

## Inspiring Impactful Philanthropy

# Agenda & Presentation Links

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COMMUNITY  
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# AKRON COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

ENRICHING LIVES SINCE 1955





**John Garofalo**  
*Vice President,  
Community Investment*  
Akron Community Foundation





Fissinger  
Fundraising



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# Inspiring Impactful Philanthropy

Akron Community Foundation  
Nonprofit Insight Conference

March 13, 2025 | Presenter: Peter Fissinger



FissingerFundraising.com



“To give away money is an easy matter, and in anyone’s power. But to decide to who to give it, and how large and when, and for what purpose and how, is neither in everyone’s power – nor an easy matter. **Hence it is that such excellence is rare, praiseworthy and noble.”**

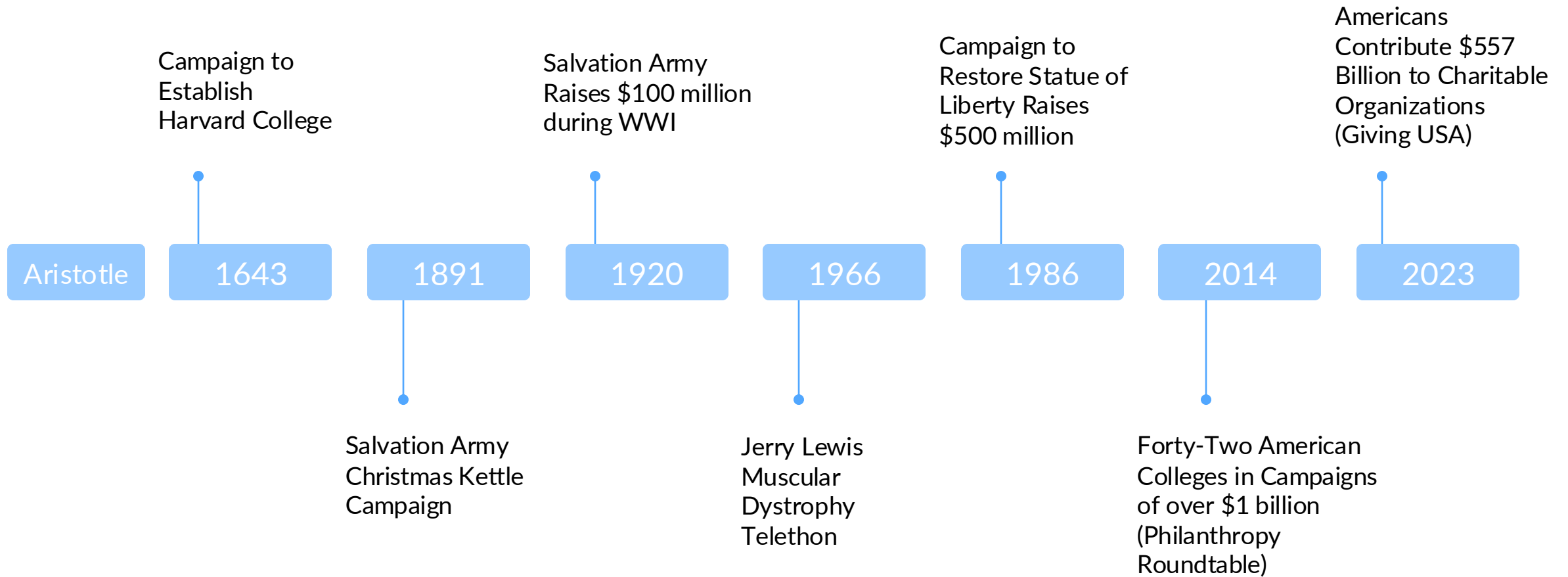
–Aristotle

#### Aristotle Also Believed:

- Generosity is a virtue
- Doing good for others is a joyous activity



# Generosity is Not New



# Also Not New:

People Seeking to Help  
Others, Make an Impact



Fundraising is about  
relationship building



Creating human connection



Convincing donors your organization  
is trustworthy and competent



Helping donors create change



# Successful fundraising may require – but at its core is not:

- Database management
- Wealth Screening
- Analytics/modeling
- Special Events
- Other (*you name it*)

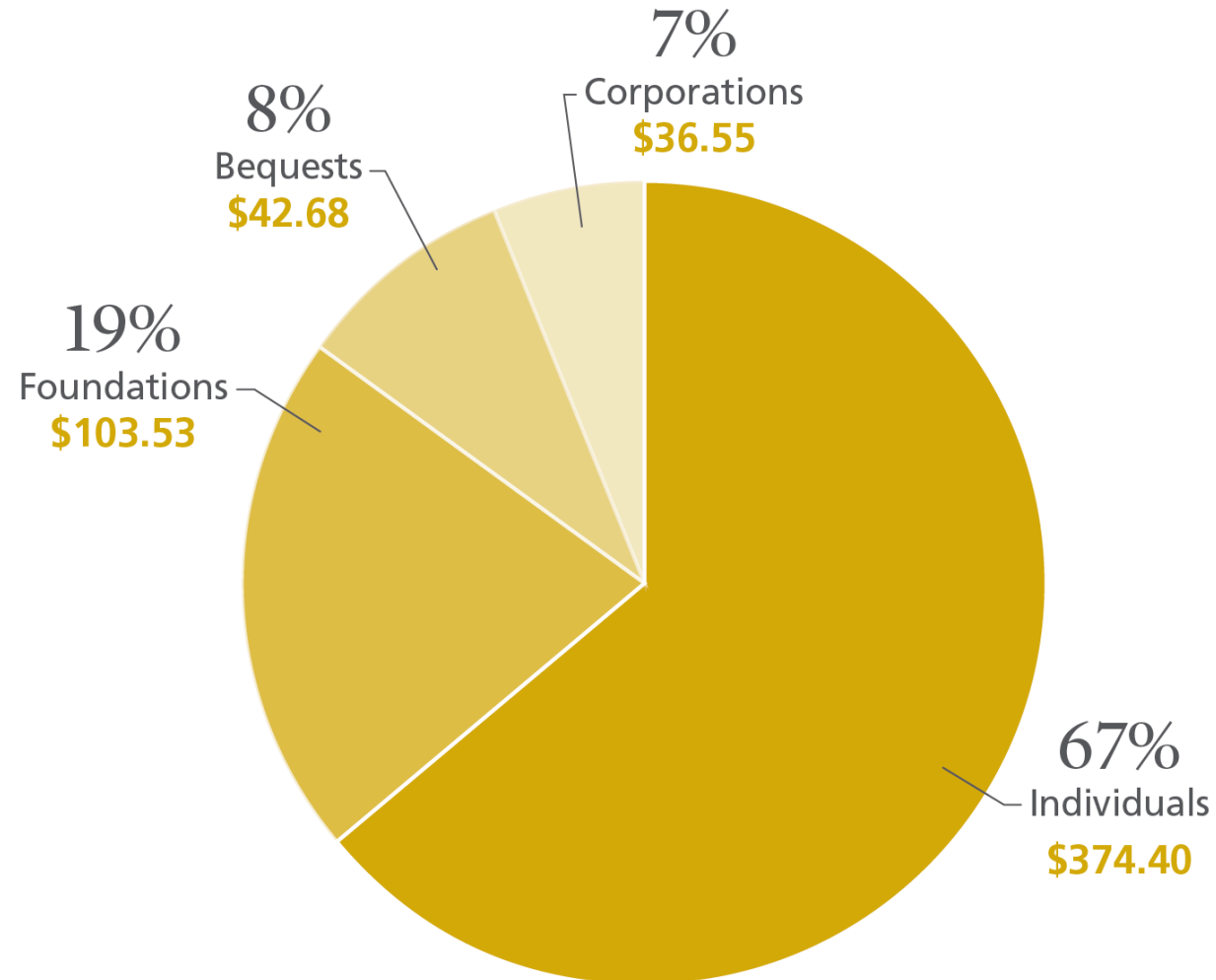
Successful fundraising is about making a meaningful connection with donors and helping them accomplish something important to them.





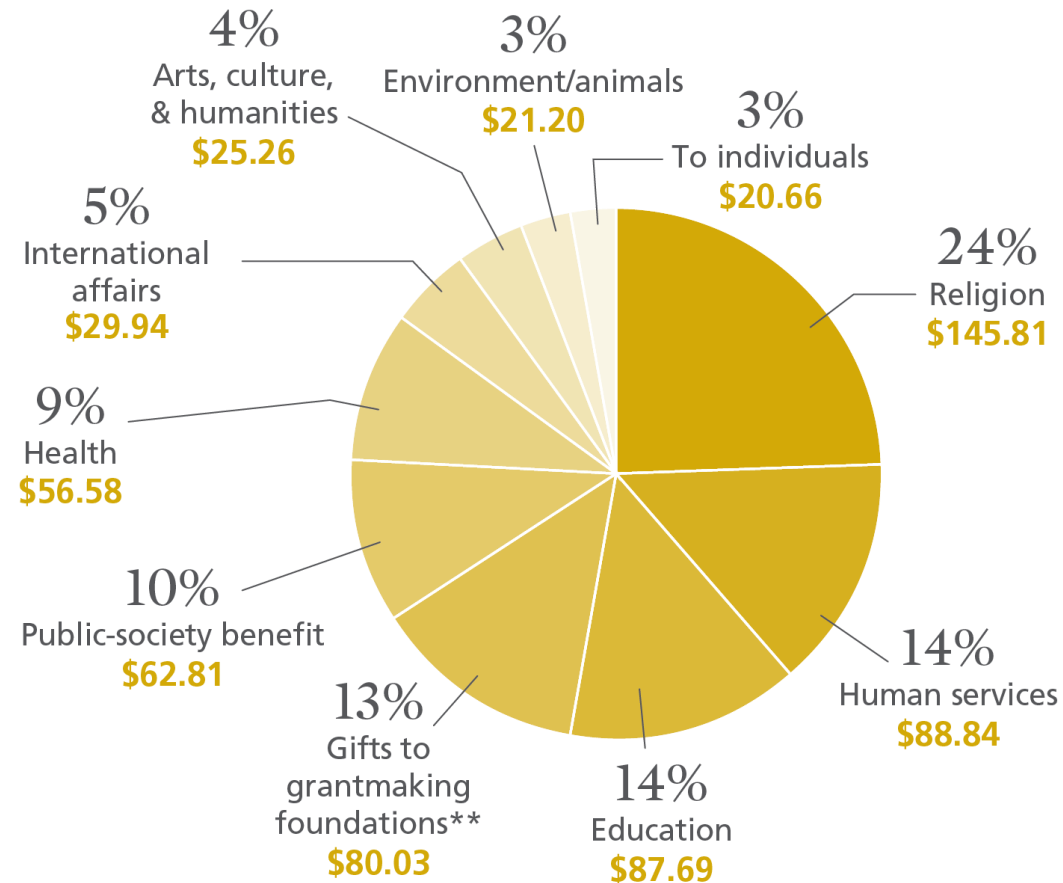
# 2023 contributions: \$557.16 billion by source of contributions

(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)



# 2023 contributions: \$557.16 billion by type of recipient organization\*

(in billions for dollars – all figures are rounded)



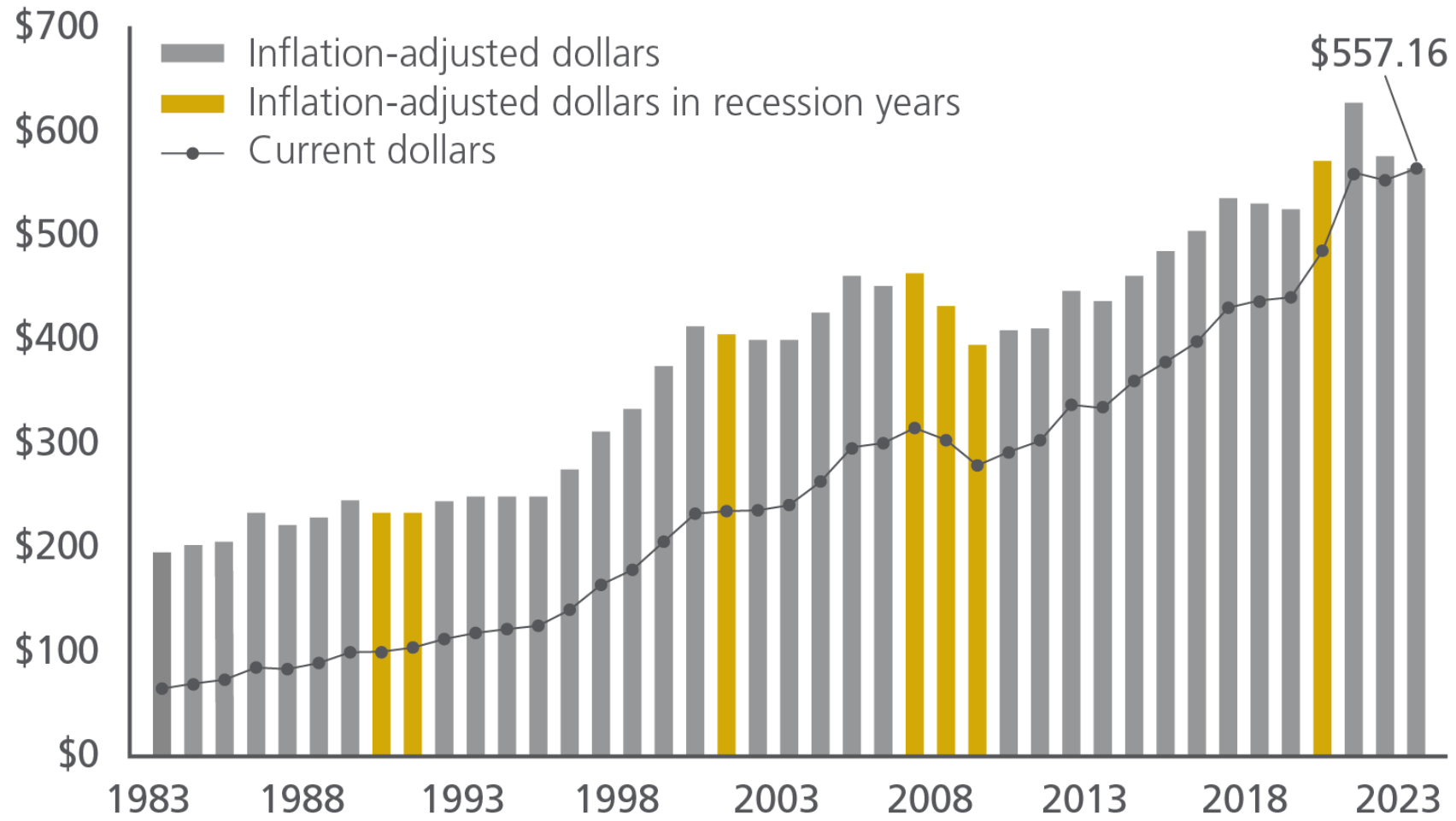
\* Total includes unallocated giving, defined as the difference between giving by source and recipient categories. Unallocated giving totaled -\$61.66 billion in 2023.

\*\* Estimates developed by Indiana University Lilly Family School of Philanthropy using data provided by Candid.



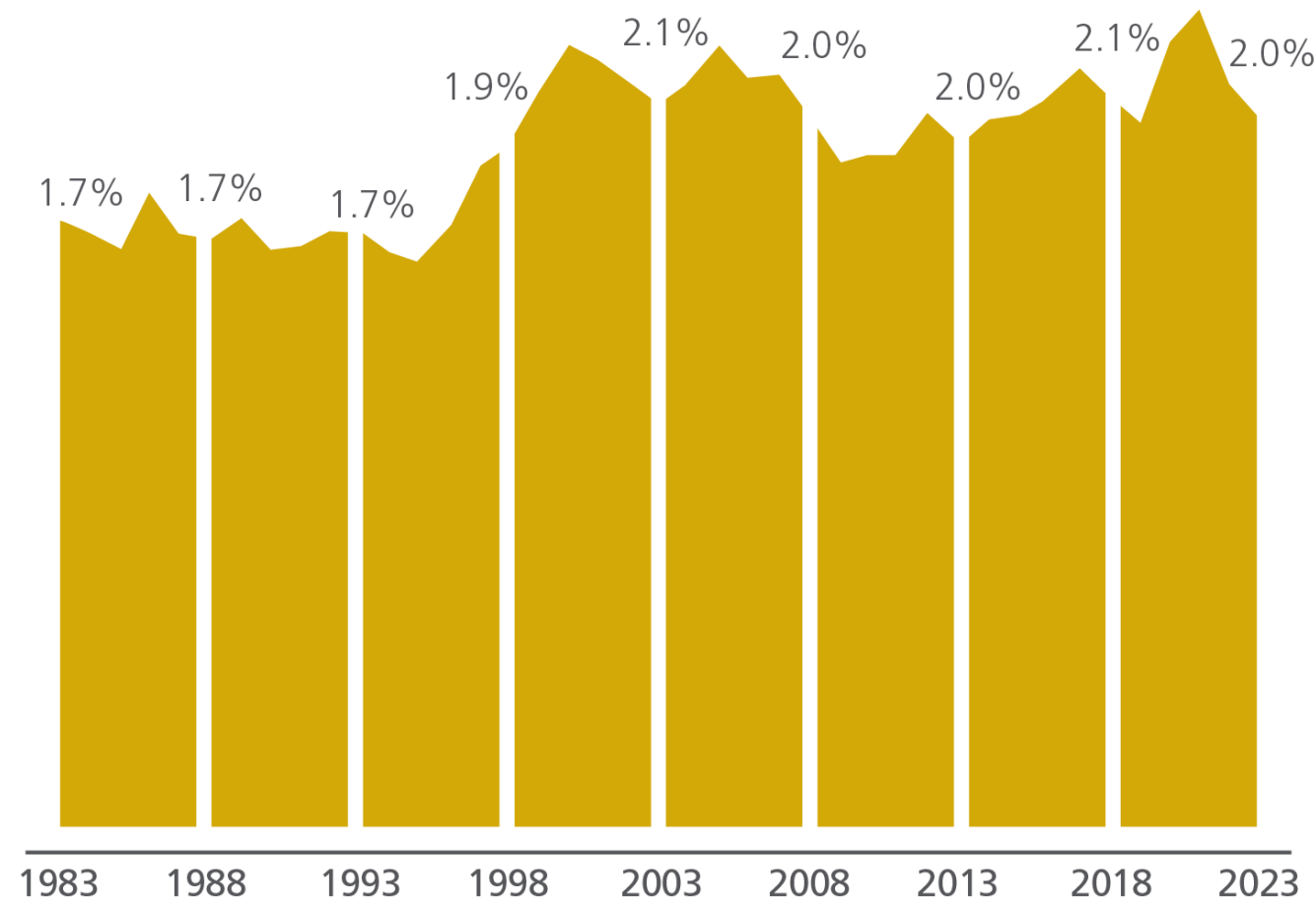
# Total giving, 1983–2023

(in billions of dollars)



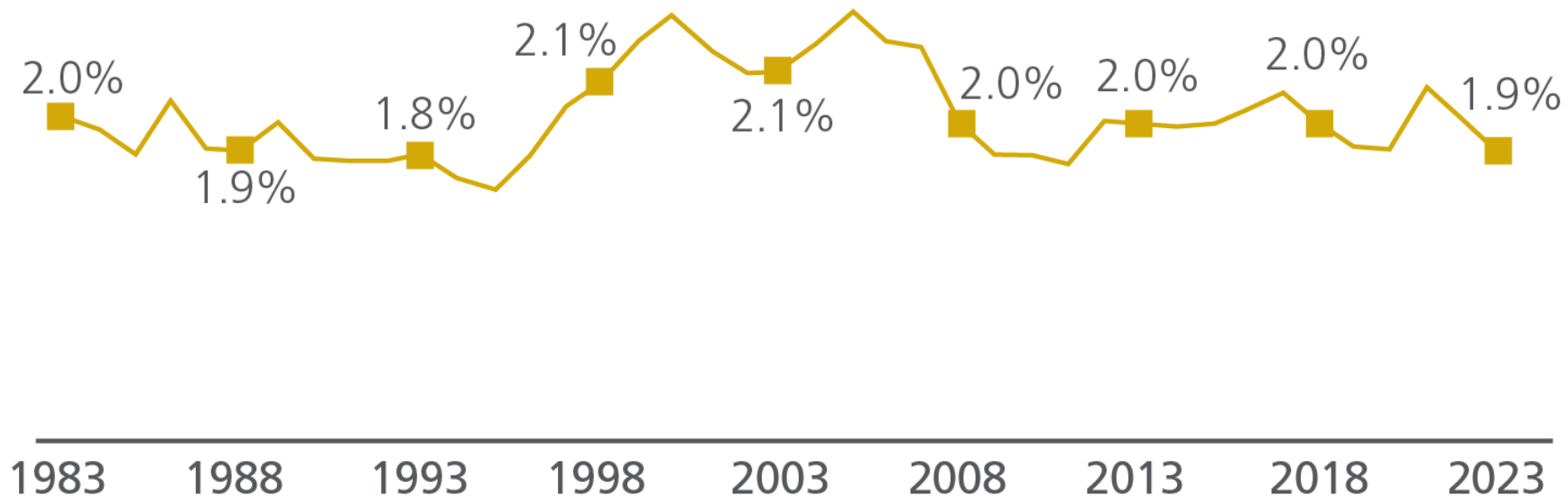
# Total giving as a percentage of Gross Domestic Product, 1983–2023

(in current dollars)



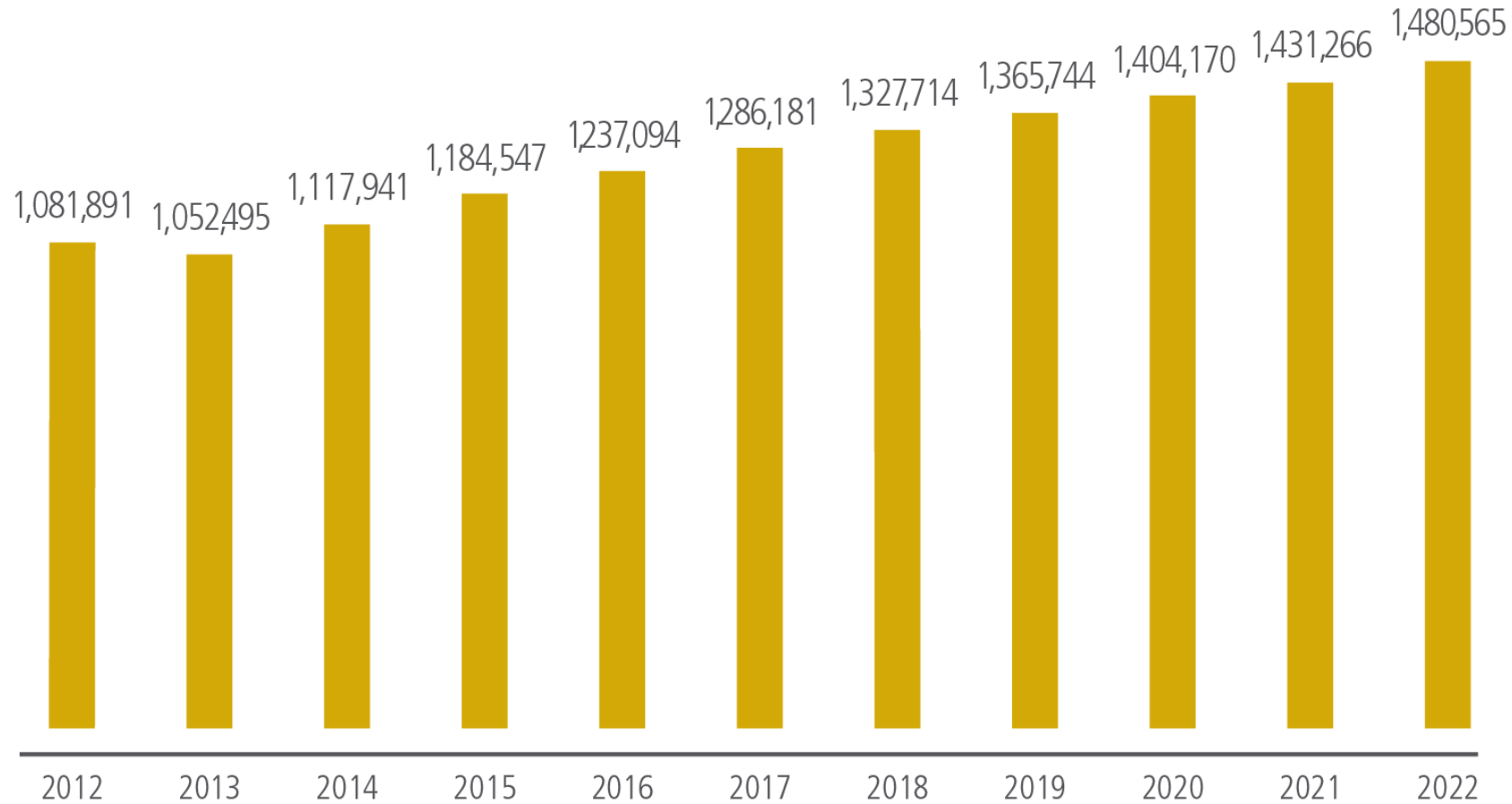
# Individual giving as a share of disposable personal income, 1983–2023

(in current dollars)





# The number of 501(c)(3) organizations, 2012–2022



# Results from Generosity Commission

- Commission was created in 2021 to look at emerging trends of giving
- Research commissioned, comprehensive outreach overseen by national communications firm, report issued in Fall 2024



# Key Findings

- While giving and volunteering continues to increase in the aggregate, the number of people giving and volunteering is dropping
  - In giving, this trend is known as “dollars up, donors down”
  - 20 million households dropped out of giving between 2010-2016
  - Households participating in giving in 2008 was 65.4%
  - Households participating in giving in 2018 was 49.6%
- Volunteerism hit 15 year low of 24.9% in 2015
  - Generosity Commission speculates these trends indicate a rise in social isolation and decline in social trust
  - Giving is known to deepen social connection
  - Giving increases likelihood one will join a community group by 10%
  - Volunteering increases likelihood of joining a community group by 24.4%



# How to Inspire Impactful Philanthropy in Today's World



# Build Your Audience

- Email list
- Social media
- Community building events
- Engage volunteers



FissingerFundraising.com





# Create a Culture Focused on Positivity, Impact and Accountability

- Case messaging
- CEO messaging
- Staff messaging to all those with whom they interact
- All interactions with those whom your institution serves
- Positioning in the community



# Execute a Comprehensive Annual Giving Program

- Multi channel
- Use database to personalize
- Convey passion and impact
- Create giving clubs/societies
- Focus on retention and upgrading
- Identify major donor prospect list



# Meet with Major Donor Prospects in Person – Ask Them to Step Up



# Art of the Ask



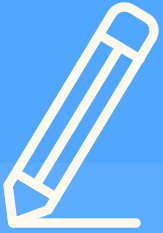


# Introduction

When considering how to ask someone for a major gift, it is important to understand there is no one right way. Because we are building authentic relationships, we must account for our own styles and the unique individual we are approaching for a gift. However, there are key fundamentals and best practices to be learned and used when asking people to consider a major gift to your non-profit organization . This section covers these key fundamentals.







# Planning & Preparation





# Planning & Preparation

Remember the definition of a major gift: requesting a gift that is far more than what the donor may consider as their annual gift. So this request is significant, and should be treated as such

## Consider the donor prospect as an individual:

- Who are they?
- What do we know about why they have supported us ?
- What is their family situation?
- What are their known philanthropic interests?
- Who in our organization knows them best?
- What do we plan to ask the donor to consider?

# Create a written meeting strategy:

## Information about the donor prospect:

- Name, address, etc.
- Professional information
- Giving history to your institution and other institutions (if available)
- Family background
- Summary of past conversations with the individual
- Key contacts at your institution
- Any other available information of import

## Purpose of the meeting

What we are soliciting the person for?

- Specific initiative (if known)
- Amount
- Other (recognition offered, future stewardship, etc.)

## Who will attend the meeting

If more than one attendee from your institution, the role each person will play

- Who will lead
  - Who will solicit
  - Other
- 
- **Review the strategy with those attending the meeting and achieve alignment on strategy**





# Setting the Appointment





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Remember the definition of a major gift: requesting a gift that is far more than what the donor may consider as their annual gift. So this request is significant, and should be treated as such

## 1 | The import of scheduling meetings is often overlooked

- We want 45-60 minutes of the donor prospect's time
- We want it to be somewhere private
- We want to talk about (your institution) and its future

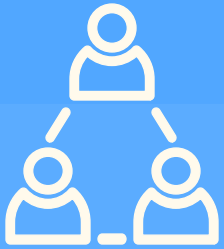
## 2 | Request meeting via phone or e-mail

- Do not solicit over the phone
- Remember the "one favor" rule

## 3 | Confirm the meeting one day in advance







# The *Meeting*



(5 minutes)

# The Opening

- 1 | Thank the individual for their time
- 2 | Let them know what you wish to discuss
  - Your institution
  - Plans for the future
  - How they may help and be involved



(15 minutes)

# Engaging the Individual in Conversation

- 1| We want the individual to share their involvement with your institution and other generosity they have shown
- 2| We do not want to do all the talking in this meeting; this is a dialogue
- 3| Listening is critical (whenever asking a question, be sure to stop talking)
- 4| Ask open ended questions
  - Tell me how you became involved with us
  - What do you most appreciate about the work we are doing?
  - What would you like to see us do in the future?
- 5| Ask close ended questions
  - So you are saying we are important to you because..... ?
  - So you are telling us that ..... is something you value?
  - So you believe.....?



(5–10 minutes)

# Presentation of the Case

- 1| Based on the conversation and the meeting strategy, present the case for supporting your organization
- 2| Strong solicitors know the case well and can adapt their presentation based on what the individual shares in the meeting
- 3| Make the case, using institutional case language and focusing on the aspect of you institution you want them to consider supporting
- 4| Ask questions
  - Address questions/objections
    - Inform
    - Reflect
    - Deflect



# The Ask

- 1 | **Have a prepared sentence or two (this makes it easier):**

“I/we want to invite you to join us in investing in (your institution) by considering a gift of \_\_\_\_\_ to support \_\_\_\_\_.”

- 2 | **Stop talking and listen for response**



# The Ask

## If Yes

- Thank them
- Ask about pledge card, how they would like to fulfill the pledge
- Meeting is essentially over
- Report back to advancement:
  - Next steps (get pledge card signed, etc.)
  - Meeting debrief and call report
  - Acknowledgement
- Thank you note from those attending the meeting (separate from acknowledgement)

## If No

- Thank the individual for their consideration and any/all support they have offered
- Try to understand why they are not saying yes right now
  - Timing
  - Interest
  - Other
- Ask how you might keep them engaged
- Thank you notes

## If “I Need to Think About it”

- Say “I understand”
- What does the individual need to make a decision
  - More information?
  - Discuss with family, advisors, others?
  - Time to reflect?
- Agree on next steps
  - More information to be provided, questions answered
  - Meet again?
  - Can we set a date?





# Concluding Remarks



Always thank individuals for their time and consideration



Always follow through quickly and thoroughly



Many gifts will come from an initial “No” when following best practices. Every meeting is cultivation and learning. Face to face meetings are always valuable



# Wrap-up Discussion

What parts of this presentation resonated with you?

What questions do you have?

Can you describe an especially compelling experience you have had either soliciting a major gift or being solicited for a major gift?

What more preparation do you need before starting a face-to face solicitation program?





# Fissinger Fundraising

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# Afternoon Breakout Sessions

## **Session A**

Conference Room A  
(Lower Level)



**Amy Wong**

Dot Org Solutions  
*Ten Ways to use AI other  
than writing copy*

## **Session B**

Board Room  
(Lower Level)



**Brandyn Neal**

Schauer Group (with Taylor  
Schauer, Schauer Group)  
*Volunteers & Vulnerable  
Populations*

## **Session C**

Ballroom  
(Main Level)



**Becky Wolfe**

Becky Wolfe Consulting  
*Leading through Influence:  
Discovering Your Voice  
and Impact*

## **Session D**

Conference Room B  
(Lower Level)

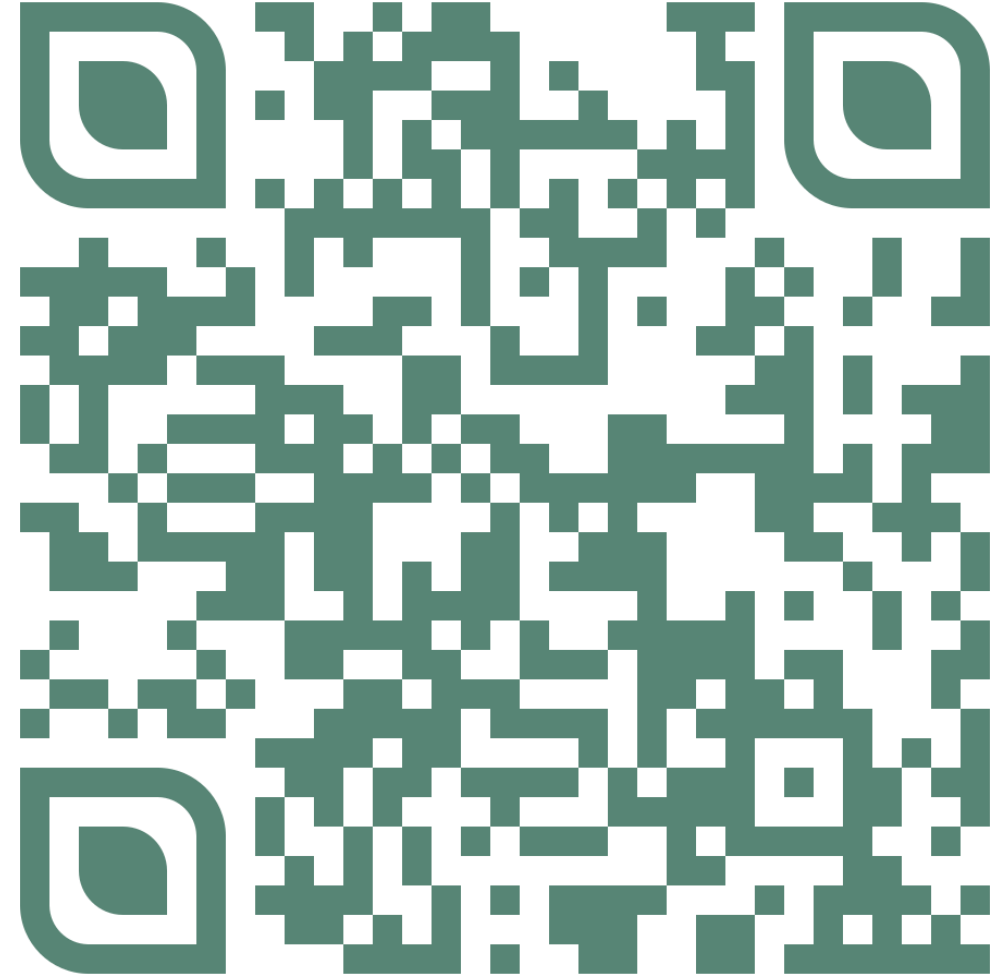


**Laura Lederer**

Akron Community  
Foundation (with Cathy  
Kemp, Akron Community  
Foundation)  
*Donor Advised Funds 2.0-  
Strategies for Nonprofit  
Success*

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