

Charitable Giving Sees Slight Dip

About \$6.6 billion in donations went to animal and environmental organizations in 2008, group reports.

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Overall charitable giving in the United States is down from \$314.1 billion in 2007 to \$307.7 billion in 2008, not unexpected in a time of recession. Americans gave about \$307.7 billion in 2008, with \$6.6 billion of it going toward animal and environmental 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 previous 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, chairman 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."

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 grantmaking 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.