

25 Ways to Make Your Gifts Go Further

Here are 25 smart ways to support your favorite charity, and some of them don't even require you to give anything, just take action.

1) PLAN your giving. You'll feel better about your giving and know that it's had maximum impact when you take a little time to determine which organizations you want to support and when/how much you'll give. If you plan, you'll also feel better about saying "no" to a charity because you'll know that you're going to give in the future. To learn more, read [The Five "Ps" of Wise Giving](#).

2) Interact with and giving to your charity online. If you receive a written letter and then give online, the charity has still incurred the cost of sending you something. But if you are proactive and let the charity know you want to receive communications online, you're saving them a bit of money. And the more donors who do that, the more money the charity can spend elsewhere.

3) Look into matching gifts from your employer. Many donors don't realize that their employee may match their gift. Not all employers do that, or may only match a portion of your gift but it doesn't hurt to find out and can easily double your impact. Ask your human resources manager. Some employers might offers employees time off to volunteer as well.

4) Payroll giving/giving a little bit each month. A \$100 gift might sound like a lot at one time, but what if you give a little part of that each month? A measly \$10 per month is a \$120 annual gift to your favorite cause. You might be able to work with a charity to have that amount come directly out of each paycheck, or just set aside a little bit each month.

5) Give to a community foundation. A community foundation focuses, as the name implies, on a certain geographic area, making contributions and providing support to charities in the community that cover a wide range of activities. Giving to a community foundation is a great way to pool your resources with other donors so you can have a bigger impact in your local community using the expertise and experience the foundation has developed over the years.

6) Donor-advised funds. These charitable vehicles allow you to give money to a charity (the fund), receive a deduction and then recommend to what charitable organizations money in the fund should be directed. Donor-advised funds typically require a significant amount of money, though smaller funds (a minimum contribution of \$10,000) have now been created.

7) Click-a-day websites. It doesn't get much easier than this. There are websites where you can go every day, click on a button, and something good will happen: For example, at the [Hunger WebSite](#), for every click you make, sponsors will provide food to charitable organizations. Use [Google](#) (or even better, read number 8 below).

8) Use an online search tool like Goodsearch. Every time you search online using [Goodsearch](#), you generate money for your designated charity. It's not a lot of money each time, but the searches can add up. [Everyclick](#) and [Charity Café](#) are other examples.

9) Play games online for charity. Play trivia games, geography games and candle games, and whether you win or lose, charities will be supported.

10) Giving circles. Get your friends together, discuss common interests, agree to a certain amount each person gives to the circle, and then determine which charities will receive your pooled gift. Giving circles are a great way to bring friends together and dramatically increase the impact of your philanthropy. For more information, click to this [great article](#) from the Minnesota Toolkit for Giving.

11) Donations of clothing and other goods. Clothing and other goods, including furniture, electronics, appliances and linens, are ALWAYS needed. However, understand that you typically cannot take a deduction for clothing or household items you donate unless the clothing or household items are in good used condition or better.

12) Donations of food. An easy and important way to give. Contact local shelters and see what they need. Be sure to take advantage of discount food sales at supermarkets, but make sure you're buying items that people will enjoy. Think about making a bit extra or buying a second turkey or ham for your Thanksgiving or holiday dinners.

13) Donating your car. Yes, you can donate your car (and boat) and receive a charitable deduction equal to the fair market of the vehicle. It's a great way to be charitable, but there are some things to think about when you're considering donating a vehicle. Charity Navigator has some [great tips](#) for vehicle donations.

14) Collect that change at the end of the month. Sure, you could use it to buy a cheap lunch. But how about keeping it and contributing it to charity? A little bit a month can add up (See number 4 above).

15) Sell items and give the proceeds to charity. A garage sale is one way. Selling items online is another through [eBay Giving Works](#). You can donate a portion of your sale to a charity and immediately contribute through PayPal.

16) Ask for donations instead of gifts. Instead of asking for gifts for your birthday or the holidays, ask for contributions to be made to your favorite charity.

17) Buy items from local charities. Lots of local groups make items or goods, especially for the holidays. Buy from these charities and get things you need while supporting a good cause.

18) Buy extra items. An extra package of soap or shampoo, an extra set of batteries or light bulbs. Lots of common household items are needed by charities, especially social service organizations, all the time. Find out what your favorite charities need, then buy items for them occasionally throughout the year.

19) Regift. Okay, so not only did you not get the gift you wanted, but the gift you got wasn't...quite right for you. But it's probably great for someone else! Consider regifting those unwanted prizes and donating them to a charity. Or auction them off online and give the proceeds to charity.

20) Bequests. Want to give a lasting legacy to a charity and your community? Then consider leaving something to a charity in your will. Getting your will prepared is an important thing to do regardless of your philanthropic interests, but you'll find that leaving something behind to charity can be easily done with positive tax benefits for your family.

21) Get your kids involved. For lots of reason. First, studies show the earlier kids get involved with philanthropy, the more likely they are to continue their involvement as they grow older. Second, their enthusiasm can be contagious. And third, they look at problems and issues from perspectives that adults often don't consider, and often provide "out of the box" solutions and innovations that seasoned professionals haven't thought of before.

22) Use an affinity credit card. An increasing number of nonprofits have partnerships with banks that produce affinity credit cards. Every time you use that credit card, a small amount is contributed to the charity—maybe a penny per dollar. Now that's not a lot, but for example if you spend \$10,000 annually on a credit card, you've just given your favorite charity \$100. Check with your favorite charities to see if they have an affinity credit card program.

23) Contribute your points. Maybe you get receive points from credit card programs, airline mileage partnerships or hotel deals? In many cases, you can contribute those points, or the benefits you'd receive from them, to a charity. Check with the appropriate company and program and see what is transferrable for a charitable cause.

24) Consider making a charity the beneficiary of your life insurance policy. Or you can donate an existing policy to a charity. Or contribute money to a charity and have it buy a life insurance policy. All are great and easy ways to support your favorite cause. Contact your charity for more information.

25) Attend special events. You want to go out? You want to run a marathon? Then do so through a charity's special event, have fun and support the cause all at the same time. Charities are now offering all sorts of special events, so find out what's happening in the community and participate!

From the Association of Fundraising Professionals Change the World with a Giving – and Wise – Heart website: http://www.afpnet.org/files/GivingHeart/GivingHeart_Gifts.html