

82% of Grantmakers Expect Philanthropy to Play a More Important Role in Society as a Result of Recent Changes in Washington, DC

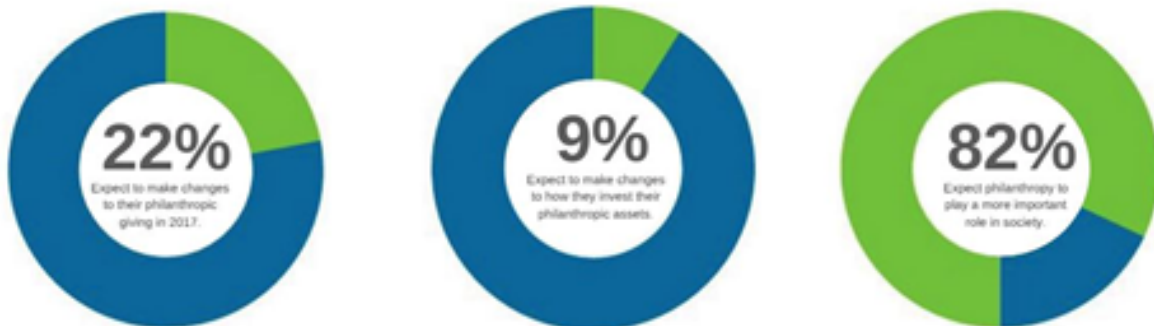
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Results of non-partisan survey by Exponent Philanthropy show that Grantmakers are watching D.C. closely; impact will likely effect giving more than investing

A new survey by Exponent Philanthropy shows the vast majority of its members (82%) expect the institution of philanthropy to play a more important role in society as a result of recent changes in Washington, DC. Issued in late March to Exponent Philanthropy's members - foundations with few or no staff, philanthropic families, and individual donors - the informal "*Pulse Check*" survey looked at how changes today in politics may impact philanthropic behavior in the year ahead, both in terms of giving practices and investments. Results were tabulated from 324 respondents representing a 17% response rate

"Our members have made it clear that regardless of their political leanings, as grantmakers, they care about and are impacted by what is happening in Government today," commented, Henry L. Berman, Exponent Philanthropy's chief executive officer. "The percentage of Exponent Philanthropy members who expect to make changes to their philanthropy as a result of current events is significant. Whether someone sees these changes as rife with risk or possibility, this survey demonstrates a shared commitment among philanthropists to making the world a better place."

As a direct result of changes in Washington, DC today...



source: Exponent Philanthropy 3/17 pulse check survey

Major findings from the survey include:

1. 4 out of 5 Grantmakers agree: philanthropy will play a more important role in society

53% of survey respondents *agreed* with the statement “In light of recent changes in Washington, I expect philanthropy to play a more important role in our society moving forward,” and 29% *strongly agreed* with that same statement. The phrase “changes in Washington” referred to 1) an aggressive congressional agenda, 2) the potential for sweeping policy changes, and 3) the unconventional style of the new administration.

Respondents were invited to support their quantitative answers with anonymous comments. Some expressed an increased urgency to address funding gaps created by proposed government cuts to social programs. Other comments pointed to a need for greater advocacy around specific causes. Still, others spoke to the opportunity for a more vigorous philanthropy sector, driven by the anticipation of robust financial markets.

2. Almost a quarter of grantmakers expect to make changes to giving in 2017 as a result

22% of respondents expect to make changes to their philanthropic giving in 2017 as a direct result of recent changes in Washington. “Philanthropic giving” is a catchall phrase that captures grantmaking, giving strategy, and causes supported. Of this 22% subset: a third (33%) expect to increase giving in 2017, while just 3% plan to decrease giving. More than half (56%) expect to change giving allocations to specific funding areas, while a third (34%) expect to give more general operating grants.

3. 1 out of 10 Grantmakers expect to make changes to investing in 2017 as a result

Only 9% of respondents expect to make changes to how they invest their philanthropic assets as a direct result of recent changes in Washington. 30% of them may make changes to their investments, while the largest percentage, 60% do not plan to make changes to their investments as a direct result of changes in Washington. Of those who are expecting to make changes in their investing, 63% will likely change their asset allocation mix, while smaller numbers plan to explore impact investing opportunities, do more program/mission-related investments, and consider more alternative investments.

Participants were invited to provide anonymous comments elaborating on their survey responses. These comments provide additional insight into the wide array of viewpoints and expectations reflected in the survey. Select responses follow:

- o *I'm hoping that we will soon see a more robust growth in the US economy. We are hopeful that our investment returns (the Drumpf bump) will enable us to increase philanthropy to [causes we care about].*
- o *[We are] seriously considering spending down, as the issues we care about are being threatened.*
- o *Philanthropy does not have the resources to replace government programs, so it will force giving away from "nice to have programs" to a stop gap effort of trying to fill holes in basic services ... It's an unsettling time for the vulnerable among us.*
- o *If the changes in Washington lead to less government regulation and interference in society, our philanthropic goals will have greater effect.*
- o *... the positive changes which are occurring in Washington will reduce government spending; thus, not-for-profit entities will be seeking other sources of funding. Therefore, the requests for grants from our Foundation will increase.*
- o *I don't expect philanthropy's role to be any more or less important in our society, though I do expect it will be more visible, and that philanthropists may work in different ways.*



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Exponent Philanthropy's *Pulse Check* surveys are internal yardsticks used by the organization to gauge membership opinions on important and timely topics. Information is collected anonymously and the full surveys are neither published nor available for dissemination to the public. On occasion, Exponent Philanthropy will publically share findings from its surveys when the topics/findings are deemed relevant and useful to the philanthropy sector at large.

Exponent Philanthropy is a *non-partisan* organization with nearly 2,000 members from across the United States, representing a wide spectrum of ideological and political viewpoints. As such, it was clearly stated in the body of the survey that Exponent “does not ask about or seek to draw conclusions around specific political ideologies.”

About Exponent Philanthropy

Exponent Philanthropy is the country's largest association of funders—nearly 2,000 members strong—and the only one dedicated to serving foundations with few or no staff, philanthropic families, and individual donors. It's vibrant network has in common lean operations and a style of philanthropy motivated by personal passion, community needs, and the strong desire for better outcomes. Exponent Philanthropy provides high-quality and cost-effective programs, resources, and connections that maximize members' dollars and time for the benefit of diverse communities and causes.

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