

10 Tips on Giving Wisely

The Internal Revenue Service grants tax exemption to an average of 83 nonprofit organizations a day. With more than 1 million nonprofits operating across the United States alone, there's no shortage of groups seeking support. Habitat for Humanity is grateful for all the support *Habitat World* readers and others supply to intensify its drive to rid the world of shacks. The following tips from the Independent Sector are presented to help inform your gift-making decisions.

1. BUDGET FOR GIVING.

Plan your philanthropic activities right into your budget just as you would other financial obligations.

2. BE AN INFORMED GIVER.

Don't be afraid to ask questions when you're asked to give. Give only when you feel comfortable that your dollars will be going to support an organization you know and believe in.

3. KEEP THE RIGHT RECORDS.

For gifts of less than \$250, a canceled check is sufficient for IRS requirements. For larger gifts, you'll want to get a properly worded receipt from the charitable organization as a confirmation of your tax-deductible contribution. (All gifts to Habitat for Humanity International are acknowledged with a receipt.)

4. BE AWARE OF HOW MUCH IS REALLY TAX DEDUCTIBLE.

If you receive a premium in exchange for your gift (such as a book or a dinner), the amount of your tax deduction is reduced by the fair market value of the premium. You can turn down the incentive item if you wish to claim a deduction for the full amount of your gift. Ask the receiving organization for more details.

5. ASK ABOUT MATCHING GIFTS.

Many employers match gifts made by their employees or make grants to organizations recommended by employees. Be sure to ask your company how it can help your gift go even further. (You can visit www.habitat.org/donation/otherways.aspx for more information concerning Habitat for Humanity International and matching gifts.)

6. YOUR GIFT CAN BE CONFIDENTIAL.

If you prefer to have your gift remain confidential, you should let the organization know. You can expect the charitable organization to honor your request.

7. CONSIDER OTHER FORMS OF GIVING.

Don't overlook the benefits to you and your cause received from bequests, charitable gift annuities, gifts in kind, endowments and many other creative forms of giving. (You can visit www.habitat.org/giving/planned for more information about other ways to support Habitat for Humanity International.)

8. VOLUNTEER!

In addition to financial support, consider giving your time and skills. Not only will you help the organization, but you'll also make contacts, hone your skills and learn more about the charitable cause to which you're committing your time and money.

9. DON'T FORGET YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO SAY 'NO.'

Give generously when you can, but if you're unsure or feel uncomfortable—or if an organization simply falls outside your plan for giving—don't be afraid to say "no." Or ask for more information and take more time to think before making your decision.

10. BE A PROACTIVE GIVER.

You don't have to wait to be asked. Plan a giving strategy in advance. Contact the charitable organizations of your choice to discuss how your gifts can be most effectively used and help make a difference in your community.

Source: www.independentsector.org



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