

DEMOCRACY'S RISING GENERATION

2023 ANNUAL REPORT



GENERATIONCITIZEN.ORG

LETTER FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

One of my favorite writers, Arundhati Roy, wrote about her dreams of a just world that *“Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.”*

I hear that *new world* loud and clear, an inclusive, participatory multiracial democratic one, in school auditoriums and community centers at every Civics Day. Throughout this report, you will see pictures of students sharing their solutions to community problems, and culminating their GC experience with a sense of agency and pride.

The journey to Civics Day is the heart of the work, an evidence-based, student-centered pathway to active citizenship:

1. Teachers begin with a lesson on the **United States Constitution** and lead students to create their own, embodying an innovative, interactive approach to civic knowledge
2. Students discuss and decide on **focus issues based on their lived experiences**, they learn to respect the views of their classmates and to find common ground across lines of difference.
3. They build community **relationships**, research the **root causes** and impacts of an issue by conducting community interviews, surveys, and analyzing studies.
4. Finally, they **create and implement an action plan**, persuading decision-makers, creating new initiatives in schools and their community and advocating for bills

Civic Leader Angela Glover Blackwell noted this year about Generation Citizen that *“Through a project-based curriculum that supports students as they engage directly in their communities on ideas they care about, young people learn about democracy...The more young people—and all of us—build the muscle of democratic engagement across differences, the stronger and better our whole system will become.”*

The inclusive, participatory, multiracial democracy is emerging across American communities. GC helps prepare young people to understand our civic past and present, so they can confidently lead as Democracy’s Rising Generation.



ELIZABETH CLAY ROY
GENERATION CITIZEN, CEO



LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Dear GC Community,

This year has seen our world torn apart by conflict, dysfunction, and suffering, but these events have made me more committed to and convinced by the work that we do with young people through Generation Citizen. GC reminds me of the power of young people in sustaining and enriching our democracy - and democracies around the world. When I hear young people from all walks of life speak at our Civics Days, it reminds me of the hope that the future brings.

Generation Citizen helps young people work together for the good of their communities and all who live amongst them. Research shows that the rising generation not only cares about their communities and world events at this moment, but also about creating a better future. GC supports these young people by giving them the opportunity, skills, and knowledge to define and create a world that is more loving, peaceful, and sustainable.

What has always impressed me about GC is its ability to reach across different kinds of communities. Whether in New England or the South, in urban or suburban areas, the power of elevating young people's voices to better their communities can cross partisan and generational divides. It is a reminder that making our democracy stronger and better is not the task of the few, but the responsibility of all. So as the world feels like it's breaking around us, I am evermore grateful for the ways all of you help young people become the stewards of our democracy.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Jane Lo', written in a cursive style.

DR. JANE LO

GENERATION CITIZEN, CHAIR

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WHAT WE DO

Community-Based Action Civics

Educators across the country teach GC's project-based, interactive civics curriculum with support from our national and regional program teams. As civics learning comes to life, students become active citizens in their own communities.



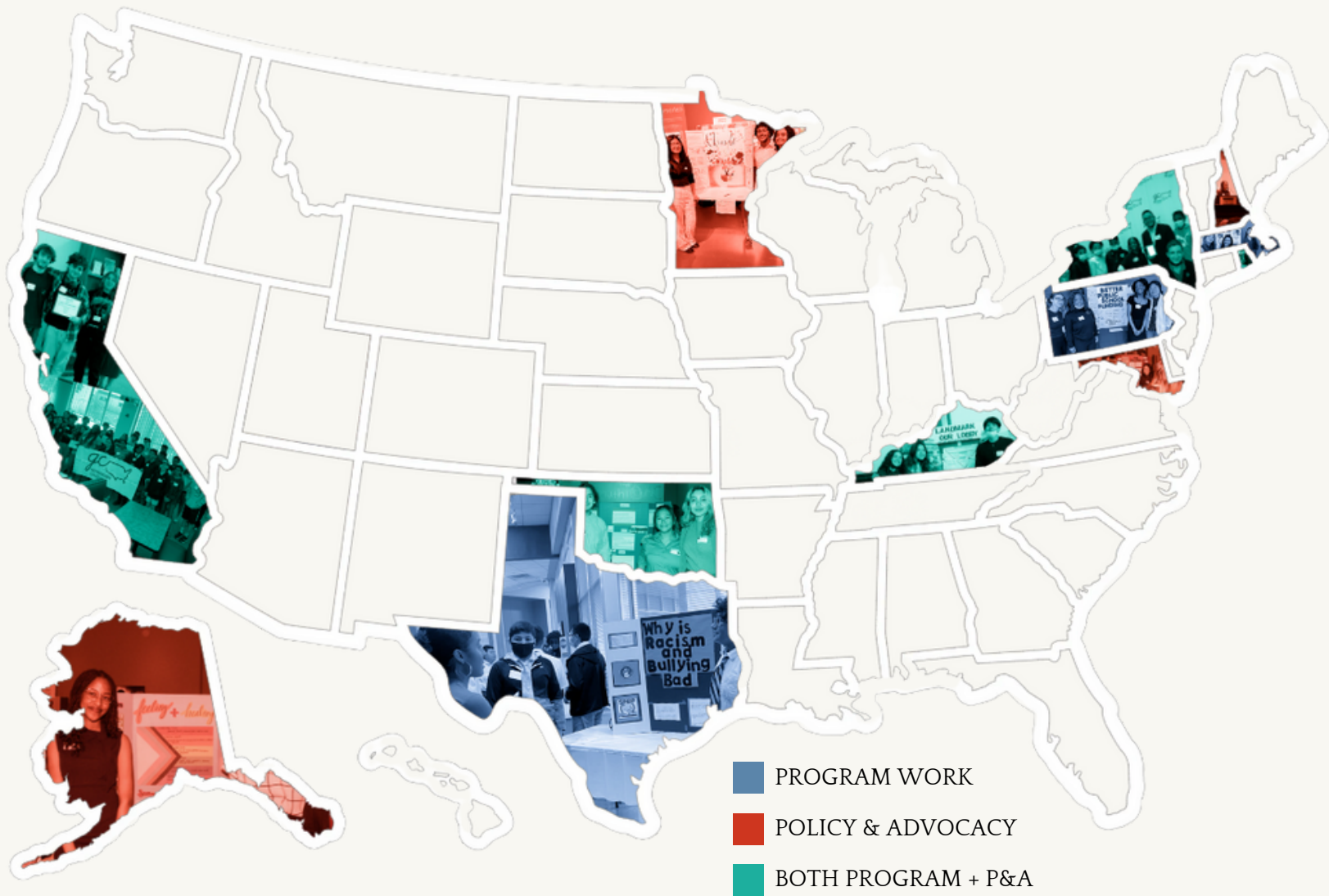
Youth Leadership Development & Engagement

The next chapter of our history will be written by today's students. We provide young people with the tools they need to lead through alumni engagement, fellowship programs, and leadership training.



Policy, Advocacy, & Field-Building

Supportive civic education policies and a strong field of experts are more important than ever. Civic education has come under attack in recent years; together with our partners, we advocate for funding and support to preserve and strengthen access to civic education.



OUR 2022-23 IMPACT:

31,918 **MIDDLE & HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS** engaged in GC's Action Civics curriculum

468 **TEACHERS DELIVERED GC'S CURRICULUM** & received training, professional development, and support

85% of students in GC's classes were **STUDENTS OF COLOR**

95% of teachers agree that the GC curriculum supported their ability to **DEVELOP A DEMOCRATIC CLASSROOM CULTURE**

96% of GC students showed **CONFIDENCE IN CIVIC SKILLS**

1275 **ACTION CIVICS PROJECTS COMPLETED!**

MID-ATLANTIC

New York and Pennsylvania

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Leveraged the full rollout of the **New York State Seal of Civic Readiness**, a high school diploma seal honoring civic engagement
- Renewed **support from New York City Council** enabled growth throughout the city
- **Expanded NYC partnerships**, including NYC DOE Districts 5 and 24, Harlem Renaissance Education Pipeline, Urban Assembly, New Visions for Public Schools, and a new partnership with KIPP Public Charter Schools
- Expanding footprint to include **Buffalo and additional districts in western New York State** as well as new partners in Westchester and Long Island
- Launching a **new partnership in Philadelphia**

ACTION CIVICS SPOTLIGHT

New Visions Charter High School for Advanced Math and Science III, Sheepshead Bay:

- **Issue:** Police violence in the community
- **Student response:** Advocating for better police/community relations; identifying key policy levers; engaging the Civilian Complaint Review Board

MS 83 Donald Hertz, Bronx:

- **Issue:** Needing new water fountains in their school to replace old, unfiltered fountains
- **Student response:** Seeking guidance from a fellow GC school which has focused on this issue; testing the water fountains for presence of lead; making their case to school leaders



CIVICS DAY

June 2023, NYC Bar Association

Keynote speaker: NYC Council Member Shekar Krishnan

Student projects addressed: Historical landmarking of school buildings, community safety support in downtown Brooklyn, littering and park beautification, student mental health, school security, smaller class sizes, and many more.

“No matter what path we take, no matter how big or small, we must use what we know to make a difference for others in our community.”

- NYC Council Member Shekar Krishnan

NEW ENGLAND

Massachusetts and Rhode Island

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Supported **18,225 students in 92 schools across 31 districts**, led by **275 teachers**
- Graduated the **first cohort of GC lead teachers** to serve as civic education champions in their schools and communities
- Launched an expansive **new partnership with Providence, RI Public Schools**

Policy & Advocacy

- In MA, worked in coalition to put forth a budget amendment to counter the Governor's proposed decrease to the \$2 million **Civics Project Trust Fund**.
- With the RI Civic Learning Commission, introduced a bill to establish a **\$1 million civics fund** that benefits all Rhode Island districts, prioritizing the most underserved communities.

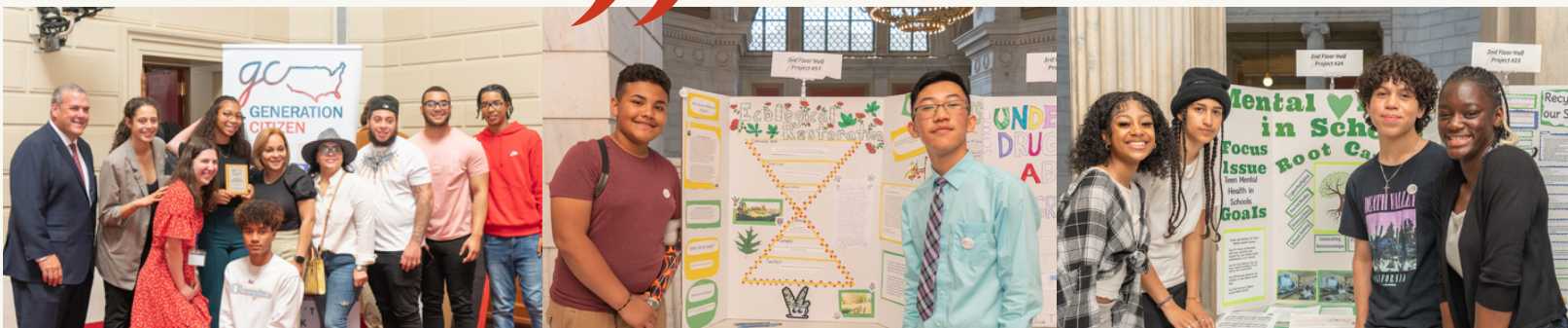
"Civic engagement is lifelong. These aren't skills for the moment; they're skills for your whole life."
- Gregg M. Amore, RI Secretary of State

ACTION CIVICS SPOTLIGHT

- Hosted **two statewide Civics Days** in Massachusetts and Rhode Island, as well as **12 local district Civics Days** across Massachusetts and Rhode Island
- **Student project topics included:** period poverty, beach pollution, hunger, financial literacy, composting, and sexual assault, among many others

Daley Middle School, Lowell, MA:

- **Issue:** Period Poverty
- **Policy Passage:** Students presented to the School Committee and Superintendent and saw their motion passed unanimously, enabling free feminine hygiene products in all girls restrooms in Lowell High School and every middle school.
- **Program Impact:** "More and more students are stepping up and expressing their concerns, and holding us accountable to provide a quality education in a quality environment." - Jackie Doherty, Lowell School Committee



SOUTH

Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Texas

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Growth across Kentucky, Oklahoma, and Texas
- Impacted **107 classrooms, 32 educators, and 2675 students**
- 91% of Oklahoma teachers reported that participating in Action Civics had **a positive impact on strengthening their relationships with students.**

Partnerships

- In Kentucky, a **groundbreaking partnership between Generation Citizen, CivicLex, and Fayette County Public Schools (FCPS).**

"When students are actively engaged in learning about civics in the classroom, supported by a strong curriculum, we are doing our part as educators to prepare them to be active and engaged global citizens."

- Fayette County Public Schools Superintendent
Dr. Demetrus Liggins

ACTION CIVICS SPOTLIGHT

- In Paris, Kentucky, a class developed an Action Civics project on teen pregnancy after learning that teen pregnancy rates were exceptionally high in their community. They undertook an initiative to improve sex education in their city, **collaborating with school officials and their State Representative** to advocate for a comprehensive curriculum to be implemented at their high school.
- Students in Meeker, OK, identified the lack of a community pool as an issue in their community. **After doing research on cost and potential location, talking to similarly-sized towns, and working with the local Sac and Fox Nation, Meeker students presented their plan for a community pool** to the local town council, seeking their support.
- Pawnee High School students in Oklahoma created Action Civics projects that addressed **issues like high utility bills and renewable energy, abandoned structures, and limited access to mental health care.**



WEST

California

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

- Revitalizing our California presence and **planning expansion to Washington State**
- Served **12 teachers, 19 classrooms, and 503 students** in CA
- **San Ramon Valley and Long Beach Unified School Districts** adopted GC's Action Civics curriculum for the 2023-2024 academic year.
- Renewed partnership with the **innovative We The People Charter School** in Long Beach
- In San Ramon Valley, **100% of participating teachers** reported positive effects on students' ability to self-manage in class and analyze problems, as well as growth in their capacity to engage with and connect with students' communities.

"I feel a lot more comfortable getting into advocacy, knowing that I am not doing this alone."

- GC student at San Ramon Civics Day

ACTION CIVICS SPOTLIGHT

- San Ramon Civics Day: Student Changemaker from Windemere Ranch Middle School, Samridh Bannerjee, shared their thoughts on the profound impact of youth voice. **"There is no larger-than-life speech or a message I wish to tell adults about youth voice. Rather, I hope the actions of students [like myself], both now and for years to come, speak louder than any speech ever could."**
- One student project focused on **advocating for CPR and first aid training**. The class collaborated with a Science teacher at their school who once served as an Army medic, and developed plans to fill the existing knowledge gap.
- Student feedback from San Ramon Civics Day: "I really appreciated how this civics program was taught at school and **wasn't something we had to find out on our own.**"



Youth Leadership in Action

Savannah Slayton, a GC alumna originally from Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, has continued her journey toward meaningful civic engagement and youth advocacy.



Savannah Slayton

"It is important for students to participate in project-based civics learning because it opens your eyes to the 'how?' aspect of any passion.

As a student at the University of Oklahoma, the 'how?' question does not daunt me as much as it did when I was a freshman in high school, because I now have the resources to make my passions and dreams for my community come to fruition."

During her time at Northwest Classen High School, Savannah first participated in Action Civics in 2020, and then went on to participate in GC's Student Editorial Board, where she published an op-ed in *The Oklahoman* on the lack of sufficient funding for Oklahoma public schools.

Savannah now serves as a Generation Citizen National Board member.

Now at the University of Oklahoma, Savannah is currently pursuing a double major in Political Science focused on Elections/Campaign Management and Constitutional Studies, along with a minor in Native American Studies. She has received recognitions such as the Henderson Scholar-President's Leadership Class, Global Engagement Fellow, NAS Mellon Impact Fellow, and OU Undergraduate Research and Creative Activity Fellow. **Her research interests include understanding the legacy of colonialism on modern education in Oklahoma, and its continuous impact on Native youth in public and residential schools.**

Savannah actively contributes to the American Indian Student Association, Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature, and OU Cousins. **She remains civically engaged on campus, serving as a Policy and Advocacy Fellow at Let's Fix This, Student Advisory Board Indigenous Chair for Campus Vote Project, and Programming Chair for Oklahoma Votes at OU, and she is often involved with Rock The Native Vote OKC.**

Her aspirations for the future align with her ongoing dedication to education policy, advocating for Native rights, and empowering young people through civics education.

Savannah says that her experience with Generation Citizen has been a pivotal influence in her continued commitment to civic engagement. **GC empowered her to recognize the strength of her voice, guiding her towards advocacy for education policy, particularly in Indian Education across Oklahoma and the United States.** She underscores the significance of project-based civics education for students, emphasizing its ability to provide a framework for transforming passion and ideas into tangible projects.

Youth Leadership Development and Engagement

Generation Citizen is committed to empowering and engaging young people in the democratic process. Our current youth engagement initiatives focus on cultivating young leaders, improving civic education, and advocating for equitable learning opportunities. We are dedicated to making a significant impact across our regions. By nurturing the next generation of informed, active citizens, we aim to shape our democracy, promote equitable education, and drive positive change in our communities.

RI Civic Learning Coalition (RICLC) Youth Voice Fellows

In 2022-23, Generation Citizen supported seven RICLC Youth Fellows, who served as leaders of the statewide multigenerational coalition. The Youth Fellows **worked to advocate for equitable civic learning across Rhode Island and led the campaign for legislative civic funding**, drafting a \$1 million civic funding bill and securing a sponsor. They then saw the bill introduced in the 2023 legislative season.

New York Youth Policy Fellows Program

In New York, we recently introduced the Youth Policy Fellows program. This initiative involves seven high school and early college Fellows from various parts of New York State, including New York City, Westchester, and Long Island. These Fellows **work on city and state advocacy, federal advocacy, and represent Generation Citizen on the DemocracyReady NY Youth Engagement Committee**. Through a series of trainings and practical activities, they engage in advocacy work such as testifying at New York City Council hearings and contributing to efforts to lower the voting age in municipal elections to 16. The Fellows also collaborate with GC staff to design and implement Action Civics projects, further developing their leadership and advocacy skills.

Vote16USA

GC's Vote16 initiative made significant strides this year in building momentum to lower the voting age to 16, providing technical assistance to campaigns across the country:

- Partnered with NY State Representative Grace Meng to **introduce a Congressional resolution lowering the voting age**
- Provided **strategic support and media engagement in Culver City, CA**, where a voting age measure amassed more than 49% of the vote
- Saw key victories: **Brattleboro, VT lowered the voting age to 16**; in Southborough, MA, 17-year-olds can now vote in municipal elections and attend town hall meetings.
- Relunched our **Vote16 Advisory Board**





Beyond Passing the Torch: Recommendations on Leveraging Age Diversity to Build a Stronger Democracy Now

Written by:

Dairanys Grullon-Virgil

Associate Director, Alumni and Youth Voice
Generation Citizen

Sydelle Barreto

National Civic Engagement Research Fellow
Generation Citizen

Published in partnership with:

CoGenerate

Millennial Action Project

In the fall of 2022, Generation Citizen, alongside Millennial Action Project and CoGenerate, conducted a landscape analysis on cross-generational civic leadership pipelines, intending to create a publicly accessible cross-organizational resource to inform the civic engagement sector on best practices for engaging people across different generations.

In February 2023, we published our report ***Beyond Passing the Torch: Recommendations on Leveraging Age Diversity to Build a Stronger Democracy Now*** [↗](#). This practitioner-facing research is a first of its kind paper that emphasizes the importance of intergenerational equity, youth voice, and overcoming traditional barriers of age and other lines of difference through close consideration of case studies and research.

Honoring Heroes in the Classroom: The Legacy of Darcy Elaine Richie

In 2022, Generation Citizen created **The Darcy Elaine Richie Teacher Courage Award** as a way to celebrate teachers of civics, U.S. government, and history who embody courage and excellence in equity-rooted civic education.

The inspiration behind the award is Generation Citizen's former Chief Officer of Program and Impact, Darcy Elaine Richie, who sadly passed away in April of 2022. Darcy was a beloved former classroom teacher, principal, and professor who inspired thousands of educators and students with her commitment to social justice education.

We honor her through the development of this \$10,000 award to celebrate an educator who empowers student voices, creates space for courageous conversations, and consistently delivers culturally responsive instruction with a strong equity lens. **By focusing on an educator who is a model advocate for civic learning, we remember Darcy's profound contributions to our community and beyond - furthering her legacy for years to come.**



Recipient Emmanuel Ramos (center) with his nominator Pam Jennings (right) and student Ajah Johnson (left)

In June 2023, Generation Citizen honored **Emmanuel Ramos** as recipient of the inaugural Darcy Elaine Richie Teacher Courage Award.

Emmanuel is a distinguished teacher at Central Falls High School in Central Falls, Rhode Island (RI). He was selected for this honor because of his commitment to promoting civic life among students - empowering students with real decision-making power in their school, and beginning the work of dismantling systemic racism.

Generation Citizen is a firm believer in centering and elevating exceptional educators who are inspiring and nurturing our nation's young people. Emmanuel Ramos's remarkable accomplishments at Central Falls High School serve as an inspiration to fellow educators and reaffirm GC's commitment to empowering youth to learn civics while doing civics through real-world democracy education across the country.

A Conversation with Jessica Lander, 2023 MA History Teacher of the Year



Jessica Lander

Jessica has been a GC teacher since 2015, teaching history and civics to immigrant and refugee students from more than 30 countries at Lowell High School.

She is the author of [Making Americans: Stories of Historic Struggles, New Ideas, and Inspiration in Immigrant Education](#), a comprehensive look at immigrant education that also features a number of past Generation Citizen students.

Jessica has won numerous awards for her teaching, including being named a Top 50 Finalist for the Global Teacher Prize in 2021 by the Varkey Foundation and being named the 2023 Massachusetts History Teacher of the Year Finalist.

What impact has Generation Citizen's Action Civics curriculum had on your students?

I have the honor and joy of teaching recent immigrant and refugee students from more than thirty countries. My students are in the process of making new homes and new lives here and they are deeply passionate about their adopted community. Our [Action Civics](#) work gives my students the tools to become real changemakers in their new community.

Early every semester, we reach the point when a student turns to me and asks, "But Ms. Lander, we aren't actually going to send this letter to the head of school? Right? Like this is pretend," and then I get to tell them, "No, this is not pretend," and watch their eyes get big and their mouths gape. And then I get to watch them walk nervously into meetings with their State Representatives, and local officials, and leaders of nonprofits - and come out in awe that adults listened to them, respected them, and cared about what they had to say.

As a teacher, I want to make sure my immigrant-origin students know they belong here. The work we do with Generation Citizen is often transformative for my students as well as our community.

I see it in the small moments in our classroom.

I see it in my students' transformation at Civics Day at the Massachusetts State House. As many have told me, they didn't think the State House, such a place of power, was a place they would be invited into, a place where they would be respected and listened to. They walk in shy, nervous and unsure if adults will care, and they walk out with confidence.

I see it months after when students tell me about the civic issues they are getting involved in.

And **I see this in the lasting impact they have had in creating positive community change** - in the projects and programs that they created that have continued long after they have graduated high school.

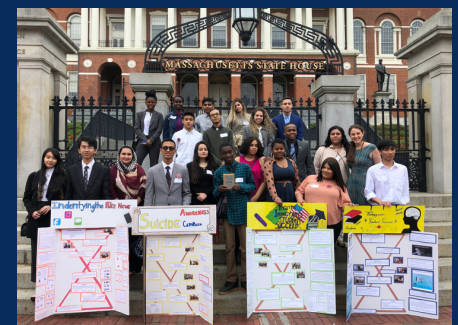
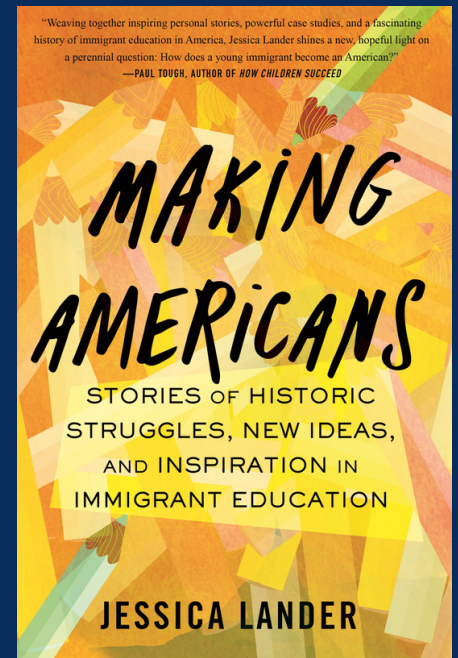
A Conversation with Jessica Lander, 2023 MA History Teacher of the Year

Your book, **Making Americans: Stories of Historic Struggles, New Ideas, and Inspiration in Immigrant Education**, focuses on students' immigrant journeys and how they created their own American identities. How have students brought their cultures and perspectives into the classroom through Action Civics?

For my book, *Making Americans: Stories of Historic Struggles, New Ideas, and Inspiration in Immigrant Education*¹, I had the opportunity to sit down with seven of my remarkable former students who generously and courageously shared parts of their journeys and stories with me so I could share them in my book. **I was struck by how so many of them spoke about the transformative impact of Action Civics on their lives** – and I see in our GC classwork the ways in which they draw on their lived experience, knowledge, and perspectives gained from living in many countries.

My student Safiya, who I write about in *Making Americans*, grew up in Iraq. When she was little, her school was attacked by terrorists. When she moved to the U.S., she was shocked to find so many schools experienced mass shootings and gun violence. **Her experience led her to become a leader in our Action Civics work tackling gun violence in schools** and working to create safer homes, schools, and communities.

Another of my students, Rebecca, grew up in a refugee camp in Uganda. She intimately understood food insecurity and was appalled that many of her friends in the U.S. were also food insecure. **She helped lead her class's effort to propose a school-based food pantry.** Her class conducted cost analyses, interviewed pantries, and met with stakeholders. In 2018, their Mill Market² Food Pantry opened at our school. Their Mill Market became a model, and in 2021, it was replicated at other schools in our district.



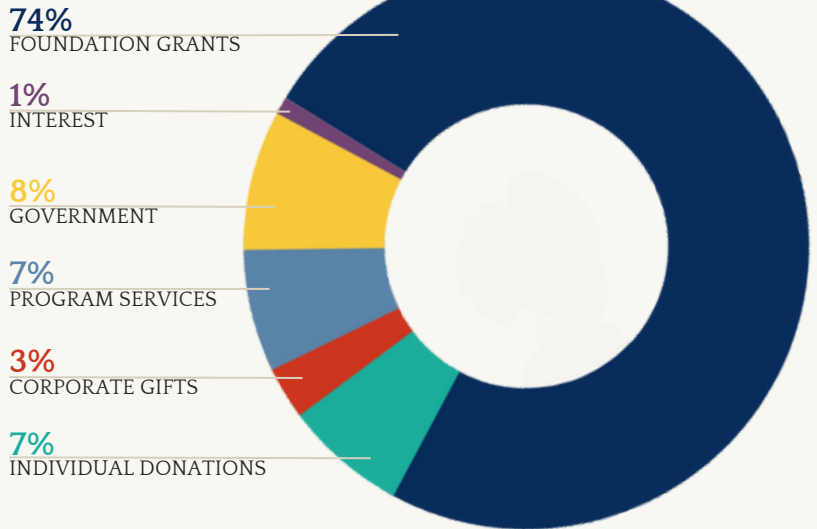
OUR FINANCIALS

In the 2023 Fiscal Year, Generation Citizen raised \$6,432,801 and spent \$4,929,421.

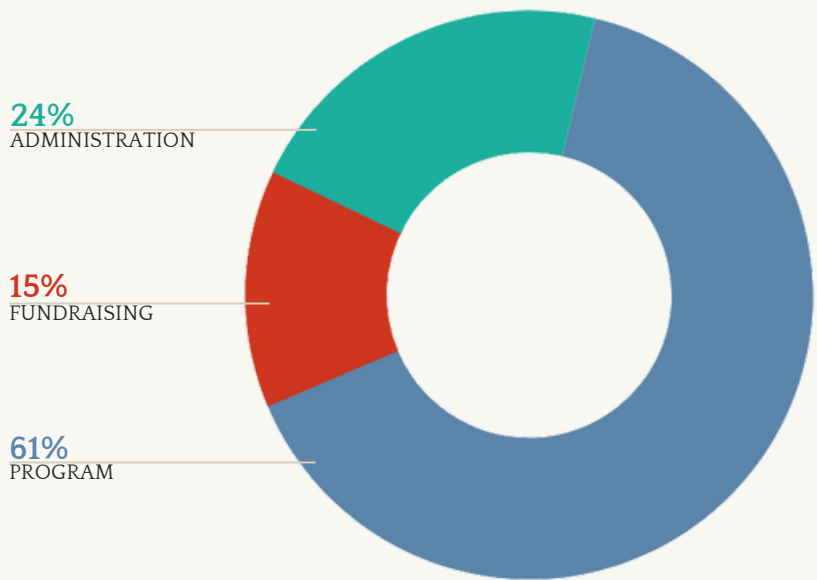
Generation Citizen made key investments in partnerships and program growth, communications, and policy and advocacy this year, to ensure continued growth and impact.

We also secured significant multi-year philanthropic investments in support of our strategic plan and ongoing growth, ending the year with over \$2M in new revenue committed for future years.

REVENUES



EXPENSES



**Many thanks to the generous supporters who made significant gifts during
Generation Citizen's 2023 Fiscal Year.**

*Your partnership and commitment are deeply appreciated. Together, we are empowering a
movement of young people prepared to lead and transform our democracy.*

Our Supporters

\$ 250,000 +

Anonymous Gift (2)
Bezos Family Foundation
The Jennifer and Jonathan Allan Soros Foundation
The New York City Council
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

\$ 100,000 - \$ 249,999

Five Together Foundation
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\$ 50,000 - \$ 99,999

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\$ 25,000 - \$ 49,999

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The Rhode Island Foundation

\$ 10,000 - \$ 24,999

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West Harlem Development Corporation
Westchester Community Foundation
William Blair and Company

A special thank you to **The Assembly**, a community of
forward-thinking, impact-driven individuals
deeply committed to GC's mission:

Mark Baumli
Minnie Baylor-Henry and Brent Henry
Brenda and Leon Brathwaite
Michele Burger and Tom Cramer
Leslie "Skip" and Lynette Griffin
Lisa and David Issroff
Fath Mitchell
Kunal Modi
Tom and Lydia Moran
Paula and Michael Price
Valerie Rockefeller
Katharine and William Schmidt
Jennifer and Jonathan Soros
Dan Tangherlini
Mary and Jerome Vascellaro
Roslyn Watson

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The Phillips Kleinberg Family Fund
Thomas Panitz
William Kirtley
William Shipps

Thank you to all who make our mission and our work possible.

We are so grateful to the teachers, students, community members, and board members who help us bring civics to life.

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Don't Talk About Change. *Lead It.*

Take Action with Generation Citizen

Solutions are only possible when we work together. Join us to prepare the next generation to be leaders for tomorrow.

Here's how you can lead change with Generation Citizen:



Attend a Civics Day



Become a Community Advisor



Host a virtual Generation Citizen gathering



Join a Generation Citizen Board



Donate

To learn more about how you can take action with Generation Citizen, please email: info@generationcitizen.org



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