

Religion Gets Largest Share of Charity in US

VOA Special English (voaspecialenglish.com) is Voice of America's daily news and information service for English learners. Read the story and then do the activities at the end.

This is the VOA Special English Economics Report.

Americans gave about two hundred ninety billion dollars to charity last year. That was ten billion dollars more than the amount of charitable giving in two thousand nine. The estimates are from the Giving USA Foundation and its research partner, the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Charities are nonprofit organizations that raise money to provide social services or other programs. Giving USA has been reporting on charitable donations since nineteen fifty-six. The group estimates that about seventy-five million households gave to at least one charitable organization in the United States last year. A household is one or more people living in a home.



AP
Charity workers dressed as Santa Claus pass St. Patrick's Cathedral in New York City in an annual parade to raise money for a holiday food program for needy residents

The largest share of charitable giving goes to religious groups. Giving USA says they received thirty-five percent of all donations in twenty-ten. Some people give a percentage of their pay to religious organizations.

Schools and other education-related organizations were second on the list. They received an estimated fourteen percent of all charitable giving last year.

The federal tax agency, the Internal Revenue Service, recognizes donations to official charities. Those who give to charity may be able to get tax breaks and reduce the amount of taxes they owe.

People who give to charity may want to know how their donations are being spent. Organizations like Charity Navigator and the American Institute of Philanthropy look at how charities spend the money they receive. Their reports

and ratings offer a measure of how effectively the charities use their money. For example, donors can learn how much a group spends on services, compared to how much it spends on itself in administrative costs.

Charity Navigator recently asked donors and charities to answer questions about year-end giving trends this year. More than five hundred donors and one hundred charities completed the questionnaire.

On average, these charities said they received forty-one percent of all their donations in the last few weeks of the year. Charity Navigator also asked donors about the kinds of charities they would likely support this holiday season. Human services rated at the top of the list. Arts, culture and humanities rated at the bottom.

Now do the worksheet ...

Level: beginner - intermediate

Time: 20 -30 minutes

This worksheet will help you learn new vocabulary about charities. You will answer questions about donations in the US, and write a short paragraph about charities in your country.

1. Match the words on the left with the words on the right to make seven phrases. Write the phrase on the line. The phrases are in the article.

| | | |
|-------------------|-----------------|-------|
| a. give to | 1. service | _____ |
| b. nonprofit | 2. costs | _____ |
| c. raise | 3. money | _____ |
| d. provide | 4. organization | _____ |
| e. charitable | 5. breaks | _____ |
| f. tax | 6. charity | _____ |
| g. administrative | 7. donations | _____ |

2. What is a *donation*?

- money, food, or clothes that you give to help a person or organization
- food or clothes that you buy at a store
- money, food or clothes that you lend to your friends

What is a *charity*?

- an organization that helps people who are poor, sick, etc.
- a business that sells expensive things
- a school that teaches how to run a company

3. Which of the following sentences is correct?

- You give a charity to a donation.
- You give a donation to a charity.

4. Look again at the title of the article: *Religion Gets Largest Share of Charity in US*. What is the article about?

- People who gave donations in the US gave the least amount to religious groups.
- People who gave donations in the US gave the most money to religious groups.
- People didn't give many donations to religious groups in the US.

5. Read the sentence below. Is it *true* or *false*? If it is false, correct the sentence.

Americans gave more money to charity in 2009 than in 2010.

6. What is “Giving USA”?

7. How many households gave to at least one charitable organization in the US last year?
8. Complete the following sentence with a number to make it true.

Giving USA says they received ____ percent of all donations in 2010.

9. Which three things got the most US donations in 2010?

- clothing stores
- religious organizations
- schools
- educational organizations
- hospitals
- offices

10. What does “Charity Navigator” do?

What kinds of charities does it say people want to donate to?

OVER TO YOU

Do people in your country usually donate to charities? If so, what kinds of charities get the most money? Use the internet to search for information.

Write 5-8 sentences explaining your answer.

ANSWER KEY

1. give to charity, nonprofit organizations, raise money, provide , charitable donations, tax breaks, administrative costs
2. money, food, or clothes that you give to help a person or organization; an organization that helps people who are poor, sick, etc.
3. You give a donation to a charity
4. People who gave donations in the US gave the most money to religious groups.
5. false; Americans gave more money to charity in 2010 than in 2009.
6. A group that reports information about donations in the US.
7. 75 million
8. 35
9. religious organizations, schools, educational organizations
10. Charity Navigator looks at how charities spend the money they receive. Human services rated at the top of the list. Arts, culture and humanities rated at the bottom.