

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



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In 2025, the ASFPM Foundation strengthened and expanded its mission to grow our nation's resilience in the face of climate change and extreme weather and began exploring the opportunities and challenges posed by Artificial Intelligence to assess and mitigate flood risk.

Since its founding in 1996, the Foundation has partnered with ASFPM to advocate cutting edge solutions to flood risk management and to educate public and private sector stakeholders about proven and changing best practices. It also continued its efforts to invest in new floodplain and flood risk management leaders with its Young Professionals initiative. That ongoing effort recognizes that mentoring the next generation of floodplain management professionals and helping them navigate meaningful career paths is critical for ensuring a resilient future.

According to Climate Central, the nonprofit organization that in July 2025 took over the climate disaster dataset previously maintained by NOAA, there were 23 weather-related U.S. disasters that topped \$1 billion in 2025 (www.climatecentral.org). That is the third highest total in the 46-year history of the database, behind 2023 and 2024. Those 23 events killed 276 people and caused \$115 billion in damage. The Yale Climate Connections newsletter noted there were no land-falling hurricanes in the United States last year for the first time since 2015 or financial damages and fatalities likely would have been higher.

Natural disasters often create unforgettable images of devastating losses of life and property but also dramatic rescues and community resilience. The flash flooding over the July 4, 2025, holiday in the Texas Hill Country was one such disaster. Fifteen inches of rain fell on parched soil in Kerr County, causing the Guadalupe River to rise 22 feet in less than an hour, and claiming the lives of at least 32 people, including 29 youth campers and counselors. Grieving Texas parents have worked to ensure the tragedy is giving rise to new local and state laws for emergency warning systems and disaster preparedness for summer camps around the country. The ASFPM Foundation is contributing its knowledge and expertise to some of those state initiatives.



While flood risk modeling continues to evolve and improve, former NOAA hurricane expert Jeff Masters said scientists are still learning about how climate change will affect storm tracks, but this much is certain, “The strongest hurricanes are getting stronger, intensifying more quickly and dumping more rainfall.” (The Future of Atlantic Hurricane Tracks, Feb. 19, 2026, www.Yaleclimateconnections.org).

Given that, the ASFPM Foundation is proud to highlight in this 2025 Annual Report the myriad efforts to honor its mission “To advance initiatives and projects that promote reduced flood risks and resilient communities.” This critical work would not be possible without the generosity of countless individuals, ASFPM State Chapters, and corporations that donate their time, talent and financial resources. The ASFPM Foundation Board of Trustees, Committee Chairs, and staff are humbled and grateful.

Gilbert White Forum

Foundation's Gilbert White Forum Explores Impact of Big Data and AI on Flood Risk Management

On March 5-6, 2025, the ASFPM Foundation hosted a dynamic policy forum at the George Washington University in Washington, D.C., to explore the impacts and implications of big data and Artificial Intelligence (AI) on floodplain management.

The event was the Foundation's seventh Gilbert F. White National Flood Policy Forum, the latest in a series initiated to convene experts in floodplain management to explore pressing issues in the field and set out ideas for resolving them. Gilbert White was known as the "father of floodplain management" for his seminal research and writing on human adjustments to floods and as founder and director of the University of Colorado's Natural Hazards Research and Applications Information Center (now known as the Natural Hazards Center).

Dale Lehman, President of the ASFPM Foundation Board of Trustees, said the 2025 forum was particularly timely and consequential because of the dramatic emergence of AI as a means of simulating human intelligence and shaping floodplain management and national flood risk policy.

At the forum, 90 invited experts discussed the evolving role of AI in flood risk management, focusing on ethical frameworks, foundational concepts, current applications, and innovative use cases. A mix of plenary panels and breakout sessions provided a structure for discussions covering five critical facets of floodplain management:

1. Hazard and risk identification
2. Standards, regulations and compliance
3. Risk communication
4. Mitigation and resilience
5. Risk transfer

Day one's three panels – featuring policy experts, engineers, scientists, and academicians – presented the fundamentals of big data and AI and answered audience questions; explored present and emerging roles of big data and AI in floodplain management; and summarized the domestic and international policy landscape.

A dozen breakout sessions spanning day one and day two provided the environment for robust group discussions of panel topics in the context of each of the five facets. Under each, participants debated and discussed ethical considerations and policy guardrails to ensure the trustworthy and responsible use of AI, as well as ways to protect against potential downsides of AI, including privacy and security issues.

By the concluding plenary, participants coalesced around several initial takeaways:

- The effectiveness of AI hinges on the quality and governance of data
- AI is a powerful tool, but human expertise and ethical oversight remain essential
- Realizing AI's promise requires robust guardrails.

Following the event, the Foundation's Forum Planning Team, led by Foundation Trustee Maria Honeycutt and Foundation Events Committee Co-Chair Jerry Sparks, worked closely with ASFPM AI Subcommittee Co-Chair Phetmano Phannavong to compile and distill the forum's presentations and participants' observations and initial recommendations into a final report that will be available on the Foundation website that outlines 11 actionable recommendations:

1. Organize a Series of Webinars and Discussion Forums on AI and Floodplain Management
2. Compile and publish AI use cases
3. Establish AI governance and policy framework for AI usage
4. Review AI accreditation process and professional standards
5. Institutionalize professional oversight for public safety
6. Promote data quality and transparency and accountability of AI development and deployment
7. Upskill the existing workforce and incentivize knowledge exchange
8. Foster collaboration and co-development
9. Collaborate on providing best practices and technical support
10. Conduct an AI pilot project focusing on communication applications
11. Explore the regulatory sandbox concept

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As the final recommendations illustrate, the Forum underscored the need for ongoing dialogue, interdisciplinary partnerships, and adaptive policies to ensure AI serves the public good while safeguarding equity and trust. Into 2026, the Foundation will continue to catalyze implementation of the Forum’s recommendations, working closely within ASFPM and with outside

partners to facilitate actions that enable practitioners and policymakers to use big data and AI carefully and constructively across all facets of floodplain management.

The Foundation gratefully acknowledges the critical financial support and subject-matter expertise provided by the Forum sponsors.

Future Leaders Scholar

Future Leaders Scholar: Audrey Nelson Selected as 2025–2027 Recipient

In May 2025, the Foundation proudly selected **Audrey Nelson** as its sixth **Future Leaders Scholar**, announcing the award at the ASFPM National Conference in New Orleans.

A Tampa, Florida native, Ms. Nelson is pursuing an undergraduate degree in **environmental studies** at Florida Gulf Coast University, with a concentration in **ecology and environmental analysis** and a minor in climate change. Her academic focus reflects a deep commitment to understanding and addressing environmental challenges facing coastal communities.

When she isn’t in the classroom, Ms. Nelson works in the ecology lab on campus, focusing on beach restoration and replanting and creating educational materials for community outreach. She also is active in Girls

in Engineering, Math and Science (GEMS), a group that goes to local middle schools to tutor girls in STEM subjects.

In her acceptance video, Ms. Nelson expressed gratitude for the scholarship and the opportunities it provides: “Receiving this award will only fuel my passions and will make me more motivated about this career field. It’s amazing to know I have the support of this entire organization.”

The Future Leaders Scholarship (FLS) is designed to support undergraduate students pursuing careers in flood risk management. The program provides up to \$20,000 per year during the final two years of a four- or five-year degree program, representing a two-year investment in each scholar’s future. Since its inception, the Foundation has awarded \$240,000 to deserving students through the FLS program.





Student Paper Competition

2025 Student Paper Competition Marks 15th Anniversary

The Student Paper Competition (SPC) marked its 15th year at the ASFPM National Conference in New Orleans and attracted finalists from the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill and George Washington University.

The competition was begun by the Foundation in 2011 to encourage student engagement in floodplain management-related topics and identify research that is likely to make a lasting contribution to the scholarly literature on creative flood risk solutions.

After a review of abstracts received by the Foundation, two finalists were invited to present their papers to a panel of flood risk management professionals. The finalists, **Lindsey Pegram** and **Hinako Sugawara**, fielded questions from audience members and judges.

Ms. Pegram, a graduate student at the Gillings School of Global Public Health, UNC, Chapel Hill, won first place and a \$1,600 cash prize for her paper entitled, “Phone-Based Turbidity Monitoring for Early Detection of Water Contamination in Floodplain Communities.” The project tested a low-cost, user-friendly turbidity sensor that could provide an affordable, accessible option for individuals interested in timely and cost-effective data about potential microbial contamination in drinking and surface waters.

Ms. Sugawara, a master’s candidate in International Development Studies at George Washington University, took second place and a \$1,200 prize for her paper, “Pathways to Flood-Resilient Development in the Philippines: Governance and Religion.” It explored how governance, religion, and development efforts intersect to potentially increase flood vulnerability, using case studies of the Philippines, which was ranked as the most disaster-prone country

of 193 assessed in the 2024 World Risk Report published by Bündnis Entwicklung Hilft, Ruhr University, Bochum, Germany.

In addition to the prize money, the Foundation covers the cost of travel and conference registration for SPC finalists. The 16th Annual Student Paper Competition will be held at the 2026 ASFPM National Conference in Milwaukee. For more information on the competition, visit the ASFPM Foundation website.

Emerging Professionals

Young Professional, Year in Review: Empowering the Next Generation of Floodplain Management Leaders

In 2025, the ASFPM Young Professionals (YP) community continued its mission to support and elevate early-career individuals in floodplain management and hazard mitigation. Serving professionals under the age 35 or within their first 13 years in the field, the YP program strengthened its role as a vital bridge between new practitioners and the broader ASFPM network.

Throughout the year, the YP focused on four core goals—engagement, development, connection, and visibility. Young professionals were encouraged to participate in ASFPM committees and chapter activities, while targeted programming helped build technical expertise and leadership skills.

This past year we welcomed young professionals at the ASFPM Annual Conference, and the YP hosted key events, including a welcome gathering for newcomers including a round of ASFPM Bingo and a mentorship mixer. These efforts created a supportive environment where young professionals could grow, contribute, and network. In the upcoming year we hope to expand this to a welcome gathering for newcomers, a mentorship mixer, professional development workshops, and community engagement activities including a welcome gathering for newcomers, a round of ASFPM bingo, and a membership mixer.

Overall, the year was marked by increased involvement, stronger peer networks, and expanded opportunities for early-career practitioners to shape the future of floodplain management. The YP community continues to welcome new voices, energy, and ideas as it works toward a more resilient future.

We're kicking off 2026 with an exciting milestone: The ASFPM Young Professionals (YP) group is officially becoming the Emerging Professionals (EP)!

This new name reflects who we truly are—an energetic, growing, and evolving community of early-career leaders shaping the future of floodplain management. “Emerging Professionals” captures the diversity of backgrounds, experiences, and talents within our group, while celebrating the momentum we’re building together.

This change marks more than a new title—it represents our commitment to inclusivity, growth, and forward-looking leadership within ASFPM. Whether you’re just entering the field or advancing into new roles, the EP community is here to support your journey, amplify your voice, and elevate your impact.

New name. Same mission. An even stronger future.

Search for Emerging Professionals on Floodzone and connect with us there!

RISE Challenge

RISE Challenge 2024–2025: Building Community Resilience Through Youth Leadership

In 2024–2025, the ASFPM Foundation continued its support of the RISE Challenge with a \$15,000 contribution, helping expand a long-running partnership between Earth Force, FEMA, and regional education organizations across Colorado, Montana, Illinois, and Utah. Through this collaboration, middle school students engaged directly with more than 60 stakeholder organizations—from emergency managers and public works teams to land trusts, city planners, and tribal environmental programs. Together, they addressed real hazards communities face today, including post-wildfire flooding and drought adaptation. Across all participating regions, student projects were rooted in local needs and implemented over time. In Estes Park, Colorado, students built on several years of wildfire preparedness advocacy to take on stormwater management and flood prevention. After learning how wildfire damage increases runoff and flash-flood risk, students investigated local stormwater detention basins and uncovered a pattern of neglected infrastructure, including gaps between public and private maintenance responsibilities.

Using field observations, historical flood data, and interviews with town staff, they drafted proposed maintenance requirements and presented their findings directly to the Town Board of Trustees. Town officials are still working through how to apply those recommendations across jurisdictions, but the issue is now squarely on the agenda.

In Bozeman, Montana, students partnered with the Yellowstone Club and state legislators to test small-scale “snow cone” water storage methods. Their findings contributed to active discussions about flood management at the state level. Across Illinois, students followed the water. They tracked how upstream erosion turns into downstream flooding, then targeted the places where small changes upstream could reduce real damage later.

The Foundation’s contribution directly supports student action projects and connects teams with floodplain management professionals who serve as mentors, classroom visitors, and proposal judges. Those relationships give students a clearer view of how decisions about land use, infrastructure, and risk are made, while also giving communities additional capacity at a time when many local agencies are stretched thin.

“You can see students start to connect stormwater systems, land use, and community vulnerability,” said ASFPM Foundation Board President Dale Lehman. “That kind of understanding usually takes years in this field. They’re building it now – and applying it.”

State chapters interested in the RISE Challenge can contact Vince Meldrum at vmeldrum@earthforce.org. Learn more at asfpmfoundation.org/scholarships/risechallenge-k-12.

“The ASFPM Foundation has been with us since the beginning. Recognizing that building community resilience means developing people, not just plans,” said Vince Meldrum, CEO of Earth Force.
“Their support allows students to work alongside floodplain administrators, emergency managers, and infrastructure professionals—not as observers, but as contributors to real preparedness efforts.”

Larry Larson Speaker Series Events

Larry Larson Speaker Series Takes Center Stage in PA and NM

The Foundation took its Larry Larson Speaker Series (LLSS) on the road twice in 2025, first to the Pennsylvania Association of State Floodplain Managers (PASFPM) annual meeting in State College, and again to the New Mexico Floodplain Managers Association (NMFMA) Annual Workshop in Bernalillo.

In Pennsylvania, **David Maurstad** told the audience it is time to establish new policy objectives for the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) including more affordable plans for low-income households, an end to subsidies for high income property owners, and replacement of the 1 percent annual flood standard for assessing risk.

Mr. Maurstad's presentation, "Navigating Change: Flood Risk Reduction in Today's Government Landscape," was delivered at the September 16, 2025, Pennsylvania chapter meeting.

Drawing on his experience as former National Insurance Administrator, Mr. Maurstad said that more than 60 years after establishment of the NFIP, the 1 percent annual flood standard, or Special Flood Hazard Area (SFHA) upon which risk assessment, federal grants, and insurance policies are based, should be replaced. Although the 1 percent annual chance event became the "gold standard" for flood risk, Mr. Maurstad noted that Gilbert White, a University of Chicago professor and researcher

known as the "Father of Floodplain Management," warned against its permanent use.

"He believed it should only be the starting point with a need for assessment and periodic review," he said. That periodic review, called for in the National Flood Insurance Act, has never happened, Mr. Maurstad said.

Since its inception, the 1 percent minimum standard has helped avoid significant losses of life and property; however, losses in high- and low- to moderate-risk areas have continued to rise, for multiple reasons. Mr. Maurstad said a "contemporary" NFIP should move away from the 1 percent annual chance event and be replaced with methodologies that rely on improved flood modeling, real-time data collection, and enhanced risk analysis.

Mr. Maurstad emphasized the actions needed to support these objectives are critical: protecting and enhancing floodplains and identifying and avoiding development practices that harm floodplains.

"This is not an exhaustive list, and there most certainly will be differing perspectives," he added. "But let's do agree that the NFIP, all of it, is worth protecting, and, dare I say, fighting for!"

Mr. Maurstad also noted that while an increased emphasis on risk mitigation had paid off in recent





years, he is concerned the Department of Homeland Security’s decision earlier this year to end the Building Resilient Infrastructure & Communities (BRIC) grant program threatens to derail that progress.

The PA LLSS event was generously sponsored by **Stantec** and made possible through the collaborative effort of the ASFP Foundation and PASFPM.

In November, a panel of experts told attendees at the NMFMA annual meeting that vulnerability and flood risk can be effectively considered together and addressed with nature-based solutions – even in arid climates such as the Southwest United States.

The discussion, “Nature-Based Solutions: National and Local Perspectives,” was presented November 4, the second installment of the LLSS in 2025.

Jared Romero, PE, CFM and a Drainage Engineer for the Albuquerque Metropolitan Arroyo Flood Control Authority (AMAFCA), said unique flooding challenges in urban New Mexico, such as development patterns, geography, heavy rainfall, and arid conditions, can effectively be addressed with a variety of nature-based strategies.

Those include vegetation management, soil management, stormwater management, creation of urban green spaces, and water retention, though flood control impoundments must release water within

96 hours unless a waiver or water right is obtained to offset stream or river impacts.

Romero said there are “many common hurdles” for nature-based solutions; among those are climate challenges, water scarcity, limited land availability, gaps in knowledge and expertise, and financial constraints. However, he went on to describe several successful, local projects that rely on nature-based solutions.

Under the umbrella of Green Stormwater Infrastructure (GSI) and Low Impact Development (LID), there are riparian and floodplain restoration projects on the Middle Rio Grande. Bernalillo County and the Arid LID Coalition created a GSI project map for the Middle Rio Grande to help locate and identify GSI/LID projects in the watershed. These projects focus on removing invasive species, restoring native vegetation, and improving floodplain connectivity.

Another nature-based solution is being employed at the Valle de Oro Drainage Facility where a dairy barn has been converted into an urban wildlife refuge and flood control facility that encompasses four distinct flood control segments. Water flows into the Valle de Oro Swale, which is about 300’ wide, stretches a mile long, and conveys stormwater flow while also providing habitat for the wildlife refuge.





Panelist **Gerhard Schoener, Ph.D.**, Assistant Professor in Civil, Construction, and Environmental Engineering at the University of New Mexico, provided additional insights on managing local flood risk in both arid and semi-arid areas. According to Dr. Schoener, there are dual challenges of flood risk management that involve infrequent, extreme flash floods that can cause significant damage as well as more frequent, low-magnitude events that are less dramatic but are still impactful. Natural vegetation, permeable surfaces, and other green infrastructure are especially effective, he said, for managing more frequent, lower-magnitude events.

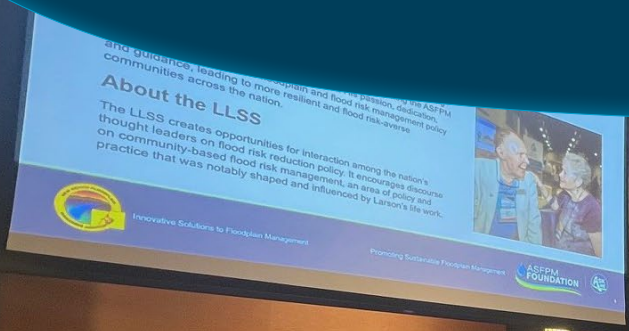
In addition to flood risks, sediment transport and erosion are typical of arid, ephemeral riverine systems and pose significant risks to the natural and manmade environment. This is backed by historical imagery from 1952 and 2006 that clearly illustrates changes in sediment patterns and the impact those changes have on local landscapes. These risks are “often under-recognized” in flood risk assessment and planning and must be acknowledged and better understood, Dr. Schoener added.

On a national level, **Michael Godesky**, Former Acting Director of FEMA’s Community Resilience Coordination Division, shared his perspective on federal programs that have influenced resilience policies and practices over the past two decades.

He explained how map modernization laid the groundwork for Risk Mapping, Assessment, and Planning, also referred to as “Risk MAP.” While highly successful, Risk MAP did not always meet the growing needs of communities that sought more comprehensive flood data and information about future conditions, in real-time. In response, FEMA is working to deliver a Future Flood Risk Data system.

Mr. Godesky also touched on the Federal Flood Risk Management Standard. In 2023, it developed tools and data on future flood risk. He said Community Disaster Resilience Zones launched a movement in which vulnerability began being considered in conjunction with risk to address the most precarious communities. He maintained that while the federal government has paused some of these efforts, the tools, data, and policies that gave rise to them “can be used to develop a comprehensive risk picture to design nature-based resilience projects that deliver social, economic, and ecological benefits.”

The LLSS event was generously sponsored by **CDM Smith** and **ESP Associates**, Inc. and made possible through a cooperative arrangement between the ASFPM Foundation and NMFMA. For more information about the Larry Larson Speaker Series, contact Laura Kelliher at KelliherLE@cdmsmith.com or Tim Hillier at hillierts@cdmsmith.com.



Annual Fundraising and Corporate Sponsors

The ASFPM Foundation continued its innovative programs and projects in 2025 including education, outreach, scholarships, and for the first time in many years, the Gilbert White Forum, which took place over two days in March in Washington, D.C. and explored the use of AI and big data on flood risk management. (For more details, see [page 4](#))

These programs and events are made possible by the individual and collective generosity of flood risk management professionals across the public and private sectors, ASFPM State Chapters, and corporate donors who volunteer their expertise and donate financially to ensure our success.

The 2025 ASFPM Annual Conference in New Orleans allowed us to showcase the Foundation's programs and raise money for both ongoing and new initiatives. The New Orleans location held special significance for conference attendees as 2025 marked the 20th anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, the Category 5 storm that flooded 80 percent of New Orleans. The storm that began as a tropical cyclone killed 1,392 people and caused \$125 billion in damage. Conference attendees had an opportunity to tour the Katrina National Memorial Museum, where the photographs, oral histories of survivors, artifacts, and video footage of the catastrophic storm allowed visitors a chance to experience, reflect on, and honor the resilience of a city that experienced horrific destruction and chaos but rebuilt.

At the Foundation's exhibit hall booth, volunteers drew visitors in with information about the Donor Appreciation Reception and Live Auction, the Student Paper Competition, and the popular hurricane glass where the Foundation collected donations from long-time supporters and new ones, too.

The Foundation drew a record, standing room only crowd at its live auction with many first-time attendees who bid on a variety of fun stuff – an electric bike, golf simulator, Irish ancestry collection, and gifts celebrating our furry friends including a dog goody basket and pet portraits. Helped by cash donations from the floor, the auction raised nearly \$30,000 and the total raised at the conference was more than \$40,000.

The ASFPM Foundation #GivingTuesday 2025 Campaign

The 2025 #GivingTuesday campaign occurred on December 2, and we again exceeded our \$40,000 goal to raise money for the Foundation's Future Leaders Scholarship (FLS). The FLS awards two undergraduate students preparing for careers in floodplain management up to \$20,000 per year for two years. We raised \$42,000 with contributions coming from generous individuals, ASFPM State Chapters, an anonymous donor, and corporations.

The Foundation is grateful to the State chapters that supported #GivingTuesday 2025: Colorado, Florida, Maryland, Minnesota, Montana, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

We are grateful, too, for all the individual donations. We don't take those for granted! Those modest donations add up: those who gave \$10, \$20, \$50 or more helped get us to our goal!

Finally, we thank our corporate sponsors: Darrin Punched Consultants, Dewberry, ESP Associates, Floodproofing.com, Guidehouse, Molly O'Toole & Associates, NIYAM IT, and Schwalls Consulting. Special thanks to Dewberry for its continuous #GivingTuesday sponsorship, which began in 2018 and has become a catalyst for other corporations to donate.

The floodplain management community, including the ASFPM Foundation, owes much of its success to the professional and financial contributions of its corporate partners. Members of these companies contribute their time, ideas, and expertise by serving on Foundation committees, and by planning and executing special events and projects. Without these contributions, we could not carry out our mission.

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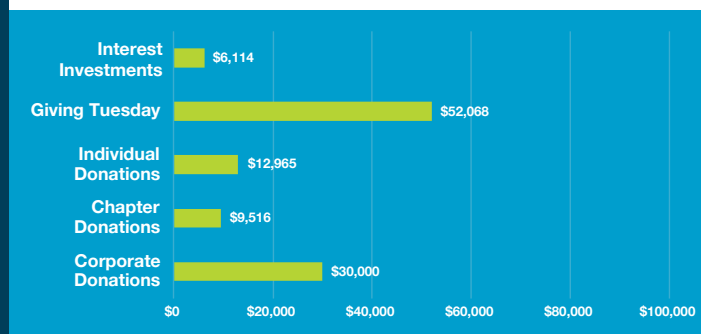
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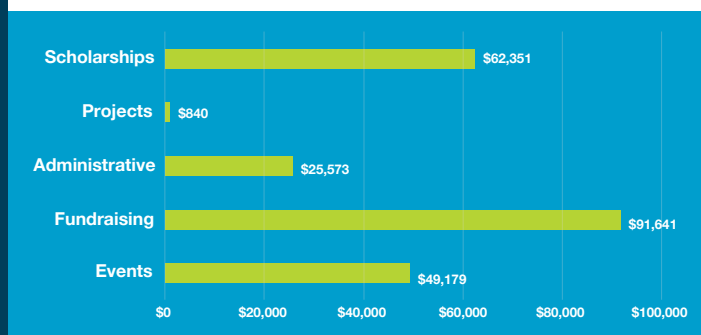
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ASFPM Foundation 2025 Revenue and Expenses

REVENUE: TOTAL \$110,663



EXPENSES: TOTAL \$229,584



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