



NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

**UPLIFTING
OUR SACRED
CONNECTIONS**

Learn more at [nicwa.org](https://www.nicwa.org)



ABOUT NICWA



NICWA
National Indian Child Welfare Association
Protecting Our Children • Preserving Our Culture

Our Mission

NICWA protects the safety, health, and cultural identity of all Native children and families—today and for future generations—by upholding culturally based services, community strength, and Tribal sovereignty.

Our Vision

All Native children and their families are safe, healthy, and belong to strong communities that are culturally and spiritually abundant.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear NICWA Members, Donors, and Partners,

Together this year we've built on the success of the past several years. We've had some federal policy wins and seen progress in the decolonization and re-Indigenization efforts Tribes are making. We've created issue briefs, advocacy tip sheets for families and service providers, sample policy advocacy letters and draft comments, and many more resources all available on our new website. We've grown our network of advocacy partners and deepened our coalition

work. Thanks to your support, we've become stronger and more impactful than ever.

"This, our ancestral wisdom, positions NICWA as a resource that helps self-determined Native communities."

In our work to strengthen Tribal and urban Indian communities to better support Native families and children, we have the opportunity on a daily basis to look to our cultures and connections as Native people—to the land and waters and our environment; to our relatives—human, animal, and plant; to the generations that came before and will come after us; and to our Creator. This, our ancestral wisdom, positions NICWA as a resource that helps self-determined Native communities.

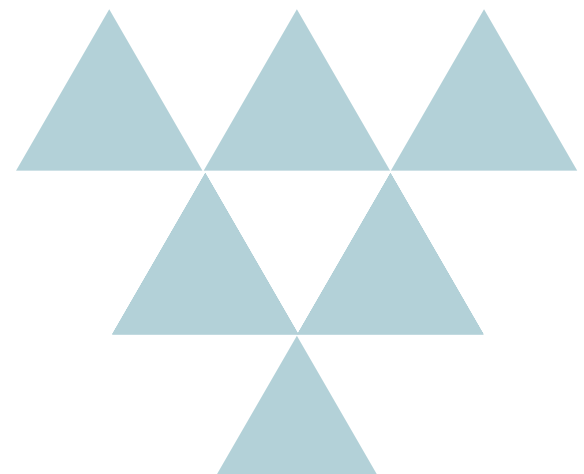
We offer tools, examples, and technical expertise. We listen closely, synthesize what we hear, and ask questions to prompt and clarify emerging community visions and strategy. We use our platforms and gatherings to highlight and share trends and innovations. We use community insight and policymaker relationships to advocate for the policy changes and federal funding to support the programs and services that Tribal Nations and urban centers need to strengthen families, according to their values and priorities.

As we close another fiscal year, we are grateful to stand shoulder to shoulder with you, uplifting our connections for the benefit of Native children and communities.

Quyanaa,

Sarah J. Kastelic

Sarah Kastelic, PhD (Alutiiq)
Executive Director

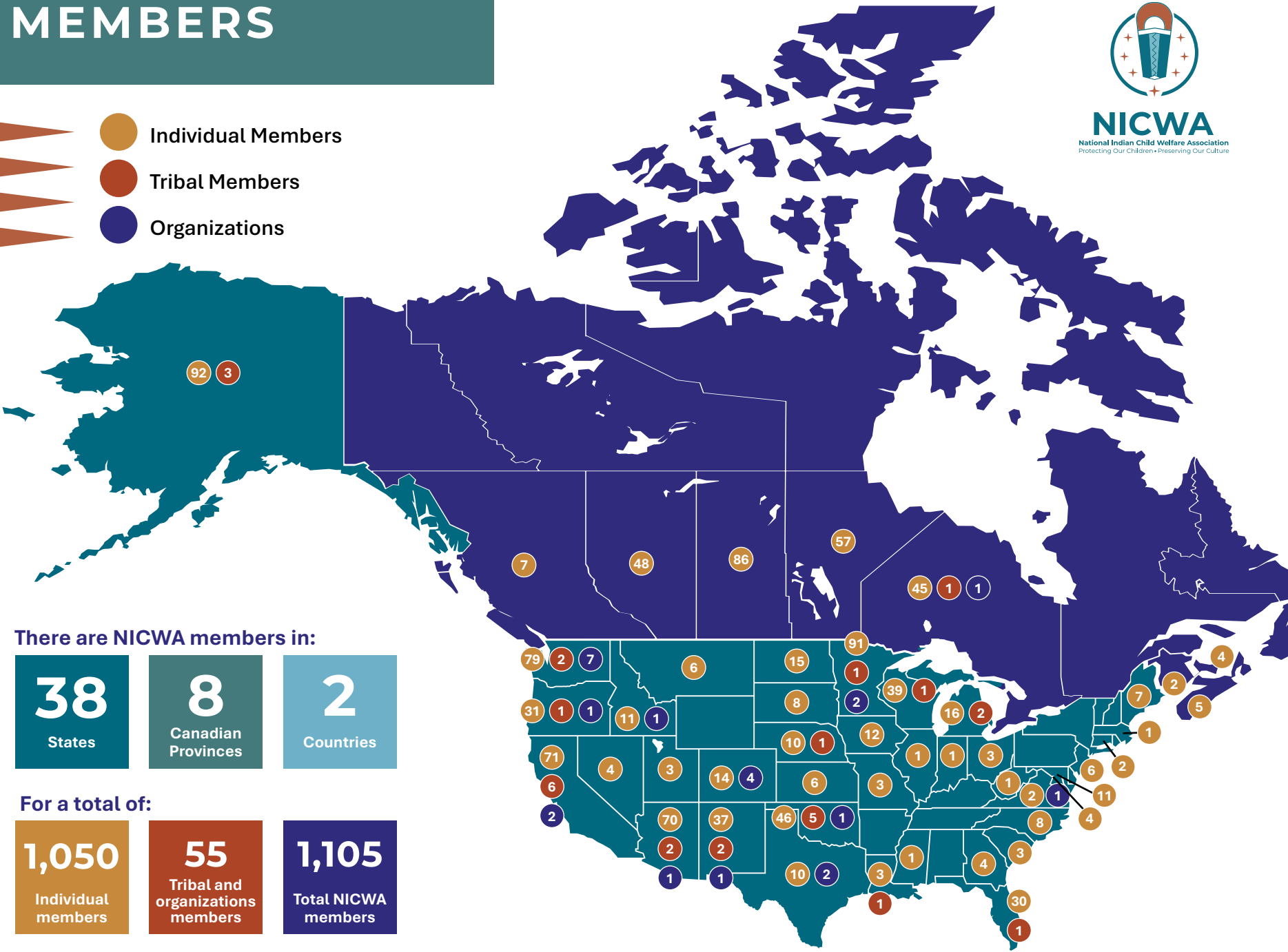


MEMBERS



NICWA
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- Individual Members
- Tribal Members
- Organizations



HIGHLIGHTS



A YEAR IN REVIEW

In early 2025, we introduced NICWA's updated brand identity—honoring our history while upholding Tribal sovereignty and embracing the future of our work for Native children, families, and communities.

The cradleboard remains at the heart of our logo, symbolizing our sacred responsibility to protect and nurture Native children. Encircling it are seven stars, honoring Indigenous knowledge, the seven sisters, and the universe that connects us all.

As we reflect on our past and the connections that led us here, and map our future forward and the relationships we need to develop or strengthen to accomplish our mission, we continue to build on our work in these core areas:



Learning
together

Promoting
culturally
grounded and
Native-led
approaches

Educating with
information
and resources

Strengthening
federal, state,
and Tribal
policy

Raising
awareness and
advocacy



Raising Awareness and Advocacy

- Our work is grounded in the belief that Tribal sovereignty is essential to the well-being of Native children and families. This year, we deepened our advocacy through coalition building and long-term strategic planning to support the holistic health of Native children while advancing Tribal self-determination.
- After reviewing 170 Tribal child welfare laws, NICWA updated and expanded the Tribal Child Welfare Codes as Sovereignty in Action project, to highlight trends and innovations in how Tribes are exercising their self-determination to better serve Native families and children.
- NICWA joined with 35+ Native-led policy organizations as the Coalition for Tribal Sovereignty, a collaborative alliance that serves as a powerful unifying voice of regional and national inter-Tribal policy-oriented, nonprofit organizations to engage with federal policymakers on critical issues affecting the sovereign interests, rights, and authorities of Tribal nations, Tribal citizens, and community members across the United States.
- As part of the Protect ICWA Campaign, we released ICWA 2050, a long-term strategic plan to proactively protect the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA) and improve Tribal child welfare capacity.





Educating with Information and Resources

NICWA’s trainings provide an unparalleled opportunity to enhance workforce and community skills and knowledge to better serve Native children and families and re-Indigenize child welfare. Immersive, multi-day sessions are designed to offer practical tools and culturally based strategies for child welfare, family support, and community well-being programming, services, and supports. Held throughout the year, these trainings are available in-person, virtually, or directly in your community through sessions tailored to community needs.

VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON TRAINING INSTITUTES

- 5** Positive Indian Parenting train-the-trainers
- 1** Foundations of Tribal Child Welfare Casework Practice
- 1** Working with Substance-Abusing Families
- 1** Child Protection Teams in Indian Country
- 1** Qualified Expert Witness
- 2** Cross-Cultural Communications Skills
- 1** Tribal Customary Adoption
- 2** Self-paced, Asynchronous Online Courses

15

Fee-for-Service contracts for training, consultation, and speaking engagements

1,929

Total frontline child welfare workers trained

779

NICWA curriculum sold



Learning Together

NICWA hosts the largest national gathering on Native child advocacy issues. With nearly 2,000 attendees, this three-day conference is the premier national event addressing Tribal child welfare and Native child well-being.

The 43rd Annual Protecting Our Children Conference, themed Honoring the Sacred, took place in Orlando, FL, with workshops that covered topics such as cultural connections, healing and connecting families, ICWA, and approaching Tribal court systems.

This was a memorable conference as NICWA posthumously honored founding NICWA board President Gary Peterson with a Lifetime Achievement Award, recalling his perseverance, tireless advocacy, and selfless service for our communities, as well as his warm heart and good humor.

3

Days

3

Amazing
keynote panels

5.5

Hours of virtual
content

14.5

CEU
credits

4,056

Cups of
coffee served

52

Volunteers

42

Exhibitors

30

Sponsors

55

States &
Provinces

74

Workshops

134

Speakers

378

Tribal Nations
represented

974

First-time
attendees

1,008

New NICWA
members

1,918

Participants

2

Baby gators

\$25,762

Given during
Paddle Raise

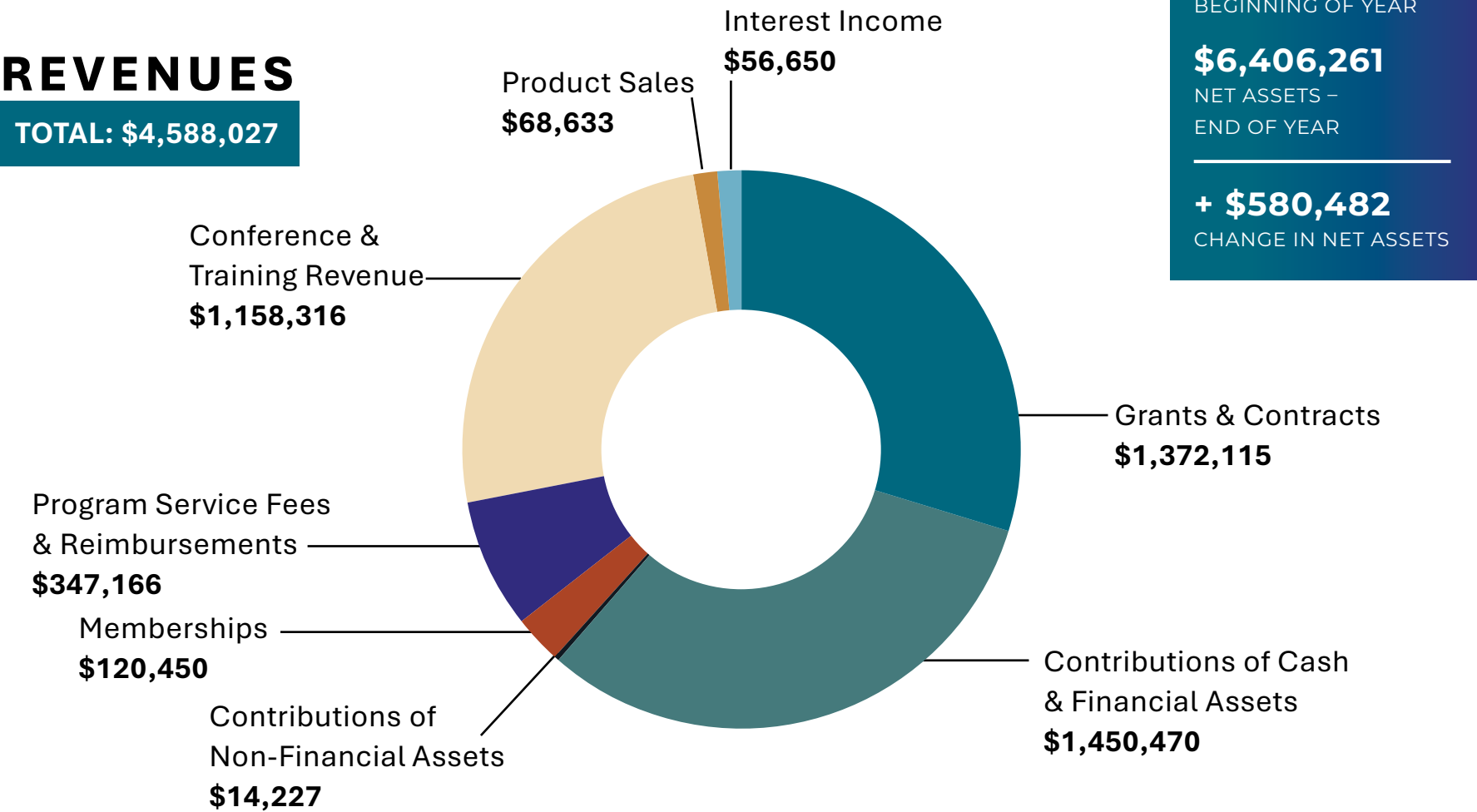
\$160,200

Sponsorship
support raised

FINANCIALS

REVENUES

TOTAL: \$4,588,027



\$5,825,779

NET ASSETS –
BEGINNING OF YEAR

\$6,406,261

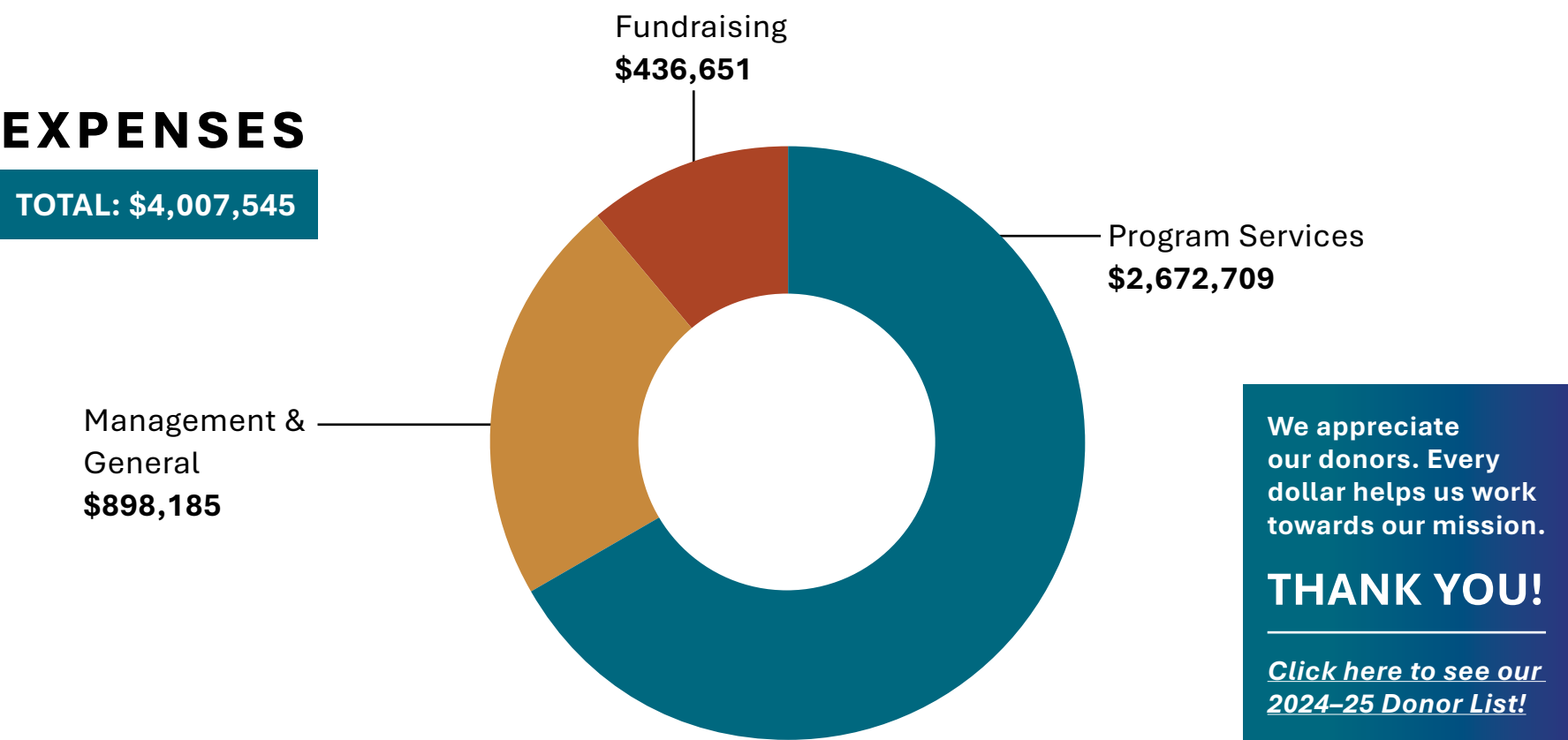
NET ASSETS –
END OF YEAR

+ \$580,482

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS

EXPENSES

TOTAL: \$4,007,545



We appreciate
our donors. Every
dollar helps us work
towards our mission.

THANK YOU!

[Click here to see our
2024–25 Donor List!](#)

BOARD & STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- President - Gil Vigil (Tesuque Pueblo)
- Vice President - Angela Connor (Choctaw)
- Secretary - Alex Wesaw (Pokagon Band of Potawatomi)
- Treasurer - Aurene Martin (Bad River Band of Lake Superior Chippewa)

MEMBERS

- Teressa Baldwin (Inupiaq)
- Justine Bautista (Northern Cheyenne)
- Mikah Carlos (Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community)
- Patricia Carter-Goodheart (Nez Perce)
- Rose Domnick (Yup'ik)
- Brad Earl (Nez Perce descent)
- Rochelle Ettawageshik (Little Traverse Bay Band of Odawa Indians)
- Deb Foxcroft (Tseshah First Nation)
- Charles Martin (Morongo Band of Mission Indians)
- Robert McGhee (Poarch Band of Creek Indians)
- Robin Sigo (Suquamish Tribe)
- Stephanie Weldon (Yurok Tribe)
- Steven Wilson, Jr. (Oglala Sioux Tribe)

STAFF

- Kyra Antone, (Coeur d'Alene and Tohono O'odham), Communications Specialist
- Dallas Archuleta (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde), Community Development Specialist
- Tia Begay (Diné), Fiscal Director
- Jake Birkel, Events and Training Project Coordinator
- April Ybarra Black, Development Manager
- Allie Brady, Training Manager
- La Rae Driftwood (Crow), Program Project Coordinator
- Lindsay Early (Comanche), Operations Director
- Mariah Garcia (Paiute), Executive Assistant to Sarah Kastelic
- Sarah Kastelic (Alutiiq), Executive Director
- Lynn Lindell (Suquamish), Development Project Coordinator
- Special Lovincey (Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs), Development Communications Manager
- Mariah Meyerholz, Government Affairs and Community Development Specialist
- Leyna O'Neill, Fiscal Assistant
- Tara Reynon (Puyallup), Senior Program Director
- Evan Roberts (Tlingit), Government Affairs and Community Development Specialist
- Lauren Shapiro-Neiwert, Events and Projects Director
- David Simmons, Director of Government Affairs and Advocacy
- Jackie Stecki Trujillo, Human Resources Specialist
- Vilma Vere, Fiscal Manager
- Andrea Zaragoza (Pueblo of Acoma, Hopi Tribe), Operations Coordinator
- Amory Zschach (Cheyenne and Arapaho Tribes), Communications Director

