The Impact of COVID-19 on Aging and Older Adults Grantmaking

Total Foundations Responded: 43

Foundations Funding Aging and Older Adults Pre-Pandemic: 35

Additional Foundations Funding Aging and Older Adults Since the Pandemic: 8

Funders Making Older Adult or Aging Pandemic Responsive Grants: 100%

Top Older Adult or Aging Investment Areas for Grantmakers Pre-Pandemic (N=35):
- Access to Quality Health Care and Preventive Services: 63%
- Food Security: 60%
- Social Isolation: 57%
- Housing: 49%
- Age-Friendly Communities: 46%
- Home Care: 46%
- Advocacy/Messaging: 43%
- Unpaid Caregivers: 43%

Change in Grantmaking Resources Devoted to Older Adults or Aging (N=35):
- Increased Level: 37%
- Decreased: 3%
- Do not know: 3%

Top Older Adult or Aging Investment Areas for Grantmakers During the Pandemic (N=43):
- Food Security: 60%
- Community Response Funds: 44%
- Social Isolation: 40%
- Vaccine Access and Distribution: 35%
- Senior Centers, Including Virtual Programming: 33%
- Digital Access/Literacy: 30%
- Telehealth: 30%
- Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): 28%
Most common changes to grantmaking strategy (N=13)

- Types of programs and interventions: 77%
- Increased funding for general operations grants: 38%
- Subpopulation focus: 23%
- Eliminated standard grant reporting requirements: 23%
- Partners: 23%

Reasons for changes to grantmaking strategy (N=13)

- Evidence of need (e.g., surveillance data): 77%
- Grantee feedback: 46%
- Staff directive: 46%
- Community feedback: 38%
- CEO priority: 38%
- Board directive: 38%

Five key takeaways

1. The philanthropic response to the pandemic focused on the immediate needs of older adults.
2. Funders relied heavily on data and evidence when determining how they would respond to the pandemic.
3. Foundations already investing in funding older adults and aging typically continued funding for their existing grantees and strategies.
4. Funder strategies impacted by the pandemic appear to not be short-term changes.
5. The pandemic did not negatively impact the level of support being devoted to older adults and aging by established aging funders.

This infographic summarizes the responses to a joint Grantmakers In Health and Grantmakers In Aging survey, conducted November 2021, on how health and aging funders are addressing COVID-19-related needs among older adult populations and potential long-term impacts on future grantmaking. Support for this joint GIH-GIA survey was provided by a grant from Archstone Foundation.