

# Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida

## *Annual Report*

2022-2023



LUTHERAN  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES



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HIV Services Director

# Message From The President



**Dear Friends,**

It is my honor to present Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida's 2023 Annual Report to you, and I am grateful for this moment of reflection.

In 2023, LSS touched the lives of almost 45,000 individuals through our five programs—30% more than the year before. When you add the impact of our four onsite nonprofit partners, the reach of the LSS campus nears 100,000 lives touched. That's extraordinary, and a testament to the resilience and dedication of our incredible team, partners, volunteers and supporters who have played such a pivotal role in our mission to serve those in need.

Yet we are serving more people, because more of our neighbors are struggling. Jacksonville is not alone in its stagnant wages, high cost of healthcare and lack of affordable housing; these problems echo in communities across America. While we are not unique in the challenges we face, however, we can set an example of a community that works together to overcome them.

For LSS, that means building strategic partnerships that allow us to serve more people, more efficiently, than we ever could alone. Collaboration has been a guiding principle at LSS since its humble beginnings 44 years ago, and continues to be our watchword moving into 2024.

I, and the entire LSS team, feel it is a privilege to be in a position where we can help others and meet basic needs until, God willing, the need is no more.

God bless you, and thank you for your partnership in this work.

Sincerely,



LUTHERAN  
SOCIAL  
SERVICES

**Bill Brim**

President & CEO

Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida



# Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida

*Empowering Communities Since 1979*

Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida (LSS) was established in 1979 by Lutheran churches and community leaders. Initially, it began with the Nourishment Network, a food pantry helping food-insecure families for over 40 years. Soon after, LSS expanded to support refugees escaping dangerous circumstances, offering housing and employment assistance.

LSS grew its reach with programs like the Advocacy, Care & Education (ACE) initiative in 1992, offering support and education for those living with HIV/AIDS. Its partnership with CAN Community Health in 2018 further expanded HIV services in Northeast Florida.

In 1995, LSS established Representative Payee Services to manage the finances of low-income individuals, ensuring their basic needs are met.

The agency launched Steps 2 Success (S2S), Florida's inaugural Financial Opportunity Center, in December 2017. S2S integrates no-cost career and financial coaching, along with income support, to empower individuals in achieving their financial goals.

Since relocating to its Philips Highway location, LSS has housed independent nonprofits like CAN Community Health, Vision is Priceless, JaxCareConnect, and WeCareJax, each offering distinct services.

This diverse network of nonprofits at one location forms a convenient hub for individuals to address multiple needs, fostering a comprehensive support network.

## Agency Profile



### Hunger Relief

Food for 2,000+ households every month through our onsite food pantry, and additional feeding initiatives for seniors and school children.



### Refugee Resettlement

Resettlement, case management, employment & tutoring for those who have fled war & persecution in their home countries for the safety of a new life in the U.S.



### Steps 2 Success

Providing free, holistic financial and career coaching to help those meet their financial goals, which include budgeting, debt management and building credit.



### HIV Services

Wraparound services for those who are HIV+, including housing, case management, mental health, and access to an onsite clinic and pharmacy.



### Representative Payee Services

Rep Payees manage finances for vulnerable individuals, ensuring basic needs are met and safeguarding against exploitation.

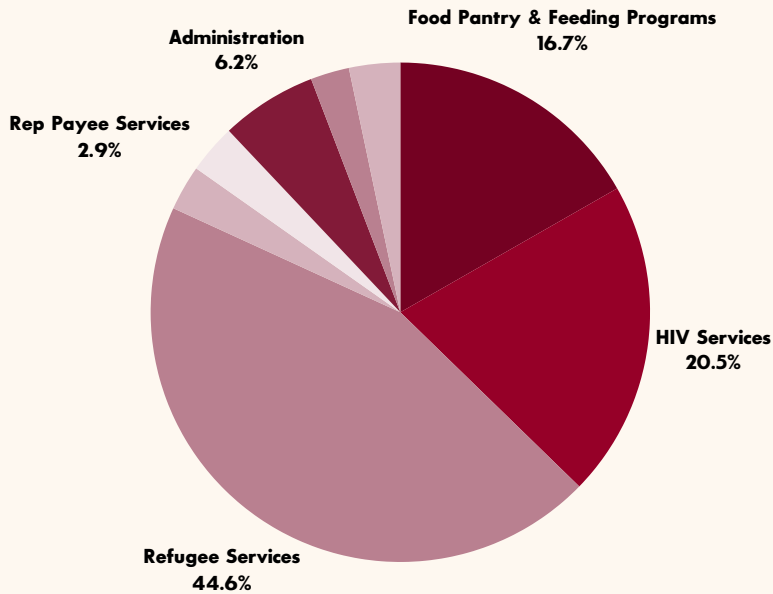


## Our Mission:

**Motivated and guided by the compassion of Christ, we serve and care for people in need.**

# Agency Balance Sheet

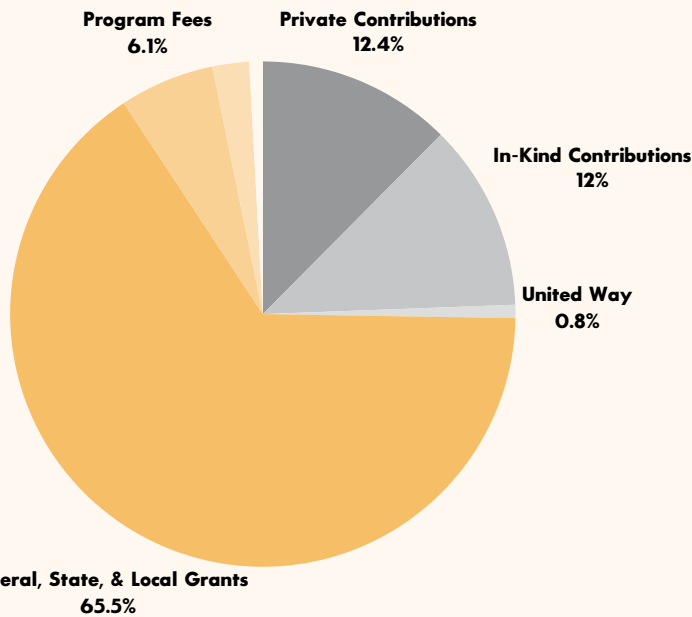
For Year Ending September 30, 2023



## Agency expenses by program

### Legend

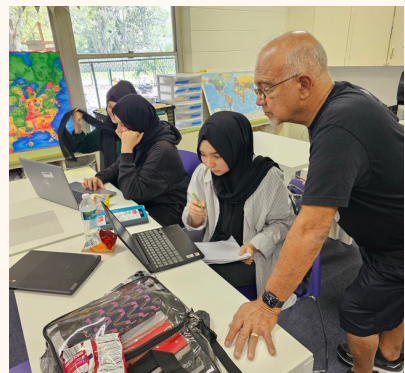
LSS Food Pantry.....	16.7%
HIV Services.....	20.5%
Refugee Services.....	44.6%
Representative Payee Services.....	2.9%
Steps 2 Success.....	3.18%
Administration.....	6.2%
Resource Development.....	2.5%
LSS Property Management.....	3.31%



## Agency revenues by source

### Legend

Private Contributions.....	12.4%
In-Kind Contributions.....	12%
United Way.....	0.85%
Federal, State, & Local Grants.....	65.5%
Program Fees.....	6.1%
Rental Income.....	2.35%
Misc. Investment.....	0.87%





# Impact At-A-Glance

Serving Over 44,000 In 2023

# 44,938

men, women, and children served in 2023



## 2023 LSS Community Services Campus Impact

The following chart illustrates the number of individuals assisted by the nonprofits located at the community service hub at 4615 Philips Highway. Please note that each nonprofit operates independently and is distinct from the programs offered by LSS.

Nonprofit	Services	# People Served
Vision Is Priceless	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Vision Screenings &amp; Eye Exams</li> <li>Glasses</li> <li>Eye Surgeries</li> </ul>	41,549
CAN Community Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>STD Testing &amp; Treatment</li> <li>PrEP/HIV Care</li> <li>Pharmacy</li> </ul>	1,260
WeCareJax	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Works with hospitals &amp; providers to connect uninsured patients with specialty care.</li> </ul>	1,845
JaxCareConnect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Links uninsured patients to a primary care doctor for ongoing care at low or no cost.</li> </ul>	919

Lutheran Social Services

44,938

**Campus Impact**

**90,511**



# Hunger Relief

## Nourishing our neighbors in need

Since 1979, our commitment to alleviating hunger has remained unwavering, and today, the need is greater than ever before. Our Hunger Relief programs are at the forefront of this mission, reaching out to the most vulnerable members of our community.

## Feeding Programs

### Food Pantry

The LSS Food Pantry at 4615 Philips Highway fed over 40,000 people in 2023. No appointments needed; visit once a month with ID. Open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. for food distribution at the back of the building.

### Backpack Program

Supporting students on free or reduced-fee lunches by providing weekend meals and snacks across 15 schools in Duval and Clay counties. In 2023, the program has provided 18,810 bags of food to students.

### Serving Our Seniors (SOS)

Ensuring groceries reach 540 low-income seniors monthly. SOS prioritizes delivering essential groceries to support elderly individuals in need.



**Bridget**  
Pantry Visitor

*"I was blessed with food that helped me feed my family and I am very grateful!"*

*"[Lutheran Social Services] truly provides miracles to people in the community that have financial hardships."*

## 2023 Snapshot

### HOW MANY WE FED

- 40,721 individuals fed
- 13,167 households fed
- 1,194,00 pounds of food distributed
- 2,200 families served each month on average
- 575 people volunteered at the pantry
- Over 3,800 volunteer hours

### PROGRAM INFO

- Hunger Relief Director: James Perrigan
- Founded in 1979
- Open Monday to Friday, 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.

### GET INVOLVED

- Donate money to the pantry
- Volunteer during a pantry market day
- Host a food drive at your place of worship, workplace or with family and friends.
- Spread the word! Follow us at @lssjax on Facebook and @lss.jax on Instagram. Visit [lssjax.org](http://lssjax.org) to learn more!



# Representative Payees

*Managing money for the vulnerable*

**The Representative Payee Program's mission is all about managing funds for those who might not handle their finances well. LSS is the only agency in Northeast Florida that offers Representative Payee Services.**

## Why the Program Exists

Managing personal finances can be challenging for anyone. In some cases, a lack of financial understanding and skill can lead to serious problems, like the cutoff of utilities or eviction.

For people with mental illnesses, developmental disabilities, substance abuse problems or other challenges, this can begin the cycle of homelessness.

## How LSS Payees Help

Fiscal coordinators help clients set budgets, pay their bills for basic living expenses and give them spending stipends. The program serves an average of nearly 600 people each month, ensuring they are living in safe environments while getting the ongoing support they need.

## 2023 Snapshot

### PROGRAM INFO

- 586 people helped
- Managed over \$1.8 M in Social Security benefits
- 7% increase in number of clients over 2022
- Director : Richard Mochowski
- Program launched in 1995

### LEARN MORE

- <https://www.lssjax.org/money-management>
- Call 904-448-5995
- Email [reppayee@lssjax.org](mailto:reppayee@lssjax.org)

## More 2023 LSS Highlights

27

Women Helped through New Refugee Support Group

30%

We Served 30% more people this year compared to last year.

91%

Viral suppression rate of LSS ACE Clients, a 5% increase from last year.



Women from S.H.E. have an activity at Hannah Park State Park to celebrate the launch of the support group for refugee women in March, 2023.

# Career & Financial Coaching

## Creating Pathways to Financial Prosperity



**Steps 2 Success (S2S), Jacksonville's first Financial Opportunity Center, equips participants with essential tools for financial and life stabilization.**

Although open to all seeking financial security, most clients reside in the historically redlined New Town Success Zone (32209).

In 2023, S2S provided its services to 117 people. Eighteen individuals graduated from the inaugural Matched Saving program, which helped participants increase their savings and assets. In November, S2S launched its Utility Assistance Benefit to new participants in light of increased living costs and to relieve some financial burden.

Clients in 2023 increased their credit score by an average of 75 points, a 35% increase compared to last year. On average, participants increased their monthly net income by \$1,200, or 27% more than 2022.

The office is adjacent to Edwards Waters University, and aims to serve the New Town Success Zone neighborhood, ensuring easy access to vital services.

S2S founders strategically placed the center to counter generational poverty by offering career and financial coaching, addressing key obstacles faced by residents in 32209.

### 2023 IMPACT & Milestones

- 117 participants
- Average credit score increased by 75 points
- Average monthly net income increased by \$1,200
- 18 Matched Savings graduates

### PROGRAM INFO

- Program Director: Michelle Hughes
- Established in 2017
- Located at 1601 Kings Rd, Jacksonville, FL 32209
- Offers Financial & Career Coaching
- Free, and open to Duval County Residents

### Program Partners



### Kimba Clark's Story

Kimba's journey from homelessness to stability with Lutheran Social Services' Steps 2 Success (S2S) program showcases resilience and unwavering support. After a chance encounter with S2S, Kimba embarked on a transformative path. With coaching, resources, and determination, she secured employment, housing, and financial stability within a year.





# Refugee Resettlement

*Empowering Hope, Embracing Humanity*

**The Refugee Resettlement program of LSS aids refugees who can't return to their home countries upon reaching the US. Formed in 1980 in response to an influx of Southeast Asian refugees in Jacksonville, LSS been a vital support system.**

Refugee resettlement supports people fleeing political or religious persecution, famine, war, natural disasters, or instability. Those seeking a fresh start in our country receive assistance from LSS, including life-skills training, connection to English classes, job placements, and family and youth support services.

Refugees, referred by Lutheran Immigration and Refugee Service (LIRS), are resettled by LSS, whose staff members speak various languages and hail from diverse countries.

The ultimate aim is to foster refugees' long-term economic self-sufficiency and ensure their successful integration into American society as productive members, be they refugees, entrants, or asylees.

## 2023 IMPACT & Milestones

- 2,542 refugees received comprehensive support
- Helped refugees in 29 countries
- 373 refugees employed through LSS
- Women's Support Group launched
- Expanded gap services to assist Cuban and Haitian Entrants

## PROGRAM INFO

- Program Director: Laura Cook
- Established in 1980

## LEARN MORE + GET CONNECTED

- Email [refugee@lssjax.org](mailto:refugee@lssjax.org)
- <https://www.lssjax.org/refugee-services>



## *Resettlement Success:*

LSS helps people excel through its Refugee Youth Services, like Sahar! In June 2021, she and her family moved from Afghanistan to Jacksonville in order to flee the Taliban. Sahar had missed a year of schooling, and started her 11th grade year struggling with her grades. Now, a year later, her grades improved, and she was accepted into the National Honor Society in October 2023.

## *Services Offered*

- Resettlement
- Women's Group
- Employment
- Case Management
- Youth Services
- Health Initiatives
- Career Laddering
- And More!

# HIV Services

Navigating Together, Thriving Beyond HIV

**The ACE (Advocacy, Care & Education) program at LSS provides assistance to families and people who are living with HIV through case management, counseling support, rent and utility assistance and outreach services.**

In 1992, LSS expanded into addressing health-related issues in the Jacksonville community by establishing the ACE (Advocacy, Care & Education) Program.

Through this program, great strides have been made in the overall viral suppression in Jacksonville.

In 2023, the **viral suppression rate for our clients was 91%**, meaning that 91 out of 100 of our clients are not able to spread the virus through sexual contact. The national HIV viral suppression rate is 66%, according to a 2021 CDC study.\*

The ACE staff assisted 972 people with all aspects relating to their medical well-being such as finding appropriate medical treatment sites, keeping clients' appointments, moving them into homes and apartments, and obtaining personal care items.

\*Source: <https://www.hiv.gov/hiv-basics/overview/data-and-trends/statistics/>

## 2023 IMPACT & Milestones

- 91% viral suppression rate in clients, 5% increase compared to 2022
- 972 individuals assisted
- Over 50,000 units of service provided
- \$1.1 million dollars in services provided
- New director hired in September

## PROGRAM INFO

- Program Director: Alane Ertel
- Established in 1980
- Services: peer support, case management, medical referrals, housing assistance and more!

## LEARN MORE + GET CONNECTED

- <https://www.lssjax.org/hiv-services>
- [alane.ertel@lssjax.org](mailto:alane.ertel@lssjax.org)

## Walldeline's Advocacy Journey

In November 2022, Walldeline, an HIV-positive individual, joined Lutheran Social Services' ACE Program for support. The LSS HIV support group became her sanctuary, nurturing her voice and resilience within the HIV community. Using TikTok, she fearlessly raised HIV awareness in English and Creole. Completing peer navigator training expanded her outreach in Central Florida. Actively advocating in the Metropolitan Jacksonville Area HIV Health Services Planning Council, she found guidance at CAN Community Health. The ACE Program empowered Walldeline, revealing her strength amid HIV challenges.





# Looking Ahead

What's Coming Up in 2024



## LSS GRAND RE-OPENING

March 6, 2024



## WORLD REFUGEE DAY

June 20, 2024



## 45TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

September 2024



## HOW TO SUPPORT: Get Involved with LSS



### DONATE

A monetary donation goes a long way toward ensuring that no one in our community goes to bed hungry.



### VOLUNTEER

Lend a hand during pantry hours! Or, find opportunities to support refugees arriving to Jacksonville.



### SPREAD THE WORD

Your voice and social media outreach are potent tools for raising awareness and inspiring others to join our mission.



### CONNECT!

If you're wanting to learn more about how to get involved, contact us!  
Phone: 904-448-5995  
Email: [contact@lssjax.org](mailto:contact@lssjax.org)

# Visit [lssjax.org](http://lssjax.org) to learn more!



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 HIV Services Director



### Agency Partners



United Way  
of Northeast Florida



THE  
LUTHERAN CHURCH  
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