2007
The Siegel Charitable Foundation is created

2011
Obtained 501(c)(3) status and were renamed Siegel Family Endowment

2012-2014
Inaugural grantmaking years, with MIT, NYC FIRST, and Scratch at the head

2015
Hired founding Executive Director and created our first mission

2016-2018
Grew staff, refined mission, launched a visual identity, and grew our portfolio of grants, particularly in computer science, workforce, and internet health

2019
Katy Knight became Executive Director. Refined our scientific approach to grantmaking

2020
Launched multidimensional infrastructure portfolio area, with a seminal whitepaper

2021-2022
Stood up in-house research team, and brought on inaugural fellows and mission-aligned grantees. Released second whitepaper on schools as community infrastructure and refreshed our workforce strategy
Our mission is to understand and shape the impact of technology on society.

Our vision is a world in which all people have the tools, skills, and context necessary to engage meaningfully in a rapidly changing society.
Philosophy: Society’s Risk Capital

1. R&D investment for the social sector that can fund, test, and prove out new and emerging solutions

2. Builds on the scholarship of Arnold J. Zurcher and Rob Reich, who argue that foundations are well-suited to “de-risk” solutions for public and private entities and actualize transformative social change

3. Challenge philanthropic norms to take calculated risks, embrace a growth mindset, fund innovators from non-majority backgrounds, and expand beyond short-term metrics
Our Approach
Values: How We Work

1. **Collaboration**
   We work closely with grantees and partners in the field to develop strategies and solutions that drive progress for our shared goals. We seek out people and organizations whose work is forward-thinking and true to their core values.

2. **Risk & Experiments**
   We’re eager to test and develop new solutions, and push ourselves beyond traditional philanthropy to find promising untested ideas, identify gaps, and reframe conversations about complex issues. We embrace failure, taking it as an opportunity to learn, iterate, and strengthen our practice.

3. **Relationship Driven**
   We have a “people first” approach to our relationships with grantees and partners, and consider a wide range of factors when developing engagement and assessment strategies. We don’t ask that our grantees fit a certain mold, or change who they are to fulfill our own objectives.

4. **Humility & Trust**
   Our role as a funder is to lift up the expertise of others. We don’t have the answers and are not always positioned to understand or wield the assets of the communities we serve. We operate from a place of trust in our grantee leaders, who know best how to approach challenges and allocate their resources.
Source & Build Relationships

• Proactively cast a wide and nontraditional net to seek out-of-the-box ideas and overlooked changemakers
• Conduct due diligence, leaning on publicly available data as much as possible

Grant & Engage

• Take the lead on writing grant recommendations with input from prospective grantees, a process that aims to serve systematically excluded and smaller orgs that often lack time, capacity, or “funder speak”

Learn & Share

• Offer multiple reporting options, using a mix of quantitative metrics and lived experiences
• Measure and capture findings in published pieces drafted with grantees’ partnership and approval
• Leverage our research team to collect, make sense of, and disseminate findings to broader community

Reflect & Iterate

• Routinely collect feedback to ensure our processes are centered on the needs of those we serve
• Evolve our strategies and practice based on what we are learning and hearing from our partners
**Approach: Inquiry Driven Grantmaking**

- **Apply knowledge and learning**
  - to refining subsequent rounds of inquiry questions

- **Convene stakeholders**
  - to solicit and synthesize feedback

- **Develop and refine inquiry questions**
  - that help guide the development of our relationships

- **Perform landscape analysis**
  - to better understand the context for our work

- **Support work in the field**
  - that helps us uncover relevant evidence

- **Collect and publish findings**
  - to share with our partners in the field
Our Interest Areas
Key Question

How can schools and communities work together to equitably enable learners to contribute to and advance in our technology-driven society?

Approach

We support initiatives that build lifelong learning opportunities, particularly in computer and data science, and also look beyond content and pedagogy to consider the whole learner, whole school, and whole community as stakeholders and design partners:

1. Schools as community infrastructure
2. Computational thinking; computer and data science
3. Future and frontier skills

Highlighted Grantees
**Key Question**

How do we promote an equitable innovation economy, one that propels people and their communities toward lasting economic prosperity?

**Approach**

We support programs that seek to put equity at the center of our economy via

1. Community-driven innovation led by proximate leaders
2. Sustainable solutions to financing skills training programs
3. Expanding and diversifying access to empowering social connections and social capital

**Highlighted Grantees**

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Key Question

How might we leverage physical, digital, and social natures of infrastructure to create a more prosperous, equitable, and resilient society?

Approach

We support initiatives that:

1. Leverage a multidimensional approach to equitably strengthen all dimensions of infrastructure

2. Ensure technology, the infrastructure of tomorrow, is designed, developed, and deployed in the public interest

3. Imagine alternative digital and data futures that place community at the center
Effective Philanthropy

We support the strengthening of our sector by investing in both the philanthropic community and the capacity of the nonprofits we serve.

Public Interest Technology

As technology’s role in our world continues to expand, we aim to ensure all people have equal access to and are able to benefit from digital technologies, which we believe are the infrastructure of tomorrow.
Our Research
Our research aligns with our mission: to understand and shape the impact of technology on society

**Approach**

**Knowledge:** Develop a body of information that advances understanding in or across our fields of study, and can lead to better decision-making both for ourselves and cross-sector stakeholders

**Insights:** Produce research outputs that synthesize existing knowledge, and build new frameworks

**Networks:** Support and contribute to networks of researchers to share ideas, combine and recombine hunches, and work across ideological and disciplinary boundaries

**Key Research Areas**

- **Intelligence:** How can humans and machines learn, work, and build together?
- **Design:** How do we design our systems to better serve our collective needs?
- **Decisions:** How do we make better decisions as a society?
- **Development:** How do we develop our potential as individuals and as a society?
- **Information:** How can we harness data, information, and knowledge for good, and prevent bias and disinformation?
- **Innovation:** What kind of ecosystems and tools best support innovative people to build community wealth?
Research Fellows 2022-2023
Our Grantee Partners

1. **Community-driven**
   They rely on teachers, staff, and local knowledge to build their programs and drive their work

2. **Systems entrepreneurs**
   They set their sights and orient their programs toward the types of change they’d like to see at the systems level

3. **Field builders**
   They work in tandem with others, recognizing that long-term change will be achieved by an ecosystem of coordinated players rather than one silver bullet

4. **Out-of-the-box thinkers**
   We believe philanthropy is society’s risk capital, and take risks on big ideas that have the power to transform the system

*NOTE: these represent some, but not all, of the qualities we look for in prospective grantees*
Where We Work

What Drives Us

1. Local insights, national reach
2. Overlap of inquiry questions and opportunity
3. Grantee interest and scale

Regions of Interest

We remain dedicated to our home in New York City, but also have a presence in Atlanta where we’re experimenting with an ecosystem approach to grantmaking and in rural areas where we’re focused on revitalizing communities.
Q&A