

Most Donors Make Small Charitable Gifts

The average donor household in the United States gives around \$2,000 a year, with small donations making up the bulk of charitable gifts, according to a report prepared by the Center on Philanthropy for Indiana University.

The study was based on an analysis of the results of a survey sponsored by American Express, in which 1,428 U.S. households were questioned about their charitable giving habits. The survey found that 65% of households had donated to charity over the past year, and around one in ten of this group donated online. Results also showed that some two-thirds of charitable donations amounted to \$100 or less, and the median charitable donation was \$50. When gifts to religious organizations were excluded, the survey the average secular gift was found to be \$138.

The survey found no significant difference between the amounts donated online and offline. When the respondents who had made online donations asked about their motivations for online giving, 64% cited convenience, while 20% offered reasons related to the charity's own online presence, including receiving a request with a link to a site, and the ability to find the site easily. When those respondents who had not given online were asked why they had not done so, the leading reasons cited included not having a computer, not being asked, and being unable to find an online site for the charity they wanted to support.

The survey also found that 24% of charitable giving occurs during the period between Thanksgiving and the New Year. The most frequent named reasons for giving more during the holiday season were the emotion or spirit of the season, followed by an appeal made by a charity.

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