BUILDING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS:

Perspectives From Community Foundation Donors

THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

BUILDING STRONGER RELATIONSHIPS: PERSPECTIVES FROM COMMUNITY FOUNDATION DONORS

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Executive Summary

The field of philanthropy has changed considerably in the 12 years since the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP) last studied community foundation donors' experiences in depth. A new generation of donors has stepped into philanthropy, giving options have multiplied, and cuts to government funding have raised the stakes for local philanthropic infrastructure. At the same time, recent research points to an evolution in the community foundation business model itself, as foundations increasingly look beyond their traditional role managing charitable assets to embrace a broader role as community leaders and partners.[1] Given these developments, more than a decade after our original study, CEP revisited the community foundation donor experience to explore what matters most to donors today.

This report draws on CEP Donor Perception Report (DPR) data from 8,001 donors across 60 community foundations that participated between 2021 and 2025. This is CEP's first such study since 2014 and, to our knowledge, the most comprehensive research on donor perceptions to date. Our goal for this research was to understand donors' experiences with their community foundations and to offer practical, up-to-date guidance that foundation leaders can use to strengthen donor relationships and, in turn, their impact on the communities they serve. So, what did we learn?

- **Why donors choose community foundations.** Donors turn to community foundations for local expertise and connections to nonprofits. But when it comes to donors' relationships with their community foundations, they have diverse preferences: About half prefer to operate independently, while the rest want a mix of guidance and active collaboration with their community foundations.
- **What drives donor satisfaction.** The factors that make the most difference to improving donor satisfaction are donors' perception of community foundations' impact on and understanding of the local community, as well as the responsiveness of foundation staff when donors have questions or need assistance.
- **What this means for future giving.** About a third of donors are considering increasing their giving to their community foundation over the next five to 10 years. The higher a donor's satisfaction, the more likely they are to say they plan to give to the foundation in the future.
- **Where opportunity lies**. Foundations have room to communicate their community impact more clearly and specifically — 13% of donors say they don't know whether their foundation is having an impact at all.

Taken together, these findings affirm that community foundations continue to succeed with the donors they currently serve, despite significant shifts in the philanthropic landscape and growing competition among charitable vehicles. This success reflects their ability to consistently demonstrate community impact, leverage deep local knowledge, and remain responsive to donor needs across a wide range of donor relationships. To bring these findings to life, this report concludes with profiles of four community foundations that stand out in our comparative dataset due to their strong donor ratings: the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo, the North Texas Community Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and the Orange County Community Foundation. Their practices offer a concrete starting point for foundations looking to deepen their donor relationships and build on models that, our data show, are working well.

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[1] Sarina Beges and Emily Imhoff, "Evolving the Community Foundation Business Model of the Future: A Path Towards Sustainability and Impact," *Aspen Institute*, 2025, https://www.aspeninstitute.org/publications/evolving-the-community-foundation-business-model/; Michael Layton, "Community Foundations in the United States: Origins, Evolution, and the Turn Toward Community Leadership," *Johnson Center for Philanthropy*, May 6, 2026, https://johnsoncenter.org/blog/community-foundations-in-the-united-states-origins-evolution-and-the-turn-toward-community-leadership/; Viviana Chiu Sik Wu, "Community Leadership and Donor-Advised Funds: Navigating Logics of Donor Services and Community Leadership in Community Foundations," *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* 54 No. 4, 2025: 773-803, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/08997640241279057.

Introduction

Community foundations have long occupied a distinctive space in American philanthropy.[2] Rooted in the communities they serve, they connect the generosity of donors with local knowledge and leadership to address both immediate community needs and long-term opportunities. Whether responding to natural disasters, supporting economic mobility, or strengthening civic life, community foundations work to translate the charitable giving from motivated donors into lasting community impact for all.[3] Never has it been more important to understand communities. Community foundations are uniquely positioned to do this through their local expertise, networks, and resources.

Today, there are more than 900 community foundations across the United States.[4] A 2024 study of nearly 450 community foundations found that these organizations collectively manage close to $159 billion in assets, receive $18 billion in charitable gifts a year, and distribute more than $16.5 billion annually in grants to communities.[5] Together, community foundations leverage considerable financial and social capital to address community challenges, which underscores the importance of understanding the motivations, expectations, and experiences of the donors who make this work possible.

CEP's last comprehensive study of the perspectives of donors to community foundations was published in 2014, more than 10 years ago.[6] Since our last research on this subject, the field of philanthropy has undergone significant shifts. A new generation of donors has entered philanthropy, making it essential to understand what these donors want from the community foundations with which they partner.[7] Community foundations themselves are also reconsidering how they can best serve their communities.[8] Recent research from the Aspen Institute describes an evolution from a traditional "community bank" model, centered largely on managing and distributing charitable assets, toward a broader "community asset" model that places greater emphasis on community leadership and impact.[9] At the same time, a recent slew of cuts to longstanding U.S. government funding to nonprofits has resulted in increased pressure on organizations that depended on these grants to provide critical programs and services for their communities.[10] Consequently, many community foundations may find themselves an increasingly important source of support for nonprofits seeking to navigate shortfalls in federal and state funding. In

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[2] Layton, "Community Foundations in the United States."

[3] Gabriela Aoun Agueira, "A Community Foundation Raised $100 Million After the LA Fires. Here's What They Learned Spending It," *The Associated Press*, January 15, 2026, https://apnews.com/article/la-wildfires-california-community-foundation-miguel-santana-330c1d04add44e57eb6f5a8a84967ae9; "The Community Fund for Women & Girls Awards $190,000 to Economic Security Programs for Women," *The Community Foundation for Greater New Haven*, June 12, 2023, https://www.cfgnh.org/articles/economic-security-programs-for-women-awarded-190-000-from-the-community-fund-for-women-girls; "King County Elections and Seattle Foundation Award Nearly $1 Million to Community Organizations via Voter Education Fund," *King County, Washington*, June 24, 2025, https://kingcounty.gov/en/dept/elections/about-us/news-and-media-resources/news-releases/june-24-2025.

[4] "Community Foundations," *Council on Foundations*, https://cof.org/foundation-type/community-foundations.

[5] "CF Insights Survey Results," *Council on Foundations*, https://cof.org/cfinsights/results.

[6] Ellie Buteau, Mark Chaffin, and Phil Buchanan, "What Donors Value: How Community Foundations Can Increase Donor Satisfaction, Referrals, and Future Giving" (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2014), https://cep.org/report/what-donors-value-how-community-foundations-can-increase-donor-satisfaction-referrals-and-future-giving/.

[7] "Everyday Donors of Color: Diverse Philanthropy During Times of Change," *Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*, 2021, https://scholarworks.indianapolis.iu.edu/bitstream/handle/1805/26496/donors-color-report.pdf; Christina Daniken and Anna Pruitt, "The Next Generation of Philanthropy," *Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*, 2025, https://scholarworks.indianapolis.iu.edu/items/9945546d-3e6c-4eb7-87c8-ad27f5ea0462.

[8] Ali Carella, "How Community Foundations Are Showing Up Right Now," *La Piana*, September 14, 2026, https://www.lapiana.org/how-community-foundations-are-showing-up-right-now/.

[9] Beges and Imhoff, "Evolving the Community Foundation Business Model of the Future."

this changing landscape, donor engagement is an even more important factor in community foundations' ability to sustain and grow community resources.

For this research, we aimed to understand the experiences donors have with their community foundations and offer insights that community foundation leaders can use to strengthen donor relationships and, ultimately, their impact in the communities they serve. This report draws on thousands of donor perspectives from funders that have commissioned CEP's Donor Perception Report, or DPR — collectively creating the most comprehensive dataset of community foundation donor perceptions to date.[11] This research was designed to answer the following questions:

- What do we know about the experiences donors are having with community foundations?
- What best predicts how satisfied donors are with the community foundation through which they give, and how does satisfaction relate to their likelihood to continue supporting their community foundation in the future?
- What are the types of relationships donors want with community foundations, and what kind of supports would they like to have?
- What can we understand from these data about groups of donors that are increasing in size in the coming years?
- How, if at all, have the drivers of donor experience shifted over time?

[10] Ellie Buteau, Elisha Smith Arrillaga, Seara Grundhoefer, and Christina Im, "A Sector in Crisis: How U.S. Nonprofits and Foundations Are Responding to Threats" (Center for Effective Philanthropy, 2026), https://cep.org/report-backpacks/a-sector-in-crisis-how-u-s-nonprofits-and-foundations-are-responding-to-threats/?section=intro#intro; Laura Tomasko et al., "How Government Funding Disruptions Affected Nonprofits in Early 2025," *The Urban Institute*, 2025, https://www.urban.org/research/publication/how-government-funding-disruptions-affected-nonprofits-early-2025; Lisa Desjardins and Kyle Midura, "How Federal Funding Cuts Have Hit Nonprofits and the Communities They Serve," *PBS News*, May 19, 2025, https://www.pbs.org/newshour/show/how-federal-funding-cuts-have-hit-nonprofits-and-the-communities-they-serve; Amy Solomon and Betsy Pearl, "DOJ Funding Cuts: More Than 550 Organizations Impacted, New Analysis Finds," *Council on Criminal Justice*, May 2025, https://councilonj.org/doj-funding-cuts-more-than-550-organizations-impacted-new-analysis-finds/.

[11] https://cep.org/services/assessments/donor-perception-report/.

DATA USED IN THIS RESEARCH

Data for this report come from CEP's Donor Perception Report (DPR), which is a comparative survey that gathers candid feedback from donors to community funders from across the United States and Canada. When a funder commissions a DPR, CEP sends a confidential online survey to its donors about topics such as donor satisfaction with and likelihood to recommend community foundations, future giving plans, and the use and helpfulness of various community foundation resources. The data collected from donors are presented to the funder in an anonymized and comparative context, placing the funder's own ratings alongside those of other funders that have commissioned DPRs. The DPR consists of about 35-40 questions, many of which use seven-point Likert scales, a handful of which invite donors to write about their experiences in their own words.

This research represents the perspectives of the 8,001 donors of 60 community foundations that participated in CEP's DPR process from 2021 to 2025. As a result, we don't claim these findings are broadly representative of all donors of all community foundations.

More information on the methodology of this research study, including the organizational makeup of participating foundations and demographic characteristics of participating donors, can be found in the appendices.

RESOURCE FOR COMMUNITY FOUNDATION LEADERS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS ABOUT DONORS

Alongside this report, CEP has published a companion resource of frequently asked questions about community foundation donors' experiences. It is designed for community foundation leaders, donor services and client relations staff, program officers, and others who work closely with donors. Drawing on the same DPR data as this report, the FAQ covers such questions as how experiences differ across donor groups; which foundation resources donors find most helpful; and whether satisfaction varies given a foundation's size, location, or fees. The full FAQ resource is available here.

Why Donors Choose Community Foundations

Donors have a wide range of options for managing their charitable giving beyond community foundations. They may choose to give directly to nonprofit organizations, establish private foundations or family LLCs, or contribute through national donor-advised fund sponsors such as Fidelity Charitable and DAFgiving360.[12] In fact, most donors who responded to CEP's survey use community foundations for a minority of their charitable giving — more than half (53%) reported having used their community foundation for less than 40% of their overall charitable giving in the previous five years.[13]

So, what motivates donors to partner with a community foundation?[14] According to CEP's survey, the primary reason donors choose community foundations is to keep their giving local with a reputable, well-known organization that deeply understands the local community and its nonprofits. While staff, tools, and local leadership matter, our data suggest they are not the primary factors driving most donors' choice of a community foundation over other charitable options.

What kind of relationship do donors want with community foundations?

Just over half of donors in our dataset report wanting to be self-sufficient in their giving. These donors are slightly more likely to say that their foundation's fees and investment performance are one of the top reasons they choose to give to their community foundation over other charitable options available to them.[15] "[What's] important to me is investment return and ease of making distributions. In my case, I do not need advice about which charities to consider," says one such donor. Donors who identify as men, as well as those at least 45 years old, are also slightly more likely to characterize themselves as independent in their giving.[16]

The remainder of donors we surveyed see themselves as being in partnership with their community foundation: a quarter of donors report wanting some assistance in making their giving decisions, and 22% think of their community foundation as a partner in their charitable giving. Donors who indicate a preference for a more collaborative funding relationship are slightly more likely to report wanting to give additional money to their community foundation.[17] They are also slightly more likely to use a variety of foundation services, including online platforms and tools, staff advice, informational communications, and donor events.[18]

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[12] Recent research indicates that national DAF sponsors and foundations differ in their giving in specific ways. For more information, see: Anna Koob, "Do National DAF Sponsors Give Differently Than Foundations?" *Candid*, September 16, 2026, https://candid.org/blogs/daf-donations-trends-dashboard/.

[13] Donors who use community foundations for less than 20% of total giving are slightly more likely to say they choose to give to their community foundation because of its knowledge of the community and local nonprofits, its leadership in the community, its initiatives and grantmaking strategy, and its network of donors. Donors who use community foundations for a majority of their philanthropic giving are moderately more likely to say they use their foundation's donor portal, and slightly more likely to use foundation staff advice and the foundation's website.

[14] For more on why donors may choose community foundations over other charitable options, see: Ben Gose, "Caught in a Web of DAF Transfers," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, March 6, 2026, https://www.philanthropy.com/news/caught-in-a-web-of-daf-transfers/; Una O. Osili et al., "What Americans Think About Philanthropy and Nonprofits," *Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy*, April 2023, https://scholarworks.indianapolis.iu.edu/server/api/core/bitstreams/b5904a8a-5081-42cd-bd44-56740b98fb67/content.

[15] This statistical relationship is of a small effect size.

[16] These statistical relationships are of a small effect size.

[17] This statistical relationship is of a small effect size.

[18] These statistical relationships are of a small effect size.

What Keeps Donors Satisfied and Committed to Future Giving

The factors that make the most difference in improving donor satisfaction (and increasing donors' likelihood of recommending the foundation to others) are donors' perception of a community foundation's impact on the local community, its understanding of the local community, and the responsiveness of its staff when donors have questions or need assistance. These three measures together explain more than half of the variation in ratings of donor satisfaction and likelihood of recommendation (see Figure 1).[19]

FIGURE 1. Predicting Donor Satisfaction With and Likelihood To Recommend Community Foundations (N=6,113-6,125)



[19] A donor's level of satisfaction with the community foundation to which they give is, to some degree, related to many aspects of their experiences with the foundation. Among the aspects that do not contribute much to overall satisfaction are: the extent to which the foundation connects donors to the community, how frequently a donor receives information from the foundation about its impact, and whether or not the donor has interacted with any staff at the foundation during the previous year. While all of these practices matter, a community foundation's impact on the community, understanding of the community, and staff responsiveness ultimately make much more of a difference to overall donor satisfaction.

The vast majority of donors indicate that they are satisfied with their community foundation overall, including with their foundation's familiarity with local nonprofits, quality of staff, investment practices, and leadership in the community (see Figure 2). As one donor says: "The [foundation's] greatest strength is helping nonprofits make the community a better place to live, work, and thrive. It's the nonprofits that do the work, but the [foundation] helps provide gas to keep the engine going."

The area of community foundations' work with which the lowest proportion of donors are satisfied (71% of donors) is foundations' efforts to connect them with other donors: "I would like to see more effort being made to connect like-minded donors with one another to collaborate and potentially strengthen the impact of funds spent. It is not very easy to access and learn about other donor profiles and interests," one writes.

FIGURE 2. Percentage of Donors Satisfied With Specific Aspects of Community Foundations' Work (N=5,075-6,906)[20]



Donors' plans for future giving

Most donors (84%) indicate that they plan to continue giving to their community foundation in some form in the future. The higher a donor's overall satisfaction with their community foundation, the more likely they are to say they plan to give to the foundation in the future.[21] Likelihood to give to the foundation in the future is also positively linked to donor satisfaction with various areas of the foundation's work, including its:

- Leadership in the community
- Administrative fees and costs
- Investment strategy and performance
- Efforts to connect the donor with other donors
- Quality of staff
- Knowledge and experience working with local nonprofits
- Ability to make an impact on specific issues[22]

[20] Note: "Don't know" responses were removed from the response options for these questions during analysis. Percentages in the chart reflect the number of donors who are "satisfied" with their foundation compared to "not satisfied" across each dimension of satisfaction.

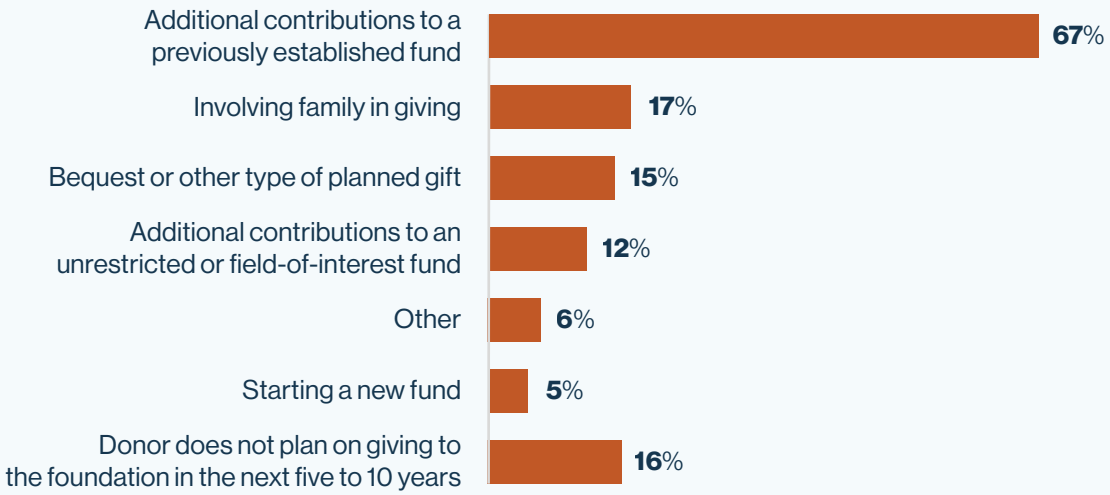
[21] This statistical relationship is of a medium effect size.

[22] These statistical relationships are of a small effect size.

There is also a strong relationship between a donor's likelihood to refer the foundation to others and their intentions to continue giving to the foundation.[23] Among donors who are considering giving to their community foundation in the future, the majority have no plans to change the way they give and intend to make additional contributions to a fund they have already established at the foundation, though some are thinking about involving their family in their future philanthropy or planning a bequest (see Figure 3). Most (53%) also indicate that they plan to continue giving at the same contribution level. However, a little over a third of donors (35%) plan to increase their giving over the next five to 10 years relative to past contributions.

Donors who intend to step up their giving are slightly more likely to say they are satisfied with the quality of their foundation's staff and its leadership in the community.[24] They are also slightly more likely to think of the foundation as a partner in their giving (rather than wanting to be self-sufficient), to use foundation resources (such as advice from staff, and donor events and programs), to have interacted with any staff at the foundation in the previous year, and to say they've received information from the foundation about its impact monthly or more often.[25] "Since our first contact up to now, we've been very impressed with how professional, friendly, and helpful the [foundation] is," says one donor who is considering additional contributions to their community foundation. "We feel confident putting our money in our charitable fund. We currently have a relatively small account but look forward to building that up and planning our future donations and estate donation."

FIGURE 3. How Donors Plan To Give to Community Foundations in the Future
(N=7,665)



Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could select all that apply.

[23] This statistical relationship is of a large effect size.

[24] This statistical relationship is of a small effect size.

[25] These statistical relationships are of a small effect size.

THE STRONGEST DRIVERS OF DONOR SATISFACTION REMAIN THE SAME

In CEP's 2014 report "What Donors Value," which used DPR data collected by CEP from 2009 to 2013, we found the main predictors of donor satisfaction were a foundation's impact on community and staff responsiveness — very similar to our current findings.[26]

In recent years, there has been some interest in determining if the shifting political, financial, and funding environment has resulted in measurable differences in donors' experiences with community foundations. To examine this, we explored whether a variety of factors differed depending on the year of their survey response.[27] Our analyses found no meaningful differences in the way donors rated their community foundations pre-2025 (2021-2024) compared to in 2025. We also found no meaningful differences when comparing donor ratings in the years 2024-2025 to those in 2021-2023. Though experiences may differ across individual foundations, and certainly across different donors, we did not see significant changes to the donor experience on our overall dataset over the last few years.

[26] Buteau, Chaffin, and Buchanan, "What Donors Value."

[27] Factors we looked at include donors' perceptions of their foundation's impact on, understanding of, and knowledge of the community; staff responsiveness; understanding of donors' goals; and overall satisfaction.

Important Considerations in Working With Donors

As noted earlier, donors' perceptions of their foundation's impact, understanding of community, and responsiveness emerged as the strongest drivers of satisfaction. Drawing on qualitative comments from thousands of donors who provided written feedback, we explore each of these themes in turn. Throughout this section, we also feature examples of practices from highly rated community foundations, presented in their own words.

Effectively communicate community impact

While most donors indicate that they are satisfied with the level of impact their foundation has had on the local community, there are still opportunities for improvement. Thirteen percent of donors — representing more than 1,000 responses in our dataset — say they "don't know" if their foundation is having an impact in the community at all. This uncertainty matters because community foundations' perceived impact is one of the strongest drivers of donor satisfaction. Donors who cannot see how their foundation makes a difference are less satisfied and less likely to continue giving in the future. Donors in our dataset who say they receive information about their foundation's impact on the community monthly or more often rate their foundation's impact slightly higher than donors who receive information less frequently.[28] Common themes among donors looking for improvements related to how community foundations demonstrate their impact include requests for more frequent touchpoints on community needs and results; specific evidence of outcomes after grant funding has been provided; direct connections with grantees and beneficiaries served; transparency as to where their specific gift went; and consistent, personal relationships with foundation staff who can speak knowledgeably to community needs and strategy.[29]

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: HOW HIGHLY RATED FOUNDATIONS COMMUNICATE IMPACT TO DONORS

"One of the goals of our team is connecting clients to our impact. One of the ways we do this, internally, is having two of our teams — the community impact team (program officers) and client directors — work more closely together. When client directors have meetings with clients, they'll bring a program officer with them who might be an expert in education or on environmental issues [to answer questions or provide expertise]. The No. 1 goal is to educate our clients and provide them with information about nonprofits [to support]. But this has also brought our teams closer together and brought more resources in. So it's a big win." – Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo (CFGB)

"Our Annual Meeting is more than just an event; it's a catalyst for connection, inspiration, and validation of our collective impact. It's where our donors see firsthand how their contributions elevate community work, and it's a powerful reminder of the difference we're making together." – Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF)

[28] This statistical relationship is of a small effect size.

[29] These themes were synthesized from hundreds of donor comments to identify high-level patterns using Claude, an AI large language model, through CEP's enterprise account with Anthropic. Under this account, data is encrypted and is not used to train AI models. CEP staff reviewed all outputs for accuracy.

Maximize responsiveness to donor inquiries

A donor's perception of how responsive foundation staff are to their questions or concerns is also important for determining their overall satisfaction and likelihood to refer the foundation to others. Crucially, donors with a designated contact at their community foundation, or who have interacted with any staff at the foundation in the last year, rate staff as being more responsive.[30] They are also more likely to refer the foundation to friends or colleagues.[31] Some donors note missed opportunities to build relationships with them and learn more about what drives their giving — 53% say they have communicated their personal charitable goals to staff at their community foundation. Donors often point to the same handful of gaps when it comes to responsiveness: losing a consistent, known point of contact; too little proactive, personal outreach; slow responses to questions and requests; and too little follow-up on how their funds and gifts are actually being used.[32] As one donor writes: "As a major donor, I have virtually no communication with anyone. In the first couple of years after starting our fund I would receive some suggestions for local organizations in need and made some grants. That was helpful. However, I have not been contacted or received anything in a few years now."

Develop a deep understanding of community needs

Whether or not donors feel that community foundations have a strong understanding of the communities they serve is another important factor in predicting how satisfied they are with the foundation. It's not only important for foundations to develop a strong understanding of community needs and priorities — they also need to be able to share this insight with their donors. When donors are asked what they see as their foundation's greatest strength, knowledge of community needs consistently emerges as one of the top strengths — many donors specifically cite their community foundation's deep knowledge of the community and local nonprofit landscape, its ability to convene donors and organizations around shared priorities, and its capacity to respond quickly to emerging needs or crises (see Figure 4).[33] Yet less than a quarter of donors indicate that their community foundation has communicated what it has learned about their community's needs "extremely clearly" to them, and just 14% say that working with the foundation "greatly increases" their knowledge of the issues they care about. "The [foundation] should understand

> *"The [community foundation's] greatest strength comes from deep listening within the community and aligning goals to meet the needs of the community. They embody their values by actually doing the work and making changes to how they support the community. Their grant representatives are in the community every day learning and helping.*
> *– Community Foundation Donor*

[30] This statistical relationship is of a medium effect size.

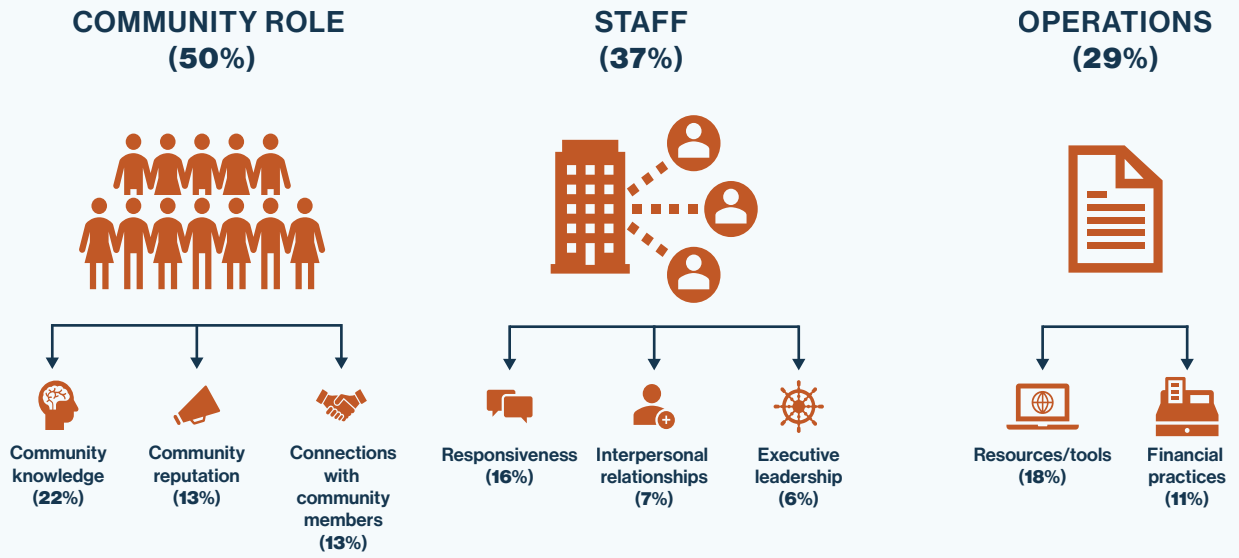
[31] This statistical relationship is of a medium effect size.

[32] These themes were synthesized from hundreds of donor comments to identify high-level patterns using Claude, an AI large language model, through CEP's enterprise account with Anthropic. Under this account, data is encrypted and is not used to train AI models. CEP staff reviewed all outputs for accuracy.

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the needs of the local community better," says one donor, adding that the funder should "communicate what they're doing to move the needle regarding systemic issues affecting the local community." Other donors comment that their community foundation could do a better job "understanding issues from the community perspective and not just listening to the vocal minority guiding new areas of focus" and "developing a deeper understanding of the social and financial profiles of those who utilize the community foundation."

FIGURE 4. Greatest Strengths of Community Foundations, According to Donors' Written Comments (N=5,248)[34]



[34] The themes in Figure 4 come from qualitative coding of thousands of open-ended donor comments. Because a comment could be coded to more than one theme, main theme percentages (role within community, staff, and operations) sum to more than 100%. All percentages, including those for subthemes, represent the share of all donor comments.

IN THEIR OWN WORDS: HOW HIGHLY RATED FOUNDATIONS STAY CONNECTED WITH THEIR DONORS

- *"We regularly talk to our donors one-on-one to learn their priority areas of interest and communication preferences. We track donor attendance at events that we have, be it a community gathering or a site visit. We track how often they're on our website, what they're looking for, what they're clicking through. Our monthly donor newsletter is achieving an open rate close to 70%. We implemented an advertising campaign for outreach efforts and regularly connect with donors through social media. We conduct a fund audit for every donor every three years, where we do a deep dive of their original agreement, reaffirm what their intent is now and what their intent is after they pass. Purposefully and strategically, we make sure we're delivering on donor intent now and in the future." – North Texas Community Foundation (NTCF)*
- *"We work early on in the relationship with our donors to help them decide how involved they want to be with us and with their giving decisions. We have some folks who are very independent and know what they want to do with their philanthropy, and that's an opportunity for us to execute on those needs. There are other donors, though, who really want deep engagement and to take advantage of our learning opportunities. It's our responsibility to elevate those needs to our team and deliver on that. It's important to be cognizant of the fact that not everybody wants the same thing." – Community Foundation of Sarasota County (CFSC)*
- *"We offer annual philanthropic reviews for all of our clients, where we do a full deep dive of their fund. As part of that, we prepare a dashboard, ask a number of questions, and really take that opportunity to get a pulse on how the donor is feeling about their relationship with us, and what else we can do to support their charitable goals." – Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo (CFGB)*

Practices of Highly Rated Community Foundations

In the profiles below, we highlight the practices of leaders from four community foundations that were rated by their donors as being among the top 15% in our sample for donor satisfaction. These foundations also rated highly on other measures in the DPR survey.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION FOR GREATER BUFFALO: Increasing Donor Satisfaction Over Time

Asset size: $1.1 billion | **Year established:** 1919 | **Location:** Buffalo, New York



Betsy Constantine

Position:
President & CEO

Tenure:
4 years (17 years in total at the foundation)

Previous experience:
Financial services industry



Emily Wycoff

Position:
Chief philanthropy officer

Tenure:
3.5 years

Previous experience:
Senior director for development and strategic partnerships at Say Yes Buffalo

How is the foundation set up for success with donors?



The Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo (CFGB) has strengthened its success with clients by making proactive, personalized client engagement the organizing principle of its work. Rather than waiting for clients to initiate contact, the foundation develops an intentional plan for each client, sets clear expectations for outreach, and creates regular opportunities to understand clients' goals and connect them with meaningful community impact. Annual philanthropic reviews anchor this model: staff conduct a deep dive into each fund, prepare a dashboard, ask focused questions, and use the conversation to assess the client's experience and identify additional ways the foundation can help. Additionally, CFGB launched an Impact Forum series in 2025, based on the success of its long-time annual Impact Bus Tour, to provide ongoing educational opportunities for clients throughout the year to learn more about specific topics from CFGB leadership and local nonprofit leaders. Clients are invited to participate in a co-funding opportunity where grant proposals, vetted by the community impact team, are shared from CFGB's annual Competitive Grant Process and clients can make a grant or grants directly from their CFGB fund. Client directors also work closely with community impact staff, bringing

program officers with subject-matter expertise into client conversations when useful. This collaboration gives clients timely information about local needs and nonprofit organizations while drawing on expertise from across the foundation.

To deliver the model consistently, CFGB has invested in staffing, technology, and role clarity. As a result, the team has grown, internal systems have been improved to streamline processes, and job descriptions have been revised to reflect a more proactive approach. Client directors work toward specific outreach goals and minimum contact expectations, while retaining the flexibility to share relevant opportunities or insights as they arise. Every client is assigned a representative, invited to events, and receives at least one proactive annual check-in. Together, these practices have produced a more consistent, responsive, and informed client experience. This demonstrates how a clear relationship strategy, reinforced by operational investments and cross-team collaboration, can deepen trust and improve the client experience over time.

Putting the approach into practice

- Increased donor satisfaction by nearly 30 percentage points over a decade, moving from a foundation that was already well regarded to one now among the most highly rated by donors in CEP's comparative dataset.
- Shifted from a reactive posture to "intentionally building proactive development plans for each individual donor, rather than waiting for donors to reach out," as Betsy Constantine, president and CEO, describes.
- Set standard, specific expectations across all client directors, including clear outreach goals and a minimum amount of contact time with each donor.
- Trained staff to be opportunistic on top of that baseline: When something comes into the foundation that a specific client would likely want to know about, donor relations directors are expected to proactively reach out rather than wait to be asked. In addition to being assigned a client representative and being invited to events, every donor receives at least one proactive check-in call each year.
- Supported this shift with structural changes over time: adopting technology that smoothed internal processes, growing the team, and revising job descriptions to match the more proactive model.

Takeaways for community foundations

- **Make proactive outreach measurable.** Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo sets individual donor plans and specific outreach goals for each donor relations lead so that proactive outreach has become a measurable part of a client lead's job.
- **Set consistent expectations.** Standardizing minimum expectations for all donor relations directors — clear goals, defined outreach cadence, minimum contact time — helps ensure a consistent donor experience across staff.

NORTH TEXAS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: Building a Business Model for Donor Satisfaction and Community Impact

Asset size: $821 million | **Year established:** 1981 | **Location:** Fort Worth, Texas



Rose Bradshaw

Position:
President & CEO

Tenure:
9 years (13 years in total at the foundation)

Previous experience:
Different roles in philanthropy across the country



Margaret Kramer

Position:
Director of donor engagement

Tenure:
5 years

Previous experience:
Director of advancement at a K-12 private school

How is the foundation set up for success with donors?



According to President and CEO Rose Bradshaw, the high donor ratings at the North Texas Community Foundation (NTCF) stem from a business model built around a clear value proposition: helping fundholders invest in the communities and causes they care most about. Beginning in 2021, when it held roughly $400 million in assets and made $22 million in annual grants, the foundation adopted a five-year strategy to double its impact by serving as a force multiplier for both fundholders and the community. It organized its operations around five mutually reinforcing pillars (SERVE, STEWARD, IMPACT, GROW, and INSPIRE) that together deliver an excellent donor experience, protect donor intent and assets, connect generosity to impactful opportunities, cultivate new relationships, and communicate results in ways that deepen trust and inspire further action.

Recognizing that its strategy depended on earning donors' trust every day, the foundation invested in the capabilities that shape the donor experience: service-minded and well-trained staff, a new enterprise software system that streamlined grant processing and accurately captured and executed donor intent, a small team with deep nonprofit experience and community knowledge to guide fundholders toward greater impact, and stronger communications that show donors the results made possible by their generosity and give them confidence that their wishes will be honored beyond their lifetimes. Over five years, this approach has tripled NTCF's annual grantmaking, raised its assets to $820 million, more than doubled its planned gifts, and placed the foundation in the top 1% of CEP's donor satisfaction survey.

Putting the approach into practice

- After the 2022 Uvalde, Texas, elementary school shooting, NTCF fundholder and former board chair Christopher M. Huckabee committed his firm's services to build a new school. He knew that, to be successful, the school would need to be codesigned by the families and educators of Uvalde, and it would need to be among the safest schools in the country. That meant it would take twice as long and cost twice as much. Building the new school would require trusted relationships, convening the right partners, careful execution, and ongoing communication. These were all capabilities NTCF had intentionally built through its strategic plan. On reflection, NTCF pointed to the following factors that made this effort possible:
  - **Building early momentum:** NTCF secured an initial $500,000 commitment from a fundholder then convened fundholders and private foundations in Fort Worth, raising approximately $4 million in total.
  - **Extending the network:** Inspired by the Fort Worth results, other community foundations organized similar gatherings across Texas and engaged their own trusted donor networks.
  - **Closing the gap and delivering:** When the campaign remained a few million dollars short of its fundraising goal, NTCF reconvened its network and Fort Worth donors were proud to "finish what they started" and close the gap. The $60 million Legacy Elementary School opened in fall 2025.[35] CEO Rose Bradshaw views the effort as "an example of how a community foundation can use responsiveness and convening power to help donors make a meaningful impact on an issue they care about."

Takeaways for community foundations

- **Donor satisfaction and community impact can be produced by the same operating system.** For NTCF, excellent service builds trust. Community knowledge channels that trust toward meaningful opportunities. Stewardship and execution protect that trust. And effective, sustained communication helps donors understand what their generosity makes possible.
- **Responsiveness means more than answering a phone call quickly.** It can also mean recognizing a promising opportunity and mobilizing the relationships and resources required to advance it.
- **Convening power becomes valuable when it is operationalized.** NTCF converted trusted relationships into coordinated action by bringing fundholders, foundations, peer institutions, and project leaders together around a shared objective.
- **Sustained engagement makes impact visible.** Staying involved throughout fundraising, implementation, and completion of a project gives donors a clear connection between their contributions and a tangible outcome.
- **Growth is an outcome of relevance, not the sole objective.** By designing the organization to help donors achieve what matters to them, the foundation strengthened satisfaction, relationships, grantmaking, and long-term growth — all at the same time.

[35] Dawn White, "Legacy Elementary Opens in Uvalde, Honoring Victims of Robb Elementary Shooting," *CBS News*, October 20, 2025, https://www.cbsnews.com/texas/news/legacy-elementary-uvalde-school-opening-robb-shooting-memorial/.

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION OF SARASOTA COUNTY: Connecting Donors to Community Needs and Impact

Asset size: $544 million | **Year established:** 1979 | **Location:** Sarasota, Florida



Jessica Muroff

Position:
President & CEO

Tenure:
5 months

Previous experience:
CEO of three nonprofits



Jay Young

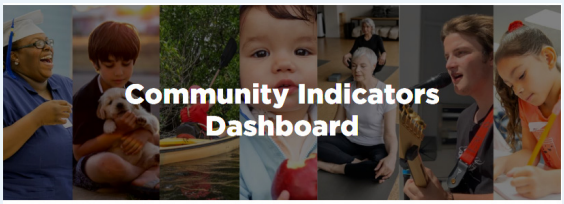
Position:
Vice president, philanthropy

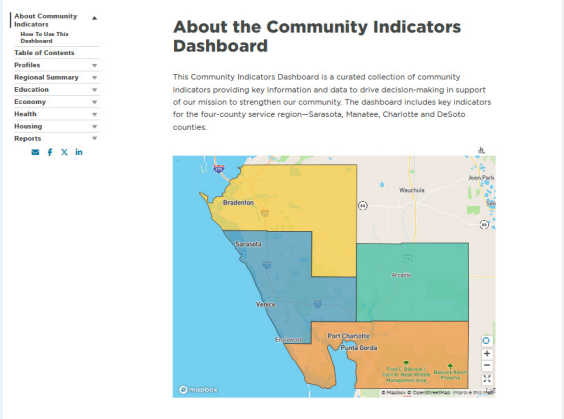
Tenure:
5 years

Previous experience:
Financial services industry (including endowment/asset management for nonprofits)

How is the foundation set up for success with donors?

The Community Foundation of Sarasota County's organization-wide culture of "asking and listening" guides all of its work, but particularly its engagement with donors. Beginning during the early stages of its relationship with individuals and families, the foundation actively solicits their input to learn about their charitable goals and what role the foundation can play in achieving them, then helps guide them through the technical questions that may emerge about various types of funds and charitable giving strategies.





Throughout that process, the organization relies on its deep knowledge of community needs and the local nonprofit sector. The foundation maintains a Community Indicators Dashboard, a frequently refreshed online resource that collects and analyzes hundreds of data points from across the foundation's geographical footprint, as well as Florida and nationwide. That allows the foundation's staff to identify emerging needs and benchmark how the region compares to others like it.

The foundation also maintains an online directory for local nonprofits, The Giving Partner, which gives donors clear insights into the programs, finances, and leadership of local mission-driven organizations. Having access to robust, transparent data about local needs and local nonprofits helps make donors feel confident that their giving is making as big an impact as possible.

The foundation also prides itself on its customer service, emphasizing accessibility and approachability in everything it does — from how visitors are greeted when they arrive for a meeting to how quickly its staff responds to questions and executes giving requests. The foundation genuinely emphasizes "asking and listening" at every stage of a donor's journey.

Putting the approach into practice

- Built and maintains a community indicators dashboard that collects and visualizes local data — housing affordability, reading proficiency, graduation rates, and other indicators — in a format Jessica Muroff, president and CEO, describes as "digestible for anybody who wants to learn more."
- Paired the dashboard with a nonprofit database and trains nonprofit partners on how to keep their individual profiles current, so donors have one central, up-to-date place to research organizations. As Muroff puts it: "It's a database that our donors rely on, as well as other organizations and community leaders across our region."
- Uses the dashboard to report back on its own listening work — publishing what it hears in convenings and initiatives, along with outcomes and next steps, rather than just facilitating the conversation and moving on. Muroff says that they "communicate what the outcomes were and what next steps are, so that people can get involved and continue to learn more."
- Uses the dashboard's data to inform tailored donor outreach, identifying "which donor has this particular issue or impact area that is really important to them" so the foundation can keep specific donors current on the topics they care about.

Takeaways for community foundations

- **Use data to deepen donor relationships.** Shared data infrastructure can double as a donor-relationship tool. Rather than building the dashboard purely as a public information resource, CFSC uses its public dashboard to connect donors' interests with timely, relevant information, turning a general communications platform into a highly useful tool for personalized donor stewardship.
- **Close the loop with community.** After convenings, CFSC shares outcomes and next steps so participants can see how their input is used and stay engaged.

ORANGE COUNTY COMMUNITY FOUNDATION: Understanding the Local Community

Asset size: $958 million | **Year established:** 1989 | **Location:** Irvine, California



Shelley Hoss

Position:
CEO

Tenure:
26 years

Previous experience:
Direct community-serving nonprofit organizations



Keri Mesina

Position:
Senior director, Center for Engaged Philanthropy

Tenure:
9 years

Previous experience:
Large financial institution, corporate/private philanthropy

How is the foundation set up for success with donors?

In partnership with its donors and the community, Orange County Community Foundation (OCCF) combines giving strategy, community intelligence, enduring relationships, and heartfelt intention to amplify the power of giving and its profound result: improving the greater good in Orange County CA and beyond. At its core, the foundation's strategy is centered on leveraging comprehensive research and data to make informed decisions that resonate with the unique needs of the community. This evidence-based approach ensures that initiatives are not just well intentioned but are genuinely impactful.

Key investments in staffing and systems have been pivotal to enhancing the donor experience. OCCF prioritizes personalized donor advising, ensuring that donors are not only informed but are active participants in the philanthropic process. OCCF's Philanthropic Advisors assist individuals and families in developing strategic approaches to their charitable endeavors. By understanding their donors' values and aspirations, Philanthropic Advisors help craft personalized giving plans that align with donor goals and maximize philanthropic impact.

Putting the approach into practice

- OCCF prioritizes commissioning targeted studies to illuminate specific community needs, ensuring that its initiatives are based not on assumptions but on real, nuanced data.
- This approach allows the foundation to uncover specific and often hidden disparities within the community, such as those revealed by a commissioned study on immigrant populations by the University of California San Diego. For example, the study revealed that Samoan and



Pacific Islander communities faced a very different set of life experiences and needs from, for example, Chinese and Taiwanese communities, though these populations are often grouped together under a single Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI) label.

- "The insights we gain from these studies are invaluable to our decision-making process," explains Shelley Hoss, CEO of OCCF. "They not only highlight the unique challenges and opportunities within our community but also guide us in crafting precise strategies that truly make a difference. By understanding these nuances, we can ensure that our initiatives are not just well-meaning but are tuned to deliver real, transformative impact."
- A 2022 OCCF study illuminated a pressing need to focus on youth mental health — a discovery that significantly redirected the foundation's priorities and resources. This pivotal finding led to a dedicated commitment to youth and child mental health, woven into the fabric of OCCF's Vision 2030 strategic plan. Embarking on a new journey, OCCF launched a six-part documentary series that amplifies community voices, with youth mental health taking center stage in its inaugural episode.

Takeaways for community foundations

- **Cultivate strong and lasting donor relationships.** Building meaningful relationships with donors is essential. By actively engaging donors in the philanthropic process and demonstrating the tangible impact of their contributions, community foundations can foster a sense of ownership and shared purpose. This connection not only strengthens donor loyalty but also enhances the foundation's ability to enact positive community change.
- **Leverage disaggregated and community-specific data**. Utilizing detailed, community-specific research is crucial for identifying unique needs and disparities that may be obscured by broad demographic categories. Disaggregated data allow foundations to craft tailored, culturally sensitive responses, ensuring that initiatives address the genuine needs of diverse communities effectively.
- **Be prepared to act on new insights.** Foundations must be willing to pivot and adapt their strategies based on new research findings. This may involve adjusting plans and budgets to align with evolving community needs. By committing to a responsive approach, foundations can ensure that their efforts remain relevant and impactful, even if it means deviating from established plans.

CONCLUSION

Community foundations are one of many philanthropic vehicles available to today's donors. Because of this reality, it is essential that community foundations looking to the future understand what motivates donors to give, what keeps them engaged, and what encourages them to recommend community foundations to others. Our study of the experiences of 8,001 community foundation donors across the United States and Canada — the largest of its kind to date that we are aware of — suggests that community foundations are uniquely positioned to offer more than just a transactional giving experience: they provide trusted local knowledge, personalized and responsive partnerships, and a direct connection to genuine community impact. These are the very reasons that lead donors to choose and continue to give with their community foundations. Each of these factors makes a significant difference to donors' overall satisfaction and likelihood of referring the foundation to others. In many ways, these qualities reflect the vision originally articulated by Frederick H. Goff when he founded the Cleveland Foundation — the world's first community foundation — more than a century ago: for community foundations to work toward the "mental, moral, and physical improvement of [the community's] inhabitants … regardless of race, color, or creed."[36] Continuing to cultivate and strengthen donor relationships in pursuit of fulfilling that early vision will be critical to sustaining community-oriented philanthropy for many generations to come.

[36] "An Idea Whose Time Had Come: Introduction," The Cleveland Foundation, https://www.clevelandfoundation100.org/foundation-of-change/invention/introduction/.

APPENDIX A: METHODOLOGY

The findings presented in this report are based on survey data collected, analyzed, and interpreted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP). Information detailing the process for collecting and analyzing the data is below.

Survey data discussed in this report were gathered through surveys administered to donors of community foundations as part of CEP's Donor Perception Report (DPR) process, through which funders commission CEP to collect confidential feedback from their donors on a range of issues, such as donors':

- Satisfaction with and likelihood to recommend the community foundation
- Use and helpfulness ratings of specific community foundation resources
- Future giving plans

The DPR survey consists of 35-40 questions, many of which use seven-point Likert scales.[37] Nearly all surveys are fielded online and in English, though a small percentage are sent and returned via mail. Donors are sent a brief message that includes a description of the DPR survey, a statement of confidentiality, and a link to their survey.

SAMPLE

From 2021 to 2025, 60 unique community foundations based in either the U.S. or Canada commissioned a DPR, and 32,963 of their donors were invited to participate in the DPR survey. For the purposes of this report, we chose to include only the most up-to-date donor responses for funders that commissioned DPRs multiple times between 2021 to 2025. Of the donors surveyed for this group of funders, 8,001 donors responded, resulting in a response rate of 24%.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

The unweighted quantitative survey data were examined using descriptive statistics, correlations, independent sample t-tests, chi-square tests, analyses of variance (ANOVA), and linear regressions.[38] An alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance for all testing conducted for this research. Effect sizes were examined and reported for all analyses included in the report. Unless otherwise noted, only medium or large effect sizes are reported. Small effect sizes are denoted by the use of the qualifier "slightly" throughout the report and in the FAQ.

[37] The exact number of questions in the DPR survey changes yearly and varies due to some funders adding custom questions.

[38] The R^2 for the linear regression predicting overall donor satisfaction was 54%, meaning that our model explains 54% of the variation in our respondents' satisfaction ratings (see Figure 1). The standardized beta coefficients, which indicate the relative predictive power of each variable, are as follows in descending order: the extent to which the foundation is making an impact on the community (0.32), the responsiveness of foundation staff when a donor has a question or needs assistance (0.31), and the extent to which the foundation understands the community (0.25).

The R^2 for the linear regression predicting a donor's likelihood to recommend the foundation to a friend or colleague was 50%, meaning that our model explains 50% of the variation in our respondents' likelihood of referral ratings (see Figure 1). The standardized beta coefficients, which indicate the relative predictive power of each variable, are as follows in descending order: the extent to which the foundation is making an impact on the community (0.31), the responsiveness of foundation staff when a donor has a question or needs assistance (0.27), and the extent to which the foundation understands the community (0.26).

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Thematic and content analyses were conducted on all responses from donors of community foundations. The survey administered to donors included two open-ended items:

1. Considering the foundation's impact, communications, resources, and services, please describe the foundation's greatest strength(s).
2. What specific improvements would you suggest in the foundation's work, including its impact, communications, resources, and services?

CEP analysts developed a codebook for each open-ended item by reading and summarizing the main themes in response text. Qualitative coding of these items was completed using Claude, a large language model developed by Anthropic. A Python script calling the Claude application programming interface (API) coded all responses to a survey question, and a human coder coded 15% of those responses to ensure the accuracy and reliability of machine-assisted coding. The API was accessed through CEP's commercial account with Anthropic, under which data is encrypted and is not used to train AI models. Both the human coder and Claude used the CEP analyst-developed codebook when categorizing responses, to ensure consistency. An average interrater reliability (IRR) level of at least 80% was achieved for each open-ended item. Our IRR across items ranged from 93% to 95%.

In some instances, to answer specific questions raised by the data, Claude was used to identify high-level patterns, with human review used to check the accuracy of those broad themes. As stated above, Claude was accessed through CEP's enterprise account, under which data is encrypted and is not used to train AI models. This review was not a comprehensive or systematic qualitative coding process (compared with the one described above), so these themes should be read as illustrative and directional rather than representative of the full comment set. When this alternative process was used, it is footnoted in the report.

Quotations from open-ended survey responses are included in this report. These quotations have been selected to be representative of themes in the data.

INTERVIEWS

Four community foundations are profiled in this report to provide examples of the way different foundations with highly satisfied donors have chosen to do their work. The foundations are the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, the North Texas Community Foundation, the Orange County Community Foundation, and the Community Foundation for Greater Buffalo. Each of these foundations rated in the top 15% on donor satisfaction in our dataset. Additionally, these foundations scored in the top 15% of the dataset on the three key predictors of donor satisfaction identified in our primary regression analysis (see Figure 1).

At each foundation, the CEO and most senior staff member working in donor relations or philanthropic services were invited to be interviewed. All interviews were conducted via Zoom and lasted up to 90 minutes. The interviews were recorded on Zoom, and audio recordings were transcribed using Otter.ai. Interviews were completed between July 8 and July 16, 2026, by two CEP staff members. All of the interviewees reviewed the material written from their interviews, including their respective quotes, and agreed to share them publicly in this report.

LIMITATIONS OF OUR RESEARCH

As is true of survey research in general, it is not possible to draw causal conclusions from the data. It is important to keep in mind that community foundations choosing to commission a DPR are interested in obtaining feedback from their donors, which may differentiate them from other funders. Likewise, the donors who choose to respond to the survey may differ from donors who do not choose to respond to the survey. In addition, as this research was conducted on a preexisting dataset, CEP's analyses were limited to the questions asked in the DPR survey. All of this should be kept in mind when generalizing these findings.

Range of Foundations Included in This Research and Variation Among Funders

The 60 foundations in this research represent a wide range of community foundations in terms of age, staff size, asset size, giving size, and how assets and giving are distributed across discretionary and nondiscretionary dollars. Foundations represented in this survey have long histories in their community, with most having been founded in 1968 or earlier. They also vary in terms of geography: 25% of funders are based in the Midwest, 10% in the Northeast, 35% in the South, 22% in the West, and 7% in Canada. Some are focused on urban areas and cities, while others serve broader, multicounty regions. About a quarter of the foundations in this research have total assets of over a billion dollars, although most sit somewhere between $258 million and $1 billion. Annual giving also varies greatly, with the median foundation distributing $48 million a year. For most community foundations, giving comes primarily from donor-advised funds (DAFs). Half of foundations have at least 55% of their grantmaking coming from DAFs. (See Table 1.)

TABLE 1. Range of Foundations Included in This Research (N=56-60)

Demographics	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Age of foundation	19 years	43 years	56 years	79 years	111 years
Number of full-time equivalent staff*	10	20	29	49	127
Total assets*	$70M	$258M	$559M	$1B	$13B
Percentage of assets that are discretionary*	2%	12%	22%	35%	60%
Percentage of assets that are held in DAFs*	5%	26%	40%	55.5%	88%
Percentage of assets that are other nondiscretionary*	0%	22%	34%	46%	83%
Total annual giving*	$3M	$20M	$48M	$97M	$4B
Percentage of grants that are discretionary*	0%	4%	13%	27%	74%
Percentage of grants made from DAFs*	5%	46%	55%	70%	95%
Percentage of grants that are other nondiscretionary*	0%	11%	24%	39%	87%

**These data are self-reported by foundations. For each statistic, between 56 and 60 out of 60 foundations total provided this information.*

Note: Numbers in these rows do not correspond to one another. For example, the foundation with the least annual giving did not necessarily also have the least in monetary assets.

Foundations are also varied when it comes to the number of donors who responded to CEP's survey. The median response rate among community foundations in our dataset was 24% of donors. (See Table 2.)

TABLE 2. Foundation Response Rates (N=60)

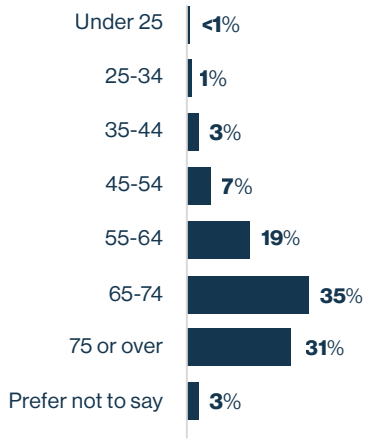
Survey response information	Minimum	25th percentile	Median	75th percentile	Maximum
Number of responding donors	45	84	118	166	380
Response rate	15%	20%	24%	30%	46%

Note: Numbers in these two rows do not correspond to each other. For example, the foundation with the highest response rate did not necessarily also have the highest number of responding donors.

Across all 60 foundations, these responses added up to 8,001 donors. The majority of donors in our dataset, more than 80%, self-reported their race as white, and two thirds reported that they are 65 years old or older. Women and men are equally represented in the dataset; about 4% of respondents declined to share their gender. Approximately 4% of donors self-reported as being part of the LGBTQ+ community; 5% declined to state their sexuality. Similarly, 5% of donors self-reported as having a disability, and 5% declined to answer. See Appendix B for more detailed information on the demographic spread of our donor dataset.

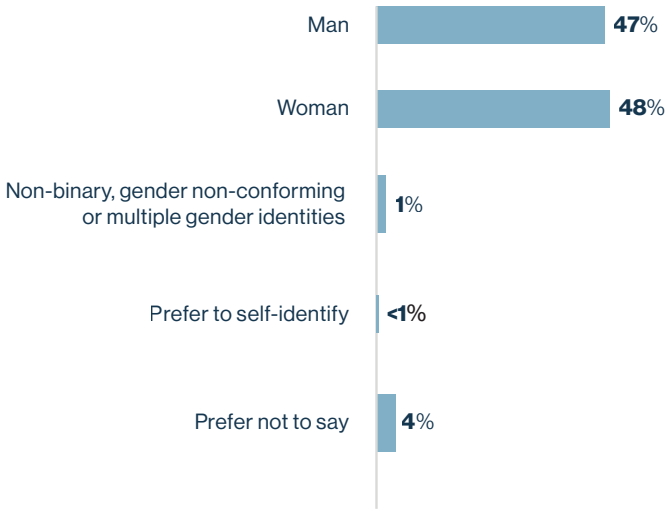
APPENDIX B: DONOR RESPONDENT DEMOGRAPHICS[39]

What is your age? (N=7,505)



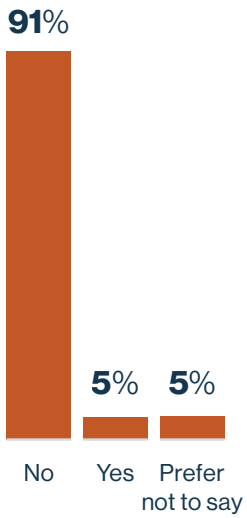
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding

What is your gender? (N=6,414)



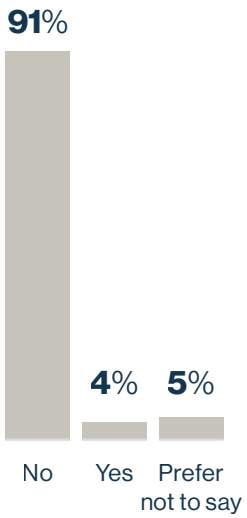
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding.

Do you have a disability?
(N=7,051)



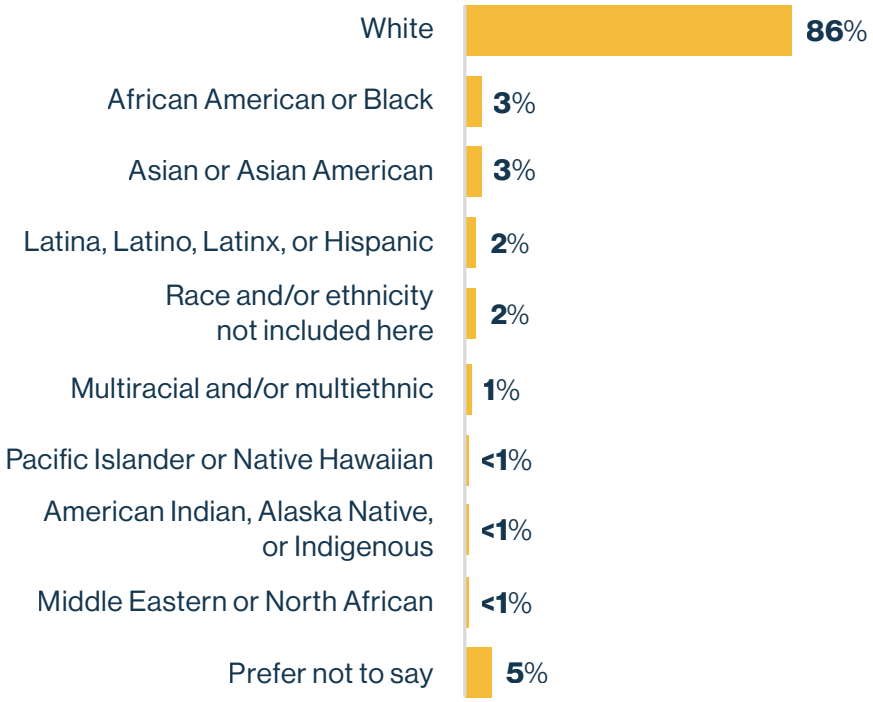
Note: Percentages do not add up to 100 because of rounding

Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ community?
(N=5,977)



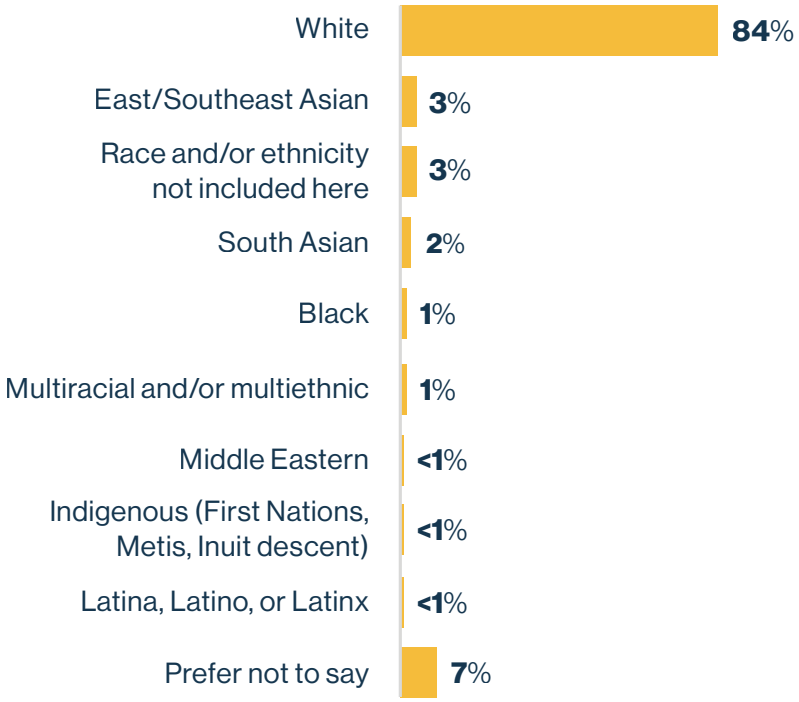
[39] Not all donors respond to the demographic questions in the DPR survey, so the Ns shown in the demographic charts in this appendix are smaller than the total number of donors in our dataset and may vary by question.

How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (N=6,645)



Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could select all that apply.

How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (N=541) **Canadian version*



Note: Percentages add up to more than 100 because respondents could select all that apply.



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