

A photograph of two young women in a greenhouse. They are leaning over a white digital microscope on a table. The woman on the left has long blonde hair and is wearing a dark jacket. The woman on the right has long dark hair and is wearing a blue hoodie. They are both looking intently at the microscope's screen. On the table, there are some colorful flowers and a blue object. In the background, there are green plants with orange flowers and the structure of the greenhouse.

Actua 2025/2026 Annual Report

Unlocking Potential:
A New Generation of Canadian Innovators

actua

Youth · STEM · Innovation
Jeunesse · STIM · Innovation

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

TREVOR CUDDY, CHAIR

Director, Continuing Professional Development,
Temerty Faculty of Medicine, University of Toronto

MIKE MUNOZ, TREASURER

Partner, Deloitte

JAMES OLSON

Professor and Dean, Faculty of Applied Science,
University of British Columbia

RHONDA MOORE

Executive Director, Science and Innovation,
Institute on Governance

TYLER WISH

CEO, Stillmind Therapeutics

JENNIFER FLANAGAN, SECRETARY

President and CEO, Actua

ANTHONIA OGUNDELE

Founder and Executive Director, Ethos Lab

KATHARINE SMART

Pediatrician

RITESH KOTAK

Lawyer, Cybersecurity and Tech Analyst, Entrepreneur



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO AND BOARD CHAIR

At Actua, we believe every young person in Canada deserves the opportunity to explore, create and lead in STEM. This year, our work has supported youth in developing the full spectrum of skills they need to thrive, from scientific knowledge and AI skills to curiosity, critical thinking, problem-solving and online responsibility. By combining hands-on STEM learning with inclusive leadership development and ethical understanding, we are preparing young Canadians to navigate and lead in a rapidly changing world.

Innovation and inclusion have been at the heart of our efforts in 2025/26. Through valuable research, insightful roundtable discussions and participation in events on topics like AI and science culture in Canada and abroad, we are strengthening our current programs while launching new opportunities like our AI Ready Project. We continue to build programming that helps youth see themselves as capable leaders, equips them with both technical and human-centred skills and inspires them to apply STEM in ways that can benefit their communities today and their career paths in the future.

Equity and reconciliation remain guiding principles. Programs such as the Indigenous Youth in STEM (InSTEM), Black Youth in STEM, Go Where Kids Are, National Girls Program and the recently launched National Youth with Disabilities Program remove barriers for underrepresented youth. We are ensuring they are seen, valued and empowered to pursue their STEM passions.

Actua's impact also extends beyond our programs. By advocating and collaborating with partners across government, education and industry, we continue to advance systemic change, step by step, while welcoming new members to our national network and reaching youth in new communities across Canada.

We are proud of the progress we are making and energized by the possibilities ahead. Together, we are building a generation of curious, creative and passionate Canadians ready to make a lasting impact in Canada through STEM.



Jennifer Flanagan
CEO and President



Trevor Cuddy
Board Chair

OUR PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

NETWORK MEMBERS

Actua is proud to support and represent a network of over 40 members located at universities and colleges across Canada. All network members share the mandate of developing essential skills and confidence in youth in STEM.

BRITISH COLUMBIA

Simon Fraser University

Science ALIVE
Burnaby

Thompson Rivers University

EUReka! Science Program
Kamloops

University of British Columbia

Geering Up
Vancouver and Kelowna

University of Northern British Columbia

UNBC Active Minds
Prince George

University of Victoria

Science Venture
Victoria

YUKON

Yukon University

YukonU Youth STEAM and Trades Program
Whitehorse

NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

Aurora College

Aurora Research Institute STEM
Outreach Program
Inuvik, Fort Smith and Yellowknife

NUNAVUT

Nunavut Research Institute

Simply Science
Iqaluit

ALBERTA

NorQuest College

Indigenous House of Learning
Edmonton

Red Deer Polytechnic

Red Hot Science at Red Deer Polytechnic
Red Deer

University of Calgary

Minds in Motion
Calgary

University of Lethbridge

Destination Exploration
Lethbridge

SASKATCHEWAN

First Nations University of Canada

FNUiv Science Outreach Program
Regina

University of Regina

EYES
Regina

University of Saskatchewan

SCI-FI Science Camps
Saskatoon

MANITOBA

Brandon University

Mini University
Brandon

University of Manitoba

WISE Kid-Netic Energy
Winnipeg

ONTARIO

Algoma University

Waawaaskonwe Niigaan ISTEAM Program
Sault Ste. Marie

Canadore College

First Peoples' Centre
North Bay

Carleton University

Virtual Ventures
Ottawa

Lakehead University

Superior Science
Thunder Bay

McMaster University

McMaster Engineering Community Outreach
Hamilton

Nipissing University

NUScience Explorations
North Bay

Ontario Tech University

Ontario Tech University Engineering Outreach
Oshawa

OUR PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

NETWORK MEMBERS

Queen’s University

Queen’s Engineering Outreach
Kingston

Sheridan

Youth Amplified
Oakville

Six Nations Polytechnic

Six Nations Polytechnic Secondary School
Ohsweken

Toronto Metropolitan University

TMU Engineering Outreach
Toronto

Trent University

TRACKS Youth Program
Peterborough

University of Guelph

Creative Encounters
Guelph

University of Ottawa

uOttawa Engineering Outreach
Ottawa

University of Toronto

Engineering Outreach
Toronto

University of Waterloo

Waterloo Engineering Outreach
Waterloo

Western University

Western Engineering Outreach Programs
London

York University

Science Engagement
Toronto

QUEBEC

Concordia University

Concordia Youth Engagement
Montreal

Musée de la santé Armand-Frappier

Programmes jeunesse
Laval

Polytechnique Montréal

Folie Technique
Montreal

Technoscience Mauricie, Centre-du-Québec

Génitruacs
Trois-Rivières

NEW BRUNSWICK

University of New Brunswick

Worlds UNBound
Fredericton

NOVA SCOTIA

Dalhousie University

SuperNOVA
Halifax

St. Francis Xavier University

X-Chem Outreach Program
Antigonish

NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Memorial University

Memorial Engineering Outreach
St. John’s



Each year at our National Conference, Actua honours a network member with the Actua Award for Excellence, recognizing outstanding commitment to advancing our shared mission and goals. In 2024, the award was presented to **Virtual Ventures** at Carleton University, and in 2025, to **UNBC Active Minds** from the University of Northern British Columbia.

OUR PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

OUR REACH

500,000

youth engaged
annually

600

communities across
Canada reached

Actua is leading a national movement to bring science, technology, engineering and math (STEM) experiences to young people across Canada. Working with a network of over 40 colleges and universities, we deliver transformational STEM learning to **500,000 youth** every year. The Actua network delivers programs in **600 communities** nationwide, in every province and territory, building essential career-ready skills and confidence.

We are deeply committed to reaching youth who need it most, including girls and young women, Indigenous youth, Black youth, youth with disabilities, those facing socio-economic challenges and young people in remote communities. Our goals are to boost youth STEM skills, increase the number of STEM graduates, break down barriers to STEM for equity-deserving youth and ultimately strengthen Canada's science, technology and innovation future.

Behind our national reach is a diverse group of youth leaders and instructors, including post-secondary students, high school volunteers and interns. Actua and its network hire over 1,000 post-secondary youth as instructors each year. After their experience, 93% say they have the skills and knowledge needed to succeed in the workplace and 75% feel better prepared to advocate for diversity in STEM.



OUR PROGRAMS

NATIONAL GIRLS PROGRAM

25,000

girls participate in all-girls programs each year

225,000

girls participate in other programs

Actua's National Girls Program (NGP) is a bold initiative addressing gender inequity in STEM. Now in its third decade, the NGP builds confidence, supports mental health and strengthens science and digital literacy, while offering girls meaningful exploration of topics like AI and online safety. Actua's all-girl programs welcome transgender girls, non-binary and Two-Spirit youth and it is worth noting that, in addition, Actua recognizes and supports the distinct program needs and partnerships for queer youth.



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN STEM

40,000

First Nations, Inuit and Métis youth reached annually

200

Indigenous communities



Actua's National Indigenous Youth in STEM (InSTEM) program is Canada's first national initiative dedicated to removing barriers to Inuit, Métis and First Nations youth participation in STEM. Led by Actua's Indigenous leadership team, InSTEM provides culturally grounded STEM experiences for Indigenous youth that build skills, confidence and pride in Indigenous Knowledge. InSTEM is a dynamic, non-linear model open to learners, educators and partners at any stage in their STEM journey, grounded in the understanding that Indigenous Knowledge is STEM knowledge.

OUR PROGRAMS

NATIONAL BLACK YOUTH IN STEM

10,000

Black youth reached
annually

Black youth are underrepresented in STEM, not because of a lack of interest or ability, but due to systemic barriers, stereotypes and limited access to role models. Launched in 2021, Actua's National Black Youth in STEM program creates tangible pathways for Black youth to pursue and thrive in STEM education and careers. Through culturally responsive camps, clubs, workshops and events, the program engages Black youth to build skills in science and technology, confidence and a more equitable future in STEM.



NATIONAL GO WHERE KIDS ARE

150,000

youth engaged
annually



Actua's Go Where Kids Are program brings STEM learning directly to youth who face barriers to participation, including newcomers, 2SLGBTQ+ youth, youth with disabilities and those in low-income, rural or remote communities. By partnering with organizations already supporting these youth, such as Family Resource Centres, immigrant-serving groups, BGC Canada and YM/YWCAs, among others, Actua and its network deliver tailored, accessible programming that addresses barriers like transportation, language and food insecurity.

OUR PROGRAMS

ACTUA IN THE NORTH

10,000

youth in Northern Canada engaged annually in community-based programs

Actua has been a trusted and valued STEM outreach partner for dozens of communities across the Northwest Territories, the Yukon, Nunavut, Northern Quebec and Labrador. Actua's Outreach Team and network members engage youth in hundreds of school workshops throughout the year and through summer camps. Programming includes customized content that showcases Northern science, Traditional Knowledge and connects to Northern economic development opportunities.



NATIONAL EDUCATOR PROFESSIONAL LEARNING PROGRAM

10,000

educators engaged annually



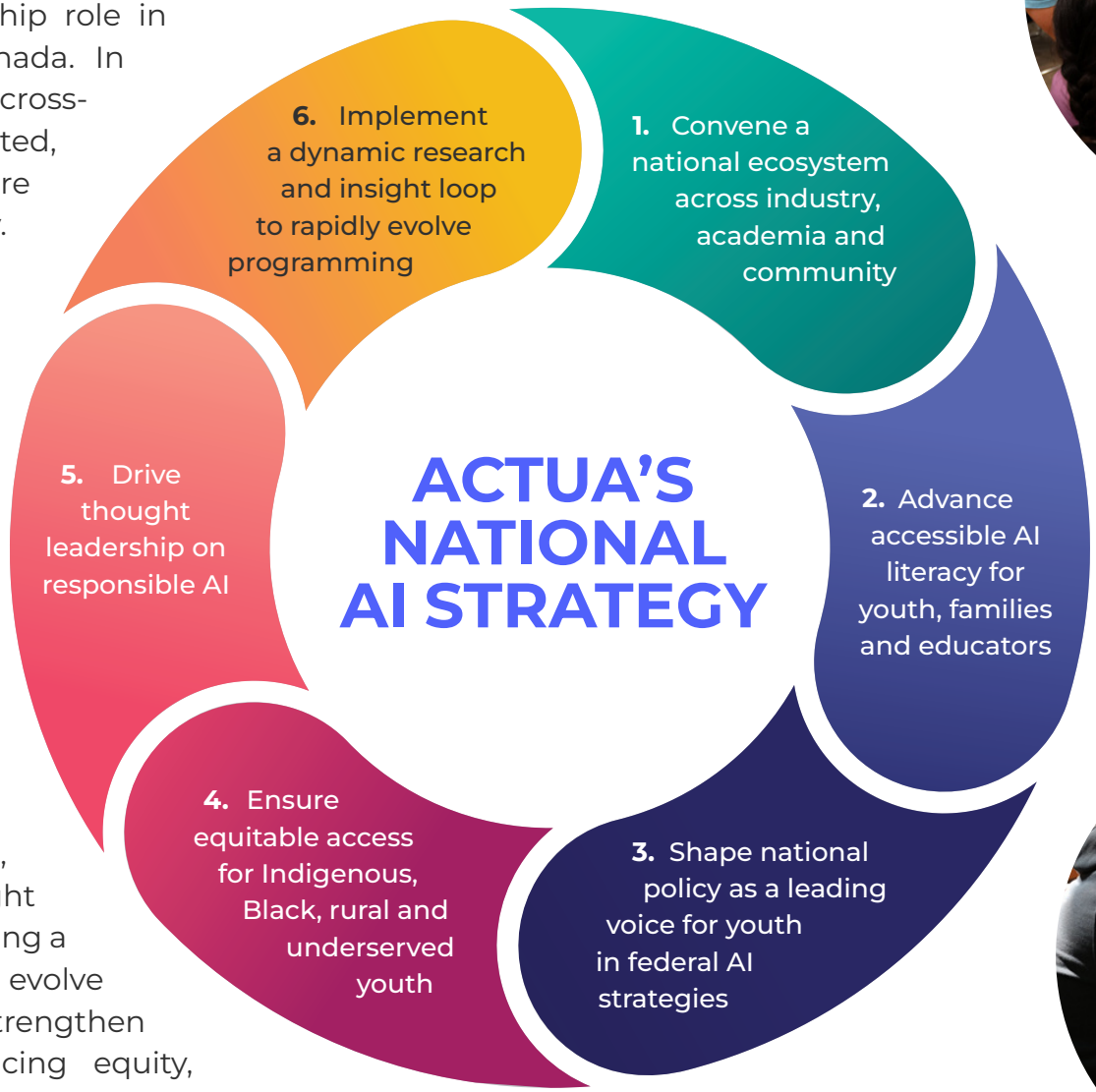
Actua provides educators, including K-12 pre-service and classroom teachers, administrators and post-secondary faculty members with professional development opportunities and resources designed to enhance learning outcomes and equip youth with the latest, most in-demand STEM skills. This includes digital skills and AI-readiness, robotics, cybersecurity, digital citizenship and engineering design/design thinking.

OUR PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

ACTUA'S NATIONAL AI STRATEGY: HELPING YOUTH THRIVE IN AN AI-DRIVEN WORLD

Actua is playing a critical national leadership role in advancing AI learning and literacy in Canada. In 2025–2026, we focused on mobilizing cross-sector partners and driving a coordinated, pan-Canadian approach to ensure youth are prepared to succeed in an AI-driven economy. With strong backing from leading industry partners, including Microsoft Elevate, Actua is helping position Canada as a global leader in inclusive AI talent development.

Our strategy is anchored in six interconnected pillars that create a reinforcing cycle of research, advocacy and action: convening a national ecosystem across industry, academia and community; advancing accessible AI literacy for youth, families and educators; shaping national policy as a leading voice for youth in federal AI strategies; ensuring equitable access for Indigenous, Black, rural and underserved youth; driving thought leadership on responsible AI; and implementing a dynamic research and insight loop to rapidly evolve programming. Together, these pillars strengthen Canada's AI talent pipeline while advancing equity, innovation and global competitiveness.



OUR PROGRAMS AND IMPACT

ACTUA'S NATIONAL AI STRATEGY

ADVANCING AI LITERACY AND DIGITAL SKILLS

Actua's AI Ready Project, launched in 2025, delivers hands-on AI learning through workshops, clubs and camps for youth, alongside training and resources for educators and caregivers. The program builds foundational AI knowledge, explores ethical implications and develops practical skills for application across sectors ensuring young people are prepared for AI-powered futures. Supported by **Microsoft Elevate** and the Government of Canada's CanCode 4.0 program, AI Ready is a cornerstone of Actua's national AI strategy.

Complementing this work, Actua's Cyber Smart Education Project equips youth with the skills to navigate the digital world safely and responsibly. Through a focus on cybersecurity, digital citizenship and countering misinformation, youth build the critical thinking skills needed to assess online content and mitigate digital risks. In 2025, Actua also contributed to national efforts to combat misinformation and partnered on research addressing the harms of gendered disinformation resulting in the development of resources to support youth, families and educators.

DRIVING NATIONAL THOUGHT LEADERSHIP AND ECOSYSTEM ALIGNMENT

In December 2025, Actua partnered with Microsoft Elevate to host a high-profile national fireside chat in Ottawa with Brad Smith, Microsoft's Vice Chair and President. Moderated by CEO Jennifer Flanagan, the discussion underscored the urgency of AI literacy as a foundational competency for Canada's workforce and economic competitiveness and reinforced the need for coordinated national investment and cross-sector collaboration.

Building on this momentum, Actua convened a national AI Literacy Ecosystem Building Roundtable in January 2026, bringing together leaders from industry, education, research and the non-profit sector. Focused on moving from strategy to implementation, the roundtable addressed the conditions required to scale AI education nationwide. This work is helping to align stakeholders, inform policy and program development and shape a cohesive national approach to AI literacy, positioning Canada for long-term leadership in the global AI economy.



“At its core, every datacentre we build and every AI capability we deploy is an investment in Canadians and their future. Because technology alone doesn't drive transformation, people do. That's why it's imperative to ensure that every Canadian can develop the skills needed to succeed in an AI era.”

Brad Smith
Vice-Chair and President, Microsoft

HIGHLIGHTS

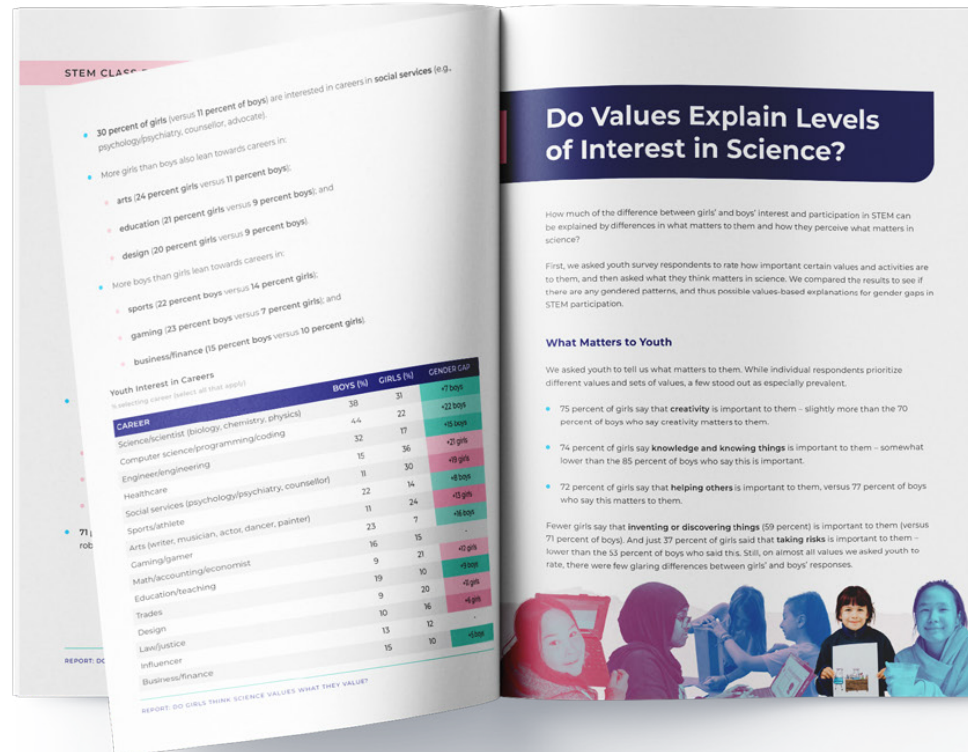
The Actua network is full of stories of success and impact and we highlight a few of those below.

Research

Actua is a recognized leader in STEM outreach research in Canada, advancing the field through a sustained commitment to research and evaluation that deepens our understanding of program impact and the evolving needs of the youth we serve.

This year, our work included a national AI survey of youth, parents and educators; a research partnership on gendered disinformation; insights from two National Girls Program roundtables; and the development of discussion papers on science culture in Canada. Collectively, these initiatives generate critical evidence that informs program design, strengthen impact and enhances engagement with equity-deserving youth while also contributing to national workforce development priorities, strengthening Canada's innovation pipeline and informing the evolution of STEM ecosystems.

You can read these reports at actua.ca/our-reach#reports.



National Youth with Disabilities Program launch

Launched in early 2026, the National Youth with Disabilities Program is designed to remove barriers to STEM participation and meaningfully engage disabled youth across Canada. By centring their perspectives and experiences, the program is advancing a more inclusive STEM ecosystem and contributing to lasting, system-level change in disability inclusion.

HIGHLIGHTS

Youth Delegations

Actua's youth delegations are year-long, next-step programs that engage cohorts of 20–30 high school and post-secondary students in sustained, virtual learning experiences designed to accelerate their pathways into STEM education and careers. These programs intentionally bridge the gap between interest and opportunity by building advanced STEM competencies, fostering peer networks and connecting youth with mentors and real-world applications that strengthen their proximity to future work and leadership in Canada's innovation economy.



BLACK YOUTH IN STEM DELEGATION

This delegation connects Black youth with shared interests in STEM and community impact, supporting their progression toward post-secondary education and careers. Through monthly virtual sessions, participants engage with Black STEM professionals on topics such as AI readiness, financial literacy and creative coding with the goal of gaining exposure to career pathways, building critical future-ready skills and developing networks that increase their access to opportunities within Canada's innovation and workforce ecosystems.

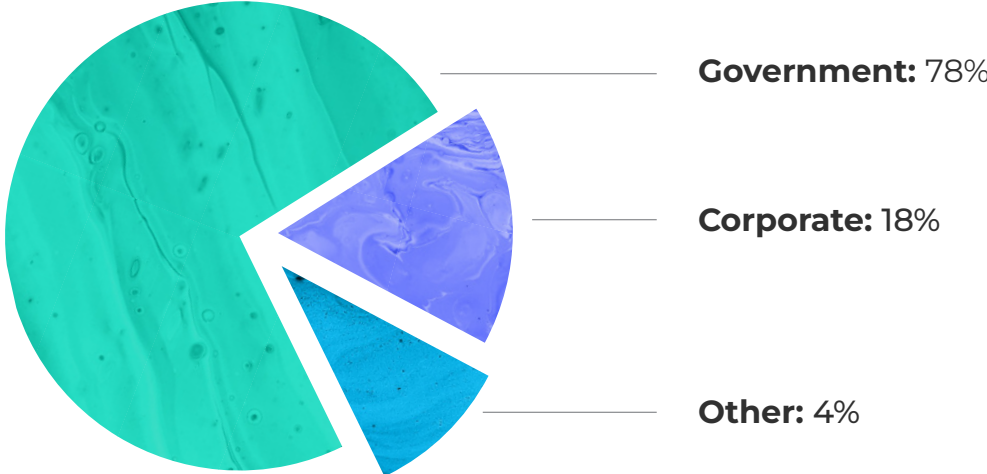
INDIGENOUS YOUTH IN STEM (INSTEM) DELEGATION

Launched in 2021, this delegation supports Indigenous youth in advancing along their STEM pathways through monthly virtual sessions that integrate STEM skill-building with leadership development. Grounded in Indigenous worldviews, the program creates space for meaningful connections between Indigenous Knowledge and Western science. Through mentorship from Indigenous professionals, Elders and Knowledge Holders, participants explore how their identities, cultures and interests in STEM can inform their education and career journeys, while contributing to more inclusive and diverse STEM systems.

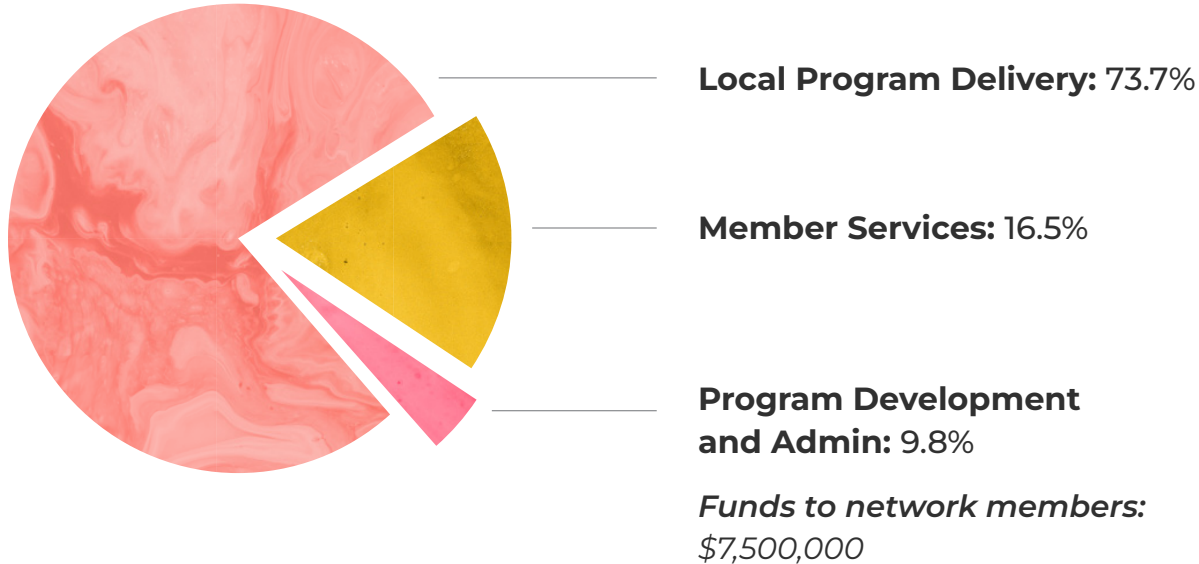
FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Actua directs the majority of its resources to the development and implementation of local programs. In 2025, Actua’s operating budget was \$15.2 million, with 78% coming from government sources. Corporate sector partners contributed 18%, while the remaining 4% came from other sources, including donated goods and interest on investments. This does not include the local operating budgets of our 40+ network members.

BUDGET (REVENUE) — \$15,200,000

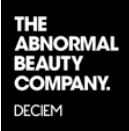


EXPENSES



SUPPORTERS

Funded by the
Government
of Canada



actüa

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Jeunesse · STIM · Innovation

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