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Female Donors Give More To Women's, Girls' Causes

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Female donors to women's foundations and funds give more than general donors, have been giving to those causes for a longer period of time, and do more than just write checks, according to a new report from the Women's Philanthropy Institute (WPI), part of the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI.

Those are some of the findings from "[All In for Women & Girls,](https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/institutes/womens-philanthropy-institute/newest-report/index.html)" (<https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/institutes/womens-philanthropy-institute/newest-report/index.html>) which was funded by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The 36-page report, released this morning,

“examines the unique role that high-net-worth donors to women’s funds and foundations play in catalyzing support for women’s and girls’ causes.” The report was based on a new survey of high-net-worth donors, comparing women’s fund and foundation donors to a group of more “general” high-net-worth donors to a variety of causes.

“This is the first report to look at the intersection of high-net-worth donors, giving to women and girls, and women’s funds and foundations,” said lead researcher Elizabeth J. Dale, Ph.D., an assistant professor at Seattle University. “It finds that women’s fund and foundation donors give significant, substantial support for women’s and girls’ causes and bring a ‘gender lens’ to their philanthropy. We know that investing in women and girls leads to real and lasting change in communities – this research can help continue to drive funding for gender equity and provide a model for other identity-based causes,” she said in a press release announcing the results.

Donors to women’s funds and foundations in the survey gave more than \$48,000 in 2017 with \$12,790 in giving to women and girls, compared with \$30,000 by general donors, including \$7,626 to women and girls. Women’s fund and foundation donors also gave to more organizations, 19, of which more than three were focused on women and girls, versus 14 by general donors, of which, slightly more than 1 was a women’s and girls’ nonprofit.

Almost 60 percent of women’s fund and foundations donors serve on the board of a women’s or girls’ organization compared with just 23 percent of general donors and 43 percent view themselves as a leader in philanthropy versus 24 percent of general donors. More than a quarter of them are members of giving circles while just 8.4 percent general donors said they are.

Among the largest disparities in motivation between women’s donors and general donors was serving on a nonprofit board; about three-quarters of women donors compared with a third of general donors.

Women's fund and foundation donors have given to women's and girls' causes for a longer period of time, on average for more than three years longer than general donors. Some 58 percent of women's fund and foundation donors have given for at least a decade compared to 41 percent of general donors.

Compared to general donors, the report found that women's fund and foundation donors are more likely to be women and LGBTQ individuals, and less likely to be retired or religious.

Nearly 12 percent of women's fund and foundation donors, about one in eight, identify as LGBTQ; that's more than four times the proportion in the general donor sample of 2.4 percent. Just 36 percent of these donors are retired compared to 55 percent of general donors and about 28 percent said they attend religious services at least monthly compared to 41 percent of general donors.

The sample used for this report is all respondents who completed key portions of the survey and qualified as high-net-worth – a total of 967 respondents. Of those, 187 were donors to a women's fund or foundation and the remaining 780 were "general donors" who had established a donor-advised fund.



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Contact us

201 Littleton Rd # 2, Morris Plains, NJ 07950

sschwanz@foxrep.com

(<mailto:sschwanz@foxrep.com>)

(973) 401-0202

(tel:9734010202)

Send Editorial Inquiries To: info@nptimes.com

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