

# Nonprofit Fundraising Study

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Covering Charitable Receipts at U.S. and Canadian Nonprofit Organizations  
in the First Six Months of 2012

With a Special Focus on Donor Retention:  
What is working and how is it related to overall charitable receipts?

*November 2012*



Collaborative members include:



blackbaud<sup>®</sup> Campbell Rinker



## *Acknowledgements*

The Nonprofit Research Collaborative (NRC) thanks all respondents who took the survey in August and September. Your willingness to share information about your organization makes it possible for this report to appear.

We also thank the Cincinnati Better Business Bureau, which helped publicize the survey among its nonprofit clients in that region and elsewhere.

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## Introduction

Penelope Burk said in 2003 that donor attrition is the most serious problem in fundraising.<sup>1</sup> In the nearly 10 years since, the problem remains. The Fundraising Effectiveness Project reports for 2011 that organizations lost 107 donors for every 100 gained.<sup>2</sup>

But are organizations that strive to improve donor retention getting results? This round of the Nonprofit Fundraising Survey (NFS) explores retention rates. We examine whether higher retention rates are associated with higher totals in charitable giving, and what methods used to boost retention seem to be working among survey respondents.

The Nonprofit Research Collaborative (NRC) explored these questions along with the standard questions about which fundraising methods are raising more, less, or the same as a year ago. More than 770 organizations participated. Responding charitable groups included large and small organizations (by budget size) and organizations from every subsector, from Arts, Culture & Humanities to Religion.

The standard questions related to fundraising receipts asked about changes in charitable receipt amounts in the first six months of 2012 compared with the same period in 2011. Another section of the survey asked about changes in receipts by fundraising methods, such as direct mail, online, events, and so on. A third section investigated retention rates, both actual for 2011 and goals for 2012, plus methods that organizations might be using to help improve retention.

The first several pages of this document shares results about charitable receipts in the first half of 2012, followed by a section that covers findings about charitable receipts from 13 different fundraising methods. The last section covers findings from the portion of the survey about tracking donor retention rates and specific tactics employed to increase donor retention.

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<sup>1</sup> P. Burk. (2003) *Donor-Centered Fundraising*. (Hamilton, Ontario: Burk & Associates)

<sup>2</sup> The Fundraising Effectiveness Project, Press release, August 28, 2012.

<http://www.afpnet.org/Audiences/ReportsResearchDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=3113>

## Summary of findings

### **Charitable receipts rose in 2012 at 46 percent of surveyed organizations**

Over the past two years, as of June, the NRC has found nearly exactly the same results, with about 45 percent of respondents seeing increases. This finding year to year is consistent with general economic trends showing very slow rates of growth in the United States (1.5 percent in the second quarter of 2012)<sup>3</sup> and stagnant consumer expenditures except for gasoline and food, where costs are increasing.<sup>4</sup>

There were no statistically significant differences in the share seeing growth when analyzed by region of the U.S., but as in earlier studies, smaller organizations (operating budgets below \$1 million) reported increases in charitable receipts less often than larger organizations.

By type of organization (subsector), between 44 percent and 51 percent of responding charities saw increases in charitable receipts except among International organizations (40 percent saw an increase) and Religion organizations (56 percent saw an increase). However, at these sample sizes, the differences by subsector are not significant.

### **Most fundraising methods “stayed the same;” increasing use of social media**

For 10 of 13 fundraising methods studied, more respondents indicated results “stayed the same” rather than seeing receipts increase or decrease. The exceptions were:

- Special events (45 percent seeing an increase compared with 37 percent reporting that receipts stayed the same);
- Major gifts (40 percent seeing an increase compared with 33 percent where receipts were about the same); and
- Foundation grants (38 percent seeing an increase, compared with 33 percent reporting level receipts).

There was a jump in the percentage of respondents starting to use social media as a way of requesting gifts. Nearly one in eight organizations using social media reported that it was a new endeavor for them. This was by far the method most often added in early 2012. In this study, 39 percent of respondents reported using some type of social media (Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.) as part of their fundraising.

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<sup>3</sup> A. Censky, GDP reports: US economy slowed in second quarter, CNN Money, July 27, 2012, <http://money.cnn.com/2012/07/27/news/economy/us-gdp/index.htm>

<sup>4</sup> L. Woellert, Consumer spending in US stagnates, Bloomberg.com, September 28, 2012, <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/2012-09-28/consumer-spending-in-u-s-stagnates.html>

### **Higher donor retention is associated with increases in charitable receipts**

This study is one of the first to explore the actual link between retention rates and the direction of change in charitable receipts and with actual retention initiatives.

- Among survey participants with less than \$3 million in total revenue, those with retention rates in 2011 of 60 percent or better were likely to see increases in their charitable receipts total in the first six months of 2012, compared with 2011. The number of charities with higher amounts of revenue that also tracked retention rates is too few to find differences in this analysis.
- For organizations with expenditures less than \$10 million, retention rates are likely to be higher when a nonprofit organization uses multiple efforts (four or more) to retain existing donors. Again, too few respondents with higher expenditure amounts in this study provided data to draw conclusions in this analysis.
- For organizations with \$10 million or more in expenditures, efforts to regain lapsed donors were associated with higher retention rates. This is the only specific initiative with enough respondents using it to test.

### **Higher charitable gift receipts associated with retention efforts that utilize communications, donor recognition**

Organizations were likely to report an increase in 2012 charitable dollars received to date when the organization uses any one of three “best practice” donor-retention communications: donor recognition, reporting results, and multiple channels of disseminating information.

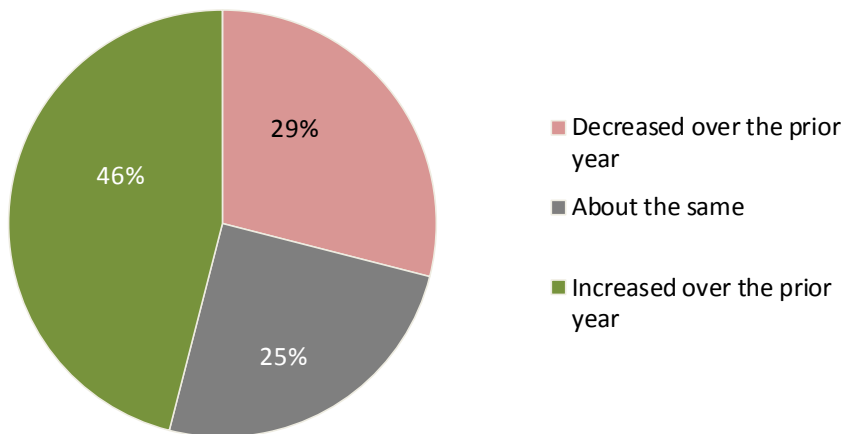
## First half of 2012 results

This section presents overall results, including a summary of answers about factors that helped the organization in the year. The section then details sub-sets where there are statistically significant differences in the results. These include by organizational size (based on total expenditures) and for one subsector (International).

### Just under half of responding charities reporting growth in charitable receipts

As of June 2012, 46 percent of responding charitable organizations reported an increase in charitable receipts when comparing the first six months of 2012 with the same months in 2011.

Figure 1: Percentage of responding organizations reporting change in charitable receipts, first six months of 2012 compared with same period in 2011



Last year at this time, results were very similar. For the first six months of 2011 compared with the same period in 2010: 44 percent saw an increase in charitable gift amounts received; 25 percent said results were about the same; and 30 percent said fundraising receipts had declined. One percent did not know.

For the first six months of 2012, there were no significant differences in the direction of change when results were analyzed by Census region. However, smaller organizations were less likely to see growth than larger organizations ( $p < .001$ )<sup>5</sup> (see Figure 2 on the next page).

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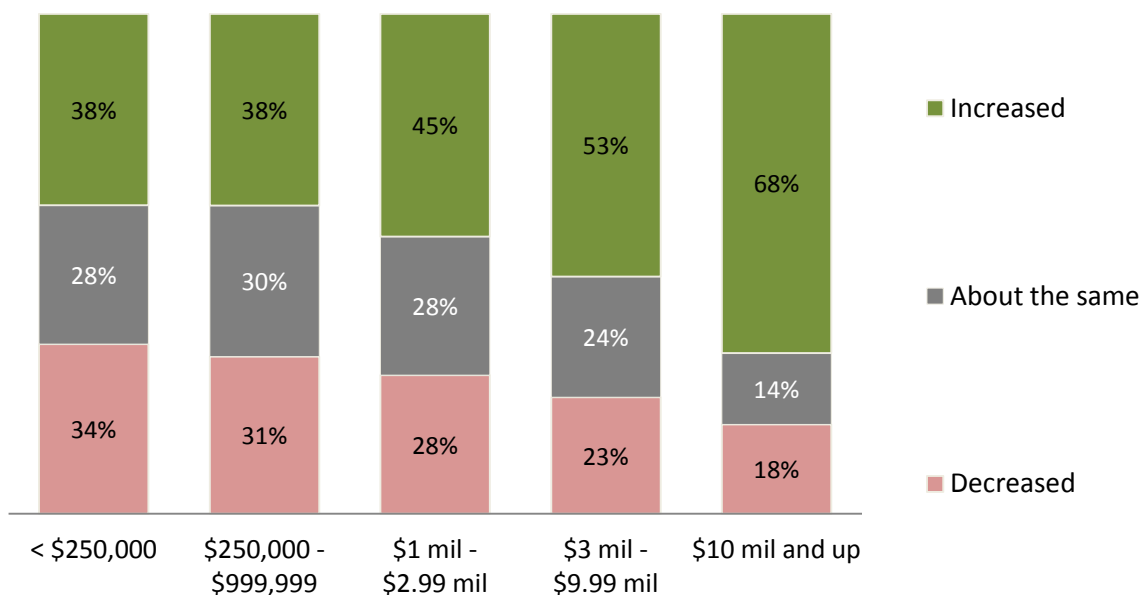
<sup>5</sup> p-values are reported for statistically significant results. The lower the p-value the more likely that the same result will occur with a different set of respondents.



## Larger organizations more likely than smaller to see increased charitable receipts

As has been the case in prior waves of the Nonprofit Fundraising Survey, larger organizations (based on expenditures) were more likely to see growth in charitable receipts than were smaller organizations. Figure 2 shows that a smaller share of participating organizations (expenditures under \$250,000) reported growth in charitable receipts for the first half of 2012 compared with the largest organizations, those with \$10 million or more in expenditures.

Figure 2: Percentage of responding organizations reporting change in charitable first six months of 2012 compared with same period in 2011

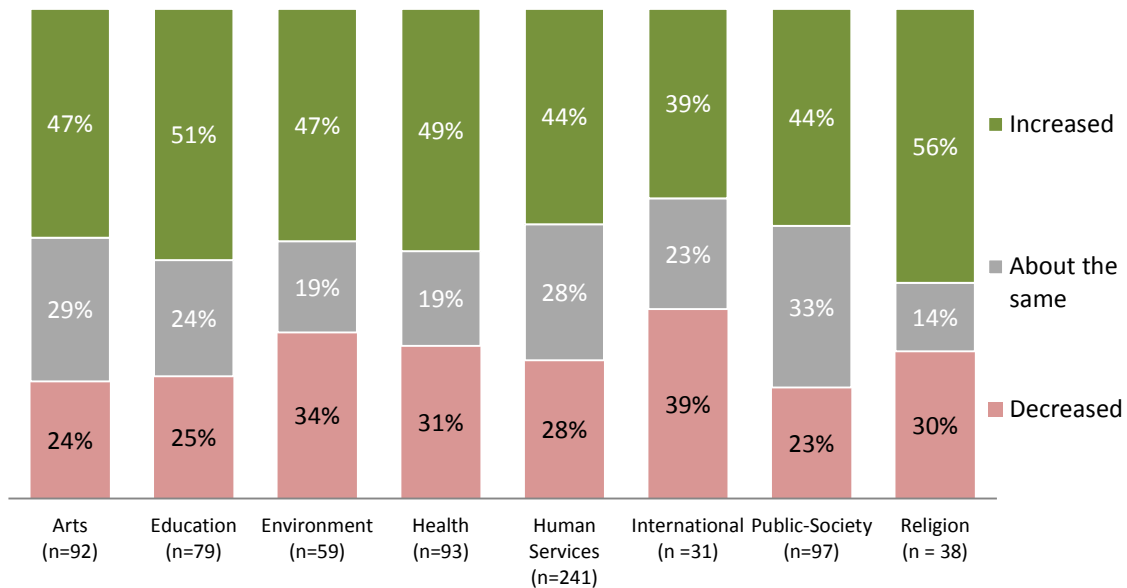


Size is based on expenditures in 2010 per the IRS Form 990 if available. Where the 990 is not available, size is based on survey respondent answer to a question about 2011 operating budget.

### Little difference by subsector

Most subsectors followed the general trend, although 56 percent of responding Religion organizations saw increases, compared with just 39 percent of responding International organizations. However, with these sample sizes, there is no statistically significant difference by subsector.

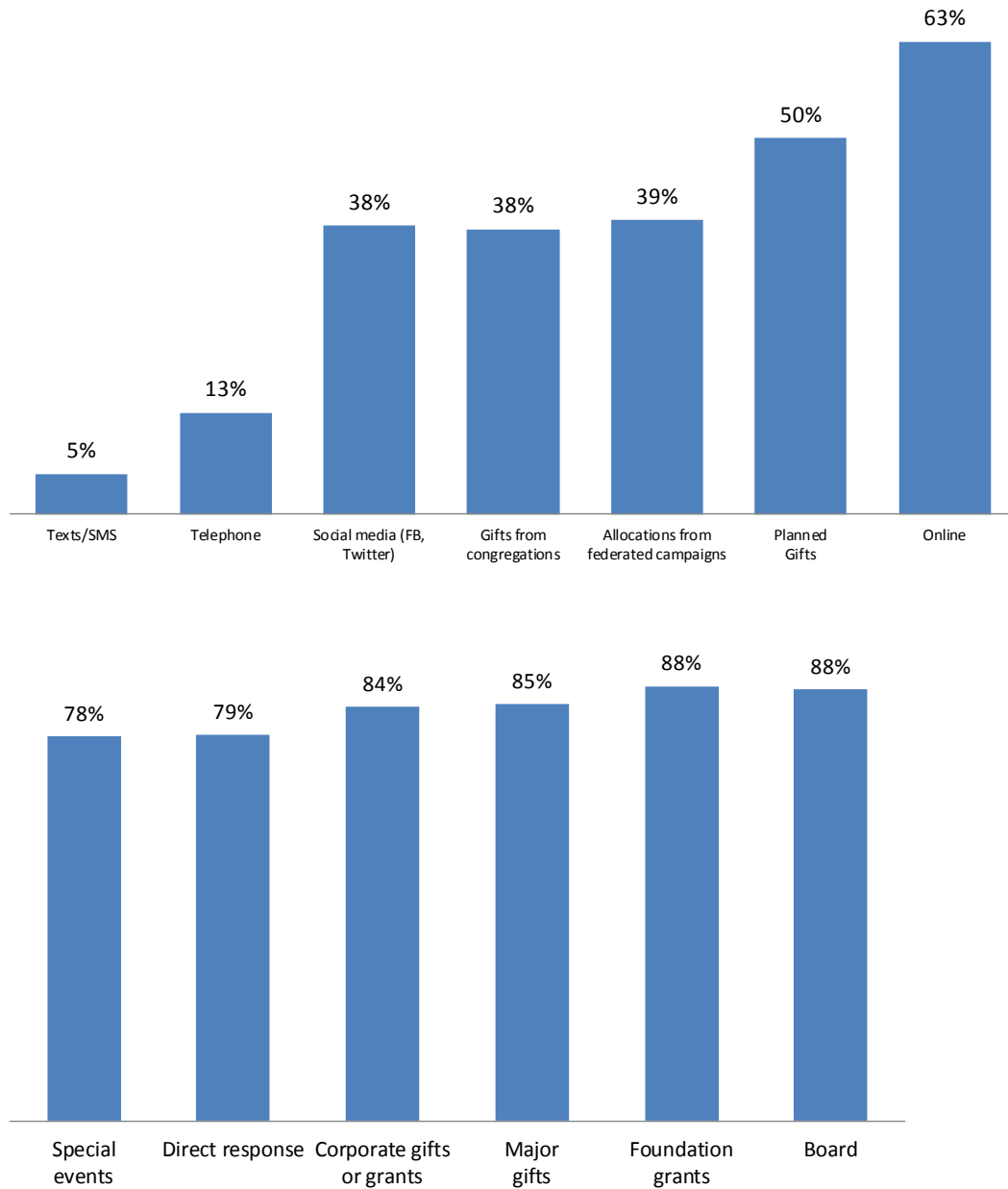
Figure 3: Percentage of responding organizations reporting change in charitable receipts by NTEE code, 2012 compared with 2011



## Types of fundraising methods used

Roughly 80 to 90 percent of organizations in this survey use foundation proposals, corporate gifts or grants, special events, major gifts, direct response via the mail, and board giving to raise funds. Some less-often used methods include telephone, gifts from congregations and distributions from federated campaigns. A small number of responding organizations (33, or 5 percent) use SMS/texting in their fundraising.

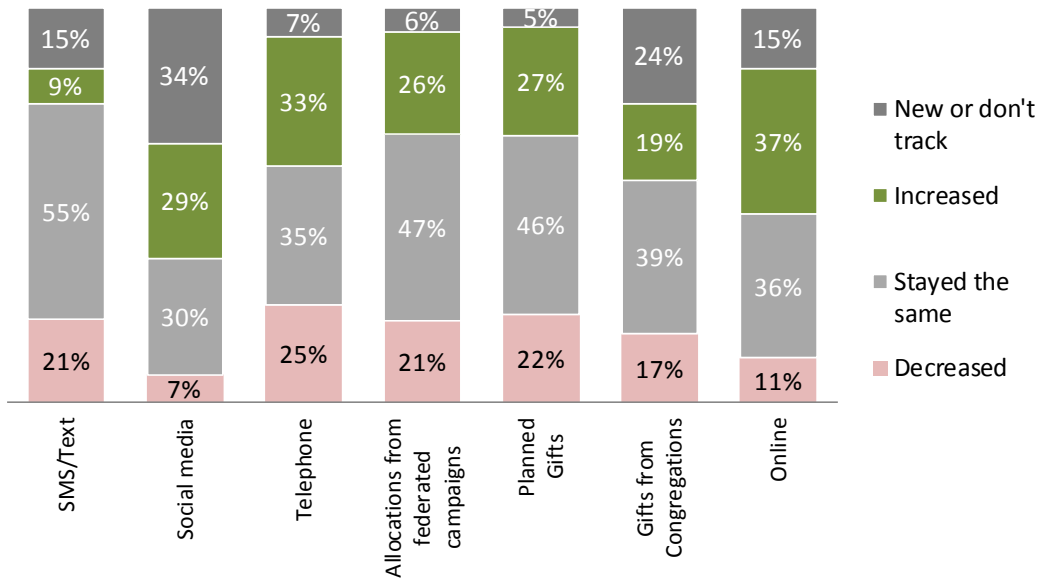
Figure 4: Percentage of responding organizations that use selected fundraising methods



**All methods in the “less used” group remained stable rather than increasing**

Among the methods that are used by less than three-quarters of respondents, not one increased at most responding organizations. For these seven methods, a larger or equal share of respondents said their fundraising receipts using the method “stayed the same” rather than increasing or decreasing in the first six months of 2012, compared with the same period in 2011.

Figure 5: Percentage of organizations reporting change in charitable receipts, 2012 compared with 2011, by fundraising method— less-frequently used methods



Percentages based on organizations that used the method, including those that do not track changes in results by period or for whom the method is new in 2012, so no comparison with 2011 is possible.

**Twelve percent of those using social media added it this year**

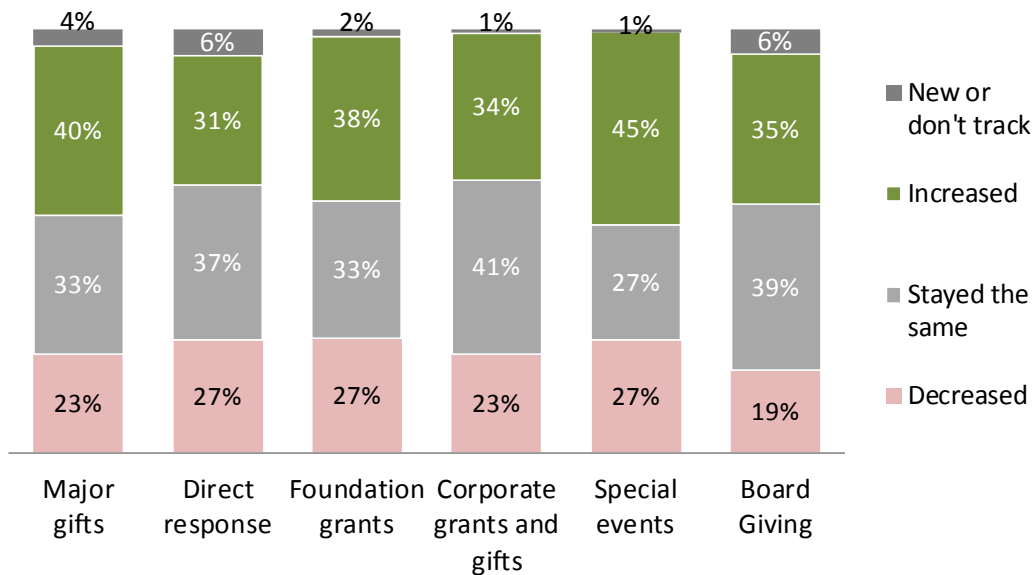
Among the organizations using social media, 34 percent either do not track results separately or began using the method in the first six months of 2012. This method began to be used this year by 12 percent of the respondents that report using it. This is the only method that was added to the fundraising program by more than 10 percent of the respondents that now use it. Online fundraising was added by 6 percent and the other methods were added by 1 to 3 percent of those that use them.

Of those using social media, 22 percent do not track their fundraising receipts by that appeal method. Similarly, 12 percent that use SMS/Texting do not track results for that method, and 20 percent that receive gifts from congregations do not track that as a donor type or fundraising approach.

## Special events, major gifts, and foundation grants increased at more organizations than did other methods

Among the organizations that use often-reported fundraising methods, gift receipts increased—rather than stayed the same or declined—for special events, major gifts, and foundation grants. In the other three fundraising tactics studied, more respondents said receipts remained the same in the first six months of 2012 than reported increases.

Figure 6: Percentage of organizations reporting change in charitable receipts in 2012, compared with 2011, by fundraising method — more frequently used methods



Percentages based on organizations that used the method, including those that do not track changes in results by period or for whom the method is new in 2012, so no comparison with 2011 is possible.

In the report for the first six months of 2011, results were very similar to this year. In that study, for example:

- 46 percent reported increases in special events receipts (compared with 45 percent this year);
- 35 percent of respondents said major gifts increased (compared with 40 percent this year); and
- 35 percent of respondents reported increases in foundation grants received (compared with 38 percent this year).

## Comparison with other studies

Blackbaud publishes an ongoing Giving Index showing trends in charitable giving, and an Online Giving Index. For the three-month period ended August 2012, Blackbaud's Index of Charitable Giving shows a 3.4 percent decrease.<sup>6</sup> This is generally consistent with the Nonprofit Fundraising Survey (NFS).

The NFS does not measure the percentage change in total dollars received as Blackbaud does, but more small organizations in this study reported level or declining charitable receipts than increases. For large organizations in this survey, more reported increased charitable revenue than reported declines, to June.

Because the two methods measure different things, it is difficult to make direct comparison. Blackbaud tracks dollars received in aggregate and the NFS tracks the percentage of organizations reporting a certain type of change (increased, same, or decreased charitable receipts). Further, this edition of the NFS focuses on the first six months of 2012. The Blackbaud index presents a three-month comparison for the period ending August 2012 and compares that to the same three-months the year before.

Blackbaud's Index of Online Giving shows a 5.3 percent increase in receipts as of July 2012.<sup>7</sup> Online giving in the NFS rose at roughly the same percentage of organizations (36 percent) where it stayed level (35 percent), and declined at 29 percent.

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<sup>6</sup> <https://www.blackbaud.com/nonprofit-resources/charitable-giving-index.aspx>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.blackbaud.com/nonprofit-resources/online-giving-index.aspx>

## Retention

This wave of the Nonprofit Fundraising Survey (NFS) asked respondents about monitoring retention rates and specific methods used to try to boost retention. Just under half (47 percent) of those taking the survey said that their nonprofit organization monitors retention rates. There are associations between:

- A focus on retention and increased charitable revenue;
- The number of retention efforts used and the retention rate obtained; and
- Specific retention efforts in stewardship and communications and increased charitable receipts—although it is not clear if the retention efforts boost retention itself, given the sample sizes available.

Retention in this context means donors that renewed their gifts to the charity in 2011.

### Background on donor retention studies

The Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP) began in 2006 and now collects data via 11 different donor management software packages from more than 3,180 participating charities. The FEP reported donor retention rates between 40 and 60 percent (see <http://www.afpnet.org/Audiences/ReportsResearchDetail.cfm?ItemNumber=3113>) for the years 2006 through 2011. The most recent FEP result shows that organizations lost 107 donors for every 100 gained in 2011.<sup>8</sup>

### High retention rates in the NFS

Organizations taking the Nonprofit Fundraising Survey (NFS) were highly likely to report a retention rate above 40 percent. In fact, they were highly likely to report donor retention rates of 60 percent or more. Specifically:

- Nearly three-quarters (73 percent) of those that track retention said they achieved a retention rate in 2011 above 50 percent, and
- Nearly half (49 percent) said that 60 percent or more of their donors renewed their gift in 2011.

The high proportion of organizations with high retention rates in this study provides a useful resource for exploring more deeply what is working for boosting retention, especially among organizations with expenditures below \$10 million.

The NFS asked respondents that monitor retention rates about whether they use specific tactics for boosting retention, and if they do, with which audiences. So respondents could indicate, for example, whether or not they used planned donor journeys for all donors, major donors, first-time donors, or repeat donors.

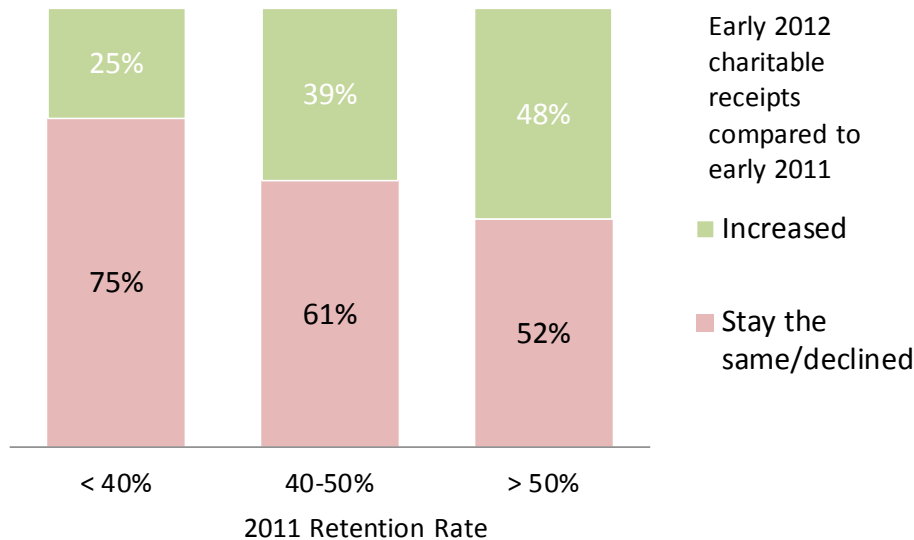
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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.afpnet.org/files/ContentDocuments/FEP2012Report.pdf>

## Retention in 2011 is associated with higher charitable receipts in early 2012

Among the smaller organizations (expenditures less than \$3 million), organizations with high retention goals achieved in 2011 were most likely to have seen increases to date in gifts received in 2012. That is, there appears to be a positive linkage between a focus on retention and an increase in charitable revenue in the following six months.

Figure 7: For organizations with expenditures < \$3 million, 2011 retention rates and direction of change in charitable receipts in the first half of 2012



Results for the other two size groups are difficult to obtain given the relatively small number of organizations (< 100) in each that reported a retention rate for 2011.

## More focus on retention associated with higher retention rate

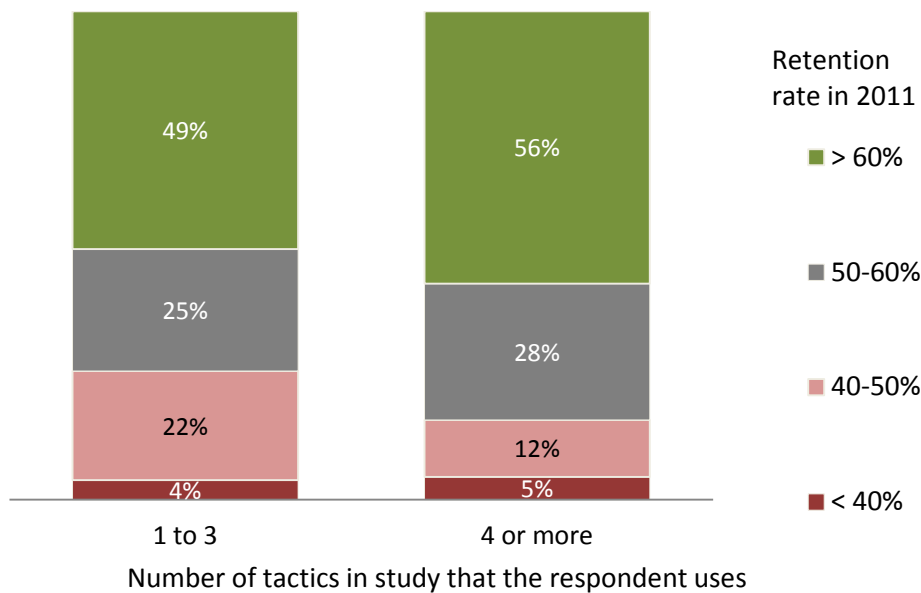
One-third (33 percent) of respondents used between one and three of the specific tactics studied, and 59 percent used four or more (up to eight) of the tactics. A very small share (8 percent) indicated they did not use the specific tactics mentioned, although they might use other strategies not covered in the study.

For organizations with operating budgets below \$9.99 million, there is a strong positive association between the number of retention tactics used and the actual retention rate achieved. However, the effect is not found in the largest organizations (\$10 million and up).<sup>9</sup>

<sup>9</sup> This result might be due to the relatively small number of organizations (43) in this round of the NFS with budgets of \$10 million or more and that monitor retention rates.



Figure 8: Retention rates in 2011 and number of retention tactics used, organizations with less than \$10 million in expenditures



The specific tactics in the study ranged from providing donor recognition and using multi-channel communications (as promoted by Convio, now a Blackbaud company) to developing planned donor journeys and promoting monthly giving options. All survey respondents could indicate what type(s) of efforts they were using to boost retention and which donor audiences were the focus of each tactic: first-time donors, renewal requests, efforts to regain lapsed donors, major donors, memorial/tribute donors, or all donors.

### Basic communication tactics used most frequently

The most frequently used tactics for all donors were donor recognition (reported by 69 percent for all donors) and reporting results to donors (reported by 61 percent). Planned donor journeys was the least frequently used, identified as a tactic used for all types of donors by just 10 percent of responding organizations. These results are in the red bars in Figure 9.

Figure 9: Frequency of use, tactics to boost donor retention

N = 768 (late respondents not included)

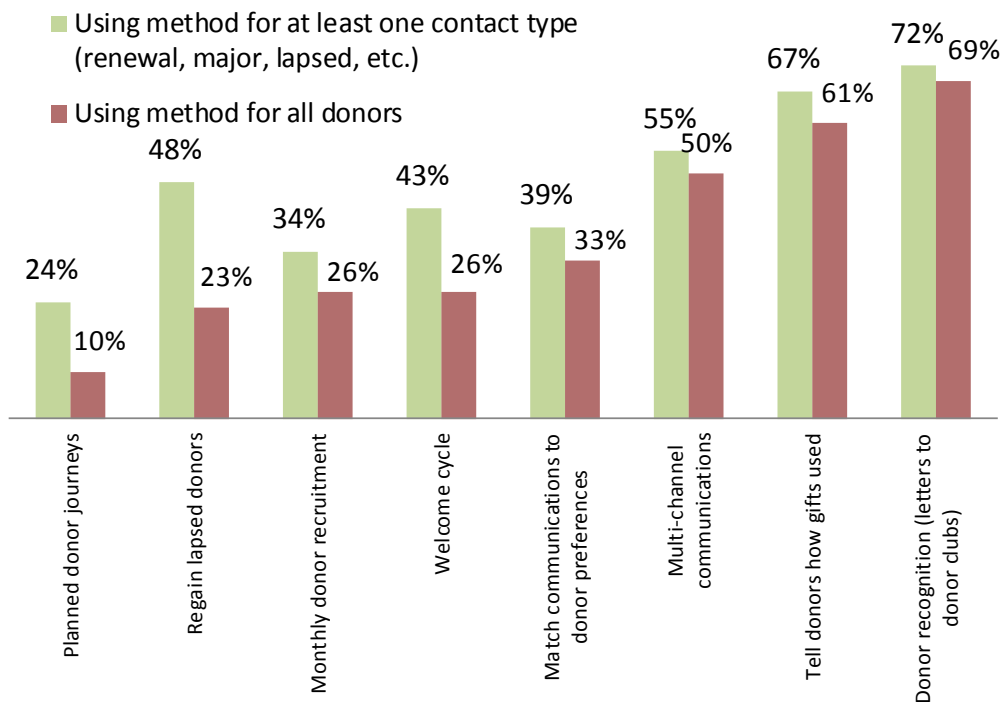


Figure 9 also shows the percentage of organizations using each tactic for any type or types of donor (green bars on left). For example, special efforts to regain lapsed donors are used by 48 percent of respondents for at least one type of donor (most often for donors whose last gift was more than a year ago). Welcome cycles, while used by only 26 percent of respondents for all donors, are used by 43 percent for at least one type of donor, most often for first-time donors. This is discussed in greater detail below on page 15.

### **Strong association between communication and amount of gifts received; less connection with retention of number of donors**

For the often-used methods directed at all donors, such as multi-channel communications, recognition, and reporting results, we tested to see if organizations using those methods were more or less likely to

- Have retention rates (donor) above 60 percent
- Have increased charitable revenues (dollars) for the first half of 2011

We find that these methods are most commonly associated with increased charitable gifts but that the connection with retention itself cannot be determined. Retention focuses on the number of donors, while charitable receipts focuses on the dollars raised.

Table 1: Association between listed retention activities and 2011 retention rate and between listed retention activities and 2012 fundraising receipts from January to June

Organization size	2011 donor retention rate # of donors			2012 increased charitable receipts in dollars, 1 <sup>st</sup> 6 months			
	Retention activity	Multi-channel	Recognition	Report results	Multi-channel	Recognition	Report results
< \$2.99 million					*	***	**
\$3 to \$9.99 million			*		~		*
\$10 million +					~	*	

Blank means no statistically significant association found in these data.

\*\*\* =  $p < .001$  \*\*  $p < .01$  \*  $p < .05$  ~  $p < .10$

Table 1 suggests that increased fundraising results in 2012, to date, are associated with communications with donors, specifically multi-channel approaches, reporting results achieved through contributions, and providing donor recognition. These same tactics, however, are not strongly associated with retention of the number of donors.

### Retention efforts tailored to donor type

The questions in the summer 2012 NFS asked which tactic(s) the organization used for which types of donors. Donor categories included: all, first-time, repeat, lapsed, major, or memorial. Among the responses of possible tactics were:

- Donor welcome cycles, or a planned series of communications in the first 12 months following a first-time gift. The welcome cycle starts with a thank you and continues with communications that “draw the donor in” to the organization’s cause and activities. This might include stewardship reports, advocacy and volunteering opportunities, or events and celebrations.
- Promotion of monthly giving options, in which donors arrange for a regular contribution by automatic transfer or credit card charge.
- Donor journeys, which could be considered a series of milestones that shows possible sequences of markers that donors reach (increased gift, number of donations, reaching a total giving threshold, etc.) as they deepen their understanding of and appreciation for the charity.<sup>10</sup> With coding and planning, an organization can distinguish “Lifetime donors of \$xxx” and “steady donors over the past five years” and create distinct communications and connections for each group.

<sup>10</sup> For articles on donor journeys, see <http://www.fundraisinguccessmag.com/article/guide-donor-relationships-with-your-donor-database-system/1#>.

Table 2 shows the most-often used retention tactics by donor category. As one expects, donor welcome cycles are used most often for first-time donors; special communications to retain lapsed donors are used most often for lapsed donors; and donor journeys are used for major donors and, interestingly, for memorial or tribute donors.

Table 2: Most often used retention tactics by donor category

Donor audience	Most often used tactic to boost retention	Percentage of respondents using tactic
First-time donors	Donor welcome	15%
Repeat donors	Monthly giving options	5%
Lapsed donors	Special communications to retain lapsed donors	23%
Major donors	Donor journeys	8%
Memorial or tribute donors	Donor journeys	3%

When testing to see if these tactics make a difference on donor retention, the analysis found just one case where a specific tactic is associated with higher retention rates. Among the largest organizations, with \$10 million or more in expenditures, those that use special efforts to regain lapsed donors had higher retention rates in 2011 than those that do not make those special efforts. With the number of responses available, it is difficult to use statistical tests for whether or not the other tactics are associated with retention rates achieved.

## Conclusion

Changes to charitable receipts to mid-2012 show virtually the same pattern as at the start of 2011 and 2010: around 45 percent of organizations reported growth; about a quarter saw flat charitable revenue; and around 30 percent reported a decline. This is consistent with broader economic trends showing very slow growth in the U.S. economy and with other studies, such as Blackbaud's Index of Charitable Giving.

This edition of the NFS drills down into fundraising tactics used and finds no dramatic change in methods used, or in the results by method, compared with the first six months of 2011. In this year's study, however, we do see that 12 percent of the organizations using social media for fundraising added it this year (which is 5 percent of all in survey), which might be a harbinger of greater adaptation of this technique for communication and requesting contributions.

Donor retention rates among the participating organizations were generally high, with nearly half that track rates reporting 60 percent or more of their donors renew. It appears that simply paying attention to donor retention is associated with increased charitable giving—and organizations that used more than four different retention methods did see increased retention rates compared with those using three methods or fewer.

In general, a well-developed communications plan seems to be a critical step in both retention and in increased charitable receipts. This includes providing donor recognition through thank you letters and special activities; reporting your organization's work and showing the impact achieved with donor gifts; and using multiple channels of distribution to get your message out: online, print, email, magazines, and so on.

To put these findings into practice, keep doing what works according to your organization's own metrics and that your organization can support. If you have to choose, focus first on strong recognition programs, multi-channel communications, and reporting results to donors. Consider investing in special communications to regain lapsed donors, as that was associated with increased retention and increased contributions with the largest organizations.

For all fundraising, track your results. Add other methods that make sense for your organizational structure and donor base when your organization can support the work and monitor the impact.

## Further reading

For more about the importance of donor retention and stewardship, as well as for examples and samples of how to implement donor stewardship and retention programs, see resources and links at:

[Donor Retention Resources](#) at the Association of Fundraising Professionals.

[Study Fundraising](#), the website of Adrian Sargeant and Jen Shang, authors of *Fundraising Principles and Practice* (Wiley, 2009).

## Methodology

The survey invitation was sent by email and through social media postings beginning on August 9, 2012. The online-only survey response remained open through September 14, 2012. Invitations were sent to several distinct groups:

- Prior participants in NRC surveys (called here panelists)
- Members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals
- More than 32,870 organizations on the mailing list of Campbell Rinker

Reminders were sent at least once, and sometimes twice or three times, to people in each of these groups.

In addition, members of the NRC sent messages through their own email systems, in newsletters, and via social media outlets to recruit additional survey participants.

By source of list, response numbers are as shown.

List source	Number	Percentage of all responses
AFP	86	11.0
Blackbaud/Convio	26	3.3
Campbell Rinker	98	12.5
Giving USA	44	5.6
Urban/NCCS	384	49.2
Panel	117	15.0
Other	26	3.3
Total*	781	100.00

\*14 responses came in after September 14. They were analyzed for the overall change in fundraising but not for the questions about retention.

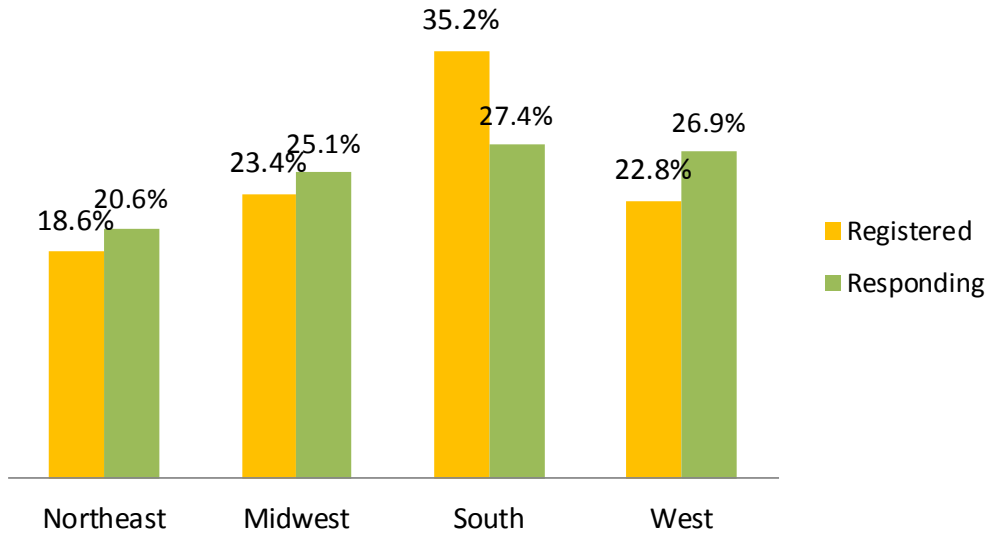
We cannot calculate a total response rate given this convenience sampling approach.

The Summer *2012 Nonprofit Fundraising Survey* received a total of 781 non-duplicated responses representing organizations with more than \$8.2 billion in total revenue (based on IRS Form 990s).

In this file of responding charities, regions defined by the Census Bureau are roughly equally represented based on the number of registered charities within each.

Figure 10: Percentage of responding charities by U.S. Census region compared with registered charities IRS and Business Master File, July 2011

(The sum is 100 by region—that is, add North, South, Midwest, and West for any of the categories of charity to get 100. All yellow bars together = 100, for example.)



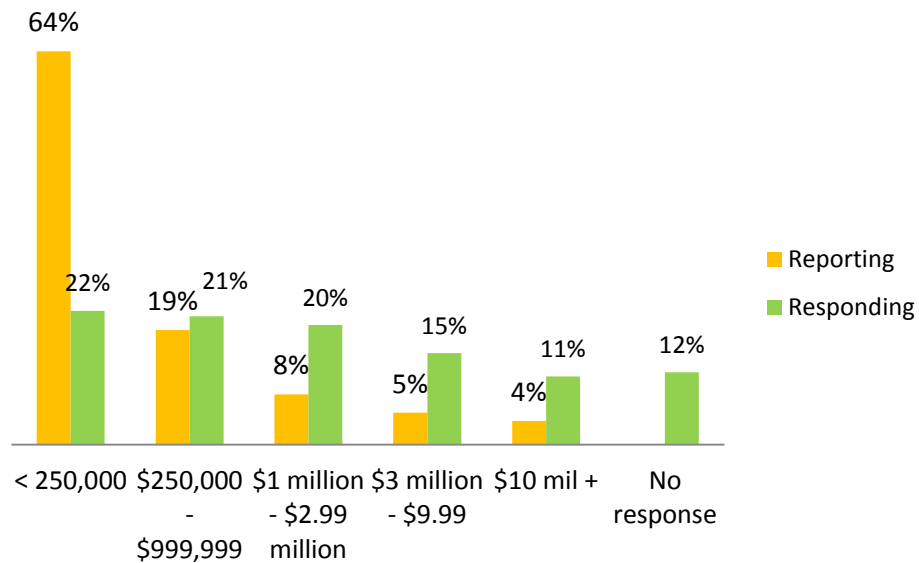
Registered = In the IRS Business Master File as of mid-2011. Regions are as defined by the U.S. Bureau of the Census.  
Responding = Response provided in this survey.

This survey also received 13 responses from Canada that are included in analysis.



This study used reported expenditure amounts on IRS Forms 990 to categorize charities by size, after matching responding charities by Employer Identification Number (EIN) to the record maintained by the National Center for Charitable Statistics that draws from IRS Forms. Thus only reporting charities, which provide expenditure information to the IRS, could be coded for size using official data. Other organizations were coded based on their self-report of total expenditures for 2011.

Figure 11: Responding charities by 2010 expenditure total, compared with reporting charities filing IRS Forms 990

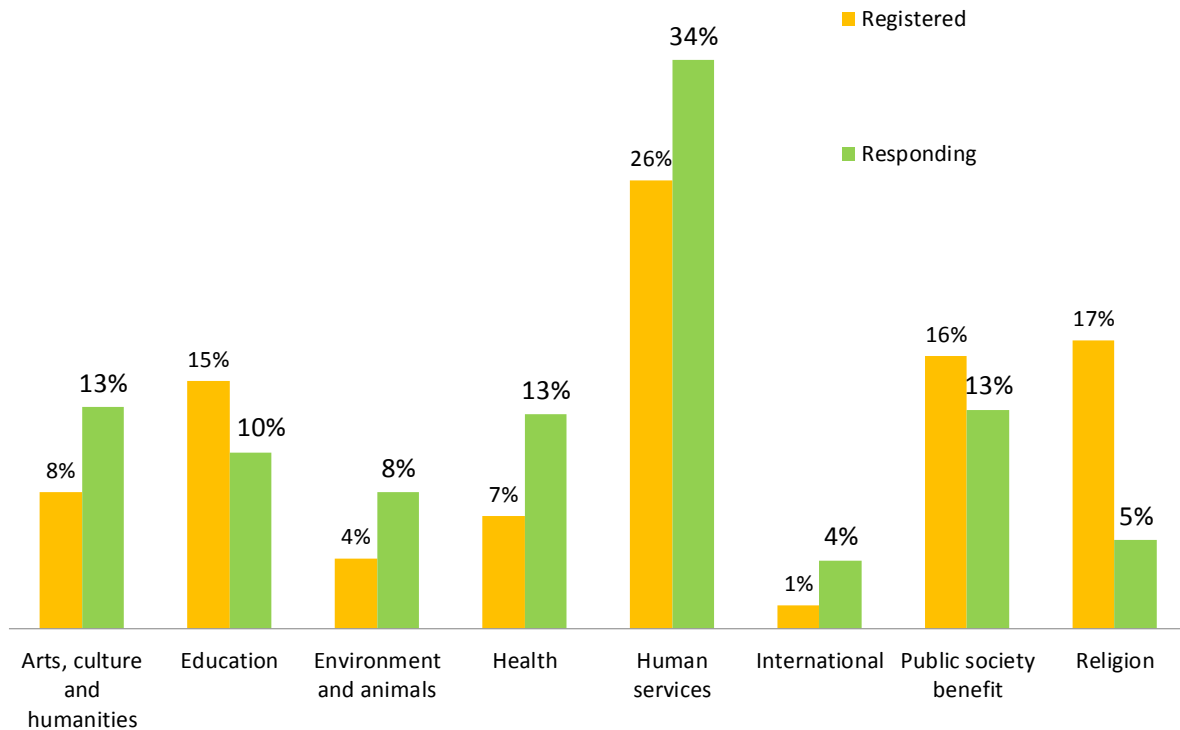


Reporting = filing an IRS Form 990 or Form 990EZ or 990-N ePostcard. Only non-religion registered charities with revenue of \$5,000 or more are required to report. Expenditure information for non-reporting charities is not available at a national level for registered nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations.

Respondents over-represent the larger charities (\$1 million and up in expenditures) and under-represent the smallest organizations (less than \$250,000 in expenditures).

Responding charities also more or less mirrored the Reporting (filing Form 990) charities by subsector or major category under the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE). However, religious organizations are under-represented, and human service organizations are disproportionately high in this set of respondents.

Figure 12: Responding charities by subsector compared with charities registered with the IRS



Registered = In the IRS Business Master File as of mid-2011. Charities in the BMF are coded by major category of the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE). Major categories are grouped here into "subsectors" as defined by *Giving USA*.

Responding = Response provided in this survey

### Statistical significance

The respondents form a convenience sample. There is no margin of error or measure of statistical significance using this sampling technique, as it is not a random sample of the population studied. Chi-square tests were used throughout the analysis to compare differences between larger responding organizations and smaller responding organizations. Results included here are statistically significant using that approach.

## About the Nonprofit Research Collaborative

Several organizations have formed the NRC. Each of these entities has, at a minimum, a decade of direct experience collecting information from nonprofits concerning charitable receipts, fundraising practices, and/or grantmaking activities. The collaborating partners are:

- Association of Fundraising Professionals, which surveyed members for an annual state of fundraising study from 2002 through 2010;
- Blackbaud, Inc., which publishes The Blackbaud Index and prepares a report about the State of the Nonprofit Industry;
- Campbell Rinker, which publishes the bi-monthly Donor Confidence Report and conducts numerous studies among nonprofit donors and nonprofit professionals.
- Giving USA Foundation, which has published the *Giving USA Annual Report on Philanthropy* for more than 50 years;
- The National Center for Charitable Statistics at the Urban Institute, which tracks the finances and activities of nonprofit organizations and prepares *The Nonprofit Almanac* and other publications and resources.

The collaborative effort reduces the burden on charities, which receive fewer requests for survey participation. Survey respondents will form a panel over time, allowing for trend comparisons among the same organizations. This approach provides more useful benchmarking information than repeated cross-sectional studies.

The Nonprofit Research Collaborative (NRC) conducts surveys twice a year.