



June 7, 2022



## Focus on the Fundamentals—Not the Market

by Arthur L. Criscillis, Ed.D.  
Managing Partner

With concerns about the stock market, the effects of the Federal Reserve's rate hiking and quantitative tightening on the economy, the disruption and fears created by Russia's war on Ukraine, and the disruption of supply chains caused by China's COVID-19 lockdown policy rising to the forefront in the minds of so many, it is difficult to not have some concerns about the impacts of these on philanthropy. Some combination of these is beginning to be raised as concerns for our fundraising efforts by development professionals and volunteers. This has not become widespread and the actual impacts of these on philanthropy are not yet being seen on any widespread basis, but the concern is growing. And the concern has a foundation in what is happening—market declines mean many of our prospects are (and feel) less wealthy, concerns about recession can create uncertainty and even fear (both of which are not amenable to economic activity and philanthropy), inflation and rate hikes erode the spending (and giving) power of individuals—particularly the lower-end donors.

It is appropriate to be concerned and to be aware of factors that can affect our prospects—effects that could be more deleterious on them than simply ability to give. That having been said, we can't let these cloud our vision or cause us to be distracted. We need to keep first things first and in the spirit of helping us to do that, let me offer the following:

- 1. Stay focused on demonstrating the positive impact of your organization.** Our organizations are doing good, important work that elevates and improves the lives of people and communities. The importance of our work is not diminished by these factors. In fact, in some instances the importance of our work increases. Keep first things first—your mission and its importance.
- 2. People still give.** Philanthropy has consistently either increased or been flat in current dollars every year since 1979, except for 1987 (tax-reform infused because people accelerated their giving), 2008 (6% decline) and 2009 (3.6% decline) according to Giving USA. And, as bad as the Great Recession was, giving was still substantial. So, we can and should continue to make the case for our organizations and the case for philanthropic investments that will help us to do our work better, to help us do new things and to help us do even more of some things that we already do well.
- 3. Don't decide for others.** If a prospect has demonstrated interest in our work and/or some project that will help us in doing that work (and assuming we have taken the appropriate steps in cultivating them), then we can and should ask for their

philanthropic support. We don't know their financial circumstances or the relative priority that they accord to our organization and its work. Our job is to educate, inform, involve, engage and ask prospects. Their job is to determine if they will give and how much they will give, based upon their circumstances and priorities. If we have done our work well, we may secure the gift. If not, we are likely to hear why they can't support us at the level we had hoped and/or also hear when it might be opportune to talk with them about their commitment or an increased commitment.

**4. Bolster efforts to demonstrate exemplary donor appreciation.** Letting donors know the impact of their giving and letting them know how much we appreciate their gifts and them is something we should always do. As times become a bit more challenging, we need to reexamine and redouble our efforts to do so. That applies both to our largest donors and our faithful donors. They and their support for us only increases in value.

As you can easily see, the focus of our efforts should be on who we are, what we do and how much we appreciate those who assist us—not on the externals. We can control the former, not the latter. So, focus on the fundamentals. That is more important than ever.

[Our Team](#)

---



# Alexander·Haas

Please join us for the release of  
**Giving USA Results for 2021**  
**Tuesday, June 21, 2022**

Giving USA Presentation & Reception  
In-Person & Zoom

4:00pm Presentation

5:00pm Reception

In-person Location

CHRIS 180

1030 Fayetteville Road SE, Atlanta, GA 30316

Presented by Alexander Haas  
in partnership with AFP Greater Atlanta Chapter

Despite the Pandemic, giving in 2020 reached an all-time high. Is it possible that government stimulus and a souring stock market could drive giving to a new high in 2021, even in a year that included more Covid restrictions and historic supply chain disruptions? David King's presentation of Giving USA Foundation's Annual Survey of Giving will offer an in-depth look as to how nonprofits are performing and share trends in giving. We hope you will join us.

**Reservations are required.**  
Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

## **Pandemic Changed Giving Strategy for Many Rich, Some Plan to Donate More**

Sixty-eight percent of wealthy donors say they plan to increase their giving in the next two years, and 51 percent say they plan to contribute to more organizations. A new study of high-net-worth investors by the wealth-management firm BNY Mellon surveyed 200 adults with at least \$5 million of investments, asking about how and why they give to charity.

### Key Highlights

More than two in five wealthy donors say they've changed their giving strategy since the pandemic began, as many wealthy donors reported giving more.

Younger donors were most likely to say they thought about giving to charity as they planned their investments. Every Gen X supporter in the survey (ages 39 to 54) said

that, as did 97% of millennial donors (ages 23 to 38).

Just 27% said they primarily gave to charity to receive tax benefits. The biggest share of donors – 41% – said they gave to support causes and charities to which they had a personal tie. Thirty-seven percent said it was extremely important for them to give because it made them happy.

Direct solicitation was a top-three consideration for 86% of respondents. Just 29%, however, ranked it as the top consideration in their giving decisions.

Of all donors surveyed, roughly a third gave to three to five charities in 2021.

The survey showed charitable LLCs, charitable trusts, and charitable gift annuities were neck-and-neck for the top spot – familiar to 47 percent, 46 percent, and 45 percent, respectively, of the wealthiest donors.

By comparison, 30% of donors with less than \$25 million invested said they were familiar with donor-advised funds. The next most common vehicle for that group was bequests – with 23% saying they were familiar with it. Charitable trusts and charitable distributions from IRAs tied for the third and fourth most familiar vehicles, each 20%.

Health care and medical research combined was the top cause, supported by 57 percent of people surveyed.

Donors with more than \$25 million in assets said they were most motivated to give by personal ties to causes or charities and a desire to affect measurable change. *COP, 5-23*

### Events Reemerged Strong in 2021

Events reemerged as an effective fundraising tool in 2021 after the COVID-19 pandemic shut down nearly all in-person events in 2020. Then report found that events generated a 49% increase in donation volume and peer-to-peer fundraising had a 47% conversion rate. The report also found that donors responded to having more choices with higher gift amounts. For instance, average ACH recurring gift was 29% larger than a recurring gift made with a credit card.

According to the study, [The State of Modern Philanthropy 2022: The Path to Lasting Donor Connections](#), having a multi-channel approach to engaging donors on social media was critical to encouraging people to take action. Although Facebook drove 83.4% of social media traffic to campaign pages, platforms such as LinkedIn and Instagram showed the highest conversion potential. LinkedIn had the highest conversion rates on both mobile and desktop, at 30% and 50%, respectively, followed by Instagram, at 20% and 30%. *PND, 5-29*

Read the report [here](#).

### One-third of Donors Gave Half Their Giving to Disaster Relief

Last year, 37% of American donors gave half or more of their charitable contributions to disaster relief efforts, and 64% gave to a charity they had never supported before. A survey commissioned by Vanguard Charitable and conducted by the Harris Poll found that the top reasons American donors gave to disaster relief included wanting to assist those impacted by humanitarian crises (46%), feeling overwhelmed by a situation, and wanting to help (33%), seeing charitable giving as the only way they could provide support (30%), and having a personal connection to the disaster/crisis (30%). The survey found that donors who contributed to disaster relief efforts gave more overall, meaning that disaster relief giving did not take away from, or occur in place of, ongoing giving. *PND, 5-21*

[Our Facebook](#)

[Our LinkedIn](#)

## We Know Social Service Organizations

For more than 35 years, Alexander Haas has been a fixture in the nonprofit community. We are honored to have worked with some of the largest, and some of the smallest, organizations across the country that help communities be a better place to live.

[Our Clients](#)

## A Fresh Approach to Fundraising

Our services aren't cookie cutter. We don't operate with a boilerplate, merely changing names and locations. We craft each and every service we provide to match your organization's unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your institution, your fundraising, and the community you serve.

Whether your need is in Capital Campaign, Annual Fund Campaign, Major Gifts, Leadership Annual Giving, Planned Giving or all of the above, we take a fresh approach to nonprofit fundraising.

[Our Services](#)



*Alexander·Haas*

TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

[www.fundraisingcounsel.com](http://www.fundraisingcounsel.com)  
[info@alexanderhaas.com](mailto:info@alexanderhaas.com)

Piedmont Place | 3520 Piedmont Place NE, Suite 450 |  
Atlanta GA 30305-1512 | 404.525.7575