

**This Call to Action begins where the research leaves off. Give More, Give Strategically, and Connect People - to - Places.**

**We can do more**

In fall 2008, an alliance of leaders from across the Triangle came together to take a hard look at life in our community. Yes, we make “Best of” lists all the time, but how does the Triangle fare in terms of giving back and taking care of its own?

The result - How the Triangle Gives Back: A Report to the Region - is the most comprehensive collection of data to date on the state of philanthropy in Chatham, Durham, Orange, and Wake counties.

After considering this research, regional leaders from the nonprofit, corporate, education, religious, philanthropic, and communications sectors have worked together for the past year to tackle the implications of the report and the possibilities it presents for philanthropy.

This Call to Action begins where the research leaves off. Through these recommendations we intend to address the following critical questions:

- How do we ensure that all people living here have equal and fair access to opportunity?
- How do we nurture a sense of community amid our mobility and diversity?

While the Triangle’s breakneck growth has led to an overall enhancement in the standard of living, maintaining middle-class stability is also becoming more difficult for more people – especially now that the economy has fallen into the worst recession in a generation. As our community safety-net systems and public institutions are consistently asked to do more with less, giving by individuals and organizations becomes the thread that keeps the safety net from ripping apart.

When Triangle Gives Back began, a nationwide economic downturn was not expected. But, as we consider our current stark economic realities, now is exactly the right time to issue a bold call to action.

Our nation – and particularly our state - has a strong history of pulling together when times are tough. It’s time for us to make sure that we marshal the region’s newfound wealth and talent to meet immediate needs and build a more prosperous future. A community that works for everyone needs a new type of philanthropy.

**We need to do good differently.**



**triangle gives back**  
*do good differently*

**GIVE MORE**

***Giving by Individuals***

Most charitable giving in the Triangle comes from individuals. In fact, both regionally and nationally those with less give a higher percentage of their income to charity. However, as a region, our individual giving lags behind Charlotte, the Triad, and the North Carolina average. What if the Triangle led the state in giving? In order to ensure that our region works for everyone, we all need to do more. Each one of us can:

- Determine what issues matter to us and take action.
- Think about what time, talent, and treasure we have available and make a giving plan that incorporates all of these.
- Utilize [trianglegivesback.org](http://trianglegivesback.org) to connect with people and organizations that have similar interests.
- Serve as role models for young people and help make giving part of their values.
- Investigate giving circles and other models for combining our giving with others’ in order to create a larger impact.

**Recession. Crisis. Meltdown. Layoffs. Foreclosures. Unemployment.**  
We’re hearing these words everyday.

### *Giving by Companies*

When compared to our peers, the Triangle has a shallow pool of corporate philanthropy. Our business community is both a contributor to and a beneficiary of the high quality of life that attracts many to our region in the first place. But that quality of life does not equally touch us all – and the business community has the power to help ensure that it does.

Because building a region that works for everyone is both a competitiveness and a workforce development issue, the business community has a vested interest. Given that interest, our region needs Triangle corporations, businesses, and entrepreneurs to give more.

We encourage the corporate community to consider:

**How they communicate about giving:**

- Report publicly the important giving they currently do.

**What they give:**

- Match employee charitable giving.
- Provide opportunities and paid time off for employees to volunteer.
- Donate money, products, technical assistance, or space.

**How much they give:**

- Allocate a specific annual budget for giving.
- Give a percentage of sales, profits, or pre-tax earnings in charitable contributions.

**To whom they give:**

- Implement organized, strategic giving programs.
- Align giving focus with company's vision, mission, values, culture, and strategies.
- Focus giving on the communities in which a company operates and where employees and customers live.

### *Giving by Religious Communities*

Over the last six years, Triangle residents have given more than \$1 billion - and countless amounts of time and talent - to their

faith organizations. While we know that this funding is often split between the faith organization itself and supporting community outreach activities, the full impact that our faith communities have on our communities is unknown.

When it comes to religious communities, we recommend the following considerations:

- Congregations and other religious entities can help organized philanthropy better understand religious giving by adopting practices of calculating and communicating information about giving that has an impact beyond their congregation.
- Grantmakers should think of religious organizations as fellow philanthropists and should work with them to develop training, tools, and technical assistance to increase the impact, strategic direction, and coordination of current religious giving to the community.

**TAKE A HARD LOOK AT LIFE IN OUR COMMUNITY. HOW DOES THE TRIANGLE FARE IN TERMS OF GIVING BACK?**

### *Giving by Colleges & Universities*

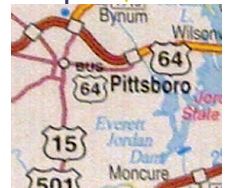
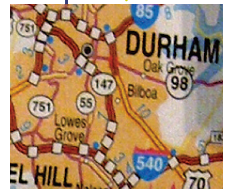
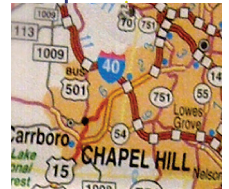
Our region's colleges and universities are both givers and receivers. Among our peers, the Triangle ranks first in the amount of grant dollars received to support education. Much of this funding comes from outside of our region. As educators, employers, and researchers, these schools enrich our communities in a variety of ways. We encourage them to:

- Continue community engagement efforts, such as those proposed in the report by the UNC Tomorrow Commission.
- Utilize [trianglegivesback.org](http://trianglegivesback.org) to:
  - Facilitate effective service-learning placements.
  - Encourage employees to give back.
  - Locally connect research-efforts with nonprofits working in similar fields in ways that benefit both organizations and the people they serve.
- Share faculty and staff expertise in strategic planning, budgeting, and fundraising with nonprofits throughout the Triangle.

### *Giving by Foundations*

The Triangle has more than 400 local foundations making grants to charities; however, most of these foundations are small and give less when compared to our peer regions. In fact, among our peers, the Triangle ranks 12th of 15 in the total number of foundations and 14th in the number of foundations with assets greater than \$1 million.

In the midst of our current economic climate, Triangle foundations – like foundations across the country – are seeing their endowment dollars shrink. However, foundation giving, through grants, investments, and leveraging, is now more important than ever.



# Think Strategically

We urge the region's foundations to consider the following:

- During our economic downturn, Triangle foundations need to honor current grant commitments and clearly communicate long-term plans for future grantmaking.
- Triangle foundations benefit the region most when they are as transparent as possible in their criteria, strategies, and decision-making processes.
- When the majority of grant dollars flowing into the Triangle actually comes from outside of the region, it raises the question of how we take care of our own community. We challenge Triangle foundations to examine the possibility of giving more than their annually required percentages.
- When funds are limited, Foundations should collaborate in the ways we recommend nonprofits do to ensure that our grant dollars continue to have the maximum impact possible.

## GIVE STRATEGICALLY

### Nonprofit Organizations

The Triangle is home to more than 5,200 501 (c) 3 nonprofit organizations. This large number speaks to the charitable impulse among people living in our region. We see a need. We give our time to that need. We create an organization to address that need.

However, each of these organizations requires – at a minimum – committed volunteers to serve on Boards of Directors and ongoing financial support from a variety of sources. Sustaining each of these 5,200+ groups is difficult for our region, especially during challenging economic times when competition for scarce funds is high.

If individuals are thinking about turning their passion for an issue into a new nonprofit organization, we recommend asking the following questions:

- How do I want to make a difference? On what issue do I want to make an impact?
- What organizations in the region are currently working on that issue? Do I have an original idea about how to make a difference?
- Is a new organization really necessary? Could my idea be a program at a larger organization?
- If I do start a new organization, what is my long-term plan for funding the organization's work?

There is a tremendous amount of vibrancy and innovation that exists within the Triangle's nonprofit community. We believe that established Triangle nonprofits are most successful when they take the following steps:

- Focus on relationship-building among current and potential donors.
- Tell their stories often and demonstrate impact.
- Increase collaborative efforts with other organizations and consider consolidation, merger, or other types of partnerships when appropriate (i.e., shared back office operations). This will become increasingly important under our current - and probably future-climate of shrinking funding.

### Giving to Meet Immediate Needs

Among our peer regions, the Triangle ranks 9th of 15 in grant dollars supporting human and social services. During our current economic recession, human and social service organizations are the only safety net for many of our Triangle neighbors. Cruelly, the demand for these services is rising at the same time that available resources, especially public ones, are diminishing. As individuals and organizations think about where and when to give their limited resources, giving to meet immediate needs is critical.

### Giving for the Long Term

Even as we give to meet today's needs, we must also plan for the long-term. Our giving is a key part of creating a sustainable region that works for everyone. We all should:

- Think strategically about which nonprofit organizations are working in areas that match our personal, family, or company values and priorities – and make a long-term giving plan based on those matches.
- Consider the difference in impact of multiple small gifts or grants compared to sustained, deeper relationships with fewer nonprofit organizations.
- Support nonprofit general operating expenses so that the organizations we believe in can use those gifts in the ways that best meet their needs.

Even as we give to meet today's needs, we must also plan for the **long-term**. Our giving is a key part of creating a sustainable region that works for **everyone**.



triangle gives back  
do good differently

# Imagine the possibilities

## CONNECT PEOPLE & PLACE

Beyond giving by and to specific groups, giving – in general – creates community.

Giving and community are linked. As we become more connected to a place, we become more concerned about the people, needs, and opportunities in that place. The more concerned we are, the more involved we become and the more likely we are to contribute our time, talent, and money.

Right now, the Triangle is a scattered collection of increasingly diverse and mobile communities. Today, more than one-half of the Triangle's population consists of people born outside of North Carolina. We currently lack mechanisms for creating connection to place – particularly among those new to our region.

The larger **Triangle Gives Back** initiative aims to take on some of these action steps. Our vision is that [www.trianglegivesback.org](http://www.trianglegivesback.org) will be a **dynamic** hub to learn, connect, inspire, and give in ways that make a **difference**.

**Imagine** what we could do if every family living in the Triangle contributed the state average of just **4.38%** of their annual income to lift up our region?

With an average median family income of \$72,618, 4.38% equals a gift of \$3,181 per family. With an estimated 295,554 families living in the Triangle, we could generate over \$940,000,000 in one year to help solve some of our region's most pressing issues.

- This could provide a safety net for a family suddenly left without a source of income because of job loss, etc. Average time of job loss is six months.
- We could provide every one of the Triangle's 202,721 youth with after-school programming, summer camps, and tutoring for one year.
- We could tutor every adult in the Triangle who is learning to read for one hour per week for one year.
- We could provide a visit to a free clinic for health, dental, and prescription services for every person in the Triangle living in poverty.
- We could provide three meals a day for six months for every person living in the Triangle for one year.

As we move forward, we need to:

- Support efforts to increase information and connection across our diverse region – particularly among newcomers – and ask ourselves:
- How do we introduce newcomers to our region?
- How do we connect newcomers to the region's diverse array of nonprofits?
- How do we collect and share information about our community?
- Talk about giving.
- What are our regional expectations about giving? How do we communicate those expectations?
- What roles can media play in highlighting stories about giving in the Triangle?
- Translate connection into specific action by making informed, high-impact giving easy for everyone.

We could do all of this – and still have more than \$1,000,000 left to further support these initiatives, advocate for civil rights, preserve our natural environment, and enhance the arts.

Our region is so often cited as the #1 place to live, work, and play. Imagine if we all worked together as a region to make the Triangle the #1 place in giving - developing a sense of responsibility and ownership so that everyone who benefits from the region's success also feels called to give back by contributing their time, talent, or treasure.



This Call To Action was issued by  
Triangle Community Foundation  
[www.trianglecfd.org](http://www.trianglecfd.org)

Andrea Bazán, *President*

Robyn Fehrman, *Community Program Officer*

Kelly Harrell, *Director of Communications*