



FIGHTING
BLINDNESS
CANADA

Raising **OUR SIGHTS**

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Making progress possible
through research,
connection and hope.



Making Progress Possible, **TOGETHER**

From our President & CEO and Board Chair

For people living with vision loss, **progress is personal.**

The latest breakthrough in vision research can mean families finding answers after years of uncertainty, a young person discovering clinical trials and emerging treatments, or someone simply replacing their fear with hope for the future.

Fighting Blindness Canada (FBC) works to bring that progress closer for the 1.2 million people in Canada affected by vision loss. In 2025, we worked alongside researchers, clinicians, advocates, community partners, individuals and families affected by blinding eye disease, and supporters like you to continue driving progress.

Because of your generosity, researchers are pursuing promising new treatments and people living with vision loss are closer to finding answers, connection and hope.

With your help, we've **set our sights high.**

This year marked the first year of *Raising Our Sights: Vision 2030*, our five-year strategy to accelerate research, deepen community connections, and expand our impact across Canada. It reflects both the opportunities ahead and our commitment to creating a future where blindness caused by eye disease is no longer inevitable.

This report celebrates the progress you made possible in 2025 and the momentum we're building for tomorrow. And none of it could happen without you!

Thank you for helping make progress possible in 2025.

With gratitude,

Jennifer Jones

Jennifer Jones
President & CEO



Tara James

Tara James
Board Chair





Every year brings
new discoveries,
new connections, and
new reasons for
us all to feel hope —
**and 2025 was no
exception.**

2025 IN REVIEW

Progress we made possible

OUR IMPACT OVER THE YEARS



\$42M+

invested in
vision research
to date.



18

clinical scientist
emerging leader
awards funded.



850+

scientific
discoveries
supported.



\$5M

invested in
programs and
education resources.

OUR IMPACT IN 2025



\$2.6M

committed
across 24
research projects.



1,575

participants at
educational events
and webinars.



700+

fundraising
event participants/
volunteers.



4

Coffee Connections
communities
visited.

Moments that shaped our year



The moments below represent just some of the ways our FBC community came together in 2025 to make progress possible by supporting research, sharing knowledge, raising awareness, and helping to shape a brighter future for people affected by vision loss.

JANUARY

Launch of our five-year strategic plan, Raising Our Sights: Vision 2030:

FBC introduced its new five-year strategic plan to accelerate sight-saving research, expand access to treatments, strengthen community connections and empower people living with vision loss. [See page 8.](#)

FEBRUARY

Raising awareness of AMD:

Age-related macular degeneration (AMD) Awareness Month featured educational resources, expert webinars and researcher spotlights to help Canadians better understand the leading cause of vision loss among older adults.

MARCH

Launching the IRD Spotlight Series:

FBC introduced a new educational webinar series offering disease-specific information and opportunities for individuals and families living with inherited retinal disease (IRD) to connect around shared experiences.

[See page 13.](#)

APRIL

Creating new connections:

View Point Coffee Connections debuted in Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa and North York, bringing people together for conversation, learning and peer support in a smaller, in-person setting. [See page 13.](#)

MAY

Bringing vision health into focus:

Vision Health Month generated national media attention through powerful stories that helped raise awareness of vision loss and vision research.

JUNE

Moving together for sight:

Our annual **MOVE FOR SIGHT** event saw more than 450 participants and 38 teams from over 160 locations across Canada.

[See page 14.](#)



JULY

Advancing stem cell research:

The first patient was dosed in a landmark stem cell clinical trial for retinitis pigmentosa (RP), marking an important milestone in the pursuit of future sight-restoring therapies.

See page 10.

AUGUST

Empowering young leaders:

FBC's Young Leaders Program marked its fifth anniversary while continuing to provide education, mentorship and support for youth living with vision loss. **See page 14.**

SEPTEMBER

Raising awareness of IRDs:

IRD Awareness Month helped raise awareness of the approximately 21,000 Canadians living with IRDs through educational resources, clinical trial information and community support.

OCTOBER

Charting the future of research:

FBC launched Research in Focus 2025–2030, a new Research Strategy, outlining priorities to accelerate discoveries and strengthen Canada's vision research ecosystem.

See page 9.

Accelerating vision health knowledge:

Accelerate Vision Health Series continues to elevate the importance of vision health in Canada by bringing attention to critical issues across the vision health landscape, including access to care, emerging research, innovation, lived experience, and mental health. **See page 13.**

NOVEMBER

Supporting emerging researchers:

The 2025 Clinician-Scientist Emerging Leader Awards recognized two promising researchers advancing innovative projects focused on thyroid eye disease and RP.

See page 11.

Learning from leaders:

View Point Toronto welcomed attendees for a day of education and discussion featuring stem cell researcher Dr. David Gamm and conversations about the future of vision treatment.

DECEMBER

Your generosity made a powerful finish to 2025 possible. Thanks to your support during GivingTuesday and our Year-End Campaign, we reached our fundraising goal and are ready to accelerate sight-saving research in 2026.



Raising Our Sights: **VISION 2030**

Building the future of vision health

2025 was the first year of Raising Our Sights: Vision 2030, an ambitious five-year strategy that challenges us to think bigger and bolder about the progress we can make possible for people living with vision loss. Created with input from people living with vision loss, researchers, clinicians, donors, and partners across Canada, this strategy focuses on creating a future where no one faces vision loss alone, where support is easier to access, and where research continues to bring new possibilities within reach.

How will we reach that future?

FBC will continue serving as a catalyst for meaningful progress by:



Advancing research

Accelerate discoveries and support world-class research that brings new treatments and cures to reality.



Strengthening community

Create more opportunities for people affected by vision loss to connect, learn and find support.



Expanding reach

Increase awareness and ensure more people in Canada can access trusted information and resources.



Building for the future

Strengthen our organization, partnerships and volunteer network to increase our nationwide impact.

What will this mean for people living with vision loss?

More
researchers
pursuing
bold ideas.

More
discoveries
moving toward
clinical trials.

More
opportunities
for people to
connect, share
and learn.

More
access to trusted
information
and support.

More
reasons
for hope.

“Vision is so deeply tied to how we experience the world. My work is driven by the hope of helping people hold on to that independence and quality of life when eye disease threatens it.”

— Dr. Anne Xuan-Lan Nguyen,
FBC CSEL Award Winner



Research in Focus 2025-2030

As part of Raising Our Sights, FBC launched its first-ever Research Strategy. Created with input from researchers, clinicians, people with lived experience and donors, it outlines how we will invest in research over the next five years while paving the way for what's next.

It focuses on:

- Strengthening scientific excellence
- Supporting emerging research leaders
- Encouraging collaboration across the field
- Aligning research investments with community priorities

Together, these priorities will help accelerate discoveries with the potential to improve lives. Learn more about the research and scientific momentum already being driven through this strategy on page 10.

Research IN FOCUS

Transforming possibilities into progress

The first year of Raising Our Sights: Vision 2030 was marked by exciting momentum in vision research, bringing hope to people affected by vision loss. FBC accelerated its investment in the people and ideas driving innovation.

From lab to trial: A breakthrough years in the making

A major research milestone was reached in 2025 when the first patient was dosed in a stem cell clinical trial for primary photoreceptor diseases, including RP. Led by BlueRock Therapeutics LP, it is the first therapy of its kind to enter clinical testing for these conditions. The trial builds on years of work by Dr. David Gamm and his team at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Supported in part through FBC's Restore Vision 20/20 initiative, Dr. David Gamm's team demonstrated that laboratory-grown stem cells can develop into photoreceptor cells and integrate with retinal tissue.

For people living with IRDs, this trial is a powerful reminder that sustained investment can turn promising discoveries into potential treatments.



**Dr. David
Gamm**

"This is a major accomplishment for our collaborative team of academic and industry scientists and clinicians. It is the culmination of nearly a decade of concerted effort, much of which has been inspired or advanced via support from FBC." — Dr. David Gamm

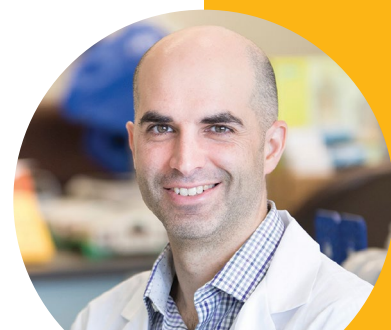
Investing in Canadian researchers

Thanks to donor support, FBC continued supporting early-career researchers whose work is helping uncover new possibilities for preventing and treating vision loss. Here are some updates from Research Grant Competition awardees currently funded by FBC:

- **Dr. Matthew Benson (University of Alberta)** is investigating how genetic mutations affect retinal cells using advanced stem cell-derived models. His research is uncovering mechanisms that contribute to retinal degeneration and potential treatment targets.
- **Dr. Pierre Mattar (Ottawa Hospital Research Institute)** has discovered the role that a previously unknown neuroimmune cell plays in retinal health, finding a potential link to glaucoma and retinal degeneration and opening new possibilities for potential therapies.



Dr. Matthew Benson



Dr. Pierre Mattar

Supporting tomorrow's research leaders

Through the Clinician-Scientist Emerging Leader (CSEL) Awards, FBC supports emerging clinician-scientists who are advancing research while caring for patients. Here are our 2025 CSEL awardees:

- **Dr. Anne Xuan-Lan Nguyen** is studying why some people with thyroid eye disease develop serious vision-threatening complications. Her goal is to identify patients at risk earlier and improve outcomes before permanent vision loss occurs.
- **Dr. Lia Huo** is exploring a gene-agnostic treatment for RP using a slow-release gel that could help protect the eye's light-sensing cells. Because the approach is not tied to a specific genetic mutation, it has the potential to benefit a broader range of people living with the disease.



Dr. Anne Xuan-Lan Nguyen



Dr. Lia Huo

"If I could ask for one thing, it would be to continue seeing my daughter grow up. Today, vision research gives me hope that this may be possible." — Bernie Zinck, musician, teacher and member of the vision loss community living with RP.

Stronger TOGETHER

Creating opportunities to learn and connect

For people affected by vision loss, progress isn't measured by scientific discovery alone. It's also measured in how confidently someone can navigate a new diagnosis, how connected they feel to others who share their experience, and how reassured they feel knowing they are not alone.

Throughout 2025, with the support of our donors, FBC brought people closer to information and community, helping them stay informed and connected to the progress shaping the future of vision health.



Learning through View Point

View Point is FBC's flagship education series, bringing together researchers, clinicians and people with lived experience to explore the latest developments in vision research, treatment and care – and that commitment continued in 2025.

Across major in-person events in Calgary and Toronto, attendees explored topics ranging from stem cells and ocular regenerative medicine to emerging cell replacement therapies, inherited retinal diseases (IRDs), age-related macular degeneration (AMD) and the growing role of patients in shaping research and treatment development.

14 View Point events hosted both in person and online in 2025.

95% of participants rated View Point programming as excellent or very good.

11% increase in View Point attendees over 2024.

Nurturing education and connection

In 2025, FBC introduced several new opportunities for learning and peer support.

The new **View Point IRD Spotlight Series** offered disease-specific education focused on Stargardt disease, X-linked retinal conditions and syndromic IRDs (such as Usher syndrome and Bardet-Biedl syndrome) while connecting participants to others navigating similar diagnoses and experiences.

FBC also launched **View Point Coffee Connections**, a new series of intimate in-person gatherings designed to bring people together through conversation and expert insights. Events were held in Vancouver, Edmonton, Ottawa and North York, with plans for further expansion in 2026.

Returning for a second year, **Accelerate Vision Health Series** continues to elevate the importance of vision health in Canada by bringing attention to critical issues across the vision health landscape, including access to care, emerging research, innovation, lived experience, and mental health.

"My favourite part of View Point was having access to knowledgeable speakers and hearing about the latest treatments and technological advancements."

— View Point attendee

"The ability to hear how others managed (their condition) and ask questions of a medical expert was AMAZING!"

— View Point attendee



Moving together for sight

Our annual **MOVE FOR SIGHT** event reached even further in 2025, uniting participants across Canada in support of a future without vision loss. On June 22, hundreds of supporters walked, cycled, hiked, surfed, volunteered and fundraised to raise awareness and enable sight-saving research like the projects featured in this report.

The year also marked an exciting milestone as **MOVE FOR SIGHT** welcomed participants to its first in-person Toronto gathering, joining events and virtual activities in communities across the country and demonstrating the movement's growing reach and momentum.

See highlights from our most recent event and discover how you can take part at **MOVEFORSIGHT.ca**.

Together, we showed what's possible when community and compassion come together, with **450+** participants across **160+** cities/towns, 10 provinces, and **three** countries.

**"Knowing that FBC
is actively working to
improve the future for
people like me with blinding
eye disease makes me feel like
I'm part of something bigger."**

— Mara Pagliaro, 2025
MOVE FOR SIGHT ambassador
living with Stargardt disease.

Empowering the next generation

FBC's **Young Leaders Program** continued creating opportunities for youth and young adults living with vision loss to develop leadership skills, connect with peers who share similar experiences, and develop the confidence to pursue their goals. Throughout 2025, participants across Canada were matched with experienced mentors who provided guidance and career development support throughout the year.

2 events (Youth Connect Toronto, Mental Health Matters webinar) + mentorship program.

58 unique participants across Canada.

9 mentorship pairs who completed the program.

90% felt more prepared for challenges.

87% rated the program excellent or very good.



Trusted support when needed most

FBC's **Health Information Line** continued to provide trusted, personalized support to people affected by vision loss. Whether helping someone understand a diagnosis, explore treatment options or learn about emerging research, the service empowers individuals and families to make informed decisions with confidence as they navigate their vision loss journeys.

304 individuals supported through the Health Information Line.

35% of inquiries focused on treatment options.

31% of inquiries focused on clinical trials.

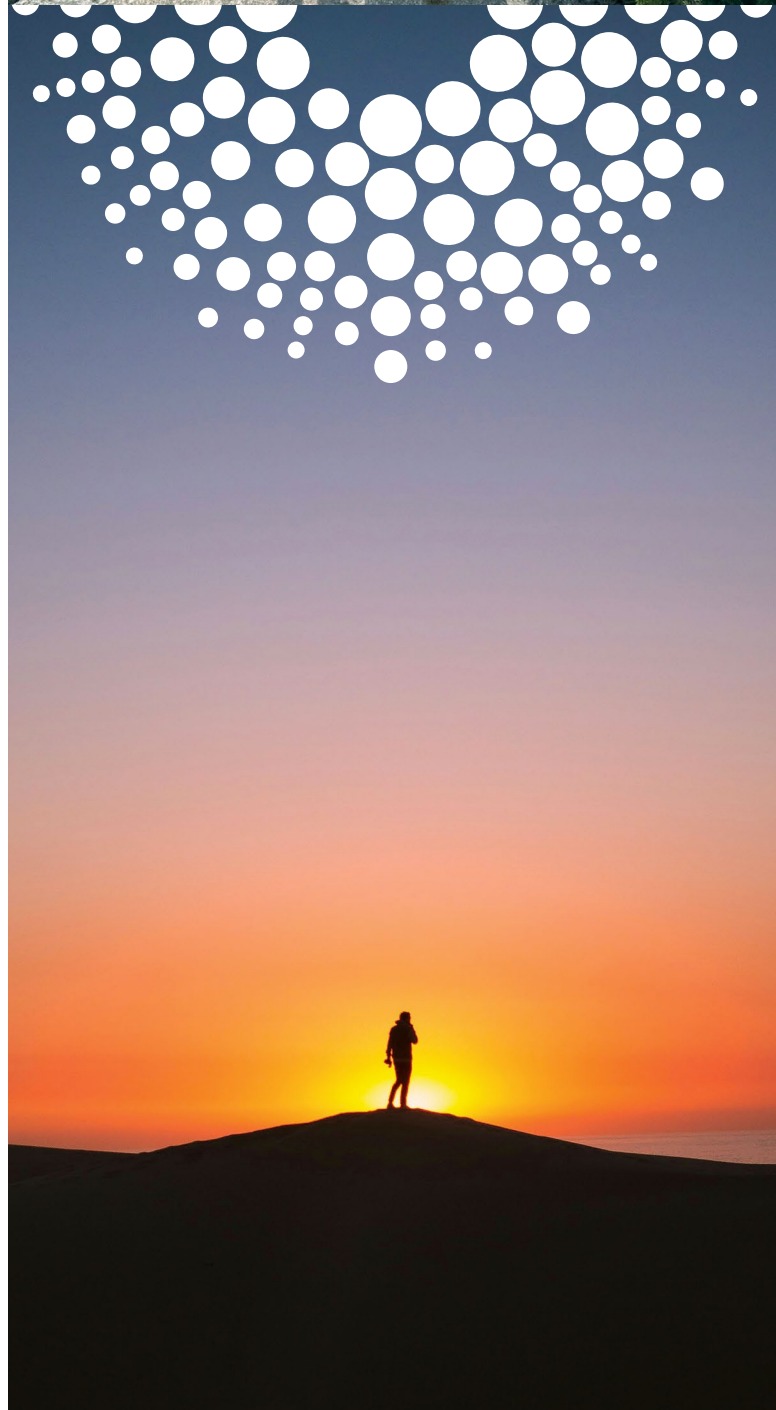
100% of survey respondents rated their experience as positive or very positive.

**"The response
and interaction from
the health information line
was absolutely stellar!"**

**I am so grateful that she took the
time and effort to not only respond
to me, and to go much further.**

**She proceeded to research my query
and got back to me a few days later
with a very thorough, thoughtful, and
informative answer to my question."**

— Health Information
Line User



Turning Science **INTO SIGHT**

Behind every breakthrough made in a laboratory are individuals and families whose lives are touched by vision loss.

And they are more than patients, participants, or statistics — they are people navigating the realities of blinding eye disease whose stories are shaped by resilience, hope, and the power of giving back.

Where progress becomes personal

Meet Doug: Commitment to Hope and Progress for Family

When Doug Carr learned he had retinitis pigmentosa (RP) at age 38, he didn't panic. Having watched his dad, who also had RP, cope with his own progressive vision loss, Doug took the news in stride. "I had observed my Dad coping well with his growing blindness. He was a great role model for me. I knew onset would be a long slow process to which I could adapt myself, just as he was doing."

That determination carried through his career with the Ontario government, where he spent 33 years, much of it negotiating and managing Indigenous land claims. By the time he began using a white cane, he was already serving as an Assistant Deputy Minister. "People were very supportive," he says.

Even in retirement, Doug continues to contribute, working part-time on Ontario's only modern treaty negotiations with the Algonquins of Ontario in the Ottawa Valley.

Outside of work, Doug and his wife, Alison, enjoy life on their small horse farm north of Toronto, caring for their three horses and exploring the countryside. He also stays active cycling on his electric-assisted bike and volunteering on his local library board, helping plan an expansion of their main branch.

For Doug, RP has always been about family. The condition has affected multiple generations and branches, including his sons, one of whom has a positive diagnosis. His other son isn't yet ready to be tested.



"Hope is better than despair because it drives positive change, both for you and for everyone else in the low-vision community."

— Doug Carr

"Living with an inherited eye disease and having at-risk offspring is a real motivator to start giving when you can!"

Doug's connection to Fighting Blindness Canada began through his father, who became a supporter soon after his diagnosis. Today, Doug continues that legacy through monthly giving and ongoing engagement.

Research is at the heart of why Doug supports FBC. "It's everything," he says. "I know people with vision-loss often need support just to live in the present, but I am all about looking ahead." He hopes research will lead to a cure and future generations will not need to wonder whether they have RP.

"Hope is better than despair because it drives positive change, both for you and for everyone else in the low-vision community."

Financial STATEMENTS

Investing in possibilities and progress

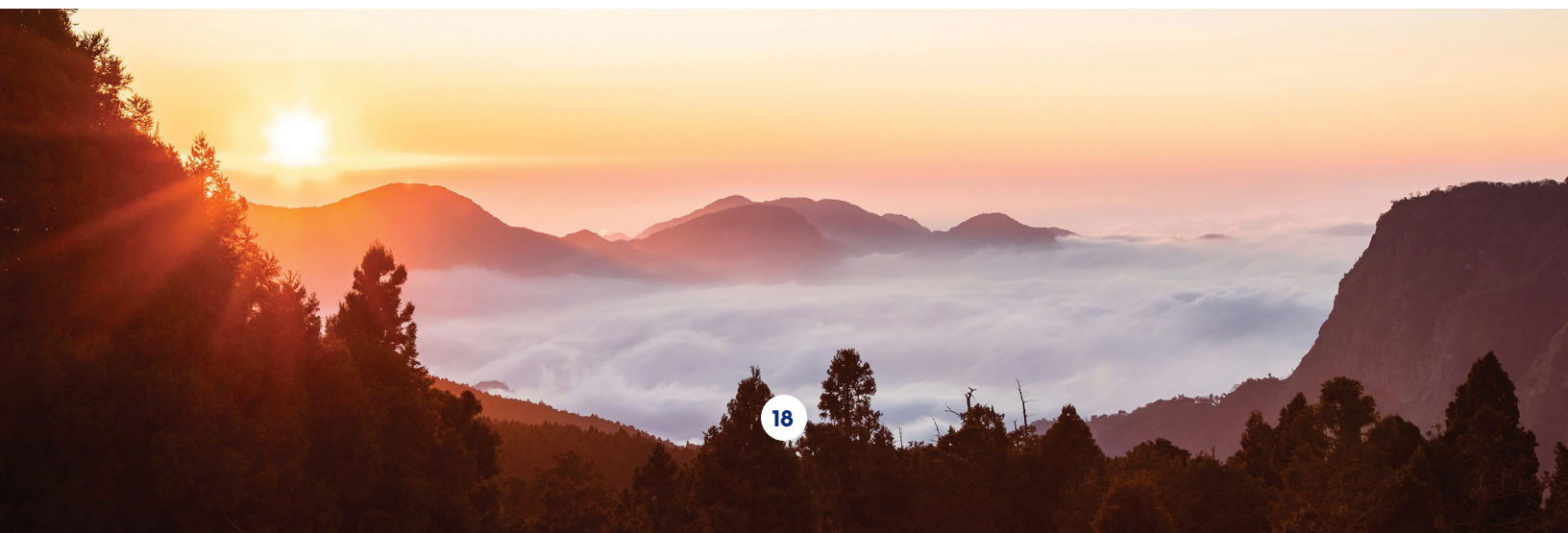
Every breakthrough, connection and possibility begins with people who refuse to accept vision loss as inevitable. Through their generosity, progress becomes possible.

With just one per cent of funding coming from government sources, FBC relies largely on the support of donors, sponsors, and community partners. We are responsible and transparent stewards of every dollar entrusted to us, ensuring your support helps advance research, expand education programs, and strengthen connections for people affected by vision loss across Canada.

In 2025, FBC recorded a planned deficit of \$326,700. This was a deliberate choice, not a shortfall.

As the first year of Raising Our Sights: Vision 2030, 2025 called for investment in new fundraising capacity that will help us reach more donors, diversify our revenue and build a stronger foundation for the ambitious growth our strategic plan calls for. We made this investment with confidence, knowing it strengthens our ability to fund research, expand programs and deepen community connections for years to come.

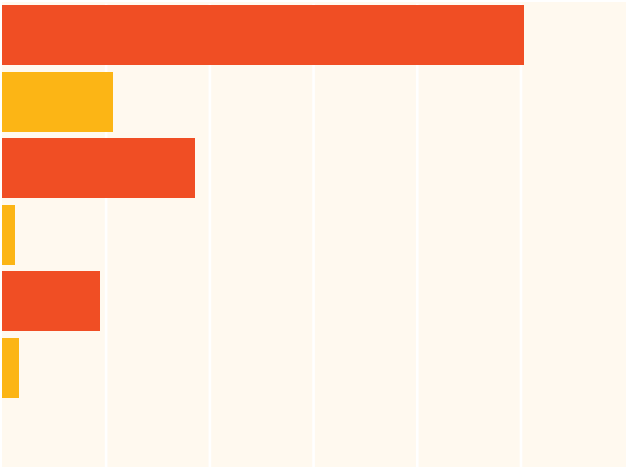
Thank you for the trust that made this kind of forward-looking decision possible.



2025 Financial Summary

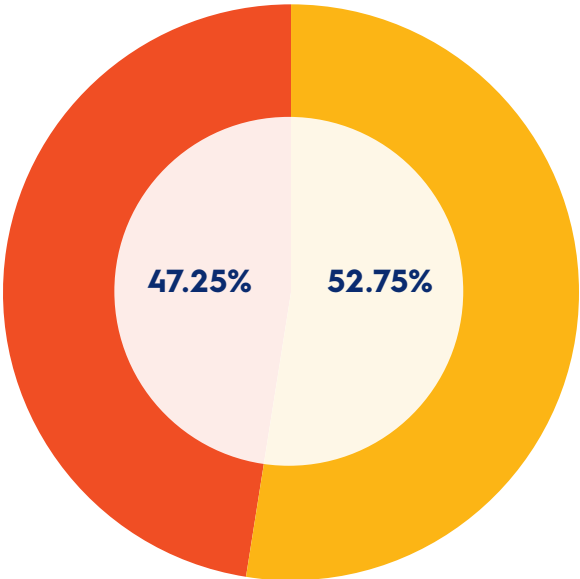
Where our money comes from

Individuals:	\$2,513,834
Foundations:	\$537,203
Corporations:	\$931,890
Government:	\$65,242
Fundraising events:	\$472,076
Investment income:	\$85,932
Foreign exchange gain (loss):	(\$3,603)
TOTAL:	\$4,602,574



How we spend on our programs

● Research Grants & Oversight:	\$1,202,525
● Education & Advocacy Programs:	\$1,076,944
TOTAL:	\$ 2,279,469



Our financial statements are prepared in accordance with Canadian accounting standards for not-for-profit organizations and are independently audited each year by Pennylegion Chung LLP.

You can view our 2025 audited financials at:
FightingBlindness.ca/about-us/financials.

Looking back on 2025, Fighting Blindness Canada is proud of the progress we made possible together – and even more excited about what comes next.

As we continue Raising Our Sights, we're building on that momentum by turning discoveries into hope, strengthening connections across Canada, and paving the way to a brighter future for everyone living with vision loss.

Thank you for helping make progress possible.



**FIGHTING
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To learn more and donate, visit:

[FightingBlindness.ca](https://fightingblindness.ca)

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