2025



70 Years
Friends Outside®

Friends Outside
Annual Report

2025 Highlights

Second Chances Celebration

April 26, 2025



We celebrated Second Chances Month for the first time, and the community came out in a strong show of support. Forty nonprofits, government agencies, and employers were there to offer services for a crowd of nearly 300 formerly incarcerated attendees.

70th Anniversary Gala

September 21, 2025



More than 200 community members gathered to celebrate 70 years of Friends Outside at the Bella Vista Rooftop in downtown Stockton. Guests enjoyed a champagne toast, a prison birthday cake contest, silent auction, great food, and live music.

Holiday Wish

December 17-18, 2025



Our 14th annual Holiday Wish campaign brought Santa and Christmas presents to 180 children of incarcerated parents. Kids were nominated by community partners, parole, and probation in San Joaquin County. Friends Outside and 55 donors made presents consisting of "two wishes and two needs" possible!

A Year to Remember

From the Board Chair



What a year it has been for Friends Outside! Our 70th year was an incredible success and paves the way for our next chapter. Our Executive Director, Michael Sorenson, has continued to build on the momentum of the last few years. As Michael outlines below, Friends Outside dramatically increased its community presence, staffing, resources, and reach in this 70th anniversary year.

In 2025, Friends Outside offered important new events and services like the first-ever Second Chances Job and Resource Fair, a 70th Anniversary gala and fundraiser, an expanded Holiday Wish program for justice-impacted children, and appearances at community events. The Resiliency Lab launched its classes and training programs in Stockton. We prepared to expand into Stanislaus County, and we are excited to be able to offer services in even more locations in the coming years.

Participation in our California State Prison and visitor services programs has more than doubled in the past two years, so we've also invested in our in-prison staff and programming. In 2025 we added a training and evaluation coordinator and increased staff training and professional development.

As we enter the next chapter of Friends Outside, we hope that you will join us to support those impacted by the justice system and create a positive impact on our community.

Sincerely,
Nicole Smolter, M.S.

From the Executive Director



As I reflect on 2025, I am filled with gratitude. This year has been one of renewal, growth, and impact for Friends Outside. Your commitment to our mission of supporting individuals affected by the justice system has allowed us to reach new milestones across California. Seventy years old sure looks good on us!

Our 2025 accomplishments represent a shared victory for our community:

- **California State Prisons**: We reached over **100,000 individuals** within the state prison system, providing vital connections and support to the incarcerated and their families.
- **Success in Reentry Programs**: Our community-based reentry programs served over **1,000 individuals**, guiding them through the critical transition back into society.
- **Regional Expansion**: We laid the groundwork to expand our reentry services into **Stanislaus County**, bringing our proven model of support to a new region in need.
- **Fiscal Growth**: Our total budget increased by **$5 million**, providing the resources necessary to scale our operations and deepen our impact.
- **Second Chances Month Job and Resource Fair**: Our inaugural **Second Chances Fair** connected justice-impacted individuals with employers and critical services.

These achievements belong to all of us—our dedicated staff, passionate board and volunteers, and generous donors. Your support has transformed lives, strengthened families, and built safer communities. Thank you for being the cornerstone of our progress and for believing in the power of second chances.

With gratitude,
Michael Sorensen, M.P.A.

In-Prison Programs

Family Liaison Services Specialists (FLSS)

Our embedded staff provide support and education for incarcerated persons in California State Prisons. FLSS team members facilitate classes that build prosocial skills like creative conflict resolution and positive parenting. They also work to keep families connected, which dramatically improves success rates when people are released from prison and work to re-establish their lives.



- 7,662 incarcerated people served
- 6,381 pre-release planning sessions
- 545 prosocial skill-building course graduates
- 2,928 missing/lost relatives located for incarcerated people

Visitor Centers

Friends Outside operates the Visitor Centers at all 31 State Prisons, providing a welcoming environment during what can be a stressful time. We provide free childcare, transportation to and from nearby transit centers, and snacks. We even stock "emergency clothing" to loan to visitors who are turned away from the gate for wearing noncompliant clothing.

- 114,350 visitors served
- 33,670 visits saved from cancellation
- 13,058 visitors provided with emergency prison-compliant clothing
- 1,492 free rides provided from local transit centers
- 10,753 children served with childcare or kids' activities during parent visits

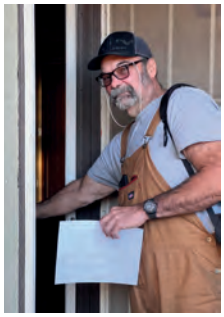


Reentry Programs

The Friends Outside Reentry Team assists people who are returning to San Joaquin or Stanislaus Counties from California State Prisons. We provide housing support, job search services, and classes in prosocial skills to help people successfully complete their probation or parole. Our Warrant Reduction and Advocacy Program (WRAP) reaches out to people being released from prison, connecting them with the resources they will need on the outside. WRAP team members follow up with clients to ensure they report to Probation.







522 clients served with housing, job-search support, probation compliance, and other reentry services

600+ justice-impacted individuals served through events and community outreach

142 people housed

119 people got jobs

Resiliency Lab

The Friends Outside Resiliency Lab opened in 2025 and hosts a busy schedule of prosocial skill-building classes, staff trainings, and special events like Holiday Wish and tattoo removal clinics.

100+ people participated in prosocial skill-building programs in the new Resiliency Lab

Classes Offered in 2025

- Financial Literacy
- The Courage to Change: Substance Use
- Creative Conflict Resolution
- Tenants' Rights and Responsibilities

Resiliency Lab classes are geared toward justice-impacted individuals and are free and open to the public.



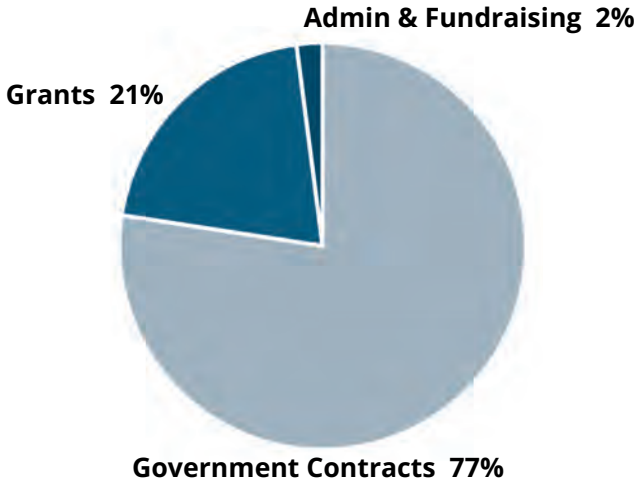
New Grants

Community Development Block Grant
Friends Outside was awarded $117,931 from the City of Stockton as a first-time recipient of a federal Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD). This funding expanded programming at the Resiliency Lab in downtown Stockton, including free, prosocial skill-building classes designed for justice-impacted individuals, as well as drop-in Lab hours where formerly incarcerated job seekers can access computers to print resumes, build skills, and receive support with online job searches.

Adult Reentry Grant, Cohort 4
Following four years of high-impact rental assistance and Warm Hand-Off services through prior cohorts of the Board of State and Community Corrections' (BSCC) Adult Reentry Grant, Friends Outside was awarded $4,497,349 through Adult Reentry Grant Cohort 4. The three-year grant supports reentry services in San Joaquin and Stanislaus Counties, including housing assistance, case management, employment support, and prosocial skill-building for individuals returning from California State Prisons.

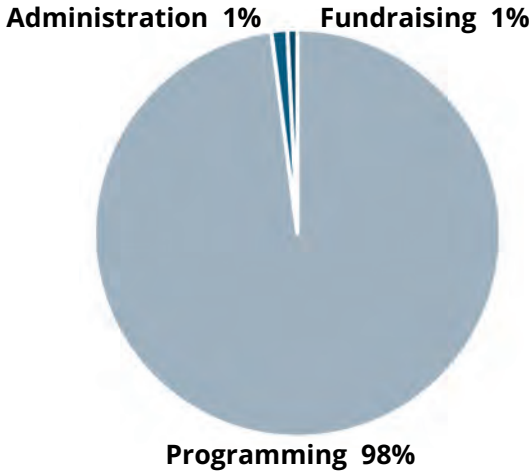
2025 Finances

Revenue



Government Contracts	$7,185,824
Grants	$1,904,677
Admin and Fundraising	$191,070
Total	**$9,281,571**

Expenses



Programming	$9,090,501
Administration	$117,333
Fundraising	$73,737
Total	**$9,281,571**

Thanking Our Funders

Government

California Board of State and Community Corrections

California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation

City of Stockton, California

Office of Violence Prevention, City of Stockton, California

San Joaquin County

San Joaquin County Office of Education

San Joaquin County Probation

San Joaquin County WorkNet

Stanislaus State - Stockton Campus

Business

Bank of Stockton

Bertilacchi Insurance Agency

California Water Service

Chase Bank

Cornerstone Wealth

Dignity Health St. Joseph's Medical and Behavioral Center, a member of CommonSpirit Health

El Concilio California

Health Plan of San Joaquin

HealthNet

Kaiser Foundation Hospital Fund for Community Benefit Programs at the East Bay Community Foundation

Kings Card Club

Legends Global

Oak Valley Community Bank

Progressive Insurance Foundation

San Joaquin Pride Center

Shepherd's Heart International Ministries

Stockton Rotary Endowment

True North Solutions

United Way of San Joaquin County

Valley Construction Services, Inc.

Valley Strong Credit Union

Walmart Store #3022

Individuals

Nancy Alameda

Linda Alband

John Alita

Anne Baird

Anthony Barkett

Thomas Beam

Hannah Bell

Bob Bilek

Mahala Burns

Ray & Joanna Call

Emiko Chan

John Chan

Alphonse Chu

Raven Cochrane

Julie Cosgrove

Michael Davila

Tony & Melissa DeJesus

Mark Dennehy

Kathy Donker

Eugene Eckert

Esther Escobedo

Mayor Christina Fugazi

Rachel Garcia

Joseph Garland

Bruce Giudici

Lizeth Granados

Robert Gray

Ronald Gray

Cristin Hallissy

Kathy Hart

Adrian Holmes

Erria Kaalund

Kitty Kameon

Keenon Krick

Danielle Krietz

May Kwan

Noah Lambert

John Langdon

Ronald Langdon

Mary Laughlin

Stella Manzo

Ricardo Marmolejo

Maureen Martineau

Willam McDonald

Steve Morales

Zenet Negron

Gretchen Newby

Devin Nguyen

Lee Nguyen

Rigo Ochoa

Tamesha Osborne

Earline Penson

Jason Perry

Heather Revezzo

Brisceida Ruiz

Jaskaran Shergill

Nicole & Lenix Pecikonis Smolter

Cristina Solano

Michael Sorensen & Leo Benavidez

Sarah Sweitzer

Kelly Tanisha

Nancy Torres-Acevedo

Sandra Vargas

Judyanne Vallado

Diane Vigil

Brian West

Sharee Wilburn-Grimes

Tiffany Williams

Alexandros Xides

Join this list for 2026!

friendsoutside.org/donate



The second chances mural on the Friends Outside building embodies our core belief that everyone is worthy of a second chance. The mural was completed in 2024 by Stockton artists Jason Leal, Koniak, Peter Juarez, and Cameron Campbell, and made possible by a grant from the Stockton Arts Commission.



Board of Directors at the Friends Outside 70th Anniversary Celebration

2025 Board of Directors

Chair	Nicole Smolter, M.S.
Treasurer	Bruce Giudici
Secretary	Joycelyn Martinez-Wade
	Ray Call, M.B.A.
	Fernando Esequiel Alvarez
	Mark Gloria
	Mike Herald, J.D.
	Sandra Romero West
	Richard Stoeckl

Our Mission

Friends Outside offers caring, evidence-based services to adults and youth who are incarcerated, reentering the community or at risk, so that they, their families and neighborhoods can be safe and thrive.

Our Vision

All those impacted by incarceration live with dignity as contributing members of our communities

The Second Chances Pledge

I believe in second chances—for myself, my loved ones, and my community. Grace brought me here and extending that same grace to others makes transformation possible.

Friends Outside

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Give today!
friendsoutside.org/donate