



PHOENIX  
SOCIETY

# Annual Report 2023-24

*Elevate Impact*



## TERRITORIAL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Our work takes place on the beautiful, unceded, and ancestral lands of the Coast Salish peoples, including the Sto:lo Nation and the diverse First Nations of the Fraser Salish region. We honor their enduring stewardship and deep connection to this land since time immemorial, including the treaty lands that recognize their rights and history. At Phoenix Society, we embrace the spirit of community and the wisdom of Indigenous cultures as we provide programs and services that address the social determinants of health. We strive for health equity and social justice for underserved and marginalized populations. With gratitude, we acknowledge the privilege of working, living, and growing in these sacred territories.



## A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

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**Our achievements this year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our senior leadership, staff, partners and funders.**

The past year at Phoenix has been an exciting and important one. As the new board chair, it has been a privilege to see caring people working cooperatively to achieve the highest quality of service. And it's been an even greater honour to see service recipients pursue individual goals, improve their well-being, and create meaningful relationships in their community.

One key milestone of the past year was the process to develop Phoenix's new strategic plan. The plan will help us navigate changing contexts and landscapes. By prioritizing the quality of our care, continuing to develop our people and culture; improving our technology, systems and infrastructure; and engaging community members and partners to amplify our impact, we will strengthen our capacity to take bold and innovative action to expand our reach.

This year also marked Justine Patterson's first full year as CEO. Her leadership has been invaluable through many significant transitions, including staff unionization. I also commend her, the leadership team and every member of the Phoenix staff for their work in achieving an excellent evaluation through CARF accreditation. This accomplishment positions us to chart a course for sustainable growth and excellence.

Looking ahead, we are acutely aware of the challenges and opportunities in our sector and our communities at large. Because of the housing crisis, the ongoing toxic drug supply crisis and persistent stigmatization of substance use, it is incumbent on us to continue promoting the social determinants of health. Everyone deserves to live free from discrimination and stigma; to be treated according to their innate value, no matter their circumstances.

Our achievements this year would not have been possible without the unwavering support of our senior leadership, staff, partners and funders, who make this work possible. I also want to extend my deepest gratitude to Pat Frewer and David Longpre for their contributions as they prepare to step down from the board.

Lastly, we owe our foundation to the Wilsons, whose vision and dedication started Phoenix on this incredible journey. As we continue to elevate our work and impact, we remain ever-mindful of our roots and the collective effort that they long established to propel us forward.

Darren Fairbrother



## A MESSAGE FROM THE CEO

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**Together, we are elevating Phoenix to new standards, ensuring we remain adaptable, innovative, and centered on the needs of our community.**

Over the last 12 months, we have made significant progress in elevating the quality of care we provide. We invested in our teams and worked to ensure that our approaches remain evidence-based. We have focused on capacity building and strengthening our internal infrastructure to better support staff. And we implemented new policies and procedures to improve consistency across programs and services.

Achieving our CARF accreditation was a significant milestone for Phoenix this year, validating our emphasis on internal infrastructure and embedding a living culture of excellence. This recognition reinforces our confidence to innovate and advocate for emergent needs, knowing we are trusted to deliver high-quality care.

Our 2024-2029 Strategic Plan for Phoenix Society is a bold and transformative initiative designed to elevate our impact and deepen our connection with the communities we serve. Anchored in our commitment to compassionate, evidence-based care and social justice, this plan will drive us to refine and expand our services, strengthen our organizational culture, and embrace innovative solutions.

It was also an encouraging year for new and enhanced programming, including the addition of much-needed specialized substance-use care for youth and young adults. And our exciting new housing project at Trethewey and Rowat Avenues in Chilliwack will further address critical gaps and community needs along the housing continuum. No matter how we evolve organizationally, we will do so with individual service recipients' needs in mind. We are at our best when we place the service recipient at the centre, orienting our efforts to support their pursuit of the life they want to have.

I want to extend my gratitude to our board, senior leadership, staff and partners for their dedication and support. Together, we are elevating Phoenix to new standards, ensuring we remain adaptable, innovative, and centered on the needs of our community. I look forward to implementing the goals in our new strategic plan, together, as we lean into our priorities with energy and clarity.

Most of all, I want to thank service recipients and their families for trusting us as partners in their care and well-being. By staying curious and affirming people just as they are, we can facilitate opportunities and provide resources for them to pursue their best possible future.

Justine Patterson

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**Darren Fairbrother**  
Board President



**Nancy Gordon**  
Board Vice Chair



**Bonnie Wilson**  
Board Secretary



**Elaine Duvall**  
Board Treasurer



**Pat Frewer**  
Board Member



**Jag Gill**  
Board Member



**David Longpre**  
Board Member

## LEADERSHIP



**Justine Patterson**  
Chief Executive Officer



**Trudi Shymka**  
Chief Operating Officer



**Kim Brazil**  
Chief Financial Officer



**Terri Chanyungco**  
Director, Operations



**Kasimir Kish**  
Director, Housing and Programs



**Munir Velji**  
Director, Practice and Standards



**Jeremy DeRoche**  
Director, Mental Health and Substance Use



**Dr. Ashok Krishnamoorthy**  
Medical Director

*This team is looking forward to leading Phoenix in the next fiscal year.*

## ABOUT PHOENIX

Phoenix Society offers support to address, recover from, or reduce harms from substance use, as well as housing, health care, education and employment, and community inclusion support for people who may or may not be living with substance-use challenges. We prioritize the social determinants of health, applying the principles of health equity and social justice for underserved and marginalized populations.

## MISSION

Phoenix Society is a multi-service agency dedicated to providing accessible services and opportunities to people who face barriers related to substance use, mental health, housing, education, criminal justice involvement and/or employment.

## VISION

A healthy community where all people feel connected and have opportunities to discover and build on their strengths to reach their full potential.

## VALUES

The values that ground us are:

- Social Justice: facilitating equal access to health, well-being, wealth and opportunity
- Relationships: building on safety, trust, and integrity
- Social Innovation: leading to individual and community well-being
- Strengths-Based: discovering and nurturing the strengths within our community

## Elevating Our Impact: Celebrating Key Milestones and Achievements

Phoenix Society offers equitable access to holistic care so individuals can lead healthy lives. This includes support for people who use substances, people living with complex health challenges like HIV, people involved with the criminal justice system, and people who are currently unhoused or who were previously unhoused. Whether service recipients are dealing with one or more of these circumstances, Phoenix seeks a deep understanding of the experience of service recipients and engages them at their point of readiness.

### 2023-24 HIGHLIGHTS

#### CARF accreditation

Phoenix proudly achieved a 3-year accreditation from the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF), significantly elevating the quality and consistency of our services. Notably, this year's review resulted in a substantial reduction in recommendations — down to just four — reflecting our commitment to continuous improvement and excellence in care.



#### Model of Care update

A Model of Care defines the ways health services are delivered. Phoenix updated its full Model of Care for all mental health and substance-use treatment programs, ensuring approaches are evidence-based, person-centered, recovery-oriented, trauma-informed and culturally safe. Our Practices and Standards team has been instrumental in these advancements, ensuring our services meet the highest levels and industry standards. We have also strengthened our infrastructure by updating our policies and procedures, providing clear guidelines for staff and ensuring we can pursue responsive, inclusive and culturally safe care.

#### New programs, new roles and new housing on the way

In response to growing needs in our community, we launched a new Provincial Intensive Youth and Young Adult Substance Use Treatment program. We also expanded our medical clinic with a new Medical Director, a leadership role critical to upholding our improved Model of Care, a primary care physician, and a psychiatrist to complement our addictions physician and 24-7 nursing team. And we have made significant progress on our housing project in Chilliwack, which will help address a critical need for a growing population of people who are unhoused in the Fraser Valley. Together these amount to important infrastructure that supports our ability to offer service recipients quality, evidence-based care, and amplify our impact.



## Elevating Wellness: Transformative Mental Health and Substance-Use Support

As we continue to strive toward elevating care and outcomes, we remain steadfast in our focus to support the overall well-being of service recipients who engage with substances. This support takes many forms, from provincial intensive substance-use care programs, harm reduction initiatives and stabilization support, and more to address needs across the continuum of care. We support individuals at every stage of their journey — whether they seek to decrease engagement with substance use or reduce harms related to substance use — ensuring they can access the options and resources that best address their unique needs and goals.



Throughout the year, we've woven quality improvements and enhancements into the fabric of our programs and services. We launched wellness and diversity committees for staff. We significantly invested in staff training —advancing their proficiency in mental health first aid, non-violent crisis intervention, cognitive behavioural therapy, dialectical behaviour therapy, and motivational interviewing—demonstrating our commitment to enhancing staff knowledge, skills and competencies to deliver high quality, evidence-based and effective services and supports. We also leveraged technology to enhance efficiency. We simultaneously strengthened our access and referral processes and increased case planning, coordination and collaboration with community partners to improve service recipient outcomes and transitions back to home communities for ongoing care.



Furthermore, we've made improvements to our Aftercare model, which is provided to ensure ongoing support once an individual achieves their initial substance use treatment goals. We've expanded our Aftercare program to offer individual and group support, as well as ongoing counselling. This ensures that service recipients continue to receive the care that best suits their needs, as they return to their home communities or move into Phoenix transitional housing.

Our new Provincial Intensive Youth and Young Adult Substance Use Treatment program is an important program in our substance-use care portfolio. Located at our Phoenix Society Main Campus in Surrey, BC, this live-in program provides



comprehensive, individualized treatment for three or six months, through individual, group, and family therapy, along with enriching recreational and music therapy. We support male-identifying individuals with diverse gender identities, aged 17-24, offering housing and food while nurturing community and meaningful connections.

In the first year of the program, we experienced a steady increase in referrals and intakes and saw heartening results: three participants transitioned to Phoenix supportive housing—a unique and valuable aspect of the Phoenix continuum of care that highlights the critical role of housing as an integral part of health care and substance use treatment. Furthermore, three other participants chose to extend their stay to continue their progress. We remain deeply engaged with feedback from service recipients, continually expanding opportunities for meaningful connections and recreational activities to enhance well-being. With flexible intake options available for BC residents, we are dedicated to providing a safe and supportive environment where service recipients can focus on their recovery and reach their fullest potential.

Meanwhile, in response to community need, we also increased the number of provincial substance-use treatment beds for adults who identify as male, demonstrating our ongoing commitment to address gaps in our spectrum of care for vulnerable and priority populations.

We also welcomed eight practicum students who have been great additions to our supportive and transitional housing team, practice and standards team, and nursing team. Helping to train the next generation ensures that more care workers can obtain the knowledge and skills needed to improve the broader system that must be in place to respond to growing needs.

At the Abbotsford Hub, and with the support of Fraser Health, we added a Community Response Peer Support Program (CPRS) to help with overdose prevention and reversals and contribute to street clean-up initiatives. The CRPS program also provides a line of communication for neighbouring businesses to actively engage with staff, should they have concerns about the well-being of people in isolated substance use, or other concerns about the community. This approach helps foster respectful relationships between service recipients, support staff and community businesses. The program launched in March and responded to 15 calls in the first month.

By strengthening our infrastructure and expanding our reach, we’ve created more consistent and accessible mental health and substance-use care programs that better meet the needs of service recipients. The emphasis on elevating every aspect of our work—from operational efficiency to staff well-being—has allowed us to build programs that offer service recipients the care and support they need to thrive.



**“I felt like I was in control of decisions. The ball was at my feet. Phoenix gave me the realization to build a foundation, set boundaries and make an informed decision to make the best choice for myself.”**

## IMPACT THIS YEAR - SUBSTANCE-USE CARE



**281**

individuals supported via mental health and substance use treatment and stabilization programs, and 69 of these individuals moved to Phoenix transitional housing upon completion

**20,720**

Abbotsford Hub drop-ins

**4,894**

overdose prevention room visits, 53 overdoses reversed



**1,168**

Naloxone kits provided

**42,072**

Harm reduction supplies provided

**405**

aftercare support sessions provided to 61 individuals



**8**

practicum students improving service recipient supports and gaining valuable experience in our sector

**60**

staff trained to elevate standards of care

## Elevating Health: Comprehensive Care for a Better Tomorrow

Our medical clinic located at our primary campus in Surrey continues to reduce barriers to primary healthcare for service recipients. We have implemented several key enhancements over the past year to continuously improve the quality of care and support.

First, we made several strategic additions to our medical team, adding a primary care physician and a psychiatrist to our existing roster of experienced and caring staff. Now service recipients can be assessed by an addiction physician, as well as a primary care physician or psychiatrist, with continued access to 24-hour nursing staff. Additionally, the visiting pharmacist removes barriers to safe and swift prescriptions.

What's more, we have added additional in-house services like TB testing and a Life Labs on-site, making it even easier for people to complete their diagnostic referrals. This integration has greatly improved the efficiency and continuity of care and means service recipients no longer need to rely solely on walk-in clinics.



At Phoenix, we understand the interconnected risks between substance use and sexually transmitted and blood-borne infections (STBBI), which often compound existing health disparities. Substance-use care and harm reduction initiatives, alongside STBBI prevention and care, can reduce vulnerabilities and improve health outcomes for all. This program, offered at the Abbotsford Community Hub Centre, focuses on accessible community education to prevent the spread of STBBIs through point-of-care testing, judgement-free support, a sustainable peer support network, and connections to healthcare services. Support workers at the HUB help service recipients manage HIV or HCV, reducing harms and preventing transmission. The team ensures service recipients receive the most up-to-date information and treatments to stay as healthy as possible, leveraging their strong knowledge of the treatment providers in their service delivery area. Recognizing the connection between the social determinants of health and STBBI transmission and health outcomes, this team also takes a holistic approach to care, ensuring service recipients receive whatever wraparound supports, information and referrals they might need to support their overall well-being.

Correctional facilities are not adequately equipped to meet the needs of an aging population, but as the needs of this population have grown, Phoenix Society has embraced the challenge with heart and dedication. Our specialized program offers 12 beds of enhanced support, providing 12 hours of nursing care each day and around-the-clock healthcare staff, in addition to our Community Residential Facility (CRF) support team. This attentive approach has been truly effective in supporting individuals with complex aging and medical needs as they transition out of the correctional system.



“I found that Phoenix has touched on every aspect of care.”

## IMPACT THIS YEAR - HEALTH CARE

**3,440**

Referrals provided by the Phoenix staff at the HUB, including health service, substance use and mental health, sexual health and STBBI, housing and shelter, other health services



**1,083**

unique individuals supported with HIV support. Of these individuals, 1,061 were linked to primary care and 309 were linked to income, housing and food security

**8,623**

visits to the Hub and its partners, including visits for sexual health, the nurse practitioner, medical services, healthy ageing services, pharmacy and counselling

**1,363**

appointments with the addictions physician, primary care physician and psychiatrist



**169**

individuals on OAT supported through the Phoenix medical clinic

**281**

initial intake Health assessments

**119**

individuals supported through onsite life lab and TB clinic

## Elevating Stability: Providing Safe and Supportive Housing Solutions

Phoenix's diverse housing offerings are designed to address one of the critical social determinants of health. The Rising Sun building, for example, is a socially innovative housing continuum designed to support individuals in various stages of recovery and community inclusion. This includes 23 studio strata units available for affordable home ownership for those committed to a recovery-based lifestyle and community participation, 12 transitional housing apartments for individuals in recovery, 4 transitional housing apartments for those coming through the justice system, and 41 supportive housing beds with enhanced supports and dedicated outdoor recreation space for men transitioning from the justice system.

Additionally, our 78 transitional housing units at our main campus, along with the enhanced Aftercare services described previously, continue to support successful independent living for service recipients transitioning from our mental health and substance use treatment programs and those individuals requiring supportive housing.

Our affordable homeownership initiative has also made strides in making homeownership more attainable, with the successful sale of four units last year.

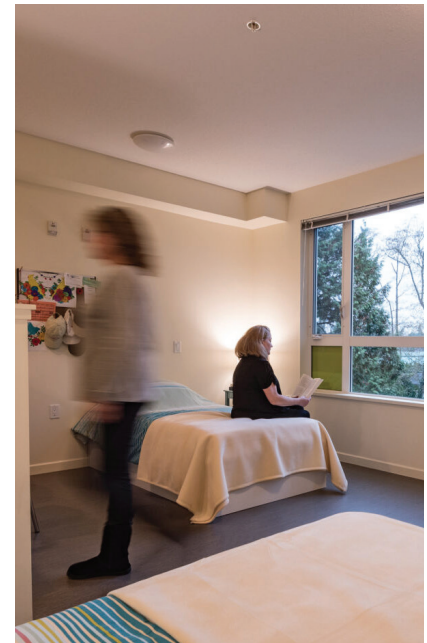
The Nest, our innovative low-barrier and recovery housing program, exemplifies our commitment to responsive and person-centered care. This supportive housing model demonstrates that integrating harm reduction and recovery paths within one facility can be both effective and unique. This model not only supports optimal service recipient outcomes but also showcases that there need not be a division between harm reduction and recovery services. With the right supports and a compassionate team, we can break down barriers and biases, delivering services tailored to the unique needs and preferences of each individual.

In alignment with our strategic plan to deepen community partnerships and enhance the effectiveness and reach of our programs, we've concentrated on building robust external collaborations to support service recipient transitions. By working closely with other housing providers, health authorities, and treatment facilities, we've been able to offer comprehensive



support, including securing subsidies to help service recipients move towards market housing. The successes of this collaborative approach can be seen in the planned wind down of our COVID-response emergency shelter in Coquitlam, where 100% of the individuals served were successfully rehomed.

Looking ahead with great excitement, we're delighted to unveil the Chilliwack Project, a transformative step in expanding our housing services. This new, four-storey building at the corner of Rowat Avenue and Trethewey Avenues, will warmly welcome 42 low-barrier shelter beds and 49 supportive housing units, including up to 22 units dedicated to complex-care housing. The building will offer thoughtfully designed shared spaces, including a communal kitchen, inviting meeting areas, and cultural spaces, all staffed around the clock to offer unwavering, compassionate support. We look forward to continuing to move this project forward this year and beyond.



**“Since I have been here, everyone has been helpful. They have made me feel comfortable and made me feel at home.”**

## IMPACT THIS YEAR - HOUSING



**100% rehoming rate**

for residents from the Coquitlam program closure

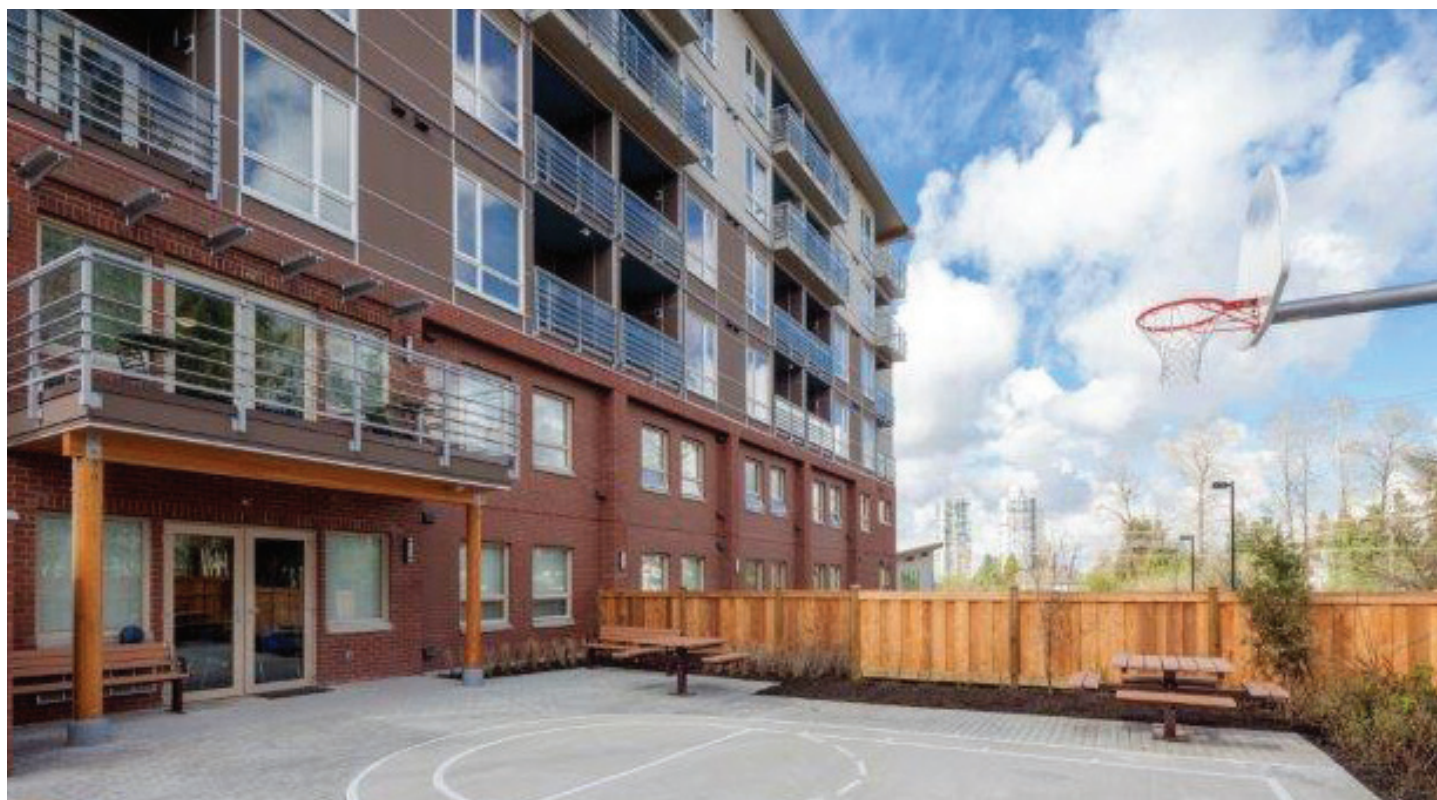
**157** individuals provided with transitional housing supports, 62% of these individuals successfully transitioned to other appropriate housing/ supports

**98** of these individuals were referred to employment and education services

**51** individuals provided with supportive housing recovery

**23** individuals provided with supportive recovery housing at the Nest

**28** individuals provided with low-barrier supportive housing at the Nest



## **Elevating Community: Fostering Inclusion and Connection**

Because social inclusion is a critical social determinant of health, we continually strive to create environments that foster a sense of belonging. This past year, we have embraced opportunities to build meaningful connections and honour the diverse experiences within our community.

Within our programs, through vibrant, culturally humble celebrations of Indigenous Peoples' Day and Pride, we've deepened our respect and consideration for Indigenous knowledge in our care and services, while strengthening our solidarity with 2SLGBTQIA+ service recipients.

Beyond our walls, we actively participated in several days of observance and community advocacy events, helping raise awareness and engagement around HIV-AIDS, Truth and Reconciliation, and overdose prevention. Whether hosting in-house celebrations or attending larger public gatherings, our presence and participation reflect our commitment to social justice principles.

Our community garden continues to flourish as a cherished gathering place, made possible by the generosity of our donors. From outdoor concerts to garden gatherings, it has become a backdrop to many moments of pride, connection and shared purpose, for staff, service recipients and partners alike.

Throughout the year, we also leveraged our food truck for adaptive and responsive efforts in the midst of increasing food insecurity. And within our facilities, our food services team welcomed new food service volunteers, while incorporating resident input and opportunities for hands-on, collaborative meal development.

Additionally, we've also made significant improvements to our Community Residential Facilities (CRF) program, which supports people as they return to community life after interactions with the criminal justice system. Over the past year, we focused on new policies and procedures to prioritize collaboration and consistency. By integrating a more robust case management team and providing on-site counselling services, we have created a more stable and supportive environment for residents, enhancing service recipient satisfaction and increasing successful program completions.

In the Tri-Cities, our outreach program continued to effectively connect unhoused individuals to housing, health and support services. By focusing on improved coordination between service providers, we continue to effectively bridge crisis intervention efforts with successful referrals.

Our expanded peer support program empowers people who have lived or living experience with mental health and substance use to be supportive examples and provide peer mentorship to those currently accessing substance use and housing services and supports. They hold a pivotal role in assisting with conflict resolution and communication, attend community appointments with service recipients and assist with the development of life skills.

Throughout the year, we continued to deliver community-based substance-use counselling and facilitated access to essential community programming and support groups at Little House in Delta. As part of our ongoing efforts to enhance local services, Phoenix has transitioned Little House to another established community organization that shares our dedication to community-based support. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the City of Delta for their invaluable partnership and their support throughout this transition. This change ensures that the legacy of Little House continues within the community, aligned with our mission to support substance use recovery and wellness through accessible and effective local services.





“Rising Sun has given me the opportunity to participate in the community garden, which has been incredibly beneficial for my mental well-being and allowed me to pursue a cherished hobby. I am grateful for this chance to engage in something I enjoy.”

## IMPACT THIS YEAR - COMMUNITY CONNECTION AND INCLUSION



**1982**

interactions with individuals through the Tri-Cities outreach program



**14,280**

bagged lunches provided at the HUB



**36,570+**

meals served

**101**

individuals supported after interactions with the criminal justice system

**2,502**

visits to the community shower and laundry services at the HUB

**326**

counselling and community education sessions provided at Little House

**3,555**

peer support sessions delivered

## Elevating Opportunities: Empowering through Education and Employment

For service recipients seeking continuous education, Phoenix collaborates with Kwantlen Polytechnic University. Kwantlen supports adult learners in returning to education and the workforce by offering personalized assessments and instruction in English and Math.

To support employment for all, Phoenix partners with Options (WorkBC). The Options resource centre provides employment counselling and assists service recipients in their job search when they are ready. The resulting work placements can provide individuals with a stable and liveable income, through which they can experience greater security and independence. This increased economic stability can strengthen individuals' outcomes and outlooks for their future.

This year we also established a new partnership with EMBERS Staffing, an organization that provides companies with a socially responsible staffing solution while providing workers with a ladder of opportunities to improve their skills and advance their careers. This partnership with EMBERS Staffing has provided additional employment opportunities to Phoenix service recipients.

Being able to offer continuing education and employment opportunities is a crucial part of the way we support service recipients as they identify, define and pursue individual priorities and goals.



## Elevating Vision: Strategic Goals for Future Success

To develop the Phoenix Society's 2024-2029 strategic plan, we prioritized an inclusive approach to engage the diverse perspectives of our community. We embedded principles of Truth and Reconciliation throughout the plan to ensure that Indigenous perspectives and knowledge are integral to our practices and decision-making. This includes addressing systemic barriers for Indigenous service recipients, fostering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities, and advancing decolonization within our services.

The strategic plan affirms who we are as an organization. We have articulated a shared language about how we show up, what we believe, the impact we intend and the approach we take.



**This plan  
also contains  
six strategic  
directions:**

- 1. Prioritize the quality of our care** and enhance service delivery through evidence-informed practices and inclusive care models,
- 2. Develop our people and culture** by fostering an environment where our team can grow, engage and lead with confidence,
- 3. Improve technology, systems and infrastructure** to support efficiency, privacy and security,
- 4. Communicate our identity, value, and brand** to ensure our identity, values, and mission are clearly understood by the community,
- 5. Engage community members and partners to amplify our impact** by centering the voices of those we serve, and
- 6. Take bold and innovative action to expand our reach** thoughtfully to make a meaningful impact for those who need it most.



## 6 strategic directions

Our priorities allow us to strengthen, elevate, connect, innovate, expand impact, address gaps, advocate and demonstrate leadership.

## Over 70 participants engaged

Through in-person dialogue sessions

## 25 interviews

Conducted with community partners, funders, and thought leaders ensuring diverse perspectives informed the strategy

## 30 survey responses collected

Insights were gathered from 30 survey responses from Phoenix employees and interest holders, contributing to a well-rounded understanding of the needs and priorities within the organization.

## 5-Year term

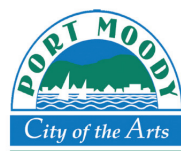
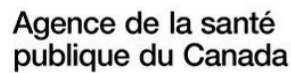
The strategic plan spans a five-year period from 2024 to 2029, setting the course for sustained growth and impact in service delivery and community engagement.

# Funders and Donors

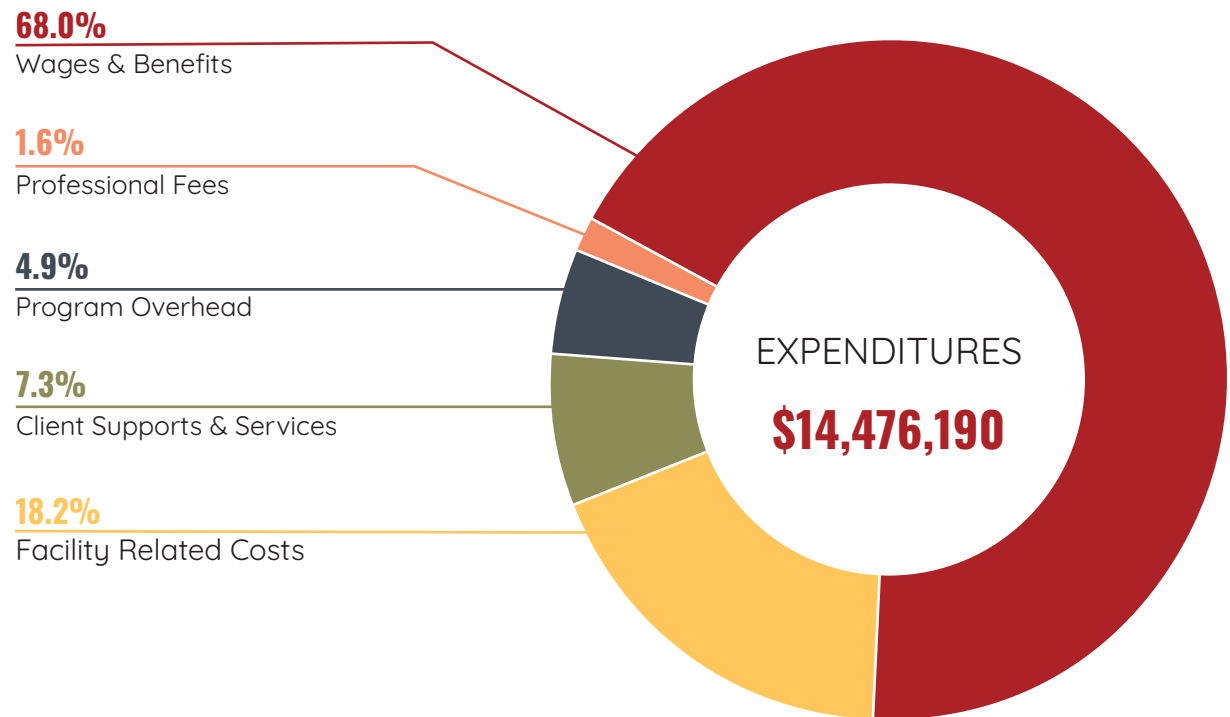
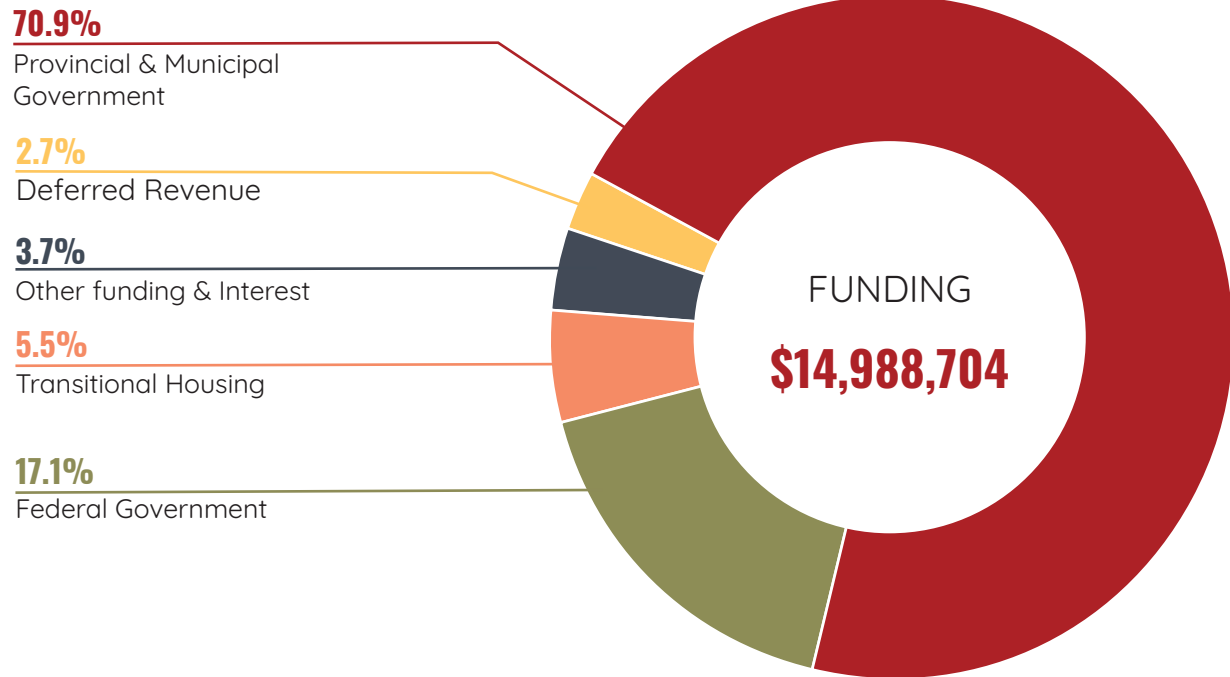
*Thank you to our partners, funders and donors for their generous support.*

BC Housing  
 Canadian Airways  
 CareRX Corporation  
 City of Abbotsford  
 City of Delta  
 City of Port Moody  
 City of Surrey  
 Correctional Service Canada

First West Foundation  
 Fraser Health Authority  
 Music Heals  
 Province of British Columbia  
 Provincial Health Services Authority  
 Public Health Agency of Canada  
 Surrey Fire Fighters



# Elevating Accountability and Visibility





## CONTACT PHOENIX

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