

CÄKEABLE

2025 ANNUAL REPORT



This past year has been one of refinement and resilience at Cakeable. While the broader nonprofit landscape has presented real challenges, our team has remained focused, adaptable, and deeply committed to the mission. We took time to clarify our priorities and concentrate our energy where we see the greatest impact: preparing adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities for meaningful, long-term employment through our training program at Cakeable Cafe.

That focus led to a year defined by depth and momentum. In 2025, we graduated 28 interns, nearly half of all individuals who have ever completed the Cakeable program, and are supporting 41 active job placements.

These outcomes are not accidental. They reflect the intentional work ethic and determination of our interns, paired with a team that is relentless in identifying placements where individuals are both capable and genuinely excited to work and grow.

As we have refined our program, our outcomes have strengthened across the board. Interns are thriving as individuals, families are experiencing greater independence and stability, and businesses continue to tell us how much they value Cakeable-trained employees. This year alone, our employer partnerships grew from 33 to 87, a clear signal that our interns are capable and that our model delivers real value to the workforce.

The impact reaches beyond individuals and workplaces. When our interns are employed in the community, they contribute meaningfully to Charlotte's economy and reduce reliance on support systems. Just as importantly, they help shift perceptions, showing our city what we have always known to be true: people with disabilities are capable, talented, and offer immense value when given the opportunity to belong and contribute.

I am deeply grateful to our interns, families, staff, board, founders, employer partners, and supporters who stood with us through a demanding and challenging year. Because of you, Cakeable is stronger, clearer in its purpose, and positioned for even greater impact in the years ahead.


Ken Norton
Executive Director



Ken with Tristian,
a 2025 Cakeable graduate

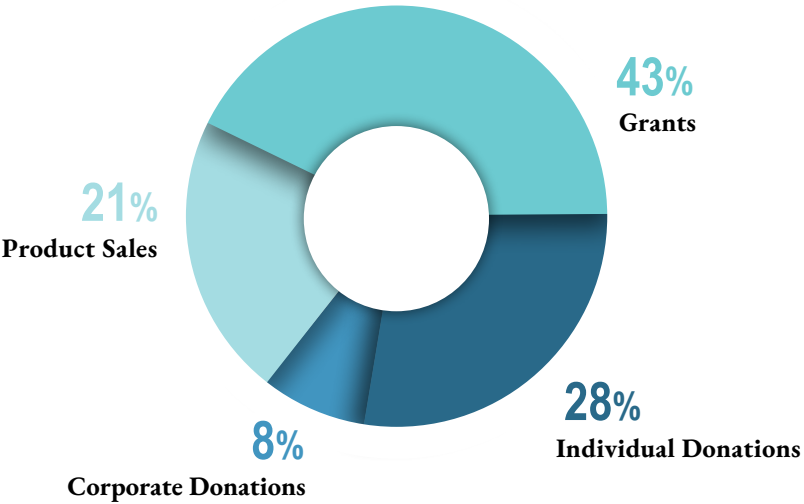


2025 FINANCES

Stewardship and transparency are important to us. We consider it a joy to partner financially with many of you in this work and a privilege to have mutually beneficial relationships, using your gifts wisely while carrying out our mission. Please don't hesitate to reach out if you'd like more information regarding our finances.

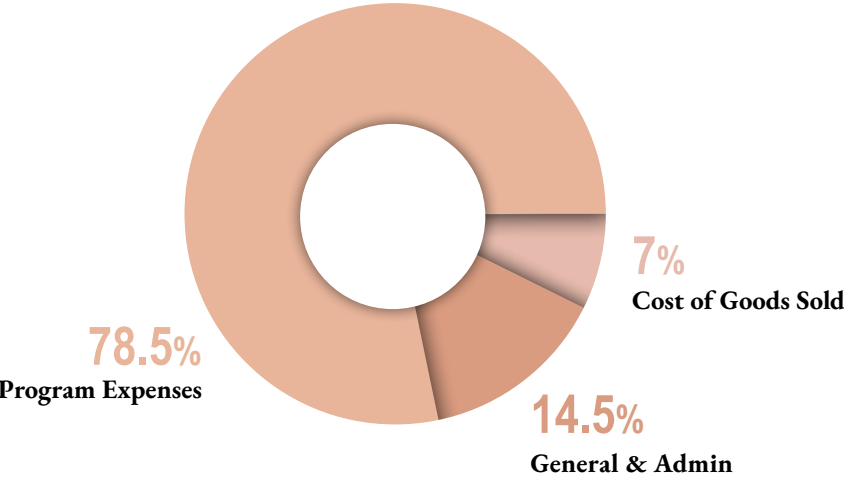
Revenue

Grants:	\$320,000
Product Sales:	\$157,542
Individual Donations:	\$204,833
Corporate Donations:	\$60,543
TOTAL:	\$742,918



Expenses

Program Expenses:	\$624,968
General & Admin:	\$115,612
Cost of Goods Sold:	\$56,135
TOTAL:	\$796,715



OUR MISSION

Work is about more than just a paycheck. It’s about dignity, independence, and belonging. Yet, for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD), finding a job is not just difficult, it’s often out of reach. In fact, 78% of working-age adults with IDD are unemployed, leaving a vast amount of talent and motivation on the sidelines. **Cakeable exists to bridge the gap.** Through our training program, adults with IDD build real-world skills and gain confidence in a supportive

environment. Our goal is not to keep our interns at Cakeable long-term (however much we may want to!), but to prepare them for what comes next. We help our graduates transition into competitive careers within the community and continue supporting them as they settle in. We aren’t just changing individual lives; we’re building a joyfully inclusive city where everyone gets the chance to use their gifts and live with purpose.



Job Training

Cakeable’s vocational training program operates at Cakeable Cafe, a coffee shop in uptown Charlotte. Interns complete paid internships of up to six months, gaining transferable job skills and soft skills in a real workplace setting. With support from experienced supervisors, they learn skills that prepare them for success in the broader workforce.



Job Placement

As interns near the end of their training, our social workers help them identify long-term job opportunities that align with their strengths and interests. We provide individualized coaching throughout the job search and interview process. Caregivers and employers also receive wraparound services to ensure a sustainable placement.



Ongoing Support

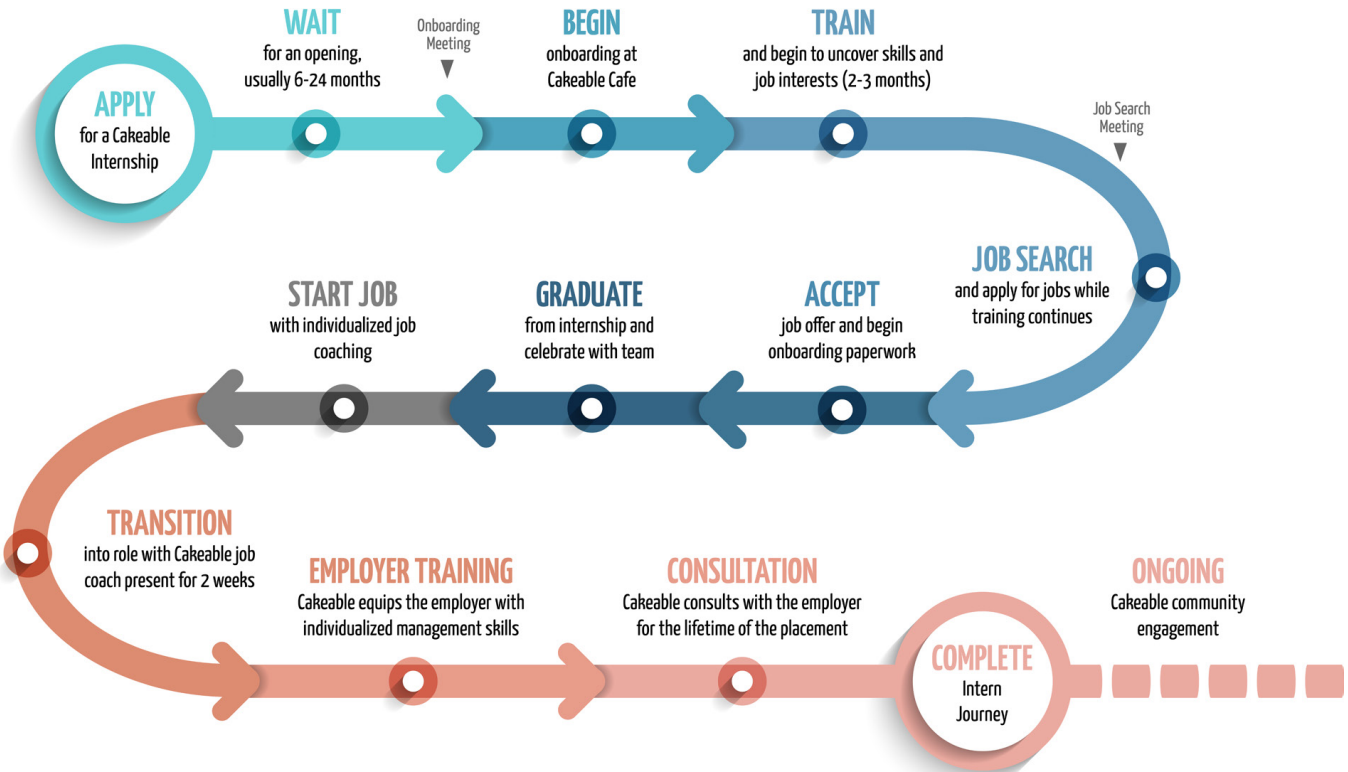
Our support extends beyond the start of the new job. We assist interns during their first weeks on the job and provide training for managers on supporting employees with IDD. We remain engaged for the duration of each placement, offering ongoing consultation. We also provide monthly social events so graduates continue to feel connected.



Lasting Impact

When interns move into community employment, the impact extends beyond the individual. Graduates gain independence and economic mobility, employers benefit from healthier teams and higher retention, and communities grow stronger as individuals with IDD contribute to the local economy and reduce reliance on public services.

THE INTERN JOURNEY





OUR IMPACT IN 2025

60	28	70%	6%	82%
Total Number of Cakeable Graduates	Interns Graduated from Cakeable in 2025	Interns Graduated to Community Jobs	Interns Graduated to Volunteer or Higher Ed	Interns Still at Placement
96%	62%	\$15	3,258	12
Internship Completion Rate	Interns Had Never Been Employed Before	Average Hourly Wage After Graduation	Training Hours for Cakeable Interns in 2025	Social Events Hosted for People with IDD
87	54	22%	113	
Employer Partners (Open to Hiring a Graduate)	New Employer Partners in 2025	Cakeable Cafe YOY Sales Revenue Growth	Individuals Still on the Cakeable Waitlist	



Our ECONOMIC IMPACT



\$30,704

The amount in wages that our interns earned in 2025 during their internships at Cakeable Cafe.



\$6,456

The amount of Medicaid-funded services saved each week when our graduates are working.

3,259

Total hours worked by interns at Cakeable Cafe in 2025.



\$15

The average hourly wage our graduates earn in their next jobs—more than double minimum wage.



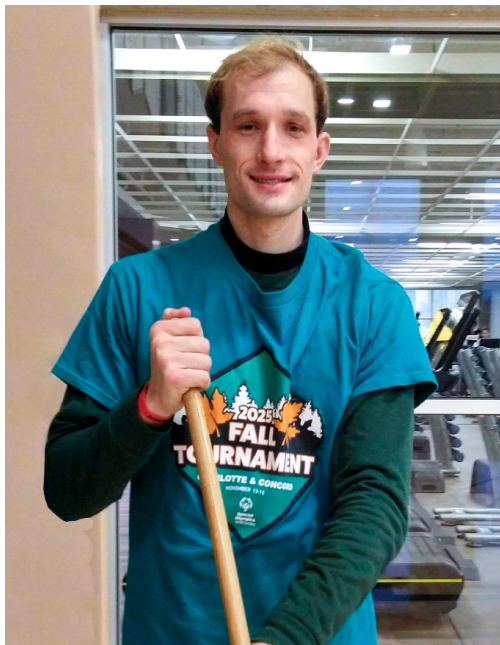
\$406,234

The total yearly income earned collectively by Cakeable graduates in their jobs after Cakeable.



519

The number of hours per week Cakeable graduates worked in their jobs after Cakeable.



We love to
WORK!

Building A BETTER CITY

*Meet just a few of the many Cakeable graduates
now employed across our city.*



OLIVIA

Graduated from Cakeable:
October, 2025

New Job: Marketing Intern
at Amwins; Barista at UNC
Charlotte Marriott Hotel

Olivia is the perfect mix of sweet and sassy. At her interview for her Cakeable Cafe internship, she hid shyly behind her mom. Today, she confidently commands any room with a playful, self-assured attitude! During her time at Cakeable Cafe, Olivia truly blossomed, from jokingly threatening to fire Ken and the entire staff to memorizing regulars' favorite orders and making a mean white chocolate caramel frappe. Her humor, confidence, and strong work ethic quickly set her apart. After graduating, Olivia joined Amwins as a marketing intern, bringing creativity and enthusiasm to every project. She also returned behind the counter as a barista at the UNC Charlotte Marriott Hotel, excited to serve customers again. Wherever she goes, Olivia brings laughter, grace, and an unstoppable spark that lifts every team she joins.



QUADRE

Graduated from Cakeable:
December, 2024

New Job: Prep Cook
with Compass Group at
Wells Fargo University

Quadre joined the Cakeable waitlist in 2021 and waited three years for an internship opportunity. During that time, he was unable to find work, volunteer roles, or other placements, even with support from county services. In July 2024, Quadre finally worked his first shift at Cakeable. While interning, he was also studying Baking and Pastry Arts at CPCC, and it quickly became clear the kitchen was where he thrived. He impressed the team with his work ethic, respectfulness, and culinary skill. With dreams of becoming a pastry chef, Cakeable helped identify a role where he could continue growing. After completing his internship, Quadre accepted a full-time prep cook position with Compass Group at Wells Fargo, where he continues developing his skills as a valued member of the kitchen team.



JONATHAN

Graduated from Cakeable:
September, 2025

New Job: Food Service Worker
at Providence Day School

Jonathan is a standout employee at Providence Day School, where every lunch period is a chance for him to brighten someone's day. From high-fives and sports talk with high schoolers to making sure every student gets their favorite snack, Jonathan brings energy, enthusiasm, and care to every shift. He especially enjoys working with lower school students, patiently helping them navigate the cafeteria. Jonathan has truly found his place and looks forward to seeing his team each day. His cheerful personality boosts morale for coworkers, teachers, and students alike. Before graduating from Cakeable, Jonathan became a fan favorite at the cafe for his friendly service, love of sports, and expert brownie recommendations. On his graduation day, employees from a nearby business even surprised him with gifts, a testament to the impression he leaves wherever he goes.



ABIGAIL

Graduated from Cakeable:
Still employed

New Job: Baker at Gail's
Garden & Bakery

Abigail was one of the first interns through Cakeable's original bakery program. Eager to expand her skills and grow in customer service, she transitioned to being one of the first interns to join Cakeable Cafe when it opened. Her quiet confidence quickly became a cornerstone of her presence. Always encouraging her co-workers to be their best selves, Abigail finds genuine joy in taking customers' orders and socializing with new people every shift. In early October, Abigail took an exciting next step by accepting a position at Gail's Garden & Bakery. Returning to her baking roots, she now assists Gail in making celiac-friendly chocolate chip cookies, carrot cake, blueberry muffins, and all the delicious pastries sold at local farmers markets. Abigail has loved reconnecting with baking, enjoying the process and the satisfaction of seeing her creations come to life.



CAITLYN

Graduated from Cakeable:
October, 2025

New Job: Spa Attendant
at Moodhouse

"I love doing laundry" is a phrase you rarely hear, but it's what Caitlyn announced when she started her dream job as a Spa Attendant at Moodhouse. It took some time for Caitlyn to come out of her shell, but once she did, her personality shone through. During her internship at Cakeable Cafe, Caitlyn's favorite tasks included taking customer orders, cleaning cabinets, and always asking, "What's next?" Her can-do attitude and energy made every task more enjoyable. On graduation day, her supportive community filled the cafe to celebrate all she had accomplished. Caitlyn's playful spirit is impossible to miss. She even uses dance moves to remember the steps for folding fitted sheets, a perfect example of how her positivity brings joy to everyone around her. Caitlyn shows that a bright attitude makes all the difference.



ETIENNE

Graduated from Cakeable:
December, 2025

New Job: Warehouse
Order Builder at Canteen
HQ Warehouse

Etienne first connected with the Cakeable team through one of our monthly socials at the cafe shortly after he moved to the Charlotte area. From the start, it was clear he brought valuable experience with him. Etienne had spent ten years working at a warehouse in his previous hometown, and his former supervisor spoke highly of his strong work ethic and reliability. During his time getting to know Cakeable, the team was consistently impressed by Etienne's attention to detail, focus, and dependability, and it quickly became clear where he would thrive. Today, Etienne works as an Order Builder at Canteen's Warehouse, where he sorts and organizes returned snacks and drinks so products can be reused efficiently. Canteen has gained a steady, skilled employee, and Etienne has found a role where his strengths shine.

HIRE A GRADUATE!



Molly with her manager, Denise, at Canteen HQ

Working with Cakeable has been great experience all around. Meg [Placement Director] and Amanda [Program Director] made bringing in our newest associates a seamless transition.

The whole office is so happy to have Molly here, and they look forward to seeing her every week. We love her sweet and sometimes sassy demeanor!

We can all see how important it is that everyone has a chance at meaningful employment. Molly being here is impactful for anyone walking through the breakroom in that she is enjoying herself, and it makes everyone want to stop and say hi. Her “joke jar” is a hit—everyone participates just to make her smile! Molly makes it clear that she loves coming in to work and thanks us for hiring her.

Inclusive hiring is so rewarding, and it’s so important that we all have a place. Just do it!

Denise Lynch
Canteen

Hiring Jonathan has overall broadened our associates’ mindsets. Understanding that everyone has limitations, strengths and weaknesses no matter age, ability, and/or mindset. The students here at PDS have been very receiving of Jonathan, which is great to see. They slow down and provide him the space he needs as they come through the register. It teaches them to appreciate their health and abilities and not take things for granted.

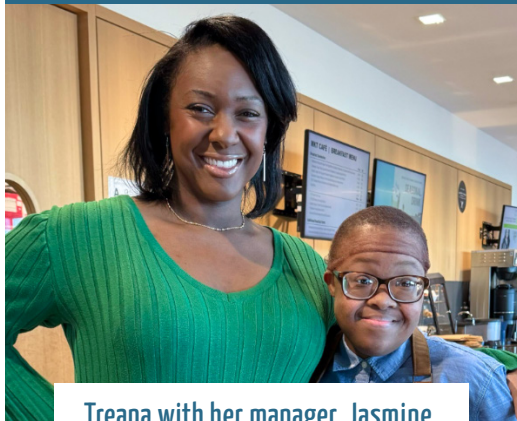
Cakeable has been supportive from the interview process through to hiring, as well as an onsite support/liason for his first couple weeks of onboarding.

If you’re considering partnering with Cakeable, it’s important to be honest in regards to what positions might be the best fit for the candidates. That said, I would reiterate how supportive Meg and Amanda are, and how much support you receive throughout the onboarding process to ensure it is a successful hire.

Michael Chassard
Compass Group at Providence Day School



Jonathan with his manager, Mike, at Providence Day School



Treana with her manager, Jasmine, at Market Cafe (Compass Group)



Isabel with her manager, Ashley, at Hickory Grove Christian School



Robert with his manager, Susan, at Chicken Salad Chick



Paxton with his manager, Patrick, at Sweetwaters Cafe

Are you looking for dependable, motivated employees for your team?

We would love to introduce you to a Cakeable graduate who could be a great fit for your team.

Cakeable interns are trained in essential workplace skills, from customer service to safety and sanitation practices, using equipment properly, and demonstrating a team-oriented attitude.

You won’t be doing it alone!

Cakeable partners with you throughout onboarding and beyond. We provide hands-on support during the transition and ongoing consultation for the life of the placement to promote long-term success.

How the process works:

-  **Initial conversation** about your workplace and open roles
-  **Candidate match** based on your needs and the intern’s strengths
-  **Interview support**, including introductions and workplace tours
-  **Accommodation planning** in collaboration with your team
-  **Optional manager training** on practical ways to support employees with IDD
-  **On-site job coaching** during the first two weeks
-  **Ongoing support**, including check-ins and on-call consultation

Why Become a Cakeable Employer Partner?

Inclusive employment empowers individuals with IDD to gain dignity, independence, and economic mobility. It also benefits businesses! Employers consistently report improvements in employee retention, team productivity, workplace culture, customer loyalty, and overall business performance.

Ready to learn more?

Contact Placement Director Meg Kelly to explore an Employer Partnership with Cakeable: meg@wearecakeable.org.

PARTNER WITH US



GIVE a financial gift to support our mission and enable us to expand our vocational training program.



COME to Cakeable Cafe to support our business and meet our team!



INTRODUCE us to others in your network who may be interested in our mission.



HIRE a Cakeable graduate or advocate for individuals with IDD to be hired in your workplace.

Sponsor an Intern!

\$1,000

gets someone off the waitlist, so they can begin their internship.

\$3,000

supports an intern for 3 months of training at Cakeable Cafe.

\$6,000

supports an intern for their entire internship, 6 months of training at Cakeable Cafe.

\$12,000

supports an intern for an entire year of training plus job placement support.

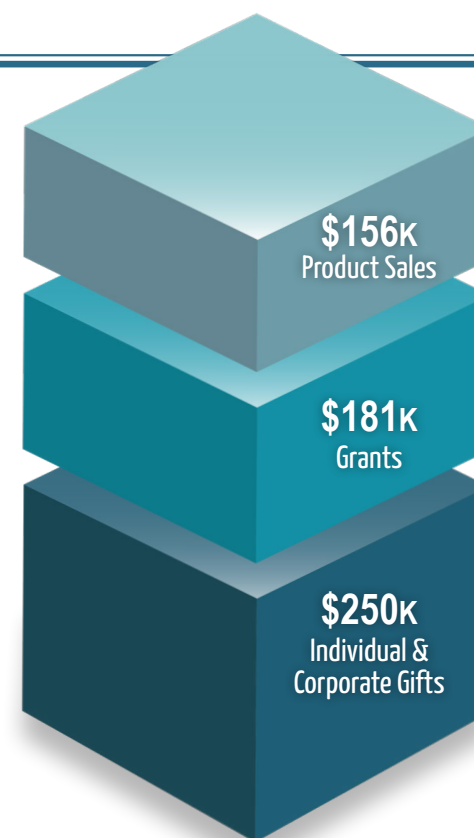


LOOKING AHEAD

2026 Goals

Our mission is powered by Cakeable Cafe, which funds 21% of our expenses.

We rely on additional support because we provide 1 on 1 training for every intern, which is essential to empowering their growth. Can you help us bridge the gap?



2026 REVENUE GOAL:
\$587k

- 1. Graduate 30 Interns.** After graduating 55 interns over the last two years, we've found that an annual cohort of 30 interns is our "sweet spot." This size ensures our cafe runs smoothly while allowing our instructors to provide the 1:1 training our interns deserve. It also guarantees every intern gets enough weekly shifts to master their new skills.
- 2. Strengthen Our Foundation.** Sustainability is about more than just staying open; it's about growing our impact. This year, we're focused on diversifying our revenue by pursuing new business opportunities and fresh fundraising streams. By tightening our operations and exploring new partnerships, we're securing Cakeable's future for years to come.
- 3. Diversify Employment Opportunities.** Last year, we aimed for 30 new partners and ended up gaining 54! With 87 employer partners now on board, our 2026 goal is to broaden our horizons. We want to recruit partners across a wide variety of industries so our graduates can find roles that align with their unique interests and skill sets.
- 4. Bridge the Employment Gap.** We're not just training interns; we're training the community. Following our 2025 pilot, we are opening our IDD training course to any business looking to foster a more inclusive workplace. Plus, we continue to offer lifelong support for every placement to ensure both the employer and the employee thrive long-term.
- 5. Shorten the Wait.** Right now, 113 people are on the waitlist to join the Cakeable family, with some waiting up to two years for a spot. Our ultimate dream is to open new locations. Expanding our footprint is the only way to clear our waitlist and welcome these eager individuals into our program sooner.

CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA

CAKEABLE

WE CREATE OPPORTUNITIES

wearecakeable.org