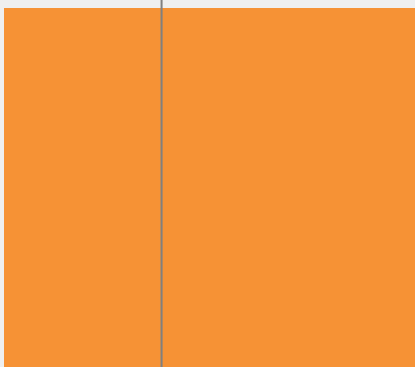


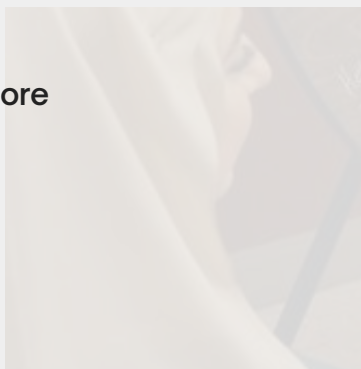


# Strategic Plan 2026-2028

This Strategic Plan positions Mishka Social Services to meet evolving community needs while continuing to create pathways to opportunity for newcomers, refugees, immigrants, and Muslims.



Explore More



# Message from Board Chair

On behalf of the Board of Directors, we are proud to present Mishka Social Services' three-year Strategic Plan for 2026–2028 and to wholeheartedly endorse the vision it sets for our organization's future. This plan marks an important milestone in Mishka's journey, one that signals our organizational maturity, our growing impact, and our commitment to thoughtful, long-term planning in service of our community.

This strategy is the result of meaningful collaboration and consultation with our board, operational leadership, staff, volunteers, community partners, and the people we serve and their families. We are also deeply grateful to our donors, supporters, and collaborating organizations whose trust, generosity, and partnership make our work possible and our ambitions achievable.

Over the next three years, our priorities are both focused and forward-looking. We are strengthening our commitment to our youth, expanding and sustaining our work across Hamilton and the Niagara region, continuously improving and refining our programs, and growing our donor and community engagement so that Mishka's impact can continue to deepen and broaden. This plan serves as both a roadmap and a promise to be more responsive, more effective, and more sustainable in how we serve.

We are incredibly proud of the dedication, professionalism, and compassion that our team brings to this work every day. Because of their efforts, Mishka is increasingly recognized as the go-to organization for culturally sensitive, Muslim- and newcomer-focused social services in the Niagara Peninsula and beyond. We are confident that, together, we will bring this strategic plan to life and continue building an organization that our community can rely on, be proud of, and grow with.

With sincere appreciation and optimism for the future,



**Dr. Khalid Azzam**

President of the Board

# Executive Summary

As newcomer populations in Hamilton and Niagara regions continue to grow and face increasing systemic challenges, the demand for accessible and culturally responsive services continues to rise. Mishka Social Services' 2026–2028 Strategic Plan provides a roadmap for strengthening our ability to respond to evolving needs while ensuring long-term organizational sustainability. Developed through research and stakeholder engagement, the plan reflects community voices and the realities facing the sector.

Over the next three years, Mishka will focus on three strategic priorities:

- **Strengthening Our Infrastructure** by diversifying revenue, enhancing staff and volunteer capacity, and building a resilient organizational culture.
- **Empowering Our Clients** by improving client management systems, advancing digital transformation, and delivering efficient, person-centered services.
- **Amplifying Our Impact** by expanding programs, reducing waitlists, strengthening community engagement, and advancing advocacy that promotes inclusion and addresses systemic barriers.

Through these priorities, the Strategic Plan positions Mishka to meet evolving community needs while continuing to create pathways to opportunity for newcomers and their families.

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# Who We Are



## Mission

Mishka Social Services aims to bridge the gap between current services and Muslims, newcomers, immigrants, and refugees. The Arabic word “Mishka” is a niche in a wall where lamps are placed, radiating light to the surrounding areas. We strive to be a beacon that empowers our clients to light up the world around them.

We provide culturally informed services to racialized newcomers in Hamilton and Niagara. Our integrated programs include a food bank, mental health counselling, social services case management, recreation for youth with disabilities and respite for their caregivers, parenting education, senior wellness, youth support, and a community thrift store. Our work addresses systemic barriers for immigrants and refugees, while promoting dignity, stability, and inclusion.

## Vision

Creating Pathways to Opportunity.  
We envision a society where everyone, regardless of their background, has access to the resources and support they need to thrive.

## Values

- Islamic Values and Principles
- Inclusion
- Community-based
- Leadership in Excellence
- Equity
- Justice



# Setting the Context

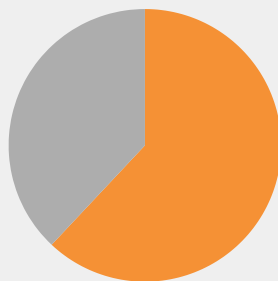
## Why Our Work Matters



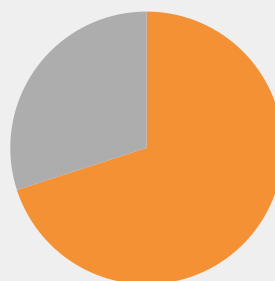
Immigration trends and policies continue to shape the region, with 26% of Hamilton residents and 18% of Niagara residents born outside Canada.<sup>1</sup> As Canada welcomes more permanent residents annually, we will continue to see growing newcomer populations.

While newcomers contribute significantly to the social and economic fabric of our communities, many continue to face substantial barriers including unaffordable housing, incomes that do not meet their basic needs, and unemployment while seeking work. At the same time, most newcomers report a positive settlement experience and a strong sense of belonging, highlighting both the resilience of newcomer communities and the importance of responsive supports.<sup>2</sup>

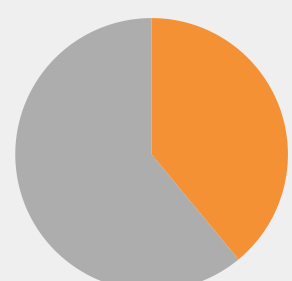
Unaffordable  
Housing (62%)



Low Income  
(70%)



Unemployment  
(39%)



Mishka's work is also shaped by the needs of the growing Muslim community. More than 63% of Muslims in Canada are immigrants.<sup>3</sup> In 2024, police-reported hate crimes against Muslims increased by 94% nationwide.<sup>4</sup> Muslim and racialized newcomers not only face settlement barriers, but rising intersectional racism and Islamophobia create additional barriers to inclusion. As a Muslim-led organization, Mishka provides a familiar and safe environment that prioritizes this community's emerging needs.

Against this backdrop, Mishka plays a critical role in addressing immediate needs while supporting long-term stability, system navigation, and inclusion. Last year's Strategic Plan focused on strengthening programs, securing sustainable funding, and improving operational excellence. Building on this momentum, the 2026–2028 Strategic Plan sets the direction for our next phase of growth, guided by our commitment to creating pathways to opportunity.

2026-2028

# Strategic Plan

## Plan Development

Mishka Social Services' 2026–2028 Strategic Plan was developed through a data-driven and community-informed process of three phases to ensure that our priorities reflect real needs and meaningful opportunities for impact.



### Phase 1: Community and Stakeholder Engagement

We surveyed 86 stakeholders, including staff, volunteers, and clients, to capture lived experience and organizational insight. Using a mixed-methods approach, we conducted a thematic analysis to identify emerging needs, alongside a quantitative analysis to determine the most frequently raised priorities. This ensured our planning was grounded in firsthand experiences and measurable patterns.

Findings from stakeholder engagement were cross-referenced with local data to align with broader trends. This process was strengthened through collaboration with the [McMaster Research Shop](#) providing insights into Mishka's infrastructure and client needs, with practical recommendations to strengthen operations. This ensured that community voices were validated through data and priorities were reflective of wider systemic patterns.



### Phase 2: Research Validation



### Phase 3: Board Guidance

The final phase involved collaborative review with Mishka's Board of Directors, who provided guidance to ensure that the strategic direction aligns with organizational values and mission, is financially and operationally realistic and balances immediate needs with long-term sustainability. Board input helped refine priorities into actionable and measurable goals for the next three years.

2026-2028

# Strategic Plan

## Framework

The Strategic Plan for the next three years will guide Mishka's work in line with the following framework that consists of three key pillars and their deliverables.

### THREE KEY PILLARS



#### Strengthen Our Infrastructure

Focus on

- Organizational resilience
- Sustainability
- Internal capacity

##### Sustainable Funding

Grow consistent and diverse revenue streams.

##### Capacity & Culture

Strengthen staff skills, team cohesion, internal advocacy, and leadership.



#### Empower Our Clients

Focus on

- Client-centered service delivery
- Efficiency
- Technology-enabled supports

##### Client Management

Streamline case management and program delivery through person-centred approach.

##### Digital Transformation

Implement technology solutions for tracking, reporting, and improving client access.



#### Amplify Our Impact

Focus on

- Community engagement
- Inclusion
- Advocacy

##### Service Expansion

Reduce waitlists, improve service delivery, and broaden program scope.

##### Engagement & Advocacy

Champion outreach, community input, and initiatives that celebrate newcomers or address barriers to inclusion.

2026-2028

# Strategic Plan

## Actionable Deliverables

This table details some of the actions we plan to take towards each of the deliverables in the strategic framework.

| Key Pillar                    | Deliverable            | Actions                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-------------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Strengthen Our Infrastructure | Sustainable Funding    | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hire Donor Relations Officer</li> <li>Develop donor subscription model</li> <li>Secure sponsorships</li> <li>Develop sale ventures for revenue</li> </ul>                                                                                                                    |
|                               | Capacity & Culture     | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Support staff skills development</li> <li>Enhance consistent volunteership</li> <li>Develop internships &amp; placement studies</li> <li>Create a sense of belonging</li> </ul>                                                                                              |
| Empower Our Clients           | Client Management      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a centralized in-take system</li> <li>Adopt person-centered approach</li> <li>Train in trauma-informed care</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                 |
|                               | Digital Transformation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adopt Customer Relationship Management</li> <li>Digitize processes to streamline operations</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                       |
| Amplify Our Impact            | Service Expansion      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduce waitlists and wait time for service</li> <li>Onboard more clients for sufficient periods</li> <li>Expand supports: financial assistance, housing, employment, language</li> <li>Expand to neighboring regions</li> <li>Develop youth intervention programs</li> </ul> |
|                               | Engagement & Advocacy  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stand up against Islamophobia, Xenophobia, Anti-Immigration sentiments through art, committees, and advocacy</li> <li>Launch community workshops</li> <li>Develop avenues for community feedback</li> <li>Expand outreach and visibility</li> </ul>                          |





# Thank You

We extend our sincere gratitude to our staff, volunteers, donors, partners, and supporters whose dedication and generosity make our work possible. Together, we have built a strong foundation for impact and growth and we are inspired by our resilient community about what we can achieve together. As we look ahead, we remain committed to building a more inclusive and thriving future for all.

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 Registered Charity No. 796452092 RR 0001