Only a small share of U.S. foundations employ paid staff to develop projects, review and investigate proposals, and work with the public. Yet the number of staffed foundations continued to rise in 2002, although the average number of staff employed by these foundations declined marginally. Foundations also showed considerable variations in current staffing patterns based on foundation size, period of establishment, regional location, and type.

*Foundation Staffing*, 2002 Edition, provides the most comprehensive information available on the number of staffed U.S. grantmaking foundations and their staffing patterns. This report serves as an ideal starting point for understanding differences in staffing levels and characteristics based on foundation size, period of establishment, regional location, and type. It also includes information on the boards of trustees of large foundations. *Foundation Staffing* is part of the *Foundations Today Series* of annual research reports on foundation growth and trends in foundation giving.

Information presented in *Foundation Staffing* comes from the Foundation Center’s annual surveys of the top 20,000 private and community foundations by giving, all corporate and community foundations, and larger newly established foundations. This included approximately 25,000 foundations for the 2002 survey. To maintain consistency with historical Foundation Center data on staffing, the analysis in this report limits its scope to those 20,002 foundations in the latest sample with at least $100,000 in giving or holding assets of $1 million or more.

Of this sample, over 3,200 foundations reported paid staff. These staffed foundations represent only a small cross-section (5.7 percent) of the nation’s nearly 56,600 active grantmakers, but account for over three-fifths (62.3 percent, or $303.0 billion) of total foundation assets, and close to three-fifths (57.4 percent, or $15.8 billion) of overall foundation giving in circa 2000—the latest year for which fiscal data are available.

**Overview of Foundation Staffing**

- 3,228 surveyed foundations reported paid staff in 2002
- One-in-six surveyed foundations employed staff
- Number of staffed foundations rose nearly three-fifths since 1992
- Over the past decade, number of staff positions more than doubled to 17,515
- Average number of staff fell just below 2001 level but surpassed 1992 level
- Number of full-time professional staff more than doubled since 1992
- Growth in foundation staffing lagged behind growth in the number of foundations

**Number of Foundation Staff**

- Foundations reported an average of 5.4 staff and a median of 2.0 staff
- Over three-fifths of staffed foundations employed two or fewer staff
- 30 foundations had 50 or more staff, double the 15 identified in 1992

![Number of surveyed foundations reporting staff rose by close to three-fifths over the past decade](chart.png)

Source: *Foundation Staffing*, 2002. Based on annual Foundation Center surveys of foundations with at least $1 million in assets or making grants of $100,000 or more.

For more information on this report, contact Josie Atienza, Research Analyst/Coordinator of the Foundations Today Series, at 212-620-4230, or e-mail, jsa@fdncenter.org. *Foundation Staffing* “Highlights” are also available at [http://www.fdncenter.org](http://www.fdncenter.org).
Foundation Staffing by Asset Range

- Three-quarters of foundations with assets of $100 million or more reported staff
- Larger foundations were more likely to be staffed and employ full-time staff
- More than half of all staff positions were held by largest foundations

Foundation Staffing by Period of Establishment

- Foundations established before 1950 were more likely to report paid staff
- Full-time professionals accounted for nearly half of the staff of pre-1950 foundations
- Older foundations reported an average of 9.7 staff, compared to an average of 3.2 staff for foundations established since 1979
- Regardless of establishment period, foundations showed a median of 2.0 staff

Foundation Staffing by Region

- West reported highest share of staffed foundations
- Close to one-in-five Western foundations employed staff
- Northeast had the largest number of staffed foundations
- West had the largest number of staff positions
- Excluding the Getty Trust (CA), the Northeast showed biggest average staff size
- Median staff size remained consistent across regions

Foundation Staffing by Foundation Type

- Community foundations were most likely to employ staff
- Independent foundations accounted for over half of all staff positions
- Operating foundations reported highest average number of staff
- Community foundations employed the highest median number of staff

Median staff size remained consistent across regions in 2002

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