

## Women & Philanthropy: Four Insights to Inform Your Practice

At the Chester County Community Foundation, we're honored to work with hundreds of individuals, families, and businesses who support a wide range of charitable causes. The generosity and commitment across generations and demographics inspire our team every single day.

March is an especially good time to reflect on the evolving role of women in philanthropy because it's [Women's History Month](#). Increasingly, women are leading charitable decisions in their families, especially as more women are serving as primary financial decision-makers, according to Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy's [Women Give 2024: 20 Years of Gender & Giving Trends](#).



Two scenarios are driving this change:

- In many families, a leadership shift happens gradually. For example, a daughter becomes more engaged over the years in conversations about the family's charitable giving. Or a spouse who once deferred philanthropic decisions begins to shape priorities more directly.
- In other cases, the transition is sudden and deeply personal—often following the death of a spouse or parent—when a woman assumes sole responsibility for stewarding both financial assets and charitable intent.

Here are four examples of how your awareness of these trends can play out in your day-to-day practice:

### **Help your clients give through thick and thin.**

According to the [Women Give 2024](#) study, over the past two decades, single women experienced a smaller decline in charitable participation than single men, and their average giving amounts held steadier or increased in certain contexts (e.g., secular causes during COVID-19). Be aware of this trend as you represent single women; it may be a priority for them to continue giving even when times are tough. The Community Foundation can help you develop a charitable giving plan to enable women-led philanthropy to continue through life's ups and downs.

### **Discuss national trends and local needs.**

According to the Women's Philanthropy Institute at Indiana University's Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, for the first time, between [2022 and 2023](#), giving to women's and girls' organizations surpassed 2% of overall charitable giving. This represents over \$11 billion going to women's and girls' organizations each year. Note, however, that when adjusted for inflation, the amount actually declined between 2021 and 2023. This trend is worth mentioning to clients, especially with the help of the Community Foundation team to share parallel local trends and opportunities to make an impact.

### **Ask about all forms of philanthropy.**

According to the [2025 Bank of America Study of Philanthropy: Charitable Giving by Affluent Households](#), 43% of affluent households volunteered in 2024, up from 37% in 2022—volunteers tend to give more and support causes more deeply, a pattern often stronger among women. Be sure to ask your female clients about causes they support both financially *and* through volunteerism.

### **Tailor advice for single women.**

Research shows that participation trends vary by household type, with single women maintaining more consistent giving patterns over long periods. Pay particular attention to building thoughtful charitable giving plans for single women households. The Community Foundation can help maximize both impact and financial planning goals as you serve these clients.

As is the case when you are working with any charitable client, our team is honored to be your partner. Whether your client is establishing a new structure, building a comprehensive strategy around an existing donor-advised or other type of fund, or navigating inherited philanthropic responsibilities, we are here to help ensure their giving reflects both enduring legacy and evolving purpose.

For more information, contact the Chester County Community Foundation:

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*The team at the Chester County Community Foundation is a resource and sounding board as you serve your philanthropic clients. We understand the charitable side of the equation and are happy to serve as a secondary source as you manage the primary relationship with your clients. This newsletter is provided for informational purposes only. It is not intended as legal, accounting, or financial planning advice.*