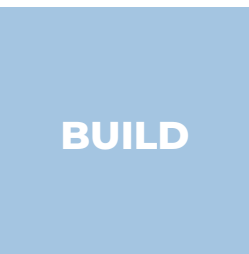





**Citizens
League**

Impact Report

2022-2023






Common ground. Common good.

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We are excited to share this Annual Report with highlights of our current work, recent community events, and ways we are co-creating unique spaces for bringing different perspectives together and finding great solutions.

For over 71 years, the Citizens League has been empowering people to engage in civic life and public policy to make our state a better place for everyone. This year, we have moved our work forward in each of the four defined pillars of our multi-year strategic plan:

- **ENGAGE** many different voices and perspectives
- **ACTIVATE** deeper participation of people in policy
- **IMPACT** critical policy issues using our unique approach
- **BUILD** organizational and financial sustainability

Further, we have clearly defined “**What We Stand For**” and we’re working in ways that are more inclusive and more equitable than ever before.

As Citizens League embarks on a leadership transition, I am confident that the state of the League is strong, and the future is full of opportunity.

Kate Cimino, *Executive Director*





ENGAGE

Many different voices and perspectives

Throughout the past year, Citizens League events have connected Minnesotans to each other and to policy issues that matter to them. We aim to **engage** people eager to participate in their communities to see public policy as a way to drive change. Leading with a multi-partisan approach, we build awareness of issues and policy solutions. Our Mind Opener webinars, Interconnected Rural-Urban Conversations, and Civics@Work policy learning sessions covered a wide range of topics such as:

- Minnesota's changing environment and climate
- Challenges facing rural and urban EMS systems
- Run, Serve, and Lead: What it's really like to serve in local elected office
- How do I talk to my neighbor again?

Our annual Civic Celebration demonstrates the power of bringing together a diverse array of civic leaders, policy thinkers, and community builders. In 2023, over 300 people gathered to honor Kathleen Blatz, former Chief Justice of the Minnesota Supreme Court and Minnesota State Legislator, and Edwina García, former Minnesota State Legislator and Richfield City Council Member.



In 2022, over 1,830 people participated in Citizens League events, a 28% increase over the previous year.



“ ”

“The Inter-connected series has been a way for urban and rural audiences to connect and learn in a nonconfrontational way. Through this partnership, we started building understanding that our policy issues have many similarities but also nuances that need special attention.”

*– Julie Tesch,
President & CEO,
Center for Rural
Policy and
Development*

In the eight years of the Capitol Pathways program, over 90 organizations have partnered with Citizens League to host interns, bringing young leaders into policy work in a variety of settings. To date, 260 Capitol Pathways student interns have had the opportunity to build skills and relationships and to bring voice to policymaking.



ACTIVATE

Deeper participation of
people in policy



Citizens League **activates** participation by helping people explore how they can be involved in shaping policies that impact their communities. Citizens League's approach to building and supporting networks of leaders is rooted in our conviction that everyone should have access to opportunities in public service and policy, and our government should be representative of our diverse communities.

New this year, Citizens League developed an in-depth workshop to help people understand how they can connect and engage in the Minnesota legislative process. We successfully piloted this training with the Saint Paul & Minnesota Foundation community impact team and look forward to sharing it with other groups.

Our Capitol Pathways program supports cohorts of Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC) college students in paid internships with government offices, nonprofits, corporations, and law firms. This year, 32 energetic young leaders from diverse communities participated in Capitol Pathways internships, impacting the legislature and policymaking community by bringing new voices into the space and changing the face of who is at the Capitol.

“ ”

“Programs like Capitol Pathways are important because they allow people whose stories are often shunned to find an opportunity to shine and contribute to the legislative process.”

– Jesus Gonzalez Ruiz, 2023 Capitol Pathways Alum

WHAT WE STAND FOR:

While Citizens League has had a role in Minnesota for over 70 years, there have been monumental changes in our world and in our communities. Here's how we

approach our work today – a reflection of discussions with our staff, board, program participants, and community partners.



We encourage:

- Curiosity, listening, and learning.
- Seeing humanity in each person. Avoiding labels and assumptions based on race, gender, political affiliation, and more; while acknowledging that differences matter.
- Being engaged to the best of one's ability, even in difficult conversations on tough issues.

We discourage:

- Binary arguments and framing: “us vs. them”, “win or lose,” blaming, finger pointing.
- Derailing or disrupting a process that has been designed to be as inclusive as possible.

We will not accept:

- Demonizing or dehumanizing people and groups.

“ ”



“Having common language that defines how we approach policymaking through an equity lens will allow us to live our values and shape the Minnesota policy landscape in a way that’s inclusive of those most impacted.”

– Breanna Schafer, Citizens League 2023 Board Chair



Why does equity matter?

Equity means everyone has an opportunity to thrive, but what one person needs to thrive may be different from what another person needs. Intentionality is required to include those communities where policy decisions may have an outsized impact, but who may not typically be at decision making tables. Equity is not only about race – depending on the issue, those most impacted could include rural residents, women, young people, older adults, individuals with disabilities, or others. The League will use a comprehensive approach to strive for intentional and sustainable inclusion that is reflective of all communities and people impacted.

What does “nonpartisan” mean for Citizens League?

We believe the inclusion and validation of multiple perspectives creates stronger community solutions. We support bridging political divides. We create space for people of different perspectives to exchange views, build relationships, and engage in civic life and public policy.

“ ”

“There’s a lot of focus on supporting BIPOC leaders to run for office but very little to help us navigate once we get in. We can only identify what this support looks like if we take time to listen. This was exactly what the candidate report was all about.”

***– Maria Regan Gonzalez,
former Mayor of
Richfield, MN***



IMPACT

Critical policy issues using our unique approach



Citizens League **impacts** critical policy issues both as a trusted source of data, and through inviting community input to develop policy recommendations. Last year, Citizens League completed a report about why people run, decline to run, remain serving, or step down from local elected office, and the impact on local government. This work was unique in many ways; we explored the motivations of local candidates from a multi-partisan perspective, analyzed themes, and recommended ways to support candidates for local elected office who are broadly representative of communities.

We are currently developing a new Connect + Impact policy engagement and collaboration model to provide ways for even more people to be involved in learning about public policy and seeing their role in it. A group of Capitol Pathways alumni worked with staff as co-designers to formulate the basic structures of this new initiative. We are continuing to get input from a variety of stakeholders to refine the program design, and we plan to pilot our new Connect + Impact policy groups later this year.



Our report, ***Serving in Local Elected Office***, summarizes what we learned from surveys and interviews with 80 local civic leaders in the Twin Cities Metro.



BUILD

Organizational and
financial sustainability

Citizens League continues to **build** a strong foundation by investing in staff and infrastructure to support our work into the future. A broad mix of contributions provides flexible funding to support our mission and makes a difference in informing and engaging people and making our



In 2022, Citizens League continued to garner broad support from a mix of foundations, corporations, and individual supporters across Minnesota and raised over \$1 million from diverse revenue streams.

communities stronger.

This year we revamped the organizational membership model to be better aligned with our partners' needs to engage their employees in more meaningful ways. In 2022, staff implemented monthly "DEI Dives", in which we chose an article, podcast or video with a Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion theme and discussed how it applied to us and to our work.

In addition to our small but mighty team of six staff members,

undergraduate and graduate school student interns help us to move the work forward. Through mentoring and robustly supporting student interns, Citizens League is "walking the talk" of preparing the next generation of policy leaders.



2022- 2023 Interns

Brynn Kimel
*University of
St. Thomas*

Noah Patterson
*University of
St. Thomas*

José Aviña
*Capitol Pathways
Intern,
Minneapolis
Community &
Technical College*



**Yasmin
Banishoraka**
*Humphrey School
of Public Affairs at
the University of
Minnesota*



Financial Summary

2022 REVENUE	
Foundation Contributions	\$ 348,424
Individual Contributions	\$ 301,927
Corporate Contributions	\$ 162,067
Sponsorships	\$ 76,701
Contracted Services	\$ 75,000
Other Program Service	\$ 26,676
In-Kind Contributions	\$ 18,999
Investment Income	\$ 11,246
TOTAL	\$ 1,021,040
2022 EXPENSES	
Programs	\$ 696,011
Management & Fundraising	\$ 267,084
TOTAL	\$ 963,095

Financial Information has been audited by a Certified Public Accounting firm in accordance with GAAP.



Board of Directors

Huda Ahmed
Lindsey Alexander
Khadija Ali
Paul T. Anderson
Tamara Asamoah
Cedrick Baker*, 2022 Board Chair
Elizabeth Campbell*
Mark Engdahl
Laura Monn Ginsburg
Peter Glessing**
Greg Halagan
Scott Hietpas*
John Knapp
Jake Loesch
Fatima Moore
Keri O'Brien
Eusebio Perez
Andrew Ryall
Breanna Schafer, 2023 Board Chair
Terry Schneider
Damon Shoholm
D'Angelos Svenkeson
Grace Waltz
Kurt Zellers

* Completed board term in December 2022

** Stepped down from board in 2023

Staff

Kate Cimino
Executive Director

Blanca Martinez Gaviña
Director of Public Policy

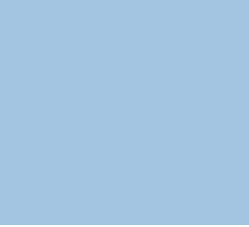
Laura Kisner
Operations and Database Administrator

Yvonne Lerew
Director of Development

Jacob Taintor
Communications and Marketing Specialist

Kalia Xiong
Capitol Pathways Program Manager





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