CHARITABLE GIVING IN THE USA 2017

An overview of individual giving in the USA

CAF Charities Aid Foundation

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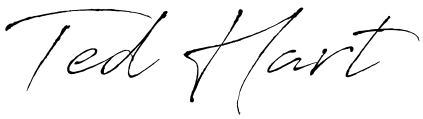
Foreword

I'm thrilled to be reminded of the American spirit of generosity. Especially worth noting is that over half (62%) of Americans engaged in charitable activities within the last year, an impressive statistic that we hope will only grow.

The United States of America is a country built on philanthropy, and charitable giving continues to play an integral role to our development as a nation.

This is evidenced by the fact that 58% of Americans gave not because of any personal benefit, but because they care about the cause, demonstrating the true altruism of the American people, a trend I'm sure is likely to continue.



Ted Hart ACFRE, CAP®
President and CEO
CAF America

About CAF America

CAF America is a global grantmaking organisation assisting corporations, foundations and individuals with their philanthropic strategies. With offices in Washington, D.C., San Francisco and Toronto we streamline the grantmaking process to eliminate risk and administrative burden, and help donors support great causes through strategic, effective and tax-advantaged international and domestic grants.

Working with colleagues at our head office in London, CAF America can offer The CAF American Donor Fund, a giving solution for individuals and companies that pay tax in both the USA and UK. The CAF American Donor Fund allows donors to achieve greater impact with their philanthropy by helping to claim the maximum reliefs available in both countries.

In the last 5 years alone, CAF America has granted more than $400 million in donor funds to more than 3,000 foreign charitable organisations in over 110 countries.

For more information please visit **www.cafamerica.org**

Preface

This Charitable Giving in the USA 2017 report is one of an international series, produced across the CAF Global Alliance, a world leading network of organisations working at the forefront of philanthropy. The series also includes reports covering Brazil, Canada, India, Russia, South Africa and the UK.

As this unique collection of country reports grows we will be able to look at trends in giving for the first time: how people of different ages and social groups give in different countries; the way they give; the rise of online or text giving; the importance of sponsorship and the different causes people support.

We hope this suite of reports will give us a greater understanding than ever before of the different ways in which people give and the lessons we can all learn from giving in different parts of the world.

Michael Mapstone
Director of International
CAF Global Alliance

About CAF

Charities Aid Foundation (CAF) is a leading international not-for-profit organisation, originating in the UK, that works to make giving more effective and charities more successful.

Spanning six continents, with services provided by local experts in nine countries, we help donors – including individuals, major donors and companies – to create the greatest impact with their giving. We do this by working globally to increase the flow of funds to the charity and non-profit sectors through the provision of philanthropy products and services, whilst providing fundraising solutions and support for charities internationally.

For more information please visit **www.cafonline.org**

Key Findings

Our analysis provides these key findings for individual giving in the USA:

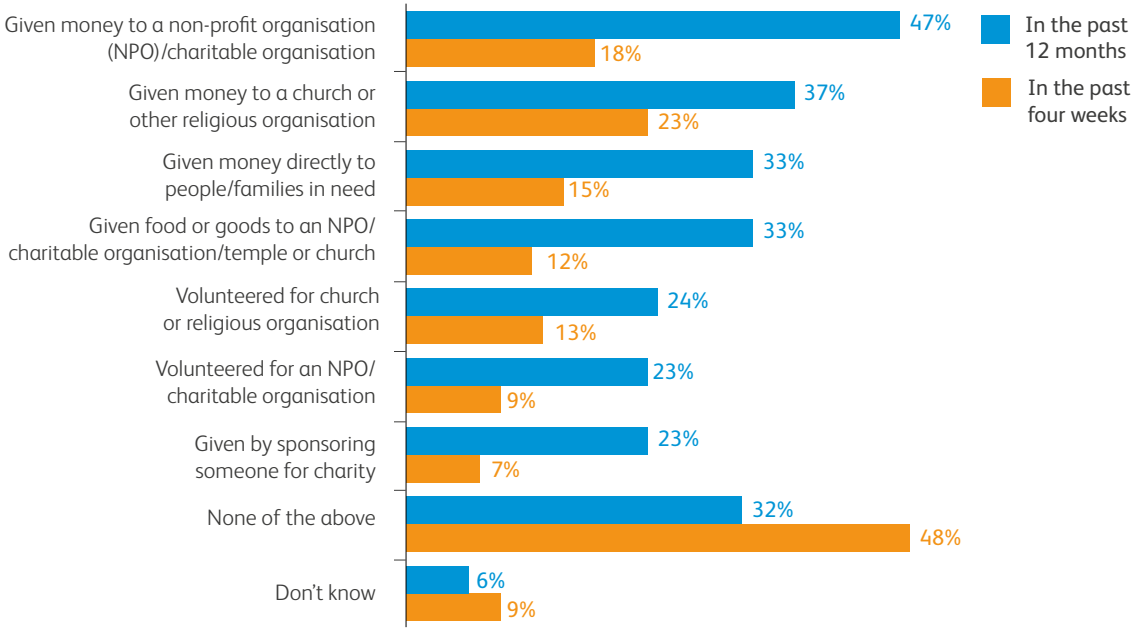
- More than half of Americans donated money in the past 12 months (55%) either by giving money to a charity, by giving to a church/religious organisation, or by sponsoring someone.
- American donors are most likely to give money because they care about the cause, and because they want to help those less fortunate than themselves.
- Religious organisations are the most popular cause for Americans to have donated to (37%).
- The median amount donated or sponsored in the last year is $100.
- Giving online with a credit/bank card is the most popular method of donation (29%).
- Nearly a third of Americans (31%) have volunteered in the last year, with religious organisations/churches the most popular cause (33%).
- Having more money themselves is the thing most likely to encourage Americans to donate more in the coming 12 months (47%).

Detailed Findings

1.0 Overall picture of how people get involved

All those interviewed were shown a list of seven activities and asked whether they had done any of these both in the last 12 months and in the last four weeks.

Figure 1: Which, if any, of the following have you done over the past 12 months/4 weeks?



Base: All adults aged 18+ (n=1,118)

At an overall level, just over three fifths (62%) of Americans report doing some form of charitable activity (i.e. donating, sponsoring, volunteering etc.) within the past 12 months, and 43% report doing the same within the last four weeks.

Those aged 55 and over are the most likely age group to have done any form of charitable activity in the last year (70%) and in the last four weeks (50%), as are those with family incomes of $80,000 or more (78%).

2.0 How people get involved – detail

2.1 Giving money

More than half (55%) of Americans have donated or sponsored someone in the past 12 months, and 35% have done this in the past four weeks.

MORE THAN HALF
gave money in the past 12 months

In the past 12 months nearly half of Americans (47%) have donated to an NPO/charity, more than a third (37%) have donated to a church or religious organisation, and nearly a quarter (23%) have sponsored someone.

Those aged 55+ were significantly more likely than any other age group to have donated to an NPO/charity (57% compared to 39% of 18 – 24 year olds), as were those with a family income of $80,000+ (69% compared to 39% of those with a family income of less than $40,000).

2.2 Volunteering

Nearly a third of Americans (31%) volunteered in the past 12 months, with 24% volunteering for a church or religious organisation and 23% volunteering for an NPO/charity. One in six (17%) had volunteered in the last four weeks; 13% for a religious organisation and 9% for an NPO/charity.

ALMOST ONE THIRD
of Americans volunteered in the past 12 months

Americans who volunteer are most likely to do so for religious organisations/churches (33%), helping the poor (22%), and supporting homeless people (16%). The causes they are least likely to support through volunteering include overseas aid and mental healthcare
(both 2%).

Men are more likely than women to volunteer for the preservation of cultural heritage (10% vs. 3%), supporting scientific research (7% vs. 1%), and for anti-corruption initiatives (5% vs 1%).

3.0 Typical amount given

Those surveyed were asked how much they had given either in the past 12 months or the past 4 weeks.

$100
was the
typical donation

Amongst those who gave money in the past 12 months (but not the past 4 weeks) the typical (median) amount given by Americans through donations and sponsorship was $100.

Amongst those who had made a donation or sponsored someone in the last four weeks, the typical (median) amount given was also $100, although those with lower incomes reported donating smaller amounts. The typical (median) amount donated by those with a family income of less than $40,000 was $50.

Whilst the typical (median) amount given is the same for men and women who had donated in the past four weeks, the average (mean) donation for men ($321) is slightly higher than for women ($227), indicating that men might be more likely to give a high value donation.

MEN

$321
mean donation
(men who had donated in the past 4 weeks)

WOMEN

$227
mean donation
(women who had donated in the past 4 weeks)

4.0 Which causes people give to

Supporting religious organisations/churches is the most popular cause in the USA, with 37% of American donors having given to this category. This is followed by helping the poor (32%) and supporting children, including orphans, seriously ill children and children with disabilities (27%).

Less popular causes in the United States are: preservation of cultural heritage, community development and urban environment, improving access to education, anti-corruption initiatives, and supporting scientific research with 3% of donors having donated to each of these.

Women who donate are more likely to have given to animal welfare than men who donate (22% vs. 10%).

Older Americans are more likely to support medical institutions including hospitals and hospice care 12% vs. 8% overall), while those aged 25-34 are more likely to support disabled people (24% vs. 15%).

Those with a family income of $80,000+ are more than twice as likely as those with an income of under $40,000 to say that they have supported schools, colleges and universities (11% vs. 5%) or improving access to education for vulnerable children and young people (7% vs. 2%).

Figure 2: Which of the following causes have you donated to/sponsored in the last 12 months/4 weeks?

Base: All donors (n=651)

5.0 How people give

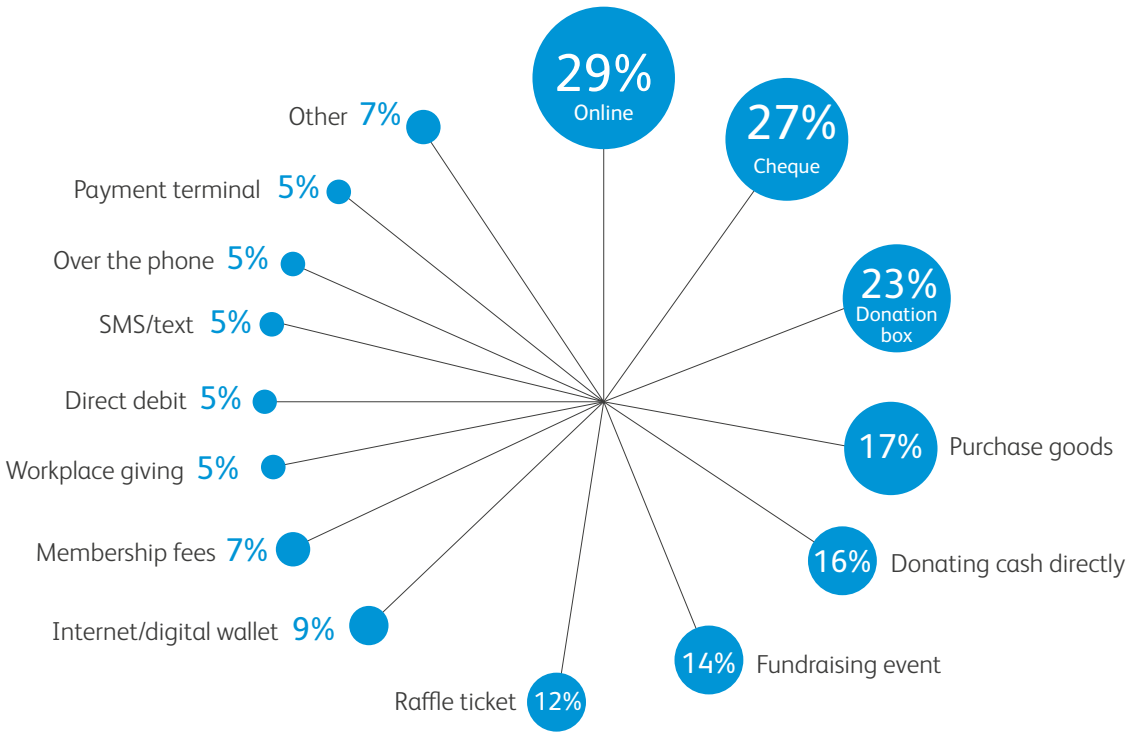
Donating online using a bank/credit card is the most popular method of donation for American donors, with three in ten giving in this way (29%). Other popular methods include cheques (27%) and using a donation box in a shop/supermarket or other public place (23%).

Giving via a payment terminal, by phone, by SMS, via direct debit and through workplace giving are the least common methods of donation (all 5%).

Men are more likely to have donated over the phone (7% vs. 3% of women), while women who donate are more likely to have given money through a fundraising event (17% vs. 11% of men).

Donating by cheque is more popular amongst older donors – 45% of those aged 55+ donated this way, compared to 5% of 18 – 24 year olds. Older donors are also more likely than the youngest age group to have made a donation by purchasing a raffle ticket (18% of those aged 55+ compared to 4% of 18 – 24 year olds).

Figure 3. In the past [12 months/4 weeks] have you given to a cause by any of these methods?



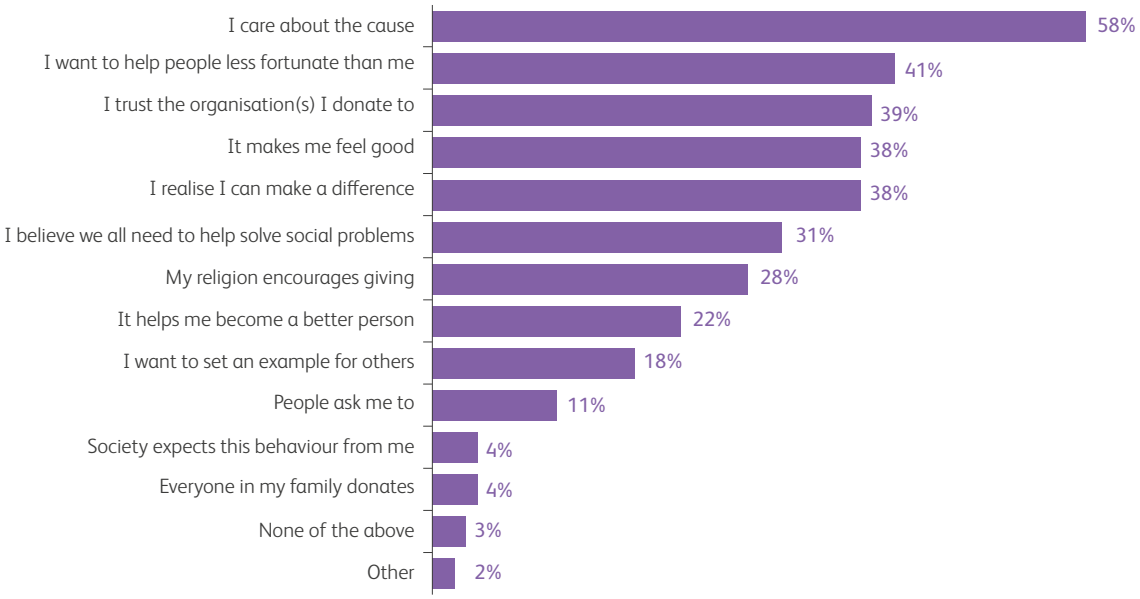
Base: All donors (n=651)

6.0 Why people give

Americans are most likely to donate money because they care about the cause (58%). This is followed by wanting to help those less fortunate (41%) and trusting the organisations they donate to (39%).

Caring about the cause is of particular importance to women who donate, of whom nearly two thirds (64%) cite this as their reason for giving, compared to just over half of men (53%).

Figure 4. Which of the following, if any, are reasons that you have given money in the last 12 months/4 weeks?



Base: All donors (n=651)

7.0 Encouraging future giving

Having more money themselves is the most likely thing to encourage Americans to donate more in the coming 12 months (47%), followed by knowing for sure how their money would be spent (35%) and being able to find a charity which works towards a specific cause they care about (18%).

Women are significantly more likely than men to say that having more money themselves would encourage them to donate more (50% vs. 43%) whilst knowing for sure how their money would be spent is of particular interest to the over 55s (44%).

Having better access to ways of making payments would encourage more giving amongst young Americans aged 18 – 24 years (15% vs. 6% overall).

Method

This report is based on data collected by YouGov on behalf of CAF.

In the United States, 1,118 interviews were completed online between 6th and 17th July 2017. This survey was conducted using YouGov's panel. Panellists are managed according to strict quality standards.

The sample is nationally representative and is weighted to known population data on demographics including age, gender, region, ethnicity and education level.

Differences are reported at the 95% confidence level (the level of confidence that the results are a true reflection of the whole population). The maximum margin of error (the amount of random sampling error) is calculated as ±3%.

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