



# Community Impact

2025 ESL IN THE COMMUNITY REPORT

# Community Impact

ESL reinvested in the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes region by distributing more than 414 grants to nonprofits for a total of more than \$28 million. Through community partnerships that meet the guidelines of our strategic framework, we work toward moving the region in a positive and equitable direction. Our Community Impact initiatives focus on expanding individual opportunities, building strong neighborhoods, strengthening organizations and systems, and sharing inspiring stories of change and success taking place throughout the community.



**TOTAL NUMBER OF GRANTS  
COMMITTED IN 2025**

414

**TOTAL DOLLARS COMMITTED  
TO GREATER ROCHESTER  
ORGANIZATIONS IN 2025**

\$28.1 Million

**EXPANDING INDIVIDUAL  
OPPORTUNITY**

(Education, Employment, and Income)

\$10.4 Million

**BUILDING STRONG  
NEIGHBORHOODS**

(Affordable Housing and  
Connected Neighborhoods)

\$12.2 Million

**STRENGTHENING  
ORGANIZATIONS AND SYSTEMS**

(Capacity Building)

\$3.1 Million

**COMMUNITY BASIC NEEDS**

(Arts and Culture, Food Security, Health)

\$2.3 Million

## Sample of Grants Provided in 2025

ORGANIZATION	PROGRAM	GRANT AMOUNT	FOCUS AREA
Schools Across the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes Region	Community Schools	\$1,650,000	Expanding Individual Opportunity
ROC the Future	Collective Impact Backbone Investment	\$1,200,000	Strengthening Organizations and Systems
Center for Employment Opportunities	WPO Transportation Support Pilot Program	\$622,000	Expanding Individual Opportunity
The Center for Teen Empowerment	Violence Prevention Through Youth Organizing and Development	\$400,000	Building Strong Neighborhoods
Reconnect Rochester	Investing in Community Mobility to Build Strong Neighborhoods	\$207,086	Building Strong Neighborhoods
The Housing Council at Pathstone	2025 Foreclosure Prevention Program	\$170,000	Building Strong Neighborhoods
WXXI	Capacity Building/Strategic Planning	\$50,000	Strengthening Organizations and Systems
Council of Agency Executives	Capacity Building Grant	\$40,000	Strengthening Organizations and Systems
Lyons Community Center Inc.	Building Opportunities for All Youth	\$25,000	Expanding Individual Opportunity
Agape Haven of Abundance	Youth Empowerment Summer Enrichment	\$20,000	Building Strong Neighborhoods
GLOW with Your Hands Healthcare Career Exploration Event	GLOW Works	\$15,000	Expanding Individual Opportunity

## Lifting Up Stories

Through our Lifting Up Stories, we share meaningful work taking place across the Greater Rochester and Finger Lakes region that is having a significant impact in areas like education, employment, and neighborhoods. Lifting Up Stories help shift the narrative of significant topics in the Greater Rochester region.

## Agape Haven of Abundance

Agape Haven of Abundance is dedicated to creating a connected, healthy, and dynamic community for everyone who lives in the Edgerton neighborhood in the City of Rochester. Through its programs and community outreach, Agape connects families with resources to help them pursue healthy living and well-being in all areas of their lives. When school doors close, youth are welcomed with a supportive space of staff and peers, providing an abundance of opportunities to help them make wise decisions and become productive members of society.

Agape is expanding with a new youth empowerment resource center, an investment that will help address social determinants of health by delivering essential services that include after-school programs, educational enrichment opportunities, workforce development, food security, and acute health clinics.



## The Commissary, Downtown Kitchen Incubator

Located in the Sibley Building in downtown Rochester, The Commissary is a collaborative community initiative that provides shared kitchen space and business assistance to certified entrepreneurs in the food industry. This support helps businesses strengthen neighborhood corridors by filling long-vacant storefronts and bringing renewed economic activity to areas that have gone without investment for years. The stability and growth of the City of Rochester remain essential to the economic health of the wider Greater Rochester region.

The Commissary stands out as an example of a program delivering measurable results. Its work supports local entrepreneurs, encourages new development, and contributes to strong commercial corridors throughout Rochester.



## Targeted Community Initiative

The Targeted Community Initiative is a new partnership between ESL and the 19th Ward Community Association to help residents and businesses in our community achieve specific goals. Before defining those goals, ESL hosted members of the 19th Ward to hear directly from residents about their priorities and gather input on neighborhood needs. That feedback helped shaped the focus areas of the initiative: improve homeownership among 19th Ward residents, help individuals and families achieve financial wellness, and establish a thriving Thurston business corridor.

Ongoing conversations with residents and neighborhood partners led to the formation of a broader collaborative that brings in additional community stakeholders with the expertise and resources to support these priorities. The group meets regularly to guide the work and monitor progress on measurable initiatives aligned with the community's goals.

Current efforts include Habitat for Humanity's Makeover Madness, which has provided free repairs to more than a dozen homes. Additional community events and neighborhood improvement projects will continue as part of the ongoing action plan.

## Impact HQ

ESL formed a new partnership with Impact HQ, a nonprofit support group, to provide a hub of resources and trusted partners to any nonprofit serving the nine counties of Western New York, including Monroe County. This partnership, The Nonprofit Support Group (NSG), connects nonprofits to capacity-building resources to equip nonprofits for success and to accelerate their impact. This partnership was instrumental in providing guidance and support to Monroe County organizations through a period of financial uncertainty in the nonprofit sector. With a commitment to listen to the needs of the nonprofit community and connect them with solutions to address challenges they face, ESL and other funders have so far invested more than \$4 million in programmatic offerings to more than 1,000 nonprofits in the region.

To learn more about the ESL Community Impact initiative and how to apply for a grant, visit:  
[esl.org/community/community-impact](https://esl.org/community/community-impact)



J.J., ESL CUSTOMER  
Beechwood Neighborhood

