



Impact Report

2024-2025

Citizens League community,

We are living in a time of deep polarization in our politics and in our communities.

Public trust in institutions and in one another has fallen to alarmingly low levels; political rhetoric is increasingly toxic; divisiveness has fomented into discord; and tragically, threats and acts of political violence are on the rise. Many people are discouraged, disheartened - and may even feel despair.

In these times, Citizens League's mission and work are important antidotes to induce hope and encourage positive civic engagement. Everywhere I go around Minnesota people tell me: "Citizens League is needed now more than ever!"

For more than 73 years, Citizens League has been a trusted, nonpartisan voice for civility, collaboration and pragmatic public policy solutions in Minnesota. And to this day, Citizens League remains committed to fostering civil, respectful policy conversations and empowering people to be active and engaged in policymaking and civic life.

Throughout this past year we've sought to find new opportunities to bridge divides, explore important public policy topics and solutions, and forge new partnerships. **We have been challenging ourselves to think big and bold about the role we play in Minnesota's civic ecosystem and how we can best meet this moment.**

We're staying true to our roots: convening important conversations, diving into critical policy research, and creating new opportunities for civic engagement...

We're supporting the next generation of leaders: through our Capitol Pathways internship program...

And we're looking to the future and building important new initiatives like the Minnesota Legislative Exchange, to prove that *Minnesota knows how to do things differently*, and that we can rise above the political noise and division and focus on the difficult but important work of governing our state most effectively, for as many people as possible.

As Citizens League approaches our 75th anniversary in 2027, we are also developing a new strategic plan to propel us into the future. We believe and hope that our work will continue to chart a better future for Minnesota: where we aspire to understand and not just attack or blame the other side, lead with curiosity, work together to find common ground and compromise, and hold ourselves accountable to the important ideals of courage, trust and integrity in our political process.

Thank you for being a part of our Citizens League community. Your voice, your engagement, and your support truly make our work possible.

Jake Loesch, Executive Director





Celebrating 10 Years of Capitol Pathways!

Since its founding in 2016, the Capitol Pathways internship program has become a flagship program of the Citizens League. The program provides BIPOC college students with leadership, legislative and career readiness training alongside an immersive, paid internship experience with an organization working in public policy and advocacy. This year's cohort was our largest ever, pairing 43 students with internships at partnering government offices, nonprofits, companies, and law firms.

The hands-on policymaking experience, knowledge and networks students gain through the Capitol Pathways program prepares them to be future leaders and change-makers. Today, with over 340 alumni serving in roles including Minneapolis and Saint Paul city council members, legislative aides, lobbyists, policy advocates and more, Capitol Pathways is bringing new voices into policy spaces at local, state and national levels.





Minnesota Legislative Exchange Launches!

The Minnesota Legislative Exchange (MLE) is a first-in-the-nation effort to build trust and bipartisan relationships at the state legislature.

As Minnesota's leading nonpartisan nonprofit focused on civic engagement and public policy solutions, Citizens League is proud to lead this important effort, intentionally forging new relationships to bridge divides and govern our state effectively. The MLE pairs up one Republican and one Democratic member of the Minnesota State Legislature to visit each other's districts, where they spend time together while learning more about each other and their communities.

We kicked off the inaugural MLE trip in early summer of 2025 with Democratic Rep. Mary Frances Clardy (District 53A) visiting Republican Rep. Dave Baker (District 16B) in his district in the Willmar Lakes region. Our second trip in late July brought us to St. Cloud with Democratic Rep. Sandra Feist (District 39B) visiting Republican Rep. Bernie Perryman (District 14A), and several additional pairings are underway for 2025 and 2026.

The MLE initiative aims to help foster deeper relationships and trust among legislators and civic leaders, provide opportunities to share about local challenges and opportunities, and to find policy areas where legislators can work together.





Conducting Research that Informs Strong Public Policy

Citizens League continues to dive into critical policy research which informs impactful policy solutions across Minnesota.

This year, Citizens League partnered with the Association of Minnesota Counties and the League of Minnesota Cities to research and explore recruitment, retention and workforce challenges and opportunities facing local governments statewide.

After a six-month process of research to gather data and input and hearing from nearly 1,000 Minnesotans – most of whom are currently working for local governments – findings were synthesized into our new report, ***Strengthening Public Service: Workforce Challenges and Opportunities for Local Government Entities in Minnesota***. This report includes thirty-six actionable recommendations to support a robust and thriving public workforce.





Connecting Minnesotans to Policy Issues:

Citizens League promotes a variety of free, online and in-person opportunities for Minnesotans to learn more about policy issues and increase their engagement through a nonpartisan approach that represents diverse points of view. Our Interconnected Rural-Urban Conversations, long-running Mind Opener event series, Civics@Work employee engagement sessions, and other events this year covered a wide range of topics including Trustworthy Elections, Geographic Disparities to Health Care Access, Minnesota's Housing Crisis, Migration and Changing Demographics, 2025 Legislative Preview, and a discussion with the authors of "From Conflict to Convergence."

In April, 2025, a sold-out crowd attended our annual Civic Celebration event and demonstrated their support of Citizens League's work. Hundreds gathered to network and connect, celebrate the people and ideas that make our state unique and recognize our 2025 honorees, Peter Bell and Sharon McMahon, and Civic Changemaker Awardee, Anton Jones.



Sustaining Partnerships to Strengthen the Civic Ecosystem:

Citizens League aspires to building lasting connections and collaborations with other organizations focused on bringing people together across the state to bridge divides, rebuild trust, and amplify the impact of our collective civic engagement initiatives:

- Last November, we hosted a **Mind Opener event at the Capri Theater in North Minneapolis in partnership with MPR News' Talking Sense** series, to hear from authors Mariah Levison and Robert Fersh about their book, *From Conflict to Convergence: Coming Together to Solve Tough Problems*. Other organizations also participated to share information and resources including Braver Angels; Center for the Study of Politics and Governance at the Humphrey School, University of Minnesota; Majority in the Middle; and Civic Bridgers.
- Our regular series of Interconnected: **Rural-Urban Conversations**, hosted in partnership with the Center for Rural Policy and Development (CRPD), explores the unique needs of communities across the state as well as shared challenges and opportunities. For more than five years, we have partnered with CRPD to promote this series of public policy events that bring together diverse panels of experts who go deep on current policy issues and help bridge the divides between urban and rural communities in Minnesota.
- Since 2017, Citizens League's Capitol Pathways program, Nexus' Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute, and Wilder's Community Equity Program have collaborated on the **Joint Partners Alumni Network**. Together, we have harnessed our collective power to support, inform and connect our 600+ alumni and help build capacity for all of our civic engagement leadership programs and alumni participants.

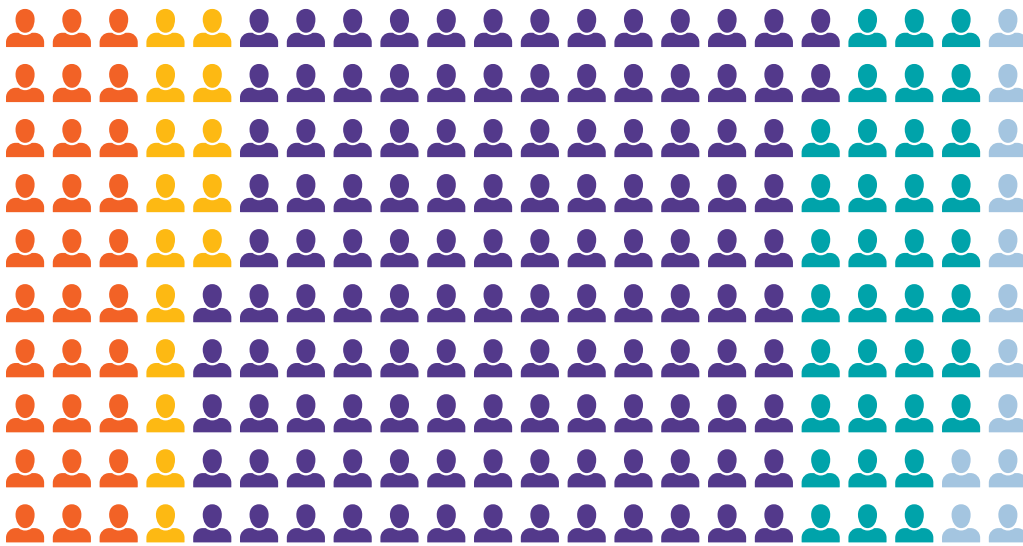
Citizens League is also proud to partner with the **Bush Foundation as an Ecosystem Grantee** organization and is grateful to all that provide strategic and financial support that helps make our collective work possible including: the McKnight Foundation, Saint Paul and Minnesota Foundation, F.R. Bigelow Foundation; Citizens League's Organizational Members including Securian, Ecolab, Ameriprise Financial, Comcast, General Mills, Medica, Target, and U.S. Bancorp among many others; and the hundreds of individual members who sustain our work.



By the Numbers

+2,200

Event Participants in 2024



300

Civic
Celebration

150

Capitol
Pathways
events

1350

Interconnected
and Mind
Opener policy
events

300

Workplace civic
engagement with
organizational
members

125

Other
events and
workshops

April 2025 Civic Celebration – Sold out crowd



365 registrants



45 sponsors and table hosts



**Strengthen
Public
Service
report:
Project
Participants
and
Representation**

940+

Minnesotans
contributed
feedback

91%

of MN counties
represented
(89 counties)

25%

of MN cities
represented
(211 cities)



10

years!...and
counting...

343

BIPOC college
student participants

125

organizations
host interns



“The **Citizens League** remains a steady force for civic engagement and inclusive solutions. From uplifting young leaders to building trust with elected officials, it sets the standard for civility, respect, and collaboration in public life.”

–**Fatima Moore**, Board Chair

Financial Summary

2024 REVENUE	
Individual Contributions	\$ 97,492
Corporate Contributions	\$ 146,045
Foundation Contributions	\$ 261,926
Government Grants	\$ 42,000
Sponsorships	\$ 82,720
Contracted Services	\$ 70,000
Other Program Service	\$ 57,082
Investment Income	\$ 11,573
In-Kind Contributions	\$ 84,655
TOTAL	\$ 853,493
2024 EXPENSES	
Programs	\$ 788,305
Management & Fundraising	\$ 274,901
TOTAL	\$ 1,063,206

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

Board of Directors

Huda Ahmed	Fatima Moore, <i>Board Chair</i>
Lindsey Alexander, <i>Vice Chair</i>	Karne Newburn
Khadija Ali*	Hue Nguyen
Paul T. Anderson	Keri O'Brien
Michelle Benson	Eusebio Perez
Greg Halagan	Andrew Ryall
Robert Harper	Breanna Schafer, <i>Immediate Past President</i>
Ron Harris	Becky Alery Scherr
Kate Hensing	Eduardo Suarez
Dave Kleis	Terry Schneider
Theresa McCormick	Grace Waltz

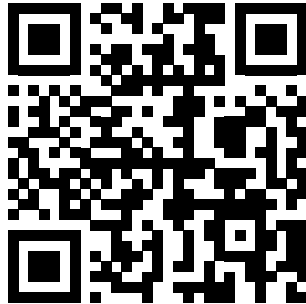
*Completed board term in December 2024

Staff

Jake Loesch <i>Executive Director</i>
Luna Allen-Bakerian <i>Director of Public Policy</i>
Maddie Harvala <i>Office Operations and Donor Database Coordinator</i>
Yvonne Lerew <i>Director of Development</i>
Jacob Taintor <i>Communications and Marketing Specialist</i>
Kalia Xiong <i>Capitol Pathways Program Manager</i>

2024-2025 INTERNS

Putrimolia Cahyudi Macalester College
Phil Reitz-Jones Macalester College
Daisy Vang Capitol Pathways Intern University of Minnesota



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