



COMMUNITY
SERVICES

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U-Turn Transitions Annual Program Report 2025-2026

About us

PLEA has a long history of providing residential care services for young people in family-based homes within the community. Our approach is rooted in care that recognizes the unique strengths, abilities, needs, and circumstances of each participant. This commitment to personalized, relationship-based support continues to guide our work across all programs.

The Transitions Program builds on this foundation by offering flexible placements designed to support young adults as they move toward greater independence. Many participants transition directly into the program after completing the U-Turn NWT program, allowing them to maintain continuity in relationships, care teams, and supports during a critical stage of development. To sustain these placements, PLEA works closely with the Department of Health and Social Services of the Government of the Northwest Territories (GNWT) Adult Services team. Our homes are located throughout the Metro Vancouver and Fraser Valley regions, providing a range of supportive living environments.

Since its launch in 2019, the Transitions Program has helped address a critical gap in specialized services for young adults from communities across the Northwest Territories. In addition to supporting those transitioning from the U-Turn Program, the program also accepts referrals from NWT adult services. Participants are supported through a range of living options, including semi-independent suites within PLEA caregiver homes and family care homes that provide comprehensive wrap-around supports.

Our focus throughout the program is to empower participants to build the skills and confidence needed for adulthood. Through employment readiness opportunities, post-secondary education and training, and ongoing mentorship beyond the age of 19, participants are encouraged to pursue their goals while developing essential life skills such as money management, wellness planning, and maintaining healthy relationships. Our participant-centred approach ensures that individuals and their support teams play an active role in shaping their service plans and daily activities. Cultural connection and identity are central to each participant's service plan within the Transitions Program. Cultural programming is supported through the leadership of Charles Lafferty, PLEA's Knowledge Keeper, who works alongside program staff and participants to ensure Indigenous perspectives and cultural practices are meaningfully integrated into daily programming. Through cultural teachings, storytelling, land-based learning opportunities, and guidance grounded in Indigenous knowledge, Charles helps participants strengthen their connection to their identity, traditions, take part in ceremony. This work supports participants in exploring their cultural while fostering a sense of belonging, pride, and

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resilience. Cultural engagement is incorporated into individualized service planning, ensuring that participants have opportunities to maintain and deepen connections to their culture, community, and traditions.

Over this reporting period the Culturally Connections Group has supported meaningful growth and development for participants. Through engagement with Indigenous traditions, teachings, and education, participants deepened their cultural competency and appreciation for local heritage. The program supported participants in building confidence to access and engage with community institutions and programming, strengthened peer relationships, and enhanced social communication skills. By encouraging curiosity, reflection, and respectful dialogue, the Cultural Connections Group helped participants develop both personal insight and a greater capacity for meaningful engagement with their communities. In addition, the Music Group continues to be a source of creativity and pride as participants create their own music, beats and lyrics. This year the music release party profiled 6 participant songs and videos as well as one live performance by a long-term participant who has shown tremendous growth and resilience in his song writing and range.

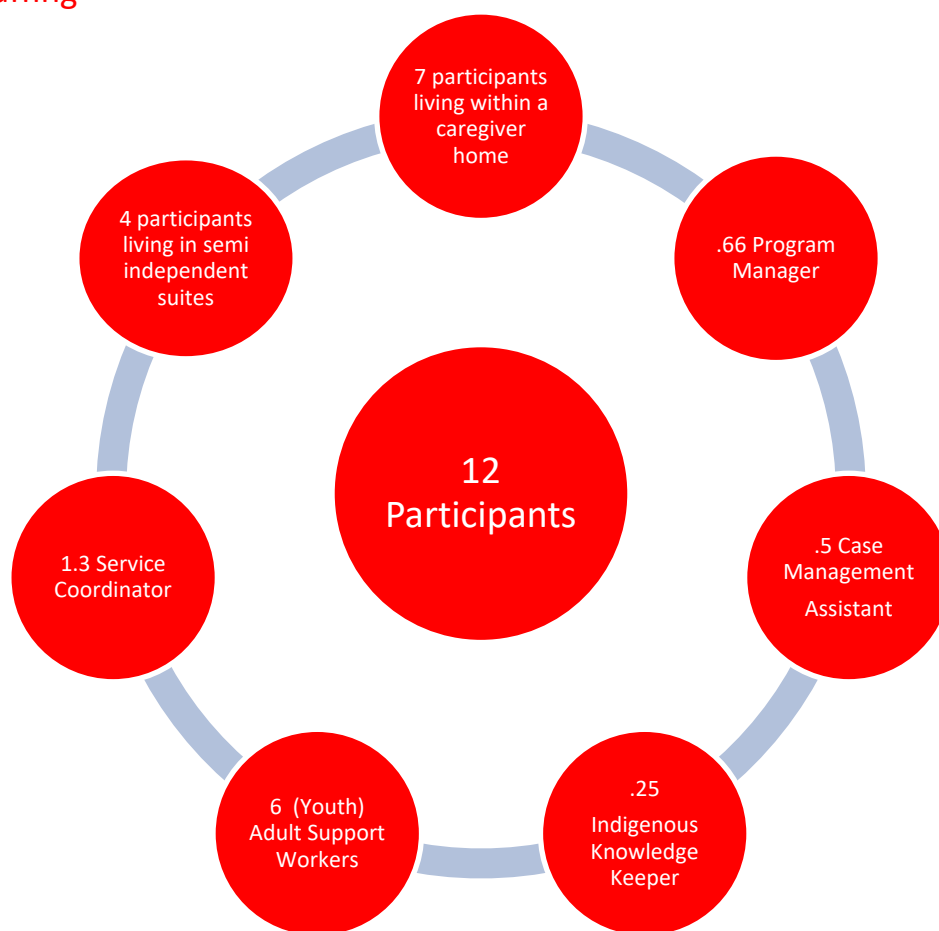
Many participants have achieved important personal milestones through their time in the program, including graduating, pursuing post secondary education, training certificates that enable part time and, in some cases, full time employment. The program continues to adapt to meet evolving needs, providing supports within caregiver homes, semi-independent living arrangements, and community settings to ensure participants can progress at a pace that works for them. As many of the participants have been in the program long term there is a sense of community, belonging and support that complements their placements. They have matured and grown through shared experiences together. This sense of community and purpose has contributed to a purposeful semi-annual event through the Community Connections Groups *Heart to Heart* event. Twice a year the participants make a hot meal and home-made cookies to hand out to the unhoused community in Maple Ridge. The initiative began as an opportunity for community engagement and has now become an activity that participants look forward to throughout the year with pride as they give back to those less fortunate and is met with enthusiasm from participants and staff as well as those receiving the gesture.

The Outdoor Club provides participants with a meaningful opportunity to connect with nature, engage with community, and learn about the traditional territories of the Lower Mainland. Often co-facilitated by local Indigenous elders, the program begins with traditional welcoming and opening ceremonies, grounding participants in cultural practices and shared respect for the land. Participants contribute to a communal meal, fostering collaboration, inclusion, and a sense of belonging. The Outdoor Club strengthens relationships among long-time participants while creating a welcoming space for newcomers, supporting the Transitions Program's broader goal of building a connected, supportive, and inclusive community.

Who we served...

Profile	2025-2026	2024 – 2025	2023 -2024	2022-2023
# of cases	12	11	9	8
% young women	50	36.36	33.33	37.50
% young men	50	63.64	66.67	62.50
% self-identified as transgender	0	0	0	0
% self-identified as Indigenous	91.66	90.91	88.89	100
Average # of days in program by discharged cases (N= number of discharged cases)	520	383	400	N/A

Our team...staffing



How we did against last year's goals (2024/2025)

1. To increase the number of family caregivers to meet the needs of our evolving participant demographic. We would like to add 2 additional caregivers to our Transitions team.

Not achieved – however we have supported 1 caregiver to continue their role as a caregiver as their participant moved from the U-Turn Program to Transitions. This provided the needed stability and consistency in the placement. Recruitment of new caregivers is an ongoing priority.

2. To offer traditional language learning to all our Transition participants.

Achieved – Traditional language courses have been offered to all participants. 2 participants are currently pursuing this goal.

3. To increase our work experience partnerships with local and self-owned businesses for our participants who need supported work experience placements.

Achieved – Work experience placements have evolved, and we have connected all Transition Participants to accommodating and flexible placements.

4. To include cultural goals in every service plan for participants who identify as Indigenous.

Achieved – All Transition participants have more than one cultural goal in their service plan. Each goal is reported on within the monthly reports. The goals include attendance at PLEA programming such as the Outdoor club and quarterly sessions with Charles Lafferty – PLEA Knowledge Keeper.

Proudest Moments of 2025 -2026

- Hosting the 7th annual Naka Festival and hosting Knowledge Keepers from the Northwest Territories to support this annual event celebrating the Northern Lights
- Participation in 10 community events with the Community Connections Group including many Indigenous cultural celebrations
- Witnessing the therapeutic outlet that music offers as many of the participants experienced a deep personal loss of a friend in the program.
- Hosting the annual Music Release Event and witnessing a participant sing live for the group, a powerful moment that highlighted their growth, confidence, and creative expression.
- Hosting the fourth semi-annual Heart to Heart Chili Lunch, a meaningful gathering that continues to foster connection, community, and shared experience among participants, caregivers, and staff.
- A notable increase in reported outcomes, reflecting the meaningful engagement of staff in the outcome's framework and their commitment to consistent monthly goal setting.
- We facilitated six family visits for participants both locally and in the Northwest Territories. The family visits strengthened family connections and supported participants' sense of belonging.

Challenges:

1. Recruitment of diverse Family Caregivers throughout the Lower Mainland that can offer different types of placements including basement suites or semi - independent spaces in a caregiver's homes.
2. The program (staff, caregiver and participants) experienced a profound loss of a long-term participant in the program.
3. Securing meaningful work experience placements that not only support skill development but also lead to sustainable employment opportunities for participants following the completion of their paid placements.

Next year's goals (2026/2027)

1. To increase the number of family caregivers to meet the needs of our evolving participant demographic. We would like to add 2 additional caregivers to our Transitions team.
2. To develop the next stage of housing for participants who have stabilized in caregiver suites and could potentially move to a more independent housing model.
3. To improve how we measure and understand our impact by consistently tracking the outcomes framework using clear, specific, and measurable goals that reflect participant progress and program effectiveness.

For more information

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