

# THE POLICY CIRCLE

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



THE POLICY CIRCLE®

# DEAR FRIENDS & SUPPORTERS,



The most rewarding aspect of leading The Policy Circle is meeting remarkable women from around the country who are taking initiative, investing in their communities, and thriving as impactful leaders.

From Ithaca to Tampa, Bozeman to Austin, we had the great privilege of gathering with new and longtime Policy Circle leaders, members, and supporters this year who **inspired** and **motivated** our team.

**We are inspired** to provide relevant, relatable, and reliable information to our more than 11,000+ subscribers. The Policy Circle's dedicated team spends hundreds of hours researching and crafting multimedia Policy Briefs on a wide range of topics. **These Policy Briefs garnered more than 100,000 views in 2021.** With more than 60+ resources available, our members can host conversations with their long-standing Circles or gather stakeholders to tackle a particular issue in their community.

**We are motivated** to offer an even more responsive and flexible framework to meet women wherever they are in their civic leadership journeys. In 2021, The Policy Circle launched the **Civic Leadership Engagement Roadmap (CLER)**, a three-month experiential program that boosts women's understanding of America's founding principles and propels their ability to become more active in their communities. In 2022, we'll release a specialized CLER track focused on education.

The Policy Circle is seizing upon the undeniable awakening amongst women around the country who are no longer willing to stay on the sidelines. We are enormously grateful for the long-standing, generous supporters who fuel The Policy Circle's mission and impact. We are excited to welcome new members and donors who bring fresh ideas, new energy, and momentum to this growing tribe of civic-minded women in 44 states. We are thankful for our strategic partners who share their expertise to contribute to our Policy Circle Briefs and multiply The Policy Circle's reach.

As The Policy Circle enters its seventh year, we are cognizant of the immense challenges facing our country. We remain dedicated to building up informed, empowered women leaders who value innovation, personal responsibility, and community-based solutions.

The best is yet to come,

**SYLVIE LÈGÈRE**  
Co-Founder & Board Chair

**STACY BLAKELEY**  
Executive Director

• **94**  
CLER  
participants

• **87**  
Cents of every dollar  
donated to The Policy Circle  
goes toward programming

• **7**  
State  
Leadership  
Councils

• **56**  
Policy Briefs

• **350+**  
Stories of  
Impact

# BY THE NUMBERS

• **400**  
Circles

• **7,600+**  
Virtual  
programming  
views

• **100,000+**  
Policy Brief views

• **11,100+**  
Community members

• **18,500+**  
Social media followers

# MISSION

The Policy Circle informs and equips women to become more impactful civic leaders.

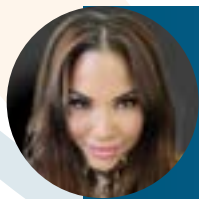
The Policy Circle focuses on three distinct pathways to build courageous and engaged leaders:

- We build knowledge
- We equip through community
- We launch local leaders



The Policy Circle's mission is to inspire, inform and equip women to become more impactful civic leaders. The Policy Circle is the only 501(c)(3) organization that provides women with carefully vetted information and a proprietary platform for civic engagement.

The Policy Circle is uniquely positioned to empower and inspire our members to become more courageous and credible problem solvers in their communities.



"Even if we think differently, we all think civically."  
- Jennifer Berman

# CORE VALUES

## We Take Ownership

**Ownership:** Leaders own their work. We encourage bold decisions, big picture thinking, and clear communication.

## We are Positive & Opportunity-Focused

**Positive:** We see challenges as opportunities and approach them with openness and positivity.

## We Exercise Empathy for People & Respect for Ideas

**Respect:** We exercise empathy to better understand other people's perspectives and show respect - even if we disagree.

## We Strive for Excellence

**Excellence:** Everything we produce must be compelling, responsive, and add value to our community.

## We are Passionate about The Policy Circle Mission

**Mission Driven:** We believe that public policies that unleash human creativity in an open economy lead to thriving communities.



“That’s what The Policy Circle is all about. It’s not just to raise awareness or give people information. Rather, it’s about what happens when people gather and give their perspectives and feed off of one another’s energy.”

- Sylvie Légère



# BUILDING KNOWLEDGE

Reliable and approachable Policy Briefs are at the heart of this mission. These balanced, fact-based resources prepare women to effectively engage in productive conversations and become catalysts for positive change. The Policy Circle Brief Library now includes 60+ multimedia, fact-based resources that are thoughtfully constructed to unpack:

- Historical Context
- Current Landscape, Challenges & Spending
- Proposed Policy Reforms
- Innovative Solutions Rooted in Entrepreneurial Values, Agency & Local Control
- How to Take Local Action



In addition to Policy Briefs, The Policy Circle provides approachable, timely, and flexible content through virtual and on-demand programming. Move the Needle virtual experiences connect our members with policy makers, industry experts, thought leaders, CEOs, journalists, authors, and other civic-minded leaders. With a growing YouTube library of topics ranging from government transparency to the First Amendment, these thought-provoking and insightful conversations give our community unique access to help inform their opinions and sharpen their focus. Most importantly, these resources are catalytic, with more than 50% of participants going on to take further action to learn and lead in their communities.

## 60+

Policy Briefs in The Policy Circle Brief Library

## 50%

More than of virtual programming participants go on to take further action in their communities



"I want to say thank you for creating a platform where we can learn, feel more empowered and confident, reach out to others who want to share their voice, discuss sensitive topics without fear while staying fact-based and spend purpose-filled time with friends."

- Dawn Lang

# EQUIPPING THROUGH COMMUNITY



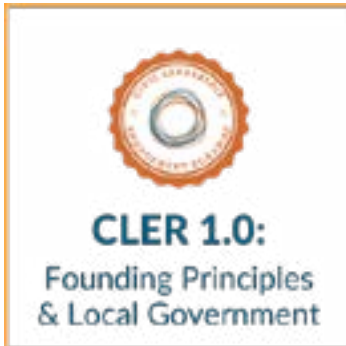
The Policy Circle provides a forum for women to gather and engage in solutions-oriented conversations that lead to local action. The Policy Circle's proven roundtable discussion model is designed to build social capital and ensure everyone has a meaningful opportunity to contribute to the discussion. Circle conversations provide an opportunity for members to step out of their comfort zones, voice their informed opinions, and connect with other civic-minded women to unpack complex issues. We learn from one another, find our focus, and, importantly, identify ways we can take action in our communities.

"The Policy Circle highlights what we can do in our communities, and inspired me to take action at the local level instead of waiting for the government to fix the issues."

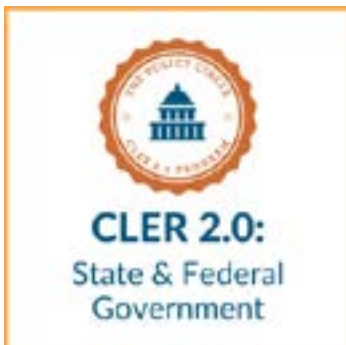
- Rachel Horton



# LAUNCHING LOCAL LEADERS



In 2021, The Policy Circle's **Civic Leadership Engagement Roadmap (CLER)** program took flight with 94 participants. Women from around the country, in every stage and phase of life, took part in this experiential, virtual 3-month course that enables participants to:



- **Strengthen their understanding of the U.S. Constitution & founding principles;**
- **Understand the civic landscape of their community and identify areas of opportunity; and**
- **Expand their influence by building relationship ecosystems and town hall relationships.**



"The Policy Circle's CLER program helped me determine how to leverage my experience to effect change in my community."  
- ZeNai Brooks



Each cohort includes approximately 35 members who gather (virtually) monthly for Policy Circle conversations, participate in 1-1 coaching calls, work through asynchronous learning modules (including a Hillsdale Constitution course), and engage with local policy makers to develop town hall relationships.

Due to the success of CLER 1.0: Founding Principles & Local Government, The Policy Circle launched CLER 2.0: State & Federal Government in 2021, and will launch CLER 3.0: Education in 2022.

# 94

Civic Leadership  
Engagement Roadmap  
(CLER) participants



CLER graduates are stepping up to lead and create local impact by assuming leadership roles in their communities. These informed and equipped graduates have joined or been appointed/elected to task forces, school boards, commissions, and councils. They have volunteered for elections and campaigns. They are credible voices who host constructive conversations, speak up at meetings, publish op-eds, and take on leadership roles in nonprofit organizations.

“CLER helps to reveal the community leader in each of us.”

- Madhu R. Anderson



# ANNUAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT

The Policy Circle's Annual Leadership Summit is a highly immersive experience where women can connect, expand their knowledge, and sharpen their strategic focus. At the Summit, policy experts and changemakers, as well as philanthropic, business, and civic leaders from across the nation share insights that inform, inspire, and challenge.

In 2021, the 5th Annual Leadership Summit focused on the **Confluence of Essentials: Power, Water, and Leadership**. Keynote speakers included Dina Powell, Tiffany Smiley, and Ina Kim-Schaad. Session topics ranged from board readiness and the power of coalition building to understanding sources of energy. More than 700 women participated in person and virtually to explore the interconnectivity between water, power, and leadership during 25 sessions featuring 34 thought leaders, industry experts, and policy makers.

Participants shared that they left the Summit feeling inspired, better equipped, and with increased confidence, skills, knowledge, and tools they need to better shape the future of their communities.



“This time was special for so many reasons but primarily because it was a gathering of really strong women of varying backgrounds who are motivated and empowered to be change makers in the world by uplifting and inspiring other women to own their greatness and pass it on.”

- Karith Foster

# 700+

SUMMIT  
PARTICIPANTS

# 25

SUMMIT  
SESSIONS

# 34

SUMMIT  
SPEAKERS

The Policy Circle's hybrid model enabled participants to join the Summit from home thanks to the interactive app, which allowed both in-person and virtual attendees to personalize their Summit agenda, attend virtual roundtables, livestream events, or watch them later on their own schedule. Importantly, even those who joined virtually had ample opportunities to connect with other attendees, sponsors, and speakers through chat rooms. The app garnered over 100,000 interactions over the course of two days and the recorded sessions on The Policy Circle's YouTube channel continue to generate views and educate citizens on the critical issues surrounding power and water in the U.S.

In 2022, the Summit will explore the pillars of thriving communities and identify ways we can each harness innovation to build more opportunities for all members of our communities to live healthy, safe, productive, and prosperous lives.



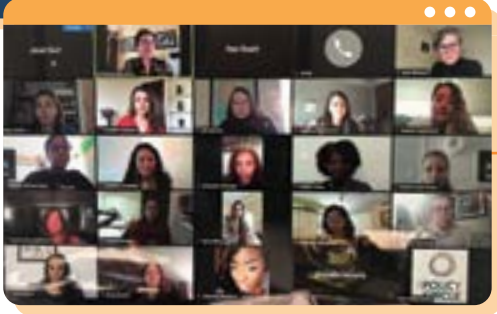
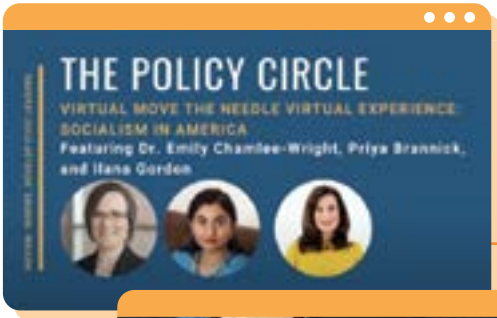
## 100.3k

SUMMIT APP ENGAGEMENTS



## 3,500+

VIEWS OF SUMMIT RECORDINGS



# JANUARY

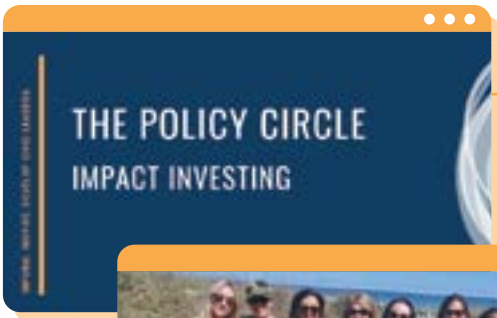
**Policy Brief:**  
Socialism

**Move the Needle:**  
Healthcare - A 2021 Prognosis

**National Advisory Council Activity:**  
National Advisory Council Inaugural Meeting

**Civic Leadership Engagement Roadmap:**  
Launch of Inaugural CLER Class

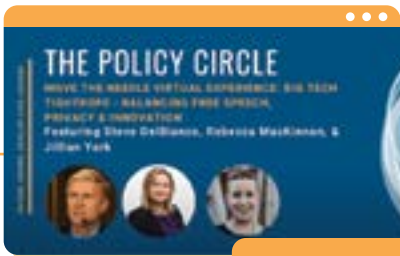
# YEAR IN REVIEW



# FEBRUARY

**Policy Brief:**  
Impact Investing

**Policy Circle Experience:**  
Ponte Vedra Policy Circle Experience hosted by Cathy Cranberg



## MARCH

### Move the Needle:

Free Speech Series: Big Tech Tightrope  
- Balancing Free Speech, Privacy & Innovation

### State Leadership Council Events:

Wisconsin Virtual Event - The Pandemic's  
Silver Linings: Policy Reform

### Policy Circle Experience:

Winter Park Policy Circle Experience  
hosted by Mary Beth Weiss & Michele Brauman



## MAY

**Policy Brief:**  
Mental Health

### Move the Needle:

Free Speech Series: It's Spreading  
- Identifying & Stopping Disinformation

### State Leadership Council Events:

Indiana Virtual Event  
- Public Policy Service and Action

### Civic Leadership Engagement Roadmap:

Launch of CLER 2.0: State & Federal Government



## APRIL

**Engagement Guide:**  
Understanding School Boards

### Move the Needle:

Free Speech Series: Class Dismissed -  
Freedom of Expression & Higher Education

### State Leadership Council Events:

Virtual Happy Hour/Gathering of All State  
Leadership Councils



## JUNE

### Move the Needle:

Understanding Mental Health in America

### State Leadership Council Events:

Michigan Virtual Event - Redrawing Michigan: The Battle for New Districts

### Policy Circle Experiences:

Policy Circle Experience hosted by Sylvie Légère and Stacy Blakeley at the 4-Word C-Level Forum; Colorado Springs Policy Circle Experience; New York City Policy Circle Experience



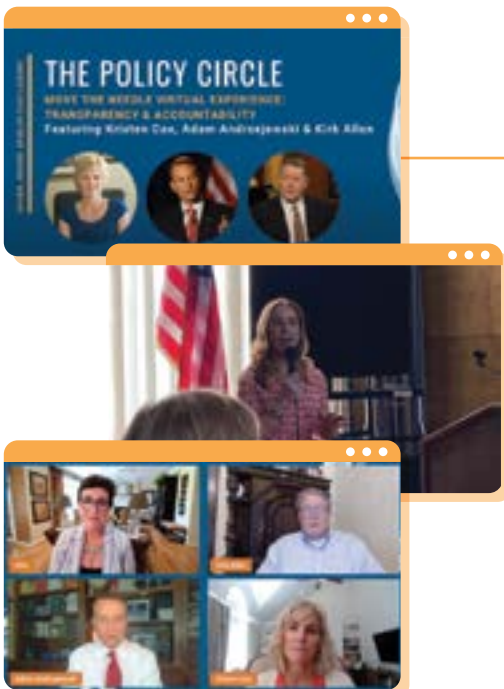
## AUGUST

### Policy Briefs:

Foreign Policy: The Middle East; Terror Groups & Rogue States

### Move the Needle:

Schools & Communities



## JULY

### Policy Briefs:

Migration Between States & Government; Transparency and Accountability

### Engagement Guide:

Business Guide to Civic Engagement

### Move the Needle:

Transparency & Accountability

### Events:

Bradley Impact Fund & Illinois Policy Institute Event (Janet Burt served on panel)

### Policy Circle Experience:

Detroit Policy Circle Experience hosted by Lisa Payne



# SEPTEMBER

**Events:**

State Policy Network Annual Meeting (The Policy Circle served as Programming Partner);  
Concordia Annual Summit (The Policy Circle served as Programming Partner & Sylvie Légère served as panelist);  
Annual Bradley Impact Conference (Sylvie Légère & Stacy Blakeley served as panelists)



# OCTOBER

**Policy Brief:**

Water & Power

**Move the Needle:**

Small Business Engagement

**State Leadership Council Events:**

Indiana Virtual Event - Energy & Environment

**Events:**

Greater Fort Wayne Women's Network Event (Janet Burt served on panel)

**Policy Circle Experiences:**

New York City Policy Circle Experience hosted by Sylvie Légère;  
Houston Policy Circle Experience hosted by Heidi Cruz, Shelley Rodgers & Cathy Cranberg;  
Greater Fort Wayne Policy Circle Experience hosted by Janet Burt



# NOVEMBER

**Policy Briefs:**

Energy and the Environment;  
How We Build A Brief

**Engagement Guides:**

Neighborhood Associations;  
Local Boards & Commissions

**Events:**

The Policy Circle 5th Annual Leadership Summit in West Palm Beach, Florida



# DECEMBER

**Policy Brief:**

Philanthropy & Civic Engagement

**Move the Needle:**

Civic Engagement & Strategic Giving with DonorsTrust & Bradley Impact Fund

# 2022 FOCUS

The Policy Circle community is composed of doers. This growing tribe of get-it-done women inspires The Policy Circle team and fuels all of our work here at The Policy Circle. In 2022, we are focused on providing timely, reliable, and highly useful information to you – our members, leaders, supporters, and subscribers.

To meet demand and ensure excellence, we are scaling at every level to further enhance our proprietary and flexible framework. At the end of the day, this is a movement that sparks informed civic engagement and builds impactful leaders.

## New Policy Circle Briefs

Policy Circle Briefs lie at the heart our mission to inform and equip women to be more impactful civic leaders. The primary goal is to provide our community with access to valuable and reliable information that boosts their confidence to voice educated opinions, shape policy, and take local action.

In 2022, we'll continue to expand the **Brief Library** by adding several more Policy Circle Briefs on topics ranging from antitrust law, Russia's invasion of Ukraine, the U.S. Armed Forces, to foster care, literacy, and crime.

## CircleUp America

CircleUp America (launched spring 2022) is a nationwide initiative designed to reignite in-person meetings and virtual conversations using Policy Circle Briefs and the Policy Circle Roundtable model. These quarterly experiences provide opportunities for existing Circles to reengage and for new members to experience how energizing these constructive, solutions-oriented conversations can be.

## CLER 3.0: Education

After the events of the last two years, many parents who historically deferred to experts or stayed on the sidelines of their children's education are now stepping up to lead. The Policy Circle, building upon the success of the Civic Leadership Engagement Roadmap (CLER) program's first two modules, is **launching CLER 3.0**, an education-focused module, in the fall of 2022.

## 6th Annual Leadership Summit - October 12-14, 2022

The 6th Annual Leadership Summit will take place in Fort Worth, Texas, America's second-fastest growing city, with a focus on **Building Thriving Communities**.

During the Summit, we'll hear from innovators, entrepreneurs, nonprofit pioneers, community leaders, and policymakers to explore the pillars of flourishing urban and rural communities. Most importantly, we will focus on breaking the barriers that prevent innovation and highlight tangible solutions that participants can take back to their hometowns.

In-person guests will join us at the fabulous Hotel Drover for a highly immersive and impactful experience. Virtual participants will have unique opportunities to learn and interact using an interactive platform for learning and engagement.



# STATE LEADERSHIP COUNCILS

The incredible women who volunteer to serve on State Leadership Councils are crucial to the continued expansion of The Policy Circle's mission by bringing community members together and driving engagement within their respective states through state-based programming.



- Jennifer Berman
- Casey Cathey
- Ilana Gordon
- Christina Bonarrigo Villamil



- Jillian Bernas
- Beth Feeley
- Glory Borgeson
- Sandee Geringer
- Janet Burt
- Stefanie Hood
- Vasavi Chakka
- Darlene Senger



- Katie Glick
- Lauren Hall
- Jamee Lock
- Amanda Muldoon
- Colleen Whiting



- Renee Amar
- Emily Mott
- Aly Rau
- Laura Seabaugh
- Cheryl Tolbert



- Kristin Fair Combs
- Monica Palmer
- Theresa Mungioni



- Kara Belew
- Ellen Troxclair
- Crystal Bonham
- Meg Tuszynski
- Robyn Johnson
- Tracy Young
- Stacy Smith



- Christine Czernejewski
- Colleen Coyle
- Ola Lisowski
- Laurie McCallum
- Robin Moore
- Leah Vukmir



THE POLICY CIRCLE®

# THE POLICY CIRCLE TEAM



**STACY  
BLAKELEY**

Executive Director



**JANET  
BURT**

Director of Programs  
& Operations



**NICOLE  
CLINE**

Director of Strategic  
Partnerships



**MADDI  
THAYER**

Events Manager



**COURTNEY  
LESSKIS, ESQ.**

Director of Policy &  
Communications



**BETH  
MCQUEEN**

Membership  
Engagement Manager



**CORINNE  
WINTERS**

Policy Editor



**KIM  
BORCHERS**

Associate Director  
of Civic Engagement



**OLIVIA  
MCCARVER**

Donor Relations  
Manager

# BOARD OF DIRECTORS



**SYLVIE LÉGÈRE**

Co-Founder and  
Board Chair



**ANGELA BRALY**

Co-Founder and  
Secretary



**KATHY HUBBARD**

Co-Founder and  
Treasurer



**LAURA COX KAPLAN**

Creator/Host  
She Said/She Said



**CAROL GREENE**

Consultant with  
Greene Advisors



**THE POLICY CIRCLE**

In 2020, The Policy Circle's National Advisory Council was launched to provide a forum to share insights that helps shape The Policy Circle's expansion, experience, and impact.

We're proud to partner with the following leaders:

**Cathy Cranberg**

Founder Authentic Agility Games,  
Business Leader, Community Builder

**Jessica Dean**

Senior Vice President, Bradley Impact Fund

**Rebecca Dunn**

Dunn Foundation, Trustee

**Meg Duke**

Supporter

**Jackie Emmet**

Supporter

**Richard Emmet**

Supporter

**Beth Feeley**

Senior Advisor, Woodson Center

**Elizabeth Fowler**

Director and Executive Vice President,  
Triad Foundation, Inc.

**Dawn Hoffman**

Supporter

**Ina Kim-Schaad**

Mental Performance Coach

**Blair Maus**

Supporter

**Melinda Oakes**

Executive Director, Triad Foundation

**Liz Orella**

Supporter

**Shyan O'Shaughnessy**

Supporter

**Jill Schram**

Schram Family Holdings LLC

**Anne Shane**

Education Advocate

**Anne Sinnott**

Supporter

**Stacy Smith**

Supporter

**Barbara Stewart**

Co-Founder,  
Bowe Stewart Foundation

**Mary Beth Weiss**

Supporter

# STRATEGIC COLLABORATORS





## *Thank you to our strategic collaborators for empowering our mission.*

*The Policy Circle continues to expand its reach and boost civic engagement around the country through strategic collaborations.*

*Working alongside subject matter experts, nonprofit and business thought leaders, and synergistic organizations, The Policy Circle produces reliable, accurate, and highly engaging experiences that bring clarity to complex and emerging issues.*

*We are grateful for our valuable partners, collaborators, and sponsors for their generous contributions of time, knowledge, networks, and resources.*

American Federation for Children  
Ashley Davis  
Badger Institute  
California Local Elected Officials (CLEO)  
Cinderella to CEO  
Colorado Women's Alliance  
Communities Foundation of Texas  
Dallas Doing Good  
Dee Haslam  
Diane Finnerty  
Dunn Foundation  
Edgar County Watch Dogs  
Electronic Frontier Foundation  
Enlightened Women of Northern California  
Foundation for Government Accountability  
Free To Choose  
Ina Kim-Schaad  
Jacquelyne DenUyl  
Jill Schram  
Katherine Gehl

Legacy Trust  
Lugar Series  
Making Your Mind  
Mary Beth Weiss  
National Charity League  
Network of Enlightened Women  
News Literacy Project  
Patriot Education Fund  
Ranking Digital Rights  
Respect America  
Respect New Hampshire  
SheFactor  
Stand Together  
Students For Liberty  
Teneo Network  
The Excellence Project  
Tom Smith  
Truth In Accounting  
Wirepoints

# STAY CONNECTED



The Policy Circle  
Brief Library



The Policy Circle  
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**INFORM.  
INSPIRE.  
BUILD CIVIC  
LEADERS.**