

2023 annual report.

citizens project



citizensproject.org

719.520.9899



A letter from our Executive Director.

Greetings!

My name is Mike Williams and I have the honor of serving as the Executive Director of Citizens Project. When I started this role two years ago, the organization was at a crossroads that challenged us to reconsider how we operate. Our goal was not just to survive, but flourish, though this required us to answer two questions: first, how do we meet the expectations of our sustainers and the communities we have traditionally served while also recognizing and addressing a host of new challenges and threats to the well-being of traditionally marginalized communities in the Pikes Peak region? Second, how do we best communicate our dedication and expanded vision to these communities?

The answer to both questions is simple: as a constituent-led organization, we must continue centering the community while also boosting the mutual support required for expanding our future projects.

Today I can proudly report that Citizens Project is doing just that, and we are thriving again. Over the last 14 months, we have provided El Paso County with our “Get Out the Vote” programming for all three elections, including our popular candidate surveys and forums. We proudly partnered with the African American Trade Association to push back against the significant barriers to home ownership in the black community by hosting the first Black Home Ownership Event. We organized four Community Engagement events to solicit community feedback. In September of 2023, we sought to increase civic engagement among younger folks by hosting the first annual Beats and Ballots Festival in Acacia Park, and hundreds of people turned out. We sought to meet younger people in the community where they were at. Our organization participated in the African American Youth Leadership Conference, conducting sessions with both students and parents on civic involvement, and providing tools and resources for rallying communities. I also had the opportunity to speak with students at Pikes Peak State College about the importance of civic engagement and to guest lecture about defending democracy at Colorado College.

While maintaining our old partnerships, we forged new ones with organizations such as Neighbors for Education, the Latina Equity Foundation, and Men of Influence. We hosted over 200 people at our annual Creating Community Breakfast. Finally, we showed support for the LGBTQIA+ community impacted by the horrific tragedy at Club Q.

30 years in, our work is only just beginning. At Citizens Project, we are not just here to show up. We want to partner with communities to fight for systemic changes so everyone can experience equity in El Paso County. In 2024, we will work to create a world wherein no member of this community is marginalized. We will continue to expand the reach and efficiency of our programs as we look toward the next several years. This work is valuable, and it depends on your support. I want to personally thank you for your partnership and humbly ask that you support our continued efforts through volunteering, engaging in events, and/or giving monetarily. Citizens Project looks forward to the next 30 years of impact in El Paso County.

With Respect,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Williams". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Mike" being more prominent than the last name "Williams".

Executive Director, Citizens Project

mission and commitment.

**trusted
since
1992.**

mission statement.

Citizens Project is a fearless, bold advocate and an engaging voice that empowers and challenges our entire community to embrace equity, inclusion, and justice.

We have been a historical leader in turning inclusion into powerful and impactful policy change for the collective well-being of all its citizens. Our mission will always revolve around the community.

our promise.

Citizens Project promises to create a culture where we advocate for equitable policies that benefit the entire community specifically the underrepresented. We will, as we have done historically, create inclusion by intentionally reaching and inviting marginalized communities to a collective table.

the need by numbers.

**16
years**

Residents in Southeast Colorado Springs have a life expectancy sixteen years lower than anywhere else in Colorado Springs¹

10%

El Paso County sits in the bottom ten percent of all Colorado counties by voter turnout²

**1/2
the rate**

BIPOC turnout is half that of white voters in El Paso County³

**11
votes**

The number of people it took to deny a measure to issue \$350 million in bonds for renovation and capital improvements in District 11⁴

Citizens Project is an outstanding partner of the League of Women Voters of the Pikes Peak Region. They have helped with voter registration, information, and registration efforts.

Terri Weber, Voter Service Team Chair of the LWVPPR

SOURCES:

- 1.) <https://krdo.com/news/local-news/top-stories/2021/05/21/colorado-springs-leaders-address-lower-life-expectancy-for-southeast-side-residents/>
- 2.) <https://results.enr.clarityelections.com/CO/115903/web.307039/#/turnout>
- 3.) <https://www.cpr.org/2022/06/06/colorado-springs-april-elections-lawsuit/>
- 4.) <https://www.elpasoco.com/recount-complete-colorado-springs-school-district-11-ballot-issue-4b/>

programs and events.

Citizens Project offers many community programs and events, several of which are highlighted below.

Beats and Ballots.

In September, Citizens Project presented the inaugural Beats and Ballots. This free event took place at Acacia Park in downtown Colorado Springs and served as a kick-off to the election season, with a focus on engaging young voters. Hundreds of attendees enjoyed music from local artists, heard from state and local elected officials about the value of civic engagement, and connected with some of the dozens of local nonprofits that set up a booth at the day-long event.

Community Engagement Series.

As a constituent-led organization, meeting regularly with members of the community is integral to the work we do. Thanks in part to generous grants from the Colorado Health Foundation and the Colorado Trust, Citizens Project was able to meet quarterly with hundreds of members throughout the year to discuss our work, its implications for the city, and ways we can better empower the individuals and organizations we work with.

Voter Education.

In addition to community-requested education events, such as our Voter 101, Citizens Project staff connected with hundreds of elementary, middle, high school, and college students at schools and events throughout the city. From the annual African American Youth Leadership Conference to quarterly parent resource nights, Citizens Project engaged children and their families about their voting rights and the importance of having their voices heard.

"Our partnership with Citizens Project is essential to our ability to do the important work of advocating for educational equity and supporting public education across the city of Colorado Springs. Citizens Project's unwavering commitment to fostering civic engagement and advocating for inclusive policies has significantly enriched the initiatives of Neighbors for Education. The collaborative spirit embodied by Citizens Project has advanced our sense of unity and shared purpose, and together, we have been able to effect positive change within our school district communities more efficiently than we could have alone."

-Lindsey Lee, Vice Chair of Neighbors for Education

resources.

**Citizens Project provides resources to empower individuals and the community.
Below are a few of the year's most impactful.**

Low Voter Turnout Survey.

Through a grant from the Colorado Trust at the end of 2022, Citizens Project was able to work with students from UCCS and Colorado College to conduct a study in Southeast Colorado Springs identifying barriers to voting. Citizens Project spoke with over 325 registered and non-registered voters about their experiences, giving valuable insight into the challenges people are currently facing. The results of the study are available as a resource on our website for all to use, and a two-year follow-up study is set for the fall of 2024.

Candidate Survey.

Citizens Project once again provided El Paso County residents with the most comprehensive candidate survey for both the municipal election in April and the coordinated election in November. Citizens Project worked with community members to ensure that their questions were being answered, and secured responses from more candidates than any other organization. Citizens Project provided a free, shortened version of the voter guide to hundreds of thousands of members of the community through the *Independent* and *Business Journal* newspapers as well as strategic dropoff areas throughout the city. The full 90-page survey is available on our website.

Candidate Forums.

Working in partnership with several civic-oriented nonprofits, such as the League of Women Voters and the Latina Equity Foundation, Citizens Project co-hosted 14 candidate forums throughout Colorado Springs. With a focus on bringing candidates to parts of town that tend to be neglected, we saw over 1,000 people attend the forums, with over 900 of those people attending in-person.

"Working with Citizens Project had been an enlightening experience, deepening my understanding of the voting process and fostering a sense of civic responsibility. Through their platform, I've successfully raised awareness within our community about the crucial importance of voting. At Solid Rock events, we've proudly registered 50 individuals, empowering them to participate in shaping our shared future through the voting process."

- Yevgeniya Tsyganok, Community Member and Food Service Manager at Solid Rock Community Development Corporation

statement of financials.

CITIZENS PROJECT Budget vs. Actuals: 2023 Budget (Updated) - FY23 P&L January - December 2023

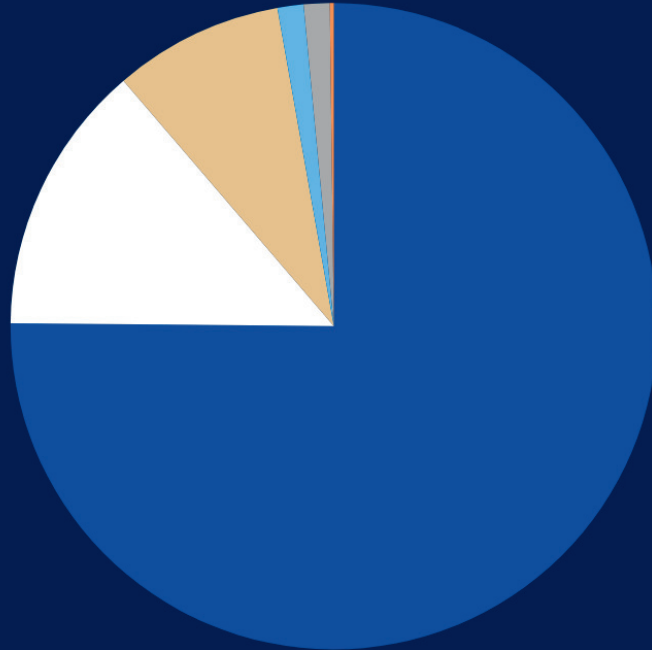
	Total			
	Actual	Budget	over Budget	% of Budget
Income				
Donations/Contributions Revenue			0.00	
Individual Donations	50,456.46	85,000.00	-34,543.54	59.36%
Total Donations/Contributions Revenue	\$ 50,456.46	\$ 85,000.00	-\$ 34,543.54	59.36%
Fundraising Event Income	9,295.62	35,000.00	-25,704.38	26.56%
Grant Revenue			0.00	
Grants Restricted	22,000.00	80,000.00	-58,000.00	27.50%
Grants Unrestricted	288,945.30	240,000.00	48,945.30	120.39%
Total Grant Revenue	\$ 310,945.30	\$ 320,000.00	-\$ 9,054.70	97.17%
Interest & Investment Income	656.74	150.00	506.74	437.83%
Program Revenue			0.00	
Printing Sponsorship		5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.00%
Trainings & Workshops		5,000.00	-5,000.00	0.00%
Total Program Revenue	\$ 0.00	\$ 10,000.00	-\$ 10,000.00	0.00%
Total Income	\$ 371,354.12	\$ 450,150.00	-\$ 78,795.88	82.50%
Gross Profit	\$ 371,354.12	\$ 450,150.00	-\$ 78,795.88	82.50%
Expenses				
Direct Program Expenses			0.00	
Communications	1,450.54	1,300.00	150.54	111.58%
Community Education	6,325.39	8,000.00	-1,674.61	79.07%
Community Events/Networking	31,176.29	25,000.00	6,176.29	124.71%
Educational Advocacy		10,000.00	-10,000.00	0.00%
GOTV/Elections	379.94	20,000.00	-19,620.06	1.90%
Postage	396.92	1,000.00	-603.08	39.69%
Printing	13,364.19	8,000.00	5,364.19	167.05%
Program Contract Labor	17,264.05	10,000.00	7,264.05	172.64%
Program Supplies	6,412.98	4,000.00	2,412.98	160.32%
Web-based Services	7,901.73	2,200.00	5,701.73	359.17%
Total Direct Program Expenses	\$ 87,561.36	\$ 90,125.00	-\$ 2,563.64	97.16%
Fundraising Event Expense	20,480.90	17,500.00	2,980.90	117.03%
Operating Expenses			0.00	
Accounting			0.00	
Accountant - 990 & Financial Review	934.59	4,500.00	-3,565.41	20.77%
Bookkeeper	4,700.00	6,000.00	-1,300.00	78.33%
QuickBooks and Payroll Subscription	1,681.69	1,500.00	181.69	112.11%
Total Accounting	\$ 7,316.28	\$ 12,000.00	-\$ 4,683.72	60.97%
Bank and Merchant Fees	1,576.49	2,500.00	-923.51	63.06%
Dues/Licenses/Subscriptions	1,882.76	500.00	1,382.76	376.55%
Insurance			0.00	
Liability	475.56	1,400.00	-924.44	33.97%
Organizational Insurance	3,606.96	1,200.00	2,406.96	300.58%
Worker's Comp Insurance	351.00	500.00	-149.00	70.20%
Total Insurance	\$ 4,433.52	\$ 3,100.00	\$ 1,333.52	143.02%
Meetings and Meals	3,154.15	2,500.00	654.15	126.17%
Misc. Expenses	317.50	1,000.00	-682.50	31.75%
Office Equipment/Technology	23,175.56	23,000.00	175.56	100.76%
Office Supplies	2,047.05	500.00	1,547.05	409.41%
Professional Services	4,034.00		4,034.00	
Rent & Utilities	11,192.13	11,000.00	192.13	101.75%
Total Operating Expenses	\$ 59,129.44	\$ 56,100.00	\$ 3,029.44	105.40%
Personnel Expenses			0.00	
Benefits	4,794.88	11,500.00	-6,705.12	41.69%
Professional Development	5,494.25	5,000.00	494.25	109.89%
Salaries	205,129.08	200,000.00	5,129.08	102.56%
Taxes	16,075.30	16,000.00	75.30	100.47%
Wellness	1,324.80	3,500.00	-2,175.20	37.85%
Total Personnel Expenses	\$ 232,818.31	\$ 236,000.00	-\$ 3,181.69	98.65%
Total Expenses	\$ 399,990.01	\$ 399,725.00	\$ 265.01	100.07%
Net Operating Income	-\$ 28,635.89	\$ 50,425.00	-\$ 79,060.89	-56.79%

Note:

The Colorado Health Foundation awarded Citizens Project \$1M to be paid out in \$200K increments per year starting in 2023 until sum is paid in 2027***

sources of revenue

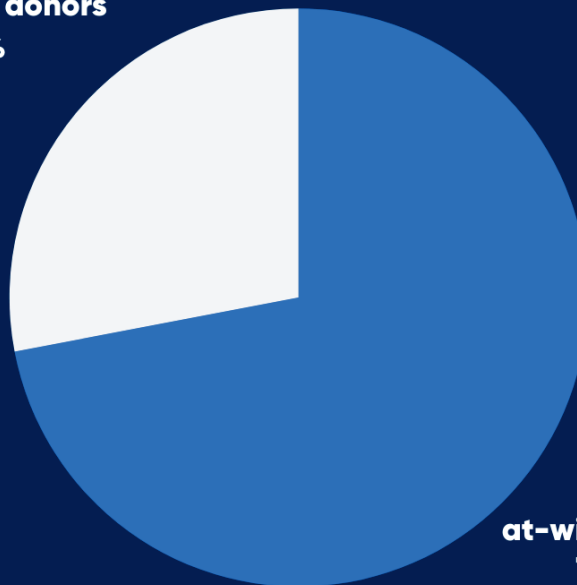
- competitive grants
- individual giving
- foundations
- sponsorships
- earned income
- investments



competitive grants • 75.3%
individual giving • 13.6%
foundations • 8.5%
earned income • 1.3%
sponsorships • 1.3%
investments • .2%

individual donors

sustaining donors
28%



at-will donors
72%

grantmakers. foundations & corporate sponsors. major individual donors.

Grantmakers

The Colorado Health Foundation
The Colorado Trust
Racial Equity Fund Giving Circle of Pikes Peak Community Foundation

Foundations and Corporate Sponsors

American Endowment Foundation
Cobalt
Divine-Triggs Joy Fund, Community Foundation Serving Boulder County
El Pomar Foundation
Lindsay-Brisbin Family Fund of Pikes Peak Community Foundation
Metronet
New Era Colorado
Ruhnow Family Fund of Pikes Peak Community Foundation
Strub Heer Foundation of Pikes Peak Community Foundation
The Colorado Health Foundation
Windy Pines Foundation

Major Individual Donors

Peg Bacon, Brenda Bartels, Kim Buckiewicz
Patty and Bruce Cameron, Kim & Will Dulaney
Margi Duncombe, Janet & Schuyler Foerster
Alan and Pamela Hazlett, Gail and Craig Johnson
Evangeline Rivera Shnitzer, Nancy Saltzman
Courtney Sutton, Ronald L Walden
Joan Williams

board of directors.

patience kabwasa, kevin replinger, kim dulaney, schuyler foerster,
evangelina rivera, brenda bartels, kim buckiewicz, christina leza, jim mason,
courtney sutton

staff.

mike williams, executive director
shayana dabney, operations & programs manager
christopher davis, development manager
lori macmath, communications manager
malikia brown, administrative assistant

interns.

samantha lorca, jasmine liu

Citizens Project exemplifies its ideals in both writing and action.
Working at Citizens Project has allowed me to expand beyond the
Colorado College community and engage with members of the wider
Pikes Peak region. Overall, it has been a pleasure and a joy working at
Citizens Project.

Jasmine Liu, Colorado College Intern and Volunteer Coordinator

donor recognition.

Deirdre Aden-Smith, Erin Adlerstein, Mary Alert, James Allen, Liz Arnold,
Nancy Bentley and John Atkinson, Margaret Avery, Kathleen B., Carol Bach,
Cathe Bailie, Roland Barnick, Jack Beal, Lois Benson, Noelle and Bill Berry, Sharon Bjorkman,
Janice Black, Karen Boatz, Tim and Cate Boddington, Charles Bordner, WaKiem Brock,
Karen Burghart, Patricia Burleson, Mary Burton, Jessi Bustamante, Anthony Carlson, Lacy
Carroll, Miriam Cavanaugh, Beth Chorpenning, Tom and Ann Christensen, Elizabeth Clement,
Mary Coleman, Lauren Collier, Colleen Conlin, Alan Cook, Maria Cortes,
John and Kathy Crandall, Slade Custer, Katie Czukas, Shayana Dabney, Curtis Daniel,
Darleen and Earl Daniels, Marilyn Davis, Gail Davis, Chris Davis, Glen Day,
Kent Borges and Stephanie DiCenzo, John Dodson, Tim Dolan, Scott & Jennifer Dorff,
Raleigh & Lewis Dove, Pamela Draper, Steve and Janie Driska, Winni du Bois-Carter,
Kathy Eans, Jan Erickson, Mike Falick, Glenn Pressman and Laura Feldman, Ben & Karol Finch,
Jodi and Louis Fletcher, Chip Frazer, James Freeman, Rebecca Frith, John Fuller,
Beth Garrison-Kemp, Katherine Gayle, Angelica Givler, Kimberly Gold, Timothy Gore,
Erin Grajales, Liz Groothof Croddy, Melissa Hafter, Karen Hall, Nita Harris, Ann Harris,
Ali Hartley, Sherry Hayden, Mark Heinrich, Deborah LaBarre and Steve Henry, Joan Hofer,
Karen Walldorf and Patrick Hollenbeck, Katherine Holmes, Kristine Hopkins,
Paulette Hubbard, Judith Ingelido, James Jackson, Jan Johnson, Ellen Johnson-Fay,
Joanne Jones, Patience Kabwasa, Murtaza Kamal, Dan Kay, Heather Kelly, Dale Kemmerer,
Bill Kemp, Jerima King, Bernard "Chip" Landman III, Gloria Latimer, Richard & Nancy Law,
Spring Leak, Skye Lewis, Christina Leza, Naomi Lopez, Richard Lundgren,
Amanda and Alice Lundgren, Steve Mack, Lori Macmath, Anthony Maro, Hannah Martin,
Donna Martinaitis, Joan Ericson and Jim Matson, Chris Matteini,
Robert and Suellen McAndrews, Scott McClure, John Mikos, Marilyn Miller, Kristy Milligan,
John Morris, Marcy and Buddy Morrison, Jean Muller, Barb Negley,
Douglas Nelson, Sean Neu, Mary Alice Nichols, Mark Noble, Lisa November, Barbara Novey,
Isabella Nunez, Katie OConnell, JoAnn Orsborn, Christine and John Orsborn, Julie Ott, Sandy
Patton, Eric Pavri, Stephanie Peters, Dena Pizzimenti, Ryan Platt, Jessie Pocock,
Zach Pollmiller, Erin Poovey, Heather Powell Browne, Susan Presti, Kevin Replinger,
Rebecca Robles, Martha Rosenau, Liz Rosenbaum, Laurence Sargent, Jenny Schell,
Anton and Ann Schulzki, Victoria Schwab, Carol and Wilbur Scott, Alan Severn, David Shakes,
Jill Shenker, James Shikles, John Stephens, Rex and Kate Stephenson, Angela Stevens,
Janet Strouss, Madison Stuart, Ryan Sturt, Eric and Cathy Swab,
Claire Olsen and Eric Swaidner, Jan Tanner, Erin Taylor, Sandy TerMeer, Deborah Thornton,
Solomon Chavez and Eve Tilley-Chavez, Ben Titzer, Shanti Toll, Sarah Troemel, Megeen Tube,
Dorothy Turner, Laurie Uddenberg, Barb Van Hoy, Jeremy Van Hoy, Keith Varney,
Lorelei Vollmar, John Vollmar, Karin White, Rita & Bob Wiley, Michael Williams,
Deborah Wolusky, Candace Woods, Michelle Zak

stay in touch.

● www.citizensproject.org

● phone • 719.520.9899

● info@citizensproject.org

● 322 north tejon street
suite 202

support our efforts.



donate.



website.



newsletter.

Citizens Project is a tireless ally to the LGBTQIA2+ youth community and one of our dearest partners. We've been honored to collaborate with Citizens Project in organizing advocacy actions, getting out the vote, and working toward equity in the Tava (Pikes Peak) region and its many communities.

Liss Smith, Inside Out Youth Services

Es increíble trabajar en una organización dedicada a impulsar cambios en Colorado Springs, una ciudad en crecimiento y expansión. El compromiso de CP es escuchar, entender y ayudar a los miembros de la comunidad, ser parte de esta organización me ayudó a entender y conocer otras áreas fuera de la 'burbuja' en que vivo.

Agradezco la oportunidad de ser parte de CP y contribuir con mi trabajo a darle una voz más fuerte al pueblo.

Samantha Lorca, Residential Advisor for Stroud Scholars at Colorado College

I appreciate the dedication and commitment that Citizens Project has for the community. Their presence and willingness to collaborate with other organizations is a huge benefit for not only the community but organizations as well.

**Dee Smith, Executive Director of OnebodyEnt,
Founding Member of Men of Influence**

citizensproject.org

copyright 2024