Arcus is dedicated to the idea that people can live in harmony with one another and the natural world.
About Arcus
Driven by the vision of our founder, Jon Stryker, and our shared commitment to global human rights and conservation movements, Arcus supports justice for LGBTQ people and humans’ closest relatives, the great apes and gibbons.
Our staff, diverse in gender identity, sexual orientation, ethnicity, and national origin, is based at our principal offices in New York City and Cambridge, U.K.
We partner with experts and activists—brave advocates for change who push boundaries and confront tough challenges. Together, we learn from each other and take bold risks on ideas that drive progress toward a future of respect and dignity for all.
We carry out our work in accordance with the values of authenticity, integrity, honesty, humility, and collaboration, with a strategic and rational approach to advancing equity for those who are most pushed to the margins.

How We Work
Arcus is among the world’s most consistent funders in its two areas of focus: LGBTQ human rights, and ape conservation and well-being. We work toward our goals using three approaches: listening and learning, strategic grantmaking, and leading.
We convene stakeholders to elevate diverse and marginalized voices and ideas within the global conservation and LGBTQ movements; provide grants to organizations aligned with our program strategies; and enhance the environments and cultures in which our partners work.
In recent years, funding has ranged from small, one-time grants to larger, multi-year investments. The majority of grants are between $100,000 and $150,000 per year, although the full spread of amounts is much wider. All grants are awarded to fund specific programs or organizations aligned with Arcus strategies. Our grantmaking cycles are based on a combination of open calls and invitations. Each grant application takes between two and six months from concept to decision.

Our Programs
The foundation’s Social Justice Program works in regions where we believe our finite resources can bring the greatest positive impact for LGBTQ movements.
We focus on advancing policy and social change—such as the welcoming of LGBTQ people in faith communities—to bring increased safety, protection, and acceptance of people marginalized because of their sexual orientation and/or gender identity. We are especially focused on LGBTQ people whose age, poverty, or status as people of color push them to the margins of society.
Through the Great Apes & Gibbons Program, Arcus seeks to ensure our fellow apes can thrive, living full lives on their own terms in their natural habitats. We work to increase respect for and recognition of the intrinsic value of all apes, reconcile socioeconomic development and conservation in the landscapes where great apes and gibbons live, and build an effective and integrated ape conservation movement.

Our Support
To achieve the greatest impact with the foundation’s finite resources, Arcus has identified priority areas for support within the Americas, Africa, and Asia. The areas comprise 12 countries which are the focus for social justice grantmaking, and 20 countries for ape conservation and well-being.

Grants (2000–2021)

- Social Justice Program
- Great Apes & Gibbons Program
- Special Opportunities

- >2,000 grants
- >500+ organizations
- >$75 million
- >$140 million
- >$190 million

Grantees

Our partners include international, regional, national, and community-based groups in rural and urban settings, including newly established organizations as well as those with long histories of work and achievement. (See chart below for types of organizations receiving Arcus support.)
In both the Social Justice and Great Apes & Gibbons programs, our partners work together at levels spanning from grassroots to international and multilateral, often supporting coordination and working in solidarity with various groups pursuing a common goal in difficult, even hostile environments.
Impact Highlights
Since Arcus’ inception, grantee partners have been a force for cultural and policy changes within the United States and globally, including the following milestones:

LGBTQ Social Justice
- Sexual-orientation nondiscrimination included among principles in the Olympic Charter.
- Successful legal challenges brought against criminalization of same-sex relations in Belize, India, Mozambique, Nauru, Palau, São Tomé and Príncipe, the Seychelles, and Uganda, most in response to specific U.N. recommendations.
- LGBT protection measures effected in China, Honduras, Nicaragua, Philippines, Suriname, Thailand, and Turkey.
- Protections from sexual orientation or gender-identity-based discrimination enshrined within the organizational policies of all Arcus grantee organizations.
- Ordination of LGBTQ clergy follows major policy changes within U.S. Protestant denominations, including the Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, and Presbyterian U.S.A. Churches.
- U.S. Supreme Court strikes down Defense of Marriage Act, legalizing same-sex marriage across the United States.
- High-profile U.S. professional and collegiate sports figures make positive and open statements about their sexual orientation or gender identity.
- New York state law preventing transgender individuals from receiving transition-related services through the government-funded healthcare program overturned.

Great Apes & Gibbons
- More than 4 million acres of forestland that is home to apes in Central Africa and in Southeast Asia are officially designated as protected areas.
- The number of habitats with stable or growing ape populations—including highly endangered mountain and Cross River gorillas—increases.
- Improved monitoring and surveying of ape populations leads to stronger and more coordinated conservation efforts across a growing number of ape habitats.
- Dozens of major corporations pledge to meet zero-deforestation targets, shielding forestland that is home to endangered apes.
- Reduced use and sale of pulp, paper, and palm oil products spares areas of Asian and African forestland from industrial cultivation for these products.
- Increased ecotourism and other income-generating activities benefit local people in or around protected forest areas of Africa and Asia.
- The work of African and Asian sanctuaries is linked more closely to conservation activities.
- The status of chimpanzees in the United States is lifted from “threatened” to “endangered,” providing stronger safeguards from biomedical research and experimentation.
- Conservationists bring the first court cases in the United States seeking freedom for caged or captive apes.