SECF Member Survey: What you told us

As part of last year’s membership market analysis, SECF also made sure to ask members key questions about their makeup and mission, their grantmaking and what they would like to see from SECF in the future.

Here’s what we learned...

Methodology: Results are from a membership market analysis conducted in July/August 2016 for SECF by Geo Strategy Partners. The information provided is derived from responses provided by 206 people representing 148 SECF member organizations.
Most SECF members have relatively small full-time staffs

- 63% of members have five or fewer people on staff.
- Community foundations had the most, averaging 11.5 full-time employees.
- Family foundations had the least, averaging 4.3 full-time employees.

Staffs and boards are steadily changing. Over the last three years...

- 29% of members have hired a new executive director.
- 60% of members have added at least one person to their board.
- 65% of members have added new staff.
The SECF Network: Growing, Vibrant & Connected
In the last 5 years, assets and grantmaking continue to show solid growth

- **9.1%** average increase in assets
- **9.5%** average increase in grantmaking

**WHY?**
Most cited reasons include favorable market conditions and successful investments

Most SECF member foundations would be considered millennials

- **64%** of SECF members were established in 1981 or later

**ON AVERAGE...**
- Health legacy foundations are the youngest
- Independent foundations have been active the longest

SECF members are strongly connected to other networks of grantmakers

- **68%** of SECF members belong to another grantmaker support organization
The Appeal & Advantages of SECF Membership
What are the biggest draws of SECF membership?

53% of members said networking with fellow organizations and peers

26% of members said learning and educational resources

Top-rated SECF member benefits included...

82% Networking opportunities
59% Leadership development
55% Access to SECF staff
54% SECF’s weekly e-newsletter, Connect
53% Legislative updates
51% Webinar/teleconference opportunities
46% Constituency events

Results indicate the percentage of respondents who placed the benefit among their top 3 choices.
SECF’s public policy engagement is a high priority – especially at the federal level

67% believe SECF should communicate regularly with national policymakers

62% want SECF to share official positions with federal policymakers

60% want SECF to meet with national policymakers on members’ behalf

58% want SECF to develop strong relationships with members of Congress

When educating policymakers, the charitable deduction is the top policy issue for most SECF members...

63% of members believe protecting the present value of the charitable deduction should be one of SECF’s top priorities.

... but community foundations are also concerned about another issue

71% of community foundation members believe SECF should prioritize expanding the IRA charitable rollover to donor-advised funds.

Results indicate the percentage of respondents who placed the issue among their top 3 priorities
The networking opportunities alone make this membership valuable. Learning opportunities and peer to peer meetings help me feel supported in my work.
“Networking with other foundation colleagues from our region is important to us, given our shared context, culture and – as in the case in many communities in the Southeast – similar challenges such as limited private philanthropic dollars, stark health disparities, and structural inequalities.”

“We, the board members, think SECF keeps us abreast of the trends, rules, and serves as a resource for questions and information to better serve our foundation. We have also gained friendships and inspiration from the fellow members.”

“SECF provides services, resources, and benefits that assists our foundation in governance, training, and leadership development.”

“The staff is very responsive, thoughtful, and the communications and trainings they provide are impeccable.”

“Lots of bang for the buck from a small staff that knows how to leverage powerful and knowledgeable members.”

“The networking opportunities alone make this membership valuable. Learning opportunities and peer to peer meetings help me feel supported in my work.”
Looking Toward the Future
Most members want to hear a variety of perspectives through SECF events and programs

- **75%** want to learn about viewpoints different from their own
- **59%** would like to have their views challenged
- **53%** see SECF as a space where diverse points of view can be freely expressed

The top SECF offerings members said they’d like to see in the future...

- **62%** Successful grantmaker collaborations
- **52%** Next-gen education/leadership succession planning
- **41%** Governance & trustee education opportunities
- **39%** Mission & impact investing
- **36%** Diversity, equity & inclusion within philanthropy

Results indicate the percentage of respondents who placed the offering among their top 3 choices