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ADVISORY  
BOARD  
for the ARTS  
Transforming Arts Organizations Worldwide

## Fundraising Outlook for Current FY & Major Gift Histories Benchmarks August-September 2022

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Fundraising in most recent FY



Recent Major Gift History



Individual Gift Overview

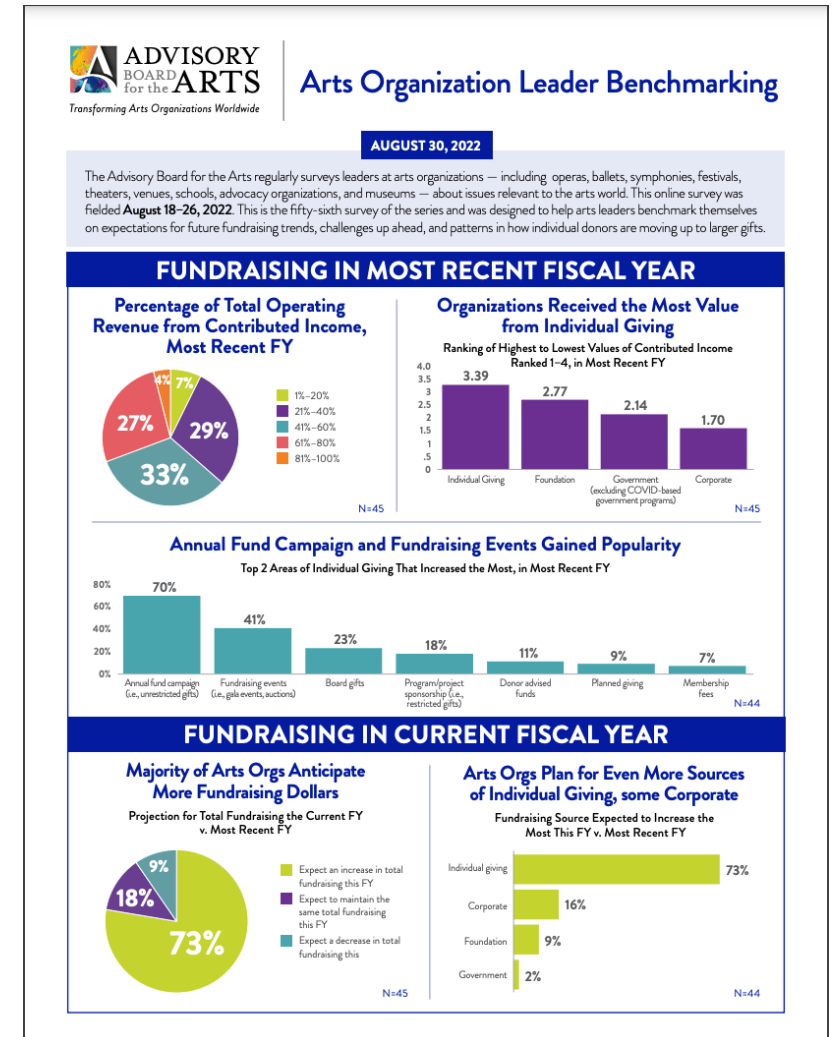


# Overview ABA Arts Executive Poll on Fundraising & Major Gifts

To understand the current landscape and outlook on fundraising in the arts, ABA's [Arts Leader Survey](#) asked arts leaders to benchmark themselves on expectations for future fundraising trends, giving challenges, and patterns in how individual donors are moving up to larger gifts.

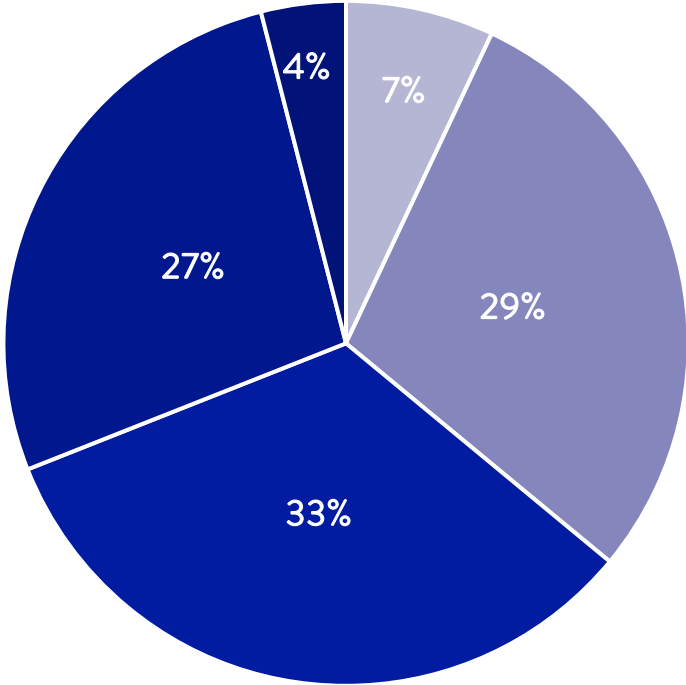
## Highlights from the survey include:

- When looking at contributed income sources in the most recent fiscal year, organizations received the highest value of gifts from individual donors, then foundation, government, and finally corporate.
- However, when looking at this current fiscal year, about one-fifth of arts organizations expect corporate donations to increase.
- 80% Of arts leaders are wary about the recession's impact on fundraising, although organizations still expect fundraising dollars to increase this year.
- A quarter of arts organizations experienced a donor jumping to a significantly higher gift in under a year.



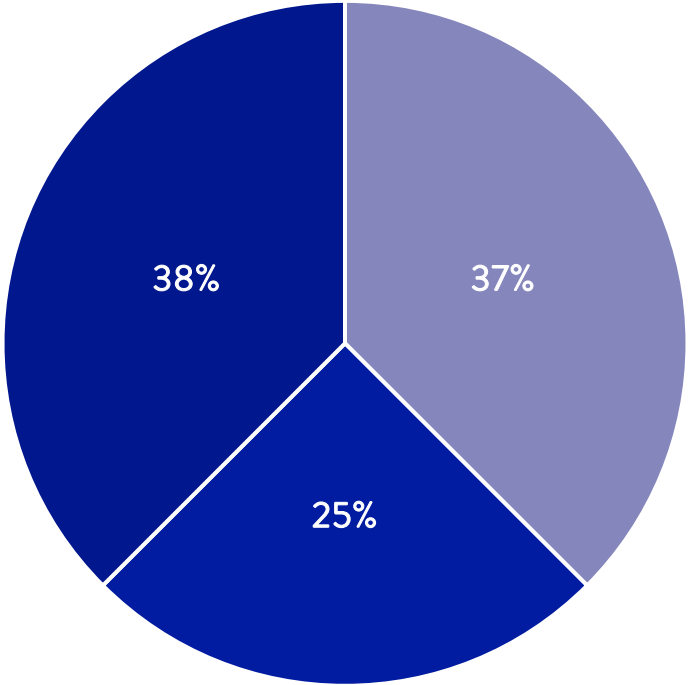
# Organizations Rely Heavily on Contributed Income

Overall respondents (N=45)



■ 1%-20% ■ 21%-40% ■ 41%-60% ■ 61%-80% ■ 81%-100%

Symphony respondents (N=8)

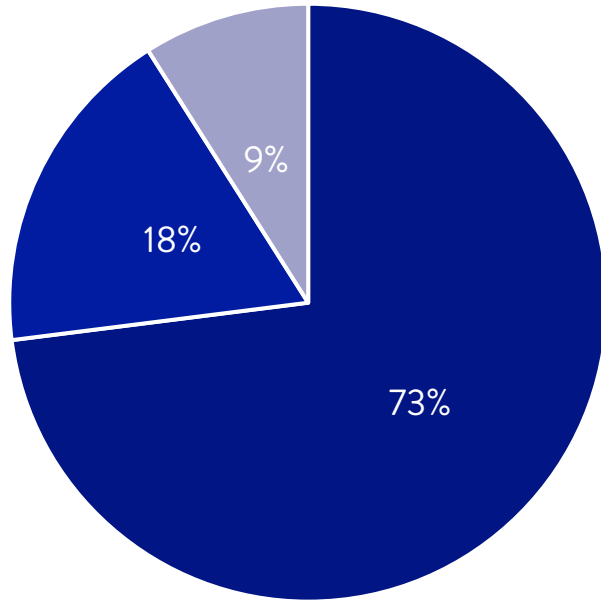


■ 1%-20% ■ 21%-40% ■ 41%-60% ■ 61%-80% ■ 81%-100%

# 50% Of Symphonies Expect to Increase their Total Fundraising

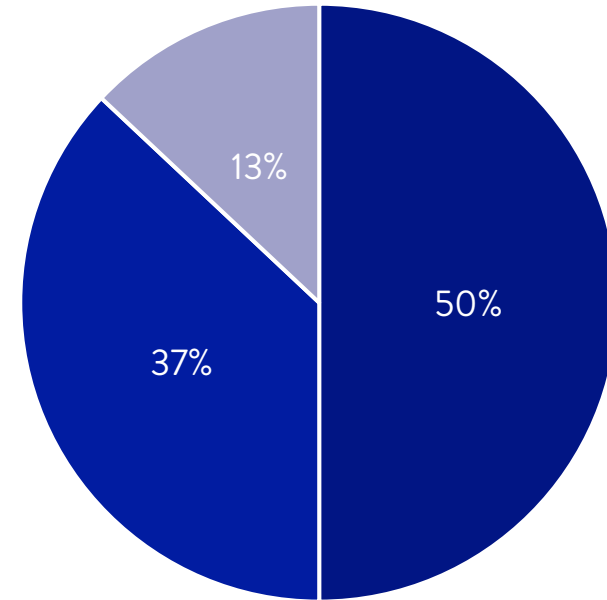
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Overall Respondents (N=45)



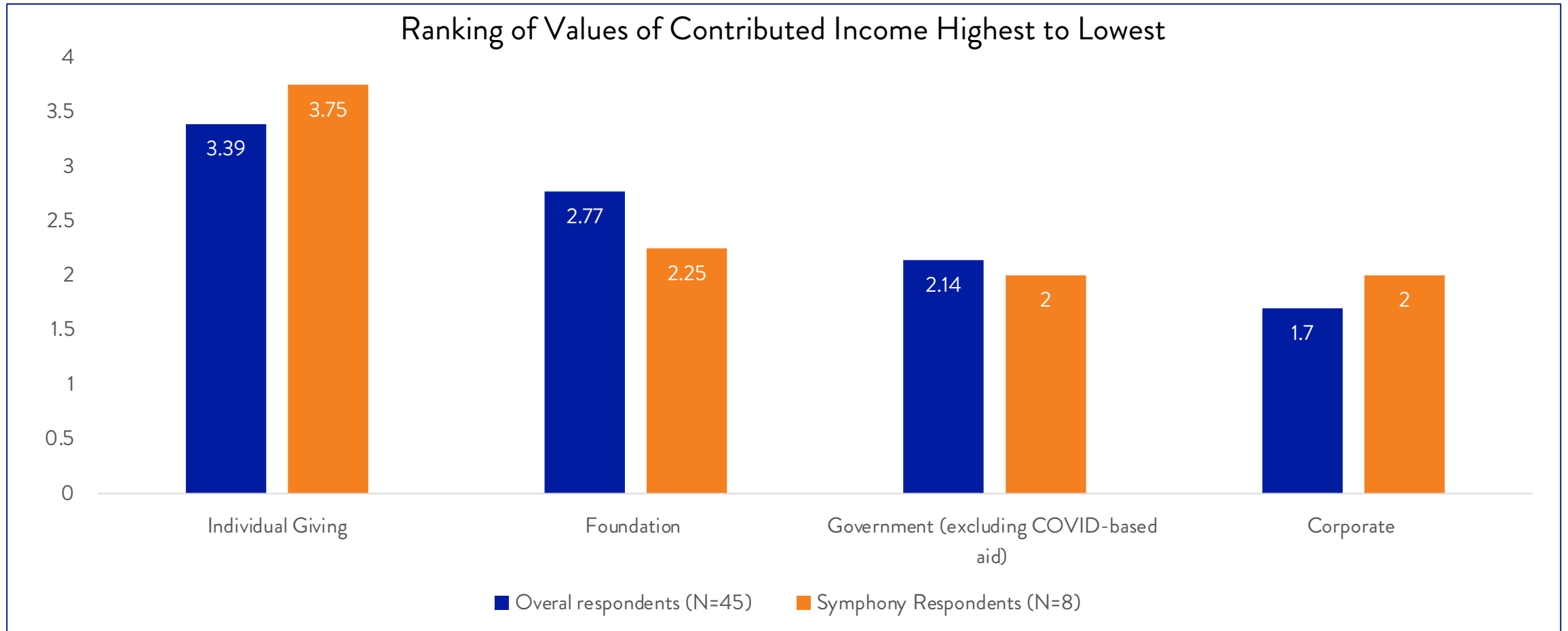
- Expect to receive an increased total fundraising amount this FY
- Expect to maintain the same total fundraising amount this FY
- Expect to receive an decreased total fundraising amount this FY

Symphony Respondents (N=8)

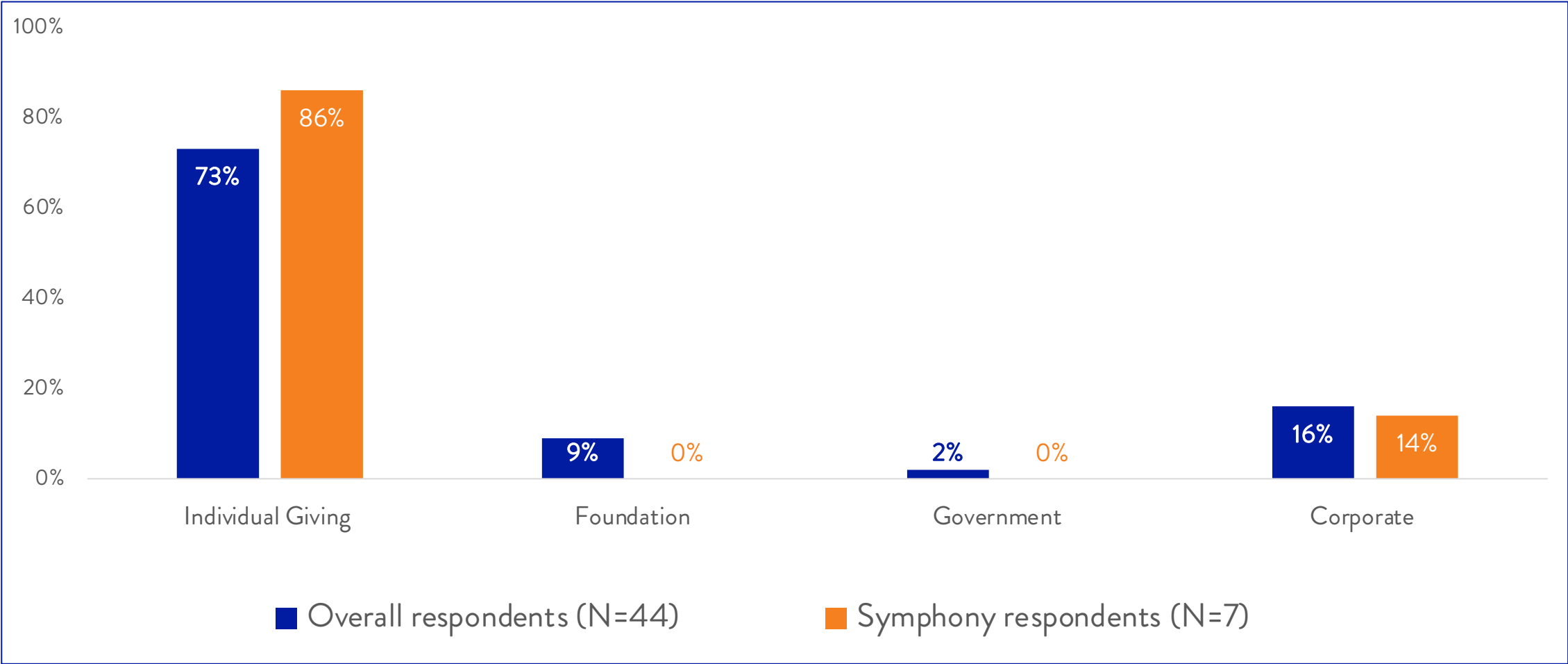


- Expect to receive an increased total fundraising amount this FY
- Expect to maintain the same total fundraising amount this FY
- Expect to receive an decreased total fundraising amount this FY

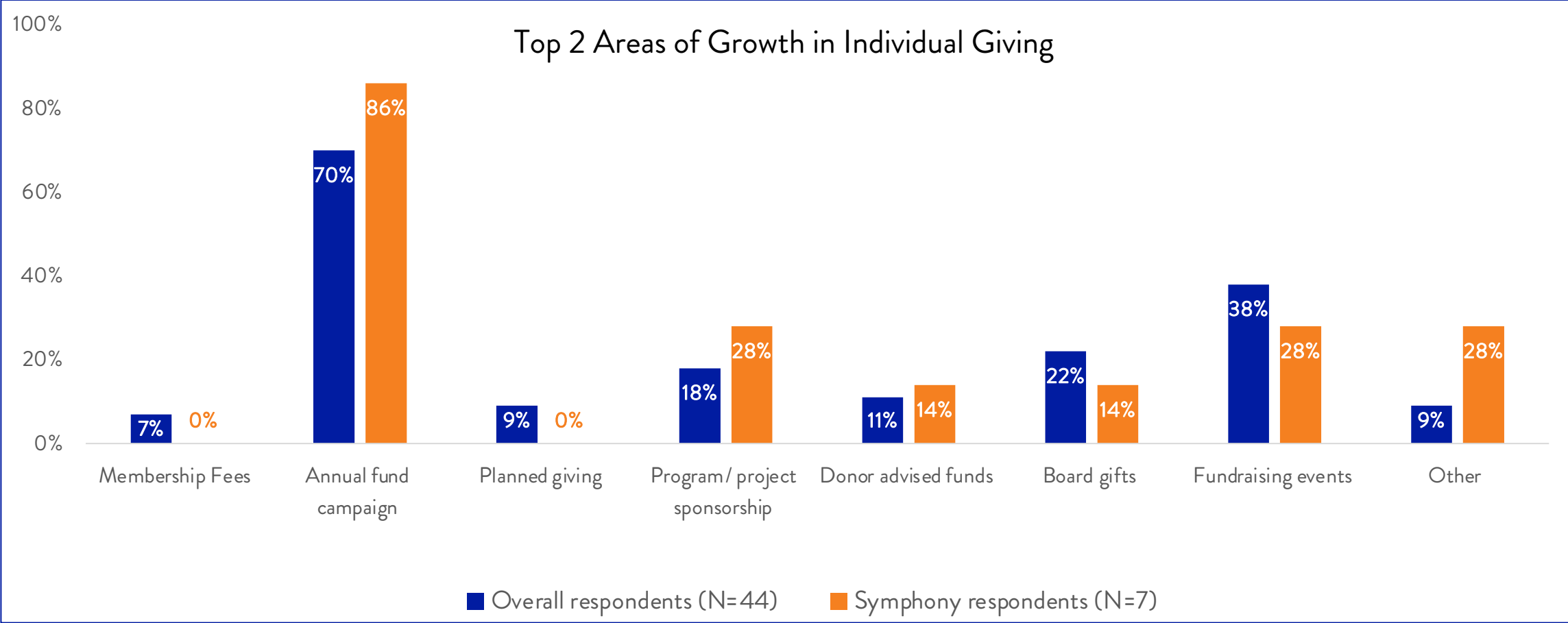
# Individual and Corporate Giving Are More Important to Symphonies



# Greatest Growth in Fundraising is Expected from Individual Giving



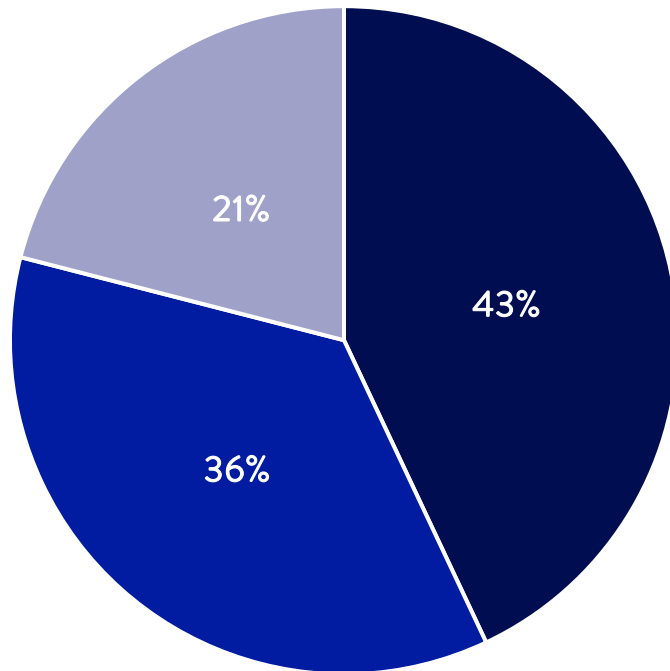
# Annual Fund Campaigns Are Growing in Importance for Individual Giving





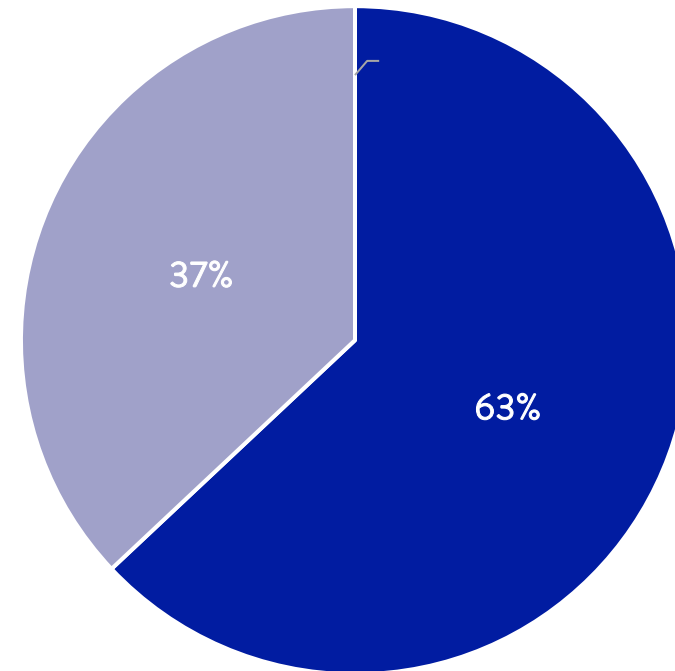
# Organizations Seem on Track with Funds Raised Compared to Last Year

Overall respondents (N=44)



- Ahead of where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised
- Same place as where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised
- Behind of where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised

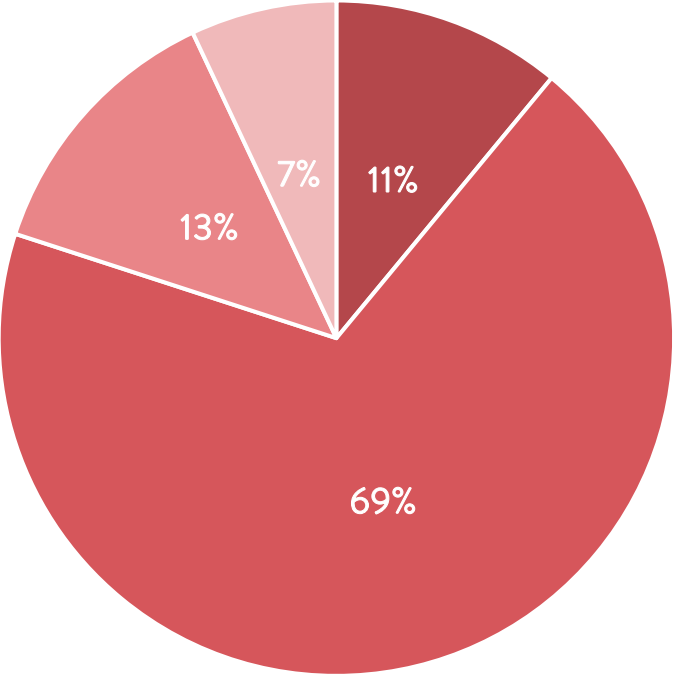
Symphony respondents (N=8)



- Ahead of where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised
- Same place as where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised
- Behind of where we were this time last year in terms of funds raised

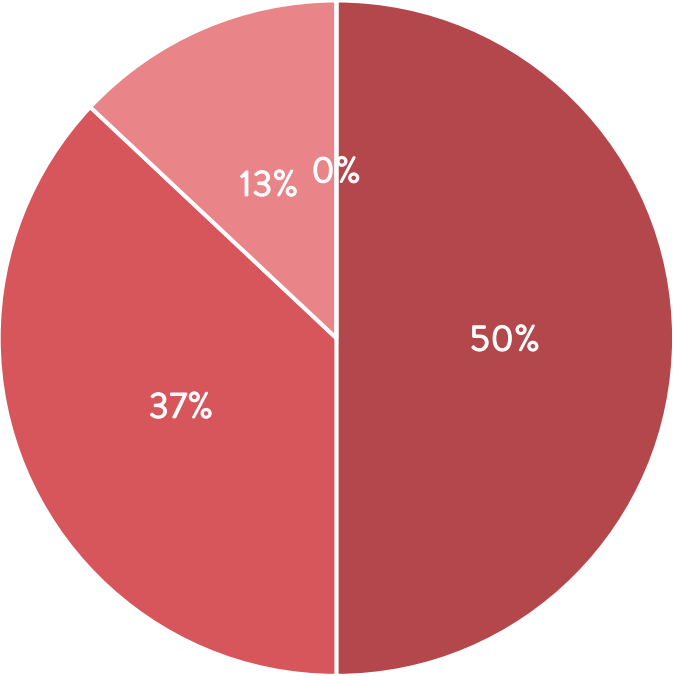
# Symphonies Seem More Wary About Effects of a Possible Recession

Overall respondents (N=45)



■ Extremely concerned      ■ Somewhat concerned  
■ Neither concerns nor unconcerned      ■ Somewhat unconcerned

Symphony respondents (N=8)



■ Extremely concerned      ■ Somewhat concerned  
■ Neither concerns nor unconcerned      ■ Somewhat unconcerned

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Fundraising in most recent FY



Recent Major Gift History



Individual Gift Overview



# Reference for Major Gifts Survey Questions

In the final section of this survey, we asked respondents to think about an **individual donor** who has recently made a significant major gift(s) that stands apart from their regular giving range.

## Survey Questions:

**Question 1:** On average, what was the amount of the major gift(s) that you received from this donor?

**Question 2:** Not including this recent stand-alone major gifts(s), what was the usual range of this donor's giving?

**Question 3:** What is the relationship of the individual donor who made this major gift(s) with your organization? (select all that apply)

**Question 4:** How long, has this specific donor been giving to your organization?

**Question 5:** How long, in years, did it take for this donor to jump from their regular giving range to this higher gift?

**Question 6:** Please describe what prompted this single larger gift for this specific donor. (Example: family event, something special the organization did etc.)

## Survey Inputs

### Gifts ranges:

- Under \$15,000
- \$15,000-\$24,999
- \$25,000-\$49,999
- \$50,000-\$99,999
- \$100,000-\$99,999
- \$500,000-\$999,999
- \$1,000,000-\$5,000,000
- Over \$5,000,000

### Time ranges:

- Under a year
- 1-5 years
- 5-10 years
- Over 10 years
- N/A this was their first gift

### Relationship to organization:

- Long term board member (over 5 years)
- Recent board member (Under 5 years)
- Long term member/ subscriber (over 5 years)
- Recent member (under 5 years)
- Annual donor (once or more annually)
- Frequent donor (more than 5 gifts over time)
- Annual event attendee (once or more annually)
- Frequent event attendee (more than 5 events over time)
- Relation to a board member
- Relation to a staff member
- Other ...

# Overview of Major Gift Trends

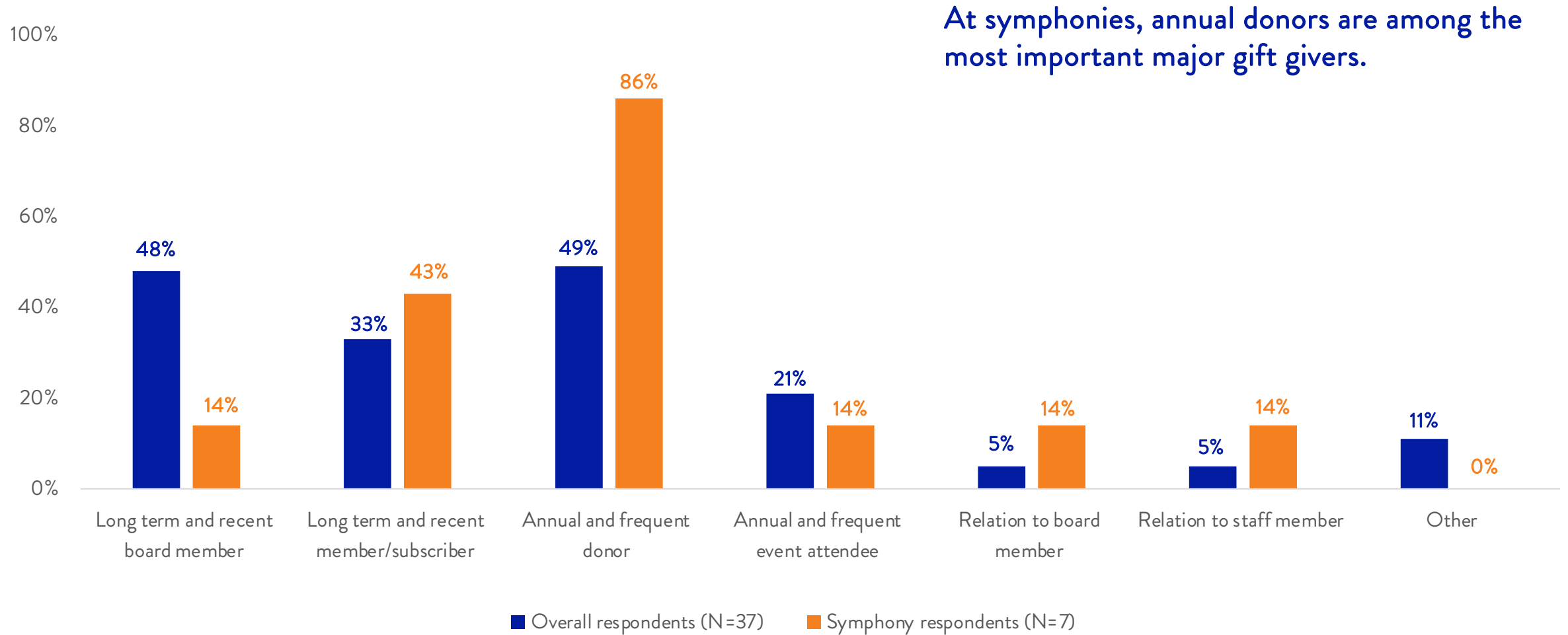
## Overall Insights:

- Unsurprisingly board members are ubiquitously the largest donors to organizations.
- No significant difference in board giving from long term vs. recent board members.
- Overall, donors listed have been giving for over 6 years.
- Unsurprisingly it took donors at the largest giving level (over \$1M) longer to make jump from their usual giving range with 37% taking over 6 years.
- It is faster to jump giving levels from lower to more mid-range gifts under \$100,000.
- The increment of growth is highest for gifts over \$1M – often 10 times more than usual giving
- The motivation that prompted jump to a larger gift is similar across all gift ranges.
- Most common motivation to jump to a larger gift is program related, finding a program donors are particularly interested in/ committed to.

## Takeaways:

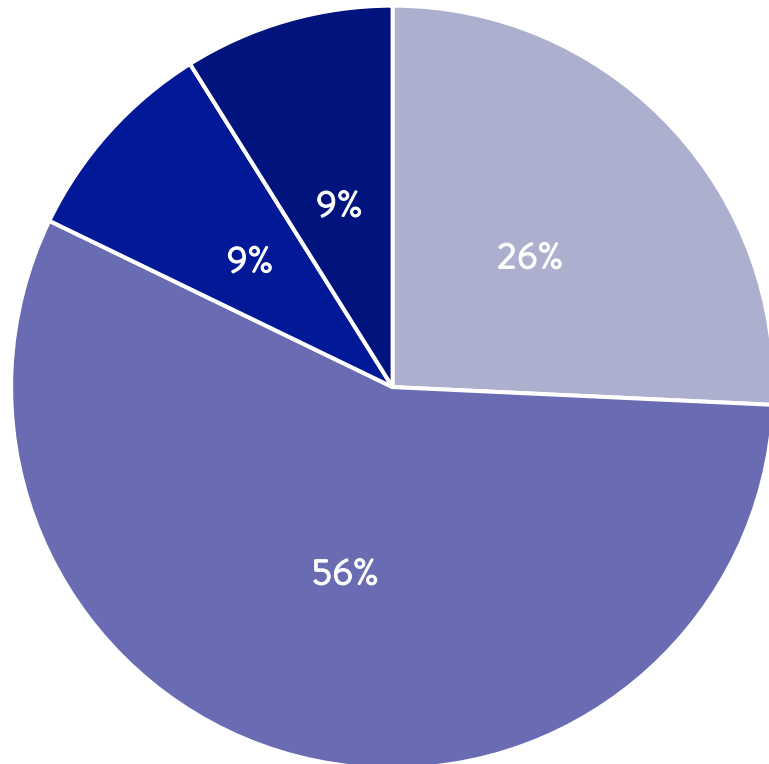
- ✓ Cannot rush stewardship process at any giving level.
- ✓ Getting people on the board and actively engaged is best indicator of likelihood to give and jump in their giving level.
- ✓ Some frequent event attendees jumped in giving levels, suggesting a potential pool of new and larger donors among attendees
- ✓ Finding personal interests of donors and connecting those to programs is strongest motivation for prompting larger gifts.

# Relationship to Organization of Individual Donor Who Made Recent Major Gift



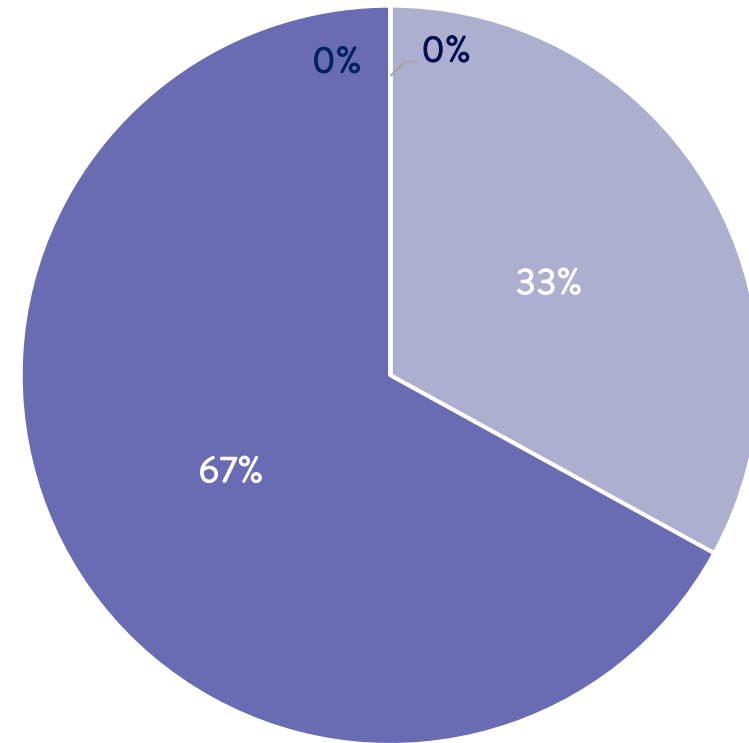
# Time, in Years, for Donors to Jump from Regular to Higher Gifts

Overall respondents (N=35)



■ Under a year ■ 1-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ Over 10 years

Symphony respondents (N=6)



■ Under a year ■ 1-5 years ■ 6-10 years ■ Over 10 years

# Quick Look at Overall Largest (\$1M+) Major Gift Histories

Gift Range: \$1M-\$5M+  
N=8

Median multiple from usual giving range to larger gift: **10 times**

## Where the gifts came from:

- 62% said gift came from long term board member (5 + years)
- 75% said gift came from either long-term board member or relation to board member
- 50% said gift came from either annual donor (once of more annually) or frequent donor

## How long have donors been giving:

- 50% said donor has been giving for over 10 years
- 25% said donor has been giving for 6-10 years
- 25% said donor has been giving for 1-5 years

## How long it took for donor to make jump to bigger gift:

- 37.5% said it took donor 6-10 years+ to make jump to bigger gift
- 50% said it took donor 1-5 years to make jump to bigger gift
- 12.5% said it took donor under a year to make jump to bigger gift

## Key takeaways:

- **Board Members and relations to board members** are most common donors of largest gift range.
- Donors making largest gift have overall **been giving to organizations for over 6 years.**
- It usually takes at least a year for donors to make a jump to a significantly larger gift. With over **37% taking 6+ years.**



# Quick Look at Overall Medium-Large (100K+) Gift Histories

Gift Range: \$100,000-\$999,999

N=7

Median multiple from usual giving range to larger gift: **6.67 times**

## Where the gifts came from:

- 71% said gift came from a connection to the board (long term, recent board, relation to a board member)
- 29% said gift came from members (recent or long-term member)
- 42% said gift came from annual or frequent event attendee

## How long have donors been giving:

- 43% said donor has been giving 10+ years
- 29% said donor has been giving 6-10 years
- Together, 71% said donor has been giving 6+ years
- 29% said donor has been giving 1-5 years

## How long it took for donor to make jump to bigger gift:

- 14% said it took donor 6-10 years to make jump to bigger gift
- 71% said it took donor 1-5 years to make jump to bigger gift
- 14% said it took donor under a year to make jump to bigger gift

## Key takeaways:

- **Board Members and relations to board members** are most common donors of medium—large gifts.
- Donors making gifts in this range have overall **been giving to organizations for over 6 years**.
- It usually takes at least a year for donors to make a jump to a significantly larger gift. **With 71% taking between 1-5 years.**

# Quick Look at Overall Medium (\$15K+) Gift Histories

Gift Range:\$15,000-\$99,999

N=12

Median multiple from usual giving range to larger gift: **4.38 times**

## Where the gifts came from:

- Together 50% of gifts in this range came from a board member (recent and long-term)
- 50% said gift came from a donor (annual and frequent donors)
- 25% said gift from frequent event attendees.
- 1 gift was listed as from a staff relation.

## How long have donors been giving:

- 42% said donor has been giving for over 10 years.
- 8% said donor has been giving 6-10 years.
- Together, 50% said donor has been giving for over 6 years.
- 42% said donor has been giving 1-5 years.
- 8% said donor has been giving for under a year.

## How long it took for donor to make jump to bigger gift:

- 50% said it took donor 1-5 years to make jump to bigger gift
- 50% said it took donor under a year to make jump to bigger gift

## Key takeaways:

- **Board Members and regular donors** are most common donors at this range.
- **Donors making gifts in this range vary** 50% have been giving over 6 years and 50% under 5 years.
- Much faster to grow this group's giving. All jumped to larger gifts under 5 years, **with 50% jumping under a year.**

# Quick Look at Overall Smaller (Under 15K) Gift Histories

Gift Range: Under \$15,000

N=10

Median multiple from usual giving range to larger gift : **1 time**

## Where the gifts came from:

- 60% said gifts in this range came from board members (long and recent)
- 60% said gifts in this range came from donors (annual and frequent)
- 20% said gifts in this range came from members (long and recent)
- 1 gift was listed as from a frequent event attendee
- 1 gift was listed as from an associated org

## How long have donors been giving:

- 60% said donor has been giving for 6+ years (1 over 10 years, 5 said 6-10 years)
- 30% said donor has been giving for 5 years or less (2 said 1-5 years, 1 under a year)
- 1 skipped

## How long it took for donor to make jump to bigger gift:

- 20% said it took donor over 6+ years to make jump to bigger gift
- 50% said it took donor 1-5 years to make jump to bigger gift
- 1 donor listed as taking under a year to make jump to bigger gift
- 2 skipped

## Key takeaways:

- **Board Members and regular donors** are most common donors at this range.
- Donors making gifts in this range have overall been **giving for over 6 years.**
- Much faster to grow this group's giving. **50% made jump in 1-5 years.**

# Detail on what prompted jump to larger gifts

<p><b>Overall reasons for giving at larger levels than usual (N= 29)</b></p> <p>Program Related = 9 (31%)</p> <p>Need/ love of org = 8 (28%)</p> <p>Moment of change org / right moment for donor = 6 (21%)</p> <p>In honor of... legacy= 4 (14%)</p> <p>Campaign/ endowment opportunity= 4 (14%)</p> <p>Peer ask/ right ask = 3 (10%)</p> <p>Tax break= 2 (7%)</p>	<p><b>Largest gifts (N=7) Over \$1M</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Related = 1</li> <li>• In honor of... legacy= 2</li> <li>• Need/ love of org =2</li> <li>• Campaign/ endowment opportunity=2</li> </ul>	<p><b>Medium- large gifts (N=4) \$100,000- \$999,999</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Related = 2</li> <li>• Moment of change org / right moment for donor = 1</li> <li>• Need/ love of org =1</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medium gifts (N=10) \$15,000- \$99,999</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Related = 4</li> <li>• In honor of... legacy=1</li> <li>• Moment of change org / right moment for donor = 1</li> <li>• Need/ love of org = 2</li> <li>• Tax break= 2</li> <li>• Peer ask/ right ask = 2</li> <li>• Campaign/ endowment opportunity= 2</li> </ul>	<p><b>Smaller - large Gifts (8) Under \$15,000</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Related = 2</li> <li>• In honor of... legacy= 1</li> <li>• Moment of change org / right moment for donor = 4</li> <li>• Need/ love of org = 3</li> </ul>

Fundraising in most recent FY



Recent Major Gift History



Individual Gift Overview



# Individual Gift Details

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**Gift Example: Over \$5,000,000**

Usual Gift Range: \$100,000-\$499,999

Relationship to organization: Long term board member (over 5 years)

How long giving to organization: Over 10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: Over 10 years

## What promoted this higher gift?

*Gift was made in memory of a past board president/ chairman. Capital Campaign and direct ask to make the gift in memory of the individual.*

**Gift Example: Over \$1,000,000-\$5,000,000**

Usual Gift Range: \$100,000-\$499,999

Relationship to organization: Long term board member (over 5 years)

How long giving to organization: Over 10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: 6-10 years

## What promoted this higher gift?

*Organization commitment to a program that they care about.*

# Individual Gift Details

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**Gift Example: \$500,000-\$999,999**

Usual Gift Range: \$25,000-\$49,999

Relationship to organization: Long term board member & annual event attendee

How long giving to organization: 6-10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: 6-10 years

***What promoted this higher gift?***

*Belief in our mission and the fact we've exceeded their expectations*

**Gift Example: \$100,000-\$499,999**

Usual Gift Range: \$25,000-\$49,999

Relationship to organization: Recent board member & recent member/subscriber

How long giving to organization: 1-5 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: under a year

***What promoted this higher gift?***

*We created a new giving program that is targeted to specifically help of our strategic plan initiatives.*

# Individual Gift Details

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**Gift Example: \$50,000-\$99,999**

Usual Gift Range: Under \$15,000

Relationship to organization: Long-term board member

How long giving to organization: Over 10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: 1-5 years

## What promoted this higher gift?

*Launched a special fund honoring a topic of high interest to donor.  
Then solicited support for a new building campaign.*

**Gift Example: \$25,000-\$49,999**

Usual Gift Range: Under \$15,000

Relationship to organization: Long-term member/subscriber, frequent donor & annual event attendee

How long giving to organization: 6-10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: Under a year

## What promoted this higher gift?

*Encouragement from peers who are board members and longtime donors. A desire to be part of a community of arts supporters was the key motivator.*



# Individual Gift Details

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**Gift Example: \$15,000-\$24,999**

Usual Gift Range: Under \$15,000

Relationship to organization: Long-term board member

How long giving to organization: Over 10 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: Under a year

**What promoted this higher gift?**

*We finally asked for something specific.*

**Gift Example: Under \$15,000**

Usual Gift Range: Under \$15,000

Relationship to organization: Frequent donor (over 5 gifts over time)

How long giving to organization: 1-5 years

How many years did it take for donor to jump to higher gift: 1-5 years

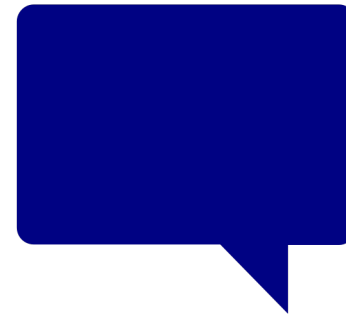
**What promoted this higher gift?**

*We found a program that not only matched their interests, but provided an opportunity for their input.*

# Appendix: Voices from the Field

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To inform our survey, we spoke to development leaders from 8 arts organizations and one arts donor, who shared valuable insights into the current challenges in major gift fundraising. The following pages contain a collection of anonymized quotes from those conversations.



# Appendix: Voices from the Field

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## Team Structures

**“Discovery staff” are critical to support relationship-building donor officers** “We currently have only one person in annual giving. I want her to have a discovery officer so we are connecting the discovery work to the lower/mid-level of giving and to major giving — and have time to steward these new relationships”.

**Ensure effective data management and prospect researching through dedicated roles to these capabilities:** “We have a contract data analysis person, and the budget to make this position full time. Looking forward to hiring a data scientist to find ways to identify those middle level donors who are more community minded and have the capacity to move up and willingness to go up.”

## Gift Type Trends

**Trend away from scheduled multi-year gifts:** “I noticed a real shift after 2008, people are more interested in a term for their pay-out without a clear pledge schedule. Or lots of ‘I’m giving you X now, and intend to give you Y later,’ so lots of second gifts in this campaign. The lion’s share, 80% were a typical 5-year payout, but with some outliers like some over 10 years.”

**Planned giving can fill in for fewer multi-year gifts, but is unpredictable:** “It basically took from the 80s to 2004 [for our major recent gift]. We knew we were in the will, but we didn’t realize we were the residual beneficiary. She had no heirs. She was collecting [art] for us and choosing to leave it to all us, so we collected around her personal interests. We have a variety of stories to tell like that.”

**Planned giving is also a good way to have blended giving:** “We’ve also used planned gifts to get people to give blended gifts: if they can’t give \$10 million now, we can have them do a \$7 million gift up front + \$3-5 million as a planned gift.”

**Recession is coming:** “The market is so volatile, and especially in this COVID period lots of people felt like the world was falling apart. And now we’re heading into a recession and that’s another time when it’s hard to get people to make multi-year pledges.”

# Appendix: Voices from the Field

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## Gift Type Trends (continued)

**Donors close to the organization are best positioned to make endowment gifts — especially post-COVID:** “Enlightened donors understand the importance of endowment for institutional longevity. So it’s a little easier to promote endowment giving.”

**There’s still opportunity for unrestricted gifts, even at high end:** “Right now if you name something in our building it has to be an unrestricted gift, with the benefit of the naming.” “We started a leadership fund giving circle at \$25K and up, just for general operating support.”

**Build unrestricted giving into the agreement:** “We always try to encourage unrestricted giving as much as possible. For example, we had an endowed guest conductor chair, which we don’t have every year — we had to write a gift agreement that made it clear that we would still receive the endowed funds if we didn’t have that position one year.”

**Donor Advised Funds growing, if frustrating to everyone:** “DAFs continue to grow and continue to be a challenge because people want their free wine and free stuff. The DAF charity doesn’t usually point out that you can’t get benefits. We have to continue to figure it out.”

## What Donors Care About: Relationships, Involvement in the Organization, and Community

**Directly from a donor:** “I want to get across my feeling about why I’m so engaged and interested in making the [organization 1] or [organization 2] something for which we can make a difference. It’s 1) the approach of someone like [donor officer], she’s a huge asset. And 2) there has to be an opportunity to participate. I was asked when I joined the board to chair a committee to improve our F&B offerings, and instantly I got to know staff and other board members (I had a background in agriculture and food). You need a feeling that you can contribute. And 3) in all of these orgs we’ve met like-minded people who we enjoy spending time with. They’re in our will now.”

# Appendix: Voices from the Field

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## Relationships

**Building relationships by saying ‘yes’:** “We pride ourselves on saying yes to anything that is reasonable that anyone wants. Bringing in 14 friends for a private 6am tour? Great! Unless it’s unethical we have a responsibility to.”

**Don’t surprise people:** “I tend not to be super aggressive about a number, and talk through the process. I’ve heard so many horror stories from my donors and they appreciate our approach. We’re up-front and not aggressively direct about it.”

**Tell people when you are going to ask for money and when you will not:** “I travel a lot to solicit donors — we have a national audience. If I want to go to make an ask, I will tell them I am going to make an ask. If I just want to see them to be social, I’ll make that clear as well. I value the relationship with these donors — they need to know most of the time we get together we will talk about *[the art form]* and 1 or 2 times a year they will have that solicitation and go into the meeting knowing what it is.”

## Involvement in the Organization

**Providing access to artists** “We host loads and loads of parties that people come to in the summer. Sitting next to an artist or apprentice — those are the things we do that move people along.”

## Community

**Appeal to civic responsibility:** “We call them ‘civic rent checks.’ Support your city and state. Businesses can have better employment offers thanks to us because we play into the ecosystem. We use strong messaging about the role we play and how little we get from the state and from the federal government for the arts.”

**Build a sense of community through events** “We host 14 people dinners: 14 people who are alike in some way (e.g., 14 female CEOs), plus me and Director-only staff. We do these all the time on campus. They are fun — and people are dining with a mix of people they know and don’t know.”

# Appendix: Voices from the Field

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## Community (continued)

**Build social ties:** “Where you see people who perhaps don’t have a history of giving step forward is because they are looking for social connectivity with their peers. They are looking to make friends, they are new to the city — maybe retired and looking for like-minded individuals to make friends.”

**Give prospective donors a taste of the community:** “What we generally do is plug prospecting events into our existing donor benefit events. For example, I encourage our gift officers to invite prospects to our ‘Meet the Artists’ events to give them a taste of being ‘part of the family.’”

## Show the Results

**Reporting is key:** “‘Why did your money matter’ — we do these reports every year, send out 60 endowment reports. I report to our board as often as I can, reporting on our endowment. They usually have far more means than they are actually giving. And we talk about total impact — donors are data driven and impact data is showing what they have made possible.”

**Market gifts effectively to inspire additional giving:** “Musician endowed chairs is the number one attractive funding opportunity for donors in our universe. When we receive those, we publicize them to the degree that the donor will allow us to, so that it will inspire other donors to do the same.”