

WHO GIVES: HEALTH & MEDICAL 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, animal-related, disaster or emergency relief, and "any health or medical causes." In this article, we'll take an in-depth look at the *people who support health and medical 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 health-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.*

Report Sponsor



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.



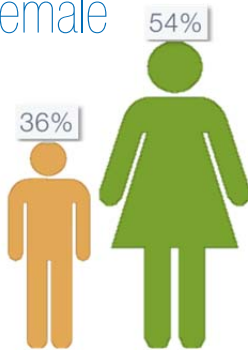
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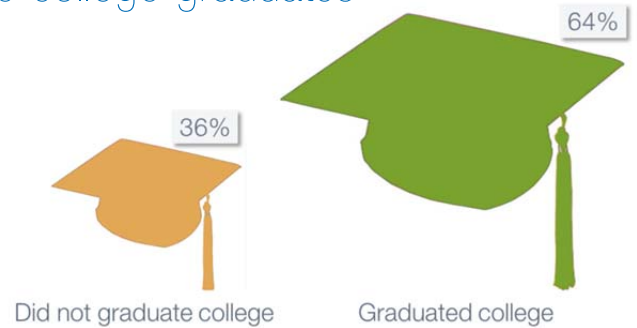
About the Donors

Overall, 46% of Coloradans surveyed reported donating to health and medical causes in the past year. Compared with other survey respondents, these donors tend to:

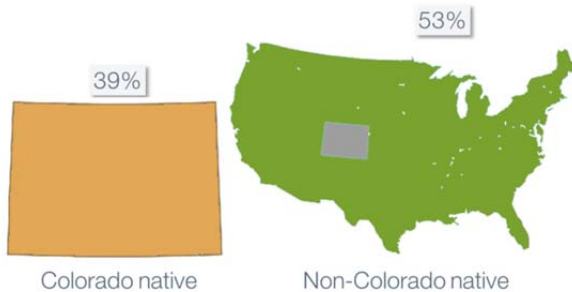
...be female



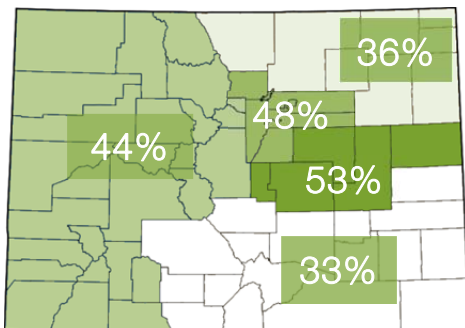
...be college graduates



...be from outside Colorado



...live in central Colorado or metro Denver



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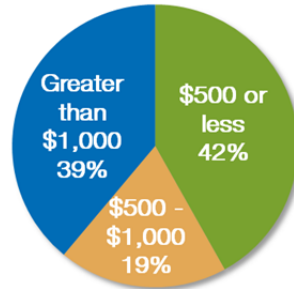
What They Give

Donors who support health and medical causes give more, on average, over the course of a year; 39% say they had donated \$1,000 or more over the past year, and a total of 58% report annual contributions of at least \$500.

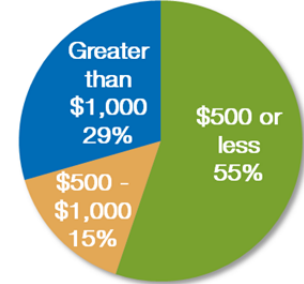
They also report donating to substantially more nonprofits than others do. 30% of health and medical donors say they had supported 10 or more nonprofits in the previous 12 months, compared with just 9% of others.

By an 18% margin, they're more likely to say that their most recent donation would have gone to a different organization, rather than not donating at all. This suggests that these gifts were planned in advance, as opposed to a casual or spur-of-the-moment decision to give.

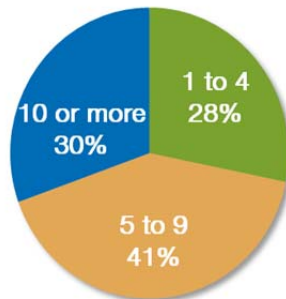
Total Annual Donations
Health & Medical Donors



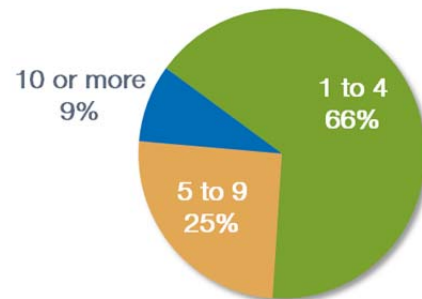
Total Annual Donations
Non-Donors



Number of Nonprofits Supported
Health & Medical Donors

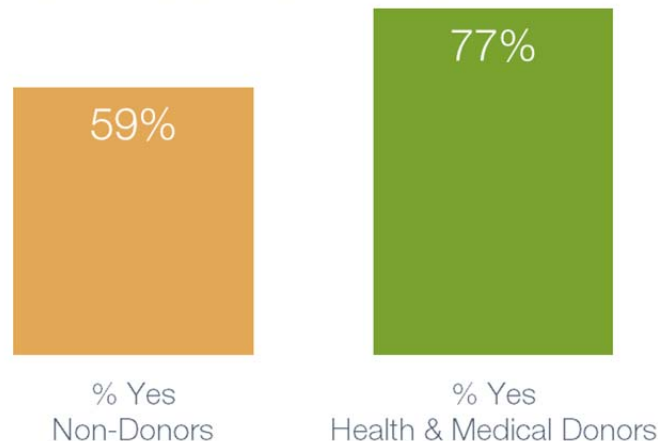


Number of Nonprofits Supported
Non-Donors



Most Recent Donation

If you had not donated to that organization, would you have donated to a different organization?



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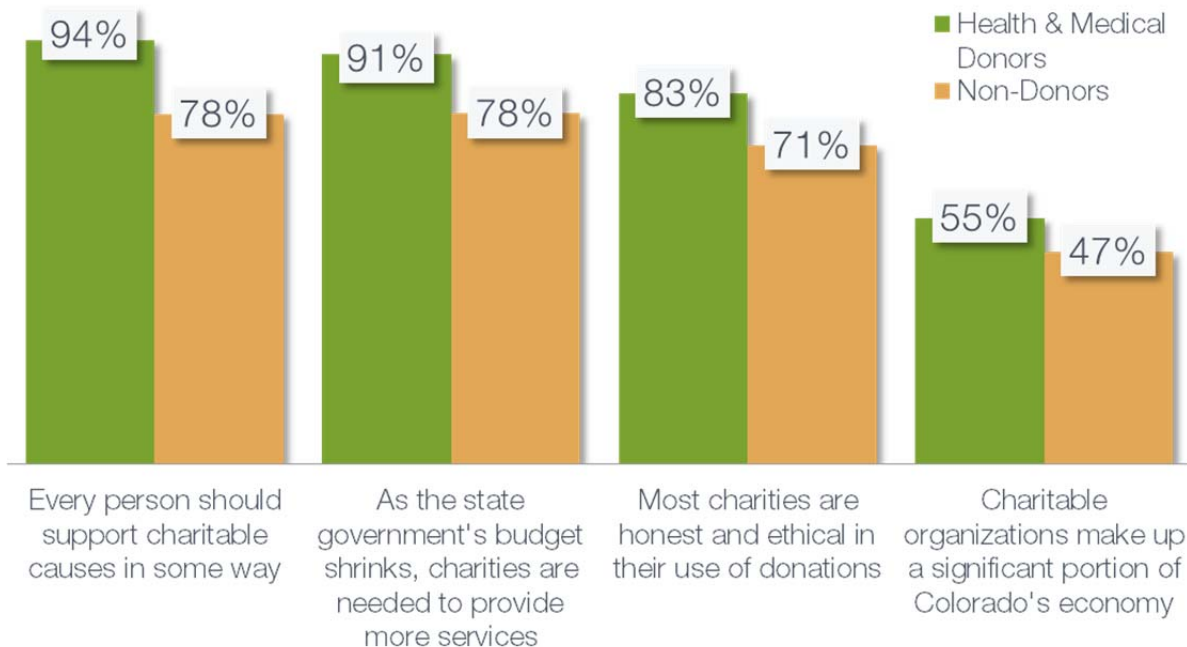
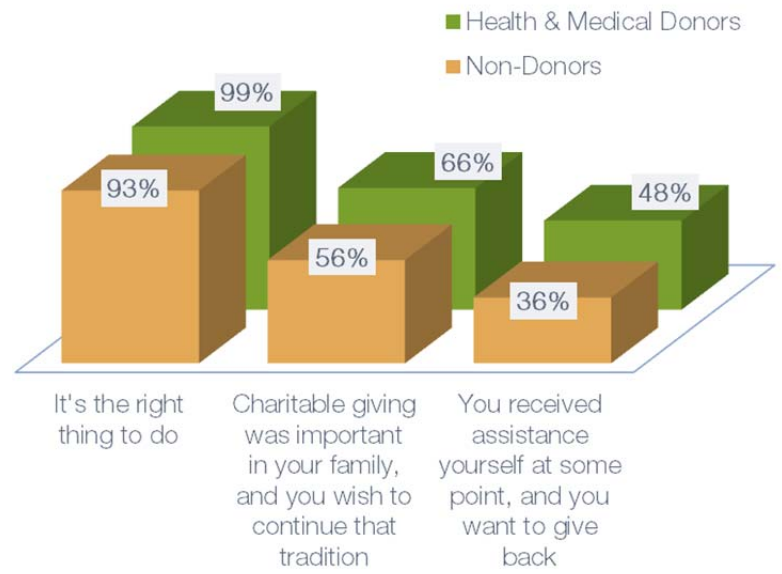
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Their Values

We asked survey participants why they give to charities in general. Overwhelmingly, health-related donors and non-donors agreed that “because it’s the right thing to do” is an important reason why they give. By a 12% margin, supporters of health-related causes were more likely to say they give because they received assistance themselves at some point, and they want to give back.

They see nonprofits as meeting important needs; 94% agreed that “every person should support charitable causes in some way,” and 91% agreed that charities are needed to fill gaps left by a shrinking state budget. By a 12% margin over non-donors, they believe most charities use donations honestly and ethically. More than half say that charities make up a significant portion of Colorado’s economy.

Important Reasons for Giving



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Deciding to Give

When choosing an organization to support, donors who support health-related causes have many of the same priorities as donors in general: they want to support trustworthy nonprofits that are effective, successful, and communicate clearly about how donations are used.

They place a strong emphasis on local impact; 90% of health and medical donors say it's important to support organizations which make "an impact locally here in Colorado," compared with 78% of non-donors.

Choosing an Organization to Support *Health & Medical Donors*

It is important that the organization...



We asked survey respondents about their most recent donation: the amount, what organization it went to, and what inspired them to give. Quite often, donors who named a health-related organization gave very personal reasons for making a gift.

"My mother suffered from Alzheimer's, so it has closely affected me." -Alzheimer's Association donor

"Because I am a cancer survivor." -American Cancer Society donor

"My husband has diabetes." -American Diabetes Association donor

"My wife has lung trouble." -American Lung Association donor

"I have a granddaughter with cystic fibrosis." -Cystic Fibrosis Foundation donor

"They help children. My son has lupus." -Lupus Foundation of America donor

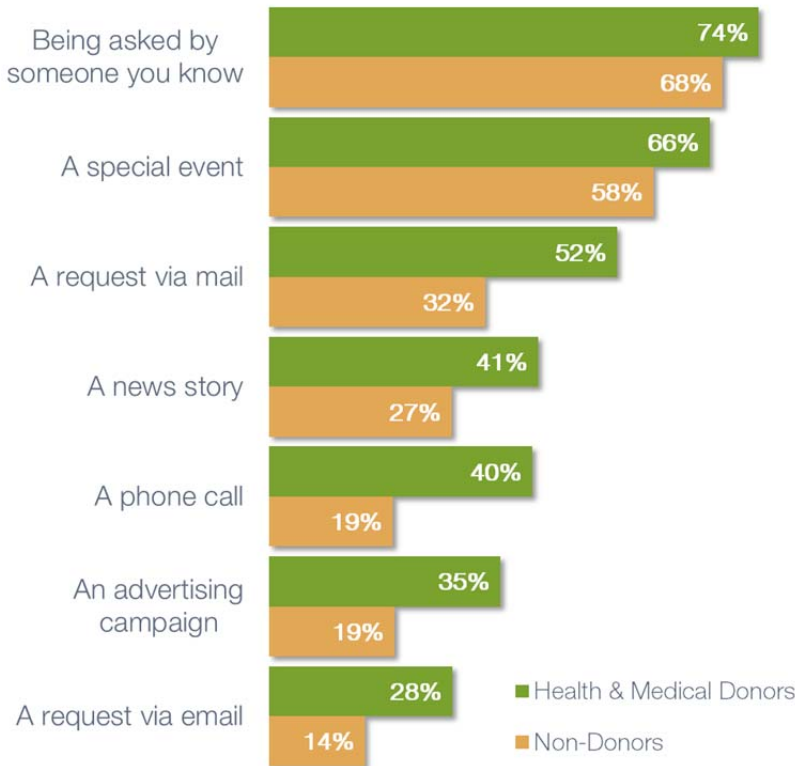
"They do a terrific job providing educational programs. I have family who have mental illness." -National Alliance on Mental Illness donor

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Giving Prompts

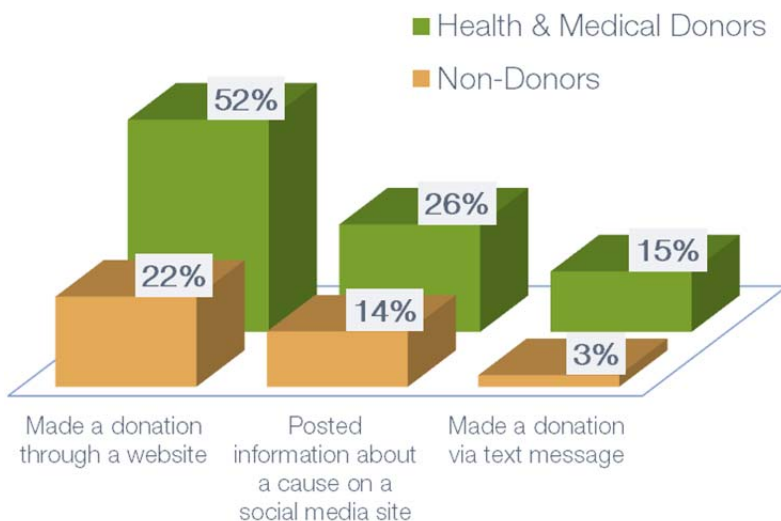
In the past 12 months, have you given as a result of..?



Among both health-related donors and non-donors, two interactions were most often cited as prompting them to donate: being asked by someone they know, and donating as part of a special event. (Health-related donors often mentioned participating in or sponsoring someone for a walk, run, or other group event.)

Across the board, people less often reported giving as a result of the less personal interactions; just 42% overall said they'd donated in response to a mail solicitation in the past year. Health-related donors, however, were significantly more likely to donate in these situations. They were also far more likely to report having made a donation in the past year through a website (52%) or via text message (15%). Their openness to donating in all these situations may result from their attitudes about giving: that most nonprofits are honest and that charitable giving is the right thing to do.

In the past 12 months, have you..?



Many donors support health-related nonprofits because of a friend or family member's struggle with health-related issues. For these donors, giving is intensely personal – but their personal connections may tie them more to causes than to specific organizations.

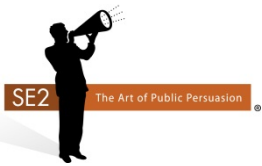
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About the Colorado Generosity Project

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.

