

WHO GIVES; YOUTH-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, animal-related, disaster or emergency relief, and "A youth group or organization that helps children or teenagers." In this article, we'll take an in-depth look at the *people who support youth-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 youth-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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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.



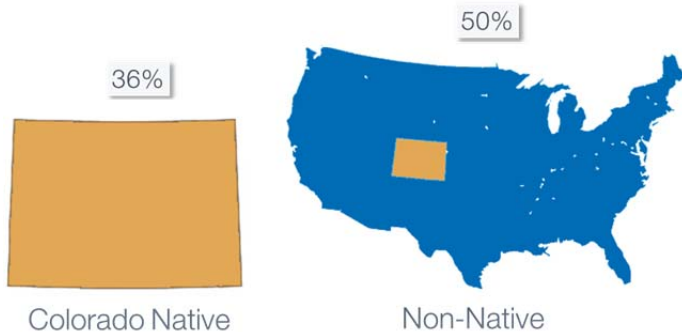
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About the Donors

Overall, 43% of Coloradans surveyed reported donating to youth-related causes in the past year. Compared with other survey respondents, these donors tend to...

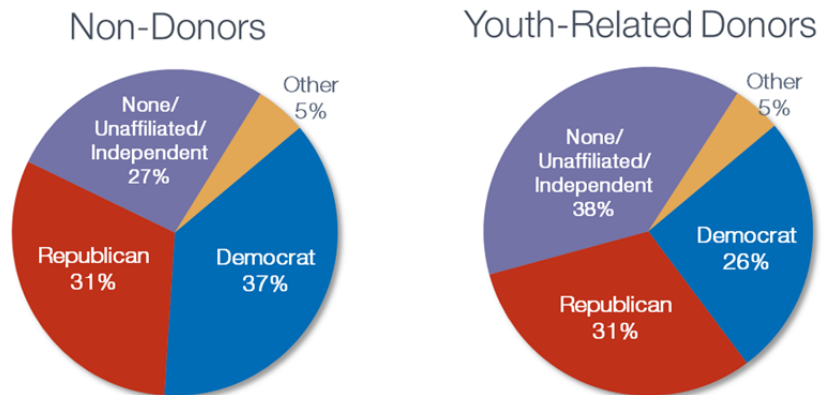
...be non-natives of Colorado



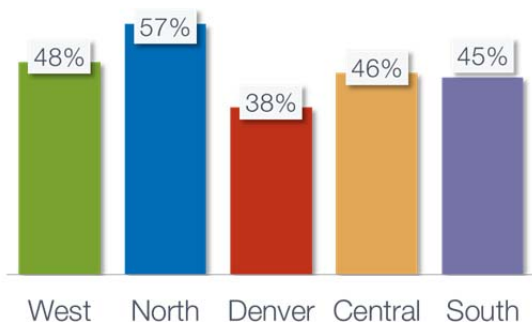
50% of non-natives, and just 36% of Colorado natives, report having donated to a youth-related cause in the past 12 months.

...be politically unaffiliated

Among donors to youth-related causes, 38% are politically independent/unaffiliated, and just 26% are Democrats.



...live in northern Colorado



57% of those living in northern Colorado are donors to youth-related causes. Just 38% of those in the Denver metro area report having given to a youth-related organization over the past year.

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What They Give

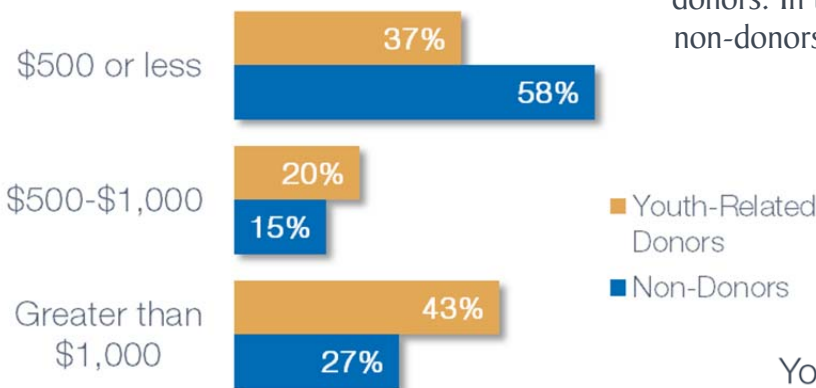
To learn about the specific reasons and ways people give, we asked each survey participant several questions about his or her most recent donation. Coloradans who support youth-related causes were more likely to report making a donation at the highest end of the range – 22% said the value of that donation was \$500 or more – but their gifts were also more likely to be at the low end of the scale, with another 20% reporting a donation value of less than \$25.

Value of Most Recent Donation

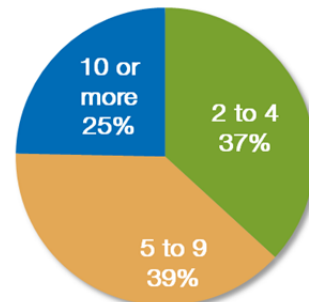


Donors to youth-related causes were significantly more likely, however, to report higher total donations over the previous 12 months, with 43% saying they had donated a total of \$1,000 or more in the previous year. They also support more nonprofits over the course of a year; 25% of youth-related donors saying they had given to 10 or more separate organizations, compared with just 15% of non-donors. In total, 63% of youth-related donors (and 44% of non-donors) reported giving to at least 5 nonprofits in a year.

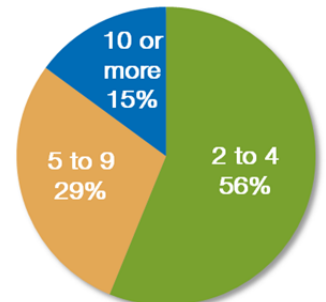
Total Donations Past 12 Months



Youth-Related Donors



Non-Donors



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Why They Give

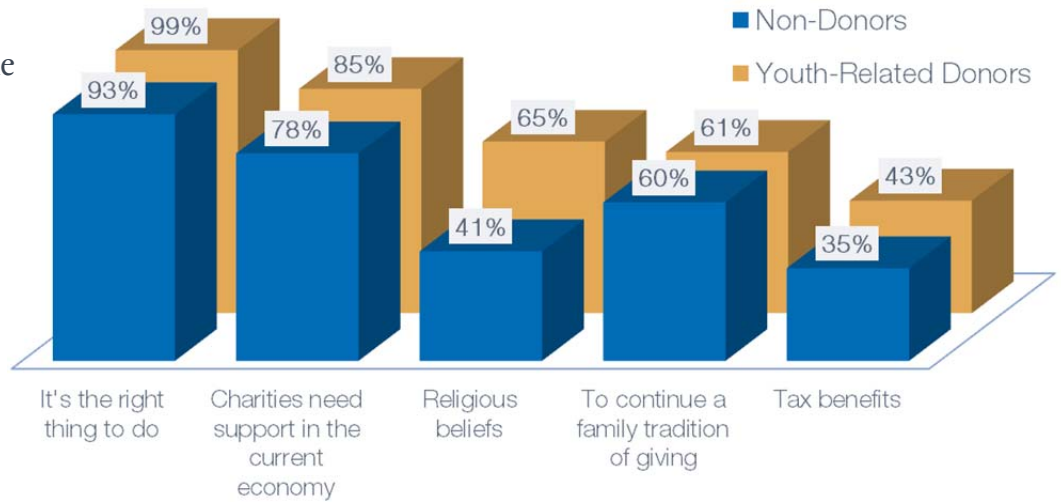
In our research, we asked Coloradans about the importance of several reasons for giving. Donors who support youth-related organizations, like Coloradans who don't, agreed that the two most important reasons are "because it's the right thing to do" and "because charities need support in the current economy."

By a notable 23% margin, youth-related donors were more likely to say their religious beliefs are an important reason why they give. Tax benefits also play an important role for these donors, with 43% ranking this as an important factor. (In our survey, we also found that 74% of youth-related donors – compared with 61% of others – told us that they itemize deductions on their tax returns.)

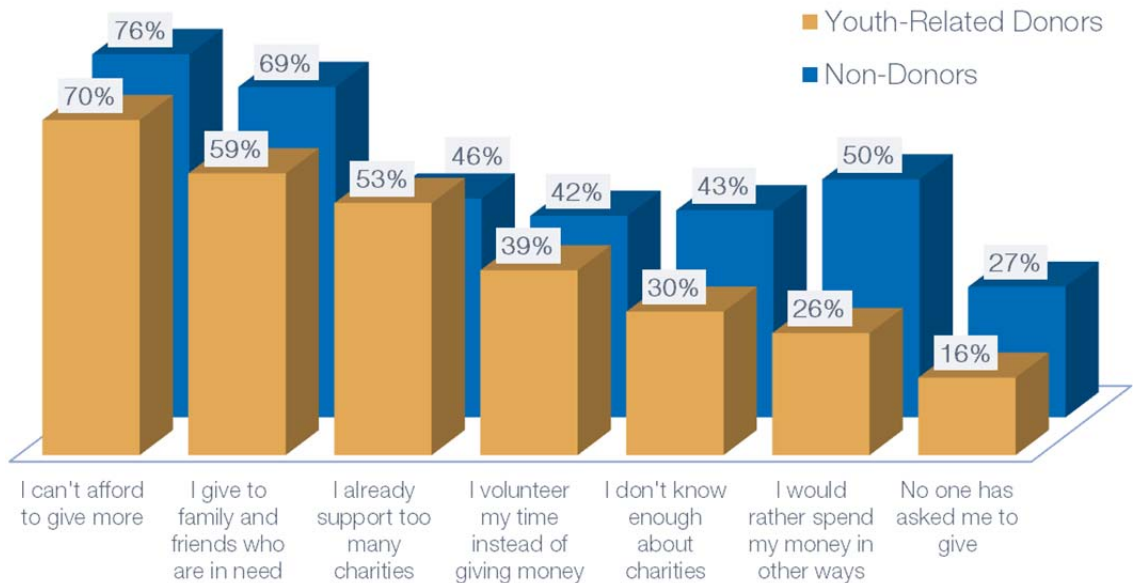
We asked survey participants about the reasons they don't give more to charity, and the comparison between

youth-related donors and non-donors was surprising. The donors were *less likely to agree with nearly every reason* for not donating more. The one exception: youth-related donors were more likely to say they "already support too many." Among both groups, "I can't afford to give more" and "I give to family and friends who are in need" were the most frequently-given reasons for not contributing more.

Important Reasons for Giving



Reasons for Not Donating More



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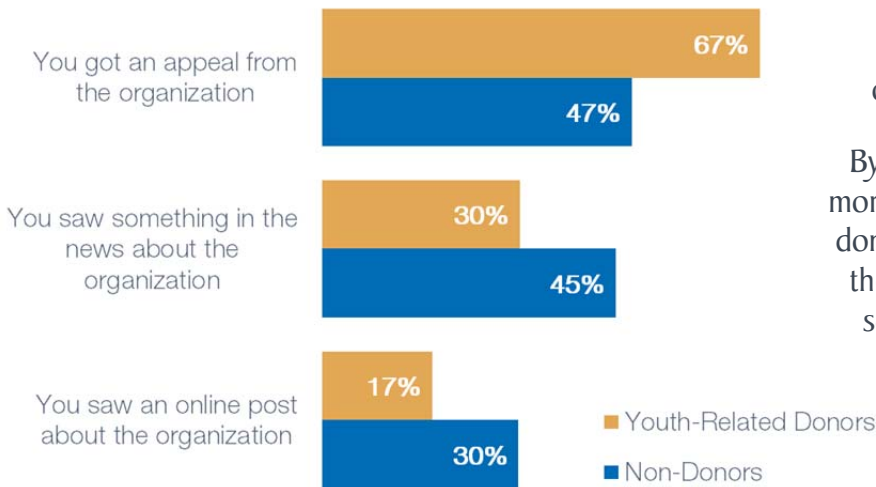
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Deciding to Give

We asked survey respondents about interactions they'd had with the organization before making their most recent donation. The results among youth-related donors and non-donors were often similar: they frequently said they

had "made another donation to [that organization] in the past two years" (80% and 75%, respectively) and "someone [they] know had a good experience with that organization" (70% and 73%, respectively).

Before making your most recent donation...

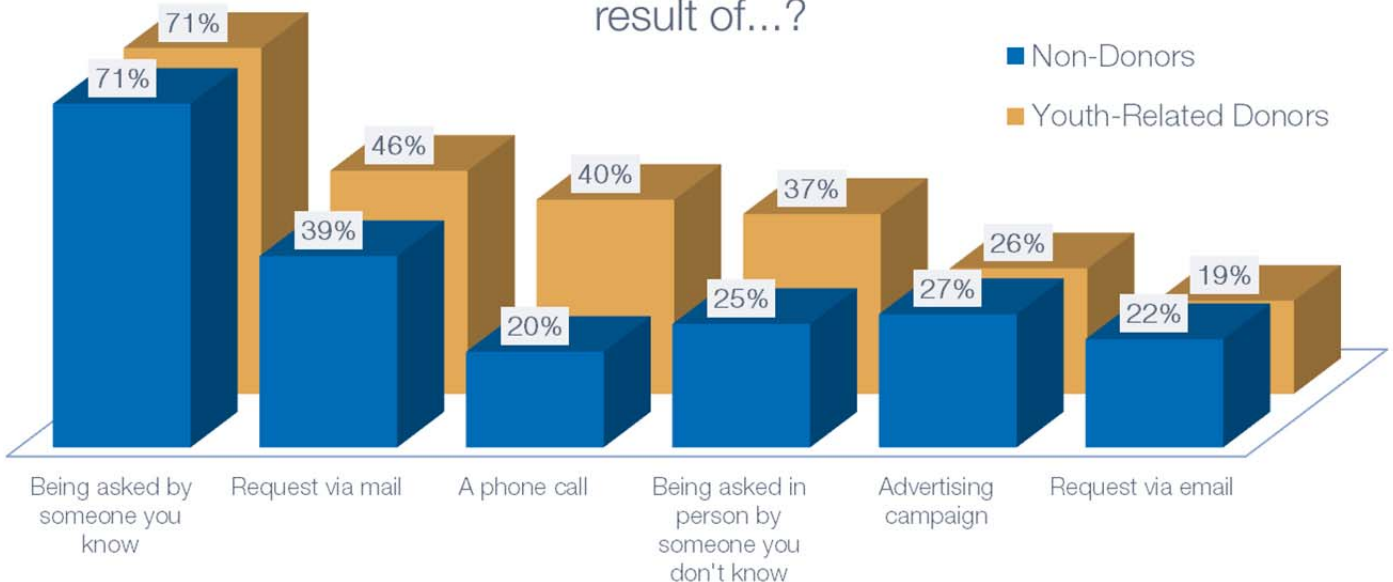


By a wide 20% margin, youth-related donors more often said they'd gotten an appeal for the donation. Compared with non-donors, however, they were less likely to report having seen something in the news (30%) or online (17%) about the organization before contributing.

Although both groups frequently reported donating as a result of "being asked by someone you know" (71% among

donors and non-donors), donors to youth-related causes more often said they had given in response to several less personal prompts. Nearly half (46%) said they'd donated in the past year in response to a request via mail, 37% had made a donation after "being asked in person by someone you don't know," and they were twice as likely (40%, compared with 20% of non-donors) to give as a result of a phone call.

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



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In Their Own Words

The survey data reveals several patterns that set youth-related donors apart from other Coloradans: they give more to charity and support more nonprofits; they place higher importance on both religious beliefs and tax benefits; they're more likely to give in response to direct appeals, including less personal appeals such as requests via phone or mail.

Regarding their most recent donation, we asked participants to explain why they chose that particular organization and what prompted them to donate at that time. Their answers provide further insight into these donors' beliefs and attitudes about giving.

Compared with others, the youth-related donors' explanations do stand out as more often based on appeals. Many said their prompt to donate was, essentially, "I got an appeal, so I gave." And while non-donors often referred to a personal experience they'd had with a cause or organization, youth-related donors tended to talk about causes, organizations, and their own reasons for giving in abstract – and often very compassionate – terms. Here are some of the answers they gave:

"I received a gift and an appeal letter from them."

"I thought it would be good for the community. They were doing a fundraiser."

"I believe in what they do. They send me a reminder and I respond."

"I think it is important for the kids."

"We do it because we feel in our heart it is the right thing to do."

"It was because God calls us to care for the poor."

"I wanted to be able to help kids around the world."

"I saw the Girl Scouts, and they kind of tug at your heart strings."

"I didn't have a particular reason. I always try to help children if I can."

"I've seen things that organization has done in the past, and I believe in their cause. They help children."

"I agree with their vision and goals. I want to support them."

"It was an emotional thing. I just felt that children should be taken care of."

"I donate because it makes me happy."

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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.

