PHILANTHROPY FACT SHEET

This brief overview identifies some main reasons why people give to nonprofits or causes, some key approaches for “making the ask,” a very quick overview of national statistics on philanthropy, and some of the charitable activities people engage in besides giving money.

Why People Give

Research by the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy and others shows that people give because:

* They feel moved about how the donation can make a difference to people or communities
* They support a particular nonprofit or cause year after year
* They are impressed by the efficiency of the nonprofit or cause they give to
* They feel financially secure and thus able to give
* They derive personal satisfaction from their giving
* They are volunteering or otherwise involved in the nonprofit or cause they give to

Key Approaches for Making the Ask

Among the key approaches to asking a donor to give are:

* First, work to develop some kind of personal relationship with the donor
* Also, work to understand the donor’s motivation to give to the nonprofit or cause
* Introduce the donor to the nonprofit or cause and its impact
* When possible, make the “ask” for a donation through a friendly third party
* Time the approach to a significant event of the nonprofit or cause
* Time the approach to a particular time of year (e.g., December 31 for tax purposes)

National Statistics on Philanthropy

In June 2013, Giving USA, the annual yearbook of American philanthropy from the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, reported the following about giving by Americans:

* Total donated - $316.2 billion in 2012 (up 1.5% after inflation from 2011)
* Individuals - $228.9 billion (plus $23.4 billion in bequeathed gifts)
* Corporations - $18.2 billion
* Foundations - $45.7 billion

Charitable Work Besides Giving

Some of the charitable work people do besides giving money include:

* Volunteer work for a nonprofit or cause, sometimes including ongoing time commitments
* In-kind contributions of goods or services
* Service on a Board of Directors
* Service as an advisor to the nonprofit or cause
* Help with connecting other donors to the nonprofit or cause

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