



Building Communities.
Educating Families.
Providing the Foundation
for a Better Future.

2024 ANNUAL REPORT



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A Note from the Chief Executive Officer

Friends and Partners,

Welcome to Empower Community Development Corporation! It is an honor to lead an organization committed to making a tangible, lasting difference in the lives of individuals and families across the greater Houston area.

At Empower CDC, we are committed to building thriving communities through collaboration, innovation, and a steadfast dedication to equity and opportunity. Our efforts encompass developing affordable housing, fostering economic growth, and providing resources for personal and professional development. Our mission is straightforward: to offer access to quality housing and the necessary tools to help the communities we serve sustainably thrive.

As the fourth largest city in the U.S., Houston is rich in diversity and opportunity, and we are proud to work together with residents, community leaders, and businesses to address the unique challenges our communities face. Together, we are creating opportunities that empower individuals to achieve their dreams and help neighborhoods flourish.

As you explore our work, I invite you to join us in our mission. Whether it's through partnering with us, volunteering, or supporting our initiatives, your involvement is invaluable. Together, we can shape a brighter future for Houston—one built on integrity, opportunity capitalization, and sustainable growth.

Thank you for your trust, support, and shared commitment to making a difference. The best is yet to come.

With gratitude,



William Merrick

Chief Executive Officer

Empower CDC | Whitestone Developments

Building Excellence, Envisioning Tomorrow

MISSION STATEMENT

Empower Community Development Corporation's mission is to work with ALICE, senior, and other cost-burdened households by providing access to quality housing and tools to help them sustainably thrive.

VISION STATEMENT

Empower CDC's vision is that our communities prosper.



PARTNERSHIPS

- AARP
- Acute Care Management
- Better Living for Texans
- Cam Agency
- Civic Heart
- Blazer
- Devoted Health
- DoTerra Essentials
- Empowering Woman Together
- Good People Helping People
- Harris County Public Health
- Houston Food Bank
- Houston Responds
- Houston Toolbank
- Houston Young Lawyer Foundation
- LYFE is Fuller Foundation, Inc
- Montgomery County Food Bank
- redM
- Schlumberger
- Sprouts Farmers Market
- Texans Benefit Medicare
- Texas A&M Agrilife
- The Restoration Team
- The Women's Fund
- TMF
- TXSMP
- Tyson
- Unite Us
- Veritex Bank



Noteworthy in 2024

- 9331 people reached through our programs and supportive services.
- Purchased land to build 22 affordable single-family homes.
- Creation of Empower(ed) Programs to help more cost-burdened households prosper
- Launched Empower(ed) to Feed to decrease food insecurities in the communities we serve.
- Launched Project Canvas to help children and youth prepare for post-secondary education.

Building Communities Through Our Partnerships

As connectors, we believe in the power of partnerships with community organizations and the individuals we serve. This year, we have cultivated meaningful collaborations with organizations that share our vision of fostering prosperity in cost-burdened communities. These partnerships have been essential in helping EMPOWER combat isolation and address the unique needs of the families and seniors we served, ensuring impactful and responsive support throughout the year.

Our Impact by the Numbers

This year, EMPOWER provided 1,388.10 hours of programming to more than 9,300 individuals in the Greater Houston area. Additionally, 148 volunteer hours through community partnerships highlighted a collaborative effort and commitment to community development. These initiatives brought vital resources directly to residents through programs and events focused on Health and Wellness, Children's Services, Senior Activities, Community Building Socials, and Adult Education.

EVENTS BREAKDOWN

BLAZER PROPERTIES

TYPE	EVENTS	HOURS
 Food Pantry	52	52.30
 After School Program	69	230.00
 Annual Health Fair	9	13.30
 Arts & Crafts	215	233.00
 First Responder/Law Enforcement	3	3.00
 AARP - Digital Training	25	26.00
 TXSMP - Medicare Fraud	77	42.30
 Social Events	233	273.50
 Exercise	359	351.50
 Character Building	31	31.45
 Financial Planning	20	20.00
 Project Canvas	3	3.00
 Outreach & Education	2	2.00
 Health & Nutrition	34	35.15

	HOURS
 Volunteers	148








"After participating in the social events and gatherings at Holly Oak, I've felt a positive impact in my life. I enjoy socializing with my neighbors and love doing the Tai Chi exercises led by our resident engagement specialist, Daniel Brown."

Cynthia W.


Our Impact by the Numbers

EVENTS BREAKDOWN

COMMUNITY EVENTS

TYPE	EVENTS	HOURS
 Project Canvas	6	6.00
 Back to School Drive	4	8.00
 Christmas/Toy Drive	8	16.00
 Thanksgiving Drive	8	16.00
 Food Pantry	5	24.00

OF EVENTS HOURS

 TOTAL	1163	1388.10
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PEOPLE SERVED: Greater Houston Area

Harris: 1,935

Montgomery: 304

Fort Bend County: 98

Others Served: 6,994



"It's really nice that EMPOWER brings these types of health fairs and events to the community. The children are having fun while being educated on the importance of staying fit." MOSLEY

 9331

People have access to our services

 1163

Multi-family & senior events

 1388.10

Hours served



EXPANDING OUR FOOD PANTRIES & FEEDING OUR FAMILIES

As of 2024, we have observed a continuous increase in the demand for quality foods among cost-burdened families and seniors. Through generous donations from EMPOWER & our partners, Sprouts, Montgomery County Food Bank & Houston Food bank, we were able to expand our food pantry services. It is for this reason that we have developed the Empower(ed) To Feed Program.



“I’m often forced to make difficult choices between paying for food or for other necessities. The local food pantry on the property helps feed my two children and me when money is tight.”

SHAWNTALAE

Thanks to nearly \$43,942.80 of in-kind donations, and an additional \$4,153.99 worth of groceries purchased by EMPOWER, and a Tyson Grant of \$7,500 residents received their choice of quality foods that are available on-site monthly.



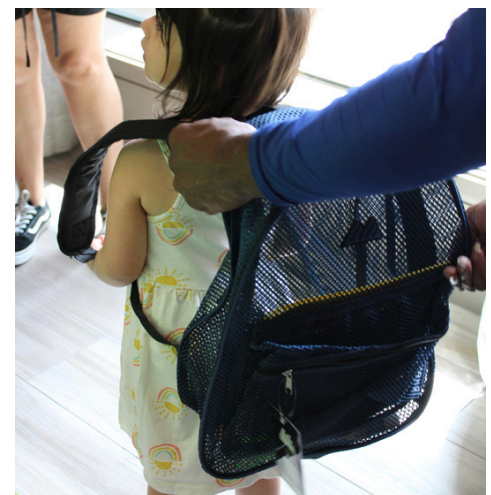
INCORPORATING DIGITAL & TECHNOLOGY LEARNING

Our collaboration with AARP allows us to equip older adults with essential digital skills, fostering independence and connecting them to vital resources in today’s digital world.



SECURING SCHOOL SUPPLIES FOR STUDENTS

We asked our community partners to help ensure students have a positive experience going back to school, and they responded! Cost-burdened seniors from our active senior properties were delighted to donate whatever school supplies they could! Thanks to Empowering Women Together (EWT), Multicultural Professional Partnerships (MPP), Lyfe is Fuller Foundation, Inc, & Civic Heart donations, children received over 581 backpacks and school supplies.



SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

County Breakdown of Individuals receiving SUPPORTIVE SERVICES

- Harris County: 1935
 - Largest service area, including nine housing facilities focused on senior living, families, and individuals in transitional housing.
 - Programs include health and wellness, senior activities, children's services, and adult education.
- Montgomery County: 304
 - Serving three housing facilities, providing tailored support for families and seniors.
 - Focused on addressing food insecurity, financial literacy, and community integration activities.
- Fort Bend County: 98
 - Supporting one housing facility with programs aimed at family stability, adult education, and youth development.
 - Community-building socials have been particularly impactful in this area.
- Others Served: 6994
 - Reached through on-site and off-site programming, partnerships with other organizations across smaller or more rural communities.

Campanile on Commerce (Active-Seniors)

Campanile At Jones Creek (Multi-Family)

Hartwood at Briarwest (Multi-Family)

Hartwood at Canal Lofts (Multi-Family)

Hartwood at West Little York (Multi-Family)

Heritage (Active-Seniors)

Hollyoak (Active-Seniors)

Meadows at Cypress Creek (Multi-Family)

Plum Creek Townhomes (Multi-Family)

Providence at Kuykendahl Court (Active-Seniors)

The Heritage (Multi-Family)

The Brittmoore (Multi-Family)

Windsor Gardens (Multi-Family)

We help families and individuals to live healthier and more fulfilling lives in counties where 1 out of 5 households are ALICE.

	Campanile on Commerce	Campanile At Jones Creek	Hartwood at Briarwest	Hartwood at Canal Lofts	Hartwood at West Little York	Heritage	Hollyoak	Meadows at Cypress Creek	Plum Creek Townhomes	Providence at Kuykendahl Court	The Heritage	The Brittmoore	Windsor Gardens
Arts & Crafts	★	★		★		★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Exercise Class	★	★	★	★	★		★	★	★				★
Health Fair	★		★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Notary Services	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★	★
On-site Social Events	★	★	★		★		★	★	★	★	★	★	★
Health & Nutrition Courses		★				★	★	★	★	★	★	★	
Transportation	★	★		★		★			★	★			
Food Pantry	★		★	★	★				★		★	★	★
Financial Planning Courses										★	★	★	
On-site Daycare						★			★				★
Back -To-School Drives								★			★	★	★
Thanksgiving Drive		★				★	★	★		★	★	★	★
Christmas Drive		★				★	★	★		★	★	★	★
TXSMP	★	★				★	★		★	★	★		★
Outreach & Education	★												
Project Canvas								★				★	★
Law Enforcement/ First Responders			★		★	★							
Character Building Program					★			★			★	★	
After School Care				★									

What to Expect in 2025 (*and Beyond*)



TRANSFORMING LIVES THROUGH NEW HOMES

We are proud to highlight that Whitestone Development/Empower CDC is the only development company to incorporate backup battery systems into every home we build, setting a new standard for innovation and sustainability



MAKING CHANGE, ONE TEAM MEMBER AT A TIME

Not one affordable housing community is the same. Each community has unique strengths, struggles, and identities. Resident Engagement Specialists (RES) can respond to each community's specific needs through solid relationships with residents and community partners.

“Our Resident Engagement Specialist makes me feel comfortable. They lift your spirits up. It makes me want to come back and let others know about the services.”

CHRISTINE

Because of their hard work in 2024, we've been able to continue combating self-isolation for seniors and promote multi-generational impact through resource-connecting activities, such as Digital classes and Lunch & Learns. We are looking forward to expanding our team of compassionate RES in 2025.



Information for our
Empower(ed) to Feed Program.



Subscribe to our newsletter for
information, updates, and ways
to get involved.

2025 STRATEGIC PLAN OBJECTIVES

OBJECTIVE 1

Expand Access to Affordable Housing

- Develop and maintain affordable, high-quality housing solutions that meet the needs of diverse income levels across Houston.
- Partner with local government, nonprofits, and private entities to address the city's housing challenges.

OBJECTIVE 2

Enhance Community Well-Being

- Create programs that address critical needs such as education, healthcare, and food insecurity.
- Invest in initiatives that build resilience, improve quality of life, and foster a sense of belonging among residents.

OBJECTIVE 3

Promote Sustainability and Innovation

- Integrate environmentally sustainable practices into all housing and community development projects.
- Leverage innovative technologies and strategies to drive efficiency, impact, and long-term growth for Houston neighborhoods.

OBJECTIVE 4

Staff Growth and Development

- Initiate a promote-from-within model where current staff members are given opportunities for professional development and promotion within the organization.
- Provide a culture of teamwork and cohesion where innovative ideas are celebrated and rewarded.
- Increase organizational capacity both financially and through additional human capital, allowing Empower to expand our quality and quantity of services.

What to Expect in 2025 (*and Beyond*)



Empower CDC: Empower(ed) Programs

Empower(ed) programs are designed to empower individuals and communities by providing them with the tools, resources, and support needed to improve their lives and make positive changes. The applications of these programs are wide-ranging, ranging from personal development to community development to education. Here is a summary of Empower(ed) programs and the associated benefits:

- **Empower(ed) to Feed**-Program or initiative with a specific focus on empowering individuals and communities to address issues related to food security and utilization of nutritious food.
- **Empower(ed) to Educate**- AARP Technology literacy, TXSMP fraud prevention, Project Canvas. To empower our community through education by providing essential skills in technology literacy, fraud prevention, and college readiness, enabling individuals to navigate today's challenges and achieve their goals.
- **Empower(ed) to Aid**- Job Fair, Expungement Clinic, legal resources. To empower our community by providing accessible employment opportunities and legal assistance, helping individuals overcome barriers, secure stable jobs, and build a brighter future.
- **Empower(ed) to Heal**- The program focuses on promoting a healthy lifestyle and well-being and is designed to empower individuals to take control of their health and make positive choices. Also, aim to educate, support, and motivate people to live healthier lives.
- **Empower(ed) to Invest**- The program concept focuses on empowering individuals to make informed and responsible investment decisions. This approach encourages financial literacy, provides resources, and supports individuals in their journey to become confident investors.
- **Empower(ed) to Give**-The concept encourages the development of a culture of giving back. Empowered individuals are encouraged to share their knowledge, resources, and support with others who may be in need. Empowered individuals, having received support and opportunities, are more likely to help and support others, thus creating a cycle of empowerment.
- **Empower(ed) to Own**- Inspire participants to feel a sense of ownership and responsibility as well as to look forward to home ownership. When individuals in communities take ownership of their development, they are more likely to invest time and effort in achieving their goals.

To learn more about how to get involved or support, please contact

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What to Expect in 2025 (*and Beyond*)



Empower(ed) To Feed

Empower(ed) to Feed is a groundbreaking initiative by Empower CDC, dedicated to tackling food insecurity. By partnering with the Houston Food Bank, Empower(ed) to Feed seeks to create sustainable, dignified, and accessible solutions to ensure that our community has reliable access to healthy food.

At the heart of Empower(ed) to Feed lies a profound commitment to ensuring that every individual, regardless of socioeconomic status, has dignified access to nutritious meals.

Windsor Garden serves as the site for this endeavor, as we redefine the landscape of food assistance programs for low-income neighborhoods.

Orange Ribbon Cutting

Empower CDC is committed to making a tangible impact in our community, marked by our recent orange ribbon cutting that celebrated the launch of new community services.

Distribution Days

1st Wednesday: 2 pm - 6 pm

2nd Wednesday: 9 am - 1 pm

3rd Wednesday: 9 am - 1 pm

4th Wednesday: 9 am - 1 pm



KPRC Interview about Food Pantry

Our CEO, William Merrick, and Program Director, Lashundria Penny Small, were featured on KPRC2 / Click2Houston, sharing insights about our impactful Food Pantry initiative. Full KPRC interview [here](#).



What to Expect in 2025 (*and Beyond*)

Empower CDC: Project Canvas

Mission: Project Canvas aims to help Houston's youth become leaders in their communities while developing skills that will expand their post-secondary options and prepare them for success.

Vision: Project Canvas co-powers with families and young people to ensure that every child in Empower CDC communities have access to a post-secondary program.

Target Audience: 7th-12th grade students who desire to attend college or trade school.



Building Tomorrow's Leaders, Today

College and Career Access, Readiness, and Counsel |
Leadership Development

PROJECT CANVAS



Quarterly activities on
our multi-family
properties

Monthly activities with
our community
partner- The YET
Center

Topics include:

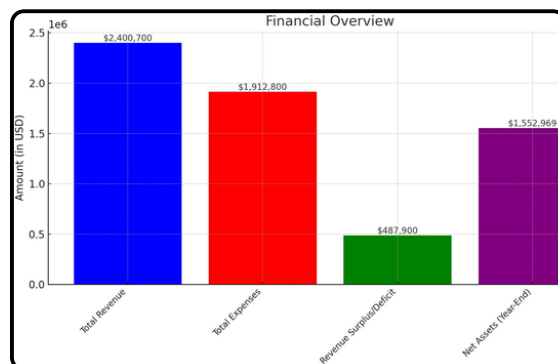
- College exploration
- Choosing a major
- Financial aid
- Time management
- STEM
- And more!

Empower CDC Budget and Financial Highlights

In 2024, Empower Community Development Corporation managed a budget of approximately \$2,400,700, strategically allocated to advance our mission of fostering prosperity in cost-burdened communities. These funds enable us to deliver vital programming, respond to community needs, and maintain operational excellence, ensuring the continuation and growth of our essential services.

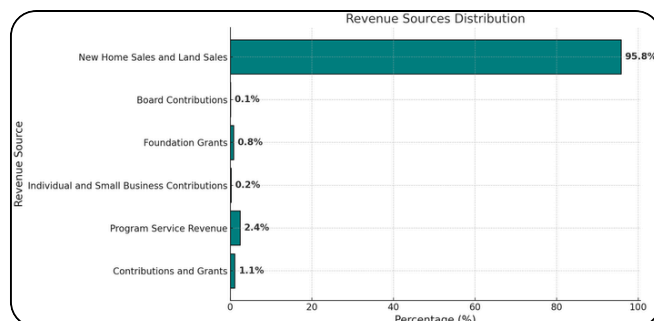
Financial Overview

- Total Revenue: \$2,400,700
- Total Expenses: \$1,912,800
- Revenue Surplus/Deficit: +25.5% (Net surplus of \$487,900)
- Net Assets (Year-End): \$1,552,969



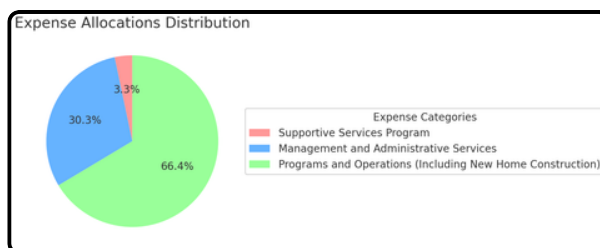
Revenue Sources

- Contributions and Grants: \$27,000 (1.1%)
- Program Service Revenue: \$58,700 (2.4%)
- Individual and Small Business Contributions: \$5,000 (0.2%)
- Foundation Grants: \$20,000 (0.8%)
- Board Contributions: \$2,000 (0.08%)
- New Home Sales and Land Sales: \$2,300,000 (95.8%)



Expense Allocations

- Supportive Services Program: \$66,000 (3.4%)
- Management and Administrative Services: \$597,500 (31.2%)
- Programs and Operations (Including New Home Construction): \$1,309,800 (68.4%)



Empower CDC continues to prioritize program operations, staff costs, and community-centered initiatives, ensuring the effective allocation of resources to meet the needs of the communities we serve. The organization's financial health reflects a strong commitment to fiscal responsibility and sustainable growth.

As we continue to grow, Empower CDC remains committed to financial stewardship, leveraging every dollar to create maximum impact.

What to Expect in 2025 *(and Beyond)*



2025 Affordable Home Renderings

Sunbury Homes are \$275,000 | Mansfield Land



OUR SUPPORTERS

We at Empower CDC are grateful for everyone who has supported us in our efforts to provide cost-burdened households the tools needed to sustainably thrive. We would like to thank everyone who went above and beyond in supporting us:

Houston Young Lawyer Foundation | Texas Methodist Foundation | Pioneer Engineering
Montgomery County Community Foundation | TC Energy | FCM Engineers | Frost Bank | Brother of Solomon #4
| AARP | Texas State Medicare Patorl | Sprouts Farmers Market
LIFE HTX | DEFINE: Body & Mind | Houston Food Bank



Donate today at EmpowerCDC.org

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