

Together

Arthritis Foundation
2021 Annual Report





Together

More than seven decades ago, the Arthritis Foundation began as an opportunity to bring together people just like you — people who care about conquering arthritis — to make a meaningful impact on the lives of those affected by the disease. Since our start, we've made a difference for millions of people, from patients and caregivers to health care professionals, researchers, partners and others.

That arthritis is a serious, life-altering medical condition is not surprising to most of us; we know it's not just a part of aging or a "just deal with it" nuisance. What is surprising to many is that nearly 300,000 kids and teens also suffer from arthritis. Whether you live with arthritis, love someone with the disease or simply want to support those affected, our work must continue to conquer it and make life better for this growing population.

While the pandemic made things difficult for everyone, dealing with a chronic disease has been especially hard. Despite the challenges of serving the arthritis community remotely, we created new and important ways to come together.

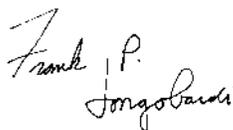
Now, as we start a new normal, we again draw upon our resilience, determination and ingenuity. In 2021, we became even stronger, wiser and more committed to providing the arthritis community with meaningful programming and life-changing resources while leading the way in scientific advancements and advocating for better access to quality care. Going forward, we will continue to be nimble and positive.

In this Annual Report, we reflect on our steady progress together. Not stopping there, we're already making new history in our next steps to improving the quality of life for people with arthritis. We're more determined than ever to improve people's lives and eventually find a cure.

Thank you for being part of our journey together.



Steven Taylor
President & CEO
Arthritis Foundation



Frank Longobardi, CPA
Chair, National Board of Directors
Arthritis Foundation



Together

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Patients Come First

Conquering arthritis isn't solely about curing a disease. It's also about planning, researching and developing new resources and customized programming so that people living with arthritis can live their best life until there's a cure.

By understanding what arthritis patients deal with each day, we're able to invest in programs and research initiatives that make a meaningful impact. We know where it's important to invest our time, skills and the critical funding that powers our mission.



As America's top cause of disability, arthritis affects millions of men, women and children. This complex disease weakens our workforce, drains our economy and threatens our society in many more ways.

We're creating solutions together.



In 2021, more than **24,300 adult INSIGHTS** assessments were collected — a nearly 40% increase over the prior year.

PATIENT INSIGHTS

In 2019, we introduced Live Yes! INSIGHTS, followed in late 2020 by JA INSIGHTS — survey assessment tools that measure the health challenges of living with arthritis. By participating, adults with arthritis and parents of children with arthritis contribute to research to improve the quality of life for themselves and the whole arthritis community.

Kids Get Arthritis, Too

We're learning more each day about what we can do to better help arthritis patients, whatever their age. In October 2020, we introduced JA INSIGHTS, enabling parents of kids and teens living with juvenile arthritis (JA) to share their experiences. Their input helps us tailor our JA program to meet their unique needs.

How It Hurts

With more than 40,000 Live Yes! INSIGHTS responses collected, we were able to take a more in-depth look at the data and the impact pain has on people with arthritis. The resulting report, titled "How It Hurts," sheds greater light on patients' top concerns and needs, and the unique difficulties they faced due to COVID-19.

See detailed findings in the [How It Hurts report](#).



SHAPING OUR WORK

At the end of 2021, nearly 60,000 INSIGHTS survey results had been captured. And more are coming in every day. These responses are helping us develop innovative new ways to meet the needs of the arthritis community. Findings shared in “How It Hurts” led to our three-year strategy that includes addressing the pervasive impact of pain on every aspect of life.

Read our [pain management statement](#).

Take our ongoing INSIGHTS survey — for adult patients and for parents of children with arthritis. Learn more about [INSIGHTS](#).



75% said pain interfered with their day-to-day activities.

66% said pain interfered with participation in social activities.

When **100%** of respondents reported that pain was their top challenge, we took action.



A UNIQUE LIFE-CHANGING TOOL

In May 2021, we launched the free chronic pain management mobile app, Vim®. By end of year, over 8,100 people were using Vim to set and meet their pain-management goals, access resources about their condition and connect with a caring community. Users set almost 30,000 goals.

Download Vim and get started!

Our DEI efforts have led to a **158% increase** in the number of **Live Yes! INSIGHTS** assessments from African American participants.



STORIES OF YES

Mileka Gilbert, MD, PhD EQUAL CARE FOR ALL

Choosing to specialize in rheumatology was a natural fit for Dr. Mileka Gilbert, who grew up as a sports enthusiast, played basketball in high school and spent time as a student athletic trainer during college. She knows the vital role that joints play in physical activity, and she's determined to help every child be able to run and play.

A practicing pediatric rheumatologist in South Carolina, Dr. Gilbert treats children with arthritis and related pediatric rheumatic diseases. She's also a member of our Diversity, Equity & Inclusion and Workforce Development Committee and is helping shape DEI practices to benefit all patients. Her contributions are vital in finding ways together to close gaps in health care for people in marginalized communities.

"I've always had an interest in learning about how people of diverse backgrounds and cultures can live and work together," Dr. Gilbert says. "The more ideas and perspectives you have at the table, the greater opportunity there is to solve these complicated problems in the delivery of care."

[Read more about Dr. Gilbert's career and philosophy](#)

DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION (DEI)

The Arthritis Foundation's goal is to conquer arthritis for everyone who lives with the disease. We recognize that African Americans and other minorities are disproportionately affected, and we are committed to changing that.

We worked with several partner organizations in 2021 to help expand and diversify patient participation in Live Yes! INSIGHTS. By increasing minority participation, we can better understand a range of perspectives and create personalized programming to address barriers.

The Arthritis Foundation is committed to supporting the training of a diverse generation of rheumatologists through our Workforce Development DEI initiatives, to ultimately improve health outcomes for patients. In 2021, we invested nearly \$300,000 for six DEI awards.

Learn more about our [commitment to DEI](#)

PATIENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Our Patient Leadership Council — a group of highly engaged arthritis patients — helps inform our work by providing their perspectives on programs and resources. Through their own experiences, they help us better understand patients' needs. And they advocate for themselves and other arthritis patients by participating in media interviews, testifying before Congress and speaking to decision makers in business, industry and government.



STORIES OF YES

Cristina Schaefer

CHALLENGING PAIN

Cristina Schaefer was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis nearly 20 years ago. Her treatments kept her relatively pain-free, but that changed when she decided to start a family. After the birth of her daughter, Cristina struggled to find a treatment plan that helps control her disease, but a new medication and goal setting have helped.

"I've found that setting goals for myself helps me stay motivated and get even stronger," says Cristina. "When the Arthritis Foundation launched the Vim app, I downloaded it right away and started tracking my progress."

A dedicated Advocate for herself and other patients who face chronic pain, Cristina brings a unique perspective to the Arthritis Foundation in her role on our Patient Leadership Council. Cristina is of Hispanic heritage, and she believes our DEI efforts will go a long way toward fostering more equitable health care. Meanwhile, her experience helps us develop better programs and address the most urgent needs of everyone in the arthritis community.

[Read how Vim has made a difference in her life](#) [🔗](#)



Patient Leadership Council
(left to right) Julianne Goodfellow, Cristina Schaefer, Rick Phillips, Patricia Nealy, Laura Genoves, Mary Michael Kelley (Arthritis Foundation), Stacy Courtney, Sarah Cloud & Tonya Horton (not pictured: Karen Anderson, Phyllis Bass, Raquel Masco, Shannan O’Hara-Levi, Suzy Szasz Palmer, Travis Salmon & Anjie Vago)



STORIES OF YES

Sarah Cloud

GIVING BACK

Every family has challenges, but most aren’t as pervasive as they’ve been for Sarah Cloud’s family. She, her husband and their son all live with different forms of arthritis.

Sarah has been diagnosed with both osteoarthritis and rheumatoid arthritis, and her husband Mike lives with ankylosing spondylitis. Their son Chris, now an adult, was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis at 12 years old.

Helping Chris navigate adolescence with a chronic illness became a top priority for Sarah and Mike. They traveled as a family to our National Juvenile Arthritis (JA) Conferences and started volunteering at Arthritis Foundation events as often as they could.

“The Arthritis Foundation has been rewarding. They’re our people,” Sarah says. “Our community of arthritis families and the Arthritis Foundation stand behind us together, every step of the way.”

Sarah has continued to give back over the years. She has made it her mission to help other patients navigate the health care system and find the resources they need to live their best life. As a member of our Patient Leadership Council, she’s helping shape programming that will benefit patients, parents and other caregivers.

Read what she says about connecting with others [🔗](#)



Scientific Research

Science plays a prominent role in the Arthritis Foundation's mission to conquer arthritis and improve the lives of people living with the disease. For more than 70 years, we've led the way in funding scientific research to conquer arthritis.

WORKING TOGETHER

Whether we're investing in studies on disease-modifying treatments for osteoarthritis (OA) or bringing together experts to build consensus on treatment plans for kids with juvenile arthritis (JA), our scientific program is focused on conquering the pain, anxiety and uncertainty of living with this disease in all its forms.



Since we began in 1948, the Arthritis Foundation has invested over **\$500M** in arthritis research for new treatments and a cure. We are making steady progress.



Osteoarthritis (OA) is the most common form of arthritis — affecting more than **32 million Americans.**

Source: Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC)

In 2021, we awarded \$5.7 million in contracts for OA clinical research. The 11 funded studies are investigating multiple topics, like how some injuries set the stage for developing osteoarthritis and how we might repurpose some existing drugs to treat OA. We're also expanding OA clinical trials.

2021

- Conquering arthritis starts by ensuring treatments are available. Nearly 1,000 experts came together during our FDA Workshop on OA Drug Development to discuss gaps in the drug development process. Together, we're working to bring effective disease-modifying drugs and integrated pain measures in OA to market.
- Clinical trials are a vital step to build the evidence base and win the approval of new treatments to modify disease progression in OA. That's why we expanded our OA Clinical Trial Network to include 15 total institutions and over 75 scientists.
- Post-traumatic OA affects millions of people — including 1 in 3 veterans and military members. We awarded \$2.3 million to research teams at Boston University, Cleveland Clinic and the University of North Carolina, who are working to better understand injury-related OA.



STORIES OF YES

Jason Kim, PhD

Vice President, OA Programs, Arthritis Foundation

OSTEOARTHRITIS OVERVIEW

“Osteoarthritis is a difficult disease to develop treatments for, because it’s not one disease,” says Dr. Kim. “OA comprises most of arthritis, affecting over 30 million Americans. That’s why the Arthritis Foundation is investing strategically in OA research.

“Think about how all cancer is not treated the same. And think about all the different joints that can be affected by arthritis. OA can take a long time to develop, up to 30 years.

“We are providing an important platform for the best scientists to work on OA, including even more improvements in joint replacement surgery and other options.”

Read about Jason’s journey [🔗](#) to where he is today, helping lead the fight to conquer arthritis.



STORIES OF YES

Reza Jafarzadeh, PhD

Arthritis & Autoimmune Diseases Research Center, Boston University

RESEARCH IN PROGRESS

With \$300,000 in Arthritis Foundation funding through the end of 2023, Dr. Jafarzadeh and his team are examining patient databases to try to find existing drugs that can be repurposed to successfully treat post-traumatic osteoarthritis (PTOA).

There are already some promising leads. Many drugs target some part of the inflammatory process or help relieve pain. Both are key factors in PTOA resulting from an injury, like a fracture, and it develops relatively quickly so is easier to track and study. Dr. Jafarzadeh hypothesizes that one of these drugs might be effective for OA.

Read details about this research project [🔗](#) and the benefits it could lead to.

At least **1.3 million people** live with rheumatoid arthritis — a painful autoimmune disease that impacts nearly every aspect of a person's life.

Source: National Institutes of Health (NIH)

Rheumatoid arthritis (RA) is a complex disease that can affect each patient differently. It often involves more than pain in joints; it may attack other body systems, including the heart and eyes. In 2021, we came together with numerous partners to find better ways to meet the needs of all people with RA.

- We convened a working group of medical and scientific advisors, and conducted a special symposium, to establish RA research priorities. By focusing a portion of our research dollars on refractory RA — meaning RA that is not well managed by any existing treatment — we can begin to understand why certain patients respond to medications while others don't, and how genetic biomarkers may be involved.
- By engaging in public-private partnerships, we can better understand and address the needs of people living with RA and lupus. We strengthened our commitment to the Accelerating Medicines Partnership at the National Institutes of Health on earlier drug discovery and development for all kinds of arthritis.

In 2021, we invested more than \$4 million in juvenile arthritis (JA) programs — strengthening our groundbreaking partnership with the Childhood Arthritis and Rheumatology Research Alliance (CARRA) — to benefit the thousands of kids living with JA.

- Working cooperatively with CARRA, we can better serve kids with JA and their families by supporting specific JA programs, including the CARRA registry, funding research projects into JA treatments and developing standardized treatment strategies that can help the most patients.
- To address the nation's dire shortage of pediatric and adult rheumatologists, and to support the training of a diverse generation of specialists, our investment included nearly \$1 million in rheumatology fellowship awards, including six Diversity, Equity & Inclusion awards.

1 in 1,000 children in the United States lives with some form of chronic childhood arthritis.

Source: American College of Rheumatology



Advocacy Actions

People living with arthritis deserve compassionate and effective policies and laws to help them get the care they need.

From pain management and access to telemedicine to out-of-pocket costs and funding for research, our advocacy team is focused on state and federal issues where we can help make it easier for people with arthritis to live with less pain.

Together with our volunteer Arthritis Advocates from around the nation, we celebrated some great wins in 2021.

MAKING A BIG DIFFERENCE

- Our inaugural organizational statement on pain outlined our commitment to advancing and promoting improved quality of life for those living with chronic pain. [Read the statement here](#) .
- We led the adoption of a new model for legislation that allows patients to apply the savings earned from copay assistance to their out-of-pocket costs.
- More than 70 state laws we supported were signed into law.



Our dedicated volunteer Arthritis Advocates made contact with more than **75%** of their congressional representatives, surpassing our goal for the year.

FUNDING SUCCESS

- For the first time since Congress originally authorized the program in 2010, \$5 million in funding was approved to partially repay student loans for medical residents in pediatric subspecialties, such as juvenile arthritis.
- Congress approved an increase in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Arthritis Program for the first time in several years. This is the only federal program to fund arthritis assistance. Only 13 states receive this funding, but every state needs to be included.
- In 2021, Arthritis Advocates urged Congress to continue investment in arthritis research programs at the CDC and the Department of Defense.

GRASSROOTS ENGAGEMENT

- Our new Twitter handle dedicated to advocacy — @AFAdvocacy — made its debut, allowing us to more easily reach and recruit volunteer Advocates.
- We kicked off a targeted effort to engage Advocates on federal step-therapy legislation with tailored information to help identify co-sponsor targets.
- We launched our work on the Ideal Model of Care, an initiative to improve patients' health care experiences by asking them about the biggest challenges in their care and proposing solutions that will guide our advocacy activities in the years to come.



Quality of Life Resources

Helping people with arthritis improve their lives is a top priority of the Arthritis Foundation. Our trusted programs and resources support living a life with less pain.

In 2021, we launched new programming aimed at helping those with arthritis better manage their pain and get the resources they need.

FIND YOUR CHRONIC STRENGTH VIA VIM®

Vim means energy and enthusiasm. And that's exactly what we wanted to help people living with chronic pain regain in their lives. In 2021, we introduced our free Vim pain management mobile app.

Vim helps users set and achieve personal goals and offers tips and information to improve daily life. Plus, there's a community of support to help you get there.

[Download Vim here](#) 





Every Year From Arthritis:

- **172 million** lost workdays
- **\$304 billion** in medical costs and lost earnings

MAKING CONNECTIONS

In 2021, over 350 Live Yes! Connect Group events, led by 144 volunteers, were held to support 1,300 attendees.

For veterans and military members — a group predisposed to developing arthritis due to physical strains and injuries they often experience — there's now a safe place to discuss unique challenges, learn about military-specific programs and connect with others who understand. We're partnering with the Veterans Administration, and together we're guiding both active duty and retired service members to help them manage their chronic joint pain through a Live Yes! Connect Group just for them.

Join a Connect Group [🔗](#) or start your own.

SAY YES WITH YOUR EXERCISE SOLUTION

In 2021, we partnered with the American Physical Therapy Association to update and produce new videos, and to create a more interactive format of Your Exercise Solution. This online hub features a library of exercise videos to help people with arthritis create customized, safe and effective fitness routines based on their situation. There are physical therapist-approved modifications for every exercise. Your Exercise Solution makes it easy for everyone to be active.

Build your own activity routine and **get moving** [🔗](#).



EASY DOES IT

Our re-energized Ease of Use program took off in 2021 — attracting new manufacturers that are helping to make living with arthritis pain easier. Products and services earning the Ease of Use certification are proven to be easier for everyone to use.

Learn more about our [Ease of Use program](#).



LET'S GET TO WORK

With 1 in 4 employees living with arthritis, our Arthritis@Work program offers turnkey tools and resources to help businesses support their employees with arthritis.

Learn more about [improving work productivity](#).

ON-DEMAND EXPERTISE

Even more helpful information was made available to people with arthritis through podcasts, webinars, e-books and more in 2021. We ramped up our efforts to bring information to the arthritis community by offering easy-to-access, expert content.

- Our Live Yes! With Arthritis Podcast now features over 60 episodes, with expert guests talking about a range of topics — from life hacks to treatment options and everything in between. Each episode in 2021 was in the top 10% of all podcast downloads during its first week of release, according to Buzzsprout, a major podcast hosting service. [Subscribe to our podcasts here](#).
- We hosted 27 virtual events and webinars in 2021, with 50% of participants who were new to the Arthritis Foundation. These events were available to attend live or to view on-demand later. [See our recorded webinars](#) and what's coming up.
- [Get free e-books](#) of tips and tricks, from everyday hacks to travel prep to meal planning.

MAY WE HELP YOU?

The Arthritis Foundation's Helpline works with a translation service that gives us the opportunity to serve constituents in 250+ languages. Call 800-283-7800 or fill out the [Helpline form](#).

RESOURCES FOR OUR YOUNGEST CHAMPIONS

Kids get arthritis, too. They and their families need specialized programs to aid them in navigating the unique experience of growing up with a chronic disease. From care packages for families of newly diagnosed children to college scholarships, our resources help JA families better manage the disease and its impacts and to connect with others who understand this unique journey.



More than **1,000 JA Power Packs** were distributed to families of newly diagnosed kids in 2021 — featuring guides for parents, kids and teachers, along with fun surprises.

Get Your Free JA Power Pack Now! [🔗](#)



STORIES OF YES

Tiffany Coffman THE JA JOURNEY

Not only has Tiffany Coffman raised two children with arthritis, she's battled the disease herself, having been diagnosed with JA as a teen. For decades, she's understood all too well the struggles of living with a childhood illness. In fact, that's what has driven her to become a passionate volunteer for the Arthritis Foundation: She wants to give back and help others who are just beginning their journey with JA.

When her children were young, Tiffany and her family participated in JA camps, family days and the National JA Conference. These events were such positive experiences that she began volunteering at events like her local Walk to Cure Arthritis. She became a facilitator of a JA Parents Connect Group and a moderator of the JA Parent-to-Parent Online Community Forum. And recently, she's taken on a new role as a volunteer for the Arthritis Foundation's Helpline, providing answers, resources and support to callers who have questions about JA.

"I feel the best way to help is to listen and show compassion for what someone believes is their most difficult situation ever," says Tiffany. "I have learned to be more compassionate. Everyone has an issue, so we make the best with what we have."

Read more about Tiffany's journey [🔗](#) with arthritis and why she volunteers.



STORIES OF YES

Joshua James KEEP MOVING FORWARD

Joshua James was diagnosed with arthritis at age 4. It went into remission eight years later. But in his junior year of high school, the arthritis returned with a vengeance.

"It took over my entire life," he says. "It disrupted my sleep, my education and my family's financial situation. I missed weeks of school for surgeries and treatment. I gained a lot of empathy for all people with diseases and disabilities and the impact they have."

Despite his physical setbacks, Joshua continued to work hard, not only in school but also as an Arthritis Foundation volunteer. He became involved in JA camps and the National JA Conference, as well as Walk to Cure Arthritis and Jingle Bell Run. All this while pursuing a college degree.

At 26 — with support from an Arthritis Foundation scholarship award — Joshua began pursuing his Master of Science in higher education counseling at California State University, Long Beach. He continues to volunteer and help kids living with JA.

"Keep moving forward. Learn to use all the resources that are available to you and figure out ways to empower yourself. No person is an island," he says.

See what Joshua has to say [🔗](#) about growing up with arthritis and his next plans.

GETTING TOGETHER HOWEVER WE COULD

With COVID-19 still preventing a return to normalcy in 2021, we gave kids and families living with arthritis opportunities to connect remotely.

- The virtual 2021 National JA Conference welcomed over 850 attendees (44% of them first-timers) from 41 states. Nearly three out of four parents/caregivers and young adults say they feel more knowledgeable about JA since participating in the conference; 69% of participating parents/caregivers say they feel more empowered and more supported.
- We hosted 530 campers during two week-long sessions of a virtual National JA Camp and additional regional camps.



In our JA INSIGHTS study, **77%** of parents of kids with juvenile arthritis say pain greatly interfered with their child's ability to sleep, pay attention, run or walk one block.



STORIES OF YES

Team Carter

A MILLION-DOLLAR IDEA

When Jerry Davis’s grandson, Carter, was diagnosed at age 3 with ankylosing spondylitis, Davis knew he had to do something to help. Together with his friend Kyle Berg, Jerry formed Team Carter — a fundraising group taking part in the California Coast Classic Bike Tour.

Since the team’s formation in 2015, Team Carter has raised nearly \$1 million and is expected to surpass that milestone in 2022. This seven-time top fundraising team loves participating in the tour, but never forgets why this event is so important.

“Diagnosis was a rough road for little Carter those first couple of years,” says Kyle. “But with support through the Arthritis Foundation, he and his family have found a treatment plan that helps control his symptoms. But treatment is not a cure, and no child should have to experience the pain and inflammation that Carter faces.”

Learn more about the amazing [California Coast Classic](#).

Our special events raised nearly **\$10 million** to support arthritis research and programming in 2021.

Walk to Cure Arthritis	\$3.3 Million
Jingle Bell Run	\$3.3 Million
Marquee Events	\$1.9 Million
Other Events	\$1.2 Million

FUNDING THE FIGHT

Conquering arthritis starts with investing in the right research, developing the most impactful programming and making resources easily accessible to the community we serve. Through grants, fundraising and generous donations, we’re able to not only work toward a cure, but also provide life-changing resources for everyone affected by arthritis.

We’re privileged to receive ongoing grants for new scientific discoveries and are incredibly fortunate to have so many donors, partners and other supporters working with us. Learn about all the ways people can support our work.

Learn how you can [make a real difference](#).

2021 DONORS

Together, in partnership with our generous 2021 donors, we worked hard to improve even more people's lives. Thank you for helping change the future of arthritis today.

Our National Corporate Partners

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(left to right) Sabrina Sexton, Steven Taylor & Vickie Fung

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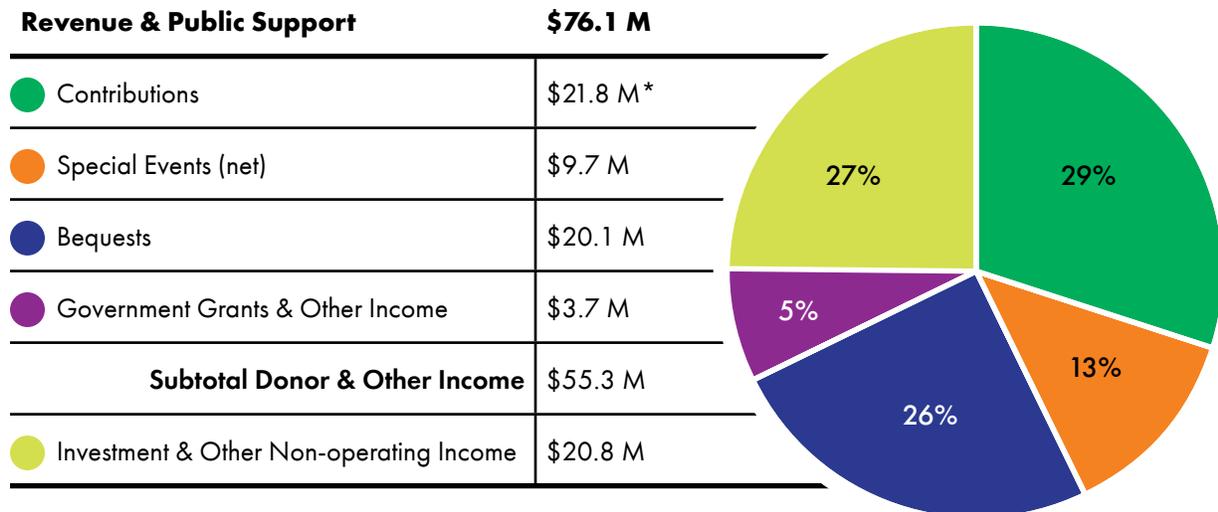
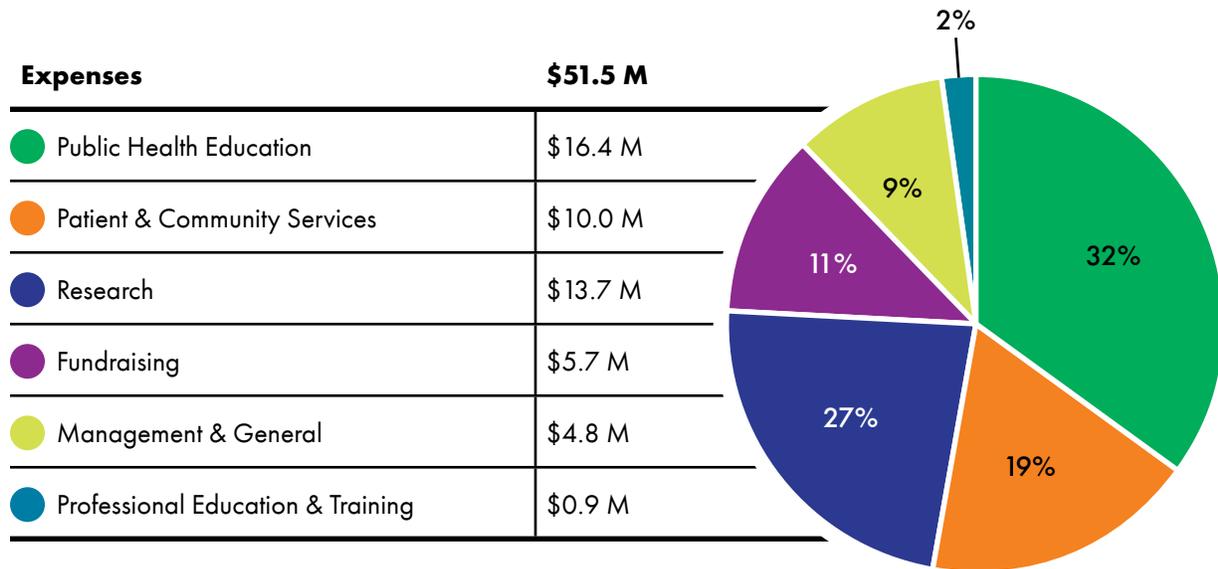
Katie Bobin
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2021 FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

In 2021, the Arthritis Foundation invested over \$30.1 million in research and public health education.



Net Assets End-of-Year: \$191.1 M

Complete audited financial statements are available online at [arthritis.org/financials](https://www.arthritis.org/financials).

*Includes \$8.7 M in pharmaceutical, biotechnology and medical device corporate support, representing 11.4% of total organization revenue.

2021 ANNUAL REPORT LINKS INDEX (in order of appearance)

How It Hurts Report:

arthritis.org/howhurts

Pain Management Statement:

arthritis.org/painmanagement

Live Yes! INSIGHTS:

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Vim Pain Management Mobile App:

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Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Statement:

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Story – Mileka Gilbert, MD, PhD:

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Story – Cristina Schaefer:

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Story – Sarah Cloud:

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Pain Management Statement:

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Your Exercise Solution:

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E-books:

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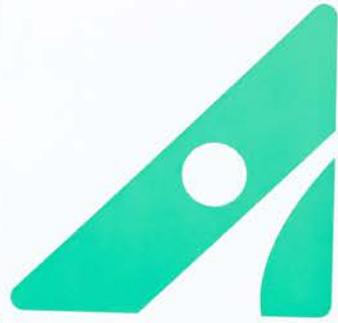
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