



ANNUAL



Report



2023

ACLU
Wisconsin

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SHOWING UP FOR OUR COMMUNITIES, SHOWING UP FOR OUR RIGHTS

Dr. Melinda Brennan, ACLU of WI Executive Director

As our constitutional rights continue to be threatened, we know the path forward is through community education, empowerment, and shared action. This led us to become even more community-centered this past year as we've navigated life as a critical battleground state in the fight for democracy.

One of the most crucial parts of success in Wisconsin was building a team that can meet the moment – a staff who values humans impacted by issues and is committed to being community-centered in all work. The staff shares the key values of showing up for each other, showing up for communities, and showing up for the hard work ahead.

This past year, we've renewed and deepened partnerships with other organizations, led as a clarion voice for defending democracy and our rights, and loudly spoke the truth as a trusted messenger. We knew we were on target because we actively listened to communities and let that experiential knowledge inform all other areas of work.

Part of the magic is making sure educational information and calls to action are accessible and responsive to the needs of our Wisconsin community – and when we engage and fight for our rights, we remember why we are doing this work and how it impacts real people's lives.

We were tested in many ways this past year, including the fall of Roe, the heartbreak of the summer, where the rights of several generations were swept away, leaving Wisconsinites engaging in a battle over a relic law from 1849. Very recently, we've had hopeful changes in reproductive justice, and that hope is built on the hard work of two election cycles fighting for democracy-sustaining elected officials.

As we engaged in educational and advocacy work to educate voters about their choices on the ballot, we walked the walk – we came together as an integrated team. This meant community programming, accessible education, partnerships with key organizations, engaging volunteers and donors, and policy, lobbying, and analytical work that more than half of our team engaged in during the November and April elections. We worked closely with our national ACLU partners and across our team in Wisconsin and remained dedicated to our community and human-centered compass.

As we continue defending democracy in Wisconsin, we know where power comes from – the people, which has been and will continue to be what informs our work going forward.



Dr. Melinda Brennan

Executive Director

EMPOWERING THE COMMUNITY

WHAT DOES OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT DEPARTMENT DO?

The Community Engagement department is dedicated to promoting the civil liberties and civil rights of all residents of Wisconsin through education, outreach, organizing, and programming for adults and youth. This is accomplished by building and sustaining relationships with coalitions, high school student alliances, college chapters, and members, and through community events that focus on ACLU-WI issues that impact our community.

THEORY OF COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

We believe that to make an impact, we must work collaboratively with community members directly impacted by the inequalities, whether providing support through Know Your Rights training or showing up for Back To School Drives, to be a resource for the community. It is impossible to make a change and support the community fully, including their wants and needs, without being in the community in multiple ways.

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS CONCEPT

We understand that in order to make community reflective change, we must have conversations centering on the voices of our community. The concept of community conversations stems from the understanding that we need to actively listen, uplift the voices of our community members, and create space for them so we can all learn from each other.

Community Conversations is about sharing space and creating dialogue with different members of our community. The modalities of our community conversations vary from traditional Q&A panels with community leaders to Circle facilitation with community members directly impacted by particular issues.

JAIL VOTING COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

On Thursday, December 1, 2022, the ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation held first of its kind Community Conversations: Voting Rights while Incarcerated. Our report aimed to analyze previous steps taken and any progress of Wisconsin jail administrators to address formerly identified challenges and shortfalls in their respective jail voting policies, which can itself facilitate widespread de facto disenfranchisement in Wisconsin. Furthermore, this update aimed to highlight the fundamental and intersectional barriers preventing eligible Wisconsinites, both within and outside the carceral system, from fully participating in the voting process.

We provided an educational discussion with multiple leaders in the community to ensure that the report was accessible in order for folks to have a deeper understanding of jail voting and the landscape in Wisconsin. In alignment with our values, we prioritize respectfully listening to and centering the voices and experiences of directly impacted people. This was the first of its kind community conversation by the community engagement team that was rooted in an honest, educational, activating discussion.

A crucial part of this work was led by Melissa Ludin, Nour Kalbouneh, and James Stein, our advocacy deputy director. The three provided valuable insight into the Community Conversation event as panelists discussed recommendations and next steps for Wisconsinites.

MEET OUR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TEAM



Justice Grau

Director of Community Engagement

As someone deeply committed to youth rights and equal education, Justice believes all students have the right to feel safe at school regardless of their racial background, sexual orientation, or religious preference. Other ACLU issues she is particularly passionate about include racial justice, reproductive freedom, and police, prisons, and criminal law reform.



Melissa Ludin

Statewide Coalitions and Relationship Advocate

Melissa is directly impacted and she leads with an unrelenting passion for criminal justice reform and reentry peer support. Melissa's firsthand experience started while she was incarcerated more than 12 years ago. Once incarcerated, she quickly became a leader by galvanizing women from extremely diverse backgrounds to open up about their paths and learn from each other. Her goal was to build trust and provide support.



Abby Kanyer

Deputy Director of Community Engagement

As a Milwaukeean, Abby is particularly passionate about racial justice initiatives and how structural power systems have created substantial and detrimental equity gaps in our city. She says that her background as a graduate of a traditionally all-women college made her deeply invested in reproductive rights and ethics. Abby is eager to facilitate volunteer opportunities for community members to connect with one another, support partner organizations and adopt a human-centered approach to initiating change in themselves and their respective communities.



Nour Kalbouneh

Legal Intake and Community Engagement Coordinator

Nour's work as a liaison between the legal department and community engagement team has served as a model for the approach to integrated advocacy at the affiliate. As an undocumented immigrant, Nour is deeply invested in immigrants' rights. Educating other immigrants and helping them understand their rights is something that Nour strives to do.



OUR TEAM VALUES:

1. The importance of understanding how race, gender, class, sexuality, religion, and disability impact the way we navigate community engagement
2. A dignity-based, human-centered approach that rejects the practices of white supremacy
3. Respect for the rights, differences, and dignity of others
4. The lived experience of those who are impacted by a criminal conviction

PROTECTING OUR YOUTH

Young people are the next generation of civil and human rights defenders, making youth work essential to the mission of the ACLU-WI. The purpose of this work is to educate and empower Wisconsin's youth to become successful civil liberties and civil rights advocates and leaders for their schools and communities. Youth work and programming focuses on important issues such as voting rights, reproductive freedom, LGBTQIA rights, racial justice, police reform, youth rights and equal education, and more.

Student Alliance, Youth Social Justice Forum (YOSO), and Summer Justice Institute (SJI) are three of the cornerstone programs run by our Community Engagement department. All three programs work together to create a circle of programming for the youth of Milwaukee and beyond. While each program is its own individual entity, each one can also be considered an entry point into another.

These programs have similar goals. They give the youth of the community an opportunity to engage with and grow in understanding of their civil rights and liberties, educate youth about the work currently being done in the community surrounding civil rights and liberties, grow leadership skills and opportunities, and help youth build connection with their peers and other community members. Workshops, site visits, artistic endeavors, and interpersonal connection give students an opportunity to learn about and begin their journey in civil rights and liberties processes.

ACLU OF WISCONSIN STUDENT ALLIANCE

The ACLU of Wisconsin Student Alliance consists of high school, college, or law school clubs that promote civil rights and liberties on their campus and within their communities. Student Alliance provides students with the opportunity to become successful civil rights and liberties advocates by hosting fundraisers, food drives, art projects, film screenings, civil rights and liberties activist training, and voter registration events. This mission is fostered through meetings, workshops, and events that

blend art, activism, education, and community organizing. Student Alliance provides leadership development, updates on current ACLU issues, and educational programs such as "Know Your Rights" training.

As the ACLU of Wisconsin works every day to protect our rights, Student Alliance members understand that young people are the next generation of vigilant defenders of civil and human rights. Student Alliance invites impassioned and creative individuals interested in gaining the skills and knowledge needed to become effective advocates and organizers for their community, to become involved at their school!



MEET OUR YOUTH PROGRAMMING COORDINATOR **Abigail Homuth**

Youth Coordinator Abby Homuth has been with the ACLU of Wisconsin since August 2022. The goal of the Youth Coordinator position is to create programming that blends education, art, activism, and community organizing.

Abby came to the ACLU with a wide variety of experience working with youth, providing support to those impacted by the juvenile and criminal legal systems, advocating for the best interest of youth and families by supporting their education, personal development, mental health needs, and more.

Abby leads, develops, and facilitates youth-centered programs, with the purpose of fostering long-lasting and meaningful relationships between young people and the ACLU-WI. She also works to build relationships with community partners who hold the same values and goals as the ACLU-WI and are interested in youth work and engagement.



OUR VOTE IS OUR VOICE

HOW THE ACLU OF WISCONSIN EMPOWERED VOTERS ALL YEAR LONG

Nonpartisan voting work has always been at the heart of everything we do at the ACLU of Wisconsin. This year, we got deeply involved in both the November 2022 gubernatorial election and the spring State Supreme Court race this past April.

2022 GUBERNATORIAL RACE

Our engagement in the gubernatorial election was driven by a mission to educate and empower voters. We wanted to increase voters' knowledge of each of the candidates running for governor in the general election, and we wanted to do so on a large scale. We created a voter education guide, using the candidates' own on-the-record statements to provide Wisconsinites with a clear, concise, and straightforward look at where both candidates stood on key issue areas. We used the voter guide in a direct mail campaign, in newspaper and digital ads, and on social media to maximize our potential audience. In total, we reached one in every five Wisconsinites.

ELECTION PROTECTION

Aside from those extensive voter education campaigns, the ACLU did what we always do – defend the right to vote. Our team engaged in election protection work, working around the clock on Election Day to answer voters' questions, solve problems, and make sure the constitutional rights of Wisconsinites were upheld. Through and through, every member of our team is committed to preserving and expanding democracy – no matter what it takes.

“I feel immense gratitude for all the people who poured themselves into the fight for a just future, resisting the worst impulses of our state, and showing up to support communities — especially those who have been historically excluded, advocating from the margins. Their passion and endless pursuit continue to give me strength. Together, we made sure that the peoples' voice was heard in this vital election.”

— **Dr. Melinda Brennan**, ACLU of Wisconsin Executive Director

APRIL SUPREME COURT RACE

State supreme courts can act as the last defense for our rights, and Wisconsin's high court is poised, in the coming years, to make monumental decisions affecting voting rights, gerrymandering, the criminal legal system, abortion, and more. The stakes of Wisconsin's spring supreme court race were clear, and we knew that educating voters was the crucial next step. With that clarity of vision, we — the ACLU and ACLU of Wisconsin — deployed a whole-of-organization approach to ensure every eligible voter had the tools, knowledge, and resources they needed to cast an informed vote.

Our campaign focused on highlighting the candidates' positions on abortion and worked to reach voters through radio advertisements on this issue, direct mail, door-to-door canvassing, community outreach, and social media. The ads reached 570,000 listeners over ten times each. Abortion was the defining issue of this election, and these ads helped people across the state get to know each candidate's views in their own words. To educate even more voters, our team sent three flights of mail breaking down the candidates' perspectives on abortion as well as voting rights, LGBTQ+ rights, and more, while we made calls, knocked on doors, talked one-on-one with voters, tabled in areas across Milwaukee, and recruited volunteers. In total, we engaged well over 100,000 additional people through these tactics, and those numbers grow even larger when factoring in other communication channels like social media, web traffic, and mass email communications.

ADVOCACY

LEGISLATIVE TRACKING + POLICY ANALYSIS

At the start of the 2023-24 Wisconsin Legislative Session, the affiliate launched a comprehensive bill tracker on the ACLU-WI website featuring summaries and analysis of legislation impacting civil rights and liberties for which the ACLU has registered positions. Individual bill pages also feature testimony submitted to legislative committees, blog posts, and op-eds published on bills moving through the legislative process.

The Advocacy team also monitors and analyses legislation and policy being considered by local policymaking bodies across the state such as county boards, city councils, and school boards.

EDUCATION

We work to educate ACLU-WI members and followers on the issues through accessible short and long-form content on the website, on social media, in the press, and IRL at community events.

MOBILIZATION

When civil rights and liberties are under attack, we provide opportunities for Wisconsinites to fight back by engaging policymakers through tactics like message actions, petitions, phone banks, and public meeting action alerts – all while working to build long-term power in Milwaukee and statewide.

LOBBYING

As registered lobbyists at the state level and in the city of Milwaukee, Advocacy team members share policy analysis with elected officials and fight for legislation that protects the civil rights and liberties of all Wisconsinites.

MEET OUR ADVOCACY TEAM



Amanda Merkwae (She/Her)

Advocacy Director

joined the ACLU-WI in September 2022. As Advocacy Director, she leads the team's policy and mobilization work alongside Deputy Advocacy Director James Stein (he/him).



James Stein (He/Him)

Deputy Advocacy Director

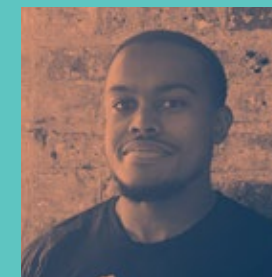
As the deputy advocacy director, James supports the ACLU team by integrating organizing tools and data programs into campaigns by training and supporting staff and volunteer teams. He helps identify, recruit, train, and organize volunteers, and maintain databases and information to strengthen ACLU campaigns.



Conor Miller (He/Him)

Political Manager

joined the ACLU-WI as Campaign & Political Manager in January 2023 and leads the team's organizing program.



Jon McCray Jones (He/Him)

Policy Analyst

joined the ACLU-WI in January 2023. As a Policy Analyst, he engages in rigorous research, writing, TikTok-ing, and lobbying across all ACLU issue areas.



Maria Robbins (She/They)

Field Organizer

Maria Robbins joined the ACLU-WI in March 2023 as Organizers working to engage the community through civic education and political action.



Arielle Winter (She/Her)

Organizer

Arielle Winter joined the ACLU-WI in March 2023 as Organizers working to engage the community through civic education and political action.



IN THE COURTS

We've celebrated many legal wins in the past year. Take a look at some of our accomplishments and ongoing work.

LEGAL VICTORIES

TRANSGENDER STUDENTS IN MADISON METROPOLITAN SCHOOL DISTRICT WILL REMAIN PROTECTED

Several parents anonymously sued the Madison Metropolitan School District, claiming that the school district's guidance that seeks to provide support for transgender, non-binary, and gender-expansive students violates parental rights and religious freedom by allowing students to use names and pronouns at school different from those they were assigned at birth, without providing parental notification absent a student's consent. With pro bono assistance from Quarles & Brady, the ACLU and ACLU of Wisconsin intervened in the case on behalf of LGBTQ student groups at schools in the district to help defend the district's guidance.

On November 23, 2022, the Dane County Circuit Court dismissed the lawsuit in a victory for the transgender students of Madison Metropolitan School District.

ACCESS TO BOOKS IN CADOTT SCHOOL LIBRARIES TO CONTINUE

In March 2022, the Cadott school board voted to remove library books *The Baby Tree* by Sophie Blackall and *Protest Movements: Then and Now* by Eric Braun and to restrict access to *Pride: The Story of Harvey Milk and the Rainbow Flag* by Rob Sanders. The ACLU of Wisconsin filed an open records request with the School District of Cadott Community as part of an investigation into the book ban reports.

Our request stated: "We urge the District to end policies and practices that suppress the free exchange of ideas and discriminate against viewpoints and representation of marginalized communities."

The Cadott school board reversed its library book ban in a free speech and learning win.

ONGOING CASES

BATTLING THE SCHOOL-TO-PRISON PIPELINE IN OSHKOSH

When students of color faced racial harassment and disparate punishment in the Oshkosh Area School District (OASD), the ACLU of Wisconsin took the case to the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, where it's being investigated.

The mother of two Black siblings who attend Merrill Middle School reported racial harassment to school administrators, only for them to ignore the claims and fail to investigate.

Police body camera footage showed white officers and OASD administrators discussing how to refer Black and biracial students to juvenile intake most severely.

Black and biracial students involved in the Halloween dance incident were expelled, while the white student went unpunished. In one seventh-grader's expulsion hearing, the school board official overseeing the hearing said that the racial harassment that occurred was 'not relevant.'

BURLINGTON AREA SCHOOL DISTRICT HELD ACCOUNTABLE FOR ITS RACIALLY HOSTILE ENVIRONMENT

Frustrated by the football program's history of racism, Burlington Coalition for Dismantling Racism filed a discrimination complaint and called the district to act. The district responded by brushing off the coalition's concerns, failing to follow its complaint procedures, and even falsely suggesting that it was against the law for the group to bring a complaint.

In August 2022, following an ACLU of Wisconsin appeal, the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction ruled that the Burlington Area School District failed to follow its internal discrimination policy. The district was ordered to train staff on discrimination policy and proper investigation.

SCHOOLS MUST INVESTIGATE DISCRIMINATION COMPLAINTS

Two families with children of color came to the ACLU of Wisconsin after their children experienced racial harassment and bullying in the Cedarburg School District. Complaints to the school district produced no appropriate action to address the incidents of harassment and the racial atmosphere in the school district. The families filed separate complaints with the Office of Civil Rights of the U.S. Department of Education, and the Office has now opened an investigation on one complaint and the other complaint remains pending.

DEMANDING FOLLOW-THROUGH FROM GREENDALE SCHOOL DISTRICT ON ITS RACIAL EQUITY PLAN

As part of a complaint we filed in 2019, we asked the Greendale School District to investigate — and meaningfully act upon — a series of racist incidents in its high school and elementary school, including the use of racial slurs, posting of racially offensive videos, and other harassment that has created a hostile environment. The district promised to develop an equity plan to address these issues but has not followed its commitments.

Meanwhile, students of color in Greendale continue to report incidents of racial harassment and discrimination — including five documented reports of hate speech during the first two quarters of the 2022-23 school year. We and Attorney Elisabeth Lambert of Wisconsin Education Law & Policy Hub have sued the district to enforce the promises made to our clients in 2019.

ADVOCATING FOR ENVIRONMENTAL JUSTICE AND TRANSIT EQUITY

For over a decade, we've advocated for a transportation system that fairly shares benefits and burdens and ensures that underserved communities get necessary transit. We represented the NAACP-Milwaukee branch and MICA in a lawsuit against transportation officials for failing to consider adverse effects on people of color in their proposal to expand I-94 in dense urban neighborhoods in west-central Milwaukee.

The state then withdrew the damaging project, but several years later began the process to resurrect it. We and other advocates successfully pushed to force the state to do a new environmental impact statement, and we submitted comments, along with many other environmental justice advocates, on the new proposal in January 2023.

For our additional ongoing cases, go to aclu-wi.org/en/our-work/courts.

REFORMING MILWAUKEE POLICE DEPARTMENT STOP-AND-FRISK PRACTICES

Five years into our settlement with the City of Milwaukee to reform its police department's unconstitutional and racially discriminatory stop-and-frisk program, MPD continues to be non-compliant on core tenets of the agreement. In particular, racial disparities remain inexcusably high, and constitutional violations are not met with the appropriate discipline.

While it is undoubtedly a positive step that the recorded volume of unconstitutional policing has diminished since the settlement was established, the extent to which Black Milwaukeeans continue to be overpoliced and discriminated against is unacceptable. Everyone deserves to be treated fairly and equally, no matter where we live or what we look like.

The settlement agreement ends once MPD has been compliant for five years. We will continue to monitor as long as it takes to get fair, constitutional policing.



INTEGRATED

ADVOCACY

Integrated advocacy is a method of collective action across our entire team, and a practice engaged throughout our nationwide ACLU universe. By pulling together a team across all ACLU of Wisconsin departments - advocacy, communications, community engagement, development, finance, and legal - we are better able to adapt and mobilize in the politically volatile battleground state of Wisconsin. We take a “three legged stool” approach of impact, with different tools utilized together to make a difference.

All three legs of the stool – legal, advocacy, and community engagement – have a distinct role to play in integrated advocacy, each with their own strategies and tactics to accomplish the goal of protecting civil rights and civil liberties of BIPOC and LGBTQIA individuals. Because this fight can be complex, there is not always a universal approach to the work. Sometimes one tactic might be more effective than another, thus one department might take the lead. Other times, the three approaches work together to create a multi-pronged approach to ensure that rights are maintained, defended, or protected. Community Engagement teaches the team how pivotal community voices and empowerment are in shaping our goals and how we support real people engaged in activism. Advocacy, often in rooms and holding relationships that are otherwise less accessible, directly advocates for these communities and our rights. Legal leads when a sharp reminder of right-sides policy or governmental behavior, or when all else has run its course, as the intervention through the courts. We are far more powerful together when we serve, listen, act, plan and accomplish as a unified team with complimentary knowledge and different labor. We stand together, and the work stands even stronger.

DEVELOPMENT & INTEGRATED ADVOCACY WORK

‘Development is an important part of integrated advocacy— our department helps to connect donors to the work that is happening on the ground— both equipping donors to be informed about the work and inspiring them to support the intersectional impact of the ACLU as a whole.’

— **Tina Itson**, Development Director.

COMMUNICATIONS & INTEGRATED ADVOCACY WORK

The Communications Department acts as a bridge between all of the branches of our affiliate, particularly in the integrated advocacy model. Our department is in touch with all departments and creates press releases, blogs, op-eds, talking points and social media posts on the issue areas that our advocacy, legal and community engagement departments take on, which allows us to be intersectional in our approach to our messaging.

— **Alyssa Mauk**, Communications Director

LEGAL - IN THE COURTS

When thinking about the work of the ACLU, one often thinks primarily about the role of the legal department and the work it does to file lawsuits, trials, and appeals in order to fight discrimination, the abuse of power, or the threat to civil rights. The work of the ACLU of Wisconsin in the courts touches on many issues, but addressing the systems which have produced mass incarceration of black and brown bodies in Wisconsin prison, will always be at the forefront.

Thus, another very important task of the legal department is the oversight and monitoring of the victories we have achieved, now embodied in consent decrees. Currently, the ACLU of Wisconsin is actively monitoring and enforcing consent decrees involving the Lincoln Hills/Copper Lake juvenile prison, the Milwaukee County Jail, and the Milwaukee Police Department.

But obtaining a consent decree usually is not the endpoint of our work. The question must always be -- what comes next? How do we replace an unjust system with one which reflects the diverse needs and justified expectations of impacted communities. What comes next may mean advocating for legislative or regulatory changes. It may mean a process of communicating and training what it means to have policing which does not treat race as a reason for suspicion. It may mean a process of community engagement to understand what BIPOC and LGBTQ+ require to feel safe.

The work of the ACLU in the courts must always be integrated with advocacy for what comes next, with communication regarding the rights we all share, and engagement with communities impacted by the actions of governmental authorities.

ADVOCACY

The Advocacy team approaches policy and power analyses through an intersectional lens – recognizing that all civil rights and liberties issues in which we engage are inextricably intertwined and impact marginalized communities in compounding ways.

For Black, Indigenous, and people of color, the LGBTQ+ community, immigrant communities, disabled folks, and those directly impacted by the criminal legal system, “civil rights and liberties” aren’t theoretical concepts. They are lines of defense against literal violence by state and private actors, legal recognition of one’s inherent dignity and bodily autonomy, and avenues for accessing basic needs.

For that reason, as we analyze the impact of proposed legislation, engage in direct lobbying and grassroots advocacy, and organize to build political power, we aim to center the experiences of those directly impacted.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Community Engagement department approach to BIPOC and LGBTQ+ integrated advocacy is extremely human-centered. We understand that in order to make an impact, push for legislative change we need to have supportive and sustainable relationships all year round in different community hubs and sectors. The Community Engagement team prides itself on being a community partner that understands that building strong relationships requires patient, constant, unwavering work to show up in community and demonstrate our non-extractive and humble desire to do this work. Through our work, our team aims to build relationships with BIPOC and LGBTQ+ led organizations that can inform and advise on the needs of their respective, and often intersectional, communities. This allows the community engagement at the ACLU team to serve as a hub for BIPOC and LGBTQ+ rights organizations by connecting them with other ACLU-WI teams to work holistically and in tandem in defending the civil rights and liberties of Wisconsinites.

COMMUNITY-CENTRIC FUNDRAISING



Tina Itson, Development Director

As development professionals, we have been taught for many years the importance of ‘Donor-centric fundraising’ – techniques that place a donor at the center of the fundraising paradigm. Our goal is to help donors see how they are impactful in creating change in their communities through the gifts they give to an organization. We are often taught that we should understand that it is not the organization that makes the impact but the donor.

While this perspective isn’t necessarily bad in its purest form – donors do make significant impacts on the work of an organization and the communities it serves – ‘Donor-Centric Fundraising’ has a danger of elevating a donor above the mission itself and creating opportunities for power dynamics that can be harmful to an organization and the community.

In 2015, Vu Le began to challenge the paradigm of donor-centric fundraising and, through conversations with a number of fundraisers, began to inspire a new way of thinking about fundraising. What if we decided to center the communities served in our fundraising models instead? Instead of elevating a donor or an organization, we focus on the community. What is best for a community, what strengths it brings to the table, and what solutions can be borne out of the community itself?

It is a fundraising model based on equality, equity, and social justice. Instead of competing for resources, organizations would collaborate on resources. Instead of over-directing funds, donors would trust and rely on community-based leaders for solutions. Instead of creating challenging and difficult processes to manage, foundations would seek ways to bring more organizations to the table.

CCF can be a challenging model and requires fundraisers to have the willingness to have hard conversations with donors, organizational leaders, and community members about questions of privilege, equity (and inequity), and injustice.

While unfamiliar to many and challenging to some, CCF is grounded in the same values of the ACLU of Wisconsin – values that place communities first, grounded in social justice and systemic equality, and believe that our collective gifts and wisdom lead us to better solutions. While we don’t always get it perfect, CCF is a standard that our development team seeks to practice in our work.



PERIS FLAGG, DEVELOPMENT PROJECT MANAGER, SAYS IT BEST:

‘At the heart of community-centric fundraising (CCF) is the fundamental idea that no individual organizational mission is as important as the sum of the collective. At the American Civil Liberties Union of Wisconsin Foundation, fundraising is firmly grounded in coalition-building. We treat donors, ACLU-WI members & volunteers, ACLU programming beneficiaries, other organizations, and interested public members equally as partners, united in the commitment to promoting equity and social justice.

This year, our first community-building circle was the perfect example of ACLU-WI’s dedication to CCF principles. Examining the issue of housing inequality brought together a broad range of individuals who represented ACLU-WI donors/members, city officials, staff members, partner organizations, and members of the public. Executing the issue from a healing and awareness perspective was equally fruitful for all attending the event.

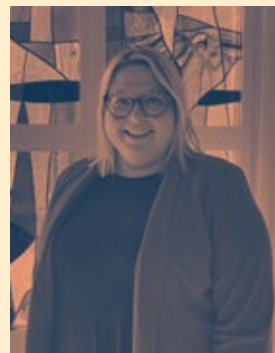
By operating in this manner, the ACLU of Wisconsin is able to further the mission of defending the civil rights and liberties of all Wisconsinites while yielding to the broader idea that social justice work is more effective when everyone is equally engaged.’



Zachary Kester

Development Relations Manager

As Development Relations Manager, Zachary supports the Development team with research, message drafting, small donor gatherings, donor communications, and ongoing cultivation, solicitation & stewardship of existing and new donors. He also manages a portfolio of mid-level donors and prospects. The ACLU issues most important to Zachary include LGBTQIA+ Rights, Criminal Justice Reform, Immigrants’ Rights, Reproductive Freedom, Racial Justice, and Voting Rights.



Kate Braun

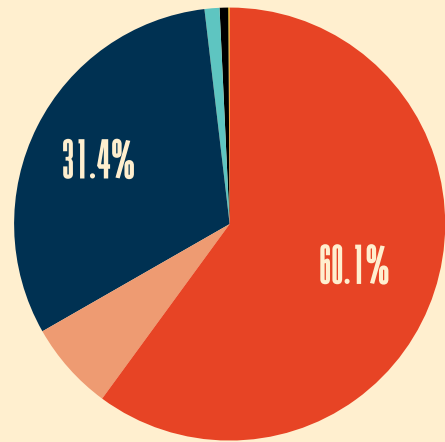
Grant Writer

As a member of the Development Team, Kate writes and applies for various grant-based funding sources to support the work of the ACLU of Wisconsin.

Kate is passionate about all ACLU issues but in particular reproductive freedom, LGBTQIA rights, and racial justice. member in the city of Milwaukee focusing on college readiness for high school juniors and seniors.

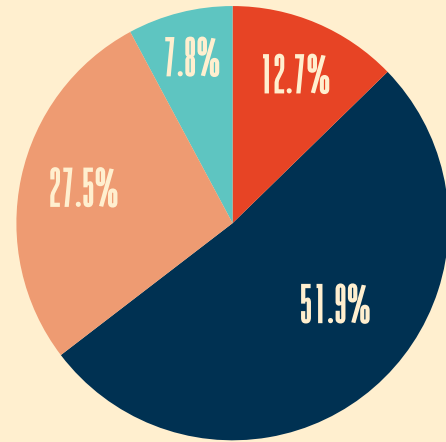
ORGANIZATION FINANCIALS

SUPPORT AND REVENUE FY21



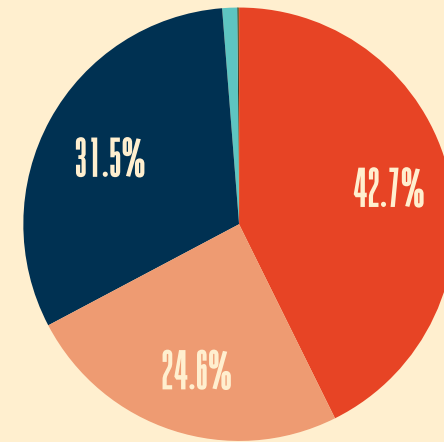
- **GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS: \$1,866,556**
- **MEMBERSHIP INCOME: \$974,969**
- **RESTRICTED FUNDING: \$207,454**
- **AWARDED & DONATED LEGAL FEES: \$34,862**
- **TRUST GAIN (LOSS): \$20,093**
- **OTHER REVENUE: \$3,141**

EXPENSES FY21



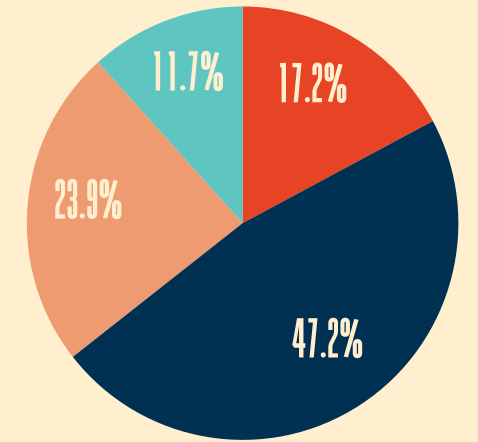
- **LITIGATION & EDUCATION: \$1,066,823**
- **MANAGEMENT & GENERAL: \$566,263**
- **PUBLIC POLICY: \$261,680**
- **FUNDRAISING: \$161,405**

SUPPORT AND REVENUE FY22



- **GRANTS & CONTRIBUTIONS: \$1,183,483**
- **MEMBERSHIP INCOME: \$872,978**
- **RESTRICTED FUNDING: \$682,649**
- **AWARDED & DONATED LEGAL FEES: \$31,309**
- **TRUST GAIN (LOSS): \$2,418**
- **OTHER REVENUE: \$1,108**

EXPENSES FY22



- **LITIGATION & EDUCATION: \$983,862**
- **MANAGEMENT & GENERAL: \$497,867**
- **PUBLIC POLICY: \$358,027**
- **FUNDRAISING: \$243,477**



GET INVOLVED

AND JOIN THE

Fight

As we move toward 2024, our civil rights and liberties are more important than ever. Join the ACLU of Wisconsin as we continue to show up in communities across our state and beyond.



JOIN

Become a member of the ACLU of Wisconsin. Stay informed on our work and the threats to civil rights and liberties.



GIVE

Support the work of the ACLU of Wisconsin Foundation through your tax deductible gift. Your support invests in communities, in the expansion of rights, in the defense of democracy, and more. Consider an annual gift or contact us for more information about legacy giving.



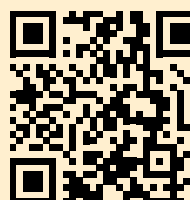
VOLUNTEER

Get involved in your community! From legal observing to tabling to supporting community programming, there are lots of ways to show up for your community.



ACT

Want your voice to be heard? Sign up for action alerts, track bills in legislative session, and learn more about how you can speak out on issues you care about.



KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

Know your rights and how to use them. Attend a Know Your Rights training or find our Know Your Rights materials online at [ACLU-WI.org/KYR](https://aclu-wi.org/KYR).

QUESTIONS ABOUT HOW YOU CAN GET INVOLVED? CONTACT US TODAY!

@ACLUOFWI



@ACLUOFWISCONSIN





CONTACT US

MEDIA INQUIRIES

Email media@aclu-wi.org

DEVELOPMENT INQUIRIES

Development@aclu-wi.org

REQUEST A SPEAKER

To request a speaker from the aclu of wisconsin, email us at speaker@aclu-wi.org with the date of the event, the issue being discussed, and location.

GENERAL INQUIRIES

For general inquiries, email us at liberty@aclu-wi.org with specific details pertaining to your inquiry. (legal inquiries will not be reviewed from this email address.)

ACLU
Wisconsin