

REPORT TO OUR COMMUNITY

2025



Supporting and empowering young people on their journey to self-reliance

REFLECTIONS FROM OUR CEO

A MODEL FOR YOUTH-CENTERED SERVICE

What the YouthLink team and our trusted peers have accomplished in the last year is truly remarkable and cements our solidarity alongside of the young people we serve. We saw a 25% increase in youth served and a 30% increase in visits from 2024 to 2025. We've unlocked new and promising financial opportunities, we have continually strengthened operations, and we have holistically sharpened the YouthLink culture—one rooted in light, high standards, high efficiencies, accountability, and lasting community partnerships. All of this while lowering YouthLink's cost-per-client for the fourth consecutive year and enhancing both financial and program performance metrics.

As we execute our 5-year plan through 2030, we will: 1) elevate our programs and culture, 2) improve our financial position, and 3) actively prepare for the future by extending YouthLink's impact well beyond our 50th anniversary in 2028.

Our proven model of service and culture is too important and vital not to dream big! With the dedication of our staff, our board of directors, and supporters, I am certain YouthLink will continue to exceed expectations while setting new standards for youth-focused service and stewardship—not only in Minneapolis but as a model nationwide.



— Rich Melzer,
YouthLink CEO



MISSION

To support and empower young people on their journey to self-reliance.

VISION

A community in which all youth, without regard to their living situation, have an equal opportunity to pursue their goals and dreams, and an equal likelihood of achieving them.

DROP-IN CENTER EVENTS

CELEBRATING COMMUNITY & CONNECTION

Throughout the year, YouthLink's Drop-In Center hosts events that bring joy, connection, and resources to young people. In 2025, events included a **Black History Month Celebration, Backpack Giveaway, College & Education Fair, Health & Wellness Fair, Job Fair, Fall Festival, Thanksgiving Lunch, and Holiday Party & Santa Shop.**



Thanksgiving Lunch



Health & Wellness Fair



Fall Festival

These moments of celebration and connection are a vital part of YouthLink's approach to supporting young people. Events create opportunities for youth to decompress, have fun, and build relationships with peers, staff, and community partners.

RECORD PARTICIPATION AT THE SANTA SHOP

264 people received gifts, including 113 teens and young adults and 151 children.



Thank you to the donors and volunteers who made the Holiday Party & Santa Shop possible—38 volunteers contributed 120 hours, and generous donors provided the gifts that made the season brighter for so many youth and families in 2025.

VOICES OF YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL

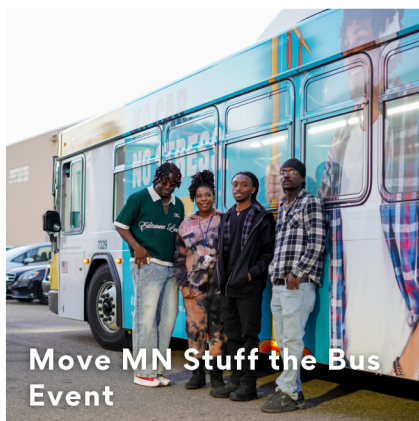


AMPLIFYING YOUTH PERSPECTIVES

As a youth-led organization, the Voices of Youth Advisory Council (VOYAC) plays a vital role at YouthLink by advising leadership and influencing the four P's: **policy, procedures, programs, and partnerships**. VOYAC provides a powerful platform for youth leaders to participate in policymaking, strategic planning, and community advocacy, strengthening YouthLink's commitment to youth-driven solutions.



Moving Youth Along (M.Y.A) Celebration



Move MN Stuff the Bus Event



Stand Up For Youth Panel



Homeless Day on the Hill



Nat'l Conference of State Legislatures



Health & Wellness Fair

A LEGACY OF ADVOCACY AND LEADERSHIP

As VOYAC Chair, Clyde has led with authenticity, purpose, and a deep commitment to ensuring youth voices are not only heard, but centered. As he passes the baton to the next Chair, Brother Ra, we reflect with gratitude on the impact of his leadership. Clyde shared:

“YouthLink has been a space for growth, transformation, and accountability. Through this role, I’ve advocated for youth experiencing housing instability, connected with leaders and policymakers, and grown into a more grounded, emotionally intelligent leader. Most importantly, I’ve served the community I come from, reinforcing my belief that leadership means staying close to those most impacted.”

Thank you, Clyde, for your extraordinary service and unwavering commitment to young people experiencing homelessness. His leadership has been powerful, his advocacy impactful, and his legacy within VOYAC will be felt for years to come.



YOUTH HIGHLIGHT

FINDING STABILITY AND A PATH FORWARD

When Samera first came to YouthLink, she was facing homelessness and unsure what the future might hold.

“I went to YouthLink downtown for an intake meeting,” she says. “Two weeks later, they called me saying they had housing for me. ‘This is Nicollet Square and we have your keys.’ I’m like... today? And they’re like ‘right now.’”

After moving into Nicollet Square, Samera began working with staff to set goals for her future. She knew she wanted to become a cosmetologist but wasn’t sure how to make it happen.

“They helped me find the right cosmetology school, apply for student loans, and even gave me bus cards so I could get to class every day,” she says. “They were very supportive.”

With that support, Samera completed cosmetology school—an achievement she calls “the best day of my life.”

Today, she says the support she received at YouthLink changed everything.

Now, she’s focused on the future.

“My next steps are to try and buy a house once I move out of here,” she says. “Every plan I’ve made with staff here... it has happened.”



-SAMERA,
YOUTHLINK PROGRAM
PARTICIPANT

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

YouthLink provides supportive services at two affordable housing sites—**Nicollet Square and Downtown View**— in partnership with Beacon Interfaith and Project for Pride in Living. These sites pair stable, affordable housing with onsite, wraparound support, including case management, counseling, employment coaching, a food pantry, and life skills education. With occupancy consistently between 95–100%, these sites are not just full—they are thriving communities. Through peer



support groups, shared traditions, and milestone celebrations, staff foster a sense of belonging that helps youth stay engaged and build toward long-term independence.

Case Manager, Abbie, teaching a resident how to care for their houseplant

INDEPENDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY

Through **Scattered-Site Housing**, YouthLink helps young people secure housing throughout the community by providing rental assistance and individualized case management. Case managers support youth in navigating the responsibilities of independent living—from building relationships with landlords to managing rent—laying the groundwork for long-term stability. As a result, **92% of youth remained stably housed after 12 months.**

BEYOND HOUSING: ONGOING SUPPORT

Housing is just the beginning. YouthLink case managers continue working alongside young people to set and achieve goals related to education, employment, and overall well-being. Through donor funds like the Springboard Fund, YouthLink helps remove barriers to success—covering costs for essentials like laptops and driver’s education. **Caring, consistent relationships ensure youth have the support they need as they move toward lasting stability.**



Case Manager, Dee, attending a resident’s 2025 graduation ceremony

POWERED BY PARTNERSHIP

It takes a community to do this work. The Drop-In Center and Youth Opportunity Center thrive through collaboration with dedicated on-site partners who provide essential services and programming—supporting YouthLink’s mission to empower youth on their journey to stability and independence.



2025 ON-SITE PARTNERS

- **Avivo** – Mental health care and support
- **The Soul’s Apothecary** – Licensed alcohol and drug counseling
- **Health Care for the Homeless Clinic** – Full-service medical care
- **Hired** – Career training, job placement, and GED services
- **Kulture Klub Collaborative** – Arts programming and creative expression
- **The JK Movement** – Mentorship, group coaching, and life skills training
- **Goodwill Easter-Seals** – Education and employment support

VOLUNTEER SUPPORT

Community members also play a vital role in bringing the Youth Opportunity Center to life. In 2025, volunteers contributed **670 hours of service**—a 21% increase from 2024—supporting day-to-day operations and creating a welcoming environment for youth.

We are grateful for the many individuals and volunteer groups who gave their time and energy in 2025, including teams from **SPS Commerce, Netrio, Xcel Energy, USI, Accenture, Wakely, Medica, and Hennepin County Safe Communities**. Thank you!



Xcel Energy Day of Service



SPS Commerce Volunteer Group



USI Volunteer Group

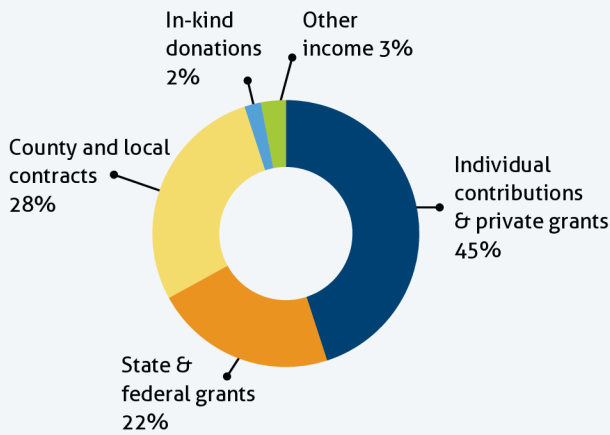
STATEMENT OF REVENUES & EXPENSES

(Fiscal Year (FY) 2025: Oct 1, 2024, through Sept 30, 2025)

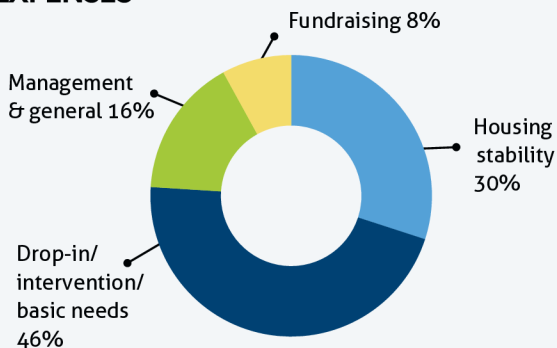
Revenue	FY 2025
Individual contributions & private grants	\$2,824,111
State and federal grants	1,381,068
County and local contracts	1,766,659
In-kind donations	125,309
Other income	178,900
Total revenue	\$6,276,047

Expenses	FY 2025
<i>Direct Program Expenses (76%)</i>	
Housing stability	\$1,725,903
Drop-in/intervention/basic needs	2,743,195
<i>Supporting Services (24%)</i>	
Management and general	947,638
Fundraising	497,513
Total expenses	\$5,914,249
<i>Total revenue less total expenses</i>	<i>\$361,798</i>

REVENUE

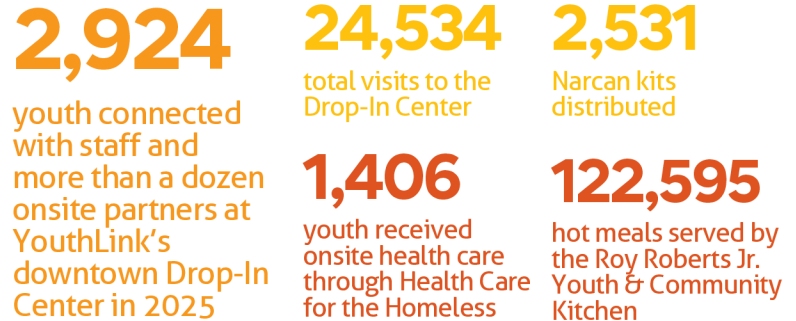


EXPENSES



YOUTHLINK PROGRAMS BY THE NUMBERS 2025

Drop-In Center



Mental & Chemical Health

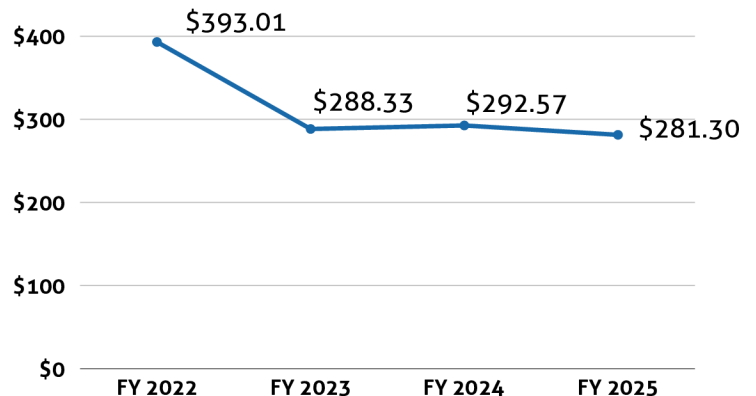


Housing



Greater Impact at a Lower Cost

Average Cost to Support One Youth Toward Stability



Average cost to support one youth decreased while maintaining same level and quality of service.

LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

DEAR FRIENDS,

We are so proud of the YouthLink organization. I am pleased to share that, thanks to the generosity of an expanding donor base, YouthLink ended the year well ahead of budget—**reporting a 35% increase in revenue and a \$1.2M swing in net assets, achieving a healthy profit, with a sizable reduction in debt.**

This progress is especially meaningful as YouthLink continues to serve a growing number of young people, even as expenses rise and new revenue strategies take time to mature. Because of your support, more youth are accessing the stability, resources, and care they need to move forward.

The YouthLink Board and Leadership Team takes seriously our role as stewards of the contributions entrusted to us. This year, we strengthened both our financial position and our ability to serve:

- We enhanced financial controls, continuing our partnership with Clifton Larson Allen and an Independent Auditor. Our financial turnaround led to the removal of ‘ongoing concern’ language from our audit.
- All state and local grants were renewed following rigorous assessment.
- We strengthened budgeting oversight to responsibly manage expenses, while supporting our growth as more youth seek services.
- We welcomed five new Directors while honoring four outgoing members, continuing to grow and strengthen our Board. Our village is expanding.
- A significant estate gift of over \$400,000 allowed us to establish a reserve, providing both security and flexibility for the future. This gift came from a long-time donor who first engaged with YouthLink over 20 years ago. Individual contributions and private grants increased 42% compared to 2024.
- All of the above, along with the success of our annual *Stand Up For Youth* breakfast, have diversified revenue and reduced reliance on government funding.
- We worked together to design and adopt an ambitious new Five-Year Strategic Plan.

It has been noted that “growth comes from uncomfortable situations.” We see that truth reflected in the resilience of the young people we serve and in YouthLink’s own journey. We remain committed to ensuring every young person has the resources to thrive.

We are deeply grateful for your continued support,



— **Rachael Scherer,**
YouthLink Board of Directors Chair

LEADERSHIP

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Rachael Scherer, Chair
Community Volunteer,
Retired,
Medtronic LLC

Alicia Berger, Vice Chair
Regional Vice
President, Gas
Operations,
Xcel Energy

Kumar Das Gupta, Treasurer
Senior Vice President
Enterprise Operations,
Allianz Life

Jay Belsito
Civic Engagement,
Gender Justice

Terrell Benton
Executive Vice
President & Chief
Operating Officer,
YMCA of the North

Anne Doepner
Senior Director of
Diversity, Equity, and
Inclusion,
Minnesota Vikings

Kimberly Haynes
Assistant General
Counsel,
Minneapolis Public
Schools

Devan Heinsen
Fundraising
Consultant,
Brave Fundraising

Jamal Knight
Commercial Real
Estate Attorney,
Taft Stettinius &
Hollister LLP

Mike Mills
Director of
Construction
Management,
Ryan Companies

Quincy Powe
Senior Manager of the
Opportunity Youth
Network,
Youthprise
Co-Founder,
Voices of Youth
Advisory Council

Darron Sherrill
Culturally Responsive
and Supportive
Schools Supervisor,
Minnesota
Department of
Education

Shikhar Singh
Chief Technology
Officer,
Choice Bank

Patrick Troup
Vice President of
Student Affairs,
Minneapolis
Community and
Technical College

Bryan Wilkinson
Managing Director,
Accenture

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Allina Health

Nellie Siers, Vice Chair
Minnesota Housing

Ky'Mari Love, Communications Lead
East Side
Neighborhood
Development
Company (ESNDC)

Jackson Nelson, Membership Lead
GDI Integrated
Facility Services

Ray Anderson
Allianz Life

Zoe Martens
The Advocates for
Human Rights

Diego Nevares
Winthrop &
Weinstine, P.A

Sammi Noebel
SPS Commerce

Lucy Scherer
Scherer Brothers
Lumber Co.

Malik "Des" Thomas
Kulture Klub
Collaborative & VOYAC

Francesca Wurm
Washburn Center for
Children

VOICES OF YOUTH ADVISORY COUNCIL (VOYAC)

Clyde Quarles
Chair

Brother Ra
Vice Chair

Malik "Des" Thomas
Advocacy Advisor

Manny Bekoe
Secretary

Khi Doume
Events Advisor

Starr Pate
Communications
Advisor

Htoo "Sky" Paw
General Council
Member



THANK YOU!

2025 was a year of growth and impact—made possible by the strength of our community. We are deeply grateful for our partners and supporters who stand alongside young people every day.




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