SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT

January 30th, 2024

Ask Me Anything Webinar

About Siegel Family Endowment
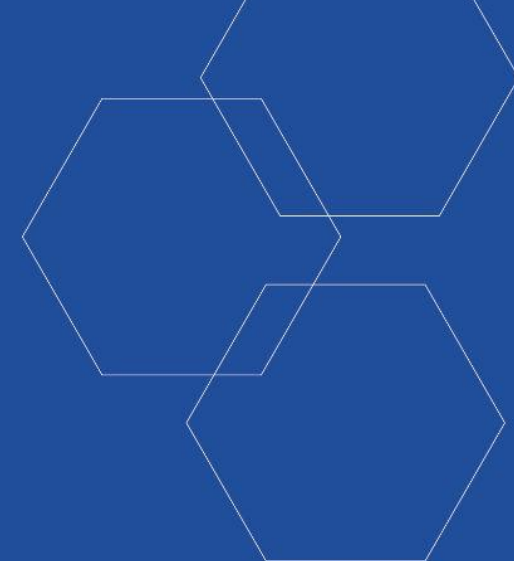
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We are a foundation focused on understanding and shaping the impact of technology on society.

We make grants across three primary interest areas:

Learning   **Workforce**   **Infrastructure**

We take an inquiry-driven approach to grantmaking, rooted in the scientific method.

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Process: Values in Action

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

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.

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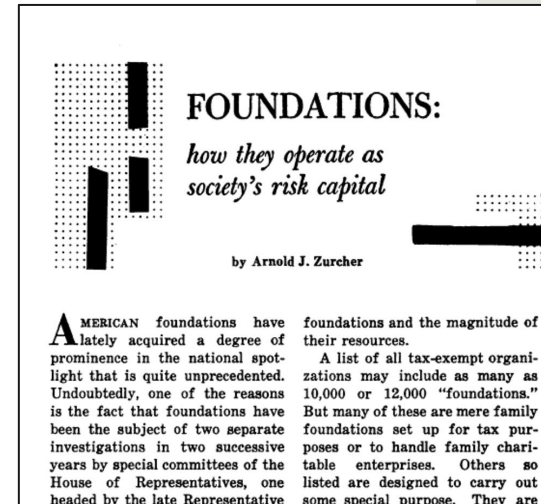
*NOTE: these represent some, but not all, of the qualities we look for in prospective grantees

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

Perform landscape analysis
to better understand the context for our work

Apply knowledge and impact
to refine subsequent rounds of inquiry questions

Support work in the field
that helps us uncover relevant evidence

Convene stakeholders
to solicit and synthesize feedback

Collect and publish findings
to share with partners in the field

Grounding our approach in the scientific method

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
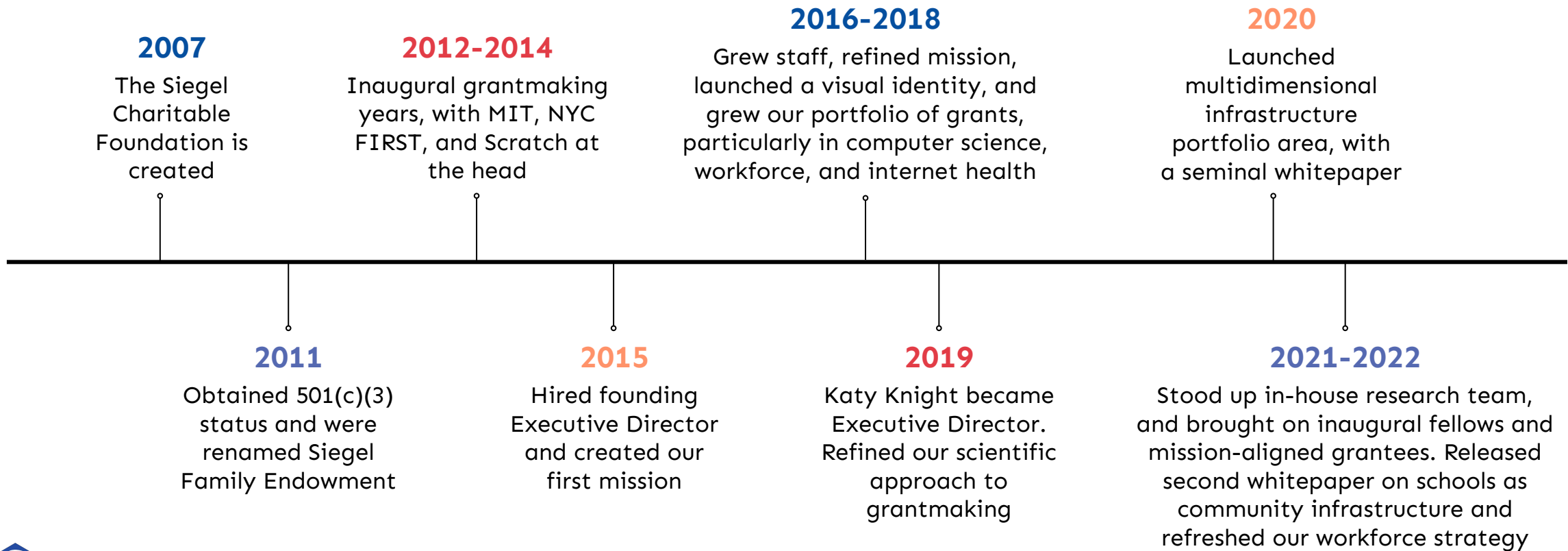
JUST GIVING

WHY PHILANTHROPY IS FAILING DEMOCRACY AND HOW IT CAN DO BETTER

ROB REICH

FOUNDATIONS:
how they operate as society's risk capital

by Arnold J. Zurcher

AMERICAN foundations have lately acquired a degree of prominence in the national spotlight that is quite unprecedented. Undoubtedly, one of the reasons is the fact that foundations have been the subject of two separate investigations in two successive years by special committees of the House of Representatives, one headed by the late Representative foundations and the magnitude of their resources.

A list of all tax-exempt organizations may include as many as 10,000 or 12,000 "foundations." But many of these are mere family foundations set up for tax purposes or to handle family charitable enterprises. Others so listed are designed to carry out some special purpose. They are

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History Of Siegel

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

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2023 was a year of organizational growth, exploration, and reflection.

1 We grew our research, grantmaking, operations, and external engagement teams to meet this unique moment of technological transformation head-on.

2 We invested in understanding the lessons from the last few years of grantmaking.

Read our reflections in our 2023 YIR and insights on our website.

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2023

Year *in* Review

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Our Guiding Star

1 **intentional and equitable grantmaking** that elevates grantees, fosters connection, and generates tangible learning outcomes

2 **codifying, reflecting on, and sharing** what we learn to inform our own strategy, that of our grantees, and that of our peers

3 **prioritizing collaboration** throughout to strengthen our work and our community

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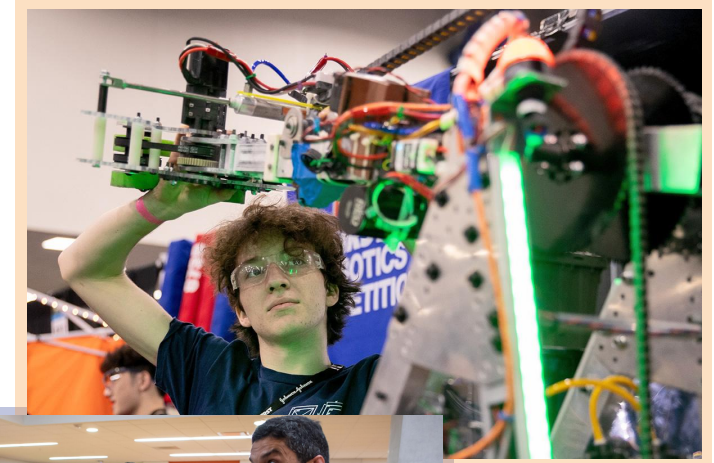
Our Interest Areas
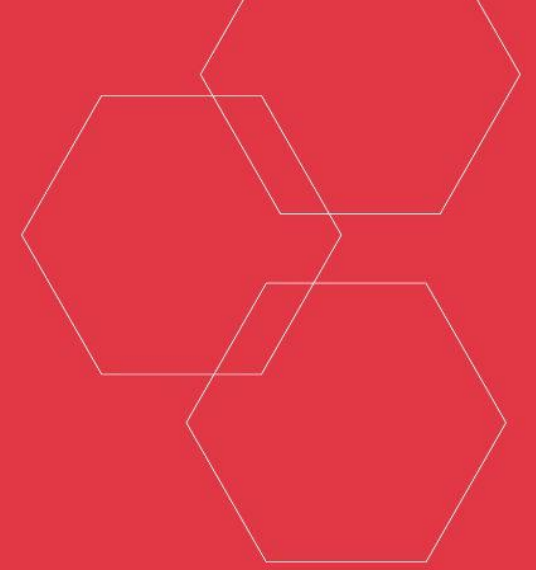
Learning

We believe:
Multidimensional learning ecosystems that consider the whole learner, whole school, and whole community are a crucial path towards more equitable outcomes.

We ask:
How might we shift systems in ways that drive equitable outcomes and create opportunities for learners and their communities?

We prioritize initiatives that pilot inventions and scale transformative interventions that incorporate flexibility and rigor, and enable all learners to thrive in a rapidly evolving society.

- **Continued learning**: Computational thinking, computer and data science, schools as community infrastructure
- **New explorations** AI in education, field-coordinating efforts/all of the "ALLs," evidence-driven edtech

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Workforce

We believe:
AI and emerging technology are fundamentally shaping the nature of work and employment.

We ask:
How might we best empower workers and communities to shape and utilize new technologies and prevent harms in the workplace?

We prioritize advancing actionable insights into how AI and emerging technologies transform work and the work environment. We aim to support organizations that address workers' needs and perspectives around work-impacting technologies through pilot programs, case studies, and other research initiatives.

- **Continued learning**: educators in the workforce, innovative finance within skills development, rural workforce ecosystems

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Infrastructure

We believe:
Vibrant communities require just and equitable infrastructures - and just and equitable infrastructures require engaged communities. Without power sharing with communities, inequalities will grow.

We ask:
How might we increase the meaningful participation and agency of communities to shape the development, deployment, use, and stewardship of the digital infrastructures upon which they rely?

We prioritize practices that empower communities in co-creating sustainable digital, social, and physical infrastructures centered on their unique values, needs, and aspirations.

- **Continued learning:** public interest technology, civic knowledge (information ecosystems, knowledge institutions, news, journalism, museums, and libraries)
- **New explorations:** interplay of technology and climate

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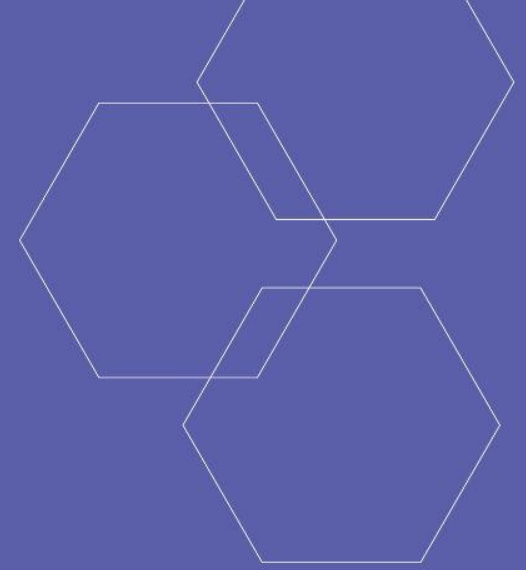
Our Research

Our research aligns with our mission: to understand and shape the impact of technology on society

Approach (3 "N"s)

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?

Information
How can we harness data, information, and knowledge for good, and prevent bias and disinformation?

Design
How do we design our systems to better serve our collective needs?

Innovation
What kinds of ecosystems and tools best support innovative people to build community wealth?

Decisions
How do we make better decisions as a society?

Development
How do we develop our potential as individuals and as a society?

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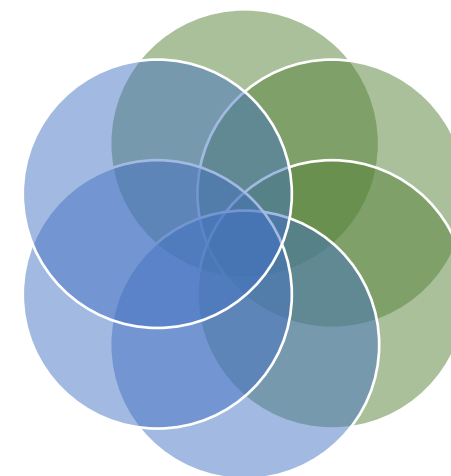
What we're watching

1

Tech policy

What democratic values should inform and guide the shaping and implementation of our technology policy?

2

Generative AI (across our inquiry areas)

Identify and mitigate potential harms in everyday uses, providing guardrails through regulation and policy. Will AI increase or decrease inequality?

3

What will be the next wave of big questions society needs to tackle?

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Research Fellows 2023-2024

Yvonne Eadon
Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life, University of North Carolina

Christian Edlagan
Washington Center for Equitable Growth

Breanna Green
Cornell Tech

Seungwoong Ha
Santa Fe Institute

Michaela Henley
Black Tech Futures, Stillman College

Basileal Imana
Center for Information Technology Policy, Princeton University
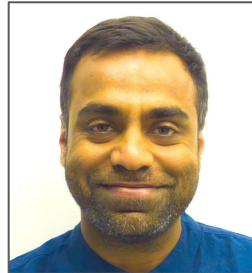

Nick Logler Tech Policy Lab, University of Washington

Dylan Nelson
Work of the Future, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

Megan Shahi Center for American Progress

Caroline Sinders
Convocation Research + Design

Ranjit Singh
Data & Society

Eleanor Tursman
Aspen Digital

Hannah Waight
Center for Social Media and Politics, New York University

Sara M. Watson
All Tech is Human

Amy Winecoff
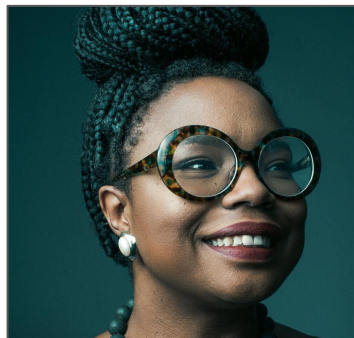Center for Democracy & Technology

Research Advisory Council

Ben Armstrong, Executive Director, Work of the Future, Massachusetts Institute of Technology

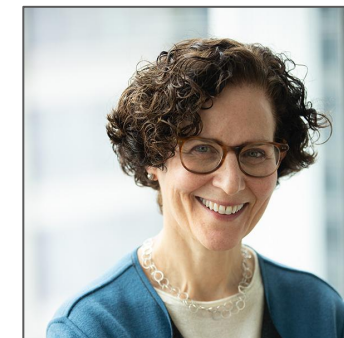**Deborah Estrin,** Professor of Computer Science & Associate Dean for Impact, Cornell Tech

Fallon Wilson, Co-Founder & Principal Investigator, #Blacktechfutures Research Institute

Janet Haven, Executive Director, Data & Society

Kathryn Peters, Executive Director, Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life, University of North Carolina

Mara Rudman, Executive Vice President for Policy, Center for American Progress

Prateek Mittal, Director, Center for Information Technology Policy, Princeton

Arvind Narayanan, Professor of Computer Science, Center for Information Technology Policy, Princeton

Zeve Anderson, Executive Director, Center for Social Media and Politics, New York University

Vivian Schiller, Executive Director, Aspen Digital, The Aspen Institute
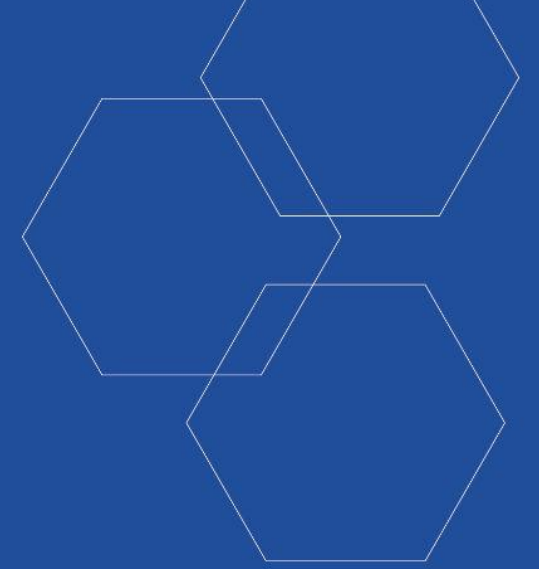

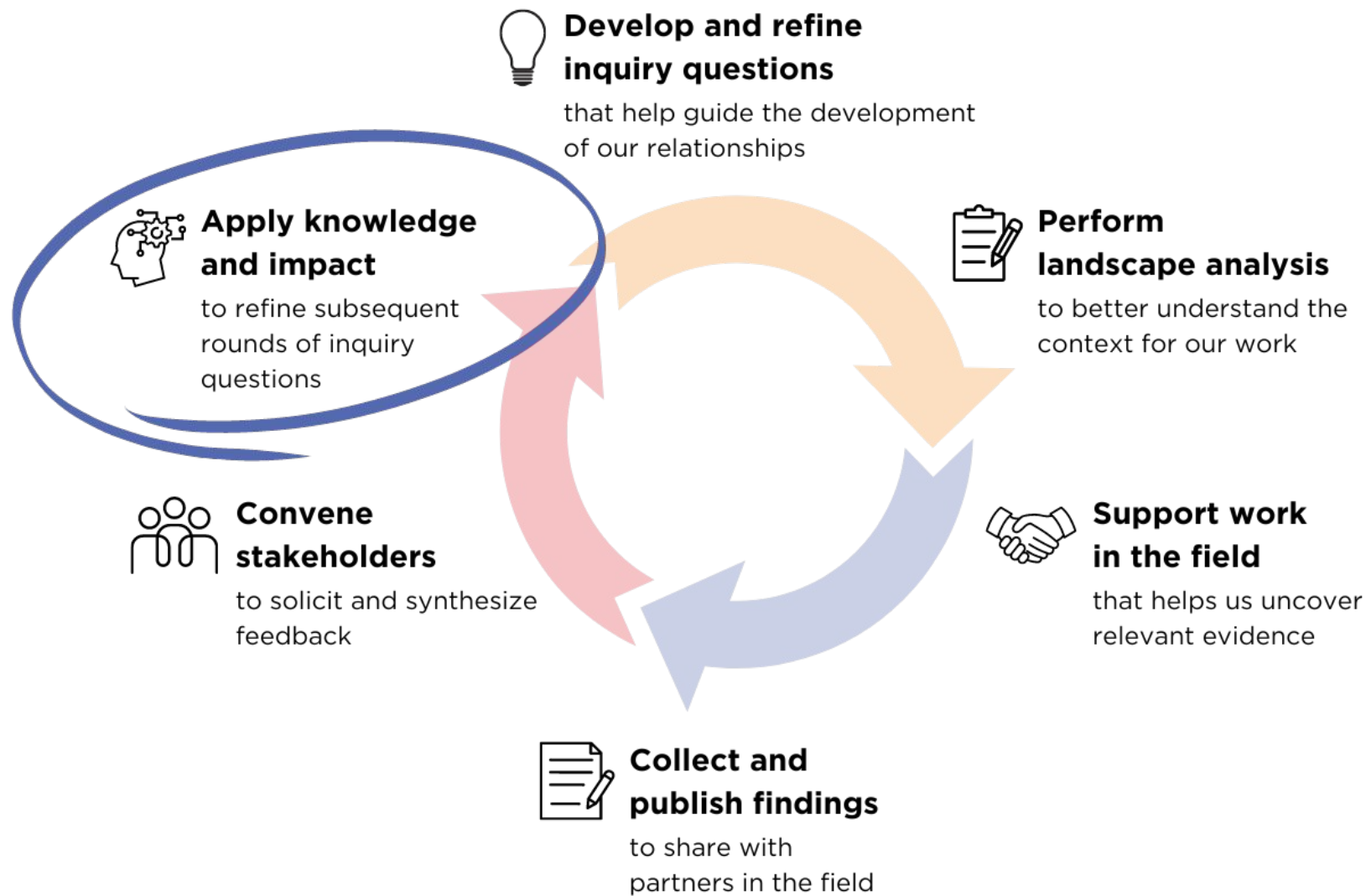**Shayna Strom,** President, Washington Center for Equitable Growth

Will Tracy, Vice President, Washington Center for Equitable Growth

Knowledge & Impact

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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

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Grounding our approach in the scientific method

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Activating: Monitoring, Evaluation and Assessment (MEA)
Strengthening co-learning

Siegel's "Bayesian" approach

- **(Prior) Before:** What are we testing? What our assumptions do we need to consider?
- **(Evidence) During:** What evidence are we gathering?
- **(Posterior) After:** What have we learned? How have we revised our assumptions and perspective on what change is needed?
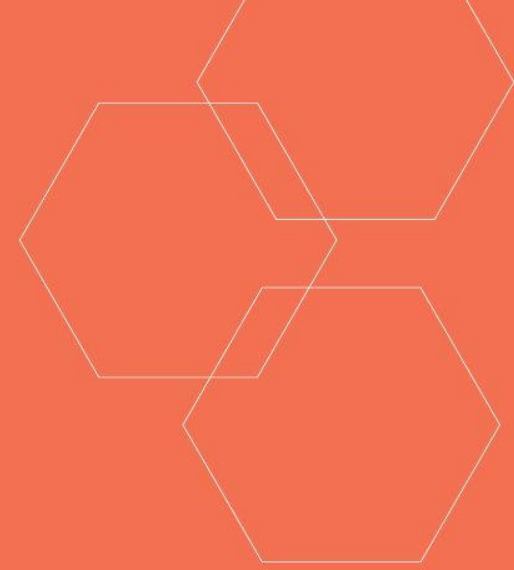
Our Principles

- Root in inquiry questions
- Define success as "what we learned," even from perceived "failure"
- Generate insights usable by others, not just us
- Tailor methodology and evidence to grantee, strategy, and learning questions

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How We Show Up as Partners

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Our Vision for Effective Philanthropy

We aim to lead our field to reimagine philanthropy by prioritizing the wellbeing of a flourishing and diverse nonprofit ecosystem over traditional approaches to grantmaking, and by investing in enhancing the capacity and organizational strength of partners.

Our Internal Practice

Grantee Engagement and Process

- Reducing Burden
- Iteration

Culture

- Risk
- Staff Engagement
- Learning and Reflection
- Feedback

Our External Approach

Sector Engagement

- Sharing Insights
- Conferences and Convenings
- Collaboration

Areas of Exploration

- Capacity building
- Cultivate sector leadership
- Tailored approach to scale and impact

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You Spoke, We Listened

What We Heard

- Greater transparency regarding grant timelines and renewals
- Recognition of multidisciplinary approaches and alternative measurements for success
- Beyond grantmaking strategies for grantee support and capacity building

How we're responding

- Proactive transparency
- Convening for collective learning
- Reporting out and amplifying insights from Siegel and our partners
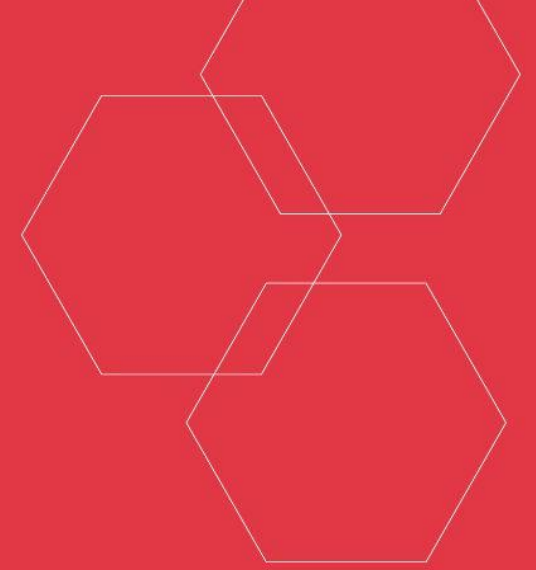- Codifying co-learning in select grants

What's new for grantees

- GivingData
- JustFund
- Office hours, community spaces, and Siegel events

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Q&A

● Contact Us at

https://www.siegelendowment.org/contact/

● Find us at

- **Knight Media Forum**, Miami, FL, February 20-23
- **SXSW**, Austin, TX, March 4-7 for EDU; 7-12 for Interactive
- **ASU+GSV**, San Diego, CA, April 14-17

● Hear from us

- **Siegel Insights Page** https://www.siegelendowment.org/insights/
- **LinkedIn** www.linkedin.com/company/siegel-family-endowment

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Thank you for joining!