



Giving Statistics

Charitable giving continued its upward trend in 2017, as an estimated \$410.02 billion was given to charitable causes. For the third year in a row, total giving reached record levels. This increase and the overall size of charitable contributions is further testament to the integral role charities play in our society, a role which continues to grow.

How much do we give?

- Total giving to charitable organizations was \$410.02 billion in 2017 (2.1% of GDP). This is an increase of 5.2% in current dollars and 3.0% in inflation-adjusted dollars from 2016.
- Giving has increased in current dollars every year since 1977, with the exception of three years that saw declines: 1987, 2008 and 2009.
- The average year-to-year change in total giving between 1977 and 2017 was an increase of \$8.94 billion (in current dollars), making the current-dollar change in total giving between 2016 and 2017 much larger than the 40-year average.
- Prior to the 40-year period 1977–2017, total giving was consistently at or above 2.0% of GDP. It fell below 2.0% throughout most of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Total giving as a percentage of GDP rose to 2.0% and above through most of the 2000s, but then dropped to 1.9% in the years 2009 to 2011. Total giving as a percentage of GDP was 2.1% for four of the five years, 2013–2017.

Who is giving?

- As in previous years, the majority of that giving came from individuals. Specifically, individuals gave \$286.65 billion, accounting for 70% of all giving and representing a 3.0% increase over 2016.
- Giving by bequest increased by 2.3% to \$35.70 billion (9% of all donations).
- Foundations - which includes grants made by independent, community, and operating foundations - gave \$66.9 billion (16% of all donations). This represents a 6% increase over the prior year.
- Corporations grew by 8% to \$20.77 billion (5% of all donations).
- Historically, donations from individuals account for over two-thirds of all donations. If you add in gifts from bequests, then the category accounts for nearly 80% of all giving. In other words, the donating public, not big foundations or corporations, is responsible for the vast majority of annual donations.

Where do the donations go?

- Giving to Education charities was up 6.2% to \$58.9 billion (14% of all donations).
- Donations to Human Services charities were up 5.1% to \$50.06 billion (12% of all donations).
- Foundations saw an increase of 6% to \$45.89 billion (11% of all donations).
- Health charities experienced an increase of 15.5% to \$38.27 billion (9% of all donations).

- Public-Society Benefit charities saw an increase of 7.8% to \$29.59 billion (7% of all donations).
- Giving to International charities decreased by 4.4% to \$22.97 billion (6% of all donations).
- Arts, Culture and Humanities saw an increase of 8.7% to \$19.51 billion (5% of all donations).
- Charities that focus on the Environment / Animals saw an increase of 7.2% to \$11.83 billion (3% of all donations).
- Historically, Religious groups have received the largest share of charitable donations. This remained true in 2016. With the 2.9% increase in donations this year, 31% of all donations, or \$127.37 billion, went to Religious organizations. Much of these contributions can be attributed to people giving to their local place of worship.

All data is the property of *Giving USA 2018*, the Annual Report on Philanthropy.

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