



Annual Report

Fiscal Year 2023

July 1, 2022 to June 30, 2023

Herndon-Reston

FISH

Friendly Instant Sympathetic Help



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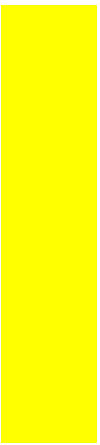
Board of Directors*

Elliot Wicks, President
Janet Hyman, Vice President
David Mandel, Vice President
Jack Gazlay, Treasurer
Peggy LeReche, Secretary
Robert Averde
Kathy Jones
Roy Miller
Robert Reed
Susan Sather



Committee Chairs*

Executive Committee – Elliot Wicks
Finance – Jack Gazlay
Assistance – Peggy LeReche
Personnel – Elliot Wicks
Development – Mary Saunders
FISH Fling – David Mandel and Mary Saunders
Holiday Food & Gift – Mary Saunders



Staff*

Mary Saunders, Executive Director
Lilia Jiménez-Siuhengalu, Emergency Assistance Manager
Lynn Warner, Bargain Loft Manager
Linda Bracewell, Bookkeeper

*As of December 2023.



Diversity and Inclusion

Herndon-Reston FISH is committed to realizing and maintaining a welcoming environment that embraces diversity. We strive to provide assistance to people of all races, genders, ages, ethnicities, sexual orientation, physical abilities, and religious beliefs. We encourage and promote the potential talents of each volunteer and staff member. We want to foster an atmosphere where everyone will do her or his best to work in pursuit of FISH's mission and goals.



Herndon-Reston FISH Mission

Herndon-Reston FISH, Inc., is a nonsectarian, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization providing **F**riendly **I**ntant **S**ympathetic **H**elp to Herndon and Reston residents in short-term financial crises. Work is performed by a small staff and many talented, enthusiastic volunteers. FISH works closely with social workers from Fairfax County, schools, local hospitals, and other non-profit organizations.

Every year, FISH helps thousands of predominantly very low-income families and individuals in all demographic categories by paying for rent, utilities, medical items and prescriptions, food, house-hold items, and other short-term emergency needs. FISH is dedicated to providing help to residents in Herndon and Reston who are struggling with an urgent need for financial stability. We seek to prevent crisis situations from escalating that could cause significant disruptions in families' ability to cope with their challenging lives. FISH's many efforts are mostly concentrated on the almost 7,000 residents who live at or below the poverty level in Herndon and Reston. They are from all racial and ethnic groups, gender identities, language groups, and family types.

The direct cash assistance that FISH provides prevents homelessness and utility cutoffs, and it can shield families from the dilemma of having to choose between paying for food or paying for medicine. When clients require additional ongoing assistance to overcome such fiscal challenges, we work with other public and private providers to ensure that the longer-term needs of vulnerable clients are met.

Recent History

Although FISH has been helping needy families for almost 55 years, the past several years have presented an unprecedented challenge as COVID took hold and destroyed jobs and people's health at the same time. When the pandemic began, FISH responded forcefully when Fairfax County came to us and requested that we shoulder a large share of the burden of getting financial support out to the many families in Herndon, Reston, and other County communities who were in serious financial distress. The County did this by providing FISH with \$7,761,008 in Federal funding from multiple rounds of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act (CARES), and the Emergency Rental Assistance (ERA) programs from FY2020 to FY2024. This has allowed FISH to serve not only more people than ever before but with significantly larger awards than ever before. But FY2023-2024 will mark the end of this federal funding stream.

Recent Accomplishments

Federal Program Experience

The availability all funds provided through the federal relief programs and passed through Fairfax County to FISH for distribution greatly increased both the number and size of payments that we made. The results are shown in the table below. The reduction in the number of cases in fiscal year 2023 reflects the fact that the federal programs were winding down.

FISH Federal Program Cases

	Number of Rent Cases	Average Rent Payment	Number of Utility Cases	Average Utility Payment
FY20	94	\$2,298	19	\$419
FY21	455	\$4,055	106	\$368
FY22	548	\$8,343	129	\$659
FY23	146	\$6,454	17	\$522

Traditional Program Experience

While FISH was administering these Federal programs in coordination with Fairfax County's Coordinated Services Planning Office, we continued our ongoing Emergency Assistance program that operates with funds that FISH raises on its own. During the last three fiscal years, the scale of these efforts can be summed up in the following table that compiles the numbers of cases, average awards, and total spending for emergency rent support, utility bills and related expenses that include medical/dental items and prescriptions, household items, transport challenges, and other emergency needs.

Fiscal year 2023 saw a substantial uptick in the number of rent cases, the average rent payment, and the number of utility cases. This probably again reflects the fact that as the federal assistance programs are being phased out, the need for assistance remains high and rent levels are increasing, so the help that FISH provides was again essential for meeting needs in the community.

Fish Traditional Assistance Program Cases

	Number of Rent Cases	Average Rent Payment	Number of Utility Cases	Average Utility Payment	Total Payments
FY21	207	\$632	115	\$383	\$189,177
FY22	261	\$620	175	\$422	\$244,887
FY23	357	\$856	295	\$410	\$450,610

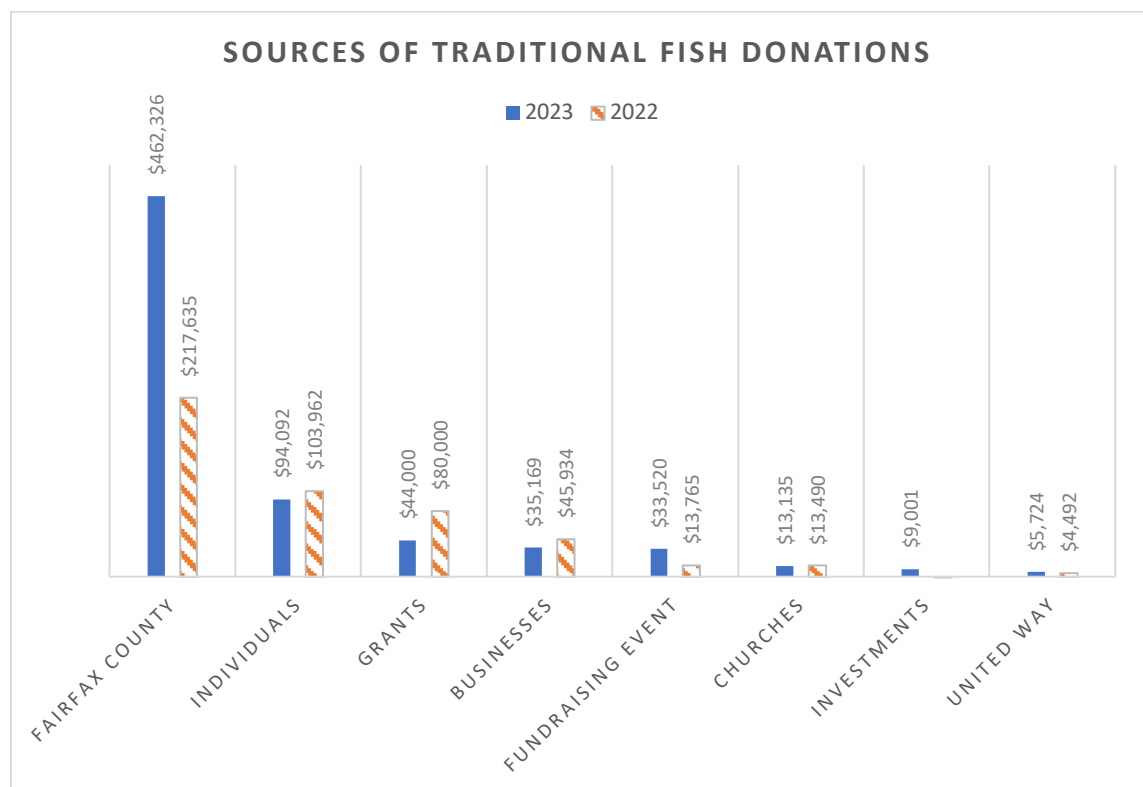
Over the past several years, the average number of individuals per household that have benefited from FISH emergency assistance awards is 2.8. This experience allows us to translate our households-served count into an estimate of individual beneficiaries across all areas of support. The number grew from 1,008 in FY21, to 1,280 in FY22, and then on to 1,966 in FY23.

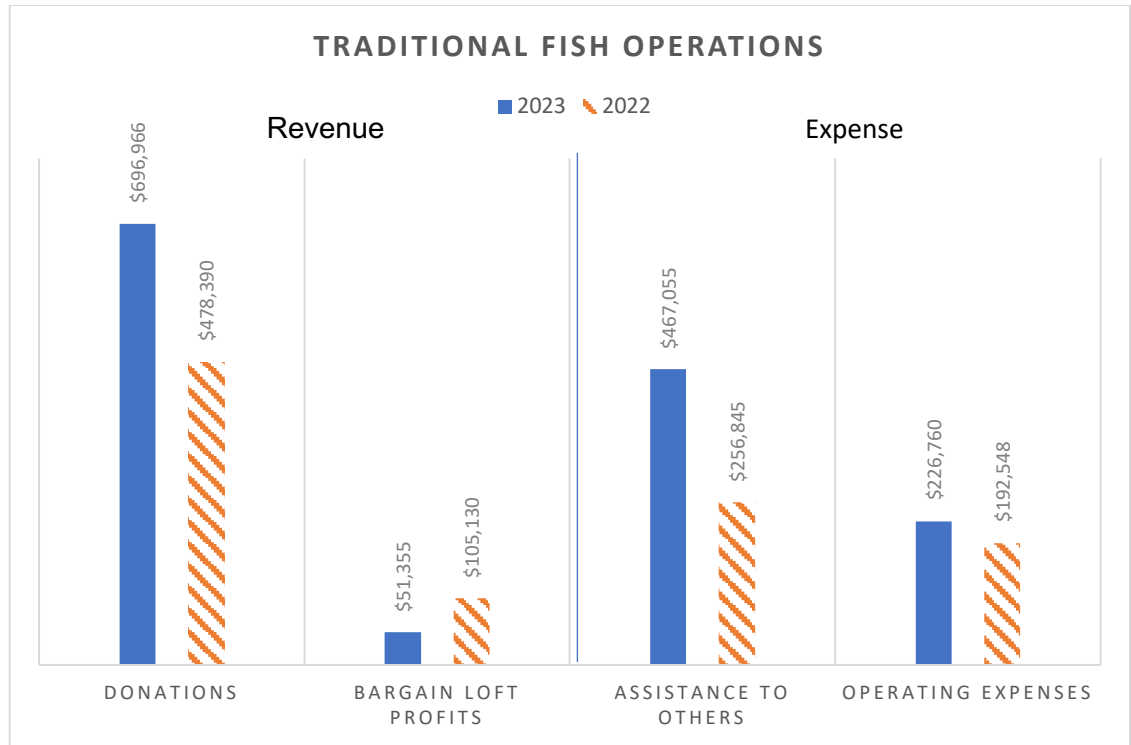
FISH Funding & Spending

The following graphs give a picture of the sources of funding for both FISH's traditional assistance programs and the federally funded programs as well as how these funds are spent.

Traditional FISH Assistance

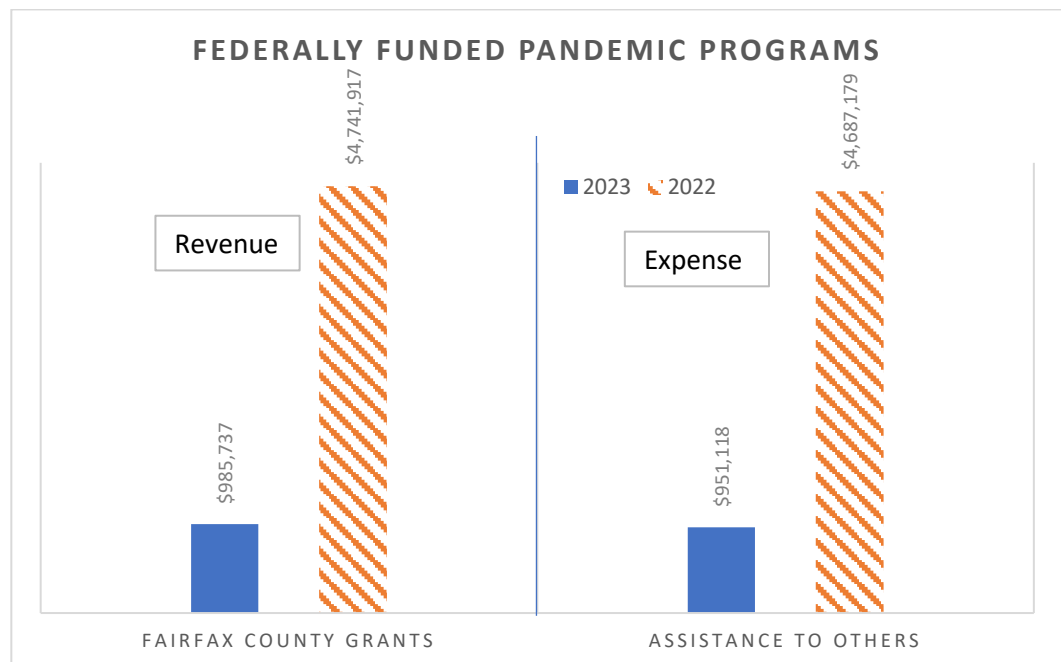
The funding FISH received from Fairfax County for our traditional assistance program in FY2022-2023 increased substantially over the previous year. Total donations from all sources were up 46%, which allowed us to increase assistance spending by essentially the same proportion, 45%.





Federally Funded Programs

As shown below, both funding and assistance supported by federal pandemic funding programs decreased dramatically: funding and assistance in FY2023 were only 20% of the previous year's amounts.



The Near Future

In the next two fiscal years FISH will face a landscape where the overall level of financial resources at our disposal will sharply decline as Federal support evaporates, and at the same time the needs of the poorest among us will not. We will, as always, rely on our traditional supporters—individual donations, foundation grants, business contributions, and support from religious institutions, as well as support from Fairfax County.

Who We Helped and for What Purpose

TOTAL NUMBER IN HOUSEHOLD	1	222	11.6%
	2	296	15.5%
	3	290	15.2%
	4	428	22.5%
	5	290	15.2%
	6+	380	19.9%
	Total	1906	100.0%

Our assistance was provided to 1906 families of various sizes with a fairly even distribution across sizes with the exception that households with four members accounted for nearly 23%.

FEDERAL POVERTY GROUP (FPG)	<=100% Extremely Low		75.24%
	101-200% Very Low		8.68%
	201-300% Low		7.23%
	>300% Moderate		8.84%
	Not Spec		0.00%
	Total		100.00%

By far the largest proportion (75%) of people we assisted had incomes that put them far below the federal poverty level. Clearly, our assistance goes to people who desperately need our help.

TOTAL MONTHLY AMT PAID	Rent and/or Security Deposit	\$303,716	68.0%
	Electricity	\$93,672	21.0%
	Gas	\$11,768	2.6%
	Water	\$11,967	2.7%
	Prescription/Med	\$1,455	0.3%
	Dental	\$2,283	0.5%
	Car	\$11,449	2.6%
	Other	\$10,139	2.3%
	Total	\$446,448	100.0%

By far the largest share of our assistance goes to pay for rent and utilities.

ETHNICITY	Non-Hispanic		78.40%
	Hispanic/ Latino		21.60%
	Total		100.00%

Hispanics make up a significant share of those we help, nearly 22%.

RACE	White		49.4%
	Black/African American		25.7%
	Asian		6.7%
	Native American / Alaska Native		0.5%
	Pacific Island / Hawai'ian Native		0.2%
	Multi		5.9%
	Not Spec		2.6%
	Other		9.0%
	Total		100.0%

Half of the people who receive our assistance are white, and more than one-quarter are black.

Individuals We Helped

Described below are examples of the situations of individuals and families that we helped in the past year. Because we have dollar limits on the amounts we can provide, our help is not always sufficient to meet the need. Our help is often supplemented by contributions from other agencies that serve populations in need.

Jill is a single mom with two children. She has been unable to work for the last seven months because she is still recovering from burns to her back and stomach. She has undergone surgery but has not been able to return to work. Jill has exhausted all of her savings and needed help to pay her electric bill. FISH contributed \$500 for two month's energy bills.

George is in his late 70s and lives on a fixed income. Some of his larger expenses include a copayment for his heart medication, which is \$500 a month, and Neighborhood Association fees and property taxes. He needed help to pay for car repairs so that he can get to his doctor's appointments. George shares his home with an elderly couple that live upstairs. He took them in rent free after they were evicted from their home because they didn't have sufficient income to pay rent. FISH provided \$1,000 to pay for the car repair.

Francine is a widow in her early 40s and the mother of two teenage children. She lost her husband to COVID last year, and she was recently diagnosed with stage 4 cancer and is receiving chemotherapy. She has been trying to stay afloat financially by pawning and selling household items and jewelry. Because of poor health, she cannot hold a regular job, but she is a freelance hair stylist at home, which allows her to make some income to support her family. Helping Francine was made more complicated by the fact that she is a French speaker, and there was difficulty finding a translator. She did not receive payments from any of the pandemic relief funds that were available to some people. She needed help with expenses for rent and utilities. FISH was able to pay \$1,500 toward these expenses.

Brenda's financial situation was jeopardized because of health problems of her husband. He has been hospitalized multiple times for renal failure, was in a coma for a while, and is now receiving physical therapy and dialysis at home. Because she is the primary caregiver for her husband and children, Brenda has not been able to maintain a full-time job, and she has lost a few days' pay from her part-time job because of absences related to her duties with her family. FISH provided \$1,000 for rent, \$500 for electric bills, and \$150 in grocery gift cards.

Sydney is a single father of three children under 10, including a set of twins. Over the summer of this year he was a victim of a random shooting outside of his residence. He was hit six times yet survived. Sydney is still responsible for raising his children, but he is now disabled and unable to work. FISH was able to help Sydney by providing \$1,500 for rent and utilities and \$150 in grocery gift cards.



Additional Programs

The Bargain Loft Thrift Store

The Bargain Loft was started 42 years ago, in 1981, as a volunteer-run thrift store selling household items, jewelry, furniture, collectibles, and more. Profits generated by The Bargain Loft support the FISH assistance programs to help residents with short-term emergency needs. About 45 volunteers support the paid Bargain Loft staff members. During the fiscal year, The Bargain Loft generated about \$35,000 in net revenue, down somewhat from the previous year. For the next fiscal year, we anticipate increased sales revenue. We depend upon generous members of the community for donated gently used items to sell. We are grateful for these donations. Please keep us in mind when you are disposing of no-longer-needed items.

Holiday Food & Gift Program

In the winter holiday season, FISH annually offers food and gift assistance to households with very low incomes. By providing this assistance, we hope to relieve some of the stress of the holidays by allowing families to use their own funds for housing or other basic needs. This helps prevent financial crises. We traditionally provide non-perishable foods and gifts for children. Families are referred to us primarily by local public schools, community-based organizations, and the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board. In FY2023, we provided gift cards totaling almost \$11,000 to 218 families, made up of 894 individuals, of which 57 percent were children 18 and younger.

Our 2023 grant application to Fairfax County's Food Assistance Program that provided the monies for us to purchase of \$42,500 in grocery gift cards was funded by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) of 2021. We distributed about \$5,900 of the grocery gift cards for fresh food and distributed nearly 3,500 pounds of non-perishable food to feed 238 families in need. Additionally, we provided 510 holiday gifts to children, including nearly \$5,000 in Target gift cards for youth 11 to 18. Local individuals and groups supplemented our gift card supplies with donations. Also, during the holidays, we provided tote bags of food to help 20 ONHerndon program families, approximately an additional 80 individuals. (Opportunity Neighborhoods [ON] is the county-wide organizing framework for residents, community-based partners, FCPS, Fairfax County, and other supporters to work together to deliver needed resources that are equitable, accessible, and effective for vulnerable youth and their families.)Fling Gala

Herndon-Reston FISH raised more than \$27,000 through our annual FISH Fling and Silent Auction. These proceeds help local residents who are in financial crises and at risk of becoming homeless. More than 100 local residents and dignitaries attended the event, and collectively the auction raised more than \$5,600. Additionally, local companies, nonprofit partners, churches, and individuals contributed more than \$20,000 in sponsorship. These funds are put to use helping our neighbors in the Herndon-Reston communities who are



unable to pay rent, utility bills, medical expenses, or repairs to cars needed to get to jobs. Our neighbors in financial distress are able to receive the help they need to get them through their crises and back to stability. Many thanks for those who attended and contributed to the FISH Fling.

Food Assistance Program

In 2023, we applied for and were awarded a Fairfax County Food Assistance Program Lane 1 grant of \$42,500. We received this funding late in the 2023 fiscal year and used the funds to purchase \$25 Giant grocery gift cards for distribution to families facing food insecurity. For this program, we worked with social workers from local schools and other nonprofit agencies. During the 2023 fiscal year, we provided \$26,025 in grocery gift cards to 152 families, of which 80% were referred by local public schools. Additionally, families were referred by churches, other nonprofits, Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, and the Fairfax County Police Department's Victim Services Division.

Lastly, we collected about 210 pounds of non-perishable food through our Bargain Loft Thrift Store. We, in turn, provided the donations to the St. Anne's Episcopal Church's food pantry, a partnership we established in the fall of 2021 during a Fairfax County "Stuff the Bus" event.

Donors

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all the foundations, corporations, religious institutions, other organizations and individuals who donated to support our activities.

\$50,000-plus

Fairfax County Consolidated Community Funding Pool

\$10,000-\$49,999

Anonymous

The Closet of the Greater Herndon Area, Inc.

Fairfax County American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Food Access Program Round II

Fairfax County 2022 American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) Nonprofit Sustainability

Dominion Energy Charitable Foundation

Gupta Family Foundation

Nelson J. & Katherine Friant Post Foundation

\$5,000-\$9,999

Anonymous

Reston Community Center, County of Fairfax

United Christian Parish

United Way of National Capital Area



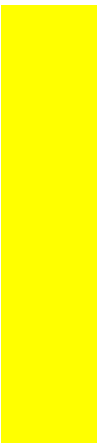
\$2,000-\$4999

Anonymous
CDW
Dominion Energy Cybergrant
Herndon Friends Meeting
Hidden Creek Country Club Women's Golf Association
Holder Construction Co.
Lockheed Martin Charity
PayPal and Associated Platforms
Philip L. Graham Fund
St John Neumann Church



\$500-\$1,999

America's Charities
Anonymous
Anthem HealthKeepers Plus
ExxonMobil Foundation
German Friends of FISH, Inc.
Hidden Creek Country Club Maloney Cup Golf Group
ICF
Loyal Order of the Moose, Herndon Lodge 2274
Marginot Family Fund
Northwest Federal Credit Union
Reconcile Ready Mediation, LLC.
The Robert & Annette Reed Charity Fund
salesforce
Unitarian Universalist Church of Reston



Up to \$499

AmazonSmile
American Online Giving Foundation
Bechtel Employees Club
Cornerstones
Network for Good
Reston Lions Charities, Inc.



In-Kind

Groundswell
Gift Card Donors
Individual donors of non-perishable food for our Holiday Food & Gift program
The many business and individual donors to our 2023 FISH Fling Auction

Thank you too to the many Individuals and families that contributed to FISH in FY2023.

Words of Appreciation

To the wonderful people at FISH:

We wanted to express our heartfelt gratitude to your organization for the significant rental assistance payment you made on our behalf to our apartment, just days before our scheduled eviction. Your assistance not only saved our apartment, but also allowed us to regain stability in our lives during a challenging time. You gave us hope when we saw none, and we are incredibly grateful to FISH for making such a positive difference in our lives.

God bless you all ❤️
A Herndon Couple

FISH is a terrific organization that helps so many people in so many different ways.

—TG, a FISH Donor

Thanks to you and Herndon Reston FISH for all your work in the community.

—JS, a FISH Donor

We thank you for all of your hard work on providing holiday assistance to our families.
Happy Holidays to you!

—Dogwood Elementary School Staff

Thank you very much for all you do for our families!!

—Tersest Elementary School Staff



HERNDON-RESTON FISH, INC.

1141 Elden Street, Suite 200
Herndon, VA 20170