

**CENTER FOR
CIVIC EDUCATION**

**2024 ANNUAL
REPORT**



A Message from Our President

Like many of you—educators, alumni, public servants, volunteers, and community leaders—valued supporters of civic education, I have been called to this vocation because I can think of no greater need than an educated electorate to sustain a thriving constitutional republic.

Twenty-five years ago, I was a novice social studies educator in a We the People regional summer institute in Boston. I can mark on one hand the times my entire thinking and worldview of my vocation was changed, and that experience was one of them. As an adult, I had never before taken part in such profound learning about our Constitution, its history, and how to teach it. And not just teach it for civic knowledge but, even more importantly, for the civic skills and dispositions that students and their teachers develop as a result. Indeed, the Center’s professional learning model was a change-maker then and even more so now.

What I experienced firsthand, and what I know to be true through decades of anecdotes, examples, and research, is that when you understand your government, how it works, and your role in it, you care about it and attend to its health. The reflective patriotism, civic empathy, and call to the common good that civic education brings is what we need now and always.

The Center’s mission, focused on the principles and practice of democracy, has always supported this theory of change. Deep

constitutional and civic knowledge coupled with opportunities to practice the skills and behaviors of democracy create empathetic, informed citizens at all levels.

However, the principles and practice of democracy are not automatically transmitted. Truly, to sustain a thriving republic, they must be taught and reinforced. Government at all levels, school leaders, and teachers must prioritize civic education. I am thankful to our supporters and stewards of the Center’s mission for the ongoing trust you bestow in the Center to do this work. Nevertheless, it is forever incomplete.

The Center recommits to the belief that We the People is for all people. There are even more ways we can continue to prioritize the conversation of how our country can truly exemplify the founding principle of *e pluribus unum* and civic education’s role in that. As a stalwart national nonprofit for 60 years, we double down on our mission to advance education for democratic participation. We look forward to a 2025 that supports a more pluralistic society, ever striving towards a more perfect union. It is an honor and a privilege to do this critical work alongside you.

Yours in civic education,

Donna Phillips, Ph.D.,
President and Chief Executive Officer



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Our Mission

The Center for Civic Education strives to promote an enlightened and responsible citizenry committed to democratic principles and actively engaged in the practice of democracy.



A Year of Growth



Introduction

This past fiscal year, the Center for Civic Education was pleased to be able to lean into growth through program expansions, resource development, and critical new projects. We celebrated the 5,000th episode of our [60-Second Civics podcast](#)—free to all, served 1,056 teachers of underserved and high-needs students through our immersive professional-learning opportunities, and created a portfolio of new, cost-free, inquiry-based lessons for ease of use by teachers across the nation.

With your support, we are even more determined to help our nation prioritize constitutional understanding and responsible civic engagement, doubling down on our commitment to keep our democratic republic through impactful, transformative civic education. We will continue to wrap our arms around the long-term impacts from the years of our nation neglecting the importance of civics and help educators and families mitigate the effects of content-specific and social and emotional learning gaps caused by the pandemic and resource inequity.

We know the work is vast and we know that—alongside our supporters and partners—we will continue to make a difference by providing hope and fortitude through deep constitutional and civic education.

49,465

teachers using our curricula
in classrooms, reaching

= 1,187,160

students across the country

+ 824,000

beneficiaries utilizing our supplemental
resources, taking part in state and
national civics competitions, and
engaging with our professional learning

= 2,011,160

people served by the Center this year

1,056
teachers in
constitution-
based
professional
learning



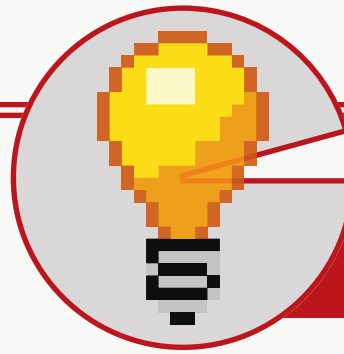
Educators Are the Gateway to Our Future

Training It Forward

The Center creates opportunities to multiply our impact by working with our state partner network through training opportunities that cascade to their local and regional teachers.

The Center was pleased to hold the annual Civics that Empowers All Students (CEAS) Workshop at Georgetown University in March 2024. State coordinators and mentors from participating states convened for a powerful two days of professional learning and growth. These amazing educators focused on various objectives, including clarifying grant goals, understanding research components, and discussing their roles.

They exchanged ideas on teacher professional learning, instruction for upper elementary and middle school students, and strategies for creating inclusive learning environments. Additionally, they deepened their knowledge of social-emotional learning, universal design for learning and, and culturally responsive teaching. This training was designed to help state coordinators and mentors to organize CEAS summer institutes for teachers across the country.



85% of participants reported feeling better prepared to help students think critically

A Summer of Professional Learning

In collaboration with state coordinators and mentor teachers from across the country, we hosted summer institutes to provide growth opportunities for teachers, equipping them with strategies to seamlessly integrate our curriculum into classrooms using various methods, including simulated congressional hearings. Our partners in education spent the summer building their skills and confidence in teaching the U.S. Constitution, American history, and civic education content and pedagogy.

Over 450 teachers representing 35 states committed to uplifting a minimum of 16,000 students

through their participation in our CEAS and James Madison Legacy Project Expansion Program (JMLPE) summer institutes.

Between these two learning opportunities, their students represent underserved populations in elementary through high school or students with disabilities, English language learners, and diverse student groups. These teachers immersed themselves in best practices in inclusive social studies classroom pedagogies and strategies and are better prepared to impact students nationwide as they bring the dynamic We the People and Project Citizen curricula to their classrooms.



LOCKED OUT

★ ★ ★ 2020 ★ ★ ★

ESTIMATES OF PEOPLE DENIED VOTING RIGHTS DUE TO A FELONY CONVICTION

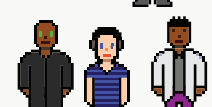
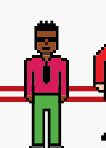
- Approximately 5.2 million Americans could not vote in the 2020 election due to a felony record
- 6.3% of voting age Black Americans cannot vote due to disenfranchisement laws
- In 11 states, 1 in 10 Black Americans cannot vote due to disenfranchisement laws

WWW.GLDADANILS.COM

Source: The Sentencing Project, Locked Out 2020: Estimates of People Denied Voting Rights Due to a Felony Conviction

“Thank you for a transformative opportunity. I immensely enjoyed the knowledgeable speakers, incredible museums, and terrific colleagues.”

—Sheila B., Teacher and We the People Summer Institute Participant





Elevating Our Profile

Center staff greatly enjoy expanding their circle of colleagues in civic education at conferences focused on and supporting social studies.

This past year, we shared our program updates and enhanced resources alongside our partners in learning at the National Council for the Social Studies (NCSS) Annual Conference, the Council of State Social Studies Specialists Annual Meeting, the National Service-Learning Conference, and the National Social Studies Leaders Association meeting. Additionally, we attended and presented at the National Service-Learning Conference, the annual conferences

of the North Carolina Council for the Social Studies, the Minnesota Council for the Social Studies, the Middle States Council for the Social Studies, the Virginia Council for the Social Studies, and the California Council for the Social Studies.

As leaders in the field, the Center was invited to present on our findings and programs and speak on panels during the conferences. This year, we presented the Center's professional-learning opportunities, our inquiry- and project-based programs, and our new [Civil Discourse Toolkit](#) for older youths and adults.

Celebrating Our Heroes in Education

To recognize teachers' exemplary work preparing young people to become informed and engaged citizens, the Center for Civic Education, the Center on Representative Government at Indiana University, and the National Education Association sponsor the [American Civic Education Teacher Awards \(ACETA\)](#). The awards are given to teachers of civics, government, and related subjects who have demonstrated exceptional expertise, dynamism, and creativity in motivating students to learn about the Constitution, public policy, and U.S. government at the federal, state, and local levels.

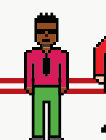
This year's ACETA winners were **Sergio de Alba of R.M. Miano Elementary (California), Allison Sheridan of Heritage Middle School (Florida), and Kimberly Huffman of Wayne County Joint Vocational School (Ohio)**. The award winners were honored at the 2023 NCSS Annual Conference, December 1-3 in Nashville.



119
mentor
civics
teachers
nationwide



Growing Teacher Leadership Through Sustained Mentorship



This past fall, the Center commenced our inaugural national Civics Mentor Professional Learning Community (PLC). A first for the Center, this community brought together both CEAS and JMLPE mentors from our grant programs to engage in continuous learning and support. This seven-part series had attendees from coast to coast. Each monthly meeting featured a civics skill and a mentoring skill that mentors could bring back to their participating teachers. Presenters shared a wealth of knowledge about a wide variety of topics—everything from best practices for serving multilingual learners to reflective teaching practices. **The PLC successfully supported the mentors’ professional journey by modeling strategies to strengthen the mentor-mentee relationship, providing a platform for courageous conversations and celebrating mentors as national leaders in civic education.** Our decades-long focus on mentorship has been critical in driving transformation of the teachers’ practices.

To fortify our core curricula, the Center developed a robust learning suite to assist

teachers in its use and best practices. The Center’s programs and resources are rooted in the inquiry-based curriculum model. Inquiry is a learning process that engages students by making real-world connections through discovery, exploration, and high-level questioning.

Inquiry encourages students to engage in problem-solving and experiential learning.

In FY2024, we began to build the library of ready-to-use lessons with current topics focused on media literacy, how the definition of “We the People” has evolved since the beginning of the American republic, the First Amendment, lowering the voting age, and the civil rights movement then and now.

Complementary to our teacher professional-learning opportunities, the Center continues to develop interactive webinars in collaboration with scholars and partner organizations. These

live webinars with recordings available on demand allow participants to dive into enriching discussions, gain new perspectives, and foster their professional growth with exceptional professional-learning opportunities.

The webinars are geared toward educators, civics enthusiasts, and anyone with a curious mind. While a few of the webinars focused specifically on the implementation of our core texts and programs, additional topics included establishing a climate, culture, and context for civic action (in partnership with the National Liberty Museum), “Elections, Then and Now: A Journey Through Democracy” and “Constitutional Cornerstone: Marbury v. Madison—An Exploration for Educators” (in partnership with Colonial Williamsburg), “Women, War, and Citizenship: Exploring Diverse Perspectives” (in partnership with the American Battlefield Trust), as well as a We the People competition bootcamp and a focused Project Citizen webinar series that support educators facilitating our programs. Webinars are recorded and **available on demand** through our website: civiced.org.

Our PLC Objectives

- Build upon your own professional goals in serving as a leader in civic education
- Witness best practices for you & your mentees
- Participate in a yearlong book study to promote our growth mindset
- Share experiences and expertise with other professionals

Informing the Field and Key Stakeholders

Transforming Civics for High-Need Students

The Center's Dr. Donna Phillips and Alissa Irion-Groth presented "[Transforming Civics for High-Need Students](#)" with Dr. Diana Owen of Georgetown University's [Civic Education Research Lab](#) (CERL) at the American Political Science Association's Annual Meeting in August of 2023. The paper features the innovative research and curriculum development process of the Center's [James Madison Legacy Project Expansion Program](#).

Proof of Civic-Learning Outcomes

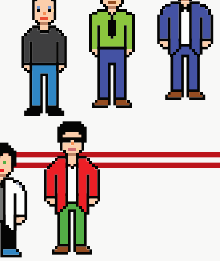
We marked the release of the "[Project Citizen Research Program 2024 Report](#)" by CERL. The report evaluated the impact of the Project Citizen teacher professional learning program and curriculum on middle and high school teachers and students over three years.

To launch the findings of the PCRCP report, the Center held a first-of-it's-kind research conference at Georgetown University where representatives from most states and organizations across the country gathered to highlight the deep impact of Project Citizen.

Findings showed increased understanding of and confidence in civic knowledge, dispositions, skills, and engagement and the intersections of civics with social and emotional learning competencies and science, technology, engineering, and math.

An additional observation is that Project Citizen teachers placed significantly more emphasis on civic dispositions in their classes after participating in the professional-learning program. For more of the Center's analysis on the impact of Project Citizen and civic education, please read the [full Research Impact article](#) on the Center's website. The webinar recording can be [found online](#).

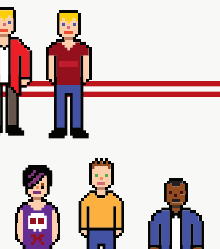




Meeting Adult Learning Needs with Timely Urgency

On September 17, 2023—Constitution Day—the Center for Civic Education, with funding from the Annenberg Public Policy Center’s Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics, released the [Civil Discourse: An American Legacy Toolkit](#), a free online curriculum for college classrooms and adult learners that assists educators and their students in developing civil-discourse skills using primary sources and current events.

Developed for college students and adult learners with a focus on facing challenging conversations and welcoming divergent viewpoints, our goal is to address the lack of civility in political discourse through this freely available multimedia resource—videos, pedagogical guides, and deep content utilizing primary sources. We were excited to preview the toolkit at the 19th Annual Constitution Day Conference at the Ronald Reagan Presidential Library on September 9, 2023.

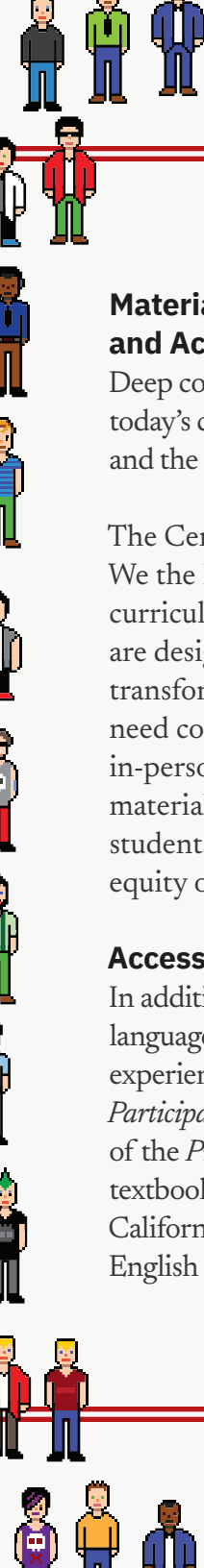


Driving 21st Century Skills, Literacies, and Civic Engagement

New Media Literacy and Public Policy Project Underway!

In the fall of 2023, we launched a new project to develop media literacy through public policy engagement. With a new American History and Civics National Activities grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the Center worked with media-literacy experts and experienced educators to create new innovative curricular materials that integrate media literacy with hands-on public policy engagement. This award enabled us to revise our [Project Citizen Level 2 textbook](#) to reflect the needs of today's learners, including the addition of the media-literacy curriculum, which can be used as a standalone learning resource. And this summer, the Center began working with our Project Citizen coordinators, mentor teachers, and educators across the country on the "Project Community: Engaging All Students in Media Literacy and Public Policy" project over the next three years. The Civic Education Research Lab at Georgetown University will soon survey teachers across the country on their media-literacy experiences and needs.





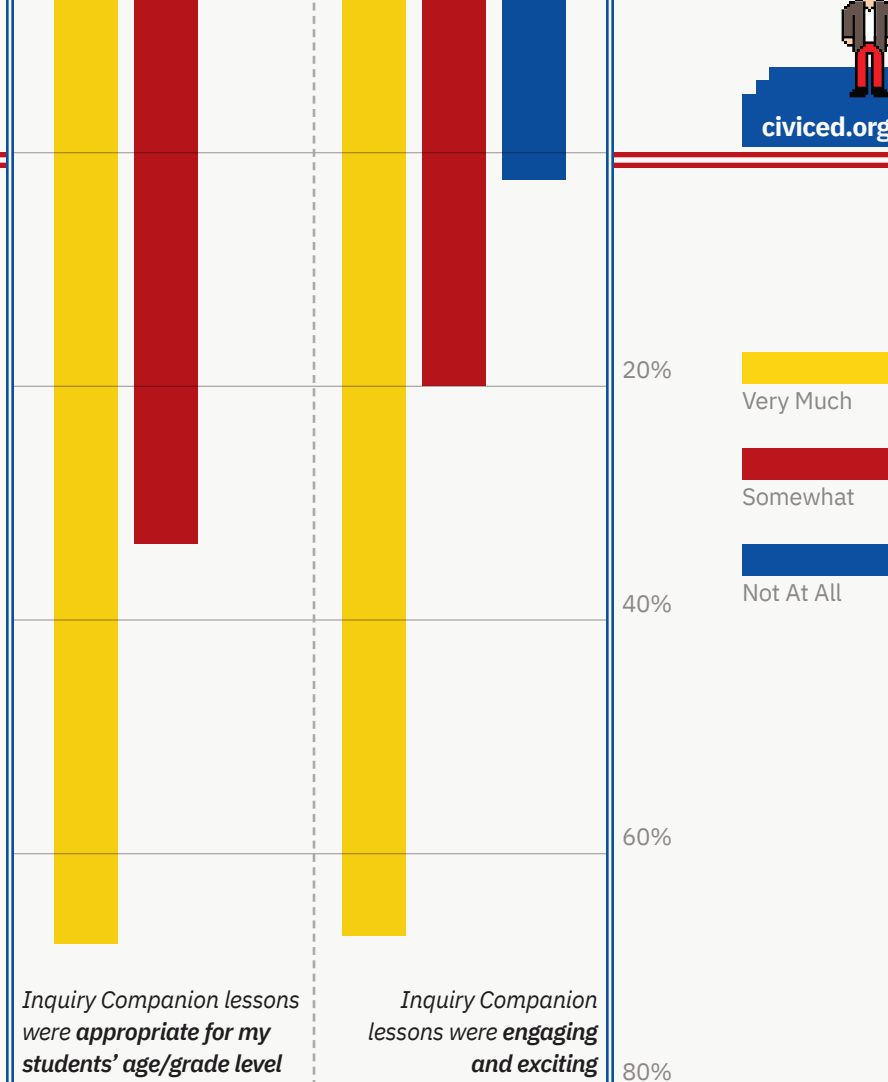
Materials Designed to Increase Access and Achievement for All Students

Deep content knowledge and relevant pedagogical skills are needed by today’s classroom educators to teach the foundations of American history and the U.S. system of government.

The Center developed a new inquiry-based teacher’s guide for the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution Level 2 and 3 curricula, intended for middle and high school students. The lessons are designed to empower civic educators in their mission to provide transformative civic education for all students, especially those in high-need communities. Through this companion material, accompanying in-person and virtual professional development, and a pilot of the new materials for 11 teachers of approximately 300 middle and high school students most in need of this support, the Center sought to address equity of resources for underserved classrooms.

Accessibility for Language Learners

In addition to financial barriers, partnerships fuel our ability to tackle language barriers that limit access to beneficial public policy learning experiences. To this end, the Center has completed *Proyecto Ciudadano: Participación de la comunidad en las políticas públicas*, the Spanish translation of the *Project Citizen: Community Engagement in Public Policy* Level 1 textbook for middle grades. The Spanish translation is being piloted in California in fiscal year 2025, filling a critical gap in resource availability for English learners.



“Regardless of identity, background, or ability, I was able to engage all learners. By now, I know my students and what their needs are. I was able to tailor the lessons in a way that could be engaging for all learners.”
—Inquiry Companion Teacher

The Center Wins Two Grants to Advance Civic Education

Elevating Unheard Perspectives through Civil Discourse

This project was designed to amplify the historical viewpoints of marginalized communities and normalize best practices of civil discourse with underserved youth in grades 6–8. With a goal of filling a curricular gap in those grades, the Center will promote the use of civil discourse **in rural and tribal communities** through the development of three robust digital-resource modules—representative of the target audience—and train teachers in the use of the resources to ensure student outcomes. We anticipate **reaching approximately 35 teachers and up to 1,000 students**. On Constitution Day, this curriculum will be launched for free to teachers and students everywhere, greatly increasing its impact.

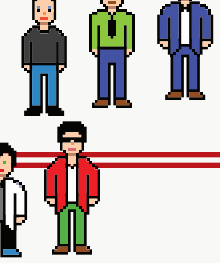
This project was awarded the 2024 Leonore Annenberg Institute for Civics (LAIC) prize. LAIC is a project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania.

Transforming Civic Education Outcomes with Inquiry-Based Learning

This project increased the use of inclusive, inquiry-based, student-centered learning strategies and bolstered teachers' skills and commitment to implementing best practices in social studies education for grades 4–8. The Center collaborated with state partners to gauge needs in local and underserved communities in the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region and created four digital-inquiry lessons focused on the foundations of democratic concepts that address regional, culturally responsive topics. Featuring Library of Congress online primary-source resources and built upon existing curricula focused on the

concepts of authority, privacy, responsibility, and justice, new lessons **emphasizing unheard perspectives**. Teacher training was included. In the implementation phase of this project, we **reached approximately 125 teachers and 3,750 students**.

This project was sponsored by the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources Eastern Region Program coordinated by Waynesburg University.



Leading the Charge

The Center for Civic Education’s Board of Directors appointed Dr. Donna Phillips as President and Chief Executive Officer of the organization, replacing Christopher R. Riano, who stepped down after four years of service. “For decades, the Center has shaped my own civic education as an educator, member of the network, and citizen. As President, **I am excited to honor our history and impact while embracing new opportunities and strategies that align with our mission and the needs of our national network of educators, students, and communities,**” Dr. Phillips said. Dr. Phillips assumed the position of President and CEO on May 1, formerly served as the Center’s VP and Chief Program Officer, and looks forward to working in concert with you to deepen our impact.



Capstone National Events Equal Unparalleled Experiences for Students

We the People National Finals

In April 2024, **76 volunteer judges and 100+ event support volunteers** joined us for the We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution National Finals, and approximately **1,200 students and their teachers** participated in the high-energy National Finals competition weekend. Their days were filled with testing their hard work through simulated congressional hearings, practice, and immersion in all that Washington, D.C., has to offer. Full information regarding participating teams, volunteer judges, the program, and event supporters can be [found in the program guide](#) on our website. The Center is immensely appreciative of the support from our volunteers, donors, and sponsors.

Grant High School from Portland, Oregon, placed first in the 2024 We the People National Finals. Douglas S. Freeman High School from Henrico, Virginia, placed second, and Foothill

High School from Pleasanton, California, placed third in the event, which was held at the National Conference Center in the Washington, D.C., area.

If you have never seen We the People students in action, [watch this video](#) from a We the People National Finals hearing in 2022.

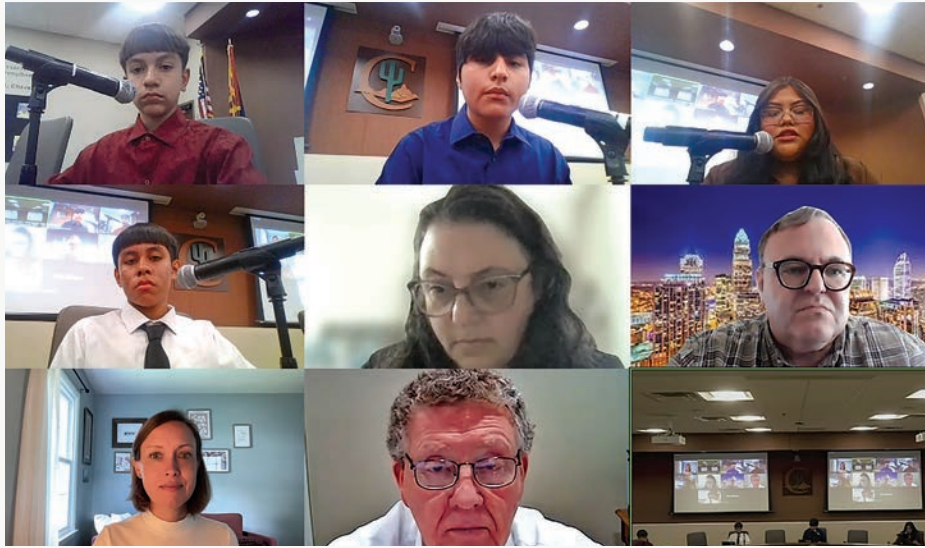
Expanding Access

As part of our commitment to breaking down barriers to participation, and through the generous support of funders, the Center presents an annual award—the **John Lewis Class Scholarship**—to one team that would otherwise not be able to afford to participate in the National Finals.

This past year, Overland High School in Aurora, Colorado, was selected as the 2024 John Lewis Class at the National Finals. This exceptional group of students represented a myriad of backgrounds, including those who have recently migrated to the United States. Many of these students are English learners and first-generation students from the Middle East and North Africa. This school's population is representative of the need for increased investment to lift up more teams like this. It is one of the most diverse schools in the United States, with over 80 different languages spoken fluently by families. In addition, 75% of the school receives free or reduced lunch, 81% of students are Black, Indigenous, or people of color, and 59% of students' families fall below the poverty line.

This scholarship was supported in part by the American Judges Foundation and individual supporters.





We the People National Invitational

Fourteen teams of students from eight states competed May 10–11 in the We the People National Invitational, a nationwide academic competition on the Constitution held online. The virtual simulated congressional hearing format is very similar to the in-person competition and gives students not quite ready for the main stage a hands-on experience.

Nova Middle School of Davie, Florida, placed first in the middle school portion of the competition, while second place went to another Florida team, Miami Arts Studio at Zelda Glazer, and third place was awarded to Faith Lutheran Middle School's Gold Team of Las Vegas, Nevada. Nova High School's Unit 5 won an award for highest-scoring unit in the high school division. [Watch the awards announcement here.](#)

Project Citizen National Showcase

Every year, state coordinators of the Project Citizen program designate exemplary portfolios from their state to send to the annual Project Citizen National Showcase, where evaluators determine the level of achievement attained by each portfolio. Through this curriculum, students engage cooperatively as a class in the Project Citizen process of identifying a problem in their community, researching alternative public policy-based solutions, and developing and presenting a solution to others in their community.

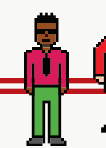
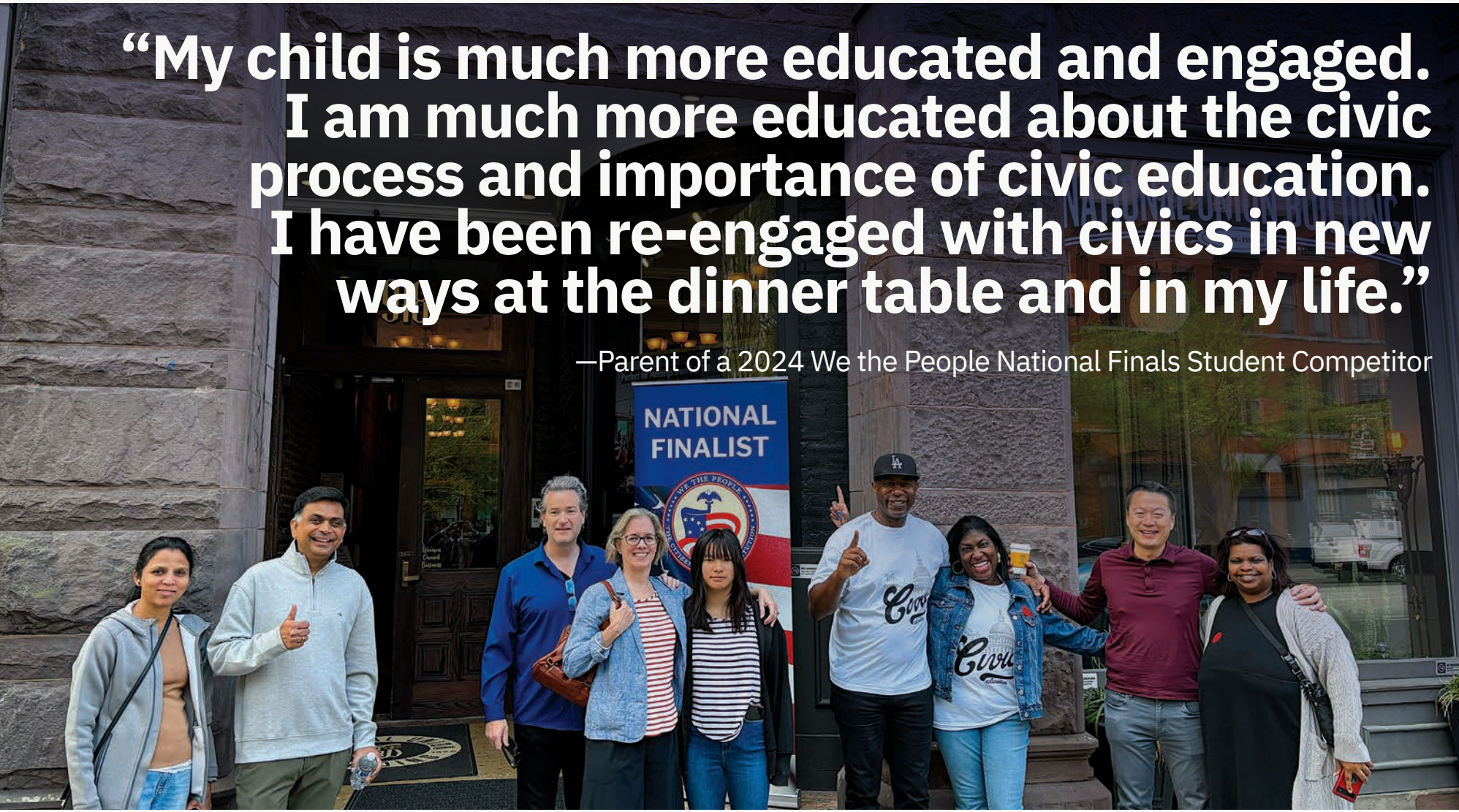
Join us in celebrating young changemakers who are reshaping our world. At this year's Project Citizen National Showcase, students demonstrated innovation, ingenuity, and inspiration. Each project was a testament to the power of youth voices to shape our society for the better. From environmental conservation to mental health to social justice, these passionate young visionaries have tackled some of the most pressing issues of our time.

This past July, out of the 16 team entries, eight projects were determined to be Superior, seven Exceptional, and one Outstanding. [The full results](#) can be found on our website.



“My child is much more educated and engaged. I am much more educated about the civic process and importance of civic education. I have been re-engaged with civics in new ways at the dinner table and in my life.”

—Parent of a 2024 We the People National Finals Student Competitor



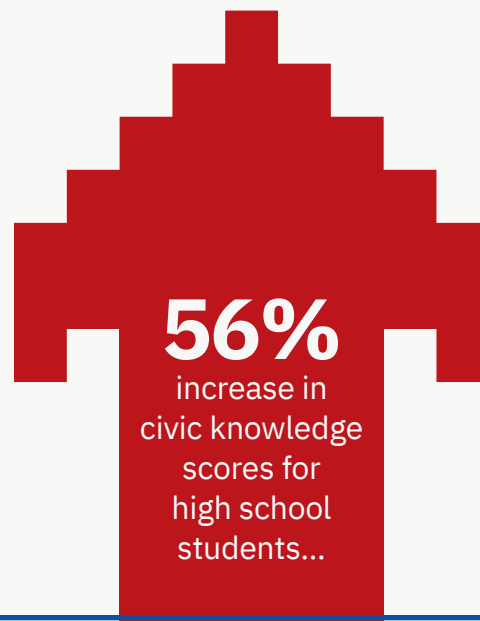


Studies Show...

Parents and caregivers get to see their young people thrive as students of our programs. Studies show a 76% increase in civic knowledge scores for middle school students and a 56% increase for high school students.

Investments in our mission ensure more students across the nation—and their parents—learn about their constitutional rights and how to use those rights to make a difference in the communities around them.

When they learn, democracy thrives.



**...after participating in the
Center's We the People
curricular program**

4,790
students in
state &
national civics
competitions

We the People Alumni Shape Our Democracy

During the We the People National Finals Awards Ceremony held on April 15, the Center, its Board of Directors, and the We the People Alumni Network recognized two out of countless incredible We the People alumni. New in 2024, this awards program was created to celebrate and spotlight We the People: The Citizen and the Constitution students **who took the passion, knowledge, and skills they gained as students of the We the People program and made a positive impact in the world around them.** We salute our accomplished We the People alumni, and we are pleased to recognize their service to their communities.

2024 Outstanding Young Alumni Award—Athena Claire Hanny

We the People Class of 2015

Douglas S. Freeman High School (Virginia)

In the words of her nominator, Martha S., “Athena has dedicated her career to public service, as her passion is uplifting the education system to support generations of students ... and is always aiming to create environments where students have an equal and just opportunity to learn.”

Ms. Hanny graduated with an undergraduate degree in youth and social innovation from the School of Education and Human Development and a master’s degree in public policy from the Frank Batten School of Leadership and Public Policy, both at the University of Virginia (UVA). Upon graduation, she learned how to foster improved higher education through her work in the UVA’s President’s Office. She went on to work at an architectural firm focused on ensuring educational buildings promote the best, healthiest learning environments for students and enhancing the overall well-being of students and educators.



Currently, Ms. Hanny works for Mayor Levar Stoney in Richmond, Virginia, focusing on public education and juvenile justice. She recently published a report detailing a multitude of steps being taken in the city to reduce gun violence and injury among its youth.

2024 Cincinnatus Award—Sambo “Bo” Dul

We the People Class of 2001

Corona del Sol High School (Arizona)

Sambo (Bo) Dul was a member of her high school’s 2000–2001 We the People state championship team, which placed among the top ten teams at the National Finals.



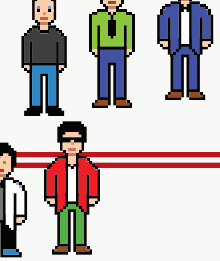
Ms. Dul and her family resettled in Phoenix, Arizona, as refugees from Cambodia in 1988. English was her second language. She attended college at Arizona State University and graduated summa cum laude with three degrees. She then earned her law degree from New York University and a master’s in public affairs from Princeton University. After practicing law for two years in New York, she clerked for Chief Judge Theodore McKee in the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. She then returned to Phoenix and joined Perkins Coie LLP, where she made partner in the Political Law Group.

Additionally, Ms. Dul started the Phoenix Legal Action Network, a public-interest legal organization designed to help immigrant families in Phoenix. In January of 2019, Ms. Dul was appointed as State Elections Director by then-Arizona Secretary of State Katie Hobbs. After Secretary Hobbs was elected governor in November 2022, Ms. Dul became General Counsel in the Office of Governor Katie Hobbs.



1,523
volunteers
plus
68 state
coordinators





Our Donors

Thanks to the support of corporations, foundations, and individual gifts, the Center for Civic Education provides no- and low-cost programs and resources enabling learners of all ages and professional educators to access robust constitutional and civic education.

This support offsets the cost of curricula and program development for students and educators, as well as audio, video, and print resources for learners of all ages. Thank you for your investment in democracy and civic education.

Contributions were made August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2024.

✓ Event sponsors are in italicized bold font.
* Asterisks denote members of our Sustaining Democracy Circle, monthly donors of \$25 or more per month.

Gifts of \$100,000+

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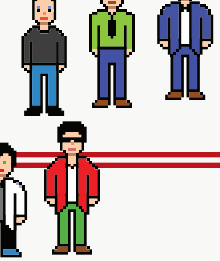
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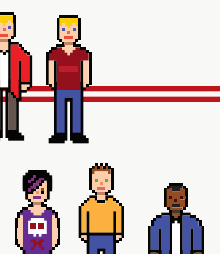
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