



Everything You Need to Know About DAFs in 2026

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DAF 101

the basics to
get you started

Supporting the Arts
Education & Community



William Barstow,
founder of the first
donor advised fund

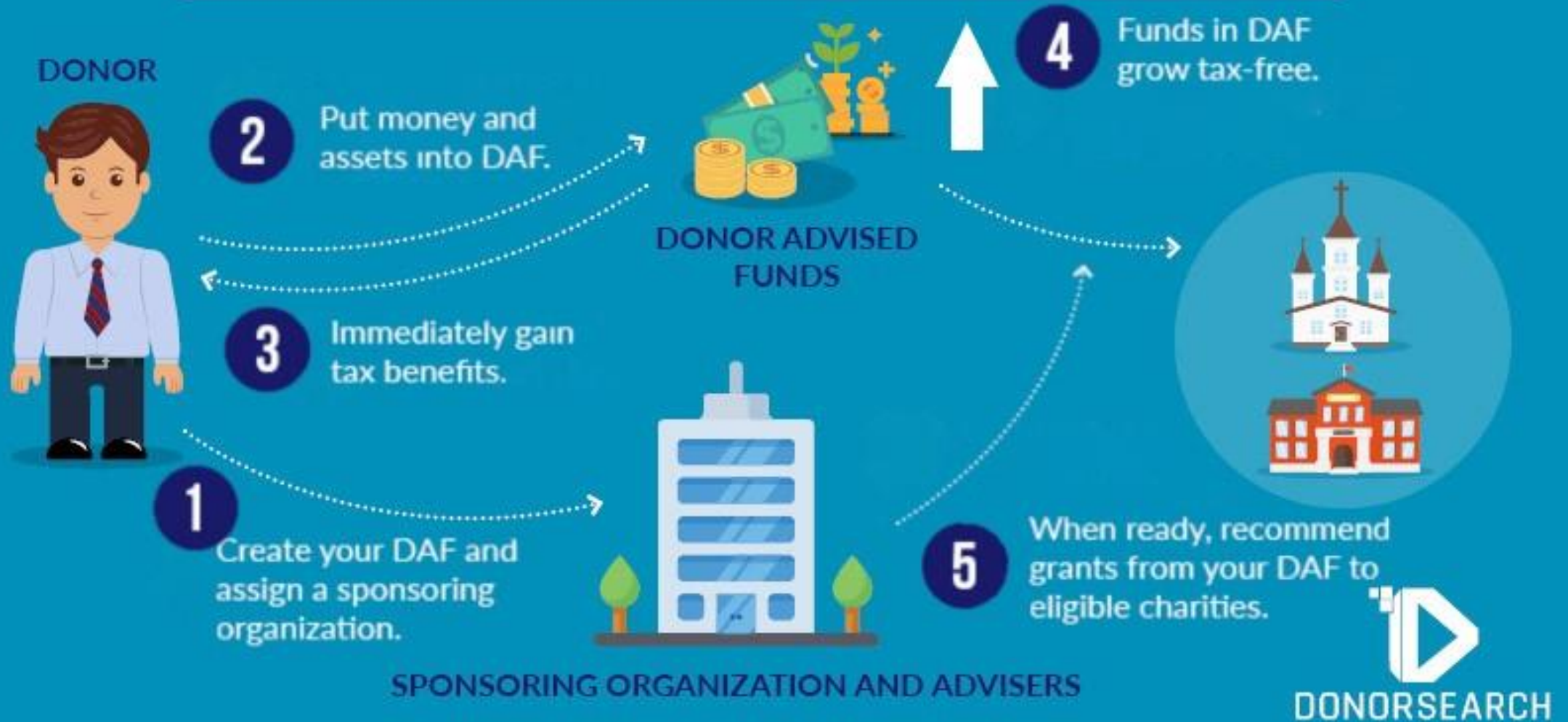
**CHOOSE YOUR CAUSE
LEAVE YOUR LEGACY**

1ST DONOR ADVISED FUND 1931

What are DAFs?

- Charitable savings account
- No distribution requirements
- Provides philanthropic advising
- Accessible
- \$326B invested in DAFs
- \$64B in grants from DAFs
- 3.5M DAF accounts
- \$91,000 average account

HOW DONOR ADVISED FUNDS WORK



DONORSEARCH

FIGURE 3.1D
Total Assets in DAFs (\$ in billions)



TABLE 3.2B**DAFs and Private Foundations' Grants and Assets (\$ in billions)**

Metric		DAFs (FY)	Private Foundations (CY)
Total Grants	2024	\$64.89	\$118.50
	2023	\$54.54	\$112.44
Total Assets	2024	\$326.45	\$1,625.33
	2023	\$255.99	\$1,455.11
Payout Rate		25.3%	8.1%

Note: The numbers presented in this table use FYs for contributions from DAFs (from this report) and CYs for private foundation giving (from FoundationMark, 2025). All are current dollars. The payout rate is calculated using the report's primary calculation method.

TABLE 3**DAF Metric Overview (\$ in billions except where noted)**

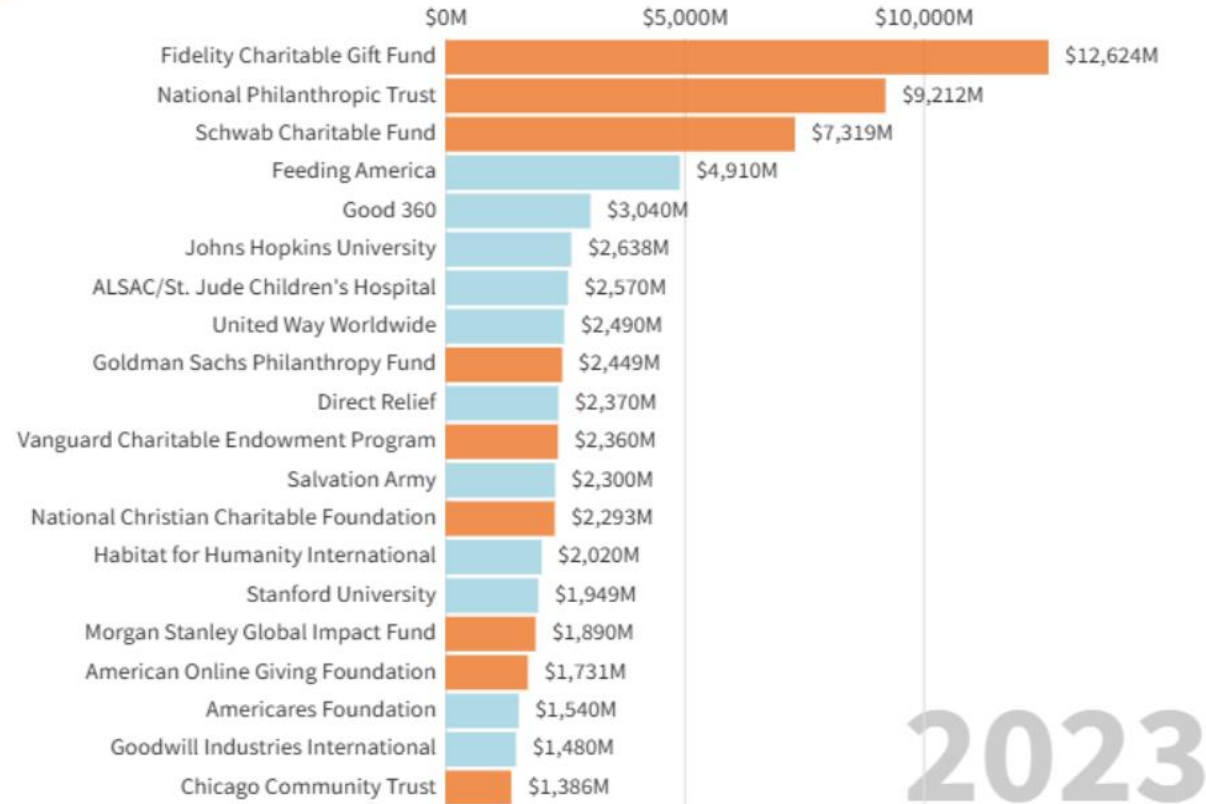
	2023	2024	Percent Change
Number of DAF Accounts	3,009,918	3,562,623	18.4%
Total Contributions	\$65.29	\$89.64	37.3%
Total Grants	\$54.54	\$64.89	19.0%
Total Assets	\$255.99	\$326.45	27.5%
Payout Rate	24.1%	25.3%	1.3 percentage points
Average DAF Account Size	\$85,009*	\$91,611*	7.8%

**Amount as shown.*

Note: Metrics are rounded for presentation; values and percentage changes may not sum precisely due to rounding.

20 U.S. Charities Receiving the Most Contributions

■ Operating Charity
■ Donor-Advised Fund



2023

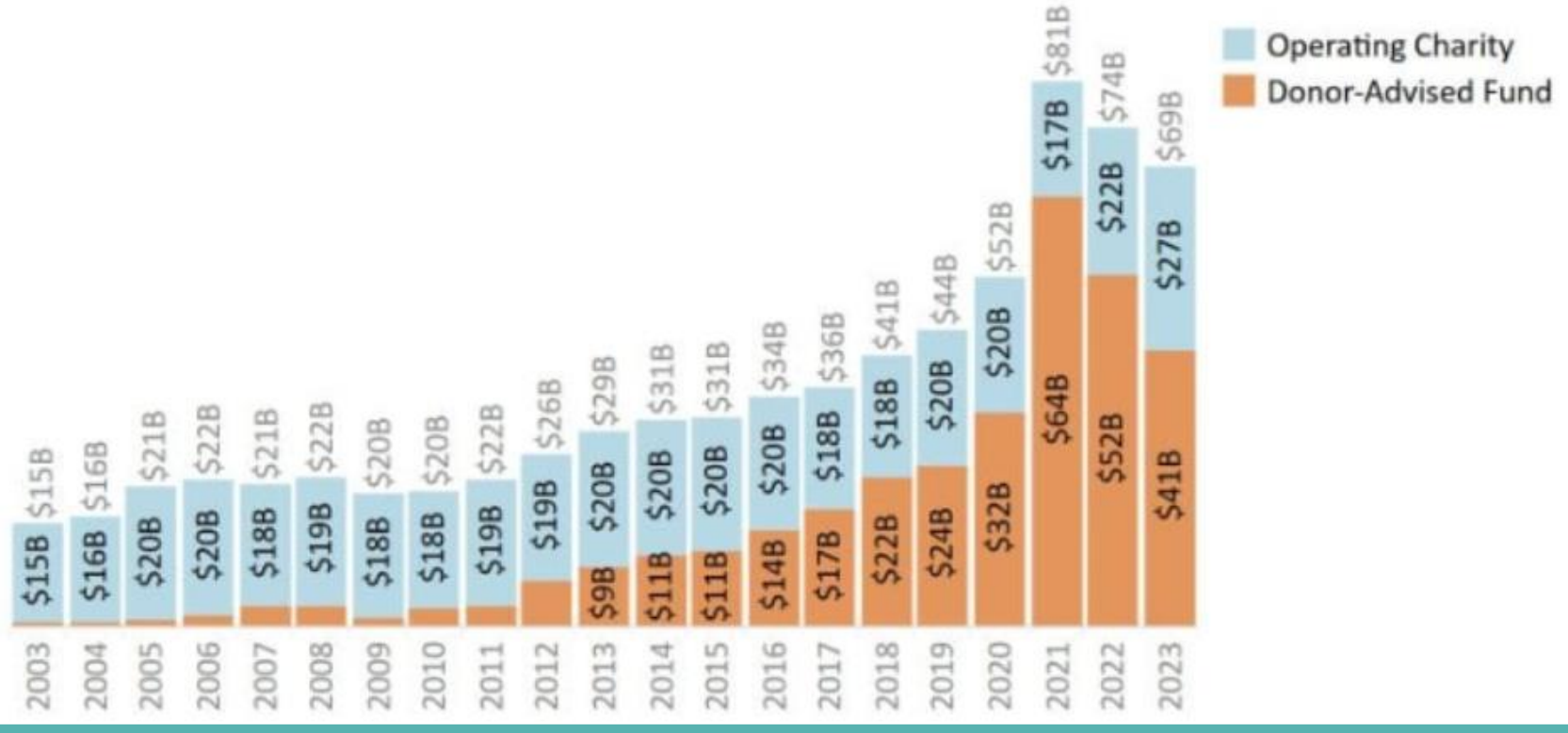


1990 1992 1994 1997 1999 2001 2003 2005 2007 2009 2011 2013 2015 2017 2019 2021

Visualization by the Institute for Policy Studies. Estimated DAF and university contributions are from an IPS analysis of Form 990 returns, publicly available from the IRS. Estimated contributions to other organizations are from Forbes' list of America's Top Charities. Both sets of estimates include only private contributions (no government grants) and exclude religious organizations (which are not required to report financial data).

Made with Flourish • Create a bar chart race

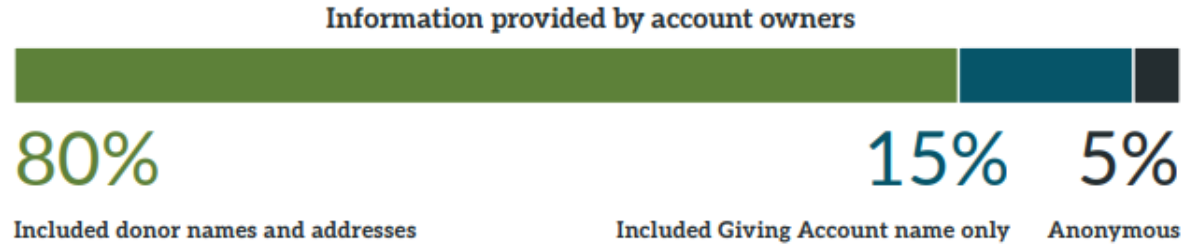
Contributions to the Top 20 U.S. Charities



New Research Findings

A committed and transparent community

Fidelity Charitable donors openly supported the nonprofits that matter to them, with 95% of grants including the account name or the recommending donor's name and address. Only a small percentage of grants were made anonymously.

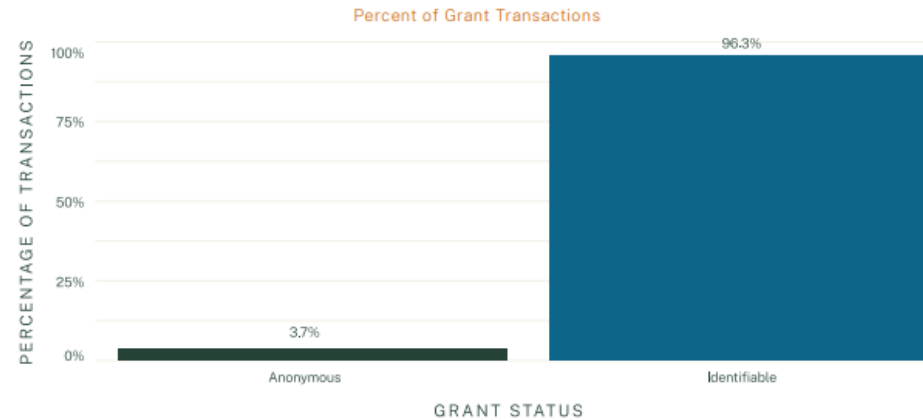


SECTION 5.6

DAF Grants: Anonymity

Anonymous Grants: Transactions and Dollars

FIGURE 5.6



SECTION 2.5

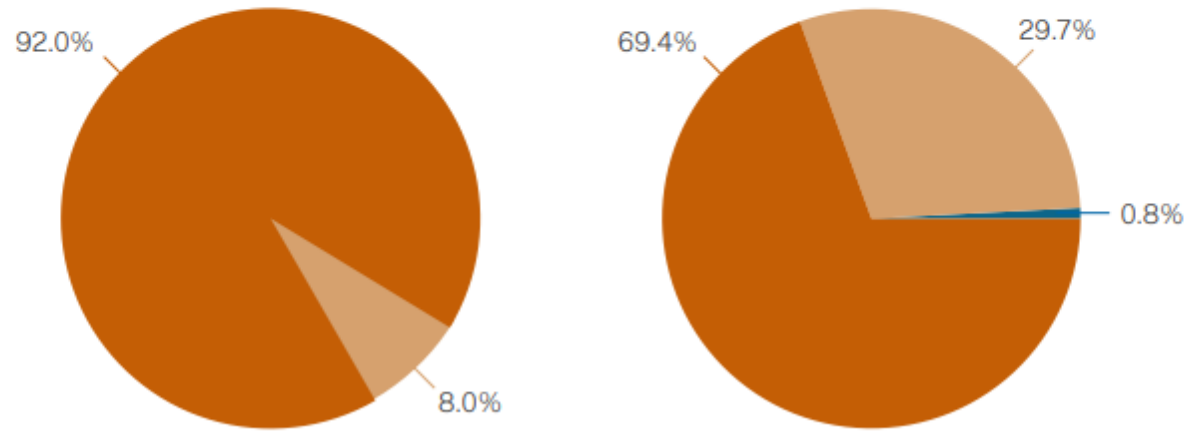
DAF Succession Plans

Types of Succession Plans

FIGURE 2.5

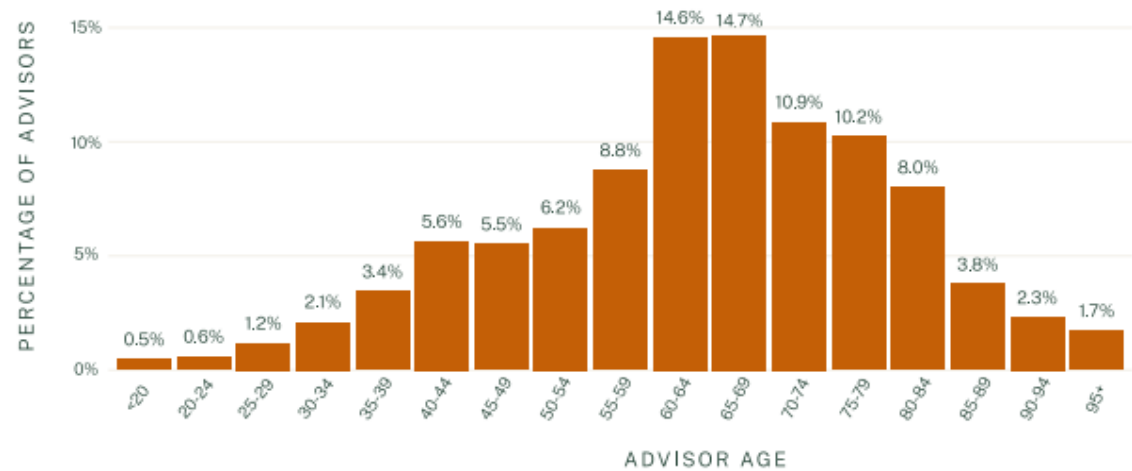
● No Plan ● Has Plan

● Combination ● Sponsor Organization ● Individual/Family



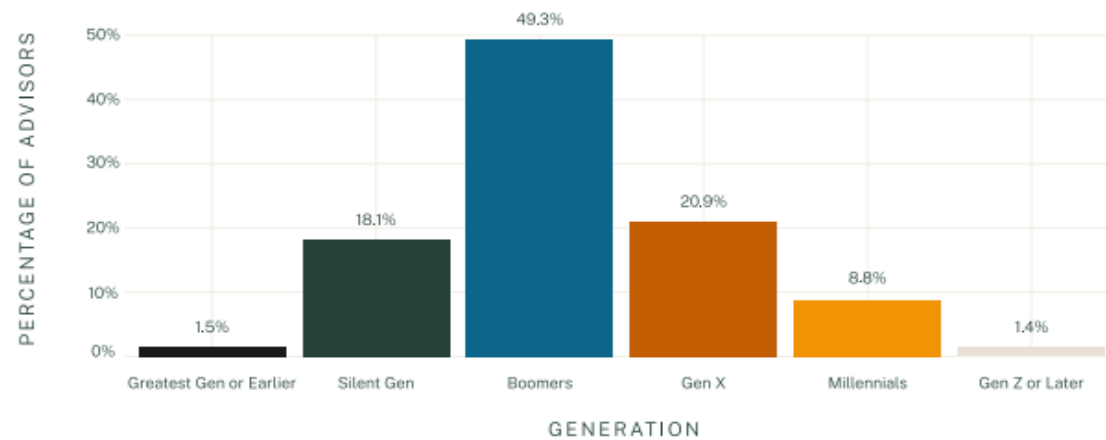
Age of Donor Advisors

FIGURE 3.3A



Generations of Donor Advisors

FIGURE 3.3B

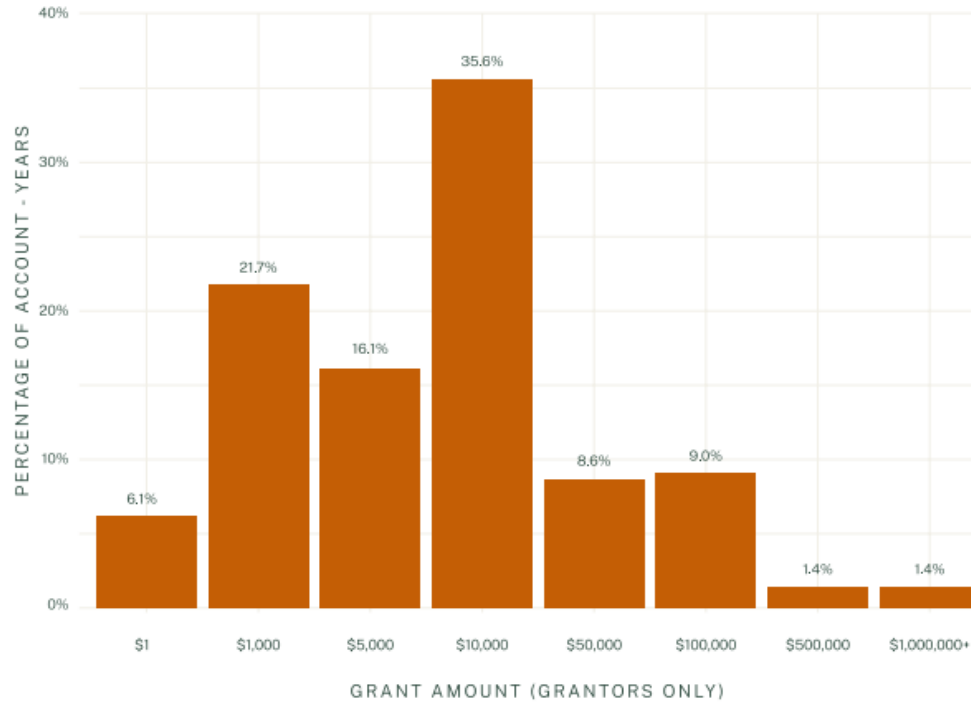


SECTION 5.3

DAF Grants: Annual Grantmaking

Annual Grant Totals

FIGURE 5.3



Who Sponsors DAFS?

- 1,485 DAF sponsors
- National sponsors: standard (National Philanthropic Trust) or donation processor (Fidelity)
- Community foundations: defined geographic region
- Single-issue charities: universities, healthcare, religion, other specialty causes

Who Uses DAFs?

- Individuals and families (97%)
- Private foundations
- Companies
- New to philanthropy
- Immediate tax benefit
- Planned giving prospects

Prepare to Receive DAF Gifts

- Update and maintain your GuideStar and Charity Navigator profiles
- Train staff to talk about DAFs
- Consider tools to streamline the donation process
 - [DAFpay](#)
 - [DAF Widget](#)
 - [DAF Direct](#)
 - [United Way of Kaw Valley](#)
- Reference DAFs in all donor communications
- Include DAFs in “Ways to Give”

Receiving DAF Gifts

- Gift entry: hard credit vs. soft credit
- Reporting
- Proper gift acknowledgement
- Understand what DAFs can and cannot do
- Donor Recognition

Stewarding DAFs

- Build relationships with philanthropic advisors, CPAs, wealth managers
- Treat the gatekeeper as the donor
- Train staff to follow up
- Invite for tours
- Provide updates on outcomes, annual reports, one pagers, etc.
- National vs. local

Resources

- *Handouts: Sample language for donor communications*
- *Handouts: Research cited*
- [Council on Foundations Community Foundation Locator](#)
- [2024 National Study on Donor Advised Funds](#)
- [Fidelity Charitable 2025 Giving Report](#)
- [DAF Research Collaborative Annual DAF Report 2025](#)
- [DAF Day](#)
- [DAFpay, DAF Widget, DAF Direct](#)

Thank You

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