Frequently Asked Questions

With simple answers that help you maximize your philanthropic impact

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Key

Indicates content of particular interest to investment advisors.
Q: What is a donor-advised fund and how does it work?
A: A Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund is a simple, tax-smart solution for supporting charitable organizations you care about. Once you set up an account with Schwab Charitable and contribute cash, securities, or appreciated assets, you'll be eligible for a current-year tax deduction and can be more strategic about your giving decisions.

Learn more about how a Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund works

Q: What types of donor-advised fund accounts does Schwab Charitable offer?
A: We offer two different types of Schwab Charitable accounts. Our core donor-advised fund account requires a minimum initial contribution of $5,000 and donors can recommend investment of account assets among a selection of investment pools. For larger accounts (minimum $250,000 initial contribution), our professionally managed account option enables clients to recommend an investment advisor to invest the account in a wider range of investments.

Learn more about investment options for both core and professionally managed accounts

Q: How much does a Schwab Charitable account cost?
A: The basic cost structure of a Schwab Charitable account consists of two parts: administrative fees and investment expenses.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Administrative Fees</th>
<th>Investment Expenses</th>
<th>Annual Cost</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To cover expenses of grantmaking and regulatory compliance</td>
<td>Will vary depending on how an account is invested</td>
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In certain situations, we may assess additional fees on individual accounts to cover special costs. These may include legal and professional costs, taxes, or transaction costs.

Learn more details about account fees in our Program Policies
Learn more details about account fees online
Q: I’d like to understand more about the tax advantages of a donor-advised fund; where can I find more information?
A: Contributing to a donor-advised fund could have certain tax benefits, but these will be unique to each donor’s circumstances. For example, the availability of federal income tax deductions depends on whether you itemize deductions. Rules and regulations pertaining to deductions for charitable giving vary at the state level as well. What’s more, capital gains tax benefits can vary depending upon what you’re contributing and how long you’ve held it. Finally, there may be estate tax benefits associated with certain contribution arrangements, but again, these are unique to each person’s individual circumstances.

We encourage you to explore our resources regarding the potential tax advantages of contributing non-cash assets, but we always strongly recommend that you consult with a qualified tax advisor and/or legal counsel to review the specific tax implications of your proposed contributions.

Learn more about contributing non-cash assets
Learn about strategies to help maximize giving while reducing taxes

Q: How do I open an account?
A: You can open an account online or, if you prefer, you can complete our application by hand. You may also ask your investment advisor to help open your account by initiating an application, though you will need to read and sign the application. Either way, here’s what you’ll need to complete the application:

- A U.S. permanent resident address, social security number, date of birth, and contact information for each person listed on the account
- A signature for each account holder listed on the account
- Funding information, depending on the method you choose to contribute to your account

Be sure to read though our Program Policies before opening a Schwab Charitable account. When you sign our application, you’ll need to agree to the terms and conditions described in those policies.

Read our Program Policies
Learn more about opening an account from our How-To Video Series

Q: Are there advantages to giving to charity through a donor-advised fund rather than giving directly or through another vehicle?
A: A Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund can enhance your overall charitable giving strategy, whether used alone or in conjunction with giving directly or through other vehicles such as private foundations, charitable gift annuities, or trusts. Each method has different features and benefits, so it’s best to consult with your financial advisor, CPA, or attorney about your specific situation.

Some key advantages of a Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund include:
- You may qualify for a current-year tax deduction
- You can recommend grants to charities over time at your convenience or when the charitable assets have had the chance to grow
- We streamline recordkeeping, making it easier to donate appreciated investments or assets that may be more difficult for smaller charities to accept directly; that may help you to stay organized and eliminates the need to keep track of checks and credit card receipts for tax preparation.

Learn more about aligning your giving strategies
Learn more about your contribution options

Q: What should I know before setting up a Schwab Charitable account?
A: Be sure to read though our Program Policies before opening a Schwab Charitable account. When you sign our application, you’ll need to agree to the terms and conditions described in those policies.

Explore our website at schwabcharitable.org. From donor-advised fund basics to in-depth articles on philanthropic giving strategies, we offer a wide variety of resources at your fingertips.

Read our Program Policies
Learn how our donors are maximizing the impact of their charitable giving
Q: Is there a minimum account balance that I must maintain?
A: There is no minimum balance requirement for a core account, although if an account has less than $100 for more than a year and there has been little or no activity on the account, we’ll reach out to re-engage you. If we can’t reach you, we may need to close the account.
Professionally managed accounts have a minimum balance requirement of $250,000. If a professionally managed account falls below $200,000 for more than a year, we’ll reach out to you and your advisor to discuss converting to a core account.
Learn more about low balance accounts in our Program Policies

Q: Can I withdraw my assets once they’re contributed to my account?
A: Per the IRS, because you may claim an immediate current-year tax deduction if you itemize, contributions to a Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund account are irrevocable. Put simply, that means donations can’t be withdrawn once contributed. Donated assets are now subject to the full control and discretion of Schwab Charitable and can no longer be counted among your personal investments.
Learn more by reading our Program Policies

Q: I’m not sure who I want to list as a successor or beneficiary on my application. Can I come back to that later?
A: Yes. You can update your successors and beneficiaries at any time using our Update Account Information form. You might also consider exploring our Charitable Legacy Program, an estate-planning strategy designed to help you extend your philanthropy beyond your lifetime.
Access the Update Account Information form
Learn more about the Charitable Legacy Program

Q: Can I name others on my account to help me manage it?
A: Yes. You can appoint up to five people to serve as secondary account holders. Both the primary and secondary account holders have full and equal account access and privileges, though only the primary account holder receives mailed notifications.
You can also recommend an investment advisor to help manage your account, although privileges will differ depending upon the type of account that you have (core or professionally managed). Schwab Charitable partners with thousands of registered investment advisors across the U.S. We support investment advisors through the entire cycle of their client relationships and provide resources and guidance that help them champion charitable planning and giving efforts with their clients.
Read our Program Policies to learn more about account roles and privileges
Send your advisor here for resources and more information

Q: Is Schwab Charitable a nonprofit organization?
A: Schwab Charitable is an independent nonprofit organization and is recognized as a tax-exempt public charity as defined by the Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Sections 501(c)(3), 509(a)(1), and 170(b)(1)(A) (vi), and 170(b)(1)(A)(vi). Schwab Charitable is eligible to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions under IRC Section 170(c). Schwab Charitable was established by Charles Schwab & Co. in 1999 but is governed by an independent board of directors.
Schwab Charitable’s tax ID is: 31-1640316
Learn more about the history of Schwab Charitable

Q: How are Charles Schwab & Co. and Schwab Charitable related?
A: Schwab Charitable is an independent public charity that was established in 1999 with the support of Charles Schwab & Co. and is governed by an independent board of directors. Charles Schwab & Co. and its affiliates provide certain investment management, administrative, and recordkeeping services to Schwab Charitable.
Learn more about the history of Schwab Charitable
Contributing to Your Account

**Common questions** (click to link to the answer)

- Are there specific contribution minimums?
- What types of assets can I contribute?
- How long does it take to process contributions for a new Schwab Charitable account?
- Can other people (third parties) contribute to my account?
- Can my advisor contribute to my account on my behalf?
- Will I get a tax receipt for my contribution?
- How are contributions processed?
- Can I name my Schwab Charitable account as a beneficiary in my will, or of my annuity or other retirement benefits?
- Can I contribute to my Schwab Charitable account directly from my IRA as part of the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?
- How do you calculate the fair market value of my contributions?
- How do I determine if I need to file IRS Form 8283?
- Can I use my Schwab Charitable account to receive donations from a fundraising event or activity?
- Can I use my Schwab Charitable account to receive donations in honor or memory of someone?
- What are year-end contribution guidelines?

**Q: Are there specific contribution minimums?**

A: Yes. You can open a core account with a minimum initial contribution of $5,000. The minimum amount needed for a professionally managed account is $250,000. After the initial contribution, you can make contributions of $500 or more at any time. If you have a Schwab brokerage account, you can make contributions to your donor-advised fund online. If you prefer, print and complete the *Contribute to Your Account* form and mail or fax it back to us. If you want to make a contribution from a non-Schwab account, please use our *Transfer of Assets* form.

**Contribute to Your Account form (from a Schwab account)**

**Transfer of Assets form (from a non-Schwab account)**

**Q: What types of assets can I contribute?**

A: You can contribute both cash and non-cash assets. The most common contributions are cash and appreciated, unrestricted publicly traded securities, like stocks, ETFs, mutual funds, and bonds. Appreciated non-cash assets such as restricted or privately held stock, private equity, hedge funds, real estate, cryptocurrency, and tangible personal property are accepted on a case-by-case basis.

Learn more about making non-cash contributions

**Q: How long does it take to process contributions for a new Schwab Charitable account?**

A: Typically, accounts are opened, funded, and ready for granting within a week of the receipt of the initial contribution. In some cases (during periods of high volume or when assets are being transferred from a financial institution other than Charles Schwab), the process can take several weeks. To avoid delays, we encourage you plan your giving in advance —to Schwab Charitable and ultimately, to your recommended grant recipients. Many donors are inspired to establish donor-advised funds as the calendar year or a charity’s fiscal year comes to a close, but planning in advance and giving throughout the year can help keep vital funds flowing with consistency to charitable organizations, especially in times of economic uncertainty.

See how to schedule recurring grants from our How-To Video Series

Learn more about structured giving
Q: Can other people (third parties) contribute to my account?
A: Yes. We accept third-party contributions to accounts from individuals or entities, such as private foundations, corporations, and other donor-advised funds as long as the contributions haven’t been solicited; due to both federal and state regulations, we don’t permit fundraising in our donor-advised funds.

Please notify us in advance of third-party contributions to help ensure proper processing and confirmation to the third party for tax reporting purposes. Third-party contributions are subject to Schwab Charitable’s contribution minimum of $500 for all account types.

Note that third-party contributors have no account privileges and they can’t receive any goods or services in exchange for—or in consideration of—their contribution.  
Learn more about contribution options
Learn more by reading our Program Policies

Q: Can my advisor contribute to my account on my behalf?
A: If your advisor is approved by Schwab Charitable and has the appropriate authorizations, he or she may contribute to your account on your behalf. And because the Schwab Charitable online platform is fully integrated with the Schwab Advisor Center, authorized advisors can easily transfer assets from Schwab accounts to Schwab Charitable, or initiate transfers from external accounts. 
Learn more about advisor requirements and privileges in our Program Policies

Q: Will I get a tax receipt for my contribution?
A: Yes. We’ll provide a timely written acknowledgment for each contribution. This confirmation serves as evidence of the contribution for tax reporting purposes for those who itemize. Contribution acknowledgments can also be viewed online on Schwab.com or the Schwab Advisor Center at any time.

As a reminder, a contribution to a Schwab Charitable account is eligible for a current-year itemized income tax deduction; any subsequent receipts from charitable recipients are duplicative and shouldn’t be used for tax reporting purposes.  
Learn more about recordkeeping with Schwab Charitable from our How-To Video Series
Learn more about what’s included on a contribution acknowledgment in our Program Policies

Q: Can I name my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund as a beneficiary in my will, or of my annuity or other retirement benefits?
A: Yes. You can name your Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund as a charitable beneficiary in your will or other testamentary instrument. You can also name your Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund as a charitable beneficiary with respect to non-probate property, including but not limited to annuities, retirement plans, charitable trusts, life insurance, brokerage, or other accounts allowing designation of beneficiaries. Generally speaking, naming a public charity like Schwab Charitable as a beneficiary on such accounts may have certain tax benefits. That said, we strongly recommend that you consult with a qualified tax advisor and/or legal counsel to review the specific tax implications of any proposed contributions, including those related to estate planning; we don’t provide individualized tax, legal, or investment planning advice.  
Please read our Program Policies for more details about testamentary contributions

Q: How are contributions processed?
A: For core accounts, Schwab Charitable typically accepts and liquidates contributions as quickly as possible once the required paperwork and assets have been received in good order. Thinly traded or illiquid securities generally take longer to liquidate and may incur additional fees. Note that we can’t hold assets beyond standard processing times upon an account holder’s request. Also note that during high-volume periods, such as at the end of the calendar year, processing times can be delayed.

For professionally managed accounts, the investment advisor is responsible for arranging the sale of contributed securities.

Learn more by reading our Program Policies

Q: Can I contribute to my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund directly from my IRA as part of the Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD)?
A: While you can make a distribution from your IRA to your Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund, it is important to know that currently, the IRS has determined that any distribution from an IRA account to a donor-advised fund isn’t a Qualified Charitable Distribution (QCD) for tax purposes. There are, however, other types of contributions that may have potential tax advantages. We encourage you to explore our resources regarding the potential tax advantages of contributing non-cash assets. As always, we recommend that you consult with a qualified tax advisor and/or legal counsel to review the specific tax implications of any proposed contribution.

Learn more about contributing non-cash assets
Learn about strategies to help maximize giving while reducing taxes
Q: How do you calculate the fair market value of my contributions?
A: Once you make a contribution, we provide a contribution acknowledgment; it may include an estimated fair market value (FMV) for certain types of non-cash assets. FMV is generally determined on the date a contribution is received. The process for assessing the value depends upon the asset or investment type. In the case of contributions of unrestricted, publicly traded stock, the FMV is the average of the high and the low for the day that the stock was received by Schwab Charitable. In the case of contributions of mutual funds, the FMV is the closing price on the date of receipt by Schwab Charitable. Securities are typically liquidated the business day after receipt, so the FMV for tax purposes may differ from the amount of sales proceeds credited to the account. Note that you may be required by the IRS to obtain a qualified appraisal for other types of non-cash assets.

Learn more about making non-cash contributions
Please read our Program Policies for more details about contribution acknowledgments

Q: How do I determine if I need to file IRS Form 8283?
A: Contributions of appreciated non-cash assets can involve complicated tax analysis and advanced planning. The below response is meant only as general information and isn’t intended to provide tax or legal guidance; we can’t complete IRS Form 8283 on your behalf. Be sure to consult with your tax advisor for assistance.

That said, IRS Form 8283 should be completed for non-cash charitable contributions exceeding $500, but is only required to be submitted to Schwab Charitable for signature when the contribution is more than $5,000 and consists of non-cash property other than publicly traded securities. For contributions exceeding $5,000, you’ll need to complete all of Section B of this form except Part III (Declaration of Appraiser) and Part IV (Donee Acknowledgment). Forward the completed Form 8283 (Section B, Part I and II) to ask@schwabcharitable.org for prompt verification and signature. We’ll return the signed form directly to you.

Learn more detail about IRS Form 8283 requirements in Section 4 of our Program Policies (Income Tax Considerations)
See the 8283 instruction sheet on Schwab Charitable Client Center
Learn about strategies to help maximize giving while reducing taxes

Q: Can I use my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund to receive donations from a fundraising event or activity?
A: No. Because fundraising activity, particularly across social media, presents significant regulatory and administrative complexities, Schwab Charitable donor-advised funds may not be used for fundraising purposes.

Learn more by reading our Program Policies

Q: Can I use my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund to receive donations in honor or memory of someone?
A: Yes, with some caveats. Some account holders use their Schwab Charitable donor-advised funds to receive third-party donations in memory of a loved one or in honor of a loved one’s significant life event such as a graduation, birthday, or wedding. We accommodate such requests on a case-by-case basis and will ask that you sign a letter of understanding. Please contact us at 800-746-6216 for assistance with this type of account.

Learn more by reading our Program Policies

Q: What are year-end contribution guidelines?
A: For our most up-to-date year-end giving timelines, please click on the link below. Note that many donors are inspired to open donor-advised funds as the calendar year comes to a close, but planning in advance and giving throughout the year can help keep vital funds flowing with consistency to charitable organizations, especially in times of economic uncertainty.

Access our year-end giving guidelines
Learn more about structured giving
Investing Your Contributions

Common questions (click to link to the answer)
- How are contributions to my account invested prior to granting?
- What if I don’t specify an investment pool allocation on my core account application?
- Do you offer socially responsible investment options?
- How does Schwab Charitable select the underlying mutual funds for the pools?
- Do the investment pools you offer ever change?
- Do you charge loads or commissions for investments in the investment pools?
- How do investment advisors manage investments in the professionally managed account?

Q: How are contributions to my donor-advised fund invested prior to granting?
A: We offer a variety of investment options depending on account type.
For core accounts, you may recommend an asset allocation among a selection of investment pools. For professionally managed accounts, you may recommend a qualified investment advisor to invest account assets in a broad range of options outside of the investment pools, including stocks, bonds, ETFs, and mutual funds.
Learn more about our current investment pool options
Explore our asset allocation calculator

Q: What if I don’t specify an investment pool allocation on my core account application?
A: Not everyone is prepared to make an allocation decision when completing an application and this section may be left blank. If that happens, we will allocate 100% of your contribution to the Money Market Pool. We encourage you to actively participate in your account allocations; you can recommend a reallocation of the account assets at any time on the Schwab Charitable website or Schwab Mobile app or by using the Update Account Information form. Having trouble deciding? We offer many resources to help you define your philanthropic goals and strategies for how you might achieve them.
Access the Update Account Information form
Defining your charitable mission can inform your allocation decisions

Q: Do you offer socially responsible investment options?
A: Yes. Investment advisors may explore a socially responsible allocation within a professionally managed account. Additionally, for core accounts, we offer two investment pools with underlying funds supporting socially responsible mandates.
- The Socially Responsible Investment Pool’s underlying mutual fund (PAXWX) follows a multi-asset environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategy.
- The Large-Cap Equity Pool’s underlying mutual fund (PRBLX) links environmental, social, and governance (ESG) factors to fundamental investment principles.
We also feature a variety of resources that explore incorporating socially responsible values into your charitable giving strategies.
Learn more about socially responsible grantmaking by defining your charitable mission
Explore resources to define goals for measuring and reviewing the impact of your charitable giving

For RIAs, learn about the requirements to manage Schwab Charitable accounts for your clients
Q: How does Schwab Charitable select the underlying mutual funds for the pools?
A: With support from the Schwab Center for Financial Research, we establish each pool’s investment objective and then we select the underlying mutual funds from leading investment providers. In selecting the funds, we factor in the stability and strength of the mutual fund’s investment company, investment objectives, long-term risk/return profile, peer ranking, size, fees, and the length of time the fund has been managed by the portfolio manager or portfolio committee. We then monitor the selected funds on a continuing basis.

Note that the investment pools aren’t registered funds themselves and therefore aren’t available for investment separately from Schwab Charitable.

Learn more about our current investment pool options
View the fact sheet for our current investment pool options

Q: Do you charge loads or commissions for investments in the investment pools?
A: No, we don’t charge separate loads or commissions for the investment pools. However, each investment pool has investment and operating expenses, including those of the underlying mutual fund, and these are reflected in each pool’s net asset value. For this reason, the performance of an investment pool will differ slightly from the performance of the underlying mutual fund.

Learn more details about account fees in our Program Policies
Learn more details about account fees and expenses online

Q: How do investment advisors manage investments in the professionally managed account?
A: Professionally managed accounts, which are available for accounts of $250,000 or more, allow you to recommend an investment advisor to manage assets outside of the investment pools. Your recommended advisor, if approved, may invest account assets in individual equities, bonds, or mutual funds consistent with our investment policy and guidelines.

Your investment advisor would work with you to select an investment strategy and performance benchmark for your account by considering your philanthropic goals, target return, risk tolerance, other special considerations, as well as our investment guidelines. The investment strategy and benchmark established for your account must comply with Schwab Charitable’s investment guidelines.

Advisors, learn about the requirements to manage Schwab Charitable accounts for your clients
Giving to a Charity

Common questions (click to link to the answer)

- How do I recommend a grant?
- Is there a minimum grant amount?
- How long does it take to process a grant recommendation?
- Why do some grants take longer than others to process?
- Do you have a list of approved charities?
- What if the charity to which I want to grant doesn’t appear in the search results when I am making my online grant recommendation?
- How do you ensure that grants go to legitimate charities?
- I’ve seen the term “more than an incidental benefit.” What does that mean, exactly?
- I’ve seen the term “IRS-qualified public charity.” What does that mean, exactly?
- Can I recommend a grant to cover the tax-deductible part of a ticket to a charity event if I pay for the taxable portion another way?
- Can I recommend a grant to pay for my attendance to a fundraising event supporting a charity?
- Can I recommend a grant to satisfy a pledge I’ve made?
- Can I recommend a grant to pay for a membership to a charity?
- Can I support a missionary with a grant from my Schwab Charitable account?
- Can I recommend a grant to support a scholarship or for a tuition payment?
- Can I recommend a grant to my political party?
- My favorite charity is promoting a matching gift and I need my grant to get to them by a certain date in order for the amount to be matched. How can I make sure my grant gets there in time?
- Can my company match grants to charities from my Schwab Charitable account or contributions into my Schwab Charitable account?
- Can you send the grant check to me so that I can deliver it to the charity in person?
- Will I get a grant checkbook so that I may write grant checks to my favorite charities?
- Why might a grant recommendation be declined?
- Am I required to grant a minimum amount in any given year?

Q: How do I recommend a grant?
A: To recommend a grant online, just log into your account or use the Schwab Mobile app. You can then recommend a new grant recipient or use the Grant Again option for a charity you’ve previously designated, which streamlines the process and saves you time.
You can also recommend a grant by completing a Recommend a Grant form and returning it by fax or mail. Instructions are included on the form.
Note that all contributions to a Schwab Charitable account are irrevocable and contributed assets are subject to the full control and discretion of Schwab Charitable as to their use and distribution. Grant recommendations aren’t binding, and we may decline grant recommendations at our discretion. That said, grant recommendations are generally approved as long as the recipient organizations are classified by the IRS as 501(c)(3) public charities and the grants comply with guidelines specified in our Program Policies.
Learn more about researching and recommending grants
Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines
Recommend a Grant form

Q: Is there a minimum grant amount?
A: You can recommend grants of $50 or more to eligible U.S. tax-exempt organizations or to certain international organizations. We allow unlimited—and recurring—grants from an account to the extent that the account balance allows.
If there isn’t enough in the account to fund the grant, we’ll contact the primary account holder to determine if additional contributions are expected or if the grant should be canceled. For professionally managed accounts, the investment advisor is responsible for ensuring sufficient cash is available to fund a grant recommendations.
Learn more from our Program Policies
View our granting tutorial
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: How long does it take to process a grant recommendation?
A: If we’ve already granted to a charity and it remains eligible, a personalized grant letter and check will generally be mailed to the charity within three to five business days. Don’t forget to allow time for the post office to deliver the check to your charity—that always takes a few days.
If we haven’t previously granted to the charity or, if for some reason, its eligibility status has changed, the required due
diligence may add time to the processing of your grant, depending on the type of charity and how responsive the charity is. During peak activity periods (calendar and fiscal year-end), grants sometimes take longer to issue. Eligible international grants can take eight to 10 weeks to process. Learn more about grant eligibility from our Granting Guidelines
Learn more about giving to international charities

Q: Why do some grants take longer than others to process?
A: If we haven’t previously granted to a charity, the initial due diligence process can take longer depending on the type of charity. There are many different 501(c)(3) public charity classifications and, in some cases, additional documentation is required in order to verify the charity’s eligibility. Other factors, including a charity’s responsiveness, can also impact the processing time. Additionally, during peak activity periods (calendar and fiscal year-end), grants may take longer to issue. If the grant is to an eligible international organization, the grant may take eight to 10 weeks to process.
Learn more about our due diligence requirements by reading our Program Policies

Q: Do you have a list of approved charities?
A: We don’t “approve,” endorse, or represent any charity. However, we are committed to helping you make informed granting decisions. We provide several resources to help you identify legitimate, highly effective charities that can have the greatest impact on the causes you support. You may search for charities addressing a specific cause or research the effectiveness or background of any charity by perusing databases at the Center for Disaster Philanthropy, GuideStar, Charity Navigator, and Charity Watch.

We also encourage you to explore our library of Give Lists, which are curated lists of high-impact, nonprofit organizations spanning a range of issues and causes: environment, healthcare, nutrition, U.S. education, refugees, and global poverty. These lists are provided by leading philanthropists and organizations with demonstrated expertise on the topic.
Explore database resources
Explore our library of Give Lists

Q: What if the charity to which I want to grant doesn’t appear in the search results when I am making my online grant recommendation?
A: The vast majority of recommended grant recipients are in our database, which includes more than a million charities, and grants to these charities are quickly approved. However, if the charity of your choice isn’t in our database, please provide as much information as you can, such as the charity name, address, phone number, tax ID, and/or contact person, and we’ll perform the necessary due diligence to determine whether the organization is eligible to receive a grant from a donor-advised fund. If it’s eligible, we’ll add it to our database to facilitate future granting.
Please note that our due diligence efforts for a new charity may add time to the processing of your grant, depending on the type and responsiveness of the charity.
Learn more about grant eligibility from our Granting Guidelines
Recommend a Grant to Charity form

Q: How do you ensure that grants go to legitimate charities?
A: We’re committed to ensuring that all grants are used exclusively for charitable purposes. As one part of our due diligence process, we check all recommended grant recipients against the Treasury Department’s list of Specially Designated Nationals, other U.S. and foreign government watch lists, and the IRS list of organizations whose tax-exempt status has been suspended under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(p). We won’t approve grant recommendations to organizations that appear on these lists. We may also conduct our own media review, and if a recommended charity or its principals are under investigation by a regulator or law enforcement agency, we may freeze granting until the matter is resolved.
Learn more about our due diligence requirements by reading our Program Policies
Learn more about IRS and other agency due diligence on our Explore Charities page
Q: I’ve seen the term “more than an incidental benefit.” What does that mean, exactly?
A: Per the IRS, grants from a donor-advised fund must be made exclusively for charitable purposes with no more than incidental benefits to you or any third-party contributor. A “more than incidental” benefit generally refers to items of financial value, such as event tickets, raffle tickets, auction items, or the any other goods or services. The IRS considers certain items/services of minimal value (less than $75) to be of “incidental” benefit, such as parking spaces, logo-bearing keychains, coffee mugs, or calendars.

If you want to recommend a grant that may result in “more than incidental” benefits, you may do so if you waive the benefits. If this is the case, we suggest that when you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, select Other purpose not listed from the dropdown menu and under Additional Notes, state that you waive all benefits. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that nobody will receive more than incidental goods, services, or other private benefits from the charity as a result of the recommended grant.

Learn more from our Granting Guidelines
Recommend a Grant to Charity form

Q: Can I recommend a grant to cover the tax-deductible part of a ticket to a charity event if I pay for the taxable portion another way?
A: No. This is known as bifurcation and the IRS explicitly prohibits this: bifurcated, or “split,” gifts cannot be made from a donor-advised fund. We cannot approve recommended grants intended to pay for all or a portion of the cost of tickets to attend a charitable event. This includes grants just for the tax-deductible portion of the ticket price. The entire ticket price (the tax-deductible and non tax-deductible portions) must be separately paid from any Schwab Charitable grants.

You may, however, recommend a grant to pay for a ticket to a charitable event if you waive the benefit altogether. If this is the case, we suggest that when you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, select Other purpose not listed from the dropdown menu and under Additional Notes, state that you waive all benefits associated with the event. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that you understand and agree to the following: Grants may not be used to provide any portion of admission to any charitable event or other benefit functions when the account holder would receive a quid pro quo, such as the value of a dinner or the privilege to attend, that if received in return for a charitable contribution, would reduce an account holder’s charitable deduction.

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: I’ve seen the term “IRS-qualified public charity.” What does that mean, exactly?
A: An “IRS-qualified public charity” is a charitable organization that has successfully filed an exemption application with the IRS for its public charity status, or other organizations that the IRS considers to be public charities without filing, such as certain religious, educational, and government institutions. When you begin to recommend a grant and the recipient charity of your choice isn’t in our database, that doesn’t necessarily mean it isn’t IRS-qualified or is ineligible for granting. Please provide as much information as you can, such as the charity name, address, phone number, tax ID, and/or contact person, and we’ll perform the necessary due diligence to determine whether the organization not eligible to receive a grant from a donor-advised fund. If it’s eligible, we’ll add it to our database to facilitate future granting. Please note that our due diligence efforts for a new charity may add time to the processing of your grant depending on the type and responsiveness of the charity.

To research IRS-qualified public charities, please click on the links below.

Explore database resources
Explore our library of Give Lists
and under Additional Notes, state that you waive all benefits associated with the event. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that you understand and agree to the following: Grants may not be used to provide any portion of admission to any charitable event or other benefit functions when the account holder would receive a quid pro quo, such as the value of a dinner or the privilege to attend, that if received in return for a charitable contribution, would reduce an account holder’s charitable deduction.

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: Can I recommend a grant to satisfy a pledge I’ve made?

A: Per the IRS, donor-advised funds can’t be used to satisfy a legally binding pledge or agreement between an individual and a charity. Instead, donors may agree to recommend grants from their donor-advised funds over time with a special purpose noted. Please note that grant recommendations with a designated special purpose may take a bit longer to be distributed, as manual processing is required.

You may, however, recommend a grant to satisfy a non-binding pledge. If doing so online, in the Purpose of Grant section, simply select Pledge (non-binding) from the dropdown menu. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make a note regarding the non-binding pledge in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that the grant will not be used to fulfill a pre-existing pledge, and the following language will appear on the letter that accompanies a grant: This grant is for a non-legally binding pledge. The grant funds may not be used to fulfill an existing obligation. If this commitment is considered legally binding, please return the grant to Schwab Charitable.

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: Can I support a missionary with a grant from my Schwab Charitable account?

A: Grants from a donor-advised fund cannot directly benefit a specific individual. You may recommend a grant to be used to support the projects or efforts of a particular missionary, but not the person him/herself. When you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, simply select Missionary Fund from the dropdown menu and under Additional Notes, state that you would like the grant to be used to support the efforts of the missionary, whom you may name. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.” The recipient charity will have sole discretion over the use of the funds and may apply them as recommended or for another eligible charitable purpose.

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that you understand and agree that the grant will not support a specific missionary project of an individual who is related to you, any other account holders or users, or to advisors on your account. The personalized letter to the charity that accompanies the grant will include the following statement: We understand that you will have full control and discretion regarding the use and application of the grant funds. We hope that you will consider applying the funds to support the work done by your missionaries like [first name last name].

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: Can I recommend a grant to pay for a membership to a charity?

A: You can recommend a grant for this purpose only if the organization confirms that its membership fee is 100% tax-deductible and/or that membership benefits are incidental. The IRS considers certain items/services of minimal value (less than $75) to be of “incidental” benefit, such as parking spaces, general admission, logo-bearing keychains, coffee mugs, or calendars.

If this is the case, when you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, simply select Other purpose not listed from the dropdown menu and under Additional Notes, state the that the membership level doesn’t provide you with more than incidental benefits. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

We may have the charity’s confirmation of membership benefits on file; if not, we’ll need to confirm this and these due diligence efforts may add time to the processing of your grant recommendation, depending on the responsiveness of the charity.

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that nobody will receive more than incidental goods, services, or other private benefits from the charity as a result of the grant.

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines
Q: Can I recommend a grant to support a scholarship or for a tuition payment?
A: Per the IRS, a grant from a donor-advised fund can't be used for the tuition payment of a specific person or for a scholarship where the donor or the donor’s relatives have a majority or deciding vote over the recipients.

With those restrictions in mind, you can recommend a grant for the purpose of supporting a scholarship program that is administered and overseen by an IRS-qualified public charity, as long as it doesn’t satisfy someone’s financial obligation. When you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, simply select Scholarship Fund from the dropdown. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make a note regarding the scholarship fund in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Please note that you’ll be asked to certify that you understand and agree that the grant will not support a scholarship if any account holder or advisor on account (or any relative) is an eligible recipient or has a deciding role in selecting the scholarship recipient.

Learn more from our Program Policies
Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: Can my company match grants to charities from my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund or contributions into my Schwab Charitable donor-advised fund?
A: Company policies vary; please check with your employer to understand its policy for matching gifts of grants from or contributions into donor-advised funds. For matching grants from a donor-advised fund, your employer may ask that you make a note in the special purpose section of your grant recommendation. If so, please plan on extra time for delivery, as grant recommendations with a designated special purpose may take longer to be approved; manual processing is required.

Learn more about grant eligibility from our Granting Guidelines

Recommend a Grant to Charity form

Q: My favorite charity is promoting a matching gift and I need my grant to get to them by a certain date in order for the amount to be matched. How can I make sure my grant gets there in time?
A: Grants issued from donor-advised funds take time to process; for time-sensitive grants, you may wish to seek an alternate way to participate in the matching gift promotion.

If we’ve already granted to the charity and it remains eligible, the check will generally be mailed to the charity within three to five business days and it will take a few additional days for the post office to deliver the check to your charity.

If we haven’t previously granted to the charity or, if for some reason its eligibility status has changed, the required due diligence may add time to the processing of your grant. Additionally, during peak activity periods (calendar and fiscal year-end), grants sometimes take longer to issue. Eligible international grants can take eight to 10 weeks to process.

Should you decide to participate using your Schwab Charitable account, when you make your grant recommendation online, in the Purpose of Grant section, select Other purpose not listed from the dropdown menu and under Additional Notes, state the that the grant is specifically for the matching gift. If using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, make that note in Section 3—Grant Details under “Additional information for Schwab Charitable staff.”

Learn more from our Program Policies
Recommend a Grant form
Q: Can you send the grant check to me so that I can deliver it to the charity in person?

A: As a donor-advised fund sponsor, we are required to maintain full control of account assets; for this reason, we mail the grant checks directly to the recipient charities. However, the check is accompanied by a personalized letter that may include your name and address for acknowledgment purposes. When you recommend a grant online, simply complete the Acknowledgment in Grant Letter section. If recommending a grant using our Recommend a Grant to Charity form, be sure to complete Section 3—Grant Details.

You can always access a copy of the personalized grant letter online at any time to present to the charity if you wish. Once logged into your account, click on Grant Letters from the right hand Quick Links menu to view letters associated with your grant history.

Recommend a Grant to Charity form

Q: Why might a grant recommendation be declined?

A: We approve grants only to eligible organizations and then only for permissible purposes. Grant recommendations are typically only declined if the charities are not IRS-qualified public charities and/or not eligible to receive grants from donor-advised funds, if the terms of the grant recommendation result in benefits to an individual, or if the terms of the grant violate any other restrictions as listed in our Program Policies. Employing a rigorous due diligence process, we take great care to comply with all IRS guidelines affecting donor-advised funds.

Learn more from our Program Policies

Learn more from our Granting Guidelines

Q: Will I get a grant checkbook so that I may write grant checks to my favorite charities?

A: As a donor-advised fund sponsor, we are required to maintain full control of account assets and therefore must handle all grant processing and distribution. All final grant approvals are made at our discretion and we therefore can’t provide checkbooks to account holders.

Learn more from our Program Policies

Submit a grant recommendation

Q: Am I required to grant a minimum amount in any given year?

A: While there is no minimum annual granting requirement, our mission is to increase charitable giving in the U.S., and we expect you to be actively involved in recommending grants to eligible charities. If none of the account holders recommend any grants during a period of 30 months, we consider the account inactive, and we’ll reach out and ask that you make a grant recommendation.

Learn more from our Program Policies