In 2011, 2,491 foundations called Los Angeles County home, one of every three foundations in California. They held assets of $41.5 billion—more than 40% of all California foundation assets—and accounted for $1.9 billion in giving, or nearly 30% of the grantmaking dollars of all California foundations.

Los Angeles foundations were hard hit by the “Great Recession,” but assets and giving are slowly nearing their pre-recession levels.

Most Los Angeles foundations are young, having been established in the last 20 years.²

The more recently established foundations, with living donors or their families in control, have giving levels as a share of their assets that are twice those of foundations created before 1980. These newer foundations are frequently a vehicle by which individuals make contributions with the intent to make grants in the near term. If the endowments of these foundations grow over their life-cycle, as earlier established foundations have, the future capacity of LA foundations will be robust, and even greater than it is today.

1 Fiscal data is based on The Foundation Center’s grantmaking database (circa 2011), which includes all independent and family, corporate, community and operating foundations that reported giving. Excluded from these figures are approximately 15,000 foundations that did not report giving in their latest fiscal year. Prior year data is not inflation adjusted.

² Based on The Foundation Center’s survey of grantmaking foundations with at least $1 million in assets or making grants of $100,000 or more in 2010-2011.
A handful of the largest foundations in Los Angeles hold the great majority of foundation assets and are responsible for most foundation giving.

By Total Assets

- J. Paul Getty Trust $10.48 B
- The California Endowment $3.66 B
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation $2.13 B
- Eli & Edythe Broad Foundation $1.69 B
- Annenberg Foundation $1.53 B
- The Norton Simon Foundation $1.31 B
- California Community Foundation $1.20 B
- W.M. Keck Foundation $1.02 B
- The Ahmanson Foundation $938.7 M
- The California Wellness Foundation $794.3 M

By Total Giving

- Annenberg Foundation $179.1 M
- California Community Foundation $131.2 M
- Eli & Edythe Broad Foundation $120.7 M
- The California Endowment $116.3 M
- Wells Fargo Foundation $107.5 M
- Conrad N. Hilton Foundation $81.7 M
- W.M. Keck Foundation $52.2 M
- The California Wellness Foundation $41.6 M
- The Ahmanson Foundation $37.3 M
- Weingart Foundation $33.4 M

Grantmaking in Focus

Funding priorities in Los Angeles are similar to those of California foundations as a whole. Education was the top funding area of LA foundations with Health coming in second. Human Services received 30% of grants but only 12% of grant dollars, reflecting the smaller size of grants that are targeted to small and mid-sized human service nonprofits.

DISTRIBUTION OF GRANT DOLLARS BY SUBJECT CATEGORY

- Education: 36%
- Health: 28%
- Human Services: 12%
- Arts & Culture: 11%
- Public Affairs, Society Benefit: 5%
- Environment and Animals: 2%
- Other: 6%

DISTRIBUTION OF NUMBER OF GRANTS BY SUBJECT CATEGORY

- Education: 18%
- Health: 24%
- Human Services: 30%
- Arts & Culture: 12%
- Public Affairs, Society Benefit: 5%
- Environment and Animals: 3%
- Other: 5%

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3 The J. Paul Getty Trust is an operating foundation that includes the Getty Conservation Institute, Getty Foundation, J. Paul Getty Museum, and Getty Research Institute.

4 All figures in the Grantmaking in Focus section are based on The Foundation Center grants sample (circa 2011), which includes all the grants of $10,000 or more awarded to organizations by a sample of 1,122 larger U.S. foundations. For community foundations, only discretionary grants are included. Grants to individuals are not included.