





We envision a world in which involvement in the foster care system does not limit the opportunity to thrive in adulthood.

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Jamie, 21
First Place Program Participant,
Alameda County



Dear Friends,

A year ago, when I began my tenure at First Place for Youth, I was humbled by its legacy of shaping California's approach to serving foster youth. Over the last 24 years, our innovations in programming have guided our advocacy to improve the systems that serve all foster youth in the state. We've come a long way: from providing housing to offering life-changing supports that help these young people connect to caring adults. We guide them to careers and educational pathways that will help them achieve rewarding, satisfying lives. This spring, we will celebrate our 25th anniversary at a May event. I hope you all can join us. We need more believers like you, and we have a lot to celebrate.

In 2022, we provided direct support for 1,507 young adults across the country, including 640 in our My First Place™ Program and countless more through our advocacy efforts at the state and local levels. We've expanded our national work to reach Mecklenburg County in North Carolina and Cincinnati's county child welfare ecosystem to apply our models to their systems of care. In this report, you'll also read about our tremendous wins in 2022 in Mississippi: we're now advocating for the state to extend foster care to youth over the age of 18.

Over the last 12 months, I've deepened my respect for our teams working across California and the nation. I've met with so many of you, and heard such varied stories about what motivates donors to support our work. Just like our young adults, each donor's story is different. When I spoke with our partner and renowned artist Mark Bradford from Art + Practice, he shared how his mother's South LA hair salon was the only place where he could safely be himself when he was young. Thanks to donors like you, we can provide those safe places for these young adults. And that is the essence of our mission at First Place: we believe more is possible when foster youth have safe spaces to be themselves, to learn, to grow, and to thrive.

Thomas G. Lee, CEO

Antoinette, age 23

loves working with children

Antoinette has always wanted to work with children. As the third oldest of 11, she grew up helping younger children, and now, she is determined to help the most vulnerable, either as a teaching assistant or in her own childcare center.

“I’m not getting any younger, and if I want something, I have got to get it for myself,” she said. “The majority of the stuff you say you can’t do: you CAN.”

Antoinette is proud to have graduated a year early from high school to start attending college courses. Her First Place team matched her to a paid apprenticeship with the YMCA of the East Bay in South Berkeley, and she’s excited to be caring for the youngest children, ages 0-4. In addition to working full-time, she attends classes two days per week in the hopes of getting an AA or BA degree to qualify as a teaching assistant.

“I love my Youth Advocate because, without her, this wouldn’t really be possible,” said Antoinette. “She will be on my case about school and working and everything and if she can’t get in contact with me. **For me, to know that there’s somebody out there like that gives me motivation and keeps me going. I really appreciate that.**”

Antoinette said she is saving her money to open her own childcare business and to be ready to live on her own when she exits the My First Place program next year.

My First Place™ provides housing, education, employment, and case-management supports for young adults ages 18-25. A primary goal throughout the program is to prepare young adults for living-wage employment and achieving educational goals.

“The majority of the stuff
you say you can’t do:
YOU CAN.”





Kevon, age 21

metal is his medium

“When I’m welding, I feel at peace, like I was meant to do it. It calms me down,” said Kevon, who discovered his love for the trade during a high school shop class and then spent five years learning the different aspects of welding. This fall, **Kevon will attend the University of Iron in Benicia as a journeyman ironworker** to qualify for union jobs and pathways to foreman or superintendent roles.

“I gained a lot of experience, and now I have an opportunity for a welding apprenticeship where they can pay me, and I can work at the same time,” he said.

Kevon joined the My First Place Program in 2019, and despite his Vallejo apartment and connections to supportive staff, he said things haven’t always been easy.

“It was a challenging time,” he said of the 2020 fires and COVID shutdowns. “I had a couple of asthma attacks and couldn’t get transportation or go outdoors.”

When he finishes the My First Place program, he said he expects to become a welder and “take over the world.”

First Place's apprenticeships and pre-apprenticeships match young adults to paid work experience and career-linked training pathways that connect directly to education. First Place partners with employers and educational institutions in each county service area to connect young people to on-the-job training, career-focused education, industry-recognized credentials, and employment skills in high-growth industries.

Alex, age 21

focused on her future

Alex is excited to explore potential career pathways—from social work to cosmetology to finance; Alex is keeping her options open! Exploring different career paths is critical for young adults at this age to identify the best fit. Currently, she works at First Western Bank and attends Los Angeles Southwest Community College, where she is a sociology major. Alex is learning to work with clients, manage money, and apply her mathematical skills daily—skills that will help her no matter what passion or career path she chooses.

Alex recognizes the importance of saving for her future and staying accountable: "I put away \$250 a month so I can leave First Place's program with some savings. It's important to pay yourself before you pay anyone else. At the end of the day, you are working for yourself. Make sure you put yourself first. Take care of yourself by paying your rent, going to school and your job, and stay in good communication with your team at First Place. They'll help you out."



By the Numbers

1507 youth served by First Place for Youth and network partners in Massachusetts, Mississippi, New York, and Ohio

640 My First Place program participants gained housing, education and employment coaching, as well as comprehensive case-management supports

My First

At Entry

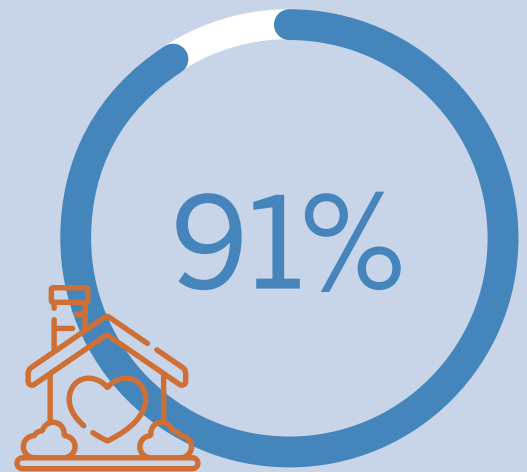
43% were homeless
or couch surfing

49% were not in school

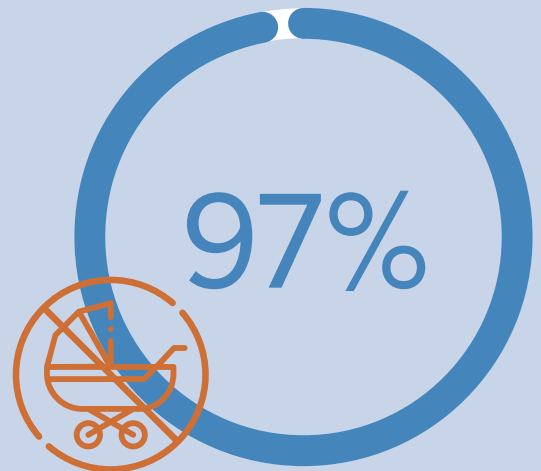
53% were unemployed

13% had children

39% had prior involvement
with the justice system



exited the program
into stable housing



avoided pregnancy

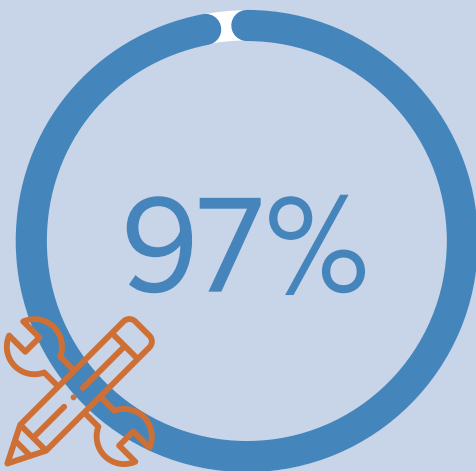
Place Program Outcomes



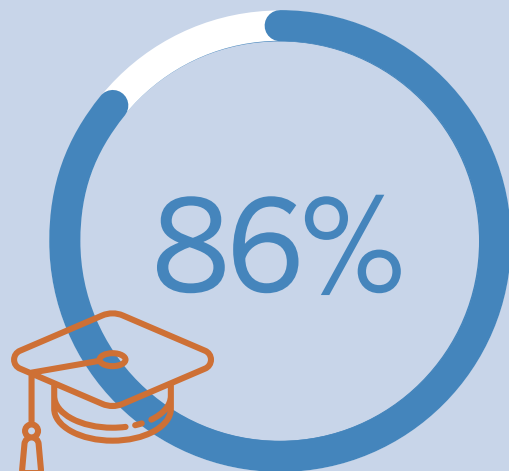
of eligible youth enrolled in
post-secondary education



obtained employment



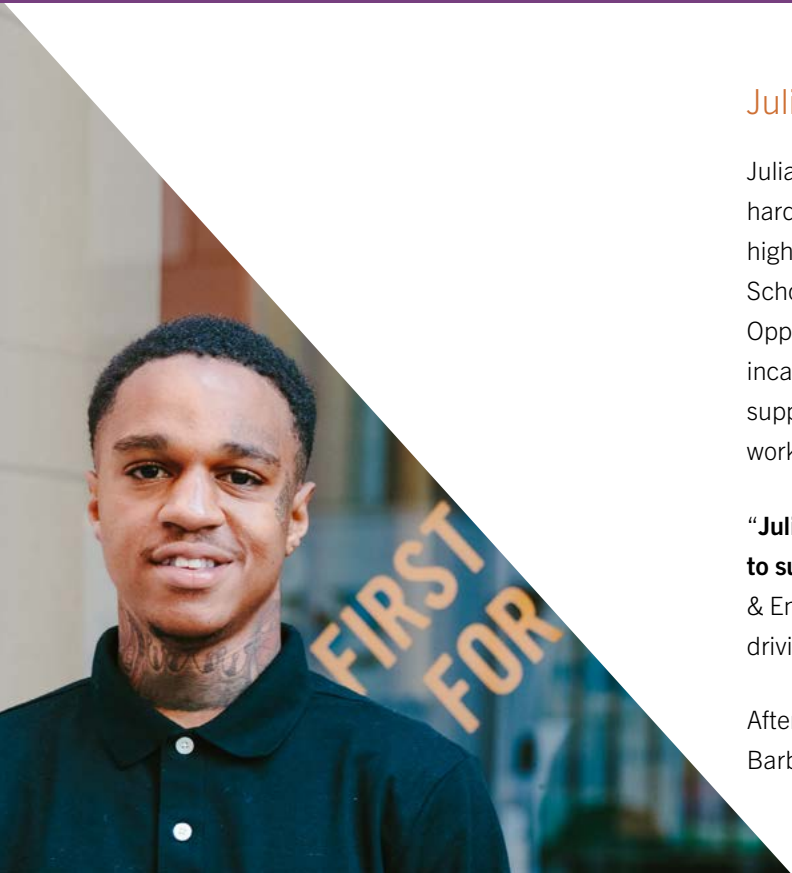
avoided arrest



earned or progressed towards
high school diploma

The housing outcomes shown includes youth who exited the program after 12 months or more. Other outcomes are for youth in program 30+ days.

From the safety of stable housing, My First Place program participants can focus on finding their voices and making choices for school, work, and future careers



Julian's superpower drives his success

Julian, 21, says that thinking about his future inspires him to work hard and advocate for himself. Right now, he's focused on finishing high school through our community partner, Five Keys Charter School. Julian also works at the Alameda County BOSS (Building Opportunities for Self-Sufficiency) program, where he helps formerly incarcerated people find housing, employment, and connections to support a successful re-entry into the community. Julian enjoys this work and dreams of one day becoming a barber.

“Julian's superpower is that he is self-motivated and really wants to succeed. He takes action to achieve his goal,” said his Education & Employment Specialist, Maria Rangel. “He has been the one driving his success in the program.”

After he finishes at Five Keys Charter, Julian plans to enroll at Moler Barber College to realize his dream.

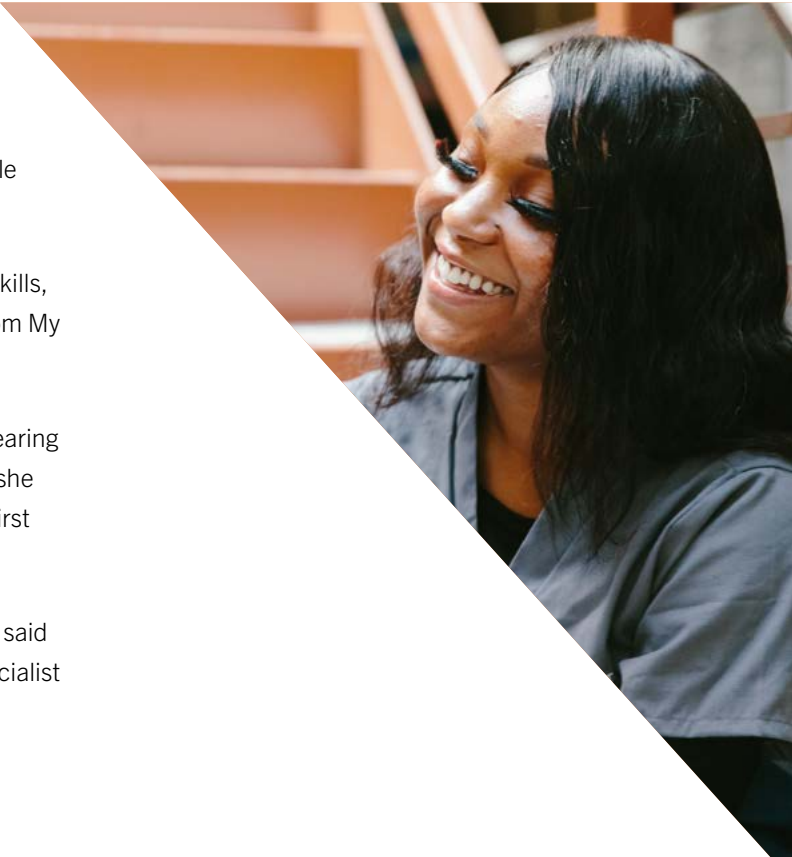
Alexia has home, school, and work sorted

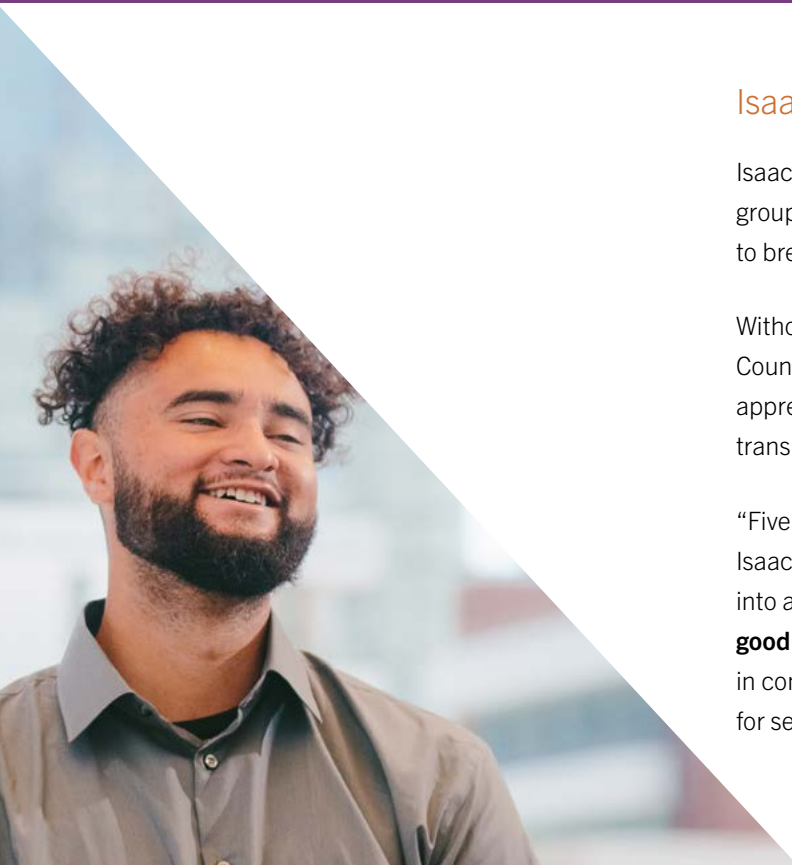
Alexia is proud to be living and working in Alameda County while taking AA courses to become a dental hygienist.

“I've always loved the dentist,” she said. “Now I will have the skills, knowledge, and certification to go out on my own after I exit from My First Place in the fall of 2023.”

Alexia enrolled in the My First Place program at age 18 after hearing about it from her county social worker. She's 20 now and says she appreciates the support and guidance she receives from her First Place team.

“This week, I completed my sealants and polishing segments,” said Alexia. “My First Place for Youth Employment & Education Specialist and Youth Advocate both came out to celebrate with me!”





Isaac is building a trade for the future

Isaac, 19, learned about our My First Place Program when exiting a group home at 18. Through our Apprenticeship Program, he hopes to break into the construction trades.

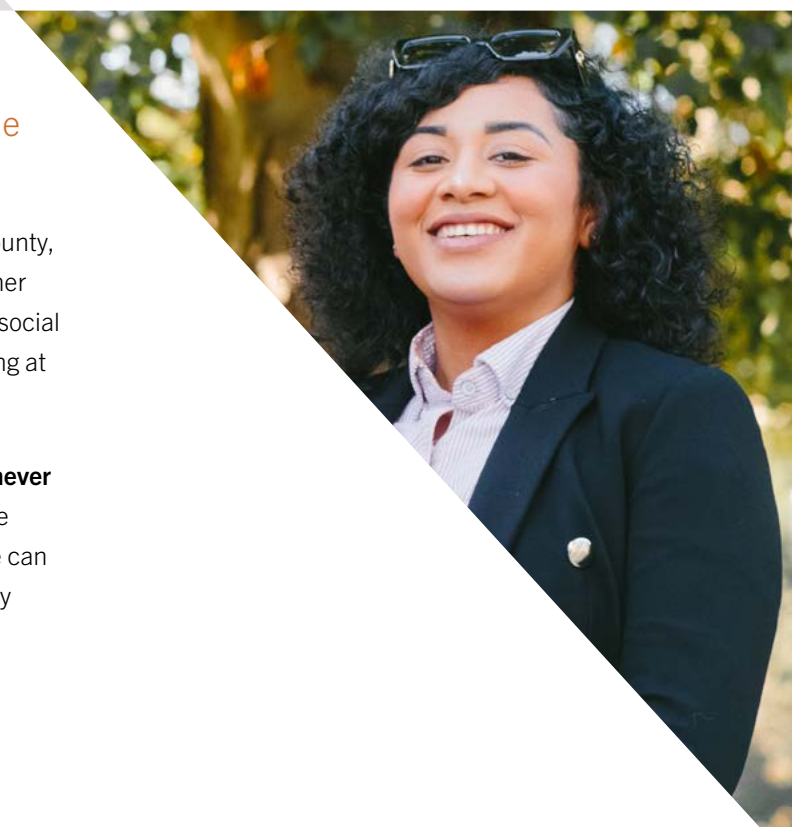
Without a car, it can be hard to get around in sprawling Solano County, and a big challenge Isaac faced when traveling to his apprenticeship. His First Place team helped secure reliable transportation.

“Five years from now, I see myself being in a construction union,” Isaac said. “I graduated from school and the next step is getting into a union because **California isn’t cheap. You’ve got to have a good job.**” Isaac looks forward to the consistently high wages found in construction work. He hopes to stay in our My First Place Program for several years to work and save money.

Brianna is shaping her future while being a role model to others’ success

After two years in our My First Place program in Santa Clara County, Brianna, 21, is studying marketing and technology to achieve her dream of helping people grow their social media footprint as a social media manager. She is also gaining valuable experience working at Bloomingdale’s.

“**My First Place helps young adults become the person they never thought they could be,**” Brianna said. “I’m proud that I’m a role model to my brothers and sisters, knowing I’m a person people can come to about any problems, going back to college to better my future,” she said.





Bridging Gaps in Cincinnati, Ohio

Jason, age 20, loves creative writing and creating and selling his art online, but as a high school senior, he felt overwhelmed by school and didn't want to work. With support from our Cincinnati partner, New Path, Jason enrolled in the My First Place program. His Youth Advocate and Education & Employment Specialist helped Jason recognize pursuing an education as a priority. Together they worked on removing barriers and shifting Jason's mindset. With this caring support in place, Jason found the motivation to get his schoolwork done and graduated this past May.

Jason is proud to have accomplished what felt like an unattainable goal. Now he's working with his Education & Employment Specialist to enroll in college courses that will hone his writing skills while he sells his art online.

We're finding that the best path to the right mix of services lies in customizing assessments and recommendations to fit local needs and capacity. Just as Jason needed individualized support through our programming, we've realized that a one-size-fits-all approach to our national work doesn't fit every region.

For young people like Jason to successfully transition out of foster care and reach their full potential in Cincinnati and Charlotte, we're preparing evaluations for county officials to recommend the right mix of core services based on our My First Place model.

Historic Win for Mississippi Foster Youth

With the passage of the Kinkade FAITH Scholarship Program this past April, former Mississippi foster youth aged 18-21 are now eligible to apply annually to a \$1 million state scholarship fund to cover tuition, fees, and room and board expenses at public and private schools. Our Mississippi Youth Voice leaders, all former foster youth, who advocated to make this historic moment possible, are profoundly inspiring.

Andrea Sanders, Commissioner of the Mississippi Department of Child Protective Services, noted that **these foster youth are the “real heroes” for helping to pass this historic legislation** that addresses barriers Mississippi foster youth have faced in funding, attending, and completing college.

“For me, as someone who doesn’t have a whole lot of financial help, it will definitely motivate me to be able to be the best I can be and go to college and help further my education to reach some of my major goals,” said 21-year-old Maranda Turner, Mississippi Youth Voice member and scholarship advocate.

This scholarship program will impact the lives of foster youth for many years to come—it’s truly a legacy to be proud of!



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Financials*

Revenue

Government	\$19,849,451
Foundation, Corporate, and Individuals	\$7,373,126
Donated/Miscellaneous	\$640,252
Total Revenue	\$27,862,828

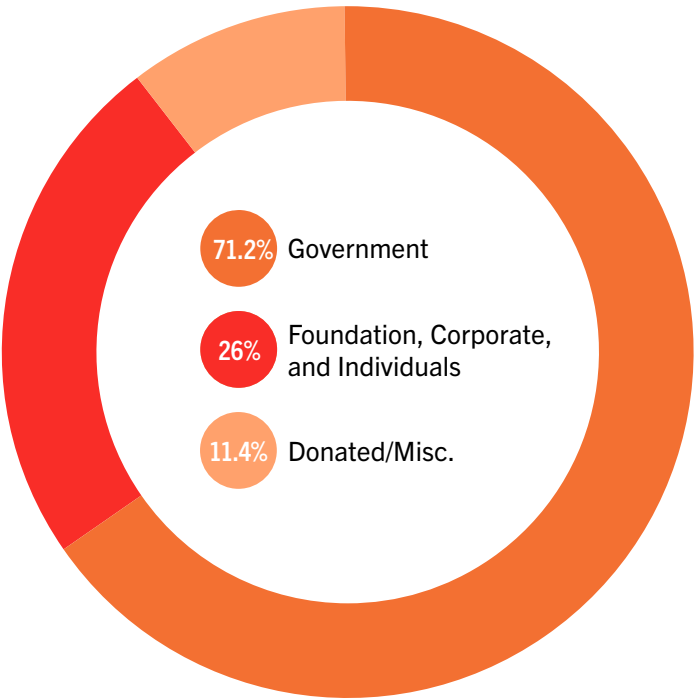
Expenses

Program	\$23,962,381
General/Administration	\$2,714,238
Fundraising	\$1,006,135
Total Expenses	\$27,682,755

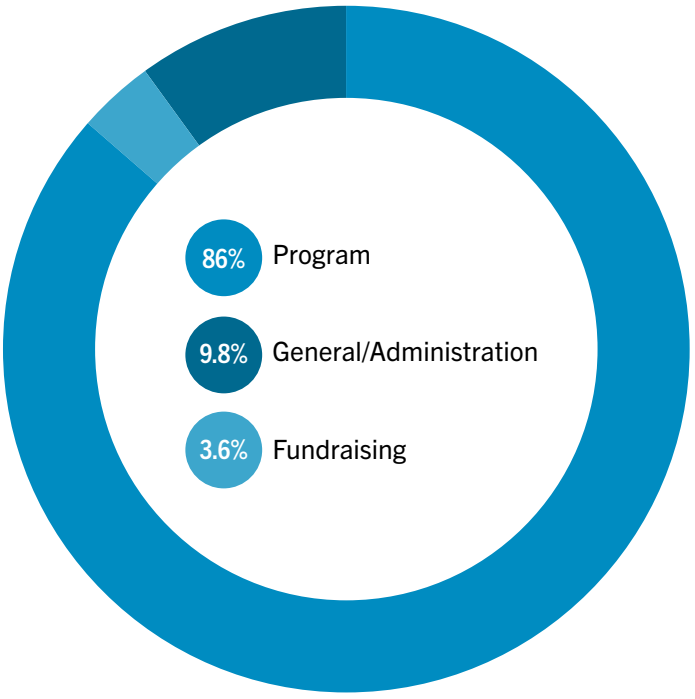
Statement of Financial Position

Current Assets	\$16,801,186
Fixed Assets	\$393,893
Other Assets	\$689,826
Total Assets	\$17,884,905
Total Liabilities	\$3,439,092
Net Assets	\$14,445,813
Total Liabilities and Net Assets	\$17,884,905

Total Revenue \$27,862,828



Total Expenses \$27,682,755



*unaudited



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