T9H 3G3



Re: Letter of Support and Partnership for Markaz UI Islam and the We Care Unit

To Whom It May Concern,

On behalf of Sister in Cancer YMM, I am honored to extend our strong support for the We Care Unit at Markaz UI Islam. Our organization works daily with women and families affected by cancer, and we deeply value partners who create safe, inclusive, and compassionate spaces for those facing hardship. The We Care Unit has consistently been that partner in Fort McMurray.

The We Care Unit stands out for its ability to mobilize volunteers, resources, and culturally sensitive programming that meets people where they are. Whether during times of illness, natural disaster, or personal struggle, their doors remain open, offering not only practical support but also a sense of dignity and belonging. This work has directly benefited members of our community who needed a place to feel understood and supported through their journey.

The collaboration between Sister in Cancer YMM and the We Care Unit demonstrates the power of unity. Their programs addressing women's empowerment, mental health, and family resilience complement our mission of supporting women's well-being, and together, we foster a community that is stronger, more compassionate, and inclusive.

We wholeheartedly recognize the We Care Unit as an essential resource in our region and a unique asset for building resilience among vulnerable groups.

Sincerely,

Sundas Shamshad  
Founder/ ED  
Sister In Cancer YMM



October 2, 2025

Community Investment Program  
Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo  
9909 Franklin Ave  
Fort McMurray, AB T9H 2K4

**Re: Markaz-Ul-Islam Community Centre Community Investment Program Application**

To Whom it May Concern.

As the MLAs for the Fort McMurray region, we are writing to express our support for the Markaz-Ul-Islam Community Centre's Community Investment Program Application.

Markaz-Ul-Islam initiated the "We Care Unit" in 2016, to serve the collective well-being of Wood Buffalo, increasing resiliency and cultural inclusivity while providing supports to families and residents regardless of race or religion. Since inception, the We Care Unit has been making a remarkable positive impact in our area, providing evacuee shelter and support, hosting food bank and school supply drives, children's wellness programs, summer camps and the Empower Her program.

Should Markaz-Ul-Islam be successful in their application, they intend to utilize the funding to sustain operation of the We Care Unit, facilitating access to mental health supports through counselling, youth mentorship, family and community wellness programming. Serving over 6,000 Muslim members and 20,000 community-wide participants, the We Care Unit fosters collaboration, unity and hope within our diverse, multicultural region.

As the MLAs for the Fort McMurray region, we hope that our support for the Markaz-Ul-Islam Community Centre's application meets your approval. Should you wish to discuss this application further, please do not hesitate to reach out to our office.

Sincerely,

**Brian Jean, MLA, KC, ECA**  
Fort McMurray – Lac La Biche  
Minister of Energy and Minerals  
Phone: 780.588.7979  
Email: [fortmcmurray.laclabiche@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:fortmcmurray.laclabiche@assembly.ab.ca)

**Tany Yao, MLA**  
Fort McMurray – Wood Buffalo  
Parliamentary Secretary for Small Business and  
Northern Development  
Phone: 780.790.6014  
Email: [fortmcmurray.woodbuffalo@assembly.ab.ca](mailto:fortmcmurray.woodbuffalo@assembly.ab.ca)

**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**  
**Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2024**

**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**  
**Index to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2024**

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## **INDEPENDENT PRACTITIONER'S REVIEW ENGAGEMENT REPORT**

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To the Members of Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray

We have reviewed the accompanying financial statements of Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray (the organization) that comprise the statement of financial position as at December 31, 2024, and the statements of operations, changes in fund balances and cash flows for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

### *Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements*

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO), and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

### *Practitioner's Responsibility*

Our responsibility is to express a conclusion on the accompanying financial statements based on our review. We conducted our review in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements, which require us to comply with relevant ethical requirements.

A review of financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted standards for review engagements is a limited assurance engagement. The practitioner performs procedures, primarily consisting of making inquiries of management and others within the entity, as appropriate, and applying analytical procedures, and evaluates the evidence obtained.

The procedures performed in a review are substantially less in extent than, and vary in nature from, those performed in an audit conducted in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Accordingly, we do not express an audit opinion on these financial statements.

### *Basis for Qualified Conclusion*

In common with many not-for-profit organizations, the organization derives revenue from fundraising and donation activities, the completeness of which is not susceptible to verification through evidence we considered necessary for the purpose of our review. Accordingly, the evidence obtained of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the organization. Therefore, we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to fundraising and donation revenue, excess of revenues over expenditures, and cash flows from operations for the year ended December 31, 2024, current assets and net assets as at December 31, 2024.

(continues)



Independent Practitioner's Review Engagement Report to the Members of Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray *(continued)*

*Qualified Conclusion*

Based on our review, except for the possible effects of the matter described in the *Basis for Qualified Conclusion* paragraph, nothing has come to our attention that causes us to believe that the financial statements do not present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray as at December 31, 2024, and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO).

*Other Matter*

The financial statements of Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray for the year ended December 31, 2023 were compiled and are presented for comparative purposes only.

Calgary , Alberta  
April 10, 2025



Abbadi Professional Corporation  
Chartered Professional Accountant

MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY  
Statement of Financial Position  
December 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	General Fund	Capital Fund	2024	2023
<b>ASSETS</b>				
<b>CURRENT</b>				
Cash (Note 2)	\$ 788,151	\$ 2,356,380	\$ 3,144,531	\$ 2,361,161
Accounts receivable (Note 3)	84,172	-	84,172	41,724
Security deposits	500	-	500	500
	872,823	2,356,380	3,229,203	2,403,385
Capital assets (Net) (Note 4)	-	25,170,789	25,170,789	23,840,101
	\$ 872,823	\$ 27,527,169	\$ 28,399,992	\$ 26,243,486
<b>LIABILITIES</b>				
<b>CURRENT</b>				
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities (Note 5)	\$ 44,325	\$ -	\$ 44,325	\$ 48,140
Due to members (Note 6)	375,200	-	375,200	582,200
Other current liability	2,433	-	2,433	7,387
	421,958	-	421,958	637,727
<b>FUND BALANCES</b>				
Unrestricted funds	174,428	-	174,428	1,734,318
Restricted funds	-	27,803,606	27,803,606	23,871,441
	174,428	27,803,606	27,978,034	25,605,759
	\$ 596,386	\$ 27,803,606	\$ 28,399,992	\$ 26,243,486

Approved on behalf of the Board  
*Abdulghani Alido* President  
*Yusuf Younis* VP Treasury

**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**

**Statement of Operations**

**Year ended December 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023**

	General Fund 2024	Capital Fund 2024	2024 2024	2023 2023
<b>REVENUES</b>				
Donation and fundraising	\$ 1,026,318	\$ 1,155,278	\$ 2,181,596	\$ 2,358,590
Global fundraising (Note 8)	-	1,367,230	1,367,230	-
Government grants (Note 7)	403,000	-	403,000	26,423
Memberships	104,902	-	104,902	119,627
Rental revenue	76,219	-	76,219	46,939
	1,610,439	2,522,508	4,132,947	2,551,579
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>				
Amortization (Note 4)	-	432,418	432,418	449,591
Salaries and wages	398,503	-	398,503	413,755
Donations	153,149	-	153,149	200,719
Community events activities	152,100	-	152,100	132,229
General and administrative expenses	143,576	-	143,576	35,021
Utilities	-	101,412	101,412	145,548
Advertising and promotion	81,077	-	81,077	13,271
Professional fees	74,470	-	74,470	6,623
Repairs and maintenance	1,960	64,405	66,365	97,568
Expenditures on charitable activities	54,561	-	54,561	90,299
Rental expenses	52,722	-	52,722	14,720
Insurance	40,978	-	40,978	41,617
Interest and bank charges	18,180	-	18,180	25,681
Other building expenses	-	5,512	5,512	13,724
	1,171,276	603,747	1,775,023	1,680,366
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES FROM OPERATIONS</b>	439,163	1,918,761	2,357,924	871,213
<b>OTHER INCOME</b>	947	13,404	14,351	5,933
<b>EXCESS OF REVENUES OVER EXPENDITURES</b>	\$ 440,110	\$ 1,932,165	\$ 2,372,275	\$ 877,146

MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY  
Statement of Changes in Fund Balances  
Year ended December 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023

	General Fund Unrestricted	General Fund Restricted	Capital Fund Restricted	Total 2024	Total 2023
<b>FUND BALANCES - BEGINNING OF YEAR</b>					
Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$ 1,734,318	\$ -	\$ 23,871,441	\$ 25,605,759	\$ 24,728,613
Interfund transfers (Notes 7, 8)	506,518	(66,408)	1,932,165	2,372,275	877,146
	(2,066,408)	66,408	2,000,000	-	-
<b>FUND BALANCES - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 174,428</b>	<b>\$ -</b>	<b>\$ 27,803,606</b>	<b>\$ 27,978,034</b>	<b>\$ 25,605,759</b>

**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**

**Statement of Cash Flows**

**Year ended December 31, 2024, with comparative information for 2023**

	2024	2023
<b>OPERATING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Excess of revenues over expenditures	\$ 2,372,275	\$ 877,146
Item not affecting cash:		
Amortization of capital assets	432,418	449,591
	<u>2,804,693</u>	<u>1,326,737</u>
Changes in non-cash working capital:		
Accounts receivable	(42,448)	2,140
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	(4,425)	(21,114)
Employee deductions payable	610	425
Other current liability	(4,953)	(327)
	<u>(51,216)</u>	<u>(18,876)</u>
Cash flow from operating activities	<u>2,753,477</u>	<u>1,307,861</u>
<b>INVESTING ACTIVITIES</b>		
Purchase of capital assets	(1,763,107)	(144,698)
Advances from members	(207,000)	(218,200)
	<u>(1,970,107)</u>	<u>(362,898)</u>
Cash flow used by investing activities		
<b>INCREASE IN CASH FLOW</b>	<b>783,370</b>	<b>944,963</b>
Cash - beginning of year	<b>2,361,161</b>	<b>1,416,198</b>
<b>CASH - END OF YEAR</b>	<b>\$ 3,144,531</b>	<b>\$ 2,361,161</b>

**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**  
**Notes to Financial Statements**  
**Year Ended December 31, 2024**

**1. PURPOSE OF THE ORGANIZATION**

Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray (the "organization") is a not-for-profit organization of Alberta on March 15, 1983. As a registered charity the organization is exempt from the payment of income tax under Subsection 149(1) of the Income Tax Act. The organization operates two Masjids and provides a range of religious, educational, and community support services to the community of Fort McMurray. Its activities include organizing daily prayers, religious events, educational programs, and community outreach initiatives. The registered office is located at 9904 Gordon Avenue, Fort McMurray AB T9H 2E2.

**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES**

The financial statements were prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations (ASNPO) and include the following significant accounting policies:

Cash and cash equivalents

The organization's policy is to present bank balances and term deposits with a maturity period of three months or less from the date of acquisition under cash and cash equivalents. Bank balances include cash on hand, chequing accounts, savings accounts, and cash common share accounts.

Capital assets

Capital assets are stated at cost or deemed cost less accumulated amortization and are amortized over their estimated useful lives on a declining balance basis at the following rates and methods:

Land	N/A	non-amortizable
Buildings	50 years	straight-line method
Construction in progress	N/A	non-amortizable
Equipment	5 - 10 years	straight-line method
Computer equipment	5 years	straight-line method
Furniture and fixtures	5 years	straight-line method

The organization regularly reviews its capital assets to eliminate obsolete items and determine any impairment.

Measurement uncertainty

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amount of assets and liabilities, disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the period. Such estimates are periodically reviewed and any adjustments necessary are reported in earnings in the period in which they become known. Actual results could differ from these estimates.

Significant areas of estimation include estimated useful lives of capital assets and accounts payable and accrued liabilities.

Fund accounting

Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

The General Fund accounts for the organization's program delivery and administrative activities. This fund reports unrestricted resources and restricted operating grants.

The Capital Asset Fund reports the assets, liabilities, revenues and expenses related to the organization's capital assets and building expansion campaign.

*(continues)*



**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY**

**Notes to Financial Statements**

**Year Ended December 31, 2024**

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**2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (*continued*)**

Revenue recognition

Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

Restricted contributions related to general operations are recognized as revenue of the General Fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. All other restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate restricted fund.

Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the General Fund in the year received or receivable if the amount to be received can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Memberships and rent are recognized as revenue of the General fund in the year they are earned.

Goods and services tax

Contributed materials and services are recoverable at 50% as a rebate. The unrecoverable portion is recorded as an expense with the rebate treated as a receivable.

Leases

Leases are classified as either capital or operating leases. The organization does not have any capital leases. Rental payments under operating leases are expensed as incurred.

Contributed services

The organization depends on volunteers who contribute their time to support its charitable activities. Since the fair value of these contributed services cannot be reasonably determined, they are not recognized in the financial statements.

Government grants

Government grants are recorded when there is a reasonable assurance that the organization had complied with and will continue to comply with, all the necessary conditions to obtain the grants.

Financial instruments

Financial instruments are recorded at fair value when acquired or issued. In subsequent periods, financial assets with actively traded markets are reported at fair value, with any unrealized gains and losses reported in income. All other financial instruments are reported at amortized cost, and tested for impairment at each reporting date. Transaction costs on the acquisition, sale, or issue of financial instruments are expensed when incurred.

Financial assets measured at amortized cost using the straight-line method include cash, term deposits, and other receivables,

Financial liabilities measured at amortized cost using the straight-line method include accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and amounts due to members.

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**MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT MCMURRAY****Notes to Financial Statements****Year Ended December 31, 2024****3. ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE**

	2024	2023
Accounts receivable	\$ 31,626	\$ 31,153
GST receivable	52,546	10,571
	<u>\$ 84,172</u>	<u>\$ 41,724</u>

**4. CAPITAL ASSETS**

	Cost	Accumulated amortization	2024 Net book value	2023 Net book value
Land	\$ 5,256,417	\$ -	\$ 5,256,417	\$ 5,256,417
Buildings	20,898,232	2,879,609	18,018,623	18,436,588
Construction in progress	1,893,413	-	1,893,413	130,306
Equipment	93,980	91,643	2,337	16,790
Computer equipment	5,391	5,391	-	-
Furniture and fixtures	14,390	14,390	-	-
	<u>\$ 28,161,823</u>	<u>\$ 2,991,033</u>	<u>\$ 25,170,790</u>	<u>\$ 23,840,101</u>

The \$1,893,413 in construction costs for the Islamic Center building are not being depreciated as the asset remains under construction.

**5. ACCOUNTS PAYABLE**

	2024	2023
Accounts payable	\$ 25,414	\$ 38,244
Accrued liabilities	11,275	2,870
Employee deductions payable	7,636	7,026
	<u>\$ 44,325</u>	<u>\$ 48,140</u>

**6. DUE TO MEMBERS**

	2024	2023
Interest-free loans from members	<u>\$ 375,200</u>	<u>\$ 582,200</u>

The amounts due to members are non-interest bearing and have no set repayment terms. These interest-free loans from members are used to support the organization's construction of the Fort McMurray Islamic Center and are payable on demand. During 2024, Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray repaid \$307,000 and obtained a new loan of \$100,000 from members.

## MARKAZ-UL-ISLAM CONGREGATION OF FORT McMURRAY

### Notes to Financial Statements

Year Ended December 31, 2024

#### 7. GOVERNMENT GRANTS AND INTERFUND TRANSFERS

##### Government Grants

In January 2024, Markaz-UL-Islam Congregation of Fort McMurray entered into a one-year Community Sustaining Grant agreement with the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo to deliver mental health and community support services within the Wood Buffalo community. During the fiscal year, the organization received three grant installments totaling \$403,000, restricted exclusively to the 'We Care Unit' program. All grant funds were fully utilized in 2024.

##### Interfund Transfers

During the year, the Board of Directors authorized the following fund transfers:

*General Fund:* The 'We Care Unit' program received additional support through \$77,865 in designated donations and a 66,408 inter-fund transfer. To address a funding shortfall and ensure program continuity, management authorized the transfer of \$66,408 from unrestricted general fund resources to internally restricted funds, in compliance with organizational financial policies.

*Capital Fund:* The Board approved a fund transfer of \$2,000,000 from the general fund to the capital fund, designated for the Islamic Center, major renovation projects, and the purchase of capital assets. As at December 31, 2024, the balance of the restricted capital fund was \$27,803,606.

#### 8. INTERNATIONAL FUNDRAISING OF RESTRICTED CAPITAL FUND

In 2024, the organization received a restricted contribution of from Sheikh Abdullah Al Nouri Charity Society, a charitable organization based in Kuwait. The funds were received on May 8, 2024, via wire transfer through the Embassy of Kuwait. This contribution is restricted for the construction of classrooms on the first floor of the Fort McMurray Islamic Centre (FMIC), as approved by the organization's Board of Directors. The funds have been allocated to the restricted capital fund and are solely dedicated to the Islamic Centre project.

#### 9. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

The organization is exposed to various risks through its financial instruments, without being exposed to concentrations of risk. The following analysis describes the organization's risk exposure as at December 31, 2024.

##### Credit risk

Credit risk arises from the possibility that a counterparty may fail to fulfill its obligations. The organization is exposed to credit risk related to accounts receivable and grants receivable.

##### Liquidity risk

Liquidity risk is the risk that the organization will encounter difficulty in meeting its financial obligations. The organization is primarily exposed to this risk in respect of its receipt of funds from its customers and other related sources, as well as amounts due to members, accounts payable, accrued liabilities, and other current liabilities.