

# ANNUAL REPORT

FY 2025



NATIONAL KIDNEY  
FOUNDATION®

of Illinois

# 35.5 MILLION

adults in the U.S. have  
chronic kidney disease (CKD)



Source: CDC

## 1 IN 3 ADULTS

in the U.S. are at risk for CKD



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The pages within highlight NKFI’s efforts between April 1, 2024 and March 31, 2025, our fiscal year 2025.



# MESSAGE FROM

# LEADERSHIP



**Brian O'Dea**  
NKFI Board President



**Jacqueline Burgess-Bishop, FACHE**  
NKFI Chief Executive Officer

## 75 YEARS OF KIDNEY HEALTH

Dear Colleagues and Supporters,

As we commemorate the **75th anniversary** of the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois, we honor the legacy of the Chicago League for Nephritic Children, founded in 1949 by a group of concerned parents, and its evolution into a founding affiliate of the National Kidney Foundation in 1964. Our enduring mission remains focused on improving the health and well-being of individuals at risk for or affected by kidney disease through prevention, education, and empowerment.

FY 2025 was a year of meaningful progress and collaboration across Illinois. Our achievements, detailed in this report, were made possible by the dedication of our board, donors, advocates, healthcare professionals, elected officials, ambassadors, community partners, volunteers, and staff. We are deeply grateful for your continued support.

### Key Highlights:

- **Get Screened:** We launched the enhancement of our KidneyMobile® technology to enable secure, two-way communication of screening results with healthcare providers, improving continuity of care. The opportunity to impact nearly **1,500** individuals screened during FY 2025, and reflecting back on the value-add for the over 6,000 individuals screened over the past 3 years, provides insight on the potential impact of health industry-compliant data exchange in the future as a tool to change the trajectory of kidney health in Illinois.

- **Supporting Research:** Thanks to generous donor contributions, we awarded over **\$129,000** in research grants, prioritizing young investigators and medical students to strengthen the future of kidney health research.
- **Navigating the Journey:** Living with kidney disease can be costly, fragmented, inequitable, and overwhelming to patients and their families. NKFI expanded patient support programs, reaching over **338** patients and caregivers, including **15** Kidney Campers. We also piloted the nation's first kidney-specific training for Community Health Workers, empowering them to guide patients through complex care pathways. Additionally, **32** Illinois advocates helped shape health policy through legislative engagement at both state and national levels.

Across Illinois, the personal stories of those affected by kidney disease—from prevention to transplant—continue to inspire our work. We invite you to join us in advancing kidney health and supporting those living with kidney disease.

Sincerely,



**Brian O'Dea**  
NKFI Board President



**Jacqueline Burgess-Bishop, FACHE**  
CEO- NKFI



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# KIDNEY DISEASE

## AT-A-GLANCE

**30% OF ALL PATIENTS**

with kidney failure (ESKD) are Black/African American, even though this group is 13% of the U.S. population



Black/African American people are

**4X**

**MORE LIKELY**

to have ESKD than white people

Hispanic/Latino people are

**2X**

**MORE LIKELY**

to have ESKD than white people

Sources: USRDS, CDC

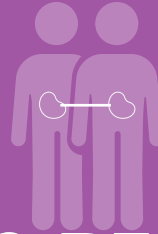


**ABOUT  
3,600  
PEOPLE**

are on the waitlist for a kidney donation in Illinois

**1,456  
PEOPLE**

in Illinois received  
kidney transplants  
in 2024



**299 PEOPLE**

in Illinois received a  
kidney from a living  
donor in 2024

Sources: OPTN/HRSA

**MORE THAN A QUARTER**

of all kidneys (living and nonliving donors) procured  
for transplant are unable to be transplanted.

Source: Clinical Transplantation. 2019 Jan;33(1):313419.

**12 PEOPLE**

die each day while waiting for a kidney transplant

Sources: HHS/OPTN



# NKFI IMPACT

## AT-A-GLANCE

**44 KIDNEYMOBILE**

screenings held state-wide



**1,498 PARTICIPANTS**  
screened for kidney disease,  
diabetes & hypertension

**55.5%**  
had at least one  
abnormal result

.....

**476 RENAL  
CLINICIANS**  
attended continuing  
education events



**\$129K AWARDED**  
in research grants



**338\* PATIENTS  
& CAREGIVERS**  
attended educational  
events free of charge

\*Includes 15 Kidney Campers



**1,633 WALKERS**  
attended the  
Walk for Kidneys



## NKFI.ORG IN FY 25

**60K**

users on  
nkfi.org



**78K**

page views  
on nkfi.org

### TOP 3 PAGES:

- NKFI Home Page
- Middle Market Open
- Walk for Kidneys

**48K**

unique page  
visitors on  
nkfi.org

**13.6K LISTENERS**



reached with valuable information  
about kidney health through  
The Journey Continues podcast

**23K PEOPLE** reached through  
**177** community partner outreach events



**6,731**

FACEBOOK  
followers



**1,442**

TWITTER  
followers



**2,705**

INSTAGRAM  
followers



**1,771**

YOUTUBE  
subscribers



**1,446**

LINKEDIN  
subscribers





# CHAMPIONING

# KIDNEY EQUITY

In FY25, NKFI made significant strides towards enhancing kidney care for all individuals, regardless of race, socioeconomic status, or geographic location. Our commitment to advancing care has led to the successful implementation of various initiatives that not only improve health outcomes but also promote equity in kidney disease management.

## KIDNEY HEALTH FOR ALL

The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) doesn't just address kidney disease, we fight to prevent it at its roots by dismantling the economic, social, and structural barriers that make kidney disease more deadly for some than others.

Here's how we championed kidney equity across the state of Illinois in FY25:

### 1. **Bringing Care Directly to Communities.**

NKFI's KidneyMobile® travels across the state, especially to communities with limited access to healthcare. The free screenings check for chronic kidney disease (CKD) and its two biggest precursors: diabetes and high blood pressure. Participants receive on-the-spot consultations with healthcare professionals, empowering them with immediate knowledge and follow-up resources. By removing the barriers of transportation, insurance, and cost, the KidneyMobile® ensures that people who may never see a doctor still have access to preventative care.

### 2. **Cultivating Culturally Sensitive Community Partnerships.**

NKFI forms strategic partnerships with ethnic and community-based organizations to bring kidney health educations and services to specific populations that face unique risks or systematic neglect. In addition to ongoing partnerships with African American and Latinx partners, in November 2024, NKFI partnered with Arab American Family Services in Worth, IL, offering bilingual health education and screenings tailored to the cultural and linguistic needs of that community. These partnerships help overcome language barrier, mistrust in healthcare, and lack of culturally relevant information.

### 3. **Offering free educational events for families, youth and patients.**

NKFI's patient education programs like Living with Kidney Disease & Transplantation: Families, Kidney Connections, Take Charge, Viviendo con Enfermedad Renal

y Trasplante are all offered free of charge and are often hosted in non-clinical, community-friendly spaces. With expert panels and input from nephrologists, transplant surgeons, dietitians, social workers, and patient mentors (Kidney Ambassadors), these programs help demystify kidney disease, reduce stigma, and ensure patients and caregivers - especially those from underserved groups - have the knowledge they need to advocate for themselves.

### 4. **Providing cost-free services and support.**

An estimated 6% of all Illinois residents are uninsured and many more are underinsured. NKFI removes financial hurdles for these people by offering free KidneyMobile® screenings, keeping all patient educational events free for participants, providing free materials and disease-management tools online, and supporting patients through peer mentorship programs and navigation resources for patients from diagnosis to dialysis and transplant care. These services bridge critical gaps between diagnosis and ongoing care, especially for those facing economic insecurity.

### 5. **Advocating for Policy and Systemic Change.**

NKFI advocates for equitable organ donation policies, increased public funding for early CKD detection and research, and inclusion of kidney equity in public health strategies. By working closely with state legislators and public health departments, our upstream approach addresses the cultural causes of kidney health disparities, like lack of access to primary care, underrepresentation in donor registries, or regional inequities in care quality.

Our work illustrates how bringing preventive care, knowledge, and community support to the frontlines can help reduce disparities and improve kidney health outcomes across Illinois.





# ADVANCING EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

Education and awareness are fundamental to our mission of saving lives and improving kidney health for all. In FY25, we undertook numerous initiatives aimed at equipping patients, caregivers, and healthcare professionals with the knowledge and tools necessary to manage and treat kidney disease effectively.



## PROGRAM EXPANSION

In FY25, the National Kidney Foundation of Illinois (NKFI) significantly advanced education and awareness around kidney health through a series of well-coordinated initiatives - from large public events to targeted community programming.

### THE BIG ASK, THE BIG GIVE

In 2024, we were thrilled to welcome the return of The Big Ask, The Big Give, a patient-centered educational and empowerment program designed to help kidney patients on the transplant waiting list, and their support networks, learn effective strategies to find a potential living donor and guiding loved ones through the donation journey. These workshop emphasize lived experiences, featuring panels of donors and recipients sharing their journeys. Participants leave with customized action plans and resource guides in hand. For the first time in Illinois, NKFI held the program in both English and Spanish. Like all patient programs NKFI hosts, these workshops are free to attend, accessible, and culturally relevant. These events aim to break down barriers to donation, especially among communities historically underserved, in a supportive, community-oriented format.



### KIDNEY CONNECTIONS

In 2024, we launched a new patient program entitled Kidney Connections. Driven by a group of patients, kidney transplant recipients, living donors, and experts, called Kidney Ambassadors, the event series is designed to foster community, encourage support, expand learning, and empower those affected by kidney disease. The program is comprised annually of 3 webinars and one in-

person event. Expert and patient panels offer participants an opportunity to make connections while getting answers to their burning questions.



### WORLD KIDNEY DAY

For the third year in a row, NKFI held two World Kidney Day celebrations. The first was held on World Kidney Day proper, March 12, 2025, in Chicago at St. Augustine College. A second event was held on March 25, 2025 at the George Washington Carver Center in Peoria. Both full-day health fairs featured a KidneyMobile® screening for chronic kidney disease, diabetes, and high blood pressure, as well as screenings from community partners for vision, hearing, HIV, cholesterol, and colorectal cancer. Fresh produce was available for all participants. These events served as educational hubs, featuring health resources, vendor booth, and access to expert information, promoting not only kidney health but overall personal health literacy.





# ACCELERATING

# CHANGE FOR ALL

The relentless pursuit of innovation drives us to transform the landscape of kidney care. In FY25, we implemented several initiatives that advanced patient care while ensuring that our efforts contributed to equitable access to treatment and resources for all individuals affected by kidney disease.

## ADVANCEMENTS IN RESEARCH

### MEDICAL STUDENT AWARDS

NKFI awarded research funding to three promising medical students for the 2024–2025 academic year, reinforcing our commitment to advancing kidney health and addressing disparities in care across Illinois. These competitive Medical Student Research Grants support early-career investigators exploring critical issues in nephrology, including social determinants of health, dialysis outcomes, and nutrition in end-stage renal disease (ESRD) care.

The projects are:

1. **Jameel Alausa**, medical student at University of Chicago. Project title: *“Equity in Dialysis Care: Assessing the Impact of Social Risk Factors on Dialysis Quality and Transplant Referral Rates under the End-Stage Kidney Disease (ESKD) Quality Incentive Program (QIP)”* Alausa’s project investigates how social risk factors affect dialysis quality and access to kidney transplant referrals within the Medicare QIP framework, with an emphasis on equity.

2. **Drishti Jain**, medical student at Loyola University Chicago. Project title: *“Detrimental Effects of Diet Selection in Hospitalized ESRD Patients”* Jain’s study explores how dietary choices in the inpatient setting influence outcomes for ESRD patients, aiming to inform better nutritional guidelines during hospitalization.

3. **Roy Wilson**, medical student at University of Chicago. Project title: *“Assessing Health Related Social Needs (HRSN) Among Urban CKD/ESKD Patients and Their Impact on Kidney Transplant Outcomes”* Wilson is examining how unmet social needs—such as housing, transportation, and food insecurity—affect transplant access and success in urban chronic kidney disease (CKD) and ESKD populations.

Each project asks important questions about how we can make kidney care more equitable, effective, and responsive to patients’ lived experiences. Supporting their work is an investment in the future of nephrology and the health of our communities.

The students presented their findings at the annual Citywide Grand Rounds program.

### YOUNG INVESTIGATOR GRANT

NKFI selected Alexander J. Kula, MD, MHS to receive the 2024–2026 Young Investigator Grant. The work of Dr. Kula, an Assistant Professor of Pediatrics (Pediatric Nephrology) and an early-stage physician scientist at the Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children’s Hospital and Northwestern University Feinberg School of Medicine, is aimed at transforming how physicians identify and understand heart complications in children living with chronic kidney disease (CKD).

Dr. Kula’s project, *“New Echocardiographic Approaches to Phenotype Diastolic Dysfunction in Pediatric Chronic Kidney Disease,”* focuses on refining non-invasive imaging techniques to better detect diastolic dysfunction—a common but often underdiagnosed cardiovascular complication in pediatric CKD patients.

Children with CKD are at significantly elevated risk for cardiovascular disease, yet traditional methods for evaluating heart function are often limited in their sensitivity or tailored primarily for adult populations. Dr. Kula’s study explores advanced echocardiographic methods to better characterize how the heart fills with blood (diastolic function), which is key to detecting early cardiac dysfunction before symptoms appear.

Diastolic dysfunction can be silent but devastating for children with CKD. Dr. Kula’s research aims to provide clinicians with better tools to diagnose it earlier and more precisely, with the long-term goal of preventing progression to heart failure.

This project reflects NKFI’s mission to fund innovative, patient-centered research that bridges disciplines and improves health outcomes. By focusing on heart-kidney interactions in children, Dr. Kula’s work has the potential to inform both clinical care protocols and future guidelines in pediatric nephrology and cardiology.





# OUR FINANCIAL

# OVERVIEW

Thousands of people like you across the state have given their time, talents, and treasures all year to raise millions to fund important work led by NKFI. FY25 marked our 75th anniversary as an organization and your pivotal role in NKFI's journey deserves special recognition. Our mission is now more important and critical than ever before, which is why we are so thankful for our many patrons who continue to support kidney patients.

AUDITED FINANCIALS FOR NKFI - FY25

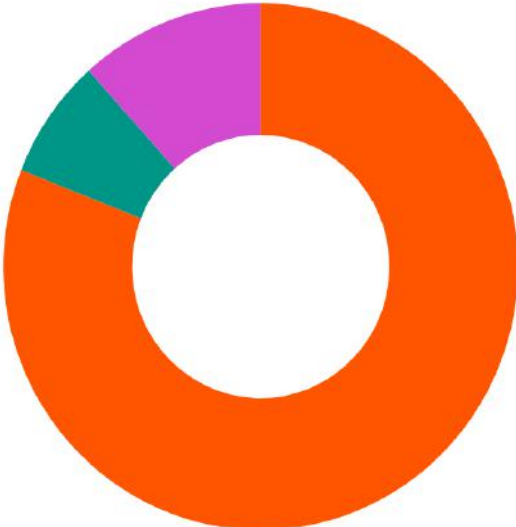
PUBLIC SUPPORT AND REVENUE



**24.5%** Grants \$823,590  
**24.1%** Contributions \$810,153  
**22.6%** Program Sponsorships \$761,117  
**15.9%** Special Events \$533,895  
**13%** Other Income \$439,032\*  
**100% Total Income \$3,367,787**

\*Includes net investment income of \$336,167

EXPENSES



**81%** Program Services \$2,303,038  
**11.6%** Fundraising \$331,094  
**7.4%** Management and General \$209,892  
**100% Total Expenses \$2,844,024**

Assets

Cash.....	\$747,546
Investments.....	\$5,985,257
Grants and Contributions Receivable .....	\$408,698
Prepaid Expenses .....	\$184,621
Property and Equipment..	\$131,638
Other Assets.....	\$85,153

**Total Assets \$7,542,913**

Liabilities and Net Assets

Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses.....	\$118,333
Deferred Revenue.....	\$282,422
Net Assets w/o Donor Restrictions .....	\$134,706
Net Assests w/ Donor Retrictions...	\$7,007,452

**Total Liabilities and Net Assets \$7,542,913**

# ACKNOWLEDGING

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Outset Medical  
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The National Kidney Foundation of Illinois improves the health and well-being of people at risk for or affected by kidney disease through prevention, education and empowerment.

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