



The  
**ROCKEFELLER  
FOUNDATION**



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## **In an Effort to Bridge Political Divide, The Rockefeller Foundation Grants \$1M to StoryCorps to Spark Meaningful Conversations between Opposing Viewpoints**

*New undertaking will be archived at the Library of Congress*

**NEW YORK**—The Rockefeller Foundation today announced a \$1 million grant to StoryCorps to launch “One Small Step,” a new project aimed to help bring together a politically divided United States by recording conversations between people with different political viewpoints. As part of the effort, StoryCorps will invite pairs of people of all backgrounds, who hold opposing political viewpoints, to record personal interviews with the goal of empowering participants and the people who hear these conversations to cross partisan divides and better understand each other.

Recognizing Americans are in the midst of a pivotal political moment, The Rockefeller Foundation partnered with StoryCorps on this project to help people on opposite sides of the political divide understand one another better as people, build social capital and, ultimately, recognize our shared humanity. “One Small Step”—the first time StoryCorps has deliberately put together people who don’t agree—seeks to forge healthy and productive conversations that encourage respect, and to help bridge our nation’s divides.

StoryCorps has been testing “One Small Step” interviews between people who know each other and between strangers. Because participants are aware that these interviews become part of American history—and available for future generations—at the Library of Congress, there is a remarkable level of thoughtfulness, honesty and civility to these conversations that stands in stark contrast to the tone often found on social media and elsewhere.

Over the past 14 years, StoryCorps has become iconic, connecting over 400,000 Americans by facilitating conversations between two people, often family members, friends, or loved ones, and then preserving their interview in the Library of Congress. The personal reflection and wisdom shared in these stories, some of which are shared broadly in beloved radio segments on NPR and via other media, help engender empathy and personal

connection, according to research undertaken by StoryCorps. Through these conversations, StoryCorps participants and those who listen to the conversations, as well, are able to recognize the value in each of their lives and stories—a goal that this new series, “One Small Step” will also aim to achieve.

“America is in the midst of a substantial political divide that is fracturing communities, friends, and families. The Rockefeller Foundation believes that, in this difficult moment for national unity, we can play a role in helping to open dialogue, foster greater understanding, and ensure that people once again begin to hear each other,” **said Rajiv Shah, President of The Rockefeller Foundation.** “Our partnership with StoryCorps is ‘one small step’ toward rebuilding trust among the American people through transparency, respect and candor. We can think of no more appropriate a partner to fund in this effort than StoryCorps, which has a long and successful history of encouraging honest conversation.”

“Nearly half a million people from across all parts of the U.S. who know and love each other have participated in StoryCorps to date,” said **Dave Isay, President and Founder of StoryCorps.** “We are excited to see how the StoryCorps interview method can foster authentic, meaningful conversations between people with opposing political views at a moment of dangerous polarization in the United States. We hope that ‘One Small Step’ can act as something of a pressure release valve for the nation during these difficult days.”

Much like traditional StoryCorps interviews—which bring together two participants and a facilitator in person in a recording booth—conversations recorded through “One Small Step” will typically last about 40 minutes and will be archived at Library of Congress, where future generations of Americans will be able to listen to them.

But unlike traditional StoryCorps interviews, participants could also have an opportunity to bridge geographical divides using technology. In partnership with local public radio stations, StoryCorps will offer the chance to record “One Small Step” conversations between individuals in separate studios, in different cities, with remote facilitators, using video technology powered by **Cisco.**

StoryCorps will work with a variety of partners to share “One Small Step” stories with the nation, including NPR and public media stations across the country.

StoryCorps will begin collecting interviews for “One Small Step” in January 2018.

For more information and to sign up to record an interview, visit [storycorps.org/discover/one-small-step](http://storycorps.org/discover/one-small-step).

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**About The Rockefeller Foundation:**

For more than 100 years, The Rockefeller Foundation's mission has been to promote the well-being of humanity throughout the world. Today, The Rockefeller Foundation pursues this mission through dual goals: advancing inclusive economies that expand opportunities for more broadly shared prosperity, and building resilience by helping people, communities and institutions prepare for, withstand, and emerge stronger from acute shocks and chronic stresses. To achieve these goals, The Rockefeller Foundation works at the intersection of four focus areas—advance health, revalue ecosystems, secure livelihoods, and transform cities—to address the root causes of emerging challenges and create systemic change. Together with partners and grantees, The Rockefeller Foundation strives to catalyze and scale transformative innovations, create unlikely partnerships that span sectors, and take risks others cannot—or will not. For more information, please visit [www.rockefellerfoundation.org](http://www.rockefellerfoundation.org).

**About StoryCorps** Founded in 2003 by Dave Isay, StoryCorps, an independently funded non-profit organization, has given more than 400,000 people—Americans of all backgrounds and beliefs, in towns and cities in all 50 states—the chance to record interviews about their lives. The organization preserves the recordings in its archive at the Library of Congress, the largest single collection of human voices ever gathered, and shares select stories with the public through StoryCorps' weekly podcast, NPR broadcasts, animated shorts, digital platforms, and best-selling books. These powerful human stories reflect the vast range of American experiences, wisdom and values; engender empathy and connection; and remind us how much more we have in common than divides us. Visit [storycorps.org](http://storycorps.org) for more information.