



Tips for Donors Considering Giving While Living

Source

Turning Passion into Action: Giving While Living, The Atlantic Philanthropies, pp18-19.

Determine what you have a passion to support

- What cause(s) resonates with you? Social justice? Access to health care? Conservation? Women's rights? Poverty? Education? Why?

Decide what problem(s) you want to focus on

- What *specific* issue or problem do you want to tackle?
- What ideas do you have about possible solutions?
- What are your convictions about how that change is going to happen?
- What resources can you bring to the issue?

Do your research

- Who else is working in this field, and what are they doing?
- What are the successful models? Unsuccessful ones?
- Are there existing organizations to partner with to reach your goals?
- Where can you most effectively intervene in an issue?
- How much can you narrow your area of focus to have the most impact?
- What are realistic expectations and how can you measure progress?
- What giving vehicle suits your goals best?

Consider what results you hope for

- How do you define and assess success? In the short term? Long term?
- Do you want to invest in formal evaluations to measure progress?
- What sort of recognition are you seeking for your giving?
- How do you plan to communicate your progress and results?
- How do you plan to get others involved in your cause?
- Are you willing to accept setbacks and even failure on some projects you support?

Develop a plan

- Will you devise a plan yourself, or do you need to hire someone to do it?
- What combination of activities will further your goals?
- What resources do you need beyond what you plan to give? How will you get them?
- What are your benchmarks for progress and success?

Explore different giving channels and methods

- Will a foundation work best for you, or would some other entity be better?
- Is there an existing organization that embodies your goals, or do you need to start one?
- If a new foundation, do you want to establish it in perpetuity or with a limited lifespan?
- How much money do you have to give away?
- Will tackling your chosen problem involve investing in both non-profit and for-profit groups?
- Can the skills that you have be an integral part of your program?

Join networks

- Don't rely on answers from any single nonprofit or peer philanthropist.
- What conferences would be most helpful to attend?
- What questions do you want to ask experienced philanthropists?
- What other groups are supporting your area of interest?
- Will they allow you to investigate their methods and models?
- Do you need to form your own network in your funding area, if none exists?

Select your geographic area(s) of concentration

- What geographical area do you want to target? Local? National? Global?

Consider your level of resources, interest, risk tolerance and desire for involvement

- Will you give both time and money? How much?
- What is your strategy for making change?
- What are your goals and expected results? Time frame?
- Is this a one-time gift, or will you provide ongoing resources?
- Do you envision a short-term or long-term investment of time and money?
- What are your core competencies that you are willing to put to work?
- Do you want to plan and execute your strategy yourself, or hire others to help you?
- Are you interested in supporting new, unproven initiatives or well established ones?

Think about how you want to give

- What motivates you to give?
- Do you want to give anonymously, or play a visible role in your giving?
- Do you like to work in cooperation with other donors?