

United Way Says Giving Didn't Grow Enough to Meet Inflation as the Economy Sputters (The Chronicle of Philanthropy, Print Edition, September 22, 2011, Page 8)

By Raymund Flandez

The sputtering economy made fundraising difficult for local United Ways across the country last year, with contributions of \$3.86-billion virtually unchanged from 2009's total of \$3.84-billion.

When inflation is taken into account, though, that 0.4% growth is technically a drop of 1.2%

Still, it is an improvement over the previous year, when donations dropped 5%, and United Way officials say it's a strong showing given the shaky job and stock markets.

"We're still in a difficult economy that could even be more difficult," says Sal Fabens, United Way Worldwide spokeswoman. "Despite being in a recession, to have some growth is hopeful to me."

United Way's traditional sources of donations continue to struggle: Contributions solicited through workplace fundraising drives grew just 0.2%, and corporate giving was down 1.4%.

But the organization has been helped by its efforts, to diversify its fundraising approach. United Way says efforts to raise money from particular types of donors, such as well-to-do women, and campaigns to seek out large or planned gifts helped make up for sluggish giving in 2010 among less-affluent people.

United Way reports:

- Fund raising from affinity groups grew at 11.9%, raising more than \$200-million in 2010. Donations collected by the United Way Women's Leadership Council grew by 110%.
- Contributions to endowments and planned gifts increased by 12.7%, with bequests rising 27.3%.
- Donations of \$10,000 or more from individuals, which accounted for more than one-third of total giving, rose by 1.5%.