



INSTITUTE FOR
HUMANE STUDIES
AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY



2024

IMPACT REPORT



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HUMANE STUDIES
AT GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

OUR MISSION

IHS supports the achievement of a freer society by advancing the principles and practices of freedom.

OUR VISION

To spark a movement that celebrates and advances the principles underlying the American experiment: political, economic, intellectual, and civic freedom.



To our community of partners and supporters:

What an exciting year 2024 has been at IHS!

It's been thrilling to see intellectual talent in our community drive important gains for freedom in states around the country and even before the Supreme Court. We've also developed a suite of AI-powered research tools for our community of thinkers and doers, launched a grant fund to support extracurricular programming for undergraduates around the country, and expanded our talent development work, helping over 45 partners in policy and philanthropy tap the scholarly expertise within our expansive network.

I couldn't be more excited for the opportunities ahead in 2025, especially with Courtney Derr as our new executive director by my side. Courtney joined the IHS team nearly 15 years ago and, as chief operating officer for the last three years, has been a key driver of IHS's innovation. As IHS looks forward to its 65th anniversary in 2026, Courtney will be my key partner in ushering in this next chapter for IHS and sharing our progress along the way, beginning in the pages of this report.

Thank you for being part of our work—I hope you are proud to read about the real impact your support and partnership has made possible over the last year and are energized by the opportunities ahead for making ours a freer, more prosperous, and more humane world.



Emily Chamlee-Wright

Emily Chamlee-Wright
President & CEO

A Message from the *Executive Director*

Americans today enjoy unprecedented levels of personal freedom and material abundance: the fruits of a society based on universal human dignity, individual liberty, and limited government—in other words, fruits of the classical liberal tradition.

When I'm traveling to meet with IHS supporters and partners, I often reflect on what this means for me personally—a working mom in the knowledge economy who can read bedtime stories with her kids on FaceTime after landing at her destination several time zones away.

Nearly nine decades ago, this life, especially for a woman, would have been unthinkable to my grandmother as a girl growing up as the twelfth of thirteen children with no running water on an Indiana farm.

My generation used to take for granted that such progress was the way of the world. After watching the fall of the Berlin Wall and the lifting of the iron curtain in the nineties, we had no reason to doubt Francis Fukuyama's belief that liberalism had won decisively.

No longer.

Liberalism is not utopia, and we face serious challenges as a country that need serious solutions. Instead, we find ourselves in a zero-sum contest between two extreme, top-down political visions that both lead to the same place: the end of the American experiment and the end of our hard-won freedoms. The freedom to think for ourselves. To exist peacefully alongside those who might worship, look, or speak differently. To innovate, create, and push boundaries in ways that advance human knowledge and flourishing.

If, like me, you believe that the best solutions can be found by unleashing the great creative force of human freedom, rather than imposed from the top down, I hope you will join me and the Institute for Humane Studies (IHS) in raising our voices against rising authoritarianism in our politics and in our culture.

Since our founding nearly 65 years ago, IHS has put the principles of liberty and human flourishing to work in the academy and beyond. Cultivating talent has been at the heart of this effort, and today the IHS community includes over 7,000 professors, policy experts, and thought leaders, making it the world's largest network of thinkers and doers advancing the liberal project.

With your support and engagement, the IHS community's influence extends far beyond the halls of higher education, where it has reached millions of undergraduates to date. Through strategic “upstream investments” in talent and research, IHS has influenced key Supreme Court decisions in 2024 and catalyzed groundbreaking research in critical areas such as regulatory reform, school choice, and freedom of speech—research that is shaping our most important public conversations and policy debates. The pages that follow highlight the fruits of your support for this work over the previous year and look forward to the year ahead.

While we celebrate the impact we've had over the last year, we know the current moment demands so much more.

With America's 250th right around the corner, in a moment when our most important freedoms hang in the balance, **IHS aims to spark a movement dedicated to advancing the political, economic, intellectual, and social freedom**—the four corners of liberalism, as our president and CEO Emily Chamlee-Wright likes to say.

In the words of the great economist and early IHS partner Friedrich Hayek, we seek not “*a mere defense of things as they are nor a diluted kind of socialism, but a truly liberal radicalism ... which is not too severely practical, and which does not confine itself to what appears today as politically possible. We need intellectual leaders who are willing to work for an ideal ... willing to stick to principles and to fight for their full realization.*”

On behalf of the entire IHS team, thank you for being part of our community and for your commitment to classical liberal principles such as limited government, free enterprise, and the inherent dignity of every person. Together, we ensure the world has the talent and research it needs to put these principles to work in solving the challenges we face, at the moment they are needed most.

I hope you will join us in the year ahead as we embark upon our most ambitious and bold effort yet.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'CAD' followed by a flourish.

Courtney A. Derr
Executive Director

How You Advanced Freedom in 2024

170+

new classical liberal professors entered the academy



During their careers, these professors will reach an estimated 765,000 students, inspiring our future leaders with America's founding principles. They join the ranks of over 5,000 professors in the IHS network, who will collectively reach over 10 million students in the next decade alone. Each year, IHS provides funding to the most masterful among them to offer additional educational opportunities outside of the classroom.

See page 4 to read about their impact in 2024.

2,000+

critical research projects published



These publications strengthened the fields that matter most to a free society, informing public opinion and policy discourse. For example, this past summer *The New York Times* featured six research studies on rising polarization, five of which were co-authored by IHS scholarly partners. We're building national scholar networks around other urgent challenges—including health care, emerging technology, and the administrative state.

You can read more about the impact of this work on page 7.

1,000+

media outlets and more than 160 public policy and civil society organizations referenced and expanded on the work of IHS partners and alumni



In policy, research from the IHS network made so many key wins at both the federal and state levels possible over the last year. For example, policy education efforts from IHS's national network of regulatory scholars resulted in over 65 freedom-enhancing reforms across 26 states since 2020, including repealing laws that restrict entry of new health care facilities and providers, stifle innovation, increase costs, and reduce the quality of patient care.

More on this can be found on page 7.

The *Masterful Teachers* You Empowered & the *Next Generation of Leaders* You Inspired



**PETER
CALCAGNO**



**13 YEARS
AS AN IHS
PARTNER**



**4,000+
STUDENTS
INSPIRED**

At the Center for Public Choice and Market Process, economist **Pete Calcagno** (College of Charleston) helped more than 300 students last year explore the economic, political, and moral foundations of a free society through a free-enterprise speaker series, book discussions, and a regional reading group.

A teacher committed to the transformational power of classical liberal ideas, Pete has been inspiring students for 28 years to not only study these ideas but also pursue careers advancing them in public policy and at organizations like IHS.



RUPERT MUNRO

Former student and current COO, Property and Environmental Research Center (PERC)

“Programming from Dr. Calcagno and the Center was among the most impactful of my college career. From robust discussions on challenging topics to lectures from leading scholars, the Center equips students to think critically, broaden their understanding, and be prepared for their careers and lives.”

Meanwhile, at the Free and Open Societies Project, political scientist **Andrew Taylor** (North Carolina State University) brought the principles of freedom and democracy to life for 400 students in 2024 through a dynamic speaker series, hands-on undergraduate research, and engaging seminars. The project’s highlights included an annual lecture and discussion series on the Bill of Rights, igniting meaningful conversations around and appreciation for the foundations of the free society we enjoy today.

This initiative goes beyond the classroom and indeed even students’ college journeys—it helps talented and principled future leaders embrace a life of ideas, broaden their exposure to diverse perspectives, and champion and practice free expression and open inquiry.



**ANDREW
TAYLOR**



**12 YEARS
AS AN IHS
PARTNER**



**4,500+
STUDENTS
INSPIRED**



**ALAN
LEVINE**



**27 YEARS
AS AN IHS
PARTNER**



**4,000+
STUDENTS
INSPIRED**



**TOM
MERRILL**



**15 YEARS
AS AN IHS
PARTNER**



**3,000+
STUDENTS
INSPIRED**

Professors **Alan Levine** and **Tom Merrill** (American University) at the Political Theory Institute are advancing a climate of intellectual discovery and openness on their campus. In the last year alone, their lecture series reached hundreds of students, and an in-depth mentorship program helped position 40 of the best and brightest for careers in policy and government.

Alan shared why this work matters so much to him and his students:



...the wisdom and freedoms of Western society need to be constantly re-explained to new generations and constantly re-defended. Our students' accomplishments show how they take these ideas to heart. I am proudest of the number of my students who go on to found journals and become teachers themselves. Several run and/or founded academies of classical learning, including for poor Black students in the worst part of Memphis, TN, with incredible success. Many more are now tenured professors themselves or currently in graduate school. Civilization and freedom require us to be links in the great chain. We play our parts and help create the links of the next generation."

Given the challenges and climate on many college campuses around the country, these programs and opportunities are a *lifeline* for students and professors who care about ideas but find too few opportunities to engage in the joy and challenge of intellectual exploration with others.

Programs and opportunities like these require resources, which are increasingly scarce. **That's where you come in.**

In 2024 alone, your support enabled these exceptional educators to provide thousands of students nationwide with transformative extracurricular programs that deepened their understanding of and appreciation for the principles and practices of freedom. Thanks to you, the next generation of business, civic, education, and policy leaders will have these principles ready at hand to guide and inspire them in their careers and communities.



The Difference—Making *Intellectual Talent & Research* You Supported

“The dismantling of the unlawful Administrative State has officially begun.”

That’s how **Mark Chenoweth**, president of the New Civil Liberties Alliance (NCLA), describes the outcome of NCLA’s success in one of the 2024 Supreme Court cases that overturned decades of *Chevron* deference.

IHS support—from the seminars Mark attended as an undergraduate, to the grants he received, to his mentorship from IHS scholars—gave him the inspiration and connections that proved critical in his career as a champion of freedom.

Your support is cultivating the next generation of leaders like Mark, enabling IHS to award over \$1 million in grants in FY24 to graduate students destined for impact in academia, public policy, and beyond.

“ I wouldn’t be doing what I’m doing today if it weren’t for my introduction to and involvement with IHS on many levels. It really happened earlier in my career, when I was in college back in the 1990s, when I attended some of the IHS seminars. One of my most important mentors in college was David Schmitz, who was very involved with IHS. I benefited from a Humane Studies Fellowship and was mentored by Richard Epstein, someone else who has been involved with IHS over the years. And even to this day, [President Emerita] Marty Zupan sits on our board here at NCLA ... so IHS has really been invaluable to me personally and to NCLA in doing what we do every day fighting the administrative state.”



MARK CHENOWETH
President and Chief Legal Officer,
New Civil Liberties Alliance

This past year with your support, talent in the IHS network...

Generated **over 2,000 academic publications** that are shaping academic fields and informing public discourse.

In a *New York Times* op-ed last summer on America's growing polarization, five of the six scholars cited—(pictured top left to right) Jay Van Bavel, Jamie Druckman, Yphtach Lelkes, (pictured bottom left to right) Thomas Costello, and Claire Robertson—received research funding and other support, thanks to your generosity.

The New York Times

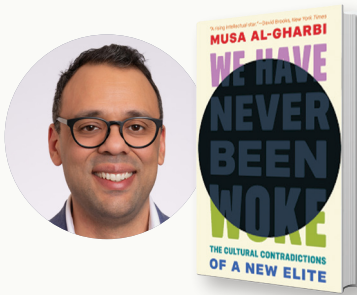


Drove progress on **key policy issues**.

James Shuls (University of Missouri) and Eric Wearne (Kennesaw State University) advanced school choice and alternative K-12 schooling models in outlets such as *The Washington Times*, *Ed Choice*, and *Education Next*. Meanwhile, IHS alumnus Ilya Somin's (George Mason University) work on how eminent domain harms the poor influenced the reform of Maine's laws.

Helped repeal laws that will **save tens of thousands of lives** in the next few years alone.

Longtime IHS partners at the Knee Regulatory Research Center at West Virginia University informed the repeal of laws that restrict entry of new health care facilities and providers, stifle innovation, increase costs, and reduce the quality of patient care.



Clarified the dangers of **DEI**.

Sociologist and IHS alumnus Musa Al-Gharbi (Stony Brook University) has gained significant attention for his new book IHS helped support, *We Have Never Been Woke*, which gives a rigorous examination of the contemporary social justice movement. David Brooks, writing in *The New York Times*, said that the book “announces [al-Gharbi] as a rising intellectual star.”

Tens of thousands of students inspired. Over 170 new freedom-focused professors entering the academy. 2,000+ critical research projects published. Dozens of policy wins and two landmark Supreme Court cases.

These are the fruits of your partnership with IHS in building and sustaining the intellectual foundations of our freedom and are just the beginning of the lasting impact your generosity has created in 2024 and beyond. *Thank you for being part of our work and the impactful community we've built together.*

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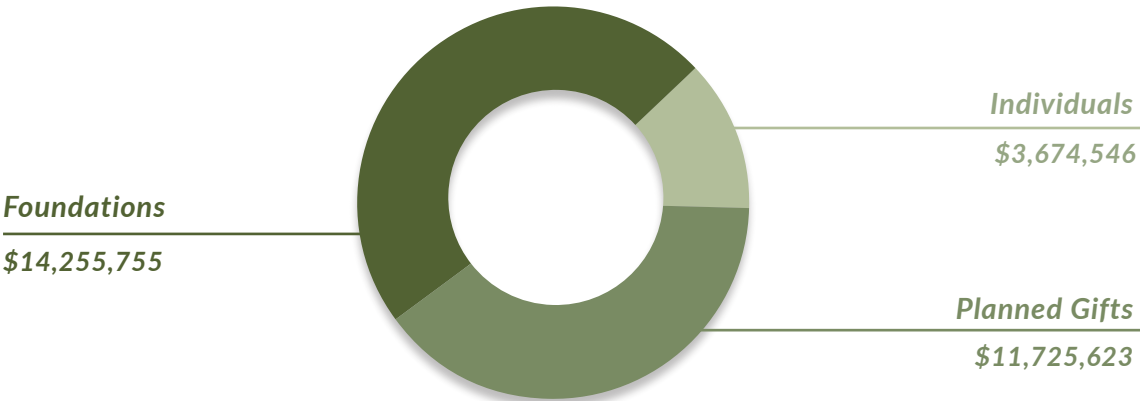
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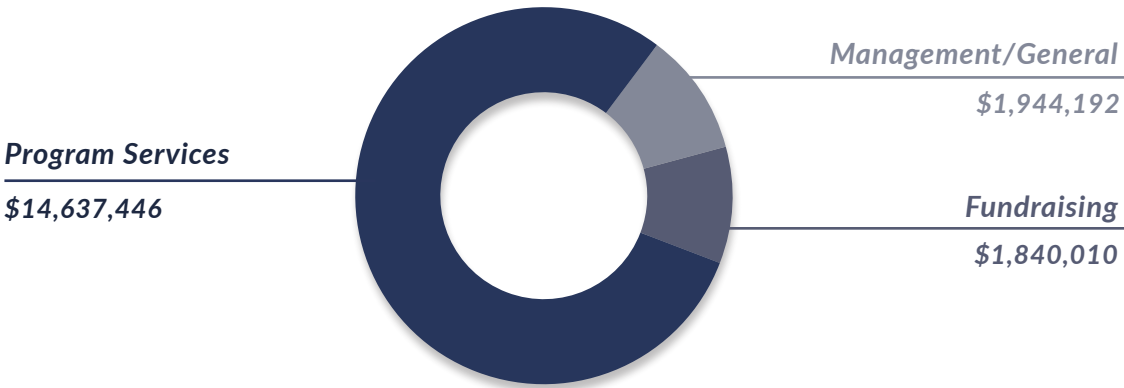
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Financial Report

2024 TOTAL REVENUE (\$29,655,924)



2024 TOTAL EXPENSES (\$18,421,648)



Scan the QR code to view past 990s



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