

# The Community Foundation

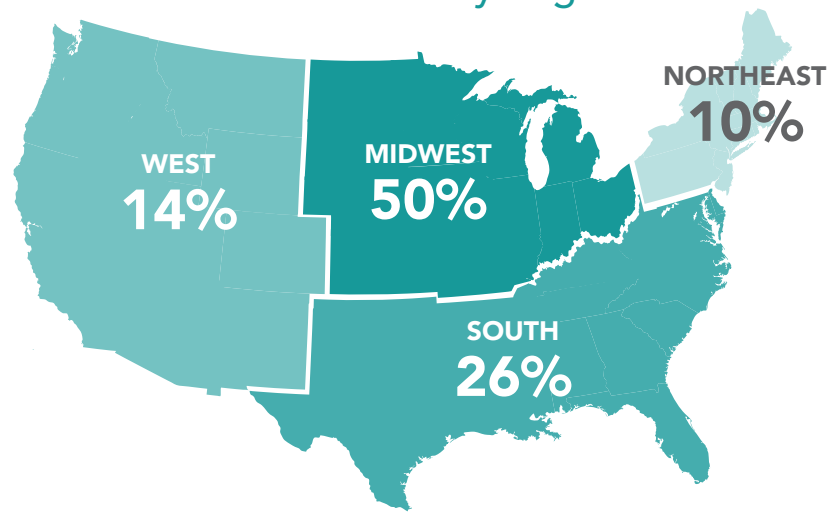
This report presents a snapshot of data on community foundation growth and related operational activity during fiscal year 2015. The findings are based on Columbus Survey responses from 271 community foundations as of May 2016, which account for over 90 percent of the field's estimated assets. We extend our thanks to all who have participated and enabled us to share these findings with the confidence that they broadly reflect the state of the field as a whole.

It's no surprise that our participating community foundations reflect a wide variety of sizes, locations, and communities served. Representation among small community foundations is strong, as is representation among those in the Midwest and Southern regions of the United States, illustrated at right and below. We'd like to extend a special thanks to the Giving Indiana Funds for Tomorrow (GIFT) initiative of the Indiana Philanthropy Alliance and the Florida Philanthropic Network for their members' robust and timely participation, which enhanced representation among these groups.

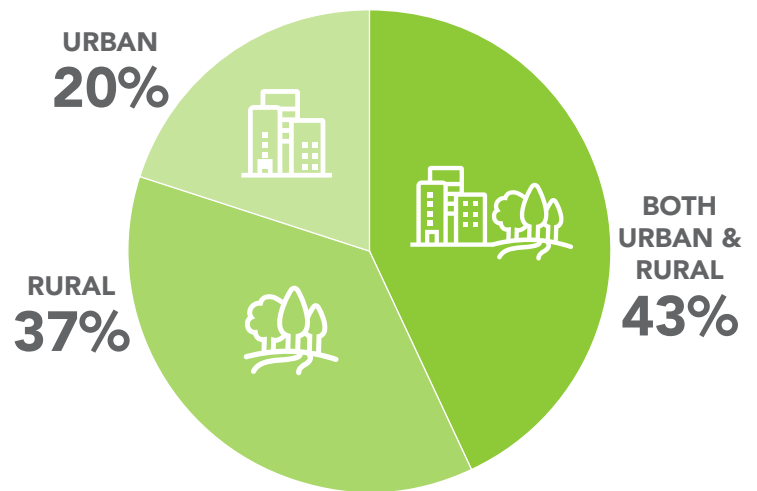
Participants interested in detailed 2015 results for their foundation using additional metrics can visit [cfinsights.org](http://cfinsights.org) to gain access to a wider range of comparative and longitudinal reports via the CF Insights database. Members of CF Insights can compare their 2015 performance, as well as performance in prior years, to custom peer groups using over 90 online reports.

For any community foundations who have not yet contributed data, you can still log on to [cfinsights.org](http://cfinsights.org) at any time to share your 2015 results, and query reports that put your foundation's performance in context. As more foundations contribute and 990s are completed, more comparative data will be available and CF Insights will continue to build on this snapshot with analyses based on the growing dataset.

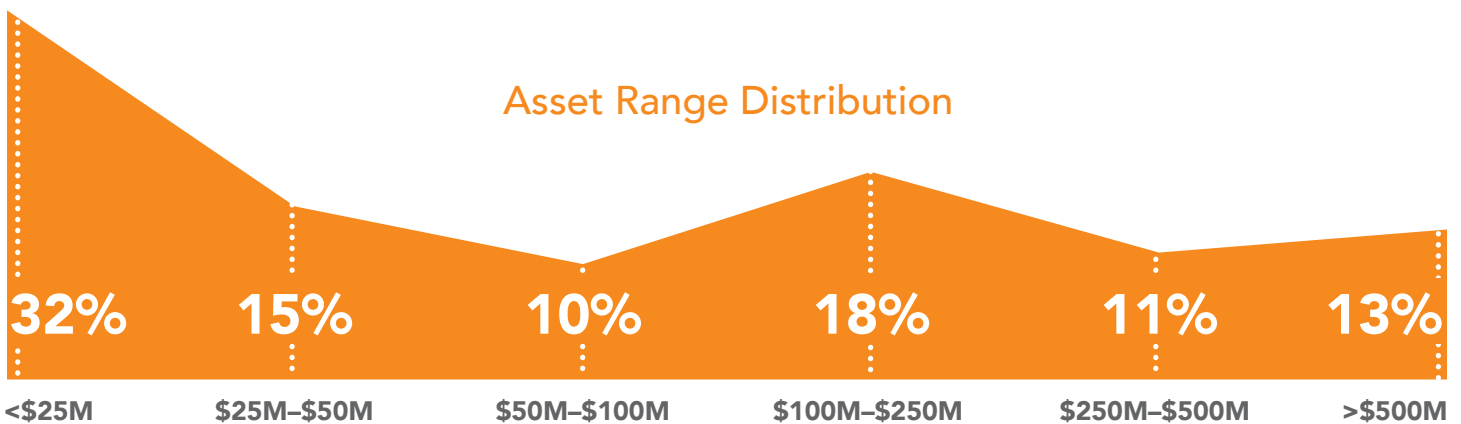
## Distribution by Region



## Service Density Distribution



## Asset Range Distribution

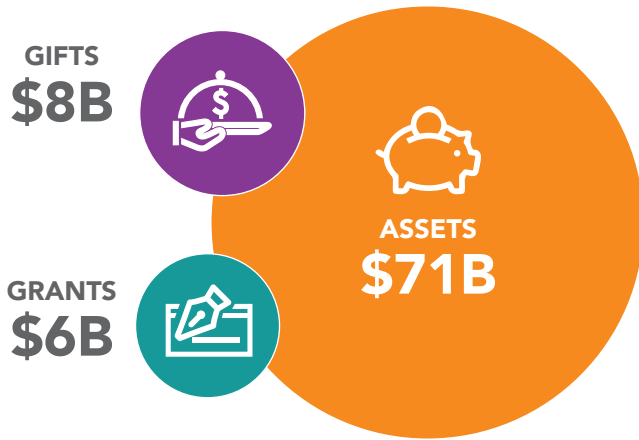


Total may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

In 2015, Columbus Survey Results show a slowdown in asset growth after several years of rapid field expansion. This could be due to several factors, not the least of which is the state of the larger economy which led to lower investment returns across the field. Still, there are positive trends in

grantmaking, led in no small part by donor-advised fund activity, as well as operating efficiency. These points and more will be illustrated and explored in the following report on the state of the community foundation field.

### Total Reported Assets, Gifts, & Grants

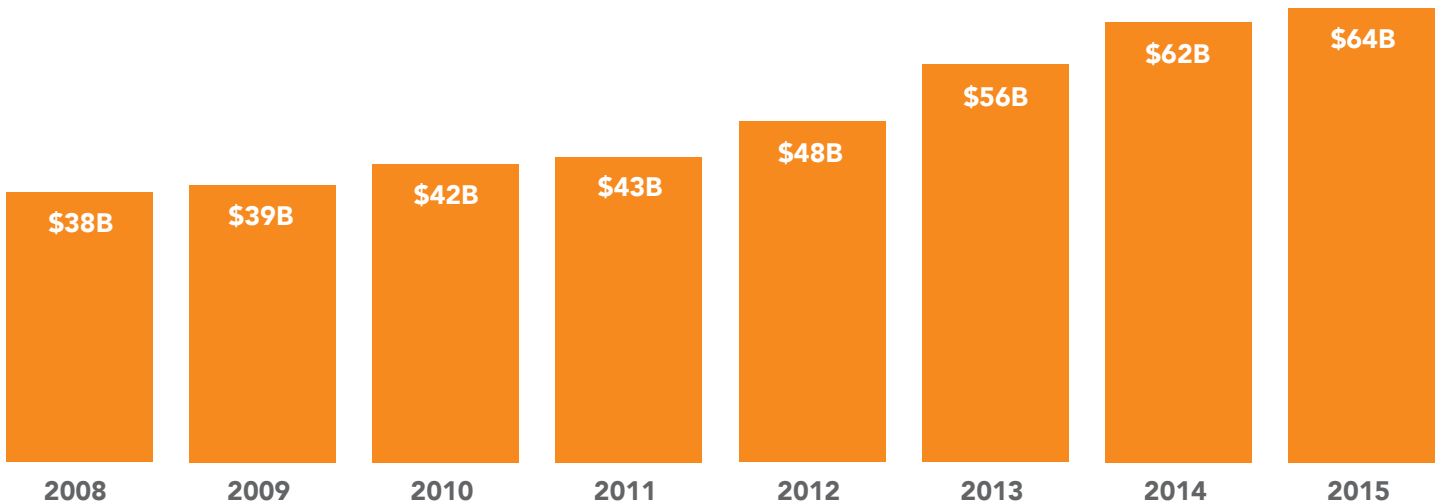


A pattern of modest asset growth emerged across the entire field compared to fiscal year 2014, regardless of asset size grouping.



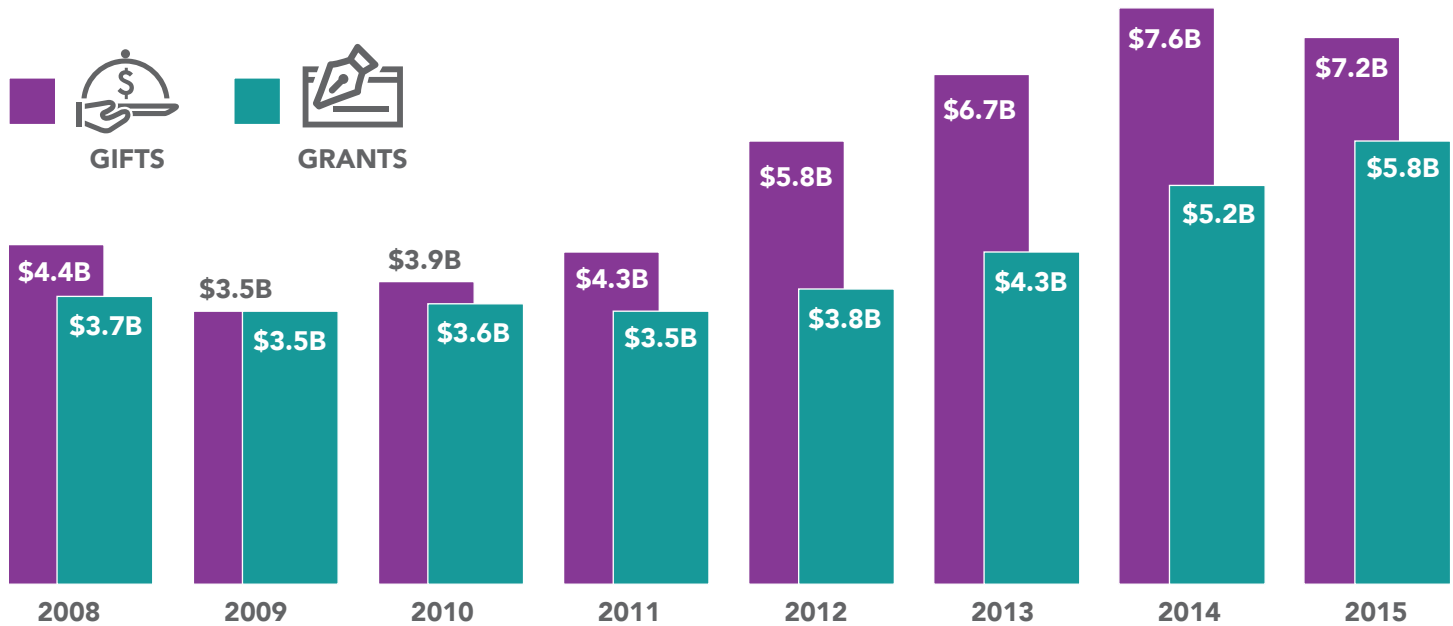
Median Change in Assets = 0.7%

Total assets for the largest 100 community foundations have grown steadily for the past several years; although, growth was flatter in 2015.



Data reflects the largest 100 community foundations by asset size as of FY 2015 and includes only those from that cohort that have data for all years represented (n=96).

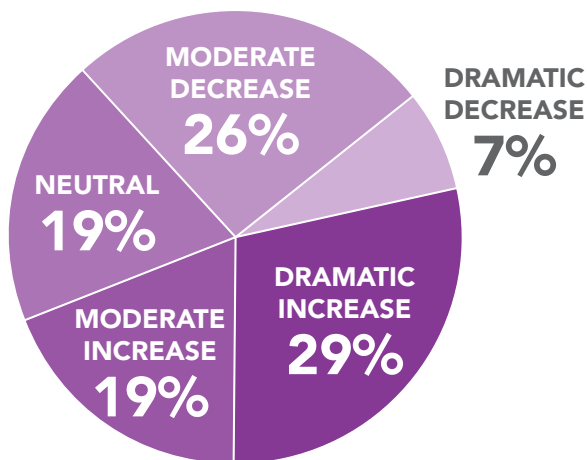
Gifts to and grants from the largest 100 community foundations show more variation than assets, with gifts actually decreasing slightly in 2015.



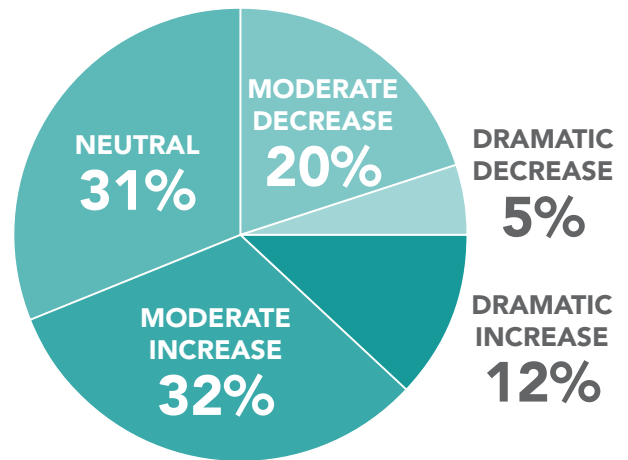
Data reflects the largest 100 community foundations by asset size as of FY 2015 and includes only those from that cohort that have data for all years represented (n=96).

Changes in gift activity can be difficult to predict year over year, reflected by the fairly even spread in respondents who experienced changes to different degrees in 2015.

Grants are predictably more stable, with over 80% of respondents experiencing only moderate changes in grantmaking from 2014 to 2015.



 Median Change in Gifts = 7.8%



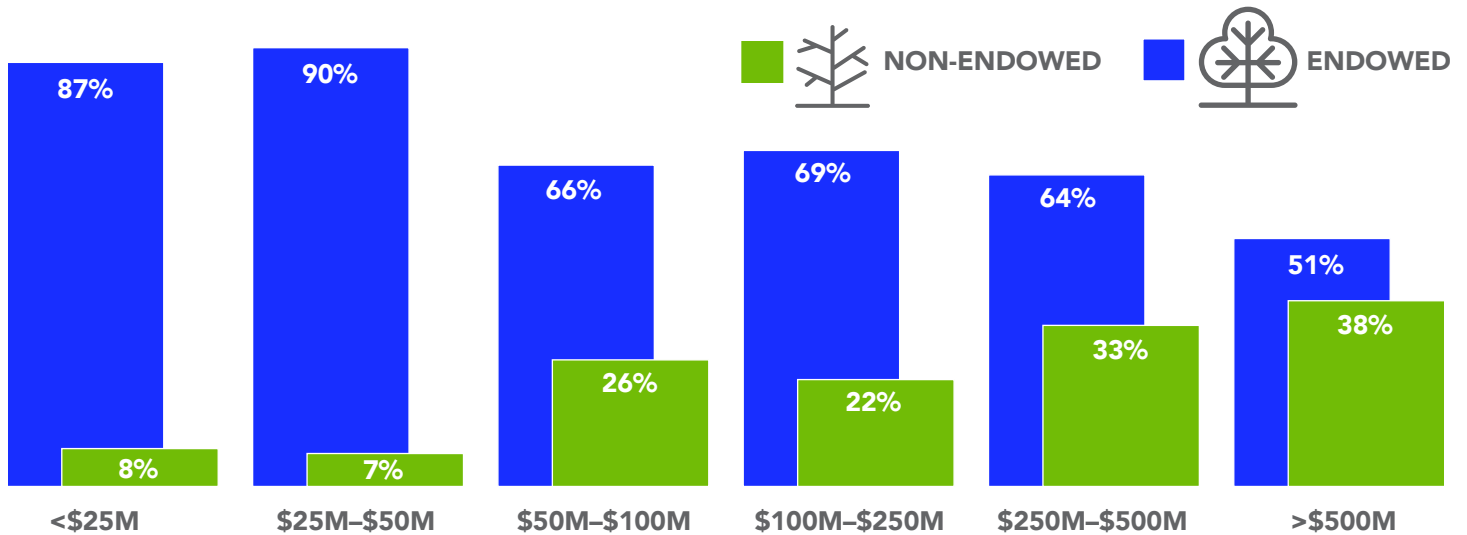
 Median Change in Grantmaking = 7.3%

Degree of change: Dramatic decrease = -50% or greater; Moderate decrease = -49% - -11%; Neutral = -10% - +10%; Moderate increase = -11% - +49%; Dramatic increase = +50% or greater

# Funds

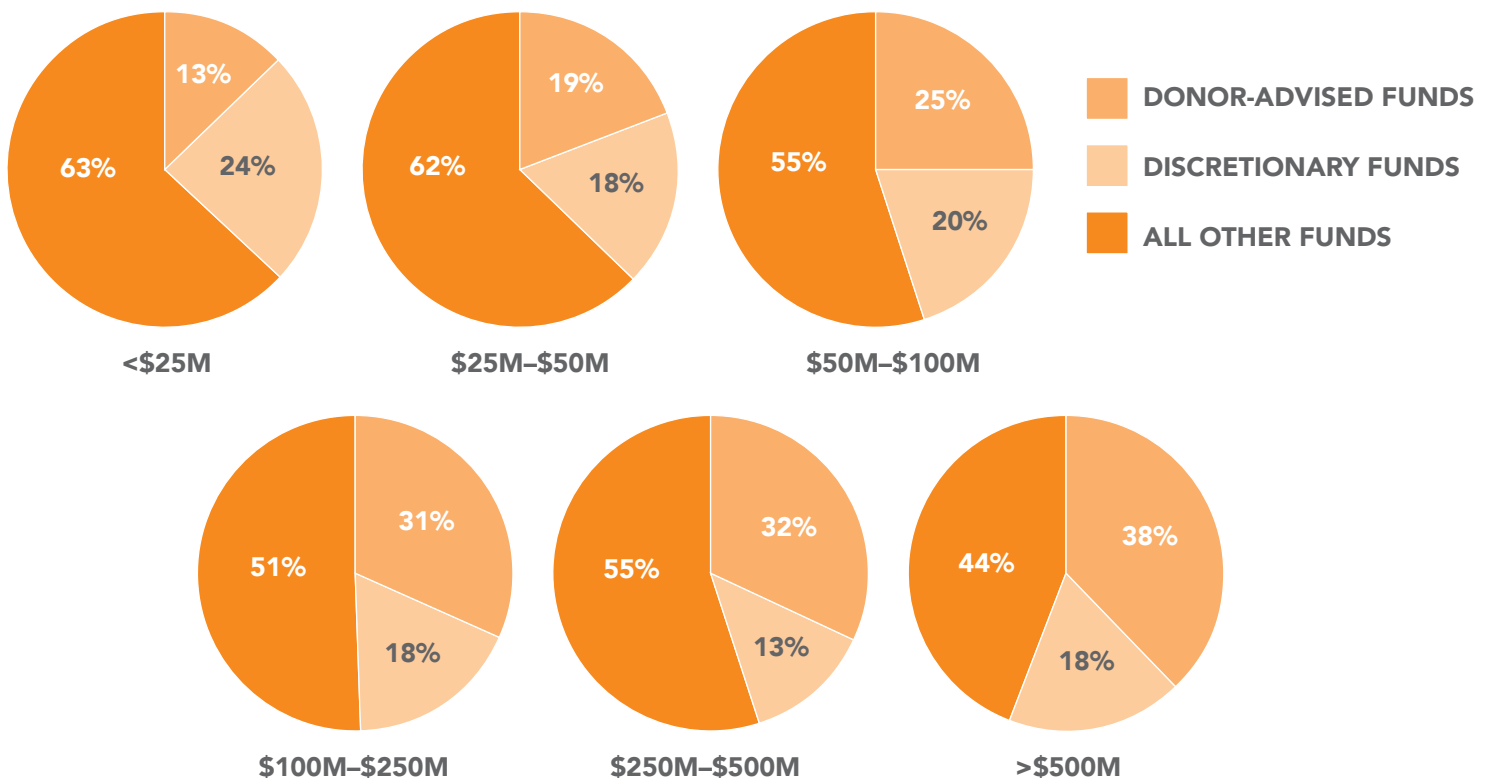
AS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION SIZE INCREASES...

...so does the percentage of non-endowed assets...



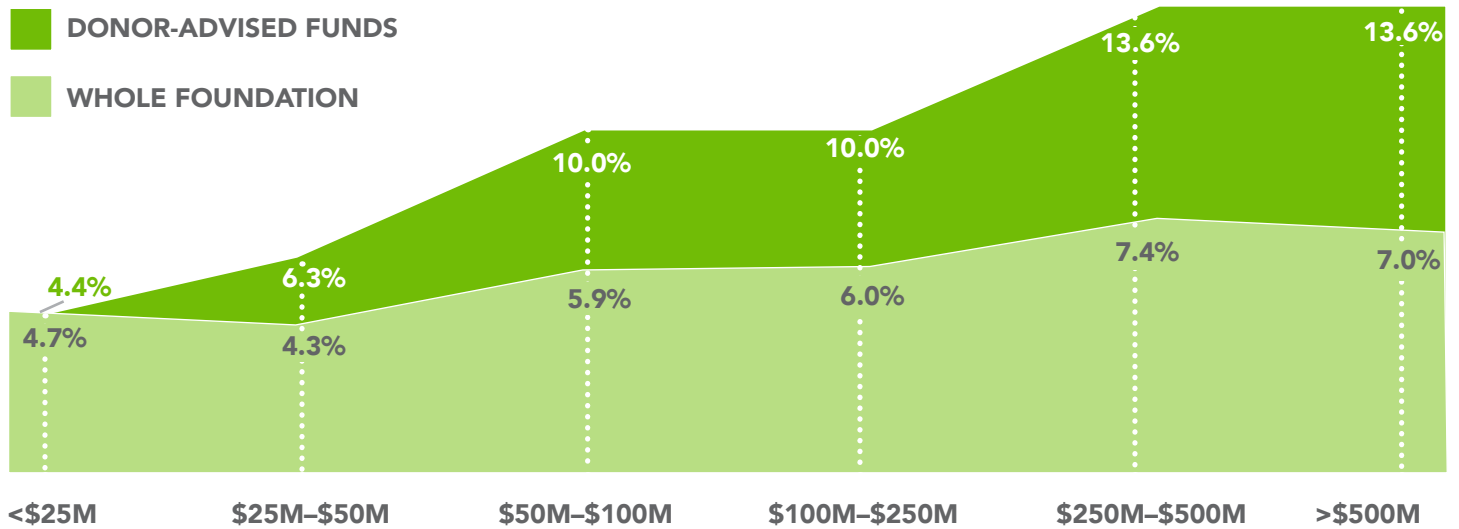
Median percentages for the proportion of assets that are endowed and non-endowed may not add up to 100% due to rounding.

...along with donor-advised fund assets...



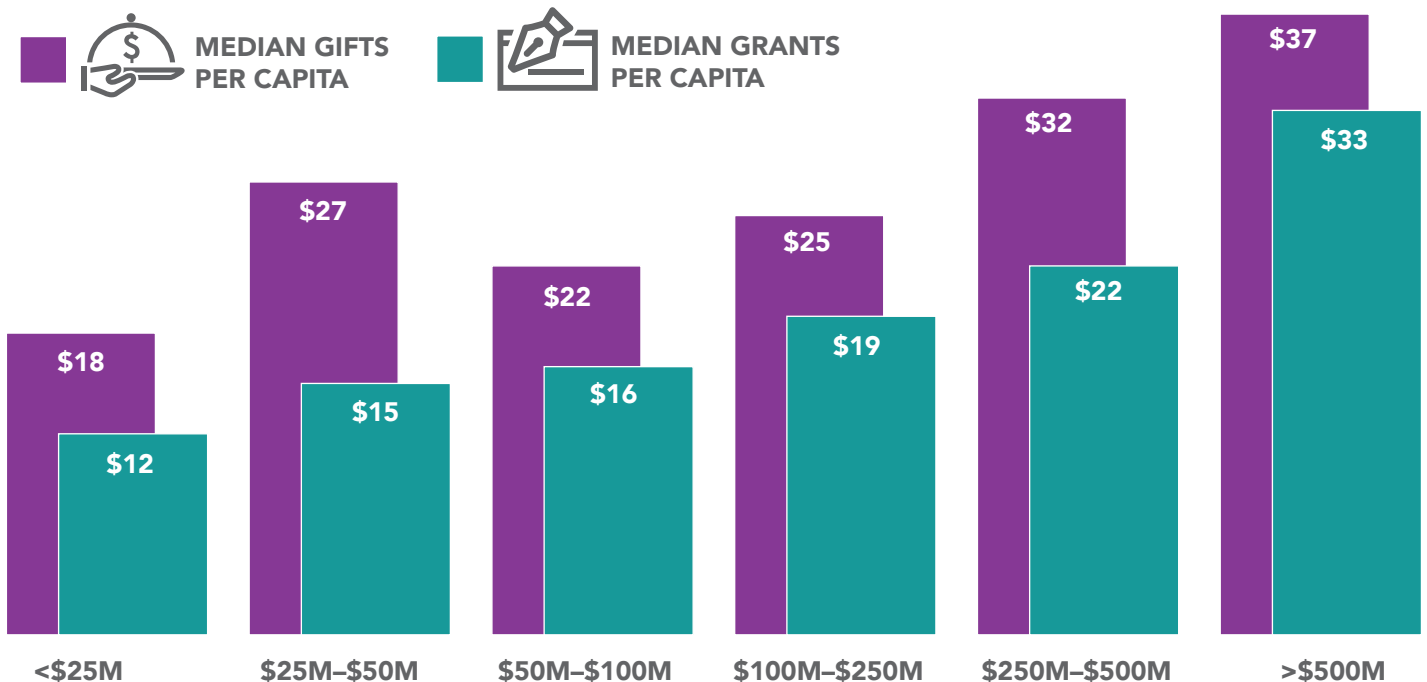
Averages were used to total 100%.

...and the distribution rates from those donor-advised funds, and other fund types to a lesser degree.



Sample sizes for DAF distribution rates are slightly smaller than for the whole foundation.

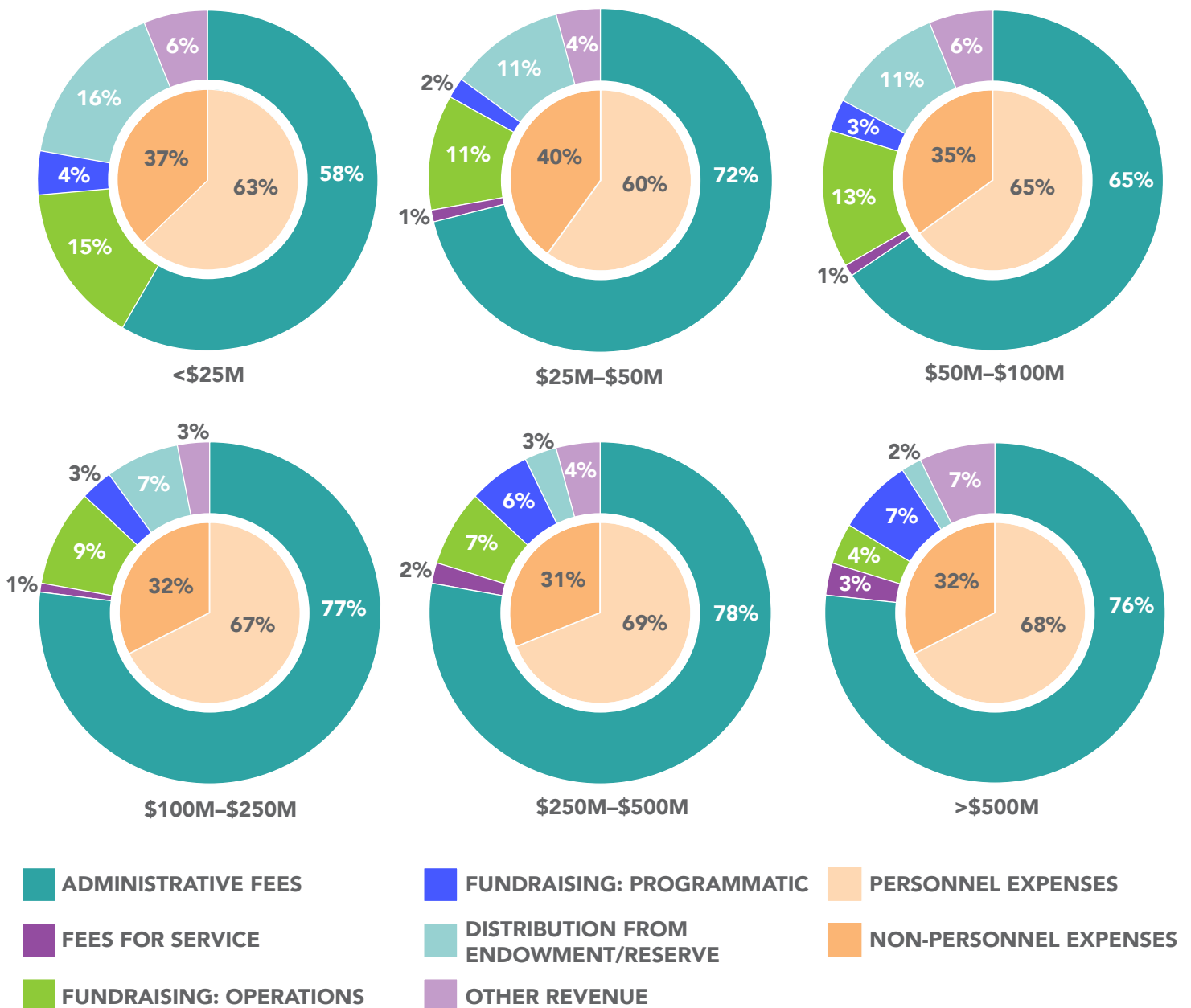
Gifts and grants increase on a per capita basis, alongside overall gift and grant totals, as asset size increases. The higher per capita gifts and grants at larger community foundations due in part to a concentration of high net worth donors in urban centers.



# Operations

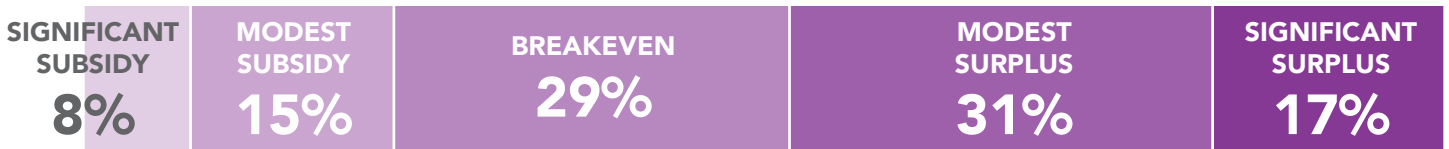
Administrative fees based on fund assets are the main revenue driver in community foundations of all sizes. However, small community foundations (assets under \$100M) rely more heavily on fundraising for operations and distributions from endowments/reserves to support operations than do larger community foundations.

The breakdown of expenses is consistent in foundations of all sizes, with staff costs accounting for about two-thirds of overall expenses.



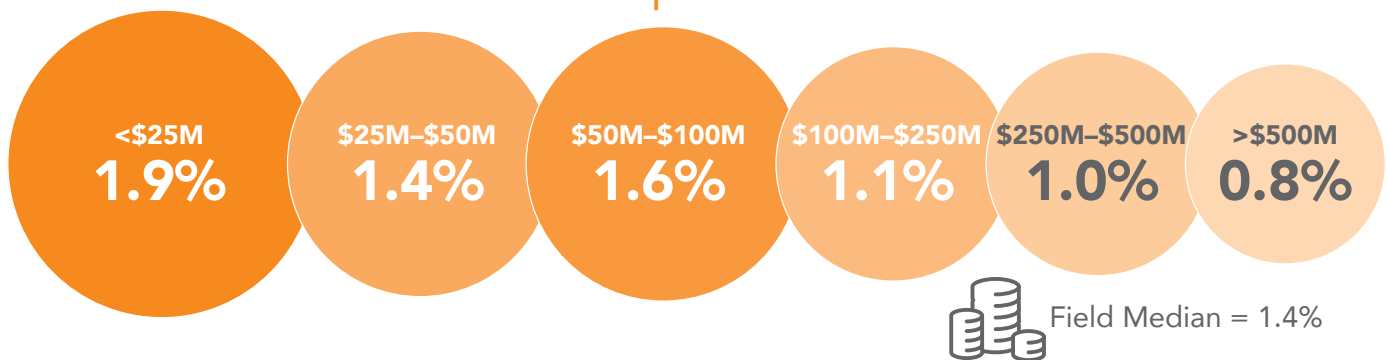
Averages were used to total 100%.

Nearly half of all community foundations generated surplus revenue in 2015, while just under one-quarter needed to subsidize operations to some degree. Unrestricted funds are commonly used to cover gaps between revenues and expenses, but this impacts a foundation’s grantmaking capacity.



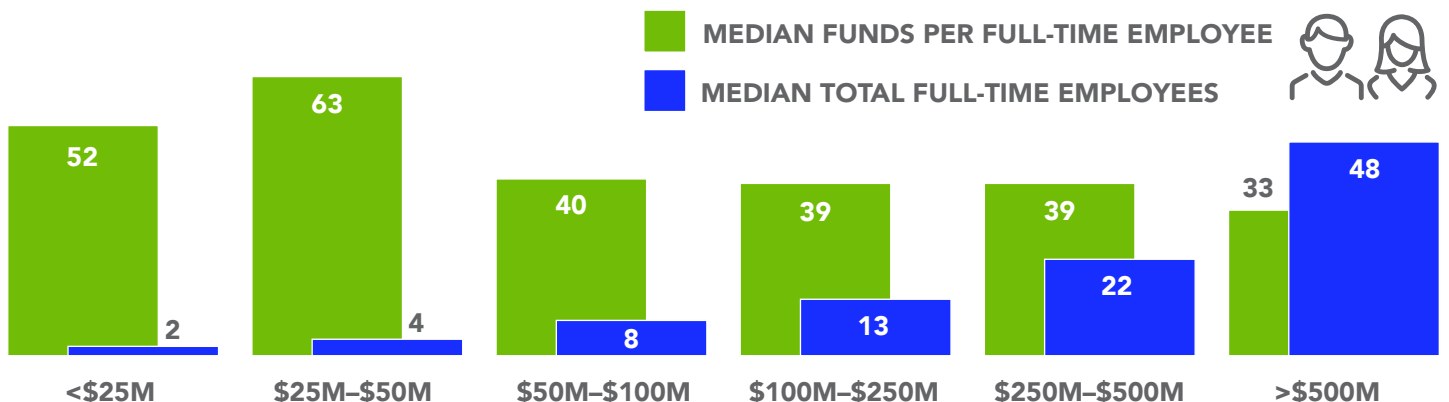
Calculated as revenues divided by expenses: Significant surplus >125%; Modest surplus = 105%-124%; Breakeven = 95%-105%; Modest subsidy = 75%-94%; Significant subsidy <75%

Economies of scale at larger community foundations allow for decreases in expense to asset ratios.



As expected, larger community foundations have more staff resources to manage increased assets and funds.

The lower number of funds managed per FTE in large community foundations reflects a combination of increased staff resources and the complexity of the foundations’ work, with larger community foundations generally offering a greater mix of traditional funds and other services.



# The idea behind CF Insights is simple: What if each community foundation could know what all community foundations collectively know?

## Created by Community Foundations

CF Insights responds to a hunger for shared knowledge and greater impact among U.S. community foundations. Community foundations grow stronger when their decisions are based on timely, accurate, and complete information. Through CF Insights, community foundations improve performance and sustainability—individually and collectively. CF Insights has operated under the auspices of Foundation Center since January 2015.

## About Foundation Center

Established in 1956, Foundation Center is the leading source of information about philanthropy worldwide. Through data, analysis, and training, it connects people who want to change the world to the resources they need to succeed. Foundation Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. and, increasingly, global grantmakers and their grants—a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit Foundation Center’s website each day and are served in its five library/learning centers and at more than 450 Funding Information Network locations nationwide and around the world.

## Acknowledgments

CF Insights would like to offer special thanks to The Columbus Foundation, which conducted the hallmark community foundation survey on behalf of the field from 1988 to 2007. We are grateful for the opportunity to now manage this important work of collecting and reporting field-wide data. We would also like to thank the Council on Foundations for encouraging their members to participate in this important annual survey and for helping to share the results with the field. In addition, a wide range of community foundations contributed data to this report. We would like to thank all Columbus Survey participants for their contributions. We especially thank CF Insights members and funders for their continued support, which makes possible the growth and development of CF Insights’ knowledge base. Finally, we would like to express profound gratitude to FSG. It’s through their tireless dedication to the development of CF Insights that has allowed it to grow into what it is today: a respected and valuable resource for the community foundation field.

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