



2025-26 Annual Report



Acknowledgements

This report celebrates the milestones of another transformative year as we work collaboratively to achieve digital equity for Nova Scotia.

Our progress is a testament to the incredible synergy of people, partners, communities, and organizations united in a shared goal to improve quality of life by bridging the digital divide.

“ *The digital divide is the issue.
Digital equity is the goal.
Digital inclusion is the work.* ”

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Note from Co-Chairs

Once again, it is our pleasure, as Co-Chairs of the Board, to share an update on a defining year for GEO Nova Scotia; one marked by transition, clarity of purpose, and renewed momentum.

Simply put, this past year has been about **transition**. Transition in leadership, and a meaningful transition into GEO's next phase of growth. This evolution builds on the strong foundation created by those who brought GEO to life in response to the urgent need for digital inclusion during COVID.

In July 2025 we were thrilled to welcome Bonnie Ste-Croix as GEO's first Chief Executive Officer. Bonnie has brought deep leadership, operational expertise, vision, and a genuine compassion for community-qualities that continue to be essential as GEO moves forward. Working alongside her, founder Matt Spurway stepped into his new role of Chief Development Officer, focusing on partnerships and new opportunities for growth. Supported by a dedicated staff, we are confident that Bonnie is exceptionally well-positioned to lead GEO through its next chapter.

This year also marks an important organizational shift, as GEO evolves from a start-up into a more established sustainable force for digital equity in Nova Scotia. At the heart of this transition is the launch of GEO's new strategic plan – a clear and forward-looking roadmap for impact from 2026 to 2029. It outlines our mission, vision,

and values, and sets thirteen strategic objectives across four key priority areas: strengthening internal systems; deepening our reach and impact; building a more reliable and structured approach to funding; and influencing and leading change in digital equity. Together, these reflect a balanced focus; inward, on organizational effectiveness, and outward on community impact.

Speaking of transition, the Board itself has also evolved over the past year. Despite the departure of two founding members, we have maintained strong momentum through the commitment of both continuing and new Board members. Through active engagement we have supported Bonnie and her team in advancing meaningful impact. In the months ahead, the Board will transition from a more operational role to a policy-focused one; an important indicator of organizational maturity and growth.

As we look to the year ahead, GEO is stronger than ever; grounded in purpose, guided by strategy, and energized by the collective commitment of our community. We are deeply grateful to all who support and believe in this work.

Yours, in community,



Kelsey Rioux & Karn Nichols

GEO Board Co-Chairs

Note from CEO

I could not be happier to share this reflection on GEO Nova Scotia's achievements over the past twelve months. Looking back on my first year with GEO, it is truly remarkable to consider the transformative journey we have already shared together. Joining this team has been one of the most rewarding milestones of my career. This work matters, and I feel it in my bones.

You don't have to believe me, though. The exponential demand for GEO's services speaks for itself. We began the 25-26 fiscal year with a first quarter that saw the highest demand in our history and that demand continued throughout the year. While this clearly demonstrated the essential need for digital access across the province, such sustained momentum required us to remain agile-pivoting and adapting within our resource capacity. Our success this year belongs to our dedicated partners, our relentless and unfaltering staff team, a diligent Board of Directors, and a shared unwavering commitment to GEO's mission.

Throughout the year we remained dedicated to meeting the needs of Nova Scotians by ensuring equitable access to the vast number of opportunities available online. Front-of-mind was the research that showed people who are unable to benefit from internet access are likely to have worse health outcomes, face higher costs due to lack of capacity to cost-compare, and are over five (5) times more likely to be unemployed. This evidence fueled our resolve to deepen our impact so the ripple effects of improved outcomes can resonate throughout our province.

In this report you'll see impressive data about diverse populations that have benefited from GEO's programs. However, it's not really the numbers that are the most impressive part, it's the people themselves. To illustrate some of our participant's life-changing experiences, we have integrated brief examples of their inspiring narratives throughout this report. Shared by our dedicated partners and participants themselves, each story serves as a testament to the profound impact of digital equity, demonstrating how access, affordability, and digital capacity can unlock potential, bridge socio-economic divides, and strengthen community outcomes. This is why we're here and why we will persevere in our efforts to achieve digital equity for Nova Scotia.

Sincerely,



Bonnie Ste-Croix
*Chief Executive Officer
GEO Nova Scotia*



About GEO



I was able to complete mandatory training/education so that I could keep current with work and the college of nurses.”

- GEO Participant



The GEO program was able to help me get back on my feet with a new job after being unemployed and in dire straits. It was one of the largest and most helpful tools that I could have hoped for.”

- GEO Connects Graduate

GEO works to improve the quality of life for low income Nova Scotians by creating programs, services, and partnerships that increase digital equity.

If you've found your way to this report, chances are you may already be aware of GEO's work to bridge the digital divide. However, we still frequently hear that digital inclusion, digital equity and the digital divide are not well understood. This is partially because the digital world has become so integrated into society that it is easy to overlook the fact that, while most of the world has moved online, people without access or skills are being left behind - most of whom already experience multiple barriers. The growing gap between those online and offline is perpetuating existing social and economic inequities while much of the world remains unaware of the issue.

As a nonprofit organization, GEO Nova Scotia is working hard to close the digital divide. We provide affordable access to devices, digital skills, home internet, and phone data plans to people who are unable to afford these on their own. GEO's programs are intentionally designed to reduce barriers so that access to our services is as simple as possible. The most important component of this is our partnership approach where more than 130 organizations across the province partner with us to deliver these services. Together we are changing lives and working to level the playing field across Nova Scotia.

Yet even with this, the divide continues to grow as accelerated digital advancement outpaces the development of preventative infrastructure to ensure people facing barriers are not further marginalized. GEO aims to support an increased focus on policy development for a balance between digitization and social equity until universal access is a reality. Until then, GEO will continue working with partners to build digital skills, open doors to the internet, and provide people with devices and the support they need to safely navigate the online world and all the opportunities it offers.

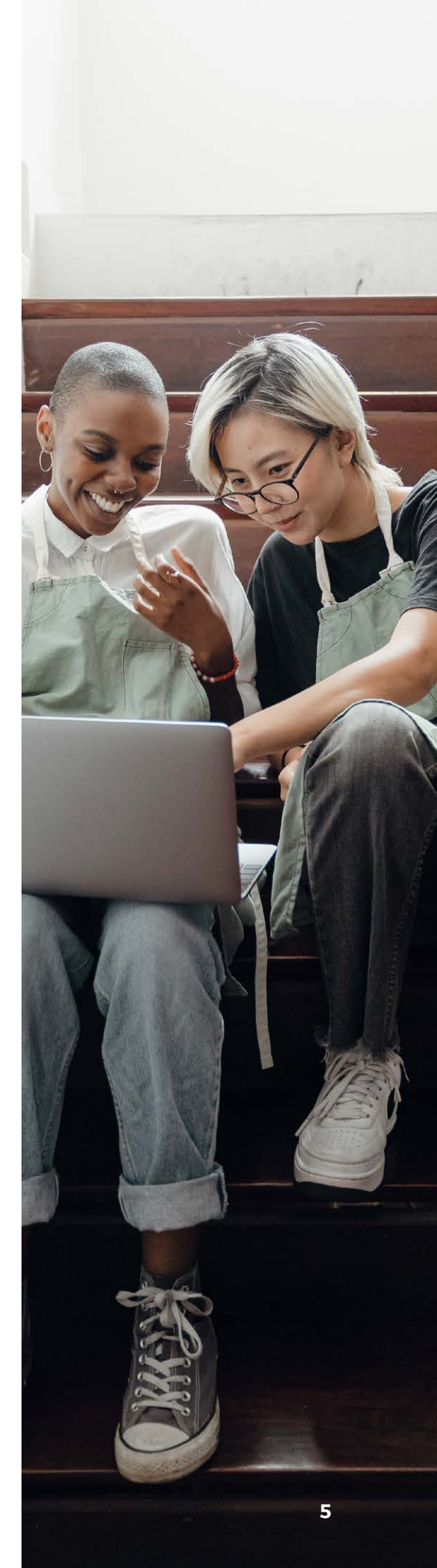
MISSION:

Bridging the digital divide by providing access to the internet, devices, and digital skills to fully participate in the online world.



VISION:

Everyone thrives with access to the expanding opportunities of the digital world.



Participant Totals

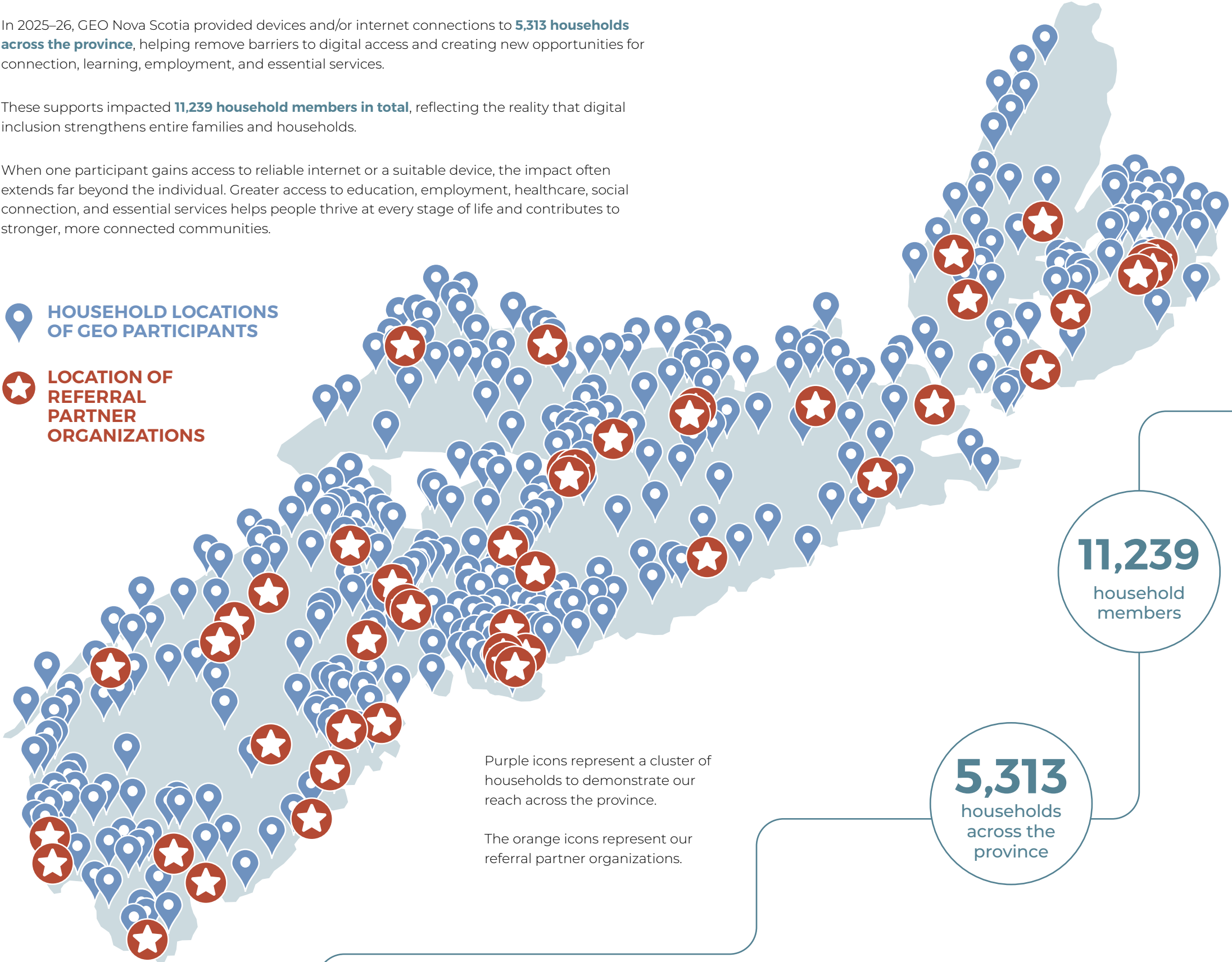
In 2025–26, GEO Nova Scotia provided devices and/or internet connections to **5,313 households across the province**, helping remove barriers to digital access and creating new opportunities for connection, learning, employment, and essential services.

These supports impacted **11,239 household members in total**, reflecting the reality that digital inclusion strengthens entire families and households.

When one participant gains access to reliable internet or a suitable device, the impact often extends far beyond the individual. Greater access to education, employment, healthcare, social connection, and essential services helps people thrive at every stage of life and contributes to stronger, more connected communities.

 **HOUSEHOLD LOCATIONS OF GEO PARTICIPANTS**

 **LOCATION OF REFERRAL PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS**



Purple icons represent a cluster of households to demonstrate our reach across the province.

The orange icons represent our referral partner organizations.

11,239
household members

5,313
households across the province



Because of GEO Nova Scotia, one of our participants was encouraged to get the internet to her home when [broadband] came to her community. She now uses video chat with her family and friends. Having a spouse with early signs of dementia, she is able to remain in the home while still socializing."

- GEO Referral Partner

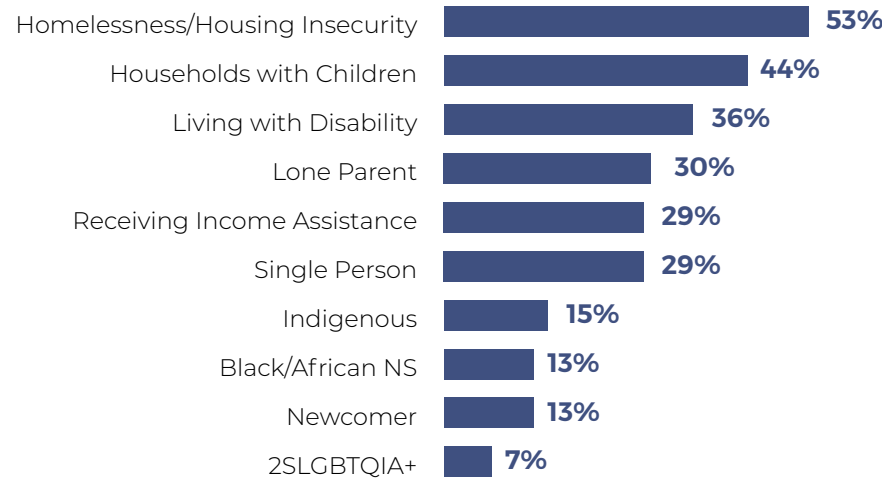


Having access to this program has made an unmeasurable impact on my child. He went from being non verbal to being able to communicate and express himself and use his words which I never thought was going to be possible. He is now even able to read basic words and choose his own foods on a menu and play games with flash cards."

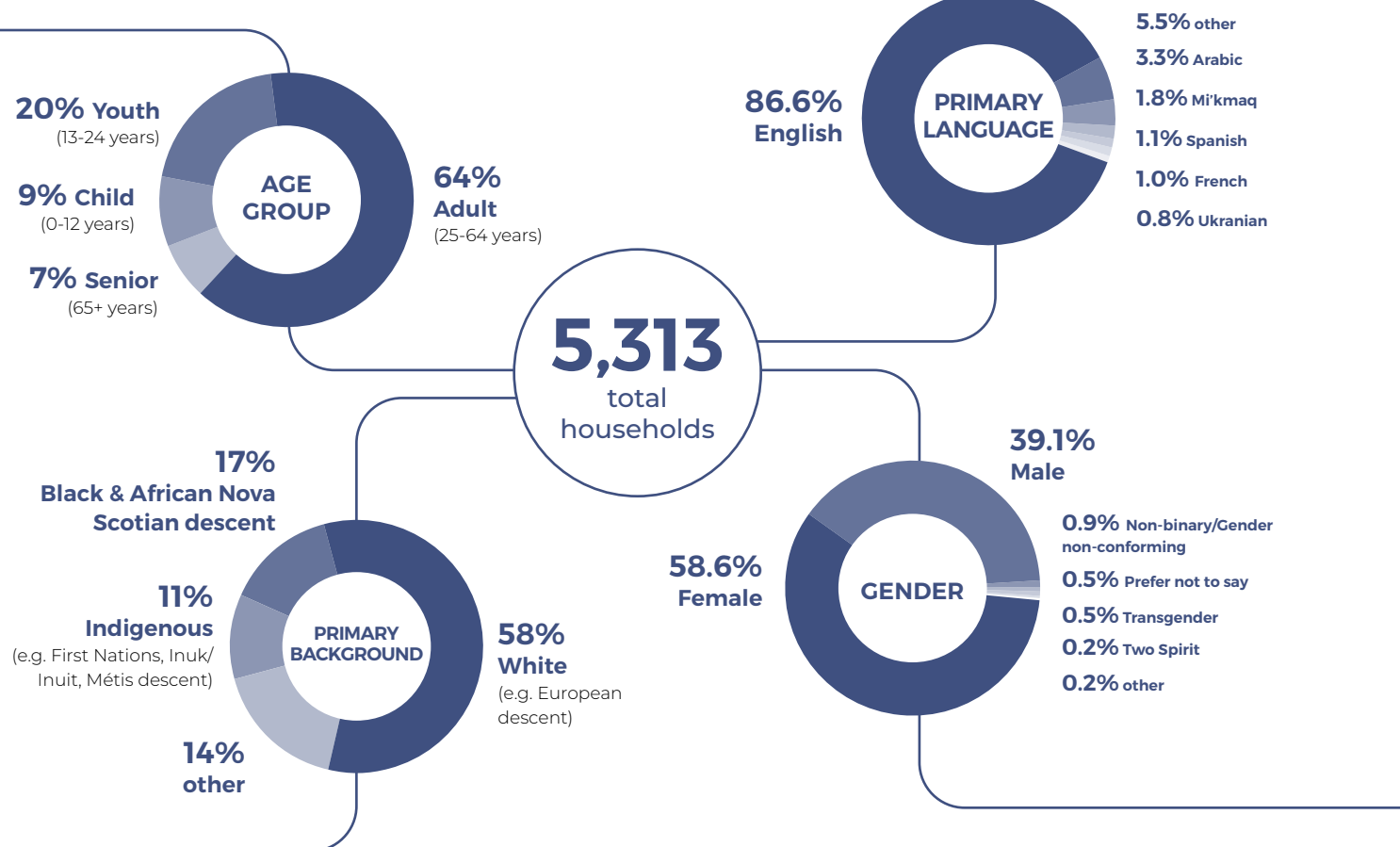
- Youth AAC Participant

Participant Demographics 2025-26

The table below shows self-reporting from participants GEO Nova Scotia reached between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026.

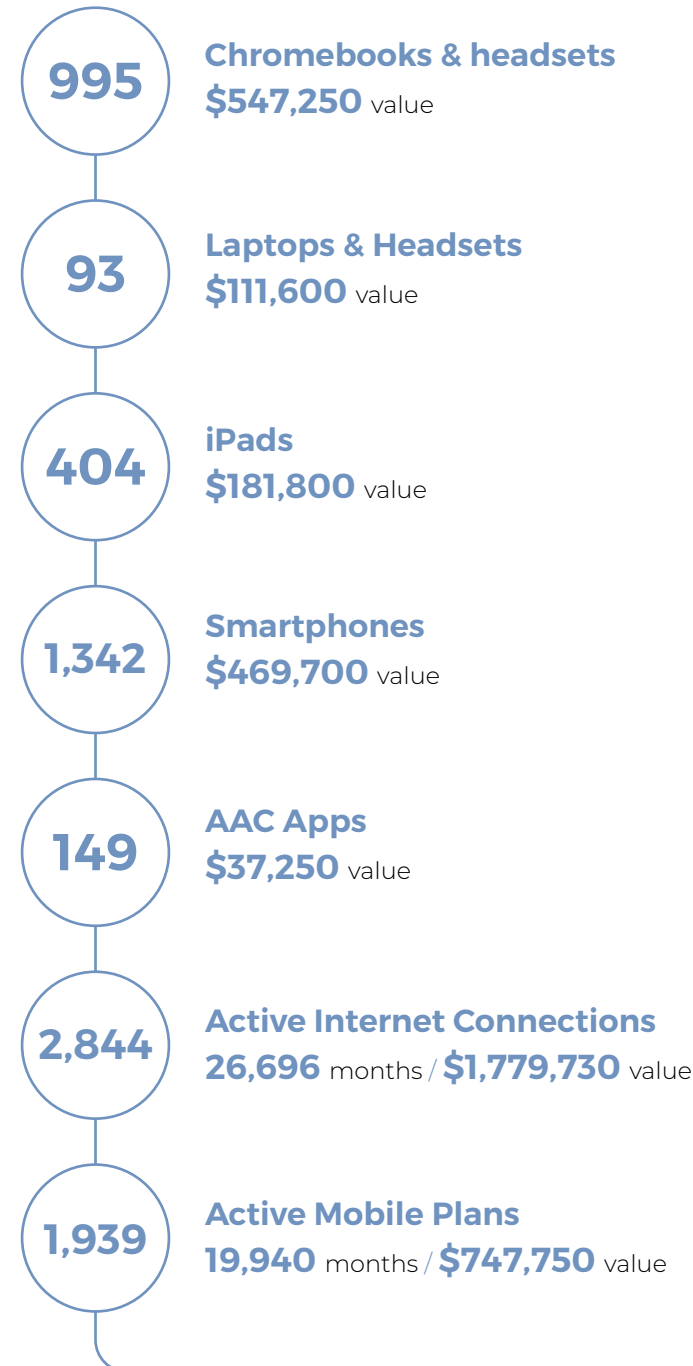


Note: People's lived experiences are intersectional, so they can belong to more than one group, and their households may be counted for more than one demographic category.



We have been collecting demographic information about the primary Participants in each household; other residents in the household are not included in these statistics. Detailed demographic information about Participants is in the Report [on page 27](#).

Devices & Connections Distributed



In total that's **46,636 months of connectivity** provided in a single year! To put that into perspective, that equals more than **3,886 years** of connection. If that service had been provided consecutively to just one person, they would have needed to get online during the Bronze Age-and they'd still be connected today!



When we moved back to our home, GEO made sure the internet service was installed right away. It is free, one less thing to worry about. I have one in University, one in college and one in elementary school. Did not hear any complaints about the internet, they were doing their school stuff no issue. That is a huge help for me as a single mother."

- GEO Connects Participant



This program has increased my job satisfaction. There are so many system barriers and service gaps that we're often not able to support families to the extent that they need. Being able to provide this service to families has been wonderful."

- GEO Referral Partner



Communication is a fundamental right, and it is unfortunate that there are so few programs and support, aside from GEO Nova Scotia, available to help families provide their children with a reliable and effective way to communicate."

- GEO Referral Partner

Referral Partners: The community connections behind the impact

GEO Nova Scotia's work is deeply rooted in relationships across the province. Our Referral Partners are the community organizations and frontline staff who are already supporting people navigating complex life circumstances. Because of the trust they've built, they're often the first to recognize when someone could benefit from connectivity supports and help connect them to GEO programs.

These partners work alongside individuals from all walks of life, including people experiencing housing insecurity, newcomers, lone parents, people living with disabilities, and members of the 2SLGBTQIA+ community. Their role is simple but essential: identifying need, making warm referrals, and ensuring people are supported into services that help close the digital divide.

This past year, our network continued to grow in meaningful ways. We welcomed 14 new Referral Partners, bringing our total to 140 organizations across Nova Scotia. Each one represents a connection point into communities—helping ensure more people can access the digital tools they need to fully participate in everyday life.

We were also proud to initiate special Referral Partnerships with Mount St. Vincent University to support their Tuition Waiver Program participants and Dalhousie University's Transition Year Program.



GEO also partners with organizations on special projects outside their main programs. These are often supported with financial grants. Here are some highlights from 2025-2026

- 159 smartphones and 159 new data plans for individuals experiencing gender-based violence in partnership with the **Transition House Association of Nova Scotia, YWCA**, with funding support from the **Nova Scotia Advisory Council on the Status of Women**;
- 171 iPads and 143 specialized AAC apps for youth living with disabilities, in partnership with **SchoolsPlus** and **Nova Scotia Hearing & Speech**, with funding support from the **Public Good Society of Dartmouth**.
- 12 Chromebooks, iPads and connections for African-Nova Scotian youth in The Source program in partnership and with funding support from **Unity Charity**.
- 23 devices and 20 connections to support the mental health and wellbeing of refugees navigating the refugee determination process, in partnership and with funding support from **Halifax Refugee Clinic**.
- 23 Chromebooks for seniors in partnership and with funding support from **Sagewell**.
- 57 laptops and 12 internet connections for participants learning life skills and preparing for employment in partnership with **Solutions Learning Centre**.
- 30 Chromebooks for youth participating in the Virtual EDGE job search and readiness program in partnership with **SEED**.

There is a full list of Referral Partners [on page 29](#), as well as [on our website](#).



It empowers clients to help themselves as much as possible by looking up and connecting with resources, whether at our facility or out in the community. They are happier and feel more supported. It is a huge help to our work. It also eases our worries around client safety, knowing they have the resource (phone) to reach out for help if needed."

- GEO Referral Partner

Finding Their Voice: GEO's Youth AAC Program in Action



My son has made tremendous strides in his language. He has begun to gain confidence in speaking out loud. Following the words he makes on his iPad."

- Youth AAC Participant Parent



It has significantly decreased the amount of time I spend applying for funding on behalf of families and has given me confidence that, if a family identifies a need for a speech generating device, I can help them access one."

- Youth AAC Referral Partner

For children and youth living with disabilities and their families, access to the right technology can be life-changing. Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) tools such as speech-generating devices and communication apps can unlock their ability to express themselves, connect with others, and navigate everyday life with greater independence.

In partnership with **SchoolsPlus** and **Hearing & Speech Nova Scotia**, GEO Nova Scotia is proud to support these children and their families through our Youth AAC Program, providing iPads with protective cases and specialized AAC applications to remove barriers to communication and digital access.

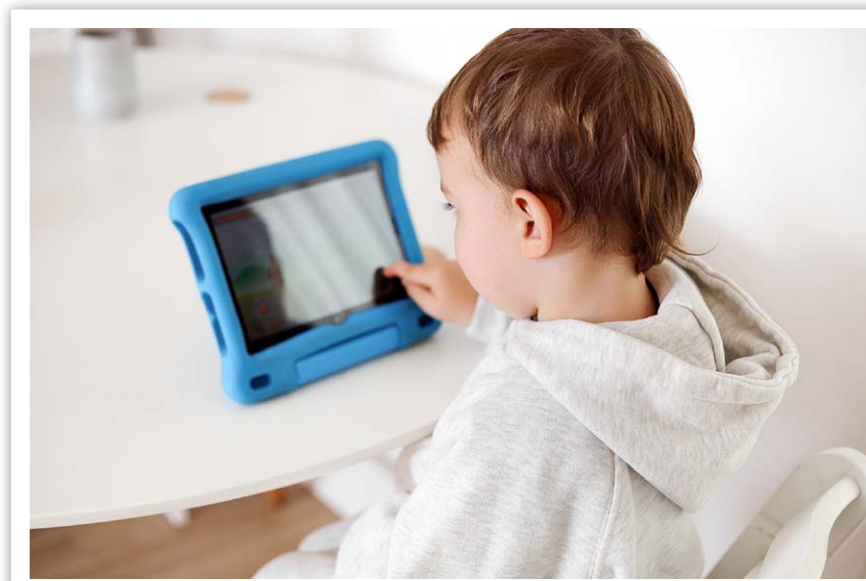
In 2025–26, GEO Nova Scotia **distributed 171 iPads and 143 specialized AAC apps** to youth across Nova Scotia, supported in part by funding from The Public Good Society of Dartmouth.

Referral partners have shared that this has transformed not only the lives of children and families, but also the support they are able to provide as professionals. With AAC tools in place, children are able to communicate their wants, needs, thoughts, and personalities more clearly, reducing frustration and creating stronger connections at home and in school. For clinicians, this means they can spend less time navigating barriers to communication and more time helping children build skills, expand vocabulary, and prepare for long-term success in the classroom and beyond.

Together, this partnership is helping young people build confidence, strengthen family connections, prepare for school, and participate more fully in their communities—because every child deserves the opportunity to be understood.

171
ipads

143
AAC
apps



Once he received the device, the transformation was remarkable. He immediately began exploring the vocabulary and using it to communicate, which was incredibly exciting for both his family and me. He became more engaged with others and started forming connections that had previously been difficult for him. His frustration decreased significantly, and he finally had a reliable way to express himself. We were able to help him build his skills with the device and expand his vocabulary before starting school, giving him a strong foundation for communication in the classroom. Your program truly helped give him a voice."

- Youth AAC Referral Partner



I was also able to access and use resources for my healing and personal growth following the traumatic experience I had with my ex partner and I was able to educate myself on domestic abuse and violence.”

- Crisis Mobile Participant



This program has kept the upwards of 60 women who have accessed this program safe. Our agency distributes phones to women in immediate danger of domestic violence or at a high risk of lethality. These phones have at times been what keeps them alive and gives them ability to call for help when needed.”

- Crisis Mobile Participant

A Lifeline at a Time of Crisis

When someone is experiencing a crisis such as gender-based violence or homelessness, access to a reliable phone can mean everything.

A mobile phone can be the difference between isolation and support, danger and safety, uncertainty and action. It can mean reaching a shelter, contacting a loved one, attending a virtual appointment, or calling for help. It also means a brand new phone number and the relief of knowing that the device has no tracking installed on it.

That’s why GEO Nova Scotia’s Crisis Mobile program exists.

In 2025-2026 Crisis Mobile expanded to become a year-round program with a growing network of nearly 60 Referral Partner organizations across Nova Scotia. It was a natural evolution born of an existing partnership between GEO Nova Scotia, THANS, and the YWCA, that was funded by the Nova Scotia Status of Women Office. It has also grown thanks to hundreds of used mobile phones donated by the public and Eastlink through GEO Nova Scotia’s Phones for the Holidays donation drive in December 2025. The program is helping frontline staff from community organizations provide instant mobile connection and support to people in crisis.

These organizations are often the first and only safe point of contact for someone navigating fear, uncertainty, and isolation while in need of shelter, healthcare, housing, support services, and safety planning.

To help make mobile connections possible, GEO’s Crisis Mobile program pre-ships a box of ready-to-use mobile phones with cases, screen protectors, and SIM cards to registered referral partners. They also receive vouchers that activate one-month mobile and data plans, allowing partners to connect their clients instantly, any time of day or night. Partners can also request 6-month phone plans for individuals who need additional support.

For many recipients, receiving a phone represents more than just access to technology. It is a reminder that they are not alone.

In 2025-2026, 451 phones were distributed to Crisis Mobile Referral Partners along with 193 12-month mobile phone plans and 250 one-month phone cards.

To learn more about Crisis Mobile and our referral partners, visit: geonovascotia.ca/crisis-mobile



This program showed me that people do care about me, since due to my situation, I’ve lost a lot of contact with family and friends and have been very isolated.”

- Crisis Mobile Participant



photo: Centre for Homelessness Impact / Amy Ryall



Between my studies at NSCC and my daughter being in high school, having reliable internet was non-negotiable for our assignments. The GEO program was a total lifesaver- it met our needs 100% and made our success possible.”

- GEO Connects Graduate

1,521

participants have graduated from the GEO Connects program

Introducing GEO Graduation: Steps to Independence

The GEO Connects program supports people unable to afford internet connections and devices on their own.

For many, the opportunities that become available to them online mean they can eventually afford their own internet account independently, or at least make a contribution to the cost.

In 2025 we launched our Graduation process for the GEO Connects program to support our participants who have reached the end of their program term. The process recognizes individual circumstances and readiness to take on some responsibility for their own connections, while freeing up opportunities for new participants to benefit from the program.

Through the graduation process, participants are supported in exploring options for maintaining connectivity beyond the GEO Connects program, where possible. It also honours the trust, relationships, and personal achievements developed throughout their participation.

In 2025-2026, GEO staff reached out to over 1,500 participants who had benefited from free internet for more than a year. Each participant was invited into a conversation about what came next. For some, it meant taking over full responsibility for their internet connection at a special reduced “Alumni Rate” agreed to by our Internet Service Partners. For others who could not afford this rate, it meant enrollment in a subsidized plan where they pay \$15 to \$45 per month and GEO subsidized the rest. Every situation was unique and every conversation, just like every participant, mattered.

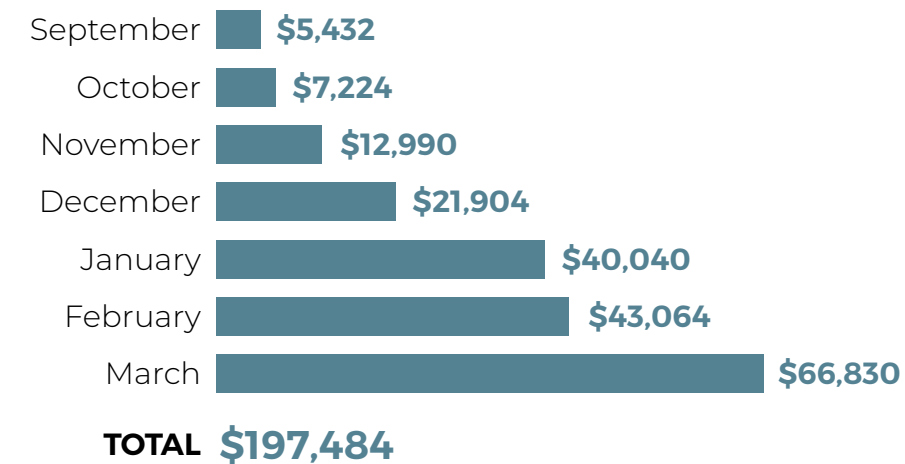
- **June 2025** - Internal candidate was promoted to the Digital Equity Lead and was largely dedicating the majority of their time to the launch and success of our graduation program.
- **August 2025** - The first email was sent.
- **September 2025** - The first participants officially graduated.
- **As of March 31, 2026** - 1,521 participants have graduated from the GEO Connects program.

Hundreds of those households are now independently paying for their own account through the special Alumni Rate. Hundreds more are contributing a portion of the cost through the subsidized plan - an important milestone that reflects both increased stability for participants and the long-term sustainability of digital inclusion support across Nova Scotia. These opportunities also enable many participants to build up their credit, a critical step in their own financial stabilization.

The responses to our graduation surveys have been overwhelmingly positive, with many expressing immense gratitude for the support they received and deep appreciation for the care shown to them by our staff during their graduation process.

We are deeply grateful to have been part of each participant's journey and proud of the trust they placed in us. Their stories remind us that digital inclusion is about far more than devices and connections-it is about independence, opportunity, and belonging.

Financial “savings” in 2025-2026 from graduated participants - this is funding that can now be applied to new participants - allowing more people to be helped through GEO programming:



1,184

participants have filled out surveys regarding their experience with a GEO Connects program

over 750

participants are paying the full cost or part of the cost of their internet going forward.



I have been able to research possible career paths, recover from surgery, and have a strong start to my path forward. The GEO alumni rate will help me to continue to grow.”

- GEO Connects Graduate

Increasing our focus on Digital Skill Building

“
I have become a little more comfortable operating the computer and the internet. It opens up a whole other world.”

- GEO Connects Participant

In recognition of the ever-growing need for digital skills support; over the past year, GEO began reimagining its digital skill building program called Digital Champions. The focus on supporting referral partners so they are better able to teach basic skills to their clients will continue, but with the reimagining, content will be more tailored, the approach and style slightly different, and the addition of other elements will be added to our portfolio.

The breadth of digital skill building activities will be broader so the name of this portfolio will now be the GEO Digital Equity Network (DEN) whose purpose is to establish a digital skills support network that equips community partners in Nova Scotia with essential digital skills resources that enable them to better meet their clients' needs. Through the DEN, Community partners will be able to acquire resources, specific tools, and information to guide their clients through the digital landscape with safety and confidence.

Also in 2025-2026, GEO Nova Scotia staff contributed to the development of digital skill building content that was tailored to specific populations or topics. This aligned well with GEO's increased focus on making digital skill building meaningful while also allowing for a deeper dive into specific needs. By focusing on tailored content, GEO staff were able to provide more relevant support that addressed unique barriers faced by different groups. This meant that the digital skills acquired were directly applicable, fostering a more inclusive and effective digital learning environment. Examples include:

ATLANTIC COMMUNITY SHELTER SOCIETY

Working with Atlantic Community Shelter Society, GEO Nova Scotia helped develop a practical guide supporting their iPad and government applications sessions for seniors. The resource was designed to help participants navigate essential digital tools and services with greater confidence.

NOVA SCOTIA WORKS TRAINING PROGRAM

GEO Nova Scotia designed an online digital skills guide for Nova Scotia Works staff, focused on providing effective strategies to support clients through computer-based job searches. The project was funded through the Nova Scotia Department of Labour, Skills, and Immigration.

AI COLLAB PARTICIPATION

GEO Nova Scotia was accepted as a participant in the AI Collab facilitated by the Coalition of Innovation Leaders Advancing Respect and funded by the Canadian Centre for Nonprofit Digital Resilience. The initiative explores the role of emerging technologies and responsible AI within the nonprofit sector.

JUSTICE & TECH COLLAB

GEO Nova Scotia also participated in the Justice & Tech Collab hosted by St. Leonard's Society, contributing to conversations surrounding technology, accessibility, and equitable support systems within justice-focused community work.

These initiatives recognize that digital skills are a critical part of digital inclusion. In fact, gaps in digital skills can have profound consequences, limiting educational opportunities, employment prospects, and access to essential services. Supporting the development of digital skills mitigates the risk of deepening the divide for people who already face multiple barriers.

Through ongoing learning, collaboration, and community-driven solutions GEO is working to level the playing field through access to basic digital skills, an understanding of how to navigate online environments, and the ability to critically assess and use information safely online.

Redeveloping our digital skill building work is ongoing and 2026 will see a more connected ecosystem to support the continually evolving digital skills needed to navigate the online world.



Introducing GEO for Nonprofits

In 2025 GEO Nova Scotia launched GEO for Nonprofits - a social enterprise designed to help community organizations across Nova Scotia access more affordable technology and connectivity.

As a nonprofit, GEO understands the challenge of procuring affordable technology for the workplace. With over 125 nonprofit partners involved in GEO programming, it became apparent that sharing GEO's economy of scale could benefit partners, while also supporting GEO programs.

By leveraging GEO Nova Scotia's buying power, distribution network, and partnerships, GEO for Nonprofits is providing devices and connectivity solutions at below-market cost to other community-based organizations, providing savings so more of their limited budgets can be focused on their critical programming and community impact.

Partners have already been benefiting from the opportunity! One participating nonprofit noted that purchasing through GEO for Nonprofits will save their organization approximately **\$3,400 annually** - savings that can now be redirected back into frontline programs and services.



Supporting the Sector with Digital Inclusion

GEO FOR NONPROFITS January 2026 Spotlight **APPLE IPAD - 8TH GEN**

Without case: **\$329** (Tax Free!)

With Otterbox case: **\$379** (Tax Free!)

32GBs of Storage

Professionally Refurbished

GEOForNonprofits@geonovascotia.ca
GEOForNonprofits.org

Order now

Nonprofits require - and deserve - the tools needed to communicate and innovate online and through other technological tools. GEO for Nonprofits represents another way GEO Nova Scotia is working toward digital inclusion for all - ensuring nonprofit organizations have the tools they need to continue supporting communities across the province.

A Historic Step Forward for Digital Inclusion

As more of daily life moves online, digital equity is increasingly being recognized as a critical issue impacting health, education, employment, financial security, social connection, and civic participation. Access to affordable internet, reliable devices, and digital skills is necessary to fully participate in modern society.

In Nova Scotia, one of the clearest examples of this growing recognition came in October 2025, when the **Province officially proclaimed October 6-10 as Digital Inclusion Week**. The proclamation marked a historic moment, making Nova Scotia the first province in Canada to formally recognize the importance of digital inclusion in this way.

For GEO Nova Scotia and the hundreds of partners involved in this work from the community, businesses, and government, the proclamation represented a critical milestone. It was a strong public acknowledgment that digital equity is a collective responsibility and that ensuring no one is left behind requires collective action.

Nova Scotia's leadership proclaiming Digital Inclusion Week positioned the province as a national leader in advancing digital equity. At a time when many Canadians face barriers to participating fully in society, the proclamation demonstrated a commitment to creating a more inclusive future.

The proclamation by Premier Tim Houston was delivered by the Honourable Jill Balser during **GEO Forum 2025**, recognizing that digital access is essential to participating fully in life, work, and community.

The need for this work increases every day. While digital services continue to expand, tens of thousands of Nova Scotians face barriers related to affordability, connectivity, and digital skills. Digital Inclusion Week helps shine a spotlight on those realities while also celebrating the collaborative efforts underway to address them.



Events & Highlights

This year, GEO Nova Scotia brought people together through milestone moments, important conversations, and community celebrations that helped move digital inclusion forward across the province.



In-person audience members take part in the Opening Plenary Panel, "What Does Digital Inclusion Mean to Nova Scotia?", at GEO Forum 2025 in Halifax.

GEO FORUM 2025

October brought our biggest GEO Forum yet, with more than 480 registered attendees. **GEO Forum 2025** saw speakers, panelists, and partners all coming together to share insights and experiences, highlighting the growing momentum for digital inclusion across the province.

GEO Nova Scotia would also like to extend sincere thanks to the sponsors whose generosity made the 2025 GEO Forum possible. Their support allowed the event to be offered at no cost to attendees or to GEO Nova Scotia, helping create an accessible and welcoming opportunity to celebrate digital inclusion efforts from across the province.

Special thanks to our Presenting Sponsor, the Nova Scotia Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions, and to our Partnering Sponsors:



Their partnership and shared commitment to digital inclusion continue to help strengthen communities across Nova Scotia.

FIRST PHONE DRIVE SUCCESS

In 2025, GEO Nova Scotia held its first annual Phone Drive, in support of those experiencing gender-based violence or homelessness. The campaign exceeded its goal of collecting 1,000 donated mobile phones, with support from more than 80 drop-off locations, including nearly all 55 MLA constituency offices, and a network of over 40 distribution partners. The Phone Drive helped connect people to the services, opportunities, and supports they need to thrive.



Eastlink's Dan MacNeil stands with their first shipment of mobile phones donated to GEO's Phone Drive. These devices will help connect Nova Scotians, including those experiencing homelessness or fleeing gender-based violence.

A NEW CHAPTER IN LEADERSHIP

The growth of GEO Nova Scotia was reflected in an evolving leadership structure, when we welcomed our first CEO, Bonnie Ste-Croix, while ensuring that the vision of our founder, Matt Spurway, remained at the heart of our work through his role as Chief Development Officer.

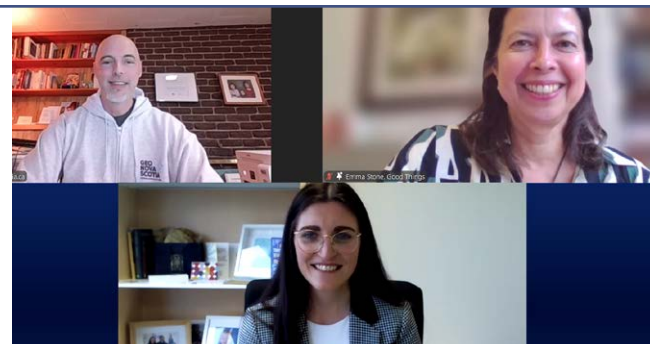


GEO Nova Scotia CEO Bonnie Ste-Croix and Chief Development Officer Matt Spurway at the GEO Nova Scotia office. Their long-standing relationship, built on years of working together prior to Bonnie's arrival at GEO, has set them up for a productive road ahead!

INSIGHT FORUMS

In 2025 GEO hosted two **Insight Forums** focused on digital inclusion and global learning.

From exploring the UK's approach to digital equity to lessons shared across the Atlantic, these sessions helped connect Nova Scotia to broader conversations about what inclusive digital access can look like.



GEO Nova Scotia's Chief Development Officer, Matt Spurway, The Good Things Foundation's Dr. Emma Stone, and Hon. Jill Balser, Minister of Nova Scotia Department of Cyber Security and Digital Solutions are seen taking part in the virtual Forum.

EXPANDING ACCESS

With funding from the Mental Health Foundation of Nova Scotia, GEO Nova Scotia printed and distributed thousands of copies of our eMental Health Booklet 2.0 this year.

This updated resource was designed to make trusted, practical mental health information more accessible to people and communities across the province.





NOVA SCOTIA DIGITAL INCLUSION AWARDS

2025 NOVA SCOTIA DIGITAL INCLUSION AWARDS

In October, GEO Nova Scotia welcomed more than 100 people from across the province to celebrate the **2025 Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Awards** - recognizing the individuals, organizations, and partnerships working toward digital equity in communities throughout Nova Scotia. The event highlighted the power of collaboration, local leadership, and the collective effort behind digital inclusion for all.

2025 AWARD RECIPIENTS:

- Government Champion of the Year:
Nova Scotia Status of Women Office
- Community Champion of the Year:
Colchester Adult Learning Association
- GEO Referral Agent of the Year:
Grace Reynolds - Futureworx
- Program Partnership of the Year:
NPower Canada
- Business Champion of the Year:
DataGuide Technologies

The Award Ceremony also saw the inaugural inductee into the Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Hall of Fame. **Sandra McKenzie** was honoured for her tireless efforts to bring the cause of digital inclusion in the province forward during and after the Covid-19 pandemic. As the founding chair of GEO Nova Scotia's board of directors, Sandra will always have a special place in the heart of the organization.



The Honourable Leah Martin, Minister responsible for the Advisory Council on the Status of Women, accepting the award for Government Champion of the Year at the 2025 Nova Scotia Digital Inclusion Awards.



Looking ahead...

The GEO team is excited about the opportunities ahead in 2026–27 and beyond. With our new Strategic Plan, *Strengthening Our Foundation, Expanding Our Impact*, guiding us, we are moving forward with an emphasis on strengthening our internal practices and building capacity for new opportunities. We have identified a clear path forward to transition from a start-up to a structured and scalable organization. We will continue streamlining our processes and evolving our programming while remaining grounded in the foundation that has been built over the years.

More and more, we are digging into research and reaching out to partners across Canada and other parts of the world who are also tackling similar issues. We share research, ideas, and our respective progress so we can learn from each other. Collectively, we've noted that the research increasingly emphasizes that digital access plays a critical role in addressing the social determinants of health and economic inclusion. So much so that "the influence of digitalization on the social determinants of health has emerged as an area of particular interest for researchers, with some proposing digital connectivity and digital literacy to be 'super social determinants'" (Sheon, 2018).

These conversations fuel our desire to continually evolve our programs so they improve outcomes for our participants and consistently demonstrate what is possible when these tools are provided to people who cannot afford them. We see every day that when people have access to affordable internet, devices, and the skills needed, they can find jobs, access healthcare, reconnect with friends and family, and complete their education.

We're excited to work with our partners to discuss ideas and concepts that can further our shared goal of digital equity.

2025–26 was a year of growing demand and creative pivoting as we worked to meet evolving needs by reducing our costs per participant, initiating our graduation process, and implementing other innovative adaptations. This upcoming year will further that work and enable us to build GEO's capacity to reach farther into communities, deepen relationships, improve outcomes, broaden our networks, and enrich lives across the province. Most importantly, we will continue to nurture partnerships and extend our gratitude to every person who has, and continues to, support digital inclusion efforts.



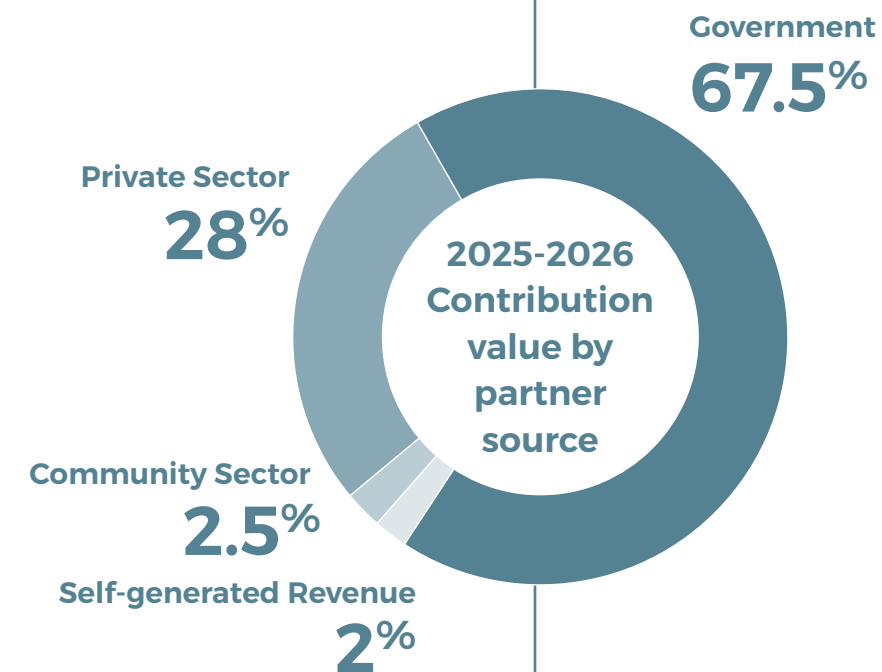
GEO Nova Scotia staff and board at a strategic planning retreat in 2026.

Value from our Partners

GEO's revenue has primarily come from the Department of Opportunities and Social Development and there are increasingly more Departments and other funders supporting our work, including the NS Status of Women Office, Labour Skills and Immigration, and Cyber Security and Digital Solutions.

Our private sector partners contribute in-kind to GEO through significantly reduced rates for equipment, connections, storage, delivery, and labour. **In 2025-2026 the estimated combined value exceeds \$1.7-million.**

Our Community Partners make valuable contributions to support digital inclusion work. Beyond Program Partnership funding contributions, 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. **All together, the estimated value of these contributions exceeds \$150,000.**



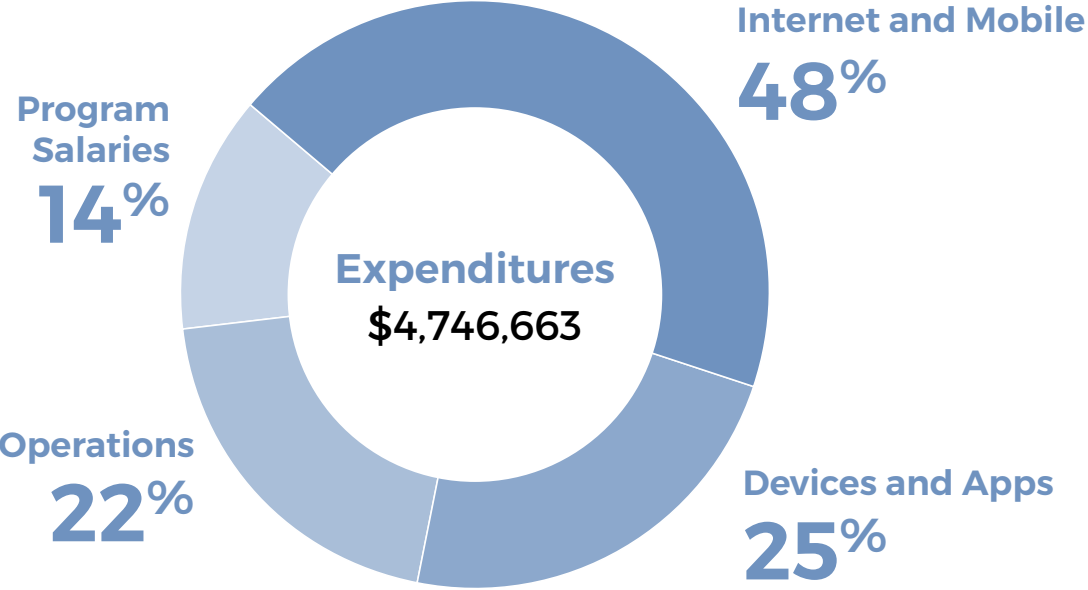
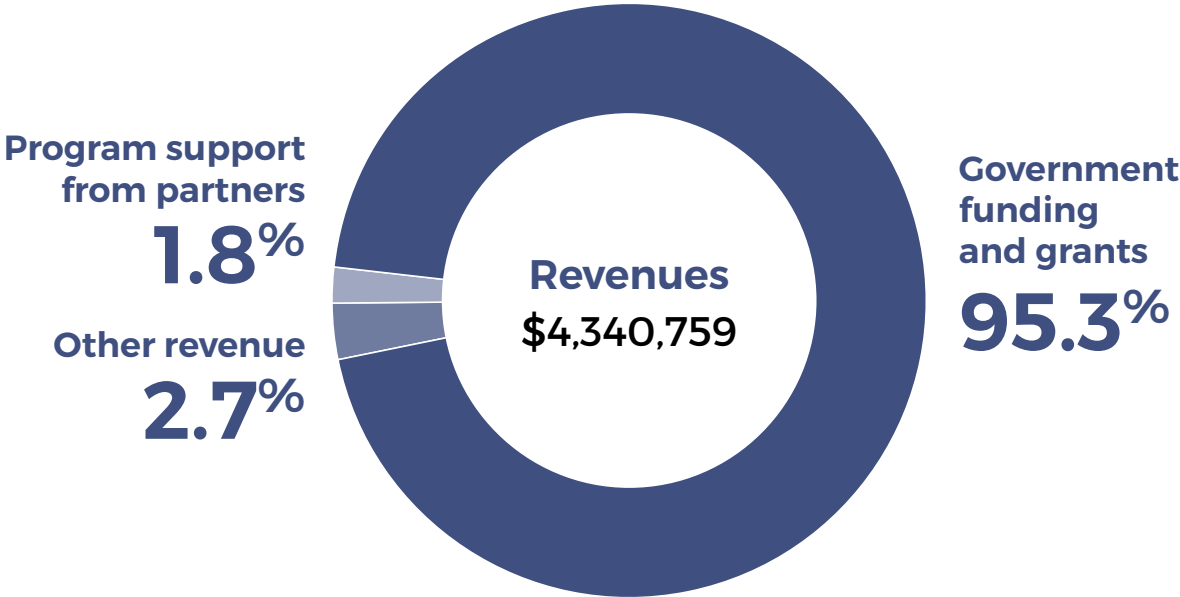
Financial Summary

| FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT | APRIL 1 ST 2025 TO MARCH 31 ST 2026 | APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| Revenues | \$4,340,759 | \$4,233,883 |
| Expenditures | \$4,746,663 | \$4,232,841 |
| Total net excess (deficit) of revenues over expenditure | (\$405,904) | \$1,042 |

| REVENUES BREAKDOWN | APRIL 1 ST 2025 TO MARCH 31 ST 2026 | APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025 |
|-------------------------------|---|---|
| Government funding and grants | \$4,144,905 | \$4,120,989 |
| Program support from partners | \$76,935 | \$55,650 |
| Other revenue | \$118,919 | \$57,244 |

| EXPENSE BREAKDOWN | APRIL 1 ST 2025 TO MARCH 31 ST 2026 | APRIL 1 ST 2024 TO MARCH 31 ST 2025 |
|---|---|---|
| PROGRAMMING EXPENSES | | |
| Devices & Applications | \$1,079,818 | \$1,316,769 |
| Internet connections & Mobile Phone Plans | \$2,078,944 | \$1,778,742 |
| Program Salaries | \$608,736 | \$535,317 |
| OPERATIONS EXPENSES | | |
| | \$979,165 | \$925,188 |

APRIL 1ST 2025 TO MARCH 31ST 2026



Detailed Participant Demographics

AGE GROUP

| | |
|--------|-----|
| Adult | 63% |
| Youth | 20% |
| Child | 9% |
| Senior | 7% |

GENDER

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--------|
| Female | 58.69% |
| Male | 39.08% |
| Non-Binary/ Gender non-conforming | 0.93% |
| Other | 0.19% |
| Prefer Not To Say | 0.45% |
| Transgender | 0.48% |
| Two Spirit | 0.19% |

PRIMARY BACKGROUND

| | |
|--|--------|
| White (e.g. European descent) | 51.75% |
| Prefer not to say | 10.65% |
| Indigenous (e.g. First Nations, Inuk/Inuit, Métis descent) | 10.24% |
| Black (e.g. African, Afro-Caribbean, African Canadian descent) | 7.56% |
| African Nova Scotian descent | 6.78% |
| Unknown | 4.43% |
| Middle Eastern (e.g. Arab, Persian, West Asian descent - i.e. Afghan, Egyptian, Iranian, Lebanese, Turkish, Kurdish) | 3.61% |
| South Asian (e.g. South Asian descent - i.e. East Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, Sri Lankan, Indo-Caribbean) | 1.64% |
| Other | 1.15% |
| Latino (e.g. Latin American, Hispanic descent) | 1.12% |
| East/Southeast Asian (e.g. Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Taiwanese descent or Filipino, Vietnamese, Cambodian, Thai, Indonesian, other Southeast Asian descent) | 1.04% |
| Jewish | 0.04% |

HOMELESS/HOUSING INSECURE

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| No | 53% |
| Yes | 34% |
| Not comfortable answering | 12% |

2SLGTBQIA+

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| No | 75% |
| Yes | 7% |
| Not comfortable answering | 18% |

LIVING WITH A DISABILITY

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| No | 50% |
| Yes | 36% |
| Not comfortable answering | 15% |

NEWCOMER

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| No | 77% |
| Yes | 12% |
| Not comfortable answering | 10% |

SINGLE PARENT

| | |
|---------------------------|-----|
| No | 61% |
| Yes | 27% |
| Not comfortable answering | 12% |

PRIMARY LANGUAGE

| | |
|--------------------|--------|
| English | 86.55% |
| Arabic | 3.29% |
| Mi'kmaq | 1.75% |
| Spanish | 1.07% |
| French | 1.03% |
| Ukrainian | 0.79% |
| Swahili | 0.56% |
| Hindi | 0.52% |
| Somali | 0.44% |
| Other | 0.40% |
| Malayalam | 0.24% |
| Kinyarwanda | 0.24% |
| Tigrinya | 0.20% |
| Tagalog (Filipino) | 0.20% |
| Russian | 0.20% |
| Punjabi | 0.20% |
| Pashto | 0.20% |
| Farsi | 0.20% |
| Amharic | 0.20% |
| Vietnamese | 0.16% |
| Oromo | 0.16% |
| Nepali | 0.16% |
| Mandarin | 0.12% |
| Turkish | 0.08% |
| Tigriya | 0.08% |
| Persian | 0.08% |
| Nepalese | 0.08% |
| Korean | 0.08% |
| Kakwa | 0.08% |
| Gujarati | 0.08% |
| Yoruba | 0.04% |
| TWI | 0.04% |
| Sign language | 0.04% |
| Portuguese | 0.04% |
| Kurdish | 0.04% |
| Inuktitut | 0.04% |
| Ilocino | 0.04% |
| German | 0.04% |
| Georgian | 0.04% |
| Fante | 0.04% |
| Dholuo | 0.04% |
| Creole | 0.04% |
| Coujarati | 0.04% |
| Chinese, n.o.s. | 0.04% |
| Ahamaric | 0.04% |



Registered Referral Partners

(AS OF MARCH 31, 2026)

- 7th Step Society of Nova Scotia
- Adsum for Women & Children
- Adult Learning Association of Cape Breton
- Africadian Empowerment Academy
- Alderney Cogswell -Atlantic Community Shelters Society
- Alice House
- Ally Centre of Cape Breton
- Antigonish County ALA
- Aboriginal Peoples Training & Employment Commission (APTEC)
- Archdiocese of Halifax-Yarmouth
- Atlantic Community Shelters Society
- Atlantic Muslim Resource Centre
- Atlantic Street -Atlantic Community Shelters Society
- Autism Nova Scotia
- Autumn House
- Antigonish Women's Centre & Sexual Assault Services
- Bancroft -Atlantic Community Shelters Society
- Beacon House Shelter and Pallet Village
- Black Business Initiative - Business is Jammin'
- Black Educators Association
- Breton Ability Centre
- Bryony House
- Cumberland Adult Network for Upgrading (CANU)
- Cape Breton Food Hub
- Cape Breton Transition House
- Cape Breton Community Housing Association
- Chebucto Connections
- Chrysalis House
- Canadian Mental Health Association Halifax Dartmouth
- Canadian Mental Health Association Nova Scotia
- Colchester Adult Learning Association
- Community INC
- Coverdale Justice Society
- Dalhousie University
- Dartmouth Learning Network
- Demetreous Lane Tenants Association
- Digby Adult Learning Association
- Downtown Dartmouth Business Commission
- East Hants Community Learning Association
- Elizabeth Fry Society of Mainland Nova Scotia
- Employment Solutions Society
- Eskasoni Mental Health
- Eastern Shore Musquodoboit Valley Learning Network
- Every Woman's Centre
- Farm to Feast Cafe Association
- Futureworx
- Guysborough Learning
- Halifax Refugee Clinic
- Harbour House
- Healthy Minds Cooperative
- Hearing and Speech Nova Scotia
- In the Works
- Inverness County Literacy
- It Takes A Village Community Outreach & Advocacy
- Jane Paul Indigenous Women's Resource Centre
- The John Howard Society of Nova Scotia - EDGE
- Job Junction
- Juniper House
- Kids Action Program
- King's Senior Safety
- Leaside Transition House
- Lilac Place
- Literacy Nova Scotia
- Maggie's Place: Colchester
- Maggie's Place: Cumberland
- Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre - Millbrook
- Mi'kmaw Family Healing Centre - We'koqma'q
- Mi'kmaw Native Friendship Centre
- Mountains & Meadows Care Group
- Mount Saint Vincent University
- Naomi Society
- New Dawn Enterprises
- Npower Canada
- Nova Scotia Association of Black Social Workers
- NSCC Digby Learning Centre
- Nova Scotia Early Childhood Development Intervention Services

- Open Arms Resource Society
- Our House Youth Wellness Centre
- Pathways to Education
- Pathways to Employment
- Pictou County Women's Centre
- PeopleWorx Society
- Phoenix Learning and Employment Centre
- Pictou County Community Learning Association
- Pictou Landing First Nation
- Peer Outreach Support Services & Education (POSSE)
- Potlotek First Nation
- Prescott Group
- Preston & Area Family Resource Centre
- Preston Area Learning Skills Society
- Public Good Society of Dartmouth
- Queens Learning Network
- Rainbow Refugee Assoc of NS
- Reachability
- SageWell
- Saint Benedict Parish
- SchoolsPlus Central Region
- SchoolsPlus Eastern Region
- SchoolsPlus Northern Region
- SchoolsPlus Western Region
- Second Story Women's Centre
- Society for Enterprise Education and Development (SEED)
- Shelburne Association Supporting Inclusion
- Shelburne County Learning Network
- Shelter Nova Scotia
- Supportive Housing Youth Focus Team (SHYFT)
- Solutions Learning
- South Shore Open Door Association
- Stepping Stone
- Strait Area Women's Place - Leaside Society
- TEAM Work Cooperative
- Tearmann Society for Abused Women
- The Ann Terry Society
- The Confederacy Of Mainland Mi'kmaq
- The Lotus Centre
- The Marguerite Centre
- The Overlook
- The Portal Youth Outreach Assoc
- The Youth Project
- Third Place Transition Housing
- Thomas Raddall Pallet Village - Atlantic Community Shelters Society
- Transition Year Program
- Tri-County Women's Centre
- Truro Housing Outreach Society
- Unity Charity
- Valley Community Learning Association
- Victoria County Home Support Services
- Wasoqopa'q First Nation (Acadia)
- Welcome Housing
- Yarmouth County Learning Network
- YMCA Immigrant Services
- YMCA Nova Scotia Works
- YMCA of Cumberland
- YMCA of Pictou County Housing Department
- YWCA Supportive Housing for Young Mothers + WISH
- YWCA -Waverly Inn





**GEO
NOVA
SCOTIA**

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