

## **Wenner-Gren Foundation Report February 25, 2025**

The Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research funds, well, anthropological research.

We support all the subfields of the discipline worldwide, in the wide range of forms it takes. We fund people who study bones, primates, potshards, micro-sediments, wedding ceremonies, political movements, and random conversations. We support scholars trained in cultural anthropology, archaeology, linguistic anthropology, and biological anthropology – along with the growing number whose work is blurring these lines.

We also provide a platform for conversations – we’re interested not just in supporting anthropology by amplifying the voices of those who are working to transform the discipline, so it can live up to its promise.

In all this, we work to play a leadership role in anthropology. Our mission is to advance anthropological knowledge amplify the impact of anthropology, address the precarity of anthropology and anthropologists, and foster an inclusive vision of the field.

It’s an accident we exist.

Founded in 1941 by a couple of men who somehow hit upon the discipline as a beneficiary. Our origin story involves vacuum cleaners, pleasure yachts the size of ocean liners, a story about a big game hunt, which probably wasn’t true, and an amateur archaeology expedition to Peru.

The Foundation is named for Axel Wenner-Gren, Founder of the Electrolux Corporation, who established what was then called The Viking Fund. Paul Fejos, a Hungarian avant garde filmmaker, persuaded Wenner-Gren to devote the Fund to anthropology.

Biological anthropology has always been an emphasis. The Foundation funded early work in infrastructure development, including the research that gave rise to carbon dating, and promoted disciplinary stocktaking in the International Symposium on Anthropology. The Foundation was instrumental in disseminating research findings into other fields. In the early days, the Foundation made small research grants to its network of associates.

Today, we have an endowment of over \$200 million. We give away roughly \$6 million per year. Our grants are competitive; we receive around 1,500 applications per year across all our awards.

We spend this money to support our mission through a range of programs.

1. Dissertation Fieldwork Grants

Up to \$25,000

We fund scholars pursuing a PhD in anthropology or a related discipline from institutions all over the world.

2. Post PhD Research Grants

Up to \$25,000

We support independent researchers as well as faculty members. We fund scholars in institutions all over the world.

3. Engaged Research Grants

Up to \$25,000

This new program is open to both to PhDs and doctoral students committed to doing work that empowers those who have historically been among those researched, rather than the research. We look for genuine research partnerships – projects that are engaged from the identification of the research question to the design of the methods to the afterlife of the project.

4. The Hunt Postdoctoral Fellowship

\$40,000 to work on a writing project

5. The Fejos Postdoctoral Fellowship in Ethnographic Film

\$40,000 to bring ethnographic film or media project to completion

6. The Wenner-Gren Fellowship in the Anthropology of Black Experiences.

Optionally residential fellowship in collaboration with SAR

7. The Wadsworth International Fellows

\$20,000 per year, renewable to cover four years of doctoral training

This award is open to students from locations without easy access to advanced training in anthropology.

8. The Wadsworth African Fellowship

\$20,000 per year, renewable to cover four years of doctoral training

This award is open to African students pursuing a PhD at a South African university.

9. Conference and Workshop Grants

\$20,000 per event

## 10. Wenner-Gren Symposia

Boldly interdisciplinary workshops hosted by the Foundation

Biologists, psychologists, and biological and cultural anthropologists participated in our symposium on masculinity and violence. Economists and anthropologists took part in our symposium on the price of wealth. Political theorists and activists and anthropologists met to work through papers on populism.

## 11. Wenner-Gren Seminars

Intergenerational meetings hosted by the Foundation that focus on the discipline's future

## 12. Global Initiatives Grants

Up to \$20,000 for collaborative capacity building projects worldwide

We are currently prioritizing projects on the flourishing of paleoanthropology in East Africa among East African scholars.

You can find information on all our programs on [our website](#). And you can always email us if you have questions – we're easy to find. If you have any ideas or suggestions, we would love to hear from you.

Last but not least, if you're interested in reviewing for us, please let us know. We're always looking for smart, generous scholars to help with our work. Dr. Brendane Tynes, our Foundation Anthropologist for Research Equity and Excellence, is at the meetings and she'd be happy to talk with you.

**Danilyn Rutherford**

February 25, 2025

[drutherford@wennergren.org](mailto:drutherford@wennergren.org)

[inquiries@wennergren.org](mailto:inquiries@wennergren.org)

[btynes@wennergren.org](mailto:btynes@wennergren.org)