ILLINOIS CHILDREN'S HEALTHCARE FOUNDATION 2025 ANNUAL REPORT

presence. partnership. possibilities.

presence
partnerships
possibilities

OUR VISION

That every child in Illinois grows up healthy.

OUR MISSION

ILCHF cultivates, supports, and promotes initiatives that improve the health and wellness of children in Illinois.

Dear Friends,

As we reflect on 2025, we are reminded that meaningful change begins with presence.

Presence means showing up . . . not simply as a funder, but as a trusted partner, thoughtful convener, and responsive collaborator. It means listening before walking beside, remaining connected to communities and responding with urgency and intention when children and families face evolving challenges. Presence calls us to stay close to the experiences of those we serve and to recognize that lasting solutions are built through relationships grounded in trust, humility, and shared purpose.

In 2025, the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) deepened partnerships, responded to emerging needs, and invested in bold possibilities that strengthen systems of care for children and families across Illinois. Guided by our vision that every child in Illinois grows up healthy, **we partnered with 47 grantee organizations and invested more than $7.6 million in initiatives advancing children's mental health, oral health, and unmet and emerging needs.**

Through responsive and strategic investments, we supported initiatives that address immediate needs while, in collaboration with our grantee partnering organizations, facilitated the building of stronger, more equitable systems of care. The grantmaking initiatives were:

- **Ecosystem Responsiveness**
  Recognizing that communities often face urgent and evolving challenges, including gaps created by the dismantling of the social safety net and systemic inequities, ILCHF invested $1 million to strengthen mental health supports for immigrant children and families through partnerships with Metropolitan Family Services and Enlace Chicago. In addition, ILCHF invested $2 million to expand access to nutritious food through eight food banks serving communities across Illinois, reinforcing the connection between basic needs, family stability, and children's overall health and well-being.
- **Strengthening the Bilingual Mental Health Workforce**
  Understanding that children and families thrive when care is accessible, culturally responsive, and reflective of their lived experiences, ILCHF invested nearly $800,000 in seven organizations statewide to strengthen the pipeline of bilingual behavioral health professionals that reflect communities that they serve. These investments are helping expand the capacity of Illinois' mental health system and ensuring more children and families can access care from providers who understand their language, culture, and unique needs.
- **Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children**
  Through a commitment to prevention and early intervention, ILCHF invested nearly $560,000 in 14 Local Health Departments across Illinois to expand access to oral health education, preventive services, care coordination, and patient navigation for children and families enrolled in the Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) program. By integrating oral health into trusted community settings, these investments may help families establish healthy habits and access care earlier in a child's developmental years.

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- **Expanding Access to Oral Health Through New and Existing Dental Strategies** To address longstanding barriers to pediatric dental care, ILCHF continued to invest in innovative partnerships that increase access to high-quality, family-centered services. The Foundation invested $372,000 in Midwest Refuah to establish a Pediatric and Family Dental Clinic and $2.5 million in Shawnee Health Service and Development Corporation to expand pediatric dental services in communities where access remains limited. These investments represent a commitment to ensuring that geography, availability, and systemic barriers are less likely to determine whether a child receives the dental care they deserve.

Partnership continued to define our work throughout the year. The Funders Strategic Response Group, launched by Heather Alderman and Sol Flores (former CEO of Knight Impact Partners) convened philanthropic leaders to foster shared learning, coordinated action, and collective investment around issues affecting residents across Illinois. Likewise, our *Mapping the Future* convening centered youth voice and brought together leaders from multiple sectors to explore innovative solutions and reimagine what is possible for children's mental and behavioral health services.

These efforts reaffirmed an important reality: meaningful and lasting change happens when partners come together with a shared purpose. When philanthropic organizations, community leaders, and organizations closest to the work connect, collaborate, and learn from one another, they are better positioned to address complex challenges and create opportunities for collective impact. Through shared commitment, partnership, and alignment, we can strengthen systems of care, support communities, and cultivate new possibilities for the health and well-being of Illinois' children and families.

Knowing this gives us great hope for the future of Illinois, our nation, and, most importantly, our children and families. While the challenges before us are evolving, we are confident in what can be achieved when we continue to listen, learn, and act together. The strength of our collective efforts gives us reason to believe that the possibilities ahead are greater than the obstacles we face. By investing in partnerships, elevating community voices, and staying committed to solutions that advance health and equity, we can continue building a future where every child in Illinois grows up healthy.

With gratitude,

Juan Carlos Avila
Board Chair

Heather Higgins Alderman
President & CEO

Ecosystem Responsive Grantmaking

In 2025, ILCHF reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring every child in Illinois grows up healthy by introducing a novel approach to grantmaking designed to meet moments of extraordinary need. As federal policy changes, economic uncertainty, and harmful reductions to critical safety-net programs emerged, ILCHF recognized the need to be a responsive partner capable of quickly and collaboratively supporting communities across the state. Through conversations with grantee partners, state leaders, healthcare providers, funders, and families, the Foundation gained a deeper understanding of the interconnected challenges threatening children's health. These conversations led to the development and launch of the Ecosystem Responsive Grantmaking Framework—a new grantmaking strategy designed to protect the health and well-being of Illinois children amidst growing threats to the social safety net.

As part of this strategy, the Foundation launched the Children's Nutrition Renewal Initiative, a $2 million commitment to strengthen food security for Illinois children. Building upon more than $5.65 million invested in Illinois-serving food banks between 2020 and 2023, ILCHF renewed its commitment by providing $250,000 grants to each of the seven Illinois-serving food banks. These investments are projected to provide more than 5.1 million meals while serving approximately 188,485 children.

Among the Foundation's partners, Northern Illinois Food Bank is utilizing grant funding to expand access to programs designed to provide nutritious meals to children during weekends and school breaks. Through these efforts, the organization anticipates providing approximately 612,000 meals to 7,500 children across its service region.

"Solving childhood hunger is a community-wide commitment, and we are grateful for the generous support of ILCHF in helping make this work possible. Through a network of schools, community centers and local food pantries, our initiatives like Family Mobile Markets, Milk to MyPlate and weekend BackPacks help connect children across Northern Illinois with the nutritious food they need to learn, grow and thrive."

JULIE YURKO *President and CEO of the Northern Illinois Food Bank*

ILCHF was also proud to respond rapidly to the emerging ecosystem crisis, moving from identification of the need to approval and deployment of $1 million in funding in approximately six weeks to strengthen culturally responsive mental health supports for immigrant children and families experiencing heightened threats, violence, fear of family separation, and general uncertainty resulting from immigration enforcement operations. Increased detentions and deportations due to this activity have caused children to experience trauma and an escalating mental health crisis.

In response, ILCHF awarded a $950,000 grant to Metropolitan Family Services to launch a comprehensive emergency response network called ChicagoPrepared that connects families in need to trauma-informed mental health services, coordinated case management, emergency financial assistance, and school-based supports. To support their work, Metropolitan Family Services has been offering technical assistance support to regional providers supporting the delivery of emergency responsive services in communities west and north of Chicago.

"ChicagoPrepared's mental health initiative is focused on providing these impacted children and families with the critical mental health services they so desperately need. With the support of the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation and our partners serving affected communities across Chicago and the region, these children and families are now on a long journey toward healing and recovery. Metropolitan Family Services is deeply grateful to ILCHF and our partners for meeting the moment and need, and for standing with these families when they need it most."

RIC ESTRADA *President & CEO of Metropolitan Family Services*

Strengthening the Bilingual Mental Health Workforce Initiative

Illinois has long been a welcoming home for immigrant, refugee, and asylum-seeking families. Between 2022 and 2024, more than 41,000 new arrivals came to Chicago seeking safety and opportunity, many requiring access to comprehensive behavioral health services. At the same time, Illinois faces a significant behavioral health workforce shortage. The shortage is even more pronounced among bilingual clinicians, limiting access to culturally and linguistically responsive care for children and families.

To address this need, ILCHF launched the Strengthening the Bilingual Mental Health Workforce Initiative, investing nearly $800,000 to expand the pipeline of bilingual behavioral health professionals serving children and families across Illinois.

Although the initiative was originally designed to support three organizations, the exceptional quality demonstrated by applicants inspired the Foundation's Board of Directors to expand its investment and fund eight grantee partners: Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Alternatives, Arden Shore Children and Family Services, Association House of Chicago, Centro de Salud y Esperanza, Hoyleton Ministries, Journeys Community Center, and Trilogy.

Reflecting on the theme of Presence, Partnership, and Possibilities, the initiative has highlighted the importance of remaining closely connected to communities during periods of uncertainty. Amid heightened immigration enforcement activities and growing fears within immigrant communities, grantee partners reported challenges including decreased school attendance, reduced referrals, and hesitancy among families to seek services outside their homes. Organizations adapted by expanding telehealth options, providing multilingual communications, and maintaining safe spaces where children and families could continue receiving support.

Partnerships among grantees have flourished as well. Organizations requested opportunities to connect, exchange resources, and share promising practices, leading to the creation of a monthly Bilingual Supervision Cohort. Inspired by the value of these gatherings, Arden Shore Children and Family Services convened the first Frontline Healers Plática *(photo)*, bringing together behavioral health professionals from Lake County and Northern Cook County to strengthen networks of care and support.

Early outcomes demonstrate the possibilities created through intentional investments in workforce development. Grantee partners reported reduced vacancy periods, the introduction of internship stipends, expanded trauma-informed, culturally responsive training opportunities in Spanish, and enhanced bilingual supervision models. Several organizations described stipends as a social justice strategy that helps remove barriers for emerging clinicians while supporting the next generation of providers.

Together, these investments are creating new pathways toward healing, belonging, and opportunity, demonstrating how the Foundation's nearly $800,000 investment is supporting partnerships, enhancing a high-quality bilingual behavioral health workforce for Illinois children and families.

Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children Initiative

At ILCHF, presence means listening to families, understanding their experiences, and responding to the barriers that prevent children from receiving the care they need. Families participating in the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) often face significant challenges accessing oral healthcare services, contributing to disparities in oral health outcomes.

In response, ILCHF launched the Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children Initiative, a $560,000 investment designed to expand access to oral health education, patient navigation, and preventive services for WIC-enrolled children and families. Through 14 two-year grants of $40,000 each, Local Health Departments (LHDs) across Illinois are strengthening their capacity to integrate oral health services within WIC settings.

Partnership is at the heart of this work. ILCHF is facilitating the provision of training and technical assistance that will be provided by the Illinois Department of Public Health–Oral Health Section and the Illinois Public Health Association to grantees. Together, partners are supporting LHDs to equip Community Health Workers, nurses, and other primary care medical staff with the skills needed to deliver high-quality oral health supports and services.

"Strong partnerships help strengthen access to oral health education, prevention, and support for WIC-enrolled children and families across Illinois and intentionally create collaborative spaces for WIC teams with community health workers. Together, through the leadership and collaboration of partners like ILCHF, we are helping support healthier communities through early intervention and connection to care."

TRACEY SMITH *Associate Executive Director for Public Health Practice, Illinois Public Health Association*

Across the state, grantee partners are demonstrating what is possible when communities are supported to meet families where they are. In East Central Illinois, the Champaign-Urbana Public Health District has expanded access to oral healthcare by training Community Health Workers to deliver education and patient navigation supports. Through the Illinois Public Health Association's "CHW 101 Training" program, Community Health Workers learn practical strategies to help families establish healthy routines and establish a dental home with a provider who accepts Medicaid.

"We are proud to meet families where they already receive trusted support by providing oral health education, fluoride treatments for children, and helping pregnant people connect with a dental home during a critical time for their health and their baby's health. Through care coordination and Medicaid enrollment assistance, we are helping reduce barriers to care and making preventive dental services more accessible for WIC-enrolled children and families, which can lead to better overall health and fewer costly dental problems in the future."

JENNIFER BOYD *Dental Program Coordinator, Champaign-Urbana Public Health District*

Collectively, grantee partners project reaching nearly 9,700 infants and children and more than 4,500 parents and caregivers, while training a total of 30 primary care providers and 19 Community Health Workers to deliver integrated oral health supports.

Through the Enhanced Pathways Initiative, ILCHF is demonstrating that when philanthropy is present in communities, invests in strong partnerships, and embraces new possibilities, children and families can access the oral healthcare services they deserve.

Mental Health Initiatives

Strengthening the Bilingual Mental Health Workforce

Ada S. McKinley Community Services, Inc.
Behavioral Health Workforce Development Program
Metro Chicago
$100,000

Alternatives, Inc.
Strengthening the Spanish Bilingual Mental Health Workforce
Metro Chicago
$100,000

Arden Shore Child and Family Services
Lake County Behavioral Health Workforce Development
Collar Counties
$100,000

Association House of Chicago
Strengthening Bilingual Mental Health Services for Youth
Metro Chicago
$100,000

Centro de Salud y Esperanza
Bilingual Supervision of Behavioral Health Interns and Recent Graduates
Metro Chicago
$99,999.63

Journeys Community Center Incorporated
Bilingual Clinical Supervision Training Program
Metro Chicago
$100,000

Trilogy, Inc.
Strengthening a Bilingual Spanish Workforce
Metro Chicago
$100,000

Hoyleton Ministries
Strengthening the Bilingual Mental Health Workforce
Southern Illinois
$100,000

Other: Workforce Development

CITIED Foundation
Early Birds Social Worker Development Program
Northern Illinois
$20,000

Regional Access Mobilization Project Inc.
Youth Career Readiness
Northern Illinois
$20,000

Oral Health Initiatives

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District
Reducing Barriers to Care: Implementing Nitrous Oxide Sedation in a Public Health Dental Clinic
East Central
$28,648

Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation
H2O on the Go
State of Illinois
$250,000

Douglas County Health Department
2025 Douglas County Sedation Dentistry Outpatient Office
East Central
$275,000

Midwest Refuah Health Center
Pediatric & Family Dental Clinic
Metro Chicago
$372,000

Shawnee Health Service and Development Corporation
Shawnee Pediatric Dentistry Expansion
Southern Illinois
$2,500,000

Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children

Adams County Health Department
Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants and Children
Southwest Central
$39,952

Champaign-Urbana Public Health District
CUPHD Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children
East Central
$40,000

Chicago Family Health Center, Inc.
WIC to Wellness: Integrated Oral Health Care
Metro Chicago
$40,000

Christian County Health Department
Mothers, Babies, and Smiles
Southwest Central
$40,000

DuPage County Health Department
Building Dental Health Through Education and Support
Collar Counties
$40,000

Edgar County Public Health Department
Enhancing Maternal and Pediatric Dental Outcomes
East Central
$40,000

Egyptian Health Department
Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children Initiative
Southern Illinois
$40,000

Erie Family Health Center
Expanding Access to Oral Health Education and Services to Women and Children
Metro Chicago
$40,000

Jasper County Health Department
Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants and Children
Southern Illinois
$40,000

Jefferson County Health Department
JCHD 2025 Enhanced Pathways to Oral Health for Women, Infants, and Children
Southern Illinois
$40,000

Jersey County Health Department
Bridging Smiles: Integrating Oral Health into WIC Services
Southwest Central
$40,000

Kendall County Health Department
Little Smiles Bright Futures
Collar Counties
$40,000

McDonough County Health Department
Oral Health Education and Prevention for Vulnerable Populations of McDonough County
Northwest Central
$40,000

Ogle County Health Department
Helping Bridge Dental Access Gap
Northern Illinois
$40,000

Other: Workforce Development

Great River Development Foundation
Great River Oral and Mental Health Workforce Development Project
Southwest Central
$19,827

Western Illinois Health Corporation DBA Cass County Health Department
Grow Our Own Program for Cass County 2.0
Southwest Central
$20,000

Ecosystem Responsive

Mental Health

Enlace Chicago
Raíces de Bienestar (Roots of Wellness)
Metro Chicago
$50,000

Metropolitan Family Services
Emergency Mental Health Response for Chicago and the State of Illinois
Collar Counties, Metro Chicago, and Northern
$950,000

Nutrition

Central Illinois Foodbank, Inc.
Nourishing Children and Families
Southwest Central
$250,000

Eastern Illinois Foodbank
Nutritious Food for Growing Kids
East Central
$250,000

Eastern Illinois Food Bank
Growing Healthy Futures: Child and Family Nutrition
Northwest Central
$250,000

Greater Chicago Food Depository
Food Purchase for Hunger Relief Initiatives
Metro Chicago
$250,000

Northern Illinois Food Bank
Nutritious Food for Food-insecure Children
Collar Counties
$250,000

River Bend Food Bank
Fresh Produce Purchases for Illinois Youth
Northwest Central
$250,000

St. Louis Area Food Bank, Inc.
Food For Better Childhoods–FY26 and FY27
Southern Illinois
$250,000

Tri-State Food Bank, Inc.
BackPacks and Mobile Food Distributions
Southern Illinois
$250,000

Other Health Initiatives

Jim Ryan Legacy Grants

Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation
Illinois Health Smiles, Health Growth 2023-2024 School Incentives
State of Illinois
$3,000

Kuumba Lynx
Kuumba Lynx Arts and Healing Center Youth Wellness Program
Metro Chicago
$10,000

Metropolitan Family Services
Impacted Parent Engagement
Metro Chicago
$10,000

Project Unloaded Inc.
Chicago Public Library Partnership Expansion
Metro Chicago
$10,000

Tufil Nfp
TUF Ambassador Program
State of Illinois
$10,000

Well Child Center
Project SMILE
Collar Counties
$5,000

Funders Strategic Response Group

In 2025, ILCHF President and CEO Heather Alderman and Sol Flores (Former CEO of Knight Impact Partners) launched the Funders Strategic Response Group (FSRG) to strengthen ecosystem responsiveness among philanthropic partners serving people and communities across Illinois.

Grounded in the belief that meaningful change begins with being present to the realities facing communities, the Funders Strategic Response Group was created as a space for funders to connect, exchange insights, and consider how philanthropy can respond thoughtfully and effectively during times of change. As needs continue to evolve across the state, the group provides a forum for philanthropic leaders to discuss emerging issues, identify opportunities for alignment, and learn from one another's experiences.

Partnership is central to this work. Through ongoing dialogue, funders are deepening their understanding of the interconnected challenges facing residents of Illinois, including the children and families that are the focus of ILCHF's work, while exploring opportunities for collaboration and shared action. Conversations have included Illinois-focused discussions on education, immigration, healthcare, and basic needs, alongside broader reflections on effective philanthropic practices in an ever-changing landscape. By convening funders across issue areas, the group fosters stronger relationships, promotes collective learning, and supports a more coordinated response to the needs of communities statewide. In a year-end survey, nearly 90 percent of respondents indicated that the content presented at the FSRG meetings had informed their work in 2025, and nearly 60% indicated they had engaged in funding influenced by content presented at FSRG meetings.

In February 2026, more than 100 philanthropic leaders participated in a hybrid convening focused on housing, domestic violence, and nutrition. The gathering demonstrated the power of shared learning and collective action at a time when organizations were navigating increasingly complex and interconnected challenges.

The Funders Strategic Response Group is advancing the possibilities that emerge when philanthropy extends beyond grantmaking to deepen relationships, strengthen connections, and build shared understanding. As a funder, convener, and partner, ILCHF remains committed to the belief that when philanthropic organizations come together to listen, learn, and align their efforts, they are better equipped to support the communities working every day to ensure that every child in Illinois grows up healthy and is grateful for the opportunity to learn with and be in partnership with fellow funders in the FSRG.

september 2025

Mapping the Future

In September 2025, Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation hosted *Mapping the Future: A Journey Towards Healthy Minds, Healthy Communities,* a children's mental health event focused on learning from the past, listening to young people and partners, and identifying opportunities to strengthen the future of children's mental health in Illinois.

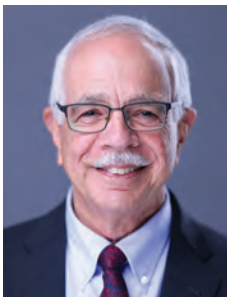
The event brought together more than 150 attendees representing 70 unique organizations, creating space for shared learning and statewide connection. A central focus of the day was ILCHF's COVID-19 School Wellness Initiative (CSWI), which was launched in response to the exacerbation of profound mental health needs by the pandemic. Through CSWI, ILCHF invested approximately $8.5 million over two and a half years to support 29 grants in 22 communities across Illinois. The initiative helped expand school-based behavioral health services, strengthen partnerships between schools and providers, and respond to the needs of students, school staff, parents and caregivers.

Planning, Implementation, Evaluation (PIE.Org) was the evaluation partner for CSWI. PIE.Org facilitated a panel with Heritage Behavioral Health Center, Juvenile Protective Association (JPA) and Arts In Motion (AIM) to frame the day's conversations. Evaluation findings pointed to the importance of parent and caregiver engagement, workforce recruitment strategies from communities where schools are located, and strong school-behavioral health provider relationships as key elements in sustaining improvements in children's mental and behavioral health across communities.

One of the highlights of *Mapping the Future* was a panel facilitated by Center for Childhood Resilience of youth leaders from the Youth Advisory Council associated with the Illinois Children's Mental Health Partnership. They shared their experiences navigating the state's mental health system, offering their expertise, passion, and guidance to improve the mental and emotional well-being of our state's children. Their voices were essential to ground the day in the lived experiences of young people and reinforce the importance of centering youth voices in shared decision-making that shape systems, services, and supports capable of ensuring that ***"Every child in Illinois grows up healthy."***

As ILCHF continues its work to improve the health and well-being of children and families in Illinois, *Mapping the Future* served as both a reflection point and a call to action. The event underscored that lasting progress requires collaboration, listening and a shared commitment to building systems of care that meet children and families where they are.

Click here to learn about the Ecosystem Responsive Funding Insights ▶



PHIL CALI *ILCHF Board Member 2011-2026*

Over the past 15 years, my experience with the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation has been one of learning, growth, partnership, and purpose. I was introduced to the Foundation through a colleague, Kathy Halloran, after years of serving on professional, university, and nonprofit boards. She helped me see the unique opportunity to contribute to an organization committed to improving the health of children across Illinois.

When I joined the Foundation, the Board was transitioning from a hands-on, management-focused role to one centered on governance, strategy, and leadership. Under Heather's leadership, the Foundation developed into a thoughtful, strategic organization with a strong reputation across the charitable community. I was fortunate to be part of that evolution.

My service on the Grants Committee was particularly meaningful. Reading grant applications, meeting with grantees, and seeing their work firsthand gave me a deeper understanding of the health challenges facing children and families throughout Illinois. Those experiences reinforced for me that philanthropy is most powerful when it is grounded in relationships, informed by community, and responsive to real needs.

As a Board member, presence has meant showing up to meetings and ILCHF events with curiosity, preparation, and a willingness to listen. My years on the Board taught me the importance of being fully engaged, asking thoughtful questions, and offering honest perspectives. The Foundation's commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion also challenged me to listen differently and deepen my understanding of the lived experiences of others.

Partnership has been equally important. I have been especially proud to see the Foundation share knowledge, build relationships, and collaborate with organizations across Illinois and beyond. From children's mental health and oral health to Family Run Organizations, workforce development, and innovative approaches to reaching children in health deserts, the Foundation has demonstrated that meaningful change is rarely achieved alone.

And there is tremendous possibility in what comes next. The Foundation has not simply invested in programs; it has helped strengthen organizations, develop leaders, elevate new ideas, and create opportunities for others to improve the health and well-being of children. Its willingness to listen, learn, and respond has raised the bar for what philanthropy can accomplish.

One of the things I will miss most is the people. . . . the Board members, staff, grantees, and partners who have made these 15 years so meaningful. While I may be leaving the Board, I take with me the lessons, relationships, and experiences that have shaped me. I have served on many boards throughout my career, but none has taught me as much as the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation.

I am grateful to have been present, to have partnered with others in this important work, and to have witnessed the possibilities that emerge when people come together around a shared commitment: ***ensuring every child in Illinois grows up healthy.***

MICHAEL PARKER *ILCHF Board Member 2011-2026*

Sometimes, a meaningful journey begins with a simple invitation.

Fifteen years ago, Kathy Halloran *(ILCHF Board Member and Retired Executive Vice President of NICOR, Inc.)* encouraged me to consider joining the Illinois Children's Healthcare Foundation (ILCHF) Board. After learning more about the Foundation's mission and meeting the Board, I was inspired to get involved. The more I learned, the more committed I became. I saw an opportunity to help create meaningful change for Illinois children and families, and that commitment has continued throughout my 15 years of service.

Over the years, one of the accomplishments I am most proud of has been helping the Board evolve from a founding board into an oversight board. As ILCHF grew, we came to better understand the distinct roles of the Board and staff. We learned to move away from day-to-day operations and focus more intentionally on governance, strategy, and long-term direction, while empowering staff and leadership to lead the Foundation. As a result, that evolution strengthened the Foundation and positioned it for continued growth. It also reinforced the importance of good governance, thoughtful leadership, and a willingness to evolve as a Foundation's needs change.

Along the way, serving as Board Chair was especially meaningful. It challenged me to help keep the work moving forward and think strategically about both the challenges before us and the opportunities ahead. At the same time, just as meaningful have been the relationships I have built along the way. The friendships I have developed through my service have been one of the most rewarding parts of the experience. Together, these experiences have given me a unique perspective on ILCHF's growth and the opportunity to see firsthand how the Foundation has evolved, grown, and expanded its impact while remaining firmly grounded in its mission.

Over the years, I have been especially proud of the Board's willingness to recognize emerging needs and respond thoughtfully and meaningfully.

I am particularly proud of the Board's investments in children's mental health, including CMHI 1.0, 2.0, and 3.0, the H3 Initiative, and support for Family Run Foundations. These efforts have made a meaningful difference while also deepening my understanding of the tremendous need for children's mental health services across Illinois. They reinforced ILCHF's willingness to step forward when gaps exist in the system and to make investments that can help create lasting change for children, families, and communities.

I am also proud of the Board's willingness to engage in meaningful conversations about belonging, equity, diversity, and inclusion. Those conversations have challenged us to think more deeply about the communities we serve and the importance of ensuring that the Foundation's work reflects their experiences, needs, and aspirations.

Ultimately, I am proud that the Board has been willing to challenge the Foundation to think beyond the traditional role of a foundation board while remaining focused on what matters most: ensuring every child in Illinois grows up healthy. That combination of thoughtful stewardship, courageous leadership, and a willingness to evolve is what I believe has helped position ILCHF for continued growth and impact.

Throughout my service, I have learned that effective Board service requires presence, collegiality, and a willingness to speak up. It requires asking difficult questions, respectfully challenging one another, and valuing different perspectives. Above all, that kind of engagement is essential to good governance, and to ensure that ILCHF continues to move its mission forward.

Although my formal service on the Board is coming to an end, I know my connection to ILCHF and its mission will continue. I look forward to attending Foundation events, staying engaged, and serving as a lifelong cheerleader for the Foundation and its work. In many ways, staying connected will be the easy part because ILCHF has become such an important part of my life.

What I will miss most is the ILCHF team, the collegial nature of the Board, and the relationships we have built over the years. After 15 years, these relationships have become deeply meaningful, and I will miss being surrounded by people who care so deeply about one another, the Foundation, and the children and families we serve.

Financial highlights

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

	December 31, 2025	*December 31, 2024*
ASSETS		
Cash	$ 1,809,085	$ 2,270,434
Investments, at fair value	161,598,284	148,162,710
Other assets	444,090	540,769
Total assets	**163,851,459**	**150,973,913**
LIABILITIES		
Grants payable	500,010	1,222,075
Other liabilities	434,820	1,273,047
Total liabilities	**934,830**	**2,495,122**
Net assets without donor restrictions	162,916,629	148,478,791
Total liabilities and net assets	**$163,851,459**	**$150,973,913**

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES

	2025	*2024*
Investment income, net	$ 28,835,574	$ 17,430,397
Other income	23,584	—
Total net revenue	**23,859,158**	**17,430,397**
Grants approved, net*	7,173,300	4,891,377
All other expenses, net	2,248,020	2,714,233
Total expenses	**9,421,320**	**7,605,610**
Change in net assets	14,437,838	9,824,787
Net assets beginning of year	148,478,791	138,654,004
Net assets end of year	**$162,916,629**	**$148,478,791**
**Grants paid out during the year*	*$ 7,552,993*	*$ 6,147,051*

For a copy of the 2025 audited financial statements, 2024 Form 990PF, or a complete and detailed listing of our 2025 program investments, visit our website at www.ilchf.org or contact Santrice R. Martin at 630.439.7151.

ILCHF Board and staff

As of December 31, 2025

ILCHF BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Officers

BOARD CHAIR
Juan Carlos Avila
Managing Director, Co-Head
Centric Wealth Management

VICE CHAIR
Regina Crider
Senior Policy Analyst
Community and Parent Liaison
Chapin Hall at the University of Chicago;
Senior Pastor
Crossroad of Life Community Church

TREASURER
Rudy Valdez, DM
Retired Engineering Manager
Kaney Aerospace

SECRETARY
Icy Cade-Bell, MD
Pediatrician
University of Chicago;
Mobile Medical Unit Director
Comer's Children's Hospital

Directors

Philip S. Cali
Retired Executive Vice President
Nicor Gas

Kim Cassel
Principal
CasselView Advising

Carl Flowers, PhD
Retired Professor and Director Emeritus
Rehabilitation Institute
at Southern Illinois University;
Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor
C. Flowers and Associates, LLC

Peter F. Flynn, PhD
Retired Superintendent of Schools
Freeport School District 145

Veronica Guadalupe Fonseca
Chief Executive Officer
Greater Family Health

J. Kay Giles
Retired Superintendent of Schools
Prairie-Hills School District 144

Stacie Kuhlman
Lead Director
Family Office Solutions
Northern Trust Wealth Management

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