

**TUSK PHILANTHROPIES**

**2023**  
**Annual Report**

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## To anyone interested in our work:

If you know me at all or have heard me speak, you probably think that putting together an annual report is not something I would be interested in. You would basically be right. But, my team at Tusk Philanthropies approaches their work differently than others. Because it seems to be working, and because it's different, I think it's worth laying out what we are up to and how it works.

## Our Approach

- First off, while we give grants and partner with others, we aren't a grant-giving organization. We run campaigns and projects to make changes we believe in. We are active, not passive.
- We embrace politics and use it aggressively to achieve specific results like new funding for hunger programs or giving people the chance to vote in elections on their phones. Our sweet spot is where change is achievable but needs some money and political force and know-how to make it happen. We are also willing and able to be aggressive in campaigns where traditional non-profits cannot. If upsetting someone powerful is what gets a school meals bill passed, we're happy to do it and we can live with the consequences.
- We always try to combine our financial resources with our skill set – dealing with politics, media, regulators, influencers, advocates, unions and others – to achieve a much bigger result than we could just through making donations alone.
- We try to have as little bureaucracy and process as possible (no board, no quarterly meetings), and rather than making sure we spend 5% of our endowment annually, we spend our money on causes and campaigns as fast as we make it. We provide our partners with detailed summaries of our campaigns in real time, and we value their feedback and insights to help us run our campaigns better.

## Results

- Solving Hunger has become a national force – active in 24 states with at least three more starting next year. Over 13 million people now receive food regularly because of the bills we helped pass. We have won 80% of our campaigns and have used about \$6 million in funding to secure more than \$2 billion in state funding for hunger programs.
- Mobile Voting funded more than 20 elections in seven states using mobile voting technology. All of these elections were safe and passed post-election audits. When our opponents said that no mobile technology was safe enough for voting on your phone, we took it as a challenge and provided grant funding to build the most advanced and secure voting technology ever created. When the technology exceeds the standards our opponents have set, we will offer it for free to U.S. election officials.

We welcome partners who share our goals and are not afraid of our methods. If you are interested in learning more, we are always happy to talk. I hope you enjoy the read and welcome any feedback.

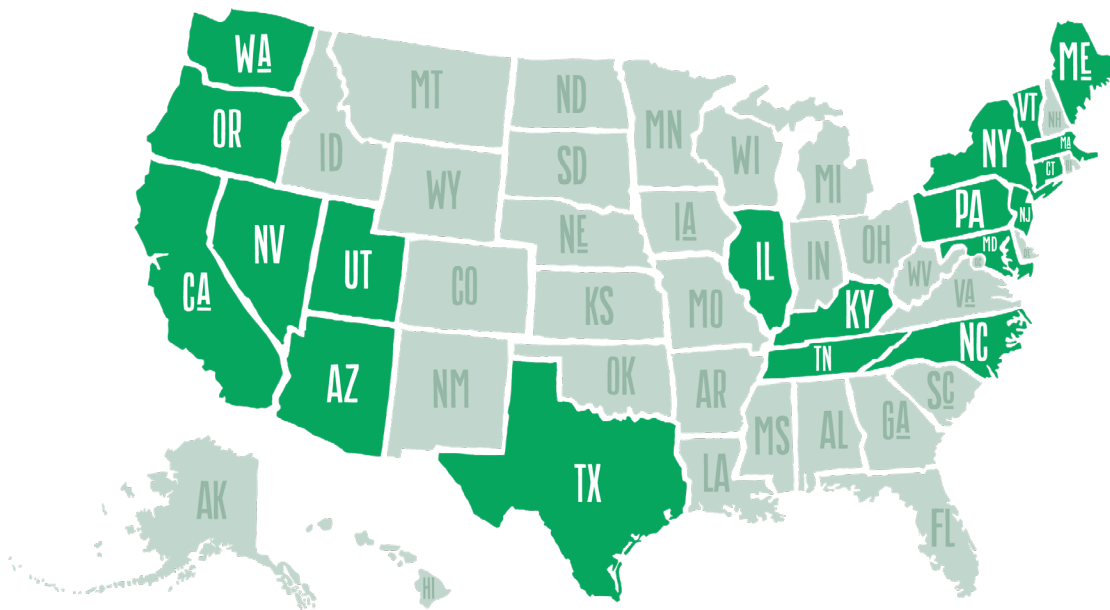


# Introduction

Tusk Philanthropies takes a campaign approach to 1) make sure people who are hungry have enough food to eat; and 2) fix our democracy by making it exponentially easier to vote.

In our country, no one should go hungry. Tusk Philanthropies' Solving Hunger initiative brings campaign expertise to fight for additional state funding for kids and other vulnerable populations who are food insecure. We have won 24 of 30 anti-hunger campaigns in 19 states across the country. We have helped pass Universal School Meals (USM) laws, breakfast after the bell legislation, an increase of the federal poverty level to expand eligibility for school meals, funds to expand the school Community Eligibility Program, and expanded access to SNAP for college students and seniors. Over the last decade, by spending over \$6 million, we have increased food access for more than 13 million people. Working with statewide hunger organizations, these campaigns have leveraged more than \$2 billion for food access and anti-hunger programs across the United States.

## STATES WE WON



In 2018, Tusk Philanthropies launched the campaign for Mobile Voting to dramatically increase turnout in U.S. elections by allowing Americans to vote from their phones. We believe the only way to fix our broken democracy is by making politicians accountable to and representative of all voters, not just the handful who consistently vote in primaries or donate money. In early 2021, we awarded grant funding to build new technology that will dramatically increase the security of mobile voting and allow everyone to vote from their mobile devices. As of the end of 2023, our grantees are on the verge of completing primary development and testing of this new mobile voting system and plans are underway to roll out the tech publicly over the next year. To ensure we can win campaigns to enact mobile voting, we continue to grow the movement, building a broad-based coalition of support among voting and civil rights groups, electoral reform organizations, and youth civic engagement groups, as well as the disability community, veterans, and military voters. In the coming months, we aim to leverage the rollout of new technology to widen our coalition, double our supporter base, and mobilize in-state teams to support enactment campaigns beginning in 2025.



# Our Team



**Bradley Tusk**  
Founder & CEO, Tusk Holdings



**Bob Greenlee**  
President, Tusk Philanthropies



**Lisa Quigley**  
Director, Solving Hunger



**Jocelyn Bucaro**  
Director, Mobile Voting



**Meaghan Collins**  
Chief of Staff, Tusk Holdings



**Malcolm Robbs**  
Coordinator of Campaigns,  
Engagement, and Digital Reach



**Dani Frese**  
Vice President, Tusk Strategies



**Cory Epstein**  
Senior Vice President, Tusk Holdings

# Solving Hunger



Millions of children do not get the nutrition that they need. Without it, they cannot perform well in school or achieve their full potential. Free meals in schools would help, but kids and low-income families typically don't have top talent or the resources to fight state legislative battles to obtain access to this support. We not only provide capacity grants to local hunger advocacy organizations, but we also fund top lobbyists, communications firms, pollsters, and targeted media to make our case for more funding.

During the pandemic, the federal government recognized the vulnerability of children and threw out the rulebook. Gone were poverty tests. Gone were school personnel chasing down meal debt. Gone were laws that punished kids from participating in school activities if they carried lunch debt. Gone were substandard meals for kids who couldn't pay. And gone was the shame.

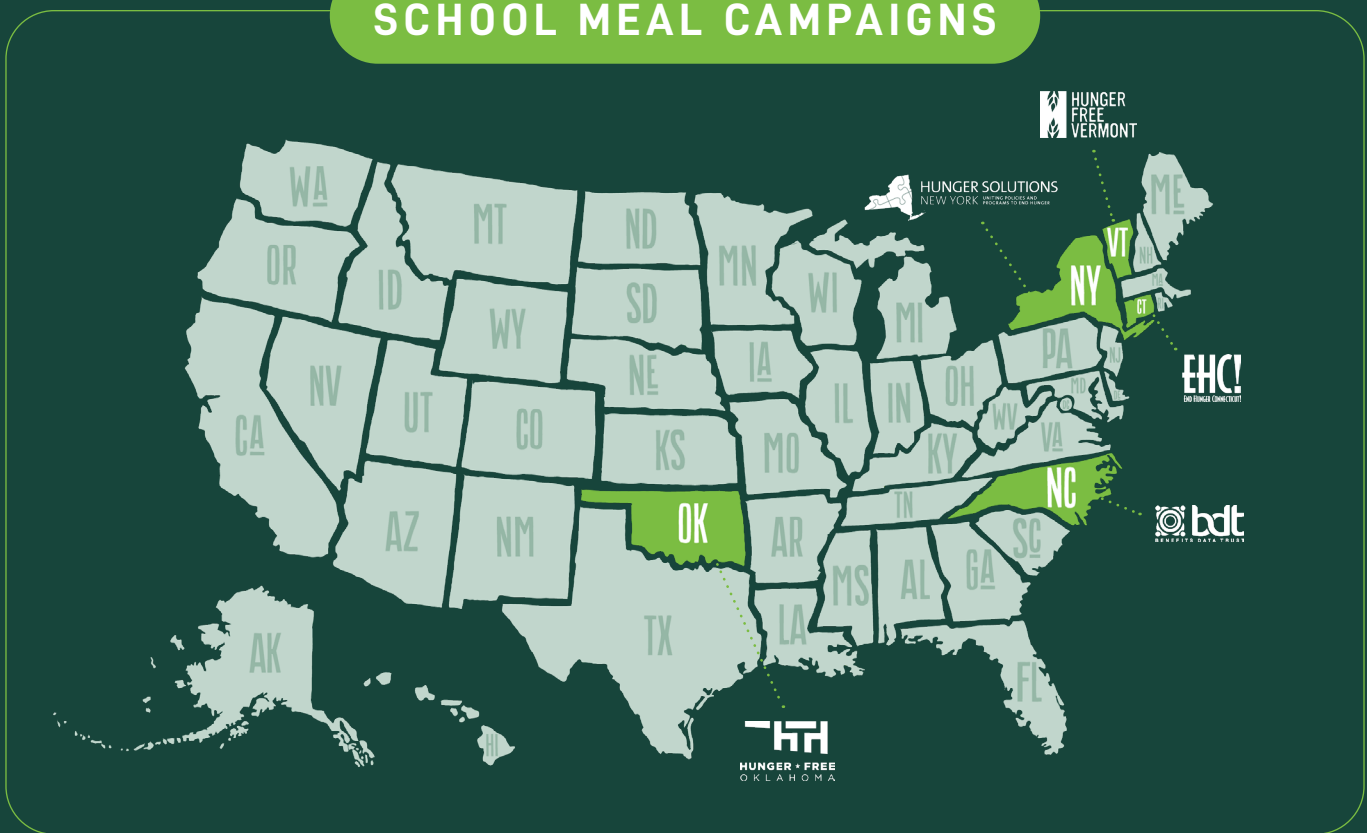
Even though this was a great move for kids, the program was not renewed. If the federal government isn't going to do its duty, states need to step in. Solving Hunger has focused on expanding Universal School Meals (USM) – and programs that serve as stepping stones to USM – for all K-12 public school children. 15 million K-12 children can now get breakfast and lunch at school, no matter their family income. In the nine states that have adopted USM, there are no more poverty tests, no more shaming of kids who cannot pay, and no withholding of school activities if a child's parents cannot pay for the food that they need. We have 36 million kids – in 41 states – to go.

The US Department of Agriculture announced in the fall of 2023 that they would lower the eligibility levels for participation in the Community Eligibility Program. CEP allows schools or entire school districts to feed all of the children in their care without families filling out any forms at all. We advocate to states that they can leverage the benefits of this expansion to feed more kids affordably.

## 2023 Campaigns

In 2023, we ran school meal campaigns in five states – Vermont, New York, Connecticut, North Carolina, and Oklahoma. All but one was successful. Vermont now has Universal School Meals. Connecticut is feeding all kids breakfast. Over 80% of all New York State children are now able to access breakfast and lunch at school. In North Carolina, the cost of reduced-price meals is now being paid by the state, allowing tens of thousands more children to receive free meals at no cost to them. Just this year, over 1.2 million children have access to school meals at a cost to state governments of just over \$255,000,000. We would not have been able to achieve these victories for children and families without the superb leadership of Hunger Free Vermont, Feeding New York State, End Hunger Connecticut, and the North Carolina Alliance for Health.

## SCHOOL MEAL CAMPAIGNS



### Vermont

In 2022, we worked with Hunger Free Vermont to become the first state to pass a one-year extension of the expiring federal universal meals program. In 2023, we worked with them again to pass a permanent universal school meal law, guaranteeing breakfast and lunch for all of the state's 84,000 students.

### New York

We worked with Hunger Solutions New York in 2018 to pass breakfast after the bell legislation, leveraging more than \$5 million for childhood hunger. In 2023, we worked with Feeding New York State to secure \$134 million to expand by 284,000 the number of children who are now eating free in school, which is 80% of New York public school children.

### Connecticut

In 2023, working with End Hunger CT!, we helped secure \$76 million in two separate campaigns to restart universal school meals for all 487,000 Connecticut children, and secure universal breakfast and payment of the reduced-price copay for one school year.

### North Carolina

In 2016 we worked with Benefits Data Trust to expand access to SNAP for more than 115,000 eligible seniors. In 2023, we worked with North Carolina Alliance for Health in securing \$16 million to pay the reduced price co-pay and to expand participation in the Community Eligibility Program.

### Oklahoma

In 2023, we worked with Hunger Free Oklahoma in an attempt to raise the federal poverty level to include more children in the free meals program. Despite the committed, conservative champions in the legislature, we could not overcome the opposition.

# MOBILE VOTING



Our campaign to promote mobile voting made significant progress in 2023. After nearly three years of development, our grantee has finished building the most sophisticated and secure mobile voting technology ever made. The new system is undergoing extensive user and security testing and we expect it will be ready for public rollout and pilots later in 2024.

VoteHub makes the absentee voting process digital. The app will be available in the public app stores, and voters will be able to use it to fully complete the absentee voting process from their smartphone. Importantly, VoteHub is designed to ensure voters can verify that their votes are correct at every stage. Each vote is protected with advanced encryption, and voters can independently verify that their votes are recorded, cast, and counted correctly.

To ensure the tech is ready for public use, we joined coalition partners in hosting seven mock elections with over 400 voters, including over 115 blind and low vision voters and nearly 300 Gen Z and Millennial voters. Feedback from users was overwhelmingly positive, with nearly 100% of users saying they would want to use the technology to vote in the future. Participants noted that the technology “would definitely engage younger voters” and “will definitely revolutionize the future of voting in the US.” Blind users were particularly excited at the promise of accessible mobile voting, with one user saying, “Please make this a real thing. I will do anything and everything possible to support that happening.”

We also continued to build the public case for mobile voting in 2023 and integrate our campaign into the broader democracy movement. In connection with a [successful panel at SXSW](#), we published [our first white paper](#) highlighting how barriers to existing voting options suppress turnout among many voter groups, and how mobile voting would help remove those barriers and increase participation among all voters. At SXSW, our panel featured Martin Luther King III and his wife Arndrea, Michigan Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson, and civil rights activist Ralph Neas discussing the need for mobile voting to address disparities in our current voting system.





# Meet the Future of Voting

We are very excited about the forthcoming rollout of VoteHub, the new mobile voting technology that promises to enhance the security and accessibility of voting. VoteHub was developed thanks to our grant funding and will be available for use in elections through our grantee, the Free Democracy Foundation. Free Democracy is a 501(c)(3) organization we are proud to support as they are working to support election technology solutions to ensure all eligible voters in the U.S. can participate in the democratic process.

The new VoteHub system holds the promise to not only make voting easier, but will also enhance the transparency and verifiability of our elections by giving voters and the public more evidence their votes are correct, increasing confidence in our democracy. Key features and benefits include:



## End-to-End Verifiable

VoteHub gives voters tools to independently verify their ballot is recorded, cast and counted correctly. And the public can verify the system is secure.

## Advanced Encryption

VoteHub protects cast ballots using advanced encryption and an immutable hash chain, ensuring the privacy and integrity of each ballot.

## Offline Ballot Decryption

VoteHub does not tabulate ballots. Instead, ballots are extracted and decrypted offline before being printed for scanning and tabulation with other absentee ballots.

## Accessible and Usable

VoteHub has been tested in partnership with the National Federation of the Blind, American Council of the Blind, and University of Colorado at Denver.

## Improved Access and Verifiability for Voters

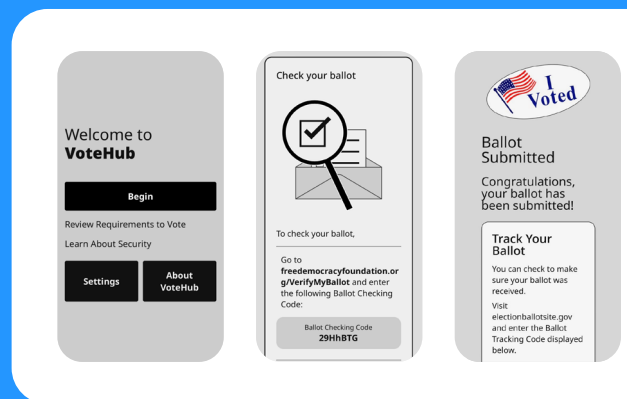
VoteHub makes absentee voting more accessible and convenient, while also giving voters more evidence their absentee ballot is cast and counted correctly.

## Improved Efficiencies for Election Officials

VoteHub saves election officials time and money while providing faster and more efficient ballot delivery and processing. And, by making scanning and tabulation faster, VoteHub provides faster election results.

## Improved Transparency and Public Verifiability

With VoteHub, the public can view and audit all activity in the system in real time, giving the public more evidence that the election is secure. In fact, VoteHub is more transparent and publicly auditable than any other voting system currently in use.



To learn more about VoteHub and the Free Democracy Foundation, visit [www.freedemocracyfoundation.org/votehub](http://www.freedemocracyfoundation.org/votehub).

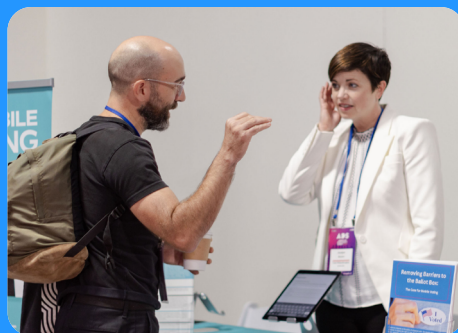
# Movement Building

The Mobile Voting movement also continues to grow. In 2023, we grew our supporter base by 70 percent and added new volunteers from more than 15 states. We also developed a volunteer organizing toolkit and recruited a national volunteer coordinator to help with volunteer onboarding and engagement. And we began hosting volunteer training workshops to engage volunteers in our broader movement building activities.

To raise awareness and anticipation of the technology, we hosted dozens of demonstrations for important stakeholders, from state and local election officials at events like the National Association of Secretaries of State Winter Meeting and Election Center Annual Conference, to state lawmakers at the National Association of State Legislatures Summit.



We also engaged key groups to educate them about mobile voting and lend our support for their broader strategic goals. New contacts included other groups working to protect voting rights like the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights, the ACLU, and the National Council on Accessible Voting. Groups working to engage young voters included HeadCount, 18by Vote, and Civics Unplugged. Groups working on electoral reforms included the National Association of Nonpartisan Reformers, Represent Us, and Veterans for All Voters.





# 2024

2024 will be a big year here at Tusk Philanthropies. We won't be changing what we do, but with the support of new partners, we are able to do more and better.

Solving Hunger will be running campaigns to get more children fed in three states – Pennsylvania, Illinois and South Carolina. All of our polls there agree: 80% of voters in those states believe that feeding kids in school is the best guarantee for keeping our youth healthy and learning. However, as support from the federal government's Covid-era programs expires, states are thinking harder about their spending priorities. There is less funding for school meals at the same time that funding has dried up for child tax credits, and health care and housing subsidies. All of these hit kids hard, and more and more of them are falling into poverty.

We are also expanding into states that won't determine their budgets until 2025, including Arkansas and Ohio. We have already seen Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders and Governor Mike DeWine make commitments – and provide funding – to hungry kids, and we believe that these commitments will be expanded in 2025.

We will continue to support the Free Democracy Foundation as it prepares to launch the new VoteHub technology and identify new public primary election pilots over the next year. We continue to prepare VoteHub for public elections by supporting additional public security testing to validate that the technology is both safer and easier to use than absentee ballots or mail in ballots. Once VoteHub is launched, we will make the code free and open source to anyone who wants to use it, and then start a nationwide roadshow, taking the technology to election officials and elected officials across the country to show them what their constituents are missing.

We will also continue to engage key stakeholders and build a nationwide grassroots movement in support of mobile voting. Our goal is to double our volunteer and supporter base in 2024 and build a diverse advisory board to help us as we transition into the next phase of our work. Want to join our campaign? Visit [mobilevoting.org/action](https://mobilevoting.org/action) to learn more and become a volunteer.

Interested in learning about our work and how you can support it? Visit [tuskphilanthropies.org](https://tuskphilanthropies.org).