



OPEN TABLE NASHVILLE

HOUSING. HEALING. HOPE.

2025 ANNUAL REPORT

A note from our executive director

In 2025, Open Table Nashville celebrated 15 years. OTN was born on the flooded banks of the Cumberland River in Nashville's oldest and largest camp: Tent City. We received hospitality and care each time we visited. Our presence in that camp nurtured a solidarity in us that remains a core value in our mission today. We made a promise that we wouldn't abandon our friends when they face displacement. We lived out that promise last summer when they were once again facing displacement. This time not from rising flood waters but from a city closing down their encampment. We stayed true to that promise as we watched bulldozers begin demolition before all remaining residents were even out of the camp.

Our work in encampments through the years has taught us a lot. Whether we're delivering supplies, taking someone to the DMV, or helping fill out a housing application, you learn the complex web of services that folks are up against. And when you begin to peel back the layers and hear the stories of why someone needs to set up a tent in the woods in the first place, you quickly realize: **homelessness is not a choice.**

I thought we were well past the misconception that someone is outside because they want to be. But this is a pervasive myth we must work to undo. We have watched far too many experience the joy of unlocking the door to their home to ever think a person is outside because they want to be.

How can a country of such immense wealth have an epidemic of homelessness? Because our systems are failing us. We treat housing as a commodity and not a basic guaranteed right. Our healthcare system runs on profit over care. When social safety nets are gutted, it leaves people to choose between putting food on the table or paying their rent. No one should be facing those choices.

Our communities are safer, healthier, and more vibrant when everyone has access to the things they need to thrive. And so often that begins with the stability of a home. We know what's at stake and with your partnership, we will continue to be hopeful and steadfast in making that a reality for all.

In solidarity, *Allie Wallace*

OUR NEW LOOK

Last summer, we revealed Open Table Nashville's new logo and updated mission statement to celebrate our **15 year anniversary**. After months of hard work, we feel that this updated look and language best represents the work we've done and will continue to do

One thing that has remained constant in OTN's work is our steadfast commitment to our friends on the street. To journey alongside folks without making them feel judged, less than, or undeserving. Everyone deserves access to safe, dignified, and affordable housing. Fifteen years into this work, that belief has been unwavering, and it will carry us into the next 15 years.



The mission of Open Table Nashville is to stand in solidarity with our friends on the streets and work to end homelessness through person-centered outreach, housing navigation, community education, and advocacy.

SMALL TEAM - BIG IMPACT

The impact you'll read about in this report was accomplished by a seven person team; four who are part time. As we said two years ago when we had to reduce the size of our staff, our decreased capacity will not change the effectiveness and excellence of our programs.

And while our staff size remains at a reduced level, we continue to make significant impacts in the Nashville community.



- **Allie Wallace, Executive Director**
- **Cal Gurley, Marketing & Communications Manager**
- **India Pungarcher, Associate Director of Advocacy**
- **Jess Fincher, Street Outreach & Housing Navigator**
- **Kelly Chieng, In Kind Donations Coordinator, Winter Canvassing Coordinator**
- **Lindsey Krinks, Co-Founder, Director of Advocacy**
- **Maddie Griffin, Street Outreach & Housing Navigator (joined May 2025)**
- **Will Compton, Resource and Housing Navigator (left May 2025)**

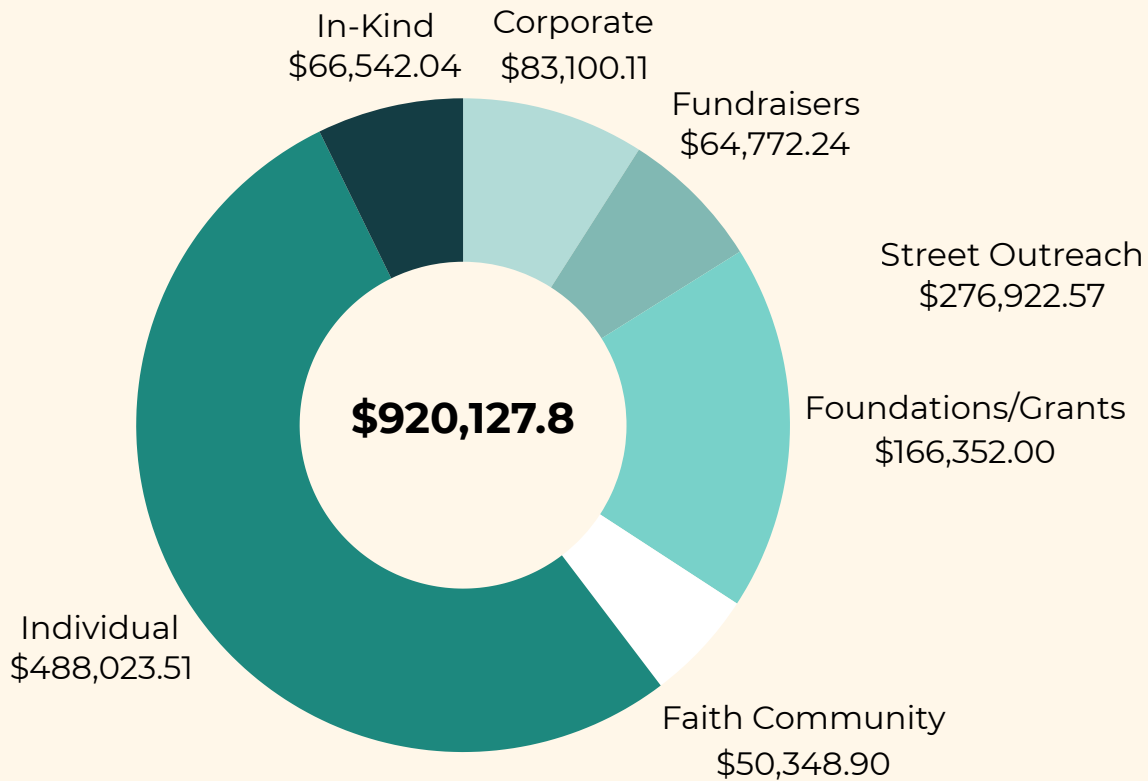
MEET THE BOARD

- **John N. Lozier, MSSW, *Board Chair***
Retired Executive Director, National Health Care for the Homeless Council
- **Margot Fosnes, *Board Treasurer***
Economic and Community Development Consultant
- **Stephanie Haney, *Board Secretary***
Learning Consultant, Caterpillar Financial
- **Alaina Boyer, PhD | Senior Director of Programs, National Healthcare for the Homeless Council**

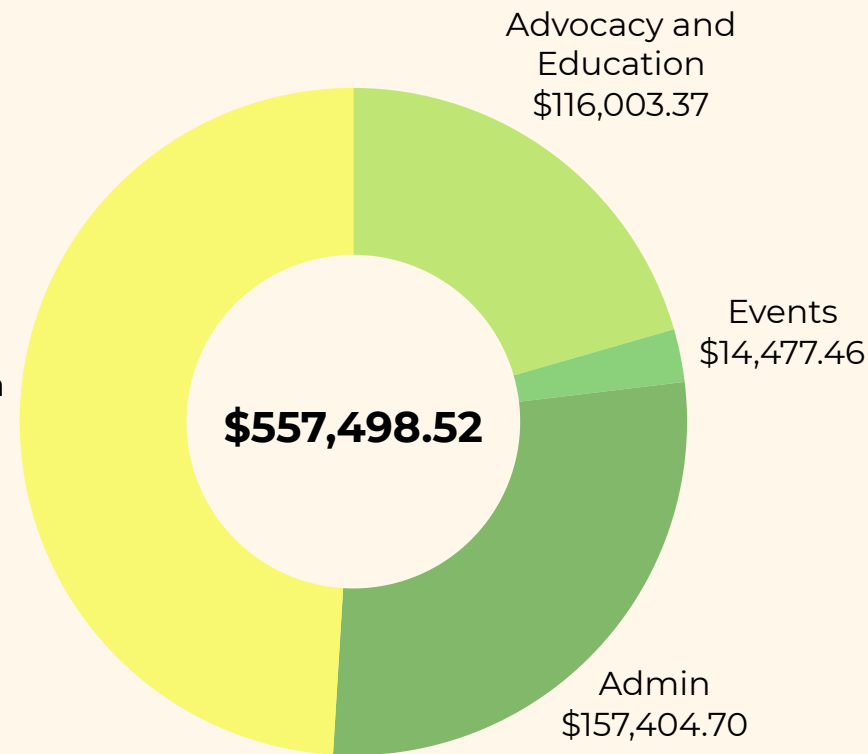
- **Farhang Heydari | Assistant Professor, Vanderbilt Law School**
- **ET Jones, lived experience**
- **Kelsey Oesmann Wilson | Principal, Nelson Community Partners**
- **Greg Ziegan | Software Engineer, Zendesk**
- **Chris Coleman | Attorney, Lief Cabraser**

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Revenue



Expenditures



HOUSING. HEALING. HOPE.

*In 2025, we continued to provide housing, healing, and hope through our **Street Outreach and Housing, Advocacy, and Education** programs.*



STREET OUTREACH AND HOUSING NAVIGATION

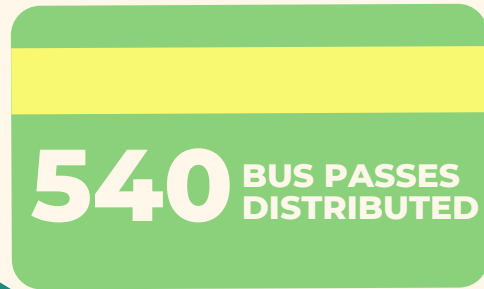
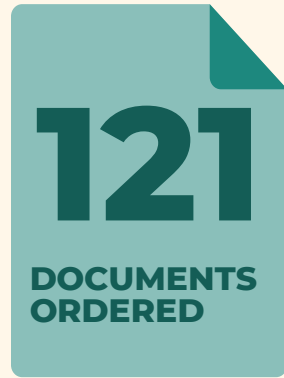
Our outreach team consists of only one full-time staff person and one part-time staff person. Together, they work regularly with people living outside on plans toward stability and housing. They provide weekly food and supply distribution, rides to appointments, and establish goals and housing plans.

Significantly, in the last two years, the people housed through our work have maintained housing at an **87% retention rate**.

We're always mindful that the people we work with aren't cases to be managed or a number on a spreadsheet. They are individuals we journey alongside. That's why we're committed to meeting people where they are, on their terms, to develop authentic relationships built on trust, dignity, and solidarity.



OUTREACH AND HOUSING IMPACT



RECEIVED FINANCIAL
SUPPORT FOR HOUSING



“Open Table Nashville helped me get into permanent housing at a very difficult time after years of searching in a city that has housing availability problems.

OTN has helped thousands of people get into permanent housing in no time.”

- M, who moved into housing in 2025.

EDUCATION

We believe that in order to break cycles of poverty and homelessness, we must first understand these cycles. In addition to various speaking engagements, we also facilitate trainings for the public to provide education on root causes of homelessness.

1397 PEOPLE RECEIVED EDUCATION

28 GROUPS RECEIVED EDUCATION



Our team is always looking for new resources to inform our work and the public. For example, we hosted a discussion with journalist and author Brian Goldstone while on his book tour for *There is No Place for Us: Working and Homeless in America*. His book was named one of the New York Times best books of 2025. We were honored to spend the evening in conversation with Brian.

ADVOCACY



Punitive measures and policing will never end the devastating crisis of mass homelessness in the United States. This is why we push for our elected officials to invest in public goods like affordable housing, mental health care, and non-police crisis response. Below are two successful initiatives from 2025.

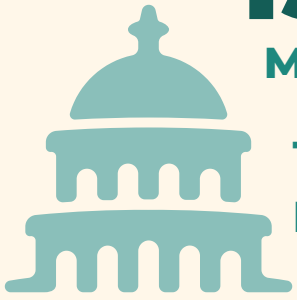
Launched a State-Wide Housing Justice Coalition

For the last couple of years, OTN and four other on-the-ground organizations have been laying the groundwork to launch Housing for All Tennessee. This is a statewide coalition that focuses on affordable housing, tenants' rights, and ending homelessness in Tennessee. This nonpartisan coalition works towards systemic transformation by developing a shared state housing justice platform, creating strategic statewide policy goals, and coordinating our local campaigns.

Strengthened Accountability & Oversight of Policing Homelessness Downtown

Last year, we provided critical education to Metro Council and the wider community on the disparate impacts that Business Improvement Districts have on people experiencing homelessness. Without oversight, protections, and accountability, BIDs can facilitate the takeover of public spaces by private companies, wealthy property owners, and the tourism industry. Because of our education and advocacy during the council's expansion of the BID, multiple amendments were added that increase transparency, accountability, and oversight around how BID-funded private police engage with people experiencing homelessness downtown.

ADVOCACY IMPACT



130 PARTICIPANTS
MET WITH **65** LEGISLATORS AT OUR
THIRD ANNUAL DAY ON THE HILL
FOR HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS

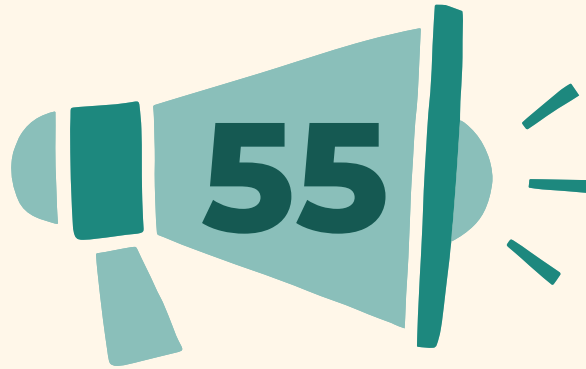
PROVIDED EDUCATION
AND ADVOCACY FOR



STATE AND LOCAL BILLS



37
ADVOCACY
LETTERS
WRITTEN



PUBLIC MEETINGS,
LEGISLATIVE SESSIONS,
& PUBLIC ACTIONS
ATTENDED



28
MEDIA INTERVIEWS

OLD TENT CITY

Last June, the city, led by the Metro Office of Homeless Services, **closed Old Tent City** - the **oldest and largest encampment** in Nashville.

While many camp residents were placed in transitional housing options, dozens felt that wasn't the right choice for them and wanted to remain in their camp until they could find **permanent** housing. They were not given that choice. We believe in centering the choice and agency of the individuals we work with and we recognize that everyone's path to housing looks different. To honor what we were hearing from folks on the ground, we held listening sessions with camp residents who asked if we could relay their requests to the mayor's office.



Photo by David Farmerie

Residents requested:

- For Mayor O'Connell to meet with them.
- More permanent housing options.
- More time or a delayed closing of their camp.
- For land to be made available when people find themselves with nowhere to go.

"By the time people are sleeping outside, we have already failed them in so many ways. And the only meaningful and humane way to close encampments is to prevent people from sleeping outside in the first place."

-Michael Durham, director of networks at Funders Together for Housing Justice.

The mayor agreed to meet with a small group of residents to hear their concerns. The residents were thrilled, but **the mayor canceled and didn't reschedule**. Camp residents felt **ignored, dismissed**, and like their concerns **did not matter**.

OLD TENT CITY

We remained present in the camp throughout the closure process, navigating complex situations and advocating alongside residents who felt they were left with no options.

We stayed with the people who remained on the final day when the **police** and the **bulldozers** showed up. Through the support of our donors, we were able to raise a fund of nearly \$3,000 to help residents being displaced. We filled gas tanks, put air in tires, and reinstated drivers licenses. We bought vehicle parts and paid for towing. We even coordinated with community members who offered safe places to park while we worked on obtaining permanent housing.

While it may look like progress to clear an encampment, these camps are being shut down without an adequate supply of affordable permanent housing and causing undue stress with no solutions.

People who live in encampments don't want to be homeless. But encampments do serve as a way for folks to carve out a safer means of survival and community for themselves. We're not advocating for camps to remain open for the sake of it but instead to stay as a landing place when folks find themselves with nowhere to go.

This is why we'd rather see our city's resources go to prevention and diversion efforts that have a far greater effect on preventing homelessness in the first place. Every dollar we spend closing a camp could be a dollar used toward permanent housing.



Photo by Madison Thorn

“The importance of Old Tent City in Nashville cannot be understated. It started in the 1980s and its population has ebbed and flowed ever since. The camp has meant different things to different people over the years. For some residents, this camp was hell, but for others it was a haven - a place where they found community, support, and connection to resources.” - Lindsey Krinks

VOLUNTEERS



Our work wouldn't be possible without the support of dedicated volunteers who pour their time and energy into our mission. Whether it's organizing supplies, assembling food bags, or checking on our friends outside on Nashville's coldest nights, we are so grateful for the many volunteers who support our efforts.

OTN's most recurring volunteer opportunity is **winter canvassing** and that outreach is only possible because of the volunteers who show up with us in below freezing temperatures! This year saw **140 unique volunteers** across **34 nights** of cold weather canvassing.

THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS

Open Table Nashville is sustained through the recurring support of a grassroots funding base. Individual donations remain our **largest and most consistent** stream of funding. It's not lost on us how unique and important that is to our ongoing operations especially as the uncertainty of federal funding continues to grow.

OTN's recurring donors are the backbone to the operations of our organization and we are endlessly grateful for the support of our mission.

As we often say at OTN, ***We Take Care of Each Other***, and we are so thankful for the way our donors show up and join us with such generosity and commitment to keep our work going!

