

The State of Fundraising in Nevada

Rankings, giving behavior, and what it means for capital campaign strategy

CATAPULT FUNDRAISING · 2026

49th

Nevada's overall rank out of 50 states in WalletHub's 2025 Most Charitable States study — ahead of only New Mexico.

Source: WalletHub, "Most Charitable States," data collected Oct. 2025, published Nov. 2025

Nevada is one of the fastest-growing philanthropic markets in the country, and one of its most misunderstood. New data from WalletHub's 2025 Most Charitable States study ranks Nevada 49th out of 50 states overall, ahead of only New Mexico. For nonprofit boards and development offices reading that headline in isolation, it is tempting to conclude that Nevadans simply do not give. The data says something more specific, and more useful, than that.

Four figures anchor the ranking. Nevada's total charitable behavior score sits at 43.90 out of 100. Only 18.6% of Nevadans formally volunteer, among the lowest rates in the U.S. The state has just 5.83 public charities per capita, the fewest of any state in the nation. And its informal helping rate, the share of residents who help neighbors directly rather than through an organization, is 45.7%, also the lowest in the nation.

43.90

Total charitable behavior score (of 100)

18.6%

Nevadans who formally volunteer — among the lowest in the U.S.

5.83

Public charities per capita — fewest of any state (50th)

45.7%

Informal helping rate — lowest in the nation

Where Nevada Stands

WalletHub's methodology ranks all 50 states across volunteering & service and charitable giving, then combines the two into a total score. The states at the top of the list, Wyoming, Utah, and Maryland, share a common thread: long-tenured populations, dense civic and religious institutions, and agrarian or multi-generational community roots. Nevada, along with fellow Sun Belt transient-population states like Arizona and California, clusters much further down the list.

RANK	STATE	TOTAL SCORE	VOLUNTEERING & SERVICE RANK	CHARITABLE GIVING RANK
1	Wyoming	69.49	2	6
2	Utah	68.59	1	19
3	Maryland	65.16	20	3
37	California	53.09	45	5
43	Arizona	48.19	31	49
49	Nevada	43.90	48	44
50	New Mexico	38.83	50	50

Why Nevada Ranks Low

The honest reading of this data is structural, not attitudinal. Nevada carries a high share of transient, non-native residents, which means fewer households have the multi-generational giving roots that anchor philanthropy in states like Wyoming and Utah. The state also has the fewest public charities per capita of any state in the country, a thinner nonprofit infrastructure that makes it harder to convert donor intent into an actual gift. And Nevada's tourism- and service-driven economy shapes household income and available time differently than the agrarian and civic-culture economies of the states that rank highest.

"This reflects infrastructure gaps more than donor unwillingness."

— Dr. Jessica K.A. Word, UNLV, WalletHub panelist

What This Means for Capital Campaign Strategy

For organizations running capital campaigns in Nevada, this data is less a warning than a map. Four implications stand out:

- **Relationship-driven, major-gift asks outperform grassroots or volunteer-pipeline models** in this market. With formal volunteering and informal helping both trailing the nation, campaigns built around broad-based volunteer recruitment will underperform models built around direct, personal cultivation of major donors.
- **Low charity density means less donor "shopping" competition per cause**, an opening for well-positioned campaigns. Fewer public charities per capita means fewer causes competing for the same wallet, a real advantage for an organization that shows up with a clear, well-cased ask.
- **Feasibility studies should benchmark against peer Sun Belt, transient-population markets**, not national averages. Comparing a Nevada campaign's projected results to a national median built on states like Wyoming and Utah sets an unrealistic and discouraging bar. Arizona, California, and other transient-population Sun Belt states are the more honest comparison set.
- **Board training should reframe the narrative**: "Nevadans don't give" should become "Nevada requires a direct ask." The data shows a market that responds to relationship and specificity, not one that lacks generosity. That reframe changes how a board approaches every prospect conversation.

Nevada's philanthropic ranking is a fact about its infrastructure and history, not a verdict on its donors. For campaigns willing to invest in feasibility work, relationship-first solicitation, and realistic benchmarking, the same conditions that produce a low state ranking can produce an outsized opportunity for the organizations that understand them.

Sources: WalletHub, "Most Charitable States" (2025) · U.S. Census Bureau / AmeriCorps · The Nevada Independent · Giving USA