



the
source

Impact Report

2024

From Our CEO

2024 was another transformative year at The SOURCE!

This year has brought both challenges and triumphs that have deepened our understanding of our community's evolving needs. For the third consecutive year, food security is a pressing concern for many of our families. We've also witnessed a significant increase in requests for mental health support, while the weight of rising living costs—particularly in housing and groceries—continues to challenge working families.

Yet amidst these challenges, we're deeply moved by the resilience and progress we've witnessed. Our clients are achieving meaningful milestones:

- Improved credit scores
- Vehicle ownership
- First-time home ownership

We're especially heartened to see more landlords opening doors of opportunity, including those extending housing options to individuals with past criminal records—a testament to our community's growing commitment to second chances.

Looking ahead, I'm thrilled to share that 2025 will mark an exciting new chapter as The SOURCE expands into Southeast Michigan. This growth reflects not just our success but our dedication to championing the workforce by advocating for programs and policies that create pathways to economic and personal well-being for working families across the state of Michigan.



Alison Treas
President & CEO

Source Staff

Milly Chavez

DHHS Caseworker

Clementina Floyd

Resource Navigator

Erika Gonzalez

Managing Director

Erica Harris

Resource Navigator

Lourdes Jordan

Program Manager

Abigail Medina

Resource Navigator

Anais Perez Villar

Office Manager

Angela Rincones

Program Manager

Joyce Rohrer

Director of Business and
Community Engagement

Carly Shereda

Resource Navigator

Sarah Westoby

Senior Resource Navigator

Who We Are

Our Vision

The SOURCE will be a champion for the workforce and a lead voice in advocating for programs and policies that create pathways to economic and personal well-being to improve the lives of working families across the state of Michigan.

Our Mission

The SOURCE brings together the people, systems, and supports required to stabilize households and strengthen our community by eliminating systemic barriers to employment.

Our Values



The Whole Person

We provide holistic support.

We know work is only one aspect of life. We focus on the big picture and seek to understand the interconnectedness of all parts of our client's lives so we can provide comprehensive support to help them achieve their personal and professional goals.



Collaboration

We believe in the power of collaboration.

Our organization was founded through intentional and innovative partnerships. We remain committed to building unique connections to best serve our clients, strengthen the workforce, and improve outcomes for our communities.



Dignity

We treat everyone with dignity.

Whether you engage with us as a client, business member, community partner, or member of our team, we value your unique perspective, and treat you with respect and kindness in every interaction.



Advocacy

We use our voices to advocate.

In our neighborhoods and across the country, we bring awareness to the struggles of the workforce and challenge the status quo as we fight for greater systems change.

Our Board of Directors

In 2024, The SOURCE Board of Directors transitioned to a new structure consisting of two parts: (1) Governing Board of elected representatives of the Employer Network and (2) Advisory Board of community leaders whom are committed to the mission of The SOURCE.

Governing Board

President

Becky Ploeg

Comfort Research

Treasurer

Gina Triick

Spectrum
Industries

Secretary

Stephanie Schoenherr

Cascade Engineering

Director

Lisa England

Butterball Farms

“The SOURCE continues to make an incredible impact in our community, and I am honored to support its mission as part of the Governing Board. The dedication and expertise of the team are truly inspiring, and under Alison's leadership, we have seen thoughtful and responsible growth. The addition of an advisory board in 2024 is just one example of the forward-thinking strategies that strengthen our work and ensure we can meet the evolving needs of those we serve. It is a privilege to contribute to such meaningful efforts alongside such a talented and passionate team.”

Becky Ploeg

Board President
Vice President, People & Culture
Comfort Research

Advisory Board

Arianna Hovey

Lake Michigan
Credit Union

TaRita Johnson

The Right Place

Laura Longstreet

Royal Technologies

John VanElst

Grand Rapids
Community College

The SOURCE Employer Network

- AGS Automotive - 2024
- American Autocoat - 2013
- Building Bridges - 2022
- Butterball Farms* - 2003
- Byrne Electrical - 2019
- Cascade Engineering - 2010
- Comfort Research - 2017
- Corewell Health - 2016
- The DECC Company* - 2003
- Grand Rapids Foam Technologies - 2007
- Haviland Enterprises - 2022
- Irwin Seating - 2019
- Jireh Metal - 2021
- Joseph Jeup - 2024
- Lumbermen's Inc. - 2018
- MillerKnoll - 2018
- NuCraft - 2022
- R&R Mechanical Services - 2022
- Richwood Industries - 2006
- Rose Medical - 2024
- Soundoff Signal - 2023
- Spectrum Industries* - 2003
- Trinity Health - 2022
- Uniform Color Company - 2024
- Wolverine Coil Spring - 2007
- Women's Resource Center - 2024
- 2Gen Manufacturing - 2022

*Founding Member

27
Total
Members

10 yrs
Average Length
of Membership

300%
Average Return
on Investment

16%
Average
Utilization Rate

According to our National Partners, the average utilization within an employer is 10-15%.

2024 Clients & Barriers

1,078

Clients Served
644 - New Clients
434 - Repeat Clients*

2,282

Barriers Addressed
2.1 - Average Barriers
per Client

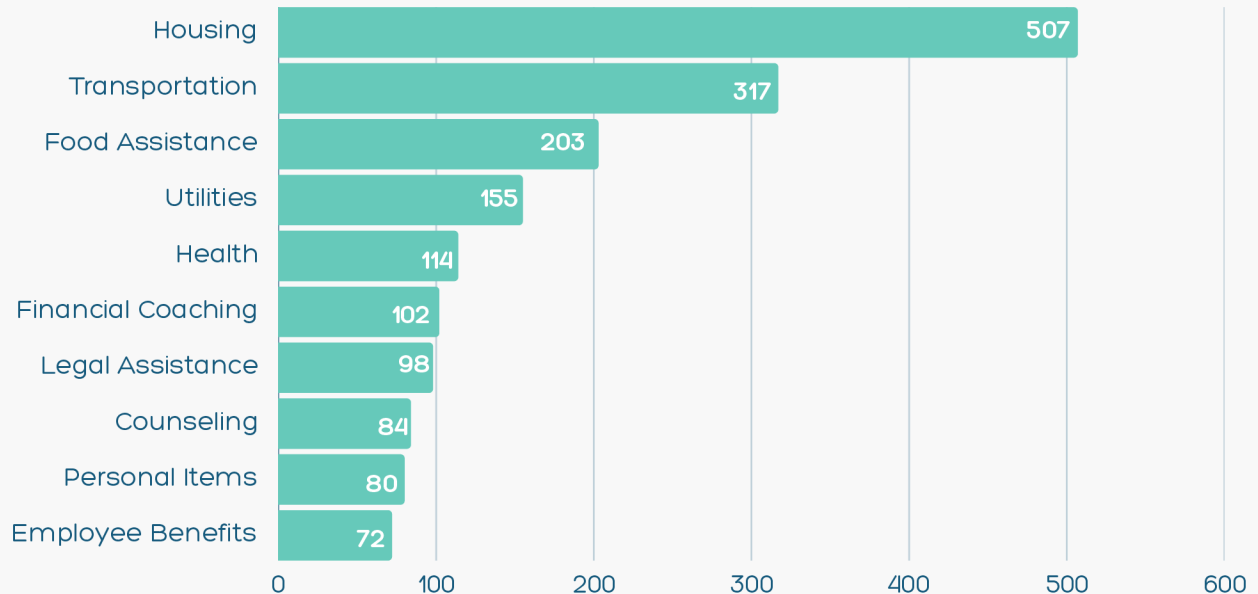
80%

Retention Rate
79% - New Clients
81% - Repeat Clients*

10,487

Client Interactions
9.7 - Average Interactions
per Client

Top 10 Barriers in 2024



Other barriers assisted with in 2024: Adult/Elder Care, Career Coaching, Child Care, Child Support, Clothing, Credit Repair, Debt, Domestic Violence, Education, Emergency, Employment, Financial Classes, Furniture, Garnishments, Immigration, Literacy, Medical Financial Support, Parenting/Pregnancy, Retirement, Student Loan Debt Relief, Student Loans, Substance Abuse, Taxes, Translation, Unemployment, and Vital Documents.

Client Demographics

591
Female

484
Male

3
Non-Binary

390

DHHS
Assistance

131

Previously
Incarcerated

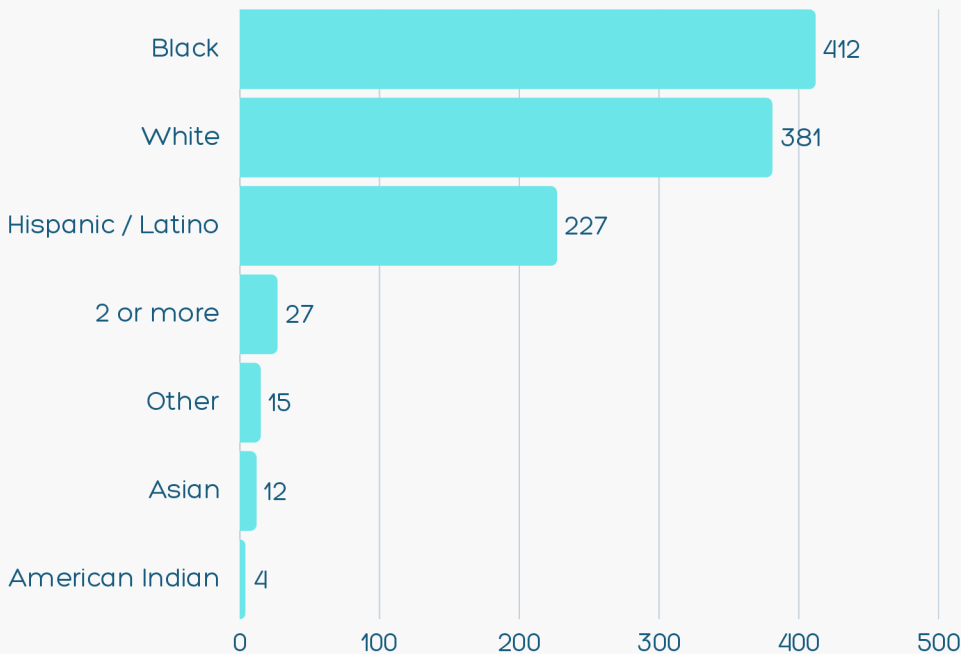
\$21.12/hr*

Average wage

\$0.89 increase from 2023

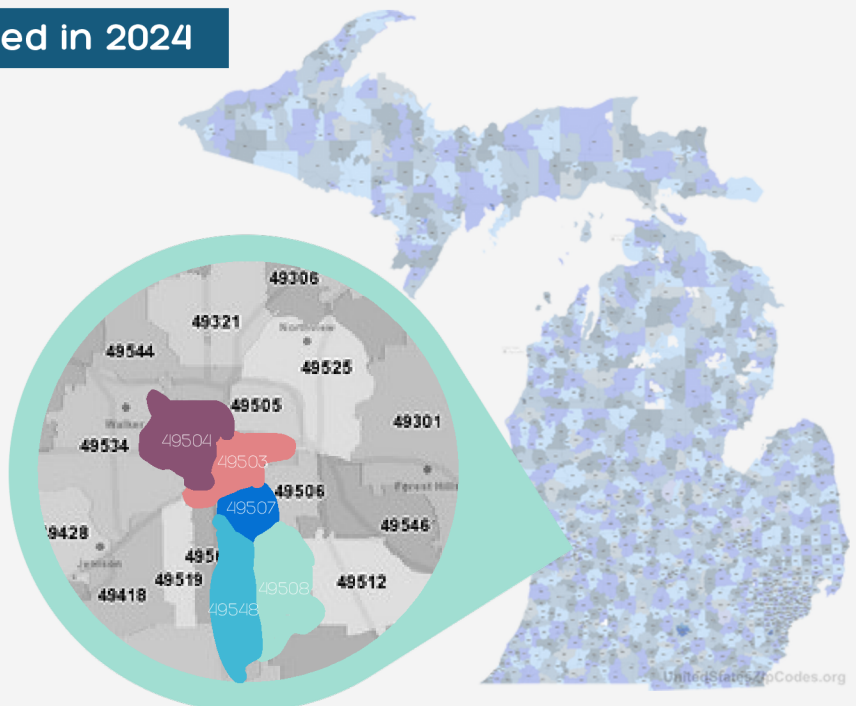
*self-reported at initial assessment

Breakdown of Ethnicity / Race



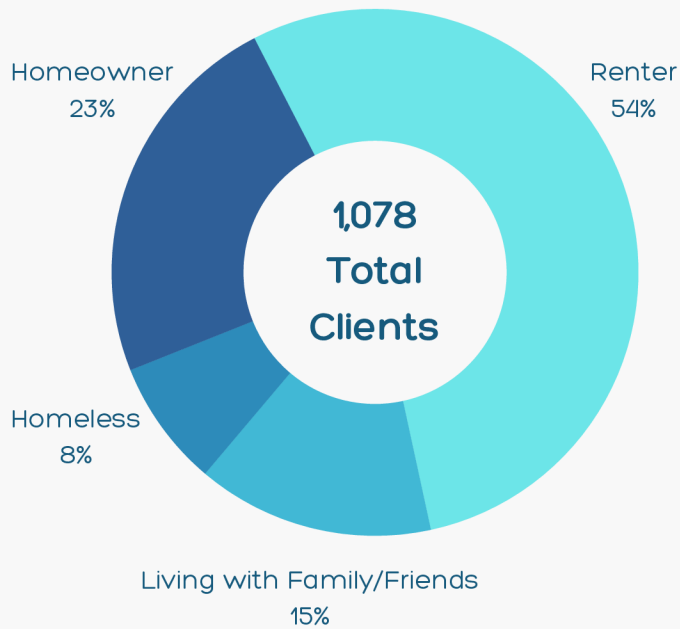
Top 5 Zip Codes Served in 2024

- 49507 - 116
- 49503 - 72
- 49504 - 72
- 49508 - 62
- 49548 - 60



Housing Insights

Housing Status at Point of Interaction



53%
have
dependents

34%
single
parents

Average Cost of Housing

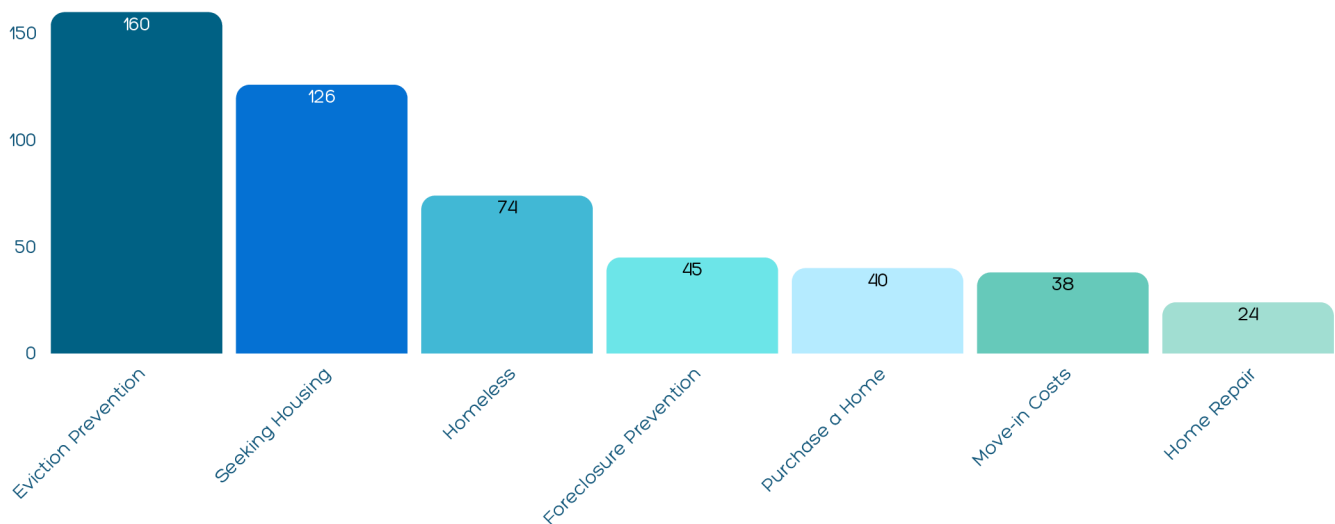
\$991
monthly

Renter

\$750
monthly

Homeowner

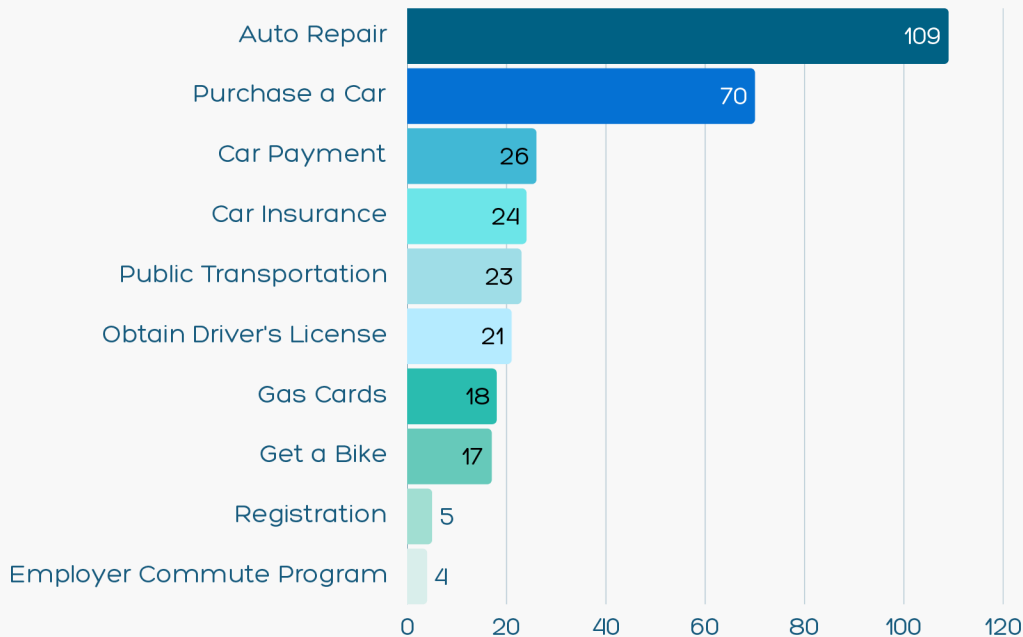
Housing-Related Barriers Breakdown



Sage** connected with The SOURCE as they were living in transitional housing and needed to find affordable housing. Before contacting The SOURCE, Sage tried applying for a few places on their own but was denied due to their criminal background. Prior to incarceration, they were living with a family member; however, upon release, they were unable to return to that living situation. The resource navigator contacted Re-Entry Services, who provided a list of private landlords and apartment complexes that potentially work with individuals with criminal backgrounds. The resource navigator called about 40 apartment complexes and private landlords, finding a few options for Sage to further explore. Sage selected an apartment and was able to move in within the month. Now that Sage has stable housing, they are able to focus at work and continue to focus on rebuilding their life post incarceration.

Transportation Insights

Transportation-Related Barriers Breakdown



To learn more about
Upcycle Bikes
scan here:



"Upcycle Bikes donates refurbished bikes to over 30 partner organizations across the greater Grand Rapids area in support of their clients who need an affordable mode of transportation. So many dedicated organizations in our region are supporting the basic needs of refugees, parolees, those with housing instability, individuals with addiction and mental health challenges, women in crisis, and employees with limited financial means. The SOURCE is one of Upcycle Bikes' outstanding distribution partners, and we were honored to provide bikes in support of their clients in 2024. Together The SOURCE and Upcycle Bikes partner to help provide independence and opportunity to someone working to build stability in their lives."

Rick Armbruster, Executive Director & Founder, Upcycle Bikes

Casey** reached out to The SOURCE prior to their start date. Casey stated that they knew that The SOURCE could assist them in their new role as they had worked with another member company previously and received assistance then. They were eager to get started on the new job but faced a transportation issue. Their car was damaged, and relying on the bus took up too much time for their commute. Their goal was to get their car running again, but if that wasn't possible, they were open to other options. Casey mentioned they had a Rapid Wave Card, but didn't have enough funds to cover their transportation needs as they were starting a new job. Their goal was to stabilize their finances over time. To get Casey in a good position to get to work, the resource navigator was able to reload their Rapid Wave Card, helping them with immediate transportation costs to get to work. The navigator also suggested exploring an alternative transportation option: a bike. Casey seemed open to the idea, and the navigator was able to get Casey a bike that would cut down the amount of time it takes to utilize the bus and get to work on time. With transportation issues addressed, Casey was able to focus on their upcoming job and the goals they had for the future.

*Name has been changed to maintain confidentiality

2024 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

For all clients:

26%

of cases in 2024
resulted in financial
assistance

91%

of funds used came
from SOURCE held
grant funds

For clients seeking
financial support:

582

Average
Credit Score

90%

report savings as
a financial goal

\$5,238,501

TOTAL IMPACT

This value is calculated by the value of casework, retention, savings to clients, financial support.

2024 Financial Assistance By Barrier

BARRIER	SOURCE CLIENT FUNDS	COMMUNITY FUNDS
Auto Repair	\$5,534	--
Child Care	\$365	--
Clothing	\$825	--
Debt	\$1,667	--
Domestic Violence	\$1,065	--
Education	\$1,799	--
Eviction Prevention	\$21,126	\$3,289
Financial Coaching	\$100	--
Food Assistance	\$1,575	--
Foreclosure Prevention	\$1,369	\$5,648
Furniture	\$262	--
Health	\$2,833	--
Homeless	\$1,132	--
Housing	\$19,105	\$2,969
Medical Financial Support	\$3,303	--
Parenting/Pregnancy	\$150	--
Personal Items	\$17,899	--
Transportation	\$37,888	--
Utilities	\$13,548	\$267
Total	\$131,546	\$12,173

In June 2018, The SOURCE began tracking financial support and savings to clients. Since then, The SOURCE has connected clients with over \$2M in financial support and an additional \$284K in savings.

EMERGENCY LOANS

\$17,700

2024 loan total

\$328,992

program all time

The SOURCE has partnered with AAC Credit Union since 2012 to provide a non-predatory loan option to clients. Currently, 15 member companies participate in this program.

Savings for Clients

\$97,384

Savings for Clients represents the value of financial resources leveraged from other community organizations to meet a client's need. Examples of savings for clients are: donated furniture, utility assistance through DHHS, etc.

VITA Tax Site Since 2005

This brings a critical resource to our clients and community members through volunteer tax preparers by helping individuals and families maximize their tax returns so they keep more of their hard-earned money. This also saves them money in the process as the average cost for basic tax preparation is \$200.

2023 Tax Season Highlights:

965

returns prepared

355

employees of member companies

\$193,000

in savings of preparation services

The SOURCE completed **463** more returns than in 2023!

Chris*, an employee returning from maternity leave, reached out to The SOURCE for help with securing childcare for their infant. Feeling stressed and unsure where to start, Chris was concerned about finding a reliable option before going back to work. The resource navigator connected with Chris over the phone to discuss their childcare needs and preferences, including location and type of care. The resource navigator then called licensed childcare providers that matched Chris' criteria, helping to narrow down the options. After providing Chris with a list of providers that met their criteria and had openings, the navigator assisted them in scheduling a tour at a local childcare center. Chris decided to enroll their infant there, ensuring they had reliable childcare in place for their return to work. With this support, Chris was able to go back to work feeling confident and prepared, knowing their childcare needs were met.

2024 Supportive Grants

Wege New Hire Grant

In June 2024, The SOURCE completed its New Hire Retention Assistance Program thanks to a two-year, \$40,000 Wege Foundation grant. The program focused on supporting new employees during their first 180 days of employment by providing assistance with transportation, housing, and other potential obstacles. The initiative proved highly successful, surpassing all target outcomes and demonstrating that early financial support plays a crucial role in reducing employee turnover during the initial employment period.

93

Total clients
assisted

82%

Goal = 75%

Retention at
6 months

58%

Goal = 50%

Wage Increase
at 6 months

\$1.78

Average
wage
increase

Top Barriers: Housing and Transportation

"I will forever be grateful to The SOURCE for assisting me with my eviction. I was facing medical issues that caused me to miss work. When I fell behind in rent, The SOURCE provided the support I needed to get back on track."

Christine*, Client

"We are so appreciative for the partnership with The SOURCE to provide valuable resources to help support and retain new team members at a time when they are settling into their new position."

Allise Wilkerson,
Senior HR Business Partner,
Corewell Health

Wege Transportation Grant

In May 2024, The SOURCE was awarded a two-year, \$40,000 grant to pilot a new transportation program, Ways to Wheels, in partnership with AAC Credit Union. With this grant, the SOURCE will provide matching dollars alongside employees and employers, to be used toward a vehicle purchase.

This down payment match helps clients—even those with lower credit scores—purchase a reliable vehicle and provides the following in cost savings:

~\$80

average reduction in
monthly payment



~\$5,000

average savings
total cost of loan

Barrier Removal Employment Success (BRES) Grant

In January 2024, The SOURCE was awarded \$77,000 from the State of Michigan in partnership with West Michigan Works. These funds are used to remove barriers to gaining and maintaining employment.

Highlights:

96 Families Assisted

\$323 - Average Amount of Support

Top Barriers: Housing, Utilities, Transportation

Steelcase Foundation Youth Employment Grant

In January 2024, The SOURCE was awarded a \$150,000 grant from the Steelcase Foundation to launch a new workforce development program in collaboration with AYA Youth Collective. The program aims to help young adults who are experiencing instability better navigate the workforce.

Expected Outcomes:

- Achieve stable housing
- Establish a banking relationship
- Improving personal circumstances

31

Youth
Served

Jordan** contacted The SOURCE because they were behind on rent and unable to afford a car repair as they were struggling with the loss of their food assistance. They knew they needed help, fast, to avoid late fees and further financial strain. The navigator was able to access a grant that The SOURCE was awarded to cover the remaining portion of Jordan's rent. Knowing Jordan couldn't rely on their car, the navigator was able to request a bike from an organization The SOURCE is partnered with to provide them an alternative means of transportation. Additionally, the navigator was able to provide a list of local food resources Jordan could access. The navigator also assisted Jordan in creating a budget, outlining their monthly expenses and finding ways to cut back. With a clearer financial plan and practical resources, Jordan was able to catch up on rent, manage their transportation, and make sure they had enough to eat. The support of The SOURCE's navigator gave Jordan the tools they needed to regain control of their finances and avoid falling further behind.



CEDAM Tax Grant

In November 2024, The SOURCE was awarded a grant from CEDAM to become a stand alone VITA Tax Site in 2025!

Financial Education Program

In response to growing demand from our clients to help them achieve greater financial security, the SOURCE team made enhancing financial security a key strategic priority in 2024. We piloted a comprehensive financial education program designed to give participants practical knowledge and tools to build financial stability and resilience.

This 3-part Series included classes on:



Debt Management



Credit Building



Budgeting & Saving



At the start of the series:

51%

participants were not prepared for an unexpected expense



At the end of the series:

100%

would recommend this series to a co-worker

86%

participants did not have a household budget



100%

felt confident applying their new knowledge to their personal finances

What clients are saying:



"I am grateful because I learned a lot of things that I did not know about finances."

"I liked the open and honest talk."

"Very informational. I learning a lot of things. I did not realize how much I was spending."

"The information on credit building and breaking down weekly expenses was particularly helpful."







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