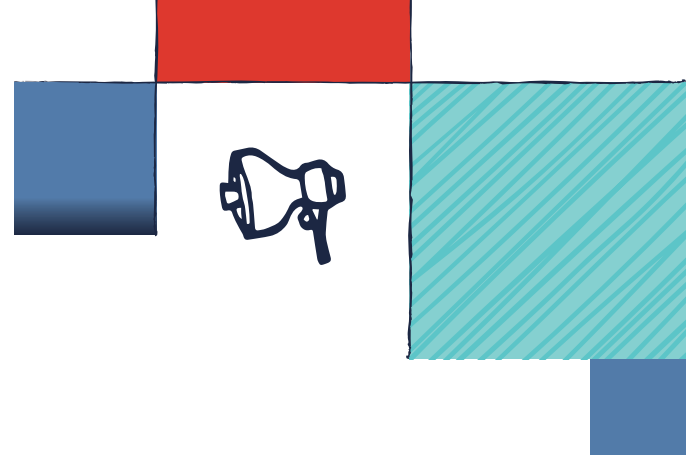




**Nebraska
Table**



2022-2023 Annual Report



About Us

Our Mission: The Nebraska Table works with nonprofits to build transformative, inclusive community power across Nebraska through year-round civic engagement.

Since 2016, the Nebraska Table has been committed to making sure people’s voices can be and are heard. By investing in year-round civic engagement, our network of 65 Member nonprofit organizations and 20 Partner organizations is strengthening power in politically marginalized and disenfranchised communities and building for the future together. 2022 and 2023 taught us much about the needs of our state. The expansion of the Nebraska Table’s work points to the progress we are seeing to protect everyone’s seat at the table.

Our Team

- Meg Mikolajczyk**, JD, Executive Director
- Angie Remington**, Director of Strategy and Development
- Brad Christian-Sallis**, Director of Power Building
- Arlo Hettle**, Associate Network Policy Manager
- Chelsea Sullivan**, People & Culture Specialist
- Corrin Day**, Development & Strategic Communications Associate
- Derek Ramirez**, Data Strategist
- Gabriela Pedroza**, Power Building Organizing Manager
- Guadalupe Esquivel**, Communications Director
- Jessy Romero**, JD, Finance & Operations Associate
- Madeleine Parr**, Communications Strategist
- Nicole Lewis**, Power Building Organizer
- Riley Wilson**, JD, Organizing & Member Services Manager
- Sandy Griffin**, Data Director
- Sierra Edmisten**, Power Building Organizer
- Y’Shall Davis**, Statewide Civic Engagement Strategist



Program Staff at Member Organizations

- Aleyah Smith**, Policy Fellow with I Be Black Girl
- Andrew Farias**, Policy Fellow with the Asian Community & Cultural Center of Lincoln
- Jaden Perkins**, Policy Fellow with Heartland Workers Center
- Laura Gamboa Urrego**, Greater Nebraska Community Organizer with YWCA of Grand Island
- Olivia Larson**, Policy Fellow with RISE
- Omar Samaniego**, Greater Nebraska Community Organizer with Unity in Action
- Schmeeka Simpson**, Policy Fellow with Malcolm X Memorial Foundation

Our Board

- Board President:
Robia Qasimyar
- Treasurer, Finance Chair:
Karen-Bell Dancy
- Secretary:
Corrie Kielty
- Programs Chair:
Yolanda Nuncio
- Personnel & Governance Chair:
Sapphire Andersen
- Immediate Past President:
Rachel Fox

- Valeria Rodriguez**
- Shereece Dendy-Sanders**
- Favian Mendez**
- Grant Friedman**

Thank you to the following past board members for their service during 2022 and 2023: Claudia Granillo, Inonge Kasaji, Kathy Steinhauer Smith (past Board Treasurer), Dr. Katie Weitz, Nic Swiercek, and Shannon Gilroy.



Dear Friends,



I have always believed in the power of community, advocacy, organizing, and change led by nonprofits. As a self-appointed Nonprofit Cheerleader, I know that, although we may be the underdogs in some of these matchups, anything is possible! Our nonprofit team often comes back from behind, scoring the winning points in the final seconds of the game. When our team wins, it's exciting. It's power shifting. It's hard and exhausting, but when those wins center our communities and achieve positive, life-changing outcomes against the odds, it's totally worth getting back on the field, again and again. We're playing the long game and it's working.

In my two and a half years as Nebraska Table Executive Director, and years prior served on our Board of Directors, I've been inspired by the energy of the changemakers in this diverse network. Just look at what we've accomplished together recently: an increase to the state minimum wage, increased accessibility measures in our legislature, dedicated infrastructure for nonprofits committed to year-round civic engagement, and tangible energy statewide to ensure all voices are heard.

The Nebraska Table's priority is to fundamentally transform ways communities engage year-round with and in systems that should represent them. It's about increasing access to systems that have historically kept out and continue to marginalize certain populations. It's about recognizing the needs of communities and strategizing together to effectively set the course for change.



Over 2022 and 2023, Nebraska Table's scope of work broadened to more effectively address gaps and harness community power. Through programming increasing nonprofit collaboration, focusing on more comprehensive direct democracy efforts, and intentionally investing in and fostering an inclusive, equitable environment supported by our DEI Council, the Nebraska Table is all in on working toward a state where Nebraskans are truly represented and empowered.

The match ups we face aren't always fair, equitable, or easy. But, our network has proven its dedication to showing up for our communities, and each other, to continue to drive the ball towards the goal line. We cheer for one another, even if we fumble or don't make every single basket we shoot. We stay focused on the long term strategy and know that movement building isn't about winning one match up, it's about fundamentally changing the game. Together, we're committed to building transformative, inclusive community power across our state and changing the game for good.

Meg Mikolajczyk, JD,
Executive Director



Organizing, General Capacity Building, Elections



Supporting grassroots organizing across Nebraska

In the summer of 2023, we convened our membership for the first-ever Member Summit. During two days of dedicated relationship-building, strategizing, and collaborative learning, with over 40 Members in attendance, our network Statewide Organizing Plan found its roots. With an eye ahead toward 2024, Members agreed upon four main priorities to guide the network's efforts: the 2024 elections, ballot initiative work, legislative policies, and local coalitions.

Organizer School

Our Organizer School is a comprehensive program that hires and trains organizers to be placed with a Member to grow their culture of civic engagement and build the leadership pipeline within the network. Participants develop key skills in data, communications, GOTV, and organizing tactics. In 2022, the program expanded into Hall and Dakota Counties to increase capacity and ensure a sustainable organizing presence throughout Greater Nebraska. Program participants support the network's direct democracy strategies as well as engage in policy-based advocacy with local and state-level policymakers. They help to scale the work in their communities by recruiting, training, and stewarding volunteers and developing local civic engagement tactics.

Throughout Organizer School I was exposed to so many amazing people across the state of Nebraska who are doing the same work that I have now committed myself to. Meeting those who have been doing the work and seeing the diversity within that group of people has reshaped the way I see and approach the work we are doing. I am thankful for the relationships that I was able to build while in org school and the wealth of information that I now have at my disposal.

Rogelio Rodriguez Villalobos, former community organizer with Unity in Action of South Sioux City, on his experience with Organizer School



Civic Engagement Fund:

Nebraska's nonprofits have built deep, trusted relationships with local communities, making them particularly effective at building power and encouraging civic participation. Our Civic Engagement Fund (CEF) provides grants to Members to support cultivation of civic engagement in the communities they serve.

2022

\$209,636

Community Connect: \$59,100

GOTV/AR: \$133,500

Grassroots Advocacy: \$0

Emergency/Additional: \$17,036



2023

\$127,811

Community Connect: \$35,500

GOTV/AR: \$41,225

Grassroots Advocacy: \$44,322

Emergency/Additional: \$6,764



Unique grantees: 21

- League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha
- East African Development Association of Nebraska
- Yazada Yazidi Cultural Center
- Somali Community Services
- inCOMMON
- League of Women Voters of Nebraska
- Latino Center of the Midlands and Comunidad Maya Pixan Ixim
- Rabble Mill
- Black Votes Matter Institute of Community Engagement
- Empowering Families: Empoderando Familias
- Unity in Action
- YWCA Grand Island
- ACLU Nebraska and OutNebraska
- NeighborWorks Lincoln
- Asian Community and Cultural Center
- Centro Hispano
- Somali American Heritage Society of Nebraska
- Heartland Workers Center
- ACLU Nebraska
- Civic Nebraska

Unique grantees: 22

- Black Votes Matter Institute of Community Engagement
- Nebraskans Against Gun Violence
- OutNebraska and ACLU Nebraska
- YWCA Grand Island
- ACLU Nebraska
- Elevate Omaha
- Conservation Nebraska
- New Life Family Alliance
- Somali Community Services
- Centro Hispano
- Civic Nebraska
- Asian Community and Cultural Center
- Nebraska Appleseed
- Voices for Children
- Common Cause
- Heartland Workers Center
- Eastern Nebraska Community Action Partnership
- OpenSky Policy Institute
- League of Women Voters of Greater Omaha
- Common Cause
- National Coalition of 100 Black Women - Greater Omaha



In 2022, Members attempted to contact to **65% of registered voters in the state**, supplying voter registration information, educating about crucial ballot initiatives, and encouraging community members to vote in upcoming elections.



Members significantly increased their efforts in 2022 compared to the previous midterm election. Voter contact attempts **increased 173% in 2022** compared to 2018.



Our coalition's efforts made an impact. **75% of the voters we reached turned out to vote in 2022**, meaning that individuals contacted by members voted at a rate **20% higher than the statewide voter turnout rate of 55%**.



In addition to Get Out the Vote and voter registration efforts, Nebraska Table and our broader coalition collected 130,000 signatures to put a minimum wage increase on the 2022 ballot. The initiative, which passed with 59% of the vote statewide, increases Nebraska's minimum wage to \$15 an hour by 2026.

Civic Engagement Fund Grantee Highlights:

ACLU and OutNebraska received a collaborative CEF grant to host a legal name change clinic for transgender people and conduct deep canvassing on LGBTQ+ issues. The free legal name change clinic, held in late August 2022, helped 41 people to change their legal names, removing one of the barriers trans, nonbinary, genderqueer, and Two-Spirit Nebraskans face when registering to vote and turning out at the polls. OutNebraska and ACLU also recruited 31 canvassers who knocked 640 doors, engaging communities in personalized and in-depth conversations about the LGBTQ+ community.

YWCA of Grand Island used their CEF grant to increase civic engagement among low-propensity voters in Hall County. Using a variety of strategies, YWCA - Grand Island worked to educate community members about changes in polling locations and to encourage these voters to turn out in the 2022 primary and general elections. Between April and November 2022, canvassers recruited and trained by YWCA - Grand Island knocked 1553 doors and made 406 phone calls to voters.

Getting out the vote:

With a critical presidential election year on the horizon and rapidly evolving tactics emerging after 2020, the Nebraska Table network spent 2022 and 2023 learning how to best engage communities in safe and effective ways. Voter outreach got creative through COVID-conscious efforts and artistic endeavors that emphasized Nebraskans' personal connections to issues.

Direct Democracy

Uplifting Nebraskans' voices through direct democracy is integral to the Nebraska Table's mission. Our Power Building team, formed in 2023, spearheads this coordination on statewide organizing efforts. To strategically build sustainable grassroots power, our statewide organizers work directly with and in communities to build relationships and engage in conversations through activities like voter registration, issue forums, signature collection, grassroots leadership skill building, and supporting Members to increase their engagement levels.



These efforts help communities be heard. Power Building Organizer Sierra Edmisten in Adams County sees her work in direct democracy efforts as an opportunity to help historically excluded communities make their voices heard.

When we have communities who feel empowered, that's when we can get things done.

Sierra Edmisten, Power Building Organizer

Bringing It To The Ballot

Our communities are building people power! Through ballot measures, Nebraskans are making their voices heard and building a state that works for all, not just for some.

- **Raise the Wage:** Nebraskans passed a minimum wage increase in 2022, bringing to light the hardships that so many workers face and helping to address racial and gender pay gaps.
- **Decline to sign:** Voter ID: A decline-to-sign effort fought hard against voter ID restrictions. Though ultimately passed, our pro-democracy network continues to advocate for election accessibility and guide Nebraska voters through the new identification requirements.
- **Support Our Schools:** A resounding 117,145 Nebraskans—nearly double the required amount—signed the referendum petition to repeal LB753.
- **Paid Sick Leave for Nebraskans:** Nebraska workers are the backbone of the state, yet many are still unable to get the time to care for their health or their family members without risking the loss of a paycheck. This ballot initiative campaign aims to require all Nebraska businesses to offer paid sick leave to employees, without retaliation.
- **Protect Our Rights:** With bodily autonomy blatantly ignored during a tumultuous 2023 legislative session, community members are taking it into their own hands to get government interference off their bodies with a ballot initiative campaign for 2024.

Deepening efforts alongside the Second House Collaborative

Second House Collaborative is a 501(c)(4) organization working to resource, train, and support nonprofits in Nebraska championing ballot initiative and issue campaigns. Launched in March of 2023, Second House Collaborative works in partnership with the Nebraska Table and other key stakeholders to support the shift towards direct democracy efforts to build power with and restore power to the people.

In recent years, passing positive policy or blocking devastating legislation in Nebraska has become more difficult as the result of decades of gerrymandering, loose campaign finance regulations, and term limits. Nebraska Table and its 501(c)(3) nonprofit network have leveraged ballot initiative campaigns as a way to take essential issues directly to the people. Second House Collaborative was created to fill the gaps within the network, devoting its unlimited ability to lobby to critical campaign infrastructure and support.

Nebraska Table, in partnership with the Second House Collaborative...

1. Facilitated coalition strategy, alignment, and collaboration by sharing resources and convening regular meetings.
2. Bolstered critical campaign infrastructure by managing, funding, and staffing signature collection efforts across the state.
3. Provided tools, training, and research, which included equipping members with essential technology and commissioning polling on campaign issues.

30+ SIGNATURE COLLECTION EVENTS

WORKED WITH 15+ COALITION PARTNERS

3,705 SIGNATURES COLLECTED

HOSTED 20+ BALLOT INITIATIVE-RELATED TRAINING SESSIONS,

HELPING TRAIN 300+ STATEWIDE VOLUNTEERS





Policy and Legislative Advocacy

Showing up at the Capitol

A sustainable focus on skill-building and resource-sharing helps nonprofits navigate the policy world and be prepared to advocate for legislation that protects our communities. Building up the bench of policy experts and coordinating collaborative advocacy efforts doesn't happen overnight. From pro-democracy bills to accountability measures on representatives, policy work deeply influences our lives.

The policies passed at the Nebraska Legislature can support our futures and encourage us to thrive, or they can work to further marginalize and divide us. Historically, the voices most often heard at the Legislature were those with money and influence. We're working to transform that by empowering nonprofit leaders with tools, skills, and collaborative spaces that they can use to powerfully advocate for and with our communities.



Arlo Hettle, Associate Network Policy Manager

Building up Nebraska's bench of public policy experts

Our Lobby School program takes a holistic approach to movement building by connecting elections and grassroots efforts to policy work. It is designed as a collaborative space to expand existing advocacy infrastructure and build power within Nebraska's nonprofit advocacy organizations by developing participants' essential skills to advocate for their community interests which are traditionally absent from the interests of professional lobbyists, particularly those of rural and BIPOC Nebraskans. This is done through experiential learning, lecture, mentorship, and collaboration.



2022 11 GRADUATES

2023 12 GRADUATES

Lobby School has been an opportunity that I believe any beginning lobbyist should go through. I've been navigating the legislature for a handful of years but getting specific on strategy for lobbying and having a mentor is something that has proven invaluable. The wealth of knowledge and direction has allowed me to maneuver this session more intentionally therefore creating more of an impact for the people we serve and our organization.

Jasmine Harris, Director of Public Policy and Advocacy at RISE, speaking about her own experience as a member of Lobby School cohort 1

Policy Fellows

Essential to Lobby School are our Policy Fellows. Fellows are passionate leaders placed with Member organizations to integrate grassroots strategies in order to engage stakeholders and uplift the voices of our communities, all with the goal of advancing Nebraska's public policy.

Policy Fellows are currently working with the following Member organizations: **Asian Community & Cultural Center, Heartland Workers Center, I Be Black Girl, Malcolm X Memorial Foundation, and RISE.**



Youth Lobby School

In December 2023, we introduced a new program, spearheaded by Policy Fellow Andrew Farias, to support youth from historically exploited or marginalized communities in using their power for community building and making their voices heard. The inaugural cohort, made up of a group of 16 high schoolers from Lincoln and Omaha, is part of a community of young advocates learning how to engage with issues that matter to them.

Creating space for collaborative policy action and coalition building

As part of our efforts to support socially responsible public policy and legislative advocacy, the Nebraska Table facilitates a weekly Nonprofit Advocacy Call in partnership with the Coalition for a Strong Nebraska and the Nonprofit Associate Midlands. This is a space for nonprofits and community advocates to share legislative updates on bill status, action items, and strategy. These weekly calls see over **175 organizations** representing a wide range of interests.



Donors

In 2016, the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table was created by a group of nonprofit leaders and funders who recognized the deep, trusted relationships Nebraska nonprofits have built in their communities. They saw an opportunity to support those nonprofits in building strong collective power, particularly in communities where Nebraskans have been historically silenced, excluded, and disenfranchised from voting, policy-making, and leadership development. Eight years later, we continue to carry out their vision and are honored to share with you the work of 67 nonprofits across the state, a true collaborative effort to ensure every Nebraskan has a voice in the decisions that impact their lives and their communities. Our deepest gratitude to all of our supporters, including the following foundations and individuals who in 2022 and 2023 provided grant funding, or who made contributions at or above the \$5000 giving level.

Operating Revenue and Expenses

2022:
TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,379,600

- Grants: \$1,307,100
- Individual Donations: \$49,800
- Member Dues and Program Revenue: \$22,700

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$1,604,200

- General Operating Expenses: \$711,200
- Fundraising Expenses: \$60,300
- Programming: \$832,700

ASSETS: \$1,339,900

2023:
TOTAL REVENUE: \$1,236,200

- Grants: \$1,171,300
- Individual Donations: \$35,800
- Member Dues and Program Revenue: \$29,100

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$1,824,000

- General Operating Expenses: \$477,500
- Fundraising Expenses: \$114,300
- Programming: \$1,232,200

ASSETS: \$3,242,900

- Annette and Paul Smith Charitable Fund
- Clean and Prosperous America (2022)
- Cooper Foundation (2022)
- Dr. Katie Weitz
- Fred and Eve Simon Foundation
- Holland Foundation (2022)
- Humanities Nebraska (2022)
- Adams RBG Empowerment Fund (2023)
- John and Dianne Scott
- Lincoln Community Foundation
- Lozier Foundation
- Movement Voter Project (Tides Foundation) (2022)
- Sherwood Foundation
- State Voices
- Todd and Betiana Simon
- Weitz Family Foundation



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