

A group of young people, primarily Black, are gathered outdoors in a grassy area. They are all wearing face masks. In the foreground, a young woman with a black and white patterned mask is writing on a document with a pen. To her left, a young man with a red and black patterned mask is looking at the document. To her right, a young woman with a yellow and blue mask is also looking at the document. In the background, another person in a purple shirt and blue mask is visible. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting it's daytime.

2021

2021 IMPACT REPORT

DEMOCRACY NC

"Built of, by, and for the people!"

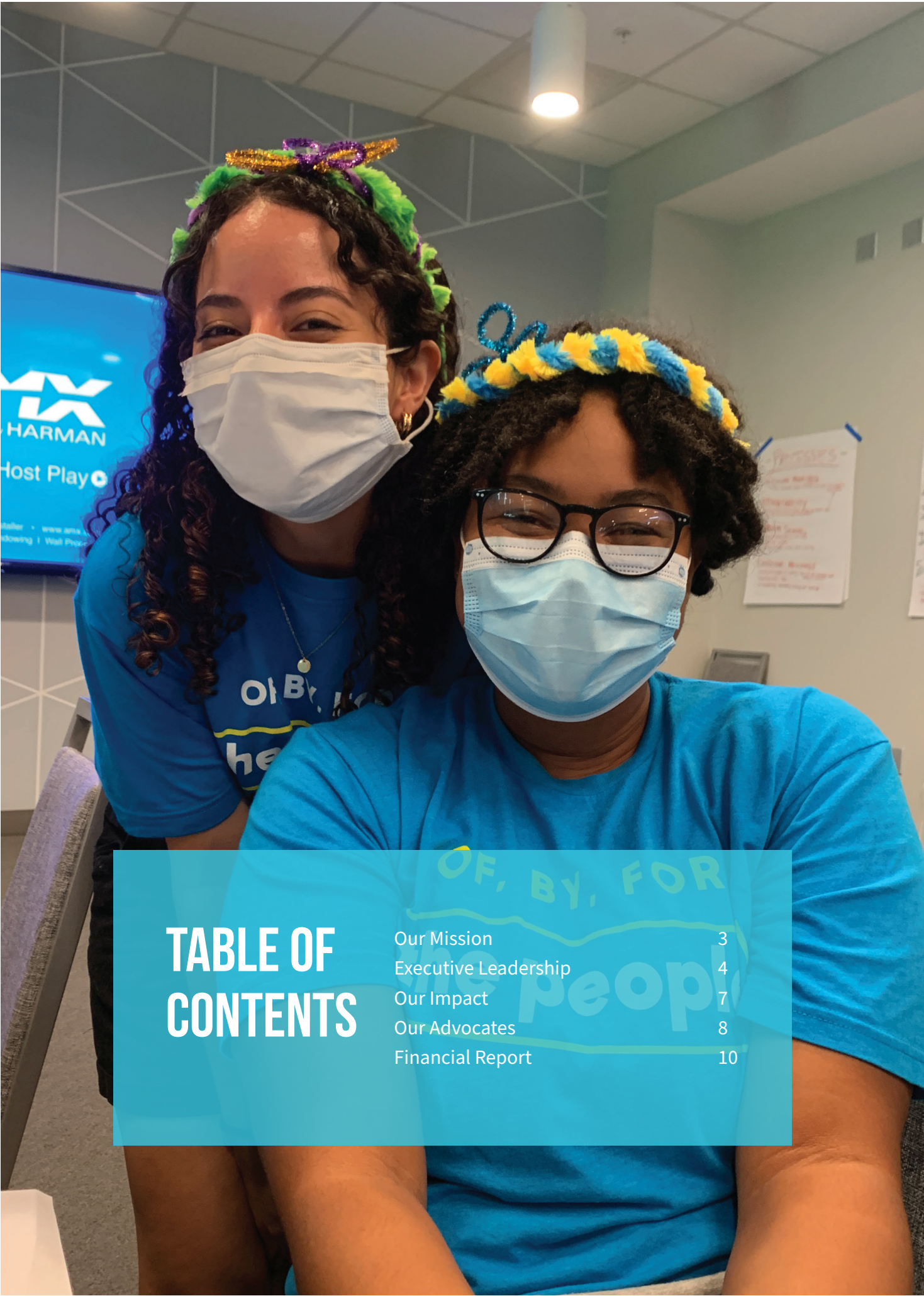


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OUR MISSION

Democracy North Carolina is a nonpartisan organization that uses research, organizing, and advocacy to strengthen democratic structures, build power among disenfranchised communities, and inspire confidence in a transformed political process that works for all.



Our state's democratic structures and policies are a national model, ensuring voter freedoms and fair representation for every North Carolinian, especially Black, Latine, Asian American and Pacific Islander, Indigenous, and low-wealth communities who have been targets of voter suppression.

We empower existing and emerging community activists, leaders, coalitions, and partners to work together and strategically build power and expand voter participation across the state.

We believe that true democracy is possible and worth the work.



230K

**WE MADE 230,000 VOTER CONTACTS
ACROSS NORTH CAROLINA IN 2021.**

EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP

A Message From Our Executive Leadership Team



2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS

- Randy Lucas (Chair)
- April Dawson
- Meredith Emmett
- Judy Futch
- Irving Joyner
- Jim Overton
- Jarette Pittman
- Greg Walker-Wilson
- Cynthia Wallace
- Sandy Welton

As we enter our 30th year as an organization, there is much to celebrate at Democracy North Carolina. Our growing staff of organizers and advocates continue their tireless work throughout North Carolina to build power, especially in Black and brown communities that are targeted by voter suppression efforts. We help strengthen voter access and our democratic structures through mobilizing voters and legislative and election advocacy, and set our state on a path back toward trust, transparency, and accessibility for all North Carolinians. We connect with voters, communities, partners, and the leaders of tomorrow through our groundbreaking Democracy Summer program. Our staff is constantly working to improve equity, expand empathy, and enact bold action, both within our organization and across the state. We hold each other accountable, as staff, as community members, as North Carolinians.

Yet our eyes remain wide open to the challenges we face. As we enter the third year of the COVID-19 pandemic and our state and nation continue to grapple with social and political upheaval, it's clear that our work has never been more important. In the aftermath of the 2020 election, tainted by ongoing, calculated campaigns of disinformation, we successfully defended against anti-voter efforts and witnessed the power of protest here in North Carolina.

Similar to many organizations, we have experienced our share of transitions over the last two years. But, while our organization evolves with the changing times, our core values haven't changed. We believe true democracy is possible. Even when faced with uncertain times, we know the fight is worth it. And we know Democracy NC has a crucial part to play in that fight.

No matter the moment or challenge, we are thankful for you. We will continue to build together and work for a democracy for all of us!

In solidarity,

Randy Lucas
Board of Directors Chair

A handwritten signature of Randy Lucas in black ink.

Adrienne Kelly
Interim Co-Executive Director

A handwritten signature of Adrienne Kelly in black ink.

Cheryl Carter
Interim Co-Executive Director

A handwritten signature of Cheryl Carter in black ink.



Democracy North Carolina is led by 22 full-time and 7 part-time staff members, located across North Carolina. We are proud that our team is representative of North Carolina’s geographic and demographic diversity.

ORGANIZING

Reginald Barrett
Aja Bullock
Desmera Gatewood
Savanna Gibson
Ariana Griffin
Lissa Harris
Kamaria Lawrence
Conchita McIver
Manny Meija Diaz
Linda Sutton
Marques Tompson
Kel Williams

ADVOCACY

Carol Moreno Cifuentes
Caroline Fry
Jean-Patrick Grillet
Taylor Knoedl
Grace Perron
Hannah Stocks

OPERATIONS

Leigh Bradley
Juliana Deitch
Hannah James

COMMUNICATIONS

Julia Hawes
Amanda Matson
Taylor Moss
Alyssa Rodriguez
Joselle Torres

DEVELOPMENT

Gillian Hayden
Caleb Ponton

EXECUTIVE

Cheryl Carter
Adrienne Kelly
Wanda Parker



WE PROTECTED VOTER FREEDOMS IN 2021

Manuel “Manny” Mejia Diaz is no stranger to voter suppression in the South. Since 2019, he has served as Democracy NC’s Southeast Regional Managing Organizer and advocates for pro-democracy policy in his hometown of Fayetteville. He believes in the power of his community.

In 2021, the “Vote Yes Fayetteville” campaign began as an attempt to dilute Black voting power by restructuring Fayetteville’s City Council. If approved, the initiative would dramatically weaken the power of Black and brown voters and would ultimately prevent working-class people from holding local office. Ever since these anti-voter efforts came to light, Manny and his team of Southeast Advocates have worked diligently on a “Vote NO Fayetteville” Campaign to stop this initiative from making it on the ballot.

“Our campaign is a grassroots effort utilizing coalition spaces, speaking at churches, writing op eds for the newspaper...the beauty of the campaign is that it has organically progressed to something much larger, engaging more people. We want to reach people who vote in municipal elections and connect with young voters so they understand the historical and political context as well.”

The future of Fayetteville requires bold leadership and Manny believes that his community is more than capable of producing that. Learn more at demnc.co/votenofayetteville.

OUR 2021 IMPACT



➔ **We stalled all attacks on voter freedoms in North Carolina.**

State legislatures across the country introduced over 400 anti-voter bills, nearly a dozen of which were introduced in the North Carolina General Assembly. All of these bills were successfully defeated thanks to the hard work of our staff and volunteers.

➔ **We stopped voter suppression and defended the right to protest.**

Our state already had laws on the books to address property damage. House Bill 805, touted as a check on civil disobedience, was actually a backlash against the Black Lives Matter movement. Had it been implemented, hundreds of protesters would have been subject to felony charges and lost their right to vote. This legislation was a clear attack on the people of North Carolina and the racial justice movement.

➔ **We coordinated 500+ election advocates across 25 counties.**

Through the Elections Advocacy program, advocates across the state were trained to serve as resident watchdogs of county boards and the State Board of Elections. They attended public hearings, submitted online petitions, and made critical public comments in the redistricting process. Democracy NC formally advocated for state funding of the county boards of elections in predominantly vulnerable regions of the state.

➔ **We distributed 120,000+ voter guides and resources to the public.**

Our regional voter guides were delivered across the state to inform voters about which candidates, initiatives, and potential outcomes would affect them most in their local elections.

➔ **We recruited 21 young leaders from across the state.**

In Democracy Summer's 22nd year, we trained the next generation of North Carolina's leaders. Students across the state's community colleges, HBCUs, and universities advocated against voter disenfranchisement in their communities and educated the public on issues that affected their daily lives.

➔ **We collaborated with 150+ organizations across North Carolina.**

Together, we pushed for a better redistricting process, advocating for legislators to center public participation and transparency. We issued clear demands to the General Assembly about conducting a community districting process that was fair, transparent, and accessible to the public.

➔ **We mobilized 10,000+ advocates to take action in 2021.**

Our skilled Regional Managing Organizers engaged advocates in five regions across the state to contact their lawmakers, give public testimony, monitor Boards of Elections, and much more to protect democracy in 2021.

Learn more about our statewide voter impact at demnc.co/impact.

OUR ADVOCATES



“I came to Democracy North Carolina in 2021 as a summer intern, freshly grieving the loss of my younger brother. What I found was an environment that not only cares deeply about the rights of the people, but also meets each individual where they are. Now, a year since his passing, I am fortunate enough to be using the training and experience in grassroots organizing and social justice advocacy that I received as a Friendtern, in my role as an Organizing Assistant. Democracy North Carolina has changed my life for the better, and I am proud to be even a small part of this organization that is working diligently to build a future that is “of, by, for the people”!”

Kel discovered Democracy NC after applying to serve as a Democracy Summer “friendtern” in 2021. As a native of North Carolina and student at Central Piedmont Community College, Kel understood the unique challenges of voting as a young person of color in North Carolina.

Throughout the summer, she worked alongside Democracy NC staff to recruit advocates and engage voters in Cabarrus County. After completing her studies, Kel joined Democracy NC as an Organizing Assistant for the Western Piedmont Region. Since that time, she has played an integral role in the organization’s outreach to Black, Latine, Asian American and Pacific Islander, and Indigenous communities across the state and has successfully advocated for pro-voter provisions at the local level.

As a fierce advocate for social justice, Kel has worked tirelessly to increase voter engagement in her community and to better understand the needs and challenges that face the people of North Carolina.

KEL WILLIAMS
ORGANIZING ASSISTANT, WESTERN PIEDMONT NC



**“THAT’S WHAT IT MEANS TO ME,
TO BE PART OF THIS GRASSROOTS
ORGANIZATION.”**

**MINERVA FREEMAN
ADVOCATE, EASTERN NC**

“I have been involved with Democracy NC for more years than I can count.

In my time, I have helped support my Eastern NC neighbors by registering students to vote, protesting at Moral Monday events, and advocating for fair elections. I have served as a Democracy NC Advocate for the Pitt County Board of Elections and I have traveled to the General Assembly to address legislators about the needs of my community. I am especially motivated to protect Sunday Early Voting and work with local organizations to encourage people to vote.

In recent years, I have focused on the U.S. Census, ensuring that as many people as possible are counted and represented in the redistricting process. Participating at the state and local levels of government — whether that be going to BOE meetings, speaking in front of the NCGA, or simply voting — can make a significant difference. That’s what it means to me, to be part of this grassroots organization.”

“We first became involved with Democracy NC in 2014 through volunteering with our local chapter of the NAACP.

We have always felt that working on the ground in our community is the most effective way to affect positive social change. It is so important for local progressive groups to work together to achieve their mutual goals. Democracy NC’s election education materials are critical for the public to understand and respond to the ongoing challenges that our elections face. Since 2016, we have served as Vote Protectors through Democracy NC. We have canvassed at countless events and reached out to as many donors as we can.

Helping people navigate the treacherous waters of American democracy always feels like our proudest moments.”



**JUDITH & RICHARD PIGOSSI
ADVOCATES, WESTERN NC**

FINANCIAL REPORT

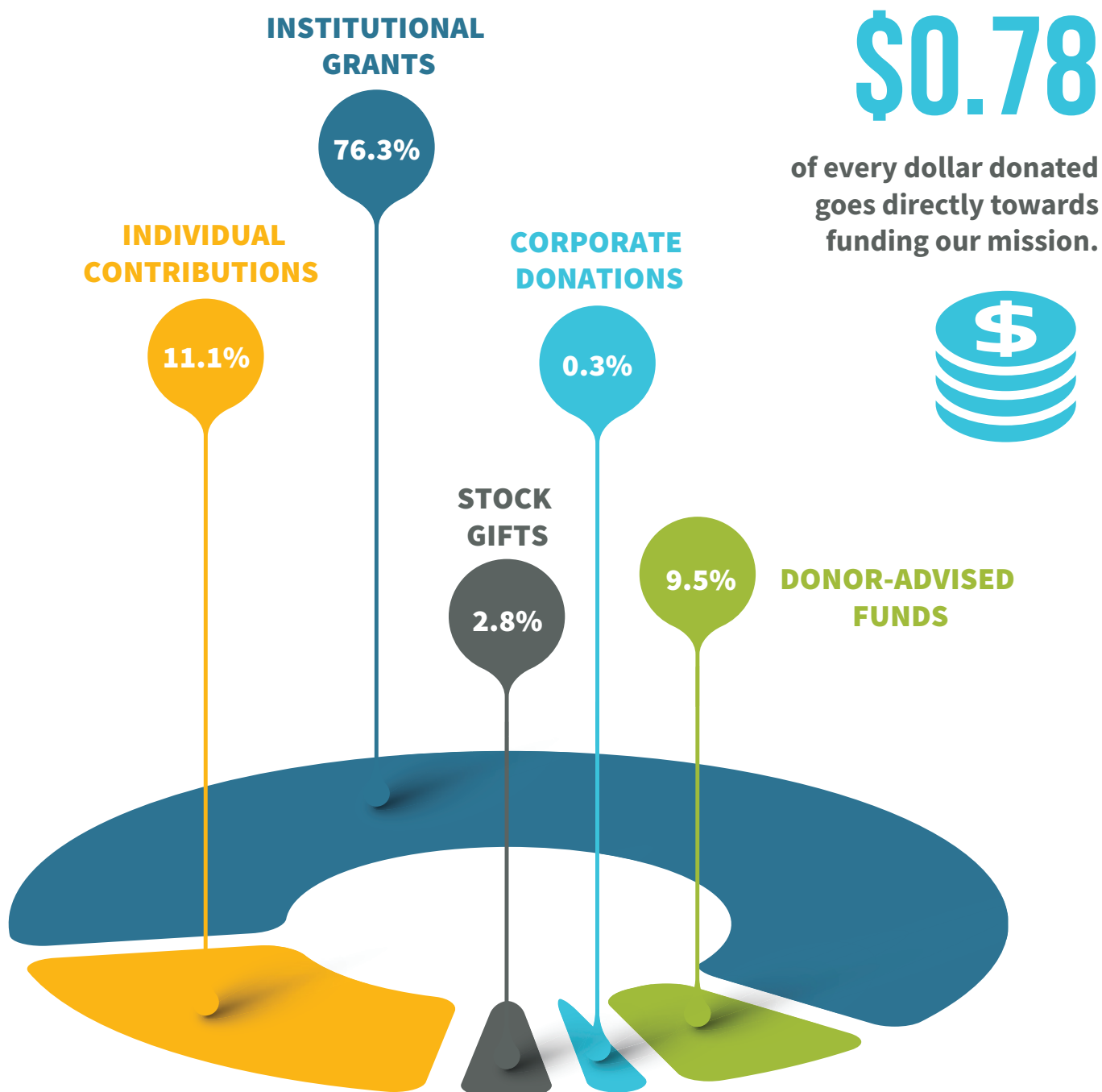
We rely on the generosity of our community to further our work in protecting voter rights and advocating for fair elections.

ALL OF THE FUNDS WE RAISE STAY IN NORTH CAROLINA.



Your contributions make a powerful impact across our state. In 2021, these funds helped:

- Expand key grassroots organizing programs that defended fair and free elections.
- Target 5 high-stake regions across NC to educate and mobilize local communities.
- Relay critical information to the public, including policy changes and social justice developments.
- Safeguard employee and volunteer health, through extensive COVID-19 prevention standards.
- Invest in robust employment practices, including competitive pay and mental health services.





PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT TRUE DEMOCRACY IS POSSIBLE AND WORTH THE WORK.

Democracy North Carolina is a nonpartisan organization that uses research, organizing, and advocacy to strengthen democratic structures, build power among disenfranchised communities, and inspire confidence in a transformed political process that works for all.

Learn more at democracync.org.



@democracync

Follow us on social for the latest updates!

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