

Six family philanthropy trends to watch in 2016

Posted by [National Center for Family Philanthropy](https://www.ncfp.org/index.html)
<https://www.ncfp.org/index.html>

on January 7, 2016

2015 was a remarkable year for family philanthropy.

It brought the release of landmark new research on our field, new investments in programs that address many of our world's most pressing challenges, and a spirit of optimism and cooperation that inspires unprecedented collaboration and progress.

As we get back to work after the holidays, we're looking ahead to another exciting year in 2016.

Here are six things you can expect to see in the next 12 months that will impact your work:

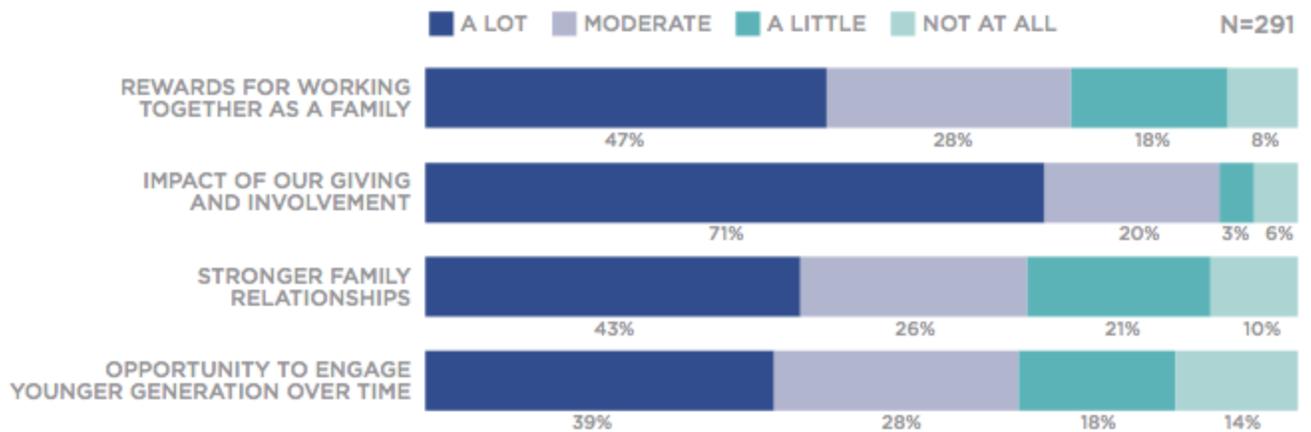
A focus on impact

Many family foundations do not have strategies for assessing whether their grant making is making a difference.

But that's changing — quickly.

Roughly half of family foundations that responded to the National Center for Family Philanthropy's first-ever [Trends in Family Philanthropy survey](#) reported that they are exploring how to assess their impact, and achieving impact is the single biggest motivation for individual participation in the family foundation:

FIGURE 16. MOTIVATIONS FOR PARTICIPATING IN THE FAMILY FOUNDATION



Source: Urban Institute and National Center for Family Philanthropy 2015 National Survey of Family Foundations.

After listening to family foundations discuss their efforts to build effective measurements for their work at the recent [National Forum for Family Philanthropy](#), we expect to see a variety of innovative new approaches to tracking impact in 2016.

This focus on impact isn't just coming from newcomers to the field. A number of the field's most senior organizations are also taking a step back and finding new ways to measure their work.

According to the Trends survey, nearly three in five younger family foundations are exploring how to measure and assess their impact. Meanwhile, nearly one half, 48 percent, of older foundations are taking similar steps.

Expect to see a number of family foundations launch new assessment programs in 2016 — and for a wave of new discussions about how to effectively measure our work.

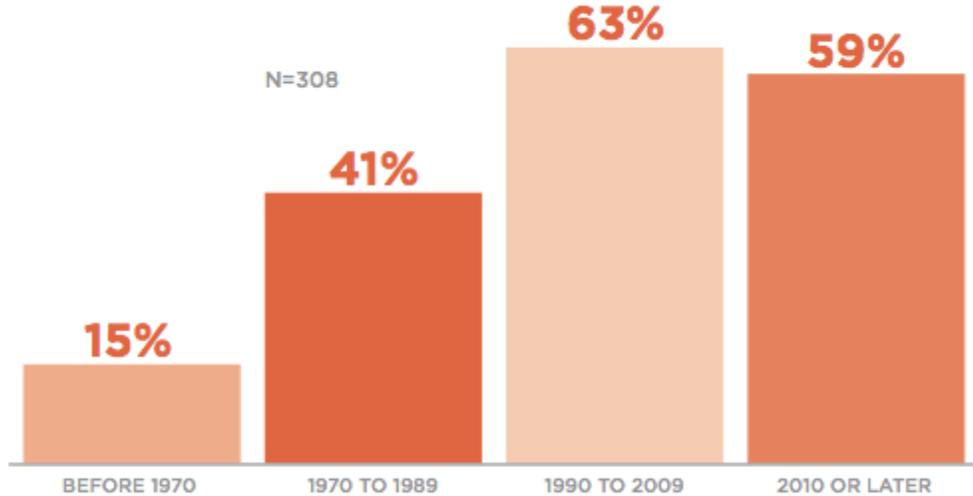
Growth in assets

Mark Zuckerberg and Priscilla Chan dominated headlines about giving at the end of 2015 following the announcement of their landmark new philanthropic effort.

But the growth in more traditional forms of philanthropy — particularly family foundations — shouldn't be overlooked.

In fact, roughly half of all family foundations anticipate the influx of additional assets during the next four years, according to NCFP's Trends survey:

FIGURE 35. EXPECT TO RECEIVE ADDITIONAL ASSETS IN NEXT 4 YEARS



Source: Urban Institute and National Center for Family Philanthropy 2015 National Survey of Family Foundations.

For family foundations created after 1990, this trend is even more pronounced — with more than 60 percent of groups expecting to see new assets.

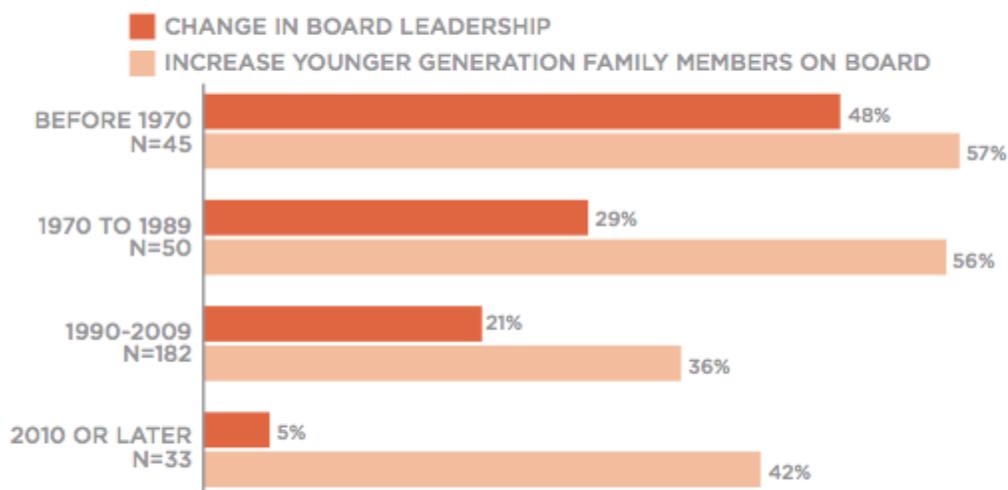
Family foundations are growing — and we expect to see some of that growth take shape in 2016.

More millennials

As millennials continue to come of age and take an interest in philanthropy, they will have a greater voice in their family foundations.

During the next four years, 43 percent of family foundations expect to add to or increase the number of younger-generation family members on their boards, according to the NCFP survey:

FIGURE 34. CHANGES IN BOARD, BY AGE OF FOUNDATION



Source: Urban Institute and National Center for Family Philanthropy 2015 National Survey of Family Foundations.

And many of these changes are already happening.

These changes are likely to be felt most strongly in older family foundations. More than one half of foundations created before 1990 expect to add younger generation family members to their boards.

Spending down speeds up

One of the most recognized names in family philanthropy — the [Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies](#) — will go out of business in 2016.

In doing so, it will continue to usher in a new way of thinking about grantmaking.

The Bronfman Philanthropies is one of the highest-profile examples of spend-down philanthropy — the practice of deliberately granting all of a foundation’s assets to charities by a specific date rather than managing its endowment in perpetuity.

We expect to see more family foundations making the decision to operate with a limited lifespan in 2016.

According to the Trends survey, one in 10 family foundations have already made the move toward limited life. As the following chart shows, this percentage is much higher among younger foundations — with roughly 1 in 5 family foundations created since 1990 eschewing perpetuity in favor of spending down:

FIGURE 25. FOUNDATION LIFE-SPAN PLANS, BY AGE OF FOUNDATION



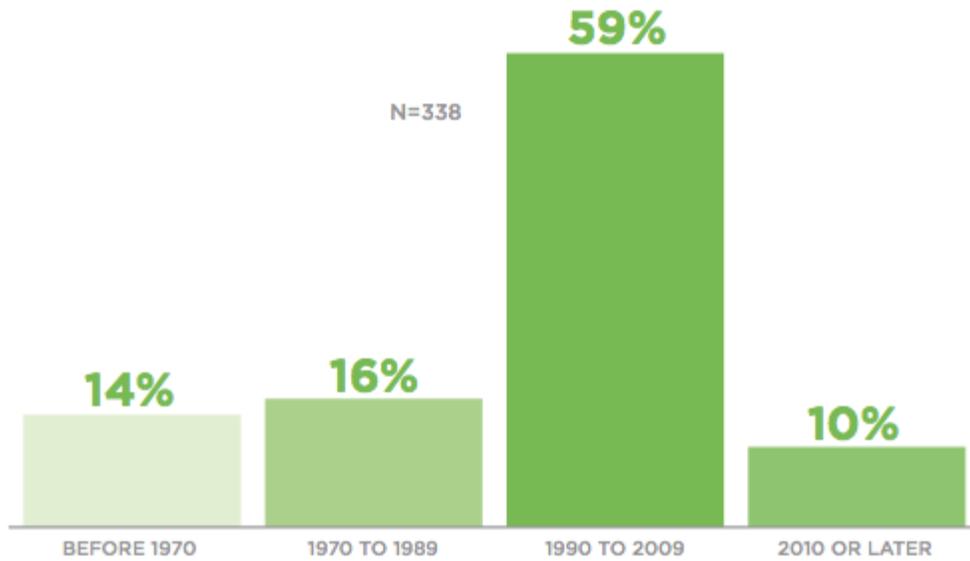
Source: Urban Institute and National Center for Family Philanthropy 2015 National Survey of Family Foundations.

Major milestones

While we rightfully keep an eye on what's new in the field of family philanthropy, it's important to note the pioneers who are making an impact after decades and decades of grant making and thought leadership.

While approximately 70% of the more than 40,000 family foundations in the U.S. have been created since 1990, as the following chart indicates, this still means that *more than 10,000 U.S. family foundations have been around for nearly 50 years* (or, in some cases, much longer!):

FIGURE 1. FAMILY FOUNDATIONS, BY YEAR FOUNDED



Source: Urban Institute and National Center for Family Philanthropy 2015 National Survey of Family Foundations.

2016 will mark a century of grant making for the A.C. Ratschesky Foundation — and 90 years for the Flint, Mich., stalwart Charles Stewart Mott Foundation.

A number of other family foundations — among them the J.A. & Kathryn Albertson Foundation, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, Roy A. Hunt Foundation, the J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation, the Park Foundation, RGK Foundation, and Roth Family Foundation — celebrate their 50th anniversaries this year.

Each of these family-led entities— and many others — has successfully navigated multiple generations and changing times to remain leaders in their communities and in the causes they serve.

In 2016, we will celebrate their achievements and continue to learn from their examples.

To see who else is celebrating milestone anniversaries this year, we invite you to check out our [list of 2016 milestone anniversaries](#).