

THE PHILADELPHIA

⚡ CITIZEN ⚡



**2022
ANNUAL
REPORT**

Never let it be said that we give up on our city.

Yes, we're coming out of an earth-shaking pandemic. Yes, we are in the midst of a murder epidemic that shatters our collective soul, that shows no signs of significantly abating, and that reveals feckless leadership at every turn. And, yes, some 330,000 of our fellow Philadelphians subsist below the poverty line — \$24,500 per year for a family of four. Those are shameful, disheartening realities. But you work with us every day to make a better Philadelphia.

In 2022, you showed up to hear Mayor Daniel Biss of Evanston, Illinois, explain his city's **first-in-the-nation housing reparations program** to a rapt Ideas We Should Steal Festival crowd.

You've tuned into our groundbreaking podcast, **How to Really Run a City**, featuring the wit and wisdom of two former mayors, our own Michael Nutter and Atlanta's Kasim Reed, when they grilled David Muhammad, the nation's preeminent expert on how city streets can be made safe again.

You showed up to **honor the late, great Judge A. Leon Higginbotham**, who, in partnership with Mural Arts and Penn Carey Law School, we honored with a long overdue mural at 46th and Chestnut, and you heard luminaries like Sherrilyn Ifill and Ken Frazier attest to the lasting impact of the jurist who spoke so often of "the high court of history."

You joined us in naming and faming our city's **"Integrity Icons"** — the public servants who go above and beyond in pursuit of the common good.

We may have had an understandably stressed-out mayor who threw up his hands when things seemed bleakest, but time and again, you showed up. And when we wrote about the political scoundrels who too often dot our landscape, you weighed in, just as you did when we shined a light on community change agents like intergenerational poverty buster **Chekemma Fulmore-Townsend** and civic-minded tech entrepreneur **Chris Cera**.

That's part of the miracle of a city. The suburbs are full of strangers. Cities have neighbors, engaged in countless and often subtle ways in an ongoing conversation about a shared future.

"Lively, diverse, intense cities contain the seeds of their own regeneration," wrote Jane Jacobs, "with energy enough to carry over for problems and needs outside themselves." Is there a more "lively, diverse, intense" city than our own? Greased poles don't even stop us from climbing them, after all.

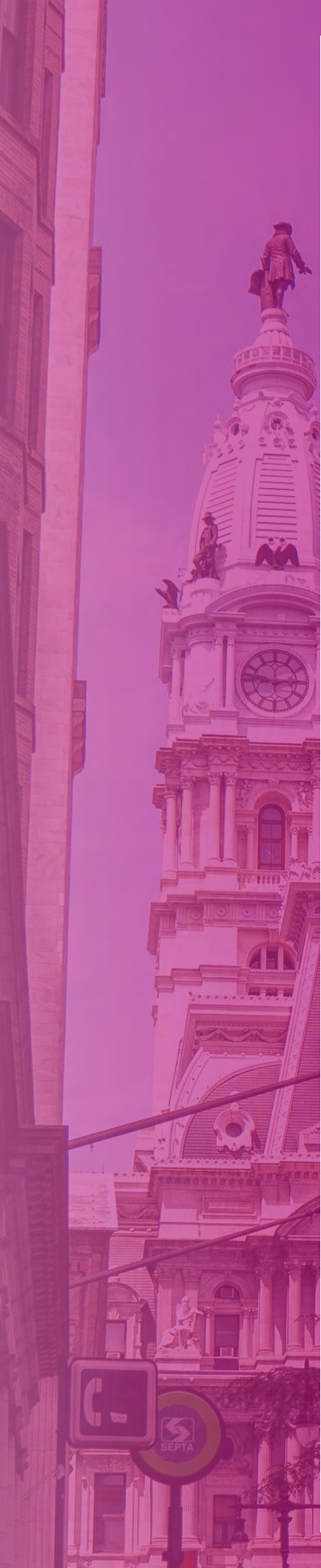
You give us the energy to keep the conversation of Philadelphia going, to chronicle what needs fixing while at the same time shining a light on the people and ideas working to regenerate the city every day into the "shining city on a hill" none other than Ronald Reagan spoke of so poetically, a sign of just how wayward the Republican party has gone:

In my mind it was a tall, proud city built on rocks stronger than oceans, wind-swept, God-blessed, and teeming with people of all kinds living in harmony and peace; a city with free ports that hummed with commerce and creativity. And if there had to be city walls, the walls had doors and the doors were open to anyone with the will and the heart to get here.

Here's to defiantly committing to the common project Reagan spoke of: Building a diverse, prosperous metropolis that leaves no fellow citizen behind. It's a tall order, but you do it...by first showing up.

Yours in citizenship,
Larry Platt
Co-Founder, The Philadelphia Citizen

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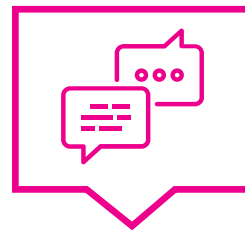
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Citizens Take Action!

The Philadelphia Citizen audience is highly engaged. We consistently see a **40% open rate** of our weekly Friday newsletters, compared to the 29% average open rate seen in peer organizations.

The Citizen's goal is to inspire readers to take action. Based on a recent audience survey, **97% of Citizen readers** are involved in their community, and **81% of respondents** were inspired to do something as a result of content from The Citizen. Another **15% decided to vote** because of information they learned on The Citizen website. That is what our brand of solutions journalism is all about.





Every Vote Matters

The Citizen audience cares about voting and knows that our resources are the most robust in Philadelphia. Among our most trafficked webpages was the 2022 PA Primary Voter Guide, which saw **79,726 unique views**. Citizens got informed about candidates and voting for the 2022 primary and general midterm election. We also **helped over 4,000** of those people understand the 2022 ballot questions.

And they were ready to get informed about the 2023 election where Philadelphians will elect our 100th mayor. In 2022, readers visited The Citizen **26,300 times** to get ready for the 2023 City Council and mayoral election – and our coverage of this historic election had just begun.

Where The Smart Conversation Happens

Meeting other changemakers, talking about ideas, and forging connections will activate change in our city. We convened **1,100 citizen at 12 thought leader events** throughout the year. Our events encouraged young people to run for elected office, discussed how to battle misinformation, and explored concrete ways to save democracy. We also elevated the good work already being done in the city. As of April 2022, **10 city workers** who go above and beyond in their service to the city of Philadelphia have been named and famed as Integrity Icons, with five more set to be named in September 2023.

Whether we are cleaning up our neighborhoods, voting, or showing up to share ideas, we are stronger together. One issue our audience took on together was medical debt. Through a Citizen-led campaign, funds raised for RIP Medical Debt have **abolished \$6,104,787 in medical debt for 3,573 Philadelphians** over the past two years.



SOLUTIONS JOURNALISM LEADS TO CIVIC ACTION

Meet Community Advocate Meeka Outlaw

Meet Meeka Outlaw, a teacher and community organizer in the Grays Ferry neighborhood of Philadelphia. She read *Reality Check: Why The Philadelphia Tire Fire Should Scare You* by Charles D. Ellison, published by The Citizen at the end of 2021. It inspired her to take action: She launched Residents Organized Advocacy Direction, and became an environmental justice organizer, working with the Academy of Natural Sciences and presenting at the University of Pennsylvania.

Penn Designs a Course for Substitute Teachers

The University of Pennsylvania's Graduate School of Education read Elaine Maimon's piece, *How to Put More Teachers in Philly Schools*, which offered an actionable solution to the teacher shortage in Philadelphia: a Substitute Teacher's Academy, which had proven successful at Arizona State University. A Penn administrator read the article and has since worked with Maimon to design a training course for substitute teachers, set to launch in Spring 2023.

Civic Coalition to Save Lives to Launch New Program

Inspired by hearing from gun violence prevention expert David Muhammad at The Citizen's 2019 Ideas We Should Steal Festival, the newly-formed Civic Coalition to Save Lives — made up of 70 local patriots — engaged Muhammad, executive director of the *National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform*, to help them develop a plan to reduce gun violence in Philadelphia. The program is launching in 2023.





Thought provoking and action-oriented conversation. Love it! Not skipping the hard convos, real truth, and yet driving learning and can-do optimism.

– Laura K.

The Philadelphia Citizen is such an important institution in our city. I love reading it. It does what good journalism is supposed to do — it informs, challenges, fills gaps, takes on hard issues, holds people accountable, and it inspires us to rise.

– Jane G.

Reading The Citizen and sharing information about The Citizen makes me proud of Philadelphia and my deep Philadelphia roots.

– Matt C.

WHAT READERS ARE SAYING

2022 HIGHLIGHTS

A Tribute to a Legal Giant, Judge A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr.

A. Leon Higginbotham was a judge, scholar, civil rights pioneer, Philadelphian, and now, mural subject. In partnership with Mural Arts Philadelphia and Penn Carey Law School, The Citizen honored the late judge with a long overdue tribute which included a mural, a breakfast featuring moving conversation with Sherrilyn Ifill and Merck Chairman Ken Frazier, and an editorial series called *The Color of Law*. View the mural, *Famous Warrior* by artist Shawn Theodore, at 4508 Chestnut Street in Philadelphia along the newly designated Social Justice Mural Corridor.

How to Really Run a City

Former Atlanta Mayor Kasim Reed, former Philadelphia Mayor Michael Nutter, and Philadelphia Citizen co-founder Larry Platt talk about what it really takes to get sh*t done in cities on The Citizen's newest podcast, *How to Really Run a City*, with a special guest joining each episode. With new episodes monthly, listeners get a window into how politics really works, and they'll hear some banter between two veteran pols with deep connections.

I really look forward to eavesdropping on these conversations, especially after time in public service. It's so real. Mayors truly are our nation's problem-solvers.

— Anne G





5th Annual Ideas We Should Steal Festival, presented by Comcast NBCUniversal

For our 5th year, we brought together changemakers from across the country to share solutions from all corners: Black Thought of The Roots, for whom finding his voice meant changing his (and our) world; the architects of Chester's gun violence reduction; freedom warriors Andrew Yang, Jennifer Rubin and Michael Steele; criminal justice pioneers Marc Howard of the Frederick Douglass Project and Father Greg Boyle of Homeboy Industries; and restaurateur Will Guidara.

This festival inspired me to be more engaged in my community!

— Kelly C

Real Estate Development... For Good!

In partnership with Drexel University's Lindy Institute for Urban Innovation, The Philadelphia Citizen presented a year-long speaker series, Development ... For Good, that smartly delved into the economic and cultural difference that enlightened and intentional real estate development can make in our city. Over three events, we discussed new approaches to public space development, the history of placemaking, and the future of the office post-pandemic.



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To provide deeply reported journalism that emphasizes solutions that can move our region forward, and to actively reignite citizenship in and around Philadelphia. We seek to identify our innovators, call out those who stand in the way of progress and shine a light on the next generation of Philadelphia leadership—all while giving Philadelphians the interactive tools they need to become more involved, engaged citizens.

Founded in 2015.