



Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario 2025 Annual General Meeting Report

Co-Chairs Report for 2025

Baby-Friendly Initiative Ontario (BFION) is a volunteer multidisciplinary organization, consisting of healthcare professionals, service providers and consumers within Ontario interested in protecting, promoting and supporting breastfeeding through implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative.

BFION is the provincial representative for the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada (BCC) and partners with hospitals and community health services in Ontario to assist and support them to achieve and maintain Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI) designation. BFION provides ongoing expert advice and recommendations on policy and guidelines to government, health facilities, community agencies and professional organizations through knowledge exchange and translation, advocacy, sharing of resources, and provincial monitoring surveys.

Our mission is to protect, promote, and support breastfeeding in the province of Ontario through the adoption, implementation and maintenance of the practice standards of the BFI. Our vision is for Ontario to have a Baby-Friendly culture.

Goals for BFION:

- Increase the number of BFI designated hospitals and community health services in Ontario
- Support designated facilities in Ontario to maintain their BFI designation
- Increase BFION membership participation
- Increase awareness and education of evidence-based best practices related to infant feeding

Current 2025/2026 Executive Committee:

Position	Executive Member
Co-Chairs (2)	Brooke Hewitt Vacant
Past Chair	Vacant
Co-Chair Elect	Vacant
Membership Coordinator	Bobbie Jo Duquette
Social Media Coordinator	Angie Manners
Treasurer	Hiltrud Dawson
Website Administrator	Andrea Priamo - supported by Marg La Salle

BFI Assessment Coordinator for Ontario	Marg La Salle
Communications	Vacant - supported by Louise Guthro
Breastfeeding Committee for Canada Representative on PT Committee	Role filled by Co-Chairs and BFI Assessment Coordinator

Highlights from BFI Ontario 2025

Membership Meetings

BFION continues to offer 4 membership meetings each year. Each meeting is hosted on a Friday from noon until 1 pm. Each meeting includes a ½ hour presentation entitled “Hot Topic” followed by a general business meeting.

Date (2025)	Hot Topic	Presented by	Attended
Jan. 31	Building Capacity to Scale-up BFI Implementation in Nova Scotia	Haileigh Robb	51
June 21	Pre-recorded Antenatal Hand Expression Awareness Event	More Milk Sooner	30
Sept. 26	Community Baby-Friendly Initiative Collaborative (CBFI-C)	Emma Seager	16
Nov. 28	BFION 25 th Anniversary Celebration	Marg La Salle & Bobbie Jo Duquette	12

Attendance at BFION meetings have remained consistent over the last 3 years.

Year	Total attending BFION Meetings per year
2023	109
2024	101
2025	109

Challenges:

- Lack of involvement of government representatives despite multiple attempts to reach out to them.
- No provincial funding for breastfeeding/BFI. Broken links and outdated resources impede families in Ontario from getting the help that they need.
- Many hospitals and community health services report they are implementing some BFI practices but are not seeking BFI designation/redesignation.

Successes:

- In December 2025 Chatham Kent Public Health underwent External Assessment for BFI redesignation. Chatham Kent Public Health initially achieved BFI designation in 2010 and was redesignated in 2016 and 2025.
- Three community health services were accepted into the Community Baby-Friendly Initiative Collaborative (CBFI-C): Black Creek Community Health Centre, Hanover Family Health Team, and Northeastern Public Health.
- BFION created and distributed *BFI Ontario's National Breastfeeding Week Resource Kit* that included many activities suitable for hospitals and community health services. Feedback was positive.
- BFION launched two infographics: “25 Reasons the BFI Matters in Ontario” and “25 Ways to Support the BFI in Ontario”
- [BFION website](#) updated to include evidence-based resources for families around infant feeding and other topics such as prenatal education, milk expression, and safe infant sleep.
- Utilized social media platforms including Facebook, Instagram and Linked in to connect with different audiences, increase awareness of BFION, and amplify our messaging.
- Switched to Microsoft Teams for BFION Executive meetings and storage of internal documents.

Future Direction:

- Switch BFION membership meetings to Microsoft Teams.
- Strengthen relationship with newly appointed government representative.
- Finetune the BFION Executive Nomination Package that we piloted last year.
- Continue engaging perinatal families across Ontario through public surveys and host a virtual event with BFION members to gather input that will inform our strategic plan for the next 3-5 years.
- Update BFION's strategic plan.

Communications Report – Louise Guthro

The role of Communications Coordinator in 2025 was not officially filled. The meeting minute taking role has been shared between different executive members and Louise Guthro, Past Chair from 2024, stayed on the executive to support emailing members through the Mailchimp platform.

One of BFION's goals is to facilitate the accurate and timely sharing of information with members regarding breastfeeding and the Baby-Friendly Initiative. The Mailchimp online platform is used as a tool to reach all our members at one time with each email.

Mailchimp assisted BFION in communicating with 349 email subscribers (members) at end of year 2024. This number is up from 344 in the previous year. The number of emails sent out to our membership in 2025 was 23 which was down from 40 emails sent in 2024. Email content included information that supported our regular membership meetings (e.g. agendas, minutes), promoted educational opportunities, and shared new research and resources/tools. Although it was not commonly used for this, it has also been an effective method for individual members to ask questions to the broader membership group (e.g. If a member has a practice question or is looking for a resource). The Mailchimp emails now include the links to our 3 social media platforms.

The Mailchimp metrics show that member engagement is at slightly less than the industry average, with our email open rate range at 23% – 34%, and average open rate at 27.2% which is down 10% from the previous year. The click rates for BFION emails ranged from 7% -18% up from 2024, which reflects the percentage of members who clicked on links within the emails. Click rates were typically higher when the email was sharing information about educational opportunities, resources/tools, or new research.

Opportunities for Consideration

The Communications Coordinator role has remained open, with the Mailchimp role being supported by the former Past Chair. Efforts to onboard a new Communications Coordinator are underway.

BFI Ontario Assessment Coordinator Report - Marg La Salle

Three community health services in Ontario were accepted into the Community Baby-Friendly Initiative Collaborative (CBFI-C) provided by the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada in partnership with the University of Manitoba. The Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) is funding this collaborative. Congratulations to Black Creek Community Health Centre, Hanover Family Health Team, and Northeastern Public Health for participating in this project and your continuing commitment to the Baby-Friendly Initiative (BFI).

In December 2025 Chatham Kent Public Health underwent External Assessment for BFI redesignation. Chatham Kent Public Health initially achieved BFI designation in 2010 and was redesignated in 2016. Their ongoing work to implement the *Ten Steps to Successful Breastfeeding in Canada* and maintain BFI designation is commendable and serves as an inspiration.

The BCC's Recognition Program has replaced BFI Pre-Assessment. There are 3 Ontario facilities that have achieved silver status: Guelph General Hospital, Sioux Lookout Meno Ya Win Health Centre and Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre in Toronto. Silver status means that the facility has met the requirements for 6 to 8 of the Ten Steps.

Brightshores Health System in Owen Sound and Carlington Community Health Centre in Ottawa achieved BFI redesignation in 2024 and their BFI designation remains in effect for 5 years. Periodic reports are submitted to the BCC to show maintenance of continuous quality improvement and implementation of the BFI standards.

Many hospitals and community health services in Ontario have informed me that they value the BFI and are actively implementing many BFI practices but not pursuing BFI designation/redesignation.

All BFI assessment work is done through the Assessment Committee of the Breastfeeding Committee for Canada. Karen Frith, Wendy Lahey, Marg La Salle and Kathy O’Grady provided Ontario representation on the BCC’s Assessment Committee in 2025. Other assessors in Ontario include Joan Bueckert, Kathy Jacyniak, Angie Manners, Jill Mather, Rebecca Serroul, Gillian Szollos, Shehnaz Makani and Margaret Sherratt.

The BFI Ontario co-chairs and Marg LaSalle represent Ontario on the BCC’s Provincial-Territorial Committee.

Kathy O’Grady continued in her role as the BCC’s international delegate to the Baby Friendly Hospital Initiative Network (BFHI Network) throughout 2025.

Respectfully submitted,

Marg La Salle

Social Media Report – Angie Manners

In 2025, we were active on 4 social media platforms: Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn and YouTube.

It is important to note that the metrics for insights on our social media platforms have changed for Meta Business Suites (for Facebook and Instagram).

The 88 Facebook posts and stories had 25.8 thousand reaches! This is a substantial increase compared to previous years. Our following increased from 276 to 304 individuals. Our posts engagements increased significantly from 42 to 419, surpassing the 2024 data.

We now have 96 Followers on Instagram which is an increase from 87 in 2024. Our posts and stories have increased our reach by 35.3% with a total of 667 in 2025. Meta Business Suites has changed the metric for “likes, shares and comments” and has replaced it with “Content interactions”. This change no longer allows us to compare year over year; in 2025, our content interaction was 44. Our hashtag is *#BFIOntario*.

Posts created focused on various topics such as Family Day, Nurses Week, National Breastfeeding Week and World Breastfeeding Week as well as BFION membership and executive recruitment to name a few. We shared breastfeeding promotion tools and

reports as well as events and opportunities from partner organizations including the BCC, WHO, the Public Health Agency of Canada, La Leche League as well as the Academy for Breastfeeding Medicine.

Our goal for 2026 is to continue growing our social media presence and to grow our followers, especially on LinkedIn – We strive to increase our reach and engagement as well as collaborate with our partners by sharing content and events as appropriate.

When possible, we post content in both official languages.

Social Media Activity – Facebook

Facebook	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Posts	48	90	47	83	88
Shared Posts	107	82	42	64	97
Followers (Page likes)	189	257	276	304	329 (+9%)
Engagement (content interaction)	328	370	42	419	624 (+64.2%)
Reach	13,709	8259	1,600	2,700	27,766
Link Clicks	826	127	35	229	**
Comments	46	30	Data unavailable*	18	30
Visits			408	5,700	**

*Data unavailable as more followers are needed for Meta Business Suite to provide this information while respecting privacy of those following the accounts.

**Meta Business Suite no longer provides information for this metric.

Facebook reach 60% increase from 2024

Demographics

- 94.7% are women, 5.3% are men (increase in male followers by 2.3% from 2024)
- Ages
 - 18-24 0.3% (men 0%)
 - 25-34 13.3% (men 1%)
 - 35-44 39.2% (men 1.7%)
 - 45-54 22.3% which is an increase from 19.6% in 2024 (men 1.3%)
 - 55-64 10.3% (men 1%)
 - 65+ 9.3% which is an increase from 7.5% in 2024 (men 0.3%)

Top 5 Cities

Ottawa (9.7%)
 Toronto (4%)
 Hamilton (4%)
 Kitchener (1.8%)
 Cambridge (1.8%)

Top 5 Countries

Canada (88.1%)
 US (4.6%)
 Egypt (1.5%)
 France (0.9%)
 Philippines (0.9%)

Social Media Activity - Instagram

Instagram (New 08/21)	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Posts	36	40	18	38	47
Stories			0	26	78
Followers	10	47	57	87	96*
Following		7		17	17
Reach	113	261	255	503	667 (+35.3%)
Content interactions*	12	66	No data	146	44 (+100%)
Share	2	4	0	15	**
Profile Visits	24	52	33	89	65

**This metric has changed from Likes and Reactions to Content interactions and is being measured differently than previous years.*

***Meta Business Suite no longer provides information for this metric.*

Instagram reach 35.5% increase from 2024

Once we reach 100 Instagram followers, we will have access to demographic information as noted for Facebook.

Social Media Activity – LinkedIn*

LinkedIn	2024	2025
Followers	21	43
Connections		36
Posts	8	38
Engagements	23	103
Impressions	402	2109 (+347.8%)
Reposts	2	4
Comments	1	6

**The BFION LinkedIn account was reactivated at the end of September 2024*

Social Media Activity – YouTube

BFION’s YouTube channel was created in May 2021 and we have started using it more regularly in 2025.

As of December 2025, there were 14 subscribers to our channel and 93 views of 5 videos.

We will continue increasing the use of this social media to promote BFION activities.

Social Media Activity – Twitter (now X)*

Twitter	2020	2021	2022	2023
Followers	84	89	97	101
Following	265	268	263	261
Tweets	33	15	12	1
Retweets	14	66	12	0
Likes			29	1
Mentions		9	9	0

*No posts were made to X during the 2024 period. Information was posted to LinkedIn (stats above).

Opportunities for Consideration

1. Create stories and reels for Facebook and Instagram as these typically generate more interest and traffic to our pages.
2. Create a calendar of topics to ensure we are posting timely topics more frequently.
3. Continue posting to LinkedIn page to gain more followers.
4. Consider following additional credible pages to increase our reach and subsequently our viewers/followers.
5. Maximize the use of our YouTube channel which was created in May 2021 (www.youtube.com/@bfiontario8439).

Membership Overview – Bobbie Jo Duquette

Overview

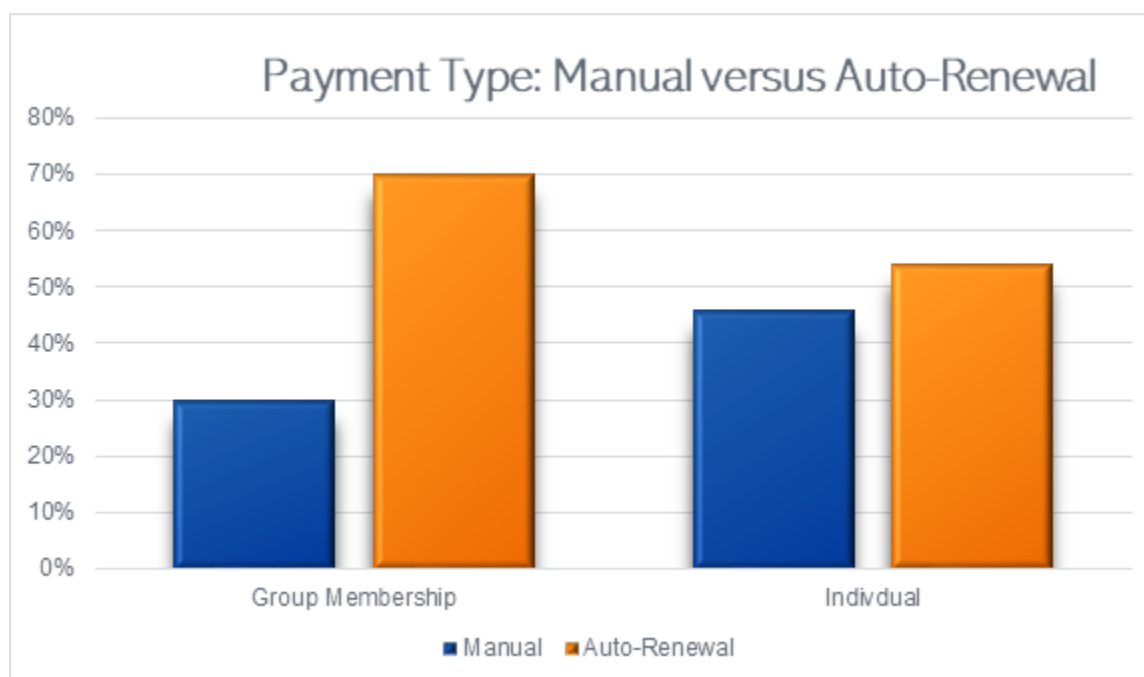
Overall, membership remains stable with manageable declines. Membership rates continue to support the implementation of BFI strategies across the province. Fees ensure accessibility across the organization sites. Focused retention and engagement strategies will be essential to sustaining growth momentum.

Fee Structure

The rates for membership remain unchanged from previous years. The fee structure is outlined below.

Category	Cost
Individual	\$20
Group A (2-5 members)	\$50
Group B (6-10 members)	\$100
Group C (11-24 members)	\$250
Group D (25+ members)	\$400

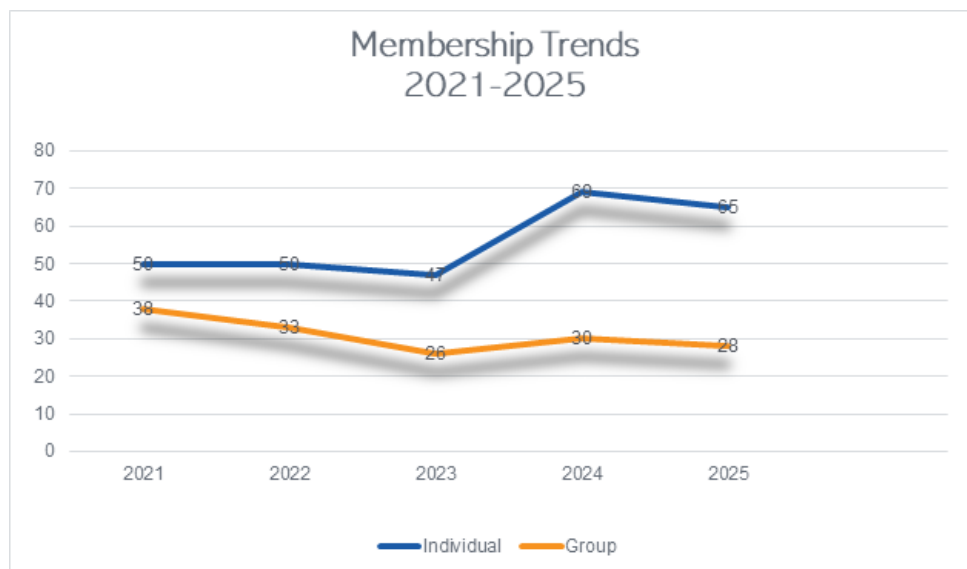
Payments



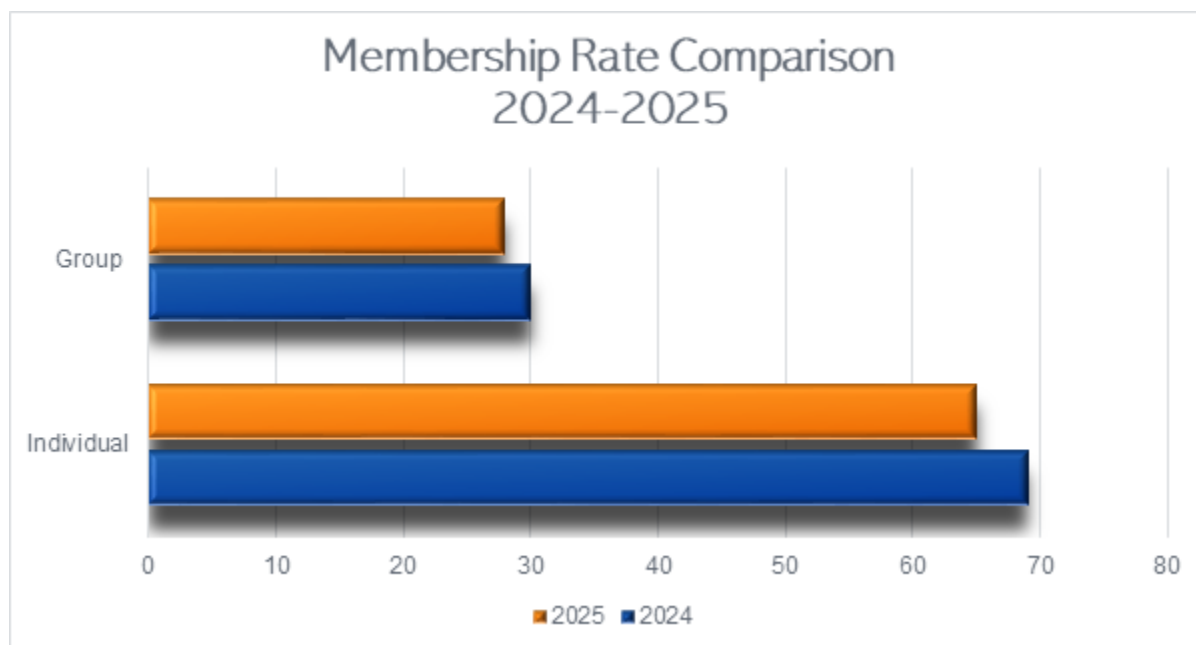
The majority of groups use PayPal as their payment method (92%), while the remainder pay by cheque (3%) or credit card (7%). Among those using PayPal, 30% complete payment manually, and 70% have set up a recurring auto-renewal payment plan.

All individual memberships continue to be paid via PayPal, with 54% enrolled in a recurring auto-renewal payment plan and 46% completing their payments manually each year.

Membership Trends

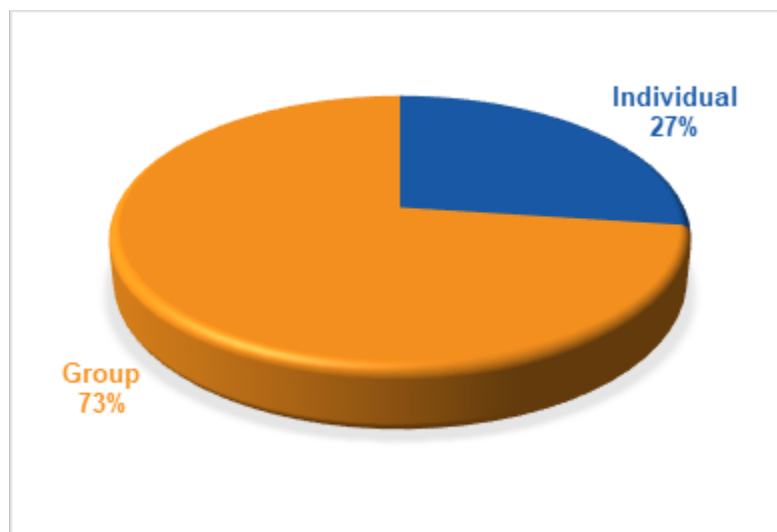


Membership trends from 2021 to 2025 show a notable fluctuation. Rates declined to their lowest point in 2023, followed by a strong rebound heading into 2024. Since that increase, membership has experienced a gradual downward trend through the end of 2025.



In 2025, BFI Ontario saw a modest decrease in overall membership. Individual memberships declined from 69 in 2024 to 65 in 2025, representing a small reduction year over year, while group memberships remained steady at 30. Although the change is not substantial, it reflects the broader gradual decline observed following the 2024 peak.

Membership Representation



BFI Ontario currently has a combined total of 240 members. Of these, 65 hold individual memberships, while the remaining 175 are affiliated with group memberships. Group memberships are operating at approximately 87% capacity, as not all groups have reached their maximum potential.

In the current year, BFI Ontario welcomed a total of eight new memberships, including seven individual memberships and one group membership.

Group Type by Membership

Group Type	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
A	31	26	20	26	23
B	5	5	5	2	2
C	1	2	1	2	3
D	1	0	0	0	0

Group Type A has consistently represented the largest membership category. After declining from 31 in 2021 to a low of 20 in 2023, membership rebounded to 26 in 2024 before declining slightly to 23 in 2025.

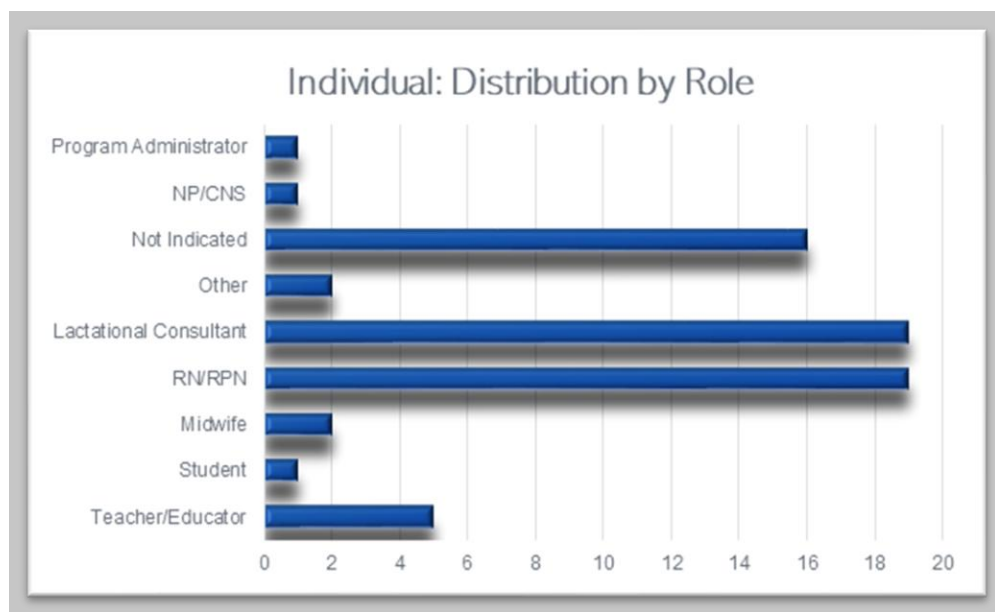
Group Type B remained stable at five memberships from 2021 to 2023 but experienced a notable decrease to two memberships in 2024, where it remained steady through 2025.

Group Type C fluctuated at lower levels over the five-year period, with a modest upward trend in 2025, reaching three memberships — its highest point in this timeframe.

Group Type D declined from one membership in 2021 to zero in 2022 and has not had any active memberships since.

Overall, while some recovery was observed in 2024, 2025 reflects stabilization or modest decline across most categories, with slight growth only in Group Type C.

Membership Distribution



The largest proportion of individual members are RN/RPNs and Lactation Consultants, each representing the most significant segments of the membership base.

A substantial number of members did not indicate their professional role, making this the next largest category.

Teachers/Educators represent a moderate portion of the membership, while Midwives, Program Administrators, NP/CNS, Students, and those categorized as “Other” make up smaller segments.

Overall, the data indicates that clinical professionals—particularly RN/RPNs and Lactation Consultants—continue to form the core of BFI Ontario’s individual membership base. However, the high number of “Not Indicated” responses suggests an opportunity to improve data collection for more accurate role-based analysis.



Most group memberships are from the Public Health sector, representing 61% of total group members, an increase from 59% last year.

Birthing Units/Hospitals account for 14%, reflecting a decrease from 17% in the previous year. Community Health Centers represent 11% of memberships, an increase of one percentage point. Family Health Teams and organizations categorized as “Other” each account for 7% of group memberships which is unchanged from 2024.

Overall, Public Health continues to be the primary sector engaged with BFI Ontario at the group level. While representation across other sectors remains steady, the shift in proportions suggests an opportunity to strengthen outreach and engagement efforts among hospitals, Community Health Centers, and Family Health Teams to further diversify sector participation.

Adjustment to Membership Coordinator Procedures

All routine responsibilities associated with the Membership Coordinator role have now been fully resumed, including restoration of website access. This adjustment re-establishes standard operational processes and ensures continuity in membership management, renewals, communications, and data tracking.

Resuming full procedural responsibilities supports improved efficiency, timely member support, and accurate reporting moving forward.

Opportunities for Consideration

- Review renewal timelines and communication strategies to increase on-time renewals.
- Expand promotion of auto-renewal options to improve retention stability.

- Analyze membership categories to identify where declines are most concentrated and target outreach accordingly.
- By prioritizing retention alongside recruitment efforts, membership levels can be stabilized and positioned for sustainable growth in future years.
- Increase group membership capacity utilization.
- Improve data accuracy by making the “Role” field mandatory.

Financial Report – Hiltrud Dawson

Overall, BFI Ontario remains in a good financial position.

Financial Overview

CRA Report and Filing

For the year 2024-25 (May 1, 2024 – April 30, 2025), BFI Ontario’s financial documents were examined. Taxes were filed by the accounting firm, T4Tax Services Inc., with no taxes to pay.

Finances Described

Income and Expenses for 2025

2025 Income:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
Membership Payments via Direct Deposit, e-Transfer and Cheque	250.00	
Membership Payments via PayPal	2,430.00	
Membership Payments via E-transfers	0.00	
Total Income	2,680.00	

2025 Expenses:

Item	Amount	Additional Explanation
PayPal fees	93.19	
Teleconferences/Zoom	242.84	
Microsoft 360		
Website	694.95	Includes first year of Microsoft 365
Executive expenses	0.00	
Tax services	429.40	
Total Expenses	1,460.38	

Assets at the end of 2025

On December 31, 2025, our accounts held the following amounts:

Assets	Amount
PayPal	2,522.79
Bank of Montreal	28,398.09
Total	30,920.88

Income and Expenses Comparison

This table compares our income, expenses and total assets for 2024 and 2025.

	January 1, 2024 - December 31, 2024	January 1, 2025 – December 31, 2025	Difference
Account Balance and Comparison			
Income	3,180.04	2,680.00	-500.04
Expenses	-2,678.78	-1,460.38	-1,218.40
Difference	501.28	1,220.62	719.34
Assets Comparison			
PayPal Assets at End of Year	2,428.80	2,522.79	93.99
Bank of Montreal Assets at End of Year	27,272.44	28,398.09	1,125.65
Total Assets	29,701.24	30,920.88	1,219.64

Budget for 2026

BFI Ontario purchased a Microsoft 365 business license as a more affordable alternative to Zoom calls, access to a dedicated email address and additional services. This should keep our operating cost for 2026 low.

Opportunities for Consideration

BFI Ontario has sufficient funds to consider other needs, tools or resources that would benefit members, strengthen the position of BFI Ontario in the province, and support BFI Implementation.

Respectfully submitted,

Hiltrud Dawson

Website – Andrea Priamo/Marg La Salle

Marg La Salle has been assisting with the BFION website work. Thank you to Karen Frith, former BFION website Administrator, for providing training and support.

The Family Forum section of the website continues to provide an area where families can share their prenatal, postnatal and young childcare experiences, especially related to infant feeding, at Ontario hospitals and community health services. New to the website is an area of the Family Forum where parents can find current, evidence-based resources about infant feeding and BFI related topics. Membership with BFION is not required to access these resources. Please encourage families to visit our website for quality resources.

Our 25-year celebration events and resources have been added to the website under the heading “About – Learn about BFI Ontario”. Links are provided to our You Tube channel and other resources created for BFION’s 25th anniversary.

The BFION executive would like to thank each of its members who supported the health and well-being of Ontario families and communities this past year. BFION will continue to do the same by protecting, promoting, and supporting breastfeeding through the implementation of the Baby-Friendly Initiative. We will continue to advocate for these evidence-based, best practices in Ontario, look for opportunities to influence change and increase engagement.

Respectfully,



Brooke Hewitt, RN, BScN

Co-chair, BFI Ontario