2021 Annual Report
Executive Summary

This year was an exciting one for the Open Research Funders Group (ORFG), marked by membership growth, increased team capacity, and a number of new inward- and outward-facing initiatives designed to advance open research within our membership as well as enact systems-level change in the larger ecosystem.

The ORFG has, since its inception in late 2016, worked to serve both as a community of practice and as an amplifier of the funder’s voice with respect to open research. In 2021, our membership swelled from 17 to 24 funders. This growth provided new texture to our understanding of funder concerns and priorities, and allowed us to hone both our programming and our cross-stakeholder engagement activities accordingly.

The ORFG team also grew in 2021, hiring its first Community Manager in March and its first Open & Equitable Civic Science Fellow in September. Our increased capacity has allowed us to provide more customized support for members and expand our activities, both internally and externally. On the internal end, examples of this work include: (1) our first in-depth analysis of open research policies across the ORFG membership, leading to personalized policy analysis and guidance for members, (2) launching new cohorts such as the Compliance and Output Tracking Group, and (3) our first analysis of ORFG member funding across the open ecosystem. On the external end, efforts include (1) serving as the operational lead for the National Academy of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine’s Roundtable on Aligning Incentives for Open Science, with notable advances like the release of the Toolkit for Fostering Open Science Practices and the soon-to-be-launched Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship (HELIOS); (2) the new Open & Equitable Model Funding Program, with 40+ interventions designed to make grantmaking more transparent and inclusive that a cohort of funders (within and beyond ORFG membership) will begin piloting in 2022; and (3) the Open Access Funder Cohort, which the ORFG launched in 2021 with representatives from six philanthropies, empowering them with the tools, strategies, and support to advance open policies within their organizations.

Our shared successes in 2021 position the ORFG to further collaborate with funders, universities, government agencies, professional societies, rank-and-file scholars and scientists, and a range of other stakeholders in delivering a more transparent, inclusive, and trustworthy research ecosystem.
Community of Practice and Internal Developments

Membership Growth
The ORFG welcomed seven new members in 2021, including Aligning Science Against Parkinson’s (ASAP) and Hewlett Foundation in March, Alex’s Lemonade Stand Foundation (ALSF) and Lyda HillPhilanthropies in May, Chan Zuckerberg Initiative (CZI) in June, Allen Frontiers Group in September, and Fidelity Foundation in November. This brings us to 24 members in total, representing a 41% growth in membership over the last year. This is the largest single-year percent growth since the ORFG’s first year, and indicates a strong momentum within the philanthropic space to support open research. ORFG members have more than $250B in combined assets, and their annual grantmaking is in excess of $11B. This means our members have huge potential to influence the open research ecosystem and grantee practices, as well as to bring multiple stakeholders to the table as we attempt to promote change.

Team and Capacity Growth
The ORFG team also grew in 2021, hiring its first Community Manager (Erin McKiernan) in March and its first Open & Equitable Civic Science Fellow (Eunice Mercado Lara) in September. With this increased capacity, we have been able to provide more customized support for members and expand our efforts by launching new internal and external initiatives.

The Community Manager began with a listening tour to understand the development of members’ open research policies, challenges they have faced, where the ORFG has added value, and where we could provide additional support in the future. The feedback received during this tour has already inspired new policy analyses, materials development, and working groups (described below), and continues to guide our work. We plan to carry out similar interviews annually to keep in touch with member needs.

The Open & Equitable Fellow also began her tenure with a listening tour to learn what our members are doing to improve Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and how they would like to incorporate these principles into their grantmaking. This feedback is helping to develop the Open & Equitable Model Funding Program (described below). We hope this program will positively shape grantmaking processes, both within and beyond the ORFG, and is another way that increased capacity is allowing us to grow new, impactful projects.
Community of Practice and Internal Developments

Policy Advances

In summer of 2021, we performed a comprehensive analysis of open research policies across the ORFG membership. We mapped the broad spectrum of policies on different dimensions such as timing of sharing, reuse rights, and number of products for which sharing is mandated; we calculated the prevalence of different open research practices in the policies; and we identified some areas for improvement, including better discoverability and clearer policy language. In particular, looking at where public-facing language is absent with respect to certain open research practices presents potential areas for growth where we can provide guidance. Our policy analysis also appears to be acting as an important catalyst. Since sending it out to the ORFG, we have been contacted by several members to discuss ways to potentially improve policy language, or make their support of open research more visible. We are now in the position to provide customized analysis and guidance to all ORFG members, and hope this is another way we can provide added value to help advance policy.

We have also had ORFG members reach out to us for help with aspects of policy development. In March of 2021, one member expressed interest in expanding their open science policy to include preprints and asked us for guidance. We developed a primer on preprints, including relevance to the open ecosystem, strategic considerations, approaches with examples from different funders, and guiding resources for more information. Member representatives said this primer was helpful in developing the language for their most recent policy supporting preprints.

Compliance and Output Tracking Group

During the Community Manager’s listening tour, many ORFG members mentioned that policy compliance and grant output tracking is an area of deep interest, both for those with policies and those thinking about developing policies. To further explore these issues, in June of 2021 we launched a working group dedicated to compliance and output tracking with volunteer representatives from 12 organizations. We have held monthly meetings, hearing about a variety of projects in this space, ranging from internal solutions used by members to external tools in development. The group is also developing a workflow document to outline the different steps and considerations involved in compliance and output tracking and map where in the process solutions exist, where better tools are needed, and identify possible intervention points.
Community of Practice and Internal Developments

Open Ecosystem Analysis

Inspired in part by feedback during the Community Manager’s listening tour and also further conversations with members, in October of 2021 we performed our first analysis of ORFG member funding in the open ecosystem. This allowed us to get an overview of the many ways beyond policy that our members are contributing to the growth of open research by supporting a wide variety of open access, open data, open education, open hardware, and open source initiatives and projects.

We were also able to link specific members with certain priority areas, e.g., members that focus on funding open access or open education initiatives. This information could help us in future to provide targeted information to these members regarding potential projects of interest, or even connect members with similar interests to explore collaborative funding efforts. With a deeper dive, we may also be able to identify areas where there are concentrations or gaps in funding.
Funder's Voice and External Developments

NASEM Roundtable

The ORFG continues to serve as the operational lead for the National Academies of Science, Engineering, and Medicine’s Roundtable on Aligning Incentives for Open Science. In 2021, a Roundtable workshop introduced several advances, most notably the public release of the Toolkit for Fostering Open Science Practices. The toolkit is a modular set of resources – including best practices; policy primers; and sample language/rubrics for hiring, reviews, grantmaking, and tenure & promotion – that can be adopted by a range of research stakeholders to fundamentally improve research incentives. Importantly, the toolkit is openly licensed to facilitate reuse, remixing, adaptations, and additions. We recently uploaded a version of the toolkit to Open Science Framework to make it easier for us and others to add resources and track its development through version control. We hope this resource will be an important catalyst for promoting open policy far beyond the ORFG.

Additionally, the Roundtable hosted an October 2021 meeting of university presidents and their high-level designates, the focus of which was planning for a cohort of US colleges and universities to launch a community of practice focused on developing and implementing open research incentives and practices. This meeting was led by the presidents of four regionally and programmatically diverse institutions. At the conclusion of the meeting, NASEM and the ORFG proposed formalizing this community of practice approach. The concept has been warmly received, with over 60 institutions committed. At a high level, engagement from colleges and universities has three core components: presidential commitment, campus engagement and collaboration among participants. This will represent the largest, most carefully coordinated attempt to align higher education practices with open research values. The project - named HELIOS (short for the Higher Education Leadership Initiative for Open Scholarship) - will hold its initial meeting in March 2022.

HELIOS will be a core component of the next phase of the Roundtable, which is in the process of being renewed for a second three year cycle. The primary focus of this second stage will be coordinating activities within and across stakeholder cohorts. These cohorts - action-oriented groups focused on applying the theory of change developed over the first phase of the Roundtable - will nurture open practices and incentives among professional societies, funders (based on the experiences gleaned via our own Open Access Funder Cohort, detailed below), and higher education (via HELIOS). The Roundtable will oversee these activities to ensure cultivation of mutually reinforcing vectors within and across these sectors.
Funder's Voice and External Developments

Open & Equitable Model Funding Program

Last year, the ORFG launched an Equity & Open Science Working Group, which includes representatives from five ORFG members, as well as seven scholars, scientists, and activists working at the intersection of open research and marginalized communities. The working group determined that to rapidly and visibly champion a more equitable and open research environment, philanthropies should leverage the best asset they bring to the research conversation – their grantmaking capabilities. As a first step, the ORFG, in collaboration with this working group and the HRA, is creating the rough framework of an Open & Equitable Model Funding Program.

In September 2021, the Program launched with the hiring of the ORFG’s first Civic Science Fellow, Eunice Mercado Lara, who joined the team specifically to coordinate these activities. Her first task was to conduct a listening tour with the members of the working group to get their feedback on possible interventions and program priorities. Feedback from the working group has now fed into a document mapping out 40+ possible interventions at different stages of the grantmaking process, which we hope will serve as the backbone of an eventual toolkit. In October, during International Open Access Week, we published a blog post and ran a Twitter campaign to officially announce the Open & Equitable Model Funding Program and ask for input from the broader community (via surveys in English, Spanish, and French). In addition, we launched our first open community call in December 2021. These calls will recur monthly. We aim to obtain feedback on the program, interventions, related experiences, and other resources from the extended community, all in the spirit of co-creation.

Last December, we also had the chance to present the Open & Equitable program to ORFG members at our annual meeting. During the session, representatives from different ORFG members shared their efforts to make grantmaking more open and equitable. We also invited all ORFG members interested in being part of the program to join our future cohort. Over the next few months, we will actively reach out to members who have expressed interest to start formal recruiting for the first cohort. Alongside the recruitment process, we will be designing the documents that will guide how the 40+ possible interventions can be implemented. While the interventions constitute the ‘what’, these primer documents will focus on the ‘how’. We anticipate that in spring 2022, we will be able to announce the members of the cohort and the work plans of each member.
Funder's Voice and External Developments

Open Access Funder Cohort

In early 2021, an ORFG “stretch goal” working group designed an Open Access Funder Cohort program to recruit a small group of open access champions from different philanthropies (both ORFG members and beyond) and empower them to advance open research within their organizations.

The final cohort included representatives from six philanthropies, the American Brain Tumor Association, Doris Duke Charitable Foundation, Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, Schmidt Futures (also an ORFG member), St. Baldrick’s Foundation, and TSC (Tuberous Scleroderma Complex) Alliance. The Health Research Alliance contributed to the socialization of the program, and four of its members signed on to the project. We launched the program in August of 2021 and then met monthly, providing both structured curriculum and customized advising to empower representatives to advance open research within their organizations. We will hold our last group session in early 2022 and then have 1:1 sessions with members to provide customized support, bring representatives closer to their policy goals, and wind down this first pilot of the program.

The ORFG plans to recruit another cohort to repeat the program in 2022 with additional funders. In the meantime, we have made the program curriculum and presentations publicly available via Open Science Framework under an open license to allow reuse. We are also thinking about ways we can string homework and readings together in a more structured way that might allow funders to follow along and use these tools independently to develop policy. While we believe that engagement is a crucial element of the program, some funders may not be able to participate in a cohort for various reasons. Public resources allow us to share information and strategies beyond the cohort and potentially broaden the impact of the program.
Looking Forward
The Open Research Funders Group anticipates that many of these initiatives will continue and grow in 2022. Internally, our Compliance and Output Tracking Group will continue to meet monthly, focusing on potential collective action in this space. Also, building on the success of this group and inspired by discussions with members, we plan to launch new ORFG cohorts, with high priorities being one group on data sharing and another on funding beyond STEM research. Several members have already expressed interest in participating. However, we realize it is important to recognize both our own bandwidth issues and those of member representatives, and so will keep this in mind with respect to planning and scheduling, perhaps staggering the launch of these throughout the first half of 2022.

Externally, the NASEM Roundtable will enter a new phase, focusing on building strong communities of practice (e.g., professional societies, higher education leadership) and taking action to serve as mutually reinforcing vectors. The HELIOS initiative will be hiring a Project Coordinator, holding its first meeting in Q1, and beginning to surface areas of shared interest and collective action. These efforts will be coordinated with the professional society and funder communities being simultaneously developed in conjunction with the Roundtable. The Open & Equitable Model Funding Program will recruit members for the funder cohort and begin piloting the interventions designed in phase 1, reporting back on the progress of these interventions as information comes in. The first OA Funder Cohort will wind down, hopefully marked by catalytic actions within those organizations to advance open policy. We plan to keep in touch with cohort members and provide customized support as needed, at least during Q1 of 2022, if not beyond. We will also recruit to launch a new cohort, likely in March or April of 2022.
2021 Operating Activities*

**Income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Memberships (1)</th>
<th>$253,840</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Program Grants (2)</td>
<td>$207,454</td>
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**Expenses**

| Personnel | $250,760 |
| Grants and Contributions (3) | $25,000 |
| Honoraria (4) | $32,239 |
| Office & General | $837 |
| Management Fees | $52,000 |

**Total Income** $461,294 (5)  
**Total Expenses** $360,836

*Unaudited management report

(1) Memberships are typically paid as either grants or invoiced contributions. Income from multiyear memberships is amortized in this report.

(2) Program grants relate to specific ORFG activities and are detailed in a separate table below. Income from multiyear grants is amortized in this report.

(3) Contribution in support of NASEM Roundtable on Aligning Incentives for Open Science.

(4) For community members contributing to the Open & Equitable Model Funding Program working group.

(5) All surplus funds carry over to future years' ORFG programming.

**List of Program Grants**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Funder</th>
<th>Amount</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arnold Ventures</td>
<td>$36,667</td>
<td>ORFG Strategic Growth Plan; covers 11 months of a 36 month grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Burroughs Wellcome Fund</td>
<td>$20,370</td>
<td>Open &amp; Equitable Model Funding Program; covers 5 months of a 27 month grant</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gordon &amp; Betty Moore Foundation</td>
<td>$32,083</td>
<td>Open &amp; Equitable Model Funding Program; covers 7 months of a 24 month grant</td>
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<td>Rita Allen Foundation</td>
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<td>Open &amp; Equitable Model Funding Program; covers 4 months of a 18 month grant</td>
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<td>Templeton World Charity Foundation</td>
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<td>ORFG Strategic Growth Plan; covers 12 months of a 36 month grant</td>
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