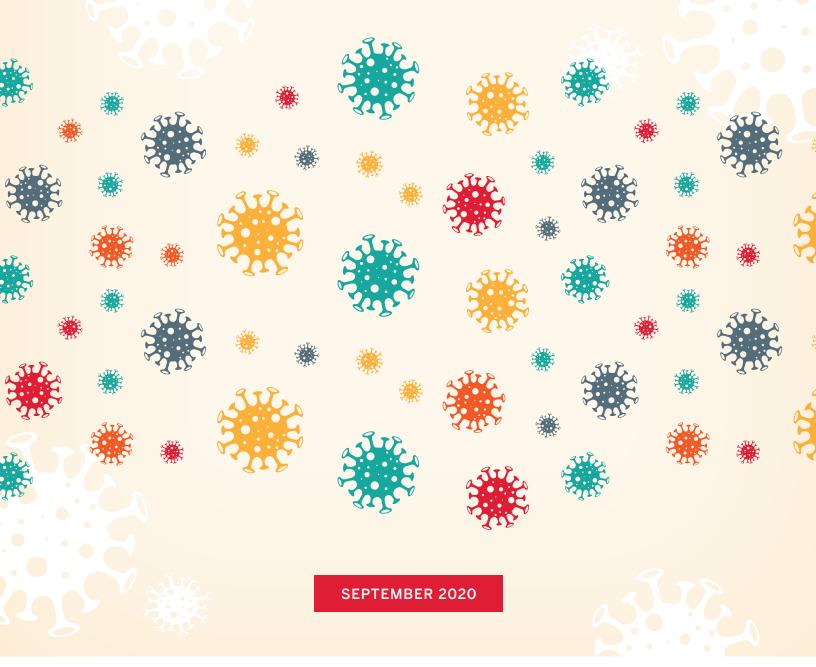
COVID-19, GENEROSITY, AND GENDER:

HOW GIVING CHANGED DURING THE EARLY MONTHS OF A GLOBAL PANDEMIC





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INTRODUCTION

The spring of 2020 was marked by disruptions to society on a level many Americans had never experienced. The novel coronavirus (COVID-19) had a devastating human toll, infecting more than 1.7 million individuals and resulting in more than 100,000 deaths in the U.S. through May 2020.¹ This public health crisis necessitated widespread community shutdowns and social distancing, upending virtually all aspects of American life. Some—from those working on the frontlines of the healthcare system to those stocking essential items in grocery stores—continued to work at their places of employment, but assumed substantial health and safety risks. Others shifted to working from home, bringing their personal and professional lives together in new ways. As schools and childcare facilities simultaneously closed, many parents were forced to take on the roles of childcare provider and homeschool educator in addition to their work responsibilities.

Still others lost their jobs or were furloughed, as businesses made significant cuts to their workforce in order to stay afloat. This included entire industries, such as travel and hospitality, whose operations largely ground to a halt. Record-high unemployment rates coupled with the fall of financial markets caused a sudden, severe economic downturn in the U.S. and across the globe. As a result, scores of Americans struggled to make ends meet. Nonprofit organizations providing food and other basic needs experienced a dramatic influx of households seeking assistance, many of whom had never previously required their services. In addition to increased demand, many nonprofits were suddenly forced to shift their fundraising strategies away from in-person events. The COVID-19 pandemic also required that organizations and fundraisers be extremely sensitive to the health, financial, and other challenges Americans were facing when requesting donations.

These circumstances combined to create an unprecedented environment for charitable giving during the initial months of the pandemic in the U.S. While many of these conditions are still present due to the ongoing nature of the public health crisis and associated economic downturn, this report offers a snapshot of how U.S. households responded to the COVID-19 pandemic through philanthropy. Beyond examining whether and how much households contributed, the report explores the types of philanthropy in which they participated and how their charitable giving changed. The study also pinpoints the effect of specific elements of the crisis on their giving. Finally, to provide a more nuanced picture of philanthropic responses to the pandemic, the report highlights differences across household types, with a particular focus on gender and marital status.

The findings serve as a starting point for understanding changes in individual giving in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as it continues to unfold. While research on philanthropy in the aftermath of disasters and during economic recessions offers takeaways on how household giving might change, the distinct features of the "dual crises" of a global pandemic and accompanying economic downturn defy comparison with previous events. This study provides new insight on how U.S. households responded philanthropically in this unique environment. The findings can help nonprofit and fundraising practitioners adjust their individual giving strategies as the current crisis continues, as well as inform their approaches to future crises.

KEY FINDINGS

- 1. Around one-third of U.S. households gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial months of the crisis.
- 2. Nearly half of households gave indirectly in response to the pandemic during the early months of the crisis (for example, by ordering takeout to support restaurants and their employees, or continuing to pay individuals and businesses for services they could not render).
- **3.** The majority of U.S. households' giving stayed the same during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, those who reported changes were more likely to say their giving decreased rather than increased as a result of the crisis.
- **4.** Households were more likely to decrease than increase their giving as a result of conditions present during the early months of the pandemic (such as uncertainty about the spread of the virus and further economic impacts).
- **5.** Single women were more likely than single men and married/partnered couples to decrease their giving as a result of specific elements of the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial months of the crisis.

¹ The "dual crises" mentioned here refer to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic downturn that took place prior to when this study was conducted in mid-May 2020. While this term has also been used to describe the ongoing pandemic and racial justice protests that began following the death of George Floyd at the end of May 2020, the racial justice protests had not yet taken place at the time of data collection, so the impact of these events is not reflected in this study.



BACKGROUND

How have U.S. households responded philanthropically to past events similar to the COVID-19 pandemic? Due to the distinct combination of a global public health crisis coupled with a severe economic downturn, no event in modern American history offers a direct comparison. However, research on charitable giving as a result of recent disasters and during economic recessions demonstrates how certain features of the pandemic may affect households' philanthropy. In addition, early research has been conducted on how U.S. households adjusted their giving and how charitable organizations fared during the early months of the pandemic. This literature provides helpful context for understanding the findings presented in this report.

Disaster giving

A substantial portion of U.S. households engage in charitable giving in response to disasters. A 2019 study found that 28.5% of households made a disaster-related donation in 2018, with donor households contributing an average of \$314.² Research shows that U.S. households usually give within six weeks of a major disaster, while the event is featured prominently in the media. However, there are some exceptions. For example, total donations to relief efforts for Hurricane Katrina, which struck the Gulf Coast of the United States in 2005, flowed over a longer period—nearly doubling from \$2.2 billion in the second month after the storm to \$3.7 billion in the sixth month.³

A variety of factors motivate U.S. households to act philanthropically in the wake of a disaster, such as the scale of the disaster (i.e., number of people affected), personal connections to the location of the disaster, and media coverage of the event. Characteristics such as gender, education, and income are also associated with individual giving for disaster aid. Women and those with higher levels of education and income were more likely to make a disaster-related donation in 2017 and 2018.⁴

Recession giving

Research shows that U.S. charitable giving is closely related to the health of the economy. Overall, total giving increased at an average annual rate of 3.3% (adjusted for inflation) during the last 64 years. But total giving declined by an average of 0.5% (adjusted for inflation) in years the U.S. experienced an economic downturn. The Great Recession, during which total giving fell by 7.2% in 2008 and 8.0% in 2009, serves as an extreme example of this pattern.⁵ The Great Recession was particularly influential on individual giving, with the share of U.S. households donating to charity dropping from 66% in 2008 to 61% in 2010.⁶

Lower levels of income and wealth are typically cited as the primary reasons for decreased giving during economic downturns. However, a 2016 study found that declines in household giving during the Great Recession cannot be fully explained by changes in income or wealth, and suggested that shifting attitudes toward charitable giving and increased uncertainty may have also been at play. Nonetheless, there were some bright spots in philanthropy during the Great Recession. While total giving fell, giving to human services organizations providing food and other necessities grew by 8.5% in 2008 and 1.8% in 2009. This suggests that those who continue to give during economic downturns may prioritize their philanthropy to help meet the increased demand for basic services.

Early charitable responses to the pandemic

Although the pandemic is ongoing, preliminary research has been conducted on the impact of COVID-19 on household giving and charitable organizations during the early months of the crisis and has shown mixed results. A survey of nonprofit organizations fielded at the end of April 2020 revealed that nearly two-thirds (63%) of organizations saw decreased fundraising revenue since the beginning of the pandemic, with one-quarter experiencing a significant decline during this period.⁹



An industry study of charitable giving by individuals who had donated at least \$1,000 to charity in 2019 was more optimistic. The March 2020 survey found that more than half of these individuals (54%) did not plan to change their charitable giving in 2020 as a result of the crisis, while 25% planned to donate more and 9% planned to contribute less. Of those who planned to increase their giving, the level of need (63%) and desire to help out (61%) were cited most as reasons for this change. Of those who planned to decrease their donations, uncertainty about their income and worry about a recession and the economy overall (both 58%) were the most cited reasons. Of the charge of the contribute less of the contribute less.

The same study also found that individuals' plans to change their 2020 giving varied by age, with a greater percentage of younger donors planning to increase their donations. Almost half of Millennials (46%) reported that they planned to give more as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, compared with 25% of Baby Boomers and 14% of Generation X.¹¹ Another study, which surveyed young Americans (ages 18-30) in April 2020, found that these individuals engaged in a variety of activities to help others during the crisis. The activities they participated in most frequently were starting to purchase or increasing their purchase of local products or services (26%), followed by donating goods or services (24%), and posting or sharing content on social media about COVID-19 prevention (21%).¹²

The present study builds on existing research by examining whether and how much U.S. households contributed in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial months of the crisis. It also looks at the forms of philanthropy in which households participated, and how their charitable giving changed as a result of the pandemic during this time. The report identifies the effect of particular aspects of the crisis on their giving, and closes by highlighting differences across household types, with a focus on gender and marital status.

These results should be interpreted with caution since the survey was conducted very early in the crisis and among individuals inclined toward philanthropy.

STUDY METHODS

This study uses data from a Women's Philanthropy Institute survey on U.S. households' charitable responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was conducted online among a general population sample of 3,405 respondents in mid-May 2020. Due to the timing of the survey and the ongoing nature of the pandemic, the findings represent an early snapshot, rather than a complete picture, of households' charitable giving in response to the crisis. While the pandemic is a global event, the findings are limited to the crisis in the United States.

The survey results were weighted based on the Census Population Survey, using age, income, race, ethnicity, and region of the country. Unless otherwise noted, the findings presented in this report are descriptive in nature. However, regression models were used to verify that the results were statistically significant when controlling for income and other demographic variables.ⁱⁱⁱ



These variables are race, ethnicity, age, geographic region, gender and marital status, and having children under the age of 18. Statistical significance means that a particular result is not likely due to chance. Significance is a statistical term that states the level of certainty that a difference or relationship exists.

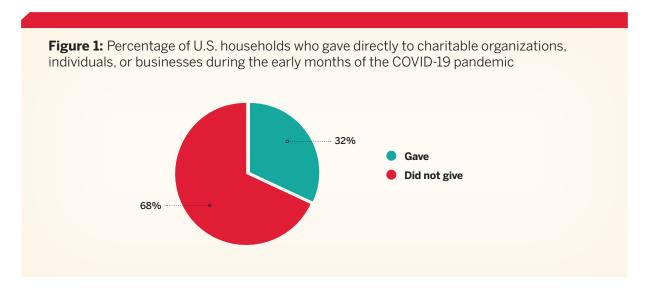


FINDINGS

In response to public health concerns and the economic downturn brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, a majority of U.S. households (56.1%) engaged in some kind of charitable activity, whether directly or indirectly, during the early months of the crisis. The findings in this report detail the scope and prevalence of this charitable activity. They also describe how households adjusted their charitable giving during this time, and how different elements of the pandemic affected their giving.

Finding 1: Around one-third of U.S. households gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses in response to the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial months of the crisis.

To capture the full range of charitable activities in which households participated during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey asked about multiple types of giving. These forms of philanthropy include donating money or in-kind goods directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses. The results show that a substantial share of U.S. households gave directly in response to the pandemic during this time.



As seen in Figure 1, 32.0% of households engaged in direct forms of giving during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. In terms of dollars, donor households contributed an average of \$347. By comparison, these figures are slightly higher than the share of U.S. households who gave (28.5%) and the average amount contributed by donor households (\$314) for disaster aid in 2018. However, they do not capture the entire scope of individual giving in response to the crisis during this time, since households participated in other forms of philanthropy as well.

Finding 2: Nearly half of households gave indirectly in response to the pandemic during the early months of the crisis (for example, by ordering takeout to support restaurants and their employees, or continuing to pay individuals and businesses for services they could not render).

In addition to contributing directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses, the survey also asked about U.S. households' engagement in indirect forms of philanthropy that arose from conditions present during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Examples of these indirect types of giving include ordering takeout to support restaurants and their employees, and continuing to pay individuals and businesses for services (e.g., haircuts, housekeeping) they could not render due to community shutdowns and social distancing requirements. The results reveal that the share of households participating in unique forms of philanthropy brought about by the pandemic surpassed the share of those giving directly as described in Finding 1.

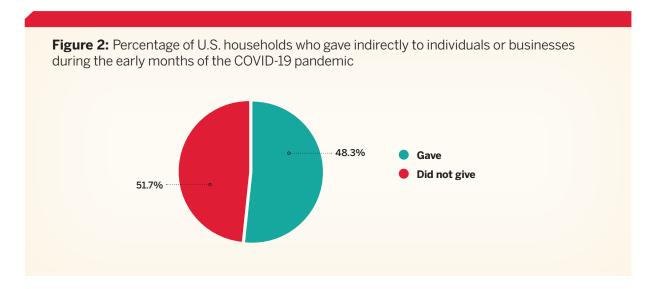
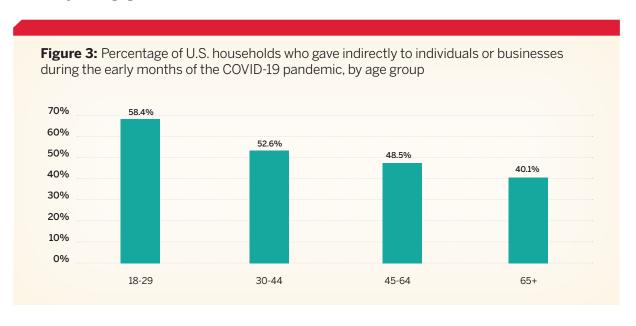


Figure 2 shows that 48.3% of U.S. households participated in these forms of indirect philanthropy during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, exceeding the portion of households who gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or business in response to the crisis during this time. This finding is consistent with recent research demonstrating that individuals, including younger and more diverse donors, tend to conceptualize philanthropy in broad terms and engage in charitable activities beyond giving money.¹⁴

In fact, regression analysis reveals that age was a statistically significant factor in U.S. households' likelihood of engaging in indirect forms of philanthropy that arose from conditions present during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic. As seen in Figure 3, younger households were more likely than older households to participate in this type of giving in response to the crisis during this time. This pattern differs from direct forms of philanthropy, in which older households are generally more likely to engage. ¹⁵



HOW IS THE RISK OF COVID-19 RELATED TO GENEROSITY DURING THE INITIAL MONTHS OF THE PANDEMIC?

As mentioned previously, younger households were more likely than older households to engage in unique forms of indirect giving brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic during the early months of the crisis. Additionally, in contrast to prior research, individuals over the age of 65 were less likely to participate in direct giving in response to the pandemic during this time. Further analysis suggests that one's risk of contracting COVID-19 could factor into these patterns.

The survey results show no direct relationship between charitable giving in response to the pandemic and how greatly the state in which one lives was affected by the virus during the initial months of the crisis. This runs counter to studies on disaster giving, which show that those living in areas closest to a disaster are most likely to give for disaster aid.

However, this pattern changes when controlling for the combination of local levels of COVID-19 infection and age. In this case, the results reveal that high levels of the virus in one's state are associated with a greater likelihood of charitable giving. When examining the interaction between COVID-19 cases and age, though, the results are negative with respect to age: older households in states more affected by the virus were less likely to give in response to the pandemic during the initial months of the crisis.

Although additional research is necessary to explain this finding, one possibility is that, because the elderly are more at risk for COVID-19, age is really measuring risk in the analysis. So it could be that those in greater danger of contracting the virus were less likely to give when faced with the uncertainty of potential infection.

^{iv} Measured by the number of cumulative cases per capita reported at the time the survey closed in mid-May. Data source: The COVID Tracking Project at *The Atlantic*, https://covidtracking.com/



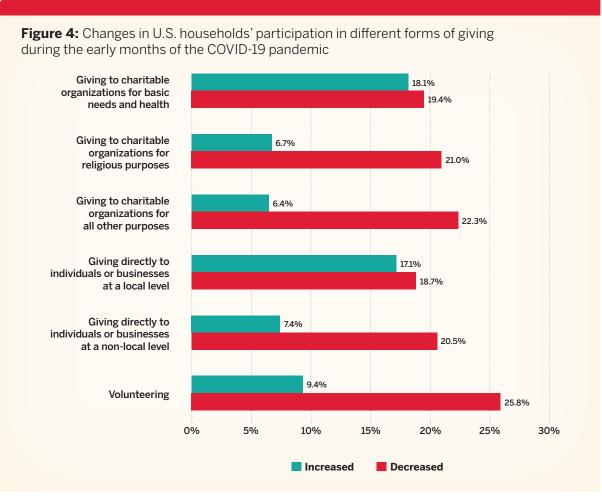
Finding 3: The majority of U.S. households' giving stayed the same during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic; however, those who reported changes were more likely to say their giving decreased rather than increased as a result of the crisis.

Beyond whether and how much they gave, the survey also asked about changes in households' charitable activities during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. This question focused on the direct forms of philanthropy described in Finding 1 rather than the indirect, pandemic-specific types of giving that emerged as a result of conditions present during the spring of 2020 described in Finding 2.

The majority of U.S. households did not change their level of engagement in different forms of philanthropy during the initial months of the crisis. Households that did report changes in their charitable giving were more likely to indicate their giving decreased rather than increased as a result of the pandemic during this time. The share of U.S. households reporting changes varied with respect to giving to different types of charitable organizations, giving to local and non-local individuals and businesses, and volunteering.

As seen in Figure 4, a larger percentage of households increased their giving to charitable organizations focused on basic needs and health (18.1%) and to individuals and businesses in their community (17.1%) compared with other forms of direct philanthropy. This suggests that, during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. households prioritized giving to meet the pressing needs of those in their area.

At 25.8%, households were most likely to decrease their volunteering during the early months of the crisis. This is likely due to restrictions on face-to-face volunteer opportunities at this time as result of community shutdowns and social distancing requirements and individuals' reluctance to participate in these opportunities due to health and safety risks. Indeed, recent studies have shown that nonprofit organizations saw high levels of cancellation in volunteer attendance during the spring of 2020.¹⁷



Note: The percentages for those responding "Stayed the same" are not shown here.

Examining changes in households' participation in different forms of philanthropy through a gender lens, there are consistent differences based on gender and marital status. Single women were most likely to report decreasing their engagement in each type of giving as a result of the pandemic during the initial months of the crisis. However, these differences were generally not statistically significant.

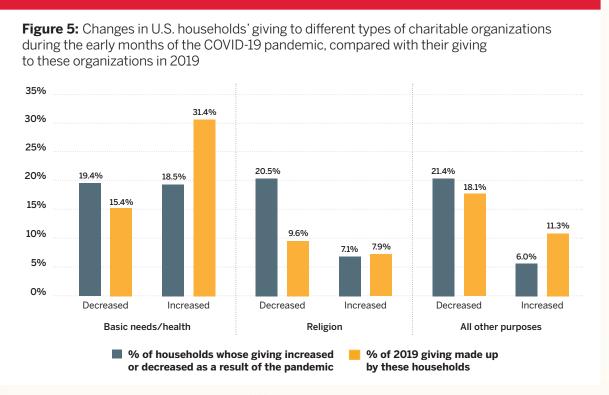
^v Giving to charitable organizations for all other purposes (e.g., education, arts, the environment) was the only category for which single women were significantly more likely than single men to decrease their giving as a result of the pandemic during the early months of the crisis. The other categories, while showing a difference, were not statistically significant. This means that, when controlling for sample size and available demographics, the size of the difference is small enough that it cannot be confidently stated as real and not just due to chance.



HOW DOES GIVING DURING THE INITIAL MONTHS OF THE PANDEMIC COMPARE WITH GIVING DURING RECESSIONS?

While examining changes in U.S. households' philanthropy alone during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic provides some insight on how households have adjusted their charitable giving in response to the crisis, clearer patterns emerge when looking at the past philanthropy of these households. These patterns reveal that how U.S. households adjusted their giving to different types of charitable organizations during the initial months of the pandemic closely aligns with changes in giving during past economic recessions. *Giving USA* data show that, during recession years, giving for basic needs tends to increase, while giving for religious purposes stays relatively flat, and giving to education and the arts usually declines.¹⁸

Figure 5 compares the percentage of U.S. households that increased or decreased their giving to different types of charitable organizations during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic with the share of 2019 giving that these households represent. This comparison offers a closer look at how households' past giving to different types of charitable organizations relates to changes in their giving during the initial months of the crisis, suggesting a similar pattern could unfold in the COVID-19 era.



Note: Figure 5 is based on a smaller sample (n=2,686) of respondents with other adults living in their household, for which 2019 giving data was available. Other figures are based on the full sample, which includes all household types.

The blue bars in Figure 5 represent the share of U.S. households whose giving to three types of charitable organizations increased or decreased during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. The yellow bars represent the percentage of 2019 giving to these types of charitable organization made up by households whose giving increased or decreased during the initial months of the crisis. For example, looking at the "Increased" columns for basic needs/health, only 18.5% of households stated that their basic needs/health giving increased as a result of the pandemic. But this 18.5% of households made up 31.4% of 2019 giving to basic needs/health organizations, indicating that these households are giving in larger dollar amounts.

Looking at charitable organizations focused on basic needs/health as a whole, there was a relatively even split between households who indicated their giving to these organizations decreased versus increased during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic (both around 19%). However, households reporting increases in charitable giving to basic needs/health organizations during this time contributed more than twice the share of dollars going to basic needs/health organizations in 2019 (31.4%) compared with households reporting decreases (15.4%), suggesting a more promising outlook for giving to these organizations.

Regarding charitable organizations focused on religion, a much greater percentage of households indicated that their giving to these organizations decreased (20.5%) than increased (7.1%) during the early months of the crisis. However, a relatively even portion of the charitable dollars going to religion in 2019 came from households who reported decreased giving (9.6%) versus increased giving (7.9%) to religious organizations during the initial months of the pandemic, hinting that giving to these organizations may remain relatively stable.

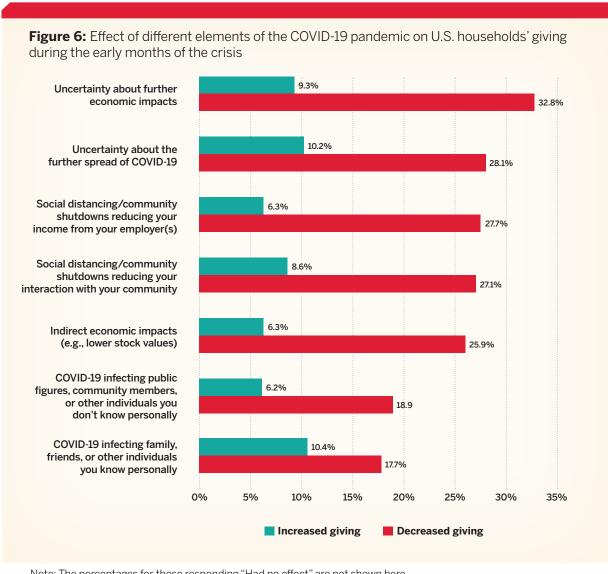
With regard to charitable organizations focused on purposes besides basic needs/health and religion (e.g., education, arts, the environment), a much larger share of households indicated that their giving to these organizations decreased (21.4%) than increased (6.0%) during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, a greater portion of the charitable dollars going to organizations focused on all other purposes in 2019 came from households who decreased (18.1%) versus increased (11.3%) their giving to these organizations during the initial months of the crisis. This pattern suggests a more challenging outlook for giving to organizations dedicated to all other purposes compared with those focused on basic needs/health and religion.

Due to the ongoing nature of the pandemic, further research is necessary to determine whether these trends continue over the long-term. However, early data show that, similar to previous recessions, organizations dedicated to basic needs and health could fare better than those focused on religion, and especially better than those serving all other purposes.



Finding 4: Households were more likely to decrease than increase their giving as a result of conditions present during the early months of the pandemic (such as uncertainty about the spread of the virus and further economic impacts).

In addition to exploring how U.S. households' philanthropy changed during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey sought to pinpoint the particular elements of the pandemic that affected households' charitable giving during this time. Similar to Finding 3, the majority of U.S. households did not change their philanthropy as a result of specific conditions present during the initial months of the pandemic. Those who did report changes to their giving in response to these conditions were more likely to indicate their giving decreased than increased during this time.



Note: The percentages for those responding "Had no effect" are not shown here.

Figure 6 reveals that the greatest share of U.S. households identified COVID-19 infecting people they know personally and uncertainty about the further spread of the virus (at 10.4% and 10.2%, respectively) as aspects of the pandemic that increased their philanthropy during the spring of 2020.

A much larger portion of households cited uncertainty—either about further economic impacts (32.8%) or the continued spread of COVID-19 (28.1%)—as an element of the pandemic that decreased their giving during this time. This indicates that the variety of unknowns surrounding the spread of the virus and its economic effects were key considerations in U.S. households' decisions about charitable giving during the initial months of the crisis. It is also consistent with previous research demonstrating that uncertainty is detrimental to philanthropy. The impact of social distancing and community shutdowns on households' income (27.7%) and community interactions (27.1%) closely followed forms of uncertainty as factors that decreased households' giving during this time.

Looking closer at U.S. households reporting that various elements of the pandemic decreased their giving during the early months of the pandemic, different patterns emerge among single women, single men, and married/partnered households.





Finding 5: Single women were more likely than single men and married/partnered couples to decrease their giving as a result of specific elements of the COVID-19 pandemic during the initial months of the crisis.

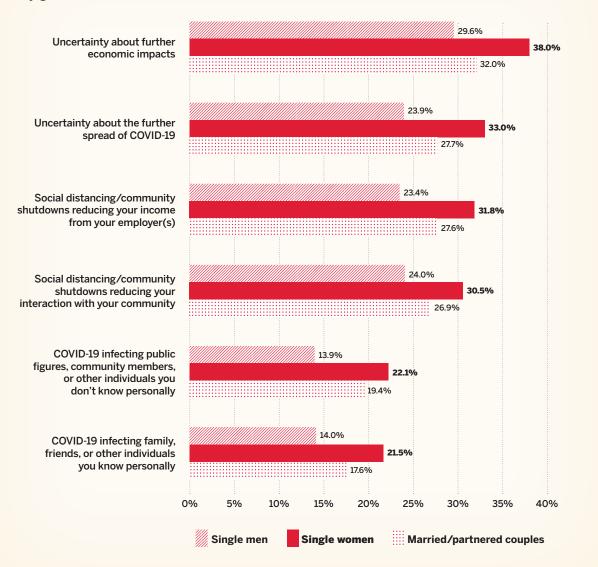
While single women were more likely than single men and married/partnered couples to report decreasing their philanthropic activity in each category included in Finding 3, this difference was generally not statistically significant. However, there were statistically significant differences in how these groups indicated that various elements of the pandemic affected their giving during the early months of the crisis (Finding 4).^{vi}

As shown in Figure 7, single women were more likely than single men and married couples to indicate that different aspects of the pandemic decreased their charitable giving during the early months of the pandemic. Regression analysis revealed that the differences between single women and single men were statistically significant when controlling for other demographics known to be associated with giving. This pattern differs from previous research, which has consistently shown that single women are more likely to give and give in greater amounts than similarly situated single men.²⁰

Although further research is necessary to fully understand this finding, recent studies show that women have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic and resulting economic downturn, which could decrease their ability to give.²¹ This pattern contrasts with the Great Recession, which had an outsize impact on men. Another possible explanation involves women's preference for giving collaboratively, which could explain how lack of community interactions during the early months of the pandemic may have had a dampening effect on their giving.²²

vi This excludes indirect economic impacts, which is not pictured in Figure 7.

Figure 7: Percentage of U.S. households who decreased their giving in response to different elements of the COVID-19 pandemic during the early months of the crisis, by gender and marital status



DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a complex crisis whose widespread social and economic impacts created an unprecedented environment for charitable giving during the spring of 2020. These conditions have greatly affected philanthropy, influencing whether U.S. households give, how much they give, and to which causes and organizations they give. Nonetheless, households have stepped up to address the numerous ways the pandemic has impacted their communities, with nearly one-third donating directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses and almost one-half contributing indirectly in response to COVID-19 during the first few months of the crisis in the U.S. Households, particularly those in younger age groups, have especially embraced indirect forms of generosity in their response to the pandemic, echoing patterns seen in philanthropy more broadly.

A slightly higher percentage of U.S. households gave, and in slightly higher amounts, during the initial months of the pandemic compared with recent disasters. Regarding the recipients of this philanthropy, the pandemic has affected different types of charitable organizations in different ways. Those viewed as solving problems created or exacerbated by the crisis may have benefited more from COVID-19-related giving; those whose mission does not seem as directly related may have benefited less. Additionally, nonprofits that rely heavily on volunteers have had to compensate for decreased contributions of time, since community shutdowns and social distancing requirements largely precluded in-person volunteering.²³

Specific elements of the pandemic have had a greater effect than others on U.S. households' giving. Due to the ongoing nature of the public health crisis and associated economic downturn, uncertainty has been an important factor in households' decisions to decrease their philanthropy. Those who have increased their giving were most likely to do so as a result of being personally affected by the crisis through family or friends who have contracted COVID-19. There are also gender differences in the pandemic's effects. Women have been on the frontlines of the crisis at work and at home—from comprising the majority of essential workers to having greater caretaking responsibilities for children and older relatives. It follows, then, that these roles have left little room for donating time and money, despite a strong body of research demonstrating that women are particularly inclined toward these behaviors.

IMPLICATIONS

Although this report emphasizes changes in U.S. households' charitable giving during the initial months of the COVID-19 pandemic, the fact that the majority of households did not adjust their giving during this time can be viewed as a positive sign for philanthropy. This suggests that charitable giving is an ingrained habit for many households that will endure regardless of their personal situation and that the fundamental principles of fundraising still apply. To encourage ongoing giving, nonprofits and fundraisers should keep in mind the importance of explicitly communicating the actions they are taking in response to COVID-19 and why their cause still requires support.

Connecting with donors virtually is also critical during the pandemic and beyond. Once it is considered safe to host events, some individuals, particularly those who are older or medically vulnerable, may continue to be cautious in their social interactions. Therefore, it is important to find creative ways to keep donors engaged and to incorporate these methods into post-pandemic fundraising strategies. Virtual events offer an opportunity to expand an organization's supporters beyond the usual suspects—such as to those who may be too busy or far away for in-person meetings under normal circumstances. These strategies apply to fundraising and volunteer events, as well as donor cultivation and stewardship, and can even take on a hybrid format when restrictions begin to loosen. Research shows that creating a sense of community, whether in person or online, is especially crucial for those seeking to attract women donors.

Various elements of the pandemic appear to have had a negative effect on women's philanthropy during the early months of the pandemic—especially economic uncertainty and community shutdowns/social distancing requirements. Even when the economy is healthy, studies show that methods of giving beyond financial contributions appeal to women donors in particular. Fundraisers may reach out to women whose giving has recently decreased to explore other ways they could contribute, such as writing thank you notes to fellow donors, crafting a blog post about why they support the organization, or even establishing a giving circle. The concept of achieving a larger impact through collective giving appeals to women donors, and giving circles have provided vital resources during the pandemic as a result of their knowledge of local communities and ability to be nimble.

Finally, donors and nonprofits alike must remember that the situation will eventually improve. Even when donors need to pause their contributions, they should remain part of the giving community, receiving communications and updates from the organizations they typically support. Maintaining connections with these donors will go a long way in ensuring they resume or even grow their giving once they have recovered financially. As more certainty returns to the world, efforts to strengthen donor relationships during this challenging time will bear fruit for years to come.



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