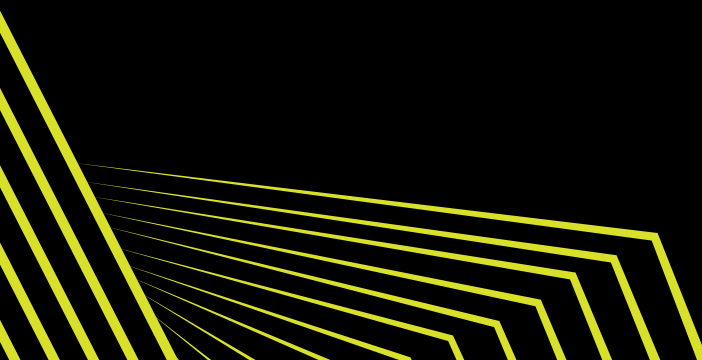


2023 // CELEBRATING EVERY WIN



END OF YEAR REPORT



EVERY DAY IS A CELEBRATION



This year began on a celebratory high as we closed 2022 being named as *The Tennessean's* People of the Year. The honor was given due to our unwavering and impactful contributions to ensure Nashville's present and future are driven by ideas, execution, and holding leaders accountable. We gladly accepted the recognition and basked in the incredible glow of what we accomplished. It set a joyous tone for another year of People focused power and progress. From existing fights to new opportunities, our work in 2023 remained rooted by equitable development, economic justice, and transparent policies that enable all residents to thrive.

STANDING TALL

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



What do I have to say about SUN's 2023? I can't help but smile and say, "Wow, we're really badass for public good!" Last year was a beast, but we put up a fierce fight and continue to stand tall because of it. Every campaign, call out, and challenge that we amplify leads to more Nashville residents becoming informed about what's happening to them. We channel that into teaching them to use their power to ensure that sustainable, good things happen for them and with their direct input.

Internally, our team spent the year in reflection and realignment. We intentionally celebrated wins of all sizes, held candid conversations, encouraged feedback and fun, and provided meaningful support to cultivate a better team and workplace. This focus strengthened our advocacy and impact for the public. We boldly opposed backdoor deals, corporate greed, and the ripple effect of harm caused by profits being prioritized over the People and good faith policy. I'm truly blessed to lead this capable and tenacious team in promoting a better Nashville for all, but especially the working-class, and Black and Brown communities.



"I can't help but smile and say, 'Wow, we're really badass for public good!'"

While this report captures key moments from the year, it does not fully encompass all of our mission-driven work or impact. There's more to what we've done and what we're positioned to do. I invite you to partner with us through donations and volunteering. Know that your financial contributions and time will position us to fortify and advance our efforts beyond what we've already accomplished.

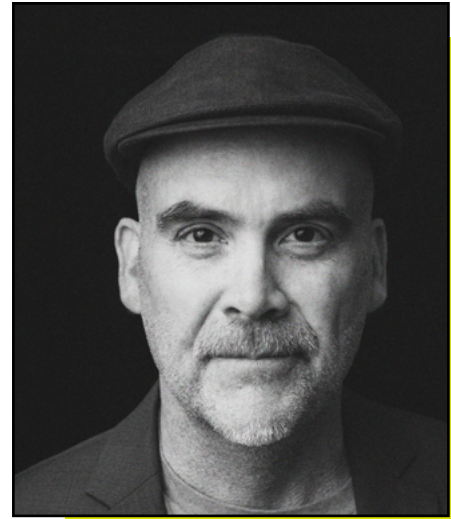
Thank you for your generous support in making 2023 a successful year, let's keep standing!

J. Odessa Kelly
Founder & Executive Director

THE WINNING TEAM



Odessa Kelly
Founder & Executive Director



Michael "MCK" Callahan-Kapoor
Deputy Director



Nate Carter
Director of Workforce & Employment



Bilal Tahir
Director of Power Building



Diamond Bell
Organizer



Isaac Swafford
Organizer



Emily Barrett
Researcher

STAND UP
NASHVILLE

THE TENNESSEAN'S
PEOPLE of the
YEAR 2022

The Tennessean named a mix of four individuals and organizations – including Stand Up Nashville, as their People of The Year of 2022. We received a nod for being a vital “builder” in the bustling, crane filled city. The statewide publication referred to honorees as, “the people who are helping Nashville thrive and prosper” with “the goal of creating inclusive prosperity for all.” Yes, that’s definitely us.



WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Built relationships with over 2,500 Black, Brown, and working-class students and underpaid workers around better career paths

Organized 12 job fairs for Soccer Stadium First Source Hiring Program and MC3

PROVIDE TRAINING, CREATE CAREERS

Our partnership with Music City Construction Careers, an apprenticeship readiness program, launched the MC3 Apprenticeship Readiness Program at Maplewood High School for the 2023-2024 school year. The inaugural class of 21 students is learning essential life and workforce skills including financial literacy, workplace safety, and various trade careers. The launch ceremony included remarks from our Director of Workforce & Employment Nate Carter, Mayor Freddie O'Connell, Principal Dr. Sonya Brooks, and partner organizations Gear Up Nashville and Nashville's Building Trades Unions.

The students shared excitement for the program and the potential to earn income to build a better future for themselves and their families. Many of them were familiar with trade careers due to their family members, and expressed personal desires to have a viable alternative to college. Successful completion of the

readiness program will guarantee priority job and apprenticeship placement after graduation.

We're proud of the diligent work Nate has put into this program from securing the school partnership to finding a qualified instructor. In addition to the school based program, he was key in recruiting and graduating 78 individuals through the MC3 program in 2023. Seven graduates will go on to work with IBEW - a connection facilitated by Nate.

Nate and Bilal attended Community Change's National Convening on Infrastructure & Climate Organizing in Washington D.C. While there, Nate spoke on the Integrating a Good Jobs Agenda into Our Infrastructure Campaigns panel, where he discussed SUN's role in MC3.

MEDIA MENTIONS NewsChannel5

[Maplewood High School launches skilled construction career pathways program for seniors](#)

ORGANIZING OUR WAY TO SUCCESS

Organizing is the heartbeat of our mission. It is how we introduce, educate, and activate Nashvillians. We prioritized training and systems that have positively transformed organizing operations: building and retaining relationships, turnout and follow-up, demographic data, cost-effective and efficient software, and process improvement. A big highlight of the year was the establishment of our volunteer development and recruitment team. It can take a lot to compel people to show up and speak out on civic matters, but Diamond has flourished in building a solid organizing and volunteer base. We appreciate the lifeline of support that comes through phone calls, emails, text messages, community canvassing, holding signs, marching, petitioning, and sharing what's happening in our city.



PROTECTING THE CBA, PUSHING THE CAC

Our Community Benefits Agreements set the standard for demanding community input for projects that include public funding. These demonstrated efforts are ushering in a much needed era of creating new institutional norms for how policy is drafted, implemented, and upheld in Nashville. However, they are not without opposition - locally and by state legislation. CBAs should not be used as preemptive threats to conceal more greed and harm targeting our communities. Our CBAs are strategically researched and drafted to maximize public good by enshrining protection and progression for housing and economic development that serve working-class people and communities of Black and Brown residents.

We remain heavily involved in the Community Advisory Committee to hold NSH accountable to the CBA. In that spirit, congratulations to MCK for becoming the committee chairman! His organized and innovative leadership have improved efficiency, compliance, and progress. In October, the CAC held a charrette to garner input on the micro unit incubator space from micro-business owners. The conversations focused on uses, floor plans, and support services. Participants represented a variety of industries including beauty, crafts, food and beverage, media, and more.

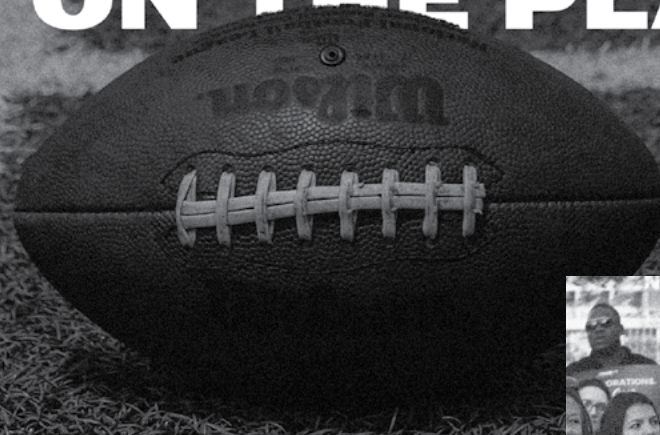


MEDIA MENTIONS

AXIOS Nashville

Tennessee bill targets community benefits agreements

TITANS STADIUM: FLAG ON THE PLAY



While former Mayor John Cooper and the majority of the Metro Nashville Council preferred piling on heavier financial burdens for taxpayers by pushing to fund a new Titans stadium, we advocated for a more democratic way – let the People speak and decide. Although the decision came down to a late night Council vote, they did allow the People to give public comments. Notably, most of those present and in favor of the deal represented out of county interests. The people who spoke in opposition to the deal were Davidson County taxpayers, educators, small business owners, and concerned residents. They expressed concerns over how the proposed funding would come at a loss for education, housing, road repair, and other vital city needs.

The outcome wasn't what we stood for, but the impact was. It influenced how voters evaluate candidates campaigning for the next election and how organizations consider coalition building. That's the power of the People! This undeniable impact led to SUN becoming a partner in Mayor Freddie O'Connell's How Nashville Grows committee, which provides recommendations for the East Bank.



MEDIA MENTIONS

Tennessean.

[Stand Up Nashville: New Titans stadium on East Bank not among crowd's top priorities](#)



[Community members want answers before Nashville commits to a new Titans stadium](#)

#MUSICCITY NOTNOISYCITY

During the peak of summer on July 25, we gathered community members and coalition partners to demand the Metro Council and Bristol Motor Speedway pump the brakes on their rushed expansion plan for the Nashville Fairgrounds Speedway. It was another case of a backdoor deal that lacked sufficient community information and input. The day's events featured a media-only walkthrough and well-attended community rally prior to the standing room only community meeting.

For us, the work began in 2021 when the deal was first announced. Recognizing the tired plays from the profit-over-people playbook, we conducted research by knocking on over 1,000 doors in the impacted area, and surveying 500+ residents in-person and online to get their input on the potential deal. The results revealed:

- 55% of residents do not want the racetrack to expand based on the current plan.
- 74% of residents stated they had "concerns" about the development with the top concerns being noise and traffic.
- Residents in favor of and in opposition to the expansion have concerns about what it means for noise, traffic, gentrification, and property value.

Ultimately, the public pressure moved BMS to shift its plan into park a few days after our actions. This was a huge community win! We especially appreciate our coalition partners South Nashville Action People, Neighbors Opposing Track Expansion, Citizens Against Racetrack Expansion, The Equity Alliance, Fairgrounds Neighborhood Impact Advisory Committee, Fair Board members, and other neighborhood association leaders for standing with us.



MEDIA MENTIONS

Tennessean.

[Nashville lawsuit targets state law that makes it easier to change Fairgrounds Speedway](#)

NewsChannel 5

[Fairgrounds Speedway - Stand Up Nashville](#)

TENNESSEE LOOKOUT

[The NASCAR race next door](#)



KNOCK, KNOCK: IT'S THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING CRISIS



“Affordable housing will not be achieved by one person, office, or policy alone. It takes all of us.”

A lot can be said about the “it” city’s affordable housing crisis. To start there’s historic discrimination, key terms, and hopes vs. harsh realities. We set out to explore the ins and outs of affordable housing through our limited series, *Home Is Where You Can Afford It: Nashville’s Affordable Housing Crisis*.

The powerful email and social media series has been well-received, with engagement and responses that pushed the series beyond its planned 7-issue feature. Readers have shared their personal stories of housing insecurity, low-wage jobs, slumlords and rental companies, discrimination, and **the aha moment of realizing they too are cost-burdened**. The attention led to this [WKRN News 2](#) story featuring BCL graduate Faith L. Walls.

It has moved the affordable housing conversation from being about “those people over there,” and revealed just how close the crisis is to readers’ front doors. So close that according to the Metro-Nashville Human Relations Commission, nearly 70% of Nashville residents fall into affordable or workforce housing.

We invite you to read the series and share it with your family, friends, and networks

[\[Intro\] Ringing The Doorbell On The Housing Crisis](#)

[\[Part 1\] Housing Discrimination: How’d We Get Here?](#)

[\[Part 2\] Housing Discrimination: Who’s to blame & shame?](#)

[\[Part 3\] Nashville Planning Department: We Asked. You Answered.](#)

[\[Part 4\] Affordable Housing 101: Affordable for whom?](#)

[\[Part 5\] The Real People Of Nashville’s Housing Crisis](#)

[\[Part 6\] Real People, Real Housing Stories: Hannah](#)

MEDIA MENTIONS

NewsChannel **5**

[Housing in Nashville – Stand Up Nashville](#)

KEEPING THE FAITH FOR HOUSING

Faith L. Walls learned of the Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute by way of The Equity Alliance's LiberTEA Collective program. She was excited by the idea of deepening her civic engagement through a board or commission, so she eagerly applied once applications opened for the next BCLI cohort. Today, Faith is a BCLI graduate who is making a difference working with her local councilman on community initiatives, and within organizations locally and throughout the country advocating for people with disabilities and living in public housing.

When WKRN News 2 reached out with interest in our housing series, Faith immediately came to mind. The Chicago, Illinois native moved to Nashville in 2019 and was surprised to find Music City "a little bit barren" when it comes to housing opportunities. "I have two degrees from Howard University, a Bachelors in Psychology, and a Masters in Educational Administration. I have been a school administrator; I have lived abroad in Sweden and done research, and I am in public housing," she explained. "I just want to move somewhere where there's a bathtub. You know, kids deserve to get baths at night; that's like a dream of a lot of parents to bathe their kids. That's not happening here."

Faith isn't alone in her plight. We have a clear crisis and the onus is on the city's elected and appointed officials, departments, and the developers who are favored with perks and profits to the disservice of Nashville residents. People like Faith prove there's enough room for each of us to create and contribute to the change we want to see. She works on projects that benefit her building and community, while hoping that ten years from now she's not still living in public housing, "I have that hope. I have that faith."



UNITING BCLI ALUMNI

The first Boards and Commissions Leadership Institute Alumni Network event was held in September for fellows from the 2021 and 2023 cohorts. The event created a space to foster deeper relationships, strategize, and allow fellows to support one another in getting appointed. Kenya Payne was nominated for the Industrial Development Board; Lisa Hammonds was nominated for the Health and Educational Facilities Board, and Antone Christianson-Galina was nominated for the Housing Trust Fund Commission; Lisa and Antone were elected to their respective boards by the Metro Council on November 21.

Applications for the third BCLI cohort will open in late 2024.



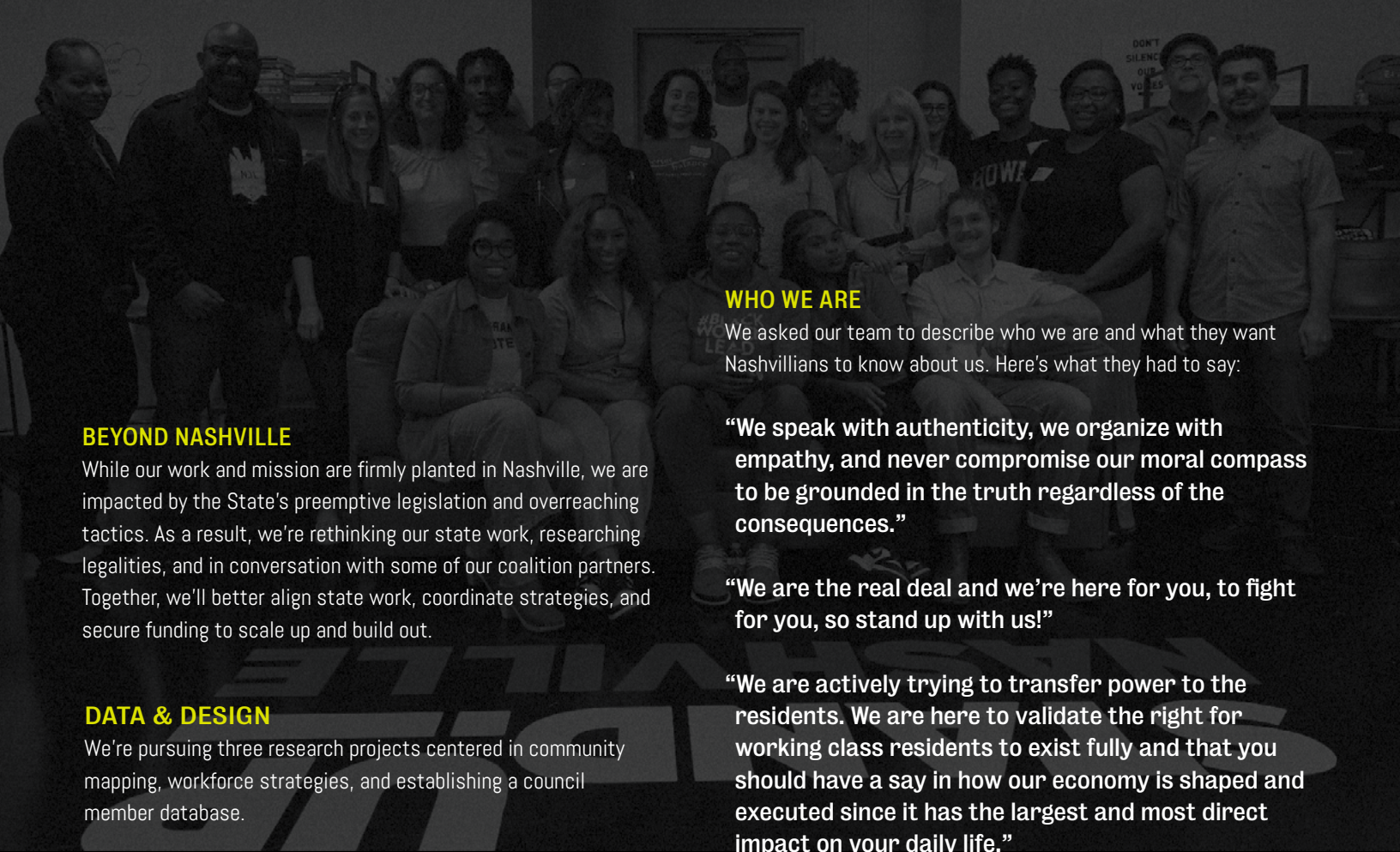
CUTTING DOWN STATE OVERREACH

We are the anchor organization of We Decide Tennessee, a statewide coalition of community organizations and local elected officials fighting against state interference in local decision-making. Isaac has done a commendable job with leading this segment of SUN's coalition work. We Decide Tennessee uses community education, strategic stakeholder engagement, and policy advocacy to empower local communities with the freedom to determine their own futures.

In 2023, we launched a [website](#) and released a [report](#) that we used to educate the public and to have conversations with 100 local elected officials across the state on this critical issue. We also helped stop harmful legislation, including a bill that would have undermined community benefits agreements.

While State interference in Nashville is not new, it has escalated in recent years. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, the State threatened to withhold funding for school districts that continued virtual learning. Earlier this year, it targeted Nashville with legislation to cut Metro Council in half, change the number of council votes needed to approve demolition at the Nashville Fairgrounds Speedway, ban community oversight boards, and takeover the Metro Nashville Airport Authority and Nashville Sports Authority. Every overreach is a threat to all residents, and an attack on the rights of voters and taxpayers.

Metro Nashville has since filed lawsuits against the State over the council reduction requirements, airport authority, and sports authority legislation. In late October, a three-judge panel ruled in favor of Metro Nashville in the airport authority lawsuit. The State has since appealed the ruling. The new ruling reinstated the previous board approved by the Metro Council, and included additional zoning power granted by the state law.



WHO WE ARE

We asked our team to describe who we are and what they want Nashvillians to know about us. Here's what they had to say:

“We speak with authenticity, we organize with empathy, and never compromise our moral compass to be grounded in the truth regardless of the consequences.”

“We are the real deal and we’re here for you, to fight for you, so stand up with us!”

“We are actively trying to transfer power to the residents. We are here to validate the right for working class residents to exist fully and that you should have a say in how our economy is shaped and executed since it has the largest and most direct impact on your daily life.”

In 2023, we said goodbye to Delishia Porterfield, our Director of Leadership and Advocacy, as she took her fight to the next level. We are so thankful for her incredible contributions and wish her godspeed in her new endeavors to build a city for all of us.

BEYOND NASHVILLE

While our work and mission are firmly planted in Nashville, we are impacted by the State's preemptive legislation and overreaching tactics. As a result, we're rethinking our state work, researching legalities, and in conversation with some of our coalition partners. Together, we'll better align state work, coordinate strategies, and secure funding to scale up and build out.

DATA & DESIGN

We're pursuing three research projects centered in community mapping, workforce strategies, and establishing a council member database.

A new look is on the way too! We're updating our website in anticipation of some top secret things launching at the top of 2024. The improvements will help us tell our story, welcome new volunteers to our SUNshine Squad, and provide a smoother giving process.

Donate to SUN

Thank you for supporting another dynamic year of SUN advocating, amplifying, and activating Nashvillians to boldly stand up for equitable development, economic justice, and transparent policies. Although the fights are relentless, we refuse to back down because the issues are too great of a threat to the livelihoods of working-class people, and Black and Brown communities. Please join us in securing more power and championing more wins for the people of Nashville!

[DONATE HERE](#)



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