

## Make an annual donations budget

Type of Charity	Amount
Religious Organizations	
Community (i.e. United Way)	
Arts and Culture	
Education	
Health	
International Aid	
Recreation	
Social Services	
Other	
TOTAL	

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## Your Donations Guide



## Make Donations with Confidence

## When charities come calling...

Every year, each one of us gets approached by dozens of charities asking for our support. How do you know which ones deserve your support, and which ones don't?

Here are some hints to help you make your decisions. If the charity that has approached you sounds like something you might be interested in supporting, but you don't know much about it, ask these questions.

- If a representative is on the phone or at the door, ask if he or she is a volunteer, an employee of the charity, or working for a company to raise money. Charities that use companies to call you often spend a lot of what you give them on the fund raising company.
- Ask how much of the income from this campaign is spent on fund raising.
- Ask how much of the charity's total income goes to its charitable activities.
- If you are not familiar with what the charity does, ask what specific needs it meets, and what it does to meet those needs. Do its services sound reasonable in comparison to the needs?

If you are still interested, ask them to send you a copy of their most recent annual report and audited statement. Charities should detail their expenses every year, in a report produced by an independent auditor. If they won't send you information, don't give them any money, and never agree to give them money over the phone.

## When they send you a letter...

If you get requests in the mail, or if a charity responds to your request for information...

- Does the information list the members of the board of directors — the volunteers who control the charity? Is there anyone whose name or position you recognize and respect?
- If you receive information on their income and expenses, does the information look reasonable? Do they have a big surplus or a big deficit?
- If you receive information on their services, does what they do seem reasonable? If their services sound too good to be true, they probably are.
- Sometimes two charities have similar sounding names. Are you making a donation to the one you think you are?
- If you have any doubts call your local Better Business Bureau to see if they have any complaints against this organization.

### Before you decide...

- Beware of scam artists who make themselves sound like charities but aren't. Look for their charitable registration number on their literature.
- Don't respond to pressure. No responsible charity will browbeat you into giving.
- Don't give to sob stories. Ask for specific information about how your donation will be used.

**Finally, be as generous as you can. Charities need your support to do their good works.**