

HEALING TO ACTION

BUILDING SURVIVOR POWER

**20
24**

IMPACT REPORT





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ALLIES AND SUPPORTERS,



2024 was a banner year for Healing to Action. We received our highest-ever number of applications for the Healing Generations Leadership program. Our leaders piloted a violence prevention workshop series for caregivers that was so successful, Chicago Public Schools plans to scale it across the school district. In November, we launched our first-ever Solidarity Mercadito, allowing our community to engage in rebellious joy and support survivors' economic self-determination.

Yet, in these early months of 2025, we are already feeling the harmful impacts of cruel policies on people we deeply care about, and who are indispensable to our community.

We do not know what the future holds. But what we do know is that in our base of survivor leaders, we have some of the most creative, resourceful partners we could hope for to safeguard and advance our mission. Healing to Action remains steadfast in building survivor power, and collaborating with survivors to create an alternative world where survivors are seen as the powerful individuals they are, and their solutions undo the harmful structures in our social fabric that perpetuate gender-based violence.

As we move into a political climate run by individuals who normalize sexual violence, building the collective power of survivors is needed now more than ever. Being timid now does not yield the opportunity to act with courage in the future.

As an organization, we will protect our leaders, and their work, as they continue to build new, bold alternatives to end gender-based violence in their communities. We know we can rely on you, our passionate and dedicated supporters, to meet the urgency of this moment and to ensure that survivors face the coming struggles with power. **We hope that this report is a reminder of the future we are fighting for together.**

With gratitude,



Sheerine Alemzadeh, she/her(s)
Co-founder, Co-director



Karla Altmayer, she/they
Co-founder, Co-director

MISSION AND VISION

Our Mission is to end gender-based violence by building the leadership and collective power of the communities most impacted—survivors from immigrant, low-income, disability, and LGBTQ+ communities, and communities of color.



Our Vision is a future free from gender-based violence.

What is Gender-Based Violence?

Gender-based violence is violence against a person who does not conform to gendered expectations or stereotypes. This can include physical and psychological violence by intimate partners, sexual assault, rape, and stalking. It also includes physical and psychological violence against people who do not conform to traditional gender roles like gay, lesbian, bisexual, trans, intersex, and gender-questioning people.

The HTA Community

HTA is a powerful collective representing a wide spectrum of individuals from all walks of life. We're made up of women, non-binary individuals, Black people, people of color, proud LGBTQ+ folks, energetic young people, hard-working parents, first-borns, first-gens, neurodiverse people, people with disabilities, and those with rich multi-racial and multi-ethnic backgrounds.

OUR SURVIVOR-LED MODEL

Combining leadership development, grassroots organizing, and capacity building, HTA's program model enables survivors to develop bold solutions that address the root causes of gender-based violence and eradicate the shame and stigma surrounding it in their communities.

Survivor Leadership Development

Building the leadership of survivors and their communities through programs like **Healing Generations** and **Survivor-Leader Circles**

Grassroots Initiatives

Survivors build the collective power of the communities most impacted by gender-based violence through the **Sex Ed Works Campaign** and **Peer-to-Peer Outreach**

Movement Capacity Building

Building the field of frontline workers and organizers through **Healing to Action's Survivor Power Institute**



OUR VALUES

- 01** **We are survivor-centered and survivor-led.** Our work is directed by and for survivors, who are wise, resourceful experts uniquely equipped to identify and respond to the root causes of gender-based violence. We are accountable to survivor leaders' vision, who actively shape, implement, and evaluate the success of our work.
- 02** **We are working towards liberation.** We see liberation as a collective state of joy where every person's experiences and emotions are valued and they feel understood, creating deep trust within our community. Our liberation work is ongoing, and requires continuous growth of our knowledge and resources.
- 03** **We see our struggles as interconnected.** We recognize that we each bring specific experiences of privilege and oppression to our work. Through integrating our unique identities into our collective work, we strive for each person to feel wholeness.
- 04** **We have the power to transform our lives.** We seek to transform ourselves, our community, and our culture.
- 05** **We believe that unity makes us stronger.** We are united in our commitment to empower ourselves and each other. We reliably support and share mutual responsibility for this work and for our community.
- 06** **We are rooted in healing.** We believe healing is both a personal and collective process. If we heal our minds and bodies from trauma, then we can help others overcome the trauma that affects the mental and physical wellbeing of survivors. To heal is to free yourself from oppression.
- 07** **We are committed to justice.** We acknowledge and uplift every experience of survivorship, because we envision a world free from injustice for all. We organize against the root causes of gender-based violence in our communities, creating tools to repair and prevent harm to ourselves and future generations.



MARIA SALUD CAMBRON

LEADER STORY



Healing to Action builds the leadership capacity of survivors like Maria Salud, a recent graduate of our Healing Generations Leadership Development program. Originally from Michoacan, Mexico, Salud has spent the last 10 years in Chicago as a household worker and caretaker, and studying at Illinois University. As a survivor of labor and workplace violence, Salud learned about Healing Generations through the Latino Union where she serves on their board and advocates for workers to fight back against abusive employers.

“ I like supporting my community in any way I can, and I got really excited about the opportunity to learn from other [survivor] leaders. [Healing Generations] gave us an opportunity to speak, express ourselves and be heard... While it's sad that we have so many similar stories of abuse, it's also beautiful and important to share our stories so others can hear us and know they aren't alone.

I was able to participate in the program because there was transportation, food, and language interpretation, so we can learn from one another. I saw people with disabilities, my sisters with wheelchairs or using American Sign Language - I realized with HTA, there were no barriers to participating in their program. This is when I first thought, "Wow, we have the power."

I wish there was someone who told me about places like HTA earlier. Before I felt like I was dying on the inside but now, I feel I can get through anything when surrounded by you all. I'm so grateful for the opportunity to participate in Healing Generations because now I feel more comfortable with being myself...I don't feel so alone now and I'm committed to supporting others too."

HEALING GENERATIONS



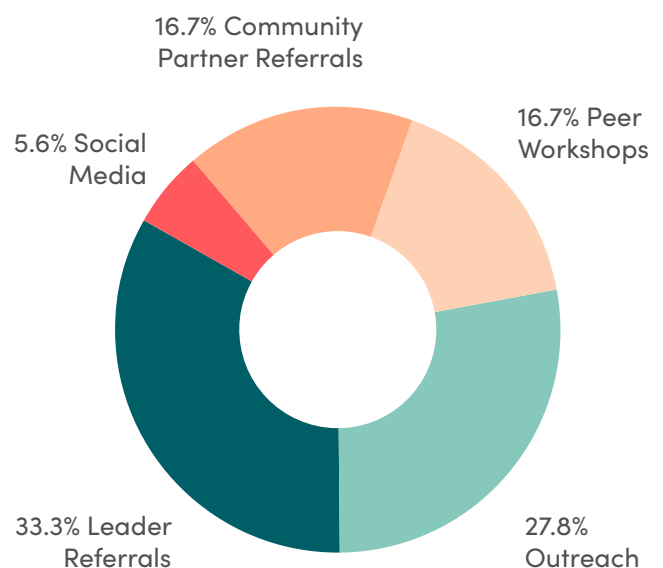
HTA's survivor-leadership development program graduates 18 new leaders

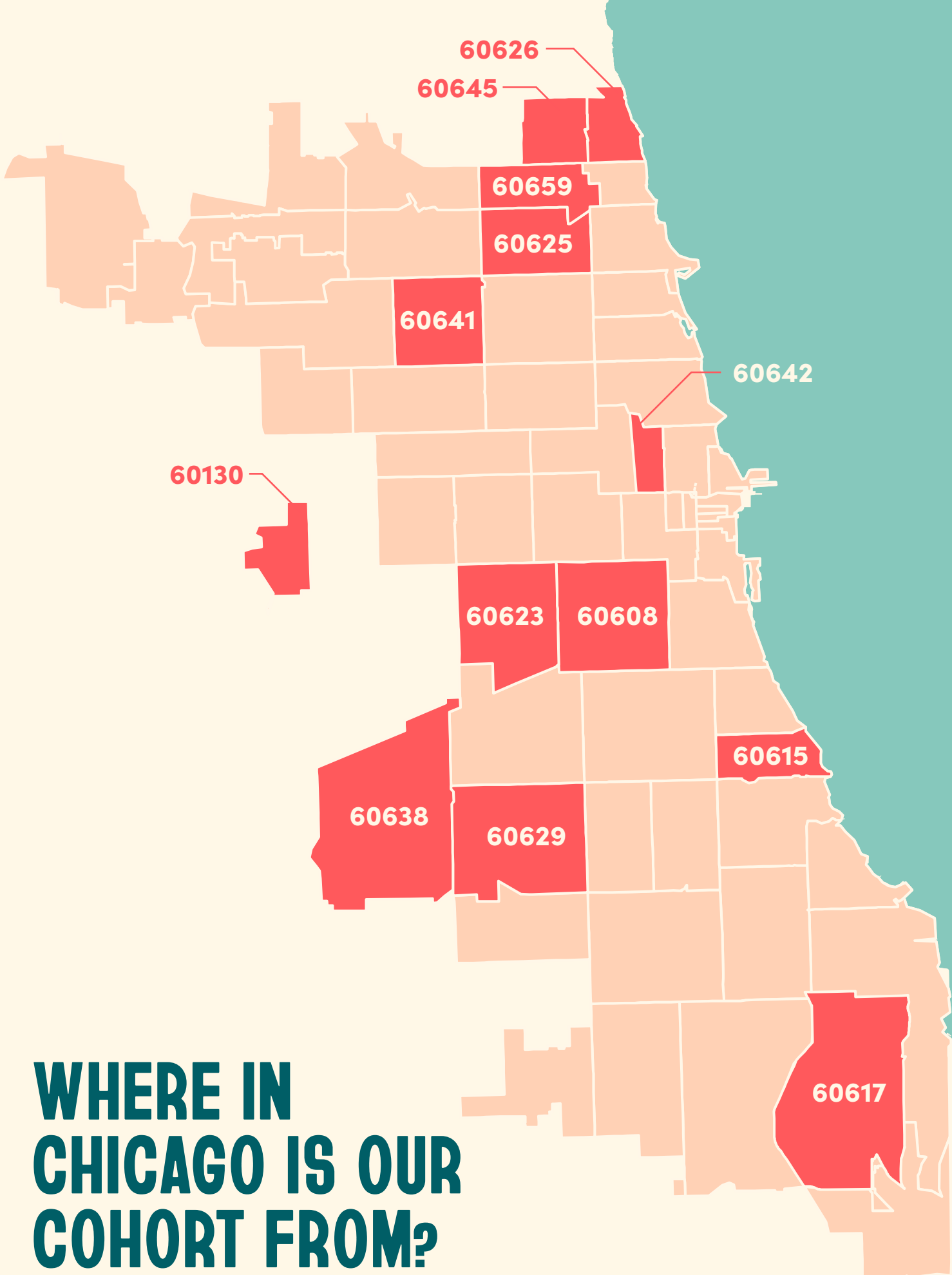
In August 2024, 18 new survivor-leaders graduated as part of the fourth cohort of **Healing Generations**, HTA's 8-week leadership program designed by and for survivors. In total, 66 powerful leaders have now graduated from Healing Generations with the tools to combat gender-based violence in their communities. The majority of graduates go on to innovate solutions to prevent violence and support survivors alongside Healing to Action, such as developing community workshops and leading our Sex Ed Works campaign, so that even more survivors can be reached and brought into the movement.

In 2024, HTA received the largest number of applications to Healing Generations yet - a **42% increase** from 2022. For the first time ever, there was a waitlist of interested community members for our leadership development program. After careful consideration and priority to the communities most impacted—including immigrants, people with disabilities, LGBTQ+ survivors, and low-income survivors—Healing Generations 2024 kicked off with 18 enthusiastic prospective leaders, all of whom graduated by the end of the summer.



How did participants find HTA?





WHERE IN CHICAGO IS OUR COHORT FROM?

ARTS HEALING



Arts Healing Workshops

Healing Generations participants engaged in an arts healing workshop series alongside current HTA survivor-leaders to process trauma, express their creativity, deepen their connection to one another, and claim their stories. **Guided by Rebel Betty—a Chicago-based collage artist**—Healing Generations participants and HTA survivor-leaders crafted individual portfolios and then collaborated on group collage projects. Group collage themes ranged from powerful migration stories to a call to protect women’s mental health. Participants showcased their collages during the Healing Generations Graduation, and once again saw their art exhibited to the community during HTA’s Solidarity Mercadito at the National Museum of Mexican Art.

What does accessibility mean at HTA?

It means providing accommodations such as free childcare, transportation, interpretation, and emotional support advocates so that ALL survivors can join us. It means monetary benefits to support leaders’ ability to participate in our programs. By centering participants’ multiple identities as caregivers, workers, and survivors, we can eliminate barriers to participation and sustain survivor leadership.

Recent Healing Generations Graduate Jazmin Lopez

Jazmin learned of the program at one of HTA's peer workshops with the Back of the Yards Parent University. As a mother and grandmother, Jazmin has been a passionate advocate for youth in Chicago Public Schools (CPS), including her 17-year-old-son who has autism and other disabilities. **Jazmin almost didn't join Healing Generations until she realized HTA provides free transportation and onsite childcare during our programs:**

“

I don't always have child care and I'm not leaving a child or a person with disabilities alone. Having them there with us was the best thing you offered. With transportation, I've been to many other trainings for parents and no organization in my experience offered this. I live far away and I wasn't sure about the distance, but HTA helped me break down the barrier around distance.

”



DOMINIQUE WARD



LEADER STORY

Dominique Ward—a single mom of identical twins, born and raised on Chicago’s West side—graduated from Healing Generations this summer. As a survivor and a domestic violence advocate, Dominique has been sharing [her story of cyber and domestic abuse with news sources](#) like the Chicago Tribune and with attorneys across the state.

Dominique shares, “When I applied for Healing Generations, I was very new in my advocacy journey and I knew I wanted to take on change in the domestic violence world. It was great to learn from others and their experiences of abuse, while validating what I already knew about consent.”

Only recently has Dominique stopped being abused and stalked by her daughters’ father. [It’s been through telling her story](#)—not through police assistance—that Dominique has found justice and healing. Dominique says,

“*In my advocacy work, I’m trying to contribute to change. I can’t do it myself, no one can. But this is my assignment, because it’s bigger than me. I had to go through fire to recognize it, but here I am....Sharing my story has been healing for me. Like I told my attorney, I’m on this journey because even if I couldn’t help myself in the moment, other people who experience domestic violence after me will reap the benefits of the hard work of advocates today.*”

PEER-TO-PEER INITIATIVES



HTA survivor-leaders are building alternative responses rooted in community dialogue and intentional connection

Through their peer-to-peer outreach strategy, HTA survivor-leaders* are reaching survivors across Chicago through community workshops they facilitate in their neighborhoods, schools, community groups, and places of work and worship. Through these workshops, HTA leaders destigmatize sexual violence through dialogue around the root causes of violence and potential solutions powered by the community itself.

Leaders partnered with three local organizations to reach new communities of survivors in Chicago, including Latinx immigrant workers, parents and caregivers on the Southwest side, and survivors with disabilities.

**A survivor-leader is any survivor who wants to transform their community's existing responses to gender-based violence.*

Partners:



HTA Survivor-Leaders' Impact in 2024

769

Our base of **27 survivor-leaders** held 769 conversations in their communities about gender-based violence

36%

36% of community members reached **disclosed their experience** of gender-based violence to an HTA leader

270

HTA survivor-leaders connected over 270 survivors to **trauma-informed resources**



SOLIDARITY MERCADITO





On November 13, 2024, we gathered the HTA community to launch our first-ever Solidarity Mercadito. **With many of our survivor-leaders being entrepreneurs, small business owners, artists, or looking to start a business, we launched our inaugural Solidarity Mercadito** to bring together donors, funders, partners, and board members to directly support our survivor-leaders and other survivor-led small businesses.

We gathered over **20 vendors** at the National Museum of Mexican Art in Pilsen and brought in nearly **200 people** to direct their holiday shopping dollars to survivors from the communities most impacted by gender-based violence. This event took place one week after the 2024 Presidential Election—an intentional choice we made so that regardless of the outcome of the election, HTA would be ready to hold space and be in community at a critical moment. Many attendees shared how our event brought them a sense of joy and purpose at a time of great fear and uncertainty. We look forward to offering another Mercadito in 2026.

**40%
40%**

With **40% of survivors living paycheck to paycheck** and **1 in 2 survivors as their family's primary breadwinner**, survivors often embrace entrepreneurship and self-employment to overcome employment hurdles and create more flexible work options.

Thank you to our Mercadito Sponsors!



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#SEXEDWORKS CAMPAIGN



Through their Sex Ed Works grassroots campaign, HTA survivor-leaders are addressing the racial and economic inequities in Chicago youth’s access to comprehensive sexual health education—a proven root cause of higher rates of gender-based violence in low-income communities. After two years of organizing with caregivers of Walsh Elementary School in Chicago’s Pilsen neighborhood, in 2024, HTA survivor-leaders finalized a blueprint to equip caregivers with tools around consent, gender & diversity, and healthy relationships so they can promote a culture of consent with youth in their communities. With the tools to promote a culture of consent, Walsh Elementary caregivers advocated their principle for broader inclusivity of the needs of their children, including access to comprehensive sexual health education and better protections for youth experiencing abuse in schools.

One parent from Walsh shared, “...in our times there was a lot of abuse in our family. I wish we had this education in our time, spaces, and teachings like this. [Especially for boys, who experience abuse.]”

Led by HTA with the City of Chicago’s Gender-Based Violence Taskforce, this blueprint was then piloted with Chicago Public Schools’ Parent University to engage more caregivers in preventing gender-based violence. The positive impact of the pilot on caregivers has led Chicago Public Schools to continue to scale caregiver education around consent, gender & diversity, and healthy relationships across 12 of its networks across the district.

Impact highlights for HTA’s caregiver pilot series:



Decrease in transphobic attitudes among participants



Positive changes in attitudes around gender, sexuality, and transphobia



An increase in participants recognizing their child’s power to give consent and say “no” to adults

100%

100% of parents left feeling like they had the tools or grew their expertise to approach sexual health related topics, like gender-based violence

A parent who participated in the caregiver pilot workshops shared how HTA's workshops on gender & diversity shifted her attitudes on trans rights. She shared how her new understanding helped her create a welcoming and affirming environment for her kids' friends, deepening trust as a parent with her child.



Sex Ed Works Coalition Partners



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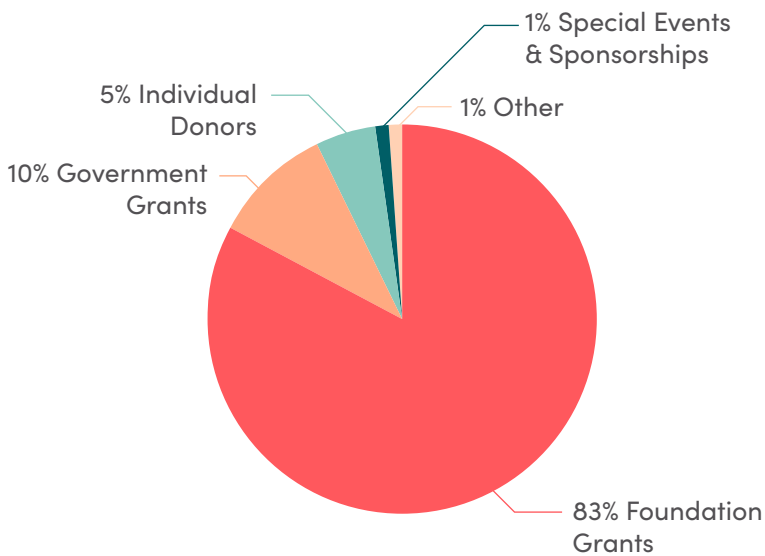


OUR FINANCES

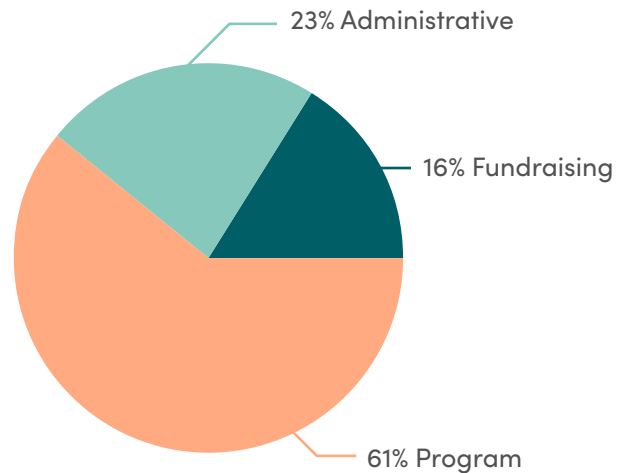


In 2024, HTA’s budget grew by 27%! This financial growth has allowed us to hire two new staff roles in 2024—increasing HTA’s capacity to train frontline organizations on our model, build new tools to support our survivor leaders’ work organizing their communities, and provide them with ongoing healing and leadership development support from the HTA team to sustain their critical leadership.

FY24 Revenue



FY24 Expenses



HTA’s impact is fueled by the generosity of our grassroots supporters and institutional partners. We’re incredibly grateful to our community of donors and funders for believing in a survivor-led movement to end gender-based violence—and for turning that belief into action.

145

community members raised over \$65k for Healing to Action in 2024!

30

monthly donors sustained our work

FUNDERS

Adobe Employee Community Fund
Albert Pick, Jr. Fund
Chicago Foundation for Women
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Collective Futures Fund
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Cook County, Stronger Together Initiative
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