WASHINGTON SQUARE HEALTH FOUNDATION

ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2024-2025

MISSION STATEMENT

Realizing the healthcare crisis in our country, the Board of Washington Square Health Foundation, Inc. recognizes that no one foundation can meet all the challenges of the healthcare environment. However, the Foundation has developed a program of grant making which is designed to be both a catalyst and guide for other foundations and grant making organizations in meeting the various needs of the Chicagoland healthcare community.

The Washington Square Health Foundation, Inc. grants funds in order to promote and maintain access to adequate healthcare for all people in the Chicagoland area regardless of race, sex, creed or financial need. The Foundation meets this goal through its grants for medical and nursing education, medical research and direct healthcare services.

As a guide to other foundations and other service providers and as a part of the Board's stewardship of charitable funds, the Washington Square Health Foundation, Inc. has developed a grant evaluation system to ensure that the objectives of various projects are carried out in the manner prescribed by the approved grant.

The Foundation wishes to impress on the philanthropic community that the careful evaluation of the outcomes of grant projects is as important as the appropriate selection of grant recipients.

BOARD CHAIR'S MESSAGE

William N. Werner, M.D., M.P.H., F.A.C.P.

William N. Werner, MD, MPH
Board Chair

A technique used in improv theater is “yes, and…” to transition to a new or expanded topic while continuing the underlying theme of the episode. While Washington Square Health Foundation’s (WSHF) Grant Committee and staff do not consider improvisation when evaluating grant funding requests, we will consider the question “yes, and” when seeking to expand a grant’s impact on a community’s health and well-being.

A recent example of this additive approach to grant making is the “Utilizing High-Fidelity Simulation to Improve Pediatric Emergency Readiness Across the Care Continuum.” William Friedeman, a founding member of the WSHF’s Board, Secretary and Chair of the Compensation Committee, brought an article in the Wall Street Journal to the Foundation’s attention regarding the lack of emergency room and first responder preparedness when treating children resulting in many children dying.

It was apparent that there is not only a lack of regulation, but there was no plan in place to correct these issues. Mr. Friedeman asked the question “yes, and” what could WSHF do to improve the situation.

Staff reached out to the Ann and Robert H Lurie Children's Hospital, the premier state of the art pediatric facility in the Chicago area. Together a three pronged approach was developed to address these issues. Simulation training modules for health care providers was developed which employs a multi-modal approach to provide training for critical knowledge and skills unique to the assessment and care of children. Several area hospitals and first responders have participated in the program which has improved patient care and avoided medical and medication errors.

Challenges in today's health care environment include providing trustworthy information and sustainable services. With mixed messages and disinformation/misinformation coming from previously reliable sources, WSHF strives to base grant making on scientifically based evidence and data. The Board also considers how an organization will sustain a grant request beyond the initial funding period. So a logical question to ask about a grant funding request is "yes, and…"

William N. Werner, MD, MPH, FACP
Board Chair

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

Catherine Kapella, M.P.H

Catherine Kapella, MPH
Executive Director

At Washington Square Health Foundation, our mission has always centered on improving health outcomes and supporting the most vulnerable communities across Chicagoland. As I reflect on the past year, I am proud to share that 2025 was a year of strong growth and continued progress toward expanding the Foundation's impact.

The Foundation remains in a strong financial position. This growth reflects the careful stewardship and long-term vision of our Board of Directors, staff, and financial advisor. Because of this success, we have been able to increase our grantmaking budget and further strengthen our ability to invest in transformative healthcare initiatives throughout Chicago.

Over the past year, we continued advancing strategic priorities focused on innovation, collaboration, and community impact. One highlight was the Board's visit to Shirley Ryan AbilityLab, where we saw firsthand the groundbreaking work being supported through our growing investments in cutting-edge medical research. We are especially encouraged by the progress of the Chicago Diabetes Project human trial initiative, which represents the culmination of years of philanthropic partnership and support.

Washington Square also continued to expand its role as a convener and connector within the nonprofit healthcare community. This year, we began facilitating a partnership between Cornerstone Community Outreach and Lawndale Christian Health Center to explore the development of a healthcare clinic serving individuals experiencing homelessness on Chicago's North Side. By bringing organizations together around shared goals, we can help create sustainable solutions that address urgent community needs.

Education and workforce development also remained key priorities. We continued strengthening our relationship with the University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health through efforts to establish an endowed scholarship program for Master of Public Health students committed to serving medically underserved communities. This scholarship initiative honors Dr. William N. Werner, WSHF Board Chair, for his longstanding commitment to public health and leadership at the Foundation while helping prepare the next generation of public health professionals.

Internally, the Foundation made important operational advancements that position us well for the future. We modernized record retention systems, enhanced technology infrastructure, and streamlined grantmaking procedures that will provide operational stability and cost savings. We also welcomed new student interns who bring energy, talent, and a strong commitment to our mission.

At the same time, the healthcare landscape continues to face significant uncertainty. Rising healthcare costs, workforce shortages, evolving federal policies, and increased pressures on safety-net systems continue to affect nonprofit providers and vulnerable populations alike. Washington Square remains committed to responding thoughtfully and strategically to these challenges.

As a private foundation, we are uniquely positioned to act quickly when urgent needs arise and to support organizations not only through grant funding, but also through technical assistance, collaboration, and partnership-building.

Looking ahead, we remain focused on implementing the Foundation's Strategic Plan and pursuing new initiatives that strengthen access to care throughout Chicagoland. None of this work would be possible without the dedication and leadership of our Board of Directors, whose guidance continues to strengthen the Foundation and expand our reach. I am deeply grateful for their partnership and for the many nonprofit leaders, healthcare professionals, and community organizations who work alongside us every day.

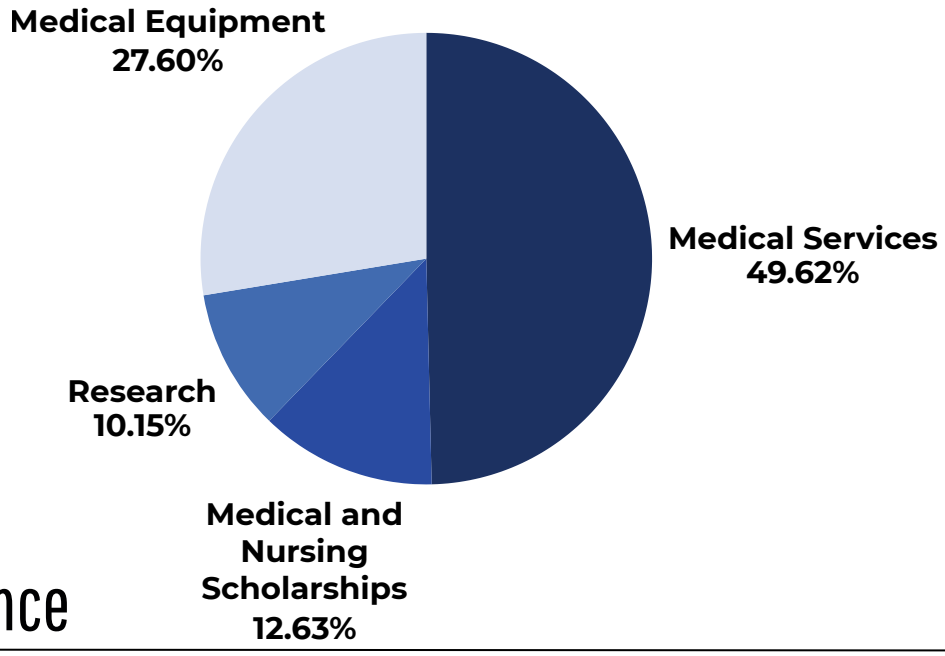
As we move forward, Washington Square Health Foundation remains committed to being responsive, innovative, and mission-driven in addressing the evolving healthcare needs of our communities. We look forward to continuing this important work together.

Sincerely,

Catherine Kapella, MPH
Executive Director
Washington Square Health Foundation

Funding Allocations

Since Inception



Fund Balance

1985	$16.7 Million
2025	$20.7 Million
Increase	24%
Given Away	Over $35.3 Million or 211.38% of original assets granted over time

2025 administrative expense (non-charitable) is less than 1% of total assets.

Statement of Activities

Year Ended September 30, 2025

Grants	$667,212
Estimated Administrative Expense (Non-Charitable Expense)	$79,011
Professional Legal and Accounting Fees	$50,754
Total Assets	$20,670,433

The official and complete audit as certified by Crowe Horwath LLP.

GRANT RECIPIENTS

- A Silver Lining Foundation
- Advocate Charitable Foundation
- Alexian Brothers Bonaventure House
- Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago
- Bubby Fira's Food Bank
- Buffalo AKG Art Museum
- Center on Halsted
- Centro San Bonifacio
- ChesedChicago
- Chicago Hearing Society
- Chicago Women's Health Center
- CommunityHealth
- Cornerstone Community Outreach
- Council on Foundations
- Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance
- Easter Seals Metropolitan Chicago
- Elmhurst Memorial Hospital
- Elmwood Franklin School Inc.
- Epilepsy Foundation of Greater Chicago
- Erie Family Health Center
- Food for Greater Elgin
- Forefront
- F.R.E.E.
- Gilda's Club Chicago
- Grantmakers in Health
- Howard Brown Health Center
- ILLINI Chabad
- Institute of Medicine Chicago
- Keshet
- La Rabida Children's Hospital
- Lawndale Christian Health Center
- Lester and Rosalie Anixter Center
- North Park Friendship Center
- Northwestern
- Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine
- Our Lady of Mount Carmel Academy
- PCC Community Wellness Center
- Polish American Association
- Project Seed of Suburban Chicago, Inc.
- Ray Graham Association for People with Disabilities
- Rosalind Franklin University of Medicine and Science
- Shirley Ryan AbilityLab
- Sinai Chicago
- The Chicago Lighthouse
- The Children's Clinic
- The Kedzie Center
- The Night Ministry
- Torah Academy of Buffalo Grove
- University of Chicago Medical Center
- University of Illinois Chicago School of Public Health
- Wauconda Fire Protection District
- Westminster Presbyterian Society