

KEY
TAKEAWAYS



How Women Will Shape Philanthropy in the Decade Ahead

By Maria Di Mento

Billionaire philanthropist MacKenzie Scott's [\\$8.5 billion](#) giving spree over the past year has prompted numerous discussions about the future of giving and whether her no-strings, hands-off style of giving, and giving to so many groups that focus on social and racial justice will become the norm — or at least more common.

The Chronicle hosted an [online conversation](#) to explore the ways women donors could shape the future of giving. The wide-ranging discussion included important insights from two women with deep experience in philanthropy. Here are the key takeaways.

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Women Donors Seek Partnerships Based on Trust

“What MacKenzie Scott has modeled is trust-based philanthropy, and I think we’re going to see more of that as we move forward and more hands-on philanthropy,” said Liz Thompson, a wealthy donor and nonprofit leader. “We cannot just write a check and then walk away.”

Today’s women donors are focused on developing partnerships with the charities they support, said Abby Falik, the founder and CEO of Global Citizen Year, a nonprofit that trains young people to be leaders.

They will donate when they see a nonprofit’s potential to carry out a mission they care about, she said. Women’s approach to giving is a departure from that of many men, who she said tend to be more interested in the transactional nature of their charitable giving.

Fundraisers Should Seek to Understand How Giving by Blacks Is Often Unreported

Besides being a philanthropist, Thompson also founded the Cleveland Avenue Foundation for Education, which makes grants to nonprofits that focus on college access and career attainment for low-income students and on Black-led philanthropic programs.

She talked about why it’s important for fundraisers who cultivate Black women donors to make an effort to understand the issues surrounding Black intergenerational wealth.

“Black donors are called on to support so many things in our communities,” Thompson said. “We are called on to help our churches, our neighbors, our institutions, in addition to our charities of choice, and so that’s something to be very cognizant of.”

She said reports on Black donors that are generated by prospect researchers often don’t give fundraisers the whole story because the reports often don’t take into account what Black donors — male and female — are already giving, she said. The reason? A lot of their gifts go unreported or are not captured through typical prospect-research reports.



Liz Thompson
Founder and CEO
Cleveland Avenue for Education



Abby Falik
CEO
Global Citizen YearHost

Get to Know Your Women Donors

When major-gifts officers seek to cultivate women donors, they should make an effort to forge a deep connection with them, Falk said. Thompson said gift officers need to take the time to understand what the donor cares about most before they even approach her.

Leaders Hope More Will Give Like Scott

Thompson and Falk both applauded [Scott's decision](#) to make unrestricted gifts with few reporting requirements. Falik, however, added that contributions with fewer strings doesn't mean charities should be less strict about "measuring impact."

"We can sometimes conflate no-strings, big-bet giving with "she doesn't care about the outcomes," Falik said "I don't think that's true."

Instead, she said, Scott's giving signals a shift to the donor recognizing that a charity leader knows more about the problems the group is trying to solve. Thompson agreed and said it also signals that she trusts the leader to direct the money to where it is most needed.

"Nonprofits are desperate for donors who approach their giving in the way that we see MacKenzie Scott make gifts," Falik said. "She's changing the game on who she is supporting and the narrative around how we give."



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