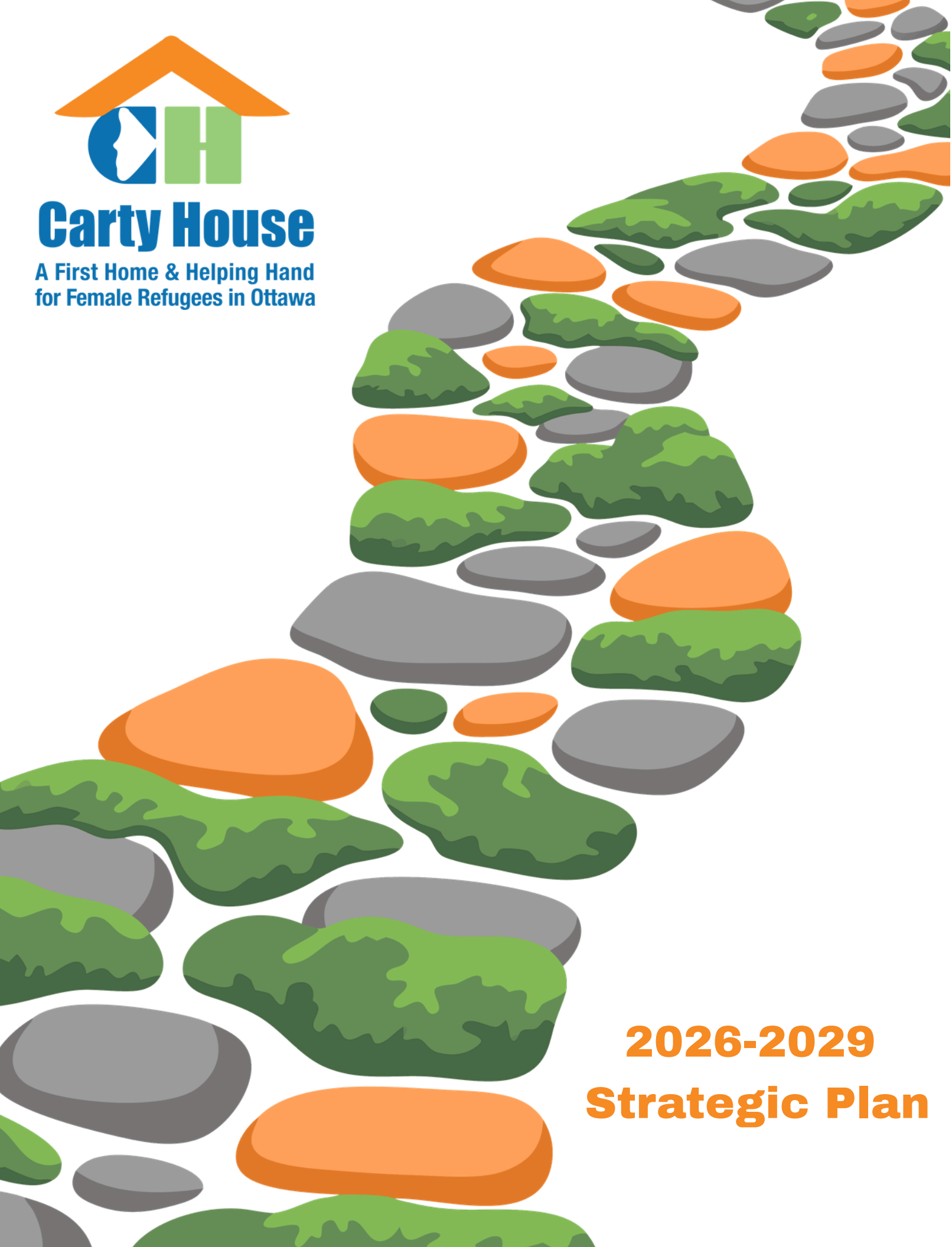
Carty House

A First Home & Helping Hand
for Female Refugees in Ottawa



2026-2029
Strategic Plan

Message from the Board Chair and Executive Director

Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters of Carty House,

We are excited to share Carty House's new strategic plan that will guide our work from 2026 to 2029. Our plan is a roadmap that reflects our deep commitment to the refugee women we serve and our vision for the future.

Navigating Challenges from a Position of Strength
We move forward with both clear-eyed realism and genuine optimism. Externally, we face ongoing challenges including federal policy uncertainty around refugee settlement and funding, Ottawa's affordable housing crisis, the rising costs of living, and harmful narratives about refugees threatening public support for this essential work. Internally, we recognize where we must grow stronger by diversifying funding sources, better supporting our team who continue to manage substantial workloads, maintaining our infrastructure, and strengthening data collection to better demonstrate our impact and tailor our support.

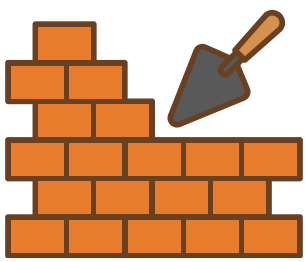
We approach these challenges from a position of organizational strength. We have a strong and dedicated staff team, volunteers, and Board of Directors. We operate two homes at 100% occupancy, with 90% of residents successfully transitioning to long-term housing. And we are entering 2026 with healthy reserves that provide us the freedom to think big and plan strategically about organizational development and strengthening.

Our Path Forward
Through extensive consultation with our board and staff, we have organized our work around four strategic priorities:

Supporting Residents to Thrive

Investing in a Strong and Sustainable Team

Strengthening Organizational Infrastructure



Driving Change Through Advocacy and Collaboration

This plan is both aspirational and grounded in our operational reality. It recognizes that strengthening our current foundation must come before further growth. Over the next three years we will further invest in creating a healthy workplace and fostering staff development, deepen partnerships, diversify and grow revenue, focus on communications, and continue to adapt our services to best meet the diverse needs of the women we serve. We will measure success through the quality of our services, resident outcomes, and organizational sustainability.

The challenges are real, but so is our determination. With your continued support, we are building a community where refugee women do not just survive, they thrive.Thank you to our dedicated staff team: your compassion, expertise, and tireless work make our mission possible every day. To our supporters, partners, and funders: your belief in this work sustains us and the women we serve.

With gratitude and excitement for the future,

Diana Martin
Board Chair, Carty House

Louise Ebeltoft
Executive Director, Carty House

Carty House

A First Home & Helping Hand for Female Refugees in Ottawa

P.O. Box 4758, STN E.
Ottawa, ON K1S 5H9

office@cartyhouse.org
www.CartyHouse.org

About Carty House

Carty House provides a first home and vital supports to refugee women in Ottawa. Founded in 2001 by Sister Maureen Killoran of the Congregation of Notre Dame, the organization incorporated in 2009 as a non-religious, non-profit charitable organization. Since 2009, the organization has established itself as Ottawa's only organization providing dedicated transitional housing and wraparound support services exclusively for refugee women. Our model recognizes that refugee women face unique barriers and our approach is designed specifically to meet their needs with compassionate and tailored support to help them achieve stability and independence.

We currently operate two homes with the capacity to serve 27 women annually, providing:
• Safe, affordable accommodation for up to 18 months
• Individualized support for housing searches, employment, education, and community integration
• Material and financial assistance to meet basic needs
• Psychosocial support and peer community building
• Connections to other settlement services including language training, mental health support, legal services and community resources

Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our vision, mission, and values are the foundation upon which Carty House operates and the compass that guides our work. During our 2026 strategic planning process, we reviewed and refined these statements to ensure they reflect who we are today and the work we want to do moving forward.

Our Vision

A future where every refugee woman feels safe, builds community and has the opportunity to thrive in Canada.

Our Mission

Carty House provides a safe home and supportive community for refugee women, with individualized, comprehensive support that enables them to build stable, independent lives in Ottawa.

Our Values

Collaboration. We work closely and transparently with our community and partners to maximize our impact and deliver the highest quality of service.

Compassion. We lead with empathy and without judgment, while striving to understand the unique perspectives, experiences, and situations of those we serve and work alongside.

Excellence and Innovation. We pursue excellence in our work and are committed to continuous learning and improvement, building on best practices as a sector leader in supportive housing for refugee women.

Inclusion and Belonging. We create an environment where refugee women, staff, board members, and volunteers feel valued for their unique contributions. We model equity, diversity, and inclusion in all of our policies, programs, and services, while fostering genuine connection and mutual respect throughout our community.

Integrity. We practice responsible and sustainable stewardship across all aspects of our work, including the management of resources and delivery of services, while ensuring compliance with relevant guidelines and regulations.

Overview of the Strategic Planning Process

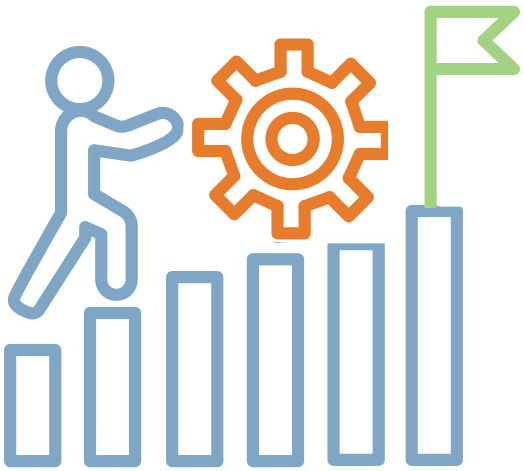
This strategic plan was developed through a collaborative, inclusive process involving board members, the Executive Director, and our full staff team. We are grateful for the time, expertise, and honest reflection contributed by all participants. While this process focused on board and staff input, we are committed to meaningfully incorporating resident voices into our annual operational planning and ongoing program development. The strategic planning process was conducted in early 2026 and included key activities.

Environmental Scan and Context Setting

Participants reviewed and discussed current external and internal factors impacting Carty House. These include the following:

Strengths and Opportunities

- Unique positioning in the community and demonstrated demand for services
- Proven impact and quality service delivery
- Strong staff team
- Strong partnerships and reputation
- Strong financial foundation and opportunity to strategically invest reserves
- Strong community engagement through volunteers and donors

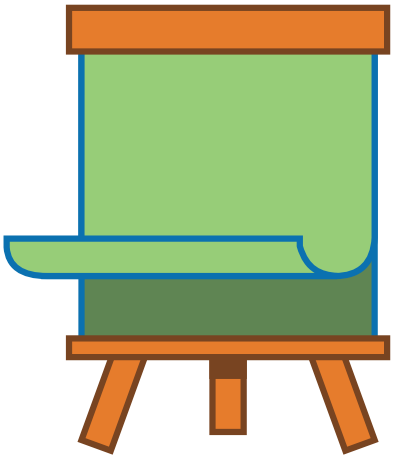


Challenges and Threats

- Political uncertainty and growing anti-immigrant sentiment
- Housing market crisis and inflation pressures
- Competitive funding environment
- Operational challenges including staff sustainability, limited administrative capacity, aging infrastructure, and gaps in policies and risk management

Strategic Planning Retreat Sessions

Two strategic planning retreats were held with participation from board members, the Executive Director, and the staff team. The sessions focused on:



• Identifying goals and objectives for the strategic plan using Action Priority Matrices to assess impact and feasibility.
• Reviewing and updating Carty House's Vision, Mission, and Values to ensure alignment with our current work and future aspirations.
• Honest assessment of our organizational strengths, challenges, and opportunities.
• Small and full group discussions to build consensus on objectives within each strategic priority area.

Key themes that emerged from the planning process included:
• The need to strengthen organizational infrastructure before exploring expansion.
• The importance of staff wellness and sustainable workloads.
• The opportunity to deepen and strengthen fundraising and communications functions.
• The value of strategic partnerships to enhance services and amplify impact.
• A commitment to centering resident voices and outcomes in all we do.

Our Strategic Priorities

Guided by our vision, mission, and values, we have established four strategic priorities to direct our efforts over the next three years, from 2026 to 2029.

These priorities emerged from extensive consultation with our board and staff team and directly address both the internal capacity challenges and external environmental factors we face. They provide a strategic framework that will allow us to adapt and navigate emerging needs and opportunities, while ensuring we can direct our energy and resources where they are needed most.

Priority: Support Residents to Thrive

The first months in Canada are critical and the support we provide during this time can make a significant difference in helping refugee women build successful, fulfilling lives. Providing consistent and person-centered support across our homes while continuously improving our services through resident feedback and outcome measurement will ensure that each resident receives the individualized care and resources she needs to thrive.

We will:

1. Continue to deliver safe housing and individualized supports that address each resident's unique needs, education and employment goals, and community integration with consistency across our homes.

2. Build and maintain community among current residents through structured peer support, programming, and leveraging connections to past residents, volunteers, and the Board.

3. Drive continuous improvement in program quality by establishing a comprehensive data collection and outcome tracking, including through resident feedback mechanisms, to measure progress and continuously improve program quality.

Priority: Invest in a Strong and Sustainable Team

Our people are our greatest asset. A supported team and active board sustain operational excellence, and are necessary for strategic growth and long-term sustainability.

We will:

1. Invest in staff wellbeing through ongoing training, professional and leadership development, and team building that supports recruitment, retention, and builds a positive and trusting team culture.

2. Review and update operational policies and procedures to ensure they provide clear and comprehensive direction for staff in line with our mission, values and best practices. This includes clarifying roles and responsibilities, reviewing internal manuals, and engaging in succession planning.

3. Strengthen board engagement through increased training, networking and advocacy and by ensuring policies and structures are in place to support the Board's work.

4. Develop a volunteer management strategy that formalizes recruitment, training, and recognition processes, and fosters meaningful engagement opportunities.

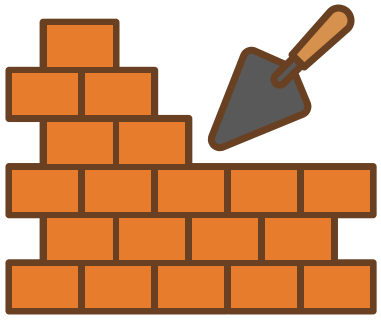
Priority: Strengthen Organizational Infrastructure

Strong infrastructure underpins sustainable, mission-aligned operations and growth. By strengthening our organizational infrastructure, we will protect our ability to effectively support refugee women now and into the future.

We will:

1. Develop a multi-year fundraising strategy to diversify revenue while strengthening staff capacity where needed to support its implementation.

2. Strengthen long-term sustainability through improved reserve fund management and multi-year financial planning.



3. Invest in technology to improve operational efficiency, data privacy and security, and information management.

4. Develop site-specific capital plans and proactively maintain physical infrastructure to safeguard our high-quality and safe housing.

5. Assess current operational, staffing and financial capacity to inform decisions about sustainable expansion that preserves the integrity of the Carty House model.

Priority: Drive Change Through Advocacy & Collaboration

The challenges facing refugee women are systemic and require collective solutions. Strategic collaboration and advocacy can extend our impact, enhance resident services, and counter harmful narratives, while positioning Carty House as a trusted voice in shaping policies that affect refugee women across our community.

We will:

1. Develop and implement a communications strategy that integrates resident perspectives to strengthen organizational visibility, digital engagement, media relations, and community presence.

2. Build and leverage strategic partnerships with organizations that can enhance resident support, reduce operational strain, and extend Carty House's reach where applicable.

3. Remain active in housing and immigration advocacy initiatives, engage strategically in municipal forums, and collaborate with peer organizations to promote increased sector funding, share best practices, influence policy and combat harmful narratives through education and by sharing the impact of our work.

Implementing Our Strategic Plan

Accountability and Leadership

The Executive Director holds primary responsibility for leading the strategic plan implementation, with support from staff and oversight from the Board of Directors.

Implementation

An impact-effort planning tool will be used to guide implementation of this strategic plan. This will help prioritize annual actions and resource allocation, ensuring a balance between quick wins and longer-term investments. Use of this planning and decision tool will demonstrate:

- **Strategic discipline:** Carty House is choosing its actions carefully, focusing on what makes the biggest difference and is the most realistic to do.
- **Transparency:** It explains how actions were selected, which is important for reporting and explaining when trade-offs must be made.
- **Alignment:** It helps future staff and board understand the logic behind which activities were prioritized and what may have been deferred.

Next Steps

1. **Develop operational plans** that identify annual goals, objectives, key indicators, timelines, resources required, and roles and responsibilities.
2. **Allocate budget resources** aligned with strategic priorities during the annual budget development process.

Monitoring

3. **Monitor progress** through reports to the Board that track key metrics, milestones, and challenges.
4. **Adapt strategies** based on staff and resident feedback, sector trends, funding opportunities and changing community needs.

Communication

5. **Share the strategic plan** publicly and on a regular basis with staff, residents, community partners, and funders.
6. **Communicate progress** on a regular basis through board reports, annual reporting to funders and the community, staff meetings, and opportunities for resident input.

Evaluation and Review

7. Complete an **annual review** of the strategic plan, assessing progress of each priority and adjusting subsequent annual plans and budgets as needed.
8. In 2029, conduct a thorough **evaluation** of outcomes achieved and lessons learned. At that time, the Board can decide if a new strategic plan is required or if the timeframe for the current plan can be extended.