

NOVEMBER 2021

**COVID-19, GENEROSITY, AND GENDER:**  
How Giving Changed During the  
First Year of a Global Pandemic



**IUPUI WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY INSTITUTE**  
LILLY FAMILY SCHOOL OF PHILANTHROPY

**RESEARCH THAT GROWS WOMEN'S PHILANTHROPY**

RESEARCHED AND WRITTEN BY

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### **Women's Philanthropy Institute**

The Women's Philanthropy Institute (WPI) is part of the Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy. WPI increases understanding of women's philanthropy through rigorous research and education, interpreting and sharing these insights broadly to improve philanthropy. Learn more at <https://philanthropy.iupui.edu/wpi>.

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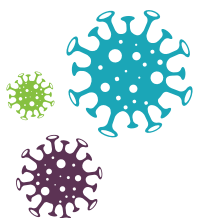
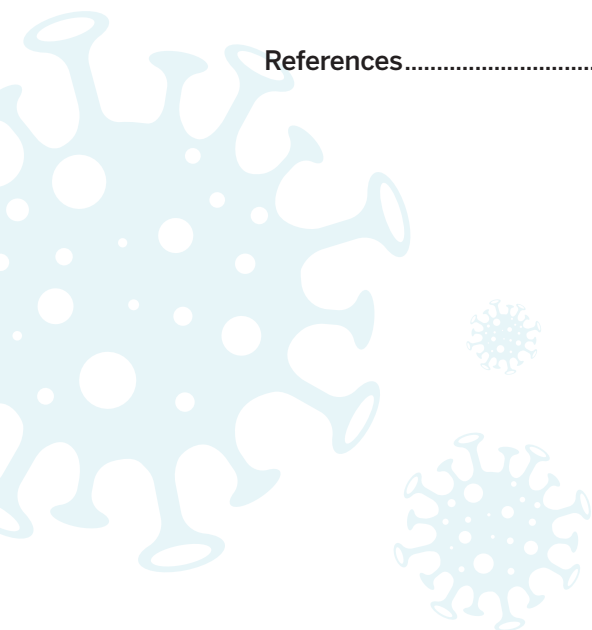
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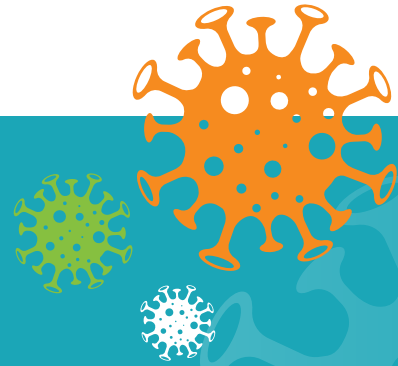


## INTRODUCTION

In September 2020, the Women's Philanthropy Institute (WPI) examined the intersection of COVID-19, gender, and generosity to understand how charitable giving by U.S. households was shifting during the initial months of the pandemic.<sup>1</sup> The report found that single women's philanthropy appeared to be affected more than that of single men or married/partnered couples; single women were more likely to reduce their giving in response to the crisis. Despite negative trends in giving for single women in particular, the study showed that giving in response to the pandemic itself was strong: around one-third of households gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses, and around half of households gave indirectly (for example, by ordering takeout to support a local restaurant or paying a stylist without receiving services).

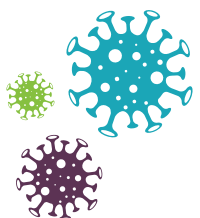
A year later, the pandemic has gone through ebbs and flows and the end is not yet in sight. Instead of coming to an abrupt close, it is increasingly clear that the "new normal" brought on by COVID-19 may be here for quite some time. While the term "She-cession" was coined in May 2020,<sup>2</sup> the past year's jobs reports indicate a persistent unemployment crisis for women, especially mothers of school-aged children. The "Great Resignation" is in full swing, and women are quitting their jobs at a faster pace than men.<sup>3</sup> To understand how the developing context of the pandemic continues to affect philanthropy, the present study revisits the same questions a year after the original survey was fielded.

While other research has been conducted on charitable giving during the pandemic, as well as challenges for women during this time, this report focuses on the intersection of COVID-19, gender, and philanthropy. This study has implications for nonprofit organizations and fundraisers as they continue to adjust to the new dynamics of their work, and for donors as they choose where and how to give, especially those prioritizing gender equity and racial and social justice given the events of the past year and a half. As society's views of and responses to the pandemic have shifted, so, too, has charitable giving and the role of women in families and society. This report provides an update on the research one year later to understand how women and men are giving in the second year of the COVID-19 crisis.



## KEY FINDINGS

- 1.** The share of households who gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses for COVID-19 relief increased by 9.3 percentage points from May 2020 to May 2021.
- 2.** In response to the pandemic, overall charitable giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health saw strong growth from May 2020 to May 2021. While giving to organizations focused on religion and all other purposes also increased during this time, U.S. households are giving less to these organizations than before the pandemic began.
- 3.** Contracting COVID-19 did not have a clear effect on overall charitable giving, but was associated with increased giving for COVID-19 relief. The economic impacts of the pandemic, however, decreased overall charitable giving to all three organization types (basic needs and health, religion, and all other organizations).
- 4.** Single women and married/partnered couples increased their overall charitable giving from May 2020 to May 2021, but are giving less to most charitable organizations than before the pandemic began.



## BACKGROUND

### Shifting context of the COVID-19 pandemic

Two major changes have occurred since the publication of WPI's first report on gender and generosity at the start of the pandemic. First, there is now a growing body of research about how the pandemic has influenced charitable giving, and how COVID-19 has affected women in particular. A year ago, there was no clear precedent for such a crisis, and researchers searched for hints as to how philanthropy might be affected in the literature on disaster giving and recession giving. While new research is available, WPI's studies are the only ones to date known to have investigated the intersection of COVID-19, gender, and generosity.

The second key shift has been society's understanding of the pandemic overall and in the context of other events that took place during 2020 and 2021. At the start of the pandemic in March 2020, most messaging was that if people practiced social distancing, the crisis would likely pass relatively quickly. Now it has become clear that the pandemic will go on in some form for the foreseeable future. How has this affected people's decisions, particularly about their finances—such as charitable giving?

Finally, when WPI collected data in mid-May 2020 for the first study, it was hard to imagine anything would come close to COVID-19 in terms of its impact on philanthropy and society more broadly. But later that same month, the murder of George Floyd by Minneapolis police officers reignited a movement for racial and social justice that spread across the United States and around the world. Late 2020 and early 2021 also brought a deepening political divide around the presidential election, culminating in a violent insurrection on the U.S. Capitol and ongoing divisions and distrust.

### Philanthropy in the first year of the pandemic

The philanthropic sector in the year after the COVID-19 pandemic began is a picture of both increased need and increased giving. Nonprofit organizations experienced a surge in the demand for services, and long-standing racial injustices came to light in terms of who needed the most support.<sup>4</sup>

Despite this need, total giving grew 5.1% in 2020.<sup>5</sup> And according to one conservative estimate, at least \$26.9 billion was pledged or distributed for COVID-19 relief,<sup>6</sup> with corporations, community foundations, and donor-advised funds being key donor groups.<sup>7</sup>

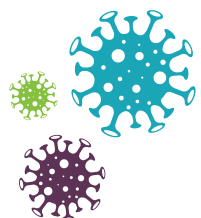
While increased need and increased giving would seem to balance out, the impact of and recovery from COVID-19 in the nonprofit sector was quite uneven. Wealthy households had more capacity to give while others struggled and needed assistance from nonprofits.<sup>8</sup> The recent trend of “donors down, dollars up” that has taken place over recent decades accelerated during the pandemic.<sup>9</sup> The wealth of high-net-worth individuals grew during 2020.<sup>10</sup> The vast majority of high-net-worth Americans—around 90%—donated to charity; 47% donated in direct response to the pandemic.<sup>11</sup> Meanwhile, less affluent households are less likely to give, and give lower amounts, compared to the 2000s.<sup>12</sup>

### **An ongoing crisis for women**

The COVID-19 pandemic and associated economic downturn have affected women within local communities, across the U.S., and around the world. Local community reports on COVID-19’s impact on women in their area abound. In one example from Connecticut, a report co-funded by area women’s foundations and funds draws attention to alarming phenomena: more women are leaving the workforce than men; childcare presents a major challenge for working mothers; domestic violence and intimate partner violence have increased, as have mental health concerns for women; and women of color experience even greater impacts across many of these issues.<sup>13</sup> These concerns are repeated in similar reports from across the country.<sup>14</sup>

Of course, these effects are not limited to the U.S. Globally, women have faced exceptional challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>15</sup> One report outlines four key reasons why women have been more greatly affected:<sup>16</sup>

1. Women are more likely to be infected with COVID-19 based on their work (in service or care industries with face-to-face contact with clients and/or the public);
2. Women are more affected by economic downturns, particularly in countries and regions where women have reduced access to financial services and less financial independence;
3. Gender-based violence is on the rise globally, exacerbated by community shutdowns and financial stress; and
4. The pandemic has further marginalized women’s decision-making in their households and communities by reinforcing harmful gender stereotypes that women belong in the home, performing unpaid care and domestic work.<sup>17</sup>



## **A persistent ‘she-cession’**

More than a year into the pandemic, women’s economic power has not yet recovered and the she-cession seems more intractable than ever. COVID-19 magnified pre-existing gender inequities and may have long-term consequences for women’s careers.<sup>18</sup>

Higher levels of unemployment among women have persisted since the initial economic downturn in spring 2020. The August 2021 jobs report showed that just 11.9% of new jobs went to women.<sup>19</sup> Unemployment aside, a new study shows a widening gender gap in feeling burned out at work, with women taking on more unpaid labor and emotional labor in their jobs.<sup>20</sup> The “Great Resignation” has also disproportionately affected women, who are leaving their jobs at greater rates than men. On top of increased work stress and burnout, mothers in particular are less inclined to return to the workforce due to a lack of childcare and concerns for children who were not yet vaccine eligible at the time this report was written.<sup>21</sup>

While the impacts of COVID-19 on women have been felt globally, the she-cession has been worse for women in the U.S. In many countries, women saw more job losses compared with men, but this was largely a short-lived trend outside the U.S.<sup>21</sup> Compared with their counterparts in many other developed nations, American women are disadvantaged due to a lack of public policies like support for child care, labor protections, and the ability to work remotely.<sup>23</sup>

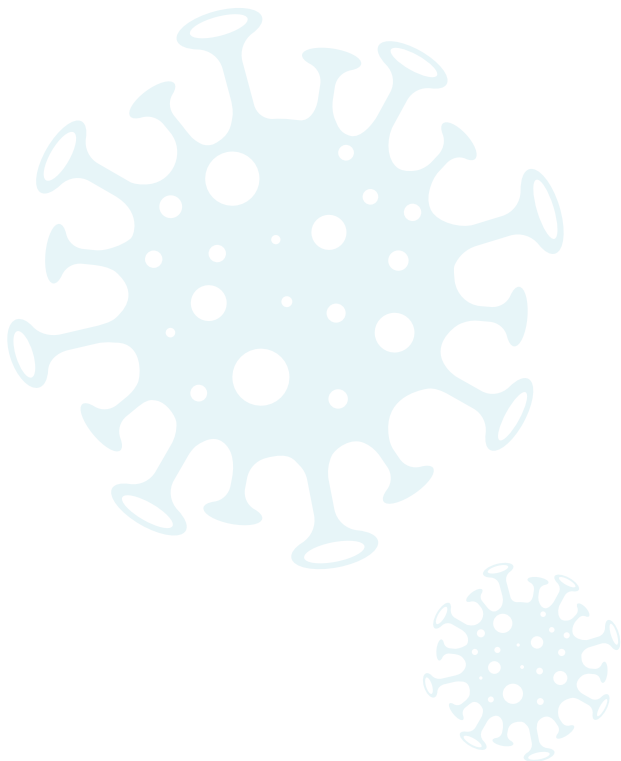
The present study builds on WPI’s September 2020 report by providing a longer timeframe to understand how U.S. households responded to the COVID-19 pandemic. It provides updated data on how households contributed for COVID-19 relief, and how their overall charitable giving changed between May 2020 and May 2021 as the pandemic wore on. The report also identifies the effects of particular aspects of the crisis on giving, such as contracting the virus and losing a job or income. Finally, the study highlights differences across household types, with a focus on gender and marital status.



## STUDY METHODS

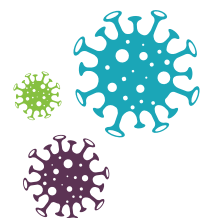
This study uses data from a Women’s Philanthropy Institute survey on U.S. households’ charitable responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. The survey was originally conducted online among a general population sample of 3,405 respondents in May 2020. The same households were re-contacted in May 2021 and asked the same questions as the original survey, as well as additional questions on the impact of COVID-19 on their lives. The follow-up survey was also conducted online, with 2,073 households responding.

While the COVID-19 pandemic is a global event, this study is limited to the crisis in the United States. The survey results were weighted based on the Census Population Survey, using income, race, ethnicity, age, and region of the country. All findings are based on regression analyses, which verify that the results are statistically significant when controlling for income and other demographic variables.<sup>i</sup> This report presents descriptive statistics throughout for ease of interpretation.



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<sup>i</sup>These variables are race, ethnicity, age, geographic region, gender, marital status, and having children under the age of 18. Statistical significance means that a particular result is not likely due to chance. Significance is a statistical term that states the level of certainty that a difference or relationship exists.



## FINDINGS

This study explores how U.S. households responded philanthropically during the first 14 months of the COVID-19 pandemic in the U.S., which began in March 2020. The first finding examines charitable giving specifically for COVID-19 relief. Unless otherwise noted, the remaining findings look at how households' overall giving changed during this time. Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the crisis.

Many of the results are framed in terms of changes from the first survey (May 2020) to the second survey (May 2021). It is important to note that the results compare participants to themselves from the first to the second survey, rather than comparing aggregate results from the two surveys. Other results focus on only the second survey.

***Finding 1: The share of households who gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses for COVID-19 relief increased by 9.3 percentage points from May 2020 to May 2021.***

To capture the full range of charitable activities in which households participated in response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the survey asked about multiple types of giving. These forms of philanthropy include donating money or in-kind goods directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses. The results show that a substantial share of U.S. households gave directly for COVID-19 relief during the first 14 months of the crisis, beginning in March 2020.

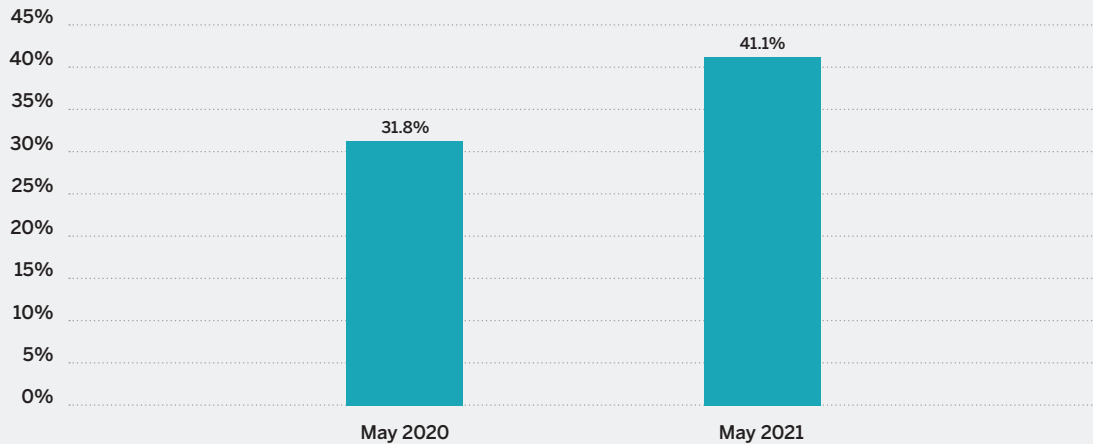
Figure 1 shows that this percentage increased by 9.3 percentage points from the first survey to the second survey.<sup>ii</sup> More than 4 in 10 U.S. households (41.1%) gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses for COVID-19 relief in May 2021, up from around 3 in 10 households (31.8%<sup>iii</sup>) in May 2020. The statistically significant growth in direct giving for COVID-19 relief during this time could be attributed to the ongoing nature of the pandemic. While some households may not have given immediately due to uncertainty about further spread of the virus and its economic impacts, they may have decided to do so as the pandemic and increased need for services continued.

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<sup>ii</sup> A percentage point is the difference between two percentages and is different than a percent increase. For example, moving from 20% to 30% is a 10 percentage point increase, but a 50% increase.

<sup>iii</sup> This figure was reported as 32.0% in WPI's September 2020 report. The figure from the present study is different because it only includes respondents to the follow-up survey, rather than the full sample from the previous report.

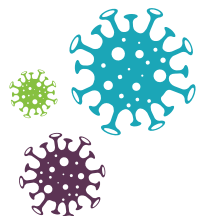
**Figure 1:** Percentage of U.S. households who gave directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses for COVID-19 relief



Direct giving alone does not capture the full scope of U.S. households' charitable responses to the pandemic. Beyond contributing directly to charitable organizations, individuals, or businesses, the survey also asked about households' indirect giving. Examples of indirect giving include ordering takeout to local support restaurants and their employees and continuing to pay for services like haircuts and housekeeping that could not be rendered due to community shutdowns and social distancing requirements.

The first survey revealed that 47.0%<sup>iv</sup> of U.S. households participated in indirect giving during the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, far exceeding the portion of households who gave directly in response to the crisis during this time (31.8%). The share of households who gave indirectly for COVID-19 relief declined 1.7 percentage points from 47.0% in May 2020 to 45.3% in May 2021, narrowing the gap between participation in indirect giving and direct giving (45.3% and 41.1%, respectively). The decline in indirect giving could be related to households no longer viewing these actions as philanthropic as the pandemic continued and businesses returned to more normal operations.

<sup>iv</sup> This figure was reported as 48.3% in WPI's September 2020 report. The figure from the present study is different because it only includes respondents to the follow-up survey, rather than the full sample from the previous report.

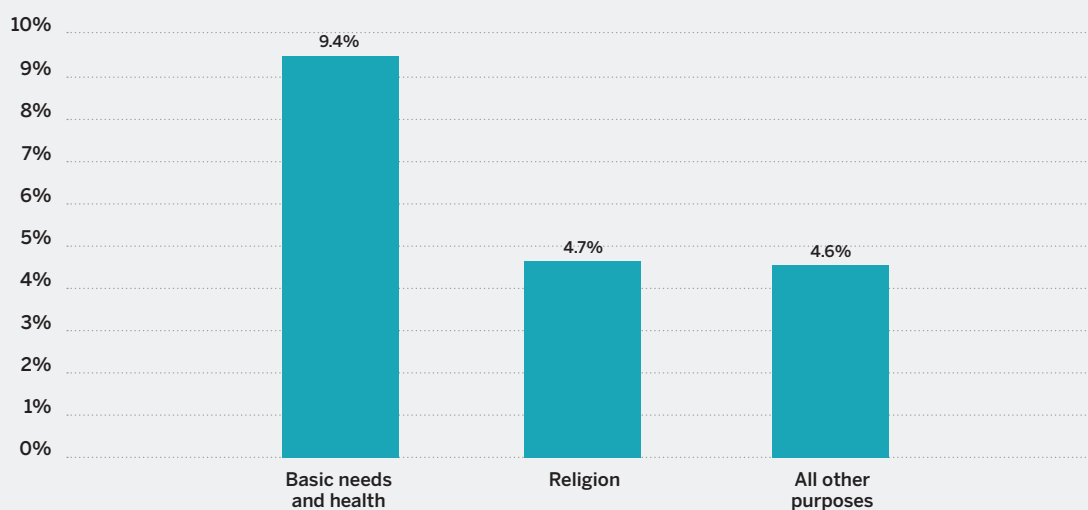


**Finding 2: In response to the pandemic, overall charitable giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health saw strong growth from May 2020 to May 2021. While giving to organizations focused on religion and all other purposes also increased during this time, U.S. households are giving less to these organizations than before the pandemic began.**

As seen in Figure 2, U.S. households' overall charitable giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health grew substantially (9.4%) in response to the pandemic from May 2020 to May 2021. This change was calculated by subtracting the percentage of households who decreased (15.9%) from the percentage of households who increased (25.3%) their giving to basic needs and health during this time. Giving to organizations focused on religion and all other purposes increased about half as much from May 2020 to May 2021. Giving to religion increased by 4.7% (with 14.7% of households decreasing and 19.4% of households increasing their giving) and giving to all other purposes increased by 4.6% (with 16.6% of households decreasing and 21.2% increasing their giving) during this time.

These findings echo other research pointing to uneven growth in charitable giving across different types of organizations since the onset of COVID-19 in the U.S. For example, *Giving USA 2021* reports that total giving increased in 2020, with giving to human services organizations growing strongly and giving to religious organizations staying relatively flat.<sup>24</sup>

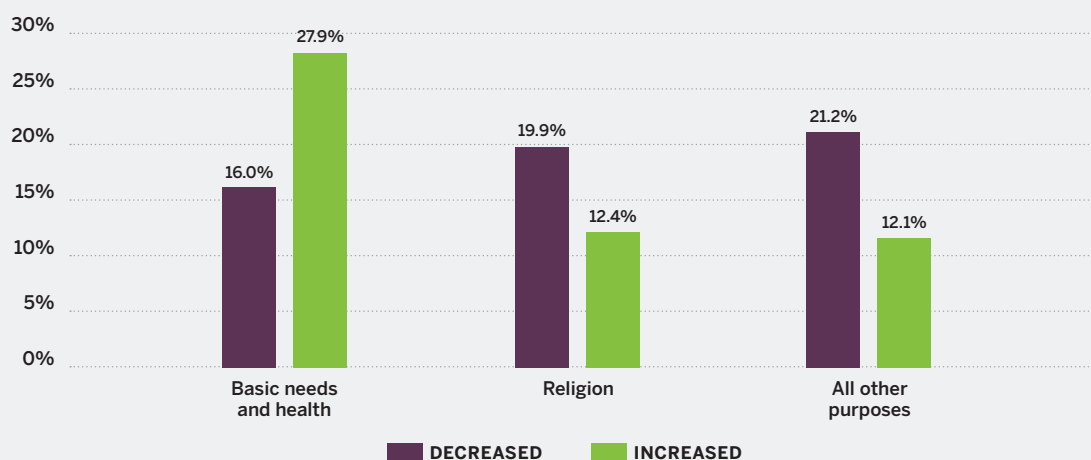
**Figure 2:** Net change from May 2020 to May 2021 in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19



Note: Net change equals any increase in giving from May 2020 to May 2021 minus any decrease in giving during this time. Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the pandemic.

Figure 3 shows, as of May 2021, changes in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations since the onset of the pandemic.<sup>v</sup> A greater percentage of households reported increasing (27.9%) than decreasing (16.0%) their giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health since the pandemic began (for a net change of 11.9% increasing). Contributions to other types of charitable organizations followed the opposite pattern, with a larger portion of households reporting decreased rather than increased giving to organizations focused on religion (19.9% decreased and 12.4% increased, for a net change of 7.5% decreasing) and all other purposes (21.2% decreased and 12.1% increased, for a net change of 9.1% decreasing).

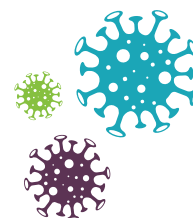
**Figure 3:** Change in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19, from the start of the pandemic to May 2021



Note: Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the pandemic.

These patterns generally align with changes in charitable giving during past economic recessions. *Giving USA* data show that, during recession years, giving for basic needs tends to increase, giving for religious purposes stays relatively flat, and giving to education and the arts usually declines.<sup>25</sup> The decline in household giving to organizations focused on religion since the onset of the pandemic could be associated with COVID-specific factors such as decreased in-person attendance at religious services. While many congregations offered virtual services and digital giving vehicles, some households may not have had the ability or desire to take advantage of these options.

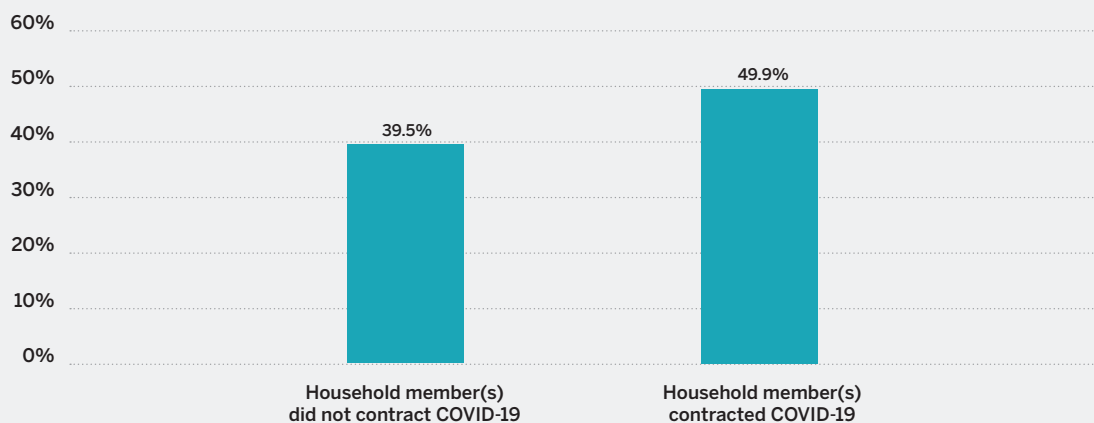
<sup>v</sup> Figure 2 illustrates the difference in U.S. households' overall giving between May 2020 and May 2021. Figure 3 depicts the difference in households' overall giving between the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 and when the second survey was fielded in May 2021. The numbers in these figures are different because while Figures 2 and 3 both include changes in households' giving from May 2020 to May 2021, Figure 3 also includes changes in their giving during the initial months of the pandemic.



***Finding 3: Contracting COVID-19 did not have a clear effect on overall charitable giving, but was associated with increased giving for COVID-19 relief. The economic impacts of the pandemic, however, decreased overall charitable giving to all three organization types (basic needs and health, religion, and all other organizations).***

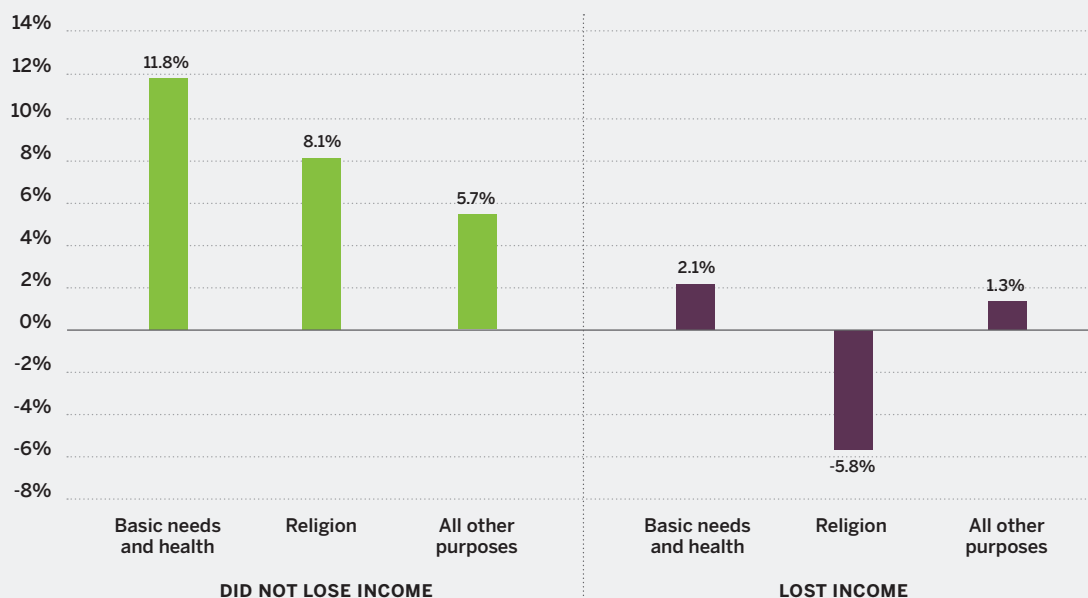
Responses to the second survey provide new insight on the specific impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. households and how these factors affected their charitable giving. The results show that contracting the virus did not have a clear effect on households' overall giving. However, households in which at least one person contracted the virus were significantly more likely to donate for COVID-19 relief. This includes both direct giving and indirect giving as described in Finding 1. Figure 4 shows that, as of May 2021, half of households whose members had COVID-19 (49.9%) donated for COVID-19 relief, compared with 39.5% of households whose members did not have the virus.

**Figure 4:** Percentage of U.S. households who gave directly or indirectly for COVID-19 relief, by COVID-19 infection, May 2021



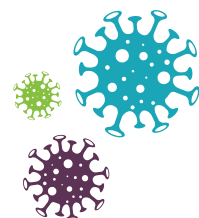
Compared with contracting the virus, experiencing an economic shock had a clear effect on U.S. households' overall giving. Losing a job or losing income was strongly associated with less overall giving to all three types of charitable organizations examined, with income losses being especially significant. As seen in Figure 5, from May 2020 to May 2021, giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health and all other purposes increased by significantly smaller margins among households who had lost income (2.1% and 1.3%, respectively) compared with households who had not (11.8% and 5.7%, respectively). This pattern is even more pronounced for giving to organizations focused on religion, with households who had lost income actually decreasing their giving to these organizations by 5.8% from May 2020 to May 2021 (compared with an increase of 8.1% among households who had not).

**Figure 5:** Net change from May 2020 to May 2021 in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19, by changes in household income



Note: Net change equals any increase in giving from May 2020 to May 2021 minus any decrease in giving during this time. Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the pandemic.

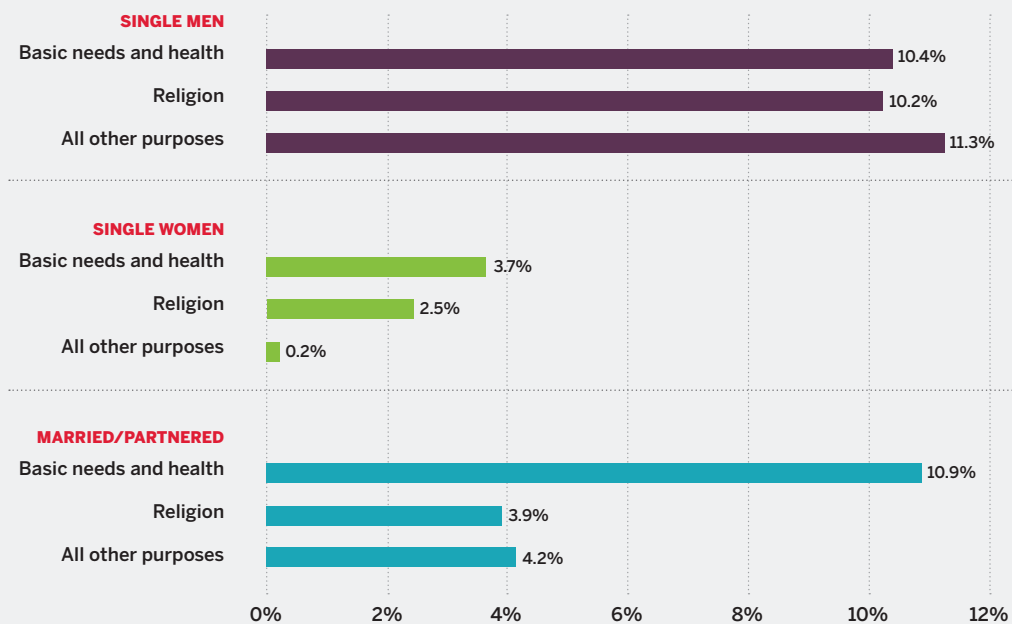
In addition to charitable giving, both surveys also asked about changes in U.S. households' volunteering in response to the pandemic. Households whose members or close friends or family members contracted COVID-19 were significantly more likely to have decreased their volunteering between the onset of the pandemic and May 2021. This is likely the result of ongoing concerns about the safety of in-person activities. Regarding economic impacts, changes in volunteering followed similar patterns as charitable giving, with households who had lost income reporting lower levels of growth in volunteering from May 2020 to May 2021, and overall decreases in volunteering since the pandemic began. This could be due to households having to adjust how they spend their time in response to shifting financial circumstances.



**Finding 4: Single women and married/partnered couples increased their overall charitable giving from May 2020 to May 2021, but are giving less to most charitable organizations than before the pandemic began.**

The survey responses illustrate clear patterns in how the COVID-19 pandemic affected overall charitable giving by different types of households. Figure 6 shows how giving by single men, single women, and married or partnered couples changed between May 2020 and May 2021. Among all household types, giving to all three organization types increased during this time, but increased the least among single women. Giving by single men showed the greatest increase from May 2020 to May 2021, with the exception of giving to basic needs and health, for which married or partnered couples' contributions increased the most.

**Figure 6:** Net change from May 2020 to May 2021 in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19, by gender and marital status

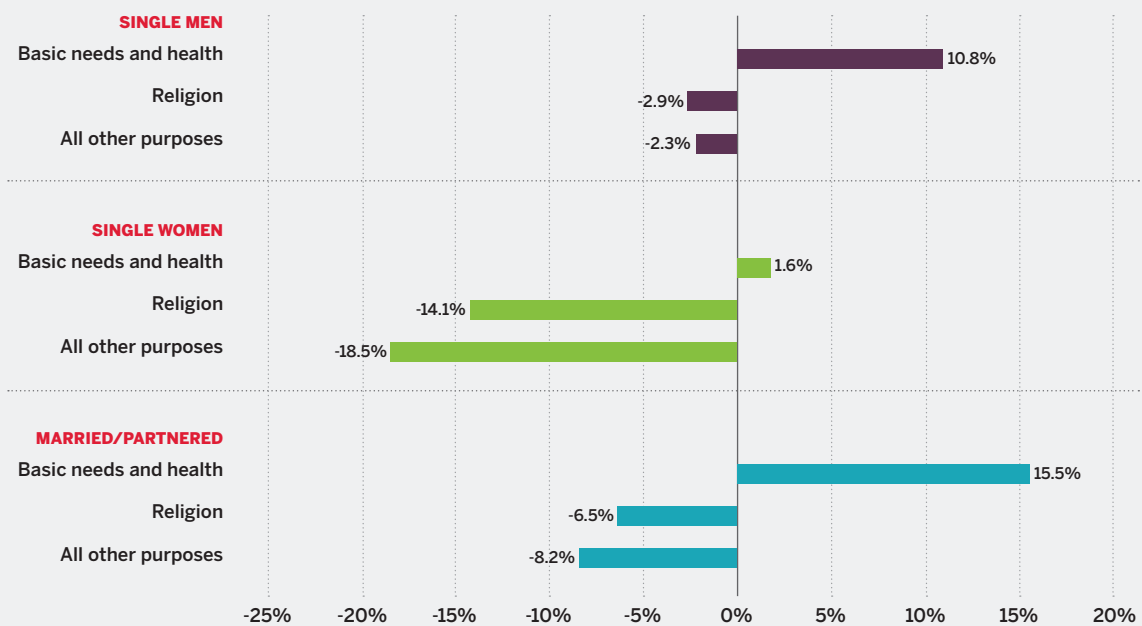


Note: Net change equals any increase in giving from May 2020 to May 2021 minus any decrease in giving during this time. Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the pandemic.



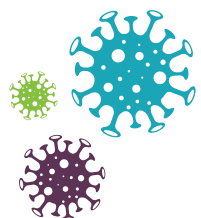
Figure 7 shows, as of May 2021, the net change in overall giving to different types of charitable organizations by household type since the pandemic began.<sup>vi</sup> Since the onset of the pandemic, single men, single women, and married or partnered couples all increased their charitable giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health. Married or partnered couples increased their contributions to basic needs and health the most (15.5%), and single women increased theirs the least (1.6%). By contrast, all household types decreased their charitable giving to organizations focused on religion and all other purposes since the pandemic began. Single women decreased their contributions to these types of organizations the most (14.1% for organizations focused religion and 18.5% for those focused on all other purposes). Single men decreased their contributions to these organizations types the least (2.9% for religion and of 2.3% for all other purposes).

**Figure 7:** Net change in U.S. households' overall giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19, from the start of the pandemic to May 2021, by gender and marital status



Note: Net change equals the percentage of households who increased their giving minus the percentage of households who decreased their giving in May 2021 (compared with before the pandemic began). Overall giving includes recurring or one-off contributions that households would typically make in the absence of the pandemic.

<sup>vi</sup> Results are statistically significant for religion and all other purposes, but not for basic needs and health. Appendix Table A shows the regression model used for this finding; additional analyses are available upon request. Figure 6 illustrates the difference in U.S. households' overall giving between May 2020 and May 2021. Figure 7 depicts the difference in households' overall giving between the onset of the pandemic in March 2020 and when the second survey was fielded in May 2021. The numbers in these figures are different because while Figures 6 and 7 both include changes in households' giving from May 2020 to May 2021, Figure 7 also includes changes in their giving during the initial months of the pandemic.



This finding sheds new light on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on married and partnered couples. While the disproportionate effects of the pandemic on women have been well-documented, this study suggests that the economic situation may have worsened for couples between the first and second surveys, as reflected by decreased levels of overall giving to most types of charitable organizations since the pandemic began.<sup>vii</sup> This pattern differs from previous research, which has consistently shown that married couples are more likely to give, and give in greater amounts, than similarly situated single individuals.<sup>26</sup>

It is possible that, while single individuals had to figure out how to support their families at the onset of the pandemic, married and partnered couples may have been able to make do at first, but were forced to make tough choices as the crisis wore on (e.g., one partner needing to leave a job to care for children or other relatives). Further research is necessary to fully understand the reasons underlying this finding.



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<sup>vii</sup>The regression results in particular show household giving by married/partnered couples improving less than similarly situated single-headed households between the two surveys, controlling for variables like income, region of the country, and having children under age 18.

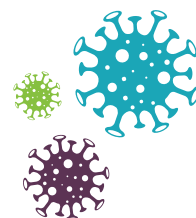
## DISCUSSION

The COVID-19 pandemic is a complex crisis whose social and economic impacts have continued to influence charitable giving. This study offers new understanding about how U.S. households' giving changed from the early months of the pandemic in May 2020 to more than a year into the crisis in May 2021. The findings reveal that direct giving for COVID-19 relief increased substantially during this time, which may be attributed to households gaining more certainty about their economic situation and seeing the ongoing need for services. Indirect giving declined slightly, likely due to households no longer viewing activities like ordering takeout to support local restaurants as philanthropic as the pandemic wore on and businesses returned to more normal operations.

With respect to overall charitable giving, the findings show that U.S. households' giving to organizations focused on basic needs and health experienced strong growth from May 2020 to May 2021, and households are giving more to these organizations since the onset of COVID-19. By contrast, giving to organizations focused on religion and all other purposes saw slower growth during this time, and households are giving less to these organizations than before the pandemic began. These findings support other research pointing to an uneven recovery across different types of charitable organizations. However, compared with *Giving USA 2021*, which reports that total giving increased in 2020 (largely driven by strong stock market performance and growth in giving by foundations), this study does not show net gains in giving by the general population.

This study provides unique insight on the specific impacts of COVID-19 on U.S. households and how these factors affected their charitable giving. Contracting the virus did not have a clear effect on overall charitable giving, but households whose members had COVID-19 gave significantly more for COVID-19 relief, possibly due to their direct experience with the virus and desire to support others who had also been impacted. However, the economic impacts of the pandemic on households' overall giving were clear: losing a job and losing income were strongly and negatively associated with giving to all three types of charitable organizations examined (basic needs and health, religion, and all other organizations).

The study also makes a distinct contribution to research on philanthropy and COVID-19 by examining how the pandemic affected charitable giving by different types of households. While the crisis continues to have the greatest effect on charitable giving by single women, the impact of the pandemic on giving by married and partnered couples emerged between May 2020 and May 2021. This pattern is especially notable because, like single women, couples tend to give more than similarly situated single men. While further research is necessary to understand the reasons behind this finding, it is possible that couples were able to make do with existing work and family care arrangements during the initial months of the pandemic, but needed to adjust their financial and other decisions as the crisis continued.



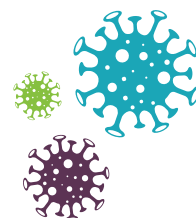
## IMPLICATIONS

There are numerous opportunities for philanthropy practitioners, especially fundraisers and nonprofit organizations, to apply the insights from this study. The findings suggest that COVID-19 has had an uneven impact on different types of households, especially by income and wealth. Nonprofits and development professionals should be sensitive to these differences and consider tailoring their appeals based on a donor's current situation. However, they should also keep the bigger picture in mind. While the pandemic has lasted longer than many expected, it is temporary and households who have pulled back their giving based on present circumstances should not be discounted in the future. Organizations and fundraisers should continue communicating with these donors, possibly asking for smaller gifts or finding other opportunities for engagement.

The differential impact of the pandemic on U.S. households—with some becoming wealthier and others experiencing increased financial strain—has highlighted the need for nonprofits and development professionals to better understand how households prefer to give and otherwise engage with organizations. Many donors have shifted their giving online,<sup>27</sup> and technology has been a lifeline for people during the pandemic.<sup>28</sup> Research also shows that women in particular are more likely to give online.<sup>29</sup> Beyond preferences for online donations, it is also important to learn the specific platforms that different individuals are more likely to use to make giving as convenient as possible. This is especially critical for younger donors, whose giving may follow different patterns than their older counterparts and who are more likely to use newer tools like Snapchat and TikTok.

Similar strategies hold true for volunteering and other types of non-monetary giving. Many households have embraced these forms of philanthropy, both before and during the pandemic. However, this study suggests that households, especially those whose members contracted COVID-19, may be ambivalent about returning to volunteering. Nonprofits should be cognizant of these concerns by continuing to exercise caution with in-person activities and by exploring virtual options. Hybrid formats may be preferable to accommodate individuals with different comfort levels with in-person activities as the pandemic persists. They should also be aware of shifting demands on households' time as they have navigated various changes to their daily routines.

Finally, COVID-19 and other developments in 2020 and 2021 have demonstrated the need to stay attuned to community issues. While donors' individual motivations and interests should still be considered, the pandemic and racial justice movement have stressed the importance of addressing larger community- and society-wide concerns. These events and an increased emphasis on equity have also highlighted the need for nonprofits to build trust among donors and other stakeholders. Demonstrating transparency and other efforts to establish trust are critical at any time, but are particularly important now, since research has shown that people with higher levels of trust in nonprofits are more likely to give for COVID-19 relief.<sup>30</sup> As the pandemic continues, this study reinforces that charitable giving and other forms of generosity from households across the U.S. are crucial in meeting this moment.



## APPENDIX

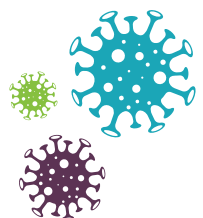
**Table A:** Ordered logit regression model: U.S. households' change in giving to different types of charitable organizations in response to COVID-19, from the start of the pandemic to May 2021

	Basic needs and health	Religion	All other purposes
<b>Gender + Marriage (single man omitted)</b>			
Single woman	-0.0657 (0.153)	-0.361** (0.167)	-0.398** (0.176)
Married or partnered	-0.0853 (0.131)	-0.255* (0.151)	-0.378** (0.148)
<b>Children under 18</b>			
	0.0802 (0.124)	0.0281 (0.135)	-0.0694 (0.133)
<b>Income (Log + 1, imputed)</b>			
	0.316*** (0.0831)	0.238*** (0.0847)	0.293*** (0.0909)
<b>Wealth (Log + 1, imputed)</b>			
	0.0204 (0.0252)	0.00291 (0.0268)	-0.00473 (0.0279)
<b>Age</b>			
	0.00182 (0.00383)	0.00936** (0.00443)	-0.00567 (0.00477)
<b>Race (White omitted)</b>			
Black	0.223 (0.181)	0.586*** (0.202)	-0.00662 (0.197)
Asian	0.0174 (0.234)	0.240 (0.292)	0.0528 (0.229)
Other	-0.0418 (0.301)	0.301 (0.311)	1.069*** (0.395)
<b>Ethnicity – Hispanic</b>			
	-0.469*** (0.138)	-0.159 (0.146)	-0.319* (0.182)
<b>Region (Northeast omitted)</b>			
South	-0.0393 (0.155)	0.394** (0.170)	0.0484 (0.162)
Midwest	-0.0927 (0.167)	0.262 (0.171)	-0.0855 (0.186)
West	-0.0724 (0.156)	0.331* (0.173)	0.0974 (0.186)

**Table A continued**

	<b>Basic needs and health</b>	<b>Religion</b>	<b>All other purposes</b>
<b>Education (&lt; high school omitted)</b>			
High school	-0.115 (0.191)	-0.321 (0.274)	-0.564** (0.246)
Some college	-0.0780 (0.174)	-0.122 (0.260)	-0.566** (0.241)
Bachelor's +	0.263 (0.194)	-0.116 (0.272)	-0.278 (0.260)
<b>Currently working</b>	-0.177 (0.115)	0.0166 (0.124)	0.00545 (0.129)
<b>LGBTQ+</b>	-0.138 (0.188)	-0.228 (0.175)	0.01000 (0.217)
<b>Constant 1</b>	1.903** (0.815)	1.621* (0.865)	0.695 (0.888)
<b>Constant 2</b>	4.607*** (0.819)	5.006*** (0.875)	4.128*** (0.896)
<b>Observations</b>	1,838	1,838	1,838

Notes: Ordered Logit regression where -1 = decreased, 0 = did not change, and 1 = increased. Robust standard errors in parentheses. Values are weighted. \* =  $p < 0.1$ , \*\* =  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*\* =  $p < 0.01$ .



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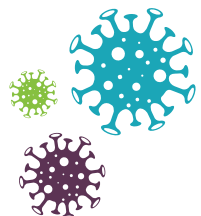
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