



2024/2025 Trustee Report

What is the Trustee Program?

The Trustee Program aims to help individuals gain budgeting skills, maintain safe and consistently stable housing by promoting financial literacy skills and by managing client's personal finances to ensure that rent and other bills are paid on time. Once voluntarily enrolled in the program, client income is deposited directly into Viola's Place Trust Account, whereby the Trustee will forward payment to landlords, utility companies, etc. on their behalf. The remaining monthly income is then disbursed to the client. Our goal is twofold – to help clients to become more independently able to manage their own finances and to assist in eviction prevention for those who are unable to independently manage their own finances. Our program is available to anyone in Northeastern Nova Scotia. Clients can self-refer or be directed to us by other agencies, such as the Dept of Opportunities and Social Development.

What's new?

Our Trustee Program continues to grow. Since the program began in 2020, nearly 60 clients in total have used the Trustee Program and some of those clients are still enrolled. As of June 2025, Trustee Services are currently provided to 31 clients, including two associated with the John Howard Society housing program at Berma's Place in Pictou and one from Antigonish. Besides people using Trustee services, other services have been provided this year in various ways to approximately 74 shelter and other community residents who needed some support. In addition, the Trustee personally completed approximately 150 individual income tax returns in the past year.

Other ways clients are supported:

- Arranged with our local volunteer tax coordinator to offer free income tax clinics at Viola's Place to our own clients as well as those in the community receiving income assistance;
- Continue to sit as Treasurer on the Board of the Pictou County Affordable & Supportive Housing Association. The goal of this Association is to eventually build supportive housing – a direct benefit to Viola's Place clients;
- Work as the front-line contact for clients seeking financial help through Viola's Place Shelter Diversion funds, for those with rental arrears, power bill arrears, etc.
- Regularly, with staff, attend workshops and meetings with other service providers in an effort to improve access to services for the population we serve;
- Continue to assist people with budgeting and financial literacy skills;
- Collaborating with other agencies who help in non-financial areas and mutual client referrals;
- Continued a positive working relationship with a Credit Counsellor (BDO) for clients in need of that service and have referred a number of clients to that service;
- Advocating for and assisting clients who have barriers and need help with navigation of services
- Community Presentations on the benefits of the Trustee Program, budgeting and income tax matters.

It continues to bring me great personal satisfaction in working with my clients and other members of the vulnerable sector of our society, as well as in developing positive working relationships within Viola's Place Society, and with other agencies and individuals in our area.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Mumford, Client Trustee