



Annual Report 2025

Strengthening Our Community. Growing Our Impact.

Mimi Washington Starrett Foundation

MWS Foundation Leadership



Edward Ahart, Chairman

U.S. nonprofits play a critical role in providing goods and services that are deeply needed in Morris County and across the country. Without the nonprofit community, so much of what supports individuals, families, and the common good simply would not exist.

In the past year, we received grant requests from organizations facing real headwinds: the shifting political climate, reductions in federal and state support, and growing community need. Whether addressing hunger, housing, health, legal assistance, the arts, education, or the environment, the needs have not lessened. If anything, they have grown.

The truly good news is that even modest support can make an outsized difference. We at the Mimi Washington Starrett Foundation are grateful for the opportunity to partner with the extraordinary nonprofits doing this work every day. We look forward to continuing that partnership and to playing our small but meaningful part in building a healthier, happier, and even greater community.

Onward to a better world!

Sarah Ahart, President

As I reflect on 2025, I find myself drifting back to the early spring of 2021, when our board meetings centered around writing a mission statement, creating a logo, and learning what it truly means to build a strong foundation. In some ways, we are still doing that work, five years later. Our mission is our guiding star. Our logo is a daily reminder of our intention. And we deliberately center everything we do around learning and sharing knowledge.

There is a vulnerability required when you operate with a true learning mindset — and we have leaned into it. We have had to be comfortable talking openly about what we did not know, listening with the genuine intention to learn, and applying that knowledge in ways that are meaningful for our team, our foundation, and the community we are entrusted to serve.

I can admit that I love being a partner in this community. Morris County is filled with inspiring, tireless nonprofit leaders who offered their expertise and support when we were brand new and still finding our footing. We hope to return the favor. We are committed to building a truly supportive network across nonprofit organizations and philanthropy in the county — and I intend to forge a path leading to many years of learning, collaborating, growth, friendship, and support in all the ways that matter on this journey.



MWS Foundation Leadership

Board of Trustees

Edward Ahart

Chairman of the Board

Pam Marcenaro, PhD

Trustee

Gary Mazart

Trustee

Jordan Wassel

Counsel to the Board

Elisabeth Hughes MacDonald

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Laura Landy

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Staff

Sarah Ahart

President

Amy Beba

Operations Manager

JoAnn Tiefau

Grants Specialist

Jessie Lubow

Grants Specialist

2025 Achievements

A Year of Connection, Commitment, and Growth



This year was a period of thoughtful navigation as the nonprofit sector continued responding to a shifting political landscape and growing community need. Against this evolving backdrop, the Foundation completed its first full year with two grant cycles—strengthening access, deepening relationships, and remaining a steady partner to organizations working across Morris County.

As the need in our community remained as great as ever, we leaned into connection—listening closely, showing up consistently, and reinforcing our commitment to supporting nonprofits amid uncertainty and change. This year reflected our continued commitment to supporting the nonprofit community in meaningful ways—through connection, collaboration, and shared learning.



Year in Review

A Year of Growth, Connection, and Impact



Two Grant Cycles

Completed the first full year hosting two grant cycles, one in January and one in June, focusing on different areas of interest and strengthening our ability to prioritize community needs.

Beyond Grantmaking Convenings

Brought together nonprofit leaders for two convenings on storytelling and planned giving reinforcing our core belief that mission clarity is the foundation for building trust, connection, and collaboration

MPAC Starlight Award

Recognized at the Mayo Performing Arts Center annual gala, affirming our shared belief that the arts are a vital part of a thriving community and the value of strong partnerships.

Board Growth

Welcomed a new board member to expand thought leadership through lived experience, professional expertise, and community connections.

Grantmaking at a Glance



January 2025

Education & Community Services

47 applications received

\$320,725 awarded

20 organizations funded

June 2025

Human Services, Environment & Animal Welfare

63 applications received

\$457,000 awarded

24 organizations funded



2025 Wrapped

\$777,725

total awarded

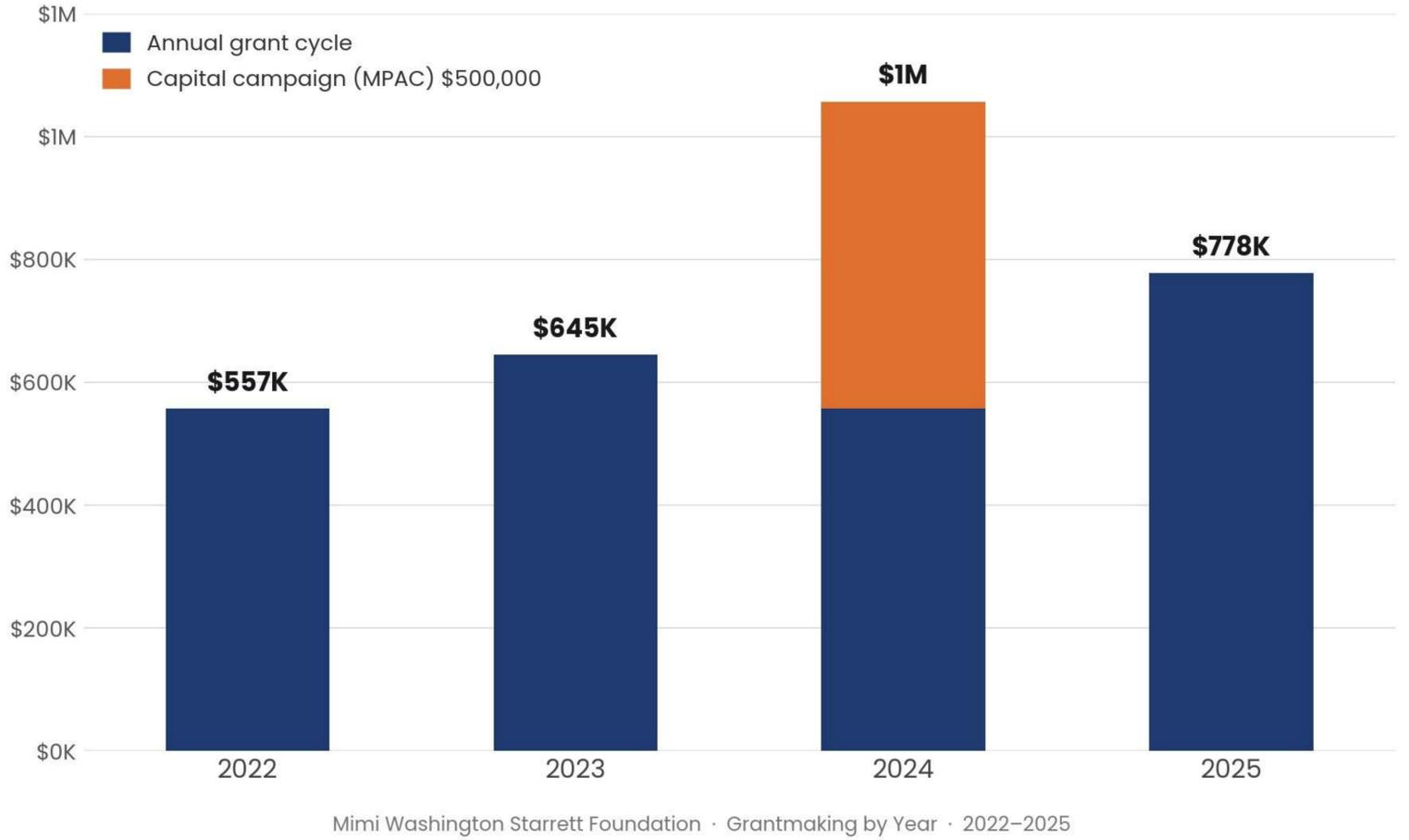
44

Organizations Funded

\$17,675

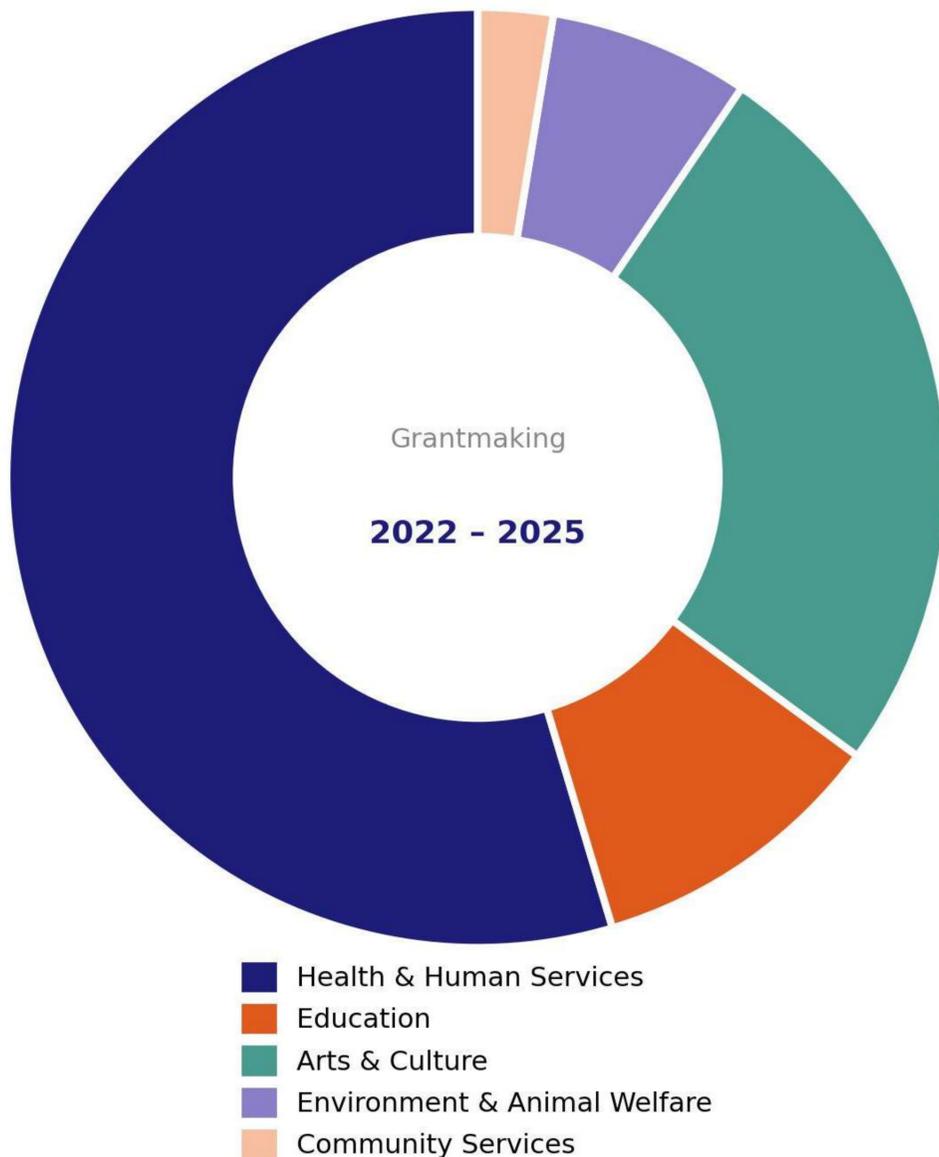
avg. grant size

Grantmaking By Area of Interest



Four Years of Growing Impact Across Morris County

Mimi Washington Starrett Foundation
Grantmaking by Area of Interest | 2022-2025



FINANCIAL STANDING



	2024		2025	
TOTAL FUNDS				
January 1	\$21,745,501		\$24,251,915	
December 31	\$23,719,414		\$24,476,140	
TOTAL GRANTS	\$1,030,000		\$777,725	
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$1,413,868		\$2,074,672	

Community Leadership in Action

In December, Governor-elect Mikie Sherrill and Lt. Governor-elect Dale Caldwell announced their Transition Interdisciplinary Advisory Task Force, and we were proud to see so many Morris County nonprofit leaders among those selected. Their inclusion is a testament to the quality, credibility, and impact of the work happening in our community every day.

TASK FORCE MEMBERS FROM OUR COMMUNITY

Bette Simmons

Preschool Advantage

Carmine Deo

Community Hope

Eva Turbiner

Former President & CEO, Zufall Health

JoAnn McEniry

EDGE NJ

Diane Williams

JBWS

Hans Dekker

Community Foundation of New Jersey

Meghan Hunscher

CEO Morris County Chamber of Commerce

Craig Drinkard

Victoria Foundation

Jaclyn Stoll

Homeless Solutions

Jennifer Coffey

ANJEC

JoAnn Bjornson

Family Promise Morris County

Terry Connolly

nourish.NJ

William Salcedo

Big Brothers Big Sisters, Coastal & Northern NJ

Mark Valli

NORWESCAP

Jeremy Grunin

President, Grunin Foundation, Council of NJ Grantmakers

Lucy Vendenberg, ED

Schumann Fund for New Jersey



Beyond Grantmaking in 2025

Beyond Grantmaking is our way of connecting with the Morris County nonprofit community in ways that go beyond funding. Through convenings, webinars, shared learning opportunities and personal connections, we aim to support the organizations working to make Morris County healthier, more equitable, and more connected.



- **Common Grounds ~ Common Goals: Storytelling**

- Co-hosted the third event, the second annual, with the F. M. Kirby Foundation
- Focused on storytelling, mission clarity, and impact
- Highlighted narrative as a tool for trust, connection, and collaboration

- **Webinar: Planned Giving**

- Educational webinar for over 60 nonprofit leaders
- Voices from our community offered guidance on donor engagement and the meaningful impact of legacy giving
- Provided practical guidance for long-term sustainability

**More Than Funding -
Collaboration, Connection, and Leadership**

Morris County Funders Group - 2025 Highlights

Shared Learning, Collective Action & Community Investment

Mental Health First Aid Training

- Invested \$213K in youth mental health first aid workshops across Morris County, with a commitment to reaching \$250K in total funding.
- Partnered with Positive Pathways to expand free counseling services, including individual, family, and group counseling, for teens in the Morris School District, with a focus on immigrant families.
- Supported the Mental Health Association of New Jersey in delivering mental health first aid training for professionals working with youth across the county.
- Directed resources toward organizations with deep local roots and a proven ability to meet the growing mental health needs of Morris County youth.

Capacity Building

- Together with the Morris County Funders Group, we helped establish and provide initial funding for a capacity-building grant opportunity now housed at the Community Foundation of New Jersey.
- Nonprofits doing meaningful work in Morris County can now apply for funding to strengthen their infrastructure and deepen their long-term impact.

Community Engagement & Shared Learning

- Hosted local representatives from the Trust for Public Land to share plans for the Whippany Oxbow Project in Morristown, providing the funders the opportunity to support this initiative.
- Created an opportunity for funders to learn about local initiatives to celebrate and honor America's Semiquincentennial Anniversary (America250) throughout the year.

