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New CECP Research: Corporate Foundations Are Managing More Money, Without More Staff

Corporate foundation transfers rising while headcount stays flat, as companies lean on foundations to differentiate their philanthropic strategy

NEW YORK, August 20, 2026 — Corporate foundations are taking on a bigger role in how companies achieve their social impact strategy, according to new findings from Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose® (CECP)'s Giving in Numbers® 2026 Edition, the longest-running benchmarking study of corporate social investments, in partnership with companies.

The data shows foundations remain a fixture of corporate giving with 84% of participating companies maintaining a foundation, and 90% report having secondary giving vehicles such as foundations, trusts, and donor-advised funds. But the more telling story is what's happening underneath that stability: foundations are handling significantly more money and more strategic weight, with no corresponding growth in staff.

Key findings:

- **Foundations anchor cash giving.** Among companies with both a foundation and direct cash contributions, foundation dollars made up 56.4% of total cash giving on average.
- **Transfers are substantial and highly concentrated.** The median corporate transfer to a foundation reached $10 million in 2025, with reported transfers ranging from $190,000 to more than $504 million.
- **Strategy is diverging.** 57% of companies say their foundation giving differs from their direct corporate giving — most often by program type, and in some cases by focus area as well.
- **Capacity without expansion.** In a three-year matched set, foundation prevalence held steady (82–84%) and median staffing didn't move from four FTEs — even as transfers into foundations rose 16% over the period.

"Foundations aren't just administrative extensions of a company's giving program," said Kate Stobbe, Director, Corporate Insights & Research, CECP. "Companies are using them as a key resource in pursuing longer-term or more flexible goals than direct giving allows, and they're doing it with the teams they already have."

Now in its 26th year, CECP, in partnership with companies, has built the largest and most comprehensive historical dataset on corporate social investment trends, drawing on participation from more than 650 multi-billion-dollar companies and representing over $519 billion in giving over the life of the survey.

The report also notes that companies have not yet reported changing foundation structures in response to the new 1% charitable deduction floor under H.R. 1 (the One Big Beautiful Bill Act) — though CECP Pulse Survey data suggests many are actively exploring their options.

Complete the survey to gain access to confidential benchmarking tables that show how your company's giving and social impact investments compare with peers of similar size and industry, helping you make more informed strategic decisions and answer executive questions with confidence.

Companies over $500M in revenue can still participate and it's completely free; see the survey here and email insights@cecp.co for more information. The full report will be available in October 2026.

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Chief Executives for Corporate Purpose® (CECP) is the only nonpartisan business counsel and network dedicated to driving measurable returns on purpose. We promote responsible purpose-driven business as it increases customer loyalty, builds employee engagement, improves brand trust, attracts top talent, connects with strategic investors, and contributes to the bottom line.

More than 200 of the world's leading companies seek to improve their return on purpose through access to CECP's solutions in insights and benchmarking. With our companies, we harness the power of purpose for business, stakeholders, and society.

For more information, visit cecp.org.