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***What happens to charitable giving during economic slowdowns?
New report from Giving USA Foundation debunks “conventional wisdom”***

Glenview, IL (Sept. 19, 2008) – What really happens to charitable giving when the economy is roiling? A new report from Giving USA Foundation examines the topic from the aspect of past recessions and economic slowdowns, and discovers that while there is an impact on giving, it’s not as dire as conventional wisdom would assume.

“When the economy is uncertain, as it is in 2008, non-profits and others naturally assume the one sector that will be heavily impacted is philanthropy,” said George C. Ruotolo Jr., CFRE, chair of Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits and past chair of Giving USA Foundation. “With history as our guide, we know that’s not true. In fact, while charitable giving is impacted by recessions and/or economic slowdowns, it’s not by nearly as much as one might expect.”

The report, aptly entitled “Giving During Recessions and Economic Slowdowns,” looks at the subject in terms of historical times of economic distress in the nation’s economy, going back to 1969. It finds that total giving in the United States has risen every year in current dollars but one since recording began.

The exception was 1987, when a tax change law the previous year prompted some people to “give early,” so they could maximize the value of tax deductions they could claim, Ruotolo said.

Economic changes, such as slowed growth or a decline in gross domestic product, occur without economic recession. When the economy shows stress, whether it is a recession or not, giving may grow more slowly, but it still grows, according to the report, which was researched and written on behalf of the Foundation by the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University.

The report, part of the Foundation’s “Spotlight” series of newsletters that examines various aspects of philanthropy, looks at how different sectors within philanthropy have fared during recessions going back to 1969. (A recession is defined as two quarters of negative domestic growth. One has not been declared for 2008 by the body that is charged with identifying recessions, the National Bureau of Economic Research.)

“It is important at this juncture for cooler heads to prevail and for non-profits to not listen to those who would claim the sky is falling,” Ruotolo said. “Those charities with a clear and compelling case and an established loyal donor constituency will continue to succeed, even in difficult times.

“Let me be clear that if history is our guide, overall giving may once again grow in 2008,” he added.

(Note to editors: A full copy of the report is available by contacting Sharon Bond at 847/375-4836 or sbond@connect2amc.com.)

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About Giving USA Foundation™

Giving USA Foundation, headquartered in Glenview, Ill., has as its mission to advance philanthropy through education and research. It was formed in 1985 as the American Association of Fundraising Counsel Trust for Philanthropy by what is now known as the Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits. Its seminal publication, Giving USA, has been published continuously since 1956 and is considered the “bible” on who gives what to whom in America. For more information about the Foundation and its work, visit www.givingusa.org.

About Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits

Founded in 1935 as the American Association of Fundraising Counsel, what is now the Giving Institute: Leading Consultants to Non-Profits has as its mission to advance the practice of philanthropy through research, education and best practices. Its 35 member firms work globally in fundraising counsel, executive search, marketing communications and more. It is also headquartered in Glenview, Ill. For additional information on the Institute and its members, visit www.givinginstitute.org.