In 2016, private sector giving to the arts, culture, and humanities—by individuals, foundations, and corporations—was $18.21 billion, up 6.4 percent (5.1 percent when adjusted for inflation) from a revised $17.12 billion in 2015. This marked the fifth consecutive year of growth and makes 2015 the highest arts contribution year ever, even when adjusted for inflation.

The percentage of all charitable giving going to the arts in 2016 grew to 4.88 percent, an increase from 4.51 percent in 2015. Maintaining a strong share of overall philanthropy demonstrates relevance of the sector, and even fractional changes have significant financial implications. The 2016 share of philanthropy is the highest it has been in at least 20 years.

Private contributions to all charities were up 2.7 percent (1.4 percent when adjusted for inflation) reaching $390.05 billion in 2016, with 72 percent coming from individuals. Changes in total giving correlate strongly with changes in GDP, the S&P 500, and disposable (“spendable”) personal income.