



Executive Director's Report

Annual General Meeting: 2025 – 2026

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Land Acknowledgement

We respectfully acknowledge that the City of Hamilton is situated upon the traditional land of the Mississaugas of the Credit, Haudenosaunee, Erie, Neutral, and Huron-Wendat people.

This land is protected by the Dish with One Spoon Wampum Belt Agreement between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee.

“The Peacemaker said that the nation leaders should eat from this common dish, sharing one spoon and only taking what each one needs. No knife should be used as there should be no conflict and violence; everyone has an equal right to eat from the dish or harvest from the land’s bounty. There should always be something for others and future generations, and the plate should be kept clean.”

We further acknowledge that this land is covered under Treaty 3, Between the Lakes Purchase, originally negotiated in 1784 and updated in 1792. The Treaty between the Mississaugas of the Credit and the British Crown covers approximately 3 million acres of land between lakes Erie, Huron and Ontario. Today multiple cities including the City of Hamilton exist on this Treaty Territory. The present-day reserves for both the Mississaugas of the Credit and Six Nations exist within the original Haldimand Tract.

Settlers continue to have obligations of peace, friendship and respect under this Treaty and other.

At Contact Hamilton we have a commitment to continue to learn about the Indigenous cultures and the lands upon which we are situated.

Message from the Executive Director

I am pleased to present my Executive Director's Annual General Meeting Report for the fiscal year 2025 – 2026. This report contains an overview of key accomplishments in 2025 – 2026 and focus areas for 2026 – 2027.

Contact Hamilton is guided by its service values and principles of integrity, diversity, empathy and accountability. We are deeply committed to the people we support and their families and systems (formal and informal). We feel honoured to work in close partnership with our service provider communities and funders in support of children, youth, adults with intellectual disabilities, and their families and support networks.

Contact Hamilton's work is made possible through the dedication and commitment of our professional and caring staff teams. We acknowledge and celebrate their work, and we sincerely thank them for all they do. Our staff engage in very important work – ensuring their safety and wellness is a priority. In 2025 – 2026, Contact Hamilton completed an intensive review of policies, procedures and practices related to our employee's safety when performing their work. There was significant engagement of staff teams resulting in the revision of existing policies and procedures and the creation of new policies and procedures that promote healthy and safe work practices and psychological safety.

I also recognize the devotion of our volunteer Board of Directors to Contact's Hamilton vision and mission.

"Our vision: Thriving children and youth, empowered adults, strong families, inclusive communities."

"Our mission: To enhance quality of life by providing access to information and available services and supports."

At the conclusion of the 2025 – 2026 year, our Board of Directors finalized Contact Hamilton's strategic plan that will guide the organization through the next five years. Our strategic goals include funding our future (funding diversification); data to support system planning (creating a robust, equity driven data culture and data mobilization); and organizational preparedness to meet growing demands and system needs and promoting a supportive workplace culture and staff well-being.

Our goals are ambitious and our determination is strong. We have much to do, and we look forward to moving forward on our goals and priorities, keeping the people we support at the centre of our work.

With sincere appreciation,

Lea Pollard, Executive Director

Children and Youth Services Program

Our Services:

Access and Service Coordination

- Contact Hamilton helps children, youth, and families access available supports and resources. We provide information, consultation, intake, and referral to services on behalf of children and youth who are presenting with developmental, FASD, autism, and/or complex needs.

Coordinated Service Planning

- Our Coordinated Service Planning program supports children and youth who have multiple, complex service needs and their families in managing and coordinating their services.

FASD Consultation Service

- Contact Hamilton provides FASD Consultation by providing evidence informed FASD best practices and information. We also provide education to families and community professionals about FASD.

Complex Needs Placement Coordination (CNPC)

- Contact Hamiltons locates short-term out-of-home placements for children and youth approved to receive Complex Special Needs funding, and provides oversight to these placements during the child / youth's placement

Facilitation and leadership to critical community processes

- Service / case resolution
- Complex Special Needs
- Transitional aged youth
- Residential Placement Advisory Committee

“Your team is incredible! I’ve had some really great collaborations with some of them. Shout out specifically to [staff names] who have all sent some really great referrals over to me and were so lovely throughout the experience of working together.” --Community Agency

“I am grateful for you every day.” --Community Agency

“I am very happy to be connected with you guys as a parent. I know you guys do great things. I’m happy to be able to get her in young so that we can get services going when she’s older. I appreciate your help. [Staff person] was absolutely wonderful.” --Parent

How We Helped

- 1,161 referrals were received on behalf of people requesting access to children and youth services
- With respect to our Coordinated Service Planning program
 - 29 new referrals were received by the program
 - 87 children and youth had an active coordinated service plan
 - 74 children and youth were waiting for the Coordinated Service Planning program as of March 31, 2026
- With respect to our FASD Consultation program
 - 57 new referrals were received on behalf of 32 children and youth (some children and youth required multiple services at different times)
 - 54 children and youth received FASD Consultation services
 - 9 children and youth were waiting for our FASD Consultation program as of March 31, 2026

- We facilitated the following Hamilton FASD Collaborative activities
 - 5 child / youth specific case conferences
 - 5 in-services / education sessions to agencies
 - Supported / facilitated 3 Hamilton FASD Network meetings
 - Facilitated 9 Hamilton FASD Parent and Caregiver Support group
 - Awarded \$5,000 in Health Nexus grant funding to support in-person family and caregiver support meetings and promoting International FASD Awareness Day
- Our CNPC program oversaw the placement of 21 children and youth receiving a period of out-of-home placement
- In funded partnership with the Extensive Needs Services (McMaster Children's Hospital), 30 additional children and youth received coordinated service planning services.

Focus Areas for 2026 – 2027

- Review of the Coordinated Service Planning program (focus areas: scope and waitlist management)
- Review and redesign of the ENS-funded service model to enable more children and youth with very complex needs to be connected to needed community services and supports
- Enhancing consumer feedback mechanisms
- Begin reviewing available data and reporting

Developmental Services Ontario Hamilton Niagara Region (DSOHNR)

Our Services:

- [Eligibility confirmation](#) for MCCSS-funded adult developmental services
- [Application](#) for MCCSS-funded adult developmental services
- [Service navigation](#) for people who have completed the application and are waiting for MCCSS-funded adult developmental services; this includes information provision about available community services and supports, application updates, new / updated referrals and service registrations, linkage to community processes
- [Housing navigation](#) including information provision about housing options and linkages with municipal housing managers and providers

“Dear [staff person], thank you for all your time in assessing [client]. Your manner was so genuine and authentic, and it took away any fears we had. I feel like I’m rediscovering [client] as a person.... I think [client] had his best autumn in a few years. Your work has changed our lives, and I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart.” --Parent

“Thank you so much for the chat yesterday. You are so helpful and kind, patient and understanding. We really appreciate you.” --Family

“[Service Provider] noted that you’ve been extremely helpful, knowledgeable and resourceful during this project and that you’ve represented the DSO as a major support to services agencies during this time.” --Community Agency

How We Helped

- 871 intake calls were received on behalf of people requesting access to MCCSS funded adult developmental services (this is a 7.4% increase from last year)
- 575 applications for MCCSS funded adult developmental services and supports
- With respect to Housing Navigation
 - 1,073 individuals and families received housing resources
 - 83 consultations were provided to community agencies
 - Met with 51 housing providers, agencies and social housing programs
 - Consulted with 8 new private housing providers (information)
 - 24 presentations and webinars to 774 individuals and families
- 42 presentations were made to various stakeholders about DSO services (agencies, family groups, schools, other sector partners)
- Monthly onsite presence at Community Living Six Nations to provide intake services and information provision

Focus Areas for 2026 – 2027

- Relationship building with under-represented groups including expanding onsite intake to other indigenous communities and expanding partnerships with newcomer service providers
- Increase community awareness about DSO services
- Explore efficiency strategies to address growing demands
- Data sharing with community planning tables
- Implementation of the MyDS portal (allowing people to access their information at any time)

Passport Hamilton Niagara

Our Services

- Advise people of their Passport Funding [allocations](#)
- Assist people with [onboarding](#) to the Passport Funding program and understanding the program
- Provide ongoing [education, information and resources](#) about the Passport Funding program
- [Assist people to implement](#) their Passport Funding by answering questions about the program and addressing barriers to finding services or managing funding
- [Follow-up on submitted reimbursement claims](#) when there are questions
- Help Passport recipients and families to [connect with community resources](#)
- Work with service providers to [build their understanding of the Passport program](#) so that they can best serve Passport recipients

“Hello, a woman named [staff person] called me regarding my son and his Passport Funding. This is very new and an intimidating process, he just turned 18. She was extremely helpful, informative and assured me of things that have been unknowns. Talking with [staff person], her demeanor and the information she was providing absolutely helped in these new beginnings for my son and I. Thank you for helping this process be less painful.” --Parent

*“[Staff person] was very professional and a clear communicator.” --
Family*

“[Staff person] went above and beyond to provide exceptional service. I really appreciate it.” --Family

How We Helped

- 8,049 people were supported with Passport Funding (\$97.5M allocation)
- 73% Passport Funding utilization rate (provincial utilization rate is 71%)
- 955 Passport Funding approvals were made
- 47 virtual education presentations were made to 171 attendees
- 8 resource fairs / community presentations were made to approximately 270 attendees

Focus Areas for 2026 – 2027

- Enhancing outreach and communication to Passport recipients and families by using technologies
- Expanding access to Passport education and engagement opportunities for recipients and families
- Enhancing consumer feedback mechanisms
- Strengthening partnerships with providers who offer Passport services
- Exploring efficiencies and continuous improvement opportunities