



## **2021 Year in Review**

Since the Center's founding in 2000, our focus has remained constant: to look "over the horizon" at global, national and local trends that will shape the future of our city and our region.

Our vision is to further the Houston region as a top global community in which to work and live, and to achieve this, we bring business, government, and community stakeholders together to engage in fact-based strategic planning, collaboration and action on issues of great importance to the Houston region.

In spite of the unprecedented challenges related to the pandemic, the Center advanced our mission in 2021 by doing work in areas that are critical to success of our region's future.

Making our region a leader in the energy transition has been a key focus for the Center and an area of significant accomplishment. But the Center has also advanced our mission through our work on immigration, on health care and health equity, and in mobilizing community leaders through our Leadership program.

The Center expanded its collaboration with the Greater Houston Partnership on the energy transition. CHF has led efforts to create a global clean hydrogen hub through our research and thought leadership, by convening and coalition building, and by catalyzing pilots and projects that will create high multiplier jobs, equitably grow our economy and provide solutions to address climate change.

In addition, as part of our work in healthcare, we are developing innovative solutions around health equity and putting together a coalition of community partners to collaborate on this effort. We also began work on the intersection of maternal health and social determinants of health.

We also continued our efforts to frame the immigration debate as an economic issue, working in partnership with Rice University's Baker Institute on conducting research, facilitating workshops and holding a national immigration conference.

Through all our programs, we have expanded our partnership and collaboration efforts, including leading the development of two federal grant proposals in energy and healthcare. At the same time, we bolstered our brand and visibility through virtual events, thought leadership and media outreach, both traditional and social.

In leadership, we successfully pivoted our leadership forums to a virtual format, attracting high-caliber speakers and bringing together diverse leaders to join our cohorts. Additionally, we increased engagement among our graduates.

The Center adapted our financial model to address limits on in-person fundraising events due to the pandemic. While 2021 was challenging, we believe the Center has been doing its best work in spite of these difficult times. A more detailed list of accomplishments follows:

## 2021 Accomplishments

**Energy Transition and Climate Change:** We have been a pioneer in recognizing that the Houston region should become the global low-carbon energy capital and have undertaken research, conferences, webcasts, projects, media interviews and thought leadership using a collaborative model to catalyze this vision.

- **Research:** In partnership with the University of Houston, we released two white papers: one on carbon capture and storage and the other on low-carbon hydrogen. We also assembled a team of six graduate student interns from area universities to model and survey the potential opportunities to use hydrogen as a fuel in commercial transportation markets. Leveraging all that research, we submitted almost 50 pages of comments to the U.S. Department of Energy making the case for Houston as a low-carbon hydrogen hub.

We released a major study in collaboration with statewide nonprofit Texas 2036. The 60-page analysis, *Changing World Oil Markets and the Texas Economy*, looked at what would happen to the Texas economy and state and local government revenues under specific world oil price scenarios.

- **Federal grant applications:** We positioned the Houston region for success in obtaining federal grants to support the creation of a regional hydrogen hub. We developed a broad-based coalition of business, government, academia and nonprofit organizations to support these grant applications. Along with the University of Houston, we submitted a grant application to the Department of Commerce on the Build Back Better regional challenge supported by 60 organizations. While our proposal was not selected, the coalition created and the work developed will be leveraged for the Department of Energy's upcoming \$8 billion hydrogen hub RFP.
- **Major Houston-focused energy conference:** The Center and the Greater Houston Partnership unveiled a comprehensive energy transition strategy, called the Houston Energy Transition Initiative (HETI), at a widely attended three-day hybrid conference focused on how Houston might lead the globe in the energy transition. The Center produced a full day of virtual hydrogen programming featuring experts from across the nation and the globe.
- **Thought leadership and awareness building:** In addition to our climate-focused thought leadership webcasts (described in the community engagement section below), the Center has participated in some 25 webcasts, panels, conferences and speeches. The Center has had almost 50 media appearances for the year across its energy efforts, including a recent hydrogen op-ed that appeared in the Houston Chronicle.

**Health Care:** We have continued to present our research to health care groups and community organizations. We also prepared and submitted a major health equity grant proposal to the Department of Commerce as a part of the federal Build Back Better Regional Challenge program. We developed a coalition of over 30 stakeholders including University of Texas School of Public Health and the University of Houston Medical School to support this work. While the proposal was not chosen, the coalition plans to continue to work together to seek funding for this concept.

**Immigration:** Our immigration work continues to focus on guiding business and community leaders to develop greater understanding of how immigration is integral to the region's economy and we undertook the following activities this year:

- **Workshops/Conferences:** In partnership with Rice University's Center for the United States and Mexico at the Baker Institute, we hosted an invite-only policy workshop in May. A report was released with specific recommendations around DREAMers, opportunities for lower-skilled workers, visas and the concept of border security. This was followed in the fall by an Immigration Policy Summit in partnership with the Baker Institute and the George W. Bush Institute and an in-person workshop for the Houston branch of Young Presidents Organization.
- **Partnerships:** We continued to broaden our list of partners and collaborators. We have re-energized our work with TheDream.US, which runs the largest scholarship program in the country for Dreamers. We have also developed collaborations with the George W. Bush Institute, the Bipartisan Policy Center and Fwd.U.S.
- **Research:** We released a 2021 update to our 2019 report on the impact that immigrants have on the region's economy. This update confirmed our previous findings that immigration is essential to Houston's GDP growth.
- **Thought leadership and outreach:** In addition to our webcasts, we participated in several podcasts and three media interviews.

**Leadership:** We continued with a virtual format for both spring and fall Leadership Forums. We enhanced the program by adding high profile speakers, by focusing on systemic issues facing the community and by re-doubling our efforts to ensure a diverse class of participants.

**Community Engagement:** The Center focused on engaging the community in all of our program work in 2021.

We produced two themed webcast series. Our Energy and Climate change series featured the following climate change thought leaders: Harvard Business School professor Rebecca Henderson, nationally renowned climatologist Katharine Hayhoe, and Boston University Institute for Sustainable Energy Director Peter Fox-Penner. On Civic Leadership, we heard from Hewlett Packard Enterprise CEO Antonio Neri, philanthropist Anne Chao, and Houston Endowment CEO Ann Stern.

At our annual meeting, we hosted Harvard Business School professor Rosabeth Moss Kanter who discussed her book, "Think Outside the Building: How Advanced Leaders Can Change the World One Smart Innovation at a Time," an inspiring account of how civic leaders can impact their communities, ideas that heavily influenced the Center's programmatic work.

**Financial:** We will end 2021 with positive net income higher than our budgeted amount, with sufficient cash reserves and a significant positive fund balance.