



Freedom's
Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA



Annual Report

freedomfrontier.org



About

Freedom's Frontier

The Missouri-Kansas border. For those who live here, how you tell the story of freedom often depends on where you call home.

Along this border, a new nation set out in a long trek across the ancestral lands of Native Americans to settle the frontier and, in the process, hoped to find economic and religious freedom.

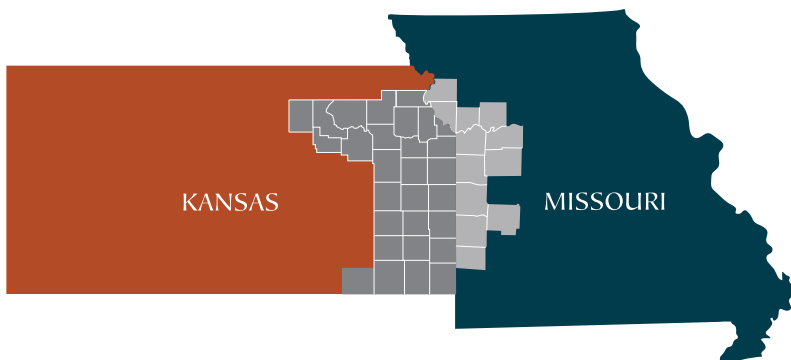
Along this border, the nation violently collided in skirmishes that helped instigate the Civil War.

Along this border, millions of Americans fought—over school segregation, over Native-American rights, over suffrage, over the right to choose how to live and love—in the enduring struggle for freedom.

Freedom's Frontier National Heritage Area brings together the histories that started here but grew to change the course of history for the entire country, whether it is the history of the settlement of the frontier, the Kansas-Missouri Border War and Civil War, or the enduring struggle for freedom.

Freedom's Frontier knits together the histories of the settlement of the frontier, the Border War and Civil War, and the enduring struggle for freedom into one American fabric. Its threads contain the remarkable histories from its partners: historical sites, museums, convention and visitor bureaus, educators, and support societies. Each is deeply invested in telling these stories.

More than three million people call Freedom's Frontier home. More than 30,000 square miles fall in the 41 counties that define Freedom's Frontier in both Missouri and Kansas. As we end our nineteenth year of operation, over 250 organizations have partnered with us.



KANSAS: Allen · Anderson · Atchison · Bourbon · Chautauqua · Cherokee · Clay · Coffey · Crawford · Douglas · Franklin · Geary · Jackson · Jefferson · Johnson · Labette · Leavenworth · Linn · Miami · Montgomery · Neosho · Osage · Pottawatomie · Riley · Shawnee · Wabaunsee · Wilson · Woodson · Wyandotte

MISSOURI: Barton · Bates · Buchanan · Cass · Clay · Jackson · Johnson · Lafayette · Platte · Ray · St. Clair · Vernon

On the cover: Quindaro Townsite Ruins in Kansas City, Kansas.

Left: The historic 18th & Vine district in Kansas City, Missouri.

Above: The Jesse James Bank Museum in Liberty, Missouri.

2025 In Review

At the end of 2025, FFNHA remains as vital as ever. Following a year defined by unexpected challenges and shifting conditions, we have emerged stronger and more focused as we continue advancing tourism and economic development in Kansas and Missouri. Our dedicated team—working in close collaboration with our valued partners and supporters—has once again demonstrated this region’s resilience, adaptability, and indomitable spirit. In other words, the best of small-town America.

Some of our key achievements this year included:

- Supporting non-educational programming that reached more than 28,000 people
- Securing nearly 1,000 volunteer hours, valued at over \$30,000
- Serving 122% more students through Bus on Us grants compared to FY 2024
- Producing a new Freedom’s Frontier map and comprehensive visitors guide, available in both print and digital formats

None of these accomplishments would have been possible without the unwavering support of our donors, partners, volunteers, and dedicated team members. Your belief in our mission sustained us through a demanding year and continues to fuel our progress.

Equally essential to our work is reliable funding at both the local and federal levels. Those small investments in our future are force multipliers, ensuring that Freedom’s Frontier can continue to offer the grants and programs that benefit both our partners and the public at large.

As we look ahead, we remain energized by both the opportunities and the challenges 2026 will bring. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to each of you for being an essential part of Freedom’s Frontier. Your confidence in our mandate and mission propels us forward as we work together to preserve and share the stories of our past.

- Lucinda Adams, Executive Director
Freedom’s Frontier National Heritage Area

A Letter from **Gary Nevius** Trustee Chair



As we turn the page on another year, it is my honor to reflect on the headwinds Freedom's Frontier faced and overcame over the last twelve months. 2025 was a particularly challenging period – one marked by both success and difficulty. More and more, those conditions seem to be the new normal. What continues to surprise and inspire me is this organization's unique ability to adapt, reset, and persevere.

Freedom's Frontier felt pressure on multiple fronts this year. We faced new challenges at almost every step, all in an environment defined by uncertainty. Still, we continued to advance our mission to preserve, interpret, and promote our region's nationally significant stories. Alongside our partners, we strengthened educational programming, expanded our promotional reach, and supported local organizations through vital grants and technical assistance. These efforts broadened public access to our shared history and reinforced the vital role heritage plays in community identity, tourism, and economic development.

That all of this was accomplished under challenging circumstances is staggering.

That said, I wouldn't expect less of this organization. This year marks the conclusion of my term as Chair of FFNHA's Board of Trustees. During the past two years, I have witnessed the dedication of our board, the professionalism and creativity of our staff, and the passion of our partners. Together, we navigated multiple crises while remaining focused on stewardship, collaboration, and thoughtful storytelling. Put succinctly—and mildly—I am proud of our work.

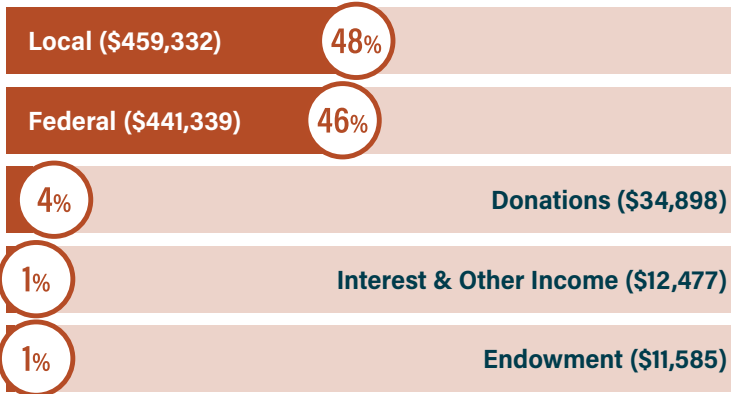
As I pass the baton, I extend my sincere thanks to fellow trustees, staff, partners, and supporters for their trust and collaboration. I look forward to continuing to support Freedom's Frontier as it builds on this remarkable progress and carries these stories forward for generations to come.

With appreciation,

Gary Nevius

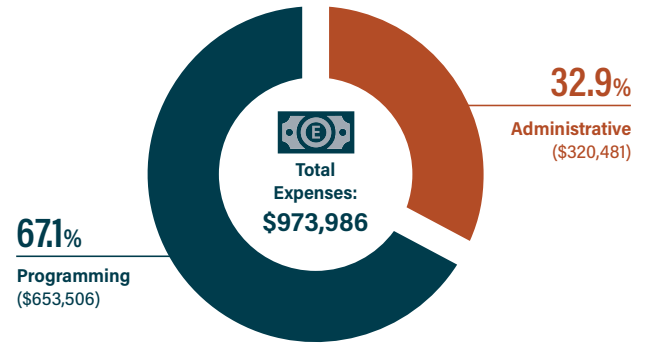
Financials

Income



Total Income: \$959,632

Expenses



Bus on Us Field Trip Grants

The Freedom's Frontier Bus on Us grant program is designed to assist educators and schools with transportation costs for field trips within the heritage area related to FFNHA's congressionally mandated themes. These small grants ensure that school field trips remain accessible to students in rural communities throughout the region.

In FY 2025, Bus on Us grants had a larger impact than ever before. Combined, these small grants connected over 30 schools with 21 partner sites and generated an audience of over 3,000 students—each able to experience hands-on learning at museums and historic sites in their own communities.



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