

Between Friends Annual Report

FY24

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OUR MISSION

Between Friends is dedicated to preventing domestic violence and ending the cycle of abuse by equipping our communities with the tools necessary for everyone to feel safe and equal in their relationships.

OUR VISION

We envision a society free from domestic violence and abuse.

OUR HISTORY

In 1986, Between Friends was founded by volunteers and friends from the National Council of Jewish Women and the Junior League of Evanston/North Shore as a small grantmaking body dedicated to raising funds for local domestic violence programs. Between Friends began to expand our efforts in 1991, by providing direct crisis intervention services for individuals and families.

MESSAGE FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

As I reflect on the past year, I am reminded that true impact often grows not in times of ease, but in moments of challenge. In recent years, government support sharply declined. The Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) allocations took a cut from \$1.9 billion in 2023 to \$1.3 billion in 2024. For homelessness and domestic violence, \$3.6 billion in federal funds were frozen, and we face ongoing uncertainty from this and other federal funding freezes this year.

And yet, despite these hardships, Between Friends remained steadfast.

We expanded our programming, reached new communities, and continued to provide trauma-informed, healing-centered services to survivors, youth, and families across Chicagoland. Every member of our team—from our frontline advocates to our educators, volunteers, and board members—rose to meet this moment with courage and compassion. Together, we proved that commitment and creativity can carry us through even the most difficult times.

Our work cannot happen alone. Thank you to everyone who stood with us this year. Your support—whether financial, personal, or political—sends a powerful message: that survivors deserve safety, dignity, and hope.

We remain determined to protect and grow the services that make that vision possible. We invite you to continue this journey with us.

Sincerely,

Verda Bhatti

Verda Bhatti
Executive Director



FY24 OUTCOMES

Counseling and Support Services

The Crisis Intervention & Support Services, which includes our trauma-informed and healing-centered counseling and court advocacy programs, served:



560 

individuals through the Court Advocacy Program.

2,179 

callers seeking assistance through the 24 hour Crisis Line.

10,672 

individuals this year through Crisis Intervention & Support Services and Prevention & Education Programs.

95% of adult clients reported increasing their knowledge of strategies for enhancing their safety.

99% of children identified two things they learned to do when they don't feel safe.

93% of clients stated that they learned their rights as victims of domestic violence going through the justice system.

FY24 OUTCOMES

Prevention & Education

Between Friends continues to be a community leader in providing evidence-informed prevention and education programs to youth and adults.

The **Adult Education Program** trained

1,574



healthcare providers, social service providers, educators, parent/caregivers, etc.

REACH Educated

6,143



young people across **35 Chicago Public Schools**.

99%

of adults reported knowledge of the **warning signs of domestic violence**.

of adults reported that they felt **more confident in responding to domestic violence**.

93%

of youth reported knowing the warning signs and dynamics of abusive relationships.

95%

of young people reported knowledge of **how to get help if they were being harmed in a relationship**.

A client's closing letter



I learned that it's okay to be angry about what had happened to you by your abuser and that I shouldn't feel guilty about what happened. I learned laws that I didn't know were in place to help my daughters and I to stay safe. I learned the cycle of abuse and how it affects me and everyone around me. I learned the medical information behind the reason for my headache after strangulation. I learned that I am not alone. Thank you Sasha* for all your help. Because of you and Between Friends Staff I am rebuilding myself into a new and strong woman. I will remember all the information you have shared with me. I will remember the fun night outs at the concert and restaurant. I will remember the help on transportation and encouraging my decision making for safety. I will remember when you and David* checked up on me regarding my abuser back in August. I will remember when David* helped me with getting on the housing list and making sure I have a safe place to go. I have hope my daughters and I will be safe. I have hope for the future in our new chapter in life filled with happiness and laughter.

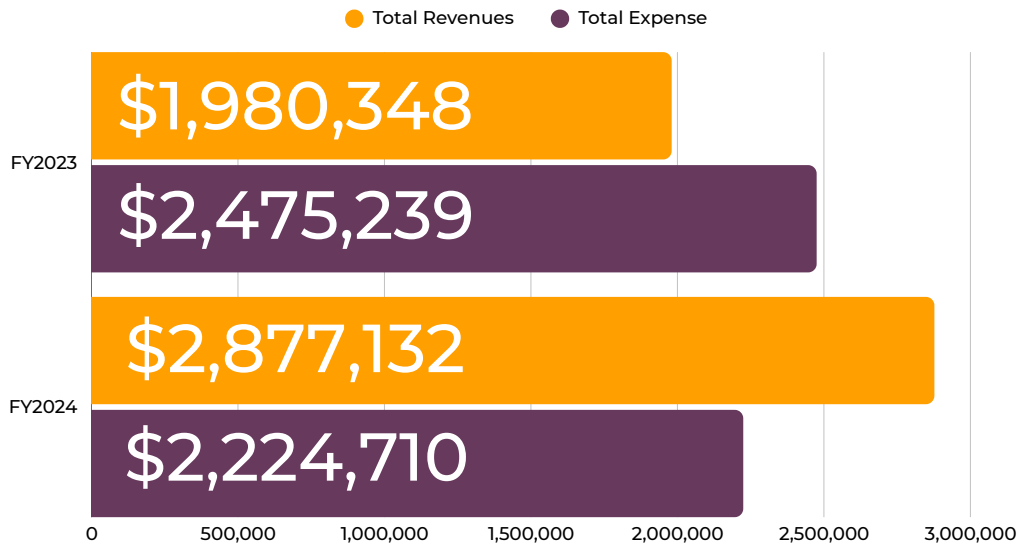
*all names have been changed to protect client/ staff confidentiality

FOUNDATION AND CORPORATE SUPPORT

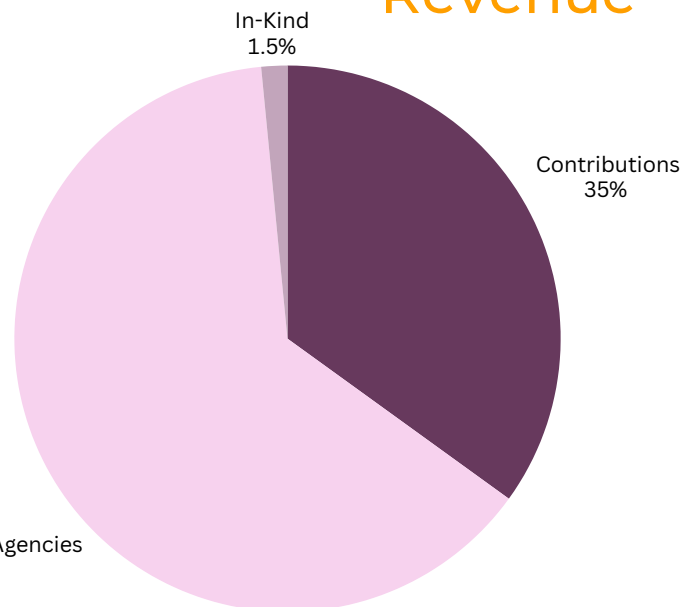
Allstate Foundation
Ascension St. Francis
Calmoseptine
Chicago Foundation for Women
Crown Family Philanthropies
The Egarter Family Foundation
Ernest and Sally Micek Foundation
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Fourth Presbyterian Church
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NorthShore University HealthSystem
Old Second National Bank
Performance Wealth
Rachel B. Williams Foundation
The Reva & David Logan Foundation
S&C Electric Company Fund at The Chicago
Community Foundation
United Way of Metropolitan Chicago
VNA Foundation
Wintrust Bank Rogers Park

Financial Breakdown

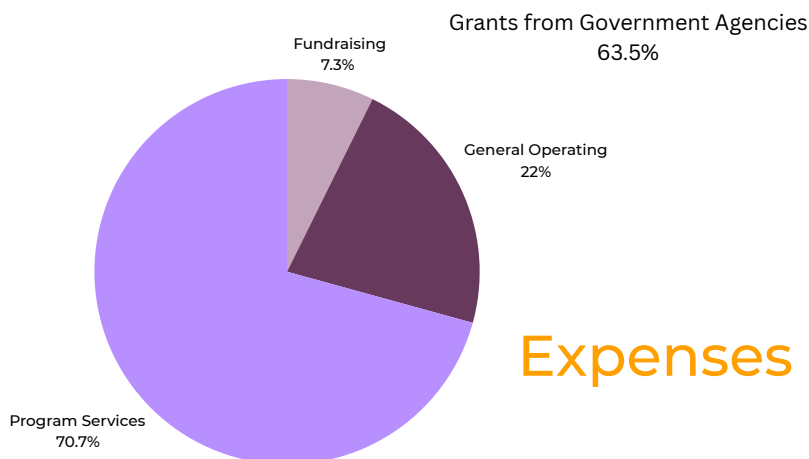
This section includes the breakdown of revenue and expenses for FY24 in comparison to FY23. Thank you to our individual, foundation, corporate, and government partners who make our work possible.



Revenue



Expenses



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Raytheon Technologies

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SENIOR LEADERSHIP

Verda Bhatti

Executive Director

Nancy Toncy

Director of Survivor Services

Elena Calafell

Director of Prevention & Community Education

Molly Pim

Director of Development

Bernard Mariano

Chief of Staff

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS



Between Friends

*We thank you for your continued support
in our efforts to empower victims and
prevent the spread of domestic violence.*

CONTACT

Between Friends

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