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# TRANSITIONS:

It  
Might  
Be  
Time

2021/2022 ANNUAL REPORT



# A MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Transitions can be difficult. Change is not easy for most of us. At best, we embrace it, go for the ride, and grow from the experience. Abrigo's fiscal 2021/22 fiscal year was in many ways a year of transition.

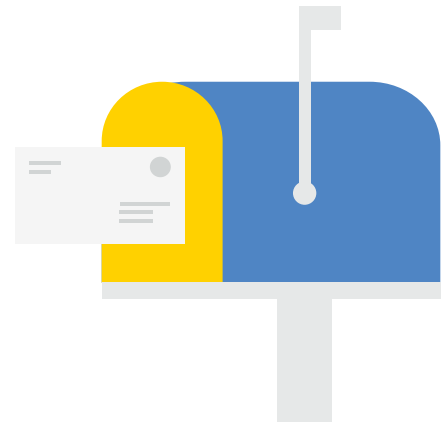
We all got quite use to working from home during the pandemic, saddled to our computer and held at the mercy of our internet service in our bedrooms, dens and dining room tables. Most of us became extremely comfortable in that setting. Yet, the world never completely stops spinning and a return to what looked like our previous life was inevitable.

Abrigo's Board of Directors and staff are proud to present our agency's 2021/22 Annual Report, entitled **Transitions: It Might Be Time**. The fiscal year brought us continued uncertainty but a never-ending feeling that it might be time to transition back to staff working in the office, chatting with our loyal volunteers and seeing clients walk through our front door after a long absence.

Abrigo started the fiscal year by altering how we triage our clients through our Intake program. It was an important step to providing the best care and service possible. You can read more about this important change on page five in this report.

The leadership of the agency was infused with a replenished sense of energy with the addition of four excellent new Board members. Each provided valuable expertise in the creation of a new three-year Strategic Plan for the organization. Working with an experienced consultant specializing in this area and involving senior Abrigo staff members, it was a meticulous process that will now set our direction for the immediate future.

Despite lockdowns ending and the relaxing of restrictions, the increase in gender-based violence calls continued. Many of the women who experience abuse are also presenting with an additional series of complex issues including income and food insecurity, a lack of safe or affordable housing, and childcare issues.



For most of the fiscal year, Abrigo counsellors were given the opportunity to return to the office to meet in-person with clients who needed direct one-on-one support. This was done with great caution as clients were screened before entering the building and strict health and safety protocols followed. Many of these clients were older adults or those who didn't have the hardware or skills to navigate competently in the virtual world. For many it was long-awaited relief.

Yet, meeting virtually or over the phone continued to be the preferred form of counselling for many clients. The elimination of childcare needs and taking public transit was most appreciated. Some clients enjoyed the flexibility to meet their counsellor virtually during a lunch hour while at work.

In spite of the uncertainty of the past year, the community that financially supports Abrigo came through with a marvelous display of loyalty and generosity. Ongoing partners like LiUNA Local 183, LiUNA OPDC, the Canadian Council of Construction Unions, Lusogolf Fundraising Inc. and Mr. Manuel DaCosta continued to demonstrate their unwavering support. We thank all our donors for their trust in our ability to help others and the resulting impact we have on our community.

We are proud of the results exhibited by each program during this time of transition. Abrigo staff continue to work longer and harder than ever before due to the increased demand for service. Yet, they are always ready to assist you in your time of need. Remember, help is only one phone call away!

Thank you all for your ongoing support and generosity.

**Lena Barreto**  
Board Chair

**Ed Graça**  
Executive Director

# WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW

## Our Mission

To build community capacity in west Toronto by helping individuals and families achieve their full potential.

## Our Vision

To ensure our collaborative efforts result in socially integrated and empowered individuals, families and communities.

## Abrigo's Motto

Connecting People to Possibilities



# ABRIGO IN ACTION

## Client and Volunteer Numbers (Fiscal 2021/22)

- **5,591** - Total number of clients served
- **2,891** - Number of clients served by the Community Development and Integration Program (CDIP)
- **2,915** - Number of clients assessed by the Intake Services team
- **1,570** - Number of clients served by the Youth Outreach program
- **472** - Number of clients served by the Violence Against Women program
- **185** - Number of clients served by the Partner Assault Response (PAR) program
- **118** - Number of clients served by the Life and Hope Seniors group
- **106** - Number of clients served by Parenting groups
- **62** - Number of volunteers donating their time to Abrigo
- **6,442** - Number of hours donated by Abrigo's volunteers

# GOALS FOR FISCAL 2022/23

## ▪ Implementation of Abrigo's new Three-Year Strategic Plan

Abrigo will focus on three areas this fiscal year: Enhancing our current programs and services to continue to meet the changing needs of our communities. Ensuring organizational excellence and impact by building our capacity internally and through partnerships. Diversifying our revenue by retaining our current funders, seeking new sources of funding and increasing donations to ensure financial sustainability.

## ▪ An Examination of Virtual Counselling

With a grant from the Canadian Women's Foundation, Abrigo will complete an evaluation project to review, learn and respond to the emerging needs of clients who have experienced the virtual / hybrid model of service. The findings will be shared with our peers serving women facing gender-based violence.

## ▪ Review and Update of Abrigo Bylaws

Members of Abrigo's Board of Directors will lead a review and update of our agency's bylaws that will make us compliant in advance of the Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporation Act implementation deadline for charities in 2024.

## ▪ Phase Three of Vaccine Engagement Project

After two successful phases to educate, engage and get members of our community vaccinated, Abrigo will enter the third and final phase of this project that will run until the end of the 2022 calendar year. The focus will continue to be on getting vaccines into the arms of the general population but will also specifically focus on naturally occurring retirement communities (NORCs).

## ▪ Develop Succession Plans for Key Leadership Positions

Abrigo is committed to ensuring that fully developed succession plans are in place for each of the organization's leadership positions in fiscal 2022/23. Our agency is currently working with a consultant with expertise in this field to ensure completion of this task.

# ANA'S STORY: THE LONG JOURNEY FROM ABUSE TO FREEDOM

It was a call Violence Against Women counsellors at Abrigo never want to experience. While talking to her client Ana on the phone during their fourth counselling session together, long-time Abrigo staff member Marilia dos Santos heard her client's husband threatening to kill his wife with a knife.

The next heart-stopping 30 minutes on the phone together was chaotic at best and left both Marilia and her client severely shaken as the threats continued to escalate. Following agency protocols, the police were called by another Abrigo staff member. All the while Ms. dos Santos served as her client's advocate ensuring that the police clearly understood in real time the incident as it was occurring. The arrival of the authorities finally diffused the situation.

Ana (her name has been changed to protect her identity) lived with abuse at the hands of her husband for most of the 44 years they spent together as man and wife. The abuse took shape in essentially all possible forms; verbal, emotional, physical, sexual and financial. Ana shared that during the course of her marriage the abuse by her husband was constant and relentless.

Yet, Ana stayed with her husband throughout his long-standing infidelity, alcohol abuse and each violent ordeal. "For far too many years I was a victim of brainwashing and simply, I was afraid of him. Afraid of the things he would do and possibly do to me. He never ever showed any remorse for the horrible things he did."

During the pandemic her husband was on disability and although Ana was working as a cleaner for a few different establishments and private homes, the additional hours together was time not well spent.

For years Ana's husband would baselessly accuse her of having affairs. She concluded it was most likely to deflect from his own endless cheating.

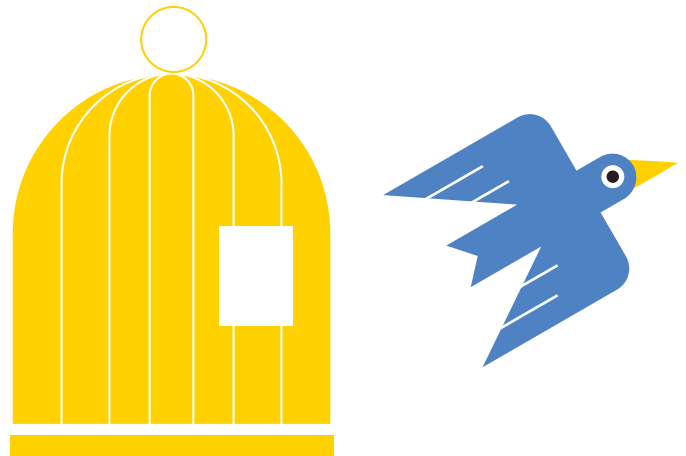
"During the pandemic I went into work for three o'clock in the afternoon and each day my husband would take the TTC with me there and back," says Ana. "This was not done out of love or concern for my safety, he wanted to control me and everything I did."

Although Ana was aware of Abrigo as an agency that helped people in the community, a friend referred her to the Violence Against Women program. Initially reluctant to speak about her experiences, Ana quickly opened up to Ms. dos Santos and together they discussed Ana's safety and options and talked about her emotional wellbeing.

*"Abrigo has helped me an awful lot. Marilia is my angel. She's teaching me to be strong, not to be afraid. The strength she gives me is immeasurable."*

Ms. dos Santos sees the personal growth Ana has experienced as well. "Each day that we connect gets Ana moving forward toward her goals. She's now living with her daughter. We are working on finding an apartment for herself and she is saving money to pay for her divorce."

Ana is sharing her story because she wants others to come forward and get the help they need. "I want the women currently going through the same situation to know that there is help available. You are not alone. I finally have some freedom and can't wait to experience more."



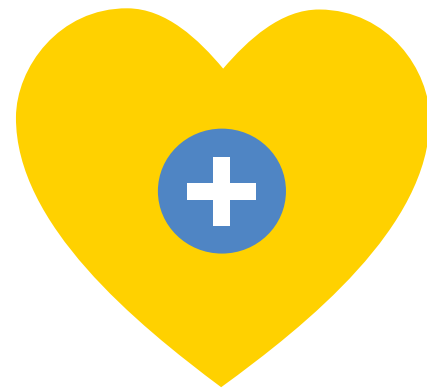


# INTAKE CHANGES IMPROVE SERVICE FOR CLIENTS

Abrigo's Community Development and Integration (CDI) Program is the front door to all Abrigo programs and services. Its goal is to empower all individuals and families to access the information and support they need in order to thrive in their community. Last year, Abrigo's CDI program **assisted 2,891 clients.**

Whether it's addressing issues such as income support, food insecurity, pensions, other governmental programs or instrumental needs, counsellors in the CDI program offer information and referrals to services such as mental health programs, legal aid and legal clinics, settlement programs, education and employment supports. Our CDI team also assists clients with form filling and advocates on behalf of clients with a variety of government and social service agencies.

An important part of the CDI program is Abrigo's Intake Services. Offered in both Portuguese and English, its aim is to ensure quality care and responsive service to first-time callers and new clients. Intake counsellors offer crisis support, safety planning, provide brief intervention, coordinate internal and external referrals and follow-up support all with the aim of meeting client needs.



Abrigo has for years offered an Open Intake system to our community to ensure that anyone in need would get the counselling or care they require as quickly as possible. Pre-pandemic, that would consist of primarily walk-in clients and phone calls weekdays from 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

During the pandemic, the agency eliminated walk-ins to keep all involved as safe as possible. Through our phone calls, we've noticed a significant uptake in requests for gender-based violence services as well as other more complex cases with multiple needs and resourcing such as income and food insecurity and mental health concerns. As a result, Abrigo instituted a new model to better meet the needs of our clients.

Abrigo's Intake was revamped in April 2021 largely by hiring an additional counsellor to help with call volumes and streamline the service. During the fiscal year, Intake ran primarily over the phone weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Calls are triaged with priority given to gender-based violence survivors and best efforts are made to ensure that everyone receives a call back from the agency within 48 hours.

Our Intake Counsellors work from a trauma informed framework focused on ensuring client safety, choice, and empowerment to collaboratively identify goals and co-create a service plan with measurable and achievable steps. Intake counsellors and other Abrigo CDI or VAW counsellors meet throughout the week to assign new clients to their counsellor.

These changes have clearly benefited both our clients and counsellors. The new streamlined structure and added staff support means clients are triaged more effectively and get the care and service they need sooner.

## CRISTIANE'S STORY: PARENTING PROGRAM RAISES CLIENT'S CONFIDENCE

There's a shiny but often false belief that caring for a newborn or toddler is one of the best times in a woman's, or any parent's, life. In reality, life can hit hard and Abrigo client Cristiane Garcia soon realized that being a mother also meant facing a number of daunting challenges.

The pandemic and lockdowns left Cristiane frequently alone with her new son. She had a supportive husband but unfortunately his work required extended periods separated from the family. In addition, her friends and family members were thousands of miles away in Brazil. This combination of circumstances left Cristiane with feelings of isolation, frustration and at times anger.

Cristiane moved to Canada from Brazil in 2015 and settled in Winnipeg. A nutritionist back home, she took English classes for eight months to immerse herself in the language and later enrolled in a culinary arts program. She completed her college degree when she was six months pregnant with her son Daniel and later moved to Toronto.

As the baby moved from infant to toddler, Cristiane found herself struggling to be the mom she hoped to be for Daniel. "I found myself losing patience with my son. I noticed that his behavior was changing. I had no one to help guide me at the time. I felt guilty about my behavior and realized I needed help, for me and for him," says Cristiane.

After doing research online to find an agency that supported the Portuguese-language community, she made an initial call to Abrigo. Cristiane had two sessions with one of the counsellors on staff and was referred to the Portuguese Mental Health Clinic at Toronto Western Hospital. While there, she was diagnosed with post-partum depression. "They were very professional, kind and understanding," says Cristiane.

During her counselling, Cristiane was referred back to Abrigo and counsellor Valeria Sales to take part in the agency's now online parenting programs, including its flagship session, *Success by Six*. "Abrigo's parenting program has made a huge difference in my life," says Cristiane. "Valeria leads all three groups and provides great information. She is very straight to the point but at the same time she listens to and acknowledges all the opinions and feelings shared by the participants."

That solid instruction and guidance was exactly what Cristiane was looking for to help improve her parenting skills. "I also took the other two groups, *Kids Have Stress Too* and *Raising Sexually Healthy Children*. These classes opened my eyes to so many things," she said. "It was a safe environment and I was able to ask personal questions that I was uncomfortable asking others. I quickly saw improvement in my son when I put into practice the items or topics that we discussed."

The online programming was perfect for Cristiane and soon found them to be an invaluable resource.

*"Today, I feel confident, strong and secure about my abilities to raise my son. I wouldn't be in that place without the support and guidance of Valeria and Abrigo."*





# AN UNEXPECTED EVOLUTION: COVID-19 VACCINE EDUCATION AND DELIVERY

At the start of the pandemic, Abrigo joined a cluster of social service agencies organized by the City of Toronto and the United Way Greater Toronto that shared ideas and best practices to help guide our collective clients through the various challenges all were facing.

In the spring of 2021, Abrigo linked with an offshoot group that was determined to educate and help get people in Toronto vaccinated against COVID-19. Joining the York Weston Pelham Vaccine Engagement Team (VET) was a leap of faith in many ways for the organization as providing healthcare services has never been part of Abrigo's mandate.

With funding from the City of Toronto, our first order of business was to hire a Lead Ambassador, who would spearhead our agency's vaccination efforts. The organization quickly turned to former Abrigo Board member and media personality Matthew Correia. Matthew graciously accepted the offer and we were literally off to the races – the race to get the COVID-19 vaccine into the arms of primarily the Portuguese-speaking community of Toronto.

Under Mr. Correia's leadership the agency quickly hired two Resident Ambassadors, Tania Barbosa and Jessica Pacheco to assist with the cause. The group began making media appearances to promote our efforts and other engagement activities to educate the public about the importance of getting vaccinated.

Abrigo counsellors and our Vaccine Engagement Team worked together to ensure that all interested Abrigo clients, volunteers and staff members got their shot as soon as possible at one of the various city-run vaccine clinics. However, it became clear that there was an appetite for Portuguese language focused pop-up clinics.

The Abrigo team took up the challenge and held our first clinic at our Dufferin and St. Clair location on July 9, 2021. During the remaining fiscal year, Abrigo held 11 other vaccination clinics and provided a total of more than 1,200 doses to our clients. We thank our



partners Toronto Public Health, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Paramedics, the Canadian Red Cross and Casa das Beiras Community Centre for the delivery and execution of this important service.

This degree of success could not have been reached as well without the support of the many Portuguese-language media outlets who joined us on this journey. We thank each of them for their support of Abrigo and commitment to engage and educate the community.

Abrigo continues to grow, evolve and meet head-on the difficult issues that affect local residents. We have never backed away from a challenge and COVID-19, although a formidable foe, is no match for the energy and determination of our VET team.



# FUNDER AND DONOR SUPPORT DRIVES CLINICAL EXCELLENCE

Abrigo relies annually on the generous support of our funders, donors and community partners. Their gifts, no matter the size, enables our agency to deliver exceptional programs and services to thousands of individuals and families in Toronto, the Region of Peel and beyond.

Without their ongoing support, Abrigo could not make the positive impact we do on so many lives. Our donors' trust and belief in our mission drives each staff member's pursuit to deliver unparalleled clinical excellence and better outcomes for everyone.

Abrigo extends our sincere and most heartfelt thanks to the institutions, corporations, organizations and individuals listed below.

## Funding Partners

- Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services
- United Way Greater Toronto
- Ministry of Attorney General
- City of Toronto – Community Service Partnerships
- City of Toronto – Vaccine Engagement Project
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Canadian Women's Foundation
- Catholic Children's Aid Society of Toronto
- Ontario Charitable Gaming Association
- Regiao Autonoma Dos Acores

## Corporate and Community Partners

- 5038596 Ontario Limited
- BMO
- CanadaHelps
- Canadian Council of Construction Unions
- Cardinal Funeral Homes
- Charities Aid Foundation of Canada
- CHUM Charitable Foundation
- Dixon Gordon & Co. LLP
- Drywall Acoustic Lathing & Insulation Local 675
- Ferreira Professional Corporation
- Fidelity Investments Canada ULC
- GJF Realty Management Inc.

- Hoffman – La Roche Ltd.
- IC Savings
- LiUNA Local 183
- LiUNA Ontario Provincial District Council
- Lusogolf Fundraising Inc.
- Macedo Wine Grape Juice Ltd.
- Manulife
- Mellohawk Associates Inc.
- PayPal Giving Fund Canada
- Royal LePage Supreme Realty
- The Benevity Community Impact Fund
- Viana Roofing & Sheet Metal Ltd.

## Individuals

- Amelia Claro
- Americo Lopes
- Ana Carolina Sales
- Ana Marcos
- Aristides Miguel
- Arnold Santos
- Camila Andrade
- Cathy Brasil
- Carlos Teixeira
- Carmina Pereira
- Cidalia Pereira
- Cristina Jordao
- Daniela Pacheco
- Daniela Pereira
- David Pereira
- Derek Monteiro
- Deyan Kostovski
- Dianne Oliveira
- Diogo Peligrinelli Dutra
- Ed Graça
- Edith De Melo
- Elisio Jordao
- Ermidio Alves
- Francisco Leite
- Francisco Silva
- Francisco Varela
- Gerald Luciano
- Gil Amaral
- Gila Raposo
- Gilberto Oliveira
- Gisel Bettencourt
- Humberto Carolo
- Irene Regalado Graça
- Iria Bracelos
- Ivy Baccas
- Jenny Almeida
- John Martinho
- Jose Adriano da Silva
- Jose Ernesto Cabral
- Jose Goncalves
- Jose Manuel Simoes
- Jose Silva
- Dr. Jose Silveira
- Kathleen Teixeira
- Laura Galeazza
- Lena Barreto
- Manuel DaCosta
- Manuel P. DaCosta
- Manuel J. Clementino
- Manuela Marujo
- Maria Bettencourt
- Maria Cristina Alves
- Maria Coelho
- Maria da Conceicao Lopes
- Maria Helena Da Silva
- Maria Melo
- Maria Odete Cerqueira
- Marie Moro
- Mary-Lou Dejesus
- Odette Medeiros
- Palmira Da Costa
- Patricia Harper
- Paula Oliveira
- Paulo Luis
- Peter Reis
- Ricardina Nogueira
- Rosa Oliveira
- Rosa Pereira Lopes
- Ruth Warner
- Susan Da Cruz
- Teresa Pagnotta
- Thaina Goncalves
- Ulysses and Salomé Pratas
- Valeria Sales



# ABRIGO VOLUNTEERS: STEADFAST SUPPORT DURING TRANSITIONING TIMES

The last year has been a time of transition for all those associated with the Abrigo Centre. However, one thing shone brightly, our volunteers continued their passionate and steadfast commitment to the agency.

While our counsellors continued to provide most client services virtually, they did see clients by appointment in the office. In stride, our volunteers continued to assist clients over the phone with form filling and other instrumental services and many also spent time in the office screening clients at the door and assisting our counsellors with a variety of duties.

Although the number of volunteers this fiscal year didn't rival pre-pandemic days, they still delivered the kind of quality care that Abrigo earned its stellar reputation in the community.

All of our volunteers deserve special commendation for serving our clients and community with compassion and care during continuing challenging times.

In fiscal 2021/22, **62 devoted volunteers** generously **gave 6,442 hours** of their valuable time to serve the clients of Abrigo. Thank you to all our volunteers for your dedicated support and valuable assistance!



- Agnes Barbosa
- Alyssa Martins
- Amelia Moreira
- Ana Maria Matos
- Andre Luis De
- Andrade Silva Filho
- Anthony Harker
- Arnon Melo
- Carla Neto
- Carlos Melo
- Cibebe Agnelo
- Cristina Domingos
- David Pereira
- Debora Mayer
- Deyan Kostovski
- Diana Da Silva
- Dominic Martins
- Elisabete Dias
- Enir Bassani
- Erika Pascoal
- Fabiana Camara
- Fernanda Gomes
- Francisco Leite
- Gila Raposo
- Ilda Januario
- Iris Barcelos
- Joana Nunes
- Joao Pires
- Joaquina Vieira
- Joel Figueiredo
- Jorge Palhao
- Kathleen Virtue
- Lena Barreto
- Ligia Sardo
- Lucilia Maia
- M. da Luz Ferreira
- M. de Lourdes Jesus
- M. Isabel Pereira
- M. Jesus Machado
- M. Norberta Oliveira
- M. Teresa Moura
- Mafalda da Silva
- Margery Pimentel
- Maria Silva
- Matthew Graca
- Miguel Ramalho-Santos
- Moyses Sant'Anna
- Natalia Medeiros
- Nathan Conley
- Odete Melo
- Patricia Harper
- Paula Martins
- Paula Oliveira
- Raquel Mazzeo
- Regina Jordao
- Rosana De Rezende
- Sergio Sarmiento
- Sofia Valente
- Teresa Pagnotta
- Thaina Goncalves
- Urania Silveira
- Vanessa Alvim
- Zelia Borges



# ABRIGO'S BOARD AND STAFF

## Membership of Abrigo's Board of Directors April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2022

- Arnon Melo
- Carla Neto
- David Pereira, Secretary
- Deyan Kostovski
- Gila Raposo
- Lena Barreto, Chair
- Patricia Harper, Vice Chair
- Teresa Pagnotta

## Abrigo Staff Members

- Ana Machado
- Anderson Salvador
- Cidalia Pereira
- Ed Graça, Executive Director
- Erika Pascoal
- Gerald Luciano
- Liliana da Cunha
- Luciana Pache de Faria
- Marilia dos Santos
- Marta Santos
- Martina Esteves
- Paula De Jesus
- Rosane Fernandes
- Teresa Emmanuel
- Valeria Sales

## Our Services

- Community Development & Integration Program
- Comprehensive Needs Assessment
- Government form filling
- Mindful Fathers Parenting Group
- Individual Counselling
- Information and Referral Services
- Newcomer Services
- Partner Assault Response (PAR) Program
- Seniors Educational & Recreational Group
- Seniors Helping Seniors
- Success by Six Parenting Group (for Mothers)
- Teens Against Gender-based Violence (TAG-V)
- Violence Against Women Counselling
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Youth Outreach Services





# ABRIGO CENTRE

## STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS

For the year ended March 31, 2022

	2022	2021
<b>Revenue</b>		
Funding from governments	\$ 926,913	\$ 814,647
Contributions from charitable organizations	\$ 310,206	\$ 329,715
Fundraising and donations	\$ 139,161	\$ 124,661
Fees and other	\$ 107,686	\$ 70,393
	<b>\$ 1,483,966</b>	<b>\$ 1,339,416</b>
<b>Expenses</b>		
Salaries (note 8)	\$ 1,009,063	\$ 853,516
Employee benefits	\$ 125,142	\$ 110,952
Rent (note 8)	\$ 136,203	\$ 171,176
Interpretation costs	\$ 36,520	\$ 8,029
Amortization (note 3(c))	\$ 13,899	\$ 35,094
Office and general	\$ 7,923	\$ 28,717
Program delivery	\$ 28,484	\$ 20,257
Purchased services	\$ 22,674	\$ 22,935
Insurance	\$ 17,735	\$ 15,137
Professional fees	\$ 11,433	\$ 12,233
Promotion	\$ 11,773	\$ 5,117
Repairs and maintenance	\$ 11,453	\$ 9,347
Utilities	\$ 11,020	\$ 9,424
Staff training and travel	\$ 6,528	\$ 9,790
Information technology	\$ 8,419	\$ 8,420
Telecommunications	\$ 6,292	\$ 7,055
Direct supplies	\$ 5,986	\$ 5,720
Donations and fundraising	\$ 1,642	\$ 700
	<b>\$ 1,472,189</b>	<b>\$ 1,333,619</b>
<b>Excess of revenue over expenses</b>	<b>\$ 11,777</b>	<b>\$ 5,797</b>



Each and every day Abrigo counsellors are helping clients find solutions to issues and concerns. No client in need is ever turned away. It can be long and challenging work but rewarding and satisfying as well.

Your support will provide our dedicated women and men with the resources they need to improve program and service delivery. Take a moment to think about how you can help.

Visit us at **[www.abrigo.ca](http://www.abrigo.ca)** to donate today.



**United Way**  
Greater Toronto

## **Abrigo Centre**

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Facebook & Instagram: /abrigocentre

Charitable Number 129515284 RR0001

*Design and Artwork by Vy Do, v-illustration.com*