

MISSION  
PARTNERS

We take our work to  
**heart**

*Our 2022 Social Impact Report*

Certified



Corporation

WOMEN  
OWNED<sup>®</sup>



# A Letter From Our Founder

## Dear Friends,

Each spring since becoming a certified B Corporation™ Mission Partners has released an annual social impact report. I've often thought about this annual report as a **love letter to our community**—about what we accomplished together, where we challenged one another, and where we see our work going next.

Thinking about this report as a love letter is fitting, perhaps, because of how deeply we take our work, our impact, our values, and our partnerships to heart.

In 2022, we collectively contributed our time, treasure, and talent across 50+ mission-aligned projects. We launched a groundbreaking Social Entrepreneur in Residence program. We received a Gold Bell Seal from Mental Health America and an Inc. Best Workplace Award. We delivered more than \$140,000 in pro bono services to Black-led and women-led organizations. We renewed our B Corp™ score with a 30-point increase. We lived fully through our values. And we showed up every day, as communicators for social change. Because **we take this work to heart.**

In the pages that follow, you'll understand how seriously we think about this work, and how seriously we take our role and responsibility as thought partners, strategists, writers, designers, project managers, and content creators.

At Mission Partners, communication isn't only a job. It's our way of leaving the world better than we found it: by challenging and helping to reimagine systems, by contributing our skills to a more just and inclusive society, and by advancing meaningful missions in creative and compelling ways.

This is hard work, and heart work. And we're in it for good.

**With gratitude,**



*Carrie Fox.*

Carrie Fox (she/her)  
Founder and CEO  
Mission Partners, Benefit LLC.

# We take *our work* to heart.

## About Mission Partners

At Mission Partners, we use the power of communication to advance social justice.

With decades of experience in social impact communications and mission-driven strategic planning, we partner with organizations along their journeys to build more equitable and just systems and communities. Working at the intersection of public relations, policy, and philanthropy, we use a full range of strategic communications—messaging, marketing, issues management, and strategy building to help advance our clients' visions for the future.

Since our founding, we've counseled hundreds of nonprofits, foundations, and purpose-driven organizations, as well as the partners who fund and

support their work, helping to ensure they are authentic in their words, equitable in their strategies, and intentional about their impact.

We've helped organizations refine their strategies, increase their impact, and amplify their stories. We track and measure progress every step of the way. And, we significantly invest our own dollars and time back into the clients we represent, because we know that everything we do to share and strengthen a powerful idea will move us toward a better world.



# We take *our values* to heart.

## Our Values

Mission Partners is built on the principles of justice, equity, diversity, inclusion, and belonging. These principles are embedded in every value we hold as a company.

- **We value people first.** We are more than what happens during our office hours. We are human first, and we strive to show deep respect for every person inside and outside our company. We know that company culture matters, and we strive to create an environment in which our team can thrive as people and as professionals.
- **We value integrity and excellence.** We are honest, open, ethical, and fair. People trust us to adhere to our word, and we work hard to earn and maintain that trust. We always bring our best—to our work, our clients, and each other.
- **We value courageous leadership.** We act with courage, challenge the status quo, and find new ways to drive impact and equity. We grow our company and each other.
- **We value strategic thinking and thoughtful execution.** We are not just seasoned consultants; we are experienced doers and collaborators. We understand the value of thoughtful analysis, clear rationale, and contextual communication in moving from ideas to implementation.
- **We value continuous learning and growth.** We are a dynamic team, continuously learning, innovating, and improving. We seek first to understand and apply what we learn to evolve and improve our work.

## Public Benefit Statement

As a Certified B Corporation, we pledge to foster a radically inclusive and richly regenerative economy. Our company voluntarily invests in meeting significantly higher standards of sustainability, governance, and giving back to the community in our daily operations. At Mission Partners, we believe business is a force for good, and we are committed to providing an environment of mutual respect for all employees and partners. We believe that the more inclusive we are, the better our work will be.

# We take *our impact* to heart.

At Mission Partners, we're driven by our desire to leave a long-lasting and positive impact. It's not just about what we do; it's also about how we do it. We show up every day to consider the impact we can have on one another, our client projects, our communities, and across society.

Here are some of the ways Mission Partners made an impact in 2022:

**We prioritized mental health in the workplace.** Mission Partners received the Gold Bell Seal from Mental Health America for our workplace policies and approach.

**We expanded our employee benefits.** We expanded paid family leave to six weeks, added paid jury leave, and increased sabbatical leave options. In addition to our existing spring and winter breaks, our office also closed for a summer break.



**We encouraged civic action.** The Mission Partners office closed for Election Day to allow employees time and space to exercise their right to vote.

**We launched a groundbreaking new residency for Black agency leaders.** Our Social Entrepreneur in Residence program can serve as a model for our peers.

**We shifted \$362K in capital to Black-led and women-led businesses.** This investment is part of our commitment to shift \$2.5M to Black-led and women-led organizations by 2025.

## \$362,000

directed to Black-led and women-led organizations

**“I really appreciate Mission Partners’ ‘conscious leadership’ approach to strategic planning and their focus on centering marginalized communities throughout the process—Mission Partners absolutely understands social justice.”**

Democracy Fund

We co-created award-winning work on behalf of our clients. We received recognition for our projects with Democracy Fund, Prism, and UpTogether.

We ensured 100% of our team members were upskilled. Training topics for the team ranged from race equity to plain language to people management.

We saw our B Corp score increase by 30.1 points.

We collectively contributed 750 hours of pro bono support to our clients representing \$146,500.

We donated \$6,290 to nonprofits, including dollars donated through our charitable match program.

We were named one of *Inc. Magazine's* Best Workplaces in the U.S. for 2022.

**750**  
**HOURS**  
of pro bono support

**Inc. Best  
Workplaces**

**2022**

**100%**

of our team members upskilled

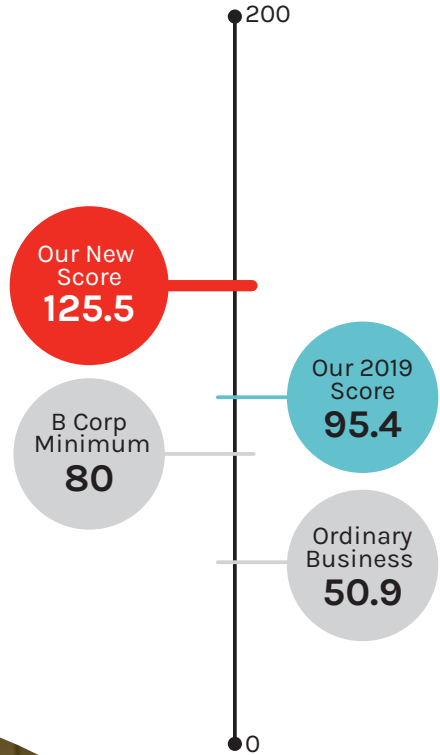


# We take *our role as a B Corp* to heart.

B Corps are scored in five categories: Governance, Workforce, Community, Environment, and Customers. While our score improved in every category, our biggest growth was in Governance and Workers. Our concentrated efforts in these areas contributed to Mission Partners earning nearly 20 additional points, representing 60% of our overall score growth.

## Why the B?

Nearly 5,000 businesses around the world hold the coveted Certified B Corporation designation—and we are proud to be among them. B Corporations are better for employees, the community, customers, and the environment. It's our collective and ongoing hard work that is driving transformational change across the business sectors we represent.







## Impact Business Model

B Lab, the organization that certifies B Corporations, uses **Impact Business Models (IBMs)** to identify the ways that a business is designed to create a specific positive benefit or outcome for its stakeholders. Impact Business Models are specific, material, verifiable, lasting, and extraordinary. Impact Business Models are one of the three underlying aspects of a company's social and environmental performance, assessed in the B Impact Assessment. Impact Business Models are one of the more challenging and nuanced parts of the B Corp certification process—it is difficult to earn an IBM credit, and most companies have no more than two, if any. It is extremely rare for a company to have three applicable IBMs.

B Lab has recognized Mission Partners for three Impact Business Models.

- **Mission Locked:** This standard rewards companies for safeguarding their mission and for formally considering stakeholders in decision-making. *At Mission Partners: We are a Benefit LLC in the state of Maryland.*
- **Support for Underserved/Purpose-Driven Enterprises:** This standard recognizes businesses that provide services that enable the financial or operational success of organizations that are purpose-driven or underserved. *At Mission Partners: We guide leaders of nonprofits, foundations, associations, coalitions, and responsible businesses along their journey to impact.*
- **Serving In-Need Populations:** This standard acknowledges that the work of a company benefits traditionally underserved populations, primarily as measured by income levels. *At Mission Partners: In 2022, we were proud to partner with 37 organizations, collectively representing more than 500,000 association members, 53,680 students, 694 foundations grantees, and 160,000 people whose lives are impacted by the organizations we served.*

# We take *our relationships* to heart.

In 2022, we strengthened and expanded our bonds with thoughtful leaders and bold visionaries. Our key initiatives centered around fostering relationships, sparking new ideas, and pushing the industry to be more equitable.



Ryan Pintado-Vertner, CEO and founder of Smoketown, served as the first Social Entrepreneur in Residence.

## Launching A Groundbreaking Social Entrepreneur in Residence Program

We recognize the power, privilege, and advantage we have in our industry as a White-led firm, with **nearly 90%** of communications agency leadership identifying as White. To address the racial disparity in communications agency ownership, Mission Partners launched the Social Entrepreneur in Residence program. Through this program, Mission Partners invests in Black-led founders who might have more limited access to the capital and resources than White-led firms typically do.

Throughout the residency, the entrepreneur receives executive-level coaching and financial support from Mission Partners to grow and scale their company. In exchange, the entrepreneur provides their expertise to Mission Partners' employees and clients.

In September 2022, we proudly welcomed our first Social Entrepreneur in Residence, **Ryan Pintado-Vertner**, CEO and founder of Smoketown, a consultancy that helps mission-driven consumer brands.

**“It’s one thing to believe in myself as a startup founder. It’s quite another thing to have others believe in me, too, especially when those allies are backing it up with money, resources, and expertise that I can rely on. That’s what Mission Partners’ Social Entrepreneurship in Residence program means to me.”**

Ryan Pintado-Vertner, CEO and Founder, Smoketown

**mission**  
**FORWARD**  
with CARRIE FOX

Thought-Provoking Conversations  
with Mission Forward

**Mission Forward with Carrie Fox**, the podcast for social impact communicators released its fifth and sixth seasons in 2022, surpassing 25,000 downloads. The podcast featured dozens of social impact leaders and internationally recognized guests who shared perspective-shifting conversations on harnessing the power of communications.

25,000+

Mission Forward downloads

Journalist, philanthropist, and author, Mitch Albom, joined Carrie for a special live interview event.



# We take *our clients'* *missions* to heart.

At Mission Partners, we wholeheartedly believe in supporting our clients to move their missions forward. We approach every client experience with an open mind, an open heart, and a plan to achieve transformative results. We're proud to share our collective impact from 2022.





## SOME (So Others Might Eat)

### Scaling the Impact of DC's Fight Against Hunger

For more than 50 years, SOME (So Others Might Eat) has supported DC residents who are experiencing homelessness and poverty through comprehensive and transformative services. Since 2001, this community-based service organization has also hosted the largest Thanksgiving Day race in DC, known widely as the SOME Trot for Hunger. In preparation for its 21st year, Mission Partners supported the event's rebrand to America's Trot for Hunger, resulting in an expanded version of the race spotlighting the issue of hunger not only in DC, but nationwide.

Mission Partners developed and activated several streams of digital communications, including social media, e-newsletters, and a peer-to-peer fundraising toolkit, to increase virtual and in-person event participation. The communications strategy for the Trot included identifying unique ways to bolster existing sponsorships and partnerships, while building

new ones. Through earned and paid media engagement, Mission Partners also promoted the Trot to new audiences, locally and nationally. Mission Partners secured FOX 5 as the first official media partner for the race and engaged local nonprofits in event promotion and participation.

Anchored by these communications activations, SOME raised more than \$785,000 during this year's Trot. In addition to their paid media partnerships, America's Trot for Hunger earned 70 media hits, resulting in a potential reach of more than 200 million views. SOME also increased their fundraising total by leveraging the peer-to-peer fundraising toolkit. To expand the impact of this toolkit beyond the Trot, Mission Partners created an evergreen version of the same tool in support of year-round peer-to-peer fundraising.

PHOTO: JON FLEMING, SOME



“The Mission Partners team delivered what they said and more. I find myself imagining ways to work with them again.”

Lizzy Hazeltine, North Carolina  
Local News Lab Fund



CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

## North Carolina Local News Lab Fund

In 2022, Mission Partners built a website for the North Carolina Local News Lab Fund, an organization dedicated to building a more resilient, sustainable, and inclusive news and information ecosystem that benefits all of North Carolina. Equipped with a central hub to share their story, news, and thought leadership, the website serves a critical role in advancing the overall mission of the Fund: funneling more dollars into local news and community information organizations.

PHOTO: MADELINE GRAY,  
NARRATIVE ARTS, (VIA  
NORTH CAROLINA LOCAL  
NEWS LAB FUND)



#### CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

## Sitar Arts Center

Sitar Arts Center engages DC youth in building a creative community of learning and belonging that removes financial and cultural barriers to arts education and career training. Through strategic communications efforts, Mission Partners helped Sitar maximize its impact in more ways than one during 2022: revising Sitar's mission, vision, and values statements, providing vital content to Sitar's five-year strategic plan, coordinating media relations for major news and events, and increasing student enrollment through strategic marketing.

PHOTO: JATI LINDSAY, SITAR ARTS CENTER





PHOTO: CHRIS FERENZI

CASE STUDY: PR, CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT & ACTIVATION

## A National Dialogue on the Power of the Humanities

### Leveraging the Humanities as a Tool for Civic Engagement

Today's society is polarized on virtually every major issue. What used to be called statesmanship is now in short supply, with terms like “civil discourse” taking on new and more charged meanings. But what if we could use the art of open conversation to help address the challenges of our time?

To show the power of the humanities, Mission Partners supported the launch of a top-ranking university's movement to encourage the application of humanities skills across professions, industries, and the world at large.

This national effort kicked off with an inaugural panel event, where speakers across the political spectrum presented a range of opinions and encouraged audience members to consider other perspectives. Mission Partners prepared speakers with a briefing kit, run-of-show, moderator's guide,

and templated communications for speakers to promote the event within their networks. Mission Partners also built a guest list of leaders from diverse schools of thought to create dynamic conversation, and behind the scenes, Mission Partners ensured core messages about the event were clear and accessible. Mission Partners also supported the university with donor communications and provided a post-event report to share impact with key stakeholders.

Through the launch of this series, the university elevated its national profile and increased the credibility of the humanities as a tool for thoughtful discussion. The event welcomed some of the nation's leading voices and influencers in the humanities, earned coverage that extended the reach beyond those in attendance, and helped secure financial investments to support the continued growth of this work.

## Public Prep

### A More Authentic Brand Experience by Centering Equity and Inclusion

As the nation's first nonprofit, tuition-free charter school network that develops Pre-K and single-gender elementary and middle public schools, Public Prep has a rich history of fostering excellence across Manhattan and the Bronx in New York. Following over a decade of impact, Public Prep embraced 2022 as an opportunity to strengthen and evolve its brand and messaging. To support their goals, Public Prep engaged Mission Partners in the development of messages that clearly articulate the mission, vision, and purpose of the organization. Mission Partners also presented a refreshed visual brand that drives greater understanding, engagement, and activation.

Taking a community-informed approach to the updated messaging and brand, Mission Partners engaged the Public Prep team and key stakeholders in conversations about the organization's identity, impact, and reputation. Following these community conversations, Mission

Partners supported Public Prep in achieving greater brand consistency and using more inclusive language. Mission Partners then created a comprehensive brand style guide to help Public Prep communicate with inclusion, equity, and accessibility in mind. Mission Partners also supported Public Prep with a brand rollout plan, which ensured the new brand was depicted across all communications channels.

Refreshing Public Prep's messaging and brand through an equity lens created an opportunity for courageous conversations about the network's policies. Shifting their identity from a single-sex to single-gender school was a significant policy change, and it's one that's now reflected in Public Prep's key messages. With more inclusive language, Public Prep was also able to unify their schools with one shared brand and identity.

PHOTO: PUBLIC PREP





**“Mission Partners was an essential part of developing our first-ever strategic plan. They made the journey a wonderful experience, and we couldn’t have done it without them.”**

Lori Little, National Affordable Housing Trust



#### CLIENT SPOTLIGHT

## Public Health Communications Collaborative

In partnership with the Public Health Communications Collaborative (PHCC), Mission Partners developed “Communicating Through COVID-19 and Beyond,” a compilation of insights from public health communicators nationwide about what they have learned since 2020, and how those learnings can support and protect public health moving forward. Many of the public health leaders featured in the report became champions of PHCC’s work and engaged more deeply with the collaborative as webinar speakers and panelists at PHCC-hosted conference sessions.

PHOTO: CHARLOTTE MAY, PEXELS.COM



PHOTO: CHRISTINA MORILLO, PEXELS.COM

CASE STUDY: PR, CAMPAIGN DEVELOPMENT & ACTIVATION

## American Library Association

### Cultivating Key Audiences to Deepen Brand Impact

From young readers to adults seeking new learning opportunities, America's libraries provide a wide array of resources at every stage of life. As the oldest and largest library association in the world, the American Library Association (ALA) is best positioned to articulate this value. But to do so, ALA needed to first deepen its relationships with key audiences among the general public. In 2022, ALA engaged Mission Partners to develop a national campaign concept to deepen engagement, foster loyalty, and drive donations among ALA's audiences.

First, Mission Partners conducted several forms of research with a diverse set of library workers and ALA stakeholders. Driven by their insights, Mission Partners developed three detailed profiles for ALA's key audiences: young social justice advocates, dedicated parents, and engaged older adults. The profiles dug deeply into the needs, wants, and attitudes of each audience, which

then informed nuanced messaging to directly engage each one. Mission Partners then developed customizable campaign materials to support the activation of the strategy. In doing so, Mission Partners supported ALA's ability to bring the national campaign to local communities, thus extending the campaign's overall reach.

Although libraries are capable of supporting every member of a community, deepening relationships with key audiences requires understanding how each audience can be moved toward action. Developing audience profiles and accompanying messages supported ALA's ability to not only drive donations, but reaffirm to each audience that their reason for supporting libraries is understood, valued, and mission-critical to achieving thriving libraries nationwide.

# We take *our commitment to race equity* to heart.

In early 2020, Mission Partners published our **Race Equity Action Plan**, a collection of our commitments and actions to advance racial equity within our business, our client work, and our world. Since then, our team has continued to move this crucial work forward. In 2022, through three working groups focused on our business, our clients, and our world, our team dug deeper into a few select projects that are poised for long-lasting impact. Specific progress made in 2022 includes:

## Ensuring our client work is developed through an equity lens

Throughout 2022, client service team members served as accountability partners to each other on how to prioritize equity in communications on every client project. This guidance often centered around the usage of person-first language, accessibility, and plain language. Additionally, team members created space to discuss the opportunities and challenges with select projects in order to learn from each other's approaches.





### Solidifying Mission Partners' prioritization of our team's mental health

In May 2022, Mission Partners was awarded the Gold Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health. Led by Mental Health America, the Bell Seal is a national certification program that recognizes employers committed to creating mentally healthy workplaces. Caring for our employees' full experiences is a top priority at Mission Partners, and we are committed to upholding this high standard.

### Investing in nonprofit missions that can have generational impact

The Mission Partners team went through a thoughtful and methodical search to identify an organization that we could support through an annual donation and volunteering. Throughout the search, team members designed the selection process to be as unbiased as possible. The annual gift to our selected organization will begin in 2023.

**“At Mission Partners,  
communication isn’t  
only a job. It’s our way of  
leaving the world better  
than we found it.”**

Carrie Fox, Founder and CEO  
Mission Partners

**MISSION**  
PARTNERS



**WOMEN**  
OWNED