

Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund Continues Growth

By [Ruthie Ackerman](#)

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The Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund reported on Wednesday that its donors made more than 152,000 grants totaling \$531 million during the first six months of 2010, the strongest first half for outgoing grants in the Gift Fund's 19-year history.

With the stock market returning 14% over the past 12 months, incoming contributions were very strong, up 67% over the last year, said Sarah C. Libbey, president of the Gift Fund. "At first blush this may seem surprising," said Libbey in a phone interview on Wednesday. "But there are a couple factors contributing to the growth: the ability for donors to use appreciated securities in their portfolio to take advantage of tax strategies and the trend of donors looking for alternatives to private foundations."

In the first six months of 2010, appreciated securities represented 51% of the fund's total incoming contributions, up from 32% in the first six months of 2009.

New account openings increased 19% from the same period last year.

"Our donors continue to give at record levels, reflecting their ongoing commitment to supporting the causes important to them as well as to responding to unforeseen charitable needs, such as the crisis in Haiti," said Libbey in a press release. "It's heartening that more donors are recognizing that having donor-advised funds, such as those at the Gift Fund, provides a ready reserve so that they can strategically plan, contribute and grant, based on their personal philanthropic mission."

Incoming contributions to the donor-advised fund during the fiscal year ending June 30, 2010, were \$1.3 billion, a jump of 39% from the prior fiscal year. Donors recommended grants totaling \$1.1 billion to nonprofits nationwide, up 11% from the prior fiscal year. Additionally, the Gift Fund ended its fiscal year 2010 with nearly \$4.4 billion, up 15% over the past year.

Looking ahead, Libbey says that she expects advisors to continue to talk to their clients about giving. In Fidelity's advisor survey [last month](#), one in four advisors said they predict that their clients will increase their charitable giving to offset potential tax hikes. Another 48% expect their clients to maintain their level of giving despite ongoing market uncertainty.

"That's close to 75% that are very optimistic about giving in the coming year," said Libbey.