

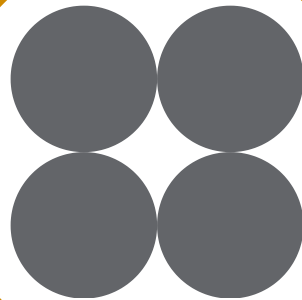
Q3 REPORT

20



FROST
for Zcash

SHIELDED AID
INITIATIVE



25

Zcash Foundation
zfnd.org

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Our Mission

The Zcash Foundation is a 501(c)(3) public charity that builds financial privacy infrastructure for the public good, primarily serving users of the Zcash protocol and blockchain.

Executive Summary

Our ability to advance both cutting-edge technical infrastructure and mission-driven applications put Zcash's privacy-preserving technology to work protecting the world's most vulnerable populations.

This quarter marks a period of significant progress for the Zcash Foundation, highlighted by the launch of the [Shielded Aid Initiative](#), an innovative program that leverages Zcash's privacy technology to set a new global standard for secure, compliant, and dignified humanitarian aid delivery. This initiative reflects our belief that privacy is both a human right and a practical necessity, empowering aid organizations to protect their beneficiaries through rigorous privacy risk assessments and privacy-preserving solutions.

With humanitarian organizations distributing between \$6 billion and \$10 billion in cash aid annually, the stakes are immense. Many aid programs are adopting transparent blockchains that unintentionally expose recipients' personal data, creating permanent public records that hostile actors can exploit. The Shielded Aid Initiative addresses this urgent gap by helping NGOs integrate Zcash's zero-knowledge proof technology into their systems, consulting on privacy-preserving digital aid pilots, and advocating for privacy-first design across humanitarian interventions. The initiative rests on three pillars: privacy equals protection from surveillance and abuse, privacy equals compliance with humanitarian data standards, and privacy equals sustainability for long-term, secure aid programs.

Beyond this transformative humanitarian work, we announced the Foundation's [3-Year Vision for Community Events](#), laying out an ambitious roadmap for global learning, collaboration, and network-building across the Zcash ecosystem. This strategy supports both in-person and virtual engagement through initiatives designed to foster innovation, resource stewardship, and inclusivity.

Executive Summary

The community initiatives roadmap includes: [Zcomm](#), a new virtual gathering for community builders to share practical toolkits on organizing events and growing engagement; Zcash Dev Summits, focused gatherings for technical alignment and collaborative problem-solving; Zcon7 in 2026, our flagship in-person conference emphasizing deep connection and engagement; and Zcon Voices, a new regionally relevant event series that empowers local communities through culturally tailored programming in local languages. In 2027 and 2028, we'll continue this cycle with virtual editions of Zcon, additional dev summits with optional hackathons, and ongoing community-led events based on participant feedback and evolving needs.

Our engineering teams delivered major updates with [Zebra v2.5.0](#) and [Zebra v2.4.2](#), incorporating important security patches, expanded feature sets, and improved performance and compatibility to ensure the strength and reliability of the Zcash network. Notably, [Zebra 2.5.0](#) successfully implemented and deployed NU6.1 on the Zcash public Testnet. We also released [FROST v2.2.0](#), which features a critical security fix and enhancements for cross-compatibility and cryptographic flexibility, keeping our cryptographic core robust and adaptable. This release included validation for key parameters to prevent potential security vulnerabilities, updates to make most crates no-std compatible, and new distributed key generation refresh functions.

Finally, as part of our ongoing commitment to transparency and legal compliance, we updated the Zcash Community Forum's [Terms of Service](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). These updates align the Forum's documentation with current data protection requirements, clarify cross-regional compliance (including U.S., EU, and UK standards), and introduce new overview sections in each document that provide a clear, user-friendly summary of key rights, responsibilities, and policies.

Executive Summary

Together, these achievements reflect the dedication of our team and Zcash ecosystem partners. As we continue to shape the future of privacy and financial equity, the Foundation remains committed to impactful solutions, transparent governance, and open collaboration with all stakeholders. This quarter demonstrates our ability to advance both cutting-edge technical infrastructure and mission-driven applications that put Zcash's privacy-preserving technology to work protecting the world's most vulnerable populations.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alex Bornstein". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Alex" and last name "Bornstein" clearly distinguishable.

Alex Bornstein
Interim Executive Director and COO

Introducing SAI

Zcash Foundation is excited to announce the Shielded Aid Initiative (SAI), which is dedicated to making privacy-preserving technology available and accessible for humanitarian aid organizations around the world.

Why Privacy Is Urgent in Aid

Many humanitarian groups rely on transparent blockchains like Bitcoin and Ethereum to boost donor confidence and transaction transparency. However, these platforms unintentionally make sensitive beneficiary data permanently public, inadvertently exposing individuals to risks such as targeting or exclusion. The consequences of these privacy gaps are serious; vulnerable people can be re-identified and harmed in the aftermath of well-intentioned digital aid programs.

How SAI Makes a Difference

SAI will equip NGOs with privacy-preserving tools and expert guidance. Using zero-knowledge proofs at the core of Zcash technology, SAI will enable secure, compliant digital cash assistance while shielding recipient identities. This means organizations can meet both donor requirements and high standards for beneficiary protection—without ever storing or exposing personally identifiable information.

What SAI Offers

SAI provides comprehensive privacy and technology consultations for NGOs and aid agencies, along with rigorous privacy risk assessments of digital aid pilots. Additionally, our team offers individualized support in designing and implementing privacy-preserving solutions, while delivering strategic guidance for senior leadership on integrating privacy into organizational policy and practice.

With SAI now launched, we stand ready to partner with organizations seeking effective, privacy-preserving approaches to digital aid. For more information, visit zfnd.org or email SAI@zfnd.org.

Shielded Aid Initiative



Peer-Reviewed Publication

A key milestone this quarter was the publication of *Privacy in peril: safeguarding digital data in humanitarian blockchain initiatives* on Humanitarian Practice Network's respected, peer-reviewed practitioner platform. This article features digital privacy as a critical, yet often overlooked, human right in humanitarian blockchain projects, and examines real-world risks and case studies to highlight the importance of designing systems with privacy at their core.

The article emphasizes the need to position privacy at the center of sector-wide accountability and innovation, calling for rigorous data governance, participatory approaches, and robust oversight. Our goal is helping to set a sector standard for ethical digital innovation.

Being published in such a respected forum underscores our commitment to maximum visibility and sector impact. This marks the first in a series of publications planned for the coming quarters to further advance these priorities.

We invite you to [read the article](#).

Privacy in peril: safeguarding digital data in humanitarian blockchain initiatives

August 26, 2025

Alex Bornstein Elise Hamdon



Shielded Aid Initiative

Engineering Summary

In the third quarter, we transitioned our engineering processes from traditional sprints to a lean approach, aiming to improve focus, reduce waste, and enhance team communication. We are progressing with zcashd deprecation and we released Zebra v2.4.2 and v2.5.0. The work for NU6.1 was completed followed by an audit, which received positive results and minimal requested changes.

Zebra used to decide whether to generate a V4 or V5 coinbase tx based on a config option, but now it will be determined based on the network and height. The `TrustedChainSync` module now syncs all non-finalized blocks from the connected Zebra node, rather than just the best chain; this is because Zaino is now serving more than just lightwallets, requiring access to block and chain tip data for "side chains." We added new RPC methods and new fields to existing ones. Functionality has been added to prevent the irrecoverable loss of blocks in the non-finalized state if Zebra restarts after zcashd deprecation, mitigating the risk of the network losing those blocks. We have also improved response/error typing in state services.

From the DevOps side, we made substantial improvements to how we test and build Zebra, making the development process faster and more reliable for everyone. We implemented a new test runner that allows tests to run in parallel, which significantly reduced the time it takes to verify code changes. We also optimized how our Docker containers are built, improving caching so that we are not rebuilding things unnecessarily. Perhaps most importantly, we simplified how Zebra is configured in Docker environments by moving away from a complex file generation system to a more straightforward approach using environment variables. These changes mean developers get feedback on their work much sooner, and the system is easier to understand and troubleshoot when issues arise.

We also undertook a major cleanup of our continuous integration system, removing nearly 3,000 lines of complex configuration and consolidating 19 separate workflow files into a more streamlined setup. This effort focused on making the CI system more accessible to contributors, especially those working from forks of the project. We moved our documentation hosting making it easier for anyone to deploy and maintain. We also improved security by fixing how permissions and secrets are handled. Along the way, we addressed several edge cases related to caching, disk mounting, and status checks, making the entire system more robust and predictable for both core developers and community contributors.

Looking ahead, our next steps include completing the zcashd deprecation work, continuing to refine our new CI, focusing on NU7, and performance improvements.

ZF Use of Funds

During Q3 2025, ZF's monthly operating expenses averaged approximately \$199,377 USD. The breakdown of resource allocation is as follows:

Community Calls, Event Sponsorship, Forum & Comms (outreach)	\$14,492
Conference & Professional Development	\$15,470
Dev Summit	\$0
General Overhead	\$53,100
Program Expenses	\$48,615
Retreat	\$0
Team Compensation	\$466,455
ZCG Support	\$0
Zcon	\$0
ZF Grants	\$0
Total	\$598,131

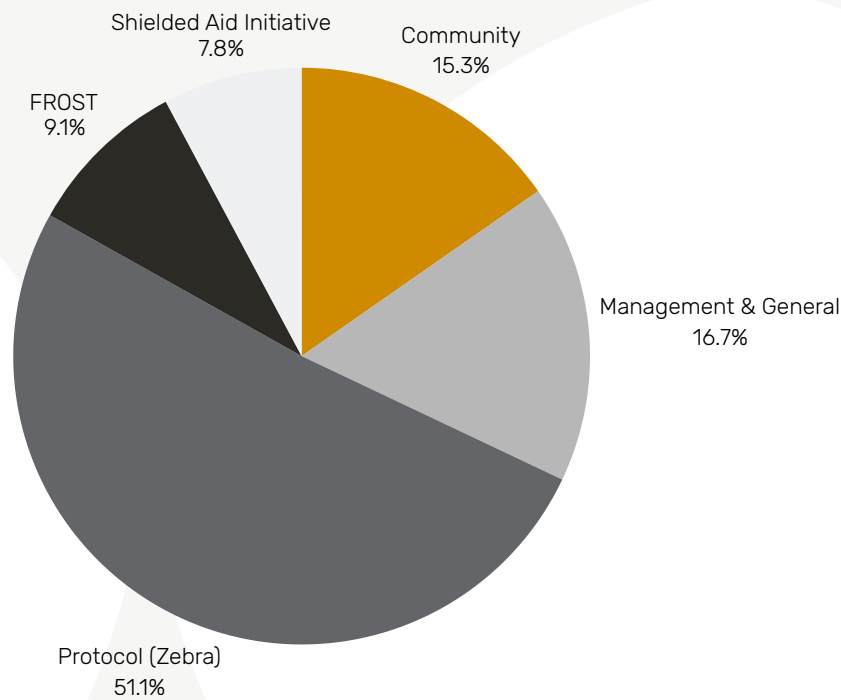
General overhead refers to costs not related to labor. These include: accounting, HR account fees, custodial service and banking fees, insurance, legal fees, incorporation fees, operating accounts, website expenses, and trademark enforcement expenses.

Team compensation encompasses all compensation and benefits paid to ZF staff and contractors.

Unaudited and subject to change.

ZF Programs

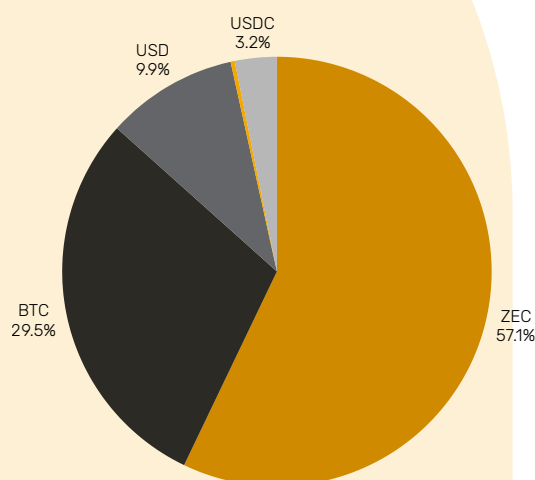
This table and the chart on the following page explain what type of programs ZF invested in during Q3. Please note that each ZF team member's compensation and benefits are allocated to the program(s) to which they contributed.



Community	\$91,570
FROST	\$54,258
Management & General	\$100,082
Protocol (Zebra)	\$305,537
Shielded Aid Initiative	\$46,686
Total	\$598,131

Q3 Financial Snapshot

UNRESTRICTED FUNDS		
TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS		
LIQUID ASSETS	COIN BALANCE	USD VALUE
USD	\$ -	\$1,573,185
USDC	\$500,000	\$500,000
ZEC	121,638.82	\$9,062,092
BTC	41.04	\$4,681,469
ETH	11.91	\$49,388
TOTAL LIQUID ASSETS		\$15,866,134
TOTAL LIABILITIES		
GRANT COMMITMENTS		-
ACCRUED EXPENSES & PAYROLL LIABILITIES		-
TOTAL LIABILITIES		\$0
NET LIQUID ASSETS		
NET LIQUID ASSETS		\$15,866,134
USD VALUE (as of September 30th): \$74.50 USD/ZEC \$114,060.36 USD/BTC \$4,145.95 USD/ETH		NB: This simplified balance sheet does not include intangible or illiquid assets and liabilities that would appear on ZF's full balance sheet (e.g. trademark, etc.)



% of assets are based on the end of quarter USD value

Community Focus

**We convene and facilitate authentic
Community conversations and experiences
to support and grow the Zcash ecosystem.**

Blog Posts

- [FROST 2.2.0 Release](#)
- [Zcash Foundation Launches New Initiative to Champion Privacy-Preserving Humanitarian Aid](#)
- [Announcing ZF's 3-Year Vision for Community Events](#)
- [Zebra 2.5.0 Release](#)
- [Zebra 2.4.2 Release](#)

Video Playlists

- [Zcash Arborist Calls](#)
- [FROST for Zcash](#)
- [DevOps](#)

Get Involved

- Zcash Community Forum: <https://forum.zcashcommunity.com>
- Zcash Foundation: <https://discord.gg/na6QZNd>
- Zcash Global: <https://discord.gg/zcash>
- Zcash R&D: <https://discord.gg/Wg5cRK2eUM>
- Electric Coin Co: <https://discord.gg/Huzg9C7EHP>
- Zero-Knowledge AV Club: <https://www.zkav.club>
- Zcash Arborist Calls: <https://zfnd.org/arborist-calls>

THANK YOU ZF BOARD

ZF would like to thank our board members for their continued contributions. Board members are uncompensated volunteers, who dedicate their time and expertise to shape the future of the Zcash Foundation while providing vital governance oversight.

- **Marta Belcher**: President and Chair of the Filecoin Foundation as well as the Filecoin Foundation for the Decentralized Web. She is also General Counsel and Head of Policy at Protocol Labs, and special counsel to the Electronic Frontier Foundation.
- **Ted Hoffmann**: (boggerster on the Forum) is a European citizen fluent in French, German, and English, with nearly a decade of experience in cryptocurrency. He's particularly passionate about Ethereum and Zcash, valuing open finance and permissionless financial privacy as essential safeguards against authoritarian financial controls. He believes Zcash's privacy features are critical for fostering a democratic society. Drawing on his extensive knowledge of blockchain ecosystems like Ethereum, Cosmos, Bitcoin, and Zcash, Ted advocates for a community-first approach to advancing Zcash, prioritizing effective communication, streamlined technology, robust onboarding, and a transition to proof-of-stake (PoS).
- **Taylor Hornby**: (earthrise on the Forum) brings extensive experience to the Zcash ecosystem, having worked at the Electric Coin Company (ECC) during Zcash's pre-launch, later returning to ECC in 2018 as a security engineer, before leaving in 2022 and becoming the Zcash Ecosystem Security Lead through 2023.
- **Andrew Miller** (Chair & Treasurer): Assistant professor in the electrical and computer engineering department at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and an associate director of the Initiative for Cryptocurrencies and Contracts.
- **J.W. Verret**: Associate Professor at the Antonin Scalia Law School at George Mason University, where he teaches banking, securities, and corporation law.

