

# ANNUAL REPORT

*"Braver Angels has renewed my  
hope in America."*

- Steve S., member since 2018

## 2022



Red/Blue Workshop | San Antonio, TX



# An Invitation From the Co-Founders



*If you are heartsick about the rancor tearing our country apart,  
if you believe that your opponents should not be your enemies,  
if you believe that America’s best days can lie ahead...*

Join our Civic Renewal Movement and become a member of Braver Angels.

We began in December of 2016 in South Lebanon, Ohio, when 11 residents who voted for Clinton and 10 who voted for Trump came together for a weekend to talk *with* each other rather than *about* each other. By the end of the weekend, we realized we had captured lightning in a bottle; it was so inspirational we decided to start a grassroots organization so we could bring this experience to people throughout the United States to spark a larger movement.

## The Braver Angels Way

We state our views ***freely and fully, without fear.***

We treat people who disagree with us  
with ***honesty, dignity and respect.***

We welcome ***opportunities to engage***  
those with whom we disagree.

We believe ***all of us have blind spots***  
and none of us are not worth talking to.

We seek to ***disagree accurately,***  
avoiding exaggeration and stereotypes.

We look for common ground where it exists and,  
if possible, ***find ways to work together.***

We believe that, in disagreements,  
***both sides share and learn.***

In Braver Angels, ***neither side is teaching the other***  
or giving feedback on how to think or say things differently.

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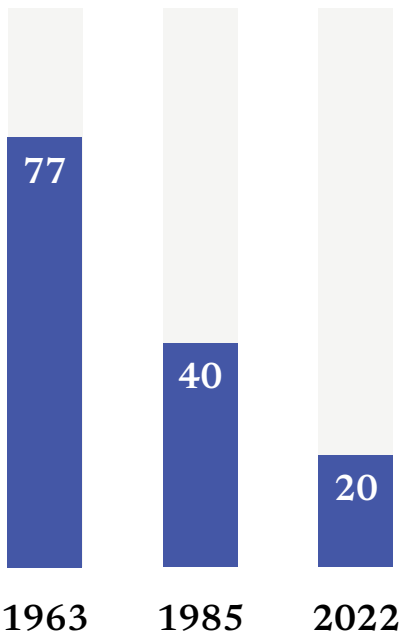
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# The Challenge We Face

Affective polarization — the tendency to dislike and distrust those with differing political views — is the crisis of our time and threatens our nation. As we separate into groups that increasingly do not even know, or interact with, people of differing opinions, we lose trust in our institutions, eroding the ability to govern ourselves and lowering the caliber of citizenship. This growing trend coarsens public debate, produces policy gridlock, shrinks our capacity for goodwill, and harms our family and personal relationships. Effective self-government depends precisely on what this type of polarization destroys.

Braver Angels exists to address this crisis. We believe the American Experiment can survive and thrive for every American who contributes to the effort.



% of Americans who 'trust the government to do what is right'

[PEW RESEARCH CENTER, JUNE 2022](#)

## Igniting a Civic Renewal Movement

America's polarization crisis has been building for decades and is now deeply rooted in our major institutions. Turning the tide is an enormous task; it requires repair in citizen-to-citizen relationships in a nation of 260 million adults, as well as meaningful changes in the rules and practices of many of our major institutions.

No single organization, no matter how successful, will be powerful enough on its own to heal the divide. If our aim is truly to strengthen our democratic republic, our only practical strategy is to help ignite and shape what scholars and others call a social movement, and what we call a Civic Renewal Movement.

# How We Overcome

## Our Vision

We envision an America with respectful embrace of political disagreements, where civic friendship flourishes and competing perspectives strengthen our nation. Embracing values of respect, humility, honesty, and responsible citizenship, our goal is not to change people's views of issues, but to change their views of each other.

## Our Mission

Bring Americans together to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen our democratic republic.

## Our Approach

As individuals, we try to understand the other side's point of view, even if we do not agree with it.

In our communities, we engage those we disagree with, looking for common ground and ways to work together.

In politics, we support principles that bring us together rather than divide us.







# Civic Renewal Journey

1

## Take on the Challenge

A citizen or partner comes to believe that America can be a stronger nation if the rancor tearing our country apart is addressed. Instead of contributing to the issue, they decide they want to be part of the solution.

2

## Practice the Braver Angels Way

A citizen or partner decides to develop the skills needed to bridge the partisan divide by attending our annual convention, workshops, debates, 1:1 conversations, local alliance meetings, or interacting with their fellow Braver Angels members.

3

## Strengthen Local Community

A citizen or partner implements the skills in their personal lives and in their community. They share success and best practices through word-of-mouth testimonials, or by bringing an alliance, debate, or workshop to their area.

4

## Impact Institutional Norms

A citizen or partner extends their impact to bring about durable change in the social norms of their community and institutions. Such acts may include moderating a deliberative town hall or bringing a Red/Blue workshop to their representatives in the state legislature.

*"The division in our country is keeping me up at night - it is the single biggest problem we face as Americans today."*

- Jennifer Y., Blue

*"Americans are much, much closer than the extremes, the media, and our elected officials would have us believe. It is time to restore the voice of the people."*

- Christopher N., Red

*"I am not willing to be a part of the divisiveness in America and welcome skills to help me move forward."*

- Pamela K., Blue

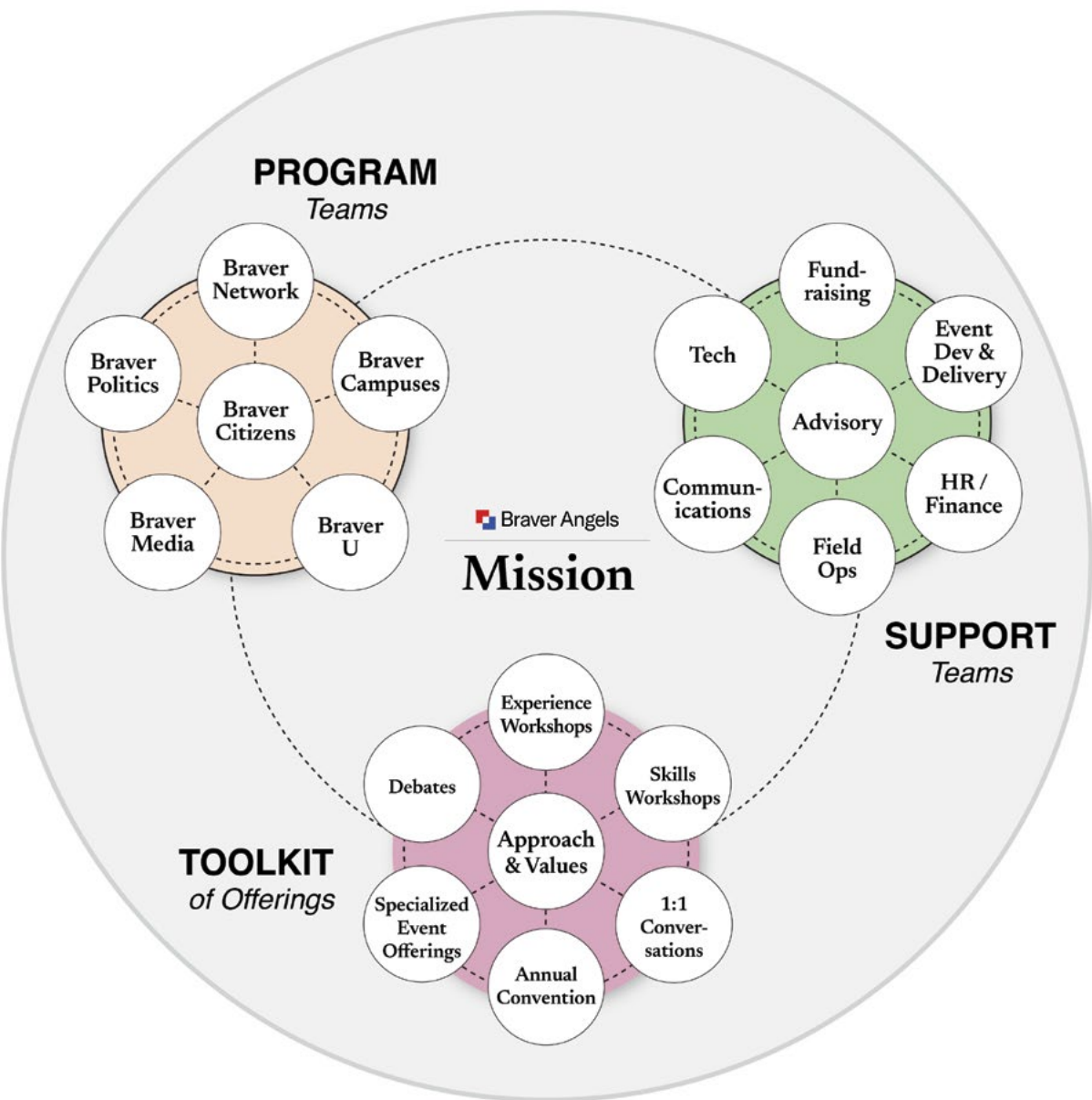
*"I would like to see Democrats and Republicans spend the majority of their time working for their constituents rather than criticizing the other party."*

- Jan H., Red



# Organizing for Action

Braver Angels is igniting and shaping a movement in an organizational container. This hybrid form of civic work is designed to let us stay open to new ideas and energy guided by the structure we need to get meaningful results.



## Program Teams

Braver Angels Programs are an ecosystem of volunteer-led teams divided into six segments.

### ● Braver Citizens

We organize citizens at the grassroots level across all 50 states through membership recruitment, local alliance-building, regional leadership development, convention delegation, and community events, including workshops, debates, and town halls.

### ● Braver Politics

We empower elected officials to bridge the partisan divide and improve communication with their colleagues and constituents through specially-developed programs, including workshops, debates, and town halls.

### ● Braver Campuses

We seek to influence culture and curricula at all levels of education through debate programs, lesson plans, and partnerships with organizations such as BridgeUSA and American Council of Trustees and Alumni.

### ● Braver Network

We partner with local and national organizations supportive of our mission and create Braver Angels programs in collaboration with hundreds of civic groups and houses of worship.

### ● Braver Media

We tell the story of Braver Angels — our mission, members and impact — through the creation and dissemination of newsletters, podcasts, field reporting, guest articles, social media, video, and earned media coverage.

### ● Braver U

We collaborate with academics, policy experts, data analysts, authors, film producers, artists and musicians through the Scholars Council, public forum discussions, independent program evaluations, film and book discussions, and a music initiative.



Braver Angels Senior Fellow for Public Practice Mónica Guzmán giving a speech at TEDxSeattle on how curiosity will save us.

# Toolkit of Offerings

Braver Angels brings together people from across the political spectrum at the grassroots level – not to find centrist compromise, but to find one another as citizens. Through workshops, debates, campus engagement, and more, Braver Angels helps Americans understand each other beyond stereotypes, form community alliances, and reduce the vitriol that weakens our civic culture.

A comprehensive catalogue of our offerings can be found in our [Live Bravely guidebook](#).



*"Common ground exists  
- we just have to be able  
to talk about it without  
being shut down."*

- BLUE MEMBER\*

*"Reasonable people can  
disagree, and a respectful  
debate reminds us of  
what active democracy  
looks like."*

- RED MEMBER\*

\*Collected anonymously.

## Experience Workshops

Experience workshops generate connection and understanding between Reds and Blues through exercises designed to help participants clarify disagreements, reduce stereotyped thinking, and discover common values.

## Braver Angels Debates

Braver Angels debates are an opportunity to explore controversial issues through a parliamentary format, which encourages everyone to share their perspectives, ensures civility in disagreement, and strives for learning for all.

## Skills Workshops

Skills workshops equip participants with the tools needed to communicate in a constructive, empathetic way and better navigate difficult political conversations with the people in their lives.

## 1:1 Conversations

1:1 conversations enable participants to talk directly with someone from a different political, geographic, racial, or generational background. Participants are given a guide to help stay on track and learn.

## Specialized Event Offerings

Our specialized event offerings include Common Ground Workshops, which explore a single issue, and town halls, which give participants a chance to present agreed-upon solutions to a legislator.

## Annual Convention

Our annual convention is a gathering of members and partners who join together to learn the skills necessary for a Civic Renewal Movement and establish our platform for the future.

# Our Members

Over 10,000 members of Braver Angels work at the grassroots level to fuel the Civic Renewal Movement. We strive to be representative every American, no matter their perspective, background, or experience.



**Greg H.**  
Minnesota

*"I'm a construction worker and small business owner. Politically, I'm progressive. I want healthcare for all, public schools fully funded. But I ran for office on a platform of bridging the partisan divide. During my election, I worked with Braver Politics and signed the Braver Angels Pledge for Civility."*



**David J.**  
Michigan

*"I'm a pragmatist by nature and believe 'to whom much is given, much is required.' I was drawn to Braver Angels because I want our political system to work for people. Born and raised in Detroit, I now work in the automotive industry and serve as the state co-coordinator for Michigan."*



**Annette R.**  
Maryland

*"I discovered Braver Angels when attending a debate at Allegany College of Maryland. Now, I'm on the leadership team of We the People's Project. We're focused on giving working-class people a bigger voice in our politics. I'm not 'Red' or 'Blue' because I don't fully agree with either."*



**Ted G.**  
United Kingdom

*"As a defense professional, I believe our political division is our greatest threat. Our enemies use it against us, and it keeps us from solving the challenges our nation faces today. Braver Angels restores trust amongst our citizens and protects our security. I'm the Red leader of the alliance Braver Angels Abroad."*



**Alma C.**  
North Dakota

*"I was raised in the city as a passionate liberal, but now I'm a libertarian and call the oilfields my home. Throughout 2020, I became frustrated with the hot-headed behavior on both sides and connected with the mission of Braver Angels as a Christian. Now, I'm the co-lead of our music team."*



**Janelle B.**  
Washington

*"People think you can't be a Black Republican, but that's wrong. I'm originally from Missouri as the daughter of an Air Force veteran. I ran for the school board and founded a community outreach organization dedicated to healing in the Black community. Now, I'm the co-chair of the Angels of Color Caucus."*



# Our Volunteers



**2,500+**  
Event Volunteers

Event volunteers are the heartbeat of our mission and the engine of our grassroots work. Their roles are expansive and include moderating online and in-person workshops, chairing debates, and organizing events at the local, state, and national level.



**200+**  
Ambassadors  
Deliver  
Outreach  
into Local  
Communities



**300+**  
Local Alliance  
Co-chairs, State  
Coordinators  
and Regional  
Leaders Deliver  
Results on the  
Ground

**100+**  
Project Leaders

Project leaders are the depolarization entrepreneurs behind the scenes. Their roles range from maintaining the online delivery of workshops to analyzing program data for mission impact. They are encouraged to inject ideas into the movement and implement them in a self-directed environment.





# Our Network



## Develop & Connect

Braver Network Partners broaden their networks, develop new leadership skills, and become more effective citizens through participating in our programs and events.



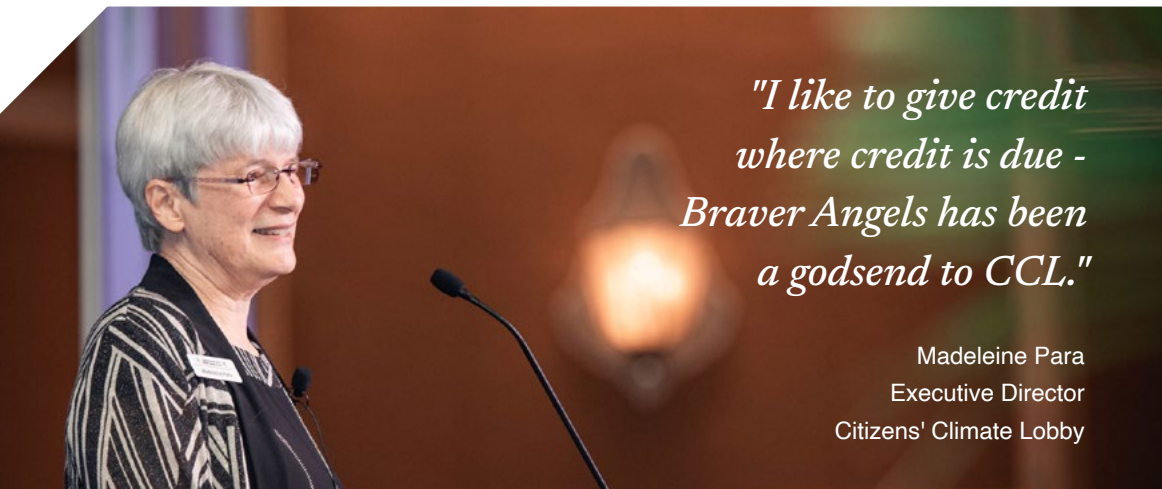
## Build Capacity to Depolarize

Many organizations have experienced damaging internal rifts due to political divisiveness. Braver Network programs provide opportunities to strengthen bonds of trust.



## Help America at a Time of Need

Braver Network Partners join other organizations to help broaden and strengthen the Civic Renewal Movement for more goodwill in our politics and society.



*"I like to give credit where credit is due - Braver Angels has been a godsend to CCL."*

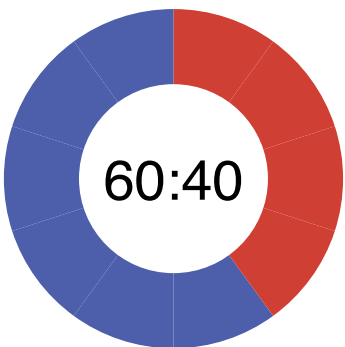
Madeleine Para  
Executive Director  
Citizens' Climate Lobby

Over 4,000 CCL members have participated in Braver Angels programming.

# Our Funding

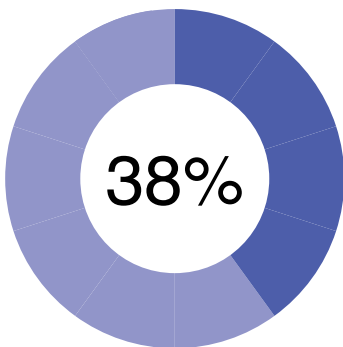


In 2021, Braver Angels achieved the highest rating for transparency from Guidestar, the premier information-sharing service of Candid. The rating signifies the highest level of financial transparency achievable by a non-profit. Further information can be found in our financial disclosure documents available online at: [BraverAngels.org/financials/](https://BraverAngels.org/financials/)



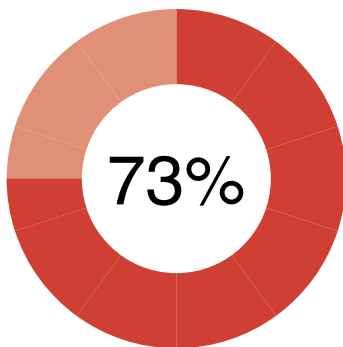
## Foundation Funding Balance

Braver Angels receives meaningful support from foundations which are considered to be left-of-center (60%) and foundations considered to be right-of-center (40%). Our goal is to draw funding from foundations spanning the political spectrum in a balanced manner.



## Member Funding of Operations

Braver Angels aims to be a member-supported organization with the majority of our budget covered by member contributions. In 2022, 38% of our \$4.4M budget was supplied by member dues and gifts. This represented a 20% increase from 2021.



## Grassroots Funding Focus

In 2022, 73% of funding directly supported grassroots programming, including our network of local alliances and debates across college campuses.



# Our Impact



**24,000+**  
Participants

In 2022, over 24,000 people participated in Braver Angels programs, including workshops, debates, 1:1 conversations, town halls and online discussions.



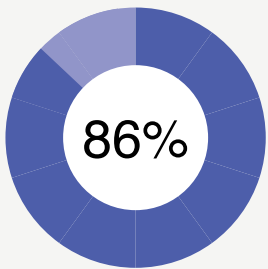
**5,000+**  
Students

Over 5,000 college students across 55 institutions have developed skills through Braver Angels programs, including debates and discussions.

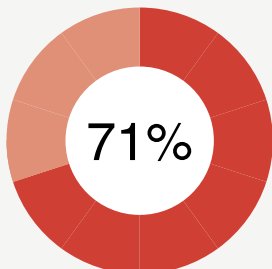


**4,000+**  
Participants

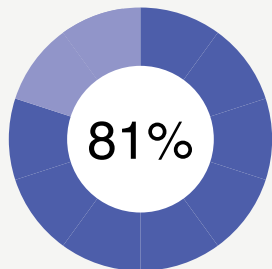
Over 4,000 participants across 16 states have attended Braver Politics events, including deliberative town halls, candidate debates and workshops for legislators.



After attending a Braver Angels workshop, 86% of participants feel they better understand the other side.



After attending a Braver Angels workshop, 71% of participants feel better understood by the other side.



After attending a Braver Angels workshop, 81% of participants feel better prepared to apply the skills.

# Braver Angels in the News



# Braver Angels in Review

Numerous academic studies have reported the effectiveness of Braver Angels programs. To learn more, check out the reports linked below.



[Journal of Applied Communication Research](#)



[Journal of Climate Change and Health](#)



[Couples Therapy for a Divided America](#)



# Our Plan Going Forward

1

Grow Our Grassroots Organization with Braver Citizens

Polarization in America is a structural problem reinforced by political institutions and the media environment. Using an infrastructure for depolarization, Braver Angels has sparked a Civic Renewal Movement. Growing this movement will be our focus going forward.

2

Expand the Civic Renewal Movement with Braver Network

Through Braver Citizens, we work at the grassroots level and invite Americans into experiences that transform the way they talk to one another and engage in democracy, creating a new set of political norms.

3

Depolarize Political Institutions with Braver Politics

Through Braver Network, we create relationships with organizations, including universities, civic groups and houses of worship, to export those norms back into the broader culture.

Through Braver Politics, we empower local, state, and national legislators to bring those norms to their deliberative bodies to improve their relationships with their colleagues and constituents across the aisle.

This is not just a theory. It is a practice. And it is being put into practice by the engine of Braver Angels. Thousands of volunteers across the political spectrum are bridging the divide that so many Americans have given up on.

Our mission is born out of a shared purpose and spirit of goodwill. This is what we mean when we say we're here to build a house united.

Join our Civic Renewal Movement and become a member of Braver Angels.





*"As a longtime Republican county leader, I can confidently say that Braver Angels is doing the work that our country needs."*

WILLIAM ELLIS  
VICE CHAIR OF MONROE COUNTY  
REPUBLICAN PARTY

Braver Angels embraces grassroots work with community and county officials as well as state and national representatives.



In December 2022, Braver Angels co-founder Bill Doherty led a workshop with the New Hampshire state legislature.



# What You Can Do



## Become a Member

Membership enables you to live out the mission of Braver Angels by giving you access to online courses, in-person events, and other members in the movement.



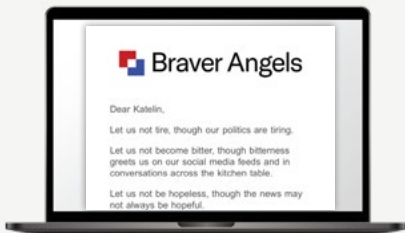
## Connect to an Alliance

Join your local alliance to connect with neighbors who want to bridge the partisan divide and strengthen your community. Don't have a local alliance yet? Start one!



## Subscribe to Newsletter

Stay engaged with the ongoing work of Braver Angels by subscribing to our newsletter, where you'll be informed on everything from our upcoming events to reflections on topical news.



## Share This Report

Our grassroots movement depends on individuals like you speaking with family, friends and neighbors about the cause. Your efforts make a difference!



## Attend an Event

Experience the Braver Angels Way in action by attending a debate, workshop, town hall, or discussion. With online and in-person options, you can show up in whichever way works best for you.



## Attend Our Convention

On July 5-8, 2023, hundreds of everyday Americans will gather in Gettysburg, PA to establish the platform of our Civic Renewal Movement. Apply to attend and be on the frontlines of this historic effort.





*This Annual Report was produced by a team of volunteers and staff – balanced among conservatives (Reds), liberals/progressives (Blues), and independents (Purples). Our locations spanned America – from south to north, and from west to east.*

## Annual Report Feedback



We care about your perspective! Please take a moment to provide feedback or suggestions for improvement to this annual report. Scan the QR code to get started.