



# 2025 Impact Report

WISH OF A  
LIFETIME  
FROM AARP



## Our Mission

At Wish of a Lifetime® from AARP, our mission is to spark hope and joy in the hearts of older adults by fulfilling their dreams through personalized experiences that promote healthy and purposeful aging. We share these stories to inspire those of all ages.

## Our Vision

A world where everyone ages with hope and joy, older adults are celebrated for their wisdom, accomplishments, and sacrifices, and intergenerational connections enrich our daily lives.

## A Message from the Vice President & Executive Director

Each year, I am reminded that the heart of Wish of a Lifetime® from AARP is simple and powerful. Every older adult deserves to age with hope, joy, dignity, and meaningful connection. This report is a celebration of what we accomplished together in 2025 and an invitation to keep building toward a future where aging is filled with possibility.

In 2025, we saw the difference that connection can make. We granted 273 wishes, and each one reflected the resilience, passion, and spirit of the older adults we serve. I am especially proud that 67 percent of these wishes created intergenerational moments, which reinforces the importance of making

people of all ages feel seen and valued.

Our work reached far beyond wish experiences. 31,865 volunteers showed up to share kindness and community. With the support of AARP and our generous donors, we generated \$4.7 million in revenue and enabled 377,295 older adults to experience greater connection and support through our programs and partnerships.

This year, we continued strengthening our commitment to serving older adults from every walk of life. More older adults, including those from multicultural communities, LGBTQIA+ communities, veteran & military

family members, rural and tribal areas, were able to benefit from our programs. We worked to remove barriers so that every older adult can feel valued and included.

The ripple effect of this work continues to inspire me. When an older adult fulfills a lifelong dream or reconnects with someone they love, it affects families, volunteers, and whole communities. A wish is never an isolated moment. It enriches lives in ways that last.

As we look ahead, our priorities for 2026 are clear. We will continue expanding programs and deepening our partnerships across the country. We will find new ways to elevate stories that remind people why aging with hope and

joy matters.

On behalf of our Founder, Jeremy Bloom, our Board of Directors, and our entire staff, thank you for being part of this mission. The impact in these pages reflects your belief in what is possible when we come together. I am grateful for your support and excited for the year ahead.

With appreciation,

*Tom Wagenlander*

**Vice President & Executive Director  
Wish of a Lifetime from AARP**





## Year in Review: Impact at a Glance

Wish recipients reported that the experience improved their lives:

**99%**

Outlook on Life

**98%**

Quality of Life

**97%**

Purpose in Life

**97%**

Involvement in the World

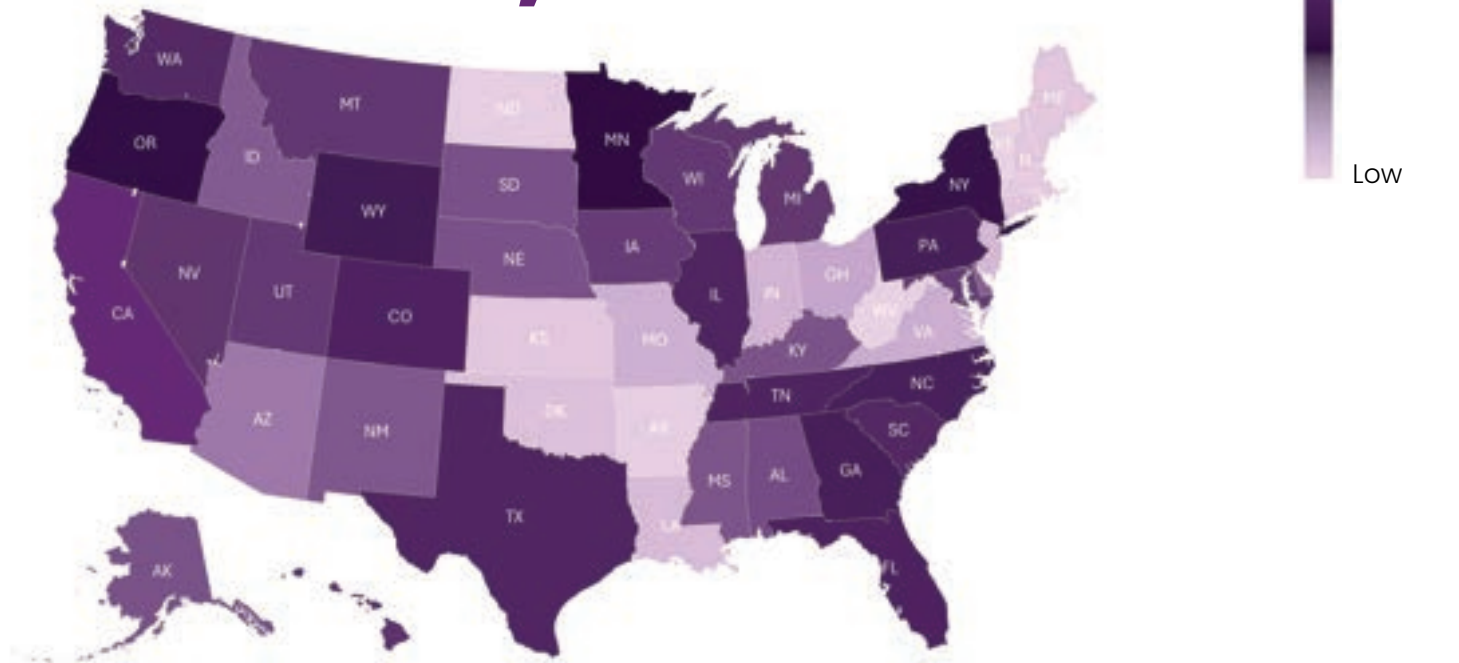
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**273**

Wishes Granted

# Older Adults Impacted by Programs

# 377,295



## Wishes Making Headlines

1,835,912,403 Impressions

137 Media Placements



Visit our Media Center at [wishofalifetime.org](http://wishofalifetime.org) to see more examples of Wish of a Lifetime in the spotlight.

# Stories that Inspire

## Billy Finds Recognition and Healing Through Voyage of Valor

Billy (age 77, Wyoming) served during the Vietnam War at a time when many LGBTQIA+ service members were forced to hide who they were. For decades, he carried the weight of those experiences in silence. The memories of friends lost, the lack of a true “welcome home,” and the complicated feelings surrounding his identity and service stayed with him long after he returned. Through Wish of a Lifetime from AARP’s Voyage of Valor program, Billy was given the opportunity to honor his past and find healing.

Billy joined a cohort of fifteen fellow Vietnam-era veterans for the multi-month Voyage of Valor journey, beginning with shared conversations, veteran-to-veteran connection, and time to reflect on their service and healing. But the most profound moment was visiting the Vietnam Memorial and seeing his childhood friend’s name etched onto the wall. “That was my mission: to find him and just have closure. I took that long to get to him, but thanks to Wish of a Lifetime, they made my wish right,” he said.

Throughout the visit, Billy was met with kindness and gratitude from elementary students, fellow veterans, and passersby. People stopped to listen to him, to thank him, and to honor the fullness of his story. But it didn’t end there. When the veterans returned from the Voyage of Valor trip, AARP Wyoming had arranged for Cheyenne community members to greet them with a welcome rally and a celebratory motorcade through the city.

“They said, ‘Welcome home.’ That just got to me, that hit me. Finally, we’re getting the recognition that we should’ve gotten years ago,” Billy said.

The impact of the experience extended beyond Billy. Other Voyage of Valor participants reflected on how his courage helped them feel more comfortable sharing their own stories. Younger visitors told him how meaningful it was to witness a veteran living proudly and authentically. Billy said he left Washington feeling lighter than he had in years.

“

For the first time, I felt seen for all of who I am. This visit helped me finally breathe again.





## Stories that Inspire

### Mariko Rediscovered Her Voice Through Community

Mariko (age 65, Colorado) spent her life surrounded by music. Her singing and songwriting gifts became both her joy and her way to cope with life's challenging circumstances. After several years of isolation and declining health, she dreamed of being able to express her feelings once again by sharing the songs she had written.

"It's not just the performing—it is about having a platform to get my songs out. That is how I express myself," Mariko explained. "I feel connected with others when I perform, and I have this desire to bring connectedness to the community." With the support of Wish of a Lifetime from AARP, Mariko was welcomed back onto a stage at a local community near and dear to her, where neighbors, friends, and fellow artists gathered to cheer her on.

The moment she stepped into the spotlight, everything shifted. Her voice was steady. Her smile was full. And afterward, she shared that she felt "connected to my community again in a way I didn't think was possible."

***“Being back on stage reminded me that I still have a place in this world. I felt alive.”***

Her performance lifted the room, but it also rippled far beyond it. Younger performers embraced her, thanking her for inspiring them. It was a moment that bridged generations while honoring a lifelong passion.

# Stories that Inspire

## Alfredo Fulfills a Childhood Dream at the Statue of Liberty

For as long as Alfredo (age 66, Texas) could remember, the Statue of Liberty symbolized hope, possibility, and the promise of new beginnings. As a child, he dreamed of seeing her in person. Life, work, and family came first, and the dream stayed tucked away for decades. As he got older, he wondered if he had missed his chance.

But when Alfredo received a diagnosis of stage 4 renal cancer, his daughter nominated him for this wish, believing it would give him the hope he needed to keep fighting. Wish of a Lifetime was honored to provide that hope by sending Alfredo and his family to New York City.

Other family members met them in the city and surprised Alfredo with heartfelt letters from his children, grandchildren, and even his in-laws at the base of the Statue of Liberty. As they walked up the steps to the statue together, Alfredo kept up with everyone, feeling a new sense of vigor.

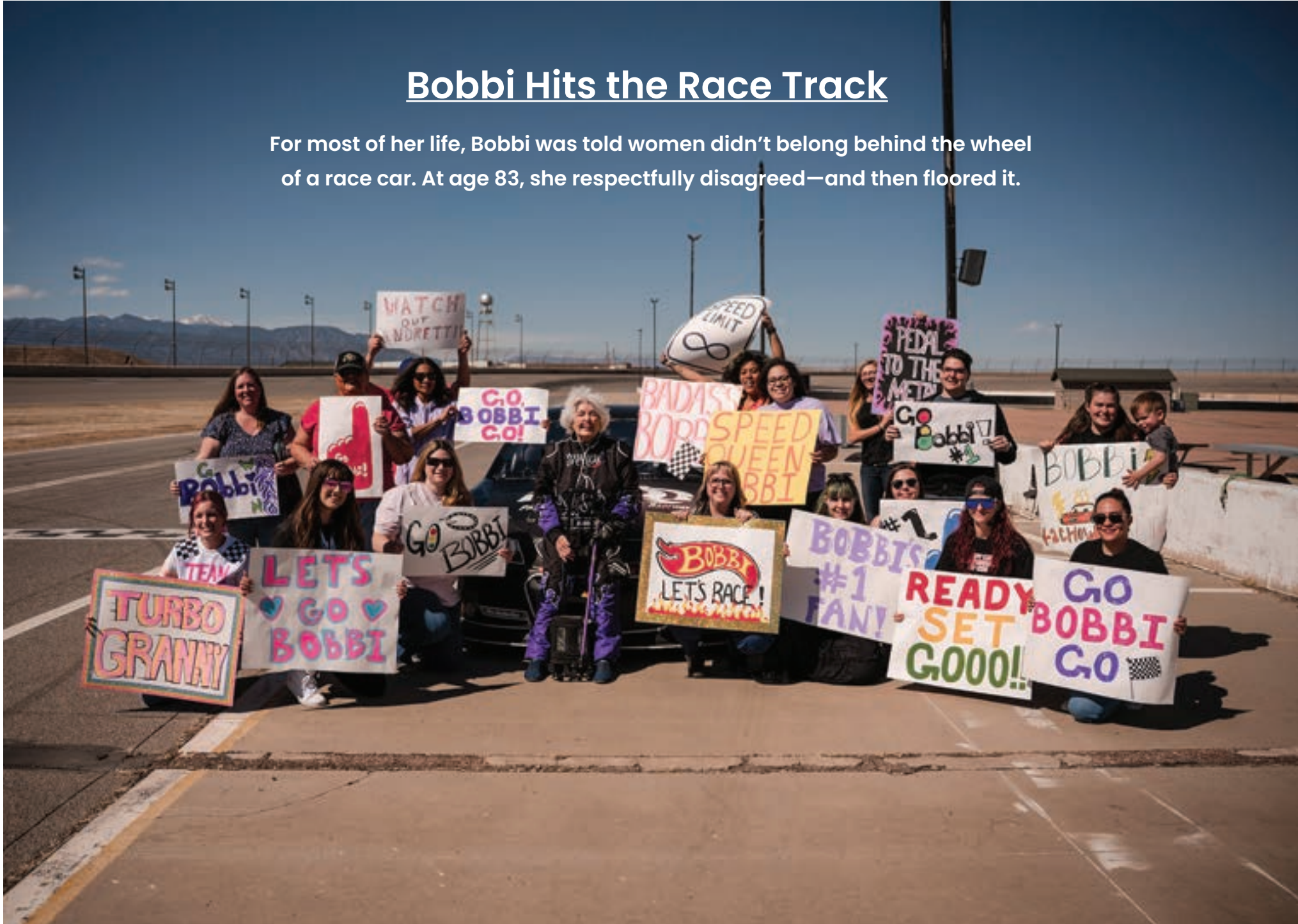


To finally gaze up at the symbol of freedom he'd dreamed of when he entered the U.S. decades before was life-affirming for Alfredo. "The statue is huge, just like they say! There were so many people! I don't know where they all came from. Everything was so beautiful," said Alfredo. "I feel more motivated! I'm ready to take another trip—to my homeland."

What began as one man's wish became a moment of pride, gratitude, and connection across three generations.

# Bobbi Hits the Race Track

For most of her life, Bobbi was told women didn't belong behind the wheel of a race car. At age 83, she respectfully disagreed—and then floored it.



# Celebrating the Volunteers

Across the country, thousands of volunteers are extending hope, joy, and connection to older adults. Whether they are helping bring a wish to life on the ground, amplifying our mission within their communities, or sending love through heartfelt handwritten messages, our volunteer network is the beating heart of Wish of a Lifetime from AARP. Their compassion turns dreams into transformative experiences for older adults everywhere.

This year, volunteers played an essential role in wishes like Bobbi's.

## Volunteer Reflections

"Watching Bobbi get to drive the NASCAR race car was an awesome experience. It goes to show you that no matter what age you are, you can still achieve your dreams. Watching her have a big smile on her face, especially after the burnout, made me smile." — Jennifer Shay

"As an older woman myself, Bobbi gave me hope that there's so much more in the world to experience. She is living proof that lifelong dreams can be reached. I loved seeing a full head of beautiful silver hair in a NASCAR car." — Debra Logan

Getting to share this memory with her was everything. Watching her live a real dream was refreshing and inspiring. All of us women are strong, fierce, and pushing limits, and Bobbi is proof." — Camden Warren

"At 83, she climbed into a NASCAR race car not just to chase a thrill but to show women everywhere that strength and courage have no age limit. She is proof that you are never too old to break barriers and inspire the next generation." — Liz McNeeley

# Cupid Crew: Spreading Love and Connection Across the Nation

**316,817 Lives Impacted**  
**30,635 Volunteers Engaged**

Every Valentine's season, Cupid Crew unites people of all ages in a simple yet powerful mission: make sure older adults feel seen, loved, and connected. What began as a small act of kindness has grown into a nationwide movement. Volunteers deliver roses, handwritten cards, and heartfelt moments of connection to older adults who may otherwise spend the holiday alone.

In 2025, Cupid Crew reached **316,817 older adults**, bringing comfort, joy, and a reminder that they matter deeply. **30,635 volunteers** stepped forward to create these moments — families, school groups, companies, senior centers, and neighbors who wanted to make a difference in their communities. From doorstep deliveries to community events to quiet one

on one conversations, each interaction helped break through isolation and spark a sense of belonging.

Volunteers often shared that what moved them most was not the rose or the card, but the expression on someone's face when they realized the gesture was meant just for them. Many older adults described the experience as the highlight of their year. For others, it was the first Valentine they had received in decades.

Cupid Crew continues to demonstrate how small acts can create a meaningful ripple effect — not only uplifting older adults, but inspiring families, communities, and future generations to build a more connected world.



# Voyage of Valor: Honoring Service. Championing healing.

In 2025, Wish of a Lifetime from AARP deepened its commitment to honoring Vietnam era veterans through **Voyage of Valor**, a yearlong journey of connection, reflection, and healing. Veterans traveled to Washington, D.C., where they shared stories, honored fallen friends, and experienced a meaningful tribute before returning to a welcome home celebration that brought long-awaited closure. Volunteers made each moment special.

In communities across Wyoming and beyond, **2,452 individuals** added their names and messages to the digital Wall of Valor — a growing tribute honoring the 15 Vietnam era veterans who participated in 2025's program.

At Idlewild Elementary in Tennessee, students spent weeks learning about the Vietnam War, writing heartfelt letters, and preparing to meet the Voyage of Valor veterans in person.

*"It is one thing to write cards to veterans, but giving students the opportunity to meet them and thank them in person helps make meaningful connections to their learning that will last a lifetime." — Bill Shuman, Vice Principal, Idlewild Elementary*

*"I started reading these letters, and I started bawling. The boy said, 'I'm sorry to make you upset.' I told him, 'No, no, these are happy tears.'" — Billy, Navy Veteran and Voyage of Valor Participant*

These exchanges captured the spirit of Voyage of Valor: honoring service, bridging generations, and creating moments of healing that ripple far beyond a single day.

A photograph of three women in front of a fountain. One woman is seated in a wheelchair, wearing a blue shirt and a patterned skirt. Two other women, one in a blue shirt and one in a white top, stand behind her, smiling. The fountain has a bird sculpture on top and water spraying out. The background shows green trees and a blue sky.

# Looking Ahead

*A future filled with possibility,  
connection, and impact*

## Our Priorities for 2026

**Expand Programs for Veterans and Military Families | We are committed to serving more veterans, through program's like Voyage of Valor, and through personalized wish-granting which reflects who they are and what matters most to them.**

**Reach More Older Adults | We will deepen outreach to multicultural, LGBTQIA+, rural, and low income communities to ensure that more older adults age with hope and joy.**

**Grow Wish-Granting Through New Partnerships | By collaborating with mission-aligned organizations, we can increase our capacity, remove barriers, and spark more life-changing experiences across the country.**

## Ways to Partner With Us

**Storytelling Campaigns | Showcase the ripple effect of your impact through uplifting wish stories.**

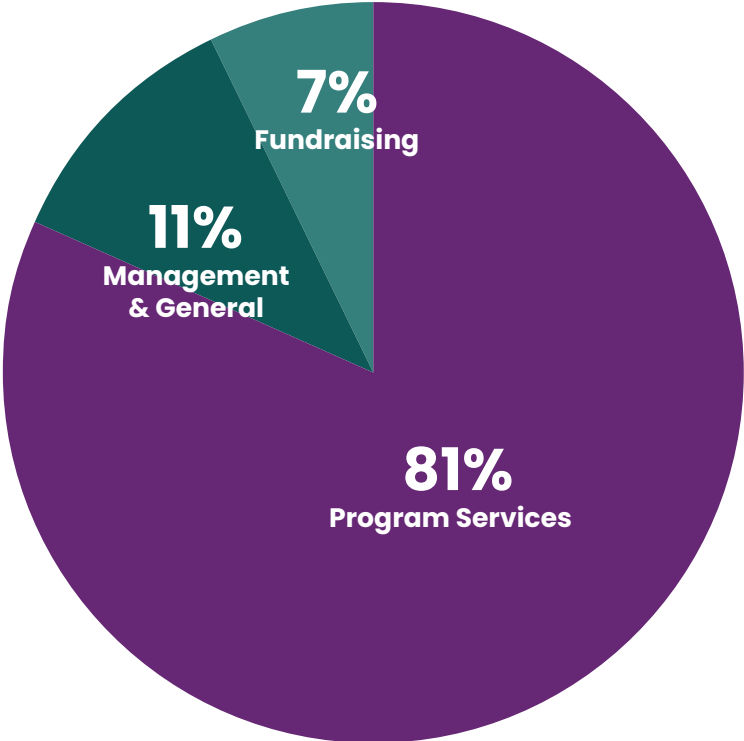
**Veteran Wish Initiatives | Support programs that honor service and help veterans reconnect with their legacy.**

**Employee Volunteer Programs | Engage teams in meaningful hands on experiences that bring joy to older adults.**

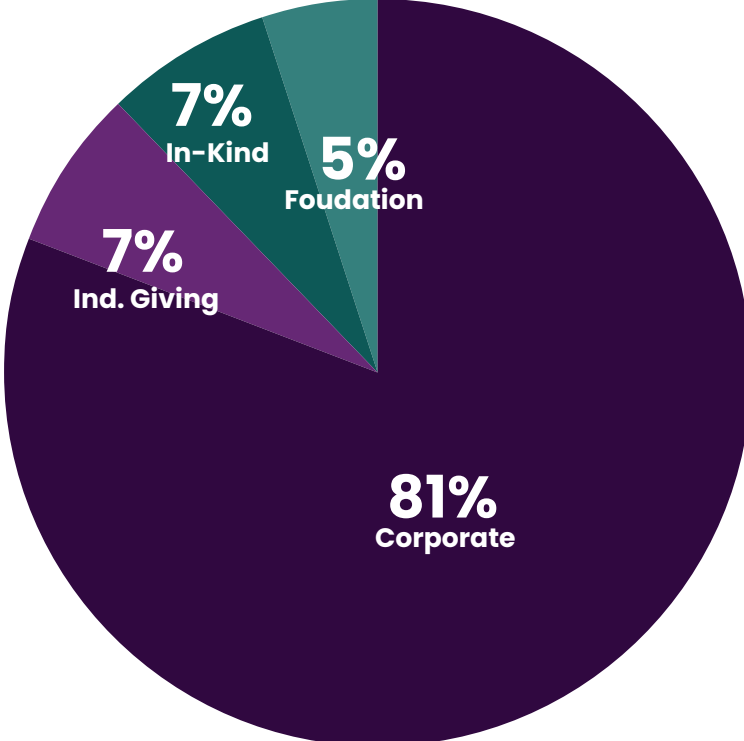
**Cause Marketing Collaborations | Align your brand with purpose driven campaigns that connect generations and strengthen communities.**

# Financial Snapshot

### Operating Expenses



### Sources of Revenue



Wish of a Lifetime from AARP receives funding from multiple sources, including public support, grants and AARP. In 2025, we directed 81% of support to programs that bring hope, joy, and connection to older adults in need. Additionally, 7% supports fundraising efforts, and 11% goes towards general administrative cost.

# Our Partners in Possibility

Our corporate and foundation sponsors play a pivotal role in transforming the lives of seniors and demonstrate a strong commitment to social responsibility. We are grateful for their generous support.



## **Corporate and Foundation Supporters**

Allstate Insurance Company  
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Vital Life Foundation  
Willis Tower Watson  
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Together, we can build a future  
where every older adult ages with  
hope, joy, and connection.





Some language in this report was refined for style and clarity using AI.