



HOPE FAIR HOUSING CENTER
2024

Annual Report

January 2024 - December 2024

Welcome

Reflecting on 2024, a year defined by urgency and action, I’m proud to share HOPE’s Annual Report. Our team, partners, and board worked tirelessly to advance fair housing across Illinois—pushing boundaries, pursuing justice, and responding to a growing demand for our services.

In 2024, the nation faced a record number of fair housing complaints—an alarming reminder of how much work remains. Yet, HOPE launched bold new initiatives, expanded our impact, and laid the groundwork for a grantmaking program that will invest fair housing settlement funds into preserving and creating homeownership opportunities.

None of this would be possible without the support of our funders, donors, and community. We are especially grateful to HUD, DuPage County, the City of Aurora, Chicago Funders Together to End Homelessness, the Village of Oak Park, Western Suburbs Giving Circle, DuPage Foundation, Zillow Group, the REALTOR Association of the Fox Valley Association, Soule, Bradtke & Lambert, and every partner and individual who believes in our mission.

Thank you for standing with HOPE as we continue the fight for fair housing opportunities for all.



michael chavarria
executive director



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



intake



testing



policy change



investigation



outreach



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Enforcement

The Enforcement Team had another busy year fighting discrimination throughout Illinois. In 2024, HOPE staff processed a total of 394 intake inquiries from individuals, housing providers, and other organizations. The most reported issues were related to disability, source of income, and race, following the same trends from 2023. Our community continues to report high rates of source of income discrimination following the amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA) in 2023. The IHRA added immigration status as a new protected class in 2024, and HOPE began receiving these complaints as well.

From these complaints, HOPE initiated 55 investigations to root out discrimination. Our efforts included direct advocacy to support clients making reasonable accommodation requests and immigrants facing harassment from neighbors, as well as educating 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 such as the Department of Housing & Urban Development and the Illinois Department of Human Rights. HOPE filed 7 administrative complaints and assisted 7 clients in self-filing complaints. HOPE also filed one lawsuit in federal court, whose outcome is still pending.



blake mitchell

*associate director of
enforcement*



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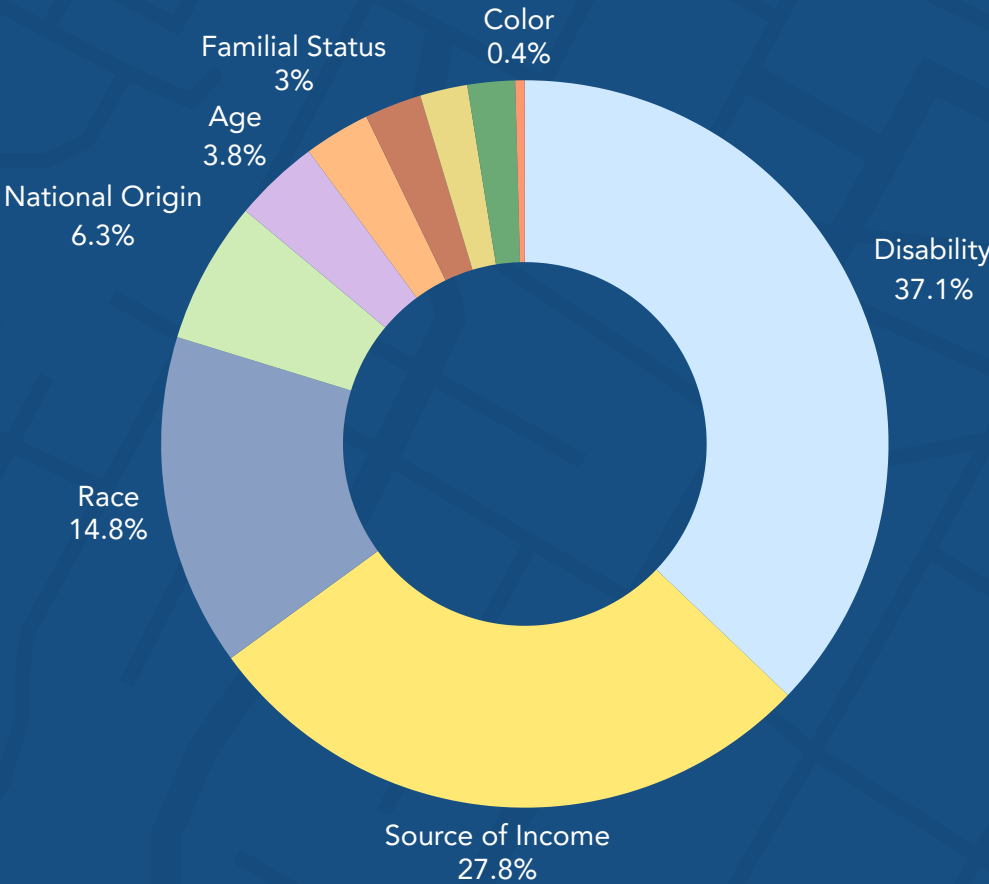
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Stats Overview

type of discrimination alleged



55
investigations

7
clients self-filed
complaints

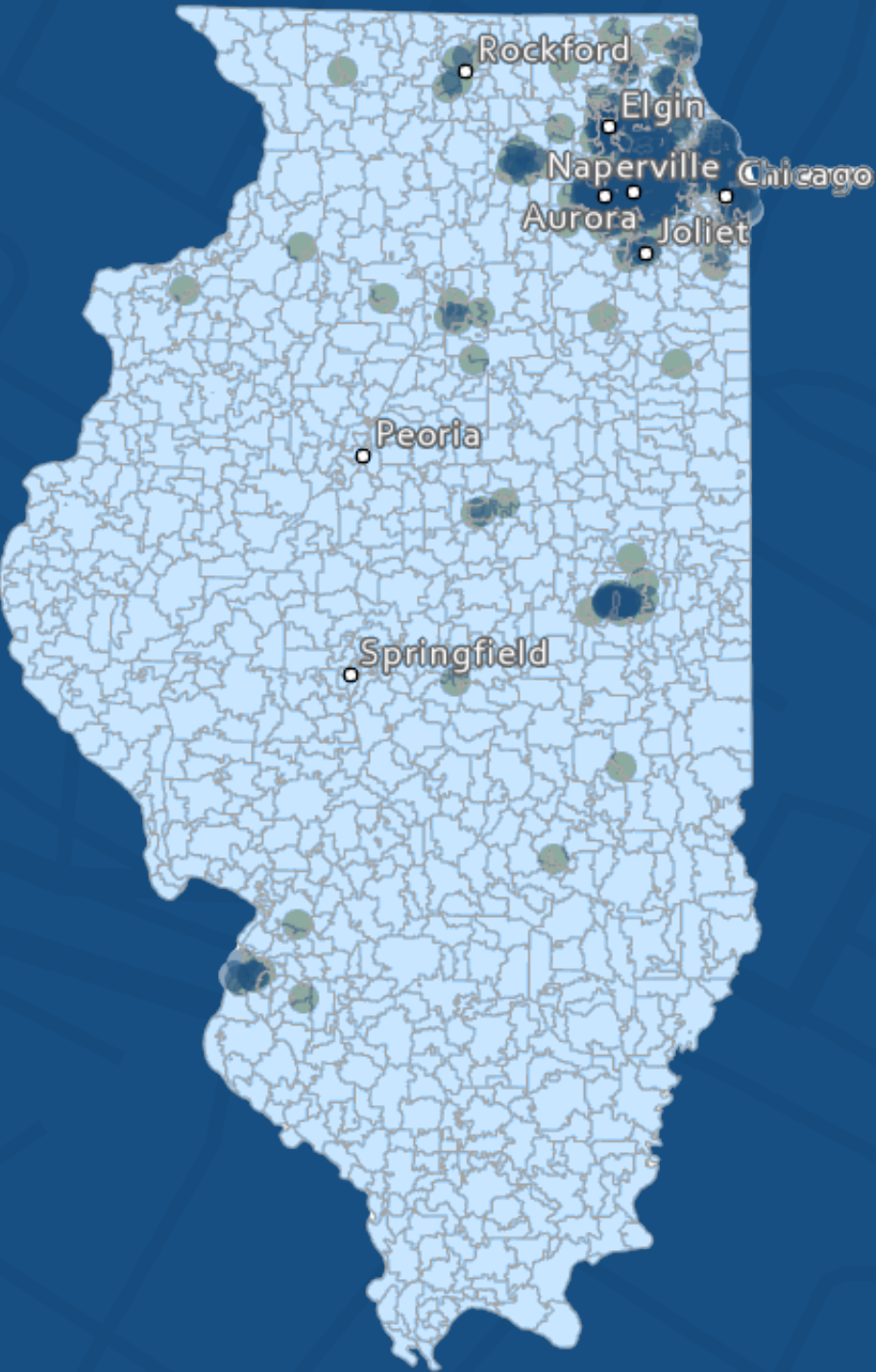
1
federal
lawsuit

7
administrative
complaints

394

intakes processed

intakes by zip code



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Case Highlight

Protecting Voucher Holders

In December, HOPE and four Housing Choice Voucher (Voucher) holders filed a class-action lawsuit against Hyde Park housing provider Mac Properties. We allege that Mac Properties systemically discriminated against Voucher holders by denying them applications, refusing tours, and steering them away from newer, more desirable units and towards older units lacking amenities. HOPE Fair Housing Center and Co-Plaintiffs are represented in this lawsuit by Chicago Lawyers’ Committee for Civil Rights and Hughes Socol Piers Resnick & Dym, Ltd.

Our investigation began in 2023 following multiple complaints about Voucher holders who were being denied access. Our team conducted an investigation of Mac Properties after receiving complaints from Voucher holders, which included several rounds of testing to determine whether the discrimination was systemic. Ultimately, our investigation uncovered evidence that Voucher holders are systematically deterred from applying for or acquiring the housing of their choice at Mac Properties.

This lawsuit comes after Source of Income became a protected class in Illinois more than two years ago – showing that, despite policy change, discrimination persists in our communities. Additionally, the vast majority of Voucher holders in Chicago are Black, creating a discriminatory effect based on race.

Our priority is ensuring that Voucher holders – and everyone else, for that matter – have the opportunity to access housing in the place of their choosing, free from illegal barriers.

Stay tuned for updates to this case in the coming year.



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Education & Outreach

In 2024, the Education & Outreach team expanded its efforts, participating in 54 events and reaching 3,706 people across Illinois through fair housing trainings and resource events. We also produced several deliverables under our HUD Education & Outreach Initiatives: Striving for Equity (SFE), which wrapped up in the Summer, and Advancing Racial Equity (ARE), which will end in 2025.

Under our SFE grant, HOPE launched four self-advocacy toolkits on eviction, appraisal bias, arrest & conviction records, and source of income protections. Meanwhile, our ARE grant focuses on updating our 2013 Public Housing Agency Manual, creating a tailored Arrest & Conviction Toolkit for public housing applicants, and producing a testimonial video. Additional funding from the Western Suburbs Giving Circle and the Village of Oak Park supported outreach on focused fair housing topics.

Our annual HOPE for Housing: Envisioning Equity conference welcomed 117 attendees to Geneva, IL. Our conference would not have been possible without the support of our panel speakers, sponsors, and attendees.

Together, we are striving for equity—one training, one resource, one relationship at a time.



jocelyn rios
associate director of
outreach



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Conference

HOPE For Housing: Envisioning Equity

Our 2024 Conference was our best one yet (though we may be biased to say so). 117 advocates, service providers, industry professionals, and community members came together at Riverside Receptions in Geneva to discuss equitable approaches to fair housing and how to realize that vision.

We heard from a slew of experts including our keynote speaker, Kimberly Merchant, as well as speakers from Access Living, IDHR, Woodstock Institute, Shriver Center, and more.

Sharon Legenza of Housing Action Illinois was presented with our Fair Housing Hero Award.

We thank our sponsors, including National Association of REALTORS, Zillow, REALTORS Association of the Fox Valley, and more, for helping us facilitate such an incredible and productive event.



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Key Projects

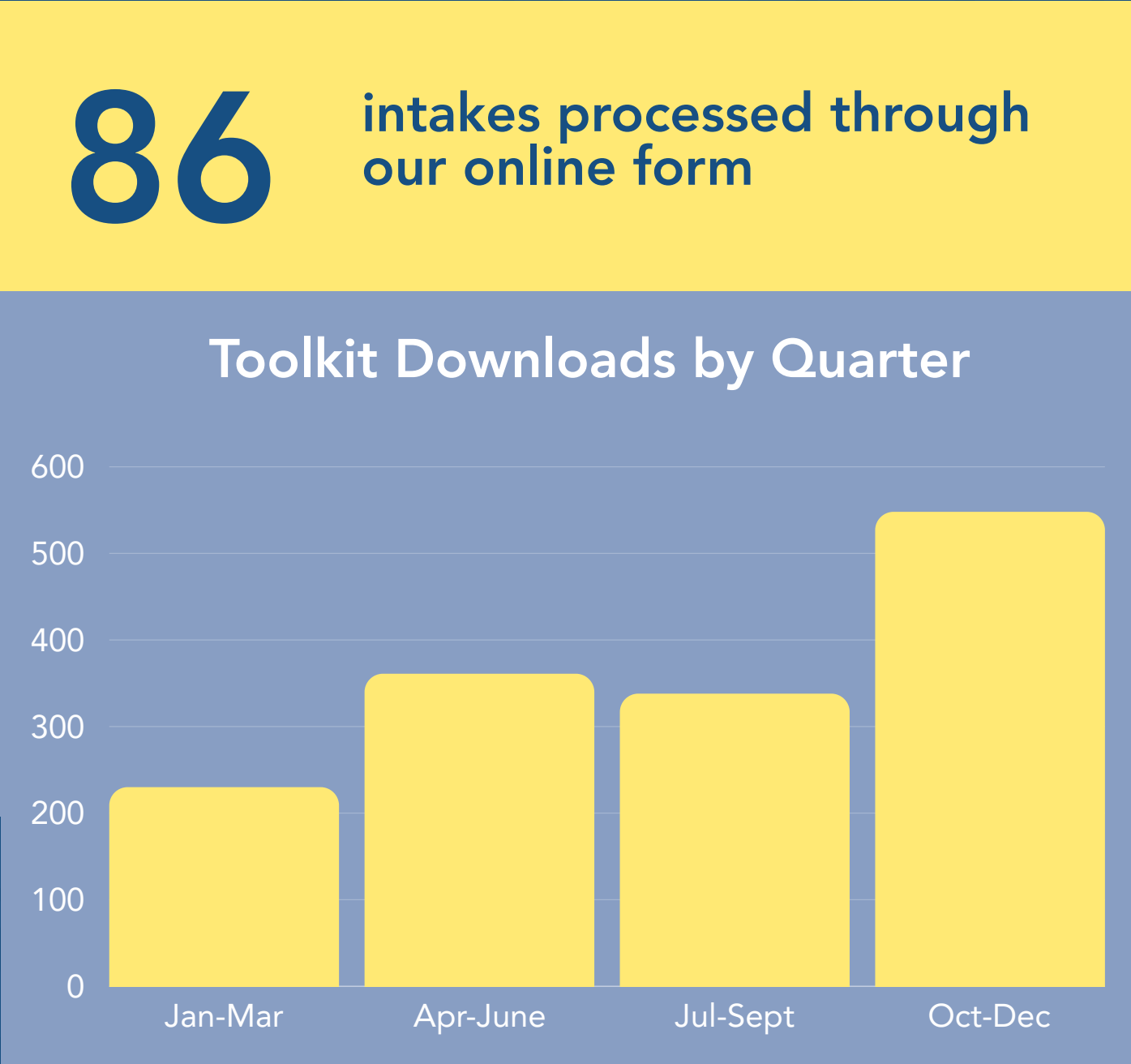
Striving for Equity Grant (2023-24)

- Launched a new [online intake form](#) to make our services more accessible for clients
- Created several [Self-Advocacy Toolkits](#) to increase client autonomy
- Expanded our [Housing Resources](#) page to support the various referral needs of our clients

Advancing Racial Equity Grant (2024-25)

- Began creating an updated Fair Housing Handbook for Public Housing Agencies
- Began expanding on our Arrest & Conviction toolkit to include protections in public housing, which includes producing a video testimony from a previous client

Stay tuned as we finalize our projects in 2025!



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West Suburban Giving Circle

- Researched the most pressing fair housing needs for women, women of color, and survivors of domestic violence
- Will present our findings and recommendations to partner organizations in our community in 2025

New Partnerships & Outreach Efforts

- REALTORs Association of the Fox Valley
- Casa DuPage Workers / Immigrant Solidarity DuPage
- Casa Michoacan
- IL State Senator Karina Villa

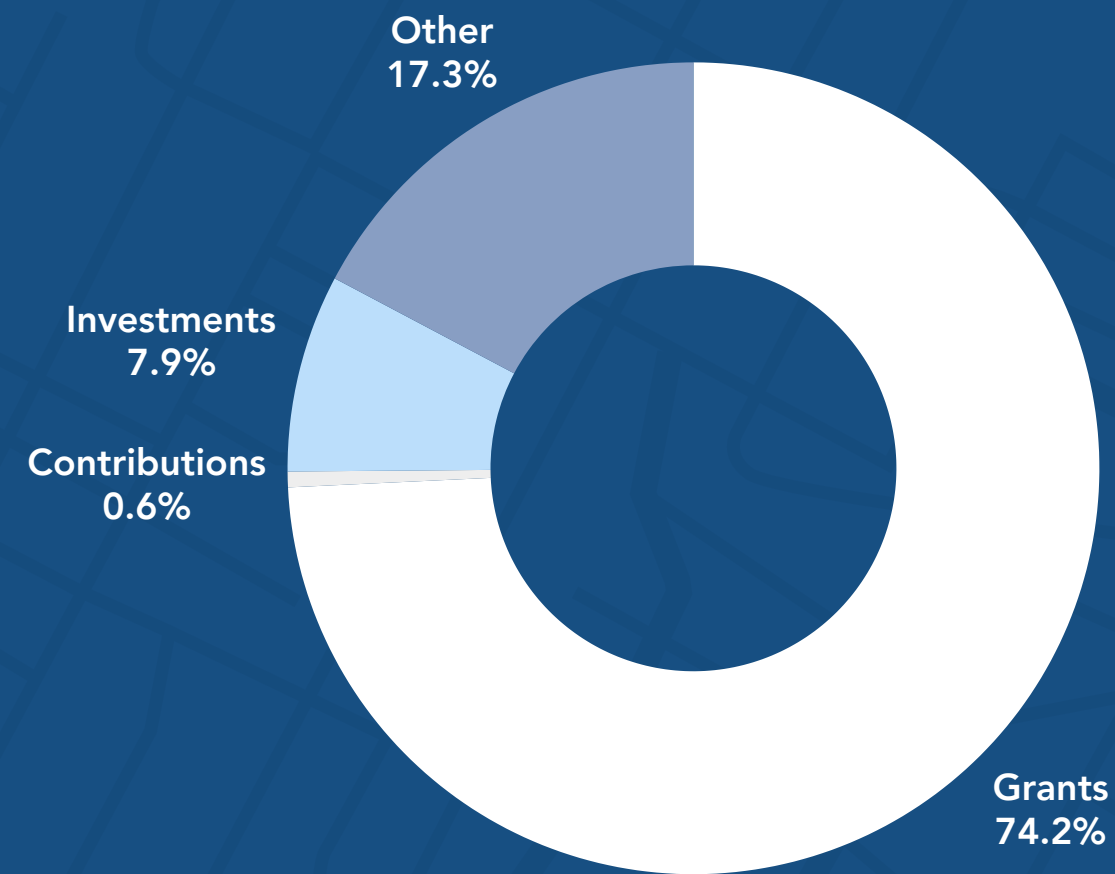
UIC Capstone Projects

- Sociology students at the University of Illinois, Chicago researched and presented on past fair housing cases in which HOPE was involved, including the 2004 Arlington Racetrack Case and the rescinding of Illinois Supportive Living Program’s “No Mental Health Diagnoses” policy
- Provides students with real-life examples of social advocacy that they can apply in their careers



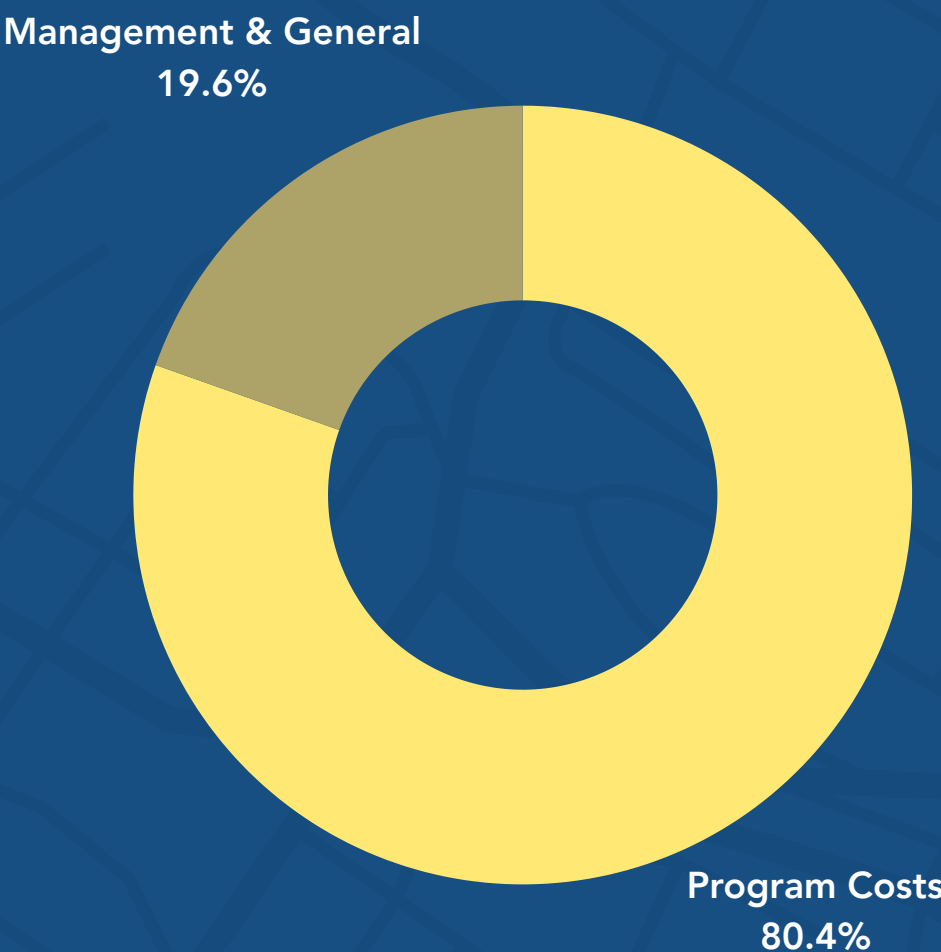
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Revenue



\$1,113,242

Expenses



\$1,061,440

net assets Jan 2024: \$1,372,615
net assets Dec 2024: \$1,424,417
change to net assets: **+\$51,802**

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Team HOPE

Announcements & Updates

- Sasha Mothershead became Special Projects & Grants Manager
- Sofia Partida was hired as Fair Housing Analyst
- Elizabeth Pinder joined as Fair Housing Enforcement VISTA
- Trisha Rodriquez and Julie Coticchia joined as Interns
- The Board welcomed 3 new members, including Betsy Carlson, Joerika Stitt, and Lily Walton
- Josefina Navar celebrated 5 years with HOPE

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, *Special Projects & Grants Manager*
Cameron Rapata, *Communications Coordinator*

Charlie Morvay, *Intake Specialist*
Isabel Anderson, *Outreach Coordinator*
Sofia Partida, *Fair Housing Analyst*
Elizabeth Pinder, *Fair Housing Enforcement VISTA*
Trisha Rodriquez, *Intern*
Julie Coticchia, *Intern*

Board of Directors

Florentina Rendon, *Board President*
Maria Padilla, *Board Secretary*
Michael Childress
Andrea Juracek
Betsy Carlson
Joerika Stitt
Lily Walton



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Thank You

This year has been an especially challenging one for fair housing, but the strength, compassion, and persistence of our team at HOPE have never wavered. United in our mission to create greater housing opportunities for all, we remain focused and resilient.

Our 2024 conference theme, “HOPE for Housing: Envisioning Equity,” reflects our continued drive to confront injustice, educate communities, and expand our services to those long underserved. This theme not only captures the aspirational goals we set but also underscores the urgency of addressing systemic inequities.

While our staff is small, our impact is amplified by a dedicated Board of Directors whose guidance and support are vital to our success. We are also deeply grateful for the many partners who work vigorously alongside us to uphold our vision - when all members of our communities can access housing fairly, we will have the economically sound and vibrant neighborhoods we deserve.

With appreciation,



josefina navar
deputy director

