

2024 ANNUAL REPORT

# NEW ENGLAND

*Massachusetts and Rhode Island*

The Future in Focus:  
Youth Leading Change



# Letter from Our Executive Director

When I witnessed the journey of Lawrence High School students last spring, I saw democracy in its purest form. What began as a classroom discussion about community issues transformed into a citywide initiative that culminated with the mayor signing their proposed ordinance into law.

*"I feel like I got a lot out of it and it shows that our voices could actually be heard. And as the future generation we could actually start making changes now and not later, because later in the future might be too late,"* reflected an 11th grader from Lawrence High School.

These students didn't just learn about civic engagement—they lived it. From identifying littering as a pressing concern in their community to testifying before the city council multiple times, collaborating with the Council President, and ultimately creating legislation that was unanimously approved, these young people experienced the full power of their collective voice.

This is community-based civics in action.

As a first-time mother to my daughter Amelia, moments like these have taken on profound new meaning. I find myself reflecting deeply on the world she will inherit and my responsibility to help shape it. I want her to grow up in a society where her voice matters, where she feels empowered to participate in civic life, and where she sees herself as an agent of positive change. This isn't just professional passion—it's deeply personal.

My own civic journey began in a small rural Massachusetts town, where some of my earliest memories involve waiting in long lines at the polling station with my parents. I remember their patience as they explained the importance of voting, their pride in participating in something larger than themselves. At home, our dinner table conversations often centered around local issues, and weekends and evenings frequently included community clean-ups or town meetings. My parents didn't just talk about civic responsibility—they lived it through countless volunteer hours, showing me that community involvement was both a privilege and a duty.

For nearly 15 years, Generation Citizen has partnered with New England schools to transform how young people experience democracy. In 2025, we will bring community-based civics to more than 2,100 students across the region—from urban centers like Providence, RI and Lowell, MA to rural areas in Dover, MA and Plainfield, VT.

This work feels particularly urgent now. We find ourselves navigating unprecedented political polarization, challenges to electoral processes, and a growing disillusionment that threatens civic participation. Many young people are questioning whether democracy can truly represent their interests and address the complex problems facing their communities.

Yet even amid this uncertainty, I find tremendous hope in our classrooms. Our students demonstrate daily that meaningful civic engagement transcends partisan divides. They show us that democracy functions best when diverse voices collaborate to address shared challenges—whether it's addressing food insecurity in Fall River, MA, advocating for mental health resources in Woonsocket, RI, or tackling affordable housing concerns in Lynn, MA.

In the pages that follow, you'll discover the stories and strategies that defined our work and impact this past year. Each represents another step toward our vision: a country where every young person is equipped to shape the future of their community—including my daughter and all of our children who deserve to inherit a democracy that works for everyone.

With gratitude for your partnership,  
Kristina Pires



**KRISTINA PIRES**

*Executive Director, New England*

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# What We Do



## COMMUNITY-BASED 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. Together with our partners, we advocate for funding and support to preserve and strengthen access to civic education. We provide young people with the tools they need to lead through alumni engagement, fellowship programs, and leadership training.

*"It's important to learn from a young age how to advocate for yourself and for others, and to critically think about your community and what issues are important to you and the future of everybody around you."*

*- GC Student at Massachusetts Civics Day*

## OUR 2023-24 NEW ENGLAND IMPACT

**19,050** middle & high school students engaged

**303** teachers delivered GC's curriculum & received training, professional development, and support

at **85 SCHOOLS** across **MASSACHUSETTS AND RHODE ISLAND**

## OUR 2023-24 NATIONAL REACH & IMPACT

**33,570** middle & high school students engaged

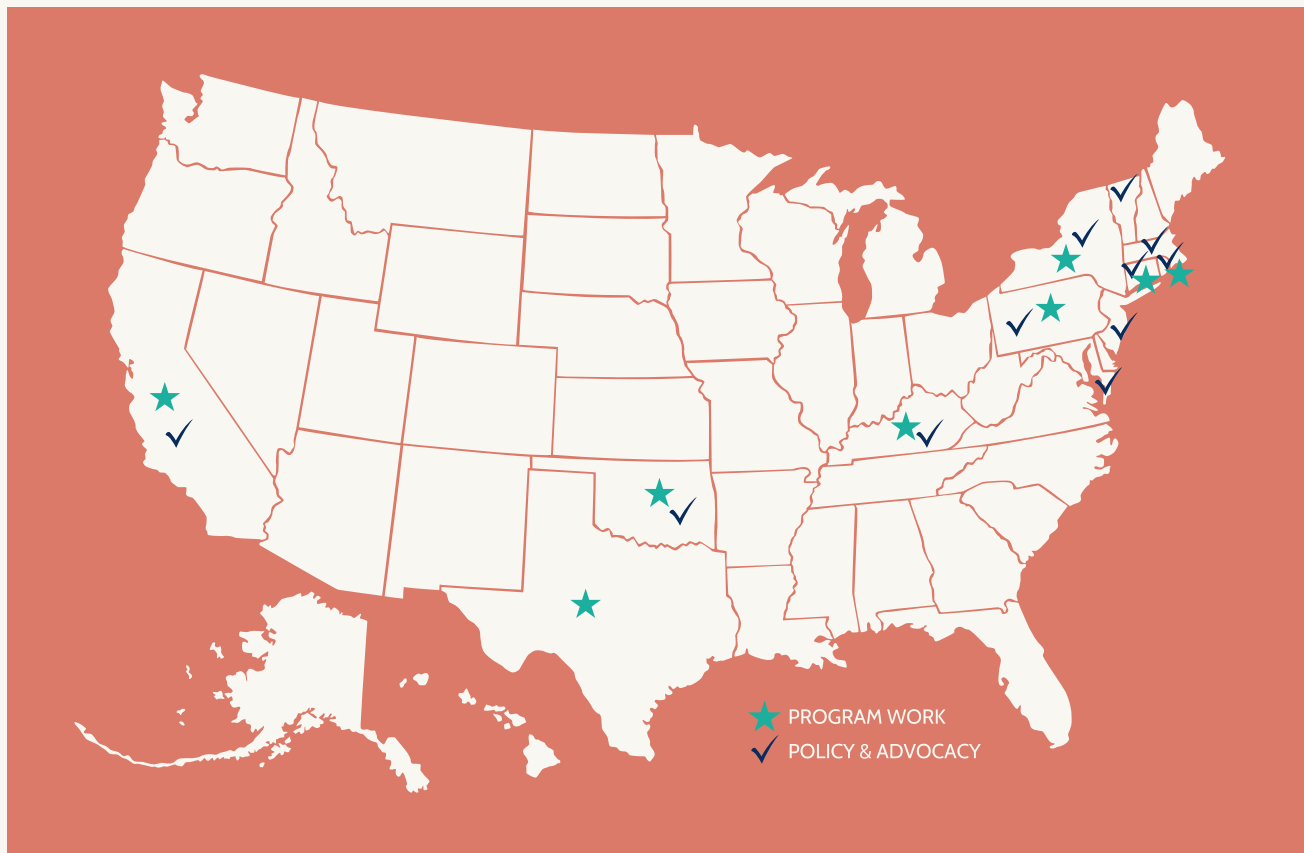
**544** teachers delivered GC's curriculum & received training, professional development, and support

**90%** of students in GC's classes were students of color

**99%** of teachers agree that the GC curriculum supported their ability to develop a democratic classroom culture

**98%** of GC students showed adoption of civic skills

**1,344** STUDENT CIVICS PROJECTS COMPLETED!



In 2024, Generation Citizen New England held two statewide civics days, in Rhode Island and Massachusetts in May, providing an end-of-year showcase event to more than 500 students, and supported 11 local district events across the two states.

## CIVICS DAY SPOTLIGHT

### Massachusetts Civics Day

At the Edward M. Kennedy Institute in Boston, more than 300 students from **Attleboro, Dennis-Yarmouth, Fall River, Fitchburg, Lawrence, Littleton, Lynn, Methuen, Peabody, & Randolph** shared 99 civics projects with a large group of Community Advisors from across the state for our Massachusetts Civics Day in June 2024. Elected officials, leaders in the civics and education fields, and other GC supporters provided feedback and insights on students' project presentations. **State Representatives Sam Montañó and Rebecca Rausch** opened the day, which included remarks from **Representative Brandy Fluker Oakley** as the keynote speaker.

Our students' projects focused on topics ranging from **youth violence**, to **tackling excessive litter**, to the **need for more afterschool programming**, to the **need for more healthy school lunch options**.



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*“Our voices are important. They do matter. And we will make a change.”*

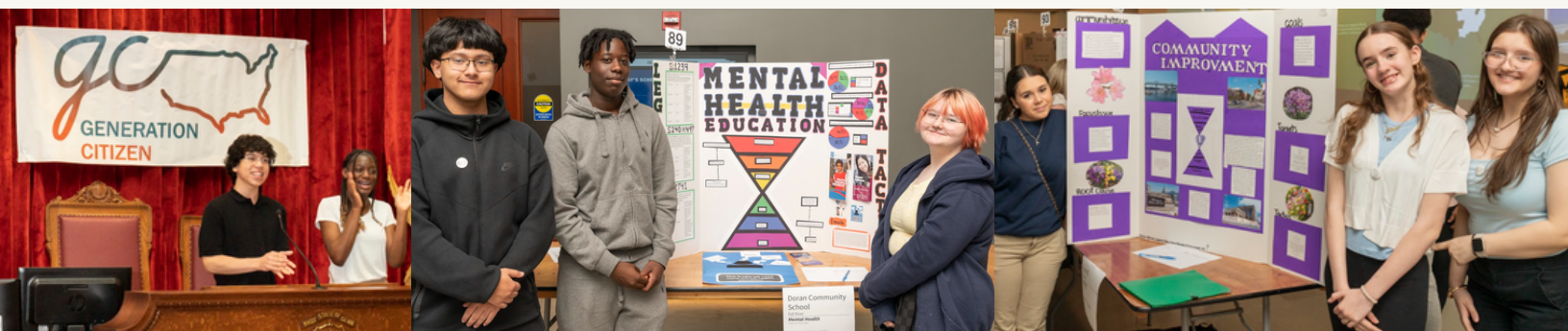
*– Alexa R.*

*Student Changemaker at  
Massachusetts Civics Days*

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In 2024, GC entered a formal Partnership with MA Department of Education (DESE) to lead four statewide MA Civics Project Showcases in the spring of 2025.

Building on Generation Citizen's 15-year legacy of civic education leadership in Massachusetts, we are thrilled to announce our **partnership with DESE** to coordinate and support statewide civics project showcases in 2025 to enhance civic education opportunities across the Commonwealth. This collaboration will leverage our organizational expertise to ensure equitable access to meaningful civic learning experiences for all students throughout Massachusetts.



# VOICES IN ACTION: HOW TWO STUDENTS TRANSFORMED THEIR CITY

As part of a Generation Citizen civics project at **Lawrence High School**, students Baloma and Yebriana transformed classroom learning into real-world change.

**Baloma** began her journey as the sole advocate for addressing the **city's growing litter problem**. Through research, persistence, and peer-to-peer persuasion, she built consensus around the issue and led her class in developing a **proposal focused on increasing public trash receptacles**. Her leadership extended beyond school walls, as she testified before the **Lawrence City Council** and helped navigate stakeholder feedback to strengthen the initiative. Through **collaboration with local officials, including the Council President**, the proposal evolved into a **policy offering tax credits to small businesses for maintaining outdoor trash bins**. Her efforts paid off when the **mayor signed the ordinance into law**.

**Yebriana** was a vital member of the same project team, contributing to every stage of the initiative. Though she started out as a quieter student, **the real-world focus of the civics project empowered her to step up**. She conducted **outreach to local stakeholders, created materials, and canvassed the business community**—often using her Spanish to engage more effectively with residents. Yebriana prepared and **delivered testimony at multiple City Council meetings**, spending late nights with classmates fine-tuning their presentation and strategizing for impact. Her growing confidence and commitment helped drive the project forward, and her story exemplifies how inclusive, experiential learning can unlock leadership potential.



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*“Even the quietest kid can be the loudest voice.”*

— Yebriana, GC student

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*Did you know? After completing a project, 92% of GC students report having developed the skills necessary to participate in public life, and—perhaps more importantly— 81% report that they believe they can make a difference in the public square.*

# PROVIDENCE CIVIC EDUCATION WEEK

In Providence, RI, GC New England partnered with the **City of Providence** and **Providence Public School District (PPSD)** to put on “**PVD Civic Education Week**” for **425 students from 17 PPSD schools**, who came to City Hall to meet local public officials, speak about their civics projects, and gather more information about their focus issue.

Prior to Civic Education Week, GC students in the 8th and 10th grades in PPSD participated in a hands-on, real-world civics project to gain the knowledge, skills and motivation to be lifelong civically engaged citizens.

At the conclusion of their experience, **students met with elected officials and others in the city government**, allowing them to interact with local government officials, ask questions, share ideas, and plan their next steps in the pursuit of systemic community change.



*“As current and future leaders, it is important that we are well aware of the roles of the systems of government and the importance of civic engagement in our communities. You cannot work within or push back against a system when you don’t understand how it works. You cannot advocate for change when you do not know the steps to get there.”*

– Demii E., high school senior in Providence, RI



## Goals of City Hall Department and PPST Student Meetings

1. **Build Reciprocal Civic Motivation** – Build relationships between PPST students and City Hall Employees, share career pathways toward local government, learn about and celebrate the community change effort that the students have been working on this year.
2. **Build Civic Knowledge** – Share what various City Hall Departments do, how students, as citizens of Providence, can get involved and/or reach out to this department in the future.
3. **Build Civic Skills** – Identify next steps for students to take in their community change project (who they should talk to, what advocacy strategies they could take...)

# RHODE ISLAND CIVIC EDUCATION TEACHER OF THE YEAR

## SHANNON GORMLEY

At a 2024 ceremony in the Rhode Island State House, Secretary of State Gregg M. Amore honored GC teacher Shannon Gormley of Central High School in Providence as Rhode Island Civic Education Teacher of the Year.

The Teacher of the Year award honors outstanding teachers who have demonstrated a commitment to and expertise in teaching civics or American government, with special consideration given to those who employ innovative teaching practices and experiential learning.

Gormley was nominated by one of her students: *"During my time in her class, I learned lifelong lessons that I'll never forget. For example, the importance of helping others, celebrating diversity, and encouraging us to speak up against injustice and unfairness... Mrs. Gormley always goes above and beyond to make sure every student feels valued, heard, and seen."*

Shannon Gormley is currently the History Department Leader at Central High School in Providence, where she teaches United States History, Community Development, and African American Studies in addition to Civics. She has been a GC teacher for 11 years.



From left to right: Kristina Pires (Executive Director of GCNE), Mary Ellen Lynch (Program Manager of GCNE), Shannon Gormley (recipient), and student nominator

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*"Civics matters to me because it is the foundation of our democracy. It teaches us the importance of being informed and engaged citizens, advocating for social justice, and standing up for what is right. By understanding how our government works and how policies are made, we can actively participate in shaping the future of our country. Receiving this civics award reaffirms my commitment to being an active and responsible citizen. It motivates me to continue learning about civics, advocating for causes I believe in, and encouraging others to get involved in their communities."*

*- Shannon Gormley  
History Department Leader, Central High School  
2024 RI Civic Education Teacher of the Year*

”

# ADVOCATING FOR SUSTAINABLE CIVIC EDUCATION FUNDING ACROSS NEW ENGLAND

Generation Citizen is leading a powerful regional effort to **secure sustainable, long-term funding for universal access to high-quality civic education**—a vital investment in our democracy and our young people. In 2024, we continued our **advocacy in Rhode Island and Massachusetts**, working alongside statewide coalitions to ensure that all students can meaningfully engage with civics in and beyond the classroom.

## *Rhode Island: \$1M for Implementation of the Civics Literacy Act*

Together with the **Rhode Island Civic Learning Coalition (RICLC)**, GC is championing the passage of a **\$1 million state funding bill** to bring the **2021 Rhode Island Civics Literacy Act** to life. Although the Act outlines essential civic learning goals—including **real-world civic action projects and the demonstration of civic proficiency**—it currently remains unfunded.

This proposed funding would provide much-needed resources to teachers, schools, and districts to deliver the high-quality civic instruction envisioned in the law.

*“This year, I voted for the first time. I couldn’t imagine going through that process without having known at least the very basic fundamentals that I’ve learned – mostly outside of the classroom. No one should be left unaware of how to engage with a government that’s meant to be ‘of the people, by the people, and for the people.’ My hope is that with more funding and more advocacy, our communities will become more prepared to be engaged and be afforded the same civic learning opportunities, if not more, than I was able to experience.”*

*– Chloe F., high school senior in Providence, RI*

## *Massachusetts: Defending \$2.5M for the Civics Project Trust Fund*

Meanwhile in Massachusetts, GC and our partners in the **Massachusetts Civic Learning Coalition (MCLC)** successfully advocated to maintain **\$2.5 million in funding** for the state’s **Civics Project Trust Fund**. This fund is a key resource for supporting the implementation of the state’s landmark 2018 civics education law, which **mandates student-led civics projects and active engagement in democratic processes**.

Thanks to strong coalition support and legislative engagement, the \$2.5M in funding was preserved—ensuring continued support for civics programming, professional development for educators, and resources that make meaningful civic learning accessible across Massachusetts.

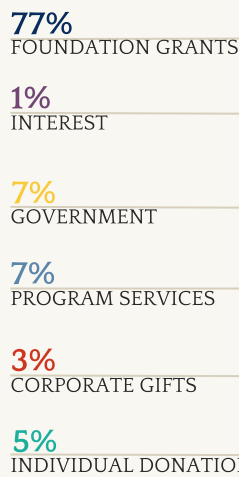
# OUR FINANCIALS

In the 2024 Fiscal Year, Generation Citizen raised \$7,424,838.30 and spent \$5,153,515.50.

Generation Citizen was able to invest in critical new capacity this fiscal year thanks to generous multi-year gifts from donors, including significant gifts from New Profit and Yield Giving.

Due to these and other generous investments, we brought on additional staff focused on partnership development and program delivery as we grew the number of schools, teachers and students we worked with, and laid the foundation for future growth into new states.

## REVENUES



## EXPENSES



Many thanks to the generous supporters who made significant gifts during  
Generation Citizen's 2024 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.*

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\$ 250,000 +

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*"Being involved in this class and participating in discussions, debates, and projects has deepened my understanding of how our voices and actions can influence policies, create movements, and ensure that the issues that matter to us are heard."*

— GC Student, South Region



*"Your voice, your mind, the things that matter to you is what makes education what it is...you have to really think about what are the things that matter to you and your community."*

— Dr. Nyshawana Francis-Thompson  
Chief of Curriculum & Instruction for The School District of Philadelphia



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*"This civics work—this is who I am."*

— GC Student, West Region



*"Our youth feel empowered when they can potentially make a change and especially to have adults listen to them, and hear them, and have conversations with them about what they think is important, it really does empower them."*

— Tristan Williams  
Department Head, Social Studies at Dennis-Yarmouth Regional High School