

AMERICANPRESS

institute

Topline: Funders

From “Charting new ground: The ethical terrain of nonprofit journalism” (Published 4/20/16)

Collected May 21 – July 6, 2015

Total N=76

		PERCENT	COUNT
1. How many years has your foundation been in existence?	Less than 5 years	4%	3
	6-15 years	18%	14
	16-50 years	37%	28
	50-99 years	25%	19
	More than 100 years	3%	2
	Don't know/Not sure	0%	0
	No response	13%	10

2. Which of the following best describes your foundation?	Other	3%	2
	Public charity	8%	6
	Private foundation	45%	34
	Family foundation	18%	14
	Corporate funder or foundation	3%	2
	Individual funder	5%	4
	Community foundation	4%	3
	No response	14%	11

3. Is your foundation's giving mostly:	Other	4%	3
	Local	11%	8
	State or regional	14%	11
	National	20%	15
	International	3%	2
	Several of the above	34%	26
	No response	14%	11

		PERCENT	COUNT
4. Approximately, what was the total amount of grant making by your foundation in the last calendar year?	Less than \$1 million	9%	7
	\$1 million to \$5 million	11%	8
	\$6 million to \$10 million	13%	10
	\$11 million to \$50 million	14%	11
	\$51 to \$100 million	12%	9
	\$100 to \$200 million	8%	6
	More than \$200 million	13%	10
	Don't Know/Not Sure	3%	2
	No response	17%	13

5. In the last 5 years, has the total amount of the overall grant making by your foundation increased, decreased or remained about the same?	Increased	34%	26
	Decreased	4%	3
	Remained the same	42%	32
	Don't Know/Not Sure	3%	2
	No response	17%	13

7. Does your foundation make grants to news or media organizations?	Yes	83%	63
	No	12%	9
	Don't Know/Not Sure	1%	1
	No response	4%	3

**Following questions based only on those who said yes to Q7
Those who make grants to media organizations
N=63**

8. What was the first year of your media grant making?	Before 1995	27%	17
	Between 1995 and 2004	22%	14
	2005 and later	22%	14
	No response	29%	18

9. Approximately what percentage of your foundation's total funding went to media grants in the last calendar year?	Zero	2%	1
	1 percent to 10 percent	51%	32
	11 percent to 25 percent	17%	11
	26 percent to 50 percent	8%	5
	More than 50 percent	2%	1
	Don't Know/Not Sure	6%	4
	No response	14%	9

10. Which of the following kinds of grantees did you give media grants to in the last calendar year (Check all that apply)

	PERCENT	COUNT
a. Grants to nonprofit media (other than public broadcasting)	81%	51
b. Grants to public broadcasting	62%	39
c. Grants to commercial media organizations	21%	13
d. Grants to individuals for media projects	30%	19
e. Grants for journalism and media education or training	63%	40
f. Grants for media research	35%	22
g. Grants to develop media technology or platforms	43%	27

11. In the last 5 years, has the PERCENTAGE of funding your foundation has given to media grants increased, decreased, or remained about the same?	Increased	43%	27
	Decreased	6%	4
	Remained the same	30%	19
	Don't know/Not Sure	8%	5
	No response	13%	8

12. In the last 5 years, has the OVERALL NUMBER of media grants your foundation gives increased, decreased, or remained about the same?	Increased	41%	26
	Decreased	8%	5
	Remained the same	29%	18
	Don't know/Not Sure	10%	6
	No response	13%	8

		PERCENT	COUNT
14. What is your foundation's policy about what you expect media grantees to disclose about your funding?	Other	3%	2
	We have no specific policy about what our media grantees disclose about our funding beyond what the law requires	56%	35
	We require public disclosure of our funding but do not stipulate the form	14%	9
	We require disclosure of our funding in specific ways, such as on media grantees' website or annual reports, as a condition of our grant.	13%	8
	No response	14%	9

15. When it comes to what your foundation discloses about itself, to what extent do you publicly list the names and amounts of your media grant making?	Other	3%	2
	We publicly disclose the names of all grantees and amounts given to them	79%	50
	We publicly disclose all grantees and amounts above a certain level of funding	0%	0
	We publicly disclose the names of all grantees but not the amounts	3%	2
	We publicly disclose only what is required by law	2%	1
	No response	13%	8

16. Do you fund media projects using donor-advised funds?	Yes	19%	12
	No	60%	38
	Don't Know/Not Sure	8%	5
	No response	13%	8

17. IF YES: Does the fund identify the sources of its money (the organization, family or individual who made the contribution)?	Other	6%	4
	Yes	11%	7
	No	2%	1
	Not asked	81%	51

		PERCENT	COUNT
18. On balance, how successful would you say your media grant making has been in meeting your objectives over the last five years?	Our media grant making has exceeded our objectives	17%	11
	Our media grant making generally has accomplished our objectives	38%	24
	Our media grant making has probably fallen short of our objectives	10%	6
	Don't Know/Not Sure	19%	12
	No response	16%	10

19. Which of the following kinds of grants does your foundation currently make to media organizations, and has it changed in the last five years?			
A. General operating support grants	Increased	21%	13
	Decreased	6%	4
	Remained the same	37%	23
	Don't make this kind of grant	16%	10
	No response	21%	13
B. Grants for capacity building (to help grantees fundraise and develop sustainability)	Increased	27%	17
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	27%	17
	Don't make this kind of grant	17%	11
	No response	25%	16
C. Grants for coverage of general subject areas (such as environment or health care)	Increased	33%	21
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	29%	18
	Don't make this kind of grant	13%	8
	No response	22%	14
D. Grants for coverage of more specific issues or problems (such as fracking or breast cancer)	Increased	29%	18
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	27%	17
	Don't make this kind of grant	17%	11
	No response	24%	15

		PERCENT	COUNT
E. Funding of particular investigative projects or series of stories on specific problems	Increased	35%	22
	Decreased	5%	3
	Remained the same	21%	13
	Don't make this kind of grant	16%	10
	No response	24%	15
F. Grants to experiment with new forms of storytelling	Increased	35%	22
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	22%	14
	Don't make this kind of grant	16%	10
	No response	24%	15
G. Grants to adopt new technologies	Increased	25%	16
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	29%	18
	Don't make this kind of grant	16%	10
	No response	27%	17
H. Grants for a particular type of journalism (such as investigative) without specifying topics or projects	Increased	29%	18
	Decreased	0%	0
	Remained the same	21%	13
	Don't make this kind of grant	24%	15
	No response	27%	17

20. What is the typical length of time of your grants to media organizations?	Other	2%	1
	One year or less	24%	15
	One to two years	37%	23
	Three to four years	16%	10
	Five or more years	6%	4
	No response	16%	10

21. In the last 5 years, has the typical LENGTH of time covered by your media grants increased, decreased or remained about the same?	Increased	6%	4
	Decreased	5%	3
	Remained the same	65%	41
	Don't know/Not Sure	5%	3
	No response	19%	12

		PERCENT	COUNT
22. In the last 5 years, has the typical SIZE of your grants to media organizations increased, decreased or remained about the same?	Increased	30%	19
	Decreased	3%	2
	Remained the same	44%	28
	Don't know/Not Sure	3%	2
	No response	19%	12
23. How many of your grants to news organizations are followed by additional grants to the same recipient?	None	0%	0
	Less than 10 percent	3%	2
	10 percent to 24 percent	5%	3
	25 percent to 50 percent	14%	9
	More than 50 percent	52%	33
	Don't Know/Not Sure	8%	5
	No response	17%	11
24. In the last five years, has the number of such follow-up grants to the same media recipient increased, decreased or remained about the same?	Increased	14%	9
	Decreased	8%	5
	Remained the same	48%	30
	Don't know/Not Sure	10%	6
	No response	21%	13
25. How much, if any, of your media grant making is made up of startup or “seed” grants, which stipulate that after an identified period of time continuing funding is unlikely?	None	24%	15
	Less than 10 percent	21%	13
	10 percent to 24 percent	14%	9
	25 percent to 50 percent	11%	7
	More than 50 percent	6%	4
	Don't Know/Not Sure	5%	3
	No response	19%	12

		PERCENT	COUNT
26. IF ANY STARTUP GRANTS: Assuming the startup or initial grant was considered a success, which of the following is most typical when it comes to subsequent funding?	Other	2%	1
	Most grantees do not receive additional funding after the startup or seed grant is gone	6%	4
	Most grantees receive additional funding if they can match certain amounts of funding	6%	4
	Most grantees receive additional funding if our support can be limited to a defined minority percentage of all funding	6%	4
	Most grantees typically receive additional funding if they can demonstrate certain impacts and objectives	30%	19
	No response/Not asked	49%	31

27. Does your foundation ever make grants to media on issues where you are also engaged in work such as trying to change policy or public behavior on that issue?	Yes	52%	33
	No	19%	12
	Don't Know/Not Sure	10%	6
	No response	19%	12

28. Recognizing there can be many factors in funding decisions, which of the following statements comes closer to describing the reason your foundation funds media organizations?	Other	0%	0
	We fund media to have an impact and advance the larger strategic agenda of our foundation	35%	22
	We fund media to strengthen a free press and to educate the citizens regardless of the outcome of the reporting we fund	43%	27
	Both	2%	1
	No response	21%	13

		PERCENT	COUNT
29. Before journalistic content is produced, to what degree do you usually talk with media grantees about what they are working on?	Other	3%	2
	We usually discuss what stories media grantees are working on and the possible timing of those stories	6%	4
	We usually discuss what problems the reporting might expose and the implications they might raise but not specific stories	11%	7
	We usually about coverage areas but only in general terms.	21%	13
	We like to have a “heads up” when a media grantee is about to produce a story we have underwritten but otherwise do not discuss ahead of time	10%	6
	We never talk with media grantees about what they are working before it appears	25%	16
	No response	24%	15

30. Whatever your discussions, how often, it at all, does your foundation see journalistic content you have underwritten prior to publication?	Always	0%	0
	Usually	3%	2
	About half the time	0%	0
	Only sometimes	8%	5
	Very rarely	22%	14
	Never	40%	25
	Don't Know/Not Sure	3%	2
	No response	24%	15

		PERCENT	COUNT
31. IF SEE CONTENT: When you do see journalistic content prior to publication, which of the following comes closest to the comments you most often offer?	Other	2%	1
	We expect a full editorial review	0%	0
	We make suggestions but we do not expect grantees to accept them all	2%	1
	We offer general reactions but, as a matter of policy, never specific editorial suggestions	3%	2
	We do not offer media grantees comments on journalistic content they've produced prior to publication unless we see a major problem or red flag	13%	8
	We never, as a matter of policy, look at journalistic content we have underwritten prior to publication	3%	2
	The nature of our review varies case by case	11%	7
	No response/Not asked	67%	42

32. How often do you estimate grantees make editorial changes based on your input, whatever its nature?	Almost always	0%	0
	Often	3%	2
	Sometimes	11%	7
	Hardly ever	14%	9
	Never	33%	21
	Don't Know/Not Sure	2%	1
	No response	37%	23

33. Does your foundation have any written rules governing your organization's participation in content decisions made by media grantees?	Other	5%	3
	Yes	2%	1
	No	57%	36
	No response	37%	23

		PERCENT	COUNT
34. Does your foundation require grantees to have written rules regarding the involvement of funders in content decisions, or regarding ethics or conflict of interest?	Other	3%	2
	Yes	10%	6
	No	52%	33
	No response	35%	22

35. What, if any, metrics do you typically ask media grantees to provide to evaluate your grant making. (Please check all that apply)			
A. Your web traffic such as page views, visitors, time spent etc.	40%	25	
B. Social media numbers or activity	44%	28	
C. Web traffic of partners who distributed the work	29%	18	
D. Numbers of other media organizations that used or cited the work	35%	22	
E. Audience comments or other audience actions taken	30%	19	
F. Responses from officials to the reporting	24%	15	
G. Direct impact from your work, i.e. formal hearings, laws changed or charges filed	40%	25	
H. Editorials written or other journalistic activities that followed your work	25%	16	
I. Evidence of changes in awareness or knowledge of an issue or topic	35%	22	
J. Evidence of changes in attitudes/perceptions about an issue or topic	32%	20	
K. We don't typically ask for metrics	14%	9	

36. Has your foundation ever funded a media organization to produce an investigation into a particular problem or do specific series of stories?	Yes	30%	19
	No	33%	21
	Don't Know/Not Sure	8%	5
	No response	29%	18

		PERCENT	COUNT
37. Have you discussed with grantees in advance what kinds of problems you expect the reporting to expose or conclusions you expect the reporting to come to when your organization has provided funding for investigations?	Other	3%	2
	Yes	10%	6
	No	16%	10
	Don't Know/Not Sure	3%	2
	No response	68%	43
38. Has a media organization ever returned or declined funds from your foundation?	Yes	8%	5
	No	56%	35
	Don't Know/Not Sure	10%	6
	No response	27%	17
39. IF YES: Which of the following reasons comes closest to the organization's explanation for returning the funds?	Other	2%	1
	They could not meet the objectives	3%	2
	Funds not spent	2%	1
	Change of strategy	2%	1
	Not asked	92%	58
40. Has your foundation ever requested that a grantee return funds for reasons other than the grant period ended and not all funds had been used?	Yes	3%	2
	No	54%	34
	Don't Know/Not Sure	14%	9
	No response	29%	18
41. IF YES: What were the main reasons for your decision to request the funds be returned? (Select up to two)			
A. We decided that the goals of our two organizations were incompatible		0%	0
B. The grant became too controversial		2%	1
C. Discussions over editorial content became too difficult to resolve		0%	0
D. Differences over the timetable of the work		2%	1
E. Differences over editorial independence		0%	0
F. The collaboration was more trouble than it was worth		2%	1