

1993 Private Foundation Study Overview and Sampling

The data are based on a sample of Reporting Year 1993 Forms 990-PF that were filed with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS). These returns were filed by organizations with accounting periods beginning in 1993 (and therefore ending between December 1993 and November 1994). Some part-year returns were included in the sample for organizations that changed their accounting periods, or filed initial or final returns. Approximately 63 percent of the foundations and 60 percent of charitable trusts had full-year accounting periods covering Calendar Year 1993, or part-year accounting periods that ended in December 1993. Additionally, 61 percent of total foundation assets and 52 percent of total trust assets were for the calendar-year accounting period. Therefore, the majority of the financial activities reflected in the data can be associated with Calendar Year 1993.

The 1993 sample was stratified based on both the size of book value of total assets and the type of organization (either a private foundation or a charitable trust¹). Foundation returns were selected at rates that ranged from approximately 3.5 percent (for the more numerous but very small asset-size returns) to 100 percent (for the relatively few returns with large amounts of assets). Charitable trust returns were selected at rates that ranged from 29 to 100 percent. The 5,364 returns in the 1993 sample (4,533 foundations and 831 trusts) were drawn from an estimated population of 48,000.

The population from which this sample was drawn consisted of 1993 Form 990-PF records posted to the IRS Business Master File during 1993 and 1994. Some of the records designated were for organizations deemed inactive or terminated. Inactive and terminated organizations are not reflected in the estimates. For the small number of active, large foundations and trusts whose returns for the 1993 Reporting Year were not yet filed or were otherwise unavailable for the statistics, data were estimated using prior-year returns.

All returns were subjected to comprehensive testing and correction procedures in order to ensure statistical reliability and validity. In most cases, changes made to the original return as a result of administrative processing, audit procedures, or a taxpayer amendment were not incorporated into the data base.

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¹ The private foundation/charitable trust distinction was determined by using IRS Business Masterfile data and/or the check-box on the front of the Form 990-PF.