

Generosity lives here.

Your generosity guidebook

An easy-to-follow introduction to
charitable giving

In this guide, we'll help you:

- Orient yourself, your family, or your group on how to make a gift
- Discern ways you can make a difference
- Identify nonprofits whose missions align with your goals
- Go deeper in your philanthropic journey





Introduction

We all know what it feels like to be the recipient of a gift—be that a birthday present, a scholarship, or even a free coffee paid forward by the person in front of us at a coffee shop. Whether it was expected or a surprise, it feels great!

Giving of every kind is done in relationship—it is joyful for the receiver and for the giver. Throughout our lives, we practice giving in many ways. We may volunteer our time at an animal shelter or food pantry in our neighborhood. A community fun run gives us the chance to exercise our legs for a good cause. A benefit event is an opportunity to give back while learning about a nonprofit that interests us. All these ways of giving are good.

With financial giving, we invest in the people and organizations that are making change happen—around the corner, across the river, or even around the globe. We can give the cash we have in our pockets, a gift in honor of someone or something, a pledge paid out monthly, a gift of stock or property, or a part of our life's legacy through our estate.

We choose not only what we give but how we give. We can give small donations to lots of organizations (we call this “peanut butter philanthropy” because it spreads a little bit a long way!) or select a few organizations that are closest to our hearts. We can give to organizations meeting immediate needs or to those working to change systems that cause those needs to develop in the first place. All these ways of giving are good, too.

With so many options and avenues for giving, sometimes we need a little guidance. This is where your Quad Cities Community Foundation can help.

When you are ready to take the next step—or simply get some questions answered—we are here to listen to your philanthropic hopes and dreams and help guide you through your decision-making process. Just call us at (563) 326-2840 to set up a call or visit with a member of our team.

Step 1 / Define your values

I have values that are important to me. Can I share those values through my generosity?

Yes! The most rewarding generosity is guided by your own passions and values. Defining and naming those values helps you build the foundation of your giving—the why. Every person has assets to pass on, and through our charitable giving, we can pass along our values—worth so much more than our valuables—to the people, causes, and communities we love.

Take a moment to reflect on and write down your own answers to the following questions. If you're working in a group, answer separately and then share with each other.

- What values did your family pass on to you?

- What values do you share with those in your inner circle?

- What values guide the daily choices you make in life?

- What gifts of money and time have you made in the past that gave you the most joy or satisfaction? Why?

- What gifts of money and time have you made in the past that gave you the least joy or satisfaction? Why?

Step 1, continued



Circle the 5 values that are most important to you:

- Acceptance
- Access
- Achievement
- Acknowledgement
- Adventure
- Arts
- Beauty
- Change
- Collaboration
- Comfort
- Commitment
- Community
- Compassion
- Conservation
- Creativity
- Democracy
- Dignity
- Diversity
- Education
- Empathy
- Entrepreneurship
- Equity
- Fairness
- Faith
- Family
- Freedom
- Generosity
- Happiness
- Harmony
- Healing
- Honesty
- Inclusion
- Independence
- Innovation
- Integrity
- Interdependence
- Joy
- Justice
- Knowledge
- Love
- Loyalty
- Merit
- Opportunity
- Peace
- Growth
- Preservation
- Pride
- Privacy
- Respect
- Responsibility
- Security
- Self-expression
- Self-reliance
- Service
- Stability
- Stewardship
- Transformation
- Truth
- Wisdom
- Others:

Step 2 / Identify your interests

I see so much need and so many good causes, but I can't give to them all. How do I decide?

You may know today what cause or organization best fits your charitable goals. Or you may be just starting out and wondering where you can make the most impact.

Start by asking yourself questions like these (or better yet, write the answers down below!):

- What do you want to change or preserve in your community/the world?

- What is your vision of a better world?

- What inspires you about the future?

- What frustrates you about the present?

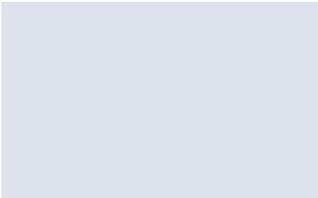
- Beyond yourself and your loved ones, is there anything else in the world on which you would like to have a positive impact?

Step 2, continued



Circle the 5 interest areas that are most important to you:

- Addiction/Recovery
- Animals
- Arts & Culture
- Basic Human Needs
- Black, Indigenous, and other People of Color
- Children & Families
- Cities & Neighborhoods
- Civil Rights
- Civic Engagement
- Community Development
- Disaster Relief and Response
- Domestic Violence
- Early Childhood
- Economic Justice
- Education
- Employment & Training
- End-of-life Care
- Environment
- Equity
- Fine & Performance Arts
- Food Insecurity
- Health Care
- Health-specific Disease
- Housing & Homelessness
- Human Rights
- Incarceration
- Immigrant Issues
- International Development
- Justice
- LGBTQIA+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, Intersex, Asexual)
- Literacy
- Mental Health
- Parks & Recreation
- Peace
- Persons with Disabilities
- Poverty
- Racism
- Religion & Spirituality
- Reproductive Rights
- Science & Technology
- Seniors & Elderly
- Violence Prevention
- Wellness
- Women’s Rights
- Youth Development
- Others:





Step 3 / Connect your values & interests to find your mission

With so many options, how do I narrow them down so I can make a difference?

The places where your values and passions meet the needs in your community and world will bring into focus your mission for giving.

Which values do you rank the highest from Step 1? List them here:

Which interest areas do you rank the highest from Step 2? List them here:

Consider how your highest values and interest areas relate to each other. This intersection may give you direction for how and where you should give. From here you can create a giving mission statement for your giving—an affirmation of guiding principles that will help you make decisions in the future.

For example, if you ranked your highest values as preservation, beauty, stewardship, and conservation, and you ranked your highest interest areas as arts and culture, cities and neighborhoods, community development, and housing and homelessness, you could define your mission as:

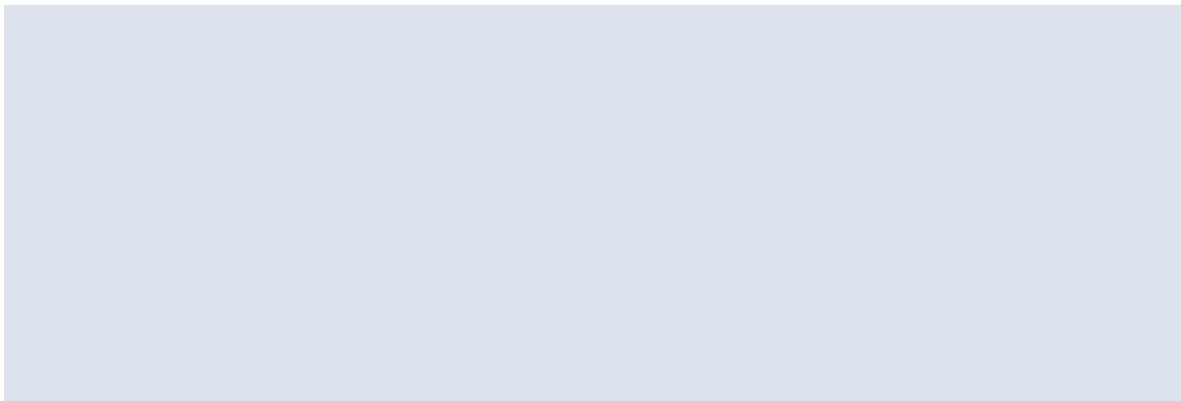
I work to improve quality of life in my community's neighborhoods by supporting historic conservation and equal access to affordable, quality housing.

Or, if you ranked your highest values as education, family, responsibility, and respect, and you ranked your highest interest areas as children and families, persons with disabilities, wellness, and parks and recreation, you might develop this mission:

Our goal is to create safe and vibrant opportunities for people of all abilities to play, exercise, and socialize in our community.

You may also consider how you envision your generosity will be applied to a problem or opportunity. Do you feel drawn to providing direct support for a need or cause? Or do you want to support bringing about large-scale change to a system at its root? Both are good, both are important, but one might resonate with you more than the other.

My giving mission statement:



Step 4 / Practice effective philanthropy

Wait, you mean there's more to being generous than making a gift online or mailing a check?

Yes, there is. Part of being generous involves learning and applying your giving where it can have the impact you are looking for. Luckily, your Quad Cities Community Foundation is here to help. We exist to help people just like you make the most of your generosity.

Get to know nonprofits

Check out the nonprofit's website. Do you understand the organization's mission and how it is carried out through their work? Do the accomplishments reflect what you expect? Want to go deeper with them? Ask for a tour. Talk to staff, volunteers, or board members. Sign up for their newsletter so you can see their progress and learn more about them over time.

Pro tip: Ask the Community Foundation staff to introduce you to nonprofits that might be a good fit for your goals!

Pay attention to equity and justice in your community

Often, giving goes to the organizations we already know and have experienced in our own circles. Have you considered the needs and opportunities in your community that exist outside your own experience or how equitably you are sharing your gifts so that all who live and learn in your community may thrive?

To get started, ask yourself these questions: What do I give to nonprofits led by people of color compared to white-led organizations? Do I support community- or neighborhood-based organizations that are closest to the impact and have the most community credibility but that often find it difficult to raise gifts from outside their community? How does my support reach people who have been historically marginalized in our society—or not?

Pro tip: Check out the Community Foundation's ResourceLink for more resources on equitable giving.

Following through on reflections like these can lead you to nonprofits that know and serve your neighbors in economically and socially excluded communities or to organizations you previously overlooked.



Volunteer your time

Giving of your time to an organization or program gives you a first-hand perspective on the nonprofit's mission and how your generosity contributes to that shared goal. As you get to know the organization, you can offer additional support by sharing your expertise through serving on committees or a board of directors, introducing friends to the nonprofit, and being an advocate for the mission. These are all actions that, when paired with your financial giving, can leverage your donations for greater impact.

Give flexible support

Don't feel you need to restrict how your gift is used or point it only at a program or project. Nonprofits know how to apply your gift where and how it is needed most. By allocating or restricting gifts only to programs, we can end up starving nonprofits of the fuel they need to run those programs. In fact, all nonprofit organizations need healthy general operating support to fulfill their mission.

Good overhead is just as essential to a successful nonprofit as it is to a successful business—through good accounting, up-to-date technology, maintained facilities, well-trained and well-paid staff, and experienced management. Giving unrestricted dollars empowers the nonprofit—who knows their work and mission best—to allocate your generosity where it is most needed and where it can do the most good.

Be willing to learn

Effective philanthropy is not a destination or transaction. It's a journey and a relationship—for you and for the nonprofits you get to know. Be open to learning from nonprofits about their cause and the challenges they face. Be willing to accept risk, change, and even failure as an organization works on tough issues. After all, if the answers were easy, our world would look a lot different already! Nonprofit staff and volunteers strive to be efficient, effective, and impactful, but sometimes that means trying again and again and again to identify and adopt the right solution. Be willing to learn and grow with them.

LET'S TALK

The expert team at the Quad Cities Community Foundation is here to support you as you embark on this journey of discovery. Whether you're new to giving or an experienced donor, we're here to share our knowledge, tools, and support to help you be the best giver you can be with your gifts of time and money.

Would you like to know more about how the Community Foundation can help you explore how you can share what you have with the causes and community closest to you? Call us today at (563) 326-2840 or visit our website at QCCommunityFoundation.org to discover more.