

Charitable Giving Sees Slight Dip Amidst Recession

Charities are receiving fewer donations because of the recession, with donations to animal charities dropping by 5.5 percent.

By The SmallAnimalChannel News Division

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Courtesy of Giving USA Foundation / Giving USA 2009

Charities for the environment and animals received 2 percent of the total charitable contributions in 2008.

Americans gave about \$307.7 billion in 2008, with \$6.6 billion of it going toward animal and environment organizations, according to Giving USA, a publication of Giving USA Foundation, researched and written by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Overall charitable giving is down from \$314.1 billion in 2007, a record year since the annual report on philanthropy began in 1956.

The animal/environment subsector, which represents 2 percent of total estimated giving, saw a 5.5 percent drop from the prior year.

"With the United States mired in a recession throughout 2008, there was no doubt in anyone's mind that charitable giving would be down," said Del Martin, chair of Giving USA Foundation. "However, what we find remarkable is that individuals, corporations and foundations still provided more than \$307 billion to causes they support, despite the economic conditions.

"It would have been easy to say 'not this year' when appeals came their way, and we definitely did see belt-tightening. This drop in giving meant that nonprofits have had to do more with less over the past year, but it could have been a lot worse."

Other recipients of contributions in 2008 included those involved with religion (35 percent of total estimated giving), education (13 percent), human services (9 percent), health (7 percent), public-society benefit (8 percent), arts/culture/humanities (4 percent), international affairs (4 percent), grants to individuals (1 percent), gifts to foundations (11 percent) and unallocated giving (6 percent).

Individual giving, which is always the largest component of charitable contributions, was about \$229.3 billion, or 75 percent of the total, in 2008, according to the report. This is a decrease of 2.7 percent compared with 2007 estimates.

Charitable bequests brought in about \$22.7 billion in 2008, a decrease of 2.8 percent from the prior year. This component makes up about 7 percent of total giving.

Corporate giving, about 5 percent of charitable giving, decreased 4.5 percent to \$14.5 billion.

Foundation grant making increased 3 percent to \$41.2 billion, representing about 13 percent of total giving in 2008.

The Giving USA 2009 report will be available in early July.

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