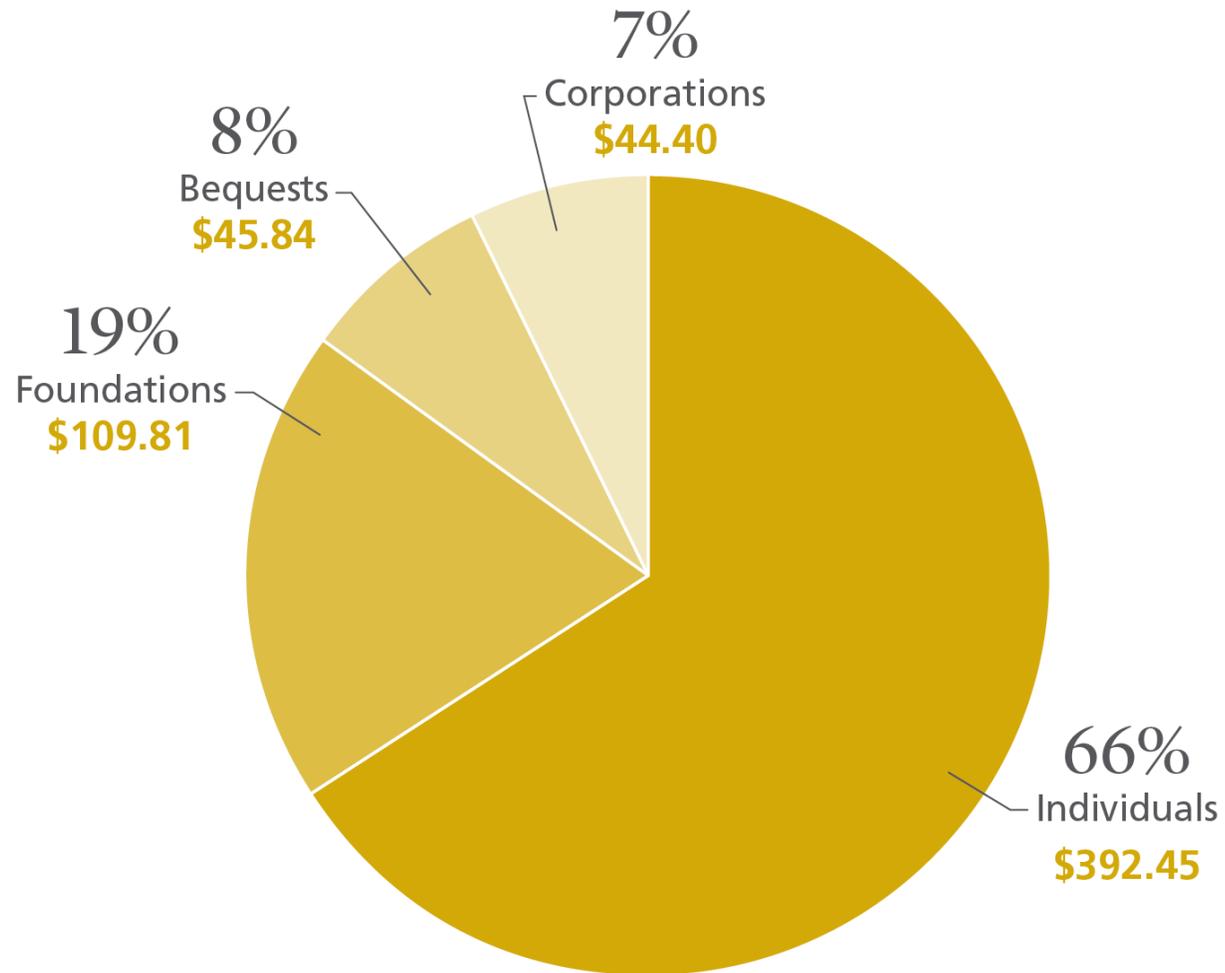# Creating and Maintaining a Culture of Philanthropy

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Brad Cecil &
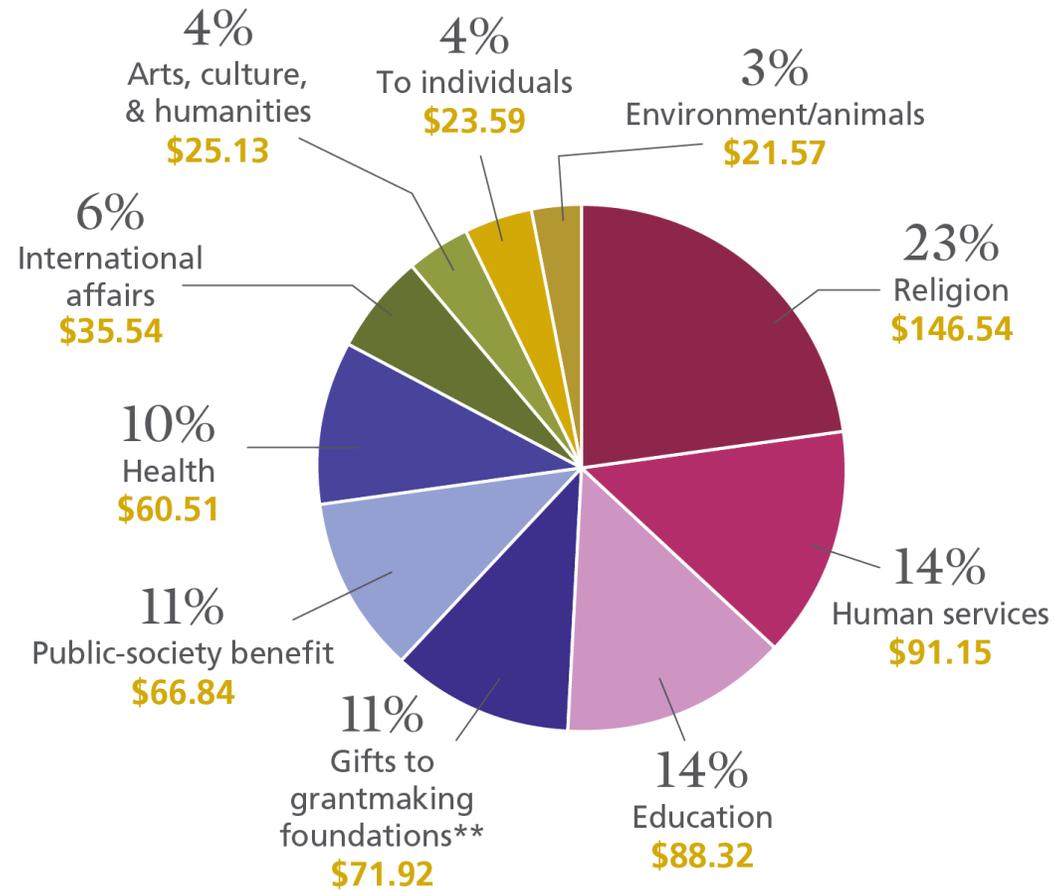A S S O C I A T E S

Philanthropy

= Philos + Anthropos

Translation: the love of mankind

2024 contributions: $592.50 billion by source of contributions

(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)

7%
Corporations
$44.40

8%
Bequests
$45.84

19%
Foundations
$109.81

66%
Individuals
$392.45

Researched and written by LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY — INDIANA UNIVERSITY

2024 contributions: $592.50 billion by type of recipient organization*

(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)

4%
Arts, culture, & humanities
$25.13

4%
To individuals
$23.59

3%
Environment/animals
$21.57

6%
International affairs
$35.54

23%
Religion
$146.54

10%
Health
$60.51

11%
Public-society benefit
$66.84

14%
Human services
$91.15

11%
Gifts to grantmaking foundations**
$71.92

14%
Education
$88.32

* Total includes unallocated giving, defined as the difference between giving by source and recipient categories. Unallocated giving totaled -$38.60 billion in 2024.

** Estimates developed by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy using data provided by Candid.

What *Is* a Culture of Philanthropy?

Shared ownership of fundraising and stewardship

Mission-first: fundraising is fuel, not a burden

Relationship-focused: donors are partners, not ATMs

Shared responsibility: everyone has a role; everyone acts as an ambassador for the mission

Consistent gratitude: donors feel seen, valued, and appreciated

Common Misconceptions

"Only the Executive Director raises money."

"Our board members aren't comfortable asking."

"We're too small for this."

"Everyone already knows we need money."

"We just need to get our story out there."

Why a Culture of Philanthropy Matters

- You multiply your fundraising capacity without hiring first

- Programs improve because staff see donors as partners, not pressures

- Fuels fundraising and deeper relationships because donors feel more connected

- Builds mission alignment across all roles

- Strengthens sustainability and donor trust

Everyone Has a Role to Play

Leadership: Model and communicate philanthropy values

Board: Advocate and connect networks

Staff: Live gratitude through daily interactions

Volunteers: Represent generosity to the community

Ways to Support – No Ask Required

Only a small number of people need to be "askers."
The rest support the pipeline.

| *Ambassador:* **Builds awareness and invites others to learn** |
| Examples: sharing posts, inviting friends to events, introducing a potential donor |

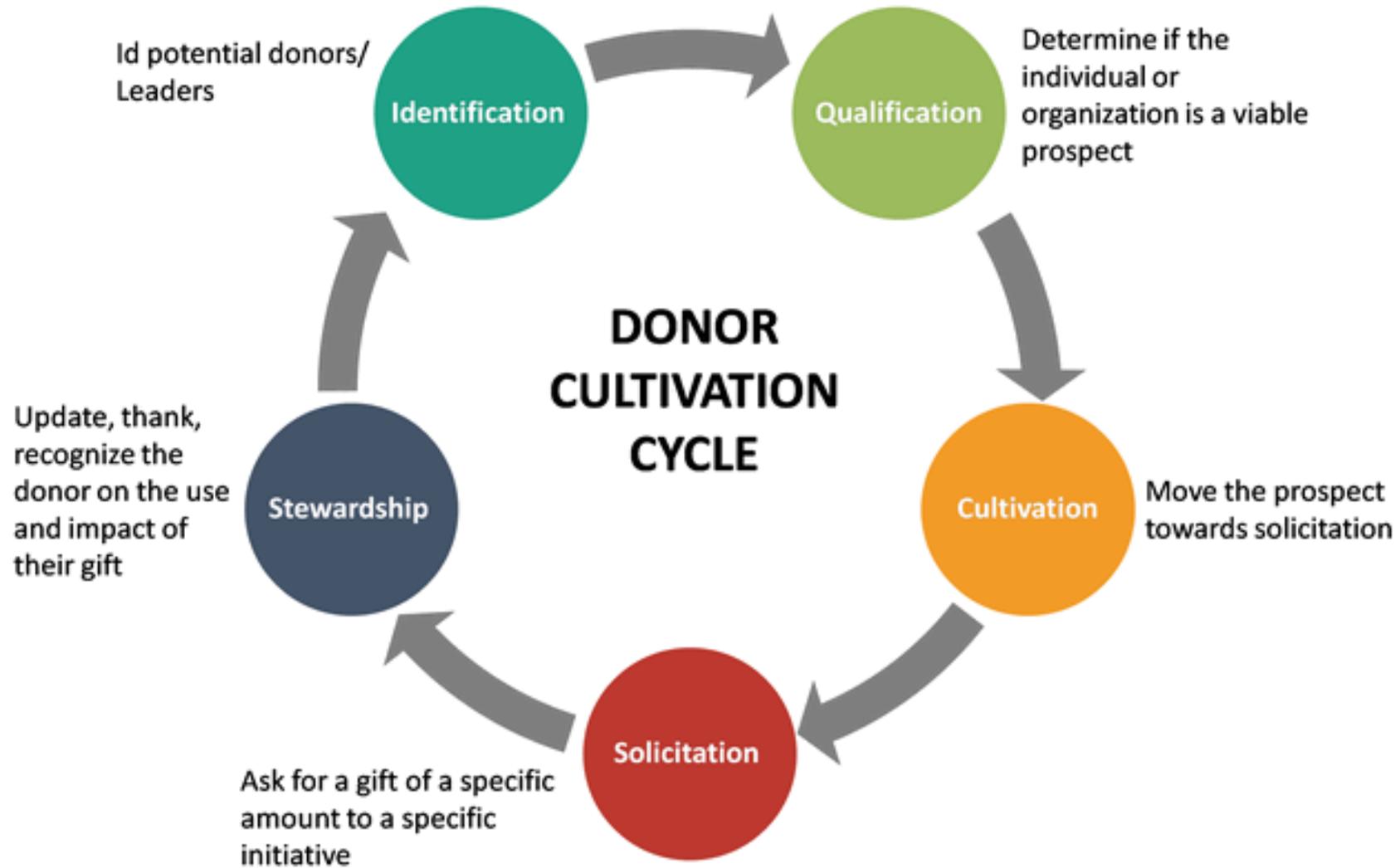| *Storyteller:* **Connects mission to impact** |
| Examples: program staff providing stories, ED sharing wins in newsletters |

| *Steward:* **Makes donors feel appreciated** |
| Examples: handwritten notes, thank-you calls, photos from the field |

| *Connector:* **Links donors to mission moments** |
| Examples: tours, site visits, virtual briefings |

Id potential donors/
Leaders

Identification

Qualification — Determine if the individual or organization is a viable prospect

DONOR CULTIVATION CYCLE

Cultivation — Move the prospect towards solicitation

Update, thank, recognize the donor on the use and impact of their gift

Stewardship

Ask for a gift of a specific amount to a specific initiative

Solicitation

Source: Association of Fundraising Professionals

Where to Begin

- Assess current culture, readiness and define shared values
  - *Handout: Culture of Philanthropy Self-Assessment*

- Educate staff in recording impact stories; normalize donor visits
  - *Handout: Story Collection Template*

- Provide impact stories and key messaging to board

- Integrate philanthropy into onboarding and communications across all teams

- Celebrate board participation and team contributions, not just giving milestones

- Clarify roles, communicate responsibilities and provide tools

Examples

- Start small/sustainable; be consistent

- Thank donors within 48 hours

- Handwritten thank you notes/Thank-A-Thon

- Quarterly impact update

- A stewardship touchpoint twice a year

- Monthly staff and board "philanthropy moment"

- Regularly scheduled engagement opportunities
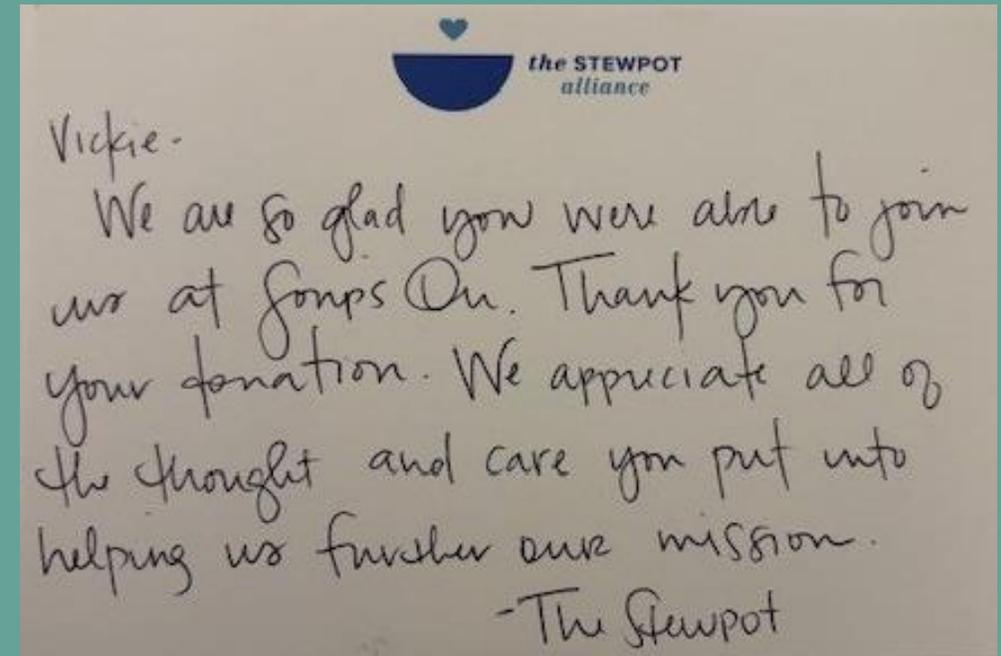
Maintaining a Culture of Philanthropy

Time Allocation

- 50% running the organization; 25% development; 25% board management

- Prioritize consistent stewardship and team check-ins; protect relationship-building

- Balance between donor relationships, internal collaboration, and deep work time

- Use batching and shared calendars for collaboration

Maintaining a Culture of Philanthropy

Annual Planning

- Integrate culture-building goals into annual fundraising plans

- Build in training, recognition, and reflection opportunities

- Schedule recurring culture-focused check-ins, all-staff engagement activities, and recognition moments

- Integrate philanthropy milestones into your calendar

- *Handout: Annual Planning Template*

- *Handout: Donor Pipeline & Stewardship Tracker*

Maintaining a Culture of Philanthropy

Reporting

Keep it VERY simple to help board see and feel the culture shift:

Annual Measurement	Year-to-Date	Goal
Total $ raised		
# Gifts		
# Donors		
# Stewardship touchpoints per month		
# Introductions made by board		
# Introductions made by staff		
# New donors through introduction		
Donor retention Y/O/Y		
Board self-reported participation		

Key Takeaways

A culture of philanthropy does **not** mean everyone asks for money. It means everyone:

- Values donors

- Tells the mission through impact stories

- Helps deepen relationships through shared ownership

- Celebrates generosity and shared values to build momentum

Thank You

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