

WHY WE

VOTE

WHY WE

BUILD

WHY WE

FIGHT

WHY WE

THRIVE



**The Bus Federation Action Fund
2016 Annual Report**



WHY

Because our very democracy depends on young people having power when votes get cast & decisions get made.

ANYBODY LOOKING AT HISTORY CAN SEE – progress is driven by young people. From civil rights to women’s liberation, from the labor movement to just about every popular uprising from the American Revolution to the Arab Spring – young people are the spark, the tinder, and the fuel for fundamental change. No matter which party holds elected office, young people will drive change in this country. In the streets, at the ballot, and ideally both.

We are organizing our generation, because this nation must move forward, and our democracy must survive and thrive. This is why we vote. This is why we build. This is why we fight.



A Word from Our Fall Guy (aka Executive Director)

Why? For our own futures. For our family and friends. Because we owe it folks who came before. Because in the words of Edward Abbey, “Sentiment without action is the ruin of the soul.”

When I first started organizing as a teenager in 2002, I began dreaming of a world where young people have a real seat at the table. A world where young people can declare #ByeAnita and bring Chicago a new prosecutor. A world where our generation turning out in force brings down housing costs and expands transit systems. A world young people in Oregon convince their state’s power players to try out their crazy automatic voter registration idea and give the power of the vote to 97,184 as soon as the system launches. Even in troubling times, I’m watching that world emerge.

This is my last year at the Bus Federation. It’s bittersweet to leave in the midst of so much change. 2016 was full of inspiring stories and heartbreaking ones, triumphant victories and lots and lots of tears. At this time, we have to keep pushing ahead; our network is moving through an incredible set of changes big and small to address the needs of our nation and our generation. Thanks for being with us on each step of this journey.

Onward,

Matt Singer, Bus Federation Executive Director & Fall Guy

**Young people
accomplished
so much in 2016.**

**Young people
have so much
more to do.**

**Young people
can be trusted
to get it done.**





WHY WE

The future of American leadership, leading America to the future – right now.

IN OUR FEDERATION, young people run the show – setting the goals, calling the shots, doing the work, scheming up the memes, you name it. Every federation program gets planned and executed by someone young. We forge unmatched new leaders because we give them the chance to be powerful.

In 2016, our network welcomed an incredible crop of new leaders – wayyyyyy too many to name. But we'll give you a peak at a few choice champions.



WASHINGTON



OHIO

So many leaders trained!

445 fellows & interns graduated with with a full spectrum of organizing experience, to be exact!



TEXAS

New Affiliates

2016 saw the Bus Federation's reach expand into the deserts of Arizona and the manatee-filled waters of Miami, Florida. Our network now unites youth organizing from piney mountains of the northwest to the beaches of the southeast – all pushing for young people power together.

La Machine

Started by DREAMers with an uncommon instinct for field organizing, La Machine played a key role in lifting youth and Latinx voices in Maricopa County in 2016. They helped put a measure to raise the minimum wage on the ballot, and educated young voters to get it over the top; helped defeat racist sheriff Joe Arpaio, and trained a dazzling squad of young high school and college students who will carve out power in the Grand Canyon State.



Engage Miami

If Will Smith, Gloria Estefan, and Pitbull have taught us anything, it's that Miami is the place to be if you want to stir things up. Lucky thing, an extraordinary crew of young organizers, activists, artists, and social justice lawyers came together to found Engage Miami – and they're already changing things. From winning landmark campaign finance transparency policy, to registering 4,699 young people to vote for 2016, Engage Miami's youth power has arrived in the 305.

WHY WE VOTE

When Millennials
are deeply engaged,
change happens.
That's just what we do.

MILLENNIALS ARE THE LARGEST, most diverse, and most justice-loving generation in American history. We've created powerful, culture-shifting social movements from Occupy Wall Street, to the DREAMers, to #BlackLivesMatter. When we take to the streets AND the voting booth in big numbers, we transform what's possible.

The Bus Federation runs straight-up huge vote education and turnout, and tears down age-old barriers to the ballot. We launched the American Voter Guide – already one of our country's largest youth voter education efforts. We engaged and educated so many young voters it'll give you whiplash. Plus, we led the charge to bring automatic voter registration to America, and helped make it a record-shattering success.

The American Voter Guide Has Arrived ✈

Today's young Americans hold arguably the most progressive values of any generation ever – when they're engaged fully, they transform the political center of their communities. Trouble is, many young voters are skeptical of the electoral process because they don't see a difference between candidates & don't trust most public information. Enter the American Voter Guide - a simple, user-friendly print and online guide that shows where candidates land on issues that matter to young people. Tested in 2014 and 2015 with Bus affiliates (including an experiment that showed a 1% turnout effect), we expanded the program nationwide in 2016.

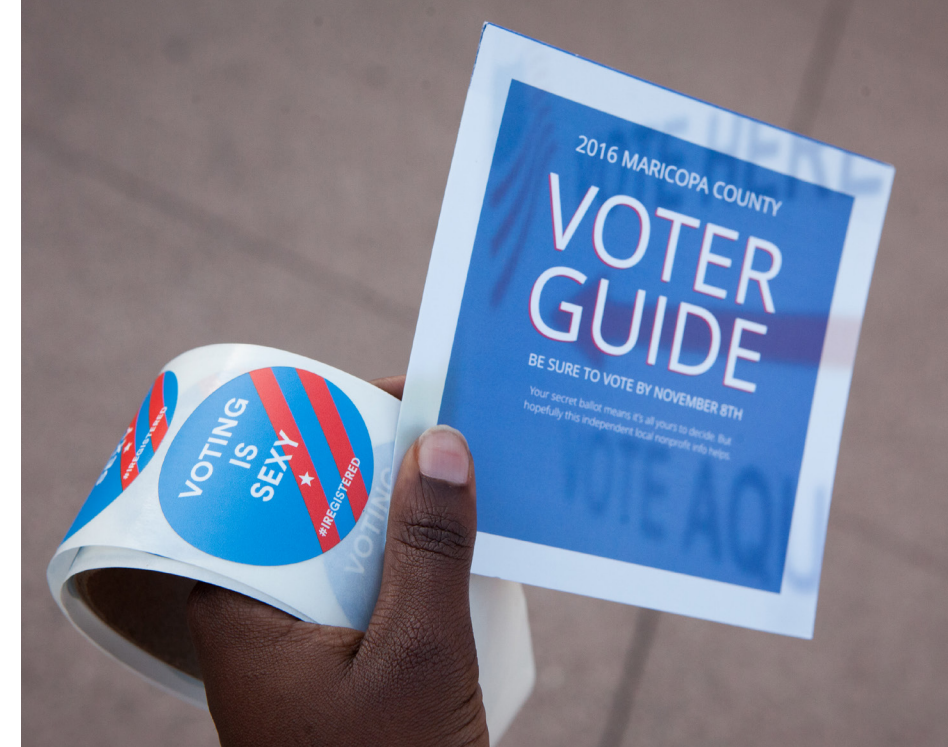


Some Sweet Turnout Experimentation

We don't do just dope work – we test it, and learn from it. In 2016, we ran two major turnout experiments. We don't have the results in yet, but we'll tell you what we know.

Messaging Turnout Experiment ✈

Knowing that young voters are motivated by issues, and need some convincing that voting can effect major change, we tested the hypothesis that showing young people telling the stories of how collective youth power in elections changed their communities. Featuring the #ByeAnita Cook County prosecutor's race and Boulder Local Power energy fight victories, we ran a web ad experiment in Election Day Registration and Automatic Voter Registration States to determine the effects of these messages on turnout. Results are coming in early spring.



American Voter Guide by the Numbers

1,506,276

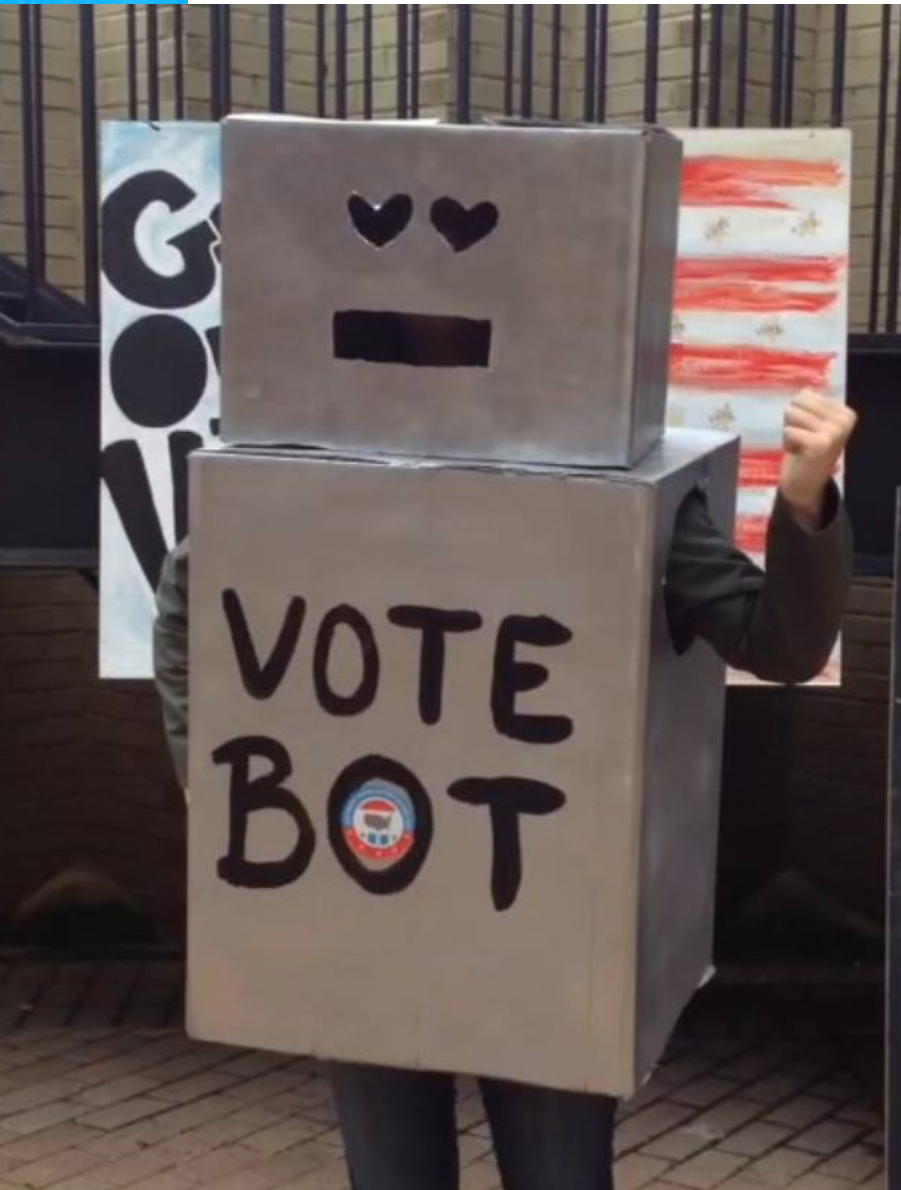
guide distributed to
young voters around
the country

Partners in 21 States

Arizona, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Maine, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Texas, and Washington.

American Voter Guide Turnout Test #2

In 2015, we tested the American Voter Guide, mailing them to 18-to-29-year-old federal midterm voters in the historically low-turnout Chicago Mayor’s primary, and found a 1% positive turnout effect. Looking to confirm these results in an election with historically higher turnout, we ran another mail test to an updated 18-to-29-year-old universe in the Cook County prosecutor primary race, which coincided with the highly competitive Democratic presidential primary. Results will be available in late winter.



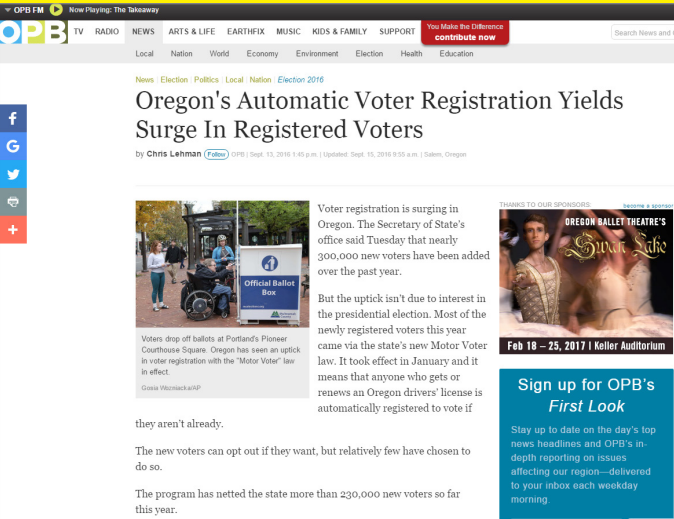
Making Automatic Voter Registration Happen ←

In 2009 the Bus Federation’s oldest organization, the Oregon Bus Project hatched a plan to break the barrier of voter registration once and for all – using state records to register every eligible citizen, automatically. After years of building coalitions across the state, pounding out the policy details, and donning cheap, secondhand suits at the state capitol, automatic voter registration became law in 2015, and took effect at the top of 2016.

Like any good scheme, this set off a chain reaction that led to automatic voter registration quickly becoming state policy in California, West Virginia, Vermont, Connecticut, and Alaska – a bipartisan policy that’s truly solving problems.

And it works. Like woah. With 97,184 new automatically registered citizens casting ballots, Oregon’s turnout of eligible voters grew more than any other state in the country over the last presidential election.

Our Federation + Automatic Voter Registration = Media Sensation



WHY WE BUILD

Check the record: When youth power organizations are strong, so are their communities.

THE BUS FEDERATION values local organizing over everything. It's our favorite. When young people organizing locally with the support they need, it fundamentally alters the course of their community. Voters engage more. Local leadership gets more diverse. Public policy improves. Food tastes better.

(Ok, we're not 100% certain about that last one.)

In 2016, some of our federation's newer affiliates came into their own, and some of our strongest groups shocked us with how much stronger they became. Here's a few examples:

Ohio Student Association: Power in the streets & on the voter rolls →

The Ohio Student Association first made their national mark with powerful responses to the police killings of unarmed Black Ohioans, John Crawford, Tamir Rice, and Tanisha Anderson. In 2016, they brought that power to the ballot. Resourced, supported, and committed, they multiplied their voter registration by 10x – from 2,008 last cycle to 27,359 in 2016. O-HI-O.



← New Era Colorado: Blowing voter registration goals out of the water

Already one of the strongest youth organizations in the country, New Era Colorado shifted into overdrive for the 2016 elections – DOUBLING their voter registrations from over 26,000 new voters in 2014 to over 55,000 in 2016. That's straight-up bonkers.

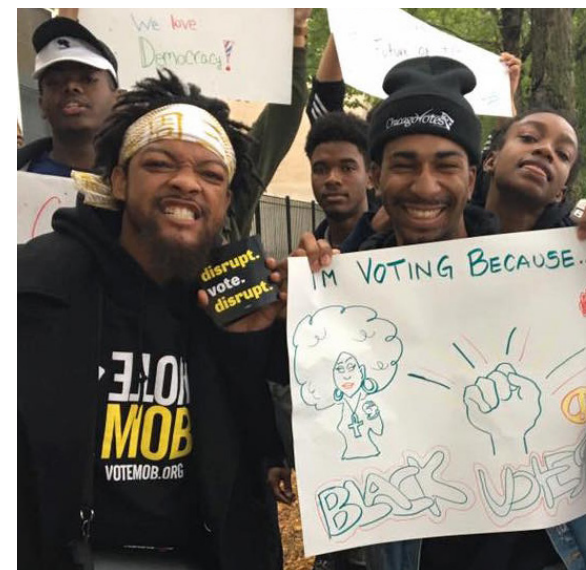
MOVE San Antonio: Growing Big, the Texas Way →

In 2013, MOVE San Antonio Foundation was an idea hatched by a few teenage college students in a coffee shop. By 2016, they have helped pass an LGBTQ non-discrimination ordinance, put body cameras on police, saved campus polling places and broke into the voter registration double digits with 11,322 young people registered this cycle. Yahoo!



← Chicago Votes: Transforming Democracy in Illinois

At the dawn of Chicago Votes, old fashioned voting laws and a corrupt political culture brought voter turnout so low it would win most Limbo contests. Enter Chicago Votes, whose successful campaigns for online voter registration and Election Day voter registration plus a ton of voter registration and mobilization, have helped Illinois make the second biggest turnout improvement in the nation from 2012 to 2016.





WHY WE

FIGHT

WITH AMERICAN POLITICS IN TURMOIL, one thing remains undeniable – organized youth power means wins for justice – and those wins mean more youth power. It's a flipping fantastic flywheel that offers hope for progress, and a model for reshaping policy possibilities across the country.



With our futures on the line, we line up wins to empower our futures.

← Raising the Wage

With our generation's economic mobility stuck in the muck, our affiliates poured their strength into building a path out. In Colorado, Arizona, and Oregon we engaged, educated, and turned out young people to support historic increases in the minimum wage – putting more money in the pockets of literally millions of low-income workers.



LGBTQ FTW ↑

We shouldn't still need to fight for LGBTQ rights, but dammit we do. With right-to-discriminate laws popping up around the country, we fought back and beat the bigots. In Washington, our organizing helped block a major anti-trans measure from the ballot. In Montana, we pushed for and won non-discrimination job protections for LGBTQ state workers. The fight is not over, but our folks are pushing progress forward even in tough times.



Defeating Defenders of Profiling & Brutality

While in many ways, 2016 felt like a setback for racial justice, our youth organizing helped carve out major wins against the forces of mass incarceration, profiling and police brutality. A powerful combination of hard-nosed direct action and hardcore electoral organizing unseated incumbents who had long thumbed their noses at justice. Young people launched huge protests and turned out in record numbers in communities to defeat prosecutors Anita Alvarez (Chicago) and Tim McGinty (Cleveland) who had both protected police officers who killed unarmed Black citizens. Perhaps most monumental, we played a key role in the coalition that ended the career of infamous racist Maricopa County Sheriff Joe Arpaio.

Affording our Homes →

With over ⅔ of Millennials spending more money on housing than we can afford, cheaper rent and transportation is basically do or die for us. We threw down on ballot measures to build a ton of housing that you can afford without being Mr. Monopoly. Both the Oregon Bus Project and the Washington Bus helped pass huge new housing packages, with Washington adding in a massive public transportation package to boot.



WHY WE

THRIVE

None of this is possible without your ginormous generosity.

YOUNG PEOPLE DRIVE this movement with our sweat, swagger, and seriously worn out shoe soles. But we basically can't do any of it without the open minds, hearts, and wallets of foundations, businesses, and individuals across the country.

You're so darn amazing we can hardly stand it. Thank you for all your support. We can't wait to build more with you in 2017 and beyond.



Great Gratitude for Glorious Giving

The deepest thanks to the generous foundations, businesses, and individuals who fueled our work this year.

American Federation of Government Employees

Cathy Lerza

Civic Participation Action Fund

Communication Workers of America

Denise Heitzenroder

Faye and Sandor Straus

Henry Van Amerigan

Matt Singer

Margie Roswell

Megan Hull

NextGen Climate

Sean Hinga

United Food & Commercial Workers International Union

United Steelworkers

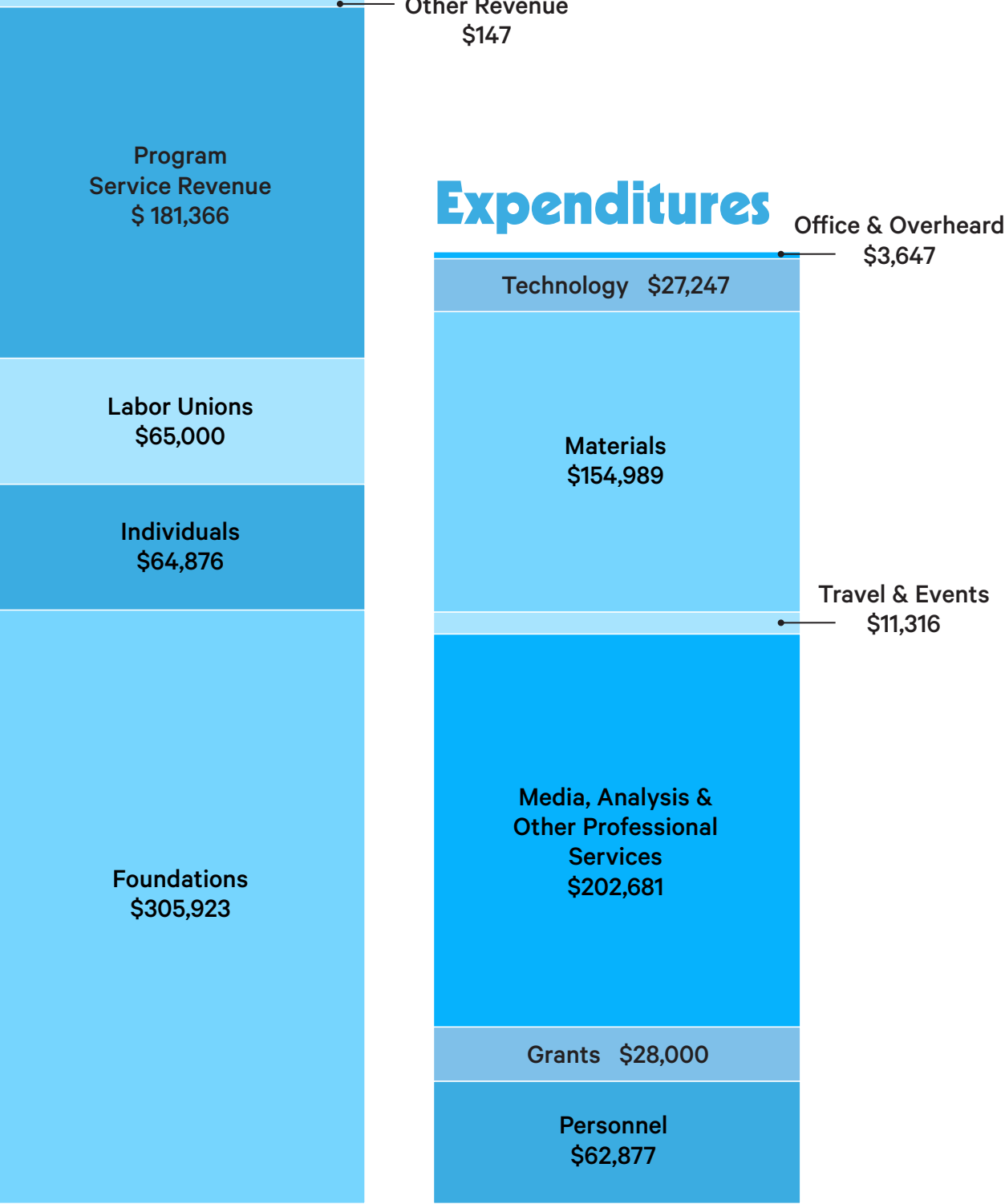
Youth Engagement Action Fund

SUPERFINE FINANCIALS

The financial information here has not yet been audited.

THE TEAM

Income



Assets

Checking Accounts	\$139,041
Receivables & Other Assets	\$62,023
TOTAL ASSETS	\$210,065

Liabilities

Payables	\$10,293
Deferred Revenue	\$40,000
TOTAL LIABILITIES	\$50,293

Net Assets

Unrestricted	\$74,394
Board-Designed Reserve	\$14,989
Temporarily Restricted	\$61,388
TOTAL NET ASSETS	\$150,772

TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS \$210,065

Board of Directors

Kurston Cook, *Chair*
Ben Wessel, *Vice Chair*
Kim Rogers, *Treasurer*
Alexandra Acker-Lyons
Nathaniel Parks
Andrea Cooper
Kelley Robinson
Chris Sloan
Pat Sweeney

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Henry Kraemer,
Secretary of States / Program Director
Daniela Lopez, *National Voter Registration Bae / National Programs Coordinator*
Andrea Marcoccio, *Bus Lightyear / Organizational Health Director*
Rita Ombaka,
Chief of Stuff / Operations Manager
Matt Singer,
Fall Guy / Executive Director
Sarah Stadler,
Big Bucks Hunter / Deputy Director
Stevie Valles,
Mr. Nationwide / National Campaigns Director

Many of the staff of the Federation and our Affiliates at a recent gathering in Portland, OR

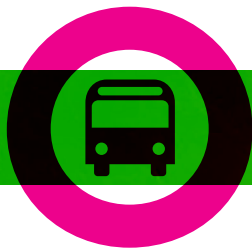


Our Majestic Mission

The Bus Federation supports and scales the work of local organizations, building a movement of young people, by young people, and for all people.

Our Vivacious Vision

The Bus Federation envisions a new era of locally-led democracy with inclusive processes and equitable outcomes, where lots of young people engage in democracy as voters, organizers, and leaders, making the world more just, more sustainable, and more awesome.



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