
No Strings Attached: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly of Private Funding

Building relationships between public libraries
and private funding agencies



Image courtesy Georgia Archives

The Ethical Problem

We do not advance private interests at the expense of library users, colleagues, or employing institutions.

ALA Code of Ethics, VI



What ethical considerations has your library faced?

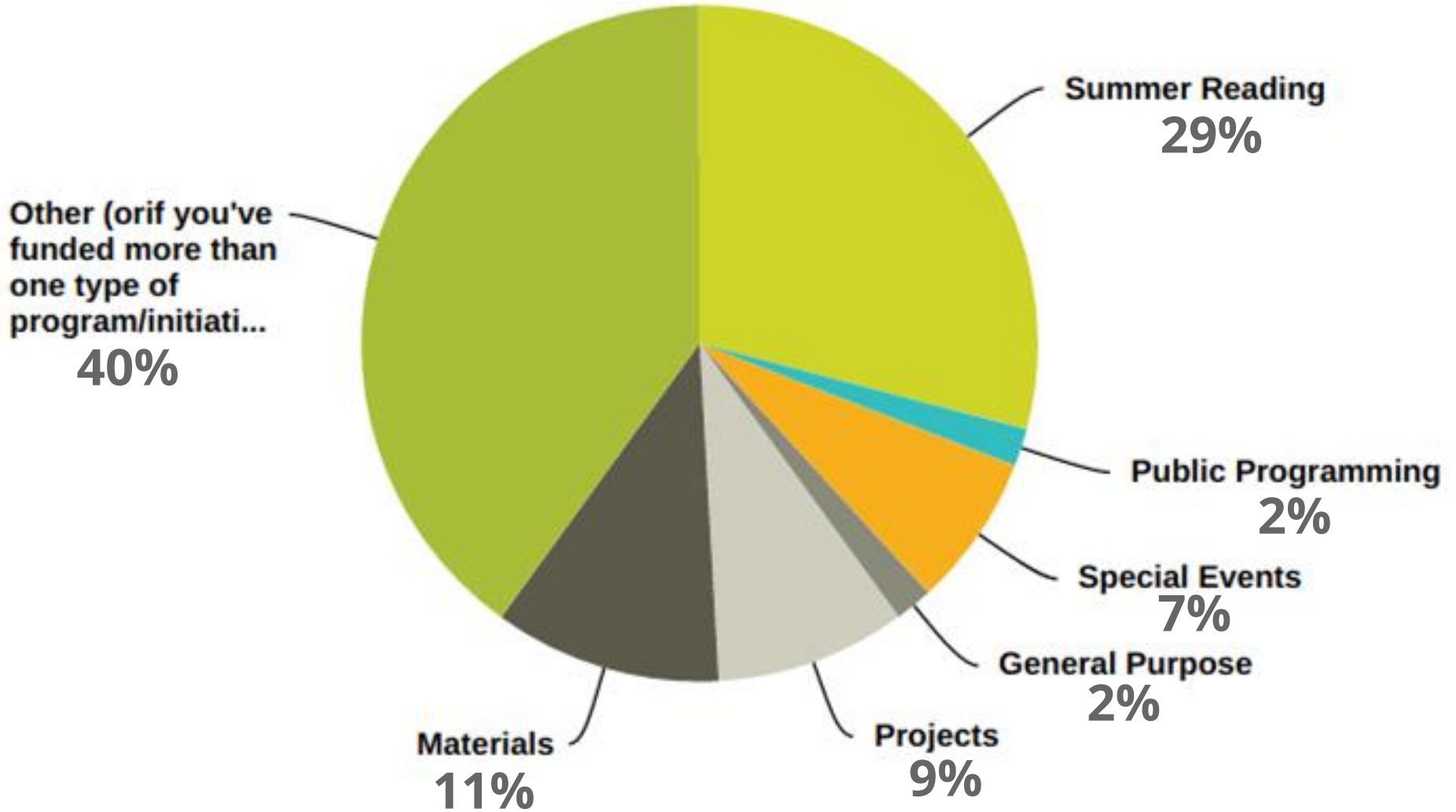
- 36 of 42 respondents did not encounter or were not aware of any ethical dilemmas.
- “We only allow gift plates or recognition at the beginning of a sponsored event (this summer reading program sponsored by...). No other conditions on the donations are allowed.”
- “Unknown however the ethical part of transparency has been troublesome in my opinion”
- “Patron complaints”
- “No corporations where relations or personnel are members can make donations without board or Regional Directors approval” [sic]
- “self published materials”

Are there strings attached?

- **Shared Values?**
- **Who Benefits?**
- **What Are The Benefits?**
- **In Line With Library Mission?**
- **Influence?**
- **Long term effects?**

The Funding Problem

What types of programs or initiatives has your library funded with corporate donations?



Have you ever experienced a reduction in funding from your existing resources after receiving a large corporate donation?

Yes: 3

No: 51



A Closer look

Only 6 respondents identified their organizations as “Very Successful” in attracting corporate donations.

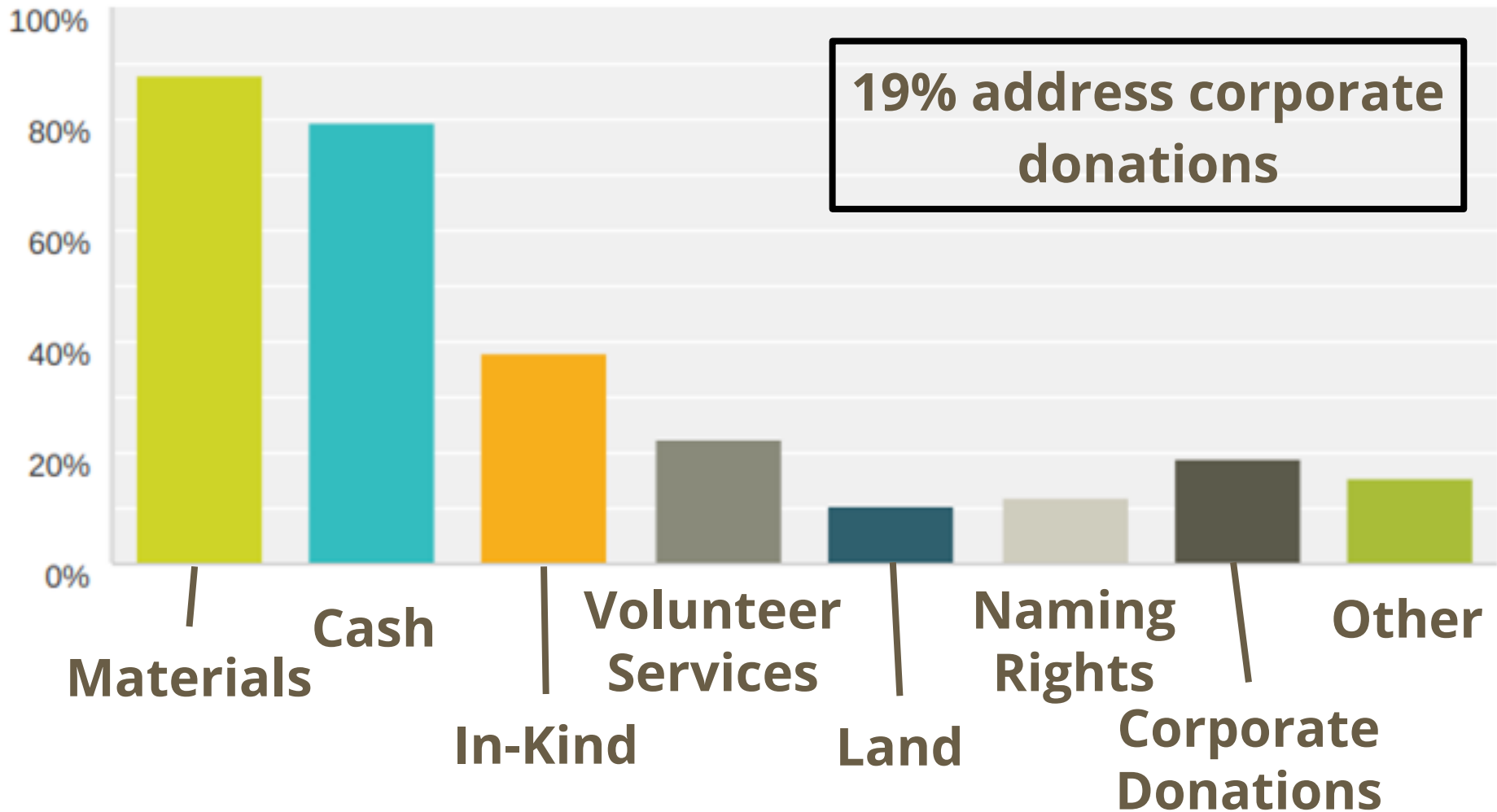
Of these, 2 stated they experienced a reduction in other funding following corporate donations.

Points to Consider

- **Political Environment**
- **Reputation**
- **Publicity**
- **Messaging**

The Policies

Does your library's donation policy specifically address any of the following?



Bare necessities

Donation Policy

Donor Privacy Policy

Confidentiality Policy for
Staff

Donation

Acknowledgement Policy

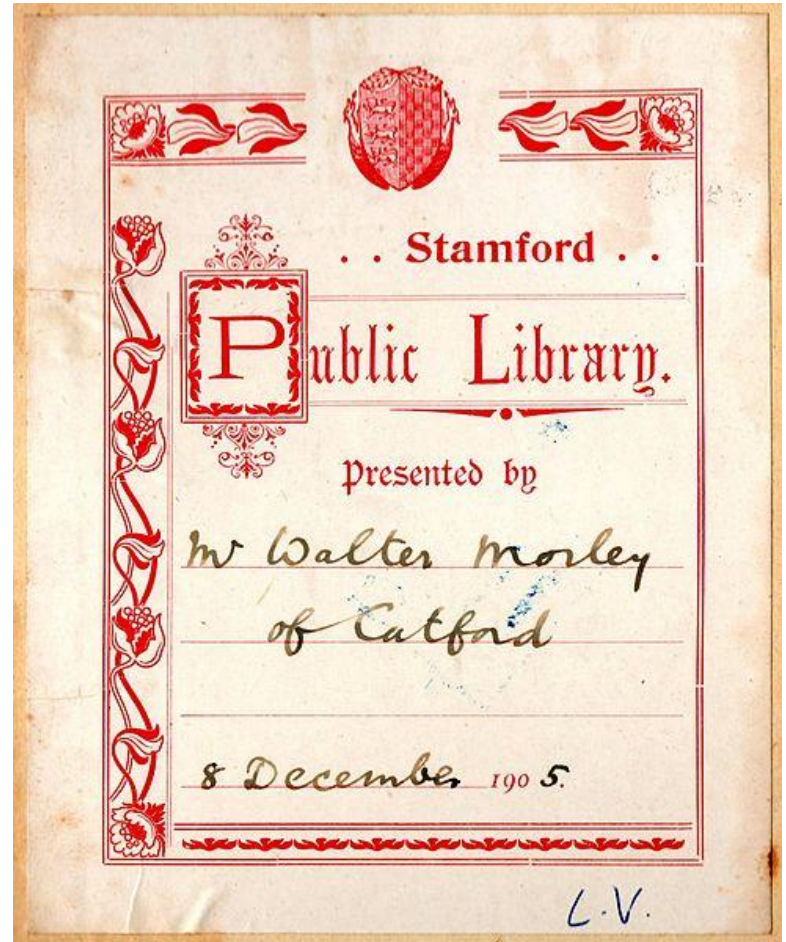


Image courtesy Stamford Public Library

Naming Policy Basics

Process for formalizing the agreement

Morals clause

Opportunities & minimums

How & when gifts are recognized

Sample language for plaques

Payment Schedule

Process for mergers or changes in use

Process for replacement (or disposition)

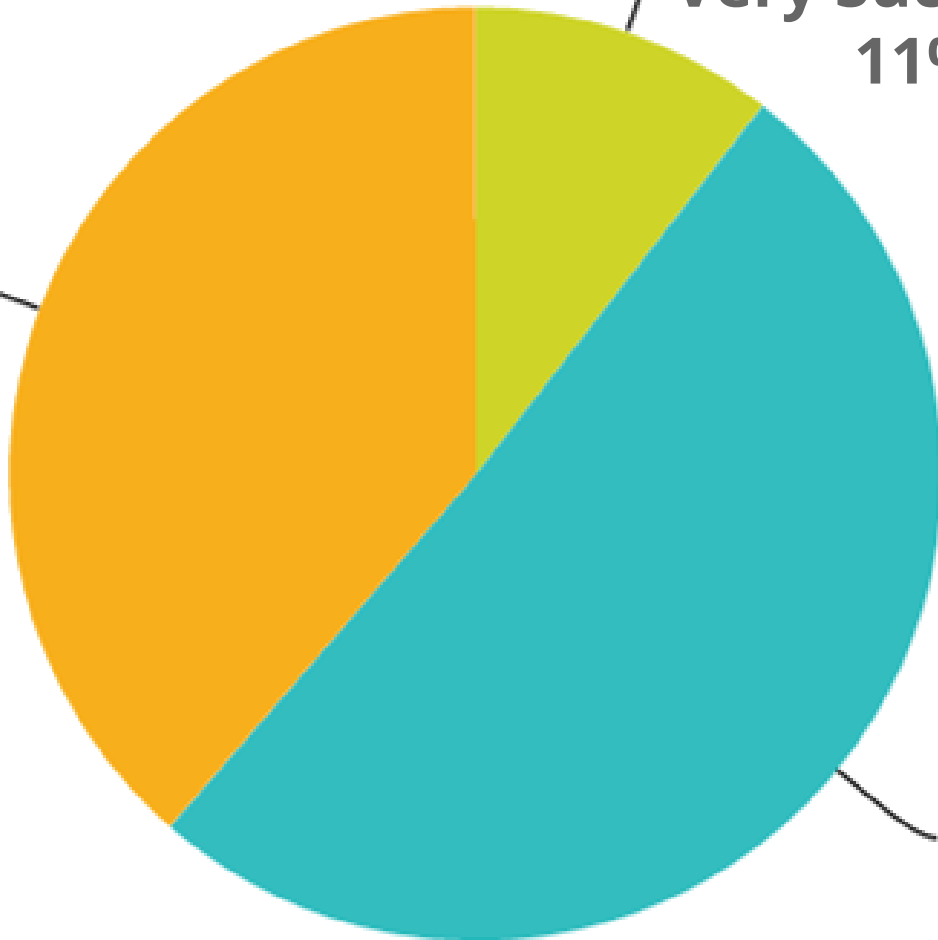


Image courtesy Middle Georgia Regional Library

Motivating Corporate Donors

How successful do you feel your library has been in attracting corporate donations?

Unsuccessful
39%



Very Successful
11%

Moderately Successful
51%

Getting to Know You

- **How do corporations give?**
 - **Cash contributions**
 - **Non-cash contributions**
- **Why do corporations give?**
 - **Tax deductions**
 - **Corporate visibility**
 - **To be good corporate citizens**

Getting to Know You

- **What can your library offer a corporation to support its goals & objectives?**
- **How can your library help a corporation reach new audiences?**
- **What services & programs can your library offer a corporation?**
- **How much are YOU willing to do?**
- **Raise awareness through cultivation**

Thanks!

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