

THE PHILANTHROPY TOOLKIT: AN INTRODUCTION TO GIVING EFFECTIVELY

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CONTRIBUTE YOUR TIME, TALENT, AND TIES

When considering levels of donor engagement, you may have heard of the “4 T’s”—Treasure, Time, Talent, and Ties. In this context, treasure is shorthand for financial contributions, time reflects the hours you are able to give, talent refers to your specific skillsets, and ties relate to your social and professional networks.

It is up to you to consider how to balance and deploy these “4 T’s” in your philanthropic endeavors at different periods in your life. There may be intervals when you don’t have much time but are happy to make significant financial donations. There may be other times when you cannot give the lead gift on a campaign but are able to consistently volunteer and make introductions to key people in your social network. Regardless of how you balance your “4 T’s,” there are many organizations that will be delighted to have you involved.

We address financial contributions in **Section 4: Structuring Your Giving** and **Section 6: Making Gifts and Tracking Your Giving**. In this section we focus on the other three T’s: Time, Talent, and Ties.

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You might consider deepening your philanthropy by contributing your time and talent through volunteering. Volunteering can be an excellent way to learn more about your focus areas and get to know an organization. You can volunteer with organizations you support financially as well as other organizations. Nonprofit organizations sometimes post information about volunteer positions on their websites. Volunteer commitments can be short-term and focused around a specific event or short-term business goal, or they can be long-term and connected to a series of events, an on-going program, or extended strategic initiatives.

Another way to contribute at a leadership level is to serve on the board of a nonprofit organization. Often, an organization's senior leadership identifies prospective board candidates based on the skills and expertise they can contribute and extends an invitation to join the board. Organizations often ask board members to be "ambassadors" for the organization, willing to tap into their social and professional networks to help the organization more effectively meet its various goals. While board service can be extremely meaningful, it can also be a significant time commitment depending on the organization's needs and the skills and resources other board members bring to the table.

If you are considering volunteering or serving on a board, work through **Activity F**.

For more information on board service, refer to BoardSource in **Additional Resources: Section 1** at the end of the Toolkit.

ACTIVITY

F Consider Your Time, Talent, & Ties

F

ACTIVITY

CONSIDER YOUR TIME, TALENT, & TIES

INSTRUCTIONS

Review the questions in Activity F to consider your interest in contributing your time, talent, and ties to a particular focus area. Jot down your thoughts.

CONSIDER YOUR INTEREST IN GENERAL VOLUNTEER WORK BY ANSWERING THESE QUESTIONS:

- Is there an issue you would like to learn about through firsthand experience?
- If you have an organization in mind, is that organization accepting volunteers? What responsibilities do volunteers have?
- Does the organization need volunteers with particular skills or experience? Do you have the skills or experience they need?
- What is the time commitment for volunteers at the organization? Are you able to commit your time?

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CONSIDER THESE QUESTIONS TO DETERMINE YOUR INTEREST IN BOARD SERVICE:

- Do you have enough time for board service?

Serving as a board member requires more than attending meetings. You will often be expected to serve on one or more committees, read and understand financial documents, represent the organization at various events, and fundraise.

- Are you willing and able to meet fundraising expectations?

Board members are usually asked to make personal contributions as well as raise funds from their personal and professional networks. You may also be asked to network with potential donors on behalf of the organization.

- What skills or expertise do you offer the organization's board? Are your skills or expertise needed?

Board members offer a variety of skills and experience to assist with the overall functions of the board. How you can make a difference in the organization depends on the needs of the organization.

- How might you tap into your personal and professional networks to assist the organization in meeting its goals?

In addition to reaching out to friends and colleagues for fundraising parties or other special events, board members also often tap into their networks to seek advice and mobilize additional skillsets to assist an organization's special projects and initiatives. With the organizations and causes you are interested in, who in your network comes to mind and how might they be most helpful?

