



2024

ANNUAL

REPORT

From the Executive Director and Chair of the Board

This year, as we celebrate Ithaca Welcomes Refugees' ten-year anniversary, we are pleased to present our first annual report. In 2024 IWR continued its pattern of growth since our founding in 2015, when we were entirely staffed by volunteers and merely laying the groundwork to support new refugee arrivals. Fast forward to 2024, when we added our eighth part-time staff member, and with the continued help of a strong base of volunteers, supported 141 refugees and immigrants.

As forced displacement globally reached 122.6 million people mid-way through 2024, we remained dedicated to playing our part locally, welcoming 27 new arrivals and supporting 119 additional people, some of whom we had welcomed years prior.

We began preparing for the uncertainties presented by the presidential election in the spring. We then found ourselves ready, though disheartened, to face the challenges posed when President Trump was re-elected. We began educating immigrants about their rights, raising funds to help people file asylum applications, and deepening services to new arrivals from recent years.

Even during these difficult times, we look back over the last year and celebrate the IWR community's shared accomplishments. In 2024 our Welcome Home program, which helps newcomers move into housing, had a budget for the first time. The program had relied completely on donated items and we used its inaugural funds to purchase more intimate items, like pillows and linens, new. We expanded trauma-informed care training to more IWR volunteers. And many people we supported in their resettlement journeys joined the ranks of our volunteer translators.

As always, we are immensely grateful to the many volunteers, donors, partner organizations, and community members, new and old, who give of themselves to help IWR continually strive toward our mission: to partner with newly arrived refugees and immigrants as they rebuild their lives in Tompkins County.



CASEY VERDEROSA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



DOUGLAS STAYMAN, BOARD CHAIR

Who We Are

Operational Staff

Casey Verderosa,
Executive Director



Leila Wilmers,
Development Director



Leigh Bacher,
Programs Coordinator



Bronwyn Losey,
Director, Global Roots Play School



Play School Staff

Molly Alexander, Child and Family
Support Specialist
Stephanie Muñoz, Lead Teacher
Zahraa Aldelfi, Assistant Teacher
Kiersten DeMarco, Assistant Teacher

Lead Volunteers

Coert Bonthuis
Glen Robertson
Ellie Stewart
Wendy Wallitt

Board of Directors

IWR's operations are advised by a board of directors. Our board members include individuals with lived experience of displacement and backgrounds in the non-profit sector, government, academia and the arts, with deep connections to the local community. Given the risks to displaced people at this time, we have chosen not to name board members here. Contact us with any questions or to learn more about IWR's organizational structure.

Programs

Welcome Home

Through IWR's Welcome Home program, we helped locate suitable accommodations, carried out donation drives for furniture and household items needed, and organized 7 home moves for 27 people in 2024. With an inaugural budget for housewares, we were able to purchase new linens and pillows for the first time, while still gladly accepting donations of other housewares from our generous community. Also for the first time, rather than relying on volunteer vehicles, we were able to rent moving trucks. We provided newcomers with a 2-week supply of basic, culturally-appropriate groceries and we contributed \$29,524 in needs-based housing aid to 10 households.



“I want to express my heartfelt thanks to everyone who supported my family throughout this journey. Words cannot fully convey my gratitude in this message. My family’s achievements, including finishing college, would not have been possible without your help. You all made this process much easier for me, and I never felt alone.”

Response Projects

Our volunteers assist a refugee family or individual in meeting their self-expressed resettlement goals. In 2024, volunteers helped IWR's refugee partners find doctors, enroll in English language classes, seek employment, enroll children in school, take driving lessons, and more.

Programs

Global Roots Play School

Having their children enrolled in a safe, nurturing environment allowed caregivers to take English classes, work, or perform other tasks essential to their well-being and that of their families.

Last year, we added a Child and Family Support Specialist to the Global Roots staff and found this to be an important role.

Founded in 2017 to provide accessible early childcare to refugee families who wanted to take English language classes, IWR's Global Roots Play School enrolled 18 children last year.



Children at Global Roots engage in a play-based, child-paced learning environment. Teachers are trained to provide trauma-informed care at this safe place to land for families new to the US.

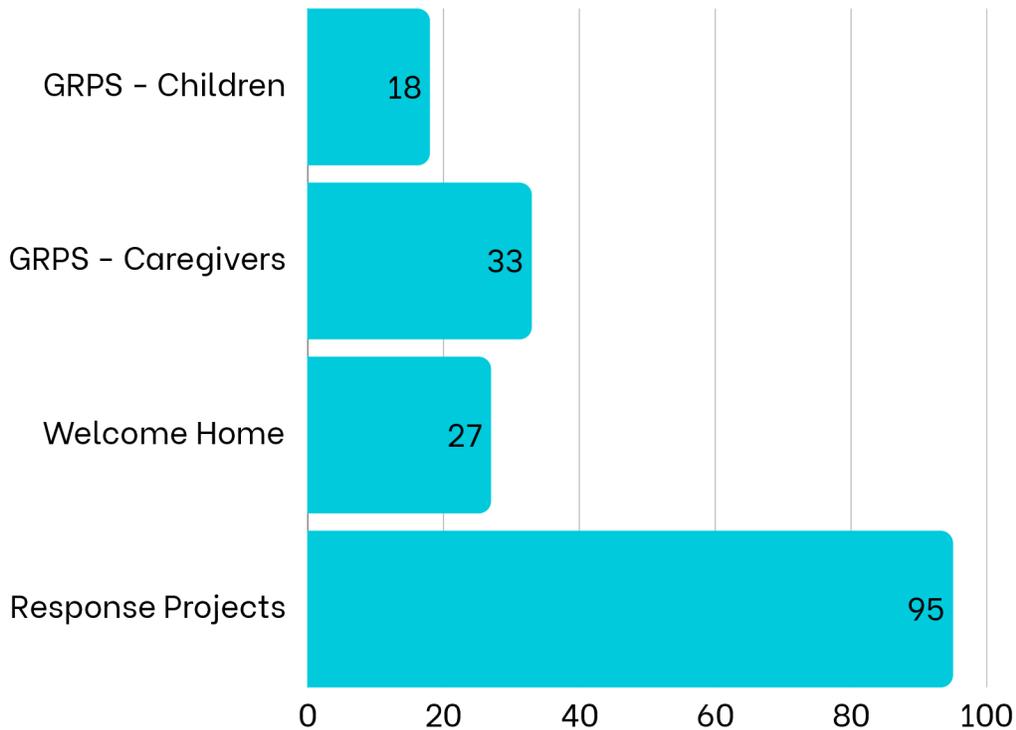
Due to the school's two-generation approach, 33 adult caregivers also benefited from Global Roots last year.

“It’s beautiful because you can find different kids from everywhere, like families and kids from different countries, who speak different languages and get to know each other.”

People Served

In 2024, IWR served a total of 146 people.

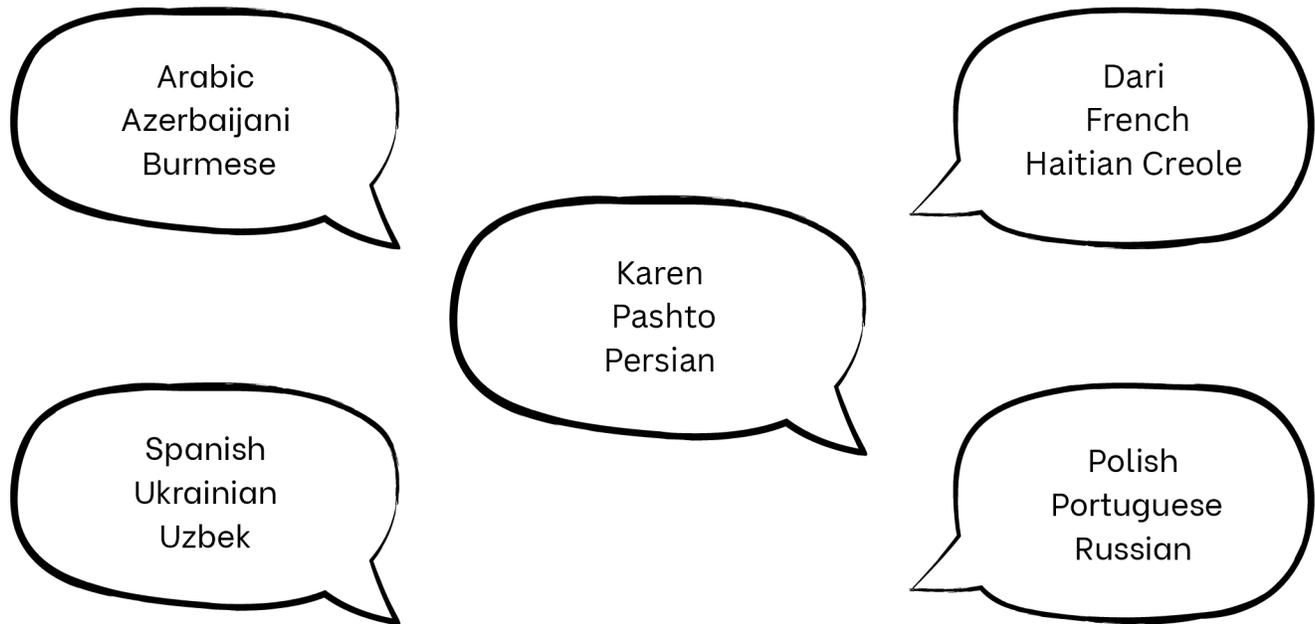
People Served by Program



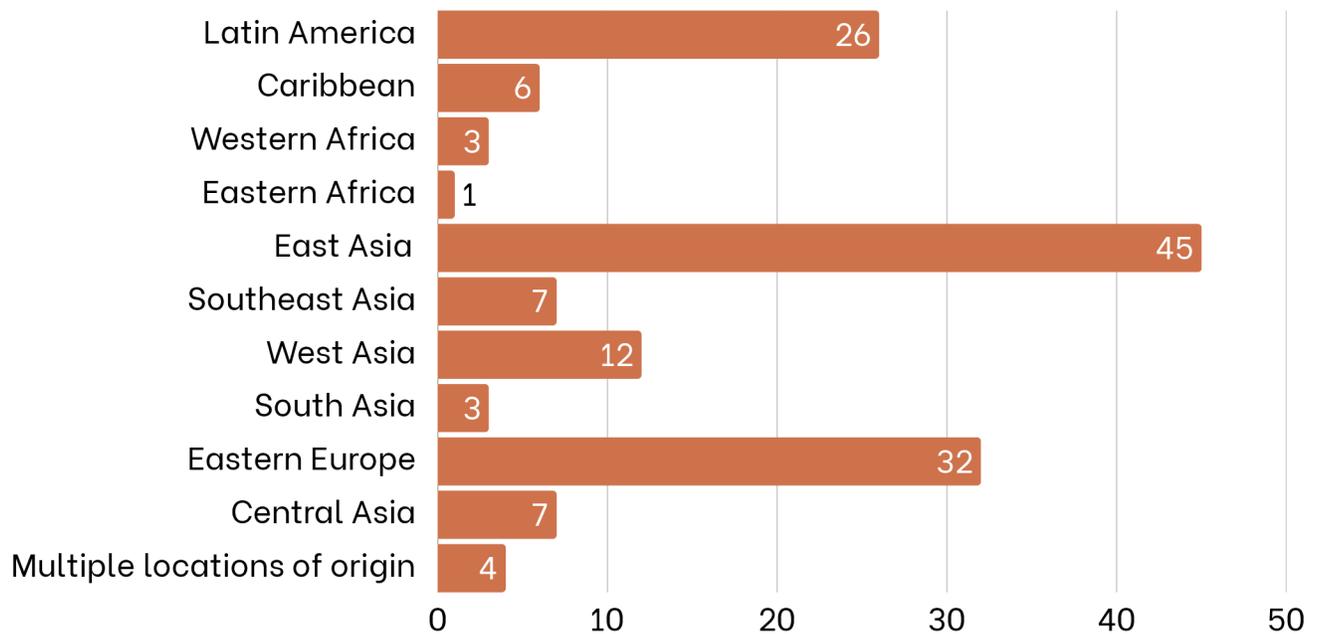
*Some people were served by more than one program.

People Served

Languages Spoken



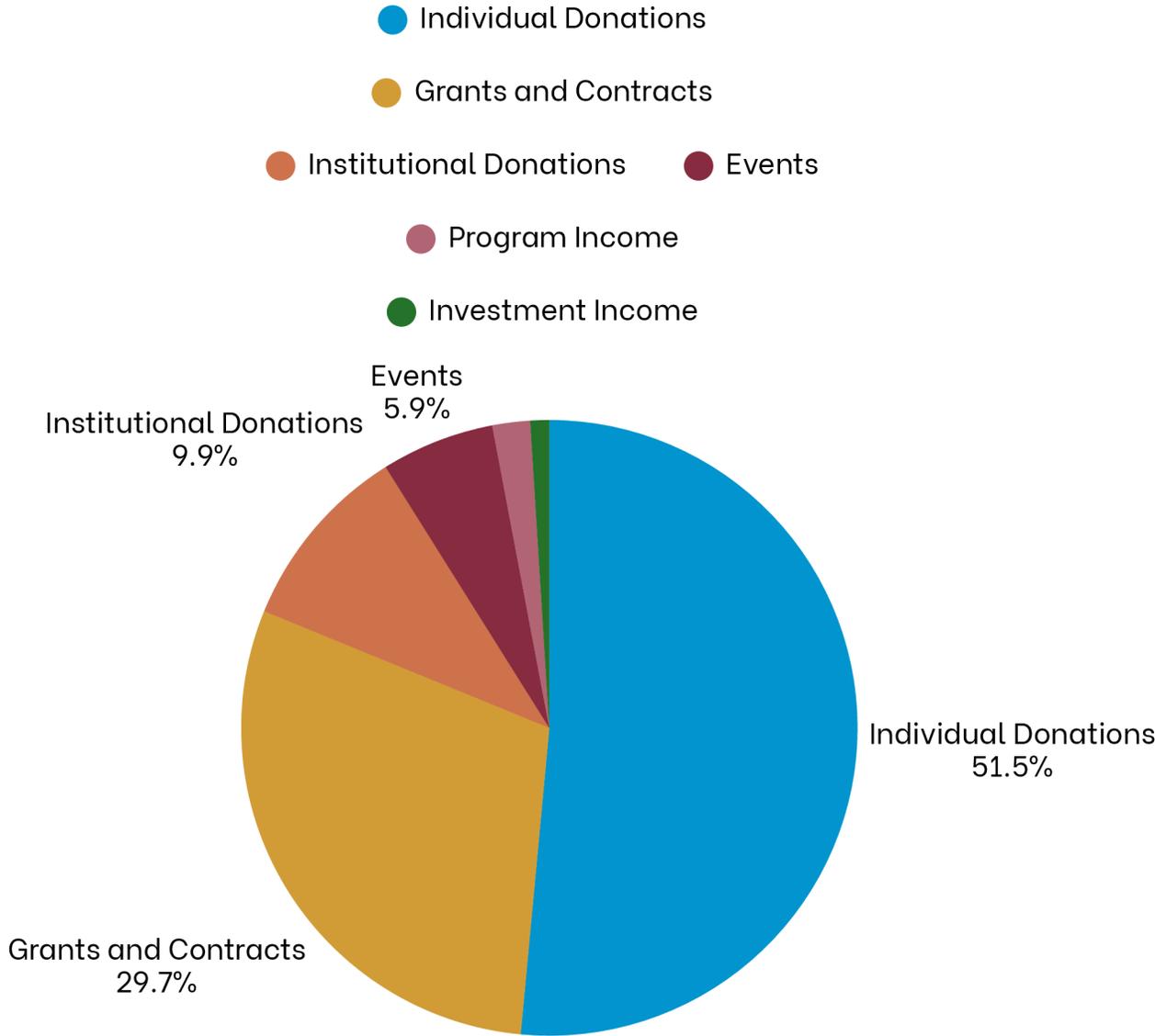
Region of Origin



Financial report

Total Revenue: \$329,328

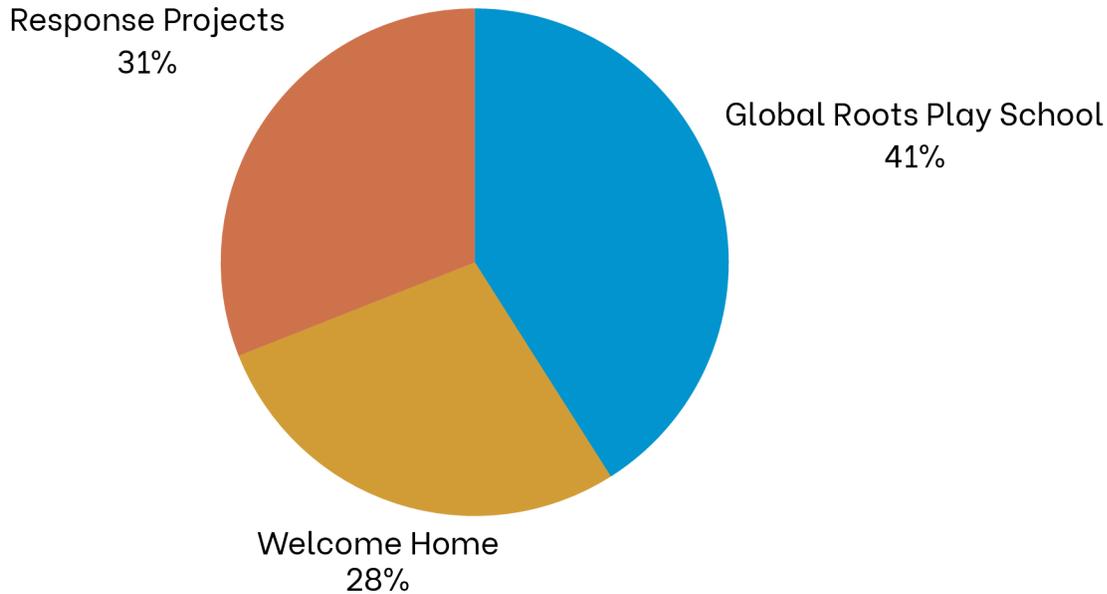
Revenue by Type



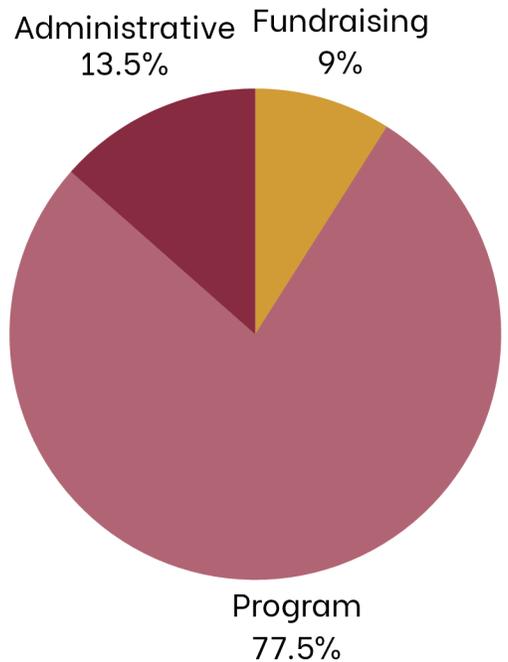
Financial report

Total Expenses: \$258,446

Expenses by Program



Expenses by Type



Unspent 2024 revenues included Crisis Funds raised to address urgent new needs arising from anticipated changes to the federal policy environment at the start of 2025. These funds are now being disbursed.

Our Supporters

Donor organizations

- Birth to Three
- City Federation of Women's Organizations
- Community Foundation of Tompkins County
- Farmington-Scipio Regional Meeting
- First Presbytery Matthew 25
- Human Services Coalition of Tompkins County
- Legacy Foundation of Tompkins County
- Migrations Program, Cornell University
- Social Services League of Ithaca
- United Way of Tompkins County
- Women Building Community

Business sponsors

- Argos Inn
- New Delhi Diamond's restaurant
- The Science Center
- Wide Awake Bakery

Key partners

- Catholic Charities of Tompkins and Tioga
- Cornell Cooperative Extension
- First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca
- Open Doors English
- St Paul's United Methodist Church
- Tompkins Learning Partners

Fundraisers and donation drive organizers

- Bhangra at Cornell - PAO XI dance show
- Yvonne Fogarty and Debbie Benzer - spring and fall jewelry sales
- Emma Hewitt, Bridgette Nugent, Leia Raphaelidis, Leila Wilmers and others - Back to School fundraiser for Global Roots Play School
- Nina Cummings and Wendy Kenigsberg - fall pottery sale
- First Presbyterian Church of Ithaca - concert
- Kendal at Ithaca Residents' Interfaith Activities Committee - Thanksgiving fundraiser
- Bethany Campus Christian Church - donation drive
- St John's Episcopal Church - donation drive

Individual donors

We are grateful to each and every person who chose to donate to IWR in 2024! Your donations enable our work and help ground it firmly in the community. Cash contributions this year included match funding from employers, awards passed on, and gifts in honor of friends or family members. We also saw more supporters signing up to give monthly. We welcome this commitment from those who can make it. Recurring donations help us plan and manage costs throughout the year.

From Our Supporters

“My grandparents were immigrants who left dangerous situations and came to the US with nothing. I believe that hard-working individuals should be given the chance to work towards a better life for themselves and their families.”

-Anonymous

“As a retired professor of anthropology, I looked for volunteer opportunities that would bring me into contact with other cultural worlds; with IWR I have been on teams dealing with persons from Angola, Ukraine, and Afghanistan. Every interaction is rewarding, whether helping someone move or driving them to the dentist or connecting them with childcare and language classes.”

-Ann Grodzins Gold

“In the current political climate, it’s a relief to be offered a local channel through which I can provide support.”

-Harriet Malinowitz





315 N. Cayuga Street
Ithaca, NY
14850 USA

ithacawelcomesrefugees@gmail.com
ithacawelcomesrefugees.org