



THE  
LOCAL

| *The Local's* Inori Roy prepping for a night of worm picking in July 2025. Photo by Galit Rodan

# IMPACT REPORT 2025



## MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND PUBLISHER

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2025 was an extraordinary year for *The Local* on many fronts. We produced more journalism than ever before. Even though we're technically a quarterly, 2025 saw *The Local* publish six issues and 57 in-depth stories. We leaned in on issues of democracy, covering not just the provincial and federal elections, but also two municipal by-elections. We put a spotlight on the state of public education, with issues dedicated to public schools and higher education. And we continued to cover the immigration, labour, housing, and health care beats with some of our most ambitious reporting.

Our journalism was recognized among the very best in Canada, taking home eight national awards in multiple categories at the Canadian Journalism Foundation Awards, Digital Publishing Awards, and National Magazine Awards.

Our stories had close to one million reads, a record for *The Local*. Our revenues continued to diversify and grow to match the ambitions of our newsroom. Our contributors—comprising 38 freelance and six staff positions—were 73 percent visible minorities, nearly three times that of the Canadian journalism industry average. And we continued to create opportunities for young journalists from communities underrepresented in Canadian media through the sixth edition of our Local Journalism Fellowship.

In a media industry that's under constant threat, *The Local's* approach to journalism is demonstrating that original, fact-based reporting by real reporters on the ground, in communities, continues to matter.

Chris Ellis  
Chair,  
Board of Directors  
2019 - 2025

Laura Quinn  
Chair,  
Board of Directors  
2026 -

Tai Huynh  
Editor-in-Chief  
and Publisher



## OUR PURPOSE

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*The Local* is a non-profit online magazine covering urban health and social issues in Toronto.

We are unabashedly Toronto, reporting from corners of the city that are too often ignored or misunderstood, with bylines as diverse as the city itself. We aim to fill a role that traditional media neglects—turning complex policy issues into compelling narratives, and addressing problems that are systemic and ongoing, even if they don't have a news hook.

We publish four quarterly issues a year, in addition to special series and regular one-off features and investigations tackling a range of social issues—from housing and transit to public education, labour, and urban health.



Welcome to  
**TORONTO**

Winter 2025  
**The Immigration Issue**

Illustration by Marley Allen-Ash

## OUR JOURNALISM IN 2025

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2025 was our biggest year yet. We published six issues and a total of 57 in-depth features and investigations—both were the most in a single year since *The Local* started in 2019.

We kicked off the year with our [Immigration Issue](#), a timely spotlight on the newcomer experience at a moment of rapidly changing attitudes and policies around Canadian immigration. Nationwide, in the midst of an affordability crisis, we'd seen a shift in attitudes toward immigration, coinciding with an anti-immigrant turn in countries like Australia, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The issue dug into the complicated, sometimes contradictory, ways newcomers change the city and how the city affects them in turn. We tackled the [housing crisis](#), which had become the de facto anti-immigration talking point, and dug into how changes in immigration policy could hamstring the [construction industry](#) at the very moment we need to be building more homes than ever. As the government vowed to reduce immigration, we looked at a field where, despite a pressing need, many highly-trained newcomers remain unable to work—[nursing](#). We examined the disastrous legacy of the past decade of [international student policy](#) and investigated how shifting policy has been accompanied by an increase in [anti-South Asian racism](#).

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**“Thank you for your superb, empathetic, and informed journalism.”**

— Reader

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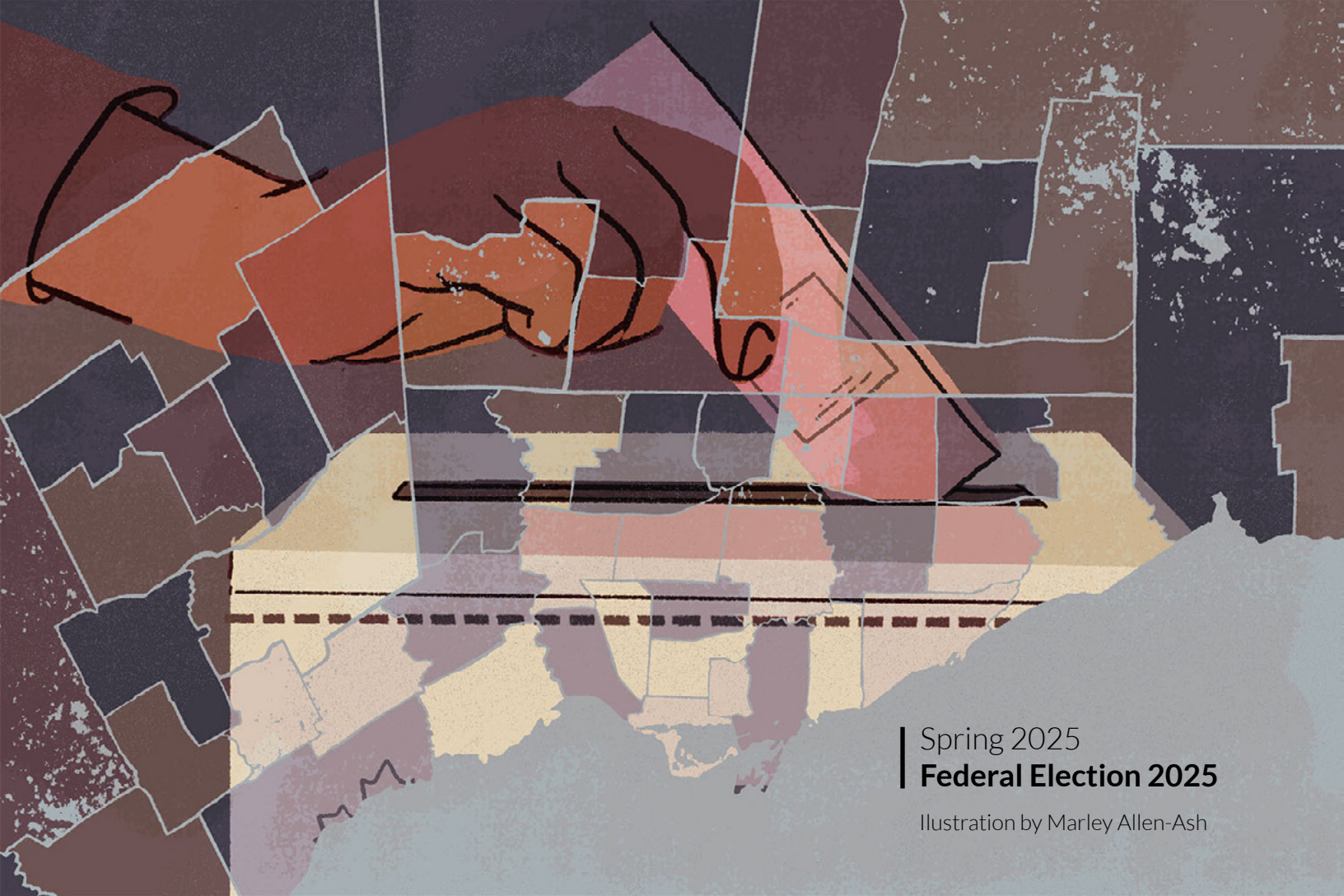
If there was one thing that defined our work in 2025, it was elections. Not only did we cover a provincial and federal election, but two municipal by-elections as well—one for a TDSB trustee opening in [Don Valley West](#), and a city councillor position in [Scarborough-Rouge Park \(Ward 25\)](#).

Ontarians went to the polls on February 27, 2025 thanks to Doug Ford's decision to call a snap election. The move also kicked into high gear *The Local's* plans for a special election package which focused on the Premier's track record since taking office nearly eight years prior. The plan began with a fundraising campaign asking readers to donate the \$200 cheques they unexpectedly received from the government ahead of the election. We raised over \$10,000 in three weeks, which allowed us to supplement our newsroom with additional freelancers to help accelerate our production cycle. The special issue, [7 Years of Doug Ford](#), included a number of deep-dives on the issues most important to residents, such as [hallway health care](#), [cuts to education](#), [the Greenbelt fiasco](#), the government's unprecedented expansion of [online gambling](#), the financial woes at Ontario's [colleges and universities](#), and Ford's complicated [relationship with the city of Toronto](#).



Ontario Election 2025  
**7 Years of Doug Ford**

Photoillustration by Marley Allen-Ash



Spring 2025  
**Federal Election 2025**

Illustration by Marley Allen-Ash

Just one month later, Mark Carney—Prime Minister for all of 10 days—asked the Governor General to dissolve parliament, setting us on course for an April election. Although *The Local* doesn't usually jump into national politics, the looming Trump tariffs and rapidly changing federal stance on immigration felt especially relevant to residents in the GTA. With a grant from the [Covering Canada: Election 2025 Fund](#), we were able to dispatch reporters to different corners of the GTA from [Brampton](#) to [Durham](#) region, and from [Parkdale](#) in Toronto's inner-city to [Don Valley North](#) in the inner-suburbs.

By the end of spring, our newsroom was ready for a reprieve from all forms of provincial and federal politics. This came in the form of our summer issue, [Wild Wild City](#). From divisive fights over [cormorants](#) and [coyotes](#), to the rise and fall of niche industries like [worm picking](#), [horse racing](#), and [roadside zoos](#), to the sudden explosion in the [rabbit population](#), the issue explored our shifting relationship with the creatures among us.



Summer 2025  
**Wild Wild City**

Photo by Andrew Budziak

Midsummer is not normally a time to launch anything new. But thanks to the Ford government's extraordinary action against GTA school boards, *The Local* launched a special series, [School Board Takeover](#). In addition to stories that took readers [inside the provincial takeover](#), the series investigated a range of deeper issues needing attention, like the [dramatic rise in non-teachers](#) filling in at TDSB schools, and long-standing issues with the education [funding formula](#).

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**“I was initially drawn to your publication because of your excellent coverage of education in Ontario. As a parent of a 16-year-old in the TDSB, I see firsthand how high the stakes are, and I appreciate reporting that reflects the real complexity of these stories. I’m glad to support work that takes these issues seriously. Please keep going.”**

— Daphne Gordon

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Our fall issue continued with the education theme, but took things up a notch with a focus on colleges and universities. [The Higher Education Issue](#) put a spotlight on the [financial crisis](#) unfolding at post-secondary institutions that has led to the slashing of hundreds of programs and firing of thousands of instructors. Beyond the economic woes, we examined the enormous [technological](#), [political](#), and [social](#) upheavals at colleges and universities and sought answers to the question: [what is higher education for?](#)



Special Series  
**School Board Takeover**

Illustration by Marley Allen-Ash



Fall 2025

## The Higher Education Issue

Illustration by Aliya Ghare

In addition to our six themed issues, 2025 also saw *The Local* publish a number of timely, one-off stories, including our pieces on the opening of the [Finch West LRT](#) and [homelessness on the TTC](#). By far the single biggest story at *The Local* in 2025, in reach and readership, was Nicholas Hune-Brown's [investigation into an AI-era scammer](#) who nearly duped us into producing a fabricated story. That story reverberated across the internet and around the world, raised important questions about AI's role in journalism, and spurred the development of *The Local's* new [AI policy](#).



“After the International Student Gold Rush”  
by Nicholas Hune-Brown is one of *The Local’s* five  
nominations for a National Magazine Award.

Photo by Christopher Katsarov Luna

## OUR IMPACT

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In 2025, our work filled important gaps in the city’s information ecosystem and helped residents exercise their democratic rights. When [Don Valley West held a by-election](#) for the vacant TDSB trustee position, *The Local* was there. When residents of [Scarborough–Rouge Park](#) (Ward 25) went to the polls in the by-election for the vacant city council seat, we fired up [Candidate Tracker](#)—the only place to find fact-checked biographies and election platform summaries for all 20 candidates. We partnered with the Toronto Public Library to disseminate the information in all TPL branches in the district and reported [live results](#) on election night. Our data suggests that one in two voters in the ward used *The Local*’s coverage during the by-election.

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**“A huge thank you for the recent article you did profiling all the Ward 25 candidates in the upcoming election next Monday [...] No other publication seems to care to even bother doing this but you guys did, and I just wanted to give you a huge thumbs up and thanks for the amazing work!”**

– Ward 25 resident

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In July 2025, [Peel Region began tracking life expectancy](#) across its 40 neighbourhoods, becoming one of the first municipalities in Canada to do so. This follows exclusive reporting from *The Local* in October 2024 showing that [life expectancy varies by almost 12 years across Toronto neighbourhoods](#). In addition to the stark results, the project—a partnership between *The Local* and MAP Centre for Urban Health Solutions at St. Michael’s Hospital—developed a [unique methodology](#) that we openly shared. This proved to be useful to Peel Region’s own efforts.

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 TORONTO PUBLIC LIBRARY IS CLOSED FOR LABOUR DAY HOLIDAY I 	2  	3  	4  	5 BABY STORYTIME & PLAYTIME 10:30-11:30am 	6 
8 DIVING DEEP: UNDERWATER WORLD ART WORKSHOP W/ ATIYA HASAN 4:00-5:30pm 	9 BASIC BIKE MAINTENANCE W/CYCLE T.O. 6:30-7:30pm 	10 USER EDUCATION—LEARNING COMPUTER SKILLS ONLINE 2:00-3:30pm 	11 LEADING TO READING 4:30-7:45pm 	12 BABY STORYTIME & PLAYTIME 10:30-11:30am 	13 FILM SCREENING - INCANDESCENCE (2024) 2:30-4:15pm 
15 AFTER SCHOOL CLUB: VEGETARIAN SUSHI MAKING W/CHEF SANG KIM 4:00-5:30pm 	16 BOOK CLUB 7:00-8:00pm 	17 	18 LEADING TO READING 4:30-7:45pm 	19 BABY STORYTIME & PLAYTIME 10:30-11:30am 	20 
22	23	24 USER EDUCATION—GOOGLE SHEETS 6:00-7:30pm 	25 LEADING TO READING 4:30-7:45pm 	26 PA DAY MO—PADDINGTON IN PERU (2024) 2:00-3:45pm 	27
		National Day for Truth and Reconciliation 			

hours &

ingside branch, Toronto Public Library

hours &

**SCARBOROUGH ROUGE PARK**  
BY-ELECTION CANDIDATES



FACT-CHECKED BIOS & PLATFORMS FOR ALL CANDIDATES IN THE SEPTEMBER 29 BY-ELECTION

THELOCAL.TO/SRP2025

PREPARED BY JOURNALISTS AT THE LOCAL MAGAZINE



**SCARBOROUGH ROUGE PARK**  
BY-ELECTION CANDIDATES



FACT-CHECKED BIOS & PLATFORMS FOR ALL CANDIDATES IN THE SEPTEMBER 29 BY-ELECTION

THELOCAL.TO/SRP2025

PREPARED BY JOURNALISTS AT THE LOCAL MAGAZINE



The Local's election leaflets at the Toronto Public Library's Morningside branch.

Nicholas Hune-Brown's [Victoria Goldiee](#) investigation [spurred needed conversations](#) across the industry about the role and conduct of news outlets in the age of AI. The story was picked up by everyone from *The New Yorker* to the *Columbia Journalism Review*, and Hune-Brown was featured on multiple international journalism panels and interviewed almost a dozen times about the story and its implications. As a direct result of that work, stories bylined by Goldiee have been taken down at a number of reputable outlets around the world, including *The Guardian*.

In 2025, our stories were read a total of 978,586 times, a record for *The Local*. While we fell just shy of the one million milestone, readership surpassed all expectations across different channels—our [website](#) and our [Apple News page](#). A number of our stories were also republished by *The Walrus*, further extending our reach.

*The Local* at the 2025 National Magazine Awards. Photo by Sammy Kogan / National Media Awards Foundation



The quality of our journalism continued to be [recognized nationally](#), with eight national awards in multiple categories at the Canadian Journalism Foundation Awards, Digital Publishing Awards, and National Magazine Awards. These eight awards, for work we did in 2024, were a record for *The Local*. They include the CJF Jackman Award for Excellence in Journalism (small media category) for our stories on life expectancy in Toronto and the award for General Excellence in Digital Publishing (small publication category), which *The Local* won for the fourth time in five years. Our editor-in-chief, Tai Huynh, was named editor of the year at the prestigious National Magazine Awards. *The Local* also won gold in the Photo Essay & Photojournalism category for the second consecutive year, for Nick Kozak's [encampment photography](#).

Excellent photojournalism has long been part of *The Local*'s DNA. Hiring Chloë Ellingson—a regular photographer with publications like the *New York Times*, *Globe and Mail*, and *Bloomberg*—as *The Local*'s first ever [Visuals Editor](#) is our newsroom doubling down on our commitment to visual storytelling.

Our work in 2025 has been nominated for a total of 14 national awards, including four [Canadian Association of Journalists Awards](#), [five Digital Publishing Awards](#), and [five National Magazine Awards](#). The winners will be announced at separate ceremonies in June 2026.

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**“What inspired me to donate is the very high quality of journalism that’s practised in *The Local*. I’m a retired journalist myself—from both print and television. I know how much work goes into really good investigative reporting! You accomplish that and more, with excellent writing as well.”**

— Wendy Trueman

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# INDUSTRY AWARDS

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**2020**

Digital Publishing Awards



**2021**

Digital Publishing Awards



**2022**

Digital Publishing Awards

National Magazine Awards

Press Freedom Award



**2023**

Digital Publishing Awards

Alliance for Healthier Communities Media Award



**2024**

Digital Publishing Awards

National Magazine Award

Canadian Association of Journalists Awards



**2025**

Digital Publishing Awards

National Magazine Awards

Canadian Journalism Foundation Award



## OUR NON-PROFIT BUSINESS

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The continued success of our newsroom year after year is proof that non-profit journalism works. It works because we have donors rather than shareholders, which allows our newsroom to chase original, impactful stories rather than easy clicks. The kind of on-the-ground, shoe-leather reporting that our readers have come to appreciate takes human resources, and none of it would be possible without our generous donors, large and small.

In 2025, our supporters contributed more than \$650,000 to *The Local*, a new high for our publication. A full 78 percent of that funding went to the salaries of our journalists—the 44 staff and freelancers who, in 2025, helped *The Local* churn out more work than ever before. And because there are no shareholders to extract dividends, the more funding we raise, the more journalism we produce. It's that simple.

*The Local* has become a leading voice for non-profit journalism in Canada. Tai Huynh is on the board of Press Forward, a media association representing independent and community-focused journalism. In October of 2025, he and board members of Press Forward were invited by Senator Andrew Cardozo to attend a meeting at the Senate of Canada to discuss ways to make news media sustainable. In his [report](#), released in the spring of 2026, the Senator lent support to the non-profit approach to journalism exemplified by *The Local*.

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**“There are examples of great success in philanthropy supporting ongoing coverage of local news. In Toronto, *The Local* engages in local and investigative news journalism with a newsroom of five reporters. Its multiple income streams include a 70% revenue stream from an impressive list of well-established foundations.”**

— Senator Andrew Cardozo

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# OUR EQUITY COMMITMENT

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As a publication focused on the issues affecting our city, *The Local* is [committed](#) to making sure our contributors reflect the diversity of our population, and that the people we platform are also connected with the communities on which they report.

That's why every year, *The Local* conducts a [diversity survey](#) among our staff and freelance contributors as part of our ongoing commitment to race, representation, and diversity. In 2025 we sent our survey to 44 contributors (staff and freelancers) and received 33 responses, a 75 percent response rate.

In 2025, 72.7 percent of our respondents identified as visible minorities (non-white). This is higher than the Canadian industry average of 25.1 percent.

	<b>The Local</b>	<b>Industry Average</b>
White	27.3%	74.9%
Non-white	72.7%	25.1%

In terms of gender representation, 60.6 percent of our contributors identified as female, which is higher than the industry average of 52 percent. 9.1 percent of our contributors identified as non-binary, which is higher than the industry average of 1 percent.

	<b>The Local</b>	<b>Industry Average</b>
Female	60.6%	52%
Male	27.3%	47%
Non-binary	9.1%	1%
Prefer not to answer	3%	—

In addition to gender and race, *The Local* is among a handful of outlets that also collect and report data on contributors who identify as living with a disability, which was 9.1 percent for 2025. As not many outlets report on this data, there is no industry average for comparison.

	The Local	Industry Average
No	84.8%	—
Yes	9.1%	—
Prefer not to answer	6.1%	—

*The Local* is also committed to creating scholarships and mentorship opportunities for aspiring journalists of colour. In 2025, we held the sixth edition of our Local Journalism Fellowship—a paid 15-week opportunity for aspiring and emerging journalists from communities underrepresented in Canadian media to learn the craft of magazine-style community journalism and make important industry connections. Thanks to the generous support of the J.P. Bickell Foundation, we were able to offer fellowships to Moyo Lawuyi, Vikram Nijhawan, and Mayumi Ramos.

20  
25

LOCAL JOURNALISM  
FELLOWSHIP



Moyo  
Lawuyi



Vikram  
Nijhawan



Mayumi  
Ramos

## WHAT'S AHEAD IN 2026

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If 2025 was a year of experimentation—in covering provincial and federal politics for the first time, and in wildlife journalism—2026 will see *The Local* going back to our roots. This includes a ton of health care stories in our [winter issue](#) followed by a major data journalism project in long-term care. When the world descends on our city for the World Cup in June, we'll turn our attention to local sports. And then it's going to be all-hands-on-deck as we hit municipal election season in the fall. Expect local election coverage like you've never seen before, across not only Toronto, but also Peel region.

Encampment in Peel region in the winter of 2025. Photo by Chloë Ellingson



# 2025 FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

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As a non-profit, *The Local* relies on various sources of revenue to pay our staff and contributors, and to offer high-quality content that is freely accessible to everyone. Vital to keeping *The Local* operating as an ad- and paywall-free publication is our growing community of generous supporters who believe in what we do.

As part of *The Local's* [transparency policy](#), we make public all sources of funding above \$5,000 per year.

## *\$25,000 or more*

Atkinson Foundation  
Canadian Journalism Collective/Online News Act  
Canadian Periodical Fund/Government of Canada  
Gift Funds Canada  
Metcalf Foundation  
Northwestern University - Data-Driven Reporting Project  
SE Health  
Toronto Foundation  
United Way Greater Toronto  
Vohra Miller Foundation  
Wellesley Institute  
WES Mariam Assefa Fund  
YMCA of Greater Toronto

## *\$5,000 to \$24,999*

Abundance Canada  
Aqueduct Foundation  
Ben and Hilda Katz Charitable Foundation  
Covering Canada: Election 2025 Fund  
J.P. Bickell Foundation  
The McLean Foundation

## *Up to \$4,999*

In addition to the financial contributors above, *The Local* is supported by hundreds of individual readers who have generously donated various amounts—one-time, monthly, or yearly.

# THE TEAM

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## **Staff**

Editor-in-Chief and Publisher: Tai Huynh

Executive Editor: Nicholas Hune-Brown

Features Editor: Inori Roy

Senior Reporter: Wency Leung

Visuals Editor: Chloë Ellingson

Manager of Operations: Craig Madho

## **Board of Directors**

Laura Quinn (Chair, 2026 -)

Chris Ellis (2019 - 2025)

Sagal Ali

Adnaan Bhyat

Rachel Chen

Amirah El-Safty

David Gildiner

Danielle Griffin

Nora Gorman

Ellie Marshall

Michael Torres

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*The Local* is a Registered Journalism Organization.

Registration number: 711980086RR0001

“I give to *The Local* because, as a former journalist now retired, I put a lot of value on the role that journalism plays in our society, a role that seems to be increasingly threatened or diminished by many in positions of power [...] I like the approach of *The Local*: its commitment to diverse content providers and to covering topics in more depth than I can find elsewhere. So keep it up, and I’ll keep contributing.”

— *Roger Morier, a Local supporter*

