

**2024**

SMALL BUSINESSES'  
**CONTRIBUTION**  
**TO THE COMMUNITY**

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# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

## Types of Contributions

Small businesses play a vital role in shaping and enriching their communities. They create jobs, stimulate local economies, and add to the unique characteristics of their area. Small business owners build relationships with customers, enhancing community trust and loyalty. The 2024 Gallup survey on the public's trust of American institutions found that over two-thirds of the public have a strong sense of trust among small businesses, more than any other of the listed institutions including large businesses, education system, and the media to name a few. They are not just the foundation of their local economies, but they are integral to the fabric of their communities. Small businesses contribute to the community in a variety of ways including donating time, financial support, and making in-kind contributions in addition to providing jobs. This report offers unique insight into the ways in which small businesses and their employees benefit local communities across the country.

## Volunteering Time

One of the important ways in which small business owners contribute to their community is volunteering their time. About three-quarters (76 percent) of all business owners reported volunteering their time to work on behalf of community or civic groups, charities, youth sport programs, schools, religious organizations, or similar activities in the last 12 months. Owners of larger businesses were more likely to report volunteering their time, likely because they have more help running their business: 73 percent of businesses with 1-9 employees reported volunteering compared to 86 percent of those with 50 or more employees.

Of those owners who volunteered their time in the last 12 months, 30 percent reported they were very active, and 47 percent reported moderately active in the activities in which they volunteered. About a quarter (23 percent) of owners reported they were not very active.

Small business owners were asked how much of their volunteer activities are related to their business (e.g., in-kind services or goods, business name used in sponsorship of volunteer activities, etc.). Almost half, 42 percent, of respondents reported that 50 percent or more of their volunteer activities are associated with their business. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) reported that none of their volunteer activities are related to their business. Nine percent reported less than 5%, 19 percent reported between 5-24%, and 6 percent reported between 25-49%. This was generally consistent across all sizes of businesses.

Employees often participate in business related volunteer activities also. In fact, 46 percent of owners reported that their employees had participated in volunteer activities sponsored or supported by their business in the last 12 months.

## Financial Support

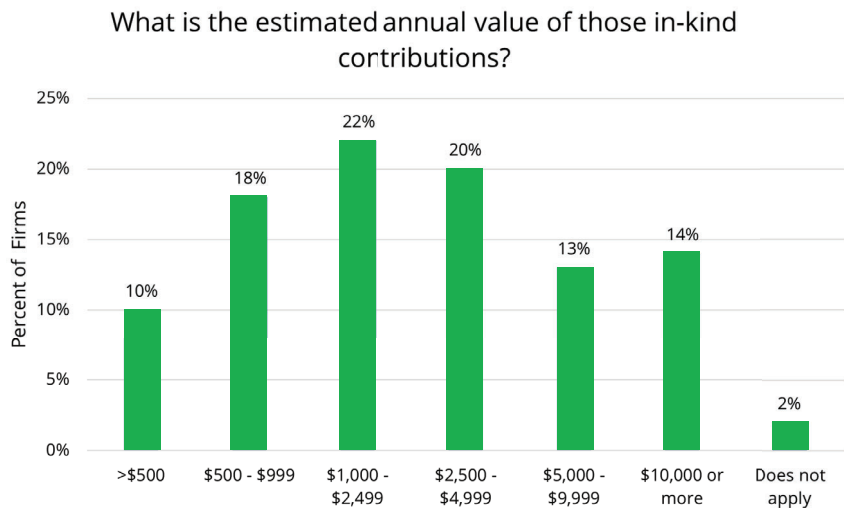
Small businesses also contribute to their community through financial support. Financial support was the most common method small businesses used to support their community compared to volunteering their time or in-kind contributions. Ninety percent of small business owners have financially supported community or civil groups, charities, youth sport programs, schools, religious organizations or similar activities in the last 12 months. Asked how much of their charitable financial support is associated with their business, 15 percent reported 100% of their financial support was tied in with their business, 26 percent reported between 50-99%, 9 percent reported 25-49%, 22 percent reported between 5-24%. Ten percent reported none.



# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

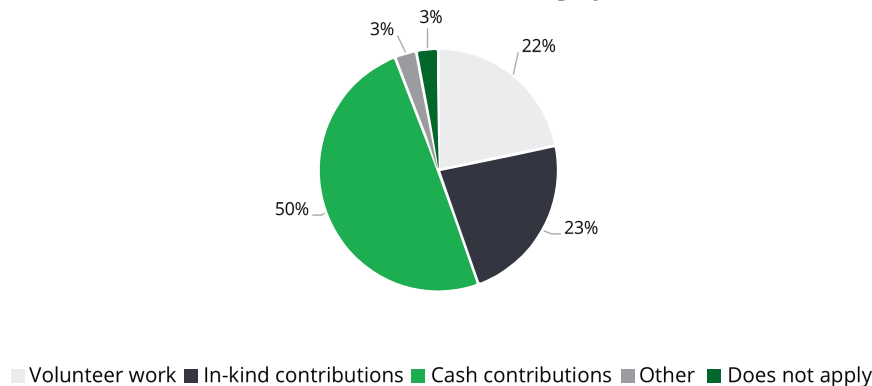
## In-Kind Contributions

In-kind contributions are another method small businesses use to support the community. Sixty-three percent of small business owners reported providing in-kind contributions for community and civic groups or functions, charities, schools, etc. (e.g., providing a meeting space for a local fundraiser, donating excess inventory for a cause, offering auction items to raise money, etc.). A quarter of small businesses reported that all their in-kind contributions are associated with their business. Four percent said none, 18 percent reported less than 5%, 23 percent reported between 5-24%, 8 percent reported between 25-49%, and 21 percent between 50-99%. Asked the estimated annual value of those in-kind contributions, 10 percent of respondents reported less than \$500. Eighteen percent estimated the value between \$500-\$999 and 22 percent contributed between \$1,000- \$4,999. Over a quarter (27 percent) contributed \$5,000 or more, with 14 percent of those reporting a contribution of \$10,000 or more.



Half of all small business owners believe that, in terms of value, they contributed the most during the last year through cash contributions. This was generally consistent across all business sizes, except for firms with 50 or more employees (65 percent), which was 15 points higher than the overall reading. In-kind contributions were cited by 23 percent of all small business owners and 22 percent reported volunteer work. Three percent reported other methods.

In terms of value, do you believe that in the last year you contributed the most through your:?



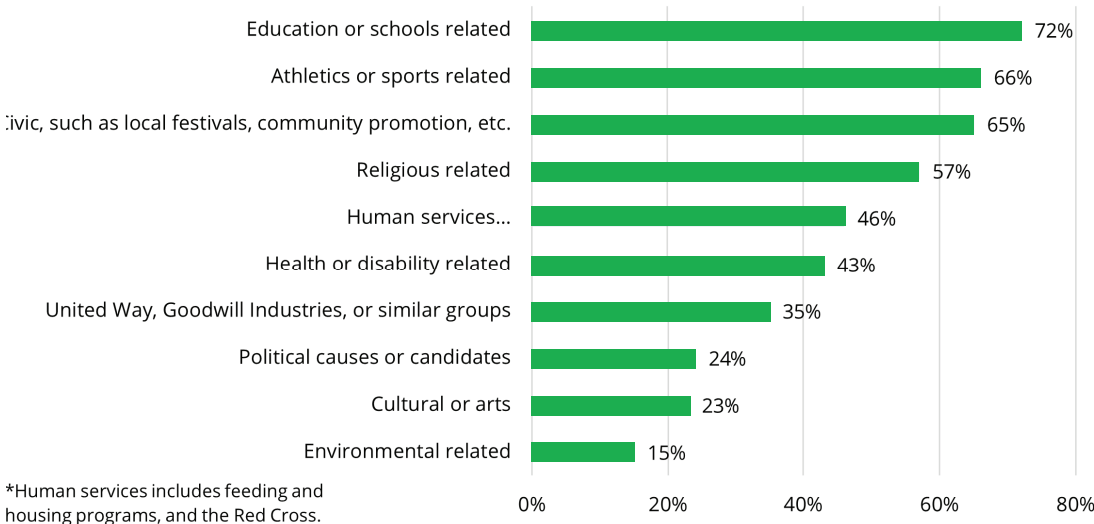
# SMALL BUSINESSES’ CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

## Types or Groups of Activities

Small businesses owners contribute to a wide range of different types of groups or causes, whether it’s through volunteering, contributing in-kind, or contributing financially. Respondents were also asked about the specific types of groups or causes that they have contributed to during the last year.

Seventy-two percent of all small businesses reported contributing to education or school related activities or groups, the most common of all listed activities. There was a significant difference between non-employers (61 percent) and those with 50 or more employees (91 percent). Sports related activities was the second most cited category of support with 66 percent of small business owners reporting this activity. Following was civic (festivals, community promotion, etc.) with 65 percent reporting it. The trend was generally consistent across all firm sizes with only a 3-point difference between non-employers (61 percent) and those with 50 or more employees (64 percent). Over half (57 percent) reported they contribute to activities or groups that are religious related. Forty-six percent of small business owners reported human services, including food and housing programs, and the Red Cross. Another 43 percent contributed to health or disability related activities, and 35 percent contributed to the United Way, Goodwill Industries, or similar groups. Nearly a quarter (24 percent) of small businesses contribute to political causes or candidates. Of all the categories reported, contributing to political causes or candidates had the greatest difference between small and large firms. This was reported by 16 percent of non-employers compared to 52 percent of businesses with 50 or more employees, a 36-point difference. Twenty-three percent of small business owners contribute to cultural or arts related groups or activities. The least cited group or activity that small businesses contributed to was environmental related, with 15 percent of all small business owners reporting this.

During the last year, for which of the following types or groups of activities did you volunteer, contribute in-kind, or contribute financially?



# SMALL BUSINESSES’ CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

## Importance of Involvement

Small business owners find value in contributing to their community in a variety of ways. Small business owners were asked about the degree of importance their involvement in community activities has on different aspects of their business and themselves personally. Larger businesses tended to report a higher degree of importance for all aspects.

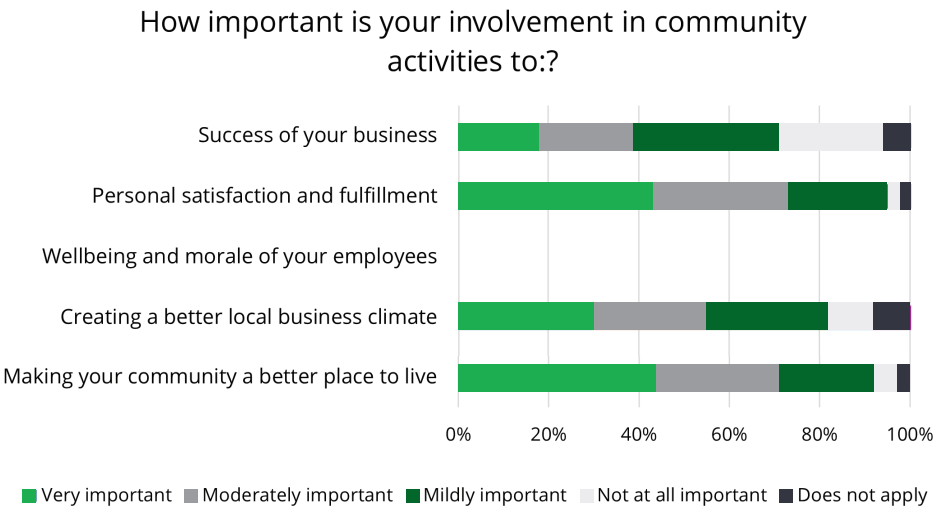
Seventy-one percent of small businesses reported that their involvement in community activities is important to some degree to the success of their business, with 18 percent saying it is very important. Twenty-one percent reported moderately important and 32 percent, mildly important. Twenty-three percent said it was not important to the success of their business.

Almost all (95 percent) of small business owners reported their involvement in community activities is important to their personal satisfaction and fulfillment, with 43 percent saying it is very important. Thirty percent reported moderately important, 22 percent reported mildly important, and only 3 percent said it was not at all important.

Small business owners were asked about the importance of their involvement in community activities to the wellbeing and morale of their employees. Sixty-eight percent of small business owners reported it was important to some degree. Seventeen percent reported very important, 23 percent reported moderately important, and 28 percent reported mildly important. Sixteen percent said it was not important.

Creating a better local business climate is another motivation for small businesses to contribute to the community. Eighty-two percent of small business owners report that their involvement in community activities is important to creating a better local business climate. Thirty percent reported very important, 25 percent reported moderately important, and 27 percent reported mildly important. Ten percent reported it was not at all important.

Lastly, small businesses were asked how important their involvement in community activities is in making their community a better place to live. Ninety-two reported it was important to some degree. Forty-four percent reported very important, 27 percent reported moderately important, 21 percent reported mildly important, and 5 percent reported not at all important.



# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

## Other

Not only do most small business owners contribute to their community by volunteering to support existing groups or organizations, many small business owners have created or helped create civic organization themselves. In fact, over one-quarter (28 percent) of small business owners have personally started (or with a group) volunteer activities in their community in the last 10 years.

## Conclusion

Small businesses owners continue to be actively engaged in civic activities within their community, beyond operating their business. They are key assets in supporting their communities through volunteering their time, money, and other resources. Their philanthropic activities cover a broad array of organizations and causes that help strengthen the communities in which they operate their business.

## Methodology

This survey was conducted with a random sample of 20,000 NFIB members from NFIB's membership database of around 300,000 small business owners. The survey was conducted by email from Aug. 1 – Sept. 15. NFIB collected 617 responses.

# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Employee Size of Firm:	No empl	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-49 emp	50+ emp	Total
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**1. Have you volunteered your time to work on behalf of any community or civic groups, charities, youth sport programs, schools, religious organizations, or similar activities in the last 12 months?**

1. Yes	75%	73%	76%	82%	86%	76%
2. No	25	27	24	18	14	25

**2. If yes, how active have you been in volunteering for these activities in the last 12 months?**

1. Very active	23%	28%	36%	27%	47%	30%
2. Moderately active	53	44	46	56	40	47
3. Not very active	25	28	16	18	13	23

**3. How much of your volunteer activities are related to your business (e.g., in-kind services or goods, business name used in sponsorship of volunteer activities, etc.)?**

1. None	30%	23%	27%	23%	24%	24%
2. > 5%	7	9	8	9	12	9
3. 5-9%	7	7	4	10	6	7
4. 10-24%	13	14	8	8	15	12
5. 25-49%	6	6	12	4	6	6
6. 50-74%	6	12	18	9	12	12
7. 75-99%	23	24	19	25	27	24
8. 100%	9	6	4	12	0	6

**4. Have any of your employees volunteered in activities sponsored or supported by your business in the last 12 months?**

1. Yes	–	39%	58%	51%	66%	46%
2. No	–	60	41	47	31	53
4. Does not apply	–	1	1	3	3	1

# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Employee Size of Firm:	No empl	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-49 emp	50+ emp	Total
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**5. Have you financially supported any community or civic groups, charities, youth sport programs, schools, religious organizations, or similar activities in the last 12 months?**

1. Yes	86%	89%	94%	93%	97%	90%
2. No	14	12	6	7	3	10

**6. How much of your charitable financial support is associated with your business?**

1. None	15%	11%	9%	1%	15%	10%
2. > 5%	23	18	21	15	15	18
3. 5-9%	10	9	5	13	3	8
4. 10-24%	12	16	11	13	15	14
5. 25-49%	15	9	9	6	9	9
6. 50-74%	8	12	11	18	24	13
7. 75-99%	8	9	15	22	21	13
8. 100%	10	18	20	13	0	15

**7. Do you provide in-kind contributions for community and civic groups or functions, charities, schools, etc.? (e.g., provide a meeting space for a local fundraiser, donate excess inventory for a cause, offer auction items to raise money, etc.) ?**

1. Yes	56%	60%	71%	70%	60%	63%
2. No	44	40	29	30	40	37

**8. How much of your in-kind contributions are associated with your business?**

1. None	8%	5%	3%	0%	0%	4%
2. > 5%	18	18	17	13	24	18
3. 5-9%	10	14	6	15	14	12
4. 10-24%	15	12	11	9	5	11
5. 25-49%	10	8	11	7	0	8
6. 50-74%	5	8	6	11	14	8
7. 75-99%	13	13	9	19	19	13
8. 100%	23	22	38	26	24	25



# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Employee Size of Firm:	No empl	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-49 emp	50+ emp	Total
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## 9. What is the estimated ANNUAL value of those in-kind contributions

1. >\$500	8%	14%	11%	4%	0%	10%
2. \$500 - \$999	28	23	14	4	10	18
3. \$1,000 - \$2,499	23	25	26	9	19	22
4. \$2,500 - \$4,999	23	14	18	37	24	20
5. \$5,000 - \$9,999	10	13	11	22	10	13
6. \$10,000 or more	5	9	20	24	38	14
7. Does not apply	3	3	2	0	0	2

## 10. In terms of value, do you believe that in the last year you contributed the most through your?:

1. Volunteer work	22%	24%	20%	17%	21%	22%
2. In-kind contributions	25	21	23	30	15	23
3. Cash contributions	49	49	50	47	65	50
4. Other	0	4	2	1	0	3

## 11. During the last year, for which of the following types or groups of activities did you volunteer, contribute in-kind, or contribute financially?

### A. Cultural or arts

1. Yes	13%	22%	27%	25%	39%	23%
2. No	87	78	72	75	61	77

### B. Religious related

1. Yes	56%	55%	57%	64%	62%	57%
2. No	44	45	43	36	38	43

### C. Civic, such as local festivals, community promotion, etc.

1. Yes	61%	63%	64%	76%	64%	65%
2. No	39	37	36	24	36	35

### D. Health or disability related

1. Yes	37%	36%	59%	50%	58%	43%
2. No	63	64	41	51	42	57

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E. Political causes or candidates						
1. Yes	16%	20%	31%	28%	52%	24%
2. No	84	80	69	72	49	76
F. Athletics or sports related						
1. Yes	54%	62%	72%	83%	73%	66%
2. No	46	38	28	17	27	34
G. Education or schools related						
1. Yes	61%	69%	77%	75%	91%	72%
2. No	39	31	23	25	9	29
H. Human services, including feeding and housing programs, and the Red Cross						
1. Yes	42%	41%	52%	59%	56%	46%
2. No	58	59	48	41	44	54
I. United Way, Goodwill Industries, or similar groups						
1. Yes	30%	32%	35%	48%	52%	35%
2. No	70	68	65	52	49	65
J. Environmental related						
1. Yes	11%	16%	10%	17%	21%	15%
2. No	89	84	90	83	79	85
K. Other _____						

## 12. How important is your involvement in community activities to the success of your business?

1. Very important	12%	14%	26%	24%	29%	18%
2. Moderately important	20	20	21	25	15	21
3. Mildly important	35	33	26	33	27	32
4. Not important	24	26	20	14	18	23
5. Does not apply	9	7	7	4	12	7

# SMALL BUSINESSES' CONTRIBUTION TO THE COMMUNITY

Employee Size of Firm:	No empl	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-49 emp	50+ emp	Total
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## 13. How important is your involvement in community activities to your personal satisfaction and fulfillment?

1. Very important	30%	36%	58%	51%	65%	43%
2. Moderately important	30	35	19	26	18	30
3. Mildly important	24	23	19	21	12	22
4. Not at all important	8	3	1	0	3	3
5. Does not apply	8	3	3	1	3	3

## 14. How important is your involvement in community activities to the wellbeing and morale of your employees?

1. Very important	–	13%	26%	19%	27%	17%
2. Moderately important	–	22	17	29	32	23
3. Mildly important	–	27	38	26	12	28
4. Not important	–	15	12	21	24	16
5. Does not apply	–	23	8	4	6	17

## 15. How important is your involvement in community activities to creating a better local business climate?

1. Very important	22%	26%	36%	38%	50%	30%
2. Moderately important	20	26	27	26	15	25
3. Mildly important	28	27	26	28	21	27
4. Not at all important	11	11	7	6	9	10
5. Does not apply	20	9	5	3	6	9

## 16. How important is your involvement in community activities to making your community a better place to live?

1. Very important	39%	42%	50%	44%	61%	44%
2. Moderately important	20	29	21	31	24	27
3. Mildly important	28	20	23	18	9	21
4. Not at all important	11	4	2	6	3	5
5. Does not apply	3	4	3	1	3	3

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Employee Size of Firm:	No empl	1-9 emp	10-19 emp	20-49 emp	50+ emp	Total
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17. Have you personally (or with a group) started any volunteer activities in your community in the last 10 years?

1. Yes	26%	28%	30%	31%	27%	28%
2. No	74	72	71	69	73	72

18. How many employees does your business have?

Full time \_\_\_\_\_  
Part time \_\_\_\_\_

19. Is your primary business activity:

Activity	Responses
1. Construction	15%
2. Manufacturing	11
3. Retail	15
4. Services	28
5. Finance, Real Estate, Insurance	12
6. Wholesale	3
7. Agriculture	9
8. Transportation	3
9. Restaurant	3
10. Other _____	3

Do you have any additional comments on the topic of Small Businesses’ Contribution to the Community?

If you have any questions related to this survey or other NFIB activities, please don’t hesitate to contact NFIB at [info@nfib.org](mailto:info@nfib.org).