

What is a Philanthropy-Serving Organization?

- An organization that aims to increase the effectiveness, impact or scale of philanthropy by bringing funders together and/or educating and informing grantmakers.
- Part of the infrastructure of philanthropy.
- PSOs include philanthropic intermediaries, funder affinity groups, regional associations of grantmakers and other types of organizations.

Like any field, philanthropy learns and grows, and is shaped and supported, through networking, professional development, education, and infrastructure. Philanthropy-serving organizations (PSOs) are the non-grantmaking entities that bring funders together to network, learn best practices or new practices, and gain information that can inform and improve their giving. Philanthropy-serving organizations are part of the infrastructure of philanthropy.

Can you give me some examples?

Philanthropy-serving organizations aim to increase the effectiveness, impact or scale of philanthropy by facilitating networking among funders, providing funders with helpful information, educating grantmakers (as well as nonprofits and the public) on particular issues or philanthropic practices, and more. Funder affinity groups, regional associations of grantmakers, some philanthropic intermediaries and information clearinghouses are all types of PSOs.

PSOs bring together and educate funders who share a common interest. Some are issue-based, like the Science Philanthropy Alliance or the Philanthropic Initiative for Racial Equity, and provide deep knowledge of the issue that can advance or shift philanthropic conversations and priorities.

Other PSOs come together around a specific community, for example, Funders for LGBTQ Issues, Native Americans in Philanthropy and the Women Donors Network. PSOs can also be geographically based, as in regional associations of grantmakers, which can help to mobilize resources to respond to an urgent need like disaster relief in



a specific geographic area. Regional associations can also facilitate holistic thinking about funding across issues in a given city or state.

There are also PSOs that focus on specific philanthropic approaches or practices. For instance, several PSOs offer information and resources related to impact investing. A PSO like Exponent Philanthropy provides support and resources to foundations with very small or no staff.

Another type of PSO are information clearinghouses, such as Candid, which provide data on philanthropy as a whole, detailed information on funders and nonprofits across sectors, and resources like a searchable database of foundations and grants. And then there are umbrella organizations that bring PSOs themselves together across issues and communities, like the national United Philanthropy Forum.

Philanthropy-serving organizations conduct and publish research, train philanthropic professionals, organize conferences, and in myriad other ways provide infrastructural support to the field of philanthropy.

You may also want to check out:

- [What is a Donor Collaborative?](#)
- [What are Regional Associations of Grantmakers?](#)
- [What is a Philanthropic Intermediary?](#)

