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USD helps release study on corporate giving, foundations

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San Diego Grantmakers and the University of San Diego Caster Family Center for Nonprofit Research on Tuesday released a study on organized philanthropy in San Diego County.

The report, "The Grantmaking Report: Foundation and Corporate Giving in the San Diego Region," provides a benchmark on the type and amount of charitable grants in 2005, the most recent year of available data.

"For the first time, this research gives the community a clear picture of organized philanthropy in our region," said Nancy Jamison, executive director of San Diego Grantmakers. "It is vitally important that the public have credible information on San Diego's private and community foundations, corporate giving programs and the United Way – how much they give, where they give and what their giving priorities are."

According to the report, 78 percent of the region's private foundations were established after 1990 and nearly 50 percent of these were incorporated after 2000. Most of the foundation growth is in small, typically unstaffed, family foundations.

The study also showed that higher education, human services-related nonprofits and religion-related nonprofits received the highest proportion of grants from foundations located in San Diego County during the year that was studied.

When combined, San Diego's private and community foundations have considerably fewer assets (\$2.29 billion) than the assets reported by foundations in California's two other major cities, San Francisco (\$31.3 billion) and Los Angeles (\$34.7 billion), according to the study.

Despite the recent downturn in the economy, almost 28 percent of the respondents to a survey of San Diego's largest corporations stated their companies' corporate giving was likely to increase during the next two years, while 62 percent predicted that giving levels would remain the same.

"By doing this research, we can better understand the landscape of philanthropic investments to help determine where philanthropy is focusing now and where grant makers may need to shift focus to better serve the San Diego community," said Laura Deitrick, the lead researcher from USD.

"All of us have benefited in some way from the work of nonprofits, and therefore have felt the impact of the philanthropic organizations that support them," added Jamison. "While this report covers philanthropic data, the numbers are really just a reflection of the lives of San Diegans: those giving to, serving and receiving the support of San Diego's 9,000 charities."

The report can be found at www.sdgrantmakers.org.