

WHO GIVES: ANIMAL-RELATED CAUSES

A report of the Colorado Generosity Project

Introduction

In *Understanding Giving: Beliefs & Behaviors of Colorado's Donors*, we explored what, how, and why Coloradans give. The report was based on a wealth of research, most of which was conducted by Colorado Nonprofit Association in 2011 through a phone survey and focus groups around the state.

Our phone survey included the question: "During the past twelve months, which of the following did you or anyone in your household make a donation to?" The list of 14 options that followed included types of organizations such as religion-related, arts and culture, health or medical, disaster or emergency relief, and "Animal-related charities or causes." In this article, we'll take an in-depth look at the *people who support animal-related causes*: how they view nonprofits, how they connect with organizations, and what inspires them to give.

**Note: throughout this article, the term "non-donors" is used to refer to those who did not report donating to animal-related causes in the past 12 months. The majority of these respondents are, in fact, donors; 84% report making donations in the past 12 months.*

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Colorado Generosity Project Sponsors



For More Information

Visit www.ColoradoNonprofits.org/Understanding-Giving for the full report, *Understanding Giving: Beliefs & Behaviors of Colorado's Donors*. You'll also find supplemental data, regional reports, and a schedule of our upcoming trainings.



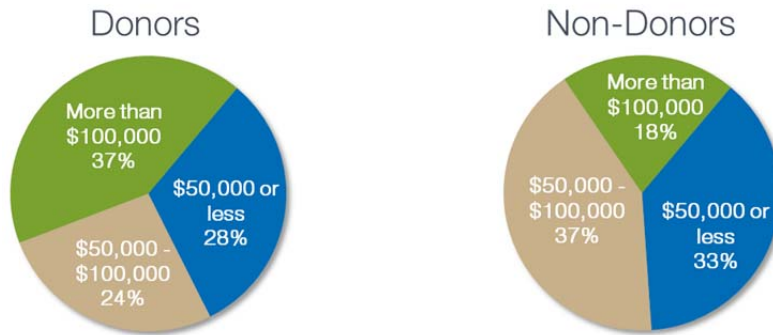
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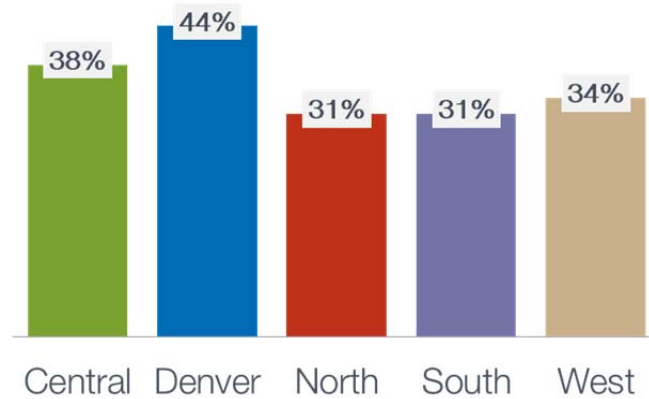
About the Donors

Overall, 40% of Coloradans surveyed reported donating to animal-related causes in the past year. Compared with other survey respondents, these donors tend to...

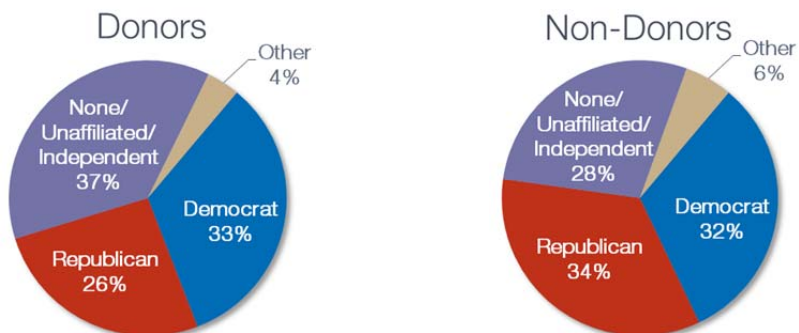
...have higher incomes



...live in metropolitan Denver



...be politically unaffiliated

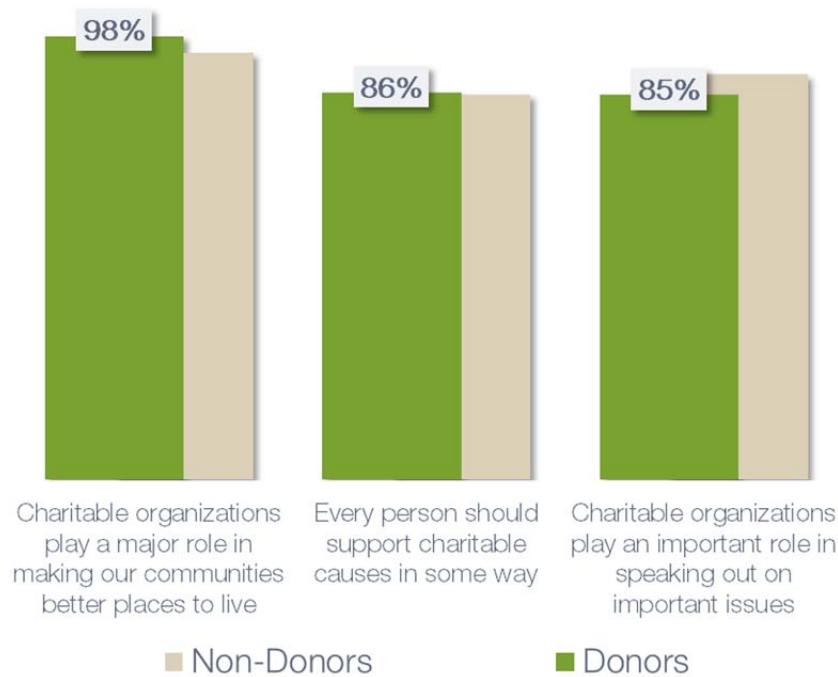


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Values & Beliefs

Our research found that Coloradans, whether they support animal-related causes or not, overwhelmingly agree that charitable organizations are community-builders, “making our communities better places to live.” (98% of animal-related, and 94% of others, agreed with the statement.) The two groups also agree – at somewhat lower rates – that “every person should support charitable causes in some way” (85% and 86%, respectively).



While the difference is minor, donors who give to animal-related causes were slightly less likely than others to see nonprofits as advocates, “speaking out on important issues” (85% and 90%, respectively.)

In our exploration of donors by the types of causes they support, we’ve *usually* found more positive beliefs about nonprofits among the “donors” than the “non-donors,” regardless of the type of cause. These results aren’t very surprising; they simply suggest that people with positive beliefs about nonprofits are more likely to donate to any particular cause.

For that reason, two results of the research into beliefs are especially interesting. We found that animal-related donors were *less*

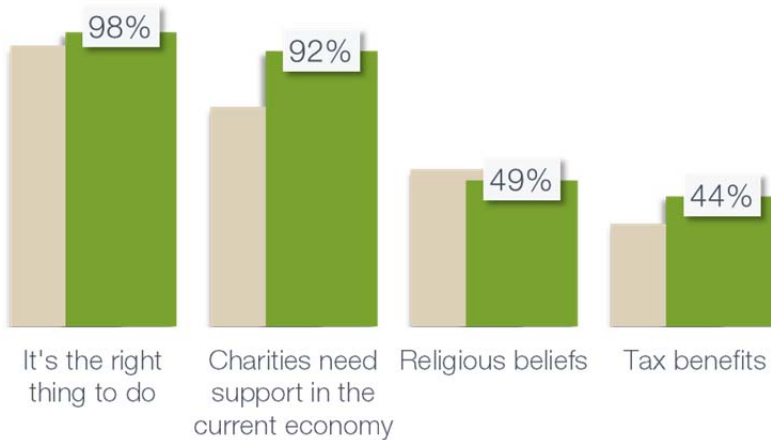
likely than non-donors to agree that “charitable organizations make up a significant portion of Colorado’s economy” by a 9% margin. Much more surprising is that the non-donors were more likely – by an 11% margin – to agree that “most charities are honest and ethical in their use of donations.” Nearly a quarter of animal-related donors disagreed with this statement; 18% chose “somewhat disagree” and 6% chose “strongly disagree.” (Another 6% said they did not know.)



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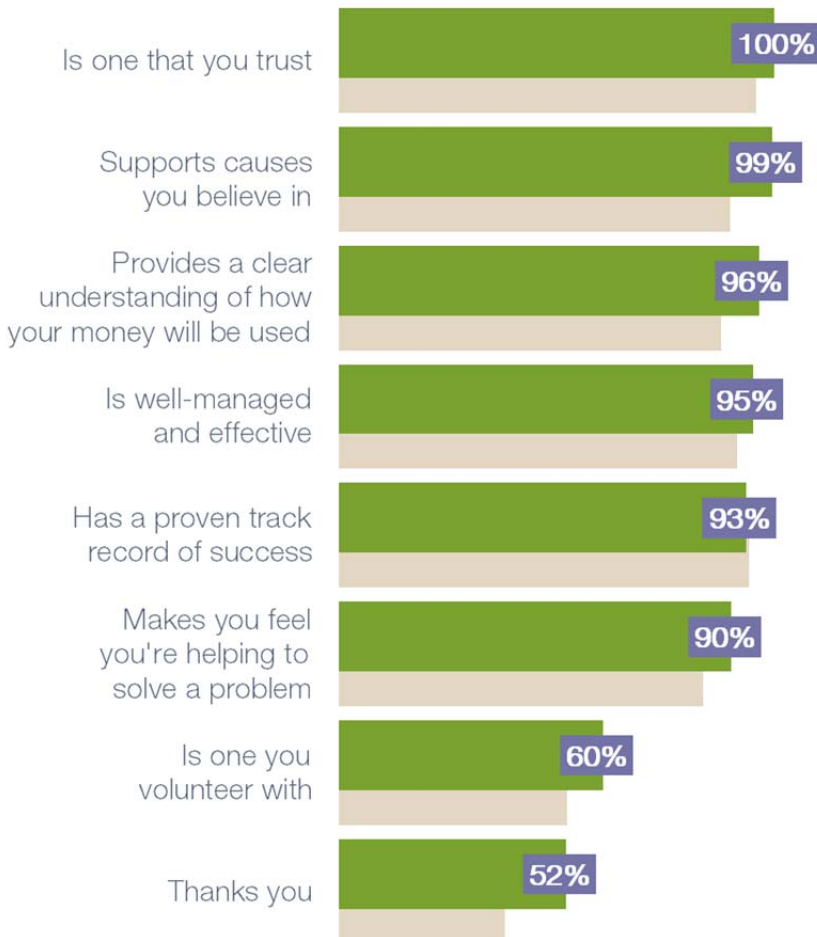
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Why They Give



Although they may be more skeptical about nonprofits in general, nearly every animal-related donor in our survey said “because it’s the right thing to do” is an important reason why they give. And while they were less likely than non-donors to view nonprofits as playing a major role in Colorado’s economy, they definitely see the effect the economy has had on nonprofits; 92% of donors and 74% of non-donors said that “because charities need support in the current economy” is an important reason they give.

It's important to support an organization that...



Compared to non-donors, Coloradans who give to animal-related organizations are driven by a desire to make a difference. 99% of donors and just 89% of non-donors said “the organization supports causes you believe in” is an important factor in choosing a nonprofit to support. They were also more likely to prioritize factors such as “the organization provides a clear understanding of how your money will be used” (by a 9% margin) and “makes you feel like you’re helping to solve a problem (6% margin).

Perhaps they also more strongly prefer seeing – or reading or hearing about – the impact their gift makes. Animal-related donors were more likely to place importance on factors like “you volunteer your time with the organization” (by a 8% margin), and “the organization thanks you” (14% margin).

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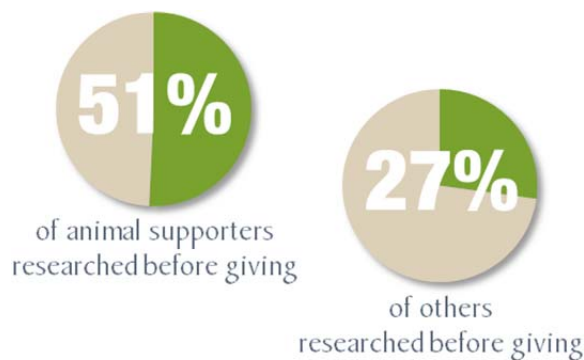
The Decision to Give

Thinking about your most recent donation: if you had not made that donation, would you have donated to another organization instead?



Supporters of animal-related causes were more likely to say they would have donated to a different organization instead, suggesting their giving is less driven by a specific appeal or a spur-of-the-moment decision.

Thinking about your most recent donation: did you do any formal research about that organization before making your donation?



Supporters of animal-related causes were almost twice as likely to say they had researched the organization before donating. The sources of information they most often used were: an internet search, the organization itself (the organization's website, newsletters, in-person interaction with staff, etc.), and personal recommendations.

We asked survey participants about their most recent donations: which organizations they gave to, how they made their choices, and what prompted them to make those specific gifts. Here are some of the answers they gave about their donations to animal-related causes:

"I chose them because I love dogs."

-Humane Society of the Pikes Peak Region donor

"I am an animal owner, and P.A.W.S. is an organization for animals."

- P.A.W.S. donor

"That is where my heart is."

- Humane Society (unspecified) donor

"I generally [donate to them] at the end of each year. We have adopted animals from them in the past."

-Denver Dumb Friends League donor

"Because of my adoration for pets and animals. It is local and they do really good work for animals in our area. When people abandon their pets - they take care of them."

- Donor to "a regional nonprofit shelter for pets. I can't remember the name."

"They help animals. I try to support them every year."

-Dream Power Animal Rescue donor

"They do good work for animals. I received something in the mail for it."

- ASPCA donor

"They sent me a mailer. I like their work with endangered animals."

-World Wildlife Fund donor

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Making the Gift

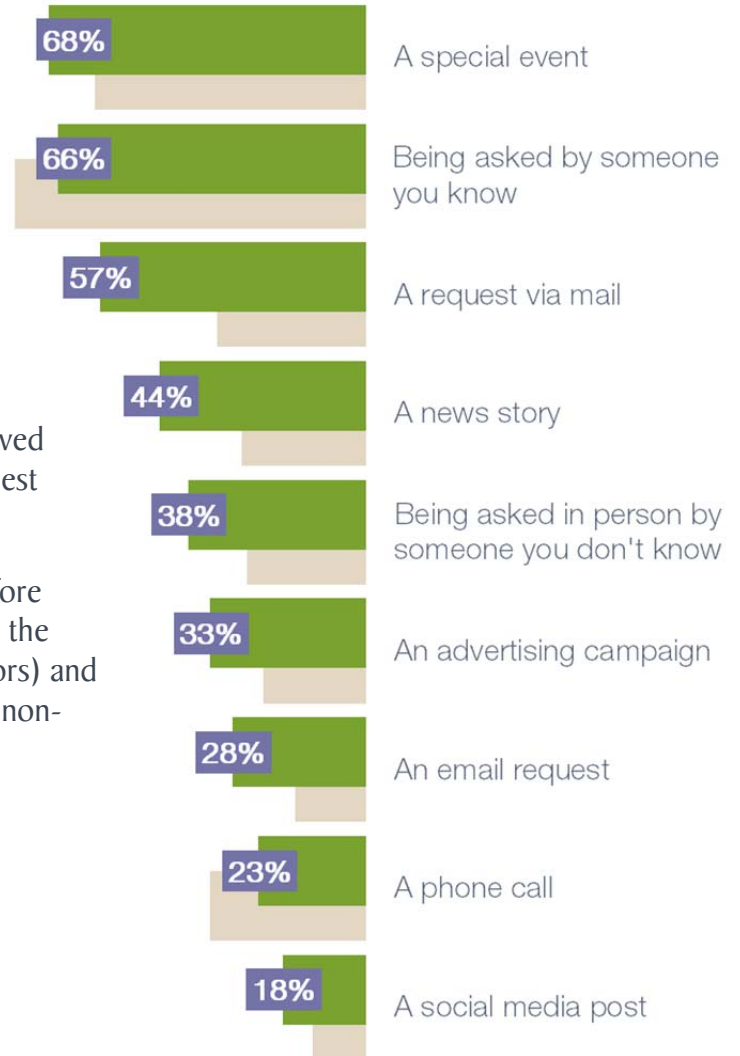
To learn more about what prompts someone to make a donation at a specific time, we asked respondents about some common fundraising strategies and other interactions, both in terms of their most recent gift and in terms of all donations they'd made in the previous year.

By a 10% margin, supporters of animal-related causes more often reported that they had donated "during a special event." Just 66% – compared with 75% of non-donors – said they'd made a gift as a result of "being asked by someone you know."

Animal supporters were nearly twice as likely to say they'd donated in the past year as a result of "a request you received in the mail" (57% donors, 32% of non-donors) and "a request you received via email" (28% donors, 15% non-donors).

They were also substantially more likely to report that, before making their most recent donation, "you saw something in the news about that organization" (51% donors, 29% non-donors) and "you volunteered for that organization" (35% donors, 23% non-donors).

In the past year, have you given as a result of..?



46%
of animal supporters
had donated through a website
in the past year



29%
of others
had donated through a website
in the past year

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Would you be more likely to donate to an organization if you heard that...?

The organization is poised to undertake a bold new project



The organization cannot meet a growing demand for the services it provides



Someone in your community had a good experience with the organization



The organization is in danger of closing due to funding shortages



We gave survey respondents a series of general, hypothetical situations and asked them to tell us whether they'd be more or less likely to donate to an organization in each situation. Overall, animal-related donors' reactions to these messages were similar to those of non-donors. The only exception was in their responses to "the organization is in danger of closing due to funding shortages." Among supporters of animal-related organizations, the response was remarkably positive, with 70% saying they'd be more likely to donate in this situation. (Only 54% of non-donors said they'd be more likely to donate, and 20% said they'd be less likely to give.)

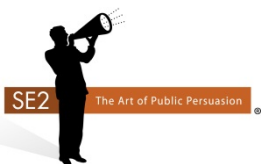
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About the Colorado Generosity Project

In 2007, the Colorado Nonprofit Association launched the Colorado Generosity Project, an initiative aimed at building expertise within and awareness of the state's charitable sector, with the ultimate goal of increasing Coloradans' generosity. The Generosity Project seeks to increase the rate and total amount of giving to Colorado's nonprofits by: conducting research about giving trends in Colorado; helping nonprofits fundraise more effectively through technical assistance and training; and teaching the public about the value of giving to charitable organizations.

Acknowledgements



SE2 is a Colorado-based mass communications firm focused on public issues, policy and social marketing. They offer a full range of advertising and public relations services to nonprofits and issue-driven organizations, helping them tell their story and identify key messages that move their audiences to action.



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About Us

Colorado Nonprofit Association leads, serves and strengthens Colorado nonprofit organizations. We are a statewide nonprofit membership coalition connecting nonprofits of all sizes, missions and geographic locations.

We lead the nonprofit sector in influencing public policy and public opinion.

We serve our members by providing tools for communication, networking and administration.

We strengthen the nonprofit community through trainings, issue discussions, and public advocacy about the importance of the nonprofit sector.

