

— TOP TAKEAWAYS — Giving in the USA



AMERICANS ARE THE MOST CHARITABLE PEOPLE ON EARTH

- We gave away \$428 billion in 2018 to various charities and causes, from religious institutions to animal rights organizations.
- Religion and religiosity are the most significant factors in individual giving. People who attend religious services twice a month or more give **over four times** as much as those who never attend religious services.
- From our founding, Americans have come together to address problems in our communities, country, and worldwide rather than waiting for government to fix them.
- Increased government aid crowds out private giving by donors sometimes dollar-for-dollar.

ANONYMITY IS A CRITICAL ELEMENT OF PHILANTHROPY

- Donors benefit from the freedom to support the organizations and causes they believe in without fear of harassment, retaliation, unwanted solicitations, boycotting and even physical harm.
- Confidentiality allows donors to practice their religious teachings.
- Donor privacy has always been important for those who fund controversial movements in history such as abolition, women's suffrage, Civil Rights, and gay rights.

TAX INCENTIVES, NOT GREATER GOVERNMENT CONTROL, CAN ENCOURAGE AMERICANS TO GIVE

- Tax policy can encourage Americans to give through tax incentives, such as the charitable deduction, and other giving vehicles.
- Limiting the amount of the charitable deduction or limiting it only to certain causes could discourage some charitable giving and hurt causes.
- When taxes increase, Americans have less discretionary income to give. Proposals to impose wealth taxes will likely reduce giving.

Philanthropic freedom demands that our right and ability to give be protected. Without this freedom, our civil society will not flourish, and the lives it helps will be at risk.

Visit iwf.org to read the full policy focus and learn more about charitable giving in the U.S.