



National
Philanthropic
Trust

2020 *Donor-Advised Fund Report*

+ *DAF COVID Grantmaking Survey*

Highlights from the 2020 DAF Report and COVID Grantmaking Survey

By Andrew Hastings, Chief Development Officer

Earlier this month, NPT released our 14th annual [Donor-Advised Fund Report](#) and a special [Donor-Advised Fund COVID Grantmaking Survey](#). DAF donors have always been committed to philanthropy, and these two publications make clear the impact of their recent charitable action. DAF donors' quick response to the urgent needs of their communities and beyond throughout the COVID-19 pandemic is remarkable. We are pleased to share some historic takeaways from both reports.

The **2020 Donor-Advised Fund Report** consists of comprehensive data on donor-advised funds in the U.S. In the most recent report, NPT examines 2015 through 2019 fiscal year data from 993 charities. For the tenth consecutive year, there was growth in donor-advised funds (DAFs) in every key metric.

2020 Donor-Advised Fund Report Highlights:

- **Grants Surpass \$25B:** Grants from DAFs to charitable organizations reached a new high at **\$27.37 billion**. This is a **15.4 percent increase** from a revised 2018 total of \$23.72 billion. The compound annual growth rate for grants from 2015 to 2019 was 13 percent.
- **Contributions Increase at Slower Rate:** Contributions to DAFs in 2019 totaled **\$38.81 billion**. This number is a 7.5 percent increase from the revised 2018 value of \$36.10 billion. It is slower than the compound annual growth rate for contributions from 2015 to 2019, which was 9.5 percent.
- **Number of DAF Accounts Continues to Increase:** The number of individual DAF accounts rose by 19.4 percent to **873,228**, a markedly slower rate than the 33.8 percent compound annual growth rate from 2015 through 2019.
- **Payout Rate Remains Above 20%:** Aggregate grant payout rates from DAFs **have exceeded 20 percent for every year on record**. The payout rate for **2019 was 22.4 percent**, higher than the revised payout rate of 21.2 percent for 2018.
- **Average DAF Size Shrinks Slightly:** The average size of an individual DAF account is estimated to be **\$162,556 in 2019**. This is a 2.7 percent decrease compared with the revised estimate for the 2018 average account size of \$167,002. The emergence of workplace giving DAF accounts, and of sponsoring organizations that have no or low contribution minimums, affects the average DAF size.

Highlights from the 2020 DAF Report and COVID Grantmaking Survey (continued)

The **Donor-Advised Fund COVID Grantmaking Survey** is the sector's first look at DAF donors' generous initial response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This survey was conducted among 13 DAF sponsors using self-reported data and covers the first six months of 2020.

Donor-Advised Fund COVID Grantmaking Survey Highlights:

- **Grant Dollars Increased Significantly at the Onset of COVID-19:** Grants from DAFs to qualified charities rose **29.8 percent**, from \$6.41 billion in the first six months of 2019 to **\$8.32 billion** for the same period in 2020.
- **Number of Grants Increased More Than a Third as COVID-19 Emerged:** The total number of DAF grants increased by **37.4 percent**, from 945,044 grants in the first half of 2019 to **1,298,787** in the first six months of 2020.
- **Grant Dollars Increased to Almost Every Charitable Subsector:** Grant dollars increased to organizations in every charitable subsector except arts, which experienced a dip of 9 percent. The human services subsector experienced the highest increase at **78.9 percent** in early 2020 compared to early 2019.
- **Number of Grants Increased to All Charitable Subsectors:** The number of grants rose for every charitable subsector. The most significant change was the increase in grants to human services charities, which rose by **78.1 percent**.

These findings make clear that DAF donors remain committed, engaged philanthropists, equipped for generous giving during ordinary times and in national emergencies. We will continue to see the impact of DAFs as more data becomes available, but for now there is no indication that DAF donors are slowing down.

Read the full [2020 DAF Report](#) and the [DAF COVID Grantmaking Survey](#) to learn more.

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