

Chapter 9: Preservation Expenditures and Funding

Librarians must educate the public about the choices and the financial commitments necessary to preserve our society's cultural and social records.

—*American Library Association Preservation Policy*, American Library Association, 2001

An institution demonstrates preservation awareness and well-integrated conservation policies through an annual budget appropriation, appropriate to the size of the institution, for preservation and conservation of the collection.

—*Position Paper on Conservation and Preservation in Collecting Institutions*, American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, 2002

It is the director's responsibility to identify priorities of the museum that are consistent with its board-approved policy and to recommend the allocation of funds required to support them.

—*Professional Practices in Art Museums*, Association of Art Museum Directors, 2001

The section of the Heritage Health Index survey devoted to preservation expenditures and funding revealed that few U.S. collecting institutions regularly designate funds to conservation/preservation and that most institutions' budgets for conservation/preservation are surprisingly low. Only 13% have access to preservation funding from permanent funds, such as endowments. Furthermore, many institutions are not seeking external funds to support preservation of their collections and are not engaged in activities to raise awareness from potential preservation funders. This data leads Heritage Preservation to conclude that preservation is not a core activity that is budgeted for regularly. Lack of financial support is at the root of all the issues identified in the Heritage Health Index. Making funds for preservation a consistent and stable part of annu-

al operating budgets would begin to address these issues.

Only 23% of collecting institutions, which include archives, libraries, historical societies, museums, and archaeological repositories/scientific research collections, have funding specifically allocated for conservation/preservation activities in their annual budgets (figure 9.1). In some cases, institutions rely on other budget lines for conservation/preservation—for example, a museum may include preservation in a curatorial budget or a library might include preservation in a technical services budget. However, only 36% allocate funds through other budget categories. Forty percent of U.S. collecting institutions allocate no funds for the care of their collections.

The data on allocation of funds for preservation correlates to size (figure 9.2), with larger

Fig. 9.1 Institutions with Funds Allocated for Conservation/Preservation in Annual Budget

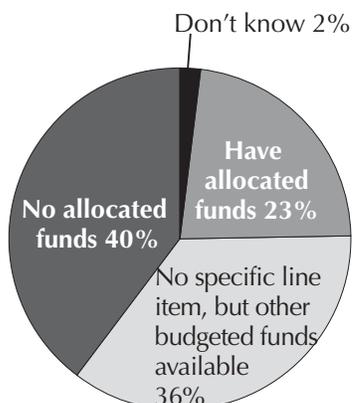


Fig. 9.2 Institutions with Funds Allocated for Conservation/Preservation in Annual Budget (most recently completed fiscal year) (by size)

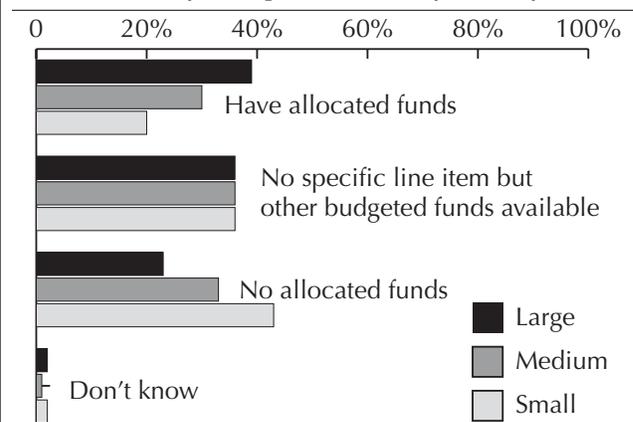
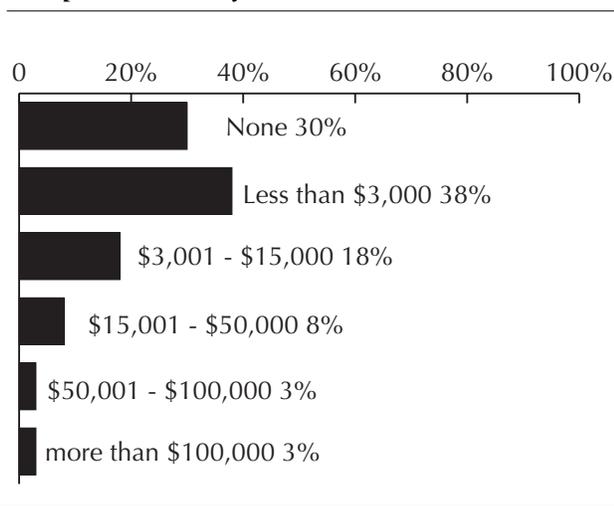


Fig. 9.3 Institutions' Annual Budget for Conservation/Preservation (most recently completed fiscal year)



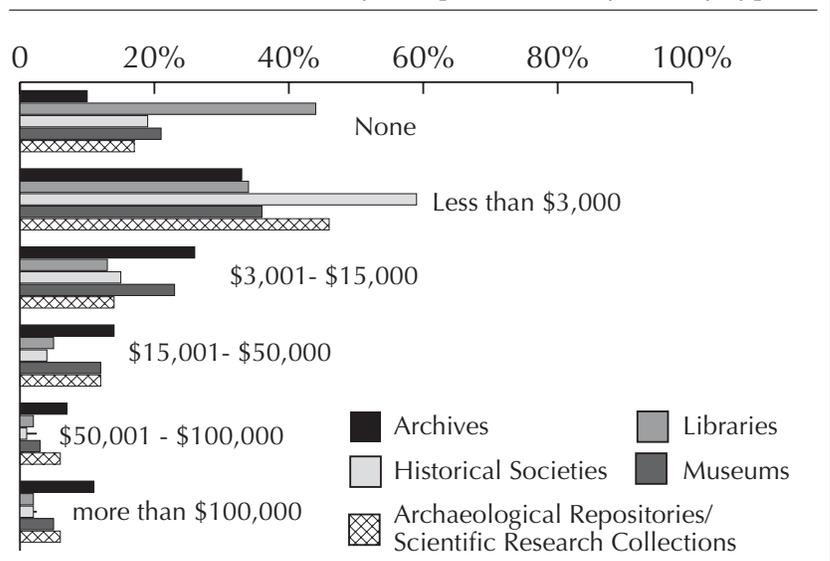
institutions more likely to have a specific line-item for preservation, and smaller institutions more likely to not have any budgeted funds. More than one-third of institutions (36%), regardless of size, use funds from other budget lines for preservation. By institutional type, libraries are least likely to allocate for preservation at 54%. This figure is influenced by 60% of public libraries and special libraries not specifically allocating for preservation in their institutional budgets (including 42% of large public libraries and 55% of large special libraries). Art museums are most likely to have funds specifically allocated for preservation (45%), followed by independent research libraries (40%). By region, institutions in the Northeast are most likely to specifically allocate funds at 32%, and institutions in the Mountain-Plains region are least likely at 19%.

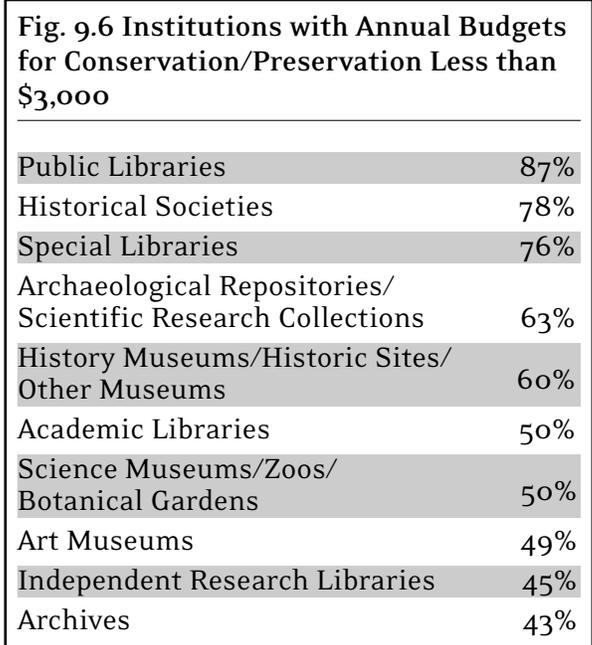
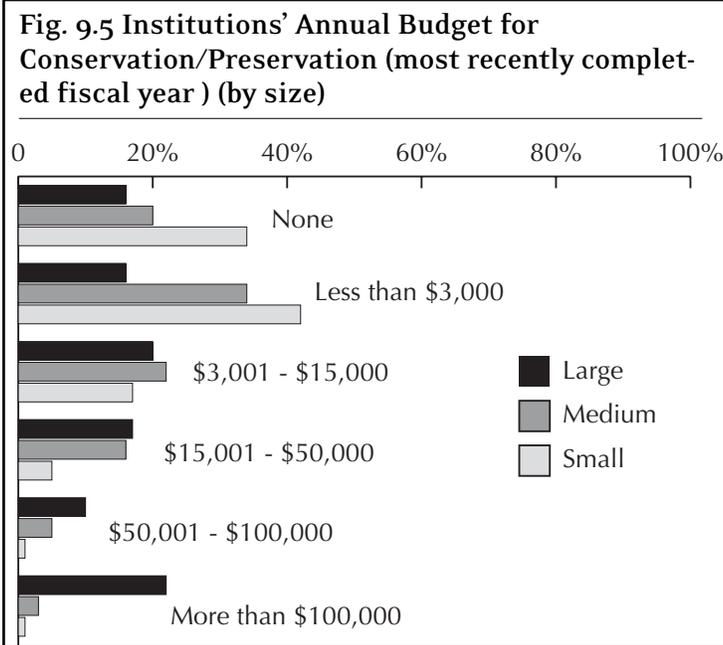
In question E3, survey participants were asked to record the amount of their institutions' conservation/preservation budget for the most recently completed fiscal year. Half the respondents reported data for FY2003; the other half reported data for FY2004. The question explained that if no specific line-item for preservation budget exists, respondents should include

an estimate of other budgeted funds used in the most recent fiscal year. This estimate was to include funds for staffing, supplies, equipment, surveys, treatment, preservation reformatting, commercial binding, consultants, contractors, and other preservation costs. The instructions referred institutions to what they recorded in the preservation staffing question to ensure that all personnel costs were included in the preservation budget response. Funds for utilities, security, capital projects, or overhead were not to be included in the preservation budget, although in some cases these expenses could be related to preservation. Institutions were instructed to include all funds from the most recently completed fiscal year, even if that figure was higher than usual due to a special project or grant. This question received an 86% response rate—lower than most of the survey questions, which have responses close to 100%. If the question was left blank, data was considered to be missing rather than assumed to be zero.

Given such a broad definition of preservation expenses, preservation budgets are surprisingly low (figure 9.3). Almost a third (30%) had no funds budgeted, and 38% had less than \$3,000 budgeted in the most recently completed fiscal year. As seen in figure 9.4, libraries at 44% are most likely to have a preservation budget of zero (50% of public libraries, 44% of special libraries, 43% of independent research libraries, and 25%

Fig. 9.4 Institutions' Annual Budget for Conservation/Preservation (most recently completed fiscal year) (by type)



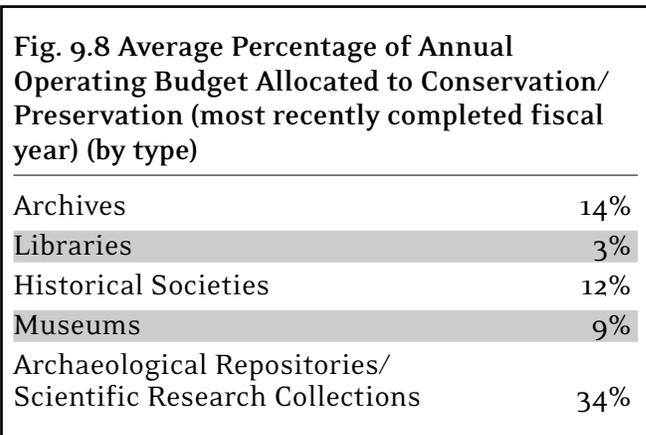
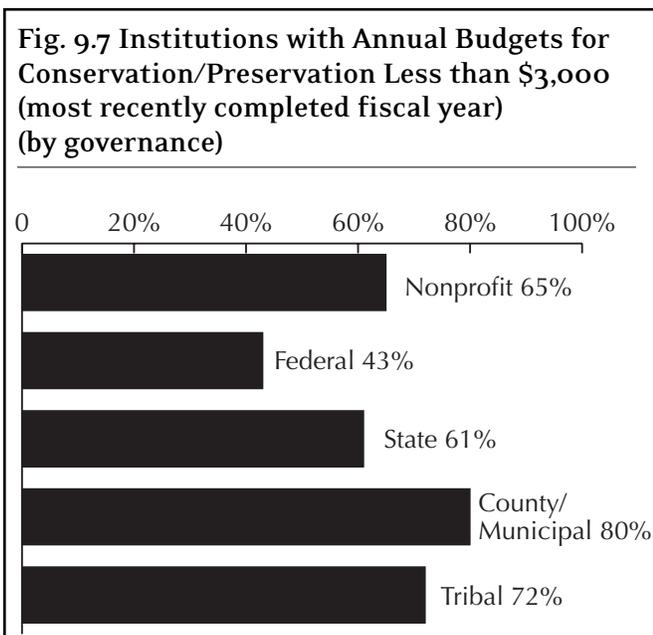


of academic libraries). Results for preservation budget amounts correlate to size (figure 9.5).

In the preservation funding category of less than \$3,000, 78% of libraries and 78% of historical societies have preservation budgets this low—10% less than the national average of 68%. The library figure (figure 9.6) is dominated by 87% of public libraries and 76% of special libraries having a preservation budget of less than \$3,000. Archives fall to the bottom of the list with only 43% having less than \$3,000, but this figure is based on a small number of institutions with a

primary function as an archives. When considering all institutions that reported having archives among their functions, 59% had less than \$3,000 budgeted for preservation in the most recently completed fiscal year. As shown in figure 9.7, 80% of institutions under county/municipal governance had a preservation budget less than \$3,000, while only 43% of federal institutions have preservation budgets this low.

The Heritage Health Index questionnaire asked institutions to record their total annual operating budget for the most recently completed fiscal year so that it would be possible to put preservation budgets in some context. To consider the average percentage of total budgets devoted to preservation, the percentage is figured for each institution and weighted for institutions with



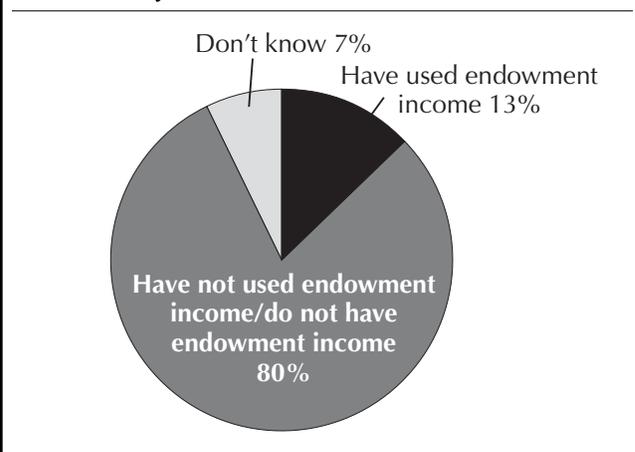
missing data (Methodology, p. 21); then an average is taken across all or similar institutions. In this case (figure 9.8), the range goes from an average of only 3% of library budgets allocated for preservation to 34% of archaeological repositories/scientific research collections' operating budgets spent on preservation. At large and medium-sized institutions, an average of 5% of total operating budgets is spent on preservation; at small institutions the average is 9%. In some cases, institutions recorded the same figure for total annual operating budget and preservation budget, indicating 100% of the institutions' budget goes to collections care expenses. This situation is conceivable, especially in collecting institutions where overhead is covered by a parent institution, such as an academic university or municipality.

To get a more complete understanding of nationwide conservation/preservation expenditures, it is useful to consider the proportion of total spending to total preservation spending. Budget figures for annual budgets and preservation budgets are each totaled and weighted to compensate for missing data (Methodology, p. 21). The response rate for the question about annual operating budget was 87%; for the question about annual conservation/preservation budget, 84%; and on both questions, 81%. Data needed to be weighted to compensate for missing data in about 20% of the cases. The total annual operating budgets of collecting institutions in the most recently completed fiscal year was \$32,831,262,572, while the spending on conservation/preservation nationwide was \$720,708,717—a proportion of 2%. The proportion does not change in relation to the size of the institution. Considered by type of

Fig. 9.9 Proportion of Total Annual Operating Budgets to Total Conservation/Preservation Budgets (most recently completed fiscal year) (by type)

Archives	7%
Libraries	1%
Historical Societies	3%
Museums	4%
Archaeological Repositories/ Scientific Research Collections	5%

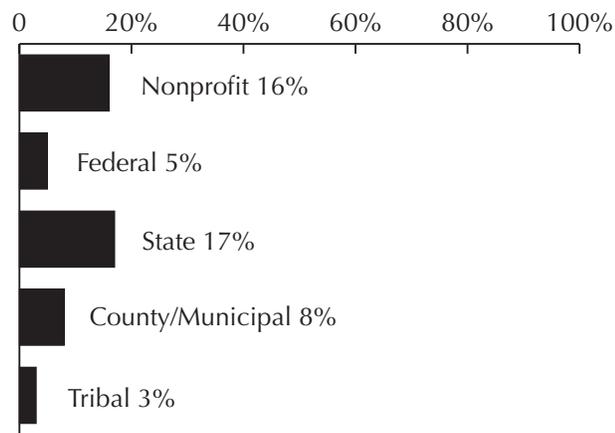
Fig. 9.10 Institutions that Used Income from Endowed Funds for Conservation/Preservation (last three years)



institution (figure 9.9), 7% of total archives budgets was directed to preservation and only 1% of library budgets was spent on preservation.

To ascertain the consistency of preservation funding at institutions, the Heritage Health Index asked, “In the last three years, have any of your conservation/preservation expenditures been met by drawing on income from endowed funds?” Only 13% (figure 9.10) use such income; 80% do not or their institution does not have endowed funds; and 7% don’t know. Libraries were least likely to use income from endowed funds for preservation, though viewing the data by specific type of institution show there is a range among library responses; 32% of independent research libraries have used income from endowed funds (more than any other type of institution), while only 6% of public libraries and 6% of special libraries have done so. At 25% and 21% respectively, art museums and science museums/zoos/botanical gardens were among institutions with the highest likelihood of using endowment income for preservation. Larger institutions (24%) were more likely than medium-sized (15%) or small (11%) institutions to use income from endowed funds. This data has more variation when viewed by region than other funding data; 22% of institutions in the Northeast and 15% of institutions in the Midwest draw on income from endowed funds for preservation expenses, compared with 8% in the West and about 12% for the remaining regions.

Fig. 9.11 Institutions That Used Income from Endowed Funds for Conservation/Preservation (last three years) (by governance)



Considering the type of institutional governance and how it relates to use of endowment income (figure 9.11), state government and nonprofit institutions have higher rates than the national average of 13%. While the higher percentage is to be expected from nonprofit institutions, the figure for state-governed institutions is likely influenced by data from state colleges/universities. Since academic institutions are more likely to have endowments, their collecting entities are more likely to have this potential source for preservation funding.

The Heritage Health Index survey included three questions about where collecting institutions were obtaining support for conservation/

preservation activities. Institutions were asked if in the last three years they had received funding from various sources outside their institution (figure 9.12). At 27%, individual donors are the most likely source for external preservation funds; this category included funds from membership or friends groups. Most noteworthy is that 40% of institutions have applied for no additional, external funding for preservation and 8% do not know. Breaking down 40% by size of institution reveals that 31% of large institutions, 39% of medium-sized institutions, and 41% of small institutions have sought no additional external funding. Libraries are the most likely not to have received external funds in the last three years at 58%. Almost two-thirds of special libraries have received no external funding for preservation; neither have more than half of public libraries and academic libraries. The next most likely not to have received any external preservation funding in the last three years was archaeological repositories/scientific research collections at 40%, followed by 30% of archives, 26% of museums, and 24% of historical societies. There are no significant differences among regions regarding obtaining external funds for preservation.

Many external funding sources require an application, and 62% of institutions indicate that they have not applied for funding from any public or private source in the last three years (figure 9.13). This was followed by a question for those that have not made grant applications to under-

Fig. 9.12 Source of Support for Institutions that Have Received External Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)

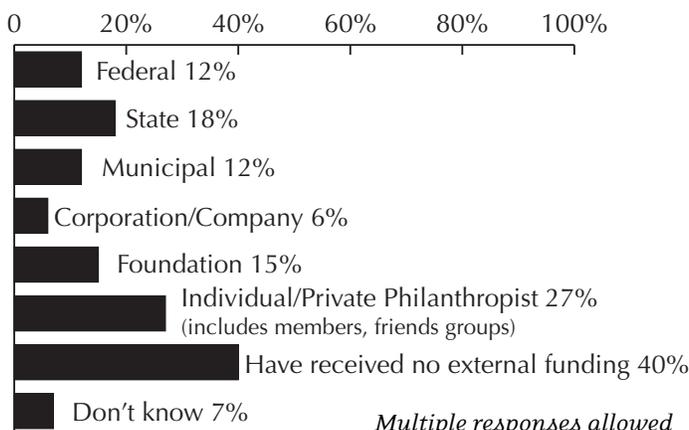
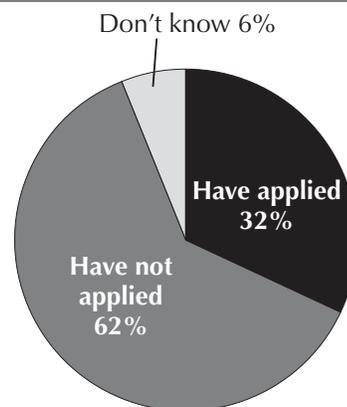
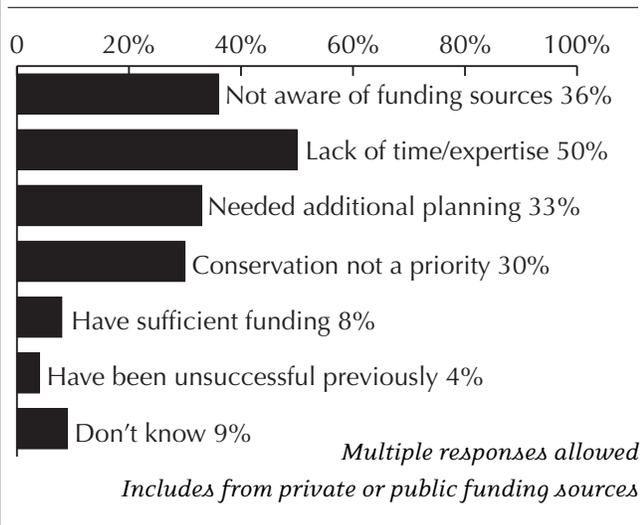


Fig. 9.13 Whether Institutions Have Applied for Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)



Includes from private or public funding sources

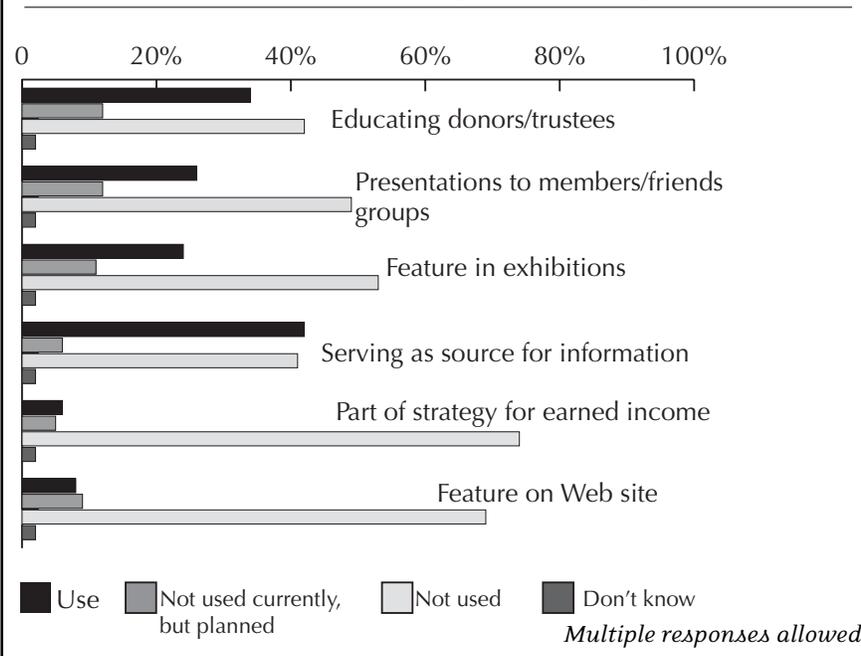
Fig. 9.14 Reasons Why Institutions Have Not Applied for Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)



stand what factors influenced their decision not to apply. Lack of staff time or expertise in applying for grants was the most frequent response at 50% (figure 9.14). The next highest response at 36% was “not aware of appropriate funding sources.” A third of institutions cite a need for additional time to plan projects before requesting grant funds. It is important to note that 30% responded that conservation/preservation is not an institutional priority and so additional funding has not been sought in the last three years.

Promoting awareness of what institutions do to care for collections is an additional way to attract outside funding for conservation and preservation. The results to a question on this topic (figure 9.15) illustrate that more institutions could employ strategies to attract funding. More than 40% serve as a source for preservation information for the public,

Fig. 9.15 Institutions that Promote Awareness of Conservation/Preservation Using the Following Activities



and a little more than a third educate donors and/or trustees about preservation through such activities as tours or demonstrations. Only 8% feature preservation topics on their Web site, and few (6%) use preservation for earned income—for example, by selling preservation-quality materials in their gift shops or providing conservation services on a fee-for-service basis.

Recommendation

Institutions’ budgets should reflect that preservation of collections is among their top priorities. Designated giving for the care of collections can help ensure this. Individuals at all levels of government and in the private sector *must* assume responsibility for providing support that will allow collections to survive.