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What does it mean for the United States to share land borders with only two other countries? For many Americans, world events can feel far away, isolated, and unrelated to daily life. Certain world events receive tremendous coverage in media outlets and conversation around the dinner table, while many go unnoticed.

For more than a century, World Affairs Councils across the U.S. have held space for conversations about what’s going on around the world and why it matters. Through nonpartisan educational lectures and panel programs, discussion groups, and opportunities for students and teachers, Councils help their communities to understand the world, others, and themselves more deeply. They highlight connections between people, places, and world events and invite communities to go beyond the headlines to consider the complexities of today’s world.

At its heart, the work of Councils is the work of building community. Councils from Hawaii to Maine and Alaska to Miami bring together businesses, universities, nonprofit organizations, community networks, and other individuals with international interest. Through their programs, Councils center skills like active listening, critical thinking, media literacy, and empathy to counter the isolation and polarization we’ve all experienced. Councils are a prism of perspectives through expert presentations and, importantly, the authentic sharing of the communities the Councils serve.

The collective impact of our national network of 90 Councils touching 43 states, chronicled in this annual report, benefits from the tireless efforts of local staff and board members and countless volunteers and friends who see value in this work. Whether you are a seasoned member of a World Affairs Council or hearing about our national network for the first time, we hope you’ll take your seat at the table.

Kind regards,

Matthew Hughes
President and CEO
The World Affairs Councils of America supports, strengthens, and represents a national network of more than 90 nonpartisan organizations working to deepen their communities’ global perspective.

We express our deepest gratitude to Carlos & Malú Alvarez of San Antonio, Texas, whose long friendship and transformative generosity have ensured a sustainable future for the World Affairs Councils of America.
Our National Board is dedicated to the mission of the World Affairs Councils of America, which is to support our network of 90 Councils across the country as they engage and serve their local communities. We are privileged to serve the foremost grassroots organization dedicated to international issues in America.

Glenn Creamer
Board Chair
National Network Background

The World Affairs Councils of America (WACA) traces its earliest roots to 1918, when the League of Free Nations Association was formed to support President Woodrow Wilson’s efforts to achieve a just peace.

At the end of World War I, the Association’s founders were concerned that Americans would choose isolationism over international engagement. They worked to promote awareness of international issues affecting the U.S., and in 1923 reconstituted the organization as the Foreign Policy Association (FPA).

Citizen discussion groups and FPA branches began to form and spread in the 1920s, 1930s, and after World War II – forerunners of World Affairs Councils.

In 1954, the Great Decisions program was launched in Oregon. Based on the annual briefing book prepared by FPA’s editors, Great Decisions has become the largest nonpartisan public education program on international affairs in the world. The FPA consolidated its operations into its New York City headquarters in the 1980s while the network of independent World Affairs Councils continued to flourish.

In 1986, the National Council of World Affairs Organizations office was established in Washington, DC. The organization was renamed the World Affairs Councils of America, and today WACA serves more than 90 World Affairs Councils nationwide.

National Office Staff

Matthew Hughes  
President & CEO

John Aloszka  
Marketing & Communications Manager

Drew Nickels  
Member Services Coordinator

Kaela Rider  
Global Education Coordinator
AGE IS A GIFT. Two World Affairs Councils, the Cleveland Council on World Affairs (top) and the World Affairs Council of Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky (bottom), celebrated centennial anniversaries in 2023.
World Affairs Councils across the United States create events and educational initiatives for diverse audiences, fostering a more globally informed electorate, promoting civil discourse, and building community.
Our National Network

**Midwest**

Cleveland Council on World Affairs  
Cleveland, OH

Columbus Council on World Affairs  
Columbus, OH

Dayton Council on World Affairs  
Dayton, OH

Global Minnesota  
Minneapolis, MN

Indiana Council on World Affairs  
Indiana, IN

Institute of World Affairs  
Milwaukee, WI

International Affairs Forum  
Traverse City, MI

International Relations Council  
Kansas City, MO

Nebraska World Affairs Council  
Omaha, NE

Peoria Area World Affairs Council  
Peoria, IL

South Dakota World Affairs Council  
Brookings, SD

Tennessee World Affairs Council  
Nashville, TN

World Affairs Council of Central Illinois  
Springfield, IL

World Affairs Council of Cincinnati & Northern Kentucky  
Highland Heights, KY

World Affairs Council of Detroit  
Detroit, MI

World Affairs Council of Kentucky & Southern Indiana  
Louisville, KY

World Affairs Council of Northwest Ohio  
Stony Ridge, OH

World Affairs Council of St. Louis  
St. Louis, MO

World Affairs Council of the Quad Cities  
Davenport, IA

World Affairs Council of Western Michigan  
Grand Rapids, MI

**New England/Mid-Atlantic**

Baltimore Council on Foreign Affairs  
Baltimore, MD

Foreign Policy Association  
New York, NY

International Center of the Capital Region  
Troy, NY

International Institute of Buffalo  
Buffalo, NY

Southeast Connecticut World Affairs Council  
Cleveland, OH

Vermont Council on World Affairs  
Burlington, VT

Windham World Affairs Council  
Brattleboro, VT

Worcester World Affairs Council  
Boylston, MA

World Affairs Council of Connecticut  
Hartford, CT
Our National Network

World Affairs Council of Greater Reading
Reading, PA

World Affairs Council of Harrisburg
Harrisburg, PA

World Affairs Council of Maine
Portland, ME

World Affairs Council of New Hampshire
Manchester, NH

World Affairs Council of New Jersey
Millburn, NJ

World Affairs Council of Philadelphia
Philadelphia, PA

World Affairs Council of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA

World Affairs Council of Rhode Island
Narragansett, RI

World Affairs Council of Rochester
Rochester, NY

World Affairs Council of the Mid-Hudson Valley
Poughkeepsie, NY

World Affairs Council of Western Massachusetts
Springfield, MA

WorldBoston
Boston, MA

Pacific Northwest

Alaska World Affairs Council
Anchorage, AK

Juneau World Affairs Council
Juneau, AK

Olympia World Affairs Council
Olympia, WA

World Affairs (Northern California)
San Francisco, CA

World Affairs Council of Seattle
Seattle, WA

World Affairs Council of Sonoma County
Santa Rosa, CA

World Affairs Council of Tacoma
Tacoma, WA

World Affairs Council of the Monterey Bay Area
Monterey, CA

WorldOregon
Portland, OR

Rockies

Colorado Foothills World Affairs Council
Evergreen, CO

Colorado Springs World Affairs Council
Colorado Springs, CO

Montana World Affairs Council
Missoula, MT

Utah Global Diplomacy
Salt Lake City, UT

WorldDenver
Denver, CO

Southeast

Alabama World Affairs Council
Montgomery, AL

Columbia World Affairs Council
Columbia, SC

Gulf Coast Diplomacy
Pensacola, FL

Naples Council on World Affairs
Naples, FL
Our National Network

Sarasota World Affairs Council
Sarasota, FL

Savannah Council on World Affairs
Savannah, GA

World Affairs Council of Atlanta
Atlanta, GA

World Affairs Council of Charleston
Charleston, SC

World Affairs Council of Charlotte
Charlotte, NC

World Affairs Council of Greater Richmond
Richmond, VA

World Affairs Council of Hilton Head
Hilton Head Island, SC

World Affairs Council of Jacksonville
Jacksonville, FL

World Affairs Council of Miami
Miami, FL

World Affairs Council of New Orleans
New Orleans, LA

World Affairs Council of Palm Beach
Boynton Beach, FL

World Affairs Council of Western North Carolina
Asheville, NC

World Affairs Council Upstate
Greenville, SC

World Orlando
Orlando, FL

Southwest

Global Santa Fe
Santa Fe, NM

Global Ties Arizona
Phoenix, AZ

Los Angeles World Affairs Council
Los Angeles, CA

Pacific and Asian Affairs Council
Honolulu, HI

San Diego World Affairs Council
San Diego, CA

World Affairs Council of Albuquerque
Albuquerque, NM

World Affairs Council of Austin
Austin, TX

World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth
Dallas, TX

World Affairs Council of El Paso
El Paso, TX

World Affairs Council of Greater Houston
Houston, TX

World Affairs Council of Inland Southern California
Loma Linda, CA

World Affairs Council of Las Vegas
Las Vegas, NV

World Affairs Council of Orange County
Irvine, CA

World Affairs Council of San Antonio
San Antonio, TX

World Affairs Council of South Texas
Corpus Christi, TX

World Affairs Council of the Desert
Palm Desert, CA
“Do we always have to be so depressed?” Remarked a Council member to Joyce Davis, President and CEO of the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg (WACH) and WACA National Board Member. The Council member, who was lamenting the often grim nature of international affairs, felt like many who work within the foreign affairs space: tired of viewing the world from a place of negativity.

So, when the Council wanted to host an event tackling war and terrorism, “we switched it to focus on peace,” said Davis. Harrisburg’s annual peace symposium was born.

Davis, who spent years reporting on (and from) the Middle East for NPR and Knight Ridder Newspapers as an editor, is no stranger to conflict and its perils. Her focus as a reporter and writer was the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which she has written two books about.

When she returned to the U.S. to settle down in Harrisburg, she took a decidedly harmonious approach to founding the World Affairs Council of Harrisburg, bringing together an initial cohort of academics from the region’s universities and colleges.
According to Davis, it’s been “full tilt boogie ever since.”

In addition to the Annual Peace Symposium, which this year hosted the Vice President of the U.S. Institute of Peace, Michael Yaffe, WACH also hosts an annual International Women’s Conference, which addresses the rights of women and girls abroad and was inspired by community members.

“We have a refugee from Sudan in our community, a woman who is quite outspoken for feminism and democracy, which forced her to actually flee Sudan,” said Davis.

While the International Women’s Conference focuses on hard-hitting issues, it also takes care to explore the cultures represented in the Harrisburg community.

“This year we added a little flavor to that and added an international women’s fashion show, so all the ladies from different cultures brought out their best traditional garb.”

Harrisburg also focuses on youth programming. Through its Summer Internship and Enrichment program, Davis estimates that the Council has impacted over 300 students as they begin their journeys in international affairs and the foreign service.

These programs spread the message that “the world is our own backyard,” says Davis—ultimately bringing the world, and communities in Harrisburg, closer together.
Our network stretches from Hawaii to Maine and Alaska to Miami.
Our network stretches from Hawaii to Maine and Alaska to Miami.
Global Education
Informed Civil Discourse
International Exchange
Community Building
Public Programming
Workforce Development
Civic Engagement
Third Places
Cross-Cultural Competency
Foreign Service Pipelines
Teacher Development
Thought Leadership
Life-Long Learning
Mentorship
College Readiness
Business Development

That’s just what we do.
Bringing Communities Together

The World Affairs Councils of America is perhaps unlike any network of associations in the United States. Ninety independently operated Councils—think of them like restaurant franchises, but with sometimes different menus—working to promote global awareness and understanding.

For some Councils, this mission is operationalized through public speaker programs and discussion groups, but for others it may be strictly educational programming in high schools or colleges. Many Councils offer a mix of public events, programming in schools, service-oriented programs, and offerings for the business community.

The benefits of global awareness are infinite.

Promoting international affairs through youth programming prepares students to work in a globalized economy, to recognize cultural differences as strengths, and to expose them to career paths in the foreign service, economics, policy, and more.

Engaging the public on foreign affairs and current events fosters a more informed electorate, promotes civil discourse, and builds community through events that bring neighbors, different sides of town, and people of different backgrounds together. At a time when social clubs are on the decline and polarization is increasing, World Affairs Council events bridge divides and create constructive third places.
**NONPARTISAN**
When you attend a Council event, you can expect a nuanced, balanced presentation based on facts.

**INFORMED CIVIL DISCOURSE**
Informed civil discourse is a cornerstone of functioning societies and critical for the exchange of ideas. Beyond being simply respectful, informed civil discourse promotes having well researched opinions.

**THIRD PLACE**
A third place refers to the social surroundings that are separate from the home and the workplace where you can connect with others who have similar interests.

**INTERGENERATIONAL**
Audiences for Council events often include students, business leaders, retirees, and life-long learners, which promotes the exchange of ideas between generations.
Engaging with the National Network

The World Affairs Councils of America national office does not operate like a traditional Council. Instead, the office works to support and sustain Councils in communities across the country.

**Academic WorldQuest™**

Our flagship youth education program is a fun, fast-paced team competition for high school students. Academic WorldQuest™ (AWQ) tests students’ knowledge of international politics, geography, global economics, history, and world cultures. Some 50 World Affairs Councils hold local competitions for high school students in their communities. Since 2003, winning teams have traveled to Washington, DC, every April to vie for the national championship.

**National Conference**

From leadership workshops to panels of international experts, this annual event in Washington, DC, inspires diverse Councils from 90 communities to sustain the conversation on critical global issues and contribute to a stronger network and informed American public.

**Engage America**

The national office partners with think tanks, foundations, NGOs, corporations, and embassies to arrange timely “national conversations” at several Councils across the country on critical topics. This year, WACA partnered with the Korea Economic Institute and the International Labor Organization.

**Council Development**

The national office hosts Roundtables over Zoom for Council professionals and volunteers to meet others in the network, share questions and ideas, and explore innovative strategies together.

Additionally, Council leaders from across the country convene for a multi-day retreat focused on collaboration and problem solving during the Leadership Meeting, held in a different location each year.

200,000+ PEOPLE REACHED BY THE COUNCIL NETWORK IN THE LAST YEAR
One of the greatest challenges facing our nation is preparing the next generation for the globally interconnected world of the 21st century. America’s ability to face the economic and security challenges and seize new opportunities depends on an informed citizenry and a well-educated workforce.

Academic WorldQuest™ (AWQ), the flagship education program of the World Affairs Councils of America, is a unique, competitive educational program that exposes youth to the world outside our borders and prepares them for the challenges and opportunities ahead.

Some 50 World Affairs Councils across the nation hold competitions for high school students in their communities. Since 2003, local winning teams have traveled to Washington, DC, each April to compete in the Carlos and Malú Alvarez Academic WorldQuest™ National Competition.

Academic WorldQuest by the Numbers

649 LOCAL TEAMS
2,983 STUDENTS
24 STATES
John Scott, who teaches advanced placement social studies courses at Plano West Senior High School in Plano, Texas, sees globally aware students as more than just able to name countries on a map, but as better attuned to the interconnectedness of the world’s challenges.

Scott’s belief in the benefit of global education has led him to sponsor his school’s Academic WorldQuest (AWQ) team for over ten years. AWQ, a team game competition testing students’ knowledge in international affairs, has local competitions across the United States before each competition’s winning team competes nationally in Washington, DC.

“World Affairs students are positive, aware, and understanding of the world around them more so than students who are not. Their participation in Academic WorldQuest gives them a lot of concepts of being a lifelong learner of world affairs,” said Scott. “AWQ promotes better global citizens. It gives students a better sense of our interconnected world.”

Plano West, which participates in Academic WorldQuest
through the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth, went on to win the national Academic WorldQuest competition last year, but Scott sees the benefits of Academic WorldQuest extending far beyond trivia, “The competition process helps them understand that they are important to each other, that they are each responsible, and that collectively they can achieve great things.”

Jennifer Bowden, Director of Education for the World Affairs Council of Dallas/Fort Worth, agrees: “The entire Academic WorldQuest event, from study to competition, provides students with tools to make a positive global change on today’s complex challenges, effectively interact with people from different backgrounds, and compete for jobs in the interconnected workforce.”

While Academic WorldQuest primarily exists to serve students, Scott says seeing students’ passion inspires him as a teacher, “It goes back to the essence of why people start teaching in the first place: They want to be around students who want to learn and want to engage.”

“Being around students like this is the essence of teaching.”
Spotlight: Engaging Albany Through Engage America

The International Center of the Capital Region (ICCR), located in Albany, New York, is known for its diverse programming in schools and in the city’s rich fabric of immigrant communities. Through the Engage America series, ICCR has been able to expand its reach into the business and technology sectors, while engaging students more deeply in international exchange.

The recipient of an Engage America grant from the Korea Economic Institute, the ICCR hosted Chang Woo Lee, a South Korean diplomat, in Albany, where he met with students, the chamber of commerce, and civic groups. During his visit, he also toured the NanoTech Center at SUNY Polytechnic Institute, which is quickly becoming a microchip hub.

“This programming gets different people to come out to events,” said ICCR Executive Director Holly Planells McKenna. “A lot of our programming is in community centers here, and then there’s people in business and government, and it’s great to get them into the same room.”
The National Conference, held in Washington, DC, each November inspires diverse Councils from 90 communities to sustain the conversation on critical global issues and contribute to a stronger network and informed American public.

The 2022 Conference, *Navigating a Fractured World*, examined the fractious time in which we find ourselves and featured such speakers as Fiona Hill and Marie Yovanovitch.

The 2022 International Service Award, the highest honor bestowed by WACA, was accepted by Linda Thomas-GreenField, U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations.

The 2023 conference, *Building the World of Tomorrow*, takes an optimistic outlook on the current climate in hopes of forging a promising future for all.

Honoring his lifetime of public service and his impact on international affairs, the 2023 International Service Award was awarded to Ambassador Thomas R. Pickering.

As with every conference, Student Scholars from across the nation attended on a scholarship. While at the conference, the students network and interact with expert speakers.

**In Focus: National Conference**
“I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to have attended this conference and gained new perspectives on such a broad array of issues.”

Evan Odegard
Harvard University
Thank you to our 1918 Society members, whose contributions sustain the World Affairs Councils of America’s mission in supporting and strengthening the Council network.

Osmar Abib
Carlos & Malú Alvarez
Erik Brattberg
Karen Burghart
Mimi Burke
Glenn Creamer
Rich Crepage
José de Arimatéia da Cruz
Joyce M. Davis
Brian Easley
Sylvia Fields
Michelle Glandorf
Mimi Gregory
Henry & Nancy Hamlin
Stephen Lackey
A. Alex Lari
Chuck Leonard

Maryanne Maldonado
Edward Martens
Cynthia Melcher
Mary Mendoza
Jacquelyn Miller
Derrick Olsen
Stephen & Colleen Petras
Pierce Powers
Naseem Qader
Niki Shishido
Barbara Stephenson
Serge Tomassian
Megan C. Torrey
Jon Ward
Angela & Shawn Weck
Mary P. Yntema

For more information about supporting WACA through the 1918 Society, please email Matthew Hughes, President and CEO, at mhughes@worldaffairscouncils.org.
Financial Summary | FY 2022

The below financial report reflects the Fiscal Year 2022 audited financial statement.

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<th>Current Assets</th>
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