



Healthy Communities, Thriving Planet

California Academy of Sciences

ANNUAL REPORT

July 1, 2023 — June 30, 2024

Being focused on a singular, compelling mission is no easy task, especially for a sizable, 171-year-old institution like the California Academy of Sciences. Nearly four years ago, the Academy built on our longstanding commitment to biodiversity science by boldly updating its mission in response to the magnitude of our planet’s current challenges: **We regenerate the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration.**

By regenerate, we mean boosting the health and resilience of select ecosystems around the world to address the ongoing eco-crisis—including climate change, biodiversity loss, and habitat destruction. But science alone cannot achieve this ambitious mission. The Academy is also working to regenerate the human-nature connection, which means connecting people with nature in deeper ways that increase knowledge, caring, and, ultimately, action.

In the last year, the Academy brought our regeneration mission to life in many exciting ways. Within our walls, we opened a new exhibit, *California: State of Nature*, spotlighting how research, Indigenous partnerships, and traditional ecological knowledge play major roles in regenerating and restoring our state’s unique ecosystems. Close to home, our scientists co-led the historic reintroduction of the Silvery Blue

butterfly on restored sand dunes in the Presidio. To help re-establish healthy kelp forests across California, our biologists began raising thousands of sunflower sea stars in our aquarium. And further afield, the Academy teamed up with researchers from Honduras to Australia to protect coral reefs around the globe.

This report offers a more visual snapshot of our impactful regeneration work around the world. None of these achievements would have been possible without the unwavering support from our donors, members, and entire Academy community. Thank you for your generous commitment toward our pressing purpose.

Sincerely,



Scott D. Sampson, PhD
Executive Director
William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair



Dan Janney
Chair of the Board of Trustees



From Sprout to Spark

The California Academy of Sciences is connecting humans to nature and regenerating the natural world through science, learning, and collaboration. This work starts right here at the Academy.



EXPERIENCE

1,860,000

in-person engagements





Corpse Flower Blooms

After five years of quietly growing and storing energy underground, Mirage, our corpse flower, produced its first spectacular (and stinky) bloom.



101,218

guests attended the Academy on a fieldtrip

A Solar Eclipse Across America

As seen from the Academy's Living Roof, the Moon crossed 34% of the Sun's diameter. Spectators from all over the city came to observe this exciting event alongside planetarium staff with special viewing glasses, and enjoyed educational programs throughout the day.





California: State of Nature

Big. Beautiful. Biodiverse. When it comes to nature, California is second to none. Our all-new exhibit, crafted in collaboration with Indigenous advisors, reveals the surprising connections between people, places, and species that make California thrive.



VOLUNTEERS

540 volunteers gave
35,609 hours
of their time to the Academy

Happy Birthday, Methuselah!

DNA analysis finds that **Methuselah**, the Academy’s Australian lungfish, is the world’s oldest aquarium fish at approximately 93 years old!



Spark: The Universe in Us, the Academy’s ninth original planetarium production opened in November 2023 and won multiple awards, including Best Astronomy Show at the Dome Under Festival in Melbourne, Australia and Best Educational Film at Dome Fest West.



BigPicture celebrated its 10th anniversary and the Academy co-published a new book, **Seeing It All: Women Photographers Expose our Planet**.



EXPERIENCE

Over
450,000
Academy visitors attended a planetarium show

Cloud Walker by Torie Hilley

From Cocoons to Coasts

From California coasts to Sierra forests to vibrant cities, the Academy works collaboratively with local communities to regenerate biodiversity, build resilience to climate change, and advance equitable access to nature across the state.



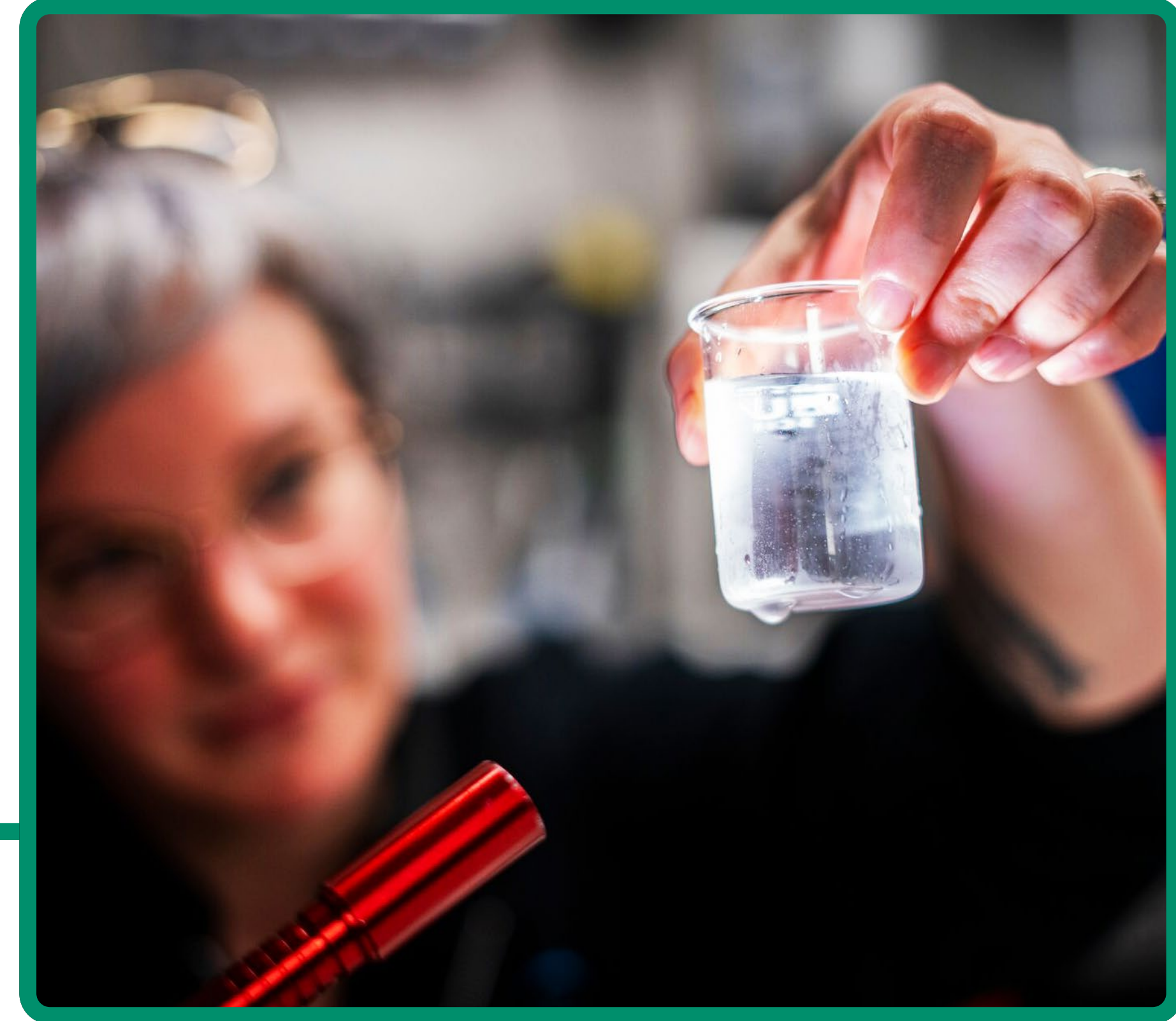
EDUCATION

24,708 youth
served through after-school
programs and internships



Steinhart Aquarium Celebrated its Centennial

on September 29, 2023 with a variety of festive activities including a citywide scavenger hunt, a coastal cleanup in McLaren Park, pay-what-you-can museum admission, a 1920's-themed NightLife, and the publication of a new book, *The Spectacular Steinhart Aquarium*, authored by Bart Shepherd, Senior Director of Steinhart Aquarium.

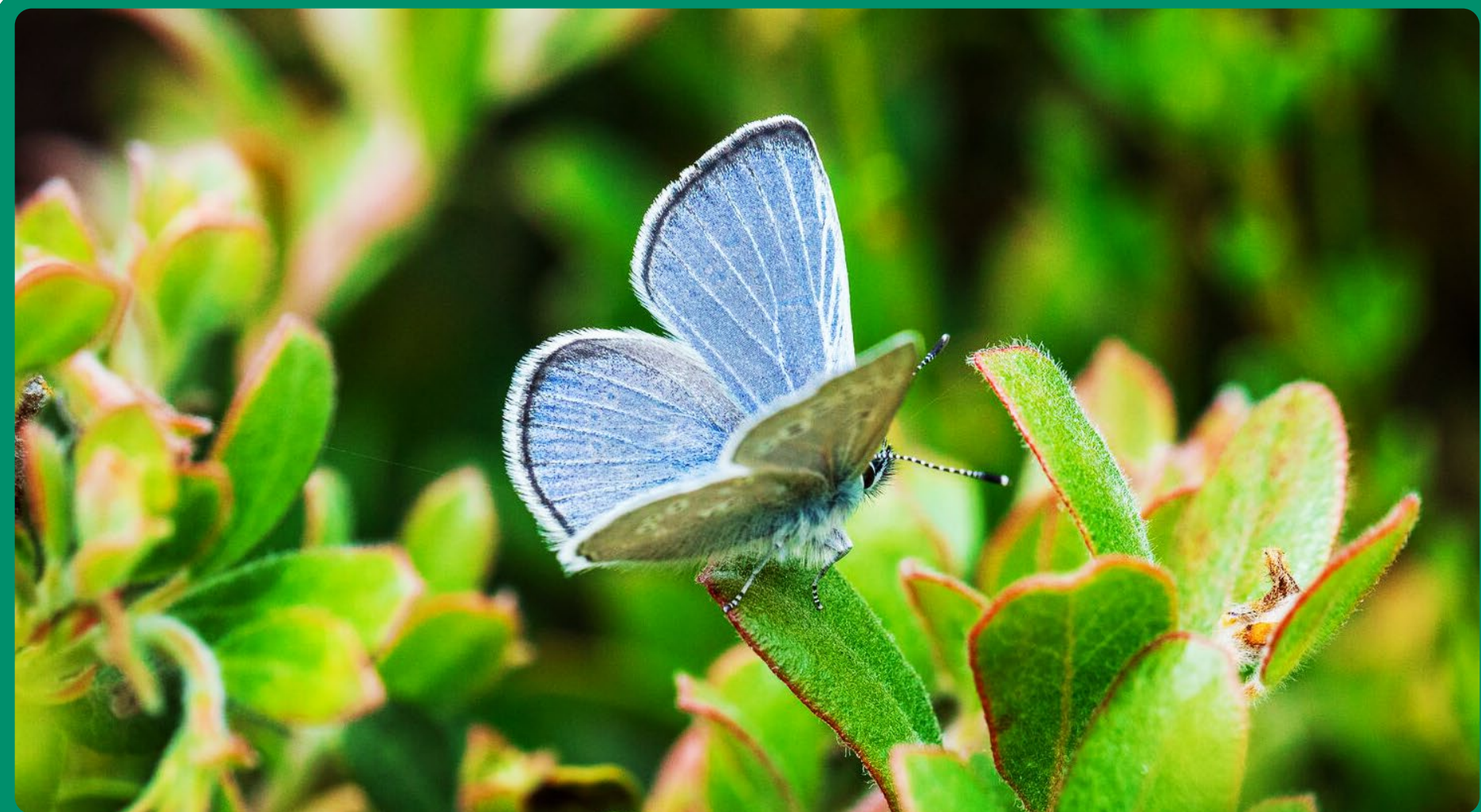


Sunflower Sea Star Rearing

In partnership with five institutions across California, Steinhart Aquarium received sunflower sea star embryos and employed their larval rearing expertise to raise the young sea stars. This success marks another step forward to save this endangered species vital to the health of kelp forests across the California coast.

Release of Silvery Blue

Years of research and habitat restoration finally culminated in the Academy and Presidio Trust releasing Silvery Blue butterflies to repopulate the Presidio's sand dunes and act as an ecological 'stand-in' for the Xerces Blue.



In FY24, the living collection had
953 births and hatches
from **22** different species

SCIENCE

\$3,000,000 Grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation

The California Academy of Sciences received a \$3 million, five-year grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to bolster biodiversity data collection and conservation efforts across California.



SCIENCE

32 active research grants totaling over
\$17,500,000 in funding



Snapshot Cal Coast

California families came together for a ninth year to take a “snapshot in time” of the state’s 124 marine protected areas. All of the data collected informs forecasting systems that track coastal health and predict how climate change might shape our coast’s biodiversity.





Reimagining San Francisco

The Academy and over 40 partner organizations launched Reimagining San Francisco to improve the ecological health of San Francisco and equitably distribute the benefits of local nature to all.

Reimagining San Francisco's #1 goal:

Make **30%** of San Francisco biodiverse greenspace by **2030**

From Rearing to Regenerating

From expanding community science opportunities in California to leading coral reef research and restoration around the world, the Academy is collaborating with communities to regenerate vulnerable ecosystems and support those who rely upon them.



147,631

students and educators reached through the Academy's online distance learning program—nearly a 40% increase from the previous year

EXPERIENCE



Plastic Pollution on Coral Reefs

In a paper published in *Nature*, researchers from the California Academy of Sciences, University of São Paulo, University of Oxford, and University of Exeter revealed the extent of plastic pollution on coral reefs. Researchers conducted underwater visual surveys at over two dozen locations across the Indian, Pacific, and Atlantic oceans, revealing the abundance, distribution, and drivers of plastic pollution at various depths, helping prioritize conservation efforts to protect vulnerable coral reefs.



The Academy's Coral Regeneration Lab (CoRL) welcomed

thousands

of coral babies during its annual two-week spawning event—the most successful spawn to date

Coral Restoration in Honduras

The California Academy of Sciences and the Roatán Marine Park received a \$1.5 million grant to fund the first coral rearing lab in Honduras. There, experts hope to develop more effective techniques for coral conservation.



City Nature Challenge

In its ninth year, the City Nature Challenge resulted in a record-breaking 2,436,844 observations and recorded 65,682 species worldwide—including nearly 4,000 rare, endangered, or threatened species. This year's City Nature Challenge welcomed participants from nine new countries: Gabon, Kazakhstan, Madagascar, Malawi, Namibia, Philippines, Poland, Slovakia, and Turkey.

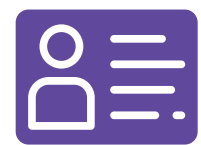
Academy Scientists Describe 153 New Species

Researchers described 153 new animal, plant, and fungi species in 2023, enriching our understanding of Earth's biodiversity and strengthening our ability to regenerate the natural world. The new species include 66 spiders, 20 sea slugs, 18 plants, 13 sea stars, 12 geckos, 10 beetles, five fishes, four worms, two wasps, one sea snail, one scorpion, and one legless skink.

A Trip to the Galápagos

Academy researchers returned to the Galápagos where warmer ocean temperatures brought on by El Niño provided a unique opportunity to study how the archipelago's flora and fauna adapt to environmental change.



2,100

members attended Academy
Members' Month events

Baby Penguins!

Ten African penguin chicks hatched at the Academy over a period of 14 months. These chicks were bred as part of our participation in a Species Survival Plan (SSP) to conserve this South African endangered bird.



“For us, regeneration is all about healing the web of life—**rebuilding the diversity, complexity, and resilience of ecosystems** so that they can withstand climate change and other disturbances.”

—Scott D. Sampson, PhD, Executive Director
& William R. and Gretchen B. Kimball Chair





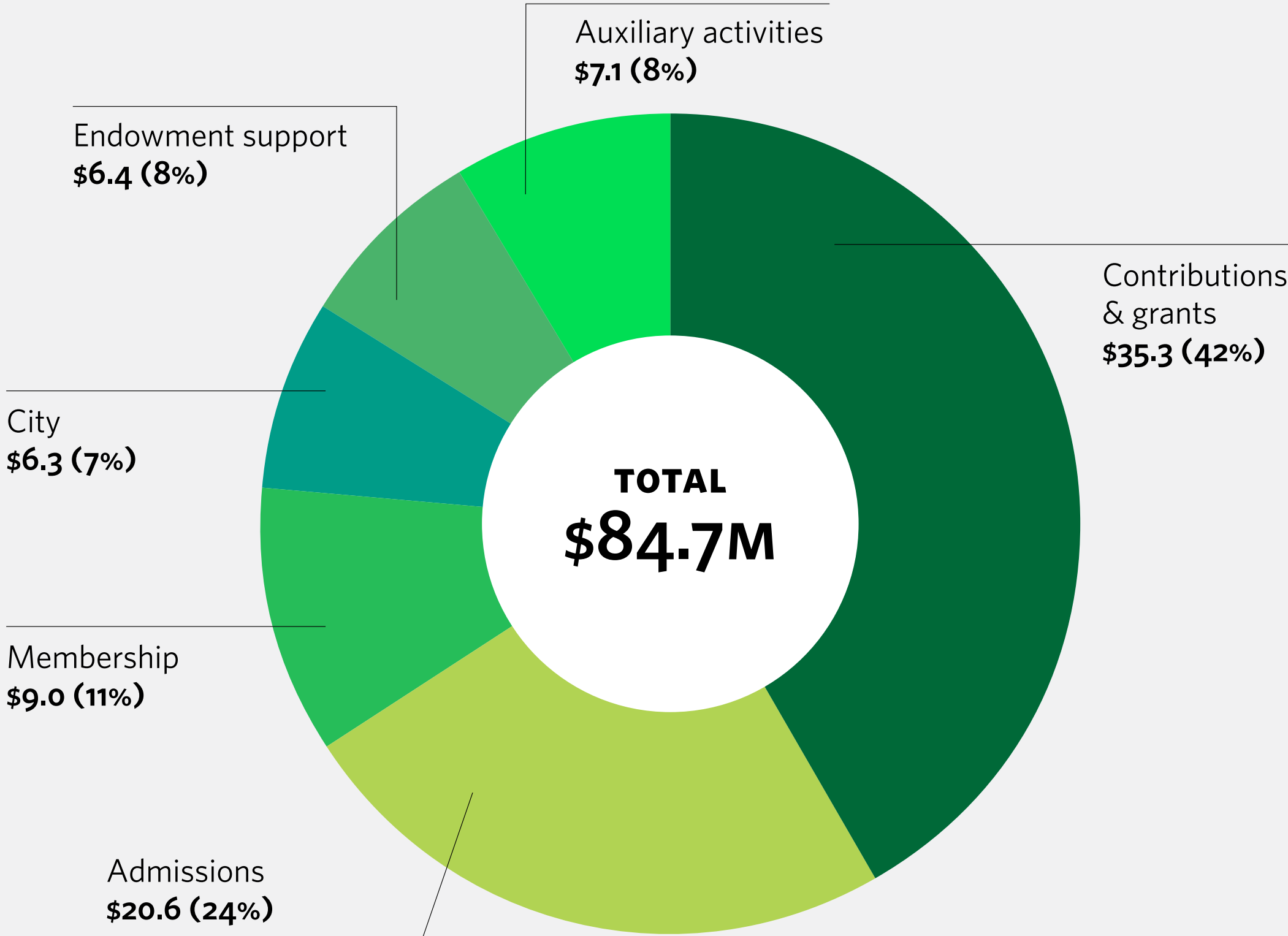
We look forward to the next 171 years of *science, learning, and collaboration.*

We are grateful to those who made generous contributions to the Academy. Your support makes a profound impact on the Academy's critical regeneration science, animal care for all our residents, and collaboration with communities all over the world. A special thank you to our **Friends Circle, Leadership Circle, Director's Circle, Institutional Partners, Eastwood Associates, members, and contributors.**

Additional thanks to the following donors, whose generosity has been transformational to the Academy's work this year: Barbara Bakar, the Byers Family, Leslie and Troy Daniels, Ella Qing Hou and J. Sanford Miller, Dan Janney and Noelle Montgomery for chairing *Big Bang: Thriving California*, Marie and Barry Lipman, Ed Warner and Jackie Erickson, Pat Wilson, Bill and Brenda Younger, Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, John and Marcia Goldman Foundation, PG&E Corporation Foundation, and Pisces Foundation.

Financials

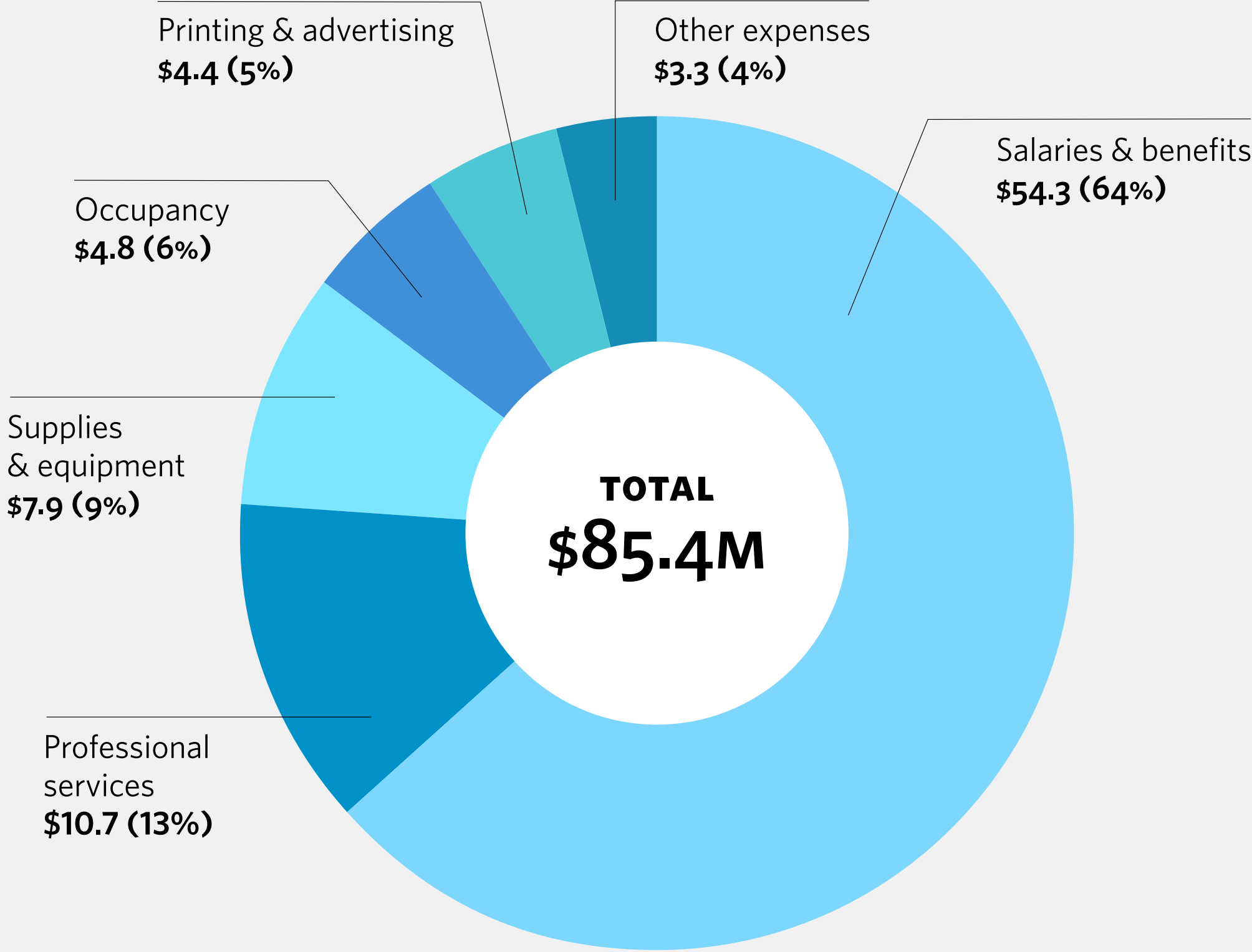
FY24 REVENUE MIX
\$ IN MILLIONS



This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.
These revenue items include unrestricted donor contributions that are available to support operations:

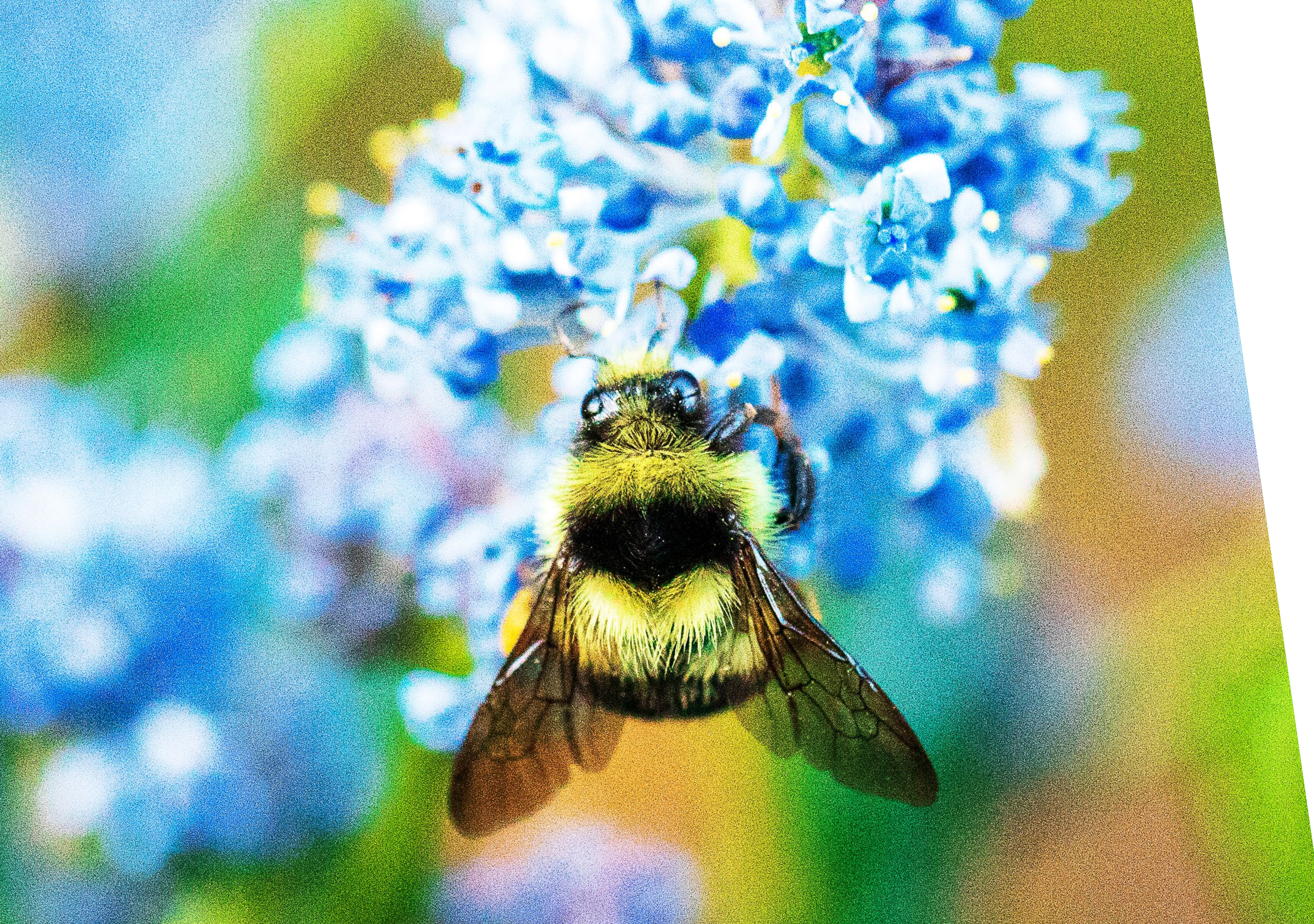
- » Contributions & grants
- » Endowment support

FY24 EXPENSE MIX
\$ IN MILLIONS



This is an excerpt from the Statement of Activity.
Total operating expense excludes infrequent and unusual items and certain transactions that do not impact cash flows from operations:

- » Restructuring costs
- » Depreciation & amortization
- » Interest & debt-related fees



WRITING

Lauren Mercer-Ferguson
& Sarah Fahey

DESIGN

Spencer Vandergrift

PRINCIPLE PHOTOGRAPHY

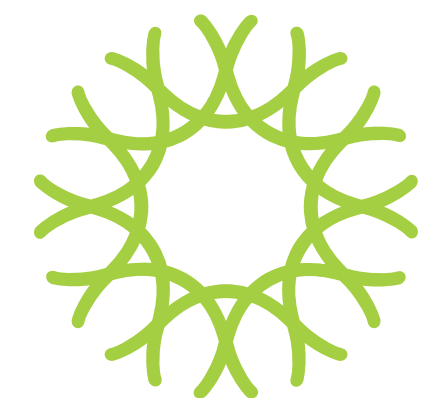
Gayle Laird & Nicole Ravicchio

ADDITIONAL PHOTOGRAPHY

Luiz Rocha, Google Earth

CREATIVE DIRECTION

Rhonda Rubinstein



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