

# ICGC Social Services Impact Report 2022



HEALTHY FAMILIES



VISION BOARD

ESSENTIAL NEEDS



SELF-SUFFICIENCY



LEARNING



*Uplifting Lives*

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# Poverty in Context

The Cincinnati metropolitan area (also known as the **Cincinnati Tri-State**, or **Greater Cincinnati** area) is centered on Cincinnati and surrounding counties in the states of Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. The population for this region in 2022 was 2.26 million of which approx. 312,000 people lived in poverty based on the poverty rate of 13.8% for this area.

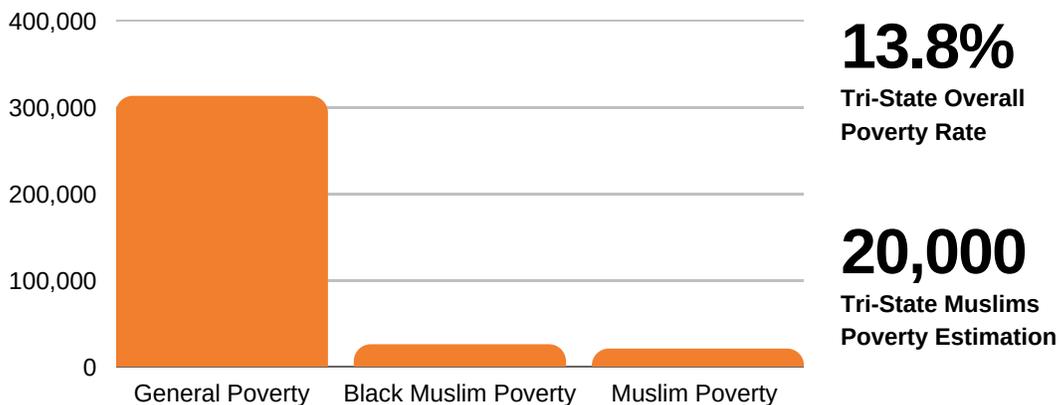
Of this 312,000 people, we can estimate that roughly 20,000 (i.e. 6.4%) are Muslims living in poverty. This number is based on the estimate that there are 60,000 Muslims in the Greater Cincinnati area of **which a 3rd live below poverty. (ISPU - American Muslim Poll 2022)**

## Key Findings of ISPU's American Muslim Poll 2022:

- 33.33% of American Muslims earn less than \$30k a year
- Muslims remain America's most likely faith community to be poor and
- Black Muslims are impacted at an even higher rate i.e. 41%

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## Poverty in the Greater Cincinnati



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**15,000** Muslim families live in the Greater Cincinnati area.

**5,000** Of these Muslim families are living in poverty.

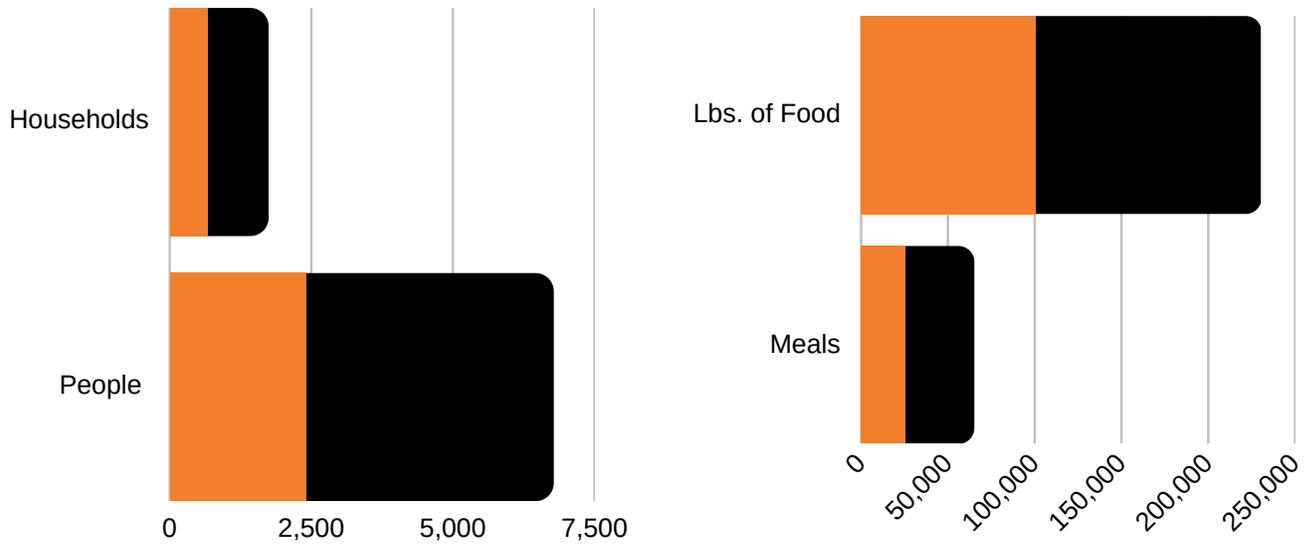
# Essential Needs - Security

Prior to guiding and empowering folks towards self-sufficiency, we have to ensure that they are in a safe and secure environment. This means making sure families have food on the table every day, a roof over their heads and other basic needs met before creating plans for work or education. Our Success@Home program continued to meet family needs in terms of food, clothing, hygiene, and other household needs in addition to facilitating connection to various benefit income resources. In fact, our service delivery numbers for 2022 show a significant increase in services provided compared to last year.

## Pantry Nos. Year Over Year -

2021

2022



Almost all key indicators show a significant increase in service delivery from last year. Here is a snapshot:

**Households Served** - 85% increase from last year

**People Served** - 91% more served from 2021

**Lbs. of Food Distributed** - 130,000 lbs. distributed

**Meals Provided** - 91% increase as well

**Children Served** - More than half i.e. 53% of those we served were children

### Outcomes - Hunger Prevention / Food Security

**40%**

The percentage increase in the number of new families coming to the pantry from last year.

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## Message from Our Families

*"Good afternoon my name is KL and I would like to share how the Islamic center of greater Cincinnati has helped me. The food pantry there has helped me to make ends meet with food and personal items. I don't know how I would make it or manage without help from the Islamic center. I want Mrs. Jackie and the rest of the staff there to know how much I appreciate all they have done for me."*

KL has been coming to the food pantry for almost 4 years, she is a single mom and the food pantry is a tremendous help to her family, especially the hygiene bag.

Another single mom had this to say about the pantry:

*"Aslamulikum, Surely, the deeds of kindness protect from evil fates and you are the people of kindness, the makers of smiles, and the relievers of grief with Allah's will and permission. It is because of you and the honorable donors that a helping hand has been given to many people and those who have been burdened with a tough life. To you all the cordiality and gratitude on behalf of everyone you have provided help and thanks to everyone who works at this great organization."*

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*It was really helpful, I used it to purchase what my kids and I need, especially that their dad doesn't pay them child support, so it helped me to buy my kids clothes and shoes and other needs. JAK!*

Ramadan Voucher &  
Gift Card Recipient



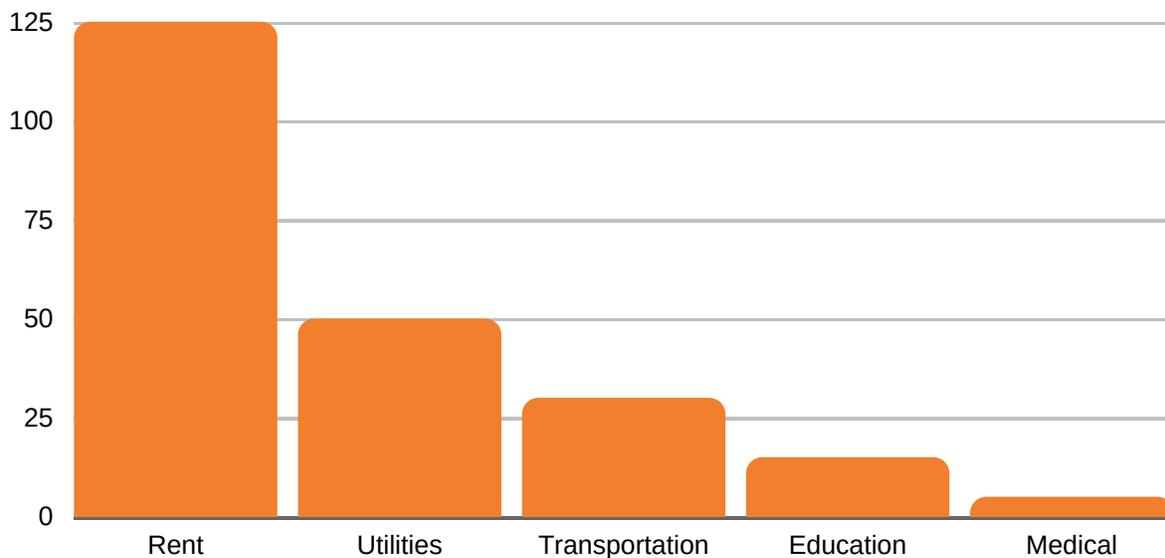
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# Emergency Needs - Stability

Our bills assistance program focuses on short term household stabilization by assisting primarily with payments towards housing (i.e. rent & utilities), followed by transportation, and tuition scholarships for qualified candidates. In 2022, we served 205 households through 250 applications. The total amount spent was \$159,000/- of which 78% went towards housing, 13% towards transportation and 7% towards education. Our goal is to increase the education support in the upcoming years through a new program inshAllah. Trends wise, in the past 5 years, the amount of funds distributed via bill's assistance has increased by 67%.

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## Financial Assistance - Applications by category



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### Biggest Challenge "Affordable Housing"

As a general rule of thumb, for housing to be affordable, the cost of rent & utilities must not exceed 30% of one's gross income. Most of the households we serve, average a monthly income of \$2500/- or an annual salary of \$30,000. This means at 30% they should not be spending more than \$750/- per month on housing.

However, the average rent amount paid through our bill's assistance program is \$900/- per month while the average utility bill is \$285/- per month. This means on an average the households we serve spend approximately \$1200/- on housing which considering the affordable housing formula comes out to be 48% or almost half of their salaries.

### Outcomes - Homelessness Prevention / Housing Security

**21%**

**Increase in the amount of assistance requested compared to last year.**

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## Message from Our Families

***"I moved to the United States running from crisis in Lebanon and I had no help and small amount of money so ICGC helped me the first 4 months with the rent. I appreciate what they did for me."***

L is a single mom who lost everything in Lebanon and decided to return to the US in 2021. She is now trying to settle here. We helped her with rent and employment services to get a job and stand on her feet.

Some other feedback received, highlights the importance of this program:

***"I had a really tough financial situation and the rent support actually helped me to stay on top of rent payments."***

***"Sometimes life conditions go beyond expectations, so sometimes, we struggle to pay rent or semester bills. So, I heard about this program and applied for it. They helped me by paying my rent for several months and paying my semester bill. I appreciate this type of program, especially for students who have children".***

***This service really relieved financial stress as it helped & allowed me to pay my rent for my family. We are forever grateful & thank you!***

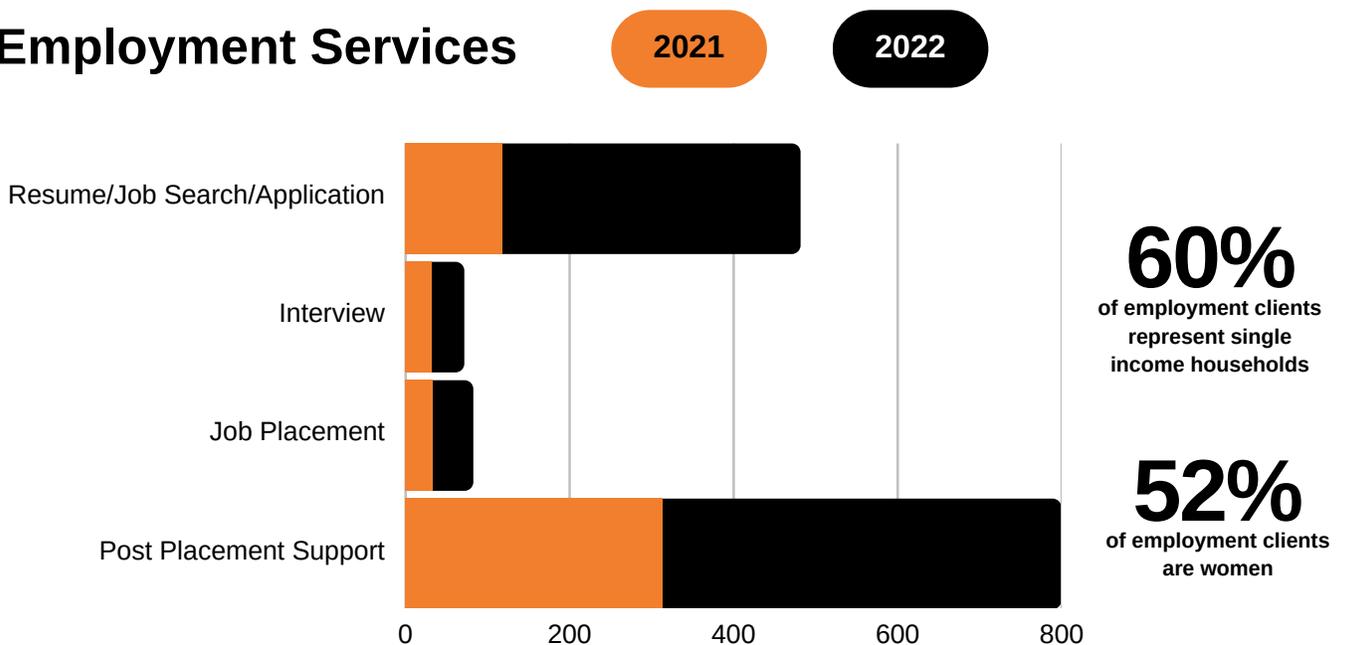
*Rent & Utility Assistance  
Recipient*



# Employment - Self Sufficiency

Our Employment Case Management program saw a 210% increase in the number of people looking for employment from last year based on the number of applications. Job placements also went up by 28% with 49 job placements. We continued to enroll individuals in "Project Lift" as well. In fact the number of enrolled participants has almost tripled in the past 3 years i.e. going from 8 in 2020 to 20 participants in 2022. In addition, we made connections with 7 new employer partners namely Aimbridge Hospitality, Schneider Electric, GSF Cleaning, Koch Foods, A Place at Home, Graham Packaging, and Forvis, while strengthening ties with current partners such as Amazon, PerScholas, Michelman, Cintas and Supply Chain OKI.

## Employment Services



### Biggest Challenge "Living Wage"

For Butler County, a family of 4 (2 adults + 2 kids with 1 adult working) needs to earn \$37.12/hour to be considered Self-Sufficient. This is an annual salary of \$74,000/-. Earning this living wage would allow a family of 4 to afford housing of up to \$1850/month while being able to afford other necessities.

Compare this with the average housing cost of \$1200/month that our families incur, a salary of \$48,000/- per year or \$23/hour would be a minimum requirement for a family of 4 to be considered self-sufficient. Unfortunately, however the average salary earned by our clients working full time, is around \$16/hour or \$33,000/- per year only.

### Outcomes - Self-Sufficiency / Upward Mobility

**\$15.84** Average hourly wage for our job placements.

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## Message from Our Families

*"Salaam. Alhamdulillah since 2021 Leanna been so helpful to me she's so amazing, I've cried and struggled, had no food to eat and no ways to pay my rent because I lost so much and Leanna was there for me and so patient with me until I got a a job and now I'm completely okay but I would not have made it without her. I appreciate her so much and she has no idea how much I appreciate her and someday I hope I can thank her in person in a big way. Leanna thank you for everything, you are an incredible human being, May Allah grant you everything you desire May Allah gives you blessings everyday. And I thank the whole Muslim Community and Westchester Mosque for everything I am grateful of you all and I'd hope to repay you for everything."*

O is a college student who is working while completing his studies. The young man has many responsibilities. His mom is a single parent and he is the oldest son in his family and often has to send money to support his family in Africa. In addition to that he also has to sustain himself here.

Some other messages reflect the same sentiment:

*"This service helped me get a job and helped my life in this country"*

*"Five stars, nice job and in particular I would like to thank Leanna for her efforts."*

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*"Cintas has become one of our top partners in the past year. We have worked together to employ individuals in stable, good paying jobs. We work with two of their locations, Mason and Middletown. At each location, we now have a group of clients who are top performers and have some of the best attendance records. We are working on future programs that will be able to employ more clients and reach a broader group of people."*



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# Education - Growth

Imagine navigating life in the US with limited English, a cell phone that you use for social media and a questionable “translator.” You don’t know how to use email or the internet though, and your phone is very slow. Or imagine that you know some technology but are a single Mom needing to learn English. Lack of transportation or child care limits your access to in-person classes.

Life in 21st Century America has come to require life long and life wide learning for many adults. This is known as **"Adult Foundational Education"** (Ref. - Open Door Collective | Literacy Minnesota). The need for foundational education in some aspect or another can prevent people from living to their full potential. Limitations of English, digital skills or even formal education create barriers to employment, health, citizenship and civic participation and more. The pandemic highlighted the usefulness of technology for daily life and learning. However, there is a digital divide in skills and/or digital access for many.

In addition to in-person classes at ICGC on Sundays, ICGC Social Services offers online tutoring in English and citizenship and uses a variety of resources and learning management systems to continue to address unmet educational needs and work towards ending intergenerational poverty through adult foundational education.

Using skills from EdTech Center@World Education Services' Digital Makerspace and Digital Skills Library, Mary Joan, our program coordinator, put together a “Foundations in Digital Literacy ” course, designed especially for seniors and immigrants, with an emphasis on mobile use as well as computer use. It starts with the basics of ownership and maintenance, such as how to clear your phone cache or your laptop’s browsing history, setting email passwords and internet safety. It also included a survey of how to use different resources for learning English and online services in the U.S. We have tutors who speak English, Arabic and French to assist.

Until he took classes with us, one male student was about to buy a new phone because his phone didn’t seem to work well any more. Another single mother with some IT background learned about multiple different ways of using tech for learning English. She now uses a learning management system and participates in online learning. This has increased her English and confidence greatly.

Hence in addition to building foundations and filling gaps, we also celebrated the benchmark achievements of **"Citizenship"** for an immigrant entrepreneur mother and completion of our **"Foundations of Digital Literacy"** course for a single mother, taught by a volunteer woman who is 1st generation literate herself.

Goals for next year include exploring psychometric assessment (understanding learning styles and learning disabilities) for those with limited English or non-standard education.

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## Computer Lab

**Expanded the use of tech tools for both, in-person classes as well as online tutoring, via mobile devices & laptops.**

**This set-up allows learners to continue learning with us, with others or on their own. Its flexibility fits the need for sustained education despite the many interruptions in adult life.**

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# Message from Our Families

*"It has helped me and my wife understand better, and we have had the best experience so far. We are currently learning with Mary Joan, and I just wanted to say that she is the best and has helped us a lot. Five stars for her :)"*

*"It's helping us a lot special in the beginning because we are new here without any work or experience."*

*"My English is progressing better."*

*"Yes it's very helpful I got a citizenship."*



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*Aml Mohamad, is our very 1st graduate from the "Digital Literacy & Learning" program.*

*Since her graduation she has made several videos about digital literacy and tech for learning as well as helping other students on Sundays with the computers.*

*She is now enrolled in a Cyber Security program which she will begin attending after Ramadan InshAllah.*



*On August 11, 2022 Ibtisam Masto and her daughter Amal Masto, from Syria, took their Oaths of Allegiance to the United States and became U.S. citizens.*

*Since they arrived in the U.S in June 2016, the family has helped each other thrive. Ibtisam, a mother and grandmother, owns her own restaurant/catering business, The Olive Tree, which the whole family supports.*

*Similarly, they have supported each other in the citizenship process. Ibtisam and Amal studied together at outreach classes which ICGC offered at the Sharonville Library. They are appreciative of all those who have helped them, especially ICGC.*



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# Collaborations & Partnerships

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## Meijer Simply Give

Through the "Meijer's Simply Give Campaign" our food pantry was able to raise \$3,360/- in gift card donations in the fall of 2022, as well as \$2,140/- as an additional gift in support of fighting food hunger in our community.

Thank you Meijer for being a true partner in feeding hungry families.



## Shared Harvest

Our collaboration with Shared Harvest continued in the form of:

Cost effective inventory acquisition  
Training & Development



Butler County United Way  
Community Partner

## United Way of Butler County

We became a "Community Partner" of Butler County United Way in 2022. This partnership will help support our goal of fighting poverty and promoting health & wellness in our neighborhood through resource connection, professional development and grants in the future.



United Way  
of Greater Cincinnati

## United Way of Greater Cincinnati

Project Lift supports Hamilton County families attain self sufficiency through employment and/or education. This program has grown significantly since we first joined as a "Sponsor Agency" in 2020 i.e. the no. of participants has grown from 8 to 20 in the past 3 years. 29% of our families have reported at least a 20% increase in income compared to 10% of the program average while 17% increased income by 1 FPL vs. 7% of program average.

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# A Look Ahead

In the past 5 years we have served over 1000 families out of the estimated 5000 that need support. In order for us to support all those in need we need additional resources to grow, expand and reach the communities that are not part of Butler County. One way to do that is increasing staff capacity and modifying our programs however there are many that may still not be able to reach us consistently. For those, we need to focus on "intentional place based" services i.e. a location closer to our families in addition to the existing facility which is Hamilton county.

**2020/2030**



**Islamic Center of Greater Cincinnati**

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# Priority Areas 2020 to 2030



## Self-Sufficiency

Research shows that people with postsecondary education earn more over their lifetimes and have lower-than-average unemployment rates. Our goal is to empower young adults from low income immigrant households to pursue higher education or career training (technical skills) programs through coaching, career counseling and tuition sponsorship.



## Housing

Cincinnati like the rest of the country has a shortage of affordable housing where rent / mortgage must not exceed 30% of household income. Our goal is to create pathways to homeownership, equity, and self-sufficiency by helping families stabilize, save money, grow their assets, and become property owners. One avenue to focus on is financial literacy, coaching and savings based programs.



## Immigration

According to a report by EPI, the income for an adult immigrant with citizenship is almost 15% higher than that of a non citizen. The path to citizenship leads to the path out of poverty. Our goal is to provide low income Muslim immigrant families access to affordable legal services through litigation, training & education, advocacy & public policy work.



## Health & Wellness

People who earn 200% or less of the federal poverty level, have higher health risks, greater social needs, and worse access to care than relatively healthy moderate-income (200%–400% FPL) and higher-income (>400% FPL) people. Our goal is to provide access to free or affordable, culturally competent health services to low income families in Greater Cincinnati area.

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# Ways to support our mission!

1

## Zakah

Our programs serve families that qualify for 3 of the 8 categories i.e.  
The poor  
The needy  
The debt- ridden.

2

## Sadaqah - General Donations

For non zakat eligible programs, services or expenses we rely on general donations. This includes part of the Food Pantry and Bills Assistance program as well as ESL. Capacity building also relies on general donations such as salaries, equipment, furniture, space, and technology which ensure consistent and professional service delivery.

3

## In-Kind Donations

We are always in need of clothing, household items, baby items, furniture and other home essentials. The items needed varies from time to time so always be on the lookout for special requests from the team on social media.

4

## Cars 4 Jannah

Cars4Jannah is a national platform for Muslim organizations to receive old car donations in the form of cash. Learn more about it at <https://icgc.cars4jannah.org/>

# Conclusion

We will continue to build upon our vision of *"a healthy, financially strong and socially connected region where all families have the opportunity to uplift their lives and thrive"* through a continued focus on our strategic goals & mission which is *"empowering families towards financial independence, health, and well-being through supportive services, educational programs & strong partnerships"*. We hope you join us in this journey to uplift lives by supporting our efforts in the years to come inshAllah!



## Poverty Alleviation

Help families achieve

- Self-Sufficiency
- Upward Mobility

through employment, education & financial coaching.



## Health & Wellness

Help individuals improve their outlook on life & health via

- Life Coaching
- Mental Health Counseling



## Capacity Building

Continue to grow and expand our reach through

- Partners whose mission and values align with ours
- Place based service delivery
- Exploration of social enterprise models

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# Acknowledgements

This work would not be possible without the following:

- ICGC Board
- ICGC Executive Director
- ICGC Staff
- ICGC Social Services Team
- Partner Organizations
- Donors
- Volunteers
- Community

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**We thank you  
for your continued support  
in our efforts to  
reduce poverty &  
promote health & wellness  
in our region.**



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## Contact

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