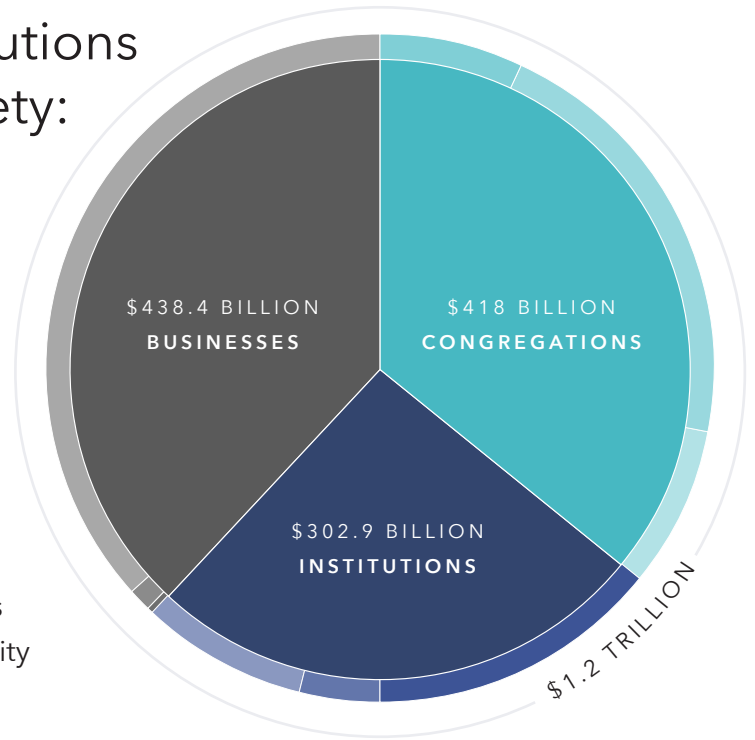


The Socio-Economic Contributions of Religion to American Society: An Empirical Analysis

Religion in the United States today contributes \$1.2 trillion each year to our economy and society. These contributions range from the basic economic drivers of any business—staff, overhead, utilities—to billions spent on philanthropic programs, educational institutions and health care services. Congregations, businesses inspired by faith, faith-based charities and institutions not only build communities and families but also strengthen our economy in every town and city of the country.



BUSINESSES

SECTOR	\$ IN BILLIONS	% OF TOTAL
Religious Media	\$1.3	0.1%
Food (Traditional Kosher and Halal)	\$14.4	1.2%
Businesses with Religious Backgrounds	\$422.7	36.5%
TOTAL	\$438.4	37.8%

CONGREGATIONS

SECTOR	\$ IN BILLIONS	% OF TOTAL
Direct Spending	\$83.8	7.2%
Individual and Social Impact	\$243.9	21%
Schools and Daycare	\$91.3	7.9%
TOTAL	\$418*	36.1%

*The sum of line items factors in the exclusion of inter-congregational giving.

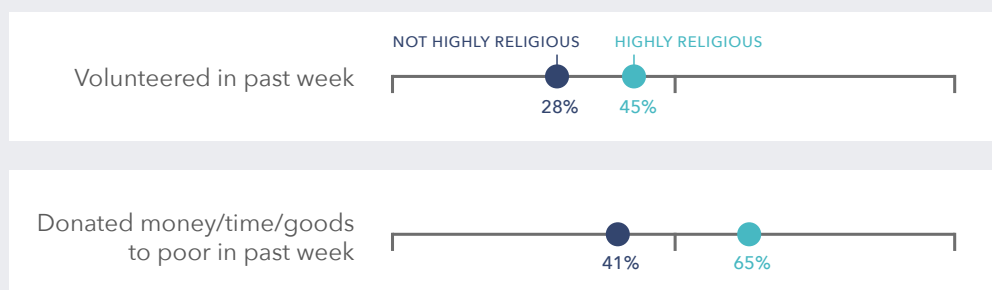
INSTITUTIONS

SECTOR	\$ IN BILLIONS	% OF TOTAL
Health Care	\$161.0	13.9%
Higher Education	\$46.8	4.0%
Charities	\$95.2	8.2%
TOTAL	\$302.9*	26.1%

*Numbers do not total due to rounding.

The tables and chart above represent the over 344,000 religious congregations across the United States, which collectively employ hundreds of thousands of staff members, and buy billions in products and services in their local communities. The tables also include the tens of thousands of religiously-affiliated charities, health care providers, institutions of higher learning, and business activities—ranging from the purchase of Kosher and Halal food products to religious media and other faith-based companies.

VOLUNTEERING & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT



Pew Research finds that adults who are highly religious are more likely than those who are less religious to report they did volunteer work and made donations in the past week. This difference is driven primarily by volunteering through houses of worship, which as the next page shows, feeds many social service programs.

The Contributions of Congregations

Congregations alone coordinate 7.5 million volunteers to help run 1.5 million social programs each year. Below are examples of a few of the social issues these programs address, along with several examples of how individual congregations are helping to solve them.

EXAMPLE ISSUES	# OF PROGRAMS*
Parenting Assistance	135,000
Alcohol / Drug Abuse Recovery	130,000
Marriage Improvement	125,000
Helping the Unemployed	121,000
Veteran & Veteran Family Support	94,000
Mental Illness	78,000
Food for the Poor	68,000
Home Building, Repair, Maintenance	62,000
Societal Race Relations	56,000
Helping the Needy	48,000
Encouraging Voter Registration	44,000
Offering Services to Immigrants	33,000
Preventing Transmission of HIV / AIDS	30,000
Supporting Persons with HIV / AIDS	26,000
Pollution, Environmental Issues	26,000
Disaster Relief	18,000
Visiting Shut-ins, Incarcerated Individuals	12,000

*Congregation-run programs / groups. Rounded to nearest 1000.



ALCOHOL / DRUG ABUSE

The Saddleback Church (CA), founded a *Celebrate Recovery* program 25 years ago that has helped over 27,000 individuals overcome drug abuse since it began.



MENTAL ILLNESS

United Methodist Minister Rev. Susan Gregg-Schroeder created *Mental Health Ministries* (CA) to help individuals use their faith to combat depression, mental illness, and to prevent suicide.



HIV / AIDS

The Mount Lebanon Baptist Church (MD), provides daily AIDS testing and onsite counseling for its local community, which has one of the highest diagnosis rates in the U.S.



INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

The *Interfaith Study Group* (CA) is a collaboration between three faith communities, which teaches about diverse faiths and encourages respectful, informative dialogue.



VETERANS

First Congregational Church's (CT) veterans outreach program helps vets suffering from PTSD, serves homeless veterans, and visits hospitals.



UNEMPLOYMENT

The Greater Allen AME Church (NY) offers direct help to the unemployed through weekly meetings, interview training and resume building support.

FAST FACTS

Over 150 million Americans (or about half of the U.S. population) are members of one of over 344,000 congregations.

Despite declining religious affiliation in the U.S. population, religious organizations have *tripled* the amount of money spent on social programs in the last 15 years—to \$9 billion.

Religion's \$1.2 trillion impact is more than the annual revenues of the top 10 tech companies, including Apple, Amazon, and Google combined.

Almost 120,000 congregations report attracting visitors for their art or architecture each year, nearly four times the number of American museums visited during the same period.

If \$1.2 trillion was put in terms of GDP, it would make U.S. religion the 15th largest national economy in the world.

40% of the top 50 charities in the U.S. are faith-based, with a combined operating revenue of \$45.3 billion.

"The Socio-economic Contribution of Religion to American Society: An Empirical Analysis," a 2016 study by Brian J. Grim (Georgetown University) and Melissa E. Grim (Newseum Institute), published in the peer-reviewed journal, *Interdisciplinary Journal of Research on Religion*, Volume 12, Article 3.

To view the full study, please visit FaithCounts.com/Report. Study sponsored by Faith Counts, a multifaith campaign aimed at promoting the value of faith.