

GIVING USA 2026

Your All Access Pass to Enhance
Your Fundraising Performance



Key Takeaways – Leading Opportunities from the 2025 Giving USA Report

Use the Giving USA Data as a Strategic Benchmark

Giving USA remains the sector's gold standard for measuring philanthropic trends.

- Turn the report into a mirror; let your context shape your reading.
- Treat the report as a benchmark against your own organization's performance.
- Use the data to set fundraising goals, track sector performance, monitor donor trends, and evaluate organizational effectiveness.
- Share insights broadly with executive leadership and boards to inform strategy and decision-making.
- Analyze where your organization is outperforming peers and identify areas requiring course correction.
- Context matters: geography, donor demographics, organizational size, and mission all shape fundraising performance differently.

Data tells part of the story. The real opportunity lies in understanding the economic, demographic, and sector-specific forces underneath the trends.

Great Wealth Transfer is a Major Opportunity

- Nearly 20% growth in bequest giving signals the early acceleration of one of the largest intergenerational wealth transfers in history.
- Organizations should strengthen planned giving strategies now.
- Expand promotion of sophisticated giving vehicles, including:
 - Bequests
 - Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)
 - Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs)
 - Trusts and charitable unitrusts
 - Insurance-based giving vehicles

Planned giving is shifting from optional to essential.

Donor Landscape is Increasingly Uneven

- Economic gains are concentrated at the top: wealthier donors continue growing stronger financially, while everyday donors face increasing pressure.
- Fundraising trends show a familiar pattern: dollars raised are increasing, but donor participation continues declining.
- Consumer sentiment reached historic lows in 2025 despite strong market performance.

Organizations must rethink broad-based donor engagement strategies.

Major Giving Requires Greater Sophistication

- Major gifts moving through foundations often remain invisible until later reporting cycles.
- Ultra-high-net-worth philanthropy increasingly operates through private foundations, family offices, and anonymous vehicles.

Treat foundations with the same relationship-building discipline as individual major donors.

View Donor Retention as a Long-Term Strategy

- Retention requires multi-year relationship building and intentional stewardship.
- Trust, consistency, and long-term engagement increasingly determine donor loyalty.

Fundraising is becoming more relational, less transactional.

Don't Overreact to Policy or Economic Volatility

- Tax policy changes, shifting government priorities, and economic uncertainty all influence philanthropy, but rarely in simple or immediate ways.
- While overall giving remains strong, continued pressure on everyday donors signals a more complex fundraising environment.
- The long-term effects of policy and economic shifts may take years to fully materialize; it's critical for organizations to focus on strategy, not short-term headlines.

Stay disciplined, avoid chasing uncertainty, and plan for long-term resilience.

Strong Cases for Support Separate Organizations from Competitors

- Organizations must clearly communicate:
 - What makes their programs unique
 - Scalable, high-impact initiatives
 - Bold ideas that inspire investment
 - Clear connections between donor contributions and measurable outcomes

Donors increasingly want to understand exactly what their gift accomplishes.

Giving Represents Trust, Not Just Financial Transactions

- During moments of crisis, philanthropy reflects confidence in institutions.
- The estimated \$860–970 million donated during the California wildfire response demonstrates that donors give when they trust organizations to act effectively.

Giving is increasingly an act of trust, not simply generosity.

Embrace a Leadership Mindset

In today's fundraising environment, organizations should strive to be:

Confident in strategy.
Competent in execution.
Bold in ambition.
Humble enough to listen and adapt.



**Giving
USA**

A public service initiative
of The Giving Institute

\$617.20 billion

In 2025, Americans gave \$617.20 billion to charity, growing 5.7% over 2024.
When adjusted for inflation, total giving grew by 3.0%.

Where did the generosity come from?

Contributions by source

By percentage of the total

64% \$394.20 billion

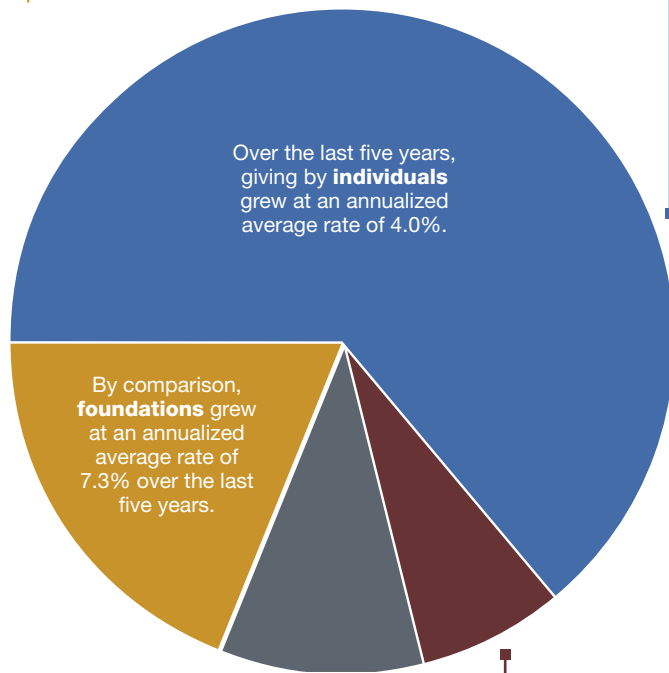
Giving by Individuals

↑ increased 4.1% from 2024

19% \$117.15 billion

Giving by Foundations

↑ increased 5.7% from 2024



10% \$62.19 billion

Giving by Bequest

↑ increased 19.7% from 2024

7% \$43.67 billion

Giving by Corporations

↑ increased 3.1% from 2024

Where did the charitable dollars go?

Contributions by destination

percentage of the total contributions* →

↑ **2.4%** \$151.58 billion
Religion 23%

↑ **5.3%** \$99.50 billion
Human Services 15%

↑ **11.7%** \$92.01 billion
Education 14%

↓ **16.2%** \$79.05 billion
Foundations 12%

↑ **11.6%** \$72.06 billion
Public-Society Benefit 11%

↑ **6.1%** \$61.43 billion
Health 9%

↑ **4.1%** \$33.02 billion
International Affairs 5%

↑ **7.5%** \$27.31 billion
Arts, Culture, and Humanities 4%

↑ **11.0%** \$24.57 billion
Environment/Animals 4%

↑ **0.7%** \$25.77 billion
Individuals 4%

↑ change in comparison to total raised in 2024

*All figures on this infographic are reported in current dollars unless otherwise noted. The inflation rate in 2025 stood at 2.6%, and results may differ when adjusted for inflation. Learn more in the chapters.

*Percentages for recipient categories are calculated using the sum of recipients, which can differ from total giving for any given year. This difference is called unallocated giving, and totaled -\$49.09 billion in 2025.



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