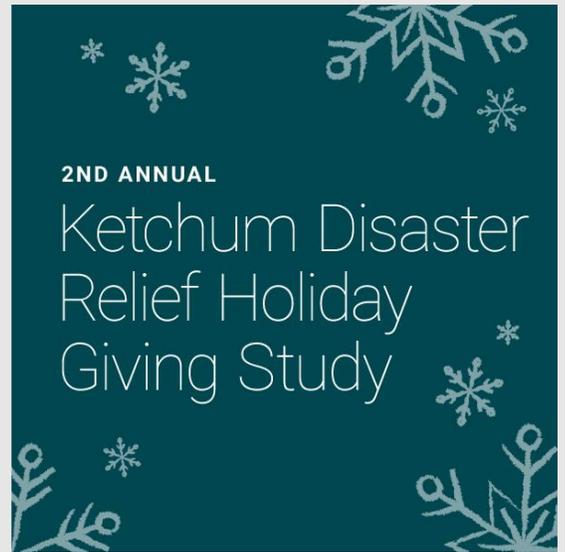


# Americans Show Fatigue in Charitable Giving to Disaster Relief and Volunteering, According to Second Annual Ketchum Study



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## *Supporting Disaster Relief is Less of a Priority in 2018 Despite Costly Year for U.S. Natural Disasters, but Consumer Commitment to Companies that Support Disaster Preparedness and Relief Remains Steady*

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**NEW YORK, Dec. 12, 2018** – After a strong commitment to giving in 2017, the American public is less inclined to give back with their time and money this holiday season, according to Ketchum’s second-annual Disaster Relief Holiday Giving Study. The number of Americans planning to donate has decreased 18 percent, and those specifically planning to donate to disaster relief has decreased approximately 18 percent over last year, despite the fact that 2018 is likely to surpass 2017 with 11 disaster events with losses exceeding \$1 billion and the most destructive wildfire in California history.

Specifically, the study found that among survey respondents of Americans ages 18 years and older:

- 40 percent plan to give money in 2018, down from 49 percent in 2017
- 29 percent plan to volunteer in 2018, down from 32 percent in 2017
- 38 percent are not giving to natural disasters, compared with 29 percent who said they would not give to natural disasters in 2017

Monica Marshall, SVP and director of Ketchum’s Purpose specialty, said, “2018 was a charged year, with many people having very strong opinions about issues they care deeply about. We saw an increase in passionate participation in causes, and even rage-giving. On top of that, the U.S. was inundated with disaster after disaster, and these factors were likely major drivers of the giving fatigue identified by this study.”

While disaster support is not a priority for direct giving in 2018, slipping from the fifth-most important cause for Americans to No. 8 since Ketchum’s April 2018 Causes Americans Care About study, Ketchum found that companies continue to play an active role in how and whether people donate. Similar to the 2017 survey, nearly half of consumers say they are more likely to buy holiday gifts from companies that support disaster preparedness and relief.

“We continue to see consumers preferring brands that drive awareness and funds for causes,” Marshall said. “This means companies committed to issues that align with their mission and their customers’ values can differentiate while increasing consumer loyalty, and NGOs can gain exposure and funds for critical social and environmental issues.”

The survey also showed that, among survey respondents who plan to give to disaster relief during the 2018 holiday season, more than 8 in 10 (83 percent) will give in addition to, not in place of, personal and holiday shopping.

“As a first responder supporting the response and recovery from Hurricane Florence and major disasters going back more than a decade, I’ve seen firsthand the vulnerability of the survivors and the challenges facing charitable donations in the aftermath,” said Michael Anderson, an issues and crisis specialist at Ketchum and U.S. Coast Guard Reservist. “Despite disaster giving fatigue, there are still many signs that people want to help others with contributions that matter.”

The ways in which people make their donations is shifting as well: cause-related product purchases and point-of-sale donations remain prevalent, at 55 percent and 44 percent respectively. However, both have declined slightly since 2017. Texting donations has increased to 13 percent in 2018 from only 8 percent in 2017. Millennials (ages 22 to 37) are leading the shift to donate by text.

The Disaster Relief Holiday Giving Study also revealed generational differences related to holiday donations and volunteering. For example, volunteering ranks higher among millennials (40 percent) than older generations, compared to 23 percent of Gen X (ages 38 to 53) and 21 percent of Boomers (ages 54 to 72). However, among these generations, Boomers are most likely to make charitable contributions during the holidays, with 51 percent planning to make direct contributions.

How companies respond to natural disasters can have a significant impact on their corporate reputation and employee engagement. To help ensure that companies have a robust disaster preparedness, response and recovery plan that connects to and through their sustainability, social impact or purpose initiatives, Ketchum created a new service called Disaster 3D.

Disaster 3D consists of three phases: Discover (assessing a company’s ability to engage in a tangible way), Design (creating an engagement plan for support and communications strategy), and Deploy (community relations activities that include first/second responder relationship building). The service is led by Anderson, a U.S. Coast Guard Reservist who has responded to nearly 40 US disasters in the billion-dollar range in the past decade, and Marshall, a former deputy director of private partnerships and communications for the United Nations disaster response agency, the World Food Programme.

### **About the Second Annual Disaster Relief Holiday Giving Study**

The omnibus survey was conducted through an online survey of 1,000 Americans (general population). In partnership with Ketchum’s Analytics specialty, Research Now conducted the survey Nov. 5 to 9, 2018. When necessary, the numbers were weighted to be nationally representative (weighting is applied to age, gender, region, race/ethnicity, education and income to be proportionally representative of the U.S. adult population). Some percentages may not add up to 100 percent due to rounding. The margin of error for the sample of 1,256 is +/- 2.77 percent at the 95 percent confidence level. Smaller subgroups will have larger error margins. Generational breaks by age align with Pew Research.

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