

PHILANTHROPY PRO-TIPS FOR SMARTIES: CHOOSING A CHARITY OF CHOICE

Choosing a charity of choice can be a tongue-twister to say and a challenge to do for some people. With so many worthy causes and great organizations to choose from, it may be challenging to select a charity for your donation.

The following are five steps to help you choose and donate to your charity of choice:

1. Decide what causes you're passionate about.
2. Find a charity that matches your passion.
3. Research the organization before you donate.
4. Avoid red flags.
5. Donate to your charity of choice.



PRO TIP:

Talk to people in your network who can help you find a charity that matches your interests.

1. DECIDE WHAT YOU'RE PASSIONATE ABOUT

When it comes to giving, the adage to “follow your heart” is quite appropriate.

If you're passionate about different causes like animals, veterans, education, the homeless, or something else, you'll want to choose nonprofit organizations that address those causes and interests so that your donation can make the biggest impact where you want it to. After you've narrowed your list down to a few or maybe even one cause, it's time to find your charity.

2. FIND A CHARITY THAT MATCHES YOUR PASSION

There are several ways to find nonprofit organizations that you want to support:

- Talk to people in your network (e.g., family, friends, and colleagues) to learn more about charities that are doing great work and get guidance on how to make your donation.
- Visit fundraising and nonprofit organization websites. A great resource for finding nonprofit organizations online is Consumer Reports, which has a list of the best and worst charities.
 - [Best and Worst Charities for Your Donations - Consumer Reports](https://www.consumerreports.org/money/charities/best-charities-for-your-donations-a4066579102/)
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- Contact nonprofit organizations directly by email or phone and speak to a representative to learn more about their missions and community service.

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3. RESEARCH THE ORGANIZATION BEFORE YOU DONATE

Once you find a charity that matches your passion, it's time to do your homework.

It's wise to learn as much as you can about a nonprofit organization before you donate. The following websites make it easy to do your research online:

- **Donate.org:** The website for the Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, which provides information for prospective donors and evaluates and accredits charities.
- **CharityWatch:** A nonprofit organization that informs the public about wasteful or unethical practices by charities.
- **Charity Navigator:** Has rating information on 1.6 million nonprofits registered in the United States and rates only charities that have generated at least \$1 million in revenue for two consecutive years. The site also rates large nonprofit organizations on how sustainable and transparent they are.

Also, remember to **make sure that you have the organization's name correct when you do your research.** Many fake operations will use a name very similar to a reputable nonprofit's name.



PRO TIP:

It is important to research an organization and be familiar with its mission and effectiveness before you donate.

4. AVOID RED FLAGS

When doing your research, you should be able to see at least three things on a nonprofit organization's website:

- The organization's mission
- A list of the board of directors
- The latest financial reports

If you can't find those items on a charity's website, there may be some transparency issues.

5. FINAL STEP: DONATE TO YOUR CHARITY OF CHOICE

So... You know what you are passionate about, you've done your research, you've found a charity, and there are no red flags. Now, you are ready for the final and most important step: **Follow the donation procedures and donate to your charity of choice!**