

GrantStation Member Results Annual Budget

The Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Report



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



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INTRODUCTION

As a leader in the nonprofit sector, part of your job is to know about the latest trends and to apply lessons learned by others to the strategic development of your organization. We are here to help you do just that.

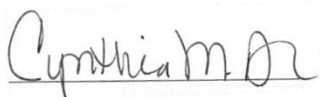
The primary objectives of the twice-yearly State of Grantseeking Report are to help you both understand the recent trends in grantseeking and identify benchmarks to help you measure your own success in the field.

This document, *The Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Report*, is the result of the 16th semiannual informal survey of organizations conducted by GrantStation to help illustrate the current state of grantseeking in the U.S.

Underwritten by [Altum-PhilanTrack](#), [Foundant-GrantHub](#), the [Grant Professionals Association](#), [GrantVantage](#), and [TechSoup](#), this report looks at sources of grant funding through a variety of lenses, providing the reader with benchmarks to help them understand the grantseeking and grant giving landscape.

I would like to personally thank the 4,970 respondents who made this report possible, particularly the 1,392 respondent organizations analyzed in this report that self-identified as Members of GrantStation or one of GrantStation's Premium Licensing Partners.

I hope that the information and benchmarks provided will assist each of you in your good work. Responding regularly to a twice-yearly survey takes commitment, and on behalf of the organizations that will benefit from this analysis and those of us at GrantStation, our underwriters, our advocates, and our collaborators, I thank you.



Cynthia M. Adams

Founder and CEO

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recent results of *The Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Survey* suggest that organizational size determined by annual budget is the key factor influencing the grantseeking experience. Increases in organizational budget, staff size, and age mirror an increase in the organizational capacity to engage in active grantseeking.

Organizational grant application and award rates for GS Members related positively to budget and staff sizes. Larger GS organizations consistently reported higher application and award rates as well as larger award sizes. While over half of all GS respondents (59%) reported total awards over \$50,000, and the median of total awards was \$68,900, there were critical differences by budget range.

- The median of total awards for small GS organizations was \$9,700.
- For medium GS organizations, the median award total was \$40,000.
- The median of total awards for large GS organizations was \$161,300.
- For very large GS organizations, the median award total was \$440,000.
- The median award total for extra-large GS organizations was \$786,800.

However, for those organizations that do engage in active grantseeking, funding is available. According to *The Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Report*, during the last half of 2017, 82% of GS respondents that submitted a grant application received at least one grant award.

This statistic varied by budget size, and reflected the relationship between increased staff sizes and increased awards. For example, 56% of small GS organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 47% won one or more awards. Small GS organizations were primarily staffed by volunteers (52%), had less than one full-time equivalent employee (26%), or employed one to five people (21%). In comparison, 99% of extra-large GS organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 99% won one or more awards. Extra-large GS organizations primarily reported 200 or more employees (86%).

Private foundations continued to be the most frequently cited source of grant awards for GS organizations of any budget size. Government funding frequency usually increased with organizational budget size. Small GS organizations more frequently received support from “other” sources of funding (including religious organizations, the United Way, donor-advised funds, civic organizations, and tribal funds).

Funding source frequency can be used as a guide to help determine where your investment of staff and time is most likely to result in awards when engaging in grantseeking. Generally, funders of all types more frequently supported larger organizations (excluding “other” sources of funding).

Another benchmark to consider before submitting an application is organizational age. Organizational age tends to increase in conjunction with organizational budget size; 84% of small GS organizations were 25 years old or younger while 94% of extra-large GS organizations were over 25 years old. Funders, particularly the Federal government, tend to look for proof of an organization's sustainability as evidenced by its age. Seventy-one percent of organizations that reported the Federal government as the source of their largest award were over twenty-five years old, compared to 42% of organizations that reported corporations as the source of their largest award. Thus, younger organizations may want to focus more time on applications to corporations than on Federal government applications.

Organizational collaboration may be another way to increase grantseeking success; it is encouraged by many funders. Keep in mind that an organization's annual budget, with the implied increases in staff and infrastructure in tandem with the increases in budget size, has an effect on collaborative activities. Fifty-eight percent of GS organizations with budgets of \$25,000,000 or more participated in collaborative grantseeking in the last six months of 2017. In comparison, 17% to 44% of GS organizations with budgets under \$25,000,000 participated in collaborative grantseeking during this period.

We at GrantStation hope the State of Grantseeking Reports help to alleviate some of the frustration among nonprofit organizations as they engage in grantseeking activities. Overall, this report speaks to the importance of targeting the right grantmakers. How can this report help your organization find the funding it needs?

First, compare your organization's grantseeking to this report. Are there areas of performance where your organization excels, or where it could stand to improve? Next, set realistic expectations for the projected contribution of grant awards to your total budget, using the results of this survey as one of your guides.

Because these reports are meant to serve you and to help you determine where you need to focus your energy, you may consider setting aside time in your next Board of Directors meeting to discuss this report and how the information can be used to help you build a successful and resilient grant management strategy.

Finally, consider investing in tools to help organizational growth, such as Membership in GrantStation. At [GrantStation](#), we help you to keep your organization financially healthy through assistance in developing a strong grantseeking strategy. [Member Benefits](#) provide the tools for you to find new grant sources, build a strong grantseeking program, and write winning grant proposals.

Ellen C. Mowrer

President and COO, GrantStation

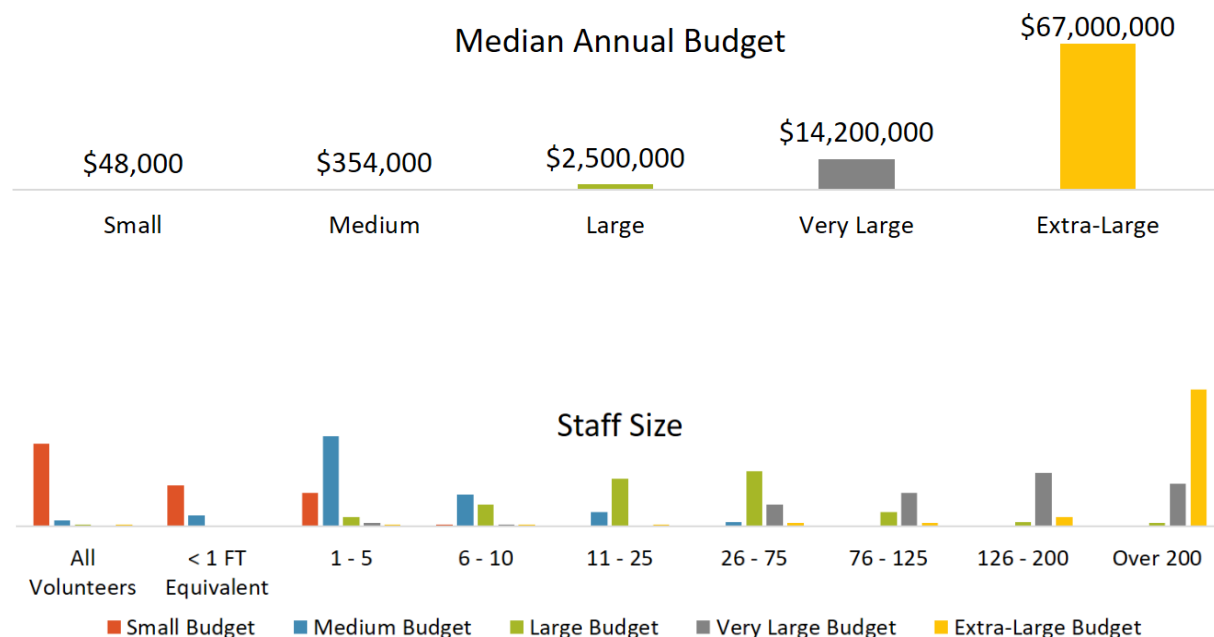
COMPARISON BY ORGANIZATIONAL BUDGET

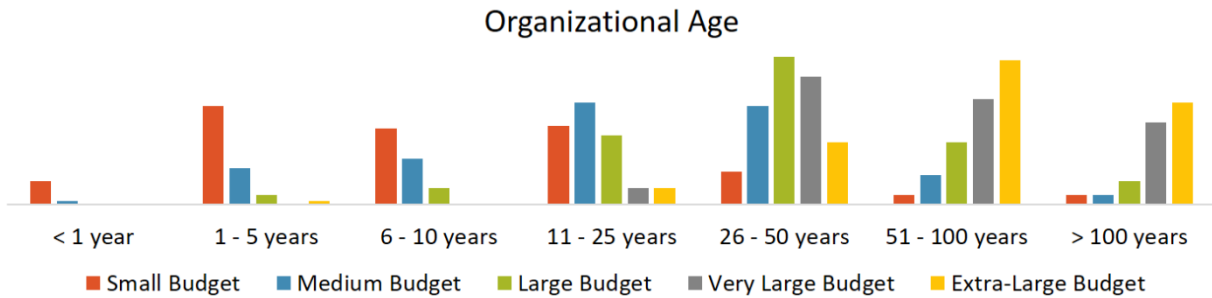
Organizational size determined by annual budget is the key factor influencing the grantseeking experience. For GS Members, when viewed through the lens of budget, variations among organizational demographic profiles and grant management and strategy profiles help us to understand the state of grantseeking at a more granular and actionable level, and serve as a tool to assist in the 2018-2019 planning process. For this report, organizational budget ranges are defined as:

Budget Range	Range Name	% of GS Members	GS Members Median Budget Amount
Under \$100,000	Small	18%	\$48,000
\$100,000 - \$999,999	Medium	39%	\$354,000
\$1 Million - \$9,999,999	Large	28%	\$2,500,000
\$10 Million - \$24,999,999	Very Large	6%	\$14,200,000
\$25 Million and Over	Extra-Large	9%	\$67,000,000

KEY DEMOGRAPHICS

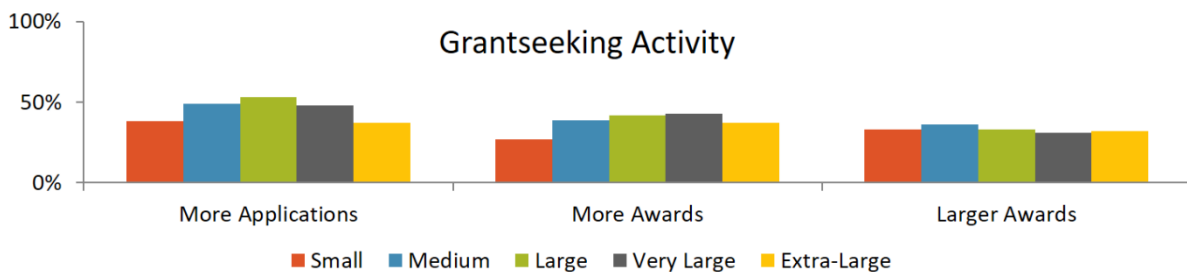
Increases in the organizational budget, staff size, and age of GS Members mirror an increase in the organizational capacity to engage in active grantseeking.





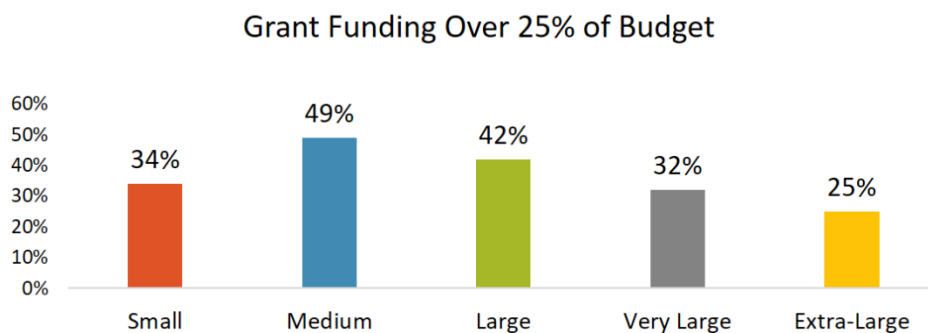
GRANTSEEKING ACTIVITY

GS Members with small or extra-large organizational budgets reported lower rates of increased grantseeking activity than did GS Members with medium, large, or very large organizational budgets. For GS Members with small budgets, a lack of full-time staff may explain less grantseeking activity, while for GS Members with extra-large budgets, less grantseeking activity might be the result of more frequent reliance on funding from tuition or fees for services.



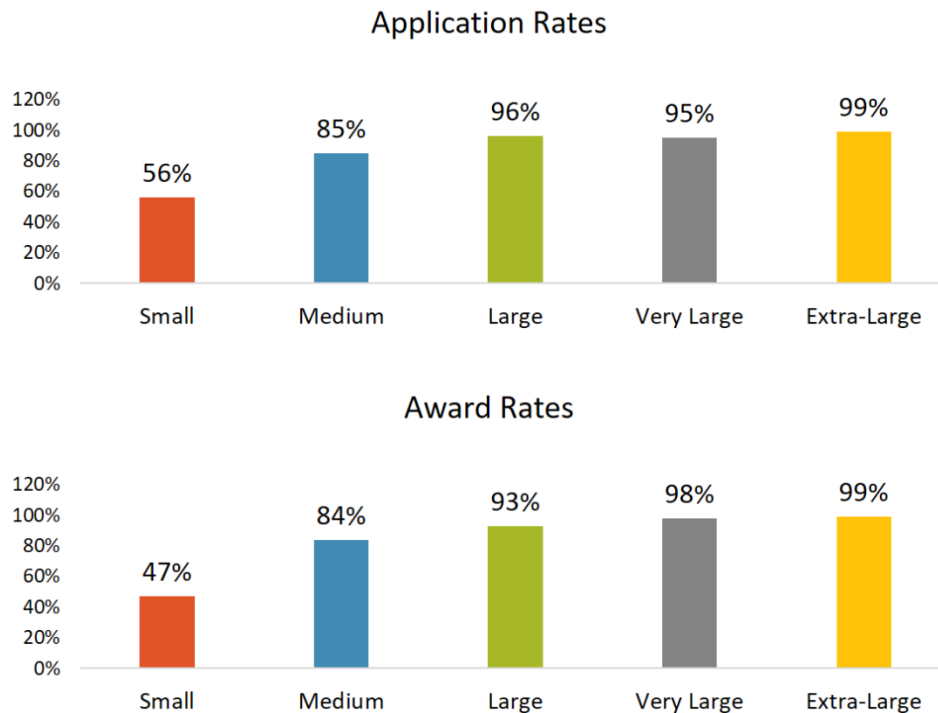
GRANT FUNDING BUDGET CONTRIBUTION

Grant funding was a greater percentage of the annual budget for medium and large GS organizations.



APPLICATION AND AWARD RATES

Organizational grant application and award rates for GS Members related positively to budget and staff sizes. Larger organizations consistently reported higher application and award rates.



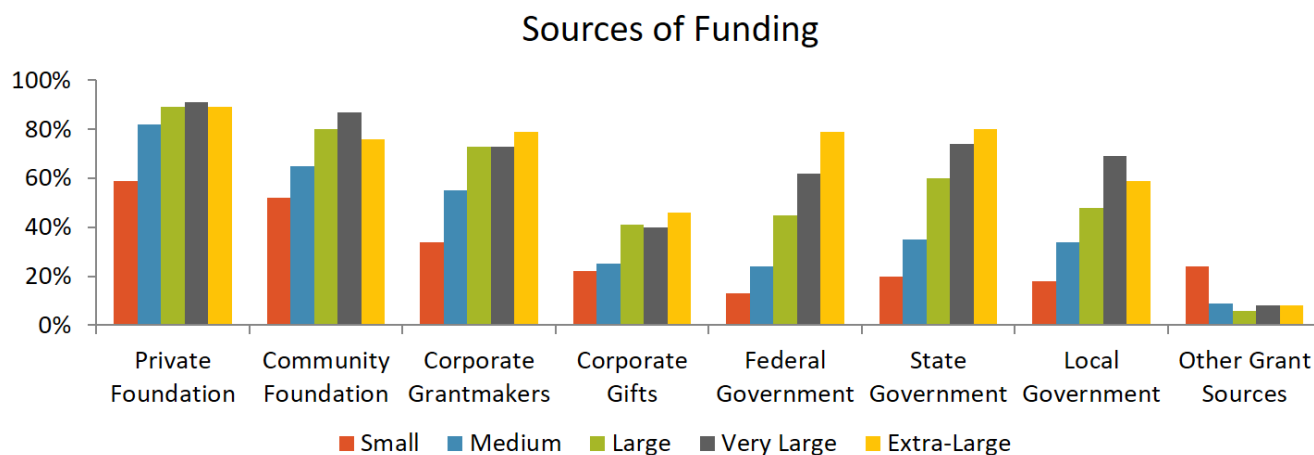
Regarding the period between July and December 2017, GS Members reported the following:

- Fifty-six percent of small organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 47% won one or more awards. Small organizations were primarily staffed by volunteers (52%), had less than one full-time equivalent employee (26%), or employed one to five people (21%).
- Eighty-five percent of medium organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 84% won one or more awards. Medium organizations primarily employed one to five people (57%) or six to ten people (20%).
- Ninety-six percent of large organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 93% won one or more awards. Large organizations primarily employed from 11 to 25 people (30%) or 26 to 75 people (35%).
- Ninety-five percent of very large organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 98% won one or more awards. Very large organizations primarily employed from 76 to 125 people (21%), 126 to 200 people (34%), or over 200 people (27%).
- Ninety-nine percent of extra-large organizations submitted at least one grant application; of those, 99% won one or more awards. Extra-large organizations primarily reported 200 or more employees (86%).

GRANT FUNDING SOURCES

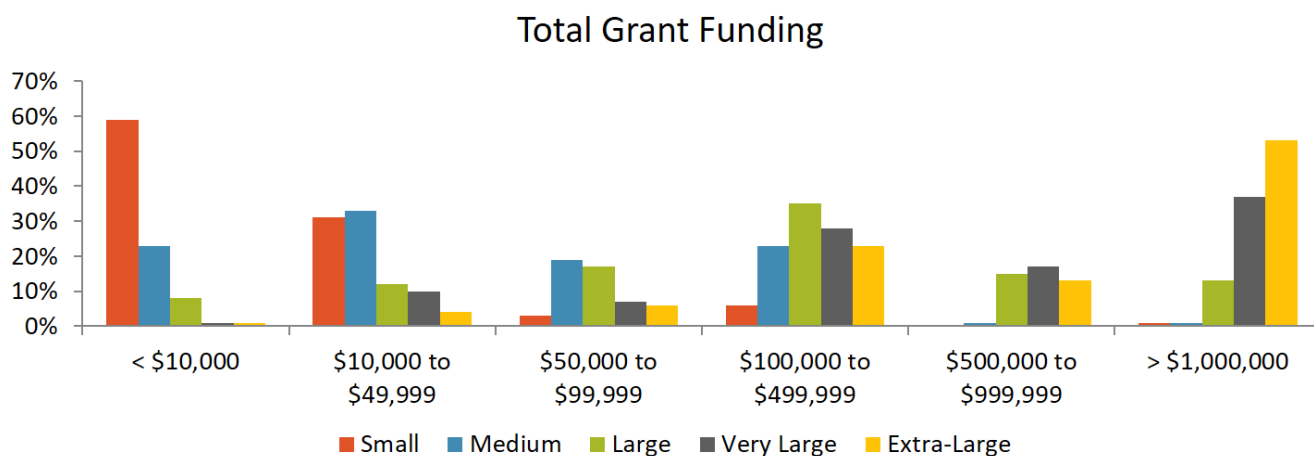
Private foundations continued to be the most frequently cited source of grant awards for GS Member organizations of any budget size. Government funding frequency generally increased with GS Member budget size. Small GS organizations more frequently received support from “other” sources of funding (including religious organizations, the United Way, donor-advised funds, civic organizations, and tribal funds).

Funding source frequency can be used as a guide to help determine where your investment of staff and time is most likely to result in awards when engaging in grantseeking. Generally, funders of all types more frequently supported larger organizations (excluding “other” sources of funding).



TOTAL AWARDS

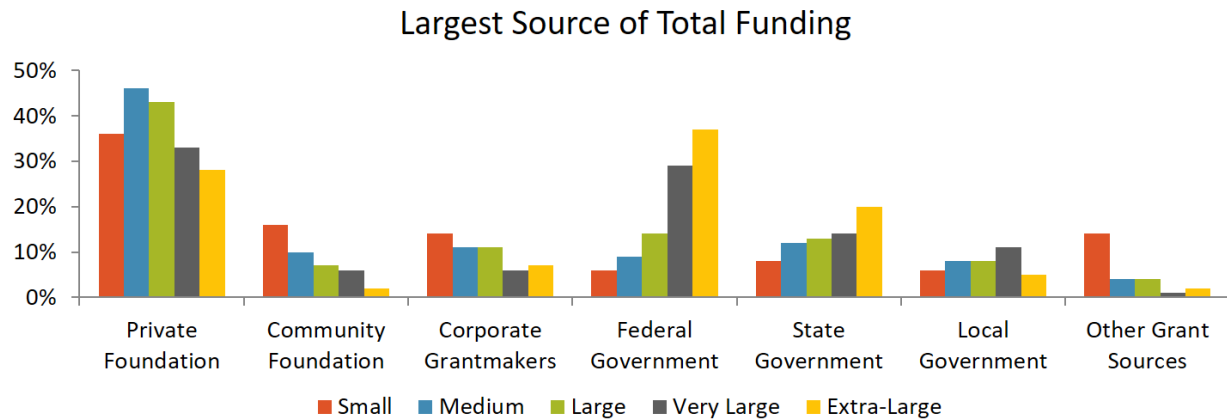
As with organizational grant application and award rates, total award size related positively to budget and staff sizes. Larger GS organizations consistently reported larger award sizes. While 59% of GS Members reported total awards over \$50,000, and the median of total awards was \$68,900, this chart shows the critical differences by budget range.



- The median of total awards for small GS organizations was \$9,700.
- For medium GS organizations, the median award total was \$40,000.
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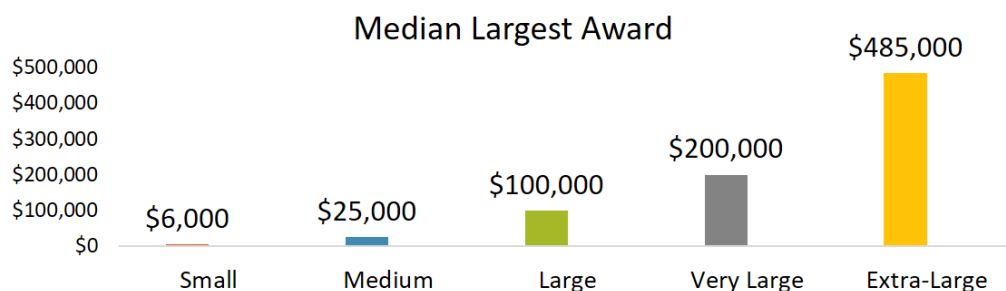
LARGEST SOURCE OF TOTAL FUNDING

When the largest source of total funding is viewed through the lens of budget size, differences in funding preferences become apparent. Organizations should be aware of these preferences as they research potential funding opportunities and choose where to focus the grantseeker's time and energy. For example, the funding frequency of community foundations is in inverse proportion to budget size, while Federal government and state government funding frequency increases in proportion to budget size.



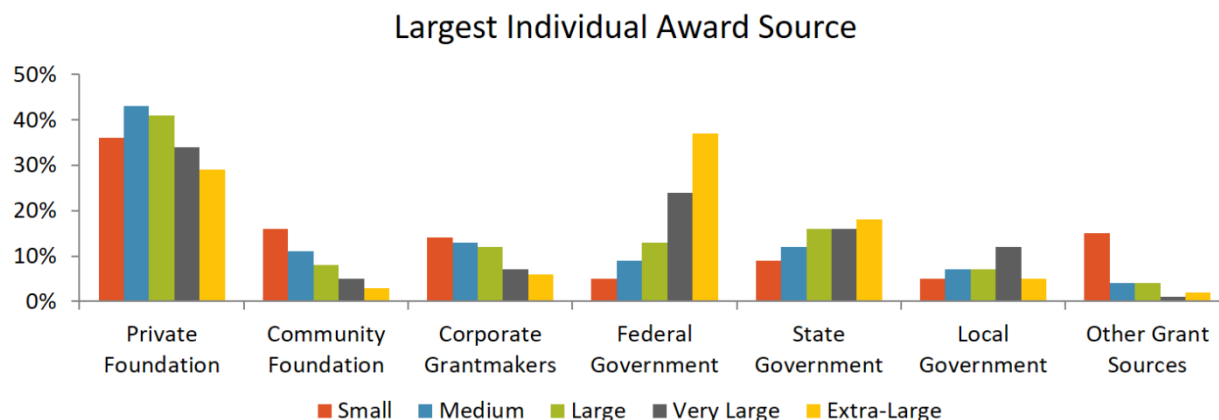
LARGEST INDIVIDUAL AWARD

Again, larger organizations consistently reported larger award sizes. For all GS Members, the median largest individual award was \$50,000; this chart shows the differences by budget range. These variations speak to the importance of comparing your organization to organizations within similar annual budget ranges.



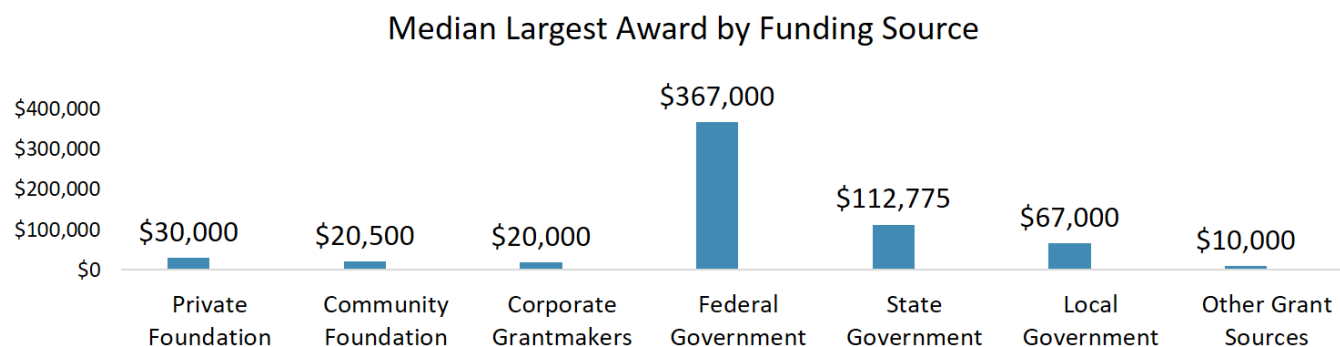
LARGEST INDIVIDUAL AWARD SOURCE

GS Members also reported variations in funding tendencies based on organizational budget ranges. Again, organizations should be aware of these preferences as they research potential funding opportunities and choose where to focus the grantseeker's time and energy. For example, the funding frequency of community foundations and corporate grantmakers is in inverse proportion to the budget size, while Federal government and state government funding frequency increases in proportion to budget size.



The median largest award by funding source is included in the chart below to provide context.

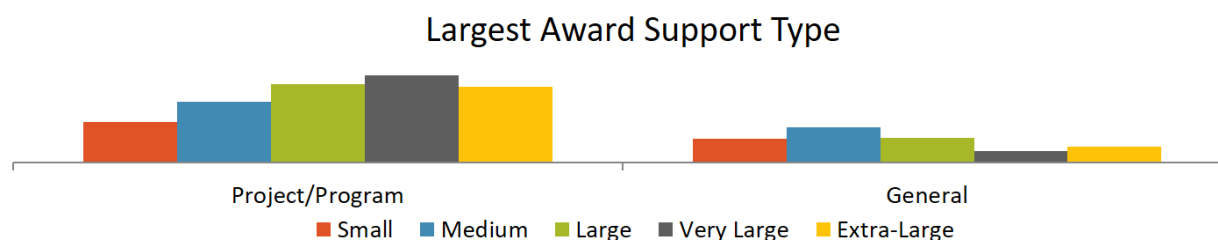
For example, small GS organizations more frequently reported community foundations, corporate grantmakers, and “other” grant sources as the source of their largest individual award. The median size of the largest award from community foundations, corporate grantmakers, and “other” grant sources was lower than those of other funding sources.



LARGEST AWARD SUPPORT TYPE

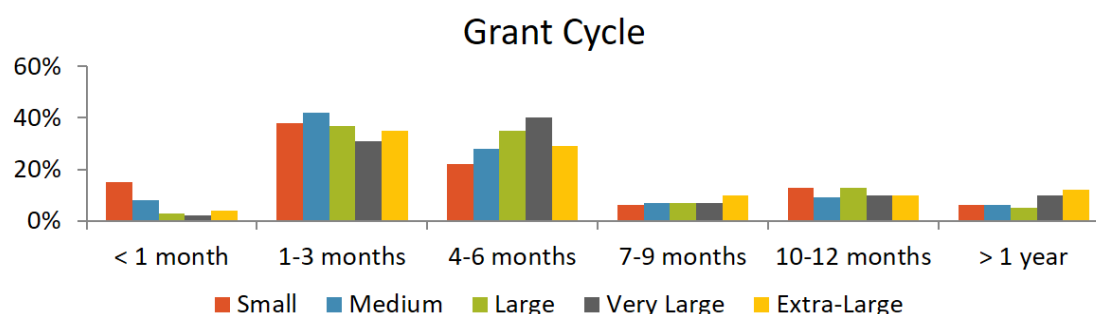
The largest award received by GS Members was in the form of project/program support, followed by general support. Project/program funding tended to increase in relation to increases in budget size, while general support funding was usually less frequent for larger organizations.

When planning your grants strategy, consider the most frequent funding source in conjunction with the support type and the award size. For example, an organization with a small budget may wish to apply to “other” funding sources for general support of \$6,000 to \$10,000.

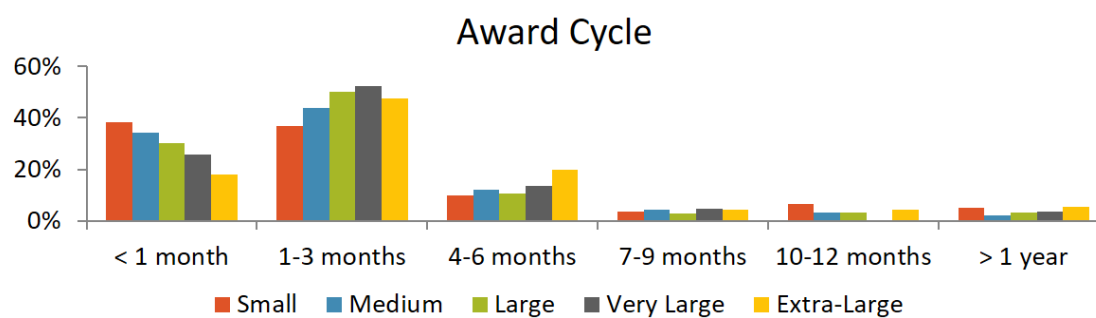


LARGEST AWARD LOGISTICS

The grant cycle length—from proposal submission to award decision—for the largest grant award was between one and six months for most GS Members. A longer grant cycle of seven months or more was most frequently reported by extra-large GS organizations (32%), while a short grant cycle of less than a month was more frequently reported by small GS organizations (15%).



Once an award decision had been determined, funders released the award monies quickly; most GS Members reported receiving the award within three months of notification. Delayed receipt of award monies, taking four months or more, was reported most frequently by extra-large GS organizations (34%).

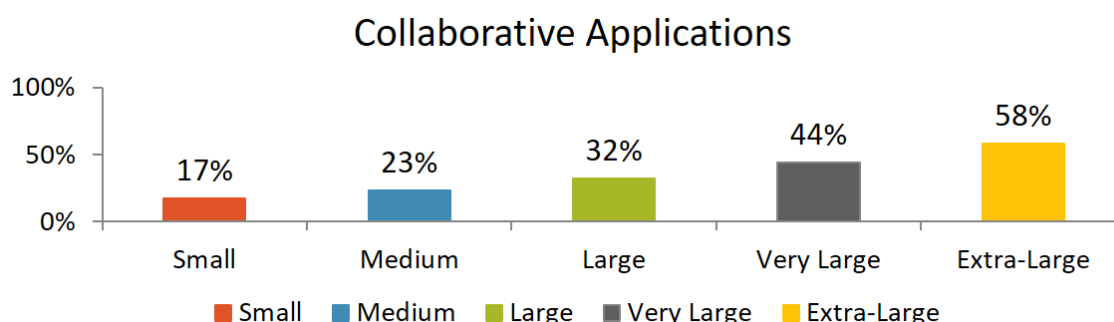


COLLABORATIVE GRANTSEEKING

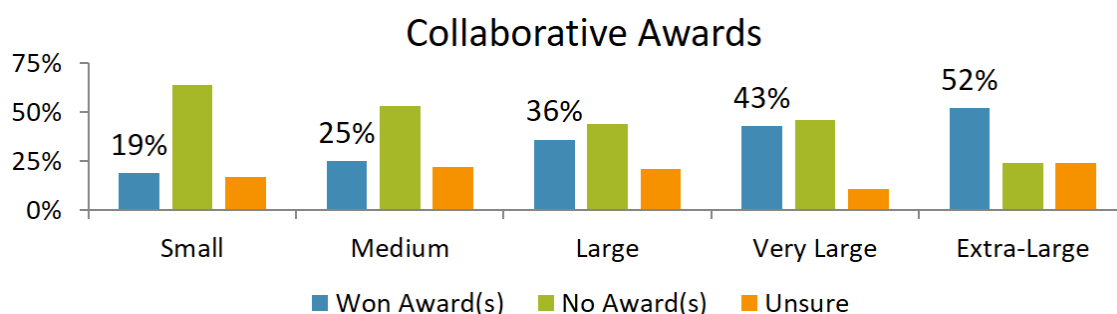
COLLABORATION BY ANNUAL BUDGET

Annual budget, with the implied increases in staff and infrastructure in tandem with the increases in budget size, had a significant effect on collaborative activities.

Fifty-eight percent of GS organizations with budgets of \$25,000,000 or more participated in collaborative grantseeking in the last six months of 2017. In comparison, 17% to 44% of GS organizations with budgets under \$25,000,000 participated in collaborative grantseeking during this period.



Of those organizations that did submit a collaborative application, larger organizations more frequently reported winning an award. The response “unsure” may reflect submitted applications for which award decisions were still pending at the time of the survey.



RESPONDENT COMMENTARY

As always, we asked survey respondents to share their experiences, expertise, and opinions. Overall, there were many similarities in the comments of respondents from organizations of all sizes, and from both those who participated in collaborative grantseeking and those who did not. Many comments focused on the additional staff and time required to manage collaborative grantseeking. Some pointed out the issues with funder requirements, and some questioned the cost versus the benefit.

A SAMPLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM RESPONDENTS WHO PARTICIPATED IN COLLABORATIVE GRANTSEEKING FOLLOWS:

Small Organizations

- I feel it is incredibly beneficial and helps the grantmaker aid more people through one gift.
- Collaboration is the best way to secure funding at the state, city, and federal level.
- I heard from one source that it is supposed to boost your chances of getting a grant. I find it bothersome.
- When it's meaningful and inclusive, working together is in itself part of the solution to social change. But bad partnering can squash a smaller or culturally specific organization. More training and deep technical assistance is needed in collaborations.
- It helps organizations develop strong community partners, which will aid in their work if they do not already have those partnerships in place. This is also good for grant funders as having collaborations already in place is a good indicator of an organization that has support and ties in the community.

Medium Organizations

- This is the way to go if funding is to be obtained from many donors because the collaborators have unique skills to add to proposal development and financial management.
- Someone needs to be responsible. One organization needs to own the process of grantseeking, with both reviewing the application. Collaboration only works if there are individual responsibilities outlined.
- Grant administration, or the fair and equitable distribution of any award, is a challenge, but not insurmountable. It seems most grantmakers are interested in collaboration, but not necessarily supporting an infrastructure of true collaboration.
- It's an excellent opportunity. Combined, the organizations are positioned to reach a larger geographic area and many more partners.
- Collaboration makes us more competitive for grants but it also makes the grantwriting and application process much more challenging. Therefore, we are able to apply for fewer collaborative grants overall.

Large Organizations

- Funders don't realize the challenges when they require it without any means of sustaining the partnership or at least giving equal funding to partners. The power imbalance is hard to navigate. Our organization has been burned more than once.
- It's a powerful way to leverage expertise and resources for impact.
- If we pinpoint an unmet need for services, and collaboration is the most beneficial way to serve that unmet need, then it is usually a positive experience.

- They can be a fine thing when they are not pushed on us by the foundation(s). Otherwise, it can feel like the foundation is creating more work for us so they can spread the funds in a way that is better for their bottom line.
- When we know and trust the partners, it's powerful. When we are getting to know someone at the same time that we are seeking a joint grant, it is often frustrating.

Very Large Organizations

- I like it as an option, not as a requirement for funding. Grantmakers have no idea the strain they put on nonprofits when forcing collaborations that don't fit or make sense, or when their definition of collaboration doesn't match ours.
- I think it shows funders a greater level of commitment to the project, and that multiple agencies are contributing and potentially leveraging non-grant resources to support the program.
- I think it's critical. Funders want return on investment, and collaboration deepens impact.
- It's wonderful, as it opens the doors to more opportunity and broadens our knowledge in new areas.
- Collaborations can be beneficial in terms of increased services and reach to target populations, but they often put a strain on staff to manage.

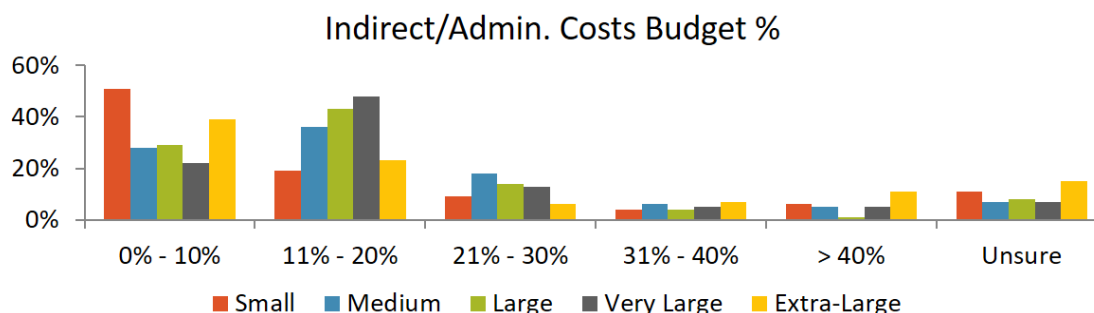
Extra-Large Organizations

- I am open to the concept. In practice, it becomes challenging to coordinate the varied goals, objectives, timelines, and commitment among multiple organizations.
- Collaboration increases efficiency and streamlines service delivery.
- I think it can be very important; however, it takes a lot of upfront work for smooth implementation.
- When seeking support, multiple organizations working collaboratively on a single program might appear as a stronger program with greater reach for the grantor.
- Collaboration is a wonderful way to increase the impact of funding. However, when collaborations are only created to apply for funding, they can result in a tangled mess or misunderstanding between organizations.

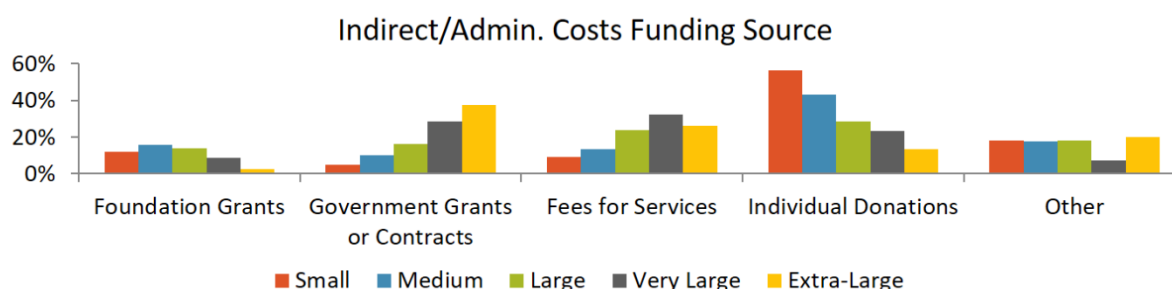
INDIRECT/ADMINISTRATIVE COSTS AND FUNDING

Sixty-eight percent of GS Members reported that indirect/administrative costs comprised 20% or less of their annual budget.

By budget range, indirect/administrative costs comprised 20% or less of the annual budget for 70% of small GS organizations, 64% of medium GS organizations, 72% of large GS organizations, 70% of very large GS organizations, and 62% of extra-large GS organizations.



The most frequent source of indirect/administrative funding for GS Members was individual donations (38%).



By budget range, individual donations were the most frequent source of indirect/administrative funding for 56% of small GS organizations, 43% of medium GS organizations, 28% of large GS organizations, 23% of very large GS organizations, and 13% of extra-large GS organizations.

Five percent of small GS organizations reported that government grants or contracts were the most frequent source of indirect/administrative funding, compared to 10% of medium GS organizations, 16% of large GS organizations, 28% of very large GS organizations, and 38% of extra-large GS organizations.

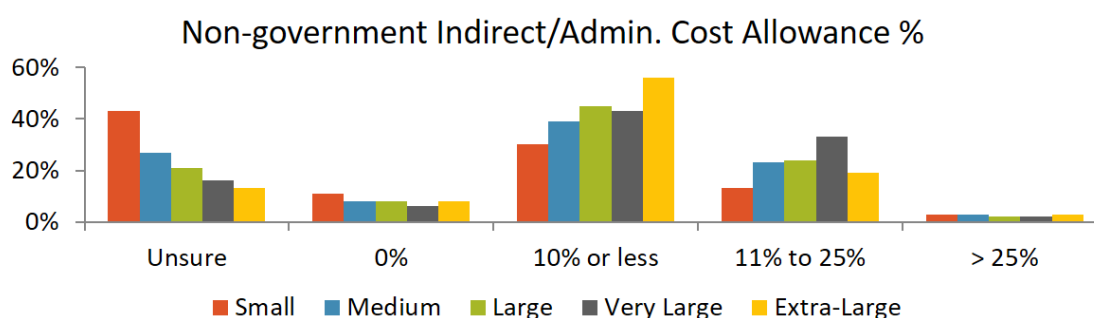
Other sources of funding included taxes, tuition, endowments, operating revenue, service fees, and general funds.

INDIRECT/ADMINISTRATIVE COST FUNDING LIMITATIONS

Non-government funders allowed 10% or less of award funding for indirect/administrative costs for 30% of small GS organizations, 39% of medium GS organizations, 45% of large GS organizations, 43% of very large GS organizations, and 56% of extra-large GS organizations.

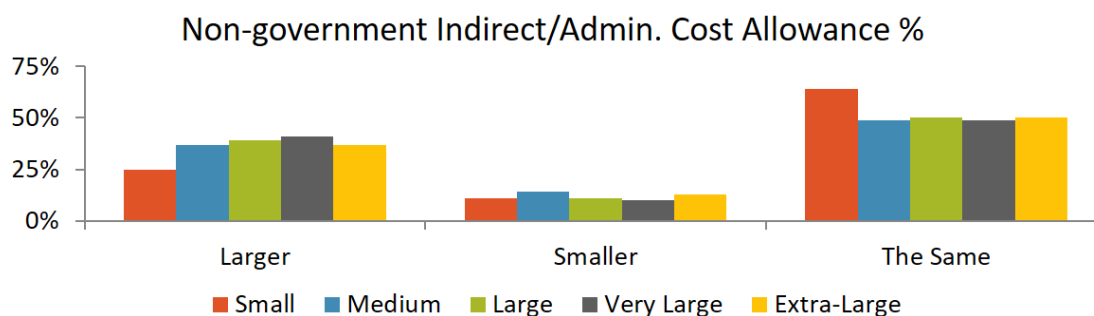
Among GS Members, non-government funders allowed 11% to 25% of an award for indirect/administrative costs for 13% of small organizations, 23% of medium organizations, 24% of large organizations, 33% of very large organizations, and 19% of extra-large organizations.

Smaller GS organizations were more frequently unsure as to the indirect/administrative cost allowance than were larger GS organizations.



INDIRECT/ADMINISTRATIVE COST TRENDS

Most GS Members reported that their costs remained the same. However, indirect/administrative costs increased for 25% of small GS organizations, 37% of medium GS organizations, 39% of large GS organizations, 41% of very large GS organizations, and 37% of extra-large GS organizations. Indirect/administrative costs decreased for only 11% to 14% of GS organizations by budget range.



INDIRECT/ADMINISTRATIVE COST CONTROLS

GS Members were asked, “How did you reduce your indirect/administrative costs?” Over half of all GS respondents (56%) reported that they had reduced indirect/administrative costs by eliminating staff, while 31% reported increased reliance on volunteer labor.

By budget size, more than half of GS Members in medium (52%), large (67%), very large (100%), and extra-large (79%) organizations reported that they reduced indirect/administrative costs by eliminating staff, while 58% of small organizations increased their reliance on volunteer labor.

Cost reduction techniques, by budget size, are as follows:

Reduction Technique	Small Budget	Medium Budget	Large Budget	Very Large Budget	Extra-Large Budget
Reduced services/programs offered	8%	20%	26%	14%	29%
Reduced organization hours	4%	14%	5%	0%	7%
Reduced organization geographic scope	4%	6%	13%	0%	7%
Reduced staff salaries	19%	14%	13%	14%	0%
Reduced number of staff	27%	52%	67%	100%	79%
Reduced staff hours	12%	22%	15%	29%	21%
Increased reliance on volunteer labor	58%	38%	15%	0%	7%
Buying groups/economy of scale	8%	5%	13%	14%	14%
Space/location sharing	12%	9%	13%	0%	29%

RESPONDENT COMMENTARY

We asked GS Members to share their experiences, expertise, and opinions about how their organizations reduced administrative costs. Overall, there were many similarities in the comments of respondents from organizations of all sizes; many comments focused on the elimination of staff.

A SAMPLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM GS MEMBERS ON ADMINISTRATIVE COST REDUCTION FOLLOWS:

Small Organizations

- All of our help is 100% volunteer. We know that cannot continue with the amount of services needing to be provided.
- All administrative affiliates are volunteer, so we can manage administrative costs.
- Because we knew we had not received the funding, we reduced operating costs such as printing and paper as much as possible.

Medium Organizations

- We are cutting the very little fat we have by not taking part in as many professional development opportunities, not travelling to conferences, and working to streamline our travel to and from conservation properties. We are also in a transitional period seeking a new executive director, which has wildly skewed our budget numbers from "normal" years.
- We did not fill a position vacated by an employee who went away to school. Instead, we hired several interns, which was time-consuming.

- We adjust our administrative expenses based on grants that come in when we can, although increased staff will ultimately be the main way that we can raise more money.

Large Organizations

- Administrators now perform multiple functions, including HR, accounting, legal, IT, and even data processing and some building cleaning and maintenance. Administrators now work six to seven days.
- We moved to a sublease so our rent went up about 15% as compared to the 70% increase we would have had if we had renewed our lease. We realigned service delivery for more efficiency, reducing staffing needs.
- We reduced the size of our physical office space, moved to reduce rent, and reduced staff.

Very Large Organizations

- Our organization has reduced the number of people working in support/administrative positions.
- We share IT support, marketing, and payroll functions with two other organizations in our city.
- We reduced costs by offering no annual wage increases and freezing all wages.

Extra-Large Organizations

- We previously had multiple layers of administrative entities. We have downsized both our programming and administrative layers.
- The college received reduced state funding, so open positions were held open longer or went unfilled, and other administrative efficiencies were sought.
- Staff are leaving due to the high cost of living and they are not replaced.

CHALLENGES TO GRANTSEEKING

We asked, “What, in your opinion, is the greatest challenge to successful grantseeking?” Among all GS Members, 20% reported grantseeking’s greatest challenge as the lack of time and staff for grantseeking activities.

However, by budget range, small (24%) and medium (23%) GS organizations reported the challenge of a lack of time and staff more frequently than did large (16%), very large (18%), or extra-large (11%) GS organizations.

The challenge of reduced funding was most frequently reported by extra-large GS organizations (23%), and increased as a challenge in proportion to budget size. The challenge of increased competition was most frequently reported by very large GS organizations (22%).

By budget range, challenges to grantseeking were reported as follows:

Grantseeking Challenge	Small Budget	Medium Budget	Large Budget	Very Large Budget	Extra-Large Budget
Competition	8%	12%	14%	22%	13%
Reduced funding	2%	6%	9%	12%	23%
Economic conditions	4%	5%	7%	5%	8%
Funder practices and requirements	8%	14%	16%	14%	14%
Internal organizational issues	4%	3%	5%	6%	11%
Lack of time and/or staff	24%	23%	16%	18%	11%
Need for a grantwriter	11%	7%	4%	2%	4%
Relationship building with funders	8%	8%	13%	8%	6%
Research, finding grants	17%	14%	10%	8%	3%
Writing grants	9%	3%	2%	2%	0%
Other	6%	5%	4%	2%	6%

RESPONDENT COMMENTARY SUMMARY

The majority of GS Members shared their frustration with the fact that more responsibilities were placed on fewer staff members, resulting in little time to devote to grantseeking. This lack of time and staff increases the perception that funder practices are arduous, and adds to the sense of disconnect between organizations and funders, the government, and the community as a whole. Many GS Members across all budget ranges and focus areas stated that there was limited funding for their specific mission, and many GS Members told us that there is a greater need for non-restricted funding, regardless of mission focus. Some GS Members also referenced the changing political landscape and the proposed state and Federal funding reductions and resulting confusion in grant opportunities.

A SAMPLE OF REPRESENTATIVE COMMENTS FROM GS MEMBERS ON GRANTSEEKING CHALLENGES FOLLOWS:

Small Organizations

- The challenge that our organization faces is multiple organizations applying for the same pot of money. Most of the available grants go to the same organizations over and over again. Unless you are included in this organization's focus/interest, your chances of receiving those grants from these entities are few and far between.
- We are a very small organization of volunteers with other full-time jobs. Finding time to write these has become challenging.
- Many funders do not support small organizations to develop infrastructure to assist in building capacity to reach the nonprofit's mission. Large foundations want to fund only very narrow areas of interest.

Medium Organizations

- Our greatest need is for general operating costs (salaries), and most grants available are for specific programs. Little to no funding is available for staff salaries, particularly for religious organizations.
- We seem to lose as many funders in a year as we gain. We are focused on increasing our new funders to keep pace with who drops off and strive to acquire more funders than those who discontinue funding.
- Most support is for project specific staff. With limited institutional support for administrative and managerial staff, it is difficult to dedicate time to fundraising. Our director spends a great deal of time building relationships with donors, which is very helpful for identifying potential grants. However, this takes him away from other institutional and project responsibilities, and we still have limited staff time/capacity to write grant proposals.

Large Organizations

- Corporations have reduced giving or give only in narrow bands (e.g. STEM, not 'education').
- Our small staff is wearing multiple hats, busy doing the work to achieve outcomes. We need to build capacity, without increasing the budget.
- I've been doing grants for ten years and I feel like the funder relationship is the key to getting funding, but there is very little in the way of training or mentorship for helping grant managers develop those relationships.

Very Large Organizations

- Funders need to be more accessible and more transparent about their practices (as they ask of us). Funders need to make the process easier. Why ask the same budget questions year over year when you already have the information? Just ask if there are significant changes. Also, if you ask a nonprofit to put in the hours to fill out a lengthy application year after year (some are ridiculously long and repetitive), then I expect you to put in the hours to actually read what I wrote

or to actually get to know my organization and come for a visit when I've asked every year. It's insulting when you realize they didn't actually read your details or know the scope of your work. Finally, the insistence of funders to fund projects and not general funding is outdated and needs to be challenged more. I wish more grantmakers would positively influence each other on the importance of general funding.

- Many of the above apply. There are fewer local dollars available, tighter requirements, a lack of staff time for planning proposals, and more competition. They want new, innovative ideas but we are asked to show how they are research based and securely sustainable.
- Sometimes the guidelines and constraints for the organizations make it feel as though the funder doesn't really want to be in the grantmaking business! Open doors, open ears, and open hearts are what make partnerships between grantors and grantees.

Extra-Large Organizations

- Our organization has 28+ separate programs and a \$38 million annual operating budget. Normally, we have two grantwriters, but for the past six months, we've only had one grantwriter. This is a challenge to continuing to submit the same level/quantity of proposals as we have in the past. Grantwriting has had to take priority over relationship building with funders.
- Overcommitted and overstretched staff make it difficult to retrieve needed information and internal cooperation to submit grant requests.
- The current political, economic, and environmental climate is unstable. The country is facing a total lack of leadership, even willful destruction of infrastructure and human rights at the highest level, rendering the stock market and everything else volatile. It has yet to be seen how this will affect philanthropy. Will anything trickle down? Will there be generosity toward those being persecuted and marginalized economically, racially, and by gender? It remains to be seen.

SURVEY RESPONDENTS BY BUDGET SIZE

As illustrated by the *Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Survey* results, organizational size determined by annual budget is the greatest factor influencing the grantseeking experience. Annual budget size generally defines the demographic characteristics of an organization, including staff size and organizational age.

It is interesting to note the growth in organizational capacity and sustainability as defined by age, staff size, respondent role, and grantseeker role. For example, 58% of small GS organizations relied on volunteers or board members to manage grantseeking responsibilities, while 91% of extra-large GS organizations had staff members to manage grantseeking.

The following are typical organizations from each annual budget range.

SMALL ORGANIZATIONS - ANNUAL BUDGETS UNDER \$100,000:

Organizations with small budgets comprised 18% of GS respondents; the median annual budget reported was \$48,000. Sixty-two percent of respondents from small GS organizations were directly associated with their organizations at an executive level. Nonprofit organizations comprised 95% of small GS organizations. Fifty-two percent of small GS organizations were staffed by volunteers, while 26% employed less than one full-time equivalent and 21% employed one to five people. Volunteers (23%), staff members (27%), and board members (35%) held grantseeking responsibilities. Most small GS organizations were one to five years old (30%), six to ten years old (23%), or 11 to 25 years old (24%). Forty percent were located in a mix of service area types (rural, suburban, and urban), while 23% were in suburban service areas, and 20% were in urban service areas. The most frequent geographic service reach for small GS organizations was multi-county (18%) or one state (16%). Human Services (14%), Arts, Culture, and Humanities (13%), and Education (13%) were the most frequently reported mission focuses. Forty-seven percent of these organizations reported a service population comprised of over 50% individuals/families at or below the poverty level.

MEDIUM ORGANIZATIONS - ANNUAL BUDGETS BETWEEN \$100,000 AND \$999,999:

Organizations with medium budgets comprised 39% of GS respondents; the median annual budget reported was \$354,000. Sixty-eight percent of respondents from medium GS organizations were directly associated with their organizations at an executive level. Nonprofit organizations comprised 94% of medium GS organizations. Fifty-seven percent of medium GS organizations employed one to five people, while 20% employed six to ten people. Staff members (75%) held grantseeking responsibilities. Most medium GS organizations were 11 to 25 years old (31%) or 26 to 50 years old (30%). Forty-one percent were located in a mix of service area types (rural, suburban, and urban) and 27% were located in urban service areas. The most frequent geographic service reach for medium organizations was multi-county (27%) or one county (16%). Human Services (24%), Arts, Culture, and Humanities (15%), and Youth Development (10%) were the most frequently reported mission focuses. Forty-eight percent of these organizations reported a service population comprised of over 50% individuals/families at or below the poverty level.

LARGE ORGANIZATIONS - ANNUAL BUDGETS BETWEEN \$1,000,000 AND \$9,999,999:

Organizations with large budgets comprised 28% of GS respondents; the median annual budget reported was \$2,500,000. Forty-six percent of respondents from large GS organizations were directly associated with their organizations at an executive level and 41% were associated with their organizations at an employee level. Nonprofit organizations comprised 89% of large GS organizations and educational institutions comprised 7% (of those, 50% were K-12 schools and 50% were colleges or universities). Thirty percent of large GS organizations employed between 11 and 25 people, while 35% employed between 26 and 75 people. Staff members (86%) held grantseeking responsibilities. Most large GS organizations were 11 to 25 years old (21%), 26 to 50 years old (45%), or 51 to 100 years old (19%). Forty-nine percent were located in a mix of service area types (rural, suburban, and urban), and 34% were located in urban service areas. The most frequent geographic service reach for large GS organizations was multi-county (33%) or one county (15%). Human Services (32%), Education (13%), and Healthcare (10%) were the most frequently reported mission focuses. Fifty-nine percent of these organizations reported a service population comprised of over 50% individuals/families at or below the poverty level.

VERY LARGE ORGANIZATIONS - ANNUAL BUDGETS BETWEEN \$10,000,000 AND \$24,999,999:

Organizations with very large budgets comprised 6% of GS respondents; the median annual budget reported was \$14,200,000. Sixty-two percent of respondents from very large GS organizations were directly associated with their organizations at an employee level, and 33% were associated with their organizations at an executive level. Nonprofit organizations comprised 86% of very large GS organizations, and educational institutions comprised 8% (of those, 100% were colleges or universities). Twenty-one percent of very large GS organizations employed between 76 and 125 people, while 34% employed between 126 and 200 people, and 27% employed over 200 people. Staff members (95%) held grantseeking responsibilities. Most very large GS organizations were 26 to 50 years old (39%) or 51 to 100 years old (32%). Twenty-five percent were over 100 years old. Forty-seven percent of these organizations were located in a mix of service area types (rural, suburban, and urban) and 34% were located in urban service areas. The most frequent geographic service reach for very large GS organizations was multi-county (33%) or multi-state (17%). Human Services (40%), Education (11%), and Healthcare (9%) were the most frequently reported mission focuses. Sixty-two percent of these organizations reported a service population comprised of over 50% individuals/families at or below the poverty level.

EXTRA-LARGE ORGANIZATIONS - ANNUAL BUDGETS OF \$25,000,000 AND OVER:

Organizations with extra-large budgets comprised 9% of GS respondents; the median annual budget reported was \$67,000,000. Fifty-six percent of respondents from extra-large GS organizations were directly associated with their organizations at an employee level, and 29% were associated with their organizations at an executive level. Extra-large GS organizations were mainly comprised of nonprofit organizations (54%), educational institutions (24%), and government or tribal agencies (17%). Colleges or universities comprised 73% of respondents from educational institutions. Eighty-six

percent of extra-large GS organizations employed over 200 people. Staff members (91%) held grantseeking responsibilities. Most extra-large GS organizations were 26 to 50 years old (19%), 51 to 100 years old (44%), or over 100 years old (31%). Forty-six percent of these organizations were located in a mix of service area types (rural, suburban, and urban) and 37% were located in urban service areas. The most frequent geographic service reach for extra-large GS organizations was multi-county (24%) or one county (15%). Education (28%), Human Services (26%), and Healthcare (16%) were the most frequently reported mission focuses. Forty-five percent of these organizations reported a service population comprised of over 50% individuals/families at or below the poverty level.

GS MEMBER DEMOGRAPHICS



ORGANIZATIONAL AFFILIATION

Of GS respondents, 91% were directly associated with the organizations they represented as executives (55%), employees (27%), board members (6%), or volunteers (3%). Consultants (7%) and government employees (2%) comprised the remaining 9% of respondents.

TYPE OF ORGANIZATION

Most GS respondents (97%) represented nonprofit organizations (89%), educational institutions (5%), or government entities and tribal organizations (3%). The remainder (3%) included businesses and consultants. Among respondents from educational institutions, 37% represented K-12 schools and 63% represented two- or four-year colleges and universities.

ORGANIZATIONAL AGE

GS organizations ten years of age or under comprised 24% of respondents. Organizational ages from 11 to 25 years old were reported by 23% of GS respondents, while 30% reported organizational ages of 26 to 50 years. Organizations from 51 to 100 years of age comprised 15% of GS respondents, and 8% of GS respondents were from organizations over 100 years old.

ANNUAL BUDGET

GS respondent organizations reported the following annual budgets: less than \$100,000 (19%), between \$100,000 and \$499,999 (25%), between \$500,000 and \$999,999 (13%), between \$1 million and \$4,999,999 (21%), between \$5 million and \$9,999,999 (7%), between \$10 million and \$24,999,999 (6%), and \$25 million and over (9%). The median annual budget of GS respondent organizations was \$812,500.

STAFF SIZE

All-volunteer organizations comprised 11% of GS respondents. Less than one full-time equivalent employee was reported by 7% of GS respondents. One to five people were employed by 28% of GS respondent organizations. Twenty-four percent of GS organizations employed six to 25 people, while 12% employed 26 to 75 people. Eight percent of GS respondent organizations employed 76 to 200 people, and 10% employed over 200 people.

STAFF ETHNICITY

Respondents were asked, “What percentage of your organization (staff, management, and board) self-identify as persons of color?” For 41% of GS respondents, less than 10% of their organization was comprised of persons of color. GS organizations reporting 11% to 50% persons of color comprised 31% of respondents, and 17% of GS respondents were from organizations with 51% or more persons of color on their staff, management, or board. This question was not applicable for 11% of GS respondents.

PRIMARY GRANTSEEKER

Most GS respondent organizations relied on staff members (72%) to fill the role of primary grantseeker. Board members (9%), volunteers (6%), and contract grantwriters (9%) were also cited as the primary grantseeker. Four percent of GS respondent organizations were not engaged with active grantseekers.

LOCATION

Within the United States, GS respondents came from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and three territories. In addition, GS respondents from four Canadian provinces participated, and 23 GS respondents were from countries outside of the United States and Canada.

SERVICE AREA

The State of Grantseeking Report utilizes the Census Bureau’s population-based area classification. Rural service areas containing fewer than 2,500 people were reported by 9% of GS respondents. Eighteen percent of GS respondents reported cluster/suburban service areas containing between 2,500 and 50,000 people. Urban service areas containing over 50,000 people were reported by 29% of GS respondents. In addition, 44% of GS respondents reported a service area comprised of a combination of these population-defined areas.

GEOGRAPHIC REACH

Organizations with an international, continental, or global geographic reach comprised 10% of GS respondents, while organizations with a national geographic reach comprised 9%. Multi-state organizational reach was reported by 11% of GS respondents, and 12% reported an individual-state reach. A multi-county reach was reported by 27% of GS respondents, while a one-county reach was reported by 15%. Eight percent of GS respondents reported a multi-city organizational reach, while 7% reported a geographic reach within an individual city. In addition, 2% of GS respondents reported a reach comprised of other geographic or municipal divisions.

POVERTY LEVEL

Respondents were asked, “What percentage of your service recipients/clients/program participants are comprised of individuals/families at or below the poverty level?” Service to individuals or families in poverty was reported at a rate of 76% or more by 35% of GS respondents, while 17% reported serving those in poverty at a rate of 51% to 75%. Service to individuals or families in poverty at a rate of 26% to 50% was reported by 16% of GS respondents. Service to those in poverty at a rate of 11%

to 25% was reported by 14% of GS respondents, while 9% reported a service rate of 10% or less to those in poverty. This question was not applicable for 10% of GS respondents.

MISSION FOCUS

The 25 major codes (A to Y) from the NTEE Classification System, developed by the National Center for Charitable Statistics, were utilized as mission focus answer choices. Each mission focus choice had some respondents.

Almost half (49%) of GS respondent organizations reported one of three mission focuses: Human Services (25%), Education (13%), and Arts, Culture, and Humanities (11%). The next most frequent mission focus responses were Youth Development (9%), Health (7%), and Community Improvement (6%). Environment was reported by 4% of GS respondents. Housing and Shelter and Animal Related were each reported by 3% of GS respondents. Religion Related, Public Benefit, Mental Health, Employment, and Food, Agriculture, and Nutrition were each reported by 2% of GS respondents. The remaining eleven mission focuses, reported at a rate of under 2% by GS respondent organizations, were aggregated into the category of Other (9%).

METHODOLOGY

The Spring 2018 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 last six months of 2017 (July through December). For the purpose of visual brevity, response rates are rounded to the nearest whole number; totals will range from 98% to 102%.

The Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Survey was open from February 15, 2018, through March 31, 2018, and received 4,970 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 Spring 2018 State of Grantseeking™ Report* uses focused survey results, such as reports by mission focus or budget size, to provide a resource more closely matched to your specific organization.

This report was produced by [GrantStation](#), and underwritten by [Altum-PhilanTrack](#), [Foundant-GrantHub](#), the [Grant Professionals Association](#), [GrantVantage](#), and [TechSoup](#). In addition, it was 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 Spring 2018 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 $100 \times r/n$.
- Population: A collection of units being studied.

ABOUT GRANTSTATION



Serving over 30,000 individual grantseekers and hundreds of 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).



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