



2025

Year-End Impact Report

The Pruno Fund is a non-profit organization providing post-release services for wrongfully convicted individuals. Co-founded by the authors of “Pruno, Ramen, and a Side of Hope” and led by a group of former Northern California Innocence Project staff, we have seen first-hand the elation of our client’s release from prison and then the reality of “and now what?”. Pruno supports and empowers wrongfully convicted individuals as they move forward with their lives through training, financial resources, and community building.

This report details the impact of our programs from January 1 through December 31, 2025.

Letter from our Executive Director



As the Executive Director of The Pruno Fund, I'm honored to share the remarkable strides we've made over the past year—and to extend my heartfelt gratitude for your steadfast support.

At The Pruno Fund, our mission is simple and urgent: to uplift and empower individuals who have been wrongfully convicted by providing the training, resources, and community they need to rebuild their lives. This year, we've seen that mission come alive in powerful ways. I'm deeply proud of what we've accomplished together through our programs and initiatives, and even more inspired by the resilience and determination of the people we serve.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

We know the immense challenges innocent people face as they work to rebuild their lives. To meet those needs, we continued to provide direct financial assistance for housing, transportation, and other essential supports.

Our financial assistance program remains a lifeline—and its impact continues to grow. This year, we provided more than \$28,000 in support and expanded our reach to 16 states. These funds helped exonerees and their families stay in stable housing, maintain safe and reliable transportation, and stay warm during difficult seasons.

TRAINING

Our communications training program offers wrongfully convicted people a safe, healing space to learn how to share their stories, inspire change, and step into leadership within the exoneree community.

In 2025, we hosted two transformative communications retreats. One of these retreats was advanced training retreat where our Exoneree Advisory Council had the opportunity to deepen their advocacy skills and strengthen their leadership as voices for justice.

LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

Guided by the insight and partnership of our one-year-old Exoneree Advisory Council, we will be exploring ways to “go deeper” with our financial assistance program in the coming year. Together, we aim to identify opportunities for more lasting, long-term impact—and we hope to pilot new initiatives that respond directly to the needs of the exoneree community.

Together, we've made a profound difference in the lives of people who were wrongfully convicted. Thank you for being an essential part of this mission and for standing with exonerees and their families in such meaningful ways.

With heartfelt gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nikki". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nikki Pope, Executive Director

Quedellis Rick Walker Financial Assistance

AT A GLANCE

Wrongfully convicted individuals often return home with nothing—no savings, no safety net, and enormous barriers to securing stable, well-paying jobs. Many live below the poverty line, facing financial crises that threaten their ability to rebuild their lives. Pruno steps in at these critical moments, providing emergency support that restores stability, dignity, and hope.

In 2025, our financial assistance program grew by 11% and expanded to reach exonerees in three new states. Together we helped secure safe housing, ensure reliable transportation, keep utilities running, and cover essential medical care.

Since launching this program in 2018, we have invested more than \$100,000 directly into the lives of exonerated individuals—breaking down financial barriers and opening the door to stronger, more secure futures.



30 clients served



Average grant award \$848



Total disbursed over \$28,000



Across 16 states

GRANT AWARD PURPOSES



OF YEARS AFTER EXONERATION GRANT AWARDED

>1 year



1 year



2 years



3-5 years



6+ years



Communications Skills Training

AT A GLANCE

Storytelling is a catalyst for healing and a force for justice. Through our communication retreats, exonerees gain the tools to reclaim their narratives, transform trauma into purpose, and drive meaningful change in their communities.

In 2025, we supported exonerees with two powerful retreat experiences: an intensive leadership and advocacy training for our Advisory Council, and a community-building retreat for Chicago-area exonerees that strengthened connection, confidence, and collective voice.

Since launching this program in 2018, our retreats have empowered more than 70 exonerees and family members. Each participant leaves with renewed agency, a supportive community, and the ability to use their story to advance justice reform.

ASHLAND, OR RETREAT - APRIL



“The workshop can give you tools that are very helpful and gives you an opportunity to decompress.”

“It provides a safe place to express yourself and grow.”



CHICAGO, IL RETREAT - OCTOBER

“Very informative, good atmosphere, great people. This is life changing.”



Exoneree Advisory Council

2025 marked the launch of our Exoneree Advisory Council. Made up of seven exoneree leaders, the Council is already shaping Pruno Fund's future by channeling their lived expertise into program growth, strategic insight, and community-centered innovation. Their leadership ensures our initiatives reflect the real needs and aspirations of the exoneree community.

Our Advisors serve as critical thought partners in shaping Pruno's future. They meet regularly to assess existing programs—clarifying what's working, identifying opportunities for deeper impact, and offering guidance on design and implementation.

They also help us imagine what's possible, bringing fresh perspectives and strategic insight to new program ideas from early concept through execution.



Eric Anderson



Karla Baday



**Sabrina
Butler Smith**



Arturo Jimenez



Roderic Pippen



Elizabeth Ramirez



Khalil Rushdan