

crunchbase

Funding to the Female Founders



About Crunchbase

Crunchbase is the leading provider of private company prospecting and research solutions. Over 55 million users—including salespeople, entrepreneurs, investors, and market researchers—use Crunchbase to prospect for new business opportunities, and companies all over the world rely on us to power their applications, making over 3 billion calls to our API each year.

Why we cover female funding progress

At Crunchbase, we believe different perspectives accelerate innovation for a better future. We strive to democratize the way innovators access opportunities to foster the discovery of new solutions and surface old problems that need answers.

Gender disparity in startup funding is one of these problems, leading to fewer solutions from different perspectives making it to market. We integrated gender-specific data into our company dataset so people could objectively compare investment in male- and female-led startups and identify this gap, along with its potential downstream effects.

The addition of these insights has allowed us to track trends in funding to female founders, uncover progress over the last decade, and identify areas for improvement as we move into the next. After all, charting the

path forward begins with measuring and understanding where we are today. Despite multitudes of data highlighting the [benefits of investing in female founders](#), in the seed stage and beyond, female-founded companies continue to be underfunded. In 2010, only three percent of invested dollars went to female-only founders and in 2019, almost 10 years later, that number remained at just three percent.

To create more opportunities for female founders, we're passionate about bringing these issues to light through the power of data. We've seen firsthand what exposing gender disparity can do -- from the brave women who led the women's suffrage movement, to those who are currently fighting to close the income gap. With this data, we shed light on the gap in opportunities for female founders.

As we celebrate International Women's Day this year, we hope our ongoing research on this topic will shed light on progress and uncover opportunities to drive change.



A Decade In Review: Funding To Female Founders

Introduction

Crunchbase has been tracking the growth of companies with female founders since early 2015 when we added gender to the dataset. Our first report was titled “[Female Founders On An Upward Trend According To Crunchbase.](#)” The number of female founders and the amount of venture dollars raised by female founders has continued to grow since we first looked at the underlying data to analyze progress in our industry.

We started this research with the 2010 dataset, which indicated there was c\$3 billion of venture funds raised by companies with at least one female founder, but saw that amount grow to \$26 billion in 2019. The breakdown to female-only founded companies was \$1 billion in 2010 and close to \$6 billion in 2019. These amounts, while increasing, were not close to parity with male-only founded companies which raised \$31 billion in 2010 and \$195 billion in 2019.

The absolute number of funded companies with a female founder has doubled in the past five years compared to the previous five years. However we see sluggish growth in proportion year over year. The ratio to female-only founded companies has been stagnant with that segment raising 2 or 3 percent of venture for 8 out of the last 10 years. Female/male co-founded moved from 6 to 9 percent of dollars over a 10-year timeframe. Round counts tend to be slightly higher as a proportion; 19 percent of rounds versus 12 percent of dollars in 2019 to both female-only and female/male co-founded, with female-only rounds shifting from 4 percent in 2010 to 6 percent in 2019.

The increase in round counts relative to invested dollars in 2019 is double-edged. A higher count of rounds could potentially mean more startups with a female founder, but it also suggests that female founders tend to raise less than their male counterparts. [See section on median and average seed and Series A rounds.]

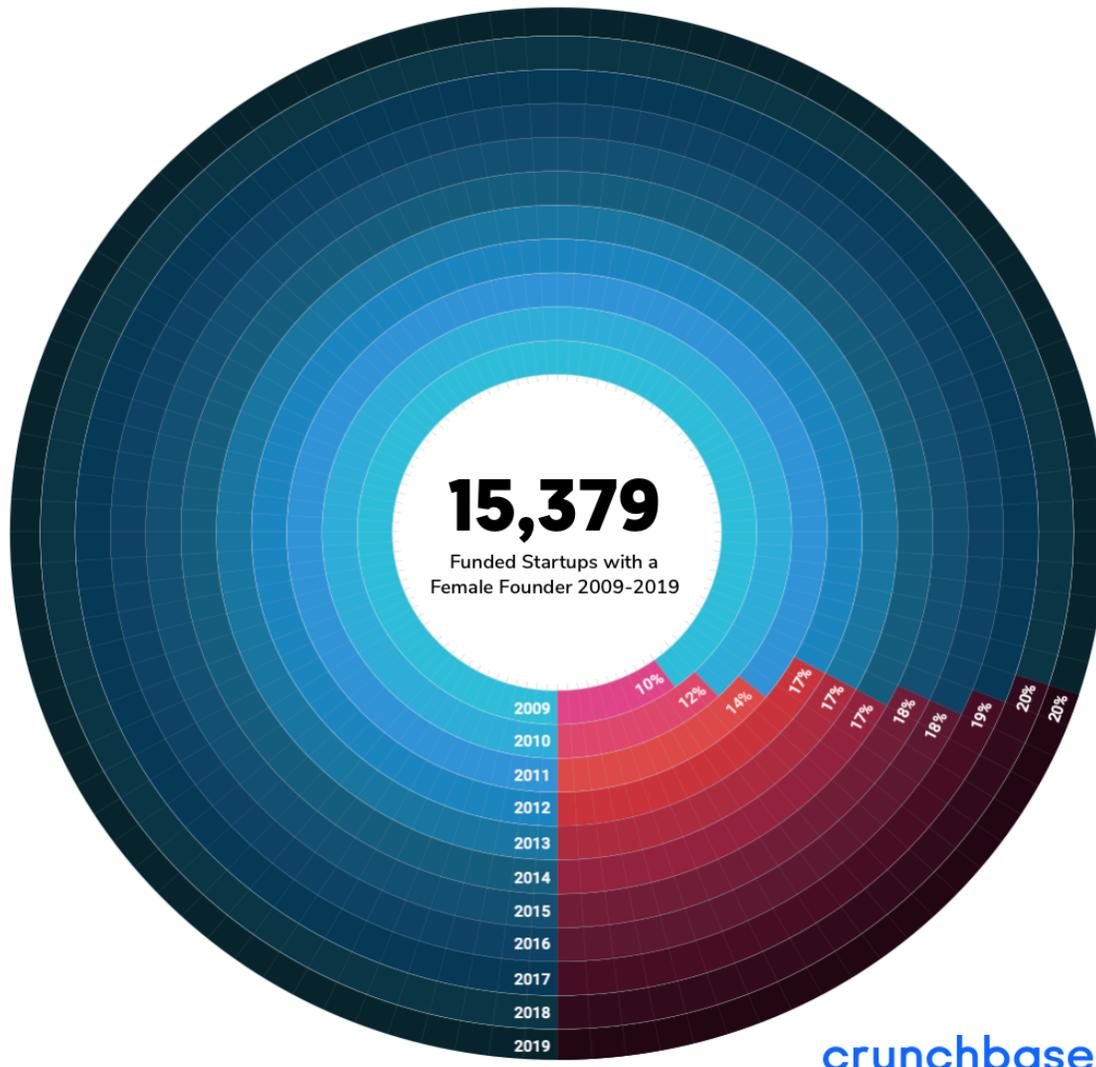
Note: Companies without founders associated are not included in this analysis, which found over 90 percent of venture dollars associated with companies with founders over the decade. [See methodology section below]

Using the Crunchbase dataset, we tracked founders and funding from the seed through venture rounds, excluding private equity rounds for this analysis.

We closed out the decade with the following findings:

- In 2019, 20 percent of global startups that raised their first funding round had a female founder, doubling from 10 percent in 2009.
- In the last five years, close to 9,900 startups raising an initial funding round had a female founder, almost double the count from the previous five years with 5,300 startups.
- There were 21 new female co-founded unicorn companies in 2019, the highest count in a one year period. In 2018, there were 15 new female co-founded unicorns. This subset includes companies with female-only founded and male/female co-founded companies.
- In 2019, female-only founded companies raised 3 percent of venture dollars and female/male co-founded raised 9 percent of venture dollars. The proportion of venture dollars to female-only has been stagnant; raising 2 or 3 percent venture for 8 out of the last 10 years. Female/male co-founded has moved from 6 to 9 percent of funding over a 10-year timeframe.

Proportion Of Global Startups With A Female Founder On First Funding Round



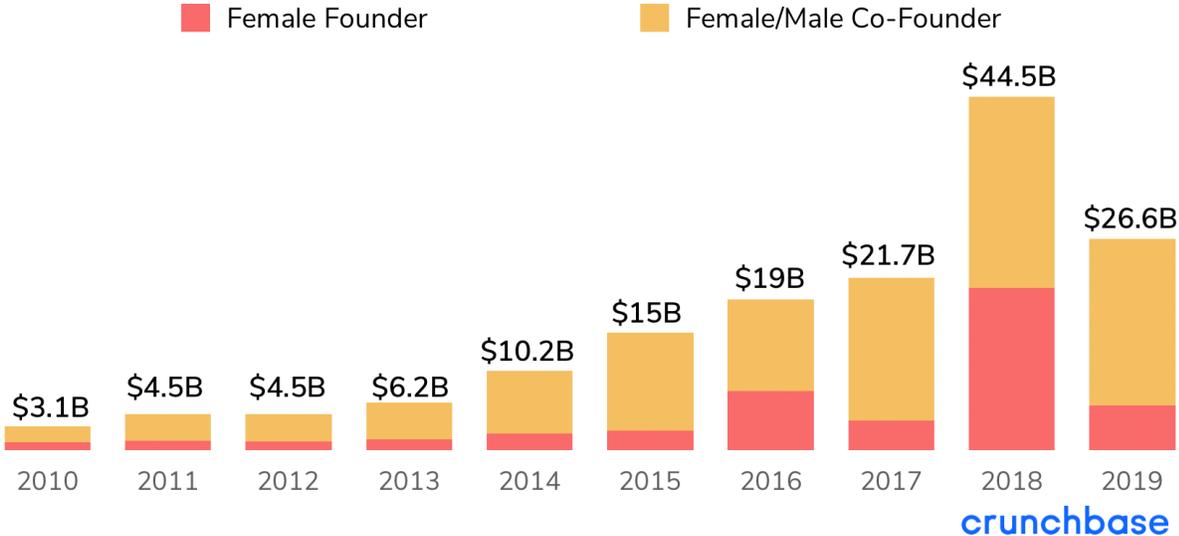
The total number of newly funded startups with a female founder is one indicator of change. How female founders fared when raising venture funding is another measure we explored.

Invested dollars in female-founded companies

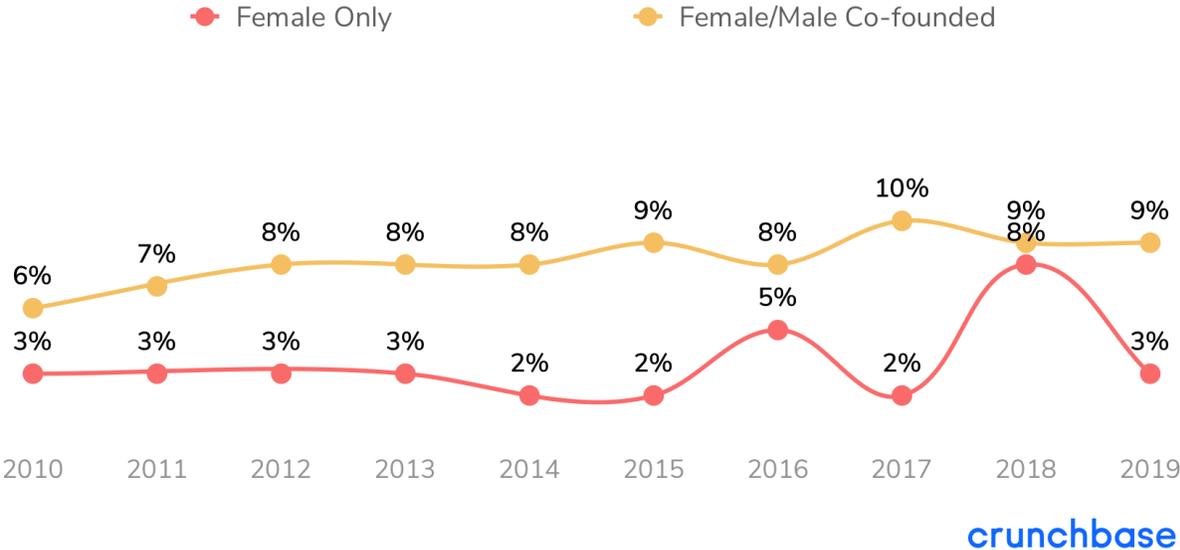
- In 2019, \$26.6 billion was invested in companies with at least one female co-founder. There was just under \$6 billion in female-only founded and \$20.9 billion in female/male co-founded companies. This speaks to a more than eightfold growth since 2010.
- In 2019, invested dollars were down year-over-year by 40 percent; due mostly to 2018's largest venture round of \$14 billion to China's Ant Financial. However, 2019 was the second-highest year in the past decade in funding to female founders.
- Female-only founded companies received 3 percent of 2019 dollars, while female/male co-founded companies got 9 percent. This is consistent with 2017 but less than 2018, which was at 17 percent to female-only and female/male co-founded companies in total venture funding.
- We started the decade at 9 percent of venture to female co-founded companies and ended at 12 percent. Although 3 percentage point growth over a decade is slow, the amounts invested increased from \$3 billion to \$26 billion in that timeframe, a more than eightfold growth.

Global Venture Dollar Volume In Female-Only and Female/Male Co-founded Companies

Startups without founders listed in Crunchbase are excluded. Private equity is also excluded.



Proportion Of Dollars To Female-Only And Female/Male Co-founded Companies

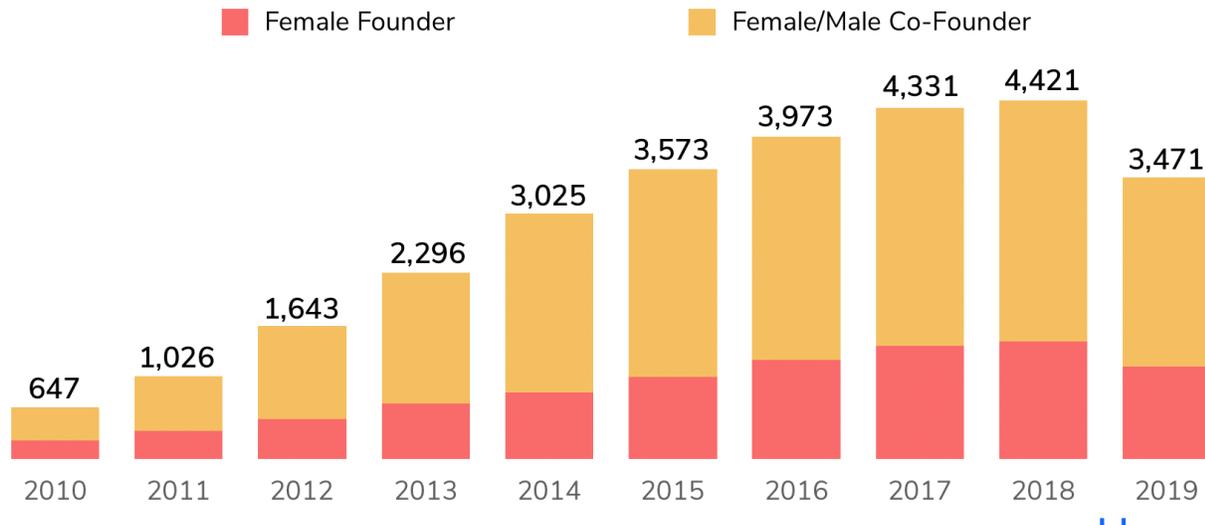


Deal volume in female-founded companies

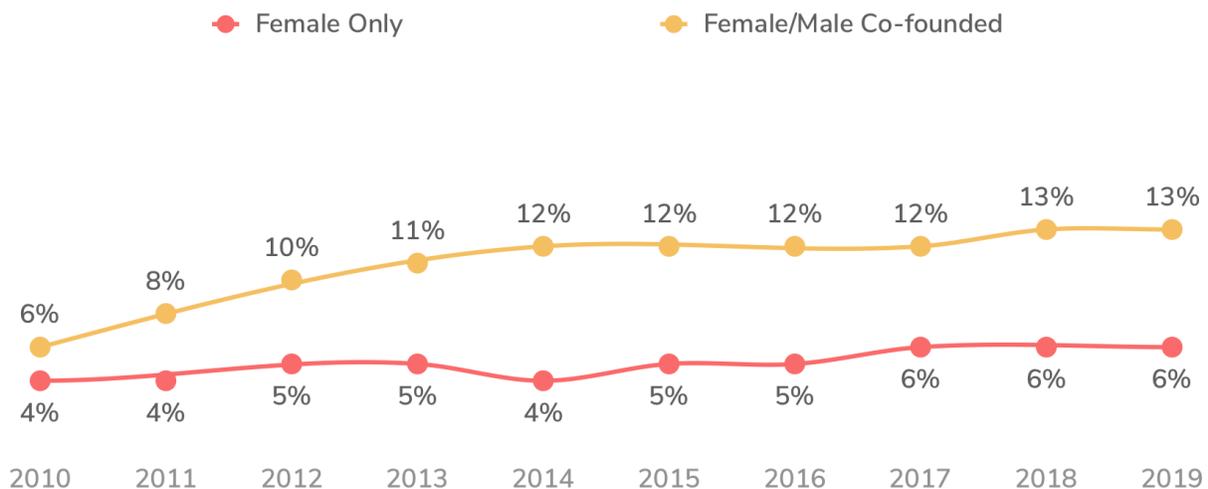
- Over 1,100 rounds were raised by female-only founders, with 2,300 rounds raised by female/male co-founders in 2019.
- Year-over-year deal counts were down by 21 percent, but over time will lessen. Much of the difference in funding round counts are attributed to the seed stage—down 25 percent—where the most reporting delays are seen. At the early-venture stage, counts were down by 6 percent, but we fully expect these numbers to go up during 2020. Reporting delays for funding amounts are less pronounced in Crunchbase data.
- Deal counts tended to be at a slightly higher proportion than dollar volume. In 2019, 6 percent of the overall deal count went to female-only founded and 13 percent to female/male co-founded companies. Deal counts in 2010 were at 10 percent and rose to 19 percent overall during the past decade.

Global Venture Deal Volume To Female-Only and Female/Male Co-Founded Companies

Startups without founders listed in Crunchbase are excluded. Private equity is also excluded.



Proportion Of Deal Volume To Female-Only And Female/Male Co-founded Companies



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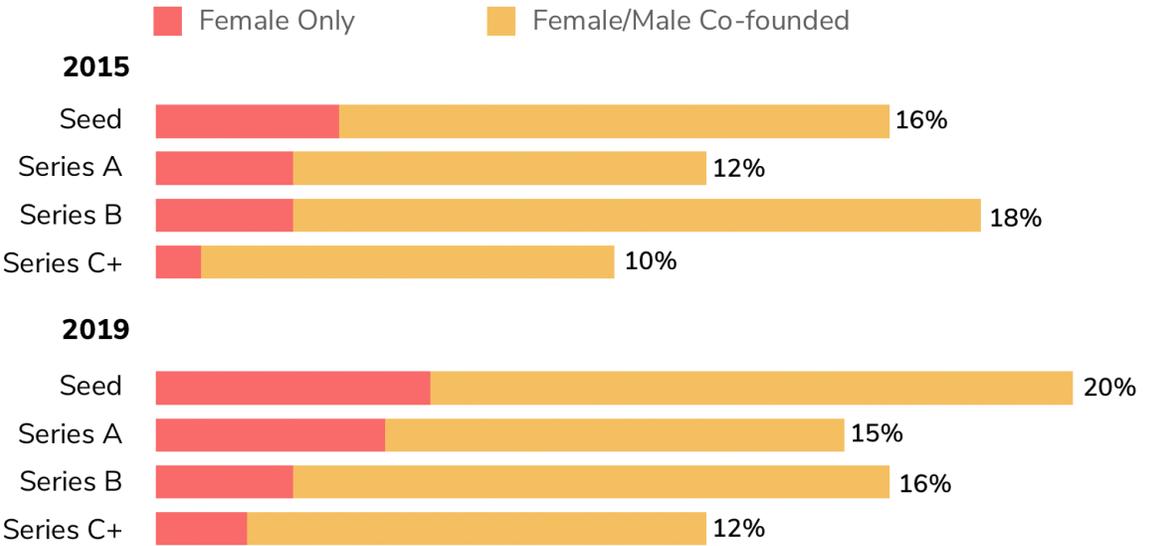
Deal count by stage: 2015 versus 2019

We often get asked how female founders fare at each funding stage. Since the overall numbers can mask what is happening as startups progress from seed to Series A and onward, we compared 2015 with 2019 to measure progress over the last five years.

- At most stages for dollar volume and deal count, we saw an increase in 2019 versus 2015.
- With seed as the first step in a startup journey, these percentage point increases are indicators for future trends in early- and late-stage rounds.

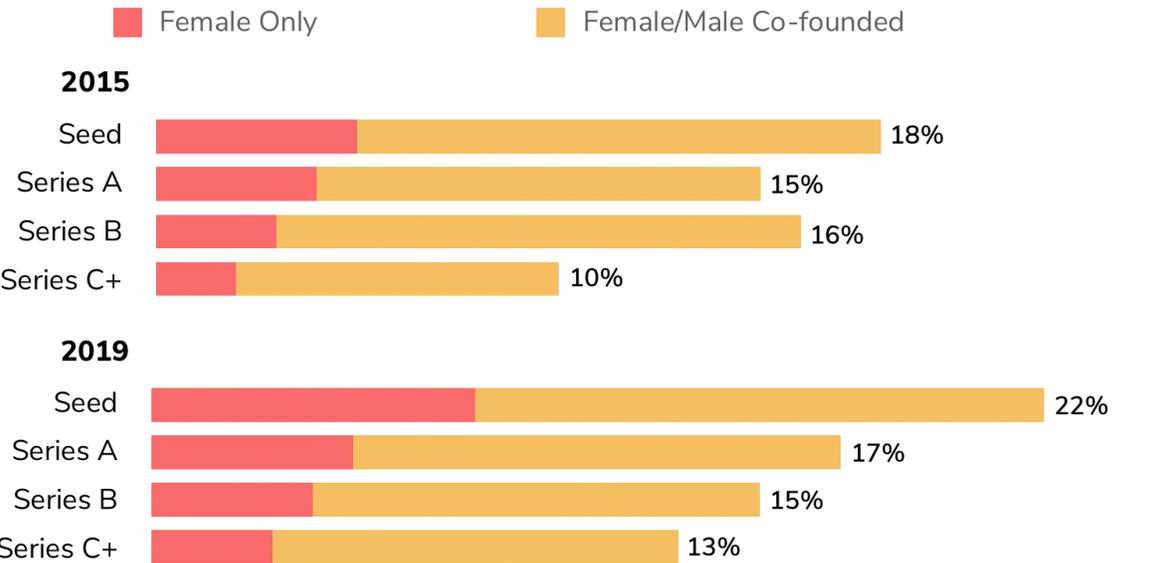


Proportion Of Dollar Volume In Female Co-Founded By Stage 2015 Vs 2019



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Proportion Of Deal Volume In Female Co-Founded By Stage 2015 Vs 2019



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Median

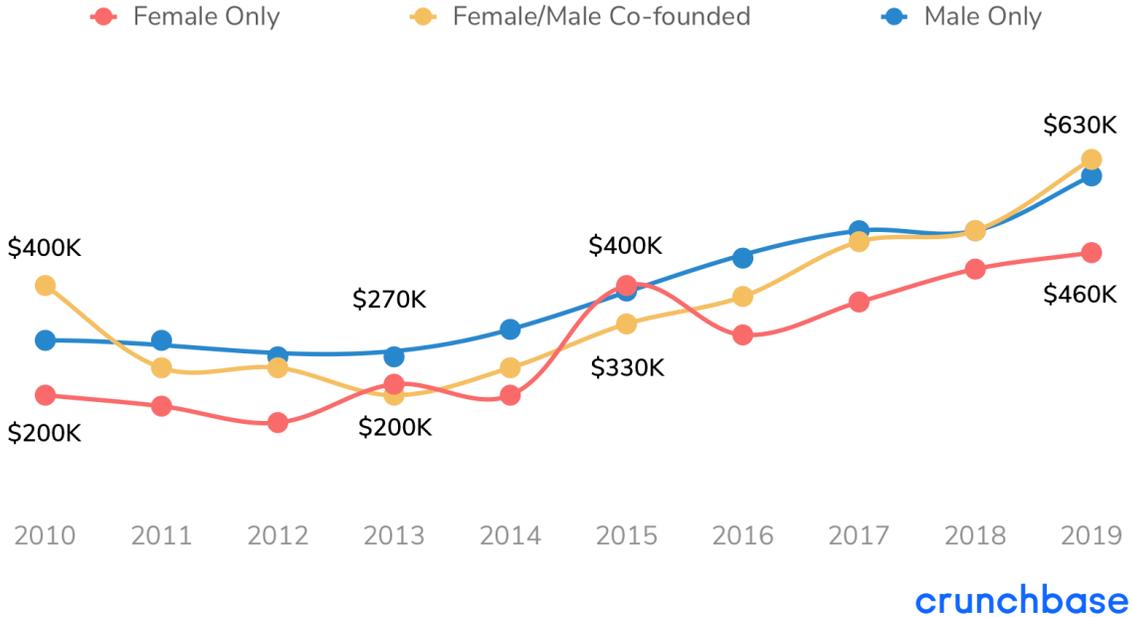
- The median seed for female-only founders was \$200,000 in 2010 and reached \$460,000 in 2019.
- The median seed for male founders has risen from \$300,000 in 2010 to \$600,000 in 2019.

Average

Note: For averages, we excluded all seed rounds above \$20 million.

- The average seed in 2010 for female-only founders started at \$350,000 and ended at \$1.2 million in 2019; closing the gap with male-only founders.
- The average seed for male-only founders was \$650,000 in 2010 and \$1.35 million in 2019.
- Over the decade, female-only founders raised an average of 13 percent less than male-only founded companies and 10 percent less than female/male co-founded companies.

Median Seed By Founder Gender

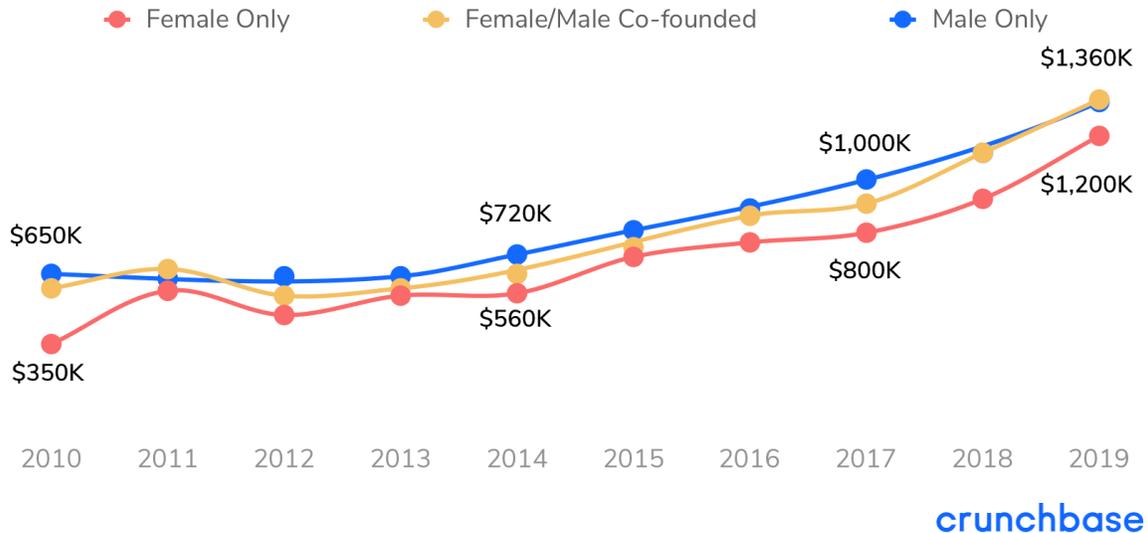


The Series A round is a huge milestone for a startup. Overall, Series A rounds have gone up significantly over the past decade, however, female founders still tended to raise less than their male and female/male co-founded counterparts.

- In 2010, female-only founders reached a median Series A of \$2.7 million, which rose to \$7 million in 2019.
- Female/male co-founded startups raised higher or on par with male-only startups, raising a median of \$4 million in 2010 and ending the decade matching female-only at \$7 million.

Average Seed By Founder Gender

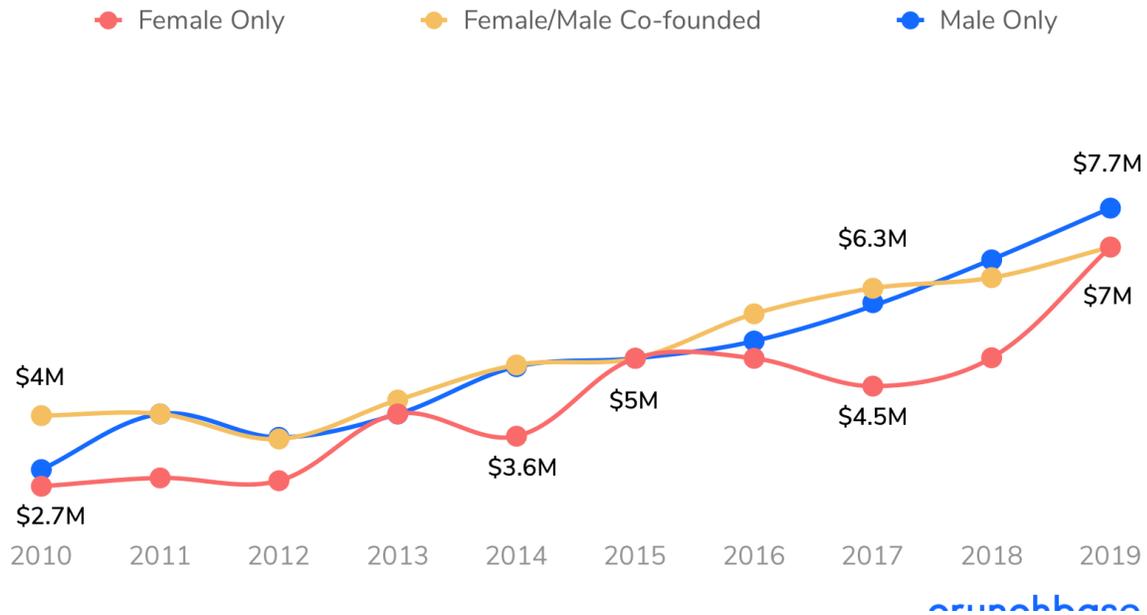
We Exclude Seed Rounds Above \$20 Million



Note: For averages, we excluded all Series A rounds above \$50 million.

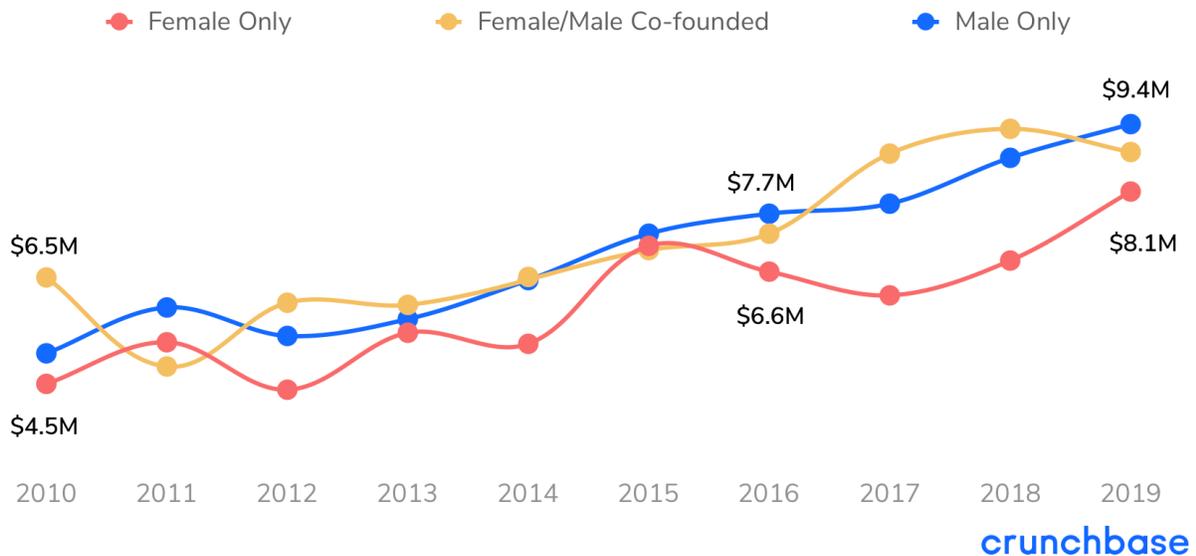
- The average Series A for female-only founders started at \$4.5 million and ended at \$8.1 million.
- The average Series A for male founders was \$5.1 million in 2010 and \$9.4 million in 2019.
- Over the decade, female founders raised an average of 13 percent less than male-only founded. Female/male co-founded companies raised an average of 3 percent more than male-only founders over the same time frame.

Median Series A By Founder Gender



Average Series A By Founder Gender

We Exclude Series A Rounds Above \$50 Million

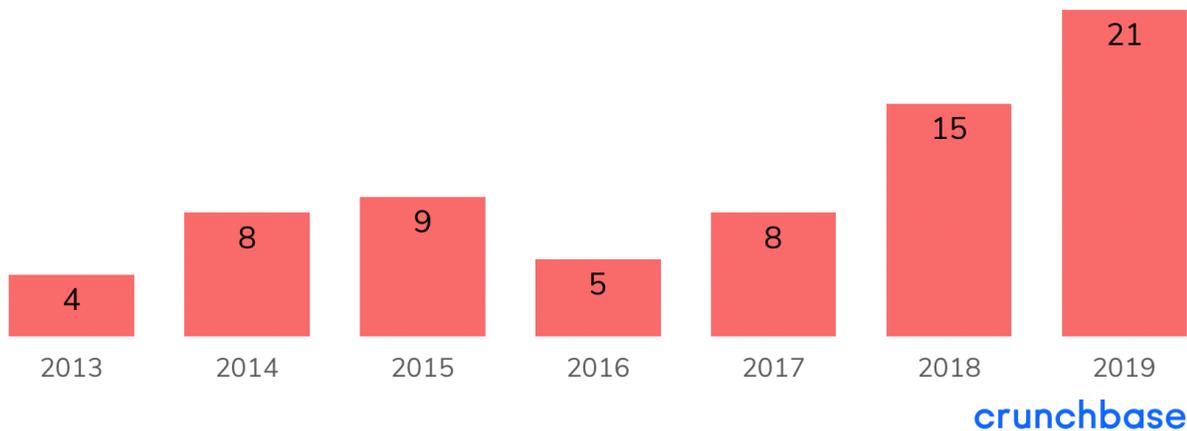


2019 unicorn companies

There were 21 new female-founded unicorns in 2019, up from 15 in 2018. Among the new unicorn companies are [Away](#), [Glossier](#), [Guild Education](#), [Rent the Runway](#) and [The RealReal](#). Collectively, those 21 unicorns raised close to \$3 billion in 2019.

Growing The Herd Of Women Founded Unicorns

Count of companies with at least one female founder by year of first equity round raised at a post money valuation of \$1B+



Female-only founded companies that raised rounds over \$100 million in 2019 include:

- [Guild Education](#) (\$157 million [Series D](#)), a learning platform based in Colorado
- [Luckin Coffee](#) (\$150 million [Series B](#)), a Chinese coffee brand that went public shortly after raising a Series B round
- [Northern Arc](#) (\$130 million [Venture Round](#)), a debt capital platform based in India
- [Kuaikan Manhua](#) (\$125 million [Corporate Round](#)), a Chinese digital comics platform
- [SpringWorks Therapeutics](#) (\$125 million [Series B](#)), a Connecticut-based bio-pharma company that went public in September
- [Rent the Runway](#) (\$125 million [Series F](#)), a subscription fashion website based in New York
- [Genera Energy](#) (\$118 million [Venture Round](#)), a biomass supply company based in Tennessee
- [Tala](#) (\$110 million [Series D](#)), a California-based mobile financial services company
- [Kronos Bio](#) (\$105 million [Series A](#)), a cancer research biotech company based in New York
- [Insitro](#) (\$100 million [Series A](#)), a machine learning biotech company based in California
- [Talaris](#) (\$100 million [Series A](#)), an organ transplant biotech company based in Massachusetts
- [Away](#) (\$100 million [Series D](#)), a modern luggage brand based in New York
- [Glossier](#) (\$100 million [Series D](#)), a direct-to-consumer beauty company based in New York

Methodology: Notes on the data

Our analysis was based on announced funding to companies with founders associated. We included private company fundings from seed through late-stage venture; excluding private equity rounds.

Crunchbase's dataset is constantly expanding, but there are gaps. A company may not have founders listed on its Crunchbase profile, or Crunchbase might not have a gender listed for founders attached to the profile. (Note: In addition to "male" and "female," Crunchbase has over two dozen other gender tags.) Based on an analysis of current data for this report, more than 90 percent of dollars raised in the last 10 years are associated with companies that have founders.

Crunchbase, like all databases of private-market transactions, has a documented pattern of reporting delays. It can sometimes take between weeks and months for some rounds to be announced publicly and subsequently get added to Crunchbase. This is especially the case for the most recent year as well as for seed and early-stage deals—often raised by companies before launching a product. As outside media coverage surfaces, information about the company's funding history becomes available. As data is added to Crunchbase over time, some of the numbers in this report may shift slightly.