A new wave of interest in growing charitable giving, which some measures say is stuck around 2 percent of GDP, is under way. But many measures of giving, like the share of GDP, do not sufficiently account for the changing patterns in how Americans are spending their financial resources for social good.

This dashboard brings together selected core indicators that can track some of the changing patterns and levels of individual giving using the best data sources available.

**Sitting, Sorting, and Making Sense of It All**

What key measures should we use to understand and tell a story about growth in giving? What should we be paying attention to?

A significant amount of activity in the social sector is devoted to measuring giving levels and practices, and the field is steadily improving the representativeness and reliability of these data. But the quality of the data is often unknown, and the challenges of measurement often go unnoticed.

**Understanding Why Indicators Are Important**

Indicators help shape how we think about charitable giving, and they frame the debate and, ultimately, the decisionmaking around giving. But to be influential, indicators must be used by journalists, academics, and policy analysts and endorsed by influential people and organizations in civil society.

**Broadening the Scope of What Counts as Giving**

The dominant approach to quantifying donations—counting only tax-deductible donations to registered public charities—does not capture the entire scope of giving. Why not count money given when solicited on the street or at the grocery store? Or money pledged when a friend or relative participated in a charity walk? Or money given through online platforms using digital currencies?

### Growth Indicators

- **Noncash Asset Donations**
  - Noncash contributions, including digital currencies, totaled $49 billion, or 25 percent of all charitable contributions, in 2015 (IRS SOA).

- **Levels of Giving**
  - The median donor retention rate remained at 43 percent in 2015 (APF/Fundraising Effectiveness Project).

- **Participation in Charitable Organizations**
  - Approximately 51 percent of Americans reported giving to a charitable or religious organization in 2014 (Current Population Survey).

### Political Giving

- **Forms of Giving to Watch for Potential Growth**
  - In 2016, 5.8 percent of contributors went to political organizations, reflecting increased giving over the past three presidential campaigns (MasterCard Center).

- **Remittance Giving**
  - In 2015, USC insights sent $1.35 billion to relatives in their home countries (World Bank).

- **Point-of-Sale Donations**
  - In 2014, major charity checkout campaigns raised more than $950 million (Engage for Good).

### Point-of-Interest Donations

- **Preferences for Buying versus Donating**
  - In 2016, 12 percent of survey respondents said they prefer to purchase socially responsible products rather than donate to charities, up from 18 percent in 2015 (Good Must Grow).

- **Preferences for Impact Investing**
  - Among the 25 percent of wealthy donors who do not participate in impact investing, 34 percent do so in place of some charitable giving (US Trust/A).