



GEORGE W. BUSH
PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

CHARGING FORWARD



The 2020 Annual Report

A blue-tinted photograph of George W. Bush speaking to a crowd. He is gesturing with his right hand towards the audience. The background is filled with people, some holding up phones to record. The image has a monochromatic blue color scheme.

“I MAINTAIN *an* UNSHAKEABLE FAITH
in THE FUTURE *of our* COUNTRY,
BECAUSE I KNOW THE CHARACTER *of*
OUR CITIZENS. WE RISE *or* FALL TOGETHER.
AND WE ARE DETERMINED TO RISE.”

GW Bush



Each year, as I write this letter to you, I'm grateful for the chance to reflect on the consequential work of the George W. Bush Presidential Center, the important values that guide us, and the remarkable team we've gathered here.

This is especially true as we emerge from more than a year of immense global challenge. 2020 was a difficult time for people across the globe. Each of us experienced in some way the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic challenges, changes to the way we live and work, division and discord, and the tremendous losses that accompanied it all. And yet, even in the darkest moments, my colleagues at the Bush Center – led by President and Mrs. Bush – remained optimistic and committed to making a positive impact.

Our organization has always been focused on advancing the ideals that sustain our great Nation, and the values that drive our work: freedom, opportunity, accountability, and compassion. And in a time of crisis, those are the values that matter the most.

At the Bush Center, we develop leaders, advance policy, and take action to solve today's most pressing challenges. And so, when presented with challenges in 2020, we leaned on our values and dug in on what matters: the work.

We broadened our reach across all our platforms. Our policy journal, *The Catalyst*, examined topics like the pursuit of the American dream. Our podcast, *The Strategist*, highlighted those working to help others during the pandemic. Our policy experts Zoom-ed in to important conversations with policy makers and thought leaders on issues like immigration, democracy, and education. And we ensured the sustainability of the Bush Center far into the future by reaching our goal for the *A Charge to Keep* capital campaign.

Many of you have invested in the work of the Bush Center, and for that, I am thankful. We're a place that seeks to influence policy, not politics. We encourage and invite a diverse set of solution-oriented people to help us create lasting change on the issues that matter the most, like creating opportunity for everyone and advancing free societies. We believe we can open our doors and our minds to many and remain deeply rooted to our conservative heritage.

In 2021, we have turned our focus to concluding a long-range strategic planning process for the Bush Institute. We look forward to sharing those plans with you soon, as we look to the issues and ideas that will affect our Nation over the coming decade.

We have already started that work through our efforts in immigration. If you haven't been to Dallas yet to see the newest special exhibition of President Bush's paintings, *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants*, I encourage you to add it to your to-do list. President Bush's art is a powerful statement about the value of immigration to our country, and a reminder that our immigration system is overdue for comprehensive change. We have presented actionable policy solutions on issues like border management, refugee and asylum processes, and the economic benefits to immigration. We are energized by the opportunity to advance policy solutions and shape the conversation around important issues like this and will continue to bolster our efforts in the years ahead.

Thank you for your support and interest in the Bush Center. We are grateful for your continued contributions to our success.

KENNETH A. HERSH
President and CEO



If 2020 taught us anything, it's that in the face of adversity and challenges, adaptability and optimism are critical to success. I believe we've all faced that in our own lives, and over the last 18 months, I've seen it play out every day at the Bush Institute.

Who could have predicted in February of 2020 that our best-laid plans would drastically change in a month's time? Or that our in-person meetings and policy briefings would change to Zoom calls and virtual gatherings? We certainly never thought that we would shift course on issues from education to global health and offer insight as people navigated through the uncharted waters of a global pandemic.

And yet, that's the story of the Bush Institute in 2020. Our team adapted – putting out even more content through op-eds, policy papers, and publications like *The Catalyst* and *Democracy Talks*. Our experts were called upon by policy makers at the state, local, and federal levels to offer solutions on issues like how to handle mass migration from the Northern Triangle or how to ensure that online learning leaves no children behind.

It was also inspiring to see how the participants of our Bush Institute-led leadership programs used the skills they learned through Presidential Leadership Scholars, the Stand-To Veterans Leadership program, WE Lead, and the Liberty & Leadership program to help those in their communities who needed it the most.

Every challenge we faced as a nation over the last year and a half – divisiveness, economic difficulty, tragic loss, and heated rhetoric – has rooted us more firmly in the values and ideas that ground the work of the Bush Institute.

We begin to enter back into “normalcy” with an even stronger belief that pragmatic, compassionate, and thoughtful ideas will solve our country's most pressing problems. Our best days do truly lie ahead of us. I'm proud to work with a team that is focused on solutions rather than credit, and who are passionate about their chance to improve opportunity for all and strengthen our democratic system.

Thank you for your continued support of our work.
I look forward to seeing you at the Bush Center soon.

HOLLY KUZMICH
Executive Director
George W. Bush Institute

Central America Support

Lack of economic opportunity, combined with violence and corruption, lead many Central Americans to flee their homes – putting pressure on the U.S. southern border.

The Bush Institute's Central America Prosperity Project addressed the urgent need for continued U.S. support in Central America, beginning with a conversation between Representatives Will Hurd and Henry Cuellar and continuing with panel conversations urging government cooperation and outlining a path toward economic growth.

In conjunction with the conversations, the Bush Institute released a new report, *A Digital Strategy for Competitiveness and Integration in the North Triangle* and engaged leaders in Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador in advancing those policy solutions.

Women's Rights in Afghanistan

Building upon their longstanding partnership to promote women's rights in Afghanistan, the Atlantic Council and the Bush Institute hosted virtual conversations in October with First Lady of Afghanistan Rula Ghani and Mrs. Bush.



Choose Freedom

Nicole Bibbins Sedaca, the Kelly & David Pfeil Fellow at the Bush Institute, authored *Choose Freedom*:

Revitalizing American Support for Democracy and Human Rights in the 21st Century, a call to action urging Americans to redouble their efforts to support democracy and human rights globally.



Cities and Opportunity in 21st Century America

This in-depth report by Cullum Clark, Director of the George W. Bush Institute-SMU Economic Growth Initiative, explores why cities and neighborhoods so strongly influence economic mobility and how America can create more cities of opportunity.



The Third Annual Forum on Leadership

The third annual Forum on Leadership was hosted in September at the Bush Center, highlighting those that showcase America at its best – from everyday citizens who are doing extraordinary things to optimistic leaders who are answering the call to serve across this country and around the world. Wendy Kopp, Founder of Teach for America and CEO and Co-Founder of Teach for All, received the 2020 George W. Bush Medal for Distinguished Leadership. Liberty in North Korea received the Bush Institute Citation, and Michael Sorrell, President of Paul Quinn College in Dallas, received our Trailblazer Citation.

Moving Ahead

When the pandemic hit, Bush Institute offices closed but the important work didn't slow. From lesson plans based on Marvel movies for parents teaching at home, to analysis of COVID-19's long-term impact on education, to breakdowns of potential economic impact of COVID relief packages, Bush Institute experts continued addressing pressing challenges of the day. 235 op-eds were published and readership of Bush Institute content on our website increased by 35% over the previous year.



The Catalyst: A Journal of Ideas from the Bush Institute

The Catalyst tackled pressing policy issues in 2020: the federal debt, the racial equity gap in education, and the looming challenges from China. But it also took a moment in the spring to highlight bright spots as the world battled a pandemic: stories of kindness, determination, and innovation from those working to help their fellow citizens.



The STRATEGERIST
Presented by the
GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER

The Strategerist Podcast

In the early months of the pandemic, *The Strategerist* podcast focused on leaders working to make a difference, such as Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation CEO Mark Suzman, who predicted the rapid vaccine development, and problem solvers Anurag Jain & Patrick Brandt, who paired out-of-work hospitality workers with nonprofits through Get Shift Done.

The 2020 Engage Season Opens

In January, Fox News' Brian Kilmeade took us back in time with a discussion of his book, *Sam Houston and the Alamo Avengers: The Texas Victory That Changed American History*.

And in February, CEO of Texas 2036 and former Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings headlined an event outlining the future of our state.



Laura Bush Book Club

This year's Laura Bush Book Club conversation featured Dr. Michele Harper, author of the acclaimed memoir *The Beauty in Breaking*. Harper, an emergency room physician, grew to a better understanding of herself and of the inequities in our country through patients she treated as an emergency room physician.



The Bush Center Moves Online

While the pandemic limited audiences inside the Bush Center, the ideas kept flowing. Our *Engage at the Bush Center*, presented by Highland Capital Management series was broadcast from our auditorium to homes across the nation.

A Sit-Down with Jay Leno

To celebrate the opening of the *Liberty and Laughter* exhibit, Bush Center President and CEO Ken Hersh sat down with talk show host Jay Leno for an *Engage at the Bush Center*, presented by Highland Capital Management discussion about the role of humor in our democracy and the impact that late-night talk shows have had on the political landscape.



The Economy Is Fueled by Innovation

Mark Cuban and Daymond John, entrepreneurs and stars of the ABC hit show *Shark Tank*, came together to share their views on solutions to issues our country is facing, with a look at how entrepreneurs, innovators, and business leaders can help drive solutions.

But Innovation Often Comes with Unintended Effects

In August, a panel of experts convened for the Highland Capital Lecture to discuss the topic of "deepfakes" – videos manipulated using complex algorithms and AI to distort reality.

Civil Rights in America

Historian Lonnie Bunch, Founding Director of the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture and now the Secretary of the Smithsonian Institute, joined us to discuss the state of civil rights in America and what's at stake for our country if we don't ensure a quality education is accessible for all.

One Time in the Motorcade

In December, Freddy Ford, President Bush's Chief of Staff, interviewed former White House staffers from multiple administrations in *One Time in the Motorcade*. From pranks, to embarrassing stories, to lighthearted moments with the President, the stories illuminated a different side of 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue than we usually get to see.



2020 FINANCIAL REVIEW

The Bush Center strives to operate in a financially sustainable and responsible manner to ensure that our work will continue long into the future.

While successfully managing its expenses during the pandemic, the Bush Center continues to receive tremendous support from individual, corporate, and foundation donors and entered 2021 in a healthy financial condition.

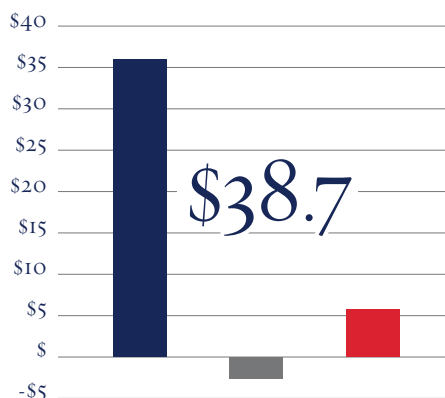
2020 SOURCES

(dollars in millions)

- Gifts from Bush Center Supporters, Net of Expenses*
- Bush Center Endowment Contribution to Operations
- Presidential Center Operations, Net of Expenses**

*Includes expenses relating to direct mail campaigns.

**Includes revenues from museum and facility rental operations, less associated direct expenses and those administrative expenses allocated to these operations. The Presidential Center operations realized a net loss in 2020 due to pandemic-related closures and reduced activities, including facility rental, parking, and museum-related operations.

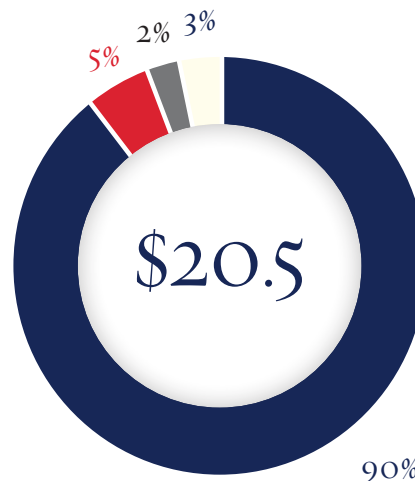


2020 USES*

(dollars in millions)

- Program Services
- Fundraising and External Affairs
- Foundation Administration
- Support Operations

*Expenses before depreciation, other non-cash charges, provisions for uncollectable contributions receivable, and distribution of Laura Bush Foundation grants. Also excludes all direct expenses and those administrative expenses allocated to museum and facility rental operations and expenses relating to direct mail campaigns.





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