

S.H. COWELL FOUNDATION
Grantee Perception Report
April 14, 2005

Excerpts from the report prepared by
The Center for Effective Philanthropy

Methodology

- ◆ The Center for Effective Philanthropy has surveyed more than 22,000 grantees of 117 foundations in 2003 and 2004 (see Appendix for full list of foundations), receiving nearly 14,000 completed responses via mail and the Web.¹ Contact information for fiscal year 2003 grant recipients was provided by S.H. Cowell Foundation (SHCF).
 - 61 grantees of the S. H. Cowell Foundation were surveyed from September – October 2004.
 - 56 completed responses were received, representing a 92 percent response rate.

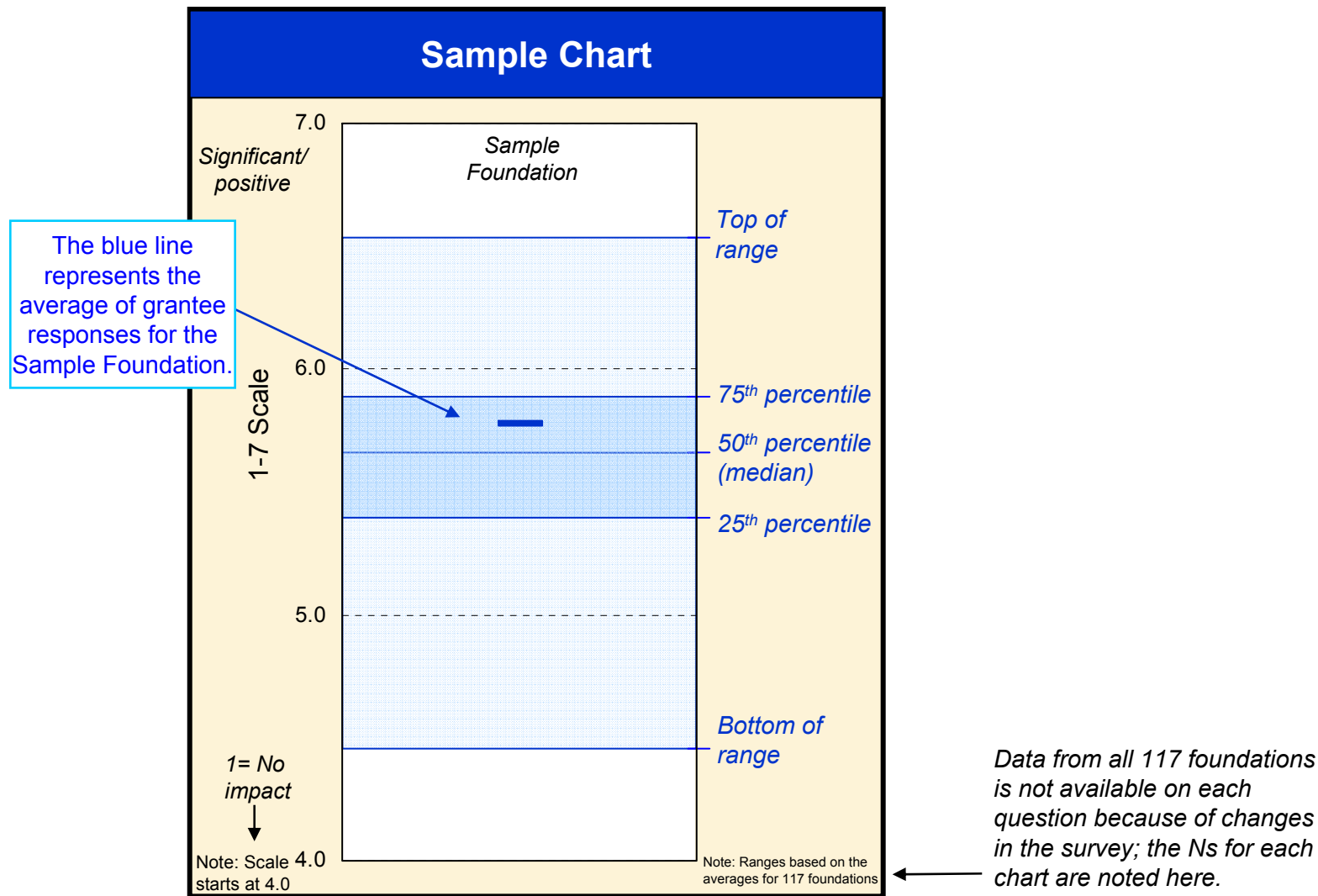
- ◆ The average response for SHCF is shown throughout this report relative to the range of responses for all foundations the Center has surveyed in 2003 and 2004.

- ◆ Throughout this report, selected grantee comments are shown. This group of comments was selected to be representative of the 160 comments the Center received about SHCF.

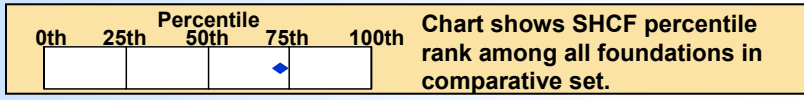
1: Response rates vary by round, but do not have any bearing on grantee ratings, which remain consistent – and comparable – among rounds in terms of average and range. Response rate for the survey was 53 percent in the February 2003 round, 66 percent in the September 2003 round, 65 percent in the March 2004 survey round, and 65 percent in the September 2004 survey round. There are no meaningful differences between responses received via the mail or the Web.

Reading GPR Graphs

Much of the grantee perception data in the GPR is presented in the format below. These graphs show average ratings of grantee responses for individual foundations, over a background that shows percentiles for the overall sample of grantee ratings of all 117 foundations.



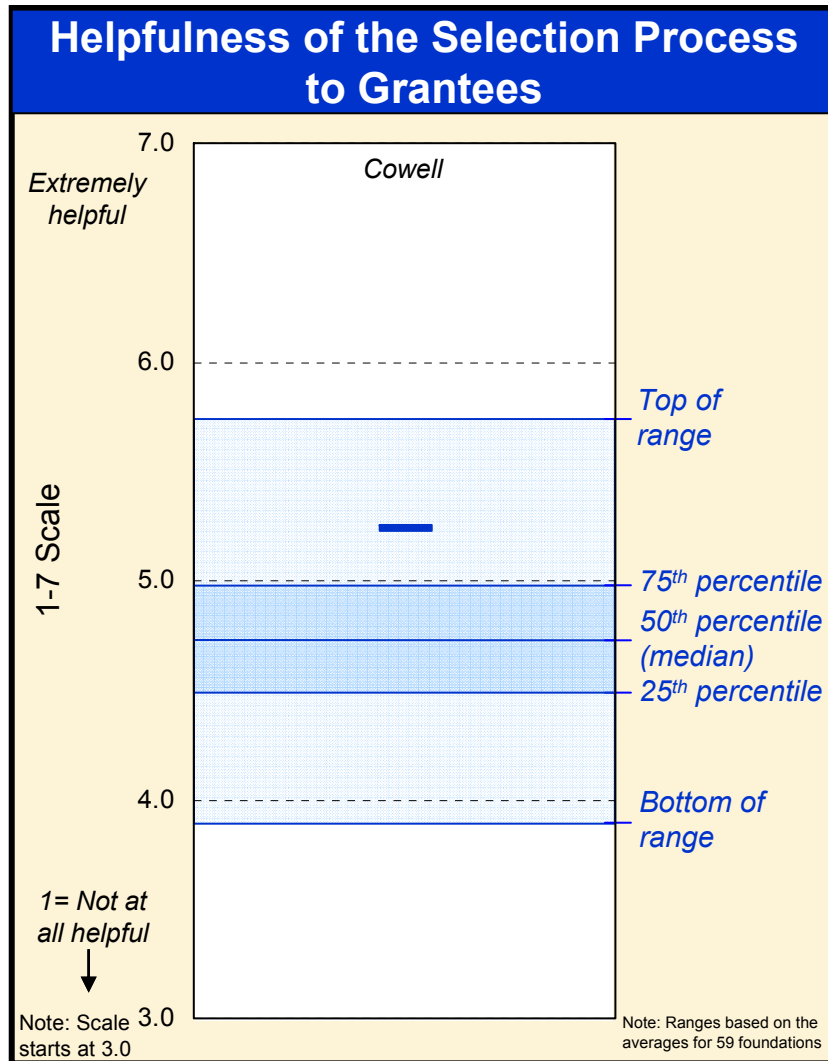
Review of Findings



| Indicator | Percentile | | | | | Description |
|---|------------|------|------|------|-------|--|
| | 0th | 25th | 50th | 75th | 100th | |
| Impact on the Field | | | | | ◆ | Grantees were asked to rate the foundation's impact on their fields. |
| Impact on the Community | | | ◆ | | | Grantees were asked to rate the foundation's impact on their local communities. |
| Impact on the Grantee Organization | | | | | ◆ | Grantees were asked to rate the foundation's impact on their organizations. |
| Satisfaction | | | | ◆ | | Grantees were asked to rate their overall satisfaction with their funder. |
| Quality of Interactions | | | | | ◆ | This summary includes grantee ratings of foundation fairness, responsiveness, and grantee comfort approaching the foundation if a problem arises. |
| Clarity of Communications of Goals and Strategy | | | | ◆ | | Grantees were asked to rate the clarity of the foundation's communication of its goals and strategy. |
| Non-Monetary Assistance | | | | | ◆ | This summary includes the frequency of provision and ratings of helpfulness of 15 individual activities, including management and field-related assistance. |
| Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources | | | | ◆ | | This summary includes the frequency of provision of foundation assistance in obtaining funding from other sources, and ratings of the impact of those efforts. |
| Dollar Return on Grantee Administrative Hours | | | ◆ | | | This summary is calculated by dividing the dollar value of individual grants by the time required of grantees to fulfill the foundation's administrative requirements. |
| Selection Process | | | | | ◆ | Grantees were asked to rate the helpfulness of the foundation's selection process for their organizations. |
| Reporting and Evaluation Processes | | | | ◆ | | Grantees were asked to rate the helpfulness of the foundation's reporting and evaluation processes for their organizations. |

Helpfulness of Selection Process

Participating in the selection process at SHCF is seen as being more helpful to the grantee than is the selection process at the median foundation.

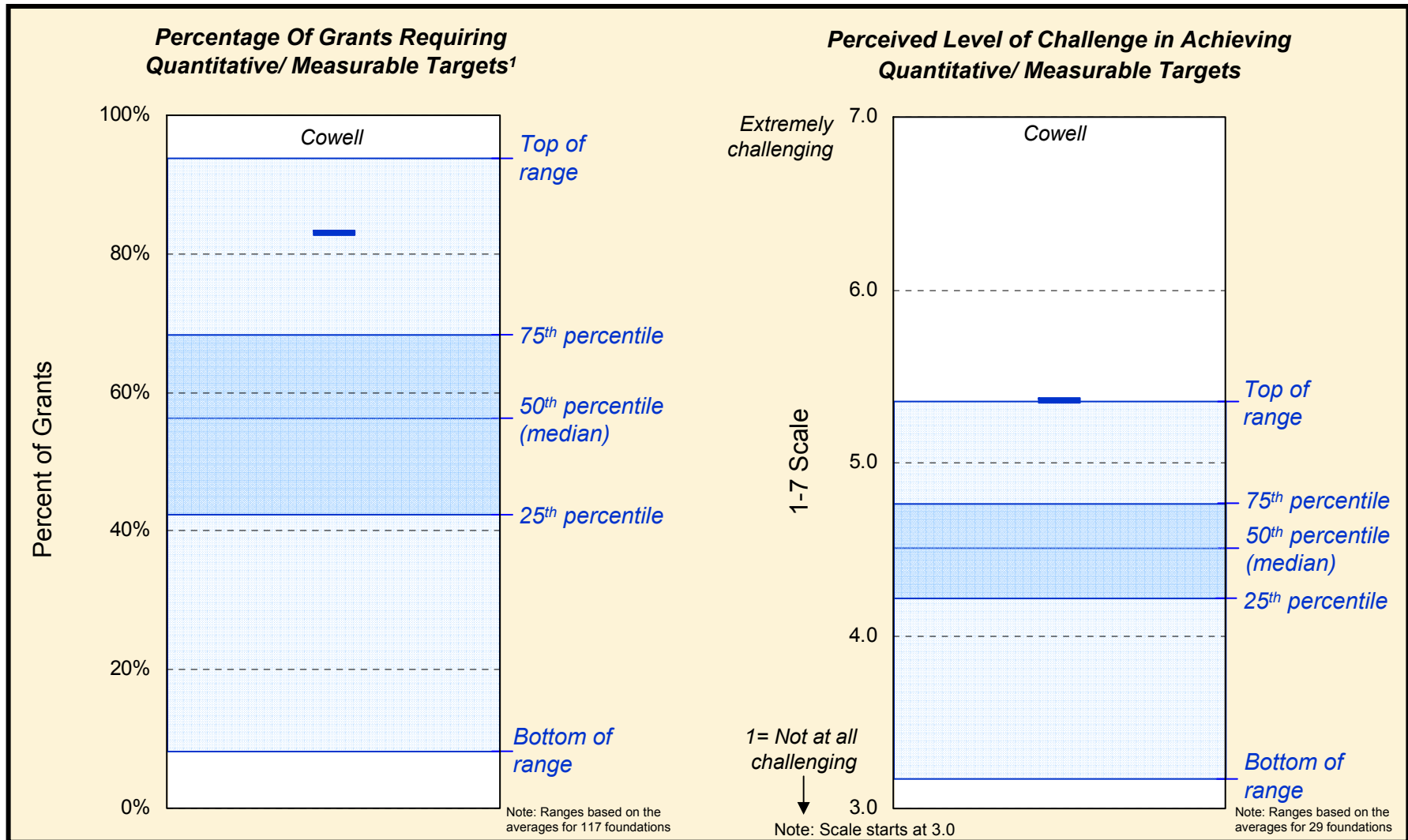


Grantee Comments on the Selection Process

- ◆ “Our program officer was extremely helpful in editing and helping us revise or re-order the structure of the proposal.”
- ◆ “[Cowell was] instrumental in assisting us develop a successful proposal that has been useful for other grant proposals. They have been great in letting us then work our plan.”
- ◆ “Without the support from the Foundation we could not have completed our application.”
- ◆ “The Foundation's staff are excellent in terms of communicating what they are looking for, and the process to follow in order to secure funds.”
- ◆ “Extremely efficient staff. Very quick turn around to any questions. Extremely supportive of agency's efforts. Always making an effort to understand where we are in our development process.”

Quantitative/Measurable Targets (1)

SHCF requires grantees to report against quantitative targets for a larger proportion of grants than is typical. These targets are perceived as being the most challenging to achieve among foundations whose grantees were asked this question.

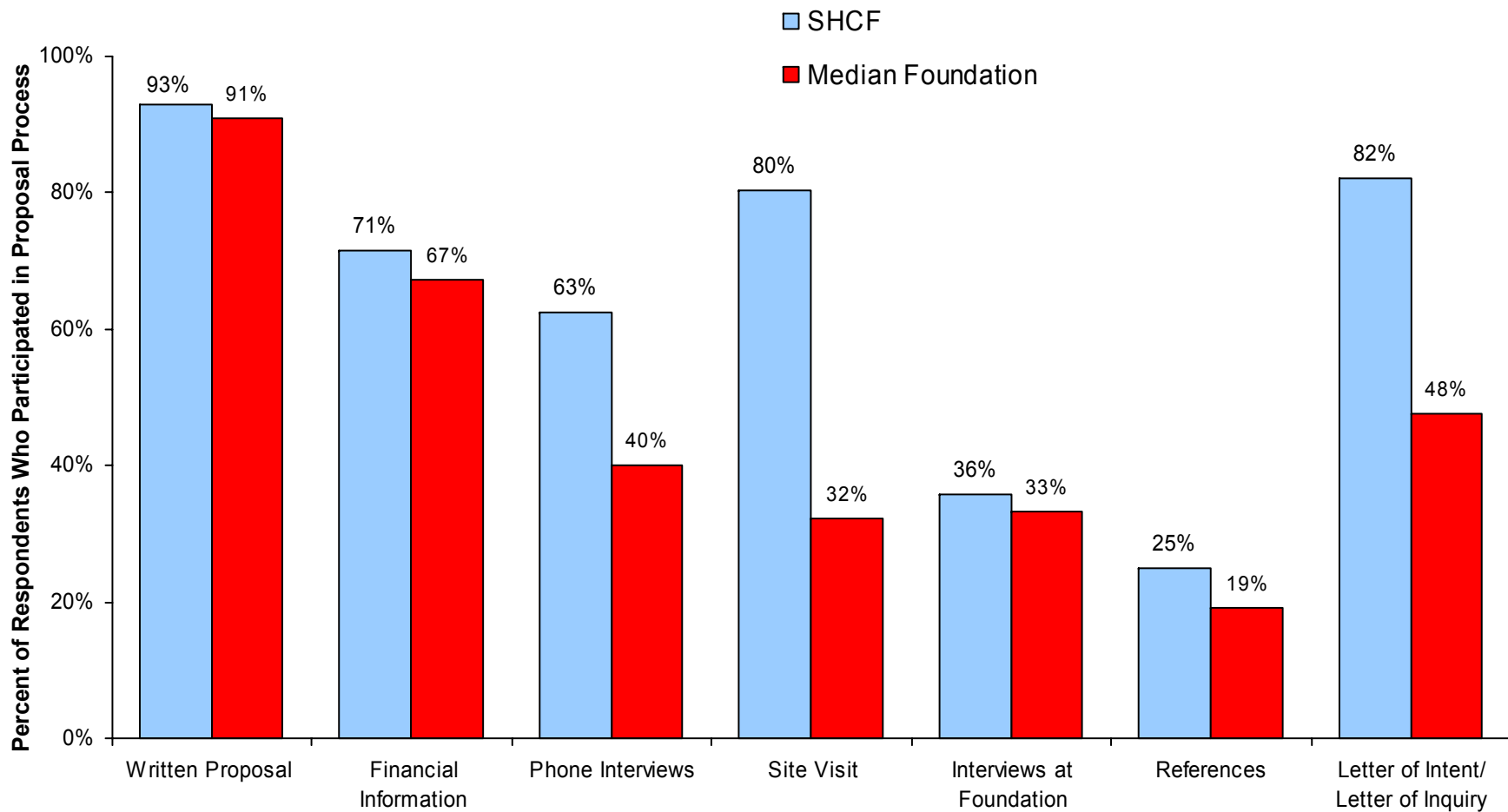


1: Targets include process and outcome targets.

Data Requested During Selection Process

SHCF grantees report submitting a letter of inquiry and having site visits and phone interviews more frequently than typical during the selection process.

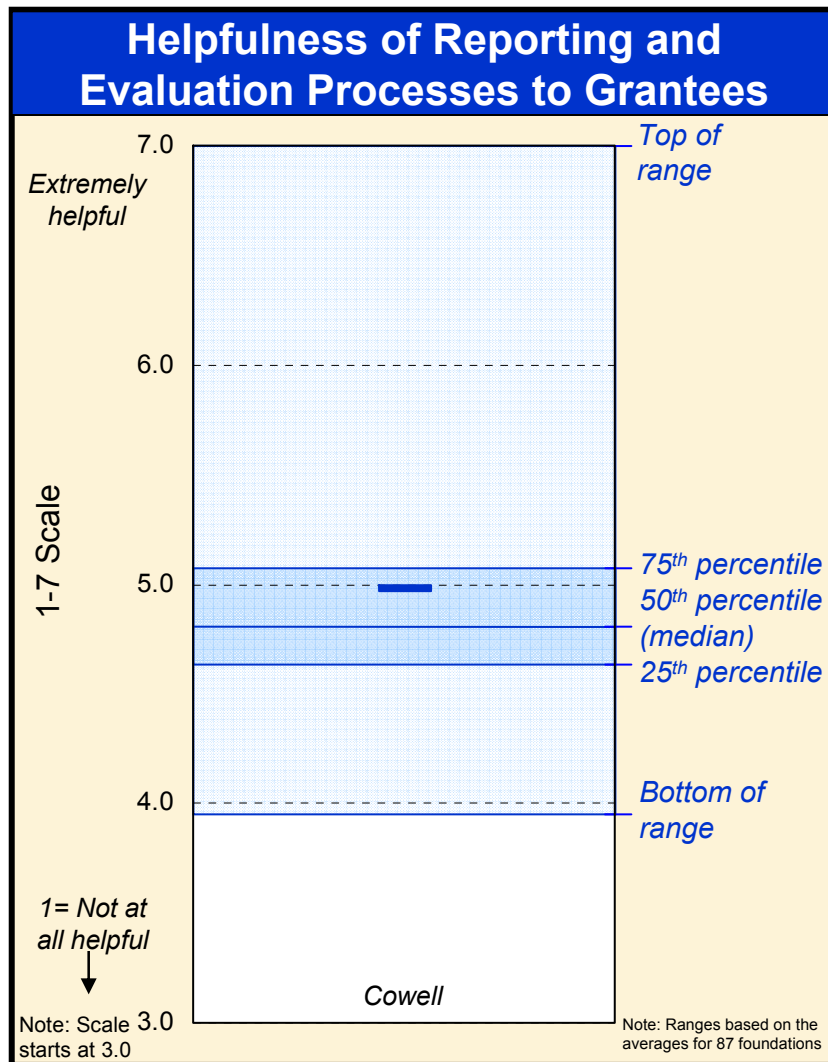
Data Requested by the Foundation During the Selection Process



Note: Survey responses shown in this chart include data from 59 foundations.

Helpfulness of Reporting and Evaluation Processes

SHCF's evaluation¹ process is seen to be more helpful than the process at the median foundation.



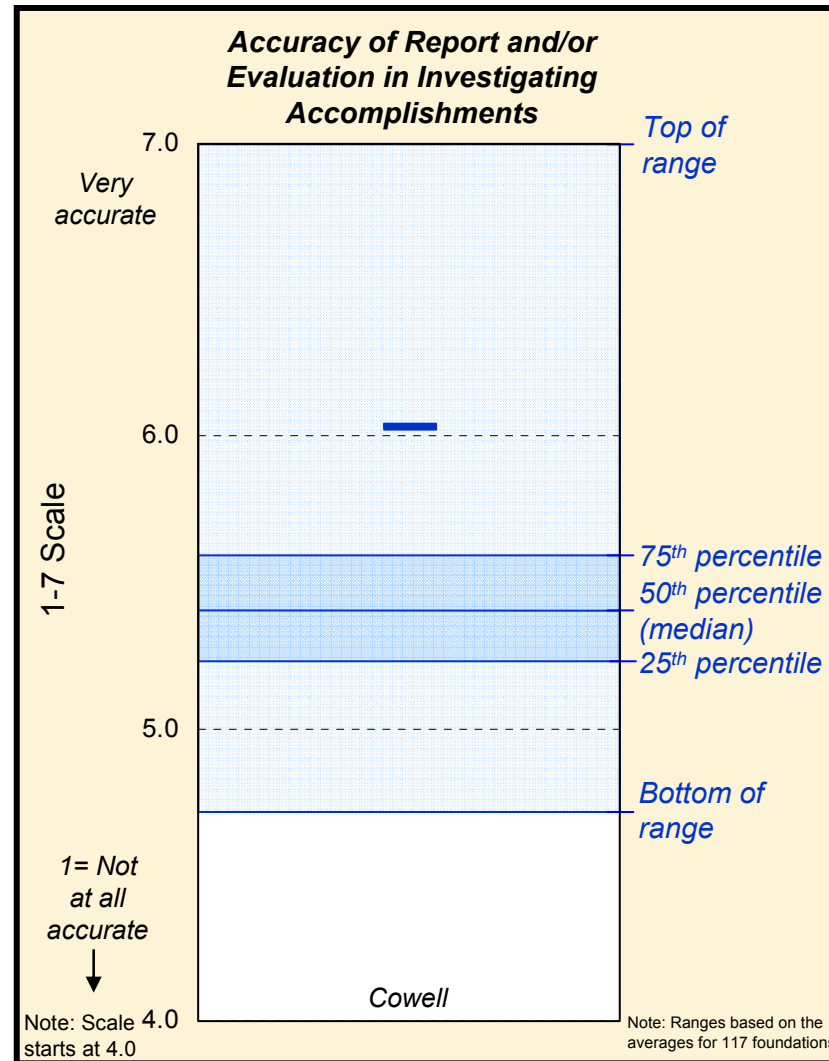
Grantee Comments on Reporting and Evaluation Processes

- ♦ *“The program officer was accessible and provided very helpful information in both the application and reporting period. The reporting information he requested helped me make the case to the Foundation about why funding us was a worthwhile investment, and helped me monitor how well we were meeting our own and the Foundation's goals. The program officer really paid attention to what we did and thought about it.”*
- ♦ *“We were so happy to be funded that we didn't think about these issues. Personal communications seem friendly but we don't know where we stand with the foundation regarding their perceptions of our success or non-success.”*
- ♦ *“From both an individual and agency perspective, we have experienced the highest quality of services from the Foundation. The Foundation person we work with makes us work very hard for our funding! We are held accountable for both our progress and our difficulties. But we also receive excellent guidance and support, and firmly believe the Foundation is invested in our success.”*
- ♦ *“Staff appear to be very committed to the work they are doing. They are open and responsive to communication concerning grant goals and objectives, and encourage interaction with other Foundation grantees.”*

1: “Evaluation” is defined as any activity considered by grantees to be part of an evaluation, and may not correspond to foundation definition.

Reporting and Evaluation Processes (2)

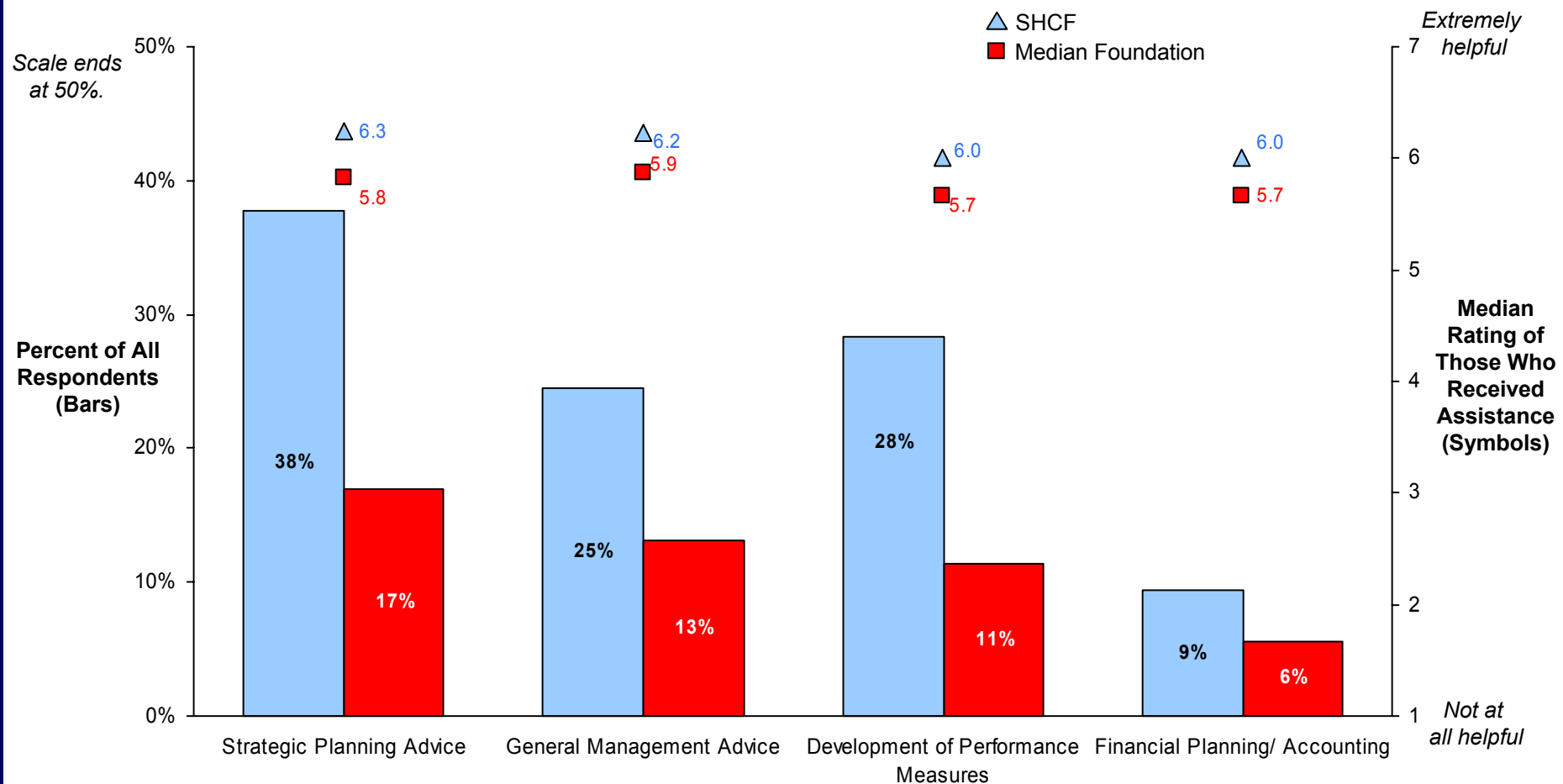
SHCF grantees rate the Foundation's reporting and evaluation processes as more accurate in investigating their accomplishments than do grantees at the median foundation.



Management Assistance Activities & Helpfulness

A higher than typical proportion of SHCF grantees report receiving most types of management assistance. This assistance is rated as more helpful than grantee ratings of the median foundation.

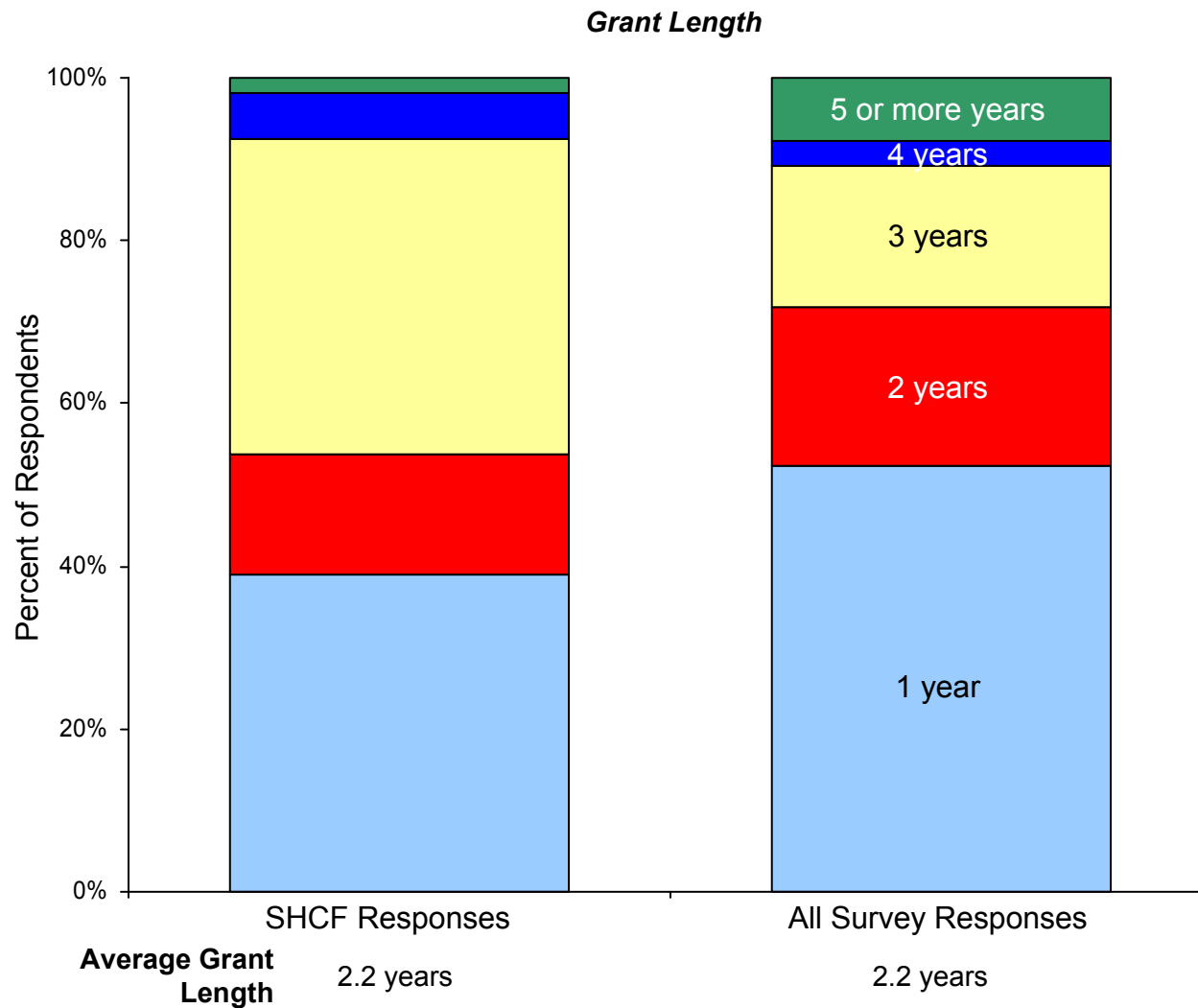
Frequency and Helpfulness of Management Assistance Activities



Note: Percent of grantees receiving non-monetary assistance is an overall percentage including those who answered that they did not receive assistance from the Foundation. Survey responses shown in this chart include data from 59 foundations.

Grant Length

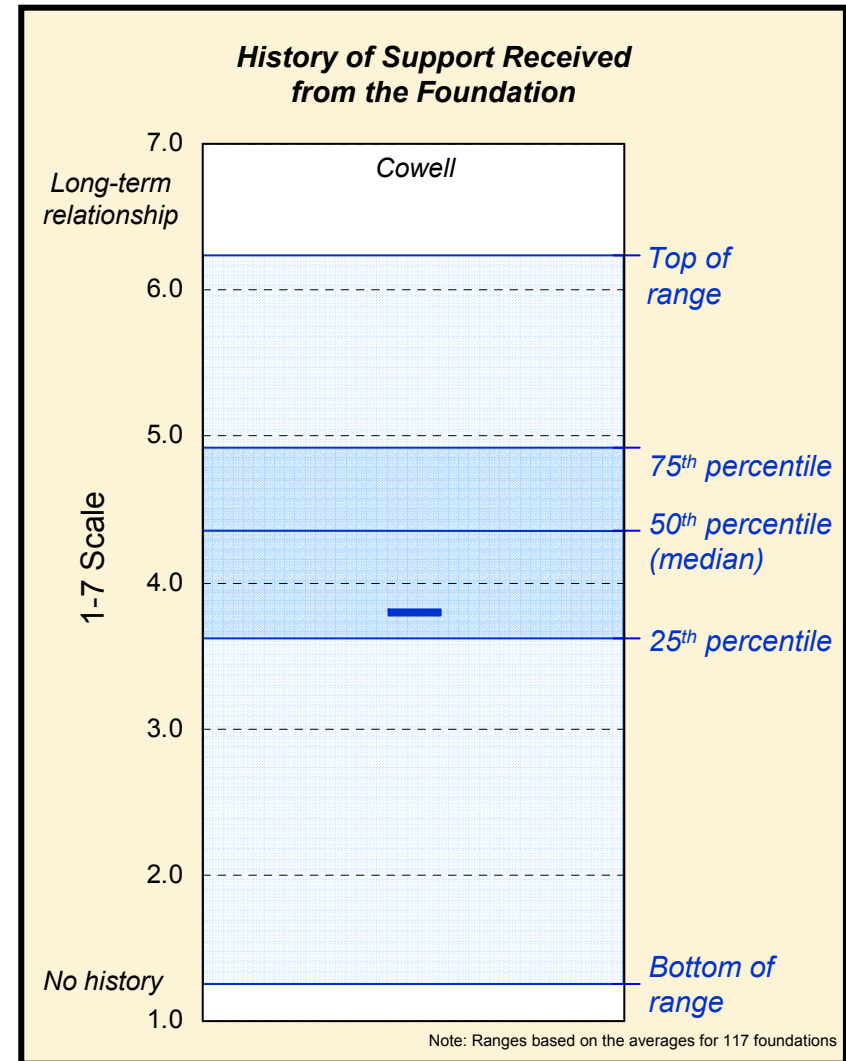
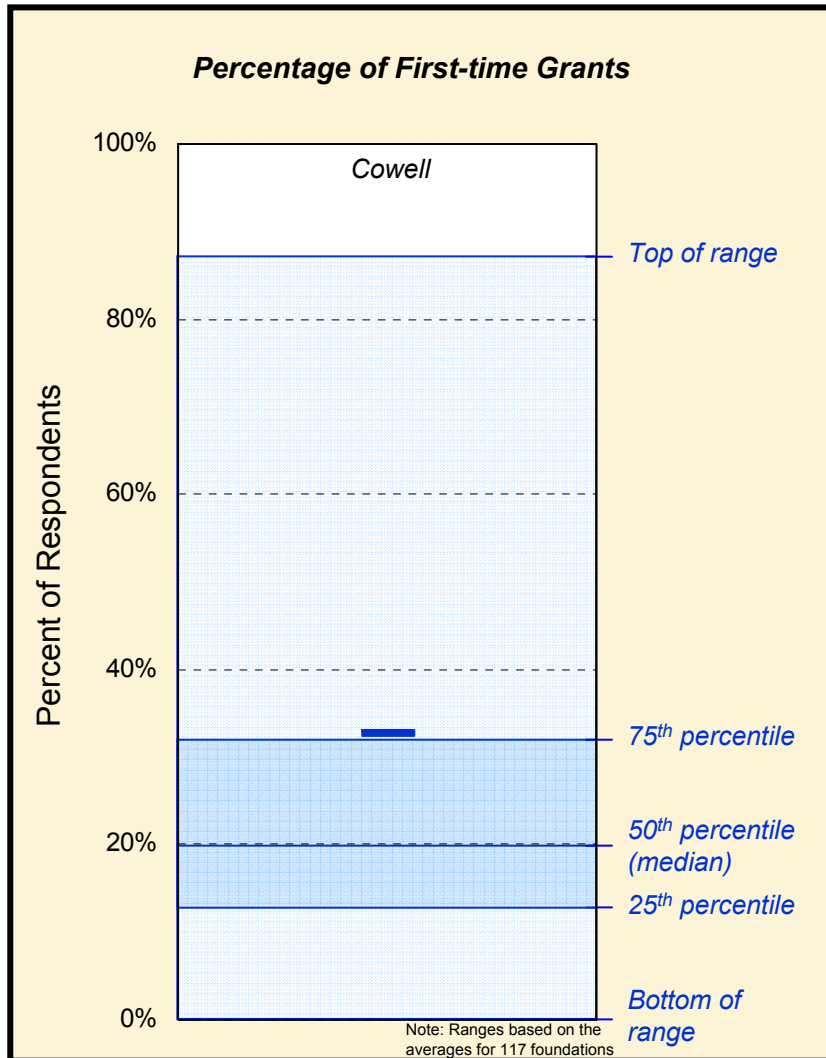
SHCF more frequently awards multi-year grants than typical, especially 3 year grants.



Note: Survey responses shown in this chart includes data from 117 foundations

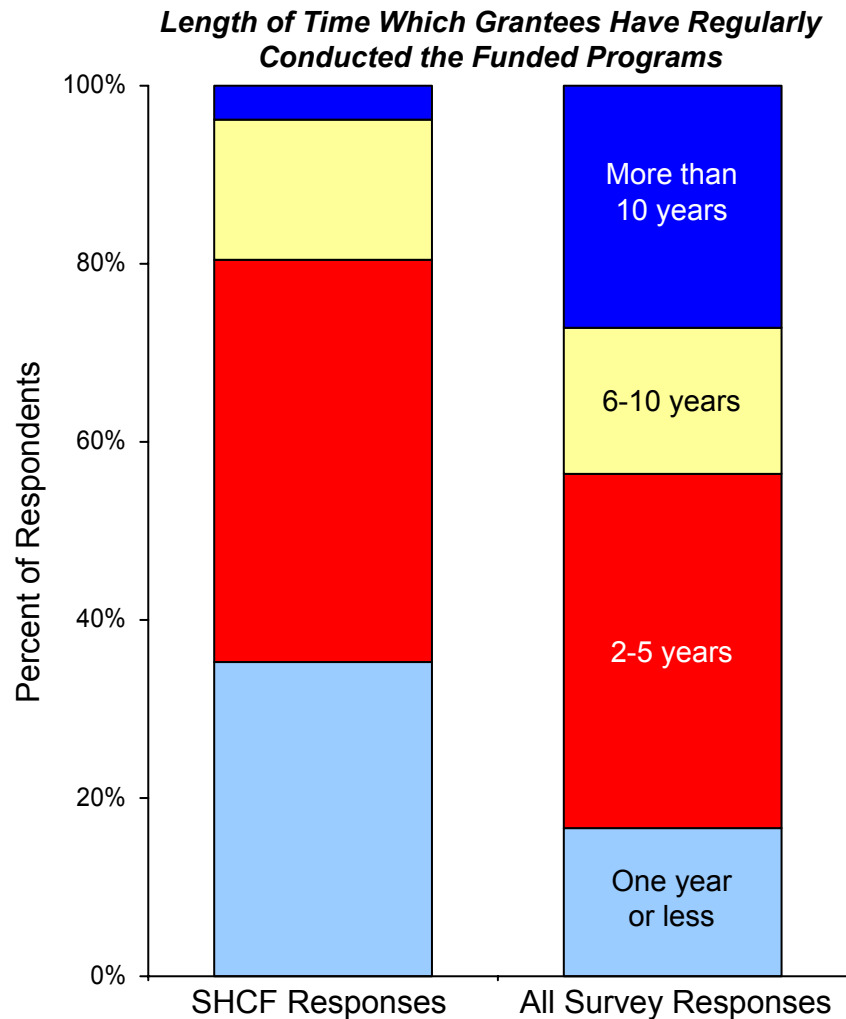
History of Foundation Support

A substantially larger proportion of SHCF grants are first-time grants relative to the median foundation, and the Foundation's history of support of grantees is shorter than is typical.

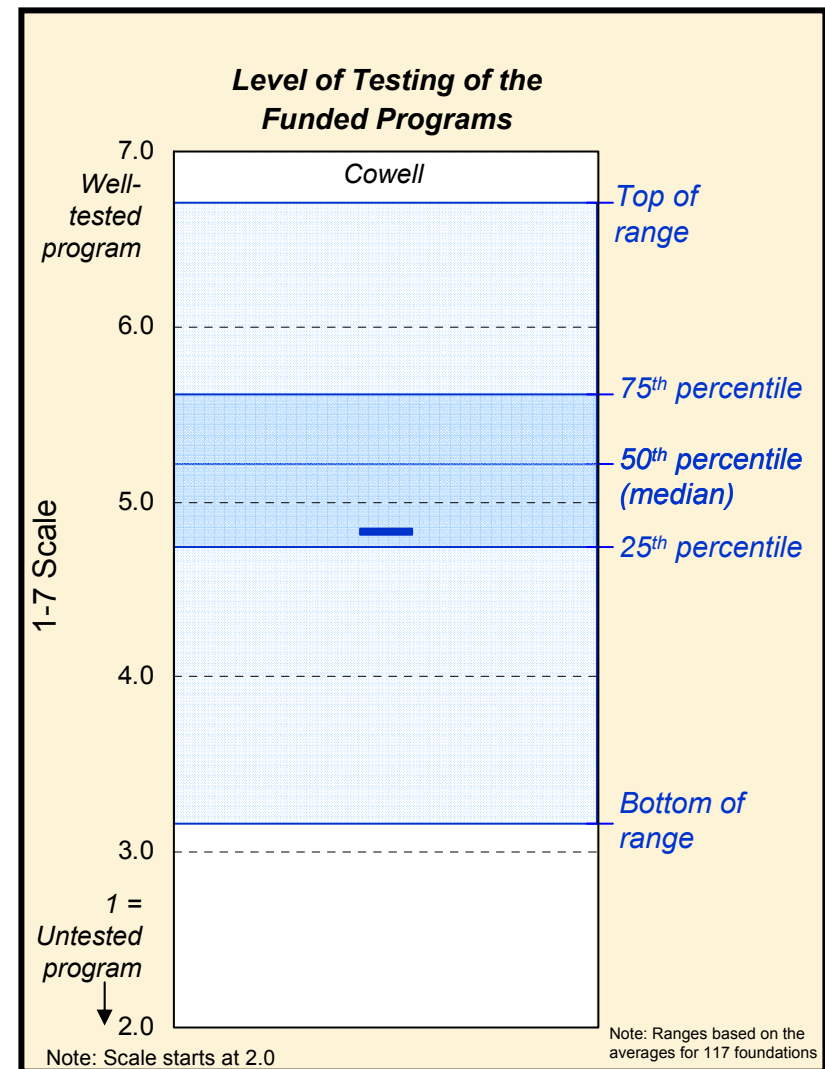


History of Grantee Programs

SHCF funds programs with a shorter history of implementation than other foundations. The programs funded are described by grantees as less well-tested than those funded by the median foundation.

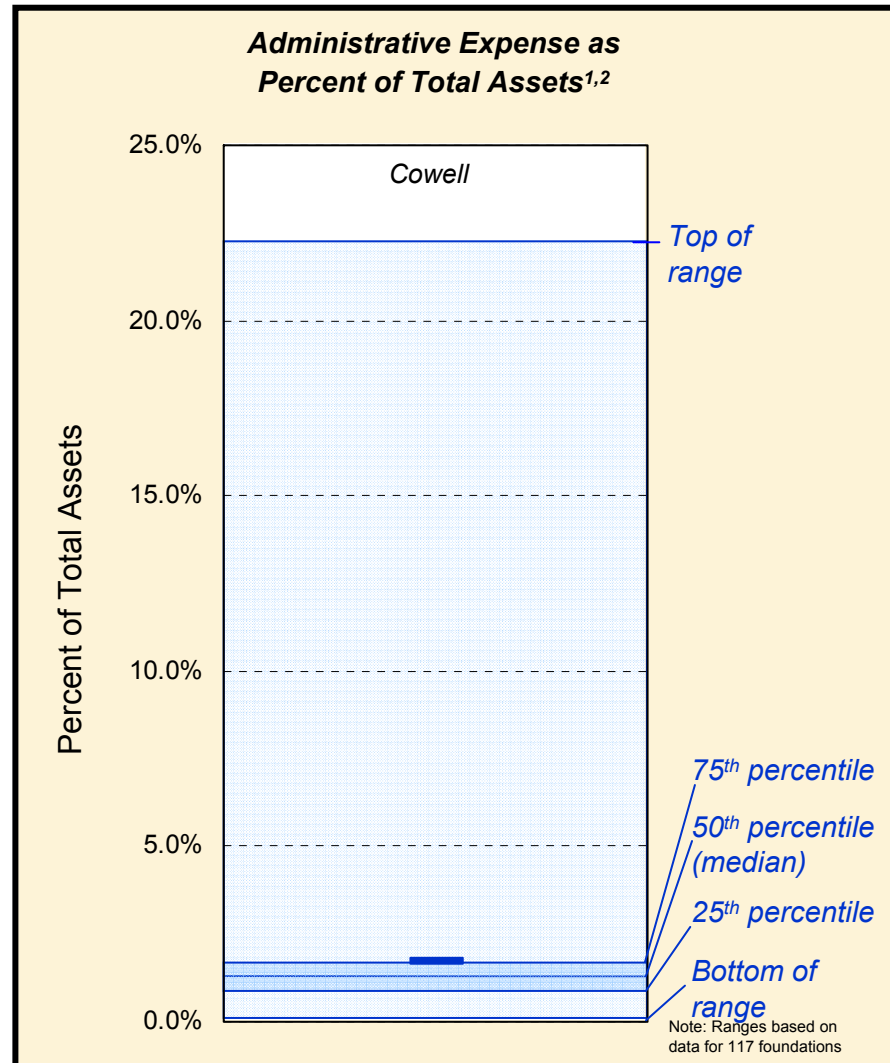


Note: Survey responses in left-hand chart shown in this chart includes data from 29 foundations



Total Administrative Expense

Cowell spends a typical amount on administrative expenses as a percentage of total assets.

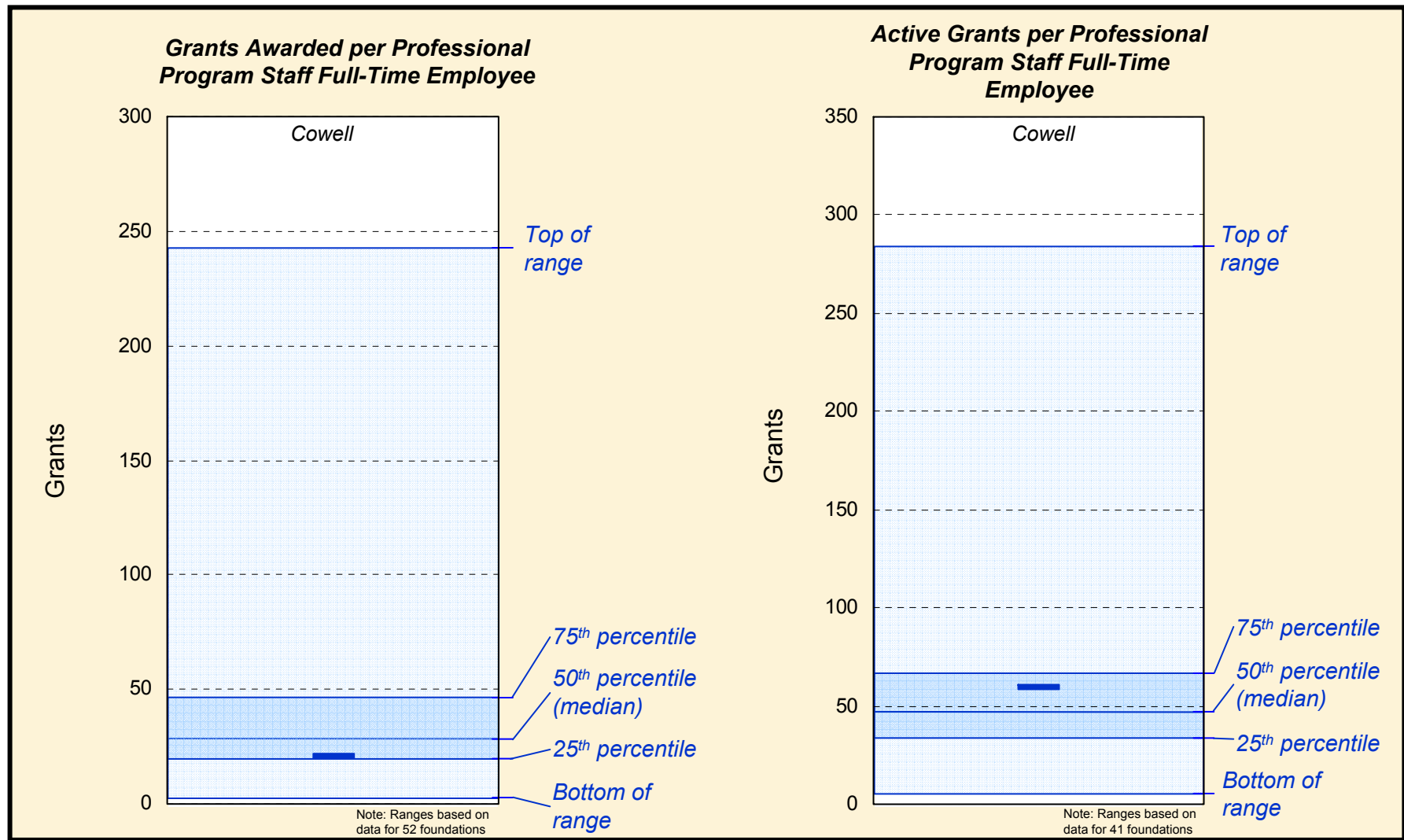


1: Total administrative expense is line 24a on the 990-pf (line 44a subtracting 22a on the 990); qualifying administrative expense is line 24d (44b subtracting 22b on the 990), and total giving is line 26d (22a on the 990). All data is from most recent tax filings available (2001 and 2002).

2: Excludes one value of over 16%.

Program Staff Load (2)

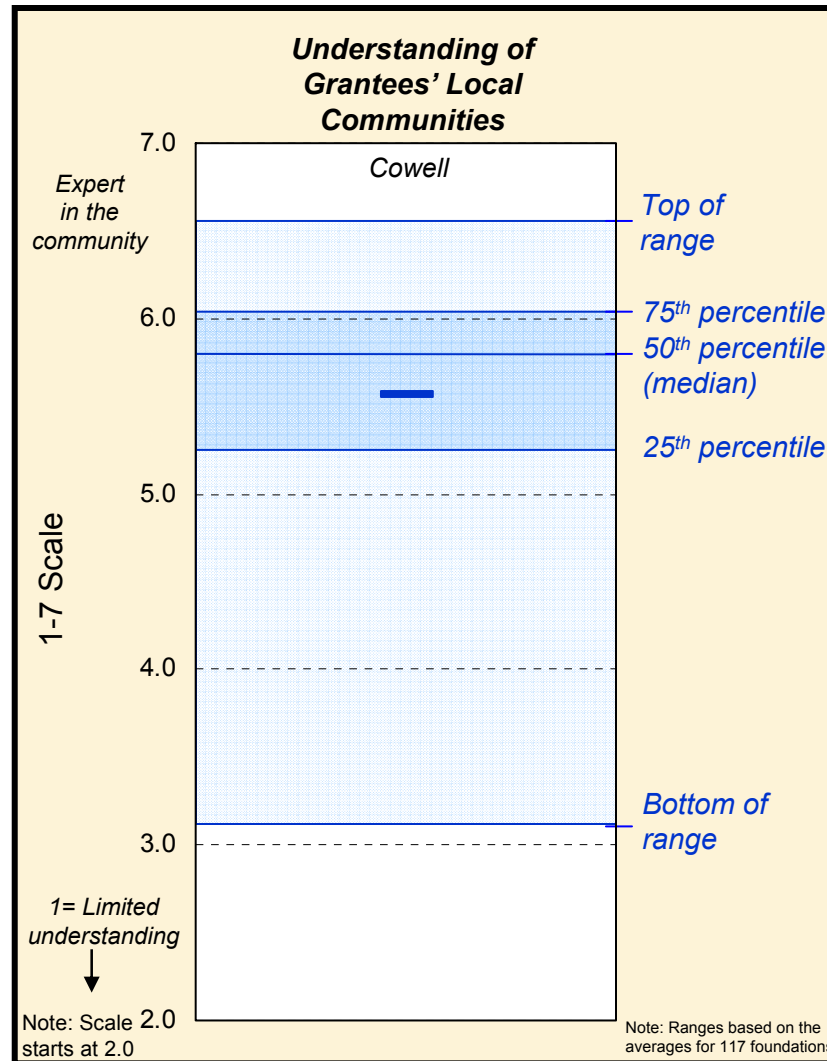
Cowell has a smaller number of grants awarded per professional program staff full-time employee but an above median number of active grants per professional program staff full-time employee.



Source: SHCF and other GPR subscribers, 2003 and 2004. Also includes other foundations that provided supplemental data.

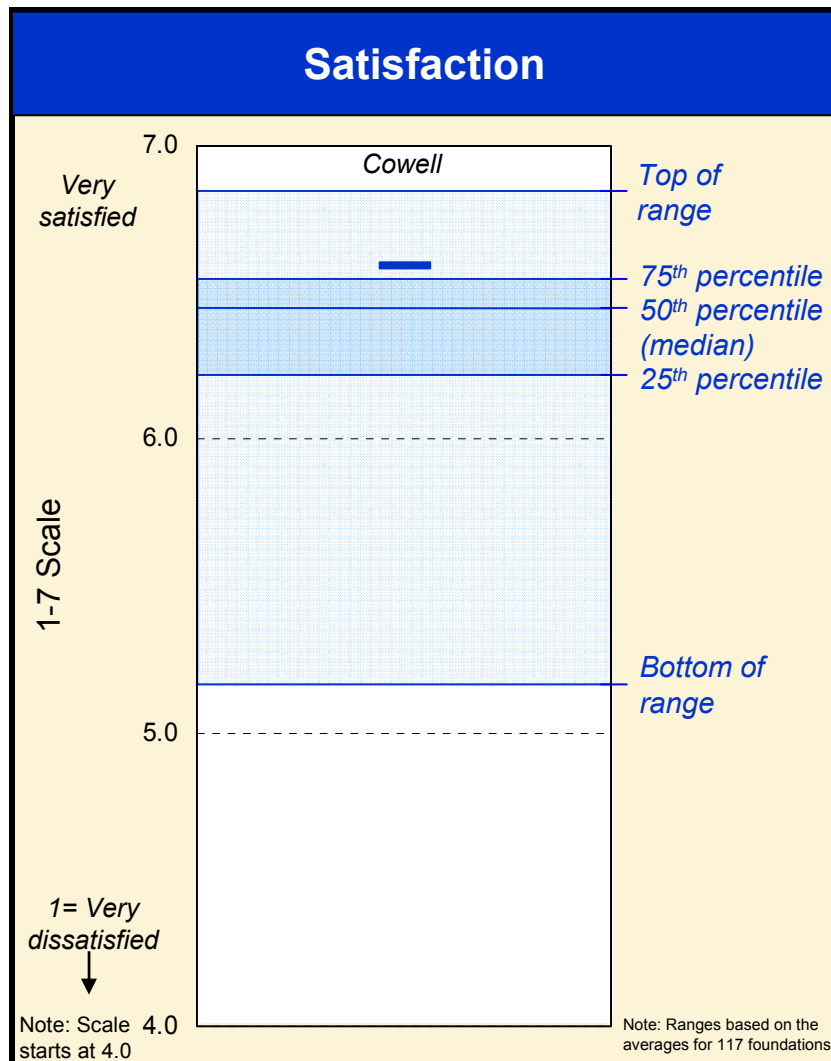
Understanding of Grantees' Local Communities

SHCF grantees rate the Foundation's understanding of grantees' communities lower than the rating of the median foundation.



Satisfaction with the Foundation

SHCF grantees are more satisfied with their experience with the Foundation than grantees of other foundations.



Grantee Comments on Overall Satisfaction

- ◆ *“The Cowell Foundation is, by far, one of the most involved, thoughtful, challenging, effective, honest, sincere, helpful, task-mastering, supportive foundations with which I have been involved. Their staff is of the highest caliber in terms of integrity, heart, insight and guidance. They have a very good reputation by all of us who have worked with them. Yes, they grant us funds and that’s great, but all of us feel that they are tough. They ask tough questions, they challenge us to do better and to think smarter. They have truly elevated us and we have the utmost respect for them as people and as representatives of a foundation that really does want to take their mission seriously and make an impact on communities and on those organizations such as ours to be better.”*
- ◆ *“Very professional, supportive. The Foundation behaves just as you would if it were ‘your’ foundation. They are actively involved in outcomes.”*

Survey-wide Analysis Fact: Three dimensions best predict grantee perceptions of satisfaction with their foundation funders: 1) *Quality of Interactions with Foundation Staff:* fairness, responsiveness, approachability; 2) *Clarity of Communications of a Foundation’s Goals and Strategy:* clear and consistent articulation of objectives; 3) *Expertise and External Orientation of the Foundation:* understanding of fields and communities of funding and ability to advance knowledge and affect public policy. For more on these findings and resulting management implications, please see the Center’s report, *Listening to Grantees: What Nonprofits Value in Their Foundation Funders.*