

blackbaud®

Nepa

FUNDRAISING IN CANADA:

# Donor Behaviour Insights 2023



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# INTRODUCTION

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Supporters sit firmly at the heart of non-profits; whether as enthusiastic advocates for your cause, inspiring volunteers helping to deliver your work, or generous donors your fundraising efforts. Therefore, it is fundamental we truly understand the motivation behind being a supporter to better encourage more people to do so, and to keep hold of those we already have.

This is especially important during difficult times. In late 2022, we published the Status of Canadian Fundraising Report. We asked non-profit professionals for their views on everything from income to fundraising targets, to digital transformation, so we could form a comprehensive picture of fundraising in Canada.

One of the key findings from the research saw the majority of fundraisers tell us the biggest challenge they are facing in the 12 months ahead is the economy.

In fact, 75% of organizations said they are most concerned about the current economic situation leading to fewer donations. Non-profits are justifiably concerned that at a time when their services may come under even greater demand, donors are also facing tough financial times personally.

As your organization plans strategies and campaigns for the year ahead, we wanted to take a deeper look into the behaviour of those who donate to charity, to understand why they give, what shapes their preferences and further insights which might help inform your plans.

The team here at Blackbaud have worked together with Nepa, expert researchers and data analysts, to get the views of 1000 donors in Canada on how they have donated in the past, and the ways they wish to continue giving in the future.

We hope you find these insights useful.

Enjoy reading.

**Louise Sparks,**  
**Content Manager, Blackbaud**

# FOREWORD

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The Nepa team are really excited to be able to share this research with you. Each year we know that Blackbaud's Status of Canadian Fundraising Report research gives charities a great insight into the mood and future trends among those working within the charity sector. The chance to deep-dive into what the picture looks like among those who actually give to charities and good causes felt like it could be extremely valuable to everyone working within the sector.

Analyzing the data collected alongside our partners at Blackbaud, we are confident that the results will provide much needed insight and direction for all those working in the non-profit sector. From preferred methods of donation, expectations around follow-ups after a donation, and how these differ among various age groups and giver profiles, we hope that this report will help you to turbo-charge your donations through 2023 and beyond.

**Luke Brown,**  
**Account Director, Nepa**



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# Who Did we Talk to?

1,003 total responses from donors in Canada who have given money to a charity or good cause in the last 12 months.

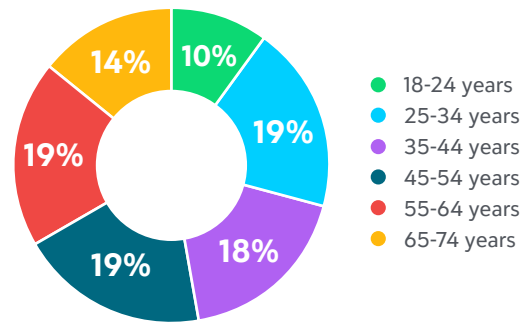
## Gender



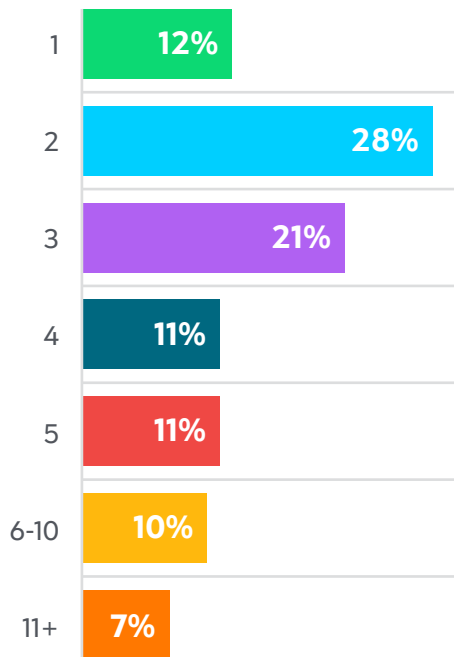
**51/49**

51% of respondents to this study are male, and 49% are female

## Age of respondents



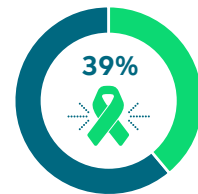
## # of Charitable causes Canadians have given to in the last 12 months.



## How do they show their support?



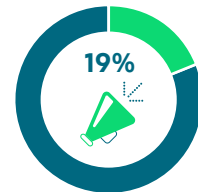
Giving Donations



Volunteering



Taking part in events



Fundraising



Activism



Others

# Key Findings:



Cash is the most popular way to give, closely followed by online donations. There is also a high preference for giving by cheques from donors aged 55+



The majority of respondents indicated the way they show support is through giving monetary donations, and volunteering their time.



Most people said the pandemic has had no effect on their donation habits.



A third of people say the average amount they give is over \$100 and more than half donors said they have given over \$200 in the last year.



A family member asking for a donation is most likely to trigger someone to give.

SECTION

#1



How Donors  
are Giving

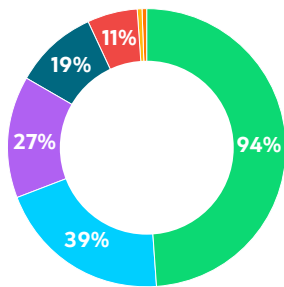
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## SECTION #1

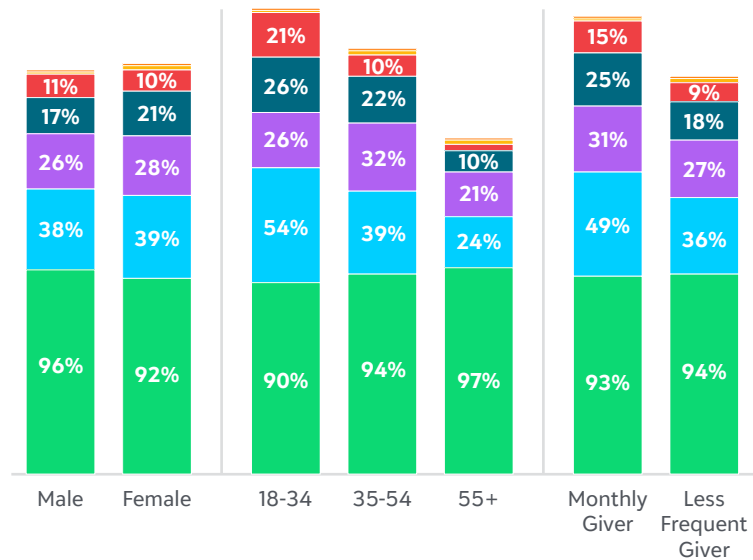
# How Donors are Giving

The good news is that people want to give! The research found that the majority of people (90%+) support charities by donating money. 39% of people also volunteer and 27% take part in events. The 18-34 years age group are more likely to volunteer, at 54%.

### How do you show your support for charities?



- Giving donations
- Volunteering
- Taking part in events
- Fundraising
- Activism
- None of these
- Other, please specify

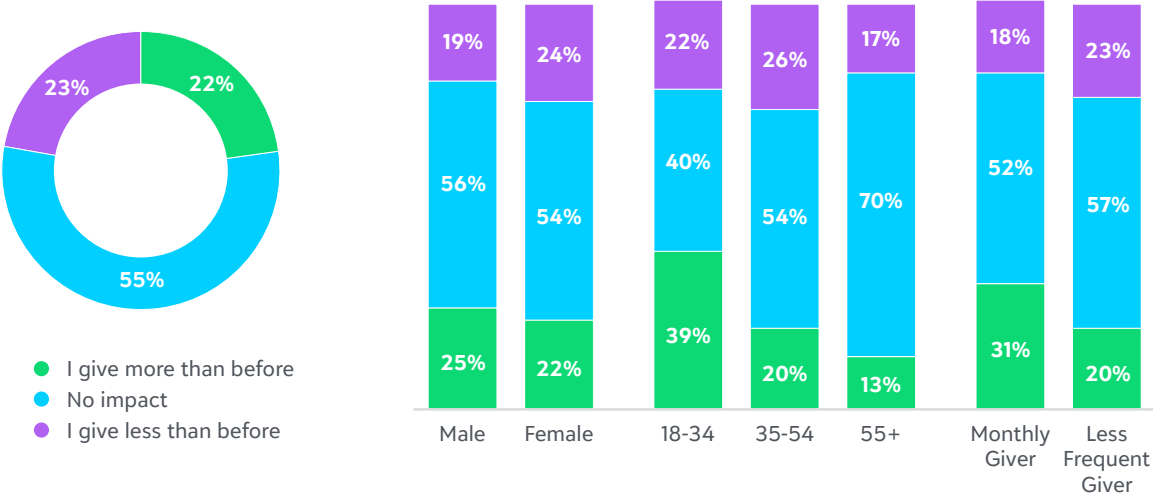


Percentage below 5% are not labelled



The majority of people say that the pandemic has had no impact on their donation habits, with 23% saying they give more than before. Younger people are more likely to say that the pandemic has caused them to donate more than previously.

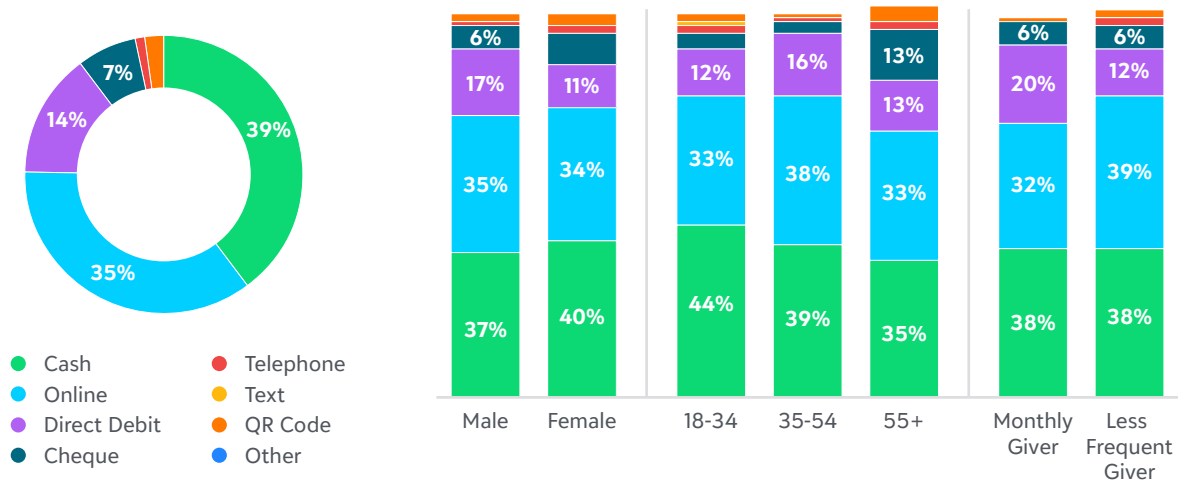
How would you say the pandemic has impacted your donation habits?



## Methods of Giving

Cash is still the preferred way to donate across all ages groups, closely followed by online giving. There is also a relatively large number of cheque givers in the 55+ group.

### What is your preferred method of donation?

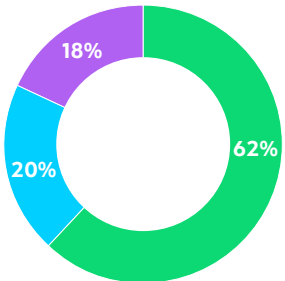


### TOP TIP

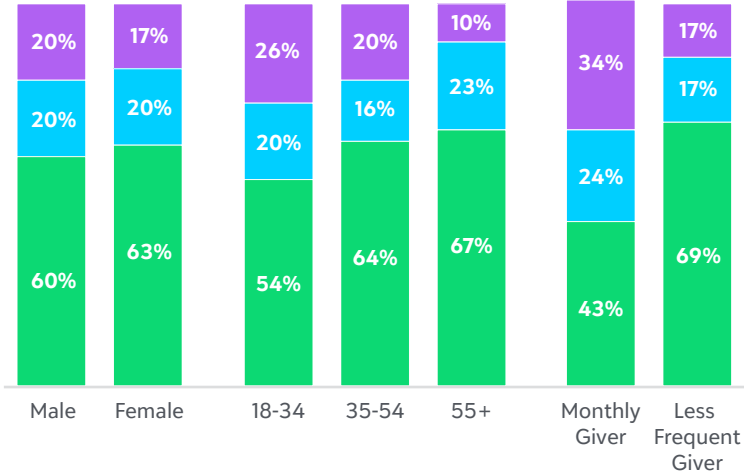
It's always good practice to check the demographics of your supporters to see how best to communicate with them. Discover how your particular supporters prefer to give, and make sure you are set up to easily accept this type of donation and provide a smooth supporter experience for your donors.

The majority of people, across all age groups, prefer to give to charities on a one-off basis, rather than be locked into a regular payment.

Which of the following most applies to you?

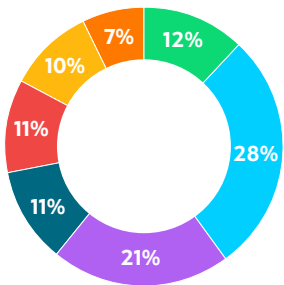


- I prefer to give on a one-off / ad-hoc basis
- I prefer to give via regular an automatic payment
- I don't have a preference

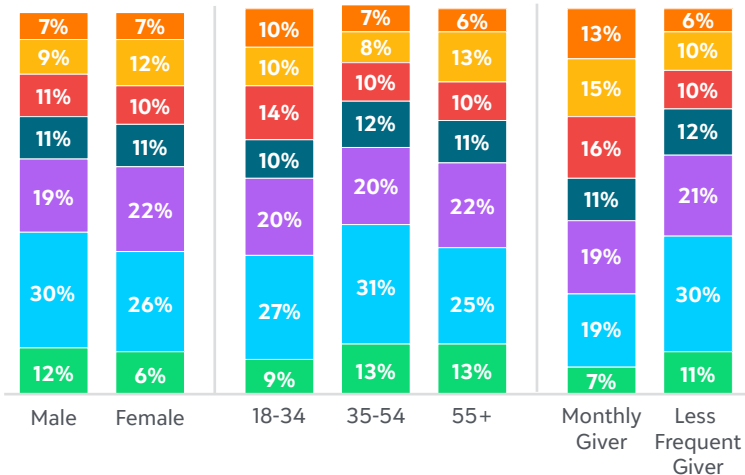


Most people (61%) have given to between 1-3 charities in the last 12 months. Female donors are more likely to give to a higher number of charities. The pattern is relatively similar across the age groups.

Please estimate how many different charities / good causes you have given to in the last 12 months



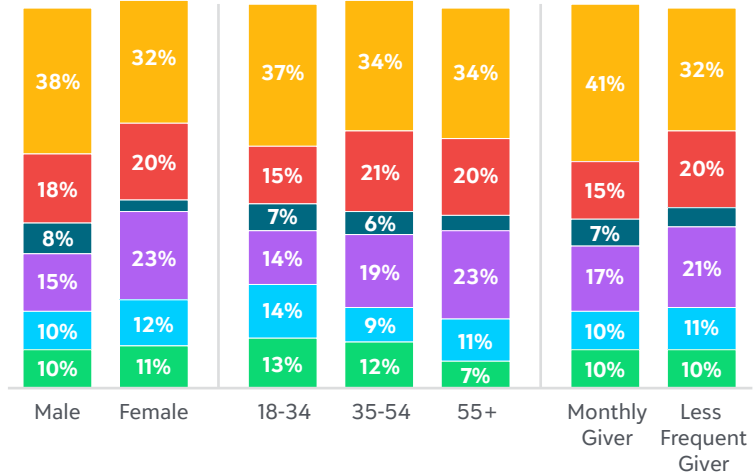
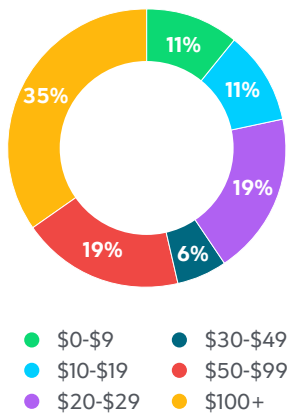
- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6-10
- 11+



## Amount per Donation

The average donation in Canada is high, with 35% of donors saying they give over \$100 on average.

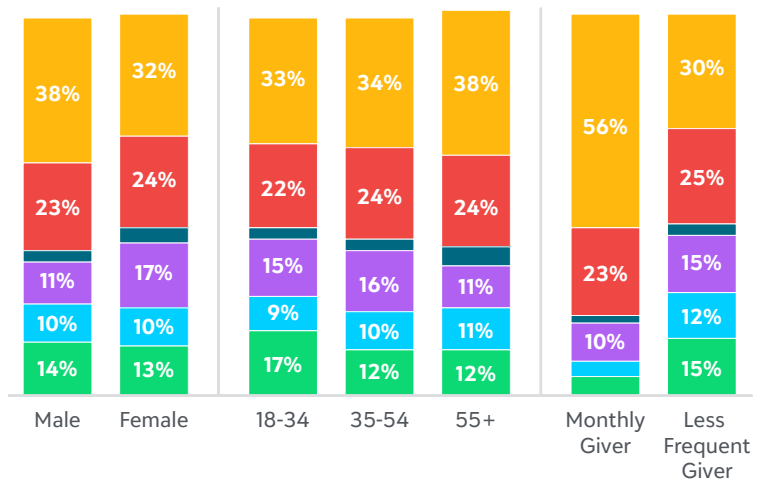
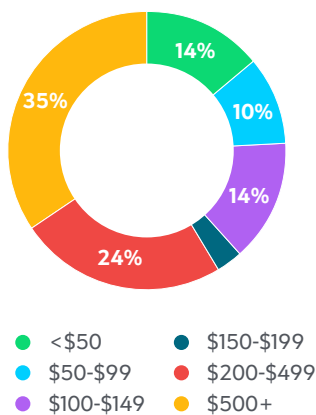
What would you say your average donation is when giving to a charity or good cause




## Amount given Annually

Almost 60% of people say they have donated over \$200 in the last 12 months.

Please estimate how much you think you have given in total in the last 12 months to charities or good causes



A photograph of three women in pink athletic wear, smiling and cheering. The woman in the center is wearing a pink tank top and has her hands clasped. The woman on the right is wearing a pink long-sleeved shirt and a white visor, with her mouth open in a cheer. The background is a gradient of green and blue.

SECTION  
#2

Motivations  
to Give

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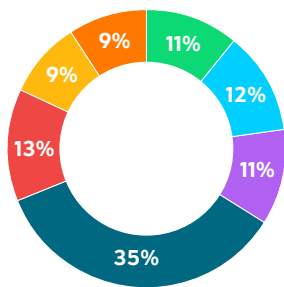
## SECTION #2

# Motivations to Give

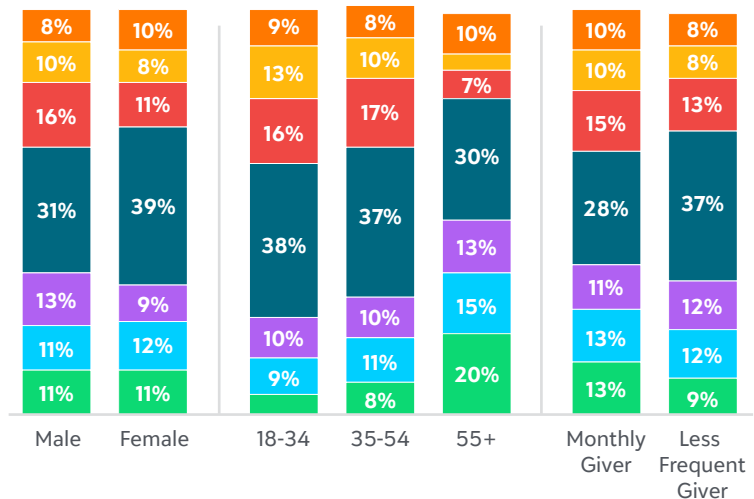
Overall, there is an even split between people giving to the same charity each time vs donating when they see a good cause, although this differs by age group.

The older group (55+) prefer to give to the same place each time (48%), whereas 18–34-year-olds are more likely to give to what appeals to them at the time.

Where would you place yourself on the below scale?

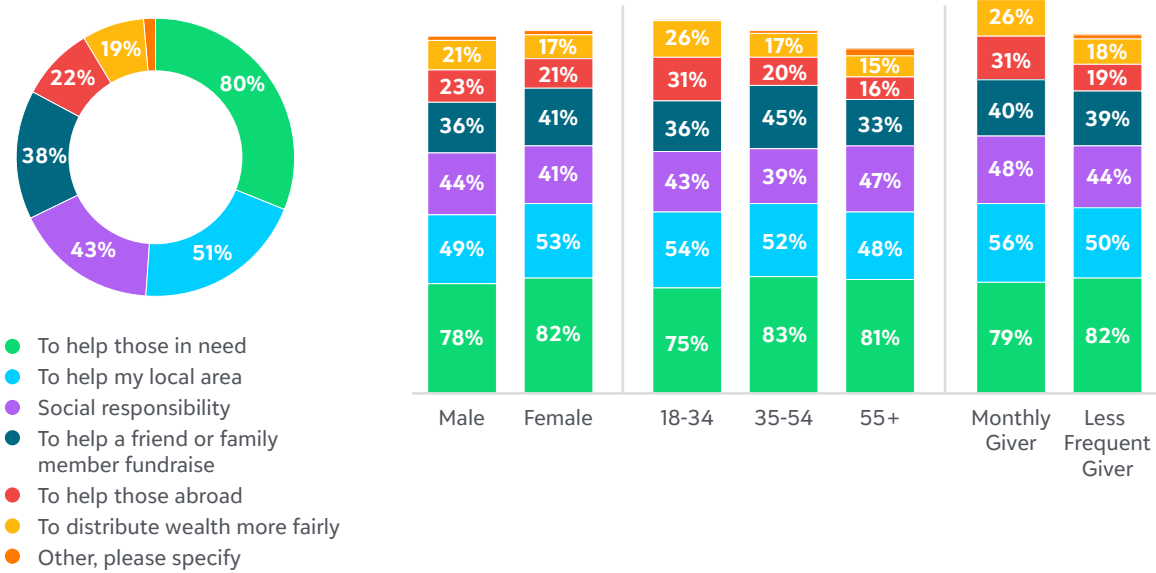


- 1 = I always give to the same charity or cause
- 2
- 3
- 4 = I favour charities / causes, but tend to give anywhere appealing
- 5
- 6
- 7 = I just give to whatever cause appeals to me at any point



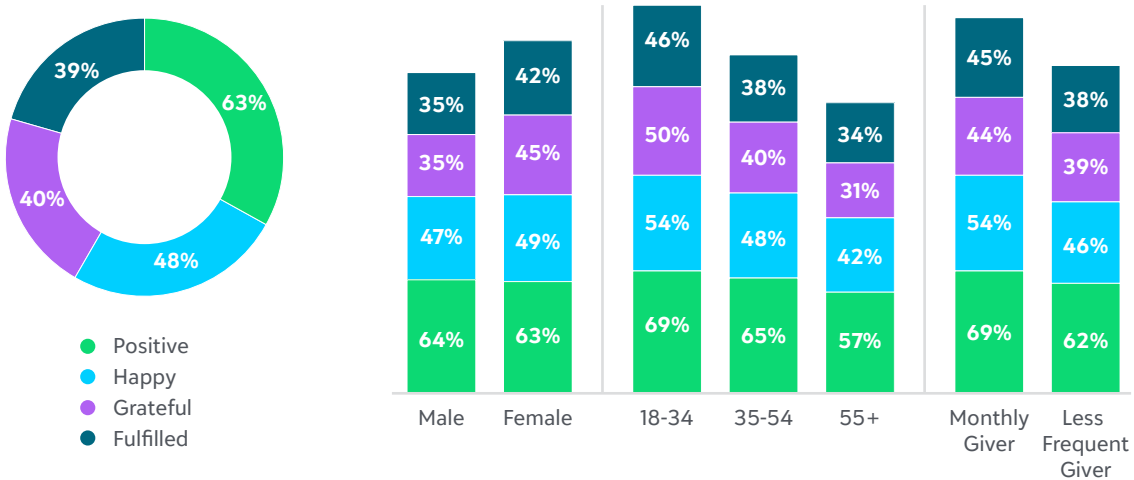
The biggest motivation to give (across all groups) is to help those in need, followed by helping their local community and social responsibility.

**What would you say motivates you to donate to charity?**



People report that they feel positive after donating, with the younger group also feeling more fulfilled and grateful.

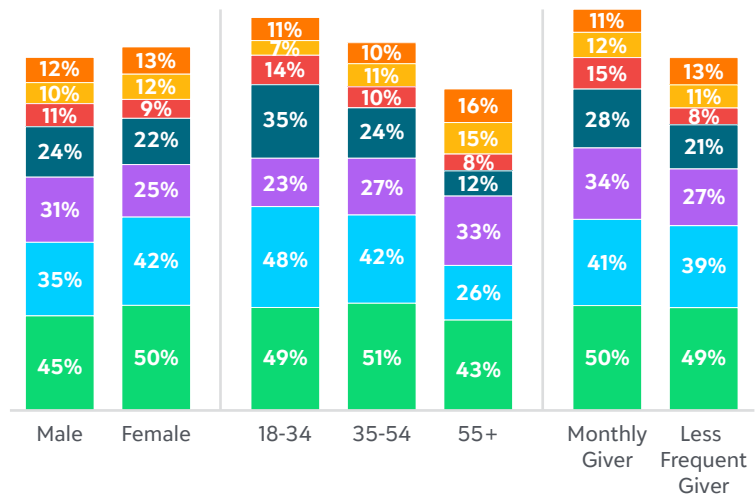
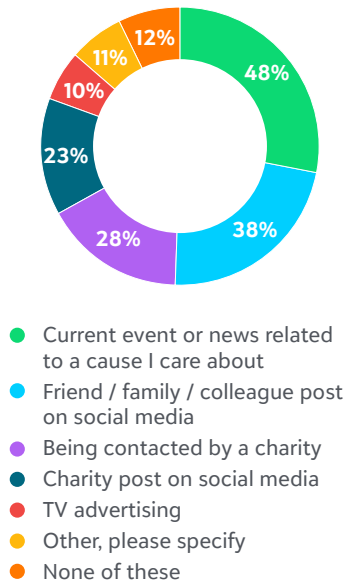
**How do you feel after you have given to charity?**



## What Leads to a Donation?

Key triggers to donate are a current event or news story, or a post on social media from someone they know. Being contacted by a charity, or seeing a charity social media post are also key triggers.

Which of the following normally ‘triggers’ you to donate to a charity or good cause?



### TOP TIP

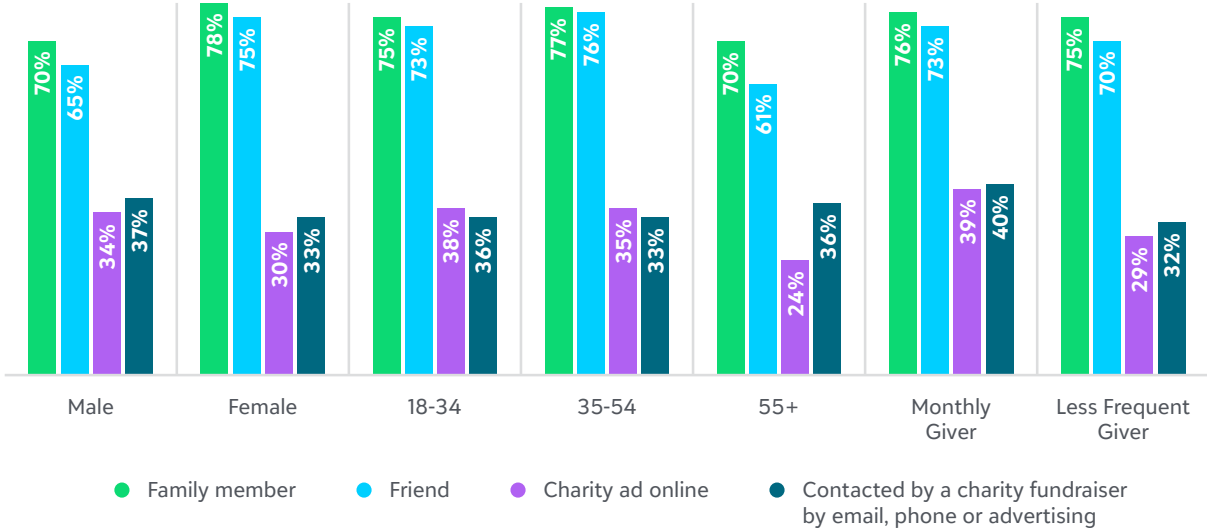
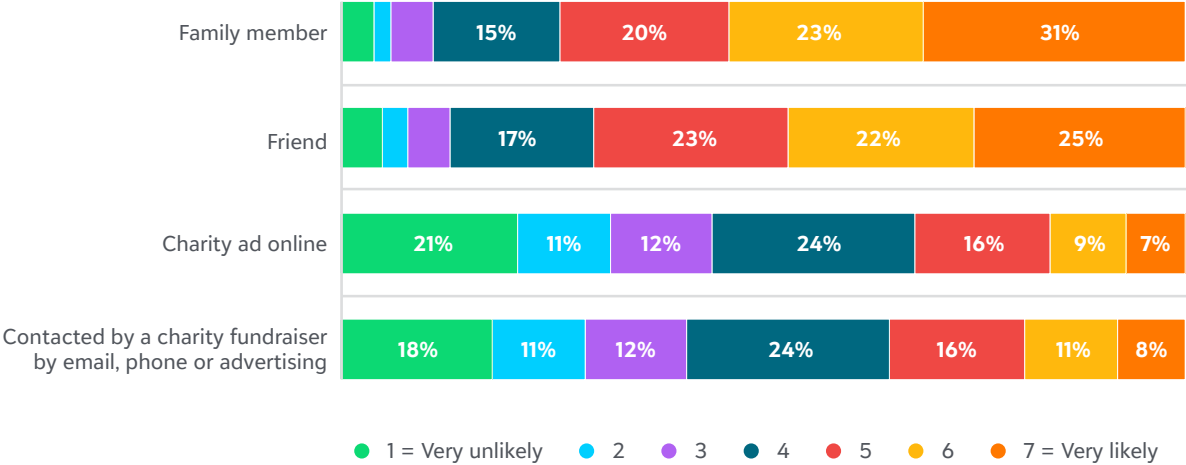
Remember that it’s not just your organization that benefits when people make that donation – they also feel positive and happy too! This is a great message to share, and also to take forward in your follow-up communications with donors.



A family member approaching someone is the most likely trigger for a donation across all the key target groups, followed closely by a friend.

Both are at least twice as likely to trigger a donation than being contacted by a charity or seeing an advert.

**How likely are you to donate when being asked via the following places?**



A woman with dark hair tied back, wearing a light pink ribbed sweater, is sitting at a wooden desk. She is smiling and looking to her right. She is holding a blue credit card in her right hand. In the background, there is a blurred indoor setting with a white vase containing dried plants and a brown object on a shelf. A laptop is partially visible on the desk in the foreground.

SECTION  
#3

Following  
a Donation

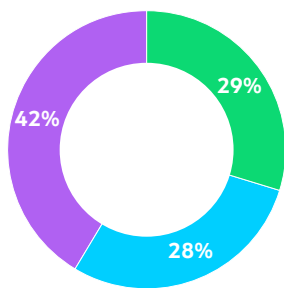
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## SECTION #3

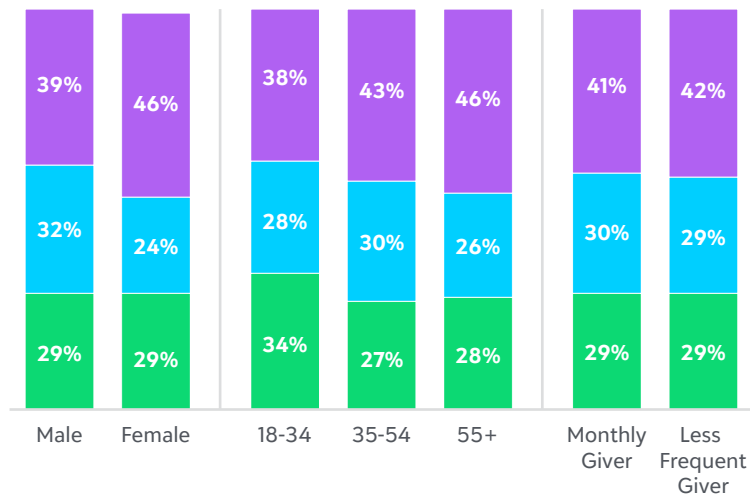
# Following a Donation

Only 29% of people expect a 'thank you' after a donation, although this does increase among the youngest group to 34%.

Do you expect a 'thank you' from a charity after you make a donation?



- Yes
- I don't mind
- No

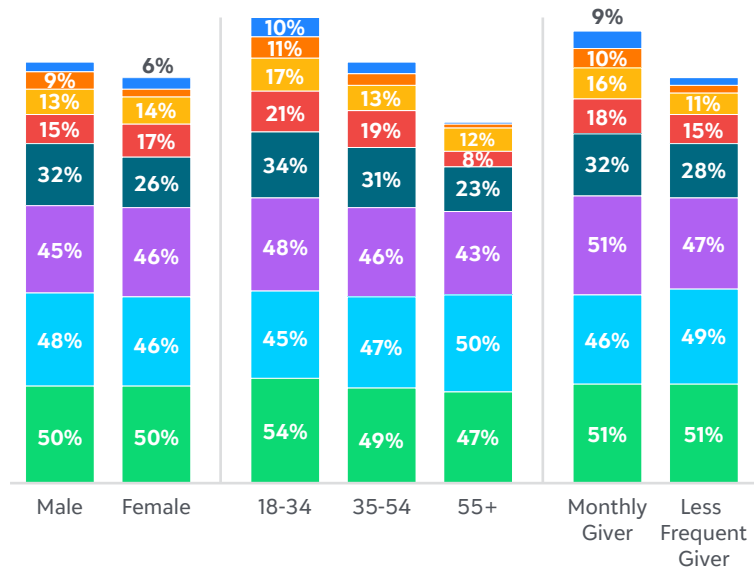
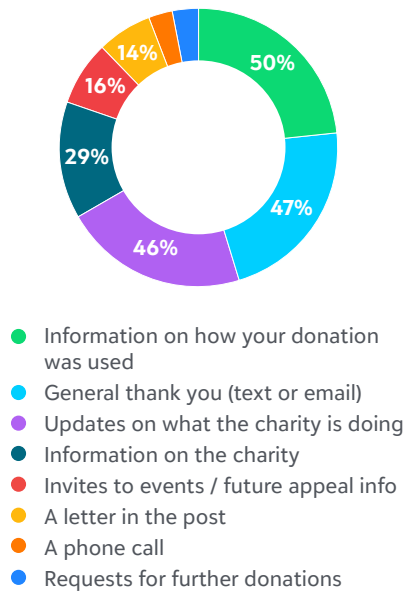


### TOP TIP

Stand out! If they're not expecting a thank you, think about the impact that a thank you will make.

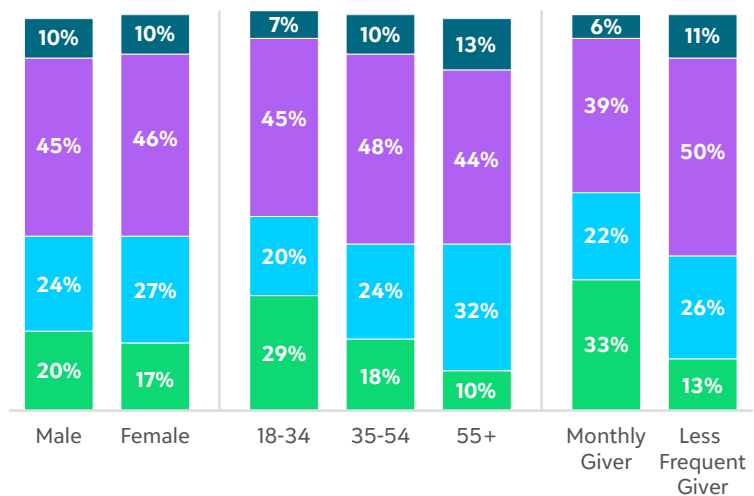
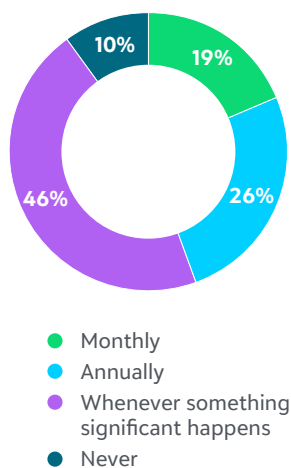
If a thank you is sent, people would like to receive a general thank you, information about how the money was used, and updates on the charity in general. This is similar across all age groups.

### If a charity was to send a thank you message after a donation, what information would you like to receive?



About half of people only want to be contacted by charities when something significant happens, although those who donate more are happy to be contacted more frequently.

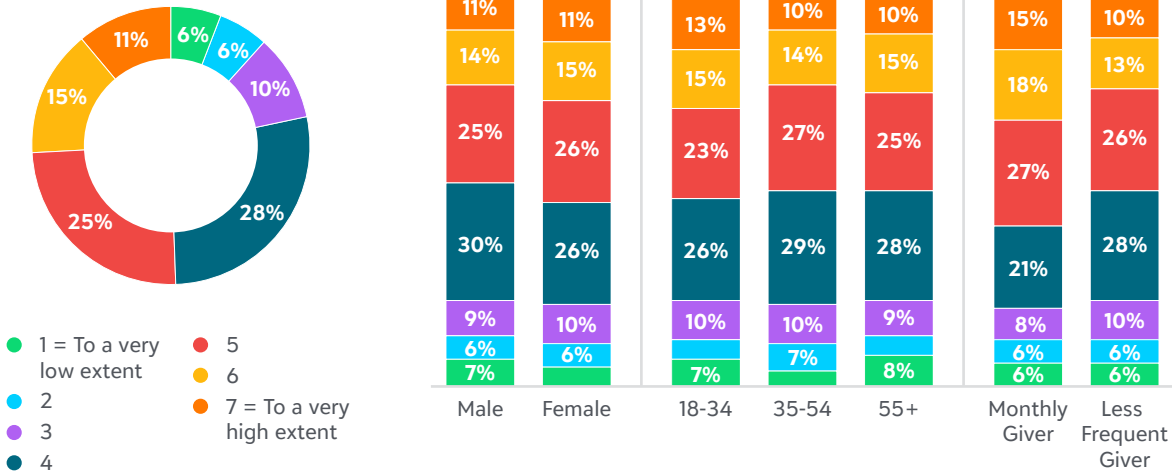
### How regularly would you like to receive updates from a charity after a donation?





51% of people say that they know what difference their donation has made. This doesn't differ across age groups.

To what extent do you feel like you know what difference your donation has made?



**TOP TIP**

Demonstrate the impact that your supporter has made – research looking at high net-worth donors found that 44% are motivated by the belief that their gift can make a difference.\* Further research found that 56% of organizations saw an increase in donors after sharing success stories\*\* – there really is power in showing the difference that donors make!

\* <https://www.ncfp.org/knowledge/2016-u-s-trust-study-of-high-net-worth-philanthropy>

\*\* [State-of-Storytelling-in-the-Nonprofit-Sector.pdf](#)

SECTION  
#4

Ethics and  
Sustainability

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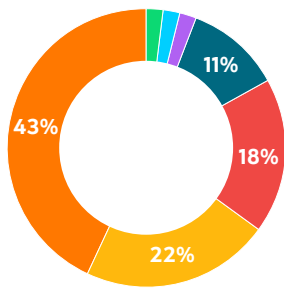


## SECTION #4

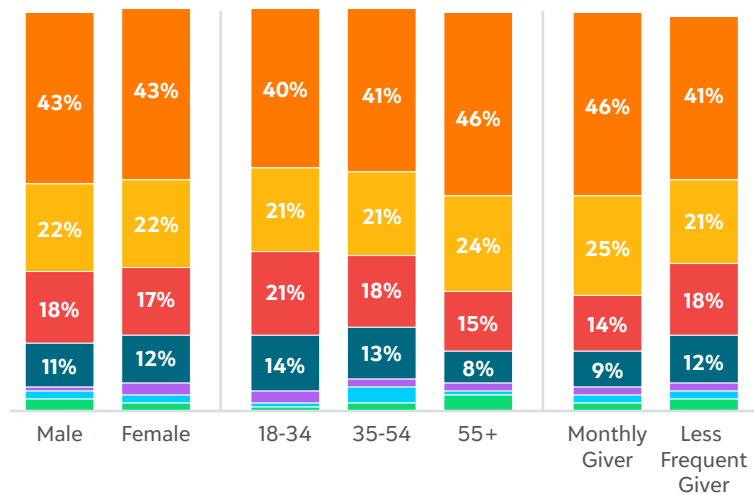
# Ethics and Sustainability

A high majority think it's important for charities to demonstrate an ethical and sustainable business model.

How important is it for you that the charities you donate to demonstrate an ethical and sustainable business model?



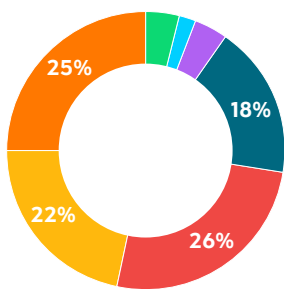
- 1 = Not important at all
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = Very important



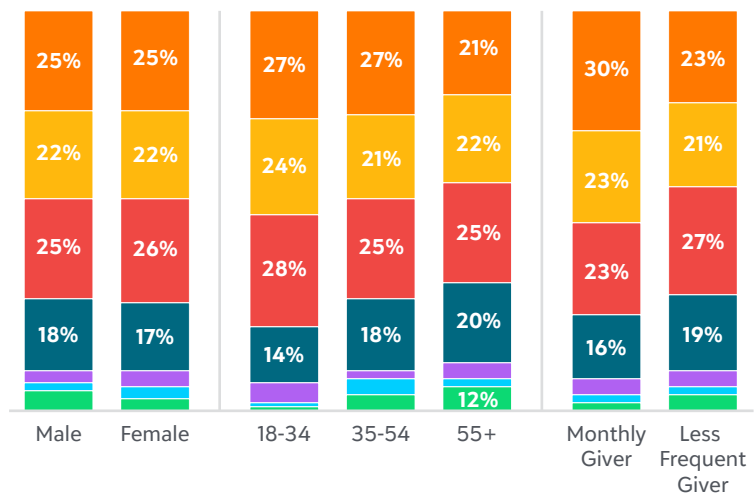


A huge 73% of people say that they would donate more to charities who are ethical and sustainable. This increases to 79% among 18-34-year-olds.

To what extent do you think that you would donate more to a charity if they can demonstrate their ethical and sustainable ways of working?



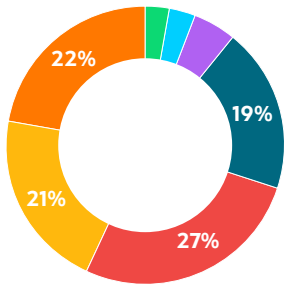
- 1 = To a very low extent
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = To a very high extent



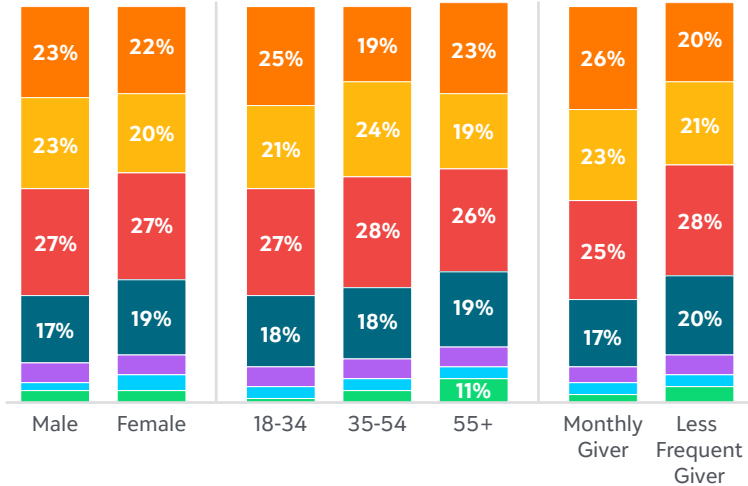


It's a similar pattern for the need to understand more about an organization's ethical policies, the majority of people would like to know this.

**To what extent do you feel like you need to understand an organization's ethical operating policies, if available, before you give?**



- 1 = To a very low extent
- 2
- 3
- 4
- 5
- 6
- 7 = To a very high extent



**TOP TIP**

Research in the Status of Canadian Fundraising Report 2022 found that only 48% of non-profit organizations are committed to ESG (Environmental, Social and Governance) – demonstrating a charity's commitment to these values is a great way to show donors the ways in which your organization is ethical and sustainable.

# Conclusion

Understanding the behaviour of donors and the motivation for giving is essential for any non-profit looking to withstand these difficult times, build a resilient organization and succeed.

It is encouraging to discover that the majority of donors say the pandemic has had no effect on their donation habits, and that those who donated to charities before the events beginning in 2020 are still continuing to do so now. This research gives important insight into why and how they donate, and so here are some key understandings of how to use this to inform your fundraising:

- #1 All of the findings point to slightly different outcomes when broken down into age groups. It's not always a certainty that, for example, younger people will want to do something completely different to the older generation – but it's definitely worth looking at your particular supporters and examining the different demographics within them. A supporter survey is a great place to start to understand why your supporters are there, and how they want to be communicated with.
- #2 The research shows that most people prefer to donate cash, but also many want to give online. When you look at your fundraising strategy, are you allowing your supporters to give in the ways they want to? Can your donors easily give online? Don't miss out on significant donations because you haven't considered the different ways to give.
- #3 Only 29% of people said they expect to be thanked following a donation. This is surprisingly low, but it could be an indication of how often they have been thanked in the past. If you're not thanking donors already, start now – and make your organization stand out and be remembered.

# Useful Resources

[The Status of Canadian Fundraising Report 2022](#)

[The Supporter Experience Toolkit](#)

[End of Year Fundraising Toolkit](#)

## How Blackbaud can Help

### **Need help inspiring and motivating your supporters?**

[Blackbaud Raiser's Edge NXT](#) makes reaching new supporters and engaging existing supporters easier and more effective.

- Raise awareness for your mission and keep constituents engaged with beautiful, dynamic email campaigns.
- Deliver the right message at the right time through the right channel with integrated multi-channel techniques and tools.
- Understand what motivates your contacts with clear reporting on how your campaigns perform.
- Maximize your program activities with advanced tools and insightful metrics for events, volunteers, and members.



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