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How does Wisconsin (and, your state) rank in charitable giving?

The Chronicle of Philanthropy utilizes data from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) to study the giving characteristics of Americans. The Chronicle’s analysis is based upon the charitable deductions claimed on individual federal tax returns with incomes of $50,000 or more.

The Chronicle reports that the median charitable contribution made by American households in 2008 was $2,564 or 4.7 percent of their incomes. Utah ranked first with a median contribution of $5,255 or 10.6 percent of reported income per tax return. How did Wisconsin rank?

a) In the top ten  
b) The top twenty  
c) A little less than average  
d) The bottom ten

Answer: d) Wisconsin ranked 44th among the fifty states with a median contribution of $1,747 (3.7 percent of income). The top five also included: Mississippi (7.2%); Alabama (7.1%); Tennessee (6.6%); and South Carolina (6.6%). New England dominated the bottom five with Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Vermont, Maine, and New Hampshire.

Wisconsin taxpayers with incomes of at least $50,000 gave $2.0 billion in 2008. If Wisconsinites gave at the national average, charities would have received an estimated additional $500 million.


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