

**A MORE** The Jewish  
**PERFECT** Partnership  
**UNION** for Democracy



**Mobilizing the  
Jewish Community  
for a Resilient  
and Enduring  
Democracy**

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

**“For nearly two and a half centuries, even amid painful setbacks, the United States has offered one of the last, best places to be Jewish — not because it catered to Jews, but because its democratic pluralism, albeit aspirational and imperfect from the beginning, allowed minorities like ours an opportunity to live freely.**

**When that democratic pluralism struggles, we shouldn’t prematurely mourn its loss. We should repair it instead. This is not naïveté; it’s the agency our parents and grandparents came here looking for.”**



**The New York Times**

AARON DORFMAN  
LETTER TO THE EDITOR, *THE NEW YORK TIMES*  
PUBLISHED DECEMBER 31, 2023

## Dear Friends,

What a year it has been. First and most importantly, thank you for your generosity, your partnership, and your passion for our shared vision of a strong and resilient American democracy. A More Perfect Union is still young, but we are so proud of the impact we are seeing across the Jewish community and the country.

This has been a building year in many ways: new staff, new systems, new strategic priorities, new partners, new possibilities. We've broadened our approach to ensure we are looking beyond each individual election cycle to the urgent revitalization of a strong, resilient culture of democracy in this country. We've had successes and setbacks; we've celebrated and mourned alongside our larger community. We know there is much weighing on all of our minds these days, and still we work to ensure our community is ready for a busy and contentious year ahead here in the United States.

As you read this report, I hope you will share my sense of optimism and momentum for the work ahead. Thanks to the resilience and vision of our community, there is now intentional, community-based, pro-democracy work happening at camps, schools, JCCs, social-service agencies, synagogues, museums, and more all around the country.

In this report, you will find our top headlines from the year, including our recently-published letter to the editor in *The New York Times*. None of this is possible without you. Thank you.



**With so much gratitude,  
AARON DORFMAN**

**“A More Perfect Union’s long-term goal to *rebuild a strong, resilient democratic culture* cannot wait. Until it is realized—and it is a task that could take decades—every election will bring new risks.”**

DANIEL STID, LYCEUM LABS

FORMER HEAD OF THE U.S.  
DEMOCRACY PROGRAM,  
HEWLETT FOUNDATION

## We've made significant investments in our organizational sustainability.

Democracies are living things made up of ordinary people. They grow, evolve, falter, recover, and thrive. In order to ensure our enduring impact, we need to build a sustainable organization. This is why we invested so much in critical infrastructure in 2023, including:

### HIRING THREE NEW STAFF MEMBERS, ADDING CRITICAL EXPERTISE AND BANDWIDTH TO OUR GROWING TEAM



**ELENA PAULL**  
Senior Director of  
Operations (Dallas, TX)



**TERISSA SCHOR GRUMER**  
Senior Program Associate  
(Long Island, NY)



**TASHA KAMINSKY**  
Senior Director of  
Development (St. Louis, MO)

### UPGRADING TO A MODEL A FISCAL SPONSORSHIP

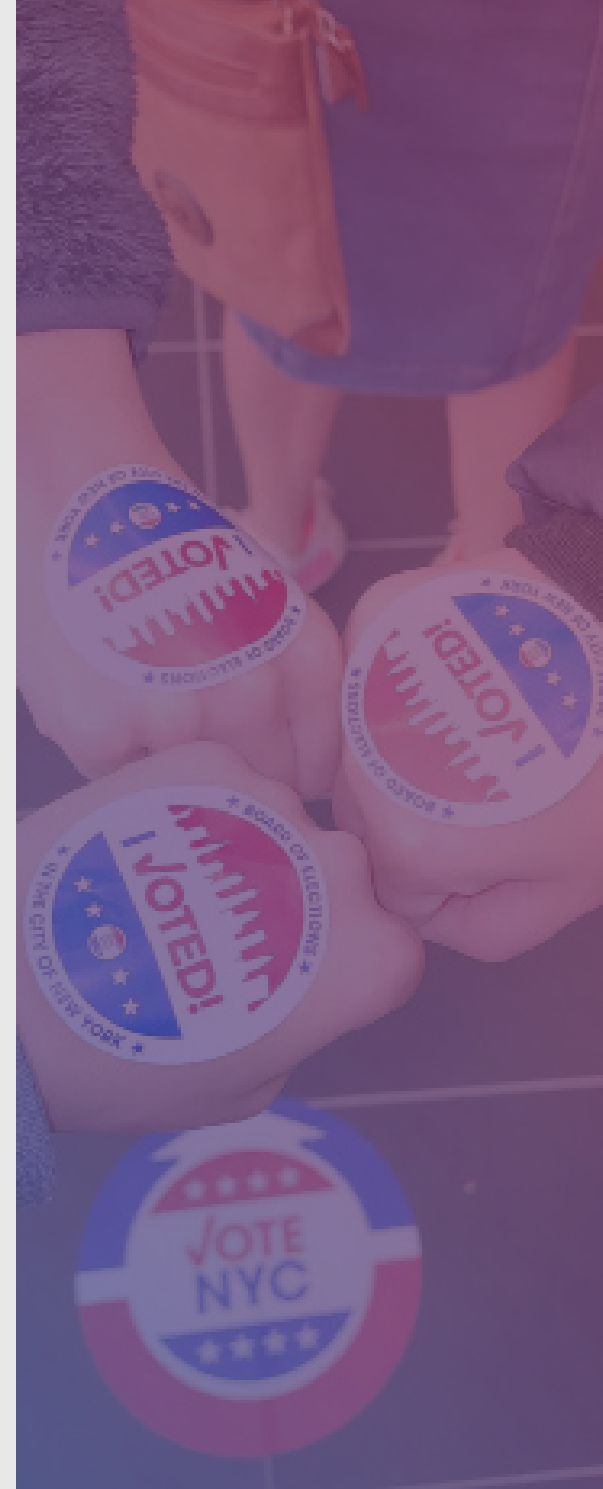
This change gave us access to a full suite of accountants, attorneys, HR resources, grants management tools, and finance experts, all intended to free up valuable staff time to dedicate to programmatic priorities.

### INVESTING IN A ROBUST CRM

Our new system is designed to collect and track data on our work, the commitments and contributions of our partners, and community-wide impact.

### LAUNCHING AN ONLINE GIVING PLATFORM

With Classy, we can design and run grassroots and peer-to-peer campaigns as opportunities arise.



# We're being recognized for our contributions.



A More Perfect Union was built to mobilize the full strength of the Jewish community to protect and strengthen American democracy. By definition, this cannot be done alone. It takes investment and collaboration from partners across the Jewish and secular spectrums. In 2023, we were honored to see our work uplifted, referenced, and recognized by a variety of trusted organizations.

## A MORE PERFECT UNION WAS SELECTED FOR:



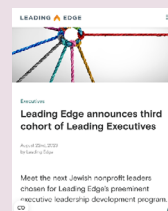
### Upstart's UpSpring Venture Accelerator

The UpStarter Network is composed of some of the most cutting-edge organizations and individuals in the Jewish world today. Selected organizations receive \$100,000 in targeted support.



### Slingshot Fund's "10 to Watch!" List

The "10 to Watch!" list features organizations and projects that use creative approaches to respond to current and timely needs — and have great potential to enrich the Jewish future.



### Aaron Dorfman was selected for Leading Edge's Leading Executives Cohort

Leading Executives is an executive training program by Leading Edge designed to nurture and support effective, creative, and dynamic leadership in the Jewish community.



### A More Perfect Union was featured in Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE)'s Funding Guide for Faith and Democracy

"Just as investing in racial and ideological diversity can strengthen the durability and perspective of networks seeking to revitalize democracy, investing in grassroots faith leadership can help ensure that the democracy movement is broad enough to be successful in the long-term." FUNDING GUIDE FOR FAITH AND DEMOCRACY



### Sofi Hersher Andorsky served on the Advisory Committee for Protect Democracy and Interfaith America's Faith in Elections Playbook

"A More Perfect Union's nonpartisan work to mobilize the Jewish community served as an inspiration for the Faith in Elections Playbook. Their expertise has been essential not only to engaging Jewish leaders and organizations, but in helping interfaith and multi-faith projects to thrive. *They are the gold standard for partnership.*" CHRIS CRAWFORD, PROTECT DEMOCRACY

## We're incubating new, innovative pro-democracy work in the Jewish community.

The magic of collective impact networks is the way they create positive feedback loops: partners learn with and from each other, borrow and adapt programs and approaches, amplify each other's work, and get each other's backs. Our ask that partners join the Jewish Partnership for Democracy with a tangible commitment to a shared set of priorities has already yielded an exciting array of pro-democracy efforts across the Jewish community, including in the arts, education, advocacy, service, and leadership development sectors. Below we offer a sampling of the exciting work we're incubating through our remarkable set of partners.

**Temple Emanu-El of Dallas** commits to institutionalizing bimah honors for congregants engaged in civic service, which will include honoring recent poll workers.

**Leading Edge** commits to developing a resource guide for Jewish leaders to help them navigate political and ideological conflict in the workplace.

**The Institute for Jewish Spirituality** commits to creating a Jewish meditation series focused on "Jewish Spiritual Practices for Democracy."

**"What A More Perfect Union has been able to do is create a context for this work, and put our effort into a larger mobilization of the Jewish community for democracy. I think it says something important that the community as a whole can align around these values and commitments."**

RABBI JOSH FEIGELSON, INSTITUTE FOR JEWISH SPIRITUALITY

**T'ruah** commits to mobilizing 10-20 clergy across at least 5-10 states to build relationships with their election officials. In building these relationships, clergy will serve as validators for the elections process, leading to greater confidence in election results.

**theatre dybbuk** commits to an episode of its podcast, *The Dybbukast*, that will use performed readings and a scholar interview to illuminate an aspect of democracy in the United States.

**The Shalom Hartman Institute of North America** commits to recruiting half of its staff to serve as poll workers and monitors to help ensure the safe and effective administration of elections across the country.

**JArts** commits to promoting ideological pluralism and civic learning through the Be the Change public art movement, which features 6-8 sculptures by local artists that drive viewers to participate in our democracy.

**Oak Park Temple** commits to partnering with Power the Polls to recruit poll workers, hosting a conversation with the Cook County Assistant Deputy Clerk of Elections, and facilitating an experience for its synagogue based on Pardes's Mahloket Matters program.

**Hillel International** commits to supporting 10 campuses in advocating to add campus polling places, targeting campuses located in states with limited on-campus voting access.

**Repair the World** commits to creating a comprehensive "Ballot of Engagement" through which it will engage volunteers in a variety of impactful ways throughout election season.

**"We were aware of democracy as it exists in the news, but through the instrumental partnership and guidance from A More Perfect Union, we have been able to create an entire engagement plan built on their expansive network and knowledge. This offering not only helps legitimize our work for our own Jewish volunteers and their communities, but also builds a stronger democracy across our whole country."**

ELI GREENSTEIN JACOB, REPAIR THE WORLD

**The Brandeis School of San Francisco** commits to developing a K-8 curriculum connecting Jewish ethics and civic engagement.

**Habonim Dror Camp Galil** commits to expanding its youth leadership curriculum to include and connect American Democracy to the work that they currently do.

**Prizmah** commits to encouraging schools to promote civic education and study US democracy with a Jewish lens and commits to promoting opportunities for schools to engage in the study of civil discourse and depolarization.

**The Council of American Jewish Museums (CAJM)** commits to convening its national conference in Washington, DC, with an emphasis on museums, democracy, and the public square.

## We're bringing democracy to Jewish spaces and the Jewish community to democracy spaces.

2023 was a year of building. We criss-crossed the country to make sure the Jewish community was represented and engaged as the pro-democracy movement gains momentum. We also ensured best-in-class expertise was shared with Jewish organizations and audiences through programming, speaking engagements, and strategic initiatives.

A More Perfect Union presented to Jewish service leaders at the **2023 Repair the World Service Matters Summit**. To enrich the discussion, titled "Elections, Service, and Building a Culture of Democracy," we flew in experts Marta Hanson from Power the Polls and Raelyn Roberson from Common Cause.

In May, we brought a group of **10 network partners together to attend One America Movement's Annual Meeting in Atlanta**. This gathering brought faith leaders to explore and discuss practical ideas for navigating polarization and division.

In August, we brought Jewish leaders from Civic Spirit, Hillel International, and Congregation Etz Chaim to **speak to the Parliament of the World's Religions** on the topic, "Toward A More Perfect Union: American Jews and American Democracy."

Our Vice President, Sofi Hersher Andorsky, is **co-leading Braver Angels' first-ever dedicated "Religion and Spirituality Sector"** in its nationwide network of bridge-building activists.

Our Executive Director, Aaron Dorfman, is the only **member of Civic Learning Week's Steering Committee to represent a faith community**.



## We're filling a vital role as “connective tissue.”

We are proud to champion the idea that faith communities have a tremendous role to play in protecting and strengthening American democracy. Our positions in both communities allow us to create “connective tissue,” a responsibility we take seriously.

A More Perfect Union is **servicing on the Language Assistance Advisory Committee of the NYC Civic Engagement Commission**, building off work we did to recruit Yiddish and Russian language translators for polling sites and record Yiddish-language voting reminders in 2022 and 2023.

We continue to **support and recruit attorneys for the Election Official Legal Defense Network (EOLDN)**, regularly fielding requests as needs arise around the country.

We successfully **pitched a democracy skills-building workshop for reporters covering religion beats** to be led by trusted partner Hearken at the 2024 Religion News Association conference in Pittsburgh, PA.

We successfully **recruited the first four faith organizations in the Election Infrastructure Initiative**, a secular coalition run by the Center for Tech and Civic Life.

In December, we **hosted five bridge-building organizations in a “demo day” style program** that introduced 45 Jewish organizations to new dimensions and possibilities for pluralism work in their communities.



## Spotlight



**In August, EOLDN reached out with an urgent request to find an attorney willing to help a beleaguered election official in the Aspen, CO area. In just 72 hours, we located and vetted an attorney who jumped into action.**

## We've learned a ton.

As we've said all along, A More Perfect Union is dedicated to learning and iterating as we go. Every year provides valuable insights, and 2023 was no exception.

### HERE ARE OUR TOP THREE TAKEAWAYS FROM A BUSY AND FRUITFUL YEAR:

#### 1 WE MUST BUILD IT FOR THEM TO COME.

This breakthrough came as we were launching recruitment efforts for the newly-expanded Jewish Partnership for Democracy. Though there is widespread interest in American democracy, **we needed concrete plans to give the network shape and provide incentives for Jewish organizations to spend their valuable time and resources with us.** To this end, we're developing more concrete pathways for partners to pursue around each of our three strategic priorities (read more on page 11). These helped focus our partners' commitments and plans for 2024.

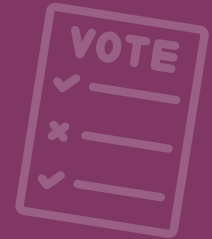
#### 2 COMMITMENTS FROM PARTNERS ARE AN END AND A MEANS.

Locally-meaningful commitments from diverse organizations working toward a shared vision provides the best chance at revitalizing democracy in the long-term, rather than just surviving from election to election. That being said, we realized that not all Jewish organizations are yet ready to design or prioritize meaningful standalone commitments, though are more than willing to participate in shared efforts. To capitalize on this, **we adjusted our core strategy to allow for a commitment to be both intrinsically meaningful and also a gateway to further impact** through work led and coordinated by us.

#### 3 SOMETIMES, YOU HAVE TO GO SLOW TO GO FAST.

This was a year of systems design. Our first-ever Senior Director of Operations led us through a number of key changes, all of which required the rewiring of old habits and the consideration of new processes. Sometimes, that has meant taking a longer, more replicable path to addressing a challenge, or adjusting the way software is used to ensure data is being captured and updated in the most efficient manner. **Scalability is the name of the game for us as we seek to grow our network to 200 partners in 2024,** and we will keep this learning top of mind next year.

# Spotlight



**2024 ELECTION CAMPAIGN** We will run a yearlong, comprehensive community mobilization campaign, replete with messaging, education, and media support as well as violence prevention and community preparedness programs for Jewish leaders and organizations.

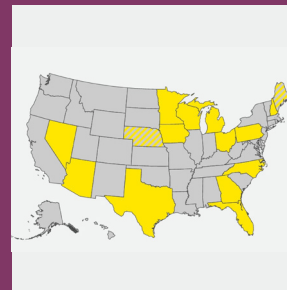
In December, we partnered with the **Jewish Community Relations Council of Greater Phoenix** to bring 40 local faith leaders to the Maricopa County Tabulation and Election Center. This tour recognized and supported local clergy to serve as trusted messengers to counter disinformation and build confidence in local election administration in a critical county.



Building on a successful partnership in 2022, **Power the Polls** has custom-built **A More Perfect Union** a poll worker recruitment landing page that will enable better tracking and coordination across Jewish organizations.



Each state does not experience a federal election the same way, and we are sensitive to the unique needs of those in “swing” states. To this end, we have created a working group for Jewish organizations in these crucial areas, beginning with an **exclusive briefing in January from Issue One and Citizen Data on election trust** in Arizona, Georgia, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.



## We’re ready to support the Jewish community through a contentious election year.

There is no sugarcoating the challenges 2024 will bring to the Jewish community and to the American people. The good news is A More Perfect Union is ready to meet the moment.

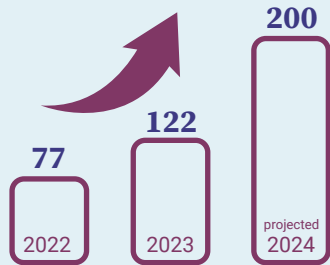
### JEWISH SUMMIT ON CIVICS

A More Perfect Union is gearing up to host this Jewish community gathering offered in conjunction with the second-ever Civic Learning Week. The event is meant to help Jewish educators and attendees reflect on shared learnings and focus on field-building in formal and informal educational spaces.

### PROMOTING IDEOLOGICAL PLURALISM

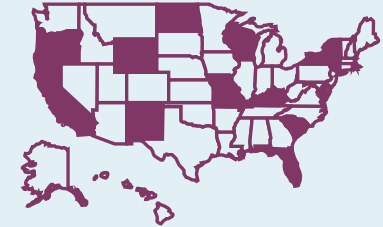
Next year will bring special challenges to the world of bridge-building. We are currently working with several partners to incubate exclusive cohort and training opportunities for Jewish leaders to develop the skills and dispositions to lead through complex and volatile periods in their communities. More to come in 2024!

## 2023 By the Numbers

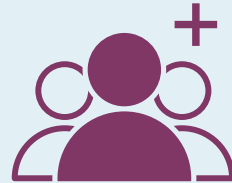


**122** active partners in the Jewish Partnership for Democracy

**29** states represented in the Jewish Partnership for Democracy



**484** people attended our pro-democracy virtual programs



**3** new teammates

**13** speaking engagements



**55** returning partners or expanded commitments



**240** applications to join our team as "Vice President, Programs"

**For all of your support and all of your partnership,  
we thank you for a wonderful year.**

**More to come!**

**To learn more about A More Perfect Union, please contact  
Aaron Dorfman, Executive Director, at [adorfman@jewishdemocracy.org](mailto:adorfman@jewishdemocracy.org)**

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