

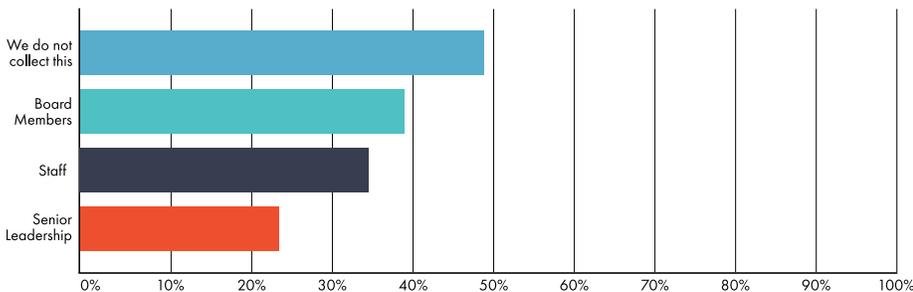
Insight, Impact, and Equity: Collecting Demographic Data

Key Findings

Grantmakers occupy a powerful space of privilege in the social change sector. As such, they have a unique opportunity—and responsibility—to work proactively toward equity and inclusivity. Increasingly, grantmaking institutions are challenging themselves to live their values through their grantmaking practices.

For philanthropy to advance equity in all communities, especially low-income communities and communities of color, it needs to be able to understand the demographics of the organizations being funded (and declined), the people being served, and the communities impacted. That data should be used to assess practices and drive decision making.

Do you collect demographic data on the staff, senior leadership, and boards of the organizations you support?



BUT...

- o Just over half of the respondents to the survey (54%) indicated that their organizations are collecting demographic data at some point in their grantmaking process.
- o Overwhelmingly, this data was collected on who nonprofits were serving or benefiting (88%) as opposed to the demographics of the staff and leadership of the organizations themselves (52%).
- o Most funders that are collecting this data are collecting it on race, ethnicity, age and, to a lesser extent, gender. There is little insight into other demographic characteristics.
- o Many grantmaking organizations are collecting this information but not using it systematically or consistently. The main reason funders are collecting this data is for general insight into who their grant dollars are funding and how.

Through our discussions with survey respondents, it became clear that there are already some strategies and best practices emerging around collecting demographic data.

- o The field should work toward building an internal understanding of why demographics is essential not just for equity but also for insight into impact.
- o Engaging this data should not just be an exercise; conversations, plans, and effective communications about what will be collected, how it will be used, and why it is important are an essential part of the process.
- o Demographics, and the identities people associate with them, are dynamic, so you can't always assume you know who you are reaching, especially over time.
- o There are important variations within target populations that have an impact on interventions and this variation can be obscured by collecting only categorical data without considering intersections between categories.
- o Don't let "perfect" be the enemy of "good." Piloting tools, terminology, and processes is essential to learning and to contributing to better practice.
- o It is essential to engage this data constructively and not just judgmentally if people are to voluntarily collect it and use it effectively.