

THE PHILADELPHIA

CITIZEN

**2021
ANNUAL
REPORT**

“This City is what it is because our citizens are what they are.”

-PLATO

DEAR FELLOW CITIZENS,

There were a number of times in 2021 when, looking out at your smiling, unmasked faces at any one of our ambitious in-person events, I welled up, reminded of Plato's long ago heralding of that which makes up citizenship: **You**.

There was that time, once the Delta variant subsided, that some 200 of you came out for a breakfast conversation on the history of business between author Richard Vague and MSNBC anchor (and Citizen board member) Ali Velshi, that included revealing information about Velshi's choice of socks. Then there was the time, just before Omicron hit, that nearly 250 of our fellow citizens showed up at Fitler Club for our Real Estate Development...For Good series, to hear the likes of Drexel President John Fry reflect on the University City boom, and to listen to developer Charles Lomax and Urban Land Institute CEO Laura Slutsky hold forth on how intentional development can combat inequality. At our year-end signature Ideas We Should Steal Festival, over 500 of you convened for the most old-fashioned type of social networking: Actually showing up, live, to inspect ideas that can make our shared spaces more equitable—a brave act of civic ownership.

Even when transmission rates spiked last year, you were there, virtually; I beamed with pride when some 250 members of this nerdy community we've cultivated signed up for a discussion on resurrecting regionalism, and again when we gathered restaurateurs like Nicole Marquis and Ellen Yin—often our overlooked frontline workers—to talk about the business model moving forward for those who feed us.

There's a lot in our world right now with apocalyptic overtones, but every time we all gathered last year—whether in person or virtually—I walked away more confident in the abiding power of the self-evident truths penned 246 years ago by a 33-year-old with a penchant for powdered wigs in a basement at 7th and Market streets. We know now of Thomas Jefferson's personal failings, but how prescient were his words? If he were here today, he'd know that you've proven his point, time and again. Citizenship is more than just liking some shit on Facebook. It's showing up, in person; it's letting your voice be heard, the prospect of cancellation be damned; and it's the celebration of common things over narrowly private pursuits.

In the last year, we've stayed true to our mission to introduce you to the people and ideas that just might make our city better. We launched our first-ever narrative podcast, a moving seven-part series called “Philly

Under Fire,” that explored the causes, effects and fixes for gun violence in Philadelphia and around the country. We've identified a cohort of some 30 “Generation Change Philly” emerging leaders; along with the nonprofit Keepers of the Commons, we'll be providing them with the social capital they'll need to ascend to positions of influence. With our Integrity Icon initiative, we've named and famed another group of high-integrity city workers, because, judging by our never-ending stream of public official perp walks, just shaming bad actors is not enough.

And we've written about the folks who are fighting the odds and making a local difference, like union leader Ryan Boyer and FS Investments founder Michael Forman, who joined together to form the Philadelphia Equity Alliance, to make Philly the most equitable big city in America; St. Christopher's pediatrician Dan Taylor and his son, who spent their weekends last year driving around the city to replace missing neighborhood basketball nets; or Zulma Guzman, a Salvadoran immigrant who is her neighborhood's unofficial social worker. Even when kvetching about our incredibly shrinking mayor or our timid Council, we've accompanied critique with ideas our leaders ought to adopt—like investing in job growth to fight poverty, staunching gun violence through better policing, and pushing arts into every neighborhood.

To be sure, these are strange times. Classically American values are under assault, both abroad and closer to home. It's easy to get down. But when I do, I just think about the work we're all doing in this community we've built together. We take issues seriously, while resisting the urge to take ourselves too seriously; we're constantly aware that none of us built anything solely by ourselves, that growth-oriented policies and public officials given to widening the aperture of their lens have historically had a hand in shared prosperity; and, perhaps most important, we keep showing up.

“When nothing seems to help, I go and look at a stonecutter hammering away at his rock perhaps a hundred times without as much as a crack showing in it,” wrote the muckraking journalist Jacob Riis. “Yet at the hundred and first blow it will split in two, and I know it was not that blow that did it, but all that had gone before.”

Here's to pounding some more rock with you in 2022.

Larry Platt
Philadelphia Citizen Co-Founder

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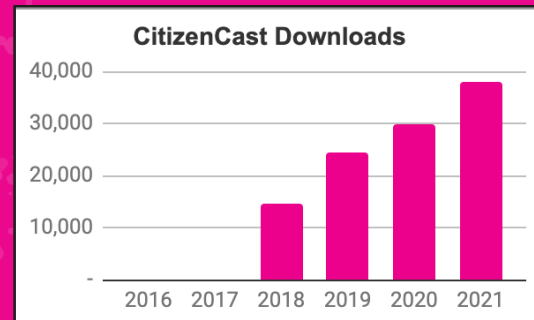
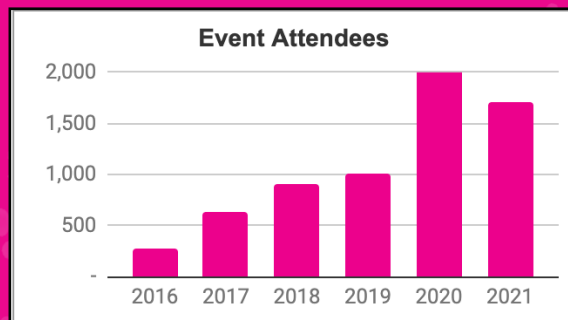
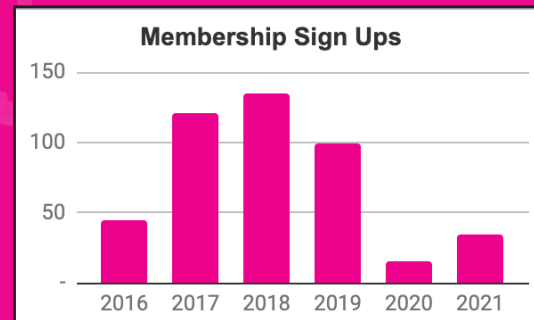
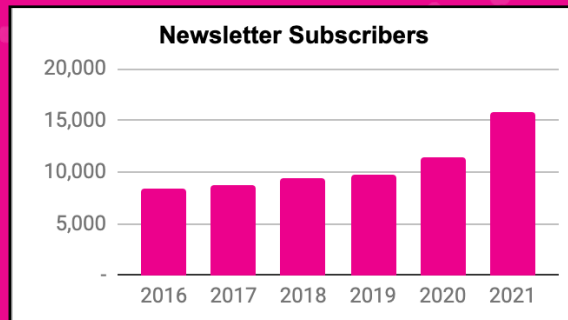
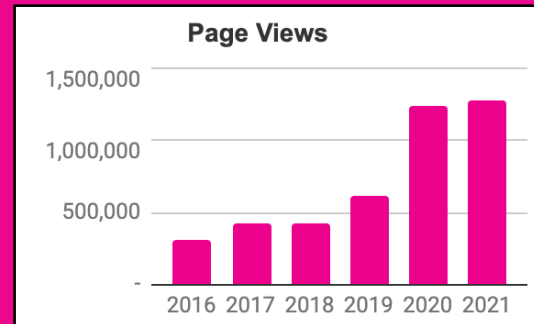
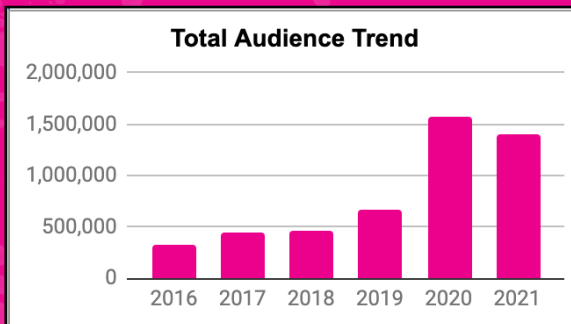
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1.44 million citizens reached



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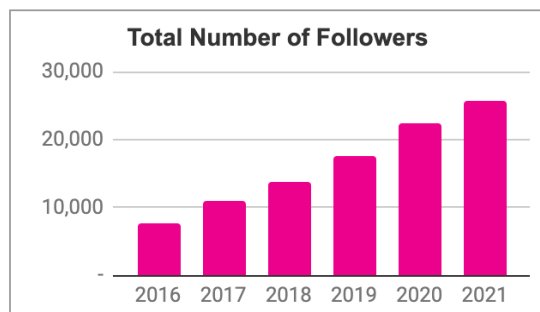
7,545



6,359



10,973



Total audience shows a downward trend in 2021.
Why?

In 2021, Philadelphia began to lift covid-19 restrictions and the Citizen began hosting some in-person events. A hybrid approach engaged a smaller audience as people became fatigued from the virtual world, and at the same time hesitant to return in person. Also, there was little capacity to maintain the membership program in an operationally challenging time. Lastly, a viral video spiked total audience trends by 250,000+ in 2020.

There were positive outcomes! The Citizen saw great improvement in newsletter subscribers and podcast downloads as people searched for solutions in a time of uncertainty and unrest.

21,450

unique clicks on Digital Calls
to Actions

8,593

unique clicks on Do Something
Halos, specific calls to actions
for readers to make impact

over 1,000

people who found their polling
place or checked their voter
registration status via the
Philadelphia Citizen site

1,700

event attendees gathered in
2021 to share solutions to
Philly's most pressing issues

37,992

podcast and audio stories
were played from CitizenCast

52,068

citizens were educated about
judicial candidates for the
2021 election



IMPACT

Campaigns

Integrity Icon Philadelphia

Integrity Icon Philadelphia was launched in 2020, a campaign in partnership with Accountability Lab. The campaign names and fames honest tax-paid, city workers who are leading as examples of high integrity in public service—*aka the principled heroes we need.*

The top vote-getter and People's Choice Integrity Icon winner Principal Richard Gordon, pictured above, credits this honor with being integral to his being named the 2021 NASSP National Principal of the Year. This award brought national attention to West Philly's Paul Robeson High School and amplified his model for college and career readiness that has been proven through the school's 95% graduation rate.

Generation Change Philly

Another campaign, in partnership with Keepers of the Commons, **Generation Change Philly** named 30 changemakers and rising civic leaders in Philadelphia. The Philadelphia Citizen began to amplify their work and published 11 profiles on GCP fellows in 2021, with more ongoing in 2022.

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THE PHILADELPHIA **CITIZEN**

The Philadelphia Citizen is a non-profit, non-partisan media organization with a dual mission: 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.