

ANNUAL REPORT 2025

A photograph showing the silhouettes of two hikers on a rocky shore at sunset. One hiker is standing and reaching out to help another who is sitting on the rocks. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a bright orange glow and lens flare. The ocean is visible in the background under a clear sky.

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WELCOME LETTER

2025 was a year of unprecedented challenges. Like many other non-profits, we've faced a number of existential threats over the last 12 months. With the loss of federal funding, the financial model that had long undergirded our work suddenly lost its viability. With the termination of federal grants, it became increasingly difficult to collaborate with some of our longtime partners. And with the explosion of AI-based technologies, we were confronted with new ways of conducting research—and new levels of uncertainty and risk.

Taken together, these developments forced us to question every aspect of our work—how we're funded, how we do our research, and even why we exist. In every instance, our response was the same: to tackle challenges head on, and to stay true to ourselves.

When existing funding streams began to dry up, we cast our nets wider, cultivating relationships with a broader range of non-federal partners and laying a course toward a more financially sustainable future. Instead of simply reacting to the spread of Large Language Models (LLMs) and other AI-enabled tools, we dedicated ourselves to studying them—and to loudly negotiating for a place in conversations about their use. And when our core values came under attack, we recommitted ourselves to our foundational principles and reinvesting in partnerships aligned with our mission of creating practical social science for a better world.

As a result of these decisions, Knology has not only persevered, but grown into a stronger, more resilient organization. Powered by a simple refrain – “our work has never been more important than it is now” – in 2025, we doubled down and fought harder. At a time of cuts and curtailing, we recouped some of our losses, hiring new analysts and researchers to maintain our existing portfolio and lay a foundation for future growth. By strengthening our existing partnerships, we discovered new and better ways to empower organizations with knowledge and resources for serving their communities. And in the process of strengthening our resolve, we learned how to more effectively talk about our work, connect with our audiences, and advance the cause of practical social science.

As we close the books on 2025, we hope you'll join us in celebrating all that our team and our partners have accomplished at a time of immense adversity and uncertainty. Together, we rose to the occasion, standing in solidarity with each other and working arm-in-arm to build a more compassionate, inclusive, just, equitable world.

In connection with that goal, our 2025 annual report offers a wealth of insights into how our work helped partners **address critical problems, maximize their impacts, and build their organizational capacities.**

As a new year dawns, we move forward with a promise to continue empowering our partners with research-backed insights and tools that advance their missions. We hope the information shared here gives rise to new ideas for how we can collaboratively work toward this goal.



JOANNA LAURSEN
BRUCKER, ED.M.



ANTOINETTE
LA BELLE, D.M.

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ABOUT KNOLOGY

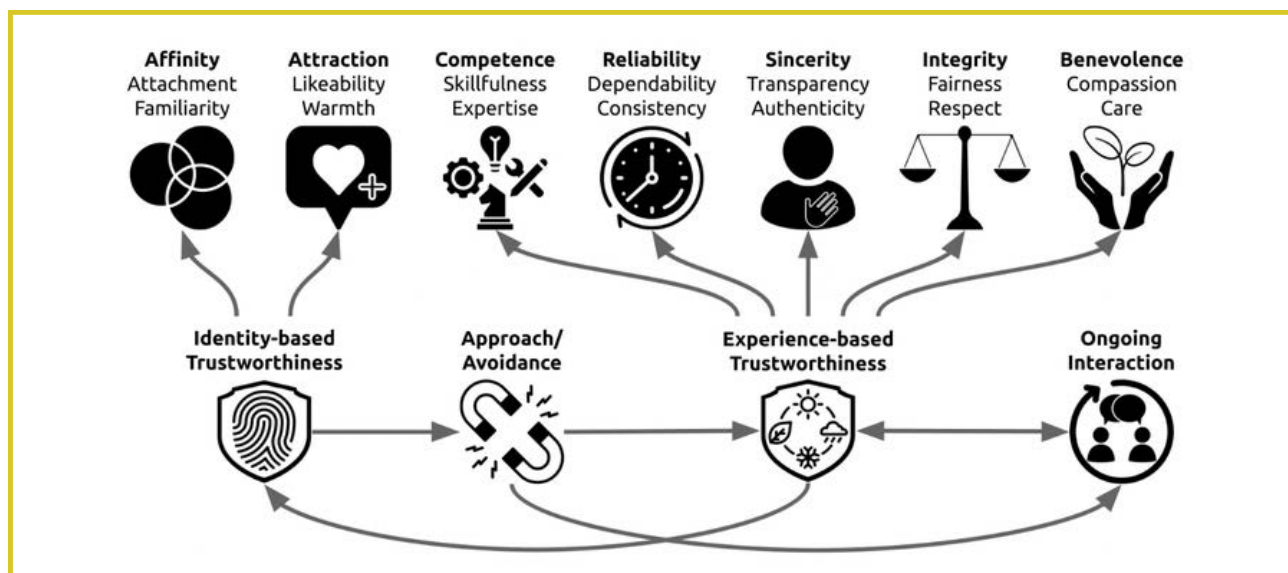
Knology is a non-profit research organization with a mission of practical social science for a better world. Through collaboration with highly networked, national organizations, we use social science tools to simultaneously study and solve real world challenges in real time. Our work equips professionals with research-based insights, tools, and resources that can be used to amplify impacts and open new pathways to action.

SOLVING PROBLEMS

Our research helps partners solve the complex problems bound up in their work. Whether it be tools for addressing the crisis of institutional trust, strategies for meeting diverse community needs, or ways to challenge stereotyped knowledge, the examples below showcase the range of ways we equip others with data-based insights and resources for addressing the problems confronting their communities.

Trust

With funding from [IRC4HR](#), we devoted much of the year to tackling the problem of organizational trust. In addition to building a [trust framework](#), we developed a number of practical strategies organizations can use to demonstrate trustworthiness. Some of these are geared toward [helping leaders build trust with staff](#) during times of workplace conflict, while others focus on ways organizations can [expand the radius of trust in their communities](#). We also advanced a model for building [trustworthy AI learning companions](#). All of this guidance reflects a key finding of our research: problem solving works best when actions (whether taken by humans or machines) align with the key components of trust—especially benevolence, sincerity, integrity, reliability, and competence.



National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment (NILPPA)

Through an IMLS-funded collaboration with the American Library Association, we identified a number of different ways programming partnerships can help libraries create more equitable communities. Based on an analysis of data tied to our “National Impact of Library Public Programs Assessment” (NILPPA) project, our study found that collaboration with local partners gives libraries a better sense of diverse community needs—especially those of historically and persistently excluded groups. We also showed how collaboration can help libraries broaden the appeal and relevance of their work, and more effectively forge bonds among diverse groups.

Partnerships for Indigenous Climate Justice

As part of an NSF-funded partnership with PBS News and Indigenous media outlet ICT, we looked at how news organizations can learn from Indigenous-led journalism to cover climate change in ways that challenge audiences’ stereotyped understandings of climate problems, solutions, and solvers. Our research found that traditional media can improve their coverage of climate change by incorporating four lessons from Indigenous journalism: (1) recognize that humans are part of nature; (2) take a holistic perspective; (3) seek out Indigenous perspectives, and; (4) consider all actors—including those who cause climate problems, victims, problem solvers, and those harmed by solutions.





MAXIMIZING IMPACT

In 2025, we helped partners close the gap between theory and practice, find a deeper level of meaning in their work, and better understand how they can make a difference in people's lives. The examples below highlight some of the many ways our evaluative efforts improved the impact of our partners' work.

Science Journeys

To support Children's National Hospital's implementation of a STEM program for hospitalized youth, we surveyed medical professionals and caregivers across the country. Our [findings](#) shed light on how such programming could fill gaps in children's learning, improve their emotional wellbeing, impart a sense of normalcy to their hospital experiences, and foster positive family dynamics. Through a [review of recent literature](#), we also charted a path toward achieving these outcomes. Taken together, our work created a foundation for maximizing the program's impacts.



Libraries Transforming Communities: Accessible Small and Rural Libraries

Working with the American Library Association, we offered research-backed guidance on ways for libraries to become more accessible to people with disabilities. Published as case studies and blog posts, our work spanned the gamut of libraries' day-to-day operations—from advice on inclusive language to questions surrounding physical accessibility, autism acceptance, and strategic planning. A particular focus of our efforts was on accessible programming, including ideas for hosting memory cafés and other dementia-friendly programs, best practices around sensory sensitivity, and strategies for supporting mental health and ASL literacy.

Museums for All

In collaboration with the Association of Children's Museums, we evaluated an IMLS initiative called "Museums for All," which is dedicated to reducing financial barriers to museum access. In addition to documenting some of the success and challenges bound up in the project's implementation, our evaluation allowed us to debunk a common misperception about initiatives like these: that attempts to expand access to low-income families inevitably result in institutional financial losses. Instead of damaging their bottom lines, participating museums often found that Museums for All brought money in the door. On the basis of these findings, we created a theory of change designed to help museums maximize the initiative's beneficial impacts—particularly in terms of cultivating funders and improving trust perceptions.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Through learning workshops, we connect organizations with practical information, tools, and techniques for building their internal capacities. We tailor workshops to partners' specific needs and goals, helping them develop social science expertise in a variety of areas. Below, we highlight examples of how we help partners build their organizational capacities.

Organizational Trust Webinar

At the conclusion of our “Culture of Trust” project, we co-hosted a webinar with IRC4HR that brought together nearly 100 individuals across the private and public sectors. The event gave attendees a chance to unite across fields to address a common challenge: growing distrust in leadership. In addition to learning about the role of trust in organizational performance, attendees gained a grounded understanding of how our trust framework can be applied to specific real-world problems — for example, how to build staff trust during times of organizational change. Attendees found the webinar highly relevant to their work, agreeing that it underscored the need to create an open forum aimed at stimulating more frequent cross-organizational dialogue on leader-staff trust. To strengthen sharing, after the webinar we extended the Q&A to LinkedIn, moderating a multi-month discussion on organizational trust.



Storytelling for Literacy and Community Healing

As part of a project funded by the Estée Lauder Foundation, we partnered with the American Library Association to identify key steps libraries can take to build effective storytelling programs with people impacted by the criminal legal system. Our work included a literature review of storytelling interventions with system-impacted people and communities across a range of contexts, and highlighted the importance of counterstorytelling as a tool for navigating hostile environments, healing from historical traumas, and dismantling oppressive systems. Our research also provided concrete action steps for libraries, detailing particular ways to build counterstorytelling into their work in ways that align with their existing programming capacities.

Healing with Play

Through our contributions to the Association of Children's Museums' "Healing with Play" initiative, we helped a cohort of children's museums build their capacities for supporting bereaved children and families in their communities. In a series of reports and case studies, we introduced children's museums professionals to recent bereavement scholarship, explored the various grief-related supports families would like children's museums to provide, highlighted the experiences of museums already active in this space, and shared a set of best practices based on those experiences. As this project continues, we plan on expanding our capacity-building efforts—most notably, through the creation of an A-Z reference text outlining everything museums (and other cultural institutions) need to incorporate themes of death and dying into their regular programming.



FINANCIAL STABILITY

Knology maintained a stable financial position throughout 2025. Given shifts in the funding landscape, we focused on investing in new and varied funding sources. We embarked on a number of new projects and partnerships, and are well positioned to enter 2026.

KF O'Conner Davis conducted our 2025 audit and issued an unmodified opinion. We summarize our financial standing on the following pages. The full audit is available upon request.

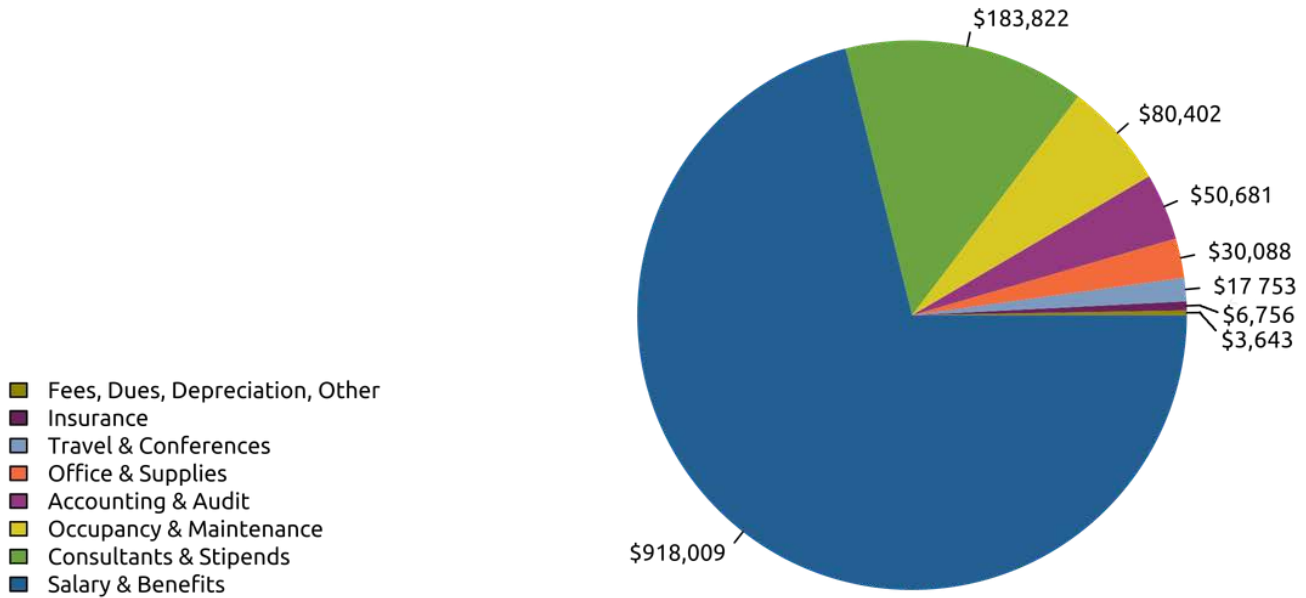
Statement of Financial Position

Assets	2025	2024
Cash and cash equivalents	\$ 881,434	\$ 633,327
Contract service fees receivable	258,807	338,799
Employee retention tax credit receivable	61,635	257,287
Prepaid expenses	3,727	6,167
Security deposits	-	24,670
Right of use assets – operating lease, net	-	65,890
Furniture, equipment, and leasehold improvements, net	-	1,056
	\$ 1,205,603	\$ 1,327,196
Liabilities and Net Assets		
Liabilities		
Accounts payable and accrued expenses	\$ 48,213	\$ 98,298
Lease payable	-	75,783
Unearned revenue	191,943	302,695
Total liabilities	240,156	476,776
Net assets	965,447	850,420
Without donor restrictions	\$ 1,205,603	\$ 1,327,196

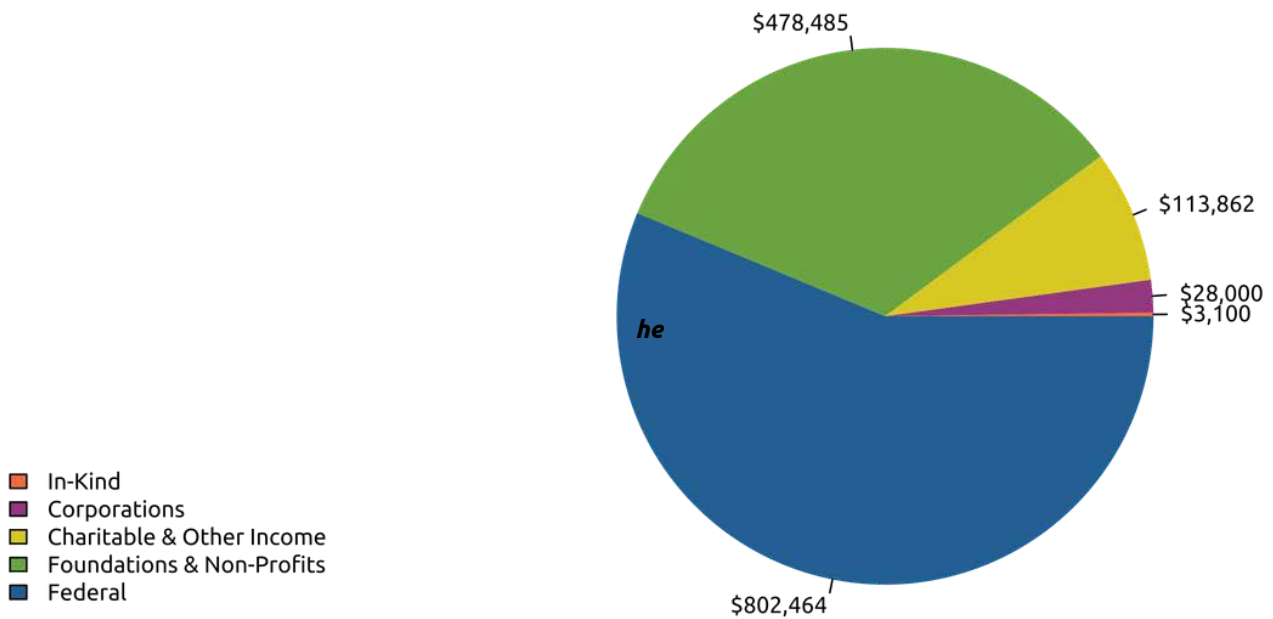
Statement of Activities

	2025	2024
Revenue and Support		
Contract service fees	\$ 1,288,822	\$ 1,439,906
Contributed non-financial assets	3,100	4,540
Contributions	79,114	127,562
Employee retention tax credit	-	332,002
Other income	35,140	16,910
Total revenues and support	\$ 1,406,176	\$ 1,920,920
Expenses		
Program services	758,398	\$ 927,978
Supporting services		
Management and general	446,476	481,233
Fundraising	86,275	186,580
Total supporting services	532,751	667,813
Total expenses	\$ 1,291,149	\$ 1,595,791
Change in net assets	115,027	325,129
Net assets without donor restrictions, beginning of year	850,420	525,291
Net assets without donor restrictions, end of year	\$ 965,447	\$ 850,420

Distribution of Functional Expenses



Distribution of Revenue Sources



2025

KNOLOGY TEAM



Staff

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Jena Barchas-Lichtenstein*, Ph.D.,
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Erin Simmons, M.A., Freelance Editor
Laura Tietjen, M.F.A., Employee Wellness
& Accounts Manager
John Voiklis, Ph.D., Principal Researcher

*Individuals who did not work a full calendar year

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Katerine Sauer, Ph.D.
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K.T. Todd, Ph.D.

2025

PUBLICATIONS

Peer Reviewed

Barchas-Lichtenstein, J., Voiklis, J., Attaway, B., LaMarca, N., Sawdy, R., Vasquez, S., Parson, P. & Bennett-Begaye, J. (2026). Reporting on Climate Solutions in Institutional, Indigenous, and Climate-focused News Outlets. *Front. Commun.* 10:1617150. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fcomm.2025.1617150>

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