



ANNUAL REPORT

Fiscal Year 2024

July 1, 2023 to June 30, 2024

HERNDON-RESTON

FISH

FRIENDLY INSTANT SYMPATHETIC HELP



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BOARD OF DIRECTORS*

Elliot Wicks, President
Janet Hyman, Vice President
David Mandel, Vice President
Jack Gazlay, Treasurer,
Roy Miller, Secretary
Robert Averne
Kathy Jones
Peggy LeReche
Robert Reed
Susan Sather

COMMITTEE CHAIRS*

Executive Committee - Elliot Wicks
Finance - Jack Gazlay
Assistance - Peggy LeReche
Personnel - Elliot Wicks
Development - Mary Saunders
FISH Fling - David Mandel and Mary Saunders
Holiday Food & Gift - Mary Saunders

STAFF*

Mary Saunders, Executive Director
Lilia Jiménez-Siuhengalu, Emergency Assistance Manager
Lynn Warner, Bargain Loft Manager
Linda Bracewell, Bookkeeper
*As of December 2024.

HERNDON-RESTON FISH MISSION

Herndon-Reston FISH, Inc., is a nonsectarian, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing **F**riendly **I**ntant **S**ympathetic **H**elp to Herndon and Reston residents in short-term financial crises. Work is performed by a small staff and many talented, enthusiastic volunteers. FISH works closely with social workers from Fairfax County, schools, local hospitals, and other non-profit organizations.



Every year, FISH helps thousands of predominantly very low-income families and individuals in all demographic categories by paying for rent, utilities, medical items and prescriptions, food, house-hold items, and other short-term emergency needs. FISH is dedicated to providing help to residents in Herndon and Reston who are struggling with an urgent need for financial stability. We seek to prevent crisis situations from escalating and thereby cause significant disruptions in families' ability to cope with their challenging lives. FISH's many efforts are mostly concentrated on the almost 7,000 residents who live at or below the poverty level in Herndon and Reston. They are from all racial and ethnic groups, gender identities, language groups, and family types.

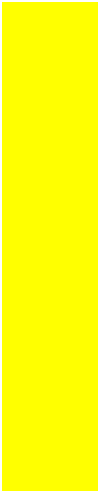


The direct cash assistance that FISH provides prevents homelessness and utility cutoffs, and it can shield families from the dilemma of having to choose between paying for food or paying for medicine. When clients require additional ongoing assistance to overcome such fiscal challenges, we work with other public and private providers to ensure that the longer-term needs of vulnerable clients are met.

INCLUSION

Herndon-Reston FISH is committed to realizing and maintaining a welcoming environment that embraces diversity. We provide assistance to people of all races, genders, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and religious beliefs. We encourage and promote the potential talents of each volunteer and staff member. We strive to foster an atmosphere where everyone will do her or his best to work in pursuit of FISH's mission and goals.

RECENT HISTORY



Although FISH has been helping needy families for almost 56 years, the past several years have presented an unprecedented challenge. The situation has been substantially affected by the Covid pandemic and its aftermath. FISH played a vital role in helping Fairfax County distribute financial assistance made possible by multiple rounds of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), and the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) programs. This allowed FISH to serve not only more people than ever before but with significantly larger awards than ever before. But by FY2023-2024 most of the funding made possible these federal programs was ended.

RECENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Federal Program Experience

The availability all funds provided through the federal relief programs and passed through Fairfax County to FISH for distribution greatly increased both the number and size of payments that we made. The results are shown in the table below. The reduction in the number of cases in fiscal years 2023 and 2024 reflects the fact that the federal programs were winding down.

FISH FEDERAL PROGRAM CASES

	Number of Rent Cases	Average Rent Payment	Number of Utility Cases	Average Util- ity Payment
FY20	94	\$2298	19	\$419
FY21	455	\$4055	106	\$368
FY22	548	\$8343	129	\$659
FY23	146	\$6454	17	\$522
FY24	112	\$3597	0	0

Traditional Program Experience

While FISH was administering these Federal programs in coordination with Fairfax County's Coordinated Services Planning Office, we continued our ongoing Emergency Assistance program that operates with funds that FISH raises on its own. During the last three fiscal years, the scale of these efforts can be summed up in the following table that compiles the numbers of cases, average awards, and total spending for emergency rent support, utility bills, and related expenses that include medical/dental items and prescriptions, household items, transport challenges, and other emergency needs.

Fiscal year 2023 saw a substantial uptick in the number of rent cases, the average rent payment, and the number of utility cases. This probably again reflects the fact that as the federal assistance programs are being phased out, the need for assistance remains high and rent levels are increasing, so the help that FISH provides was again essential for meeting needs in the community.

FISH TRADITIONAL ASSISTANCE PROGRAM CASES

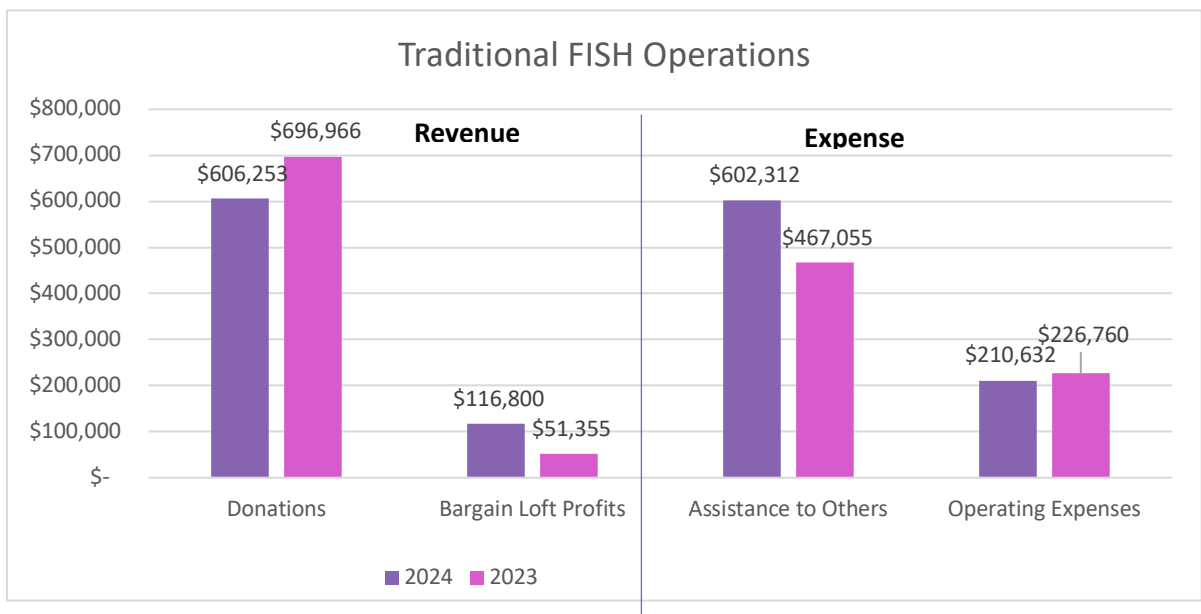
	Number of Rent Cases	Average Rent Payment	Number of Utility Cases	Average Utility Payment	Total Payments
FY21	207	\$632	115	\$383	\$189,177
FY22	261	\$620	175	\$422	\$244,887
FY23	357	\$856	295	\$410	\$450,610
FY24	338	\$1205	332	\$495	\$581,857

FISH FUNDING & SPENDING

The following graphs give a picture of the sources of funding for both FISH's traditional assistance programs and the federally funded programs as well as how these funds are spent.

Traditional FISH Assistance

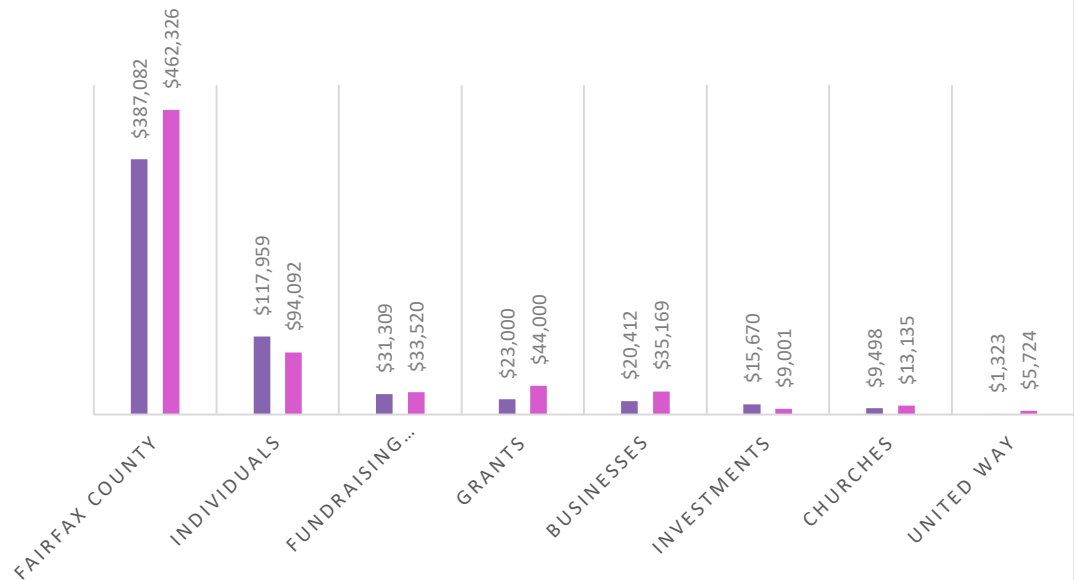
In fiscal year 2023-2024, for traditional FISH operations, revenue from donations declined by 13 percent, which was partially offset by an increase in Bargain Loft profits of 127 percent. On the expenditure side, assistance to others increased by 29 percent while operating expenses declined by 7 percent.



The funding FISH received from Fairfax County for our traditional assistance program in FY2023-2024 decreased over the previous year, totaling \$387,082.

SOURCES OF TRADITIONAL FISH DONATIONS

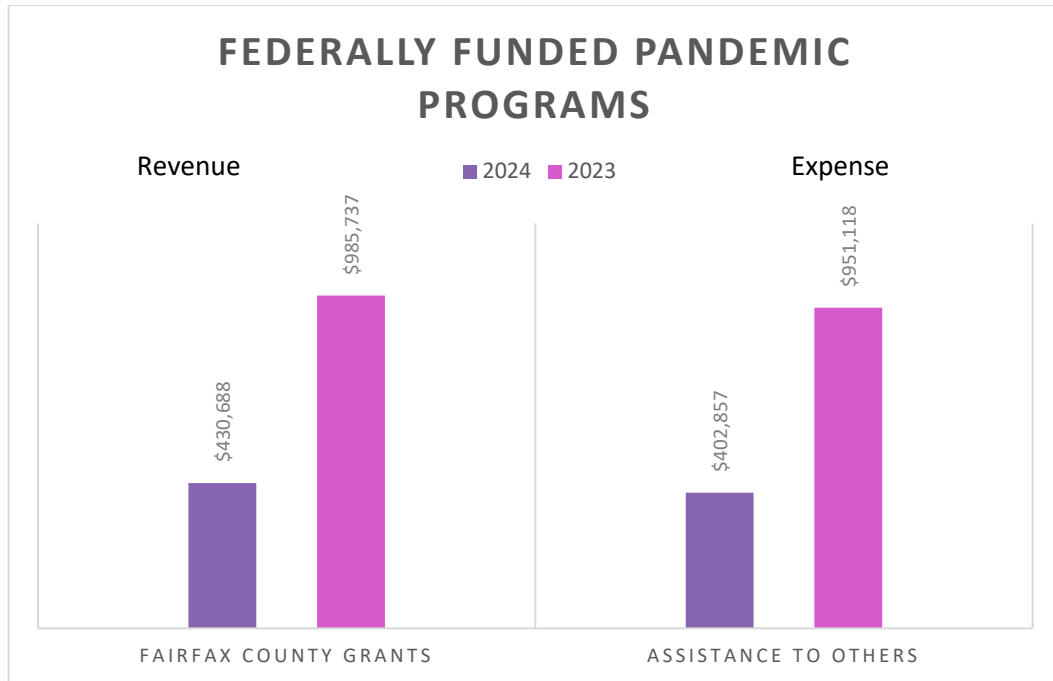
■ 2024 ■ 2023



Federally Funded Programs

As shown below, both funding and assistance supported by federal pandemic funding programs decreased substantially: in FY2024, funding was only 44% of the previous year's amounts, and assistance was only 42% of the previous amount.

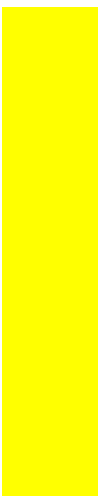
As federal support for the assistance we provide is phased out, we will, as always, rely on our traditional supporters—individual donations, foundation grants, business contributions, and support from religious institutions, as well as support from Fairfax County.



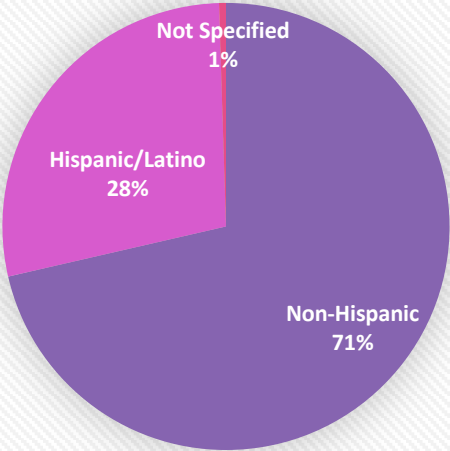
WHO WE HELPED AND FOR WHAT PURPOSE

In FY2023-2024, HRFISH served about 1,700 people through our basic emergency financial assistance program. While helping families with funds raised by us, we also assisted Fairfax County with distribution of federal COVID rent assistance funds to another 270 people in this same area. In the past, households were almost evenly split between the Herndon and Reston communities, but more recently we are receiving an increasing number of clients from the Herndon zip codes, especially those areas deemed “hot spots” by Fairfax County. The past year 55% of our clients were from Herndon and 41% were from Reston. The number of homeless cases remains at 4%.

Over two-thirds of our clients assisted in FY2024 had female heads of household, many with children. Our assistance is non-discriminatory. The percentage breakdown by ethnicity and race of the head of households assisted by HRFISH basic program in FY2024 is shown in the charts below.



Recipient Ethnicity



Race

Black/African-American	45.9%
White	26.0%
Asian	6.9%
Native American/Alaska Native	0.7%
Pacific Island/Hawaiian Native	0.5%
Multi	6.2%
Not specified	2.6%
Other	11.3%
Total	100.0%

Income Level



TOTAL NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD	1	11.6%
	2	15.5%
	3	15.2%
	4	22.5%
	5	15.2%
	6+	19.9%
	Total	100.0%

TOTAL MONTHLY AMT PAID	Rent and/or Security Deposit	\$303,716	68.0%
	Electricity	\$93,672	21.0%
	Gas	\$11,768	2.6%
	Water	\$11,967	2.7%
	Prescription/Med	\$1,455	0.3%
	Dental	\$2,283	0.5%
	Car	\$11,449	2.6%
	Other	\$10,139	2.3%
	Total	\$446,448	100.0%

INDIVIDUALS WE HELPED

Described below are examples of the situations of individuals and families that we helped in the past year. Because we have dollar limits on the amounts we can provide, our help is not always sufficient to meet the need. Thus our help is often supplemented by contributions from other agencies that serve populations in need.

Cynthia, a woman in her early thirties with a teen-age child, requested help with rent. Because of an error regarding her place of residence, her wages were garnished in March for unpaid property tax in Loudoun County, even though she has been a Fairfax County resident for over a year. Cynthia was to receive a refund, but the process was going to take 12 to 16 weeks. Hence, she needed help to cover the current cost of rent. Cynthia has a stable full-time job, and she is exploring additional part-time employment opportunities. She has also applied for child support to increase the family income. FISH was able to help Cynthia in the amount of \$1,500, with the expectation that with this help she would be able to achieve a stable situation.

Margaret, a woman in her mid-40s was recently widowed. She is currently employed only part-time. She faced multiple extra expenses and was at risk of having her electricity cut off. She was able to pay half of the electric bill on the date of the

service cut off, and she made arrangements to pay the rest on a sixth month payment plan of \$14 per month. FISH was able to help with the situation by providing assistance in the amount of \$108.

Joe is a recent immigrant from Afghanistan. He and his wife, who are in their late 30s, have four children between the ages of three and 13. The family moved into Fairfax County in November 2023. After living at a relative's house for a couple of months, the family was able to reach a stable situation. Joe is employed and was able to sign a lease for a home in Herndon in March 2024. He is currently looking for higher-income employment in his field. But the family needed financial assistance because their entire savings had to be allocated to pay the security deposit and the first month's rent. The family needed assistance to cover the rent, and FISH was able to provide \$2,300. The expectation is that with this assistance the family will be able to achieve financial stability and move forward after this difficult period in their lives.

Jane is a single mother in her late 20s who has five children between the ages of three and 11. She lost her job after missing work for three days, which resulted from the fact that her children's father ran away with the kids. Jane suffered a stroke as a result and was in the hospital for nine days. She was reunited with her children when she got out of the hospital, and she is now working full-time and receiving child support. Even so, she has struggled to get back on track because of her medical bills and court expenses. She was also facing the prospect of being evicted, although she is now on a waitlist for low-income housing. She needed help to pay her back rent and utilities. FISH provided \$2,300 to assist with rent and utilities.

ADDITIONAL PROGRAMS

The Bargain Loft Thrift Store

The Bargain Loft was started 44 years ago, in 1981, as a volunteer-run thrift store selling household items, jewelry, furniture, collectibles, and more. Profits generated by The Bargain Loft support the FISH assistance programs to help residents with short-term emergency needs. About 45 volunteers support the paid Bargain Loft staff members. During the fiscal year, The Bargain Loft generated about \$154,495 in revenue, more than 32% more than the previous year.

We depend upon generous members of the community for donated gently used items to sell. We are grateful for these donations. Please keep us in mind when you are disposing of no-longer-needed items.

Holiday Food & Gift Program

In the winter holiday season, FISH annually offers food and gift assistance to households with very low incomes. By providing this assistance, we hope to relieve some of the stress of the holidays by allowing families to use their own funds for housing or other basic needs. This helps prevent financial crises. In addition to community members we have helped throughout the year, families are referred to us primarily by local public schools/Head Start, the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, and community-based organizations. We traditionally provided non-perishable foods and gifts for children but in the last several years we provided grocery gift cards rather than actual food items.

Our 2024 grant application to Fairfax County's Food Assistance Program Round 3 that provided the monies for us to purchase of \$42,500 in grocery gift cards was funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. We distributed about \$12,925 of the grocery gift cards for fresh food. Additionally, we provided 185 holiday gifts to children, including nearly \$1,800 in \$25 Target gift cards for youth 11 to 18. Local individuals and groups supplemented our gift card supplies with donations.

Fling Gala

Herndon-Reston FISH raised more than \$31,234 through our annual FISH Fling and Silent Auction. These proceeds help local residents who are in financial crises and at risk of becoming homeless. About 120 local residents and dignitaries attended the event, and collectively the auction raised more than \$7,600. Additionally, local companies, nonprofit partners, churches, and individuals contributed more than \$29,855 in sponsorship. These funds are put to use helping our neighbors in the Herndon-Reston communities who are unable to pay rent, utility bills, medical expenses, or repairs to cars needed to get to jobs. Our neighbors in financial distress are able to receive the help they need to get them through their crises and back to stability. Many thanks for those who attended and contributed to the FISH Fling.

Food Assistance Program

In 2024, we applied for and were awarded a Fairfax County Food Assistance Program Lane 1 grant of \$42,500. We received this funding too late to purchase \$25 Giant grocery gift cards for distribution to families facing food insecurity. For this program, we worked with local schools and other nonprofit agencies. Additionally, families were referred by churches, other nonprofits, Fairfax-Falls Church

Community Services Board, and the Fairfax County Police Department's Victim Services Division.

Lastly, we collected non-perishable food through our Bargain Loft Thrift Store. We, in turn, provided the donations to the St. Anne's Episcopal Church's food pantry, a partnership we established in the fall of 2021 during a Fairfax County "Stuff the Bus" event.

DONORS

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the foundations, corporations, religious institutions, other organizations and individuals who donated to support our activities.

\$50,000-plus

Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool

\$10,000-\$49,999

The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc.

Gupta Family Foundation

Nelson J. & Katherine Friant Post Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

Reston Community Center, County of Fairfax

United Christian Parish

\$2,000-\$4999

Anonymous

Google

Griffin-Owens Insurance Specialists, LLC

Lockheed Martin Workplace Giving

Philip L. Graham Fund

St John Neumann Church

Stern Family Trust

\$500-\$1,999

Anonymous

Anthem HealthKeepers Plus

Bank of America Charitable Fund, The

Bechtel Employees Club

Benevity Causes/American Online Giving Foundation



Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation
Estate of Ruth O. Tatlock
German Friends of FISH, Inc.
Hidden Creek Country Club Maloney Cup Golf Group
Holder Construction Group, LLC
Independent Project Analysis, Inc. (IPA)
Kevin and Jeanne Fay Fund, The (in Memory of Jacqueline Fay)
Marginot Family Fund
Memorials
Northwest Federal Credit Union
PayPal Giving Fund and Associated Platforms
Unitarian Universalist Church of Reston
United Way of National Capital Area

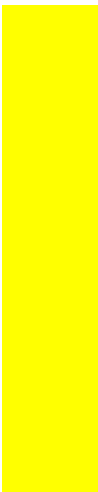


Up to \$499

Charities Aid Foundation of America
Cornerstones
PayPal and Associated Platforms
Reston Lions Charities, Inc.

In-Kind

Gift Card Donors
Individual donors of toys and non-perishable food for our Holiday Food & Gift program
The many business and individual donors to our 2024 FISH Fling Auction



Thank you too to the many Individuals and families that contributed to FISH in FY2024.

WORDS OF APPRECIATION

[The Bargain Loft offers] Great Bargains of clean, beautifully presented top notch items! Plus such a Corps of kind, efficient volunteers so proceeds really go for community help. Their SALES are incredible! And all proceeds go to help people in the community, so a great place to take donations.

-Bargain Loft Customer

Great Bargains of clean, beautifully presented top notch items! Plus such a Corps of kind, efficient volunteers so proceeds really go for community help. Their SALES are incredible! And all proceeds go to help people in the community, so a great place to take donations.

-BL Customer 2

Thank you very much for your generous support in assisting those in need. . Thank you for your continued support and the valuable work you do for those in need.

-Case Manager, Northern Virginia Family Services

Thank you so much for helping us. We thank God for Fish and how you have taken the stress away concerning our car!

-FISH Client

[From a CPS Social Worker in commenting on the expression of appreciation from a client helped by FISH.] I know what we do gets overlooked often but this client you chose to assist this week was extremely grateful and sent an email about how much it meant to her. Those are sometimes rare in our line of work and it made my day but it couldn't have been done without you!! Thank you and all of HRFISH!!!



HERNDON-RESTON FISH, INC.

1141 Elden Street, Suite 200
Herndon, VA 20170