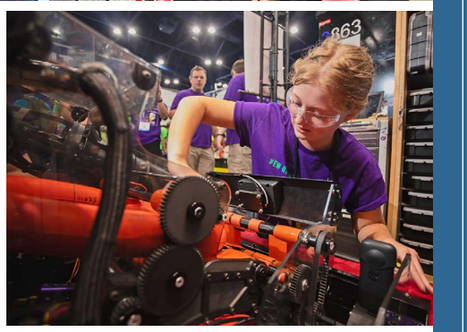
Siegel Family Endowment

YEAR IN Review

2024

Flip to the center for a Siegel Mad Lib to spark your thoughts on shaping the future of technology

SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT



MAD LIB AN *Old* TOOL TO IMAGINE A *New* FUTURE

At Siegel we are committed to exploring how, as both a foundation and a member of the responsible tech ecosystem, we can increase meaningful participation and agency among communities in shaping the development, deployment, use, and stewardship of digital tools to meet their own needs. To achieve this vision, we must begin with a fundamental shift in how we discuss technology—not as a neutral or values-agnostic force (both of which are impossible), but as one that is intentionally guided by values.

Envisioning a tech ecosystem driven by values is no easy task. The first step is imagining what that could look like. However, the act of imagining itself is challenging, as it requires us to break from the constraints of our current reality and envision something entirely new, often in the face of uncertainty, complexity, and limitations. Fortunately, tools exist to help facilitate this process—one of the simplest being the age-old Mad Lib. A Mad Lib allows individuals to fill in blanks with random words according to prompts, which then form a connected and often surprising narrative.

In the context of technology values, this playful framework can serve a serious purpose. By using a Mad Lib to explore technology's role in our future, we can experiment with different scenarios where shifting values lead to distinct outcomes. The blanks in the Mad Lib don't just represent nouns, adjectives, or actions; they symbolize the vast array of possibilities for how technology could evolve based on differing priorities.

It encourages the blending of imagination with current technological trends, sparking new ideas for how we might address challenges or pursue opportunities down the road. It also can help us identify potential blind spots or unintended consequences in our vision of the future.

It is our hope that the Mad Lib found at the center of this book might invite us to reflect on the choices we make today, and the ethical and social implications they have on the future we want to build.

Turn to the middle of this book to try your hand at the Siegel Mad Lib or follow the QR Code for a digital version.

THE TIME HAS COME FOR US TO BE *unreasonable*

As we reflect on the past year, it's clear that artificial intelligence has dominated discussions across various domains. What surprises us, however, is not the volume of conversation but rather its lack of nuance. Having navigated many cycles of technological development, we recognize the urgent need to move beyond the simplistic "gloom vs. doom" narrative. Instead, we must critically examine what these technologies can do, what they cannot, and—most importantly—what we truly need from them.

To answer these questions, we've worked to build a community around public interest technology. This year, we hosted Tech Together, a gathering that brought together 200 funders, mission-aligned investors, and thought leaders to shape the future of the global public interest technology movement.

David opened the event with a quote by George Bernard Shaw: "The reasonable man adapts himself to the world; the unreasonable one persists in trying to adapt the world to himself. Therefore, all progress depends on the unreasonable man."

The time has come for us to be unreasonable.

We must challenge the norms we encounter, resist the temptation to accept the status quo that overlooks the potential negative impacts on people and the planet, and advocate for a tech-driven world that prioritizes our values. What does this look like in practice?

Being unreasonable means leading with values

At the heart of meaningful change is the courage to lead with our values, particularly when faced with complex decisions or competing priorities. Over the past year, we've reflected on how personal values align with public processes and institutional goals, especially in an era where technology increasingly shapes our lives. The challenge is not just identifying what is important to us but translating these values into tangible actions that guide technology's development and deployment. This requires a shift in how we think about technology—not as a neutral tool but as a reflection of our collective priorities.

All technology carries values—whether or not we are conscious of them. From the algorithms that drive our daily interactions to the platforms we engage with, every piece of technology is built on assumptions about what matters most. If we don't consciously name the values at the tables where technology and policy are shaped, we risk reinforcing harmful biases, exclusionary practices, or systems that perpetuate injustice. Technology is never a blank slate—it is an expression of the choices we make, the assumptions we hold, and the outcomes we deem important.

To drive positive change, technology must be designed with intentionality, grounded in values that prioritize people, planet, and society at large. This means advocating for technology that serves the public good, amplifies marginalized voices, and aligns with justice, fairness, and sustainability. It also means acknowledging the tensions between competing values—privacy and security, innovation and regulation—and using these tensions as opportunities to refine our technological frameworks. In this sense, being unreasonable is about insisting that technology be a force for good, holding it accountable to the values that matter.

Being unreasonable means asking better questions

In an increasingly polarized world, nuance is often dismissed as antagonistic or irrelevant. Yet, the world is far more complex than the simple dichotomies of black vs. white, left vs. right, or Mac vs. PC. Nuance is the key to finding the most effective levers to target systems change. And it begins with asking better questions.

Questions are powerful tools to challenge the conventional "reasonableness" of the status quo. Curiosity, coupled with humility, can be far more effective than the reflex to persuade or defend. By approaching debates with a mindset to listen and learn, we open doors to unexpected breakthroughs—whether in science, policy, social innovation or around the kitchen table. This approach fosters a deeper understanding of the world, allowing us to refine our mental models of what can change and what cannot. Ultimately, it is this nuanced perspective that guides us toward effective, sustainable solutions.

At first glance, nuanced perspectives might seem to seek compromise or be at odds with prevailing narratives. Consider, for example, the notion that we *do* want bias in our data—a belief that on its surface runs counter to the myriad of efforts seeking to mitigate harm. But dig deeper, and you'll see that what we seek are *positive* biases—those that are pro-social, pro-environmental, and that tip the scales toward equity and justice. It's only by embracing these complexities that we can create solutions that are truly transformative.

Being unreasonable means collective action

Social change work is inherently complex, messy, and slow-moving, but it is also deeply necessary. The pursuit of generational systems change, the kind that reshapes institutions, cultures, and power structures, cannot be measured in traditional ways. Quick fixes and linear progress are rare in this space, and it's easy to be discouraged by the lack of immediate, tangible outcomes.

However, when we succeed in fostering deep, collaborative partnerships—leaning on each other's intellectual strengths, lived experiences, and diverse perspectives—the process becomes less about individual achievement and more about collective transformation. Success is not defined by who gets there first, but by the collective strength of all those working together to create a more just, equitable, and sustainable world.

Through shared effort, we recognize the value of building on the work of others, asking questions, and

Technology is never a blank slate—it is an expression of the choices we make, the assumptions we hold, and the outcomes we deem important.

refining our approaches based on what has come before us. By grounding our efforts in collaboration, we ensure that progress is not only sustained but accelerated, with a greater chance of creating lasting impact for future generations. Social change is never truly "done"; it is always a work in progress—becoming more inclusive, impactful, and transformative over time.

A call to unreason

We invite you to join us in becoming "unreasonable." If becoming unreasonable means challenging the conventional, questioning assumptions, and refusing to accept things simply because they've always been that way, then we believe it is not only reasonable—it is essential to drive real, lasting change.

Thank you for your continued support as we work together to create a future we can all be proud of.

With best wishes,

Scan the QR code to explore additional insights from the Siegel team on the technology values guiding their work, reflections on their achievements this year, and their priorities for 2025.

"One big question I have is figuring out where we want to take the AI and emerging technology conversation and, most importantly, where we *don't* want to take it."

JOSHUA ELDER, VICE PRESIDENT & HEAD OF GRANTMAKING

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 positions us to be society's risk capital. We support high quality work that will help us derive insights to timely questions and has high potential for future scale. Our focus is on organizations doing work at the intersection of learning, workforce, and infrastructure. We aim 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 Siegel, co-founder and co-chairman of financial sciences company Two Sigma.

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Amanda Ahern
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Nicole Smoot
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Evan Trout
Grantmaking Manager

Ellery Wong
External Engagement Associate

OUR INQUIRY *Areas*

We believe the impact potential of a philanthropic organization goes beyond the individual impact of specific grants or even broader strategies. A well-functioning philanthropy is also a learning organization. It should learn from successes as well as failures, connect the dots between issue silos and sectors, be humble about what it knows, and identify gaps in knowledge that need to be filled. It is our goal that advancing knowledge in our grantmaking interest areas will lead to better decision making for ourselves and other funders, as well as for policy makers, and leaders in the private and nonprofit sectors.

1. Learning

We strive to understand how we can better equip individuals with the knowledge they need to contribute to and engage with a rapidly changing society. 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—can widen inequality and impact success. Our work supports and shapes programs and solutions that build lifelong learning opportunities and envision an education system that works for everyone, by addressing long standing social and economic inequities.

2. Workforce

We prioritize advancing actionable insights into how AI and emerging technologies transform work and the work environment. While empirical research on AI and work is growing, AI's possible impacts on work and workers remain largely unknown. AI affects not just the content of jobs (tasks that might be replaced), but also the context – including the hiring, management, and monitoring of workers, as well as the worker experience. We seek to better understand both how employers are deploying AI in the workplace and how workers might harness new technologies to advance their livelihoods.

3. Infrastructure

The internet and emerging technologies have changed the way we engage with one another and our institutions, and reshaped elements that underpin our civil society. The choices and values driving the building and maintenance of our infrastructure shape our future. It's essential that we rethink how to define, design, govern, and fund it. We apply our multidimensional framework for infrastructure to deliver positive community outcomes and address the urgent challenges facing American society. We prioritize practices that empower communities in co-creating sustainable digital, social, and physical infrastructure centered on their unique values, needs, and aspirations.

Read on for deeper insights into our strategy, grantmaking, core programs, and the achievements of our partners in 2024.

Scan the QR code to explore insights from David Siegel.

"When I was growing up, car engines were still accessible. I remember rebuilding the carburetor on my first car, and understanding how it worked gave me a real sense of connection to the vehicle. These days, much of our technology, even cars, feels completely incomprehensible to many people. As a result, they tune out and become much more passive.

We need to improve technological literacy so people can feel more connected to society and become active participants. Most technologies aren't as complicated as they might seem—especially if they're presented the right way. Very few things are so complex that they can't be understood by most people."

DAVID SIEGEL, CO-FOUNDER OF TWO SIGMA AND CHAIRMAN OF SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT

YEAR IN REVIEW: *Learning*

Commitment to the Fundamentals

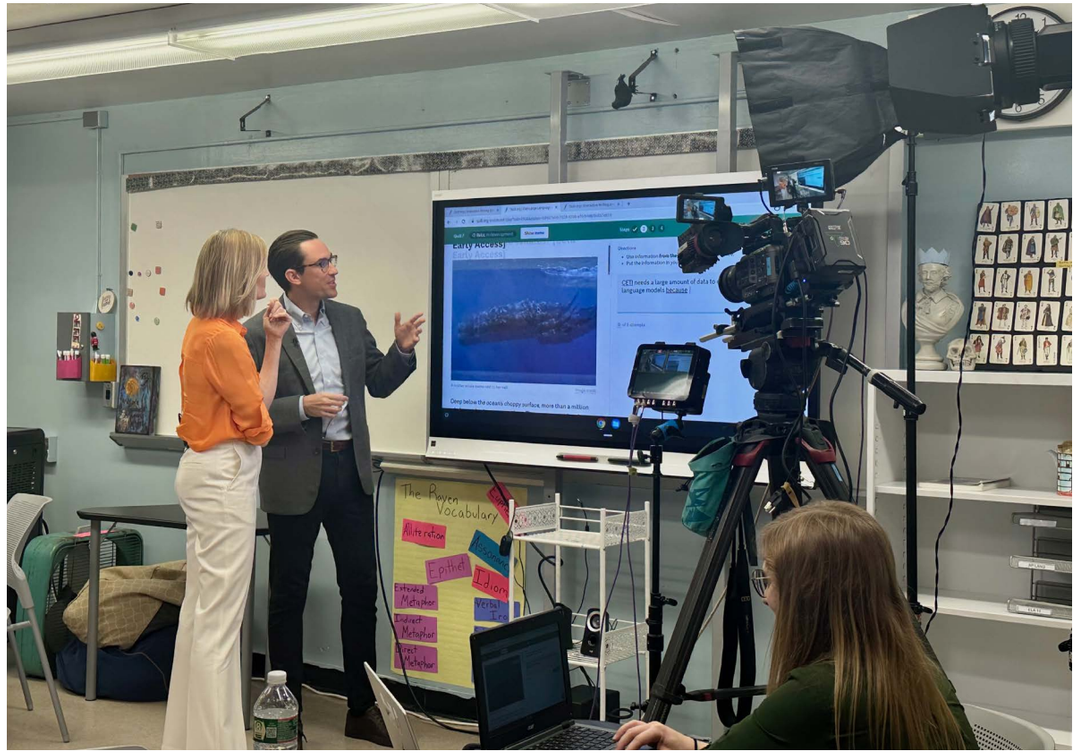
In our learning portfolio this year, we saw promising innovations that address the evolving demands of students, teachers, and workplaces. We launched the Learning Landscapes Challenge in partnership with the Walton Family Foundation, a three-phase prize competition that emphasizes creating adaptive, multidimensional environments that both meet current educational needs and encourage lifelong learning skills that will prepare students for the future. While we've been able to energize innovation and partnership around such education initiatives, there is still much to learn about the conditions that enable scale and sustainability.

Of course, generative AI continues to reshape the educational landscape. As we look ahead, we find a huge lever point in the educational technology space. We continue to push companies, investors, and designers towards responsible, student-centric innovations grounded in research and evidence. Such an approach is exemplified in the work of Quill.org, which uses generative AI to provide nuanced, customized feedback on student writing. Quill's commitment to collaborating with educators to fine-tune these tools reinforces the role that thoughtful design and teacher input play in scaling high quality educational technologies in a responsible and effective way.

Recognizing that some of the most impactful technologies in education may appear "unsexy," we must advocate for the importance of investing in foundational tools and platforms that, while not flashy, are essential for long-term educational success. Technologies like attendance monitoring, budget tracking, and parent communication. By investing in backend administration, organizations create a stable environment where innovation can thrive.

Mirroring our commitment to foundational technologies, our enduring focus on foundational skills—computational thinking, creative problem solving, collaboration—underpins our mission to ensure more people have the skills and resources necessary for an increasingly digital world. We're committed to computer and data science as the building blocks of both a future-ready education and the ability to become conversant with the complexities of our technology-driven world.

▲ Developmental Technologies (DevTech) research group



▲ Quill

Peter Gualt
Founder & Executive Director, Quill.org

"Quill.org uses *manual customizations* and multi-shot prompting to provide high-quality AI-powered feedback, unlike generic, hit-or-miss AI systems. We all know how frustrating it can be when Siri doesn't understand you—imagine a sixth grader trying to use a chatbot that doesn't really understand them. Quill's customized approach to AI is critical to providing an effective learning experience, especially for low-income students who deserve the best support."

▲ Robin Hood

"Imagine a world where *Scar from Lion King*
NOUN - VILLAIN
controlled all of the *smartwatches*"
PLURAL NOUN - DIGITAL DEVICE

Daniel Oscar
Founder, Realign Education

Creating *future-ready learning environments* for all students—including those pursuing non-college pathways—requires foundational changes in college admissions, which has remained fundamentally unchanged for over 125 years. Instead of upholding outdated memorization-focused education, easily measurable by our antiquated admissions systems, we must foster K-12 experiences that develop competencies essential for human flourishing, a healthy democracy, and economic strength. A new AI-assisted infrastructure will enable the shift to efficient, sophisticated applicant review and encourage deeper, transformative learning."

Aylon Samouha
CEO and Co-Founder, Transcend

Across the country, there's a lot of talk about adults needing to change schools. But what if we started by unleashing the incredible potential of students to drive change – both inside and outside the classroom? When we design schools that *give students real choices* about when, where, and how they learn, something amazing happens: they feel a stronger sense of belonging and see school as directly relevant to their lives. This leads to greater engagement, higher attendance, and ultimately, stronger outcomes. At Transcend, we believe that student voice is core to the infrastructure of future-ready learning environments. We regularly survey over 100,000 students to understand their experiences and use their insights to help adults design schools that offer real agency and choice. This isn't just a practice; it's a deeply held belief in the value of students' lived experiences. By making student experience a core component of the infrastructure that sustains ongoing innovation, we can create learning experiences that are far better and more equitable for all young people."

Scan the QR code to explore additional insights from the Siegel team on the technology values guiding their work, reflections on their achievements this year, and their priorities for 2025.

"One of our biggest achievements this past year has been launching the Learning Landscapes Challenge in partnership with the Walton Family Foundation. The challenge aligns deeply with our mission by addressing how technology is reshaping where and how we learn. It emphasizes the multi-dimensional infrastructure—physical, digital, social, and the connective tissue that ties them together—needed for future-ready learning environments. Now in its final incubator phase, we're excited to learn alongside participating communities and celebrate the innovations they're driving."

ALI CHIN, GRANTMAKING MANAGER AT SIEGEL FAMILY ENDOWMENT

YEAR IN REVIEW: *Infrastructure*

Doing Tech Together

This year, our infrastructure portfolio highlighted the growing importance of public interest technology (PIT) as a collaborative, cross-sector effort with global implications. We hosted Tech Together, which together 200+ funders, mission-aligned investors, and thought leaders to catalyze a global movement around financing and investment. We supported major public sector initiatives like NSF Responsible Design, Development and Deployment of Technologies (NSF ReDDDoT), which granted $18M to 44 multidisciplinary, multi-sector teams building responsible tech. And we're fueling the next phase of the PIT University Network (PIT-UN), which is made up of 60+ universities, colleges, and HBCUs that seek to build PIT as a field and career pathway on their campuses, and nurture a new generation of civic-minded technologists. These partnerships have demonstrated that PIT is a priority for a diverse range of stakeholders, and are paving the way for more inclusive, accessible technology solutions that benefit communities worldwide.

Our grantees have shown that while PIT is anchored in the public sector, global civil society and nonprofit organizations are driving much of the innovation. Groups like Code the Dream are creating revenue-generating PIT tools that drive their missions while broadening access to impactful technology. Targeted programs such as TechCongress and Govern for America are addressing the decline of the civil service workforce, with growing emphasis in areas like AI governance. These initiatives are bringing talented, mission-driven professionals into public service, helping to fill critical gaps in technical expertise and governance.

Our focus on community-driven digital infrastructure aims to create technology solutions that are not just tools, but integral parts of the social fabric, enabling them to address their unique challenges. Including community members in the design of technology solutions not only leads to more effective and relevant products but also builds trust and creates a sense of shared ownership that ultimately contributes to their long-term success. Through partnerships with organizations like New_ Public, we are exploring what makes community-based digital public spaces successful and sustainable, especially in ways that drive belonging and social trust at the local level.

As we move forward, our work will continue to emphasize the importance of community-driven, digitally-enabled infrastructure that empowers local leaders to design and govern technologies aligned with their needs, creating more equitable opportunities for individuals around the world. The year's learnings reinforce the importance of collaboration, both within and beyond the public sector, in creating robust infrastructure that supports inclusive development and empowers individuals to drive global change.

◀ Public Interest Technology University Network

Deepti Doshi
Co-Director, New_Public

"Our democracy is at risk, and at the same time, research shows that most Americans lack social trust or any sense of belonging to their communities. We see these two challenges as deeply connected and have been studying digital spaces that many towns and neighborhoods rely on for news, information, and community building and their leaders. It's clear that the moment is now to invest in them—both the design and creation of publicly-spirited, digitally-enabled communities and their often volunteer leaders who are uniquely positioned to weave together the American social fabric again and strengthen the core foundations of our democracy."

Tech Together Event by the Public Interest Technology Infrastructure Fund

Octavia Abell
CEO and Co-Founder, Govern for America

Our partnership with the Siegel Family Endowment allowed GFA to support Fellows to drive GFA to translate federal investments into greater digital inclusion for communities and direct resources to where they were needed most. From designing visualizations that make data on public spending accessible to state residents in Colorado, to partnering with community members to channel $10M to resident-generated projects like telehealth stations, coding courses at libraries, and public Wi-Fi in community parks in Tennessee, to challenging inaccurate federal maps in order to secure the third largest broadband investment in the country ($1.7B) in Missouri, GFA Fellows are delivering results that matter."

"Now imagine a world where everyone—from your grandma to *Danny C. from 3rd grade* —had the opportunity to thrive, creating a vibrant ecosystem where innovation flourishes and there is increased *honesty* "

PERSON - YOUR CHILDHOOD CRUSH

NOUN - A CORE VALUE

Travis Moore
Founder and Executive Director, TechCongress

This year has made clear that we all need to all dramatically scale up our work. And that building or implementing tech solutions isn't enough. Scale in government and the public sector—whether it's expanding the IRS Direct File program, or institutionalizing safe and responsible AI development—happens through public policy and often at the legislative level. Every engineer or developer building tech solutions needs to spend time in their legislature—whether it's their city council or member of congress– in order to grow their own impact and the impact of our field."

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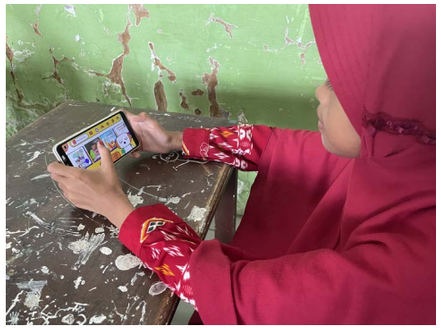
"Our infrastructure work is grounded in the idea that infrastructure is something enduring, lasts generations, and is built inclusively for all. We've seen how the world can change overnight, so creating a resilient public interest technology ecosystem that will serve as our future infrastructure feels really urgent right now."

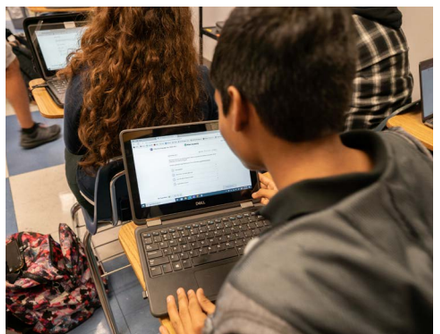
LAURA MAHER, SENIOR MANAGER & HEAD OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT












YEAR IN REVIEW: *Workforce*

Unpacking the Effect of AI on the Work Experience

In order to remain responsive to shifts in the field, we took a research-heavy approach to our workforce strategy this year, bringing on a constellation of seven research grants, each of which is studying a unique aspect of tech in the workplace. Our goal is to use the funding to be able to support evidence-based pilots in the future. Our grantees have shown that while PIT is anchored in the public sector, global civil society and nonprofit organizations are driving much of the innovation. Groups like Code the Dream are creating revenue-generating PIT tools that drive their missions while broadening access to impactful technology. Targeted programs such as TechCongress and Govern for America are addressing the decline of the civil service workforce, with growing emphasis in areas like AI governance. These initiatives are bringing talented, mission-driven professionals into public service, helping to fill critical gaps in technical expertise and governance.

Our workforce grantees highlighted the importance of balancing AI technology with human-centered approaches to transform the workplace experience and improve outcomes for diverse job seekers. We're looking beyond AI replacing jobs to AI transforming jobs. Collecting accurate and comprehensive data on employee experiences with AI can provide valuable feedback on how these tools are perceived and used. This information is crucial for addressing concerns, improving worker experience, and ensuring that AI complements human capabilities rather than undermining them.

To do this, we need better data. As governments, regulatory bodies, and worker organizations increasingly scrutinize AI use, having robust data helps organizations operate with facts, rather than wild speculation. Such data also serves as a warning signal to expose and identify harms in AI systems. Through partnerships with institutions like MIT's Work of the Future Initiative, we observed an increasing interest among employers in designing and deploying AI responsibly, with many seeking collaboration and consultation to shape this technology in ways that support both workers and organizational efficiency. These conversations signal a shift toward integrating worker perspectives at each stage of the AI workplace tool lifecycle, from design to deployment to continuous improvement, a critical development in workplace technologies.

Understanding how AI affects different demographics in the workplace can help shift employer practices and foster an inclusive environment. Programs like Upwardly Global's partnership with HiredScore show how combining human advocacy and education with bias-mitigating AI can improve inclusive hiring, as well as drive meaningful employer change. This tech-supported, advocacy-driven approach has helped amplify opportunities for overlooked candidates, emphasizing the need for workforce solutions that prioritize both equity and innovation.

As we look to the future, our learning questions emphasize the need for worker-centered design and co-creation processes in work-impacting technology. We remain committed to fostering a collaborative ecosystem that includes workers, workforce developers, and employers in the design and deployment of emerging technologies, advancing both economic opportunity and worker rights.

Lily Bukshpan
Director of Institutional Giving, Upwardly Global

We know that immigrants and their children will be responsible for driving all of the growth in our working-age population by 2035. Emerging technologies, including AI, present both immense opportunities and potential challenges for newcomers' successful workforce inclusion. Upwardly Global is focused on ensuring that AI tools that support job matching, recruitment and hiring are effectively designed for nontraditional communities, including immigrants and refugees. With support from the Siegel Family Endowment, we're taking actionable steps to make this a reality. We've partnered with HiredScore, an ethical and fully explainable AI solution, to support companies' efforts to find qualified international talent. This solution has the potential to drive equitable hiring by minimizing biases often present in traditional hiring processes. By focusing on skills and qualifications rather than demographic factors, these tools can help nontraditional job seekers, including immigrants and refugees, access opportunities that may have previously been out of reach."

Owen Davis
In-House Research Fellow, Siegel Family Endowment

What feels more urgent than ever is thinking critically about how AI, emerging technologies, and workforce shifts will impact those who face barriers to opportunity. While we can't predict exactly what the next 5, 10, or 20 years will bring, we can focus on creating a society better equipped to adapt to these changes. It's not about preventing every harm but fostering relationships and setting precedents for how different groups can come together to navigate uncertainty and find constructive ways forward. Even without a crystal ball, we can lay the groundwork for a future that prioritizes equity and preparedness."

"As we face challenges like *slow walkers*,
NOUN - PROBLEM THAT IRKS YOU ON A DAILY BASIS
it is our commitment to *equity* that will lead us
NOUN - SAME CORE VALUE
toward finding solutions that work for more people."

Scan the QR code to explore additional insights from the Siegel team on the technology values guiding their work, reflections on their achievements this year, and their priorities for 2025.

"What I want people to understand is that much of our work focuses on social change, which is inherently complex, non-linear, and often messy. It takes time, and distilling or packaging this kind of work into something easily shared can be a real challenge. Many of these issues require a systems-change approach because they're deeply interconnected and thorny. A single learning may offer part of the solution but rarely the whole answer. I think there's a hesitancy to share progress while it's still unfolding, but embracing the messiness and sharing along the way can be incredibly valuable—not just for transparency but for helping others engaged in similar work."
AMANDA AHERN, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

YEAR IN REVIEW: *Effective Philanthropy*

A New Science of Questions

Effective philanthropy is central to our mission of fostering thoughtful, strategic inquiry that drives meaningful change. This year, we rose to address trends, such as the growing impact of technology on the nonprofit sector and the need for better questions within philanthropy itself.

We've seen significant potential for emerging technologies, like AI, to scale social impact—if nonprofits are equipped with the right tools and frameworks to overcome foundational challenges that limit growth and effectiveness. Through initiatives like our partnership with Project Evident, which explores AI's role in nonprofit scalability, we aim to provide practitioners with the knowledge and resources they need to harness technology for greater impact, helping build a more resilient and effective nonprofit ecosystem.

Our partnership with Data4Philanthropy is helping to cultivate a "science of questions," an emerging field that emphasizes the power of asking the right questions to drive problem-solving and innovation. Rather than simply focusing on answers or solutions, this approach emphasizes the importance of forming questions that challenge assumptions, uncover hidden complexities, and stimulate deeper exploration. By shifting the focus from reactive solutions to more thoughtful inquiry, we can help philanthropy move toward deeper, more transformative and sustainable strategies.

▲ SXSW EDU 2024 Futures Studio with Stanford d.school

"No matter who you are — *doctor* (NOUN - A PROFESSION), *bricklayer* (NOUN - ANOTHER PROFESSION), or even a humble *labor economist* (NOUN - YOUR PROFESSION) — technology plays a role in your personal and professional life."

Scan the QR code to explore additional insights from the Siegel team on the technology values guiding their work, reflections on their achievements this year, and their priorities for 2025.

"This year has been incredibly exciting, and a personal highlight for me has been the launch of our new Knowledge and Impact team. While inquiry-based grantmaking has always been central to our approach, this is the first time we've dedicated staff exclusively to supporting that inquiry. In just a short time, we've developed collaborative monitoring, evaluation, and assessment plans that prioritize curiosity over rigid evaluative measures. By co-creating learning questions, shared goals, and outcome frameworks with our grantees, we're deepening the impact of our partnerships."

KYLA KASHARIAN, SENIOR KNOWLEDGE AND IMPACT ASSOCIATE

YEAR IN REVIEW: *Fellows Reflection*

Year Three of Inquiry and Evolution

The Siegel Research Fellowship program supports researchers across academia, public policy, and non-profit organizations doing vital work at the intersection of social science and technology. Siegel Research Fellows form a multidisciplinary and multisector cohort that meet regularly to collaborate and challenge each other in asking big questions around technology and society.

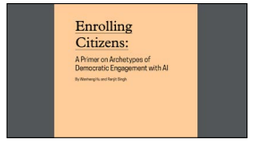
This year's cohort included 15 fellows, with diverse research foci. Throughout the program year fellows engaged in a variety of activities, from delivering research seminars to contributing publications and policy reports.

The fellows generated extensive outputs across a range of media—book chapters, op-eds, academic journal articles, and podcast interviews, contributing to the broader dialogue on technology and society.

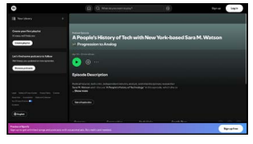
A key focus of the program is bridging the gap between specialized audiences and real-world impact, reflecting our commitment to share what we're learning from our grantees and partners to relevant stakeholders. Fellows participated in professional development opportunities, including workshops on writing for a broad audience and pitching opinion pieces, honing skills that will serve them throughout their careers.

The in-person convening provided an essential platform for fellows to connect, share ideas, and collaborate on projects. Beyond individual projects, the fellowship program also nurtured broader initiatives such as the Coalition for Independent Technology Researchers, which continues to grow and provide vital support for independent voices in tech policy.

As we look ahead, the fellowship program remains a catalyst for fostering critical research and fostering connections that shape the future of technology. As we prepare to welcome our fourth cohort, we will continue to create dedicated space and time for fellows to do their important research, share ideas among a multidisciplinary cohort, and collaborate to increase our collective understanding of the impact of emerging technologies on society. Each cohort brings with it a new set of questions, methods, and approaches to this work and we continue to develop new pathways for cultivating collaboration and sharing this learning across our broader network and beyond. Stay tuned for an announcement of our incoming cohort!



▲ Ranjit Singh, co-author of *Enrolling Citizens: A Primer on Archetypes of Democratic Engagement with AI*



▲ Sara M. Watson, interviewed on *A People's History*

▲ Yvonne Eadon, author of *Combating Contamination and Contagion: Embodied and Environmental Metaphors of Misinformation*

▲ Megan Shahi, author of *Election Denialism Nearly Shattered Our Democracy. Meta's Allowing It Anyway*

Who

What

14 Research seminar presentations

9 Fellow spotlight Q&As

Scan the QR code to explore additional insights from the Siegel team on the technology values guiding their work, reflections on their achievements this year, and their priorities for 2025.

"One thing that gives me hope is our fellowship program. Having a front-row seat to its growth has been incredibly rewarding. As we prepare for our fourth cohort, I think about the alumni network of over 30 researchers who have gone on to diverse roles in academia, civil society, and industry. The fellowship's true magic lies in bringing together people who might not naturally cross paths but absolutely should—sparking conversations about complex problems and questions. Watching this ecosystem of ideas and relationships take shape gives me immense hope for the power of collaboration to drive change."

MADISON SNIDER, RESEARCH ASSOCIATE

A YEAR OF COMMITMENT TO *Inquiry, Iteration, and Community*

As we reflect on a year of grantmaking across our portfolio areas, the theme that resonates most strongly is **commitment**. Commitment to inquiry, iteration, collaboration, and thoughtful engagement with the rapidly changing landscape around us. At Siegel, we've focused on ensuring that every aspect of our work is guided by our North Star, and rooted in the values of intentionality, learning, relevance, and collaboration. Through our grantmaking efforts, we have committed ourselves to diving into difficult questions, being flexible in our approach, and staying true to the mission of supporting transformative work in the communities we serve.

This journey has not been without challenges. Together, as a team and with our grantee partners, we embraced flexibility, introspection, and openness to new possibilities. It demanded patience, adaptability, and courage. Yet the outcomes have been transformative.

One of the most striking lessons from this year has been the importance of staying **committed to inquiry and iteration**, even when it feels uncomfortable. The conversations around technology, particularly AI, continue to evolve in complex ways, and our strategy has evolved—and will continue to evolve—with it. This has meant remaining committed to iteration, responsiveness, and flexibility, ensuring that our efforts remain dynamic and adaptable to the needs of the field. At times, this has meant saying "no" to certain directions in order to stay focused on areas where we can make the most impact. We are mindful of the need to balance depth with breadth in our focus areas, prioritizing the most impactful work while maintaining our commitment to supporting organizations doing meaningful work across the country. And it has meant maximizing what we're learning from our investments, and listening deeply to the experiences and feedback of our partners and grantees.

Our **commitment to collaboration** has also been a key theme throughout this year. Our grantees continue to inspire hope, and it's been a privilege to witness the incredible work happening on the ground—often in the face of tremendous challenges. Seeing the impact of their work reminds us of the power of field building and the importance of being responsive to the needs of those we support.

Looking ahead to 2025, the work won't get easier, but it will become more essential. The future of our technology-driven society is still unfolding, and we must remain **committed to navigating the future thoughtfully and with a healthy skepticism, balanced with optimism about its potential**. Our grant portfolio positions us to deepen field learning and pursue future grants that align with and amplify our strategy. The road ahead is promising, and I look forward to continuing this work together.

With excitement, gratitude, and appreciation,

Joshua Elder
Vice President and Head of Grantmaking

FRAMING THE FUTURE: THE CRITICAL QUESTIONS *That Shape Our Path Ahead*

As we reflect on a year of grantmaking, one of the most striking things is how the big questions we posed at the start of 2024 continue to resonate with urgency and relevance as we move into 2025. These questions helped inform our strategy, pushing us to think deeply about how technological advancements intersect with how we learn, work, and build as a society. As we look ahead, these questions remain just as vital in shaping the trajectory of our work, particularly as we engage with emerging technologies like generative AI. It is in this same spirit of inquiry that I offer my reflections for our work next year.

We expect to see further advancements in AI tools as we move standalone products, like chatbots, to integrated tools and applications. AI will likely become more deeply integrated into our devices, digital services, and workplaces. While some applications will be transparent, many will operate behind the scenes, often unnoticed. Further development of the technologies, especially in foundational generative AI models, will shape how these tools are implemented and experienced. Innovations in content-agnostic text generation and resource-augmented generation could unlock new applications and deployment strategies, broadening their potential impact.

As these technologies advance, fundamental questions persist: How can we move beyond basic automation to intentionally harness these tools for scalable, positive impact while mitigating potential harm? It's essential to be mindful not only of AI's potential to augment human capacity, but also of the areas where its reach should be limited. How can we ensure that we are wielding these technologies responsibly, with awareness of their broader implications? And, how might we use AI to do something that would otherwise not be possible?

In parallel with these technological shifts, the challenges posed by misinformation, disinformation, and "polluted" information continue to threaten the integrity of civic knowledge. Misleading narratives have wide-reaching effects, from undermining public trust to distorting economic and health systems. How can we build the infrastructure and social contracts necessary to ensure that knowledge dissemination is both trustworthy and equitable? These questions are particularly pressing as we navigate a rapidly changing information ecosystem, and as we consider the role technology plays in shaping the public discourse.

Finally, we also must think about how we, as a nation, can navigate the uncertainty of our political system, understanding that without the political will to address these challenges, we risk stagnation. The pathway forward requires collaboration, critical inquiry, and a willingness to tackle difficult issues head-on.

While we do not have all the answers, we do have a responsibility to imagine what is possible, not just in the near term, but with a long-term perspective as well. As we continue to refine our strategy and the questions we ask, we remain focused on empowering ourselves and our partners to think five to ten years ahead, considering the broader societal shifts and technological innovations that will shape the future. Our research team will continue to unpack the costs and benefits, interrogate their ethical implications, and invest in thoughtful partners who are committed to building a more inclusive, resilient, and innovative world.

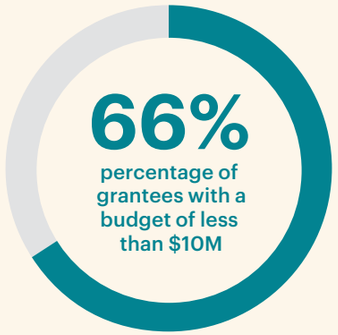
Sincerely,

John Irons
Senior Vice President and Head of Research

BY THE *Numbers* 2024

Risk and Experiment

~29
MILLION DOLLARS DISBURSED EOY



113
GRANTS, INCLUDING **24** NEW GRANTEES

4
PRIZE COMPETITIONS

Our collective investment of **$3M+** in these competitions ultimately unlocked **$28.7M** in total prize funding.

National Science Foundation's Responsible Design, Development, and Deployment of Technologies (ReDDDoT) Program
$18+M in prize funding

Tools Competition
$8M in prize funding

Learning Landscapes Challenge
$2.2M in prize funding

(Inter)national Moonshot Grants
$500K in prize funding

Collaboration

15 number of fellows

SEVEN
number of case studies

96
convenings attended

THREE
FUNDER COLLABORATIVES

1. Public Interest Technology Infrastructure Fund
2. Public Interest Technology University Network
3. Feedback Incentives Learning Group

Relationship-Driven

$4,100,000.00 → MEDIAN BUDGET

★★★★★
RATINGS

Overall experience partnering with Siegel: **4.72/5**

Experience with our post-grant engagement process: **4.62/5**

Experience with our grant writing process: **4.70/5**

13.5
hours of open grantee office hours

Curiosity and Trust

3 ??? high-level portfolio questions, with **40+ grant-specific questions**

50
OF INSIGHT POSTS

~1400
mentions of Siegel Family Endowment in online news and content

OUR GRANTEE *Partners* 2024

#BlackTechFutures Research Institute
1Up Career Coaching
Alder GSE
all tech is human
Aspen Digital, aspen institute
ASU Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College, Arizona State University
Aurora Institute
bdc
Black River Innovation Campus
Braven
building21
Candid.
Capital B
CAP 20
CDT Center for Democracy & Technology
CITAP Center for Information, Technology, and Public Life
CORI Center on Rural Innovation
Chalkbeat
Citizens Committee for New York City
Clay Art Center
Code the Dream
common sense
Communitas America
Community Share
CSTA Computer Science Teachers Association
Connect Humanity
Convocation Research + Design
Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum
Code.org
CAT Citizens and Technology Lab
Creative Commons
CSforALL
CUNY The City University of New York
Data & Society
DataScience4everyone
DEVTECH Research Group
Digital Promise
Economic Policy Institute
EducationWeek
eLAB
Elite Emerging Leaders in Technology and Engineering, Inc.
NSF ECEP Expanding Computing Education Pathways
Families & Workers Fund
Feed Back Labs
FIRST
Foundation for Civic AI
FreeWorld
Govern for America
GovLab
Grove
ICA
InnovateEDU
ACE Institute for Advancing Computing Education
JFF
Just Fund
Khan Academy
KIPP NYC Public Schools
LaGuardia Community College
Last Mile
LEANLAB Education
LearnerStudio
Learning Landscapes Challenge
MakerUSA
Marshall Street
Media Economies Design Lab, University of Colorado Boulder
MIT Work of the Future
moz://a
New America
NBR
New Growth Innovation Network, Powering Inclusive Economies
public interest tech.fund
Public Interest Technology University Network
nysci New York Hall of Science
New_Public
NewSchools
Northeastern University
NYC FIRST
CSMaP Center for Social Media and Politics
Project Evident
Project Invent
project tomorrow
Pursuit
Quill
Realign Education
Rebuild by Design
Regional Plan Association
reimagine America's Schools
ril responsible innovation labs
Roadtrip Nation
Robin Hood Learning + Technology Fund, Bezos Family Foundation and Siegel Family Endowment
Santa Fe Institute
Scratch Foundation
springboard collaborative
Stanford PACS Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society
d. Hasso Plattner Institute of Design at Stanford
SETDA Leadership · Technology · Innovation · Learning
STEM From Dance
STEM teachers NYC
TechCongress
the Bell
The Hechinger Report
The Knowledge House
Maintainers
Modern Classrooms Project
The New York City Workforce Development Fund in the New York Community Trust
Plugging Into Power, Family and Community Engagement for Equitable CS Education
Tech Institute, Athens
Tech Policy Lab, University of Washington
The Tech
Transcend
Tools Competition
Upwardly Global
urban arts
Washington Center for Equitable Growth, Evidence for a stronger economy
WeTeach_CS
Work It Out Wombats!


SUPER


A.I. & NEWS


CARE
Understanding citizen
embodiment and the e
Abstract


TECH TOGETHER
Towards a Global Network for
Public Interest Technology
public interest
tech.fund

https://www.siegelendowment.org