

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT

2024  
2025

Advocacy and Grantmaking for Human Rights and Gender Equity



**W** THE FUND  
FOR WOMEN & GIRLS

## MISSION

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The Fund leads and unites the community through philanthropy and advocacy to ensure that women and girls have resources and opportunities to thrive.

## VISION

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Women and girls have equality and security, making our communities stronger and more vibrant for everyone. The Fund is a vital partner and leader, convening individuals and organizations with boldness, connectivity, and creativity around a shared commitment to gender equity and the well-being and self-determination of women and girls.

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## Letter from our **LEADERSHIP**

To our community of supporters,

Thanks to your incredible support, this year we strengthened our community-driven grantmaking and invested in focus groups, listening sessions, and needs assessments to better understand the experiences of women and girls in Chester County. This work informs our advocacy efforts, which are essential for creating lasting change. **Working together, we are integrating grantmaking and advocacy to address the root causes of the barriers women and girls face, bringing our community closer to true equity.**

Since 2005, The Fund has compiled four editions of the **Blueprint Report, the only comprehensive needs assessment for women and girls in Chester County**. A comparison of those reports shows modest progress in areas of education and workforce participation; however, income disparities for Black and Latina women have continued to grow. Rates of domestic violence and sexual assault remained stubbornly high. We also experienced significant regression in reproductive healthcare when the U.S. Supreme Court eliminated the constitutional right to abortion.

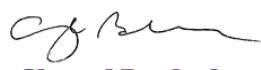
Because these challenges are urgent, this year we took a step further! The Fund conducted a series of focus groups, led by Dr. Chasity Riddick, to learn from women and girls of color in Chester County. Participants shared experiencing numerous barriers to accessing a quality education and a sustainable career. As a result of the focus groups, in addition to listening sessions with nonprofit leaders and discussions with our board, **The Fund identified priorities for systemic change to benefit women and girls in Chester County**, especially those most impacted by gender discrimination and disparities.

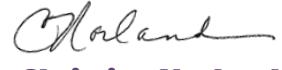
Throughout this report, you will see how The Fund and our grantee partners are working to address the challenges. From innovative approaches to increased mental health support to more culturally relevant services, **our community is responding**.

**We cannot thank you enough for your steadfast support, contributions of time and money, and advocacy on behalf of the women and girls in Chester County.** We invite you to continue this journey with us as we work to create opportunities for women and girls to not just survive, but to thrive!

**Hope is our greatest asset**, as we were reminded by the student who reflected on her time at The Bridge Academy, **“I’m not sure what’s next for me, but I’m starting to want more than just pain and memories.”**

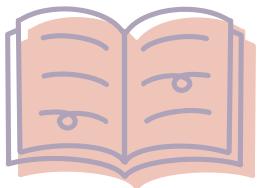
In solidarity,

  
**Cheryl Brubaker**  
Executive Director

  
**Christina Norland**  
Board Chair

## How we create change **OUR SYSTEMIC PRIORITIES**

### **EQUITY IN EDUCATION**



We envision a community where every student is empowered to thrive through equitable access to resources, opportunities, and support — including fair funding, high-quality instruction, inclusive materials, mentorship, meaningful representation, and a learning environment that removes barriers and uplifts each student's full potential.

### **HEALTH & SAFETY**



We envision a community where everyone has access to quality, affordable healthcare, including mental health care, reproductive and birthing care, and gender-affirming care, as well as overall safety and well-being, including safety from gender-based violence, intimate partner violence, sexual assault, and sex trafficking.

### **ECONOMIC STABILITY**



We envision a community where everyone has the opportunity to earn a living with equitable wages (as of June 2025 \$46.62/hour for one adult with one child), including access to quality, affordable childcare, safe and reliable transportation, and affordable housing.

## GRANTMAKING STRENGTHENING THE MOVEMENT

Thanks to our generous donors, The Fund provided **\$221,000 in grants to 22 nonprofit organizations** that provide crucial services for women and girls throughout Chester County.

The funding was distributed according to the following priorities:

1

**Women's Economic Empowerment**

2

**Gender-Based Violence Prevention**

3

**Access to Reproductive & Wellness Care**

## GRANTEE ORGANIZATIONS

- 4th Trimester Mommie
- A Child's Light
- Alianzas de Phoenixville
- Ann's Heart
- The Bridge Academy
- Crime Victims' Center of Chester County
- Domestic Violence Center of Chester County
- The Garage
- Home of the Sparrow
- LCH Community Services
- Maternal and Child Health Consortium
- Mighty Writers
- Mom's House
- North Star
- Open Hearth
- Parkesburg POINT
- Phoenixville Free Clinic
- Planned Parenthood of Southeastern PA
- Prepared to Thrive
- Project Libertad
- Safe Harbor
- Young Moms

“

*Your investment has **advanced health equity** and helped remove critical barriers to care—thank you for standing with us.*

# Turning vision into action: PROGRAMS THAT MOVE THE MISSION FORWARD

## YOUTH PROGRAMS YOUTH LEADING THE FUTURE

### Igniting the Next Generation of Changemakers

We're proud to share the ongoing success of our **student programs, where young advocates are stepping up as leaders**, shaping policy conversations, and directing funding to local organizations advancing gender equity.

#### Students Engage Directly with Legislators



Teen participants present on important issues at Advocacy in Action.

In celebration of International Women's Day, The Fund hosted Advocacy in Action, where participants engaged directly with Pennsylvania state legislators.

#### Students presented on key issues affecting women and girls, sharing personal stories and policy suggestions.

Elected officials, including Representatives Chris Pielli and Paul Friel, and Senators Katie Muth and Carolyn Comitta, participated in meaningful discussions, fostering a deeper understanding of these challenges and encouraging advocacy.

#### Students Meet with County Officials About Housing Crisis



Students have a real talk with county officials about the housing crisis.

Our CivicG+ program students, who had investigated the housing crisis in Chester County, met with county officials to **discuss homelessness, available services, and related policies**.

The students had the chance to ask questions, engage with experts, and suggest solutions to tackle the housing challenges in their community.

“

I'm truly grateful to The Fund for giving me the chance to keep learning while working on **making real, lasting change** that people can feel on a personal level.

– Emily E.

# Turning vision into action: PROGRAMS THAT MOVE THE MISSION FORWARD



Participants present their social issues project at our culminating event.



GAB participants award their grants to local nonprofits.

## Girls+ Advisory Board Awards: Grants to Local Organizations Supporting Women and Girls

The Girls+ Advisory Board (GAB) has been instrumental in the philanthropic work of The Fund for 20 years, **awarding over \$400,000 to local organizations** that address key issues such as poverty, violence, and healthcare barriers for women and girls in Chester County.

This year, GAB members focused on **education, childcare, and housing access**. After site visits and interviews, they selected seven effective organizations to receive grants.

## GAL(A) Celebration: A Night to Honor Youth Leadership

In March, The Fund **celebrated the accomplishments of the GAB and CivicG+ programs** at the GAL(A) event held at The Farmhouse, People's Light in Malvern.

The event honored the hard work and dedication of these young changemakers, highlighting the difference they've made in the lives of women and girls in Chester County.

“Your support directly contributed to **dismantling generational cycles of poverty**, fostering economic empowerment, and building a more sustainable and inclusive future for women and girls across Chester County.”

– Nonprofit Grantee

# Turning vision into action: PROGRAMS THAT MOVE THE MISSION FORWARD

## COMMUNITY-LED ADVOCACY IN ACTION

**SEE THE  
SUMMARY  
REPORT HERE**



Throughout 2024 and 2025, The Fund led a series of **focus groups to listen to and learn from the experiences of Black and Hispanic women**, first-generation and immigrant women and girls, single mothers, and teens in Chester County. The focus groups **explored barriers to opportunity** and access to education, mental health care, childcare, housing, language access, and more.

Their voices shed light on the challenges they face every day, and on the changes needed to create more equitable opportunities and support systems. The project was completed by the work of The Fund's staff, board members, and volunteers under the direction of Dr. Chasity Riddick.

This report, along with our entire Blueprint series and numerous listening sessions, allows lived experience to drive policy action.



### 1 Financial Stability for Working Pennsylvanians



Most part-time, retail, and hospitality roles are held by women, especially Black and Latina women. These

jobs often provide little support during pregnancy, medical issues, or caregiving.

To address this gap in health, safety, and economic security, **we joined a statewide coalition lobbying for a state-run paid family leave program** that would be created by the passage of **the Family Care Act** (a bill that is in the PA House and Senate).

Alongside coalition strategies, The Fund is building a grassroots, volunteer-powered campaign with over 70 volunteers spreading awareness, distributing materials, enlisting business/community support, and contacting and meeting with legislators.



# Turning vision into action: PROGRAMS THAT MOVE THE MISSION FORWARD

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*I enjoyed going to Harrisburg as it made me feel like my voice made a difference and that all the little efforts add up.*

## Over the past year we have:

- engaged legislators to ask for their support,
- attended rallies in Harrisburg,
- spoken at roundtables for Representative Houlihan and Senator Collett, and
- motivated the Chester County Commissioners to sign a letter of support for a statewide paid leave program.

This next year, we will increase our efforts, building momentum for our advocacy group, reaching more constituents and legislators, and helping to organize statewide efforts to get the Family Care Act passed into law.

Our **paid leave advocacy group members participate in monthly virtual calls** that provide updates, action items, and answers to questions; write and call elected officials; receive timely updates about next steps; meet with legislators; and travel to Harrisburg to directly engage policymakers in the capital.

The beauty of this group is twofold: participants can self-select what action items they can do at any given time, and action items are supported by our Director of Advocacy and Policy so that **everyone can participate— even those who have no previous experience!**

## 2 Youth Civic Engagement

Started by students in The Fund's civic engagement program, the **Vote 16PA** program **aims to pass legislation that would allow 16/17-year-olds to vote in school board elections** here in Pennsylvania. Currently, 18 Chester County youth drive the work in this youth-led initiative.

During virtual meetings, **participants discuss the process of passing a law**, building coalitions, and next steps towards reaching our goals.



They then break into three subgroups:

- communications (documentation and social outreach),
- coalition (identifying partners statewide interested in passing this legislation), and
- research (focused on collecting data about lowering the voting age, legislation already under consideration in other states, and examples of how registration could work).

**Through collaborative work with other nonprofits, we will be engaging with young people around the county.**

# Turning vision into action: PROGRAMS THAT MOVE THE MISSION FORWARD

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## Empower Her Vote

Launched during the 100th anniversary of the 19th Amendment, **this initiative encourages civic engagement, especially in voter education, turnout, and advocacy.**

Our mural (completed 2020) in West Chester –at 119 E Market St– commemorates this history and continues raising awareness of our individual role in our democracy and the impacts it has on gender and racial equity.

The initiative focuses on education in all facets of civic engagement. Through **intentional outreach, communications, and educational events**, we share information about the importance of upcoming elections

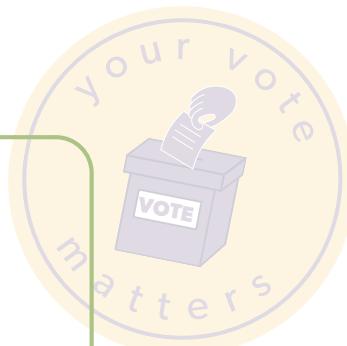


and what is on the ballot - something that can be very confusing! Our nonpartisan communications demystify this crucial opportunity we have to be active participants in our democracy.

Throughout the year, we provide different opportunities and create communications that foster year-round engagement in the political process. Engaging with our elected officials and ensuring our voices are heard is imperative in the fight for gender equity.

**Policy is one of the most important ways to make change, and we support that through education.**

**“For every failure in policy, a nonprofit is born**



# Impact highlights: WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MADE POSSIBLE

## ACCESS TO REPRODUCTIVE & WELLNESS CARE



- **2,216 women** received critical medical care, including cancer screenings, mammograms, pregnancy tests, and prenatal and postpartum care, all at no cost to the patient.
- **560 caregivers** obtained support for birthing and raising a baby, significantly improving long-term health outcomes for both mothers and babies.
- **80 women** accessed comprehensive postpartum care, preventing potentially disastrous health outcomes.

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of program participants.

### New Grantee Spotlight: 4th Trimester Mommie

**Ana**\*, a young postpartum mother, began experiencing concerning symptoms that were initially dismissed by healthcare providers. Leveraging our clinical expertise, **we successfully advocated for hospital admission and specialist consultation**, ultimately preventing what could have been a fatal case of sepsis.

In another critical intervention, we supported **Laura**\*, who continued experiencing heavy bleeding and large clots two months postpartum—symptoms that had been overlooked during routine follow-up care. **Our assessment and advocacy led to her return to the hospital, where physicians discovered a serious uterine hematoma** requiring immediate treatment.

Our educational efforts have also empowered women to self-advocate effectively. Two women in our program recognized dangerous blood pressure elevations consistent with postpartum preeclampsia—a leading cause of maternal mortality—and sought immediate medical attention, potentially saving their lives.

“Last year, **we launched a community-based birth doula initiative**, the first of its kind in Chester County, in partnership with Penn Medicine Chester County Hospital. In addition, we are working with West Chester University to offer a birth doula certification.

—Maternal & Child Health Consortium.



Local women and girls hold round-table discussions on important issues.

# Impact highlights: WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MADE POSSIBLE

## GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION

- 658 school-based programs were provided to 12,482 participants, to prevent sexual and gender-based violence.
- 1723 adults and children who had experienced intimate partner violence received counseling and support for obtaining legal protections.
- 40 adults and 55 children received emergency shelter. More than 90% of those individuals reported a renewed sense of hope and ability to access the resources and support they needed.
- 5226 individuals received training and/or education in the prevention of, and intervention with, intimate partner violence.

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of program participants.

### Domino Effect

**Sarah's\*** ex-husband arrived at night, intoxicated and demanding to take their three children. She got him to leave and called the police. **Trained in lethality assessments, the officers identified the incident as high risk for future homicide.** They put Sarah in contact with the Domestic Violence Center for legal and counseling services. The police searched for the abuser and caught him as he was returning to Sara's home with a firearm. The lethality assessment training those officers received prevented what may have become a horrific crime.

Months later, this **Sarah**, who works as a nurse, **was the first care provider from her hospital to connect another victim of domestic violence to the services at the Center.** The effects of one police officer's training created a domino effect that saved multiple lives.



## WOMEN'S ECONOMIC EMPOWERMENT

- 124 single parents and children received ongoing rental assistance and case management services, preventing homelessness and supporting financial stability.
- 393 girls from Parkersburg, many of whom face instability, food insecurity, and neglect, received academic support, daily meals, topical discussions, internships, mentoring, and leadership training.

\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of program participants.

### Investing in Those We Serve

One of our most inspiring outcomes involves **Marisol\***, a young woman who first came to us as a Special Immigrant Juvenile Status (SIJS) client. Thanks to grant-funded legal advocacy and wrap-around support, Marisol **secured her SIJS relief and began rebuilding her life.** Motivated by her own journey, she joined our team as a case manager, where she now thrives—guiding other young women through the same process that once felt so daunting to her.

# Impact highlights: WHAT YOUR SUPPORT MADE POSSIBLE

- 13 young women and their 17 children received **free, quality childcare** in order to complete their education, including GED programs, technical training, and college degrees.
- 690 families with 1198 children received a total of 86,000 **diapers**, 160 **safe portable cribs**, as well as **personal hygiene products**.
- 163 young mothers received resources to help them complete high school, pursue a GED, or enroll in educational program.
- 265 Coatesville-area families (representing 1,275 individuals) received **diapers**, **wipes**, **fresh and pantry food items**, household products, and holiday items.
- 406 Coatesville-area female students gained social-emotional learning skills through age-appropriate **mental health programming**.
- 96 women participated in a Coatesville-area Mom's Club, gaining hope, connection, and strategies to overcome barriers with **improved mental well-being**.
- 56 women received 253 hours of professional support, including goal setting and life planning, transportation to medical and **mental health appointments**, court and family services support, as well as crisis response.



**Marisol** is excelling in her role, and **with our continued mentorship and resources, she plans to attend law school** so she can one day advocate for immigrant children just like herself.

Her story underscores the transformative power of this funding and the ripple effects of investing in those we serve—Project Libertad.



- 860 immigrant women received **economic empowerment** through programs such as English Learners & Leadership Academy and/or Trauma Counseling.
- 268 women and girls were provided with **Know Your Rights** training and education, equipping them with tools to assert their rights within the complex immigration system.
- 5 women and girls received **legal representation** in a total of 11 **immigration cases**, including asylum, Special Immigrant Juvenile Status, and T visa relief, increasing stability and safety for these young women and girls.
- 60 women representing a diverse population that includes women of color, individuals with disabilities, members of the LGBTQ+ community, and older adults received **shelter, community, support, and hope**.



**My biggest success was being able to buy a house with my mom!** My case manager helped me through many challenges. (She) provided a lot of advice and encouragement.

— North Star Client.

# Challenges: THE LIVED REALITIES THAT DRIVE OUR WORK

Despite the incredible work accomplished by this past year's grantee organizations, significant challenges continue to create barriers for these organizations and the people they serve. Lack of affordable housing, reliable transportation, anti-immigration policies, and the high cost of child care disproportionately affect women and girls—particularly in Black and Latina communities.

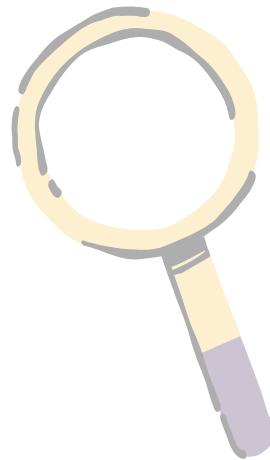
These challenges are not individual

shortcomings; they are the result of longstanding inequities and the absence of effective policies that respond to the needs of the community. We've learned from our grantees that these needs are shifting quickly, and meeting them requires support from every angle: **direct services, grassroots leadership, and advocacy that pushes for policy changes.** This is why your continued partnership is critical. Your support makes this holistic approach possible.

## HOUSING:

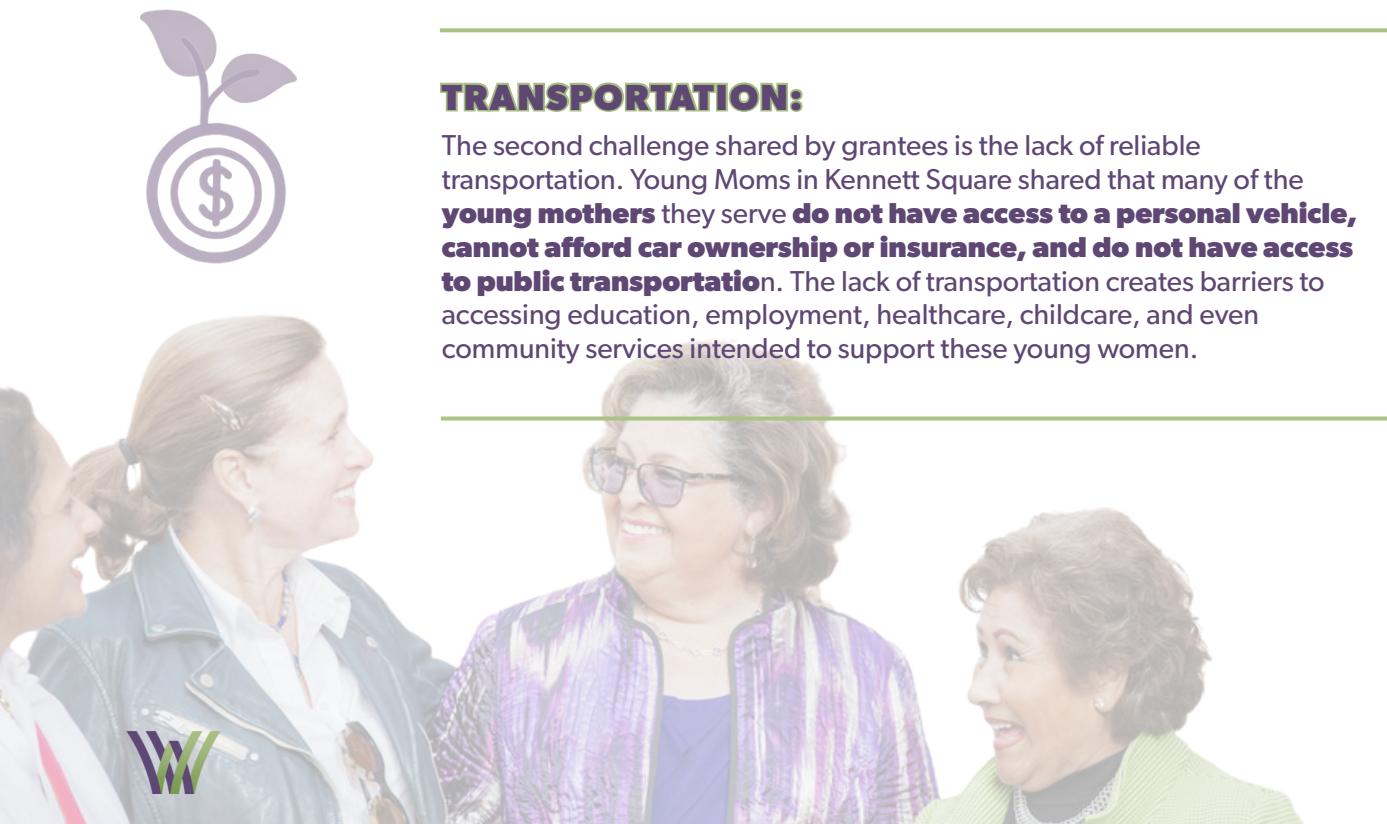
The lack of affordable housing, cited by most grantees, not only threatens housing stability, but also impacts safety, physical and mental health of both women and their children. The Domestic Violence Center named housing as the biggest barrier for their clients, noting that **domestic violence is the leading cause of homelessness among women and children in the United States.**

Parkesburg Point noticed a trend of housing instability, which creates significant stress for students, making it difficult for them to consistently attend school and focus on education. The Phoenixville Free Clinic reflected on how the social determinants of health, including housing, remain difficult for medical providers to address, noting that "after expending funds on basic essentials like housing and food, many of our patients simply cannot afford to address medical issues, no matter how debilitating." North Star and Safe Harbor emergency shelter both experienced a significant increase in need over the past year, exceeding capacity.



## TRANSPORTATION:

The second challenge shared by grantees is the lack of reliable transportation. Young Moms in Kennett Square shared that many of the **young mothers** they serve **do not have access to a personal vehicle, cannot afford car ownership or insurance, and do not have access to public transportation.** The lack of transportation creates barriers to accessing education, employment, healthcare, childcare, and even community services intended to support these young women.



# Challenges: THE LIVED REALITIES THAT DRIVE OUR WORK

## IMMIGRATION:

Our grantee organizations assisting immigrant women and children have also experienced challenges to their work, including **loss of government funding for basic medical needs and increased anti-immigrant racism**, which has created an even more hostile climate for immigrant communities and those who serve them. Project Libertad shared how this environment has increased fear and vulnerability among the women and girls they serve.

## IMPACT STORY:

### Supporting Immigrant Families at Alianzas

When **Luisa's\*** husband was snatched and deported, it was devastating for her and her children. Within just one week, they started facing financial hardships and risk of homelessness.

Unfortunately, area shelters are not allowed to accept immigrant families even when they have vacancies. **Alianzas staff put out a call to neighborhood allies and were able to prevent homelessness for them.**

While still heartbroken, Luisa and her children remain in their home, huddled tightly together, while **we support them with our Food & Essentials Program and mediation services.**



\*Names have been changed to protect the confidentiality of program participants.

## CHILD CARE:

Finally, child care centers are facing an ongoing staffing shortage due to high educational requirements and low pay relative to those requirements. For example, **Pennsylvania child care teachers earn \$29,480 compared to kindergarten teachers who earn \$68,670, even though in many cases they have the same degree.** Across the state, more than 25,000 children were unable to access childcare due to staffing shortages. Mom's House in Phoenixville, which provides free childcare for young mothers pursuing their education, reported similar challenges limiting the number of women and children they were able to help this year. Fortunately, as of June 2025, they were able to obtain full staffing and maximize their space to serve more families.

# Financial Overview

## FUNDING THE WORK THAT DRIVES CHANGE

### FINANCIAL REPORT

#### SUMMARY

	Revenue	Expenses	Net Assets & Liabilities
FY24	\$719,654	\$770,777	\$5,321,604
FY25	\$855,792	\$798,189	\$5,698,681

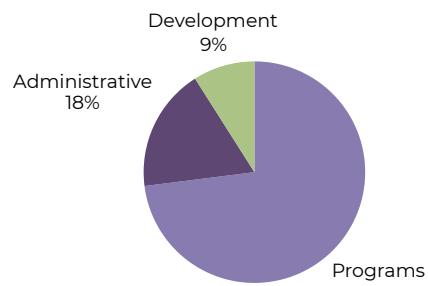
EXPENSES	FY25	FY24
Grants Awarded	\$221,000	\$244,500
Programs	\$358,402	\$314,520
Management	\$144,295	\$145,738
Development	\$74,492	\$66,019
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$798,189</b>	<b>\$770,777</b>

REVENUE		
Contributions	\$485,260	\$455,029
Investment Income	\$259,608	\$244,493
Other	\$7,048	\$20,132
Employee Retention Credit	\$103,876	\$0
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$855,792</b>	<b>\$719,654</b>

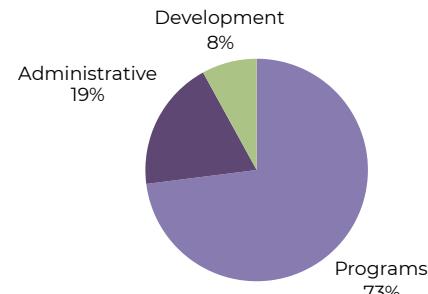
ASSETS	FY25	FY24	LIABILITIES	FY25	FY24
Current	\$644,988	\$644,988	Current	\$44,074	\$33,117
Investments	\$5,018,278	\$5,018,278	Right of Use Lease Obligations	\$32,861	\$58,726
Other	\$35,415	\$35,415	Net Assets	\$5,621,746	\$5,229,761
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$5,698,681</b>	<b>\$5,698,681</b>	<b>Total Net Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>	<b>\$5,698,681</b>	<b>\$5,321,604</b>

#### Percentage Breakdowns

##### FY25



##### FY24



\*Numbers Are Unaudited

# The Fund's Team: THE PEOPLE BEHIND THE MISSION

## ★ BOARD MEMBERS:

- Christina Norland, **Chair**
- Sandra Donahue, **Vice Chair**
- Maxine Cuffe, **Treasurer**
- Ingrid Tomlinson, **Secretary**
- Sonal Gandhi
- Lacey Layberger
- Christine Lowthert
- Cheryl Miles
- Ashley Orr
- Marisol Perez
- Chasity Riddick
- Danielle Ruttman
- Marilyn Sheils
- Bhuvana Sundaresan
- Michelle Wade
- Barbara Jordan, Honorary Chair

## ★ STAFF:

- Cheryl Brubaker, **Executive Director**
- Andrea Blue, **Director of Development & Engagement**
- Blake Emmanuel, **Director of Advocacy & Policy**
- Brandon Szerenyi, **Director of Operations**
- Whitney Hallman, **Communications Associate**





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  @thefundchesco

 The Fund for Women and Girls



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