



FUNDING THE WORK

Leah Reisman (*The Barra Foundation*)
Caitlin O'Brien (*Scattergood Foundation*)
Peter Gonzales (*Consultant*)

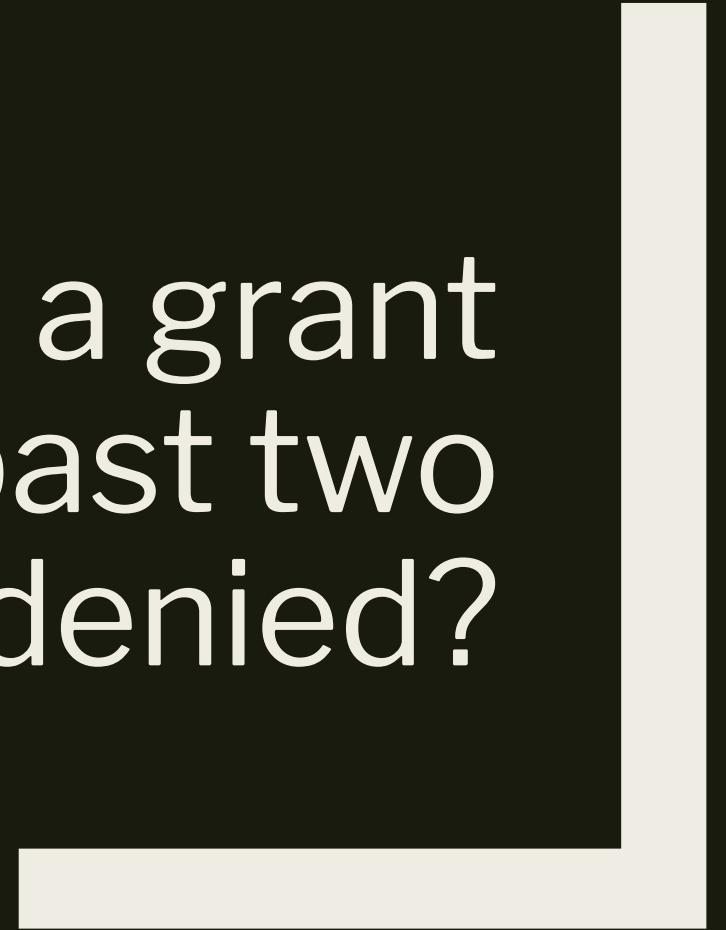
10/10/25

Agenda

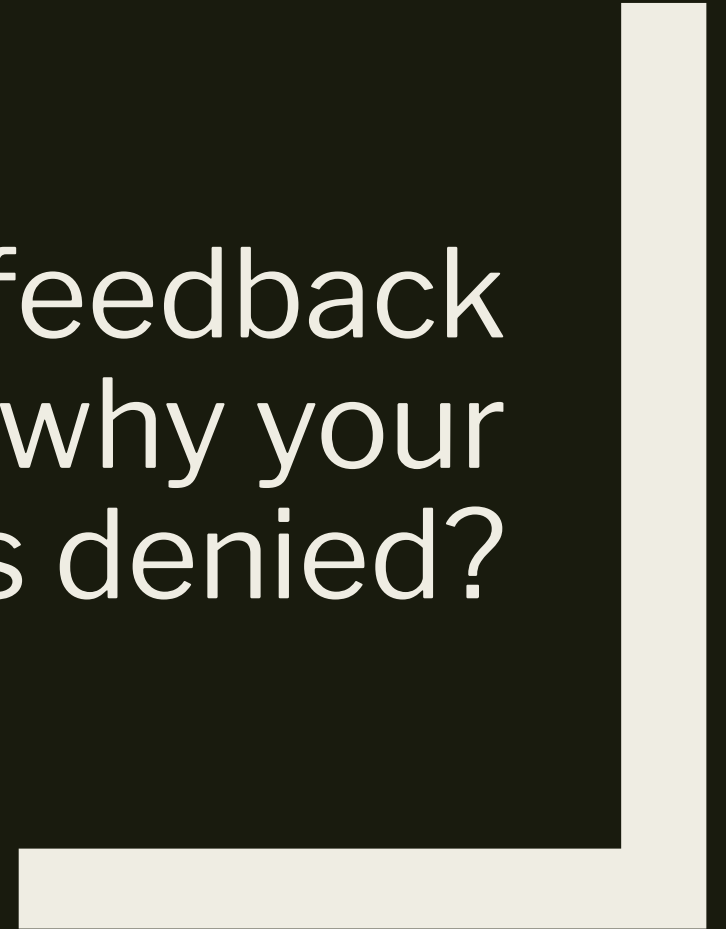
- Who funds the work?
- Typical process for grant funding
- Funder storytelling
- Managing nonprofit fundraising
- Fundraising in the now

- Questions?

Have you submitted a grant application in the past two years that was denied?



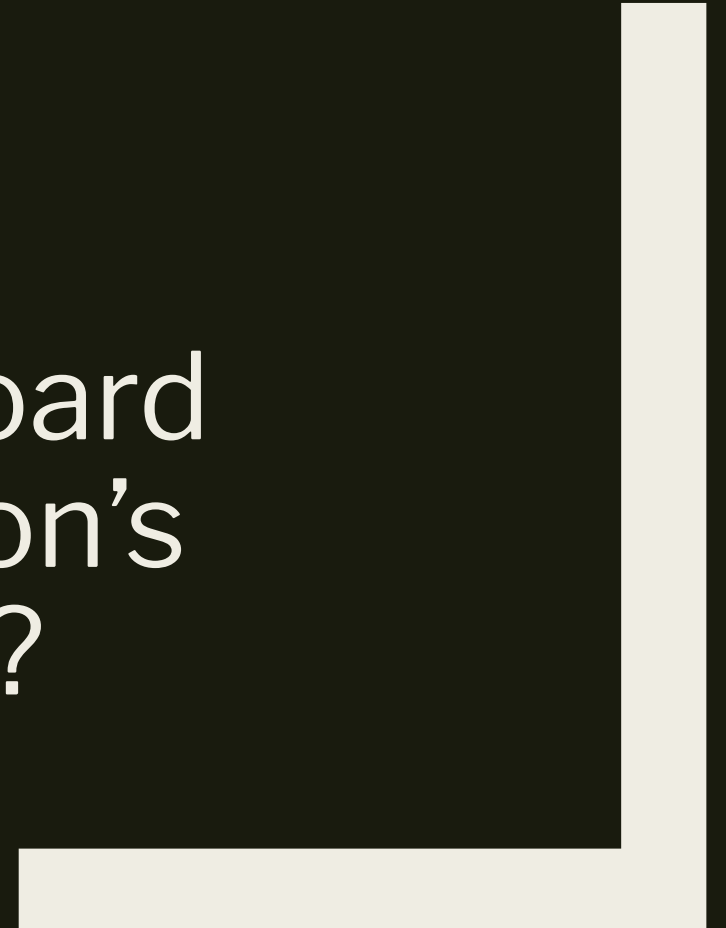
Have you ever **asked for** feedback
from a funder on why your
application was denied?



Have you ever **received**
feedback from a funder on
why your grant application
was denied?

Have you ever:

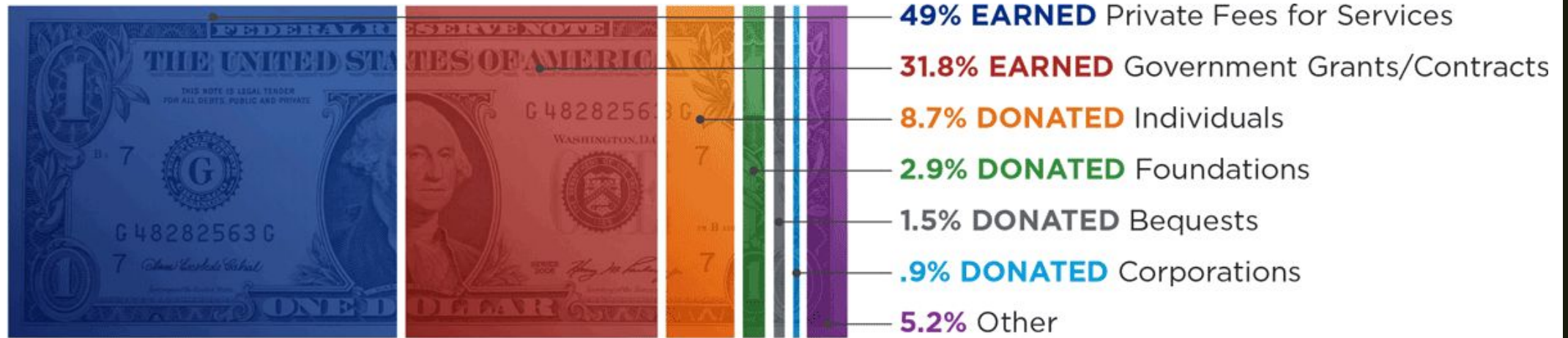
- worked at a foundation,
- served on a foundation board
- contributed to a foundation's decision-making process?





WHO FUNDS THE
WORK?

How are nonprofits funded?



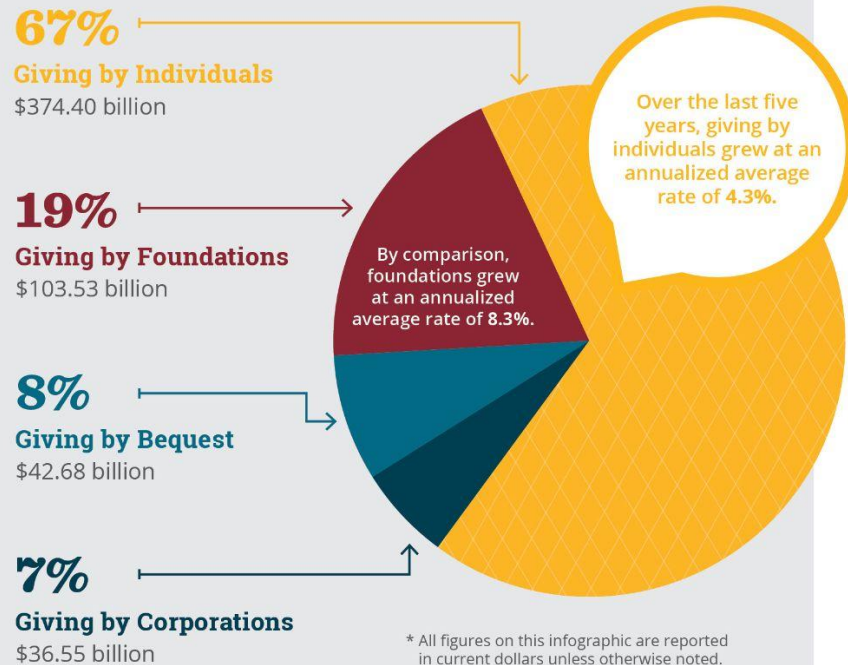
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In 2023, Americans gave **\$557.16 BILLION** to charity

DONOR ADVISED FUNDS ARE AMONG THE FASTEST GROWING FORMS OF GIVING.

Where did the generosity come from?*

CONTRIBUTIONS BY SOURCE (by percentage of the total)



* All figures on this infographic are reported in current dollars unless otherwise noted. Inflation was slightly higher than average in 2023, at 4.1%, and results may differ when adjusted for inflation.

Where did the charitable dollars go?

CONTRIBUTIONS BY DESTINATION (by percentage of the total)



Five of nine subsectors reached their all-time high in 2023, even when adjusted for inflation: human services; education; health; arts, culture & humanities; and environment/animals.

What are philanthropic foundations?

- Philanthropic foundations
 - *Exist to provide funding (grants, loans) to social purpose organizations/groups*
 - *Most give only to 501(c)3 nonprofits, but some give to small businesses and individuals*
 - *Most private foundations get their money from families, corporations, or individuals to form an endowment, which typically is invested to earn a return*
 - *Required to give a MINIMUM of 5% of their total endowment each year*
 - If a foundation has a \$100million endowment, they will likely give up to \$5million per year, including operating and administrative expenses
- Foundations ARE nonprofits but nonprofits ARE NOT necessarily foundations!
- Foundations also have missions – through grantmaking, they aim to accomplish both their own and their grantees’ missions
- Tend to have funding cycles – timelines for applications/decisions and sometimes specific topics on which they are focusing

Types of foundations & related

■ **Family foundations**

- *Local or national. Money from individuals or families, run by families themselves (e.g. Neubauer Family Foundation)*

■ **Independent foundations**

- *Local or national. Money from individuals or families, NOT run by families (e.g. Barra Foundation)*

■ **Corporate foundations**

- *Local or national. Money from parent companies but are separate organizations (e.g. Bank of America Foundation)*

■ **Community foundations**

- *Money from a variety of donors, give grants in the local community (e.g. Philadelphia Foundation)*

■ **Donor-advised funds**

- *Fund that allows individuals and families to give grants without creating their own foundations*

■ **Individual giving**

- *Charitable giving done by individuals*





IF YOU'VE SEEN ONE
FOUNDATION, YOU'VE SEEN
ONE FOUNDATION.



Foundations and Resources to Pay Attention To

- Foundations doing work in the health space: Robert Wood Johnson Foundation (national), Philadelphia Health Partnership, Health Spark Foundation, Scattergood Foundation
- Foundations doing work in the social justice space: Ford Foundation (national), Open Societies Foundation (national), Borealis Foundation (national), Samuel F. Fels Fund, Bread and Roses Community Foundation, Gender Justice Fund
- Foundations that fund many issue areas: William Penn Foundation, Pew Charitable Trusts, Spring Point Partners, Neubauer Family Foundation, The Barra Foundation, Patricia Kind Family Foundation, Claneil Foundation, The Independence Foundation
- Community Foundations (The Philadelphia Foundation) and United Ways
- Resource: Philanthropy Network of Philadelphia



TYPICAL
PROCESS
GRANT FUNDING

Applying for a grant – typical process

- Confirm specific purpose/program for which you wish you raise funds
- Identify prospective funder(s) and relevant application deadlines and timelines
- Create an account and fill out a preliminary application
 - *Information about you, your organization, your budget and board of directors, the amount you are requesting, and details about your program/project/organization and how you'd use the money*
 - *Choose type of support you're requesting:*
 - General operating support (funding not tied to a specific program)
 - Program support (funding that can only be used to support a specific program or initiative).
 - Some foundations only offer one or the other, some offer both
- If the foundation invites meetings with prospective applicants, request one!

Applying for a grant – typical process

- Wait for feedback, which could be:
 - *Denial*
 - *Request for more information (meeting, site visit, longer application, etc.)*
 - *Approval*
- Some funders have a one-step process (the initial application), and some have two or three-steps that are often a combination of writing and meetings/presentations
- Receive grant award and confirm payment and reporting schedules, sign agreement
- Implement your program, keeping track of what you did, who and how many people you served, what you accomplished, and how you spent the money. Take photos!
 - *Use this information to submit periodic reports to funder*
- At the end of your grant period (could be 12-24 months), submit a final report

Common Questions

- **Should I start my own organization, apply as an individual, or work with an existing organization?**
 - Ask yourself – what program/service does my community need?
 - Does an existing organization provide this service, or do similar work? Could you partner with them?
 - Do you need the infrastructure of an organization – more people, a physical space, systems etc. to do the work?
 - How much would it cost to meet this need?
 - When does the work need to happen? What's your timeline?
- **How do I find a funder who might be interested in my work?**
 - Research organizations doing similar work – where does their funding come from?
 - Charging fees? Government? Donations? Philanthropic foundations?
 - What funders support organizations that do similar work? Do they fund in my area?
 - Search relevant databases (Candid, Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia)
 - When is the application deadline, and when are decisions made? Does this timeline work for me?
 - Are there restrictions on how grant money is used?
 - Make sure to do your homework!

Common Questions

■ **What people or organizations are eligible to apply for grants?**

- *Most fund organizations, rather than individuals – 501(c)3 or fiscal sponsor common requirement*
- *If funding individuals, most require a social security number*
- *Fewer opportunities for small businesses – some funders specifically focus on businesses (e.g. Merchants Fund)*

■ **What information could an application ask for?**

- *Your organization's mission, overall budget, board members and their demographics*
- *A description of your program and a breakdown of its budget*
- *The number of people you will serve*
- *How you will involve community*
- *What outcomes you expect*
- *Why your program fits with the foundation's priorities*

Application Best Practices

- Identify the problem you intend to solve
- Focus on the impact you hope to have, not just what you will do
- Avoid using acronyms, abbreviations, jargon
- Keep it simple and focused, and use consistent terminology
- Highlight why your program is important, and how it builds on your past work - your successes and what you have learned
- Consider partnering to deepen or expand impact
- Create a realistic program budget – do your best!
- Tailor your application to the foundation’s priorities, and highlight why it fits
- Be specific - what outcomes do you expect from your program?
- Always review and re-review your proposal

Challenges in philanthropy

- Evaluating impact
 - *Many foundations focused on “impact” and numbers, which sometimes is not realistic or representative of reality*
 - *But nearly all want grantees to track the number and demographics of people they serve, how they spent grant money, and the outcomes/impact of the work*
- Influencing nonprofit work
 - *Nonprofits often feel the need to change what they do to align with funder priorities*
- Collaborating with other funders
 - *“if you’ve seen one foundation...”*

Useful Resources

- [Candid Foundation Directory](#)
- Philanthropy Network Greater Philadelphia
 - [Member directory](#)
 - [Opportunity board](#)
- [National Council of Nonprofits](#)



EFFECTIVE
STORYTELLING
TO FUNDERS



Tips for Telling Your Story

- Consider your audience
- Explore options for framing
 - *Focusing on a particular population*
 - *Describing impact on systems*

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MANAGING NONPROFIT FUNDRAISING

Showing Strength & Vulnerability

- **Dealing with Funders & Capacity**
 - *Chicken or the egg? - Either show capacity to deliver or show need for funds to build capacity?*
- **Reporting Requirements**
 - *Getting the grant may just be the beginning; data collection, analyses and reporting are key*
- **Impact of Getting/Not Getting Grants**
 - *On the communities served*
 - *On the staff (i.e. “real people”) who do the work*



FUNDRAISING IN
THE NOW

Saving a World on Fire

- Meeting the **urgent needs of community** while navigating the seemingly **glacial pace of philanthropy**
- **Shifts in Philanthropy:**
 - *Collaboration and Networks*
 - *Pooled Funding & Participatory Grantmaking*
 - *Rapid Response Funds*
- **Repositioning:** Fiscal Sponsors & Partnerships

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THANK YOU!

Leah Reisman - Ireisman@barrafoundation.org

Caitlin O'Brien - cobrien@scattergoodfoundation.org

Peter Gonzales - pg@petergonzales.com

