



2025 - 2026

YEAR END REPORT

Prepared by :

Chene Redwood & Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa



Carleton
University

School of
Social Work

Message from the Chair

The past year has been one of growth, collaboration, and renewed commitment for the Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship (CSPSC). Guided by our mission to advance research and dialogue on poverty, inequality, and social citizenship, the Centre has continued to strengthen its role as a hub for interdisciplinary research, community engagement, and policy-informed scholarship.

Throughout the year, the Centre brought together researchers, students, community organizations, practitioners, and policymakers to address some of Canada's most pressing social challenges. Through public events, collaborative partnerships, student support initiatives, and knowledge mobilization activities, the Centre has expanded opportunities for meaningful dialogue and evidence-informed action.

As we continue to grow, we remain committed to supporting research and dialogue that contributes to more equitable policies, stronger communities, and improved social outcomes. We thank our donors, faculty, students, partners, the CSPSC Advisory Committee and supporters whose dedication makes this work possible.

About the Centre

The Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship (CSPSC) is housed within Carleton University's School of Social Work. The Centre's mission is to support the Carleton School of Social Work in generating critical and innovative knowledge about inequality and social exclusion that informs social work education, policy, and practice.

We recognize that poverty disproportionately impacts marginalized communities, including, but not limited to, racialized and Indigenous communities.

CSPSC's work aims to ensure a basic standard of social justice, community engagement, and social citizenship for all. The Centre's overall goal is to conduct and support high-quality research and knowledge mobilization on policy- and practice-related issues concerning poverty and social citizenship.

The Centre serves as a bridge between academia, community organizations, governments, and individuals with lived experience to promote socially just and evidence-informed solutions.

2025–2026 Highlights

During the past year, the Centre:

- Expanded its leadership by welcoming a new Chair and adding student and community representatives to its Advisory Board.
- Welcomed a new Program Coordinator to support research, communications, and community engagement.
- Hosted a major Housing Affordability Symposium that brought together more than 70 researchers, policymakers, practitioners, students, and community members.
- Continued to support graduate student research through conference funding and Student Spotlight initiatives.
- Supported faculty research through organising an annual writing retreat, grant funding and advanced poverty research and public dialogue through the Conversations on Poverty series.
- Increased public engagement through news stories, website updates, and knowledge mobilization activities.
- Strengthened partnerships with community organizations, governments, and academic institutions.

Strengthening Leadership

This year marked an important period of organizational growth and renewal for the Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship (CSPSC), with new leadership appointments and strengthened governance to support the Centre's expanding research, teaching, and community engagement activities.

A significant milestone was the appointment of a new CSPSC Advisory Board, bringing together faculty members, students, and community leaders committed to advancing research, education, and advocacy on poverty, social justice, and social citizenship. The Advisory Board provides strategic guidance, supports the Centre's governance and outreach activities, and strengthens partnerships across academic, community, and policy sectors.

The new Advisory Board included Dr. Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa (Chair), Dr. Deborah Connors, Dr. Pamela Grassau, Andrea Kenny, Tammy Corner, Dr. Katherine Occhiuto, graduate student representative Julie Picard, and undergraduate student representative Gwen Radzimirska. The inclusion of student representatives reflects the Centre's commitment to shared governance and ensuring that student voices contribute to the Centre's strategic direction and future priorities.

The Centre also welcomed Dr. Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa as Chair. An Assistant Professor in Carleton University's School of Social Work, Dr. Mpofu-Mketwa brings extensive expertise in social justice, decolonization, and participatory approaches to research, teaching, and community engagement. Under her leadership, the Centre has strengthened its

commitment to interdisciplinary scholarship and community-engaged research that addresses poverty, inequality, and social exclusion. Her vision emphasizes building meaningful partnerships that bridge academic research with community knowledge and public policy, ensuring that the Centre's work contributes to equitable and lasting social change.

Further strengthening the Centre's organizational capacity was the appointment of Dr. Chene Redwood as Program Coordinator. Dr. Redwood provides support in program administration, strategic communications, event coordination, partnership development, and knowledge mobilization. Drawing on a strong background in social research, community engagement, and educational development, his work supports the Centre's mission of advancing collaborative research and translating knowledge into practice and policy. His expertise in poverty reduction, labour market inequality, and immigrant social inclusion has enhanced the Centre's ability to expand its research profile and strengthen engagement with students, community partners, and policymakers.

Together, these leadership appointments and governance enhancements have positioned the CSPSC for continued growth, fostering stronger collaboration, expanding research opportunities, and increasing the Centre's impact within Carleton University and the broader community.

Advancing Research and Knowledge Mobilization

The Centre continued to support research addressing poverty, inequality, and social citizenship while creating opportunities to share research with academic, community, and policy audiences.

Throughout the year, faculty and students disseminated their research through:

- conference presentations
- public lectures
- workshops
- knowledge exchange events
- community partnerships
- website publications

These activities reflect the Centre's commitment to ensuring that research informs policy discussions, strengthens community partnerships, and contributes to meaningful social change.

Conversations on Poverty and Social Citizenship

This year, the Centre launched Conversations on Poverty and Social Citizenship, a new knowledge mobilization initiative that highlights the research and scholarship of faculty, students, and community partners working to advance understanding of poverty, equity, and social inclusion. Through accessible research profiles and interviews, the series

demonstrates how scholarship can inform public dialogue, influence policy, and support more equitable communities.

The inaugural feature showcased the work of Dr. Katherine Occhiuto, Assistant Professor in Carleton University's School of Social Work. Her research, *The Complexities of Navigating Social Supports: Impacts on Low-Income Lone Mothers*, examines how low-income lone mothers navigate Canada's fragmented system of social supports and the implications for their well-being, dignity, and social citizenship. Drawing on interviews with mothers in Ottawa, the study demonstrates that accessing social supports often involves significant emotional, relational, and administrative labour that remains largely invisible within social policy.



Dr. Katherine Occhiuto, Assistant Professor School of Social Work at Carleton University.

Dr. Occhiuto's research highlights how fragmented service systems can reinforce poverty, stigma, and social exclusion while identifying opportunities to improve equity through more reliable, coordinated, and relationship-based approaches to service delivery. By centring the lived experiences of low-income mothers, the research contributes important insights for policymakers, service providers, and researchers seeking to strengthen social supports and promote social citizenship.

The Conversations on Poverty and Social Citizenship series reflects the Centre's commitment to translating research into accessible knowledge that informs policy, enriches public understanding, and supports collaborative approaches to addressing poverty and inequality.

Supporting Faculty Research

The Centre continued to invest in faculty-led research that advances understanding of poverty, inequality, and social citizenship through its Faculty Research Grant Program. By supporting innovative and community-engaged scholarship, the Centre strengthens interdisciplinary collaboration and contributes to research that informs policy and practice.

This year, the Centre granted Allison Everette's a research award to support her research project, *Advancing Pathways: Recruitment and Retention of African, Caribbean, and Black Students in Professional Practice Programs*. Conducted in collaboration with Dr. Amina Mire, the project examines the structural barriers that shape access to professional education and careers for African, Caribbean, and Black (ACB) students. Focusing on the fields of social work, psychology, and education, the research explores how financial constraints, limited mentorship opportunities, and unequal access to professional pathways contribute to the continued underrepresentation of ACB professionals despite the diversity of the communities they serve.

The project reflects the Centre's commitment to interdisciplinary and community-engaged research by bringing together scholars and students across Social Work, Sociology, and Psychology while partnering with community organizations that support ACB students. Collaborations with organizations such as Jaku Konbit, Black student associations, and Caribbean student associations ensure that the research is grounded in community knowledge and lived experience. International engagement through participation in the Joint World Conference on Social Work and Social Development 2026 further strengthens the project by incorporating African-centred and Global South perspectives on education, social development, and poverty reduction.

By examining how systemic inequities influence educational and professional opportunities, the project contributes to the Centre's mission of advancing research that promotes social justice, strengthens social citizenship, and supports more equitable pathways into the helping professions. The research also creates opportunities for student involvement through research assistance, environmental scans, and knowledge mobilization activities, fostering the next generation of scholars committed to addressing structural inequality.

Community Engagement

Community engagement remains at the heart of the Centre for Studies on Poverty and Social Citizenship (CSPSC). Throughout the year, the Centre strengthened partnerships with community organizations, researchers, practitioners, policymakers, and advocates to promote collaborative approaches to addressing poverty, housing insecurity, and social exclusion. By creating spaces for dialogue and knowledge exchange, the Centre continues to connect research with practice and contribute to evidence-informed policy development.

Advancing National Dialogue on Poverty

On October 17, 2025, in recognition of the United Nations International Day for the Eradication of Poverty, the CSPSC participated in *A Future Without Poverty: National Dialogue 2025*, a national virtual forum that brought together organizations, advocates, researchers, and community leaders from across Canada. Representing the Centre, Program Coordinator Dr. Chene Redwood joined discussions focused on innovative approaches to poverty reduction, collective advocacy, and strengthening cross-sector collaboration. The event featured a national briefing note endorsed by 45 organizations, calling for coordinated action to address the structural causes of poverty and advance social and economic inclusion. The Centre's participation reflected its ongoing commitment to contributing research-informed perspectives to national conversations on poverty eradication.

Strengthening Partnerships to Address Homelessness

The Centre continued to expand its engagement with organizations working to address homelessness and housing insecurity. In October 2025, Chair Dr. Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa participated in the *Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness Conference* in Montréal, where researchers, service providers, policymakers, and advocates from across Canada explored innovative approaches to homelessness prevention, supportive housing, Indigenous homelessness, renters' rights, and data-informed policy. The conference also provided an opportunity to share insights from Dr. Mpofu-Mketwa's research on the Herongate Housing Crisis and to strengthen relationships with partners working to advance equitable housing solutions.

Through the conference, Dr Mpofu-Mketwa connected with key public policy and nonprofit partners in the housing sector who were later invited to present at the Centre's housing symposium in March 2026. For example, Kaite Burkholder Harris, the Executive Director of *the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa* and Michele Biss, the Executive Director of the *National Right to Housing Network* were invited as keynote speakers and panelist respectively.

Drawing on local evidence and system-level experience, Burkholder Harris reflected on three critical questions shaping the future of housing policy and homelessness response in Ottawa. She emphasized the importance of shifting from crisis response to prevention by expanding diversion strategies, increasing investments in non-market housing, and designing services in partnership with people with lived experience. The discussion reinforced the importance of prevention-focused, community-informed approaches to addressing housing insecurity and highlighted the value of collaboration between researchers, practitioners, and policymakers.

Through these initiatives, the CSPSC continued to strengthen partnerships that bridge research, policy, and practice while fostering collaborative solutions to some of Canada's most pressing social challenges. These engagements reflect the Centre's commitment to advancing research that informs public policy, supports community action, and contributes to a more equitable and inclusive society. These engagements reinforce the Centre's commitment to connecting research with practice and public policy.



Dr. Mpofu-Mketwa with Michele Biss, Executive Director of the *National Right to Housing Network*.

Housing Affordability Symposium

One of the Centre's signature events this year was the Housing Affordability Symposium, held on March 24, 2026, which convened more than 70 participants representing academia, government, community organizations, service providers, advocates, students, and individuals with lived experience.

The symposium created a collaborative forum to examine the structural drivers of Canada's housing crisis while identifying practical, evidence-informed policy solutions. The program featured three thematic panels, a keynote address, and a facilitated recommendations session designed to move beyond dialogue toward collective action. Together, these sessions explored the causes and consequences of housing unaffordability while highlighting opportunities for collaboration across research, policy, and practice.



The opening panel, *Housing Affordability Crisis, Data and Policies*, examined the structural and policy factors contributing to housing insecurity in Canada. Presentations highlighted the growing mismatch between housing costs and incomes, the loss of affordable rental housing, increasing financialization of housing, and the disproportionate impact of homelessness on Indigenous peoples, young Canadians, newcomers, and other structurally marginalized populations. Panellists emphasized that the housing crisis is the result of decades of policy decisions that have reduced access to affordable housing and weakened protections for vulnerable communities.

The second panel, *Lived Experience and Community Solutions*, focused on the critical role of community organizations and non-profit housing providers in addressing homelessness. Speakers emphasized that stable housing must be accompanied by integrated supports, including healthcare, mental health services, income supports, and community connections, to promote long-term housing stability. Throughout the discussion, lived experience was recognized as essential to designing effective, equitable, and dignified responses to housing insecurity.

The final panel, *Pathways Forward: Policies and Partnerships*, explored collaborative approaches to expanding affordable and non-market housing while advancing housing as a fundamental human right. Panellists highlighted innovative partnerships across governments, community organizations, and the private sector, emphasizing the importance of long-term investment, policy reform, and accountability in creating a more equitable and sustainable housing system.

A keynote address by Kaite Burkholder Harris, Executive Director of the Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, reinforced many of the symposium's central themes. Drawing on local data and systems-level experience, she emphasized the need to prioritize

prevention, expand non-market housing, strengthen coordination across sectors, and design housing systems that are responsive to people's diverse needs. Her remarks underscored that lasting solutions require coordinated action across planning, financing, service delivery, and public policy.

The symposium concluded with a facilitated *Collective Insights and Recommendations* session, during which participants identified priorities to guide action over the next 12 to 24 months. Key recommendations included:

- expanding affordable and non-market housing options
- increasing income supports to improve housing affordability
- strengthening prevention-focused approaches to homelessness
- enhancing collaboration across governments, service providers, and community organizations
- centring lived experience in housing policy and program development
- adopting a human rights-based approach to housing



Participants discussing housing affordability priorities

The recommendations generated through the symposium will inform CSPSC's future research, policy dialogue, and community engagement initiatives. More broadly, the event strengthened relationships among researchers, policymakers, service providers, and community organizations, demonstrating the Centre's leadership in convening evidence-informed dialogue and advancing collaborative solutions to one of Canada's most pressing social challenges.

Faculty Writing Retreat

The Centre continued to support faculty scholarship by sponsoring the *Annual Faculty Writing Retreat*, held from May 25 to 28, 2026, at Old Mill Manor in Almonte.

Professors Deborah Connors, Melissa Redman, and Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa from Carleton University's School of Social Work participated in the retreat, which provided dedicated time and space to advance their research and writing projects away from the demands of their daily academic responsibilities. In addition to supporting scholarly productivity, the retreat fostered collegiality, collaboration, and peer support, creating opportunities for participants to exchange ideas, provide feedback, and strengthen their research community.



Faculty members Deborah Connors, Melissa Redman, and Tsitsi Mpofu-Mketwa at Faculty Writing Retreat.

By sponsoring the annual writing retreat, the Centre reaffirmed its commitment to advancing research excellence and supporting faculty scholarship. Initiatives such as this contribute to the development of high-quality research that informs social work education, policy, and practice while strengthening the Centre's research capacity and collaborative culture.

Supporting Student Success

The Centre remains committed to supporting the next generation of researchers and social work leaders.

Throughout the year, students received support through:

- conference travel funding
- symposium presentations and engagement
- student spotlights
- research mentorship
- opportunities to present their work nationally and internationally

Student research addressed a broad range of contemporary issues, including universal basic income, housing policy, ethics, social work practice, and poverty reduction. Through its Student Research Grant Support Program, the Centre provided conference funding to graduate students to present their research at national and international conferences. These opportunities enabled students to share their work with diverse scholarly audiences, receive valuable feedback from leading researchers, and build professional networks that support their academic and professional development. This year we supported two graduated student conference presentations.

One recipient, Emily Paquette-Leahy, a Master of Social Work student, presented her research at the European Conference for Social Work Research 2026 in Aberdeen, Scotland. Her presentation, *Beyond Economics: Ethics of Adopting a Universal Basic Income Program Under a Neoliberal Regime in Canada from a Social Work Values Perspective*, critically examined universal basic income through the lens of social work ethics and values. By engaging with international scholars, Emily strengthened her research on poverty reduction and social welfare while expanding her professional network as she prepares for doctoral studies.

The Centre also supported Alyssa Schenk, a PhD student in Social Work, in presenting her research at the Canadian Association of Social Work Education (CASWE) Conference, held in Ottawa, Ontario, from June 4–7, 2026. Her presentation, *Decolonizing Practice Through Decolonizing the Mind: Sikolohiyang Pilipino Beyond Borders*, explored the application of Sikolohiyang Pilipino (Filipino Psychology) to social work practice and research with Filipino communities in Canada. Drawing on Filipino Indigenous epistemologies, Alyssa examined the responsibility of Filipino social workers, academics, and community practitioners to engage in processes of decolonizing the mind as a foundation for ethical, relational, and culturally grounded practice. For Alyssa, the Centre's support helped overcome financial barriers to conference participation and provided an important opportunity to share this emerging area of scholarship with educators, researchers, and practitioners. The experience strengthened her commitment to advancing decolonizing social work practice and expanding research on Filipino communities in Canada.



Alyssa Schenk at CASWE Conference

In addition to providing financial support, the Centre celebrated student achievements through its Student Spotlight initiative, showcasing student research and accomplishments on the Centre's website. By highlighting emerging scholars and their contributions, the Centre recognizes the important role students play in advancing research on poverty, social citizenship, and social justice while encouraging future generations of researchers to engage in impactful, community-informed scholarship.

These initiatives help students develop research skills, build professional networks, and contribute to important public conversations, strengthening the next generation of scholars and practitioners committed to advancing poverty reduction and social inclusion.

Communications and Outreach

The Centre expanded its public profile through regular news stories, event coverage, and research highlights published on its website. These communications showcased faculty achievements, student accomplishments, public events, community partnerships and research initiatives. By sharing research beyond academic audiences, the Centre continues to increase public understanding of poverty and social citizenship while encouraging dialogue across sectors.

Financial Report

2025-2026 Financial Report

Budget Summary – Opening and Closing Balances

Fiscal Year	Opening Budget Available	Closing Budget Available
May 2022	35, 982	61, 745
May 2023	61, 745	69, 125
May 2024	69125	72350
May 2025	72350	75560
May 2026	75560	72798

Year-End 2026



Summary by Acct Detail - Current Year (Data as of 08-18-2026 06:37:09 AM)

Period Apr-2026 (Year End) | Chart = M | Fund = 265651 Ctr for Studies-Poverty/Social Just | Orgn = 109109 | Prog = 5000 Trust - Instructional

Acct	Title	Adjusted Base Budget	Adjusted Fiscal Budget	Apr-2026 Month Actual	Apr-2026 O/S Commitments YTD Actual	YTD Total Activity	Budget Available	Budget Fav/Unfav
Opening Fund Balance - All Orgn Codes Included							75,560.03	
Revenue								
560000	Donation Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00	(27,081.58)	0.00	(27,081.58)	F
	Subtotal	0.00	0.00	0.00	(27,081.58)	0.00	(27,081.58)	0%F
	Total Revenue	0.00	0.00	0.00	(27,081.58)	0.00	(27,081.58)	0%F
Labor								
611200	Administrative P/T Salaries	0.00	0.00	0.00	15,651.58	0.00	15,651.58	(15,651.58) U
611300	Overtime Paid to P/T Employees	0.00	0.00	0.00	262.50	0.00	262.50	(262.50) U
630001	Gov't Benefits - CPP Casual Empl	0.00	0.00	0.00	834.10	0.00	834.10	(834.10) U
630003	Gov't Benefits - EI Casual	0.00	0.00	0.00	363.79	0.00	363.79	(363.79) U
630005	Gov't Benefits - EHT	0.00	0.00	0.00	310.34	0.00	310.34	(310.34) U
630007	Gov't Benefits - WSIB	0.00	0.00	0.00	12.71	0.00	12.71	(12.71) U
	Subtotal	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,435.02	0.00	17,435.02	(17,435.02) 0%U
	Total Labor	0.00	0.00	0.00	17,435.02	0.00	17,435.02	(17,435.02) 0%U
Direct Expenditures								
710001	Reference Materials	0.00	0.00	0.00	104.99	0.00	104.99	(104.99) U
710004	Software Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	60.73	0.00	60.73	(60.73) U
711001	Printing Costs & Supplies	0.00	0.00	0.00	153.50	0.00	153.50	(153.50) U
716800	Networking/Reception Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	5,394.83	0.00	5,394.83	(5,394.83) U
717200	Honoraria/Guest Lecturer Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,400.00	0.00	1,400.00	(1,400.00) U
719001	Recruitment Events	0.00	0.00	0.00	149.12	0.00	149.12	(149.12) U
719100	Travel - General Costs	0.00	0.00	0.00	3,251.20	0.00	3,251.20	(3,251.20) U
720040	Other Professional Fees	0.00	0.00	0.00	1,841.00	0.00	1,841.00	(1,841.00) U
	Subtotal	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,355.37	0.00	12,355.37	(12,355.37) 0%U
	Total Direct Expenditures	0.00	0.00	0.00	12,355.37	0.00	12,355.37	(12,355.37) 0%U
Direct Expenditures								
810001	Interfund Transfers Out	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.00	0.00	53.00	(53.00) U
	Subtotal	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.00	0.00	53.00	(53.00) 0%U
	Total Direct Expenditures	0.00	0.00	0.00	53.00	0.00	53.00	(53.00) 0%U
	Total All Expenses	0.00	0.00	0.00	29,843.39	0.00	29,843.39	(29,843.39) 0%U
	Total Revenues Less Expenses and Transfers	0.00	0.00	0.00	2,761.81	0.00	2,761.81	(2,761.81) 0%U
Closing Fund Balance - All Orgn Codes Included							72,798.22	

Looking Ahead

As the Centre continues to grow, several priorities will guide our work in the coming year.

These include:

- expanding interdisciplinary research partnerships
- strengthening community-engaged scholarship
- increasing opportunities for student research and mentorship
- enhancing knowledge mobilization activities
- supporting policy development through evidence-informed research
- pursuing external funding to expand the Centre's research capacity

Through these initiatives, the Centre will continue advancing research that informs policy, supports communities, and contributes to a more equitable society.

