

Giving USA 2011: Highlights from the Annual Report on Philanthropy
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Last month, the Giving USA Foundation published its annual figures on philanthropic giving for the year 2010. This comprehensive report provides extensive data on giving patterns, who gave in 2010 and to whom they gave, and giving trends based on data comparisons.

While economic times continue to be difficult, charitable giving remains an essential part of American culture. With that dedication 2010 saw a modest increase in giving consistent with what has been modest economic recovery. American individuals, corporations and foundations donated an estimated \$290.89 billion to charitable causes last year. This is an increase of 3.8 percent (2.1 percent adjusted for inflation) from the revised estimate of \$280.30 billion for 2009.

While Giving USA's reports are rich with data, it can often be difficult to ascertain what that data actually means to those working in the fundraising trenches. The following highlights some of the most relevant points to help non-profits as they look toward the future:

- People give most to the charities they care about the most. Recruiting and retaining passionate Board members should help non-profits ensure that available resources stay with their organizations.
- The trend toward mega gifts had decreased in 2009, but reports show an increase so far this year. An upswing in the stock market may be providing high net worth individuals with increased assets to share.
- Charitable bequests rose an estimated 18.8 percent in 2010. Non-profits are advised to look at even the most modest of planned giving activities in an effort to capture bequest dollars. In difficult times one bequest can make all the difference in a non-profits financial well-being. For more established organizations bequests can provide endowment funds and the insurance of long-term stability.
- Family foundations dominated 2010 foundation giving. Of the \$41 billion in charitable dollars that foundations gave, family foundations awarded three-fifths of that total.
- Corporate giving rose an estimated 10.6 percent in 2010, but in a very targeted way. This sector continues to see a strong increase in cash and in-kind giving by pharmaceutical companies accounting for nearly half of corporate contributions.
- Giving to human service organizations remained steady in large part due to significant contributions to Haiti's earthquake relief. Hence, human service organizations continue to face a downward trend. This is leading organizations to explore operational collaborations to share administrative costs and better serve their communities in this new economic climate.
- Volunteerism remains strong with the greatest number of volunteers in the religious sector. Human services saw an increase in volunteerism. The greatest increase being women, especially those in the 45-54 age range who are married and employed fulltime.
- Combined charitable giving by individuals, bequests and family foundations amount to an estimated \$254.10 billion in 2010, or about 87 percent of the total. This reality underscores the necessity for organizations to build strong donor relationships that lead to major and planned giving.

Overall, a return to growth in total giving is a positive sign. Are the results mixed? Yes. Will a return to stronger charitable giving take several years? Yes. But despite all that our country and its myriad communities have faced over the last few years donors continue to want to make a difference. It's up to

each non-profit to show their donors how they can make a difference. Stay true to your fundraising basics by providing clear, mission-based messaging, letting donors know how their gifts impact the work that you do, and using stewardship strategies that keep donors passionate and engaged.

Giving USA is researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University and published by the Giving USA Foundation.