

Dear HFLA Community,

Each year, our annual report is a chance to reflect on what we've accomplished together. We celebrate the loans made, the borrowers who successfully repaid them, and the dedication of our staff and Board, and the commitment of our giving community to help sustain this 122-year-old institution. This year is no different! I am pleased to share the 2025 annual report, where we once again celebrate the success of our borrowers and the achievements of the organization.

This year, I feel especially compelled to speak about our why. Why do we continue to make interest-free loans in the 21st century?

We are guided by the Jewish ideals of Tzedek, Tzedakah, and Tikkun Olam—justice, righteousness, and repairing the world. Jewish tradition reminds us that living in community carries responsibility: we are called to support our neighbors and ensure that opportunity is within reach for all.

This is what that vision looks like in the 21st century. We provide fair financial resources to people who, for a variety of reasons, are not able to access mainstream financial services. While the world looks very different from the way it did when this organization was founded 122 years ago, the moral imperative remains the same. HFLA is dedicated to supporting the Northeast Ohio community and creating equal opportunities for everyone.

Through our loans, we help people start businesses, pursue higher education, and navigate moments of financial instability with dignity. We offer more than financial assistance—we offer opportunity, empowerment, and a path forward on borrowers' own terms. In this critical moment, we are living our values and fulfilling our responsibility to our community.



Carrie Miller
Executive Director



“Even a baby step is a step forward.”

Leslie Elston wears many hats: student, airman, husband, pastor, chef, and businessman. At HFLA, we know him best as a compassionate borrower.

After an unexpected accident, the Elston family hit a financial road bump. They took out a high-interest loan, which seemed like the only option at the time, but that only led them to spiral further. **Leslie found HFLA and reduced his monthly payment from \$760 to \$300! With the extra funds available, he was even able to pay off his loan early and see a 200-point increase in his credit score!** After completing his loan payments, Pastor Elston decided to pay it forward by joining the Sprouts Club, HFLA’s monthly donation program, to give back to those who may come behind him.

But this was not the end of Pastor Elston’s journey with HFLA. Pastor Elston is the owner of Maraq Gourmet Soup. Currently offering 18 varieties, all packed with vegetables, herbs, and other fresh ingredients. Committed to customer service, Leslie personally delivers all his orders. But his trusty Cadillac was getting older, leaving him in a predicament as he tried to figure out his next steps.

Leslie returned to HFLA. He secured a business loan to purchase a new, roomy SUV to complete his deliveries. Leslie and the business are doing great and actively support HFLA whenever possible. Besides being a borrower and donor, he constantly refers applicants and has served as a guarantor!



To learn more about Maraq Gourmet Soup and Leslie's story, [scan the QR code.](#)

2025 Loan Snapshot

\$1,498,743
currently lent in Northeast Ohio

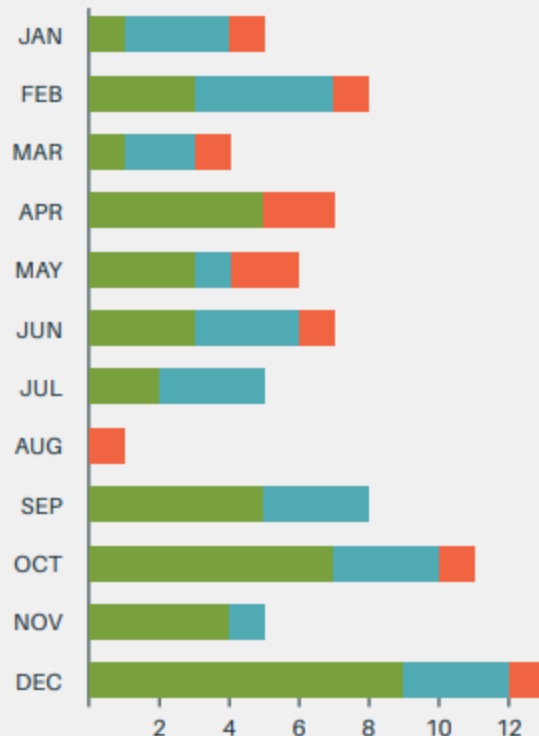
\$511,618
was financed in 2025

80 Total Loans

43 Standard Loans
\$157,591 financed

26 Education Loans
\$132,225 financed

11 Business Loans
\$221,803 financed



57 Loans Repaid

32 Standard Loans
20 Education Loans
5 Business Loans

35 Months
Average Repayment Amount

\$4,665
Average Loan Amount

Statement of Activities

for the year ending December 31, 2025

Category	2025
Individual Donations	\$73,667
Event Revenue	\$51,846
Unrestricted Grants	\$395,385
Restricted Grants	\$162,925
Total Revenue	\$683,823
Personnel	\$365,209
Loan Administration	\$14,966
Fundraising	\$44,554
Operating	\$114,688
Total Expenses	\$539,417
Net Revenue	\$144,406
Total Current Assets	\$3,502,406

Board of Directors

Brian Rosenfelt, Board President

**Jason Powers, Vice President
& VP of Governance**

Kerri Colwell, VP of Development

Margaret Eigsti, VP of Loan Policy

Nan Zieleniec, Secretary

Michael Paull, Treasurer

Jonathan Brown

Melissa DeGennaro

Emmanuel Hilton

Maya Holtz Groys

Joanna Laytin

Eric Zell