



**MILKEN  
INSTITUTE**  
CENTER FOR  
STRATEGIC PHILANTHROPY

## PHASE I: GETTING STARTED

# Questions to Guide Your Philanthropy

To explore your philanthropic priorities, consider the following guiding questions, and challenge yourself to understand the “why” behind each answer:

### VISION

---

- What do you want to achieve through your philanthropy? What is motivating this goal?
- Which three factors are most important to you when deciding which causes or organizations to support?
- Thinking back on your philanthropic activities to date, which experience(s) do you consider the most successful, and why? Which was/were most challenging, and why?

### PRIORITIES

---

- Are you drawn to specific causes? Why?
- Thinking about your philanthropy as a portfolio that provides ongoing sustenance to priority causes and organizations, and responds to acute needs, how would you prioritize your commitments in any given year to balance your portfolio?
- What is your desired timeline for impact (e.g., near-term vs. long-term results)?

### LEGACY

---

- Do you want your philanthropy to continue in perpetuity, or do you want to spend down your philanthropic assets in your lifetime?
- Do you wish for your family members to engage with your philanthropy, and if yes, how?
- If you had the opportunity to directly inform your family’s future generations about your philanthropic values, what would you want them to know?