

2021

YEAR IN REVIEW



Valery Rizzo



DEAR FRIENDS,

AS WE TRANSITION INTO THE NEW YEAR, I'm grateful for the chance to reflect on the lessons and insights that have guided our work during another year of unprecedented change.

At Siegel Family Endowment, we take an inquiry-based approach to our work. **We challenge assumptions as a basis for discovering more innovative ways to build a better world.** And if the events of recent years have taught us anything, it's that our systems need deep, structural examination.

This year we've seen some of these issues—from the outsized impact of Big Tech on our daily lives, to the need for a more comprehensive understanding of infrastructure—elevated to the national stage. We know that philanthropy doesn't hold all the answers to addressing these challenges. However, we believe that philanthropy is uniquely positioned to ask questions, take risks, and chart a path forward. As a result, our work continues to set examples for how out-of-the-box thinking can transform lives in a real, tangible way.

Our thesis on multidimensional infrastructure is now being put to the test in localities across the country.

When we first began thinking about infrastructure as part of our grantmaking, it was with the idea that the underlying things that connect us—that make us thrive or falter as a society—have evolved, yet our definition of infrastructure has been slow to evolve with it. As Americans have come to learn this past year, infrastructure

is much more than just roads and bridges; it encompasses cell towers and broadband cables, computers and hand-held learning devices, public parks and power grids, and the people and organizations that sustain our physical and virtual communities.

We first articulated this multidimensional view of infrastructure in 2018, which led to the release of a seminal whitepaper in 2020. Since then, the pandemic has dramatically highlighted how when one element of our society—such as internet connectivity or childcare—is under-resourced, we all lose.

In 2022, the landmark trillion dollar federal infrastructure legislation is primed to set in motion a radical update to our society. Already our grantee partners are rising to the challenge of modernizing the basic structures and networks that help society function effectively, and engaging in dialogue about what type of infrastructure we need going forward. Their work, which ranges from holistic and resilient placemaking by Center on Rural Innovation and the Regional Plan Association, to the reconception of data ownership and community power by Mozilla's Data Futures Lab and Data & Society, provides a glimpse of how we might manifest a better version of infrastructure that ushers in a different future.

To enhance our inquiry-driven approach to grantmaking, we've increased our investment in research.

Our grantmaking is rooted in the scientific method, and is inspired by our chairman and founder David Siegel's approach to his life's work. We ask questions that help us develop an informed hypothesis, support academic work that uncovers evidence, track outcomes thoughtfully, and apply our findings in order to inform the next phase of inquiry.

We believe that a well-functioning philanthropy is also a learning organization. It should challenge assumptions, learn from successes as well as failures, and connect the dots between issue silos and sectors— all while identifying gaps in knowledge that need to be filled. And perhaps most importantly, it should share

this knowledge with relevant stakeholders, and use its findings to increase impact.

To that end, we're proud to have launched a new in-house research function, which will devote significant resources to developing new research and insights on topics at the intersection of technology and society - from mapping returns on infrastructure investments to understanding the flow of disinformation through communities. This effort is powered by our inaugural Partner Research Fellowship Program, a collective of eight fellows who will be producing new research on critical issues.

A key remit of this new team will be to apply theory to practice, and deploy knowledge about our economy and systems from academia into real world settings. It's in this spirit that we are working with partners such as Aspen Digital, Michigan State, and UCLA's Computer Science Equity Project to catalyze new insights into multidisciplinary questions. We're excited to share new papers and projects from these partners and our fellows throughout the year to come.

We continue our commitment to equity in everything we do.

From the Siegel Family Endowment's earliest days, our chairman has urged us to “look in the corners” to fund organizations, projects, and leaders that are unnoticed. That charge continually challenges our assumptions about where innovation happens, and has afforded us the opportunity to support and lift the voices of leaders who may not have been heard in traditional spaces.

But championing equity doesn't stop at the grants we make; true equity happens in our everyday processes, in the details. We're proud that over half of our grantee leaders are women and a third are people of color. We believe that it is a positive reflection of the sort of outcomes that can be achieved organically when work is centered in equity. Yet, the work is never done, and we will continue to challenge our assumptions about what it means to work equitably and push ourselves to do better.

From eliminating barriers in America's workforce to building new technologies and artificial intelligence

rooted in equity and the public interest, our grantee partners continue to set a new standard for reimagining systems in a way that works for everyone. This coming year, we will continue to “look in the corners” starting with the publication of a new whitepaper reimagining the way we approach education. We will also be revisiting our approach to workforce development, with the goal of finding fresh ways to ensure education, jobs and opportunities within the innovation economy are accessible to all.

As our work at the Siegel Family Endowment continues to expand in new ways, we remain grateful for your support and insights on this journey. We invite you to challenge your own assumptions, and make seeking knowledge an integral part of your goal setting in the year ahead. As we move forward, we should also not forget what we've all learned through this trying time. There's work to be done, and we all have a role to play in doing it.

What follows is a sampling of our grants portfolio this year.

With hope and best wishes for 2022,



Katy Knight,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



INFRASTRUCTURE

We take a multidimensional approach to infrastructure, which recognizes the interdependence of its physical, digital, and social dimensions. Our grantees exemplify what it looks like to weave together these components to create thriving communities and achieve outsized impact. Their work, which spans multidimensional placemaking, cutting edge research, public interest technology, idea incubation, and funder collaboratives, seeks to catalyze more funding and attention to the space. Our tent is big, but so is the work of designing and maintaining infrastructure that's responsive, resilient, and cost-effective and creates further opportunities for society.

MASS.

SUMMARY

MASS Design is a nonprofit architecture and design firm that centers their ideation, planning, and construction processes around advancing economic growth, social empowerment, and equity in the communities where they work. Their multidisciplinary team of architects, landscape architects, engineers, builders, writers, filmmakers, and researchers all work according to the guiding principle that architecture can be a force for good, and that the built environment can create more equitable, thriving communities that serve all people.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

MASS is not only a bastion of community-driven change, but also a foundational thought partner on our infrastructure portfolio. Our support has fueled their field-leading Fringe Cities research work, which examines how the era of Urban Renewal contributed to population loss and urban decay in the small American city and identifies local organizations who

are doing the work to address the fallout of this legacy. These “fringe” cities, named for the geographic and economic cusps that they occupy, offer important lessons for the equitable development of infrastructure and shift the narrative away from growth at all costs towards authentic, locally-driven community redevelopment.

THE PATH AHEAD

With a volume of lessons in hand, MASS plans to launch a publication culminating their Fringe Cities research, accompanied by a national “Listening Tour” across a number of profiled cities with the aim of sharing knowledge with community leaders and advancing conversations about their futures. The long term goal, which closely reflects our own strategy, is to activate communities and local coalitions, to put them in charge of planning the economic growth of their cities, and to help them make the most of funding opportunities that are tailored to their specific needs.

KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
MASS Design Group

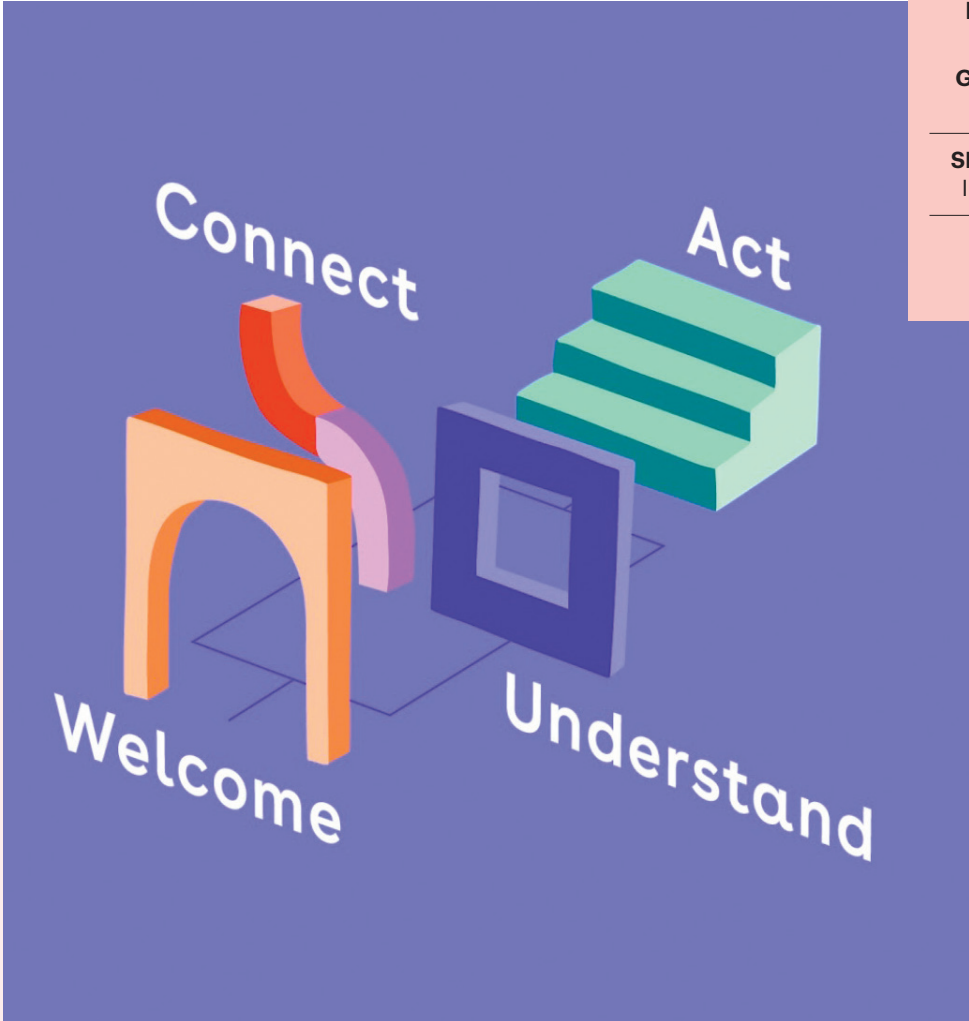
SFE Focus Area
Infrastructure

Reach
Global



“The goal isn’t to make architecture—it’s to solve problems”

- Thatcher Bean, Film Director



KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
New_ Public

SFE Focus Area
Infrastructure

Reach
Global

New_ Public

SUMMARY

New_ Public is an incubator for healthy digital public spaces. Their work pulls on principles and lessons from fields like urban planning and design to explore ways that public spaces in the digital realm (such as social media) can enhance our social fabric and improve shared experiences. To that end, they identify, develop, and scale new ways to build online spaces and communities, and support the leaders and designers who are building them.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

We’re working with New_ Public to advance our shared vision of a world that’s shaped by multidimensional infrastructure, guided by the belief that changes in the digital world have widespread ramifications in

all other areas of civic life. The team at New_ Public is convening thought leaders, producing original content, testing new ideas, and cultivating exciting research that examines the online and offline ripple effects of digital public spaces.

THE PATH AHEAD

Our vision for multidimensional infrastructure is grounded in the belief that the boundary between digital, physical, and social institutions is more porous than ever before. New_ Public pushes us to be critical of how these new relationships and dynamics develop, and elevates those working to develop alternatives that ensure that these ongoing changes happen in a way that strengthens civic institutions and communities.

“All of these public spaces that we take for granted in the physical world - parks, libraries, and other social infrastructure - don’t exist in digital space. What happens when we think of platforms as public spaces?”

- Eli Pariser, Co-Director



REBUILD BY DESIGN

SUMMARY

Rebuild by Design helps communities build more resilient infrastructure by fostering collaboration across sectors - including government, business, non-profit, and community organizations - to gain a better understanding of how overlapping environmental and human-made vulnerabilities leave cities and regions at risk. Founded in the wake of Superstorm Sandy, Rebuild’s core belief is that through collaboration, our communities can become stronger and more prepared to improve, expand, and enhance resilient local infrastructure.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

Rebuild is working towards the development of resilient infrastructure funding at the state level to raise billions of dollars to address climate adaptation challenges and put communities at the forefront of decision-making processes. The research, analysis, and policy proposals we’re supporting will address

intra-state hazard mitigation needs, and help communities rebuild from climate disasters and the COVID-19 pandemic by outlining pathways for job creation, industry growth, and economic development.

THE PATH AHEAD

Rebuild will apply its learnings from successfully creating a \$3 billion Environmental Bond Act in New York State to expand its research on recent climate impacts and taxpayer costs to each of the fifty states. The guidebook will help communities prioritize infrastructure investments to the areas that are most socially and physically vulnerable. By raising the bar for how communities are built to withstand and recover from disasters, Rebuild is composing a set of standards that cities and governments learn from and draw upon as they develop and strengthen their own infrastructure systems and strategies.

KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Rebuild by Design

SFE Focus Area
Infrastructure

Reach
National



“I would challenge designers to always consider how they can advance social resilience through the built environment. Every infrastructure or public space presents an opportunity to connect people and strengthen communities.” - Eric Klinenberg, Research Director

A blue-tinted photograph of a makerspace or classroom. In the foreground, a young person with curly hair is focused on assembling a small robot on a table cluttered with electronic components, wires, and tools. Behind them, another student wearing VR goggles holds a controller. To the right, a third student is partially visible, looking at a laptop. The background shows shelves filled with organized parts and a window looking out onto trees.

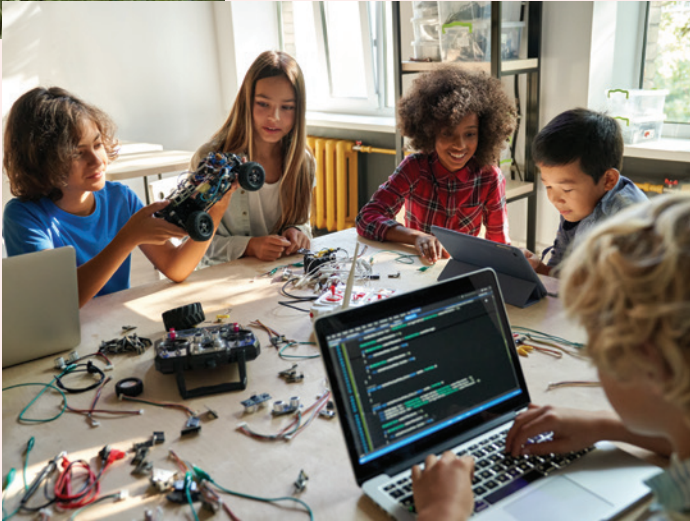
LEARNING

The spotlight on our education system's inequities and inadequacies, coupled with massive federal infrastructure investment, has set the stage for reimagining how we educate. Building on our legacy of investment in computer science education and computational thinking, we've added future-forward skills like data science to the mix. Yet, we also recognize that every factor in a learner's education—from broadband access to safe and affordable housing to the development of social-emotional skills—all contribute to future success. We're proud that our grantees look beyond content and pedagogy to consider the whole learner, whole school, and whole community as stakeholders and design partners.



Teton Science Schools

“This is the moment when we must think bigger than a return to the pre-pandemic normal. This is the moment we can begin building the education system we know we need today, tomorrow and for the future soon to come.” - Kelly Young, President



KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Education
Reimagined

SFE Focus Area
Learning

Reach
National



SUMMARY

Education Reimagined is an organization focused on making learner-centered education available to each and every child in America, regardless of race, background, or circumstance. They partner with visionary leaders to imagine, invent, and bring to life the new systems and conditions necessary to enable a learner-centered, socially-just future for education to spread and thrive. Their ultimate vision is to transform the US education system towards one that is tailored to the unique needs, capacities, and strengths of each child, and prepares them to thrive in a complex and fast-changing world.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

As field builders, Education Reimagined works to promote widespread buy-in for an expansion of the educational system. Our partnership will allow them to pilot and evaluate the impact of learner-centered education

as compared to traditional education models, as well as create practitioner learning coalitions and frameworks with an eye towards scale. This will help the organization advance its vision for expanding learning beyond a single building or staff of educators to an ecosystem that includes physical, social, and digital infrastructure elements like public spaces, community members, digital networks, and virtual learning opportunities.

THE PATH AHEAD

The team at Education Reimagined recognizes how vast the future of learning and education is, and pursues work that both anticipates and guides these shifts. We’re excited to work with Education Reimagined to challenge popular misconceptions and limitations around how learning can work. Together, we advocate for a paradigm shift in the United States with the goal of making students more engaged and helping foster more active, participatory communities across the country.



SUMMARY

Reimagine America’s Schools (RAS), a project of the National Design Alliance, works to leverage historic investments in the modernization, renovation, and new construction of our nation’s public schools and the surrounding neighborhoods. RAS works in partnership with educators, technology experts, design professionals, and school communities to create new models for learning environments. In doing so, RAS elevates issues of equity, technology, active and life-long learning, and crisis preparedness in the design of next generation learning environments and communities.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

RAS has launched Education Centered Community Reinvestment, a new initiative that seeks to address inequality by supporting “15-minute neighborhoods,” in which schools serve as the center of the community, with access to daily necessities and civic engagement opportunities no further than 15 minutes away. This approach views the school and neighborhood as

a unified ecosystem requiring singularly integrated design strategies derived from extensive engagement of community members. Our partnership will create a blueprint for implementing this concept, informed by convenings with stakeholders from a diverse range of fields, including urban design, transportation, education, architecture, social services, and real estate.

THE PATH AHEAD

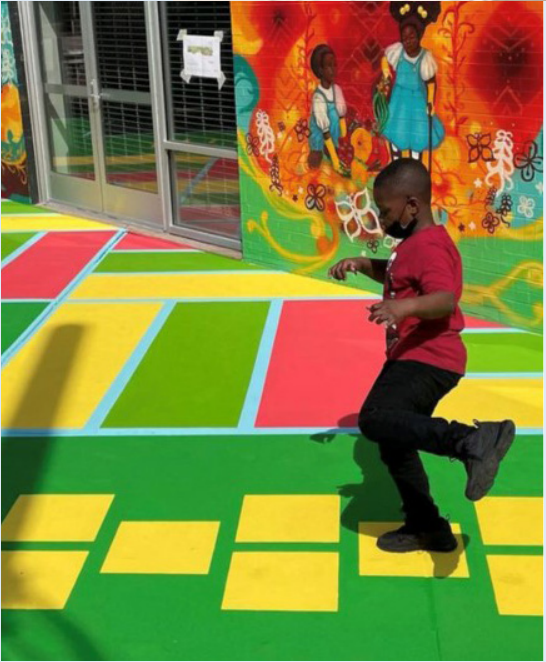
Our partnership is founded on the belief that education doesn’t stop with pedagogy; rather, it is driven by a rich ecosystem of actors, engaging and accessible environments, and enabling technologies that complement curricula and skills. Changing the physical, digital, and social infrastructure of a school can have major ramifications on its success, with ripple effects to the surrounding neighborhood. We’re excited to work together to promote the responsive and community-driven design of learning environments that benefit not just students, but their communities, families, and the institutions that they participate in as part of a broader civic experience.

KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Reimagine
America’s Schools

SFE Focus Areas
Learning,
Infrastructure

Reach
National



“We’ve approved more than \$50 billion in school building renovation and construction, but most of these will be built for 1950 rather than 2050. The design of the education space is not keeping pace with curriculum and technology. Our hope is to drive a new vision for school design that supports these innovations.”

- Ron Bogle, Founder and CEO



KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Transcend
Education

SFE Focus Area
Learning

Reach
National



“When educators have the capacity to transform learning environments in ways that transcend the bounds of the traditional model, our students will astound us.”

- Jeff Wetzler, Co-Founder



SUMMARY

Transcend Education works with school and system leaders to design and redesign learning environments that are equitable, relevant, and responsive to 21st century demands and opportunities. Driven by the vision that all young people learn in ways that enable them to thrive in and transform the world, Transcend connects communities with plans and strategies for implementing locally-tailored education innovations, and helps move ambitious ideas about learning from theory into action.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

Our partnership will support Transcend as they connect the demand for better school design to a supply of adoptable, innovative models. Funding will enable the development of a Models Exchange - a digital platform where school communities can access blueprints for successful learning models and resources on how to implement them. It will also grow the Transcend Design Community, a network of innovators, school

designers, and education experts all actively engaged in building better learning environments for children. Finally, our grant will support direct design services to guide the physical infrastructure development of up to six school sites over the next three years.

THE PATH AHEAD

Our shared belief is that a more holistic approach to school design and the expansion of learning environments beyond classroom walls can be done at scale. To drive this complex change, Transcend’s work extends into the policy realm, making connections between innovative researchers, legislators, and motivated community members who are eager to start bringing ideas to life in communities around the country. Their strategies for ushering policy and research into an actionable space will provide guidance on implementing the research findings we’re supporting across our interest areas. This work will also produce a roadmap to ensure an ambitious vision for learning and education in America is more achievable in the near term.

A man and a woman are leaning over a workbench in a workshop, looking at a laptop. The man is on the left, wearing a white polo shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a light blue polo shirt. They are both looking intently at the laptop screen. In the foreground, there are several metal drill bits and a laptop. The background shows industrial equipment and a bright, airy workshop environment.

WORKFORCE

As the nature of work continues to evolve, our partners have evolved as well. We've expanded our portfolio to include grantees focused on making the innovation economy more equitable for all by ensuring that people of color, women, and overlooked rural communities can play a key role in regional growth and prosperity. In addition to supporting high quality, future-relevant job training, our grants now consist of organizations focused on bolstering entrepreneurship, increasing access to financial and social capital for diverse leaders, and strengthening the uniquely human skills needed to work alongside advanced technologies.



New Growth Innovation Network

POWERING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIES

SUMMARY

New Growth Innovation Network (NGIN) is a knowledge, insight, and innovation hub that supports practitioners in advancing inclusive economic growth in their regions. NGIN focuses on closing structural opportunity gaps to ensure that people of color, women, and neglected geographies are a core part of inclusive economic growth and prosperity.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

There is broad acknowledgement that professional networks play a role in securing job offers or new business contracts, and yet there are limited efforts to invest in them. NGIN works with its network of economic development practitioners in cities around the US to better understand the ways that social and digital infrastructure can be leveraged to support diverse workers and business owners, increase their in-

come, and create wealth. The output of this work will include best practices and replicable strategies for investment in social and digital infrastructure that can lead to higher incomes for lower middle income and BIPOC individuals, and economic growth for the community.

THE PATH AHEAD

Ensuring that all people have the ability to participate meaningfully in the innovation economy is a critical piece of our work, and that starts with rethinking the way traditional economic development programs operate in communities and regions across the country. By focusing specifically on efforts to include historically underrepresented communities in ongoing innovation efforts, we’re hopeful that our partnership with NGIN will create a new standard for inclusion and equity in this work going forward.

KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
New Growth
Innovation Network

SFE Focus Area
Workforce

Reach
National



Building an Equitable Economy: A Case Study on Baltimore



“Inclusive growth fundamentally repositions disadvantaged people and places, particularly communities of color, as drivers and beneficiaries of the enormous growth opportunities in the new economy.”

-Yasmina McCarty, Chief
Executive Officer and President



KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Rural Community Assistance Partnership

SFE Focus Area
Workforce

Reach
National, Puerto Rico, US Virgin Islands

“Our work is fundamentally about building capacity and ensuring communities of all sizes have opportunities, and that the people in those communities have equal and equitable opportunities in the future”

- Nathan Ohle, Chief Executive Officer



SUMMARY

The Rural Community Assistance Partnership (RCAP) is a national network of nonprofit partners helping rural communities drive economic development and infrastructure-related projects in every state and territory across the United States. RCAP’s six regional partners and more than 300 technical assistance providers help build the capacity of small business leaders in rural areas to address issues impacting their ability to grow and thrive.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

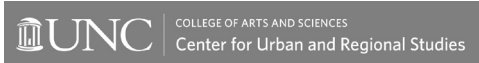
Our work together will scale up a virtual Small Business Training Program that provides rural entrepreneurs and small business owners with the technical, practical, and marketing skills needed to shift aspects of their businesses from in-person to online. Group courses will be offered virtually, followed up with individualized check-ins to ensure businesses are sup-

ported through the process and to assist with individual needs. RCAP strongly believes the personalized technical assistance that accompanies its training is vital to ensuring that rural and tribal enterprises have the resources needed to be successful.

THE PATH AHEAD

In order for everyone to be able to participate meaningfully in the innovation economy, we need to look beyond the urban centers that claim so much attention and recognize the vital role that rural communities play in driving prosperity. We’re focused on developing a robust network of local change agents who are charged with building out the rural entrepreneurship ecosystem and guaranteeing that all Americans have access to the 21st century digital economy. RCAP’s technical and training services will go a long way towards amplifying this message and help bring our vision of a more economically connected rural America to bear.

Manufacturing Extension Partnership Research



SUMMARY

Manufacturing Extension Partnerships (MEPs) are a decentralized network of 51 centers that provide business and technical assistance to small and medium sized manufacturers to help them adopt organizational and technological change. We’re partnering with the University of North Carolina (UNC) and Portland State University on a research project to investigate how MEPs can be deployed to deliver technological and workplace culture changes that enhance productivity, quality of life, and equity for all workers involved.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

This research addresses one of our guiding questions about building inclusive and complementary relationships between human capital, labor, and technology: How might we develop work environments that make the most of uniquely human skills, and complement those skills with new technologies that improve productivity, increase wages, and expand worker agency? Our support for the teams at UNC and Port-

land State will produce a series of research papers and policy proposals dedicated to understanding the potential for MEPs to mitigate automation-related job loss. These findings will be shared with leaders and stakeholders around the country, with the end goal of informing the way MEP workforce programs might continue to evolve.

THE PATH AHEAD

By moving beyond traditional workforce training, MEPs have the potential to promote high-quality jobs, career mobility, and equity standards. This research will also help inform how businesses and their partners in other sectors can best integrate new technologies and support their workforces. By probing how the manufacturing sector can involve frontline workers in the technology design and deployment process, we are honoring our commitment to ensuring every voice, especially those that are traditionally overlooked, are part of conversations about the future.

KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Manufacturing Extension Partnership Research

SFE Focus Area
Workforce

Reach
National and Puerto Rico



“MEP Centers have expanded far beyond process-oriented client support, demonstrating their ability to also help firms retain and redirect workforce talent, design innovative products, and develop emergency response strategies that will be helpful for future pandemics and natural disasters.” - Nichola Lowe, Professor of City and Regional Planning at UNC-Chapel Hill



EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

We believe that strengthening the nonprofit sector as a whole happens by both supporting the organizational effectiveness of individual grantees and also by engaging our peers in the philanthropic community to improve our collective practice. We advocate for practices that we think are equitable and effective, and create space for sharing successes, failures, and common problems. Our work takes many forms, including funder learning groups, trade publications, and focused convenings. We believe that promoting a culture of sharing positions all grantmakers to better serve nonprofits, and ultimately, enables all of us to be more effective together.



KEY FACTS

Grantee Name
Feedback Labs

SFE Focus Area
Effective
Philanthropy

Reach
Global



“We believe that making people’s voices central to the decision-making process will revolutionize social impact.”

- Megan Campbell, Senior Director of Programs and Strategy



SUMMARY

Feedback Labs convenes philanthropic and nonprofit leaders to develop strategies for making feedback the norm in philanthropy, nonprofits, international aid, and government. They believe people are the best experts in their own lives and should ultimately drive the policies and programs that impact them.

OUR PARTNERSHIP

Our partnership was founded on a shared belief that nonprofit and philanthropic organizations are most effective and equitable when they listen to and act on feedback from the communities they serve. Over the past few years, our support has helped build feedback-related tools and training, a global community of 600+ organizations, and efforts aimed at realign-

ing sector incentives towards listening. Additionally, we are founding members of the Feedback Incentives Learning Group, where we regularly come together with peer funders to learn, discuss, and build the field of feedback within the philanthropic sector.

THE PATH AHEAD

Feedback Labs has a strong record of convening powerful stakeholders and catalyzing them towards achieving meaningful results. Their sights are set on widespread adoption of effective feedback practices across the nonprofit and public sectors, a goal we continue to work towards in our own approach and promote within our field. Our collective work demonstrates that feedback is not just the right thing to do, but also leads to better programmatic outcomes and is feasible at scale.

OUR 2021 GRANTEE PARTNERS



ABOUT SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT

We are a foundation focused on understanding and shaping the impact of technology on society.



SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT employs an inquiry-driven approach to grant making that is informed by the scientific method and predicated on the belief that philanthropy is uniquely positioned to address some of the most pressing and complex issues facing society today. Our grant making strategy supports organizations doing work at the intersection of learning, workforce, and infrastructure. It is designed to help build a world in which all people have the tools, skills, and context necessary to engage meaningfully in a rapidly changing society. Siegel Family Endowment was founded in 2011 by David M. Siegel, co-founder and co-chairman of financial sciences company Two Sigma.

