



Gaithersburg HELP
Neighbor Helping Neighbor Since 1968



2025

ANNUAL REPORT

A comprehensive review of our financial
resilience and strategic achievements.

GAITHERSBURGHELP.ORG



Leadership Message

In 2025, Gaithersburg HELP assisted 6,041 families with food, representing 25,821 individuals; funded 215 prescriptions; and provided 782 rides to medical appointments for the disabled and elderly. It was a challenging year with substantial cuts to federal programs while the cost of food continued to increase. Our income was less than budgeted through most of the year as our supporters struggled with financial demands. Requests for food surged in the fall when the federal government shut down. Despite these challenges, we continued to provide food within 1 or 2 days of the request even though we had a budget deficit that reached \$150,000 in October. A surge in year-end donations coupled with emergency funding from several government agencies allowed us to end the year with a small surplus.

Recognizing that our clients have many needs beyond the services we provide, we've found opportunities to partner with organizations to meet those needs. Several local medical centers referred clients to us for prescription funding. We referred clients to the Gaithersburg Hope Center (formerly the CARES Hub) for diapers, and clients were referred to us for formula and baby food. We supported rent and utility assistance by providing \$24,000 to the Upper Montgomery Assistance Network (UMAN). The essential collaborative relationships formed with staff and volunteers from many local organizations give us opportunities to explore problem solving techniques, find innovative ways to support our clients, and keep Gaithersburg HELP at the forefront of assistance organizations. Through these networking relationships, we are gaining a broader perspective on the needs of our community while augmenting our ability to meet those needs.



Gaithersburg HELP Partners

In November 2025, we welcomed a new vice president: Pastor Steve Buechler of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church agreed to help our current president, Pastor David Sonnenberg of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church. Their leadership and guidance will assist us as we navigate the complexities of external forces that impact our role in the community. As always, we are grateful for the steadfast commitment of all our member congregations, which provided food donations, financial assistance, and many volunteers during the year.

We continue our focus on careful stewardship of our assets, and we look forward to another year of providing our services to all community members who request them.

Margo Goldman

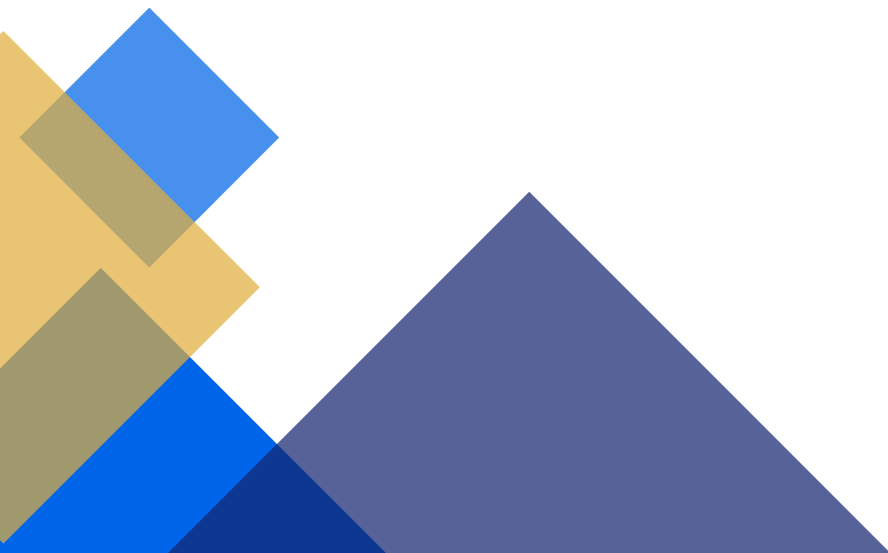
Executive Director

Kevin Ramsey

Assistant Executive Director



Bank of America Food Donations



OUR VISION

As a vital neighbor-helping-neighbor link in a county-wide network of providers, Gaithersburg HELP strives to assist clients with food and other basic needs.



Program Highlights

- ◆ Pantry and Infant Needs
- ◆ Food / Infant Needs Coordinators
- ◆ Spanish Language Services
- ◆ Rx / Financial Program
- ◆ Transportation Program
- ◆ Volunteer Program
- ◆ 2025 Grants
- ◆ Financial Review

Pantry and Infant Needs

Our Food and Infant Needs program faced many challenges in 2025, yet we assisted 6,041 families with food, representing 25,821 individuals. Those numbers are about 15 percent higher than in 2024. We also provided 580 units of infant formula and countless jars of baby food and baby cereal. General inflation meant that all the food we bought cost more than it had in 2024. In early 2025, we were also concerned about the impact that stepped-up immigration enforcement in our service areas might reduce the number of clients willing to pick up food at our pantry. We were relieved to find that our client numbers rose over the course of the year. Late in the year, the federal shutdown sharply increased food requests. Our daily family numbers almost doubled over those weeks, yet we managed to make appointments for food within a couple of days. Our coordinators were overwhelmed during that period, and we were relieved when the shutdown ended. At year's end, we still faced rising food costs; but we have received generous support from state, county, and city agencies as well as foundations that are aligned with our mission of basic needs assistance. For example, the County's Office of Food Systems Resilience awarded us substantial food purchase credits that enabled us to order a wide variety of groceries through Manna Food Center, which is the administrator for the county's program. Additionally, our partnership with the Capital Area Food Bank further assists us in purchasing shelf-stable foods for the pantry. We began 2026 on sound financial footing that should enable us to successfully serve our community through the provision of wholesome foods and infant needs.



Pantry Distribution Team, Rotary Club



"Souper" Bowl Sunday Donations

Food / Infant Needs Coordinators

Food/Infant Needs Coordinators made appointments for English-speaking clients to pick up food at the Gaithersburg HELP pantry. The Food/Infant Needs Coordinators scheduled 2,641 households for food in 2025. While informing people about Gaithersburg HELP's various services, team members also referred them to additional sources of food and social services in Montgomery County. Volunteers worked from home by telephone. In 2025, we had 13 volunteers; but we continued to seek more volunteers for this important role, which imparts a new understanding of the needs of people in our community. Members of the Food Coordinators team supported the annual client survey in May 2025.



Spanish Language Services

The Bilingual Coordinator (BC) team made appointments for food and infant needs, including formula, and helped coordinate requests for transportation and prescription funding for our Spanish-speaking clients. There were about 14 percent more Spanish-speaking households scheduled for food in 2025 than in 2024, and about the same number as in the 2020 pandemic year.

The BC team scheduled food for 3,900 households (compared with 3,414 households in 2024, 3,932 households in 2020 and 1,582 households in 2019, pre-pandemic). The BC team handled approximately 60 percent of the total food requests. We served 387 new Spanish-speaking households in 2025 (compared with 313 new households in 2024, and over 800 new households in 2020).

The BC team trained five new volunteers and lost three volunteers. At the end of 2025, there were 14 regularly active BCs. The schedule was managed with one morning volunteer daily and one afternoon volunteer, two to three times per week. During 2025, BCs referred clients to social service organizations, medical clinics, and other resources for food, diapers, and help in paying rent and utilities. Members of the BC team also helped conduct the annual client survey.

Gaithersburg HELP

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¿Necesita que lo lleven a una cita médica o a una agencia de servicios sociales?

Llame al 301-216-2510 y deje un mensaje en la **línea 2**

Si usted es una persona de la tercera edad o un adulto discapacitado, puede obtener hasta 18 viajes por año calendario

Si no hay un conductor voluntario disponible, es posible que podamos proporcionarle un cupón para un viaje en taxi si son 10 millas o menos

Llame con su solicitud de viaje entre las 8:00 am y las 5:00 pm al menos 2 días hábiles antes de que se necesite transporte

Para más información, ir a www.gaithersburghelp.org

Rx / Financial Program

In 2025, the Rx/Financial Program provided critical support by funding 215 prescriptions for 96 individuals, ensuring they had access to essential medications. Those clients included referrals from several local medical centers. Beyond prescriptions, we also sponsored eye exams and glasses for clients, including students and their parents referred to us by local school social workers. These services helped numerous clients improve their vision and overall well-being. Our dedicated Rx/Financial team responded to countless inquiries from families seeking guidance on rent and utility assistance, unemployment support, and a variety of other urgent needs. With compassion and expertise, we connected them to the appropriate resources, empowering them to navigate challenges and find the help they needed.

Transportation Program

In 2025, the Transportation Program provided 651 rides to medical and social service agency appointments for seniors and adults with disabilities. In 2024, we had provided 881 rides. The numbers for 2025 equaled a 26 percent decrease over 2024. The decrease in the number of rides and a decrease in the number of volunteer drivers contributed to increased program costs because we paid for more taxi rides. Although the meter cost for taxi rides did not increase during the year, we concluded 2025 over budget. We hope to recruit more volunteers for the Transportation Program soon.



Kentlands 5K

Volunteer Program

In 2025, we recruited volunteers through a variety of channels, including the Gaithersburg HELP website and third-party platforms such as the Montgomery County Volunteer Center and Idealist. We also benefited from referrals from current volunteers, which brought in several qualified candidates.

Through these combined efforts, we welcomed 24 new volunteers in 2025 who provided essential support across multiple HELP programs.

Our Transportation and Bilingual Coordination/Assistance programs received much-needed volunteer support - areas that have historically been challenging for recruitment. While we have been successful in expanding our volunteer base, recruiting volunteers with technology expertise continues to be a significant challenge.



Pastor Buechler Presents Prince of Peace Donation

Looking ahead, we remain committed to refining our recruitment strategies, strengthening volunteer engagement, and addressing critical skill gaps to ensure we continue meeting our community's needs effectively.



City of Gaithersburg Spring Shredding Event

2025 Grants

Throughout the year, we have received generous support from state, county, and city agencies, as well as foundations that are aligned with our mission of basic needs assistance.

Below is a list of our government and foundation grant awards for 2025. These grants complement our individual, congregation, and business donations, and the value of the donated food we received. Some of these awards will be expanded over more than one year, and they do not include any carry-over funds from 2024.



Holy Cross Health Foundation and Maryland Physicians Care Grant

Gaithersburg HELP 2025 Grant Awards

Montgomery County Government	\$103,048
City of Gaithersburg	\$72,200
Holy Cross Health & Maryland Physicians Care	\$50,000
William S. Abell Foundation	\$25,000
Kaiser Permanente	\$24,500
State of Maryland	\$19,900
Adventist Health Partnership Program	\$12,500
Carl M. Freeman Foundation	\$10,000
Johns Hopkins Health Plans Corporate Giving Program	\$10,000
Ada L. and Albert M. Wibel Foundation	\$6,000
Interfaith 5K	\$6,000
Kentlands Community Foundation	\$5,000
Cloudbank Foundation	\$5,000
Bank of America Charitable Gift Fund	\$5,000

Gaithersburg HELP 2025 Grant Awards *cont'd*

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Endowment	\$4,017
Food Lion Feeds Charitable Foundation	\$3,000
Phase Foundation	\$3,000
The WAWA Foundation	\$2,000
Bob's Discount Furniture Foundation	\$1,000
Costco	\$500
TOTAL	\$367,665



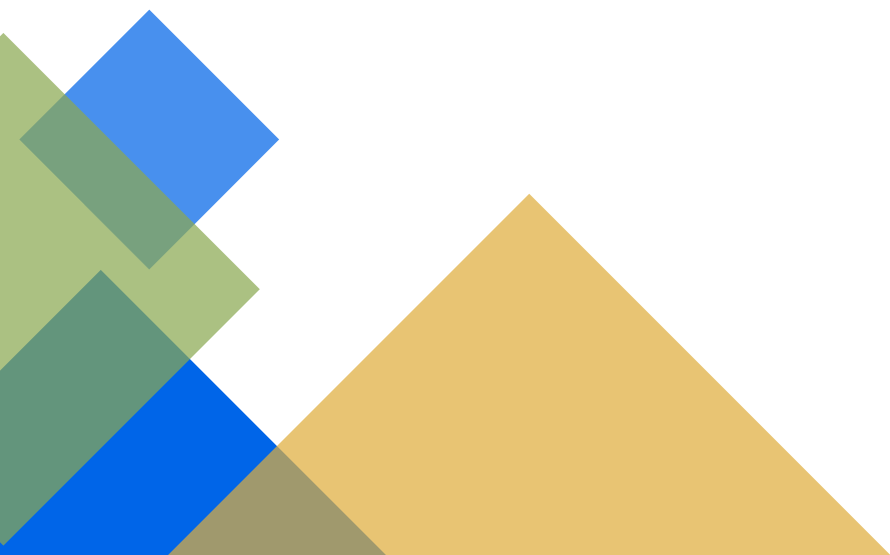
Carl M. Freeman Foundation Grant

Financial Review

In 2025, HELP's income saw a slight increase (\$20,000) compared to 2024. Significant funding continued to come from the Montgomery County Government, the State of Maryland, and the City of Gaithersburg. The county remained the largest contributor, providing both direct contract reimbursements for food purchases and grants distributed through the Capital Area Food Bank and Manna Food Center. The proportion of our income provided by government and foundation grants decreased from 45 percent in 2024 to 35 percent in 2025. This was largely in response to an increase in individual giving and donated food surrounding the cutoff in SNAP funding in the latter part of the year. Overall, the proportion of support from individual donors and member congregations remained steady this year. We remain grateful for the strong financial contributions from over 250 individual donors and our supporting congregations.

HELP's overall expenses increased by 14 percent in 2025 compared to 2024, putting our expenses in line with those experienced during 2023. This increase was driven by a 10 percent increase in the number of individuals served by our food program coupled with the increase in the cost of food associated with the inflation seen in the economy during 2025. Despite these increased costs, we continue to provide a 3- to 5-day supply of nutritious food, including a generous amount of protein and fresh produce, to our clients. While management and fundraising expenses remain low at just three percent of total expenses, they continue to rise in total dollars and exceed the costs of three of our program areas.

HELP ended the year with a surplus of **\$28,500** and reserves of approximately **\$510,000**. As an all-volunteer organization, HELP continues to be a low-cost provider of emergency services to the Gaithersburg community.



2025 Financial Summary

INCOME	EXPENSES
\$776,000	\$747,500
35% Grants	86% Food
25% Individuals	4% Client Rent / Utilities
23% Donated Goods	3% Mgmt / General and Fundraising
8% Congregations	3% Transportation
5% Businesses	2% Infant Needs
5% Other	2% Prescriptions

