



# CHANGE THE STATUS QUO

2021 Impact Report

# #CHANGETHESITUATION

## DISCLAIMER:

Some pictures taken before mask mandates and social distancing guidelines were in effect.

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LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

CivicAction acknowledges that the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is situated upon traditional and current Indigenous territories that include the Wendat, Haudenosaunee, Anishnaabeg, Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation, and Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation. We believe in the spirit of the “Dish with One Spoon” concept—that land can be shared to the mutual benefit of all its inhabitants.

Today, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is still home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island (North America) and we recognize the historical oppression and inequalities that they continue to face.

We also recognize the non-settlers and the dis-planted, such as people of African descent who were brought here forcibly and enslaved and who continue to face oppression and inequality on land that is not their own.

Depending on our ancestry, we each have different relationships to the land on which we live. In our role as a civic convener, and in the spirit of reconciliation, CivicAction is committed to rebuilding and renewing respectful relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people, we support Indigenous sovereignty and we support the recommendations of The Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



MESSAGE FROM THE CEO



In my first year as CEO at CivicAction, I have seen our network, our partners, our Board leadership, and our passionate staff team together transform their commitment into action that can create a city region where we all feel valued and have a sense of belonging.

The last year has been both challenging and exhilarating. CivicAction creates the platform for many voices to challenge the status quo. Our focused and patient investment in rising leaders continues to catalyze and amplify voices for change, in all sectors and industries.

It is tough going on some days, but I remain energized and inspired by our future and the path to a stronger more inclusive city region. Our future is hopeful, as we build trust amongst our different perspectives and needs.

**LESLIE WOO**  
CEO, CivicAction





# MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRS

The COVID-19 pandemic has made life more difficult for everyone, although its negative impacts have been far from equal. It has polarized our communities, fractured our trust in public institutions, worsened the mental health crisis, and in many cases, effectively rolled back decades of social progress. Moreover, it has left all of us weary of the relentless toll this virus has taken on our lives.

Despite our collective fatigue, it's in these difficult times that we must work harder than ever to bridge the divides that exist in our society.

Staying curious and remaining open to the insights and experiences of other people—especially if they are different from our own—is an important start. Acting on those insights for a better Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is the necessary next step.

This is the magic of CivicAction.

As a growing network of thousands of rising leaders, industry experts, community coordinators, government officials, executives, visionaries, and curious minds, we're focused on enabling community members to take an active role in shaping our collective future. CivicAction's distinct model of bringing together diverse collaborators to challenge the status quo is more important now than ever.

We have spent the last year focused on empowering rising leaders and rallying for an

inclusive economy. From free skills-building events that support thousands of young people, to preparing for the future of work, to innovative leadership programs, we've been building a better future for our region. We've connected hundreds of Indigenous, Black, and racialized rising leaders with the region's most senior executives to create powerful and enabling networks. We do all these things because we believe more inclusive cities in the GTHA are fundamental to our collective sustainability and success.

So, where do we go from here?

As we emerge from this urban region's most challenging period in living memory, we need your help in building a GTHA where everyone has the tools to succeed, and we all feel we belong.



**ROB MACISAAC**  
Chair, CivicAction



**TIM HOCKEY**  
Chair, CivicAction  
Leadership  
Foundation



# OUR VALUES

## DRIVE ACTION

We are relentlessly driven and tenaciously curious. We set ambitious, informed goals and drive towards measurable impact.

## HARNESS COLLECTIVE WISDOM

We are a multiplying force for action. We believe that collaboration leads to stronger outcomes and that when we work together, we become more than the sum of our parts.

## CULTIVATE INCLUSION

We unrelentingly work towards a culture of inclusion and belonging. We embrace diversity and seek to create an environment that respects the perspectives, experiences, abilities and aspirations of all.

## BE BOLD

We don't settle for the status quo. We experiment, learn and work continuously to achieve better outcomes.

## INTEGRITY AT OUR CORE

We are non-partisan in all we do and believe trust and integrity are core to who we are. We build trusted relationships and strive to be principled, decent, balanced and fair.







# A NEW ERA OF IMPACT: CIVICACTION'S THREE-YEAR STRATEGY

Now more than ever, people want to feel seen and heard, get involved in causes they care about, and create inclusive change. At CivicAction we're turning these collective ideas into meaningful action.

As part of our new Three-Year Strategy (2021-2023), we're focused on further mobilizing inclusion in leadership and the economy by connecting and collaborating with government officials, industry leaders, community advocates, academics, innovators, and community members.

This new era of impact aims to build a more equitable future for everyone who calls the GTHA home. But we will not succeed alone. Our partners, sponsors, champions, alumni, and many more are the foundation of our shared success.

OUR KEY PRIORITIES:

Deepen inclusion for Indigenous, Black, and racialized rising leaders.

Push for an economic recovery that includes equity deserving communities.

Convene, collaborate, & co-create for impact.

Visit our website to learn more about the [Three-Year Strategy](#) and ways [you can support](#) this important work.



As a DiversityCity Fellow I am constantly impressed by CivicAction's commitment to elevating diverse, rising leaders. By disrupting outdated approaches to mentorship and fitting in, they are empowering leaders to challenge systems that weren't built with their needs in mind—making the GTHA more inclusive for all its residents.

Colin Druhan,  
DiverseCity Fellow  
(2020)





It's always so uplifting and rewarding to meet young leaders who are doing such amazing things in their lives.

**Nan DasGupta,**  
CivicAction Board Member and Established Leader, CivicMatch







IMPACT STORY

# YULENA WAN

With a drive to build a more inclusive and welcoming community, Yulena lacked the tools and network to really change the status quo. That's where CivicAction comes in.





Growing up, I was aware of my privilege.

Instilled in me early on was an idea—one that shaped how I interact with our region today—that every person has the responsibility to use their privilege, whatever that may be, to break down barriers and elevate other people.



[...] we cannot sit on the sidelines and wait for someone else to do this work. If we do, systems of oppression will continue to dominate, and equity-deserving groups will remain at the periphery of society.

Throughout my early career, I spent a great deal of time volunteering in the charitable sector, and I learned a lot. I learned about the systemic roadblocks that exist and just how far we are from being the inclusive, diverse region that we want to be.

Now, I just needed the tools, network, and opportunity to make an impact. And in 2018, I got just that.

I joined CivicAction as a DiverseCity Fellow, where I worked with a group of like-minded yet diverse, rising leaders from across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area to tackle critical issues facing our communities. We routinely had candid conversations on polarizing topics and collaborated to find equitable solutions to those problems. It was these workshops, roundtable discussions, and insightful conversations that equipped me with the skills and confidence to lean into my strength as a leader, navigate obstacles, and have challenging conversations.

Here's what I know; one, we cannot sit on the sidelines and wait for someone else to do this work. If we do, systems of oppression will continue to dominate, and equity-deserving groups will remain at the periphery of society. Two, we all have a sphere of influence; it is imperative that we leverage our skills, networks, and abilities to make a positive change in our communities. Because if not us and now, then who and when?

Today, CivicAction continues to challenge the status quo by bringing together leaders from all walks of life, disrupting their way of thinking about systems that are so central to our society, and making them question—what if we did things differently?



# INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

Inclusive leadership builds better, more welcoming communities. But it is not only the right thing to do; diversity of thought, talent, and lived experiences at the decision-making table has a direct return on investment for organizations and our economy overall.

By investing in the success of 3100+ diverse rising leaders in the GTHA, CivicAction's programs and initiatives break down systemic barriers to success for equity-deserving communities and empower new voices to be heard, changing longstanding and outdated beliefs on what it means to be a leader.



# CivicMatch

CivicMatch leverages the power of networks to advance Indigenous, Black, and racialized rising leaders across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Through small group conversations with established leaders, CivicMatch delivers critical strategic connections that open doors to new opportunities and new relationships to accelerate leadership trajectories.

150+

rising leaders participated in impactful conversations in 2021.

99%

of participants found their conversation to be insightful.

97%

agreed they would recommend CivicMatch to a peer or colleagues.

# DiverseCity Fellows

CivicAction’s DiverseCity Fellows program is an award-winning leadership experience for diverse rising leaders (referred to as ‘Fellows’) in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) who are looking to amplify their leadership skills, grow their network, explore social issues, and discover how to make a positive change in their communities.

30

new Fellows joined our growing pipeline of diverse, civic-minded rising leaders as part of the 2021 cohort of DiverseCity Fellows.

300+

Fellows alumni who are working across industry and sector to move the GTHA forward.

81%

of Fellows would recommend the program to a friend.

94%

of Fellows agree that the overall experience as a DiverseCity Fellow was positive.

# Emerging Leaders Network

CivicAction Leadership Foundation’s Emerging Leaders Network (ELN) connects, develops, and activates rising leaders from across the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). Created in 2006, the ELN is now 3100+ rising leaders strong and represents a wide range of ethno-cultural backgrounds, communities, and sectors throughout the GTHA.

250+

members joined the ELN in 2021.

~100

rising leaders built up their future-proofed leadership skills at ELNstudio: Future Proof Me.

100%

of attendees reporting that they would recommend the network to their peers.

97%

satisfaction rating with ELN events in 2021.

500+

rising leaders attended 10 virtual events: networking, developing leadership, and community-building skills.

As we look to the future, CivicAction will focus on what we do best: collaboration and co-creation. Over the next year:

- We’ll continue to amplify the voices of rising leaders through the ELN and DiverseCity Fellows—diversifying representation at decision-making tables
- We’ll continue to evolve the Fellows curriculum to better suit the needs of this diverse group of rising leaders.
- We’ll launch a board matching initiative to prepare and match talented Indigenous, Black, and racialized candidates with non-profit, charitable, and public board opportunities.
- We’ll scale the CivicMatch program to connect even more executive and racialized rising leaders.

FROM THE KEYNOTE SPEAKER AT  
ELNSTUDIO: FUTURE PROOF ME...



It’s no longer enough to be good people in our hearts. We need to be good people in our words and actions

Mohamad Fakh, President & CEO of Paramount Fine Foods





# INCLUSIVE ECONOMY

COVID-19 has had an unprecedented and historic impact on the economic health of our region and the people who live here. It has exacerbated and shone a spotlight on the growing inequities in our systems and spaces. It has also shown us that when we invest in making economies more equitable from the bottom up (or the middle class out), economic growth is likely to be better for everyone.

Recognizing we can't move forward together while some people are still held back, we leveraged the cross-sectoral expertise and input of our Future of Work Champions Council to bridge the growing divides in the regional economy of the GTHA through our programs. With the support of our partners, we remain committed to building an economy where everyone has the opportunity to succeed.





Thank you for such a well thought out and executed program—this is exactly the kind of program I felt I needed to help me at the crossroad that I’m at.

**Karan Gill,**  
CivicAction DiverseCity Fellow alum and  
CivicMatch participant



HireNext is a free made-in-Canada tool that helps employers better hire and retain diverse, young talent. By helping employers better recruit, screen, onboard and most importantly retain entry-level talent, HireNext takes the guesswork out of creating more open, accessible, and inclusive hiring and HR practices.



Launched a technology-enabled job posting assessment tool in the Toronto region.



Connected over 80 employers to three community partners that can provide access to the young, diverse talent employers are looking for.



Launched the inaugural HireNext Bulletin to inform and connect employers.



YouthConnect prepares young people and youth workers for the future of work through free skills-building events and online learning. For the last seven years, we’ve worked across the Toronto region, Calgary, Halifax, and more to deliver YouthConnect to over 5,200 people and distributed over 4,500 free LinkedIn Learning licenses.

**110+**

young people  
accessing tools to  
help them find and  
prepare for  
employment.

**97%**

of participants  
found YouthConnect  
valuable.

**100%**

of participants are  
likely to recommend  
YouthConnect to a  
friend or peer.





As a Black female and visible minority, I constantly feel the pressure to prove myself ten times over. We all want the possibility to achieve in these areas, but we must first be given the opportunity. CivicAction connected me to key individuals who supported and assisted me with my journey—and for that I am grateful.

**Elizabeth Frimpong,**  
YouthConnect 2021 Participant





# CO-CREATION

Although our region grows increasingly more divided, it is imperative that we reach across the divides to build bridges and help each other forward—and this is what CivicAction does best.

To solve the big urban challenges we face today, CivicAction brings together all levels of government, different sectors, and every generation to work as a collective, developing new approaches and achieve bold impact.



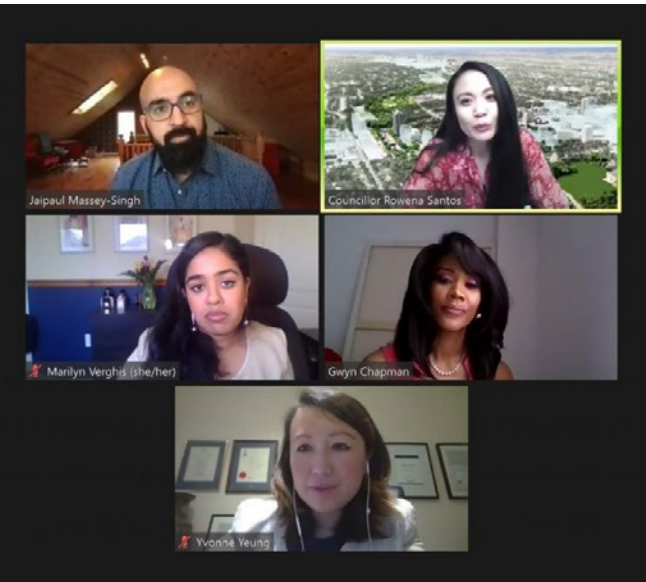
ANTI-SEX TRAFFICKING

- Over a million impressions on a collaborative campaign that leveraged the insight and experience of the Anti-Sex Trafficking Champions Council, the storytelling expertise of Edelman, the support of Scotiabank, and Toronto-based content creator, Keara Graves, to raise awareness and educate young people on the signs of sex trafficking.



INCLUSION ONTARIO

- Partnered with the Government of Ontario’s Anti-Racism Directorate to host a virtual roundtable on economic inclusion in the workplace.
- Bringing together over 100 established and rising leaders from across sectors, communities, and experiences, attendees worked to identify concrete actions employers can take to build workplaces that work for everyone.



DIGITAL DISH

- Brought together a panel of civic leaders from the City of Brampton to discuss the municipality’s current and future priorities as it looks to not only recover from COVID-19 but build back better.

“

I’ve been lucky enough to support Civic Action’s leadership team and board in their reimagining of a more inclusive city. Their unique ability to drive positive change through enabling cross-sectoral collaboration has tackled some of our most pressing issues as a city. As a first generation Canadian of bi-racial immigrants, CivicAction’s youth centric programs focused on enabling under-represented next-gen leaders resonates the most with me. Their programs have made a meaningful impact in thousands of leaders to date. It’s why I continue to work with CivicAction as they are helping us build a pipeline of leaders that more accurately reflect contemporary Canada.

Daniel Abichandan,  
Partner, Deloitte & CivicAction supporter



# OUR COMMUNITY

A team of doers, dreamers, advocates, and allies we believe in the bold potential for our region's future, and we're committed to turning these innovative ideas into tangible solutions.





CivicAction shows us that when diverse leaders are empowered and their voices amplified, our entire region benefits. I am proud to support the organization as it continues to bring together rising and established leaders from every sector and background to solve critical issues facing our cities. This important work moves our region forward and makes the GTHA more inclusive for everyone who works and lives here, giving them opportunities to flourish, to feel a genuine sense of belonging, and to give back in meaningful and fulfilling ways.

**Wisdom Tettey,**  
CivicAction Board Member

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

## CIVICACTION BOARD



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President and CEO,  
Hamilton Health  
Sciences; Chair,  
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and Senior Partner,  
BCG, Toronto;  
Vice-Chair,  
CivicAction



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Past-President & CEO,  
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Corporation; Chair,  
CivicAction Leadership  
Foundation



**WISDOM TETTEY**  
Vice President,  
University of Toronto;  
Principal of University  
of Toronto

## CIVICACTION LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION BOARD



**TIM HOCKEY**  
Past-President & CEO,  
TD Ameritrade  
Corporation; Chair,  
CivicAction Leadership  
Foundation



**CATHERINE  
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Hamilton Health  
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**SALIMA RAWJI**  
Vice President of  
Development,  
CreateTO; 2011-2013  
ELN Co-Chair; 2010  
DiverseCity Fellow



# TEAM ACTION



**LESLIE WOO**  
Chief Executive  
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**AMAN VELLANI**  
Project Officer



**BRIAN JOE**  
Executive Assistant  
& Senior Advisor to  
the CEO



**CAMILO GARAY**  
Senior Manager,  
Development



**CHRIS ADAMS**  
Chief Financial  
Officer



**DANIEL LYNN**  
Senior Manager,  
Operations



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Program Manager,  
DiverseCity Fellows



**HAMNA AWAN**  
Manager,  
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Program Manager,  
Emerging Leaders  
Network



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Manager, Development



**TAHER  
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Bookkeeper



**YASMINE  
MOHAMED**  
Director, Activation

# 2022-2023 ELN EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

The ELN Executive Committee is a team of volunteers who help shape the programming for the ELN. This includes launching campaigns and initiatives to increase member engagement, planning, and executing exposure opportunities for members, and deepening the overall impact the network provides to its members.



**ALEEM PUNJA**  
ELN Programming  
Lead; National  
Operations Officer,  
Aga Khan Council for  
Canada



**ALLIE SUTTON**  
ELN Communications  
Lead; Associate,  
Social Impact  
Practice, Generation  
Capital



**ANDREA  
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ELN Communications  
Lead; Associate  
Principal, Navigator  
Ltd.



**ANOWA QUARCOO**  
ELN Co-Chair; Director,  
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**KATELYN KOZMA**  
Programming Lead;  
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(Incoming) Consultant,  
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ELN Programming Lead;  
Manager, Community  
Reintegration, Ontario  
Public Service (OPS)



**SARAH BALDEO**  
ELN Programming  
Lead; Director,  
Deloitte, Canada



**UMEMA  
SHARAFALI**  
Programming Lead;  
Coordinator for  
Learning Opportunities,  
Centre for Connected  
Communities



**WES IQBAL**  
Co-Chair; Senior  
Manager, Strategic  
Initiatives, Ontario  
Digital Service



“

The ELN is continually bringing people together and building a pipeline of innovators that are passionate about change. By empowering future leaders with the skills and mindset to effect change in our communities, CivicAction shines a light on the role that we collectively play in building a more inclusive region for all—one that is truly equitable.

**Anika Harford,**  
Emerging Leaders Network,  
Executive Committee (2021)





# OUR PARTNERS

From funding our innovative programs, to providing services that empower our work, to offering expertise that amplifies our impact in the community, our partners\* and donors make this important work possible. We are grateful for their support.

If you are interested in partnering with CivicAction, please contact **Sarah Hashem**, Vice President of Partnerships & Development at [sarah.hashem@civicaction.ca](mailto:sarah.hashem@civicaction.ca).

\*All partners and donors listed have contributed between January 1, 2021 and January 31, 2022.



## CIVICACTION PARTNERS





CIVICACTION LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION PARTNERS



CIVICACTION LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION DONORS

ORGANIZATIONAL DONORS

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BCG  
BMO  
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Godin Family Foundation  
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- Institute of Corporate Directors  
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Sleep Country Canada  
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Vital Toronto Flowthrough Fund at Toronto Foundation

INDIVIDUAL DONORS

- |                   |                             |                |                   |
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From being a DiverseCity Fellow to an Emerging Leaders Network Executive Committee Member and now a CivicAction donor, I continue to benefit from CivicAction's robust and quality leadership programming. CivicAction builds the leadership muscles of many cross-sectoral change makers who break down barriers and, trust me, they pack a punch.

**Alyssa Lai,**  
CivicAction donor, ELN Exec Committee Member, and DiverseCity Fellows alum

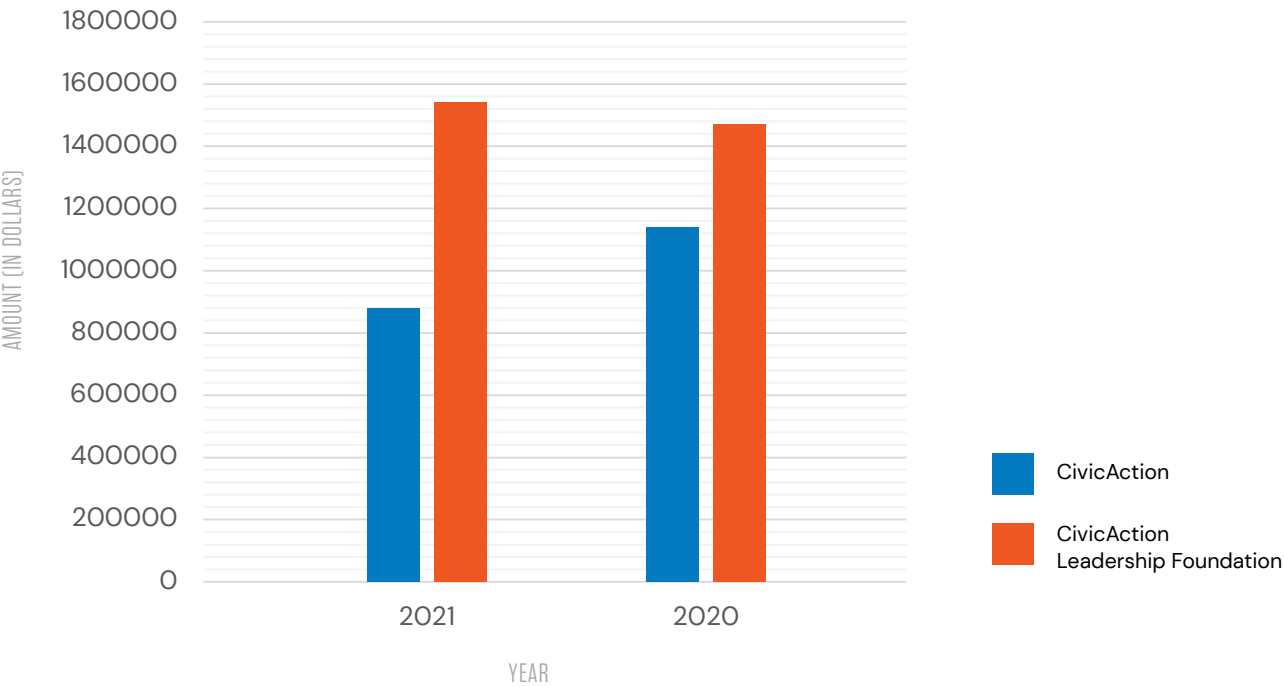


# FINANCIALS

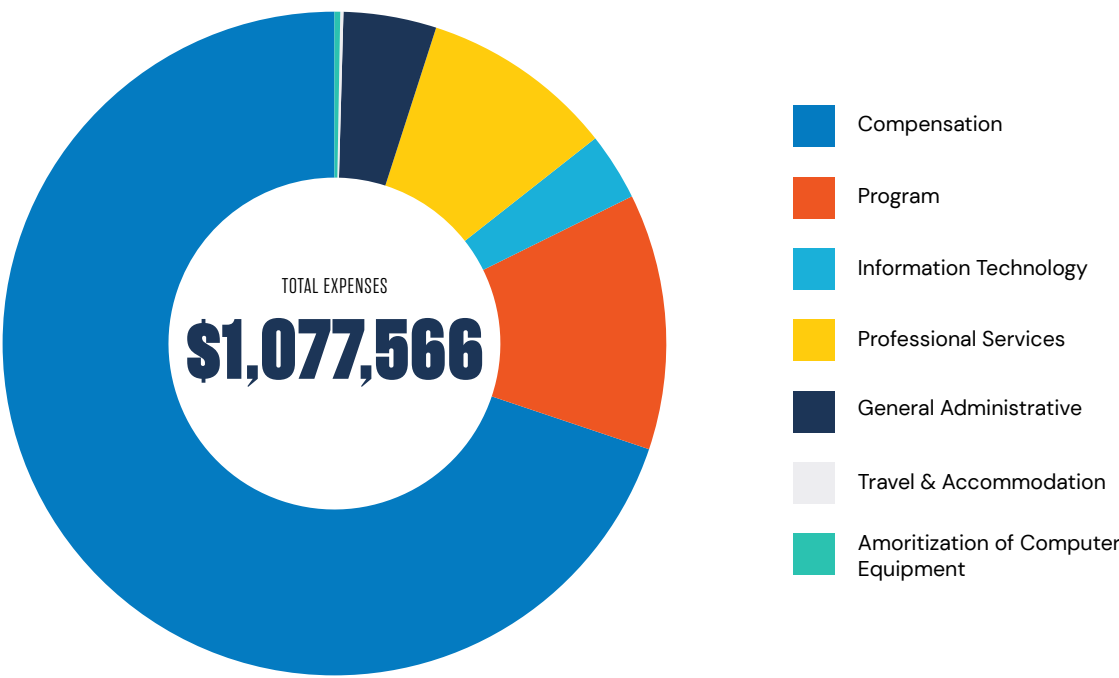
Financials as reported in this annual report capture revenue and expenses between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021 (our fiscal year). Program activities reported above are from the 2021 calendar year. The following information is derived from the 2020-2021 financial statements of both organizations as audited by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP.

For more information, please contact **Daniel Lynn**, Senior Manager, Operations at [daniel.lynn@civicaction.ca](mailto:daniel.lynn@civicaction.ca).

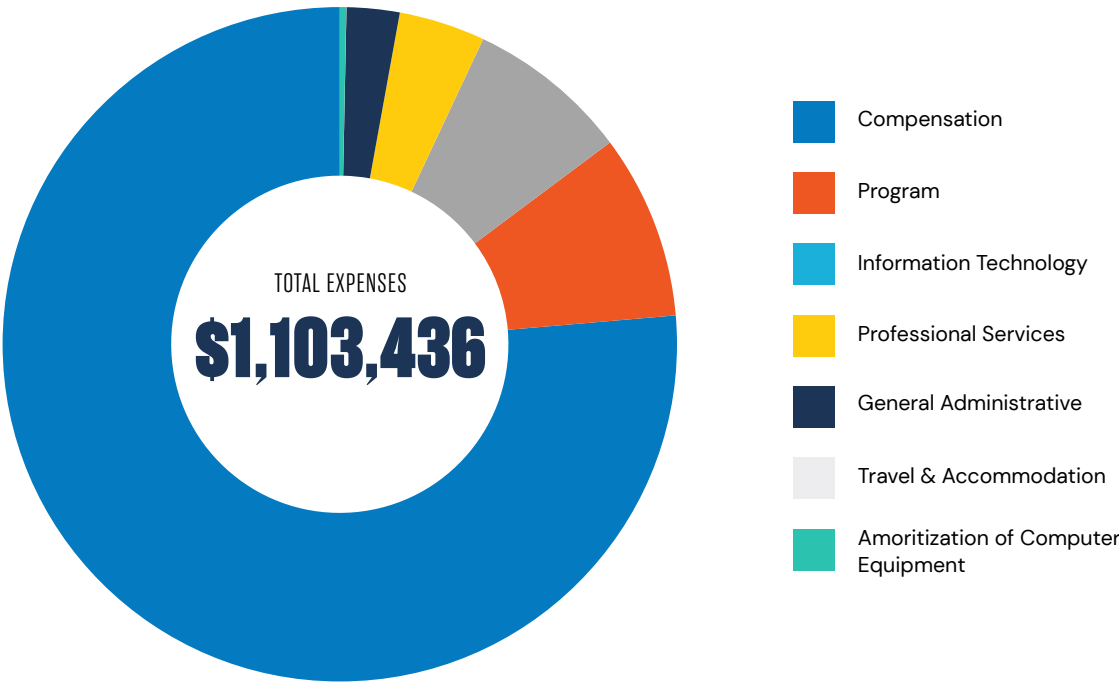
## 2020-2021 REVENUES



## 2021 CIVICACTION EXPENSES



## 2021 CIVICACTION LEADERSHIP FOUNDATION EXPENSES

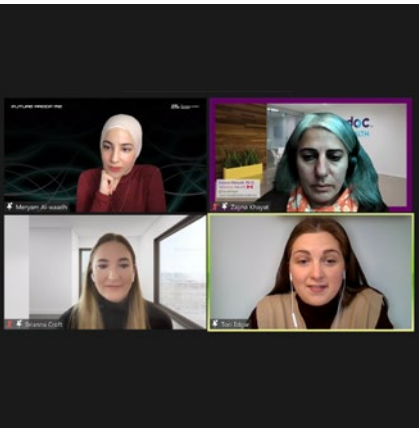
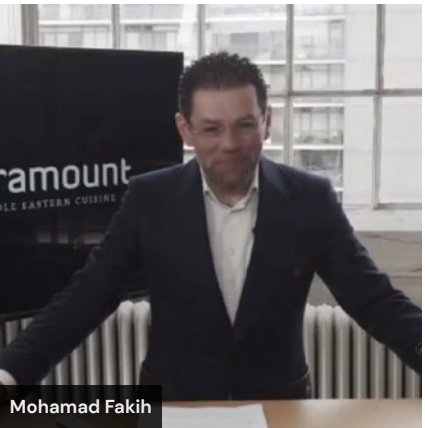
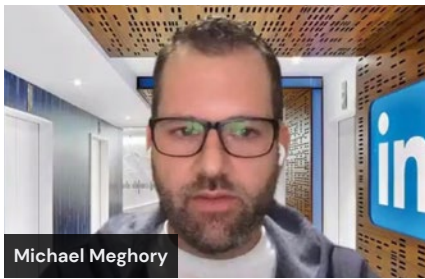
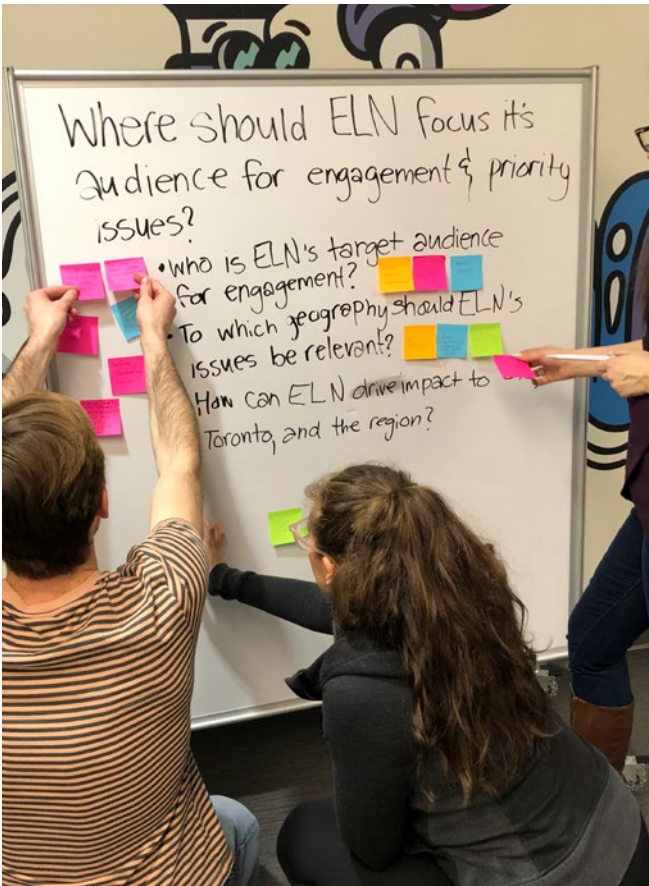




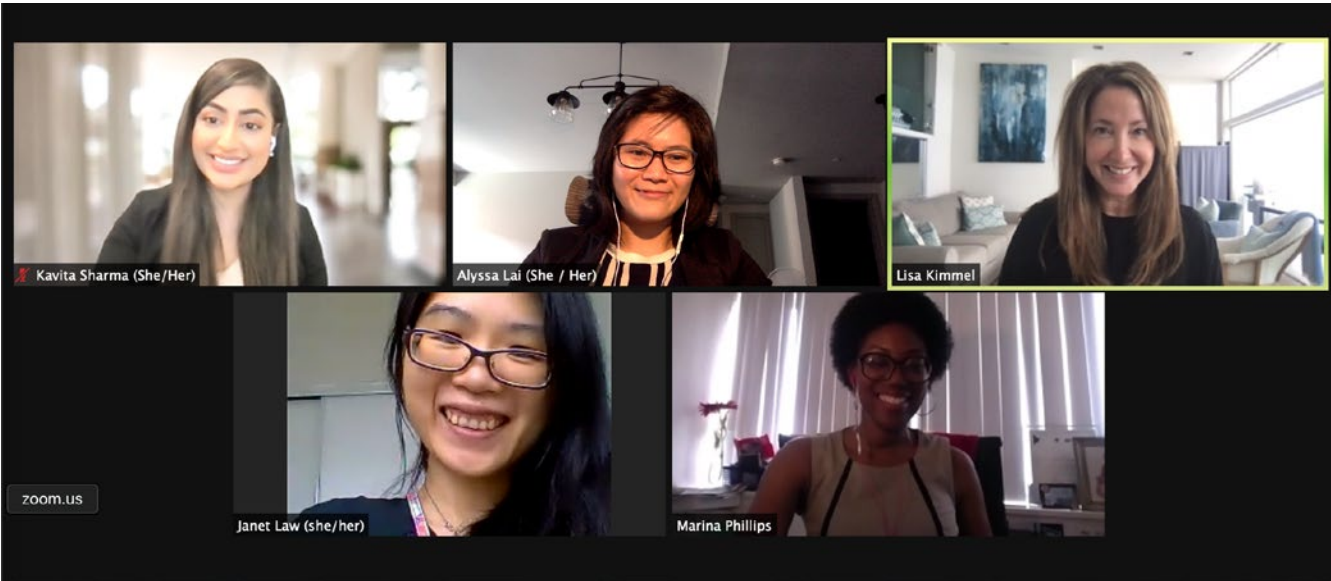


As a CivicAction mentor and supporter, it is incredible to witness the passion and purpose with which the organization achieves its impact. That is why I donate—to support them with their goal of empowering new rising leaders and equipping them with the best tools for success. Advocating for inclusive leadership is transformative, especially when people, ideas, and communities deeply connect, and opportunity is afforded to everyone.”

Jennifer Lynn,  
CivicAction Donor



#CHANGETHESTATUSQUO







## **#CHANGETHESTATUSQUO**

CivicAction | CivicAction Leadership Foundation  
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