



CONVERSATIONS OF THE HEART



Northern Virginia
Family Service



2019 ANNUAL REPORT

Letter from our CEO



Stephanie Berkowitz
President and CEO

The five conversations of the heart captured in this year's annual report provide a window into the breadth and depth of Northern Virginia Family Services' work and reveal how and why we provide 42,000 people a year with the essential building blocks for financial, emotional and physical well-being and, ultimately, economic independence. Thank you for being part of this journey.

Our pioneering model, which engages a wraparound approach of uncovering and eliminating barriers to independence for the most vulnerable individuals and families in Northern Virginia, has been honed over 95 years. As we near our 100th anniversary, we remain authentic to these acts of humanity and continue to evolve to meet the challenges facing our region today – from a dramatic and increasing income gap to a long history of embedded racial inequity.

In the words of donor Xenia Garofalo, who is featured on page 12 in conversation with her husband Frank, "I see an organization preparing individuals and families to thrive in a complex world."

You make this work possible and for that, we are deeply grateful.

The past year presented both its share of challenges, but also opportunities. For instance:

Government Shutdown

Building on the expertise in trauma recovery we have developed over many years, Northern Virginia Family Service stood ready to assist our current clients and neighbors throughout the region during January's prolonged government shutdown. Just as we have done for almost 100 years, we provided high quality assistance to individuals and families in crisis – offering food and emergency financial assistance for rent, mortgages, utilities and childcare to furloughed federal employees, government contractors and others affected by the 35-day shutdown. In addition, local news outlets turned to us to talk about the value of mental health support in times of crisis, resulting in widespread coverage in The Washington Post, on WAMU's Kojo Nnamdi Show and in numerous Northern Virginia media outlets.

Day One Families Fund Grant

NVFS was singled out as one of only 24 nonprofits in the country (the only organization in Northern Virginia) to receive an inaugural Day One Families Fund grant. The funding, from the Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos Family Philanthropic Fund, is accelerating NVFS' development of solutions, models and practices to address family homelessness in Northern Virginia.

Identified by Day One as a high-performing, high-impact leader, NVFS is taking its work to the next level by investing in services not typically found at a shelter. Already, the grant has allowed us to hire a career navigator and housing locator for our SERVE shelter in Manassas and is providing rent support to families like Aria and Charles, who share their conversation on page 8.

As we look ahead to the future, we pause to thank the many people who gave their hearts to NVFS in 2019. To our devoted staff and volunteers; dedicated board members; corporate, government, and community partners; and to each and every donor, we offer our gratitude. Because of you, NVFS is able to make Northern Virginia a better place for all of our neighbors. Finally, to our clients: your courage and determination inspire us every day.

Our Impact In 2019

Thanks to you, in FY2019, Northern Virginia Family Service helped **42,000 clients** on their path to self-sufficiency at **16 locations** across Northern Virginia.

Through the efforts of nearly **400 employees** and more than **4,000 volunteers**, supplying more than **64,000 volunteer hours** valued at **\$2 million**, you ensured that our neighbors have the tools and resources they need to build brighter futures.



MISSION

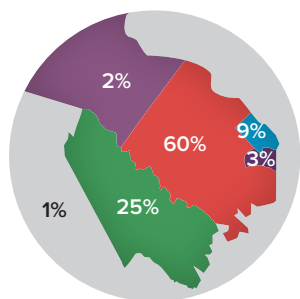
To empower individuals and families to improve their quality of life, and to promote community cooperation and support in responding to family needs.

Who We Serve

In FY19, NVFS reached over 42,000 participants and their families.

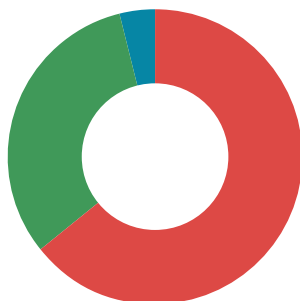
Service Areas

- Early Childhood Development
- Foster Care and Adoption
- Health Care Access, Nutritional Education, and Food Assistance
- Homelessness and Housing
- Immigration Legal Services
- Mental Health
- Workforce Development
- Youth Initiatives



Geographic Snapshot

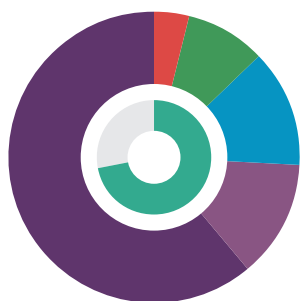
- Fairfax/Falls Church 60%
- Prince William 25%
(includes Manassas Park and Manassas City)
- Arlington 9%
- Alexandria 3%
- Loudoun 2%
- Other (Virginia, Maryland, DC and other) 1%



Income Levels

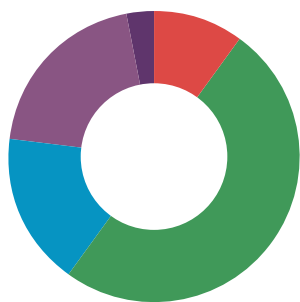
Over two-thirds of our clients live below the federal poverty level

- NVFS clients living on less than \$25,750 for a family of four 67%
- NVFS clients living on between \$25,750 and \$51,500 for a family of four 33%
- NVFS clients live on more than \$51,500 for a family of four 0%



Race and/or Ethnicity

- Asian 4%
- Multi-racial 9%
- African American 13%
- Other 13%
- White 61%
- Hispanic 72%



Age

- 0-5 10%
- 6-18 50%
- 19-35 17%
- 36-65 20%
- 65+ 3%

98%

of legal cases, where a decision is reached, are approved in NVFS' clients' favor.

Asylum from Domestic Abuse

The U.S. legal system can be arduous to navigate, especially for those unfamiliar with the system, let alone the language. NVFS Legal Services assists immigrants and their families in achieving safety and stability in the United States by providing competent, culturally sensitive and low-cost immigration-related legal services. Attorney Emily McCabe and three colleagues take around 2,000 cases a year, reflecting the growing need in our community for immigration legal services. Olimpia and her two daughters, ages 11 and 16, arrived in the U.S. from Central America in November. They experienced daily sexual and physical abuse for 11 years. Their conversation took place in Spanish.





EMILY: When you told me your story, my heart sank. That you were attacked by your husband with a machete, that you and the girls were prevented from leaving the house, even to go to the store or to school because he didn't think girls should be educated. What the three of you went through is unimaginable. It's not surprising that it was hard to talk about.

OLIMPIA: I thank God you were willing to take my case and knew from the moment we met that I could trust you.

DAUGHTER: At first it was really painful to revisit the things that happened. But then I started to feel more comfortable telling you things.

EMILY: That's when the full story came out. How you had been raped and suffered daily beatings in your home country. With great courage, you made your way to Virginia where you have family. You came to us seeking legal asylum. From the start, I thought you could win the case. Then, just six months before the hearing, the law changed and we had to entirely rethink our strategy. We prepared for the worst but hoped for the best.

DAUGHTER: The mock trial helped a lot in preparing for the hearing.

OLIMPIA: Remember when you gave each of us a stress ball, in case we got nervous in the courtroom?

EMILY: Yes! I don't think you ended up needing it. Several of the other NVFS

immigration attorneys participated in the mock trial, playing the roles of the judge, the trial attorney and the interpreter. You had some qualms about coming face-to-face with a male judge, so I asked you if it would help to have my female coworkers sitting in the courtroom. That way, when you looked out into the courtroom, you'd see a sea of friendly faces.

OLIMPIA: That helped calm my nerves.

EMILY: The judge indicated at the hearing he would grant you asylum, but the government shutdown meant you had to wait another month before the final decision was announced.

DAUGHTER: That was nerve-racking. I was afraid he would change his mind.

EMILY: I could tell you and your sister understood the moment he announced his decision – even before the verdict was translated into Spanish.

DAUGHTER: I tried not to cry. My sister is usually very stoic, but this time she had a little smile on her face. That smile said so much. Afterward, we Facetimed with our younger brothers who are still back home.

EMILY: Looking back, I realize NVFS was able to offer you hope at a time when you didn't have any. At that first meeting, you expressed concern that you'd be sent back to your home country and be killed. Instead, you get to live here violence free. I could tell it became real for you when we started talking about bringing your brothers here.

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Just six months before the hearing, the law changed and we had to entirely rethink our strategy.



In the past year,
94%
of clients who
worked with our
Career Navigators
saw an increase
in their wages.

More than a Resume

Martin Romualdez is a Career Navigator with NVFS who specializes in helping people with diverse backgrounds and experience to land jobs. Part of NVFS' Bridging Affordability program, Martin previously worked in our Training Futures program, which helps under- and unemployed adults secure professional careers with potential for advancement. Munir el-Hag turned to NVFS because he was having a hard time finding a job in his field.

MUNIR: I moved to Fairfax in 2000 to make a better life for myself and my family. I was an accountant in Sudan, but there were limited opportunities. My wife came two years later. We are raising our children here – two boys and a girl. In the U.S., I got my CPA certification. Yet it was still hard finding work.

MARTIN: When I met you, you were discouraged with your job search. You took every rejection hard. I saw my role as lifting you up.

MUNIR: We would meet in the public library in Falls Church or in your office and work on my resume. When we started, my resume was not organized. You helped with the

wording and the grammar. We worked and reworked it several times. You also sent me links to potential employers. Many, many links.

MARTIN: As a Career Navigator, that's what I do: offer support, guidance and resources to my clients. I remove barriers and empower the people I work with so they can achieve their vision of what it means to be successful. Like you, many of my clients have moved here from other countries and don't know how to navigate the American employment system or know how the U.S. job culture works.

MUNIR: I was originally focused on senior level positions. You encouraged me to broaden my job search, to get a foot in the door.

MARTIN: And to add cover letters to your applications. When we first met, you weren't sending cover letters. We worked on that.

MUNIR: There was no limit to what you did for me. When my CPA license expired – twice – you not only helped me renew it, you identified funding within NVFS to pay the fees. That meant a lot to me.

MARTIN: I could tell setbacks were difficult for you, but I kept telling you all you need is one "yes" and all those "noes" would disappear.

MUNIR: The "yes" finally came in the form of a \$70,000 job as a CPA. Unfortunately, after two months, the company was sold and the fulltime position was eliminated. Since then, I've been running my own business. But I've never forgotten you, how you boosted my spirits and my confidence.

MARTIN: I've learned many things from my clients over the years. Instead of saying, "I am going to tell you what you need to do to stay on track," I've learned to ask, "How can I help you stay on track?" I've learned not to talk at people. In my previous job, as a probation officer, I was constantly telling people what to do. Sometimes you just need to listen to them. My answers will not always be their answers, and that's okay. Munir, I learned so much from you. I learned how courageous people can be, even in the face of persistent setbacks. I also learned that sometimes the right solutions come from individuals who have to conquer their challenges on a daily basis – all you have to do is listen.

MUNIR: Thank you Martin.

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With 92 beds, the SERVE Shelter is Northern Virginia's largest family homeless shelter.

On average, 50% of shelter guests are children. Guests work with staff who connect them with the right tools, knowledge and resources for lasting well-being and self-sufficiency.

SERVE Shelter: Incubator for Needle-moving Work

DC's outer Virginia suburbs are not usually associated with homelessness. Yet, many of our neighbors are one financial crisis away from becoming homeless. At the SERVE shelter in Manassas, our holistic approach focuses on providing shelter guests with whatever they need to move into housing and become self-sufficient. That's what Aria Drayton and Charles Butts found during their time at SERVE, where they met shelter manager Michael-Sean Adams.

ARIA: I'd been in a homeless shelter before, but this was the first time since I had my kids, so I was nervous. I didn't know if I'd be allowed to have my babies (ages 4 and 18 months) with me in my room. I was relieved to find out we could all be together. All I cared about were my kids.

CHARLES: For me, a perfect storm led me to SERVE. I was laid off from my job at the same time the house I was staying at was foreclosed on.

ARIA: I remember when you said hi to me in the cafeteria.

CHARLES: You were wearing a Dallas Cowboys shirt.

ARIA: And I learned you're a Washington fan! You were really great with my kids. That won me over from day one.

MICHAEL-SEAN: When you arrived, you both seemed lonely. In addition to finding each other, you stayed focused on your job and housing searches, taking advantage of everything we offered – from the job coach and housing locator to the financial management classes. Charles, over time you seemed to get a new light, a new fire under your feet. That's when I knew you would make it. And Aria, you settled in once you knew your kids would be okay.

ARIA: I was given everything I needed, from diapers to daycare. The Early Head Start program was located, conveniently, in the





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At one point when she was sick, the mental health counselor observed me with her and said: “You’re a good mom.” It meant a lot for someone who doesn’t know me to tell me I’m doing a good job.

same building as the shelter. I was allowed to sit in on the program for the first three days and could see that my daughter was in great hands. At one point when she was sick, the mental health counselor observed me with her and said: “You’re a good mom.” It meant a lot for someone who doesn’t know me to tell me I’m doing a good job. It gave me more confidence. That’s when I began focusing on my own needs with the help of both of my case managers (one through the shelter, one through Early Head Start).

MICHAEL-SEAN: With your background in hospitality, we were able to help you line up a job as a crew leader at a fast food restaurant in Woodbridge.

CHARLES: At the same time, I was working with the staff on my resume, applying for jobs and practicing interview techniques. You arranged for one-on-one time with a job coach. I had hoped to land a job as an electrician but when that didn’t pan out, I pursued a job as a mechanic working on buses.

ARIA: Then you were selected for rapid re-housing and NVFS was able to help with the deposit and three months of rent. I had applied for those same Woodbridge apartments before and was denied. Together, by combining our incomes, we can make this work.

MICHAEL-SEAN: Your rent and our housing navigator and career navigator positions were funded by a grant from the Bezos Day One Fund, which has been like an injection of energy and hope. It has given us the flexibility to experiment with new ideas and trends while continuing to provide best practices in ending family homelessness.

96%

of families enrolled in Healthy Families have an optimal home environment to support child development, or show improvement, after one year of participating.

Counseling in the Healthy Families program

In the months after the birth of her first child, Bianca Anez struggled with depression. After getting professional help, she knew she wanted to help other women who were experiencing post-partum depression. That's the role she plays today as a bilingual mental health counselor with the Northern Virginia Family Service's Healthy Families program. Among the many first-time mothers she has counseled is Kenia Leiva, who grew up in El Salvador before moving to North Carolina and then Northern Virginia. She left behind her family, her friends and her job; in other words, when Bianca first met Kenia, she was functioning without a safety net. Their conversation took place in Spanish.





KENIA: For me, coming to Northern Virginia was such a big change. I had my husband, but he left for work every morning at 5. I was really stressed out and didn't have a support system. I started overeating and developed panic attacks, vertigo and pre-diabetes. I was seeking refuge in food. Luckily, I learned about Healthy Families and when the case manager visited me at home, she saw I was depressed. That is when she referred me to you.

BIANCA: When my own son was born, I felt the weight of the world on my shoulders. He was colicky. I didn't know how to handle it. I knew I was depressed but I didn't realize how common that is. Talking to a counselor brought sanity back to my life.

KENIA: You and Diana (from Healthy Families) brought sanity back to my life! When I met you I had no confidence. I didn't know basic things, like letting babies sleep on their stomachs puts them at risk for SIDS or that grapes are a choking hazard. I didn't know when I was supposed to introduce solid foods, or that I needed to childproof my house. I had never even seen an outlet cover until Diana brought one to my house. And she gave me handouts in Spanish about the developmental milestones.

BIANCA: We talked a lot about the guilt that sometimes comes after childbirth. For me, I didn't know why I was sad since it's a blessing to have a beautiful family. I felt guilty about not being able to provide what my son needed. I witness this in my clients: guilt about not feeling 100 percent happy at all times.

KENIA: The expectations for mothers are crazy. In my country, the thinking is: You had your baby the day before yesterday. Now get back to milling grain.

BIANCA: In many Latin American countries, it's taboo to talk about mental health.

KENIA: With your help, I've become a better version of myself. I'm more tranquil and motivated to do things like go on walks and work out. I drink green smoothies instead of coffee and bread. I'm more energetic. The voice in my head used to say "You can't do this." Now it says, "You can." I hear your words in my head: "If you feel like you are falling, it's ok, but get back up." I'm so grateful for Healthy Families. Without them, I never would have had the opportunity to work with you, Bianca.

BIANCA: And I wouldn't have had the opportunity to work with you. It's amazing what people can achieve when they have access to mental health care. I'm very proud of you.

KENIA: I've been a very good student!

Laughter.

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The voice in my head used to say 'You can't do this.' Now it says, 'You can.'



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We should have been the ones in line getting food. Instead, we gave others what little we had.

A “Hamilton”-obsessed Couple Discovers NVFS

When Xenia and Frank Garofalo moved from New York City to Alexandria, they went in search of a local nonprofit to support – one that reflected their family’s values and was having a significant impact in the community. They didn’t have to look far.

XENIA: We didn’t want to raise our children in New York. I had gone to law school in D.C. and thought Northern Virginia would be a great fit for our family.

FRANK: I love that it’s close to a major city but has so many parks and lakes. I love the diversity of people and languages, too. It’s important to us that our children are exposed to that.

XENIA: We have a great life, but understand others aren’t as fortunate. I know, from my own childhood. We should have been the ones in line getting food. Instead, we gave others what little we had. That was a value my grandmother instilled in me.

FRANK: I love that about you.

XENIA: Last year I was looking online for an organization in this community that our family could support. That’s how I found Northern Virginia Family Service. Talking to the staff reinforced the impact they are having on a daily basis.

FRANK: Every time you come home from visiting the SERVE shelter and Hunger Resource Center, you’re so excited.

XENIA: Because, as a tax attorney, I know how money works. I have a big picture perspective. I see an organization preparing individuals and families to thrive in a complex world. An organization showing them how to best leverage what little they have so they can become self-sufficient.

FRANK: Before becoming a stay-at-home dad, I was a teacher at a Title 1 school that serves a large concentration of low-income students, so I understand how important education is and value NVFS’ Early Head Start and Head Start programs. Those early interventions are critical.

XENIA: The children who come to NVFS’ early learning programs could be tomorrow’s leaders. It’s no secret that we are obsessed with the musical “Hamilton.” I’ve been fascinated by Alexander Hamilton’s story for a long time. He was an orphan yet look what he’s done, look at the impact this one immigrant had. My obsession with Hamilton is not unlike my obsession with NVFS, which stands behind people who might not otherwise have the help they need to succeed. That’s why NVFS has become my favorite organization. Or obsession, if you will.

FRANK: You just reminded me of another thing: I was so impressed with NVFS’ ability to step in quickly during the government shutdown to provide emergency support. Everyone in Northern Virginia knew someone who was affected. They were our friends, they were our neighbors. When NVFS says they are here for the community, they are true to their word.

XENIA: We keep meeting people who have volunteered or donated to NVFS for decades.

FRANK: That will be us.



35%
of meals at the
SERVE family shelter
were provided
and prepared by
volunteer groups,
saving
\$51,400
in shelter costs.

Thank you!

Thanks to our many donors for your financial and in-kind support in FY 2019
(July 1, 2018-June 30, 2019).

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**Temple B'nai Shalom's Adult
B'nai Mitzvah Class of 2019**

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Risa Morris

Rabbi Amy and Gary Perlin

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Shapiro

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Gregory Tervo

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Abria Croft

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Tina and Richard Yalen

Stephen and Janet Braverman

Clifford Yee

Heather Joyner

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- Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services
- Virginia Department of Housing and Community Development
- Virginia Housing Development Authority
- Virginia Department of Social Services

District of Columbia**Fairfax County****Fairfax County Public Schools****Loudoun County****Northern Virginia Regional
Commission****Prince William County****U.S. Department of Agriculture****U.S. Department of Health & Human Services**

- Office of Head Start
- Office of Refugee Resettlement

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 Brentsville Presbyterian Church
 Bringing Resources to Aid Women's Shelters
 Buckhall United Methodist Church
 Bull Run Voiture
 Cantor Fitzgerald Relief Fund
 Capital Area Food Bank
 Catholic Charities
 Centreville Baptist Church
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 House of Mercy
 ICNA Relief
 Ideaventions
 Jack and Jill America, Inc. - Prince William County Chapter
 Jirani Coffeehouse
 Kerala Cultural Society of Metropolitan Washington
 Kiwanis Club of Bull Run Inc.
 Kiwanis Club of Manassas Battlefield
 Knights of Columbus Council 10947
 Lake Terrapin Community
 Let's Help Kids
 Light of Life Church
 Little Zion Baptist Church
 Living Faith Seventh Day Adventist Church
 LMEPAC Charity Program Custodial Account
 Loudoun SAI Center
 Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service
 Manassas Christian Fellowship
 Manassas Church of the Brethren
 Manassas Gap Women's Club
 Manassas Lioness Lions Club
 Manassas Park Community Center
 Manassas Presbyterian Church
 Manassas Seventh Day Adventist Church
 Manassas Women's Club
 Marsteller Middle School
 Master Gardeners of Northern Virginia
 Master Gardeners of Prince William
 Merit School of Old Town
 More Miles Races
 Northern Virginia Chapter of ARMA
 National Charity League - Cherry Blossom Chapter
 Nokesville Church of the Brethren
 Northern Virginia Church of Christ
 Northern Virginia Women Attorneys Association
 NOVEC Helps
 Nurturing Souls Ministries
 Olive Branch Baptist Church
 Osbourn High School

Osbourn Park High School Key Club
 Pajama Program
 Park Valley Church
 Potomac Patriots Hockey
 Prince William County Bar Association
 Prince William County Public Schools
 Prince William SHRM, Inc.
 Prince William SPCA
 Project Linus
 Quilts for Tots
 Regency Women's Club at Dominion Valley
 River of Grace Lutheran Church
 Sai Group of Loudoun
 SCAN of Northern Virginia
 St. James Episcopal Church
 St. Lucy Project
 St. Luke Orthodox Church
 St. Luke's Serbian Orthodox Church
 St. Thomas United Methodist Church
 Sudley United Methodist Church
 Tahirih Justice Center
 Tavares Taylor Charities, Inc.
 Telecom Pioneers
 Temple Rodef Shalom
 The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
 Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology
 United Way of Greater Portland
 United Way of the National Capital Area
 United Way Worldwide
 Unity Works
 Vietnamese Cultural Center
 Westminster School
 Women of Temple Rodef Shalom
 Young Men's Service League - Vienna/Oakton Chapter

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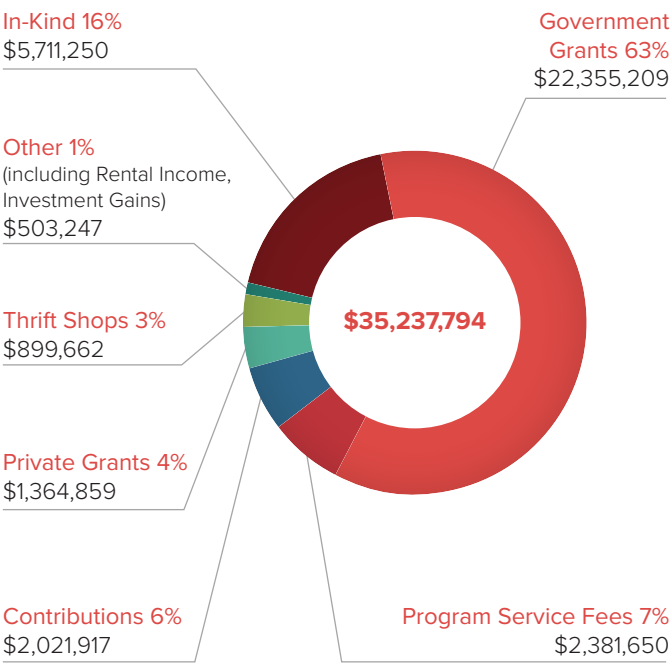
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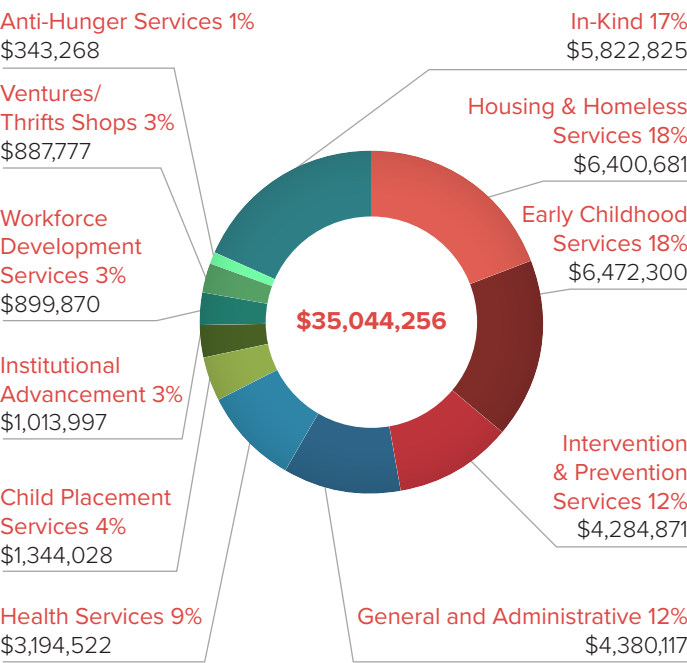
Financial Statement

Every dollar you contribute is important to us. We invest your financial support and other contributions in ways that best address the most crucial needs in our community. Because of the support we receive from our government, foundation, corporate and individual supporters, we are able to respond effectively and efficiently to ever-evolving community needs.

FY2019 Support and Revenue



FY2019 Expenses



▲ Above is a summary of our audited financial statements for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2019. NVFS' most recent audited financial statements are always available online at www.nvfs.org.

Get Involved

**Donors and volunteers are the heart and soul of NVFS.
You make our work possible.**

Donate

Throughout all seasons of need, more than 42,000 neighbors depend on your generosity and compassion. You can give back to your local community through NVFS by:

- Donating to our Family Hope Fund
- Celebrating a colleague or family member through Honor or Memorial Gifts
- Joining the Family Legacy Society to make a gift through your estate plan
- Engaging your family in our Village of Impact
- Shopping at and/or donating items to our Falls Church Thrift Store
- Participating in our back-to-school or holiday drives – or hosting your own!

Donations may be made online at nvfs.org. Or visit nvfs.org/wishlist for a list of current in-kind needs.

Volunteer

Volunteers are a part of NVFS' rich history of permanently lifting families out of poverty. We are committed to engaging volunteers in meaningful opportunities that encourage innovative ideas, unique perspectives and specialized expertise.

Opportunities include:

- Prepare and serve meals at our shelter
- Sort and organize items at our Thrift Store
- Stock the shelves and prepare food packages at our Hunger Resource Center
- Lead creative activities for children at our Head Start programs
- Provide job training and mentoring to prepare individuals for corporate positions

***We have numerous opportunities for individuals,
groups and families to get involved in our programs.***


*Contact us or visit our website (nvfs.org/volunteer) to learn
more about how you can deepen your community impact.*




Northern Virginia
Family Service


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Tel: 571.748.2500
nvfs.org

 **NoVAFamilyService**

 **Northern Virginia Family Service**

 **@nvfs**

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