

The Harkin Institute Annual Report

FY 2023



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Crowd in the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center atrium for the Harkin Summit on Disability-Driven Innovation.

About The Harkin Institute

Who We Are

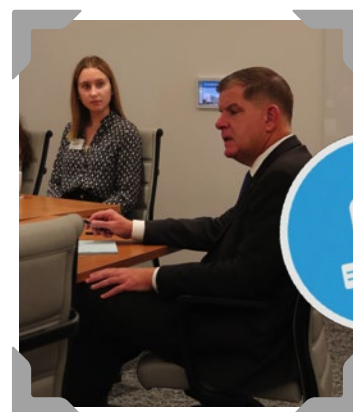
The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement at Drake University is dedicated to the study of issues that define our public life and to engaging students and citizens in constructive dialogue regarding these issues. Founded on the premise that good public policy is best achieved when policymakers have access to high-quality information, political processes are open and well-understood, and citizens are informed and active participants, The Harkin Institute seeks to create opportunities for thoughtful policy discourse in a nonpartisan environment.

Mission

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy & Citizen Engagement exists to inform citizens, inspire creative cooperation, and catalyze change on issues of social justice, fairness, and opportunity.

Vision

Our promise is to improve the lives of all Americans by giving policymakers access to high-quality information and engaging citizens as active participants in the formation of public policy.



Former Secretary of Labor Marty Walsh speaks to Drake University students in the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center Boardroom.



Note from Our Founder

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When Ruth and I founded The Harkin Institute a decade ago, we had two goals: to facilitate collaborative, high-quality, nonpartisan, multi-disciplinary public policy research and analysis dedicated to the issues that defined my legislative career, including labor and employment, people with disabilities, retirement security, and wellness, nutrition, and agriculture; and to foster active and informed citizen engagement in public decision making and public policy making through education and outreach that expands the knowledge and understanding of these issue areas among students, scholars and the public.

In the past ten years, I'd say we've done exactly what we set out to do. We have established annual events like the Harkin International Disability Employment Summit, which brings together key champions and implementers from around the world to increase employment of people with disabilities, and the Harkin on Wellness Symposium, which gathers practitioners, policymakers, students, educators, and members of the public to discuss timely topics associated with wellness and nutrition. The Institute has published dozens of research reports and briefs on a wide range of topics that advance our mission. And most recently, we opened the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center, which will serve as a model of inclusion and accessibility. We are so proud to open this building which puts universal design at the forefront. The Americans with Disabilities Act is just a starting point when it comes to achieving inclusion. It's imperative to think beyond basic compliance to create a truly inclusive setting, and I believe that's what we've done with the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center.

We have accomplished so much over the last ten years, thanks to our generous donors, Institute staff, and Drake University. But the truth is, there is still work to be done. I expect the next ten years to be just as impactful and productive at The Harkin Institute. We hope that you will continue to be a part of the great work we do.



Senator Tom Harkin (Retired)



Senator Tom Harkin holding the 2023 Harkin on Wellness report at the annual HOW Symposium.



Senator Tom Harkin speaking at the 2023 Harkin Retirement Security Symposium in Washington D.C.

Note from Our Executive Directors

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This year, we said farewell and thank you to former Executive Director Joseph Jones, who departed The Institute for a new role with Des Moines University. We thank Joseph for his leadership and wish him well in his new endeavors.

From Our Former Interim Executive Director

I was honored last summer to be asked by Drake President Marty Martin and Tom and Ruth Harkin to step in as the Interim Executive Director of The Harkin Institute. My wife, Joanne, and I have been friends with the Harkins for around 50 years and in that time, I have found it difficult to tell them I won't help when they ask. So, I put down my golf clubs and stepped out of retirement to take on this role, which has been a joy. In this time of transition, our team here at The Harkin Institute never missed a beat.

Early in the fiscal year, we dedicated the brand new, state-of-the-art Tom and Ruth Harkin Center. This new home for The Harkin Institute is one of the most accessible buildings in the country, earning national awards thanks to our partners at BNIM. We also held numerous events in our new space, focusing on disability employment, retirement security, and even accessible art.

I am so proud of the work that has gone on at The Harkin Institute over the past year and know that work will continue and evolve as The Institute moves into a new chapter, with new leadership. It has been my pleasure and honor to have been part of this organization this past year.



Ray Walton
Former Interim Executive Director

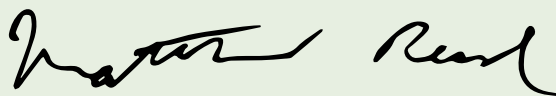
From Our New Executive Director

Hello everyone. My name is Matthew Reed and I'm honored to serve as the new Executive Director of The Harkin Institute.

I want to thank Ray Walton for all he has done to lead The Harkin Institute and to make sure my transition was a seamless one.

As we reflect on all that THI has accomplished over the last fiscal year, I'd also like to take a moment to look forward. This is a critical moment for our democracy and an exciting moment to engage in rigorous, non-partisan research to advance human welfare and opportunity for all. I look forward to working across Iowa and around the world to connect our work to the most critical issues of our time.

I hope you will continue to support and be involved with The Harkin Institute during this exciting time. I look forward to leading this vital and essential organization into a new chapter.

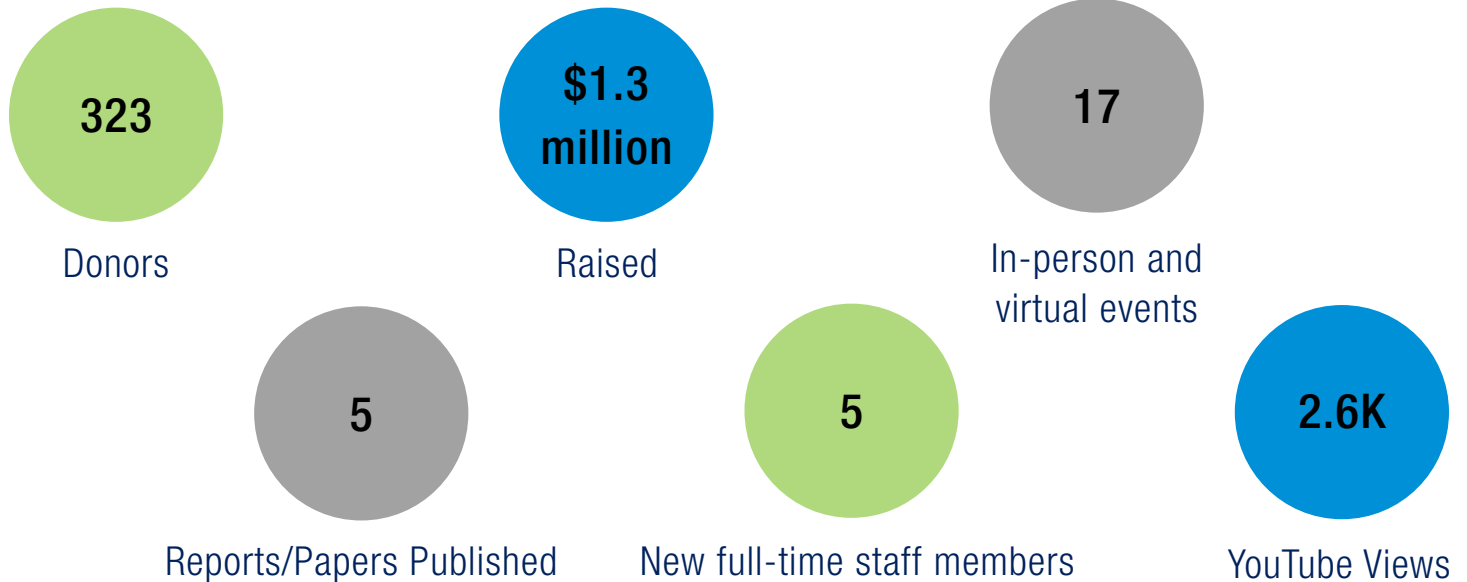


Matthew Reed, Ph.D.
Executive Director



FY 2023 Snapshot

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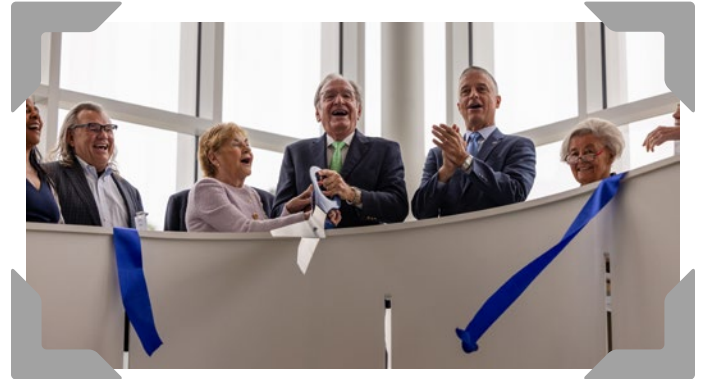
FY 2023 Event Timeline



Tom and Ruth Harkin Center

In August, we dedicated the 17,000 square foot Tom and Ruth Harkin Center, celebrating our new, state-of-the-art, accessible building. The Center was designed by architect Kevin Nordmeyer, who is a person with a disability and uses a wheelchair, and his partner Jason Kruse project manager / architect at BNIM. Universal Design was at the heart of every decision for this building. Expanding beyond the base accessibility requirements of the ADA, we considered qualities of space and concepts that make buildings understandable and accessible by all people. The building features wide ramps instead of stairs, contrasting colors for individuals with low vision, and natural light to reduce energy consumption.

Tom and Ruth Harkin cut the opening ribbon at the dedication for the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center.



This Universal Design Building is being nationally recognized and used as a model for architects and designers to create buildings and landscapes rooted in empathy and inclusivity. We believe this center to be the most accessible building in America for all persons with disabilities.

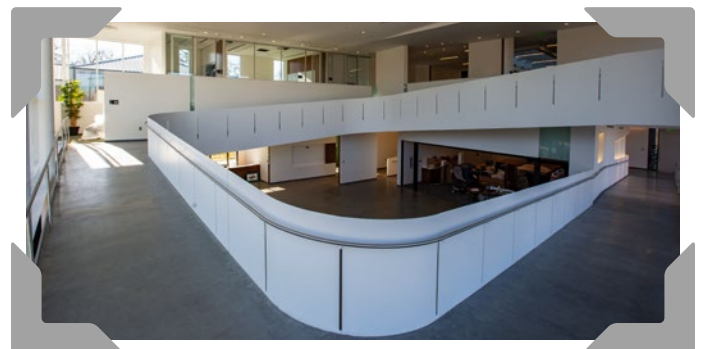
Some of the accessibility features throughout the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center include:

- **Gracious Building Circulation:** Too often, ramps are added as an alternative for those who can't use the stairs. The Nelson Ramp at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center serves as the primary, celebrated route between the gallery and event space on the first floor and the offices on the second. The ramp and all hallways throughout the building are wider than required to allow adequate space for multiple wheelchair users or people to communicate by sign language while walking.
- **The Value of Natural Light:** Floor to ceiling windows and skylights ensure natural light is available in all workspaces throughout the building, which helps to reduce energy consumption, eyestrain, headache, and fatigue and improve the indoor work experience.
- **Contrasting Colors:** Providing contrast between different building elements helps individuals with low vision with spatial awareness. At the Harkin Center, floor colorings are dark, and furniture is light or brightly colored. Walls are white and outlets, light switches and other fixtures are dark to make them easier to spot. Contrasting wooden corner trim helps those with low vision mark important transitions in circulation or locations of restrooms.
- **Environmental Design:** The center has achieved three Green Globes, making it the highest rated project in the state and the first project in Iowa to receive this level of rating. This third-party building certification program measures the reduction of environmental impacts and use of environmental efficiency practices for new and existing building projects.

The Tom and Ruth Harkin Center will help ensure that The Harkin Institute can continue to further our public policy research and analysis in retirement security, wellness & nutrition, labor & employment, and people with disabilities. We're able to provide our community with access to congressional archival resources and thoughtful events addressing the major public policy issues of our time.



View of the front of the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center from across the street.



Inside view of the ramp that connects the first and second floors.

Policy Events



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Harkin Belfast

Just before the start of the fiscal year, The Harkin Institute traveled across the Atlantic for the 2022 Harkin International Disability Employment Summit in Belfast, Northern Ireland. THI partnered with the Northern Ireland Executive's Department for Communities to host the event.

Harkin Belfast welcomed over 600 delegates in-person and promoted positive social impact and left a lasting legacy across the city. Attendees were encouraged to positively reframe the narrative on approaching, supporting, and enabling persons with disabilities to achieve their career goals and aspirations. To ensure a successful event, the city of Belfast underwent leading transformational change before, during and post-Summit to ensure it is an accessible, diverse, and inclusive host destination.

The Summit's impact is already being recognized. ICC Belfast, the convention center where Harkin Belfast took place, and professional conference organizer Event-ful were awarded 'Best Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion at a Conference' for Harkin Belfast at the Association of British Professional Conference Organisers (ABPCO) Excellence Awards 2022. The award recognizes a team that has demonstrated an exceptional commitment to equality, diversity, and inclusion throughout event planning.

The Harkin International Disability Employment Summit has occurred annually since 2016 and has gathered private employers, government leaders, and disability advocates from more than 40 countries to address the barriers to competitive, integrated employment for persons with disabilities.



(Top Left) From left to right: an ASL interpreter, Judy Heumann and Shani Dhanda give the closing remarks onstage at Harkin Belfast.



(Top Right) Daniel Van Sant introduces fireside chat between Senator Tom Harkin and Rodney O. Martin, Jr. of Voya financial.

(Bottom Left) Seán Fitzsimons, activist and partner for Harkin Belfast, speaking at the podium onstage.



(Bottom Right) Crowd at the reception gather to watch Fionn & Jonathan Angus, known as "Fionnathan" perform.



Roadmaps to Retirement

Too often, thoughts of retirement and how to sustain a comfortable lifestyle are topics many people either choose to delay or have difficulty devoting adequate time to truly consider. With the elimination of most defined benefit pension plans and constant political threats regarding Social Security, contemplating the post-employment financial future can be daunting.

The Harkin Institute for Public Policy and Citizen Engagement at Drake University and the U.S. Department of Labor sought to address such issues during the Roadmaps to Retirement: Taking Stock and Looking Forward event in December at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center.

The event featured a panel focused on employer retirement savings programs, led by Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of the U.S. Department of Labor; and a discussion of Social Security and Disability Insurance, moderated by Senator Tom Harkin (retired). The panelists, including the Acting Social Security Commissioner Dr. Kilolo Kijakazi, discussed the challenges faced by the Social Security and Disability Insurance programs and reform efforts to strengthen and sustain the programs for future generations.



(Top Left) Rayna Stoycheva speaking at the podium in the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center auditorium.

(Bottom Left) Overview of panel one speakers. From left to right on the blue couches and chair: Judge Bob Pratt, Kilolo Kijakazi, Senator Tom Harkin, Max Richtman, and Taryn Williams.

(Top Right) Kilolo Kijakazi, Acting Commissioner of the U.S. Social Security Administration during panel one of Roadmaps to Retirement.

(Bottom Right) Overview of panel two speakers. From left to right: Kim Olson, Michael Kreps, Kathleen Kennedy Townsend, Susan Lenczewski, and Mark Shemtob.

Harkin on Wellness Symposium

The 2023 Harkin on Wellness Symposium held in April, focused on the theme of “Reimagining Regional Food and Health Systems.”

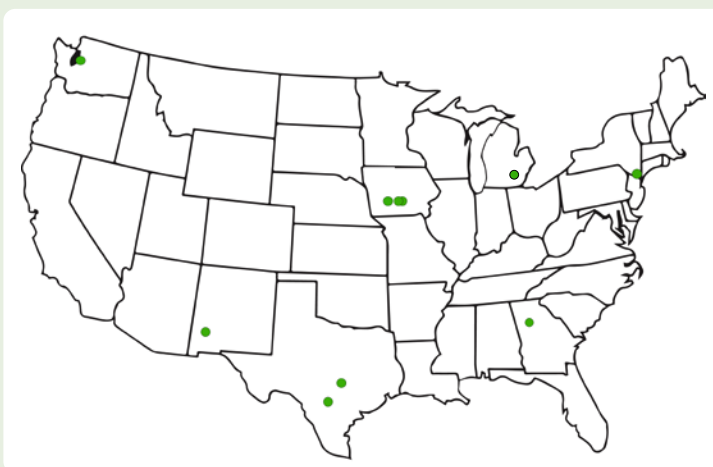
During the COVID-19 pandemic, healthcare systems were overrun with patients and supply chain issues disrupted our access to healthy foods. Community leaders and organizations responded by creating new approaches to address the relationship between food and health. These new approaches include the growth of food systems coalitions and councils working to shape, advise, and implement food policy. These groups also worked to increase opportunities and reduce barriers to healthy outcomes at the regional level.

This year’s Harkin on Wellness (HOW) Symposium showcased the work being done at state and local levels to improve people’s lives by reimagining the food system from farm to table and everywhere in between.

We were delighted to welcome our keynote speakers, Deputy Under Secretary for the USDA’s Food, Nutrition, and Consumer Services, Stacy Dean and Dr. Walter Willett, M.D., Dr. P.H., Professor of Epidemiology and Nutrition at Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health and co-chair of the EAT-Lancet Commission.

The Symposium also honored some of the top wellness and nutrition initiatives that are reimagining food and health systems in their communities. The organizations honored include:

- Argus Farm Stop (Ann Arbor, MI)
- City of San Antonio Metropolitan Health District (San Antonio, TX)
- Grady Health Foundation - Food as Medicine (Atlanta, GA)
- Greener By Default (New York City, NY)
- Iowa Healthiest State Initiative - Iowa Produce Prescription Program (Des Moines, IA)
- LSI Global Greens (Des Moines, IA)
- Planted Society (Austin, TX)
- Seattle Farm to Preschool (Seattle, WA)
- The Frontier Food Hub (Silver City, NM)
- Waukee Farm to School (Waukee, IA)



Chris Jones speaks at the podium during panel focused on Reimagining Sustainable Food Production. Other speakers pictured (left to right) are Liz Garst, Jean Bertrand Contina and Audrey Tran Lam



Afternoon Keynote, Deputy Under Secretary of the USDA, Stacey Dean speaking at the podium to the crowd in Parents Hall on the Drake University campus.

Harkin Summit on Scaling Disability-Driven Innovation

The Harkin Institute held the Inaugural Harkin Summit on Scaling Disability-Driven Innovation in May. The two-day Summit was hosted in partnership with Cruise, Voya Financial, the CEO Commission for Disability Employment, the Perkins School for the Blind, Walmart, and John Deere Financial.

The event brought together leaders from the disability movement, the private and public sectors, and the investor community to scale the innovative potential of persons with disabilities to transform the economy, so it creates value for all.

Day 1 of the Summit consisted of a series of small group panel discussions and interactive roundtable discussions. The day was capped off by a “Dining in the Dark” event – an immersive, communal dining experience where blindfolded participants use senses other than sight to explore food and drink. Participants experienced first-hand how design choices and environments can create barriers for people who are blind, visually impaired, or have other disabilities. They then learned about how universal design and accommodations can correct the barriers and provide access. The event also featured a panel discussion and Q&A session with entrepreneurs, corporate executives, and experts in disability employment where insights and observations were shared about creating a more inclusive and innovative private sector.

Day 2 focused on fostering the innovative potential of persons with disabilities and creating employment opportunities by allowing entrepreneurs and business owners to pitch their start-up idea to local businesses, entrepreneurs, and community leaders. The presentations were followed by a job fair and social, where organizations were able to network with and interview prospective candidates.



(Top Left) Accessible Job fair in the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center Atrium.

(Top Right) “Day in the Life of a Startup” panel focused on hearing from disabled entrepreneurs. From left to right behind the table: Jasmine Duffey, Jen Stratton, Joe Steffy, Anhad Sahgal, and Em Hillman

(Bottom Right) Blindfolded guests participating in a wine tasting for the Dining in the Dark event at Mainframe Studios.

2022 Fall Sussman Lecture - “The U.S. Supreme Court: Yesterday and Today” with Dr. Michael J. Nelson

The 2022 Sussman Lecture took place last October, focusing on what has become a highly contentious event, the Supreme Court nomination process. Gone, it seems, are the days of nominees for the Court meeting with senators to essentially solidify what historically has been bipartisan support.

The lecture was given by Dr. Michael J. Nelson, a professor of Political Science at Penn State University, an undergraduate alumnus of Drake University, and co-author of several books on the judicial system of the United States.

Dr. Nelson addressed the questions of “Has the Court become too politicized? Is it an accurate reflection of the nation’s population or has that image always been a myth?”

The Sussman Lecture Series hosts a notable public policy figure to discuss topical current events with a small audience. The series was established by Richard Sussman, AS’51, and his late wife Lila.



(Top Left) Dr. Michael J. Nelson during his lecture.



(Top Right) Professor William Garriott, Professor Dennis Goldford, Dr. Michael J. Nelson, and University President Marty Martin talking to each other at the pre-event reception.

(Bottom Right) View from the side of Sussman theatre while Dr. Michael J. Nelson gives his Sussman lecture.



An Evening with Charlie Cook

Political analyst Charlie Cook's annual lecture series returned to The Harkin Institute in December. The event took place just after the 2022 midterm election, making it the perfect topic of conversation. Cook discussed the history of midterm elections in our country and what happened in 2022 that surprised political analysts and lawmakers.

Born in Louisiana, Cook cut his political teeth first as a staff person for Senator J. Bennett Johnston (D-Louisiana) while also attending Georgetown University. In 1984, he launched the Cook Political Report, a newsletter that quickly became the top-rated, nonpartisan political report for reporters, analysts, and campaign wonks. He is also a columnist for the National Journal and the online National Journal Congress Daily. Additionally, Cook has provided election night commentary for several networks.

In 2006, he was inducted into the Louisiana Political Museum and Hall of Fame and, in 2010, received the Carey McWilliams award from the American Political Science Association.

Cook is also a member of the National Advisory Council for The Harkin Institute and, as part of that role, provides guidance on the Institute's nonpartisan policy development.

An Evening with Charlie Cook is made possible by a generous gift from friends of The Harkin Institute and Drake University who wish to remain anonymous.



(Top Left) Student employee, Alex Bates, introduces Charlie Cook onstage in Sheslow Auditorium.

(Top Right) Closer shot of the crowd at An Evening with Charlie Cook, with Ruth Harkin in the front row.

(Bottom Right) Charlie Cook during his annual lecture at the podium in Sheslow Auditorium.

Uplift: The Central Iowa Basic Income Project



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In 2022, The Harkin Institute engaged in a new partnership to help bring a basic income pilot to our community. With the support of 11 funding entities, Ashley Ezzio and Michael Berger joined the team to launch UpLift – The Central Iowa Basic Income Pilot. The three-year community study will monitor the impact of a no-strings attached, monthly \$500 payment for 24 months.

110 low-income Iowans living in Polk, Warren, and Dallas counties were chosen to receive the payments. During the ten-day application period, more than 6,000 eligible Central Iowans submitted applications to participate. The first payments were sent out on May 15 and will continue for two years.

Researchers will track how participants use the stipend each month and will compare various health and well-being outcomes of stipend recipients to those of 140 individuals who do not receive a stipend. Researchers also hope to gain a better understanding of where to invest private and public funds in order to build and maintain healthier and more prosperous communities.

Learn more by visiting UpLiftIowa.org.



(Top Left) Project coordinators Michael Berger and Ashley Ezzio at a Community Conversations event.

(Top Right) Dr. Nalo Johnson of the Mid-Iowa Health Foundation speaking at the UpLift kick-off event at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center.

(Bottom Left) Group photo of the UpLift funders, the project coordination team from The Harkin Institute and the research teams from University of Pennsylvania and Des Moines University.



Student Employment

A position at The Harkin Institute is much more than a part-time job; it is a real-world opportunity to do real-world work.

Student employees receive a unique opportunity to join full-time employees in a variety of settings, help on long-term research projects, and gain exposure to national thought leaders and policymakers.

Student Employees

- Alex Bates, Undergraduate Communications Associate
- Kat Callahan, Legal Research Assistant
- Leetal Cohn, Undergraduate Policy Associate
- Kathryn Hansen, Legal Research Assistant
- Shanna Joseph, Undergraduate Policy Associate
- Stephanie Kiel, Undergraduate Chief of Staff
- Morgan Ryan, Undergraduate Policy Associate
- Natalie Sherman, Legal Research Assistant



Senator Tom Harkin with undergraduate student employees. Pictured left to right: Stephanie Kiel, Morgan Ryan, Tom Harkin, Leetal Cohn, Alex Bates, and Shanna Joseph.

Student Scholarships

The Harkin Institute offers two scholarships for Drake University students pursuing internship opportunities in Washington, D.C.

The Harkin Institute D.C. Experience Scholarship was established in 2014 to honor Senator Harkin's legacy by providing financial assistance to Drake undergraduate students with financial need who have secured a summer internship in a non-profit organization, congressional office or government agency in Washington, D.C.

The Robert J. Waters and Patricia J. Beneke Endowed Washington, D.C. Experience Scholarship was established in memory of Bob Waters – Senator Harkin's former Chief of Staff – by his wife and daughter. This scholarship supports Drake students with internships in Washington, D.C., to enable undergraduate or graduate students (including law students) with an interest in and commitment to public service to work with congressional or executive branch federal government offices or private organizations engaged in addressing: delivery of universal, high-quality health care; enhanced human, women's, LGBTQ, and civil rights; improved civic engagement and effective governance; expanded disability rights; a strong system of accessible public education; and sustainability, environmental protection and climate change.

2022 Scholarship Recipients

- Ethan Williams, Intern for Rep. Ashley Hinson
- Trinity Harris, Intern for Aflac



The Harkin Institute Team

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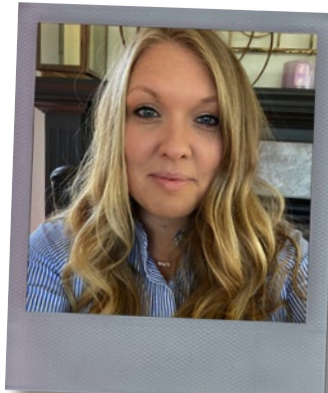
Our Employees



Michael Berger
UpLift Project Coordinator



Hope Bibens
Drake University Director
of Archives & Special
Collections



Ashley Ezzio
UpLift Project Coordinator



Jennifer Fiihr
Office Manager



Lila Johnson
Graphic Designer & Digital
Accessibility Specialist



Kathryn Kuckelman
Communications Manager



Matthew Reed
Executive Director



Adam Shriver
Interim Director of Wellness
and Nutrition Policy



Stephanie Sinovic
Drake University Senior
Advancement Officer



Rayna Stoycheva
Director of Retirement
Security Policy



Daniel Van Sant
Director of Disability Policy

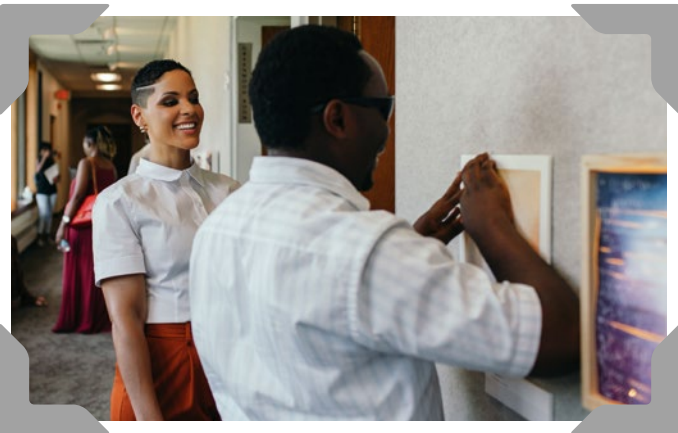


Our National Advisory Council 16

- Patricia Beneke
- Charles E. Cook, Jr.
- Angela L. Walker Franklin
- Ruth Harkin
- James W. Hubbell III
- Rachel R. McLean
- Sally J. Pederson
- Mary Sellers
- Liz Shuler
- Steve Sukup
- Marsha Ternus

Our Fellows and Consultants

- Ashlea Lantz, Senior Policy Advisor, Disability Policy
- Robert Ludke, Senior Fellow, Disability Policy
- Joshua Pearson, Senior Fellow, Retirement Security Policy
- Jill Wells, Fellow, Disability Policy



Jill Wells, Fellow & Artist

In 2022, The Harkin Institute added the organization's first-ever artist fellow, Jill Wells. Jill has been conducting research and programming focused on accessibility in art. Jill's work is represented in the permanent collections of the Havelocks, Dublin; the Center of Afrofuturist Studies at Public Space One in Iowa City; as well as the Evelyn K. Davis Center for Working Families and Disability Rights Iowa. Jill currently serves on the Board of Directors for The After School Arts Program, works as a full-time Artist in her private practice, as well as running her mentorship program Artist X Advocacy (AXA). You can find more about Jill's work at jillwellsart.com.



(Top Left) Rachel McLean and Steve Sukup at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center building dedication.

(Middle Left) Ruth Harkin, Marsha Ternus, and Senator Tom Harkin at the Tom and Ruth Harkin Center building dedication.

(Bottom Left) Jill Wells observing someone from the Mandela Washington Fellowship program interact with one of her accessible Braille art pieces.

(Top Right) Daniel Van Sant, Bob Ludke, and Ashlea Lantz at the Harkin Summit on Disability-Driven Innovation.

(Bottom Right) Jill Wells stands next to one of her accessible Braille art pieces while Senator Tom Harkin interacts with it.

Honor Roll of Donors

Our friends of The Harkin Institute make what we do here possible. We thank them for their generous support of our mission. This is an honor roll of donors who have made a gift in fiscal year 2023 (July 1, 2022-June 30, 2023.)

\$100,000+

Gordon Gund
Tom and Ruth Harkin
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\$25,000-\$99,999

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Darci Vetter (AS'96)
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Connie Wimer
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Paul and Nancy Burrow (Paul, LA'76, GR'81)

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Brad and Emily Chafa (Brad, BN'83; Emily, LA'82)

Gregory Christie

David and Alicia Claypool

Brendan and Christine Comito

Jeffrey Couch

Dr. Kevin and Jeanne Cunningham

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Dr. Jane DeWitt (PH'74)

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Jack Holveck Jr. and Andrea Holveck

Denise Hotopp

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Mary Malloy (LW'14)
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Maureen McCue
Michael McGuffin
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Virginia Petersen
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