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## **Coloradans Are Generous, But Still Rank Low Nationally**

DENVER – Coloradans increased their charitable giving by 13 percent over the year before, reaching a record high of \$3.8 billion in charitable gifts according to *“THE STATE OF GIVING,”* a report issued today by the Colorado Nonprofit Association and sponsored by Mile High United Way.

Despite this high level of giving, Colorado donors rank low when compared to donors in other states. Coloradans rank 36<sup>th</sup> among the 50 states in the percent of income donated to charities, despite the fact that that state ranks 5<sup>th</sup> in income.

“While we are excited to see generosity in Colorado growing, we can only imagine how great our state could be if our donors gave just a little more,” said Charley Shimanski, president & CEO of the Colorado Nonprofit Association. “If Coloradans had given at the same rate as the average American – just two-tenths of one percent higher – charitable giving would have been \$243 million greater. That’s an increase nearly equal to the \$246 million in total foundation funding in the same period.”

Richard Audsley, interim president and chief operating officer of Mile High United Way, notes that this additional giving could go a long way toward addressing many of Colorado’s pressing health, human and social service needs. “It will take the collective generosity of all our citizens to help create long-term solutions for youth who are at risk for dropping out of high school and people who are working hard, but still can’t make ends meet,” says Audsley.

Audsley points out that the seven-county metro Denver region ranks last among the six regions in the study, giving an average of 3.3 percent of income to charity. The average American donates 3.6 percent.

The Association’s report highlights that those earning the least give the most – those with incomes less than \$50,000 actually give the highest percent of their income to charity – 5.2 percent – while those earning between \$75,000 and \$100,000 gave just 3 percent.

“In a state with small government, and a high number of nonprofits per capita, it is essential that donors dig deeper to support charities in our great state,” adds Susan France, Chair of the Colorado Nonprofit Association Board of Directors. “There are many unmet needs in our communities, and we all need to step up our giving to meet those growing needs.”

The report, which is based on 2005 tax data recently released by the Internal Revenue Service, shows that while Coloradans earn 6 percent more than the average American, they give 8 percent less in charitable contributions.

The Colorado Nonprofit Association produced the study to help it identify areas of strong and weak charitable giving in the state. The study is a first-ever analysis of charitable giving by residents of Colorado's regions, counties, cities, and towns.

**Other key findings from the report include:**

- This lackluster giving in Colorado is not new. Coloradans have donated 7 percent less than the national average over the last six years even though Colorado ranks 7th of the 50 states in the percent of tax returns that include deductions for charitable contributions.
- Donors with income greater than \$200,000 increased their average charitable contribution by \$2,054 over the year before – an increase of more than 9 percent.
- The Southwest, Central and Northwest regions of Colorado led the rest of the state in charitable giving, while the Northeast, Southeast and Denver regions fell far behind the national average.
- The seven-county Denver Metropolitan region gave at levels well below both the national and state averages, and finished last among all regions. Of the seven counties, donors in Denver County were the only ones to exceed the state and national average. Denver County donors gave a total of \$385 million in itemized contributions.
- It was the \$361 million in giving by El Paso County that propelled the Central region to be the most generous among regions with large cities.
- The small town of Manassa in Conejos County, population just over 1,000, led all cities and towns in Colorado. Donors there gave 9.7 percent of their income to charity, nearly three times that of the average Coloradan.
- Among the 60 largest cities and towns in Colorado, the most generous people were those who live on the United States Air Force Academy grounds.
- The resort communities of Vail, Aspen, Snowmass Village and Avon each placed among the top five in average contributions per donor. Vail donors were the most generous in the state, averaging \$15,674 in charitable gifts.

Copies of “The State of Giving” can be obtained by calling the Colorado Nonprofit Association at 303-832-5710, or by download from the Colorado Nonprofit Association web site, [www.ColoradoNonprofits.org](http://www.ColoradoNonprofits.org)

**ABOUT THE COLORADO NONPROFIT ASSOCIATION**

The Colorado Nonprofit Association is a statewide nonprofit membership coalition connecting nonprofits of all sizes, missions and geographic locations. The organization serves its 1,200 members by providing tools for communication, networking and administration. It also strengthens the nonprofit community through trainings, forums for discussion of current issues, and public advocacy on behalf of the nonprofit sector. To learn more about the Colorado Nonprofit Association, go to [www.ColoradoNonprofits.org](http://www.ColoradoNonprofits.org)

**ABOUT THE MILE HIGH UNITED WAY**

Mile High United Way maximizes the power of collective generosity by focusing on three related initiatives: School Readiness, Youth Success and Adult Self Sufficiency. Its mission is achieved when young children from low-income families are prepared to succeed when they begin school, at-risk youth graduate from high school, and individuals and families achieve financial stability and independence. To learn more about Mile High United Way, go to [www.unitedwaydenver.org](http://www.unitedwaydenver.org)

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