

A hand with pink nail polish holds a string of warm white lights that form a heart shape. The background is a sunset over a beach with waves crashing on the shore. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and white. The overall mood is peaceful and hopeful.

# Shaping Tomorrow:

HOW GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS  
VIEW CHARITABLE GIVING

FOUNDATIONSOURCE

# Table of Contents

<b>Summary of Findings</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Who Are The NextGen Givers?</b> .....	<b>5</b>
SURVEY DEMOGRAPHICS .....	6
GENDER AND INCOME BY GENERATION .....	7
<b>Redefining Philanthropy</b> .....	<b>8</b>
HOW DO THEY GIVE? .....	9
HOW MUCH DO THEY GIVE? .....	10
HOW DO THEY SEE THEMSELVES? .....	11
WHEN DO THEY START? .....	12
HOW KNOWLEDGABLE ARE THEY? .....	13
WHY DO THEY GIVE? .....	14
<b>Harnessing The Power of NextGen</b> .....	<b>15</b>
FIVE KEY TAKEAWAYS FOR PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS, ADVISORS & NONPROFITS .....	16
NEXT GEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES .....	18
<b>Conclusion</b> .....	<b>19</b>

## ABOUT THE DATA

Unless another source is provided, the data in this report was compiled in conjunction with Helical Research, Inc. through an online survey conducted between February 27 and March 8, 2024. The sample was provided by national US opt-in consumer panels and included 1,000 respondents between 18 and 43 years old at the time of the survey.

# Every generation faces its own challenges and uncertainties and the same is true for Gen Z and Millennials.

Despite the geopolitical crises and social and economic shifts of the last 20 years (or perhaps because of them), these generations are proactively looking for opportunities to give back through a wide range of charitable activities. Their perspectives influence determination to play a role in bringing relief to communities they care about, they believe they have an obligation to make an impact, and they are ready to get to work.

Some aspects of philanthropy resonate with them, but others need a refresh, they believe.

**This paper examines the actions, inspirations and goals of charitably active Gen Zers and Millennials.**

From the age at which they first began their philanthropic endeavors to the nature of their contributions, we explore the ins and outs of their charitable intentions.

Their experiences and perspectives offer a window into where giving is headed and can provide a framework for effective collaboration for the following stakeholders:

- **PRIVATE FOUNDATIONS** can expand the influence of rising generations and plan for succession.
- **FINANCIAL ADVISORS** can offer more tailored guidance to their clientele.
- **NONPROFITS** can benefit from these insights as they look to attract and engage with younger donors.
- **ACTIVE PHILANTHROPISTS** can find and connect with new partners.
- **MEMBERS OF GEN Z AND MILLENNIALS** can learn from what their peers are doing.



# Summary of Findings

## GENERATIONAL CHANGEMAKERS

Gen Z and Millennials aspire to be seen as “givers,” “volunteers,” “advocates,” “changemakers” and “humanitarians.”

## PRIMARY DRIVERS

Their inspiration to get involved is primarily driven by family, having a passion for a specific cause or issue and wanting to help their local community.

## GENDER DIFFERENCES

On the whole, women are more likely than men to want to make an impactful change to a cause and demonstrate their family’s values; men, on the other hand, are more likely than women to want to create or continue a legacy.

## STARTING YOUNG

Millennials who engage in charitable activities started at an average age of 18; Gen Z started even younger—at age 14.

## MONEY MATTERS

Financial contributions are influenced by each participant’s financial resources. Monetary donations are more common among high earners, college graduates and employed individuals. And high earners donate greater amounts.



# Who Are The NextGen Givers?

To better understand the attitudes, perceptions and preferences of the next generation around giving and philanthropy, we surveyed 1,000 people ranging in age from 18 to 43 years old who had made a financial or in-kind contribution or volunteered their time to a charity or other nonprofit organization in the past year.

This section includes more information about the age, gender and income of our survey respondents, as well as key demographic differences between the Gen Z and Millennial generational segments.



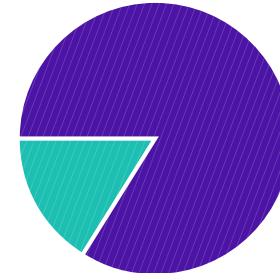
# Survey Demographics

In this report, Millennials are defined as 28-43 years old. Although, currently Gen Z is defined as 12 to 27 years old, we focused only on those who are 18 and older. The average age of respondents was 35 years old.

N=1,000

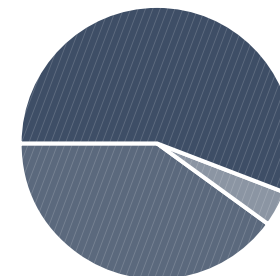
## BY AGE

**84%** MILLENNIAL  
**16%** GEN Z



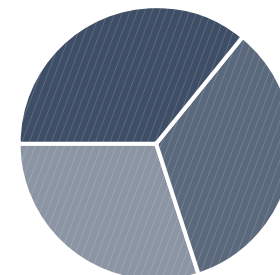
## BY GENDER

**52%** FEMALE  
**46%** MALE  
**2%** NONBINARY



## BY INCOME

**36%** \$100K+  
**34%** \$50K-\$100K  
**30%** <\$50K

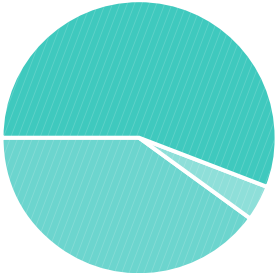


# GENDER AND INCOME BY GENERATION

The sample's gender identity broke down as follows:

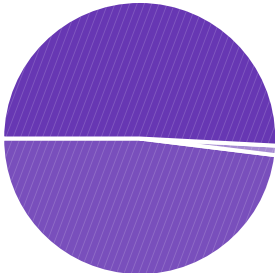
## GEN Z

**56% FEMALE**  
**40% MALE**  
**4% NON-BINARY**



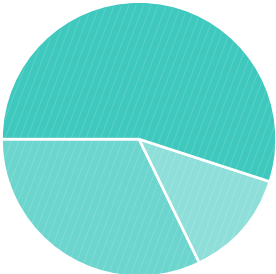
## MILLENNIAL

**51% FEMALE**  
**48% MALE**  
**1% NON-BINARY**

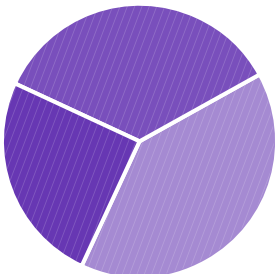


The sample was divided into three groups to analyze giving patterns across income levels:

**55% <\$50K**  
**32% \$50K-\$100K**  
**13% \$100K+**  
**AVERAGE: \$59K**



**25% <\$50K**  
**35% \$50K-\$100K**  
**40% \$100K+**  
**AVERAGE: \$98K**



# Redefining Philanthropy

To understand their motivations on a deeper level, we explore **how and why Gen Z and Millennials are choosing to give**—whether by volunteering time, donating items or through financial contributions. From terms that resonate with them to their knowledge about charitable approaches, we uncover how these generations are redefining philanthropy.





# HOW DO THEY GIVE?

Gen Z and Millennials don't limit their charitable activities to financial contributions. They see a range of activities as an expression of their commitment to social change.

## Charitable Activities in the Past Year

**GEN Z**  
**MILLENNIAL**



*“I never sell my clothes, furniture or household items. I donate it because I want it accessible to the people who need it.”*

— 26-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM MINNESOTA



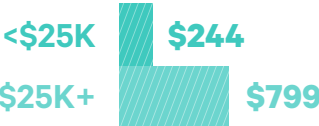
# HOW MUCH DO THEY GIVE?

Older respondents and those with higher earnings give more. Millennials making six figures or more donate the most, while Gen Zers making less than \$25,000 give the least. As these charitably inclined generations mature and hit their peak earning years, their potential to contribute more financially to the causes they care about grows too. In the last year, this is how much they gave on average:

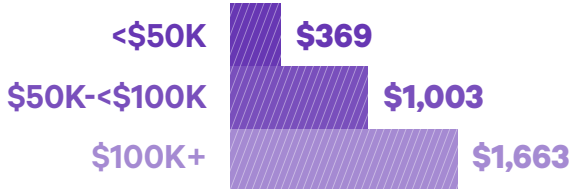
## TOTAL



## GEN Z



## MILLENNIAL



*I am fortunate enough to have a little extra money, so I need to find something good to do with it (other than parking it in the bank and letting it gather dust). In addition to keeping the country/community vital, charitable activities give me an opportunity to engage with my local community and foster goodwill."*

— 33-YEAR-OLD MAN FROM CALIFORNIA

# HOW DO THEY SEE THEMSELVES IN THE FUTURE?

The younger generation envisions a greater role for their charitable giving. In terms of how they want to be described in the future, we see “giver” at the top, implying a generous and caring mindset and, possibly, a desire for a more direct relationship with charitable giving. This is followed by “volunteer,” “advocate,” “humanitarian,” and “changemaker.” The number of those aspiring to be described as “changemakers” (with 70% of Gen Z aspiring to this label) indicates a growing desire to be seen as catalysts for system change rather than passive donors.

In total, the respondents aspired to be described as:



*“I put on a 5K run for a local hospital where my sons were cared for after being born prematurely. We help with all aspects of that event from planning, event management and securing donations.”*

— 38-YEAR-OLD MAN FROM MASSACHUSETTS



# WHEN DO THEY START?

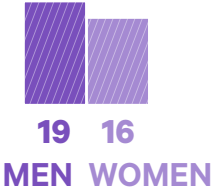
Both Gen Z and Millennials stated they began their charitable activities early, but Gen Z started younger, reporting an average age of 14 as the beginning of their giving journeys. Millennials, meanwhile, started at an average age of 18. In both generations, men started later, 15 for Gen Z and 19 for Millennials. Non-white members of each generation also started later, 17 for Gen Z and 19 for Millennials.

**GEN Z**  
**MILLENNIAL**

**AGE THEY  
STARTED  
GIVING:**



**THE GENDER  
DIVIDE AMONG  
MILLENNIALS:**



*From a young age, I was volunteering with my mom. She volunteered all the time. I volunteered at church and school and now I volunteer at my local YMCA.”*

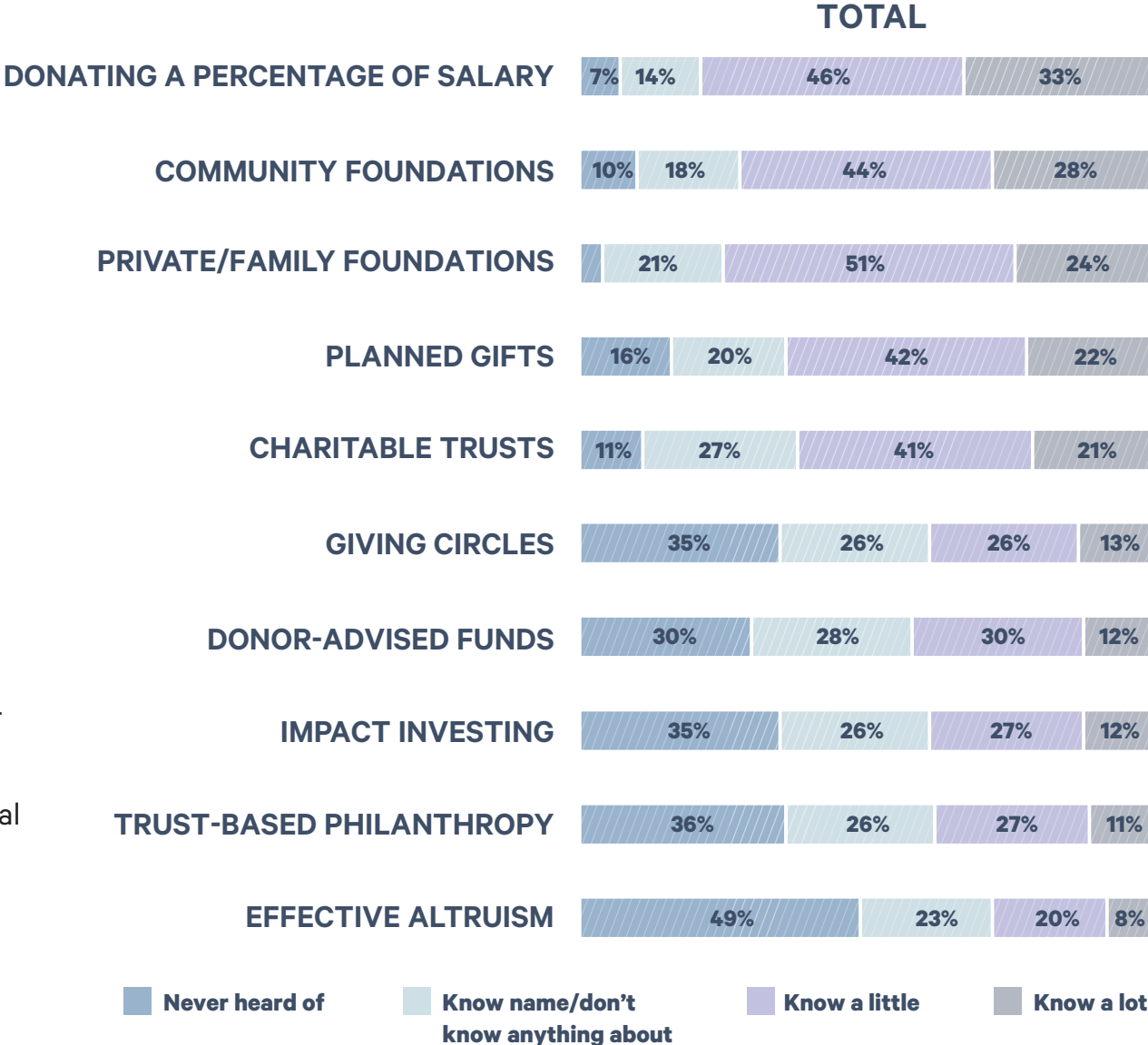
— 26-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM MINNESOTA

# HOW KNOWLEDGEABLE ARE THEY ABOUT GIVING APPROACHES?

Gen Z and Millennials are actively engaged in charitable activities, but their methods often diverge from traditional philanthropy.

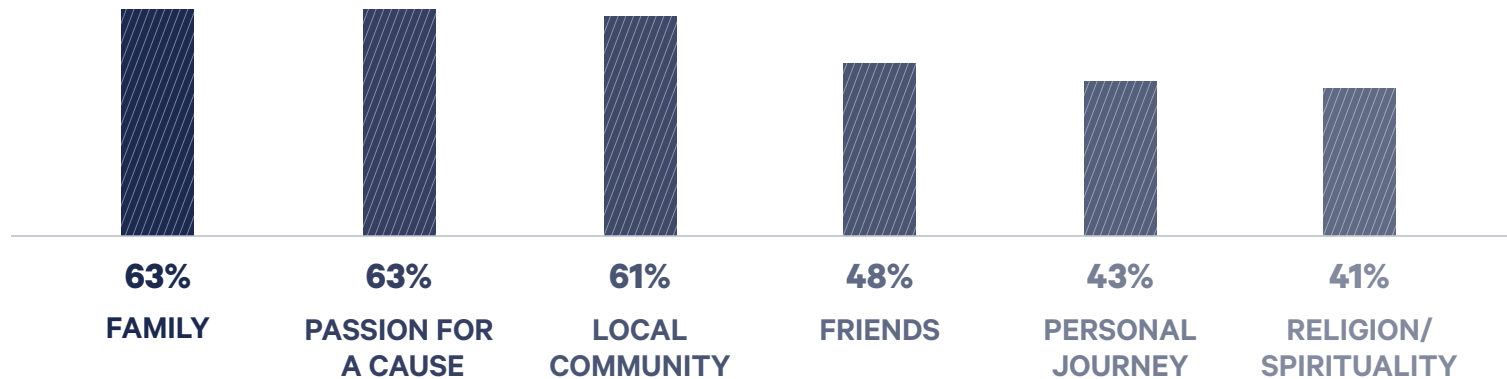
Their giving tends to be informal and direct, reflecting a desire to make an immediate impact.

However, while awareness of formal charitable vehicles and other approaches such as giving circles, impact investing and trust-based philanthropy could be higher, respondents show interest in learning more. While this is not hindering their philanthropic spirit, their giving could have an even greater impact by exploring a combination of techniques and vehicles to drive optimal outcomes. They may be interested in more tax-efficient ways of giving as their taxable income increases as well.



## WHY DO THEY GIVE?

Younger generations' motivations to engage in charitable activities are varied, but family, passion for a cause and local community are the biggest drivers.



*"I like to help out those less fortunate than me. I did it with my mom when I was young, and I carry that tradition with my kids. It's important to stay humble."*

—42-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM NEW YORK





# Harnessing the Power of NextGen

The unique perspectives of Gen Z and Millennials provide an opportunity for stakeholders to **reframe messaging and engagement strategies** in ways that resonate with these younger cohorts.

The data will have different implications for **private foundations, advisors and nonprofits** — and they can each capitalize on it in different ways.

Consider these five key takeaways.

# Five Key Takeaways for Private Foundations, Advisors & Nonprofits



## FAMILY FIRST



Family plays a significant role in influencing giving for the younger generations. Starting early helps people adopt a lifelong commitment to social change.



## NEED FOR GREATER INCLUSION



All philanthropic participants must look for ways to enhance engagement for all genders and people of diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.



## LOOK BEYOND THE DOLLARS



Younger donors don't yet have the financial resources to make big donations, but they still want to be involved.

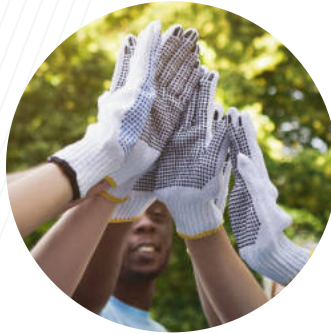




## AWARENESS OF GIVING APPROACHES



Both Gen Z and Millennials demonstrate moderate awareness of giving approaches, but there are ways to improve. With increased knowledge, they may be more inclined to get involved.



## MAKE IT PERSONAL








Family and community are primary motivators for charitable engagement and all players should keep these in mind.



*I lost my mom to cancer, so I like to make donations to charitable research so that other people don't have to suffer like I did."*

— 43-YEAR-OLD WOMAN FROM GEORGIA

# NEXT GEN ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES

		Private Foundations	Advisors	Nonprofits
<b>FAMILY FIRST</b>		<b>Create roles that tap into the talents and passions of next-gen givers.</b> Help younger family members find foundation mentors who can share best practices.	<b>Facilitate family philanthropy discussions</b> to help clients involve younger generations in charitable decision-making.	<b>Develop family-oriented volunteer programs and events</b> that encourage multi-generational participation.
<b>NEED FOR GREATER INCLUSION</b>		<b>Establish diversity and inclusion initiatives</b> within grantmaking processes to support a wider range of causes and communities.	<b>Help all clients research and explore</b> charitable causes that resonate with them.	<b>Implement targeted outreach programs</b> to engage underrepresented groups, particularly men and individuals from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds.
<b>LOOK BEYOND THE DOLLARS</b>		<b>Develop capacity-building programs</b> to help nonprofits effectively engage and manage next-gen volunteers and stakeholders.	<b>Educate clients on the value of nonfinancial contributions</b> and how these can be a component of an overall giving strategy.	<b>Create a variety of engagement opportunities</b> that allow young people to contribute their time, skills and networks. These programs help to build relationships that may become financial contributions in the future.
<b>AWARENESS OF GIVING APPROACHES</b>		<b>Look for opportunities to bring rising generations into the planning, governance and decision-making processes</b> so they can understand strategy and the key role that the foundation itself, as well as other vehicles and approaches that may be in use, can contribute to the desired outcomes.	<b>Proactively introduce younger clients to different giving vehicles,</b> explaining their long-term benefits and tax implications.	<b>Partner with schools, community centers and other organizations</b> to offer educational workshops on various giving vehicles and their benefits.
<b>MAKE IT PERSONAL</b>		<b>Offer personalized site visits or virtual tours</b> to connect donors with the projects they're supporting.	<b>Help clients identify causes</b> that align with their personal values and experiences, creating a more meaningful giving strategy.	<b>Create experiences that allow donors to see the direct impact</b> of their contributions on local communities and causes.

# Conclusion

**Gen Z and Millennials are rewriting the rules of charitable giving, starting with how they define themselves in the philanthropic space.** They are proudly declaring themselves “givers,” “advocates” and “humanitarians,” with a growing aspiration to be seen as “changemakers.” This reflects their desire for more direct, impactful engagement and signals a desire for more hands-on philanthropy.

However, some obstacles still need to be addressed to enable these generations to emerge as future philanthropic leaders. Due to limited awareness of common giving approaches and vehicles, as well as the tax benefits of charitable contributions, their efforts are not as impactful as they can be.

Foundations, advisors, nonprofits and other philanthropic stakeholders that are striving to engage the next generation must meet them where they are. Reframing language around giving to align with how younger donors self-identify is a start. Crafting messages and showcasing images that resonate with a wide range of demographics and psychographics is also key, as today’s youth represent one of the most diverse generations in history.

Critically important, nonprofits, advisors and other partners in giving must play the long game. With the understanding that new donors are starting their giving journeys earlier than ever, look to engage the whole family, provide educational resources and workshops to instill a lifelong commitment to social change and inspire a multi-generational tradition.

These younger generations have tremendous potential to reshape philanthropy through their willingness to drive change directly. However, they need guidance and innovative engagement from the philanthropic community to translate their aspirations into impact. **The future of giving will be enriched by the philanthropic community’s ability to adapt and facilitate the unique approaches of Gen Z and Millennial givers.**



## ABOUT FOUNDATION SOURCE

Foundation Source is the leading provider of **enterprise-caliber and technology-led charitable giving solutions**. We offer a range of purpose-built, cloud-based platforms that facilitate all stages of giving and a configurable suite of administrative, compliance, tax and philanthropic advisory services for donors, nonprofits, professional advisors and financial institutions.

For more than two decades, Foundation Source has **empowered people and companies to create a better world** through philanthropy. In February 2024, we acquired planned giving software and services firm PG Calc. Today we support more than **4,000 charitable organizations**, administer more than **\$22 billion in foundation assets**, and facilitate more than **120,000 grants and planned gifts annually**.

## HAVE A QUESTION?

Call 800.839.0054 or send us an email at [info@foundationsource.com](mailto:info@foundationsource.com).

[www.foundationsource.com](http://www.foundationsource.com)

©2024 Foundation Source Philanthropic Services Inc. All rights reserved. v0924

The information provided in this document is for general information purposes only, and does not constitute legal, tax or investment advice.

FOUNDATIONSOURCE