

The 2023 State of Grantseeking Key Findings



OUR UNDERWRITERS

We extend our appreciation to the underwriters for their invaluable support.





KEY FINDINGS

GRANTSEEKING ACTIVITY

- Ninety percent of respondents applied for grant funding in 2022.
- Among the organizations with active grantseekers, 74% reported that one to two people were directly involved with the grant process.
- Compared to the same period in the prior year, 58% of respondents applied for more grants and 47% were awarded more grants. In addition, 46% reported the receipt of larger awards.
- Application rates varied by funder type; 91% of respondents applied for private foundation funding in 2022 while 64% applied for Federal funding.
- Applying for at least three grant awards increased the frequency of winning an award. Thirty-six percent of organizations that submitted one application won no awards. However, the percentage of organizations that won at least one award was high among organizations that submitted three to five applications (90%), six to ten applications (98%), or eleven or more applications (99-100%).

AWARDS

- Fifty-one percent of respondents reported grant funding as comprising 25% or less of their annual budget.
- Recurring grants were 10% or less of total grants for 45% of respondents, and 11% to 50% of total grants for 33% of respondents.
- The median total grant funding was \$150,000; the median largest individual award was \$74,500.
- The median largest award from non-government funders (an aggregate of private foundations, community foundations, corporate grantmakers, donor-advised funds, and “other” funding sources) was \$40,000.
- The median largest award from government funders (an aggregate of local, state, and Federal government) was \$218,000.

The most frequently reported type of support for the largest award was project or program support (37%); general support was the largest award type for 23% of respondents.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT AWARDS

- Of all respondents to *The 2023 State of Grantseeking™ Survey*, 40% stated that their organizations receive Federal funding on a regular basis and 36% received Federal funding in 2022.
- The largest award median for the Federal government was \$423,435.
- Most organizations that received Federal funding in 2022 reported that their largest Federal award came in the form of grants (66%) or contracts (10%).
- Forty-four percent of the funds for the largest Federal award originated directly from the Federal government; 25% originated as pass-through Federal funding via a state government.
- Twenty-five percent of respondents reported that matching funds were required in their largest Federal award. Of those, 33% reported a match of 25% or less.
- Fifty percent of respondents reported that their largest Federal award included indirect or administrative cost funding.

DONOR-ADVISED FUND AWARDS

- Among our respondents, 33% reported donor-advised funds as a source of funding.
- Donor-advised funds were the largest source of total funding for 2% of respondents.

LARGEST AWARD LOGISTICS

- The grant cycle length—from proposal submission to award decision—for the largest grant award was between one and six months for 60% of respondents.
- The grant process takes staff. For 66% of respondents, one to two people were directly involved in the grantseeking process for the largest individual award, while for 22% of respondents, three to five people were directly involved.
- The grant process takes time. Grant research took three days or fewer for 66% of respondents. Project design and planning took three days or fewer for 53% of respondents, while writing the grant application took between two days and two weeks for 70% of respondents. Application submission took three days or fewer for 68% of respondents and reporting requirements took three days or fewer for 54% of respondents. Post-award monitoring took three days or fewer for 40% of respondents, whereas it wasn't applicable for 22% of respondents.

- Once an award decision had been determined, funders released the award monies quickly; 70% of respondents reported receiving the award within three months of notification.

INDIRECT/ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS

- Compared to indirect/administrative costs for the prior year, 42% of respondents reported that these costs had remained the same, while 50% reported that these costs had increased. Indirect/administrative costs decreased for 8% of respondents.
- Respondents kept their costs low; 62% reported indirect/administrative costs as 20% or less of their total budgets.
- The most frequently reported indirect/administrative cost control techniques involved reductions in the number of staff (37%), reliance on volunteer labor (25%), and “other” reduction techniques (28%) including cost savings through hiring freezes, virtual work, and non-replacement of technology.
- Individual donations (38%) were the most frequent source of indirect/administrative funding.
- Only 8% of respondents reported that non-government funders would not cover any level of indirect/administrative costs. However, 40% of respondents reported an allowance of 10% or less for these costs and 28% were unsure of cost coverage.

COLLABORATION

- Most respondents (71%) did not participate in collaborative grantseeking in 2022.
- Thirty-six percent of those respondents that did submit a collaborative grant application reported winning an award.
- Increases in annual budget size, with the implied increases in staff and infrastructure, influenced collaborative activities. Fifty-four percent of organizations with budgets of \$25,000,000 or more participated in collaborative grantseeking in 2022, whereas 11% of organizations with budgets under \$100,000 engaged in collaborative grantseeking during this period.

CHALLENGES TO GRANTSEEKING

- Lack of time and/or staff (24%) continued to be the greatest challenge to grantseeking among respondents.
- Increased funder requirements (15%), difficulty in finding grant opportunities that matched with specific missions, locations, or programs (14%), competition for finite

monies (9%), and building funder relationships (8%) were also frequently cited as the greatest challenge to successful grantseeking.

ORGANIZATION ANNUAL BUDGET

- Larger organizations consistently reported larger award sizes. Median total awards ranged from \$14,500 for small organizations to over \$2.8 million for extra-large organizations. The median size of the largest individual award ranged from \$8,850 for small organizations to over \$1.7 million for extra-large organizations.
- Extra-large organizations reported a much greater frequency of Federal government grants. Organizations should note that the median largest award size is substantially higher for government sources and consider these trends when setting realistic grantseeking expectations based on organizational size. For example, the median largest award for Federal grants was \$423,435, while the median largest award from community foundations was \$20,000.

ORGANIZATION MISSION FOCUS

- Award sizes varied by organizational mission focus. The median size of the largest individual award ranged from \$25,000 for Animal Related organizations to \$1.5 million for Educational Institutions. Religion Related organizations reported a median award total of \$48,500, while Educational Institutions reported a median award total of \$2,549,015.
- Private foundations were the largest source of total grant funding for most mission focuses. The Federal government was the most frequently reported source of total grant funding for Educational Institutions and Housing and Shelter organizations.

METHODOLOGY

The 2023 State of Grantseeking™ Report presents a ground-level look at the grantseeking experience and focuses on funding from non-government grant sources and government grants and contracts. The information in this report, unless otherwise specified, reflects recent grantseeking activity during the year 2022. For the purpose of visual brevity, response rates are rounded to the nearest whole number; totals will range from 98% to 102%.

The 2023 State of Grantseeking™ Survey was open from February 10, 2023, through March 31, 2023, and received 2,463 responses. The survey was conducted online using Survey Monkey and was not scientifically conducted. Survey respondents are a nonrandom sample of organizations that self-selected to take the survey based on their affiliation with GrantStation and GrantStation partners. Due to the variation in respondent organizations over time, this report does not include trends. *The 2023 State of Grantseeking™ Report* uses focused survey results, including data by mission focus or budget size, to provide a resource more closely matched to your specific organization.

This report was produced by [GrantStation](#). The lead underwriters were [Foundant-GrantHub](#) and the [Grant Professionals Association](#). Additional underwriters included [ARNOVA](#), [CampaignCounsel.org](#), and [TechSoup](#). The survey was also promoted by many generous partner organizations via emails, e-newsletters, websites, and various social media outlets. Ellen C. Mowrer, Diana Holder, and Juliet Vile wrote, edited, and contributed to the report. For media inquiries or permission to use the information contained in *The 2023 State of Grantseeking™ Report* in oral or written format, presentations, texts, online, or other contexts, please contact Ellen Mowrer at ellen.mowrer@grantstation.com.

Statistical Definitions

- Descriptive statistics: The branch of statistics devoted to the exploration, summary, and presentation of data. *The State of Grantseeking Reports* use descriptive statistics to report survey findings. Because this survey was not scientifically conducted, inference—the process of deducing properties of the underlying population—is not used.
- Mean: The sum of a set of numbers, divided by the number of entries in a set. The mean is sometimes called the average.
- Median: The middle value in a set of numbers.
- Frequency: How often a number is present in a set.

- Percentage: A rate per hundred. For a variable with n observations, of which the frequency of a certain characteristic is r , the percentage is $100 \cdot r/n$.
- Population: A collection of units being studied.

ABOUT GRANTSTATION



Serving both individuals and partners that represent hundreds of thousands of grantseekers, [GrantStation](#) is a premier suite of online resources for nonprofits, municipalities, tribal groups, and educational institutions. We write detailed and comprehensive profiles of grantmakers, both private and governmental, and organize them into searchable databases (U.S., Canadian, and International).



At GrantStation, we are dedicated to creating a civil society by assisting the nonprofit sector in its quest to build healthy and effective communities. We provide the tools for you to find new grant sources, build a strong grantseeking program, and write winning grant proposals.

- Do you struggle to identify new funding sources? We've done the research for you.
- Does the lack of time limit your ability to submit grant requests? We have tutorials on creating time and making space for grant proposals.
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