

Dollars for Doers Programs

Employer–Sponsored, but Employee–Driven

A Dollars for Doers Program (DFD) is a contributions program that donates cash grants to qualified nonprofit organizations based on a level of employee involvement, usually as volunteers or board members. The effects of this program are two-fold. It allows the employee to donate his or her time to an organization that they value, while the company acknowledges its employees' dedication by donating cash to the same cause, therefore allowing the employee to “give twice.” This program can be implemented in place of, or along with, a matching gifts program to allow those employees who cannot give the gift of monetary funds, an opportunity to contribute and be acknowledged.

Advantages

- Provides employees with more community engagement opportunities that direct company dollars to organizations they support without taking it from their own pockets.
- Provides visibility for employees and company in nonprofit organizations.
- Addresses the challenge of not wanting to take off work to volunteer, since it rewards any volunteerism during work time or on employee's own time.
- Recognizes employee contribution of time and energy for community organizations and ties to other employee engagement and reward policies (e.g. matching gift policies).
- Provides data for tracking volunteering involvement, which is helpful in developing new programs and communicating the program's success.
- Can be used to support specific company-sponsored activities.

Disadvantages

- Requires the development and implementation of specific company policies and procedure statements (e.g. requires application process).
- Employee interests may not be the same as the company's. This could alienate some employees.
- Implementing the program may be time consuming and requires decision making on qualifying organizations.
- Can be considered an expensive program to run.
- Community and nonprofit partners might not always be informed of DFDs.

The most successful DFDs are the programs that have been incorporated deeply into the existing employee volunteer program. Combining your DFD with your time off policies, your global days of service, or other programs is a win-win strategy. For example, Disney allows their EARS to You program to be applied to volunteer projects through their VoluntEARS program. This encourages employees to participate in company-sponsored volunteer programs and projects.

A Few Sample Policies:

- During 2011, IBM has expanded its Community Grants program to include grants of up to \$5,000 to eligible community organizations and schools where IBM employees and retirees are actively volunteering, and in support of specific projects.
- Qualcomm Inc. operates a Community Service Grants program where employees who volunteer at least 15 hours of their time at a nonprofit organization during the fiscal year, can request a \$245 donation to be awarded directly to the qualifying nonprofit. DFD at Qualcomm Inc. comes hand in hand with its recognition program. Every year the Individual Employee of the Year and Team Volunteer of the Year awardees, select a nonprofit that receives a \$2,000 donation in honor of their service.
- Through its Volunteer Grant program, Bank of America employees who volunteer regularly with an organization are eligible to apply for an unrestricted grant for the nonprofit of up to \$500 per employee each calendar year. For 50 or 100 hours of volunteer time within a calendar year, the Bank of America Charitable Foundation will grant \$250 and \$500 respectively. In 2010, qualifying employee volunteers from 45 participating markets were awarded the Volunteer Service Award. Winners could choose to direct a \$5,000 charitable grant to an organization of their choice.
- Through AT&T CARES, AT&T Pioneer chapters and other qualified internal organizations, AT&T Foundation grants \$5,000 to a nonprofit which demonstrated community engagement. In 2009 alone, the AT&T Foundation provided \$220,000 in grants to 44 organizations through its CARES program.
- In 2011 AT&T announced a new AT&T Cares Project Funding Contest, giving employees a chance to win funds for 501(c)(3) nonprofit agencies where they volunteer. Up to \$40,000 in contributions will be awarded.
- Intel's Involved Hero Award Program recognizes employee community service engagement by allowing 10 finalists representing each global geography an opportunity to compete for \$15,000 in grants to donate to the charity of their choice.
- Discover Financial Services rewards employee volunteering through the You Care We Share Volunteer Recognition Program. Employees who log 24 or more employee volunteer hours on the program's website, are eligible for a \$100 grant to the charitable organization of their choice in accordance with program guidelines.
- Through its volunteer program, McKesson grants \$250 (up to a maximum of \$1,000 per fiscal year) to the employee's charity of choice for every 25 hours of volunteer work completed and logged on the company's website. Employees may volunteer with any number of nonprofit agencies in order to accumulate the minimum of 25 volunteer hours to qualify and must record their volunteer hours within two months of the volunteer date.

Request for survey data about Dollars for Doers Programs:

In terms of data, there is not a single national statistic, but there have been informal surveys and research by Points of Light and other organizations on employee engagement program structure.

Seventy-one percent of 2010 and 2011 Excellent EVPs implemented DFDs. While most companies' DFD program is open for full and part-time employees, companies such as Campbell Soup and Bank of America allow retiree participation in their program.

DFDs topped rankings of most successful domestic and international employee volunteering programs. Corporate matches for served hours amounted approximately \$10 per every eligible hour of volunteer service, usually at a fixed amount (e.g. \$500 for 50 hours).

As companies encourage employee volunteerism, it is increasingly common to see corporate matches of \$20 per hour of service. While an annual limit of \$1,000 per employee is common, the range was \$250 - 12,000 – an increase from 2009. Cited from ***CECP Giving in Numbers – 2011 Edition***.

Interestingly, according to the same source, DFD programs are predominantly offered by manufacturing and service companies (55 percent and 59 percent, respectively). Nonetheless, there are some distinctions by industry. Seventy-one percent of companies in the materials industry, 67 percent of companies in the utility industry, 64 percent of companies in the consumer discretionary industry and 62 percent of companies in the health care and financial industries offer a domestic DFD.

The [Points of Light Corporate Institute](#) is the go-to resource for community-minded companies looking to build and expand effective employee volunteer programs. With our global network of 250 affiliates and a team of experts, we can help you create a customized volunteer program, engage your employees, learn best practices, network with other leading companies, and gain visibility for leadership and excellence.

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