



# A Note to our Supporters

Friend,

The ACLU of Nebraska will enter 2025 strong, accomplished, and the best equipped we have ever been to meet the challenges before us. I realize that is no small statement given our organization's nearly 60-year history, and I will be the first to say our current strength is only possible because of enduring community support and hard-earned past achievements.

There is no question that our state will need the ACLU of Nebraska at its strongest in 2025, just as our country will need all of us. While some of the challenges before us will look different than those we have met in the past, we know what it takes to achieve victory and build power against steep odds. This report recaps some of that work, including our court case ending sweeping voter disenfranchisement, our collaborative work against bills targeting LGBTQ+ Nebraskans, our support of a powerful abortion rights campaign, and more.

Along with achievements, we have included a new element in this annual report: a plan for the coming year. It previews how we intend to protect our rights and freedoms in the courts, the Capitol, and our communities.

As the late Rep. John Lewis said, "if we believe in the change we seek, then it is easy to commit to doing all we can." I believe in that change, and I know you do too. Working together, we will do what we have always done: band together, advance justice, and serve as a firewall for freedom.

Thank you for being with us,



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mindy Rush Chipman".

Mindy Rush Chipman  
she/her/hers  
Executive Director

## CELEBRATING...

**14** full-time staff members, an all-time high for our organization. This year, we welcomed Development Associate Adairah Thapa, Finance Director Michael Berry, and Communications Strategist Dafnis Delgado-Arellanes.

**189** new Nebraska Legislature bills and resolutions actively tracked and engaged on in 2024.

**4** ballot measure successes, including one to establish earned paid sick leave, two to legalize medical marijuana, and one to repeal a section of enacted legislation sending public dollars to private schools. Additionally, an initiative to protect abortion rights came incredibly close to passing.

**134,000** Nebraskans reached through ACLU of Nebraska statewide digital ads raising awareness of judicial retention votes.

Cover Photograph: Abiola Kosoko

# Areas of Impact

**Legal Program** page 4

**Policy Advocacy** page 5

**Community Empowerment** page 6

# Legal Program

Our legal program is guided by our vision of a freer and fairer Nebraska. In 2024, our docket included cases involving voting rights, open government, immigrants' rights, privacy, and more.

## VICTORY

Thousands of Nebraskans' voting rights were at stake in 2024 due to unprecedented executive overreach. When Nebraska Secretary of State Robert Evnen refused to follow a new law restoring voting rights to Nebraskans immediately after they had completed all terms of a felony sentence, we told him he would see us in court. With help from attorneys with the ACLU's Voting Rights Project and law firm Faegre Drinker, we took up the case on behalf of impacted Nebraskans and organizational plaintiff Civic Nebraska, and achieved a victory just weeks before Election Day. The Nebraska Supreme Court ordered election officials to follow the law and let eligible Nebraskans register to vote. Thanks to this case, Nebraskans who had done their time, like our clients Jeremy (pictured here) and Gregory (pictured on cover), could use their power at the ballot box.



Courtesy photograph

## In 2024, we:

- Reached a settlement with the City of Lincoln in a legal dispute over a development being built across from Native American ceremonial grounds. We helped Niskítthe Prayer Camp advocates secure a series of city commitments that included training city staff, supporting efforts to conserve green space, and adopting a proclamation committing to the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.
- Made our case that Nebraska state senators had violated the Nebraska Constitution's requirement that "no bill shall contain more than one subject" when they combined a 12-week abortion ban and anti-transgender medical care restrictions into a single bill. A Nebraska Supreme Court majority ultimately sided with an earlier court ruling that the provisions were sufficiently linked by a general connection to "health care."
- Launched a successful case that prompted the release of Department of Homeland Security documents related to Fremont and Scribner's municipal immigrant housing bans.
- Filed a complaint with the U.S. Department of Education, initiating a Student Privacy Policy Office investigation into whether school officials outed a transgender middle school student without consent.
- Obtained records for a client who was in juvenile solitary at Northeast Nebraska Juvenile Services who was initially denied access to their records.
- Supported an appeal of a court decision jeopardizing a young Nebraskan's ability to seek legal permanent residence in the U.S. Our friend-of-the-court brief encouraged the Nebraska Supreme Court to reverse the Hall County Court decision.
- Won a partial appeal before the 8th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals on behalf of clients challenging Papillion police officers' actions during a traffic stop. We are litigating this case with the Law Firm of Daniel Gutman.
- Filed a complaint with the Omaha Human Rights and Relations board on behalf of a same-sex married couple who faced discrimination at Genesis Health Clubs when applying for joint membership.

# Policy Advocacy

Our policy work spans the state. We strive toward a more just Nebraska by advocating before state senators, county commissioners, city leaders, and others. In election years, our work also involves direct democracy and election safeguarding.

## In 2024, we:

- Put in long hours into keeping abortion legal. We played a leading role in the Protect Our Rights campaign, and helped collect thousands of signatures to put it on the ballot. The measure fell just short on Election Day, with 49% of voters in support and 51% against. A well-funded rival petition passed, keeping Nebraska's 12-week ban in place. Despite the disappointing outcome, election results clearly show the strength of the abortion rights movement in Nebraska. We will not stop working to build power and regain and protect our rights.
- Rallied opposition to a bill targeting college and university inclusion programs. LB 1330 had deeply problematic language and would have banned some campus conversations on diverse experiences and viewpoints. The bill failed to get out of committee.
- Joined librarians and educators in opposing a bill that would have made it easier to criminally prosecute school librarians. LB 441 would have chilled age-appropriate instruction and posed a significant threat to Nebraskans' First Amendment rights. Fortunately, it also failed to overcome a filibuster.
- Shined a light on concerning trends in Omaha's immigration court with a report that offered policy solutions to ensure that immigrants are provided their fundamental protections of due process and equal protection.

- Successfully advocated for the passage of a Smart Justice bill reforming the Nebraska Parole Board.
- Successfully advocated for the Nebraska Supreme Court to adopt a new qualification form and rules that will help facilitate collection of juror demographic information to ensure juries reflect the diversity of their communities.



Photograph: Rebecca Gratz

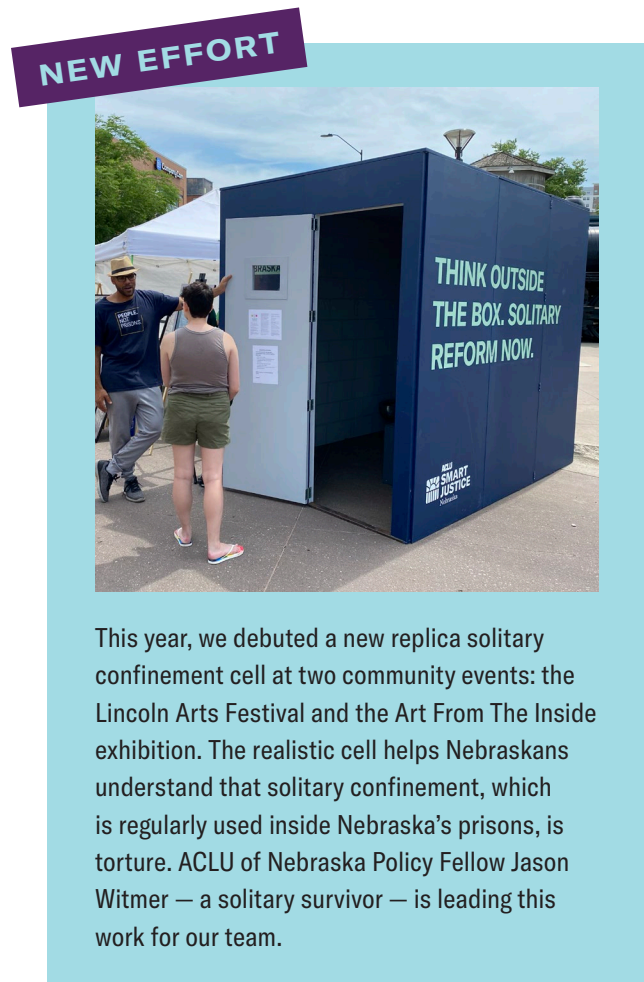
The tireless work of transgender Nebraskans and their loved ones, champion state senators, and advocacy organizations paid off when a bill targeting young trans Nebraskans narrowly failed to overcome a filibuster. If passed into law, LB 575 would have banned trans students from playing school sports and accessing locker rooms and restrooms consistent with their gender identity. The work is not done. Gov. Pillen has named this ban one of his top priorities for 2025. Our strategy in this area will continue to be informed by our Trans Rights Advisory Team, a cohort of trans, gender-nonconforming and nonbinary Nebraskans who guide our approach to LGBTQ+ rights education and advocacy.

# Community Empowerment

Our community empowerment efforts stretch from the Panhandle to the Missouri River. They rely on authentic relationships and growing partnerships with communities across the state.

## In 2024, we:

- Partnered with OutNebraska and the Campaign for Southern Equality to ensure that trans youth and their families have access to life-saving resources and care by bringing the Trans Youth Emergency Project to Nebraska. Find information on this much-needed program at [transyouthemergencyproject.org/NE](https://transyouthemergencyproject.org/NE).
- Supported Hastings parents' successful efforts to oppose a school board proposal that would have led to "In God We Trust" signs being installed in school buildings. When public schools promote faith, they violate students' rights to remain free from government-imposed religious viewpoints.
- Partnered with the Nebraska Indian Education Association to send letters to the state's superintendents, reminding them that Indigenous students have a right to wear tribal regalia at graduation.
- Partnered with re-entry organization RISE and the Nebraska Civic Engagement Table to send voting rights information and forms to county jails ahead of the primary and general elections.
- Reached thousands of Nebraskans with Election Day social media posts about voting rights and the issues on the ballot. The ACLU of Nebraska's ballot measure guide reached more than 130,000 accounts on Instagram alone.
- Reached hundreds of Nebraskans through Continuing Legal Education (CLE) and general community presentations that covered a broad range of our issue areas, including workshops at the NAACP's Nebraska Justice Summit, the Lincoln Commission on Human Rights' Civil Rights Conference, the 2024 Indigenous Peoples Summit, and more.



This year, we debuted a new replica solitary confinement cell at two community events: the Lincoln Arts Festival and the Art From The Inside exhibition. The realistic cell helps Nebraskans understand that solitary confinement, which is regularly used inside Nebraska's prisons, is torture. ACLU of Nebraska Policy Fellow Jason Witmer — a solitary survivor — is leading this work for our team.



Photograph: Chad Greene



Photograph: Rebecca Gratz

“I am grateful that our beautiful country has you and the ACLU at the ready. [...] What you do is important. It matters.”

*A letter of gratitude from a supporter*



Photograph: OutNebraska



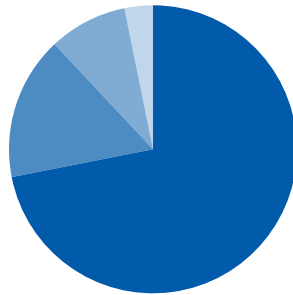
Photograph: Chad Greene

## 2024 Fiscal Year Financials

### Foundation

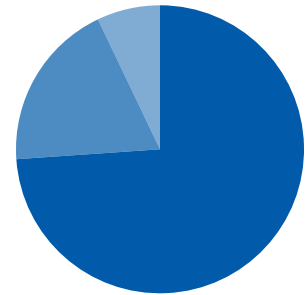
#### Revenues: \$2,569,904

- Grants  
\$1,848,003 (71.9%)
- ACLU National  
\$412,959 (16.1%)
- Contributions  
\$226,568 (8.8%)
- Interest Income  
\$82,374 (3.2%)



#### Expenses: \$1,923,084

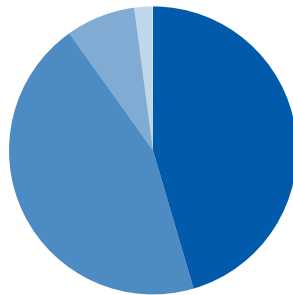
- Program  
\$1,421,580 (73.9%)
- Management & General  
\$364,773 (19%)
- Fundraising  
\$136,731 (7.1%)



### Union

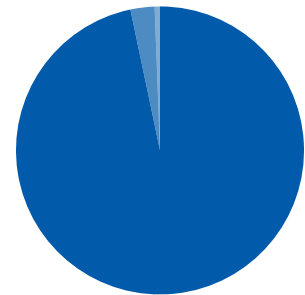
#### Revenues: \$322,455

- Contributions  
\$146,649 (45.5%)
- ACLU National  
\$144,146 (44.7%)
- Grants  
\$25,000 (7.8%)
- Interest Income  
\$6,394 (2%)
- Memberships \$266 (0.1%)



#### Expenses: \$407,981

- Program  
\$394,494 (96.7%)
- Management & General  
\$10,955 (2.7%)
- Fundraising  
\$2,532 (0.6%)



The ACLU of Nebraska is proud to be entirely funded by individual supporters and private foundations. We take no government funds, allowing us to be an independent watchdog and bring litigation against government entities with no conflicts of interest.



# A FIREWALL FOR FREEDOM IN NEBRASKA

From the plans of the incoming presidential administration to the promises of some elected officials in Nebraska, there is good cause for concern about what 2025 will mean for our most fundamental rights and freedoms. In a dark time, we will strive to be a beacon — lighting the way toward a just and accountable future where “We the People” means all of us, and where the civil rights and civil liberties of all people in Nebraska are honored and protected. This working document previews how we intend to meet the moment across a range of priority issue areas.

## OUR PLANS FOR 2025

### SMART JUSTICE

- Amid resurgent “tough on crime” rhetoric, we will oppose efforts to create new crimes, harshen sentences, or lower the age of prosecution. These failed policies would only lead to more prison overcrowding, racial disparities, and unsustainable prison spending. Instead, we will call on state officials to support public safety by adopting solutions that strengthen our communities, such as investments in diversion and reentry.
- We will continue to advocate against the torturous practice of solitary confinement in our state’s prisons and youth facilities. We will seek to hold officials accountable when vulnerable Nebraskans, such as minors and people with serious mental illnesses, are confined in solitary despite protections in state law.

### LGBTQ+ RIGHTS

- We will work to support legislative champions, impacted youth and families, as well as partner organizations to oppose anti-LGBTQ+ bills and remind targeted community members that they are valued and belong in Nebraska just as they are.
- The legal landscape of gender-affirming care may change significantly in mid-2025 after the U.S. Supreme Court decides a landmark case challenging a ban on hormone therapies for trans youth. We will be prepared for any outcome, leveraging resources and partnerships to educate impacted families on what a decision means for care in Nebraska and the state’s current ban. In the meantime, we will work with partners to ensure families have support through the Trans Youth Emergency Project.

### REPRODUCTIVE RIGHTS

- On Election Day, more than 49% of the vote went to protecting and expanding abortion rights in Nebraska. A deceptive rival ballot initiative passed, keeping Nebraska’s harmful 12-week ban in effect. In 2025, we will seek to hold the line on reproductive freedom, activating our thousands of supporters to oppose any new state efforts to restrict access to this essential health care.
- If the Trump administration follows through on the Project 2025 plan to create a national abortion ban through the Comstock Act, a more than 150-year-old obscenity law, the ACLU has promised to meet that violation of our freedoms in the courts. We will work to support any Nebraskan impacted under this act and will tirelessly work to restore access to essential care.

## IMMIGRATION

- Immigrant Nebraskans are our friends, family members, and neighbors. Promised mass deportation efforts will undoubtedly harm Nebraska families, industries, and entire communities. We will support coalition efforts to prepare for and respond to raids, share critical Know Your Rights information and planning materials, and support access to vital legal representation.
- We will oppose any efforts to involve state or local agencies in immigration enforcement, such as through 287(g) agreements, while advocating for policy solutions that will help modernize our immigration system without sacrificing our nation's laws and moral obligation to protect people seeking a better life. This effort builds on our previous accountability work, including our recent report on Omaha's immigration court – one of the most challenging courts in the nation for asylum seekers.

## VOTING RIGHTS

- Politicians have promised to once again try to end Nebraska's system of splitting electoral votes, which encourages voter participation and respects the voices of voters from across the state. We will work with state senators, civic engagement partners, and community partners to protect Nebraskans' meaningful votes by stopping "Winner Take All."
- With elections in Nebraska's largest cities just months away, we will once again be ready to provide nonpartisan voter information and election protection support. We will work with voting rights partners to ensure every Nebraska voter has the information and access they need to cast their vote, including newly enfranchised Nebraskans with past felony convictions, in order to use their power at the ballot box.

## FREE EXPRESSION

- It is likely that we will see Nebraskans join together in protest against new federal or state violations of our rights and freedoms. We are here to defend the right to free expression and assembly. We will use time-tested advocacy and litigation strategies, building off past successes representing Nebraskans who were arrested during civil demonstrations.
- We will oppose government censorship in any form, including continued efforts to silence the voices of people of color and LGBTQ+ people. Whether it is the Project 2025 plan to take "enforcement actions" against organizations that engage in diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging training or another attempt by the state to ban such training, we will educate, advocate, and litigate as necessary to defend protected speech.

## RACIAL JUSTICE & INDIGENOUS JUSTICE

- This summer, Nebraska students will have new protections in state law related to their right to wear their natural hair, religious headdress, or tribal regalia at school. We will work with the Nebraska Department of Education and school officials to ensure that all students are supported and that their rights are respected.



Learn more about how you can support this work  
as a member at [aclunebraska.org/join](https://aclunebraska.org/join).