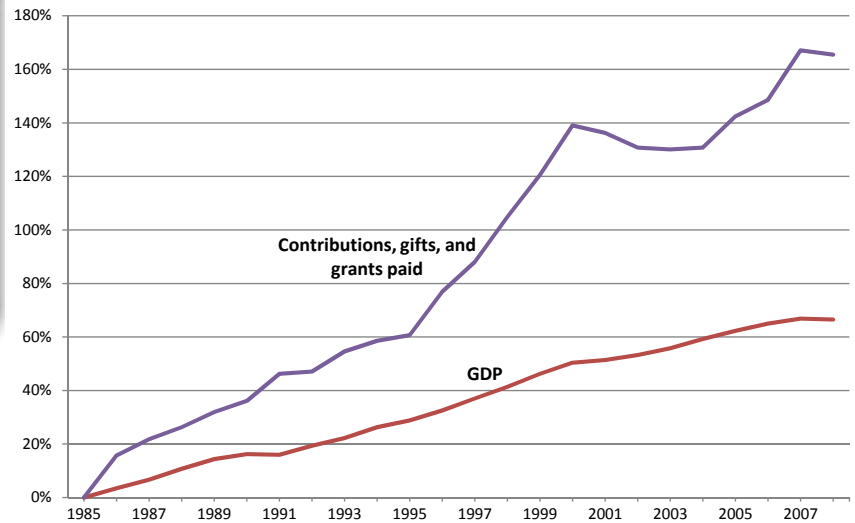




Statistics of Income

SOI Data on Private Foundations

Cumulative Growth in GDP and Contributions, Gifts, and Grants Paid by Private Foundations, Tax Years 1985-2008¹



¹ All data are adjusted for inflation using the chain-type price index as reported by the U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Economic Analysis.

SOI conducts annual studies on non-profit and other tax-exempt organizations, including private foundations. Unlike a publicly supported exempt organization, a private foundation is narrowly supported and controlled, generally by an individual, family, or corporation. As a result, foundations are subject to stricter rules than other tax-exempt organizations, as defined under Internal Revenue Code sections 4940–4945. Under IRC section 4942, most foundations are required to annually distribute a minimum amount for charitable purposes. Generally, these distributions are grants to other tax-exempt organizations to assist in funding their charitable programs. SOI estimates are derived from a sample of Forms 990-PF filed by private foundations, tax-exempt under IRC section 501(c)(3).

Highlights of the data

- For Tax Year 2008, over 90,000 private foundations exempt under section 501(c)(3) filed Form 990-PF with the IRS.
- These organizations reported nearly \$526.5 billion in assets and over \$49.6 billion in revenue for 2008.
- The majority of foundations hold assets with fair market values of less than \$1 million; however, over 57 percent of the aggregate fair market value of total assets were held by the 0.7 percent of foundations with \$100 million or more in total assets.
- For Tax Year 2008, private foundations distributed \$42.8 billion in contributions, gifts, and grants.
- A foundation's payout rate—the ratio of qualifying distributions to noncharitable-use assets—provides insight into the degree to which foundations exceed their required distribution. For Tax Year 2008, the median payout rate for private foundations was 6.2 percent. Generally, smaller foundations had higher median payout rates than larger foundations.
- SOI has conducted annual studies of private foundations since 1985. Contributions, gifts and grants paid showed a cumulative real growth of 166 percent between Tax Years 1985 and 2008. Over the same period, cumulative real growth in GDP measured 67 percent.

Products

Many products based on the annual studies are made available to the public:

- [Microdata](#) files contain corrected financial information from Forms 990-PF for all organizations in the sample.
- Annual [articles](#) published in the SOI Bulletin, as well as other research papers, are available to download or print.
- Statistical [tables](#) present aggregated financial data for all types of organizations.
- An extract of data from the [IRS Exempt Organization Master File](#) is also provided as a courtesy to TaxStats users.
- For information about selected terms and concepts, a description of the data sources and limitations, and links to recent revisions of Form 990-PF, please visit the [Private Foundations Study Metadata](#) page.