

Overview

The GivingTuesday Data Commons has proven to be an unprecedented initiative for the social sector. We are poised for substantial growth to meet the demands of a world emerging from crisis. This work is ready to scale up for maximum impact now and for the future.

As the only initiative focused on collecting and analyzing individual giving behavior of all types, the Data Commons continues to lead ground-breaking work in the social sector, and to date has collected the most comprehensive datasets in the social sector. We work with partners across sectors and borders to understand the drivers and impacts of generosity, analyze the effects of networks and collective action, explore giving behaviors, and use data to inspire more giving around the world. With over 300 collaborators and 50 global data chapters, this is the largest philanthropic data collaboration ever built.

As GivingTuesday enters its tenth year, we see increased need and enormous potential for the Data Commons. There are opportunities and demand for growth on every front: original research projects, expanded sector infrastructure, new collaborations, larger global footprint, and funding possibilities. The GivingTuesday Data Commons represents fundamental infrastructure and assets for the global social sector. These data assets have particular impact. Unlike other resources, they are not depletable – the more they're used, the more value they deliver.

The Data Commons applies the proven distributed model and collaborative culture of GivingTuesday to **reimagine both the traditional research institute and the industry data marketplace**. We are building the underpinning infrastructure that will support the global social sector. Our target budget for this work over the next five years is \$26M and we have at least 20% of this goal confirmed.

The Problem

The social sector lacks what the commercial sector has long benefited from: Tools and infrastructure that drive collaborative, data-driven solutions and innovation, thus suppressing impact, resilience and sustainability. **Until now.**

Data in the social sector have been plagued by a number of systemic problems:

- ✓ **The data are incomplete**, limiting the ability of institutions, organizations, and groups to navigate change or to face the future with agility. Without a view of the full spectrum of the environment, important trends are obscured;
- ✓ **Data and insights are siloed and opaque**, held by a very few players and without connection to each other, the sector lacks the systems-level understanding necessary to move beyond competition and focus on growth;
- ✓ **Research often reinforces received wisdom**, rather than building on our knowledge, much effort is directed and proving what we already “know”. As a result, important opportunities are missed, and threats are not mitigated. Sustaining reductive paradigms stifles innovation.
- ✓ **Data are stale, insights are not actionable**, findings focused on data that is years old results in outcomes that have no utility. There is little opportunity to leverage learning for impact; and
- ✓ **Research is disconnected by practice**, leading to efforts that are not informed by the priorities of practitioners and learning that is not disseminated for real-world results.

Our Solutions

We have designed the GivingTuesday Data Commons to tackle these long-standing issues and help build a more resilient social sector – one that is equipped to be responsive to shocks – and a more resilient sector, ready to go beyond recovery and emerge stronger, more empowered and effective. We are addressing these systemic problems by:

- ✚ **Building the most compete data assets ever collected**, both in scale and scope. These data provide high-fidelity views of giving in many forms, including non-profit donations and come from a broad range of participating providers. We are collecting holistic and comprehensive data about giving of all kinds;
- ✚ **Creating a distributed and collaborative model and infrastructure**, that provides inclusive participation and view of the marketplace, with more than 800 collaborators across sectors, and around the world;
- ✚ **Providing the environment and data inputs to challenge received wisdom**, with the aim of growing generosity without agenda or stake in status quo. We have become the most significant convener of research, uplifting new perspectives and approaches;
- ✚ **Developing the tools and resources for the practical interpretation of data**, with access to timely data, trends, and indicators that enable data-driven decision making;
- ✚ **Connecting leaders, researchers, social enterprise and policymakers**, to help practitioners access and integrate learning. We are informing research with real-world needs and situations.

Who We Serve

One of the factors that make the GivingTuesday Data Commons uniquely positioned for investment is that we have designed it with the needs of multiple stakeholders in mind. The collaborative approach we are taking serves not only to provide us with a broad approach and understanding, but also to ensure our work delivers on the needs of a wide range of users and use cases. Our stakeholders can be divided into 4 categories:

- 1. The Social Sector** – organizations and groups doing good in the world. We provide actionable insights to inform practice with a holistic view of the marketplace based on timely data;
- 2. The Giving Economy** – companies and organizations that support giving. We provide a data marketplace that supports innovation, including benchmarking and analysis that adds value to collective data;
- 3. The Research Community** – Academics and institutions that are driving learning. We provide data that supports new fundamental research in a community of practice that includes the tools and a platform to connect datasets and findings; and
- 4. The Public** – individuals, policy makers, and journalists seeking information. We provide accessible insights for any user, including visualized data and context that deliver



How We Do It

The GivingTuesday Data Commons is structured to generate an ongoing cycle of learning and impact. Our data products and pipelines provide comprehensive and timely data about giving and the technical tools and analysis to make them actionable. We deploy these through a community of practice that facilitates cross-sector collaboration on research and the identification of best practices. The learning is deployed through our network, empowering funders, organizations, social enterprises, and policy makers to effect real change for stronger communities. The measurement and evaluation of the resulting experimentation and interventions serve as data inputs to continue the cycle of improvement.



Our work is divided into 4 areas of action:

- 1. Core infrastructure** – systems, tools, and resources.
 - We have built the technical platform to support data management and collaboration; comprehensive datasets structured for access and analysis; and systems for knowledge mobilization.
 - Our plans include more and larger data assets; new analysis tools; and improved products and systems to access data and learning.
- 2. Community of practice** – more than 800 collaborators around the world.
 - We have built 50 global data chapters; convened 9 working groups; and created 15 research workspaces.
 - Our plans include enhanced academic access to our platform, data and resources; new cross-sectoral research hubs; and more global support and participation.
- 3. Giving behavior trends** – comprehensive data and insights about giving.
 - We have built new analysis methods and timely reporting of metrics; market intelligence dashboards; and broad data provider relationships.
 - Our plans include broader visibility of generosity trends; more granular and timely reporting; new technical tools and products; and ongoing measures of community impact.
- 4. Giver insights** – analysis of behavior, attitudes, and values.
 - We have built survey tools to contextualize giving; access to data, methods, and standards; and connection to direct measures of action.
 - Our plans include real time behavior trends; access to data, indices, and reporting for all user types; and direct support for innovators and social enterprise.

Our Impact

The GivingTuesday Data Commons theory of change:

We collect and develop comprehensive and timely data about giving and the technical tools and analysis to make them actionable, creating the **infrastructure to support transformative social sector innovation**.

We leverage these assets by facilitating cross-sector collaboration on research and the identification of data-driven best practices, **empowering the people and organizations that change the world**.

We deploy the resulting learning for funders, organizations, social enterprises, and policy makers to **create resilient, thriving communities**

Our key outcomes include:

A more resilient and effective social sector, including a global learning lab with 1,000 collaborators in 50 countries:

- Through actionable insights for driving broad support and sustainability, the ability to respond to emergent situations and volatility with agility, and an understanding of the giving ecosystem and marketplace for impact and resilience.

A more innovative and agile giving economy, including enabling 10 of the largest donation platforms to integrate trends data into their products:

- Through an environment that fosters innovation, market analytics that support best practices, and optimized systems for growth in giving.

A more relevant and connected research community, including dozens of research hubs and projects every year:

- Through timely data that enables new fundamental research, a community of practice, connecting research to action, and systems that ensure interventions are measured, creating a cycle of learning.

A more informed and engaged public, including increased individual giving of \$10B annually in the US:

- Through learning that drives more individual and collective giving, increased agency of givers for a more equitable social sector, and



Funding

Current supporters of the GivingTuesday Data Commons include The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Fidelity Charitable Trustees Initiative, National Philanthropic Trust, PayPal, and the Heinz Family Foundation. We are in active discussion with a number of other potential funders.

Use of funds

The GivingTuesday Data Commons is designed as a public utility for the entire social sector. Our aim is to resource this work as an integrated ecosystem rather than a series of projects and programs. See [Appendix One](#) for a more detailed list of budgeted expenditures. An investment of \$5M would bring us to nearly 40% of our target and our goal of establishing this fundamental infrastructure as a public good.



Appendix One: Current Projects Overview

The GivingTuesday Data Commons is building infrastructure that delivers actionable learning to build resilient communities through generosity-driven change. Our current projects are divided into 4 categories:

1. Core Infrastructure

Our systems, tools, and resources to support data collection, analysis, collaborative research, and knowledge mobilization.

Project / Program	Description	5-year cost	Status
The Data Commons Platform	The technical infrastructure we have built, and continue to develop, to enable research collaboration and data access. This includes the servers, hosting, user access & security, policies & processes, software, and other technical systems we develop and maintain.	\$1,250,000	Ongoing
GivingLab	A searchable repository of insights on giving behavior and impact. The next phase of development includes more types and volume of content with more ways to search and discover for many different use cases and users.	\$750,000	Ongoing
Knowledgebase & API	Our database of insights, assets, and reports generated by the Data Commons and our collaborators. Cross-indexed research from major research institutions is currently being ingested. Development of our content linking API will support more external use cases.	\$500,000	Ongoing

2. Community of Practice

We collaborate with more than 300 organizations to learn about giving – connecting research to practice.

Project / Program	Description	5-year cost	Status
Global Data Chapters	We support the work of 50 global data chapters with infrastructure, datasets, data management, methodology, and relationships. We work with these teams and connect them with each other to share learning and best practices.	\$1,500,000	Ongoing
Working Groups	Data Commons working groups help us set the research agenda and priorities that guide our collaborative research efforts. We work with these partners to scope and execute research projects to answer important questions about giving and impact. Our working groups are: Impact Measurement, Crowdfunding, Donor Advised Funds, Workplace Giving, HigherEd, Payments & FinTech, Charity/NGO, Academic Research. For an example of how we're structuring the work, check out this Workplace Giving Working Group brief.	\$3,000,000	Ongoing
Collaborative Workspaces & Research Pipeline	<p>We designed our technical infrastructure to be extensible in order to support collaborative research for the entire global social sector. We use these systems to conduct our own projects – enabling an increasingly holistic view of the giving “marketplace” by servicing these initiatives in a unified data environment. This also allows us to make these tools and resources available to research collaborators.</p> <p>We are in the process of launching 12 new research hubs on our platform in support of a variety of outcomes. The demand for these services has created a growing backlog of important insights work. The only limiting factor preventing the launch and dissemination of these insights and innovation projects is our capacity to onboard them rapidly.</p>	\$2,500,000	Ongoing
Academic Research Collaboration	Currently, researchers from more than 15 institutions participate in our working groups and various projects. There is also substantial demand for access to our data and resources from academics around the world. We are creating a program, in partnership with the Harvard Kennedy School and Stanford PACS, to better support the research community and create more connections between researchers and practitioners. This will include the creation of a Data Commons Fellowship program.	\$900,00	Launching
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion & Social Justice Research Hub	<p>We intend to launch a central research hub within our Data Commons to specifically focus on two separate but related topics: 1) Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) and 2) Social Justice research.</p> <p>Through this work, we will accomplish or create the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. DEI landscape and identified metrics, inputs for ongoing tracking: mapping leadership, skills, communities, practices, organizations, needs, and resource (gaps) 2. Data and research environment to support measurement of outcomes and best practice 3. Social justice needs, actors, funding landscape and gaps: enabling resource deployment where it's needed 4. Social justice intervention innovation, experimentation, measurement and best practice <p>Our ultimate outcomes are two-fold. First, we will enable inclusion and belonging in communities and the social sector that supports them. Second, we will create a research and innovation environment that supports effective interventions that foster social justice.</p>	\$1,450,000	Planned

3. Giving Behavior Trends

We continue to build on our data assets – the most comprehensive ever collected – providing access and tools to observe trends.

Project / Program	Description	5-year cost	Status
Data Marketplace and Products	<p>We have an ambitious development roadmap for our giving dashboards, trends, APIs, and live indicators to maximize the utility of our data.</p> <p>Our datasets continue to grow in number and scope and are a valuable asset to the social sector. We have, and are building, key metrics dashboards and business intelligence tools as well as opening access to raw and aggregated data to support new research and innovation.</p> <p>This represents the kind of systems and tools the commercial sector relies on to forecast, drive business decision-making, and develop products. We have reached the point where our data and tools are capable of answering important and emergent questions about the sector, limited only by our capacity to accelerate development.</p>	\$2,500,000	Ongoing
Data Collection & Partners	The GivingTuesday Data Commons has collected the most comprehensive philanthropic datasets in the sector. Continuing to build the fidelity, variety, and scope of data requires ongoing engagement of partners and data management systems.	\$625,000	Ongoing
Volunteer Action Analysis	We are collecting volunteer behavior data, attitudes, values, and demographics of volunteers, as well as engagement messaging and response data. As a first step, we are using methodology we have developed to track donation behavior to measure and track granular trends in volunteer action. The first line of inquiry is being developed with researchers at the Harvard Kennedy School to examine how various interventions, events, and crises impact individual volunteer action relative to other giving behavior.	\$375,000	Launched
Mutual Aid & Community Giving	<p>A deep and holistic understanding of the many ways people give and organize their generosity is critical to the success of nonprofits and the broader social sector.</p> <p>Emerging mechanisms for networks of givers, giving circles, and mutual aid reveal how people wish to support causes and community and how they think about impact. Additionally, long-standing cultures and communities of giving have not been well measured – resulting in a lack of connection and agency.</p> <p>We are collecting and analyzing data on these mechanisms, behaviors, and motivations in the US and around the world, to better inform inclusive engagement and impact measurement.</p>	\$1,250,000	Launched
Citizen Action Research Hub	<p>The Citizen Action Research Hub is a new collaborative effort to measure and understand the many ways that individuals commit their time to build and strengthen communities. Envisioned as a robust, cross-sectoral research hub empowering resilient, thriving communities through data-driven innovation, the initiative is led by GivingTuesday with support from its global network of leaders and collaborators.</p> <p>This research hub will create a community of practice where researchers, practitioners, and policymakers have access to the data, tools and methods needed to understand how people build the communities they want to live in.</p> <p>The outcomes of this work will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More Inclusive and Expansive View of Giving: We will broaden understanding of and map the full generosity ecosystem and the many and varied philosophies and values it contains. • Improved Measurement: We will provide wide scale and high-fidelity measurement and tracking of volunteer and citizen action behaviors. • Community of Practice: We will bring together researchers, practitioners, organizations, and policymakers to provide a forum for closer collaboration and data-driven innovation. • Increased Resilience: We will build capacity in the social sector to meet the moment and plan for future crises, including strengthening the ability to pivot, adopting new methods and technology, diversifying support, and maintaining an active presence with their communities and constituencies. • Lasting Revitalization: We will uplift existing cultures of giving and build long-term generous behaviors and civic participation that drives more inclusive, healthy communities. 	\$3,000,000	Planned

4. Giver Insights

Our analysis of behavior, attitudes, and values provides a holistic understanding of giving and what matters to givers.

Project / Program	Description	5-year cost	Status
Giving Behavior Surveys	<p>GivingTuesday continues to conduct this survey of a representative sample of American adults annually, expanding both reach and field of study to explore a wide range of environmental and social factors and trends.</p> <p>As the giving eco-system continues to evolve it is important that we continue to address and explore new emergent methods and modes of giving. Particularly of interest are deep dives into the proliferation of mutual aid community organization, the relationship between impact outcomes and the behaviors, demographics, attitudes, and values of givers who choose these mechanisms –what drives their giving at the most fundamental level, why and how they choose these modes of giving over others, and how to grow untapped giving opportunities.</p> <p>Through the GivingTuesday Data Commons platform, we enable access to the resulting survey data, providing researchers with the raw data from both current and previous surveys, data visualizations, reports, and presentations.</p>	\$2,550,000	Ongoing
GivingPulse	<p>GivingPulse, a weekly survey, will provide real-time monitoring of generosity behaviors allowing us to observe how various events, interventions, and crises impact giving, including donations, volunteering, advocacy, mutual aid, and other actions people take to make a positive impact.</p> <p>This resource will provide real-time trends of a wide variety of behaviors and related attitudes. It will enable a holistic view of the giving ecosystem, including the motivation and reactions of givers. In addition, we will field rotating sets of questions on a quarterly basis to investigate specific questions or emergent events.</p> <p>This platform will support researchers, practitioners, funders, policy makers, and social sector practitioners. Ongoing collection of weekly data will allow us to develop and share, indices, raw data, summary tables, key indicators, and data visualization dashboards.</p>	\$1,350,000	Launched
History of Generosity	<p>GivingTuesday is partnering with National Philanthropic Trust to build an online database and exploration web platform to host stories and research about generosity practices around the world and throughout history. The platform will serve as a resource to researchers, journalists, the social sector and the public. Launching in 2022, GivingTuesday will actively source and curate content for the site through our global network.</p>	\$375,000	Launched
Innovation Lab	<p>Our data assets and systems represent an opportunity to foster innovation in the social sector in the ways that already exist for the commercial sector. Our Innovation Lab will provide a forum for social enterprises and experimental social models to identify interventions and solutions and test them in an environment that supports data</p>	\$1,700,000	Planned



The GivingTuesday Data Commons

We measure generosity and its substantial actual impact, saving and improving lives.

The GivingTuesday Data Commons is a ground-breaking research collaboration between 300+ collaborating organizations and 50+ global data labs focused on uncovering new trends and insights on giving and generosity. We explore giving behaviors and patterns, movement growth, and altruistic behavior in order to identify and share the best practices that help drive increased generosity at a global scale. The Data Commons' design and structure models the distributed leadership and peer learning environment that are the foundations of the GivingTuesday movement.

In the United States, the project has generated an unprecedented level of collaboration between stakeholders including academics, donation platforms, and payment processors. Through nine Data Commons working groups, as well as 12 research hubs on our online collaborative data platform, we are unearthing new insights about the social sector and the giving economy and have produced tools to help improve effectiveness across these sectors. GivingTuesday is able to provide our Data Commons collaborators with access to the data collected for their own research, analysis and benchmarking, giving them freedom to create their own reports and to visualize trends.

The GivingTuesday Data Commons is the largest multi-national philanthropic data network ever built.

Key Research Partners



Data Commons Supporters



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