



FIRST RESPONDERS FOUNDATION



IMPACT REPORT 2024

Mission

The mission of the First Responders Foundation is to serve and honor all our First Responders, Veterans and their families; build appreciation and respect for their work; and enhance public safety.

Vision

By 2025, be an organization critical to the maintenance and enhancement of public safety in our communities. To serve as a recognized social impact organization supporting First Responders, Veterans, and families.

This will be accomplished by providing caring support to communities and offering tailored individual and family wellness programs and services for First Responders, Veterans and their families.

By 2030 critical services will expand programs and services through Chapter representation in multiple states and national strategic collaborations and alliances.

Brand Purpose

We exist to honor, support and care for the overall well-being of first responders, veterans and their families. We are relentless in our service to First Responders, Veterans and their families out of an immense appreciation and respect for their work and contributions

Brand Values

HONOR

PARTNERSHIP

SERVICE

RESILIENCY

INTEGRITY

Brand Promise

To serve First Responders and Veterans with the same commitment with which they have served.



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MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT

2024 marked a year of significant growth—both programmatically and geographically—as we continued to positively impact and save the lives of First Responders, Veterans, and their families.

Demand surged across all areas of service, including Behavioral Health, Physical Health, and the JAVELAN service dog program. Veterans and retired First Responders received life-saving training from our certified instructors, empowering them with tools to protect themselves and others.

In Behavioral Health, we introduced a groundbreaking 6-hour Sleep Recovery course. Combining meditation, yoga, and classroom instruction, the course equips First Responders with strategies to improve sleep, critical to both mental and physical health. This new offering joined our established courses in Suicide Prevention, Peer Support, Advanced Peer Support, Resiliency, and Couples Training.

We expanded proactive mental health checks with culturally competent clinicians, increasing sessions with the Omaha Police Department and launching new services with Iowa State Patrol. We continue to advocate for annual mental health screenings to be viewed as essential as physical health exams. Our training footprint expanded into departments in West Virginia, northern Iowa, and Missouri, building on our regional presence.

To meet the growing demand for Physical Health programming, we expanded our training space, enabling more First Responders to train safely in Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu. This 100% strike-free martial art uses leverage and technique to de-escalate encounters and reduce injuries for all parties involved.

We continued to grow our specialized curriculums: Gracie Bullyproof®, which builds confidence and self-defense skills in children, and Women Empowered®, which teaches practical, scenario-based self-defense for women.

Our JAVELAN program continued to transform lives by pairing Veterans and retired First Responders with service dogs—often sourced from shelters. Graduates receive hands-on instruction to train their dogs, with all services provided at no cost. As of 2024, nearly 200 teams have completed the program, avoiding long waitlists and saving nearly \$7 million in costs compared to private providers.

To support our expanding network, we hired a Director of Chapter Services to streamline communication and growth. In 2024, we welcomed Douglas County Corrections as our sixth chapter and aim to reach twelve chapters by the end of 2025. Local chapters—led by community members and retired First Responders—raise funds to provide mental health services, lifesaving equipment, and technology to their communities.

Our mission was celebrated through major events: Guns & Hoses Hockey raised nearly \$100,000, drawing over 3,200 attendees. The 9/11 Luncheon of Honor, featuring keynote speaker Chief Todd Schmaderer, paid tribute to fallen heroes. In partnership with local businesses and Girl Scouts, we also delivered cookies and lunches to departments across the Omaha metro.

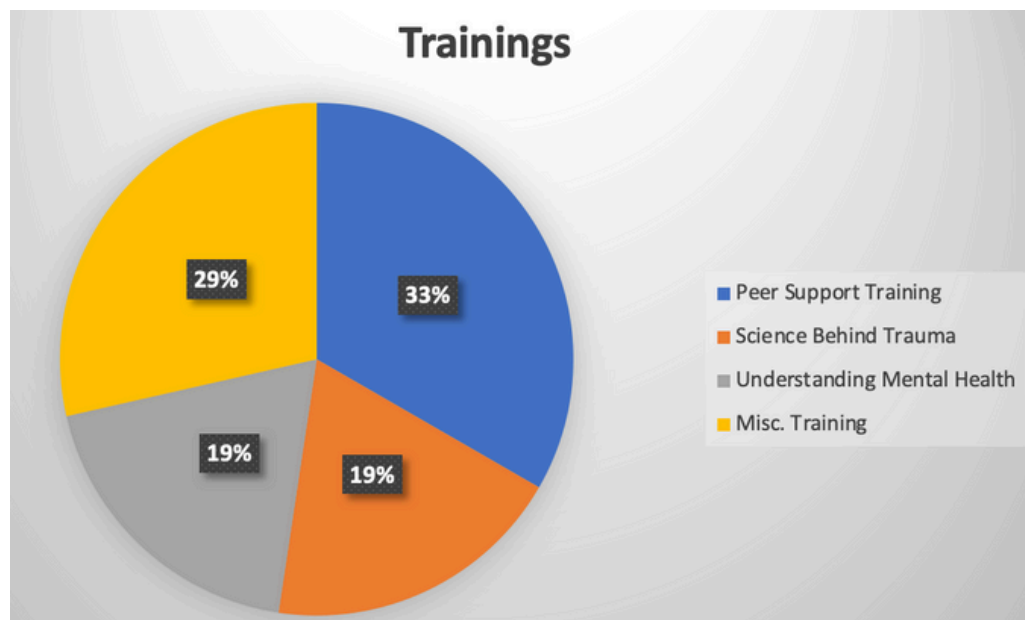
2024 was a remarkable year of impact. We look forward to serving even more in 2025.

Sincerely,
Todd Sears

Behavioral Health

Mental health has long carried a stigma in the first responder community, creating barriers to trust and support. We're working to change that.

Through ongoing, specialized training in Suicide Prevention, Peer Support, Resiliency, and now Sleep Recovery programs, we're equipping first responders with the tools they need—delivered by culturally competent therapists who understand their unique challenges. Our mission is clear: break the stigma, build trust, and save lives.



In 2024, 200 First Responders and their families received counseling with 261 sessions held. Our trainers presented 7 Peer Support workshops with key topics covered being understanding mental health and wellness, active listening skills, crisis management, building a supportive environment, and self-care and resilience building. Additionally, we expanded our Omaha Police Department Wellness Visits to additional units to now serve 200 personnel. In 2024, we also launched our brand new Sleep Recovery for First Responders training.

"This training helped me realize how many people actually suffer from some sort of mental illness. This training showed us it's okay to seek help and talk about our problems."

"I wish I had peer support knowledge before and I would have saved myself a lot of ache, and acknowledgements that it was okay to feel the way I did. Thank you for everything! I will sit through it again!"

"All leaders should take this training to better support their peers."

*Quotes from First Responders Foundation Training Attendees

Physical Health



Our Physical Health initiative advanced the training of First Responders to handle the stress and physical threats of their professions through Gracie Jiu-Jitsu® Omaha. This specialized self-defense training supports both physical and mental well-being, using weight and leverage techniques to control and de-escalate situations, reducing injuries and the frequency of excessive use of force incidents.

In the past year, we achieved significant growth and impact through the expansion of all of our self-defense programs, with considerable growth in Women Empowered® and Gracie Bullyproof®. We increased training space to better serve underserved communities and first responders, with powerful success stories highlighting our trauma-informed approach—unique in Omaha – for both civilians and police. Facility renovations enhanced safety and training quality.

Internally, we strengthened staff development through instructor certifications, leadership structure, and improved tracking systems. Student enrollment continued to rise, supported by new onboarding and attendance tools. There were 6,628 check-ins to jiu-jitsu classes by 238 members. We added 6 new students to our advanced Master Cycle® classes, 5 of whom are Veterans or First Responders.

Looking ahead to 2025, we aim to surpass 250 active students, introduce structured skill progressions, expand mental health collaborations, and secure new funding streams. Operational improvements, including digital automation, will further streamline member experience and program delivery.

"I wanted to share how much jiu-jitsu has helped me overcome my fear and anxiety. I used to be so scared, especially in the Marine Corps, of men and what they could potentially do to me. I felt hyper-alert all the time, no matter where I was. Now, I have found a sense of peace and feel like I can relax and actually breathe now." - Female Gracie Combatives® and Women Empowered® graduate and Marine Corps Veteran

Spiritual Health & JAVELAN

This year we continued our local reach on our Spiritual Health Page on our website. We now have 15 participating places of worship who are prepared and equipped to support First Responders. We look forward to continuing to add to our spiritual support system in 2025.

While it is metro area concentrated at this point, we built the site with the ability to expand nationally so that we can serve all first responders. There is no preference given to any faith, rather our intention is to be inclusive for everyone.



FIRST RESPONDERS FOUNDATION
JAVELAN | SERVICE DOGS FOR HEROES

Our JAVELAN Service Dog Program continues saving lives of Veterans and retired first responders by pairing them with a dog, many times a shelter or rescue dog.

We train these individuals to train their service dog, giving them the skills needed to train the dog for other tasks that may arise.

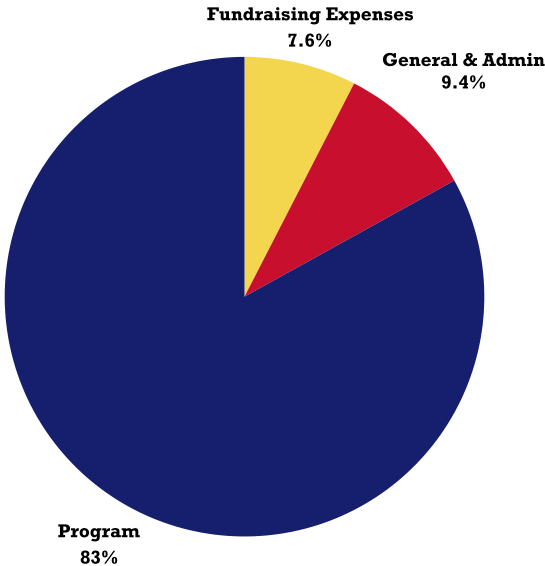
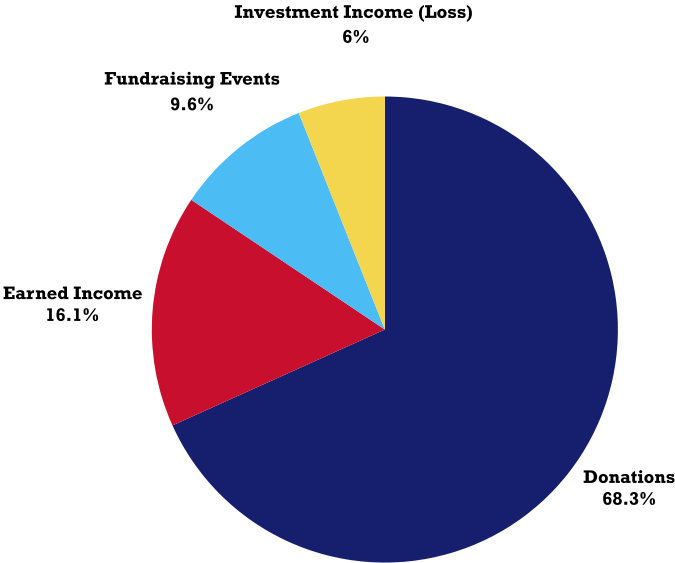
We provide this service at no charge to the Veteran or retired first responder. In 2024, we had 42 teams in training, with 40 being Veterans and 2 First Responders. 38 of our 42 teams were located in Nebraska and 4 in Iowa, respectively, with 9 total teams graduating their training.

Since the start of JAVELAN, we have had 125 teams graduate. In 2025, we will enhance our programs through a complete overhaul of training, application, and oversight processes. We'll continue supporting trainer certification in service dog instruction, align growth with new FRF chapters, and streamline application and documentation to improve efficiency and impact.



2024 Financials

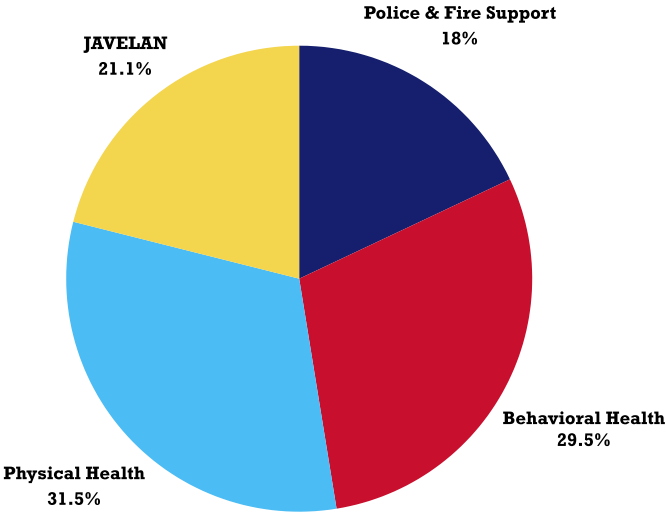
Total Revenue
\$1,239,314



Total Expenses
\$1,175,851



Total Program
Expenses 976,491



Events, Community Collaborations & Fundraisers

Foundation Events

Awards of Excellence - Awarded to 45 children of first responders
4rd Annual Guns & Hoses Hockey Challenge
8th Annual 9/11 Luncheon of Honor
16th Annual Appreciation Lunches - with special thanks to Omaha Steaks, Chick-fil-A, NFM, Midwest Premier Beverage, inTouch Communications, PIP Marketing, Signs, Print, & Farm Credit Services

Community Collaborations & Fundraisers

9/11 Memorial Stair Climb
911der Women Training
50 Mile March
55+ Club at Papillion Landing
Anchor Corps
Back 40 Dogs
Blue Knights International Law Enforcement Motorcycle Club
College World Series of Omaha, INC - Awards of Excellence Honorees
Council Bluffs Wellness Fair
First Responders Race Team
German American Society
Girl Scouts Spirit of NE
Grand Island Casino & Resort
IMHCA Conference
ICAN
Junior American League Auxiliary
K Rush It Golf Tournament, honoring Kevin Rush Spl Agent/Fire Investigator
Kim Foundation - Behavioral and Mental Health Resource Fair
KTIV (news channel around Norfolk, NE)
Lincoln Food Bank
Makers Mark Private Selection First Responders Barrel
Mission First Alliance Conference
Mutual of Omaha
Nebraska Vietnam Veterans Reunion
NU Athletics
River Runners Offroad/Barricade Go Topless Day
Rose Blumkin Jewish Home
Share Omaha - Do Good Week & Giving Tuesday
Southern Glazers Wine and Spirits
Summit Media
Tee It Up For The Troops Gold Tournament/JE Dunn Construction
Veteran's Freedom Music Festival
War Dogs
Woodcliff Veterans



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\$5,000 - \$9,999

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Please accept our apologies if we have
inadvertently omitted a name.
Every gift is important to us and greatly appreciated.

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MOPOA
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Cesnik, Gary
Grimm, Nate
Hancock, John
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Johnson, Dustin & Jacquelyn
Maher, Brian & Susan
Olson, Michael & Casey
Sears, Todd & Brenna
VFW Auxiliary #759
Ward, Sue
Way, Brenda
Glesinger, Michaela
Mary Lorraine's Dance Center
Miller, Kevin
Moeller, Doug
Papillion Professional Firefighters Local 3767
Vetter, Sarah
88 Tactical
Rocket 3 Min Wash LLC
Thomas, Erika
Integreberr farms
Milesbrand
Brester, Ronald & Deborah

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Dahlgren, Lee
Easley, Gregory
Hubka, Richard
Saint Albert Catholic
Wyant, Caroleen
Designwear Inc
Millard American Legion Post Rider #374
Voni's Hair Fashions
Walters, Holly
Swank, Rachel
Henninger, Brent & Jolene
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Martin, Eric
Rupp, Mark & Dyann
Bergman, Brady
Carlson, Amy Jo
Cobalt Construction
Feineis, Chris
Friendly Managed Services
Gerbsman, Steven
Hawk, Camille & John
Honey, Billy
Maresch, Eric
Ong, Christopher
Stover, Ethan
Tyser, Michelle
Bishop, Christine
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Aluisi, Tiffany
American Flag Association
Babashak, Danny
Bareلمان, Herbert
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Buck, David
Burke Acres LLC
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Coats, Jeffrey
Cross, Danielle
Dierks, Donn
Durapau, Kathleen
Food Bank of Lincoln Inc
Garibaldi, John & Colette
Grand Chapter of Nebraska
Hamilton, David & Judith
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Jackson Healthcare Charities
Jackson, Sarah
Jones, Jill
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Love, Larry
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Maas, Marjorie
Marker, Bryce
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Otte, Dennis & Kerry
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Poole, Linsey
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Rehn, Amy
Rogers, Roy
Ross, Ellen
Samson, Joseph
Shay, Kayla
Stinn, Ron
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Wanning, Jeffrey & Martha
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Wright, Heidi



FIRST RESPONDERS FOUNDATION

10605 Burt Circle Omaha, NE 68114
402-218-1234

Chapters

Council Bluffs, IA Chapter

Papillion, NE Chapter

Lincoln, NE Chapter

Kearney, NE Chapter

Sioux Falls, SD Chapter

**Douglas County Corrections, NE
Chapter**

**To learn more about
our impact and how to
support our mission
visit:**

www.firstrespondersfoundation.org

