

2025-2026 GRATITUDE REPORT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Program Details
- 3 Financials
- 4 Financials Cont.
- 5 Statistics
- 6 Staff & Board

MISSION

The Connect Center provides help for a more secure and connected life.

VISION

The Connect Center believes in a community that knows we are all connected.

VALUES

Our organization is built on a foundation of compassion, integrity, and accountability. We believe in treating everyone with dignity and respect, and we are committed to using our resources in the most effective and efficient way possible.

A NOTE FROM THE DIRECTOR

As our fiscal year ended in June, I am reflecting on many highlights. I am full of gratitude for wonderful staff, dedicated volunteers and interns, and funders that have been so generous. I am equally grateful for the partnerships that we have with other nonprofits, Washington County staff and departments, faith communities, community members, businesses, civic clubs and other groups that have helped us to serve our clients and accomplish our mission of providing help for a more secure and connected life.

People often become our clients because they need help with finding housing. We work with numerous partners to help them to secure safe, affordable housing. We assist clients with reaching other goals as well, whether it's finding employment, connecting with community resources, transportation, education and more. This is holistic, comprehensive and long-term work where a trusted relationship continues to grow.

As needs continue to get bigger and deeper, we will need to provide more services and financial assistance. We look forward to having more volunteers to help behind the scenes or to work directly with clients in various ways. From helping with the After School Program, organizing donations and office materials, or helping to plan a fundraiser, there is always something that a volunteer can do that will add much value to our program.

Thank you to all who have helped The Connect Center in serving those in need in our community.

Sincerely,
Cindy Parsons

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

FAMILIES

Connect Center Advocates help families reach short and long-term goals by meeting with them on a regular basis, setting goals and actions steps and celebrating achievements. Whether it's getting connected with resources, needing help with applications, finding employment or housing, families are feeling cared for and empowered.

YOUTH

Youth aged 24 and under with unstable or no housing received support and help from Connect Center Outreach Advocates. Trust is established, basic needs are provided, and short and long-term goals are addressed. The Connect Center has been very successful in helping youth to get into youth housing programs and market rate apartments. Advocates help youth with budgeting, job search, connections to benefits, resources and community services.

SINGLES

AmeriCorps Housing Resource Navigators serving at The Connect Center help singles in need of housing to address barriers to housing and to find permanent, safe and affordable housing. Clients are helped with a number of goals before and after the housing goal is met.

AFTER SCHOOL PROGRAM

Every Tuesday and Thursday, kids gather indoors and outdoors for an After School Program. Activities include games, painting and drawing, social-emotional learning discussions, reading and science projects. Kids learn important life and social skills in a fun environment.

A CLIENT'S PERSPECTIVE

My advocate has been an amazing supporter for me. She helps me make goals and helps push me to complete them. Even if it feels intimidating, she has a way of talking me through what needs to be done to make it seem less stressful and confusing. My advocate pushed me to get my license. It took a year to gain the confidence but I am proud to say I passed my test.

WITH AN ADVOCATE'S SUPPORT...

- A mother and her four children fled a Domestic Violence situation and was safely rehoused.
- A client celebrated three weeks of recovery.
- A youth received a housing referral and moved into her apartment.
- A family moved into market rate housing.
- A family was able to move into a townhome a week before Christmas and spent Christmas with her family in their new home.
- Four clients received housing referrals in January.
- A youth was accepted into college and received a scholarship.
- A single mother worked on a budget and purchased a vehicle with her tax return money.
- A single checked themselves into a substance-abuse treatment facility.

2025-2026 FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

INDIVIDUALS:

- Anderson, Susan
- Anderson, Dorothy
- Anderson, Courtney
- Balfanz, Mille
- Bloome, Katherine
- Buberl, Gina
- Conley, Vickie
- Cseter, Andre
- Cseter, Madi
- Deissner, Mark
- DeFore, Marguerite
- Dewi, Diane
- Dickie, Bob
- Dolan, Tom
- Eisenmenger, Tina
- Eisinger, Denise
- Farmer, Janet
- Favilla, Sue
- Goelzer, Priscilla
- Glass, Jessica
- Greenhalgh, Jill
- Gromoll, Clare
- Griffith, Sue
- Hanson, Jane
- Hayden, Peggy and David
- Hoffman, Diane
- Houle, Julie
- Hurley, Charles
- Hunt, Nicole
- Iverson, Bob and Kathy
- Jensen, Joel and Laura
- Jerde, Kristie
- Jessup, David
- Kayser, Lynnette and Kubic, Mark
- Kramer, Vicki and Mike
- Kriesel, Ann
- Kirstein, Naomi and Dave
- Koski, Mary and Lyle
- Lennon, Cindy
- Loose, Chris
- Madland, Carol
- Mattern, Jennifer
- McDonald, Monique
- McDonald, Vida
- McEarchern, Cathy
- McFadden, Lawrence and Mary
- McKenzie, Brenda
- McKenzie, Rob
- Mills, Diane
- Moldenhauer, Ruth Ann
- Mozey, Ann
- O'Malley, Sue
- Oesterreich, Erica
- Olsen, Jessica and Todd
- Orff, Deb
- Parsons, Cindy
- Pelto, Mike
- Persson, Cami
- Peterson, Lori
- Richey, Walt
- Rupp, Doug
- Schmidt, Mavis and Dale
- Schrade, Lorna
- Schulze, Cindy and Warren
- Seekel, Pam
- Siverson, Janine
- Siverson, Katie
- Smerud, Chris and Adam
- Snellman, Lenny
- Sokolik, Mary
- Solheim, Catherine
- Steinworth, Linda
- Swenson, Rose
- Teitelbaum, Evelyn
- Thompson, Chris
- Ulland, Peter
- Voita, James
- Weber, Lorraine
- Wylie, Jackie
- Zivoric, Angie

2025-2026 FINANCIAL SUPPORTERS

BUSINESSES:

- Aesthetic Med Spa
- Boat Art
- Carriage Realty
- Charter Oaks
- Duc's Restaurant
- First State Bank and Trust
- Gold & Eight
- Heritage Lakes Floral Lora Hotel
- Lutheran Social Services
- Marine General Store
- McKenzie Inc.
- Midwest Bank
- Nystrom and Associates
- Port Belly's LLC
- SI Yoga
- Sota Clothing
- Spikes and Houle
- Spine and Sport Chiropractic
- Stillwater Trolley
- Valley Bookseller

FOUNDATIONS:

- 30 Day Foundation
- ECMC
- Fred C. and Catherine B. Andersen
- Hardenbergh Foundation
- Longview Foundation
- Margaret Rivers Fund
- Mighty Cause
- St. Croix Valley Foundation
- St. Paul & MN Foundation
- Target Circle
- United Way of Washington Co. East

GROUPS

- Boy Scouts
- Columbine Garden Club
- CSOS
- PFLAG
- St. Paul Lutheran Quilters
- Woodbury Academy

CIVIC CLUBS

- Afton Bayport Lakeland Lions Club
- Forest Lake Lions Club
- Stillwater Elks
- Stillwater Lions Club

FAITH COMMUNITIES

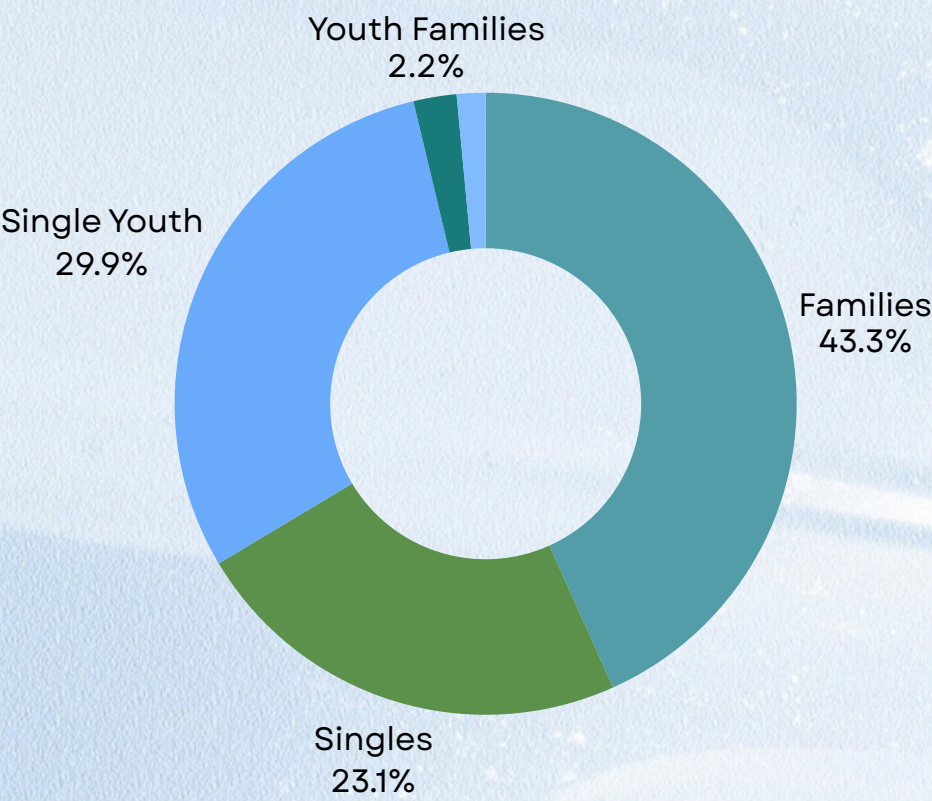
- Christ Lutheran WELCA
- First Presbyterian Church
- Holy Cross Lutheran Church
- King of Kings Lutheran Church
- St. Paul Lutheran Church
- The Grove United Methodist Church

2025-2026 STATISTICS

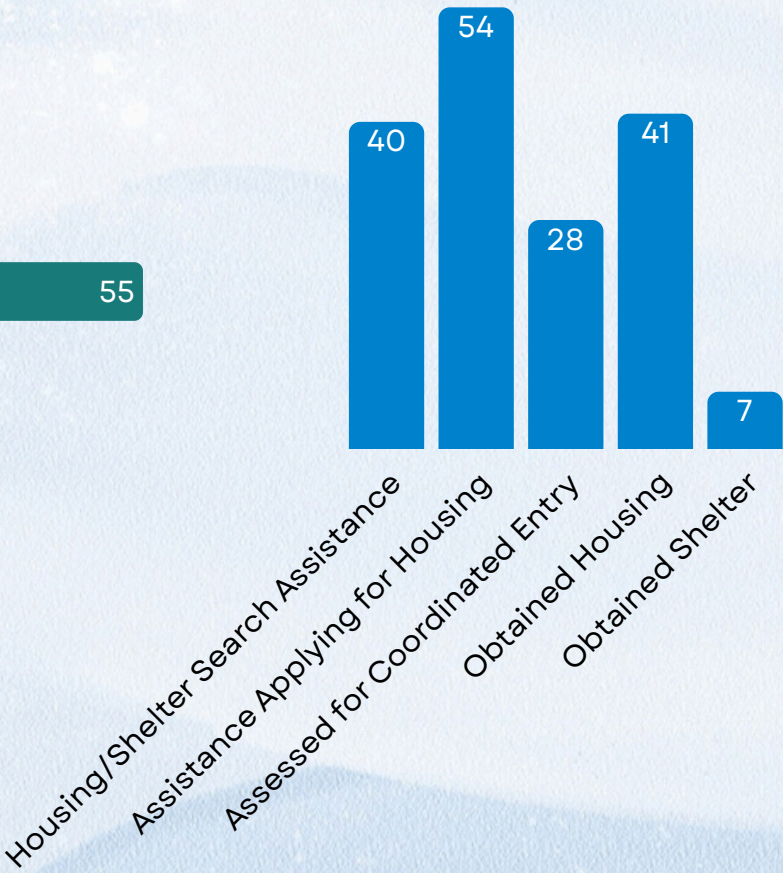
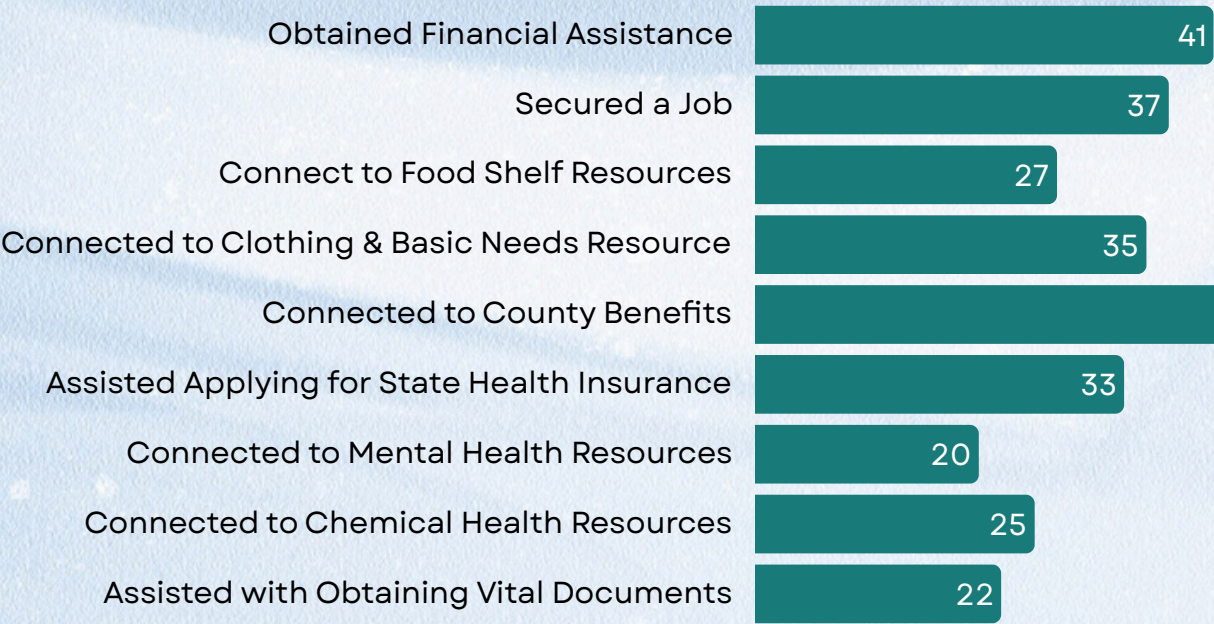
CLIENTS SERVED

134 Households Served

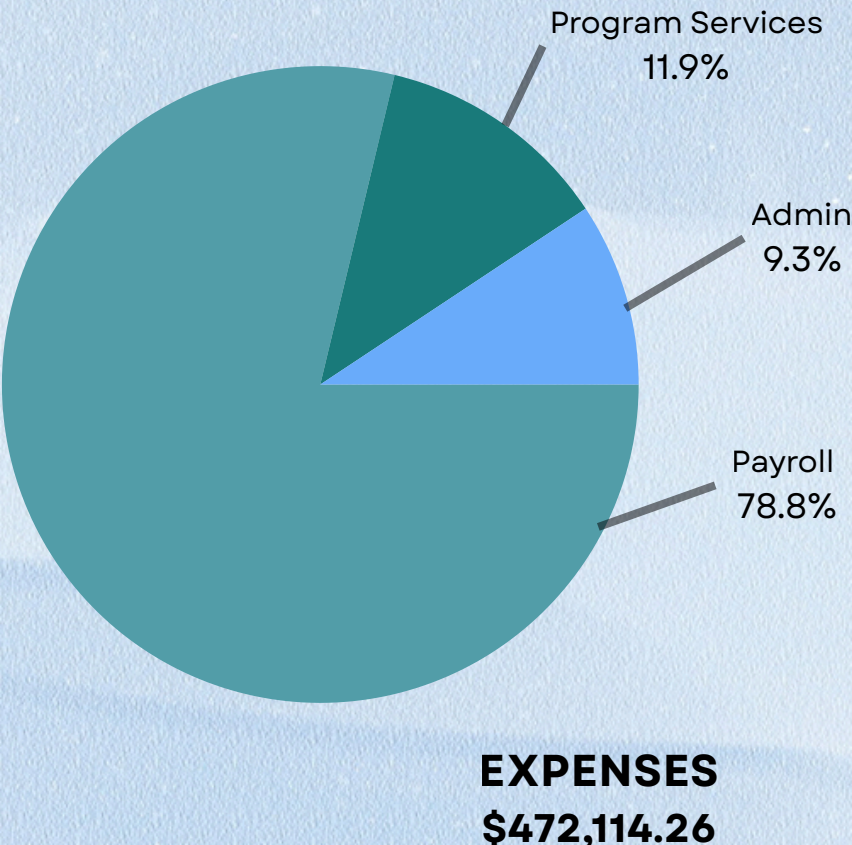
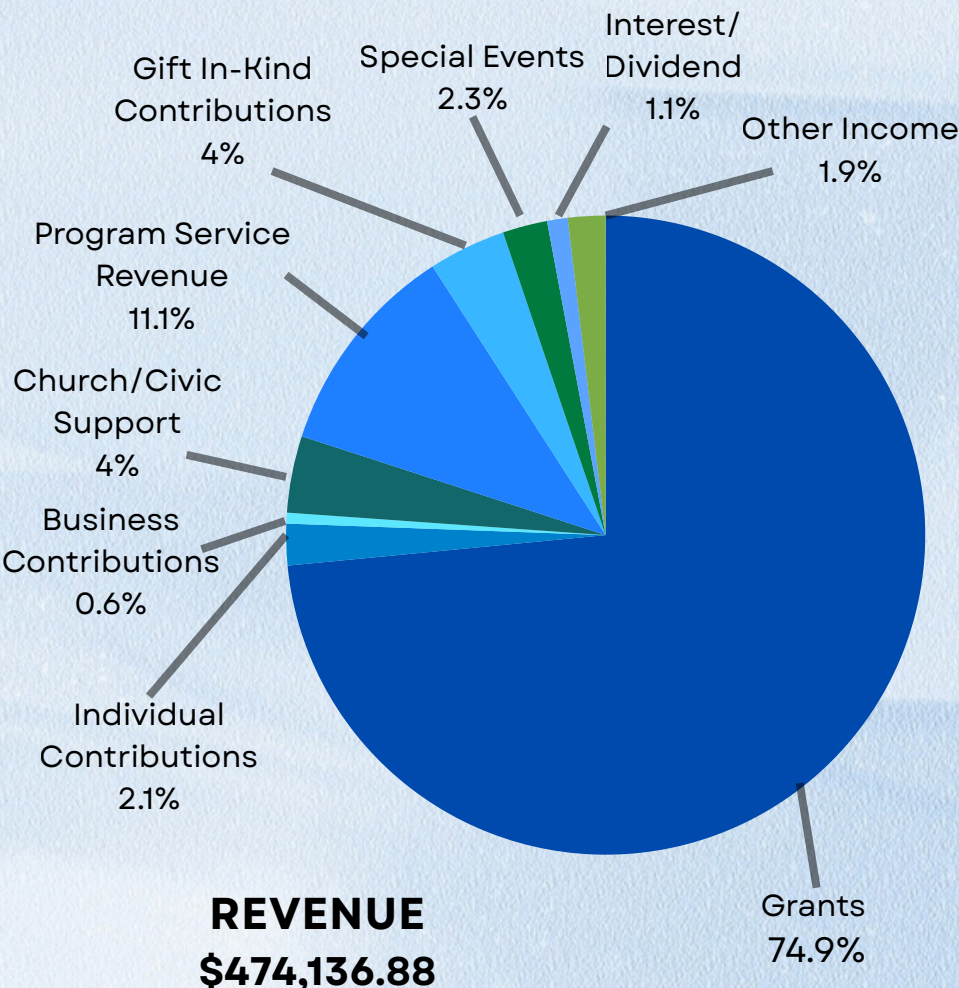
- **58** Families
- **31** Singles
- **40** Single Youth
- **3** Youth Families
- **2** Data Not Collected



SERVICES & REFERRALS PROVIDED



FINANCIAL REPORT



STAFF & BOARD

THE BOARD CHAIR'S REFLECTION

It always a pleasure to share the contributions the Connect Center and our employees are making in the lives of people living with limited resources. The Connect Center Advocates are working every day to help people find a place to sleep for the night, to find permanent housing and to make connections in our communities. We help clients navigate state, county, city and faith community support systems to create long lasting connections. Accessing food for today and ongoing plans for nutritious meals is a launching point for other activities. Having a home and nutritious food are the first step in pursuing a connected life in the valley. Clients can then thrive as they work on goals of education, employment, and time to create strong family and community bonds.

the Connect Center had many amazing accomplishments this past year. We provided resources and encouragement to help residents pass through the 'metro surge' and the assault on our values and mission to help people live together in one community. As a business, we moved from our origins of being physically located in churches to our own space in Bayport. We thank Ascension Episcopal Church and St. Paul Lutheran church for their generous hospitality and supportive environment from which The Connect Center has grown. We look forward to growing our services and providing a friendly and available location for people wanting to live a connected life in the St. Croix Valley.

A major challenge The Connect Center will face in 2026-28 is the long-term plan to sustain the activities and resources that our mission and values demand. The 2026 Board of Directors are integrating wonderful new ideas and strategies to make sure The Connect Center is up to the challenges. We continue to work hard to find the monetary commitments for growing the resources for our staff and activities. We are always profoundly grateful for the foundations, organizations and individuals that hear our story and commit to investing in The Connect Center.

As the number of clients that depend on our services grows, we are also growing our staff to meet the demand. In 2026, we are up to nine employees plus several interns to make the business of The Connect Center a success. We are looking forward to 2027 with the promise to continue our mission to help people live a more secure and connected life in the St. Croix Valley.

Sincerely,

John Richards

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

John Richards – Board Chair

Vickie Conley

Nancy Harper

Jean Larson

Kristie Mack

STAFF

Jessica Anderson – Client Advocate

Madi Cseter – Client Advocate

*Bob Dickie – Communications and
Development Director*

Natalie Houle – Client Advocate

Elle Kelbrants – Client Advocate

Clara Kilgas – Program Manager

Kim McRunnel – Office Manager

Cindy Parsons – Executive Director

Debbie Rogg – Client Advocate

GIVE TODAY



Your contribution can help us continue our mission to provide essential services and support to those in need. Please consider making a donation today. Donations are tax deductible. Visit www.theconnectcenter.org to give.



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