

# How Florida's philanthropy landscape is changing

by Amy Keller

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Mari Kuraishi, president of the Jacksonville-based Jessie Ball duPont Fund, says Floridians often get a bad rap when it comes to charitable giving.

“When I came to the Jessie Ball duPont Fund three years ago, there was a lot of like, ‘Oh, well, Floridians aren’t very generous because they’re all transplants, and they give back to where they came from’ — or at least that was the hypothesis, right?” Kuraishi says. Another refrain she heard was that the Sunshine State is filled with fixed-income retirees who were less inclined to open their purse strings. But none of it rang true to Kuraishi

“My anecdotal experience was that Floridians are perfectly generous, as generous as anybody else is, so I just wanted to get the data,” she says.

Seeking answers, the fund and the Florida Nonprofit Alliance, a statewide coalition of non-profits, commissioned Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy to look into the subject in a study fielded by the University of North Florida Public Opinion Research Lab. Their findings confirmed Kuraishi’s suspicions: According to the “Giving in Florida” report, 69% of Floridians made donations to charitable organizations in 2021 — which is nearly on par with the 71% of American households that reported giving to charity in 2020 — and the bulk of those gifts (74% of donated funds) stays in the state.

## Tax Impacts

In 2007, charitable giving by Floridians reached \$12.8 billion but dropped after the Great Recession to \$9.9 billion. Giving returned to pre-recession levels by 2015 and soared to nearly \$18 billion in 2017, before changes in the federal Tax Cuts and Jobs Act took effect. That policy change nearly doubled the standard deduction (from \$6,500 to \$12,000 for individual filers and from \$13,000 to \$24,000 for married couples), making it less beneficial for many tax filers to itemize deductions — and in 2018, the number of Florida donors reporting charitable contributions to the Internal Revenue Service dropped by nearly 63%. The overall dollar-value contributions didn’t shrink proportionately during that time, according to an analysis by the Florida Nonprofit Alliance, because wealthy donors “significantly” amped up their giving.

## Giving in Florida

The Jessie Ball duPont Fund and the Florida Nonprofit Alliance commissioned Indiana University’s Lilly Family School of Philanthropy to look into Florida’s donation trends. Some of the findings:

- **87% — Percentage of Floridians who engage in some type of “informal” philanthropy** — giving outside of the context of making monetary donations to registered organizations, such as charities and foundations. Examples include participating in crowdfunding campaigns to donating goods to a food bank to giving money to a homeless person.
- **56% — Floridians who reported volunteering in 2021** — two-thirds of those who are age 40 or younger spend time volunteering.

- **80%** — **Florida donors** who say they made charitable contributions out of “compassion toward people in need;” almost half were motivated to give by seeing friends donate, and 35% reported that donating to charities made them feel needed.

### Top Reasons Floridians Stop Giving to Non-Profits:

- **62%** — **Mismanagement of donations.**
- **60%** — **Charities working on different issues.**
- **60%** — **Organizations spending too much on administration and fundraising.**
- **59%** — **Receiving too many requests from organizations for money.**

### Top Issues That Matter Most to Floridians:

- **43%** — **Poverty and income inequality.**
- **41%** — **Health.**
- **28%** — **Climate change and environment.**
- **28%** — **Animal rights.**
- **27%** — **Disaster relief and recovery.**
- **25%** — **Florida households that gave to racial justice causes**, with an average donation of \$1,335. The leading way Floridians contributed to those causes was via direct support to individuals and families, such as through crowdfunding sites (for example, GoFundMe) or via mutual aid, hyperlocal and volunteer-led groups that organize informally to meet their community’s needs. Twelve percent of those surveyed support racial justice causes via established non-profits — such as the NAACP, Urban League, United Negro College Fund and other groups — while 11% gave to grassroots groups, such as Black Lives Matter, bail funds and other organizations focused on criminal justice reform.

### Giving by Wealth

- **\$1,035** — Average Florida donation in 2021.
- **\$15,294** — Average donation by high-net-worth Floridians — defined as households with an annual income of at least \$200,000 and /or net assets of \$1 million (excluding their primary residence).

### *High Net Worth Givers Were Also Found To Be:*

- **More likely to volunteer than the typical Floridian** — 80% vs. 56%.
  - **More likely to give because their friends did than the typical Floridian** — 56% vs. 48%.
  - **More likely to donate to receive a tax credit than the typical Floridian** — 37% vs. 19%.
  - **More likely to give a larger share** of their donations to organizations not based in Florida.
- ### Generational Giving Gaps

### Florida Donors 40 and Younger:

- **Are more likely than their older counterparts to volunteer** — 66% vs. 43% — or give online, through an app or via a crowdfunding campaign.
- **Are more likely to give to environmental causes** — 42% vs. 31%.
- **Are more likely to stop giving because an organization didn’t recognize or acknowledge their contribution** — 53% vs. 22% — or because an organization mismanaged donations — 75% vs. 55%.

### Florida Donors at Least 65 Years Old:

- **Are more likely than their younger counterparts to support formal charities** — 75% vs. 66%.
- **Give a larger share of support to organizations in Florida** — 72% vs. 62%.
- **Are more likely to give out of a sense of compassion** toward those in need and more likely to believe people can be trusted — 67% vs. 53%.

### Regional Giving

While Southeast Florida represents the largest share of giving, the share of dollars going to Florida charities is distributed more evenly around the state.

*Source: Florida Nonprofit Alliance; the Jessie Ball duPont Fund; Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at IUPUI*

### Bequests

- **9%** — Percentage of the \$471.4 billion given by Americans in 2020 that was via bequest, which is a gift in their will or estate plan.
- **8%** — Percentage of Florida households that have wills designating a gift to a Florida non-profit.
- **16%** — Respondents 65 and older who had a will with a bequest, with 60% of those naming a Florida charity.
- **41%** — High net worth households containing a bequest, with 74% of those naming a Florida charity.
- **Donors** most likely to leave a charitable bequest to a Florida-based non-profit were younger and more likely to be Hispanic or Black.