



2021 | Annual Report

Nothing focuses the mind like a global pandemic.

The last two years of extraordinary challenges — not just a public health emergency but a resulting economic downturn and disruption in how we live and work, with an electric grid collapse thrown in for good measure — renewed The Texas Tribune's sense of purpose. Our mission, always important, is never more so than at a moment when our fellow citizens need us the most. All over this state we love, we heard time and again in 2020 and especially in 2021 — when vaccine misinformation was rampant, when unemployment benefits were slow in coming, when the power was out and water wasn't flowing — that a reliable, credible source of news was literally the difference between life and death. And so we got to work.

Our nonprofit, nonpartisan news org has been in business for more than 12 years. We've raised more money to fund our operations than we ever had a reason to expect. We have a bigger total audience and more members than any time in our history. Our news reporting is sharper, more relevant and more accessible than ever. As promised, we've made Texans better informed and more civically engaged. And we've lit the path for like-minded folks from California to Maryland to follow our lead. It's so gratifying to see so many well-funded start-ups in place producing robust Texas Tribune-style reporting on politics and policy — in particular, on the largely invisible but undeniably important work of state legislatures.

Ah, yes: Our state legislature. So much of 2021 was consumed by a regular session and three special sessions, and we were there to cover it all. Our accountability journalism was essential during monthslong debates over abortion, critical race theory, voting and so much more. Of course, holding people in power to account is our job — nothing special or unusual about that — though these days it has a higher value. All of us understand the responsibility and obligation we have right now to our democracy. We serve the public interest, and it is most definitely served when newsrooms like ours keep careful, critical, skeptical watch over those in elective and appointive office. When we tell everyday Texans what their government is doing for them and to them. When we ask hard questions and demand serious answers. When we search for the truth and tell you what we find.

Another big occurrence in 2021: the arrival of our amazing new editor-in-chief, Sewell Chan. His first months on the job give me enormous confidence in his ability to lead our newsroom and make our journalism sharper, more relevant and more accessible.

I've said many times that we do this work for you — our loyal readers and supporters — but we cannot do it without you. Thank you for sticking with us. I hope you enjoy this annual look at everything that you make possible.



Sincerely,
Evan Smith, CEO and Co-founder

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Evan Smith'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

MISSION

The Texas Tribune is a nonprofit, nonpartisan public media organization whose mission is to promote civic engagement and discourse on public policy, politics, government and other matters of statewide interest.

NONPROFIT. NONPARTISAN. STATEWIDE.

The Texas Tribune is an established leader in digital-first journalism, devoted to informing Texans through in-depth investigations and rigorous enterprise, breaking news and beat reporting informed by data and statewide events. Our newsroom covers a range of topics, including public and higher education, health and human services, immigration and the border, transportation, criminal justice and energy and the environment.

We produce robust, nonpartisan journalism in a range of formats — including podcasts, original video, data visualizations, easily searchable databases and editorial events — bringing greater transparency and accountability to public policy, politics and government. Our goal is to raise the level of civic engagement in communities far and wide and to return civility to our discourse on the issues that matter.



On the national stage, Texas is a superlative: It's home to five of the 13 most populous cities in the country, has the ninth-largest economy in the world, produces the most crude oil of any state, has the second-highest public school and higher ed enrollment of any state and has the nation's largest contiguous border with Mexico. The challenges facing the nation are magnified here, from the state's sky-high rate of uninsured residents to its abysmal rankings on everything from voter turnout to high school graduation rates. On virtually every issue, and in its fast-changing demographics, Texas is a bellwether — "As Texas goes, so goes the nation."



Credit: Sophie Park/The Texas Tribune

THIS IS WHY THE WORK OF THE TEXAS TRIBUNE IS SO IMPORTANT. IN EVERYTHING WE DO, THE TEXAS TRIBUNE NEWSROOM STRIVES TO:

- Own breaking and developing stories on state politics and policy that have repercussions beyond the state capital.
- Hold those in power accountable for their actions while amplifying the voices of the people they serve.
- Write stories and produce projects that have a lasting impact and relevance to a broad audience of Texans.
- Share our journalism and resources widely and freely with other state and national news organizations.
- Connect and engage with our audience through the journalism we produce — on our website, through social media and at in-person events.

<p>AUDIENCE</p> <p>3,821,558 MONTHLY UNIQUE VISITORS</p> <p>41,549,127 SITE USERS</p> <p>9,339 TRIBUNE MEMBERS</p>	<p>THE TEXAS TRIBUNE FESTIVAL</p> <p>191 TOTAL SPEAKERS</p> <p>85 TOTAL SESSIONS (22% FREE)</p> <p>1.7M SESSION VIEWS</p>	<p>NEWSLETTERS</p> <p>172,939 SUBSCRIBERS</p> <p>MEDIA</p> <p>422 TRIBUNE STORIES PLACED ON FRONT PAGES OF 20 NEWSPAPERS ACROSS TEXAS</p>
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Texas hospitals brace for another surge

COVID-19's delta variant raises case numbers

Karen Brookes Harper

When Terry Scroggin left work at Tarrant Regional Medical Center in Mount Pleasant on Tuesday evening, there were five patients at the facility being treated for COVID-19. Overnight, six more people suffering from severe coronavirus infections were admitted to the rural Northeast Texas hospital — pushing the facility to its capacity limit and putting Scroggin, the hospital's chief executive, on high alert for what he's calling a fourth surge.

"We're at it again," Scroggin said. "That same night, hospitalizations in Bexar County rose by nearly 8%. Almost 300 people were admitted with severe COVID to local facilities on Tuesday alone, Bexar County officials said on Wednesday.

"These numbers are staggering and frightening," said Eric Kopy, CEO of the Southeast Texas Regional Advisory Council for Trauma in San Antonio. Hospital and health officials across Texas are seeing similar dramatic jumps, straining an already overstressed health care system that is struggling for workers in the aftermath of previous coronavirus surges.

In Travis and surrounding counties on Thursday, 34 patients were reported in area hospitals with COVID-19, a number not seen since late February.

In Dallas County, COVID hospitalizations have increased by 99% over the past two weeks, reaching 376 earlier this week. The local numbers are expected to hit between 800 and 1,000 by mid-August, according to forecasts at UT Southwestern Medical Center.

Overall on Thursday, Texas hospitals reported 5,662 patients hospitalized with COVID. A week earlier, COVID-

See HOSPITALS, Page 4A

11 issues on speaker

Gen. Greg Abbott has announced the agenda for the general legislative session that begins Thursday, making lawmakers in political hotspots that largely represent conservative voters who would meet out of the regular session.

The announcement of the agenda came just over 14 hours before lawmakers are set to convene in Austin.

The agenda includes Abbott's priority bills related to universal health care, as well as pushing back against social media "censorship," a ban on Texas and the U.S. and new changes to the state's schools. Most of the bills have already passed in the regular session and Abbott had previously vowed to reverse those he had already signed.

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Abbott's border security effort brings confusion

Overlapping agencies lead to unusual arrests

Jada McCallister

As the 61-year-old immigration man, who once worked within the state's border town of Del Rio, driving his truck with a gooseneck and working hard to get in the country, he was, indeed, quickly, being away from the border with a gooseneck. He had with people and police.

Under Abbott's new border security initiative meant to help migrants on the border, such as "transportation" and "housing" for migrants, the program was where county officials said a large majority of migrants were to be housed. The program was to be run by a private company's staff. At the border, the program was to be run by a private company's staff. At the border, the program was to be run by a private company's staff.



Power lines are shown Tuesday, Feb. 16, 2021, in Houston. More than 4 million people in Texas still had no power a full day after historic snowfall and single-digit temperatures created a surge of demand for electricity to warm up homes unaccustomed to such extreme lows, bucking the state's power grid and causing widespread blackouts.

'Seconds and minutes' from catastrophe

Texas nearly faced blackouts 'for months,' officials say

By Erin Douglas

Texas' power grid was "seconds and minutes" away from a catastrophic failure that could have left Texans in the dark for months, officials with the electric Reliability Council of America said Thursday.

As millions of customers throughout the state began to power restored after days of massive blackouts, officials with the electric Reliability Council of America said Thursday.

TEXAS FOSTER CARE

Judge: 'Cut to the chase' to fix system

Children still abused, neglected, report warns

Reese O'Neil

U.S. District Judge Janis Jack unexpectedly ended a hearing Tuesday afternoon in the decade-long lawsuit against Texas over the failings of its foster care system, saying it was time to "cut to the chase" and find solutions.

"All I want us to do is get together and find solutions," Jack said. "I'm not interested in sanctions or putting feet to the fire anymore. I just want these children to be safe."

Jack suggested the parties involved get together along with the court monitors — who have become subject-matter experts — to identify solutions to the ongoing issues plaguing the state's foster care system. Her court clerk said the judge canceled the hearing's continuation for Wednesday, as well.

For three hours, the judge, legal counsel for Texas foster children and state officials had been discussing new

See FOSTER CARE, Page 9A

Texans with disabilities fear voting will get harder

Group opposing legislation related to voting restrictions

By Alexa Vila

It took Nancy Crowther three hours, four public bus rides and an impressive amount of gumption to make sure her vote counted in the 2020 election. She's hoping Texas lawmakers don't make it even harder the next time.

With Texas Republicans determined to enact additional voting restrictions in the upcoming special legislative session, many of the voters have focused on changes that could make it harder for people of color to cast ballots. Less attention has fallen on another group of voters bracing for a steady stream of health care during the pandemic. But as Election Day nears, Crowther, a 64-year-old retiree, who could have been shut out of voting, is pulling up the city tea schedule and started mapping out how to get to the polls.

A former transit employee who worked on improving accessibility on public transportation, she pulled up the city tea schedule and started mapping out how to get to the polls.

See DISABILITIES, Page 4A

A TRUSTED SOURCE

Tribune journalists work to inform millions of Texans about the challenges we face in public and higher education, health and human services, immigration, criminal justice, energy, the environment, urban affairs and so much more. They deliver this important coverage through engaging storytelling forms, including vivid text narratives, striking photo and video packages and quality data visualizations. The Tribune's storytelling goes deep to break down complicated issues that matter to everyday Texans. As a result, those Texans have the tools to be more thoughtful and engaged — and not just at election time.

Here's a look at just some of what we covered in 2021 ...

REDISTRICTING TEXAS
Texas will gain two seats in Congress as residents of color drive population gains

Texas will have 38 congressional seats as a result of the latest U.S. census. It's one of six states to gain seats, and it's the only state that will get more than one.

BY ALEXA URA

WINTER STORM 2021
Texas largely relies on natural gas for power. It wasn't ready for the extreme cold.

Texas largely relies on natural gas — especially during times of high demand — to power the state. Experts say natural gas infrastructure, from pumping it out of the ground to the plants in city centers, was unprepared for the plunging temperatures brought by the winter storm.

BY ERIN DOUGLAS

TEXAS ABORTION RESTRICTIONS
Key U.S. Supreme Court justices express concern about Texas abortion law's enforcement

Six justices — including two who voted against blocking Senate Bill 8 when it first went into effect — voiced concern that other states could replicate the controversial law's enforcement mechanism.

BY REESE OXNER

Texas has new political maps. See which districts your home is in.

BY CARLA ASTUDILLO, MANDI CAI AND KALLEY HUANG

Texas lawmakers have redrawn political maps for the state's congressional, House, Senate and Board of Education districts. Republican Gov. Greg Abbott has signed these maps into law.

In addition to providing context on various policy and politics matters, the Tribune helps Texans better understand the how and why of important events happening in real time. The Tribune does this through a mix of breaking news, explanatory features, accountability coverage and service journalism. This continues to be evident through our work covering the pandemic, and this approach served Texans immensely during major news events in 2021.

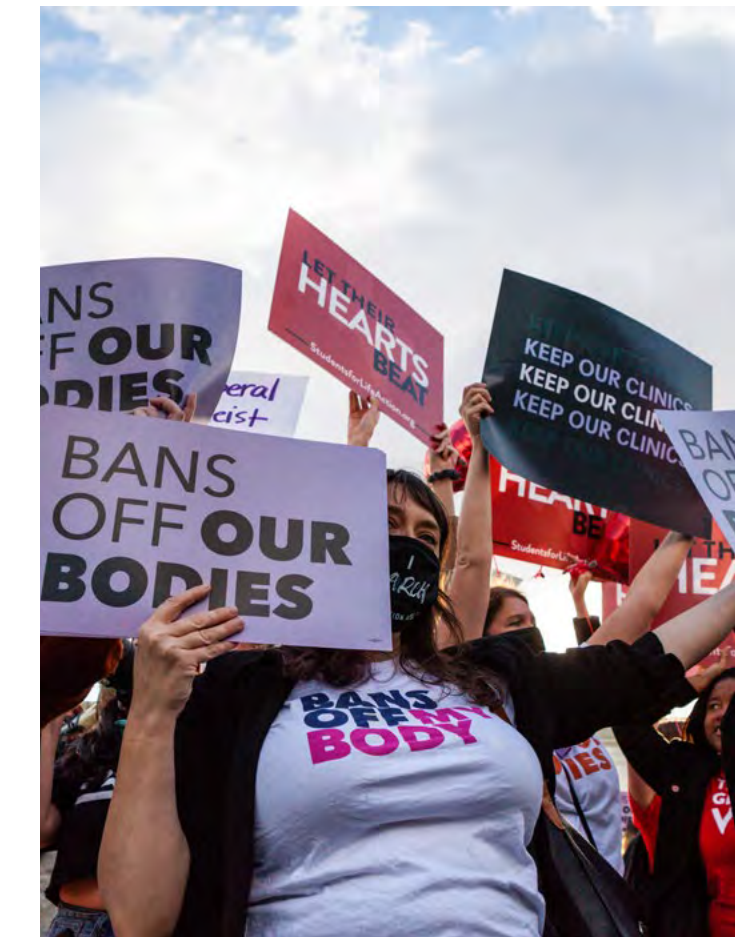
Just a few of those include:



Following up on the winter storm
 Credit: Jordan Vonderhaar for The Texas Tribune



Monitoring the Legislature, including the Democrats' walkout and redistricting
 Credit: Eric Lee for The Texas Tribune



Keeping up with abortion restrictions
 Credit: Allison Bailey/NurPhoto

The Texas Tribune-ProPublica [Investigative Unit](#) continued to take aim at corruption, injustice and malfeasance across the state.

A massive winter storm hit Texas in February 2021, unleashing a carbon monoxide catastrophe. An investigation by ProPublica, The Texas Tribune and NBC News exposed, for the first time, failures at every level of government to protect residents from carbon monoxide poisoning.



The lack of attention to the risks of carbon monoxide
 Credit: Laila Milevski/ProPublica

From charting the status of the pandemic to maps that show the impact of redistricting on communities of color, the Tribune's data visuals team told the stories of 2021 in easy-to-read formats that give clear context.

Tracking Coronavirus Cases and Vaccinations

Launched in 2020, our [COVID-19 tracker](#) was updated nearly every day in 2021 with the latest numbers on cases, tests, hospitalizations and more. We added data on vaccination rates and explored [vaccine access](#) by location, age and race. The tracker helped us explore why [more Texans under 60 died](#) during the delta variant surge this summer. We also started tracking [cases in schools](#) and [how full ICU beds were](#) in Texas.

The Toll of the Virus

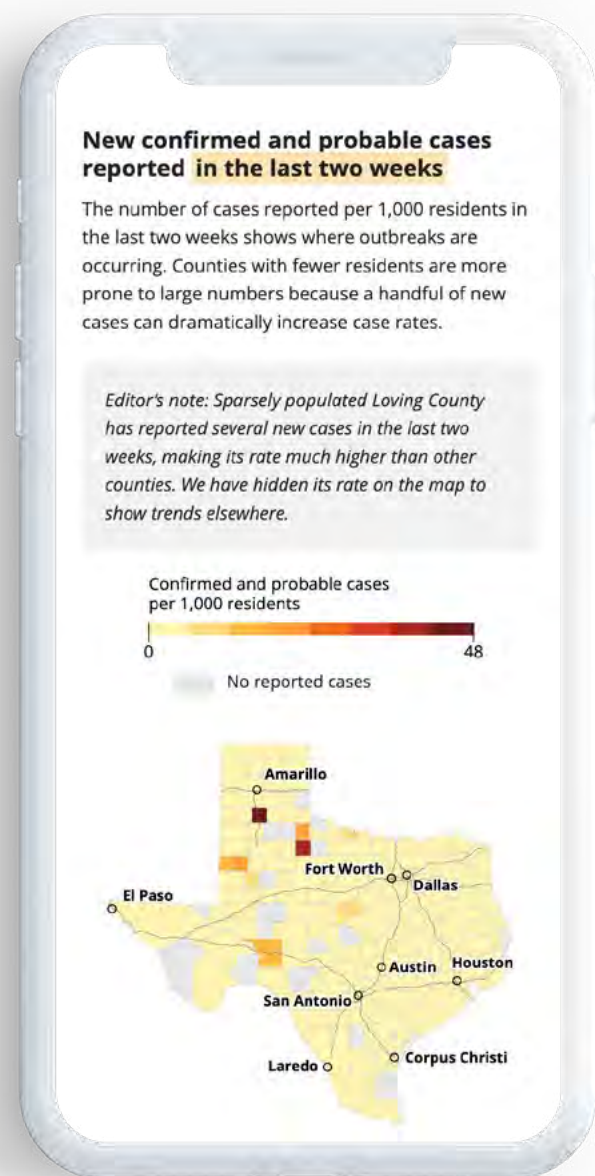
In March 2021, we marked an unfortunate anniversary: one year since the first person in Texas died due to COVID-19. As the numbers grew, we realized it's hard to comprehend the scale of the tragedy. We created a visual story that honors the [tens of thousands](#) of Texans we have lost because of the virus. This project was an effort to bring humanity back into those statistics. We followed this up by taking a closer look at the devastating toll the virus has taken on [nursing homes](#).

Winter Storm Consequences

February's winter storm knocked out power for millions of Texans. We tracked the outages and were able to show which parts of the state saw the [largest numbers of customers](#) lose electricity. We also created [a diagram](#) to show how the power grid works in Texas. Months later, we continued to follow the story. Along with NBC News and ProPublica, data reporter Ren Larson explored how the storm produced the [worst carbon monoxide poisoning catastrophe](#) in recent U.S. history and later looked at how [generators](#) can be particularly deadly. Meanwhile, senior data visuals developer Carla Astudillo drilled down on how much money the [energy industry donates](#) to Gov. Greg Abbott and other Texas politicians.

Keeping Up with Redistricting

In politics, lawmakers redrew Texas' political districts based on new population numbers [from the U.S. census](#). In the lead-up, data visuals fellow Jason Kao created charts showing how Republicans could [manipulate the boundaries](#) to their advantage. When the new legislative maps were released, we analyzed how the process reduced Black and Hispanic majority districts in both [congressional](#) and [legislative](#) maps. And afterward, data visuals developer Mandi Cai produced [several extremely detailed maps](#) showing the long-term effects this process will have on people of color across the state. We also published a tool readers can use to see how [their districts have changed](#).



Screenshot of coronavirus case tracker

Public policy and politics affect real people. That's why we view journalism as a service and believe growing our audience is about helping communities come together around the statewide issues they care about.

This was never clearer than in February 2021, with severe weather and infrastructure failures that affected all Texans and those who care about them. The week of Winter Storm Uri saw the highest on-site traffic of all time (4.3 million users), along with over 5 million readers on Apple News.

The rest of the year saw major activity as well; our website had a monthly average of 3.8 million readers — lower than 2020's peak COVID-19 and election traffic, but double that of our 2019 audience — and our off-platform viewership grew far beyond its 2020 heights thanks to continued efforts in republishing and syndication, with over 83 million views. Thousands of others consumed our journalism in their local newspapers, on their local newscasts, through social media and at the Tribune's statewide events.

Between the storm and the legislative sessions in 2021, Texas became an even bigger part of the national conversation, as 56% of our onsite readers came from outside of the state. Our top markets within Texas were Dallas-Fort Worth with 32% of our Texas audience, Houston with 25%, Austin with 18% and San Antonio with 9%.

Whether through social media, email newsletters, in-person events or livestreams, we continue to seek better ways to make our journalism accessible to readers statewide so they can engage more deeply with important news and events, as well as with the greater community of fellow Tribune readers and viewers.

2021 AUDIENCE BY THE NUMBERS

6.8M AVERAGE MONTHLY PAGEVIEWS

173K NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBERS

83.5M TOTAL OFF-PLATFORM REACH

366K TOTAL VIRTUAL EVENT VIEWS

NEWSLETTERS

We produce a series of newsletters to help our audience stay engaged and informed on politics and policy. They cover issues ranging from education to immigration to the economy and more.

Some of our most popular newsletter offerings include ...

The BRIEF

Delivered daily, The Brief keeps Texas voters and political observers up to speed on the most essential coverage of their elected officials, the policies that shape their daily lives and the future of our great state. The readership of this newsletter grew by 58% in 2021.

CORONAVIRUS IN TEXAS

From vaccination information to new public health guidelines, the Coronavirus in Texas evening newsletter helped Texans keep tabs on the latest pandemic news. This is a pop-up newsletter offering, with its frequency determined by the news cycle.



TOP STORY

Top Story Alerts deliver our most ambitious reporting to your inbox a couple of times a week.

The Texas Tribune’s impact extends far beyond our readers, serving hundreds of publications and newsrooms across Texas and the U.S. each year with content sharing and sustainability support.

Thanks to our supporters, the Tribune is able to provide original reporting and offer best practices in business to newsrooms free of charge. By sharing our journalism and offering training and information sharing to spark innovation, the Tribune sends ripple effects throughout the news industry and lifts up our peers.

PARTNERS IN JOURNALISM

Partnerships are an extension of our mission to educate Texans. That’s why we seek opportunities to collaborate with community and media organizations and to share our work with newsrooms across the state (and nation) free of charge. Our partnerships provide more Texans with Tribune coverage of state politics and policy and free up our partners to use their resources to cover more local issues.

STRENGTHENING THE MEDIA ECOSYSTEM



Now entering its third year, RevLab at The Texas Tribune is a training and innovation center that shares our lessons learned on sustainability with news media organizations across the country and around the world.

Through open source sharing and needs-based training, RevLab supports the local media ecosystem in a variety of ways to promote sustainability and innovation in the business of news. Since its launch, RevLab has supported more than 200 newsrooms, worked with hundreds of journalists and news leaders and helped impact sustainability of news organizations by facilitating training on revenue initiatives like grant writing, major gifts, membership, sponsorship and events.

RevLab helps direct the newsrooms, classrooms and startups that reach out to the Tribune nearly every week of the year to the right resources. RevLab staff supports innovation and experimentation projects at the Tribune in order to share learnings industrywide, and closely collaborates with colleagues in journalism to support organizations like LION Publishers, News Revenue Hub, The Lenfest Institute, Online News Association, Local Media Association and others to further the Tribune’s impact on news sustainability.

RevLab is funded in part by the Meta Journalism Project. For more information, email revlab@texastribune.org.



We share our passion for civic engagement through live and recorded events throughout the year, bringing together some of the state’s leading policy experts, public officials and community leaders for conversations on the political and policy measures that most affect Texans. Tribune events are interactive expressions of our journalism — showcasing our reporters and editors as experts in Texas policy and politics and bringing to life the award-winning reporting of our newsroom. The Tribune’s free events ensure that our journalism is represented across all mediums and, with the addition of streaming, reaches Texans in every corner of the state.

In 2021, we produced a variety of meaningful virtual events covering a range of subjects from immigration to energy and environment to public education, bringing Texans closer to the news stories that affect them.

Highlights included:

- Texas Tribune multimedia reporter [Alana Rocha spoke with U.S. Rep. Joaquin Castro](#) as he was in lockdown in his office during the U.S. Capitol insurrection on Jan. 6, providing real-time insight into the shocking events that transpired.
- State Rep. Craig Goldman and state Sen. José Menéndez [spoke with Texas Tribune CEO Evan Smith](#) about the Texas Legislature’s next steps following the February winter storm and the impact on the energy industry.
- Three medical professionals spoke about [what Texas did right and wrong in the pandemic](#) — and what it should do differently next time, moderated by Texas Tribune health and human services reporter Karen Brooks Harper.
- A [13-episode Instagram Live series](#) launched during the 87th legislative session helped Texans learn more about how what goes on at the Legislature affects their lives and the issues they care about.
- We also returned to in-person localized events with a four-part live conversation series called Batch O’ Politics, featuring [in-depth discussions](#) with prominent elected officials and newsmakers in Austin.



Social post promoting our IG live series



Virtual event with former mayor of Fort Worth Betsy Price

The premier expression of the Tribune’s live journalism and event expertise is the annual Texas Tribune Festival, a politics, policy and ideas event diving into the biggest challenges facing Texans and the nation. Each year, thousands of decision makers, industry leaders, community activists and students attend to take part in shaping the public conversation.

Our 11th annual Festival took place virtually from Sept. 20-25 and boasted many of the biggest names in politics and policy in high-profile conversations with leading journalists from across Texas and the nation. The all-virtual experience featured programming on critical issues impacting Texas and the country including the pandemic, voting rights, public education, health care, the humanitarian crisis on the U.S.-Mexico border, the fast-moving political landscape in Texas and Washington and the unsteady comeback of the economy.



85 SESSIONS
191 SPEAKERS
22% FREE SESSIONS
29,000 HOURS OF CONTENT

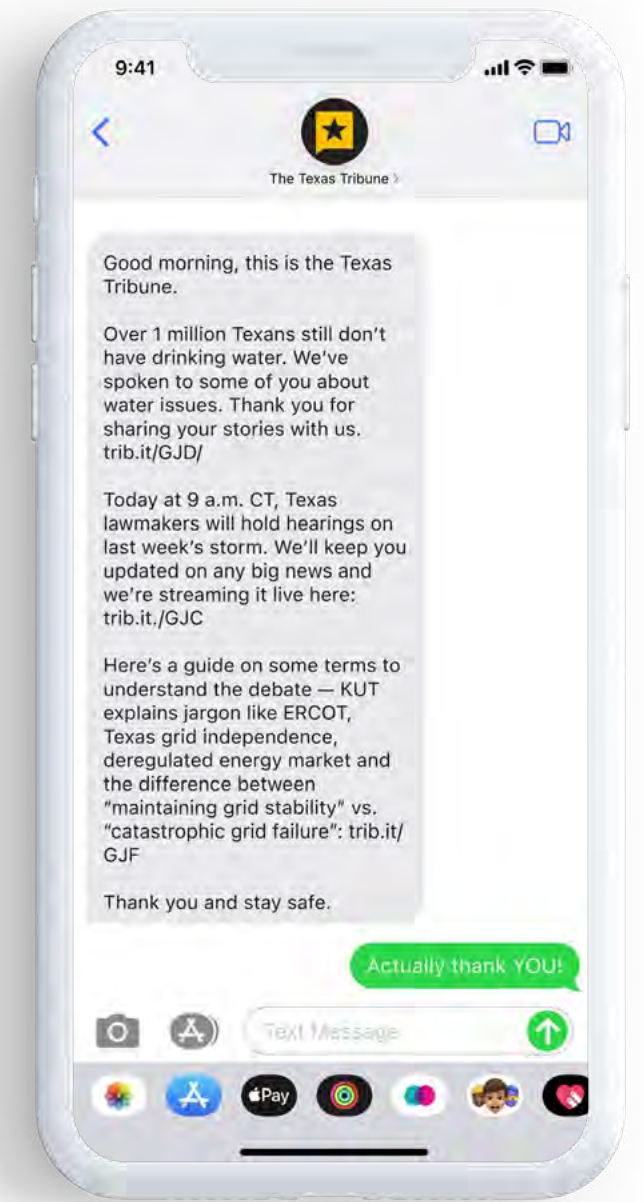
“I very much loved the entire experience. My family is immune-compromised and TribFest was a great way for me to pause, take a week and really explore issues that I cared about without worrying that I was going to put them in harm’s way.”
 — a 2021 Festival attendee

Our 2021 Festival received widespread praise and drew national attention for its ambitious programming, use of technology and star-studded speaker lineup. Conversations from the Festival broke news and were featured prominently by MSNBC, The Washington Post, The Dallas Morning News and dozens of other media outlets.

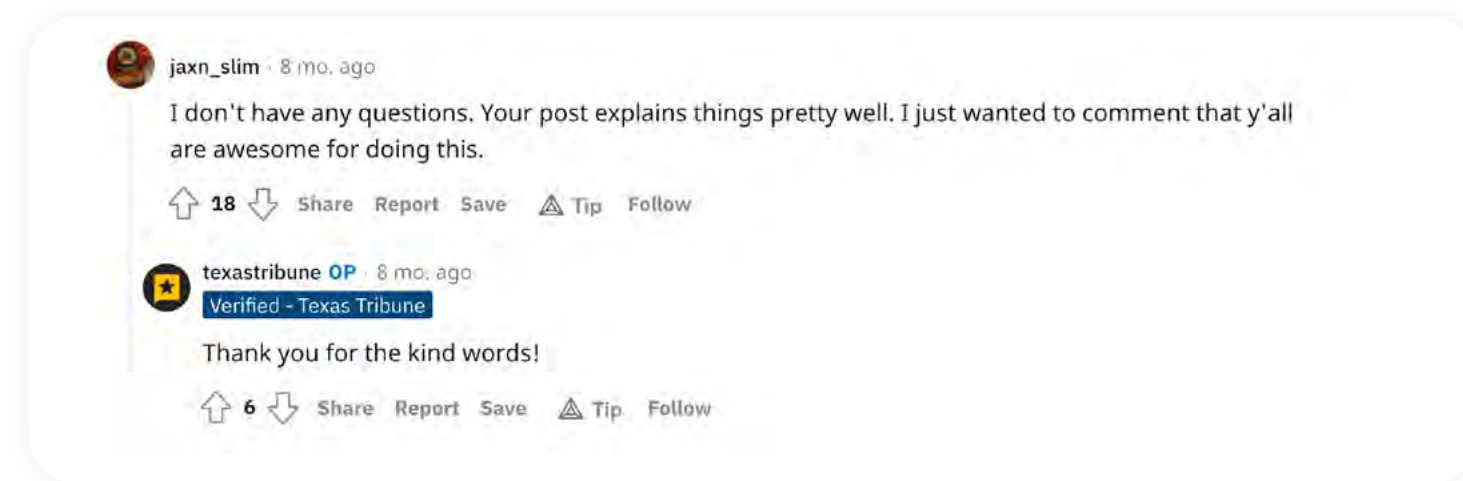
Our mission to engage and inform Texans means our work doesn’t end when we publish a story. We consider it our duty to actively engage our audience in matters of politics and policy, developing channels for meaningful discourse with and among our readers.

Early in the year, the Tribune served as an indispensable source of information during the winter storm crisis, distributing clear and accessible public safety information across social platforms and launching a texting line to fill gaps in the state’s response. We provided everyday Texans with the accurate and reliable information they needed in real time, as our newsroom worked to hold government officials accountable for what they were (and were not) doing on behalf of the state.

Throughout the year, we brought readers even closer to Texas politics and public policy. One example of this: Audience teams engaged with users across social platforms like Reddit and Twitter, hosting conversations on how lawmakers addressed the power grid failure, the latest on the COVID-19 pandemic and more. To this end, we also launched an Instagram Live conversation series aimed at engaging young and diverse Texans on issues related to the Texas Legislature, police reform efforts, LGBTQ rights, the impact of redistricting on residents and more.



Texting service in action



Screenshot of Reddit Q&A on environmental issues

We're proud that our readers value our mission enough to back it with their financial support as Texas Tribune members. As some of our most engaged readers, members tell us they give to our newsroom because they support credible, nonpartisan journalism. Member donations help ensure that our stories, multimedia projects, events and newsletters are available free of charge and that our newsroom has the resources it needs to stick with important stories.

Even through another year of a global pandemic, members did not let up their support. The opposite was true: The size of the Tribune's membership program grew in 2021, ending the year at a record high, having increased by more than 11% compared with 2020. Revenue from members increased by more than 18% compared with 2020.

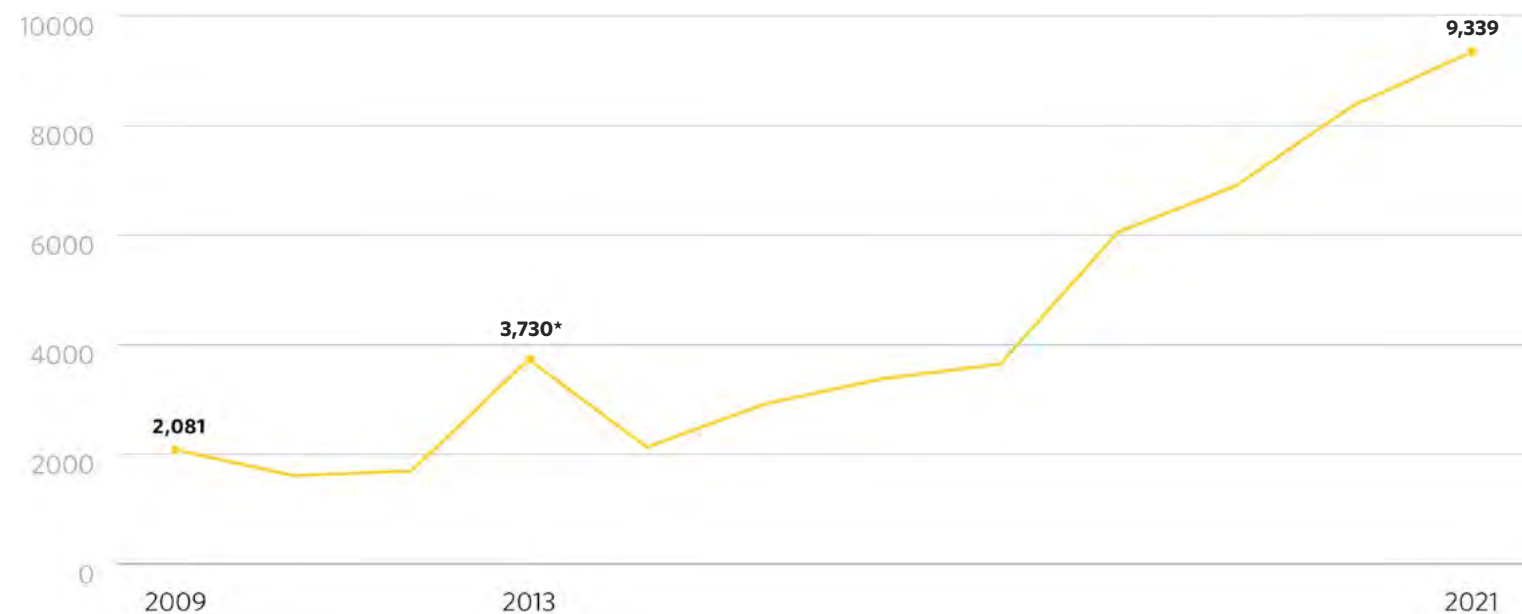
The most notable way members signaled the value they place on the Tribune as a resource was in their outpouring of support in February 2021. A significant number of Tribune readers from Texas and beyond became members, renewed their support or chipped in on top of their existing membership after Winter Storm Uri overwhelmed the state's power grid. Those donations directly funded reporting expenses and logistics critical to keeping the newsroom operational while reporters, editors and photographers were themselves experiencing loss of electricity and water.

As a greater and greater number of readers turn to The Texas Tribune for public service journalism and useful information — in addition to the insightful political coverage for which the Tribune's newsroom is known — it is critical for the Tribune's membership program to comprise people from all corners of Texas, spanning rural, suburban and urban areas. As our audience grows, our membership efforts will focus on reaching more readers across the state and building a stronger sense of community among our existing members.

"I'm a member because I know journalism is expensive and I think having an honest and reliable press to hold people to account and inform the citizenry is important."

— Rowan B.

HOW OUR MEMBERSHIP HAS GROWN



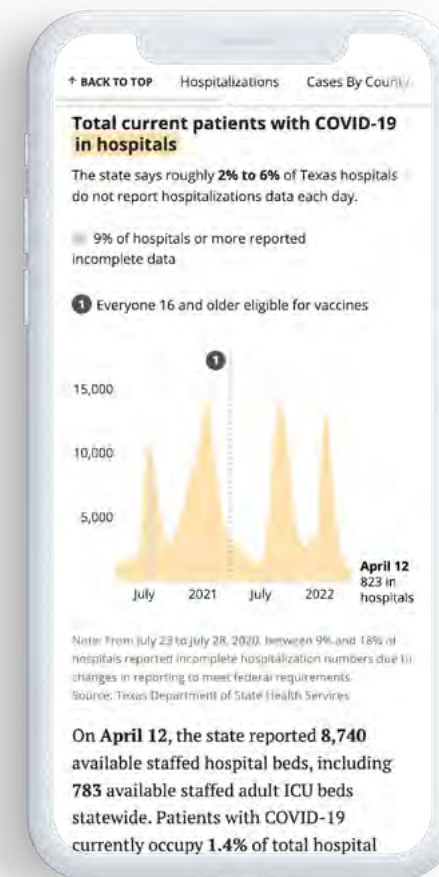
*We saw a spike in membership in 2013 after livestreaming Sen. Wendy Davis' filibuster

Our engineering, design, analytics and data teams worked hand-in-hand to keep our site and platforms sprinting along in 2021. Our website continues to load faster than any other publication in Texas — among the fastest, most accessible and reliable news sites in the country. Quick pages please our users, as well as Google, which elevates fast-loading sites in its search rankings.

Our stories look better than ever, too. Our new structured-story template was launched in April and immediately put to use during the several legislative sessions to break down complex topics and politics for our readers. It has served well beyond its original purpose, working as a template for big stories of all kinds, from explainers to liveblogs. Out of the nearly 2,000 stories published this year, we had 286 with graphics, maps and charts; 209 with audio; 54 with video and 68 with rich photo grids. Meanwhile, our Texas Tribune-ProPublica Investigative Unit produced stories that took our content management system to a new production level and garnered some of the highest engagement rates all year.

We also had many successes outside of our core website. Our news texting service launched during the winter storm added capacity for automatic republishing for our partners and improved the design and accessibility of our Apple News stories and digital republishing work. We also paid close attention to how our stories look before you click on them, adding date flags to older stories and smarter preview links in platforms like Twitter and Slack.

Finally, we worked on improving internal workflows for the newsroom and the organization. Several of our engineering fellows collaborated to launch a CMS integration for our source diversity project, which helps remind reporters to enter demographic information about the sources they used for their stories. We structured our corrections for easier handling, tracking and communication to partners. And we made many improvements to our publishing workflows, including more warnings about possible errors and tools for quick distribution of breaking news to email and beyond.



For years, [Texas Tribune fellows](#) have been an invaluable component of our newsroom, providing critical reporting on redistricting, elections, new laws, legislative sessions and more. And in the past year, they have reported on disasters like the COVID-19 pandemic and the deadly winter storm. They've shown us how [North Texans](#) are helping [Afghan refugees](#) settling in the area, documented the effects of Texas' [new abortion restrictions](#) and informed readers about [Texas leaders' response](#) to federal vaccine mandates — all while experiencing some of the most uncertain times of their lives.

In 2021, the diverse group of more than 40 fellows from 20 schools worked from all over the United States, with one even reporting to work virtually each day from the Middle East. Many represented private and public schools across Texas, as well as top programs at Columbia, Georgetown, Stanford, the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Yale.

The Tribune's fellowship program is internationally renowned. In 2021, The Texas Tribune was chosen again to host a fellow from the [International Center for Journalists](#), a global cohort of working professionals with diverse expertise, skill sets and backgrounds. The Tribune welcomed [María Isabel Gonzales](#), an award-winning journalist and podcaster from Lima, Peru, to produce the Tribune's first-ever Spanish-language podcast series, "[Pandemia 101](#)."

The Texas Tribune continues to support student journalists through a mentorship program. Tribune staff members volunteer to be paired with a fellow and commit to meet with them weekly to discuss career ambitions, offer job advice and be a sounding board for whatever is on their mind. Mentoring is one aspect of the fellowship program that brings students back for a second or third semester.

"Both of my semesters at the Tribune have been really great, in large part because of my mentors. They both supported me emotionally maybe more than they should've had to, but it's something I'll always be grateful for."

— Trinady Joslin, a fall engagement fellow

The 40+ fellows of the past year continued building toward successful careers. Their next moves include positions at such prestigious institutions as Politico, ProPublica, Google, The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Bloomberg, The Dallas Morning News, the Houston Chronicle and the Austin American-Statesman.

"There are few experiences in my college career that have been as personally and professionally valuable to me as my fellowship at The Texas Tribune."

— Neelam Bohra, a fall reporting fellow



Texas Tribune staff and fellows, September 2021

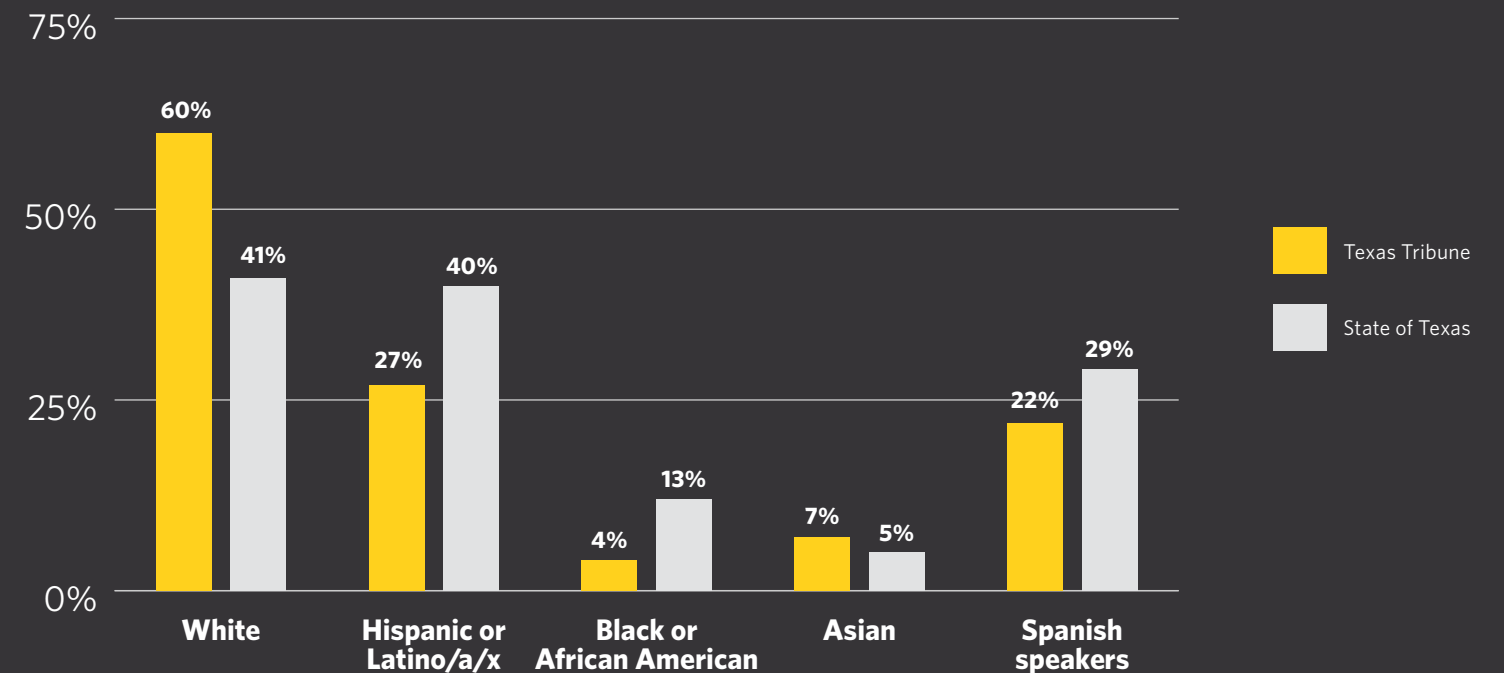
In 2019, The Texas Tribune announced our [plan](#) to better diversify not just our newsroom but our entire organization. Our intention, set out in our [strategic plan](#), is for our staff to look more like Texas — more like [the audience we want to reach](#).

This is essential to our success. Journalists from different backgrounds offer a variety of perspectives on how we cover news and what we consider newsworthy in the first place. From top to bottom, the Tribune must have a staff that reflects the demographics of a rapidly changing state. Diversity — not just in race and ethnicity but also gender, sexual orientation, socioeconomic background, disability and age — leads to better journalism.

In 2021, we've continued to improve our hiring practices to help us better reflect the state of Texas. We collect confidential applicant demographic data and we require that candidates from underrepresented groups are included in the interview stage for every job. We're investing more in recruitment efforts and advertising with professional associations that promote diversity. We're boosting our presence at conferences designed for journalists of color, with a goal of forming relationships for current and future job openings. We're posting jobs publicly and widely, working to ensure that the language in job posts doesn't discourage prospective applicants. Hiring committees — cross-departmental panels meant to ensure that a variety of perspectives are at the table — evaluate our candidates.

Here's how we're doing. At the end of 2021, 39% of staff members were people of color, compared with 37% in 2020, 33% in 2019 and 30% in 2018. That's progress, but we have a lot of work left to do to ensure that our mission-driven, nonpartisan newsroom is as diverse as it should be.

TRIBUNE STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS



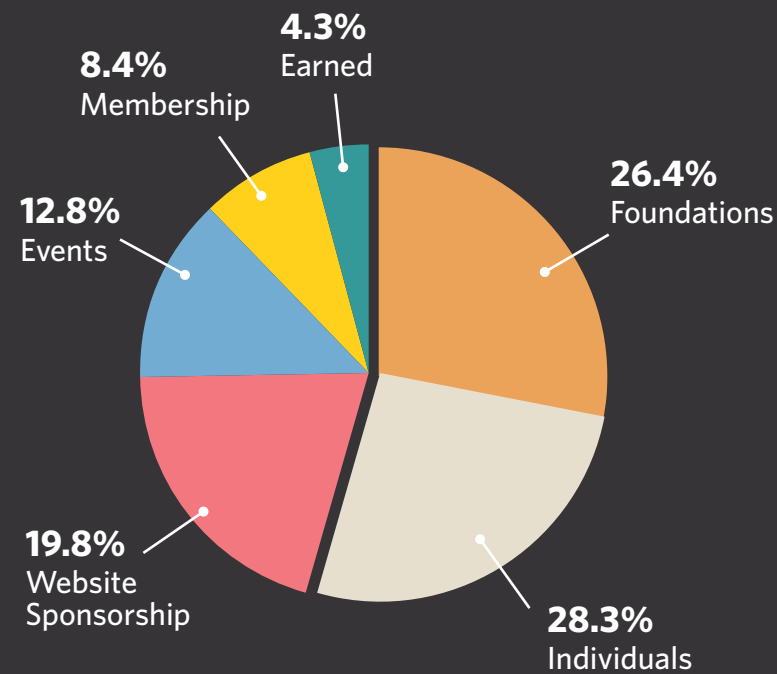
Sources: Tribune staff survey and U.S. Census Bureau 2021 and 2020 estimates

* People of Middle Eastern or North African heritage are not counted by the U.S. Census Bureau, but 1% of Tribune staff identifies as such. No Tribune staffers identify as American Indian, Alaska Native, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, but those groups make up about 1% of Texans.

As a nonprofit newsroom, we rely on the generosity of individuals, foundations and businesses to fund our great reporting. A unique mix of philanthropy, corporate sponsorship and earned revenue makes our important work possible — and sustainable over time.

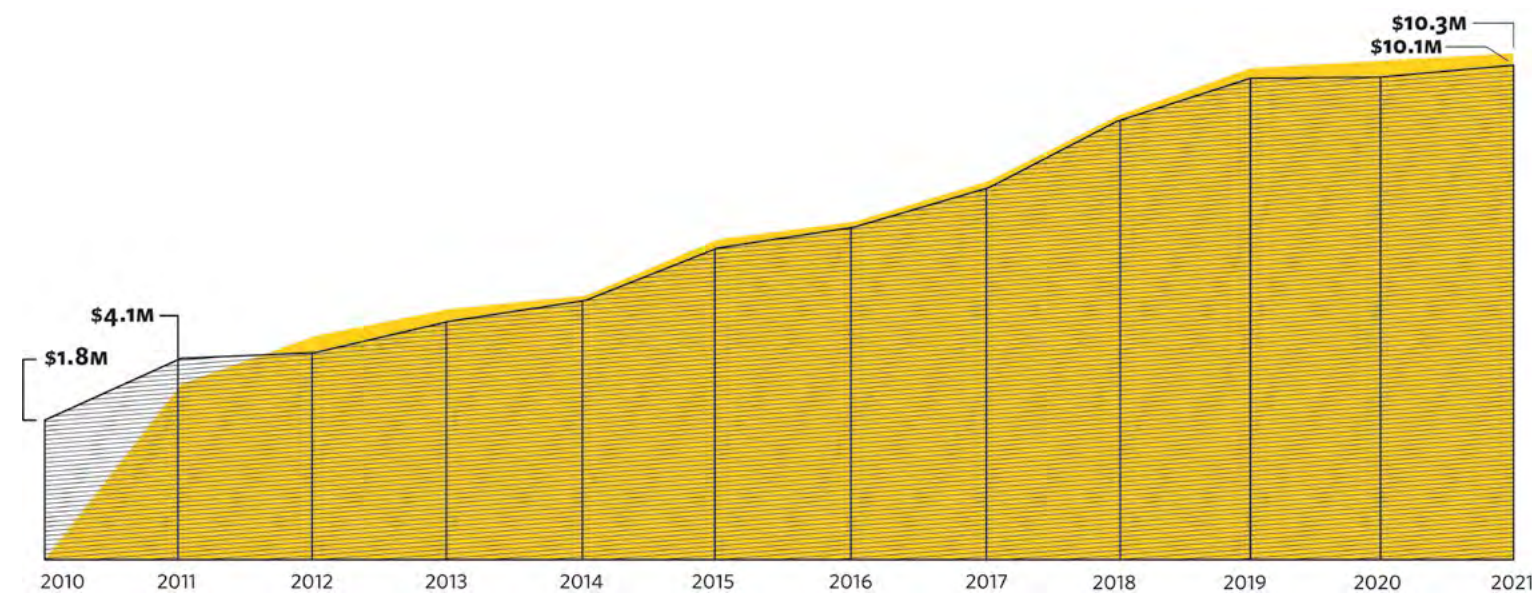
Thanks to support from around the state and across the nation, we have raised \$100 million to fund our public service journalism. We've achieved this fundraising success without sacrificing a reputation for fairness and transparency: We adopted the highest standards of financial disclosure in the industry, including publishing online lists of every individual, foundation or corporate entity that supports us.

REVENUE BREAKDOWN



ANNUAL INCOME TO DATE*

■ Revenues Committed for Fiscal Year
 Expenses



The same dynamic energy it took to start the Tribune in 2009 carried us through 2021; going forward, we will continue to think entrepreneurially about how to fulfill our mission and provide even more exceptional journalism to more deeply inform and engage Texans.

*All figures are preliminary and unaudited

"We love you Texas Tribune! Thank you!"

"Thank you for this valuable service! Love my Texas Tribune!"

"As always, the Tx Tribune makes sure that all sides are heard and understood."

"I like the focus on the Lege during sessions. I know it is every other year, but the Trib coverage has really brought light on it in one place."

"I LOVE the Covid 19 tracker, and think it one of the most essential contributions in the state. I love that in one view I can get cases, hospitalizations and deaths. When I need to feel grounded in reality, it's my first choice."

"As a local Austin business dedicated to Power Utility and Renewable Engineering, these issues are of major importance to my business, and I have come to realize that for Texas politics, the Texas Tribune is the definitive source. Very well done!"

"Thank you @TexasTribune for the ongoing text updates about electricity and water. This has really been a resource for me during this Texas catastrophe."

"Thank you for what you are doing! You are so appreciated. 'Texans helping Texans' :)"

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The Texas Tribune
919 Congress Ave., Sixth Floor
Austin, TX 78701
PHONE (512) 716-8600
FAX (512) 716-8601

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