

Nonprofit Good Giving Tips

#Giving Tuesday



Tis the season ... for giving...

Americans are the most charitable people on earth, and a substantial number of us choose to make our contributions at year-end. It is part of our culture that it feels better to give than to receive, and charitable donations allow people to make a significant difference.

When giving, choose a charity or cause that is close to your heart. One that does something that you believe is important to make the world better. If you are interested in a charity that you haven't heard of, consider the following tips from the Nonprofit Federation of DMA:

1

Don't be afraid to ask - "How will my donation be used"?

The organization should provide detailed information up front and a contact reference after the campaign. An organization's website is usually the place to find information about how your donation will be used. ***Be wary if you cannot easily find contact information so that you can get questions answered.***

2

Ask for financial details.

For most organizations, IRS Form 990's are available online at guidestar.org. All organizations should provide either an annual report or IRS Form 990 upon request. Ask a new organization or a religious organization (many religious organizations are not required to file Form 990) what financial information is currently available. ***Legitimate organizations want to be transparent and open about their finances and their results because they know they will receive additional support as a trusted organization.***

3

Donate by check or credit card.

Legitimate organizations will always take a check or credit card. Be cautious if you are considering donating cash to organizations with which you are not already familiar.

4

Protect your data!

The organization should have a clear privacy policy for the use of personal information it collects. The privacy policy is located on the organization's website. Sensitive personal information such as your social security number, your mother's maiden name, and PIN access are not sought by legitimate organizations.

5

Be cautious of high-pressure tactics!

Legitimate organizations are professional and courteous when asking for your support.



6

If you are contacted by telephone, ask about the caller's relationship to the organization. A legitimate organization may use the services of professional fundraisers, volunteers, and staff, depending on the needs of that particular organization. In all instances, a donor should expect that callers readily explain who they are and why they are calling. Ask for the caller's callback information and address if there is cause for concern.

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Be careful of email spoofing. When donating online, be careful of "spoofing," which is accomplished by clicking on a link from an e-mail that appears to be sent from a legitimate source. The e-mail may have the logo and even the correct "sent from" source. Furthermore, the site link may even look like the real organization. To avoid this, go to the organization's web site directly. If you are unsure of the web address, go to your favorite search engine and enter the organization's name.

8

Secure your online donations. When donating online, make sure that you enter your personal information only on a site that is secured. Secured sites will have the "lock" icon in your browser.

9

Don't be afraid to get expert advice: State officials monitor charitable activity – and today most states require charitable organizations that solicit funds from the public to register, usually with either the Attorney General or Secretary of State. The respective office in your state can tell you if an organization is registered with the state (each state affords registration exemptions to religious and a variety of other organization types). If you believe fraudulent activity is taking place, please report it immediately to prevent further harm. Contact information for these offices, including links to the respective Web sites can be found at nasconet.org. If your state is not listed, call your attorney general's consumer assistance line.

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Be knowledgeable about third parties. If you are giving to a charity through a third party site that may be aggregating data and sending proceeds to multiple charities (such as a workplace donation site), make sure you know what is happening to your gift and whether your data will be shared with others. It's best to go directly to a charity to give rather than through third parties so that you have all of the necessary information about your donation, the mission of the organization and how your gift will be used to further the mission. There are legitimate third parties that work on behalf of charities but go to the charity first if you have questions or concerns about the donation site.

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Giving to charity should feel good. Finally, if a solicitation from an organization you do not know concerns you, reach out to learn more. If you are not satisfied with the response, send your donation to an organization you or a trusted individual knows and trusts – giving with your heart should be tempered with your good judgement.

About the Nonprofit Federation of the Data & Marketing Association (DMA)

The Nonprofit Federation of DMA is the leading association for nonprofit organizations that use data-driven marketing and fundraising strategies to gain support from individual donors. For more than 29 years, the Nonprofit Federation has served as an effective advocate for nonprofits in Washington, DC and in all 50 states. It defends vital issues such as protecting nonprofit postal rates, preserving the charitable deduction, providing privacy & data protection, and demonstrating fundraising accountability. It leads the way on professional education, best practices and networking for its more than 400 member organizations. For additional information about the Nonprofit Federation, please visit our website at nonprofitfederation.org.