

ANNUAL REPORT

2020



LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



This year has been filled with the highest highs and the lowest lows. We struggled individually and collectively in new and challenging ways—from COVID-19 to fighting for racial justice. At the same time, we solved challenging problems. We rose to new heights of unimaginable creativity. And, most importantly, we found a way forward—together.

All in all, it's been a big year for ACE in many ways. We more than doubled the size of the organization, reached tens of millions of young people with our campaigns, ran one of the largest youth and climate civic engagement programs in the nation, grew our ACE Youth Action Network membership to more than half a million young people in all 50 states, and contributed to the highest youth voter turnout in our nation's history.

While we acknowledge all that we have achieved this year, we know that now is not the time to rest. The climate crisis doesn't rest. Fossil fuel devastation doesn't rest. The most active Atlantic hurricane season in history doesn't rest. COVID-19 has exposed more cracks and injustices in our democracy, economy, and healthcare system that disproportionately impact communities of color. These same communities are also the first and worst hit by the impacts of fossil fuel development, climate change, and environmental injustice. These are the young people that make up the majority of ACE's community of half a million youth across the nation, and that we will continue to center in our work.

As we prepare to enter a new year, we know that our most important work is yet to come. We recently kicked off a new strategic planning process to level up all aspects of our programs over the next several years, launching in summer 2021. We feel so fortunate to have the trust, support and respect of our community as we explore this next phase of our work.

Most importantly, we continue to believe in the power of young people to fight for climate justice, and to be the generation that transforms our society into one that is more just, equitable and prosperous for all. While we say farewell to 2020—the year of making history and breaking records—we energetically welcome 2021—the year we take our future back. Stay tuned for all that is yet to come as we unveil our most ambitious and important plans yet. With many thanks -- onward,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Leah Qusba". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Leah Qusba

ACE IMPACT IN NUMBERS

21M

In 2020, we reached 21 million unique young voters through our civic engagement campaign, ensuring that youth voices and votes were heard loud and clear.

500K

We grew the ACE Youth Action Network to more than half a million young people in all 50 states taking climate justice and civic action.

403K

While COVID-19 put a damper on our in-person education program, we doubled down on our digital climate education program to reach more than 403,000 young people across the nation.

60K

We registered more than 60,000 of our nation's youngest voters in Arizona, Michigan, Florida, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

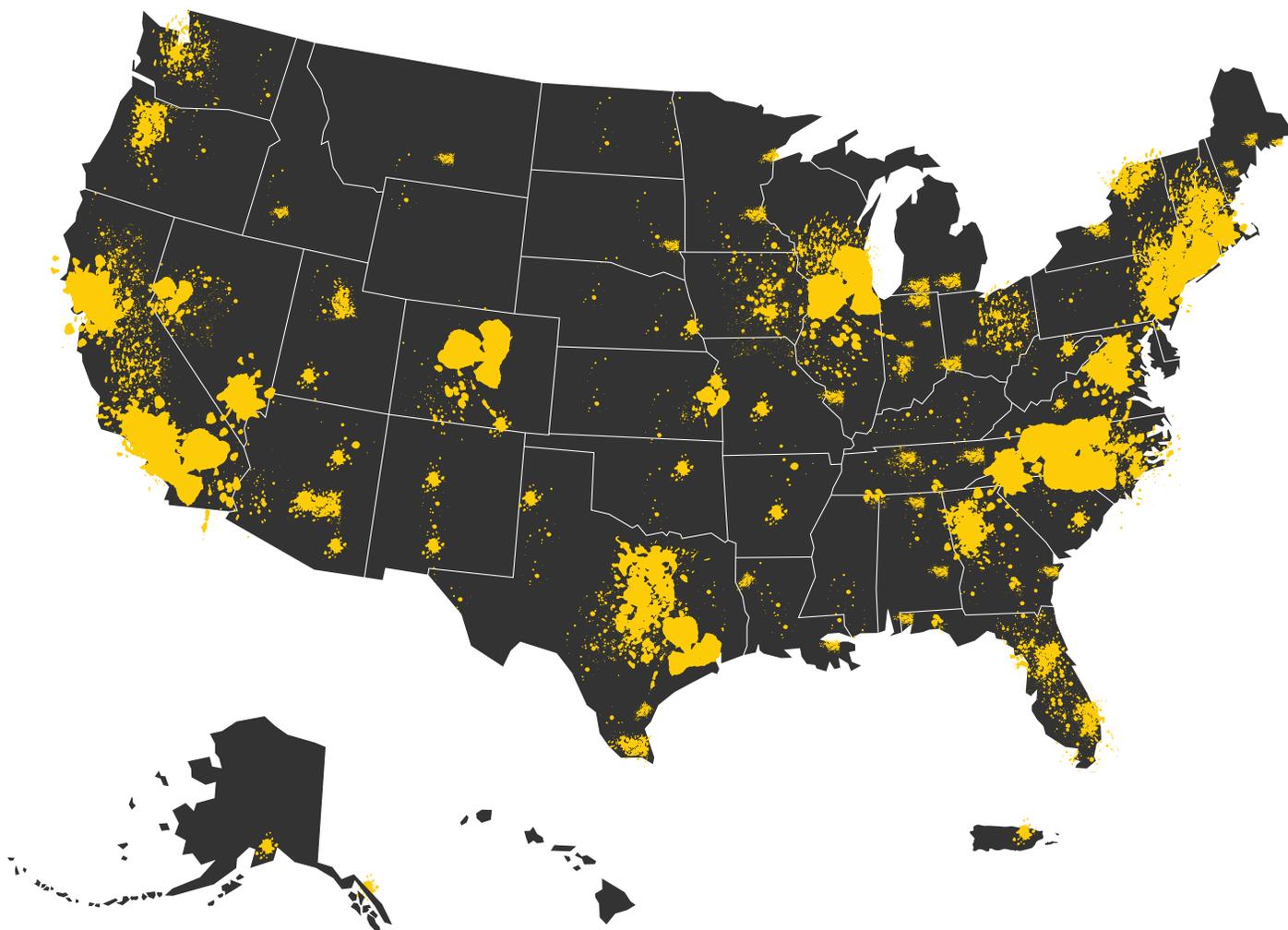
ACE CLIMATE EDUCATION PROGRAM

We are awakening a new generation to the climate crisis -- The Our Climate Our Future Climate Education Program is ACE's flagship offering and continues to be a key foundation for the rest of our programmatic work. Over the last year, we have expanded our curricular offerings to meet this moment by including lessons on climate and racial justice and civic engagement. We supported tens of thousands of teachers with the tools they need to feel confident teaching climate. And, we reached hundreds of thousands of young people in all corners of the nation with the information they need to join the climate movement they must lead.



ACE YOUTH ACTION NETWORK

Working at the nexus of civic engagement, young people and climate advocacy -- We expanded our Youth Action Network membership to more than half a million young people in all 50 states, with a concentration in our seven key states, including Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. We engaged our network in weekly actions to demand just and equitable climate and clean energy plans from our leaders, participate fully in our democracy, and usher out the era of fossil fuels. Our members are diverse with a majority identifying as Black, Indigenous and People of Color, and young women. To date, we have tracked millions of actions taken by our members.

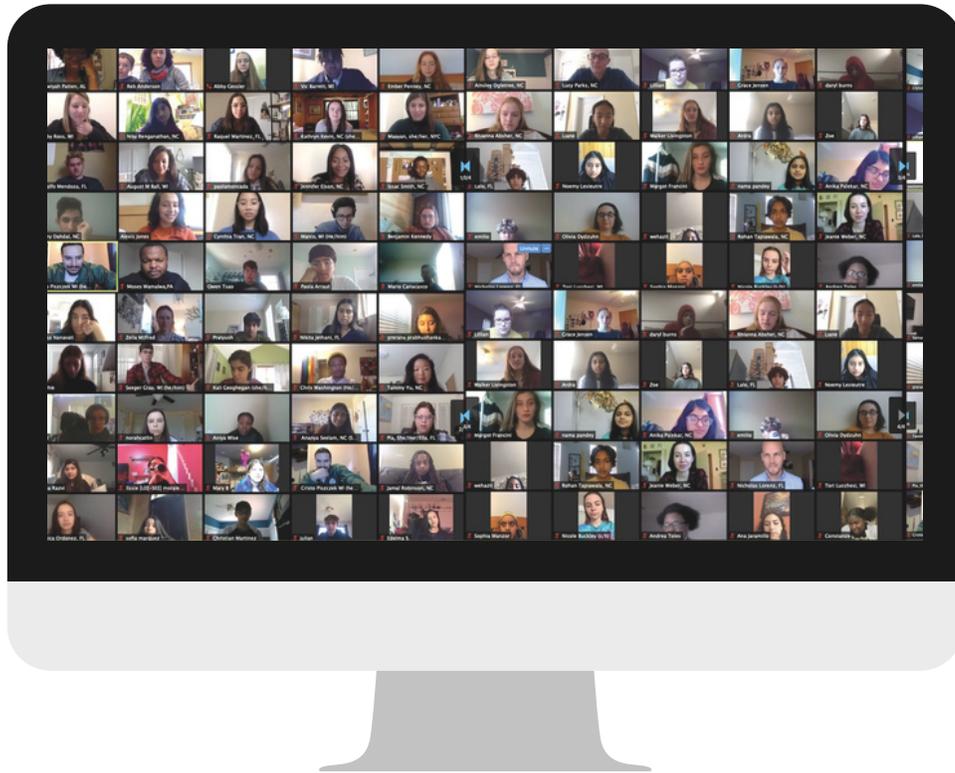


IN 2020, YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE HAD ENOUGH!



One of the largest youth civic engagement campaigns in 2020 -- Together, we are stronger. That's why this year we supported nearly a dozen partners to form the ENOUGH! Coalition. As the convening member, ACE served as the backbone partner to organize and support other youth climate organizations to take part in civic engagement leading up to the 2020 general election. We provided branding, training, digital tools and technology, regrants and other resources to our coalition partners. The key activities of the coalition included voter registration, relational voter turnout, direct mail, peer-to-peer texting and calling, and other forms of voter contact. Together, we reached more than 21 million youth voters and young leaders, empowered more than 16,000 young people to be relational voter turnout leaders, registered tens of thousands of first-time youth voters, and sent more than 355,000 handwritten postcards to unregistered young people.

ACE ACTION FELLOWSHIP



270

Action
Fellows trained

11

Regions
in five states

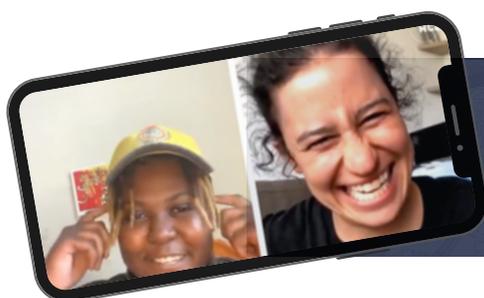
355K

Unregistered voters
reached

A youth organizing and civic engagement training program -- We trained hundreds of young people to be powerful climate and civic organizers this year through our Action Fellowship program in Florida, Ohio, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. We believe in the power of young people to take action now, while also building their leadership and skills for a lifetime. We make sure to weave in opportunities for action taking throughout the program, empowering our Action Fellows to learn how to organize and take action firsthand. Whether it was registering peers to vote, testifying at public hearings, or contacting their elected officials, our Action Fellows gained the skills, experience and confidence they need for today and tomorrow.

ACE STORYTELLING INITIATIVE

We are shifting the narrative through the power of stories -- Storytelling has the power to shift the public narrative on climate change, and build the political will to take meaningful and swift climate action. We produced hundreds of social story explainers, youth climate stories, and other videos this year, reaching more than 25 million people across the US. We also launched a new Instagram Live Series, hosted by Vic Barrett. During the 18 episodes, we were able to feature 13 Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC) voices on the frontlines of climate advocacy. Our popular Youth Takes series, a crowdsourced social video series covering a wide range of topics from climate and immigration to environmental racism, featured 41 youth voices from the ACE Youth Action Network, including 26 Action Fellows.



Vic Barrett is a Democracy Organizer with ACE in Wisconsin, focused on turning out the youth vote. He's also an Action Fellow Alum from our NYC program. Most recently, he spoke at the NYC Climate Strike to 100,000 activists about why it's critical to center BIPOC communities in the climate movement.

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During the past year, the ACE Board of Directors has supported the organization to reach new heights. The first-ever Board Diversity and Recruitment Plan passed by unanimous vote, and the full Board engaged in a multi-day racial justice training workshop to build our organizational capacity to center racial equity in all that we do. We have made great strides in expanding our Board to new geographies, and inviting new members that bring more diverse identities to our shared work.

ACE STAFF



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Youth Organizer, Pennsylvania



ASHLEY YOUNG
Lead Youth Organizer, Florida

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Building a more just, inclusive and equitable world -- We are actively working to center equity, justice, and inclusion into our organization, programs and the broader movement. This spring, we embarked on a year-long diversity, equity and inclusion journey with an external consultant. This project includes an equity assessment, racial justice training for the full staff and board, a DEI strategic plan, and ongoing coaching for the leadership team. In addition to expanding our board's racial diversity, we have also expanded the diversity of ACE's executive team, with 43 percent identifying as BIPOC and 85 percent identifying as women. In total, more than half of ACE's staff identifies as BIPOC and more than 70 percent as women.



We acknowledge that reaching our goals for equity, justice and inclusion will be a continual and difficult process. We acknowledge that to center equity and racial justice in our programmatic work, we must also center these things in all levels of our organization. We will make mistakes and we will continue to support one another as we navigate all of the complexities and challenges of being a multiracial team that's accountable to a multiracial network of young people across the nation.

RESEARCH AND EVALUATION

We use evidence to inform our strategy -- While we had much grander plans for research and evaluation work this year, COVID-19 thought differently. Even though we weren't able to run some of the in-person experiments we had planned for this year, we were still able to study and evaluate our work with rigor.

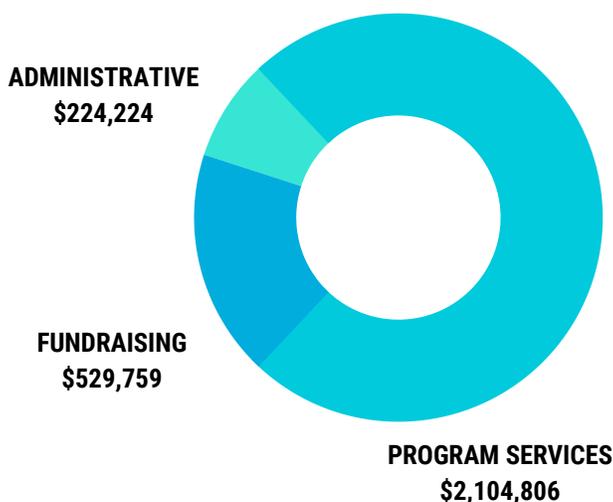
We partnered again with the Analyst Institute to run a randomized controlled trial of our handwritten postcard campaign to register young voters. In total, our staff, Fellows and volunteers wrote more than 355,000 handwritten postcards to unregistered young people in Arizona, Florida, Michigan, North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. The results of this test will be made available in March 2021, when the voter file data is made available for analysis.

In addition, ACE launched a "vote tripling" experiment with VoteTripling.org in March 2020 for the primary season with a goal of encouraging our members to sign up to contact three friends with tools and reminders to vote. The results are currently being analyzed and will be made available in early 2021. This relational experiment builds on the research we conducted in 2018 with Dr. Donald Green from Columbia University, where we increased voter turnout by 4 percentage points through our relational program.

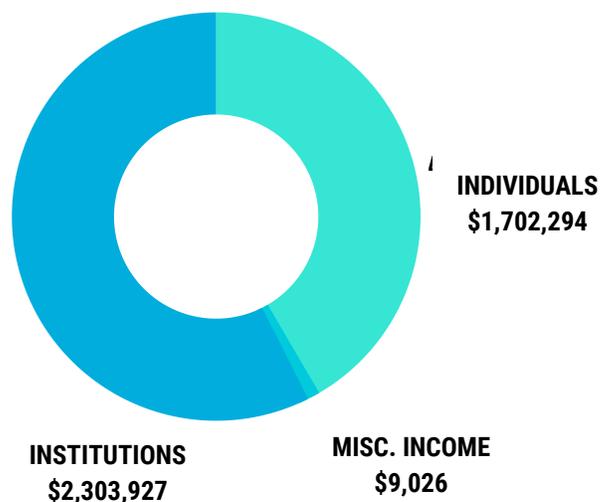
FINANCES AND FUNDRAISING

We more than doubled our size -- We have expanded our team to 32 staff in more than a dozen states over the last year, more than doubling the size of our team and growing our impact to new heights.

EXPENSES



REVENUE



*Financial information represents fiscal year 2020 from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

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