

A Decade of Discovery

SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE
2024 ANNUAL REPORT



SCIENCE
PHILANTHROPY ALLIANCE



Table of Contents

FROM OUR PRESIDENT AND BOARD CHAIR	3
OUR IMPACT	4
ELEVATING SCIENCE PHILANTHROPY	8
FOSTERING COMMUNITY AND COLLABORATION	10
BUILDING THE NEXT GENERATION	12
OUR COMMUNITY	14

**This is an abridged version of our full digital annual report.
Explore the full report at 2024.sciphil.org.**

From Our President and Board Chair

“What started as a collaboration among six visionary foundations has evolved into a vibrant alliance of 40 members and a global community of funders, scientists, and advisors committed to advancing discovery science for the benefit of humanity.”

Dear Partners,

Ten years ago, the Science Philanthropy Alliance began as an ambitious idea: to inspire and equip philanthropists to support basic scientific research. What started as a collaboration among six visionary foundations has evolved into a vibrant alliance of 40 members and a global community of funders, scientists, and advisors committed to advancing discovery science for the benefit of humanity.

As we reflect on the past decade, we are proud of what we’ve accomplished together. The Alliance has advised hundreds of philanthropists, influenced more than \$4 billion in science funding, and helped shape a field that is more strategic, collaborative, and impactful than ever before. In 2024 alone, we completed over 100 advisory projects and influenced more than \$170 million in new funding to science.

We share this report at a time of significant change in the scientific research landscape. In recent months, proposed federal cuts to major science agencies and shifts in national funding priorities have raised urgent questions about the future of the U.S. research enterprise. These developments underscore a reality the Alliance has long recognized: philanthropy has a vital role to play—not as a replacement for public funding, but as a source of flexible, long-term support that sustains discovery and enables bold new directions in research.

In this environment, the Alliance’s mission has never been more critical. By connecting committed philanthropists with high-impact opportunities, and translating vision into strategy, we help ensure that transformative science continues to thrive.

As we look ahead to our second decade, we are energized by what’s possible. Thank you for being part of this journey. Together, we can unlock the potential of science philanthropy to transform lives and our shared future.



France A. Córdova, Ph.D.
President



Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D.
Board Chair

Our Impact in 2024

102

**ADVISORY PROJECTS
COMPLETED**

\$170M

**NEW FUNDING TO SCIENCE
INFLUENCED**

3

**NEW ALLIANCE
MEMBERS**

15

**VIRTUAL AND IN-PERSON
CONVENINGS HELD**



Key Milestones

2014

The Science Philanthropy Alliance is founded by six foundations with a shared commitment to discovery science: The Kavli Foundation, Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, Howard Hughes Medical Institute, Research Corporation for Science Advancement, and Simons Foundation.

2015

The Alliance names its first President, Marc Kastner, and Vice President, Valerie Conn, and develops its model for personalized advising services for philanthropists. A pivotal learning session on discovery science hosted by the Simons Foundation convenes Giving Pledge signatories, sparking strong interest in the Alliance and leading to a wave of new members.



Marc Kastner and Priscilla Chan at the launch of the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative.

2016

The Alliance plays a key role in supporting the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative's landmark \$3 billion commitment to basic science. This public recognition significantly raises the Alliance's profile and affirms its value as a trusted partner to new science philanthropists.

2018

The Alliance enters a period of steady growth, expanding its staff with philanthropic and scientific experts to meet rising demand for its advising services. In recognition of its contributions, the Association of Independent Research Institutes (AIRI) presents the Alliance with its 2018 Public Service Award.



Alliance members sharing perspectives at an Alliance Research Partner Conference in 2018.

2020

As the COVID-19 pandemic unfolds, the Alliance rapidly mobilizes its network, convening global infectious disease experts and philanthropic funders. By the end of 2020, the Alliance had influenced \$133 million in funding for COVID-19-related research efforts and \$210 million in science funding overall.

Key Milestones

2021

France A. Córdova is appointed as the Alliance's president. A distinguished astrophysicist and former NSF Director, Dr. Córdova brings visionary leadership to the role. Under her guidance, the Alliance expands its network, welcomes new members, and begins a robust strategic planning process.



Alliance President France Córdova at the Spring 2022 Member Meeting.

2022

The Alliance publishes *The Power and Promise of Philanthropy for Science*, its first formal strategic plan. The plan lays out a bold five-year vision focused on increasing new philanthropy for science and enhancing the impact of existing giving. It also affirms the Alliance's core values: learning and curiosity, opportunity and innovation, and collaboration and partnership.

2023

With growing momentum, the Alliance completes over 100 advisory projects and influences over \$500 million in philanthropic funding for science. It helps establish the Ross Brown Investigator Award, resulting in a transformative \$400 million gift to Caltech, and releases its inaugural *Science Philanthropy Indicators Report*, analyzing data to spotlight philanthropy's rising role in basic science.



Alliance Advisory Board Members gather for a retreat in Santa Fe, New Mexico in 2023.

2024

The Alliance continues to grow, expanding to 38 member organizations and opening a new office in New York City. It prepares to transition from fiscal sponsorship to independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in early 2025—a major milestone in its institutional evolution.

2024 Highlights

MEMBER CONVENINGS

In 2024, the Alliance hosted 15 virtual and in-person gatherings for our network, including our spring and fall Member Meetings. Our spring convening, “Exploring Philanthropy’s Role in Bridging Science, Ethics, and Policy,” was hosted by the Dana Foundation and drew over 100 participants. Speakers explored the responsibilities of science funders in a time of rapid technological change and cultural polarization, from navigating public trust to integrating ethical considerations into funding strategies. In the fall, we gathered in Palo Alto for “Adaptation and Mitigation: Investing in Resilience.” Hosted by the Moore Foundation, the meeting focused on climate science and drew another 100+ attendees. Sessions featured leading scientists and communicators, including Charles Oppenheimer and Nobel laureate David Baker, and examined topics such as planetary health, nuclear energy, and the role of hope in advancing science.

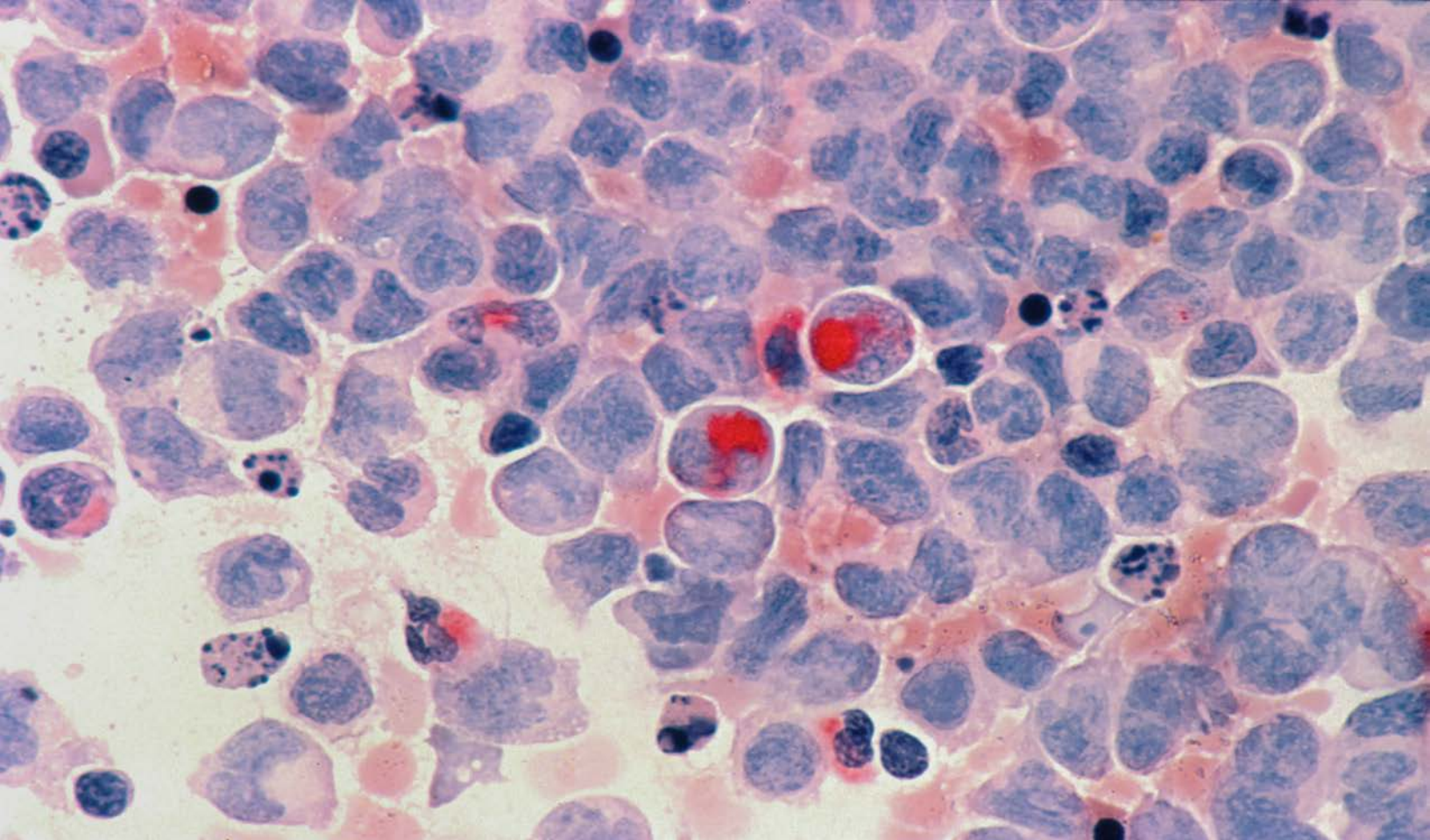
SCIENCE POLICY LEADERSHIP

In a landmark move, the National Academies’ Government-University-Industry Research Roundtable formally welcomed philanthropy to its leadership circle—renaming the body the Government-University-Industry-Philanthropy Research Roundtable (GUIPRR). The Alliance and President France Córdova played a key role in advocating for philanthropy’s inclusion, underscoring the sector’s growing impact on scientific discovery and innovation. This milestone affirms philanthropy’s integral role in shaping the future of the U.S. research ecosystem.

ORGANIZATIONAL GROWTH

In 2024, the Alliance welcomed three new members, opened a new office in New York City, and laid the groundwork to transition from fiscal sponsorship to independent 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in early 2025.*

**As a result of this transition, the Alliance’s audited 2024 financial statements reflect only a portion of our activities. To request a copy of our financial statements, please email info@sciphil.org.*



Elevating and Expanding Science Philanthropy

Science philanthropy plays a unique and irreplaceable role in advancing fundamental research that often lacks immediate commercial or government funding. The Science Philanthropy Alliance was founded on the belief that philanthropy can fill critical gaps, supporting high-risk, high-reward research that fuels innovation. By introducing new funders to science, the Alliance has expanded the philanthropic landscape, ensuring that essential areas of discovery are not left behind.

A significant part of this effort involves educating philanthropists on the most effective ways to support science. The Alliance provides guidance on best practices, underfunded research areas, and emerging scientific opportunities, ensuring that donor contributions have a lasting impact. Through policy efforts, field-building initiatives, and in-depth advising, the Alliance has helped create a more informed and strategic science funding ecosystem, empowering donors to make transformative investments in discovery science.

ADVANCING CLIMATE SOLUTIONS WITH ALLEN FAMILY PHILANTHROPIES

When Allen Family Philanthropies (formerly the Paul G. Allen Family Foundation) launched a new initiative to support Natural Climate Solutions (NCS) in the Pacific Northwest, it sought to fund innovative, community-driven projects that addressed climate change while benefiting biodiversity and human well-being. To support the initiative's success, Allen Family Philanthropies partnered with the Science Philanthropy Alliance to implement a rigorous scientific request-for-proposal (RFP) and external review process.

The Alliance worked closely with Allen Family Philanthropies' Environment team to lead a competitive review and selection process grounded in both scientific and community considerations. The RFP received 132 letters of interest and 38 full proposals and brought in a wide range of academic, nonprofit, Indigenous, and cross-sector partners, including 82% who had never previously received funding from the foundation.

The Alliance recruited and managed a diverse scientific review panel of nine experts representing a range of disciplines and identities, including hydrology, soil science, marine biology, and traditional ecological knowledge. Each proposal underwent a detailed multi-factor evaluation, followed by a structured in-person panel discussion facilitated by the Alliance. This process not only yielded six standout proposals totaling \$5.7 million in recommended funding, but also extended Allen Family Philanthropies' internal grantmaking capacity, enhanced its reputation among peer funders the foundation hadn't worked with before, and opened additional doors to future co-funding partnerships.

The initiative's reach and rigor further positioned Allen Family Philanthropies as a credible, strategic, and values-aligned funder in a complex and evolving domain. The Alliance's role in shaping and stewarding this process highlights how tailored scientific advising can unlock new philanthropic approaches and accelerate meaningful investment in underfunded areas of discovery.





Fostering Community and Collaboration

Collaboration is at the heart of impactful science philanthropy. The Alliance serves as a bridge between funders, scientists, and policymakers, creating opportunities for knowledge sharing and strategic alignment. By fostering a strong community of funders, the Alliance helps members learn from each other, share experiences, and maximize the effectiveness of their giving. The relationships built through the Alliance lead to smarter funding decisions, more strategic partnerships, and increased coordination among philanthropic organizations investing in science.

Through convenings, working groups, and direct advising, the Alliance has facilitated key collaborations that are shaping the future of scientific research. By leveraging our extensive network, the Alliance connects donors with leading scientists and institutions, ensuring that funding decisions are informed by cutting-edge expertise. These efforts have resulted in new research centers, innovative funding models, and interdisciplinary partnerships that drive discovery forward.

GUIDING A VISIONARY INVESTMENT IN ASTROPHYSICS: THE BRINSON EXPLORATION HUB

As members of the Alliance since 2019, The Brinson Foundation engaged in a multi-year learning process—supported by personalized advising from former President Marc Kastner, current President France Córdova, and Senior Director of Philanthropic Advising Elizabeth Weiss—to identify a bold, strategic opportunity that could significantly accelerate scientific discovery in astrophysics and cosmology.

The result was a \$100 million gift to Caltech to launch the Brinson Exploration Hub, an innovative research platform that brings together scientists and engineers from Caltech and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL), which Caltech manages for NASA, with the aim of accelerating scientific discovery. This new hub is designed to test groundbreaking ideas in astrophysics, space exploration, and related technologies by bridging academia, industry, and government. It will serve as a launchpad for interdisciplinary teams to move promising concepts swiftly from ideation to implementation.

The Alliance played a key role in shaping this philanthropic investment—helping the Foundation articulate its goals, assess potential models, and ultimately structure a gift that not only supports high-risk, high-reward research, but also creates unique opportunities for students and early-career scientists. The Brinson Exploration Hub’s first three projects were announced in early 2025. They were selected for their potential to drive scientific discovery in remote regions of the Earth and cosmos, and provide societal benefit.

The Brinson Exploration Hub will support a wide range of projects aimed at deepening our understanding of the universe, which has been of interest to the Foundation since its inception a quarter century ago. As Founder Gary Brinson said, “Not all projects supported by the Brinson Exploration Hub will succeed, but they will all inform. Good science is about taking calculated risks. It is often projects that involve pioneering new technologies or novel approaches that lead to unanticipated discoveries.”

The Science Philanthropy Alliance is proud to have served as a trusted advisor on this journey, helping to bring forward a major investment that will shape the future of astrophysics and inspire new generations of explorers.





Building the Next Generation

The future of scientific discovery depends on supporting the next generation of researchers and fostering a culture of public engagement and trust in science. The Alliance has played a key role in helping funders recognize the importance of investing in early-career scientists, mentorship programs, and fellowships that sustain an inclusive and innovative research community. By supporting promising researchers at critical career stages, philanthropy can help ensure that groundbreaking ideas are pursued and developed into transformative discoveries.

Beyond supporting researchers, the Alliance has worked to build a more resilient future for science by engaging the public and strengthening trust in scientific institutions. Science philanthropy has a role to play in making research more transparent, accessible, and responsive to societal needs. Through strategic investments in public outreach, science communication, and civic engagement programs, the Alliance has helped funders support initiatives that connect scientific progress with real-world impact.

SUPPORTING MEDICAL RESEARCH WITH THE PREBYS RESEARCH HEROES PROGRAM

In 2023, the Prebys Foundation turned to the Science Philanthropy Alliance for strategic and operational support in developing a new medical research initiative. The Foundation sought to fund exceptional early- and mid-career researchers in San Diego—particularly those from groups historically underrepresented in biomedical research—whose work had the potential to drive transformative health outcomes.

The Alliance partnered closely with Prebys Foundation staff to co-design the program from the ground up. Over the course of several months, the Alliance helped define the program's goals, refine selection criteria, design and implement the RFP and review process, and advise on nominee evaluation and the external review process. The result was the Prebys Research Heroes Award Program: a \$7 million initiative announced in 2024 that awarded fourteen \$500,000 grants to scientists working on urgent health challenges—from Alzheimer's and cancer to infectious disease and maternal health.

The Alliance provided hands-on program office support throughout the initiative, including outreach to local institutions, managing the peer review process, developing program communications, and advising on metrics and evaluation. The initiative also benefited from a collaborative working model that included the consulting firm Open Impact, which worked alongside the Alliance and the Foundation to ensure the program was both rigorous and responsive to the needs of the local research ecosystem.

By investing in talent across institutions such as the Salk Institute, UC San Diego, Scripps Research, and San Diego State University, the Prebys Foundation has elevated a cohort of diverse scientific leaders while strengthening San Diego's role as a hub for medical innovation. The Alliance's involvement helped ensure that the program was grounded in practices from across science philanthropy—and built to generate long-term impact.

As Grant Oliphant, CEO of the Foundation, explained, "Our program is designed to empower brilliant researchers with the means to pursue cutting-edge research that promises to tackle some of the most challenging diseases facing our world today."



Our Community

We are deeply grateful to our members and supporters, staff, board of directors, and external science advisors, who make our work possible. This dedicated and visionary community fuels our mission, guides our efforts, and strengthens our ability to advance scientific discovery through philanthropy.

ALLIANCE MEMBERS

**Allen Family
Philanthropies**

RITA ALLEN
FOUNDATION

Fondation
Azrieli
Foundation

**Sergey Brin
Family Foundation**

 **The Brinson Foundation**


**Brown Science
Foundation**

BURROUGHS
WELLCOME
FUND 

**Chan
Zuckerberg
Initiative** 



**CIRCLE OF SERVICE
FOUNDATION**
Supporting great organizations to enhance community,
opportunity and well-being

 **Shurl and Kay
Curci Foundation**

 **Dario Philanthropies**

 **Dana
Foundation**

DCH
FOUNDATION

DD
DORIS DUKE
CHARITABLE FOUNDATION

 **Fund for Science
and Technology**

Gates Foundation

 **HEISING-SIMONS
FOUNDATION**

 **LYDA HILL
PHILANTHROPIES**

 **THE
KAVLI
FOUNDATION**

**W. M. KECK
FOUNDATION**

 **LASKER
FOUNDATION**

 **LEINWEBER
FOUNDATION**

 **LEON LEVY FOUNDATION**

GORDON AND BETTY
MOORE
FOUNDATION

 **Mussallem
CHD Alliance**

the David
Lucile **& Packard**
FOUNDATION

 **PREBYS
FOUNDATION**

 **RESEARCH
CORPORATION
for SCIENCE
ADVANCEMENT**

 **SALL FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

 **Schmidt Sciences**

 **Shanahan
Family
Foundation**

SIM NS
FOUNDATION

 **ALFRED P. SLOAN
FOUNDATION**

 **JOHN TEMPLETON
FOUNDATION**

WALDER
FOUNDATION

 **wellcome**

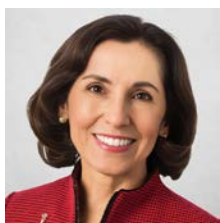
 **WINN FAMILY
FOUNDATION**

**WoodNext
Foundation**

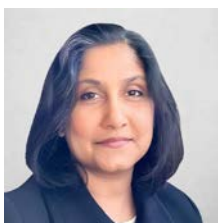
Anonymous (3)

Our Community

ALLIANCE STAFF



France Córdova, Ph.D.
President



Sreeja Asokan, Ph.D.
Research Analyst



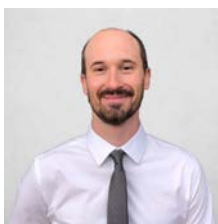
Emily Bolton
Chief Operating Officer



Elenoa Fuka
*Assistant Director of
Operations*



Daren Ginete, Ph.D.
Associate Advisor



Andrew Golnar, Ph.D.*
Research Analyst



Kate Lowry, Ph.D.
Strategy Director



Ben McAndrew
Program Assistant



Kate McCarrel
*Strategy and Events
Manager*



Sue Merrilees
*Senior Director,
Philanthropic Advising*



Bishakha Mona, Ph.D.
Associate Advisor



Kumba Sennaar, Ph.D.
Civic Science Fellow



Dustin Sposato
Communications Manager



Mary Thurson
*Program Manager,
Office of the President*



Elizabeth Weiss
*Senior Director,
Philanthropic Advising*

*Andrew was a valued member of the Alliance team until September 2025.

Our Community

BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Elizabeth Good Christopherson
President and CEO, Rita Allen Foundation



France Córdova
President



Harvey V. Fineberg, M.D., Ph.D.,
President, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation



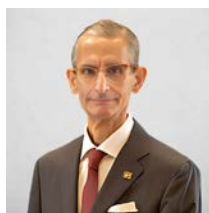
Cynthia Friend, Ph.D.
President, Kavli Foundation



Eric D. Isaacs, Ph.D.
President and CEO, Research Corporation for Science Advancement



Caroline Montojo, Ph.D.
President, Dana Foundation



Louis J. Muglia, M.D., Ph.D.
President and CEO, Burroughs Wellcome Fund



Claire Pomeroy, M.D., M.B.A.
President, Albert and Mary Lasker Foundation



David Spergel, Ph.D.
President, Simons Foundation

EXTERNAL SCIENCE ADVISORS



Thomas R. Cech, Ph.D.
Distinguished Professor of Biochemistry, University of Colorado Boulder



Fleming Crim, Ph.D.
John E. Willard and Hilldale Professor of Chemistry Emeritus, University of Wisconsin – Madison



Marc Kastner, Ph.D.
Donner Professor of Physics Emeritus, MIT; Adjunct Professor of Physics, Stanford University




Margaret Leinen, Ph.D.
Director of Scripps Institution of Oceanography and Vice Chancellor for Marine Science, University of California, San Diego



Daniel Linzer, Ph.D.
President-Emeritus, Research Corporation for Science Advancement



Shirley M. Tilghman, Ph.D.
President Emerita and Professor of Molecular Biology and Public Affairs, Princeton University



**This is an abridged version of our full digital annual report.
Explore the full report at 2024.sciphil.org.**