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IUPUI

LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

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Giving USA: Total U.S. charitable giving remained strong in 2021, reaching \$484.85 billion

Thanks to strong year for the stock market and GDP, 2021 giving nearly kept pace with inflation following 2020's record year and outpouring of support for unprecedented events

CHICAGO [June 21, 2022] — *Giving USA 2022: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2021*, released today, reports that individuals, bequests, foundations and corporations gave an estimated \$484.85 billion to U.S. charities in 2021.

Total charitable giving in 2021 grew 4.0% over the revised total of \$466.23 billion contributed in 2020. However, while giving increased in current dollars, it remained flat (-0.7%) after adjusting for inflation. *(Please see below for a more detailed breakdown of the numbers for each philanthropic source and sector.)*

Giving USA, the longest-running and most comprehensive report on the sources and uses of charitable giving in America, is published by [Giving USA Foundation](#), a public service initiative of The Giving Institute. It is researched and written by the [Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI](#).

“The story of charitable giving in 2021 is closely tied to the events of 2020, a historic year that included a global pandemic, economic crisis and recovery, efforts to advance racial justice, and an unprecedented philanthropic response. In 2021, Americans continued giving more generously than before the pandemic. However, the growth in giving did not keep pace with inflation, causing challenges for many nonprofits,” said Laura MacDonald, CFRE, chair of Giving USA Foundation and Principal and Founder of Benefactor Group. “In 2021, many donors returned to their favored causes, with many of the sectors that struggled in 2020 making a recovery in 2021.”

The stock market and GDP recovered to pre-pandemic levels early in 2021 and continued to grow throughout the year. The S&P 500 grew 26.9% (21.2% adjusted for inflation) and the GDP grew 10.1% (5.1% adjusted for inflation), creating strong conditions for charitable giving.

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Bolstered by strong market conditions, very large gifts by some of the wealthiest Americans reached a total of nearly \$15 billion in 2021. These types of megagifts (defined in *Giving USA 2022* as gifts of \$450 million or more) represent about 5% of all individual giving in 2021, and played an important role in lifting individual giving.

“The environment for giving is evolving in multiple ways. Robust economic growth translated to strong performance by institutional forms of philanthropy such as foundations and corporations. Yet these economic indicators may differ from what most people experience in daily life. The broader effects of the pandemic may have shifted individual jobs, incomes, lifestyles and family and financial priorities, potentially affecting their giving habits,” said Amir Pasic, Ph.D., the Eugene R. Tempel Dean of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. “The novel circumstances of the current giving landscape underscore the need for this report and other high-quality research, which help us understand how widespread these changes are and how they are affecting philanthropy.”

“In 2021, the U.S. had a strong year economically and also experienced inflationary pressures not seen in several decades. While the stock market performed well in 2021, there were some economic factors that may have affected nonprofits’ operations, such as labor shortages, supply chain interruptions and ongoing high demand for services,” said Una Osili, Ph.D., associate dean for research and international programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. “The growth that we see for the majority of the subsectors in 2021 is a reminder of the resilience and innovation that help to drive the philanthropic sector.”

Charitable giving grew from three of the four sources of giving in 2021. Giving grew or stayed flat to eight of the nine major types of charitable organizations. Despite uneven growth patterns, all four sources and seven of the nine recipient categories of giving experienced strong two-year growth, even when adjusting for inflation.

Highlights and Numbers for 2021 Charitable Giving by Source:

↑ **Giving by individuals** totaled an estimated \$326.87 billion, rising 4.9% (staying flat at 0.2%, adjusted for inflation).¹ Giving by individuals comprised less than 70% of total giving for the fourth time on record, and for the fourth consecutive year. It also achieved its second highest total dollar amount to date, adjusted for inflation.

↑ **Giving by foundations** grew 3.4%, to an estimated \$90.88 billion (-1.2%, adjusted for inflation). Giving by foundations, which has grown in 10 of the last 11 years, represented 19% of total giving in 2021, its largest share on record. This year’s giving is the second-highest dollar amount on record when adjusted for inflation. The estimate for giving by foundations was created by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy using data from Candid.

↓ **Giving by bequest** totaled an estimated \$46.01 billion, a decline of 7.3% (-11.4%, adjusted for inflation). Bequests are known to be particularly volatile from year to year, and it is likely that several extraordinarily large bequests in 2020 resulted in a comparative decline in 2021. However, even with the decline, bequest giving reached its second-highest level of giving when adjusting for inflation.

↑ **Giving by corporations** is estimated to have increased by 23.8%, totaling \$21.08 billion (18.3%, adjusted for inflation). Corporate giving includes cash and in-kind contributions made through corporate giving programs, as well as grants and gifts made by corporate foundations. A strong GDP and a good

year for corporate pre-tax profits (37.4% growth, 31.2% when adjusted for inflation) account for the strong growth in giving, although the total represents just 0.7% of corporate pre-tax profits.

“The research results show donors maintained their commitment to generosity with two-year growth in individual giving of 4.7 percent, adjusted for inflation,” said Peter Fissinger, chair of The Giving Institute, and Senior Advisor for Campbell & Company. “While Giving USA measures one type of generosity—charitable contributions—there are also signs that Americans helped their neighbors in myriad ways in 2021 that reflect the breadth and depth of their generosity.”

As the giving landscape continues to change, The Giving Institute, Giving USA Foundation and the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy are committed to providing new information on the most pressing topics in philanthropy. This year, the *Giving USA* report features a new chapter dedicated to understanding giving patterns of donor-advised funds and their donors, featuring new, original research that has not been published anywhere else.

“Several of the subsectors that struggled in 2020, such as giving to health and giving to arts, experienced a recovery in 2021,” said Josh Birkholz, vice-chair of Giving USA Foundation and CEO of BWF. “Conversely, several subsectors that experienced strong growth in 2020, such as education and human services, did not fare as well in 2021. On the bright side, two-year growth for each of these subsectors was over 5%, even when adjusting for inflation.”

Highlights and Numbers for 2021 Charitable Giving to Recipients:

↑ **Giving to religion** grew by 5.4% with an estimated \$135.78 billion in contributions (flat at 0.7% adjusted for inflation).

↓ **Giving to education** is estimated to have declined 2.8% to \$70.79 billion (-7.2% adjusted for inflation). Education giving includes contributions to K-12 schools, higher education and libraries.

↑ **Giving to human services** increased by an estimated 2.2% totaling \$65.33 billion (-2.4%, adjusted for inflation).

↑ **Giving to foundations** is estimated to have increased by 9.3%, to \$64.26 billion (4.4%, adjusted for inflation).

↑ **Giving to public-society benefit organizations** increased an estimated 23.5% to \$55.85 billion (17.9% adjusted for inflation). This category includes a wide range of charitable organizations, including national donor-advised funds, United Ways and civil rights organizations.

↑ **Giving to health** is estimated to have grown by 7.7% to \$40.58 billion (2.9%, adjusted for inflation).

↑ **Giving to arts, culture, and humanities** is estimated to have increased 27.5% to \$23.50 billion (21.8%, adjusted for inflation).

= **Giving to international affairs** is estimated to be \$27.44 billion, remaining flat at 0.0% growth (-4.5%, adjusted for inflation).

↑ **Giving to environmental and animal organizations** is estimated to have increased 11.0% to \$16.32 billion. Adjusted for inflation, donations to the environment/animals subsector increased 6.1%.

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“Giving to public-society benefit organizations has grown in 11 of the last 12 years and is one of the few sectors that grew in both 2020 and 2021,” said Patrick M. Rooney, Ph.D., executive associate dean for academic programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. “Growth in this subsector aligns with increased support for legal rights and voting nonprofits, but it is most strongly driven by giving to national donor-advised funds (DAFs). Some of America’s wealthiest individuals have announced major gifts to national DAFs, and the growth in the stock market more generally in the past two years has helped to bolster this subsector.”

Giving to individuals is estimated to have grown 1.8%, to \$11.74 billion (-2.7%, adjusted for inflation). The bulk of these donations are in-kind gifts of medications to patients in need, made through the patient assistance programs of pharmaceutical companies’ operating foundations.

Unallocated giving was negative \$26.75 billion in 2021. This amount can be considered the difference between giving by source and use in a particular year. This amount includes the difference between itemized deductions by individuals (and households) carried over from previous years. The tax year in which a gift is claimed by the donor (carried over) and the year when the recipient organization reports it as revenue (the year in which it is received) may be different.

NOTES TO EDITORS

Members of the media can request 40-year data tables that show sources of contributions and allocation of gifts by type of recipient category by year, both in current and inflation-adjusted dollars. Data also are available showing total giving as a percentage of GDP, individual giving as a percentage of disposable income and corporate giving as a percentage of corporate pre-tax profits.

The requested citation for *Giving USA* is *Giving USA 2022: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2021*, a publication of Giving USA Foundation, 2022, researched and written by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. Available online at www.givingusa.org.

How to Obtain *Giving USA 2022*

Giving USA 2022: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2021 is available for download at www.givingusa.org.

Through [Giving USA 2022](http://www.givingusa.org), purchasers receive an annual subscription including:

- The 2022 Comprehensive Presentation PowerPoint with researchers' notes
- Access to the archive of all Giving USA’s previous reports
- Access to all of Giving USA's previous Special Reports
- Free digital copies of upcoming Giving USA Special Reports
- Complimentary copy of the subscription year Annual Update on State Laws
- Exclusive The Giving Institute and Giving USA webinars for subscribers

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About Giving USA Foundation™

Now more than ever, it is critical to understand the ever-evolving trends shaping philanthropy and the nonprofit sector. Founded to advance research, education and public understanding of charitable giving, The Giving USA Foundation is the preeminent resource for scholarly research and special reports. Its work is driven by a passion for unbiased, accurate and relevant data to help build understanding of philanthropic trends and broaden public awareness and understanding of the role of generosity in society. The Foundation's seminal publication, *Giving USA*, the longest running, most comprehensive report on philanthropy in America, is issued annually, and shorter *Special Reports* are released periodically, providing in-depth studies on specific topics.

The Giving USA Foundation was established in 1985 by The Giving Institute. Today, the Giving Institute continues to provide financial support, expertise, and volunteer leadership to the Foundation and works in partnership with it to advance the field of generosity and to promote community excellence, and diversity and inclusion in the field.

About *Giving USA*

For more than 65 years, *Giving USA: The Annual Report on Philanthropy in America*, has provided comprehensive charitable giving data that are relied on by donors, fundraisers and nonprofit leaders. The research in this annual report estimates all giving to charitable organizations across the United States. *Giving USA* is a public outreach initiative of Giving USA Foundation and is researched and written by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI. Giving USA Foundation, established in 1985 by The Giving Institute, endeavors to advance philanthropy through research and education. Explore *Giving USA* products and resources, at www.givingusa.org.

About The Giving Institute

The Giving Institute, the parent organization of Giving USA Foundation, consists of member organizations that have embraced and embodied the core values of ethics, excellence and leadership in advancing philanthropy. Serving clients of every size and purpose, from local institutions to international organizations, The Giving Institute member organizations embrace the highest ethical standards and maintain a strict code of fair practices. For information on selecting fundraising counsel, visit www.givinginstitute.org.

About the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI is dedicated to improving philanthropy to improve the world by training and empowering students and professionals to be innovators and leaders who create positive and lasting change. The school offers a comprehensive approach to philanthropy through its [undergraduate](#), [graduate](#), [certificate](#) and professional development programs, its research and international programs and through The Fund Raising School, Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, the Mays Family Institute on Diverse Philanthropy and the Women's Philanthropy Institute. For more information, visit philanthropy.iupui.edu.

Giving USA Methodology

Giving USA estimates primarily rely on econometric methods developed by leading researchers in philanthropy and the nonprofit sector and are reviewed and approved by members of the *Giving USA* External Review Panel. Members of the External Review Panel include research directors from national nonprofit organizations, as well as scholars from such disciplines as economics and public affairs, all of whom are involved in studying philanthropy and the nonprofit sector.

The Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy prepares all of the estimates in *Giving USA* for Giving USA Foundation. *Giving USA* develops estimates for giving by each type of donor (sources) and for recipient organizations categorized by subsectors (uses). Most of *Giving USA*'s annual estimates are based on econometric analyses and tabulations of tax data, economic indicators and demographics. Data for giving by foundations come from Candid (formerly the Foundation Center).

Following the same approach used by leading public and private institutions that develop economic statistics, *Giving USA* researchers update data found within *Giving USA* each year. This is because current *Giving USA* estimates are developed before final tax data, some economic indicators and some demographic data are available. The estimates are revised and updated as final versions of these data become available. Final estimates are usually developed two or three years after their initial release.

For more specific details on *Giving USA*'s methodology, please refer to the "Brief summary of methods" section within *Giving USA 2022* or contact the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at adrldavi@iupui.edu

ⁱ Giving calculations include mega-gifts. See more about how *Giving USA* calculates charitable giving by sources and uses in the "Brief summary of methods used" section of this report.