

ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2023
1.01-12.31

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

2

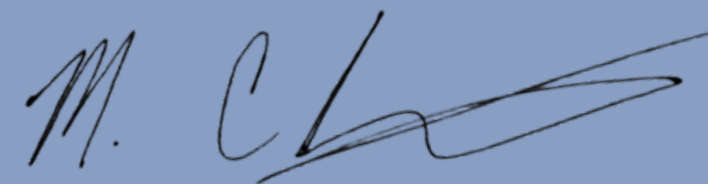
Amidst a year marked by dynamic growth, transformation, and a steadfast commitment to meeting the pressing needs of our community, I am honored to present HOPE's 2023 Annual Report. This report celebrates the work of HOPE Fair Housing Center and its partners that have helped to further fair housing across the State of Illinois. Our work has been marked by new endeavors and legal actions challenging the status quo, all led by a growing staff of talented housing justice advocates. I'm proud to showcase the diligent efforts of our team, Board, and partners. However, this is also demonstrative of the level of need that our communities have for advocacy fighting back against housing discrimination. 2023 saw a record number of fair housing complaints, which means that as much as we've accomplished and as far as we have come, the work is long from over.

At HOPE, we are committed to creating greater housing opportunities for all. We do this through advocacy, outreach, enforcement, education, and policy change. I'd like to thank our many funders and donors that make our work possible, including the US Department of Housing and Urban Development, DuPage County, the City of Aurora, Zillow Group, National Association of REALTORS, and everyone who has generously supported us.

Use the sidebar by clicking on a section to easily navigate the report!

As we look forward to 2024, we plan to continue serving the public with existing programming and will be building a new grantmaking program designed to provide financial support to create or preserve homeownership opportunities by investing funds provided to HOPE through fair housing settlements.

Thank you for your support of HOPE Fair Housing Center's mission to combat housing discrimination and create greater housing opportunities for all.



michael chavarria
executive director



welcome

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

3

At HOPE, our mission is to create greater housing opportunities for all.



intake



testing



policy change



investigation



outreach



education

about hope

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

4

The Enforcement Team had another busy year fighting discrimination throughout Illinois. In 2023, HOPE focused on developing new tools to connect with and support our clients. We were especially busy working with new fair housing protections for Source of Income which now cover all of Illinois.

This year, HOPE hired some new additions to the Enforcement team. In February, we added a new Fair Housing Specialist role, who played a pivotal part in nearly every enforcement project. Additionally, the Fair Housing Specialist played a key role in the development of several self-advocacy toolkits that HOPE developed, which included template letters, FAQs, and explainers that empower the community to fight for their rights.

In September, HOPE hired a new Intake Specialist. In the first few months at HOPE, he had already handled over 100 intakes! Additionally, the Intake Specialist also played an important role in developing a new online intake process. Beginning 2024, clients will be able to contact HOPE 24/7 by completing an [intake form online](#) through HOPE's website.

Lastly, HOPE had the pleasure of working with a UIC Social Work Intern, Though he has since graduated with his Master's in Social Work, he brought knowledge and insight throughout his

time at HOPE that lent itself to the organization's efforts in countless ways.

In 2023, HOPE staff processed a total of 458 intake inquiries from individuals, housing providers, and other organizations. The most commonly reported issues related to disability, source of income, and race. Disability and race discrimination continue to be common issues that HOPE staff address regularly. Source of income discrimination received a major increase in reporting due to new statewide protections that now protect all Illinois residents, tripling in amount from last year.

From these reports, HOPE initiated 75 investigations to root out discrimination. HOPE engaged in direct advocacy to support clients making reasonable accommodation requests, to support immigrants who do not yet have a

credit score, to educate housing providers on common policies that illegally deny applicants based on their source of income, and much more.

Finally, where advocacy was not successful, HOPE guided its clients through filing complaints with administrative agencies. In 2023, 8 matters made it to this point and were filed with the Department of Housing & Urban Development or the Illinois Department of Human Rights.



blake mitchell

*associate director of
enforcement*



enforcement

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

5

458 intakes

283

allegations of
fair housing
discrimination

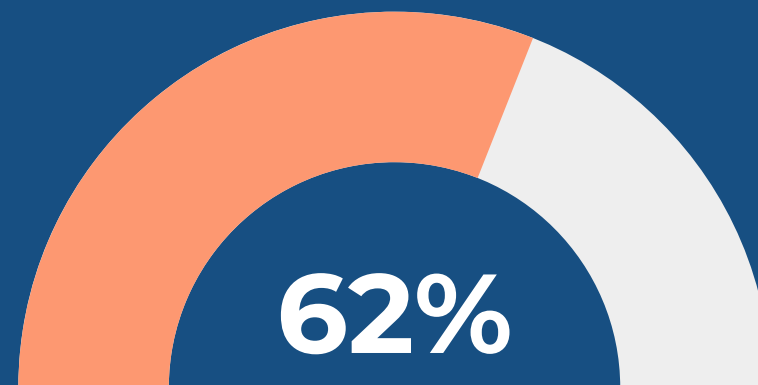
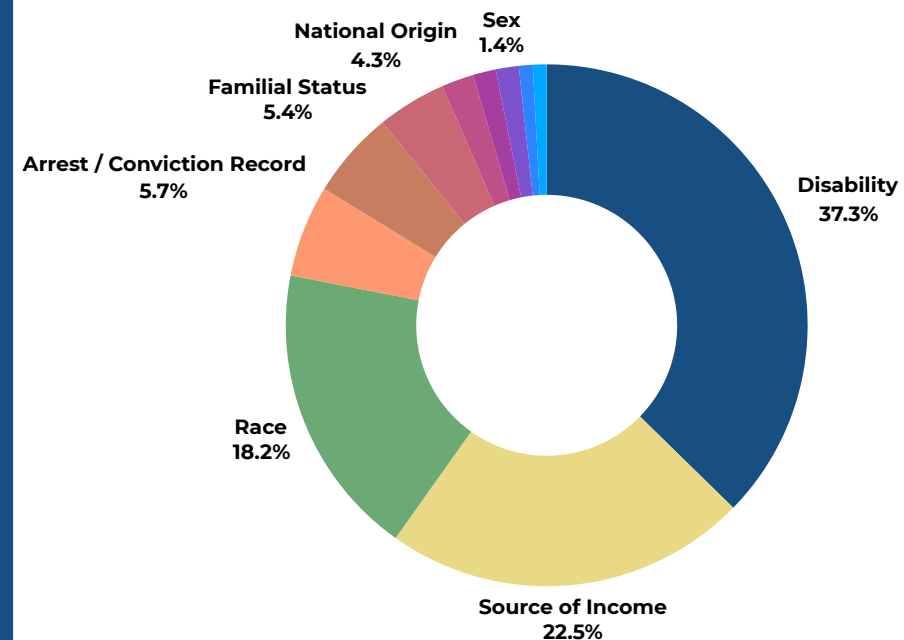
175

other housing
issues counseled
by HOPE

75

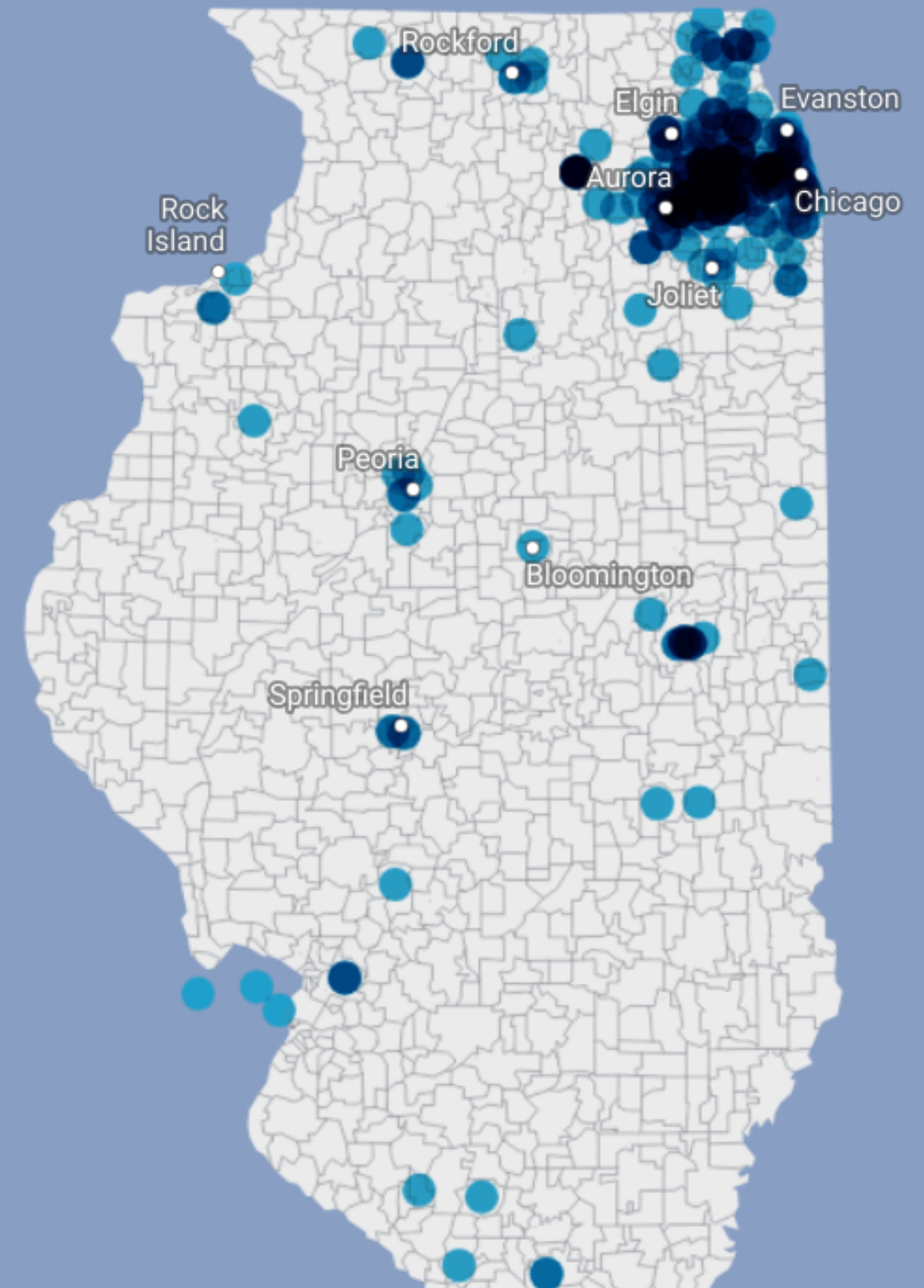
civil rights
investigations
to uncover
housing
discrimination

type of discrimination alleged



intakes alleging
rental discrimination

Intakes by Zip Code



welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

6

Case Highlight

Oak Park Apartments | July 2023

In July 2023, with the help of the ACLU, the ACLU of Illinois, and the National Housing Law Project, HOPE lodged a civil rights complaint with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) against one of the largest operators of rental housing in Oak Park, Illinois. Our complaint alleges that Oak Park Apartments' blanket "no evictions" policy discriminates against Black renters and Black women renters. HOPE additionally alleges that the practice of denying housing opportunities to applicants because they had some connection to an eviction case, perpetuates racial segregation. HOPE seeks to eliminate these harmful blanket policies and correct the unfair housing outcomes they've caused. This matter is still under investigation by HUD.



“

We can no longer ignore the consequences of these policies and the communities they harm.

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

7

Client Highlight

Source of Income Discrimination

In January 2023, HOPE began engaging in direct advocacy on behalf of clients experiencing source of income discrimination now protected under the Illinois Human Rights Act.

One of HOPE's first clients in 2023 was a voucher holder whose rental application was denied due to her income, as they were trying to enforce a minimum income policy. The property was in DuPage County, so prior to 2023, she would have been out of luck. Thanks to the new law, HOPE engaged directly with the housing provider and the advocacy was successful. The property recognized that the voucher would pay her entire rent and allowed her to move in without issue. The property also updated its minimum income policy to comply with the new law which removed barriers for future voucher holders.



**Learn more
about
source of income
laws in Illinois**

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

8

The Education & Outreach team has experienced exciting growth and change this past year! Our 2023 highlights are marked by a new team, new projects, and expanding our reach!

This year saw some exciting additions to the Education & Outreach team. We added a new Communications Coordinator role to help grow our digital reach, develop our brand, and add to our team’s overall capacity. Additionally, I had the honor of stepping into the role as the new Associate Director of Outreach. Having previously worked as our Outreach Coordinator, I am excited about the opportunity to expand our outreach efforts across the state and continue to foster relationships with partners in the fight to end housing discrimination.

In 2023, we visited several counties in Central and Southern Illinois to spread the word about fair housing and meet those impacted by housing discrimination directly. We are happy to announce that 12 new counties have been added to HOPE’s official service area, meaning that that more people now have direct access to advocacy and resources should they experience housing discrimination.

We’ve also been busy with some new projects, including our Striving for Equity project funded by HUD, which we began in Summer 2023 and will finish up in 2024. This 12-month project encompasses providing trainings, tools, and resources to the community on specific “emerging topics” in fair housing.

The E&O team hosted over 60 trainings this year, as well. In January 2023, Source of Income became a new protected class in Illinois, and we made it a priority to incorporate this new protection in all of HOPE’s trainings. We hosted trainings for housing providers, industry professionals, service providers, and community members alike to learn about these newfound protections for tenants, including rights for voucher holders or those earning anything other than traditional “wage-income”. In total, we reached over 4,400 people through our trainings and outreach events.

Lastly, our Conference, “HOPE For Housing: Meeting the Moment in Housing Justice”, was a resounding success! This was our first in-person event since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. We heard from our Keynote Speaker, Jim Bennett, Director of IDHR

and Steven Monroy, Director of Fair Housing at IDHR. We awarded Gianna Baker of the Chicago Area Fair Housing Alliance as our Fair Housing Hero for her outstanding work and embodiment of our key virtues, and we also recognized IL State Rep. La Shawn Ford and IL State Sen. Ram Villivalam as Fair Housing Legislative Champions for being pivotal players in the passing of the new Source of Income protection.

Overall, it’s been a busy year for this team, but I can’t wait to see what all this growth will bring to the department and HOPE as we head into 2024!



jocelyn rios
*associate director of
outreach*



**education &
outreach**

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

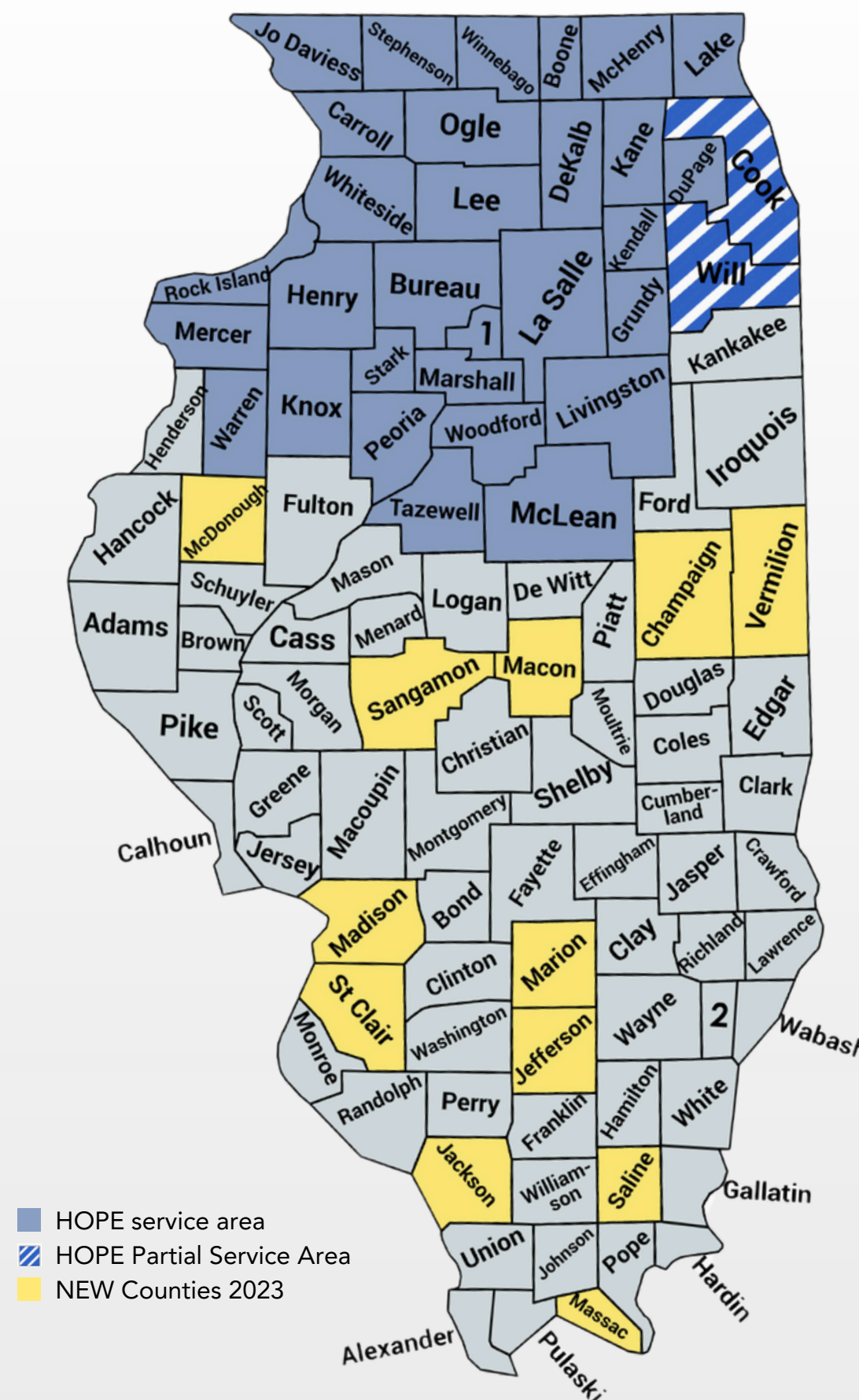
9

Expanding Our Reach

Growing Our Service Area

HOPE targeted specific counties in Central & Southern Illinois to help their communities fight against housing discrimination. During this outreach effort, HOPE hosted **21** trainings, and reached **287** individuals from community members, service providers and housing providers. We are proud to add the following counties to our official service area:

- Champaign
- Jackson
- Jefferson
- Macon
- Madison
- Marion
- Massac
- McDonough
- Saline
- Sangamon
- St. Clair
- Vermilion



welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

10

MLK Day of Service

On January 26th, HOPE hosted a virtual day of service honoring the contributions of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and highlighted his pivotal role in the fair housing movement. We welcomed high schools from across our service area to join us for the educational portion via Zoom and then offered a creative service project by providing the following prompt: What is a housing injustice problem you see and how can we resolve it? We asked students to either create a painting, take a picture, write a short poem or choose another method to complete their project. Some of the projects we received were used to create merch for our annual conference!

Striving for Equity - EOI Grant

In 2023, HOPE received the Striving for Equity grant from HUD to support fair housing Education and Outreach initiatives. Under this grant, HOPE began creating self-advocacy toolkits on emerging topics in fair housing which included: Eviction, Arrest/Conviction Records and Nuisance & Crime Free Ordinances, Source of Income and Appraisal. These toolkits provide a roadmap for individuals to advocate for themselves if they were treated unjustly in the housing process related to one of these topics. Though some of these topics are not explicitly protected under fair housing law, they largely impact already protected groups. Each toolkit will include Advocacy Letter(s), One-page Handout, Social Media Ads, a training on the topic and a video on your rights under these topics.

Stay tuned for the final products coming in 2024!



**Check out
our
toolkits!**

welcome
about hope
enforcement
education & outreach
financials
staff & board
thank you
11

Conference

HOPE For Housing: Meeting the Moment in Housing Justice

Our 2023 conference was an incredible success, especially being our first in-person event since the pandemic began in 2020. We convened at Riverside Receptions in Geneva to discuss how we, as advocates, can “meet the moment” in the context of our current world. We discussed crime-free ordinances, renters with previous evictions, appraisal discrimination, redlining, and more.

We were honored to hear from various speakers from Access Living, Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights, National Housing Law Project, Shriver Center on Poverty Law, the UIC School of Law and many others.

HOPE would would like to recognize, the National Association of REALTORS, the Illinois REALTORS Association, Zillow, Patricia Mathis, Soule, Bradtke & Lambert, Mainstreet Organization of REALTORS, Midland States Bank, Core Financial Outsourcing, Alton Jay Mitchell and Heartland REALTORS Organization for sponsoring our event.

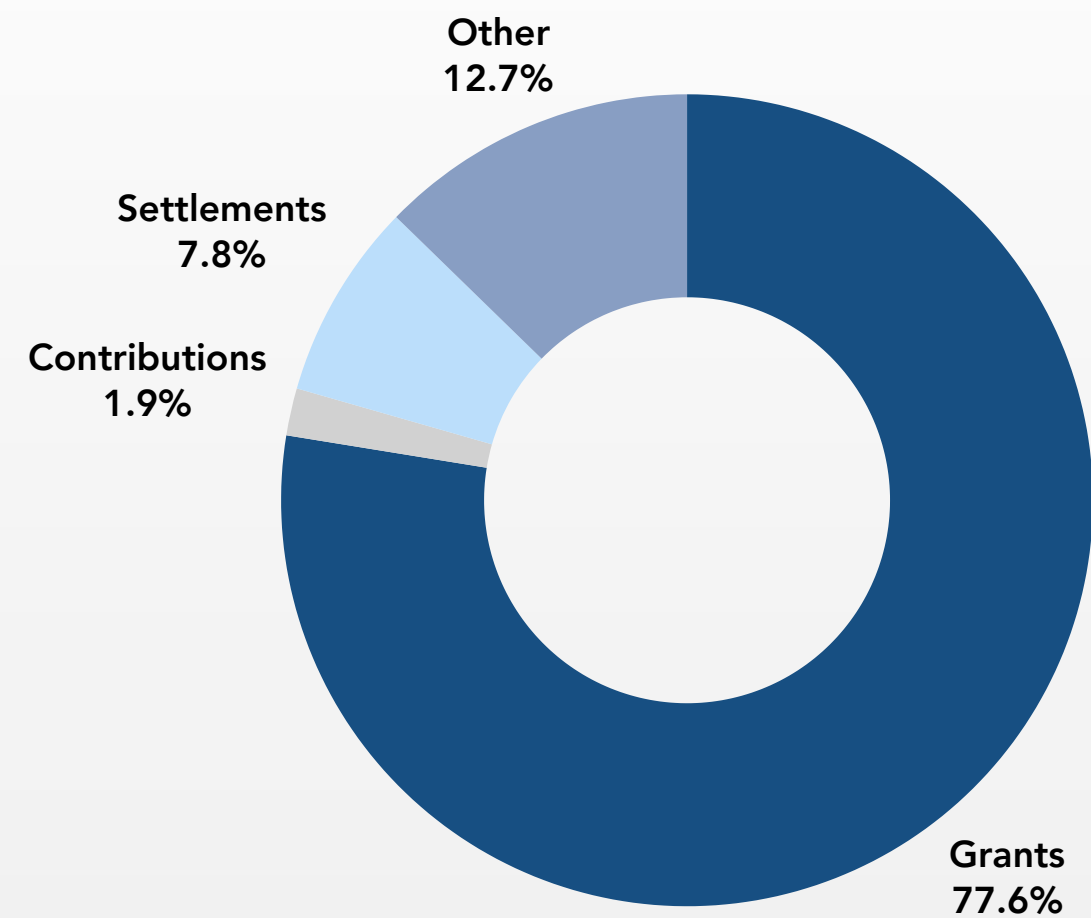
23 speakers



\$24,500 in sponsorships

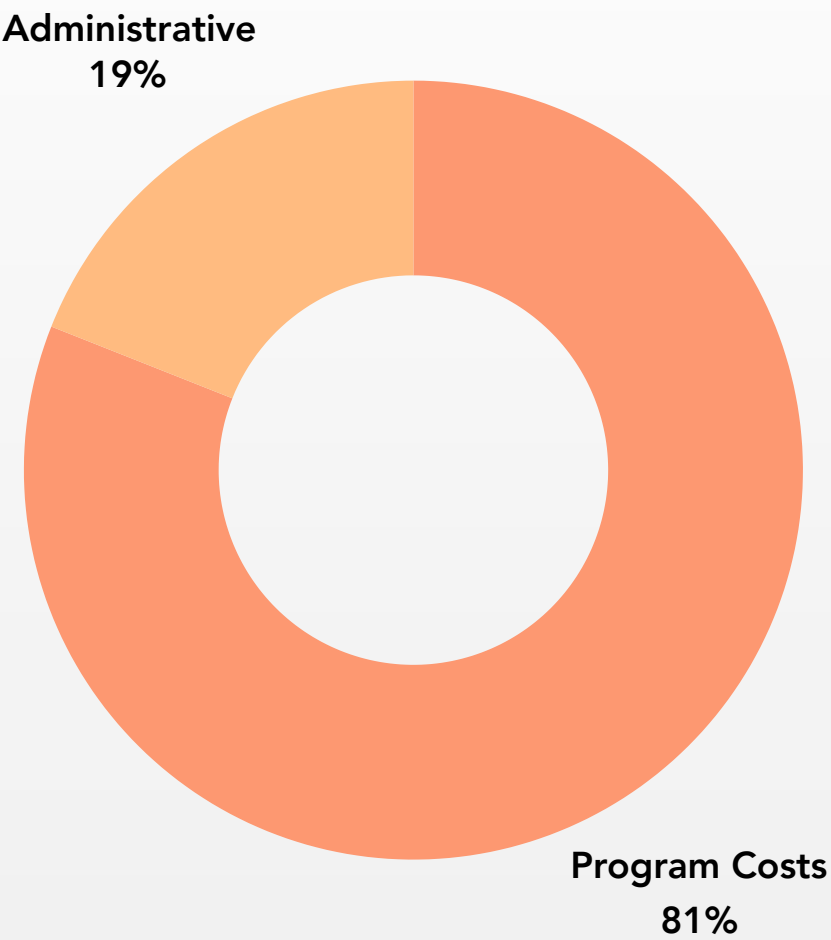
Awardees	
Fair Housing Hero Award	Gianna Baker, CAFHA
Fair Housing Legislative Champion	IL State Rep. La Shawn Ford
Fair Housing Legislative Champion	IL State Senator Ram Villavalam
Keynote Speaker	Jim Bennett, Director of IDHR

Revenue



\$980,679.00

Expenses



\$944,854.00

net assets 2022: \$2,704,976
net assets 2023: \$2,740,801
change to net assets: +\$35,825

2023 has been a year of growth for Team HOPE. We added 4 new team members, 1 intern, 2 brand new positions, and 2 new board members -- with plans to add additional roles in 2024. Our team is growing, which can only mean more possibilities in the ways we serve our mission.

Staff & Interns

- Michael Chavarria, *Executive Director*
- Josefina Navar, *Deputy Director*
- Blake Mitchell, *Associate Director of Enforcement*
- Jocelyn Rios, *Associate Director of Outreach*
- June Bishop, *Investigations Coordinator*
- Sasha Mothershead, *Fair Housing Specialist*
- Cameron Rapata, *Communications Coordinator*
- Jesus Gonzalez, *Intern*
- Charlie Morvay, *Intake Specialist*
- Isabel Anderson, *Outreach Coordinator*



Board of Directors

- Florentina Rendón, *President*
- Maria Padilla
- Michael Childress
- Andrea Juracek

staff & board

welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

14

Announcements & Updates

- Sasha Mothershead was hired for the role of Fair Housing Specialist in February.
- Florentina Rendón filled the role of Board President in April.
- Blake Mitchell assumed the role of Associate Director of Enforcement in June.
- June Bishop celebrated 12 years at HOPE.
- Cameron Rapata was hired as Communications Coordinator in August.
- Charlie Morvay was hired as Intake Specialist in September.
- Jocelyn Rios assumed the role of Associate Director of Outreach in September.
- Isabel Anderson was hired as Outreach Coordinator in November.
- Andrea Juracek joined the Board of Directors in November.
- Michael Childress joined the Board of Directors in November.

In Memoriam

HOPE recognizes the passing of Board Member Patricia Mathis (pictured bottom left) in November 2023. We celebrate her life and the legacy of advocacy she leaves behind.



welcome

about hope

enforcement

education &
outreach

financials

staff & board

thank you

15

You may have noticed some new and familiar faces on our team while reviewing this report. We couldn't be more enthused about the zealous, skilled, and compassionate team we currently have at HOPE - all working jointly to combat discrimination in the State of Illinois.

Our conference title this year speaks profoundly to our approach in executing our fair housing vision. We are "Meeting the Moment" every day by educating all on housing rights and responsibilities (both old and new), advocating for new policy changes that combat the unjust outcomes of antiquated and discriminatory systems, and expanding our reach to bring our services to counties previously underserved.

As committed as we are to fair housing, we are a small organizational team, and the success of our mission relies on our ability to work with a larger team - that of our community - that shares our values.

We have been fortunate to count on the contributions and support of funders, sponsors, community partners, fellow advocates, volunteers, and our Board of Directors.

Thank you for seeing our vision and lending your resources, time, and skillsets to help us continue our work in creating greater housing opportunities for all!



josefina navar
deputy director



thank you