



WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

When it comes to supporting what we care about, using our voices or volunteering are meaningful ways to make an impact. But it's often the resources that drive the change we want to see - money that helps an animal shelter keep the lights on, trees to repopulate a deforested area or job training workshops that offer unhoused individuals the opportunity to develop new skills.

Donating represents an individual's ability to give their personal resources to support others or to advance a social cause.

Nonprofits, large and small, rely on donations to achieve their missions, most often from everyday people. Financial donations are critical to an

organization's success and survival, and therefore their ability to address important community needs. Likewise, non-financial donations can often be just as critical - goods like school supplies for a local youth center or services like free resume consulting for women living in a domestic violence shelter.

But donating to what you care about doesn't require giving to a formal organization. Buying groceries for a neighbor who has lost their job or donating money to a crowdfunding platform such as GoFundMe to support a member of your community during a time of crisis count as well. These formal and informal ways of donating all have the ability to make a meaningful impact.

CHARITABLE DONATION TIPS FOR GIVING TO A NONPROFIT¹



FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT DONATING



1. Don't assume what is needed. A donation is only as impactful as it is necessary. Before making a non-financial donation, ask what types of goods and services could be beneficial and let that information guide what you donate.



2. Small donations matter. Donations don't have to be large to be meaningful because small donations add up. There's collective impact when individuals and groups contribute to a cause. What matters is the outcome your donation produces.



3. Make a commitment. Donations can be a one-time contribution or can be a part of a long-term strategy to support an issue or cause (monthly, annually, etc). If possible, consider investing in the issue or cause you care about by committing to making regular donations even if it's a small amount.



4. In times of disaster, donate money. When we see communities devastated by an earthquake, tornado or other natural disaster, we're often tempted to buy clothing, food or other resources because we think that will make the most impact. But financial donations are the most effective in these situations and allow organizations on the ground to purchase the supplies needed in an ever-changing crisis situation.



5. Support infrastructure, not just programs. When making a financial donation, we often think an investment in the programs themselves is the most important. However, an organization's ability to deliver on their mission is dependent on being able to pay for the infrastructure behind those programs (staff, technology, etc) By making an unrestricted donation, you equip the organization to use the donation where it's needed most to do the greatest good in the long term.

¹[Charity Donation Tips](#)



TAKE A DEEPER DIVE AND LEARN MORE



Make the most of your charitable donation by learning more about the organization you plan to support at [Charity Navigator](#)



[Donating with Impact: A Guide to Responsible Charitable Giving](#) offers a closer look at being a more mindful donor



Explore a variety of tools and resources for impactful giving at [Global Giving](#)



Review your workplace giving policies and then consider collaborating with your colleagues via [Seven Tips for Organizing a Workplace Donation Drive](#)



WATCH: [The Way we Think About Charity is Dead Wrong](#) (TEDx Talk)



[simple giving](#)
easy ways to give every day

BOOK: [Simple Giving: Easy Ways to Give Every Day](#) by Jennifer Iacovelli

THINK ABOUT IT...

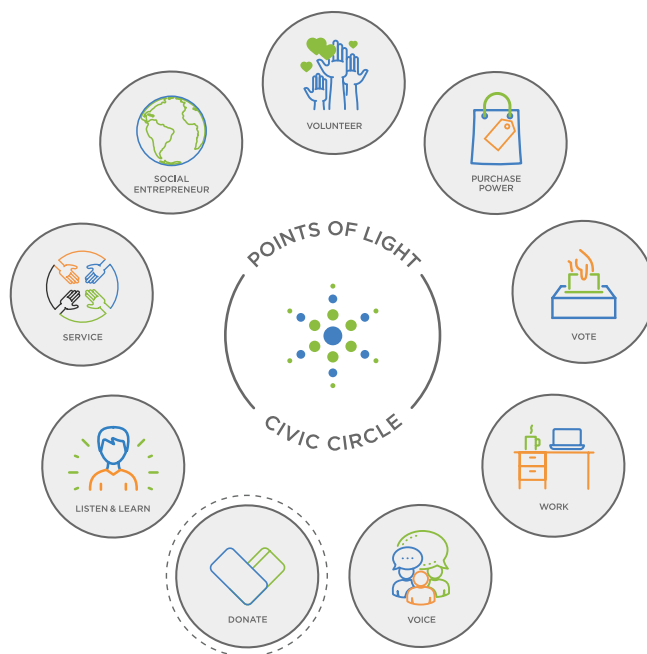


- What things do you consider before making a donation to support what you care about?
- What motivates you to donate (i.e., something in the news, a cause you're involved with, being asked by others, etc.)? Why?
- Do you typically donate in more formal ways to an organization or more informally? Why or why not?
- What types of donations do you typically make (financial or non-financial)? Why?
- How would you influence others to donate to a cause they care about?

WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

- Research the causes you care about to explore the type of financial and non-financial donations requested to support their work.
- Share what you've learned with others and inspire them to donate.
- Donate is just one activity in the Points of Light Civic Circle that you can use to lead and lend support to causes you care about. To learn more, visit <https://pointsoflight.org/civillife/>.

These resources are being provided as a convenience and for informational purposes only; they do not constitute an endorsement or an approval by Points of Light of any of the products, services or opinions. Points of Light bears no responsibility for the accuracy, legality or content of the external site or for that of subsequent links. Contact the external site for answers to questions regarding its content. If there are questions or concerns about the inclusion of a particular resource, please contact info@pointsoflight.org.



The **Civic Circle** represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life.