



CAMBRIDGE WOMENS CENTER

2023 Annual Report



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MESSAGE FROM OUR TEAM

Dear Friends,

Creating New Beginnings!

WHO WE ARE

Established in 1971, the Cambridge Women's Center stands as the longest-running community center for women in the United States. Originating from a women's movement takeover, the center has been at the forefront of creating innovative programs and services for women from diverse backgrounds for over 52 years.

WHO WE SERVE

Our commitment to serving an increasing number of women and children remains unwavering. Following the completion of a new building in the summer of 2023, the CWC witnessed a doubling in the number of individual visits from the previous year. Despite the challenges of housing evictions, rising inflation, and mental health problems, our community has demonstrated remarkable resilience time and time again. The women who benefit from our services exhibit extraordinary resilience in the face of adversity, including homelessness, trauma, and food insecurity. Through the generosity of our donors and supporters, we are able to meet them where they are and offer a welcoming space for all women to find solace and rejuvenation.

OUR VALUES

The Cambridge Women's Center firmly opposes any behavior, language, or attitudes that promote colorism, racism, anti-Black sentiments, anti-Trans sentiments, anti-Queer sentiments, religious intolerance, classism, ageism, discrimination based on citizenship status, ableism, or body-shaming.

We eagerly anticipate the opportunities that 2024 will bring for the Cambridge Women's Center. Thank you sincerely for your ongoing support.

In solidarity,



Abigail Gingrande, MPH
Director of
Operations & Administration



Stacy Karabetsos, MSW
Director of
Development & Outreach



Dosa Chidandali, MSL
Director of
Programs & Services

OUR MISSION

The Cambridge Women's Center is a physical and digital community space open to anyone for whom woman is a meaningful identifier or lived experience. We offer a safe space for learning, emotional support, empathy, and empowerment through self-determination.

Our understanding of the terms woman and feminism is intersectional, and we strive to create a community that is inclusive and actively working towards justice for Black, Indigenous, People of Color, LGBTQIA+, those with disabilities and/or mental illness, folks experiencing housing insecurity and other Powerful Groups (both national and international) targeted for oppression.



2023 Program Offerings

Drop-In

We run a low-barrier drop-in program on three specific days each week: Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays. During these days, we welcome women from all corners of the Greater Boston Area and provide a range of essential social services. Each individual who seeks our assistance has a unique background, and our services are tailored to address their diverse and personal needs.

Our drop-in center grants unrestricted access to all the facilities available on our premises. This includes a computer lab equipped with printing services, a lending library, communal areas for relaxation and socializing, a community kitchen, small private rooms, and restroom facilities.

Apart from the resources within our space, we offer packaged meals, material assistance, and supplies, as well as one-on-one support led by volunteers. Furthermore, our team manages a resource referral database that is accessible to the public. This database contains information on various social programs, with the aim of linking our participants to the appropriate support services.



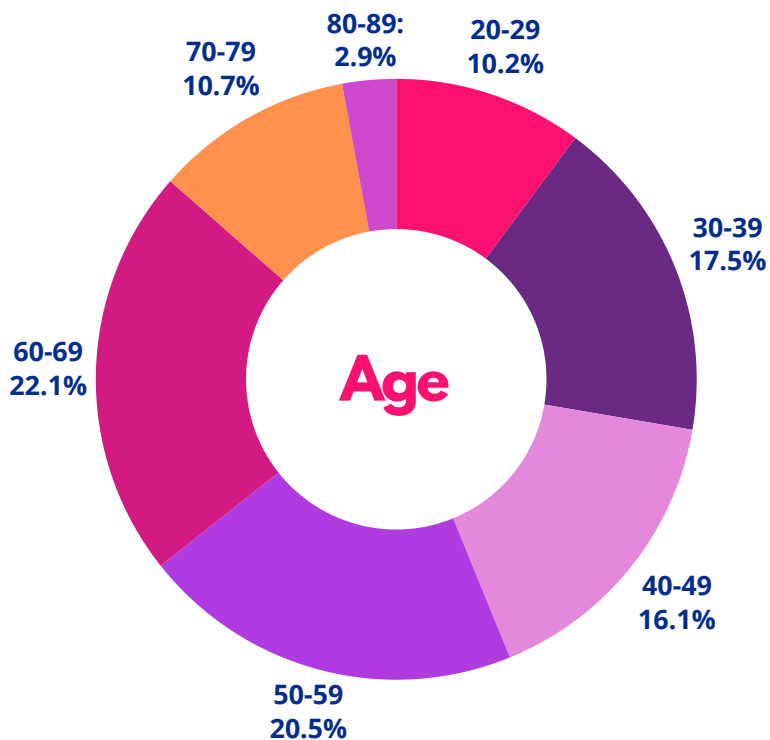
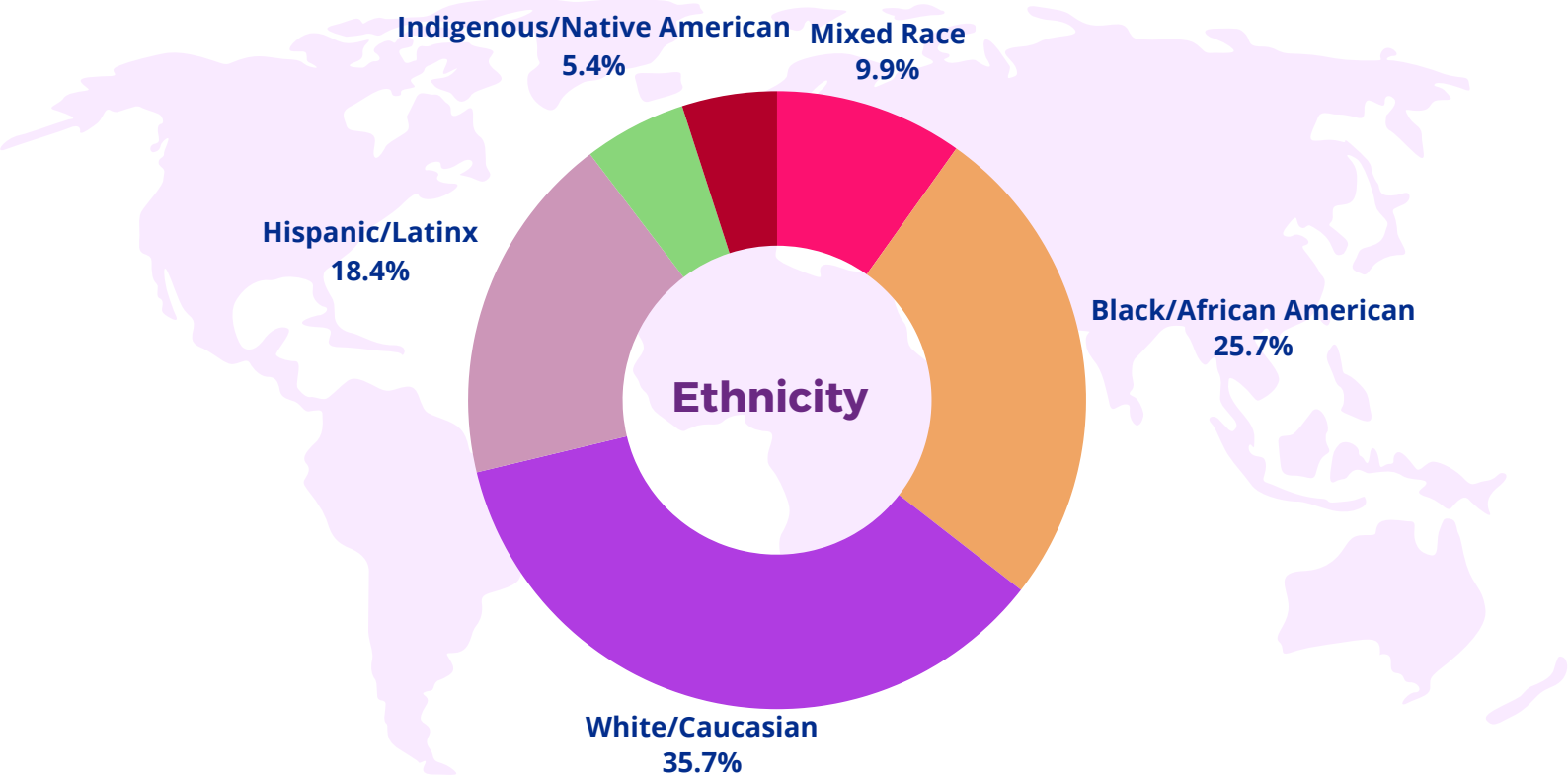
Groups & Workshops

We provide an extensive range of weekly, monthly, and periodic support groups and workshops. Certain groups are accessible to everyone, whereas others are exclusively for individuals with personal experience (such as survivors of sexual violence, individuals struggling with addictions, or those with a physical illness)..

Our group sessions promote recovery, provide assistance, aid in building a sense of community, and provide valuable information to empower participants in making well-informed choices. Every month, a schedule of our groups is published on our website..



A SNAPSHOT OF OUR COMMUNITY



We strive to serve a diverse population of individuals from different ages and ethnicities. We found that, in terms of ethnicity, 35.7% of respondents identify as White/Caucasian, followed by 25.7% of respondents identifying as Black or African-American. Hispanic/Latinx individuals make up 18.4% of respondents, Asians make up 5.5%, and Indigenous people make up 5.4%. The remaining 9.9% identified as mixed-race.

There is also variety in the ages of the individuals who come to the Center. We see a roughly even distribution of ages ranges, with the most common age range being between 50-69 years of age, which represented 42.6% of the total respondents.

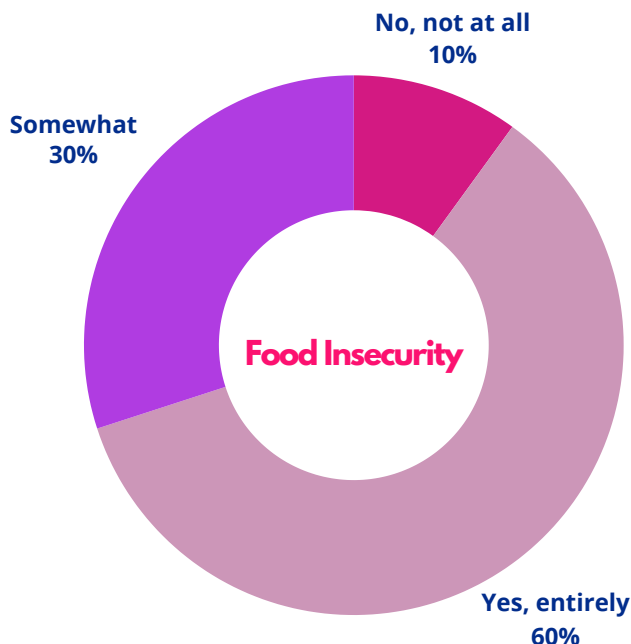
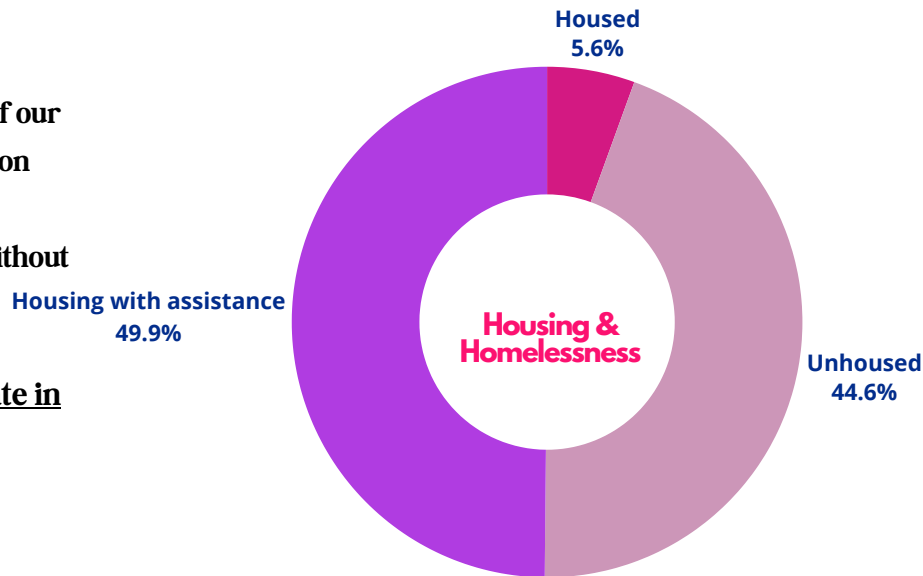
Drop-In Program Participants

Housing & Homelessness

Our programming caters to specific groups, attracting a diverse range of people. It's evident that our drop-in activities are predominantly utilized by individuals facing homelessness or housing uncertainty.

In our survey, we found that the vast majority of our respondents are either unhoused (44.6%) or are on housing with assistance (49.9%). Only 5.6% of our respondents indicated that they have housing without assistance.

In total, 94.5 % of respondents who participate in drop-in experience some form of housing insecurity.



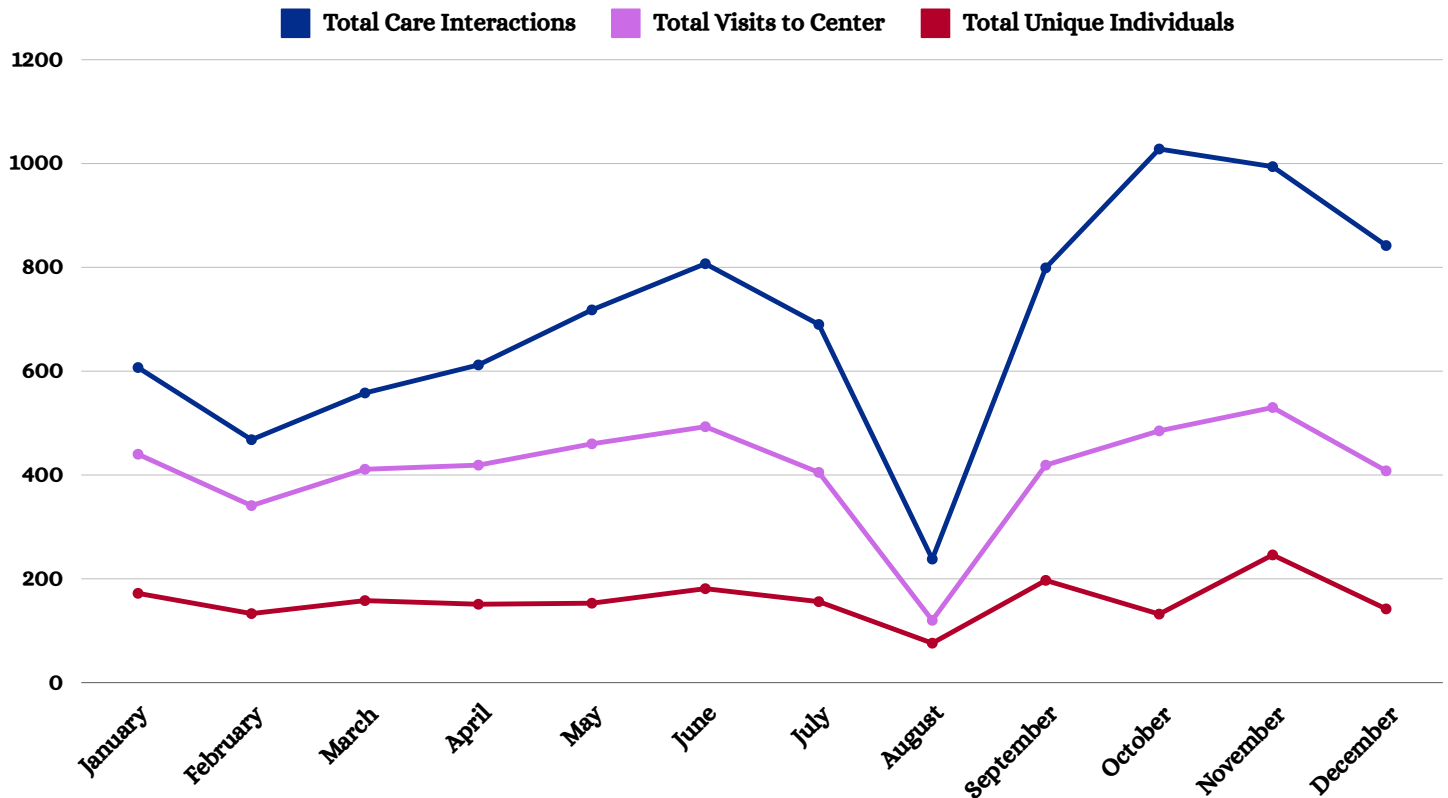
Food Insecurity

In total, our survey found that 90% of our drop-in respondents utilize our food program.

Do you depend on food from our center to meet your weekly food needs?

2023 PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Drop-In Program



Care Interactions is the term used to encompass all our services.

This can represent getting a meal, computer use, emotional support, resource referrals, and more.

Median of **725** Monthly Care Interactions

Visitors represents the total number of participants seen over a month.

Median of **424** Monthly Visitors

Unique individuals represents the number of distinct people visiting our center. This number is essential to understanding the number of lives directly impacted.

Median of **157** Unique Individuals Served Monthly

Support & Activity Groups

Women 65+ Discussion Group

The group was established in December 2016 with the purpose of providing a platform for its members to discuss the various challenges associated with aging and foster a sense of community. The group consists of 8-12 participants, ranging in age from 65 to 93 years old. The group convenes once a month either in person or through the use of Zoom. One of the primary objectives of the group is to create a space where individuals can freely share their thoughts and ideas regarding aging-related issues and other topics of interest. The group collectively decides on the discussion topics, which encompass a wide range of subjects such as Family Stuff, Coping with Fears, Medical Care, How Aging Has Changed Us, Antiracism, coping with the Unpredictability of Aging, Crossroads in Our Lives, Food, Holidays, What We Do for Fun and Joy, and How to Keep Track of Stuff.

I have enjoyed talking with women of my age group about a variety of issues over the years. I'm glad we have the hybrid meeting, too, which allows women for whom walking or driving to the meeting could pose a problem.

-Carol G, 65+ Discussion Group Participant

I've greatly enjoyed attending our 65+ Discussion Group @ the Women's Center almost every month since its founding some 8-9 years ago both at the Center and on Zoom! It has provided me with relevant & useful information, an opportunity to speak to others about personal & community concerns, as well as comradeship and much needed continued contact with some of my Cambridge friends, new & old. I've especially enjoyed the opportunity to facilitate a few Meetings. More recently, Zoom has made it possible for me to continue meeting—even at a distance—which

I could not otherwise do!

Thanks loads for this opportunity!

-Anonymous

From our 65+ discussions I enjoy finding out things: about individual hip replacements, cataract surgeries, tips on recycling or good news sources, how to do a will or power of attorney, people's different life pathways.

-Laura, 65+ Discussion Group Participant

I joined the 65+ women's group of the Women's Center of Cambridge when it began several years ago, partly because I knew a few of the members from other exercise classes at the YMCA. I had no idea what to expect.

-Manisha Roy, Ph.D., 65+ Discussion Group Participant

2023 PROGRAM ACHIEVEMENTS

Drop-In Program

Food and Material Aid

Our drop-in programming ensures that every visitor has access to essential food and material aid. Each day, we provide prepared meals to meet their nutritional needs. Additionally, twice a month, we organize a buffet-style community meal to foster a sense of togetherness. In addition to food, we also offer material aid to all participants. This includes basic toiletries such as shampoo, conditioner, body soap, deodorant, toothbrushes, and toothpaste. Furthermore, we understand the challenges faced by our members living outside or in housing insecure situations, so we provide seasonal survival supplies. These supplies encompass first aid materials, sunscreen, raincoat, cold weather clothing, as well as hand and body warmers.



3,438
visitors accessed food
& 2,570 visitors
accessed material aid in
FY2023.

We welcomed
190
first time visitors in
FY2023!

Transportation Vouchers

Under our existing program, every participant is entitled to receive a \$20 T-pass on a monthly basis. This provision, along with our other offerings, has been deliberately set at a minimal requirement. To access these vouchers, we simply request a first name or an alias. Within this program, each individual is granted access to a total value of \$240.00 in Charlie Cards annually. On a monthly basis, we cater to an average of 81 distinct individuals who avail themselves of this program..

The CWC distributed
\$32,960.90
in Charlie Cards
in FY2023.

Support & Activity Groups

The Cambridge Women's Center was delighted to oversee a grand total of 33 diverse support and activity groups in 2023. Our dedication to adaptability remains strong, with offerings of in-person, online, and hybrid options to cater to the needs of all participants.

We welcomed
2,030
group attendees in
2023

- Bake to Heal
- Body and Health, an Anti-Diet Approach
- Body Positive Book Club
- Chocolate Tasting
- Community Art Group
- Conscious Dating
- Daily Self Care & Wellness
- Direct Action Group
- Drivers of Hope
- Financial Literacy
- Healing Through Creative Arts Workshop
- Holistic Living
- In Your Body: Poetry for Healing
- Journaling for Mental Health
- Knitting Group
- Lesbian and Bi Discussion Group
- Let's Write
- Meditation Group
- Move and Groove
- Nonviolent Communication for Compassionate Conflict Resolution
- Perceiving Purpose
- Podcast Club
- Closed: Reiki Sessions
- Self Love Group
- Sewing Group
- Sex Worker Support Group
- Spanish-English Conversation Exchange
- Straight Marriage, Still Questioning
- Tech Lit & Career
- Trauma Support & Discussion Group
- Women's Coping Group
- Women 65+ Discussion Group



THE CWC TEAM: TINY YET FORMIDABLE

Ever since our inception, we have thrived as an organization driven by the passion and dedication of our volunteers. Their unwavering commitment fuels all our programs, making them possible and impactful. As we reflect on the year 2023, we proudly announce a remarkable total of...

7,647

Total Volunteer Service Hours

59

Total Active Volunteers

4,021

Drop-in Volunteer Hours

2,045

Group Leader Volunteer Hours

Volunteers

“

"The Women's Center is about women helping women. Making a human connection. Everything on the outside falls away: race, ethnicity, status, sexual orientation, background, experience, intelligence, income level, material wealth. What is left are women interacting with other women, supporting each other, learning and experiencing together. It's about giving and receiving resources, comfort, understanding, acknowledgment, space...It's about acceptance. [It is] genuine and complete."

-CWC Group Leader



“

"As a volunteer, I find fulfillment in the reciprocal relationships formed with our members. It's a constant exchange of knowledge, energy, and support, where I not only share what I know but also learn and grow alongside those we serve."

-CWC Volunteer

THE CWC TEAM & PARTNERSHIPS: TINY YET FORMIDABLE

All of this is made possible through the generous support of our funders, donors, and the dedicated efforts of our Board of Trustees. We extend our deepest gratitude to our community partners who work tirelessly alongside us, contributing to the success of our mission and the well-being of those we serve.

Anna B. Stearns Foundation
Anonymous
Bombas
Brookline Food Rescue
Bushrod H. Campbell and
Adah F. Hall Charity Fund
Cambridge Community Foundation
Cambridge Mayor's Office
Cambridge Savings Charitable Foundation
Car Gurus
City of Cambridge
Community Cooks
Cummings Foundation
Dignity Matters
Eastern Bank
Estelle Disch
Food 4 Free
Forest Foundation
Foundation M
Frederick E. Weber Charities Corp

Harvard Memorial Church
John Donnelly Trust
Marion L. Decrow Memorial Foundation
Mary Leno
Massachusetts Service Alliance
MIT Monologues
Paul Goularte
Prospect Hill Foundation
Rescuing Leftover Cuisine
Riverside Boat Club
Rochelle Ruthschild
Ruth Erickson
Second Chances
Spoonfuls
The 888 Women's History Project
The Morrison & Foerster Foundation
The Rosemann Family Trust
Town Fair Tire Foundation
Union Square Donuts
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Returning to 46 Pleasant Street: A Homecoming Journey

Thanks to an anonymous donor, our original 46 Pleasant Street house has undergone a complete renovation, now fully ADA-compliant, and amenities such as an elevator, wheelchair-accessible bathrooms, a dining room, library, an art room, and adaptable meeting spaces. After over two years of renovations, we joyfully returned in September 2023.

Every aspect of the space, from community-engaging common areas to member-focused rooms, has been meticulously crafted to provide a welcoming environment for all.

