



**TOA**  
the opportunity agenda

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT

**INCLUSIVE  
DEMOCRACY**

**IMMIGRANT  
JUSTICE**

**HEALTH  
EQUITY**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

During this defining moment in our nation's history, I am deeply honored to join The Opportunity Agenda as its new President. We stand at the heart of what matters most: helping advocates and artists tell stories that bridge divides and build a future where all Americans can thrive.

We're not just envisioning change—we're actively building a movement that unites the country toward shared values of dignity, inclusion, and opportunity for all. Our work focuses on three vital areas that touch every American's life:

- Strengthening civic participation to ensure every voice contributes to our future
- Supporting the dignity and contributions of immigrant communities
- Building public support for everyone to lead their healthiest lives

Through collaborative partnerships with advocates and artists, we help transform how social justice stories are told and heard around the world. Our research-informed approach supports leaders in crafting strategic messages that adapt to cultural trends and inspire community action. I invite you to explore this report to see how strategic narratives create understanding when facts are not enough. Together, we can shape policies that work for everyone. Let's make a future over fear a reality.

In partnership,



Traci Lester  
President

## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

### celebrating 20 years.

In 2006, a visionary team led by Alan Jenkins launched The Opportunity Agenda (TOA) with a fundamental mission: to transform how America talks about justice and opportunity. From our earliest days as a project of the Tides Center to becoming an independent force for change, alongside our partners, we have redefined how to make justice common sense.

Today, we stand as a trusted partner, shaping countless publications, media, and campaigns—from grassroots labor movements to civic engagement and legal advocacy—and reaching millions. Our tools and trainings support experts, advocates, creatives, and communicators in telling powerful stories about the issues they work on and designing solutions that unite their communities.

Together with our partners, we are proud to have shaped the narrative landscape through our landmark 'State of Opportunity' reports, visionary spaces like the Narrative Innovator's Lab, and community-driven movements like the Creative Change Network. Through it all, TOA has consistently been at the forefront of social justice communications.

In 2026, TOA will celebrate 20 years of this crucial work, and it is people like you who show us that we can succeed. We hope you continue to stand with us as we enter the next chapter of narrative power-building for justice and opportunity for all.

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# OUR PURPOSE

Every day, we are inundated with messages through news, entertainment, social media, and daily conversations with family and friends. When told repeatedly, these stories form narratives that shape our beliefs, behaviors, and the policies we ultimately support. And when only certain voices are consistently amplified while others are deliberately silenced, we develop a distorted perception of who deserves dignity, resources, and justice – creating divisions that benefit a privileged few.

The Opportunity Agenda (TOA) works to replace harmful narratives with stories that highlight our shared values and galvanize us to find common ground. We do this by conducting messaging research and developing communication strategies that help advocates demonstrate how equitable policies benefit everyone. When people recognize their interconnectedness, they become more likely to embrace solutions that create opportunity for all, confirming the profound power of strategic language and authentic storytelling to drive meaningful change.

However, transforming the narratives that shape public opinion requires sustained commitment. This work takes time, patience, and thoughtful partnership. For nearly twenty years, TOA has stood alongside communities who believe a more just America is possible. When advocates, artists, and everyday people unite to tell better stories about our shared humanity and values, change becomes possible. But we cannot achieve this work in isolation. We need each other to make this vision real. Every story you share and every conversation you lead brings us closer to a better world.

“

**for nearly twenty years, we've stood alongside communities who believe a more just America is possible.”**

## vision

We envision a multiracial and inclusive democracy, where everyone's voices and experiences are considered in decision-making, and ensures just and responsible policies for all regardless of race, ethnicity, gender, ability, religion, or economic status.

## mission

To create opportunity for everyone by advancing narratives that champion a multi-racial democracy while dismantling narratives rooted in systemic racism and white supremacy.

# OUR IMPACT

## 2024 at a Glance



**5.2K**

**advocates, activists  
and artists** received  
personalized  
narrative strategy and  
messaging guidance.



**25k**

**social justice  
communicators**  
received regular  
updates with tips,  
tools, and research.



**16**

**new fellows** joined our  
Narrative Innovator's  
Lab to craft new  
interventions for the  
issues they work in.



**300**

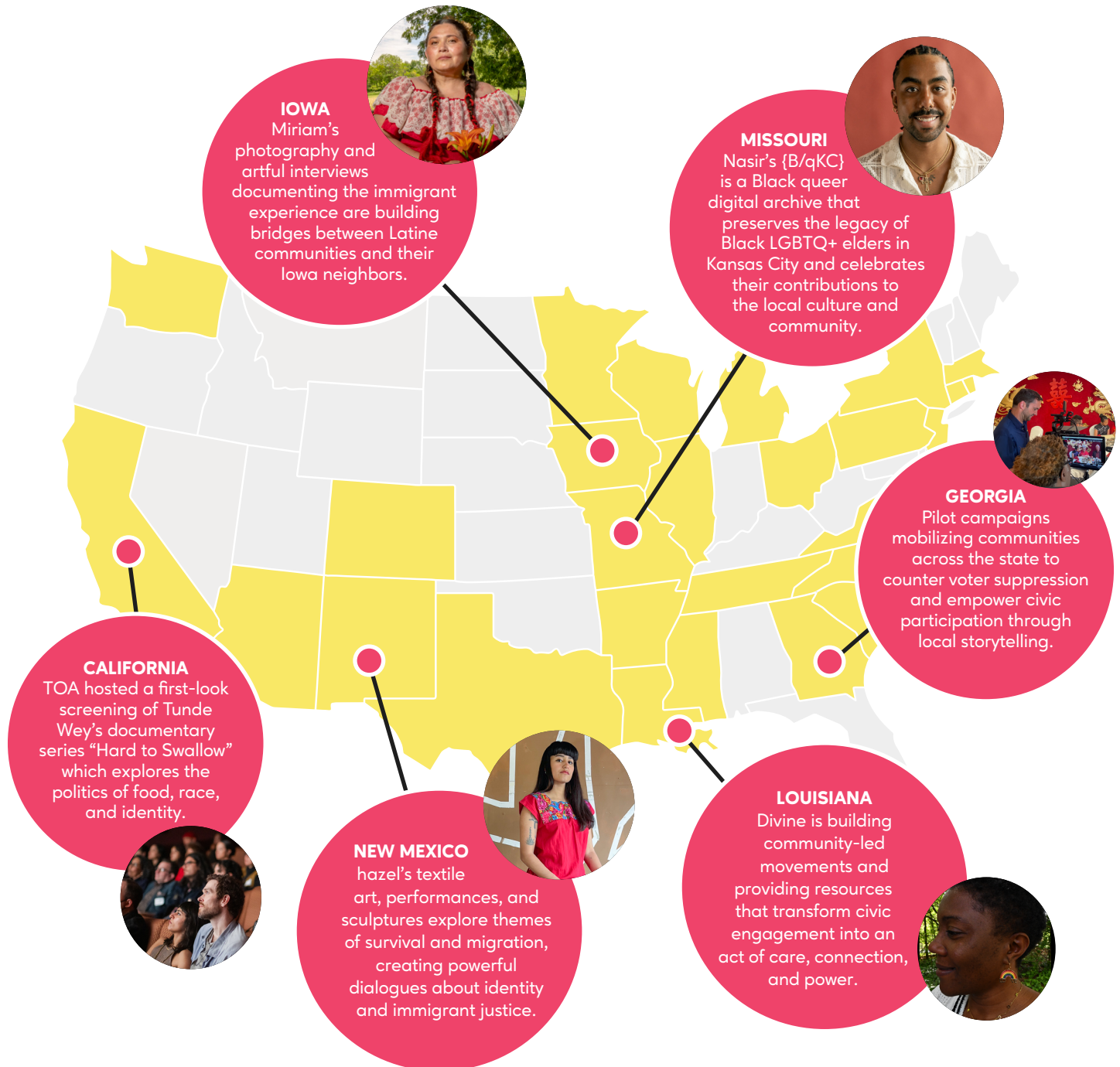
**organizations** took  
part in our research  
briefings as well  
as trainings co-  
developed with  
partners.



# OUR REACH

## Shifting Stories Nationwide

Your partnership powers a nationwide network of bold storytellers and activists. Below are highlights featuring the inspiring work of our cohort members, who are using powerful narrative strategies to create change in their communities.



**26 states**  
where social justice activists, advocates  
and artists are putting training into action.

# OUR PROGRAMS AT WORK

Our collaborative research shapes powerful stories that make social justice easier to understand. This year, through our Narrative Research Lab, we equipped 900 communicators and advocates with vital research and messaging guidance for immigrant justice. We trained 300 organizations while reaching over 25,000 social justice communicators with practical tools for community change.

We also worked to strengthen democracy by supporting and uplifting our cohort of more than 20 exceptional Southern organizers and leaders who are mobilizing voters of color and driving civic participation in their communities.

Through our Narrative Innovators Lab (NIL), we welcomed 16 new fellows to our Communications

Institute and Culture & Narrative Fellowship programs, providing them with intensive training to enhance their strategic skills, guidance with campaign development, and the opportunity to learn and co-conspire with one another.

Our Creative Change Retreat in New Mexico united artists and activists under the theme “PUNK!” to explore how to channel punk’s revolutionary spirit into today’s social justice movements. Through research, training, creative convenings, and curated events, we’re building a more effective movement for justice.

Your continued support makes it possible to equip our network with the tools, knowledge, and connections they need to succeed.

## By the Numbers

**700+** alumni and counting have participated in TOA’s fellowship programs over the years.

**350+** attendees came together in 2024 through film screenings and curated conversations to explore the influence of pop culture on our movements and calls to action.

**39** artists and activists convened at our 12th Creative Change Retreat, a nurturing space where they collaborated on project designs that fuel social movements.

**16** new fellows joined the Narrative Innovators Lab to craft innovative interventions in the issue areas in which they work.

## STORIES THAT CREATE CHANGE: BRITTANY’S IMPACT IN THE SOUTH

**Brittany Cheatham**, Senior Communications Manager at Forward Justice—a law, policy, and strategy center advancing racial, social, and economic justice in the U.S. South—reshaped her communications strategy after her time in the Narrative Innovator’s Lab as a Communications Institute fellow.



Inspired by her training, she saw the power of integrating arts and culture into narrative, legal, and policy work. This led her to create the *Forward Star Journal*, a publication that bridges law and policy analysis with lived experience.

Through storytelling, it makes complex legal battles more accessible, connects communities to resources, and offers practical steps for action. Infused with gorgeous artwork, poetry, and book recommendations, the journal uplifts the voices of those Forward Justice serves. It has sparked widespread engagement, distributed across shops, community spaces and local events, with many eager to contribute to it.

Read the latest issue of [Forward Star Journal](#) [here](#). >



**We’re excited to share their stories. By centering lived experiences and connecting them with advocacy people see that, despite our differences, we’re all facing the same systems. When we share our stories, we recognize each other, making it easier to come together.”**

# our priority **INCLUSIVE DEMOCRACY**

## **In the South, Justice Starts with Civic Engagement**

Our nation's long history of racial divides has embedded deeply rooted beliefs into the systems, laws, and policies that shape life across the country today.

In the South, we aim for achieving a more inclusive and representative democracy, where Black, Indigenous, and other racially marginalized groups hold power and participate in decisions that shape their communities and government.

Thanks to your support, The Opportunity Agenda partnered with social justice experts throughout the South to advance this vision. Through our Beyond Democracy program, we conducted community-based research to understand what motivates civic engagement and participation. These insights, combined with the wisdom of local leaders, helped us develop narratives that resonate with Southern values and experiences. Working alongside organizers in Georgia and Louisiana, we developed a messaging toolkit that equips social justice leaders with research-backed strategies for deepening voter engagement. With additional funding, we aim to expand this vital work to more Southern communities in 2025.

## **By the Numbers**

**5,000+** people were reached through message-tested campaigns in New Orleans and throughout Georgia to increase voter turnout.

**1,000+** participants were briefed on our newest democracy research during our featured presentation at a conference for survey research and polling methodology experts.

**72** social justice organizations received our newest democracy research with an accompanying toolkit in a webinar dedicated to strengthening voter engagement in their communities.

**20+** Southern organizers joined our Beyond Democracy Program and used our research-informed narratives to mobilize BIPOC voters across 6 states to connect democracy with Southern values and lived experiences.

## **STORIES THAT SHOW WE MATTER**

**Divine**, President of Friends of the Freedom House, is on a mission: to mobilize people of color to learn from and carry on the civil rights work of their elders, aiming for a more just and equitable society.

Through the We Matter New Orleans campaign, Divine boosted voter turnout and reached thousands of people in her video campaign, encouraging them to want better for their community. To strengthen her impact, Divine participated in the Beyond Democracy cohort to craft effective messages that could unite them.

"This is life work. This is nothing that you're going to solve in your lifetime,

but day by day, take it one step at a time and that's what matters. That's how all of us matter. This is not just I work, or you work, but we work. We all have a call to answer"

Her campaign weaves together the legacy of civil rights leaders with current Southern voices showing how each vote cast connects our past struggles with our future victories.



“  
**Civic  
engagement  
is a love story  
of neighbors.”**



# our priority IMMIGRANT JUSTICE

## Stronger Together

Immigrants are the backbone of America. Their dreams, cherished traditions, and vibrant celebrations form the rich tapestry of our national identity. Yet in times of uncertainty, we face a false choice between taking care of our long-time neighbors or welcoming newcomers - when history proves we can, and always have, done both.

The Opportunity Agenda stands firm in our belief that we are stronger together. To transform this belief into meaningful action, our Narrative Research Lab (NRL) has equipped thousands of advocates with cutting-edge research, messaging tools, and communication strategies through specialized training and our digital library. These resources help

organizations craft more effective campaigns at local, national, and international levels.

We had the opportunity to put our strategies into action through the NY Proud campaign, launched in collaboration with The New York Immigration Coalition (NYIC) and F.Y. Eye. This public art initiative, featuring portraits and stories of local immigrants across New York City's transit system, brought together an award-winning artist, community organizations, and advocates. By showcasing authentic immigrant experiences in public spaces, we're reshaping conversations about belonging and contribution - moving us toward a more inclusive America one story at a time.

View the NY Proud art exhibit [here](#).

## By the Numbers

**9 million** impressions generated from the NY Proud campaign across 230 citywide locations.

**200+** immigrant and refugee rights groups in NY briefed on new immigration research.

**900** advocates received new narrative strategies through the Narrative Research Lab, which served advocates across the United States and in 10 countries!

**10** new webinars added to our digital research library, featuring emerging research for immigrant justice communications.

## STORIES THAT SHAPE NEW YORK'S IDENTITY

The NY Proud campaign highlights the positive contributions of immigrants, encouraging us to reflect on how we speak about and view them. **Oscar Castillo**, the campaign's photographer and an immigrant himself, explains:

I hope people value the importance of diversity and how different backgrounds, experiences, and cultures enrich us as a society and make us stronger."

"This project is a celebration of the mosaic of people, cultures, talents, stories and countries of origin that make New York and New Yorkers so special.

I am proud to share the portraits of a wide array of hard-working New Yorkers to contribute to an increased understanding of our immigrant communities and their contributions to our city's growth and success.

“

This project is a celebration of the mosaic of people, cultures, talents, stories and countries of origin that make New York and New Yorkers so special.”



# our priority HEALTH EQUITY

## Healthier Futures for All

When people are healthy, the entire nation benefits. However, in the United States, public health practices, policies, and laws have made it difficult for everyone to have the same access to care, leading to detrimental or fatal health outcomes across communities. Despite clear evidence from public health data, misleading narratives about who deserves care continue to shape policies that overlook many Americans' health needs. The Opportunity Agenda has prioritized driving positive public conversation about health equity and access for all.

Like you, we want to live in a United States where everyone has

a fair and just opportunity to reach their best health and wellbeing, no matter their race, ethnicity, or class. That is why we launched "Health Equity Works," with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. HEW is a strategic communications hub created to drive long-term public narrative shifts on racial health equity and support swift responses to emerging challenges and the anti-health equity movement. Together, we can build public support to ensure everyone can lead their healthiest lives.

# HEALTH EQUITY WORKS

## By the Numbers

**83 million** Americans live in areas with insufficient access to a primary care physician, primarily in communities of color.

**3 times more likely:** Black babies survive childbirth when cared for by Black doctors.

**90%** lower rate of maternal complications has been achieved by Black-led birth centers compared to traditional hospital settings, with a focus on midwifery care.

**25%** increase in Black healthcare professionals over the past five years through Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs), helping to diversify the workforce and improve care.

## STORIES THAT CREATE HEALTHIER COMMUNITIES

Meet **Kimberly Hall**. TOA's Vice President for the new Health Equity Works initiative.

Kimberly brings more than two decades of experience developing and leading integrated public affairs campaigns, combining strategic communications, public relations, coalition building, and grassroots advocacy. She has leveraged her passion for data-driven messaging to drive communications on housing, education, elections, voting rights and restoration, and gerrymandering.

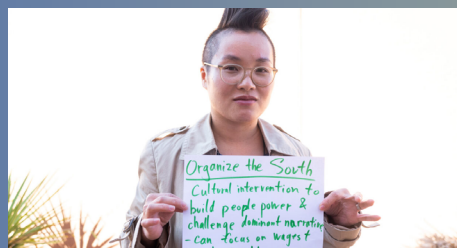
Through HEW, Kimberly will work with a team to help build a more inclusive and sustainable conversation on health equity.

Follow our newsletter for updates as this important work unfolds.



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**HEW will help build a more inclusive and sustainable conversation on health equity.”**



# YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

To our steadfast supporters: Your trust and commitment have prepared us for this pivotal time. We now face a window of opportunity to advance real change. We invite you to help us expand our impact and transform narratives that will shape a more just and equitable future for all.

Please join us in this moment and become a donor:  
[www.opportunityagenda.org/donate](http://www.opportunityagenda.org/donate)

**85%**  
of every donation  
goes directly to  
our programs  
and services.

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### TOA leadership

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Soha Elliathy  
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Elizabeth Johnsen  
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Impact*

Kimberly Hall  
*Vice President, Health Equity Works*

Sughey Ramirez  
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J. Rachel Reyes  
*Director of Strategic Communications and  
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### TOA staff

Brian Erickson  
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Britney Vongdara  
*Research Coordinator*

Charles Sherman  
*Manager of Narrative Strategy*

Chrystian Rodriguez  
*Training and Partner Engagement Manager*

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