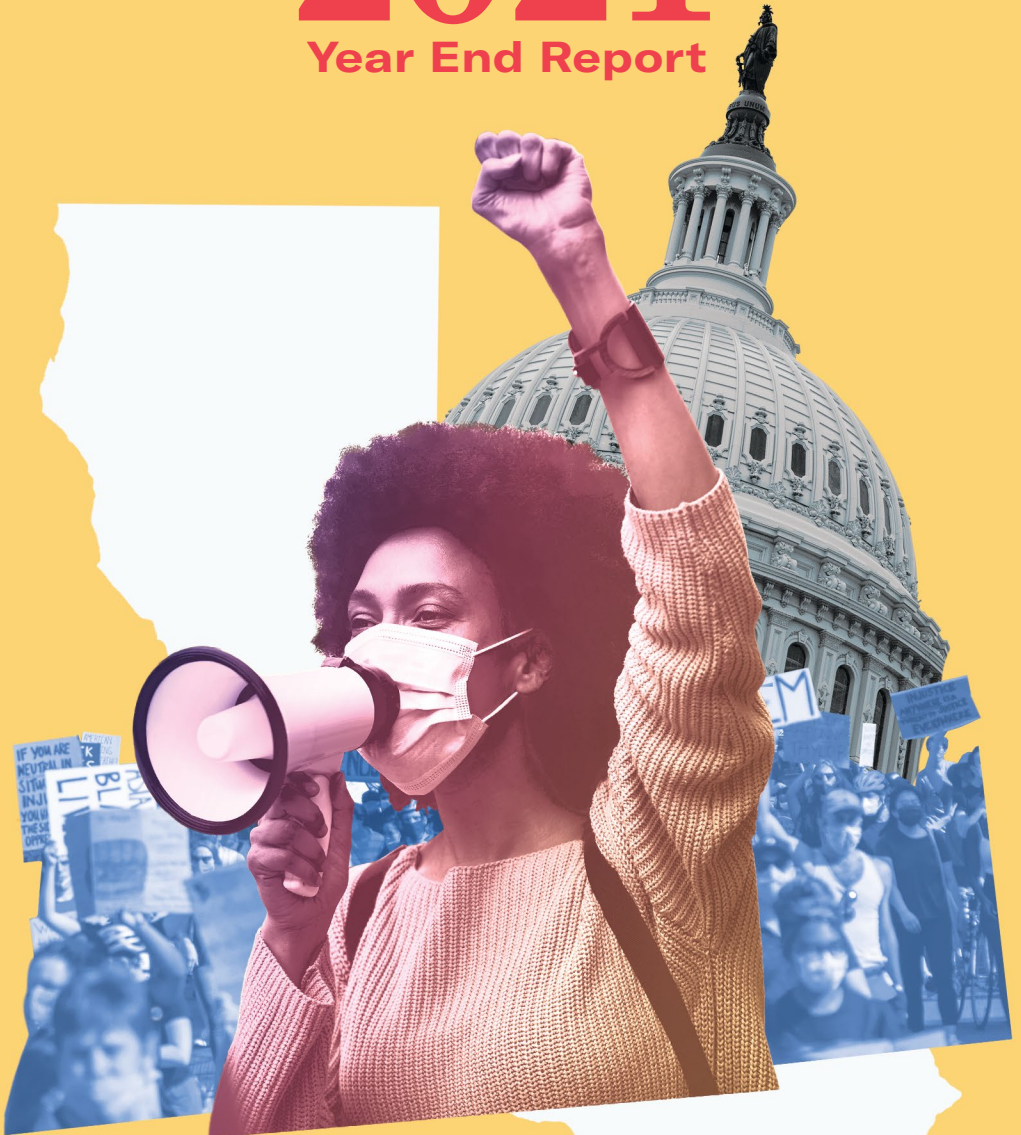


2021

Year End Report



ACLU
SoCal



Dear Friends,

Thank you! Your continued support of and investment in the ACLU has allowed us to rise to the various challenges of the past year, defending and advancing civil rights and civil liberties through one of the most tumultuous periods in recent memory.

2020 was marked by a global pandemic, a national election in which the president attempted to overturn the result of the vote, and the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and many other Black people at the hands of police. 2021 dawned with a mob of President Trump's supporters storming the U.S. Capitol, a stark warning about the fragility of our democracy and the threat posed by white supremacy.

Throughout this difficult year, your partnership enabled the ACLU to work fiercely and strategically to defend democracy, protect vulnerable communities, and seize opportunities to make lasting change. I hope this report makes you proud of all that you helped accomplish here in our region and statewide.

This report highlights just a few examples of the work your generosity made possible this year. You also helped us secure a number of other wins, including:

- ▶ **Advocating** successfully to make California the first state in the country to adopt universal mail-in voting in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ▶ **Securing** a court order requiring Orange County to reduce its jail population by 50 percent—the most expansive legal victory in the country on jail conditions during COVID-19.
- ▶ **Co-sponsoring** two critical police accountability state bills that have made it to the Governor's desk: one to decertify bad cops so they can't be rehired by other jurisdictions, and another to fund a pilot program to create alternatives to police response for certain 911 calls.

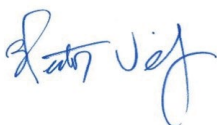
- ▶ **Winning** an important Ninth Circuit ruling that ICE violated the First Amendment when it arrested an undocumented college student who read a protest poem about immigration at a Kern County Board of Supervisors meeting and held him on an exorbitant \$50,000 bond in retaliation.
- ▶ **Training and empowering** hundreds of parents, students, and educators to ensure that their schools comply with the California Healthy Youth Act, which requires public schools to provide comprehensive, LGBTQ-inclusive sex education.
- ▶ **Winning** an administrative complaint against San Bernardino County education officials for mispending millions in state funding intended for high-needs students, including by routing millions of dollars to law enforcement instead of mental health and other support services.
- ▶ **Preparing** our Supreme Court oral arguments for *Fazaga v. FBI* in a long-running, landmark case defending religious freedoms and challenging the FBI for illegally spying on the Muslim community in Orange County.

Nationwide, the ACLU won 28 voting rights victories in 21 states, blocked more than 20 abortion bans and restrictions, fought to reunite separated families, secured the release of more than 48,000 vulnerable people from prisons and jails during the pandemic, and won landmark Supreme Court rulings protecting student free speech and establishing that employers can't fire people for being gay or transgender.

Now is the time to redouble our efforts. We must not only fight to defend fundamental rights whenever they are attacked, but also to advance our own ambitious agenda for necessary systemic change. With your support, we will seize the opportunities ahead to create a freer and more just nation.

Thank you in advance for your continued partnership.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Hector Villagra".

Hector O. Villagra
Executive Director

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Freedom of Speech and Government Transparency

The right of community members to make their voices heard is a basic principle of democracy.

Yet in Orange County, the Board of Supervisors spent years unlawfully silencing public debate and refusing to produce public records.

For years, the community organization, People's Homeless Task Force OC, raised concerns about the county's failure to provide solutions for unhoused residents. Attempting to stifle criticism, the Board adopted rules—such as arbitrarily strict time limits and requiring permission to address individual board members—that made it all but impossible for the public to participate. The Board also refused to produce public records, even

recategorizing records in a way that gave board members license to destroy them.

These actions clearly violated California's open meetings law as well as the U.S. and California constitutions. "Orange County's supervisors were treating their meetings like something out of a monarchy," said Peter J. Eliasberg, ACLU SoCal Chief Counsel. "It was a kind of royal court where criticism directed at individual supervisors could not be heard. This was clearly unlawful."

The ACLU SoCal filed suit on behalf of the People's Homeless Task Force OC, and in January 2021, reached a settlement under which the Board agreed to implement key changes in its public comment rules—a victory for free speech and public participation.

Immigrants' Rights

Over a thousand people were released from immigration detention centers and returned to their families as a result of ACLU SoCal advocacy.



Conditions in ICE detention centers were horrific even before the pandemic, but as California began to lock down in March 2020, it quickly became clear that overcrowded ICE facilities like the Adelanto Detention Center in the High Desert were death traps in the making.

People held at Adelanto were forced to live in overcrowded cells, with no ability to socially distance, and inadequate access to soap and cleaning products. Despite sitting on a large supply of COVID-19 tests, ICE refused to institute regular testing. Those who dared to speak out about the inhumane conditions faced retaliation—with staff even threatening to cut off people's access to soap if they complained.

In April 2020, the ACLU SoCal filed suit on behalf of people detained in Adelanto, seeking to improve conditions and reduce the number of people held in immigration detention.

Our intervention led to the courts ruling that conditions at Adelanto were “inconsistent with contemporary standards of human decency” and ordering a dramatic reduction in the number of people held in the facility.

By August 2021, only 95 people remained detained at Adelanto, down from 1,650 at the start of the pandemic.



Education Equity

2021 Youth Liberty Squad cohort.

ACLU SoCal's Youth Liberty Squad (YLS) is a leadership program created to develop the next generation of civil rights and civil liberties leaders.

ACLU SoCal attorneys and advocates provide high school students with the tools and training to engage on issues that affect their lives, working with students to advance education equity statewide.

We engage students on issues ranging from speech and privacy rights, to equity in school funding, arts education access, school-based mental health, and ending the criminalization of youth.

Early in the pandemic, YLS members surveyed more than 600 students across California to collect perspectives on mental health. Students reported having high levels of anxiety, feeling overwhelmed, and experiencing isolation as a result of the inadequate access to mental health services. YLS members amplified the student feedback in a letter to California State Superintendent Tony Thurmond and Governor Gavin Newsom, and ultimately presented their survey findings before the California Legislature and Department of Education.

Every summer, a new cohort of YLS members is selected to develop their advocacy skills and help advance better policies in California schools before the California State Legislature and Department of Education.

Police Practices

Then Assemblymember Dr. Shirley Weber addresses ACLU members and supporters gathered from across California in Sacramento to lobby for AB 392, the California Act to Save Lives.



Even as we work to broadly reimagine public safety and to fund alternatives to policing, the ACLU SoCal continues to play a leading role on police reform and accountability.

In July 2020, we filed a lawsuit challenging the Pomona Police Department for failing to implement California’s new use-of-force law.

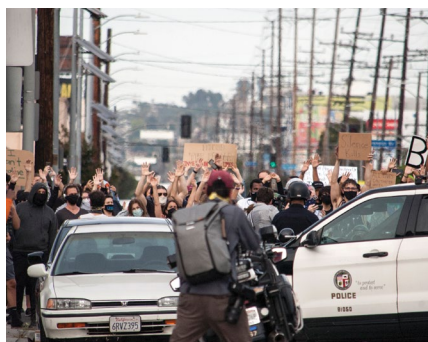
Two years ago, we co-sponsored and helped pass AB 392, the California Act to Save Lives, in coalition with racial justice and police accountability groups. The law raised California’s standard for police use of force, making lethal force justifiable only “when necessary in defense of human life.”

Three days after the bill was signed into law, the president of the Peace Officers Research Association of California—a police lobbying group—emailed its members claiming that the law would “not significantly impact” law enforcement actions. In this spirit of opposition, the Department promptly deleted the word “necessary” from its use of force policy in multiple spots—subverting the new law’s most vital change.



Over the next six months, Pomona police shot and killed three people—tragic deaths that might have been prevented by implementation of the new use-of-force standard. The department also unlawfully used public funds and employee time to adopt policies and trainings that conflicted with the new standard.

Our lawsuit is the first in the state to address police defiance of the new law.



(Above) Protests to hold officers and departments accountable for police violence escalated across Southern California in the wake of George Floyd's murder. *Photo by Tish Lampert.*

(Top Right) Pomona community members and student members of Gente Organizada have been instrumental in the fight to hold Pomona police accountable. *Photo by Jesus Sanchez.*

Voting Rights

Janet Dixon is one of the nearly 50,000 people in California whose right to vote was restored by the passage of Proposition 17.



When formerly incarcerated people are denied the right to vote, we silence the perspectives and experiences they offer in our democracy.

A discriminatory provision of California's Constitution previously prohibited nearly 50,000 state residents on parole from voting in local, state, and federal elections. Due to the racial inequities in our criminal legal system, the provision disproportionately disenfranchised people of color.

In 2020, as part of our longstanding efforts to advance voting rights, the ACLU SoCal helped pass a ballot measure asking California voters to restore the right to vote to formerly incarcerated people on parole. For months leading up to the election, we worked closely with a coalition led by people directly impacted by the criminal legal system, getting the word out to our supporters online and via phone and text campaigns.

Thanks to our collective efforts, Californians voted by a wide margin in November 2020 to approve Prop 17, granting people who have finished their prison terms the right to vote in future elections—a victory for justice and democracy.



Criminal Justice

Yehudah Pryce was arrested at the age of 19 and sentenced to 24 years in prison for a non-violent robbery. He is now an advocate for criminal justice reform.

District attorneys wield enormous power and are key to reducing mass incarceration. The ACLU SoCal is playing a leading role in coalition efforts to promote a culture of accountability within the LA County District Attorney's office, the largest DA's office in the country. In December 2020, we published [\(In\)Justice in LA](#), a 74-page report uncovering failures by then-DA Jackie Lacey's office and highlighting opportunities for reform.

Among the perspectives included in the report was that of Yehudah Pryce, a Southern California activist and social worker who is using his experience within the criminal legal system to enact change. "The DA was working against the supposed stewards of community justice," Pryce attested in the report.

"After the parole board commissioner overruled the DA's objections and I earned my parole, I taught others on how to fight an uphill battle against this supposed justice system."

The ACLU SoCal is proud to be working alongside Pryce and other directly impacted people to press for ambitious policy reforms within the criminal legal system.

Economic Justice

Don Ritter suffered a stroke, then had an operation for a hernia that never fully healed—harassment by law enforcement has kept him on the move and forced him into the High Desert.



In the City of Lancaster, city officials and the Los Angeles Sheriff’s Department relentlessly harass and criminalize unhoused people.

In many cases, people who are unhoused are banished into the Mojave Desert, where weather conditions are harsh and life-sustaining necessities like food, water, and shelter are lacking.

“It’s now impossible to reach some people without an all-terrain vehicle,” says Ruth Sanchez, a member of the Antelope Valley Chapter of the ACLU SoCal and advocate for the rights of unhoused people. Sanchez, who helps distribute food, water, and clothing to unhoused residents, has witnessed the toll of displacement first-hand.

Sanchez’s voice is one many uplifted in the ACLU SoCal’s report, [Banished and Abandoned: Criminalization and Displacement of Unhoused People in Lancaster](#). Conducted over two years, the report includes experiences of more than 50 unhoused residents and details numerous violations of the U.S. and California constitutions in Lancaster’s treatment of people who are unhoused.



The ACLU SoCal released the report in February 2021 in conjunction with the filing of our lawsuit against the City of Lancaster.

We're challenging the city's system of municipal citations, which unlawfully targets poor and unhoused people, subjecting them to fines amounting to hundreds—or even thousands—of dollars for infractions such as sitting in a public park or seeking refuge in the shade. The UC Irvine Consumer Law Clinic is partnering with us on the case.



(Above) Lancaster residents—such as Melissa Ivory (top right)—are pushed to unincorporated areas of the High Desert where they are exposed to extreme temperatures and have limited access to food, water, and life-saving medical services.

LGBTQ Rights, Gender Equity and Reproductive Justice

Evan Minton was denied health care based on his gender identity. His case could be heard at the U.S. Supreme Court.



To protect and advance reproductive and LGBTQ rights, the three California ACLU affiliates are co-sponsoring Senate Bill 379, a two-year bill which would prohibit the University of California Health System (UC Health) from entering into hospital contracts that place limits on care for nonmedical reasons—such as religious directives. UC Health often contracts with outside hospitals, including hospitals with religious affiliations. SB 379 would ensure that any such contracts do not result in patients being denied vital health care such as abortion, contraception, or gender-affirming care.

In March 2021, as part of our efforts to champion SB 379, our client Evan Minton shared his moving testimony at a California State Senate committee hearing. Minton, a transgender man whose hysterectomy was canceled by a

Catholic Dignity Health hospital when staff discovered his gender identity, told legislators what it felt like to be denied care:

“My humanity was stripped away when Dignity Health closed their doors to me as a patient because I am transgender. No one, simply no one, should be turned away for health care.”

In 2019, California courts ruled that the hospital’s actions could amount to illegal discrimination. Minton’s case may soon be heard by the U.S. Supreme Court, with ACLU SoCal attorneys leading a national team against Dignity Health’s appeal.



Mobilizing Activists and Voters for Justice

ACLU SoCal Youth Liberty Squad and Economic Justice staff engaging members and supporters on Proposition 15 during a five-part workshop in preparation for the 2020 Election.

As the ACLU worked nationwide to protect voting rights, the ACLU SoCal worked to educate and mobilize voters in California.

Ahead of the November 2020 election, we published our [2020 Ballot Guide](#) detailing the ACLU SoCal's positions on 11 key state and local ballot measures, and shared it with tens of thousands of ACLU members, email subscribers, and online activists.

Meanwhile, our ongoing public education campaigns helped inform community members about the powers wielded by sheriffs and district attorneys—as well as about when, where, and how to vote.

Most importantly, we harnessed the power of our volunteers and staff to mobilize not only ACLU members, but low-propensity young and minority voters across several Southern California Counties.

Using phone and text banking, mailers, and online engagement, we educated and mobilized 54,000 ACLU members and other voters across Southern California; of those we contacted, more than 52,000 voted. We also conducted a nonpartisan Get-Out-the-Vote campaign that reached nearly 90,000 low-propensity young and minority voters in Los Angeles, Orange, Kern, San Bernardino, and Riverside counties.

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Impact litigation cases
filed as co-counsel

18

Litigation and policy
research memos

8

Administrative
legal matters

5

Freedom of Information
Act and California Public
Records Act requests

4

Amicus briefs

Over 200

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We are grateful to our supporters in Southern California whose generous contributions create significant impact for millions of people nationwide. The following pages reflect financial figures reported on an accrual basis and unaudited at the time of publication. Audited financial statements made available by October 2021 at aclusocal.org/annualreport.

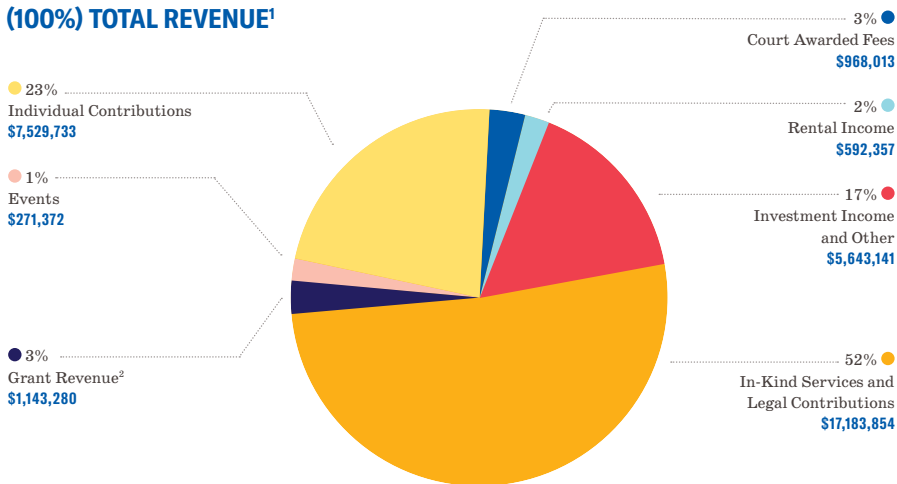
In order to follow current Generally Accepted Accounting Principles, the ACLU SoCal revenue includes in-kind services, including legal services and contributions. One key strategy to carry out our mission is partnering with legal firms who provide pro bono services for our impact litigation.

In FY21, the ACLU SoCal reported more than \$17 million in in-kind revenue—a value which is reflected in both our revenue and expenses for a total net change of zero. This is a significant increase

over last year due to COVID-19 related rapid response litigation. While our financial statements appear to show enormous growth, in fact the organization’s budget has not changed significantly compared to previous years.

\$33,319,935

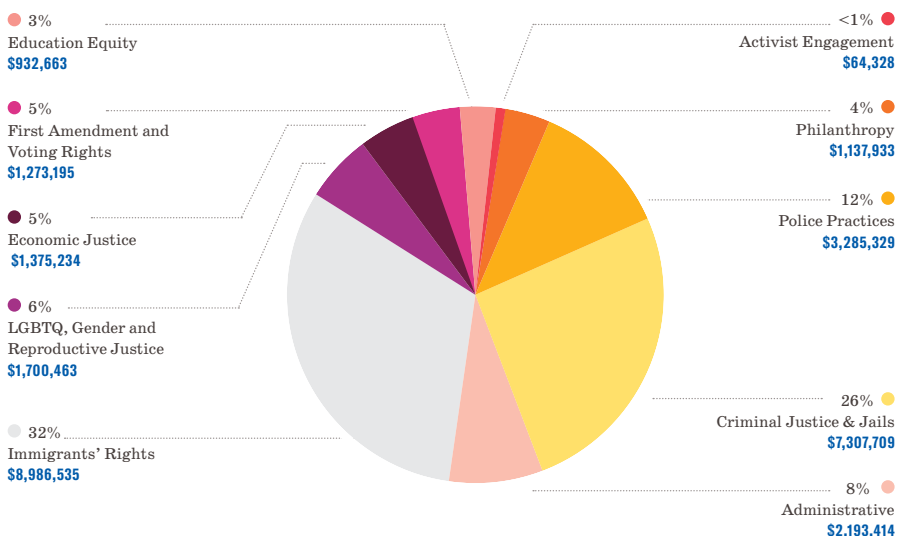
(100%) TOTAL REVENUE¹



ACLU FOUNDATION OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA | EXPENSES

\$28,256,803

(100%) TOTAL EXPENSES³

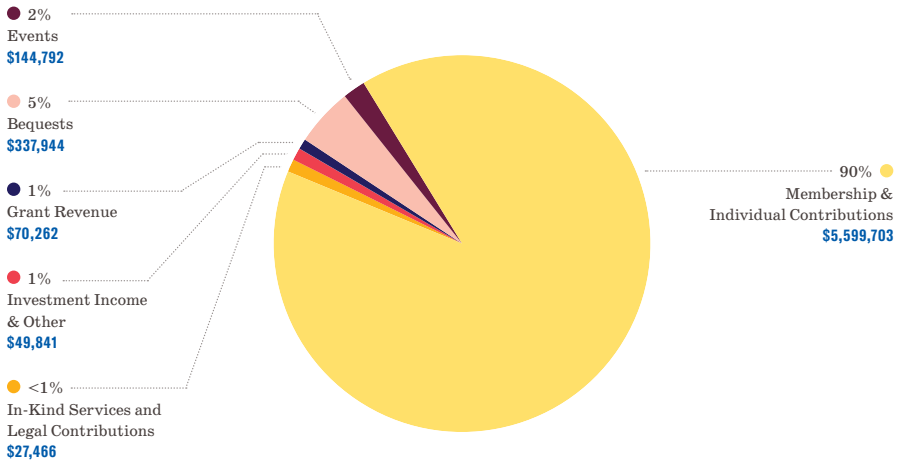


¹ Not represented in the above pie chart is a <1% decrease in bequest revenue (-\$11,815) due to changes in planned gifts.

² Grants awarded to the ACLU Foundation are restricted and earmarked for specific purposes.

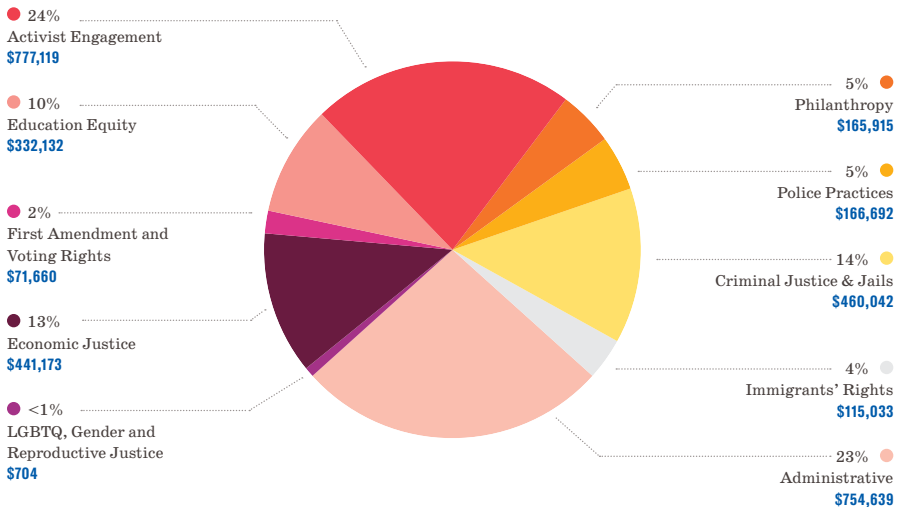
³ Total expenses include expenditures of grants and pledges made in prior years for FY 20-21.

\$6,230,008
(100%) TOTAL REVENUE



EXPENSES | ACLU OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

\$3,285,109
(100%) TOTAL EXPENSES



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See table below.

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Join hundreds across Southern California who have become members of ACLU's DeSilver Society, by naming the ACLU in their estate. To designate the ACLU as the beneficiary for part or all of your estate through your will, to name the ACLU as a beneficiary on your insurance, or to start a Charitable Gift Annuity, **call (213) 977-5254 or visit www.aclusocal.org/donate**

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