

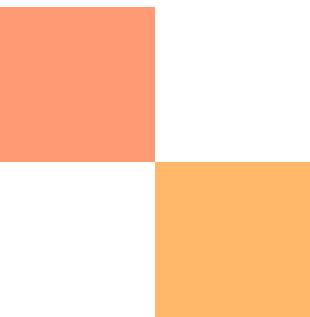
2021 FreeWill Planned Giving Report

An in-depth look at the biggest trends in estate planning and legacy giving



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INTRODUCTION

Dear friends,

Planned giving (making a donation as part of an estate plan) has been an important part of nonprofit fundraising for as long as nonprofits have raised money. These gifts are frequently the largest an organization will ever receive — and are integral to their ability to plan for their future.

Yet only the most well-funded nonprofits have historically maintained robust planned giving programs. For smaller organizations, it's generally been regarded as a "nice to have" instead of a "need to have." This is because the ultimate timing on planned giving revenue is uncertain, and cultivation and stewardship can be time-consuming.

While most people used to assume that making a will was expensive, unnecessary, or difficult, this has started to change over the past couple years. In the face of the Coronavirus pandemic, many Americans rushed to make or update their wills, reversing a multi-year downward trend in those without a will.

This means that many Americans are deciding right now which people or organizations should inherit their wealth. And this coincides with something even more important: the greatest wealth transfer in human history. Over the next 25 years, [45 million U.S. households may pass an estimated \\$68 trillion](#) on to the next generation. Nonprofits that can get into these supporters' wills right now will unlock the transformational gifts that support them for decades to come.

This idea is what lies behind FreeWill's founding. My cofounder, Jenny Xia Spradling, and I launched FreeWill in 2017 in the belief that the tools and principles of grassroots digital fundraising could extend planned giving far beyond its existing horizons.

In the past four years, our free online estate planning tools have helped nearly 350,000 people write legal wills or prepare documented wishes to take to a trust and estates attorney. From this, we've generated more than \$3.6 billion in committed planned giving revenue for nonprofit organizations. And the vast majority of these gifts come from a pool of donors that would have otherwise gone untapped.

In our third annual planned giving report, we're proud to present an in-depth analysis of the biggest trends in legacy giving over the past year. We've collected even more data to produce the clearest look into planned giving yet: who gives, how much, from where in the country, and to which type of organizations.

Our present moment represents a massive fundraising opportunity for planned giving officers and the nonprofits who benefit from their outstanding work. I hope this report is useful to you and your organizations as you develop strategies to maximize fundraising so you can keep working to make the world a better place.

Patrick Schmitt
Co-CEO, FreeWill
September 2021



ABOUT THIS REPORT



This report is an analysis of estate plans and charitable bequests made through FreeWill's platform from June 2020 through May 2021.

In that time, FreeWill users completed more than 157,000 free legal wills and trusts, or documented their wishes to be taken to an attorney. 29,309 of those estate plans included charitable bequests — nearly three times more than the previous year.

The total expected value of the bequests is more than \$1.5 billion.

Over the course of this report, we reviewed anonymized demographic, financial, and philanthropic data from our users to present a picture of the modern will-maker and legacy donor.

We use the term “will-maker” synonymously for users who completed either a last will and testament or revocable living trust.

Across these factors, we looked at several different variables, including:

1. The total number of estate plans made;
2. The percent of will-makers who included a charitable bequest; and
3. The expected value of those bequests.

Where possible and appropriate, we sought to balance our insight against publicly available and verifiable statistics.

Throughout the report, we have also included our key takeaways, hypotheses, and use cases in the hopes that they spur inspiration and thought.

KEY FINDINGS

In our third annual Planned Giving Report, we found that increased wealth, a younger age, being female, and having fewer family relationships are the greatest indicators of a will or trust-maker becoming a legacy donor.

Some of these results will support nonprofits' long-held strategies for finding and cultivating planned giving donors. However, more people than ever before are choosing to make charitable gifts in their estate plans — across all demographics and nonprofit sectors.

This supports how we approach planned giving with FreeWill partners. The most effective planned giving strategy has two important parts:

1. Scaling up thoughtful, sophisticated planned giving outreach to supporters across a wide range of incomes and lifestyles; and
2. Focusing on wealthier donors for traditional one-to-one relationship building by gift officers.

Bringing in new planned giving donors now (even those that can't make cash gifts immediately) will mean more individuals to steward into a lifetime of annual giving and engagement.

This will help significantly increase revenue outcomes for fundraisers for many years into their organization's future.

- The number of Americans choosing to make charitable bequests in their wills is increasing — 19% of wills and trusts made on FreeWill from June 2020 through May 2021 included a gift to charity. This is an increase from 13% over the prior period.
- The average value of a charitable bequest given by a will-maker on FreeWill is more than \$41,000.
- Donors under 25 are much more likely to include bequests in their estate plans. Even though the current value of these gifts are small and the realization is far into the future, they present a significant opportunity for fundraising and stewardship as their wealth grows over time. This is especially important as most gifts are given as a percentage of a donor's estate, rather than a fixed dollar value.
- Women are more likely to make estate plans and slightly more charitable than men across age, marital, and parental status. Even though their average gift value is lower and they have smaller estate sizes on average, the sheer number of female will-makers giving to charity means that they surpassed men in total bequest dollars committed for the first time in our reporting history.

- 83% of will-makers have a spouse, children, or both. However, those without either spouses or children are twice as likely to leave a portion of their estate to charity.
- Married will-makers are 10% more likely than non-married will-makers to include a contingent bequest (a gift that will go to the nonprofit if their primary beneficiary can't accept it). This shows they may still be thinking about the causes they care about, even when they put their family first.
- Washington, DC, continues to be the most charitable location in the U.S. While strong economies and higher concentrations of wealth generally track with more legacy donors, there was an uptick in giving across unexpected states, such as New Mexico, Vermont, and Montana.
- Pet owners continue to be some of the most charitable will-makers. 26% of estate plans that included beneficiaries for pets also included a charitable bequest. Only 15% of estate plans without pets had a gift.



With just one video, [Baptist Health Care Foundation](#) (BHCF) secured nearly \$130,000 in bequest commitments in April of 2021.

Their mission is to develop resources that support Baptist Health's ministry in providing the best quality healthcare services and programs to the people of Central Alabama. They wanted to give back to their highly engaged and caring staff, so they partnered with FreeWill to offer our tools as a resource. BHCF's Executive Director created an inspiring video that reached out to their community, encouraging them to make their wills and protect their loved ones.

Since then, they've helped more than 130 people in their community create their wills.

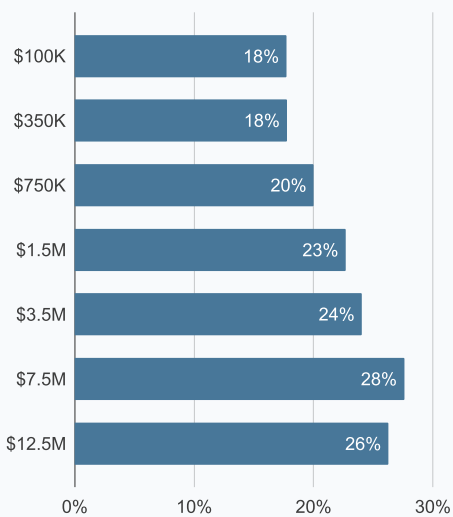
OVERVIEW: PLANNED GIVING IN 2020 & 2021



19%

of estate plans included a gift to charity

PERCENT OF ESTATE PLANS WITH CHARITABLE BEQUESTS BY MEDIAN ESTATE SIZE



The data we collect at FreeWill provides an exciting look into the current state of planned giving in the United States.

By simplifying the estate planning process and making it easy for donors to leave a gift to charity, we are able to open up planned giving to a much wider audience than nonprofits normally target.

19% of FreeWill users chose to leave a charitable bequest in their estate plan — a huge jump over estimates of 2% to 5% across the general U.S. population.

This number is also a big increase over our [2020 analysis of 13%](#), suggesting that Americans may have become more comfortable with the idea of legacy giving.

This is a huge opportunity for nonprofits. These gifts are almost always the biggest a donor will ever make, and provide nonprofits with the funding that secures their future.

Even among those that did not choose to make a nonprofit a primary beneficiary of a gift in their estate plan, 9% still listed a nonprofit as a [contingent beneficiary](#) — the organization that would get a gift if their primary beneficiary couldn't.

And the numbers hold up regardless of estate size. While the likelihood of giving increases as estate size increases, even 18% of people with estates valued under \$100,000 still chose to make a charitable bequest.

This suggests that, when presented with an accessible way to make planned gifts, many nonprofit supporters are eager to give.



\$41K

average size of a charitable bequest made in an estate plan



65%

of will-makers who made a charitable gift opted in to share their contact info with their nonprofit beneficiary

While planned giving is typically only marketed to a nonprofit's most loyal donors, it is one of the only ways a donor can make a significant impact without being financially affected in the moment.

Nonprofits that don't ask their small-dollar donors for these gifts are missing out on a huge number of supporters who want to give back in any way they can.

The value of charitable bequests given in estate plans on our platform ranged from \$100 to more than \$12.5 million. The average value of a gift was \$41,129.

Just over 15% of estate plans with bequests included more than one bequest, averaging out to 1.3 gifts per will or trust. As a result, the mean size of all giving made in estate plans with bequests was \$54,238.

Furthermore, 65% of will-makers on FreeWill who left a charitable bequest opted in to share their contact information with their nonprofit beneficiaries. This is much higher than the general planned giving landscape.

In fact, when the [Giving USA Foundation](#) conducted interviews with donors in early 2019, they found that only 4% of donors always tell the organization about their planned gifts, and 38.7% of donors sometimes inform the organization.

This information is crucial for the way fundraisers work. Without it, it's harder to plan ahead for potential fundraising revenue. Plus, it means donors will go unthanked and unstewarded, resulting in fewer gifts in the future.

Simply letting donors know that providing contact information will make the work of nonprofits easier results in a much greater percentage of opt-ins and [fewer anonymous donors](#).

AGE

Key takeaway: Donors under 25 are much more likely to give to charity in their will or trust, but the average value of gifts from donors over 65 are three times greater. Both demographics should be included in estate planning — younger donors present a powerful opportunity if stewarded well over time as their wealth will grow, and older donors will soon pass on their wealth, much of which could go to charity with the proper outreach.

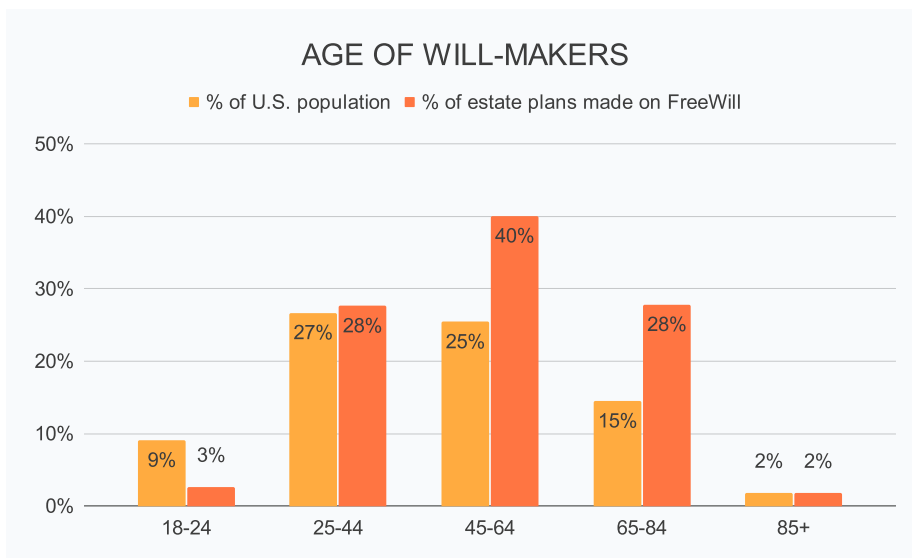
AGE & ESTATE PLANNING

While almost all adult Americans should have a will, most don't begin to think about estate planning until their 40s or later. On FreeWill, the average age of a will-maker was 54 (we've only considered estate plans made by people over the age of 18 in this analysis).

While adults aged 45 to 64 only make up 25% of the U.S. population, they accounted for 40% of estate plans made on the FreeWill platform. And the likelihood for making an estate plan increases with age.

Those 65-years and older were even more likely to make a will or trust relative to their population share. They only represented 17% of the total population, but nearly twice the share of estate plans at 30%.

●
54
average age of a will-maker



AGE & LEGACY GIVING

AGE	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
18-24	\$18,876
25-44	\$27,005
45-64	\$41,146
65-84	\$58,775
85+	\$76,393

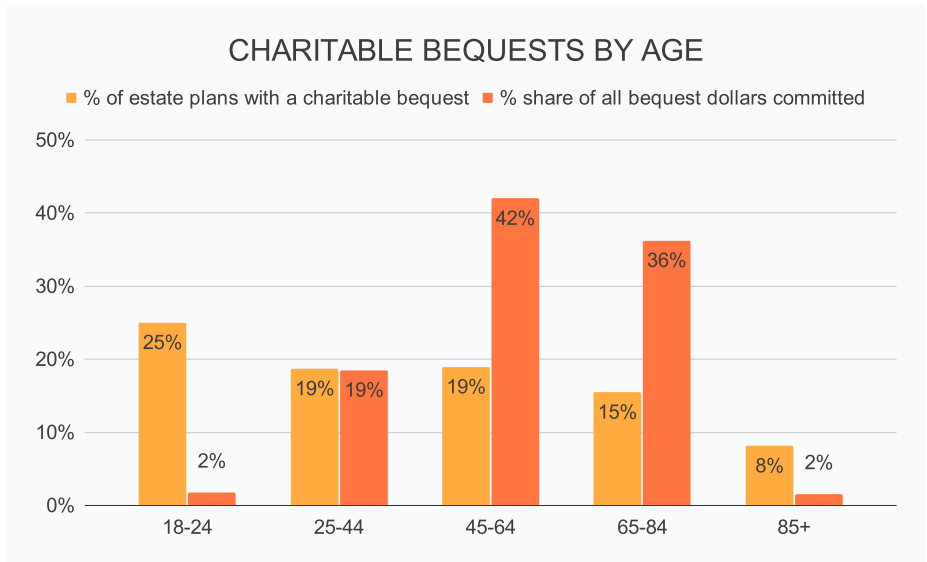
1/3

of all charitable bequest dollars were given by will-makers between 65 to 84 years old

As we’ve seen in previous years, the younger a will-maker is, the more likely they are to include a charitable bequest in their will or trust. 25% of those between 18 to 24 made legacy gifts in their estate plans compared to less than 20% in all other age groups.

This may be due to the fact that most have fewer family attachments, such as spouses and children. As we’ll explore on page 15, those with less family are much more likely to give.

The size of young adults’ gifts was also much smaller than their older counterparts. Only 15% of adults between 65 to 84 included a charitable bequest, but they made up more than a third of the total value of all bequests committed to charity on our platform. On average, their gifts were three times bigger than those from 18 to 24-year-olds.



Will-makers using our site tend to make charitable bequests as a percentage of their estate. Since most Americans accumulate more wealth as they age, and their estate size increases, it’s not surprising that this results in larger bequest commitments from older demographics.

In fact, when we looked at wealth, the individuals most likely to give were young adults (18 to 24) with less than \$350,000 in their estate and those 65+ with estates worth more than \$1.5 million.

AGE	% SHARING CONTACT INFO
18-24	73%
25-44	71%
45-64	65%
65-84	65%
85+	53%

For fundraisers focused on planned giving, this may seem to validate strategies targeting older, wealthier donors.

Donors over 50 will appear like they are committing the biggest gift — sometimes simply because of the size of their estates. These gifts are also understandably easier for organizations to “count” towards their goals — the realization of these gifts are much nearer in the future than those of younger adults.

But it’s important to understand the opportunity around engaging younger donors with information on legacy giving as well. Even if younger donors’ gifts are small now and the realization of those gifts is far in the future, there is a lot of room for them to grow as loyal donors.

They clearly want to support causes they care about, and their net worth will generally increase with income and asset growth as they get older and inherit a portion of the “Great Wealth Transfer” from the Baby Boomer generation.

Plus, the younger a donor is, the more likely they are to share their contact information with their nonprofit beneficiaries. This will make them much easier to steward into annual givers.

Research shows that once a donor includes a nonprofit in their will, they give more to that organization in the following years. In fact, bequest donors increase their average annual giving [by more than 50%](#).

For nonprofits, younger donors may represent a low-cost opportunity to capture interest in giving that will pay great dividends not only in the decades to come, but in the present, as well.

GENDER

Key takeaway: Women are slightly more charitable than men with legacy giving, and for the first time ever, the total value of their gifts was greater than men's. The sheer number and inclination for women to make legacy gifts means it's crucial for nonprofits to think about how they're engaging women, and whether their legacy programs need to change to better appeal to them.

GENDER & ESTATE PLANNING



58%

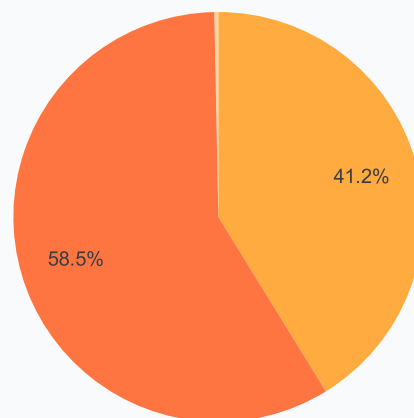
of estate plans were written by women

As a whole, women were much more likely to make estate plans than men. Despite making up just a little more than half of the U.S. adult population, they wrote more than 58% of wills and trusts on our platform from June 2020 through May 2021. This was a two-percentage-point increase from the previous year.

For the first time in the past year, we offered options for will-makers to select a non-binary gender. However, these individuals accounted for fewer than 1% of all completed estate plans.

GENDER OF WILL-MAKERS

● Male ● Female ● Non-binary



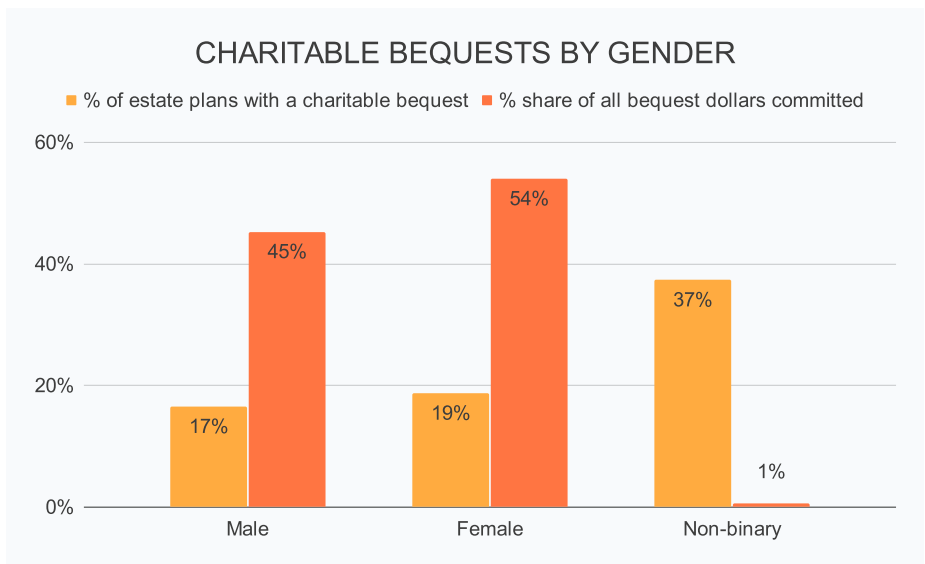
GENDER & LEGACY GIVING

GENDER	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
Male	\$49,433
Female	\$36,186
Non-binary	\$32,217

●
\$824M

was committed to charity by women in their estate plans — more than half of all bequest dollars

19% of women included charitable bequests in their estate plans. This is only slightly more than men at 17%. For the first time in our analysis, women also committed a greater percentage of all dollars going to charity than men did. This is likely due to the fact that women made more estate plans and gave at a higher rate.



In our previous report (analyzing June 2019 through May 2020), 45% of all bequest dollars came from women and 54% came from men. This past year, the numbers flipped. 54% of all bequest dollars committed in our time frame — more than \$824 million — came from women.

The average value of women’s bequests was lower than men’s. This is likely because the average estate value of women’s estates was \$436,000, and men’s was \$622,000. Despite this, the sheer volume of women giving drove up their total share of donated dollars.

When we controlled for wealth (looking at donors’ estate sizes), we found that women with estates worth \$1.5 to \$7.5 million were the most generous. They gave the most money as a percent of their total wealth.

We also learned that men on the highest (more than \$12.5 million) and lowest (less than \$350,000) ends of the estate value spectrum were slightly more generous than women in terms of the percentage of dollars given as a whole.

It's also interesting to note that, though people who didn't identify as male or female made up a tiny fraction of all will-makers, they were two times as likely to include charitable bequests than men or women.

For planned giving professionals, it's clear that there is a big opportunity for engaging women in legacy giving programs. Women are more likely to give and their estates will continue to grow over the coming decades.

The first step of the Great Wealth Transfer will most likely be from men (who have statistically shorter lifespans than women) as they leave assets to their spouses.

As women's income, assets, and estates grow, we expect their average gift value will increase as well. Following this logic, planned giving professionals may want to focus more of their resources on female donors — and think about how legacy programs can better appeal to them.



MARRIAGE & PARENTHOOD: AN OVERVIEW OF FAMILIES, ESTATE PLANNING, & LEGACY GIVING

FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS

Key takeaway: Will-makers with few family attachments are twice as likely to give to charity in their estate plans than those with spouses and children. This makes them a key demographic to target for legacy giving programs.



FAMILY & ESTATE PLANNING



83%

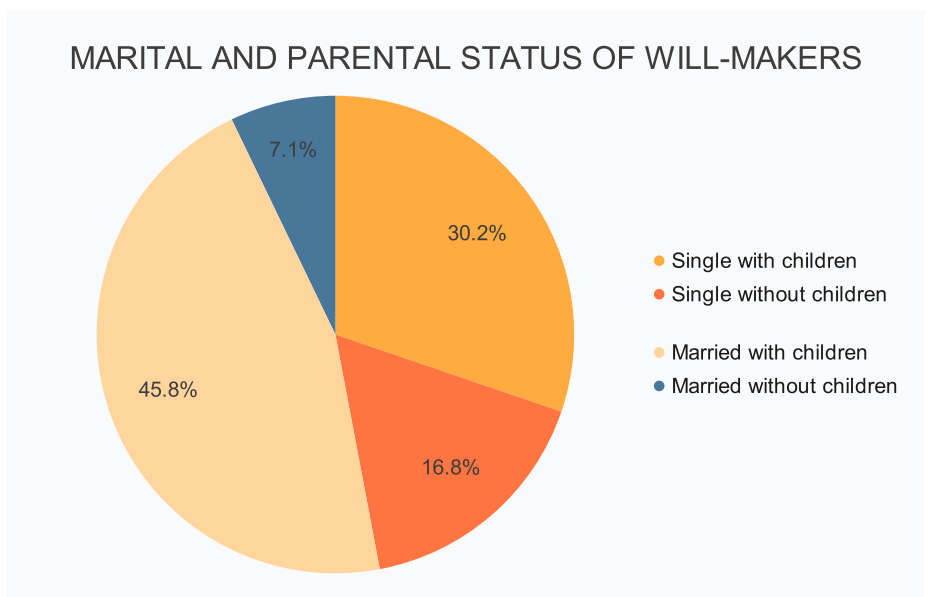
of will-makers had spouses, children, or both

83% of all will-makers on our platform had spouses, children, or both. 75% had children, and 53% were married.

Despite estate planning being an important step in taking care of a spouse, individuals who were married and did not have children accounted for very few will-makers.

Estate planning ensures married couples can protect each other financially after the other is gone — and ease the probate process during an extremely difficult time.

Nonprofits investing in legacy giving can help those without a will or trust understand the importance of estate planning, and how estate plans can make an impact both on their loved ones and on the causes closest to their hearts.



FAMILY & LEGACY GIVING

Will-makers with the fewest family attachments were twice as likely to leave money to charity in their estate plans than those with spouses and children.

30% of single will-makers without children included a charitable bequest in their wills, and 23% of married will-makers without children did so as well.

On average, parents were less likely to give overall — their marital status didn’t matter as much. There was only a 1% difference in giving between single will-makers with children and married will-makers with children.

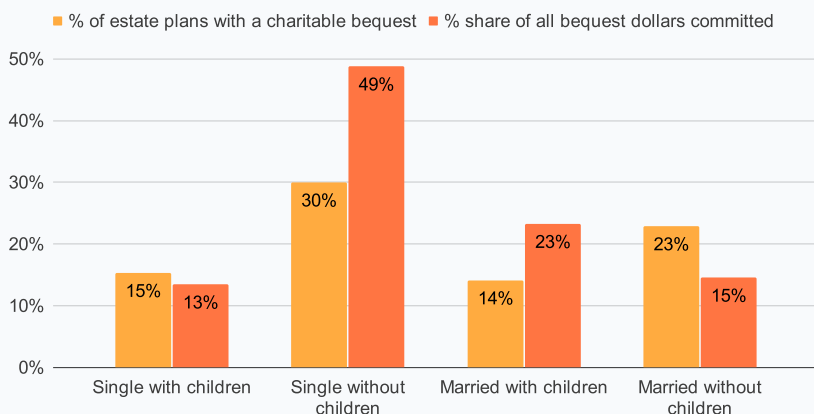
Gifts from single, non-parent will-makers were worth twice as much as gifts from will-makers with children.

And despite only making up 17% of all estate plans completed on our platform, this group gave nearly 50% of all bequest dollars committed to charity.

This data may not be surprising for planned giving leaders. When a donor has more family, they likely want to pass that wealth on to their loved ones to ensure their family is taken care of after they’re gone.

This means that gift officers should pay particular attention to donors with fewer family attachments when prospecting for legacy giving programs.

CHARITABLE BEQUESTS BY FAMILY RELATIONSHIP



MARITAL STATUS	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
Single with children	\$23,770
Single without children	\$59,372
Married with children	\$29,976
Married without children	\$62,128

MARRIAGE

Key takeaway: Single individuals are more likely to give to charity in their estate plans, regardless of gender, and their gifts are worth more on average than those from married will-makers.

MARITAL STATUS & ESTATE PLANNING

51% of will-makers using FreeWill reported that they were married. This aligns with U.S. population demographics. 45% reported they were single, and 4% said they were in a domestic partnership.

In the last year, we removed options from our tool to select whether the will-maker was widowed or divorced, but these previously reported at 14% divorced and 7% widowed.

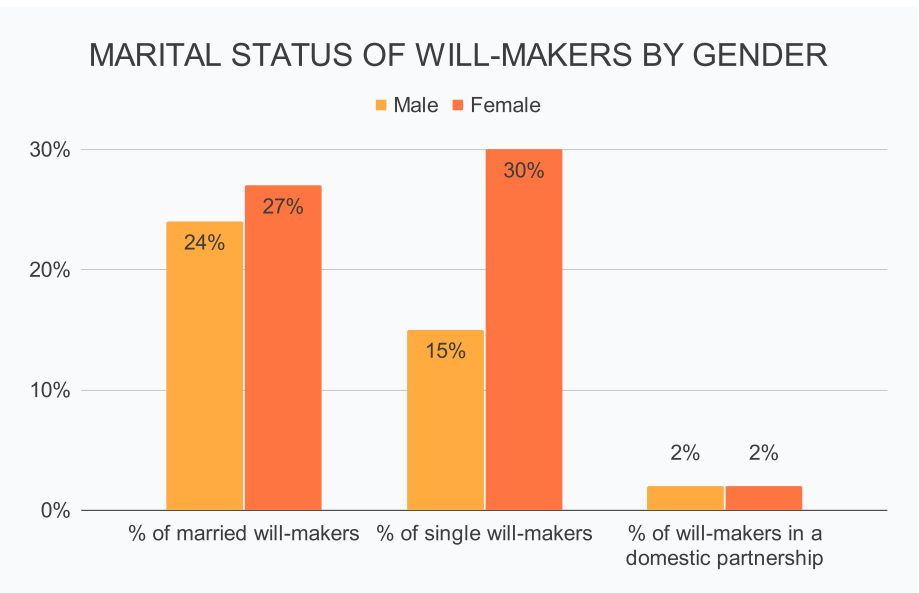
There was only a 3% difference in gender among married will-makers.

However, twice as many single will-makers were women than men, supporting the data on page 12 that women are more likely to make estate plans in general. There was no significant difference among domestic partnerships.

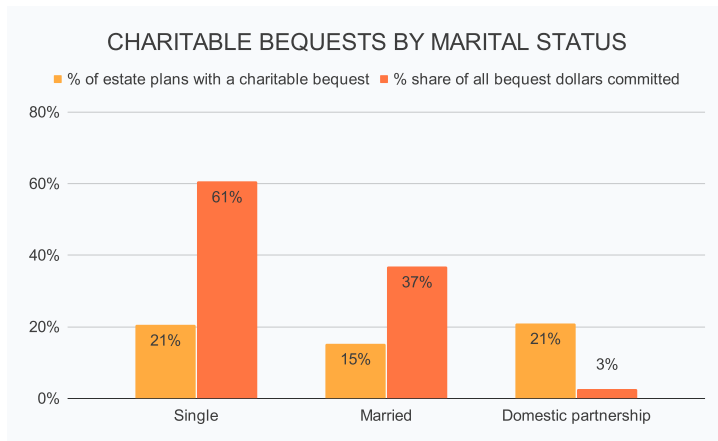


2X

as many estate plans were made by single women than single men



MARITAL STATUS & LEGACY GIVING



MARITAL STATUS	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
Single	\$44,863
Married	\$37,435
Domestic partnership	\$26,833

Unmarried will-makers and those in domestic partnerships are more likely to make a gift to charity in their estate plan than married will-makers.

21% included a charitable bequest as opposed to 15% of married will-makers.

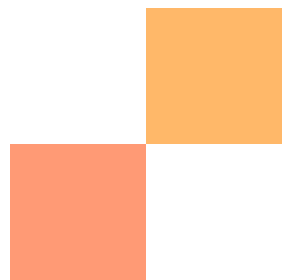
Despite married will-makers making half of all estate plans, they only gave 37% of all bequest dollars committed to charity.

The size of their gifts were also 20% smaller on average than those from single will-makers. This suggests that married will-makers prefer to leave a larger portion of their estate to their spouse.

In fact, as a whole, single will-makers gave 13% of their assets away in charitable bequests while married will-makers only gave 6%.

Whether married or single, women were slightly more likely to make a charitable bequests than men.

The only statistically significant difference was between men in a domestic partnership (18% included a charitable bequest) and women in a domestic partnership (23% included a charitable bequest).



PARENTHOOD

Key takeaway: Women without children are the best prospects for legacy giving programs. While all will-makers without children are more likely to include charitable bequests in their estate plans (28%) than parents (15%), 31% of female will-makers who are not parents choose to make legacy gifts.

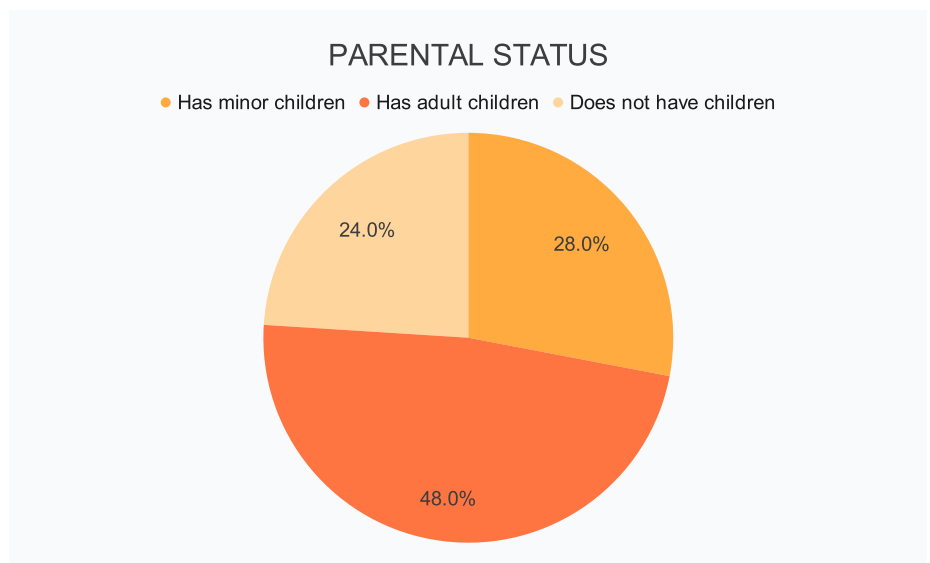
PARENTAL STATUS & ESTATE PLANNING

In 2020, nearly [40% of U.S. households had children under 18](#).

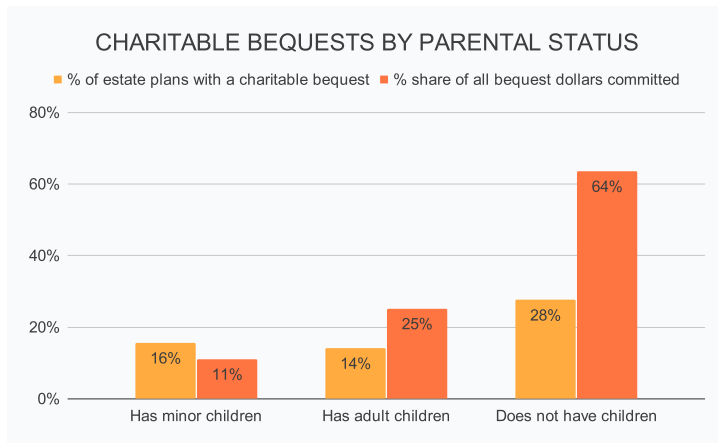
Despite this, only 28% of all will-makers using FreeWill had minors, suggesting that parents may not be making as many wills as they should. Part of this may be the age barrier: younger adults (those who generally have children under 18) are less likely to make wills.

As a parent, making a will is incredibly important — especially for those with children under 18. Parents can use their wills to name legal guardians for their children, as well as pass on their assets to their loved ones.

Altogether, 76% of will-makers reported that they had children, and 24% did not.



PARENTAL STATUS & LEGACY GIVING



Will-makers without children were twice as likely to give to charity in their estate plans than parents, and the average value of their gifts was two times greater.

In fact, 28% of will-makers without children made charitable bequest commitments, and despite being only one-fourth of all will-makers, they gave nearly two-thirds of all bequest dollars.

This suggests that when donors don't have family to pass their wealth on to, they turn to charitable giving.

This data may not be surprising to many planned giving officers, who have seen this in their work and made it a big part of their prospecting strategies.

The difference between parents of minors versus adult children was small — those with minors were slightly more likely to give to charity in their estate plans.

While 14% of those with adult children made bequests, 16% of those with children under 18 did so. This small difference may be explained by age.

As we saw on page 10, younger will-makers are more likely to include charities in their estate plans than older will-makers.

PARENTAL STATUS	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
No children	\$59,161
Has any children	\$26,826
Has minor children	\$22,365
Has adult children	\$29,414

PARENTS & GENDER	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
Female with children	\$22,698
Male with children	\$32,944
Female & no children	\$52,872
Male & no children	\$71,397



31%

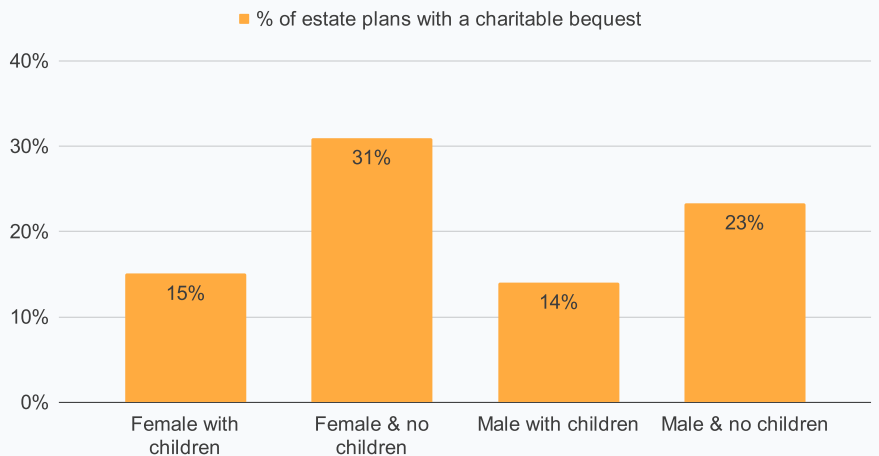
of estate plans made by women without children included a gift to charity

Unlike age, gender had a much smaller impact on legacy giving from parents. There was only a one-percentage point difference between male and female will-makers with children in how many left bequests to charity.

However, women without children were much more likely to give (31% included a charitable bequest) than men without children (23%).

This means single women, who are not parents, are some of the best prospects for legacy giving.

CHARITABLE BEQUESTS BY PARENTAL STATUS & GENDER



THE MOST GENEROUS STATES

Key takeaway: There has been an uptick in giving across all geographic, economic, and cultural lines, but Washington, DC, continues to be the top location for generous will-makers. 30% of estate plans made by individuals living in the U.S. capital included a gift to charity.

GEOGRAPHY & ESTATE PLANNING



As in our 2020 report, Florida had the most will-makers above its relative share of population.

We calculated this by looking at how many estate plans made on FreeWill came from each state and then considered that against the state-wide population according to the 2020 U.S. Census, allowing us to see which states over-indexed in will-makers.

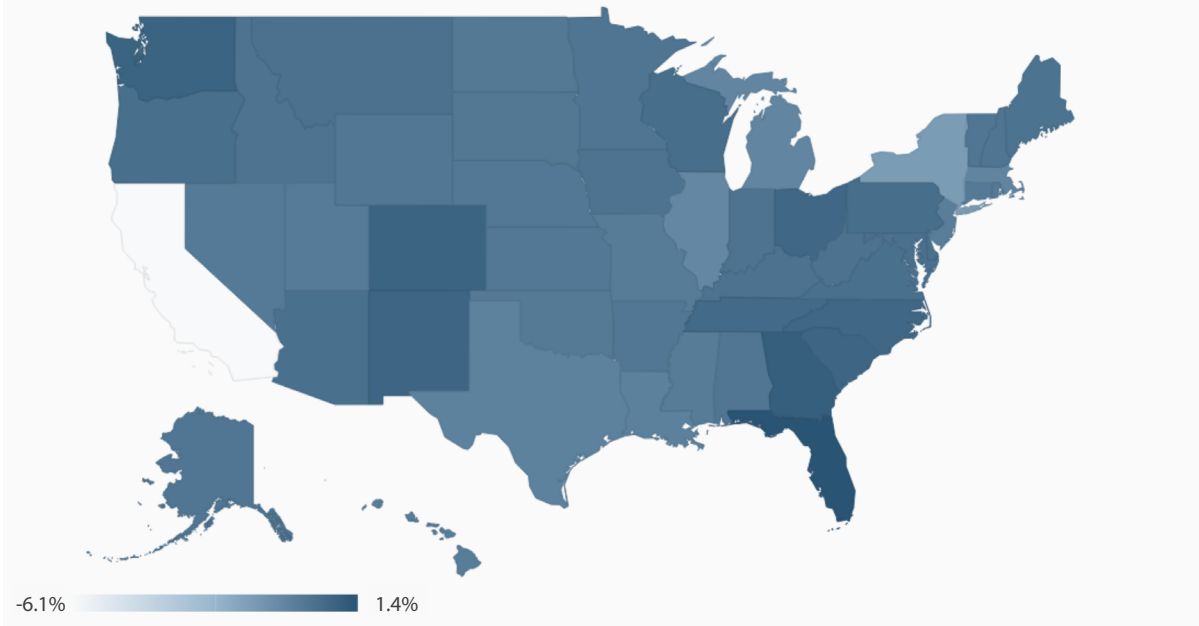
While Florida being at the top might not be surprising since it's a haven for retirees (and older folks make more estate plans), it actually ranks sixth in the U.S. for the [highest median age](#).

Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont are the "oldest" states by median age, but they fell squarely in the middle of rankings for shares of will-makers.

And the same states that were in the top five for over-indexing both in 2020 and again this year, are in the 15 bottom "youngest" states: Colorado, Georgia, and Washington.

This suggests that the factors driving estate planning in geographic regions may not be tightly correlated with age.

ESTATE PLANS MADE ABOVE POPULATION SHARE



STATE	ESTATE PLANS ABOVE POPULATION SHARE	MEDIAN AGE	AGE RANK
Florida	1.4%	42.5	6
Georgia	0.9%	37.1	42
Colorado	0.8%	37.1	42
Washington	0.8%	37.8	39
South Carolina	0.7%	39.9	14

GEOGRAPHY & LEGACY GIVING

●
30%

of estate plans made by residents of Washington, DC, included a gift to charity

As the data has shown for the last three years, the most generous location was not a state, but the capital, Washington, DC. More than 30% of estate plans made by individuals living in DC included a gift to charity.

Since Washington, DC, is the home of the United States federal government and is the gravitational center of the nonprofit ecosystem, it's not surprising that residents there leave bequests in their wills at such a high rate.

People who live there are likely to be idealistic, committed to public service, and community-minded — as well as possibly work for one of the 50,000 nonprofits headquartered in the greater area.

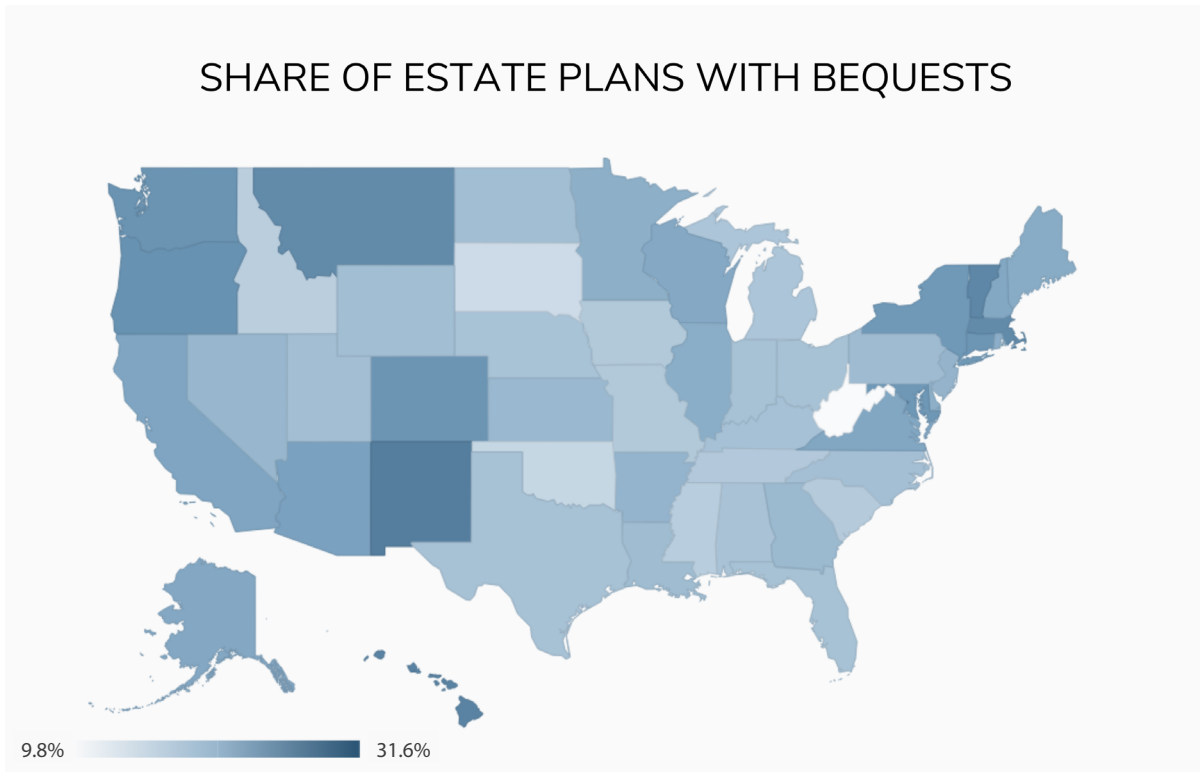
In previous years, we've also seen a correlation between the likelihood of making a bequest and locations that have strong economies and higher concentrations of wealth. In our 2020 report, California and New York followed DC for the highest percentage of estate plans with bequests, as well as the average number of bequests per will or trust.

However, this year we saw massive growth among other areas of the US for individuals giving to charity in their estate plans.

While there wasn't a decrease in giving from wealthier areas, will-makers from New Mexico, Vermont, and Montana all saw an upswing in generosity — pushing out California, New York, and Alaska from the top five spots.

This suggests that there has been an uptick in legacy giving across demographic, geographic, political, economic, and cultural lines.





STATE	SHARE OF ESTATE PLANS WITH GIFTS	AVG GIFTS PER ESTATE PLAN	MEDIAN INCOME
Washington, DC	30.6%	0.54	\$86,420
New Mexico	24.7%	0.37	\$49,754
Hawaii	24.0%	0.36	\$81,275
Vermont	23.4%	0.40	\$61,973
Montana	22.9%	0.31	\$54,970

PET OWNERSHIP

Key takeaway: Americans who include their pets in their wills or trusts are much more charitable than those who don't — 26% of pet owners leave a gift to charity in their estate plans compared to 15% of those without pets. However, the average value of their gifts is smaller.

PET OWNERS & ESTATE PLANNING



Each year, we look at how pet owners approach estate planning — and whether they do it differently than the average individual.

This information can be incredibly valuable for organizations whose missions are centered on animal welfare.

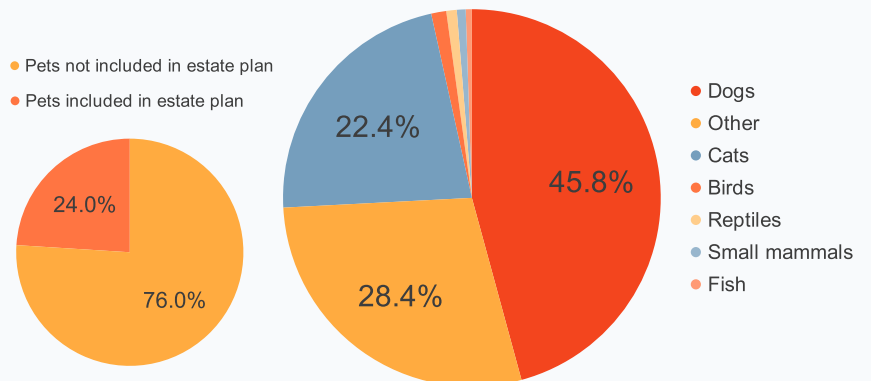
In our estate planning tools, we ask users: “Do you have any pets you would like to provide for?”

Despite [70% of U.S. households owning a pet](#), only 24% of will-makers said that they wanted to provide for pets in their estate plan.

While there was a general increase in pet ownership spurred by the Coronavirus pandemic, the share of people including pets in their will or trust did not increase over our previous report time period (June 2019 to May 2020).

For the first time, we also looked at pet ownership by pet type. 46% of those who provided for pets in their estate plans owned dogs and 22% owned cats. Birds were the third most popular, included in 1.3% of estate plans with pets.

PET OWNERSHIP IN ESTATE PLANS



PET OWNERS & LEGACY GIVING

●

26%

of people that included pets in their estate plans gave to charity

PET OWNERSHIP	AVERAGE GIFT VALUE
Pets	\$38,973
No pets	\$42,538

Pet owners are about 70% more likely to give to charity in their estate plans than people who either don't have pets or choose not to provide for their pets in their will or trust.

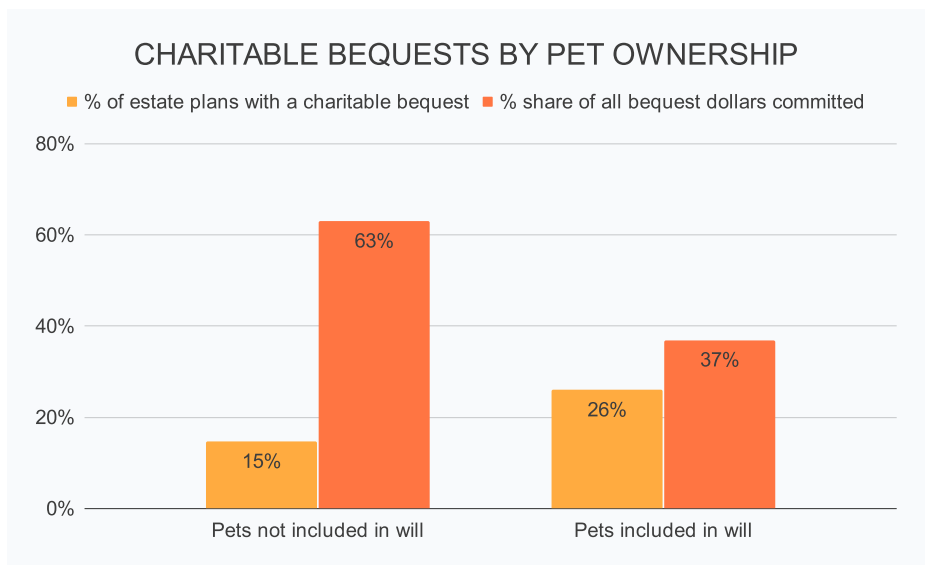
More than a quarter of will-makers who included pets in their estate plans made a charitable bequest commitment.

The strong correlation between pet ownership and inclination toward planned giving represents a significant opportunity for development professionals, particularly those who work for animal and wildlife-focused nonprofits.

By targeting animal owners, fundraisers may find that they are able to increase their number of gift commitments and generate more interest in planned giving.

It should be noted, however, that the average value of bequests from pet owners is slightly lower. Only 15% of people without pets left charitable bequests in their estate plans, but their gifts were 9% larger on average.

Even though gifts from pet owners may be smaller, the ability to raise a larger quantity of them can make up for value.





[Hope for Paws](#) has received over 2,000 charitable bequest commitments averaging \$18,000 a gift since launching with FreeWill in early 2020.

The Los Angeles-based organization, which rescues suffering or neglected animals and spreads awareness about adoption, wanted to help their animal-loving supporters make estate plans for both themselves and their beloved pets. Knowing how many pets are forgotten about after the owner passes away, they felt that this would be a powerful way to give back to their donors and further their mission to reduce animal abandonment and abuse.

By tapping into their social media presence and publishing emotionally compelling videos, they've raised awareness about abandonment and encouraged supporters to make their wills, protecting their pets.



CONTINGENT GIFTS

Key takeaway: Married will-makers, men, and older generations are generally less likely to leave charitable gifts to nonprofits as their primary beneficiaries. However, they are more likely than the average will-maker to include nonprofits as contingent beneficiaries in their estate plans.

When Americans make a will or trust, they name beneficiaries that will receive portions of their estate after they die.

They can name primary beneficiaries — the people or organizations who are first in line to get the gift assigned to them — or contingent beneficiaries — the people or organizations who would get the gift assigned to a primary beneficiary if that primary beneficiary wasn't able to receive it (e.g., they passed away first).

Since more than half of will-makers using FreeWill are married, and these individuals generally make their spouses their primary beneficiaries, we decided to look at contingent beneficiaries and gifts.

Overall, 9% of will-makers who did not leave a gift to a nonprofit as the primary beneficiary, made a gift to a nonprofit as a contingent beneficiary instead.

There were trends in who made contingent gifts.

Married will-makers were 10% more likely than single will-makers to include contingent gifts. This

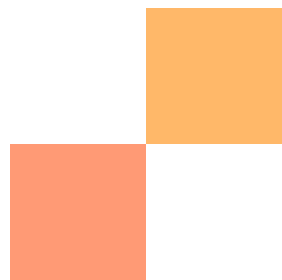
suggests that, even though they want to provide for their spouses first, these individuals are thinking of organizations and legacy giving.

Those without children were also more likely to have contingent gifts. As seen on page 21, these will-makers are more charitable overall, and this carried into their considerations for contingent beneficiaries. They were 29% more likely than the average individual to include them.

Men, who we've shown are less charitable in their estate plans with primary gifts, were more charitable when it came to contingent gifts. They were 14% more likely to include a contingent charitable bequest than the average will-maker.

Will-makers over the age of 85 are 15% more likely to make contingent gifts than their younger counterparts.

While this demographic is the least likely to give overall (perhaps due to having more children or grandchildren to inherit), this suggests that they do think of nonprofits while making their estate plans.



LEGACY GIVING BY CAUSE AREA

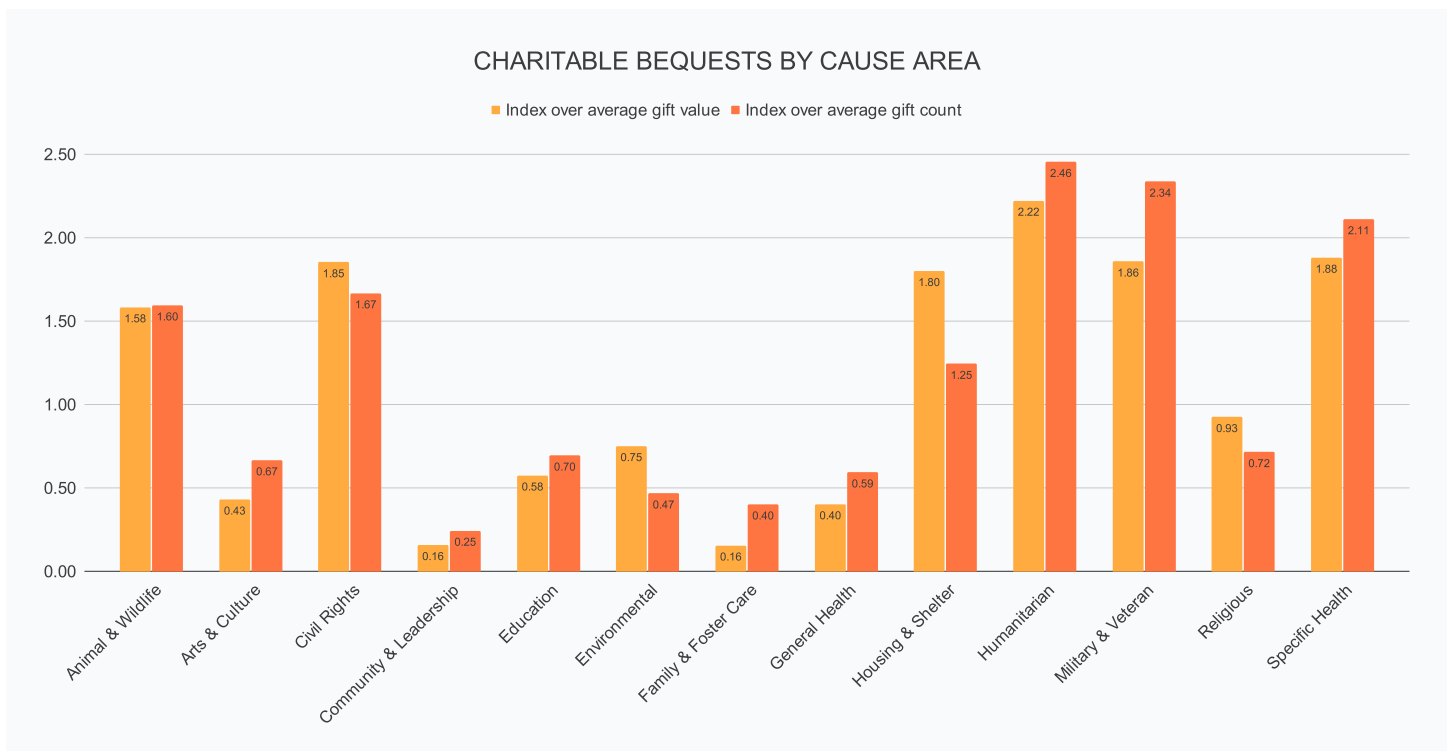
Among the nonprofit partners at FreeWill, we looked at which cause areas were attracting more legacy dollars and donors than the average organization.

There were three sectors that stood out the most: humanitarian, military and veteran, and specific health organizations.

On average, organizations in these sectors received more gifts and total bequest dollars than those in other sectors over the past year.

Organizations within arts and culture, community leadership, and family and foster care had the most room to grow.

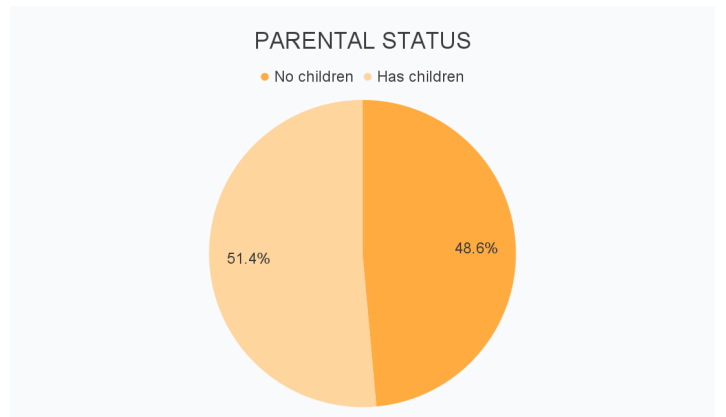
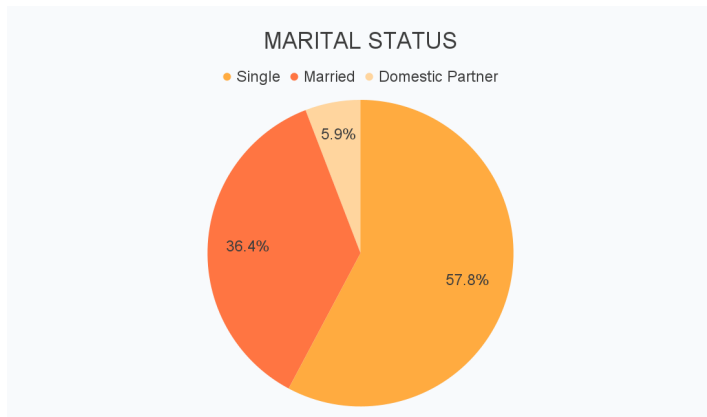
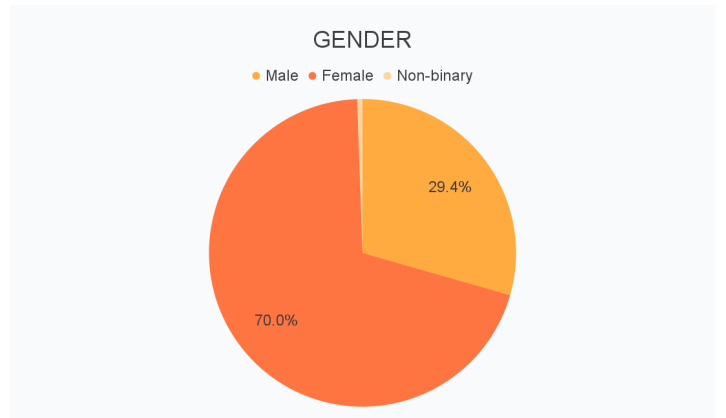
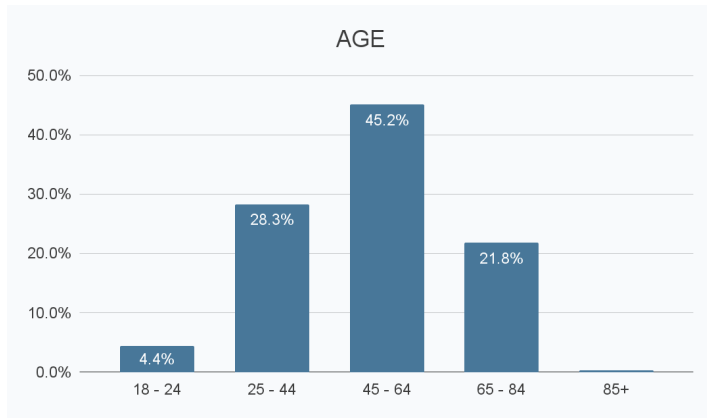
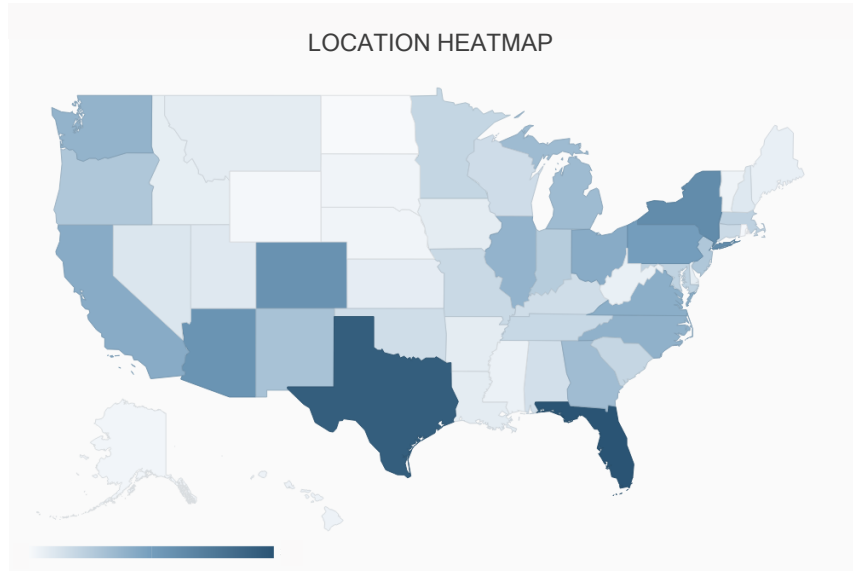
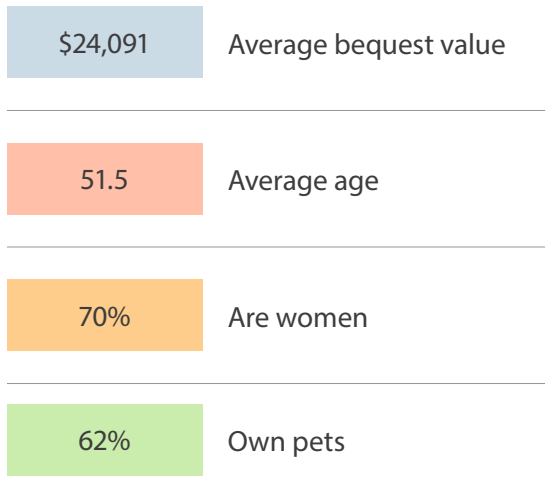
In the following pages, we break down legacy donor demographics for each cause area, including age, gender, location, and family relationships.



LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

ANIMALS & WILDLIFE

TOP STATS

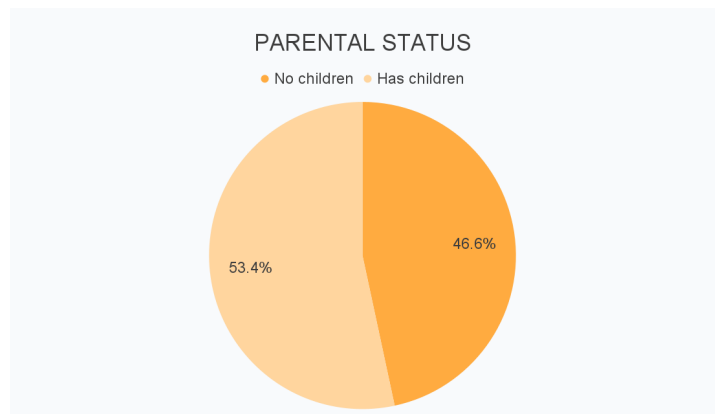
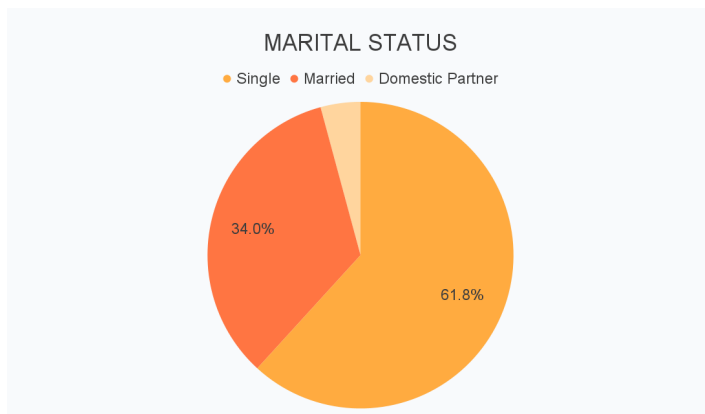
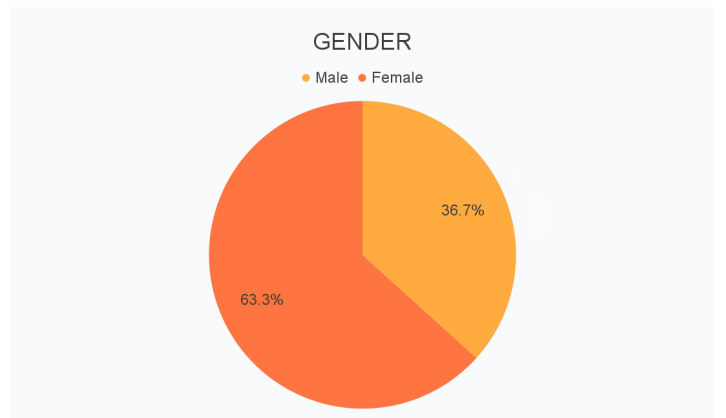
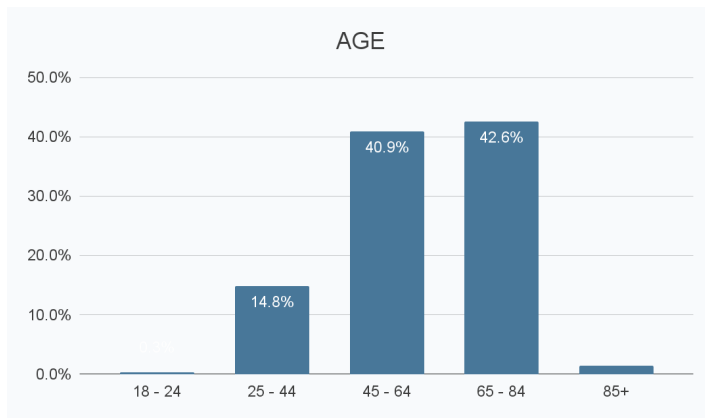
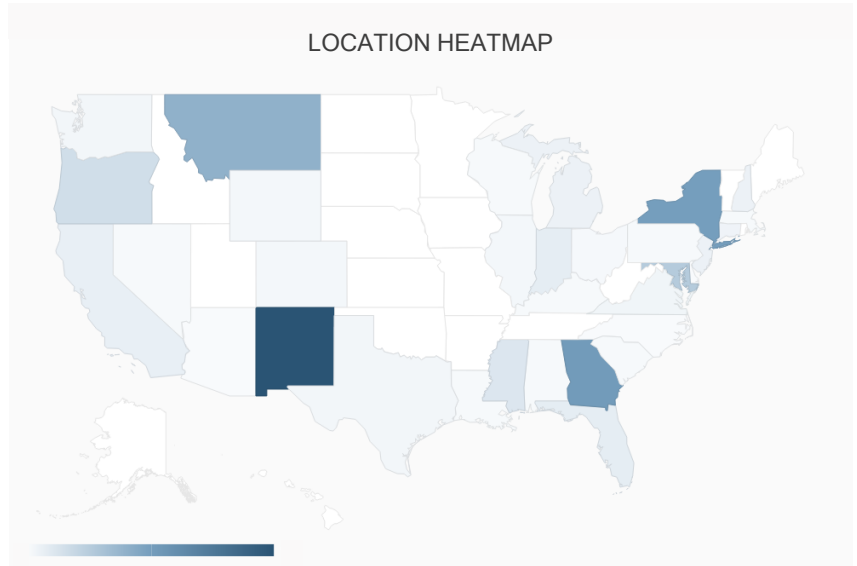
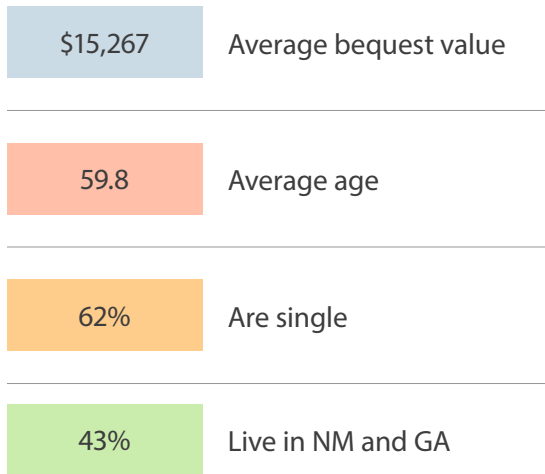


*Data is based on FreeWill Partner demographics of will-makers with one or more bequests, and may not be indicative of trends within the cause areas as a whole.

LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

ARTS & CULTURE

TOP STATS

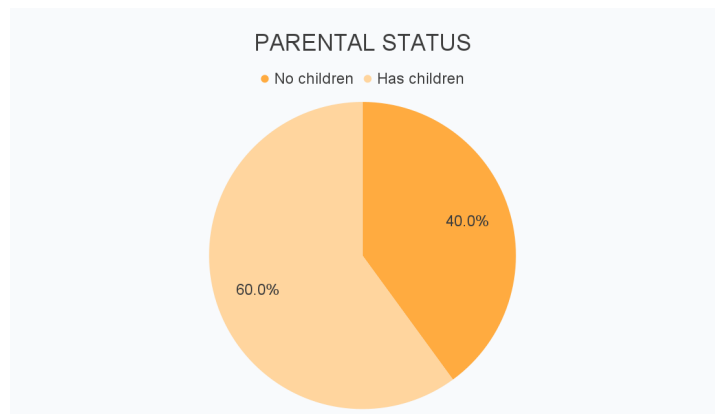
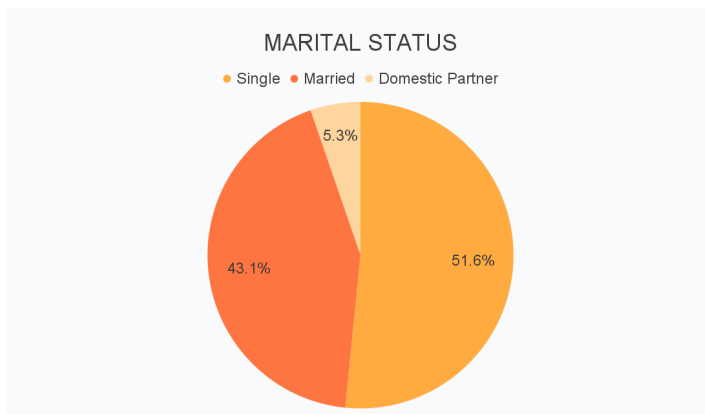
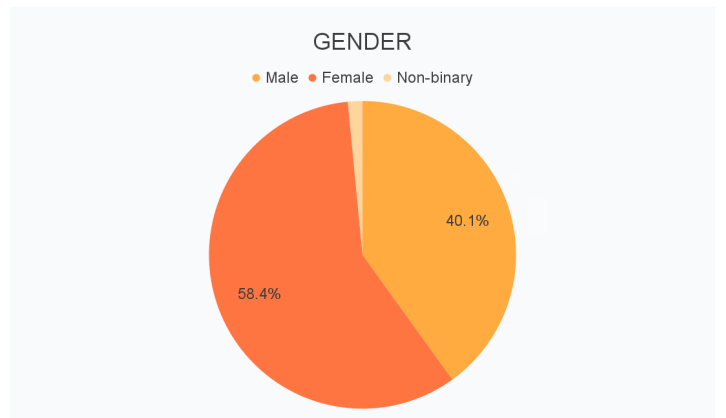
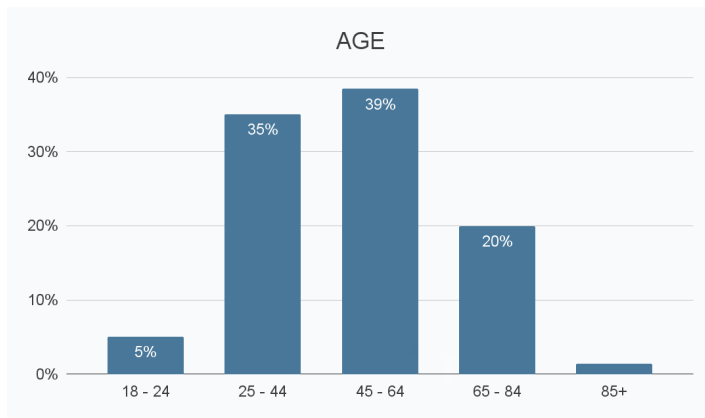
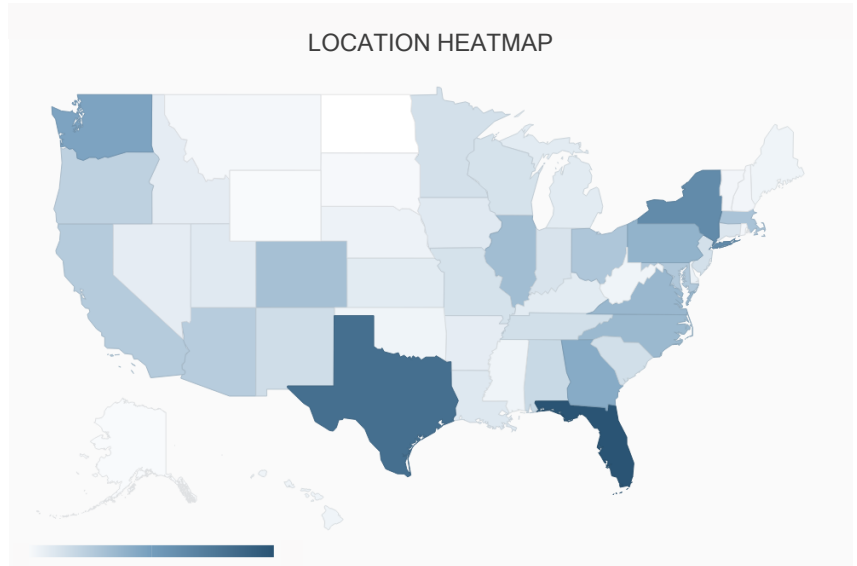
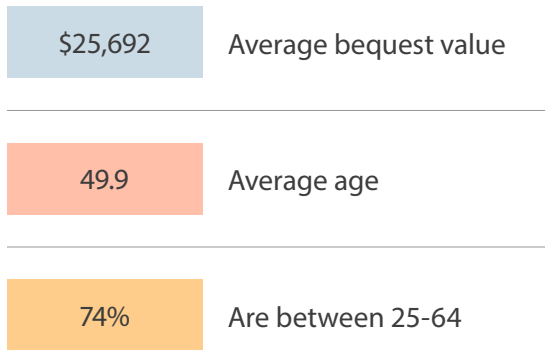


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

CIVIL RIGHTS

TOP STATS

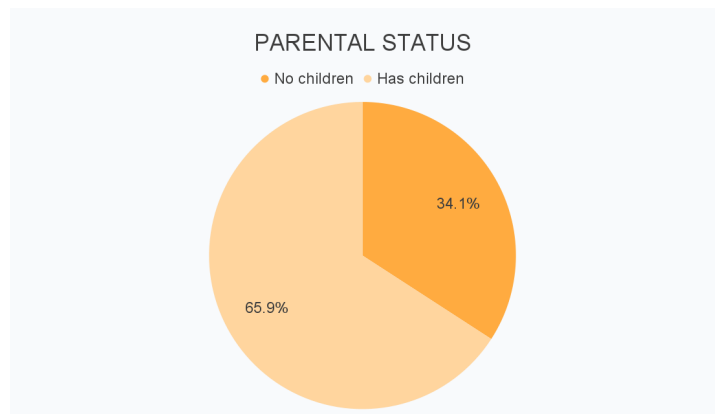
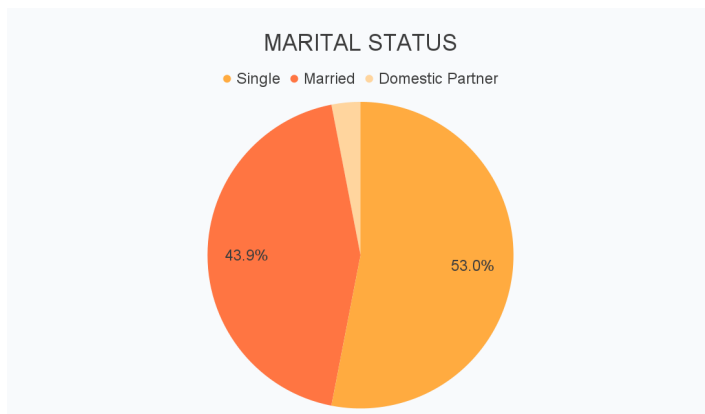
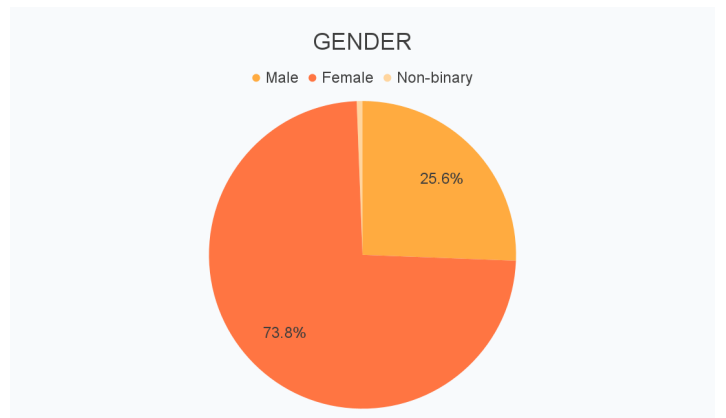
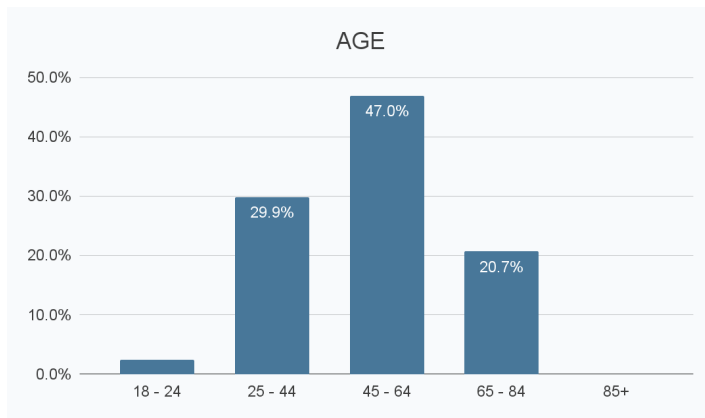
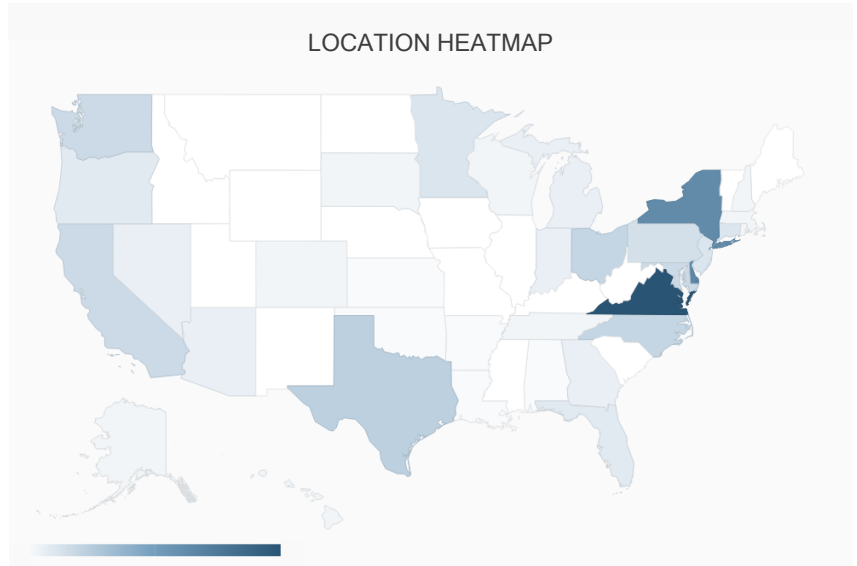
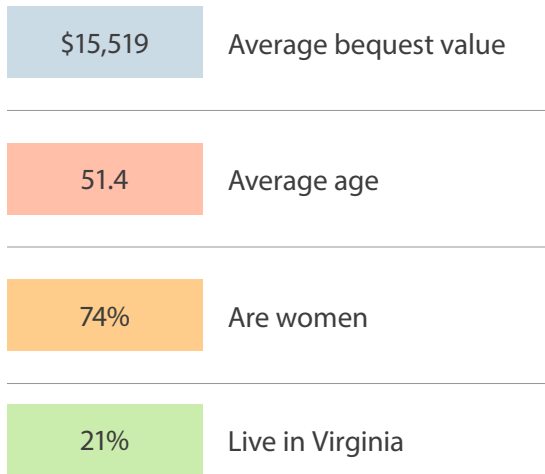


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

COMMUNITY & LEADERSHIP

TOP STATS

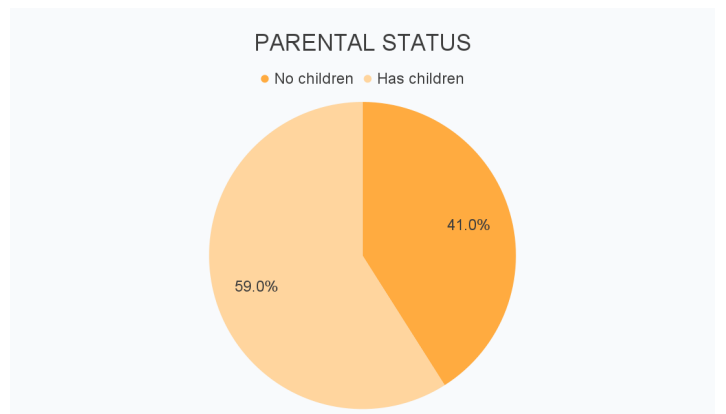
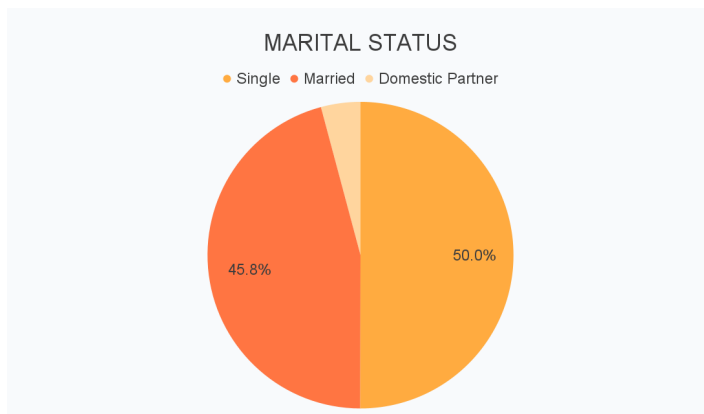
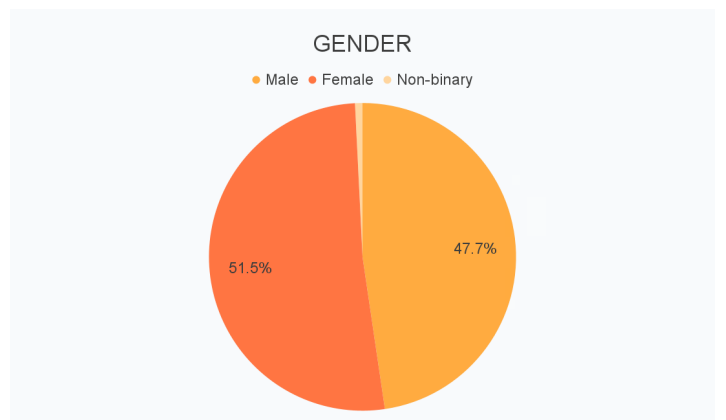
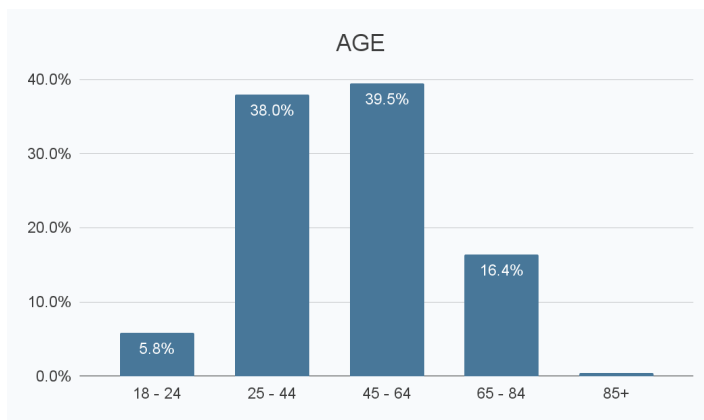
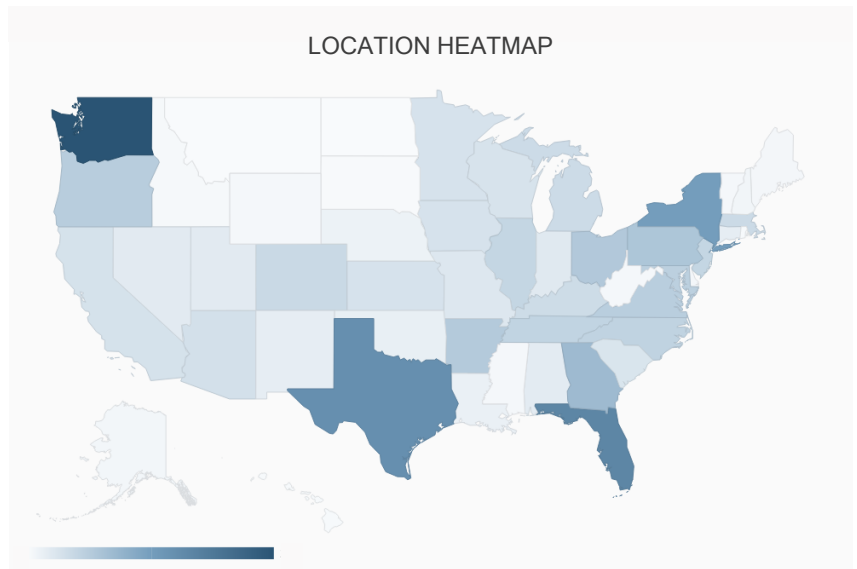
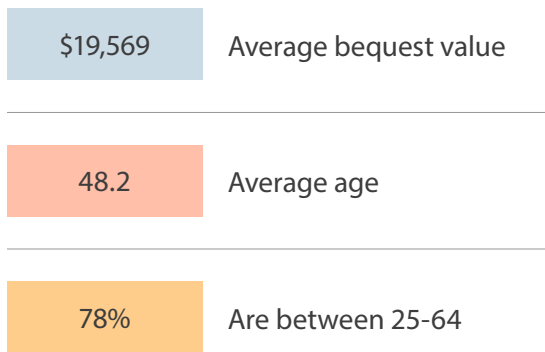


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

EDUCATION

TOP STATS

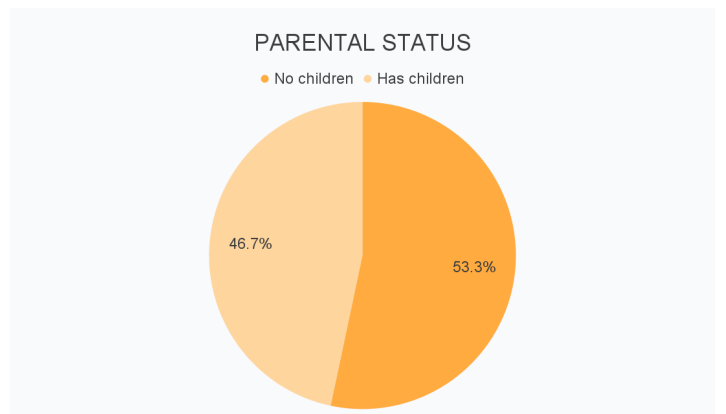
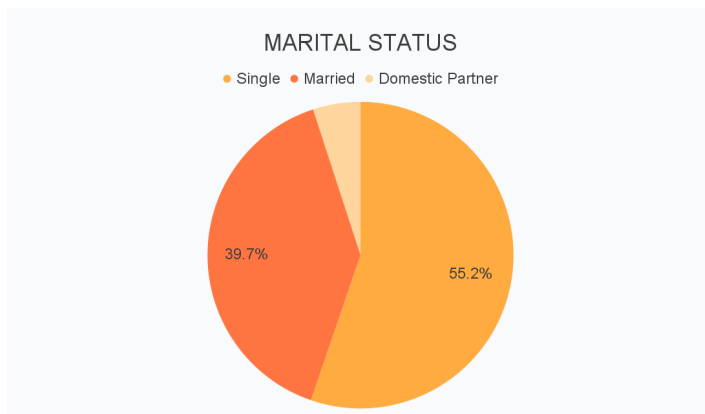
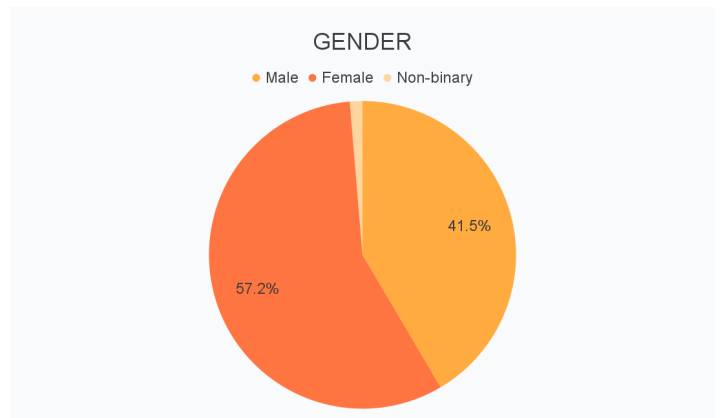
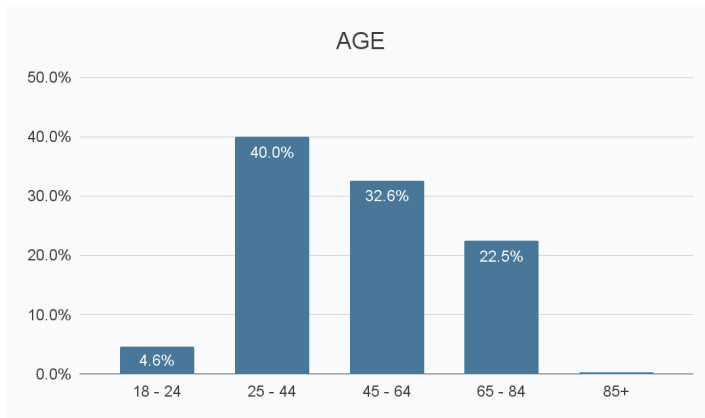
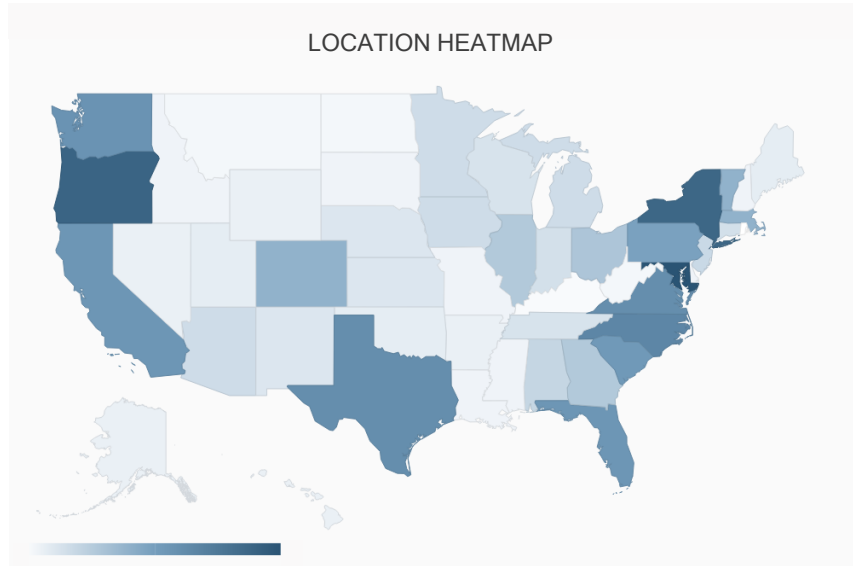
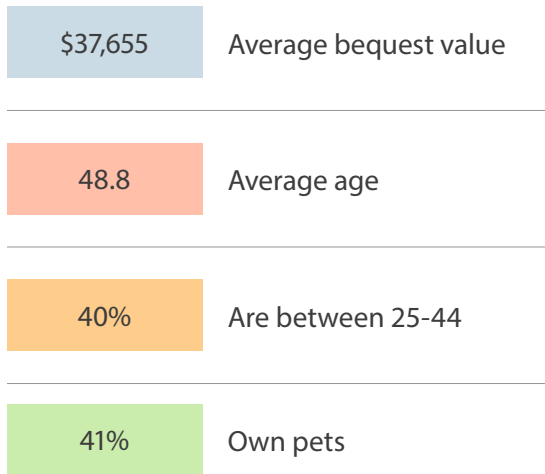


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

ENVIRONMENTAL

TOP STATS

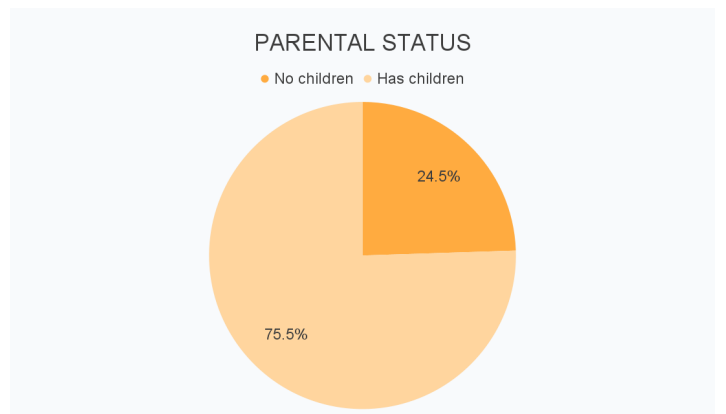
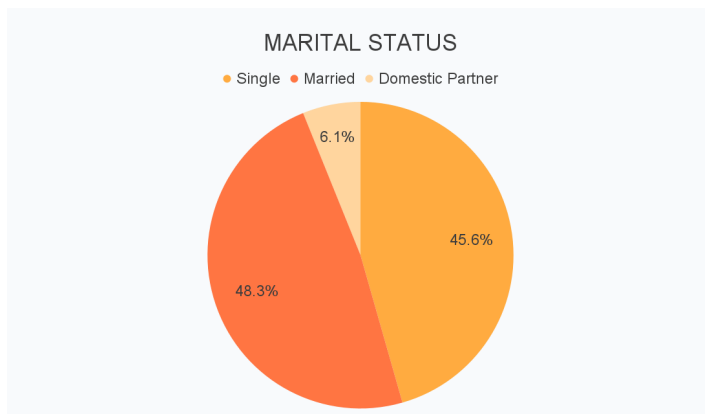
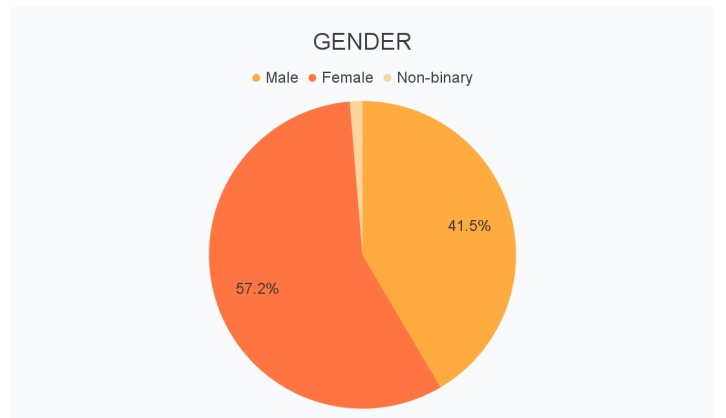
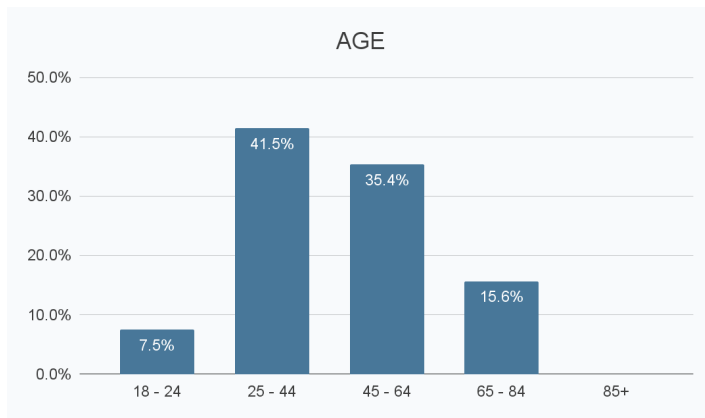
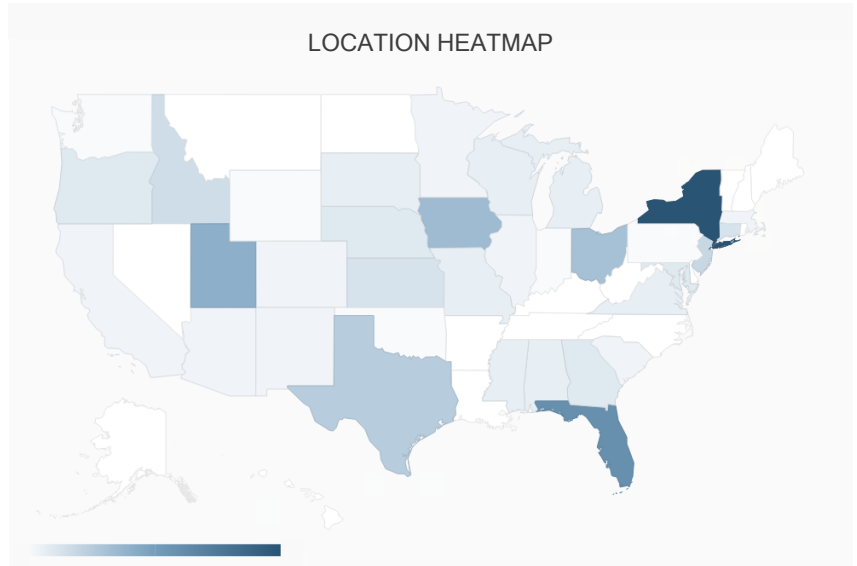
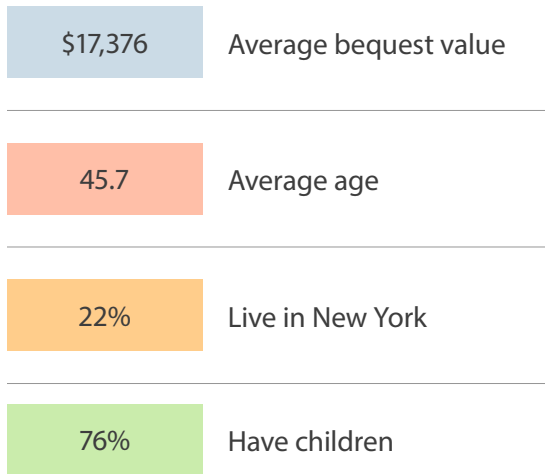


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

FAMILY & FOSTER CARE

TOP STATS

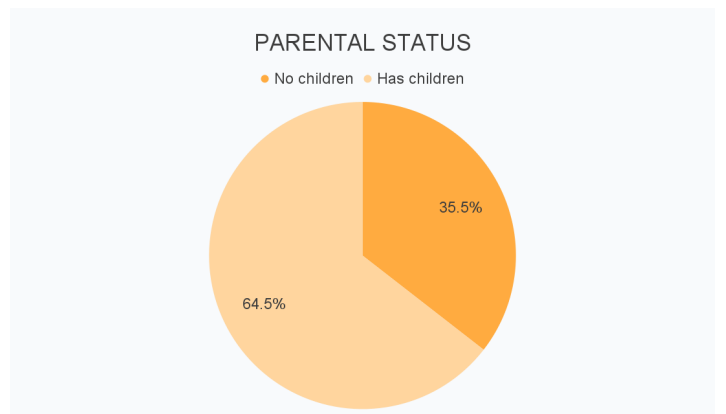
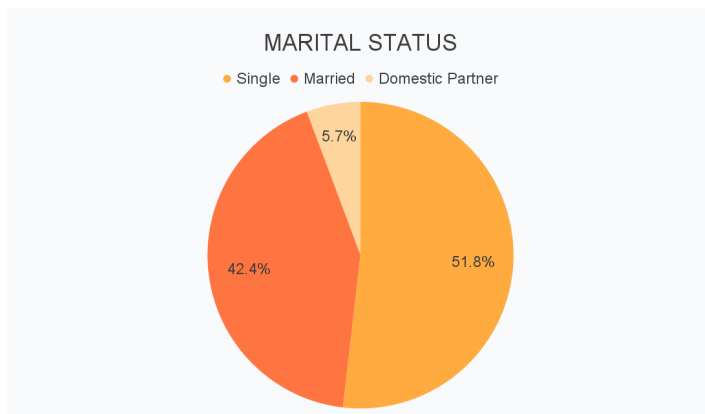
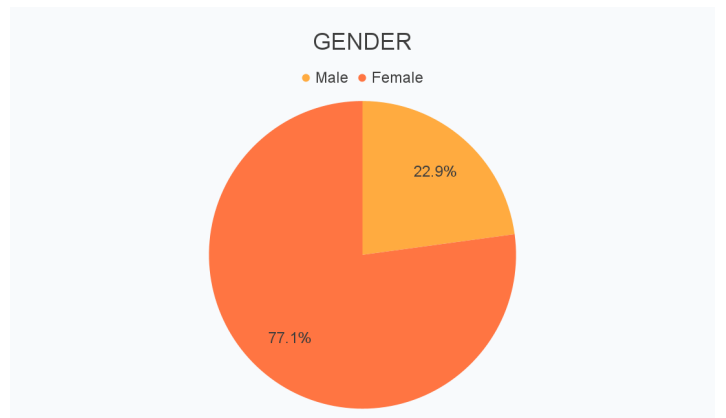
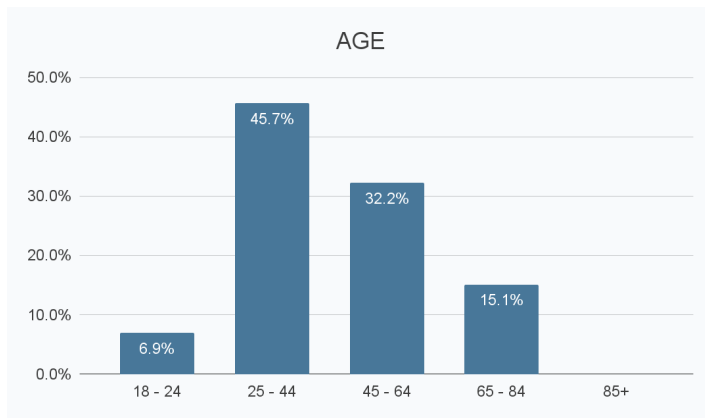
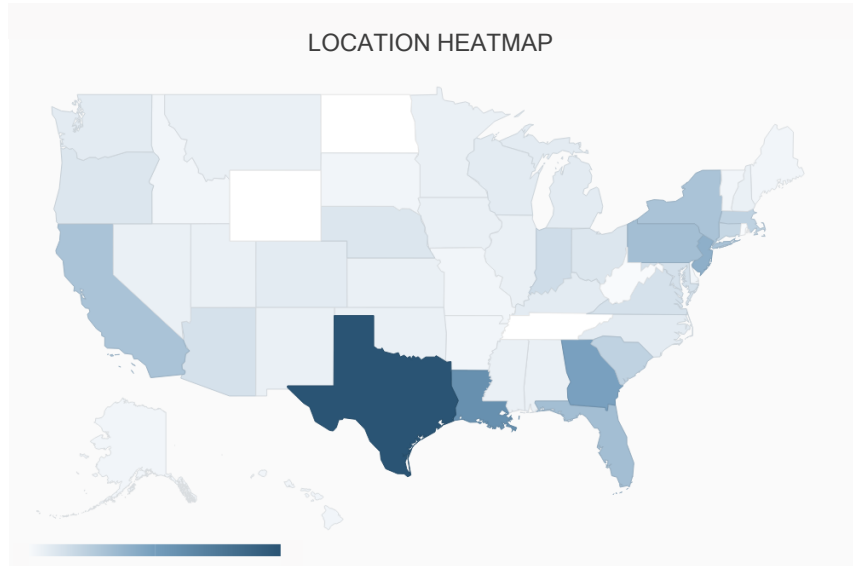
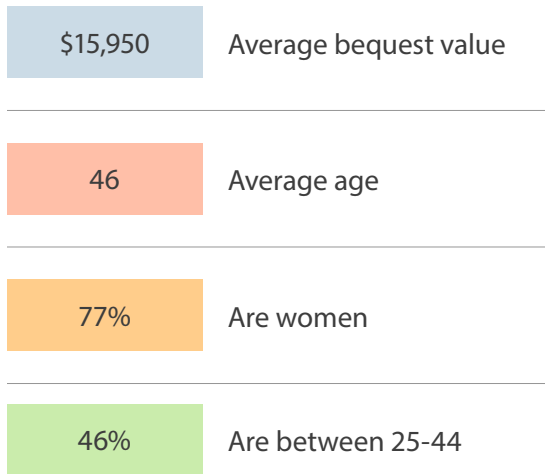


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

GENERAL HEALTH

TOP STATS

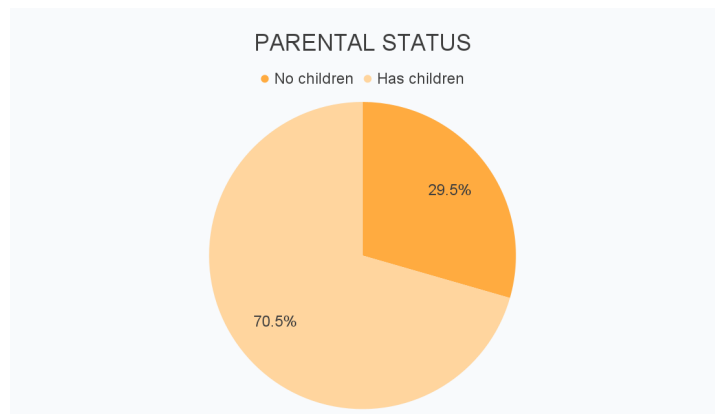
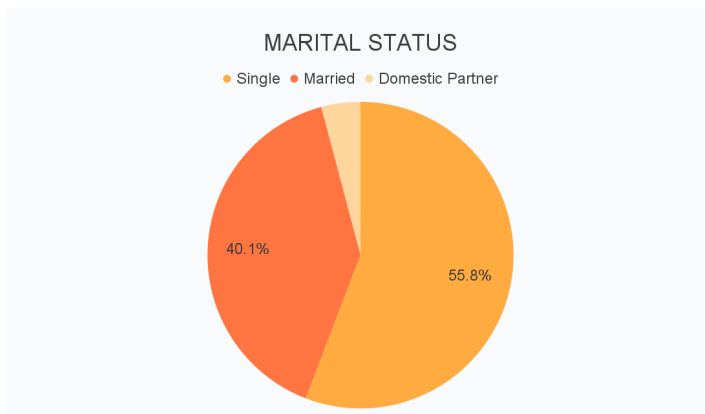
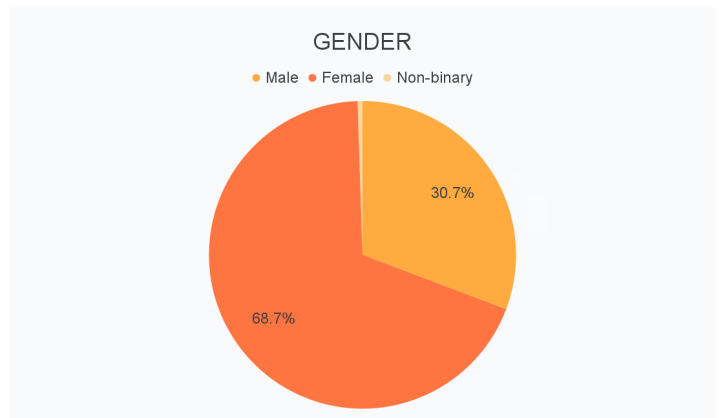
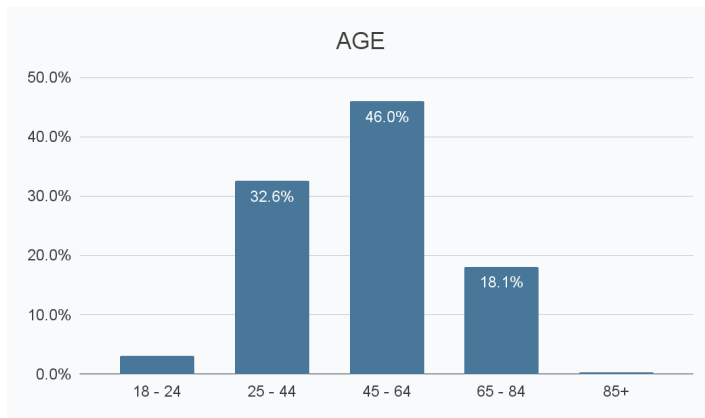
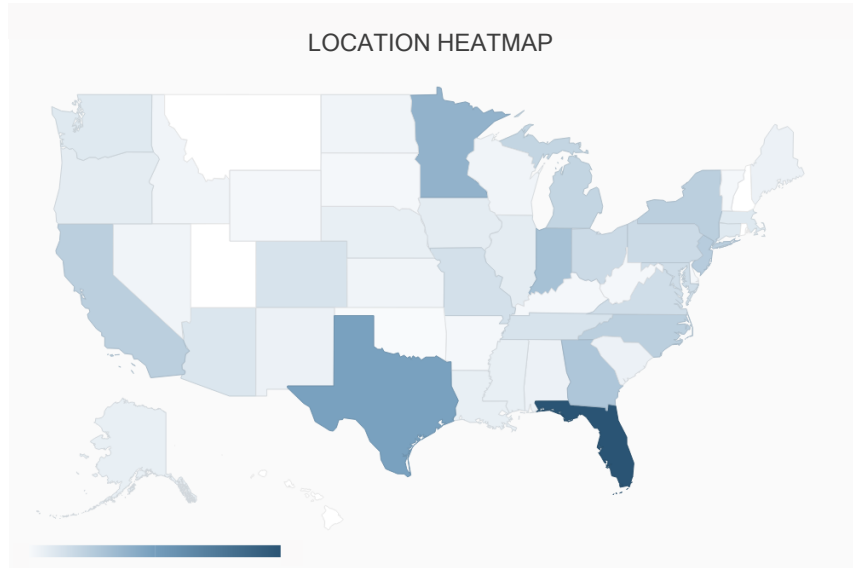
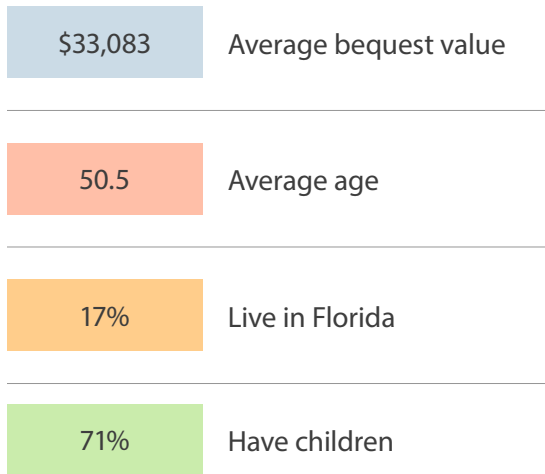


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

HOUSING & SHELTER

TOP STATS

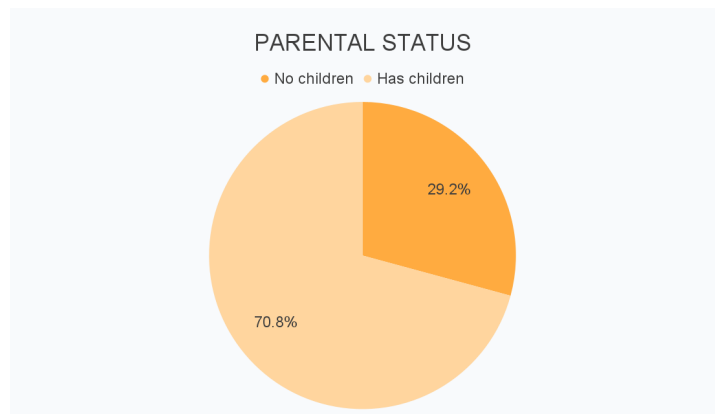
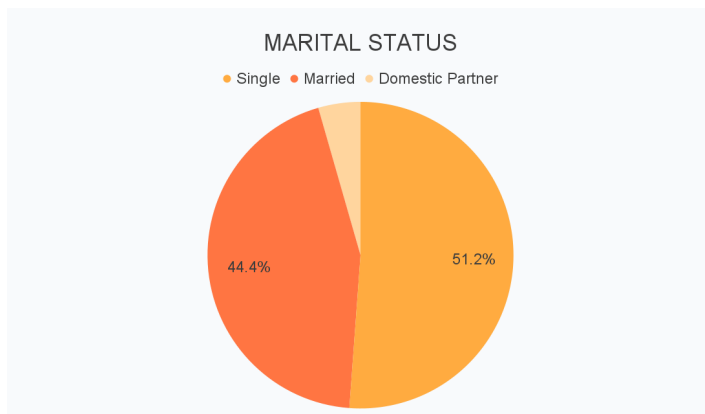
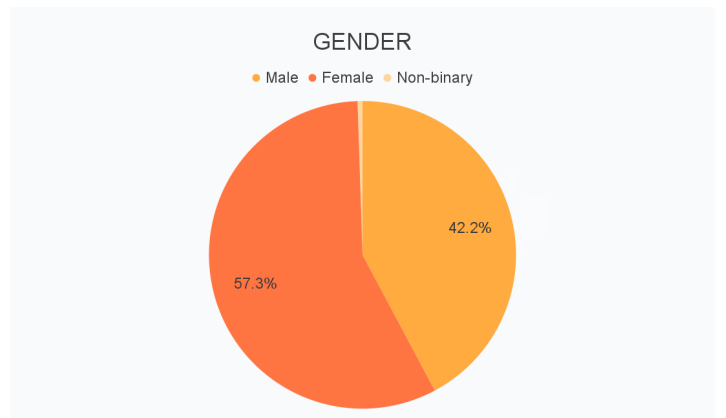
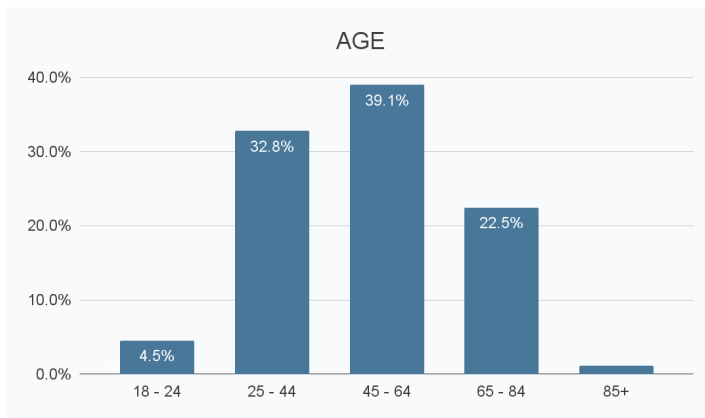
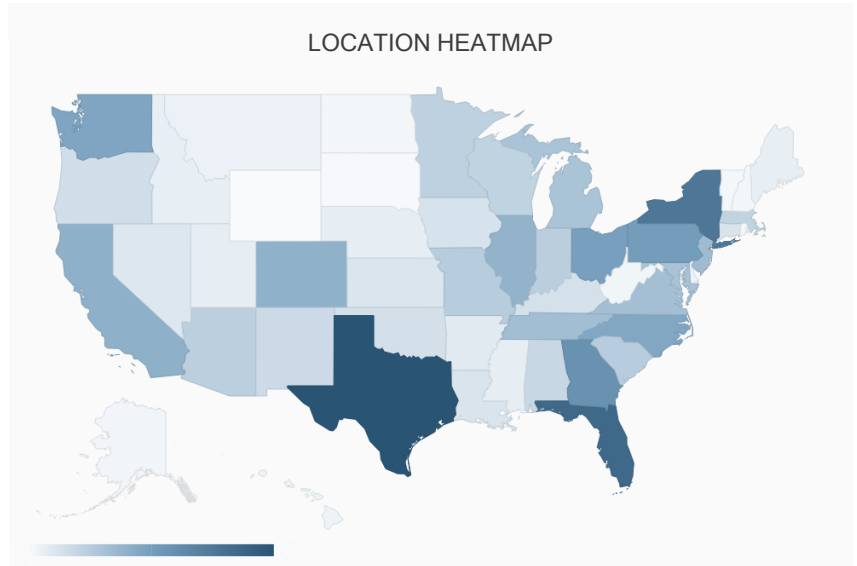
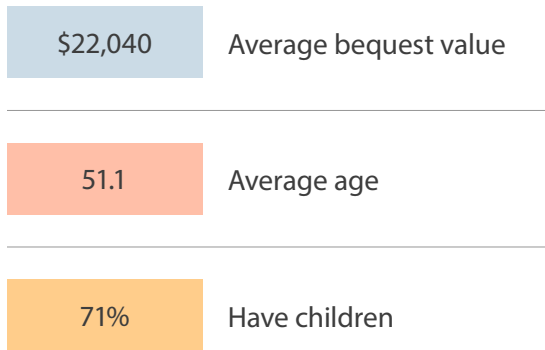


*Data is based on FreeWill Partner demographics of will-makers with one or more bequests, and may not be indicative of trends within the cause areas as a whole.

LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

HUMANITARIAN

TOP STATS

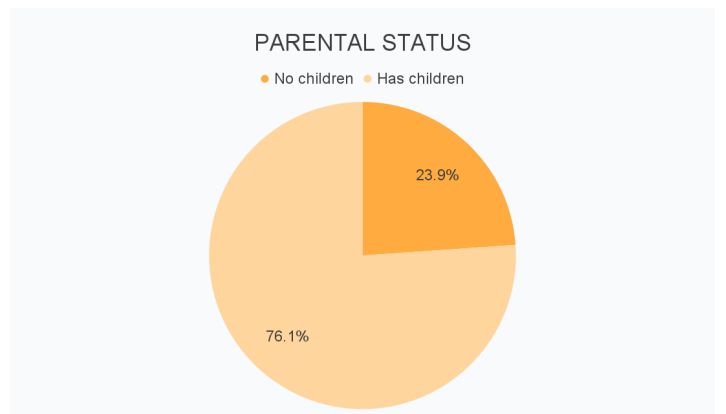
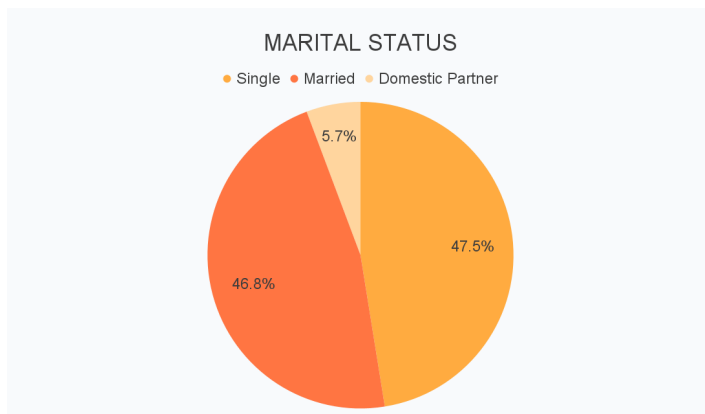
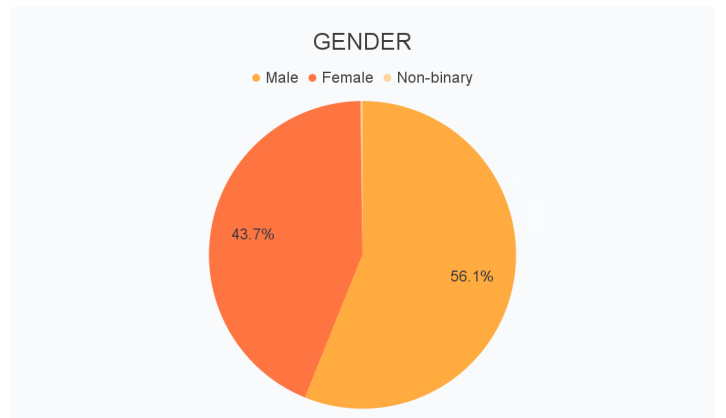
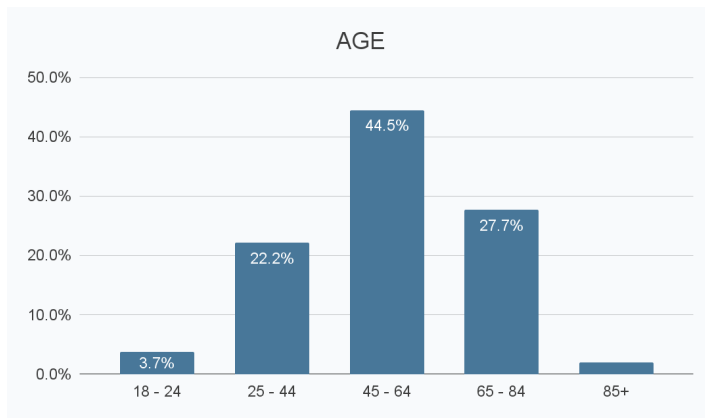
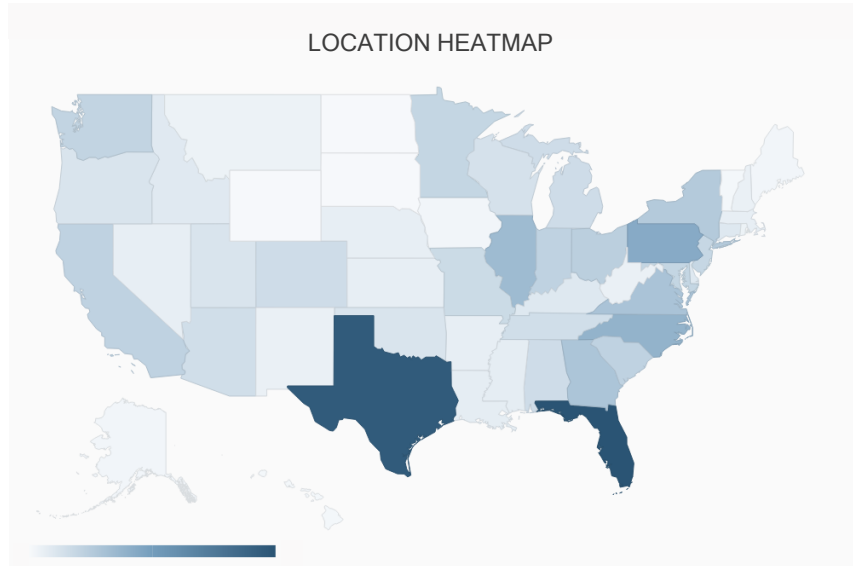
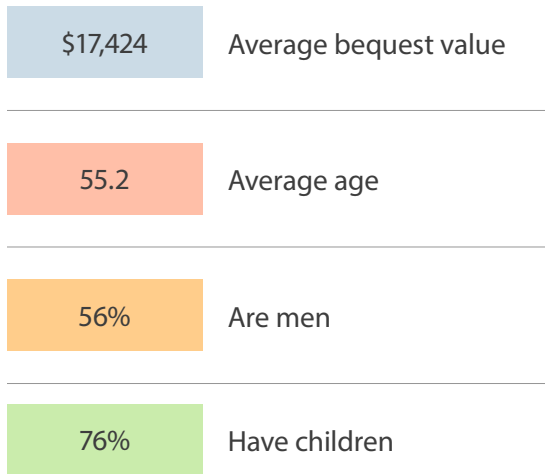


*Data is based on FreeWill Partner demographics of will-makers with one or more bequests, and may not be indicative of trends within the cause areas as a whole.

LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

MILITARY & VETERAN

TOP STATS

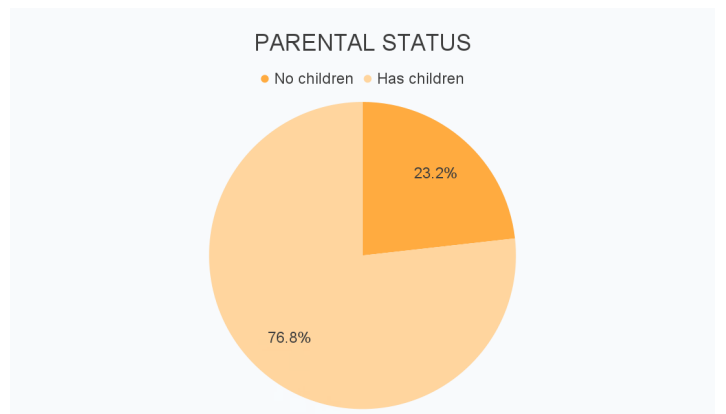
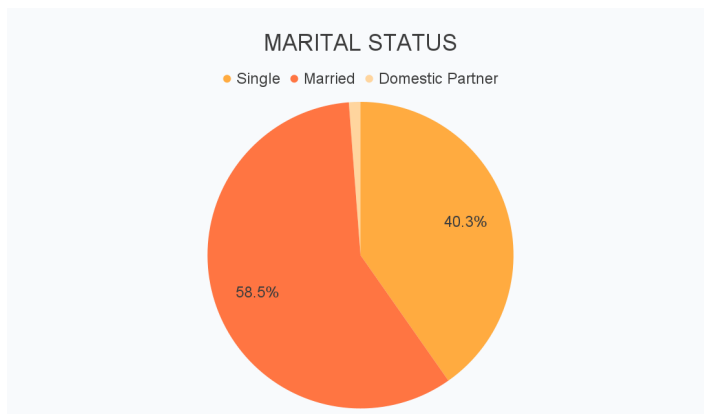
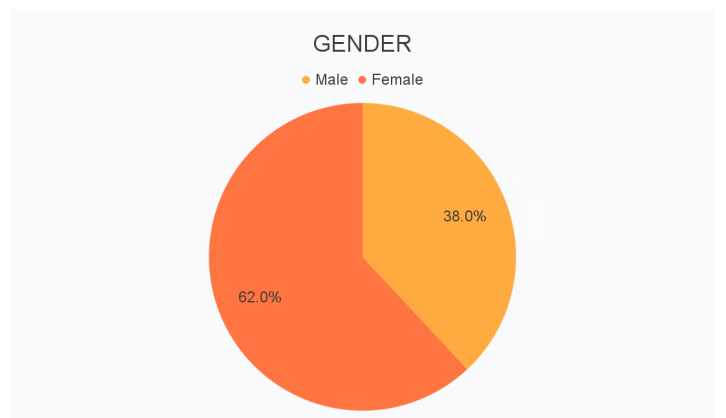
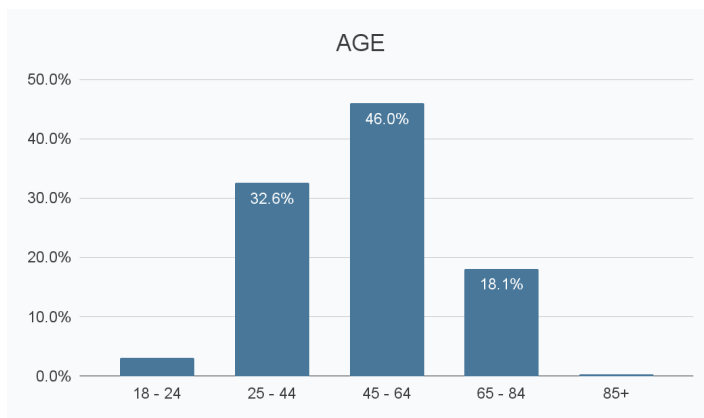
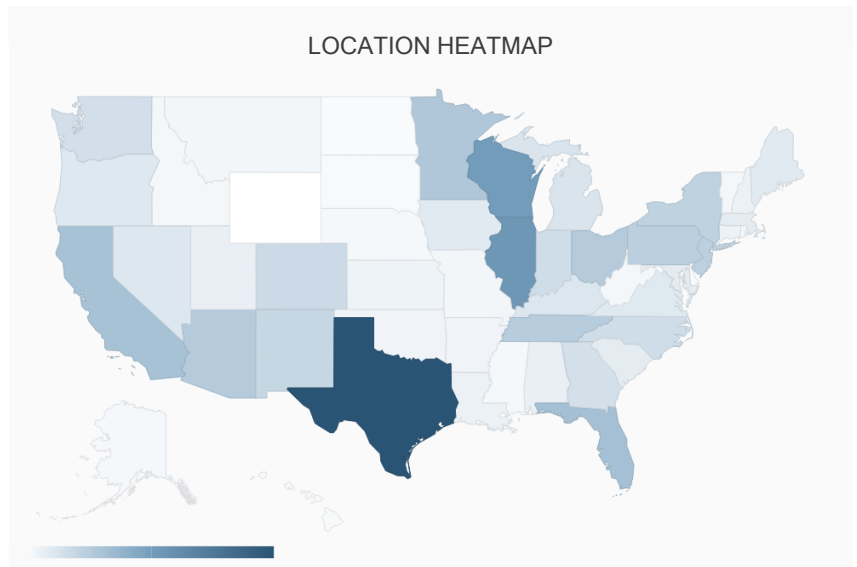
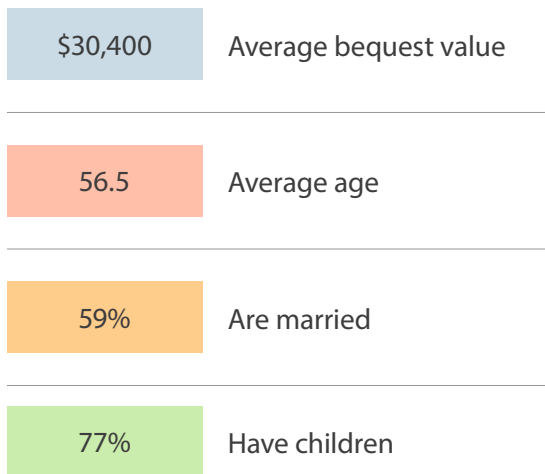


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

RELIGIOUS

TOP STATS

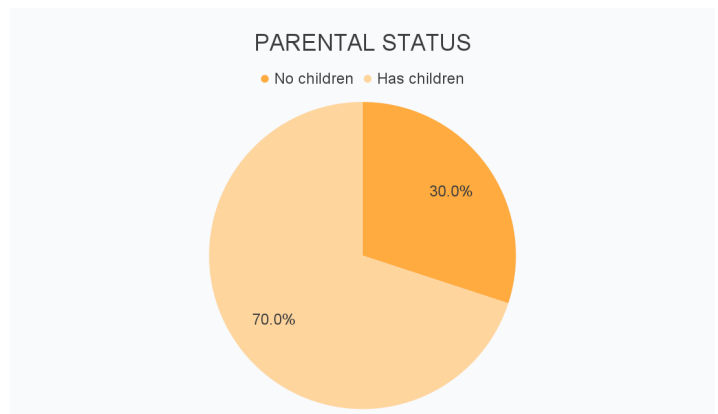
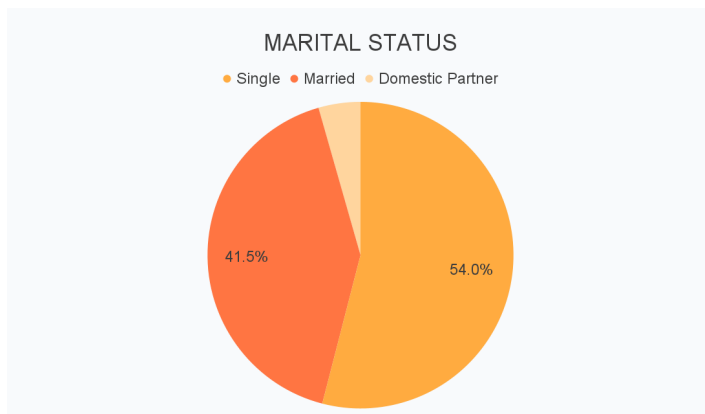
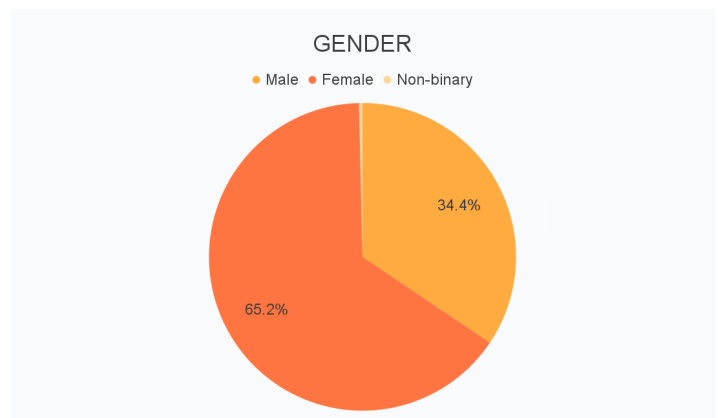
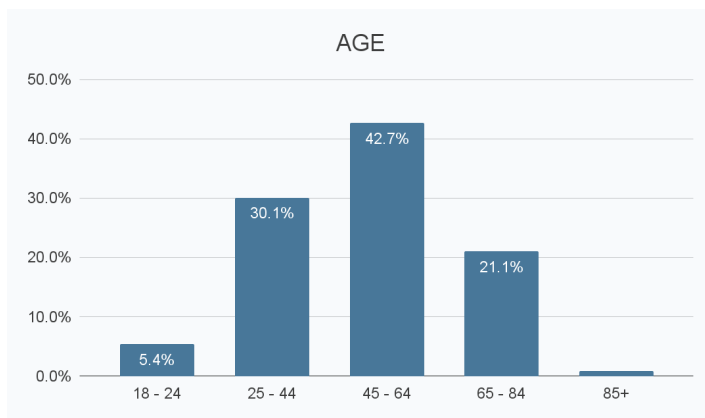
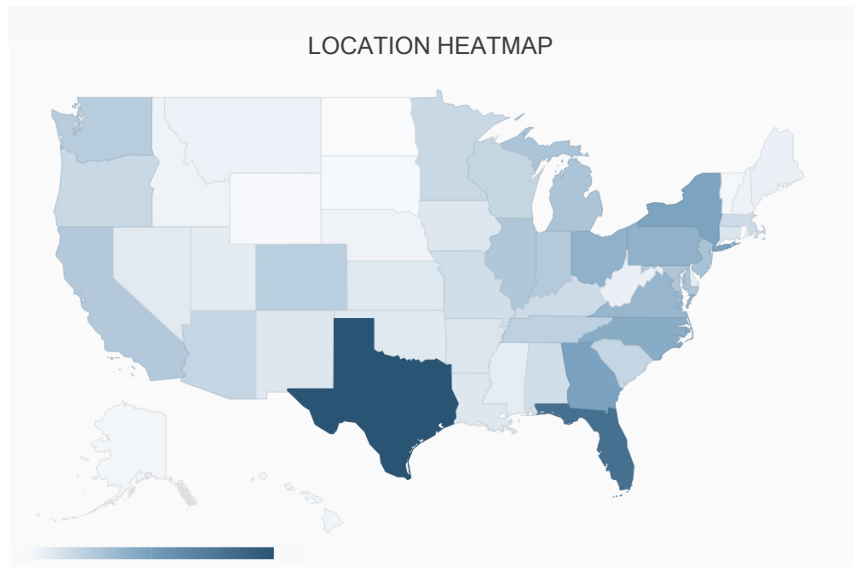
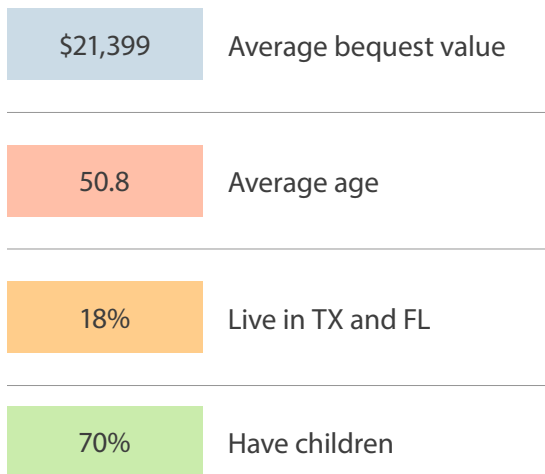


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LEGACY DONOR DEMOGRAPHICS

SPECIFIC HEALTH

TOP STATS



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

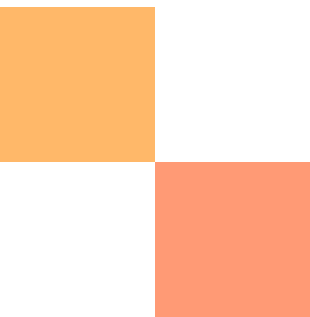
We couldn't have created this report (or done the work that led up to it) without the participation of our incredible nonprofit partners in the education, healthcare, environmental sustainability, disaster response, religious, and advocacy sectors, and so many more. It's a privilege to partner with them as they work to make the world a better place.

ABOUT FREEWILL

[FreeWill](#) is a social venture which was founded at Stanford University in 2016, dedicated to innovation in planned giving, philanthropy, and estate planning. FreeWill is based in the U.S., with a team of 95+ engineers, lawyers, designers, and fundraising experts who find joy in supporting nonprofits doing amazing work.

To date, FreeWill has generated more than \$3.5 billion in new gifts for thousands of nonprofit organizations. The [influential original research](#) on how technology and demographics are changing philanthropy by FreeWill co-founders Jenny Xia-Spradling and Patrick Schmitt was published in the Stanford Social Innovation Review. FreeWill's work has since been featured in [The New York Times](#), [The Chronicle of Philanthropy](#), [Forbes](#), and dozens of other media outlets. FreeWill's co-founders were named "Top 50 Philanthropists" by Town & Country in 2019.

If you're interested in learning more about how FreeWill can help you accelerate planned giving at your organization, please go to www.freewill.com/nonprofits.



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