

YMCA OF SOUTHWEST NOVA SCOTIA

Youth Outreach Program



2024-2025 Year End Report

YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM

OVERVIEW

The Nova Scotia Department of Opportunities and Social Development has legislative oversight for the Child, Family Services Act while the Child, Youth and Families Supports division of the Nova Scotia Department of Opportunities and Social Development provides oversight for programs, services and policies for children, youth, and families required to implement the Act. This includes Prevention & Early Intervention, Child and Family Wellbeing, and Placement Services. The Youth Outreach Program is under the Prevention & Early Intervention Youth Program Services.

What is the YMCA Youth Outreach Program? (YOP)

This all-gender, community-based program, improves the immediate and long-term social, educational/vocational, economic and health outcomes for vulnerable youth.

The YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia's YOP provides support for the following two streams of youth in Lunenburg and Queens County:

General Stream:

Youth who are 16-25 years old experiencing risk factors, and who may, or may not, be connected to Child Family and Wellbeing Programs.

Youth In Care Stream:

Youth 12-19 years old in the Minister's care who are in a number of settings across the Child Welfare Placement continuum, including temporary and permanent care.

A total of 212 referrals have been received since the programs launched in 2022. This summary reflects the data collected between April 1st, 2024 and March 31st, 2025

GRATEFUL TO OUR FUNDERS

The YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia gratefully acknowledges the Province of Nova Scotia, Department of Opportunities and Social Development for their support.

Additional Funding:

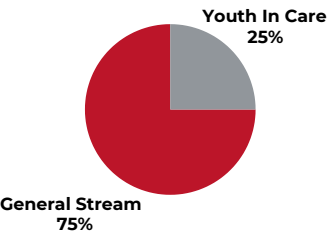
The YMCA Youth Outreach Program received a one-time funding support through the Department of Opportunities and Social Development to support programming and address affordable initiatives such as programs to alleviate poverty; enhance food accessibility; provide additional support services; and promote literacy.



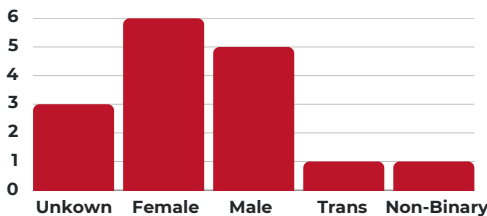
QUEENS COUNTY

DATA COLLECTED FROM April 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

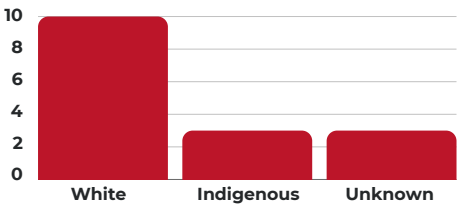
New Referrals (16 received)



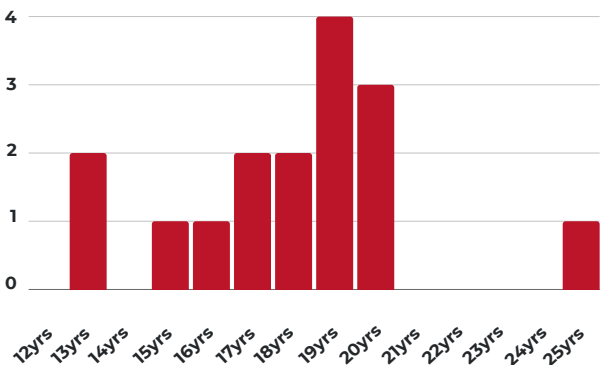
Gender Represented:



Cultural Demographics:



Ages Represented:



69%

Referrals came from Service Providers.

31%

Referrals were made as self-referrals and/or parental/guardian referrals.

Service Delivery specific to YOP youth receiving individualized support

488

in-person or virtual interventions (community/homebased visits/telephone calls/texts/etc.)

6

unique youth who participated in funded Youth Outreach group-based programming/services during this period

3

youth's family received family support work through the YOP

107

times youth dropped in for unscheduled support

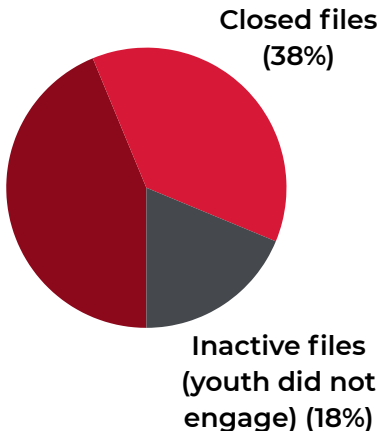
4

unique youth participated in group programming and special events

1

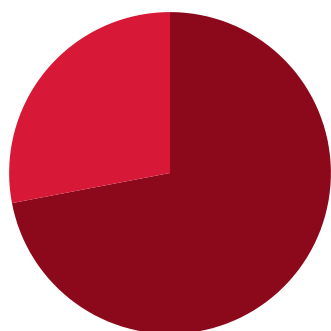
youth supported through YOP program who is/was being sexually exploited/trafficked

Open files (44%)



QUEENS COUNTY

Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre



■ 72% youth ages 12-15 yrs accessed programming

■ 28% youth ages 16-25 yrs accessed programming

121

Days programming offered at Centre

650

Times programming was accessed

GROUP PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

BASIC BUDGETING FOR YOUTH - TAKING CONTROL OF YOUR MONEY



With additional supportive funding from the Department of Opportunities & Social Development, Employment Support & Income Assistance, Youth Development Initiative Funds, the YMCA provided two FREE opportunities for youth, ages 15-25 yrs, to better understand finances and empower them to transition into independent living. A total of **8 youth** participated in the 12 session workshops held in Liverpool.

IGNITE CONFIDENCE – GIRLS ON FIRE CAMP



Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre offered a 2-day camp called Girls on Fire. Designed to help female identified youth ages 12 – 18yrs learn lifelong strategies for empowerment, self-care, promote self-worth, confidence, and resilience, while recognizing the infinite potential that lies within. **Two youth** participated in the camp.

COOK IT UP! SHOP, COOK & LEARN!



This program provides YOP youth hands on learning experiences in meal planning, shopping on a budget, food preparation following safe practices, and meal preparation using simple ingredients with an emphasis on healthy eating while providing tools transferable to home and community. With support funding from the Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage's One Time Food Relief Program, a total of **3 YOP youth** from Queens County were each provided with 4 one-to-one cooking lessons. Upon completion, each received a pantry box of staples, a cookbook, a binder of resource material and a certificate of completion.

Testimonial from youth aged, 19 who attended the Basic Budgeting for Youth workshop when asked what three things they learned: "How to get a good credit score; how to get a SIN number; and financial problems! I learned a lot."

QUEENS COUNTY

ADDITIONAL OUTCOMES



— RBC COMMUNITY TOGETHER FUND

Partnering with the RBC Bridgewater Branch, the YMCA YOP was able to provide youth accessing the Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre a meal cooked by three RBC employees. In addition, the Centre was able to use the additional funds provided through the RBC Community Together Grant to help support purchasing groceries for weekly meals provided at the centre. A total of **298 youth** were directly impacted by this funding.

— PIZZA & PONDER – FOCUS GROUP FOR YOUTH ENGAGEMENT —

The Queens Coast Diversity and Inclusion Small Grant Program provided support to host two youth focus groups to discuss recommendations for youth engagement in Queens County. One session was held with the Liverpool Regional High School Gender Sexuality Alliance and one with youth attending the Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre. **Thirty-six youth** ages 12-25yrs provided dialogue on what they want to see offered for youth in their community. The results of this discussion were compiled and shared with community organizations serving youth in Queens County.

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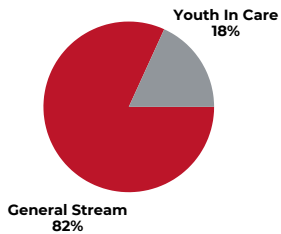
Testimonial from youth aged 14, who participates weekly in programs offered at Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre when asked what makes them come each week, “I feel safe here, no one bullies me and someone will always talk with me. It feels good when adults asks me how my day is going or checks in to see if I need anything.”

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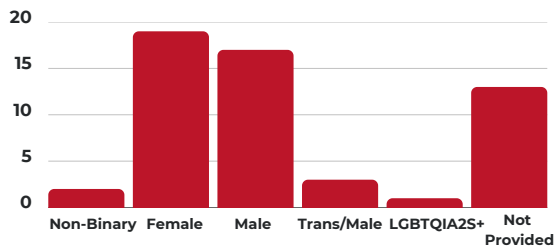
LUNENBURG COUNTY

DATA COLLECTED FROM APRIL 1, 2024 - MARCH 31, 2025

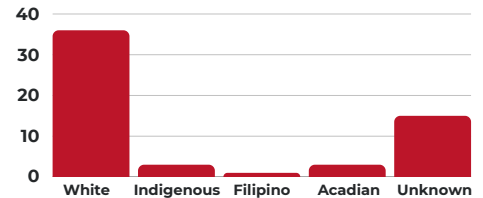
Referrals (48 received)



Gender Represented:



Cultural Demographics:



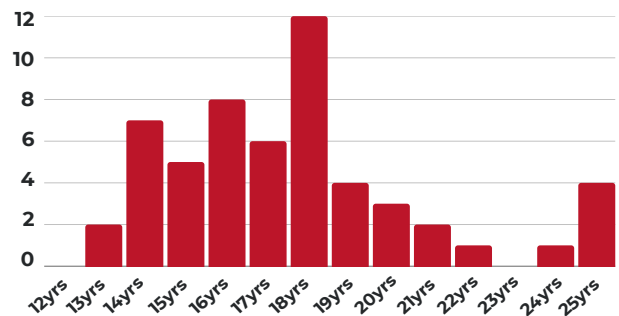
67%

Referrals came from Service Providers.

33%

Referrals were made as self-referrals and/or parental/guardian referrals.

Age Represented:



Service Delivery specific to YOP youth receiving individualized support

902

in-person or virtual interventions (community/homebased visits/telephone calls/texts/etc.)

16

unique youth who participated in funded Youth Outreach group-based programming/services during this period

17

youth's family received family support work through the YOP

226

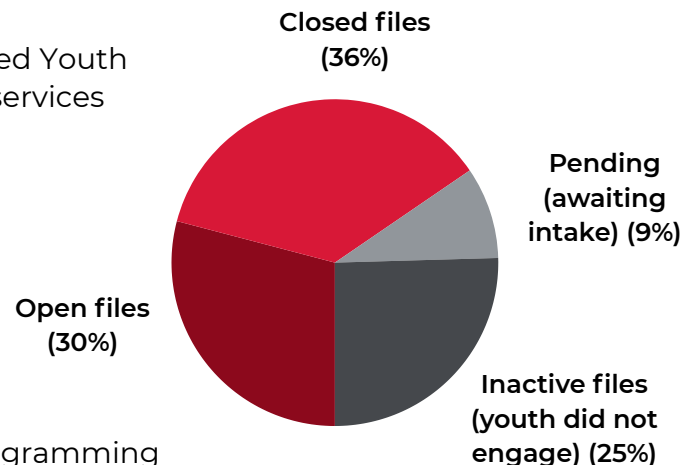
times youth dropped in for unscheduled support

12

unique youth participated in group programming and special events

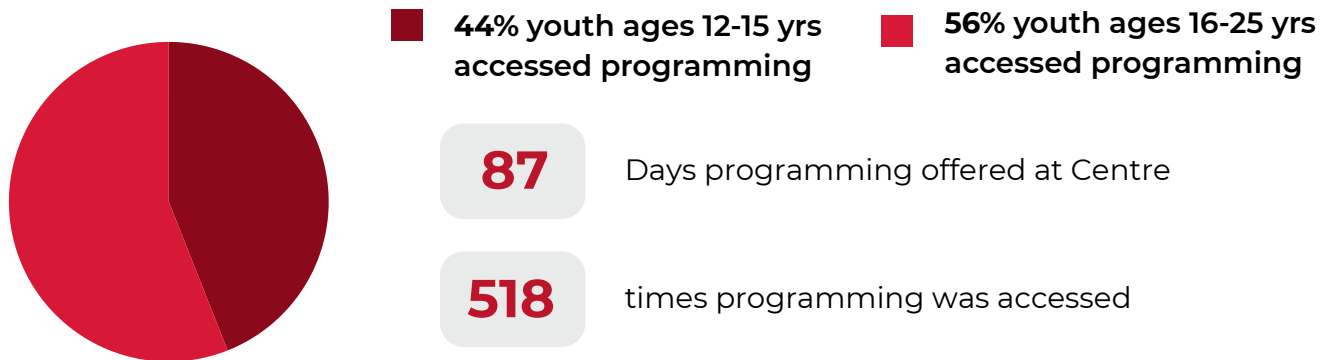
1

youth supported through YOP program who is/was being sexually exploited/trafficked



LUNENBURG COUNTY

Y Our Safe Space – Empowering Youth



GROUP PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

BASIC BUDGETING FOR YOUTH & SPECIAL EVENTS

With additional supportive funding from the Department of Education & Early Childhood- Out of School Time Grant, the YMCA provided a FREE opportunity for youth, ages 15 -25 yrs, to better understand finances and empower them to transition into independent living. A total of **13 youth** participated in the 12 session workshops held in Bridgewater.



ENERGIZE GUYS

This program provides young male identified youth with skill building activities and recreation opportunities to improve their health, and the health of their peers. It is designed to help guys open up and discuss topics such as boundaries, relationships, substance use, and more. This program was offered six times, twice at Bayview Academy; twice at Chester Area Middle School; and twice at Hebbville Academy. In total this program was accessed **144 times by 38 youth.**



IGNITE CONFIDENCE – GIRLS ON FIRE CAMP & IN-SCHOOL PROGRAMMING

One 4-day camp and 5 additional in-school programs of Girls on Fire was offered in Lunenburg County. This program is designed to help female identified youth ages 12 – 18yrs learn lifelong strategies for empowerment, self-care, promote self-worth, confidence, and resilience, while recognizing the infinite potential that lies within. The camp was offered at Y Our Safe Space- Empowering Youth and in-school programs were offered at Hebbville Academy. This program was accessed **92 times.**



LUNENBURG COUNTY

GROUP PROGRAMMING AND SPECIAL EVENTS

ANGER MANAGEMENT

This program aims to help youth better understand, navigate, and respond to their emotional responses. This program was offered two times; once at New Germany Rural High School and a second time at Bayview Community Centre. In total, this program was accessed **18 times**.



COOK IT UP! SHOP, COOK & LEARN!

This program provides YOP youth hands on learning experiences in meal planning, shopping on a budget, food preparation following safe practices, and meal preparation using simple ingredients with an emphasis on healthy eating while providing tools transferable to home and community. With support funding from the Province of Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage's One Time Food Relief Program; South Shore Public Libraries Food Literacy project; and Nourish Nova Scotia Youth Food Fund, a total of **13 YOP youth** from Lunenburg County were each provided with 4 one-to-one cooking lessons. Upon completion, each received a pantry box of staples, a cookbook, a binder of resource material and a certificate of completion.

“

Testimonial from youth aged 19, who completed the 4-session one-to-one portion of the Cook It Up! Program when taking their first bite of an omelet she made for the first time, “I can’t believe I made this!” Emma learned to make several meals but said that omelets were her “absolute favorite”. Emma finished the program and expressed that she was “excited to start helping her grandmother with meals and show her the new skills I learned in the program.”

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CAREER RISING MARCH BREAK CAMP

Youth Outreach Program with supportive funds from the Department of Opportunities & Social Development, Employment Support & Income Assistance, Youth Development Initiative, partnered with Employment Support Services Caseworker to co-facilitate a 2-day camp based on the Career Rising program which supports high school students to gain work experience, develop their career goal and go on to post-secondary education. This camp offered over the March Break period provided an opportunity for youth to participate in a small sampling of what the full program can offer. A total of **7 youth** participated in this program.

ADDITIONAL SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR YOP YOUTH – LUNENBURG & QUEENS COUNTY PROGRAM

URGENT FOOD AND ESSENTIAL FUND

The YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia's Youth Outreach Program was successful in receiving a one-time grant from the United Way of Halifax to provide \$2000 in grocery gift cards to address the most pressing needs for youth impacted by food insecurity. In total **50 youth** were supported with this program.

YOU CAN COOK! FOOD & FUN

Food security and literacy programs for youth became a focus in 2024-2025. With additional funding support from United Way of Lunenburg County, Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture, Tourism and Heritage's One Time Food Relief Program; South Shore Public Libraries Food Literacy project; Nourish Nova Scotia Youth Food Fund, and the Health Promoting Schools partnership – After School Program Funding, the YMCA of Southwest Nova Scotia's Youth Outreach Programs in both Lunenburg and Queens County provided hot, home cooked meals at both the Y Our Safe Space – Empowering Youth and Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre on a weekly basis. In total, **791 youth** received meals during flexible programs with any leftovers indirectly supporting other youth who accessed space for one-to-one support. As a result, over **60 youth** were additionally impacted outside of program hours.



YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM ALSO:

- Participated in Lunenburg/Queens P&EI Community of Practice meetings
- Attended Provincial Youth Outreach Program Community of Practice Network Meetings
- Participated in the Mount Saint Vincent “Atlantic Tuition Project”
- Supported a Mount Saint Vincent Child and Youth degree student in a practicum placement
- Hosted a Pride Youth Drop-In at King Street YMCA Youth Centre as part of Pride Week Celebrations in Lunenburg County
- Supported a Park View Education Centre student with an interest in social services in obtaining COOP hours
- Presented an overview of YMCA YOP programs/services at the Child and Wellbeing Forum- P&EI Providers at Digby Pines
- Participated in the 2024 Lunenburg/Queens Community Support and Service-Based Count on Homelessness Survey partnership with South Shore Housing Action Coalition
- Hosted a youth focus group facilitated by Youth & Caregiver Engagement Coordinator, Mental Health & Addictions Program, IWK Health to gather a summary of youth perspectives on engagement practices. Youth input was summarized in the report: “Youth Engagement: Insights and Recommendations from Youth.”
- Hosted Holiday dinners at Y Our Safe Space - Empowering Youth and Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre for **38 youth** in total.
- Presented an overview of YOP programs and workshops to Wasoqopa’q First Nations at the Gold River Health Centre and engaged community members in preliminary discussions on partnering for programming in 2025 – 26



- Presented an overview of YOP program and workshops to Queens County Department of Opportunities & Social Development, Child & Family Wellbeing Division
- Participated in meeting with North Queens County community member to discuss potential future collaboration to support youth in North Queens with possible on-going sustained programs
- Family Services Nova Scotia launches the first Youth Outreach Plus in Lunenburg County with the addition of one Youth Outreach Plus Worker

YOUTH OUTREACH LOCATION'S



Liverpool YMCA Youth Centre

40 Water Street
902-530-3352



Y Our Safe Space - Empowering Youth

425 King St., Bridgewater
902-530-3352

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON THE YMCA YOUTH OUTREACH PROGRAM, PLEASE CONTACT:

Youth Director

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(902) 530-3392



it's time for you to **Shine On**