



Immigrant Women Services Ottawa
Services pour femmes immigrantes d'Ottawa

Minutes of the 2025 Annual General Meeting
 Immigrant Women Services Ottawa

Tuesday, September 23, 2025, 6:00 pm EST – 219 Argyle Avenue, Suite 113/114

1. Call to Order/Welcome

- Kylie Patrick, the Chair of the IWSO Board of Directors, welcomed attendees, called the meeting to order at 6:04 pm and gave a land acknowledgement that this meeting took place on behalf of the IWSO, which is situated on the traditional territory of the Algonquin Anishinaabe people.
- Kylie Patrick also thanked Mercy Lawluvi, all IWSO staff, the funders and donors, the members, the Board Members, and the attendees.

2. AGM Guidelines

Kylie Patrick discussed the general rules of the meeting, how to interact with the questions and how to vote. She informed the room that only members may vote.

3. Approval of Agenda

Kylie Patrick presented the agenda and moved to approve it. Georgette Morris seconded it. **Carried.**

4. Approval of the Minutes of the 2024 Annual General Meeting

Kylie Patrick asked if anybody had any questions or concerns regarding the AGM 2024 minutes. Seeing none, Kylie Patrick moved to approve the IWSO AGM 2024 Minutes. Hosai Qasmi seconded it. **Carried.**

5. Executive Director's Report

Mercy Lawluvi, the Executive Director, highlighted IWSO's achievements and challenges in the past year. She asked employees from each department of IWSO to present their accomplishments.

Josephine Basudde presented the highlights from the **Crisis and Counselling Services** for 2024-2025:

- 530 new women served who were fleeing violence
- 3,421 counselling hours provided
- 123 new women served seeking transitional housing support
- 62 women received therapeutic counselling

- 87 children served in the children who witness violence program.
- 4 support groups were created and had 163 participants.
- 3 placement students in Crisis and Counselling Services.
- The Crisis and Counselling Services has identified human trafficking as a big problem, and training and education is ongoing on how to identify victims of human trafficking.

Amenah Abdulhameed presented highlights from the **Settlement and Integration Services** for 2024-2025:

- 1,003 newcomer immigrant and racialized women received settlement services
- There were 802 needs and assets assessment and referrals
- 1,691 one-on-one information and orientation sessions
- Approximately 20 Tea and Topics Group Information sessions
- 363 children from newcomer families visited the playroom 1,043 times
- 5,218 participations in 523 English Conversation Circles
- 658 group participations in the Digital Literacy Program, with 296 one-on-one sessions
- 291 participants in Computer Training Group sessions.

Thaksha Prasadith presented the highlights of the **Language Interpretation and Translation Services** for 2024-2025:

- There was a launch of a new website with an AI chatbot which has increased interpretation requests online.
- 905 assignments completed, a 30% increase from the previous period.
- 37 simultaneous sessions
- 1,333 invoices, two times as many from last year
- 232 interpreters on roster (34 new)
- 276 translations, 105 of them funded by IRCC
- 71 unique translation clients served
- 195 translators on roster (9 new)
- In the VAWP:
 - 3,578 interpretation assignments, an increase of 9.32% from the previous year
 - 636 unique clients served
 - 3,980.25 service hours delivered, which exceeded annual targets by 51.05%
 - A 59% increase in after-hours requests.
- In Interpreter Training Services
 - 420 inquiries and 87 interviews
 - 28 ILSAT candidates
 - 32 Core Training graduates and 33 SVHT completions
 - 17 outreach presentations

Mercy Lawluvi discussed some of the special projects and programs which were launched in response to client needs. She asked the coordinators of these projects and programs to present them.

Danielle Ring presented highlights from the **Healthy Directions Program**:

- In response to the growing need for mental health support among immigrant and racialized women, IWSO launched the Healthy Directions Program in November 2024, funded by the Shoppers Foundation for Women's Health.

- The program improves access to mental health and substance use services for these communities.
- To date, more than 200 women have participated, with many reporting improved mental well-being and reduced substance use, demonstrating the program's positive impact on their lives.

Morsal Hewary presented highlights from the **Client Accompaniment Program**:

- In response to the need for a trauma-informed, community-based support system to help survivors of violence overcome barriers to essential services, IWSO launched the Client Accompaniment Program on November 1, 2024.
- Funded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the program was introduced during a launch ceremony attended by MPP Joel Harden, community stakeholders, and IWSO staff.
- To date, more than 70 clients have been supported through the program.

Charmian Romano presented highlights from the **Culinary Entrepreneurship Program**:

- In response to growing requests from immigrant women with strong culinary skills seeking support to build sustainable livelihoods, IWSO launched the Culinary Entrepreneurship Program through funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.
- The program empowers newcomer and immigrant women to transform their cooking talents into viable food business through intensive training, hands-on kitchen experience, and mentorship from industry experts.

Mercy Lawluvi made a short speech acknowledging the staff of IWSO, consisting of 46 women, for their tireless work in providing services through IWSO. She also acknowledged and thanked the funders of IWSO, as well as the outgoing board members.

6. Board Chair's Report

Kylie Patrick presented the Board Chair's Report. On behalf of the Board, she thanked the staff and volunteers for all the work they have done in the past year. She highlighted some of the accomplishments of the Board:

Fundraising

- The Board updated the committee Terms of Reference, to reflect the role of the committees as IWSO has staff fundraising resources in place.
- The Board reviewed the Fund Development Strategy and updated it to make adjustments in relation to the new staff fundraising resources. The Board still must review specific targets for fundraising.
- The Board provided input on the Fundraising section of the new Strategic Plan.
- The Board reviewed the donor stewardship approach to ensure all donors are properly thanked and cultivated for future gifts, with an emphasis on building IWSO's monthly donors.

Policy Development

- The Board developed policies and plans:
 - Anti-racism and anti-oppression Policy
 - Anti-racism and Anti-oppression Plan
 - Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Policy
- The Board reviewed the Accessibility and Disability Policy.

Strategic Plan

The Board created a new Strategic Plan, 2026-2030, which will be the guiding document for the Board of Directors and IWSO.

7. Approval of the 2024-2025 Audited Financial Report

- Abigail Williams, Treasurer, presented the 2024-2025 Audited Financial Report, and the Independent Auditor's Report from KPMG, IWSO's auditor. Abigail noted that IWSO was in a good financial position and had a net revenue of \$63,512 in the year ending March 31, 2025. This was compared to the net revenue IWSO had of \$182,439 in the fiscal year ending March 31, 2024.
- IWSO received an audit report with a clean opinion, which means that accompanying Financial Statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of IWSO as of March 31, 2025, and the results of its operations and its cash flows in accordance with Canadian Accounting standards for Not-For-Profit organizations. In other words, the auditors did not identify any material errors or mistakes during their audit.
- The current assets of IWSO at the time of the report were significantly higher than IWSO's liabilities. Therefore, the liquidity position of IWSO is very good as of March 31. All the other items on the face of statement of financial position were consistent with the previous year.
- The Statement of Operations showed that IWSO collected revenue from main grants consistent with the previous year.
- The main significant expenses of IWSO included salaries and rent, which increased in comparison with the previous year.
- IWSO ended the year with a net surplus of \$63,512 with its total revenues higher than its total expenses.
- Abigail Williams, the Treasurer, gave time for attendees to ask questions. Hearing none, she moved to approve the IWSO's Audited Financial Report for 2024-2025. Brenda Okorogba seconded it. **Carried.**

8. Approval of Auditors for 2025-2026

Abigail Williams made a motion to approve that KPMG remain IWSO's auditor for 2025-2026. Georgette Morris seconded it. **Carried.**

9. Volunteer Appreciation

- Noushin Alyzad Ragheb took a moment to recognize and thank the volunteers of IWSO, who have contributed over 3,950 hours in 2024-2025.
- There were more than 8 ongoing volunteer-led programs including the Sewing Circle, Arts & Crafts, Yoga, French Conversation, and Citizenship & G1 Test Preparation in three languages.
- Volunteers delivered more than 300 sessions to immigrant and newcomer women and supported Care for Newcomer Children program as well as various administrative tasks.
- Noushin presented each volunteer with a certificate and a small gift.

10. Appreciation of Outgoing Board Members

Tene Knibbs, Vice-Chair, prepared a speech recognizing the various outgoing Board Members: Kylie Patrick, Barbara Amona Purdie, Tasha Truant and Seyi Okuribido-Malcolm

11. Election of New Board Members

- Barbara Amona Purdie, as Chair of the Nominating Committee, thanked the outgoing members for their service and nominated eight new women for membership on the Board of Directors. After the presentation of each potential Board Member, and a small introduction of themselves, Barbara made a motion to elect to the Board of Directors the following women for a two-year term:

Monica Beltran Espitia
Karen Magalhaes
Rawan Sheikh
Géraldine Tematio Medonnang

Thana Al-Shaibi
Riddhima Sharma
Melissa Torrado-Anacona
Christelle Nostrome

- Brenda Okorogba seconded the motion. **Carried.**

12. Re-Election of Board Members

Barbara Amona Purdie made a small presentation of the Board of Directors whose terms were to be renewed. Barbara made a motion to re-elect Brenda Okorogba, Ruth McKenzie and Tene Knibbs for an additional two-year term on the Board of Directors. Georgette Morris seconded the motion. **Carried.**

13. Presentation of the Board of Directors

Barbara Amona Purdie and Kylie Patrick presented the members of the Board of Directors for the 2025-2026 year:

Tene Knibbs
Brenda Okorogba
Abigail Williams
Georgette Morris
Ruth McKenzie

Maria Choque
Hosai Qasmi
Monice Beltran Espitia
Karen Magalhaes
Rawan Sheikh

Thana Al-Shaibi
Riddhima Sharma
Géraldine Tematio Medonnang
Melissa Torrado-Anacona
Christelle Nostrome

14. Closing Remarks

Tene Knibbs provided the closing remarks for the Annual General Meeting.

15. Adjournment

Tene Knibbs made a motion to adjourn the 2024-2025 IWSO Annual General Meeting. Kylie Patrick seconded the motion. **Carried.**

The meeting adjourned at 7:21 pm.

X 

Tene Knibbs
Vice Chair, Board of Directors