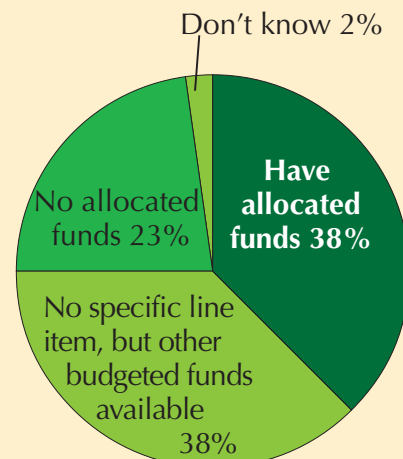


Chapter 8: Preservation Expenditures and Funding

The Heritage Health Index's data on preservation budgeting and funding reveals that more collecting institutions need to prioritize this important work. At institutions holding American art, only 38% specifically allocate for conservation/preservation in their annual budgets, 38% rely on funds from other budget lines, and 23% do not allocate any funds at all (figure 8.1).

Although institutions holding American art have larger preservation budgets than other institutions the Heritage Health Index surveyed, the figures are nonetheless troubling since they were to include any monies—whether specifically allocated or not—for staffing supplies, equipment, surveys, treatment, preservation reformatting, commercial binding, consultants, contractors, and other preservation costs. Survey respondents were referred to the staffing question and

Fig. 8.1 Institutions with American Art Holdings with Funds Allocated for Conservation/Preservation in Annual Budget

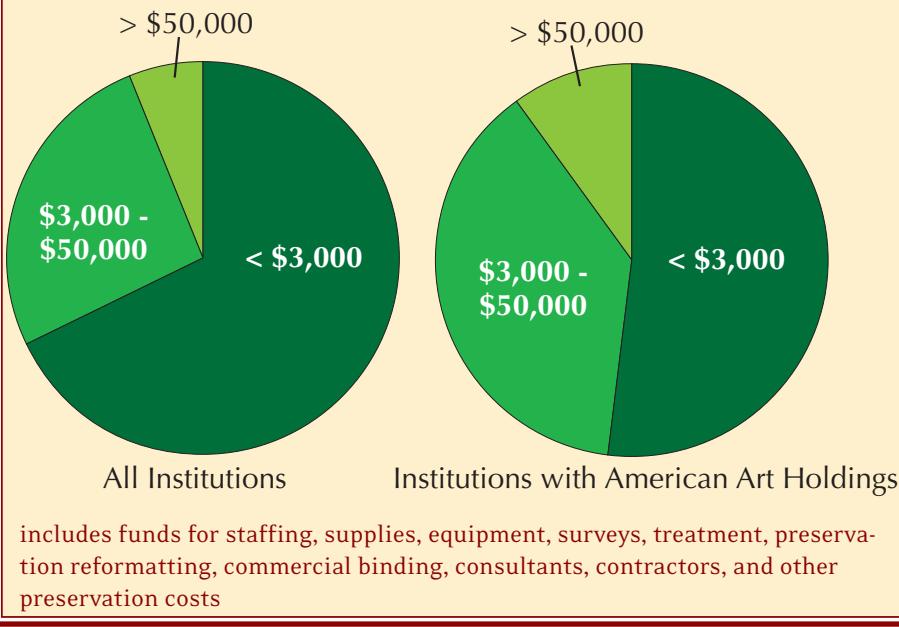


In 1999, The Oshkosh Public Museum established a Collection Fund from the sale of deaccessioned objects that were deemed out of the scope of the museum's mission. The fund is now supported by private donations and is earmarked for conservation or acquisition only (less than \$1,000 has been spent on acquisition to date). The fund has enabled the museum to undertake several projects that otherwise would have been too burdensome on the budget. For example, in 2001, *Foot of Ceape Street*, an 1856 oil on canvas by Oshkosh artist Sophia Russell and the earliest known depiction of an Oshkosh scene, was repaired and cleaned with earnings from the Collection Fund. Campaigning for the fund has helped the Oshkosh Public Museum bring awareness to its community of the museum's responsibility for and commitment to collections care.



Foot of Ceape Street, painted by Sophia Russell in 1856, is the earliest known work depicting an Oshkosh, Wisconsin scene. The painting was cleaned and varnished (before, left; after, right) bringing it closer to the artist's intent and original palette, a treatment paid for by the museum's Collection Fund.

Fig. 8.2 Institutions' Annual Budget for Conservation/Preservation (most recently completed fiscal year)



instructed to include any funds paid for staff members reported there. It should also be noted that a blank response to this question was not assumed to be zero; an institution had to enter zero for us to include this data. Nevertheless, half had recent annual conservation/preservation budgets of less than \$3,000 (figure 8.2), and 15% actually have no budgeted funds at all. It is particularly baffling to figure out how institutions that claim they have collections in “no need” have achieved this with no preservation budget. At large institutions,

With 105 silver objects, the Paul Revere collection at the Worcester Art Museum is one of the largest in the world. The collection surveys the entire career of this Revolutionary War patriot and helps to interpret American colonial and early national, social, cultural, and political history. Additionally, the collection includes two objects from Paul Revere, Sr., who emigrated from France and taught his son the craft of silversmithing. In 1999 the UnumProvident Corporation donated 56 pieces that had been collected by their Worcester subsidiary, the Paul Revere Life Insurance Company. This generous gift, which more than doubled the Museum’s holdings, catalyzed a renewed interest in this extraordinary collection, inspiring curators and conservators to study and conserve the collection with the ultimate goal of organizing a traveling exhibition. Never having received comprehensive conservation treatment, the objects were in various states of deterioration, including the disfiguring silver sulfide corrosion on their surfaces, more commonly referred to as tarnish. Every time the tarnish is removed during polishing, original surface is lost. Each object in the Revere collection was manually cleaned by carefully removing the sulfide corrosion with a calcium carbonate abrasive; then each object was examined under the microscope and any polish residues were removed. Lastly, each object was lacquered for protection against future tarnish. Under the supervision of the museum’s Objects Conservator, this conservation campaign ensured that these unique objects will be preserved and never have to undergo an abrasive treatment again. Funds to hire a conservation technician to undertake the painstaking work of polishing were raised through bids at the Worcester Art Museum’s gala auction; many generous donors responded to this creative appeal and chose to support the preservation of this national treasure.



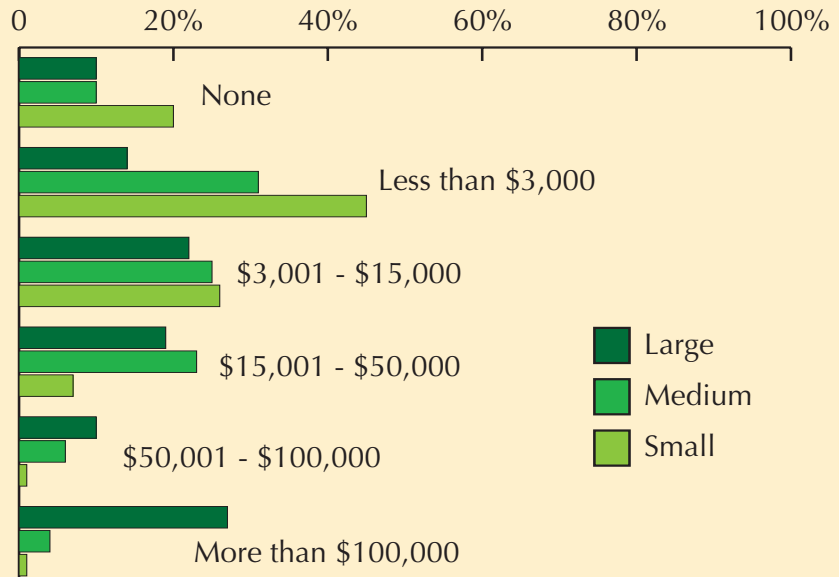
Paul Revere silver bowl (1794) before (left) and after (right) a conservation treatment removed disfiguring surface corrosion.

10% had no funding budgeted and 14% have less than \$3,000 (figure 8.3). One-fifth of art museums have no preservation budget, and only 9% spent more than \$50,000—staff costs alone would easily account for budgets of this size (figure 8.4).

One way to keep conservation/preservation funding steady is to establish endowments, from which regular income from interest may be drawn. However, only 22% of institutions holding American art report having used income from endowments for conservation (figure 8.5). Seventy percent either do not have endowments at their institutions or do not have income for conservation from endowments. The American art committee noted that while most senior conservator positions at major institutions are

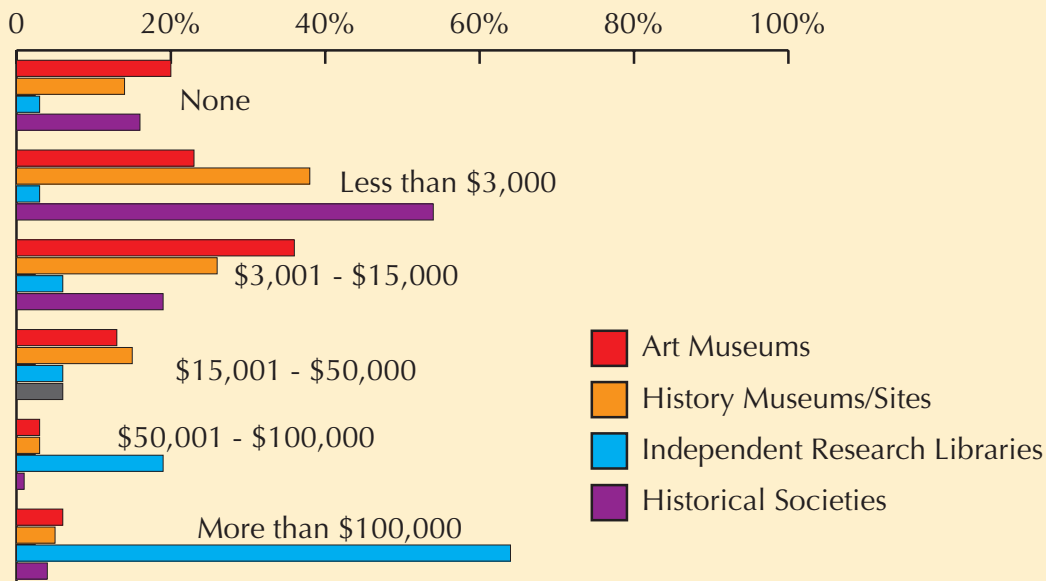
endowed, additional funding for mid-level conservators would help ensure consistent staffing.

Fig. 8.3 Institutions with American Art Holdings' Annual Budget for Conservation/Preservation (most recently completed fiscal year, by size)



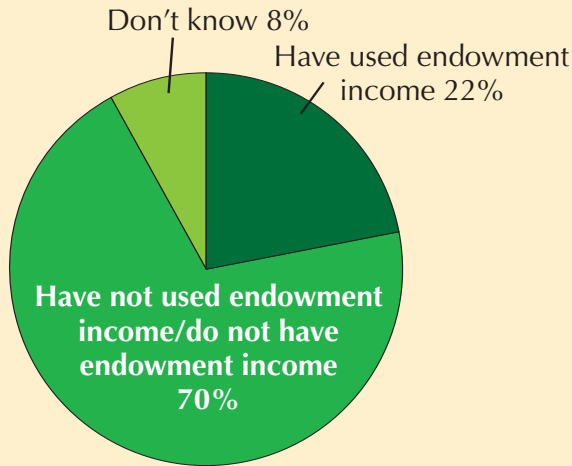
includes funds for staffing, supplies, equipment, surveys, treatment, preservation reformatting, commercial binding, consultants, contractors, and other preservation costs

Fig. 8.4 Institutions with the Largest Number of Art Holdings' Annual Budget for Conservation/Preservation (most recently completed fiscal year, by type)



includes funds for staffing, supplies, equipment, surveys, treatment, preservation reformatting, commercial binding, consultants, contractors, and other preservation costs

Fig. 8.5 Institutions with American Art Holdings That Used Income from Endowed Funds for Conservation/ Preservation (last three years)

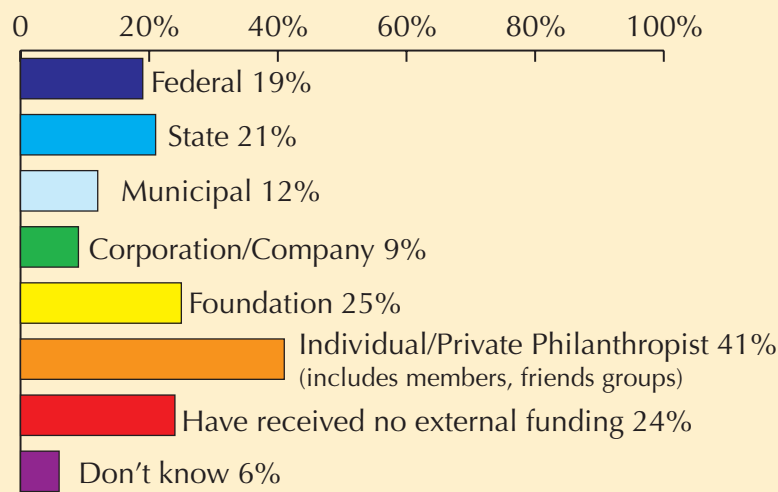


The survey asked from which external sources institutions have received funding in the last three years. Individuals and private philanthropists (which include friends groups and institutional members) is the most common; 41% of institutions holding American art have benefited from this source (figure 8.6). Foundation, state,

and federal entities provide funding at about 20% of institutions. However, 24% of institutions holding American art have had no external preservation funding in the last three years—this includes 25% of art museums, 21% of history museums, 19% of historical societies, and 13% of independent research libraries. As Figure 8.7 shows, only about half of the institutions have even made an application for private or public funding.

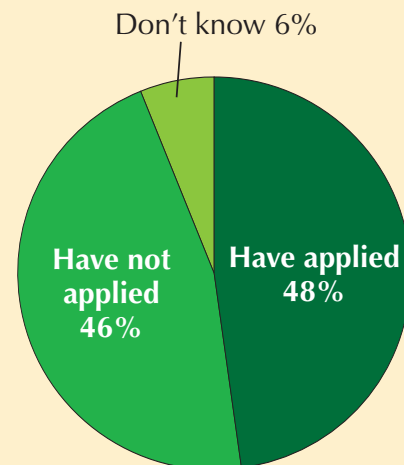
The reasons cited why institutions have not applied range from lack of time and expertise in making applications (55%) to needing additional time to plan projects (44%) and not being aware of funding sources (33%) (figure 8.8). That institutions are not aware of preservation funding sources does correlate to the size of the institution (27% of large institutions, 21% of medium institutions, and 38% of small institutions); however, it isn't a case of just small institutions not being informed. History museums and historical societies were most likely not to know of funding sources at 50% and 37%, respectively. The statistic that 19% of institutions that care for American art state that conservation/preservation is not an institutional priority raises concern; 23% of art museums, 12% of history museums, 6% of historical societies, and 33% of independent research libraries also chose this response.

Fig. 8.6 Institutions with American Art Holdings' Sources of External Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)



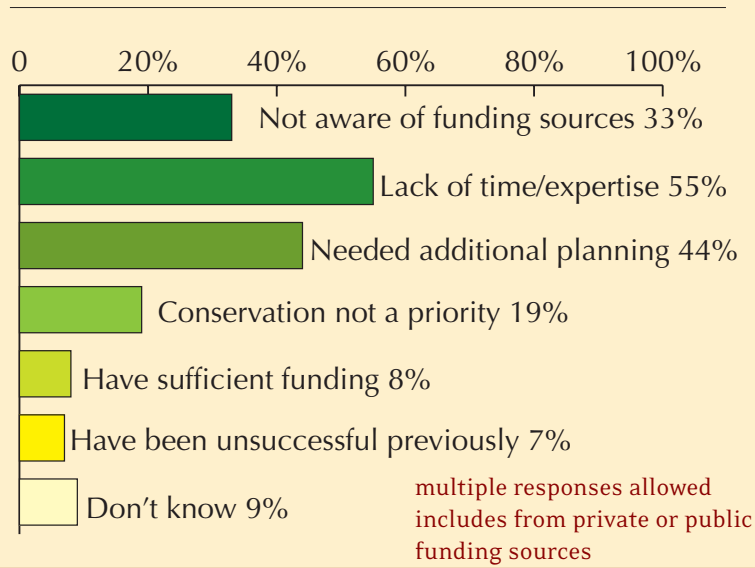
multiple responses allowed

Fig. 8.7 Institutions with American Art Holdings That Have Applied for Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)



includes from private or public funding sources

Fig. 8.8 Why Institutions with American Art Holdings Have Not Applied for Conservation/Preservation Funding (last three years)



advocate for federal grant programs such as Save America’s Treasures and to attract additional foundation funding for preservation. They noted there are several grant programs for one-time expenses or projects, but funding for ongoing activities—such as staff support or basic conservation supplies—is challenging to raise. Institutions may need to become creative to fund these activities; two ideas can be found in the case studies on pages 32 and 33. Even though some institutions have cultivated donors or friends groups to support conservation, daily needs are still difficult to make attractive to potential funders. It was suggested that perhaps a good place to start would be to encourage a grant-

The American art committee urged Heritage Preservation to use Heritage Health Index data to

ing organization to create a fund for raising preservation awareness. ♦