

Annual
Report
2025



**Association of
Community Services**

OF HOWARD COUNTY

FY25 Board Members

With thanks for their support and commitment to ACS!

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Our Vision

A vibrant, valued, and collaborative nonprofit community that is just, impactful, and sustainable.

We know that a healthy community is built upon the support of a strong, resilient nonprofit sector with the capacity to improve the quality of life for its residents.

Our Mission

To champion, strengthen, and connect Howard County nonprofits.

We do this through our advocacy efforts, capacity building initiatives, and networking opportunities to enable local nonprofits to meet the needs of our community.

(Adopted in 2025)



David Woodruff
FY26 Board President



Lois K Mikkila
Executive Director

We are proud to share this report on ACS' accomplishments during FY25 (July 2024 – June 2025), a year of significant growth for our organization. You'll see more in this report about what we've done to strengthen and support nonprofits, but a few highlights:

- We increased the number of activities we held from 19 in FY24 to 27 in FY25;
- Increased total attendance from 504 in FY24 to 815 in FY25;
- Saw our first increase in dues paying members since FY19; and
- Ended the year with a net gain in income after three years of deficit budgets.

Our new vision and mission statements emphasize our commitment to Howard County's nonprofit sector. ACS takes a broad view of "nonprofit" – bringing together government agencies, faith groups, and community advocates as well as 501c3 nonprofits. We're actively working to build a community of people and organizations that strive to meet the needs of our county residents and make Howard County a better place for everyone.

During these challenging times, when the nonprofit sector is under attack nationally, we know our work is more critical than ever. We're engaging in discussions with other community leaders on how to respond to the changes wrought by federal budget and policy changes. We're even more focused on creating space for building connections and finding support. And we remain steadfast in our belief that, working together, we can forge an even stronger future for our sector and the people and issues we serve.

Please read on to learn more about our accomplishments this past year. We look forward to another year of working with, and for, our amazing nonprofit community.



HoCo Excel – Howard County’s Nonprofit Excelerator

Funded by Howard Co’s Department of Community Resources and Services, HoCo Excel’s goal is to build the capacity, impact, and sustainability of county nonprofits.

The training component of HoCo Excel, begun in early 2024, continued in FY25. The project grant enabled ACS to offer the following training – free of cost – to any county nonprofit:

- ❖ Results Based Accountability (RBA) 101 (full day)
- ❖ Building & Retaining High Performing Boards (2-part)
- ❖ Designing & Implementing Impactful Programs
- ❖ Follow-up technical assistance sessions

The average overall rating for the workshops was 4.8 (out of 5).

New in FY25 was the launch of a cohort of five small nonprofits in August 2024. In addition to the training workshops, cohort members receive coaching, grant funding, and other individualized resources. Responses from an anonymous survey show how much cohort members value the opportunity to participate:

- ❖ “This is a project where the support and training provided is worth as much (if not more) than the grant funds.”
- ❖ “This is an incredible opportunity for a smaller nonprofit... This level of support is rare, if nonexistent.”
- ❖ “It not only strengthens leadership skills but also provides concrete resources—like sample policies, planning templates, and access to expert guidance—that directly benefit nonprofit operations.”



Community meetings provided timely information and networking opportunities

- What's the 211, Hon?
- Funders Forum
- Conversation with the State Delegation
- Conversation with the School Superintendent & Board of Education Chair
- Zoom with members to “check-in” after federal changes begin to unfold
- Understanding and Navigating Presidential Actions & the Current Political Environment
- Conversation with the County Executive
- How Immigration Enforcement Impacts Nonprofits & their Clients

Average attendance increased from 28 in FY24 to 44 in FY25



Advocacy on behalf of our sector

ACS' top policy priority is on issues that impact nonprofits organizationally, followed by issues that impact people in our community – like childcare and housing. We supported two bills in the 2025 State legislative session, both of which passed, that benefit nonprofits:

- HB300/SB127 – Increased the reimbursement rate for indirect costs in State grants
- HB541/SB365 – Created a “Nonprofit Navigator” within State Government

Locally, we are a member of the Housing Affordability Coalition and sit on the County’s Board to Promote Self-Sufficiency.

ACS also held two training workshops to provide nonprofits with the tools they need to advocate on behalf of the people they serve.

- Advocacy 101 provided an overview of advocacy skills, focusing on relationship building
- Advocacy 102 showed participants how to navigate state and county legislative websites to track bills and submit testimony.



NonProfit Collaborative (NPC) – Howard County's nonprofit center

ACS continued to provided the management services for the NPC and its thirteen nonprofit tenants. A survey of NPC tenants in Fall, 2024, found that:

- 100% have built or strengthened relationships with other NPC tenants.
- 91% feel like their organization is part of a supportive community/network.
- 82% have gained knowledge or ideas from other NPC tenants that helped them in their work.
- 82% have borrowed or shared supplies and equipment with other tenants.

NPC tenants served 15,327 community members in the most recent fiscal year.

“By being part of the NPC, our organization has been able to add staff, create 3 new programs, serve more clients and collaborate with other nonprofits housed at the NPC, which has extended additional services to clients of each respective organization. Additionally, being located at the NPC has allowed us to more easily take advantage of trainings that have been held here. Our organization has also learned about new funding opportunities and grant opportunities by collaborating with other executive directors housed at the NPC! And last, but not least, by being housed at the NPC our small team feels part of a collaborative family that helps each other and share resources.”



New Initiatives

As part of ACS' effort to champion the role and work of local nonprofits, we began a project to document the development of our sector, showing how our history is reflective of county and national changes. This will become an interactive page on our website in the coming year.

With the possibility that additional space for the NPC could become available in 2027, ACS began working on plans for a possible expansion, identifying nonprofits interested in space and convening community partners to explore creation of a snack bar/café that would provide job training for people with disabilities.

ACS was selected to be one of Leadership Howard County's Community Impact Projects (CIP), to study the feasibility of providing back-office services. Our CIP team surveyed nonprofits to gain a better understanding of their needs for back-office services like bookkeeping/accounting, IT, HR, and marketing. We are continuing to explore possible models to make these types of services more accessible and affordable.



Other activities that rounded out our year

Exec-to-Exec Forums provided space for nonprofit leaders to learn, share experience, and get support from their peers. Topics last year included Workplace Wellness, Ask the HR Expert, and Leading in Turbulent Times.

ACS held a successful **fundraiser**, celebrating our “60-ONEderful years” anniversary with a fun, informal event featuring food trucks, raffle items, and a sneak peak at the history timeline.

Our winter **holiday social**, Cookies & Cocoa, showcased a yummy selection of homemade goodies, and in the spring we held a **volunteer appreciation** event.

Our **newsletter**, ACS Connections, was published semi-monthly, with an average open rate of 41%.

ACS’ **annual membership meeting** closed out the year in June. Members elected new officers and members of the Board of Directors and approved new bylaws, before engaging in a strategy discussion about how – as individual organizations and as a sector – we can respond to federal policy and budget changes.

Thank you!
*to our FY25
sponsors*

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...and our FY25 funding partners.



**We couldn't have accomplished what we did
without your support!**