


# Defending Democracy

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation  
2023 Annual Report



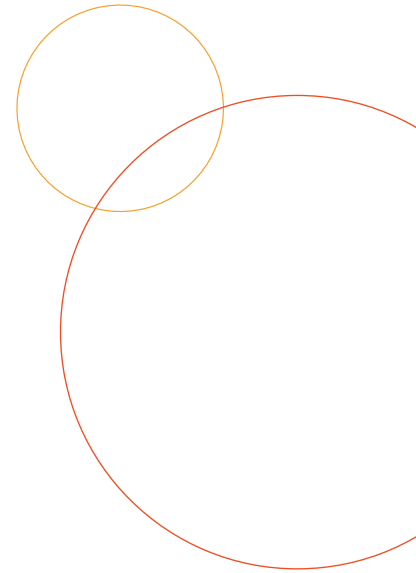


“The 2023 Annual Report chronicles our journey of transformation, highlighting a year of reflection, dialogue, and action. . . . While our appearance and focus may have evolved, we remain true to our founder’s vision of embracing innovation and limitless imagination.”

—Sharon L. Davies

# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| <b>Letter from the President and CEO</b> .....                    | 2  |
| <b>Our History</b> .....  | 4  |
| <b>Strategic Planning Process</b> .....                           | 6  |
| Vision, Mission, and Our Guiding Beliefs and Values .....         | 7  |
| Strategic Direction and Focus Areas .....                         | 8  |
| How We Do Our Work .....  | 9  |
| <b>Focus Areas</b> .....  | 10 |
| Defending Inclusive Democracy .....                               | 10 |
| Information for a Democratic Society .....                        | 13 |
| Democracy and Community .....                                     | 14 |
| Democracy and the Arts .....                                      | 17 |
| Democracy around the Globe .....                                  | 18 |
| <b>Strategic Communications</b> .....                             | 20 |
| <b>Communicating in Defense of Democracy</b> .....                | 22 |
| Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators .....           | 22 |
| Emerging Issues Roundtables and Conference .....                  | 24 |
| External Affairs and Sponsorships .....                           | 25 |
| Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy ..... | 26 |
| David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award .....                    | 27 |
| Senior Fellows .....  | 28 |
| Conferences .....   | 30 |
| Communications for Democratic Innovation .....                    | 32 |
| <b>Financial Snapshot</b> .....                                   | 34 |
| <b>Charles F. Kettering Foundation Leadership</b> .....           | 36 |



# Letter from the President and CEO

In 1927, famed inventor Charles F. Kettering established a foundation in his name to support research of use to society. We will celebrate its centennial just three years from now. For the last four-plus decades of its work, the foundation has centered its focus on the health of democracy around the globe, with a particular focus on the essential role of the citizen.

Since we first began that work in the early 1980s, much has changed for democracies worldwide. Looking back, we can now see that the foundation embarked on its democracy work at a moment of triumph for democracy, when democracy was ascending around the globe. That is no longer true. Today, nations everywhere are struggling to preserve and strengthen their democracies against a rising tide of authoritarianism.

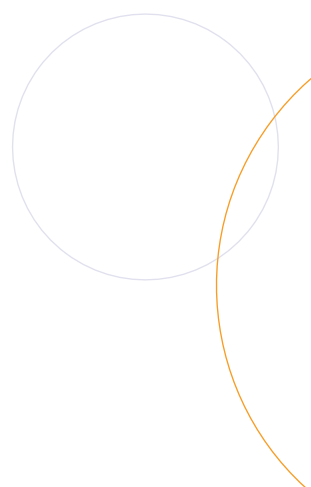
In acknowledgment of this, beginning in January 2023, the staff of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation engaged in an immersive strategic planning process that considered how the needs of and threats to democracy have changed and how our work must evolve too. The result was the publication of a new strategic plan that aligns the foundation's mission, vision, values, and scope of work with the field's new understandings of the forces that imperil democracies and the steps that citizens can take to preserve them.

This 2023 Annual Report details our transformative journey, underscoring a year marked by reflection, dialogue, and commitment to action. The adaptability and dedication of our staff have been instrumental in this transition. As we look toward the future, we are committed to advancing a world of inclusive and thriving democracies.

In service,



Sharon L. Davies





# Our History

*“My interest is in the future  
because I am going to spend  
the rest of my life there.”*

*—Charles F. Kettering*

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation was incorporated as a not-for-profit organization on June 24, 1927, in Dayton, Ohio, “to sponsor and carry out scientific research for the benefit of humanity.” Its founder, Charles Franklin Kettering (1876-1958), was an engineer and entrepreneur who held 186 patents but is best known for inventing the electric starter for automobiles. From 1920 to 1947, he was vice president and director of research for General Motors (GM). In 1945, he and GM president and CEO Alfred P. Sloan established the Sloan-Kettering Institute for Cancer Research in New York City.

Dayton, with its rich history of invention, was the ideal location for a new organization focused on innovation and research. Just fifteen years before the foundation was incorporated, the Wright brothers flew the first practical airplane at Huffman Prairie.

During Charles Kettering’s lifetime, the foundation’s financial support and research focused on areas



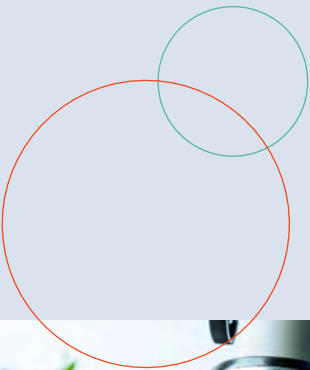
From the collections of Dayton History

that were of personal interest to him: university science programs, cooperative education, photosynthesis, cancer research, magnetism, and energy conservation. In 1953, the Charles F. Kettering Research Laboratory was built in Yellow Springs, Ohio, and the foundation's scientific research was carried out there until 1983.

In the years after Kettering's death, the foundation's leaders, seeking to meet the needs of a changing society, added research on primary and secondary education to its portfolio of interests. In 1968, the foundation relinquished most of its grantmaking activities and concentrated on its own research. Over the next several decades, trustees like pollster George Gallup, journalist and peace advocate Norman Cousins, and newspaper editor Katherine W. Fanning helped the foundation shift its research toward citizen involvement, international affairs, and public journalism, respectively.

In the 1980s, the Kettering Foundation built on the shift to citizen involvement through experiments with public deliberation. The work focused on bringing citizens together to discuss difficult issues and how to move forward on them. The foundation also partnered with K-12 educators, professors, and community leaders to explore the role citizens play in a democracy. These experiments with public deliberation and partnerships guided the foundation to its overarching research question as it entered the 21st century: "What does it take to make democracy work as it should?"

Building on its legacy of nearly 100 years of research for the benefit of humanity, today the foundation is committed to advancing inclusive democracy by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism.

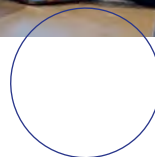
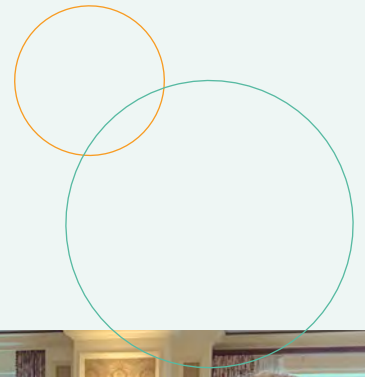


# Strategic Planning Process

During the last week of January 2023, Kettering Foundation staff gathered on Kiawah Island, South Carolina, to begin the strategic planning process involving all members of the organization. The tranquil setting allowed the staff to fully focus and work creatively with our strategic planning partners, Sangfroid Strategies. Over our days together, we reflected on our work and began to discuss the future.

Throughout the winter and spring, we continued these conversations. All staff participated in large and small group conversations that enabled us to develop a new mission, vision, values, and focus areas. Over the course of six months, we dared to ask ourselves what this moment requires of an organization like ours.

In the last week of June, the Kettering board of directors approved the new strategic plan, which better positions Kettering to contribute to the pro-democracy landscape during this critical time for our nation and the world.





## Vision, Mission, and Our Guiding Beliefs and Values



### Our Vision

We envision a world of thriving democracies where the rights of all are protected and people fulfill their civic responsibilities.

---



### Our Mission

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation advances inclusive democracies by fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism.

---



### Our Guiding Beliefs and Values

**Democratic Integrity:** We believe in the rule of law and that all people have the right to free and fair elections, accountable leadership, and the peaceful transfer of power.

**Civic Responsibility:** We believe that people have a responsibility to participate in their communities and to make demands of their governments for the common good.

**Justice:** We believe that all people have a right to fair and equitable treatment by institutions and systems of governance.

**Belonging:** We believe that democracy must embrace the full diversity of life experiences, beliefs, and voices of all.

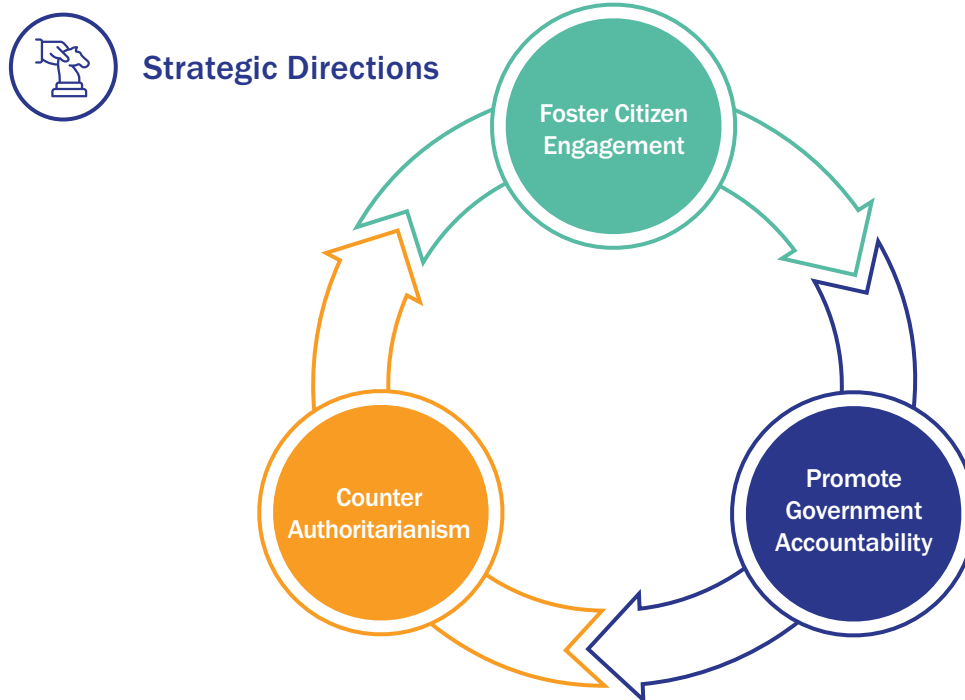
**Trustworthiness:** We believe that democracy requires civic and governmental institutions that are honest, transparent, and accountable.

---

## Strategic Direction and Focus Areas

The Charles F. Kettering Foundation's new strategic plan centers around three major strategic directions: fostering citizen engagement, promoting government accountability, and countering authoritarianism.

The foundation advances its work across five targeted focus areas. Together, these focus areas position the foundation to promote democratic principles and values and counter attacks on democracy.



## How We Do Our Work

The Kettering Foundation advances inclusive democracies by empowering people to build and preserve resilient democratic systems.

We do this through:

### Research

We are dedicated to producing, translating, and providing unwavering support to research initiatives that drive the advancement and defense of democracy.

### Narrative Making

We create trustworthy narratives that inspire the public to embrace and defend democracy.

### Communication

We employ a wide range of communication strategies and tactics to promote broad public understanding of democracy and threats to it.

### Innovation

We continually search for new, responsive, and impactful ways to advance and defend democracy.

### Partnerships

We build and cultivate alliances to strengthen commitment to democracy worldwide.



# Focus Areas

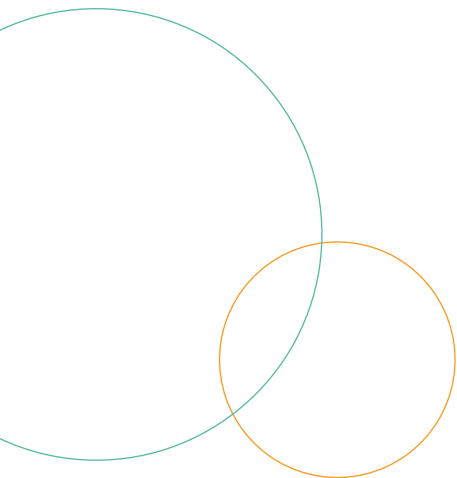
## Defending Inclusive Democracy

In this moment of worldwide democratic decline and rising authoritarianism, democracy requires a robust defense. Some of the forces at play are intentionally fragmenting our society instead of unifying it. The [Defending Inclusive Democracy](#) focus area is about strengthening the public's commitment to democracy and increasing its ability to recognize antidemocratic threats and its willingness to act in democracy's defense.

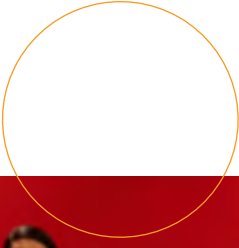
The Kettering Foundation is forging partnerships with some of America's leading civic organizations and educational institutions to promote a public understanding of and commitment to democratic principles and values. The work of this strategy centers on joining and catalyzing impactful educative initiatives that draw attention to threats to democracy and advance strategic alliances meant to strengthen America's democratic culture.

**Some of the work in this focus area includes the following:**

- Voting is the bedrock of American democracy and is a right that all eligible citizens should enjoy. The Kettering Foundation is actively developing partnerships with organizations that are registering new voters, protecting eligible voters, and advancing efforts that make it easier to vote.
- Barriers to participation have and continue to be enshrined in law and policy, leading to a cultural bigotry of low expectations. In this context, belonging, collective action, and civic participation are routinely undermined, leaving far too many citizens on the sidelines of democracy. Through partnerships and strategic communications efforts, we will work to build social awareness of structural barriers that exclude and limit civic participation.
- To advance the mission, vision, and the goals of this focus area, we have partnered with faith leaders, legislators, legislative caucuses, and civic organizations to promote inclusive democracy. This includes strategically supporting the [Quad Caucus of the National Conference of State Legislatures](#) and thinking about the role of the institutional Black church in advancing democracy.







## Information for a Democratic Society

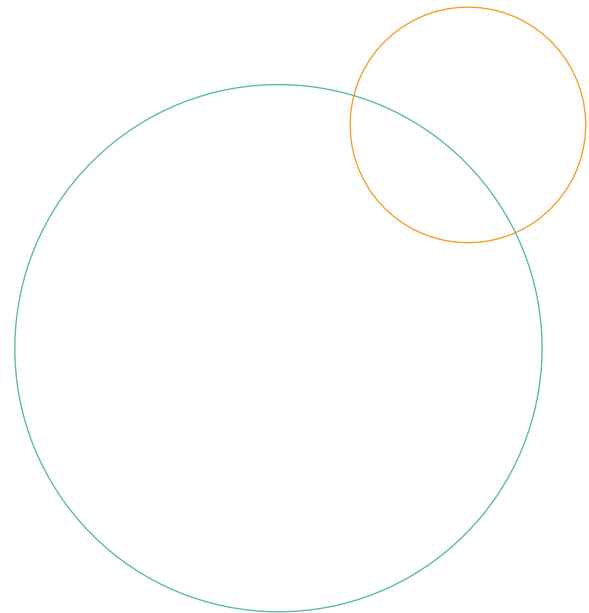
Democratic societies recognize the crucial role that independent information plays in the ability of people to govern themselves. Through our work in the **Information for a Democratic Society** focus area, the foundation sees itself as a resource for understanding democratic citizenship, enhancing civic education, and supporting fact-based journalism.

### In 2023, this area's work focused on democracy and higher education:

- The US Supreme Court's decision against race-conscious admissions threatens to reshape the landscape of college diversity and, by extension, the state of American democracy. In anticipation of this ruling, the **Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators** brought together a distinguished panel of experts in June to consider the implications and potential responses to the decision.
- The foundation partnered with the American Association of Colleges and Universities to bring together a consortium of former college and university presidents. This leadership group committed to confronting urgent challenges to both democracy and higher education, including efforts to undermine public trust and the rising tide of legislation aimed at curbing discussions on racial inequality. One outcome of this partnership was a **timely, written statement** in the wake of the Supreme Court's decision on *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard* that was signed by more than 100 former college presidents.

Our work in higher education will continue in 2024 and will be joined by two objectives: enhance public awareness about the core tenets and needs of a functioning democracy and equip citizens with the analytical tools necessary to recognize and counter authoritarian threats. This dual approach aims to fortify our democratic infrastructure, cultivating a society that is informed and resilient.

By pursuing these objectives, we're not only responding to immediate challenges but also laying the groundwork for a democracy that can withstand future tests. This work remains crucial in a world where the principles of transparency, accountability, and informed decision-making are under constant assault.



## Democracy and Community

The **Democracy and Community** focus area begins with everyday people who are longing for a world where they can work with their neighbors—literal and metaphorical—to bring about a world that is more democratic and just, freer, and safer. This focus area centers on how to use available knowledge to make things work in *this* place, in *our* time, with *our* people, with *our* circumstances.

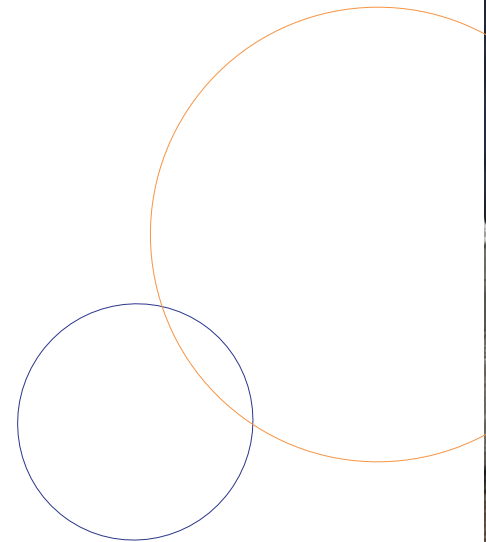
This work connects the Kettering Foundation to our roots in Dayton and our origins as a hub of innovation and creativity. Collaboration and engagement with citizens and partners in Dayton and across the state helps us to better understand how to strengthen inclusive democracies not only on Election Day or in capitals but also in community and family spaces. Work with communities provides a place to collaboratively experiment with democratic innovations and is an important step in data-driven, scalable, and sustainable democratic change.

One key step in 2023 was developing a relationship centered around trust-based philanthropy with the **Dayton Foundation and the Northwest Dayton Partnership**. This collaborative effort supports initiatives where community members are working together to improve their communities and experience the benefits of collaboration firsthand.

### Throughout 2023, we also

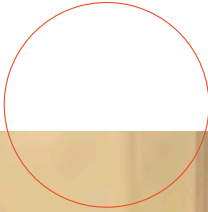
- met with more than 100 local and national leaders who are working at the intersection of inclusive democracy and community, and
- conducted a comprehensive field-mapping effort that included a deep dive into research on the role of communities in strengthening democracy and conversations with practitioners, community members, scholars, and faith and government leaders.

Through partnerships, meetings, and research, we have sharpened our strategies, research methods, and intended outcomes as we head into 2024.









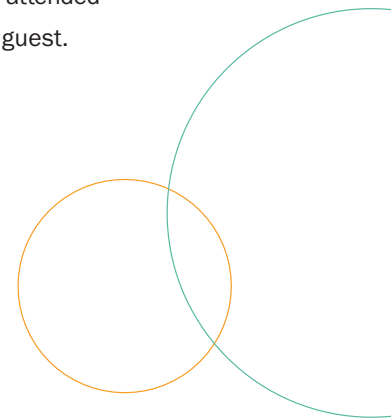
## Democracy and the Arts

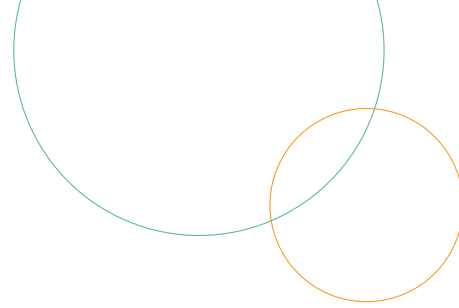
The **Democracy and the Arts** focus area has a generous view of what art is, who creates it, and who it is for. It will affirm and advance inclusive democracy through integrating the unique power of the arts into the foundation's work in Dayton, throughout the United States, and around the globe. This focus area requires building relationships and acquiring an understanding of the local context because art projects are discrete events that occur in particular places and times. Our work in this focus area's inaugural year centered around building relationships and developing strategic partnerships with leaders of the Dayton and Washington, DC, arts communities.

The arts can enhance our capacity to understand, affirm, and advance core democratic values. Art that advances and affirms democracy integrates the power of the arts with the aims of activism. This activates the personal connections essential for genuinely caring about democracy, which in turn enhances the likelihood of individuals taking actions to protect it. Abstract conceptions of democracy are made more concrete through accessible art that engages the senses and stirs emotions.

### A few highlights from 2023 include:

- The support of the first issue of *1/6: The Graphic Novel*, which imagines what might have happened if the insurrection at the US Capitol on January 6, 2021, had been successful.
- The inaugural **Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators** event on April 12 was a conversation between Sharon L. Davies and world-renowned Dayton artist Willis "Bing" Davis, focused on the role of art in democracy.
- A yearlong research project to study and support **Q the Music**, an afterschool string orchestra program for at-risk youth organized by the Dayton Performing Arts Alliance.
- The Democracy and the Arts Celebration, on October 25, formally launched the focus area. More than 40 people from organizations throughout the Dayton community attended and Bing Davis was the honored guest.





## Democracy around the Globe

The **Democracy around the Globe** focus area has been built over decades of work with civil society practitioners, scholars, teachers, journalists, religious leaders, and other democracy advocates from throughout the world. This loose international network has been vital to informing the area's priorities, identifying international partners, and ensuring that the foundation's work reflects the perspectives and experiences of those championing democracy in countries around the world.

Given concerns at the foundation about democratic backsliding and the growth of authoritarian threats, work in this area started early. In August of 2022, just four months into Sharon L. Davies' tenure as Kettering's new president, the foundation kicked off what would become more than a year of taking stock of the key threats facing democracy in different parts of the world. Over the next 14 months, members of the Democracy around the Globe team would travel to Argentina, Japan, the Dominican Republic, South Africa, and New Zealand.

These meetings deepened our understanding of the challenges people face in specific regions and offered opportunities to both build connections with constellations of local and regional actors and learn about promising initiatives. In Buenos Aires and in Auckland, the foundation brought together democracy champions from different parts of the world to identify opportunities to work across regions to promote and defend inclusive democracies.

To further explore some of these opportunities, the Democracy around the Globe team organized a set of affinity groups and hosted a series of webinars focused on elections-related issues, the media and information landscape, civil society organizations, and systemic challenges faced by women and Indigenous or First Nations people. The team also launched an experimental new model for our international fellowship program, moving away from a six-month residential model to a hybrid that incorporates a mentoring component so that fellows may gain insights from colleagues in other organizations and regions of the world.



# Strategic Communications

In the spring of 2023, the Charles F. Kettering Foundation embarked on an ambitious strategic communications process to align with the new strategic plan. This included work on our brand position, brand identity, and website.

It was important that the whole staff was involved, just as they were in the strategic planning process. While a small team worked closely with the strategic communications firm, Spitfire Strategies, the staff were engaged through surveys and an interactive branding ideation workshop. We asked ourselves who our target audiences are and what image we want to project.

These months of work resulted in a new look and new strategy that repositions the foundation for a future focused on inclusive democracy.

Building from our core values, we identified five characteristics of the Kettering brand: courageous, committed, inclusive, thought leaders, and trustworthy.

We claim a unique niche in the democracy landscape because the foundation is one of the longest running operating foundations focused on strengthening democracy, has always had a global scope, and is solutions-focused.

At the root of all our communications work is the following brand promise: The Charles F. Kettering Foundation inspires and connects individuals and organizations in the work of advancing thriving and inclusive democracies around the globe. We believe all people belong and have the right to fair and equitable treatment by institutions and systems of governance.







# Communicating in Defense of Democracy

## Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators

In early 2023, the Kettering Foundation reimagined an existing internal-facing speaker series, exploring options for connecting with external audiences and addressing current issues. The result was Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators, in which we explored ways to strengthen democracy, focused on positive narratives amid democratic crisis, and considered opportunities to build upon the strengths of our diverse communities and nation to make them more inclusive and equitable.

Over the course of the year, we hosted three Kettering Conversations in different cities. There were a total of 208 in-person participants and 435 participants on Zoom. In-person participants had the option to attend a networking reception immediately following each Kettering Conversation.

Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators provided an opportunity to engage with external audiences in new ways and in different locations. Each event built on the previous one, as staff learned what worked, did not work, and what should be done differently. The events were intentionally given a unique look and feel, signaling to the audience a new Kettering.



### ***Inaugural Kettering Conversations with Democracy Innovators***

Sharon L. Davies was in **conversation** with Willis “Bing” Davis, a Dayton artist, educator, and owner of the Davis Art Studio and EbonNia Gallery. Davis is a committed member of the Dayton community who focuses on the education of youth in the arts, with an emphasis on African American art. The discussion explored the role art plays in a democracy, whether bringing people together or as a form of protest. The program was held on April 12 at the Dayton Art Institute in Dayton, Ohio.

### ***A Conversation on the Recent Attacks on Higher Education and Their Implications for Democracy***

Davies moderated a **panel** focused on recent attacks on higher education and their implications for democracy. The timing was chosen to coincide with the US Supreme Court ruling on *Students for Fair Admissions v. Harvard*. The panel included Sheryll Cashin, Carmack Waterhouse Professor of Law, Civil Rights, and Social Justice, Georgetown University Law School; Melissa Murray, Frederick I. and Grace Stokes Professor of Law, New York University School of Law; and Eduardo Padrón, President Emeritus, Miami Dade College. The event was held on June 13 at the Willard InterContinental in Washington, DC.

### ***Erosion of Democracy: Ohio in the Spotlight***

Nancy Rogers, Professor Emeritus at the Ohio State University Moritz College of Law, moderated a **panel** examining the erosion of democracy at the state level, using a spotlight on the August special election in Ohio. The discussion explored the most urgent threats to democracy at the state level and what can be done to address them. The panelists were Maureen O’Connor, retired chief justice of the Supreme Court of Ohio, and David Pepper, lawyer, writer, political activist, former elected official, adjunct professor, and former chair of the Ohio Democratic Party. The panel took place on September 7 at the Athletic Club of Columbus in Columbus, Ohio.



## Emerging Issues Roundtables and Conference

Since 2018, the Charles F. Kettering Foundation's Washington, DC, office has hosted the Emerging Issues Roundtables, regular, off-the-record conversations with members of the policy community to explore ways to advance democracy. These private conversations draw leaders from the think tank and policy community, government, academia, philanthropy, and more. All told, more than 180 people have participated in these lunches since inception. Many attend frequently, with more than 80 having attended two or more.

The foundation hosted four Emerging Issues Roundtables in 2023, including the first **Emerging Issues Conference** on September 19, 2023. This conference built on the robust Emerging Issues network and added more DC policy leaders.

In a room filled to capacity at the Mayflower Hotel, expert panelists and audience participants explored the dimensions of authoritarian moves taking place both globally and in the United States, responses and the tensions between possible solutions, and potential ways forward. The full conference was live streamed, and the video was later posted to the foundation's web site. The conference was moderated by Brad Rourke, Chief External Affairs Officer and Director of DC Operations.

### The panels focused on connections and creative tensions among major themes in the pro-democracy space:

- Countering authoritarianism and fostering citizen engagement: There are rising authoritarian tendencies among certain political actors and also among their grassroots adherents. How does this square with important efforts to engage citizens in the work of governance?
- Sharing findings from the report, *What Promotes Pluralism in America's Diversifying Democracy?*
- Advancing inclusive democracy and pluralism: Global movements are seeking to make democracy work for groups that have historically been excluded from its benefits. At the same time, increasing hyperpolarization has driven moves to promote bridging and pluralism. How do these movements coexist?



## External Affairs and Sponsorships

Throughout 2023, the Charles F. Kettering Foundation activated an increasingly external-facing set of strategies. In addition to the communications and convening work, the foundation worked to lay the groundwork for new strategic partnerships and sponsored or supported a number of significant events.

Cultivating relationships with best-in-class, mission-aligned organizations requires time, leadership, and physical presence. Kettering senior leadership made 10 trips to Washington, DC, to move these relationships forward, a dramatic increase over previous years. These trips involved public appearances as well as meetings with senior leaders of policy organizations, associations, and government offices, designed to identify potential opportunities and areas for impact and visibility.

To support the pro-democracy efforts of other key organizations, the foundation sponsored several public and leadership events including:

- 2023 National **Conference** on Dialogue & Deliberation
- 72nd Dayton NAACP Hall of Freedom **Awards**
- Aspen Institute 39th Annual Awards **Dinner**
- Association of Former Members of Congress Election **Symposium** (lead sponsor)
- Howard University Center for Journalism & Democracy, **Democracy Summit**
- National Conference on Citizenship 2023 Annual **Conference** on Citizenship
- National Constitution Center Liberty Medal **Ceremony**
- National Democratic Institute Democracy **Gala** 2023
- The Nantucket Project (**tnpONE**)
- YWCA Dayton **Women of Influence**



# Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy

The Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship in Journalism and Democracy is awarded to journalists and scholars from the US and around the world whose work furthers Katherine Fanning’s lifelong commitment to journalism in service of democracy. The fellowship aims to provide recipients with opportunities to speak, report, and write on some of the most urgent challenges of democracy. Recipients of the Fanning Fellowship are selected by the president of the Kettering Foundation.

In 2023, Sharon L. Davies selected Judy Woodruff, senior correspondent and former anchor and managing editor of the *PBS NewsHour*, to receive the Fanning Fellowship. A distinguished journalist for more than five decades, Woodruff is nationally recognized for her integrity, reporting, and media leadership. She is the recipient of numerous awards, among them a Peabody Award for Journalistic Integrity and an Emmy Lifetime Achievement Award. She has received 25 honorary degrees.

In January 2023, Woodruff stepped away from her anchor duties to devote 2023 and 2024 to a new reporting project, “*Judy Woodruff Presents: America at a Crossroads*,” trying to understand our country better and probing why Americans seem so divided. She will also do a series of reports on challenges facing people with disabilities. Her project is in line with the goals of the Kettering Foundation’s Fanning Fellowship.

## About Katherine W. Fanning

This fellowship is named for Katherine “Kay” W. Fanning (1927-2000), an innovative and influential newspaper editor and publisher who served on the Kettering Foundation board of directors for 12 years and was chair of the board from 1994 to 1996. Between 1966 and 1983, she led the *Anchorage Daily News*, which, under her stewardship, won a Pulitzer Prize for public service. Fanning also served as editor of the *Christian Science Monitor* from 1983 to 1988, and, in 1987, was the first woman to serve as president of the American Society of Newspaper Editors.

On the Kettering Foundation board, Fanning gave steady voice to the need for news media to act with ethical standards and for journalistic practices to serve the interests of democracy. Her commitment to those ideals sparked the foundation’s exploration of what became known as public journalism, which emphasized the responsibility of journalists in a democracy to help citizens deliberate over important issues in their communities. She also had a keen interest in the foundation’s international work and often brought the two interests together.

## Judy Woodruff

2023 Katherine W. Fanning Fellowship  
in Journalism and Democracy Recipient



# David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award

The David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award allows the foundation to benefit from the experience and insights of leaders who have had distinguished careers in government, philanthropy, higher education, and other fields. Their experiences and insights will, in turn, enrich and enhance the Kettering Foundation's research and activities on behalf of democracy. This award honors the charitable and civic work of David Mathews by awarding a recipient in recognition of past civic achievements that advanced the role of citizens in democracy to promote civic life and encourage future work by the public in line with the overall mission of the Charles F. Kettering Foundation. Recipients of the David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award are selected by the president of the Kettering Foundation.

In 2023, Sharon L. Davies selected former Kansas Governor and Obama administration cabinet member Kathleen Sebelius to receive the first David Mathews Democracy Fellowship Award. Sebelius, who served as secretary of the US Department of Health and Human Services from 2009 to 2014, has shown a commitment to selfless public service and leadership.



**Kathleen Sebelius**  
2023 David Mathews Democracy  
Fellowship Award Recipient

## About David Mathews

This fellowship award is named for David Mathews, who served as president and CEO of the Kettering Foundation from 1981 to 2022 and is now president emeritus. While at Kettering, he led the foundation's research on the work of democracy, focusing on the capacity of citizens to govern themselves and resolve their common problems. He led the creation of the National Issues Forums, which encourages deliberative dialogue over public issues. Mathews is the author of eight books and has written extensively on deliberation and democracy, education, and public policy.

Mathews served as secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare in the Ford administration, focusing on restoring public confidence in government and reforming the regulatory system. From 1965 to 1980, Mathews taught history at the University of Alabama, and also served as president from 1969 to 1980, an era of significant change and innovation, including the integration of the institution. Mathews received an AB degree in history and classical Greek, graduating Phi Beta Kappa from the University of Alabama, and a PhD in history from Columbia University. He is the recipient of 17 honorary degrees. In 2007, the Alabama Center for Civic Life was renamed the David Mathews Center for Civic Life in his honor.

# Senior Fellows

As we have started to implement our new strategic plan, we have built a roster of distinguished senior fellows to act as experts and thought leaders for the foundation. Our **senior fellows** represent the nation's leading democracy thinkers and practitioners, drawn from both major parties and new emerging parties, the academy, government, public service, civil society, business, and journalism. Each is already engaged in an active body of work that aligns with our vision and mission to advance and defend democracy, speaking up and speaking out in defense of democracy.

From late 2023 to early 2024, we announced the appointments of 13 distinguished Americans as Charles F. Kettering Foundation senior fellows.

We will build on the unique strengths, interests, and bases of experience of our senior fellows by engaging them in Kettering's programs and initiatives in a variety of ways. Some will contribute to our new blog series, *From Many, We*, and others will be guests on our new podcast, *The Context*, that launched in early 2024. All will be involved in some of our public conversations as panelists or keynotes.



**William J. Barber II,**  
Minister and Social Activist



**Johnnetta Betsch Cole,**  
Former Spelman College President



**James Comey,**  
Former Director, FBI



**Neal Katyal,**  
Professor of National Security  
Law, Georgetown University



**María Teresa Kumar,**  
Cofounder and president  
of Voto Latino and Voto  
Latino Foundation



**Steven Levitsky,**  
Professor of Government,  
Harvard University



**J. Michael Luttig,**  
Former Judge, US Court of  
Appeals for the Fourth Circuit



**Chris Matthews,**  
American Political  
Commentator



**Maureen O'Connor,**  
Retired Chief Justice,  
Ohio Supreme Court



**David Pepper,**  
Former Chair, Ohio  
Democratic Party



**Kelley Robinson,**  
President, Human  
Rights Campaign



**Alexander Vindman,**  
Former Director for  
European Affairs, US  
National Security Council



**Christine Todd Whitman,**  
Former Governor, New Jersey

## Conferences

Throughout 2023, Kettering's staff participated in 31 conferences. Staff also were panelists or presenters for 23 conference sessions.

List of conferences:

- 114th NAACP National **Convention**
- 2023 Civic Learning and Democratic Engagement **meeting**, American Association of State Colleges & Universities
- 2023 **Conference** on Diversity, Equity, and Student Success, American Association of Colleges and Universities
- 2023 **Conference** on Global Learning, American Association of Colleges and Universities
- 2023 National **Conference** on Dialogue & Deliberation
- Advancing Foundation Archives **conference**
- American Council on Education Annual **Meeting**
- Association of Former Members of Congress Election **Symposium**
- **ComNet23**, the Communications Network
- Congressional Black Caucus Foundation 52nd Annual Legislative **Conference**
- Council on Higher Education as a Strategic Asset **convenings**
- **Democracy360**, Karsh Institute of Democracy, University of Virginia
- **Democracy Forum**: Strengthening Democracy and Citizen Participation, Innovation for Change (Dominican Republic)
- Frontiers of Democracy annual **conference**, Jonathan M. Tisch College of Civic Life, Tufts University
- International City/County Management Association (ICMA) Annual **Conference**
- Joint Annual **Meeting** of the Council of State Archivists (CoSA) and Society of American Archivists (SAA)
- International **Congress** of the Latin American Studies Association
- Mid-America Regional Council Annual **Meeting** and Social Equity Leadership Conference
- National **Conference** on Citizenship 2023 Annual Conference on Citizenship
- National Convention of State Legislators (NCSL) Legislative **Summit**
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators annual **conference**
- National Forum for Black Public Administrators Cleveland Chapter annual **conference**
- National **Summit** on Equal Opportunity in Higher Education, US Department of Education
- National Urban League Virtual **Conference**
- The Nantucket Project (**tnpONE**)
- The Obama Foundation Democracy **Forum**
- Philanthropy for Active Civic Engagement (PACE) Spring Members **Meeting**
- **Philanthropy Forward '23**, Philanthropy Ohio
- Society of Ohio Archivists Annual **Meeting**





**DEMOCRACY MAKERS**  
 THE ARTS AS ACTS OF CITIZENSHIP  
 JOVI DOHERTY + BRAD ROORKE  
 CHARLES F. KETTERING FOUNDATION

**ART IS EXPRESSION**

**1. WORK DIRECTLY WITH ARTISTS**

**ART IS AN ACT OF CITIZENSHIP**  
 CREATIVITY  
 INVENTIVENESS  
 AUTONOMY  
 AVAILABLE TO A BROADER PUBLIC  
 PUBLIC PLACE  
 MAKES DEMOCRACY CONCRETE

**2. ORGANIZE a PUBLIC ART PROJECT**

**DIALOGIC ART**  
 CONVERSATIONS BETWEEN PEOPLE OF DIFFERENT WORLDS OF ART

**PARTICIPATORY ART**  
 COLLECTIVE, CO-CREATIVE

**AESTHESIS**  
 KNOWLEDGE GAINED THROUGH THE SENSES

**3. CO-CREATE AN ART EXHIBITION WITH A MUSEUM**

**INTERVENTION ART**  
 DISRUPTS HABITUAL WAYS OF THINKING & SUPPORTS CRITICAL INQUIRY

**IT COSTS \$34 TO ENJOY ART**

**THE PROBLEM OF PROPAGANDA**

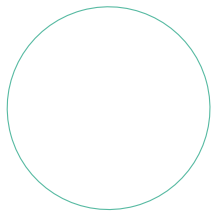
**SPECTRE OF EVALUATING OTHER ARTIST**

**WHEN YOU LOOK AT ART, WHAT COMES UP FOR YOU?**

**BLM**

**WENDE WILLY**

10/4/23 graphic recording by brian racallo, lizard brain

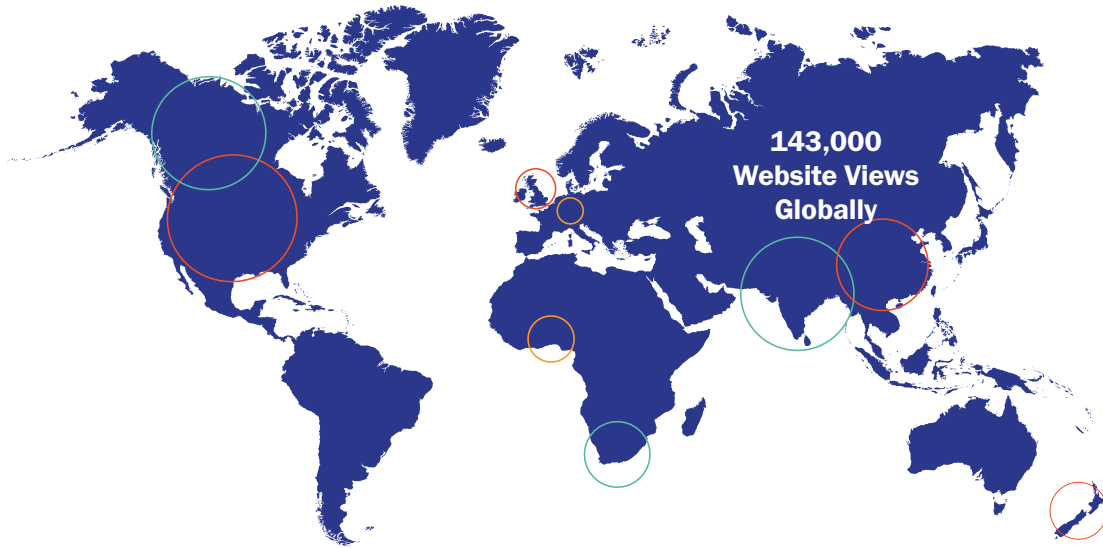


# Communications for Democratic Innovation

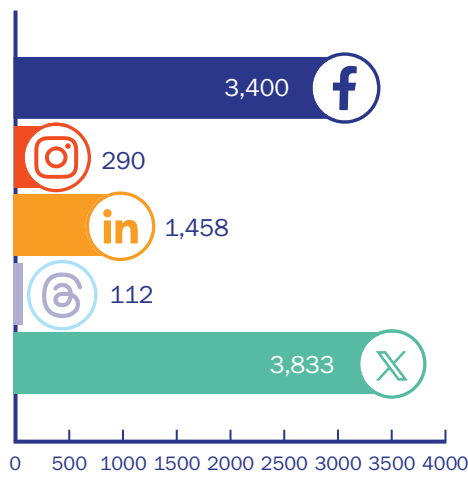
**January 2023-December 2023:** Throughout the course of 2023, Kettering’s website, social media, and e-newsletter shared and reflected the transformation of the work and scope of the foundation.



**Web Traffic:** Our **website** visitors come from all over the globe, including Canada, China, Germany, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, South Africa, and the United Kingdom.

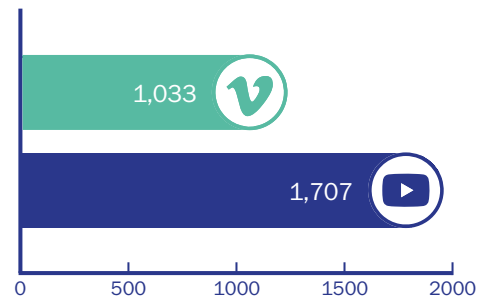


## Total Social Media Followers and Subscribers: 8,000+ (Up 9.3% from 2022)



Followers and Subscribers by Platform

## Total Vimeo and YouTube Views: 2,740



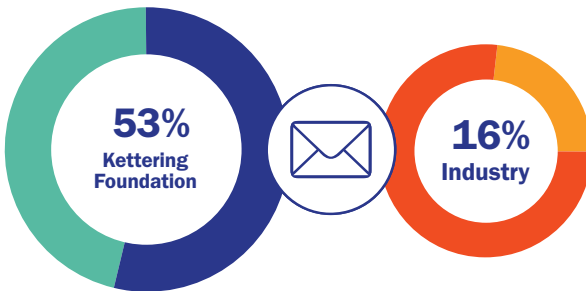
Views by Platform

**Impressions and Engagements:** The most engaged posts of 2023 were the senior fellows announcement on X and the senior fellows announcement video on Instagram November 13.

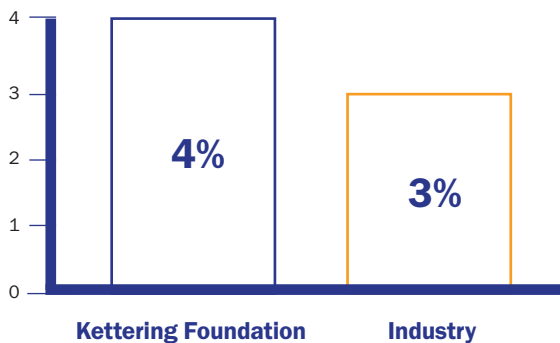


**News & Notes, e-newsletter:** Open and click rates are double the industry average for nonprofit organizations.

#### Average Open Rate YTD



#### Average Click Rate YTD



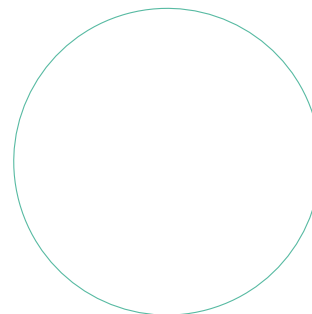
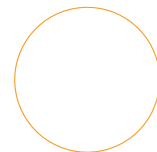
Visit our [website](#) to subscribe.

# Financial Snapshot

| <b>Assets</b>                                   | <b>2023</b>                | <b>2022</b>        |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Cash and Cash Equivalents</b> .....          | \$13,459,281 .....         | 15,839,722         |
| <b>Investments</b> .....                        | 413,200,166 .....          | 385,749,874        |
| <b>Dividends and Interest Receivable</b> .....  | 500,983 .....              | 324,141            |
| <b>Prepaid Expenses</b> .....                   | 153,819 .....              | 180,205            |
| <b>Property and Equipment, Net</b> .....        | 3,975,610 .....            | 3,931,134          |
| <b>Operating Lease Right-of-Use Asset</b> ..... | 474,284 .....              | 627,662            |
| <b>Total</b> .....                              | <b>\$431,764,143</b> ..... | <b>406,652,738</b> |

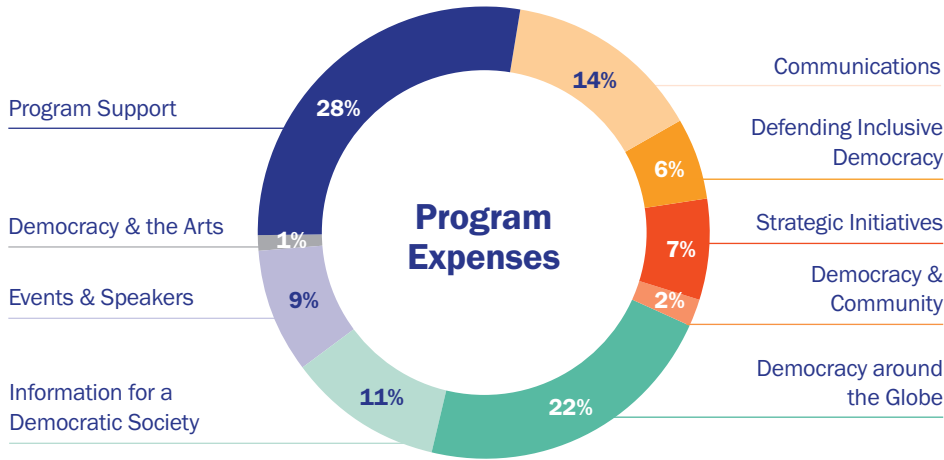
| <b>Liabilities and Net Assets</b>                         | <b>2023</b>                | <b>2022</b>        |
|---|----------------------------|--------------------|
| <b>Liabilities</b>  |                            |                    |
| <b>Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses</b> .....        | \$455,500 .....            | 1,087,431          |
| <b>Accrued Compensation and Related Liabilities</b> ..... | 86,712 .....               | 1,349,984          |
| <b>Accrued Postretirement Benefit Costs</b> .....         | 3,723,918 .....            | 3,723,918          |
| <b>Operating Lease Liability</b> .....                    | 498,090 .....              | 651,127            |
| <b>Total</b> .....  | <b>\$4,764,220</b> .....   | <b>6,812,460</b>   |
| <b>Net Assets:</b>  |                            |                    |
| <b>Without Donor Restrictions</b> .....                   | \$ 426,988,673 .....       | 399,829,028        |
| <b>With Donor Restrictions</b> .....                      | 11,250 .....               | 11,250             |
| <b>Total Net Assets</b> .....                             | <b>\$426,999,923</b> ..... | <b>399,840,278</b> |
| <b>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</b> .....             | <b>\$431,764,143</b> ..... | <b>406,652,738</b> |

The financial information is preliminary and presented as of January 10, 2024.



## Expenses

| Program                              | 2023               | % of Program | % of Total |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|--------------|------------|
| Defending Inclusive Democracy        | \$368,915          | 6%           | 2%         |
| Information for a Democratic Society | 694,039            | 11%          | 4%         |
| Democracy and Community              | 134,787            | 2%           | 1%         |
| Democracy around the Globe           | 1,460,515          | 22%          | 9%         |
| Democracy and the Arts               | 34,870             | 1%           | 0%         |
| Program Support                      | 1,862,568          | 28%          | 12%        |
| Communications                       | 876,918            | 14%          | 5%         |
| Events and Speakers                  | 575,564            | 9%           | 4%         |
| Strategic Initiatives                | 450,925            | 7%           | 3%         |
| <b>Total Program Expenses</b>        | <b>\$6,459,101</b> |              | <b>40%</b> |



| General Operating                       | 2023                | % of Total |
|---|---------------------|------------|
| Personnel and Directors                 | \$7,974,750         | 48%        |
| Operations, Facilities, and General     | 2,009,890           | 12%        |
| <b>Total General Operating Expenses</b> | <b>\$9,984,640</b>  | <b>60%</b> |
| <b>Total Expenses</b>                   | <b>\$16,443,741</b> |            |

The financial information is preliminary and presented as of January 10, 2024.

# Charles F. Kettering Foundation Leadership

## Senior Team

**Tayo Clyburn**, Chief Strategy Officer and Senior Advisor to the President

**Sharon L. Davies**, President and Chief Executive Officer

**John R. Dedrick**, Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer

**Mindy LaBreck**, Vice President for People and Culture

**James Martin**, Treasurer and Chief Financial Officer

**Brad Rourke**, Chief External Affairs Officer and Director of DC Operations

**Maxine S. Thomas**, Director of International Programs, Vice President, and General Counsel

## Board of Directors

**Sharon L. Davies**

**Ed Dorn**

**Beverly Wade Hogan**

**Les Ihara Jr.**

**Peter Levine**

**Sherry Magill (Chair)**

**Hank Meijer**

**Suzanne Morse Moomaw**

**Roberto Saba**





*Defending Democracy: The Charles F. Kettering Foundation 2023 Annual Report*

© 2024 Charles F. Kettering Foundation

[www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)

*Center cover image courtesy of Shellee Fisher Photography.*



200 Commons Road, Dayton, OH 45459-2799 • (937) 434-7300; (800) 221-3657  
444 North Capitol Street NW, Suite 434, Washington, DC 20001 • (202) 393-4478

[www.kettering.org](http://www.kettering.org)