



Employee Choice Plays an Increasingly Large Role in Workplace Giving and Corporate Social Responsibility Efforts, New Study Finds

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Special Report from Giving USA Foundation and Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy explores how workplace giving is changing

CHICAGO [November 5, 2018]—Changes to the workforce and new attitudes toward work are affecting workplace giving, and philanthropy is increasingly important to employees, employers, and nonprofits, according to a new report released today by Giving USA Foundation and the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI.

The *Giving USA Special Report on the Evolution of Workplace Giving* finds that employees increasingly want a choice in how their employer gives back, and for their employer to give to a charity of the employee's choice. This is similar to trends among nonprofit donors overall, who want more information about their donation's impact and more choice over how it is used. The landscape of workplace giving campaigns has radically expanded to include a wide range of activities, from skilled volunteer opportunities and matching gifts to more traditional federated campaigns such as United Way and the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC).

This special report is a publication of Giving USA Foundation, written and researched by the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, with support from Deloitte. Distilling academic research and information from a variety of sources, it provides insights that corporations, employees and nonprofits can implement to strengthen their corporate culture and their community. It presents key findings about corporate social responsibility (CSR) and summarizes previous research about who gives to workplace campaigns.

Among the findings:

- **Employee choice is key.** Employees want to use their talents, skills and time on a cause that they find personally meaningful. Employees also respond well when employers match time, donations or other resources to causes that the employee has chosen.
- **Engaged employees are more generous in workplace giving campaigns.** Employees who are involved with an employer's CSR efforts (or otherwise feel loyalty to their employer) tend to give more to workplace giving campaigns. Therefore, it is important that companies educate their employees about opportunities to get involved and keep in touch with employees about the outcomes of ongoing CSR efforts.
- **Nonprofits should seek out longer-term volunteer opportunities with employee groups that fit with their needs, capacity and long-term goals.** While volunteering is a common form of CSR, nonprofit organizations should be aware of potential costs, such as for developing new programs or hiring more staff to accommodate large

volunteer groups. Nonprofits should not only seek strategic partnerships that benefit the nonprofit, but the corporate volunteer group as well for best results.

“This report underscores the importance of the partnership between nonprofits and corporations,” said Rick Dunham, chair of Giving USA Foundation. “These findings emphasize to companies, fundraising professionals and nonprofits that effective communication, through a wide range of platforms, empowers employees to become donors and advocates for their causes in and through their workplaces, which is not only advantageous for the nonprofit, but for the corporation as well.”

Another theme that emerges throughout the new report is the increased prevalence of technology in the workplace and in workplace giving. For example, employees have come to expect options for how they make their gifts (e.g., payroll deduction, online platforms, etc.). Indeed, the majority of workplace giving now takes place online. While this can be considered a positive development for giving, the proliferation of technology also presents the challenge of how to engage remote workers, who may not be physically present in an office environment, in the company’s CSR initiatives.

Workplace giving is a key aspect of corporations’ giving. Total giving by corporations, including workplace giving, reached the highest inflation-adjusted level ever in 2017 at an estimated \$20.77 billion, an increase of 8.0 percent in current dollars (5.7 percent in inflation-adjusted dollars), according to *Giving USA’s Annual Report on Philanthropy* for that year.

To examine the current state of workplace giving, the report draws on three case studies that illustrate best practices for employee engagement and workplace giving campaigns in action. The first two case studies examine best practices for employers, while the third demonstrates how nonprofits can forge meaningful corporate partnerships and promote workplace giving campaigns.

“We know that workplace giving today reflects the changing nature of work, the role of technology, and the attitudes and aspirations employees bring to the workplace. As a consequence, workplace giving campaigns offer an exciting opportunity,” said Una Osili, Ph.D., associate dean for research and international programs at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. “This report makes it possible for stakeholders to apply what we already know and look to new areas of research, such as how employers can better engage diverse employees in workplace giving campaigns.”

The report highlights areas of opportunity for companies of all sizes, from finding nonprofit partners that are a good match for the skill set and size of a corporate volunteer group, to communicating effectively with employees about ongoing CSR efforts.

Finally, the report confirms that workplace giving and CSR efforts are on track to keep growing in the future. Increasingly, CSR is a factor that prospective employees, consumers and even investors consider before becoming involved with a company. Given this increased focus on CSR, workplace giving campaigns have the potential to be powerful tools to engage employees and allow companies to work in tandem with nonprofit organizations toward social good, the report finds.

Read the Full Report

The Giving USA Special Report on the Evolution of Workplace Giving is now available at www.GivingUSA.org as a **digital download** (\$24.95) or 50-page **paperback book** (\$29.95).

About The Giving USA Foundation

Advancing the research, education and public understanding of philanthropy is the mission of Giving USA Foundation, founded in 1985 by The Giving Institute. Headquartered in Chicago, the Foundation publishes data and trends about charitable giving through its seminal publication, *Giving USA*, and quarterly reports on topics related to philanthropy. Published since 1956, *Giving USA* is the longest running, most comprehensive report on philanthropy in America. *Giving USA 2018: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2017* is available now at www.GivingUSA.org. *Giving USA 2019: The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2018* will be available on June 18, 2019.

About the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy

The Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI is dedicated to improving philanthropy to improve the world by training and empowering students and professionals to be innovators and leaders who create positive and lasting change. The school offers a comprehensive approach to philanthropy through its academic, research and international programs and through The Fund Raising School, the Lake Institute on Faith & Giving, the Mays Family Institute on Diverse Philanthropy and the Women's Philanthropy Institute. Follow us on [Twitter](#) @IUPPhilanthropy and "Like" us on [Facebook](#).

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