Third Space Studio's

Individual Donor Benchmark Report 2012

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STUDIO

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Introduction

We are excited to share Third Space Studio's 2012 Individual Donor Benchmark Report. This year's report expands on the work we began last year, with more questions answered by more organizations spread out across the U.S. Although a statistics expert has assured us that our data is in no way 'statistically significant', we believe that it's incredibly useful and provocative — and we hope you do too.

**Heather Yandow
& Meredith Emmett**
Third Space Studio

We began this project because we believe that successful fundraisers set ambitious yet realistic goals, experiment with new strategies, and invest in the strategies that work. Knowing what works means doing some deep analysis: What is the average gift from our major donors and how does that compare to other organizations? How many monthly donors can we realistically expect to attract? Unfortunately, we've found that small nonprofits often operate in a vacuum, with no way to compare their goals or results to similar organizations. The goal of this project is to take a small slice of the nonprofit universe — organizations with budgets under $2 million and a focus on advocacy and grassroots fundraising — and create a useful set of metrics. Our hope is to create a clear picture of realistic fundraising goals and results that organizations can share with their staff and Board.

As a team made up of an engineer and mathematician, we may have a bias towards numbers, but we find again and again that the most successful fundraising programs are rooted in data. As one successful development director put it "If we weren't tracking our data, how would we know if we were successful?" Yet the number of organizations who are not tracking their data (or are not tracking it well) is surprisingly high. We hope that the Individual Donor Benchmark Report inspires you to track your data — and use it regularly!

We'd like to say a big thank you to the 27 organizations who are tracking their data and were willing to share it with us — and you — in this report. (See the full list of participants on page 18.)

We'd also like to thank the Grassroots Fundraising Journal and the Institute for Conservation Leadership for their support of this project.

If you have questions about the data presented in this report, or would like to find out how to be included in next year's survey, please contact Heather at **heather@thirdspacestudio.com**.
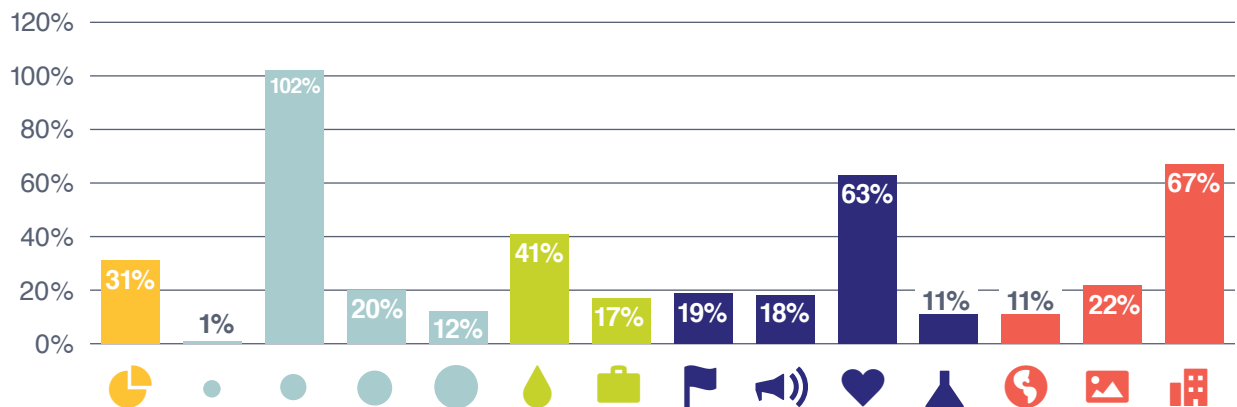
Heather Yandow   Meredith Emmett

Overall Results

In general, overall organizational revenue, individual donor revenue, and online revenue grew between 2011 and 2012. There was some variation between organizations of different size, issue focus, core strategy, and geographic scope.

$ Overall Revenue Growth

Category	Value
Overall Average	31%
Revenue (Under $250,000)	1%
Revenue ($250,000 to $499,999)	102%
Revenue ($500,000 to $999,999)	20%
Revenue ($1 million to $2 million)	12%
Environment	41%
Non-environment	17%
Public Policy	19%
Organizing	18%
Direct Service	63%
Capacity building	11%
National or Multi-State Region	11%
Statewide	22%
Local	67%

Key

Overall Average

Revenue
- Under $250,000
- $250,000 to $499,999
- $500,000 to $999,999
- $1 million to $2 million

Issue
- Environment
- Non-environment

Geographic Scope of Fundraising
- National or Multi-State Region
- Statewide
- Local

Strategy
- Public Policy
- Organizing
- Direct Service
- Capacity building

Organizations

👤 Individual Donor Revenue Growth

Category	Growth
🥧	35%
●	66%
●	35%
●	15%
●	25%
💧	55%
💼	9%
🚩	30%
📢	33%
❤️	33%
⚗️	19%
🌐	25%
🖼️	60%
🏢	18%

🖱️ Online Revenue Growth

Category	Growth
🥧	38%
●	82%
●	78%
●	15%
●	26%
💧	56%
💼	-14%
🚩	45%
📢	38%
❤️	28%
⚗️	27%
🌐	-18%
🖼️	63%
🏢	68%
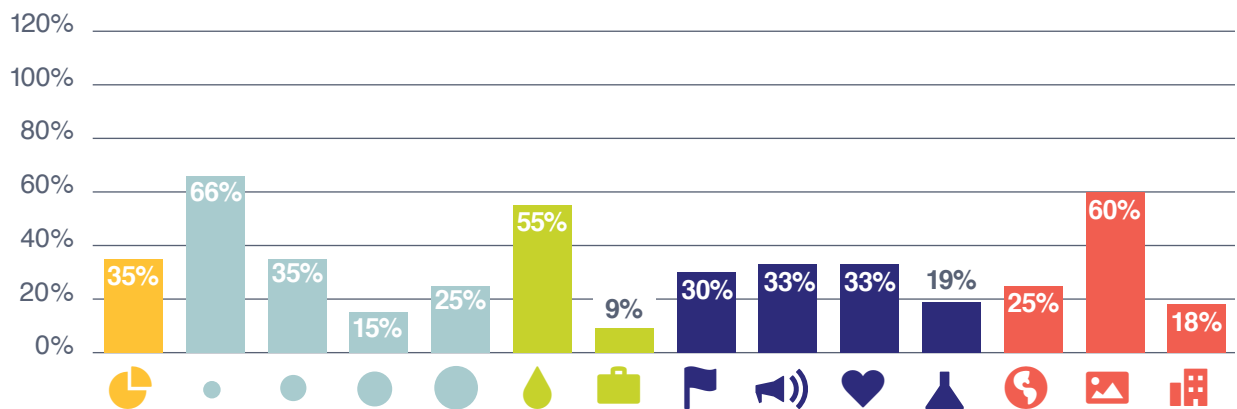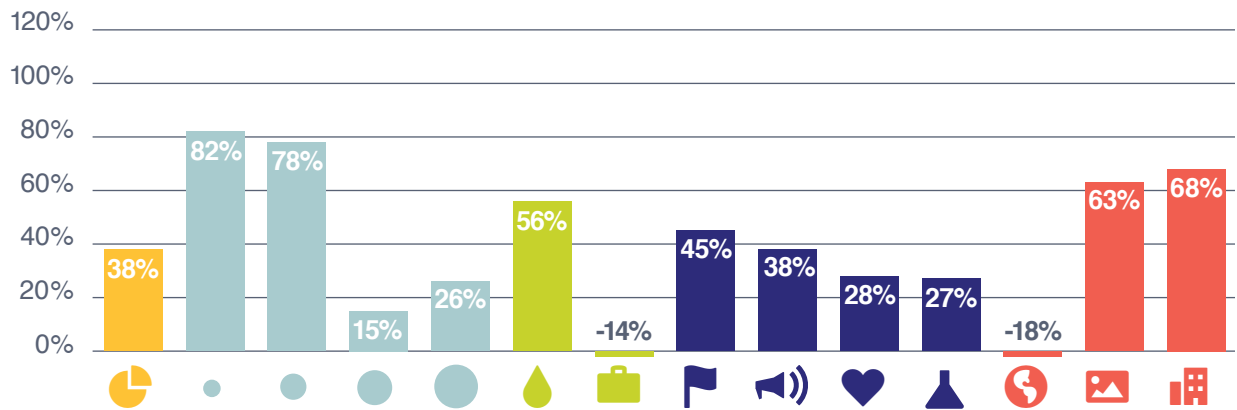
Average Gifts

This year we dug into three categories of individual donors — those whose gifts totaled under $250, between $250 and $999, and gifts totaling $1,000 or more. Below we present data on average gifts, as well as the percentages of the donor base and amount raised represented by gifts in each category.

Average Gift (All Levels)

Bar chart values: $413, $388, $474, $456, $305, $456, $353, $333, $373, $461, $457
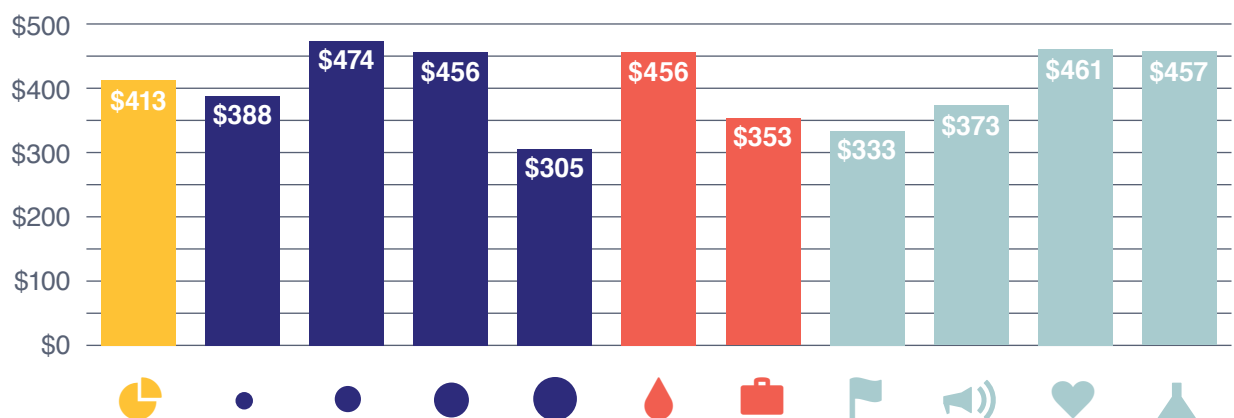
Key

Overall Average

Issue
- Environment
- Non-environment

Revenue
- Under $250,000
- $250,000 to $499,999
- $500,000 to $999,999
- $1 million to $2 million

Strategy
- Public Policy
- Organizing
- Direct Service
- Capacity building

Average Gifts

Gifts Under $250

Icon	Value
pie	$80
small dot	$98
dot	$87
circle	$59
large circle	$79
drop	$73
briefcase	$94
flag	$69
megaphone	$69
heart	$97
flask	$72

Gifts Between $250 and $999

Icon	Value
pie	$427
small dot	$465
dot	$456
circle	$400
large circle	$382
drop	$453
briefcase	$388
flag	$366
paperclip	
heart	
flask	

Gifts $1,000 or More

Icon	Value
pie	$6,763
small dot	$5,900
dot	$6,736
circle	$8,886
large circle	$3,635
drop	$8,165
briefcase	$4,582
flag	$6,506
megaphone	$7,275
heart	$7,860
flask	$8,320
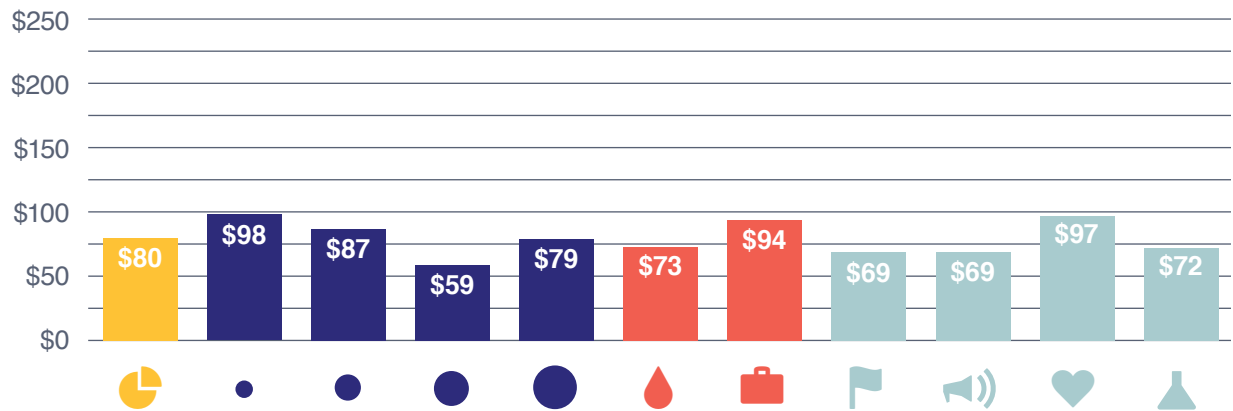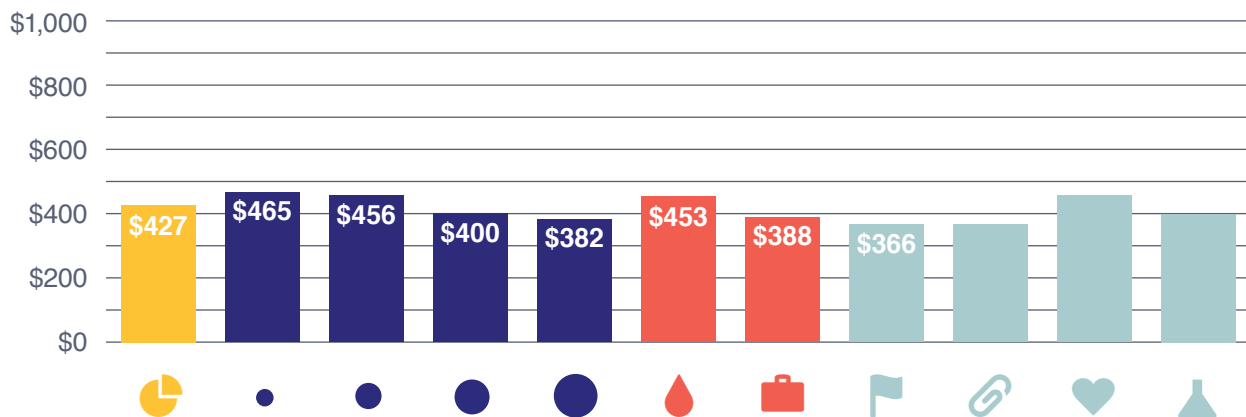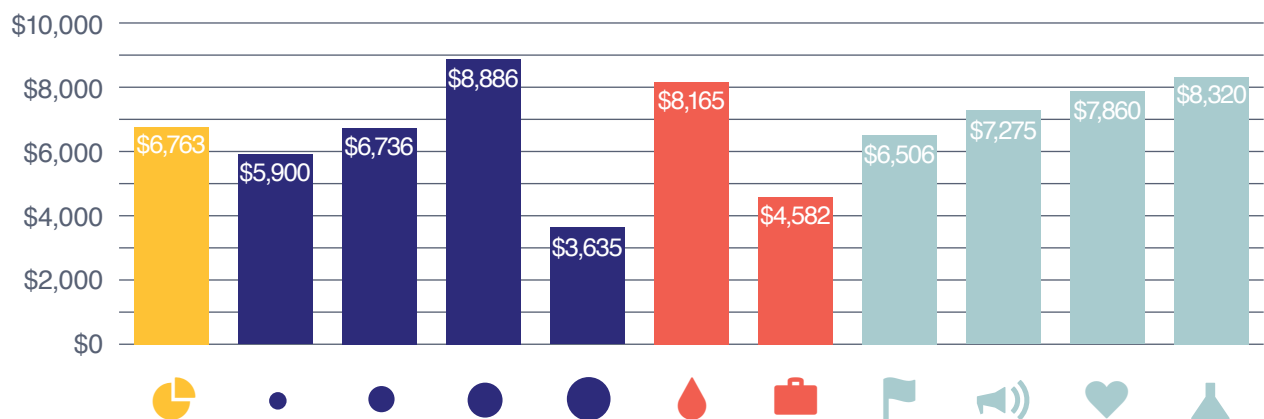
Average Gifts

👥 Percentage of Overall Donors

85% Gifts Under $250

13% Gifts between $250 and $999

5% Gifts $1,000 or More

👤 Percentage of Individual Donor Revenue

22% Gifts Under $250

20% Gifts between $250 and $999
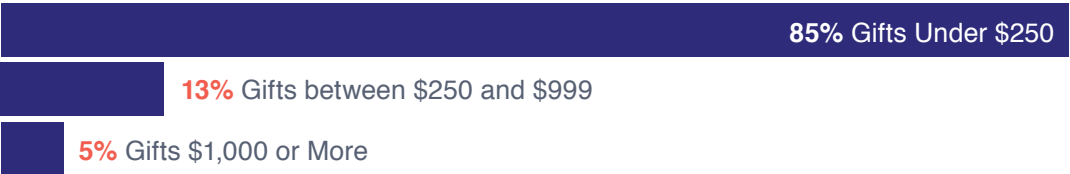
64% Gifts $1,000 or More
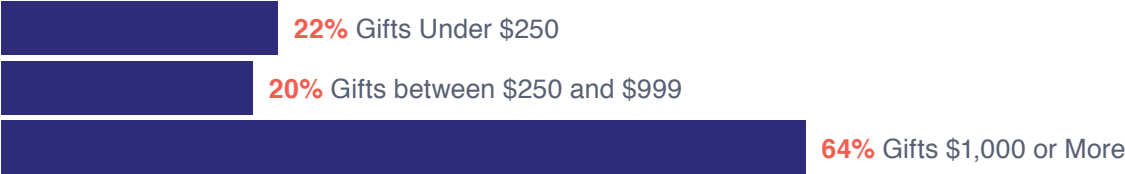
Online Giving

Although online giving rose by an average of 38% this year, it still remains at 12.5% of overall individual donor giving (compared to 13% in 2011). Below, we look at the number and size of online gifts, as well as the number of Facebook fans.

Online Donors

👤 Percentage of Individual Donor Revenue Generated Online

- **12.5%** Overall Average
- **11.1%** Revenue Under $250,000
- **10%** Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999
- **17.6%** Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999
- **7%** Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

🖥 Number of Online Donors

- **354** Overall Average
- **47** Revenue Under $250,000
- **70** Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999
- **800** Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999
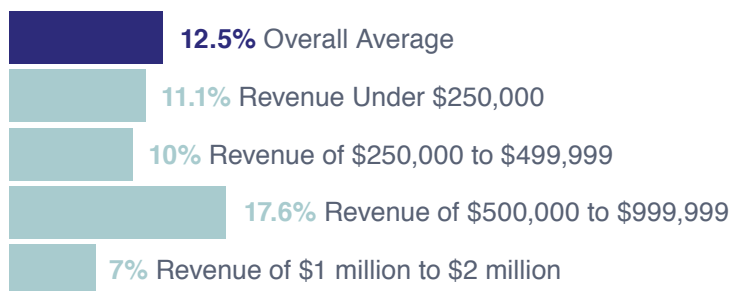- **263** Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

❖ Average Online Gift

- **$91** Overall Average
- **$84** Revenue Under $250,000
- **$105** Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999
- **$91** Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999
- **$83** Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

Online Giving

Mailing Lists

Number of People on Email List

11,758 Overall Average

2,515 Revenue Under $250,000

1,780 Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

27,478 Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

13,365 Revenue of $1 million to $2 million
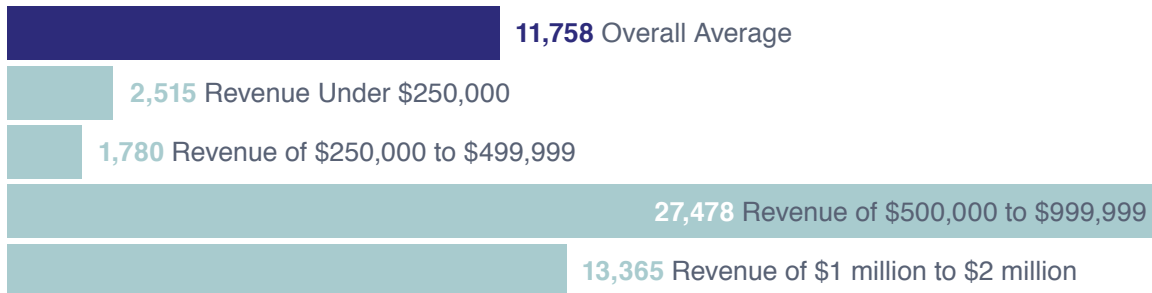
Social Media

Number of Facebook Fans

4,186 Overall Average

839 Revenue Under $250,000

678 Revenue $250,000 to $499,999

9,481 Revenue $500,000 to $999,999

3,879 Revenue $1 million to $2 million
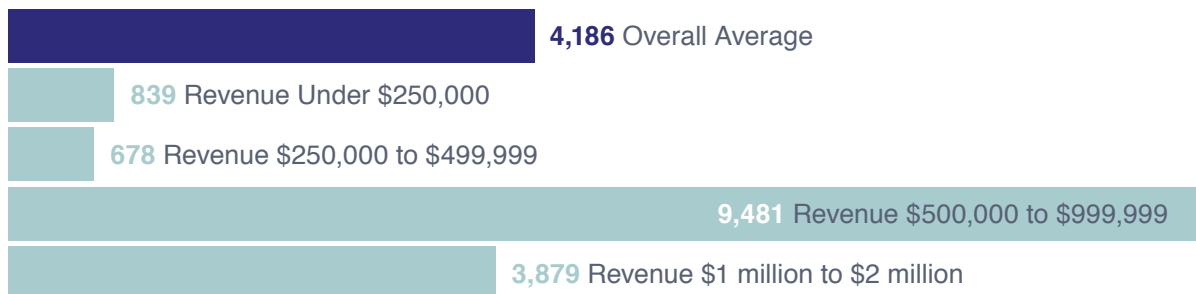
Email List Subscribers per Facebook Fan

3.9 Overall Average

4.7 Under 500 Facebook fans

4.9 500 to 999 Facebook fans

3.4 1,000 to 1,999 Facebook fans

3.4 2,000 to 9,999 Facebook fans

3.1 More than 10,000 Facebook fans
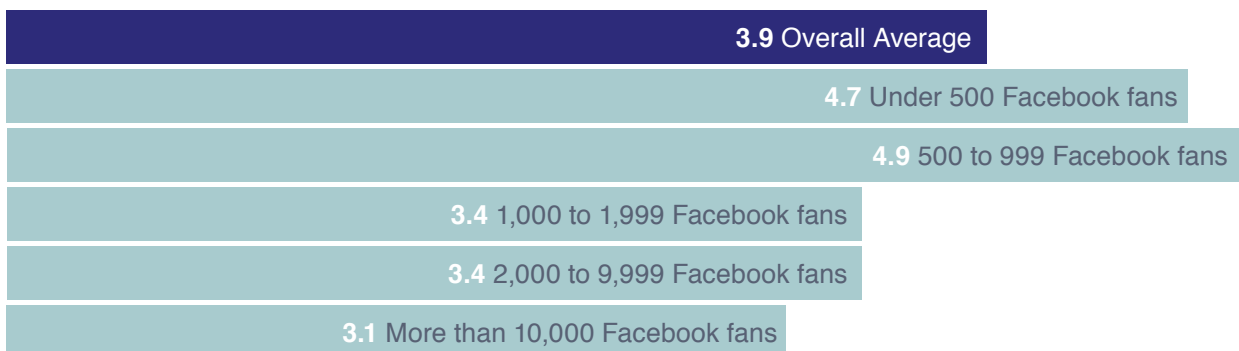
Recurring Donations

Recurring donors (those that give monthly or quarterly) are increasingly hailed as the most valuable donors. This category of donations appears to be growing — in 2012, recurring donors represented 11% of individual donor income, up from 6% in 2011.

$ Revenue from Recurring Donations

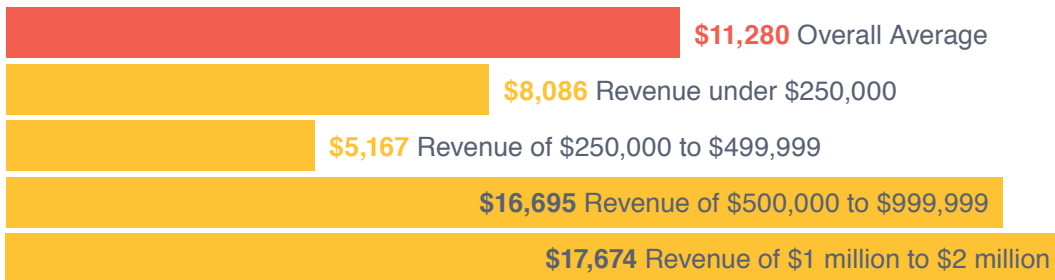**$11,280** Overall Average

$8,086 Revenue under $250,000

$5,167 Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

$16,695 Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

$17,674 Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

👥 Number of Recurring Donors

36 Overall Average

18 Revenue under $250,000

15 Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

44 Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

79 Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

↻ Average Total Recurring Gift

$402 Overall Average

$476 Revenue under $250,000

$520 Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

$302 Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

$259 Revenue of $1 million to $2 million
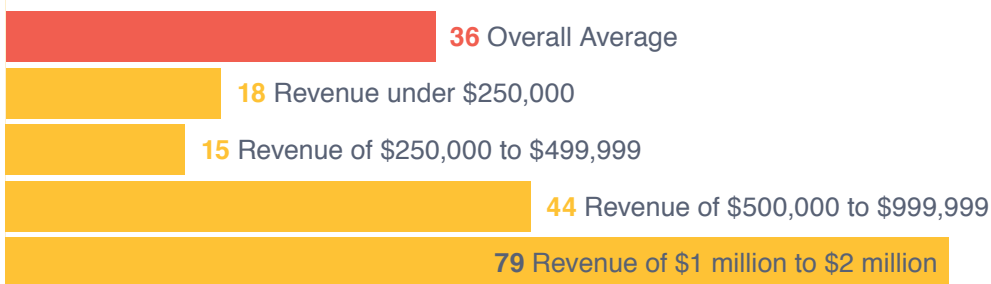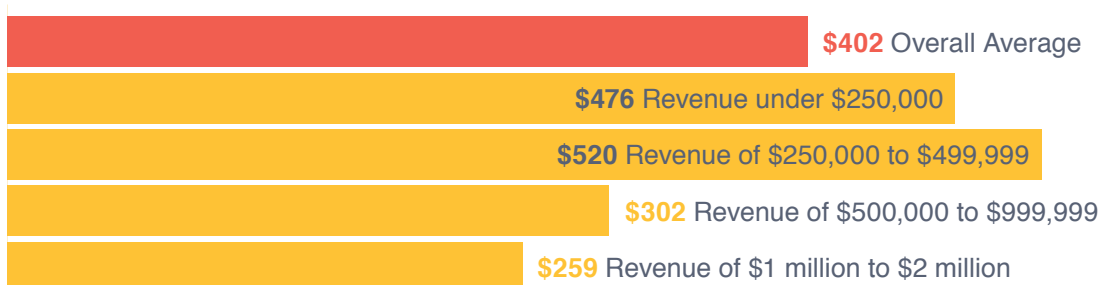
Recurring Donations

Percentage of Individual Donor Revenue from Recurring Gifts

- **11%** Overall Average
- **19%** Revenue under $250,000
- **8%** Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999
- **8%** Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999
- **7%** Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

Percentage of Individual Donors Who Make Recurring Gifts

- **9%** Overall Average
- **16%** Revenue under $250,000
- **8%** Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999
- **5%** Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999
- **6%** Revenue of $1 million to $2 million
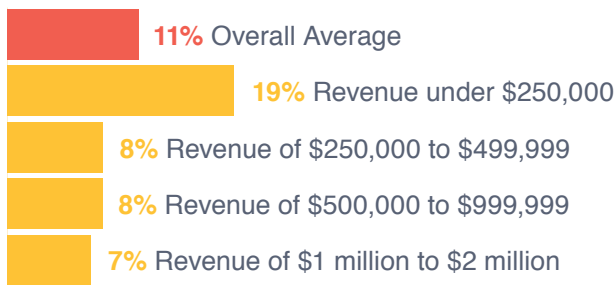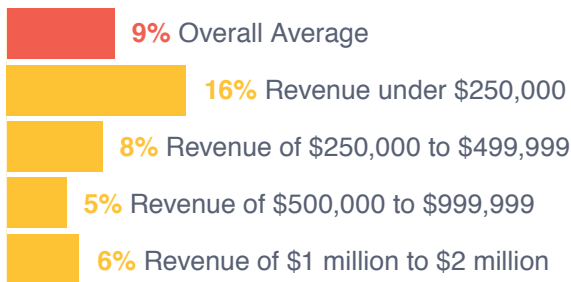
Recurring donations as a function of number of individual donors

Revenue from Recurring Donations

- **$8,140** 100 or fewer donors
- **$4,901** 101 to 250 donors
- **$6,280** 251 to 500 donors
- **$5,074** 501 to 1,000 donors
- **$26,397** More than 1,000 donors

Number of Recurring Donors

- **14.5** 100 or fewer donors
- **12.3** 101 to 250 donors
- **28.4** 251 to 500 donors
- **14.5** 501 to 1,000 donors
- **86.6** More than 1,000 donors

Recurring Donations

↻ Average Total Recurring Gift
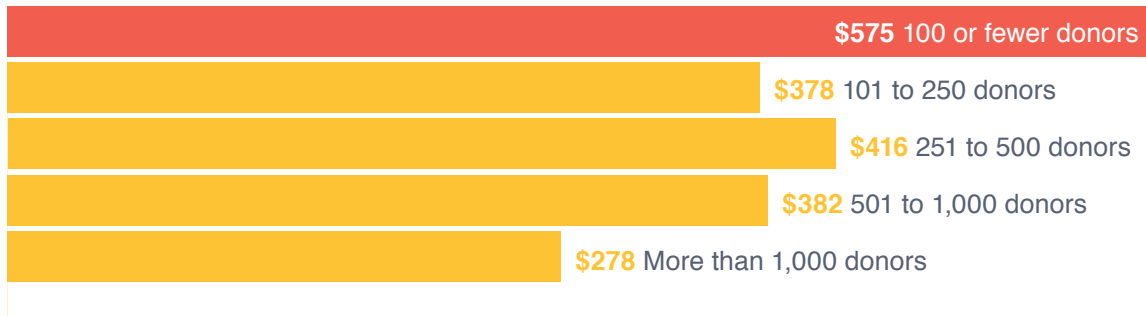
$575 100 or fewer donors	
$378 101 to 250 donors	
$416 251 to 500 donors	
$382 501 to 1,000 donors	
$278 More than 1,000 donors	

Percentage of Individual Donor Revenue from Recurring Gifts

27% 100 or fewer donors	
6% 101 to 250 donors	
5% 251 to 500 donors	
4% 501 to 1,000 donors	
13% More than 1,000 donors	

Percentage of Individual Donors Who Make Recurring Gifts

23% 100 or fewer donors	
6% 101 to 250 donors	
8% 251 to 500 donors	
3% 501 to 1,000 donors	
4% More than 1,000 donors	

Tactics & Tools

This year's survey asked organizations for details on their fundraising methods and databases.

📊 Fundraising Methods

Bar chart of fundraising methods:
- Direct mail: 89%
- Email solicitations: 89%
- Special events: 81%
- Face-to-face solicitations: 78%
- Facebook fundraising campaigns: 44%
- House parties: 56%
- Online peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns: 33%
- Other events: 22%
- Other online tools: 36%
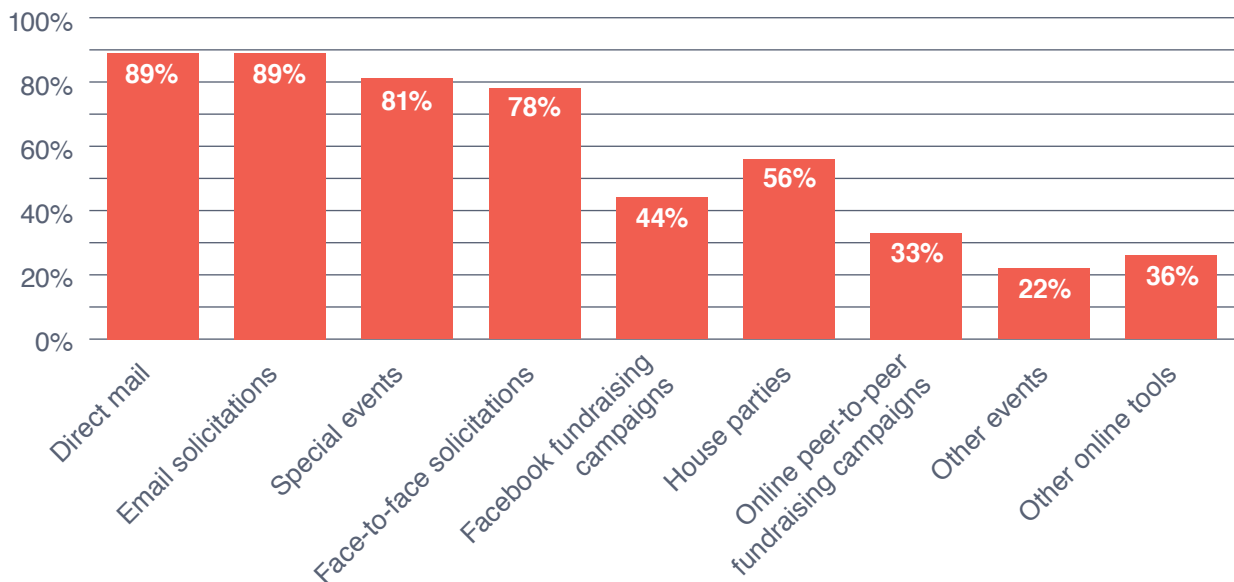
Although 89 percent of participating organizations still conduct direct mail campaigns, declining return on investment was cited as a significant fundraising challenge.

🗄 Database Types*

Total Info
Zoho
WaterGrass
DonorPerfect
Salsa
Blackbaud
eTapestry & Salsa
Microsoft Access
NEON
None
Donor Express Lite
FileMaker Pro
Fundraiser Software Online
ARCOS
Giftworks
Convio
Don't Know

Salsa (5), NEON (3), Blackbaud (2), GiftWorks (2), Microsoft Access (2), ARCOS (1), Convio (1), Donor Express Lite (1), DonorPerfect (1), eTapestry & Salsa (1), FileMaker Pro (1), Fundraiser Software Online (1), Total Info (1), WaterGrass (1), Zoho (1), None (2), Do not know (1).

*One organization reported using two databases.

Human Resources

Successful individual donor fundraising relies on human resources — the staff and Board time that organizations devote to cultivating and asking people for support. This year, we also looked at the salary and titles of individual donor fundraising staff, in addition to the time devoted to the work.

Salary Range

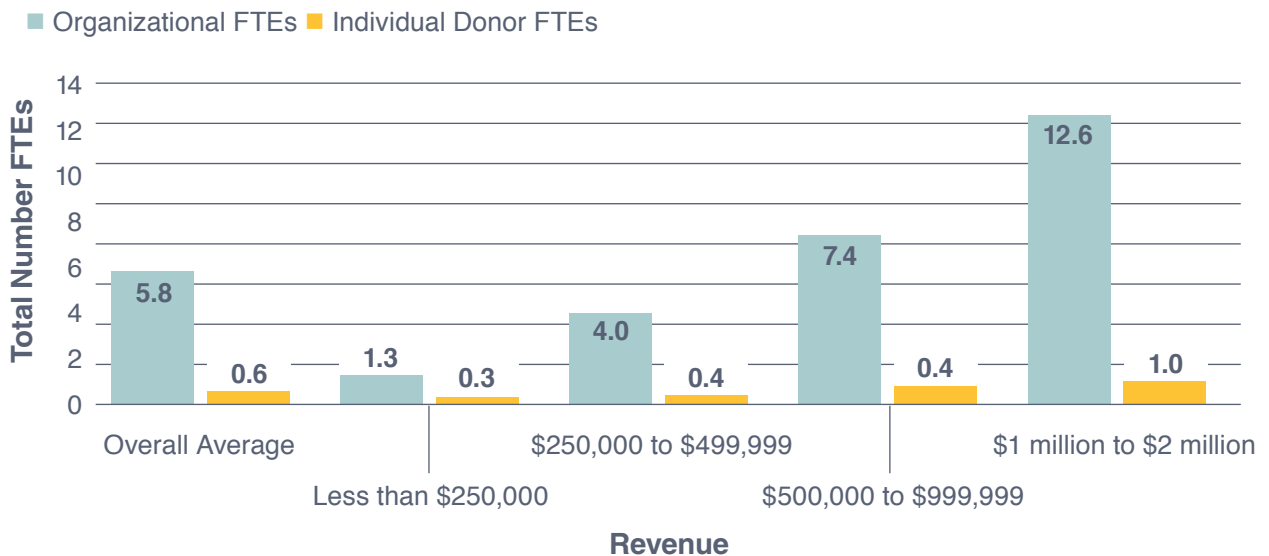■ Full-time equivalents (FTEs) ■ Average Revenue
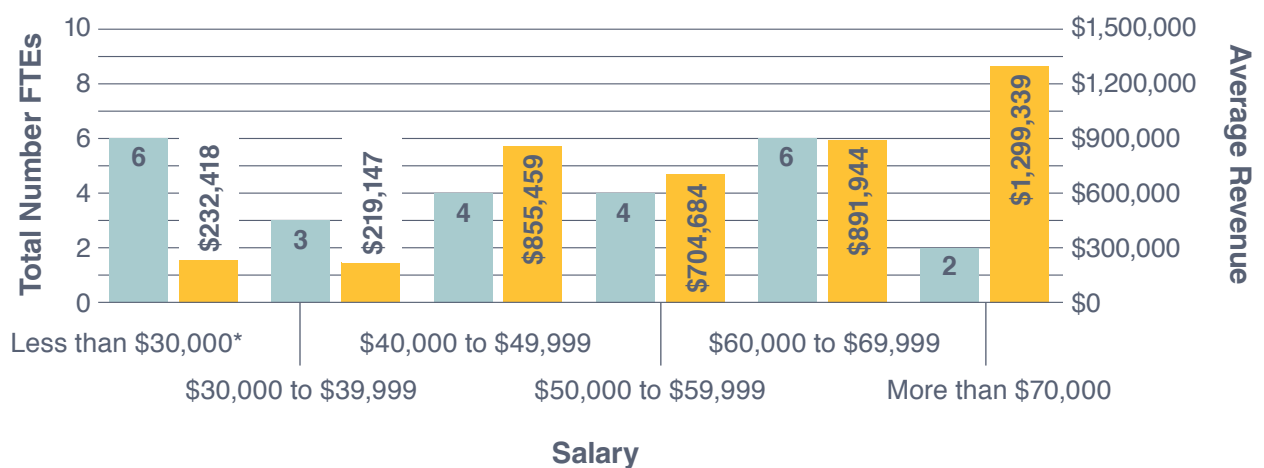
Incudes three part-time full-time equivalents (FTEs).

Most organizations reported that the Executive Director was primarily responsible for individual donor fundraising, although as organizational revenue grew the responsibility shifted to a dedicated fundraising staffer. Organizations with overall revenue more than $500,000 were very likely to have a dedicated development staffer. Titles for this staff included:
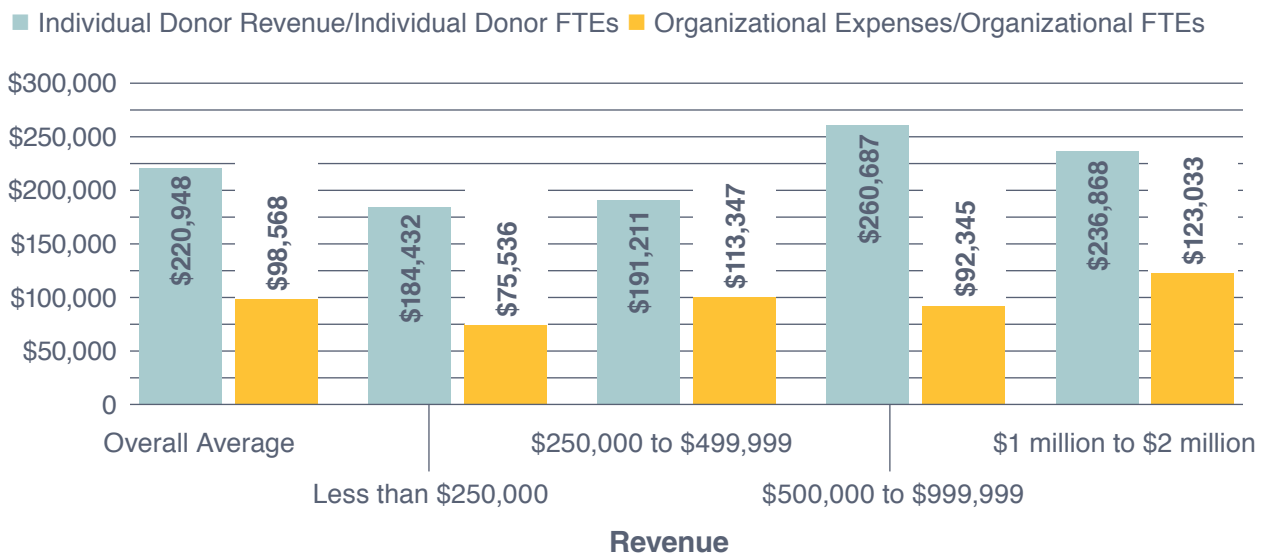
• Development Director (3)
• Director of Development (2)
• Development Associate
• Operations Manager
• Membership Director
• Senior Director of Advancement & Operations

Human Resources

Number of Full-Time Equivalents

- Organizational FTEs
- Individual Donor FTEs

Total Number FTEs vs **Revenue**

Category	Organizational FTEs	Individual Donor FTEs
Overall Average	5.8	0.6
Less than $250,000	1.3	0.3
$250,000 to $499,999	4.0	0.4
$500,000 to $999,999	7.4	0.4
$1 million to $2 million	12.6	1.0

Organizational Expenses per Full-time Equivalent

- Individual Donor Revenue/Individual Donor FTEs
- Organizational Expenses/Organizational FTEs

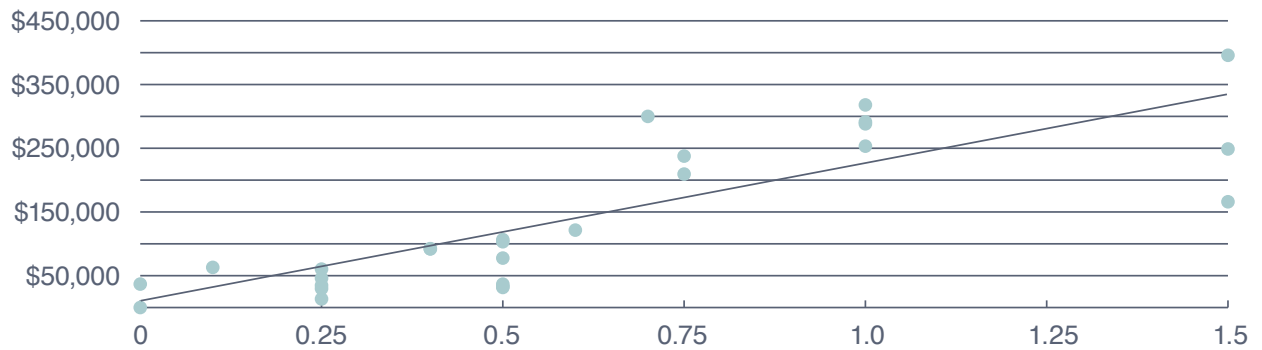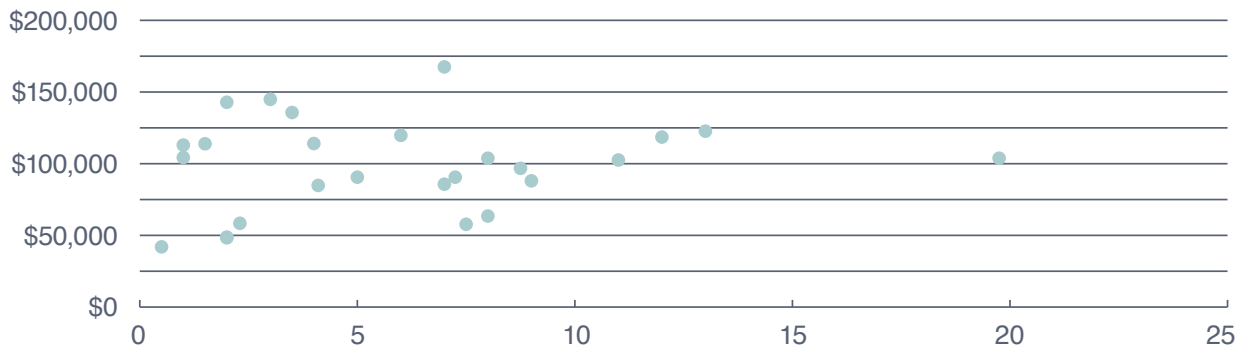| Category	Individual Donor Revenue/Individual Donor FTEs	Organizational Expenses/Organizational FTEs
Overall Average	$220,948	$98,568
Less than $250,000	$184,432	$75,536
$250,000 to $499,999	$191,211	$113,347
$500,000 to $999,999	$260,687	$92,345
$1 million to $2 million	$236,868	$123,033

Revenue

Human Resources

Individual Donor Income and Dedicated Staff

The data suggests that one full-time staffer devoted to individual donor fundraising can raise about $220,000.
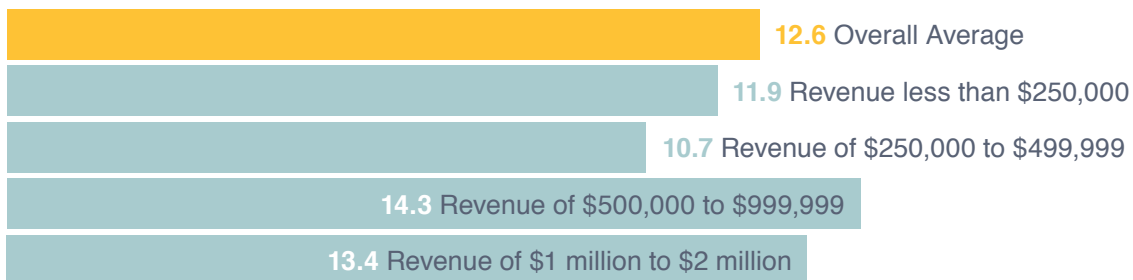

Revenue and Expenses per Full-time Equivalent

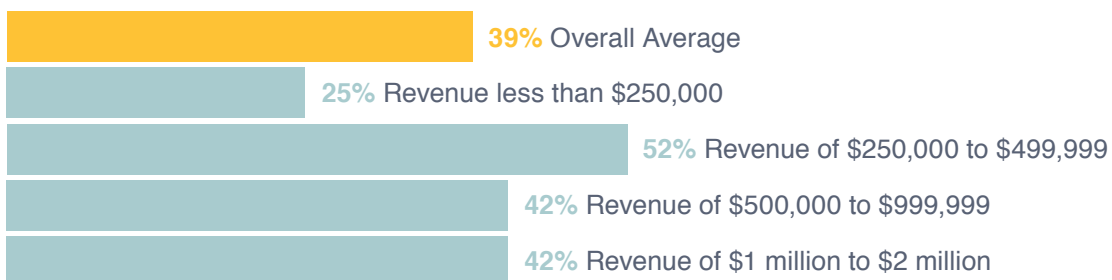As organizations grow, the expenses per FTE trend towards $100,000.

Human Resources

💬 Total Number of Board Members

12.6 Overall Average

11.9 Revenue less than $250,000

10.7 Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

14.3 Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

13.4 Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

📞 Percentage of Board Members Participating in Individual Donor Fundraising

Survey respondents cited lack of Board participation in fundraising as a significant challenge.

39% Overall Average

25% Revenue less than $250,000

52% Revenue of $250,000 to $499,999

42% Revenue of $500,000 to $999,999

42% Revenue of $1 million to $2 million

Organizations

Thanks to all of the organizations who participated in the 2012 Individual Donor Benchmarks survey.

💼 Participant Organizations

- Alaska Center for the Environment
- Carolina Justice Policy Center
- Clean Energy Durham
- Community Foundation of Harford County
- Democracy North Carolina
- Dogwood Alliance
- Earthworks
- East Coast Greenway Alliance
- El Pueblo, Inc
- Ellerbe Creek Watershed Association
- Equality NC
- Institute for Conservation Leadership
- Murder Victims' Families for Reconciliation
- National Women's Liberation
- NC Conservation Network
- NC Interfaith Power & Light
- Ohio Environmental Council
- Platte Land Trust
- Prairie Rivers Network
- Resource Center for Women and Ministry in the South
- stone circles at The Stone House
- Student Action with Farmworkers
- Tippecanoe Watershed Foundation
- Toxic Free NC
- WakeUP Wake County
- Washington Peace Center
- Western North Carolina Alliance

💲 2012 Organizational Revenue

- 8 organizations had revenue under $250,000.
- 6 had revenue between $250,000 and $499,999.
- 8 had revenue between $500,000 and $1 million.
- 5 had revenue between $1 and $2 million.

🔗 Issues Focus

- 16 organizations have an environmental fundraising focus.
- 11 have a non-environmental fundraising focus.

Organizational Demographics

📁 Strategy Focus

Note: Some organizations listed multiple strategies.

- 17 organizations have a public policy strategy focus.
- 20 have an organizing strategy focus.
- 8 have a direct service strategy focus.
- 12 have a capacity building strategy focus.

🌎 Geographic Fundraising Focus

- 10 organizations have a national or multi-state fundraising focus.
- 9 have a statewide fundraising focus.
- 8 have a local fundraising focus.

📍 Location

- 17 organizations are in North Carolina.
- 2 are in Maryland.
- 2 are in Washington, D.C.
- 1 organization is in Alaska, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Missouri and Ohio.
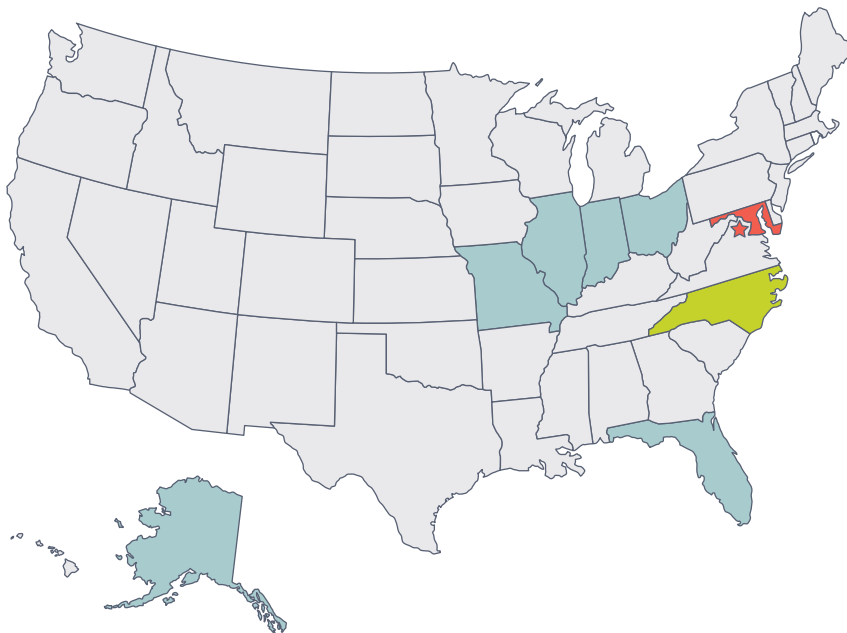
Methodology

The following survey was distributed in April of 2013. Twenty-seven organizations completed the survey questions.

▣ Your Results

Please answer all of the questions below for calendar year 2012, or your last completed fiscal year.

1. What was your total organizational revenue/income?

2. What were your total organizational expenses?

3. What was the total amount raised from individual donors? (Please include both online and offline donations from direct mail, email, major donors, and other individual donor strategies.)

4. How many individual donors (as defined above) donated to you organization?

5. What strategies did you use to solicit individual donor support? Please choose all that apply.

   - Face-to-face solicitations
   - Direct mail
   - House parties
   - Special events
   - Other events
   - Email solicitations
   - Facebook fundraising campaigns
   - Online peer-to-peer fundraising campaigns
   - Other online tools
   - Other (please specify)

6. How much money did you raise online? Do not include recurring (monthly, quarterly, etc. donations).

7. How many people donated online (not including recurring donors)?

8. How much money did you raise from recurring (monthly, quarterly, etc.) donations?

9. How many people made recurring donations to your organization?

10. How many people gave a total of $250 to $999 to your organization?

11. How much money did you raise from individuals who gave $250 to $999 in total?

Methodology

12. How many people gave $1,000 or more in total to your organization?

13. How much money did you raise from individuals who gave $1,000 or more in total?

14. Did you use calendar year 2012 for the answers to the above questions? If no, what time period did you use?

15. What was your biggest fundraising success in 2012? Please be specific.

16. What was your biggest fundraising challenge in 2012? Please be specific.

17. Does your organization have an annual fundraising plan?

18. What is the email address of the person completing this survey? This is to ensure we can contact you with any questions about your responses or with the news that you've won our prize drawing.

Your Universe

This set of questions focuses on the reach of your organization. Please answer all questions with numbers as of today.

19. How many people are on your email list? Please use the list that is most commonly used for newsletters, email action alerts, etc.

20. If your organization is on Facebook, how many people 'like' your organization?

21. How many people are on your postal mail list? Please use the list that is most commonly used for newsletters, direct mail appeals, etc.

Your Team

This set of questions focuses on the team that is responsible for your organization's fundraising. Please feel free to estimate. Please answer the following questions based on calendar year 2012 (or your last completed fiscal year).

22. How many Full Time Equivalents total do you have on staff? A Full Time Equivalent is equal to one person working a full week. For example, if you have a fulltime Executive Director, a three quarters time program staffer, and a halftime administrator, then you have 2.25 Full Time Equivalents on staff. Please use this definition in the below questions.

23. How many Full Time Equivalents were devoted to your individual donor fundraising work? Do not include marketing, communications, grantwriting, volunteer management, event planning or other activities not directly focused on individual donor fundraising. If individual donor fundraising work is 50% of someone's fulltime job, that is 0.5 FTE.

24. How many Full Time Equivalents were devoted to your organization's marketing and communications work?

Methodology

25. What is the title of the person who is primarily responsible for your organization's individual donor fundraising?

26. What is the approximate annual salary of the person primarily responsible for your organization's individual donor fundraising?

- Under $30,000
- $30,000 to $39,999
- $40,000 to $49,999
- $50,000 to $59,999
- $60,000 to $69,000
- $70,000 and above
- Do not know

27. How many Board members did the organization have during 2012 (or your last completed fiscal year)?

28. How many of your Board members actively participated in fundraising during 2012 (or your last completed fiscal year)? Active participation includes activities like providing introductions to donors, attending major donor meetings, soliciting donors by phone, writing personal letters to friends, among other significant activities. It does not include writing notes on annual appeals or making thank you phone calls (although those are good things).

Your History

These questions will give us a snapshot of your historical performance on a few key fundraising metrics. You have answered these questions for 2012 above and we are now looking for data for the previous year. Please answer all questions for calendar year 2011 (or the fiscal year previous to your last completed fiscal year).

29. What was your overall organizational revenue/income?

30. What was your revenue from individual donors? Please include offline and online strategies such as direct mail, email, major donors, and other individual donor strategies.

31. What was your revenue from online donations? Please do not include recurring donations (monthly, quarterly, etc.).

Methodology

📍 Demographic Information

Please tell us a little more about your organization. This will help us better interpret the data and provide more personalized results.

32. On what issues does your organization focus its work? Please choose all that apply. (Categories below are from the Giving USA report)

- Environmental/conservation
- Public-society benefit
- Health
- Human services
- Education
- Animal welfare
- International affairs
- Arts, culture, humanities
- Other (please specify)

33. What strategies does your organization use to pursue its mission? Please choose all that apply.

- Public policy advocacy
- Organizing
- Direct service
- Capacity building
- Other (please specify)

34. What fundraising database do you use?

35. Where is your organization located?

36. At what level is your fundraising primarily focused?

- City or county
- Multicounty region of the state
- Statewide
- Multi-state region
- National
- International
- Other (please specify)

37. What is the name of your organization? (This is for tracking purposes only. Your data will be kept confidential).