



# IMPACT

## 2023 Report

ACTION CENTER ON RACE & THE ECONOMY  
ACTION CENTER ON RACE & THE ECONOMY INSTITUTE



## A LETTER FROM OUR DIRECTORS

### 2023 was a pivotal year for ACRE and ACRE Institute.

We continued to provide much needed support to our partner organizations while also refining our organizational strategy. We're especially proud of the campaigns we have supported over the years that resulted in the progressive tidal wave that put Brandon Johnson in the Mayor's Office in Chicago. We fought to stop corporations from profiting off the backs of people of color through campaigns to win app worker protections, cancel surveillance contracts, and regulate social media platforms that are enabling bigotry, white nationalism, and Islamophobia. We campaigned to make the wealthy and major corporations pay what they owe to fund our communities through measures like digital ad taxes, corporate head taxes, and wealth taxes.

With a new Co-Executive Director at the helm, we thought this was a good time to revisit and refine our strategy. While we center the leadership of our partner base-building organizations, we also recognize that we are a strategic resource that can help connect their issues to a broader fight against racial capitalism. We provide national-level visionary strategy, amplify relevant research, and convene tables that allow for local partners to learn from each other and strategize together.

With that in mind, we are recommitting ourselves to creating a more racially and economically just society by: (1) exposing the billionaires and megacorporations that profit at the expense of communities of color and poor people and (2) building and supporting campaigns that redistribute power, wealth, and resources from those billionaires and megacorporations to Black, Brown, and poor people. To do this, we will continue to:

- Prioritize partnerships with base-building organizations;
- Center and directly address race; and
- Target corporations and billionaires harming our communities.

If you are familiar with ACRE, then you know this is a strategic refocusing more than a strategic shift. We are excited to continue to do amazing work in the years to come!

In solidarity,

**Saqib Bhatti and Bree Carlson**  
Co-Executive Directors,  
ACRE & ACRE Institute



“Throughout 2023, ACRE continued to solidify the crucial role it plays in helping grassroots organizations and coalitions across the country build and execute campaigns that center race and target corporations and billionaires. From publishing research reports to supporting direct actions to meeting with legislators and training partner-organization members, ACRE contributes meaningful strategy and capacity to the movement to build real power among communities of color and poor people.”

**CHRISTINA LIVINGSTON**  
*President, ACRE Institute Board of Directors  
and Executive Director, Alliance of Californians  
for Community Empowerment*

## PROGRESS REPORT: Chicago Progressive Revenue Project

ACRE's years of work with grassroots partners across Chicago came to fruition in 2023, with the election of Mayor Brandon Johnson and a record number of progressives to the Chicago City Council. ACRE leads and participates in coalition work in Chicago by producing and disseminating economic- and racial-justice focused research to support the campaign platforms and successful election of progressives across the city.

Our 2023 report, titled *Passing the Buck*, detailed how Mayor Johnson's opponent, Paul Vallas, had a record of financial mismanagement; the report played a critical role in pushing back against Vallas's image as the financially prudent choice for mayor. Once elected, Mayor Johnson named ACRE Co-Executive Director Saqib Bhatti, the author of the report, to his transition team. Following Mayor Johnson's inauguration, ACRE released another report called *First We Get the Money*, detailing a set of policies to create \$12 million in revenue to fund the progressive policies in the Johnson platform. The report, which called for taxing the wealthy and major corporations, generated a firestorm in the

business community. The report's wide public reception highlights that ACRE is a leader in forcing public conversations about what progressive revenue solutions could look like in our cities.

As a direct result of #StopShotSpotter, a campaign anchored by ACRE demanding divestment from a private surveillance tech company, Mayor Johnson's platform included a promise to cancel the city's ShotSpotter contract. The company saw a significant drop in its stock price the day after the election and eventually changed its name. Mayor Johnson named Alyx Goodwin, who ran ACRE's #StopShotSpotter campaign, Senior Advisor for Public Safety in his office.

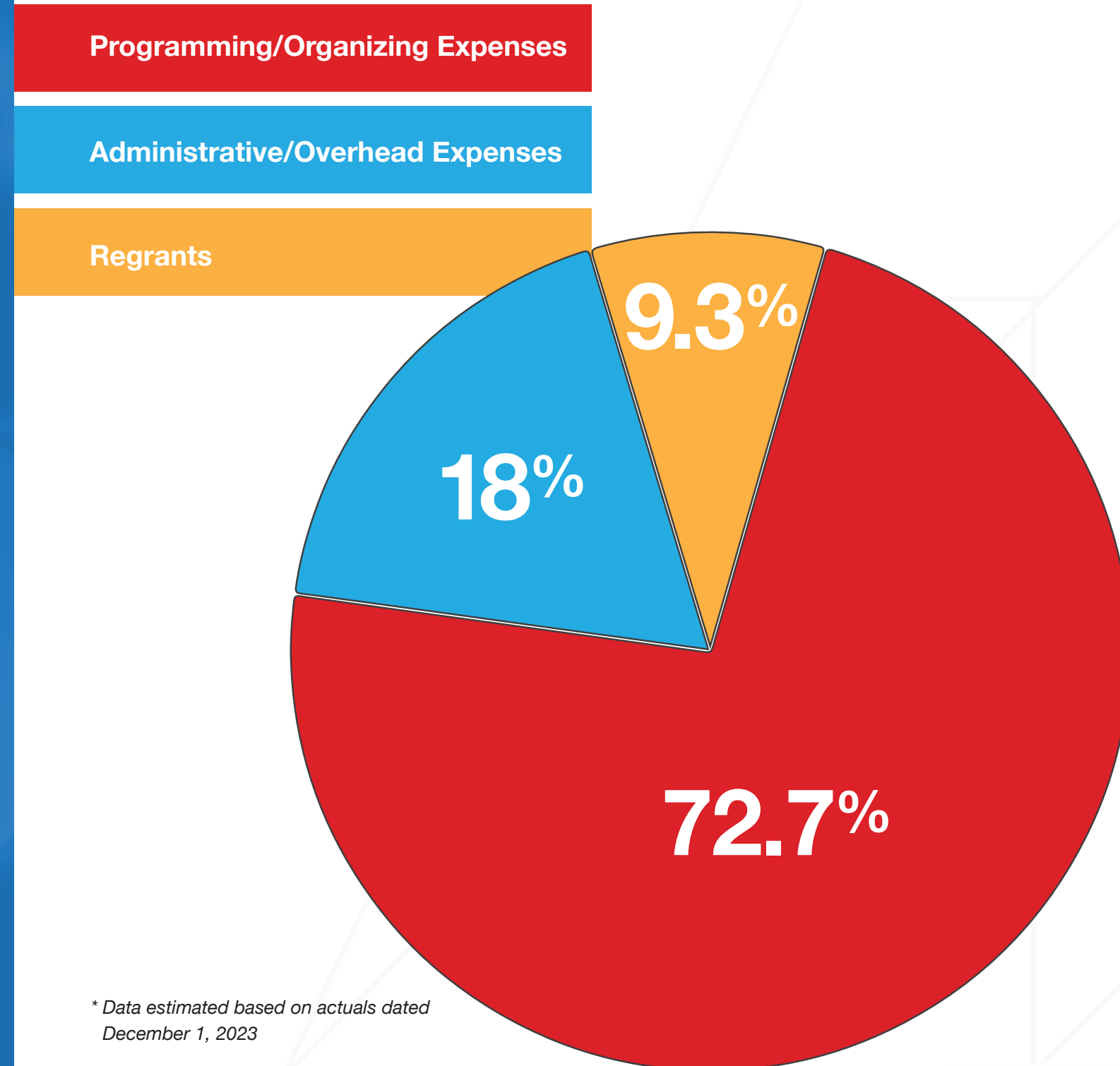
ACRE's progress in Chicago epitomizes the success of our organizational strategy: the slow and steady work of building coalitions and campaigns that center the needs of local Black and Brown communities, while simultaneously advancing progressive economic solutions, will result in major wins for our communities.

ACRE's Alyx Goodwin speaks at a protest against ShotSpotter.  
Anthony Vázquez/Chicago Sun-Times.  
July 29, 2021.



## FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

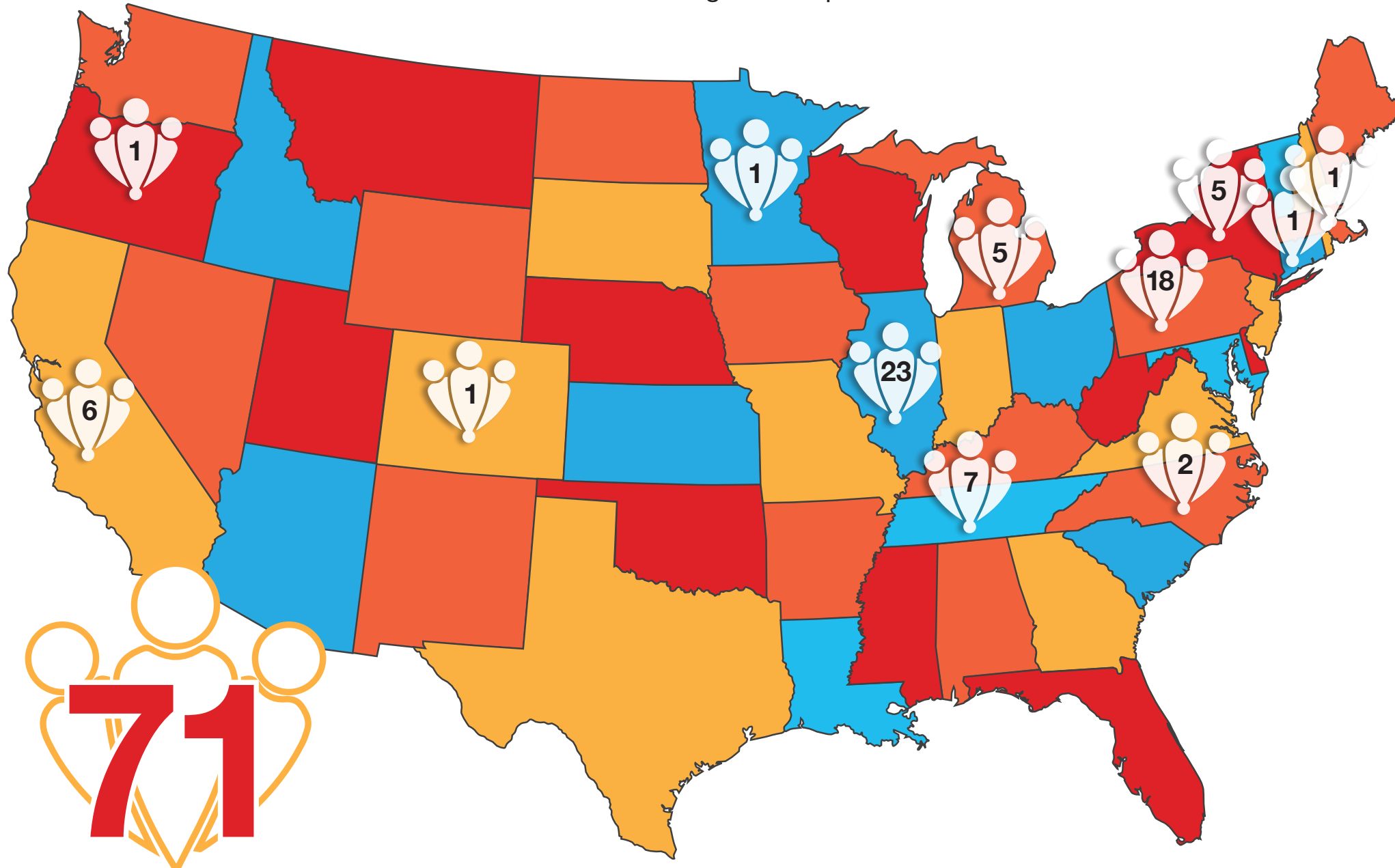
### How We're Spending



\* Data estimated based on actuals dated December 1, 2023

# ACRE In Partnership

In 2023, ACRE partnered with, supported, and joined coalitions with grassroots base-building organizations across the nation. Though we also regularly partner with other national organizations, we focus our energy on connecting to local partners.



**71**

grassroots base-building organizations we partnered with in 2023

## PROGRESS REPORT : Digital Ad Tax Campaign

ACRE made crucial strides in 2023 in engaging state partners on Digital Ad Tax, a tax on the massive profits Big Tech makes from extracting and monetizing our private information while avoiding taxes on those profits. The DAT is popular in red and blue states, according to PEW research, and is a smart policy that ACRE believes can help us advance our vision of redistributing wealth and power from corporations to Black and Brown communities.

Using the successful campaign to institute a digital ad tax in Maryland, ACRE leads a table of researchers, legal scholars, and state policy partners to advance digital ad tax campaigns in Illinois, Connecticut, and New York. In order to collaborate across states, ACRE held multiple briefings in 2023 for partners and legislators to provide a policy framework, model legislation, and campaign material. Throughout 2023, we provided training and educational materials directly to organizers and legislators in all three states to rebut the Big Tech industry’s misinformation campaign against DAT legislation.

With ACRE’s collaboration, Connecticut and New York introduced initial DAT bills in 2023, and we are supporting them to reintroduce the bill with more widespread support by their next legislative sessions. We will continue to work to support grassroots partners in their movement-building campaigns to popularize and advance Digital Ad Taxes that can be scaled nationally.



## PROGRESS REPORT : PAYBAC Campaign

ACRE's work through the PAYBAC Table, a collaboration among major grassroots organizations across Pennsylvania, has effectively highlighted and brought to public attention the role of PA's richest billionaire Jeff Yass in undermining our democracy. ACRE leads the overall strategy of the table, developing popular education trainings, organizing direct actions, and driving a press strategy to educate and agitate thousands of Pennsylvanians against corporations and the ultrawealthy.

This year the PAYBAC table trained over 100 movement leaders across the state in a clear analysis of which and how corporate actors are holding back progress; we generated dozens of media stories about Jeff Yass's impact on Pennsylvania and supported the creation of a statewide Pennsylvania organizing plan for 2024.

ACRE is building a replicable and scalable model for (1) naming the problems that the ultrawealthy produce in our democracy and in the lived conditions of Black and Brown communities, (2) identifying solutions to curtail the power of billionaires and fully fund our communities, like wealth taxes and other progressive revenue solutions, and (3) organizing broad swaths of people to advocate for these solutions.

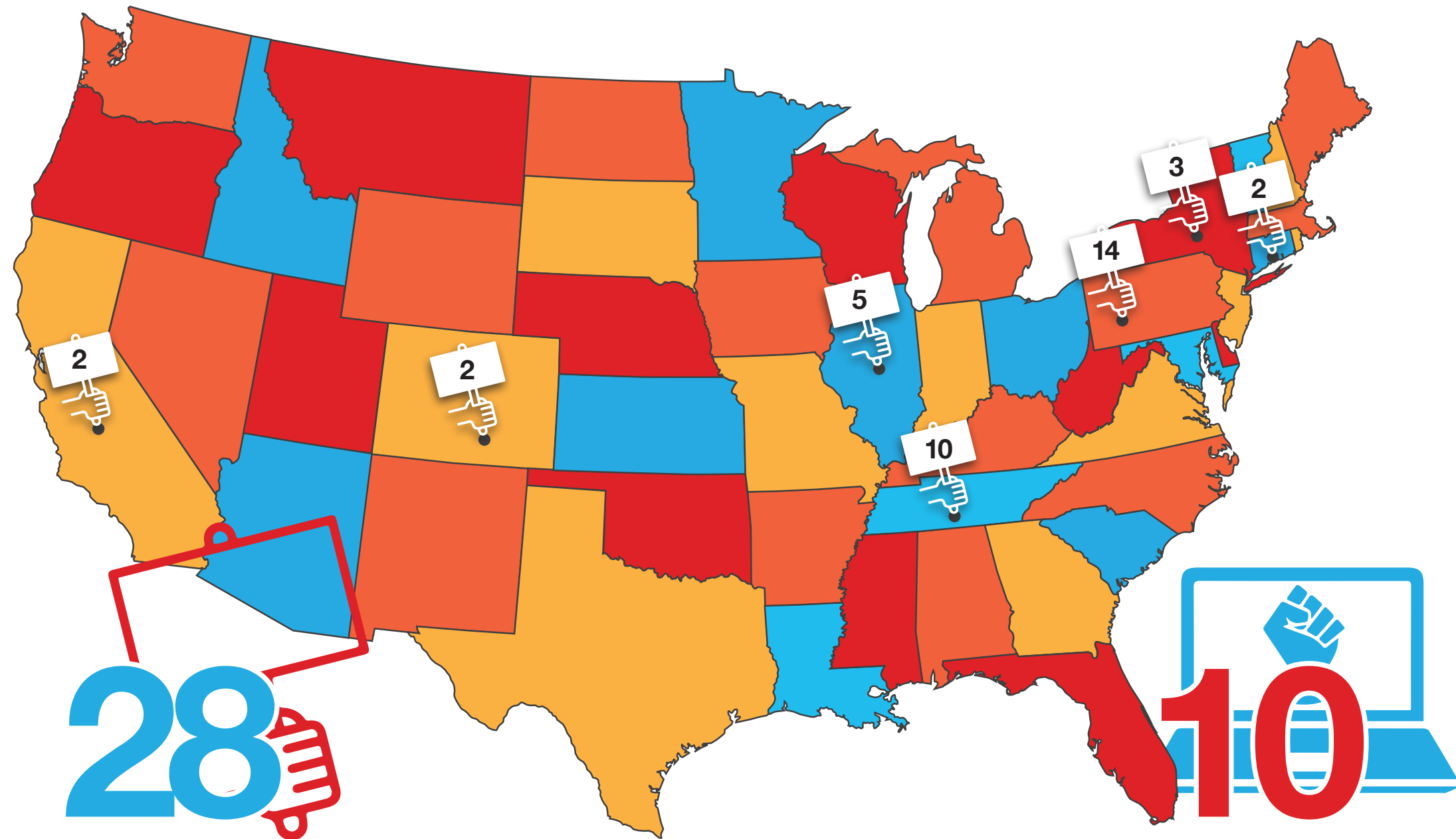


*ACRE co-leads a training with members of Make the Road PA to highlight the influence of billionaires on state politics. August 12, 2023.*

## PARTNERSHIPS & ACTIONS

# ACRE In Action

In 2023, ACRE supported and helped organize on-the-ground and digital actions that were hosted across the US.



actions we supported on  
the ground in 2023

digital actions we  
supported in 2023

## AUDIENCE & REACH

### What We Supplied in 2023



33

reports, fact-sheets, toolkits published



32

staff workshops and speaking engagements

### What It Produced in 2023



1,847

report downloads



37,267

website hits



45

explicit media mentions

VICE

FORTUNE

npr

CRAIN'S

Washington Examiner

Newsweek

Bloomberg®

CBS NEWS CHICAGO

FOX NEWS

CHICAGO SUN-TIMES

THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

The Philadelphia Inquirer



During our 2023 Tax Equity Agenda fight in Connecticut, ACRE provided our coalition with the support needed to make an innovative solution like Digital Ad Tax (DAT) a part of our agenda. ACRE crafted fact sheets, legal briefings, and testimony that allowed us to organize our coalition and legislators to take on Big Tech and counter their misinformation campaign in the legislature.”

**NORMA MARTINEZ-HOSANG**

Organizing Director,


Connecticut Recovery For All


## AUDIENCE & REACH


### Who We Addressed



 **10,200** Twitter (X) Audience

 **9,724** Facebook Audience

 **2,709** Instagram Audience


 **81,354** Email Listserv


Audience across platforms: **104,011**

### Who Engaged With Us



 **31,100** unique Instagram users

 **6,914** unique Facebook users

 **1,218** unique Tiktok viewers



“ACRE is a key partner in our shared work of confronting corporate power and pushing app corporations to treat workers and our communities with dignity. The ACRE team has worked with us to move our rideshare ordinance forward by supporting us with strategy, research, campaign planning, and creating broad support for driver dignity.”

**LORI SIMMONS**  
Organizer,  
Chicago Gig Alliance



Drivers in Chicago protest during the National Day of Action  
Chicago Gig Alliance. May 8, 2023.

# Who Engaged With Us

734,600

impressions\* on X (formerly Twitter)

\*# of times a user is served a post in timeline or search results

most popular post:



👁️ = 2,500 impressions\*



“For many years Pennsylvania’s Black and Brown leaders have experienced an indescribable feeling of angst, trepidation and disillusionment connected to day-to-day struggles in our communities. With ACRE’s leadership, PAYBAC has clarified the details, the bad actors, the connections, and the choices made that affect our lived experiences. Pennsylvanians’ fight against Yass and corporate greed is just getting started! Free the Ballot grows stronger and healthier through our participation in this coalition, a coalition that respects our unrelenting pursuit for justice for our people.”

**TONYA BAH**  
Executive Director,  
Free the Ballot



# Highlights From Our Year

ACRE delivers testimony in front of Connecticut State Legislature in support of a Digital Ad Tax.

ACRE co-organizes a 500-person candidate forum for Philadelphia City Council at-large candidates. The forum results in candidates—including those who would go on to win the primary—pledging their support for a wealth tax in Philadelphia.

**'First we get the money' — read the controversial plan to raise \$12 billion in new revenue for Chicago**  
Report co-author Saqib Bhatti said Chicago can no longer be "held hostage" by businesses that "want to be showered with tax breaks" and "threaten to leave when asked to pay" more.  
 By Catherine Olsen and Fran Spielman | May 18, 2023, 4:30pm EST

**CHICAGO SUN-TIMES**

OPINION | SEVEN COLUMNS  
**A Chicago Self-Destruction Plan**  
 The new mayor's allies lay out their agenda: 'First We Get the Money'

By The Editorial Board  
 MAY 18, 2023 @ 12:01 PM ET

**WSJ | OPINION**

ACRE's *First We Get the Money: \$12 Billion to Fund a Just Chicago* report makes local and national headlines for its unapologetic proposal to increase revenues to fund public services in Chicago.



Through Bargaining for the Common Good, ACRE staff supports a town hall in Brownsville, TN to advance a community benefits agreement for a new Ford electric vehicle battery plant.

**UNTANGLING DISCRIMINATION**

**FAIRNESS & SAFETY FOR ALL**

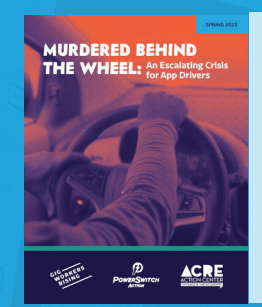
How Temporary Staffing Agencies Rely on a Racist Business Model to Discriminate Against Black & Female Workers in Houston and Nashville

NLAN Unemployed Workers United ACRE

ACRE co-releases *Untangling Discrimination: How Temporary Staffing Agencies Rely on a Racist Business Model to Discriminate Against Black and Female Workers in Houston and Nashville* with National Legal Advocacy Network, Unemployed Workers United, and Equal Rights Center.



ACRE co-hosts a Legislative Briefing with NY Senator Gianaris on Digital Ad Tax and participated in multiple follow-up meetings with grassroots partners to help build buy-in for the proposal.



ACRE co-publishes *Murdered Behind the Wheel: An Escalating Crisis for App Drivers* with Gig Workers Rising and PowerSwitch Action, corresponding with a National Day of Action, in which ACRE supports actions across the US that bring 1,000+ drivers to the streets to demand justice for Uber drivers.

CHICAGO POLITICS  
**Mayor-Elect Brandon Johnson Reveals His Transition Team**

The list of committee and subcommittee co-chair appointments included a number of notable names and fellow city leaders

Newly elected Chicago Mayor Brandon Johnson appoints ACRE Deputy Campaign Director, Alyxandra Goodwin, and ACRE Co-Executive Director, Saqib Bhatti, to his transition team.



ACRE co-leads trainings across Pennsylvania to train over 100 PAYBAC Table member leaders on why we must target billionaires and corporations to get our public services funded.



ACRE co-organizes an action with LittleSis, POWER Action, Free the Ballot PA, Make the Road Action PA, One PA, and other grassroots PA organizations to highlight the outsized influence Jeffrey Yass has on Pennsylvania politics during a weekend convening of the state's political and business elite in NYC.

# Thank You!

On behalf of the staff of ACRE and ACRE Institute, thank you for your continued interest in ACRE's work. We're proud of how our year went and look forward to continuing to lead and support campaigns that move power and resources from corporations and the wealthy to our communities!



\*Missing from staff photo taken in December 2023: Maryam Arain, Bree Carlson, Bianca Cunningham, Ramah Kudaimi, and Carrie Sloan.



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