



2024-25 Annual Report



**This report is dedicated to the spirit of working collectively,
and to the knowledge that together we are greater
than the sum of our parts. Thank you to everyone who is
working for digital inclusion in Nova Scotia.**

“ Invite everybody who cares to work on what’s possible. Acknowledge that everyone is an expert about something. Know that creative solutions come from new connections.

—Margaret Wheatley

“ This experience reinforced my belief in the power of community and the importance of helping one another. I cannot express enough gratitude for the generosity of GEO Nova Scotia, which played a pivotal role in my journey.

Today, I stand as a testament to what can be achieved with determination and the firm support of compassionate individuals and organizations. My story is a beacon of hope and a reminder that we can all make a difference in someone’s journey towards success.



From the Co-Chairs

Dear Friends,

It's our pleasure to share our story of a transformative third year at GEO Nova Scotia. Looking back, **2024-2025 has been a year of growth, change, and continued evolution**—both in our work and in the relationships that make it possible.

Our partnership with the provincial government continued to grow meaningfully this year. A key milestone was their support for **GEO Forum 2024** and the **Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Awards**, held in October.

The Board marked a significant transition in the fall with the **resignation of founding Board Chair Sandra McKenzie**, who accepted a new role as Deputy Minister of the newly created Department of Emergency Management. We thank Sandra for her leadership and vision during GEO's formative years. As GEO Nova Scotia's founding Board Chair, Sandra brought visionary leadership, deep policy expertise, and an unwavering commitment to public service.

Over the past year the **GEO Mobile program** was introduced, our network of Referral Partners grew to **128 organizations**, and together, we supported **nearly 3,000 unique households**. GEO Nova Scotia received the **2024 Tech for Good Award** from Digital Nova Scotia, and in January 2025, we hosted our first virtual **Insight Forum**.

As we look ahead, our staff team is evolving alongside the organization's ambitions.

We're thrilled to welcome **Bonnie Ste-Croix as our new CEO** in June 2025. Our founder and Executive Director, **Matt Spurway**, is transitioning to a new role as **Chief Development Officer (CDO)**, where he'll focus on building partnerships and new programming including a **new social enterprise**.

It's been an honour to serve as Co-Chairs over the past 8 months. We're incredibly proud of the progress made and grateful to every partner, team member, and community supporter for contributing to GEO Nova Scotia's success. Thank you for your continued commitment to **digital inclusion**—we can't wait to see what the next chapter holds.

Yours, in community,

Karn Nichols
Kelsey Rioux
Board Co-Chairs

 **YOU CAN READ THE
COMPLETE 2024-2025 REPORT
FROM THE BOARD HERE** 



From the Executive Director

My heart is bursting with pride and gratitude, and when you've finished reading this report you will know why.

In the pages that follow you'll get a look at the transformational impact GEO Nova Scotia has made on thousands of Nova Scotians thanks to the incredible network of partnerships that are showing the rest of the world how digital inclusion is within our reach if we all work together.

Thank you to our Learning & Evaluation Lead, Dr. Cari Patterson, for her incredible work on this year's report, along with everyone involved in putting it together, and of course to everyone involved in the stories within.

We've all come so far together, and there is still so much we can do. Luckily we've added even more strength to our team including our new CEO! Personally, I couldn't be happier with how things are working out. The next year will be the most exciting yet for GEO Nova Scotia - thank you for being a part of it and enjoy our report!

Matt Spurway
*Founder & Executive Director
(Chief Development Officer
as of June 9, 2025)*

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Getting online has helped me connect with the right people for my mental health. I've been struggling for quite some time and now I have the help I truly needed.

Overview of GEO Nova Scotia

GEO Nova Scotia (Getting Everyone Online, GEO) is dedicated to digital inclusion across the province. We began as a community project in Dartmouth North in 2020 in response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the urgent need for digital connectivity among low-income households. In 2021, with support from the provincial government, we ran four regional pilots, and in 2022 we were formally established as a provincial non-profit organization.

Today GEO is a thriving organization with a **Board of Directors** and **16 remote staff members** based across the province. We are currently funded primarily by the **Department of Opportunities and Social Development**, and we partner with government, the private sector, and more than **125 community organizations**. Together we are working to ensure that all Nova Scotians have access to affordable internet, suitable devices, and the necessary digital skills and confidence to participate fully in today's digital society.

¹ Digital Inclusion means **access** to the internet, the right **devices** for your needs, and the **skills** to use them confidently and safely.

GEO Participants²

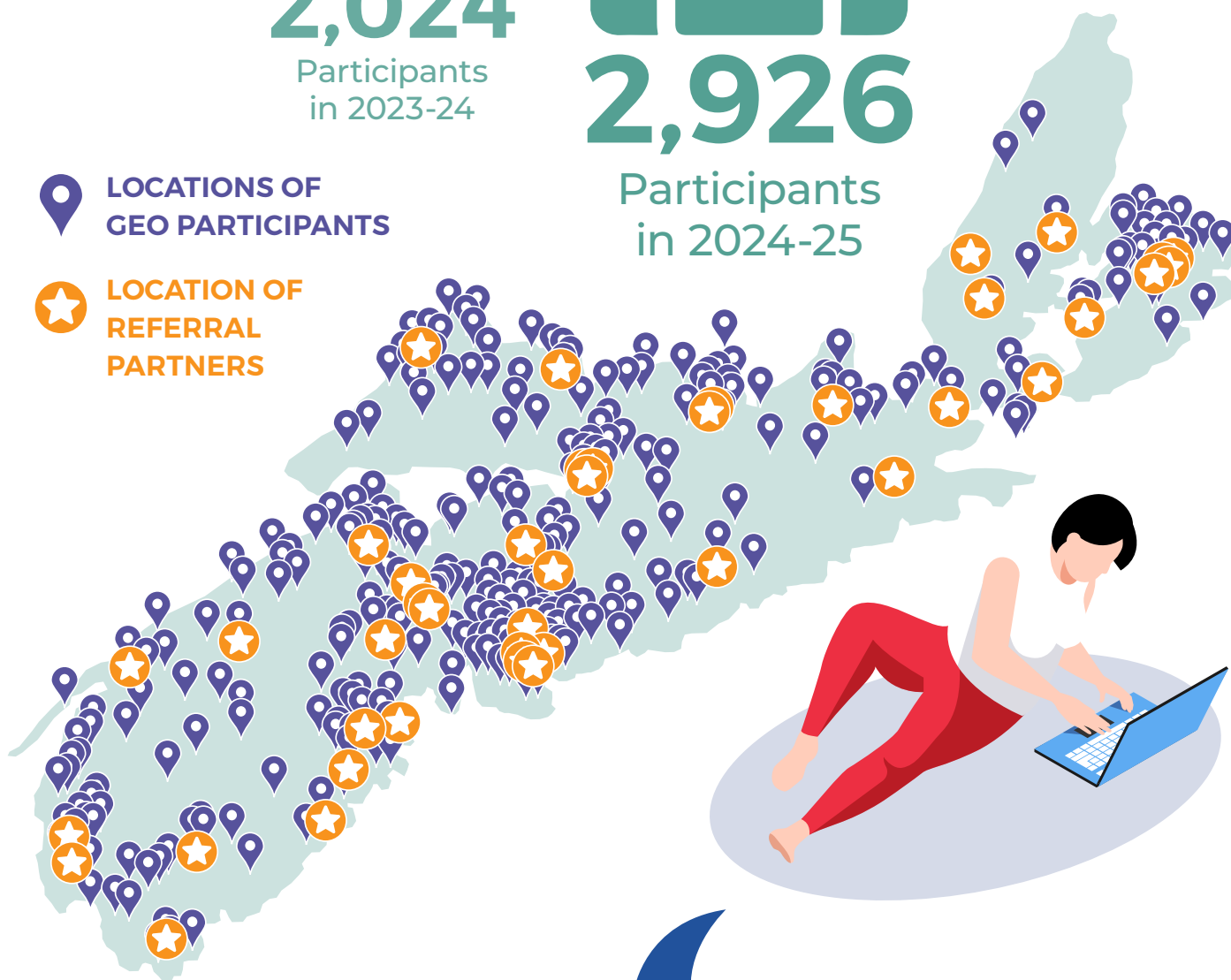

858
Participants
in 2022-23


2,024
Participants
in 2023-24


2,926
Participants
in 2024-25

 **LOCATIONS OF
GEO PARTICIPANTS**

 **LOCATION OF
REFERRAL
PARTNERS**



I am able to participate in my mental health and medical treatment plan. I am a renal patient and need to attend this service three days a week. With your service I can make transportation arrangements.

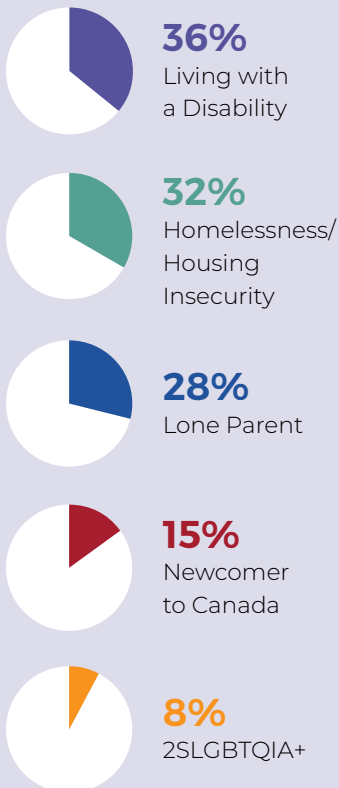


It allowed me to go to my best friend's funeral and my cousin's funeral because neither of them live here.

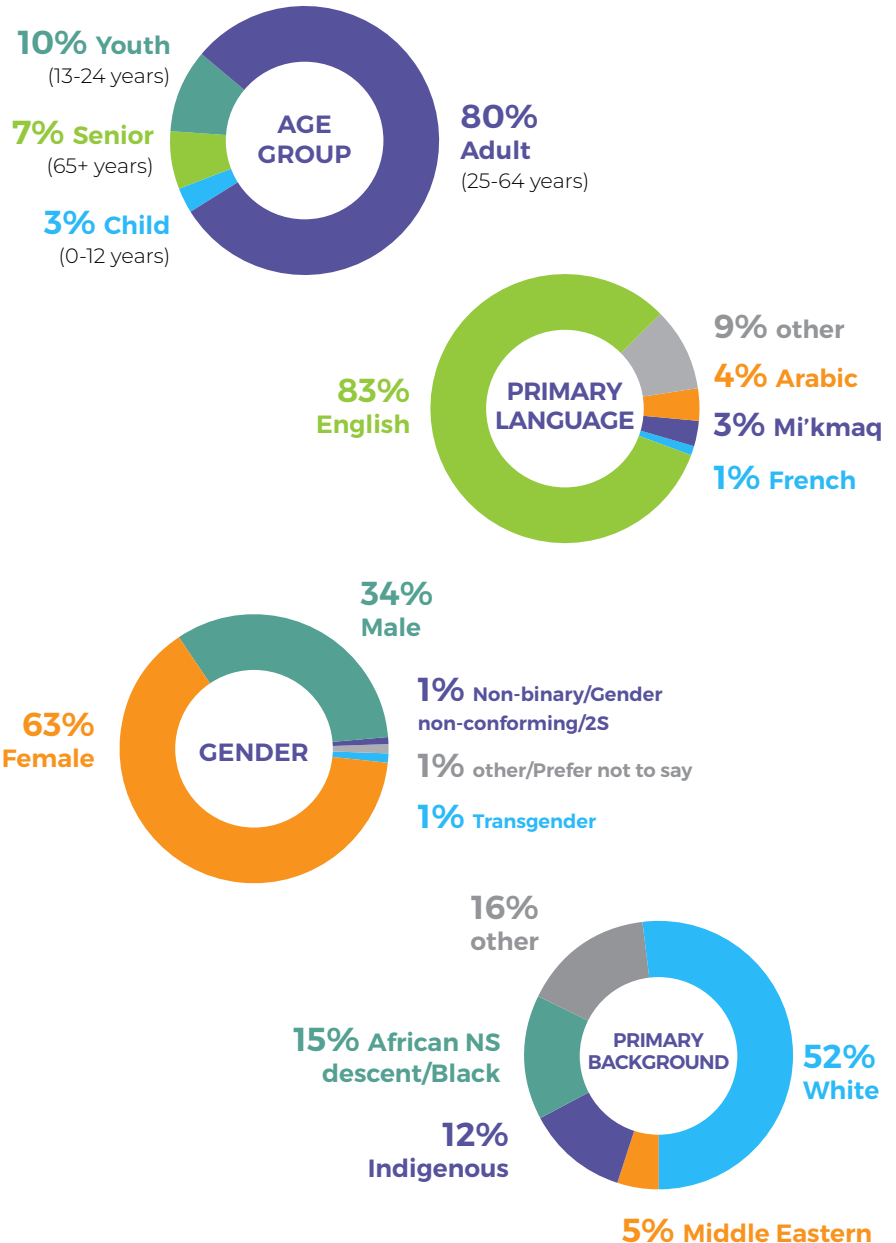


Participants' Lived Experiences

(SELF-IDENTIFIED)



Participant Demographics 2024-25



² We have been collecting demographic information about the primary Participants in each household; others in the household are not included (even if they have a device or connection). Detailed demographic information about Participants is in the Report Appendices.

Devices & Connections Distributed





Being a disabled senior living alone, it has helped give me peace of mind. I now have and use Hey Google on my phone so that if I fall or if the power goes out, I can contact someone for help.

Focusing on Priority Populations

In 2023-24, GEO provided devices and/or connections to **2,025 households** living with low incomes in Nova Scotia. **The total value of the devices and connections distributed that year was \$2,701,916.**

In 2024-25 GEO provided devices and/or connections to **2,696 households** living with low incomes in Nova Scotia. **The total value of the devices and connections distributed that year was \$3,373,066.**



















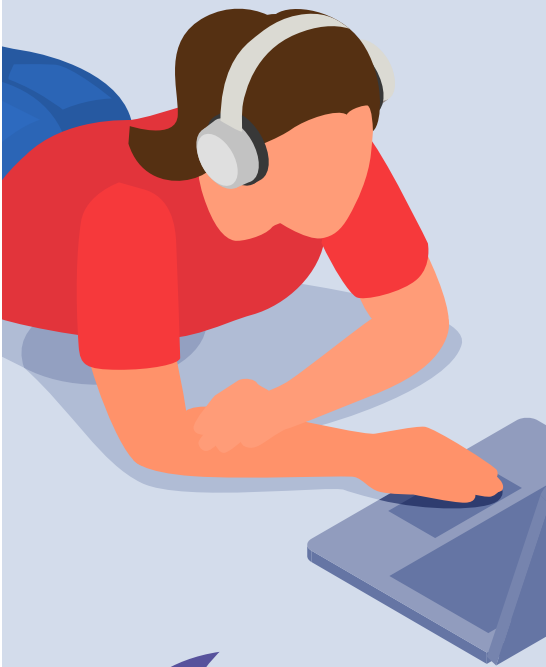
2,025
households
in 2023-24



2,696
households
in 2024-25

The table below shows the number of households GEO reached in each priority population group for 2023/24 and 2024/25, as well as the value of devices and connections we provided to each population group each year. Please note that people’s lived experiences are intersectional, so they can belong to more than one group (and their households will be counted more than once).

	2023-24	2024-25
Households with Children	 1,070 \$1,499,160	 1,380 \$1,828,340
People receiving Income Assistance	 538 \$735,280	 1,186 \$1,429,820
People living with a Disability	 940 \$1,174,880	 1,103 \$1,354,365
Lone Parent Households	 688 \$1,003,920	 856 \$1,191,895
Single Person Households	 742 \$889,900	 810 \$939,250
Indigenous Peoples	 295 \$401,700	 437 \$575,060
Black/African Nova Scotians	 323 \$437,940	 486 \$546,495
Newcomers	 318 \$421,860	 445 \$566,980





Having a device and connection has truly changed my life for the better. Before this, I had to leave my home just to find a Wi-Fi signal—sometimes even getting into trouble while trying to connect to guest networks from outside. Now, I can stay safely at home and I no longer miss important messages from my doctors and lawyers. It’s made a huge difference in my day-to-day life...

—Eskasoni First Nation Community Member

AFTER DIGITAL CHAMPIONS TRAINING ...



79% of DCs feel **better equipped and supported** to address the digital learning needs of learners

76% of DCs feel **more confident** in delivering support

72% of DCs feel **more knowledgeable** using the internet/digital devices safely, legally and confidently



Digital Champions training enhanced my digital skills, made for better decisions making, and improved my problem-solving skills. I implemented new digital skills, and it made it easier to train others with what I learned.

Digital Skills

The **Digital Champions** (DC) program provides training, resources, and support to staff and volunteers in service

organizations across the province. Digital Champions (DCs) help individual community members learn to be online, teaching them essential digital skills, such as setting up new devices, using video calls, accessing online learning opportunities, and staying safe online.



We offer a variety of DC training sessions and regularly develop new sessions based on Referral Partners' needs. In 2024-25, **262 people took part** in Digital Champion training sessions.

- **DC Core** (1 hour) showcases effective tools, tips, and techniques for supporting people who need to learn how to use the internet safely and confidently.
- **Digital Champions for Newcomers** (DC4NC) (1 hour) teaches DCs how to help newcomers to Canada improve their essential digital skills.
- **Deep Dive** sessions (1-1.5 hours) such as Employability: Skills for the Workforce; Pathways to Employment; DC Support for Seniors; and DC Support for Youth.
- **Short Shots** (30-45 minutes) such as Introduction to Chromebooks; AI & Digital Inclusion; and Digital Skills & Social Media.

Participant Outcomes



5,697

Participants
in total

As of March 2025, GEO Nova Scotia had supported 5,697 participants.

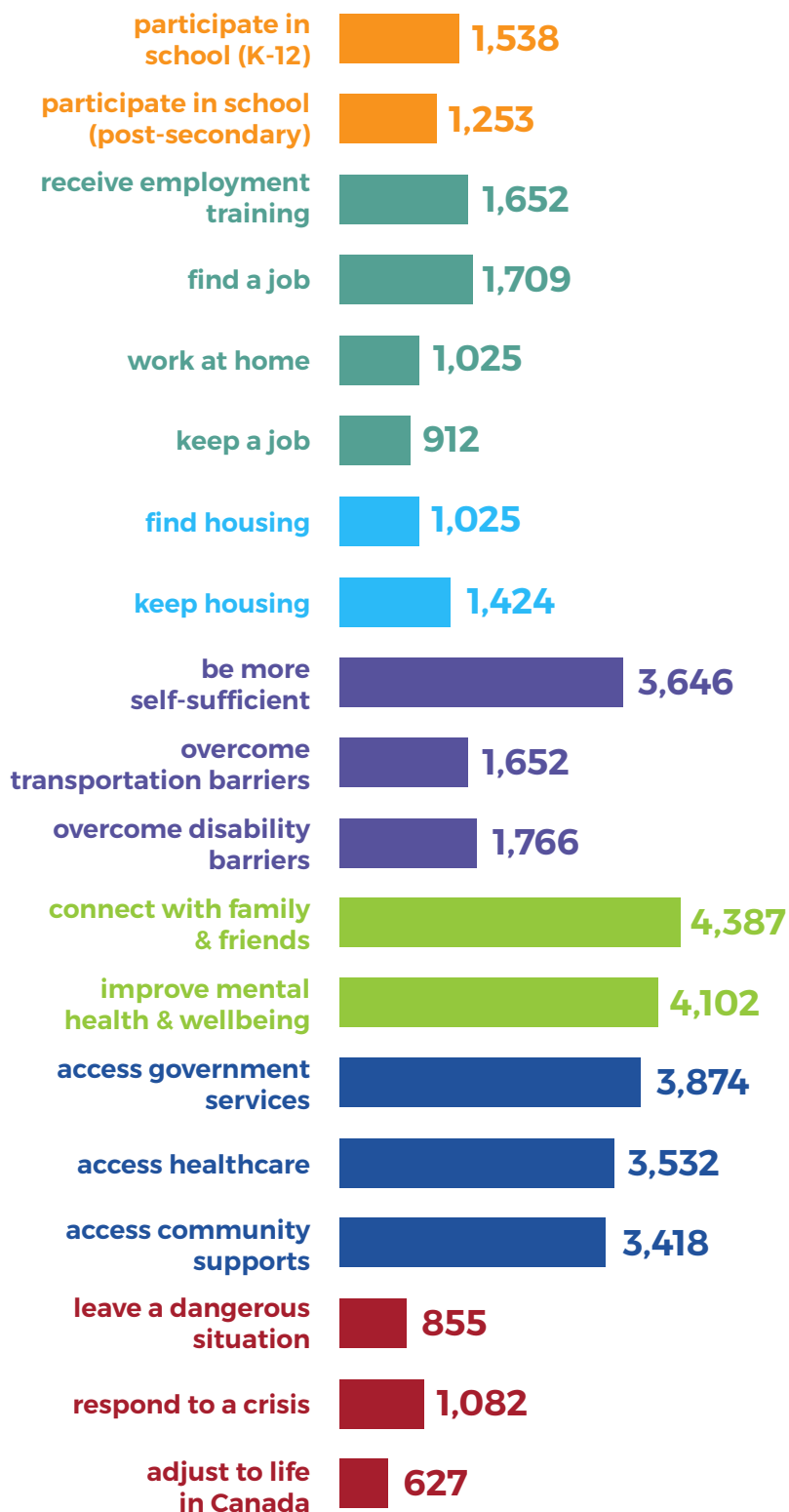
In April 2025, 228 participants identified specific outcomes as a result of GEO's support, allowing us to estimate the total number of households who have experienced each outcome.

(A sample this size has a margin of error of approximately 7%)

"GEO NS DIRECTLY HELPED ME OR SOMEONE IN MY HOUSEHOLD...."



ESTIMATED # OF HOUSEHOLDS EXPERIENCING EACH OUTCOME





Participant Stories

GEO Participants generously shared their stories about getting online, and what it means in their lives. The stories show that being connected is critical, and it impacts all aspects of everyday life.

It saves lives.

Having immediate access to a new phone/device and phone number allows women in violent relationships to stay in contact with transition house support staff and family members who their abusive partners won't allow them to contact, which means they can access support and feel safer. One woman said that by providing smartphones and data plans, GEO and our partners are shedding light on gender-based violence, validating her experience, and making her feel seen, heard, and cared about. Another participant who has a disability talked about being trapped in her inaccessible apartment for days during a hurricane, and she could have called for help with a mobile phone. Another woman said not having to pay for a mobile and connection saved her from prostituting herself.

"Before I was told about GEO I did not have any connection to the outside world, but now I am able to make connections that are very vital to me surviving to see 65. I am able to go online and enter into chat sessions with people I don't know, but they have some of the same issues that I suffer from ... Now I have an option for my voice to be heard and ... this is where I am able to get the help that I so desperately needed and I have a chance to talk to people ... it makes you feel as though you are a part of something where I felt only alone before".

"GEO Nova Scotia has literally saved my life. With isolation comes anxiety... I would not have stayed connected with anyone if not for the access to the internet. Forever grateful".

It is a lifeline.

Several Participants who are housebound due to severe and sometimes multiple disabilities said they wouldn't survive without the internet.

"I couldn't survive without it. I'm disabled and predominantly house bound. I can't get out without help from home care. And of course, being disabled and unable to work, I'm very poor. I can't afford home care on my own. The funding that I have will not allow me to have home care help me get out. So I'm trapped in my apartment, so I can't communicate or do anything with anyone. Without the internet, I can't get to in-person medical appointments, so if they can't help me virtually, I have no medical care at all. Right now, I couldn't live without it. I would have no groceries, I would have no medical care. I would have no way for home care, because I have no way to do my report so I couldn't keep my funding. I really cannot emphasize enough how incredibly important it is, and I hope that you can help partners, anyone helping you with funding, government, whoever understands that, because it is really huge".

It provides access to healthcare.

People can book appointments and communicate with doctors and health care professionals.

"Getting internet access has made a huge difference in my life ... I can also make doctor's appointments online. I can have virtual appointments with my doctor using the internet, which means I don't always have to make that long trip to Halifax. I can still see her and get the care I need, even in the winter".

It reduces isolation and keeps families connected.

Nearly everyone mentioned how important the internet is for staying in touch.

“Without the internet access I will be all alone in this world and not connected with everyone else”.

“One of the best things about having internet access is being able to stay in touch with my children and grandchildren. I love being able to see them through video calls and hear about what they’re learning and doing. It’s amazing to see how much they’ve grown”!

“The internet provides a number of significant benefits. It helps combat loneliness and social isolation, which are common issues for us. Online communities, social media, and video calls allow us to stay connected with friends, family, and social networks. This can improve our mental health and sense of wellbeing. You have no idea how”!

It helps people find housing.

Several Participants told us how important an internet connection is for finding housing, applying for housing supports, paying rent, and maintaining housing.

“After a few years of housing insecurity I used the internet to apply for low income housing and the subsidy that let me afford the rent. I thought that after I moved I would not be able to afford the internet and I was scared of how isolated I would be, especially since I am mainly housebound due to my health. But then a support worker told me about GEO. I’m so grateful that I am still able to access the internet! I use it to communicate with my doctors and healthcare support groups, to pay for my phone and rent and order groceries, to relieve stress by watching videos and connecting with loved ones, and to learn about different ways to improve my health through nutrition and exercises that I can do at home. I’m going to try and return to school by distance next September. Because of my health there’s no way that I could do that without having the internet at home”.

It helps people get jobs.

Being connected helps people build job skills, search for employment, get jobs, work from home, and run small businesses.

"I use my wifi to take courses online and at times pay my rent online. I took this course with the [community organization] to which I found connections to get into the [program]... I have accomplished a lot of online courses and job search to where I now have this awesome job as a front desk receptionist on weekends, and other duties during the week".

"The internet has been a huge help in my job search. I can explore different opportunities and connect with people so easily. I actually just finished an online training course through [community organization], which I took from home, and I'm about to sign a contract for a part-time interpreter job that I can do from home while I pursue my studies".

It gives people access to education.

Many Participants told us that internet access helped them make connections and pursue education for themselves, and that it helped their children's education.

"I found a training opportunity with [training organization]. Access to a laptop and the internet enabled me to complete the course and obtain multiple certifications".

"...this access fostered a sense of community for me. I could connect with classmates effortlessly through video calls and messaging platforms, forming study groups and collaborating on projects".

"I have a little fellow who struggles a lot in school - he has a couple of learning disabilities - so being able to keep in touch with teachers on demand or right away is important. I don't always have cell phone service where I'm at but I do always have a connection to e-mail. They also have a school homework site so they're able to go on to their school homework sites and see what is there for the day".

It provides access to government services and programs.

"The internet is crucial for accessing government services, job applications, and employment insurance ... its role in navigating Canadian systems".

"My father was diagnosed with [condition] last November. I didn't know much about it, only what I remembered from when my grandmother had it. But because I have internet access, I was able to look up information about it and find out what I could do to help my father. That took a lot of pressure off my shoulders. I'm the only one who can take care of my father ...I went online and found out about the allowance for caregivers and I applied for it".

"Being able to do things without going places is very important to people and not a lot of people have transportation to get to where they need to get to and being able to go online and click a button and get things done is very convenient".



It helps newcomers adjust to life in Canada.

Being connected is critical for refugees and newcomers. It allows them to stay in touch with loved ones back home, check on family members who are living in dangerous conditions, take courses, practice English, connect to their new communities, and build their confidence.

"I came to Canada a few months ago. I had no internet at home, because I couldn't afford it, being new to the country. I had to go to public places or a neighbour's house to connect with my family back home, or to try to find information on the community. My kids had trouble doing their homework without the internet and a computer, so they would go to our neighbours to use theirs. Now, we have a laptop and internet, and we can stay at home and talk to our family whenever we need to, and my kids can use them for homework. We also use the internet for entertainment, and we're able to connect to Youtube for educational videos that are helping my kids learn English".

It connects people to the bigger world.

Being connected to the internet allows people to access entertainment and connect and engage with the bigger outside world.

"I use the internet for the library for books I've read. I can read the newspaper, I can read magazines; it just gives you a whole new lease on everything. It's amazing what a little bit of connection can do for you; it helps you stay connected with what's going on in the world".

"The internet gives me political access to candidates to find out who they are and what they're about, and in the voting I do online it's made things a lot easier that way".

It reduces a financial burden.

Providing devices and connections without a cost to Participants, GEO provides a sense of comfort and security, and helps reduce their financial burden.

"Thank you so much for providing this amazing program, it has provided so much support, and comfort to my life. My mental health has been better not having to worry about where the money is going to come from for my internet".

"With you guys helping with the internet it saves a lot of people; speaking for myself it saved me from having to prostitute myself for extra income".

It means access to programs and support groups.

Participants described the difference that makes to them and to their families:

"It has made a huge impact on my family's life being online as I am still doing my NA meeting via Zoom. I do meetings not just for me but my children as well. Thanks to the GEO I still have my family together."

Referral Partners³

GEO Referral Partners (RPs) work with community members of all ages, genders, and backgrounds who face life challenges due to their lived experiences (e.g., living with housing insecurity, having a disability, being a member of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community, being a lone parent, being a newcomer). They have trust-based relationships with the individuals and communities they serve, which is vital to our success. Designated staff within RP organizations identify the people most in need of digital access and refer them to us for devices and connections.

Over the past year, we have focused on cultivating relationships with existing RPs and on strategically engaging new RPs to reach more priority populations across the province. We welcomed **45 new Referral Partners** in 2024/25, bringing the total to **128**.

In 2024-25, GEO Referral Partners distributed



3,448

devices

valued at

\$2,011,070



2,036

new connections

valued at

\$1,716,480

³ There is a full list of Referral Partners in the Report Appendices, as well as on our [website](#).

“Your program is very helpful to my clients. I’m finding that many families don’t have devices at home for homework etc. Also some schools will loan chromebooks and others won’t. The free data package and phones is something that helps tremendously when people are low income/experiencing life transitions (homelessness, domestic violence, unemployment). The iPad program is making it easier to introduce the technology earlier at school and with families. When people call me because they don’t have enough money to make ends meet (they have run up their power bill, don’t have money for transportation or food, etc.) this income saving program actually **helps treat the problem (poverty)** directly rather than offer a bandaid/temporary solution (fundraising / providing a gift card). People need the internet to work and live so often they are paying for it but can’t really afford it.

“GEO has been an integral part in getting our **youth connected with the resources to work towards their goals**. Working with youth at risk, or experiencing homelessness, connection is a common barrier not only for them, but for our Case Managers in our work. **Youth are better supported** with resources like a cell phone and phone plan because it allows them to not solely rely on transportation for drop in support. A phone enables them to **access resources** such as booking online medical appointments independently, helps Case Managers to do wellness check-ins, and helps Case Managers and youth be able to communicate and plan interdependently.


“We appreciate this organization and are so grateful to be able to provide the devices and services to those we are trying to help. Because the cost is covered by GEO NS we are able to **use our limited financial resources for other needs of the community**.

“GEO is connecting people who would not otherwise have access to connections or devices.... **Children are able to continue their studies** in cases where their devices may have had to be left behind for a multitude of reasons. Home internet allows women to connect home security cameras ensuring **additional levels of safety**.






Program Partnerships

GEO also partners with organizations on special projects outside GEO Connects, the main program used by Referral Partners. A number of program partners contributed a portion of the funding required for specific initiatives; they are designated below by the  symbol.

2024/25 GEO NOVA SCOTIA PROGRAM PARTNERSHIPS:


178 smartphones and data plans for **women experiencing gender-based violence** in partnership with the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia** and the **Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women**; and **26** through the Crisis Mobile program 

147 smartphones/data plans for **people living in Pallet Shelter Villages and Tiny Homes** in HRM and Cape Breton

100 iPads, specialized apps, and connections for **youth living with disabilities** who require Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) with support from the **Public Good Society of Dartmouth** and the **Halifax Youth Foundation** 

87 laptops and/or connections for **participants learning life skills and preparing for employment** in Digital Solutions, offered by **Solutions Learning Centre**


75 smartphones and/or connections for **women experiencing gender-based violence** in partnership with the **YWCA Halifax** and Eastlink


57 Chromebooks, iPads and connections for **African Nova Scotian Youth** in **The Source Program** in partnership with **Unity Charity** 

37 Chromebooks for **youth** participating in the **EDGE** job search and readiness program run in partnership with various service organizations

29 iPads for a **Business is Jammin'** March Break Camp that taught entrepreneurial skills to **African Nova Scotian youth**

22 Chromebooks for **African Nova Scotians** participating in basic digital literacy skills programs offered by the **Black Educators Association**

8 Chromebooks for **seniors** in partnership with **Chebucto Links** 

21 Chromebooks and headsets to support the mental health and wellbeing of **refugees** navigating the refugee determination process in partnership with **Halifax Refugee Clinic** 

18 Chromebooks & accessories for **African Nova Scotian seniors** participating in **Africadian Empowerment Academy** programs that teach essential computer skills

16 Chromebooks for **adult learners** in **Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning** programs in partnership with NSCC **Digby Learning Centre**

6 Chromebooks for **participants who have intellectual and developmental disabilities** at **Prescott Group's** Saturday Job Program

5 laptops for **participants** in **NPower Canada's** employment program

3 Chromebooks, iPads and/or connections for **former youth in care** in **Dalhousie University's Post-Care Tuition Waiver Program**



SPOTLIGHT ON THE AFRICADIAN EMPOWERMENT ACADEMY (AEA)

During the pandemic, AEA recognized that African Nova Scotian seniors needed to learn how to use computers and the internet in order to combat isolation and stay safe. At first young people helped their grandparents learn about laptops and virtual meetings. Now AEA offers a program in East Preston and Cherry Brook that teaches essential computer skills like email and internet use, and advanced skills for people who want to learn more; GEO provides Chromebooks and accessories for participants. The program offers a supportive environment for learning, and encourages both men and women to participate; though it's mainly women who take part.

Instructors emphasize Black history, helping seniors learn positive stories about their communities that they didn't learn in school, how to find information about important community figures, how to connect with people they used to know, and how to digitize and preserve knowledge to share with their grandchildren that otherwise might be lost to future generations.

Besides strengthening cultural awareness and intergenerational connections, the program has led to greater social inclusion and participation. One senior even gained employment due to her new computer skills.

“ So I think it's important to understand that there are communities, people, individually, but communities that are like that, they're behind like that, and that's for a bunch of reasons. That's for societal issues, because a lot of communities that we service like, again, they're predominantly Black communities or communities with an immigrant population, where, again, historically, they're very underappreciated, underprivileged by the government. So there's systemic ties with a lack of accessibility. And this program helps with a big part of the accessibility.

—Program Coordinator



“ Safety is about more than just physical location – it is also about safe communication. The GEO program has been an essential tool in helping us support women during one of the most dangerous and uncertain times in their lives. GEO helps to provide safe devices for survivors to stay connected to their support networks, access emergency services, crisis lines, etc., without fear of being tracked or monitored. When we issue a GEO device, we are providing one of the most impactful resources we can offer during the early stages of a survivor’s journey to safety.

—THANS Referral Partner



SPOTLIGHT ON ATLANTIC COMMUNITY SHELTER SOCIETY (ACSS) TINY HOMES & PALLET SHELTER VILLAGES

ACSS operates the **Lower Sackville Tiny Home Community** in collaboration with United Way Halifax, the Province of Nova Scotia, and other partners. The community has 60 fully furnished units, each with a private bathroom, kitchen, and essential furnishings. Utilities, including electricity, water, and internet, are included, and rent is capped at 30% of a resident's income.

The staff team provides wraparound services to support residents, including case management and referrals to community resources, counseling services, employment assistance and job search support, life skills training, and assistance accessing mental health and addiction services.

ACSS also operates three **Pallet Shelter Villages** around HRM. The villages provide transitional housing with single-occupancy units, each containing a bed, desk, and storage space. Washrooms, showers, laundry, and kitchens are shared.

Staff tailor supports for individual residents, and provide assistance with transitioning to permanent housing solutions, Connection to employment and health services, and community-building activities.

GEO is partnering with ACSS to get their residents connected. **In early Spring 2025, GEO began by completing referrals for 80 Chromebooks, smartphones, iPads and connections.**

Two GEO team members visited the villages to hear what residents had to say about getting online. Several people in each location expressed the need for a phone and a connection. The people who had connections told us about the many ways they use the internet: searching for jobs, reconnecting and messaging with family, making appointments, watching movies and playing games to keep themselves occupied - and not using substances, staying safe during emergencies, and learning about what's happening in the community and in the world. One of the biggest things that stood out is that people said being able to get online makes them feel less alone.

Increased Awareness of Digital Inclusion in Nova Scotia

On October 9, 2024 we hosted Nova Scotia's first ever digital inclusion conference, **GEO Forum 2024**. 331 registrants from public, private, and community sectors engaged in sessions about innovative work in Scotland; leading work by the Nova Scotia government; the implications of digital inclusion across a variety of populations in Nova Scotia; digital inclusion data; and emerging technology.

- Participants reported an **increased understanding of digital inclusion**
- Participants **feel more equipped to contribute to digital inclusion initiatives** in their communities

The **Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Awards** brought 100+ people together (including three government Ministers) in person to celebrate businesses, government, and community organizations that are leading the way in digital inclusion in Nova Scotia:



- Business Champion of the Year: **Eastlink**
- Government Champion of the Year: **Department of Community Services**
- Community Partner of the Year: **YWCA Halifax**
- GEO Referral Agent of the Year: **Elyse Leefe, South Shore Open Doors Association**
- Program Partnership of the Year: **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia**

We are also building and strengthening the digital inclusion ecosystem in Nova Scotia by hosting virtual **Insight Forums**, which bring people together to learn about various elements of digital inclusion. In January 2025 we hosted UK colleagues who shared their groundbreaking research on the **Minimum Digital Living Standard (MDLS)**, which outlines what individuals and families need in order to thrive in today's digital society⁴.

⁴ More information about the January 2025 Insight Forum is available on our [Evaluation & Learning Blog](#).



GEO NS DIGITAL INCLUSION AWARDS



Thanks to GEO Forum's sponsors for making the event possible:

- Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions
- Department of Community Services
- Department of Labour, Skills & Immigration
- IMP Solutions
- Eastlink
- Orchard
- DataGuide Technologies
- Reid Strategies and Events

“GEO feels like a safety net



Organizational Infrastructure

PUBLIC SECTOR PARTNERS

GEO's revenue has primarily come from one provincial government Department, however, there are increasingly more Departments and other funders supporting our work:



In 2023/24, **96%** of GEO's revenue came from the Department of Opportunities and Social Development (OSD).



In 2024/25, **91%** of GEO's revenue was from OSD; the other 9% came from a combination of other government departments, grants, program partnerships, and event sponsors.



In 2025/26, **77%** of GEO's projected revenue is from OSD, 6% from other Departments, and 17% from partners and our social enterprise work.

eastlink

Seaside
communications
Powered by ROGERS

IMP
solutions

DATAGUIDE
TECHNOLOGIES
MAKING IT MAKE SENSE

orchard

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS

Our private sector partners contribute in-kind to GEO through reduced rates for equipment, connections, storage, and labour.

In 2023/24, the value of these contributions was **\$497,520**.

In 2024/25 the value of these contributions was **over \$1.1M**.

COMMUNITY SECTOR PARTNERS

Referral Partners make valuable contributions to support digital inclusion work. Their support comes in several forms: completing Participant referrals, attending Digital Champion trainings, supporting individual learners building their digital skills, participating in evaluation processes, and providing ongoing feedback. In 2024/25 the total monetary value of their financial and in-kind contributions was more than **\$130,000**.

GEO EFFICIENCY

We have been improving efficiency and increasing spending on programming every year:



In 2023/24, **67%** of funding was spent on programming.



In 2024/25, **78%** of funding was spent on programming.



In 2025/26, **85%** of funding is allocated to programming.

Cost per referral is also dropping every year via program efficiency and economies of scale.

Key Highlights

Highlights of our accomplishments in 2024/25 include:

- Launching **GEO Mobile** for all Referral Partners
- Welcoming four new **Board members**
- Moving to a new office in downtown Dartmouth
- Hosting **GEO Forum 2024** and the **Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Awards**
- Winning the **Tech for Good** award at **Digital Nova Scotia's Tech Forward Awards**
- Creating a crisis mobile program
- Distributing **1600+** eMental Health booklets with mobile phones and iPads. across the province
- Piloting MIFIs (mobile wifi hotspots)
- Surpassing **2,000** homes connected to the internet and **1,000** people with mobile phone plans

“It has helped my kiddo with his potential autism by giving him something to focus on.”

“My struggles with the cost of living were lowered because of the GEO program.”



**AT DIGITAL NOVA SCOTIA'S
TECH FOR GOOD AWARDS**



Being online in 2025 is mandatory and you don't realize it until you don't have that option.

Next Steps/Moving Forward

GEO NS welcomes everyone to join the digital inclusion movement in Nova Scotia. We are committed to:

SCALING ACCESS

- Expanding device and connection delivery to reach 3,500+ individuals in 2025–26
- Piloting a “Pay What You Can” model, which will allow us to extend our reach to others who are not yet connected

INVESTING IN INNOVATION

- Prototyping GEO Booths in community spaces for safe virtual access
- Testing a Nova Scotia-developed technology that creates mobile hot spots (MiFi) to improve rural and remote access
- Testing new digital safety tools to protect vulnerable users at home
- Testing live translation tools for Forums and DC training sessions

BUILDING DIGITAL CAPACITY

- Growing our Digital Champion networks
- Offering new training on topics like AI; accessibility; and digital parenting

STRENGTHENING THE ECOSYSTEM

- Hosting GEO Forum 2025 in October, and quarterly Insight Forums to strengthen our collective understanding of digital inclusion and encourage cross-sector collaboration
- Facilitating knowledge exchange across the ecosystem via our ongoing evaluation and learning work
- Deepening collaboration with community organizations through Referral Partner engagement and co-design
- Supporting emerging and innovative digital inclusion projects through partnerships and shared infrastructure

IMPROVING SUSTAINABILITY

- Increasing program partnerships and launching a social enterprise to diversify funding
- Working with government partners to embed digital inclusion in provincial policy across areas like health, housing, education, and justice



Call to Action: A Connected Nova Scotia for All

GEO Nova Scotia invites all levels of government, private sector partners, and community leaders to take bold action toward building a digitally inclusive Nova Scotia. The data is clear: when people are connected, they are safer, healthier, more engaged, and better able to participate in education, employment, and civic life.

GOVERNMENT PARTNERS CAN...

- **Continue to sustain and scale public investment** in digital inclusion initiatives, ensuring stable, long-term funding for programs and targeted outreach to priority population groups.
- **Embed digital inclusion in policy frameworks**—including those related to health, housing, education, economic development, and justice—to ensure digital access is recognized as a core determinant of well-being.
- **Emphasize interdepartmental collaboration** to align digital inclusion efforts across government, and share data, infrastructure, and learning.
- **Continue investing in innovation and infrastructure**, ensuring safe internet access technologies that expand accessibility, especially in public and rural spaces.

PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERS CAN...

- **Continue to partner with other sectors to reduce costs and barriers** to devices, connections, and technical support.
- **Sponsor digital inclusion initiatives** that improve access for women, Indigenous peoples, newcomers, and other priority population groups.

COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS CAN...

- **Build local capacity** through Digital Champion training and other community-based digital literacy programming.
- **Advocate** for digital inclusion to be recognized and resourced as a public policy priority.

Together, we can make
digital inclusion a reality for
everyone in Nova Scotia.



Appendices

2024-25 DETAILED PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHICS

Age Group

Child (0-12)	3.6%
Youth (13-24)	9.5%
Adult (25-64)	80.3%
Senior (65+)	6.7%

Gender

Female	63.2%
Male	34.0%
Transgender	0.7%
Non-binary/Gender non-conforming/2S	1.4%
Other	1.2%

Primary Language

English	82.7%
Arabic	4.0%
Mi'kmaq	2.6%
French	1.1%
Spanish	1.1%
Swahili	1.0%
Somali	0.8%
Ukrainian	0.8%
Vietnamese	0.6%
Farsi	0.5%
Korean	0.3%
Punjabi	0.3%
Hindi	0.2%
Malayalam	0.2%
Russian	0.2%
Tagalog (Filipino)	0.2%
Turkish	0.2%
Mandarin	0.1%
Portuguese	0.1%
Urdu	0.1%
Other	3.0%

Primary Background

African Nova Scotian descent	7.6%
Black	7.8%
East/South East Asian	1.4%
Indigenous	11.8%
Jewish	0.1%
Latino	1.2%
Middle Eastern	4.7%
South Asian	2.1%
White	51.7%
Other	1.6%
Unknown	2.5%
Prefer not to say	7.5%

LIVED EXPERIENCE

Homelessness/Housing Insecurity

Yes	32.0%
No	60.1%
Not comfortable answering	7.9%

2SLGBTQIA+

Yes	7.9%
No	80.0%
Not comfortable answering	12.1%

Living with a Disability

Yes	35.5%
No	54.0%
Not comfortable answering	10.4%

Newcomer

Yes	14.9%
No	78.0%
Not comfortable answering	7.0%

Lone Parent

Yes	27.9%
No	63.9%
Not comfortable answering	8.2%

GEO NS REGISTERED REFERRAL PARTNERS

(as of March 31, 2025)

- Abby Ridge
- Adsum for Women and Children
- Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton
- Africadian Empowerment Academy
- Alice House
- Ally Centre of Cape Breton
- Ally Centre Pallet Shelters (Sydney)
- Ann Terry Society
- Antigonish County ALA
- APTEC
- Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth
- Atlantic Street Pallet Shelters
- Autism Nova Scotia
- Autumn House
- Bancroft Pallet Shelters
- Beacon House Pallet Shelters
- Black Business Initiative
- Black Educators Association
- Breton Ability Centre
- Bryony House
- CB Community Housing Association
- CB Food Hub
- CB Transition House
- Chebucto Connections
- Chebucto Links
- Chrysalis House
- CMHA Halifax Dartmouth
- CMHA-NS
- Colchester Adult Learning Association
- Community INC
- Confederacy of Mainland Mi'kmaw
- Coverdale Justice Society
- Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading
- Dal Tuition Waiver Program
- Dartmouth Learning Network
- Demetreous Lane
- Digby Area Learning Association
- East Hants CLA
- East Preston Family Resource Centre
- Employment Solutions
- ES-MV Learning Network
- Eskasoni Mental Health
- Futureworx
- Guysborough Learning
- Halifax Refugee Clinic
- Harbour House
- Healthy Minds Cooperative
- Hearing and Speech NS
- Hopeful Walk Tiny Homes
- In the Works
- Inverness County Literacy
- It Takes a Village
- Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre
- Job Junction
- John Howard Society
- Juniper House
- Kids Action Program
- Leaside Transition House
- Literacy Nova Scotia
- Lotus Centre
- Maggie's Place: Colchester
- Maggie's Place: Cumberland

- Metroworks
- Mi'kmaq Native Friendship Centre
- Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre - Millbrook
- Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre - We'koqma'q
- Mountains & Meadows Care Group
- MSVU Tuition Waiver Program
- Naomi Society
- New Dawn Enterprises
- Nisa Homes Halifax
- North Grove
- Npower Canada
- NS Association of Black Social Workers
- NSCC Digby
- NSECDIS
- Open Arms Outreach Society
- Our House Youth Wellness Centre
- Out Of The Cold
- Pathways to Education
- Pathways to Employment
- PeopleWork Society
- Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre
- Pictou County CLA
- Pictou County Roots for Youth
- POSSE
- Potlotek First Nation
- Prescott Group
- Preston Area Learning Skills Society
- Public Good Society of Dartmouth
- Queens Learning Network
- Rainbow Refugee Association of Nova Scotia
- Reachability
- Richmond County Learning Network
- Saint Benedict Parish
- SASI
- SchoolsPlus Central Region
- SchoolsPlus Eastern Region
- SchoolsPlus Northern Region
- SchoolsPlus Western Region
- Second Story Women's Centre
- SEED
- 7th Step Society of Nova Scotia
- Shelburne County Learning Network
- Shelter Nova Scotia
- SHYFT Youth Services
- Solutions Learning
- SSODA
- St. Mary's Tuition Waiver Program
- Stepping Stone
- TEAM work Cooperative
- Tearmann Society for Abused Women
- The Overlook
- The Portal Youth Outreach Assoc
- Third Place Transition Housing
- Thomas Raddall Pallet Village
- Truro Housing Outreach Society
- Unity Charity
- Valley Community Learning Association
- Victoria County Home Support Services
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation
- Welcome Housing
- Yarmouth County Learning Network
- YMCA Immigrant Services
- YMCA Nova Scotia Works
- YMCA of Cumberland
- YWCA - Waverly Inn
- YWCA SHYM & WISH

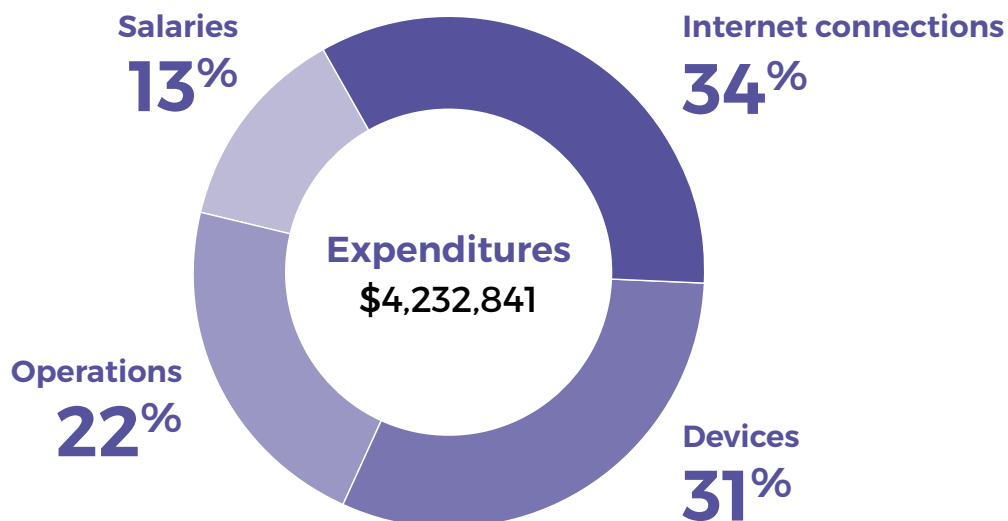
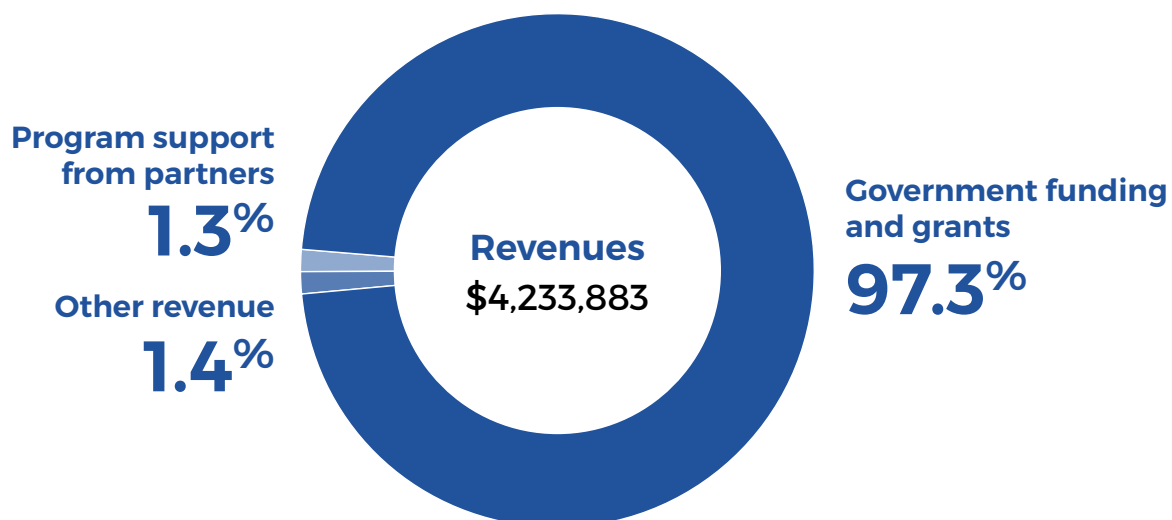
Financial Summary

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT	APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025	APRIL 1 ST 2023 TO MARCH 31 ST 2024
Revenues	\$4,233,883	\$2,831,264
Expenditures	\$4,232,841	\$2,795,059
Total net excess (deficit) of revenues over expenditure	\$1,042	\$36,205

REVENUES BREAKDOWN	APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025	APRIL 1 ST 2023 TO MARCH 31 ST 2024
Government funding and grants	\$4,120,989	\$2,809,694
Program support from partners	\$55,650	\$21,500
Other revenue	\$57,244	\$70

EXPENSE BREAKDOWN	APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025	APRIL 1 ST 2023 TO MARCH 31 ST 2024
PROGRAMMING EXPENSES		
Devices (Chromebooks, iPhones, etc)	\$1,303,071	\$966,762
Internet connections (home and mobile)	\$1,447,517	\$615,054
Salaries	\$535,317	\$421,331
OPERATIONS EXPENSES	\$925,188	\$787,904

APRIL 1ST 2024 TO MARCH 31ST 2025



YOU CAN READ GEO NOVA SCOTIA'S
2024-2025 FINANCIAL STATEMENTS YEAR
ENDING MARCH 31, 2025 [HERE](#)





CONTACT US

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