

Key Findings and Recommendations from Laudes Foundation's 2025 Partner Perception Report

Prepared by the Center for Effective Philanthropy



Survey Fielded in
January – February 2025



238
Partners Surveyed



145
Responses Received



61%
Response Rate

Overview

This summary outlines findings from the Partner Perception Report (“PPR”) that the Center for Effective Philanthropy conducted for Laudes Foundation (referred to as “Laudes” and “the Foundation”) in the winter of 2025.

- ▶ The Foundation’s partners highlight its contributions as a respected field leader and provider of beyond the grant support. In their written responses, partners characterize the Foundation’s support as “instrumental,” staffed with colleagues who are “our cheerleaders and people we can count on.”
- ▶ Still, partners’ ratings indicate several areas in which changes to elements of the Foundation’s approach and practices might yield greater impact and stronger relationships. These generally center around the frequency and depth of their interactions, opportunities to provide more tailored beyond the grant support, and aspects of the Foundation’s grantmaking characteristics and processes.
- ▶ Throughout this summary, Laudes Foundation’s partner ratings are compared to ratings from its most recent PPR in 2022; to CEP’s comprehensive dataset of more than 350 funders’ ratings; and to an additional custom benchmark: a group of 15 international funders that more closely resemble Laudes in size, scope, and/or focus.

Key findings from the Partner Perception Report are described in more detail on the following pages.¹

Contact Information

Natalia Kiryttopoulou

Lead for Global Assessment and Advisory Services
nataliak@cep.org

Max Miller

Senior Analyst – Assessment and Advisory Services
maxm@cep.org

¹ Comprehensive survey results, including information about survey methodology and segmentations by key partner groups, are available in the Foundation’s interactive online report. Ratings described as significantly higher or lower reflect statistically significant differences at a p-value less than or equal to 0.1.

Field Building Support and Leadership

Most partners are satisfied with their experience with Laudes as a funder – in their comments, they cite the Foundation’s leadership in their fields, domain expertise, ability to facilitate connections, support beyond the grant, and its systems change approach. In the words of two partners, “Laudes has nurtured – almost alone – the ecosystem of actors working in this field...” and “Laudes’ influence is instrumental, as it complements well the rest of the efforts by funders, but it also plugs important gaps and addresses existing funder blind spots.”

When asked specifically about how Laudes’ funded programs are contributing to fair, inclusive, and green industry transitions, many comments spoke directly to Laudes’ influence. Such as:

- ▶ *“Their focus on systemic change and ecosystem strengthening ensures a holistic approach, driving meaningful progress toward a more sustainable and equitable future.”*
- ▶ *“The Laudes Foundation’s funded programs in the Built Environment sector are breaking new ground and showing leadership by action. These transitions will take time, but Laudes’ commitment over the last five years has built a strong momentum of positive influence throughout the EU.”*

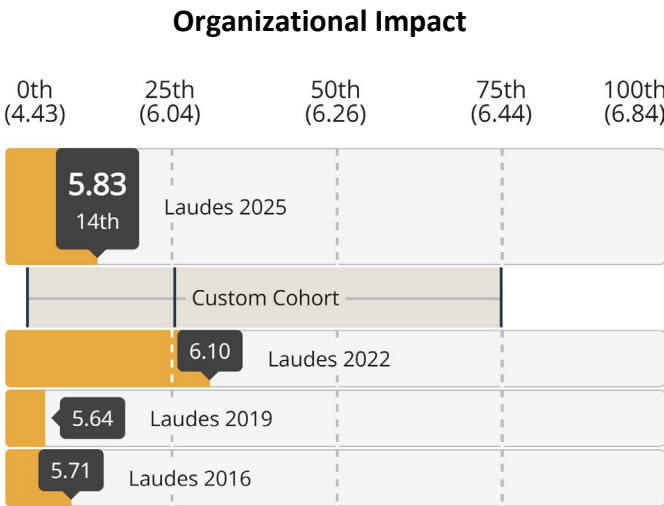
Relatedly, partners’ perceptions of Laudes’ influence on the state of knowledge in their fields, as well as its effect on public policy, have risen since 2022. Their ratings place Laudes above the median funder in CEP’s overall dataset and the Foundation’s custom cohort of funders. Partners’ ratings also continue to place Laudes alongside the typical funder for its understanding of their fields, the contextual factors affecting their work, and the needs of the people and communities they serve.

Grantmaking Characteristics

Yet, ratings for the Foundation’s impact on partners’ organizations and fields more broadly have declined from their 2022 levels; these ratings now place the Foundation in the bottom quarter of CEP’s overall dataset and below the median in its custom cohort. Likewise, partners’ perceptions for the Foundation’s awareness of the challenges they are facing also have significantly declined since 2022—although remain similar to the typical funder.

When asked to describe how Laudes could improve, one of the largest proportions of partners’ suggestions center on a desire for Laudes to provide more flexible and longer-term grants.

- ▶ While the Foundation’s reported grant size remains one of the largest in CEP’s dataset and above the median in Laudes’ custom cohort (\$429K at the median), it has declined by over half since 2022.
- ▶ However, Laudes’ partners remain larger in size, as measured by their annual operating budgets, to the median funders in CEP’s overall dataset and in the Foundation’s peer cohort.
- ▶ As a result, while Laudes’ grants continue to fund a higher than typical proportion of partners’ budgets (nine percent compared to four at the median funder), this has declined from 14 percent in 2022.



Positive Effects of Longer-Term, Core Funding

CEP's broader research suggests that grantees' perceptions of a funder's impact on their organizations are most strongly associated with the characteristics of their grant – specifically its size, length, and whether the grant is restricted.

As in 2022, a quarter of Laudes' partners report receiving unrestricted grants: a proportion that places Laudes in line with the typical funder in CEP's dataset and above the median of its cohort of peers.

Of note, while nearly two-thirds of Laudes partners report receiving multi-year grants from the Foundation, and is a higher proportion compared to the median funder, it is a significantly smaller proportion than in 2022.

Many partners note the value of stable support in their written comments:

- ▶ *"Their consistent core funding over several years has been invaluable in sustaining our hard-to-fund policy work."*
- ▶ *"Laudes often provides core funding to our organization and our partnering organizations. This helps us build capacity, hire more colleagues, [and] have more certainty in the sustainability of our organization's future."*

Opportunities for More Tailored Support Beyond the Grant

Nearly all Laudes partners report having received at least one form of non-monetary support from the Foundation (87 percent). These partners provide significantly more positive ratings for Laudes' impact on their organizations and advancing knowledge in their fields, most understanding measures, and aspects of relationships and communications.

However, when asked about the extent to which beyond-the-grant support met an important organizational or programmatic need, was a worthwhile use of time, or whether they felt Laudes would be open to feedback about its support, partner ratings place Laudes below the typical funder in CEP's overall dataset and the median of its peer cohort— suggesting an opportunity to tailor this type of support more effectively for partner organizations.

Importantly, when asked about the types of support partners have received from Laudes, nearly half reported receiving field-building support (40 percent) or grant-related support (also 40 percent). However, when asked which types of support partners would like to receive more of moving forward, the overwhelming majority of partners selected fundraising support (83 percent).

Partners reinforce this in their written responses and suggestions for the Foundation, encouraging the Foundation to enable more tailored networking and collaboration opportunities, provide additional capacity building support, and collaborations with other funders. In the words of a few partners:

- ▶ *"We would love to see Laudes playing an even greater role in bringing actors together. We have always felt that Laudes can be a great facilitator [and we] would love to see an even bigger commitment to bringing people together."*
- ▶ *"Capacity building support: further access to training, mentorship, and peer-learning opportunities to help grantees enhance their organizational impact."*

Desire for Deeper Funder-Partner Relationships

Partners continue to share praise for the Laudes team in their written responses, describing staff as “very professional,” “driven,” “thoughtful,” and “critical friend[s].” Partners also provide large agreement that Laudes staff bring conviction, accountability, adaptability, and courage to their partnership with them. Nearly 70 percent of partners provided ratings of either 6 or 7 on a 1-7 scale across all four measures. Similarly, Laudes partners largely agree that Laudes has clearly communicated what Gender Equity and Social Inclusion (GESI) mean for its work and demonstrates an explicit commitment to GESI in its work, providing more positive ratings than most of its peer funders for these two measures.

However, for all measures related to the strength of funder-partner relationships, Laudes’ partner ratings are below the typical funder in CEP’s dataset. On a few measures, partners’ perceptions of their relationships with the Foundation have significantly declined from their 2022 levels – including significant declines in partners’ comfort approaching the Foundation if a problem arises and the extent to which Laudes exhibits compassion for those affected by their work.

Laudes’ partners have generally high-touch interactions with their Foundation contacts. Compared to the typical funder, a larger proportion of Laudes partners reported having contact with the Foundation monthly or more often. Notably, on average, Laudes partners agree that this frequency of contact is just frequent enough.

Despite this, additional analysis suggests that there is space to utilize these touchpoints more effectively as there are no significant differences in ratings provided by those who report interacting with their primary contact monthly or more often compared to those who interact less frequently.

Of note that, similar to previous years, a larger than typical proportion of Laudes’ partners experienced a change in their primary contact in the last six months. Over a quarter of Laudes’ partners report experiencing a contact change, and those who did report a change also offered significantly less positive ratings across many measures in the report.

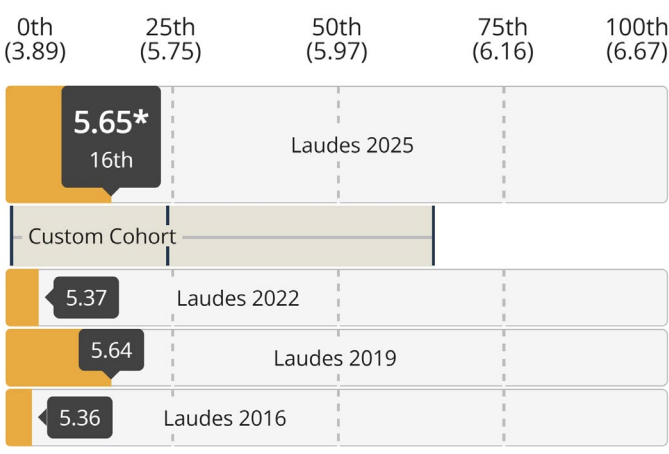
Communications

Partners continue to provide lower or close to typical ratings for many measures related to communications. However, there is significant improvement from 2022 to 2025 in terms of the consistency of information provided by different resources and improvement in how well partners understand the way their work fits into Laudes’ broader efforts.

Qualitative comments further reinforce this with several suggestions speaking directly to improving strategic communications and transparency:

- ▶ *“Laudes should be more transparent about the different activities it supports, and how they interrelate.”*
- ▶ *“I think perhaps the only missing piece would be to have a clearer understanding of the wider ecosystem, strategies and partnerships that are happening beyond specific thematic focus areas and have opportunities to feed back into their thinking for future approaches. We have hints of this bigger picture, but do not yet feel fully plugged into it.”*

Consistency of Communications



Opportunity to Continue to Refine Administrative Processes

In their comments, while many Laudes partners describe the Foundation's processes as "well structured" and "user-friendly," overall partners' quantitative results reflect typical or lower ratings for most measures related to processes.

As in previous Partner Perception Reports, partners' ratings and written comments suggest several opportunities to further streamline and clarify aspects of the Foundation's selection process and continue to find aspects of the rubrics reporting process cumbersome and difficult.

In 2025, partners report spending nearly half as much time as in the past on the Foundation's requirements, although this remains higher than most other funders in CEP's dataset. Partners report spending 77 hours on requirements compared to nearly 140 in 2022. Despite this improvement, partners continue to provide ratings that place Laudes in the bottom quarter of CEP's dataset for the extent to which its selection process was an appropriate level of effort given the amount of funding they received, and amongst the lowest rated funders for how straightforward the reporting process is.

Partners' comments indicate opportunities to clarify aspects of the Foundation's rubrics and continue to streamline processes and requirements. In the words of a few partners:

- ▶ *"The rubric system was challenging to interpret and navigate. I felt uncertain about some of the claims I needed to make regarding our potential impacts."*
- ▶ *"The reporting process, especially the rubrics framework, is complex but has led us to key insights about our work."*

CEP Recommendations and Areas for Discussion

Based on its partner feedback, CEP recommends that Laudes consider the following in order to build on its strengths and address potential opportunities for improvement:

- ▶ Celebrate the consistency of partners' positive perceptions of the Foundation's impact on their fields and its understanding of their work, fields, contexts, and the needs of those they serve.
- ▶ To deepen impact on their organizations, provide an even greater proportion of partners, where appropriate, with more flexible grants.
- ▶ Consider opportunities to provide more tailored beyond-the-grant support to partners, including additional fundraising support and the high value connective and collaborative service that partners find so impactful.
- ▶ Reflect on the changes in perceptions of the Foundation's relationships and communication with partners. Utilize the frequent touchpoints staff have with partners to drive deeper relationships and clearer alignment and expectations with the Foundation.
- ▶ Continue to streamline and clarify the Foundation's application and reporting processes, with an eye towards continuing to right-size the burden of process with the size of the grant awarded.