

**ACRE Institute's** overarching organizational priorities highlight the work that we feel is essential to achieving economic and social justice for Black and Brown communities. In all of our work, we expect to achieve the following long-term outcomes:

- provide sharp, anti-corporate analysis with an explicitly racial lens;
- develop policy proposals that meet the immediate needs of front line communities, while also helping set us up for long-term structural change, and work with local organizations to run campaigns to win those proposals;
- engage with partners in movement-building work by providing strong research and robust campaign infrastructure support; and
- be a campaign hub and thought-leader that has a proven track record of moving the dial towards racial and economic justice in several key areas.

**ACRE Institute partners with base-building organizations establishing power at the state and local levels around several issue areas. Areas that we work in include:**

### **Public Services**

**ACRE Institute believes that public services must be expanded, fully-funded, equitably distributed, publicly-owned, locally controlled, and funded through deeply progressive taxation, with targeted investments in Black and Brown communities.**

As communities enter into the upcoming budget season, we will work with partners on strategic campaigns using the Moral Budget Policy Package. ACRE is working with community groups, racial justice groups, educators, public service workers, care workers, and others to bring together local stakeholders to chart a new course in budget battles so that every community has the public service resources they need to recover, thrive, and survive the next crisis. The pandemic has confirmed what we already knew: that we need to dramatically expand and fully fund public services to strengthen our social safety net. We also know that the one-time American Rescue Plan federal funding doesn't address the longstanding injustice of structural underfunding of low-income Black and Brown communities. We will work to support grassroots partners in their movement-building campaigns to popularize and advance offense campaigns that can be scaled nationally. The moral budget framework is grounded in the following elements:

- Fully funded public services
- Make the wealthy pay their share (like Digital Ad tax)
- Cancel Wall Street Payments (resolutions passed in LA, LA Metro, and Philly in 2021)
- Defund the Police, Incarceration and Surveillance

### **Recent Program Activities:**

**Cancel Wall Street (2021)** In the fall of 2020, we launched our [Cancel Wall Street](#) (CWS) campaign to enable state and local governments to cancel interest payments

to Wall Street by taking out interest-free loans from the Federal Reserve. The campaign is a way to connect local budget fights to a national demand for the Federal Reserve to make long-term, zero-cost loans available to state and local governments, potentially freeing up hundreds of millions of dollars a year in interest that could go toward essential city services. Since the rollout of this campaign, we have had several major wins: (1) In Chicago, Stacy Davis Gates, the the Vice President of the Chicago Teachers Union, joined us for a press release and elected officials from Chicago, New York, and Florida also came out in support of CWS, drawing national attention to the campaign; (2) Cancel Wall Street resolutions were passed by the [Los Angeles City Council](#), [Philadelphia City Council](#), and [Los Angeles Metro](#); and (3) CWS was introduced in Chicago and the state of Illinois as a part of critical budget solutions.

**Philly Revenue Project (2021)** In Philadelphia, ACRE is supporting the work of the Philly Revenue Project which launched the Tax the Rich PHL campaign -- a long term campaign to demand universities, corporations and billionaires pay their fair share to fund public services. This year, we have focused on ensuring ARPA money is spent to the maximum on real neighborhood-based recovery -- instead of on corporate tax breaks. Earlier this year, Philadelphia City Council passed a resolution to Cancel Wall Street, calling on the Federal Reserve to issue no-interest loans for the City of Philadelphia to aid recovery, joining the City of Los Angeles in the national call for the Fed to take action.

**Community Recovery First: No Cops, No Banks With Our Covid Relief Money (Summer 2021)** The past year has shown us what happens when you layer a public health crisis on top of racial inequities. COVID-19 ravaged Black and Brown neighborhoods that had already been suffering from decades of disinvestment. Congress passed the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) federal relief to go directly into communities, particularly those harmed the most from the devastating economic and health impacts of the pandemic. However, cities and states across the country could divert this much needed relief money to cops and banks at the expense of essential community needs like rental assistance and public health programs. In recent weeks, a number of local leaders have [called](#) on the Treasury Department to make it easier to spend relief funds on debt, including to some of the wealthiest banks in the country. Meanwhile, the Biden administration has begun [encouraging](#) states and cities to use relief funds to beef up their police departments. In Summer of 2021, ACRE brought together [over 50 national and local community groups](#) from around the country to call on Treasury Secretary Janet Yellen and President Biden to set clear guidelines that encourage an investment in communities and protect relief funds from being rerouted to banks or police departments. This work is directly connected to the ACRE's CWS campaign arc to expose Wall Street's predatory lending, why we need to Cancel Wall Street payments draining our public budgets, and engaging new partners.

**On August 24, 2021, [Bloomberg CityLabs](#) reported on this letter with quotes from ACRE, ACCE, United Working Families, and Philly Councilmember Kendra**

**Brooks. We are really excited to have the #NoCopsNoBanks framing enter the national conversation.**

ACRE spearheaded some of this work by exposing the use of ARPA funds to pay off debt to Wall Street and increases to police budgets, instead of investing in communities and in non-police violence prevention programs that have been shown to be effective, but that are severely underfunded. In Chicago, the mayor has proposed more than half of the city's \$1.9 billion recovery money be used to [pay back debt](#)- including \$465 million to JPMorgan Chase, to avoid paying \$9 million a year in interest on a loan. Partners in Chicago have held [press briefings](#), [local officials confronted Chase CEO Jamie Dimon at their shareholder meeting](#) about waiving the interest payments on the loan to free up all the ARPA relief money for communities.

**[The American Prospect](#) and [The Nation](#) covered this campaign and used our framing and messaging.**

### **Housing**

*ACRE Institute believes that housing is a human right. We work with partners across the country to research and support strategies that disrupt racialized speculation and financialization of housing by the largest corporate landlords and Wall Street. We envision a U.S. where land and housing are publicly owned and used for the overall public good.*

Our housing work has taken on particular urgency in the last 18+ months, as COVID has further destabilized housing for BIPOC and working-class communities. Some of the activities we're planning include: (1) Researching and creating popular education demystifying the structure of the biggest and most aggressive corporate landlords, exposing the role of private equity and institutional investors in driving the worst abuses; (2) bringing corporate campaigns and policy fights to federal regulatory agencies and policymakers with latitude to stop abuses by these private equity and corporate landlords; (3) calling out pandemic profiteers in housing and how they weaponize their political clout to shape policy making; and (4) fine-tuning our narrative to grow the base of people and organizations in housing justice fights against corporate landlords and private equity in housing.

#### **Recent Activities:**

**Homes Guarantee Campaign (2020)** Released a set of updated housing justice demands in response to the COVID-19 crisis in collaboration with the Homes Guarantee campaign. Demands included a robust eviction moratorium, cancellation of back-rent and utilities, establishing an emergency fund for property owners, and the creation of a social housing acquisition fund, and more to support tenants and stabilize and transform the U.S. housing system. These demands resulted in [H.R. 6515: Rent and Mortgage Cancellation Act](#).

**[Make Them Pay \(2020\)](#)** ACRE Institute researched and released a report detailing how the real estate industry benefits from hundreds of millions in lucrative tax breaks, is led by some of the richest men in the world, and has stockpiled billions in

dry powder, in hopes of profiting from the wreckage of the COVID-19 housing crisis. Organizers and tenants held protests in connection with the release of the report, and continued to hold monthly protests in the lead up to the Sept. 1 CDC Federal Eviction Moratorium.

**Issue Campaigning (2021)** Building on the “Make Them Pay” report, our Deputy Campaign Director for Housing submitted written testimony for the April 14, 2021 House Financial Services Committee Hearing ‘Building Back Better: Investing in Equitable and Affordable Housing Infrastructure’. Our testimony focused on tenants facing eviction, the role of corporate landlords in our housing crisis, the inadequacy of our current solutions, and the collision of the housing and climate crises. In July of 2021 ACRE Institute mobilized grassroots partners around the need to extend the Federal Eviction Moratorium. We led a national day of action in September 2021 against landlord lobbyists, followed by another testimony before Congress in October 2021.

We are supporting several grassroots campaigns, with a particular focus on a corporate campaign in the Twin Cities, led by Inqulinx Unidxs to hold one of the largest single family rental corporate landlords in the U.S. accountable for a lack of repairs and exorbitant rent increases. ACRE Institute’s support has included strategic corporate research, drafting Congressional testimony, and facilitating congressional relationships.

### **Private equity and predatory finance in housing (2021)**

#### **Climate Change and Environmental Racism**

***ACRE Institute’s climate and environmental justice program envisions a future where all families live in healthy neighborhoods and where frontline Black, Brown, and Indigenous communities are fully empowered in restructuring our entire economic system to replace polluting industries with a democratically controlled, sustainable, regenerative energy sector.***

Our 2022 priorities are to build up corporate and financial campaigning capacity with grassroots environmental justice groups; to identify Wall Street connections to local Black and Indigenous-led frontline fights against toxic facilities and fossil fuel pipeline fights that could add national solidarity components to these campaigns; and to ensure more Black and Indigenous-led organizations are represented and active in national climate finance campaigns and the development of recommendations.

#### ***Recent Program Activities:***

**[BlackRock's Governance Mess: As BlackRock Rushes to Cut Climate Risk, Lead Director Murry Gerber Doubles Down on Fossil Fuels. \(Spring 2021\)](#)** The report looks at the extensive ties of BlackRock’s lead independent director, Murry Gerber, to the fossil fuel industry - including his personal pandemic profiteering off of fossil fuel investments - and the impacts on frontline communities of the fossil fuel companies he’s tied to. ACRE and LittleSis also worked together with the [BlackRock's Big Problem](#) campaign, which included coordinating closely with the Sunrise Project

and others, as that campaign rolled out Gerber as a new campaign target, with the hashtag #GerbersGottaGo.

We were also invited to join the 2nd People's Assembly on BlackRock, which was attended by 200-300 people and headlined by Rep. Rashida Tlaib, and we spoke together about the new report. The Assembly also staged an action where participants flooded BlackRock's Instagram page with the demand of #GerbersGottaGo. BlackRock's Big Problem has more activity around Gerber planned.

**Stop The Money Pipeline (2021)** ACRE Institute is a steering committee member with the Stop the Money Pipeline Coalition. We support frontline fights and engage in regulatory advocacy to educate congressional staff and financial regulators on why climate change, racial equity, and economic justice need to be priorities for all the agencies that oversee our financial system. Throughout 2021, as members of the Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team and Partnerships team, we are also working to ensure that Stop the Money Pipeline is representative of all communities struggling against the fossil fuel industry's exploitation, including Black and Latinx leadership, which is currently underrepresented in the coalition. There are also two fossil fuel campaigns we currently or plan to resource, including Stop Line 3 and Stop Formosa Plastics.

**Build Back Fossil Free (2021)** As a member of the core coordinating circle of Build Back Fossil Free, we are working closely with frontline leaders to demand that the Biden Administration adopt 25 executive actions that our coalition has identified that can end the era of fossil fuel production and lead to meaningful investments in Black, Indigenous and Brown communities. Throughout 2021, we will offer strategic campaign support, digital organizing infrastructure, and communications support to draw attention to the frontline Black, Brown and Indigenous leading campaigns to shut down oil and gas plants and to block the expansion of fossil fuel infrastructure. We also resource the Stop Line 3 and Stop Formosa Plastics campaigns through the Build Back Fossil Free Coalition.

**Reparations and Climate FinReg (2021)** ACRE Institute is launching a research project aimed at strengthening the narrative that Wall Street and the fossil fuel industry should be held accountable for paying reparations to frontline communities for generations of harm and for exacerbating our climate crisis. The research team will identify potential mechanisms for administering environmental justice and climate justice reparations in a progressive way (from Wall Street and fossil fuel industry) and create a new set of reparative advocacy tools for frontline partners and national EJ groups that may not have capacity to conduct this research themselves. We are also aiming to fill an urgent need in the climate financial regulation space for a racial justice-led analysis; Black, Brown, and Indigenous representation and participation; and frontline community inclusion in what has typically been a white-led, DC-centric space. We will engage racial justice, environmental justice, and climate justice organizations to develop and advocate for policy recommendations

specifically aimed at eliminating harmful climate change-causing private investments and targeting significant reparative private funds into frontline communities of color. Our work also includes subgranting to BIPOC-led groups and frontline groups representing BIPOC communities that might be interested in engaging on climate financial regulatory issues with the benefit of more capacity.

### **Policing and Incarceration**

***We believe public safety should be reparative, rehabilitative and transformative and the systems governing it should be accountable and controlled by communities.***

In 2022, we aim to continue to: (1) expose bloated police budgets in cities across America to encourage divestment in policing and greater investment in public services that better serve the complex needs of communities; (2) provide training and collateral that gives organizers and activists new information, language, and networks to push forward defunding campaigns; and (3) researching the role of publicly- and privately-held corporations in financing surveillance technologies used by policing and immigration authorities.

#### ***Recent Program Activities:***

**Defunding the Police During a Recession (January 2021):** A series of webinars to provide analysis and context to help strengthen demands to defund the police and bring in progressive revenue to local budgets. Topics included: (1) History of Policing and Prisons, (2) Surveillance and Militarization (3) Policing & Austerity Budgets and (4) What's next? Campaign Challenges & Demand Recommendations.

**21<sup>st</sup> Century Policing report (Spring 2021):** Alongside the Community Resource Hub, ACRE Institute released a report examining the surveillance state that Black, Brown and working class communities are subject to and that corporations profit from. Opening our webinar, Congresswoman Cori Bush gave us a powerful reminder that “it is a moral imperative that we get this right. We need to redirect energy to transformative justice.”

**Shotspotter Campaign (Summer 2021)** With the support of ACRE, organizations and activists in Chicago launched a campaign to cancel or not renew Chicago's contract with ShotSpotter. ShotSpotter is gunshot detection technology that is framed as a tool to help police respond to gun crimes and ultimately deter gun violence. However, there is no evidence that ShotSpotter is accurate or deterring gun violence. Instead, ShotSpotter is another surveillance tool used to justify over-policing in Chicago's Black and brown neighborhoods, while inflating narratives and statistics around gun violence. The ShotSpotter contract was supposed\* to be up for renewal on August 19, and Chicago residents and activists have demanded that the City not renew the contract and instead invest that money into community-led violence prevention and interruption efforts. The campaign had a soft launch of social media infographics and a petition on July 15 and the first action (march and rally) in Little Village on July 29. The petition is currently at over 2000 signatures, however we are

up against the challenge of strong counter-narratives that believe Black and brown people are inherently violent and their neighborhoods need police and need this kind of surveillance.

*\*We have since found out that the city covertly renewed the contract in December 2020, unbeknownst to many local groups, activists and press. We are now working to make sure this obscene lack of transparency from the city is well-known and not repeated.*

### **Crescendo**

***ACRE Institute campaigns against corporations that promote, enable, or partake in anti-Muslim attacks; builds power within the Muslim, Arab, and South Asian (MASA) communities in the U.S.; and connects MASA organizations with progressive organizations working for racial and economic justice.***

2022 placeholder

### ***Recent Activities:***

**Stop Funding Facism/Unmasking Fidelity (2021)** In response to the January 2021 attack on the Capitol, we launched the [Stop Funding Fascism](#) campaign as an emergency response. In addition to a [press conference](#) held to kick off a flurry of actions, including: convening a rapid response call with nearly 70 peers from across several organizations to make an action plan; writing and sending letters to the CEOs of [Amazon](#), [Blackstone](#), [Fidelity](#), and [Google](#) telling them to stop funding and platforming white supremacists and fascists, with 41 allied organizations signing on with us; mobilizing nearly 4,000 people to send individual [emails](#) to these CEOs on MLK Day, flooding their inboxes with our demand that they #StopFundingFascism; following up our letters to the CEOs of these four corporations by reaching out to some of their most important customers. We sent letters to 30 [pension fund](#) managers, 20 [university](#) presidents, and 18 [foundation](#) presidents, asking them to break ties with these corporations; and Gathering more than 8,000 signatures on our [petition](#) calling on these corporations to #StopFundingFascism.

We put out a [Medium post](#) to demand that Amazon, Blackstone, Google and Fidelity take decisive action to deplatform and defund white supremacist groups, individuals and content and make serious amends to the communities hurt by their prioritization of profit over peoples' safety. We also created [a social media toolkit](#) for use in any digital organizing work against corporations that supported and profited from divisive rhetoric over the last several years.

ACRE Institute subsequently formed the [Unmasking Fidelity](#) Coalition, a group of mission-aligned organizations. Along with the Hate Is Not Charitable Campaign, the coalition is leading the effort to hold Fidelity accountable for contributing to

organizations supporting white supremacists and fascist movements behind the January 6 attack.

**WhoseTube Campaign (2021)** We launched our WhoseTube campaign in response to the two-year anniversary of the tragic and deadly Christchurch massacre. The massacre, which targeted a mosque during prayer and killed more than 50 Muslims, was carried out by a white supremacist that inspired by watching right wing videos on YouTube. YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki has argued that she has since taken steps to strengthen YouTube's hate speech policy and alter its recommendations system. But—under her watch—the streaming platform continues to profit from the spread of anti-Muslim ideology and violence.

This campaign called on YouTube CEO Susan Wojcicki to put a stop to the spread of anti-Muslim hate on her platform. We launched a petition, released this [informational video](#) and also continue to share content with our online community via emails and upcoming research that will be released in 2022.

**Big Tech Sells War (2021)** Approaching the 20th anniversary of the Global War on Terror, ACRE Institute, MPower Change, and LittleSis launched our [Digital Destroyers: How Big Tech Sells War on Our Communities](#) campaign during Summer 2021, which highlighted the many ways Big Tech (like Microsoft, Amazon, Google, and Facebook) has supported and profited from the War on Terror over two decades.

As a part of this project, we led with our [campaign website](#), [social media toolkit](#) and a series of emails linking our audience to actions, stats and other information to help showcase the enormous amounts of money Big Tech has made from targeting Muslim folks across the globe.

## **Workers Rights**

### **Technology and Surveillance**

*ACRE Institute believes the internet should be treated as the vital public utility it is and that Big Tech corporations should be heavily regulated.*

## **Popular Education and Trainings**



A sizable part of the work that we do at ACRE Institute includes free training for partners, grassroots activists, and aligned organizations. While we do run series alone, we often partner with other organizations and individuals to bring pop-ed content and training to on-the-ground organizations and activists that need it most. Below are some examples of the training series and webinars we have done in the past 12 months.

**[Race and Housing Teach-In w/ ACCE](#) \*Alliance of Californians for Community Empowerment\* (Spring 2020)** ACRE and ACCE walk through the historical roots of our current problems and what that means for our current housing justice fight.

**Cops & Capitalism series (Summer 2020)** We partnered with the Public Accountability Initiative (the organization that runs LittleSis.org) to run a successful webinar series during the summer of 2020 for organizers interested in navigating policing and incarceration from a financialized perspective (Webinars [1](#), [2](#), [3](#), and the [Research Brief](#) linked)

**Poi\$on Series (Spring-Summer 2020)** A conversation with guest experts on issues of race, public health and Wall Street accountability (Video [1](#) and [2](#) linked)

**Cancel Wall Street Report Briefing (Fall 2020)** Briefing describing ACRE's Fall 2020 report + campaign detailing how the Federal Reserve granting cities and states zero cost loans would save local governments over \$160 billion in interest payments annually ([linked here](#))

**Defunding the Police During a Recession Series (Winter 2021)** Building off of our observations and concerns around the impacts COVID has had on policing and budgets, we offered this training to provide analysis and context to help strengthen demands to defund the police and bring in progressive revenue to local budgets. The training was broken into 4 sections that built on each other: (1) History of Policing and Prisons, presented by Critical Resistance; (2) Surveillance and Militarization, presented by Alliance for Educational Justice, Black LGBTQIA Migrant Project, and Cooperation Jackson; (3) Policing & Austerity Budgets, presented by ACRE, Grassroots Collaborative & United Working Families Party; and (4) What's next? Campaign Challenges & Demand Recommendations facilitated by BLM-Chicago and ACRE

**Solidaire Workshop Trainings (Spring-Summer 2021)** Two training sessions with Solidaire members on building movement-aligned campaigns to dismantle corporate power, including an organizing skill-building session and a examining contemporary campaigns for strategy and lessons learned.

*We are currently adapting the Defunding the Police During a Recession training into a locally-adapted training for Chicago partners and activists.*