



annual report

JANUARY 2025 - DECEMBER 2025



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welcome



On behalf of the entire HOPE team, I'm proud to share our Annual Report for the 2025 fiscal year. Over the year, the fair housing landscape continued to shift. Changes in federal priorities and funding structures created new challenges for organizations like ours that are working to enforce fair housing rights and expand housing opportunities.

HOPE has met this moment by deepening our local partnerships, strengthening our community-based work, and coalescing with the fair housing practitioners across the state to innovate how we collaborate within our shared service delivery systems and to recruit new philanthropic funders to our movement.

Of course, we would not be here today if not for the efforts of our team, our Board of Directors, and our partners. This community of passionate advocates drives our work, through efforts both seen and unseen. They are the ones connecting directly with those in need, breaking down barriers of a system designed to exclude so many. I am grateful to call them colleagues.

Lastly, I want to thank HOPE's supporters for their steadfast commitment amidst a changing landscape. When chaos struck, instead of backing away, you stepped forward and made it possible for the fight to continue on.

We still have a long way to go, but when I look around at the community standing behind this movement, my optimism does not waver.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'M. Chavarria'.

michael chavarria

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



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

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about

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

Our Programs



Client
Services



Education
& Outreach



Consulting



Inclusive
Communities
Fund

Creating Opportunity. Ending Discrimination.

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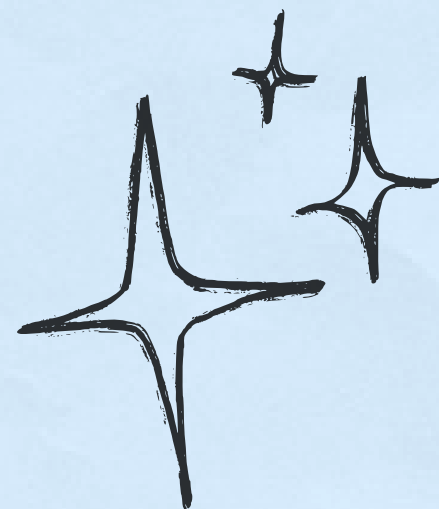
enforcement

The Enforcement Team had another busy year fighting discrimination throughout Illinois. In 2025, HOPE staff processed a total of 378 intake inquiries, 218 of which were fair housing matters. The most reported issues were related to disability, source of income, and race, following the same trends from 2024. Our community continues to report high rates of source of income discrimination following the amendment to the Illinois Human Rights Act (IHRA) in 2023.

DuPage County remained the area with the highest number of intakes, followed closely by Cook County. Overall, we received calls from 36 counties in Illinois, and 8 from areas outside of the State.

From these complaints, HOPE initiated 101 investigations to root out discrimination. Our efforts included direct advocacy to support clients making reasonable accommodation requests and educating housing providers on common policies that illegally deny applicants based on their source of income. HOPE also investigated neighborhood-level discrimination caused by municipalities and especially large housing providers.

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 assisted 4 clients in self-filing complaints with HUD and IDHR. HOPE also filed one lawsuit in state court, which is still pending.



blake mitchell

ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF
ENFORCEMENT



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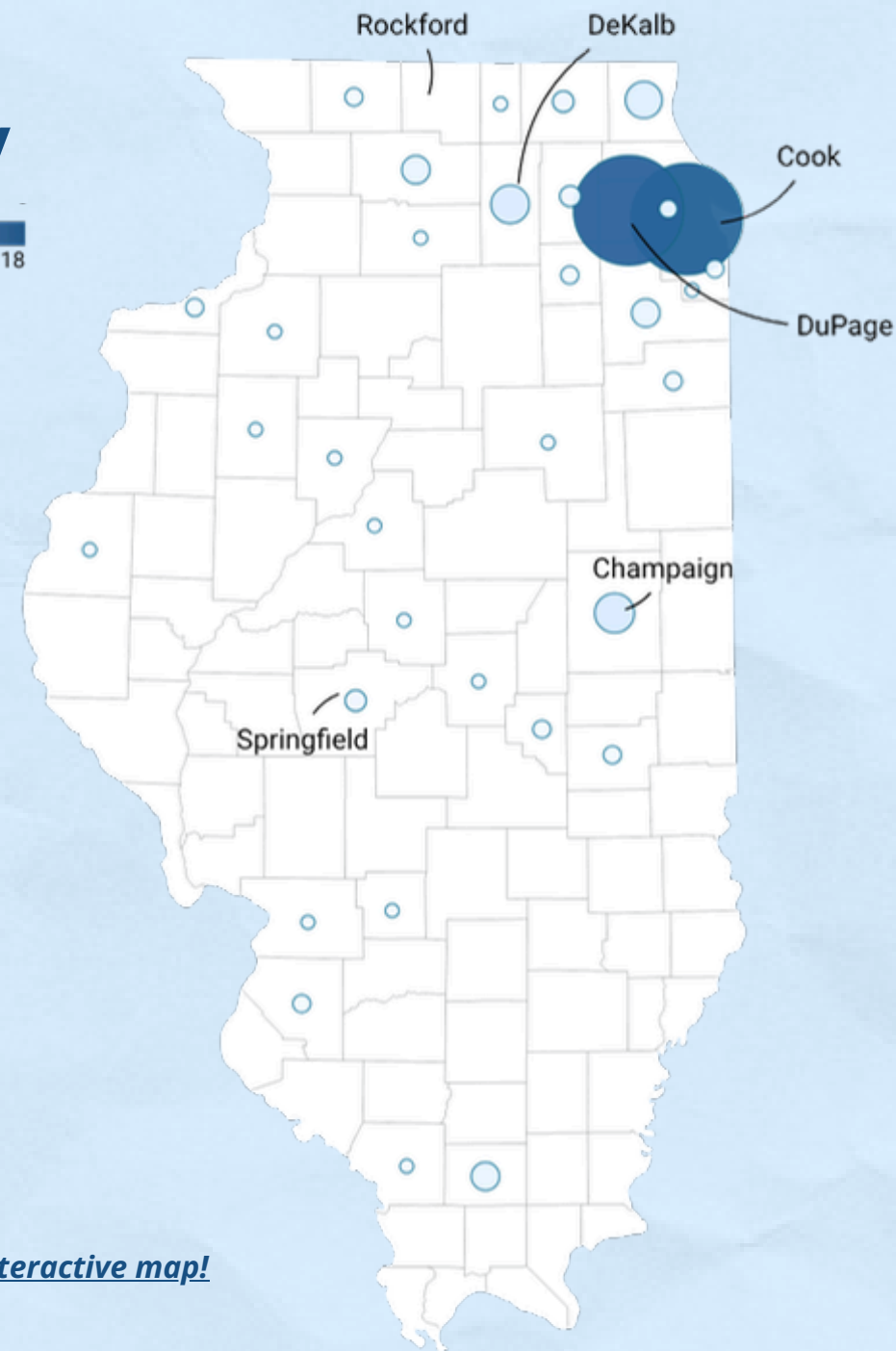
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by the numbers

intakes by county



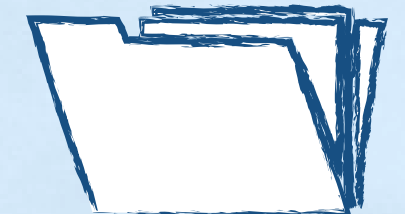
[Click here for an interactive map!](#)

218 fair housing intakes



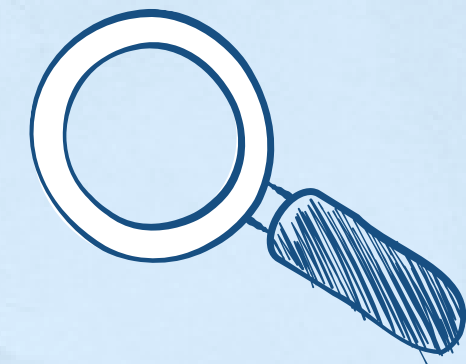
26 advocacy letters drafted

5 formal complaints filed



124 tests conducted

101 new investigations



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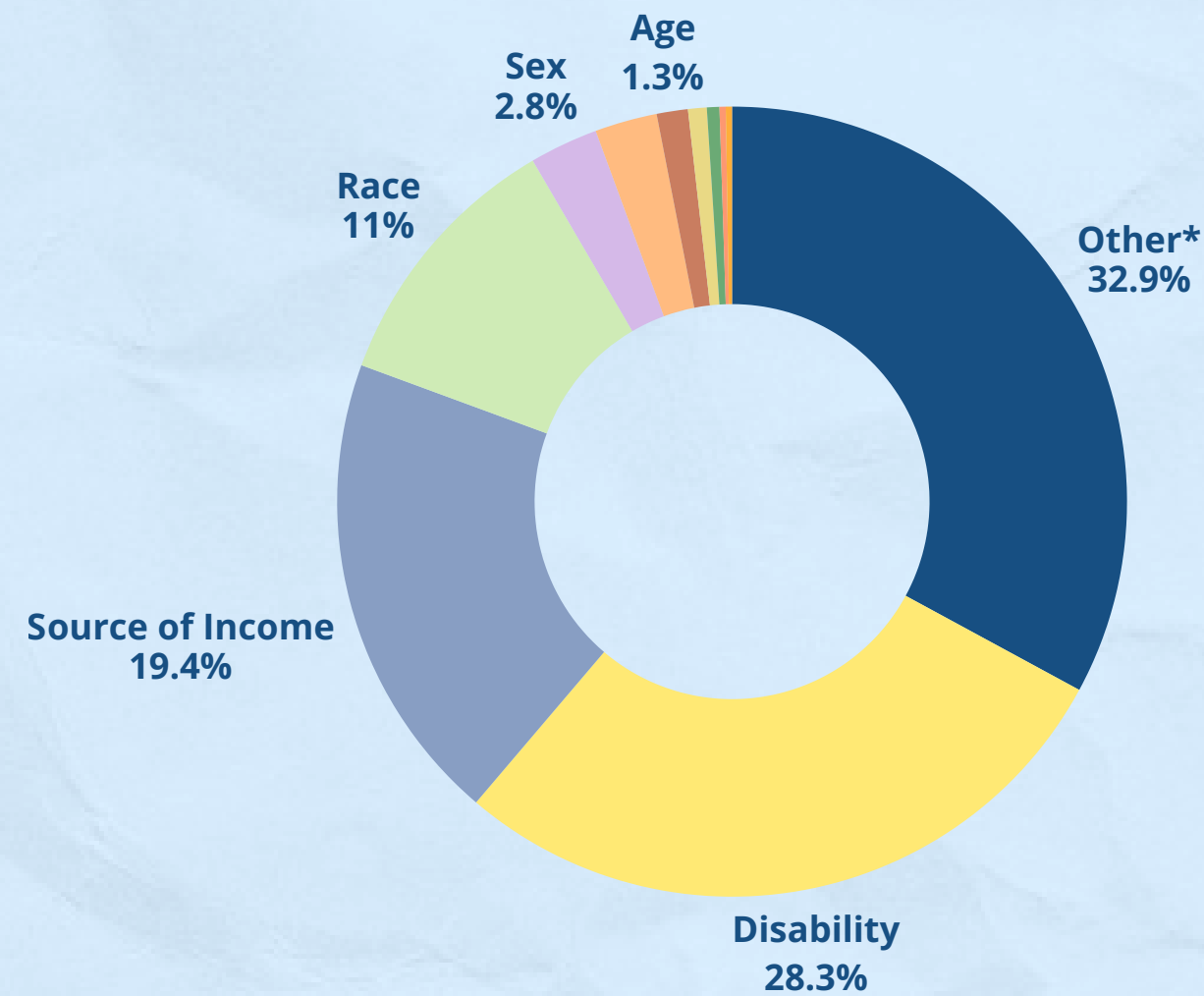
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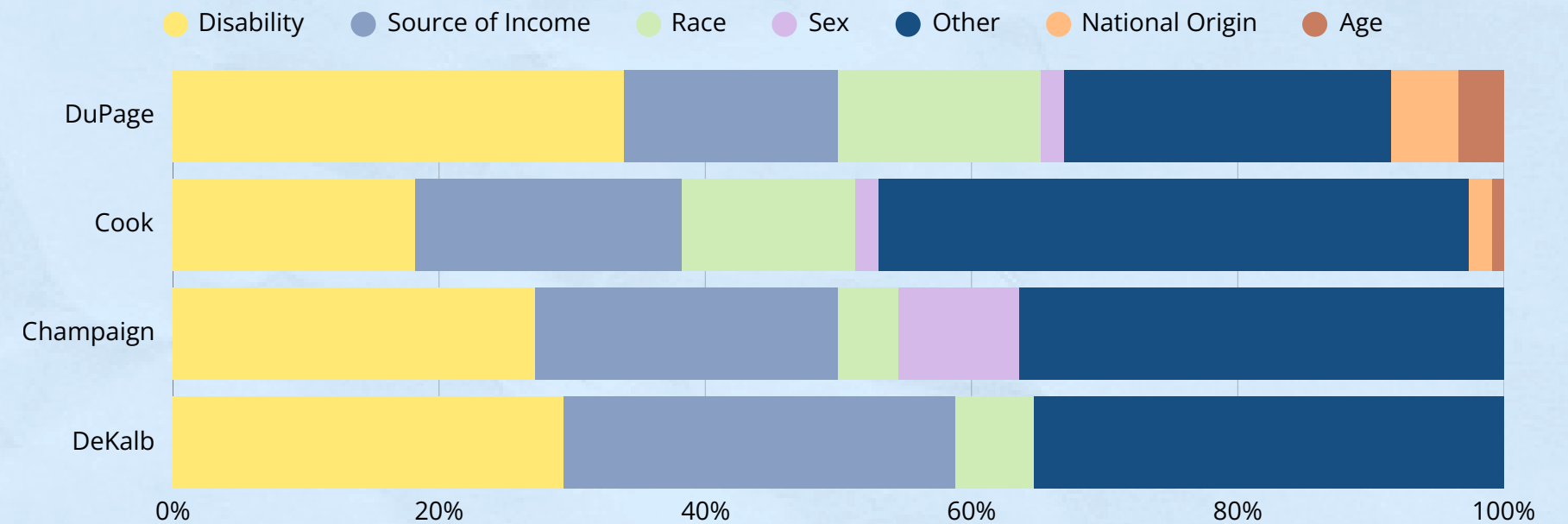
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intakes by type of discrimination alleged

discrimination alleged across top counties



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education & outreach

In 2025, the Education & Outreach team participated in 51 events and reached 3,818 people across Illinois through fair housing trainings and resource events. We also produced several new materials under our various grants supported through federal and local funding, including our PHA Fair Housing Handbook and Renter's Guide for Tenant Screening.

At a time when federal funding was cut for fair housing education and outreach programs, HOPE received support through various local entities including the Cook County Commission on Human Rights, the Village of Oak Park, and the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation. Through these projects, the E&O team was able to provide focused fair housing trainings and continue enhancing our knowledge on new topics.

Our annual conference, HOPE for Housing: Neighbors in Justice, welcomed 105 attendees to Geneva, IL. Our conference would not have been possible without the support of our panel speakers, sponsors, and attendees.

As we continue to navigate this difficult time in fair housing, HOPE remains determined to bring forth educational opportunities to the communities it serves.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jocelyn Rios'.

jocelyn rios
ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR OF
OUTREACH



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conference

HOPE FOR HOUSING: NEIGHBORS IN JUSTICE



Housing doesn't exist in a vacuum; it is inevitably intertwined with all aspects of life. That's what we explored at this year's conference, Neighbors in Justice. Over 100 advocates, service providers, industry professionals, and community members met in Geneva to collaborate on how our various movements intersect and uncover new solutions and novel ways to do our work.

Our keynote speaker was Tonika Johnson, who presented on her **Folded Map Project**, exploring how our community is impacted by social, racial, and institutional conditions that segregate the city of Chicago.

Thanks to our sponsors: RJ Oneil, Baird & Warner, Realtors Association of the Fox Valley, Zillow, Kennedy Hunt Law, CoreFinancial, Midland, HSPRD Legal, National Association of Realtors, and Alton Mitchell & Julie Federico.



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projects

CITY OF AURORA

HOPE set out to hear from the residents of Aurora on key barriers to fair housing. We conducted a survey and received feedback from 143 residents, as well as 40 social service providers.

Unsurprisingly, affordability was the top concern among residents. Also identified were issues finding housing with a Housing Choice Voucher, sub-par housing conditions, accommodations for survivors of domestic violence, and challenges transitioning into permanent housing.

We presented our **findings** and recommendations to community members, service providers, real estate professionals, and City of Aurora staff.

"Rent is extremely high for units that are not upkept."

"My house is 98 years old. I know it needs new wiring, but that's just out of my price range."

"I'm in a domestic violence shelter and there are not enough housing resources available to me."

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RENTER'S GUIDE

Navigating the housing application process is challenging for everyone, but if you have nontraditional sources of income, no credit or rental history, or are without standard forms of identification, it can feel nearly impossible to secure housing.

HOPE produced this guidebook to help renters take steps to attain housing, including:

- Proving your income
- Documenting your rental payment history
- Tips on building credit
- Alternative documentation to satisfy screening requirements
- Identifying illegal discrimination and how to get help

Access the [Renter's Guide](#)



UIC CAPSTONE PROJECT

In Spring 2025, students at the University of Illinois, Chicago presented a report on a fair housing lawsuit involving HOPE and the City of Peoria beginning in 2017.

HOPE alleged that Peoria's nuisance ordinance was enforced in a discriminatory manner against Black residents and survivors of domestic violence. HOPE connected with clients who were displaced by the ordinance, and thus conducted an investigation which revealed that properties in predominantly Black neighborhoods were disproportionately penalized.

The case ultimately reached a settlement, in which Peoria agreed to revise their ordinance, strengthen tenant protections, improve due process safeguards, and increase resources for displaced tenants.

This project was an opportunity for students pursuing careers in social services to delve into a real-world scenario, so they can better understand how community members are impacted by fair housing issues and see examples of how to provide advocacy. It also provided great insight for HOPE staff to learn more about our organization's history and efforts over the years.

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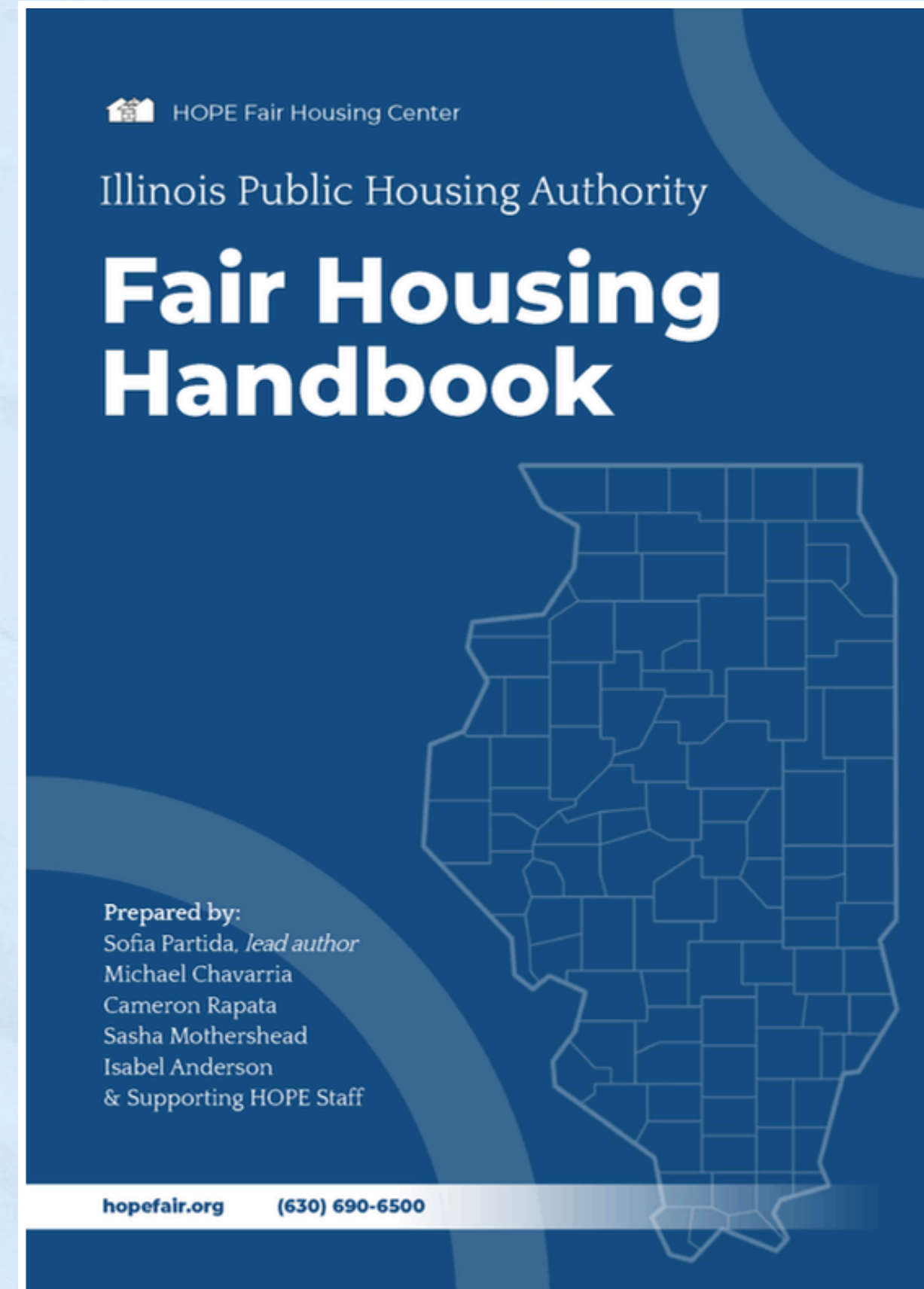
FAIR HOUSING HANDBOOK FOR PUBLIC HOUSING AUTHORITIES

In an effort to revitalize the information in our 2014 edition, we produced a new and improved Fair Housing Handbook for Public Housing Authorities in Illinois. The Handbook includes information on new guidance, legislation, and protections to help PHAs stay fair housing compliant.

A key focus of this edition is accessibility. We included guidance on plain language, accommodations for people with disabilities, considerations for residents with limited internet access, and programs to build upward mobility.

HOPE provided trainings to over 165 participants on how to implement guidelines from the Handbook, and provide free copies to over 100 PHAs across Illinois.

Access the [***Handbook***](#)



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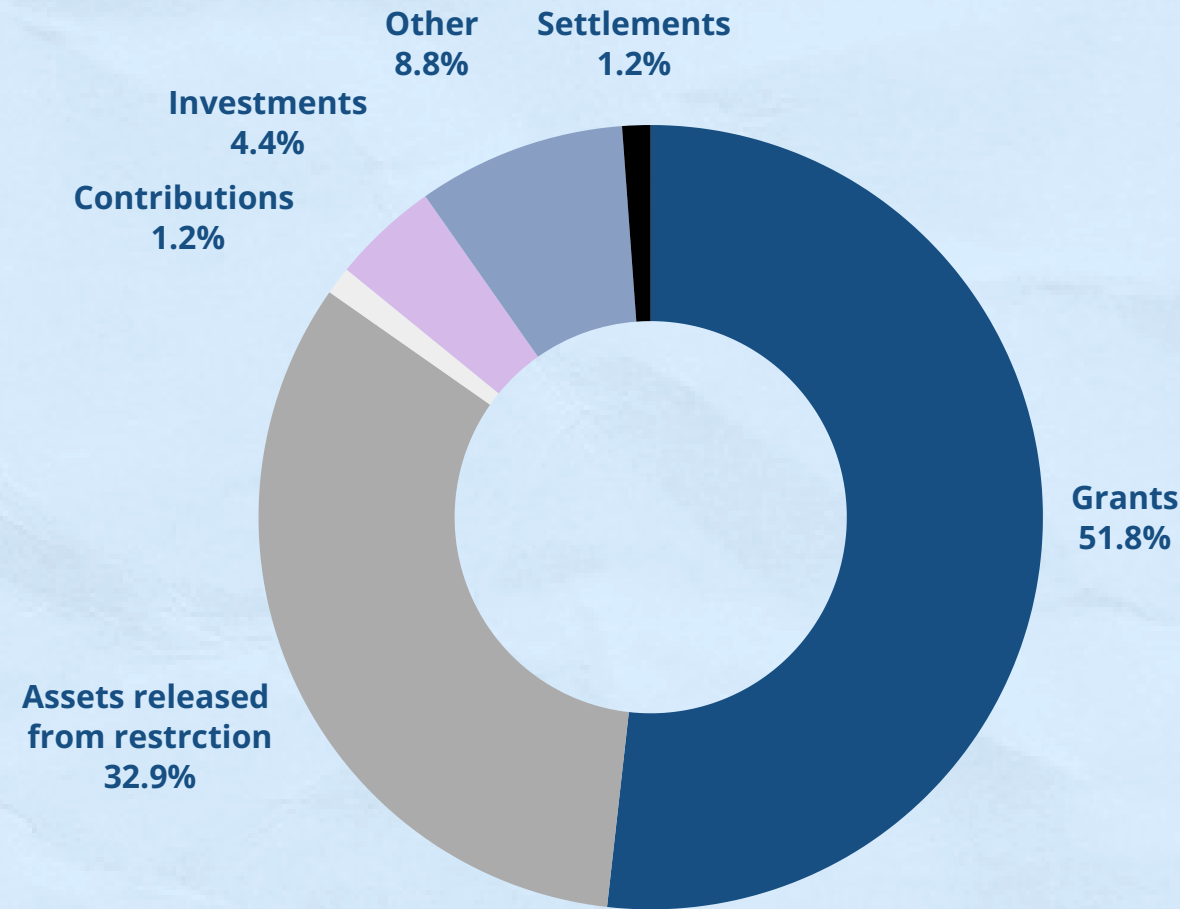
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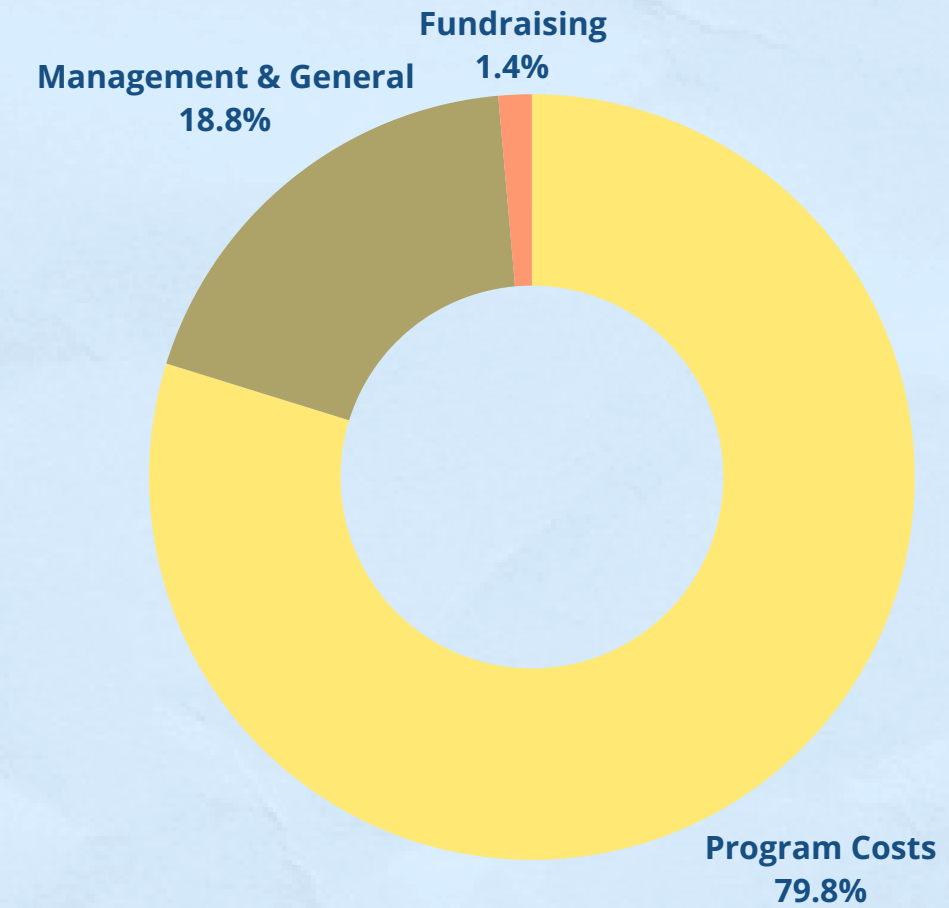
revenue



\$1,372,153

net assets Jan 2025: \$2,670,865
 net assets Dec 2025: \$2,284,983
 change to net assets: (\$385,882)

expenses



\$1,305,913

The change in net assets reflects HOPE's planned use of settlement funds received in prior fiscal years. In FY25, HOPE used these funds to provide direct financial assistance to community members and to support related fair housing programming. Because the funds were received in prior years but spent in FY25, the resulting deficit reflects the timing of that planned spending.

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our partners

Thank you to our donors for supporting HOPE's mission. Together, we can achieve fair housing for all.

corporations, organizations, foundations, & other entities

BAIRD & WARNER

HSPRD LEGAL

MIDLAND

REALTORS ASSOCIATION OF THE FOX VALLEY

ZILLOW

COREFINANCIAL

KENNEDY HUNT LAW

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF REALTORS

RJ ONEIL

individuals

JUNE BISHOP

RITA CHAVARRIA

KATELYN HEINEKAMP

DARLA LEWIS

JESSE LIPSON

KALYN MARKLEY

ESTHER PATT

BETSY CARLSON

LAURA CUMMINGS

ANDREA JURACEK

GEORGE LIPSITZ

MARIA LUENGAS

ALTON MITCHELL & JULIE FEDERICO

CATHY RAPATA

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ANNOUNCEMENTS & UPDATES

- Elizabeth Pinder was hired as Fair Housing Analyst
- Yazlinne Castillo joined as Intern
- Michael Childress became President of our Board
- Blake Mitchell celebrated 5 years at HOPE

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Michael Childress, *Board President*
 Maria Padilla, *Board Secretary*
 Andrea Juracek
 Betsy Carlson

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*
 Elizabeth Pinder, *Fair Housing Analyst*
 Yazlinne Castillo, *Intern*



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Since HOPE's beginning when the Fair Housing Act was signed in 1968, we've been committed to creating greater housing opportunities for all. We envision a world in which everyone can live in a home that is safe, affordable, and enjoyable, thereby creating vibrant and economically sound neighborhoods.

The past 58 years have challenged us as housing advocates to continue to adapt and alter the ways we chase our vision. As our community's needs and our sociopolitical environment change, so must we. This is especially the case in this current season.

Federal funding cuts, new technologies, housing shortages, a precarious economy, and a slew of other factors have produced a world that is not the same as it was yesterday. In order to meet these new needs (while also addressing the ever-present reality of housing discrimination), we have had to show up differently. That in and of itself has been a challenge, and I want to acknowledge everyone who is involved in supporting HOPE for their efforts to that end. That includes our team of staff and interns, who have endured rapid changes and have adapted to take on new projects and execute creative solutions. It also includes our Board, who has provided steadfast support and trust. And, it includes our partners, both new and old, who have met us with an eagerness and engagement that feels nothing short of inspiring.

Though we don't know what lies ahead, I am hopeful that through every twist and turn, our incredible community of advocates will continue to find new ways to chase our vision and drive our world towards a better tomorrow, in housing and beyond.



josefina navar

DEPUTY DIRECTOR

