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Growth of Community-Based Giving Days in the United States: The Landscape and Effects

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Keywords: *Giving days, online giving, community foundation, philanthropy, fundraising*

Introduction

Over the past few decades, philanthropic giving online has steadily grown in the United States: In 2017, it grew by 12.1 percent compared to the previous year (Blackbaud Institute for Philanthropic Impact, 2018). This phenomenal growth of online fundraising has contributed to the success of online and social media campaigns globally, including the Ice Bucket Challenge, which went viral in the summer of 2014 and led to the donation of $220 million within a few weeks toward research into amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (also known as Lou Gehrig's disease). Online giving also has given rise to 24-hour fundraising campaigns, known as "giving days." One of those efforts, #GivingTuesday, raised over $168 million in charitable donations worldwide in 2016, an increase of 44 percent over 2015 (Jones, 2016).

Although there are exceptions in practice to this general definition, giving days are place-based fundraising efforts that span 24 hours and are characterized by an online component and a gamification component (Giving USA, 2014; Third Plateau, n.d.). Such giving days may or may not run in conjunction with #GivingTuesday, which is defined by its organizers as being global in scope (Giving USA, 2014). The majority of giving days, however, focus on a specific city, region, or state. Bhati, Humphries Brown, and Eikenberry (2015) found an increase in such days between 2009 and 2014, growing from zero to nearly 60. Bingle (2017), using data from the DeKalb County Community Foundation, recently found that giving days supplement foundation donations and also serve as an event for philanthropic engagement among donors. Despite the increasing prevalence of giving days, little empirical research exists into the landscape of giving days within the United States, how this landscape has changed, and the extent to which such efforts actually lead to more giving at local levels.

Key Points

- Over the past decade, local and regional community foundations across the United States have adopted "giving days" as a means to build awareness, bolster community pride, and raise money for local nonprofit organizations. Despite the increasing prevalence of giving days, little scholarly research has empirically examined this phenomenon and its impact, particularly at the local and regional levels.
- To address these gaps, this article shares the findings of a study that examined similarities and differences across communities' giving days and sought to evaluate the extent to which those days led to more giving at the community level.
- While the study found that aggregate amounts raised through giving days are increasing, the median amount raised has dropped substantially and the range is widening. Still, there was substantial growth from 2009 through 2016 in the number of giving days in the U.S., raising over $1 billion across counties, cities, and states and thereby growing philanthropy within communities.

[T]here is growing evidence that giving days may help increase a donor base and that community foundations are often organizers of such days. But findings also suggest extra care should be taken when deciding to organize a giving day, because not all events are likely to raise large amounts of money.

The primary scholarly work done on giving days is a report on #GivingTuesday, which found the event had a positive impact on the charitable landscape in a broad, nonlocal sense through an increase in the number of donations given, the amounts raised, and the number of nonprofits participating (Giving USA, 2014). Beyond this, there is relatively little scholarly literature on giving days. Nonetheless, a significant amount of gray literature, in the form of evaluation reports and similar documents, provides information on how much money has been raised by community foundations that have organized giving days and how many donations have come from individual donors (e.g., Community First Foundation, 2011–2015; Bhati et al., 2015; Community Foundation, 2014; Idaho Nonprofit Center, n.d.)

This article offers a meta-analysis of the large amount of existing gray literature — defined by Alberani, Pietrangeli, and Mazza (1990) as "non-conventional literature" — to map the landscape of giving days within the U.S., describe how this landscape has changed, and quantify amounts raised. In its goals, the study is similar to work funded by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation (i.e., Third Plateau, n.d.), although it adopts a different methodological approach and assesses the full range of giving days in the U.S. since 2009, as opposed to a bounded set. Findings examine the number and type of communities that have adopted giving days, and how this has changed; the number of donors that have participated in giving days and the amount raised through place-based giving days, and how these numbers have changed at the aggregate level and the community level; and the number of nonprofit organizations participating in place-based giving days, at the aggregate level and the community level. In short, the questions are: What does the landscape of giving days look like at the national level and how has it changed? How many places? How many donors? How many dollars? And, how many nonprofits?

The remainder of this article provides a literature review, a data and methodology section, results, and discussion. Among its key findings are that while aggregate amounts raised through giving days are increasing, the median amount raised has dropped substantially and the range in amounts is widening. The data on amounts raised and the number of unique donors also suggest a landscape in which there are increasingly more "little" giving days at the same time there are more "big" giving days.

These findings have implications both for researchers and practitioners. For researchers, additional work is needed to better understand how "little" giving days compare to "big" giving days, and what factors contribute to any variations. The findings of this study are particularly important to fundraisers and community foundations; there is growing evidence that giving days may help increase a donor base and that community foundations are often organizers of such days. But findings also suggest extra care should be taken when deciding to organize a giving day, because not all events are likely to raise large amounts of money.

Literature Review

This article is an initial exploration, primarily quantitative and descriptive in nature, to assess where place-based giving days are and their patterns. The literature on giving days has broadened and deepened in the past decade, focusing primarily on the technology involved,

secondarily on their implications for nonprofits and their staff, and tertiarily on potential donors and the communities they inhabit. There are also several evaluations and reports on specific place-based giving days.

One example is Colorado Gives Day, first held in 2010. The Community First Foundation (CFF) was the creator of Colorado Gives Day and continues to be the primary organizer. Its goal is "to increase philanthropy in Colorado through online giving" (CFF, 2011, p. 1). The CFF provides training and education to participating nonprofits as part of its "nonprofit toolkit," which includes key dates and deadlines; marketing resources, such as press release templates and an event logo; and links to webinars featuring nonprofit case studies and explaining possible strategies to be used in association with Colorado Gives Day. Donor contributions are submitted via an online platform, available year-round and managed by the CFF; it involves a 2 percent third-party processing fee. Colorado Gives Day includes several incentives to motivate donor participation, including a fund that boosts the amount of money participating nonprofits receive and a number of contests and drawings, which require a $10 donation to participate. The CFF has published a report after each giving day with general information about the participating nonprofits, how much money the organizations raised, and data about the donors themselves (e.g., where they live). Similarly, another giving day — Omaha Gives — raised over $7.3 million, with over 50,000 donations from 18,548 donors, in 2018. The event, which has occurred annually over six years, has raised a total of $42 million (Bauman, 2018). Like other giving days such as Colorado Gives, Omaha Gives is also online with a minimum donation of $10 and no limit to the maximum amount. The event is conducted on the third Wednesday in May and donors can give to as many local nonprofits as they like and follow the progress of their favorite on the leaderboard throughout the day.

The growth of giving days can be attributed to the increase in both online giving and donors' comfort with the use of the relevant technology. It was less than a decade ago that the executive director of the Pittsburgh Foundation remarked about giving days, "We are at the beginning of a very large national experiment that wouldn't have been possible without the technology available now" (West, 2011, p. 16). The risks inherent in such a technology-dependent event became fully evident when an online giving platform servicing 50 community foundations across the country failed to operate as expected during Give Local America 2016 (Creedon & McCambridge, 2016; Nimishakavi, 2016). The failure also highlighted the extent to which the technology provider — Kimbia — at the time held "a near monopoly" on the event (Creedon & McCambridge, para. 3).

[T]he literature suggests that giving days may build the capacity of nonprofit professionals to use technology for fundraising: Such events provide an opportunity "to teach nonprofit leaders about online giving," and experience new ways of "publicizing their causes."

For community foundations and participating nonprofits, the literature suggests that giving days may build the capacity of nonprofit professionals to use technology for fundraising: Such events provide an opportunity "to teach nonprofit leaders about online giving" (West, 2011, p. 16), and experience new ways of "publicizing their causes" (Hall, 2015, p. 22). Development staff also learn what works when it comes to raising money on giving days specifically, such as publicizing a target number of donors rather than a dollar goal (Arnett, 2015, p. 12). Still, nonprofits that are already familiar with how to use technology may be in the best position to use giving days to their advantage. Specifically,

Research shows that there are often new tensions that accompany this new philanthropy. One of those is between promoting philanthropy and raising funds: the extent to which efforts are focused on educating existing and potential donors and creating a new concept of philanthropy, versus simply raising money.

a study of the Omaha Gives giving day found that nonprofits' increased use of social media is positively related to the amount they raise and contributes to the growth of giving days (Bhati & McDonnell, 2019).

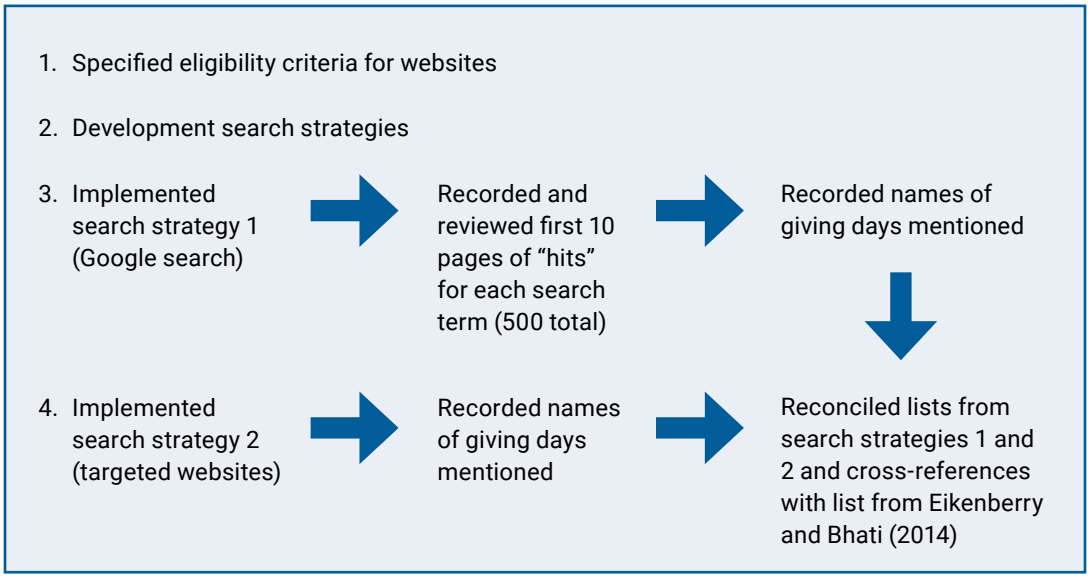
Giving days have the potential to increase awareness and influence behavior of individuals — both donors and potential donors. They have been seen as particularly appealing to younger donors (West, 2011), and place-based giving days on behalf of colleges and universities specifically are about "connecting the community, the alumni, to stories happening in the school" (Arnett, 2015, p. 13). What is unclear, however, is whether first-time donors to a giving day will go on to become regular donors (Malcolm, 2016).

The concept of a time-limited, "blitz" fundraising campaign dates back nearly 100 years (Zunz, 2012). Yet giving days are arguably a feature of "the new philanthropy," as are technological innovation and "collaboration across groups and sectors, more hands-on direct modes of giving and volunteering, and a focus on small organizations, issues, and grassroots problem solving" (Eikenberry, 2005, p. 141). Research shows that there are often new tensions that accompany this new philanthropy. One of those is between promoting philanthropy and raising funds: the extent to which efforts are focused on educating existing and potential donors and creating a new concept of philanthropy, versus simply raising money (Eikenberry).

A sense of excitement — or, as Malcolm terms it, "hoopla" (2016, para. 5) — is also implied in contemporary giving days (and their historical antecedents). With giving days, organizers achieve this through a "gamification" element: a contest structure rewards participants for behavior that cultivates the most donors or draws the highest number of donations in a certain time period. In Omaha Gives 2014, for example, participation prizes were given in three categories to nonprofits (based on the size of their annual operating budget) and to organizations receiving the highest number of unique donors. In addition, a $1,000 prize went to an organization each hour throughout the day by randomly selecting a donation made during that hour. A report on Give to the Max Day, in Washington, D.C., noted that "[g]amification added a level of excitement to a contest that is not typically present with a traditional match. Nonprofits felt a sense of competition and motivation to win awards, small and large, which in turn increased giving" (Livingston, 2012, p. 8).

While much is known about some specific giving days, questions remain about how these events fit into a larger landscape of giving days and how they compare in terms of amounts raised and the number of donors and participating nonprofits. These are questions that an examination of the landscape of place-based giving days in the U.S. might help answer. This article also steps outside the existing literature's focus on technology to examine whether there are patterns in other aspects of these giving days: What is the variation in the amounts raised across events and across time, and why? In terms of dollars raised, what are reasonable expectations? And, more philosophically, what do the data say about how giving days create a new concept of philanthropy as opposed to simply raising money?

FIGURE 1 Giving Days List: Development Process



Data and Methodology

This study offers a meta-analysis of a large amount of gray literature to map the landscape of giving days within the United States and describe how this landscape has changed. Meta-analysis is "a systematic, quantitative, replicable process for synthesizing numerous and sometimes conflicting results" (Ringquist, 2013, p. 3). In recent decades the health care field has been the primary proponent of this technique, but it has also been used by social scientists, including those in the field of nonprofit studies (e.g., Lu, 2016).

Given the technique's roots in health care, the methodology for the study discussed in this article generally follows the protocol for conducting the meta-analytic studies set forth by the Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses (PRISMA, [Moher, Liberati, Tetzlaff, Altman, & PRISMA Group, 2009]). Included in the protocol is a 27-item checklist that provides guidance on the development and reporting of studies whose content include a systematic review and/or meta-analysis. Moher et al. distinguish systematic reviews from meta-analyses based on the use of statistical methods:

> A systematic review is a review of a clearly formulated question that uses systematic and explicit methods to collect and analyze data from the studies that are included in the review. Statistical methods (meta-analyses) may or may not be used to analyze and summarize the results of the included studies. Meta-analysis refers to the use of statistical techniques in a systematic review to integrate the results of included studies. (2009, p. 1)

The meta-analysis was conducted in two parts. In Part One, a list of all giving days in the United States was developed. In Part Two, searches were conducted to identify four basic data points: geography, amounts raised, number of participating nonprofits, and the number of unique donors. (See Figure 1.)

Part One

In the first stage of Part One, criteria were developed that specified what gray literature would be included. Given what the literature suggests is a relative lack of publicly available formal studies and evaluation reports and the considerable selection bias that would result, a systematic review following the technique suggested by Ringquist (2013) included an extensive search for gray literature from print and electronic sources. Eligibility criteria were established to include or

TABLE 1 Gray Literature Review Eligibility Criteria

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Available in English	Unavailable in English
Specifies a geographic location	Does not specify a geographic location
Geographic location specified is in a United States state, district, or territory (for a list, see https://usa.usembassy.de/travel-states.htm)	Specified location is a place other than a United States state, district, or territory (for a list, see https://usa.usembassy.de/travel-states.htm)
Specifies that the event incorporated an online component, although the details of the online component do not need to be included	Does not make mention of any online component
Uses terms "giving day" or "day of giving"	
Documents publicly available in print as a website, an electronic report available for download, or a thesis or dissertation	Documents not available to the public, such as emails or other personal communication; information not available in printed form (e.g., videos, verbal communication)
Date of publication is Jan. 1, 2013 or later	Date of publication is prior to Jan. 1, 2013

exclude a source for further review. (See Table 1.) Information sources and search strategies were compiled to identify the set of giving days. (See Table 2.)

In the second stage of Part One, researchers recorded and reviewed the first 10 pages of "hits" for each search term, and included or excluded those hits according to the initial eligibility criteria. For included sources, we recorded the names of giving days mentioned and maintained a list of observations if patterns seemed to be emerging around types of websites that were consistently picked up by the search strategy and then screened out based on eligibility criteria. This process was used to create a list of giving days and identify any initial information about the relevant geography. If a giving day and its relevant geography were listed earlier, they were not relisted for subsequent hits; we added only new information as the list was developed.

Following the second search strategy, we generated a separate list of place-based giving days by reviewing reports found through searches of targeted websites and sources containing known lists. Finally, lists from the two search strategies were reconciled and cross-referenced with the list developed by Eikenberry and Bhati (2014). We then proceeded to Part Two, during which data on specific giving days were collected and a data set was developed. (See Table 3.) If additional giving days were identified during this process, each was added to the list and noted as a "late add."

Part Two

As the search progressed, researchers attempted to identify the year that a giving day was launched, and then searched for the giving day alongside a specific year reference. The search strategies were further adjusted so that specific searches were done for annual reports, when the data provided clues to what organization was the event organizer, and for documents in the PDF format, in which annual reports, evaluation reports, and newsletters containing some or all of the data points sought are often published. Given that some sources, such as press releases and news articles, tended to provide a rounded number rather than an exact count, we annotated fields while building the data set to note whether the amount was an exact or rounded figure.

TABLE 2 Information Sources and Search Strategies, Part One

Database/Source	Search Strategy
Google: "All results" – first 10 pages, representing 500 results screened	1. giving AND day AND 2017 2. giving AND day AND 2016 3. giving AND day AND 2015 4. giving AND day AND 2014 5. giving AND day AND 2013

Note: This table describes the original search strategy. Researchers modified this strategy to exclude "hits" related to giving days for educational institutions, many of which were included in the original search strategy. The modified search strategy, applied for all years, was the above plus "-site:.edu"

TABLE 3 Information Sources and Search Strategies, Part Two

Began with list of giving days and relevant geography:

1. Searched name of giving day - "all results" first 2 pages
2. Searched name of giving day AND report first 2 pages
3. Searched name of giving day AND results first 2 pages
4. Searched name of giving day AND evaluation first 2 pages

With the data set created, the data were then imported into PSPP statistical analysis software. Descriptive and summary statistics were calculated to map the landscape of giving days and how has it changed over time, with a focus on amounts raised and the number of participating nonprofits and individual donors.

List of Identified Giving Days: Limitations

One specific threat to the reliability of this study is the risk of bias due to an incomplete list of place-based giving days. To address this, the study followed a multiple-search strategy (a structured internet search as well as a search of targeted websites); triangulation of search results with existing lists of place-based giving days; and eligibility criteria that explicitly included gray literature. During Part Two, new names of giving days were added to the list; the process of identifying giving days, therefore, was sufficiently robust to address possible threats. That said, future work would benefit from what might best be described as "respondent validation" (Maxwell, 2012, p. 126) — asking potential organizers of such events (e.g., United Way, community foundations, national organizations such as the Council on Foundations) to verify the accuracy of presented data and ensure that no events are missed. Furthermore, the explicit definition of a search strategy should combat potential threats to the reliability of this study.

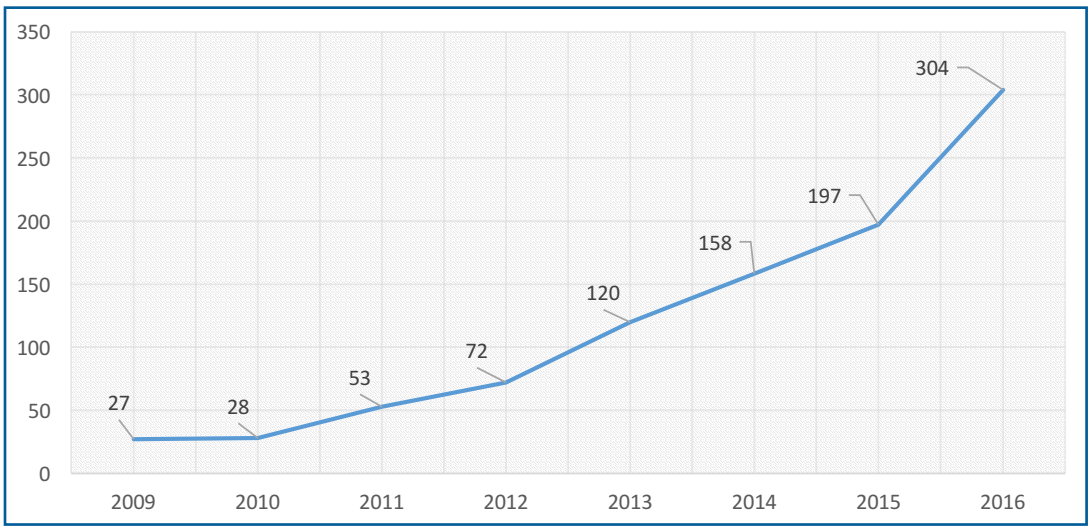
Data on Giving Days: Limitations

Another specific threat to the reliability of this study is the risk of bias due to failing to identify a complete data set in terms of amounts raised and the number of participating organizations and unique donors. To address this threat, this study followed a search strategy that incorporated explicit inclusion of gray literature — not only event websites, but also news articles, formal evaluation reports, annual reports, and newsletters. There arguably remain greater limitations in this area and questions as to whether missing data were not collected, as opposed to not reported. Also, the extent to which the study's findings can be generalized might be limited, since the data are based on secondary sources obtained via internet search. Using our database, we suggest future studies focus on collecting primary data for each community foundation to determine total amount raised, number of

TABLE 4 Giving Days by Location Type, 2009–2016

Location Type	Number (%)	Total Raised (per giving day)	Total Nonprofits Participating
Multicounty	48 (48%)	$457.1 million ($9.5 million)	36,932
County	23 (23%)	$242.5 million ($10.5 million)	11,734
State	15 (15%)	$301 million ($20 million)	35,473
City	14 (14%)	$56 million ($4 million)	6,843
Total	**100 (100%)**	**$1.05 billion**	**90,982**

FIGURE 2 Total Dollars Raised by Place-Based Giving Days (in Millions)



donors, and how giving days have impacted the community's funding landscape throughout the year (e.g., have new donors and new opportunities for giving been created, or have existing donors simply rescheduled their giving). Also, a more robust data set would result if technology providers such as Razoo and Kimbia were tapped to provide access to raw data.

Results

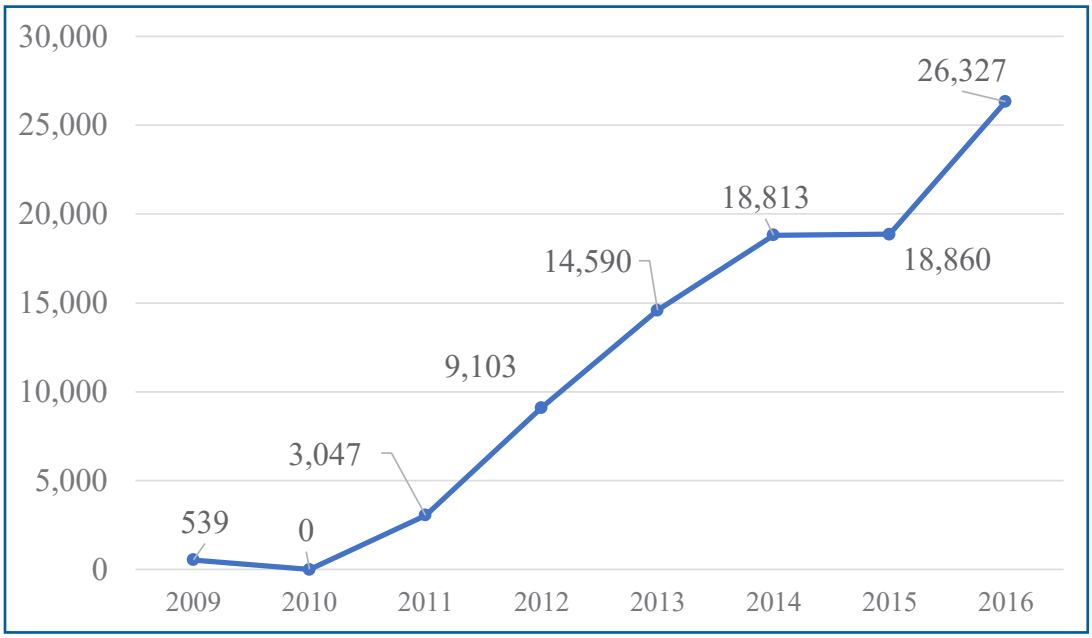
Analysis of the data set shows that from 2009 through 2016, 100 place-based giving days were held in the United States. The geographic scope of these giving days varies; some spanned entire states, others multiple counties, and still others focused on a specific city or county. (See Table 4.)

Over this eight-year period, these 100 place-based giving days raised a total of $1.05 billion for over 90,980 participating nonprofits (these numbers are inflated, as most of the organizations participated every year). Multicounty giving days raised the most money: 48 giving days raised over $457 million over the eight years. Statewide giving days followed, raising $301 million; single-county events raised $242.5 million and citywide giving days raised $56 million. But looking at average giving per giving day (total giving divided by total number of giving days in a particular location), statewide events raised the most per day ($20 million) and citywide giving days raised the least ($4 million) per event.

TABLE 5 Total Dollars Raised by Place-Based Giving Days

Year	Number of Giving Days	Mean (dollars)	Median (dollars)	Minimum (dollars)	Maximum (dollars)	Range (dollars)	Total (dollars)
2009	5	5,559,162	4,000,000	412,000	14,000,000	13,588,000	27,795,812
2010	6	4,798,674	4,150,000	630,000	10,000,000	9,370,000	28,792,047
2011	14	3,801,927	1,116,074	104,156	13,400,000	13,295,844	53,226,980
2012	20	3,635,002	1,250,000	75,000	16,391,905	16,316,905	72,700,050
2013	32	3,775,570	1,499,117	90,000	25,200,00	25,110,000	120,818,233
2014	56	2,836,537	951,556	39,863	26,300,000	26,260,137	158,846,098
2015	58	3,409,687	1,254,215	55,000	33,100,000	33,045,000	197,761,825
2016	70	4,345,322	1,496,488	34,262	37,347,237	37,312,975	304,172,517

FIGURE 3 Total Nonprofit Participants in Place-Based Giving Days



The total amount raised each year through giving days has grown alongside the increasing number of such events. The total raised in 2016 was more than 10 times that raised in 2009. (See Figure 2.) This is perhaps not surprising — the number of giving days also grew substantially over the same period, from five in 2009 to 70 in 2016. (Counts reflect giving days for which donation data were available.)

At the same time, the range in amounts raised has continued to widen. Since 2010, there have been more giving days that are smaller, in terms of amounts raised, as well as increasingly larger giving days taking place each year. (See Table 5.)

The data show a fairly steady increase in the cumulative number of nonprofit organizations participating in giving days. (See Figure 3.)

TABLE 6 Number of Nonprofit Organizations Participating in Giving Days

Year	Number of Giving Days	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Total
2009	1	539	539	539	539	539
2010	0	---	---	---	---	---
2011	8	380.88	209	36	932	3,047
2012	15	606.87	187	19	4,381	9,103
2013	27	540.37	287	21	4,437	14,590
2014	44	427.57	172	4	5,544	18,813
2015	50	377.2	288	30	2,022	18,860
2016	59	446.22	382	36	2,518	26,327

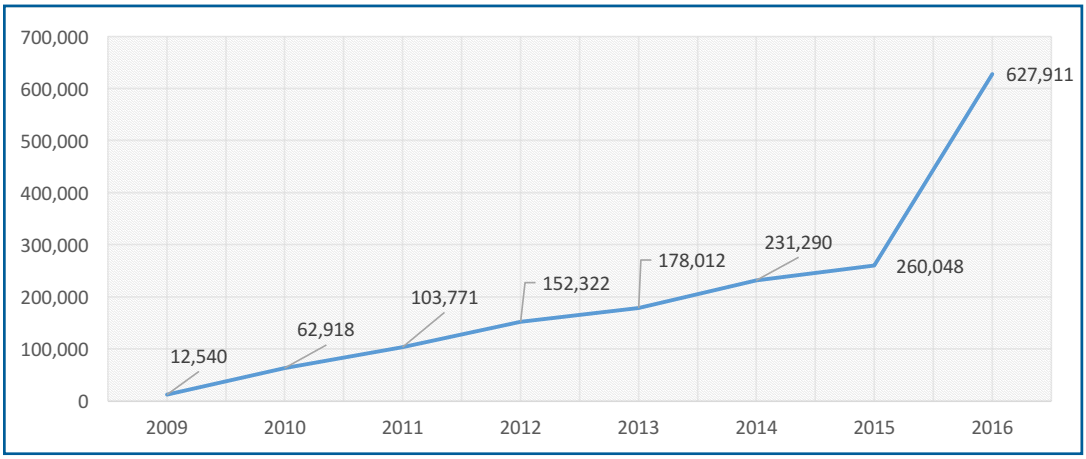
TABLE 7 Individual Donors to Place-Based Giving Days

Year	Number of Giving Days	Mean	Median	Minimum	Maximum	Total
2009	1	12,540.00	12,540	12,540	12,540	12,540
2010	3	20,972.67	12,540	7,778	42,600	62,918
2011	6	17,295.17	13,153	1,265	47,534	103,771
2012	12	12,693.50	5,712	48	53,000	152,322
2013	16	11,125.75	7,553	955	38,760	178,012
2014	28	8,260.36	5,010	828	43,979	231,290
2015	20	13,002.40	8,640	120	47,806	260,048
2016	44	14,270.70	7,777	507	81,890	627,911

Additionally, the minimum number of participating nonprofits has remained fairly steady, while the maximum number has seen greater fluctuation — peaking in 2014 and dipping in 2015 and 2016. (See Table 6.) It should be noted that counts reflect giving days for which data on the number of nonprofits participating were available; in 2010, while giving days did take place, the methodology used in this study did not identify any data on the number of participating organizations.

Lastly, the data show that the average number of donors fluctuated from year to year, and while the 2016 average is greater than that of the lone 2009 event for which there are donor data, it is not notably larger. The median number of donors is relatively stable and generally increases from 2012 forward, although this, too, fluctuates. Analysis shows a fairly steady increase in the number of donors, with the greatest year-to-year increase occurring between 2015 and 2016. (See Table 7.) The number of giving days is a count of events with available data on the number of unique donors. The number of donors rose from year to year for specific place-based giving days, from 12,540 in 2009 to 627,911 to 2016. (See Figure 4.)

FIGURE 4 Total Individuals Donating on Place-Based Giving Days



Discussion

When aggregated, data show that place-based giving days in the United States span multiple types of geographies. When considered as a unitary phenomenon, the total amounts raised through such events has increased year to year since 2009. The same pattern is present in the aggregate number of nonprofits and individual donors participating in place-based giving days: each year, the total number of participating organizations and the total number of unique donors nationwide increases.

However, the pattern toward "more" is not necessarily universal when the average amounts raised are considered. Data show less of a consistent upward trend, with a decreased average from 2009 to 2010, 2010 to 2011, 2011 to 2012, and 2013 to 2014. Only in more recent years — from 2012 to 2013, 2014 to 2015, and 2015 to 2016 — did average amounts raised increase. These amounts, however, still have not surpassed the average raised in 2009. The data suggest that a large part of this pattern may be an increase over time in the number of place-based giving days that raise smaller amounts, even if giving days of all sizes tend to improve, in terms of amounts raised, relative to their own prior year's performance. (See Figure 2.)

Although the quantity of data on the number of participating organizations and, especially, on the number of unique donors is more limited, they suggest that the average number of organizations per place-based giving days each year has been relatively constant, even as there continue to be fairly small and fairly large place-based giving days. As with the aggregate amounts raised, it is not surprising that the total number of nonprofits participating in such events has increased year to year since the number of giving days also increased. Although data on the number of unique donors are particularly limited relative to other types of data considered in this study, they also show an uptick in total unique donors year to year alongside an uptick in the number of events.

While the results of this study provide initial parameters around place-based giving days as a general phenomenon, which is how most of the literature outside of event-specific studies has framed such events, they also suggest that future work should systematically consider variations among giving days, including different types of giving days, and take into account contextual variables such as the physical size, population, and wealth of the area covered; who the organizers are; when, how, and what type of games and/or contests are used; when the event takes place (e.g., the time of year, whether the event coincides with #GivingTuesday); and when and how match funding is used.

This might suggest that donors active during giving days are more motivated to give at the local level than at the city level. At the same time, giving per event is highest for statewide giving days, suggesting that donors connect to improving conditions for state or county residents more than they do at the city level.

We also find that multicounty giving days are more popular by both number of events and total amount raised. For instance, 48 multicounty giving days have raised over $457 million, and the average amount raised per event is $9.5 million. Looking at single-county giving days, 23 events raised over $242.5 million over eight years. This finding is significant for community foundations, as it seems county and multicounty giving days are the most popular, but statewide giving days raise more money — $20 million — per event. But it should also be noted that the average amounts raised in statewide events are also dispersed among a population larger than those for single- or multicounty events. It is also surprising that city-based giving days do not seem to generate larger average giving: $4 million versus $10.5 million raised by county-based events. This might suggest that donors active during giving days are more motivated to give at the local level than at the city level. At the same time, giving per event is highest for statewide giving days, suggesting that donors connect to improving conditions for state or county residents more than they do at the city level.

Further, there is the continued importance of place — or, at least, an idea of place — in giving and thinking about the world generally. Data collected for this study show evidence that some donors who participate in place-based giving days reside elsewhere: in the case of Colorado Gives, there were donors from 20 countries outside the United States (CFF, 2017). This wider sense of "connection" to place is also seen in the rising number of county-level giving days — 48 percent of all giving days were at the county or multicounty level as compared to 15% and 14% state and city level respectively — and why giving days in higher education, with its established sense of community among students and alumni, also seem to gaining momentum. The fact that donors who live elsewhere "give locally" highlights the complexities of feeling connected to place. A sense of nostalgia can motivate people to give to a community even when they no longer live, study, or work there.

As with technology, where existing capacity and experiences have been shown to influence success in online giving days, overall community "success" with giving days may also be a result of existing capacity and experiences. While technology may be perceived as accessible to everyone, everywhere, and at all times, such is not the case and, when it is accessible, it may not outweigh the fact that there are simply more people, greater wealth, and different relationships in different places. When defining, analyzing, and understanding place-based giving days, "place" cannot be overlooked.

There is also the growing concern among fundraisers that place-based giving days may not actually increase the "donation pie" — that existing donors are waiting to make their contributions during a giving day, thereby merely shifting their timing of planned gifts. An evaluation of Omaha Gives found that "a little more than half (52.3 percent) of donor survey respondents said they gave to a new organization for the first time during Omaha Gives! 2015. First-time gifts totaled $885,071, which is 11.2 percent of total amount raised" (Bhati & Eikenberry, 2016, p. 34). The same report found that "more than three-fourths (77 percent) of the nonprofit survey respondents indicated that Omaha Gives! 2014 slightly or substantially increased their overall funding last year" (p. 37). This suggests that

giving days not only increase the giving for a particular community during the event, but also help nonprofits raise funds throughout the year.

This study sheds light on the growing phenomenon of giving days across the United States, ranging from city- and county-based to statewide events. It also adds to the limited literature on the size and magnitude of giving days in the U.S. and highlights the trend of increases in funding to local nonprofits through annual giving days largely organized by community foundations. The study, built using systemic strategies and containing data from community foundation websites, foundation annual reports, and newspaper articles, has limitations despite its contributions, based as it is on secondary sources. We recommend future studies in which this data set could be amplified by a survey of all community foundations known to organize giving days and interviews with foundation leaders to about the challenges involved in organizing successful giving days.

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