

How to Support Charities While On a Budget

Donating to charity is not mandatory, but it clearly defines a person's values. You may see some people on social media giving away thousands or even millions of dollars to charity. But do not feel pressured to donate more than what you can afford. In fact, you can still effectively support non-profit organizations even if you do not have a six-figure income. As long as you contribute any amount of money, material, or time, you are making an impact.

Here are thirteen tips to help you fulfill the social responsibility of charity based on your financial situation. At the end of this guide, you will figure out the best way to reallocate your budget to accommodate charitable donations.

The online version of this guide can be found here:

<https://dealhack.com/blog/how-to-support-charities-while-on-a-budget>

1. CHOOSE JUST ONE CHARITY TO SUPPORT



As much as we want to help everyone, the reality is we can only do so much—especially in this economy. Fortunately, thousands of non-profit organizations out work tirelessly to provide essential services like education, meals, shelter, and primary healthcare.

Donating on a budget starts with only choosing one charity group. You can always support more in the future when your financial situation improves over time. You can either choose a local one

in your community or one of the larger ones that are well-known worldwide. Deciding on which charitable organization to support is no easy decision. Consider these questions to narrow down your choices:

- Do they share the same values as you?
- Do they support a cause that you are also passionate about?
- Are they making a positive impact on the community they are helping?
- Are they transparent on how they use the donations to support their cause?

As long as you do all the research, you will eventually find the best charitable organization to support, no matter the criteria you choose.

2. MAKE A BUDGET PLAN AND INCLUDE CHARITY IN IT



The best way to control your spending is to track all your finances. Creating a budget plan helps you sort the essential expenses—rent, bills, groceries, and insurance—from the non-essential or luxury expenses. Not to mention you also need to set aside some money for your emergency fund.

Since you are on a budget, it's important that your earnings cover all essential expenses before anything else. Your charitable donations can go a long way in providing other people with their basic needs. Consider re-allocating a portion of your luxury expenses and designate it as your charity budget. Instead of buying one more pair of shoes or earrings that you don't really need, put the money into the charity budget instead.

3. DONATE REGULARLY, EVEN IN SMALL AMOUNTS



Remember, a small donation is better than none at all. You do not need to give away half of your paycheck if you cannot afford it. Giving away small amounts on a regular basis is better than the occasional huge donation because it ensures that the charity organization you support has a steady source of income.

Most non-profits nowadays enable automated payments to make the donation process simple and convenient. This method is also more secure because you no longer need to withdraw cash or carry a checkbook whenever you want to give to charity. You only have to choose an amount and the frequency of your donations, and you're good to go.

4. DONATE YOUR OLD STUFF INSTEAD OF THROWING THEM AWAY



Do you have any stuff that you no longer need? Everything from clothes and bags to books and tools can be put to good use as donations instead of just gathering dust in your attic or basement. Many non-profit organizations accept used or preloved clothes, toys, footwear, and bags and distribute them to populations that need them the most.

Donating your old or unwanted possessions means that they will still make an impact on other people's lives instead of simply going to waste. Need to get rid of worn out but still usable shoes or a shirt that no longer fits? Your local charity will appreciate taking it from you.

5. SELL YOUR UNWANTED THINGS AND DONATE THE MONEY



If you do not want to carry these boxes to a donation center, consider selling them instead and giving your profits to charity.

Garage sales are easy to organize because you have to display all your old stuff on your driveway for everyone to see. Just make sure that your Homeowner's Association approves of such an activity. Otherwise, you can take pictures of all the items you want to give away and post them on online buy & sell sites like Facebook Marketplace.

You can also visit your local thrift store to sell old but valuable items like vinyl records, limited-edition movie discs, and antique furniture. Thrift stores like Goodwill and Salvation Army sell items that various people and organizations donate. If you resell your unwanted possessions here *and then* give your profits to another charity group, you can contribute more without having to dish out extra money.

6. GIVE SOMETHING UP AND DONATE YOUR SAVINGS



What better way to control your impulse spending than giving that money to charity? Keep track of how much you spend on items that are bought on impulse. Shoes, bags, junk food, cigarettes, anything that you can't resist buying and end up regretting it. Or maybe you have a few hobbies or subscriptions that you pay for but end up barely using or enjoying, if you do at all.

Try starting a personal challenge. Give up bad habit or impulse buy for a week, and then a month, and so on. Collect the money you meant to spend on these things and give them to charity Challenge yourself to give up one of these things for a month. You can hold yourself accountable by pledging to give the money you save to a charity. If you're worried, you might not follow through, share your plans with your family and friends on social media, and track your progress daily or weekly.

7. JOIN A FUN RUN CHARITY EVENT



Non-profit organizations may also organize fun runs to raise money for donations. These events usually only require you to pay a registration fee, and the funds they collect go straight to charity. You might get additional freebies like T-shirts and keychains to commemorate your participation. Please don't worry if you are not in tip-top physical shape because anyone who can move is eligible to join a fun run. You don't even have to run at all; walking is perfectly fine. Fun runs are a great way to raise money for charity, stay fit, and socialize with other people—all in one activity.

8. START A FUNDRAISER ON YOUR BIRTHDAY



Instead of asking gifts on your birthday, how about asking for donations to a charity of your choice? You can easily do so online at any of these popular websites:

- Facebook Fundraising
- Donorbox
- Kickstarter
- GoFundMe
- CrowdFunder
- Indiegogo
- Patreon
- PayPal

All you have to do is choose from a list of trustworthy non-profit organizations or private fundraisers and share the link with your friends. Remember to include information about the charity and why it matters to you if they donate any amount they can spare.

9. SIGN UP FOR VOLUNTEER WORK



Donations do not always refer to money or products. Volunteer work is an example of non-material contributions. Giving your time, talents, or knowledge to help a cause might even be more impactful than any amount of money or material.

Most non-profit organizations need the help of volunteers to accomplish their goals. Even the simplest tasks like sorting material goods, distributing food, and lifting boxes are essential charity work. You can also help with donation drives and fundraising campaigns if you have specific skills like cooking, driving, playing musical instruments, and delegating tasks.

Volunteer work for charity takes up time and energy. But your efforts will be greatly appreciated by those you want to help.

10. JOIN A BLOOD DONATION DRIVE



Blood is a life-saving donation that does not cost you any money. All you have to do is show up at a local blood drive organized by the Red Cross. Different [eligibility requirements](#) for those who want to donate whole blood, plasma, or platelets. Here are the general requirements for whole blood donors:

- You must be at least 17 years old (or 16 years old with parental consent) in most states.
- You must be in good overall health. If you feel sick, it is strongly advised to recover fully before donating blood.
- Maintain a healthy blood iron level. Visit the Red Cross website for more info about iron in the blood.
- You must weigh at least 110 lbs. Donors who are in high school, or those who are 18 and below, might also follow additional height and weight requirements.
- You must not have donated blood in the last 56 days (8 weeks).

Most importantly, get enough sleep the night before and drink lots of fluids.

11. BARGAIN HUNT AND BUY IN BULK



Some stores offer bulk discounts on medical kits, school supplies, canned goods, and reading materials. Take advantage of these discounts online or at your local grocery, retail, or department store. Once you score a haul of products at bargain prices, donate some to charity instead of keeping them at home.

Here are a few examples of online stores where you can buy a haul of products for bargain prices:

- [Dollar Tree](#)
- [Bulk Office Supply](#)
- [DiscountMags](#)
- [Discount School Supply](#)
- [Factory Outlet Store](#)
- [Target](#)
- [Walmart](#)

Check their websites for flyers and printable coupons to maximize your savings further.

If you have a few extra dollars to spare on donations, you can also try visiting outlet and factory stores of famous fashion brands. Unlike their flagship stores that sell full-priced items, outlet and factory merchandise are cheaper but are still of good quality.

12. DONATE YOUR HAIR



Hair donations are used to create wigs, not just for cosmetic purposes. These are beneficial for people diagnosed with Alopecia areata, an autoimmune disease that leads to hair loss. Wigs are also used by severe burns patients and those undergoing cancer radiation therapy. Donating your hair costs nothing, but you can positively impact other people's confidence and overall mental health.

Here are examples of non-profit organizations that accept hair donations for a cause:

- [Chair Lifeline](#)
- [Children With Hair Loss](#)
- [Hair We Share](#)
- [Locks of Love](#)
- [Matter of Trust](#)
- [Maggie's Wigs 4 Kids](#)
- [Wigs for Kids](#)

Each non-profit has different eligibility requirements for hair donations. However, here are a few general guidelines to remember:

- Keep your hair in clean, healthy condition—not too oily or dry.
- Double-check the length guidelines before cutting off your hair. If you are not confident in doing it yourself, find a salon that is familiar with hair donation requirements.
- Cut off the split ends of your hair to separate them from the healthy strands.
- Triple check donation requirements and keep hair clean dry before you send it off.
- If you have curly hair, pull it back before measuring its length. Most non-profits do not accept hair that is less than 12 inches long.
- Check whether the organization you want to donate your hair to accepts gray hairs.

- Bleached hair will most likely be rejected for donations.

13. ASK YOUR EMPLOYER TO MATCH YOUR DONATION



If you are employed in the corporate sector, chances are the company has experience donating to charitable organizations. Workplace giving programs differ per company, but here are the most common types of gift matching:

Online method:

1. Employees donate to a non-profit organization directly (personal visit, on your website via debit/credit card, or bank transfer) or indirectly (GoFundMe, PayPal, and other third-party platforms).
2. The employees log in to their company's gift-matching website.
3. Employees look for the charitable organization they donated to on the website's database.
4. If the non-profit they are looking for is in the search results, the employees select it. If not, then they enter that organization's name and other details.
5. The employee registers their contribution by adding their name, donation amount, date, and other required information.
6. The matching gift request is submitted to be reviewed by the company.

Paper (or printed form) method:

1. The employee (referred to as the donor) secures a printed copy of a gift-matching form. This form is usually divided into two sections, one of which must be filled out by the

employee. The other section is filled out by the non-profit organization to which the employee wishes to donate.

2. The donor section typically requires the following personal information: identification number, phone number, and mailing address. Other essential fields include the non-profit organization name, address, and contact number or email address
3. The donor sends the gift-matching form to the addressed non-profit organization, usually delivered via hand or mail.
4. The non-profit organization receives the form and fills out the second section, which typically includes a mailing address to the company where the donor is employed. This step is important because it verifies that the employee indeed made a charitable donation.
5. The non-profit organization completes the gift-matching form, mails it to the company, and waits for a response.

Donation matching or gift matching ensures that your employer also fulfills its social responsibility of contributing to non-profit organizations. Some corporate entities would not refuse to donate a portion of their profits to charity.

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