

# The Backbone of Missoula Nonprofits: Donors

How do nonprofits in Missoula County raise the monetary funds necessary to meet their mission?

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## Results

**Self-motivated (33%).** Prior/ potential donors (29 %), Friend recommendations (14%), Board Referrals (14%) **Marketing (10%)**  
**4 income ranges for donors that emerged:**  
 \*0-25,000\$ (18%) \*25,000-50,000\$ (22%)  
 \*50,000-100,000\$ (43%) \*100,000-150,000\$ (17%)

**Who**

- **Direct mail (38%), events (28%), close relationships/ one on one meetings (28%), and grant writing (6%).**
- **Missoula nonprofits measure donor satisfaction in four different, but sometimes overlapping ways.**
  - Recurring gifts/donations (28%), personal feedback (52%), and Engagement (8%).
  - There was also another theme that was in our research and that was some nonprofits not measuring donor satisfaction (12%)
  - Feedback includes surveys, conversations with donors through phone calls or in person, and evaluations

**How**

## Time:

**Volunteer Time: Informal (28%), Episodic (44%), long-tem/direct (28%)**

**The average volunteer in these organizations spends 0-5 hours a week volunteering 0-5 (72%), 5-10 (24%), 30-40 (4%)**

## Money:

**Average Monetary gift: 0-100\$ (38%) , 101-250\$ (38%) 500-3000 (24%), 3 of which were 1000\$ or more.**

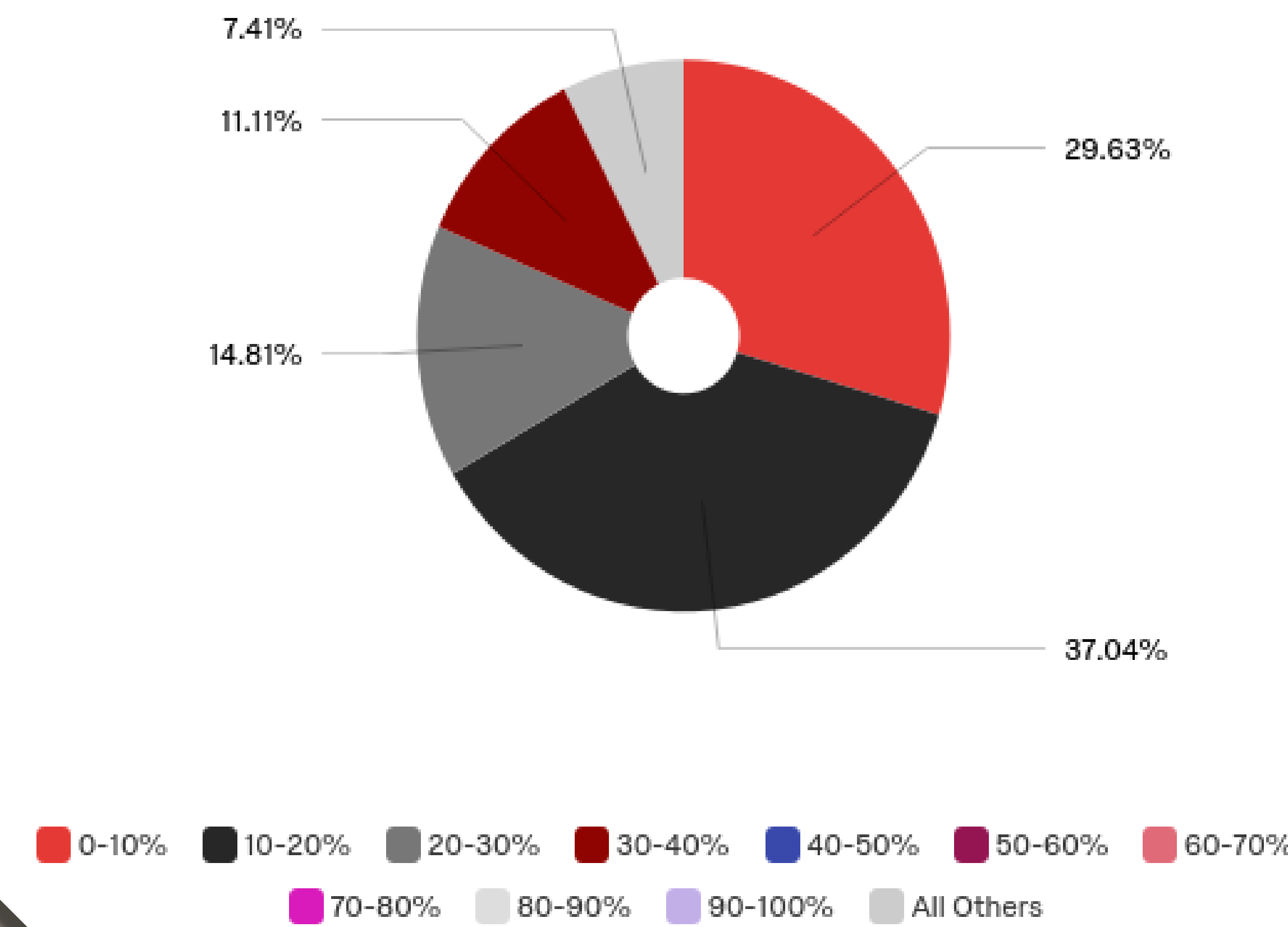
**Why**

## Learning Competency: Communication, Marketing & Public Relations

Communication, Marketing and public relations is the learning competency that we addressed in our research. Through our research, we were able to build awareness and stakeholder relations within the Missoula nonprofit sector. With the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, as well as peer and scholarly reviewed articles, our research was able to reveal new information regarding the nonprofits in Missoula. We were able to understand the numerous marketing and fundraising techniques that the nonprofit organizations use to target donors. In addition, our research outlined many donor behaviors and motivations to why they give back to the nonprofit sector. Through communication with various nonprofit organizations in the Missoula area, we were able to conclude who donates and characteristics of the nonprofit donors, such as their income levels and amount they donate. Missoula nonprofits market and solicit through three main mediums to their donors and volunteers. These communication vehicles are social media, email, and direct mail. Missoula nonprofits have three ways of measuring donor satisfaction. This communication helps the organization retain donors and is measured by recurring gifts and donations, personal feedback, donor engagement. The community engages with the nonprofit sector through prior and potential donors, friend recommendations, board referrals, self-interest, and marketing. These community development tools help the organization grow and succeed.

## Findings

Percentage of donors that contribute to volunteer time



## Implications for Research

Our research completed in Missoula, MT revealed patterns in the community's nonprofit sector, and encouraging results for future research.

The research findings paint a picture of engaged, community nonprofits. Although donor income levels are not as abundant in Missoula as compared with the national income average, nonprofits still find support in frequent volunteering and supportive boards. Our surveyed research also reveals that the impact of monetary contributions from individual donors does make a noticeable impact on the Missoula nonprofits. Volunteers are also greatly impactful, even though it is often short term and not usually done by donors who have previously donated before volunteering. An interesting finding was that boards play an important role in fundraising efforts for Missoula nonprofits, and not only are they fundraisers, but they are often volunteers as well. Unfortunately, there was not enough time for our team to do any 'on-site' visits to nonprofits in the community to engage with directors in order to build a richer picture of Missoula's nonprofits. Emerging from these findings is the image of a trusting, close community that depends on relationship building and networking to gather what limited support there are both financially and voluntarily for social missions.

It should be suggested that future research build on the donor income findings with more in-depth analysis of the Missoula community socio-economic diversity statistics. These statistics could encourage growth in the development of fundraising and marketization approaches by Missoula nonprofits; effectively building on the already strong support these nonprofits have, with an intention to grow.

## Research Method

Missoula County is rumored as having one of the highest ratios of nonprofits to residents in the nation (Patrick, 2014). However, nationally, Missoula ranks very low in the median annual household income, in 2015 it was \$53,889 in the United States and \$46,164 for Missoula County (United States Census Bureau, 2015). To understand how nonprofits receive the necessary funding to meet their mission our research delved into an investigation of donors through peer reviewed literature, articles, and a survey that led to our focus on three main topics: donor generosity based on income level, the variability of charitable givers, and effects of charitable giving on individual donors and organizations. Nonprofit organizations were selected in Missoula County based on the criteria of being a 501(c)3 organization under the National Taxonomy of Exempt Entities (NTEE). Each researcher selected 33 organizations from personal knowledge and online databases, the main criteria for selection being that an email address was accessible for use (in order to distribute the survey). Once the data from the survey was received, it was coded to be used in the research. The total number of nonprofit organizations who received the survey was 83, however only 29 completed the survey.

## Literature

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