

The State of General Operating Support 2011

By Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski

In 2011, 1,121 American grantmakers reported \$5.9 billion in general operating support, a substantial increase (83 percent) over average core support from 2008-2010.¹ The share of foundation dollars classified as providing this vital type of funding increased from 16 percent to 24 percent.

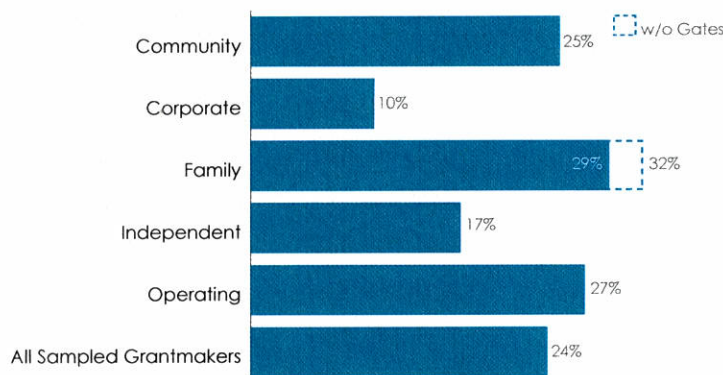
NCRP's *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best* encourages grantmakers to provide at least 50 percent of grant dollars for general operating support.² Also called "core support," these grants are essential for nonprofits' success: it provides flexible funds that help them respond to unexpected opportunities, builds capacity and leadership development and signals trust between the funder and the grantee.

Family foundations (Figure 1), Southern foundations (Figure 2) and funders giving between \$5-10 million (Figure 3) were more likely to provide general operating support than other types of funders.

The median funder reports providing only 7 percent to general operating support, but one in five grantmakers (22 percent) gave at NCRP's recommended levels in 2011, compared to one in seven grantmakers (14 percent) in the previous sample.

Figure 1. General Operating Support by Foundation Type ▾

Family foundations are the most likely to report funding for core support.



2011 AT A GLANCE



\$5.9B

Grant dollars for general operating support



24%

Share of total grant dollars given for general operating support



7%

Median foundation share of giving for general operating support

Figure 2. General Operating Support by Foundation Region ▶

Grantmakers in the south are the most likely to provide general operating support.

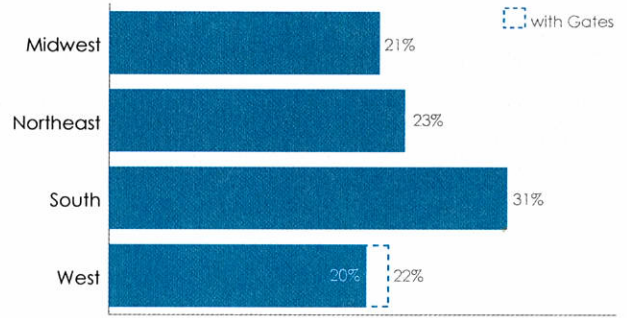


Figure 3. General Operating Support by Foundation Size ▶

Funders giving between \$5-10 million are more likely to award core support.

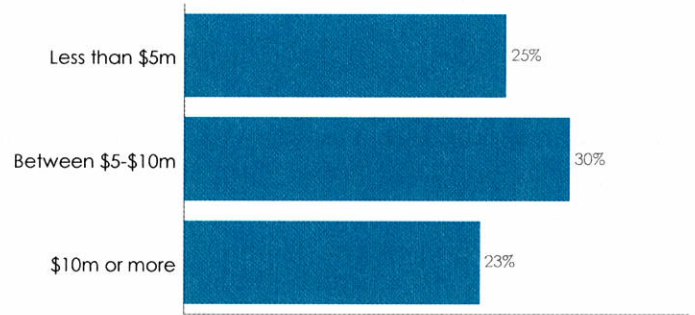
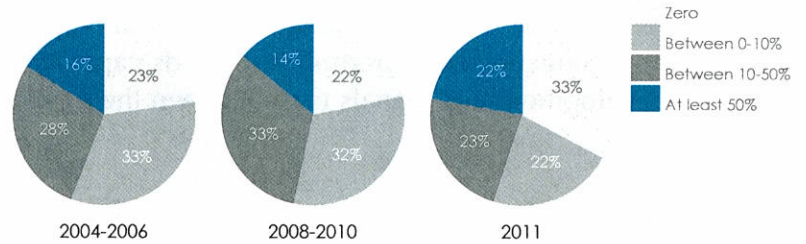


Figure 4. How Much General Operating Support Do Grantmakers Provide? ▶

One in five grantmakers provides at least 50 percent of grant dollars as core support.



LARGEST GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT PROVIDERS

In 2011, 246 grantmakers (22 percent of 1,121 sampled funders) reported giving at least 50 percent of their grant dollars as general operating support. Though only the top 25 are listed, 127 funders (11 percent of the sample) reported 100 percent of their grants as general operating support.

Table 1. Largest Funders by Share of Giving for General Operating Support, 2011 ▼

FOUNDATION NAME	STATE	GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT	
		AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Robertson Foundation	NY	\$88,815,245	100%
Druckenmiller Foundation	NY	\$53,300,000	100%
The Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation	MI	\$52,447,892	100%
The Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust	NY	\$49,936,374	100%
The Freedom Forum, Inc.	DC	\$41,108,868	100%
BP Foundation, Inc.	TX	\$29,868,412	100%
Hess Foundation, Inc.	NJ	\$25,346,265	100%

Table 1. Largest Funders by Share of Giving for General Operating Support, 2011 (continued) ▾

FOUNDATION NAME	STATE	GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT	
		AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Arison Arts Foundation	FL	\$21,941,846	100%
Klarman Family Foundation	MA	\$21,750,336	100%
The Cuneo Foundation	IL	\$21,204,912	100%
The Manton Foundation	NY	\$20,885,677	100%
Anna Maria & Stephen Kellen Foundation, Inc.	NY	\$18,917,000	100%
The Lerner Foundation	OH	\$18,540,428	100%
E. L. and Thelma Gaylord Foundation	OK	\$18,016,315	100%
S & G Foundation, Inc.	DE	\$17,867,220	100%
The William K. Warren Foundation	OK	\$17,526,556	100%
Adelson Family Foundation	MA	\$16,853,718	100%
Emerson Charitable Trust	MO	\$15,344,005	100%
Pritzker Foundation	IL	\$14,851,000	100%
The Jacobson Family Trust Foundation	MA	\$13,801,050	100%
The Jane and Daniel Och Family Foundation	NY	\$12,900,000	100%
U.S. Bancorp Foundation, Inc.	MN	\$12,549,099	100%
The Bolthouse Foundation	CA	\$12,150,000	100%
Tarble Foundation	CA	\$12,000,000	100%
Douglas & Maria DeVos Foundation	MI	\$11,772,282	100%

Table 2. Largest General Operating Support Funders by Total Amount, 2011 ▾

FOUNDATION NAME	STATE	GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT	
		AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation	WA	\$1,061,503,480	24%
Walton Family Foundation, Inc.	AR	\$800,000,000	54%
The David and Lucile Packard Foundation	CA	\$128,040,620	52%
Ford Foundation	NY	\$98,359,058	24%
Robertson Foundation	NY	\$88,815,245	100%
The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	CA	\$81,126,500	41%
Foundation to Promote Open Society	NY	\$76,152,321	36%
Silicon Valley Community Foundation	CA	\$64,462,394	34%
John Templeton Foundation	PA	\$58,373,093	92%
Druckenmiller Foundation	NY	\$53,300,000	100%
Tulsa Community Foundation	OK	\$52,958,895	99%
The Richard and Helen DeVos Foundation	MI	\$52,447,892	100%
The Robert W. Wilson Charitable Trust	NY	\$49,936,374	100%

Table 2. Largest General Operating Support Funders by Total Amount, 2011 (continued) ▾

FOUNDATION NAME	STATE	GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT	
		AMOUNT	PERCENTAGE
Lilly Endowment Inc.	IN	\$48,818,290	24%
Boston Foundation, Inc.	MA	\$47,625,690	89%
The Denver Foundation	CO	\$47,151,050	69%
The Freedom Forum, Inc.	DC	\$41,108,868	100%
The New York Community Trust	NY	\$40,177,262	37%
The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	IL	\$34,432,500	20%
BP Foundation, Inc.	TX	\$29,868,412	100%
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation	MI	\$29,848,697	36%
Ann and Robert H. Lurie Foundation	IL	\$28,835,099	100%
Skirball Foundation	NY	\$28,608,850	99%
The Simons Foundation	NY	\$28,347,500	21%
The Kresge Foundation	MI	\$27,880,764	19%

METHODOLOGY

NCRP worked with the Foundation Center to develop custom datasets using the Center’s grants sample database, which includes detailed information on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded to organizations circa 2011 by 1,121 of the largest U.S. foundations.

Information on general operating support is based on foundations’ reports of their grants’ purposes. Foundations noted in the data as giving zero to general operating support either did not give general operating support grants or did not provide enough information to code them as such. NCRP encourages grantmakers to contact the Foundation Center to ensure appropriate classification of their grants.

For more information or to see how your foundation performs compared to its peers, please contact research@ncrp.org. ■

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NOTES

1. Niki Jagpal and Kevin Laskowski, *The State of General Operating Support* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2012), <http://ncrp.org/files/publications/PhilanthropicLandscape-StateofGeneralOperatingSupport.pdf>.
2. Niki Jagpal, *Criteria for Philanthropy at Its Best: Benchmarks to Assess and Enhance Grantmaker Impact* (Washington, DC: National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, 2009), <http://www.ncrp.org/paib>.

ABOUT NCRP

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