

2025

new community 
outreach



20
25

annual report

New
Community
Outreach

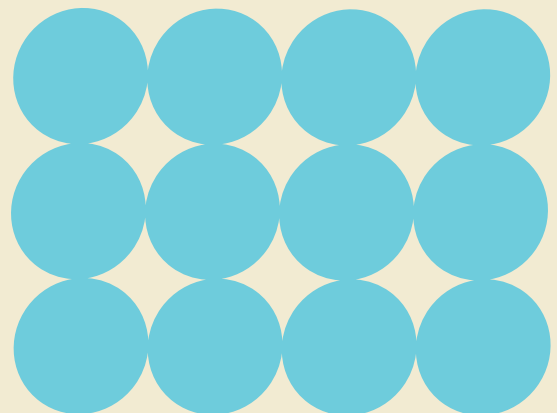
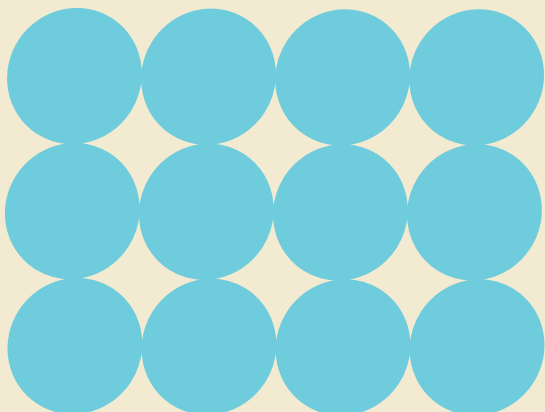


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Letter from Our Executive Director: Sonia Wang

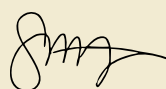


2025 was a year that reminded us why we do this work — and confirmed that it is working. Across all of our programming, we welcomed more participants than ever before, deepening our reach into the Bronzeville community and strengthening the relationships that are at the heart of everything we do at NCO. Our summer youth leadership cohort took that spirit further, designing and implementing a community impact project that demonstrated what becomes possible when young people are given space, trust, and support to lead.

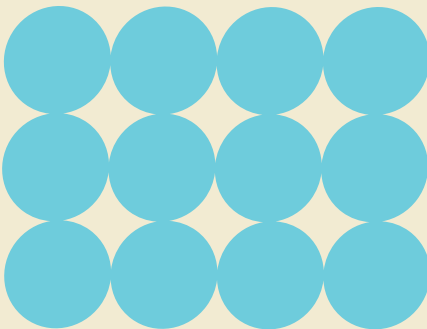
Behind all of this is a team that is growing in both capacity and commitment. Investing in our staff this year was not just an organizational priority — it was a declaration that sustainable impact requires sustainable people.

As you read this report, I hope you see what we see: an organization that exists because it is making a difference, and one that is building the foundation to keep doing so for years to come. Thank you for being part of that.

Thank you for your continued partnership,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Sonia Wang'.

Sonia Wang, NCO Executive Director



Our Mission, Vision, and Values

Mission

New Community Outreach creates restorative spaces for healing, reconciliation, and flourishing.

Vision

We envision a Bronzeville where youth and other community members meet trauma with restorative justice to renew the relationships (with ourselves, our neighbors, and environments) which lead to our individual and collective flourishing.

Values

- Sankofa: We build on the foundation of our community's history.
- Healing-Centered: We ground our practices in the understanding that holistic restoration from trauma occurs collectively in community and always with abundance as a starting point.
- Reconciliation: We confront violence, segregation, and racism as harms opposed to flourishing.
- Justice: We fight the root causes of inequity and poverty in pursuit of peace.
- Youth: We focus our efforts on uncovering opportunities and exposing challenges facing young people.
- Collaboration: We learn from, work with, and support our community partners.
- Receptivity: We assess and adapt our programs to maximize effectiveness.
- Hope: We orient our attitudes and efforts toward a hopeful future.

Our Team Leadership



Sonia M. Wang
Executive Director



Kaitlin Sobeck-Kim
Operations Manager



Hope Hammond
KEY Program Lead



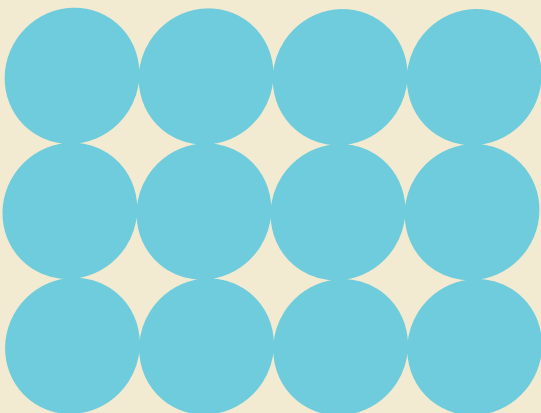
Kate Carter
Program Lead



Karlos Dodson
Board of Directors
Chairperson



David Swanson
Founder



Our Team

Staff



Circle Keepers

The KEY Program Circle Keepers (CK) provide trauma-responsive support for youth. The CK are responsible for running the KEY Program with fidelity so that students have a designated safe space to process emotions and experiences and access tools and opportunities to flourish. All staff have certification in circle keeping by an approved circle keeper training organization.

KEY Interns

KEY interns are current high-school students or recent graduates who have completed our Summer Leadership Program and restorative justice training. Interns are team members who co-facilitate peace circles for their peers and commit to relationship building and cultivating a safe space throughout the KEY School Year Program.



2025-2026 KEY Staff/Circle Keepers
Left to right: Darius B, Jonathan N., Kayla W, Hope H, Dani J, Pete B, Sonia W, Amirah R, Kate C.



2025-2026 KEY Staff/Interns (left to right): Darius B (College), Kayla W. (12th), Amirah R. (12th)

Our Team

Staff



Garden to Table

The Garden to Table team manages the Garden to Table Program, ensuring growth and proper maintenance of our garden. NCO maintains a community garden with Jackie Robinson Elementary School that our team and volunteers tend to and harvest weekly. The Garden Manager (GM) and Assistant Manager work together on the garden and harvest program.



Garden to Table staff (left to right Amy Calkin, Takara Harden, Maggie Swanson (GM) ,

Fun Fair Planning Committee

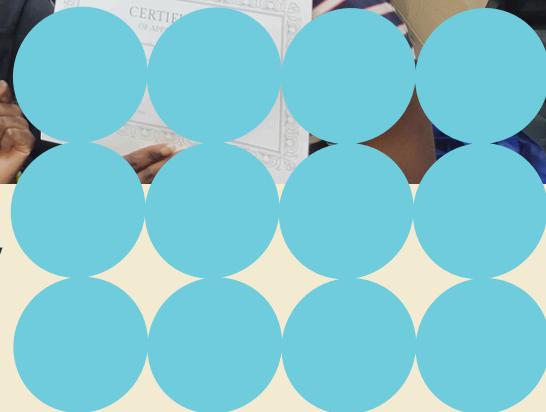
The Planning Committee is an opportunity for volunteer leaders to get involved in planning and running our Annual Back to School Fun fair. The committee leads community partner outreach, purchasing and creating fair materials, day of operations, and more.



Planning Committee (left to right): Mahaliah Sejour, Stella Cho, Pete Blodgett



2025 Year in Review



In 2025, New Community Outreach grew in reach and in strength. We reached more people than ever before, created space for our youth to lead and execute a meaningful community impact project, and invested in the team, making it all possible.

We continued to show up — through mentorship, community events, and restorative programming — creating the safe and supportive spaces our neighbors and youth need and deserve. Thanks to this growth, we engaged over 1,910 youth and community members in Greater Bronzeville, fostering connection, healing, and flourishing.

This report highlights our journey and impact from January to December 2025, and the foundation we are building for years to come.

NCO Impact in Action

1,848

Bags of produce &
non-perishable
food distributed



20

High school
students
mentored
in Bronzeville

236

Students received
backpacks &
school supplies



100%

KEY students
feel that they
can positively
impact
someone's life



191

Students in
KEY school year
program,
up 41%
from 2024



35%

of Garden to Table
attendees consider
themselves
regulars (visited 6+
times)

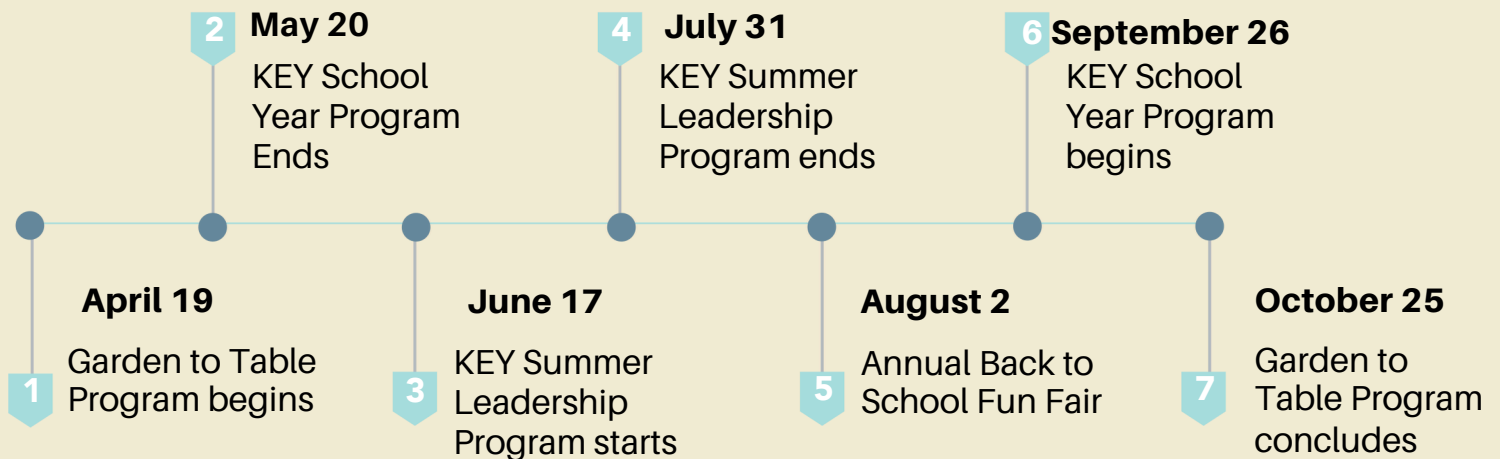


130

Volunteers
participated in NCO
programs or events



Key Events in 2025



Throughout the year NCO worked on...

Fundraising Campaigns and Events:

- Participation in StridesforPeace: Race Against Gun Violence
- Board of Directors mixer
- Hoodie campaign featuring our mission
- Giving Tuesday campaign

Community Engagement:

- Participation in 7 community events
- Two Harvest Celebrations (July and September)
- Quarterly Community Circles

Organizational Development:

- Designed & launched new website
- Impact Report
- Created new impact video

Team Growth:

- First time to start the year with team of 5
- Sabbatical for Executive Director
- Yearlong professional learning engagement with Admired Leadership for team

Our Programs

KEY School Year Program



KEY Summer Leadership Program



Garden to Table Program



Back to School Fun Fair



KEY School Year Program



The KEY Program uses the circle process, a restorative justice practice, to help high school students process feelings, experiences, and circumstances in a safe space. The KEY program addresses trauma, particularly gun violence, and fosters healthy coping skills, positive peer relationships, and community connections.

191

students
completed the
program (+41%
%
from last year)

15

3rd grade
students
participated in
KEY Elementary
Pilot Program

83%

Participants
believe it is
important to make
the world a better
place to live

100%

of surveyed
parents would
recommend the
KEY Program

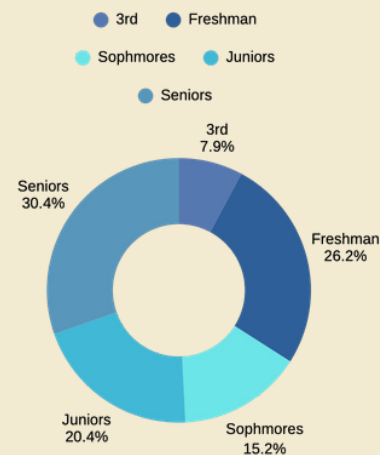
23%

Alumni
engaged with
KEY in some
capacity

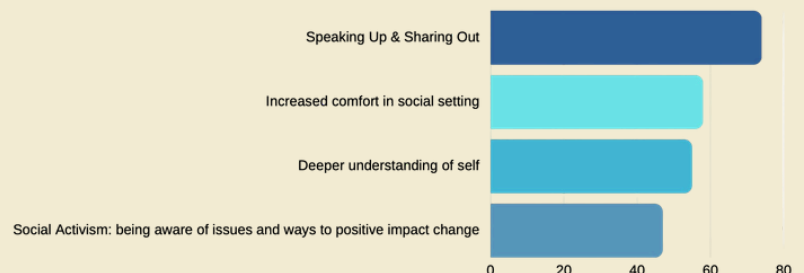
+10%

From BOY to EOY
surveys showed they
have helped make
their neighborhood
a better place for
people to live in

Student Participants



Areas Positively Impacted by KEY



The graph showcases the KEY Program's impact on students' lives, based on end-of-year surveys evaluating the program's effectiveness in fostering personal growth and community connections.

KEY School Year Program Continued



2025 KEY Capstone Project: Amplifying Voices for Impact

The beginning-of-year survey, coupled with themes from circle conversations, reflected that students felt that there were few spaces where their voice was valued, heard, and recognized as a meaningful contribution. With our students at the helm, our projects aimed to activate students as change agents to make a positive impact.

Below are some of the projects:

- Creating compilation videos amplifying student voices around topics including misconceptions and biases about the LGBTQIA+, black, Chicago, and youth communities, issues around gun violence, food insecurity and social media privacy. KEY students shared these videos broadly on social media so that it could reach a wide audience, as well as sharing one video more directly with adult mentoring figures.
- Creating digital and physical flyers of positive encouragement, advice, and reflections about what would be possible in their community if there were no judgment or criticism. The flyers were displayed at various park district field houses, including Ellis Park, Mandrake Park, Taylor Park, and Kennicott Park.
- Creating a slideshow of messages of advice and encouragement from graduating seniors to share with incoming high school students. The slideshow was displayed during high school orientation days during the summer.



KEY School Year Partners



Our strategic partners provide students with diverse experiences. Capital One and Just Roots-St.James Community Farm have partnered with us over the last several years to deepen students' KEY experience through tangible care that we provide through care packages (Capital One) and experiential learning experiences that widen our engagement with our community (Just Roots).



Looking Ahead

- Hosting summer KEY sessions, including circles, field trips, and service learning experiences
- Expanding to 13 school day sessions
- Establishing elementary KEY sessions at Jackie Robinson Elementary for more students

KEY Summer Leadership Program



From June to August, six high school students were selected to participate in our KEY Summer Leadership Program focusing on restorative justice, social justice, and activism. Two student interns who previously participated in the program and completed restorative justice training got the chance to build their leadership skills by co-leading the circle with adult circle keepers. Altogether, four high schools were represented.

Summer 2025 Highlights



Dynamic Learning: Students met with 9 guest speakers to learn about trauma processing, using past experiences to impact change, and activism through art; and to build skills in project ideation & management, financial literacy, and impactful leadership



Experiential Field Trips: A community bus tour with the Chicago Race Riot of 1919 Commemoration Project deepened students' understanding of race and racism through the lens of community history, and a community service activity with Quad Communities Development Corporation and GrowSumthin involved a park clean-up and space beautification at Park 43 in Bronzeville, where they recognized the importance of putting into action the act of both giving and receiving from their community.



Community Impact: With support from the Chicago Bulls, students designed and pitched a project focused on the impact of trash and the need to take action in reducing its presence in community spaces, earning \$1,000 to host a Trash Pickup Race that gathered over forty community members of all ages who collectively picked up 165 gallons of trash in and around Washington Park.



Celebrating Success: Students showcased leadership, shared personal stories, and provided resources for the community, and all students earned stipends for completing the program

Garden to Table Program



In 2025, our Garden Manager, two Assistant Managers, and 78 volunteers worked on the Garden to Table program. Together, we harvested and shared 650lbs of produce.

We held two Harvest Celebrations in July and September, with food from our garden's produce prepared by a local vegan chef and a volunteer, community partner booths, and giveaways.

2025 Program Data



Bags of produce distributed



1640 Bags



Attendant Households



1101 (Repeat Household visits)



Bags of non-perishables distributed



208 Bags



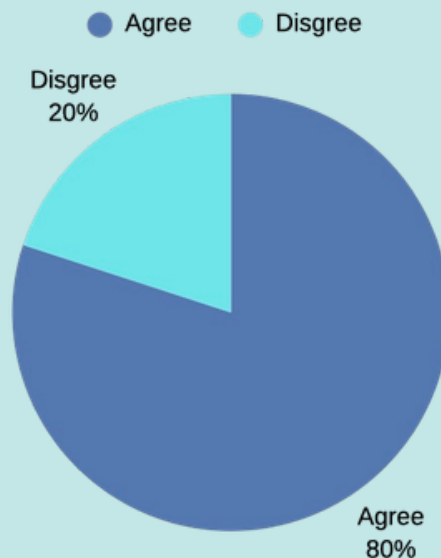
Attendance



20 Distributions

Survey Response Results for Impact on Access to Fresher, Healthier Food & Feeling Welcomed During Distribution

Over the course of our 20-week distribution, we reached key milestones in serving the community. These numbers reflect our commitment to expanding access to fresh, nutritious food, and ensuring that more families benefit from our efforts every season, bringing our community closer together.



Annual Back to School Fun Fair



With the help of planning committee members Pete Blodgett, Stella Cho, Mahaliah Sejour, & Sonia Wang, this year's Annual Back to School Fun Fair brought together 438 community members, including 236 students, for a day of fun, food, and community building at Jackie Robinson Elementary School's outdoor area.

A total of 516 people gathered for the block party-like event for a day of restorative fun.

With the support of 49 volunteers from local churches and community organizations, as well as 20+ partners who hosted a resource booth and/or provided financial and in-kind donations, the event was a huge success in preparing students and families for the new school year!



438

**Community
Members**



49

volunteers



23

**Partners
Engaged**



Community Engagement: 15 community partner booths provided valuable resources and information to students and families



Community Support: Volunteers from New Community Covenant Church, Hinsdale Covenant Church, and Garden City Covenant Church played a vital role in making the event possible



Gratitude: A special thank you to our partners and supporters who helped make this event a success by contributing time, resources, and enthusiasm

Testimonials

new community 
outreach

Bringing people together in a positive, inclusive environment that fosters connection, fun, and trust. It encourages relationship building, reduces stress and promotes a sense of belonging which supports overall community well being.

- Fun Fair attendee

I grew by learning that community is so important and understanding that people are stronger together... we need people in life to mentor us.

- KEY participant

The way the leaders guide and direct us on what we should be doing is kind.

This is simple, but isn't always the norm when volunteering. It's clear that NCO practices what they preach because they treat each volunteer and each member of the community with love, respect and kindness.

- Garden to Table Volunteer

I learned about just being there, being present for someone. It wasn't something she directly taught me, but her just always being there to console me and others while still mixing in a valid and constructive opinion was something I felt I could take after.

- KEY mentee

I feel like KEY really changed my perspectives on a lot of things by hearing about what other people around me faced. Like challenges my peers go through. I feel as though now i'm even more of a listener, i can agree to disagree with people more.

- KEY participant

I think [circle] provided an additional opportunity for students to share their feelings and learn to process or even name their emotions and feelings. Students who were reluctant to share initially became more open and willing to give their input. I feel that the experience supported building an even closer classroom community as students practiced how to listen, support, and encourage one another.

- School staff member

Community Engagement & Partnerships



Collaboration drives our work, and strong partnerships amplify our impact. By learning from and supporting each other, we expand our reach and deepen community engagement.

2025 highlights

Expanding Our Reach



This year, we partnered with 55 organizations, including 5 new partnerships

Back to School & Harvest Festivals



Our partners played a key role in bringing valuable resources, and support to these signature events

Supporting Restorative Justice



Partners provided care packages, field trips, and learning sessions for students in our KEY restorative justice program

Empowering KEY Mentors & Staff



Community experts facilitated educational sessions to equip our mentors and staff with new skills

Active Community Engagement



Beyond our own initiatives, we actively participated in 4 community events citywide, including partner-hosted events

Growing Community Impact

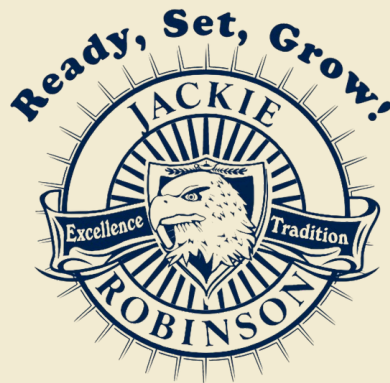


Thanks to our partners, our programming continues to expand, fostering stronger connections and creating lasting change

Community Partners

Harris Community Action

The Harris Community Action (HCA) is a student-run organization at the University of Chicago's Harris School of Public Policy that connects nonprofits with student expertise in data and policy analysis. Over the last several years, NCO has partnered with HCA on four projects, including developing a theory of action and an annual report template — work that would otherwise require significant consultant fees or staff capacity. Their fellowship model is a unique and valuable resource for organizations like ours.



Jackie Robinson Elementary School

Jackie Robinson Elementary School (JRE) has been a community partner since before NCO was founded. They entrusted us with hosting their back-to-school event as early as 2014, and that trust has only deepened over time. Our community garden is located on their site, and we now offer peace circle programming directly to their students. JRE is a living example of what it looks like when a school and a community organization grow together in mutual commitment to their neighbors.

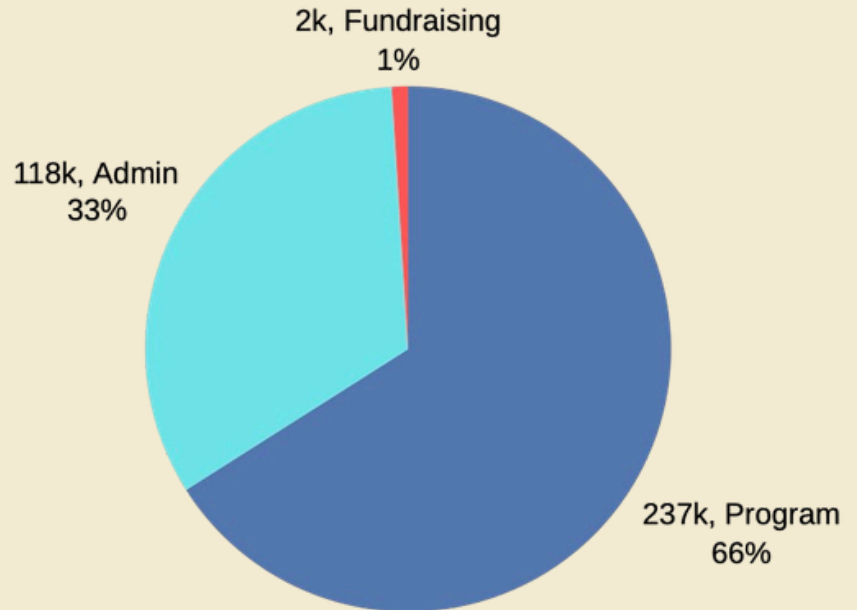
Financials

NCO relies entirely on fundraising and donations to provide our programs at no cost to all participants. Every dollar we raise goes directly into supporting our community and ensuring that everyone has access to our services.

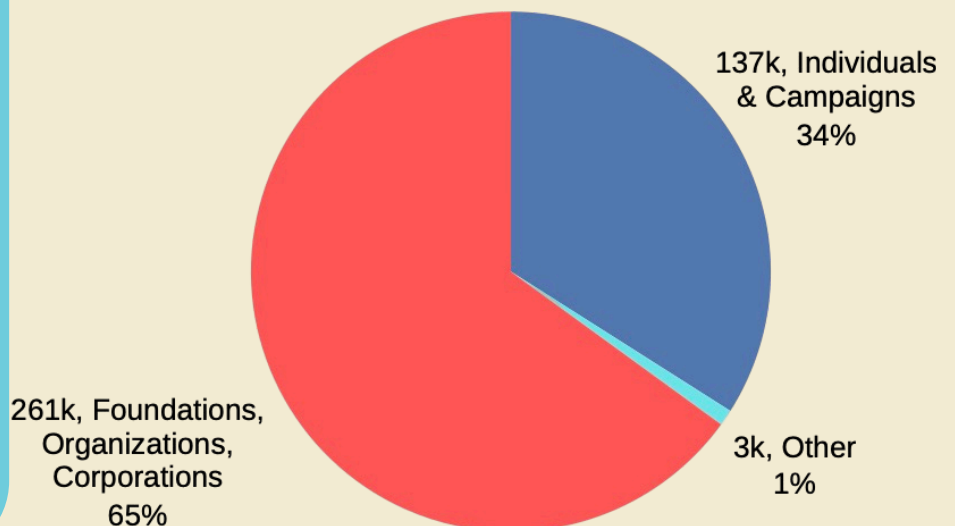
This year NCO had 37 recurring and over 50 one-time donations from both individual and corporate donors and received over \$220,000 in grant funds to support our work.

We are especially grateful to have so many donors that also serve as volunteers, partners, and participants in our programs.

Allocation of Expenses FY 25



Sources of Revenue FY 25



We'd like to extend a special thank you to all the donors and volunteers who made our work possible in 2025

Aaron Bartolome
Aaron Griffin
Abby Barbeau
Abby Hodgkinson
Aderin Oshuntuyi
Adrienne Scherenzel
Alec Chavez
Alex Yoo
Alexis Hu
Alicia Alexander
Alicia Locher
Amy Calkin
Amy Moy
Andrea Jones
Andrena Logan
Andrew Koetz
Andrew Lauber
Andrew & Alexis Reay
Angel Tatum
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Anita Phonexayphova
Anna Davidson
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Arianna Cain
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Boston Consulting Group
Brant Morris
Brenda McNeil
Brent Rolland
Brianna White
Brigitte Forster
Brittany Turner
Caitlin Wong Hickernell
Candice White
Candice White
Candy Yu
Carlton Coleman
Carmen Sandford
Cassidy Stratton
Celia Hammond
Cherise Wilson
Colby Mecher
Colby Mecher
Cosette Hammond
CST Academy
Curt Futrell
Cynthia Huang

Cynthia Perez
Danae Gordeuk
David Baker
David McKee
David Otuwa
David Swanson
David Swanson
David & Yeena Yoo
Dayna Asante-Appiah
Daynah Parker
Delaney Hawkes
Denise Posie
Dennis Bourne
Derrick Dunn
Doug Peckenpaugh
Drew Hairst
Edith Michmerhuizen
Edward Tao
Elaina Reese
ElastiFlow
Eleanor Callow
Elijah Greer
Eliot Swanson
Elisa Pleasant
Elizabeth Giron
Ella Weems
Emily & Mark Delew
Emma Lin
Emma Stapleton
Eric Changchien
Eric Kellums
Erin Martens
Erin Schubert
Ervin Olson
Eva Tao
Favour Olatunde
Felena Bunn
Fern Brown-Tyler
Fred & Elaine Hickernell
Freda Ukeka
Gladstone and Lynn Mecher
Gwendolyn Radakovich
Haraldine Stafford
Hazel Kelly-Overstreet
Heather Bilyk
Heather Dooley
Heidi Laabs
Helen Fortune
Hope Hammond

Imade Osaghae
Isaac King
Jacqueline Rodney
Jamelyn Lederhouse
James Kim
James Leonardo
James Shelton
Jane Lee
Jarrett Yu
Jasmine Tzeggai
Jeannie Kim
Jimmy Lee
John Hickernell
John Koetz
Jon Houghton
Joshua Crozier
Joshua Stock
Joy Dickson
Joy Wilson
Julian Greenhill
Julie Malaga
Kaelah Daniels
Kaitlin Sobeck-Kim
Kaitlyn Sebastian
Kaleah Ojewola
Karl Ostroski
Karlos & Michelle Dodson
Karyn Fortune
Karyn & Theo Hunt
Kate Carter
Kate Noll
Kate Williams
Katherine Boonstra
Kenya Davis
Kevin Johnson
Kevin Swanson
Khamaiya Jones
Kolton White
Kristian Werling
Kristina Williams
Kyrsten Emanuel
Linda Givand
Linda Smith
Linda Wang
Lindsay McDonnell
Lindsey Morrow
Lorie Smith
Madalyn Elliott
Madeleine Greene

Mahaliah Sejour
Malcolm Henry
Mark Tao
Matthew Hill
Matthew Mills
Matthew Walther
Melanieta (Lani)
Anggraeni
Melinda Sewak
Mellody Hill
Melody Ratliff
Michael Washington
Michelle Metu
Milton Ferrell
Monica LaFrance Sejour
Morgan McClelland
Myeisha Sullivan
Naomi Hammond
Natalia Rojszyk
Nathaniel Noonan
Nathaniel & Christine Wright
Nikkita McPherson
Noe Rouizem
Olivia Johnson
Oreal James
Patricia Watkins
Paul Crutchfield
Pradeep Nair
Racquel Gardener
Ramone Lacey
Rebecca Flood
Rica Del Rosario
Richard Wilson
Rita Romero
Rob Noll
Robin Swieringa
Rodney McAuley
Ryan Magnuson
Ryan Rubin
Sabrina Stroud

Sandra Rogers
Sara Woody
Scott Thomas
Seth Hammond
Sophie Callow
Soulful RT
Stella Cho
Stephanie Folkerts
Sunil Mathew
Susan Sperry
TaKara Harden
Tammy Swanson-Draheim
Teresa Ghali
The Carter Consulting Group LLC
Theo Yoo
Theresa Mathew
Tierra Tucker
Tiffany Fang
Toby Tao
Tolu Williams
Trevor Nicholas
Tristan White
Tumi Onabolu
Valeri Tao
Valerie Wong
William Tom
Won & Krystle Kim
Xiomara Ramirez
Zachary Gallentine
Zion Hall
Zonda D Carriel

CALL TO ACTION

Stay Connected:



Volunteer With Us:

info@newcommunityoutreach.org

Donate To NCO:



3627 S Cottage Grove Ave
Chicago, IL 60653
(312) 985-6073

