

## Top Fund Raisers in 'Philanthropy 400' Saw Steep Drop in Donations Last Year

*By Noelle Barton and Holly Hall*

Private giving to the nation's biggest charities, including more than 100 colleges, dropped 11 percent last year, according to a [survey released on Monday by \*The Chronicle of Philanthropy\*](#). The decline was the worst in the two decades since *The Chronicle* started its Philanthropy 400 ranking of the organizations that raise the most from private sources.

Nonprofit organizations say they don't expect to have done much better by the time 2010 ends. More than one in four of the groups provided projections for 2010, and the median change they predicted was an increase of just 1.4 percent.

The 400 institutions in the survey raised \$68.6-billion in 2009. Of those organizations, 114 are colleges and universities. Stanford University, which raised \$640-million, was the highest-ranked university on the list, at No. 14. Harvard University, which raised \$601-million, was the next highest, at No. 16.

Like many organizations in the Philanthropy 400, both of those universities saw declines in giving last year. Stanford's giving total dropped 18.5 percent from the year before, while Harvard's total was down 7.5 percent from 2008 to 2009.

The Philanthropy 400 findings echo the results of the Voluntary Support of Education Survey, released earlier this year, which showed [giving to colleges went down 11.9 percent in 2009](#). *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* uses data from the Voluntary Support of Education Survey, which is conducted by the Council for Aid to Education, in its survey.

### **The Top 10**

Among the 10 charities that raised the most last year, six reported declines. Giving to the United Way Worldwide (No. 1) decreased by 4.5 percent and to the Salvation Army (No. 2) by 8.4 percent, the smallest declines among the top-ranking groups.

Food for the Poor (No. 6) saw contributions fall by more than 27 percent, while donations to the Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund (No. 7) plunged by 40.3 percent, largely because it relies heavily on stock gifts, which were not very popular last year. Also reporting declines were the American Cancer Society (No. 8), where giving fell by 11 percent, and the Y (No. 10), which reported a 17.2-percent drop in donations.

Only four charities in the top 10 reported increased contributions last year. They were Catholic Charities USA (No. 3) with a 66-percent jump in donations; the AmeriCares Foundation (No. 4), which achieved an 18.1-percent rise in giving, mostly in food, medicine, and other donated goods; Feed the Children (No. 5), another charity that relies on donated products, where contributions rose by 1.2 percent; and World Vision (No. 9), which reported a 4.5-percent increase in giving mostly by donors who make monthly gifts to "sponsor" needy children overseas.

Colleges new to this year's Philanthropy 400 included Baylor University, Bowdoin College, the College of William and Mary, Drexel University, and Le Moyne College. *The Chronicle's* list shows how hard it is for new organizations to raise enough to make the Philanthropy 400 list. Of the charities on the 2010 list, 226 of the same groups appeared in 1991 and 178 organizations appeared on the list for all 20 years.

Two nonprofit leaders who played a key role in helping their organizations get on the list will discuss fund-raising trends and how their organizations overcome fund-raising challenges in a free online discussion on Tuesday, October 19, at noon U.S. Eastern time at <http://philanthropy.com>.

The Philanthropy 400 shows the organizations that raise the most from individuals, foundations, and businesses. No government funds are counted. As a result, some organizations that are large but get most of their money from government agencies are not included. Full coverage of this year's Philanthropy 400 rankings plus a look at the 20-year history of the list are available to subscribers of *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, at <http://philanthropy.com/400>.

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