

F R E E D O M I N C .
2020 Annual Report

Our Community is Our Campaign

2110 Luann Ln Madison, WI 53713
(608) 716-7324 | info@freedom-inc.org

Table of Contents

Message from the Directors	3
Our Mission	4
Images from the 2020 Uprisings	6
Gender Justice Team	8
Queer Justice Team	10
Youth Justice Team	12
Community Power Building Team	14
Board of Directors	15
Statement of Activities	16
Statement of Financial Position	17

Message from the Directors

Dear Friends, Comrades, and Family,

While the world struggled with the pandemic, financial uncertainty, and uprisings, 2020 was a watershed moment for Freedom, Inc and our social justice movements partners.

Our 2020 annual report details the many highlights, milestones, and lessons learned. While the world shut down over the spread of COVID-19, it also highlighted the country's failed health, educational, and social systems. It brought to light our communities' continued struggles for social, gender, and racial justice.

We will never forget the pandemic of 2020 nor the resistance and uprisings in the streets! We remember the unjust killing of Breonna Taylor, the horrific video captured of the killing of George Floyd, and the attempted murder of Jacob Blake, all by the police. We have validated time and time again that the police will not keep us safe. We keep ourselves safe!

In 2020, we claimed significant victories; after years of organizing for Community Control over the police, over the system, over our bodies, and our lives. Our youth team won its campaign for Police Free Schools and ended a 15-year contract between the police and the school district.

Our Statewide Community Power Building Coalition worked relentlessly to ensure thousands of Black and Southeast Asian people exercised their right to vote and be counted in the 2020 Census! We were proud to see that our communities won during the Presidential election with record numbers of Black, Khmer, and Hmong women and Queer voters. We changed this nation by mobilizing and showing that, with collective power, we can go against our oppressors and white supremacist rhetoric, leadership, and policies.

In 2020, as the world sheltered in place, we provided warm-cooked meals to over 60 elders weekly. We funded over \$50,000 towards alternative shelters

for queer women and children escaping the violence of domestic abuse and sexual assault. We distributed over \$250,000 in pandemic emergency assistance to over 100 families, 500 backpacks, and school supplies kits, and gave \$20,000 in grocery and gift cards to families for our Holiday Giving.

It has been an extraordinary year both organizationally and personally for all of us at Freedom Inc. We grew in staff size, doubled the numbers of people we served, and increased our base and members. We cared for our community while many of our own staff grieved the devastation within our own families and communities due to COVID. We deeply appreciate and thank all those who supported and worked with us to keep our communities safe, thriving, and free from gender-based violence. We can not rest until all our people can rest!! Love and Power!



Photo credit: Dynae Alice Photography

M Adams

Co-Executive Director

Kabzuag Vaj

Co-Executive Director

Our Mission

About Freedom, Inc.

Freedom, Inc. (FI) is a Black and Southeast Asian non-profit organization that works with low- to no-income communities of color. Our mission is to achieve social justice through coupling direct services with leadership development and community organizing that will bring about social, political, cultural, and economic change resulting in the end of violence against women, gender-non-conforming and transgender folks, and children within communities of color.

FI works to challenge the root causes of violence, poverty, racism and discrimination. Our belief is that people who are most affected by these issues must have voice, power, resources and choice, in order for true social change to happen.

Our Community

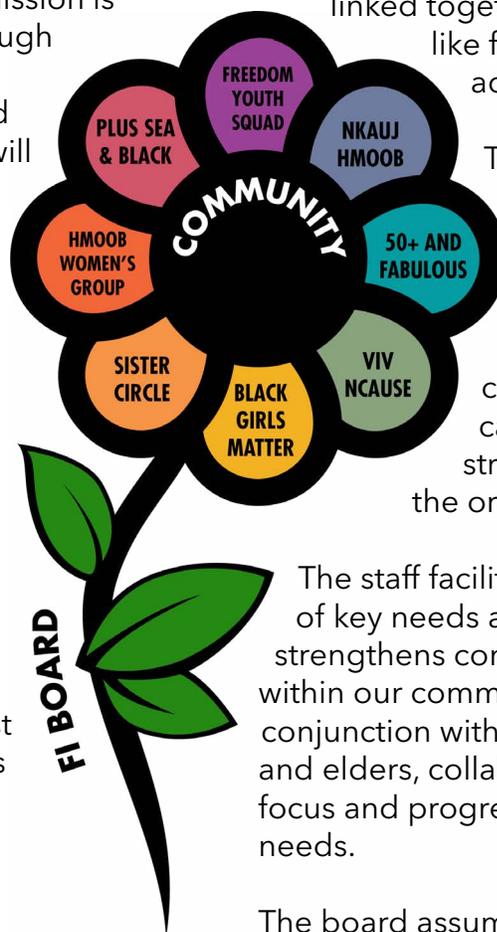
At Freedom, Inc. we describe our governance structure as a flower. Rather than making decisions through a traditional non-profit hierarchy,

activities are coordinated through overlapping committees that form the petals of a flower (eg. programs for youth, empowerment, organizing, political education, and domestic violence services advocacy are linked together with operations like fundraising and administration).

The center of the flower is made up of the organization's members, so the community served is the community in control of the issues, campaigns, and strategies engaged by the organization.

The staff facilitates communication of key needs and priorities, which strengthens continued leadership within our communities. Staff, in conjunction with community leaders and elders, collaborate to maintain focus and progress when addressing needs.

The board assumes financial and legal responsibilities, but defers leadership to the staff and community for maintaining mission-driven work and strategies.



The mission statement and organizational model for Freedom, Inc. is "Our community is our campaign." We maintain positively-directed focus on the greatest benefit to our multi-faceted communities. Concerted efforts are led by those most susceptible to, and affected by, violence, injustice,

and inequality. We continuously hone our critical strategies for developing and sustaining that leadership. In doing so, we provide a cross-sectional and multi-pronged approach to goal achievement that ensures prosperity and success for our future.



"Nobody in the world, nobody in history, has ever gotten their freedom by appealing to the moral sense of the people who were oppressing them."

Assata Shakur



Images from the 2020 Uprisings. Photos courtesy of Kaleb Hawj, True Thao, and Pajng Moua.





Gender Justice Team

"In 2020 we were challenged and pushed to the limit just like the rest of the world. I'm proud of my team for pushing through and making sure that our members and community got what they needed and deserved."

Jessica Williams | **Director of Gender Justice**



The gender justice team is dedicated to our community and providing culturally-specific domestic violence and sexual assault (DVSA) services to that community. We are committed to finding non-carceral solutions to ending violence in our communities that specifically center the needs of Black & Southeast Asian women and girls, femmes, queer, trans, and intersex folks.

In 2020, the gender justice team persevered through numerous internal and structural changes. One of the amazing things we did was provide education to highlight how incarceration is a gender justice issue. We led, worked with, and have a continued membership with the

FreeThe350BailFund.

In 2020, we freed Black women sitting in the Dane County jail who did not have the financial resources to bail themselves out. We also caught the attention of many media outlets by raising enough money to bail out folks with some of the most trumped-up and unjust charges. We are proud to bail out Kenyairra Gadson, a young queer Black woman who faces charges after defending her own life. We brought her and her family into our community and began the long journey of working toward getting her free from the criminal legal system.

In February 2020, we partnered with Badger Rock Neighborhood Center to



host our annual Still We Rise Survivors Banquet. Aisha Shaheeda Simmons was our honored guest and keynote speaker. We offered services from make-up artists and massage therapists so that our Black women could lavish themselves in self-care. Also, the Drummers of Oya shared cultural West African celebratory and healing performances with us.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we also moved all of our women’s programming to be virtual. Many of the community members we serve are elders, and getting them onto zoom and Facebook chats was a challenge. But our group sessions are one of the many ways we could stay connected with those suffering from loneliness and isolation and increased rates of domestic violence at home.

For domestic violence awareness month, we held a drive-up community pop-up where we gave gifts of love and affirmation to survivors in our community. This event was another example of the many times our team

“

Gender justice is a human right for all women and girls to live free of violence and oppression. We are the sheros our ancestors have dreamt of.

KABZUAG VAJ
FOUNDER & CO-EXECUTIVE
DIRECTOR OF FREEDOM, INC.



pulled through because we wanted our community to know that despite the pandemic, we were still with them.

We also created an outdoor healing space in the Badger Rock community gardens. This healing space allowed us to have some in-person community time while still being socially distanced. Gardening also helped meet concerns and needs about food shortages in our community and our folks not having enough food due to the whole family staying at home.



Accomplishments

- Bailed out all Black women eligible for bail in Dane County
- Hired 3 new gender justice advocates
- Sexual assault awareness month lives
- Political Education sessions around 2020 uprisings in Madison
- Raised 300,000 dollars for bail fund during uprisings
- Mobilized our bailfund to support uprisings by proving bail funds and legal fees to targeted organizers.
- Began conversation around holding folks you love accountable for sexual violence.
- Provided a safe and healing space for several elders to speak about their SA experiences for the first time.
- Began cultural healing programming using teachings of West African drumming
- Kept survivors of DV-SA safely housed and fed
- Weekly check ins with our most vulnerable community members
- Badger Rock Gardens for Black, Hmong, Cambodian community

Events

- Gender Justice Week of Action
- Sexual Assault Awareness month pop-up
- Still We Rise Survivors Banquet

Programming

- Khmer Women's Healing Circle
- Sister Circle
- Wisdom Program for Hmong Elder women
- 50 Plus and Fabulous



Queer Justice Team

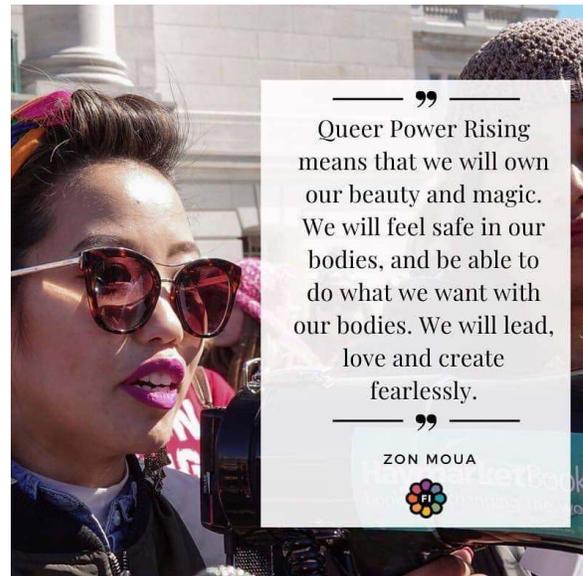
2020 was a year of Queer Power Rising.

Our co-executive director, M Adams, was the cover story of Our Lives Magazine, acknowledged as a “World Builder” and shared with readers Freedom, Inc.’s Queer Leadership team and our approach to building community and power.

We held a March for Black Queer Lives during the summer. There were 200 people in attendance and the event eventually developed into a Pride Street Take-over. With this specific event, we were able to hold public space for young Black and POC folx. We were able to celebrate the true spirit of Pride, rising up against all the ways our folx are harmed.

After witnessing and feeling the impact of the increased visibility of Asian hate acts and continuous state-sanctioned violence on Black people, taking up space as an act of resistance, love, and building community power became important. We created family, developed leaders, and built movement through culturally specific programming for Black and Southeast Asian Queer and Trans people.

During this hard year, we prioritized keeping ourselves and our community safe. We continued to provide sexual assault and intimate partner violence advocacy. We supported people



— ” —
Queer Power Rising means that we will own our beauty and magic. We will feel safe in our bodies, and be able to do what we want with our bodies. We will lead, love and create fearlessly.

ZON MOUA



with securing shelter like shelters, temporary housing, or finding resources to secure rent.

Due to our commitment to the community, we received the OutReach’s Organization of the Year Award, and our organizer, Kaleb Her, received the Courage Award.





Accomplishments

- The development of Black Queer Team
- Queer Power Rising
- 2020 Summer Uprising - led by our Black QT folk
- Co-organized with Trans Law Center - Defund the Police (Kaleb)
- Statement on Defund the Police (LGBTQ)
- Trans & GNC Health Video (Kaleb)
- Building QSEA Family (PLUS SEA) Programming
- Housing Support
- Featured in Our Lives Magazine
- Outreach Award

Events

- March for Black Queer Lives
- Pride 2020
- Pop Up for Black Trans Community
- Across the Rainbow SEA: Webinar & Panel Discussion
- Partnered up with Liquid for a Virtual Pride Event

Programming

- Blaq Table Talk Series (4)
- Gays-Giving

Youth Justice Team

Freedom Youth Squad

Our bold and brilliant youth leaders accomplished so much in 2020.

We won the first demand of our Police Free Schools campaign to get cops (often called “School Resource Officers”) out of Madison High Schools.

We could not have won this demand without the love and support of parents and allies, and most importantly, our young people who did not give up the fight against state violence. As we remember this victory, we must continue to fight for investment in Black youth and community control. Until schools are a safe and equitable place for Black youth, youth of color, youth with disabilities, and LGBTQIA+ youth,



we will continue to fight for:

- Accountability processes for school administrators and other adults who use the police against students
- Transformative justice instead of punishment
- Investment into the leadership, creativity, and wellness of Black youth and other youth of color
- Community control over schools.

We know that most impacted youth, parents, and trusted adults need real



decision-making power over schools. We proposed our Community Control Over School Safety & Accountability policy. This policy would ensure a robust and transparent community-led accountability process for teachers, school administrators, and other school staff who continue to perpetuate the violent and harmful policing and criminalization of Black, Brown, LGTBQIA+, and students with disabilities.

Black Girls Matter

The pandemic has highlighted the lack of investment in Black girls. We decided to focus on the second demand of our Police Free Schools campaign. We also focused on the leadership, wellness, and creativity of Black girls. This focus included uplifting our gender justice and reproductive justice values and ensuring that Black girls can maintain access to their safety network and contraceptive care. We also expanded our mutual aid work to include the needs of Black girls and their families. We supported over 300 families with food and housing security.

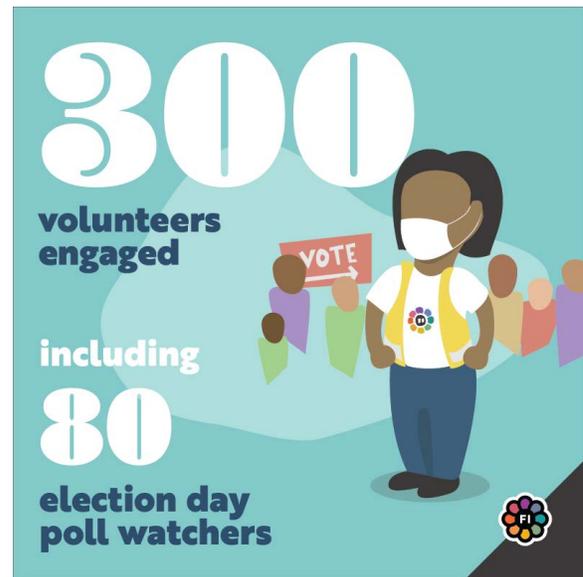


Community Power Building Team

Since 2016, the Community Power Building (CPB) team has been preparing for the 2020 Census. 2016-17 was spent educating and preparing our staff, partners, and volunteers, then 2018-19 was spent educating and preparing our communities for the census. All these years of work allowed us to be prepared for everything that has happened in 2020. When the Wisconsin Department of Health Services announced Safer at Home in March, Freedom, Inc. shifted to test out hosting Census Couch Parties. It was such a success that Freedom, Inc. went on to lead and host 3 other city wide parties reaching over 14.4k people on Facebook.

The pandemic and uprising did not stop Freedom, Inc., our Get Out the Count (GOTC) and Get Out the Vote (GOTV) work. Our Community Power Builders continue to walk the streets and show up in the community with tablets to make sure Black and AAPI communities have access to complete their census and register to vote.

This year, CPB launched pop-up events in different low-income communities. Pop-ups provided the community members with essentials for everyday



living and provided a space for Freedom, Inc. to provide voter education. During the Spring election,



Wisconsin was the only state that continued with in-person voting after daily challenges with early voting. Freedom, Inc., and our partners played an essential role in making sure that our communities were getting the

correct information needed to vote. Learning from the Spring Election, CPB set out early during the Fall Primary and Fall General Election to make sure that Black and AAPI communities were turning in their mail-in ballots or voting at early voting sites. Our team knew that after everything that had happened in 2020, showing up to vote may not be the safest for our people. This lead CPB to prepare for providing safety during the November elections. Over 80 election defenders were trained and observed at 15 different polling sites where communities of color voted. Freedom, Inc., brought out music and food trucks to 6 polling sites as a part of Joy at the Polls.

platforms. Staff taught community members how to use these different platforms so they could keep their line



CPB was able to continue programming and education due to our strong social media presence. Right away when Governor Evers put out the Safer at Home order, Community Power Builders started going to the doors of our elders and most vulnerable to help them set up their devices so they could access zoom and other social media

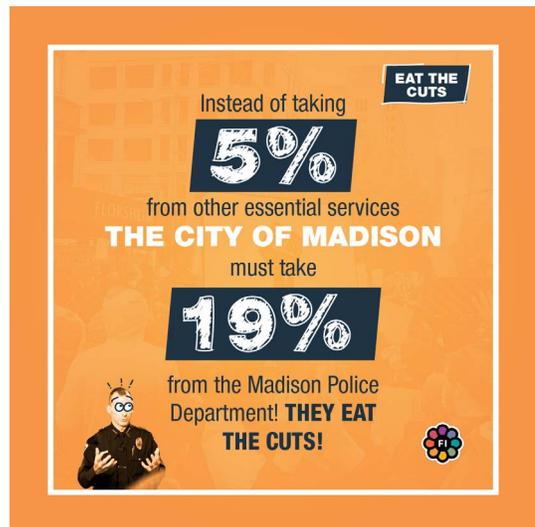
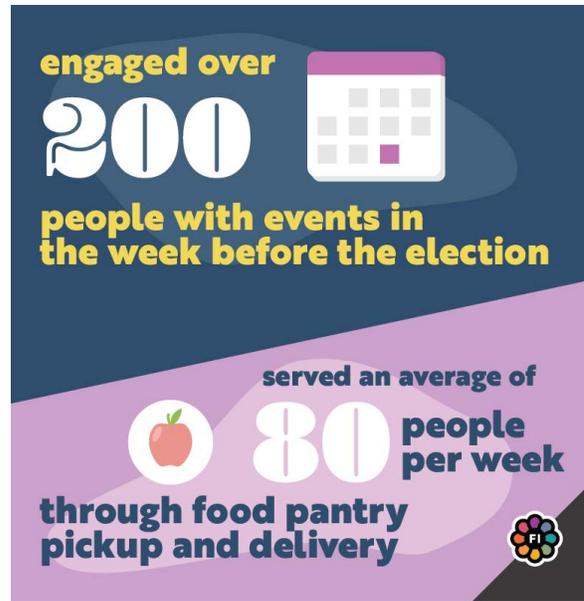
of communication open. Freedom, Inc., moved to many live and zoom meetings for the community and began producing more in-language videos. Wisconsin lacks strong reliable ethnic media and this became



apparent during the November General Elections when Khmer and Hmong community members were receiving voting misinformation from other YouTube news sources. Our team recognized the importance of building up a visible reliable media source that can continue to be used beyond 2020. Due to the canceled in-person Hmong New Years, Freedom Inc.,

teamed up with Nyob Zoo Milwaukee, WI's only Hmong TV show, and hosted a Wisconsin Virtual Hmong New Year. The hope of this partnership was to help make Nyob Zoo MKE more visible to the Wisconsin Hmong Community and build them as a source of reliable trusted news. This 6 hour live broadcast was accessible on YouTube and Facebook. It brought together elected officials, the Hmong community, and organizations to celebrate and heal together as we move into 2021, reaching over 29.6K views.

CPB also launched our Eat the Cuts campaign which has become a part of our People's Budget Campaign. When the mayor announced that departments would have to cut a percent of their funds to account for reduced revenues to the pandemic, our Eat the Cuts campaign demanded that the police department eat the cuts rather than cut funding from essential public services like libraries and transportation. Instead of taking 5% from other essential services, Eat the Cuts asked that the city of Madison take 19% from the police. department.



Board of Directors

Chong Moua | Board Chair

Mee Kong | Treasurer

Lori Lopez | Secretary

Sami Schalk | Board Member

Choua Xiong | Board Member

Statement of Financial Position

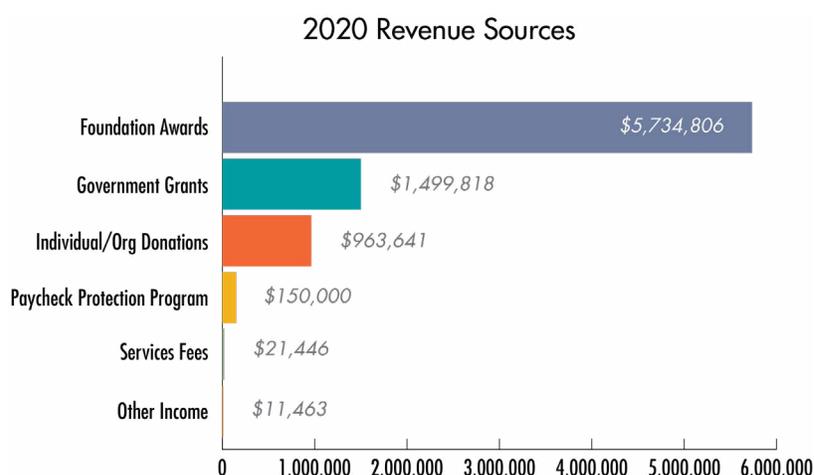
	<u>2020</u>
ASSETS	
Cash	\$ 3,291,470
Unconditional promises to give, net	1,061,082
Grants receivable	332,220
Prepaid expenses	5,754
Security deposits	-
Property and equipment, net	<u>1,678,848</u>
Total assets	<u>\$ 6,369,374</u>
LIABILITIES	
Accounts payable	\$ 55,106
Accrued expenses	23,622
Note payable	<u>790,285</u>
Total liabilities	869,013
NET ASSETS	
Without donor restrictions	3,811,277
With donor restrictions	<u>1,689,084</u>
Total net assets	<u>5,500,361</u>
Total liabilities and net assets	<u>\$ 6,369,374</u>

Statement of Activities

CHANGES IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2020
Support and revenue	\$6,938,450
Expense	(5,248,858)
Net asset release from restrictions	475,835
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITHOUT DONOR RESTRICTIONS	2,165,427
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS WITH DONOR RESTRICTIONS	966,889
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$3,132,316
Net assets at beginning of year	2,368,045
Net assets at end of the year	\$5,500,361

Revenue Sources

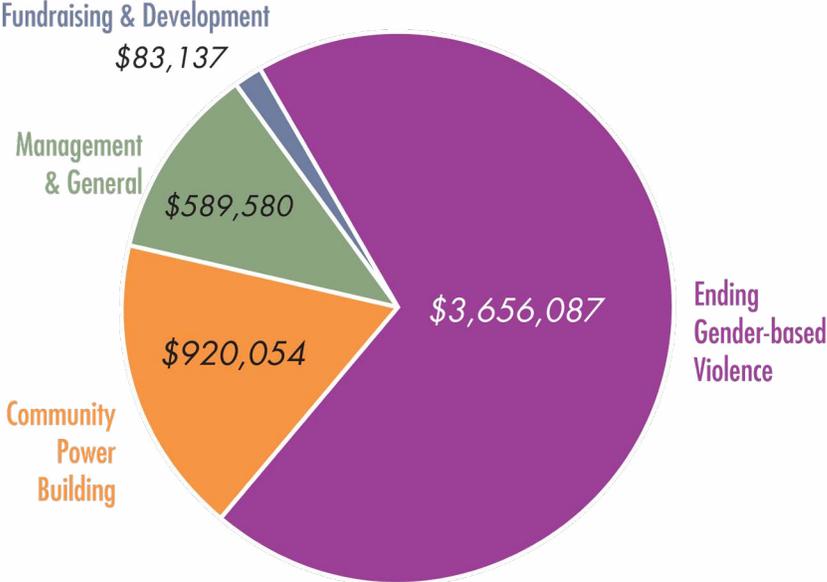
2020 was an exceptional year for the organization. We saw an outpouring of support from our friends, comrades, family, donors and grantors who invested in our work to support our communities. We received almost \$8.4 million dollars in pledges, grants, awards, and donations.



Expenses

During the year we spent \$5.2 million. The breakdown of our expenses by functions were as follows: \$3,656,087 toward Ending Gender-based Violence, \$920,054 toward Community Power Building (CPB), \$589,580 toward Management & General, and \$83,137 toward Fundraising and Development.

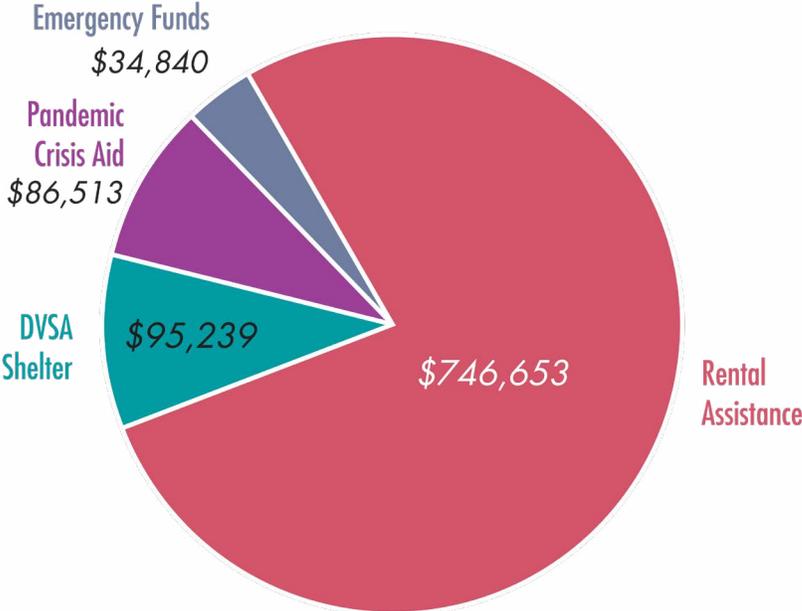
2020 Functional Expenses



Individual Assistance

In 2020, we were humbled by the increase of contributions to support our community from individuals. In total we received \$928,406 in individual contributions. We were able to assist 889 individuals during the pandemic crises - 78% for rental assistance, 10% for DVSA shelter, 9% for pandemic crisis aid, and 4% for emergency funds. These funds do not include our mutual aid pantry, pop-ups, and community events where we distributed over 500 pounds of food weekly, pandemic emergency baskets full of PPE and basic household cleaning products, backpacks and school supplies, and grocery and store gift cards to families.

2020 Individual Assistance





© **2020 FREEDOM, INC.**

This work is licensed under a CC BY 4.0 license.

**2110 Luann Ln
Madison, WI 53713**

**Phone: (608) 716-7324
Email: info@freedom-inc.org**

**📌 @AboutFreedominc
📷 @freedominc
📺 @Aboutfreedominc**