

# BRING

# CHANGE

# HOME

The Obama Foundation  
2023 Annual Report



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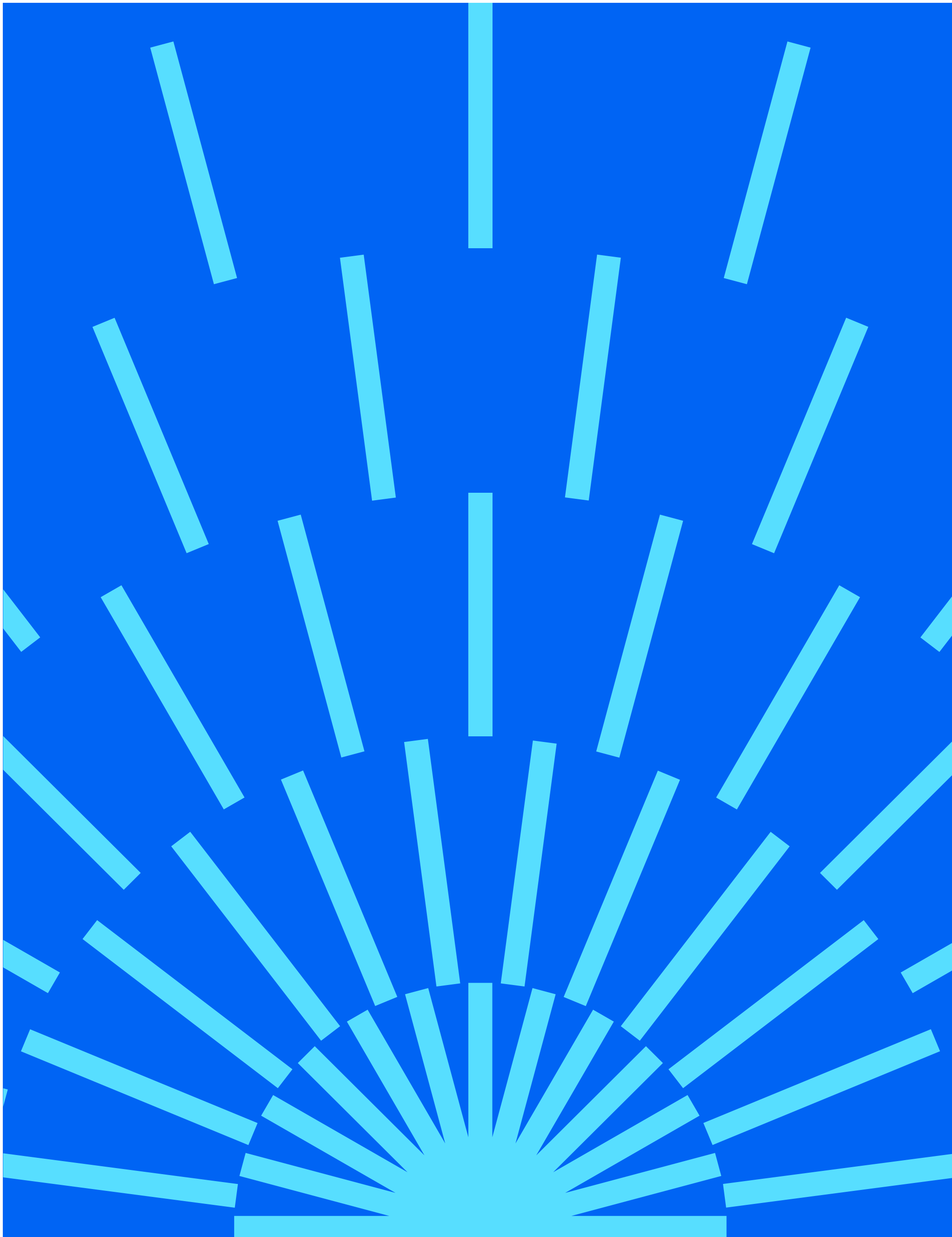
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# Who We Are and What We Do

Here at the Obama Foundation, we're on a mission to inspire, empower, and connect people to change their world. And we've long known that the change we seek starts right at home.

Whether it's strengthening our trust in democratic institutions or creating more opportunity for young people around the world, we believe that unleashing the power within communities is the most impactful and sustainable way to help people make change.

Around the world, we're empowering rising leaders to more powerfully participate by connecting them with the skills, resources, and networks to maximize their potential and extend their impact globally. We're forging pathways to essential opportunities for young people, through education, mentorship, and career development, no matter where they're from.

When we bring change home, we all move towards a world with more participation, opportunity, and trust; a world where we lift up one another and find common ground across seemingly insurmountable differences.

Our home for this ambitious vision is right here on the South Side of Chicago—we're building a global center for change that will serve as a testament to our vibrant community's tradition of creativity, innovation, and activism. It will be a place that invites visitors to bring change home.

Your continued support breathes life into our vision for the Obama Presidential Center.

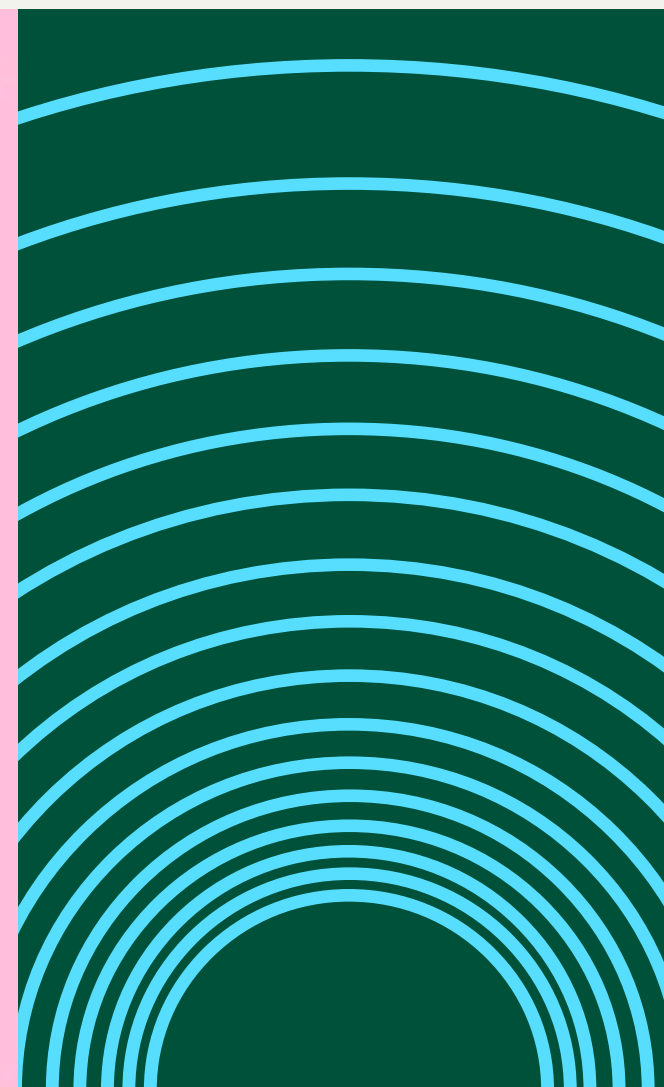
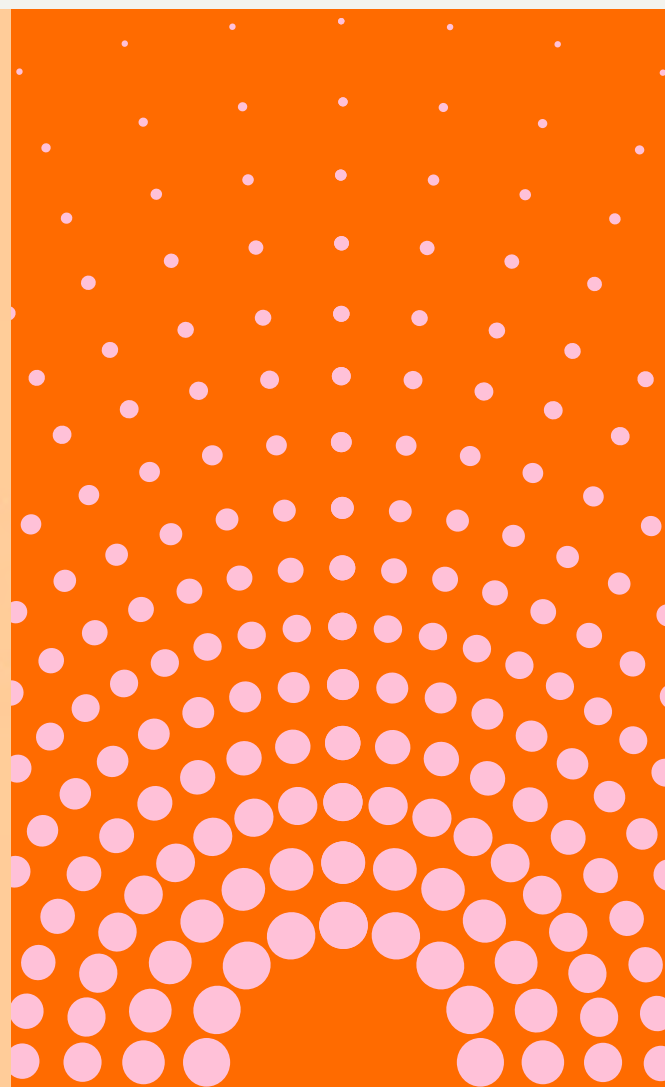
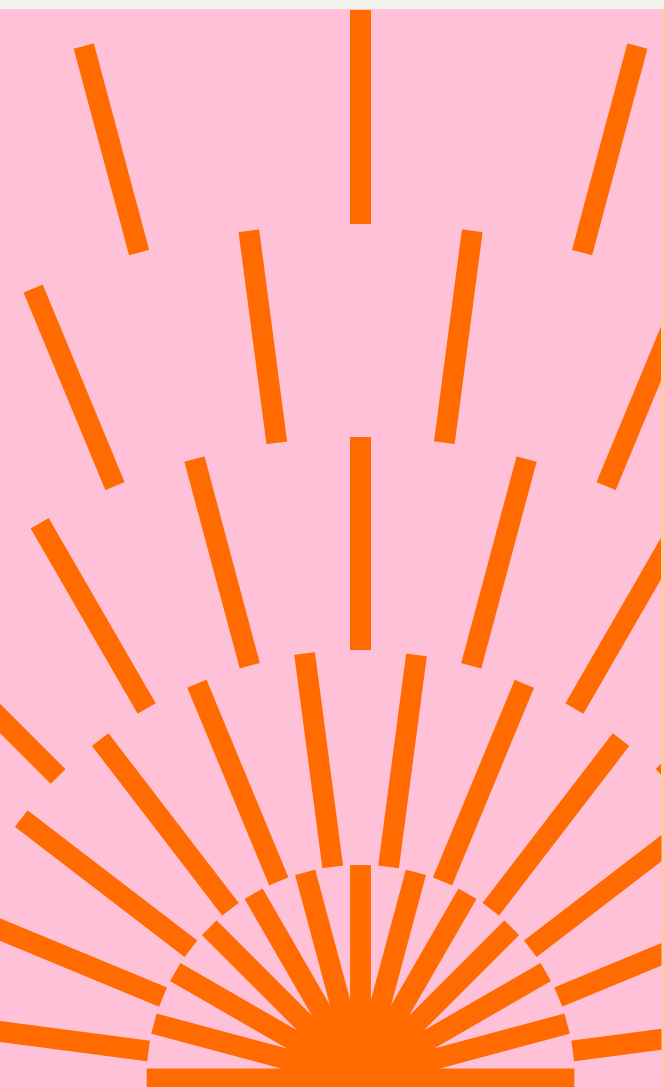


[LEARN WHY CHICAGO IS OUR HOME >>](#)



[WATCH HOW WE'RE BRINGING CHANGE HOME >>](#)

# OUR PILLARS OF CHANGE



## PARTICIPATION

WE ACTIVATE PEOPLE TO MORE  
POWERFULLY PARTICIPATE.

## TRUST

WE BUILD MORE TRUST IN OUR  
INSTITUTIONS AND COMMUNITIES.

## OPPORTUNITY

WE CONNECT MORE PEOPLE WITH  
OPPORTUNITIES FOR SUCCESS.

## MESSAGE FROM

# President Obama

For a lot of people, the very idea of democracy can feel like an academic exercise – a set of creaky institutions and archaic laws disconnected from their everyday lives.

At the Obama Foundation, we believe democracy is about something more fundamental. It's about the choices we make, the values we live by, and the ways we treat each other – including people who don't look like us or pray like us or see the world exactly like we do.

To make progress on the things we care about, the things that really affect people's lives, we need leaders who understand that – who know who they are and what's important, but who are also willing to listen and able to tap into what Lincoln called “the better angels of our nature.”

In this report, you'll meet some of them, and learn about how they're channeling the promise and potential of the next generation to bring change home to their communities.

You'll meet leaders like 2022-23 Columbia University Scholar Teresa Buczkowska, a migrant woman living in Ireland who is working to reduce inequality and help more migrants play a meaningful role in the programs and policy decisions that affect their lives.



You'll meet Beli Acharya, a 2023 United States Leader who is working to create a more just and sustainable economy by growing and strengthening the labor movement.

And you'll learn about leaders like Maka Tokhishvili, a 2023 Europe Leader who led Georgia's largest youth movements across higher-education institutions - getting thousands of young people involved in creating a new strategy for education funding.

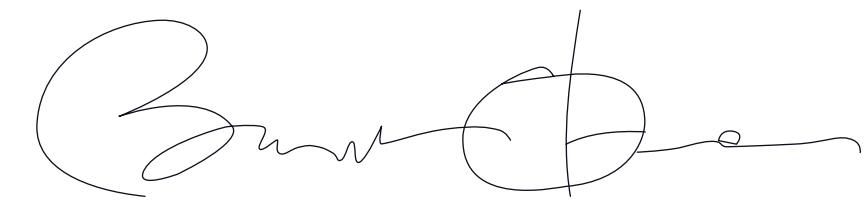
Teresa, Beli, and Maka don't back down from a fight. But they also understand that the best way to make change happen isn't to scold or shame the other side. It's to get to know each other, to assume good intent, and to find ways to move forward together.

That's why the Foundation has spent the last year training hundreds of leaders across the United States and around the world, and bringing people together to share ideas, work through challenges, and expand their horizons. We've also brought leaders together to tackle difficult issues - engaging with different perspectives and experiences, and working to find common ground.

When it opens its doors, the Obama Presidential Center will create a new space for listening, learning, and positive change. And as you'll read in these pages, it's only possible thanks to the supporters, community members, leaders, practitioners, and volunteers who have been with us every step of the way.

No nation, no society, has ever tried to build a democracy as big and diverse as ours before - one where our allegiances and our community are defined not by race or blood, but by a common creed. Maintaining that experiment in self-government has never been easy. But by supporting the young leaders who are showing us the way, we can build a world where we look out for each other and solve the greatest challenges of our time together.

Thank you for being part of this work with us.



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“  
Democracy is about the  
choices we make, the values  
we live by, and the ways we  
treat each other...”

— President Obama



MESSAGE FROM

# Valerie Jarrett

Every day at the Obama Foundation, we see ordinary people doing extraordinary things—young leaders who are working to create tangible solutions for some of the biggest issues of our time.

Against what can sometimes feel like the longest of odds, they are finding ways to bring change home to their neighborhoods, schools, and communities. But we know that they cannot do it alone. At the Obama Foundation, our mission is to inspire, empower, and connect these young leaders to the tools and resources they need to create positive change.

As we celebrate the vital work happening at the heart of the Foundation, we want to express our gratitude to you. With your unwavering belief in the next generation of changemakers, you are empowering young people here in America and around the world to start building a culture of democracy that can stand the test of time, and helping young people around the world roll up their sleeves and make a difference.

And thanks to your support, all of this extraordinary work will soon have a new home as the Obama Presidential Center takes form on the South Side of Chicago. With your help, we can keep turning hope into action and bring about a brighter future for all of us.

 [WATCH THE VIDEO >>](#)





# THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER



[LISTEN TO DR. LOUISE BERNARD, DIRECTOR OF THE MUSEUM AT THE  
OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER, SHARE MORE ABOUT WHAT VISITORS  
WILL EXPERIENCE AT THE MUSEUM >>](#)

The center is an invitation for all of us to bring change home. [Learn more >>](#)



# TAKE A TOUR



# OF OUR

# FUTURE HOME



# Progress and Milestones



In 2023, the Obama Presidential Center achieved significant milestones: workers completed substantial structural construction of the parking garage, Chicago Public Library branch, Forum Building, and the Museum Building. The design of the Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center, the athletic center, was also substantially finalized.

To date, we have committed **\$1.35M** to have **645** residents enroll in construction pre-apprenticeship programs.

- 36%** percentage of spend to date
- 52%** percentage of workforce hours performed by city of Chicago residents
- 35%** of the workforce hours on the project will be performed by workers from the South and West Side communities
- 54%** percentage of contract amounts committed to diverse vendors
- 38%** percentage of workforce hours performed by South & West Side residents
- 50%** percentage of the construction amount that will be spent with diverse vendors
- 163** number of contracts at all tiers to date
- 385** number of candidates placed in trade and non-trade positions across the city

President Obama gave his stamp of approval for the museum exhibit designs and we're in the process of building our museum collection and producing the exhibits' films and interactive media. In addition, strides were made in developing the programming strategy and finalizing a slate of incredible artists who will create commissioned artworks for the Obama Presidential Center as we prepare for opening in 2026.

Our construction manager, Clayco, created this 360-degree rotational view of the Museum Building, showing what it looks like currently to what it will look like when it is completed. [Watch the video >>](#)

# Sustainability at the Obama Presidential Center



The Obama Presidential Center embodies President Obama's commitments to environmental protection and energy conservation and builds on Mrs. Obama's priorities of health and wellness.

The Obama Presidential Center will tackle climate change through comprehensive energy strategies. The Center's heating and cooling needs are met by an underground geothermal system, completely eliminating the use of fossil fuels. Electricity for the campus comes exclusively from renewable sources, with a goal of achieving nearly 40 percent better energy performance than national standards.


To ensure a healthy indoor environment for all guests, we will implement green cleaning methods and integrated pest management practices. High-efficiency entryway systems and filters will capture airborne contaminants, contributing to our standard of a clean and safe atmosphere.

Water stewardship will be a key feature of the Obama Presidential Center. The Center will repurpose captured rainwater for landscape maintenance and eco-friendly toilet flushing, ensuring that 98 percent of stormwater is retained on-site with no runoff sent to the sewer.

In addition to water conservation, the landscape design not only promotes wellness but also respects native ecosystems in Jackson Park. We plan to plant nearly 1,000 trees and shrubs—more than double the number removed during construction—while restoring 30 percent of the site with native or adapted plants. The use of pesticides and fertilizers will be minimized to further protect the environment.

We are pursuing several sustainability certifications, including Platinum LEED Certification, Silver SITES Certification, and the WELL Health-Safety Rating.

 [EXPLORE OUR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS >>](#)


 [LISTEN TO DAVID REYNOLDS, VICE PRESIDENT OF OPERATIONS AT THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER, SHARE MORE ABOUT THE CENTER'S SUSTAINABILITY >>](#)

# The Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center

Located at the southwest corner of our Jackson Park campus, [the Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center](#) will be a hub for vibrant community engagement and enrichment. This 45,000 square foot multipurpose venue will host a range of activities, from youth and adult programs to professional conferences and community events for various organizations.

The design of Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center reflects two of President Obama's personal passions: basketball and community building. Its sleek metal and fritted glass façade draws inspiration from the pattern of a basketball net, symbolizing community connection. Additionally, the building aligns with the Foundation's sustainability goals, utilizing geothermal energy for heating and cooling as part of a broader strategy to eliminate fossil fuel use on the campus.

 [WATCH THE VIDEO >>](#)

 [LISTEN TO LORI HEALEY, SENIOR VICE PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE PROJECT OFFICER AT THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER, EXPLAIN HOW THE CENTER'S DESIGN AND ARCHITECTURE REFLECT THE VALUES AND MISSION >>](#)



# Local Mural Initiative

In 2023, Chicago artist Brandon Breaux partnered with 15 students at Dyett High School to create a mural on the construction fence at the site of the Obama Presidential Center that represents the rich culture and community that surrounds Chicago's South and West Sides.

For weeks, students worked with Brandon to create a piece that would inspire passersby. To him, the project was more than a collection of collage images and colors, and more than a tribute to the Obamas. It is a powerful statement of community, opportunity, and the enduring legacy of the city.

"The mural is a collage of our collective experiences. It's an homage to the legacy of Chicago and the Obamas," Brandon Breaux reflected. "I'm proud of the work we did—to create art that communicates to different kinds of people, allows them to see themselves in it, and respond to it."

Brandon says he hopes the Obama Presidential Center does what it sets out to do.

"I hope [the Center] helps people imagine what kind of future they want to live in—what future they want to see for their community and people in their lives," Brandon shared.

The mural is available for all to see at 62nd and Stony Island at the site of the Obama Presidential Center.





# Our Chicago Community

Last year, we launched the inaugural Obama Presidential Center Roadshows across Chicago's South and West Sides, previewing our upcoming cultural institution. Events in South Shore and Washington Park highlighted features like the Eleanor Roosevelt Fruit & Vegetable Garden, our Teaching Kitchen, and the Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center, an athletic center, programs and events facility. We also hosted a

youth input session to gather programming ideas for the Home Court, expanding community engagement citywide and beyond to all 77 neighborhoods.

In 2023, we hosted and participated in a total of 16 events across the city, engaging 2,340 attendees and volunteers for our events and service projects.



# Futures Series

[The Futures Series](#), created out of a conversation Mrs. Obama had with [Hyde Park Academy students](#), introduces high school students to diverse professions across industries and reflects our ongoing commitment to inspire, empower, and connect the next generation. Through intimate conversations with accomplished leaders, students gain insights into career pathways and valuable lessons.

Over 200 students at Hyde Park Academy High School are selected based on their career aspirations, allowing them to meet professionals in fields ranging from medicine and entrepreneurship to art, hospitality, and, of course, public service. This connection to diverse career opportunities help activate more people to participate in democracy, both at home and abroad. As the Futures Series continues at Hyde Park Academy, it will expand with larger sessions at Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center beginning fall 2025.

As part of the Futures Series experience, participants took a field trip to Navy Pier for a special event at EXPO Chicago, an annual showcase of contemporary and modern art. Students spent time with artists Hebru Brantley and Zanele Muholi to learn about career paths in the arts. They

also toured an art fair featuring more than 170 exhibitors from 36 countries. This was the first year the Futures Series took place outside of Hyde Park Academy. Participants also visited Mielle Organics and Luella's Southern Kitchen. The future Obama Presidential Center will offer arts education programs for community members to explore their creative talents, supporting initiatives like this.

## OUR 2023 FUTURES SERIES LIST OF SPEAKERS INCLUDED:

Marty Nesbitt, Obama Foundation Board Chair, Founding Partner and Co-CEO, Vistria, LLC

Chef Darnell Reed, Luella's Southern Kitchen

Melvin Rodriguez, Mielle Organics

Hebru Brantley and Zanele Muholi, Artists

Dr. Sewyln Rogers, Founding Director, University of Chicago Medicine Trauma Center

J. Ivy, Grammy-Award Winning Artist/Poet



[WATCH HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE FUTURES SERIES >>](#)



# Obama Youth Jobs Corps

[The Obama Youth Jobs Corps \(OYJC\)](#) is yet another way we're partnering with a standout organization, Urban Alliance, a national youth development nonprofit, to help high school students prepare for a promising future. We successfully enrolled over 1700+ students in the 2023-2024 school year. Moving forward, the OYJC will continue its impactful work with Urban Alliance, including placing interns at the Obama Presidential Center once it opens. This program typically supports six interns in Chicago for a 10-month period, running from late fall through mid-summer.

 [LEARN MORE >>](#)



# Local Lunchbox



[Local Lunchbox](#) was founded in Chelsea, Massachusetts, by the Shah Family Foundation, an organization that supports transformative work in education, health care, and the community.

We are thrilled to have worked with the Shah Family Foundation to expand the program to Chicago in 2022. The program seeks to connect small food businesses with community organizations to provide meals to kids 18 and under—and it's all paid for by the United States Department of Agriculture. In 2023, the Local Lunchbox program served over 82,000 meals in partnership with YMCA of Metro Chicago and Greater Chicago Food Depository.

Through this program, we were delighted to provide free meals to Chicago youth as part of our partnership with the YMCA of Metro Chicago. Community members aged 18 and under could stop by one [of these Y locations](#) for free breakfast and lunch provided by Local Lunchbox, in partnership with the Obama Foundation and the Shah Family Foundation.

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## LOCAL LUNCHBOX FINANCIAL SPONSORS

YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago  
Greater Chicago Food Depository

## LOCAL LUNCHBOX MEAL SITE/DISTRIBUTION PARTNERS


Social Works  
Imagine Englewood IF  
After School Matters  
YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago

## LOCAL FOOD VENDORS

Cajun Cafe Chicago  
ChiFresh Kitchen

# Martha's Vineyard Culinary Project

As part of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance Culinary Careers Accelerator at Martha's Vineyard, eight students baked their own focaccia bread and visited Slough Farm. The six-week program immersed young men in life on the Vineyard and exposed them to what it takes to build a successful career in the hospitality industry.

 [WATCH MBK YOUTH SPEND THE SUMMER IN MARTHA'S VINEYARD >>](#)



# OUR GLOBAL IMPACT

**147**

COUNTRIES AND TERRITORIES  
REPRESENTED IN OUR  
GLOBAL NETWORK

**6,046**

LEADERS IN OUR GROWING NETWORK OF  
PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AND ALUMNI

**350,000**

INDIVIDUALS REACHED THROUGH  
OUR PROGRAMS LIKE THE MY  
BROTHER'S KEEPER ALLIANCE AND  
THE GIRLS OPPORTUNITY ALLIANCE

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# Creating Opportunities Globally

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The [Obama Leaders Program](#) in Africa, Europe, Asia-Pacific, and the United States connects cohorts of changemakers to help them accelerate positive and lasting change in their communities and throughout their region. These Leaders are tackling a wide range of issues, but no matter their work or approach, they have found connection, support, and inspiration from their fellow Leaders. Participants reflect on values and build skills for connection and systems change in a regionalized 25-week program, including a series of workshops dedicated to Hope to Action programming.

We were particularly excited to launch the first cohort of the Leaders USA program, expanding on the Foundation's five-year effort to support changemakers driven by values. Additionally, we launched the second cohort of the [Voyager Scholarship for Public Service Program](#), which supports U.S. college juniors and seniors pursuing public service careers. The program offers up to \$50,000 in financial aid over two years, a \$10,000 stipend for a self-designed Summer Voyage, and a 10-year Airbnb credit totaling \$20,000, empowering recipients with financial relief, enriching travel opportunities, and a supportive network of mentors and leaders.



# Hope to Action

The Hope to Action curriculum is a core component of the Obama Foundation Leaders Program. It equips emerging leaders with essential skills for effective, values-based leadership. This curriculum, introduced in 2023, is structured into four modules and includes sessions focused on articulating personal values, connecting with others through shared values, and creating sustainable change. It aims to foster hope, courage, and community among participants by offering practical tools, peer learning, and opportunities for deep reflection. The curriculum supports leaders in activating their values, enhancing their impact, and connecting with a global network of changemakers.





## MEET

# Elpida Kokkota

She is a [2023 Obama Foundation Europe Leader](#).

Elpida empowers women through economic education with her nonprofit, Mexoxo, which develops social impact plans for corporations and small to medium businesses to support community socioeconomic growth.

Mexoxo has directly served over 31,000 women worldwide.

“We connect women with our network of over 250 global stakeholders from corporations, academia, government, and local NGOs. I founded Mexoxo to create pathways of change for women, their families, and their communities,” Elpida said.

Driven by the hope for a better future for women and girls, she shared, “My hope is that women and girls live in more balanced societies where humans respect each other for who they are. I want all women to find their place in the world.”

 [DISCOVER MORE >>](#)

More than 100 changemakers from across Africa, Asia-Pacific, and Europe joined President Obama in Greece for a week-long leadership and cultural experience. We were thrilled to bring together our network to equip them with the tools and support they need to keep tackling some of the biggest challenges of our time. During the week, Leaders exchanged ideas, workshopped solutions, and built meaningful connections. [Learn more >>](#)



# LEADERS



# CONVENING

# IN ATHENS





# The Girls Opportunity Alliance



The Girls Opportunity Alliance works to empower and educate adolescent girls around the world, allowing them to achieve their full potential and transform their families, communities, and countries. Our goal is to connect leaders, strengthen the impact of grassroots organizations, and use public awareness to drive action in support of adolescent girls' education and empowerment.

Since launching in 2018, the Girls Opportunity Alliance has:

**Supported 150+ grassroots projects in 36 countries across Asia, Africa, North America, and South America**

**Reached more than 120,000 adolescent girls globally**

**Included more than 4,000 grassroots leaders in our virtual Network**

**Received support from more than 10,000 individual donors from all 50 states and in 40 countries around the world**

In 2023, [the Girls Opportunity Alliance](#) supported a record 42 grassroots organizations in 18 countries. These organizations help girls stay in school, end child marriage, address gender-based violence, provide access to STEM education and digital literacy, teach leadership skills, and more.

The Alliance also expanded its virtual Network programming, offering monthly workshops on topics like monitoring and evaluation, leadership development, and briefings on global issues affecting girls. Last summer, the Girls Opportunity Alliance brought together grassroots leaders from its Network from 12 countries across Africa, Asia, and Latin America for an in-person convening in Athens, Greece. Participants connected, learned from each other and


other experts, and tapped into the power of community to strengthen and scale their work to support girls. They met other Obama Leaders from around the world and had a discussion with President Obama about their work and the importance of ensuring every girl can reach her full potential.

In November 2023, Mrs. Obama, Melinda French Gates, and Amal Clooney traveled to Malawi and South Africa. The trip was part of a collaboration between the Girls Opportunity Alliance, the Gates Foundation, and the Clooney Foundation for Justice to end child marriage and support women and girls pursuing their education.

Watch the video to learn ways to support girls overcoming barriers to reach their dreams. At Ludzi Girls Secondary School, they engaged with young women in the [Advancing Girls' Education in Africa \(AGE Africa\) program](#), which provides scholarships, mentorship, and afterschool programming. Ensuring girls finish school is a powerful way to combat child marriage and help them reach their potential.

As Mrs. Obama shared, "I saw so much of myself in these bright young women, and I was just so moved by their determination and resilience." They also met with leaders from the Women Lawyers Association of Malawi and Girls Not Brides Malawi. Following their visit, the President of Malawi announced plans to increase the country's commitment to ending child marriage.

In South Africa, they convened influential leaders and experts, including Former First Lady Graça Machel, for an event on ending child marriage and met with survivors of gender-based violence. The trip was covered in a [documentary by the BBC](#) and [Glamour](#).

 [WATCH MICHELLE OBAMA, MELINDA FRENCH GATES, AND AMAL CLOONEY VISIT AGE AFRICA IN MALAWI >>](#)

## MEET

# Donnah Mwenebanda

In the heart of Malawi, 15-year-old Donnah embodies the transformative power of education. Donnah's journey began in the Karonga District, where financial instability threatened her educational aspirations. Her parents recognized the barriers she faced and sent her to Blantyre for a better education.

“My parents live far away; it takes six hours to drive from Ludzi and even longer from Blantyre. My uncle has been a great role model for me,” Donnah reflected. “He always encouraged me to work hard in school and made me feel like I belonged in Ludzi. He motivated me to stay successful and independent.”

Donnah says her move to a new village marked the beginning. It was there that she discovered [Advancing Girls Education \(AGE\) in Africa](#), a partner of the Girls Opportunity Alliance. AGE Africa supports young girls in Malawi with scholarships, mentorship, and afterschool programs.

Donnah says AGE Africa's CHATS clubs, a part of its holistic approach to helping girls finish secondary school and pursue opportunities beyond high school, have significantly contributed to her growth.





“With CHATS, we learn different topics that help me set and achieve my goals,” she explained. “By teaching each other these lessons, we girls support each other in succeeding and getting good grades. CHATS has also helped me overcome challenges outside of the program. At home, life has become easier, and I’ve been able to rise above difficulties. In my community, many girls are dropping out of school and getting married young. But with CHATS’ encouragement, I feel empowered to be assertive and pursue my dreams of becoming a doctor.”

The Girls Opportunity Alliance’s support, highlighted by visits from Mrs. Obama, Melinda French Gates, and Amal Clooney, have further reinforced Donnah’s ambition.

“The visit from Mrs. Obama and the others was a tremendous honor and motivation,” Donnah recalled.

Donnah’s story is a testament to the profound impact that targeted support and mentorship can have on young lives. With support from the Girls Opportunity Alliance, AGE Africa has not only provided Donnah with educational opportunities but has also empowered her to become a role model in her community. Her message to other girls facing similar challenges is one of hope and perseverance: “Follow what you want to do. Don’t be discouraged by problems. Always look at your goals and manage the challenges to achieve them.”

As Donnah continues her journey, her story underscores the importance of supporting educational initiatives and the power of alliances dedicated to fostering change. AGE Africa and the Girls Opportunity Alliance’s commitment to empowering young girls like Donnah is a crucial step toward creating a brighter future for Malawi and beyond.

# Expanding into the United States

In January, the Alliance announced a new commitment to empower and uplift girls in Chicago, distributing \$500,000 to 14 Chicago-based organizations serving girls, with plans for additional funding later in 2024. Beyond funding, the Girls Opportunity Alliance is providing organizational support to more than 60 girl-serving organizations across Chicago through the Girls Opportunity Alliance Network. This comprehensive approach will benefit thousands of adolescent girls who, like Michelle Obama, call Chicago home.

“I couldn’t be more thrilled to share that the Girls Opportunity Alliance is expanding our work right here in my favorite city,” said Michelle Obama. “We’re funding 14 grassroots programs that are making a real difference in the lives of girls here in my hometown. From providing mentorship and leadership training to empowering girls through sports and dance to preparing them for a future career through work-study programs, these organizations are there for our girls each and every day.”

In October 2023, the Alliance convened nearly 50 Network members from community-led organizations dedicated to empowering girls in Chicago as part of the programming around the Obama Foundation Democracy Forum. These leaders heard from President and Mrs. Obama, and participated in workshops on healing, design thinking, and the impact of new technology. This was the largest convening of the Girls Opportunity Alliance Network in Chicago to date.



[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE CHICAGO-BASED ORGANIZATIONS >>](#)



# Voyager Scholarship

Participating in global changemaking

In 2023, the inaugural cohort of Obama-Chesky Voyagers embarked on their Summer Voyages, traveling to 62 countries and 32 U.S. states and territories. They returned from their transformational experiences with profound personal growth, professional clarity, and increased confidence in their ability to build bridges and navigate cross-cultural differences.



## MEET VOYAGERS

# Edwin Santos AND Belle Cole



The Voyagers embarked on purpose-driven missions during their Summer Voyage. Their journeys fostered personal growth, professional clarity, and increased confidence in bridging cultural divides. These voyages enabled them to engage meaningfully with others, while gaining valuable resources and connections that boost their success and impact.

Among them, Edwin Santos and Belle Cole stood out for their dedication to serving immigrant and refugee children. They volunteered at the [HOME Project](#) in Greece, a nonprofit providing crucial support to unaccompanied minors.

“It is an honor for the HOME Project to be part of the Obama-Chesky Voyagers program. As a member of the Obama Leaders Europe cohort, I know firsthand that creating meaningful experiences for young leaders, expanding their horizons, and providing them with a network of mentors and supporters is the most effective way to drive positive change and cultivate community-minded leaders for a better future,” Sofia Kouvelaki, CEO of the HOME Project, reflected.

Belle and Edwin also gained valuable insights by learning about the operational intricacies of running an international nonprofit organization providing emergency services to vulnerable communities, which helped them to clarify their public service careers after graduation.

“Despite language barriers, we formed close bonds, deepening my appreciation for nonverbal communication and empathy. As an undergraduate, I focused on immigration, but seeing it from an international perspective was eye-opening,” Edwin reflected. “Now, as a recent graduate about to start as an immigration paralegal, I believe my work in Greece

not only motivated me personally but also helped me stand out professionally in a competitive job market.”

Belle’s journey continued to Morocco, where she taught English to migrant women and children, sparking joy through affirmations. Her passion for education access stems from her role as a student success coach with City Year in Washington, D.C. Belle plans to participate in a year of organized service before pursuing a Master of Social Work, building on her degrees in Social Work and Global Studies from Salve Regina University.

“This experience gave me hope for the future as a social worker. Volunteering with the HOME Project gave me insight into the many levels of care, resources, and education necessary to support unaccompanied minors,” Belle expressed. “Being a Voyager and connecting with the HOME Project has been inspiring, empowering, and an incredible learning experience. It was an honor to watch movies with the girls, travel to language lessons, discuss health and wellness, and enjoy meals together.”

Edwin aspires to advocate for community-driven immigration policy solutions. On his journey, he engaged in leadership programs in Kentucky and California, gearing up for a future advocating for equitable immigration policies. He is currently working as an immigration paralegal to gain experience before attending law school. With a Master of Public Administration, he plans to become an attorney and eventually focus on policy work.

Their stories exemplify the impact of global engagement and dedication to public service, inspiring future leaders to navigate challenges with empathy and resolve.

# Scholars

The Scholars program at Columbia University and the University of Chicago empowers individuals with a proven commitment to service with the tools they need to make their efforts more effective, to identify innovative solutions to complex global problems, and promote change through values-based leadership.



## MEET COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY SCHOLARS

# Amanda Morrall

## AND **Huong Dang**

Inspired by President Obama's call to action at the 2023 Obama Foundation Democracy Forum, Columbia University Scholars Amanda Morrall and Huong Dang founded the [IGNITE Social Impact Summit](#) in New York City. Their collaboration led to a pioneering conference that convened 59 influential social impact leaders, who shared their models and best practices to inspire future social impact leaders. The two-day summit drew over 140 participants from around the globe, facilitating a dynamic exchange of ideas and strategies for driving social change.

Amanda shared, "We both remember the moment we wanted to collaborate, right after the Democracy Forum. We were texting back and forth, feeling extremely inspired by the forum and our opportunity to partner with each other." Huong added, "I had an idea for an event focused on environmental, social governance, and social entrepreneurship, and Amanda was thinking about a series on philanthropy. We thought, what if we collaborated and hosted our events together as a conference?"

Their initial steps involved developing a proposal, structuring the conference, and seeking feedback from program leads. The Scholars also received guidance from Stephen Friedman, former president of MTV, who ultimately agreed to speak at the conference. Amanda says the Obama Leadership

Network played a crucial role in supporting the summit.

"We are grateful to the Obama Foundation and our program leaders for reviewing our proposal and providing feedback," Amanda said.

The broader Obama community, including United States Leaders, Voyagers, and former Obama administration leaders, also contributed by moderating panels, introducing speakers, and spreading the word.

The IGNITE Social Impact Summit offered a unique practical learning experience for NYC university students and Obama Leadership Network alumni. The summit's goals included building networks, identifying new collaborators, and advancing current initiatives.

Looking ahead, Amanda and Huong aim to continue building on their success by partnering with fellow Leaders and Scholars to build upon what they started. They also plan to expand the summit to Chicago before hosting in Australia, where Huong lives.

Amanda and Huong's vision and dedication have created a platform for aspiring social impact leaders to learn, connect, and drive change. Their journey underscores the importance of believing in oneself and the collective power of community in making a difference.

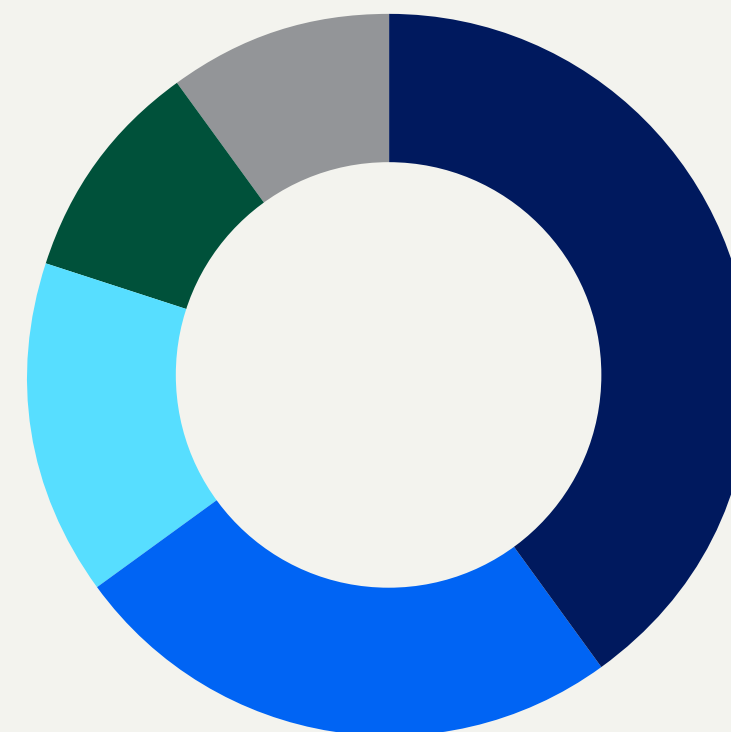




# THE OBAMA LEADERSHIP NETWORK

The Obama Leadership Network is our growing community of program alumni. The community now includes 1,081 Obama Leaders, Fellows, and Scholars from nearly 150 countries. This expansion underscores the Foundation's commitment to activating more people to participate in democracy, connecting them with the resources to succeed, and building trust in institutions and communities worldwide.

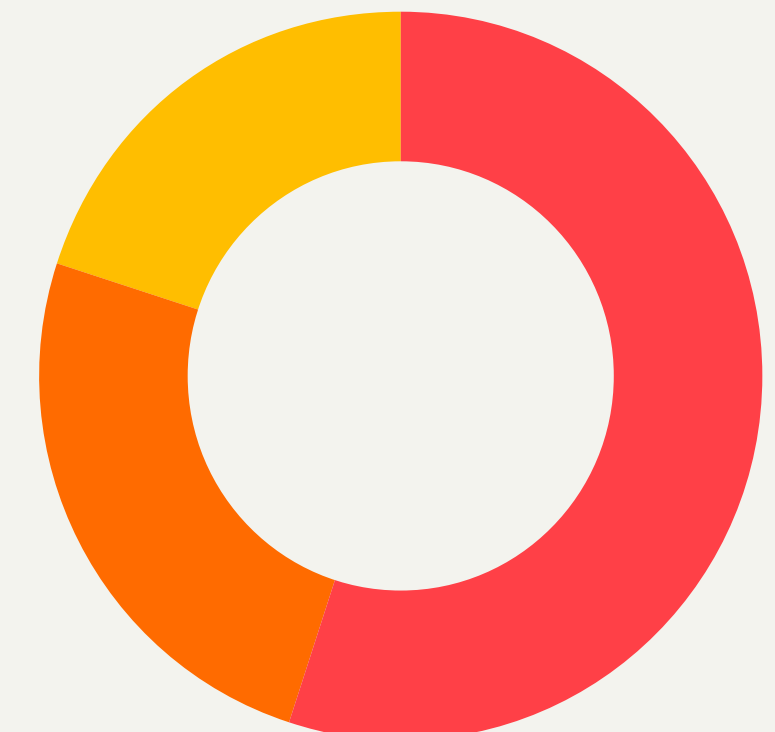
## By Region



- 40% IN AFRICA
- 25% IN ASIA-PACIFIC
- 15% IN UNITED STATES
- 10% IN EUROPE
- 10% OTHER

## By Sector

(some alumni selected more than one)



- 55% IN CIVIL SOCIETY
- 25% IN PRIVATE SECTOR
- 20% IN PUBLIC SECTOR

The Obama Leadership Network engages leaders across various key areas: 30% in democracy, rights, and inclusion; 22% in climate issues; 18% in economic growth and community development; 14% in education; 10% in social entrepreneurship and technology; and 5% in health-related issues.



# My Brother's Keeper Alliance

## Driving Real Impact for Boys and Young Men of Color

For one decade, the My Brother's Keeper Alliance has led a cross-sector national call to action focused on building safe and supportive communities for boys and young men of color where they feel valued and have clear pathways to opportunity. [Learn more >>](#)

To foster opportunities and access for boys and young men of color, we created the MBK Model Communities initiative under the Obama Foundation's My Brother's Keeper Alliance. This initiative aims to expand the implementation of evidence-based practices and their impact across communities nationwide. As part of this initiative, the MBK Alliance has identified four model communities—[Newark, New Jersey; Omaha, Nebraska; Tulsa, Oklahoma; and Yonkers, New York](#)—that have demonstrated significant impact in at least one of the [six MBK milestones](#) through effective programming and initiatives that have positively shifted educational or violence reduction outcomes in their areas.

**Homicides in the city of Newark were down 55 percent in 2022 as compared to 2013.**

**The city of Omaha has reduced homicides by 30 percent from 2011-2022.**

**Tulsa has ensured all elementary schools have early learning pre-K and has increased attendance for students of color by 33 percent**

**At 91 percent, the city of Yonkers has the highest graduation rate in the state of New York for students of color.**

These MBK Model Communities were chosen from a network of hundreds, each with a proven track record of success in improving outcomes for boys and young men of color.



[WATCH VIDEO: WHERE ARE THEY NOW: JERRON HAWKINS & NOAH MCQUEEN >>](#)

## MEET

# Marquis Wright

My Brother's Keeper Alliance, Newark

Through hard work and perseverance, Marquis Wright has reshaped his life with the support of My Brother's Keeper Alliance programs.

The [Newark Youth Opportunity Network](#), which leads the Model Communities initiative in Newark, empowers young people aged 16 to 24 with the opportunity to earn a GED and on-the-job training through community projects. For Marquis, joining the nonprofit was pivotal. He successfully completed his probation period and earned Occupational Safety and Health Administration 10 and 30 certifications.

In his free time, Marquis enjoys rehabilitating homes in his neighborhood through [YouthBuild](#) Newark. This initiative not only provides employment and leadership development but also equips opportunity youth with occupational skills training. Marquis' community involvement mirrors his own personal growth.

Looking forward, Marquis hopes to pursue a career in carpentry, building on the foundation of skills and resilience he has cultivated through his journey with MBK Alliance in Newark.





# NCAA Final Four

MBK Alliance program participants also touched down in Houston to spend the week at the NCAA Men's Basketball Final Four tournament. The young men got a behind-the-scenes look at how tournaments like these are produced, from media coverage to operations and logistics.



[WATCH MBK PARTICIPANTS AT THE NCAA FINAL FOUR >>](#)





# FREEDOM



# SUMMER

Summer can be a challenging time for boys and young men in our community. With school out of session, they have more time to fill. That's why the MBK Alliance created [Freedom Summer](#), an initiative to support local organizations that are working to provide safe and productive places where our young people can learn and have fun.

The 2023 program cycle provided \$1 million in grants to 33 Chicago-based grantees to create alternative summer programming in South Shore, Woodlawn, and Washington Park to help reduce violence, [one of the six key milestones](#) that guides the Alliance's work. With support from the Freedom Summer 2023 funds, grantees served 3,094 youth (2,626 identified as boys and young men of color.)

The young men and their communities experienced positive impact:

**46% reduction in violence in Grand Crossing**

**35% reduction in violence in South Shore**

**83% of participants expressed increased excitement about their future**

**97% of survey respondents felt safe when they were at a Freedom Summer 2023 program.**

Take a look at the [Freedom Summer 2023 Evaluation Report](#), which outlines the impact of this transformative initiative.



## A Digital Home for the MBK Leadership Network

To be more deeply involved in the work of the My Brother's Keeper Alliance, we invited communities and organizations to become involved in the MBK Leadership Network via our online learning platform. The platform ensures communities can complete the My Brother's Keeper [certification process](#) and build community with fellow leaders.

Community leaders are also paired with a My Brother's Keeper Community Coach for individual consultation and small group coaching by region and/or milestone affinity. Through the online platform, the My Brother's Keeper Alliance is the standard-setter that provides tools, resources, and opportunities designed to bolster the network of MBK Communities.



**OUR SUPPORTERS**

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Our supporters are the driving force behind the Obama Foundation's mission and the communities we serve. Together, they're making an extraordinary impact.

---

IN 2023, WE RAISED OVER

**\$130 million**

TO SUSTAIN THESE EFFORTS.

SINCE OUR FOUNDING, A TOTAL OF

**211,285**

DONORS HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO THE FOUNDATION

THESE DONORS INCLUDE

**INDIVIDUALS,  
CORPORATIONS,**

AND

**FOUNDATIONS**

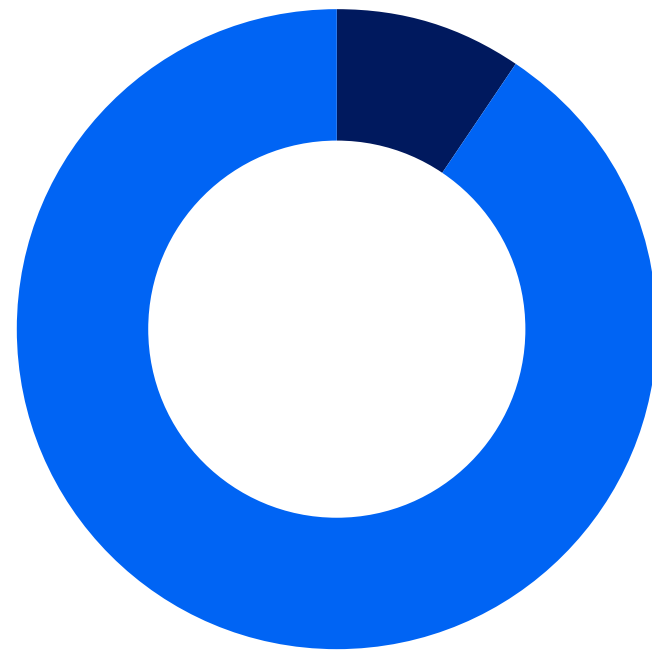
FROM

**ALL 50 STATES**

**AND 149 COUNTRIES.**

We are deeply grateful for their dedication to our shared goals.





## Revenue

TOTAL: \$144,022,983

- **CONTRIBUTIONS\***  
 90.57%  
 \$130,443,787
- **INTEREST, INVESTMENT & OTHER INCOME**  
 9.43%  
 \$13,579,196

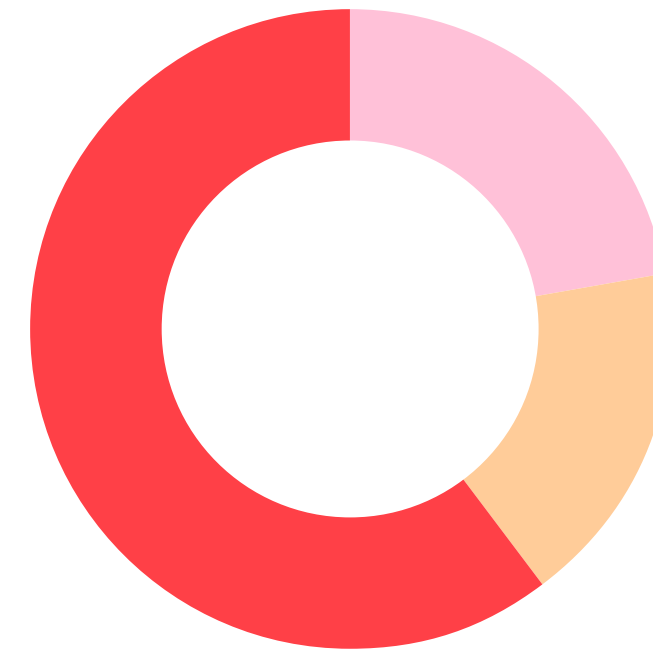
\*Contributions include in-kind donations.



## Fundraising

TOTAL: \$130,443,787

- **INDIVIDUAL**  
 55.00%  
 \$71,744,083
- **FOUNDATION + CORP**  
 45.00%  
 \$58,699,704



## Operating Expenses

TOTAL: \$88,659,956

- **PROGRAMS**  
 60.44%  
 \$53,585,539
- **FUNDRAISING**  
 22.02%  
 \$19,523,525
- **GENERAL + ADMIN**  
 17.54%  
 \$15,550,892

**NET ASSETS  
(AS OF DEC. 2023)**  
\$962,329,392

**CONSTRUCTION IN  
PROGRESS COSTS**  
\$393,250,497

## 2023 Year In Review

We spent approximately \$11.9M with more than 159 diverse businesses, and \$7.1M – representing over half of total addressable spending – with Chicago-based companies.

As we continue to build the OPC, 54% of the services that we’ve contracted and paid for are being delivered by diverse businesses.

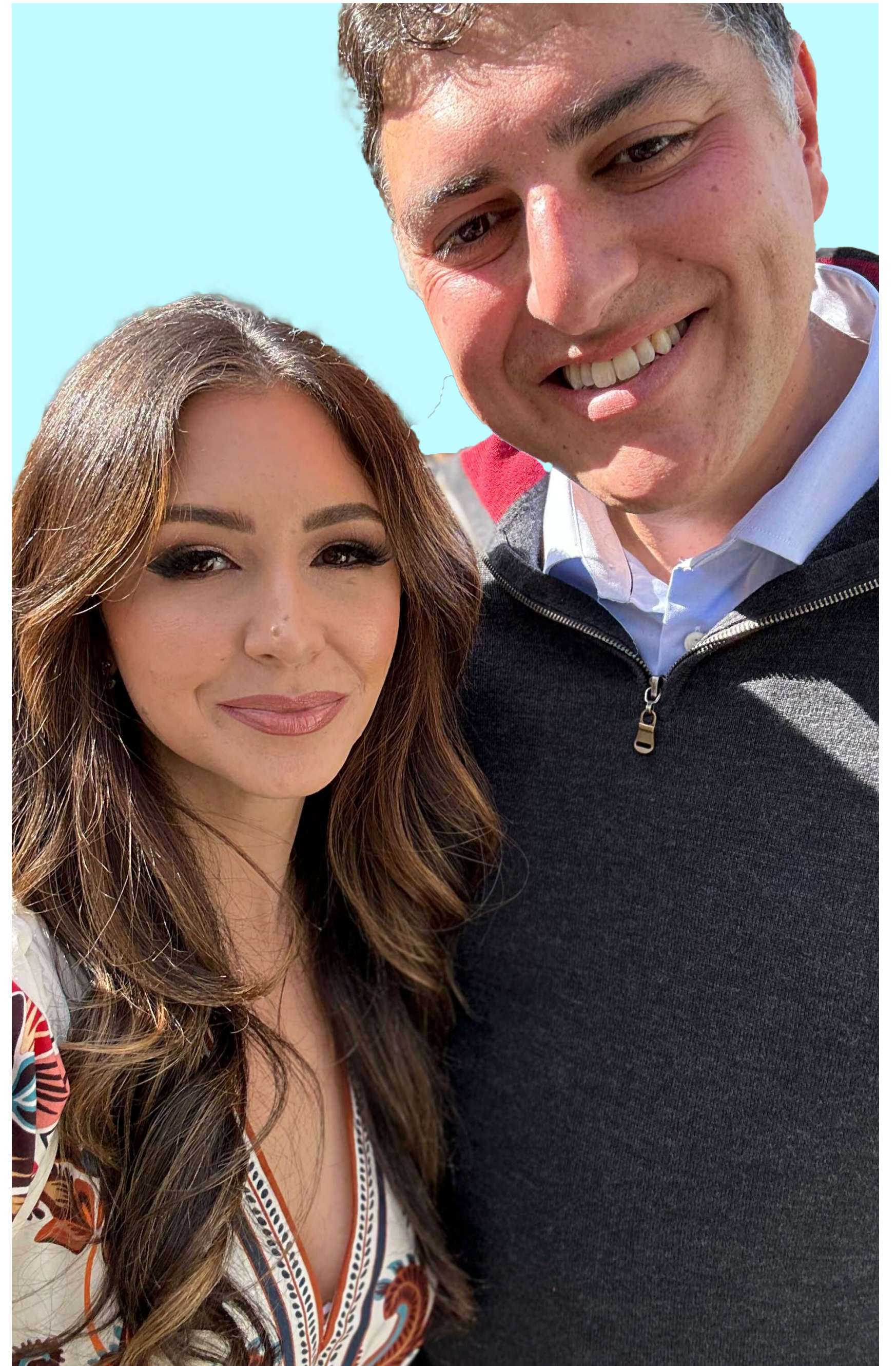
We’re just getting started. Our responsibility is to increase this number as the Foundation grows, so that diverse businesses across industries have meaningful opportunities to participate in our work.

---

“

We support the Foundation not only because of the inspirational impact President Obama has had on our lives but also due to the Foundation’s dedication to nurturing future leaders both locally and globally. Investing in these young, intelligent, and dynamic leaders is one of the most effective ways to ensure a prosperous and peaceful future. Meet one of them, and you’ll see why!”

— Mehdi Alhassani and Deena Shakir  
Obama Foundation Supporters





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“  
We are inspired to support the Obama Foundation due to our deep respect for Barack and Michelle Obama’s public service and our admiration for them. We’re excited about the Obama Presidential Center not only for the cultural and economic boost it will bring to the South Side but also because it represents a commitment to the values and ideals of the Obama administration.”

— **Daniel Levin and Fay Hartog-Levin**  
Obama Foundation Supporters

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# We are governed by a board of directors.

**MARTIN H. NESBITT**

Obama Foundation Board Chair  
The Vistria Group

**CONNIE BALLMER**

Ballmer Group

**THELMA GOLDEN**

The Studio Museum in Harlem

**GLENN H. HUTCHINS**

North Island

**BRODERICK JOHNSON**

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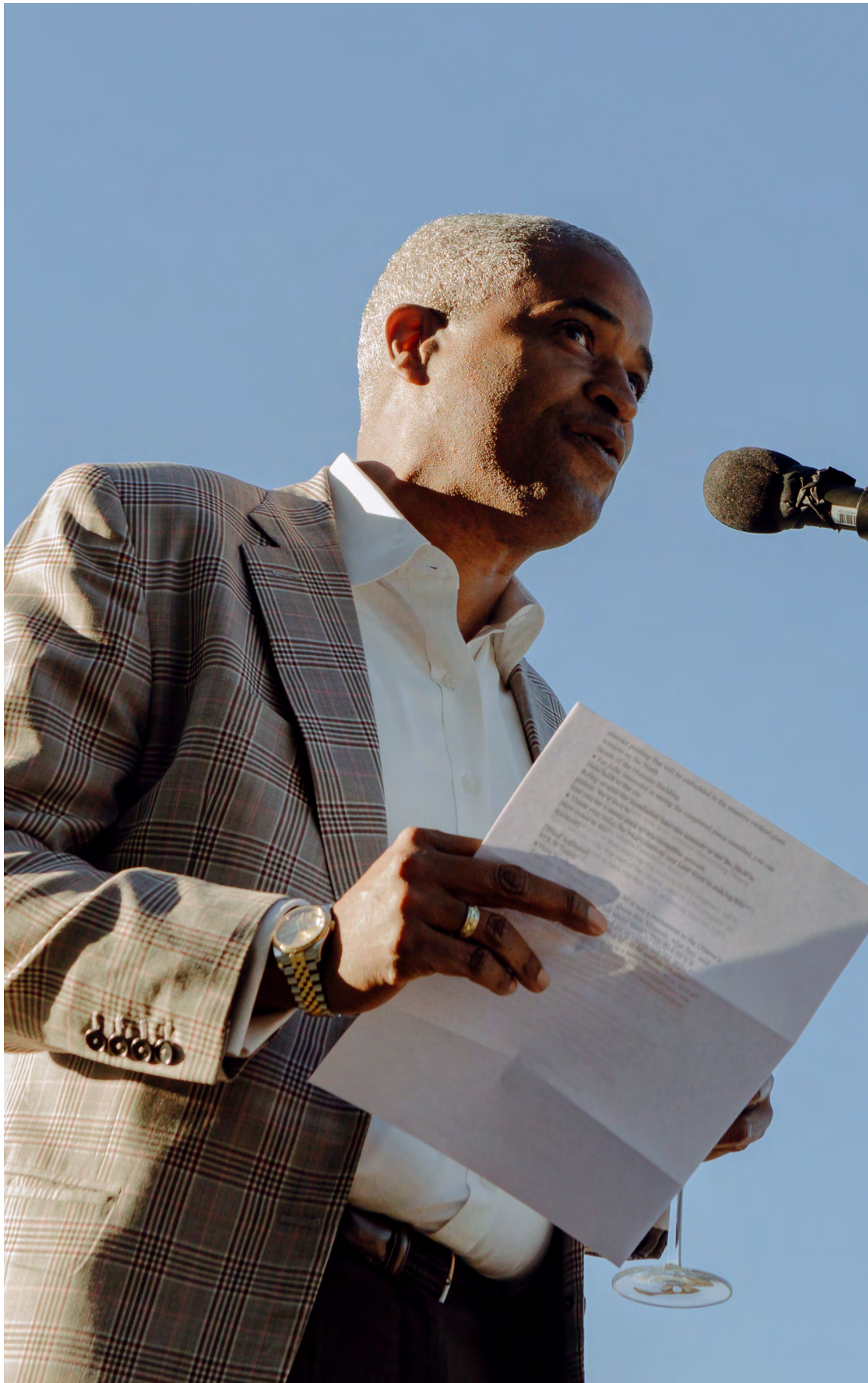
Blue Lake Strategies

**VALERIE JARRETT**

Chief Executive Officer,  
Obama Foundation

**ROBERT WOLF**

32 Advisors



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“  
We remain united in our belief in the transformative power of a community and a network that fosters collaboration to make the world a better place. By identifying and connecting the next generation of values-based leaders, we equip them with the strategies and tools to succeed, unlocking their full potential. The Obama Foundation continues to grow, reaching new milestones and expanding its impact with every step forward. This network is worth investing in, as it embodies our collective commitment to a more inclusive future.”

— **Martin H. Nesbitt**  
Chairman of the Board of Directors

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A photograph of Barack Obama and two other individuals seated at a panel discussion. Barack Obama is on the right, wearing a light blue button-down shirt and smiling. In the center is a man with glasses and a colorful bow tie. On the left is a woman with curly hair wearing a blue patterned jacket. They are all smiling. In the background, a blurred logo with the text 'A.ORG' is visible. A blue banner with white text is overlaid at the bottom left.

**YOUR TIME TO  
BRING CHANGE HOME**

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# We hope you'll join us.

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We know that the mission we've embarked on is a challenging one. Addressing the issues of our time, frankly, takes time. However, we know that together, ordinary people can change our world. We draw hope from the network you've just experienced and our broader community, who, despite seemingly insurmountable odds, believe in the power of lifting each other up and their own ability to effect real change for our generation and for generations to come.



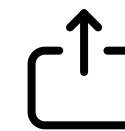
## INVEST

Power our mission with your donation



## SUBSCRIBE

Get hope directly to your inbox



## PASS IT ON

Share this report with your network



## TEXT IN

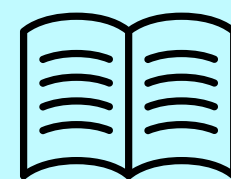
Text us at (773) 915-0096 for  
actionable hope



## STAY CONNECTED

Follow @ObamaFoundation on socials

# HELP STRENGTHEN DEMOCRACY



## READ

[President Obama's remarks from the 2023 Democracy Forum >>](#)



## EXPLORE

[3 Takeaways from the 2023 Democracy Forum >>](#)



## DISCOVER

[why inclusive capitalism is important for building healthy, sustainable democracies >>](#)



# THANK YOU

None of this work is possible without the care of the donors, volunteers, email subscribers, and social media followers around the world who are fueling our programming and helping us build the Obama Presidential Center.

[SEE THE DONORS >>](#)



## About the Obama Foundation

The Obama Foundation is a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation established in 2014 to support President and Mrs. Obama's lifelong goals to empower leaders, strengthen democracy, and create lasting change at the local, national, and global levels. The Foundation oversees planning for the future Obama Presidential Center, as well as a range of domestic and global programs. The Foundation calls the South Side of Chicago home and is headquartered just a few blocks away from the future site of the Obama Presidential Center.