

Oklahoma City area ranked seventh most charitable major metro in new philanthropy report

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BY SILAS ALLEN | Published: September 6, 2012  0

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The report ranks the 50 most populous American metropolitan areas in terms of the median percent of their annual income residents donate to charity. According to the ranking, residents in the Oklahoma City area donate 5.5 percent of their income to charity.

The Salt Lake City area topped the list. Residents there donate 9 percent of their income to charities. That total includes donations to religious institutions. Salt Lake City is the home of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

The study is based on comprehensive tax returns for 2008 the publication obtained from the IRS. The study includes only those taxpayers who reported annual incomes of \$50,000 or more. It looks only at individual donations, and doesn't account for corporate giving.

The Oklahoma City area gave more than any other metropolitan area in the state in terms of raw dollars, with \$640.1 million donated. But the Oklahoma City area fell slightly behind the Tulsa area in terms of percentage of income donated. Residents in the Tulsa area donated 5.9 percent of their income to charity, a total of \$592.4 million.

Residents in the Fort Smith, Ark., area, which includes Le Flore and Sequoyah counties in Oklahoma, gave 6.1 percent of their income to nonprofit groups. That area gave a total of \$78.9 million.

Statewide, Oklahoma donated \$1.7 billion to charity, which represented 5.6 percent of residents' income. Oklahoma ranked 11th in terms of the percentage of their income its residents donated. Utah topped the list, with 10.6 percent of residents' income donated.

Marnie Taylor, president of the Oklahoma Center for Nonprofits, said individual giving is the backbone of the nonprofit sector in Oklahoma. When an individual donor

contributes to a nonprofit, it means that donor’s passions and interests are intersecting with that organization’s mission.

The dynamic for charitable giving is somewhat different in Oklahoma City than it is in Tulsa, Taylor said. In Oklahoma City, nonprofits receive their donations from a combination of foundations, individuals and corporations, particularly those in the energy industry.

Nonprofits in Tulsa tend to see less of their income from corporate giving, T meaning donations from foundations and individuals are all the more import

“An individual donation is really gold to a nonprofit,” she said. “The nonprof would not exist without them.”

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