



Merrill Lynch: Potential Giving Of Older Americans 'Vastly Underestimated'

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Philanthropic giving of time and money is set to grow dramatically in the next 20 years because baby boomers will live longer and have more money than past generations, says Merrill Lynch and Age Wave in a study released Thursday.

Monetary giving will grow to a cumulative \$6.6 trillion over the next two decades, according to "Giving in Retirement: America's Longevity Bonus," and the value of 58 billion volunteer hours will top \$1.4 trillion.

Sixty-five percent of retirees who were surveyed say retirement is the best time to give time and money to causes they believe in. The survey included 3,600 respondents of all ages and income levels. The results were reported in a webinar Thursday.

"We found that we have vastly underestimated the potential contributions of older Americans through charity. We're seeing that retirement unleashes new opportunities to give that can positively impact the world," says Andy Sieg, head of Global Wealth and Retirement Solutions for Bank of America Merrill Lynch.

"Today's retirees are in a position to make significant, lasting contributions and define their legacy. We're going to see older adults contributing to society in new and meaningful ways," he adds.

Giving reached a high of \$358 billion last year and has been on an upward trend since the end of the 2008-2009 recession. But baby boomers give differently from previous generations, according to Ken Dychtwald, president and CEO of Age Wave, a resource and education organization organization focusing on aging issues.

Baby boomers are more focused and want to see the impact of their giving. They are five times more likely to check out charities before they give than previous generations, Dychtwald says. Once they find a charity or cause they believe in, they are more likely to become involved personally.

“We have a unique opportunity to harness the wealth of talents, skills and experiences of the boomer generation as they enter retirement and seek to make a difference,” Dychtwald says. Older adults are not a burden on society; rather, “they could be part of the solution to many of our country’s biggest challenges.”

Retirees who volunteer their time, give more than twice as much time as other ages, the survey says. Eighty-four percent of retirees say they can give back more because they have more skills and experience than they did when they were younger.

The survey also found that giving back to the community creates a better retirement. Retirees who give say they have a stronger sense of purpose than those who don’t (59 percent versus 43 percent), higher self esteem (57 percent versus 51 percent), and are both happier (66 percent versus 52 percent) and healthier (50 percent versus 43 percent).

Women are more likely than men to say that success is defined by generosity rather than wealth (90 percent versus 79 percent) and more retired women donate than men (81 percent versus 71 percent). The report is available [here](#).

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