Helping Michigan Citizens
Give Wisely

A guide to supporting Michigan's charitable nonprofit organizations

Michigan residents are generous with their time, skills and resources, but given the many new ways for charitable organizations to raise funds, it's now more important than ever to make sound decisions when donating money and volunteering. Here are some helpful tips for making those choices:

Do some research

Make sure your money is going to a legitimate charitable nonprofit with tax-exempt status. Only donations to organizations with tax-exempt status are deductible on your federal personal income tax form as charitable contributions. Verify an organization's status at https://apps.irs.gov/app/eos/. Under Michigan law, most nonprofits must be registered before they solicit funds. To find out if an organization is registered, visit mi.gov/CharitySearch or call 517-373-1152.

Be careful when donating online

Crowdfunding is an increasingly popular way of giving but be sure to verify your donations beforehand. Research crowdfunding campaigns to see if fees are deducted from donations, if donations are tax-deductible, and where the funds are going (typically, donations to individuals are not deductible). For more information, see the Attorney General's Consumer Alert on Crowdfunding.

Protect personal and financial information

- Whenever possible, provide monetary support only to organizations you know and trust.
- Make contributions by credit card or check payable to the organization, not an individual.
- Ask for and retain receipts specifying the name of the organization, the date and contribution amount.
- Visit www.mi.gov/agconsumeralerts for more advice on how to protect your personal and financial information.

Be wary of phone pitches

The callers are often for-profit fundraising firms that keep a large portion of the donation. Visit the Professional Fundraising Charitable Solicitation Reports page to see the most recent Professional Fundraising Charitable Solicitation Reports. Never give out credit card information over the phone. Tell the caller that you will research the cause and call them back if you decide to donate.

Another important way to give: Volunteer!

Organizations need committed volunteers. Get involved directly by volunteering your time to help an organization achieve its mission. Be sure to follow all COVID-19 safety protocols, and check with the organization you plan to volunteer with beforehand to ensure that they are accepting in-person volunteers.

There is a statewide network of volunteer centers serving Michigan. To learn about opportunities in your area, visit www.mnaonline.org/civic-engagement/volunteer-centers-of-michigan

m·n·a· Michigan Nonprofit Association
mnaonline.org

CMF Council of Michigan Foundations
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