



Creating Communities:

Giving and Volunteering

by Gay, Lesbian,

Bisexual, and Transgender People

WORKING GROUP ON FUNDING LESBIAN & GAY ISSUES

INSTITUTE FOR GAY & LESBIAN STRATEGIC STUDIES



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Acknowledgements

This research project was a collaborative effort of the Working Group on Funding Lesbian and Gay Issues and the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies (I-GLSS). The principal investigator of the research study was M. V. Lee Badgett, Ph.D., of I-GLSS and the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Nancy Cunningham, Executive Director of the Working Group, was the project coordinator. Dr. Badgett and Ms. Cunningham are the authors of this report.

We are grateful for the help and support of the many people and organizations who made this research project possible. In particular, we thank The Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund for primary financial support, the National Society of Fund Raising Executives for additional financial support, and American Airlines for promotional support. We would like to thank Pacific Bell for their support of the production and distribution of this report.

Several people contributed their time and expertise to the framing of the study and the creation of the survey instrument: Jeanine Cogan, Karen Anderson, Doug Braley, Cathy Nelson, Torie Osborn, Sharron Rose, and Harder+Company Community Research. Invaluable assistance in the three survey cities came from the Delaware Valley Legacy Fund, the Horizons Foundation, and the Cream City Foundation, with special help from Cathy Barlow, Grace Flannery, Tony Rhodes, and Daren Wade. We also thank Lynette Campbell, Mary Ellen Capek, Mickey MacIntyre, Debra Minkoff, and Karen Zelermyer for their helpful comments and insights on early drafts of the report. Stephanie Eckman, Stephanie Grim, and Billy Harris provided excellent assistance with the processing and analysis of the survey data. We thank Jay Blotcher, Patrice Curtis, Kelvin McNeill, and Ann Northrop for their help in publicizing the research results. Jesús Cudemus designed the report.

Finally, we thank the many individuals in participating organizations for distributing the surveys, and we are grateful to the people who made suggestions during briefing sessions on the survey results.

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The Working Group is a national association of grantmakers dedicated to advocating for increased support of GLBT issues within organized philanthropy. Through research, publications, and programs, the Working Group provides extensive resources for grantmakers and grantseekers on issues related to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities. The Working Group is a project of the Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation.

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The Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies is a nonprofit think tank. The I-GLSS mission is to inform public debates through research, analysis, and education in order to create an equal and integrated society for people of all sexual orientations and gender identifications. The Institute conducts research and analysis on policy-related topics such as marriage and employment discrimination, as well as on questions of strategic value to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities and organizations.

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Executive Summary

Every year individuals in the United States donate billions of dollars and hours to nonprofit community organizations. For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people, giving and volunteering have played an essential role in the development and growth of organizations serving their communities. Despite this support, virtually no research exists on motivational factors and giving patterns of GLBT people.

The Working Group on Funding Lesbian and Gay Issues collaborated with the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies to conduct the first systematic study of motives and barriers to giving and volunteering by GLBT people. Over 2,300 members of GLBT organizations in Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and San Francisco participated in this study.

GLBT people contribute more than the general population

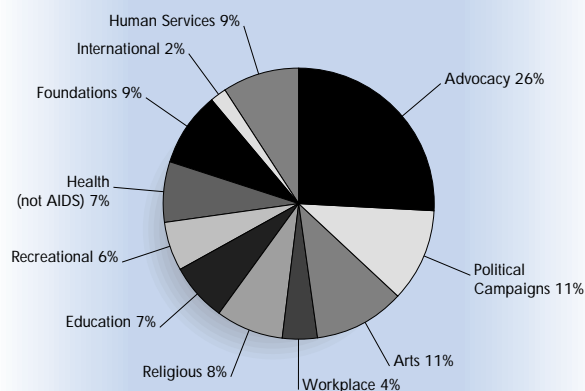
The average GLBT donor in this survey contributed 2.5% (\$1,194) of their personal

income to nonprofit organizations in the past year. This finding is similar to the 2.2% (\$1,017) of household income contributed by the average donor in the United States, as found in a 1996 Independent Sector survey. Patterns of volunteering differ, however, with GLBT volunteers being much more active. The typical volunteer in the United States averages 18 hours per month, while the volunteers in this study averaged 29 hours of volunteer service in the previous month.

More time and money go to GLBT political organizations

Among GLBT organizations, political advocacy groups and political campaigns receive one in four hours volunteered and more than one of every three dollars contributed to gay organizations. Giving and volunteering for non-gay organizations is also concentrated among political groups. This pattern is strikingly different from the general public's giving patterns: the average person in the U.S. gives only 2% of charitable contributions to advocacy groups.

Distribution of Dollars to GLBT Organizations



GLBT people give equally to gay and non-gay organizations

Overall, GLBT donors in the survey contribute roughly equal amounts of money to gay and non-gay organizations. The rest, or 14%, goes to HIV/AIDS-related organizations. The pattern for volunteer hours is similar, with 45% of time volunteered for GLBT organizations and slightly less for non-GLBT organizations.

People who are out and active give more

Characteristics of people who give and volunteer were also identified in this research. After controlling for differences in income, gender, age, race, education, etc., the study found that GLBT people who are open about their sexual orientation to their family members and workplace supervisors volunteer more hours and contribute more money than those not “out” to their families and colleagues.

When comparing men and women with similar characteristics, men volunteer two hours more per month and donate almost \$250 more than women to GLBT organizations. The research also found that lesbians who contribute to women’s organizations actually give more time and money to GLBT organizations than lesbians who do not support women’s groups.

Many people believe donors give money because they have no time to volunteer and volunteers give time because they have limited funds to contribute. In an important finding, this study shows that people who volunteer for GLBT organizations actually

donate more money than those who don’t volunteer. Further, donors to GLBT organizations give more volunteer hours to organizations than non-donors.

Social change spurs GLBT people to give

Activism

85% of donors and volunteers say they give to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.

Altruism

Over 85% of donors and volunteers state helping other GLBT people is an important motive for giving.

Building social networks and community

Knowing someone who benefited from an organization motivates over 1/3 of the volunteers and nearly 1/4 of the donors. Nearly half of the volunteers became involved to meet other GLBT people.

Barriers limit giving and volunteering

The respondents who have not given or volunteered for gay organizations report that lack of time and money are the primary reasons for not being involved. Nearly 20% say they have not been asked to contribute, and only 5% fear being identified as gay if they volunteer or give money to GLBT groups.

Threats and discrimination are major factors in GLBT activism

Nearly half of the survey respondents first became involved to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum, or because they felt threatened by anti-gay rhetoric. One third initially gave or volunteered because they knew someone with AIDS, and 30% had a personal experience of discrimination. Finally, over 40% got involved when they became more open about their sexual orientation.

Implications for organizations and funders

This research provides the first study of motives and barriers to giving and volunteering by GLBT people that can be used to expand access to financial and human resources. The lessons learned from this research can be broadly applied to individuals and organizations throughout the country, although the specific findings can only be applied to GLBT people active in GLBT organizations in the three survey cities. Nonprofit organizations can use these lessons to develop methods of diversifying their fundraising and volunteer appeals. The results further highlight the need for funders to provide core support and technical assistance to build the capacity of organizations to better serve the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender communities throughout the country.

Why This Study?

Every year people in the United States donate billions of dollars and hours to nonprofit community organizations. Contributions of money and volunteer time fuel organizations that provide vital human services, cultural experiences, democratic involvement, and spiritual connection for individuals and communities across the country.

For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender (GLBT) people, giving and volunteering have played an essential role. The second half of the twentieth century has witnessed steady growth in formal organizations created by the donated time and money of GLBT people. The first gay organizations provided social support and an island of safety in the midst of a hostile world. Today's expanding web of organizations has arisen to meet the wide-ranging social, cultural, and political needs of GLBT people.

The existence of these groups is a testament to the creativity, courage, and resourcefulness of people who have been scorned by mainstream society. GLBT organizations have survived and expanded despite many barriers to gathering the resources necessary to create effective organizations: The fears of some people that their sexuality would become known undoubtedly reduced involvement. State and federal agencies often resisted the efforts of gay organizations to incorporate or acquire nonprofit status. Traditional foundations and corporations have failed to provide support for GLBT organizations.

While GLBT people have created organizations despite these barriers, the vast majority are small, volunteer-run, and

under-funded. In the entire state of New Jersey, for example, no GLBT organization has even one full-time paid staff member. The continued growth of GLBT nonprofit organizations will require greater funding from foundations and individual donors.

According to the Foundation Center's 1995 data on foundation giving, lesbian and gay people received less than 0.1% of total annual dollars awarded—fewer foundation dollars than all but one other population group tracked by the Center.¹ The Horizons Foundation in San Francisco reports that in 1994-95 only 27% of Bay Area GLBT organizations received foundation support, and that support provided less than 3% of those organizations' budgets. Several lesbian and gay public foundations have been created to raise funds from individuals and award grants to GLBT organizations, but those funds are small compared to the needs of the communities.

Despite the important role foundations play in supporting nonprofits, foundations actually provide a relatively small proportion of all charitable contributions in the United States. In 1996, 86% of monetary contributions—or \$130 billion—came from individuals.² Clearly GLBT organizations must cultivate individual donors, even if more foundation support is forthcoming. But virtually no research exists on motivational factors and giving patterns of individual GLBT people, making it difficult for organizations to develop effective fundraising strategies to enlarge the base of donors and volunteers.

The Working Group on Funding Lesbian and Gay Issues, an association of grant-

makers committed to increasing support for GLBT organizations, decided to investigate individuals' motivations and barriers to support gay organizations. The Working Group collaborated with the Institute for Gay and Lesbian Strategic Studies, a national think tank, to conduct a study of the giving patterns and motivations of GLBT people. This project was made possible by a grant from the Aspen Institute's Nonprofit Sector Research Fund, with additional financial support from the National Society of Fundraising Executives and promotional support from American Airlines. Pacific Bell provided support for the production of this report.

This study set out to answer several basic questions:

- How much money and volunteer time do gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people give to gay organizations?
- What percentage of GLBT individuals' time and money contributed to *all* organizations goes to GLBT organizations?
- What kind of non-gay organizations do GLBT people give to and volunteer for?
- Why do GLBT individuals give to or fail to give to gay organizations?
- How does fear of disclosure of sexual orientation create barriers to giving and volunteering for gay organizations?
- What triggers people to give to or volunteer for a gay organization for the first time?

An overview of this report

This report starts with an overview of the research process, followed by a description of the basic patterns of giving and volunteering, including some comparisons with other people in the United States. The fourth section reports the underlying characteristics associated with people who give and volunteer. After a detailed discussion of what kinds of organizations receive GLBT time and money in section five, the sixth section looks closely at the motives and barriers related to giving. Sections seven and eight suggest ways that organizations, individuals, researchers, and funders can utilize this study's conclusions. The appendix contains tables with additional findings and a resource list.

Research Notes

This report presents the results of a study of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people (or GLBT people) conducted in 1997. The project focused on San Francisco, Milwaukee, and Philadelphia and enlisted local GLBT organizations to distribute surveys. The three cities met several criteria:

- Each has a local lesbian and gay community foundation or fund to provide assistance in enlisting the participation of local GLBT organizations.
- Each has racially diverse GLBT community organizations.
- The cities are located in different regions of the country.

The GLBT communities in the three cities are at different levels of development. San Francisco is the most developed with numerous GLBT organizations serving a wide variety of community interests and needs. Philadelphia and Milwaukee have a smaller number and range of organizations.

Since so little research has been conducted on giving and volunteering by GLBT people, a new survey instrument was developed for this study. Combining questions on giving and volunteering from other studies with new questions tailored to the experiences of GLBT people resulted in an eight-page questionnaire. Early versions were tested with three different groups of people outside of the survey cities, and the results from those focus groups were incorporated into the final survey instrument.

Working in conjunction with the local lesbian and gay community foundations, a wide range of GLBT organizations (not

HIV/AIDS-related) were approached for participation. Each organization sent a survey and a follow-up postcard to a random sample of people on its broadest mailing list. American Airlines provided two round-trip airfares to raffle off to respondents as an incentive to return the survey. Organizations distributed the surveys in May and June of 1997, and results were tabulated in the summer of 1997.

Of the 9,000 surveys shipped to organizations for distribution to their members, 1,511 were either undeliverable or were not mailed. Of the 7,489 individuals who received surveys, 2,345 people returned a survey, but only 2,323 were complete, for a response rate of 31%. However, several respondents reported that they had received more than one survey (but only returned one), an event that could not be avoided since organizations were not able to cull duplicate names from their mailing lists, suggesting that the true response rate would in fact be higher than 31%. For the purposes of this report, the survey results from 79 heterosexual respondents were omitted, leaving 2,244 individuals in the sample.

Making generalizations from this study

The findings refer to the gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the study and must be interpreted carefully. Because only three cities were surveyed, it would not be appropriate to generalize these results to all GLBT people in the United States. GLBT people in other cities might have different giving and volunteering patterns and motivations, although this study finds remark-

able similarities in motivations and giving patterns across three very different cities.

Further, as a result of this study's sampling technique, the respondents represent only a subset of the GLBT population in those cities, i.e. the group of GLBT people whose names are on organizational mailing lists. This study, therefore, most likely includes a higher proportion of people who are already donors and volunteers compared with the proportion of donors and volunteers among all GLBT people.

The differences between the participants in this study and the overall population of GLBT people are most obvious when comparing economic characteristics. Respondents have a higher median income than either the average person in those metropolitan areas or the average income for a gay, lesbian, or bisexual person in national surveys.³ In this pattern, the GLBT survey is consistent with national surveys that find that people who make charitable contributions or belong to organizations have higher-than-average incomes.⁴

The people in the study are most likely representative of GLBT individuals who are donors and volunteers for GLBT organizations in the three cities studied. The organizations participating in the survey represent a range of GLBT organizations, including political, cultural, religious, and social groups (see Appendix Table A1 for a list of organization categories)⁵.

The representativeness of the group studied here also depends on the characteristics of those who *returned* the surveys. The individuals who chose to return the survey might have been different from those who did not return the survey, perhaps having higher incomes, levels of education, or commitment to the organization compared to people in the same organizations who did not return surveys. If that is the case, then these findings can be applied to those individuals who are most active within GLBT organizations in those cities.

Overall, the broadest appropriate generalization of the report's findings is to other GLBT people active in GLBT organizations in Milwaukee, Philadelphia, and San Francisco.

Basic Patterns of Giving and Volunteering

Table 1. Characteristics of people responding to the survey

	No.	Overall %	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	San Francisco
TOTAL	2244	100	100	100	100
<i>Gender:</i>					
Male	1172	52.4	44.5	58.5	57.0
Female	1058	47.3	54.9	41.1	42.9
Transgender	8	0.4	0.6	0.4	0.1
<i>Sexual Orientation:</i>					
Gay/Lesbian	2028	93.2	91.5	94.8	94.1
Bisexual	147	6.8	8.5	5.2	5.9
<i>Race/ethnicity</i>					
African American	114	5.1	9.7	2.6	2.3
Asian American	57	2.6	2.0	0.0	4.3
Latino	63	2.8	2.7	2.9	2.2
Native American	16	0.7	0.6	1.5	0.2
White	1933	86.6	83.6	90.3	88.3
Multiracial	49	2.2	1.3	2.6	2.7
<i>Personal income:</i>					
Less than \$10000	128	6.0	6.5	7.3	4.6
10000 - 20000	213	9.9	9.7	13.1	9.1
20000 - 30000	358	16.7	17.6	21.8	14.0
30000 - 40000	359	16.8	16.0	21.3	15.0
40000 - 50000	304	14.2	13.8	14.0	13.2
50000 - 75000	419	19.6	21.6	14.2	21.1
75000 - 100000	170	7.9	8.1	5.3	9.2
More than 100000	190	8.9	6.7	2.9	13.7
<i>Household income:</i>					
Less than 10000	60	3.3	3.8	4.4	2.2
10000 - 20000	81	4.4	4.0	6.1	4.4
20000 - 30000	162	8.8	9.7	10.8	7.7
30000 - 40000	186	10.1	9.2	14.1	9.0
40000 - 50000	195	10.6	10.9	13.0	8.5
50000 - 75000	399	21.7	23.1	24.1	18.6
75000 - 100000	278	15.1	17.3	15.5	13.5
More than 100000	476	25.9	22.0	11.9	36.1
<i>City area:</i>					
Philadelphia	693	30.9			
Milwaukee	458	20.4			
San Francisco	928	41.4			
Other	165	7.4			

Note: Totals within categories might differ because of missing data from some individuals.

Characteristics of the respondents

Table 1 gives a basic description of the people responding to the survey overall and by city (some respondents are from outside the three city areas). Overall, 52% of respondents are male, 47% female, and under 1% identify as transgender. The respondents overwhelmingly identify as gay or lesbian, with only 7% identifying their sexual orientation as bisexual. Almost 87% are white, 5% are African-American, 3% Asian-American, 3% Latino, 1% Native American, and 2% identify themselves as belonging to more than one racial category. The respondents are also more likely to be white than the typical person in that particular city. The average age is 42.

In terms of socioeconomic characteristics, levels of education and income are high. Four-fifths of the respondents have a college degree, and 45% have a graduate or professional degree. The median personal income was \$40,000 in the prior year. (In other words, half of the respondents had personal incomes greater than \$40,000, and half had personal incomes lower than \$40,000.) The median household income was in the \$50,000-\$75,000 range (respondents reported a range).

Additional characteristics are presented in Appendix Table A2.

How much GLBT people volunteer and give

Overall, most of the gay, lesbian, bisexual and transgender people in the study are active volunteers and donors. Table 2a shows the average level of volunteering for the whole group and by city. The average

Table 2a. How much do GLBT people volunteer? (By gender and city)

(Average hours in previous month)

	All	Milwaukee	Philadelphia	San Francisco
TOTAL				
<i>Average hours to all organizations</i>	19	22	18	20
GLBT	9	10	7	10
Non-GLBT	8	9	8	7
HIV/AIDS	3	3	3	3
WOMEN				
<i>Average hours to all organizations</i>	18	21	16	18
GLBT	8	9	6	10
Non-GLBT	8	9	9	7
HIV/AIDS	2	3	2	2
MEN				
<i>Average hours to all organizations</i>	20	22	19	20
GLBT	9	10	7	10
Non-GLBT	7	9	8	7
HIV/AIDS	4	4	4	4

Table 2b. How much do GLBT people volunteer? (By race)

	African American	Asian American	Latino	Native American	White	Multiracial
<i>Average hours to all organizations</i>	29	29	24	16	18	19
GLBT	9	13	10	6	9	10
Non-GLBT	14	10	11	7	7	8
HIV/AIDS	7	6	5	3	3	2

Table 3a. How much do GLBT people give? (By gender and city)

(Average dollars contributed in the previous year)

	All	Milwaukee	Philadelphia	San Francisco
TOTAL				
<i>Average dollars to all organizations</i>	1016	782	821	1297
GLBT	429	294	285	617
Non-GLBT	446	367	424	506
HIV/AIDS	141	121	112	175
WOMEN				
<i>Average dollars to all organizations</i>	824	603	660	1116
GLBT	354	232	222	561
Non-GLBT	402	304	390	463
HIV/AIDS	68	67	48	93
MEN				
<i>Average dollars to all organizations</i>	1196	913	1029	1436
GLBT	498	340	365	660
Non-GLBT	490	413	472	539
HIV/AIDS	208	159	193	237

Table 3b. How much do GLBT people give? (By race)

	African American	Asian American	Latino	Native American	White	Multiracial
<i>Average dollars to all organizations</i>	602	810	545	835	1071	681
GLBT	202	345	221	321	455	354
Non-GLBT	288	340	221	302	471	218
HIV/AIDS	112	125	103	213	145	110

Note: Sub-totals may not add up to totals because of rounding.

person volunteered 19 hours in the month before the survey, with men averaging 20 hours and women 18 hours. The gender difference mainly results from men's greater volunteer time for HIV/AIDS-related organizations.

The three cities vary somewhat in average volunteer time. People in Milwaukee have the highest average for all organizations (22 hours), contributing 10 hours to GLBT organizations. San Francisco has the next largest average of 20 hours, with half going to GLBT organizations. In Philadelphia, volunteer time is lower than the overall average at 18 hours, as are hours spent in GLBT organizations (7 hours).

The pattern for contributions of money in the last year is similar, as Table 3a demonstrates. The average level of giving is \$1,016, and men (\$1,196) give more than women (\$824). San Francisco area residents are the most generous, contributing an average of \$1,297 compared to Philadelphia's \$821 and Milwaukee's \$782. (The next section shows that the two patterns are *not* simply caused by the male-female wage gap or the fact that the San Francisco area is the most affluent of the three urban areas.)

Tables 2b and 3b break volunteer time and giving down by race and ethnicity. African Americans and Asian Americans volunteer an average of 29 hours, the most overall, and white respondents are in the middle, with an average of 18 hours. Volunteering for GLBT organizations is more similar across groups, however, with Asian Americans volunteering the most (13

Figure 1. Distribution of Volunteer Hours

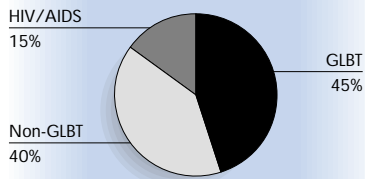
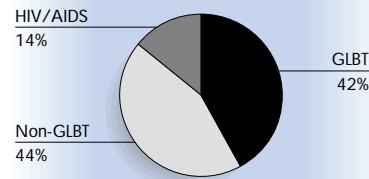


Figure 2. Distribution of Contributed Dollars



hours), and the other groups giving 9-10 hours. In the context of giving (Table 3b), however, whites give the most money in two of three categories, followed by Native Americans and Asian Americans.

Figure 1 shows the distribution of hours to GLBT, non-GLBT, and HIV/AIDS-related organizations for the whole sample. GLBT organizations receive the largest share, or 45% of volunteer hours, but non-GLBT organizations get 40%, a roughly similar amount.

Figures 2 and 3 show the distribution of monetary contributions. The proportions change a bit compared to volunteer hours. Donors give more to non-GLBT organizations than to GLBT organizations, although the difference is small.

The proportions by city are also similar, as shown in Figure 3, which illustrates how dollars are distributed across type of organization. Volunteer hours (not shown) have a very similar distribution. Overall, San Franciscans give almost half of their charitable dollars to GLBT organizations. That is a higher proportion than giving to GLBT organizations in Milwaukee and much more than those in Philadelphia, who give the highest proportion of dollars (and hours) to non-GLBT organizations.

For contributions of money, one important comparison is with the income of the survey participants, shown in Figure 4. Participants in the study give 2.1% of their personal incomes to all organizations, on average, and 0.9% to GLBT organizations. (Because the survey asked about dollar ranges of income and contributions rather than actual dollar values, these proportions

are calculated using the middle point of each range.) The proportion of personal income contributed varies somewhat, from 5.0% for the lowest income level to 1.7% in the middle of the range, with a slight increase at higher income levels.

Comparison with others in the U.S.

Comparing the responses of GLBT people with those from a national survey of people in the United States conducted in 1996 by

the Independent Sector gives a sense of whether GLBT people give or volunteer more than the typical person in the U.S. Table 4 provides this comparison.

Since the three-city survey of GLBT people focuses on those most likely to be donors or volunteers, the appropriate comparison would be between actual donors and actual volunteers in both surveys, that is, of the individuals who had actually made a contribution to some organization.

Figure 3. Distribution of Dollars by City

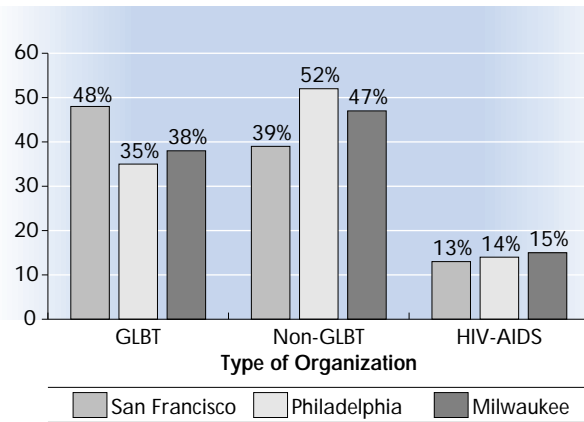


Figure 4. Giving as Percentage of Income

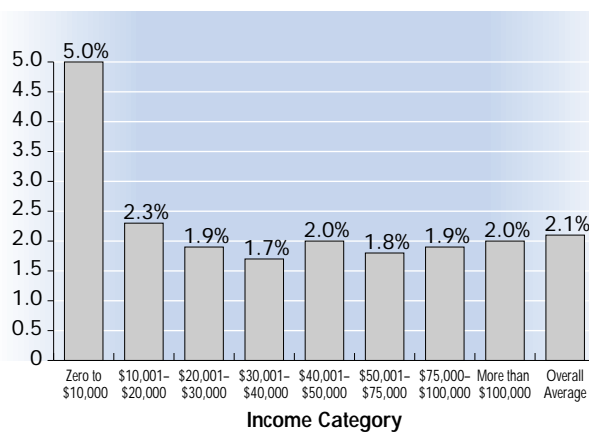


Table 4.
Comparison with others in U.S.

	Independent Sector 1996	GLBT Survey 1997
Average contribution by donors	\$1017 (household)	\$1194 (individual)
Percentage of income	2.2% (household)	2.5% (individual)
Average monthly hours for volunteers	18	29

Contributing households in the Independent Sector study give an average of \$1017, or 2.2% of household income. The average donor in the GLBT survey gives \$1,194, or 2.5% of his or her personal income (not directly comparable with household income since this study did not ask about giving by households). Giving as a percentage of income is similar across the two surveys, suggesting that the higher dollar value in the GLBT survey simply reflects those respondents' higher-than-average incomes.

The typical volunteer in the United States averaged 18 hours per month. In the GLBT study, the average volunteer gave 29 hours in the previous month.⁶ Unlike GLBT donors, GLBT volunteers are much more active than the typical volunteer in the U.S. The two comparisons with broader giving patterns suggest that GLBT people meet the increased needs for organizational resources through volunteering.

Participation in workplace giving programs

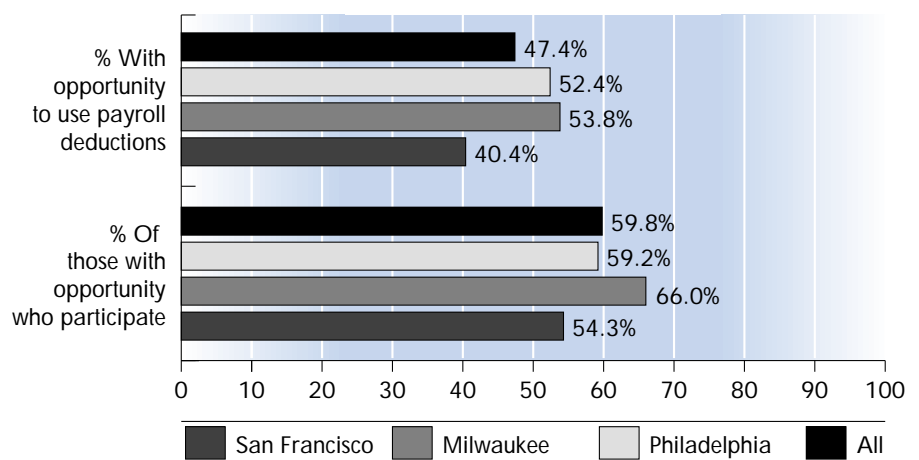
The donations described in the last section could have been made to organizations through a variety of methods. In particular, many people make charitable contributions through workplace giving programs, such as the United Way. Participation by GLBT people might depend on whether the workplace giving programs fund GLBT services and organizations and whether GLBT people feel comfortable contributing to gay organizations in this way. In the three cities studied, the United Way funds social services targeted at GLBT people.

The survey asked whether participants have the opportunity to contribute to organizations through payroll deductions, and the results are summarized in Figure 5. Overall, 47% of those employed report that

they have such an opportunity (the top bar), which is much higher than the 26% of all employed people in the United States who have that option.⁷ A bit more than half of the employed respondents in Milwaukee and Philadelphia could give through payroll deduction, but only 40% of those in San Francisco report that option.

Of the 47% of respondents who have the opportunity to give in this way, 60% actually participate in the payroll deduction plan (bottom set of bars in Figure 5). Again, this is a greater participation rate than the 48% found in the U.S. as a whole by the Independent Sector study. This varies among GLBT people by city, with almost two-thirds of those in Milwaukee participating but just over half in San Francisco enrolled in those plans.

Figure 5. Giving Through Payroll Deduction



Characteristics Associated with Giving and Volunteering to GLBT Organizations

The study's primary goal was to understand giving and volunteering to GLBT organizations and to identify the characteristics of people who give and volunteer. Obviously, many factors influence how much an individual gives. For instance, people with higher incomes might give more money than those with lower incomes. And people in San Francisco might give more because of the larger number and variety of organizations. But people in San Francisco also tend to have higher incomes, looking either at those in the survey or those in the general population of that area. So identifying the characteristics of people who give more gets tricky—do San Franciscans give more because they have higher incomes or because they have more opportunities to give or some other reason?

One way to handle the fact that an individual has some characteristics that would lead them to give more and some to give less is to use a statistical procedure known as multiple regression. This procedure holds constant some factors to see the impact of other factors on dollars donated and hours volunteered. The following factors turned out to be important after controlling for differences in income, age, city, gender, race, education, time of first involvement, motives, level of "outness," employment status, sexual orientation, and religious tradition:

- **Gender:** When comparing men and women with the same income and other characteristics, men volunteer almost two hours more per month and donate \$245 more than women to GLBT organizations. This finding also implies that women give a lower proportion of their income. Explaining this striking difference is not easy. Other research has found that lesbians are more likely to have children than are gay men,⁸ but this survey did not ask whether respondents had children. As a result, women in this study might have other financial and time demands which keep them from giving more time and money. Or perhaps women feel less financially secure or less identified with GLBT organizations.
- **Income:** People with lower incomes volunteer more hours than people with higher incomes. People with higher incomes donate more money than people with lower incomes, although Figure 4 suggests that lower income donors contribute a higher proportion of their personal incomes.
- **"Outness":** GLBT people who are out about their sexual orientation to most or all of their family members and workplace supervisors tend to volunteer more hours. A person who is out to his or her supervisor donates \$157 more than a person who has the same characteristics but is not out to his or her supervisor.⁹
- **Age:** Even holding income and other factors constant, older people donate more money, roughly an additional \$3 per year of age. In other words, a typical 40 year old gives \$30 more to GLBT

organizations than a 30 year old with exactly the same income and other characteristics. This finding suggests that people might become more attached to GLBT communities and to GLBT organizations as they get older, or perhaps particular cohorts of GLBT people tend to give more.

- **City:** Even comparing people with the same income and other characteristics, those in San Francisco give \$94 more than those in Milwaukee and \$173 more than those in Philadelphia. San Francisco area residents also volunteer more hours than those in the other cities. Interpreting the causal relationship between living in San Francisco and giving is difficult. San Francisco might provide more opportunities for giving and volunteering, but the fact that greater opportunities exist is also likely the result of *past* levels of investment of time and money. San Francisco's reputation as a gay mecca might have attracted more people who wanted to be engaged in GLBT organizations. If those activists invested more heavily in organizations, those organizations could have then enlisted additional volunteers and donors from among people who would not have been active had they lived in other cities with fewer giving and volunteering opportunities.
- **Motives:** People report different motives for their last decision to give or volunteer. Individuals who are motivated by wanting to help other GLBT people, an

altruistic motive, volunteer more hours. Respondents who report a self-interested motive, either wanting to meet GLBT people, to learn new job skills, to receive a gift, or to get a tax deduction, both volunteer more and give more money than those who do not report such a motive. Individuals who are motivated by activism—contributing to social and political change for GLBT people—donate more money than those who do not report this as an important factor.

- **Time of first involvement:** For those respondents who had ever given to or volunteered for a GLBT organization, the survey asked how long ago the initial involvement had taken place. An interesting pattern emerges when comparing first involvement to giving and volunteering behavior. Those who report that their first involvement had taken place in the last year volunteer more hours than otherwise similar people who had first gotten involved in GLBT organizations more than one year ago. On the other end of the scale, those who were first involved more than ten years ago (44% of respondents) donate more money than those with shorter terms of involvement but the same income, education, and other characteristics.

This pattern suggests several possible interpretations. Individuals might have gone through some sort of “seasoning” process, with initial entry into involvement with GLBT organizations through volunteer work, later shifting toward more financial support of organizations

after gaining experience and knowledge about GLBT organizations. (To be more certain of such a pattern, however, researchers would need to follow volunteers and donors over time to track whether their giving behavior changes.) Another possible explanation is that the cohorts of people who first got involved before 1987 are more dedicated to supporting GLBT organizations with monetary donations than those people of the same age, income, etc., who got involved more recently. A third possibility is that this finding demonstrates some kind of activist “burn-out,” where early volunteer effort cannot be sustained, and volunteers shift their support for organizations to financial support. Again, this explanation is hard to assess directly since this study does not allow us to track respondents' involvement in a single organization over time.

- **HIV status:** HIV-positive people contribute less money to GLBT organizations than do those who were HIV-negative or did not know their HIV status. However, HIV-positive people support HIV/AIDS-related organizations with more hours and dollars compared to HIV-negative people and those of unknown status.
- **Religious tradition:** The religion in which the respondent was raised (Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, “other,” or none) does not significantly influence hours volunteered or dollars donated (although those raised as Protestants

volunteer somewhat more for GLBT organizations than those raised in other traditions).

The question of competing loyalties

One specific question addressed in this study was whether lesbian and bisexual women and GLBT people of color were less involved in GLBT organizations because of their commitment to non-GLBT women's organizations or organizations serving communities of color. Certainly an individual's sexual orientation may be only one of several dimensions of identity. As political scientist Kenneth Sherrill has pointed out, gays and lesbians are born into a diaspora, spread across geographic communities and born into families where gender, race, or ethnic identities—but not a gay identity—are instilled from the beginning. The later development of a GLBT identity and an ethic of responsibility for contributing to GLBT organizations and causes may be overshadowed by the competing loyalties for time and money based on race, ethnicity, and/or gender.¹⁰

Competing loyalties could reduce giving and volunteering for GLBT organizations in two ways. First, women and people of color who are already involved with GLBT organizations might give less to those groups than do white men, who have less attachment to groups with missions focused on women and/or on people of color. Second, some women and people of color might not be involved with gay organizations at all. This study's methodology allows direct consideration of the first possible impact but only indirect consideration of the second.

Direct evidence from women's giving practices: As noted earlier, women in the study give less than men, even after accounting for differences in income and other characteristics. If that finding is the result of conflicting loyalties, then the more detailed analysis should show that women who are involved with women's organizations are less involved in GLBT organizations. This study finds just the opposite, however. Women who report contributions of time or money to non-GLBT organizations that serve women actually give *more* time and money to GLBT organizations than do otherwise identical women who had not given to women's organizations in the past year.

Direct evidence from people of color's giving practices: The survey shows a somewhat different pattern for people of color, who volunteer more but give less money than white respondents on average. If competing loyalties are an issue, people of color would contribute and volunteer less than white people after controlling for age, income, etc. However, this study finds no consistent impact of race or ethnicity on giving and volunteering for GLBT organizations in the detailed analysis. Asian Americans give more time and money to GLBT organizations than do white respondents, and African Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans give roughly the same amounts as do whites with the same income, education, and other characteristics. People of color who had contributed to organizations serving people of color and their communities give slightly more time and a bit less money to GLBT organizations.

Taken as a whole, these patterns do not support the competing loyalties hypothesis.

Indirect evidence: If competing loyalties result in the absence of many people of color and women from GLBT organizations' mailing lists, then the proportion of those groups on the mailing lists should be much lower than the proportion of GLBT people who are women or people of color. The relative race and gender proportions of the GLBT community are a matter of debate but can be approximated by the race and gender composition of the population. Since almost 50% of the sample is female, roughly the same proportion of women in the population, a large group of lesbian and bisexual women who feel conflicting loyalties does not appear to exist. The situation is different for people of color, however, since the sample contains a much lower proportion of people of color than live in the urban areas studied. To summarize, the direct evidence clearly does not support the competing loyalties hypothesis, but the indirect evidence suggests that people of color are underrepresented on GLBT mailing lists, perhaps as a result of competing loyalties.

Do individuals choose between giving and volunteering?

Organizations often think of volunteering time and giving money as entirely separate roles for people involved in those organizations. A common presumption is that people who are too busy to volunteer will write a check and those who volunteer do so instead of contributing money. This study was designed to see if these assumptions are

Distribution of Time and Money

confirmed by actual behavior.

In an important finding, this study clearly and strongly rejects that assumption. Giving and volunteering are complementary—people tended to do both.¹¹ In the results from the detailed comparisons described earlier, people who volunteer for a GLBT organization in the past month give almost \$140 more to GLBT organizations than a non-volunteer with the same characteristics. The flip-side of this is also true: donors to GLBT organizations in the past year volunteer more than non-donors, roughly an hour more for every \$1000 in GLBT contributions. Volunteering time and giving money are both expressions of commitment to an organization's efforts and goals, so it is not surprising to find that individuals did both.

Numerous local and national organizations vie for the attention and contributions of GLBT people. Individuals have many different kinds of organizations to choose from in making volunteer and donor decisions, both within and outside of the GLBT community. The distribution of giving is likely to result from a complex combination of donor and volunteer interest, access, and knowledge, as well as organizational effectiveness in finding and appealing to donors and volunteers.

This survey asked people to specify how much time and money they give to different types of GLBT and non-GLBT organizations, as well as specifying totals of time and money.¹² Those questions reveal how people generally allocated their contributions, although without identifying specific organizations.

Figure 6 shows how volunteers divide up their hours across GLBT organizations. (Non-volunteers are not included in the separate calculations for both pie charts.) The typical volunteer for GLBT organizations in the study gives an average of 20 hours. Almost one quarter of volunteer hours for GLBT organizations go to political advocacy groups and political campaigns. The next largest proportion of hours (16%) go to social, recreational, and sports groups. Arts/culture, workplace/professional, education, and human services organizations each get 9-12% of volunteer hours. Religious, health (not HIV/AIDS related), foundations, and international organizations divide up the remaining 19%.

The volunteering patterns for those

working with non-GLBT organizations (Figure 7) are somewhat different. Of the 17 hours averaged by these volunteers, a smaller share of time goes to advocacy and political work (17% total), and half as much is spent with recreational groups (8%). A much higher proportion of time is spent with workplace/professional (17%), religious (13%), and education groups (12%).

The average donor to GLBT organizations contributes a total of \$584, and donors to non-GLBT organizations average \$603. (These averages do not include those contributing zero dollars, as did Table 3.) Figure 8 shows that a higher proportion of money than hours goes to political advocacy (26%) and political campaigns (11%). Arts and cultural groups receive just over one in ten dollars, and the rest is spread fairly evenly among the other kinds of organizations.

Contributions to non-GLBT organizations, shown in Figure 9, are more evenly distributed. A total of 22% goes to non-GLBT political advocacy and campaigns, but the top single category is religious/spiritual organizations, which receive 17% of dollars from donors to non-GLBT organizations. Donors also support non-GLBT arts (15%), education (11%) and human services (11%) organizations.

To put the distribution of GLBT dollars in perspective, a comparison with general patterns of giving in the United States is helpful. Figure 10 presents the distribution of giving by the respondents in the 1996 Independent Sector survey. That survey does not use exactly the same categories (for

Figure 6. Distribution of Volunteer Hours to GLBT Organizations

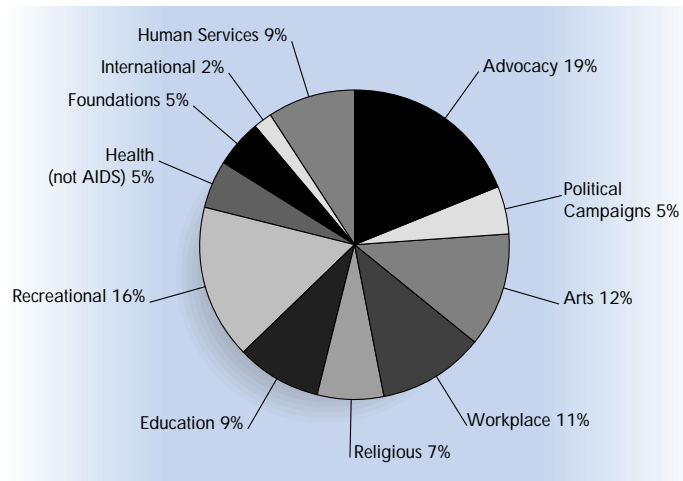


Figure 7. Distribution of Volunteer Hours to Non-GLBT Organizations

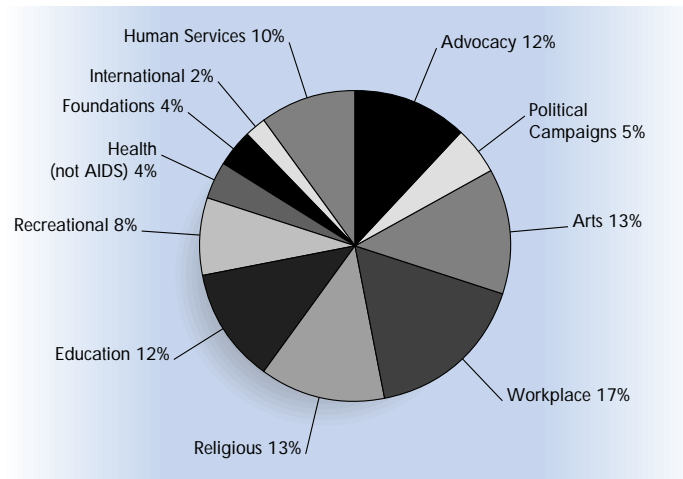
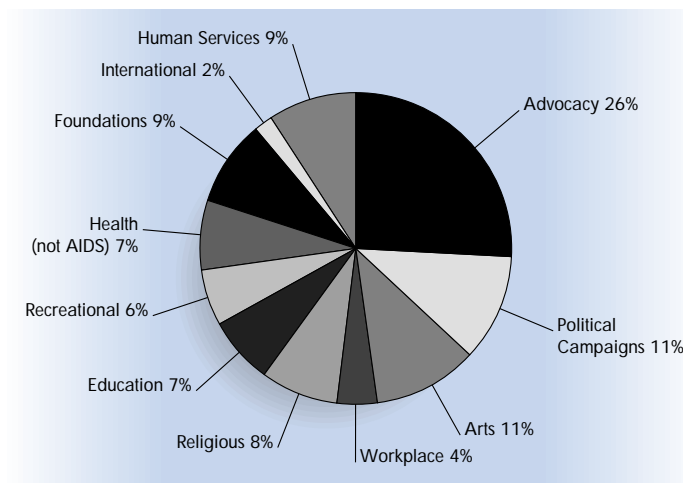


Figure 8. Distribution of Dollars to GLBT Organizations



instance, political campaigns are not included, and their definition of advocacy is public/society benefit organizations, which appears to have been broader than the one in the GLBT study), but those imperfections seem less relevant given the overwhelming proportion of the contributions going to religious organizations—58%, compared to the 8% and 17% contributed by GLBT people to GLBT and non-GLBT religious organizations, respectively. The average person in the United States also does not share the implied political activism of most GLBT people, with only 2% of U.S. charitable contributions going to advocacy groups.

Because the GLBT survey drew heavily from mailing lists of political organizations, the GLBT contributions might be skewed toward political groups. Even after testing these distributions by using calculations that reweight or eliminate the political groups, the basic pattern of heavy contributions to political organizations and small proportions to religious organizations does not change. The people who received surveys because they are on mailing lists of religious groups give much more heavily to religious organizations than do other GLBT people, with 32% of giving to GLBT religious organizations and 42% of giving to non-GLBT religious organizations, but still at levels much lower than the typical person in the United States.

Figure 9. Distribution of Dollars to Non-GLBT Organizations

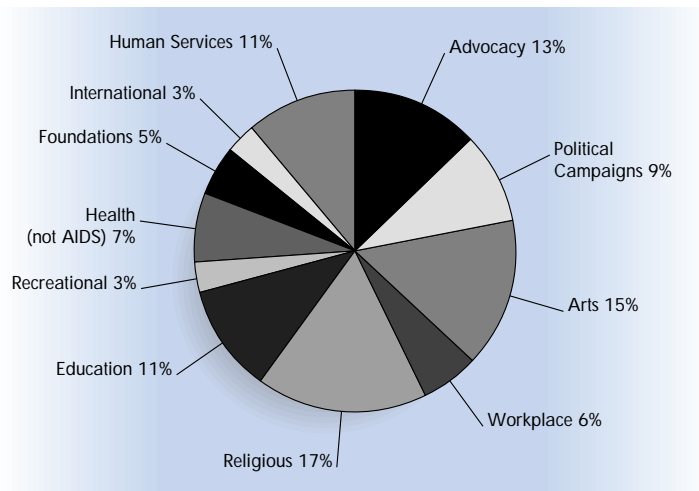
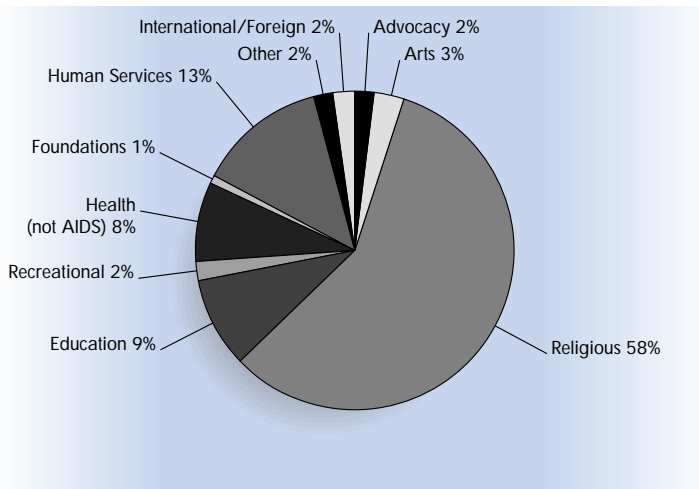


Figure 10. Distribution of Giving—Independent Sector Survey of U.S.



Motivations and Barriers

Why people give and volunteer

One of the major goals of this study was to understand the motives and barriers for GLBT involvement in organizations. The survey asked respondents which factors (on a list with many possibilities) were most important in their most recent decision to volunteer time or give money. Respondents rated each factor as “not at all important,” “somewhat important,” “important,” or “very important.” Grouping the motivations that are “important” or “very important” allows identification of individuals’ primary motivations.

Altruism and Activism: Over 85% of donors and volunteers report that they are motivated by the desire to help other GLBT people, an altruistic motive. Just as important, more than 85% also report that they give to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people. While these are lofty sentiments that could reflect either the true underlying motivations or a sense that reporting such motives is more socially desirable, the sincerity of the reports is bolstered by the fact (discussed earlier) that those expressing altruistic motives tend to volunteer more than those who do not report such motives, and those reporting an activist motivation contribute more money.

Building social networks and community: The GLBT people in the survey are motivated to get involved in order to build and strengthen their own communities. Almost half (47%) of volunteers report that wanting to meet other GLBT people is an important factor. Knowing someone who

had benefited from the organization motivates 36% of the volunteers and 23% of the donors, suggesting a motive of reciprocity, or wanting “to give something back” to an organization that had helped someone who is important to the respondent.

Organizational characteristics: The volunteers and donors in the survey look carefully at the organizations they support:

- Roughly three in four (73%) donors respond that an organization’s reputation for spending money wisely is important.
- 61% of donors note the fact that the organization provides direct services for people in need.
- Influencing the organization was a goal of 42% of volunteers and 17% of donors.
- The race and/or gender diversity of the board is important to many donors, especially for those groups who are often not well-represented: 42% of women but only 28% of men say this was an important factor in their most recent decision, and 52% of people of color but only 32% of white people report this is important in their decisions.
- Many lesbian donors (40%) also look at whether the organization primarily serves lesbians.
- Being asked to give is an important reason for one third of donors.

- Over a quarter of donors say that the fact that the organization does not receive government money is important.
- Older organizations are more attractive for 24% of donors.
- Tax deductibility is a factor for 24% of donors, although it is more important for those with incomes over \$50,000, who are the most likely to claim deductions for charitable contributions.

Why people do not give or volunteer

Among the respondents are some who have either never volunteered or never donated money to a GLBT organization. The survey asked them how important certain factors are in determining their noninvolvement.

The Closet: Some individuals might not be involved in a gay organization because of fear that others will think that they are gay. Only about 5% of non-volunteers and non-donors report that this fear is important, a surprising statistic since many fundraisers report fear as a major barrier to giving. These respondents are already on a mailing list of a GLBT organization, however, so they might not be representative of all non-donors and non-volunteers.

Not being asked: Almost one in five non-donors and non-volunteers report that one reason they have not given or volunteered is that they have not been asked. This finding is particularly surprising since all of these individuals are on an organization's mailing list which is presumably used to solicit donors and volunteers! This suggests

that many of these individuals simply do not perceive impersonal solicitations from organizations as direct requests for money or time.

Many demands for time and money: Two-thirds of non-volunteers say that their schedules are too full. Half of non-donors report that they cannot afford to donate money. And 15% of non-donors say that they do not give money because they worry that their names will end up on too many mailing lists, although most of those who cite this factor live in the Philadelphia area.

Why people first got involved with a GLBT organization

Another goal of the study was to identify ways to encourage people to contribute to or volunteer for a GLBT organization for the first time. Few non-donors and non-volunteers responded to the survey (only 10% had neither donated to nor volunteered for a GLBT organization), and they might not be representative of all of those who are not involved with GLBT organizations. Therefore, a reliable comparison between those who give with those who do not give is not possible to help identify *potential* donors and volunteers. To address this issue from a different perspective, the survey asked donors and volunteers why they first gave or volunteered for a GLBT organization. Over 45% had first given more than ten years ago, so their memories might be clouded by subsequent events, but the motivation patterns do not differ much for those whose first involvement was much more recent.

As with more recent giving decisions,

first time decisions were motivated by altruism, reported as important by 83% of donors and volunteers. The other important factors were personal experiences:

- *Responding to a threat:* Almost half (45%) report that they had first given or volunteered to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum. This motivation was more important for people in San Francisco, perhaps because of numerous anti-gay referenda proposed over the last two decades. An equal number, 45%, were motivated by a threat they felt from hearing negative comments about GLBT people.
- *Personal experiences:* Many people were drawn into a GLBT organization because someone they knew had contracted or died of AIDS. This was more important for men, 40% of whom report this factor as important, compared to 24% of women. For 29% of people in the survey, a personal experience of discrimination motivated involvement. And a quarter of respondents were first motivated by knowing someone who was helped by an organization.
- *Coming out:* Deciding to be more out about one's sexual orientation was an important factor pushing 42% of those in the survey to contribute to a GLBT organization for the first time.

Full lists of the possible motives and the proportion of respondents listing each one as important are in Appendix Tables A3-A5.

Recommendations for Organizations:

TARGET MOTIVATIONS

Fundraising strategies are rarely simple, but the findings of the GLBT survey suggest the basics for developing a plan that appeals to GLBT individuals' motivations. Organizations and foundations that want both to expand their pool of donors and volunteers and to increase the level of support from existing contributors can use the insights gleaned from this study to develop more effective fundraising strategies. While these motivations are identified relative to GLBT organizations, even non-GLBT organizations that want to reach out to gay people might find these guidelines useful.

***ALTRUISM** Show how your organization helps GLBT people*

■ 85% of donors and volunteers give to help other GLBT people. ■ 61% give to particular organizations because they provide direct services to people in need.

- Use testimonials and stories in your fundraising literature and publicity materials.
- Quote people served by your organization in fundraising materials.
- Ask your clients to speak at public events for your organization.
- Gather and publicize statistics to show how many people you have helped.
- Provide opportunities for site visits so prospective donors can see your organization in action.

***ACTIVISM** Highlight your advocacy work for social change*

■ 85% of donors and volunteers want to contribute to social and political change.

- Illustrate the short and long term political impact of your organization's work.
- Use statistics and testimonials to demonstrate your organization's effectiveness in promoting social change.
- Provide vehicles for activism coupled with fundraising.
- Be clear about your long-term goals but set intermediate milestones that can be met along the way.

A political organization asks its supporters to sign up to send mailgrams to members of Congress on gay-related issues. This tactic provides a chance to participate in the political process and helps the organization raise money at the same time.

***TRANSFORMATIVE EXPERIENCES:** Look for new donors and volunteers where transformative experiences occur*

■ 42% of volunteers and donors first got involved when they decided to be more open about their sexual orientation. ■ 45% of people first got involved to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum. ■ 45% first got involved because they felt threatened by anti-gay comments; many got involved because of their own experiences of discrimination.

- Use controversies about gay issues to recruit donors and volunteers.
- See short-term mobilizations against anti-gay campaigns as opportunities to pull new people in for long-term

involvement.

- Publicize volunteer opportunities through coming out support groups.
- Work to change laws that will make it safer to come out.

BUILDING COMMUNITY: Use personal connections to expand your donor and volunteer base

■ 47% of volunteers got involved to meet other GLBT people. ■ 36% of volunteers and 23% of donors know someone who benefited from the organization.

- Develop donors, volunteers, and clients as emissaries for your organization.
- Hold donor/volunteer recognition events and invite their friends.
- Provide opportunities for volunteers to work directly with other volunteers.
- Set up gift memberships or memorial/honorary gifts on behalf of friends and loved ones.
- Highlight the efforts of volunteers and donors in newsletters and publications.

“On one side of the return cards we send to prospective donors, we have their name, address, and a place to make a donation. On the other side we ask them for names of their friends to add to our mailing list. We’ve significantly increased our list of prospective donors this way.”

FISCAL RESPONSIBILITY: Pay close attention to financial matters

■ 73% of donors say the organization’s reputation for spending money wisely is important.

- Proactively promote good fiscal management.

- Highlight prudent spending habits in publications and fundraising appeals.
- Publish an annual report containing a financial statement.
- Create a fiscal oversight committee of your board.

DIVERSITY: Diversify the race and gender composition of your organization

■ 42% of women and 28% of men report that the race and gender composition of an organization’s board is important. ■ 52% of people of color and 32% of white people say this is important.

- Create a diversity plan for your organization and engage volunteers in the process.
- Develop a multi-racial and co-gender leadership structure.
- Engage diverse groups in program planning as well as in implementation.

Some organizations publicize their policies on board diversity that require at least 50% women and 50% people of color.

GIVING LEADS TO MORE GIVING: Always ask—people who give are often willing to give more

■ People who volunteer give more money than those who do not. ■ Donors who also volunteer contribute more hours than non-donors. ■ Women who give and volunteer with women’s organizations give more to GLBT organizations.

- Ask all volunteers to give money as well as time.
- Merge volunteer and donor databases.

- Consider joint efforts with organizations working with women or people of color to expand your visibility among GLBT people active in those organizations.
- Trade mailing lists with related organizations both inside and outside the GLBT community.

“We used to have a little box for donations on our membership renewal form that we mailed out each year. Nobody ever sent us donations! We started putting articles on the front page of our newsletter asking for donations very explicitly. Then our members started sending in checks.”

* * *

As the examples demonstrate, some organizations have already developed sophisticated methods for increasing contributions of time and money, but most organizations could do more to diversify their fundraising tactics. Organizations will reach the most donors and volunteers by providing a menu of opportunities for giving and volunteering that appeal to as many motivations as possible. Spending time developing detailed plans and training volunteers to carry out those fundraising plans might seem like too much work for over-committed activists and under-funded organizations. However, the ongoing survival and growth of GLBT organizations depends on increasing the number and commitment of donors and volunteers.

Additional Recommendations and Conclusions

Recommendations for individuals

This research demonstrates that GLBT people are actively participating in mainstream organizations alongside heterosexual people. Additionally, GLBT people are taking responsibility for creating and maintaining their own organizations to meet the needs that the mainstream organizations have not met. While GLBT organizations could do a better job of marketing their efforts to prospective donors and volunteers, funders could be more supportive of GLBT issues and organizations, and governments could be more responsive to the specific needs of gay people, ultimately the survival and growth of gay organizations will depend on the active involvement of individuals.

A goal of this study was to activate the conscience and imagination of gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people and their allies. Giving less than 1% of income to GLBT organizations has not been sufficient to achieve the political, social, and cultural progress that gay people want and need. GLBT people and their allies must take greater individual responsibility for supporting and creating the organizations that constitute the infrastructure of the GLBT community.

Recommendations for researchers

Like most research projects, this study raises many questions for future research. One particularly important methodological task remains: generating a representative sample of GLBT people that would include non-donors and non-volunteers as well as people with some current connection to organiza-

tions. While that is a daunting task, focusing on one metropolitan area could make such a project both academically and financially feasible. By including the people that this survey missed, additional barriers to giving and volunteering could be analyzed and potential means to overcome those barriers could be identified.

Future researchers might also branch out into different cities or into qualitative research methods, such as focus groups or interviews, that allow for more in-depth exploration of individual motives and barriers. Researchers could follow donors and volunteers over time to see how giving and volunteering decisions change or how involvement with GLBT organizations influences individuals' sense of community and personal identity. Focusing on organizations instead of individuals would open up many other research opportunities and useful questions, such as the effectiveness of different fundraising vehicles or volunteer recruitment methods.

No single study can address the many academic and practical questions and concerns related to giving and volunteering among GLBT people. An aim of this study was to provide baseline data about giving and volunteering by gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people.

Recommendations for funders

Lesbians and gay men have taken the lead in developing organizations and building a community infrastructure to meet their needs. This has occurred even though GLBT people are also actively—and equally—involved in giving to and volunteering for

non-GLBT and HIV/AIDS-related organizations. Although gay people have done an admirable job in supporting their own communities over the years, the pressing needs for services and legal protection are much greater than the resources available. This is particularly true in places that do not have the relatively wide range of organizations found in San Francisco, Milwaukee and Philadelphia.

Private and corporate foundations have traditionally devoted a small fraction of their grants to programs for gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people. A few private foundations have specific programs for lesbian and gay issues, but the majority of grants are awarded from a range of program areas including education, youth, arts and culture, human services, civil rights, etc. Many new foundations have been established over the past ten years to channel philanthropic dollars directly to the GLBT communities. Some of these are private foundations and others are public community foundations supported by individual donations. This report contains several important implications for both current and future funders of GLBT programs and projects.

General operating grants: Foundations investing in core support early in an organization's development can have a tremendous impact on the stability and growth of the organization. Giving general support for capacity building—board development and staffing—also enhances an organization's ability to develop and carry out a more sophisticated fundraising plan. Building an

organization that can implement the following suggestions from the previous section takes expertise and resources:

- Setting up a system to gather and analyze statistics on service provision;
- Holding recognition events for volunteers and donors;
- Preparing and auditing a financial statement;
- Publishing an annual report; and
- Creating a diversity plan.

Technical assistance grants: Providing technical assistance grants for building a donor and volunteer base is also crucial. Many of the earlier suggestions for organizations involve creativity *and* resources, both in terms of time from board members, staff, and volunteers, and in terms of financial resources. Foundation support to consult with professional fundraisers and to develop new fundraising and volunteer recruitment vehicles, for example, would provide a solid base from which to grow.

Foundations are in a unique position to facilitate those efforts. Since minimal support has been available in the past, even modest grants can provide critical financial assistance as well as help leverage additional dollars from individuals and other institutions. Creating a wider base of support for GLBT issues will also send an important message about the philanthropic community's concern for the needs and basic rights of all people.

Final thoughts

In the 1990's, gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people have successfully brought their lives and concerns to the front pages of newspapers, onto primetime television shows, and even into White House policy discussions. GLBT issues have never been more visible than they are today in the United States. As the world prepares to enter the next century, GLBT communities are faced with unique challenges and opportunities. Some organizations are well-positioned to accept those challenges and to seize those opportunities; other organizations are in a weaker position. Regardless of their current situation, *all* organizations will need significant support from individuals and foundations in the future to survive and to succeed.

This research provides the first systematic study of motives and barriers to giving and volunteering by GLBT people that can be used to improve or create techniques for securing financial and human resources. We hope that this information will be widely used by the nonprofit sector, the philanthropic community, and individual GLBT people to advance organizations throughout the country serving the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender communities.

¹ Foundation Center, *Foundation Giving: Yearbook of Facts and Figures on Private, Corporate, and Community Foundations*, 1997.

² Susan Gray, "Americans' Gifts Top \$150-Billion," *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, June 12, 1997.

³ See, for instance, M. V. Lee Badgett, "The Wage Effects of Sexual Orientation Discrimination," *Industrial and Labor Relations Review*, July 1995; or Marielka Klawitter and Victor Flatt, "The Effects of State and Local Antidiscrimination Policies for Sexual Orientation," *Journal of Policy Analysis and Management*, forthcoming, 1998.

⁴ In the 1996 Independent Sector survey of giving and volunteering in the United States, the average household income of people who are not members of any organizations was \$34,843, while the household incomes of organization members was \$43,109. Independent Sector, *Giving and Volunteering in the United States*, 1996, Washington, D.C., 1996.

⁵ In Philadelphia, foundation officials also recruited a small percentage of participants through personal networks. Excluding those respondents does not alter the patterns reported here.

⁶ This is higher than the average for all people in the study given in Table 2a since 31% of the people in the study did not volunteer at all.

⁷ Independent Sector, p. 118.

⁸ A 1993 survey by Yankelovich Partners found that 67% of lesbians were parents compared to 72% of heterosexual women, 60% of heterosexual men, and 27% of gay men. Grant Lukenbill, *Untold Millions*, New York: Harper Business, 1995.

⁹ This impact on hours and dollars contributed is separate from another possible effect of outness: being closeted might make it less likely that someone would give or volunteer at all, but this study cannot directly answer that question.

¹⁰ Kenneth Sherrill, affidavit in *Gays in the Military: Joseph Steffan vs. the United States*, Marc Wolinsky and Kenneth Sherrill, editors, Princeton University Press, 1993.

¹¹ Because the survey only asked about general categories of organizations, respondents might be giving and volunteering for different organizations.

¹² Where respondents reported contributions by organizational category but did not report a total, the organizational contributions were used to estimate total giving or volunteering.

Table A1. Types of GLBT Organizations Participating in the Survey

Health	1
Advocacy	7 (2 national organizations)
Political Candidates or Campaigns	1
Foundations	2
Workplace/Professional	1
Human Services	2
Cultural	5
Spiritual/Religious	3
Miscellaneous	5

Table A2. Additional Characteristics of People Responding to the Survey

	Number	Overall %	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	San Francisco
TOTAL	2244	100	100	100	100
Age:					
Teens	6	0.3	0.4	0.2	0.2
Twenties	207	9.4	10.8	12.3	7.6
Thirties	707	32.2	34.3	35.3	27.9
Forties	801	36.5	36.3	34.3	37.6
Fifties	330	15.0	14.5	12.3	16.3
Sixties	101	4.6	3.0	4.9	6.1
Seventies and up	45	2.0	0.6	0.4	4.3
Education:					
No High School Degree	4	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.1
High School Degree	59	2.6	3.0	5.3	0.6
Some College	390	17.4	17.2	30.9	11.7
College Degree	522	23.3	19.2	22.8	26.3
Some Grad School	251	11.2	13.2	9.6	10.9
Grad/Prof Degree	1013	45.2	47.1	31.1	50.4
School Status:					
Now in School	268	12.0	14.0	13.7	10.1
Not in School	1960	88.0	86.0	86.3	89.9
Employment Status:					
Full-time	1689	75.9	79.6	79.5	70.6
Part-time	233	10.5	10.8	9.0	11.5
Unemployed	69	3.1	3.1	1.7	3.8
Disabled	75	3.4	2.3	2.8	4.1
Keeping House	19	0.9	0.4	1.3	1.0
Retired	140	6.3	3.8	5.7	8.9
HIV Status:					
HIV Positive	155	7.0	4.4	7.3	8.9
HIV Negative or Unknown	2067	93.0	95.6	92.7	91.1
Religious Tradition:					
Protestant	883	39.6	35.7	42.1	40.2
Catholic	800	35.9	39.4	46.5	28.0
Jewish	276	12.4	15.1	2.6	15.2
Other	89	4.0	3.9	3.3	5.1
No Religion	180	8.1	5.8	5.5	11.6
Level of Disclosure of Sexual Orientation:					
Out to Friends	1858	83.5	79.1	78.7	91.0
Out to Coworkers	1514	71.1	65.3	60.9	84.0
Out to Supervisor	1432	70.0	64.5	59.0	83.0
Out to Family	1801	81.2	74.7	78.8	88.0

Table A3. Detailed Motives for Giving and Volunteering Decisions

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
Reasons for Volunteering				
I wanted to learn new job-related skills.	74.8	16.3	5.9	3.1
I wanted to meet GLBT people.	20.1	33.4	30.0	16.5
I wanted something to do in my spare time.	51.3	26.5	18.1	4.2
I wanted to influence the organization's agenda.	30.3	27.8	26.6	15.3
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	4.7	10.3	27.6	57.5
My friends volunteered for the organization.	54.8	27.3	13.8	4.1
I hoped to move into a paid position in the organization.	93.4	4.3	1.6	0.8
I wanted to help other GLBT people.	3.6	8.8	30.3	57.2
The organization had no paid staff.	63.8	16.1	12.3	7.8
I knew someone who had benefited directly from the organization's work.	41.0	23.0	24.0	12.0
Reasons for Not Volunteering				
My personal schedule is too full.	15.1	17.4	27.2	40.3
Health problems make me physically unable to volunteer.	88.2	5.8	4.1	1.8
I have no interest.	65.8	23.7	7.9	2.6
I don't have the necessary skills to volunteer.	80.6	13.1	5.5	0.8
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	81.5	13.0	2.9	2.6
I don't have transportation.	88.9	5.2	2.4	3.5
I don't know how to go about volunteering.	69.3	18.3	9.6	2.8
I have never been asked to volunteer.	50.8	25.2	16.2	7.8
Reasons for Donating				
The organization had existed for many years.	34.8	40.9	20.2	4.2
I was confident that my name and contribution would remain confidential.	78.0	13.5	5.5	2.9
The org. did not have the words "lesbian," "gay," or "bisexual" in its name.	94.2	3.6	1.6	0.5
The organization had a reputation for spending money wisely.	10.0	17.4	40.9	31.8
I had money leftover after paying my bills.	42.1	28.0	18.4	11.4
I would receive some gift, such as a t-shirt or book, in return.	90.7	8.3	0.9	0.2
The government provided no funding for the organization.	48.0	24.8	17.8	9.4
The organization primarily served lesbians.	66.1	13.4	10.3	10.3
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	4.1	8.8	25.7	61.4
The organization provided direct services for people in need.	18.5	20.4	29.9	31.3
The organization had no paid staff.	69.8	19.4	6.4	4.4
I knew someone who had benefited directly from the organization's work.	53.7	22.9	14.2	9.2
The gift was tax deductible.	50.6	25.4	16.4	7.7
The donation included a chance to attend a social event.	72.1	19.0	6.8	2.1
I wanted to do something useful for GLBT people.	3.1	6.5	28.4	62.0
I did volunteer work for the organization.	59.3	17.6	13.8	9.2
I wanted to have some influence on the organization's agenda.	60.8	22.5	11.5	5.3
The organization's board was diverse in terms of race and/or gender.	42.5	22.9	22.6	11.9
I was asked to give money to this organization.	35.9	31.7	23.4	9.1
Reasons for First Giving or Volunteering				
I had a personal experience of discrimination.	44.5	26.6	15.2	13.7
I wanted to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum.	39.2	15.9	21.0	23.8
I felt threatened by negative comments about GLBT people.	31.3	24.1	25.3	19.3
Someone I knew was directly helped by a GLBT organization.	53.0	21.7	16.0	9.3
I was the victim of a hate crime.	86.4	7.2	3.1	3.2
I wanted to do something useful to help others.	5.1	11.7	37.0	46.1
Someone asked me to contribute.	38.1	30.3	22.5	9.1
I had a lot of free time.	74.5	16.7	6.0	2.9
Someone I know contracted or died of AIDS.	52.1	15.0	15.3	17.7
My financial situation improved significantly.	55.1	21.3	16.2	7.4
I wanted to meet people.	51.4	25.4	14.9	8.3
I decided to be more out about my sexual orientation in general.	36.9	21.4	23.5	18.2
Reasons for Not Donating				
I have no interest.	71.9	17.9	4.6	5.6
I cannot afford to give money.	35.7	16.3	18.4	29.6
I am worried about losing my job.	84.2	9.7	3.6	2.6
I am worried that my name will end up on many mailing lists.	70.9	14.3	2.6	12.2
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	87.8	7.1	2.6	2.6
I have not been asked to contribute.	57.1	20.4	11.2	11.2

Table A4. Detailed Motives for Giving and Volunteering Decisions by Race and Gender

	All	All Men	All Women	People of Color	Whites
Reasons for Volunteering					
I wanted to learn new job-related skills.	9.0	8.3	9.4	14	8
I wanted to meet GLBT people.	46.5	45.8	47.2	47	47
I wanted something to do in my spare time.	22.3	24.9	19.4	31	21
I wanted to influence the organization's agenda.	41.9	39.9	43.7	42	42
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	85.1	84.9	85.2	87	85
My friends volunteered for the organization.	17.9	16.5	19.5	20	18
I hoped to move into a paid position in the organization.	2.4	2.1	2.4	5	2
I wanted to help other GLBT people.	87.5	87.9	86.9	87	88
The organization had no paid staff.	20.1	19.1	21.2	19	20
I knew someone who had benefited directly from the organization's work.	36.0	36.7	35.2	34	36
Reasons for Not Volunteering					
My personal schedule is too full.	67.5	65.0	70.7	56	70
Health problems make me physically unable to volunteer.	6.0	5.3	6.8	13	5
I have no interest.	10.5	10.3	10.9	14	10
I don't have the necessary skills to volunteer.	6.3	6.5	5.8	11	6
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	5.5	5.0	6.1	8	5
I don't have transportation.	6.0	8.2	3.2	15	5
I don't know how to go about volunteering.	12.4	11.8	12.9	15	12
I have never been asked to volunteer.	24.0	26.8	21.2	24	24
Reasons for Donating					
The organization had existed for many years.	24.4	27.2	21.4	28	24
I was confident that my name and contribution would remain confidential.	8.5	8.2	8.8	10	8
The org. did not have the words "lesbian," "gay," or "bisexual" in its name.	2.1	2.9	1.2	5	2
The organization had a reputation for spending money wisely.	72.7	75.9	69.2	68	73
I had money leftover after paying my bills.	29.9	26.5	33.3	38	29
I would receive some gift, such as a t-shirt or book, in return.	1.0	1.1	1.0	2	1
The government provided no funding for the organization.	27.2	27.1	27.0	36	26
The organization primarily served lesbians.	20.6	2.6	40.2	24	20
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	87.2	86.0	88.2	83	88
The organization provided direct services for people in need.	61.2	62.7	59.1	73	60
The organization had no paid staff.	10.8	10.4	11.1	19	10
I knew someone who had benefited directly from the organization's work.	23.4	25.3	21.2	29	23
The gift was tax deductible.	24.0	23.5	24.7	19	25
The donation included a chance to attend a social event.	8.9	8.7	9.3	8	9
I wanted to do something useful for GLBT people.	90.4	91.3	89.3	86	91
I did volunteer work for the organization.	23.1	22.0	24.2	29	22
I wanted to have some influence on the organization's agenda.	16.8	15.7	17.8	20	16
The organization's board was diverse in terms of race and/or gender.	34.5	28.0	41.5	52	32
I was asked to give money to this organization.	32.5	33.0	32.1	30	33
Reasons for First Giving or Volunteering					
I had a personal experience of discrimination.	28.9	29.0	28.5	28	29
I wanted to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum.	44.9	48.9	40.4	40	46
I felt threatened by negative comments about GLBT people.	44.6	47.7	41.1	48	44
Someone I knew was directly helped by a GLBT organization.	25.2	26.1	24.2	30	24
I was the victim of a hate crime.	6.4	6.7	5.8	11	6
I wanted to do something useful to help others.	83.2	85.2	80.9	84	83
Someone asked me to contribute.	31.6	33.1	30.0	31	32
I had a lot of free time.	8.9	9.6	8.1	16	8
Someone I know contracted or died of AIDS.	32.9	40.1	24.4	41	32
My financial situation improved significantly.	23.7	23.7	23.8	26	23
I wanted to meet people.	23.2	23.0	23.6	29	22
I decided to be more out about my sexual orientation in general.	41.7	41.7	41.8	40	42
Reasons for Not Donating					
I have no interest.	10.2	10.1	9.6	19	5
I cannot afford to give money.	48.0	45.0	49.0	46	49
I am worried about losing my job.	6.1	5.6	4.8	11	4
I am worried that my name will end up on many mailing lists.	14.8	11.2	17.3	14	15
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	5.1	3.4	5.8	8	4
I have not been asked to contribute.	22.4	22.5	22.1	24	22

Table A5. Detailed Motives for Giving and Volunteering Decisions by City

	Philadelphia	Milwaukee	San Francisco
Reasons for Volunteering			
I wanted to learn new job-related skills.	10.0	6.5	9.9
I wanted to meet GLBT people.	45.2	44.9	46.9
I wanted something to do in my spare time.	21.3	22.4	22.8
I wanted to influence the organization's agenda.	41.6	42.1	42.1
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	82.8	85.7	86.2
My friends volunteered for the organization.	21.5	14.3	17.7
I hoped to move into a paid position in the organization.	3.6	0.9	2.3
I wanted to help other GLBT people.	89.0	88.2	86.8
The organization had no paid staff.	20.6	27.4	16.5
I knew someone who had benefitted directly from the organization's work.	33.0	39.3	37.9
Reasons for Not Volunteering			
My personal schedule is too full.	69.3	62.9	68.3
Health problems makeme physically unable to volunteer.	4.9	9.1	5.0
I have no interest.	13.3	10.5	8.5
I don't have the necessary skills to volunteer.	7.2	4.9	7.0
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	8.0	5.6	2.5
I don't have transportation.	7.6	5.6	4.5
I don't know how to go about volunteering.	16.3	14.0	6.5
I have never been asked to volunteer.	26.1	25.9	19.6
Reasons for Donating			
The organization had existed for many years.	30.7	22.0	20.8
I was confident that my name and contribution would remain confidential.	11.6	9.5	5.0
The organization did not have the words "lesbian," "gay," or "bisexual" in its name.	3.7	2.3	0.8
The organization had a reputation for spending money wisely.	74.2	75.1	70.8
I had money leftover after paying my bills.	33.7	26.0	28.8
I would receive some gift, such as a t-shirt or book, in return.	1.4	1.2	0.5
The government provided no funding for the organization.	30.3	29.2	25.1
The organization primarily served lesbians.	19.1	17.6	21.8
I wanted to contribute to social and political change for GLBT people.	89.2	84.4	87.4
The organization provided direct services for people in need.	59.3	61.3	61.6
The organization had no paid staff.	11.2	15.6	8.6
I knew someone who had benefitted directly from the organization's work.	20.9	26.6	24.2
The gift was tax deductible.	21.7	17.3	28.4
The donation included a chance to attend a social event.	6.5	9.0	10.5
I wanted to do something useful for GLBT people.	90.6	90.8	90.7
I did volunteer work for the organization.	20.5	27.2	22.6
I wanted to have some influence on the organization's agenda.	16.5	17.9	15.9
The organization's board was diverse in terms of race and/or gender.	37.2	36.4	32.3
I was asked to give money to this organization.	28.3	27.7	37.2
Reasons for First Giving or Volunteering			
I had a personal experience of discrimination.	27.9	24.8	33.0
I wanted to oppose an anti-gay candidate or referendum.	39.8	39.9	52.0
I felt threatened by negative comments about GLBT people.	41.8	43.2	47.9
Someone I knew was directly helped by a GLBT organization.	22.4	28.3	26.9
I was the victim of a hate crime.	6.8	7.4	5.2
I wanted to do something useful to help others.	82.8	83.3	83.4
Someone asked me to contribute.	28.3	30.9	32.8
I had a lot of free time.	7.6	10.2	9.5
Someone I know contracted or died of AIDS.	28.2	40.1	33.3
My financial situation improved significantly.	24.3	21.1	24.0
I wanted to meet people.	22.0	21.8	24.4
I decided to be more out about my sexual orientation in general.	38.2	42.2	42.1
Reasons for Not Donating			
I have no interest.	17.3	9.1	0.0
I cannot afford to give money.	45.7	47.7	54.3
I am worried about losing my job.	7.4	6.8	4.3
I am worried that my name will end up on many mailing lists.	23.5	9.1	2.2
I worry that people will think I'm gay, lesbian, or bisexual.	8.6	4.5	0.0
I have not been asked to contribute.	28.4	22.7	15.2

A Place to Start

Publications and Trainings on Fundraising and Organizational Development

National Center for Non-Profit Boards
2000 L Street, NW, Suite 510
Washington, DC 20036
202-452-6262
www.ncnb.org

National Society for Fundraising Executives

1101 King Street, Suite 700
Alexandria, VA 22314
800-688-3463
www.nsfre.org

Support Center for Non-Profit Management

706 Mission Street, 5th Floor
San Francisco, CA 94103
415-541-9000
www.supportcenter.org/sf
www.supportcenter.org/ny

Fundraising for Social Change,

Kim Klein, 1995, Chardon Press,
510-704-8714

Grassroots Grants: An Activist's Guide to Proposal Writing, Andy Robinson,

1996, Chardon Press

Information on Foundations

The Foundation Center

79 Fifth Avenue, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10003
212-620-4230
www.fdncenter.org

"Funders of Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Programs: A Directory for Grantseekers," 1997, Working Group on Funding Lesbian and Gay Issues

116 E. 16th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10003
212-475-2930
www.workinggroup.org

Lesbian and Gay Foundations

Astraea National Lesbian Action Foundation

116 E 16th Street, 7th Floor
New York, NY 10003
212-529-8021
www.astraea.org

Cream City Foundation

P.O. Box 204
Milwaukee, WI 53201
414-265-0880

Dade Human Rights Foundation

P.O. Box 398303
Miami Beach, FL 33239
305-538-5908
www.DHRE.com

Delaware Valley Legacy Fund

Philadelphia Foundation
1234 Market Street, Suite 1900
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-563-6417
www.phlfound.org

Equity Foundation

P.O. Box 5696
Portland, OR 97228
503-220-0628

Horizons Foundation

870 Market Street, Suite 1155
San Francisco, CA 94102
415-398-2333

New Harvest Foundation

P.O. Box 1786
Madison, WI 53701
608-256-4204

Out Fund for Lesbian and Gay Liberation/Funding Exchange

666 Broadway, Suite 500
New York, NY 10012
212-529-5300

Philanthrofund Foundation

310 East 38th Street, Suite 204
Minneapolis, MN 55409
612-827-0992
http://scc.net/~philanth

Pride Foundation

1202 E. Pike Street
Seattle, WA 98112
206-323-3318
www.pridefoundation.org

Stonewall Community Foundation

300 Mercer Street, Suite 23J
New York, NY 10003
212-673-9644

Uncommon Legacy Foundation

150 W 26th Street, Suite 503
New York, NY 10001
212-366-6507
www.uncommonlegacy.org

