



**2023 BUSINESS GENEROSITY REPORT:**

# **Burnout's Toll and Generosity-Based Solutions**

Presented in partnership with:



Over the last five years, **goBeyondProfit** and **Georgia CEO** have captured research insights into business generosity in Georgia through concurrent surveys of employed adults and executives running businesses. This year, executive respondents shared concerns about continued labor shortages as well as recessionary and inflation risks. As the business landscape continues to change, the role of business generosity has also evolved.

This report offers data-driven guidance on how the priorities of employees in Georgia have shifted. We explore the undercurrent of eroding employee wellness and unveil the latest ways generosity efforts can improve both the everyday workplace experience and the long-term positive impact of Georgia businesses on people and communities. We are pleased to bring you the 2023 goBeyondProfit Business Generosity Report. We are pleased to bring you the 2022 goBeyondProfit research report.

## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS:

### Employees Unanimously Agree on the Importance of Generosity



In today's polarized environment, employed adults in Georgia agree on the importance of generosity in business. The overall number of employees who find generosity important has steadily increased since our inaugural report in 2019, with the largest increases in those employees who believe generosity is very or extremely important (47% in 2019 vs. 75% in 2023). **The data confirms that employees are paying attention to how you execute your generosity commitments.**

Executives see positive correlations between generosity and key business success measures. Yet, for the first time in this report's history, executive investment in generosity efforts shows signs of slowing. Overall, our data indicates that business generosity may not be a wise place for budgetary cuts. [\[Explore further\]](#)

### Literally Everyone Is Experiencing Burnout

This year's surveys revealed shocking levels of employee and executive burnout. **It turns out that burnout is a pervasive and cross-generational problem affecting all levels and all sizes of companies.** Additionally, the data explains the critical importance of word choice when checking in on employee mental health and offers low-cost solutions to the burnout dilemma. [\[Explore further\]](#)



For a second year, employee respondents prioritized mental health support as a top three employer generosity request. goBeyondProfit has produced an interview series with a workplace mental health expert to help executives meet this need. [\[See the Expert Interview Series: Reducing Burnout at Work\]](#)

# People Are Questioning the Price of Loyalty

When given a list of ways a company can demonstrate generosity to employees, pay equity ranked as a new top choice (91%). A deep dive into exactly what employees mean by pay equity revealed a widely shared concern that long-standing employees have paid a price for loyalty.



This concern transcends age, race, and gender. Employees coalesced around the definition that new hires make more money than employees who have stayed with the company for years when asked to select their top two definitions. While pay equity disparity among men and women is more important to female employees, new-hire compensation remains the top choice shared equally by men and women. [\[Explore further\]](#)

# Flexibility Requests Are Mostly About Empathy

For the second consecutive year, flexible work remains the top-ranked demonstration of generosity for all respondents and is equally valued by men and women. Most employees define flexible work as the ability to balance work and life demands as they arise without having to take PTO – a definition shared by both men and women.



Additionally, many see flexible work as a modified work week, such as a four-day work week or a schedule with adjusted shifts. Others see flexible work as simply the trust to complete their work. Very few people define flexibility as company-required days in the office and other days at home. [\[Explore further\]](#)

## Employees Ask For Community Outreach Reboot

Every year, we ask employed adults how employers can best demonstrate generosity to the community. Financial contributions hold steady in first place. **However, sustainability efforts took a significant leap into the top three this year, with 81% of respondents saying it is somewhat or very important.**

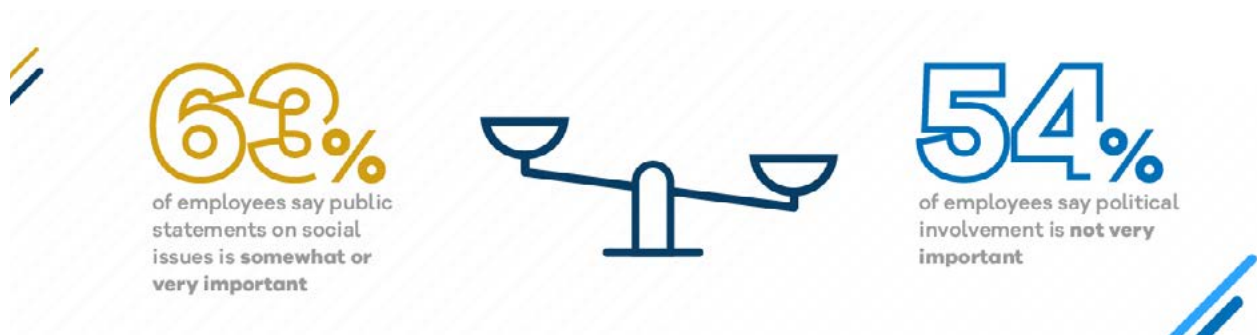
The report explores how individuals define sustainability efforts and employees' increased interest in matching gift programs and PTO for volunteering.

Data offers executives clear guidance on reprioritizing spending away from less-valued programs, such as company-sponsored volunteer events. [\[Explore further\]](#)



## The Tightrope of Public Statements and Politics Remains

In our 2021 survey, 91% of employed adults in Georgia said they expected their CEO to express a point of view about sensitive social issues. In this year's survey, 63% of employed adults selected public statements on social issues as a somewhat or very important demonstration of generosity. While this represents a notable decline in employee sentiment, most employees continue to view public statements as important.



In the current political climate, more than half (54%) of employee respondents named employer political involvement as not very to not at all important. **Balancing the distinction between employees' desire for public statements on social issues and the lack of employee support for political involvement will continue to be a challenge for executives.** [\[Explore further\]](#)

# 2023 BUSINESS GENEROSITY REPORT: UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT - GENEROSITY IS CRITICAL TO BUSINESS



## Generosity Helps Solve Top Business Concerns

In 2019, goBeyondProfit launched a first-of-its-kind business generosity survey comparing the priorities of Georgia's top executives and their employees. In this year's survey, executives shared that labor shortages tops the list of business concerns, followed closely by inflation and recessionary risks. In light of these concerns, this report reconfirms the relevance of business generosity, offering data to help identify and prioritize the most effective generosity efforts.



**Labor Shortage**



**Inflation**



**Recessionary Risks**

## The Importance of Generosity Continues to Climb

99%

of employees say  
**generosity** is an  
important part of  
the workplace

Every year, we ask employed adults in Georgia if business generosity efforts impact their choice of workplace, and the response continues to be a resounding yes. In 2019, business generosity was most valued by the younger cohort of workers, with only 47% of the employees saying they consider it important. By 2021, that number had risen to 60% of all employed adults.

In this year's study, 99% of employed adults in Georgia say it is important that the company they work for is generous, with a full 75% saying it is very or extremely important. Due to the high value employees place on business generosity, strategic investment in it continues to bring solid returns.

# Executives Detail Generosity's Core Business Benefits

In the post-COVID era of dispersed work, executives see an engaged, connected culture as the number one benefit of their company's generosity.

Specifically, 91% of executives at mid-sized companies (100-499 employees) name generosity as a compelling factor in their culture and ability to attract/retain employees.

Leaders of large companies (500+ employees) are more likely to see the potential for business generosity to improve profitability. Additionally, leaders of both small (fewer than 99 employees) and large companies are more likely to say that business generosity helps them gain customers.

1. Engaged & Connected Culture
2. Attract & Retain Talent
3. Gain Customers
4. Business Resiliency
5. Profitability

# Investment in Generosity Shows Signs of Slowing



Given the direct correlation to business success, 91% of leaders continue to report their intention to maintain (58%) or increase (33%) their company's generosity efforts in 2023. However, recessionary fears appear to be cooling generosity investments, with the percentage of executives signaling their intent to decrease them reaching 9% – the highest percentage reported since this survey began.

In contrast, in 2019, the first year of this report, 60% of executives planned to increase their generosity investments, and only 1% mentioned plans to decrease them.

Of note, younger leaders (under 55) are twice as likely to increase their generosity efforts this year as leaders over 55.

While leaders face challenges balancing economic pressures and hiring and retention needs, business generosity may not be a wise place to make cuts. Given that 99% of current and prospective employees factor in generosity when choosing an employer, this report suggests re-evaluating your current offerings and ensuring their alignment with what employees truly value today. [\[See You Need People, But What Do People Need?\]](#)

# 2023 BUSINESS GENEROSITY REPORT: BURNOUT DILEMMA - ARE YOU ASKING THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?



## The State of Mental Health in the Workplace

In 2022, goBeyondProfit's survey of employed adults in Georgia raised a red flag concerning the state of mental health in the workplace. This year, employees continue to prioritize their requests for mental health support.

A deeper look at this year's responses from executives and employees highlighted a curious distinction between respondents' comfort levels in reporting their mental health status versus sharing burnout struggles.

## When It Comes to Mental Health, Word Choice Matters a Great Deal

When asked about their overall mental health, most executives (91%) and employees (80%) rate it as good to excellent. Yet, when specifically asked whether their job has caused mental health challenges in the last 12 months, the veneer of happiness cracks, with a full third of employees (34%) responding affirmatively and more than half of employees aged 18 to 24 (51%) reporting mental health challenges directly tied to their work experience.



**1 in 3**  
employees report  
mental health  
challenges caused  
by work



**1 in 2**  
employees under 24  
years old report mental  
health challenges  
caused by work

When asked about the concept of burnout, our 2023 surveys told a very different story. As such, asking the right questions may be the key difference between achieving a productive culture and one that burns too hot. [\[See the Expert Interview Series: Reducing Burnout at Work\]](#)

## The Pervasive Toll of Burnout



**1 in 5**  
employees report  
burnout that  
affects their work  
performance



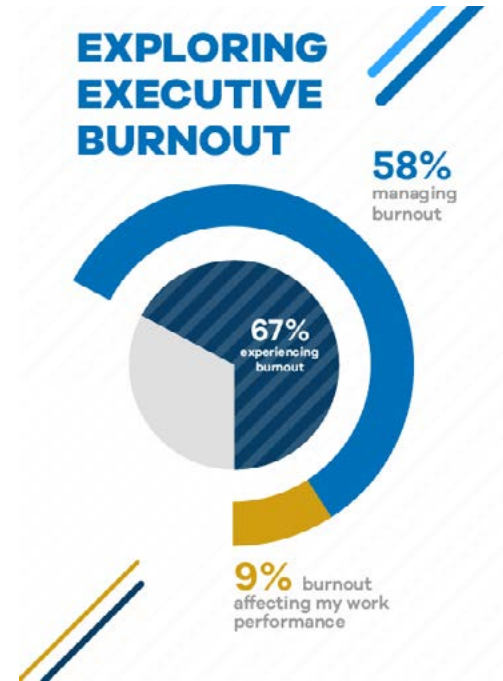
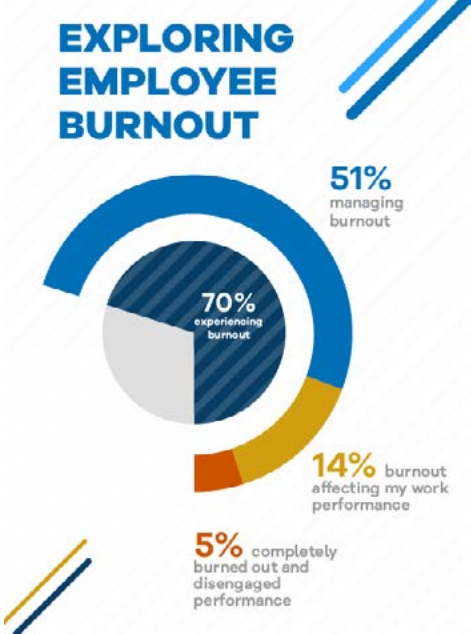
**2 out of 3**  
executives are  
experiencing  
burnout

We explored the concept of burnout further by asking employees and executives specific questions about their workplace experience. The results were alarming. The vast majority of people – employees and executives alike – report they are currently experiencing burnout. It is clear that regardless of a company’s industry, location, or size, burnout is taking a toll.

*Burnout: def. A psychological state of exhaustion stemming from persistent exposure to work-related stressors while lacking sufficient resources to efficiently cope with these stressors.*

National Institute of Health

A shocking 70% of employed adults in Georgia claim to be currently experiencing burnout. Of these employees, 51% believe they can manage their burnout level; however, nearly 20% have reached a point where they admit burnout impacts their work performance.



Perhaps more remarkable is the number of executive respondents willing to admit they are experiencing burnout (67%). Moreover, while 58% of executive respondents feel they are managing their burnout, 9% shared that their current level of burnout affects their work performance.

### The Domino Effect of Burnout in the Workplace

**Burnout’s Impact on Productivity:** The data shows a strong correlation between burnout levels and workplace productivity. Respondents who report no burnout (51%) are 18 percentage points more likely to say their productivity has improved over the past year than those whose burnout is affecting their performance (33%).

**Burnout’s Impact on Retention:** The data shows that people experiencing burnout are more likely to leave their job in the next 12 months. Employees and executives who report being completely burned out (50%) or having a high level of burnout (34%) are significantly more likely to leave their jobs in the next 12 months than those without burnout (6%).



Those experiencing higher levels of burnout claim that more aspects of work life have worsened, reporting declines in mentorship/professional development (21% vs. 3% for those with no burnout) and connection to colleagues (38% vs. 8%), in addition to increased feelings of inequity (29% vs. 8%) and loneliness (46% vs. 8%).

**Burnout Erodes Purpose & Company Values:** The data shows that burnout quickly erodes the benefits of purpose and values. A remarkable 90% of employees said their daily work connects to the company's purpose. And while 86% of respondents said their company lives its stated values, burnout quickly erodes these efforts.

Those not experiencing burnout are twice as likely to say their company is very successful at connecting daily work to a purpose than those with at least some burnout (67% vs. 38%). Similarly, employees without burnout are twice as likely to say their company is very successful at living out their stated values daily than those with at least some burnout (63% vs. 34%).

## Burnout Among Managers is a Key Concern

Looking at burnout by age provides an interesting lens into its potential impact across various roles within a company.

**Entry-Level Employees:** For employees aged 18 to 24 who typically make up most of your entry-level workforce, 78% admit experiencing some to complete burnout.

**Managers:** For employees aged 25 to 44 who find themselves in challenging management roles, 67% admit experiencing some to complete burnout.

**Managers to Senior Executive:** For employees aged 45 to 54 who fill the bulk of the senior leadership roles, 75% admit experiencing some to complete burnout. These employees typically have more direct reports and a heavier workload than their counterparts.

**Senior Executive to CEO:** Employees 55+ who typically hold the most senior leadership roles reported the least amount of burnout, but the majority (65%) admit experiencing some level of burnout.

The data confirms that burnout is a cross-generational problem affecting all levels of companies and requires a variety of solutions.



### GENERATIONAL BURNOUT

**78%**  
OF GEN Z

**67%**  
OF MILLENNIALS

**75%**  
OF GEN X

**65%**  
OF BOOMERS



## Low-Cost Solutions to Burnout

With most employees and executives managing some level of burnout, the data highlights some cost-effective solutions worth considering:

**Flexible Work Schedules May Be the Cheapest Solution:** Those experiencing complete burnout are more likely to say they were physically in the workplace more often than last year. Thus, increasing flexibility in work schedules may not only demonstrate generosity but also help ameliorate burnout and mental health challenges.

**Empathy Gap:** Those who report experiencing some burnout are 15 percentage points more likely to say that increased empathy or understanding from managers is one of the most significant ways employers can help their mental health.

However, the data also indicates a substantial generational gap regarding what employees think will alleviate the problem of burnout in terms of empathy. Entry-level employees (between the ages of 18 and 24) were far more likely to report wanting increased empathy from their managers than those typically in a managerial role (employees 25 and up).

**Fewer Meetings:** Completely burned-out employees and those with a high level of burnout affecting their performance are more likely to say that fewer meetings would help their mental health.

**Childcare or Eldercare Support:** Employees with a high level of burnout beginning to affect their work performance are more likely to say that childcare or eldercare support is one of the top two most important ways companies can show generosity to employees.

## A Small Percentage of Your People Will Just Need to Go

It is important to note that for a small number of employees (less than 10%), none of these solutions will solve their burnout – they simply need to go. Those with a high level of burnout affecting their performance and those who are completely burned out are more likely to say that nothing will help their mental health and that they just need to leave.

# 2023 BUSINESS GENEROSITY REPORT: YOU NEED PEOPLE, BUT WHAT DO PEOPLE NEED?



## What Do Employees Actually Value From Their Employer?

Once again, goBeyondProfit's data confirms that generosity remains a driving factor behind employees' choice of workplace. While this may or may not be surprising, the crucial takeaway lies in the gap between what companies currently offer and employees' evolving priorities. If you're wondering how to prioritize limited funds, employed adults provide clear direction.

Respondents were offered a comprehensive list of ways an employer can demonstrate generosity.



Continuing the trend from 2022, Flexible Work Schedules and Mental Health Support remain at the top of the list. However, a new priority (Pay Equity) has also emerged as a top request.

## Why Is Everyone Asking For Pay Equity?



A remarkable 91% of employee respondents selected pay equity as an important way for a company to demonstrate generosity to employees, with 64% naming pay equity as very important.

Historically, the discussion around pay equity has focused on the compensation disparity between men and women. However, since 91% of all respondents say it is very or somewhat important, goBeyondProfit collected additional data to understand what employees specifically mean by pay equity – the findings might surprise you.\*

## The Loyalty Penalty

When given the opportunity to select their top two concerns regarding pay equity, a surprising 43% of those surveyed responded that new hires make more than employees who have worked at the company for years. This concern, shared equally by women (45%) and men (42%), ranked as the number one choice for both men and women

[Research by Korn Ferry](#) supports this finding that your most loyal employees who have been with your company the longest might be the ones questioning the wisdom in their decisions to stay. Additional [research by ADP](#) verifies this concern, as the overall salary of people who changed jobs recently increased by 13.1%, nearly twice the 6.7% median salary increase awarded to workers who stayed loyal.



## The Gender Pay Gap

The pay equity disparity between men and women is more important to female employees in Georgia than their male counterparts (73% vs. 56%). Interestingly, this definition was most often the second choice for female respondents' behind concerns that new hires make more than loyal employees.

The pay gap between men and women has narrowed significantly, with women now earning 82 cents for every dollar earned by a male counterpart. However, according to recent Axios reporting, women will not achieve pay parity until 2056 at the current rate of improvement.

Our data also shows that women between the ages of 45 and 54 (67%) are more concerned about pay equity than their younger colleagues (51%). This may reflect that women further along in their careers are experiencing what a recent report by McKinsey describes as the "broken rung" theory, which suggests that women lose the most ground on the first step up to manager, making it that much more difficult to catch up as they continue in their career. For every 100 men promoted from entry-level to manager, only 87 women are given this same opportunity, as are only 82 women of color.

## Other Pay Equity Concerns

When asked to select up to two concerns regarding pay equity, our data found that 31% of people are concerned about CEOs making high salaries regardless of the company's performance. Men are more likely than women to choose this definition (36% vs. 25%) of pay equity, which was male respondents' second choice behind new hires making less than loyal employees.

Overall 25% of respondents selected discrimination based on race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, or disability as a top definition for pay equity; however, respondents of color are more likely to select this definition (33% vs. 22%).

Finally, 18% of respondents defined pay equity as younger employees receiving larger starting salaries and promotions.

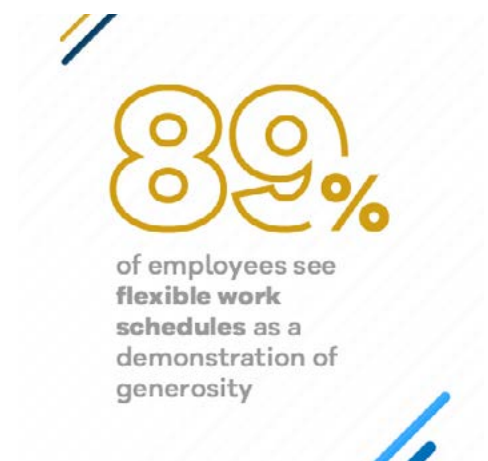
Pay equity is not a new concern but has become a more universal request in the wake of the Great Resignation. In our survey, 76% of leaders of large companies (500+ employees) say they are already addressing pay equity concerns, while only 41% of leaders of mid-sized companies (100–499 employees) and 48% of leaders of small companies (fewer than 99 employees) express the same. Accordingly, mid-sized and small companies have the most opportunity to gain favor by addressing this concern.



## Flexibility Isn't a Fight About Returning to the Office

For the second consecutive year, flexible work remains the top-ranked demonstration of generosity for all respondents and is equally valued by men and women. To help executives understand what employees specifically mean by "flexible work," goBeyondProfit collected additional data.\*

For most respondents (41%), flexible work is defined as the ability to balance work and life demands as they arise without having to take PTO – a definition shared by both men (39%) and women (44%).



Additionally, many see flexible work as a modified work week (24%), such as four-day work weeks or adjusted shifts. Another 22% of people see flexible work as simply being entrusted with completing their duties when and where they decide. Very few people (10%) consider flexible work schedules to mean a company policy of specific days in the office and at home.

With employee retention a stated concern for executives, offering flexibility may enable leaders to attract and retain talent. In fact, a flexible work schedule might not only lower expenses (overhead on office rentals, administrative supplies, etc.) but also increase employee engagement and productivity, as shown in a recent [study by Hubspot](#).

In goBeyondProfit's survey, most executives (68%) said that their companies currently offer flexible work schedules. However, Georgia still presents a wide gap between the number of companies offering flexibility (68%) and the number of employees who see flexible work schedules as important (89%), presenting a major opportunity for businesses of all sizes.

## Mental Health Support Remains a Top Priority for Employees

Last year, the goBeyondProfit report signaled a red flag about the state of mental health in the workplace. Yet, a year later, only 41% of executives state they currently offer mental health support, even though a full 88% of employees continue to name mental health support as a top demonstration of generosity.

This year, we revisited this concern and discovered pervasive levels of burnout throughout Georgia companies, including among executives. We offer employers additional data-driven insights and solutions for increased wellness in the workplace in [Burnout Dilemma – Are You Asking the Right Questions?](#)



Additionally, goBeyondProfit interviewed a workplace mental health expert to provide executives with tangible action steps for helping employees. [\[See Expert Interview Series: Reducing Burnout at Work\]](#)

## Next Steps With Diversity and Inclusion Initiatives

Since 2020, we've seen a significant increase in the number of companies prioritizing inclusion and diversity in the workplace. In 2023, 68% of executives say they are currently investing in an inclusive and diverse workplace.

As this commitment continues, it is important to highlight the significant changes in what respondents of color consider the most important demonstrations of generosity.

## INCREASED IMPORTANCE TO EMPLOYEES OF COLOR

**92%**   
Mental Health  
Support

**84%**   
Expanded Maternal  
Health Services

**83%**   
Childcare or  
Eldercare Support

According to this year's survey, Georgia employed adults of color placed a much higher emphasis on mental health support (6 percentage points more), expanded maternal health services (16 percentage points more), and childcare or eldercare support (14 percentage points more) as demonstrations of generosity.

It is especially worth noting that Georgia continues to top the list of all 50 states with the highest maternal mortality rate in the country. A recent [study by The National Institute of Health](#) shows that Georgia has 46.2 maternal deaths per 100,000 live births for all women, jumping to 66.6 for African American women. This figure represents a 44% higher death rate among women of color.

As workplaces achieve greater diversity, it is crucial for executives to factor in the divergent needs and experiences of employees and prioritize generosity efforts accordingly.

*\* Supplemental data on the deeper meaning of pay equity and flexible work schedules was gathered through an omnibus survey of employed adults in partnership with Qualtrics.*

# 2023 BUSINESS GENEROSITY REPORT: EMPLOYEES ASK FOR COMMUNITY OUTREACH REBOOT

## Do Historic Community Programs Need a Reboot?

Companies have long understood the positive benefits of a well-thought-out community engagement program. In this year's survey, Georgia employees clearly indicated their shifting priorities regarding the most important demonstrations of generosity to the community.



When asked to select their top two most important demonstrations of generosity to communities from a comprehensive list, financial contributions continues to come in first. This year, matching gifts and sustainability efforts tied for a close second. Traditional favorites such as company-sponsored volunteer events continue to decline in employee interest, with a rising preference for PTO for volunteering.

## What Do Employees Mean by Sustainability Efforts?



goBeyondProfit partnered with Qualtrics as part of an omnibus survey in an effort to help executives understand what employees specifically mean by sustainability efforts.

The majority of people (61%) define sustainability efforts as some level of "green" business practices, such as either offering environmentally friendly programs at the office (38%) or investments in renewable energy or environmental projects (23%).

However, 37% of people simply define sustainability efforts as a business taking care of customers and employees over the long term. This broader definition highlights the increased importance of integrating generosity throughout the full scope of business to ensure the long-term well-being of all stakeholders.



Currently, two out of three (68%) executives say they engage in sustainability efforts, leaving a clear opportunity for the remaining 32% to demonstrate generosity by either initiating or communicating sustainability efforts.

## Missed Opportunity to Partner on Employee Giving

Employee matching gift programs remain a top selection, with 77% of employees asserting that offering matching gifts is very or somewhat important. While 31% of executives plan to maintain or increase their matching gift program this year, a full 67% of executives say they do not currently offer a matching gifts program.

Employee matching gift programs are an easy and often low-cost way for companies to provide additional benefits their employees want while partnering with them in demonstrating generosity to communities.



## Employees Seek Autonomy in How They Volunteer

As employees continue to desire flexibility and autonomy in how they spend their time, PTO for volunteering comes in fourth as a demonstration of generosity. Meanwhile, company-sponsored volunteer events dropped to the bottom three, a consistent trend since 2021.

Notably, while employee interest in participating in company-sponsored volunteer events has declined for several years, executives continue to prioritize them in their budgets, with 76% of executives saying they offer this benefit and a full 25% of executives intending to increase their investment this year.

Additionally, 78% of employees say they prefer PTO to volunteer when and where they want; however, nearly half (48%) of executives say they don't currently offer this option.

For your Gen-Z employees (ages 18-24), company volunteerism is especially uninteresting (only 15% place it in their top two); however, one in four employees who arrived at the company in the last six months highly value company-sponsored volunteer events.

## The Tightrope of Public Statements and Politics

In our 2021 survey, 91% of employed adults in Georgia said they expected their CEO to express a point of view about sensitive social issues. In this year's survey, 63% of employed adults selected public statements on social issues as a somewhat or very important demonstration of generosity. While this represents a notable decline in employee sentiment, most employees continue to view public statements as important.



In the current political climate, more than half (54%) of employee respondents named employer political involvement as not very to not at all important. Balancing the distinction between employees desire for public statements on social issues and the lack of employee support for political involvement will continue to be a challenge for executives.

# 2023 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

June 8, 2023



Georgia senior executives qualified for the survey if they were in a senior leadership position with a company that has a presence in Georgia. goBeyondProfit and Georgia CEO, a network of local websites focused on the state's business communities, obtained respondents for this survey via invitations to their email databases and social media followers. The survey was open from April 3 to April 29, 2023, drawing 173 completed responses. At a 95% confidence level, this survey has an error range of +/- 7.45%.

An online survey was conducted among employed adult Georgians between March 27 and May 4, 2023. For the sample, goBeyondProfit contracted with Qualtrics, a provider of first-party data contributed by people who opt-in to participate in surveys and market research. Respondents qualified for the survey if they were 18 or older and employed by a company with a Georgia presence or office. The survey drew 506 completes. At a 95% confidence level, this survey has an error range of +/- 4.36%.

To add context to our findings, goBeyondProfit collected data as part of an omnibus survey conducted by Qualtrics. The survey was conducted on June 2, 2023, with 1,006 respondents nationwide. At a 95% confidence level, this survey has an error range of +/- 3.09%.