



Living in
Community

Living in Community: 2024-2025 Annual Report



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Message From Our Co-Chair

It has been quite the rollercoaster year for Living in Community. As a Co-Chair, having experienced the evolution of LIC over the past 3 years has been incredible. From a Member-at-Large to Treasurer to Co-Chair, I am extremely pleased at the efforts that LIC has made to help contribute and support the sex worker community.

Over the past year, we have witnessed the outcomes of the political climate and its impact on sex workers in our community. Our funding landscape was greatly challenged as we did not receive several grants that we had received in previous years. Our livelihood may have been threatened at the start, but it truly blossomed into an act of resilience -- a trait that our community wears proudly on our backs.

Despite the financial hardships, there are many more positive things that we accomplished this past year that outweighed the negatives. We moved from having separate committees to a condensed Steering Committee. We also completed and heavily marketed our online training, Curriculum for Change. We tabled at the Union of BC Municipalities Convention alongside the BC Poverty Reduction Coalition, and we also tabled at the New Westminster & District Labour Day Picnic. Lastly, we continued to strengthen our relationships and collaborations with other sex work advocacy organizations and continued offering trainings for the BC Network.

An immense thank you goes to our Executive Director, Halena Seiferling, who always works so diligently to keep us in the loop, as well as our dedicated Board of Directors who continue to do this important work. I am looking forward to continuing this work collectively into the coming year.



Stephanie Sia, Co-Chair

Message From Our Executive Director

The 2024-2025 year at Living in Community (LIC) has been – as always – one of both successes and challenges, necessitating that we become even more flexible in our approaches while staying deeply rooted in our values.

As the year began, we were still building from our provincial conference held in late 2023. We spent significant time and attention finalizing our conference report and advocacy toolkit, which you will read more about below, ensuring that we comprehensively and accessibly captured what was said at the conference. We took stock of what was created in that space, we shared the recommendations with key audiences ranging from government ministers to labour partners to sex workers directly, and we build new bridges with more and more communities and stakeholders.

On the education front, it has been wonderful to witness our online training being taken up by many diverse learners following its launch just prior to this year. We continue to iterate the types, formats, and content of our education and training resources to ensure we are meeting the needs of learners. Some highlights this past year include training staff at the City of New Westminster, training staff at the Government of BC's Intimate Images Protection Service, continuing to offer important workshops for the BC Sex Work Support Service Network, and updating our Sex Work Toolkit which provides a key intro to learning more about sex work (and which was in dire need of an update!).

The funding landscape was a challenging one in 2024-2025. As with many other organizations, we experienced a decline in traditional funding sources available, mainly as so-called 'emergency' funding released during the COVID-19 pandemic came to an end without sufficient alternatives available. We pivoted and branched out, calling on our champions, allies, and friends to support our work financially, connect us with their networks, or take our training. We are so very grateful to all the new supporters and donors this year who have enabled our work to continue.



Whether it's been adapting to this new funding landscape, witnessing political shifts on all levels, or adjusting our workplans to support our staff's evolving health needs, this year has called on us to be more firm than ever in our resolve. In my ED message last year, I said LIC is the hub in the middle of the wheel, while everyone we work with are the spokes, doing the work on the ground and propelling us all forward. In keeping with this metaphor, I close by saying that it's only by continuing to support each other that we can keep rolling on and keep making progress in our collective work.

Halena Seiferling, Executive Director

Our Vision:

We envision a future where sex workers' rights are respected and where sex workers are free from stigma, violence, discrimination, and criminalization. We envision a world where diverse stakeholders can come together to share, learn from each other, and work through different sex work perspectives in order to achieve our common goals of health, safety, and well-being for all community members.

Our Mission:

Centering sex workers' rights, Living in Community convenes diverse stakeholders in order to: understand a range of experiences and perspectives; inform sex work-related policies and practices of governments, service providers, and community organizations; and provide education to support these goals.

Our Values:

- We ensure that the diversity of sex workers' experiences and perspectives are at the centre of our work and inform every aspect of what we do.
- We believe that everyone has the right to health and safety, regardless of their social location and lived experience. However, we recognize that, due to differing levels of power and privilege in society, individuals experience inequitable access to health, safety, justice, and other services and supports. We address the systemic root causes which include colonization, criminalization, racism, discrimination, capitalism, and more.
- We are committed to engaging in ongoing learning about how to truly practice decolonization in our work.
- We use an evidence-based, harm reduction lens on sex work to address the impacts of stigmatization and criminalization of sex workers.
- The foundation of our work is being open to listening and seeking understanding of different perspectives in order to find common ground. We value understanding the perspectives of residents, businesses, and other community stakeholders in regard to the challenges they may have in addressing sex work-related issues.

Our Work in 2024-2025



In our strategic plan, our work is grouped under four pillars.

1. Strengthening and building the capacity of sex worker-serving organizations

The first pillar of LIC's work is strengthening and building the capacity of sex work support organizations and other key allies to undertake mutual learning and develop a unified voice for sex workers' rights.

Convening the BC Sex Work Support Service Network is a significant piece of this pillar. The BC Network is a group of 31 organizations, located across all regions of BC and into the Yukon, that offer frontline services, supports, and advocacy with and for sex workers in their communities. In the 2024-2025 year, we welcomed new members based in Victoria, Vancouver, Smithers, Kamloops, and Kelowna.

We hold quarterly meetings for BC Network members to share updates on their work, identify shared concerns and best practices, and build a unified voice on advocacy recommendations. We also hold virtual trainings for this group to collectively deepen our knowledge. In 2024-2025, we held trainings on understanding and dismantling white supremacy, managing volunteers, responsibly working with peers/folks with lived experience, and how to use LIC's conference advocacy toolkit.

This year, we continued to deepen the relationships of the BC Network. We implemented a decentralized method for BC Network members to share resources and updates with each other. We also submitted two papers to governments to present a cohesive and strong joint position in consultations: our submission on Bill S-210, "An Act to restrict young persons' online access to sexually explicit material," which would have infringed on sex workers' right to work, and our submission to the Neha Review Panel on "The Right to Safe, Adequate and Affordable Housing for Women, Two Spirit, Trans, and Gender-Diverse People, and the Government's Duty to Uphold this Right" where we spoke about the housing needs of sex workers.

LIC also convenes the SAFE in Cedar Cottage project in east Vancouver. This group of community members and stakeholders meets regularly to discuss and address sex workers' needs along the Kingsway stroll. In the 2024-2025 year, group members focused on meeting the evolving needs of the community, particularly taking leadership from the Kingsway Community Station – a peer-led drop in space for sex workers – and continued to share resources with each other to support the community.

Finally, a key success in this pillar was the next steps from our 2023 conference. In summer 2024, we published our conference report, summarizing the 82 recommendations that attendees made for needed policy and practice changes at governments and organizations. In fall 2024, we then published an advocacy toolkit, which outlines ways that people from every sector can be part of putting the recommendations into action. We also released a promotional video about the toolkit, which acts as an educational tool and further reaches new audiences with these critical recommendations for change.

By the Numbers:

- 9: number of active SAFE in Cedar Cottage members
- 31: number of BC Sex Work Support Service Network members (+4 from last year)
- 8: number of BC Network meetings and trainings held

2. Deepening and broadening our education and training work

The second pillar of our work is our anti-stigma education and awareness-raising. Since 2013, LIC has been delivering Curriculum for Change, our training for individuals to best support sex workers in their work, life, and community. In the 2024-2025 year, LIC delivered personalized versions of this training to 118 learners across British Columbia. Learners included municipal city staff, provincial government staff, law students, and frontline staff and peers at sex worker-serving organizations.

A big focus this past year was the launch of our online, self-directed training. This option broadens the reach and accessibility of our proven curriculum by allowing individuals to learn at their own pace in online courses with videos, interactive exercises, and downloadable resources for future use. There are four courses to meet varying needs: Course One is our flagship training unpacking sex work stigma, Course Two covers best practices for frontline service providers, Course Three educates on how different legal frameworks about sex work (such as decriminalization or criminalization) affect sex workers, and Course Four explores the differences between sex work and trafficking.

As part of the launch of our online training, we reached out to many new audiences and stakeholders to invite them to add this resource to their staff professional development, to recommend it to their communities, or to simply take it themselves and let us know their feedback. We also piloted a launch incentive whereby those who made a (tax-deductible) donation to LIC received access to all four online courses for free. Uptake of the online training has been steady, and we are continuing to share this resource with more audiences via meeting with key stakeholders, providing easy-to-use resources, and sharing on social media.

And speaking of social media: our reach and engagement skyrocketed this past year. We use our social media accounts (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, and recently BlueSky) to share updates about our work (such as new events or projects), information about what to expect in our online training, and organic content on sex work history as it pertains to current events and days of note. Notably, we also shared posts that summarize the discussions held in each of the sessions at our 2023 provincial conference, ensuring that the content captured in our conference report could reach a broader audience in a more accessible way.

By the Numbers:

- 118: number of individuals who attended a Living in Community live or online training or educational session in 2024-2025 (+34% from last year)
- 457: average visits to our website per month (+12% from last year)
- 81: average visits to the 'Find a Service' page of our website – which shows where sex workers and others can find local resources in their community – per month (+35% from last year)
- 370: total downloads of resources from our website in the year: fact sheets, reports, and infographics
- 14,436: people we reached via Facebook and Instagram in 2024-2025 (+156% from last year!)

3. Supporting law and policy change to uphold the rights of sex workers

By the Numbers:

- 62: number of meetings LIC attended with community groups, coalitions, unions, and other allied stakeholders on shared advocacy objectives (+68% from last year)
- 5: number of municipal, provincial, and federal government consultations and topics for which LIC provided written and verbal submissions
- 11: number of meetings with municipal, provincial and federal elected officials and decision-makers LIC attended to advocate on sex workers' rights, health, and safety

The third pillar of LIC's work is recommending new laws and policies, and advocating for changes in existing harmful laws and policies, to protect the health, safety and rights of sex workers. In the 2024-2025, there were many opportunities for LIC to advocate to governments and build collective power toward future policy change.

At the municipal level, we continued working with the City of New Westminister regarding their Sex Worker Safety Guidelines. In collaboration with PACE Society, we created and delivered four training sessions to municipal employees – including firefighters, outreach staff, and bylaw and business licensing staff – about how the Guidelines apply to their work and how they can prioritize sex workers' health and safety. Near the end of the 2024-2025 year, we began a new project which will run through to the end of 2025 where we will create an information package for frontline sex worker-serving organizations in New Westminister about the City's Guidelines and how these organizations can ensure their programming is in line with this rights-based approach. We are excited to be creating a committee of local sex workers to help guide this project as well.

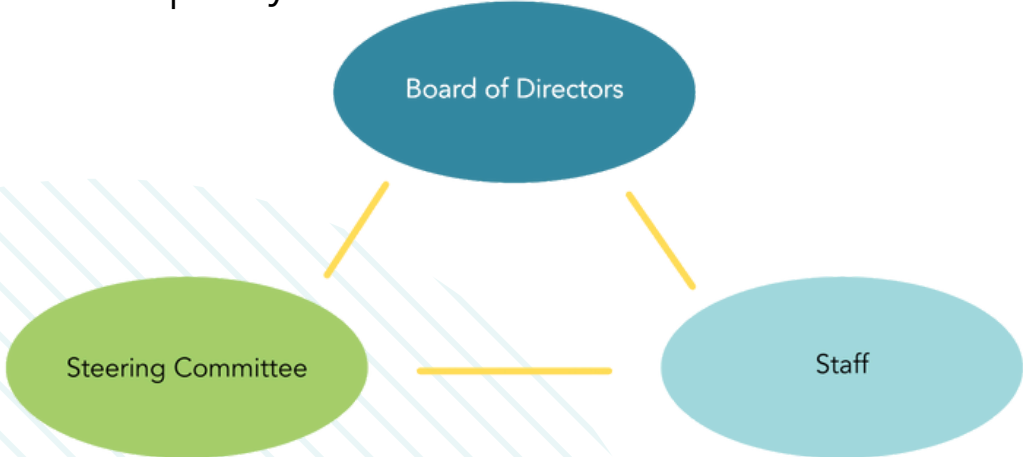
In 2024-2025, we began coordinating with other local organizations regarding the 2026 FIFA World Cup games which will be coming to the City of Vancouver. We are concerned about potential disruptions to street-based economies, especially in and around Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, as a result of clearing areas downtown and along the route where games will occur. In the coming year, we will do more on this file as we and many others work to ensure the rights of street-based workers and residents are upheld.

In 2024-2025, the BC government did not hold its annual budget consultation as it was an election year. However, we will resume our regular participation in budget consultations this coming year. We still advocated to the provincial government, though, namely through sending our 2023 conference report to key ministers and staff and holding meetings with them to speak to the urgency and breadth of these recommendations. In general, we continue to advocate for more funding for person-centered and peer-based frontline sex worker-serving organizations as well as for the BC Bad Date and Aggressor Reporting system (for which we are still a Working Group member, helping to guide the project and the system being created). We also advocate for a rights-based framework to all new policies, legislation, and programs, rather than treating sex workers as victims, criminals, or simply erasing their existence from our communities. Additionally, we continue to sit as a member of the BC Parliamentary Secretary for Gender Equity's Advisory Committee on Gender Based Violence, bringing a nuanced understanding of sex work and violence to that file.

Federally, as mentioned above we sent in two key submissions in collaboration with the BC Network: on Bill S-210, and on the housing needs of sex workers. Bill S-210 was not passed prior to the last parliament dissolving, which is a win as this bill would have infringed on sex workers' right to do their work. We look forward to following the next steps of the Neha Review Panel's recommendations to the federal government on the housing needs of women and queer and trans folks.

4. Strengthening our internal capacity

The fourth and final pillar of our work is focused on our internal capacity. The 2024-2025 year was a challenging one in this sphere, as we faced an uncertain funding landscape and worked hard to broaden our funders and donors to ensure our work can continue.



Our main operational focus this past year has been implementing the recommendations from our 2023 conference; as such, many of our grant proposals and fundraising calls have focused on our plans to advocate to the key sectors named by the conference recommendations. Gratefully, with many new supporters this past year we have been able to continue doing this critical work, which requires significant time for relationship-building, outreach, follow-up, and education. Being a registered charity – for the first full fiscal year – has enabled us to offer tax receipts to donors in thanks for their support, and keeps us to a high standard of fiscal and governance oversight as well.

A significant change we made in 2024-2025 was to our committees. For the past few years, we had three committees – a Sex Worker Engagement Committee, a Law and Policy Advocacy Committee, and an Education and Training Committee – all providing input into each respective piece of our work. In summer 2024, in discussion with our Board of Directors and our external evaluator, we decided to invite all committee members to join one joint Steering Committee. This Steering Committee meets monthly to provide input into all parts of our work, and has enabled the committee space to be more inclusive, flexible, and comprehensive, without segregating the folks we work with. We look forward to continuing to iterate our structure to ensure it is as representative, meaningful, and effective as possible.

In 2024-2025, we also launched into work again with an external evaluator, who helps us to ensure our work is effective, measurable, and meets the goals we set. In particular, our work with her focuses on the outcomes and impact of the 2023 conference, and creates a pathway for LIC to be responsible and comprehensive in our follow-through of the conference recommendations.

Thank you to our Board of Directors in 2024-2025:

- Steph Sia, Co-Chair
- Fern Apeiron, Co-Chair
- Nikta Boroumand, Treasurer
- Synder Starr, Secretary
- Spencer Johnston, Past Co-Chair
- Rhian Oldale, Member at Large
- Heather Paddison, Member at Large
- Leia Brands, Member at Large
- Emily Lawrence, Member at Large

Thank you to our staff in 2024-2025:

- Halena Seiferling, Executive Director
- Kerry Porth, Community Developer
- Nadia Grutter, Community Developer and Training Lead

Living in Community thanks the following organizations for their generous support of our work in 2024-2025:

- BC Federation of Labour
- BC General Employees' Union (BCGEU)
- City of Vancouver
- City of New Westminster
- CUPE BC
- Government of Canada – Women and Gender Equality Canada
- Health Sciences Association of BC
- Law Foundation of British Columbia
- McLean Foundation
- MoveUP
- New Westminster and District Labour Council
- Unifor
- Vancouver and District Labour Council

2024-2025 Financial Statement

Living in Community Society

Revenue and Expenses

April 1st 2024 - March 31st 2025

	Total
REVENUE	
Government Grants	\$176,006
Foundation Grants	\$28,260
Union Contributions	\$21,800
Donations & Other Income	\$2,871
Training Revenue	\$5,072
Previous year end 2023-2024	-\$19,108
Total Operating Revenue	\$214,901
EXPENSES	
Personnel Total	\$184,819
Employees	\$165,890
Contracted Services	\$12,969
Honoraria	\$5,960
Program Expenses	\$21,168
Administrative Expenses	\$10,102
Total Expenses	\$216,089
Deficit	-\$1,188

Note: LIC's fiscal year (April 1 - March 31) does not align with most project timelines. We receive funding throughout the fiscal year for projects and operations on various timelines.

