

## 4 Important Questions To Help Choose The Right Nonprofit For Your Charitable Trust

For those with a strong philanthropic urge or the desire to support causes important to you, selecting a nonprofit for your charitable trust can be a great way to manage your assets and accomplish your charitable goals. But, with so many nonprofits to choose from, it can be difficult to determine which ones to support.

*Tonda Whitt, SVP,  
Trust Administrator*

By learning more about how nonprofit organizations approach their work, fund their efforts, and measure their results, you can acquire the skills to determine when your donation is not just a gift, but a meaningful investment. Following are some questions to keep in mind when establishing a plan for your charitable trust.

### 1. Is there a clearly defined mission statement?

Many nonprofit organizations may have the best intentions, but without a clear and definitive mission statement, it's easy for them to lose focus or become disorganized. A successfully crafted mission statement will clearly indicate the scope of the organization's operation, their overriding purpose, and what goals or objectives its leaders expect to achieve. More importantly, it will demonstrate how financial contributions such as yours will support those goals or objectives. If the mission statement is vague, ambiguous, or lacking in specificity, it may be wise to look into another organization.

### 2. Are their values in line with your core beliefs?

Some organizations may have a complex set of values, some of which may not be congruent with your own. Perhaps you don't agree with some of their fundraising practices, or maybe the organization is politically aligned with ideals you oppose. Shared goals are important, but aligned convictions may be even more significant. In these cases, while the intentions of the organization may be charitable and genuine, that particular organization may not be the right fit.

### 3. Does the organization meet a vital need?

Once you've located a nonprofit that shares the same beliefs and values as you, it's imperative to ask how the organization benefits a certain group, community, or society in general. You need to determine if the organization's services and projects fill a gap, meet a need, or build on an opportunity to solve a problem.

To begin to answer these questions, ask for hard data on the extent of the issue or problem the organization purports to address. A key indicator of value can be found in metrics or statistics that most organizations have readily available to prospective donors.

For example, a nonprofit's best method of securing donations is to

demonstrate how previous contributions have resulted in positive improvements. If these facts or statistics are hard to come by, it may be an indicator that the nonprofit, however well-intentioned, is not meeting a vital need.

#### 4. Are its services and programs unique?

When deciding nonprofit organizations in which to invest your funds, it's important to select one that fits you to a 'T'. Find an organization that differs from other nonprofits operating in the same philanthropic space – whether through its financial performance or new outlooks on addressing the issue at hand. You may find that supporting an organization that is different from some of the larger mainstream entities will result in your contribution having a larger or more tangible impact.

To compare nonprofits with a similar focus, many donors utilize third-party resources to analyze and grade the financial and programmatic quality of the organizations.

#### The Choice is Made

By following these steps and asking these questions, you can help ensure that your selection of a nonprofit organization to support will be both personally fulfilling and a viable investment. To learn more about selecting a nonprofit for your charitable trust and other [wealth management services](#), call us today at 866-762-8392.