

Study reveals the demographics of charitable giving

By Pam Fessler, NPR

Ever wonder how charitable the people are who live in your state or community? It turns out that lower-income people tend to donate a much bigger share of their discretionary incomes than wealthier people do. And rich people are more generous when they live among those who aren't so rich.

That's according to a new study by the Chronicle of Philanthropy, which breaks charitable giving down by ZIP code. It found that generosity varies greatly from one region of the country to another. (Explore charitable giving in your state, city and neighborhood using the Chronicle of Philanthropy's new interactive.)

Take the 20020 ZIP code area in Southeast Washington, D.C. It includes the Fairlawn and Anacostia neighborhoods, which are among the city's poorest. Many in the area turn to charity for help.

One of those charities is a nonprofit called Bread for the City, where people line up daily for help with housing, health care, legal aid and food. But in this neighborhood, where the need is so great, charitable giving is also relatively high. Using Internal Revenue Service data, the Chronicle of Philanthropy found that the median household contribution is almost 19 percent of discretionary income – that's money left over after taxes and living expenses. This rate of giving is four times the national average.

Kristin Valentine, Bread for the City's development director, says she's not surprised. Even their clients give when they

can, though it's often a few dollars at a time.

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