

# 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT



THE CENTER  
FOR EFFECTIVE  
PHILANTHROPY

# The Center for Effective Philanthropy

Institutional and individual donors can take on pressing challenges that have defied government and business solutions. But being effective in this work is uniquely challenging. To make every dollar count, donors need to continually assess their performance, learn from data and exemplars, and adapt their practices in ways that are consistent with effectiveness. That's where CEP comes in.

## CEP's Mission

Founded in 2001, CEP is a nonprofit organization with a mission to provide data, feedback, programs, and insights to help individual and institutional donors improve their effectiveness. We do this work because we believe effective donors, working collaboratively and thoughtfully, can profoundly contribute to creating a better and more just world.

For more information on CEP's work, including its research, assessments, advisory services, and programming, visit [www.cep.org](http://www.cep.org).

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# Introduction Letter

June 2025

## Dear Colleague,

The Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) reached new milestones that expanded our influence and deepened our impact in 2024.

You'll see detailed in the pages of this report more information about our work this past year, but to share a few highlights:

- The research team published six insightful reports, including the second annual "State of Nonprofits," which became our most downloaded publication of the year. We're particularly proud that this work has helped shine a light on the human dimension of nonprofit effectiveness, sparking vital conversations about burnout and well-being among nonprofit staff and leaders.
- Season 4 of the "Giving Done Right" podcast was downloaded more than 62,000 times in 2024, placing it in the top two percent of podcast downloads globally, bringing nuanced discussions about effective philanthropy to new audiences, and amplifying important voices and perspectives from across the sector.
- Our YouthTruth team expanded its work with 22 new engagements, bringing youth voice and insights to the forefront where they were not heard before.

While celebrating these successes, we also navigated challenges. The philanthropic landscape continues to evolve rapidly, requiring us to be agile and responsive. The Assessment and Advisory Services team, which completed 125 engagements across five survey rounds, adapted approaches in anticipation of changing needs of the communities and nonprofits with which funders work.

Looking ahead, we remain committed to advancing the effectiveness of philanthropy in this challenging context through rigorous research, thoughtful guidance, strong defense of the role of philanthropy and nonprofits in a democracy, and collaborative learning. The expansion of offerings by our CEP Learning Institute and the addition of education leader David McKinney as the new vice president of YouthTruth are two exciting recent developments that position us well to deepen our impact in the coming year.

As the context in which we work continues to change rapidly, we will keep endeavoring to support philanthropy's ability to address our world's most pressing challenges.

With deep appreciation for your support and partnership,



Tony Richardson  
Board Chair, CEP



Phil Buchanan  
President, CEP  
[philb@cep.org](mailto:philb@cep.org)

# 2024 at a Glance

**125**

Assessment and Advisory  
Services engagements

With **104**  
unique clients

**6**

research reports and

**4**

webinars with more than

**4,500**  
registrants

**342,051**

students surveyed and

at **1,136** different schools

In **153** districts

**98**

participants in

**3**

cohorts at CEP's Learning  
Institute and

**3**

custom workshops with  
funders/donor audiences

**14**

new episodes of the Giving  
Done Right podcast with

**62,000+**  
listeners



# Gathering Feedback for Action

CEP worked to fulfill its core mission of gathering feedback to elevate the voices of nonprofits, donors, staff, and students through the [Grantee and Applicant Perception Report](#) (GPR and APR), [Donor Perception Report](#) (DPR), [Staff Perception Report](#) (SPR), custom [advisory projects](#) as well as via YouthTruth's student, staff, and family [surveys](#).

## Actionable Insights for Funders

CEP's assessments and advisory services provide actionable insights and benchmarking for funders that help continually improve their efforts. Over the years, hundreds of funders of nearly every type and size have commissioned CEP's advisory services and assessments to make the best choices about how to use their resources to create impact.

<b>77</b> GPRS	<b>15</b> DPRS
<b>20</b> ADVISORY PROJECTS	<b>9</b> SPRS
	<b>4</b> APRS

In 2024, the Assessment and Advisory Services (AAS) team delivered 125 engagements to 104 unique clients. In response to client feedback, the team began offering more survey rounds each year (increasing from three annual rounds to five) and have cut report turnaround times by a month, delivering data to our clients more quickly so they can close feedback loops and implement change based on their survey results.



*100 percent of AAS clients reported 'making a meaningful change or reflection in at least one organizational area' following their engagement with CEP.*

*– CEP's Harder+Co assessment*

A third-party survey of CEP's reputation and value carried out by Harder+Co. revealed that CEP's surveys are widely viewed as trusted, rigorous, and data focused. In that evaluation, 100 percent of AAS clients reported "making a meaningful change or reflection in at least one organizational area" following their engagement with CEP.

Notably, clients pointed to CEP's benchmarked data as a particularly valuable and important element of the assessment services, and 99 percent said they would recommend CEP's services to a peer organization. You can read more about the results of CEP's Harder+Co evaluation and key learnings and areas for improvement [on the CEP blog](#).

Finally, in a year that culminated in a high-stakes U.S. election, the AAS team designed new questions that clients were offered the opportunity to add to their surveys at no cost to gain insight into how nonprofits were experiencing the political climate and other current issues. The team continues to encourage and support such listening practices in 2025.



*CEP's super power is data. They are not grounding work in opinion. They ground work in evidence-based research and practices, which is so important. They can continue to find ways in this saturated marketplace to package and deliver these messages for those that really need to change.*

*– Interviewee quoted in CEP's Harder+Co assessment*

*For a full list of subscribers to CEP's Assessment and Advisory Services in 2024 see page 15-16.*

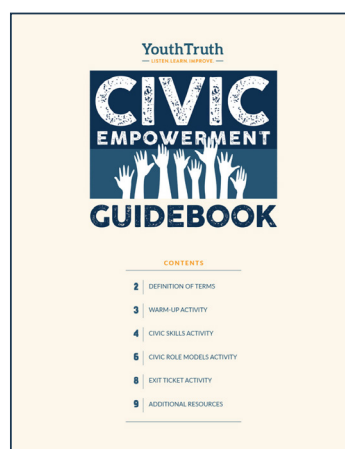
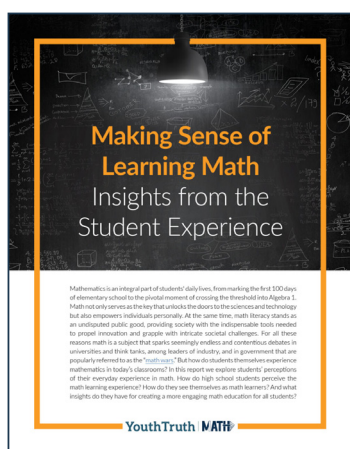


## Elevating Student Voice

YouthTruth operates on the simple principle that student voice matters. YouthTruth's research-backed surveys of the student experience invite young people to give candid feedback to adults, and they are designed to yield actionable insights that can be applied to drive real-world, real-school change. YouthTruth also gathers feedback data from families and school staff.

In 2024, YouthTruth surveyed more than 342,000 students, 97,000 family members, and 37,000 staff in 1,136 schools across 153 districts.

The YouthTruth team also released two publications during the year based on its aggregate, anonymized dataset: “[Making Sense of Learning Math: Insights from the Student Experience](#)” in January 2024 and “[Youth Civic Empowerment: Insights from the Student Experience](#),” published in September 2024 along with a [civic empowerment guidebook](#) to support educators and advocates in creating the opportunities young people are seeking to practice active and engaged citizenship in their communities.



Through coaching and convening, YouthTruth also supported school system partners and education funders to learn from student perception data to create schools where all students have the opportunity to learn and thrive. In 2024, YouthTruth conducted 50 workshops with school boards, administrators, educators, and young people themselves.

In February 2024, the longtime leader of our YouthTruth initiative, Jen Vorse Wilka, stepped down. The team benefitted from the expert interim leadership of Jen de Forest, Ed.D. while CEP conducted a national search for a new leader for the YouthTruth team. After a comprehensive national search, CEP was delighted to welcome experienced education leader David McKinney as the new vice president of YouthTruth in November 2024. You can read more about David's career and his appointment as the new vice president of YouthTruth in a [press release](#) issued at the time.



We are grateful to the following institutional funders of YouthTruth in 2024. For a full list of CEP's 2024 funders, see page 14.



# Informing Effective Philanthropic Practice

CEP seeks to provide valuable data, insight, and perspectives to inform philanthropic practice across a variety of platforms, creating a variety of opportunities for funders to engage in continuous learning for greater impact.

## CEP Research

CEP's approach to research is rooted in a belief that research and data can help donors do their work more effectively – so they can create more impact in partnership with communities.

In 2024, CEP published six research reports:

- [How Foundations Are Responding to the U.S. Supreme Court Affirmative Action Rulings](#)
- [Funding Nonprofit Endowments: Foundation Perspectives and Practices](#)
- [State of Nonprofits 2024: What Funders Need to Know](#)
- [How Foundations Are Supporting Grantee Staff Well-Being](#)
- [Bridging the Gap: Grantee Perspectives on Intermediary Funders](#)
- [Foundations and Nonprofits Sound the Alarm on Current and Future Impacts of the U.S. Political Climate](#)

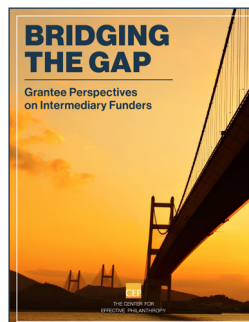
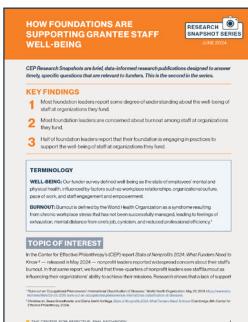
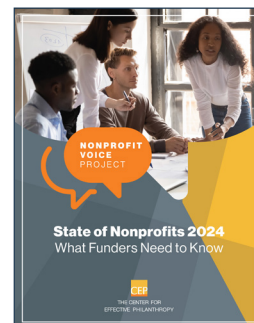
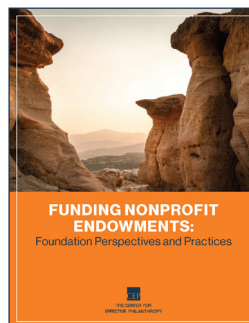
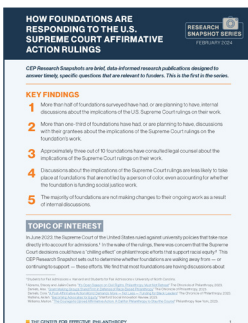
Of these six reports, three were released in the new Research Snapshot format — brief, data-informed research reports designed to answer timely, specific questions relevant to funders.

CEP's second annual "State of Nonprofits" report became the most downloaded and widely cited report in 2024, providing key data on how nonprofits are faring and kicking off a [vital conversation on CEP's blog](#) about the role of funders in supporting nonprofit leaders' well-being and combatting burnout.



*When I think about CEP, I think of strong cutting-edge research and an organization that is striving to help funders center the voices of their constituents.*

*– Interviewee in CEP's Harder+Co assessment*





## The CEP Learning Institute

Through peer cohorts and custom workshops, [CEP's Learning Institute](#) supports foundation staff and leaders to engage in collaborative learning rooted in rigorous research, set goals, and advance real changes in their work.

Throughout the year CEP's Learning Institute welcomed nearly 200 participants in workshops and peer learning cohorts that offered deep, practical learning on topics vital to effective philanthropic practice, including program officer effectiveness, amplifying impact through flexible funding, implementing trust-based philanthropic practices, and more.



*Excited about the new learning institute CEP has recently launched. It will be helpful to continue to understand how others do the work.*

*– Interviewee in CEP's Harder+Co assessment*

During the year, the Learning Institute team launched the first Flexible Funding Cohort for senior leaders and also kicked off two consecutive sold out Program Officer Peer Learning Cohorts and sold out a third for 2025, meeting a key need for program officer development in the field. In addition to peer learning cohorts, the team also ran custom workshops for specific foundations on working effectively with grantees, giving boldly for donors, and applying trust-based practices.

**Program Officer Peer Learning Cohorts:**  
**75** participants

**Flexible Funding Leaders Cohort:**  
**23** participants

**3 Custom Workshops**  
for funders and major donors

## Additional Resources for the Field

CEP aims to foster learning, conversation, and greater effectiveness for institutional funders and individual donors through a variety of resources, including a popular podcast for individual donors, the CEP blog, and both virtual and in-person programming.

### The Giving Done Right Podcast

Phil Buchanan and Grace Nicolette host the [Giving Done Right podcast](#), welcoming leaders and experts from across the nonprofit field to answer philanthropy's burning questions and take on myths that have long plagued donors and nonprofits alike.

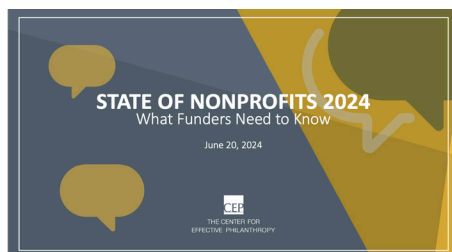


Release of the fourth season of the Giving Done Right podcast in 2024 saw the podcast reach its highest download numbers yet, with more than 62,000 downloads in the year. The year's 14 episodes (of 16 total for the season, which extended into 2025) included guests like Ford Foundation President Darren Walker, climate scientist and author Ayana Elizabeth Johnson, donors Jeff and Tricia Raikes, and nonprofit leaders like Jesús Gerena of UpTogether and Yolanda Coentro of Institute for Nonprofit Practice.

The Giving Done Right podcast is in the top two percent of podcasts globally according to Listen Notes and was featured this year in The Guardian's best podcasts newsletter, Hear Here. CEP looks forward to producing a fifth season of the podcast in 2025.

### Programming

CEP's virtual and in-person programming features CEP's rigorous research and the latest insights and trends in philanthropy. In 2024, CEP hosted four webinars and welcomed more than 4,500 registrants across these virtual events throughout the year.



In addition to these popular virtual events, CEP leaders spoke at conferences, board meetings, and private events across the country and the globe throughout the year, including at Exponent Philanthropy, Philanthropy Southeast, and National Center for Family Philanthropy conferences and at the Human Rights Funders Network Festival in Tbilisi, Georgia.

## The CEP Blog

The CEP blog aims to offer a range of perspectives, experiences, and opinions related to effective philanthropic practice and welcomes submissions from guest authors that speak to crucial issues facing individual and institutional donors. The views expressed in posts on the blog are not necessarily CEP's own.

CEP published 90 articles on the CEP blog in 2024, coming from a mix of guest and CEP authors and covering a vast range of topics, from philanthropy's role in building AI capability in the nonprofit sector to lessons on advancing racial equity starting from within a foundation to addressing the burnout crisis in nonprofit leadership.

As readership of the CEP blog continues to grow, CEP will continue to seek out diverse voices to share their experiences and insights on the blog.



*The blogs, podcasts and publications in particular for me in my role, I have increasingly turned to CEP as a resource as we're trying to support practice and policy shifts within the foundation.*

*– Interviewee in CEP's Harder+Co assessment*



# 2024 Financial Information

## Statement of Financial Position for the year ended December 31, 2024

dollars in thousands

	Unrestricted	Temp Restricted	Total
<b>Total Assets</b>	16,625	2,101	18,727
<b>Selected Balances</b>			
Cash	1,870	1,072	2,943
Investments	14,357		14,357
P/R		1,594	1,594

## Statement of Activities and Change in Net Assets for the year ended December 31, 2024

dollars in thousands

	Unrestricted		Temp Restricted	Total
	Operating	Strategic Opportunities Fund		
<b>Operating Revenue &amp; Support</b>				
Grants & Contributions	5,921		-438	5,483
Earned Revenue	7,812	364	-2	8,175
<i>Total Revenue &amp; Support</i>	13,733	364	-440	13,658
<b>Operating Expenses</b>				
Program Services	11,301	765		12,066
<b>Supporting Services</b>				
Management and General	2,196			2,196
Fundraising	0			0
<i>Total Supporting Services</i>	169			169
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	2,366			2,366
Change in Net Assets	67	-401	-440	-774
Investment Return, net	858	334		1,192
Net Assets at Beginning of Year	9,374	6,394	2,541	18,309
Net Assets at End of Year	10,298	6,327	2,101	18,727



# 2024 Funders

## \$500,000 or More

**Ford  
Foundation**



## \$200,000 to \$499,999

Carnegie Corporation  
of New York  
Fund for Shared Insight  
Robert Wood Johnson Foundation  
The Arthur M. Blank Family  
Foundation

## \$100,000 to \$199,999

Barr Foundation  
Conrad N. Hilton Foundation  
Fetzer Institute  
Fidelity Charitable Catalyst Fund  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur  
Foundation  
Longwood Foundation  
Missouri Foundation for Health  
Rockefeller Foundation  
Stuart Foundation  
Surdna Foundation  
The David and Lucile Packard  
Foundation  
The Kresge Foundation

## \$50,000 to \$99,999

Citi Foundation  
Gates Foundation  
Goldman Sachs Philanthropy Fund  
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation  
Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies  
Oak Foundation  
Rita Allen Foundation  
The California Wellness Foundation  
The Heinz Endowments  
The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley  
Charitable Trust  
The Wallace Foundation  
Wilburforce Foundation

## \$20,000 to \$49,999

Anonymous  
Blue Shield of California Foundation  
Houston Endowment  
Rockefeller Brothers Fund  
Skoll Foundation  
The Conrad Prebys Foundation  
The Duke Endowment  
The Nord Family Foundation

Unbound Philanthropy  
Walter and Elise Haas Fund  
Walton Family Foundation

## Up to \$19,999

Archstone Foundation  
California Health Care Foundation  
College Futures Foundation  
Delaware Community Foundation  
Doris Duke Charitable Foundation  
Dyson Foundation  
Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer  
Foundation  
Evelyn and Walter Haas, Jr. Fund  
GHR Foundation  
Henry Luce Foundation  
John Templeton Foundation  
Johnson Scholarship Foundation  
Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust  
Max M. & Marjorie S. Fisher  
Foundation  
Moses Taylor Foundation  
New Hampshire Charitable  
Foundation  
Public Welfare Foundation  
Skyline Foundation  
Stupski Foundation  
Susan Crown Exchange  
The Allstate Foundation  
The Assisi Foundation  
of Memphis, Inc.  
The Colorado Health Foundation  
The Columbus Foundation  
The George Gund Foundation  
The JPMorgan Chase Foundation  
The McKnight Foundation  
The Patterson Foundation  
The Ralph M. Parsons Foundation  
William J. and Dorothy K. O'Neill  
Foundation

## Individual Contributors

Caroline Altman-Smith  
Ramsey Alwin  
Anonymous  
Michael Bailin  
Birch Beaudet and David  
Wertheimer

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Peter Brach  
Jeff Bradach  
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Dick Ober  
Hilary Pennington  
Kathy Reich and Kenneth Meyer  
Tony Richardson  
Lee Risby  
James Siegal  
Elisha Smith Arrillaga  
LaTida Smith  
Keith Stattenfield and Loretta  
Beavers  
Fay Twersky and Jill Blair  
Alesha Washington  
Dace West  
Harriet Wiser  
Lynn Perry Wooten



# 2024 Assessment and Advisory Services Subscribers

Adam R. Scripps Foundation	Health Forward Foundation
America for Bulgaria Foundation	Hempel Foundation
American Friends of EdelGive Foundation	Humanity United
Ann Arbor Area Community Foundation	IKEA Foundation
Anne and Henry Zarrow Foundation	Interact for Health
Archstone Foundation	Internet Society Foundation
Argidius	John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation
Austin Community Foundation	Kenneth Rainin Foundation
Barr Foundation	KR Foundation
Builders Initiative	Luminate Group
Calgary Foundation	Maine Health Access Foundation
Center for Disaster Philanthropy	Mama Cash
Center for Prevention at Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Minnesota	Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies
Central Indiana Community Foundation	MassMutual Foundation
Clean Air Fund	Max & Marian Farash Charitable Foundation
ClimateWorks Foundation	Meyer Memorial Trust
College Futures Foundation	Michigan Health Endowment Fund
Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment	Mission Investors Exchange
Community Foundation of Greater Chattanooga	New Hampshire Charitable Foundation
Community Foundation Sonoma County	Northwest Area Foundation
Community Foundations of the Hudson Valley	Novo Nordisk Haemophilia Foundation
Crankstart Foundation	Oceans 5
Ewing Marion Kauffman Foundation	Omidyar Network Fund, Inc.
Ford Foundation	Paul Ramsay Foundation
Gerstner Philanthropies	PEAK Grantmaking
Greater Toledo Community Foundation	Philanthropy Southeast
Grove Foundation	Porticus
Growald Climate Fund	Postcode Lottery Group
Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Inc.	Princeton Area Community Foundation
Harold K. L. Castle Foundation	Rockefeller Brothers Fund
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving	San Antonio Area Foundation
	Silicon Valley Community Foundation

## 2024 Assessment and Advisory Services Subscribers *(Continued)*

SOZOSEI Foundation

St. David's Foundation

Stupski Foundation

Tara Health Foundation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation

The Assisi Foundation of Memphis, Inc.

The Audacious Project

The Broad Foundation

The Ceres Foundation

The Champlin Foundation

The Commonwealth Fund

The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

The European Climate Foundation

The Findlay-Hancock County Community  
Foundation

The HCA Foundation

The Heinz Endowments

The Imago Dei Fund

The Leon Levine Foundation

The McKnight Foundation

The Nord Family Foundation

The Oregon Community Foundation

The PATH Foundation

The Peter and Elizabeth C. Tower Foundation

The Pew Charitable Trusts

The Poetry Foundation

The Robert Wood Johnson Foundation

The Rockefeller Foundation

The Stewardship Foundation

The Wallace Foundation

The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation

The Winston-Salem Foundation

Trafigura Foundation

Tulsa Area United Way

W. K. Kellogg Foundation

Walton Family Foundation

Weingart Foundation

Wilburforce Foundation

William Penn Foundation

Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation

Z Zurich Foundation

**CEP's senior staff**





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*President*

The George Gund Foundation

### **Phil Buchanan, ex officio**

*President*

Center for Effective Philanthropy

### **Don Chen**

*President*

Surdna Foundation

### **Sampriti Ganguli**

*Senior Advisor*

Arabella Advisors

### **Jesús Gerena**

*CEO*

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### **Taryn Higashi**

*Executive Director*

Unbound Philanthropy

### **Stephanie Hull**

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*Director of Effective Philanthropy*

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The Kresge Foundation

### **LaTida Smith**

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Winston-Salem Foundation

### **Alesha Washington**

*President and CEO*

Seattle Foundation

CEP Board of Directors, June 2024



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