

Grantee Perception Report[®]
prepared for the
Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
Fall 2005

Excerpt of Results

VERSION 3/11/06



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EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

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Methodology (1)

- ◆ The Center for Effective Philanthropy has surveyed more than 31,000 grantees of 163 foundations from 2003 through 2005 (see Appendix for full list of foundations), receiving nearly 20,000 completed responses via mail and the Web.¹
 - 99 fiscal year 2004 grantees of the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation (“Noyes”) were surveyed from September – October 2005.
 - 63 completed responses were received, representing a 64 percent response rate.

- ◆ Contact information for fiscal year 2004 grant recipients was provided by Noyes.

- ◆ Selected grantee comments are shown throughout this report. As with grantee ratings, grantee comments are generally positive. This selection of comments highlights major themes and reflects trends in the data. These selected comments over-represent negative comments about Noyes in order to present as wide a range of grantee perspectives as possible.

1: Response rates vary by round, but do not have any effect 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, 65 percent in the September 2004 survey round, 67 percent in the March 2005 round, and 64 percent in the September 2005 round. There are no meaningful differences between responses received via the mail or the Web.

Methodology (2)

- ◆ Throughout this report, Noyes is compared to a cohort of foundations selected by the Foundation. The eleven foundations that comprise this group are:
 - The Case Foundation
 - The Educational Foundation of America
 - The F.B. Heron Foundation
 - The Gill Foundation
 - Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation
 - Paul G. Allen Foundations
 - The Pew Charitable Trusts
 - Public Welfare Foundation
 - Surdna Foundation
 - Waitt Family Foundation
 - The Wallace Foundation

Key Findings

The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation (“Noyes”) is relatively highly rated by its grantees on several key measures. In particular, Noyes grantees rate the Foundation very highly in its impact on and understanding of grantees’ fields, impact on grantee organizations, and in grantees’ overall satisfaction with the Foundation. In response to open-ended questions, many grantees pinpoint the Foundation’s “consistent,” “long-term” support of their fields of funding and their organizations.

Noyes is also very highly rated in the quality of its interactions – responsiveness of staff, approachability of staff, and fairness of the Foundation’s treatment of grantees. Grantees frequently comment on the “accessible,” “helpful,” and “supportive” Foundation staff. The clarity and consistency of Noyes’ communications about its goals and strategy are also rated above the rating of the median foundation.

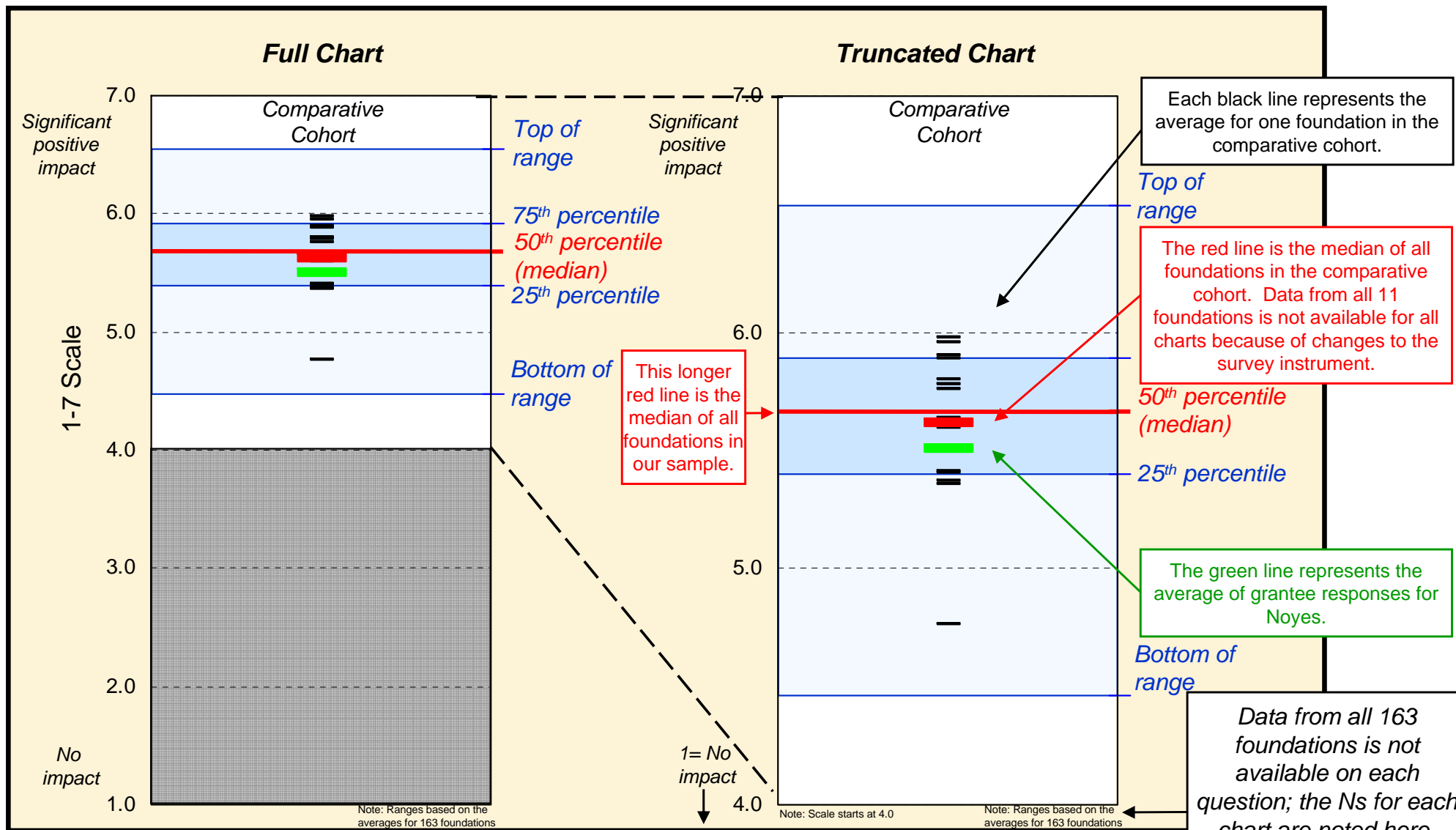
The Foundation provides its grantees with much more non-monetary assistance, particularly field-related assistance, than is typical. This assistance is highly rated relative to the assistance provided by other foundations. Noyes also provides grantees with more assistance securing funding from other sources, which is rated at the median in terms of impact.

The Foundation’s selection process is rated at the median in its helpfulness to grantees. Noyes staff are less involved in the development of the proposal than is typical. Noyes grantees rate the helpfulness of the Foundation’s evaluation/reporting process above the ratings of other foundations, although there is wide variation among Noyes funding priorities in the proportion of grantees that discussed completed reports and evaluations with Foundation staff.

Finally, the Foundation awards smaller grants (at the median) than other foundations, although these grants comprise a larger percentage of grantees’ budgets than typical. The size of Noyes grants, coupled with an above median amount of time required of grantees to fulfill the Foundation’s administrative requirements, results in fewer dollars awarded per grantee administrative hour.

Reading GPR Charts

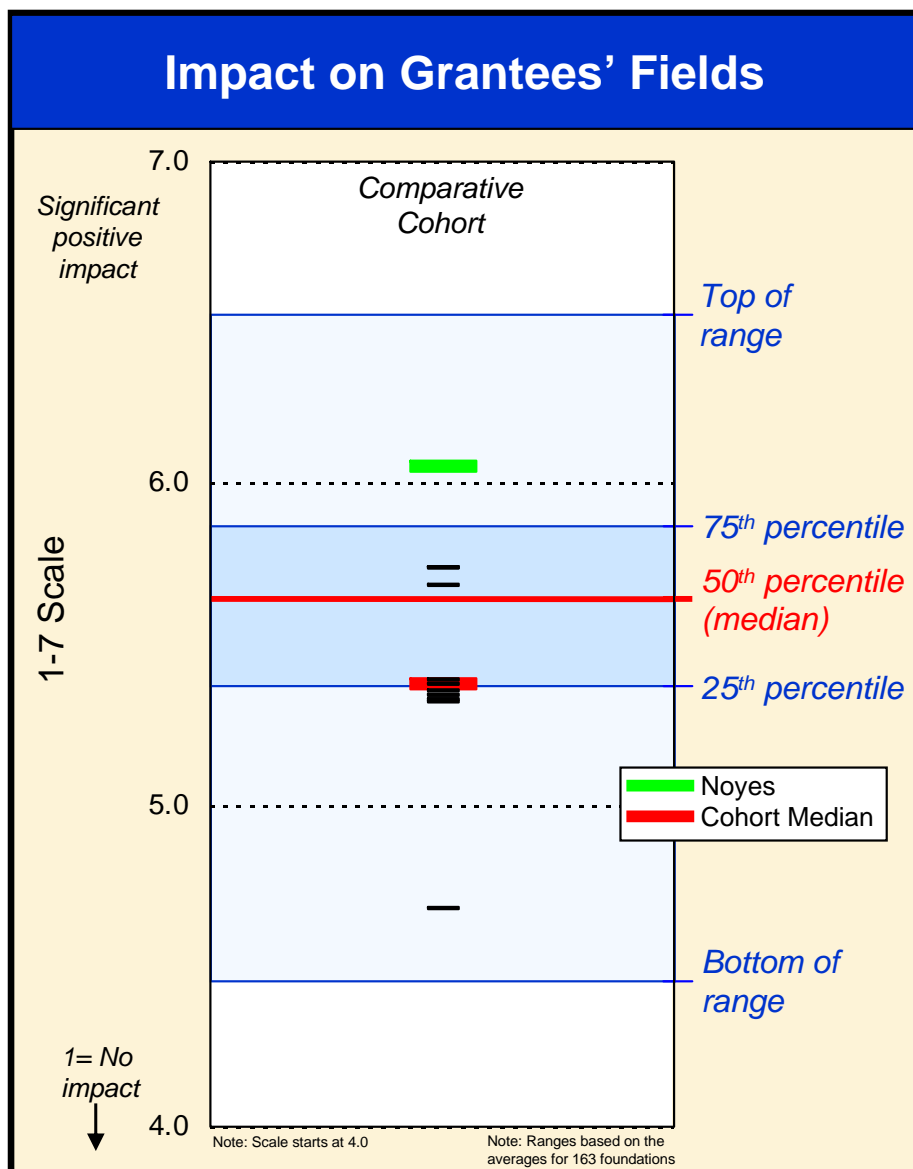
Much of the grantee perception data in the GPR is presented in the format below. These graphs show average ratings of grantee responses for individual foundations, over a background that shows percentiles for the overall sample of grantee ratings of all 163 foundations. **Throughout the report, many charts in this format are truncated from the full scale because foundation averages fall within the top half of the range.**



Impact on Grantees' Fields

This rating highlights grantees' perceptions of foundations' impact on the fields¹ in which grantees operate.

- ◆ *Noyes grantees rate the Foundation's impact on their fields more positively than do grantees of the median foundation.*

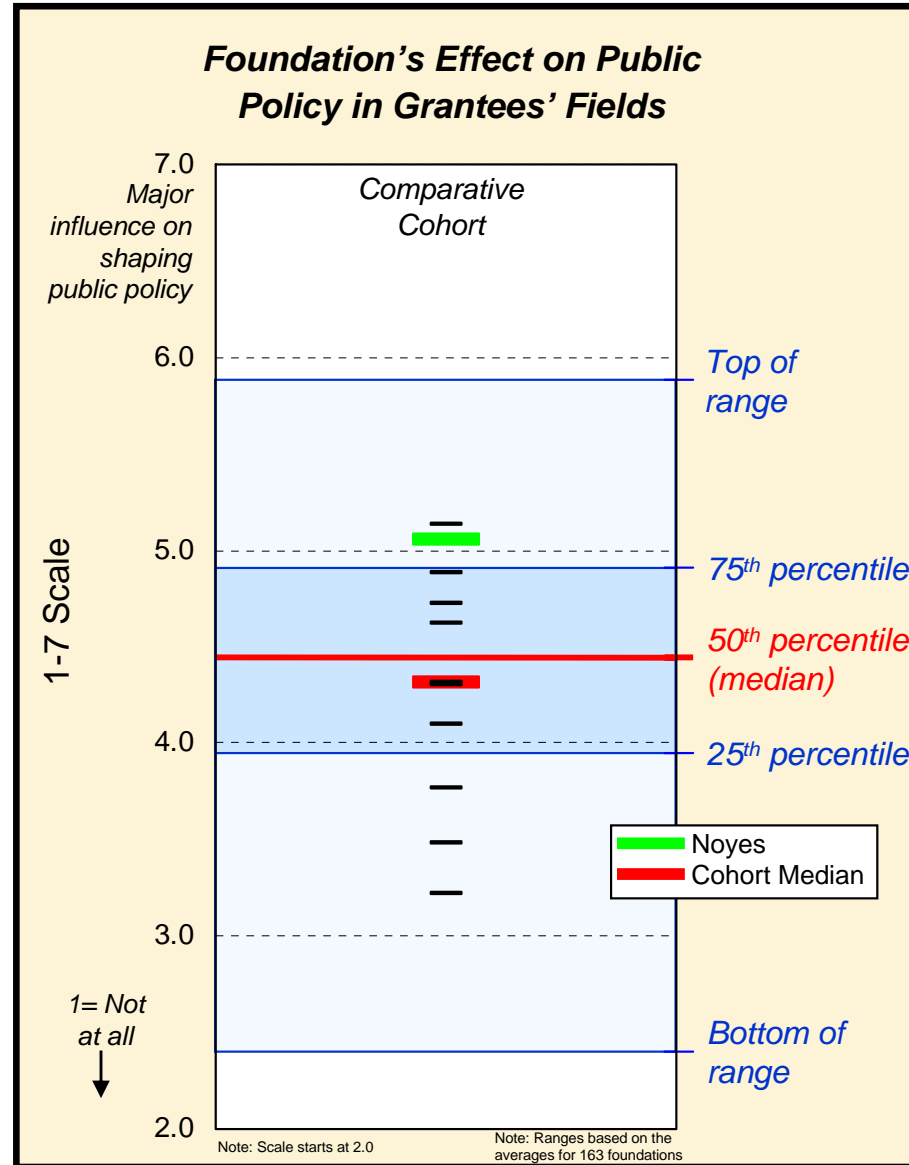


Grantee Comments on Field Impact

- ◆ *"The Noyes Foundation has been one of the most consistent supporters of sustainable agriculture. They have brought other funders into the field as well and have raised the profile of the importance of sustainable agriculture to environmental and conservation movements/organizations."*
- ◆ *"The clarity and consistency of the mission of the Noyes Foundation has been important. They have been a consistent, stable promoter of environmental justice and quality and of working with and through impacted communities and constituencies."*
- ◆ *"The Noyes Foundation's long-term commitment to collaboration and good process in the sustainable agriculture community has been invaluable in setting the norms of the movement."*
- ◆ *"There are few funders that have provided consistent support in the field of reproductive rights, especially for local initiatives. Because it is so important to sustain this work, the Foundation has had a significant impact."*
- ◆ *"We regard the Noyes Foundation as a champion in the field of sustainable agriculture, with a strong funding program that has been extremely important for long-term policy development and implementation. The Foundation's funding of other organizations has also increased our capacity to work at both the regional and national level on initiatives that require networks of organizations with the capacity to work on policy."*
- ◆ *"They have their finger on the pulse of the EJ movement."*

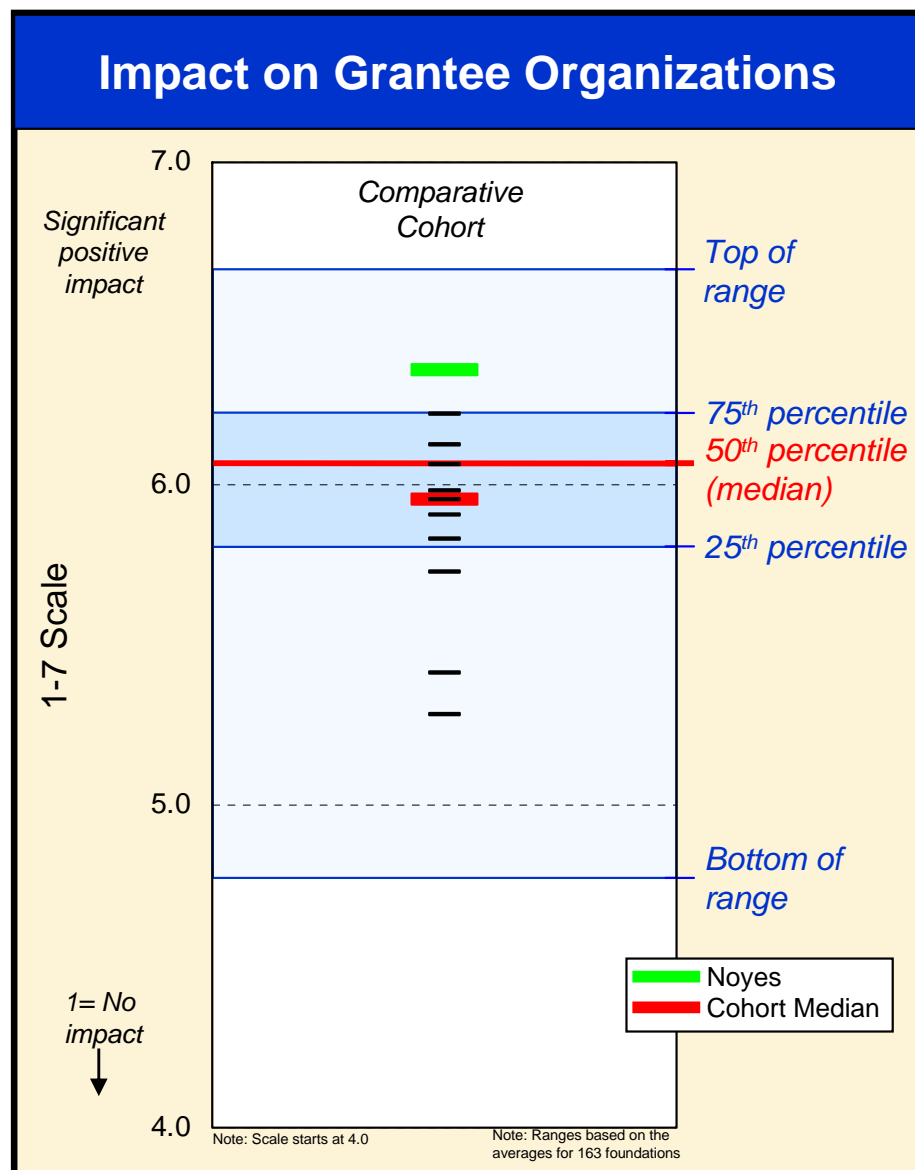
Effect on Public Policy

The Foundation is seen as having more influence on public policy in its fields than the median foundation.



Impact on Grantee Organizations

Noyes grantees rate the Foundation's impact on their organizations more positively than the median foundation is rated by its grantees.



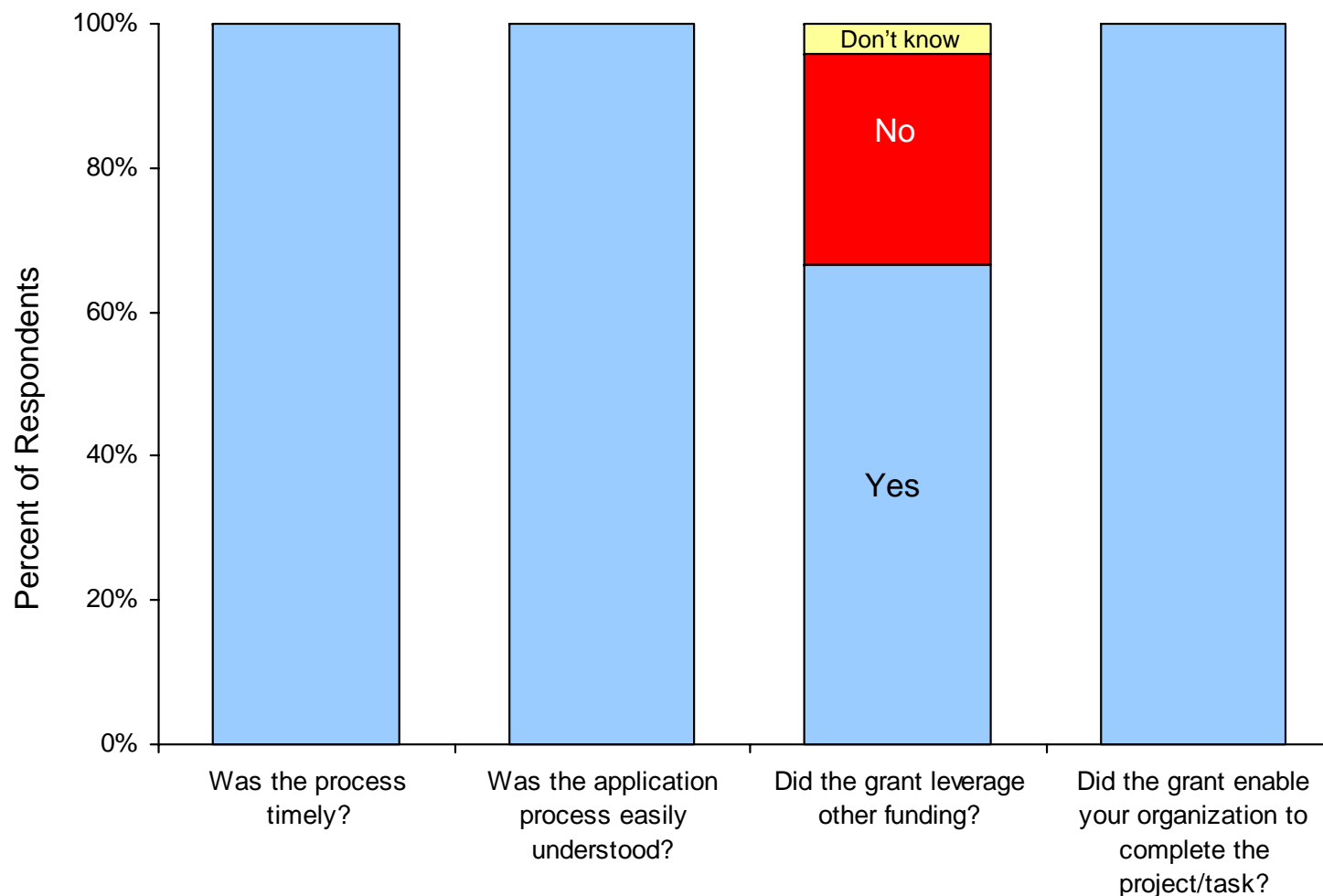
Grantee Comments on Organizational Impact

- ♦ *“The consistency of the J.S. Noyes support has made a critical difference over several years of operation. Few foundations seem to understand the significance of long-term investment as JSN does. It provided a portion of core funding that spanned a difficult organizational transition that moved [our organization] to a higher level of organizational development and to more effective program work.”*
- ♦ *“The fact that we have received ten years of general support funds has enabled us to be very stable financially – and has made all the difference to us – especially in our formative stage. We are very grateful and pleased to be a partner with the Foundation. Thank you!!”*
- ♦ *“As an organization, we have evolved with our field, and [we are] not sure how much Noyes knows about the new program and strategies we're using as we've grown more sophisticated.”*
- ♦ *“The Noyes Foundation has been a stable source of funding over the years. Although the Foundation is not our largest funder, the reliability of their funding has been instrumental for us in achieving many of our long-term policy goals and in building the capacity of our grassroots member organizations.”*
- ♦ *“Noyes invested in us early, and have stuck with us for a long time. Even as we've grown larger, it's amazing to say that Noyes as our original funders are still with us and support the work we do. We rely on their vital support.”*

Special Assistance Fund

Of the 40 percent of Noyes grantees¹ that report receiving a grant(s) from the Foundation's Special Assistance Fund, all grantees report that the process was timely, the application process was easily understood, and the grant enabled their organization to complete the project/task. Most grantees report that the grant leveraged other funding.

“Please characterize your experience with any small grants from the Foundation’s Special Assistance Fund that you may have received.”



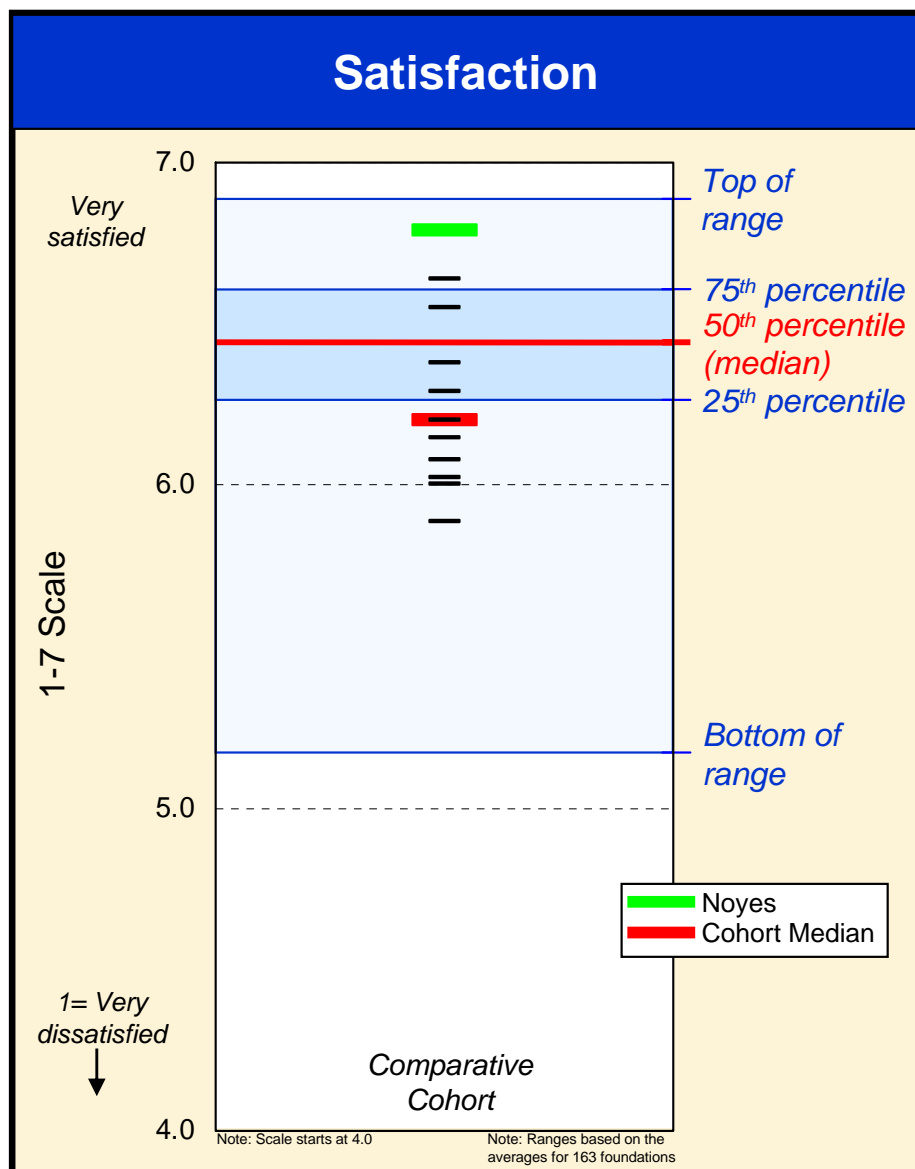
1: Twenty-four grantees responded that they received a grant(s) from the Foundation's Special Assistance Fund.

Three grantees did not answer this question.

Note: Comparative data not available because this question was only asked of Noyes grantees.

Satisfaction with the Foundation

Noyes grantees are more satisfied with their experience with the Foundation than grantees of the median foundation.



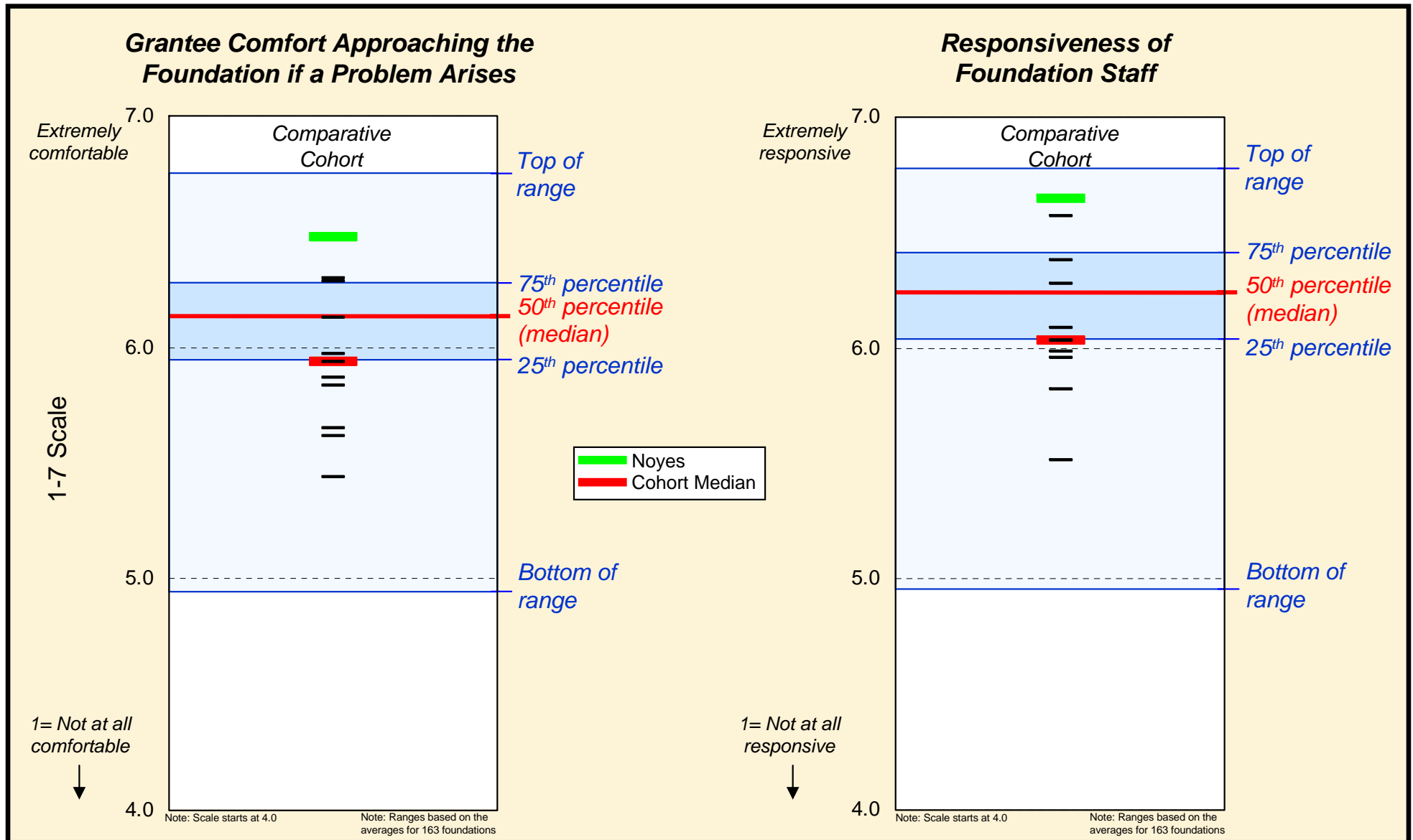
Grantee Comments on Overall Satisfaction

- “The Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation is one of the most accessible, supportive, and facilitative foundations we have ever worked with. They clearly understand and support the goals of our organization and are always ready to help us build relationships with other funders. [Two Foundation staff members] have been program officers for us, and we cannot say enough positive things about their professionalism, commitment, and support.”
- “I feel loyalty to – and even fondness for – the Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation since it was my first funder, and it has been responsive and supportive ever since. I feel completely comfortable with my program officer ...”
- “We would not have been able to initiate and maintain our project without the funding support from the Noyes Foundation. Even though it was not a large grant, it was enough to get the project going and gain momentum. It is one of the few foundations to support this type of work. The Foundation staff have been wonderful, interested in our work, helping us to connect with other groups, and helping with grant processes such as timelines for reports and submissions.”

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.*

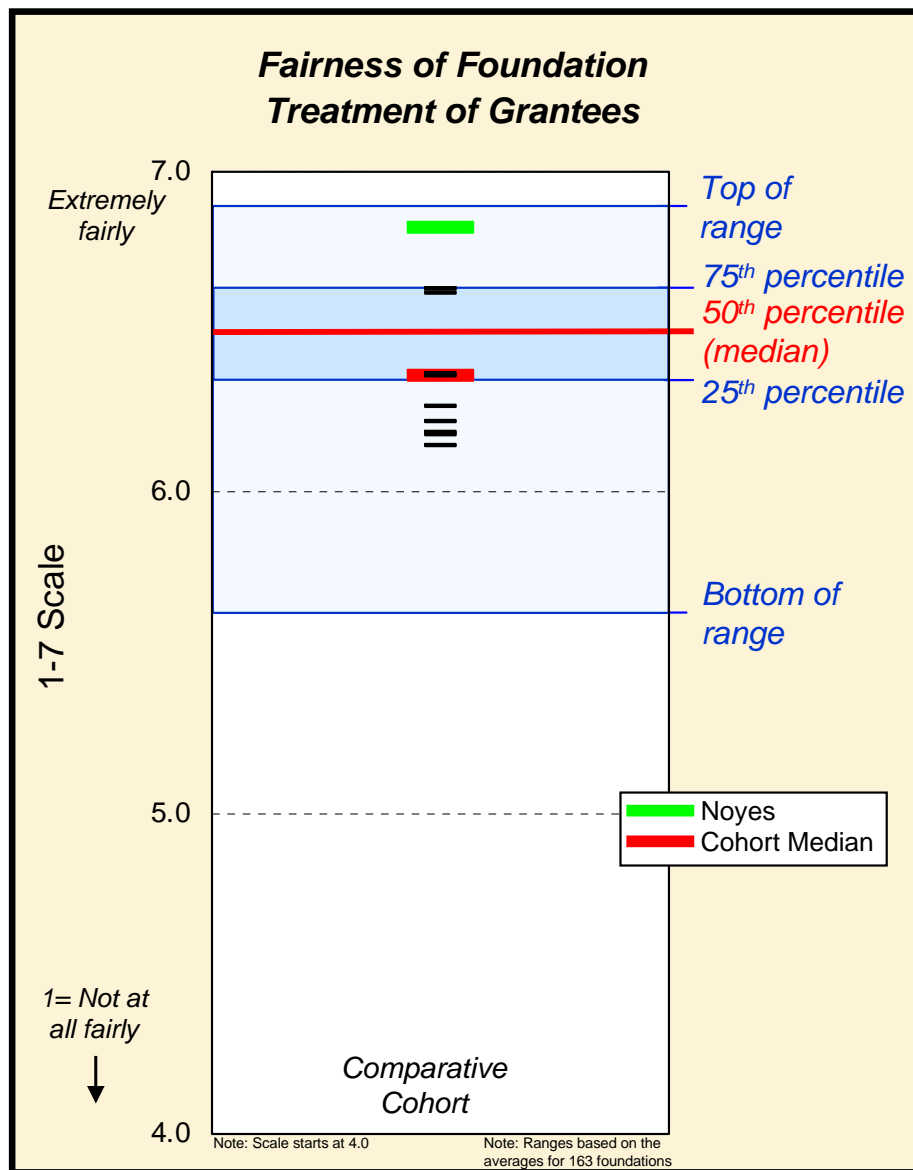
Interactions Measures (1)

Noyes grantees rate the Foundation more positively than the median foundation is rated by its grantees in terms of *comfort in approaching the Foundation if a problem arises* and *responsiveness of Foundation staff*.



Interactions Measures (2)

Noyes grantees rate the Foundation more positively than the median foundation is rated by its grantees in fairness of treatment of grantees.

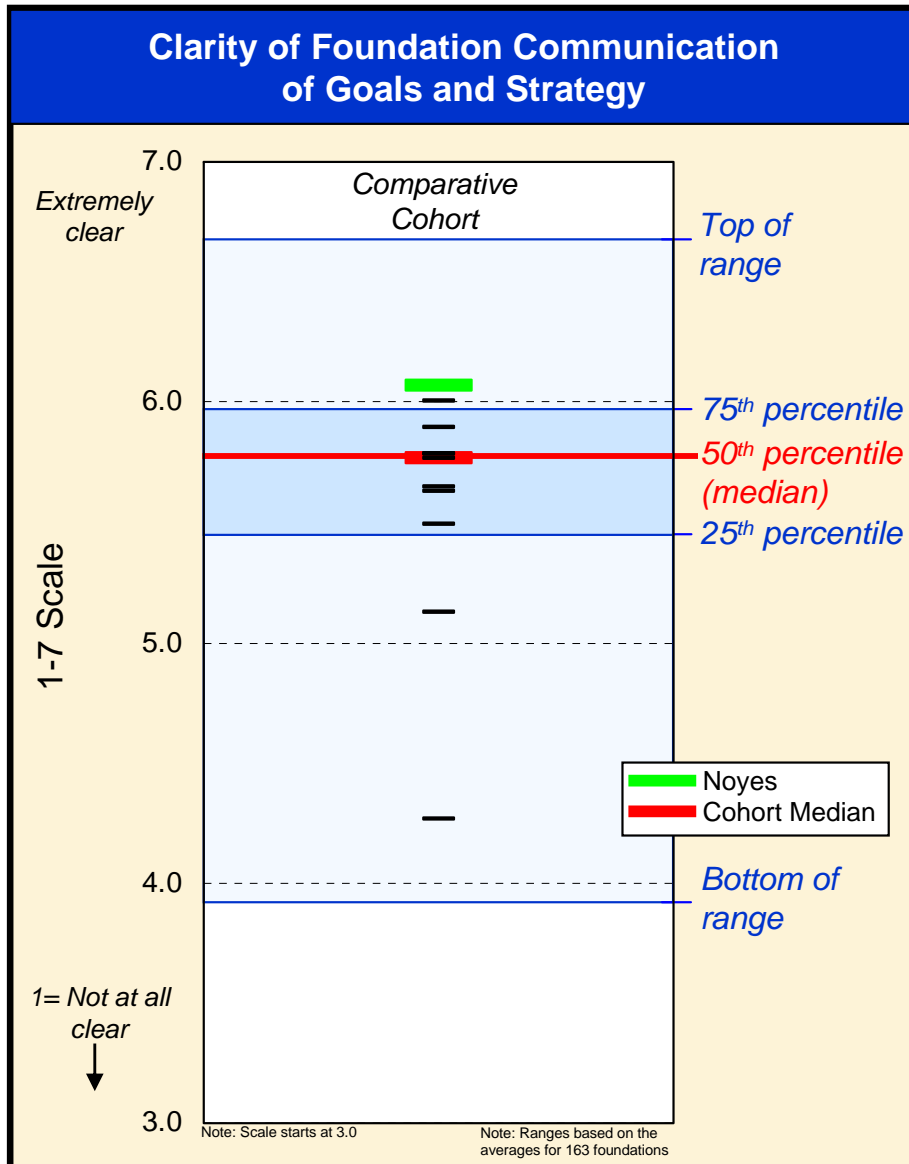


Grantee Comments on Interactions

- ◆ *“We have only had good experiences. Our program officer ... is one of the most helpful and understanding program officers we deal with, and we get about 16 grants per year. Our messages to [her] are promptly returned. She is very kind and responsive, and helpful in answering questions. We have no complaints whatsoever.”*
- ◆ *“My main interaction with JSN is through our program officer ... She is amazing, accessible, brilliant, and always supportive.”*
- ◆ *“The bonus to working with this Foundation is the program officer. She has been available, patient, and provided guidance for our overall work.”*
- ◆ *“Often no response to email or voicemail. Most successful when [we] happen to call when [they’re] available.”*
- ◆ *“High quality, easy communication with all staff. Staff are very helpful and responsive, professional but friendly in their interactions, [and] consistent in their communications.”*

Communication of Goals and Strategy

Noyes grantees rate the Foundation's clarity of communication of its goals and strategy above the rating of the median foundation.

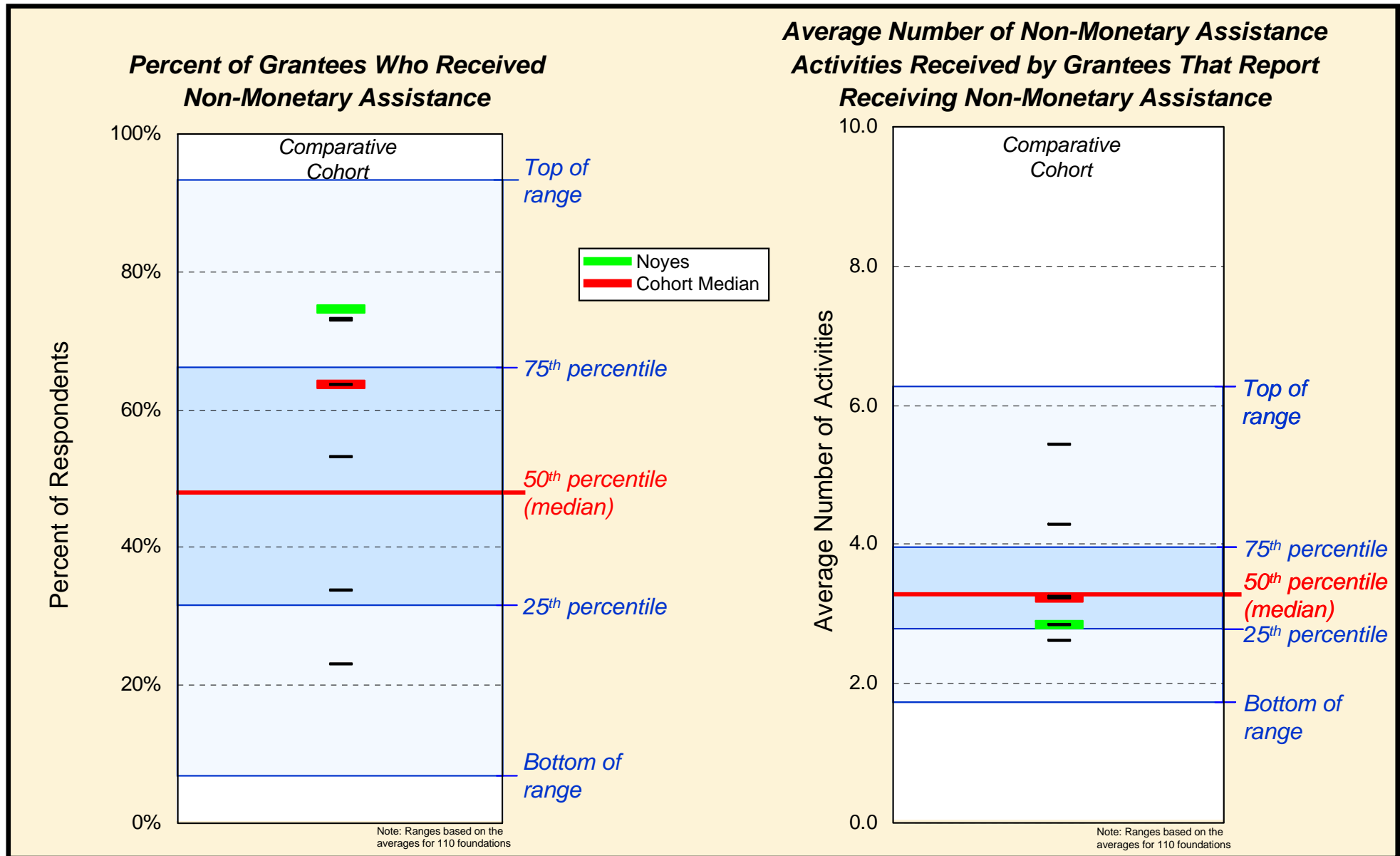


Grantee Comments on Clarity of Communications

- ◆ “Foundation staff [is] very accessible and helpful in discussing how our work fits into [the] Foundation's priorities.”
- ◆ “Overall, the Foundation staff is very clear about what is expected and is very helpful.”
- ◆ “The difference between this Foundation and many others is the accessibility of staff. I don't need written materials because I can always call up if I have a question. And the fact that they don't constantly change guidelines, reporting requirements, etc. is appreciated.”
- ◆ “Communication has been open, friendly, supportive, and non-judgmental. Timelines have been consistent which helps with planning.”
- ◆ “Jesse Smith Noyes operations and processes are very clear, cut straight to the point. The staff is very helpful when you contact them. They always call back in a reasonable time.”

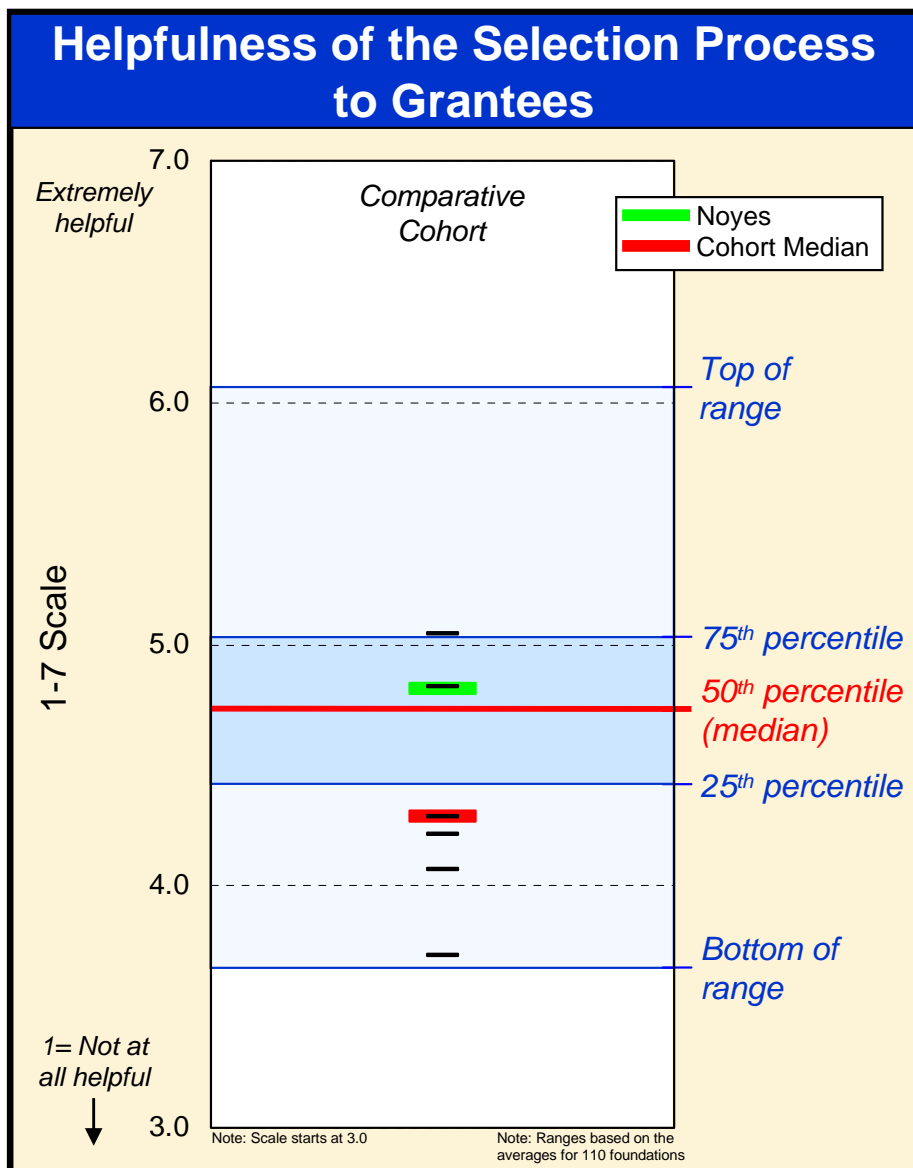
Non-Monetary Assistance (1)

Seventy-five percent of Noyes grantees report receiving non-monetary assistance, a higher proportion than is typical. On average, Noyes grantees report receiving three discrete types of non-monetary assistance.



Helpfulness of Selection Process

Participating in the selection process at Noyes is seen to be as helpful in strengthening the grantee as the process of the median foundation is perceived to be by its grantees, and more helpful than the process of the median foundation of the comparative cohort.

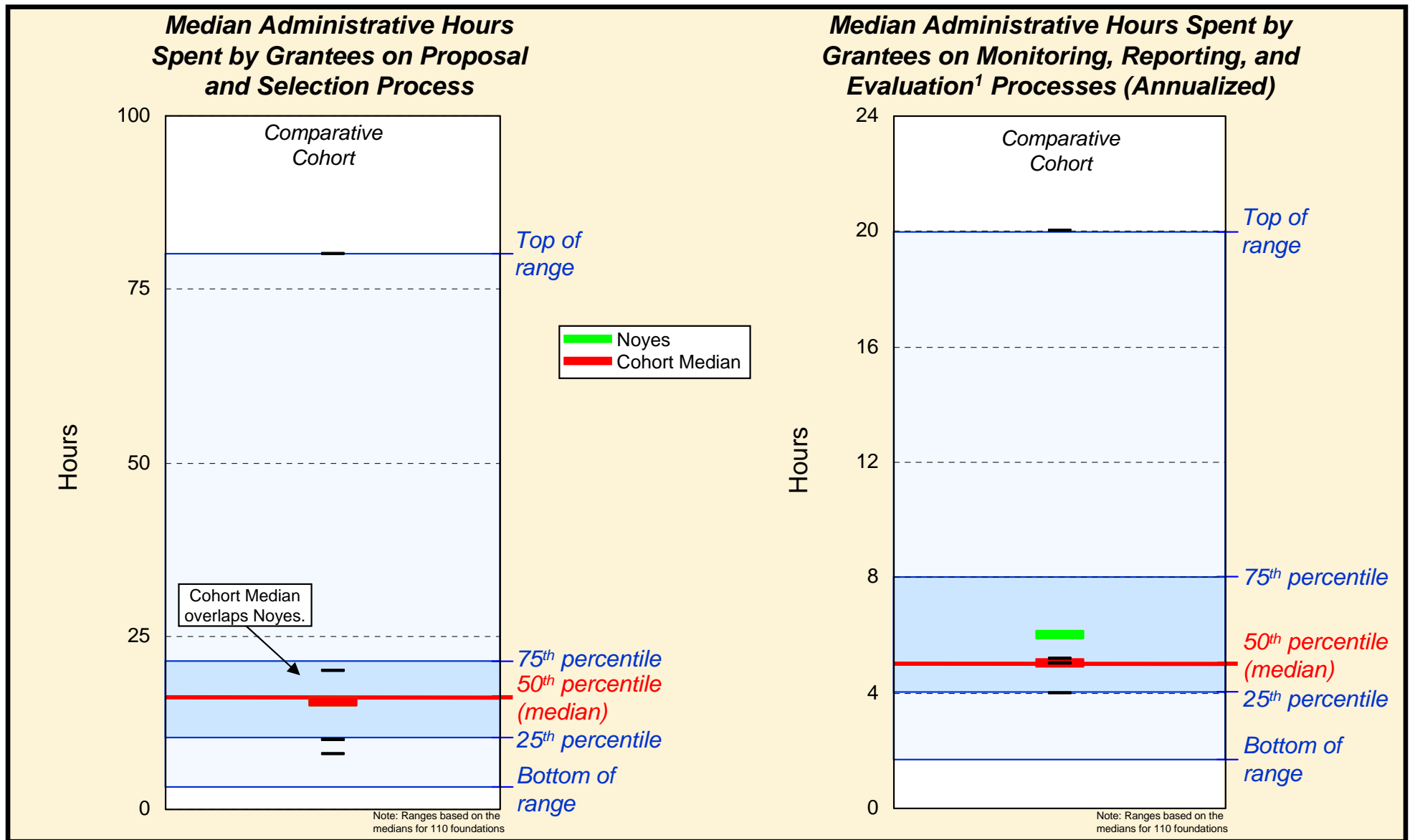


Grantee Comments on the Selection Process

- ◆ *“In the process of developing our proposal, the Foundation's staff was extremely helpful, and the process was instrumental in helping us clearly define our goals and objectives, as well as specific needs we can meet through our program work.”*
- ◆ *“We were impressed by our program officer ... and pleased by the level of communication and guidance provided during the grantmaking process.”*
- ◆ *“The Foundation has helped us tremendously. [Our program officer] called several times with questions or suggestions while we were working on the grant. This year, the Foundation suggested that we ask for a two year grant, which we received.”*
- ◆ *“[The Foundation] is one of the very few that truly understands grass roots organizing and makes the application process a productive and rewarding experience.”*
- ◆ *“One of the things that I appreciate the most is that Jessie Smith Noyes Foundation accepts the NNG Common Grant Application, and that they also allow the freedom of submitting reports prepared for other funders. This is incredibly helpful.”*

Administrative Time

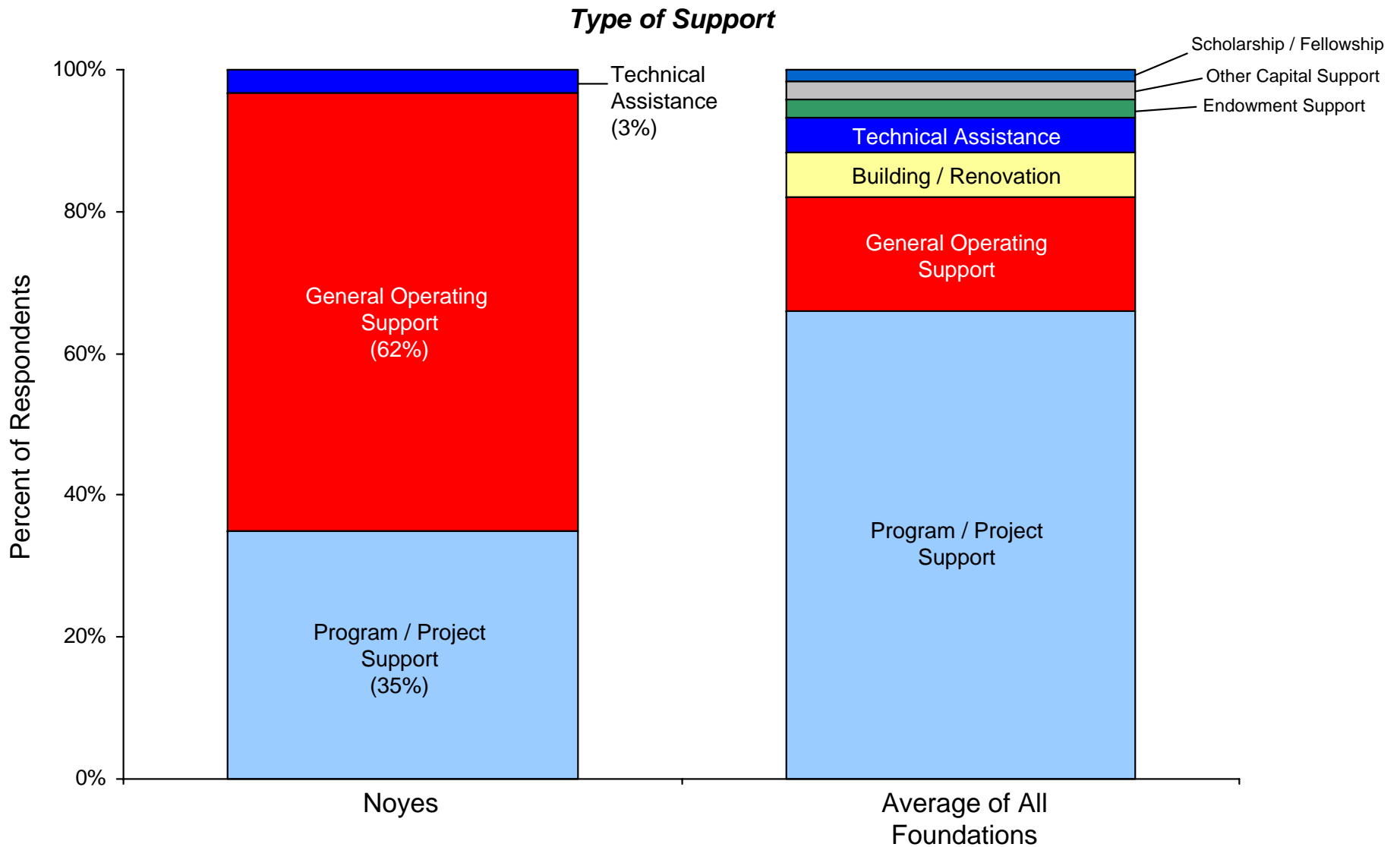
The application process requires as much time from Noyes grantees as what is required of grantees of the median foundation. Annual foundation-related monitoring, reporting, and evaluation of the grant are slightly more time-intensive than typical.



1: "Evaluation" in the survey includes any activity considered by grantees to be part of an evaluation, and does not necessarily correspond to foundation definition.

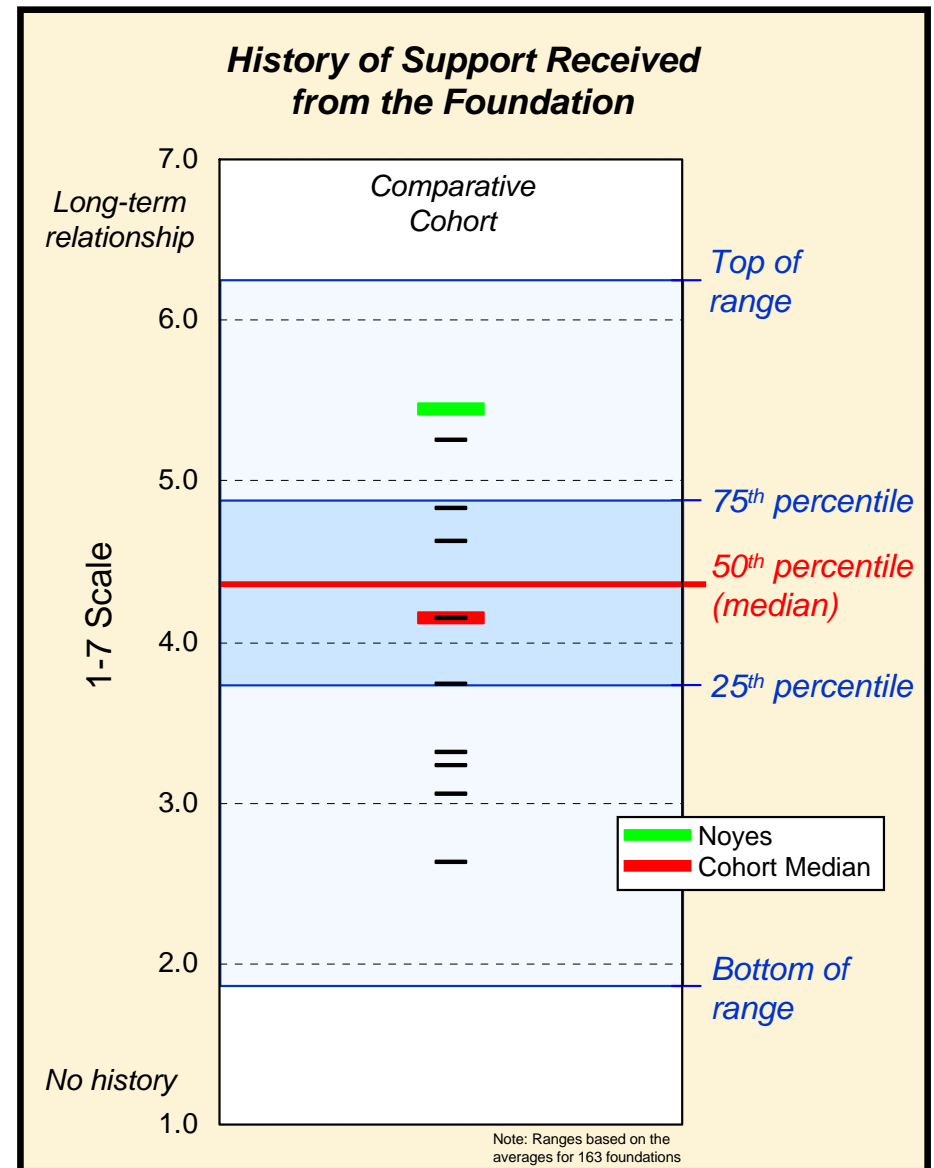
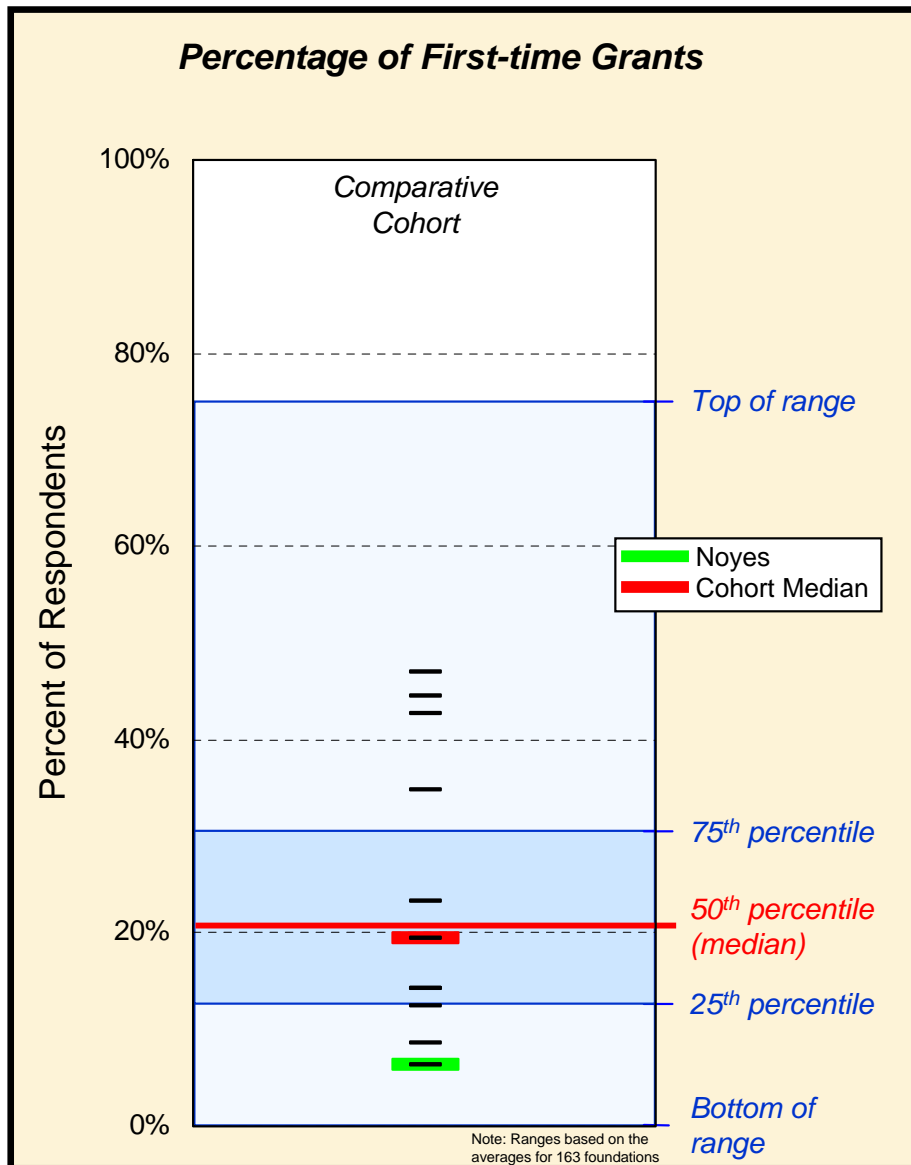
Type of Support

Noyes awards a larger proportion of general operating support grants than is typical.



History of Foundation Support

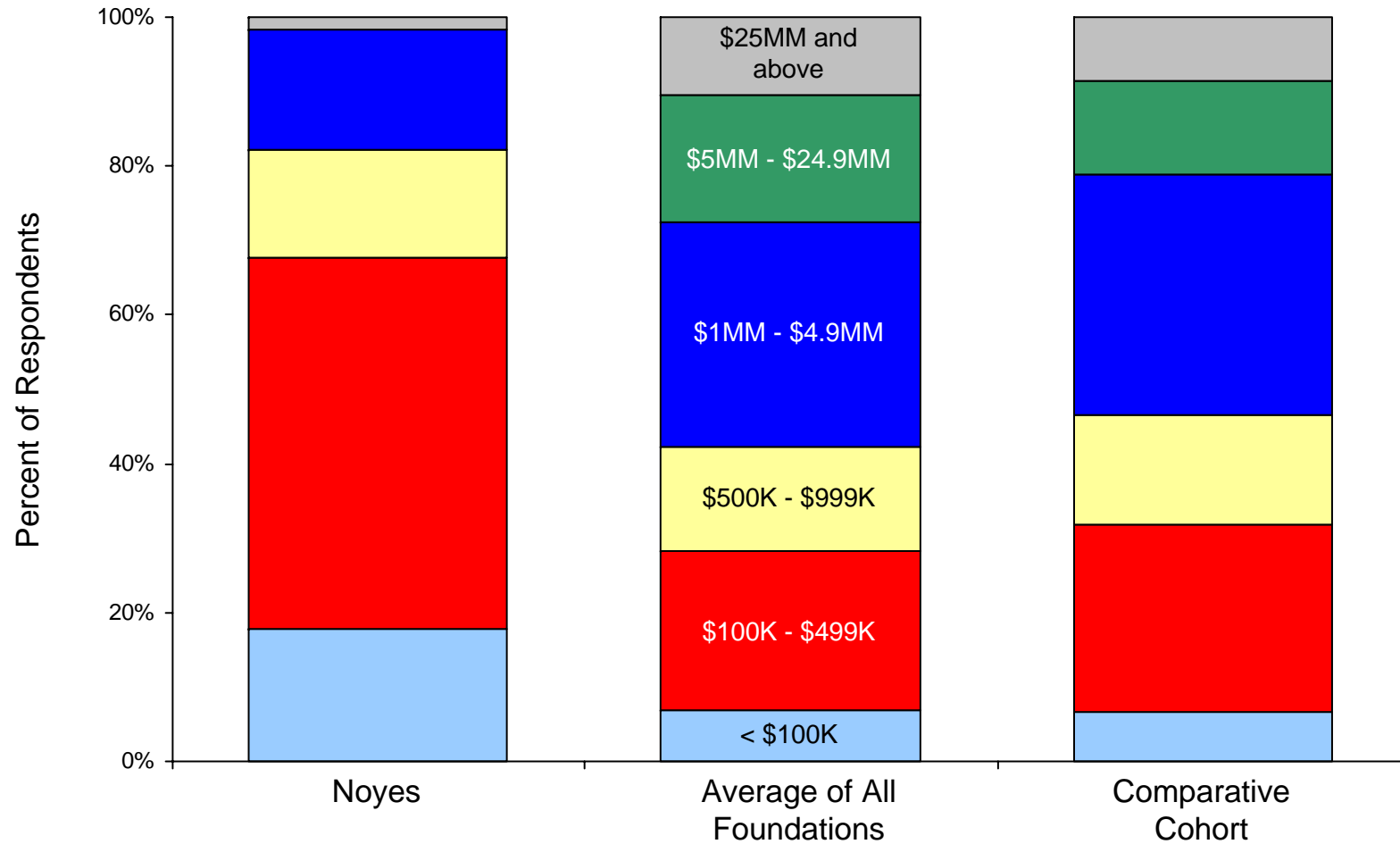
A smaller proportion of Noyes grants are first-time grants than at the median foundation, and the Foundation's history of support is longer than typical.



Grantee Operating Budget

Noyes grantees are smaller (in terms of operating budget) than grantees of other foundations in our sample.

Grantee Operating Budget



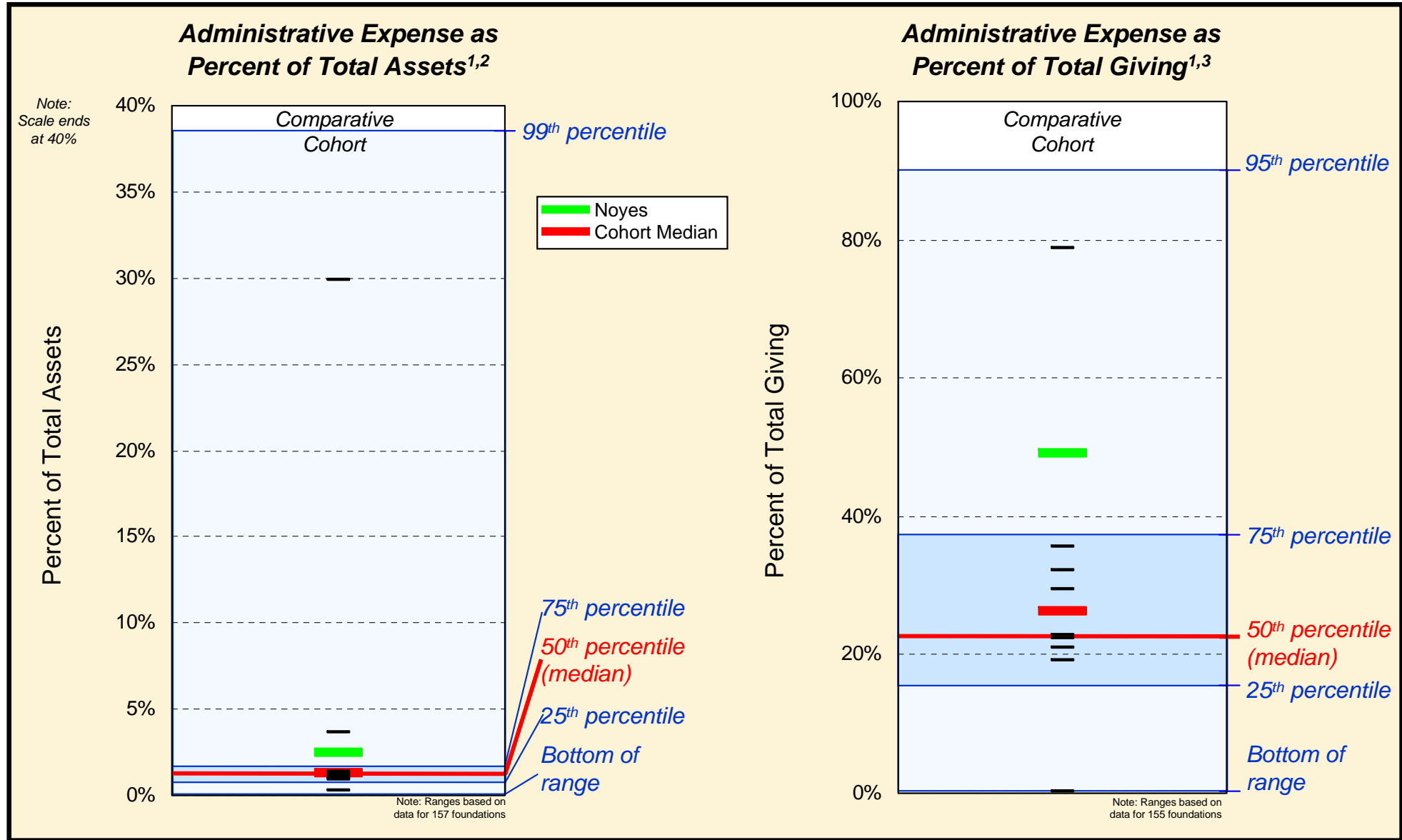
Population Average \$1.2MM
Population Median \$272K

Population Average \$45.7MM
Population Median \$1.2MM

Population Average \$36.0MM
Population Median \$900K

Total Administrative Expense

Noyes spends an above median amount on administrative expenses as a percentage of total assets and administrative expenses as a percentage of total giving.



1: Total assets is in Box I on the 990-pf (line 21 on the 990), total administrative expense is line 24a (line 44a subtracting 22a on the 990), and total giving is line 25d (22a on the 990). All data is from most recent tax filings available (2003 and 2004).

2: Excludes two values of over 40%.

3: Excludes seven values of over 100%.

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (2)

The chart below shows the areas in which Noyes grantees made suggestions for the Foundation's improvement.

Topic of Grantee Suggestion	% of Noyes Grantee Suggestions	% Average Foundation Suggestions	Noyes Grantee Suggestions
Grantmaking Characteristics	29%	14%	"For financial planning purposes, we would prefer a 2-year grant cycle." "Don't require non-profits to have to hunt match money from other foundations." "Long-term commitment." "Larger grants would be great."
Assistance Securing Funding from Other Sources	12%	5%	"More assistance with finding other funding sources, either letters on our behalf or introductions to specific funders." "One idea is to have the Foundation host a grantee gathering where other foundations are invited so as to help make introductions to other funders in the field. The Foundation could produce a packet describing the work and accomplishments of the grantees to the other foundations."
Grantee Impact and Understanding	12%	7%	"Understand our mission – better empathize with its difficulty." "More funding sustained over a long period of time."
Quality of Interactions	12%	18%	"It is sometimes hard to know what they are thinking; maybe it would be nice to get more feedback on how they think we are doing – what impresses them about our work, what suggestions for doing better, etc." "To [conduct] site visits within communities [in order] to actually attend meetings and share, listen, and learn from community members what a funded organization is doing to improve the environment of communities."

Grantee Suggestions for the Foundation (3)

The chart below shows the additional areas in which Noyes grantees made suggestions for the Foundation's improvement.

Topic of Grantee Suggestion	% of Noyes Grantee Suggestions	% Average Foundation Suggestions	Noyes Grantee Suggestions
Clarity of Communications	12%	12%	"Website covers basics, is to the point, but at times more information would be helpful to understand why the Foundation has the interests it has." "More intentional follow-up communication between the program officer and the grantee about other funding opportunities from Jessie Smith Noyes, such as receiving technical assistance or capacity building."
Field Impact and Understanding	12%	7%	"The Noyes Foundation could play a larger role in challenging the community food systems sector on issues related to diversity, scale of impact, and the need for new strategies." "I and all our organization clearly wishes that the Foundation would continue to fund the direct economic/environmental/social development type of work in which our organization is engaged, but they have shifted their focus."
Community Impact and Understanding	6%	3%	"A better understanding of issues outside of the northeast US would be helpful."
Non-monetary Assistance	6%	11%	"More networking assistance in the field."

Total number of Noyes Grantee Suggestions	17
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Review of Findings

Chart shows Noyes' (◆) percentile ranks among all foundations in comparative set. The median of the comparative cohort is also depicted (◆).

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.
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 14 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.
Selection Process		◆		◆		Grantees were asked to rate the helpfulness of the foundation's selection process for their organizations.
Reporting and Evaluation Processes ¹				◆		Grantees were asked to rate the helpfulness of the foundation's reporting and evaluation processes for their organizations.
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.

1: Comparative cohort percentile rank not shown because of changes to the survey instrument.

Areas for Discussion (1)

♦ High Marks Across Several Key Dimensions

- Noyes grantees rate the Foundation very highly on several dimensions, including quality of interactions with Foundation staff, the clarity and consistency with which the Foundation communicates its goals and strategy, and the Foundation's impact on and understanding of grantees' fields.
 - These three dimensions are the three areas CEP has identified as the best predictors of grantee ratings of satisfaction with foundation funders, as we discussed in our report *Listening to Grantees*.
- Noyes grantees also rate the Foundation very highly in its impact on and understanding of their organizations, and many grantees mention the "long-term," "reliable" Foundation support as "crucial" to their organizations. The Foundation provides a greater than typical proportion of its grantees with assistance beyond the grant check, which is highly rated by its grantees.

Areas for Discussion (2)

◆ Grantmaking Patterns

- Noyes grantees have had a much longer history of support from the Foundation than is typical, more frequently receive multi-year grants, and frequently comment that they appreciate the Foundation's "steady" support over many years.
- Noyes grants, while comprising a greater percentage of grantees' budgets than is typical, are smaller than the typical grant provided by other foundations. The Foundation's grants require more time of grantees than is typical, driven by greater time requirements in the Foundation's reporting/evaluation process – resulting in fewer dollars awarded to grantees per administrative hour required.
 - *Should the Foundation consider reducing the time required of grantees during its processes, especially during the reporting/evaluation process, particularly for grantees that have had a longer history of support from the Foundation?*
 - *Can the Foundation do this without compromising the usefulness of the processes – both to Foundation staff and to grantees?*
 - *Should the Foundation consider awarding larger, or longer-term, grants?*

Areas for Discussion (3)

◆ Helpfulness of the Selection Process

- Noyes grantees rate the level of the Foundation's involvement in the proposal development process as lesser than the involvement of foundation staff at the median foundation.
- At Noyes, greater levels of involvement are associated with more positive ratings of the helpfulness of the selection process.
 - *Is the Foundation comfortable with its current level of involvement in the selection process?*
 - *Should the Foundation consider greater involvement with grantees, or a subgroup of grantees, during the selection process?*
 - *How else might the Foundation make the selection process more helpful to grantees, without sacrificing what is most helpful to the Foundation?*

◆ Discussions of Completed Reports and Evaluations

- Although Noyes grantees rate the Foundation above the rating of the median foundation in the helpfulness of the evaluation/reporting process, grantees that discussed completed reports and evaluations report the helpfulness of the Foundation's process significantly¹ higher (5.6) than those that did not (3.6). Additionally, there is wide variation among Noyes funding priorities in terms of the proportion of grantees that discussed completed reports and evaluations with staff.
 - *Can the Foundation more frequently discuss completed reports and evaluations with more grantees?*

Mission

To provide management and governance tools to define, assess, and improve foundation performance.

Vision

A world in which pressing social needs are more effectively addressed. We believe improved performance of foundations can have a profoundly positive impact on non-profit organizations and the people and communities they serve.

More information about CEP can be found on our Web site:
www.effectivephilanthropy.org