

2021–2022

# Impact Report

PKG Public Service Center



PKG

PRISCILLA KING GRAY  
PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER

# About the PKG Center

THE PRISCILLA KING GRAY PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER (PKG CENTER) was founded in 1988 by Dean of Student Affairs Dr. Shirley McBay, MIT first lady Priscilla King Gray, and Professor Robert Mann '50. Since that time, it has been the epicenter of public service at MIT connecting thousands of students with community partners fostering systemic change in Greater Boston and beyond. Over the past 30+ years, our vision of public service has evolved significantly

from a "day of service" mindset to one that is more long-term, community-informed, and academically-aligned.

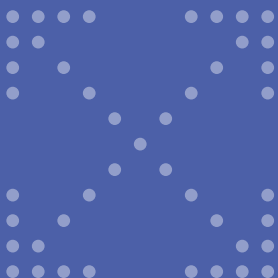
Today, the PKG Center taps and expands MIT students' unique skills and interests to prepare them to explore and address complex social and environmental challenges to create change and build a better world. We connect students with opportunities to work side-by-side with nonprofit organizations, government agencies, social enterprises, and increasingly with corporations that are driving these changes locally, nationally, and globally. Furthermore, we educate students to collaborate ethically and effectively with these community partners to engage in meaningful public service, today and in their lives beyond MIT.



PKG Spring Break Students

The PKG Center works with undergraduate and graduate students across all disciplines and class years, and our portfolio of programs are all free –and often provide funding– for students. Our programs are rigorous, immersive, driven by community perspectives, and include intentional reflections, which are all essential aspects of ethical and effective service. In addition, our programs create pathways for students to advance their knowledge and skills. Students begin by learning best practices for working with community partners and translating their skills to create social change. In our more advanced offerings, we support students while they collaborate independently with communities to create innovative ways to address complex problems.

Based on student feedback, our programs are primarily focused on three key themes: Climate Change, Health Equity, and Tech for Social Good. Racial Justice permeates these themes as communities of color are consistently and disproportionately negatively impacted by risks of climate change, health inequities, and issues related to tech, such as algorithmic injustices and limited access to technology.



## Letter from the Director

THE PANDEMIC. RACISM. SOCIOECONOMIC INEQUITIES. WILDFIRES and floods. Threats to our democracy. A disregard for science and facts. This relentless confluence of tragedies, systemic failures, and rhetoric certainly got our collective attention these past few years. All of these challenges have continued to heighten existing systemic inequities, leaving community and government agencies strained to meet increased need. MIT has a vital role to play in equipping our students to be civically prepared, navigate this tough terrain of complex social and environmental challenges, break down barriers, and create solutions to build a better world – and the PKG Center does just that.

Through PKG programs, MIT students are helping to address these needs by supporting public health efforts from Boston to Navajo Nation, innovating approaches to economic mobility in Latin America, and working on creative technology to mitigate the effects of climate change with the World Wildlife Fund. Though these are just a few examples, the students participating in our programs are applying their MIT coursework and skill sets to some of the most pressing issues of our time. In addition, the PKG Center leads the Institute's participation in the non-partisan ALL IN Campus Democracy Challenge, which helped to increase voter turnout by MIT students from 13% in 2016 to 72% in 2020.

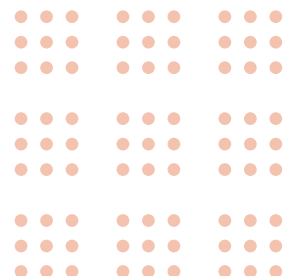


Given these acute challenges and increasing community needs, student demand for socially impactful experiential learning experiences continues to rise. Case in point – during the past year, we were able to fund only 1 out of 5 applications for Social Impact Internships due to limited funding. Therefore, we must raise even more funds each year to continue expanding this program and opportunities that rise to these challenges and meet this demand.

To our supporters, I am deeply grateful for your contributions. The work of the PKG Center and the students we serve would not be possible without your continued generosity. The impact of your gifts is best showcased through student voices. I invite you to enjoy a few program highlights and student quotes from the past year in the pages ahead.

All best wishes,

Jill Bassett  
ASSOCIATE DEAN + DIRECTOR  
PKG PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER





## Academic Courses

FOLLOWING THE PKG CENTER'S TRANSITION TO THE OFFICE OF THE Vice Chancellor in 2018, we now have the opportunity to offer for-credit academic courses. During the 2021-2022 academic year, we taught two courses. Our Fall 2021 course - Transforming Good Intentions into Good Outcomes - explored hard choices, ethical dilemmas, and the risk of failure in the humanitarian, tech, climate change, and health sectors, which exposed students to ethical frameworks and standards for social engagement and intervention. Our Spring 2022 course - Informed Philanthropy in Theory and Action – explored the potential and pitfalls of philanthropy as a mechanism for social change, culminating with the class granting \$7,000 to a local nonprofit organization. Students analyzed the

work of community agencies to address challenges and opportunities facing MIT's neighboring communities, with particular focus on community representation, equity, and social justice. Our goal for these courses is to teach students the skills necessary to work ethically and effectively with community organizations, and to create a pipeline of engaged students who will continue this work and participate in additional PKG programs.



### Student Perspective

#### Informed Philanthropy in Theory and Action

**“This class was a great complement to my other coursework in the sense that we were looking at human-focused issues and bringing emotion and heart into our work rather than just solving equations or writing programs. It brought me back to my community and reminded me why I wanted to come to MIT in the first place: to make a tangible impact on someone’s life.**

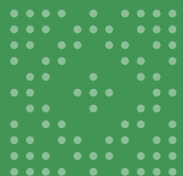
**Unlike my other classes, I knew my work was going toward more than tests or essays — I felt I, along with my classmates and instructors, was working toward a real positive difference in my community.”**



Students in SP.256 Informed Philanthropy in Theory and Action analyzing which organization to grant \$7,000

## Community-Based Team Programs

COMMUNITY-BASED TEAM PROGRAMS ARE CATALYTIC FOR MIT undergraduates and deeply influence their trajectory. Specifically, participants benefit from these experiential programs by meeting and building connections with community practitioners; accessing resources to develop and implement socially impactful projects; improving their understanding of the context behind various social issues; and developing specific skills that are valuable to future work. These team programs include our First-Year Pre-Orientation Program—Active Community Engagement and PKG Spring Break, which introduce students to local community challenges and the organizations working to address these issues. In addition, PKG IAP: Health allows students the opportunity to work alongside medical professionals at Boston Medical Center, the largest safety net hospital in New England. During this January program, students support capacity building projects to assist Boston Medical Center in their efforts to provide equitable health services to patients. Students also engage in a series of hospital events, grand rounds, and cases of the week to learn more about the healthcare ecosystem and the workings of a safety net hospital. These team programs set students on service “pathways” that allow them to deepen their engagement by participating in progressively challenging and increasingly independent work in more advanced PKG programs.



**Alana Chandler**

**Class of 2022, Course 3  
(Materials Science and Engineering)**

*Alana worked as a research intern at Boston Medical Center (BMC) as part of the PKG IAP: Health program*

**“Through my academic career, science has been taught with theories and equations, yet such learning is often divorced from the people the science can impact. The applications of what we learn in class can have amazing or harmful impacts on society, for which the ethical lens is often not discussed in the classroom. Working at BMC is a terrific example of how you can use these scientific and analytical tools for social justice, even though historically these institutions have been built on harmful practices. It’s not possible to undo the harms of the past, but this internship helps you develop tools to listen, learn from, and support communities that have been marginalized by the medical institutions.”**



Alana's remote work station aka bedroom

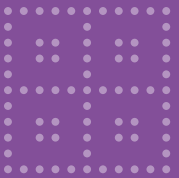
# Social Impact Internships

SOCIAL IMPACT INTERNSHIPS PAIR HIGHLY-SKILLED MIT undergraduates with nonprofits, government agencies, and social enterprises to build capacity and bolster the technical capabilities of these organizations while students address challenging social impact issues. These full-time, paid opportunities allow students to deepen their analytical, problem-solving, and critical thinking skills by applying what they are learning in the classroom to real-world challenges. Internships also allow students to grow their professional network and explore career trajectories.

Though nonprofit and public sector agencies have a strong desire to work with MIT students, they struggle to compete for MIT student talent. For-profit employer demand is strong, and students covet industry internships for their prestige, financial rewards, and career advancement benefits. Therefore, Social

Impact Internships have several key objectives: creating paid experiences that combine critical social impact work with valuable professional development; building capacity for community agencies with limited tech and financial resources (particularly those serving vulnerable populations); and developing a pipeline of socially-conscious students to carry this work beyond MIT. In fact, 99% of Social Impact Interns indicated that they gained knowledge and skills that will be beneficial in their future careers.

In addition, student demand for these socially impactful opportunities far exceeds supply. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the PKG Center was only able to fund 117 internships of the 650 applications received during summer '21 and IAP '22.



**Jason Lin**

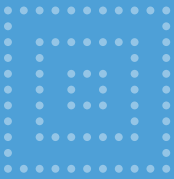
**Class of 2023, Course 6 (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science)**

*During his internship, Jason worked as a software engineering intern at Almost Fun, a nonprofit dedicated to empowering marginalized students with resources to help build mastery in math skills.*

**“Working at this internship has also shown me what it is like to create software in the real world....[It] has opened my eyes to the different types of opportunities that I have as a software engineer. I don't necessarily have to land a dream job at a big tech company. The thing that matters the most is the knowledge and skills that I have and the impact that I can create with it.”**







## Sydney Dell

Class of 2024, Course 20  
(Biological Engineering)

Sydney interned at Health Plan Administration and Oversight and Health Equity teams in MassHealth, which provides Medicaid to Massachusetts residents

“If healthcare is inaccessible, then our work as scientists in the lab is wasted and we aren’t making the impact we strive for. Science is important, but so is its accessibility and implementation. Without equitable policies in place and organizations such as MassHealth, medicine and health sciences wouldn’t be so advanced. However, there is still room for improvement and every year MassHealth reviews and edits their policies to ensure that it is as accessible as possible to the populations it serves. This is why I applied for this internship and why it has been the most rewarding one of my career.”

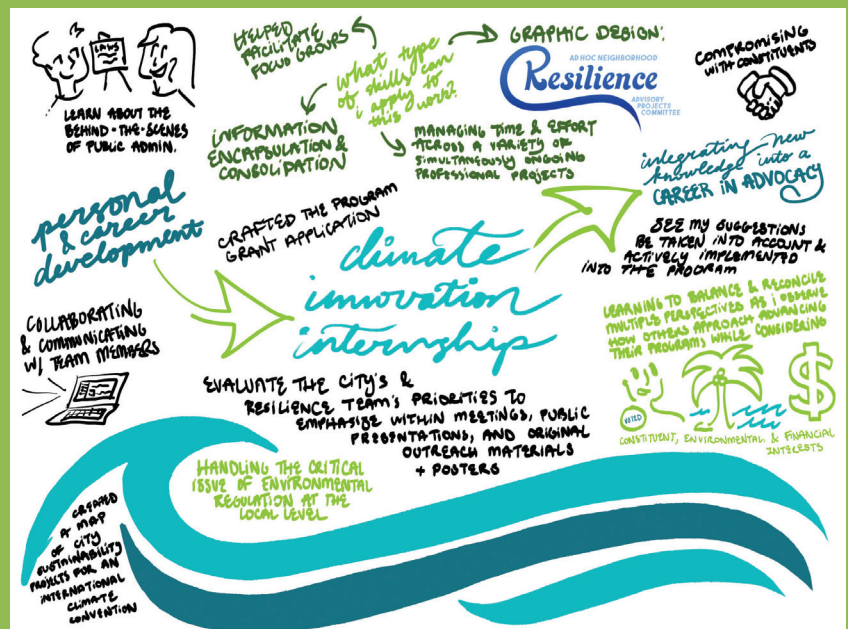


## Ari Peró

Class of 2025, Course 11  
(Urban Studies & Planning)

Ari worked as a climate policy intern at the City of Miami Beach

“Through my internship, I have developed a far greater understanding of how climate change is currently affecting local communities and how further damage to such communities can be mitigated, as well as how local policy efforts (like the ones I am working on) tie into larger scale environmental advocacy.”



Ari's visual representation of the Social Impact Internship experience

## PKG Fellowships

PKG FELLOWSHIPS PROVIDE MIT STUDENTS WITH MORE ADVANCED opportunities to foster effective community/student relationships through the development and implementation of service projects in collaboration with a community partner. Fellowships enable students the opportunity to explore careers in public service while piloting their own nonprofit or service enterprise. Through funding provided by these Fellowships, students turn their knowledge and passion into action that has the potential for sustainable benefit to underserved communities. Because most Fellowships take place over IAP or in the summer, Fellows must forgo the chance to take on well-paid internships. We believe that every MIT student should have the opportunity to engage in meaningful public service. By providing stipends for travel, materials, and living expenses, the program opens up service to the entire MIT student population.

Fellowships showcase what is possible when MIT students are given the freedom to pilot an idea or practice in context while also receiving advice and support from the PKG Center. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the PKG Center funded 44 fellows during summer and IAP. We are endlessly impressed by the ingenuity of these students to create meaningful projects with community partners.



Jupneet Singh

Class of 2023, Course 5  
(Chemistry)

*During her fellowship, Jupneet worked with the Ventura County Family Justice Center to build the Pathways to Promise program that aspires to improve the lives of children in Ventura, CA by providing a safe space for those impacted by violence and trauma. Jupneet is an aspiring trauma surgeon for the Air Force. She drew on the many leadership lessons from her Air Force ROTC training while building Pathways to Promise, seeing them as complementary forms of public service.*

**“The PKG Center has given me the space and resources to carry out initiatives that I am passionate about. There is no other place on campus quite like it, and I am so thankful for all the opportunities and mentors that the PKG Center has! Pathways to Promise was especially important to me because I was working with the community I grew up in – 10 minutes from my high school. I worked with kids all throughout high school as well and it was amazing to work with kids in my hometown after coming to MIT.”**

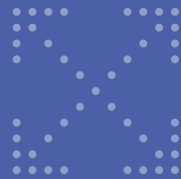


# IDEAS Social Innovation Challenge

THE IDEAS SOCIAL INNOVATION CHALLENGE ENABLES MIT STUDENT-led graduate and undergraduate teams to apply their education and expertise in developing community-informed solutions to tackle complex social and environmental issues in partnership with communities around the world.

Through this social entrepreneurship program, students can recruit a team from anywhere and develop a creative solution in partnership with stakeholders. The teams benefit from a supportive network of volunteers who serve as reviewers, mentors, and judges, as well as funding to support and develop their solutions to create lasting impact. Over the past 21 years, IDEAS has awarded ~\$1.4M in funding to over 200 student-led teams. Through the work of these extraordinary teams, approximately half of which are still active today, IDEAS has impacted over 2.5 million people.

During the 2021-2022 academic year, the IDEAS program engaged 93 student participants throughout the year-long educational curriculum. This culminated with the 16 finalist teams each receiving a \$1,000 Seed Grant. These finalist teams were featured in the IDEAS Virtual Showcase, during which 2,600+ individuals voted for their favorite team. The two teams with the highest votes were awarded \$2,500 crowd-favorite awards. In addition, during the first-ever hybrid IDEAS Awards Ceremony, four teams were awarded juried grants of up to \$20,000 to develop their solutions. In total, the IDEAS program awarded \$70,000+ this academic year directly to support the work of these teams.



**Mercy Oladipo**

**Class of 2023, Course 6 (Electrical Engineering and Computer Science)**

*Mercy's project, Birth By Us — the recipient of a \$15,000 IDEAS grant — is an app that aims to support expectant parents, specifically those who have been systemically oppressed in health care and other social systems, to reduce persistent and preventable maternal mortality rates among Black women.*

**“It's by learning from and collaborating with those who've devoted their lives to this issue that we all can improve and help empower people through their pregnancies. And so, if Birth By Us can return even one piece of that power and return it to its rightful owner, then this tool is doing exactly what it needs to.”**



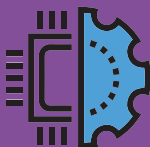
**Birth By Us team lead, Mercy Oladipo, accepting the \$15,000 grant award from keynote speaker, Malia Lazu**

VENTA BELL SHAW/BS PHOTOGRAPHY

## By the Numbers 2021-2022

28 TOTAL DEPARTMENTS REPRESENTED  
WITH TOP MAJORS BEING:

**COURSE 6**  
Electrical Engineering  
and Computer Science



**COURSE 11**  
Urban Studies  
and Planning

**COURSE 15**  
Management



**COURSE 20**  
Biological  
Engineering

### PARTICIPANTS

Graduate Students ..... **29%**  
Undergraduate Students ..... **71%**  
Class of 2022 ..... 22%  
Class of 2023 ..... 19%  
Class of 2024 ..... 30%  
Class of 2025 ..... 29%

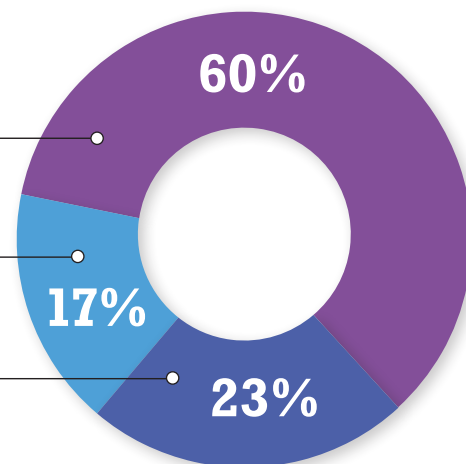


### FUNDING NEEDS — \$1.95M TOTAL ANNUAL BUDGET

Annual  
Fundraising  
Needed

Endowments

General  
Institute  
Funds

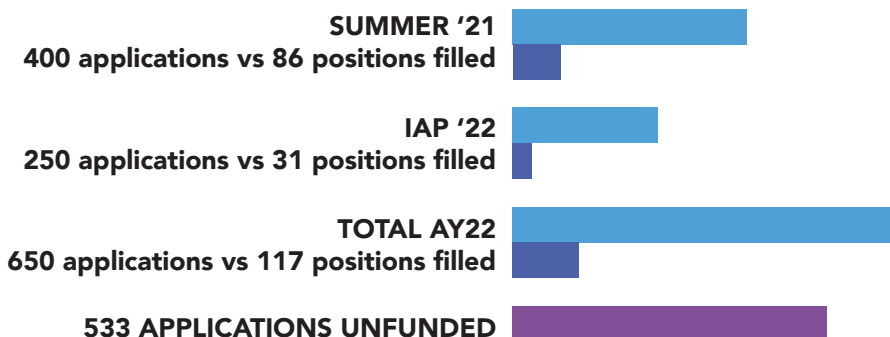


# \$800,000+

DIRECT FINANCIAL SUPPORT AWARDED TO STUDENTS  
THROUGH INTERNSHIP AND FELLOWSHIP STIPENDS,  
IDEAS GRANTS, AND OTHER PROGRAMS



### GROWING DEMAND FOR PKG PROGRAMS



■ APPLICATIONS ■ POSITIONS FILLED ■ APPLICATIONS

*This example shows Social Impact Internship application data*

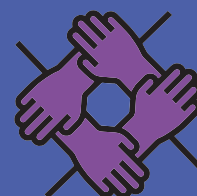


# 1,000+

TOTAL STUDENT PARTICIPANTS

# 160

NUMBER OF  
COMMUNITY  
PARTNERS



# Looking Ahead

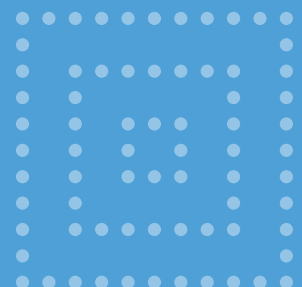
AS DEMONSTRATED BY THESE HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE PAST YEAR, PKG programming is extremely impactful for each student participant and community partner. Many MIT students go on to start their own companies, hold C-level leadership positions, or sit on nonprofit boards. PKG programs build an understanding of social issues and empathy for communities that students will carry long after they leave the Institute. Therefore, we believe that it is imperative for all students to have the opportunity to participate in – and learn through – at least one immersive service opportunity during their time at MIT.

MIT also has recognized the importance of these experiences. MIT's Task Force 2021 recommended that the Institute prioritize expanding the number of these valuable social impact learning experiences to meet increasing student demand. Our biggest area for growth is to increase the number of Social Impact Internships from ~100 to 400 to meet this demand and allow more students to participate in these vital experiences—while also increasing opportunities across our portfolio of programs. Achieving this will require a considerable increase in funding.



Each year, the PKG Center must raise 60% of our current ~\$2M annual budget from our generous supporters. Meeting student demand and community needs by increasing the number of experiences will significantly increase our annual budget and the amount we must raise each year to cover these costs. Therefore, now more than ever, gifts to the PKG Center directly support the students participating in our programs and in turn the communities with which they are partnering.

Supporting the PKG Center goes beyond supporting the growth and development of MIT students; it means connecting local and global nonprofit and government entities with the technical talent they may be otherwise unable to access or afford. If you are passionate about the work of the PKG Center and would like to learn more about supporting our efforts, please reach out to us at any time. Thank you for your consideration of helping to make tangible, systemic change and build a better world.





PKG

PRISCILLA KING GRAY  
PUBLIC SERVICE CENTER

A special thank you to our Friends of the PKG Center Members:

Dheera Ananthakrishnan '90

Priscilla Elliott\* '10

Kristin K. Foss\* '83

Priscilla King Gray\*, member emerita

Kat Jiang\* '20

Bonny S. Kellermann\* '72

Paul M. Kominers\* '12

Sze-Wen Kuo\* '73

Joseph H. Levitch\* '69

Elena J. McFann\* '90

Adam Miller\* '07

Hyun-A Park\* '83, MCP '85

Elizabeth Pettheo MBA '14

James W. Taylor\* '65, SM '67

Victor Tung Tom\* '72, SM '73, SCD '81

Caroline Wang\* '86, chair

Eberhard F. Wunderlich\* SM '75, PhD '78

Shahla Wunderlich\* PhD '78

*\*Denotes Founding Member*

**“Because the world needs people like MIT students. It’s that simple.”**

- PRISCILLA KING GRAY

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Massachusetts  
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Technology