



MEDIA BRIEFING:

HOLIDAY GIVING

Last updated: Spring 2023

Towards Decolonization

The original stewards of Turtle Island, also known as Canada, are the Indigenous peoples of this territory. The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) in Canada acknowledges the important relationship Indigenous peoples have with this vast space and the devastating legacy of colonization on their communities and the land we all occupy today.

AFP in Canada is committed to understanding the history and current realities of our diverse profession, including Indigenous, racialized and equity-deserving groups across the charitable sector. We acknowledge that the ongoing process of inclusion and reconciliation involve a review of the common practices that inform how Canadian charities value generosity and reciprocity. New paradigms, founded on principles of respect, allyship and justice, hold great potential in transforming the sector.

It is incumbent upon all of us—especially settlers on this land—to work in solidarity towards building a culture of belonging that will benefit everyone.

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 Canada Narrative for Canadian Fundraising](#) to life, the committee 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.
- Responding to inquiries from media, donors or boards.
- Fielding media inquiries that come to your organization during a time of year where there is often increased charitable giving.
- Positioning yourself in your local media market as a thought leader on the topic of fundraising as the holiday season approaches.

Overview:

Since 2020 we have seen unprecedented challenges in the charitable sector. A global pandemic, a looming recession, 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. When challenges plague our communities, the services provided by charities are needed more than ever.

- Services and programs provided by charities have seen increased demand as a result of issues caused by the pandemic, rising inflation, climate crisis, international conflict, etc. 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.
- Many charitable organizations continue to face an uphill battle to recovery from the pandemic. According to the [2023 CanadaHelps Giving Report](#), The percentage of Canadians that give is down 5% in 10 years, and 57.3% of charities cannot meet current levels of demand on their services.
- In mid-2023, with inflation rates higher than they had been in 47 years, high unemployment, record levels of national debt and high levels of social, health and economic distress, the need for, and demand on charities was higher than ever. According to the [Giving Report](#), 11% of Canadians currently rely on charities to meet their basic needs, and two in 10 (22%) Canadians expect to use or are already using charitable services in 2023 for basic necessities.

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. Canadians give about \$5 billion to charities in late November and all through December. That's almost 40% of the approximately \$11.8 billion in donations received over the entire year ([Statistics Canada](#)).
- 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](#).
- According to an [Ipsos poll](#) conducted on behalf of CanadaHelps, nearly half of Canadians would prefer to receive a charitable gift instead of a material present during the holidays. So 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.

- 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 organization works? Are you comfortable with it?

2. I gave a lot in response to COVID-19. Why should I give again now?

The economic toll from the pandemic is far from over. Charities supporting important causes are continuing to recover and facing increased need after experiencing several years of being unable to provide in-person services, nor host in-person fundraising events. Charities also face the same pressures as other businesses in the community when it comes to inflation and human resources issues. 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](#)
- [2023 CanadaHelps Giving Report](#)

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