

2025 US Chess Development Committee Report

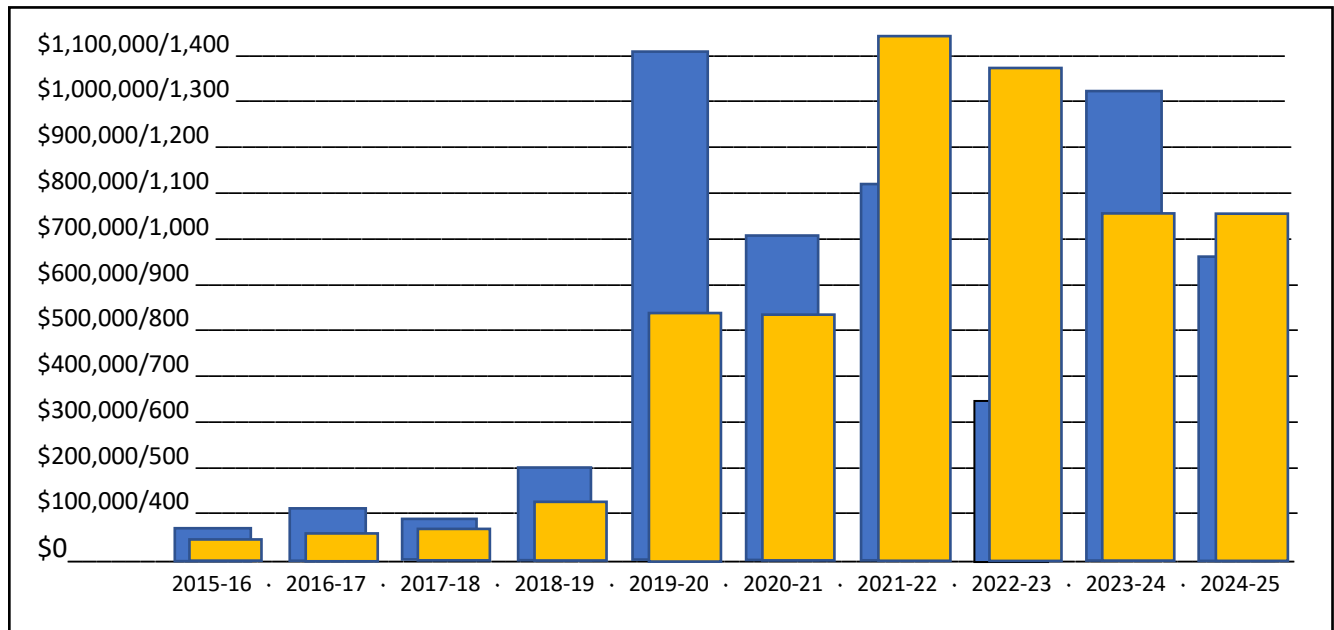
FY2024-2025 Fundraising

From June 1, 2024, to May 31, 2025, **1,060 gifts** were made to US Chess totaling **\$661,006**. The following shows the total annual gifts and number of gifts over the past ten years:

<u>Period of Fundraising</u>	<u>Number of Gifts</u>	<u>Funds Raised in that Period</u>
Fiscal Year 2024-2025	1,060	\$ 661,005
Fiscal Year 2023-2024	1,054	1,019,916
Fiscal Year 2022-2023	1,375	346,277
Fiscal Year 2021-2022	1,446	819,322
Fiscal Year 2020-2021	836	712,002
Fiscal Year 2019-2020	841	1,119,494
Fiscal Year 2018-2019	423	202,644
Fiscal Year 2017-2018	278	87,757
Fiscal Year 2016-2017	261	114,534
Fiscal Year 2015-2016	222	77,440

Year-to-Year Fundraising Graph (FY2015/16 – FY2024/25)

and Number of Gifts Received



Our Base of Support

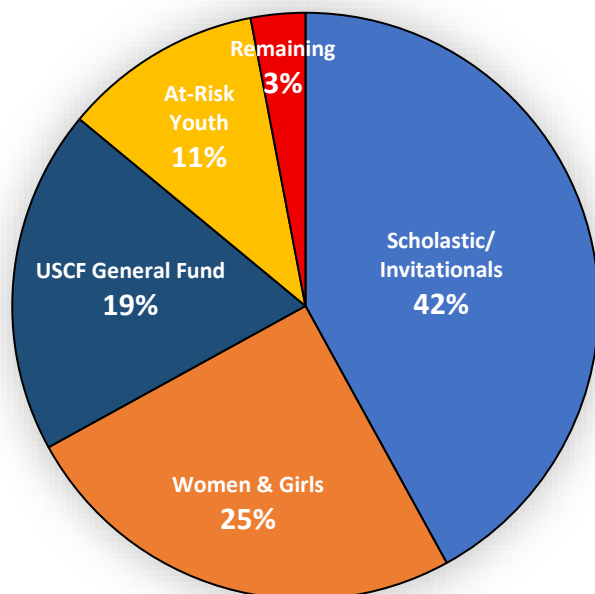
The number of donors making gifts to US Chess has increased steadily. For the past four years we have received over 1,000 gifts per year. We had an unusually high spike in number of donors during fiscal year 2020-21, partly due to third-party online tournaments, as well as a number of GoFundMe

campaigns during Covid-19 which brought in a significant number of new donors. Fiscal year 2022-23 was also an exceptional year in the number of gifts received, but it was accompanied by a sharp decrease in funds raised. This was a year of economic uncertainty and rising inflation. It appears that our donor base remained loyal, but made smaller gifts. The last two fiscal years have been both robust and very close in number of donations – we saw 1,054 gifts made to US Chess in fiscal year 2023-24, and 1,060 this past year.

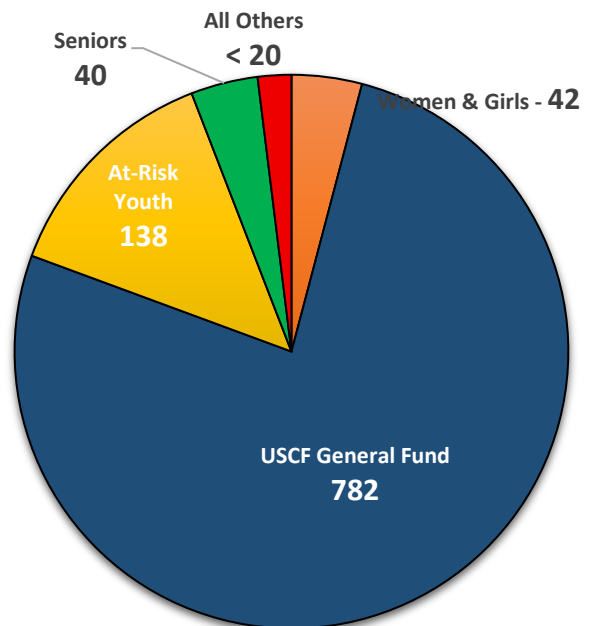
What Did Our Donors Give to in 2024-25?

Program/Fund	Funds Raised	Number of Gifts	% of Total Raised
Scholastics/Invitationals	\$275,996	17	42
Women & Girls	162,886	42	25
USCF General Fund	125,292	782	19
At-Risk Youth	75,909	138	11
Life Benefactor Members	12,000	8	< 3
Military Chess	5,302	14	< 3
Seniors	2,640	40	< 3
Miscellaneous	981	20	< 3
Total	\$661,006	1,060	\$624

% of Funds Raised for Program



of Gifts for Program



The General Fund is far and away the most popular fund that our supporters give to in terms of number of gifts received, which is great because these are unrestricted funds and can be used where the need is greatest. Second only to the *US Chess General Fund* in number of gifts made to US Chess,

the At-Risk Youth/Title I Schools programs continue to be popular funds for our donors, though they have started to plateau in the last few years. In 2019, the At-Risk Youth Fund started with only 19 donors that amounted to \$1,531.00. Over the next few years the number of gifts grew significantly. This past year we received 138 gifts for a total of \$75,909. These two funds – the USCF General Fund, and the At-Risk Youth/Title I Schools fund – make up 30% of all funds raised, and 87% of the total number of gifts received. If we add Scholastics/Invitationals and Women & Girls, these four funds make up 97% of funds raised and 92% of all gifts received. If we remove the General Fund and At-Risk Youth/Title I Schools funds, Scholastics/Invitationals and Women & Girls make up 66% of all funds raised, but less than 6% of the total number of gifts received. This is due to large Rockefeller and Barber gifts, as well as generous grants from the St. Louis Chess Club.

Our Year-End Appeal Letter

Growing our base of support is tied very closely to our year-end appeal letter. While we always promote our main programs in the appeal letter and encourage recipients to support programs they are passionate about, we intentionally emphasize those programs that particularly resonate with the greatest number of people. We also include a return card for recipients who would like more information about ways they can give, or about making a planned gift. Raising money through the Year-End Appeal Letter is actually its secondary purpose – the primary purpose of the Year-End Appeal Letter is to uncover first-time donors and grow our base of support.

Planned Giving

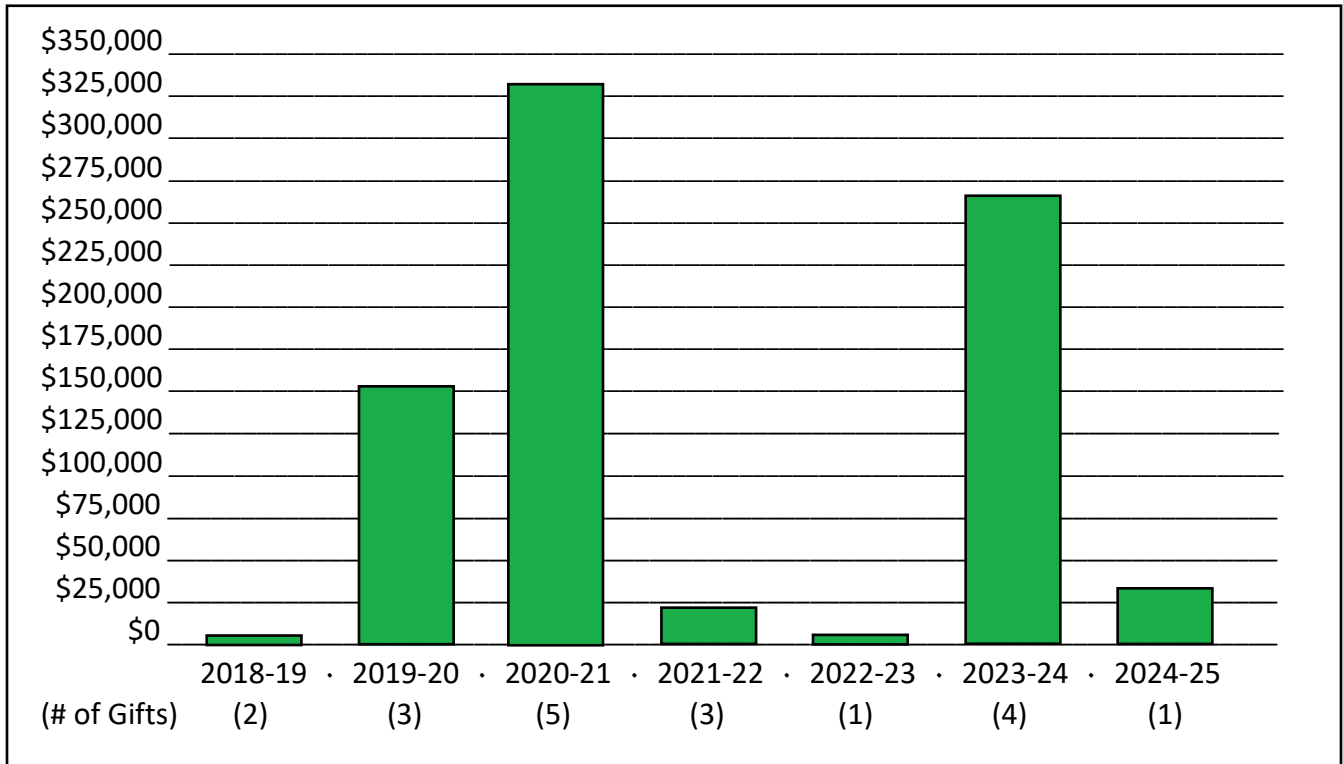
We continue to promote our Planned Giving program by selectively and strategically mailing information to planned giving prospects age 55 and older within the US Chess database. The best and most obvious prospects to promote Planned Giving (and those most invested) are USCF Life Benefactor Members, and USCF Life Members, though we solicit members outside of those parameters as well.

The very nature of Planned Giving requires patience, as it often takes years before a planned giving program bears fruit. Nevertheless, it is an important program to promote, and one that, given time, will eventually yield great rewards.

In December of 2024 we received a check in the amount of \$32,000 from a US Chess member who had passed away. The donor was on hospice in an assisted living facility. Before he passed, Geoff spoke with him on the phone. Because he was in hospice and was settling his estate, we treated his donation as a planned gift. Geoff conveyed to him how important his gift was, how it would touch the lives of others, and that he would become a member of the US Chess Legacy Society. He was very emotional when he expressed how much it meant to him to make this gift to US Chess and to become a member of the Legacy Society. Geoff mailed this gentleman a thank you letter reiterating their conversation on the phone. After he passed, one of his nurses said that he kept that letter on his person until he died. This is what US Chess, its mission, and leaving a legacy, means to some of its members.

The timing and amount of Planned Gifts is erratic and unpredictable, so charting the results of incoming gifts do not reveal any rhyme or reason that one can use to predict future gifts consistently.

Year-to-Year Planned Gifts (FY2018/19 – FY2023/24)



The US Chess Legacy Society

Since its creation in 2018, the US Chess Legacy Society has steadily been adding members. The idea is simple: By making a gift to US Chess through an Estate Plan or Planned Gift, the donor becomes a member of this exclusive club. In FY2024-2025, there was one new member added. The US Chess Legacy Society is comprised of the following members:

Dewain & Susan Barber	Dr. Herbert B. Jacklyn
Randy Bauer	Kim Jones
George & Anne Chamberlin	Myron & Rachel Lieberman
Herbert A. Dropkin	The Nearing Family
Bernard Goodman	Everett M. Renick
Charles Greger	John D. Rockefeller V
Dane E. Hinrichsen	Phil Trautman
David Hutchinson	Chuck Unruh & Debra Colpitt

Summary

FY2024-2025 has been a good year for US Chess and the chess community at large: US Chess membership is on the rise, and our partners and friends have been very generous in their support.

We are already looking forward to a strong 2025-2026 by continuing to expand our donor base and connecting and engaging with US Chess members and affiliates.

Many thanks to the committee members who volunteer their time: Michael Shuman, Vice Chair (NY); Bill Brock (IL); Kimberly Doo (NY); Sherlock Grigsby (MD); Maureen Grimaud (SC); Ivona Jezierska (CA); Joe Lonsdale (TX); Kevin Pryor (FL); Danny Rohde (NY); Mike Schulte (OH); Jay Stallings (CA); Nate Tyrell (DC); Chuck Unruh (OK); *ex officio*: Ranae Bartlett (AL); Geoff Isaak (MI).

John D. Rockefeller V (MD)
Chair
US Chess Development Committee