



Howard County Community Partnership Paygo Grants Grant Report FY25

FY2025 CSP PAYGO Grant – Annual Report

Please complete the following report and answer all questions. Please provide the most current and relevant information in your responses and answer all questions as fully, clearly, and succinctly as possible.

Part 1: Organization Information

Organization Name:	Assn of Community Services of Howard Co
Contact Name:	Lois K. Mikkila
Contact Email:	lois.mikkila@acshoco.org
Amount of CSP Grant Funding Awarded:	\$50,000
Amount of CSP Grant Funding Expended:	\$50,000

Part 2: Grant Information

1. Please describe the mission and goals of the organization. (250 word limit)

ACS' mission is to champion, strengthen, and connect Howard County's nonprofits. Our goals are to:

- Strengthen the capacity, impact, and sustainability of Howard County nonprofits. Strategic priorities include 1) expansion of the NonProfit Collaborative, 2) determining the feasibility of providing back-office support to our member nonprofits, and 3) continuing to grow HoCo Excel.
- Increase the ability of ACS and county nonprofits to advocate effectively for the people and causes they serve.
- Promote the essential role and impact of Howard County's nonprofits.
- Foster stronger connections and collaboration among Howard County's nonprofits.
- Ensure that ACS has the infrastructure needed to meet our members' needs and become more financially sustainable. Strategic priorities include 1) growing our revenue streams, 2) transitioning the board of directors to a true governing body, and 3) modeling best practices of nonprofit management and governance.

(Priorities only shown for goals related to this grant.)

2. Please describe the original goals and objectives of the one-time, PAYGO grant and how these goals were achieved during the FY2025 fiscal year. (500 word limit)

ACS' grant period was January 2025 through December 21, 2025. The original goals of this grant were two-fold:



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- 1) To develop and implement a new database and website to enable ACS to function more efficiently and effectively.
- 2) Build our organizational capacity to become more financially sustainable.

We successfully migrated to our new database (CRM). We began utilizing it during our membership renewal process in July and now use it to publish our semi-monthly newsletter, process event registrations, and track donors. One of the new CRM's features is the ability to create "communities." We're piloting this with the members of the HoCo Excel cohort, providing a place for them to easily communicate with each other and share resources. We plan to expand this to other affinity groups, to provide opportunities for nonprofits to build connections with each other.

Our new website is expected to go live in February. The content has been written; we're now finalizing the appearance of the pages. (The start of this effort was pushed back when we realized we didn't have the staff bandwidth to tackle both the database project and new website design at the same time.)

During this grant period, we pursued several new revenue sources.

- We applied for an operating grant from the State of Maryland.
- We began offering customized training for individual nonprofits for a fee.
- We opened our membership meetings to non-members, for a fee.

We also pursued the idea of providing back-office services to our members, first with a Leadership HC Community Impact Project team and now as a project of Compass Pro Bono. If we're able to launch this, it will provide an ongoing source of revenue that is fully aligned with our mission of supporting nonprofits. For the nonprofits, it will provide an important resource for affordable, quality service, which is more important than ever.

In addition, we worked diligently to ensure that ACS has effective operational and governance structures in place to provide the strong infrastructure needed to support our ongoing revenue-raising ability.

- We established a board self-assessment process and developed a plan, including board training, to address areas needing to be strengthened. We also created a formal onboarding process for new members.
- We updated our bylaws, several policies, and committee descriptions and created a schedule for ongoing reviews to keep everything up to date.
- We strengthened our committee structure, adding Resource Development and Governance committees.
- We contracted with PrescottHR to conduct an HR audit of our personnel handbook and procedures, and again to implement their recommended updates.



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- We revamped existing, and identified new, performance measures we use to evaluate our impact and help us continue to improve the value of our services.

3. What results and outcomes were achieved through this funding award? (500 word limit)

Important functions, like managing our membership information, publishing our newsletter, processing event registrations, and tracking donors is now being done more efficiently through our new CRM. Having cleaned up our existing data during this process, we are also more confident in the accuracy of our information. Once our new website goes live, that will add another level of integration to further enhance our efficiency, reach, and visibility. And with less time spent navigating data and cumbersome reporting functions, we have been able to start building a greater social media presence.

After several years of deficit budgets, we ended FY25 (June 30, 2025) with a net gain of \$72,000 and we saw the first increase in our membership dues revenue since FY19. To-date in FY26, we obtained a \$50,000 operating grant from the State of MD and surpassed our goal for our annual FallFest fundraiser, with net income of \$30,180 – nearly \$10,500 over our FY25 event.

The ACS board of directors has added members with key professional expertise (legal, accounting, and marketing), and is functioning in an appropriate, governing manner. Our bylaws, policies, and HR procedures are up to date. Our committee structure is fully formed and operational. The board and executive director have an effective and mutually respectful relationship. In short, we have made exceptional strides over the past year in building the strong foundation needed to take on new initiatives to increase our revenue-generating activities while continuing to provide Howard County's nonprofits with the information, resources and connectivity they need to achieve their missions.

4. What performance measures and strategies were used to collect data on projects and initiatives supported through this grant funding? Please share all metrics and performance measures gathered by the organization related to use of grant funding. (500 word limit)

Much of the activity related to this grant is measured by whether an action has been completed.

- Database fully implemented
- Bylaws and policies updated
- Committees formed and functioning
- New website nearing completion



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Revenue growth is tracked in QuickBooks and analyzed by source year-over-year.

We established the following metrics regarding member engagement as a proxy for assessing the value and quality of our services:

- Attendance at ACS programs:
 - Total attendance has grown: 504 in FY24, 815 in FY25, 414 in first half of FY26
 - Average attendance at membership meetings has grown: 28 in FY24, 44 in FY25, 48 in first half of FY26
- Newsletter open rate averaged 39.25% over the twelve months of this grant period. The average nonprofit newsletter open rate is 28.59%, according to Nonprofit Tech for Good.
- Our newsletter click rate over the same period ranged from 3% to 11%.

We also track evaluations of our training programs. The average overall rating has consistently been 4.8 on a 5-point scale.

We're currently preparing a survey that we intend to send out annually to collect additional feedback on our services. It will include questions that seek to measure whether nonprofits are "better off" because of the work that ACS does. This year's survey will become the baseline against which future years will be measured. These questions are:

- I/We have gained useful knowledge and/or skills through ACS.
- I/We have developed useful relationships with other organizations or individuals through ACS.
- I/We feel more connected to others in the nonprofit sector because of ACS.
- I/We have a better understanding of how local government and community systems work in Howard Co.
- Overall, how would you rate the overall effectiveness of ACS, based on its mission to champion, strengthen, and connect Howard County nonprofits?

5. If the project/program was altered from the original plan, please describe those changes and why they were made. (250 word limit)

The project was not altered during the grant year.

6. Lessons learned: what do you consider to be the greatest strength(s) of the organization? What do you consider to be the greatest challenges and opportunities - apart from finances - currently facing the organization? (250 word limit)

ACS' greatest strength is our knowledge of the nonprofit sector. For over 60 years we have worked closely with our local nonprofits and with other community partners, developing strong



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relationships and a deep understanding of their challenges. We have established a reputation as a trusted resource.

Our greatest challenge is the current environment, both political and economic. The uncertainty caused by federal policy changes makes planning and decision making difficult. Economic worries may dampen fundraising efforts, ours and our members. This may impact nonprofits' ability to afford membership dues; it has already cost us a couple of fee-based custom training opportunities. Typically, when making tough budget decisions, training, professional development, and dues are among the first things to be reduced or eliminated.

Our greatest opportunity is launching back-office support services. Our Compass Pro Bono team will be recommending that we start with bookkeeping services when they present to our board in February. They will then provide us with a business plan in April. Based on their analysis, they see significant potential to grow this into additional services.

7. If applicable to the reason for funding: What is your vision of this project or initiative over the next several years? If there are ongoing costs, how does the organization plan to sustain funding? (250 word limit)

Our long-range vision is to grow our existing sources of earned income (training and registration fees, membership dues) and additional back-office services to create sustainable sources of revenue. We anticipate that ultimately the fees generated through back-office services will cover our costs but recognize that launching the initiative will require upfront expense and will take some time to be fully implemented. We will seek one-time funding to cover start-up costs, and if we're not able to do so we will utilize our reserve funds.

8. Please list other funding sources and grants received during this period for the project(s) or initiative(s) supported through this grant. (250 word limit)

\$50,000 – State of Maryland grant (operating support)
\$10,000 – Howard County CSP grant (operating support)
\$118,677 – NPC Management fees
\$37,730 – Membership dues
\$23,897 – Fundraising
\$13,290 – Contributions
\$8,450 – Fees (event registration and fee-based custom training)

Part 3: Grant Budget

Required Attachment: Please provide a budget breakdown for the grant funds provided during this fiscal period. Please detail all expenditures and remaining fund balance (if applicable). If funds remain, please explain when and how the remaining fund will be expended.

FY25 PAYGO grant = \$50,000			total qtr spending	Total to-date
	\$17,500.00 for database / website	\$32,500.00 for capacity building		
1st quarter 1/1/25 - 3/31/25	\$11,250.00 Glue Up contract \$330.00 ED & MEM @ 4 hrs each \$11,580.00	\$2,500.00 PrescottHR audit \$7,500.00 staff time \$10,000.00	\$21,580.00	
2nd qtr 4/1/25 - 6/30/25	\$2,750.00 MEM @ 20%	\$3,600.00 PrescottHR follow-up \$4,875.00 ED @ 25% \$1,925.00 MEM @ 14% \$10,400.00	\$13,150.00	\$34,730.00
3rd "qtr" - 4 mos 7/1/25 - 10/31/25	\$3,170.00 ED @ approx. 17%	\$3,900.00 ED @ 15% \$3,667.00 MEM @ 16% \$7,567.00	\$10,737.00	\$45,467.00
final -- 2 mos 11/1/25 - 12/31/25		\$1,325.00 ED @ 10.2% \$3,208.00 MEM @ 35% \$4,533.00	\$4,533.00	\$50,000.00
balance	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$50,000.00	

ED = Executive Director; MEM = Member Engagement Manager