

# 2024

## Community Report | Solid Ground



# Our programs and services have touched nearly **2 million lives** over the last 50 years.

## Our Mission

Solid Ground works to end poverty and undo racism and other oppressions that are root causes of poverty.

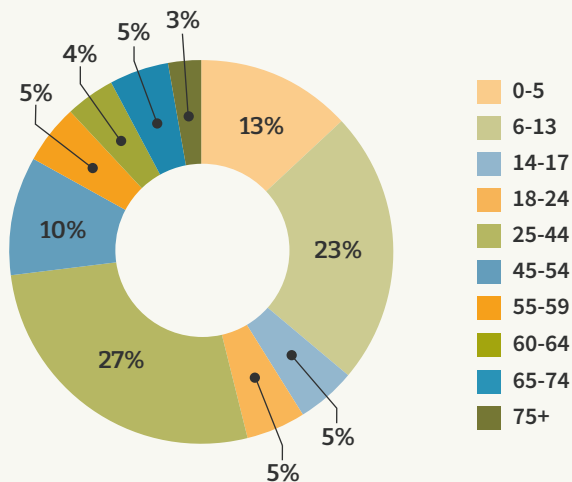
## Our Vision

We envision a community beyond poverty and oppression where all have equitable opportunity to thrive.

## Our Impact

Solid Ground's programs connect with more than 65,000 people every year, empowering them to work toward living their best lives.

### AGE



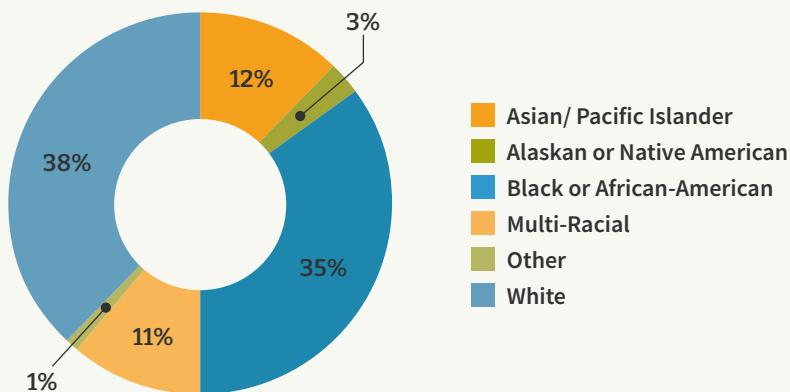
### INCOME



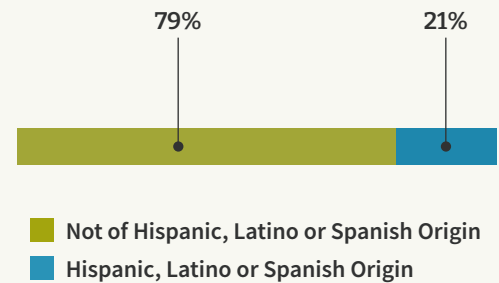
# 99%

are at or below the federal poverty level.

### RACE



### ETHNICITY



Based on available participant demographics, October 2023 — September 2024.

# Dear friends,

Solid Ground got its start in 1974 because a group of neighbors saw pressing needs in their community and decided to do something about them.

A lot has changed in the last half century, including the size and diversity of the populations we serve. But one thing that's remained constant at Solid Ground is our commitment to collaborating with our community to identify and address new needs as they emerge.

This was core to our approach in developing our new five-year strategic plan, Vision 2030, as we celebrated our 50th anniversary in the spring of 2024. Guided by our Community Accountability Council (CAC), with input from 17 listening sessions and more than 70 community members, we heard that many of our neighbors are trapped in survival mode, struggling to meet day-to-day needs and overcome barriers to get help.

## ***Based on what we heard, we developed four goals to guide our work into 2030:***

- ▶ **Human-centered response:** We'll expand and enhance our trauma-informed, client-centered approach to make resources more equitably available and easily accessible for those who need them.
- ▶ **Be the village for today's youth:** We'll greatly expand our asset-based programming to give young people greater opportunities to develop their skills, passions, and self-worth.
- ▶ **Enhance well-being:** We'll build on existing partnerships to make culturally relevant, age-appropriate behavioral health and wellness services more easily accessible to everyone we serve.
- ▶ **Organizational excellence & resilience:** Because we can't continue to provide the services our community deserves if our staff isn't compensated at a level that reflects their true value, we'll continue to support system-wide efforts to secure wage equity for human services workers.

These commitments are not a change of mission but rather a north star to guide the work we've always done: helping our community meet their most basic needs, creating opportunities for everyone to thrive, and effecting change in the systems that keep people from moving beyond poverty.

None of us could have predicted that we would end 2024 in such a vastly different landscape with new and grave threats to the well-being of those we serve. And while we remain committed to pursuing the goals of Vision 2030 in the years to come, Solid Ground also stands ready to adapt to these new needs and do right by our community, no matter what it takes.

Thank you for standing with us and with the communities we serve. Your partnership makes this work possible.

With gratitude,



A stylized, handwritten signature in black ink.

Shalimar Gonzales, CEO



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mary Ruffin".

Mary Ruffin, Immediate Past  
Chair, Board of Directors

# MEETING BASIC NEEDS



When all your energy is spent on the pursuit of the next meal, the next place to sleep, or money for the next utility, rent, or medical bill, it's extremely difficult — if not impossible — to dream of and plan for a future beyond day-to-day survival.

At Solid Ground, we believe the path to happier, more fulfilling futures starts with the stability we experience when our most basic needs are met, including secure housing, nutritious food, and accessible transportation. We partner with individuals and families to identify their own particular needs and serve as a resource to overcome barriers.

“*After an accident left me with a disability, I didn't know where to turn for help. Solid Ground's program provided the guidance and support I desperately needed. They helped me apply for Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI) and walked me through every step of the process.*

— SOLID GROUND PARTICIPANT

## 2024 IMPACT



**8,024,774**  
pounds of food  
were distributed to food banks  
and community health clinics.



**5,513** pounds  
of fresh produce  
grown at our Giving Garden  
nourished the community.

**170,000+**  
door-to-door rides  
helped get seniors and others with  
special needs to key services.

**310** survivors &  
family members  
escaping homelessness and abuse moved into  
secure housing with supportive services.



**757** children  
& adults  
moved into safe housing with  
connections to supportive services.

### The Gift of Solid Ground

By Lyssa Bastet, writer & Sand Point Housing resident

Six years ago  
I had a nonverbal toddler  
We lived in a hotel  
I fundraised on Facebook daily to survive

I was terrified  
I had made a leap I wasn't sure was practical  
Left a shelter that threatened our livelihood  
Relying on strangers to foot the bill

Scared as I was  
I couldn't keep quiet  
Even as I was drowning  
I was looking for lifeboats for us all

A CPS call on me is a CPS call on all of us  
If my family misses a meal, we all miss one  
When I am homeless, we all go without shelter  
If no one hears me, nobody else is heard

I didn't know I was the voice of the void then  
I just knew I had to survive  
I knew I had to make it out  
To raise Mysun (M Y S U N) and tell my story

For two months, I made a post every single day  
For two months, I shared our lives  
For two months, I wrote stories  
For two months, I made phone calls

I went to appointments  
I filled out applications  
I pushed a giant stroller to the market  
I cried in bed at night

I can honestly say I never lost hope  
I lost sleep  
I lost patience  
I lost most of my mind



# NURTURING SUCCESS

In our society, the opportunities and support systems that allow people to thrive are often out of reach for those living on low incomes. While helping to meet the basic needs of the people we serve, Solid Ground also supports them as they work toward long-term stability and goals they've set.

This support is different for every individual and can range from one-on-one legal assistance for accessing public benefits, to nutrition classes for healthful eating on a budget, to tutoring and therapeutic children's programming. We partner with each community member by connecting them to counseling, resources, and tools they tell us they need to plan for the future beyond next month's rent.

“*I feel so much better knowing that Solid Ground is there for me and wants to see me continue my success on getting a better, secure life for my kids and myself.*”

— SOLID GROUND PARTICIPANT

But hope?  
 I've always been foolishly full of it  
 It is a major part of my toolkit  
 Don't know what I would do without it  
 Holding on to that mustard seed  
 Meant that I was allowed reprieve  
 After riding the dangerous seas of late-stage capitalism  
 I was granted the gift of stable housing

What a difference a home makes  
 I was finally given what it takes to  
 Make roots and stretch wings  
 I could finally use my voice to sing instead of yell

My toddler became a preschooler  
 Then a kindergartener  
 No longer nonverbal  
 No longer at such a disadvantage

No more frantic Facebook posts  
 No more late-night tears  
 No more isolation  
 Still some impostor syndrome

That kindergartener is now a third grader  
 With intense main character energy  
 He's opinionated and sassy  
 He speaks his mind unapologetically

I am now an aspiring poet  
 Still housed, still making noise  
 About spirituality, mental illness, and politics  
 And what could be achieved with the simple gift of Solid Ground

## 2024 IMPACT



**750+**  
**individuals**  
 received services to avoid eviction and remain safely in their homes.

**1,600+**  
**students & adults**  
 received hands-on cooking and nutrition education.



**1,155** youth  
 learned how food systems work via Marra Farm field trips.

**125** 1:1 weekly therapy sessions  
 addressed residents' behavioral health needs and goals.



**238** mental health screenings  
 helped identify housing residents' needs.



Watch Lyssa perform her poem.

# SPREADING CHANGE

We can't end poverty in the U.S. unless we address the oppressive systems and policy failures that keep millions of Americans from moving beyond day-to-day survival to stable and thriving futures.

That's why Solid Ground partners with the experts — people who've experienced poverty in their own lives — to identify community needs and advance policy solutions at the city, county, and state levels. Together, we work to undo the policies and systems that perpetuate poverty in our community.

“ *A lot of people feel like they can't change the system. The 'big people' have all the power. But we've demonstrated for many years that actually, regular people can change things. We fight every day.*

— JUANITA MAESTAS, POVERTY ACTION BOARD CO-CHAIR & ANTI-POVERTY ACTIVIST



## Legislative Wins

- ✓ **New time-limit exception** for families with children under age 2 who receive Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF) to ensure critical financial support continues for families while caring for infants and young children.
- ✓ **Reinstatement of the full Child Support Passthrough** to ensure that child support payments to families on TANF go to the children, not the state.
- ✓ **Clear definition of a loan** to prevent lenders from evading Washington state lending laws by affiliating with out-of-state banks.

## 2024 IMPACT

**4,570** participants

accessed Medicare counseling and guidance from trained Statewide Health Insurance Benefits Advisors (SHIBA) volunteers.



**37,610** volunteer hours

supported Solid Ground programs and partner agencies.



**1,265** community members

donated time valued at \$1.5 million.



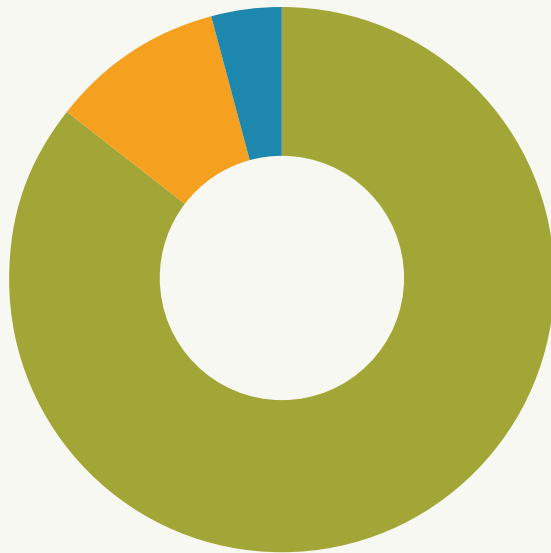
Stay in the know about how to spread change!

Sign up for Network News from Solid Ground's advocacy partner, Statewide Poverty Action Network.



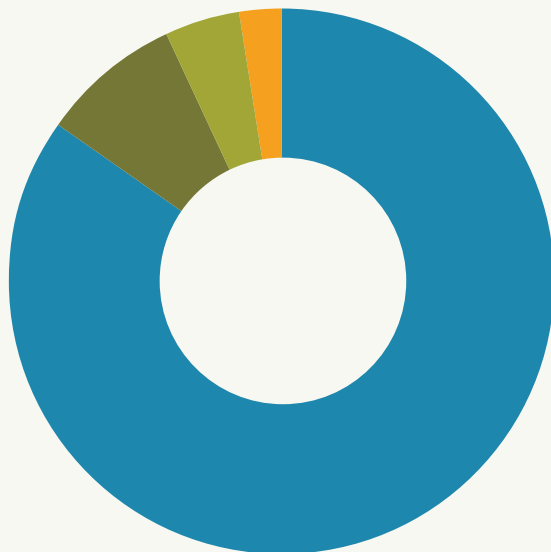
# FINANCES

## 2024 EXPENSES



Program Services	\$27,179,765
Administration	\$3,651,752
Fundraising	\$1,502,497
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$32,334,014</b>

## 2024 REVENUE



Grant Revenue	\$27,715,044
Contributions	\$2,667,215
Net Assets Released	\$1,474,875
Other Revenue	\$791,480
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$32,648,614</b>



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a difference?  
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