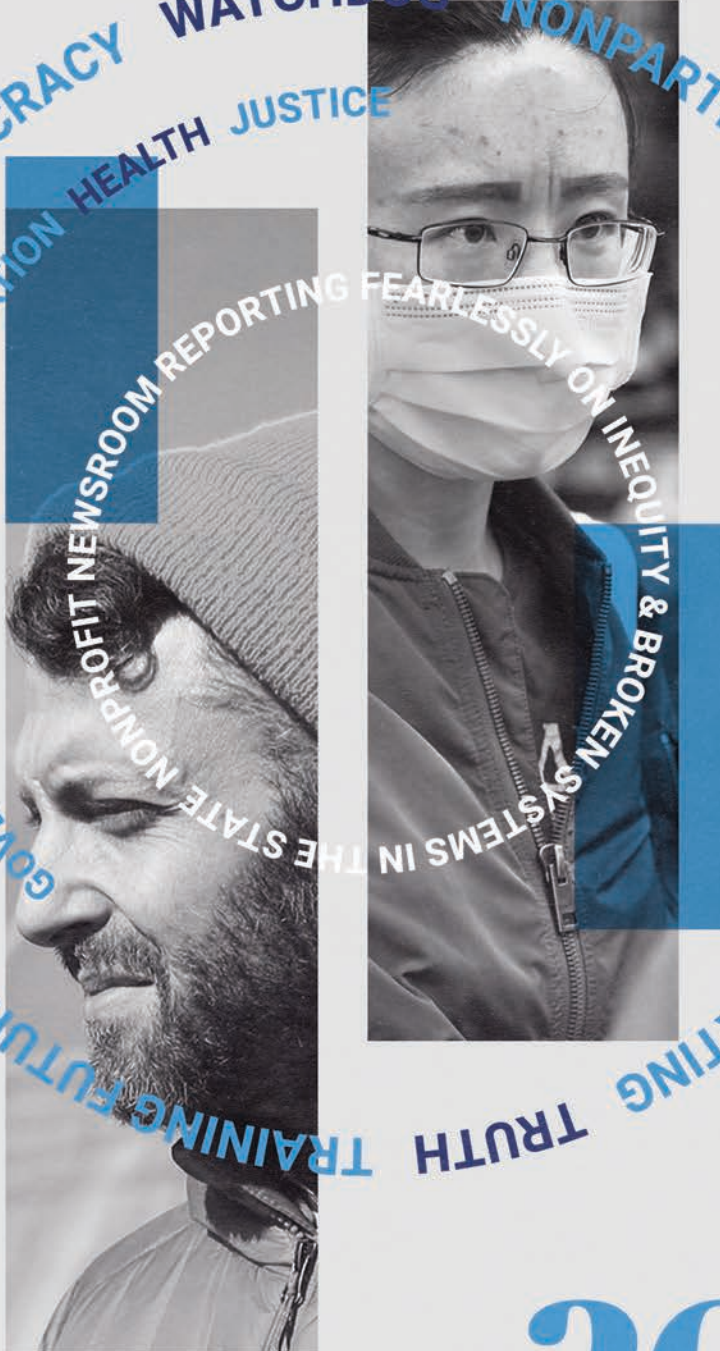




INDEPENDENT DEMOCRACY WATCHDOG  
ECONOMY EDUCATION HEALTH JUSTICE  
GOVERNMENT  
FUTURE JOURNALISTS  
NONPROFIT NEWSROOM REPORTING  
FEARLESSLY ON INEQUITY & BROKEN SYSTEMS IN THE STATE  
TRUTH  
INVESTIGATIVE REPORTING  
NONPROFIT  
NONPARTISAN



# 2022

ANNUAL REPORT

# A note from the founders

Wisconsin Watch expanded in 2022 to bring Wisconsinites more news they need on issues they care about. We added a three-person statehouse team to investigate threats to Wisconsin's democracy, which includes an Oshkosh-based reporter who focuses on workplace democracy. We hired a reporter to cover western Wisconsin as part of the Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk. We added a second reporter in Milwaukee to further our partnership with Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service, fueled by the American Journalism Project, to rebuild local news in Milwaukee and statewide. We also expanded our business team to add expertise

in audience, fundraising, operations and finance. We joined the Associated Press to bring readers more daily news to complement Wisconsin Watch's deep-dive stories. We added a fact-checking feature in partnership with Gigafact. And we increasingly publish stories from trusted partners at the NEW (Northeast Wisconsin) News Lab, Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk and other nonprofits such as the Energy News Network, Grist and Kaiser Health News. An estimated 49.9 million people saw our stories on WisconsinWatch.org and in the 280 news outlets that picked up our reports – double our audience from 2021.



**Andy Hall**  
*Executive Director  
& Co-Founder*

**Dee. J Hall**  
*Managing Editor  
& Co-Founder*





# Who we are

Wisconsin Watch is an independent, nonpartisan and nonprofit 501(c)(3) organization that reports on government accountability and quality of life issues, including criminal and racial justice, education, health, the economy and environment.

Wisconsin Watch embraces anti-racism, diversity, equity and inclusiveness in all of our journalism and operations.

We dig into undercovered issues, document inequitable and failing systems, put findings into regional and national contexts and explore potential solutions. We aim to spark impact that improves people's lives and holds power to account. Every investigation is fact-checked to ensure that our reporting is accurate and fair.

We train the next generation of journalists and news entrepreneurs through workshops, internships and fellowships, mentoring and collaborations with journalism classes and news organizations. And we share information about journalistic practices, ethics and impact with the public.

We believe in collaborating with rather than competing against other news outlets as we strive to build a better and more sustainable news ecosystem. We have partnered with Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service to expand access to local news in Milwaukee.

We push the traditional boundaries of investigative reporting in search of better ways of connecting with and serving the public. You can find our multimedia reports on [WisconsinWatch.org](https://www.wisconsinwatch.org) and in hundreds of other news outlets that receive our stories for free.

# Investigations



# & Impact





Jordan Leitner, a farm volunteer coordinator, harvests spinach in one of the hoop houses at the Hunger Task Force Farm in Franklin, Wis., on March 1, 2022. The hoop houses allow the farm to grow and harvest fresh produce during the winter. The farm is among several strategies that non-profits in Wisconsin use to provide healthy food to the 1 in 12 Wisconsin-ites who are food insecure. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)

## BEYOND HUNGER

Together with students in Managing Editor Dee J. Hall's Investigative Reporting class, we tackled food insecurity in Wisconsin from a variety of perspectives. We examined the impact of free school meals during the pandemic and debates over food quality. We highlighted advances and setbacks to reducing food waste and composting food destined for the landfill. We identified the unnecessary bureaucratic hurdles FoodShare recipients face. We showcased efforts to establish grocery stores and provide more nutritious food in Wisconsin's food deserts. In early 2023, Gov. Tony Evers proposed free school meals for all in his 2023-25 budget.



A "Vote" sign is seen outside the polling place at the Catholic Multicultural Center in Madison, Wis., on Nov. 3, 2020. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)

## FACT BRIEFS

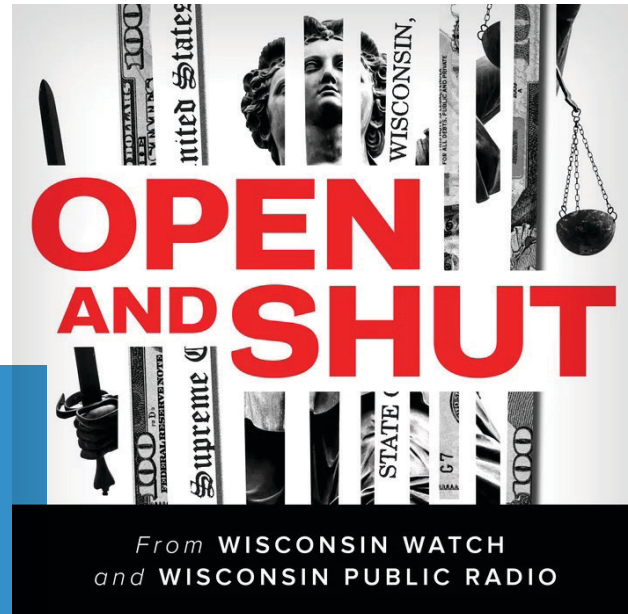
In 2022, Wisconsin Watch launched Gigafact fact briefs, 140-word fact checks that use a "yes/no" format to answer questions. Fact briefs are designed to bolster correct claims made on social media and to debunk false ones to head off the spread of misinformation. We published nearly 200 of these briefs in 2022, producing critical fact checks just before Wisconsin's high-stakes gubernatorial and U.S. Senate elections. These bite-sized fact checks became among the most read items on WisconsinWatch.org.



Commercial fisher Donny Livingston, a citizen of the Red Cliff Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, picks cisco from gillnets after lifting them from Lake Superior onto the fish tug, Ava June, during a fishing run near the Apostle Islands on Nov. 15, 2022. (Bennet Goldstein / Wisconsin Watch)

## MISSISSIPPI RIVER BASIN AG & WATER DESK

The Mississippi River Basin Ag & Water Desk is a reporting network made up of 10 partner newsrooms. Bennet Goldstein reported on the lingering water crisis in French Island, where most wells are contaminated by harmful PFAS, leaving residents to rely on government-provided bottled water. Goldstein also examined how thousands of LGBTQ farmers challenge stereotypes about farming in the Midwest and circumvent barriers ranging from land inaccessibility to federal lending restrictions to social isolation. He also anchored reporting for a team of journalists that sought answers for Iowa and Illinois residents after the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warned that PFAS contamination from a 3M factory created “an imminent and substantial endangerment” of public and private drinking water supplies.



Open and Shut is a narrative, seven-part investigative series following two district attorneys in Wisconsin's Fox Valley and their impact on victims, the accused and the justice system. The podcast is a joint production of Wisconsin Watch and WPR.

## OPEN AND SHUT

The Open and Shut podcast hosted by Phoebe Petrovic exposed the gaps in the U.S. justice system that allow its most powerful actors to use nearly unchecked authority to win questionable cases, convict the innocent and pervert the pursuit of justice. The podcast from Wisconsin Watch and Wisconsin Public Radio draws on 20 years of reporting on Wisconsin prosecutors who misused their authority with tragic consequences. One listener from Appleton told WPR the podcast was “incredible investigative journalism” that brought “things to light that happened right in my front yard!” Numerous people have contacted Wisconsin Watch with allegations similar to those described in the podcast.



Troy (no last name given), a cross-country truck driver from Texas, participates in a pro-President Donald Trump rally at the Wisconsin State Capitol in Madison, Wis., on Nov. 7, 2020. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)

## STATEHOUSE BUREAU

Wisconsin Watch's three-person statehouse bureau works to identify and expose threats to Wisconsin's democracy. The team is composed of statehouse bureau chief Matthew DeFour, investigative reporter Matt Mencarini, and Report for America corps member Jacob Resneck. In 2022 we produced the award-winning Democracy on the Ballot series to alert voters to critical issues at play in the 2022 election. We showed how gerrymandering produced even more skewed voting maps than ever. We exposed which candidates had "stop the steal" sentiments – and how they hid those statements from voters. We showed how thousands of jail inmates are eligible to vote, but many jails don't help them cast ballots. Wisconsin Watch examined claims of voter and election fraud – used by activists to urge mass purging of voter rolls – but found only a smattering of questionable votes.



Tristain Thomas holds a painting of his family members on Sept. 13, 2022, in Appleton, Wis. The painting shows himself; his mother Azerine Thomas, top right; his sister Dwynetta Thomas, center; and his two children, 5-year-old Isaiah and 1-year-old Brooklyn. Dwynetta Thomas was killed on March 12, 2022 while driving down Milwaukee's West Fond du Lac Avenue, which doubles as State Highway 145. (Angela Major / WPR)

## NEWS414

News414 is a joint project with Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service that works to fill information gaps in traditionally underserved neighborhoods. Reporter Hope Karnopp scrutinized why Wisconsin's Women, Infants, and Children program exclusively contracts with the baby formula manufacturer whose recall and plant shutdown exacerbated a national shortage. Sam McCabe found that a lack of air conditioning access disproportionately harms older Milwaukee residents and those of color. Jonah Chester investigated how state bureaucracy hinders local efforts to curb deadly driving on urban highways in Milwaukee. The Wisconsin Department of Transportation later approved plans to reconfigure part of Milwaukee's Appleton Avenue, a dangerous urban highway. Calling it a victory for pedestrian safety, Milwaukee Ald. Michael Murphy said WisDOT typically does not support such projects.





Kiel High School in Kiel, Wis., is shown on June 2, 2022. It was among several named targets of bomb threats in Kiel in spring 2022. The final bomb threat came with an ultimatum: Drop an investigation into the alleged bullying of a transgender student or much of Kiel would face violence. The school board abruptly closed the investigation. (Lianne Milton for Wisconsin Watch)

## NEW NEWS LAB

The NEW News Lab is a local news collaboration in Northeast Wisconsin made up of six news organizations. In 2022 Mario Koran exposed the roots of culture wars over racial discrimination and bullying of a trans student that gripped Kiel, Wisconsin. Citizens fought back; two school board members who fanned the flames of the conflict resigned. “I cannot overstate the importance to and impact his reporting has had on my own community,” one reader wrote. “Prior to his reporting, there was virtually no coverage on the facts. Misinformation and lies ran rampant with negative real-world consequences for both our public institutions and local democracy. ... His reporting, without a doubt, helped save our community by allowing the citizens of Kiel – armed with the truth – to pull away from the grip of a small fringe group of very hateful individuals.”



Ezekiel Acker, 2, shows concern as his mother, Emily Acker, cries while holding 1-year-old Izabel and recounts what it was like to be separated from her children while at their home on Eielson Air Force Base near Fairbanks, Alaska, on Jan. 13, 2022. (Emily Mesner / Anchorage Daily News)

## FLAWED FORENSICS

This award winning series profiled an Alaska couple accused by Dr. Barbara Knox of abusing their 3-week-old daughter, who suffered from significant birth injuries. That was followed days later by the news that Knox was resigning from her position as Alaska’s top child abuse pediatrician. Knox had been on leave after allegations of bullying and misdiagnosis – similar to charges made during her tenure at the University of Wisconsin. After we profiled another case in which Knox accused a defendant of abuse, Joshua Gehde of Madison, Wis., got new lawyers who volunteered to file a federal petition for his release. And the Alaska family sued Knox for her alleged wrongful diagnosis, which caused the couple to lose custody of their two young children for nearly a year.



# Best photos



# of 2022





On Jan. 4, 1998, the dry cleaning business owned by Dale Chu's family in Appleton, Wis., was destroyed by fire, and nearly two years later, Chu was prosecuted for arson by Outagamie County District Attorney Vince Biskupic. Although convicted, Chu has always maintained his innocence. He is seen here outside the food truck he now operates, Miss Kim's Mobile Kitchen, in Chesapeake, Va., on March 16, 2022. (Stephen Katz for Wisconsin Watch)



Margaret Benton, 48, is seen at her home in Sun Prairie, Wis., on April 9, 2022. Benton raised eight children and sometimes worried about where she would get enough food to feed her family. But the state's FoodShare program and local food pantries helped sustain her family. "If I need some food, still today, I'm going to the food pantry." (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)



Sarah Bressler, Farm Manager, harvests carrots in one of the hoop houses at the Hunger Task Force Farm in Franklin, Wis., on March 1, 2022. The hoop houses allow the farm to grow and harvest fresh produce during the winter. After they harvest the carrots and spinach in the hoop houses, they will plant lettuce, then tomatoes. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)





Amruddin, left, Lamha, center, and Seema Nabizada, right, were some of the 76,000 Afghans evacuated to the United States in August 2021. They are pictured in a Rockville, Md., hotel on Feb. 22, 2022 after being resettled to Maryland from Ft. McCoy, in rural Monroe County, Wisconsin. (Eman Mohammed for Wisconsin Watch)



In 2007, the Concordia University Wisconsin, in Mequon, Wis., finished fortifying a 130-foot bluff and building a 2,700-foot-long rock wall to buffer waves. The \$12 million project was among the largest built along Lake Michigan in Wisconsin. Neighboring landowners soon noticed changes to their property. The project has accelerated erosion on downstream properties from around 9 inches to more than 7 feet per year. After two couples sued, a jury later agreed that Concordia's construction caused "significant harm" to properties, but the university was not negligent. The jury awarded no damages, leaving bitterness over the seawall to linger in the neighborhood. Photo taken Aug. 9, 2022. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)



Ade Onabule, a UW-Madison student, votes in Tripp Commons on the campus of the University of Wisconsin-Madison on Nov. 8, 2022. (Amena Saleh / Wisconsin Watch)







**VOTE**



Select Duo Voting Booth  
[www.selectvotingbooths.com](http://www.selectvotingbooths.com)



**VOTE**



Select Duo Voting Booth





Protesters gather outside the Wisconsin State Capitol on June 24, 2022 in Madison, Wis., during a rally and march for legal abortion. Earlier that day the U.S. Supreme Court overturned *Roe v. Wade*, ending the constitutional right to an abortion. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)



The Wempner family filed a bullying complaint with Kiel High School, where their eldest had attended. Since then, the neighbors and friends of this small community have turned their backs. The school wanted to implement diversity training, however far right-wing residents have complained setting off a series of bomb threats against the schools, library, city hall, and police department. Meanwhile, family members are afraid to even be seen in town. (Lianne Milton for Wisconsin Watch)





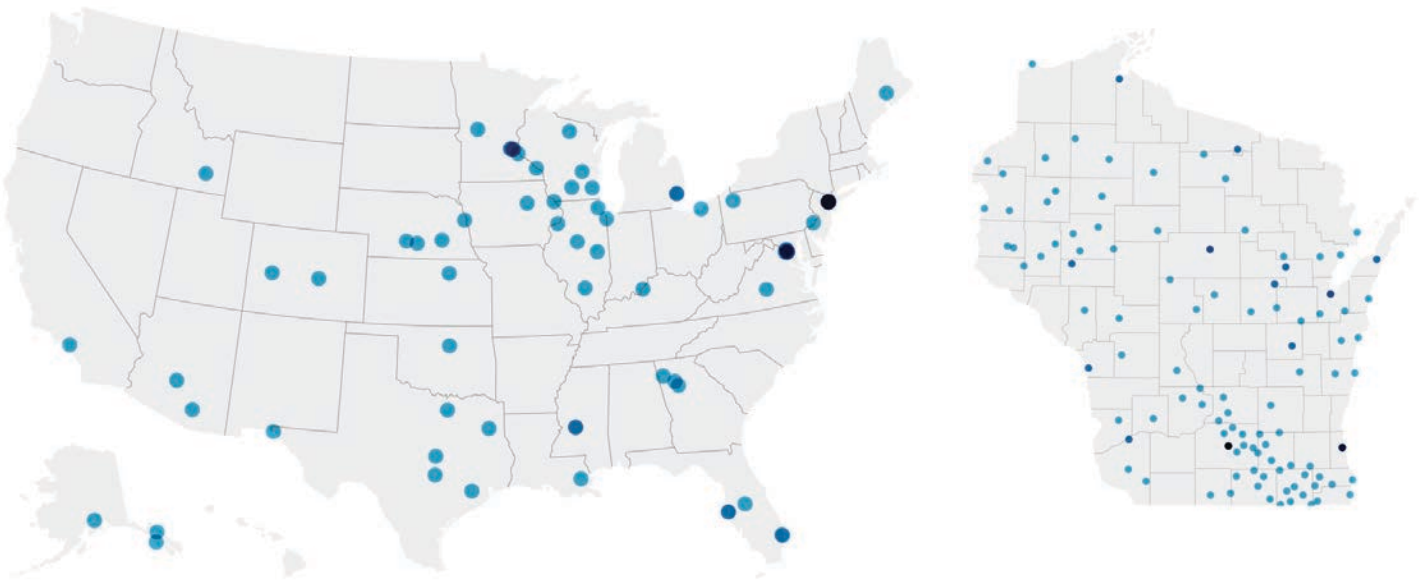
Supporters of Tim Michels, Republican candidate for governor, take photos with him after a campaign event at the Bristled Boar Saloon & Grill in Middleton, Wis., on Nov. 3, 2022. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)



Raquel Urbina feeds a bottle of Nutramigen formula to her daughter Adaliz Angeles on June 24, 2022 at their home in Milwaukee. Urbina receives monthly supplemental nutrition benefits through Wisconsin's Women, Infants, and Children program, which she says can make looking for approved baby formula feel like a "treasure hunt" during the current shortage. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)

# Our audience

Here is how our stories flow through Wisconsin and across the nation. These maps show the location of news organizations in Wisconsin and across the United States that published, broadcast or cited Wisconsin Watch's work from Jan. 1 to Dec. 31, 2022. Darker colors indicate a higher density of news organizations in that area.



## 49.9 million

TOTAL ESTIMATED AUDIENCE

## 65

MAJOR  
INVESTIGATIVE  
REPORTS

## 1,500+

PICKUPS, MENTIONS, COLUMNS/  
EDITORIALS AND FOLLOW-UP AND  
LOCALIZED REPORTS



## 280+

NEWS ORGANIZATIONS PUBLISHED,  
BROADCAST OR CITED OUR WORK

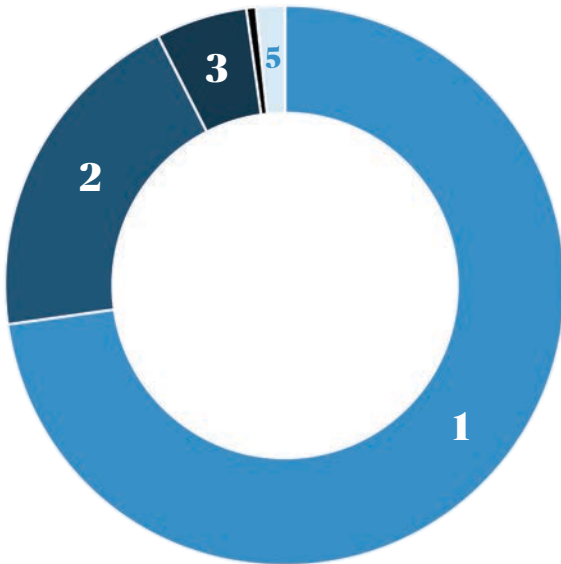
**140** IN WISCONSIN

IN **18** STATES, WASHINGTON  
D.C. AND 12 ADDITIONAL  
COUNTRIES



## 2022 TOTAL REVENUE

**\$1.38 million**

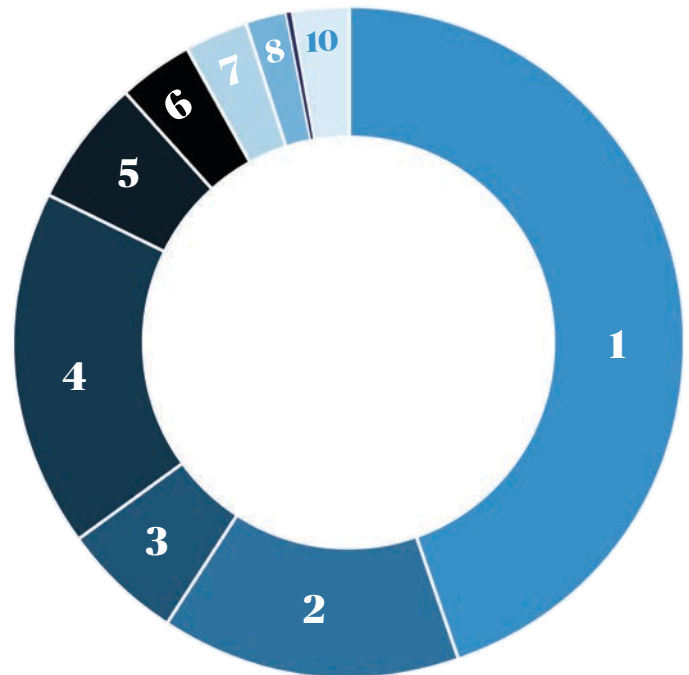


1. GRANTS: \$1,005,517
2. INDIVIDUAL/BUSINESS: \$270,945
3. EARNED INCOME: \$73,517
4. SPONSORSHIPS: \$6,499
5. OTHER: \$20,834

# Financials

## 2022 TOTAL EXPENSES

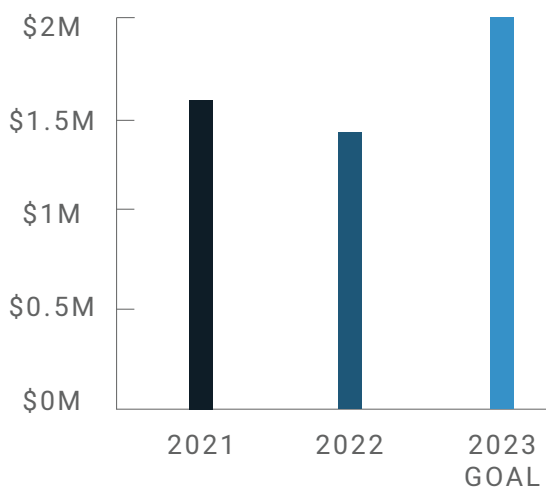
**\$1.79 million**



1. PROGRAM STAFF: \$617,463
2. FUNDRAISING STAFF: \$199,805
3. ADMIN STAFF: \$79,626
4. CONTRACT SERVICES: \$239,356
5. MARKETING & DEVELOPMENT: \$82,008
6. PROFESSIONAL FEES: \$49,520
7. TRAVEL & MEETINGS: \$41,502
8. WEB DEVELOPMENT: \$26,763
9. DATABASES AND RECORDS: \$6,193
10. OTHER: \$35,076

## 2021-2023

### Revenue



## Major institutional funders

American  
Journalism  
Project|



Columbia  
Journalism  
School 



Evjue  
FOUNDATION



INASMUCH  
FOUNDATION



The  
Joyce  
Foundation



News  
Match



REPORT  
FOR AMERICA



WALTON FAMILY  
FOUNDATION



William Collins  
Kohler Foundation





## In-kind support

Barbara Johnson



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## 2022 Partners





Wisconsin Watch staff accepted 12 awards at the Milwaukee Press Club Gridiron Awards Dinner on May 6, 2022. From left are Membership Director Emily Neinfeldt, fellow tanka dhakal, Executive Director Andy Hall, intern Zhen Wang, Managing Editor Dee J. Hall and investigative reporter Mario Koran.

# Awards

## LION AWARDS

Finalist: Collaboration of the Year – Medium / Large Revenue Tier

Wisconsin Watch and Wisconsin Public Radio for Open and Shut.

Finalist: Community Engagement Award – Medium / Large Revenue Tier

Wisconsin Watch and Milwaukee Neighborhood News Service for News414

## MILWAUKEE PRESS CLUB AWARDS

Wisconsin Watch won six gold, four silver and three bronze awards for work produced in 2021 and won 10 awards for stories or series produced in 2022. Wisconsin Watch has won more than 140 awards in the state's premier all-media competition.

## LOCAL MEDIA ASSOCIATION DIGITAL INNOVATION AWARDS

Third place: "Best Digital News Project" for Flawed Forensics

## INN AWARDS

Finalist: Insight Award for Visual Journalism – Large Division

'Something has to be done': Living along Madison's Starkweather Creek, one of Wisconsin's most polluted waterways by Isaac Wasserman, Jim Malewitz and Coburn Dukehart

## REPORT FOR AMERICA LOCAL NEWS AWARDS

First place: Phoebe Petrovic, Wisconsin Public Radio and Wisconsin Watch





Reporter Matt Mencarini speaks at a Watchdog Club happy hour event at Robinia Courtyard in Madison, Wis., on July 12, 2022. (Amena Saleh / Wisconsin Watch)

# Join

## THE WATCHDOG CLUB

The Watchdog Club is made up of Wisconsin Watch's most committed and loyal members who support our important mission. Members are Wisconsin Watch's ambassadors. They help Wisconsin Watch excel and innovate while fostering an informed citizenry and strengthening democracy.

Donors of at least \$1,000 become members of our Watchdog Club and receive "behind the story" insights, private events such as coffee conversations with world-renowned journalists, exclusive offers including invitations to our partners' events and regular updates on Wisconsin Watch and the state of investigative journalism in Wisconsin from Executive Director Andy Hall.

## WATCHDOG CLUB MEMBERSHIP

Lynn and Tom Ansfield • Adam Balin and Karin Mahony • Daniel and Karen Barr • Steven Bauman and Cynthia Yomantas • Judith Bentley • Linda Bernhardt • Doug Caves • Marcus and Sheila Cohen • James Danky and Christine Schelshorn • Brian Davis and Deb Umstead • Andy and Tad Dukehart • Jean Espenshade • Don Ferber • Beth Flaherty • Norm Fost and Renie Schapiro • Caroline Fribance • Lewis Friedland and Stacey Oliker • Pam Gilbert and Charles Lewis • Chris and Erin Glueck • Elke

and Rob Hagge • Janet and Philip Hasler • Megan Hull • Margaret Jones and David Linton • Troy Lethem and Mary Matthias • Donna and Scott Lewein • Karen Lincoln Michel and Roberto Michel • Jill and Peter Lundberg • Richard Luxton • Bonnie and Jack Mitchell • Elizabeth Neary • Carol O'Leary • Kristine O'Leary • Dick Record • Sharon Stark • Michael Vinson • Karen Walsh • Tom and Mim Warren • Brian Wielgus • Roger and Kristi Williams

## THE LEADERSHIP CIRCLE

The Watchdog Club Leadership Circle is a network of supporters taking a leadership role in sustaining investigative reporting and the training of investigative journalists.

Donors of at least \$5,000 become members of our Leadership Circle and receive all the benefits of the Watchdog Club, plus an office tour and lunch with Executive Director Andy Hall and members of the staff and invitations to exclusive Leadership Circle events.

Visit [wisconsinwatch.org/watchdog-club](https://wisconsinwatch.org/watchdog-club) or contact Wisconsin Watch membership director Emily Neinfeldt at [eneinfeldt@wisconsinwatch.org](mailto:eneinfeldt@wisconsinwatch.org) to learn more about joining the Watchdog Club or Legacy Society, or to give a donation of any amount.

## LEADERSHIP CIRCLE MEMBERSHIP

Herman Baumann and Kay Schwichtenberg • Brynn Bemis and Finn Ryan • Mary Burke • Lau and Bea Christensen Charitable Foundation • Howard Cosgrove and Susan Troller Cosgrove • Betty and Corkey Custer • Mark and Sara Eversden • Wendy Fearnside and Bruce Meier • Andy and Dee J. Hall • Larry Hands and Karen Kendrick-Hands • Phil and Tricia Hands • Sally Mead Hands Foundation • Barbara Johnson • Julilly Kohler • Adel Korkor • David and Madeleine Lubar • David and Marion Meissner • Loud Hound Foundation • Peters Family Foundation • Kingsbury Family Foundation



Gail Kohl talks with Betty and Corkey Custer at the 10th annual Wisconsin Watchdog Awards, held at the Madison Club, in Madison, Wis., on April 21, 2022.  
(Ilana Bar-av for Wisconsin Watch)





Dee J. Hall, managing editor of Wisconsin Watch, talks with community members at Lakeside St. Coffee House in Madison, Wis., at an event on Nov. 10, 2017. (Katie Scheidt / Wisconsin Watch)

## LEGACY SOCIETY FOUNDING MEMBERS

***Barbara Johnson***

***Renie Schapiro***

***Carol T. Toussaint***

***Peter Livingston and Sharon Stark***

*If you have already included Wisconsin Watch in your estate plan, thank you, and we want to hear from you so we can acknowledge your generosity!*

## THE LEGACY SOCIETY

The Legacy Society is a group of supporters helping to build a legacy that will inform Wisconsin residents and strengthen our democracy for decades to come by transforming Wisconsin Watch into a larger, more financially resilient institution. They are visionary philanthropists who want to ensure financial stability and a strong future for Wisconsin Watch.

Legacy Society members have included Wisconsin Watch in their estate plans, including wills, trusts, retirement plan distributions and life insurance. Your planned gift makes you a lifetime member of the Legacy Society.

*Learn more about ways to join the Legacy Society at [wisconsinwatch.org/legacy-society](https://wisconsinwatch.org/legacy-society)*



Immigration reporter Caitlin Dickerson speaks at a Wisconsin Watch event at the Lakeside St. Coffee House in Madison, Wis., on Sept. 26, 2019. Dickerson was a 2019 Center for Journalism Ethics Journalist in Residence at UW-Madison. (Coburn Dukehart / Wisconsin Watch)



[wisconsinwatch.org](http://wisconsinwatch.org)