



MEDIA BRIEFING:

HOLIDAY GIVING 2020

Last updated: November 2020

Background

The following document has been prepared by the AFP Canada Communications Committee to assist chapters and members with media outreach on the topic of holiday giving. As part of our mandate to bring the AFP Narrative for Canadian Fundraising to life (<https://afpglobal.org/narrative-canadian-fundraising>), the committee has developed this overview, key messaging and frequently asked questions on this topic.

This document can be used to inform and support both proactive and reactive media relations on behalf of AFP and your organization. Possible uses include:

- Using content to develop opinion/editorial pieces
- Fielding media inquiries that come to your organization during the holiday season
- Positioning yourself in your local media market as a thought leader on the topic of fundraising as the holiday season approaches

Overview:

2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges. A global pandemic, racial tensions, environmental calamities and a growing sense of unease seems to pervade our everyday life. The Canadian charitable sector—86,000 charities that serve a broad range of causes—is not immune to the challenges we've seen this year.

As we turn our minds to the holiday season, it is time to double-down on philanthropic giving. Let's give as much as we can to charities in a year of urgent need.

Key Messages:

1) In a year like no other, the services provided by charities are needed more than ever.

- Services and programs provided by charities have seen increased demand as a result of the pandemic. Healthcare, seniors, mental health, food security, education, social services for vulnerable communities *{editor's note: insert your sector here}* have all seen an increase in user need.
- The pandemic has caused a double-whammy of restricting large gatherings:
 - Lost revenue from inability to hold fundraisers such as walks, runs, dinners and events; and
 - In-person services such as support groups, education and health related services *{insert your sector here, if applicable}* have not been able to take place or have had their effectiveness impacted by virtual delivery.
- Almost two out of five Canadian charitable donors say their giving has dropped since the pandemic began, according to an [Angus Reid Institute \(ARI\) survey](#).
- According to an [Imagine Canada report](#), revenue has declined almost 31% since the onset of the pandemic, with 69% of charities reporting decreased revenues.
- According to an [Association of Fundraising Professionals \(AFP\) poll](#), 70% of fundraisers believe their charities will raise less funds in 2020 than in 2019, while 31% of organizations have been forced to lay off staff.

2) The holiday season is particularly crucial for charities and the people they serve.

- [According to CanadaHelps](#), 36% of annual giving takes place in December, and over 5% on December 31 alone. An [Imagine Canada statistic](#) reinforces this: Canadians give about \$5 billion to charities in late November and all through December. That's almost 40% of the approximately \$12 billion in donations received over the entire year.
- The needs of some sectors become even more pressing during the holiday season: mental health, food banks, social services, child and youth services.
- The colder weather in Canada during this time increases the demand for many charitable services such as homeless shelters, food banks and outreach services that protect the vulnerable from the cold.
- Smaller charities that rely on a large number of smaller donors may suffer the most this year if giving doesn't pick up this year.

3) The solution: give more and give differently this year.

- Instead of focusing in on Black Friday or Cyber Monday, look to give to a charity of your choice on [Giving Tuesday](#) on December 1, 2020.
- Look to support charities that are holding virtual runs, walks, events and dinners. If you were scheduled to go to an in-person event this year that was cancelled, give a gift to the host charity.
- If you've saved money this year by not going on vacation and staying at home more often, give a portion of what you've saved to a charity that supports something you are passionate about.

- Instead of another online shopping indulgence, consider a “tribute gift” that allows you to donate in honour of someone special in your life. Ask your favourite charity how they do this.
- In an unprecedented year, consider setting a new bar in your total charitable giving. Used to giving \$50 at a time? Give a multiple of that—\$100, \$150 or even \$500 or more. You can look at your tax return from last year to see what you gave last year. Challenge yourself (and your family) to set the bar higher.
- Look to your employer to see if they have a matching gift program where they match what you give to a charity.

Questions and Answers

1) How should I decide on which charity to support?

The best advice is to give to a cause you are passionate about. You can look at the tangible impact in the form of programs, services, research and on-the-ground benefits that affects real people.

If you are new to charitable giving, here are some tips and questions to ask:

- Ensure the organization you are looking at has a registered charitable number.
- What results come up when you do a web search of the charity’s name? Is there anything unusual or suspicious in the search results?
- Are their audited financial statements readily available?
- Look at their annual report. See what they accomplished last year.
- Talking to people at charities of interest is a good practice in all cases. You can get a feel for how the organization runs and ask questions about impact.
- Do you understand how their business works? Are you comfortable with it?

2) I gave earlier this year in response to COVID-19. Why should I give again now?

The pandemic is far from done, and the economic toll is still being tallied. Charities supporting important causes are facing a double-whammy of being unable to provide in-person services, nor host in-person fundraising events. Many charities face increased demand for services, declining revenues and imminent job losses—all at the same time. All of this is happening while the COVID-19 virus continues to hit our most vulnerable populations. Canadians can help in the season of giving by giving more and giving frequently to charities that matter to them. Supporting charities supports your community and the entire country.

Additional reading:

- [Angus Reid: Impact of covid on charitable giving](#)
- [CanadaHelps: The Holiday Giving Season](#)
- [AFP: Covid Survey Findings, Canada](#)
- [Imagine Canada: Covid 19 sector monitor report](#)

To learn more about AFP Canada visit <https://afpglobal.org/afp-canada>.