



Unlocking Gen Z and Millennial Generosity

Engaging the Next Generation of Faith-Driven Givers

Evangeline Pattison

VP Client Services + Senior Consultant
The FOCUS Group

Audrey Reeves

Marketing Lead
The FOCUS Group

Introductions

Why This Matters Now

- Donor counts declining nationally (Giving USA)
- Younger donors express generosity differently
- Faith-based nonprofits are well positioned for growth

Roadmap For This Session

- Generational Trends
- Understanding Younger Donors
- Annual Fund Strategies
- Capital Campaign Strategies
- Action Steps

Generational Trends

Defining Our Generations

- Boomers: ~61-80
- Gen X: ~45-60
- **Millennials:** ~29-44
- **Gen Z:** ~12-28

Millennials + Gen Z = “Younger” or “Next Gen” Donors

The Generational Landscape

- Boomers: Highest total giving
- Gen X: steady giving, declining trust
- Millennials: frequent giving to multiple causes
- Gen Z: early donors, values driven

Giving Amounts by Generation

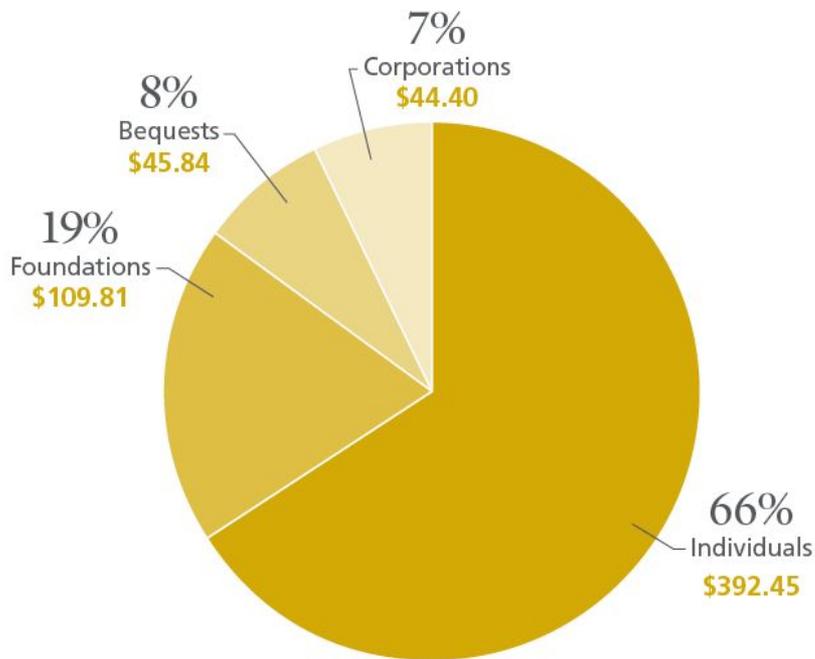
- Boomers give the most dollars
- Millennials increasing fastest
- Gen Z emerging

How Many Causes Donors Support

- Boomers: about 3
- Gen X: 3 to 4
- Millennials: 4 to 6
- Gen Z: 5 or more

2024 contributions: \$592.50 billion by source of contributions

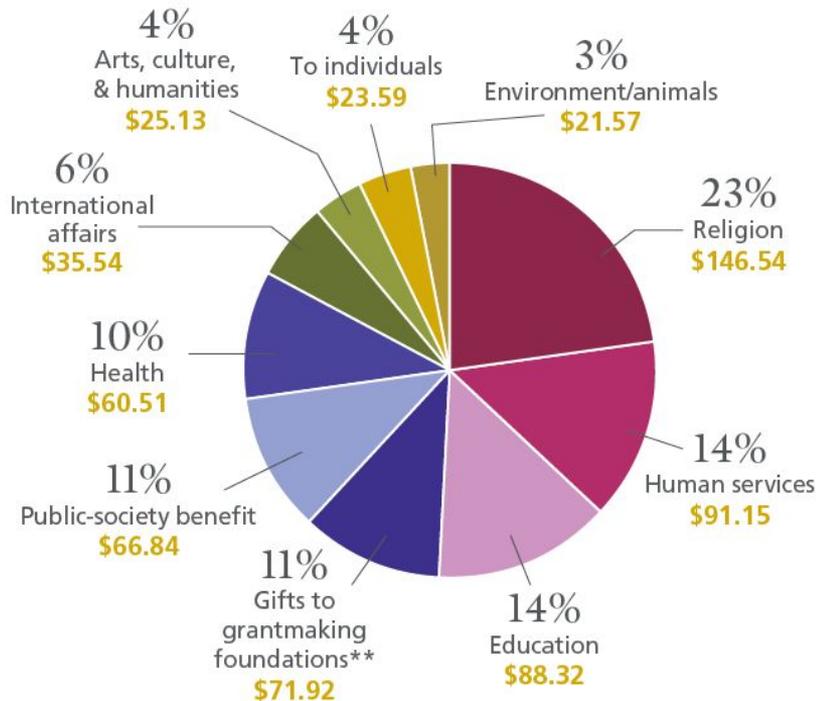
(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)



SYMPOSIUM

2024 contributions: \$592.50 billion by type of recipient organization*

(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)



Context: The Great Wealth Transfer

- \$124 trillion will transfer to heirs and charities by 2045
- Next Gen Stewards are not monolithic
 - Wealth Creators (43%)
 - Inheritors (19%)
 - Hybrids (38%)

Growing Preference for Digital Giving

- Digital giving rising across all generations
- Recurring giving strongest among Millennials
- Gen Z highly digital

Motivations by Generation

- Boomers: responsibility and loyalty
- Gen X: impact and stewardship
- Millennials: impact and values alignment
- Gen Z: identity and authenticity

Understanding Younger Donors

Key Characteristics of Younger Donors

Motivation	Impact, social change, story, purpose
Trust drivers	Transparency, authenticity, clear outcomes
Giving channels	Digital first (mobile/online)
Identity	See giving as part of being a changemaker
Participation	Value time, community involvement, social connection
Fund preferences	Issue/cause-based over institutional or routine giving

Non-negotiables for Younger Donors

- Clear mission and outcomes
- Authentic voices
- Digital convenience
- Opportunities to participate

“Opportunities to Participate” includes:

- Donating
- Volunteering (including professional services)
- Sharing online
- Peer fundraising

Barriers for Younger Donors

- Limited income
- Skepticism about overhead
- Desire for immediate results
- Need for proof of impact

Discovery Channels for Younger Donors

- Social media: 55%
- Friends: 35%
- Influencers: 30%
- Email: 20%

Why Younger Donors Stop Giving

- Felt unappreciated
- Did not see results
- Too many irrelevant messages
- Did not feel part of a community

Seeing Next Gen Women

- Women's economic influence expanding rapidly
 - Already control 30% of household assets and growing
 - Factors: longevity, increased earning, biz ownership
- Women are most credited with passing generosity to the next generation
- 70% Next Gen women feel unprepared for stewarding their wealth

Annual Fund Strategies

Why Annual Funds Must Evolve

- Traditional letters less effective
- Younger donors prefer short messaging
- Digital is central

“Modern” Annual Fund Model

- Multi-channel
- Recurring giving
- Micro campaigns
- Impact reporting

Micro Campaigns

- Shorter duration
- Specific outcomes
- High energy and shareability

Recurring Giving

- Predictable revenue
- Millennials lead adoption
- Highest retention rate in fundraising

How to Promote Recurring Giving

- Make monthly the default
- Name the program
- Offer insider updates

Annual Fund Summary

- Younger donors want clarity
- Transparency drives loyalty
- Digital flexibility is essential

Capital Campaign Strategies

Why Engage Younger Donors in Your Campaign

- They want a voice
- They want transparency
- They become future major donors

Early Involvement Strategies

- Invite to vision discussion
- Ask for feedback
- Share drafts and concepts

Roles for Younger Donors

- Ambassadors
- Digital promoters
- Peer fundraisers
- Storytelling contributors

Digital Tools in Campaigns

- Microsites
- Story videos
- Virtual tours

How to Ask Younger Donors

- Lead with impact
- Explain outcomes
- Offer tangible giving options

Capital Campaign Summary

- Early involvement
- Meaningful roles
- Transparent communication

Action Steps

What You Can Do This Month

- Conduct digital audit
- Run a micro campaign
- Identify 5 younger donor leaders

Digital Audit: Key Questions

Take the journey as if a first-time donor.

1. How *quickly* and *easily* can someone give?
2. Does this feel *human* or like an *institution*?
3. What *relationship* are we offering *beyond donation*?

Digital Audit: Checklist

Questions	Guideline
Are you focusing on mobile experience?	Should be primary
How much time does it take from start to finish?	60-90 seconds
How many clicks (and fields) to fill out?	2-3 screens max
Do you offer simple payment mechanism (beyond cc)?	Venmo/Paypal/Google/Apple
What is pre-populated?	Monthly amount (w easy opt-out)
Is confirmation page welcoming?	Think celebratory, not sterile
Is there social sharing prompt?	Make it immediate and easy
Are you offering next steps?	Follow, join, volunteer, bring a friend

What You Can Do This Year

- Build recurring program
- Create Young Leader Advisory Group
- Add quarterly impact updates

Final Encouragement

- Younger donors are generous
- They want purpose and connection
- The future of generosity is strong

Table Discussions

Share at Your Table

What's one way your org is connecting well with Next Gen donors?

What is an area you want to work on?

References

Sources:

Giving USA 2023 and 2024

Blackbaud Charitable Giving Report 2023

Blackbaud Generational Giving Study

Pew Research Center

Barna Group

Global Trends in Giving Report



Vangie Pattison - Senior Consultant
epattison@thefocusgroup.com

Audrey Reeves, Marketing Lead
areeves@thefocusgroup.com