

# Organ Donation Demographics & Religion

Based on recent U.S. transplant data for 2024–2025, the approximate percentage of total organ donors by demographic is:

- White (non-Hispanic): ~66.5%
- Hispanic/Latino: ~15.4–15.5%
- Black/African American: ~12.6–13%
- Asian American: ~3%
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander: ~0.25%
- American Indian/Alaska Native: <1%

*(Office of Minority Health)*

So overall, non-Hispanic White Americans account for about two-thirds of all organ donors in the United States.

*(Office of Minority Health)*

Most major religions today either allow or support organ donation, especially when it is intended to save lives. However, some religious groups discourage it, leave it to individual conscience, or have restrictions about how and when it may occur.

## General Religious Perspectives on Organ Donation

- Roman Catholic Church — supports organ donation as an act of charity and love.
- Southern Baptist Convention — generally supports it as an individual choice.
- The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints — allows it and leaves the decision to the individual.
- Orthodox Judaism — opinions vary; many rabbis permit donation to save lives, but some have concerns about the definition of death.
- Islam — many modern Islamic scholars permit organ donation to save life, though some scholars object or place conditions on it.
- Jehovah's Witnesses — organ donation is allowed if all blood is removed from the organ/tissue.
- Shinto — historically some followers have been hesitant because of beliefs about bodily integrity after death.
- Hinduism — generally permits donation and often views it positively.
- Buddhism — usually supports compassionate donation, though beliefs differ among traditions.

## Religious Groups Commonly Described as Having Reservations or Restrictions

- some branches of Orthodox Judaism,

- some Islamic scholars,
- certain conservative Christian sects,
- and some followers of Shinto traditions.

Importantly, very few major religions have an absolute universal ban on organ donation today. In most cases, the decision depends on:

- interpretation by local religious authorities,
- the type of organ donation,
- whether death has occurred,
- and whether the donation is voluntary and ethical.

Religious guidance can also differ between countries and denominations, even within the same faith tradition.

## Per Capita Organ Donation Rates

Per capita organ donation rates in the United States are more difficult to measure precisely than total donor numbers because different studies use different methods (registered donors, deceased donors, living donors, eligible deaths, etc.).

However, most national transplant analyses have generally found that:

- Asian Americans tend to have some of the lower deceased-donor registration and donation rates per capita overall.
- American Indian/Alaska Native communities also often show lower donor registration rates, though the population size is much smaller.
- Some studies have also shown lower registration participation among certain immigrant communities and groups with stronger religious or cultural reservations.

## Additional Trends

- Black and Hispanic Americans historically had lower registration rates than White Americans in some regions, but donation participation has increased significantly over time.
- Asian Americans have relatively higher rates of living kidney donation in some communities despite lower deceased-donor registration overall.

## Commonly Cited Factors Affecting Donation Rates

Researchers usually attribute lower per-capita donation rates to factors such as:

- distrust of medical systems,
- cultural or religious concerns,
- language barriers,
- lower outreach access,
- immigration background,

- and lower donor registration awareness.

There is not a single universally agreed federal “lowest per capita donor demographic” statistic because the data changes depending on:

- living vs. deceased donation,
- state,
- age eligibility,
- and whether registration or actual donation is measured.