



# Atlanta Results

Your Monthly Resource for Philanthropic News

Alexander-Haas  
TRANSFORMING INSTITUTIONS THAT TRANSFORM LIVES

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## The Gift of Sight

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In reading the recent Lilly Family School of Philanthropy report, What Americans Think About Philanthropy and Nonprofits, I was reminded of a line from the 18th-century Scottish poet Robert Burns well-known poem “To a Louse, On Seeing One on a Lady’s Bonnet at Church.” That line (In updated English): Oh the Gift that God would give us, to see ourselves as others see us.

This report, released on April 6, is based on a nationally representative summer 2022 survey of 1,334 adults and sought to determine public awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of philanthropy. In short, how does the public understand and see us? Not how we see ourselves. Not how we wish to be seen. How we are seen. Some highlights from the executive summary of the report merit citing.

The study indicates that **Americans see philanthropic giving as valuable: more than three-quarters of those surveyed feel that society as whole benefits a large or moderate amount when Americans donate money to charity.** About 80% said that in-kind giving (i.e., giving property such as clothes, household items, or a vehicle to a nonprofit), giving money to a qualified 501(c)(3) nonprofit, and direct person-to-person giving was very or somewhat important. Three out of four felt that mutual aid was very or somewhat important.

**Yet despite these generally favorable opinions, just 5.4% of people surveyed said they or anyone in their immediate family received services from a charitable organization or nonprofit in the past year.** Considering the many ways people engage with nonprofits in daily life, from education, disaster relief, and religious services to amateur athletics, civic beautification, or the arts, this suggests many Americans may not recognize that these and other public services are provided by nonprofits.

Additionally, **only one in three people are aware that the percentage of Americans giving to charities declined markedly over the past two decades,** even though the decrease has been widely discussed in the media and other public forums for years. People who give to charitable organizations were not significantly more likely to identify this trend than were non-donors.

**Levels of trust in all three sectors of society (government, private and nonprofit sectors) are low but the plurality (39.0%) of respondents said they trusted nonprofits** completely or very much, the highest response for any of the institutions in the survey.

Fifty percent of those surveyed expressed no opinion about whether a universal charitable deduction (such as the one Americans were able to take on their taxes in 2020 and 2021 as a result of the CARES Act) should be made permanent. Among those who expressed an opinion, nearly half (48.7%) reported that their giving would stay the same if a universal charitable deduction became permanent, while a third (33.2%) said they did not know whether or how their household giving would be impacted and 14.7% said it would increase somewhat.

**Survey respondents found value in both large and small financial contributions.** They preferred the idea of smaller donations from many donors when directly contrasted with larger donations from the wealthiest Americans. But when asked about both types of giving separately, they seemed to feel that big gifts can have a bigger impact and thus may perceive them as being more important to American society broadly.

The report as a whole merits reading. For my part, I came away thinking that we need to communicate consistently, clearly, and broadly the full range of work that we in the nonprofit sector do for the betterment of society. We need to be even more transparent in communicating the importance of not simply our major donors, but also those making more modest gifts. We also need to be very clear in tying giving to our ability to do our good work even better—whether this entails doing something new, doing more of what we already do well, or doing even better the work that we currently do.

Oh the gift of God to give us . . . .

[Our Team](#)

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## Deeper Dive on Data Mentioned Above

This month's opening letter, from our Partner, Arthur Criscillis, introduces readers to the new survey from *Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy* that examines public awareness, attitudes, and perceptions of philanthropy, philanthropic-sector institutions, and policies that govern and affect charitable giving.

Let's dive in for some more information from the report.

- Younger individuals, women, individuals with more education, and donors have a more expansive view of philanthropy.
- A majority of respondents expressed no opinion about whether the universal deduction should be made permanent.
- Religious charitable organizations are seen as the most trustworthy and transparent type of philanthropic entity, followed closely by Community Foundations.

### Activities Considered to be Forms of Philanthropy

- Giving Time 85.2%
- Giving Treasure 83.8%
- Giving Talent 72.4%
- Giving Ties 39.7%
- Giving Testimony 39.2%

### How Beneficial is Philanthropy

- A moderate amount 43.7%
- A large amount 33.6%
- Only a little 20.2%
- Not at all 2.5%

*What Americans Think About Philanthropy and Nonprofits* was funded by the *William and Flora Hewlett Foundation*. [Download the report here.](#) *PND*, 4-11

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## New Surveys Cast Doubt on Giving

Two recent surveys show that confidence in the economy is declining. One found that the share of donors who plan to give less this year than last is the highest it's been since 2020.

**Dunham+Company** recently released its donor confidence survey, which in January polled people who had donated \$20 or more in the previous year. In 2021, 80% planned to give the same or more, but that dropped to 76% in 2022, and then down to 70% this year. The nearly 25% of donors who plan to give less is the highest percentage recorded in the past three years – including the 2020 poll, which was taken in July, near the height of pandemic uncertainty and job loss.

A **Gallup Poll** was conducted during the same time frame, but for the general public – not just donors. The poll found 50% of Americans said they were worse off financially than they had been a year ago. Gallup says the last time that many Americans felt worse off financially was during the Great Recession in 2008 and 2009.

In the Gallup survey of donors, people who said they plan to give less cited three primary reasons: personal finances (62%), the economy (17%), and inflation (16%). This changed from the 2022 survey, when 35% cited inflation as the reason they would give less, and 41% blamed personal finances.

More info on [Dunham](#) and [Gallup](#). *COP*, 4-4

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## Atlanta Alumni Client Partner Gifts & News

**Georgia State University** (GSU) was awarded a \$669,000 grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to establish a literary journal, *Beyond Bars*, written by, for, and with members of Georgia's incarcerated community in collaboration with GSU's *Prison Education Project and Common Good Atlanta*, to help open doors for incarcerated writers and editors. *PND*, 4-14

The **Georgia State University\* Foundation** Board of Trustees awarded \$20,000 to the *Andrew Young School of Policy Studies' AYS Open initiative*. According to Professor Scott Jacques, who heads the initiative, it will save Georgia State students an estimated \$1 million or more on learning materials before 2026. *MetroAtlantCEO*, 4-10

**Girl Scouts of Greater Atlanta\*** shattered their fundraising goal during their 10th annual *Second Century Luncheon*. More than \$350,000 was raised to fuel the mission to inspire and empower girl leaders in our community through unique programming, leadership experiences, and the opportunity to be a Girl Scout regardless of background. **Wendy Stewart**, President, Global Commercial Banking of Bank of America received the prestigious 'Changing the World' award. *MetroAtlantaCEO*, 3-28

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## We Know Atlanta Nonprofits

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

[Our ATL Clients](#)

## A Fresh Approach to Nonprofit 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 unique needs, wants and abilities. We work hard and expect you to do the same. Together we can help you transform your organization, your fundraising, and the people 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](#)



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