

MILLENNIALS *and* GIVING

A Combined Fund Drive Focus Group



WASHINGTON STATE
**COMBINED
FUND DRIVE**

Drafted by the Combined Fund Drive
Administered by the Office of the Secretary of State

MARCH 2017

MILLENNIALS *and* GIVING

A Combined Fund Drive Focus Group

OVERVIEW

Washington State Combined Fund Drive (CFD) donors have made Washington State's public giving program one of the most successful independent workplace contribution programs in the country. As the program moves forward, the challenge becomes maintaining the strong donor base that already exists as a generation of donors retire from state employment.

Recognizing that the majority of new employees to state government are firmly categorized as "millennials," the CFD hosted focus groups to learn more about these employees and charitable giving. The main goals of the focus groups was to gain insight from millennials and improve services the CFD provides to our charity members.

CRITERIA

CFD staff determined criteria for focus groups and began inviting participants in January 2017:

- Millennials are defined as state employees born between 1980 and 1997
- Participants choose to join a donor focus group or a non-donor focus group
- Each participant must sign a consent form describing the process
- Participants in the focus groups each received a \$5 Starbucks gift card upon completion of their focus group
- Each session was recorded two ways: handwritten notes and audio recordings

GROUPS

Six sessions of three to ten participants were held at the end of January and beginning of February 2017. Selected participants were chosen based on a first-come, first-serve model in response to the emailed invitation issued in January. Focus groups were held at either the Washington State Library in Tumwater or the Office of the Secretary of State in Olympia. Each session was scheduled for one and a half hours and two sessions were conducted on each of three different days. Scheduled sessions were held as follows:

- Donor focus group #1: January 26, 2017, 12:30P-2:00P at the Washington State Library
- Donor focus group #2: January 26, 2017, 3:00P-4:30P at the Washington State Library
- Non-Donor focus group #1: February 2, 2017, 12:30P-2:00P at the Office of Secretary of State
- Non-Donor focus group #2: February 2, 2017, 3:00P-4:30P at the Office of Secretary of State
- Donor focus group #3: February 8, 2017, 12:30P-2:00P at the Washington State Library
- Donor focus group #4: February 8, 2017, 3:00P-4:30P at the Washington State Library

THE ONLINE SURVEY

For state employees who responded to the email invitation after focus groups were filled, the CFD sent an email asking them to participate in the online survey. The online survey was sent to millennials who wished to participate in the donor focus groups and used similar questions.

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES IN DONOR FOCUS GROUPS

Each donor focus group was unique with wonderful dynamics, but there were common themes for some of their answers. Questions appear in order as asked by the group moderator. Results listed are the most common responses at each of the four donor focus groups.

1. Why do you give? What makes you excited to give?
2. Did you respond to a particular fundraiser? Why?
3. How do you decide to give to your chosen charity?
4. What are your opinions on administrative costs? Have they prevented you from giving in the past?
5. Would you rather give time or money?
6. If you were given time off to volunteer during your work week, would you take part?
7. What do you think when you hear “CFD?” What does CFD mean to you? What feelings are invoked?
8. What would you want to see improved about our program?
9. How often do you like to be communicated to by a charity?
10. Do you receive good information about charity or events from social media?

QUESTIONS AND RESPONSES IN NON-DONOR FOCUS GROUPS

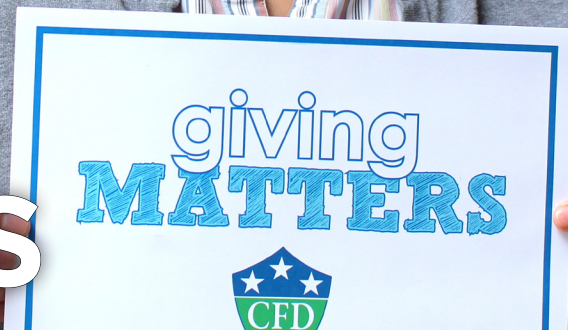
Each non-donor focus group provided great feedback for the CFD to improve our program and share with our member charities. Questions appear in order as asked by the group moderator.

Results listed are the most common responses at the two non-donor focus groups.

1. How did you learn about the CFD (if you know of us at all)?
2. When you think about donating to charity, what comes to mind?
3. What obstacles block you from giving?
4. What would make the giving experience easier?
5. Would you rather give time or money?
6. If you were given time off to volunteer during your work week, would you take part?
7. What are your opinions on administrative costs? Have they prevented you from giving in the past?
8. Do you receive good information about charity or events from social media?

Results listed are the most common responses at each of the focus groups as the survey that was sent to all millennial donors who expressed interest in being a part of the discussion.

DONORS



MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

Some of the major patterns that formed as a result of the focus groups and a survey that was sent out to all interested millennial donors included:

Giving locally is very important. Of those who responded in the focus groups and on our survey, more than 25% of respondents said that the charity being local is important.

Having a personal connection is key. Many of our respondents said that they received help from or knew someone who had been helped and that helped them make their giving decision.

Millennials would rather give money than time...right now. When asked, members of both the focus group and respondents from the survey said that they would rather give money than time. Many were younger adults who had just started families, and finding time during a busy day just wasn't feasible.

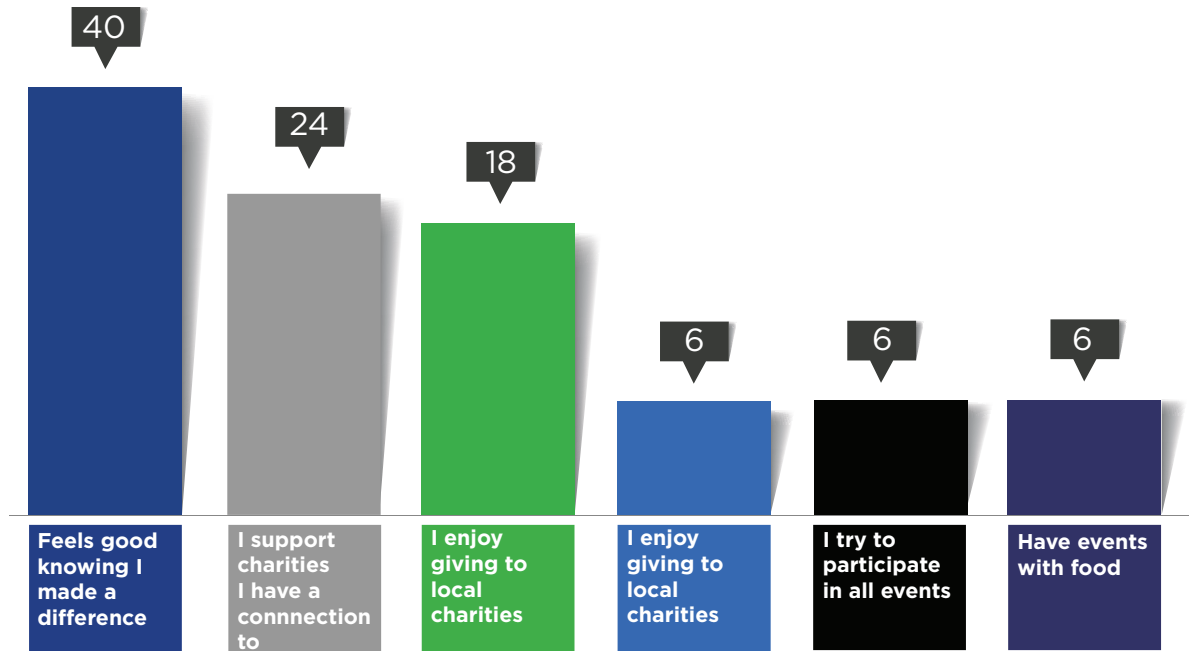
Administrative costs are hugely important. Though knowledge on the subject varies, many respondents found that high administrative costs had prevented them from giving to specific charities in the past.

DO NOT SEND MAIL to millennials. Many feel it is a waste of money and resources.

Email is the best form of communication. Respondents found that method of communication easy and cost effective.

Make sure social media is a part of your daily diet. Nearly every respondent in the focus groups said that they had attended a charitable event as a result of seeing the event on Facebook or Twitter. These two forums remain the most used social media for millennial donors.

1. Why do you give? What makes you excited to give?



FINDINGS:

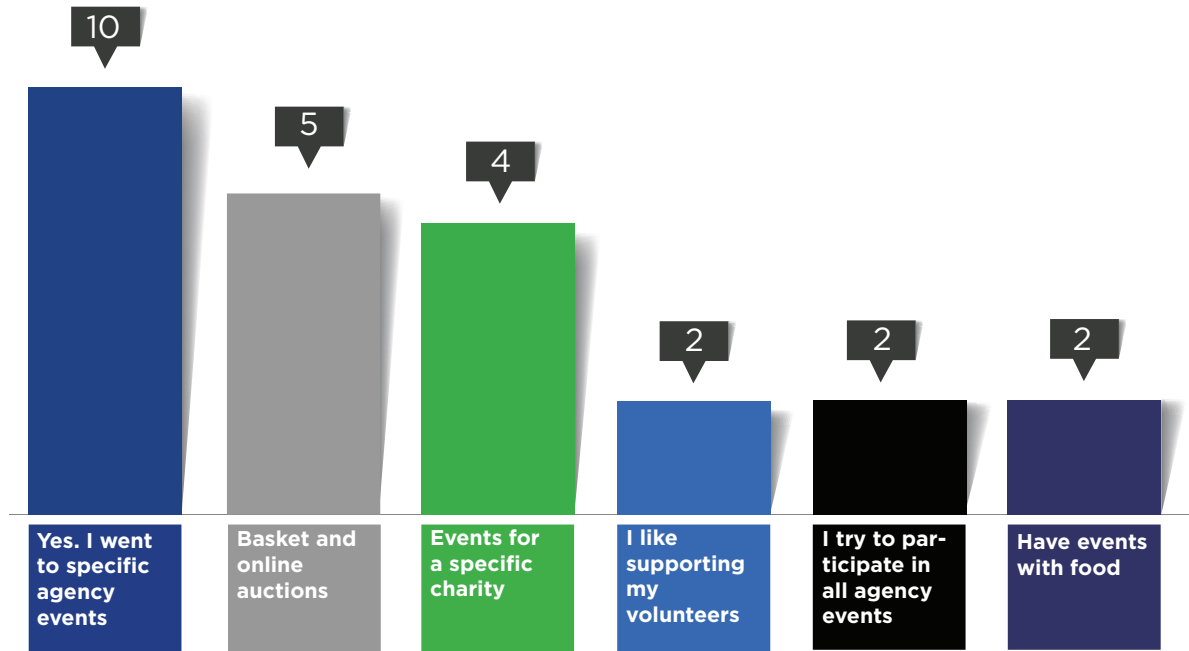
It's all about feeling good. With so many different outlets that paint a darker picture of the world, giving is one way that makes millennial donors feel good. They like the idea that they are contributing to making the world a better place.

Younger donors need connection to their charities. Whether it's having experienced receiving the services from a nonprofit, or just being connected to the charity through a friend or volunteering experience, millennial donors are more willing to give to organizations that they know and are familiar with.

Prove how much you make a difference as an organization. Stories about your recipients, focusing on how much a dollar helps, or video content of your charity helping others are all good ways to showcase how you are making a difference that younger donors will respond to.

Millennials like giving to local causes. This was a theme throughout our focus groups, but was one of the most common answers for the "why" question. Seeing results go directly back to the community is very important.

2. Did you respond to a particular fundraiser? Why?



FINDINGS:

People like supporting volunteers in their agency. Sometimes a donor doesn't show up for any other reason than the employee who put on the event.

Specifying a charity may resonate more with potential younger donors. A lack of knowledge on the CFD, along with a need to see tangible service results for their dollar, lead many millennial donors to attend fundraisers based on which charities the event benefits.

Any auction will do. Whether it's a live or silent auction, people like a good auction. It's an opportunity for them to bid against other fellow employees, win items that they may not otherwise ever pay for, and give back to their communities at the same time.

Have some food at your event. People love to eat, and having an event that is centered around food and socializing is a no-lose proposition. It gets donors away from their desks and connecting with others in their offices.

3. How did you decide on your charity?



FINDINGS:

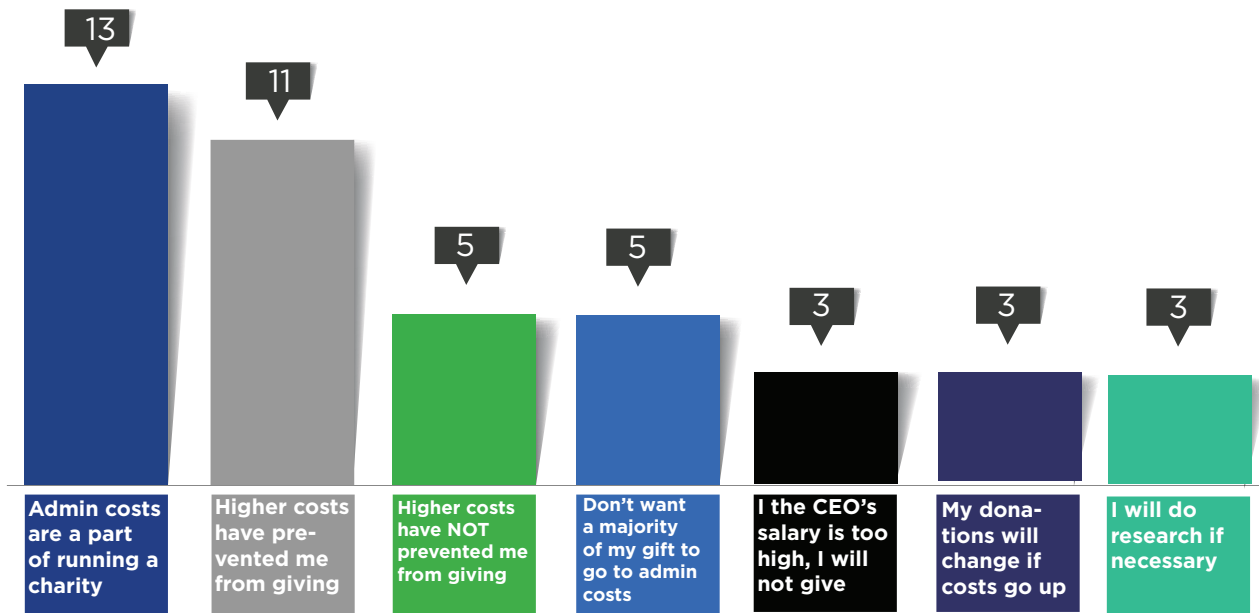
Location. Location. Location. Local giving was extremely important for many respondents in both the survey and the focus groups. Local organizations are viewed with less skepticism when it comes to administrative costs, and the results of a donor's gift can be seen in more tangible ways.

Younger donors need a reason to give to an organization...that is specific and personal. Once again, personal experience with a charity is a huge factor when it comes to a younger donor making a giving decision. If they have seen or felt your organization, they are more likely to give to it.

Show financial responsibility. This is another theme that is prevalent throughout our research. In three different questions, many donors responded positively (or negatively) to how an organization might handle their financial responsibilities.

Your services might translate into support. It's been said before, but bares repeating. Once these recipients gain access to a career, they are more likely to become active donors within your organization. Keep that in mind when you are helping in your community.

4. What are your opinions on administrative costs? Have they prevented you from giving in the past??



FINDINGS:

People understand running a charity costs money. Millennials are willing to accept some costs associated with running a nonprofit and are not unreasonable when it comes to their expectations. About 20 percent seemed like a fair threshold for many of our respondents.

Administrative costs will make a difference in making a choice. A strong amount of younger donors said that higher costs have prevented them from giving to a nonprofit in the past.

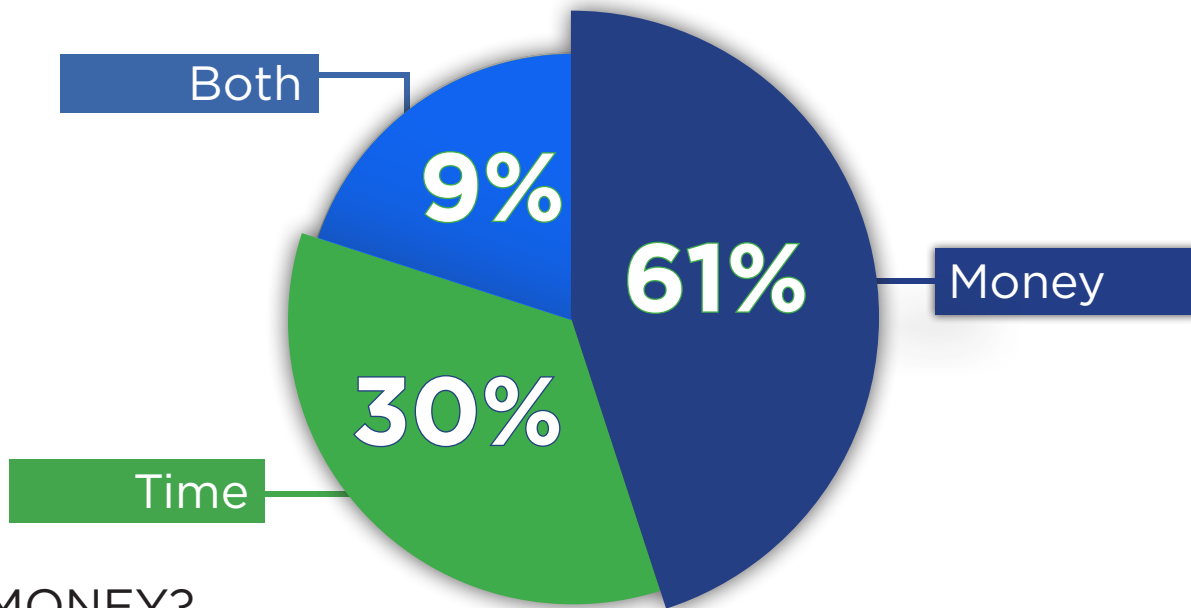
Salaries do make a difference... This seems to be a major reason why larger, branded nonprofits may struggle in the future. Our younger donors were turned off by news stories of CEOs making too much money.

...But not always. That being said, there was still a recognition that it takes money to attract good talent.

Be open about your costs. As long as an organization is transparent about what their costs are, younger donors are receptive to the concept of administrative costs.

Younger donors do NOT like direct mailings. These are viewed as cost wasters, and turned nearly every respondent off to some degree.

5. Would you rather give money or time?



WHY MONEY?

- Time doesn't allow due to commute/obligations
- Have small children
- Money is easier to give than time
- Commitment to ongoing volunteerism is difficult

WHY TIME?

- Giving money is hard to fit in a budget
- Like seeing results from giving time

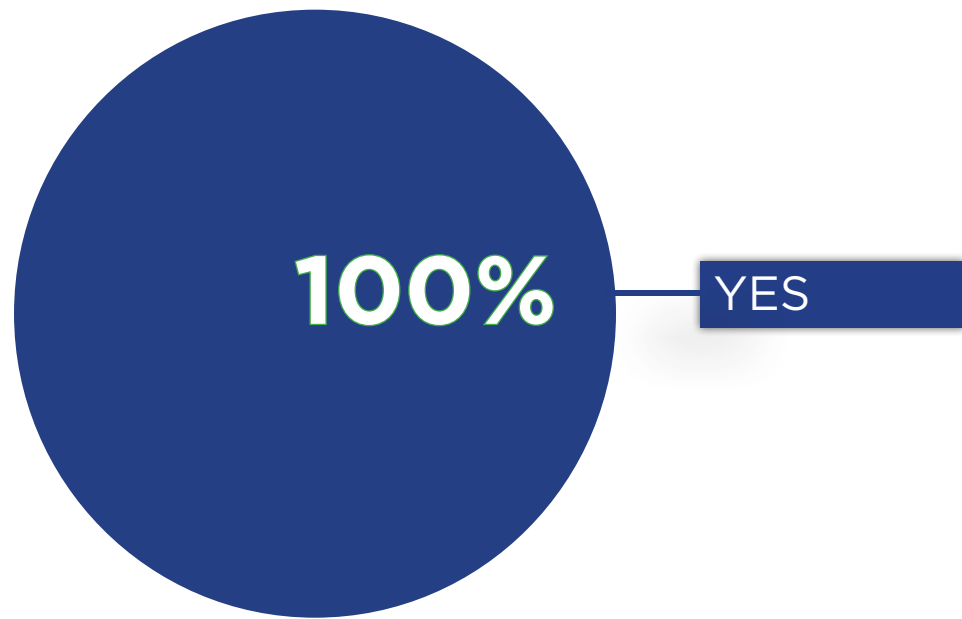
FINDINGS:

Younger donors want to give time but don't have any to give. Between the new jobs, the younger kids, the time it takes and a slew of other obligations, our millennial respondents found that their time was limited.

Try to find ways to include families with younger kids. Keep in mind, millennials are just beginning their families, or have younger kids that they can't leave by themselves. If charities give these donors an opportunity to include their families, they will build a base of loyal volunteers.

Schedule volunteer opportunities for groups of similar ages. One of the interesting ideas that came from our respondents was the idea that some use their volunteering as a chance to connect with other people with similar interests.

6. If you were given time off to volunteer during your work week, would you take part?



FINDINGS:

Millennial donors were very fond of the idea of being able to volunteer at their favorite organizations during the work week. It would allow them to stay connected to charities in the community and still give them an opportunity to budget their time.

Some of the most common reasons why volunteer time off was embraced were:

- It would be a great team building experience
- It would show that the state cares about charity programs
- People would be more likely to volunteer

There were a few respondents who thought the concept of a community pot of shared time for use of volunteering might be a beneficial idea.

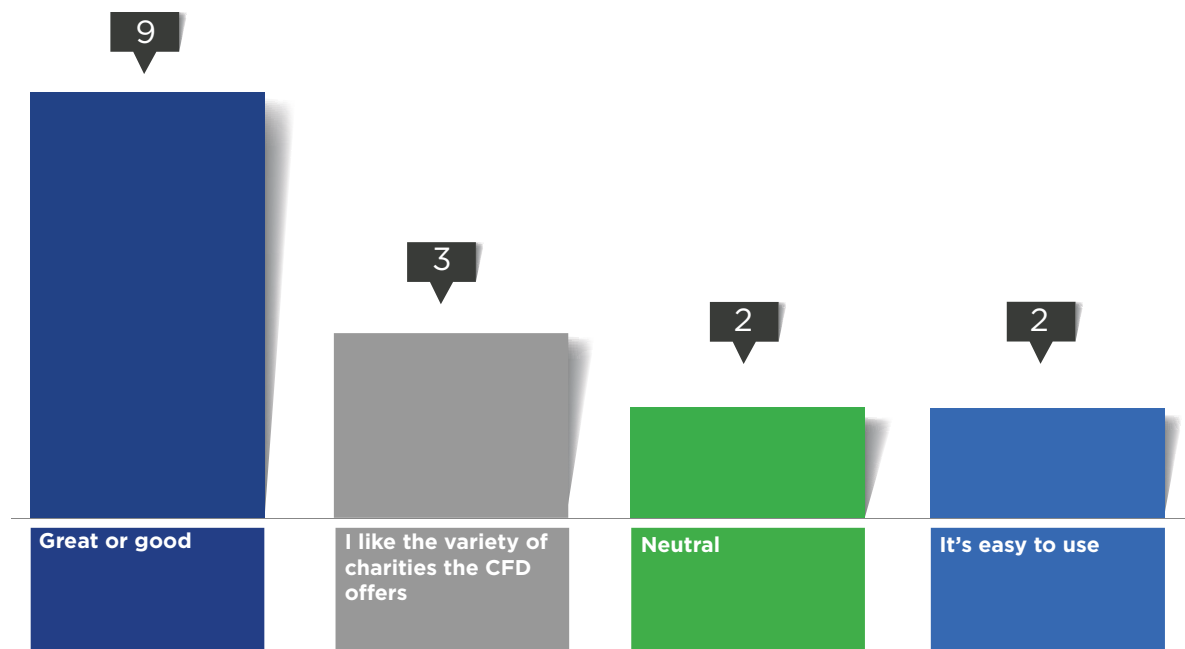
7. What do you think when you hear “CFD”? What does CFD mean to you? What feelings are invoked?

Focus Group Results ONLY



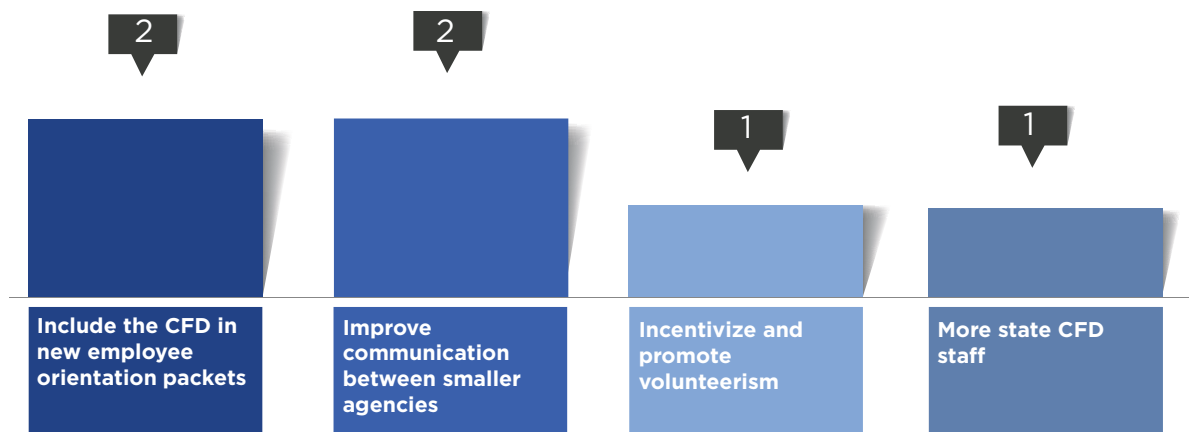
8. How do you think our organization compares to others?

Survey Results ONLY

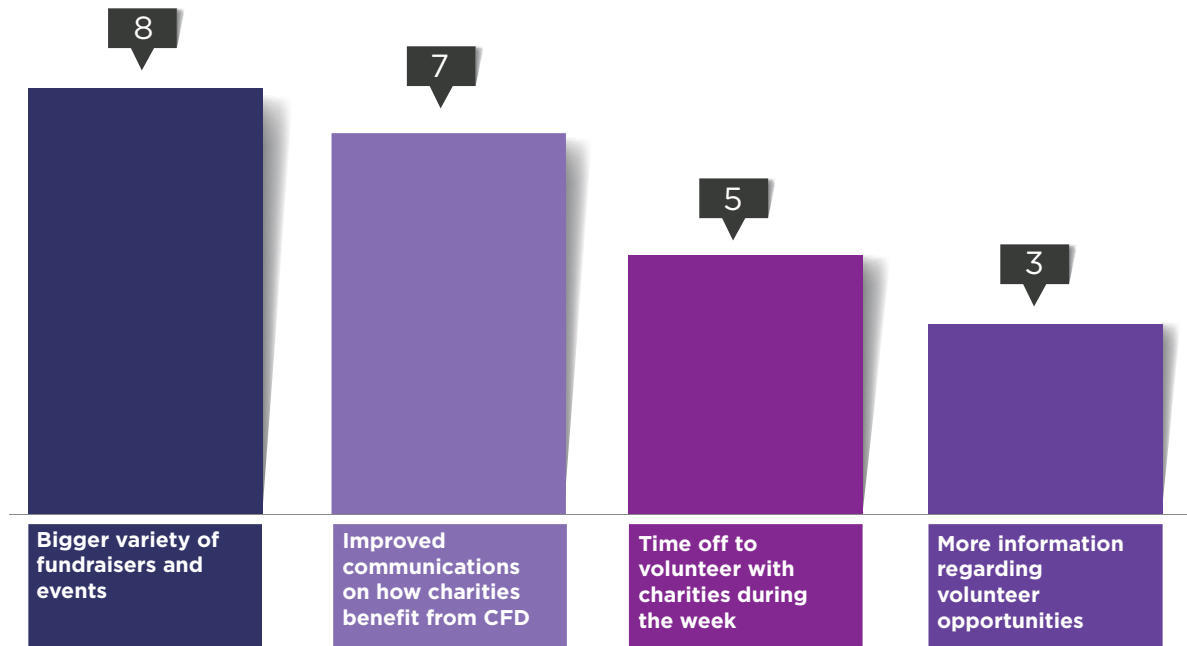


9. What can be improved about our program?

Focus Group Results



Survey Group Results

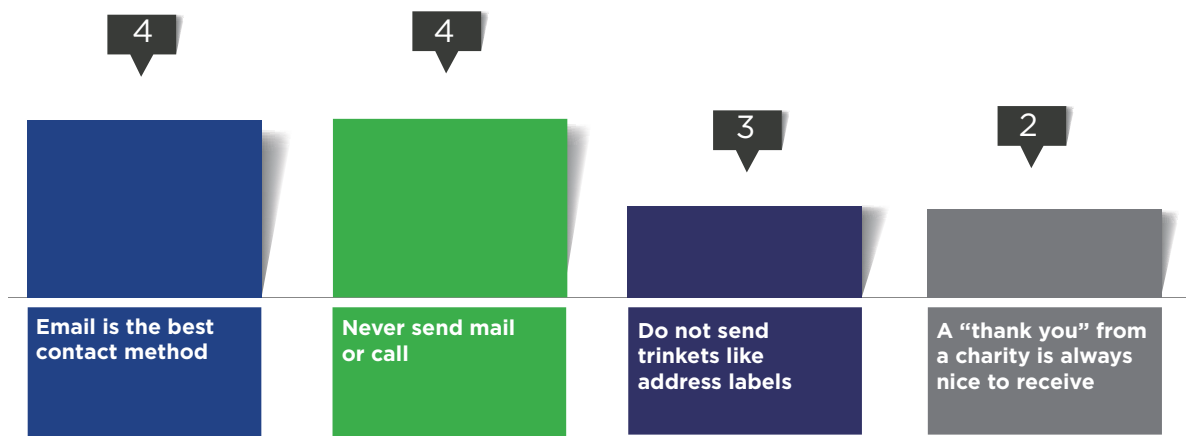


FINDINGS:

- Focus on how charities can benefit
- Give more opportunities to volunteer for our member charities
- Get in front of new employees
- Communicate directly from time-to-time

10. How often would you like to be communicated to by a charity?

Focus Group Results



FINDINGS:

Once a month is acceptable. Many of our respondents were totally accepting of being communicated to (and even solicited) once per month, as long as it is done through something like emails, which can easily be deleted if they aren't interested.

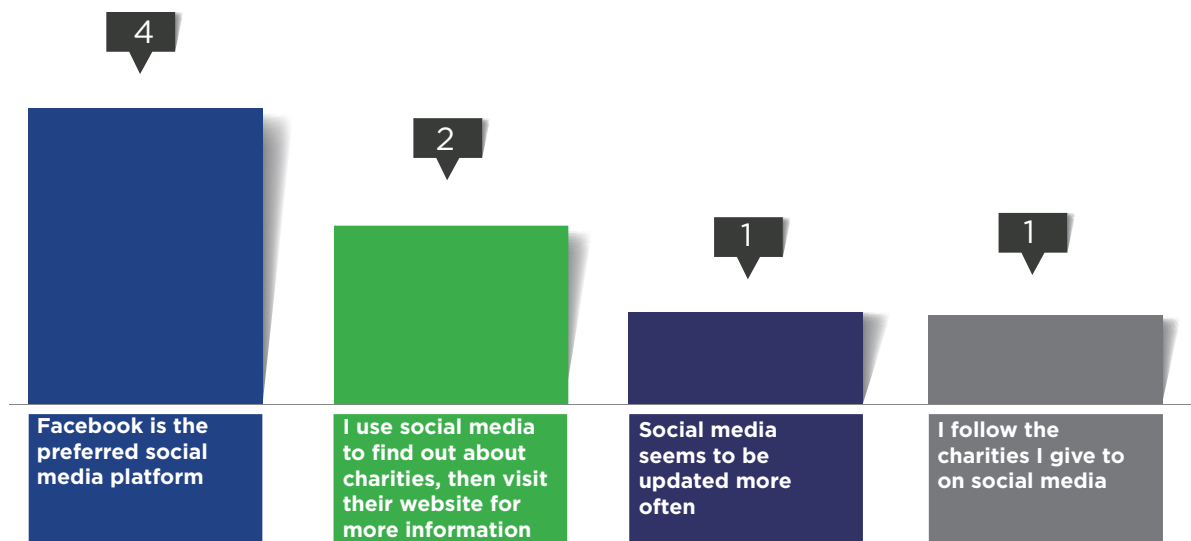
Email is the best way to communicate. Our respondents were more open to email than any other method of communication. If they didn't like the content, they could delete the message or unsubscribe from the messenger. While some said texting was OK, others said it felt too invasive or they simply didn't respond to the message.

DO NOT MAIL millennials. This was a major theme throughout the focus groups and on the survey. Even if the cost is minimal, the perception for younger donors is that direct mailings are a waste of time and resources that could be used in other areas.

Younger donors don't like trinkets as much as you think they would. Once again, these items weren't looked at as essential to the mission of the charities that serve the community.

11. Do you receive good information about charities or events from social media?

Focus Group Results



FINDINGS

Every single focus group member said yes. This was one of the only unanimous answers.

Facebook and Twitter are kings. Most of our respondents said they received information from an event from Facebook, followed by Twitter. Instagram was a distant third.

People don't learn from social media. They follow. Most of our respondents said that while they received information on upcoming events and promotions through social media, they did not usually use the platforms for important service or financial information.

Keep your social media current. The more updated information you have on your social media, the more actively engaged your users will be.

When possible, create events on Facebook. Our focus group respondents often used events to help stay informed, and also bring other friends into the fold.



NON-DONORS

MAJOR TAKEAWAYS

Some of the major patterns that formed as a result of the focus groups and a survey that was sent out to all interested millennial donors included:

A budget remains the major obstacle to giving. Student loan debt and low income are just a couple of the reasons why our non-donor respondents said they are being prevented from giving substantially. Have patience with younger donors. If you cultivate them through volunteering experiences, highlighting services or through other means, your efforts may pay off later down the road.

The CFD can work to create a better understanding of what it does. Many of our respondents said they didn't even realize the program had staff, and some even learned about the program through our focus groups than from activities within their own agency. The CFD needs to find ways to educate potential younger donors directly.

Administrative costs are important. For our non-donors respondents, this was an extreme barrier to giving. Though not as educated on the topic, they were definitely turned off by higher costs. Be aware of how much you pay for marketing efforts, because some millennial donors are paying attention and may not be giving because they think too much money is being spent just to buy more trinkets.

Time is still an issue with volunteerism. Our non-donor groups ran into the same problem as our donor respondents. There simply wasn't enough time in the day to volunteer for charity.

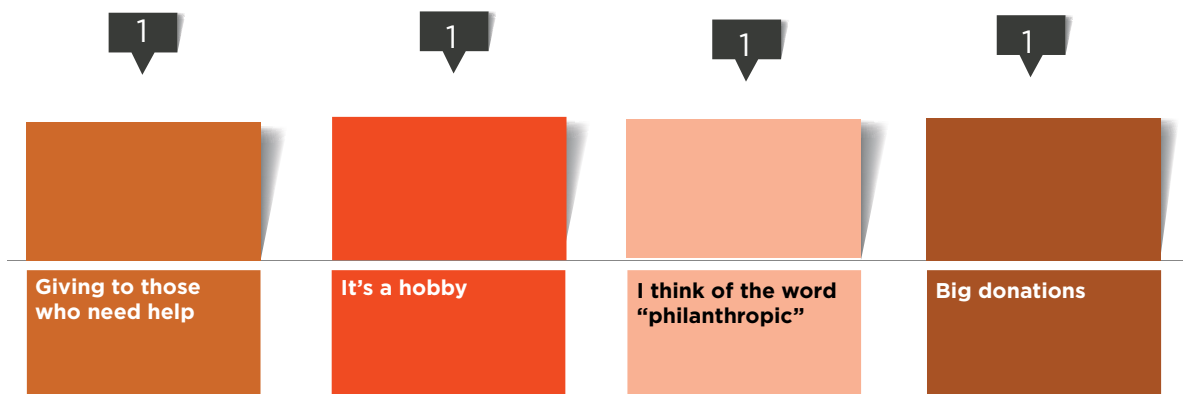
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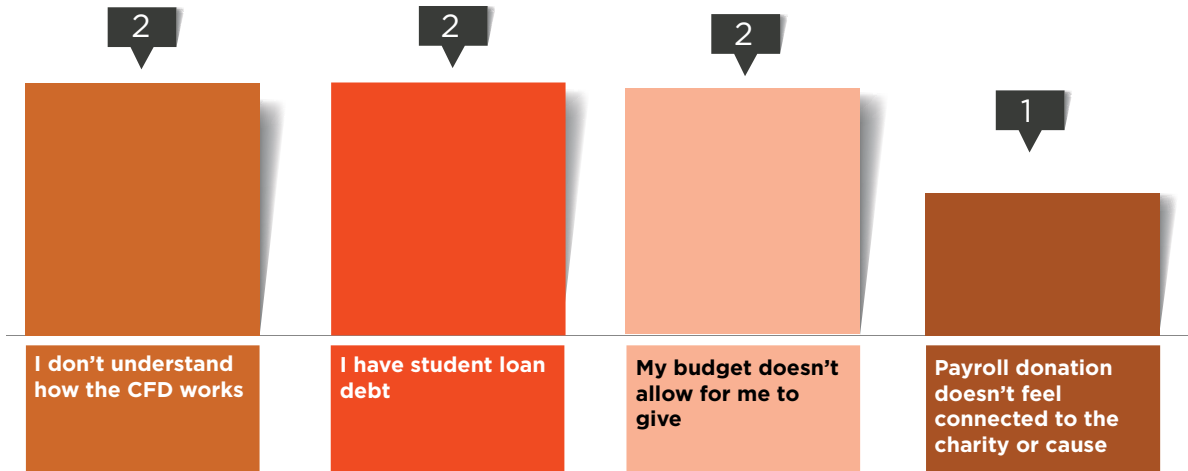
1. How did you learn about the CFD (if you know of us at all)?



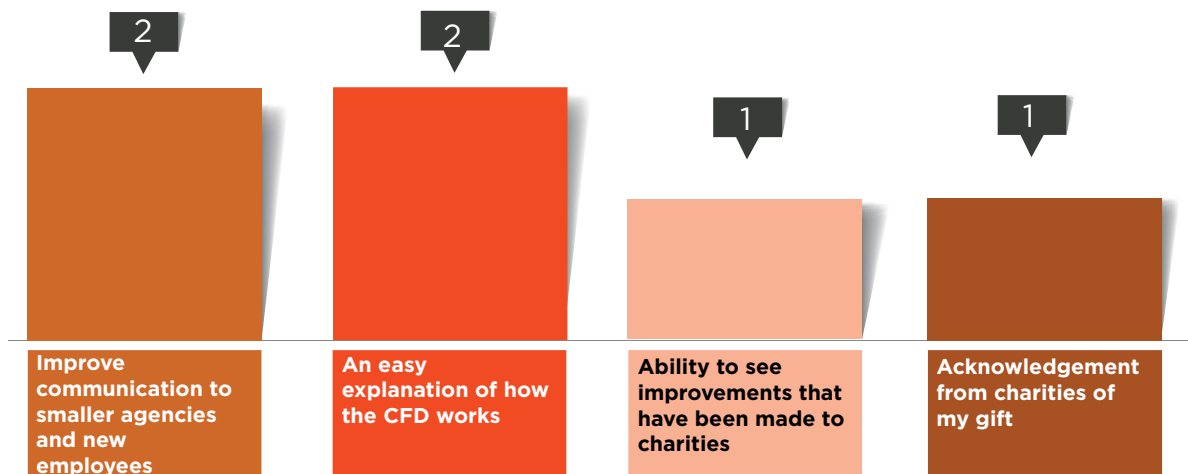
2. When you think about donating to charity, what comes to mind?



3. What obstacles block you from giving?

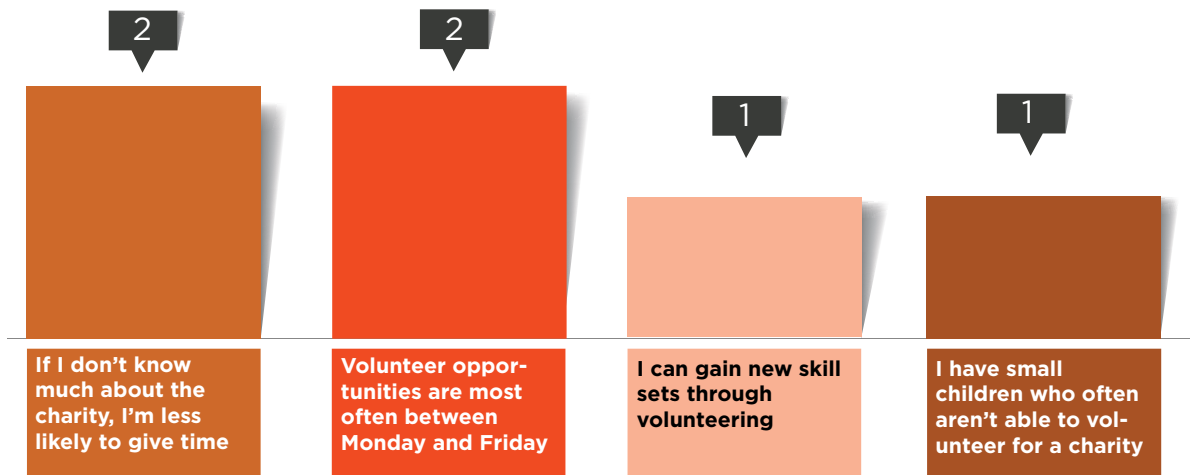


4. What would make the giving experience easier?



5. Would you rather give money or time?

Both non-donor groups were evenly split between giving time and money. The most common additional comments are below:



6. If you were given time off to volunteer during your work week, would you take part?

Both non-donor focus groups said yes. The most common additional comments are below:

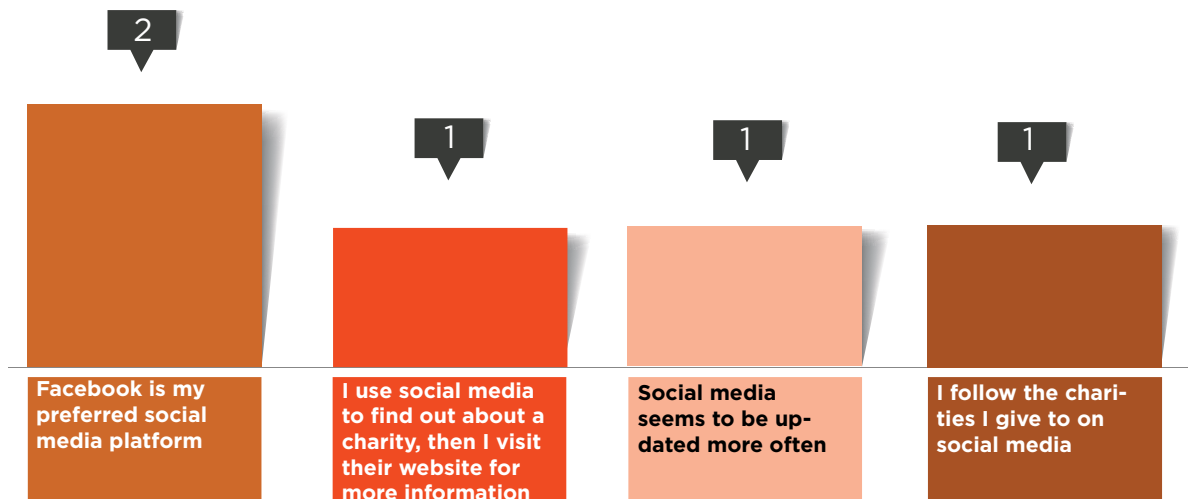


7. What are your opinions on administrative costs? Have they prevented you from giving in the past?



8. Do you receive good information about charities or events from social media?

Both non-donor focus groups said yes. The most common additional comments are below:



The Millennial Focus Group and Survey was administered by the staff of the Washington State Combined Fund Drive in conjunction with volunteers from the Office of the Secretary of State.



The views and opinions expressed in this study are those of the respondents and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of either the Combined Fund Drive or the Office of the Secretary of State.

For more information, feel free to contact the Combined Fund Drive office at 360-902-4182 or email cfid@sos.wa.gov.