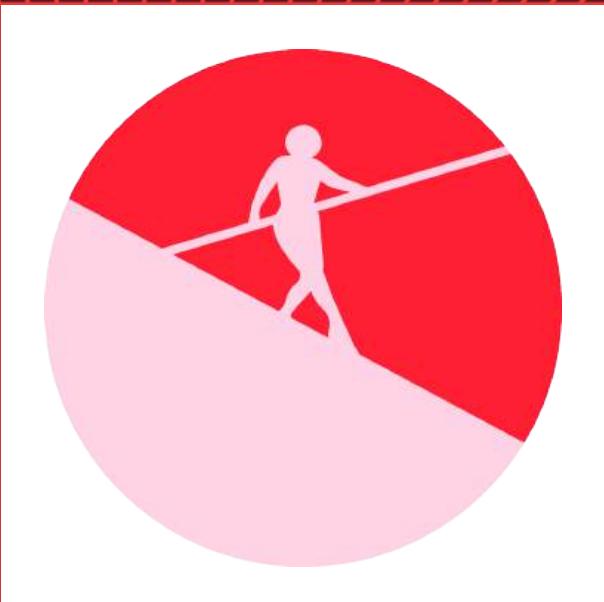


HIGHWIRE IMPROV

IMPACT REPORT

2025



“CAN I GET A LOCATION?
400 S. CONKLING STREET



**HIGHWIRE
IMPROV**

BUILDING JOY THROUGH IMPROV
IN BALTIMORE AND BEYOND

HIGHWIREIMPROV.COM



MISSION, VISION, VALUES

Highwire Improv is a non-profit organization with a mission to bring improvisational theater to the greater Baltimore community as well as bring Baltimore artists to a global stage, while actively developing improv as an anti-racist and anti-oppressive art form in the global community.

The motto of Highwire Improv is *community first* and our approach to programming and planning reflects the goal to build a strong foundation for lasting community development of this art form.

CORE VALUES

Community

Embodied in our motto ‘Community First’ – we aim to make improvised theater in Baltimore a space for everyone, not for just a small group.

Safety

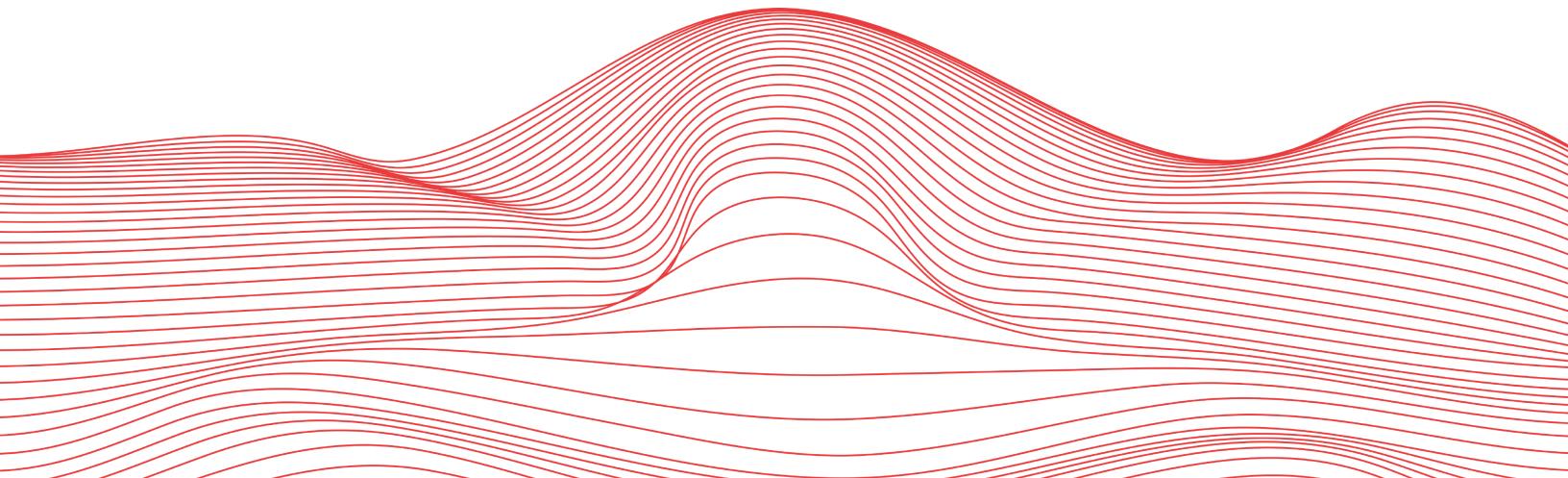
We prioritize the physical, artistic, and psychological safety of our community members, and recognize we all have a part in actively building a safe and supportive environment.

Transparency

Clear, honest, and kind communication helps everyone work together better. We believe that radical transparency to each other and to the community builds trust and results in the best outcomes for everyone.

Action

We have an imperative to make changes, solve problems, and iterate, rather than wait for perfect solutions.



WHY OUR WORK MATTERS

Highwire's mission is critical in today's world - we'd like to highlight four key reasons that our work is particularly relevant as we enter 2026 in Baltimore.

THIRD SPACE CONNECTIONS

Highwire Improv creates a myriad of human connections, both in Baltimore, and across the world. People make new friends in improv classes, and Highwire invests in building these relationships through a community Slack, free improv events with a social component (the Thursday Club), by offering our spaces for community members to plan and book their own events, and now in 2025 by opening a true community third space, The Highwire Center.

In a world with an increase in division, conflict, and loneliness, creating safe, joyful spaces for people to connect and gather is essential to the fabric of Baltimore.

IMPROV AS A COMMUNITY BUILDING PRACTICE

At Highwire Improv, we don't believe that 'if we build it, they will come' - building community takes intent and work. This takes a few forms; including our *Improv in Every Neighborhood* program, which brings the art of improv directly to individual neighborhoods across Baltimore, our applied improv training programs, which explicitly develop leadership skills for community organizations, entrepreneurs, and business leaders, and opening our space to events planned and run by the community.

IMPROV AS A LOCAL ART FORM

Improv is fundamentally a local art form that is both reflective of and contributes to the community in which it is performed. From the style of the performance to the members of an improv ensemble, to the suggestions received from a local audience, improv perhaps most directly reflects its local community. Even other theater work often begins from a nationally or globally known reference point. This opportunity to build uniquely local art and to have cross-community exchange of art is particular to improvisation.

INDEPENDENTLY SUSTAINED ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

Finally, under the current political administration, arts funding, especially at the federal level, is not guaranteed. By investing in multiple streams of revenue, developing a robust donor base, earned income through applied improv programs, and a reliable grants process, Highwire Improv brings much needed stability to the Baltimore arts community. This is reflected by our five year lease of The Highwire Center. With this independent control, we can invest further in our vision of making improv a financially accessible art form for patrons and participants, and a financially viable practice for performers and teachers.

THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY AND SUPPORTERS!

Highwire Improv took a huge step this year, opening our first-ever home, The Highwire Center in the Highlandtown neighborhood of Baltimore, all while growing our core programs of improv shows, classes, applied improv training, and free intro to improv workshops.

This incredible growth was made possible by our largest ever group of supporters, including individuals, partners, companies, neighborhood associations, and local and state grant programs. Through a combination of expertise, volunteering, materials, and old-fashioned cash, the community we serve made 2025 possible.

For our *Highwire Has a Home* campaign to launch the Highwire Center, we thank the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development, the Southeast Community Development Corporation, Highlandtown Main Street, and the Highlandtown Arts District. We especially thank the people behind the logos, Johanna Barrantes and Amanda Peters-Smit.



SOUTHEAST
community development corporation

HIGHLANDTOWN
Main Street

h2!
highlandtown arts

Highwire also received crucial grant support from the Maryland State Arts Council, Create Baltimore, and the Baltimore Development Corporation.



CB Create
Baltimore

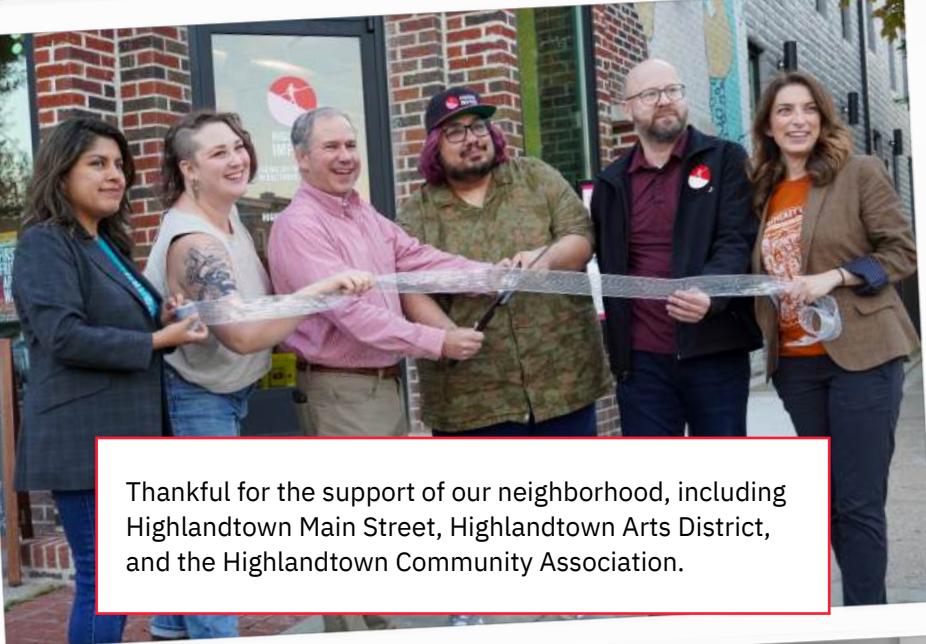
Baltimore
Development Corporation

Highwire Has a Home was our first ever crowdfunding campaign, which exceeded our wildest expectations. Thank you to every single person who donated time or money to Highwire Improv this year!

Aaron T.	Catherine P.	Heather M.	Katie O.	Nancy M.
Adam L.	Chandra G.	Ian D.	Keith E.	Nekoro G.
Adam W.	Cheryl H.	Isa A.	Kelly B.	Neri A.
Alain W.	Christopher M.	Jake L.	Kelly L.	Nick A.
Alessandra H.	Clare B.	James T.	Kevin P.	Nina U.
Alex L.	Cory A.	Janell J.	Kevin S.	Omar C.
Alex R.	Craig M.	Jason Z.	Kristen M.	Renee R.
Alexa S.	Dan H.	Jay S.	Kristen S.	Robby F.
Alissa P.	Dan K.	Jeff N.	Kyle H.	Robert W.
Allison H.	Daniel C.	Jeffrey M.	Laurie E.	Roberta F.
Amy M.	Daniel R.	Jeffrey R.	Lindy R.	Robin B.
Amy S.	David E.	Jen S.	Lisa B.	Robin W.
Andrea M.	David L.	Jennifer R.	Lyle G.	Sabrina B.
Andrew S.	Deborah M.	Jenny K.	Marc L.	Sam B.
Andy M.	Dinah D.	Jess R.	Mark B.	Sarah M.
Ann C.	Drew H.	Jill R.	Mark L.	Scott M.
Anne W.	Edmund C.	Jillian B.	Mary H.	Sean G.
Arnée S.	Eileen H.	Jodie D.	Mary P.	Shawn W.
Austin R.	Eleanor J.	John W.	Mathew B.	Stephanie M.
Barret R.	Elias W.	Jon M.	Matthew L.	Steve P.
Barry M.	Elise R.	Josh T.	Melissa K.	Susan W.
Barry W.	Erin D.	Jules C.	Michael A.	Suzanne J.
Ben R.	Essence M.	Justin C.	Michael B.	Takesha H.
Betsy H.	Genevieve O.	Justin P.	Michelle R.	Tarun S.
Bill D.	Geoff T.	Justin Y.	Mike A.	Tashika C.
Brian P.	Geraldine C.	Kalista P.	Millie H.	Taz L.
Brian S.	Grant C.	Karen B.	Mindy G.	Toni T.
Brian Y.	Greg L.	Karla D.	Misty L.	Tony C.
Brittany M.	Hannah J.	Kathleen R.	Mitch F.	Topher D.
Casey W.	Heath C.	Kathryn R.	Mohan S.	Will R.

WELCOME TO THE HIGHWIRE CENTER

400 S Conkling Street
Baltimore, MD 21224



Thankful for the support of our neighborhood, including Highlandtown Main Street, Highlandtown Arts District, and the Highlandtown Community Association.

We are filling the shoes of Hoehn's Bakery, who served the Highlandtown community for nearly 100 years! We plan to bring joy in our own way!



Function - with fully modern renovations from the HVAC to the floors!



Thank you to all of our volunteers (and the experts we hired along the way).



Form - a beautiful space for our community to call home

Immediate Impact: we've hosted over 100 events at the Highwire Center since opening on September 5th, 2025!

IMPROV IN EVERY NEIGHBORHOOD

Highwire's flagship community outreach program *Improv in Every Neighborhood* brings free arts programming directly to Baltimoreans, with the goal of reaching every single neighborhood in the city.

Accessibility in the arts is multi-faceted; by bringing free workshops directly to individual neighborhoods, Highwire addresses many barriers - finances, transportation, and awareness.

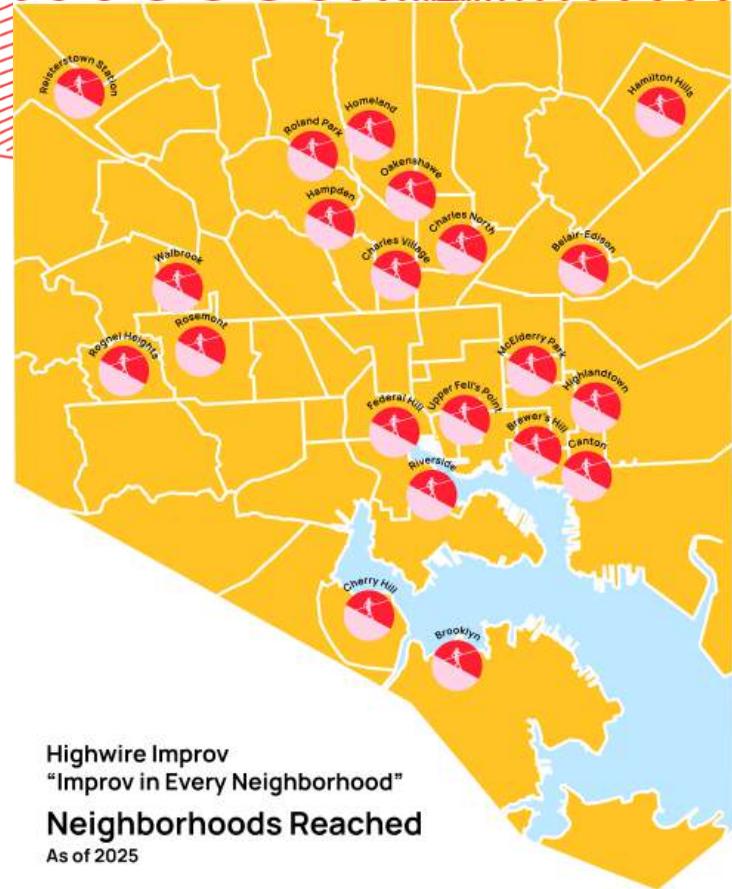
In 2025, Highwire delivered 27 free workshops, reaching 222 participants, to 14 neighborhoods, bringing our lifetime totals to 59 free intro workshops, reaching 422 participants, across 21 neighborhoods.

Crucially, Highwire connects these free programs into our broader education program. In 2025, 23 workshop participants moved into our multi-week classes.

I had an absolute blast at Highwire's intro to improv workshop (so much so that I brought my mom to one a month later!)

The laughter, joy, and connection the intro class brought me encouraged me to sign up for more classes. It was nice to have a free sample of improv!

—Claire L.



IMPROV IS (LOCAL) ART

The arts embody a timeless human endeavor which seeks to connect communities, communicate ideas, and enrich the lives of us as individuals and as societies. On this measure, we believe improv can be the best version of art and entertainment. Improvisation is in a state of cultural transition as major improv institutions in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles have closed, reopened, and been purchased by private equity firms since 2020. By investing in local artists, Highwire Improv puts Baltimore at the forefront of the global development of this young art form.



BLOCK PARTY

A monthly showcase of Baltimore's best Black improvisers, produced in partnership with Maryland Art Place.



BALTIMORE HOLY S#!T

History, storytelling, and improv brought together across the Baltimore Inner Harbor, produced in partnership with Baltimore Water Taxi.



BRIAN JAMES O'CONNELL

BOC has brought workshops to 17 theaters in 16 cities across 4 countries throughout 2025, advancing Highwire Improv as a leader in improv education.

Highwire Improv has produced 147 shows, featuring over 80 ensembles, across 11 venues, for more than 2400 audience members throughout 2025.

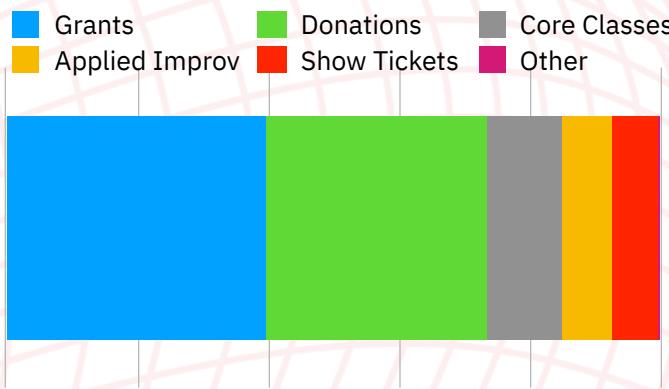
FINANCIAL DETAILS

Highwire Improv believes in financial transparency that goes beyond typical non-profit disclosures - trust and visibility into our financial operations is critical for a community-focused organization.

Income	\$ 228,371.10
Expenses	\$ 231,495.83
Net Income*	\$ (3,124.73)

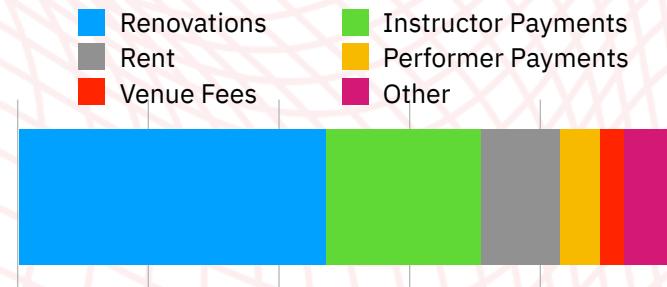
**Approximately \$9,000 in grant payments earned in 2025 are still outstanding.*

Top Income Categories	
Grants	\$ 90,622.60
Donations	\$ 76,345.51
Core Classes	\$ 26,445.72
Applied Improv	\$ 17,459.65
Show Tickets	\$ 15,393.42
Other	\$ 2,104.20



Top Expense Categories	
Renovations	\$ 109,473.39
Instructor Payments	\$ 54,246.93
Rent	\$ 27,976.18
Performer Payments**	\$ 14,078.68
Venue Fees	\$ 8,867.87
Other	\$ 16,852.78

***Some additional performer payments processed via Highwire Venmo.*



Additionally, a few highlights that cross over the budget lines:

- In 2025, we delivered **\$15,787** in payments to performers.
- In 2025, we delivered **\$54,246.93** in payments to instructors.
- We built our Last Laugh Fund, a special account for protecting the organization from unexpected financial events, to **\$10,000**.

Platinum Transparency 2026
Candid.



HOW TO SUPPORT US

By supporting Highwire Improv, you will help create a vibrant organization celebrating all aspects of improv. Our Community First mindset gives value to the contributions of every performer. We have developed global connections which expose performers and audience members to the transformational power of improv, and are now also investing deeply into becoming an integral part of the Baltimore arts community.

Your donations support programming in-person shows, workshops, and classes, scholarships for students, infrastructure for streaming and publishing online shows, as well as professional development training for local and global instructors.

\$25.00

One workshop scholarship, or

One month of fees for our Zoom accounts for meetings and streaming!

\$50.00

One month of fees for our Accounting software, or

One month of fees for our simulcasting streaming software.

\$100.00

One year of domain registration fees.

We are officially a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization, so your donations are tax deductible. You can donate cash, stocks, crypto or donor-advised fund on our website, by visiting [our Support page](#). If you'd like to donate via check, or have an in-kind donation, you can use our mailing address and contact information below:

Highwire Improv
3351 Chestnut Avenue
Baltimore, MD 21211
highwireimprov@gmail.com

CONTACT US

Improv can show up everywhere! Reach out to us with ideas, questions, concerns, partnerships, or things we haven't thought of yet!

Website	https://www.highwireimprov.com
Email	highwireimprov@gmail.com
YouTube	https://www.youtube.com/c/highwireimprov
Facebook	https://www.facebook.com/highwireimprov
TikTok	https://www.tiktok.com/@highwireimprov
Instagram	https://www.instagram.com/highwireimprov

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Barry Wright
President, Co-Founder



Brian James O'Connell



Brian Shea
Vice President, Co-Founder



Cory Anotado



Katie Overby



Kristen McKenzie
Co-Founder



Geoff Taylor
Co-Founder, Director Emeritus



IMPACT REPORT

Report compiled by Barry Wright; design and layout by Cory Anotado.

