

AUSTIN

Austin Gives: New Corporate Philanthropy Program Announced

By [Lucia Duncan \(/people/lucia-duncan\)](#)



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by Daniel Reese - 01.jpg](http://mediad.publicbroadcasting.net/p/kut/files/201201/Congress_-_by_Daniel_Reese_-_01.jpg)

Several Austin businesses are joining Austin Gives, a [Enlarge image \(javascript:void\(0\)\)](#) charitable program where companies donate a portion of their profits.

Photo by Daniel Reese for KUT News

The [Austin Chamber of Commerce \(http://www.austinchamber.com/index.php\)](http://www.austinchamber.com/index.php) announced a new program today aimed at supporting corporate philanthropy. [Austin Gives \(http://austingives.net/\)](http://austingives.net/) encourages local businesses to give at least one percent of their pre-tax earnings to charities and nonprofits, and recognizes them at a community celebration event.

The chamber held a press conference this morning, along with businesses that have signed on [as founding partners \(http://austingives.net/austin-givers/\)](http://austingives.net/austin-givers/). These include both national corporations with local branches and homegrown outfits. Mayor Lee Leffingwell said he hopes Austin Gives will change the perception of Austin as a low-giving city.

"We have been ranked recently as a low giving city. And it really doesn't fit our profile. We're a caring community. And it's kind of an enigma to figure out what that is. But I think we've got to make the effort to reach out to the public and make them aware of that fact. And make them aware that there is a great need and they can help," said Leffingwell.

Don Kendrick is a regional president of Wells Fargo, an Austin Gives founding partner. He says banks have a responsibility to give back to the community.

"We're not doing it specifically because of Occupy Wall Street, but we see

the need, we're involved. Our officers here in Austin are involved in over a hundred boards and organizations, so collectively we see the need," said Kendrick.

Austin Gives is modeled after the 35-year-old [Minnesota Keystone Program](http://www.minneapolischamber.org/mrcc-our-region/minnesotakeystone/) (<http://www.minneapolischamber.org/mrcc-our-region/minnesotakeystone/>), founded by the Minneapolis Regional Chamber of Commerce.

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Debbie

Amen to Wells Fargo and companies like them who support our Austin community and help make Austin a place we ALL want to live. Thanks, Don!

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