



FOUNDATION GIVING IN SOLANO COUNTY AND THE BAY AREA

2022 UPDATE



Contents

_Toc91508813

- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..... 3**
- INTRODUCTION..... 6**
- TRENDS IN FOUNDATION GIVING 7**
 - Agencies in Solano County Continue to Receive Least Amount of Funding 7
 - Foundation Grants to All Bay Area Counties Continue to Increase but Funding to Solano Remains Far Behind 7
 - The Amount of Foundation Funding a County Receives Is Not Linked to Population Size 10
 - The Amount of Foundation Funding Received Is Also Not Linked to Level of County Need 10
- EFFORTS TO INCREASE FOUNDATION GIVING IN SOLANO COUNTY 11**
 - Solano County Funders Collaborated 11
 - Agencies in Solano County Built Capacity of Nonprofit Leaders..... 11
 - Agencies in Solano County Applied for New Funding Opportunities 12
 - Top Foundation Funders and Recipients of Foundation Funding in Solano County 13
- STRATEGIES TO INCREASE FOUNDATION GIVING IN SOLANO COUNTY 15**
 - Raise Solano County’s Profile..... 15
 - Build Partnerships to Address Priority Issues 15
 - Increase Nonprofit Capacity 16
 - Draw Down Large Government Dollars..... 17
- CONCLUSION..... 18**

Executive Summary

INTRODUCTION

In 2016, Applied Survey Research (ASR) conducted a study, *Foundation Giving in the Bay Area: Who Wins, and Who’s Left Behind*, which found that agencies in Solano County received the fewest grant dollars compared to the other eight counties in the region. The data revealed that in 2012, just \$3 per capita in foundation funding was received in Solano County, while per capita foundation funding for other Bay Area counties ranged from \$22 to over \$1,000 per person.

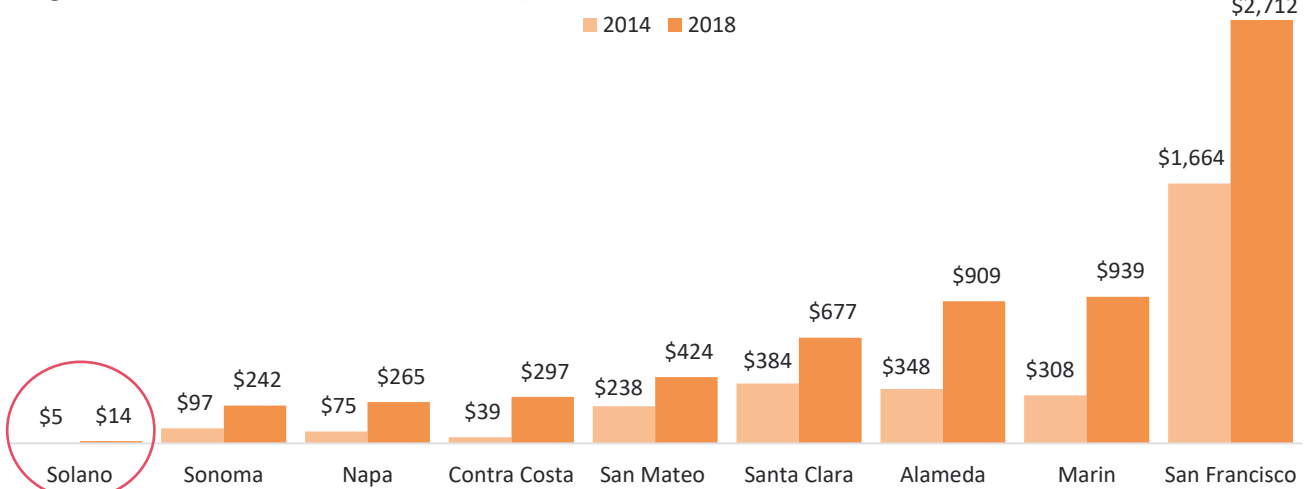
In 2018, ASR updated the study and found that agencies in Solano County continued to be under-resourced relative to other Bay Area counties. They received just \$6 per capita, still the lowest in the Bay Area, despite having the highest levels of family poverty. Based on the recommendations from the 2016 study, agency leaders in Solano deepened their relationships with foundations. This yielded early success, including several large grants to address nonprofit capacity and health and social service needs.

This report provides a brief update on the foundation giving in Solano County relative to other Bay Area counties with a focus on the most recent five years of available data, 2014-2018, and includes new insights and recommendations from foundation program officers.

FOUNDATION GRANTS TO ALL BAY AREA COUNTIES CONTINUE TO INCREASE BUT FUNDING TO SOLANO REMAINS FAR BEHIND

Across the nine Bay Area counties, foundation funding increased by 106% between 2014 and 2018. Foundation funding to agencies in Solano County increased 185%, but because the amount in 2014 was far below every other county, the dollar increase was below \$4 million, far less than any other area. In 2018, agencies in Solano County received almost \$14 per capita. This was an increase from \$5 per capita in 2014, but still the lowest in the region by far, with the next closest county (Sonoma) receiving \$242 per capita in 2018.

Figure 1: Foundation Dollars Received (per Capita), 2014 and 2018

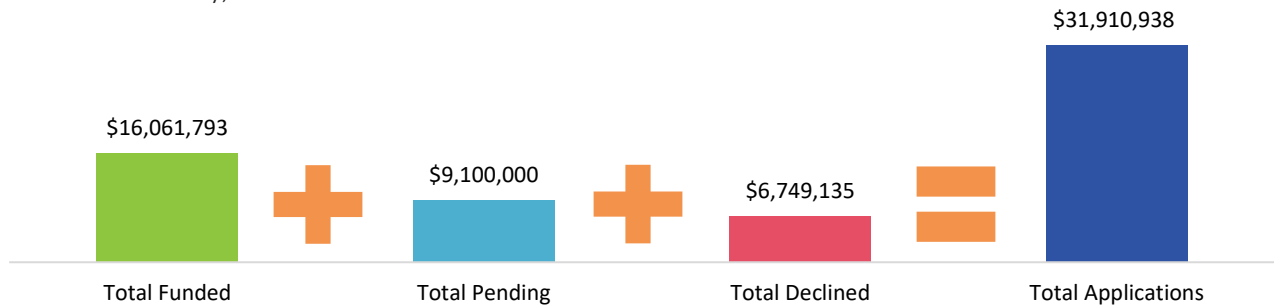


Source: The Foundation Center. Note: The Foundation Center updates their database weekly with corrected tax information; therefore, the figures presented here may differ from those reported in prior reports.

SOLANO COUNTY AGENCIES MADE STRIDES TO INCREASE FOUNDATION GIVING

Leaders in Solano County have been diligently working to increase funding to agencies in Solano County. For example, Solano stakeholders and philanthropic partners have met quarterly to discuss how to bring additional resources to agencies in Solano County. They recently held sessions to discuss the potential for funding a cash aid program for members of immigrant communities, which resulted in \$45,000 granted to Catholic Charities to start a cash aid program. Additionally, two countywide Results Based Accountability (RBA) trainings were held in 2019 and 2020 to help nearly 70 providers articulate the story of the difference their efforts make in the community. Local agencies have also continued to apply for competitive funding opportunities. The chart below summarizes the outcome of fundraising efforts of *early childhood and family well-being* agencies, showing over \$16 million was brought into the county from a variety of sources (foundation, private and government sources) between July 2016 and June 2021.

Figure 2: Outcome of Fundraising Efforts by *Early Childhood and Family Well-Being* Agencies in Solano County, 2016-2021



Source: First 5 Solano grant tracker. Note: These grants applications were submitted or supported by First 5 Solano and not inclusive of all fundraising efforts in Solano County. These include government grants in addition to foundation grants.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM FOUNDATION PROGRAM OFFICERS

To learn more about how organizations can bring in more financial support to agencies in Solano County, interviews were conducted with four foundation program officers that are familiar with Solano County.¹ They noted that Solano County is still mostly unknown to donors and suggested bringing attention to research and data on community needs and publicizing creative funding opportunities. Additionally, they recommended continuing to build nonprofit capacity so agencies can apply for larger grants; increasing collaboration among agencies to address the most pressing issues facing their communities, particularly if they align with foundation priorities; and applying for larger, more sustainable government grants.

CONCLUSION

The findings from this second update to the 2016 *Foundation Giving* study show that agencies in Solano County continue to receive the least amount of foundation funding in the Bay Area. Leaders in Solano County have

¹ Interviews were conducted with representatives from Kaiser Permanente External and Community Affairs, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Wells Fargo Social Impact & Sustainability, and Zellerbach Family Foundation in August and September 2021.

collaborated to bring in additional funding and are strengthening nonprofit capacity. Using the recommendations in this report, agencies can build upon these efforts to help close the funding gap in Solano County and improve outcomes for Solano County residents.



Introduction

In 2016, Applied Survey Research conducted a study on foundation giving in the Bay Area, *Foundation Giving in the Bay Area: Who Wins, and Who's Left Behind*, which found that agencies in Solano County received the fewest grant dollars compared to the other eight counties in the region (Alameda, Contra Costa, Marin, Napa, Santa Clara, San Francisco, San Mateo, and Sonoma). The data revealed that in 2012, just \$3 per capita in foundation funding was received in Solano County – an amount unchanged since 2006 – while per capita foundation funding for other Bay Area counties ranged from \$22 to over \$1,000 per person.

In 2018, Applied Survey Research updated the study and found that agencies in Solano County continued to be under-resourced relative to other Bay Area counties. Solano County received just \$6 per capita in 2016, still the lowest in the Bay Area, despite having the highest levels of family poverty. Based on the recommendations from the 2016 study regarding steps leaders could take to attract foundation dollars, agency leaders in Solano deepened their relationships with foundations. This yielded early success, including several large grants to address nonprofit capacity and health and social service needs.

This 2022 report provides a brief update on foundation giving in Solano County relative to other Bay Area counties, with a focus on the most recent five years of available data, 2014-2018, and includes new insights and recommendations from foundation program officers. Fundraising efforts conducted by First 5 Solano and their early childhood partners are heavily weighted in this report as they have made a concerted effort to raise Solano County's profile based on the previous foundation giving reports. These efforts have made a local impact in the early childhood arena and are replicable for other partners. The need to bring additional funding into the county is more important now than ever to help the community recover from the effects of COVID-19, address the disproportionate needs in Solano relative to other counties, and achieve improved outcomes for families in Solano County.



Trends in Foundation Giving

AGENCIES IN SOLANO COUNTY CONTINUE TO RECEIVE LEAST AMOUNT OF FUNDING

Between 2014 and 2018, \$26.4 billion of foundation grants were given to agencies in the Bay Area. As in previous years, the majority of funding went to San Francisco, Santa Clara, and Alameda Counties. Agencies in Solano County received significantly less funding than any other county in the region, and \$89 million less than the next closest county, Napa.

Figure 3: Foundation Funding Received, 2014-2018

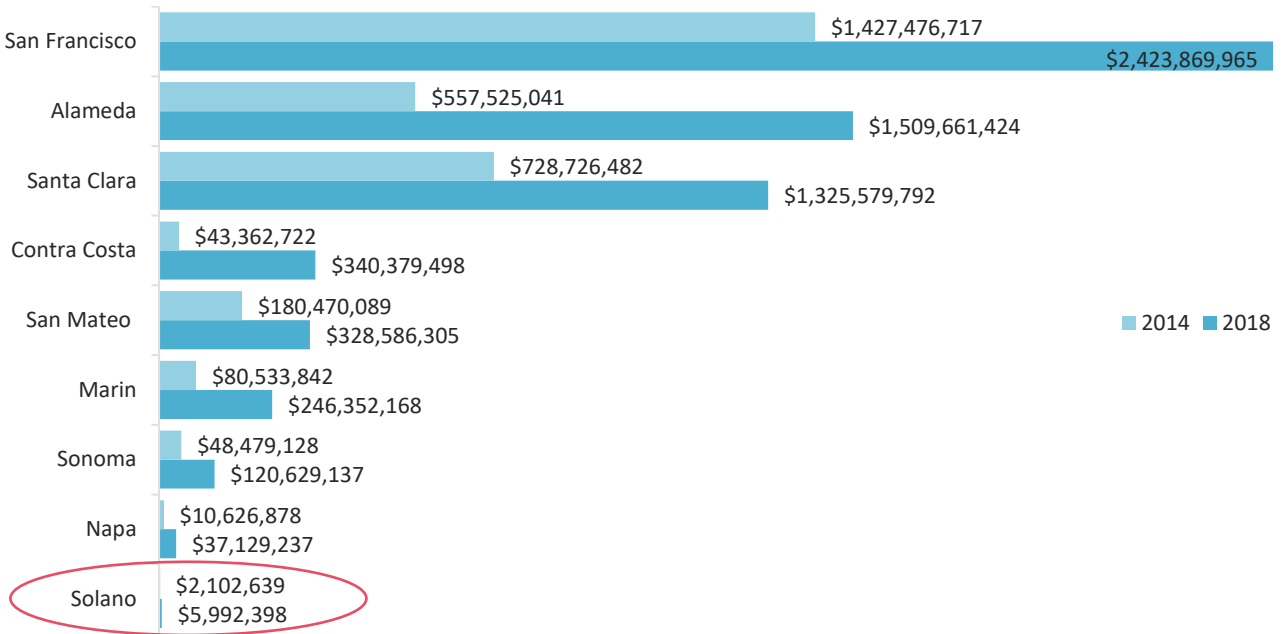
County	Foundation Funding Amount
San Francisco	\$10,403,841,540
Santa Clara	\$6,401,543,143
Alameda	\$5,884,518,154
San Mateo	\$1,433,146,247
Marin	\$901,067,989
Contra Costa	\$810,032,851
Sonoma	\$443,127,607
Napa	\$116,506,647
Solano	\$27,146,742
TOTAL	\$26,420,930,920

Source: The Foundation Center.

FOUNDATION GRANTS TO ALL BAY AREA COUNTIES CONTINUE TO INCREASE BUT FUNDING TO SOLANO REMAINS FAR BEHIND

Across the nine Bay Area counties, foundation funding increased by 106% between 2014 and 2018. Funding to San Francisco increased the least percentagewise (70%), but the most in terms of dollars (almost \$1 billion). Funding to Contra Costa had the largest percent increase (685%). Foundation funding to agencies in Solano County increased 185% to almost \$6 million in 2018. However, because the amount Solano received in 2014 was far below every other county, the dollar increase – less than \$4 million – was far less than any other area, and funding in 2018 remained below that of any other county.

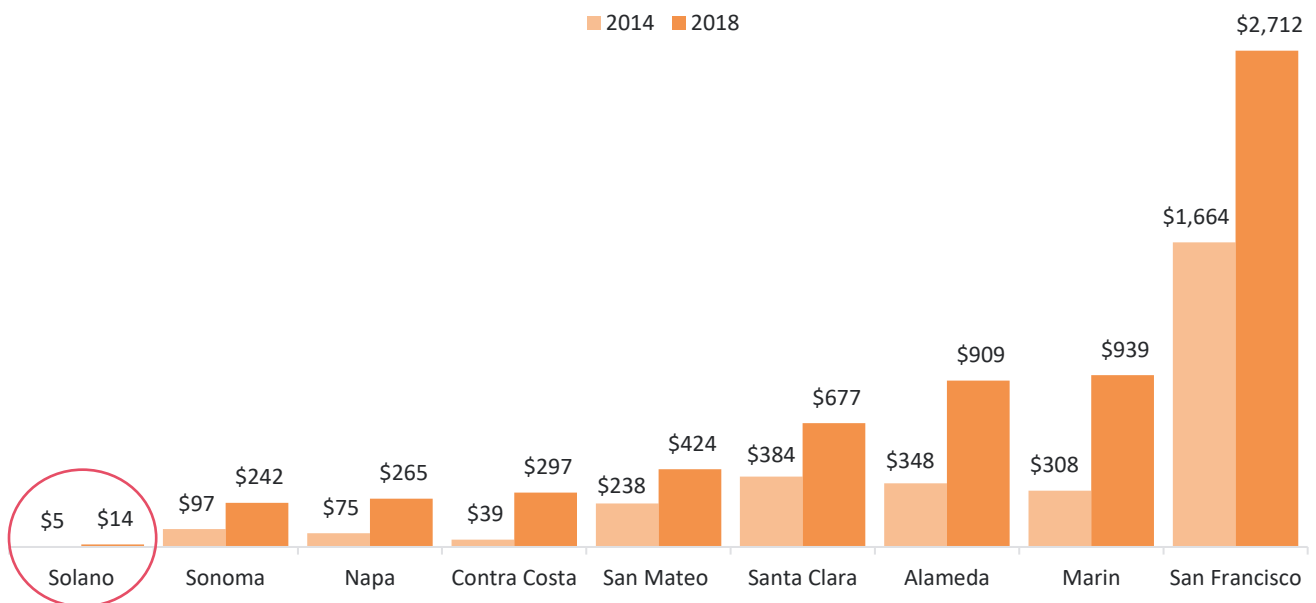
Figure 4: Foundation Dollars Received, 2014 and 2018



Source: The Foundation Center. Note: The Foundation Center updates their database weekly with corrected tax information; therefore, the figures presented here may differ from those reported in prior reports.

In 2018, the agencies in Solano County received almost \$14 per capita. This was an increase from \$5 per capita in 2014, but still by far the lowest in the region, with the next closest county (Sonoma) receiving \$242 per capita in 2018.

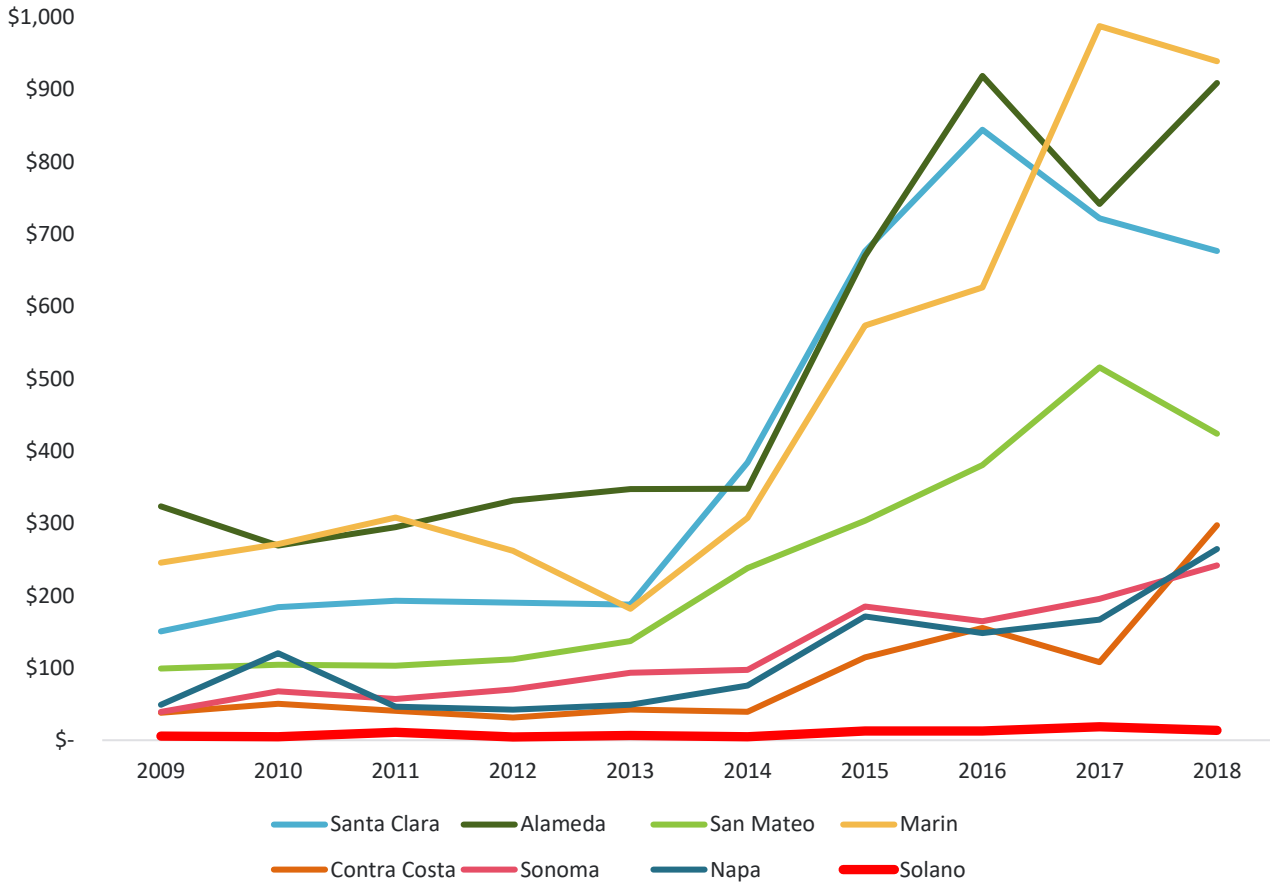
Figure 5: Foundation Dollars Received (per Capita), 2014 and 2018



Source: The Foundation Center. Note: The Foundation Center updates their database weekly with corrected tax information; therefore, the figures presented here may differ from those reported in prior reports.

Over the last 10 years, foundation funding in Bay Area counties has fluctuated from year to year, but the overall trend has been an increase in funding. Foundation funding in Solano County has also increased, but as the chart below shows, it has not risen to the same degree as it has in other counties. This has resulted in a widening gap in foundation funding between Solano County and its neighbors.

Figure 6: Foundation Dollars Received (per Capita), by Year

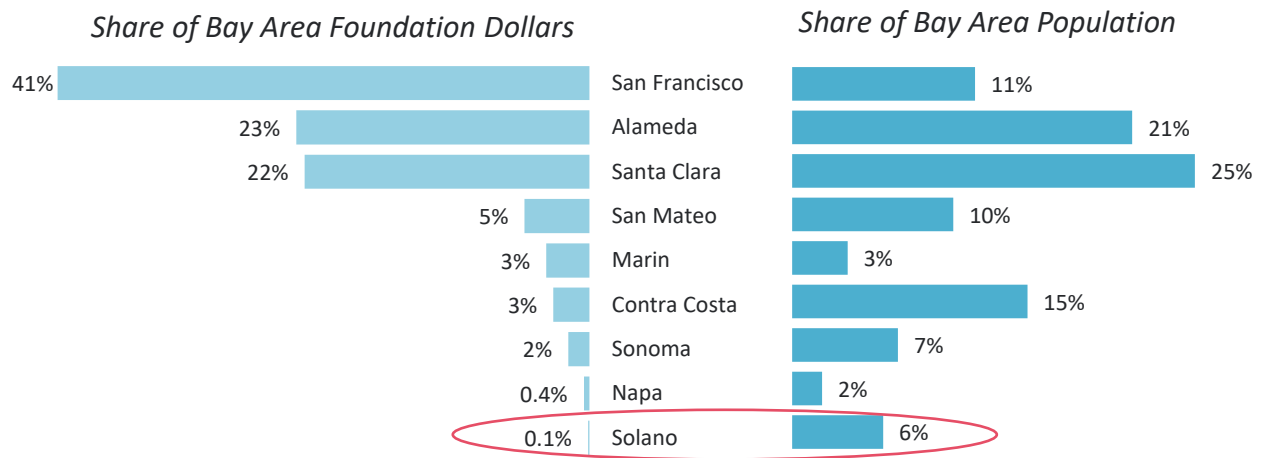


Source: The Foundation Center. Note: The Foundation Center updates their database weekly with corrected tax information; therefore, the figures presented here may differ from those reported in prior reports.

THE AMOUNT OF FOUNDATION FUNDING A COUNTY RECEIVES IS NOT LINKED TO POPULATION SIZE

Foundation funding continues to be unrelated to the size of the population in each Bay Area county. Solano’s population is larger than nearby Napa and Marin, and similar in size to Sonoma. However, Solano receives a significantly smaller share of the foundation dollars in the region than all other counties, including those with smaller population sizes. Since 2006, Solano’s share of the region’s foundation dollars has remained the lowest (less than 1%) while its share of the Bay Area population has remained third lowest (6%).

Figure 7: Distribution of Foundation Dollars Across the Bay Area Compared to Population, 2009-2018

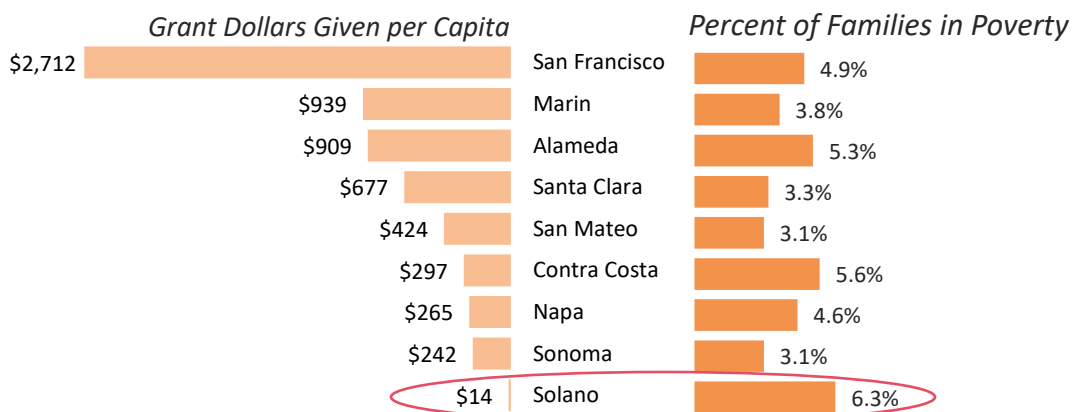


Sources: The Foundation Center, California Department of Finance Population Projections.

THE AMOUNT OF FOUNDATION FUNDING RECEIVED IS ALSO NOT LINKED TO LEVEL OF COUNTY NEED

As found in the previous reports, the level of need in the community does not relate to the level of foundation funding. Solano has the lowest level of foundation funding (overall and per capita), despite having the greatest need as measured by poverty: 6.3% of families are below the poverty level, more than in any other county. On a positive note, the percent of Solano County families in poverty decreased from 11% in 2012 to 9% in 2016 and 6% in 2018, highlighting a downward trend experienced by most Bay Area Counties prior to the pandemic.

Figure 8: Relationship Between Per Capita Giving and Family Poverty, 2018



Sources: The Foundation Center, U.S. Census, American Community Survey.

Efforts to Increase Foundation Giving in Solano County

Leaders in Solano County have continued to take action to increase foundation funding in Solano. Based on recommendations from the 2016 report and 2018 follow-up, leaders in the county have regularly convened agencies and foundations that fund in Solano, built nonprofit capacity, and applied for funding opportunities.

SOLANO COUNTY FUNDERS COLLABORATED

In the 2016 study, foundation program officers said that agencies in Solano County were underfunded because they were not “on the radar” of many foundations. Subsequently, Solano stakeholders and philanthropic partners began meeting to discuss how to bring additional resources to agencies in Solano County. This became the Solano Funders’ Forum that has continued to meet quarterly. Participating funders in FY2020/21 included First 5 Solano, Kaiser Permanente External and Community Affairs, Solano Community Foundation, Solano County Public Health and Employment & Eligibility, Travis Credit Union Foundation, and Wells Fargo Social Impact & Sustainability. One recent activity of the forum was to hold three one-hour sessions to discuss the potential for funding a cash aid program for members of immigrant communities in Solano. As a result of these sessions, the Funders’ Forum assisted Catholic Charities in successfully applying for a \$25,000 grant from Genentech to start a cash aid program, and Kaiser Permanente contributed an additional \$20,000.

AGENCIES IN SOLANO COUNTY BUILT CAPACITY OF NONPROFIT LEADERS

Recent efforts to increase the capacity of nonprofits to apply for funding included two countywide Results Based Accountability (RBA) trainings to help nearly 70 providers tell the story of the difference their efforts make in the community. These trainings, which were sponsored by First 5 Solano, gave organizations and programs tools to clearly communicate their impact to a variety of audiences, including policymakers and potential funders. For a select group of First 5 Solano grantees, additional sessions were offered to provide more individualized support.

Targeted Efforts Spearheaded by First 5 Solano to Increase Early Childhood Funding

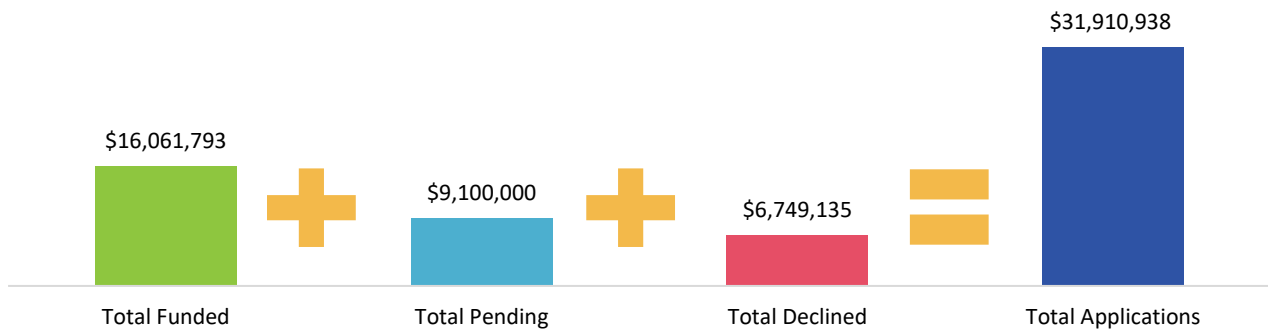
- Created and continued to host the Solano Funders’ Forum to collaborate to bring in additional resources
- Built nonprofit capacity, including by sponsoring Results Based Accountability (RBA) trainings, which provided agencies tools to demonstrate their impact
- Helped to bring in \$16 million of funding to agencies in Solano County

First 5 Solano also supported the grant application capacity of nonprofits by developing an innovative Request for Application process in 2021. Applicants who submitted letters of intent attended 30-minute grant development sessions to help agencies understand what is needed to write a successful grant application (e.g., how to describe the problems they wanted to address, how the proposed projects would solve the problems, their intended outcomes, and their proposed budget). This resulted in a significant increase in the proportion of applicants that met the grant qualifications and the total amount of funding recommended or awarded.

AGENCIES IN SOLANO COUNTY APPLIED FOR NEW FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

Leaders and agencies in Solano County have been diligently working to deepen relationships with funders and find additional funding sources. First 5 Solano, in its role as a convener for agencies devoted to *early childhood and family well-being*, has made a concerted effort (along with its partners) to raise the profile of Solano. Figure 9 summarizes the outcome of fundraising efforts related to *early childhood and family well-being* and doesn't represent the many efforts to secure funding across the county in other domains or areas. From July 2016 through June 2021, over \$16 million was brought into the county for *early childhood and family well-being*. Many of these grants were the result of deepened relationships with funders. Note that these funds include government grants, which were *not* included in the *Trends in Foundation Giving* section above.

Figure 9: Outcome of Fundraising Efforts by *Early Childhood & Family Well-Being* Agencies in Solano County, 2016-2021



Source: First 5 Solano grant tracker. Note: These grant applications were submitted or supported by First 5 Solano and not inclusive of all fundraising efforts in Solano County.

TOP FOUNDATION FUNDERS AND RECIPIENTS OF FOUNDATION FUNDING IN SOLANO COUNTY

In total, the top 10 funders to agencies in Solano County gave almost \$13.7 million through 645 grants to agencies in Solano between 2014-2018. These 10 funders accounted for 51% of the total grant dollars and 30% of all grants given to agencies in Solano County. The top funder during this period was the Solano County Community Housing Corporation, followed by the Area Agency on Aging² and Kaiser Foundation Hospitals.

Figure 10: Top Foundation Funders to Agencies in Solano County, 2014-2018

Top Funders to Solano County Agencies	Total Amount Given Over 5 Years	Number of Grants Given Over 5 Years
Solano County Community Housing Corporation	\$3,340,457	2
Area Agency on Aging - Serving Napa and Solano	\$2,443,043	6
Kaiser Foundation Hospitals	\$1,997,251	76
United Way Bay Area	\$1,496,303	25
Chronicle Season of Sharing Fund	\$1,043,460	3
Fidelity Investments Charitable Gift Fund	\$1,006,940	458
NorthBay Healthcare Corporation	\$767,846	33
Leonard & Beryl Buck Foundation	\$602,813	4
Tipping Point Community	\$500,000	1
Syar Foundation	\$499,050	37
TOTAL	\$13,697,163	645

Source: The Foundation Center.

² In 2018, the 501(c)(3) that operated the Area Agency on Aging closed and Solano County has since assumed its duties.

Between 2014 and 2018, the top 10 grant recipients received \$13.2 million in 278 foundation grants. These 10 recipients accounted for 49% of the total grant dollars and 13% of all grants received by agencies in Solano County. The top recipients over this five-year period were the Solano Affordable Housing Foundation, Meals on Wheels Solano County, and the Children’s Network of Solano County.

Figure 11: Top Recipient in Solano County, 2014-2018

Top Recipients in Solano County	Total Amount Received Over 5 Years	Number of Grants Received Over 5 Years
Solano Affordable Housing Foundation	\$3,340,457	2
Meals on Wheels Solano County	\$2,539,766	19
Children's Network of Solano County	\$1,735,345	20
Leaven Program	\$1,223,761	59
Benicia Community Action Council	\$1,214,482	24
Partnership HealthPlan of California	\$763,700	4
Solano Land Trust	\$685,330	26
NorthBay Healthcare Foundation	\$598,945	34
International Bird Rescue	\$578,249	72
Solano Coalition for Better Health	\$566,605	18
TOTAL	\$13,246,640	278

Source: The Foundation Center.

Strategies to Increase Foundation Giving in Solano County

Despite the efforts that have been made in the county to increase foundation funding, this report finds that agencies in Solano County continue to attract very few foundation dollars relative to its Bay Area neighbors. To learn more about how organizations can bring in more financial support to agencies in Solano County, interviews were conducted with four foundation program officers who are familiar with Solano.³

RAISE SOLANO COUNTY’S PROFILE

As was reported in the 2016 study, the foundation program officers interviewed for this study said potential funders are still unfamiliar with Solano County. Funders simply don’t know about the needs or the opportunities to invest in the county. In terms of the needs, program officers suggested sharing the results of research and data about the county with the media, elected officials, and foundations. Foundations are increasingly using data to drive their funding decisions and demonstrate their impact and are seeking the most updated data sources that help them pinpoint the communities most at need. To help foundations learn about investment opportunities, agencies and leaders in Solano County should develop and publicize innovative ideas that will make an impact in the community. One program officer shared Stockton’s universal basic income initiative as a model for how leaders can attract funding into their communities. In 2019, Stockton’s mayor invited other leaders and potential funders into the city and shared with them the city’s challenges as well as a creative idea to bring about change, universal basic income. This brought about media attention, which created buzz that attracted more potential funders.

“Donors don’t know Solano County.”
-Bay Area foundation program officer

BUILD PARTNERSHIPS TO ADDRESS PRIORITY ISSUES

One reason foundations are unfamiliar with Solano County is that there is very little collaboration between foundations and nonprofits. One program officer contrasted the foundation presence in Solano County with that of a nearby county. “There is a cohort of funders working collaboratively in Contra Costa. There are foundations who are located there. Their primary focus is there, in a way I don’t see in Solano County.” They went on to explain how the local foundations deeply understand the needs of their communities and see investment opportunities. They then engage and partner with other foundations to pool funding to make a larger impact. This combination of foundations embedded in the county, working collaboratively with other funders, and sharing the needs and opportunities, could account for some of the dramatic increase in foundation funding to Contra Costa observed in recent years.

³ Interviews were conducted with representatives from Kaiser Permanente External and Community Affairs, Walter S. Johnson Foundation, Wells Fargo Social Impact & Sustainability, and Zellerbach Family Foundation in August and September 2021.

Although agencies in Solano may not be able to increase the number of foundations headquartered in the county, they could learn from Contra Costa’s example by building their own collaborative efforts and focusing those efforts on specific issues. The existing funders’ forum could be a vehicle for this kind of collaboration. A common theme from the interviews with program officers was that foundations are not granting less money overall, but are making “fewer and more strategic grants” to make a significant impact in certain issues. One program officer suggested developing a partnership with representatives from foundations, nonprofits, and government agencies to work together on a particular issue and collectively apply for larger grants to address that issue. Success on that single issue can then be used to draw increased attention to Solano County and build momentum.

According to foundation program officers, agencies in Solano County may be more successful if their collaborative efforts address the most pressing issues facing their community, particularly if they align with foundation priorities. Current priorities for funding among the foundations interviewed include racial equity and housing, which are also significant concerns for Solano County. They noted the “increased racial reckoning” in recent years spurred the foundations to strategically think about how they can make a commitment to Black, Indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC) communities. One foundation, for example, is focusing on environmental justice and looking at data on how BIPOC are impacted relative to other populations. Some foundations have also made a commitment to funding organizations that are led by and serve people of color. In addition, one program officer mentioned that foundations are investing more in housing initiatives in response to widespread concern about housing affordability and rising homelessness in the region, noting that “most everyone in philanthropy is focused on housing.”

“We have increased our focus on the BIPOC community and made a commitment to funding organizations that are led by and for people of color.”
-Bay Area foundation program officer

INCREASE NONPROFIT CAPACITY

Similar to what was found in the initial 2016 report, funders interviewed in 2021 shared concerns about the capacity of the Solano County nonprofit agencies to apply for grants. The program officers perceived most of the nonprofit organizations in Solano County to be grassroots with small budgets. They said they have directly invited nonprofit organizations in Solano County to apply for grants, but some agencies declined, citing a lack of capacity to complete the application; one organization did not even respond to phone calls or emails. In the competitive world of grantmaking, funders want to see how their grant dollars are making a difference, but program officers said the nonprofits in Solano did not have evaluation methods or capacity to track the program outcomes. The

“We extended a couple grant invites, and they declined because they didn’t have capacity to fill out the application.”

-Bay Area foundation program officer

program officers also said they would consider giving to a larger, non-local organization that has the capacity for grant writing and program evaluation and fund them to provide services in Solano. However, they understand that it may create tension to fund agencies that are not local and recognized there is a “chicken and the egg” conundrum in the county; as one noted, there “is a lack of organizations that have capacity to take on more work. How do you build their capacity? Even if we decided we wanted to fund in

Solano, who do we invest in? The level of sophistication of organizations, which is a reason to invest there, is not there.” Most of the foundations’ application process is invite only, but they were open to agencies reaching out to them or submitting a letter of interest to see if they would be a good fit. This may be a way for agencies in Solano County to connect with foundations with minimal effort.

DRAW DOWN LARGE GOVERNMENT DOLLARS

Another suggestion among the program officers was for Solano County to coordinate efforts to access additional government grants. Grants from state and federal governments are often much larger than foundation grants, usually multi-year, and more sustainable long-term. Expanding government funding in the county could help build sustainable programs that are not reliant solely on foundations. Doing so would make foundations more interested in funding in those programs, because foundations see programs as a risky investment if they are the only funder or make up a large percentage of the budget. Government grants require strong local leadership as they often rely on partnerships among city and county agencies, elected officials, and nonprofit organizations.

“Foundation funding is a drop in the bucket compared to public resources.”
-Bay Area foundation program officer



Conclusion

The findings from this second update to the 2016 *Foundation Giving* study show that agencies in Solano County continue to receive the least amount of foundation funding in the Bay Area, despite having the highest need. Leaders in Solano County have collaborated to bring in additional funding and are strengthening nonprofit capacity. According to foundation program officers, these are necessary actions to draw the attention of foundations to Solano County. Agencies in Solano County should build on these efforts with the following recommended strategies:

1. More broadly share the needs and opportunities in Solano County.
2. Build partnerships to focus on the most pressing issues facing the community.
3. Continue to build nonprofit capacity so agencies can apply for larger grants.
4. Collaborate to apply for larger government grants.

These steps may help bring in additional funding to agencies in Solano County and close the funding gap between Solano and its neighbors, thereby helping the community recover from COVID-19 and achieve equity and improved outcomes for Solano County's residents.

