



OBAMA  
FOUNDATION

# HOPE HAS A HOME

2024 Annual Report



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# WHAT WE ARE BUILDING





At The Obama Foundation, we've always believed that lasting change starts close to home with the people and communities who work together to make this world a better place.

Now, that belief is becoming a physical reality in Jackson Park on the South Side of Chicago—where President Obama's public service journey began. We are building more than a campus. We are creating a living institution that will inspire, empower, and connect the next generation of leaders.

The Obama Presidential Center will be a home for hope, a place where people with different perspectives come together to build a shared future.

As we prepare to open the Center in 2026, our programs around the world continue to grow—equipping people with the tools they need to shape their communities and elevating emerging leaders across borders.

When the Presidential Center opens, we will stand as a beacon of hope—for the South Side, for the country, and for the world.





## A WORD FROM

# President Obama

Every year, I'm reminded why we started this work.

I meet people—leaders, scholars, community organizers—who are working through differences, building connections, and lifting communities with their vision and heart.

Those people are what The Obama Foundation is all about. And soon, they'll help bring the Obama Presidential Center to life.

On the South Side of Chicago—just steps from where I began my own journey as a young organizer—we're building something big. Not just in scale, but in spirit. The Center will be a place where young people can find their voice, where neighbors can gather and exchange ideas, and where people from every corner of the world can come to be inspired, empowered, and connected.

But we haven't been waiting for the doors to open to make an impact. For several years now, across continents, across the country, and across town, our work has been helping the next generation of changemakers turn hope into action. In classrooms and community centers, online and on the ground, we're giving young leaders the tools, confidence, and connections they need to show us the way.

As you'll see in the pages ahead, 2024 has been a year of momentum—laying the foundation for the next chapter and proving that, by investing in people, we can build something that lasts.

This past year, I had the chance to spend time with some of the remarkable leaders who are helping turn that vision into reality. At the 2024 Democracy Forum, I connected with leaders like Nika Kovač and Ainka Jackson, who are helping build trust across diverse coalitions to advance change and spurring civic participation in the process. They remind us what's possible when bold ideas meet grounded, community-driven work.







In this report you'll also meet Mete Coban, a 2024-2025 Leaders Europe participant, who stepped into the role of Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy while taking part in our program. From tackling air pollution to expanding clean energy efforts, Mete is shaping ambitious climate policy in one of the world's most influential cities. His time in the program reinforced the power of values-based leadership and the importance of building coalitions to address complex challenges. By staying rooted in purpose and committed to inclusion, Mete is helping drive progress and bringing others along with him.

And then there's Debora Maboya, a 2024-2025 Obama Leader from Africa. She used lessons from the program—particularly around bridging divides and listening deeply—to navigate complex dynamics between African diaspora communities and French institutions. It allowed her to build trust where there was once division and helped her design inclusive, community-driven solutions.

Nika, Ainka, Mete, and Debora represent the very best of what our programs are designed to do: cultivate leaders with the courage to tackle big problems and the humility to bring others along.

Soon, people like them will have a physical home on the South Side of Chicago—a space rooted in community and designed to welcome voices from around the world. But this work has always reached far beyond any one place. From Chicago to Cape Town and London to Los Angeles, The Obama Foundation is growing a global community committed to shaping a better future—together.

Thank you for being part of this work with us.

A handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be 'Barack Obama'.

— Barack Obama



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“

**If we want democracy as we understand it to survive, then we're all going to have to work towards a renewed commitment to pluralism.”**

— President Obama



A WORD FROM

# Valerie Jarrett

2024 was a landmark year for The Obama Foundation. With the Obama Presidential Center beginning to emerge on the South Side of Chicago and our global programs reaching farther and deeper than ever before, we are stepping confidently into a new era—one defined by impact, scale, and lasting change. This year was not just about progress; it was about laying down permanent roots and building an enduring legacy.

This is where hope has a home. That belief is no longer a vision on paper—it is becoming a reality every day. The Obama Presidential Center is taking shape not only as a physical space but as a symbol of everything we stand for. It will be more than a building; it will be a place where ideas are sparked, where communities gather, and where the next generation of leaders come to be inspired, empowered, and connected to change their world. It will stand as a beacon for those who dare to imagine a better world and are willing to do the hard work to make it so.

Throughout 2024, we've deepened our commitment to mentorship, civic engagement, and community investment. From Chicago to Peru, from neighborhoods to nations, we are working alongside young people and local changemakers who are lifting up their communities and reshaping what's possible. Every program, every partnership, and every initiative this year has brought us closer to a future fueled by hope and sustained by action.

Thank you for standing with us, for believing in the power of ordinary people to do extraordinary things, and for being part of this journey. Together, we are building something special for generations to come.



— Valerie Jarrett  
Chief Executive Officer  
The Obama Foundation





# THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER





# Progress and Milestones

In 2024, the Obama Presidential Center continued to rise—physically and symbolically—on the South Side of Chicago. As the campus takes shape, so does a larger vision: a living institution rooted in community and built to serve generations to come.

This year marked several major construction milestones, including the topping out of the Museum Building in June, a moment that signaled the completion of its structural frame and brought us one step closer to welcoming the public. In March, we broke ground on Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center, our athletic and gathering space. We also celebrated the installation of *Uprising of the Sun*, a monumental 83-foot painted glass artwork by Ethiopian-American artist Julie Mehretu—the first of more than two dozen original works of art that will be featured throughout the Center. This vibrant installation will be a centerpiece of the Museum Building, standing as a powerful symbol of movement, resilience, and collective purpose.

Inside the Museum, progress continued. We completed the process of cataloging and formally acquiring the artifacts that will be featured in the Center’s inaugural exhibitions—a behind-the-scenes milestone that ensures each object is carefully documented, preserved, and ready for public display. We also began fabricating the physical exhibits that will bring these stories to life. Filming and production were ongoing for our ambitious media program, and in the spring, we had the opportunity to prototype, at large scale, a signature immersive experience called *The Power of Words*. This 88-foot tall media canvas—spanning multiple levels—will use powerful imagery, video, and graphic text to introduce the themes of each exhibit gallery, while surprising visitors with poetic, transitional moments that both dazzle and inspire.

Every beam raised, every artifact cataloged, every voice uplifted is a step toward opening a Center that belongs to all of us and is a living testament to President and Mrs. Obama’s philosophy that ordinary people can do extraordinary things. As we continue to progress toward the opening of the Obama Presidential Center in 2026, we remain dedicated to creating a lasting impact for future generations.





# Sustainability at the Obama Presidential Center

Sustainability is at the heart of the Obama Presidential Center, from how it's built to how it will serve the community for generations to come. In 2024, we made continued progress toward creating the most environmentally responsible presidential center ever built. In fact, the Center is poised to become one of the most environmentally friendly campuses of its scale in the country, setting a new standard for large-scale sustainability in civic and cultural institutions.

The campus is designed to operate entirely without fossil fuels, relying on a state-of-the-art geothermal system and 100% renewable electricity. Rainwater capture systems, native plant restoration, and energy-efficient building features are not only protecting the local ecosystem, they're creating a healthier, more resilient space for the community.

Every step forward reflects our long-term commitment to environmental stewardship and climate-conscious construction that supports both people and the planet.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT OUR SUSTAINABILITY EFFORTS >>](#)







# Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center

Home Court at the Obama Presidential Center moved from concept to major construction milestones, signaling significant strides in our commitment to active community space and inclusive programming. We broke ground on the building in March and completed the steel structure by December.

True to the Foundation's sustainability goals, Home Court will operate without fossil fuels, using a geothermal system for heating and cooling. Its distinctive glass-and-metal exterior, inspired by the pattern of a basketball net, embodies our broader mission—where individual threads come together to form something stronger.

The 45,000-square-foot space will host youth sports programs, neighborhood events, health and wellness initiatives, and civic gatherings. It will be a space for connection, play, and shared purpose.

Looking ahead, our programs team is finalizing a campus-wide strategy to bring Home Court to life. Plans include youth sports activities, experiences for community members, and unique opportunities for young leaders interested in athletics, the arts and leadership. Designed to be dynamic and responsive, Home Court will reflect the needs, interests, and creativity of the community it serves.

[HOST YOUR NEXT EVENT AT THE OBAMA PRESIDENTIAL CENTER >>](#)



# OUR CHICAGO COMMUNITY





# Our Work in Chicago

In 2024, listening to neighbors in South Shore, Woodlawn, and Washington Park continued to guide our work. We listened closely to the hopes our neighbors have for the Obama Presidential Center and how it can serve as a space that honors their communities—not just in design, but in spirit and intention—as we prepare to open the Center in 2026.

Through roundtables and community tours, we created meaningful opportunities for dialogue, collaboration, and connection. Our roundtables had the greatest impact, bringing residents into direct conversation with Foundation teams to share updates, answer questions, and ensure the Center reflects the needs and aspirations of the people who live closest to it.

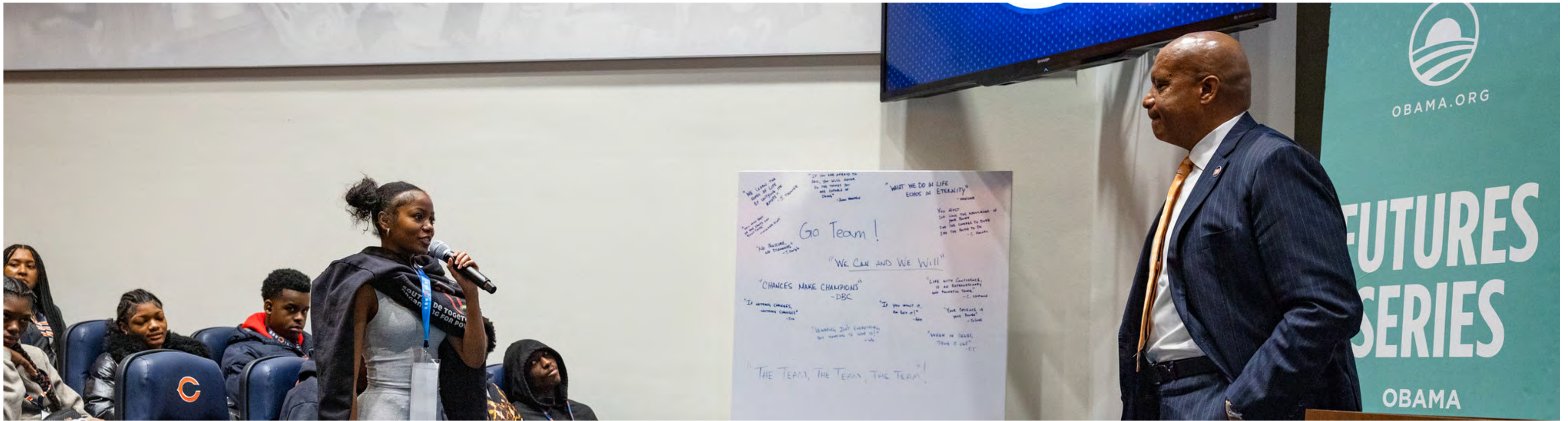
We also welcomed hundreds of visitors for site tours, offering a first look as the Center comes together and celebrating the collective effort that's brought us to this moment. These touchpoints reinforced a shared vision for a place rooted in community—a place that belongs to everyone.

We're creating a space where civic life thrives, where community is at the center, and where generations to come will find belonging, inspiration, and purpose for Chicago and beyond.

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







# Futures Series

Each year, [the Futures Series](#) brings students into direct conversation with trailblazers who are reshaping industries and reimagining what leadership looks like. Designed to spark curiosity and confidence, the Futures Series helps high school students from Chicago envision career pathways that reflect both their passions and their potential.

In 2024, the Futures Series deepened its roots at Hyde Park Academy, continuing a tradition inspired by Mrs. Obama's first conversation with students there. Sessions featured honest, inspiring conversations with leaders who shared not just what they do, but why it matters and how they got there.

## THIS YEAR'S SPEAKERS INCLUDED:

**Kevin Warren**, President & CEO of the Chicago Bears

**Cara Hughes**, Vice President of Customer & Community at Baldwin Richardson Foods

**Eric Williams**, Owner of The Silver Room

**Nadia Rawlinsons**, Co-owner & Operating Chairman of the WNBA team Chicago Sky

From entrepreneurship and corporate leadership to community-building and culture, each speaker provided a unique lens on what it means to lead with purpose.

The Futures Series also gave students a chance to step outside the classroom and into real-world experiences, through curated field trips and behind-the-scenes visits with Chicago-based entrepreneurs. Each encounter added depth and dimension to what's possible for the next generation.

As we look ahead to the opening of the Obama Presidential Center in 2026, the Futures Series will continue to expand its reach and impact with new speakers, and more opportunities for students to see themselves in the future they're helping to shape.

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



# Obama Youth Jobs Corps

At The Obama Foundation, preparing young people for lives of leadership starts with meeting them where they are and helping them take their next steps with confidence. Through our continued partnership with Urban Alliance, the Obama Youth Jobs Corps (OYJC) is expanding access to economic opportunity for students across Chicago. Since launching in 2017, the program has equipped more than 1,700 sophomores and juniors from Chicago Public Schools with foundational workforce skills, and placed over 650 high school seniors in paid, professional internships throughout the city.

In 2024, OYJC continued its three-year model to support students across key stages of their development with 16 program participants:

**10th Grade:** Students build confidence and communication skills through introductory workforce readiness sessions.

**11th Grade:** Weekly sessions provide deeper training in job skills, financial literacy, and post-secondary planning.

**12th Grade:** Students gain real-world experience through 10-month paid internships with Chicago-based employers including, in the future, opportunities at the Obama Presidential Center itself.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM >>](#)





# The 2024 Democracy Forum



## Advancing Democracy Together

In 2024, The Obama Foundation hosted its [Democracy Forum](#) in Chicago, continuing a series of global convenings launched in 2022. This year's theme, "Reimagining Democracy: Pluralism in a Changing World," focused on how embracing difference can strengthen civic trust and democratic institutions.

Over two days, leaders from more than 30 countries joined President Obama, Ryan Reynolds, Reyna Roberts, and Foundation alumni to explore what it takes to build more inclusive, resilient democracies. From cross-cultural dialogue to practical solutions, the convening underscored our commitment to people-powered leadership and pluralism in action, even when it is hard.

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### EVERYDAY PLURALISM

[READ PRESIDENT OBAMA'S REMARKS FROM THE 2024 DEMOCRACY FORUM >>](#)

[WAYS TO EMBRACE PLURALISM IN YOUR DAILY LIFE >>](#)

[DISCOVER HOW PLURALISM CREATES SUSTAINABLE DEMOCRACIES >>](#)



# OUR GLOBAL PROGRAMS







In 2024, we supported changemakers across our Global Leadership Programs, including the Obama Leaders, Scholars, and Voyagers. Of those, 335 completed their program terms and joined the Obama Leadership Network (OLN), our growing community of alumni driving change around the world.

With this new cohort, the OLN now includes 1,543 alumni from 26 cohorts across four programs—Leaders, Scholars, Fellows, and Voyagers—representing over 150 nations and territories since the network’s inception in 2017.

Among those welcomed this year were 200 Voyagers, 30 Scholars, and 205 Obama Leaders across four regional programs: 100 in the United States and 35 each in Africa, Europe, and Asia-Pacific. For a second consecutive year, The Obama Foundation’s unique Hope to Action curriculum grounded the Leaders experience, guiding 15 core sessions tailored to regional and geopolitical contexts across more than 70 countries.

And we saw results:

**100%**

of Leaders reported growth in their ability to articulate values-based leadership

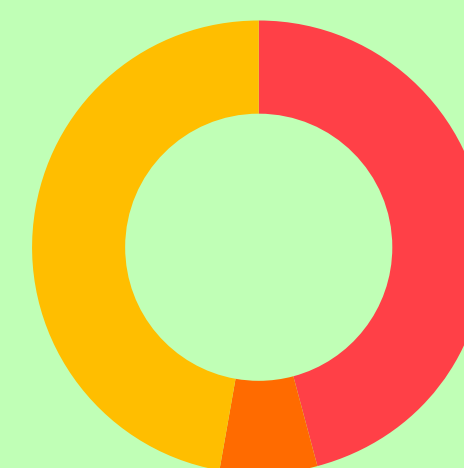
**96%**

of Scholars identified new strategies for advancing social change

**95%**

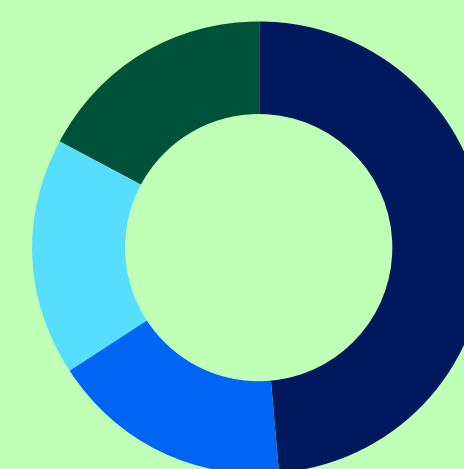
of Voyagers reported feeling more capable of using bridge-building skills to mobilize others around shared goals

### By Program



- 46.0% VOYAGERS
- 6.9% SCHOLARS
- 47.1% LEADERS

### By Region\*



- 49% IN UNITED STATES
- 17% IN AFRICA
- 17% IN ASIA-PACIFIC
- 17% IN EUROPE

\*LEADERS PROGRAM



Leader | Asia-Pacific

# DR. DEXTER GALBAN



As Assistant Secretary of the Philippine Department of Education, Dexter oversees national programs on school health, youth development, physical fitness, and child rights protection—impacting over 28 million students. When government pressure and budget cuts threatened to dismantle the School-Based Feeding Program, which provides meals to undernourished children from Kindergarten to Grade 6, Dexter used the storytelling framework he learned during his Leaders program and the collective support of his cohort peers to successfully defend the program—ensuring that millions of children continued receiving meals at school.

“We’re not just serving meals. We’re serving hope,” Dr. Dexter shared. “Even with the best teachers, learning resources, and curriculum, if students are hungry, sick, or unable to attend class, their development will be compromised.”

His efforts helped preserve a critical lifeline for children across the country. He credits the Leaders program with strengthening his courage, clarity, and cross-border support network at a pivotal moment.

“The program didn’t just offer tools, theories, or experiences. It nourished my spirit, expanded my worldview, and deepened my commitment to serve with integrity and compassion. It reminded me that collective action, rooted in shared values, can shape a better future for all.”

And now millions of children know where they’re getting their next meal.



Leader | Africa

# DEBORA MABOYA

In her work with Tai Tanzania, an organization at the intersection of youth empowerment, digital innovation, and inclusive storytelling—Debora leverages storytelling and community narratives to drive social change, particularly in areas related to disability inclusion and education access.

Debora has long worked on these issues. Yet, one of the most defining shifts in her leadership came through the “Connecting Across Difference” session in the Leaders Africa program.

“The experience fundamentally reshaped how I approach partnerships and moments of tension. That experience reminded me that connection does not require agreement; it requires understanding. And it starts by seeing others not as obstacles, but as collaborators,” Debora shared.

Her inclusive approach helped her elevate and share Tai’s work on the global stage, including the Zero Project Conference, Global Disability Summit 2025, re:publica25, and Inclusive Africa Conference 2025, positioning her to expand impact through storytelling, community voice, and partnerships.

“The outcome of being part of the Leaders Africa program has indeed elevated our vision, amplified our voice, and deepened our impact both at home and globally.”

Her refined approach to inclusive partnerships directly led to her organization securing new funding and building meaningful alliances, supporting Debora and her colleagues to forge unconventional collaborations that expand their reach and amplify community-driven change.





Leader | Europe

# METE COBAN



“The Leaders Europe program taught me the importance of building coalitions and alliances to deliver real outcomes for communities. It helped me translate my values into action, which has shaped how I lead as Deputy Mayor in London,” Mete expressed.

As Deputy Mayor of London for Environment and Energy, Mete joined the Leaders Europe program while taking on one of the UK’s most ambitious climate mandates.

“Whether it’s tackling climate change or improving public services, lasting change comes from working together across sectors and backgrounds to get things done.”

Mete says the program affirmed the importance of purpose-driven leadership and helped him develop new tools for cross-sector coalition-building. He’s now expanding access to clean energy, tackling pollution, and mobilizing London’s youth to lead on environmental justice.

“The green economy is one of the biggest opportunities of the 21st century, and it must be used to support those who have historically been left behind,” he said.



Leader | USA

# GREGORY TATRO

Co-Founder of Jenna's Promise, a nonprofit breaking the cycle of substance use disorder in rural America, Gregory credits the Leaders USA program with shifting his leadership from personal loss to national impact.

"Prior to joining the Leaders USA program, Jenna's Promise was already gaining momentum, even reaching national circles, but The Obama Foundation gave me something different: it helped me believe I had a place, that I was welcome, and that I belonged at the table. It gave me the confidence to move through imposter syndrome and recognize that my sister Jenna's tragic story—and the movement we built—was worthy of standing alongside some of the most compassionate and visionary leaders in the country."

In the early days of the program, Gregory often questioned whether he belonged among such accomplished peers. But over time, that changed. The line he shares now isn't just about his story—it's about theirs too. He sees himself as an equal in a community of changemakers he deeply admires.

On the anniversary of his sister Jenna's passing, Gregory launched the #sixyearsofhope campaign to reduce stigma around substance use disorder. His Leaders USA cohort rallied behind the campaign, sharing it widely. Their support helped turn a personal remembrance into a broader movement—one that garnered national recognition. At the ribbon-cutting for Jenna's House, leaders from across the spectrum, including Senator Bernie Sanders, Representative Peter Welch, and Governor Phil Scott, showed their support.

"What I didn't expect was how deeply my Leaders USA cohort would show up. They didn't just share the campaign—they wove Jenna's story into their own journeys and helped this message of hope reach thousands, turning a local remembrance into a national moment."





# The Obama-Chesky Scholarship for Public Service

The Obama-Chesky Voyager Scholarship continued to empower the next generation of public service leaders by helping them broaden their perspectives, deepen their commitments, and connect across lines of difference. Launched in 2022, the program engages college students in the United States in their junior and senior years who would not otherwise be able to afford pursuing their passion for public service in college, offering programming tracks to support their public service journeys.

Voyagers in their junior year prepared for their Summer Voyage, a hands-on travel experience during the summer months, with programming focused on intercultural connection, curiosity, and navigating complex global challenges. As Seniors, the Voyagers reflected on their journeys and explored how to carry those lessons forward into their careers, communities, and ongoing commitments to public service.

As the second cohort completed their Summer Voyages, students returned with powerful insights and renewed purpose, equipped not only with global experiences, but with stronger tools for bridge-building and collaboration.

Each year, the Voyagers program includes rising public service leaders from the West and South Sides of Chicago into the program. As we look ahead to the opening of the Obama Presidential Center and bringing change home to the South Side, we're already supporting the next generation of public service leaders as they bring Chicago to the world and the lessons from the world back to their home in Chicago.



## Chicago to the World, and the World to Chicago

Voyagers from across the U.S. took their passions abroad, deepening their understanding of justice, identity, and leadership across cultures. Each year, the Voyagers program includes rising public service leaders, some of whom come from the South and West Sides of Chicago.

Whether standing inside the physical remnants of the transatlantic slave trade, mapping urban development patterns, or documenting the power of public art, Voyagers from Chicago are connecting global perspectives with local purpose.



# LIDYA SANCHEZ



Inspired by the vibrant spirit of her Southwest Side Chicago community, Lidya Sanchez used her Summer Voyage to study how public art fosters identity and belonging. From South Korea to the Philippines to Australia, she interviewed street artists and explored how both community murals and curated museum collections reflect the values and struggles of everyday people.

“Seoul’s integration of historical culture, environment, and people offers a model for creating communal comfort... No matter what corner I turned in Seoul, I never doubted that someone cared about this park, this street, or this building,” she said.

She says the journey reaffirmed her belief in design as a public service, one that brings vitality to overlooked spaces and helps neighbors feel seen. Now back in Chicago, Lidya is helping mission-driven organizations amplify their impact through thoughtful visual storytelling, bringing global insight home to strengthen belonging and visibility at the local level.

“Whether through art, design, or any other means possible, I believe if we dedicate time to plan and invest, public spaces and community organizations can become the antidote to isolation.”



# KENNEDY PIERCE

As a South Side native and a youth advocate on the Chicago Youth Council for Police Accountability, Kennedy Pierce is no stranger to pushing for justice. In summer 2024, she traveled across Ghana, interning with EEPD Africa, a disability rights organization; visiting Cape Coast; and touring historic slave dungeons.

“My goal for my Voyage was to uplift disabled children in Ghana through my acts of service, and learn what life was like during the West African Slave Trade... I am hoping to learn if Black people across the equator are facing the same inequalities/issues as we are as African Americans,” she shared.

She then returned to intern in Washington, D.C., focused on public policy and racial justice, continuing to bridge global lessons with local change.







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# The Obama Scholars Program

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



# ADRIANA PREDA

Adriana Preda, a 2023-2024 Obama Scholar, has spent over a decade championing opportunities for vulnerable youth in Romania. As CEO of The Social Incubator, she leads a grassroots organization that equips young people with the tools to thrive—through education, mentorship, and community support.

“I came into the Obama Scholars Program carrying the weight of my mission,” she reflected. “I left knowing I never carried it alone.”

Through the Obama Scholars Program at Columbia University, Adriana gained more than academic growth. She found healing, connection, and the vision to think about global scale. The experience shaped her approach to leadership and organizational growth.

She expanded The Social Incubator’s model by adding civic education and democracy training, then expanded the work across Eastern Europe and into the United States, proving that locally rooted hope can have global reach.

“This experience gave me a community, the courage to think beyond borders, and the clarity to lead with intention. It reshaped how I lead, how I grow, and how I dream. Because hope does have a home—I’ve seen it, I’ve helped build it, and now I’m ready to make sure others find their place in it.”





# The Obama Leadership Network

The Obama Leadership Network is our growing community of program alumni. The community now includes 1,543 alumni in the Obama Leadership Network, from over 150 nations and territories. The continued expansion shows 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.

In 2024, the Network held three signature convenings on the sidelines of The Obama Foundation's Democracy Forum, the Skoll World Forum, and the first-ever Asia-Pacific Regional Reunion, a milestone gathering designed to deepen collaboration across a fast-growing region of alumni.

Nearly 75 Obama Leaders applied to attend the Asia-Pacific reunion in Bangkok, and 24 were selected, representing 13 nations and territories across four sub-regions and six program cohorts. The three-day retreat, themed "Gathering Around Our Kitchen Tables to Feast in Community," was co-created by a five-member alumni committee and opened with a vibrant welcome dinner of more than 35 local Leaders.

Throughout the program, participants engaged in peer coaching, small group discussions, and collaborative workshops to help refill their cups and renew their purpose. Dr. Maya Soetoro, President Obama's sister and a Foundation advisor, joined throughout, holding space for reflection and sharing wisdom on the importance of leading with empathy and humility. In a standout moment, Dr. Soetoro hosted a fireside chat with Pita Limjaroenrat, Thai Member of Parliament and former Thai Prime Minister candidate, who offered candid reflections on leadership, resilience, and hope amid uncertainty.

From Bangkok to Bogotá, and from Chicago to Nairobi, the Obama Leadership Network continues to grow into a global force for connection, collaboration, and leadership.



**The reunion not only celebrated regional growth but strengthened the connective tissue of the global Network:**

**89%**

of participants reported a significant increase in motivation, resilience, and belonging

**12**

the average number of new cross-cohort relationships built

**100%**

said they now feel more comfortable turning to fellow OLN members for support

**7**

the average number of existing cross-cohort relationships deepened



# ANA MARIA GONZALEZ FORERO

Ana Maria Gonzalez Forero, from Colombia, was part of the first class of Obama Scholars in 2018. In 2024, she joined 23 other alumni from Obama Foundation leadership programs, representing 17 countries, at an Obama Leadership Network event during the Democracy Forum. The event was created to foster new cross-cohort relationships, facilitate new opportunities and share stories of how they are putting pluralism into practice.

Ana has worked for more than 25 years to advocate for Indigenous communities in Colombia and more recently has supported the country’s ongoing peace and reconciliation process. Thanks to her time as an inaugural Obama Scholar, she was inspired to work with diverse collaborators and take a systemic approach to having a career of impact.

“Following the program, as I continued this process of reflection and considered where I could have the greatest systemic impact, I decided to join local government, where I put that thinking around building coalitions for change into continued practice,” Ana shared.

After her program, Ana served in the local government of her hometown of Cartagena. Today, she actively organizes fellow program alumni in the Network to advance social impact both in her region and globally.

“To me, the heart of pluralism is embracing difference to the point that you really want people who are not like you to have representation. We can’t want everyone to sound like us.”





# Girls Opportunity Alliance



Hope found a home in 43 countries around the world and across Chicago's neighborhoods, where 155 organizations supported by the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund delivered programming and services reaching more than 120,000 adolescent girls since the program's launch. From digital learning labs and leadership workshops to safe spaces for healing and mental health support, these grassroots organizations are equipping girls with the tools they need to thrive. This work was powered by more than 10,000 individual donors, united by the belief that every girl, everywhere, deserves the opportunity to fulfill her potential.

In 2024 alone, the Girls Opportunity Alliance supported 60 organizations internationally and in Chicago with \$3.5 million from the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund and organizational support to help girls overcome barriers. This included \$523,000 in support of 11 organizations in Chicago, which were selected to help increase impact citywide. This also included a \$1 million commitment to support hard to reach girls in conflict and crisis settings.

For the first time ever, the Alliance brought together its Latin America and Caribbean Network partners for an in-person convening in Peru—sparking new relationships, cross-border collaboration, and renewed vision for how our network can grow stronger together. The Alliance collaborated with organizations such as UNICEF, CARE, Equality Now, and Population Council to deliver a series of dynamic workshops and discussions. These sessions explored girl-centered program design and evaluation, strategies for coalition building, and effective approaches to tackling urgent challenges including child marriage and gender-based violence.

In December, the Alliance convened more than 80 girl-serving leaders and stakeholders from across Chicago for a day of connection and capacity-building. Participants engaged in expert-led sessions focused on girls' health and safety, organizational legacy, and mindful leadership, creating space for new ideas and shared solutions in our hometown.

To strengthen the work of Girls Opportunity Alliance Network members year-round, the program hosted virtual learning sessions each month, offering practical tools and insights on topics including values-based leadership, menstrual health advocacy, ending child marriage, and the effects of climate change on girls and their communities.

Throughout the year, the Alliance also created high-impact experiences for girls in Chicago, hosting six engagements in partnership with Foundation programs. Highlights included a behind-the-scenes tour with Megan Thee Stallion's Roc Nation team, a panel on entrepreneurship featuring Mark Cuban, and a wellness session led by Lululemon ambassador Kayla Jeter. Girls also participated in volunteer events for MLK Day and Earth Day, joined career panels with Chicago Sky leadership, and gained access to internships with NBC Olympics and the Chicago Sky. In total, the Alliance helped coordinate seven engagements between girls and key donors, and supported three girls in securing local or national internships.

This work is helping build a stronger, more connected community of advocates and leaders, each committed to ensuring that adolescent girls, everywhere, have the opportunity to lead, thrive, and shape the future.

[WATCH THE PERU HIGHLIGHTS >>](#)



# TEIRRA SCOTT



## GODDESS MENTORING

On the West Side of Chicago, hope is alive in the stories of 30 young girls taking part in Goddess Mentoring’s 35-week empowerment program, with support from the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund. These girls, ages 10 to 18, are part of a program that blends cultural enrichment, community service, and weekly workshops centered around sisterhood, identity, and opportunity.

Founded and led by Teirra Scott, Goddess Mentoring exists to ignite the inner strength and potential of every girl it reaches. Whether through resume writing, field trips to local colleges, or deeply personal conversations about confidence and community, the program helps girls reimagine what’s possible.

“In a community where success is often overshadowed by survival, we’ve created a space where possibility is real, and hope has a home,” Teirra says. “They’re not only learning to be confident in who they are—they’re learning how to be safe spaces for others. Vulnerability is becoming a strength. They’re building authentic connections rooted in emotional honesty, shared wins, and collective healing.”

Since receiving support from the Girls Opportunity Alliance, Teirra has seen girls begin to step fully into themselves. “These young women are now boldly naming their potential and pursuing opportunities that once felt out of reach. They’ve told us themselves, they believe they can do hard things, succeed beyond their circumstances, and thrive.”



# ANA LAURA ARAYA

## SOY NIÑA

In the neighborhoods of San José, Costa Rica, Ana Laura Araya is helping girls dream bigger and live safer. She founded Soy Niña, an organization which runs girls' clubs that provide critical support in a country where violence, poverty, and harmful norms often shape girls' daily lives.

With support from the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund, Soy Niña is reaching 200 girls, offering workshops on menstrual health, self-awareness, communication, and rights education, while helping girls build confidence and community.

"At Soy Niña we work with under-resourced girls who live in drug trafficking communities in San José, Costa Rica," Ana shared. "The support from Girls Opportunity Alliance has been invaluable. Besides the economic grant we received in 2023, the amount of support and encouragement we received from the team and other organizations from the network in 2024 has kept our mission going."

Ana also found strength in connection with other regional leaders. "Having the opportunity to meet with other Latin American and Caribbean nonprofits in Perú was an amazing experience... to know that there are so many other people out there working so that girls get the opportunities they deserve."

Her greatest source of hope, however, comes from the girls themselves.





GIRLS OPPORTUNITY ALLIANCE

# BY THE NUMBERS

## Our Growing Global Network 2018–2024

**\$8.7M+**

distributed through the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund to Chicago-based and international grassroots organizations advancing adolescent girls' education and empowerment

**10,000+**

individual donors fueling the Girls Opportunity Alliance Fund

**120,000+**

adolescent girls supported globally

**4,000+**

grassroots leaders connected through our global Network, from Chicago to Vietnam

**155**

organizations in 43 countries scaling their work with support from the Girls Opportunity Alliance

**100+**

leaders joining each ongoing monthly virtual workshops hosted on a range of topics



# My Brother's Keeper Alliance



My Brother's Keeper Alliance (MBKA) marked a powerful milestone, ten years of driving systemic change for boys and young men of color. More than an anniversary, this year was a testament to what's possible when local leaders, institutions, and communities come together with a shared commitment: to build safe and supportive environments where every young man knows he matters, and every pathway to opportunity is open and attainable.

Guided by the MBKA initiative, we continued to deepen our impact across the country. In our MBK Model Communities of cities like Omaha, Newark, Tulsa, and Yonkers, we saw real outcomes that reflect our mission, safer neighborhoods, stronger academic foundations, and expanding economic opportunities.

In Omaha, MBKA's collaborative approach to community safety, led by the Empowerment Network, contributed to a 100% homicide clearance rate for the second consecutive year while securing \$1 million in federal funding to advance community violence prevention. This milestone reinforces how public safety can be rooted in trust, prevention, and youth empowerment.

Meanwhile, in Newark, summer 2024 saw the lowest number of homicides in the city's modern history, with a 31% decrease compared to the same period in 2023. MBK Newark, led by the Newark Opportunity Youth Network and in deep partnership with the Mayor's Office and countless other community leaders and organizations, is a part of a public health approach to violence prevention that focuses on healing, trauma recovery, and collaboration—and continues to set a national standard for innovation and impact.

"Through unprecedented collaboration and data focus, Newark has decreased violent crime by 52% in the last decade, including a 67% reduction in homicides," Mark Comesañas, Executive Director of My Brother's Keeper Newark shared. "And this collaboration is not just jargon. It has been real people—from grandparents and young people to police officers, lieutenants, and captains; from funders, researchers, and nonprofit leaders to credible messengers, hospital interventionists, and social workers; and politicians and policymakers. These efforts create a perpetual cycle within the public safety ecosystem of stronger relationships, shared understanding, and systems-centered actions and make public safety the responsibility of all community stakeholders."

This decade of progress is an example of the power of a community-driven, equity-first approach to public safety, rooted in care, resources, and collective responsibility. In Tulsa, ImpactTulsa, the lead for My Brother's Keeper, with the help of many business partners, were able to position the city as a national Tech Hub, with \$51 million in federal investment and a workforce strategy that intentionally includes young men of color. This effort has the potential to generate nearly 200,000 new jobs in the coming decade, offering new pathways to prosperity.

"MBK Tulsa's leadership has ensured that hope goes from sentiment to strategy. Young men of color are not just participants but co-designers in workforce initiatives." Ashley Harris Philippsen, Executive Director of ImpactTulsa, explains. "MBK Tulsa, in partnership with local industry, civic leaders, and national organizations like StriveTogether and The Obama Foundation, has built a community-rooted strategy that ensures tech-driven economic growth doesn't leave behind the very youth who've often been shut out of opportunity."

In Yonkers, a major leap in early literacy is ongoing. A new K-8 curriculum grounded in the Science of Reading, championed by Superintendent Aníbal Soler Jr. and the teacher leaders in Yonkers, which aims to boost foundational literacy for all students, including dual-language learners. It's a crucial investment in lifelong academic success.

[CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF MY BROTHER'S KEEPER ALLIANCE >>](#)



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# The MBK-Obama Leadership Academy

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The MBK Leadership Academy is a six-week immersive summer program—created in partnership with Chicago Public Schools—designed to help rising high school freshmen from Hyde Park Academy, Dyett, and Chicago Vocational Career Academy build academic, leadership, and life skills before starting 9th grade. More than 100 incoming freshmen participated in the inaugural session, earning high school and service-learning credit, a stipend, and early preparation to stay on track for graduation.

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE MBK-OBAMA LEADERSHIP ACADEMY >>](#)





# OUR SUPPORTERS





IN 2024, WE RAISED OVER

\$301 million

263,688

total donors who have contributed to the Foundation since our founding

84%

increase in Giving Tuesday campaign revenue and a 68% rise in participation

\$25

was the most common donation amount

91,905

total donors in 2024, with 56,067 being first-time donors

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

THESE DONORS INCLUDE

INDIVIDUALS,  
CORPORATIONS,

AND

FOUNDATIONS

FROM

ALL 50 STATES  
AND 158 COUNTRIES.

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



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“

**For me, supporting this cause isn't just a donation. It's a tribute to a movement. A pledge to the future. And truly, one of the most meaningful choices I have made.”**

— Niringan Kaur  
Obama Foundation Supporter







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“

**When I watched Barack Obama raise his right hand, place his left hand on a Bible, and take the oath as the President of the United States, yes, I cried with joy. What President Barack Obama—with his God-given genius—said to America and to the world that historic day was a vision of a better world. The work of The Obama Foundation is creating that better world.”**

**— Camille Yarbrough**  
Obama Foundation Supporter

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“

**Our partnership with The Obama Foundation is rooted in a shared purpose—to empower individuals and strengthen communities. Through programs like My Brother’s Keeper, we’re creating real change by investing where it matters most: in people, in place, and in enduring partnerships.”**

**— Lata Reddy**  
**Senior Vice President, Inclusive Solutions, and Chair**  
**The Prudential Foundation**





# We are governed by a board of directors.

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Obama Foundation Board Chair  
The Vistria Group

**CONNIE BALLMER**

Ballmer Group

**THELMA GOLDEN**

The Studio Museum in Harlem

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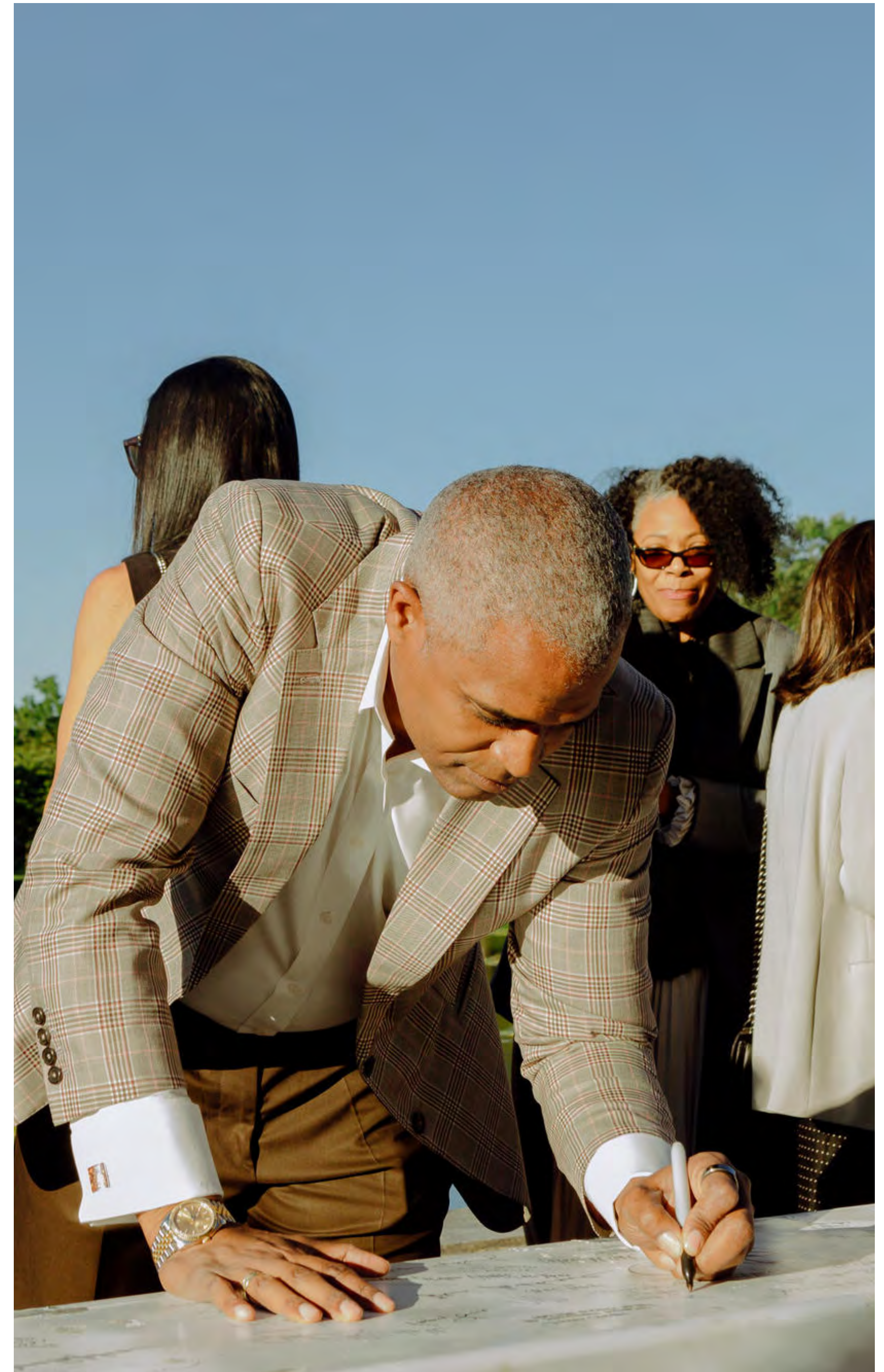


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“

**In 2024, we saw the power of community and purpose come alive. From the generosity of our supporters to the groundbreaking milestones of the Obama Presidential Center, our collective commitment to a more inclusive future is evident. Together, we are turning hope into action, creating a legacy that will inspire generations to come.”**

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





# Impact and Opportunity Metrics



Artist Julie Mehretu stands before her artwork at the site of the Obama Presidential Center.

## \$24,270,079

total addressable Foundation  
operational spend for 2024

## 56%

is addressable Foundation operational  
spend at \$13,743,472

## 798

number of residents  
enrolled in construction  
pre-apprenticeship programs

## 1,385

candidates were placed in trade and  
non-trade positions across the city  
in total

## 49%

percentage of workforce hours  
performed by city of Chicago residents

## 45%

of our addressable operational spend  
is with diverse vendors, just over \$6M

## 33%

of workforce hours performed by  
workers from the South and West  
Side communities

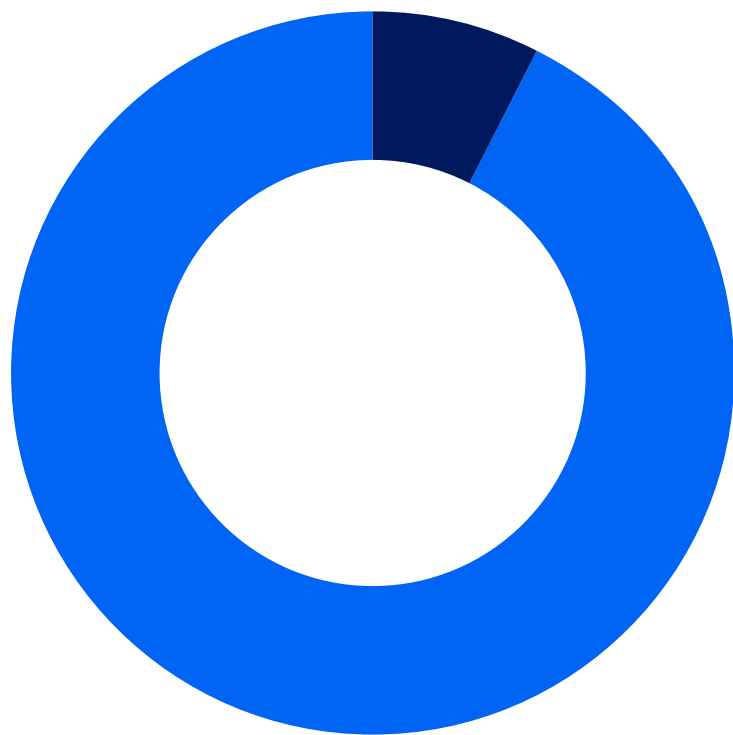
## 50%

of construction spending is committed  
to diverse vendors

[SEE THE LATEST WORKFORCE AND CONSTRUCTION UPDATES >>](#)



# Financial Information\*

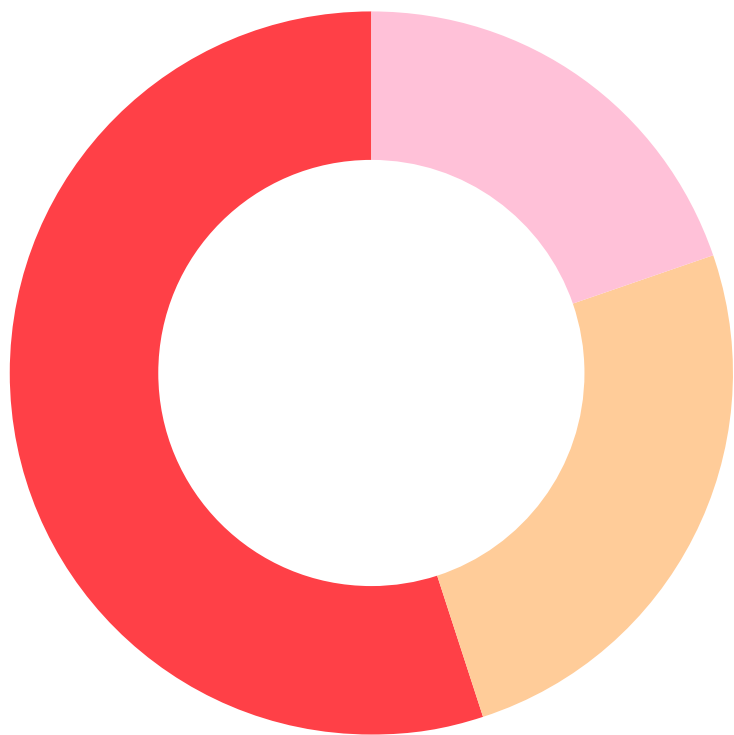


**Revenue**

TOTAL: \$211,189,986

- CONTRIBUTIONS\*\***  
92.75%  
\$195,868,997
- INTEREST, INVESTMENT & OTHER INCOME**  
7.25%  
\$15,320,989

\*\*Contributions include in-kind donations.



**Operating Expenses**

TOTAL: \$93,569,116

- PROGRAMS**  
55.12%  
\$51,576,835
- FUNDRAISING**  
25.34%  
\$23,708,330
- GENERAL + ADMIN**  
19.54%  
\$18,283,951

**NET ASSETS  
(AS OF DEC. 2024)**  
\$1,071,275,709

**CONSTRUCTION IN  
PROGRESS COSTS**  
\$615,674,047

**2024 Year In Review**

We’re reporting that we spent approximately \$3.6 million with Chicago-based companies for foundational operational spend.

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

\*based on Generally Accepted Accounting Principles



# Hope Has a Home

The journey we embark upon is neither swift nor simple. Addressing the profound challenges of our time demands a hopeful spirit, unwavering commitment and collective effort. Yet, we find our strength in the belief that, together, we can transform our world. The network you've encountered within these pages, alongside our broader community, exemplifies this conviction. In the face of adversity, they continue to uplift one another, demonstrating that real change is not only possible but already underway. Their dedication fuels our optimism and reaffirms our shared responsibility to build a more just and inclusive future—for this generation and those to come.



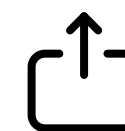
## INVEST

**Fuel our mission with your donation**



## SUBSCRIBE

**Get hope directly to your inbox**



## PASS IT ON

**Share this report with your network**



## TEXT IN

**Join our SMS for actionable hope**



## STAY CONNECTED

**Follow @ObamaFoundation on socials**



# 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 >>](#)



**OBAMA  
FOUNDATION**

## About The Obama Foundation

The Obama Foundation is a nonpartisan 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization 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.