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Giving to Public-Society Benefit

- Giving to public-society benefit organizations amounted to 9 percent of total giving in 2022.¹
- Contributions to the public-society benefit subsector decreased 8.4 percent to \$46.86 billion in 2022. Adjusted for inflation, giving to public-society benefit organizations decreased 15.2 percent.
- The total amount contributed to the public-society benefit subsector in 2022 reached its third highest inflation-adjusted value ever.

Practitioner Highlights²

- Charitable giving to public-society benefit saw the first drop in giving in over a decade. However, giving to this sector has proven strong, with the five-year annualized average rate of growth nearly double the growth rate of total giving.
- Organizations that responded quickly to create or promote solutions to pivotal and urgent issues saw strong fundraising results. These were nonprofits that were already working on these issues, had a trusted brand, and clear goals that donors could invest in. Donors also found ways to support 501(c)(4) organizations, advocacy, and legislative reform.
- Practitioners must continue to understand the motivations and factors influencing donors. Nonprofits in this sector must also educate their donors on why issues matter and how a gift will affect real societal change. Many donors want to see groups and organizations they support stand for issues important to the donor and their values. Build a cadence of stewardship and updates so donors are able to see that their support is making a difference among recipient issues and communities.

The information provided in this chapter derives from a number of sources, including publicly available reports, news stories, and websites from the most recent year. This chapter is meant to provide context for the giving trends reported in this edition of *Giving USA* and to illustrate some of the practical implications of the data. It is not intended to be a comprehensive survey of the subsector.



Results for giving to public-society benefit in 2022

This section of the chapter discusses the results for charitable giving in 2022 based on the most recent *Giving USA* data. Where applicable, we also include results from other studies in the field. The goal of this section is to explain whether giving increased or decreased in this area in the previous calendar year, and to identify any large-scale patterns that may help to explain the variance in giving year-over-year.

In 2022, giving to the public-society benefit subsector declined by 8.4 percent to \$46.86 billion.³ When adjusted for inflation, giving to the subsector declined by 15.2 percent. The two-year growth rate from 2020 to 2022 came out positive at 7.2 percent. However, when adjusted for inflation, giving to this sector declined 5.1 percent from 2020 to 2022.

Million-dollar gifts to public affairs organizations declined in 2022

The *Chronicle of Philanthropy* records publicly announced gifts and pledges of \$1 million each year to public affairs organizations.⁴ In 2022, public affairs organizations received seven million-dollar gifts that totaled

\$169 million. By comparison, public affairs organizations received 14 gifts totaling over \$566 million in 2021. The stark difference was largely due to MacKenzie Scott, who gave 11 gifts in 2021 in this sector and only two in 2022. The two largest gifts in the list were \$100 million from Brian Chesky to the Obama Foundation to create a scholarship for students interested in public service, followed by a \$25 million gift from Adrienne Arsht to endow the Adrienne Arsht Latin America Center.

Landscape for giving to public-society benefit in 2022

Research has shown that the economic, social, and political landscape for giving can have an impact on giving.⁵ This section investigates some of the key forces and events from the previous year and presents findings from relevant studies that help to establish the landscape for giving in this area.

Legal rights organizations received influx of donations in the wake of *Dobbs v. Jackson*

Donations to both pro-life and pro-choice organizations saw increased giving after the leak of the U.S. Supreme Court's draft opinion.⁶ The leak from the Supreme Court and subsequent media coverage created urgency about the potential decision on both sides of the issue. Even before the ruling, nonprofit organizations supporting abortion rights saw an increase in donations, volunteers, and influencers. NARAL Pro-Choice America reported a 1,400 percent spike in donations following the decision, marking the most funds the organization had ever received in one day.⁷ Legal rights organizations that focus on protecting access to abortion experienced growth in annual contributions, interest from new donors, and activism and financial contributions from a younger demographic.

Among individual donors to legal rights organizations, Sheryl Sandberg made one of the largest gifts, donating \$3 million to the ACLU to support legislative efforts to protect abortion rights.⁸

Public-society benefit organizations activated to support Ukraine

On February 24, 2022, Russian forces attacked several cities in Ukraine, igniting a war and a large-scale humanitarian crisis that brought the number of people in need of humanitarian aid to 18 million.⁹ According to the United Nations

Office for the Coordination of Human Affairs (UN OCHA), close to one third of Ukraine's population has been displaced.¹⁰ In addition to the substantial government response, there have been a range of philanthropic responses by individuals. This section includes information about those approaches. For example, one of the public-society benefit organizations included Jane and Stuart Weitzman's \$1 million gift to UJA-JCC Greenwich to assist in the evacuation and support of Ukrainian refugees.¹¹

The following sections outline several public-society benefit organizations that received funds.

Jewish Federations rallied to support Ukraine

Various political, economic, and social factors impacted religious giving in 2022. According to EJewishPhilanthropy.com, the war in Ukraine made the largest impact on Jewish philanthropy in 2022, growing into a long-term philanthropic focus, with refugee provision a key priority.¹² Jewish Federations allocated over \$60 million to support Ukraine in the first three months of 2022 as a result, with the Jewish Federation of North America (JFNA) raising \$24.5 million.¹³ New York-based Genesis Philanthropy Group offered \$10 million in emergency assistance, while other Jewish nonprofits (e.g., Masbia, Soup Kitchen Network) reallocated funding and programmatic priorities to assist arriving refugees.¹⁴ By the end of 2022, Jewish Federations had donated

\$85 million to support Ukraine.¹⁵

The effort also inspired social fundraising campaigns in which Instagram users like Jordan Silverman Raff collectively raised \$2,300 dollars from her followers.¹⁶ In addition, Lost Tribe inspired their 26,000 followers in a unique fundraising campaign, Tzedakah-Thon, specifically targeting Jewish youth aged 12–18, to engage philanthropically in support of the Jewish National Fund.¹⁷

United Way raised funds in support of Ukraine

United for Ukraine Fund raised \$4.2 million in six months to support Ukraine with help from existing corporate funders and community agency partners including John Deere, Red Roof Inn, Rockwell Automation, and the Harley Davidson Foundation.¹⁸ The campaign helped reach 131,249 refugees, and brought together United Way organizations based in Hungary, Romania, Poland, Germany, the Netherlands, and Spain—all countries that received an influx of Ukrainian refugees.

Funder groups invest in gun control advocacy

A recent analysis of gun control advocacy groups found that donors gave around \$153 million to 501(c)(3) organizations and about \$149 million to 501(c)(4) organizations, to such groups from 2018 to 2020.¹⁹

The analysis from Capital Research Center is based on Form 990 data of 50 organizations working on gun control (which included 501(c)(3)s, 501(c)(4)s, and 527 PACs) and covers fiscal years that ended in 2019 and 2020.

The analysis further noted that philanthropic dollars for gun control were dominated by five groups. After excluding their affiliated PACs, these five groups received over 83 percent of the funds raised by 501(c)(3) gun control groups and over 96 percent of the total money raised by 501(c)(4) groups included in this study. Here is a look at the top three gun control advocacy groups and their performance in 2019–2020:

- Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, the 501(c)(3) arm of Everytown, raised around \$61.4 million. By comparison, the 501(c)(4) Everytown for Gun Safety Action Fund raised \$105.2 million.
- The 501(c)(3) Giffords Law Center to Prevent Gun Violence brought in \$17.9 million, while the 501(c)(4) Giffords raised \$13.6 million.
- Brady Center to Prevent Gun Violence reported revenues of \$16.4 million, while the 501(c)(4) Brady Campaign to Prevent Gun Violence reported \$6.3 million in revenues.

Institutional grantmaking for gun violence-related issues sees rise

According to data from Candid, grants for gun violence-related issues reached \$83 million in 2019, a large amount relative to the \$18.9 million reported in 2013.²⁰ The top recipients for both number of grants and total grant amounts included Brady, the Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund, Chicago CRED (Create Real Economic Destiny), and Heartland Alliance. Sandy Hook Promise was one of the top recipients for number of grants. The top funders included the Keneda Fund, the Joyce Foundation, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, among others.

In early 2022, \$18 million in grants went to the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI), the Community Based Public Safety Collective, Cities United, and the National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform (NICJR) to develop an intervention ecosystem to combat community violence. The grantees will collaborate on cost assessments and detailed analytical studies, starting in four cities: Indianapolis, Newark, NJ, Baton Rouge, LA, and Baltimore. The goal is to create strategies to reduce gun violence by 20 percent and support their implementation over three years in 12 cities.

Buffalo shooting motivates giving to groups addressing white supremacy

On May 14, 2022, a gunman opened

fire at Tops Friendly Markets, a supermarket in a predominantly Black Kingsley neighborhood of Buffalo, New York.²¹ The gunman killed ten people, all Black, and shot three others before being detained by police.²²

According to reports, the shooting was racially motivated. The Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Foundation made several gifts to address anti-Black bias, including grants of \$50,000 each to the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League.²³

Giving in response to antisemitism

An audit by the Anti-Defamation League found that antisemitic attacks reached an all-time high in 2021, and 2022 continued on that trajectory with a series of public figures making antisemitic statements throughout the year.²⁴ In response to these events, the Jewish Federation of North America launched a \$126 million campaign to support the Secure Community Network, with \$36 million of this funding to be directed to local Jewish Federations to build and sustain security in their local communities.

Voting rights continue to be a major area of focus for funders

According to the Brennan Center for Justice, 23 laws were passed in 2022 that restrict voting or interfere in elections, and 23 laws were passed to expand voting access, indicating

that voting rights continue to be an important issue.²⁵

Among the biggest gifts to voting rights organizations was the Evelyn & Walter Haas Jr. Fund's \$475,000 gift to the Center for Empowered Politics Education to support movement-building and a small-donor campaign finance system.²⁶ The Katz Amsterdam Foundation & Charitable Trust also made significant donations in this area, including \$200,000 grants each to the Arizona Center for Empowerment, Black Voters Matter, Fair Fight Action, the New Georgia Project, Pro Georgia, and North Carolina Asian Americans Together.²⁷ In addition, Public Wise, a voting rights nonprofit, granted \$200,000 each to Arizona Center for Empowerment, Black Men Vote, Poder Latinx, and North Carolina Black Alliance, all organizations focused on increasing voter engagement for marginalized communities.²⁸

Trials for the January 6 U.S. Capitol attacks spark funding and concern

Political advisor Steve Bannon, Senator J.D. Vance, and political commentator Dinesh D'Souza all made donations to the Patriot Freedom Fund, which was founded to support individuals who are on trial for their role in the attacks on the U.S. Capitol on January 6, 2021.²⁹ The fund had received a total of \$860,000 as of December 2022.

On the other side of the aisle, Public Wise released the Insurrection Index in 2022, a database that was developed to provide the public with

information about participants in the January 6 insurrection, particularly about participants who hold or seek public office.³⁰ A representative from the organization acknowledged that the index was created in response to concerns that elected officials who supported the insurrection pose a future threat to democracy.

Giving to transgender rights organizations remained strong in 2022

Anti-LGBTQIA+ legislation reached record numbers in 2022, inspiring increased giving to relatively new nonprofits fighting for transgender rights.³¹ Transgender Advocates Knowledgeable Empowering (TAKE), based in Alabama and focusing especially on trans people of color, reported that its budget increased twofold between 2021 and 2022.³² The funds were raised partially in response to newly-passed legislation in Alabama limiting gender-affirming health care. Similarly, Intransitive, an Arkansas nonprofit serving trans individuals, saw a spike in funding in both 2021 and 2022 in response to the state legislature passing legislation to increase restrictions on gender-affirming health care for youth.

Good to Know!³³

Driven by a desire to drive social and political impact, donors again invested in the causes they believed represented their core values. From Supreme Court decisions to voting rights issues, gun violence to gender identity, donors spoke with their gifts to motivate both social change and legislative action. The key to success for your nonprofit will be to educate and motivate your donors through:

- Regular and meaningful outreach, including individualized conversations to best understand their stance and motivations.
- Positioning your organization as a thought leader in your sector and community; invite experts, seek connections, and advocate meaningfully for those you serve.
- Not feeling the need to create special programs or funds to try to “catch” contributions.
- Being clear in how you are playing a part in working toward solutions. Consider your unique advantage or other ways, such as partnerships, to leverage donors’ philanthropy for greater results.

Many paths to generosity

This section of the chapter identifies the many paths to generosity in this area by highlighting innovative giving campaigns, different giving vehicles, and new approaches to philanthropy. The goal of this section is to provide readers with practical information about how successful fundraising is happening in the field.

***Dobbs v. Jackson* inspires wide range of responses**

In addition to giving to nonprofits, Americans responded to *Dobbs v. Jackson* in a number of other ways. Protests erupted across the United States in the wake of the *Dobbs* decision, with rallies taking place at capitol buildings and courthouses specifically throughout the U.S., including Los Angeles, New York, Indianapolis, Tallahassee, FL, Philadelphia, and in Washington, DC.³⁴ According to one estimate, the protests at the White House included 10,000 individuals from all over the U.S.³⁵ In addition, ActBlue, a Democratic fundraising platform, reported that it had raised \$12 million in 24 hours

after the *Dobbs v. Jackson* decision first leaked.³⁶ While neither protests nor political giving are formally counted in *Giving USA*, these responses do serve as a reminder of the many ways that Americans practice civil engagement.

Report finds reproductive justice organizations taking an active role in the legal system

The collective Funders for Birth Justice and Equity released the report, *A Call to Funders: Tactics in Law, Policy and Advocacy for Reproductive and Birth Justice*, which both made recommendations for funders and showed examples of how organizations were doing work around reproductive justice and equity.³⁷

One of those organizations, If/When/How (IWH), has been influential in crafting and guiding legislation.³⁸ IWH, along with California Latinas for Reproductive Justice (E70) and Black Women for Wellness (E01), assisted in writing language for California Assembly Bill 2223, which prevents the state from criminalizing pregnancy loss and abortions and interfering with reproductive rights. This bill was passed on August 29, 2022, and signed by the California governor on September 27.³⁹ If/When/How was also part of a coalition that was asked to work on the language for Proposal 3 in Michigan known as the Right to Reproductive Freedom Initiative. This proposal went on the Michigan ballot on November 8, 2022, and successfully passed with a majority vote of 56.7 percent.⁴⁰ Prop 3 adds the right to

reproductive freedom to Michigan's constitution including decision-making during and after pregnancy and preventing the criminalization of any pregnant person exercising this right.⁴¹ In both examples, IWH was influential in securing wording that would include all phases and decisions in pregnancy for all people.

National Black Women's Justice Initiative builds donor database

A research and policy nonprofit organization, the National Black Women's Justice Institute (NBWJI) is building an individual donor program, followed by an outpouring of \$100,000 in 2020.⁴² These were all small-gift contributions that came from GoFundMe or donors who found the group through internet searches. The organization established a virtual events program—a book club and discussion—to retain new donors, engage them more with the organization's work, and garner long-term support. The organization hosted only one event in 2020, but grew with 10 events in 2021 and then 12 events scheduled in 2022.

The NBWJI focuses on research, education, and engagement with the public to tackle the criminalization of Black women and girls through community-led solutions. In 2022, the Institute surveyed over 170 people “to examine how ‘everyday’ encounters with police inflict violence and harm on Black women, trans, and gender

nonconforming people,” aiming to bring groups typically left on the margins of policing research into the conversation.⁴³

Online giving to public-society benefit organizations fell

According to the *Benchmarks 2023* report by M+R, online giving to a sample of rights organizations declined by 6 percent from 2021 to 2022.⁴⁴ The report noted that online revenue for all organizations in the sample fell by 4 percent. Rights organizations saw a 7 percent increase in online revenue from monthly donors. By comparison, all organizations in the sample saw an increase of 11 percent in online revenue from monthly donors. Monthly giving as a percentage of online revenue for rights organizations reached 41 percent in 2022, outpacing giving as a percentage of online revenue for all organizations in the sample, which reached 28 percent in 2022.

Trends in giving to public-society benefit over time

This section includes information about this area of giving over time. Looking at giving in this area over time can provide additional insight

into the previous year’s results, as well as provide the foundation for understanding how giving in this area may continue to develop in the future. Trends in giving over time are particularly important to understand given the tumultuous past few years in the wake of the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, economic uncertainty, and social movements for racial justice in 2020. The impact of these major events continues to develop over time. This section brings together *Giving USA* data that shows trends over five and ten years, as well as studies from around the field that measure giving and show how trends are developing over multiple years.

According to *Giving USA* data, contributions to public-society benefit organizations fell for the first time in 2022 after maintaining growth in the past 12 onsecutive years. Nevertheless, giving to public-society benefit organizations experienced an annualized average growth rate of 6.4 percent during the last five-year period.⁴⁵ Giving to the public-society benefit subsector exceeded the five-year annualized average rate of growth in total giving (3.3 percent).⁴⁶

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Good to Know! section and Practitioner Highlights written by *Giving USA* Editorial Review Board members Victoria Dietz, Barbara O'Reilly, and Deb Taft.

Endnotes

- 1 All data in this section are reported as estimates, which are subject to revision. These estimates include adjustments made for mega-gifts. To provide the most accurate estimates for charitable giving, as new data become available, *Giving USA* revises its estimates for at least the last two years. See more about how *Giving USA* calculates charitable giving by sources and uses in the “Brief summary of methods used” section of this report.
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