

The December 2009 Climate Conference in Copenhagen will be the final meeting of parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) prior to its requiring renewal in 2012. The Foundation Center has prepared this brief overview of U.S. foundation support focused on the global climate crisis to provide context about philanthropy's efforts to address climate issues.

Climate Change

The U.S. Foundation Response

By Steven Lawrence, Director of Research

The U.S. foundation community has long been engaged in environmental issues, including funding efforts to reduce air pollution, energy consumption, and other factors that contribute to global warming. During the past decade, overall environmental funding by grantmakers in the Foundation Center's annual grants sample has more than doubled, and their 2008 support totaled \$1.9 billion.¹

Heightened awareness of an impending climate crisis has led to even faster growth in foundation giving that addresses the causes and consequences of global warming. Between 2000 and 2008, funders represented in the Foundation Center's annual grants sample doubled the number of grants they awarded related to climate change and increased their dollar commitment from less than \$100 million to nearly \$900 million. Yet, while philanthropic efforts to address global warming have been growing, a small number of very large funders still account for most of the support.² In fact, the top 25 climate change grantmakers in 2008 provided more than 90 percent of the funding.

This advisory documents who funds climate change; examines what their grantmaking supports; and considers prospects for giving going forward.

Which Foundations Focus on Climate Change?

All types of foundations—independent, corporate, community, and operating—are providing support to address the climate crisis, and close to one out of five funders in the Foundation Center's 2008 grants sample made at least one grant related to the causes and consequences of global warming. (See "About the Grants Sample" for more details.) Still, a single foundation dominated grantmaking focused on climate change in 2008. The California-based William and Flora Hewlett Foundation awarded nearly \$550 million in climate change-related grants last year, with most

Key Findings

- ♦ Led by the Hewlett Foundation, U.S. foundation grant dollars addressing global warming reached nearly \$900 million in 2008
- ♦ The number of climate change-related grants doubled between 2000 and 2008
- ♦ One-in-four of 2008 climate change grants supported public policy-related activities
- ♦ The majority of climate change grants targeted activities in the United States

of this funding supporting the ClimateWorks Foundation. Established in 2008 by the Hewlett, David and Lucile Packard, and McKnight foundations, ClimateWorks seeks to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in nations and economic sectors with the highest emissions in three general policy areas: energy efficiency standards, low-carbon energy supply, and forest conservation and agriculture.

Nevertheless, the Hewlett Foundation did not account solely for the growth in climate change giving. In 2008, the 267 other climate change grantmakers in the sample provided \$348.7 million, a 45 percent increase over the \$240 million provided by all funders—including Hewlett—in 2007. While the top

funders in this area accounted for most of the grant dollars, more than 50 grantmakers provided at least \$1 million for climate change in 2008, up from 19 foundations in 2000.

Which Climate Change Issues Do Foundations Support?

Foundation funding targets all facets of the global climate crisis, from reducing global greenhouse gas emissions to studying the role of tropical rain forests in determining the global carbon balance to supporting a national commission on energy policy. Interestingly, several funders are focusing on resilience and adaptation to climate change. For example, the Rockefeller Foundation provided a \$5.4 million grant to the Institute

for Social and Environmental Transition in 2008 for the development of resilience strategies by the Asian Cities Climate Change Resilience Network in selected cities in India, Indonesia, Vietnam, and Thailand. This grant is part of a major multi-year commitment by Rockefeller to building the resilience of communities most likely to be affected by climate change. Similarly, the Smith Richardson Foundation made a close to \$1 million grant to DC-based Resources for the Future for “Adapting to Change: The Public Policy Response” project, which will lead efforts to explore whether most harmful effects of climate change can be addressed through adaptation strategies.

Given the central role of governments around the world in seeking solutions to the climate crisis, foundations are providing a substantial share of their funding to support public policy activities. One-in-four of the 1,669 climate change grants tracked in the 2008 sample focused on policy initiatives, and this giving totaled \$112.2 million. Among the grants awarded was the Illinois-based Joyce Foundation’s \$1.5 million grant to the Council of State Governments to organize and convene a summit on energy and global warming for Midwestern governors. Another was the David and Lucile Packard Foundation’s \$1.5 million grant through the ClimateWorks network to Columbia University to enhance the capacity of the Coalition for Rainforest Nations to reduce emissions from deforestation and degradation.

Top 25 Climate Change Funders, 2008

Foundation Name	State	Amount	%	No.	%
1. William and Flora Hewlett Foundation	CA	\$548,682,703	61.1	91	5.5
2. David and Lucile Packard Foundation	CA	70,545,985	7.9	91	5.5
3. Rockefeller Foundation	NY	37,255,400	4.2	58	3.5
4. Kresge Foundation	MI	18,095,000	2.0	18	1.1
5. Lincy Foundation	CA	15,000,000	1.7	1	0.1
6. Skoll Foundation	CA	13,060,000	1.5	4	0.2
7. Robert Wood Johnson Foundation	NJ	10,556,761	1.2	7	0.4
8. Sea Change Foundation	CA	9,355,000	1.0	8	0.5
9. John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation	IL	9,306,000	1.0	20	1.2
10. Richard and Rhoda Goldman Fund	CA	8,216,000	0.9	54	3.2
11. Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation	CA	7,550,830	0.8	17	1.0
12. Ford Foundation	NY	7,389,293	0.8	37	2.2
13. Kendeda Fund	DE	7,083,000	0.8	20	1.2
14. Joyce Foundation	IL	6,894,035	0.8	19	1.1
15. Rockefeller Brothers Fund	NY	6,465,580	0.7	46	2.8
16. California Endowment	CA	6,132,499	0.7	22	1.3
17. Richard King Mellon Foundation	PA	5,055,000	0.6	2	0.1
18. Surdna Foundation	NY	4,355,000	0.5	40	2.4
19. McKnight Foundation	MN	3,904,000	0.4	6	0.4
20. New York Community Trust	NY	3,088,000	0.3	41	2.5
21. Cleveland Foundation	OH	3,002,723	0.3	27	1.6
22. Nathan Cummings Foundation	NY	2,931,800	0.3	21	1.3
23. PG&E Corporation Foundation	CA	2,915,000	0.3	12	0.7
24. Mertz Gilmore Foundation	NY	2,790,000	0.3	24	1.4
25. Doris Duke Charitable Foundation	NY	2,657,600	0.3	9	0.5
Subtotal		\$812,287,209	90.5	695	41.6
All other funders		85,112,679	9.5	974	58.4
Total		\$897,399,888	100.0	1,669	100.0

Source: The Foundation Center, 2009. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,490 of the largest U.S. foundations.

While the climate crisis is global, prior to 2008 the majority of U.S. foundation funding for climate change supported U.S.-based organizations for domestically focused activities. The latest year has been an exception: as a result of the Hewlett and Packard foundations' commitments to the ClimateWorks Foundation, a majority of climate change-related funding targeted international efforts. Yet more than two-thirds of the *number* of climate change grants continued to focus on domestic purposes in 2008, such as the Michigan-based Kresge Foundation's just over \$1 million award to the Southern Environmental Law Center for legal and policy work addressing climate change in the United States, with a focus on Alabama, Georgia, North and South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia.

What Are the Future Prospects for Climate Change Funding?

The 2007 *Design To Win* report issued by California Environmental Associates suggests that the philanthropic sector needs to provide approximately \$800 million *annually* to implement its recommended strategies for addressing the climate crisis.⁴ At the same time, the recent economic crisis has markedly reduced foundation resources, and the Foundation Center predicts that the impact of the downturn will lead to continued reductions in overall foundation funding through at least 2010.⁵

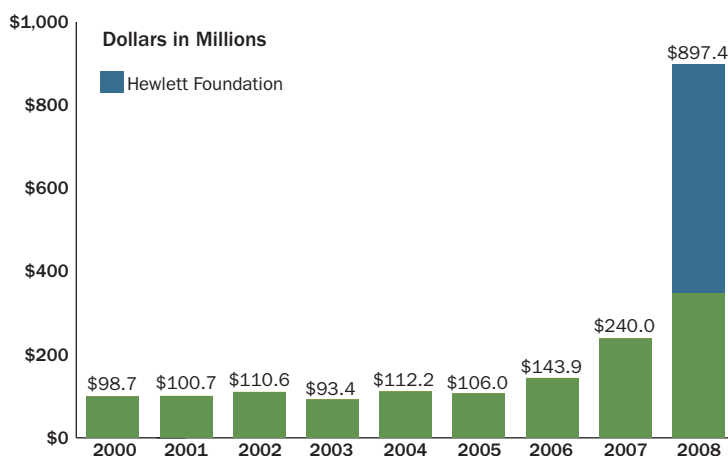
Though the impact of the expected reductions on climate change grantmaking is uncertain, throughout 2009 foundations have

continued to announce new grants focused on the climate crisis, suggesting that the foundation community will remain committed to addressing the causes and impact of global warming.

Endnotes

1. See Lawrence, S., and R. Mukai, *Foundation Giving Trends: Update on Funding Priorities*, New York: Foundation Center, 2010 (forthcoming).
2. For the purpose of this analysis, climate change funding includes all grants coded for global warming, energy conservation, air pollution control, and recycling. It includes grants related to land conservation only if they specify a focus on global warming. Overall funding with a primary purpose of land conservation or forestry in the Foundation Center's 2008 grants sample totaled \$207 million.
3. For more details on foundations that fund the environment and climate change-related activities, see Environmental Grantmakers Association, *Tracking the Field, Volume 2: A Closer Look at Environmental Grantmaking*, New York: Environmental Grantmakers Association, 2009; and Lawrence, S., and R. Mukai, *Foundation Giving Trends: Update on Funding Priorities*, New York: Foundation Center, annual.
4. See California Environmental Associates, *Design To Win: Philanthropy's Role in the Fight Against Global Warming*, San Francisco: California Environmental Associates, 2007. The report was sponsored by the David and Lucile Packard, Doris Duke Charitable, Energy, Joyce, Oak, and William and Flora Hewlett foundations.
5. See Lawrence, S., *Foundations' Year-end Outlook for Giving and the Sector*, New York: Foundation Center, 2009.

Foundation Giving for Climate Change, 2000 to 2008



Source: The Foundation Center, 2009. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of over 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations.

About the Grants Sample

The information presented in this advisory is based on the Foundation Center's annual grants sets. Each set includes *all* of the grants of \$10,000 or more awarded to organizations by more than 1,000 of the largest U.S. foundations and represents approximately half of total grant dollars awarded by the universe of independent, corporate, community, and grantmaking operating foundations in that year. (Giving by grantmaking public charities and corporate giving programs is not included.) For 2008, the grants set included 164,353 grants awarded by 1,490 foundations totaling \$25.3 billion.

Top 25 Recipients of Foundation Giving for Climate Change, 2008

Foundation Name	State/Country	Amount	%	No.	%
1. ClimateWorks Foundation	CA	\$514,905,182	57.4	3	0.2
2. Energy Foundation ¹	CA	45,040,000	5.0	23	1.4
3. Alliance for Climate Protection	CA	27,750,000	3.1	4	0.2
4. Bipartisan Policy Center	DC	9,700,000	1.1	5	0.3
5. Kaiser Foundation Research Institute	CA	8,563,940	1.0	1	0.1
6. Natural Resources Defense Council	NY	7,455,000	0.8	17	1.0
7. Smart Growth America	DC	6,515,000	0.7	4	0.2
8. Institute for Social and Environmental Transition	CO	5,918,900	0.7	2	0.1
9. European Climate Foundation	Netherlands	5,464,123	0.6	3	0.2
10. Rockefeller Family Fund	NY	5,050,000	0.6	5	0.3
11. Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens	PA	5,000,000	0.6	1	0.1
12. Clean Air Task Force	MA	4,917,635	0.5	12	0.7
13. CERES	MA	3,835,000	0.4	18	1.1
14. Rockhopper TV	England	3,543,500	0.4	2	0.1
15. Woods Hole Research Center	MA	3,355,000	0.4	7	0.4
16. Western Resource Advocates	CO	3,105,000	0.3	4	0.2
17. Tides Foundation	CA	3,070,000	0.3	3	0.2
18. Union of Concerned Scientists	MA	2,970,000	0.3	15	0.9
19. Universidad de Concepcion	Chile	2,582,360	0.3	1	0.1
20. Live Earth	CA	2,500,000	0.3	1	0.1
21. University of California	CA	2,467,341	0.3	6	0.4
22. William J. Clinton Presidential Foundation	AR	2,228,000	0.2	3	0.2
23. Carnegie Mellon University	PA	2,152,000	0.2	2	0.1
24. Columbia University	NY	2,148,875	0.2	4	0.2
25. Environmental Defense	NY	2,130,000	0.2	8	0.5
Subtotal		\$682,366,856	76.0	154	9.2
All other funders		215,033,032	24.0	1,515	90.8
Total		\$897,399,888	100.0	1,669	100.0

Source: The Foundation Center, 2009. Based on all grants of \$10,000 or more awarded by a sample of 1,490 of the largest U.S. foundations.

¹The Energy Foundation is in the process of transitioning from a private independent foundation to a public charity and is being treated as a public charity by the IRS, therefore they are included as a grant recipient.

About the Foundation Center

Established in 1956 and today supported by close to 550 foundations, the Foundation Center is the nation's leading authority on philanthropy, connecting nonprofits and the grantmakers supporting them to tools they can use and information they can trust. The Center maintains the most comprehensive database on U.S. grantmakers and their grants — a robust, accessible knowledge bank for the sector. It also operates research, education, and training programs designed to advance knowledge of philanthropy at every level. Thousands of people visit the Center's web site each day and are served in its five regional library/learning centers and its network of more than 400 funding information centers located in public libraries, community foundations, and educational institutions in every U.S. state and beyond. For more information, please visit foundationcenter.org or call (212) 620-4230.

Source for all data:

The Foundation Center

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