



DeafBlind
ONTARIO SERVICES



Annual Report 25
26



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Our Mission

DeafBlind Ontario Services is focused on individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-verbal and deafblind. We offer an array of services that support people to live their best lives.



Our Vision

Enriching lives one touch and sign at a time.

Our Values

Person-Centered Dedication



Collective Success



Fearless Empowerment



**Rooted in Values,
Growing with Purpose**

Pursuit of Excellence



Infinite Possibilities



Accountability in Action





Foundational Principles

This is our “why” — the deep purpose and inspiration behind everything we do here at DeafBlind Ontario Services.



Person-Centered Dedication

At the heart of everything we do, we place the Individual. We allow their voice, choices, and experiences to guide our actions.



Infinite Possibilities

We are driven by an unwavering belief that every person, regardless of their abilities or challenges, possesses ‘Infinite Possibilities.’

Core Values

This is our “how” — our core values shape our interactions, decisions and practices.



Pursuit of Excellence

Relentless dedication to high standards



Fearless Empowerment

Taking bold actions that prioritize the well-being of individuals, teams, and the organization



Collective Success

Collective effort aimed at achieving exceptional results



Accountability in Action

Achieving success, while emphasizing responsibility for one’s actions, decisions, and outcomes

Strategic Plan Update

As this strategic cycle enters its final year, DBOS has continued delivering on its commitments.

Strategic Plan Update 2025–2026

DeafBlind Ontario Services (DBOS) remained guided throughout 2025–2026 by its 2023–2026 Strategic Plan, built on three core principles and objectives:

1

Services
Be the Provider of Choice

2

Our Employees
Support to Thrive

3

Collaboration
Enhance, Enrich and Create

1

Services
Be the Provider of Choice

The delivery and continuous enhancement of high-quality, specialized services remained central to DBOS's work in 2025–2026.

The organization continued to build on the success of its "Living My Best Life" service model, ensuring that people supported receive individualized services grounded in what is important to and for them.

Certification and professional development remained a strong organizational focus. Building on the Certified Deafblind Intervenor Specialist (CDBIS) credential and the Enriched Communication Support Specialist internal certification, DBOS continued to strengthen internal capacity to support people who are deafblind and individuals living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing, or use non-traditional forms of communication.

DBOS's dynamic growth strategy continued to guide efforts toward service innovation, expansion opportunities, and responsive service delivery. This work was supported by the organization's objective-centric risk management and quality assurance frameworks, with regular reporting to the Board and its committees.

2

Our Employees Support to Thrive

DBOS remained deeply committed to fostering a strong, engaged, and resilient workforce.

Throughout 2025–2026, the organization advanced a multi-faceted Employee Engagement and Retention strategy, with continued emphasis on communication, wellness, and connection.

Initiatives included:

- Ongoing “Engage and Discover” meetings
- Wellness-focused communications supporting mental and physical health
- Implementation of refreshed performance appraisal tools aligned with DBOS’s Foundational Principles and Core Values

These efforts contributed to continued improvements in employee retention and organizational stability, reinforcing DBOS’s commitment to creating a workplace where employees are supported to thrive.

3

Collaboration Enhance, Enrich and Create

Collaboration remained a cornerstone of DBOS’s strategic approach at the local, provincial, national, and international levels.

DBOS continued to demonstrate sector leadership through sustained engagement in advocacy, research, and community awareness initiatives.

Highlights included:

- Ongoing collaboration with national and international partners, including Deafblind International (DbI), with DBOS employees serving on boards and committees
- Continued participation in National Deafblind Awareness Month, including province-wide yarn bombing initiatives that promote visibility, connection, and community engagement
- Commitment to evidence-based practice and knowledge sharing, including collaborative contributions to international frameworks supporting consistency and best practices in deafblind services

DBOS also maintained an agile and proactive government relations strategy, supporting ongoing dialogue with municipal, provincial, and federal partners to advance the priorities of the people supported and the broader deafblind community.



Closing the Chapter, Building the Future

The final years of the 2023–2026 Strategic Plan have been characterized by action, growth, and innovation.

As DeafBlind Ontario Services looks ahead, the organization enters its next strategic planning cycle from a position of strength—grounded in purpose, informed by lived experience, and guided by a shared commitment to growing the future together.

Looking Ahead

In preparation for the conclusion of the current strategic plan in 2026, the Board of Directors initiated a comprehensive planning process to shape the organization's future direction.

The process began with engaging an external consultant through a formal RFP process and was anchored in one essential principle: listening. Extensive stakeholder engagement helped better understand where DBOS is today and inform where it will go next. Input was gathered through meaningful conversations with individuals supported by DBOS, government partners, volunteers, and employees.

These insights will support the Board in developing a shared vision and clear strategic priorities to guide DBOS through 2027–2031, with the new Strategic Plan anticipated to launch in Fall 2026.



Letter from the Board Chair & CEO

As we reflect on the past year at DeafBlind Ontario Services, we do so with a profound sense of pride, gratitude, and optimism for what lies ahead.

Guided by our shared values, our organization continues to evolve in ways that deepen our impact, strengthen our resilience, and reinforce our commitment to the people we serve.

As our current three-year Strategic Plan draws to a close in 2026, this year marked a pivotal moment of reflection and renewal. In collaboration with StrategyCorp, our Board of Directors began shaping the foundation of our 2027–2031 Strategic Plan. The past three years have been defined by action and growth, highlighted by the third anniversary of our Living My Best Life service model. This milestone reaffirmed our commitment to **Person-Centered Dedication**, ensuring that the voices, choices, and aspirations of the people we support remain at the centre of everything we do.

Our dedication to service excellence continued through sustained encouragement for direct service employees to pursue the Certified Deafblind Intervenor Specialist (CDBIS) certification, further strengthening the quality of support across our services. We also proudly opened a new Supported Living home in Peterborough—an investment in accessible housing that allowed us to transition from renting to owning. This milestone represents an important step toward long-term sustainability and community presence.

Throughout the year, we advanced several organizational priorities, including refreshing our

Values, strengthening government relations, developing a succession planning strategy, and continuing work within our objective-centered risk management framework. The creation of the Employee Connection Specialist role further reinforced our commitment to employee engagement and organizational health. We also made significant investments in technology education and cybersecurity, demonstrating **Accountability in Action** through the protection of our information assets. Following third-party assessments, targeted training, and system improvements, we are confident that our IT infrastructure is secure, well configured, and future-ready.

Our employees remain at the core of our success. We introduced an updated Performance Appraisal Tool designed to empower staff and support meaningful reflection, growth, and career development. We also celebrated an employee's participation in the Passport to Growth exchange program at the Anne Sullivan Centre in Ireland—an inspiring example of **Infinite Possibilities** and the value of learning from global practices.

Internally, we continued to explore new ways to strengthen connection and communication across the organization. Initiatives such as our internal podcast, The Living Room, and the Viva Engage platform support open dialogue, collaboration, and ongoing learning, contributing to a strong culture of **Collective Success**.

We also made purposeful investments in awareness-building, connection, and storytelling. These efforts included a Queen's Park reception held on October 28, hosted in collaboration with sector partners and centered on the theme "Intervenor Services Make a Difference in the Lives of Ontarians Who Are Deafblind." The event exemplified **Fearless Empowerment** and **Accountability in Action**, fostering meaningful dialogue with Members of Provincial Parliament and sector leaders. In addition, we released two new organizational videos filmed across the province that highlight our mission, culture, and—most importantly—the people at the heart of our work. These authentic stories reinforce the power of shared voices. We also launched a redesigned website with enhanced accessibility, improved navigation, and a refreshed visual identity to better serve our community.

This year marked an exciting first for our sector with the inaugural Intervenor Summit—a dynamic four-day event that brought together 27 Intervenors from 19 developmental service agencies across Ontario. This important gathering exemplified our **Pursuit of Excellence** and **Infinite Possibilities**, fostering professional growth, peer learning, and sector-wide collaboration. We extend our sincere thanks to the Ministry of Children, Community and Social Services for their generous funding support, which made this transformational opportunity possible.

On the global stage, we continue to proudly collaborate with Deafblind International (Dbi) and the World Federation of the Deafblind (WFDB) in preparation for the 2027 World Conference, further reinforcing our commitment to **Collective Success** across borders.

As we look ahead, we are energized by the momentum we have built and the shared purpose that unites us. Rooted in our values, we remain committed to shaping a future that is inclusive, responsive, and empowering for the people we serve.



Roxanna Spruyt
CEO



Lise Gagnon
Board Chair

Board Members

Lise Gagnon
Board Chair

Tiffany Barker
Vice Chair

Meerab Anwar

Kevin Daoust

Stephanie Egelton

Joe Filippelli

Kathryn Heier-Siemens

Kathy Peters

Sunny Shah

Our Values and Principles in Action.



Person-Centered Dedication



Infinite Possibilities



Pursuit of Excellence



Fearless Empowerment



Collective Success



Accountability in Action

Living My Best Life Service Model Update

Over the past year, we have continued to work closely with each person we support to help them realize their potential and pursue their goals for living their best possible lives.

In September, we proudly celebrated the third year of Living My Best Life (LMBL), sharing provincially the meaningful progress individuals have made across various areas of their lives as they work toward their personal goals. Together, we celebrated the **Collective Success** of our efforts in turning those dreams into reality.

The Services team continues to review and refine internal processes to ensure we are taking a collaborative and **Person-Centred Approach** to understanding what is most important to and for each individual supported.

This work helps ensure our services remain aligned with individual needs, both in goal development and in daily engagement, communication, and ongoing skill and concept development.

We also look forward to continuing our **Pursuit of Excellence** by sharing educational resources within teams to support ongoing learning and knowledge development, to reinforce the vital role team members play in delivering specialized services, and the meaningful impact this has on the lives of those we support.



8

LMBL meetings held between
April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026



109

Total LMBL meetings held
since the new model started



657

Active goals across
the organization

Service Awards

Employees

5
years

Jeshin Shaji
Mai Linh Do
Ashley Villeneuve
Chandana Chelpuri
Devansheeben Shilu
Himavanth Goureddy
Huda Hammad
Savanna Stjean
Beverly Campeau
Srushti Bhatia
Lisa Trottier
Jason Salvador

10
years

Nicole Capalbo
Rebecca Mcfadden

15
years

Ashley Fowler
James Chidley
Jodi Fitton
Jennifer Kramp
Tonya Byers
Debora Marsh
Amanda Albrecht
Julie Banks

20
years

Susie Naelgas
Nicole Nelson
Annette Piggott
Josephine Quinn

25
years

Theresa Merrifield
Ian White
Ljubo Kresovic

Volunteers

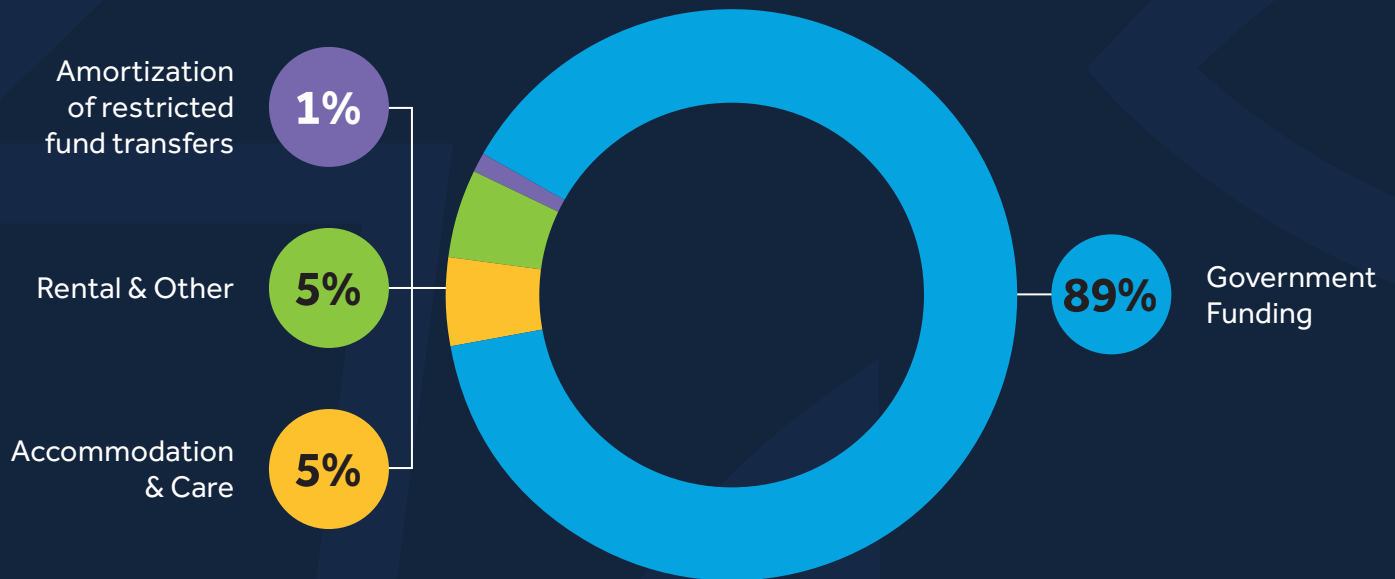
15
years

Gwen Elling
(Combined years of
service — DBOS/DBOF)

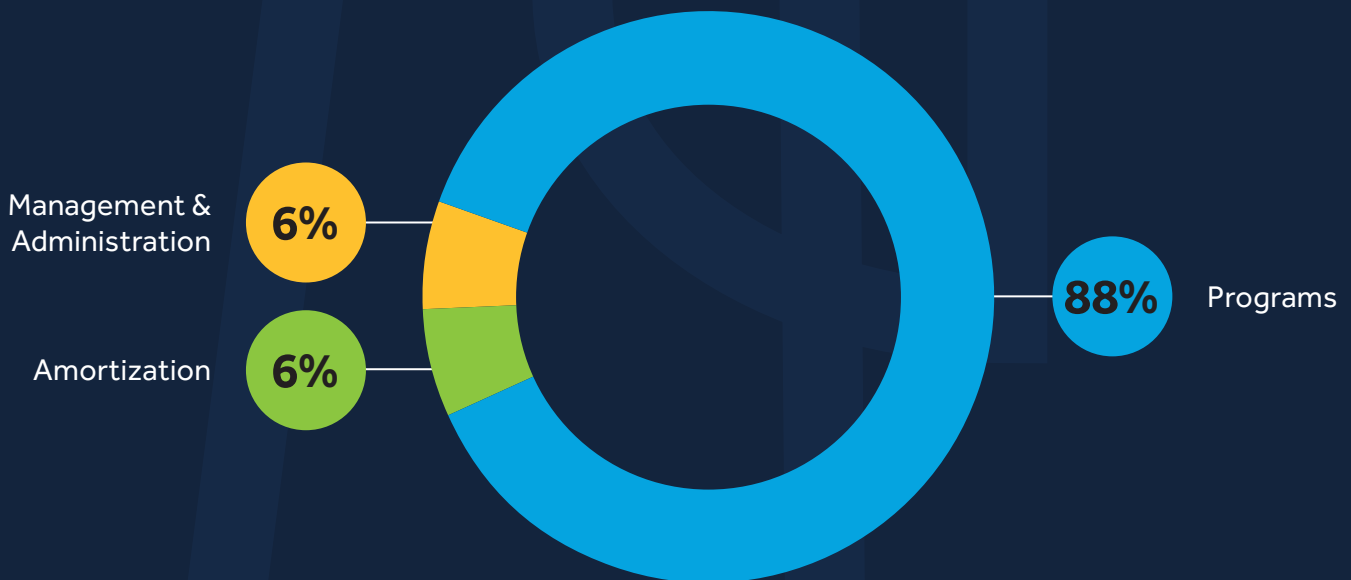


Our Financials

Revenue – Operating Fund



Expenses – Operating Fund



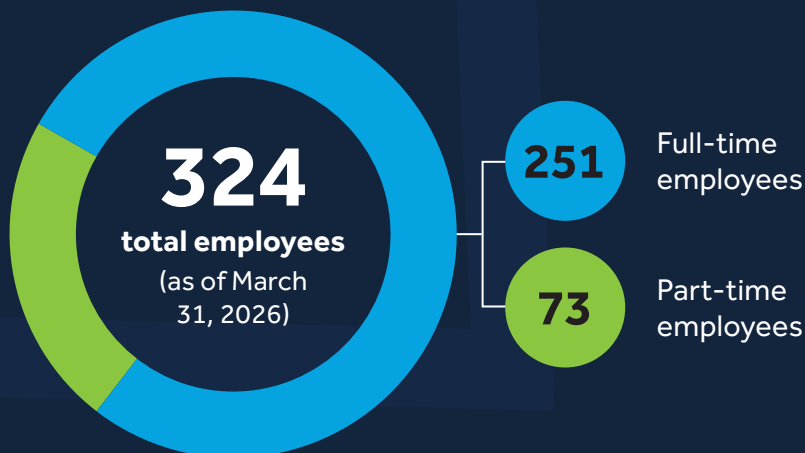
The above was summarized from the draft audited financial statements for the year ended March 31, 2026. The complete audited financial statements are available online at deafblindontario.com.

Our Impact

DeafBlind Ontario Services is committed to supporting people who are deafblind, as well as those living with a developmental disability who are Deaf, hard of hearing or use non-traditional forms of communication. Specialized services are customized to each person's unique needs, method of communication, and goals to live their best life.



Our Employees



3

new people supported between April 1, 2025 and March 31, 2026

\$59.61

Cost of one hour of direct service for Supported Living Homes

(based on 2024–2025 fiscal year)

362,255

Hours of direct service delivered in Supported Living Homes

(based on 2024–2025 fiscal year)

37

years of service as an organization

6.6

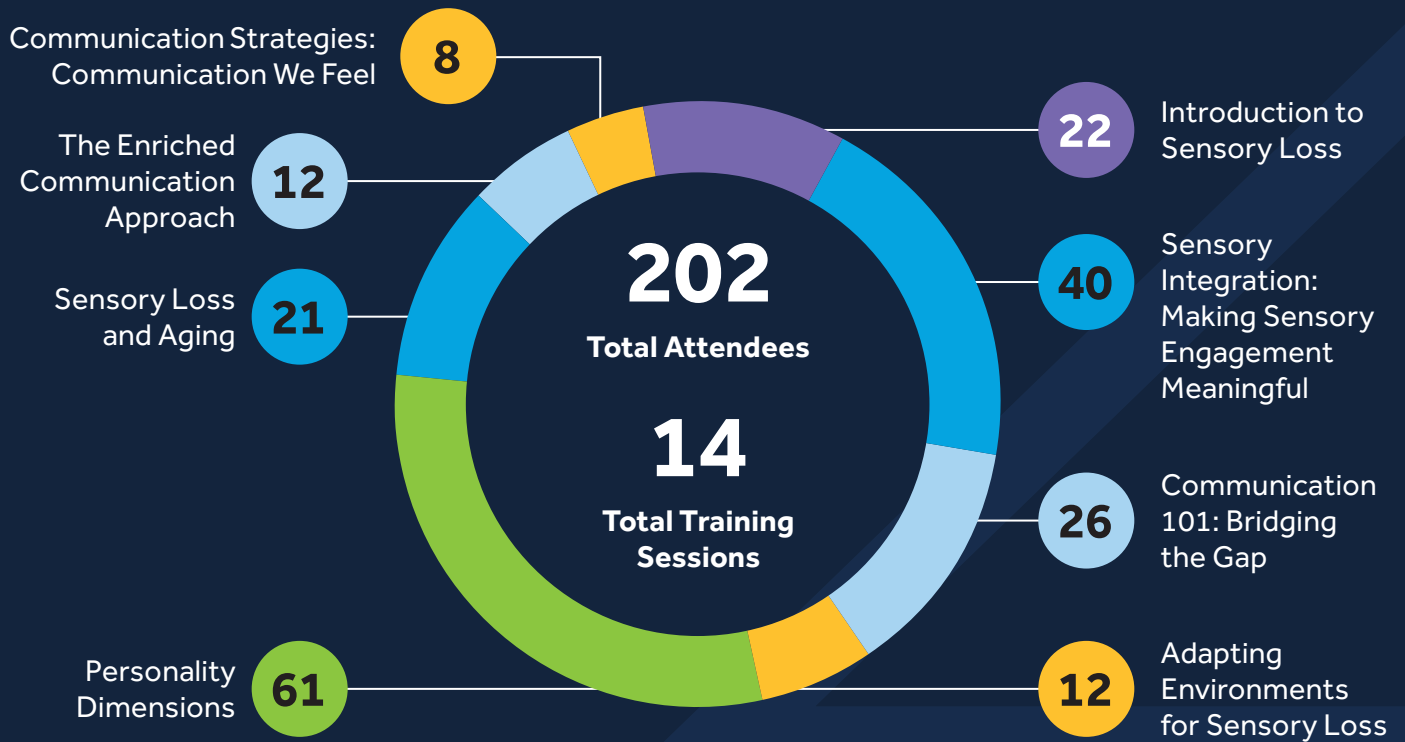
average years of service per employee

85%

of employees are in direct service

Training & Knowledge Sharing

Bridge Community Training 2025–2026



Knowledge Sharing 2025–2026

DeafBlind Ontario Services continues to be a leader in our field. Guided by our **Pursuit of Excellence**, we are consistently leading with innovation and expertise by actively sharing our knowledge with the community through presentations and research publications.



143

Total Presentations



1

Total Publications

Specialized Training 2025–2026

760

Total Attendees

64

Total Specialized Training Sessions

TOUCH™

TOUCH™ (Training Ongoing Unique Committed Holistic) enables our specialized support team to expand their knowledge on many aspects of sensory loss, including the impact of related conditions, adaptations required, communication methods, environmental considerations, and sensory complexities.



7

Total TOUCH™ Sessions



74

TOUCH™ Total Attendees

Additional Employee Training

Technical skills – from medication to back care, and everything in between.



39

Total Additional Training Sessions



504

Total Attendees

American Sign Language (ASL)



19

Total ASL Sessions



182

Total Attendees





DeafBlind
ONTARIO SERVICES



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