

Tips for Giving Wisely



1. Budget for giving.

Plan your philanthropic activities right into your budget just as you would snacks, entertainment, clothes or vacations.

2. Know your charity.

Charities have an obligation to provide detailed information to interested donors. Request written literature that includes a list of the board of directors and a mission statement. Never give to a charity that you know nothing about.

3. Find out where your dollars go.

Ask how much of your donation goes for general administration and how much is left for the program services you want to support. The general rule of thumb is that less than 40% should be spent on general administration and fundraising.

4. Keep records of your donations.

Ask for a receipt if you give cash. If you can write a check, that's a better record of your donation and has more of a chance of going directly to the non-profit.

5. Do not fall for emotional appeals.

Beware of the pathetic "sob story." Make sure you get the real story behind the charity. Ask for as much information as you need to be comfortable giving money to the charity.

6. Consider giving generously.

Once you are satisfied that the charity is worthwhile, give generously if you can. There are many good non-profit organizations that need your support. By doing your homework, you can give wisely and you will be giving more effectively.

7. Check out these websites for some investigative help.

www.charitynavigator.org
www.charitywatch.org
www.legitimatecharities.com
www.guidestar.com

These tips were adapted from the Independent Sector's guidelines posted at www.IndependentSector.org.