



America's  
Giving Challenge

# SURVIVAL GUIDE

The official guide for individuals and nonprofits participating in the Giving Challenge



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# Glossary

## Giving Challenge Lingo

**announcement:** message created by a cause administrator and posted to his/her cause as well as sent out via email and Facebook notification to all cause members

**beneficiary:** the nonprofit chosen by the administrator to receive donations made through his/her cause.

**Causes:** Causes (with a capital C) refers to the Facebook application and company that created and maintains it.

**cause:** cause (with a lower case c) generally refers to: a) a cause on Causes on Facebook that is created in order to fundraise, or b) a general term synonymous with a nonprofit organization's issue area.

**cause champion:** Passionate Individuals who spearhead fundraising efforts on behalf of an organization. These are the folks that officially represent their cause in the Challenge.

**cause administrator:** Individuals with administrator level permissions for a cause. Every cause is allowed to have multiple cause administrators.

**notification:** a Facebook update found in the lower right-hand corner of a user's screen; notifications appear as a small red bubble containing the number of updates you have.

**unique daily donations:** A unique daily donation is defined as one single donation per individual per day in the amount of \$10 USD or more. This means that duplicate donations from the same individual to a single cause in one day will only count once toward helping the cause receive a *Daily Award*. However, individuals can donate to the same cause once a day everyday for 30 days and this will count 30 times towards helping the cause receive an *Overall Award*. This would also count towards the Daily Award for that cause every day.

# Welcome to America's Giving Challenge

## What is America's Giving Challenge?

America's Giving Challenge, also referred to as the "Giving Challenge" or just the "Challenge," is a 30-day national competition that encourages people to leverage online and offline social networks to help recruit supporters and win cash awards totaling \$245,000 on behalf of their favorite nonprofit.

Participants in the Challenge will compete for daily and overall cash awards up to \$50,000 based on the number of qualifying donations generated for a cause, not the total dollars raised.

Awards will be given to the nonprofit beneficiaries of the causes that garner the highest number of *unique daily donations*\* between 3:00 p.m. EDT October 7, 2009, and 3:00pm ET on November 6, 2009.

## The breakdown of the awards is as follows:

### Overall Awards (12 total)

- \$50,000 to the cause with the highest total number of unique daily donations over the 30 days of the Challenge
- \$25,000 to the cause with the second and third highest total number of unique daily donations over the 30 days of the Challenge
- \$10,000 to the next nine causes with the highest total number of unique daily donations over the 30 days of the Challenge.

### Daily Awards (2 per day)

- \$1,000 each day of the Challenge to the cause with the highest number of unique donations that day
- \$500 each day of the Challenge to the cause with the second highest number of unique donations that day
- UPDATE: For the last seven days of the Challenge we will have three daily awards; \$1,500 for the cause with the highest number of unique donations, \$1,000 to the cause with the second highest, and \$500 to the cause with the third highest.

Remember, the Giving Challenge is not focused on how much money you can raise, but on how successful you are at building collective action and inspiring members to donate to your cause. To succeed, the goal is to get as many unique daily donations as possible (minimum of \$10 USD), to your cause each day.

America's Giving Challenge is a 30-day national competition that encourages people to leverage online and offline social networks to help recruit supporters.

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### Who organized America's Giving Challenge?

**Causes** ([causes.com](https://causes.com)), the **Case Foundation** ([casefoundation.org](https://casefoundation.org)), and **PARADE Publications** ([parade.com](https://parade.com)) have partnered to organize America's Giving Challenge.

As part of its sponsorship of the Giving Challenge, the Case Foundation is funding cash awards. PARADE Publications is helping to launch the Challenge with a cover story about the importance of giving by actor Matt Damon. The technology platform for the Challenge is the Causes Application on Facebook.

# How the Challenge Works

## How many days does the Challenge run?

The Challenge will run for 30 days, from 3:00pm ET on October 7, 2009, to 3:00pm ET on November 6, 2009.

## Who can participate?

“Challenge cause administrators” must be 13 years of age or older at the date of entry and a legal resident of the 50 United States and the District of Columbia. Award money will be given to the nonprofit beneficiaries of the winning causes. Only U.S.-based 501(c)(3) charities listed in the Guidestar database ([guidestar.org](http://guidestar.org)) and opted-in to receive online donations are eligible as potential Challenge awardees. Anyone with the passion and commitment to advocate on behalf of a cause they care about, however, can participate in the Challenge by joining and promoting the cause, donating, and fundraising.

## How can my cause win award money in the Challenge?

A total of \$245,000 will be given to the nonprofit beneficiaries of those causes that receive the most “unique daily donations” during the 30 days of the Challenge. Your cause can also win daily award money by receiving the highest number or second highest number of unique daily donations over the course of one day. For the breakdown of the awards, see the “What is the Giving Challenge?” section at the beginning of this guide.

## \*What is a “unique daily donation”?

A unique daily donation is defined as one single donation per individual per day in the amount of \$10 USD or more. This means that duplicate donations from the same individual to a single cause in one day will only count once toward helping the cause receive a *daily award*. However, individuals can donate to the same cause once a day everyday for 30 days and this will count 30 times towards helping the cause receive an *Overall Award*. This would also count towards the Daily Award for that cause every day.

The Challenge will run for 30 days, from 3:00pm ET on October 7, 2009, to 3:00pm ET on November 6, 2009.

A total of \$245,000 will be given to the nonprofit beneficiaries of those causes that receive the most unique daily donations during the 30 days of the Challenge.

A unique daily donation is defined as one single donation per individual per day in the amount of \$10 USD or more.

# How do I participate?

## If I don't have a cause yet...

If you want to participate, but you do not have a cause you want to compete with, you can start a cause and enter it into the Challenge. To start a cause, you must have a Facebook profile, which you can create at [facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com).

If you already have a Facebook account and want to start a cause, go to the Challenge homepage ([americasgivingchallenge.com](https://www.americasgivingchallenge.com)) and follow the simple steps to create a cause and opt-in to the Giving Challenge. You will be prompted to enter information about the cause you want to start (e.g. cause title, a mission statement, a photo). You will also be prompted to select a nonprofit beneficiary.

## Here are some tips for starting a great cause:

- The most effective causes tend to be issue-focused rather than organization-focused. You should name your cause accordingly, using simple action words.
- The first thing many people will see when they view your cause is your photo —this is another item you can use to personalize your cause.
- Think specifically about why you are raising money and what you are raising it for. Awards are given to those causes with the most unique daily donations, so it's extremely important to convey to your supporters why you are asking for their support. The "Mission", "Description" and "Positions" sections of your cause should reflect this specificity.
- Keep it simple. You want to activate people on behalf of your issue, not overwhelm them with too much information.
- Remember that you can always edit the information on your cause by clicking on "Admin Center" underneath the cause photo.

## If I want to compete with an existing cause...

You must opt-in to the Challenge by clicking "Enter the Challenge" on your cause (if you are a cause administrator, you'll see this link at the top of your cause in the Giving Challenge banner). Donations to your cause will not count toward the Giving Challenge unless you have opted-in.

The most effective causes tend to be issue-focused rather than organization-focused.

Keep it simple. You want to activate people on behalf of your issue, not overwhelm them with too much information.

### How do I spread the word and recruit members?

Information on Facebook is spread most effectively peer-to-peer, through people who know one another. If possible, try to turn your friends and most avid supporters into advocates for your cause first. Start by inviting your friends, colleagues and relatives to the cause and teaching them about your goals and the work of the nonprofit you are supporting. Ask for questions and post informative content on your media board. And, most importantly, urge your cause members to recruit their friends. Facebook only allows you to send out 150 invitations per day, so it's important to encourage your supporters to invite their friends as well.

- Go to the Giving Challenge box on your cause and click "Tell Friends" to post to your profile and invite all of your Facebook Friends.
- When you send an invite, use the "Add a Personal Message" feature to personalize the notification and appeal for support.
- Use Facebook's "Share" feature on your cause to share a link to your cause with others in your network. Include a message explaining why it is important for them to join and donate to your cause.
- If you have an existing Facebook Page, send an update to your fans letting them know about your participation in the Challenge. Include a link to your Challenge cause and encourage them to donate and help spread the word to their own networks.
- Use other "channels", such as your email signature and Twitter account to encourage people to join your cause (see [Social media and other tools to help you support your cause](#) for more).

### How do I encourage people to donate?

The vast majority of people donate because they were asked to donate. Moreover, a fundraising appeal is more effective when it comes from a trusted friend. Here are a few ways to leverage both of these principles:

If you are not a nonprofit, there is a lot you can do to get your friends, family, and fellow cause members to donate.

- Send bulletins to your cause members asking them to donate. Be specific about the importance and the impact of their donations.

Information on Facebook is spread most effectively peer-to-peer, through people who know one another.

Most importantly, urge your cause members to recruit their friends.

The vast majority of people donate because they were asked to donate.

- Ask for donations from all of your new members by creating a Welcome Note. The Welcome Note is a customizable page that displays to every new member of your cause as they join. Go to the “Admin Center” then click the “Welcome Note” tab and you can write a note and add a video or photo. In the note, tell new members that you are competing in the Giving Challenge and ask them to donate.
- Get your “Hall of Famers” involved. Top recruiters, top donors, and top fundraisers are excellent people to write a personal message to. Ask them to donate and get their friends to donate too!
- Use the Media Board on your cause to post great videos, pictures, and articles about your nonprofit and the issue you (or the nonprofit) work on.
- Send milestone and progress reports to your cause members: Raised \$500? Hit the 400 people donated mark? Recognize the individual contributions of your super cause members as well as when the cause as a whole reaches a goal or milestone.

**If you are a nonprofit**, be sure to go to the Causes Partner Center at [nonprofits.causes.com](http://nonprofits.causes.com). There you will find communications tools that will enable you to send messages to the administrators of causes that benefit your organization, their cause members, and the top recruiters, donors, and fundraisers for your causes. You can use bulletins to mobilize supporters who are members of more than one cause that benefits your organization. Send clear, compelling, and urgent messages to your cause administrators, cause members, and top supporters encouraging them to donate. Be specific about where the money they donate goes to, tell them why it is so important they donate, and recognize individual efforts and donations to the cause.

# Additional survival tips and strategies

## **Start a Birthday Wish and encourage your members to do the same.**

Have a birthday in October? Birthday Wish has been our most successful fundraising feature because it turns your cause members into super-fundraisers. Creating Birthday Wishes gives your supporters an easy and fun way to ask all of their friends to donate to your nonprofit for their birthday. We automatically send all cause members an email 14 days and 7 days before their birthday asking them to start a Birthday Wish but they're more likely to do it if it comes from you! So send this link out to your cause members:

<http://apps.facebook.com/causes/birthdays/new> and ask them to start their Birthday Wish for your nonprofit during the Giving Challenge. Better yet, go to the "Admin Center" on your cause and click the "Birthday Wish" tab. There you'll find a customized link that creates a Birthday Wish specifically for your cause!

## **Empower your top supporters. Get them to do the talking for you!**

Once you've built up momentum, check out the Hall of Fame within your cause to view your top recruiters, donors and fundraisers. Nonprofits can send them targeted messages through the partner center at [nonprofits.causes.com](http://nonprofits.causes.com). Don't forget to reach out to your volunteers and cause supporters who may not be online yet as well. Through their actions, online and off, they've demonstrated a strong commitment to your cause, making them invaluable to your campaign. Ask them to help spread the word to their own networks. Here are a few specific ways to involve your top supporters in your Challenge:

- Add your top supporters as administrators of your cause. They can help post announcements and media, and others can publicly see that they are leaders.
- Ask your top supporters to share with other cause members how they have fundraised and recruited so successfully, or post a bulletin with a message from a top supporter encouraging other members to be as active as he or she is.
- Encourage your top supporters to keep up the great work and give them specific goals!

Have a birthday in October? Birthday Wish has been our most successful fundraising feature because it turns your cause members into super-fundraisers.

Ask your top supporters to share with other cause members how they have fundraised and recruited so successfully.

### Use your resources offline to succeed in the Challenge.

Phone calls, newsletters, and flyers can still be effective ways to get the word out and can supplement your online efforts. Organize an event or co-sponsor one and put computers with your cause up at the entrance. If you work on college campuses, assign dorm captains, set up tables in the quad or outside big classes, or get your president involved! If you have local chapters or regional leaders, set up a conference call and make a game plan for how they can get their members involved with the Giving Challenge. Whether you organize teams of interns, set-up car washes, tap into youth groups, or bring in your volunteer alumni, think past your computer and make big things happen! Your cause will see incredible results if strong offline grassroots organizing is pushing your cause to the next level.

### Social media and other tools to help you support your cause

There are many social media tools available to help you spread the word, build support and garner donations for your Challenge cause. Here are a few you'll want to check out. For more details on leveraging social media for your nonprofit, check out more resources at [casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials](http://casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials).

### Email

- It's one of the easiest and most effective tools at your disposal. Reach out to contacts in your email, Skype and instant messaging address books to let them know about your participation in America's Giving Challenge and include the link to your cause in your email. Your contacts will be able to see and donate to your cause whether or not they are a Facebook member, but will need to login if they want to join the cause. Remember to ask your contacts to forward your email to their own contacts.

### Blogging

- If you have your own blog, you can write posts about your cause and encourage readers to offer their support. Identify bloggers that focus on your cause and comment on related posts with information about your campaign. Tell the bloggers about your campaign and why it's important to you. Ask them to include a few words about you and the link to your cause in their next post, or offer to write a guest post about your cause for their blog. They will have active readers who are likely to care about and want to support your Challenge cause.

Your cause will see incredible results if strong offline grassroots organizing is pushing your cause to the next level.

Remember to ask your contacts to forward your email to their own contacts.

Here are a few blog search engines to get you started:

- [blogsearch.google.com](http://blogsearch.google.com)
- [technorati.com](http://technorati.com)
- [mybloglog.com](http://mybloglog.com)

#### Micro-blogging: Twitter

- If you're already using Twitter ([twitter.com](http://twitter.com)), great! If not, consider getting on the micro-blogging bandwagon. Twitter lets you send short 140 character messages to your followers—people interested in what you're doing. The best way to build or increase relevant followers is to identify Twitter users who tweet about your cause or issue, follow them and, in turn, they will generally follow you back. Use any number of Twitter directories like: WeFollow ([wefollow.com](http://wefollow.com)) or Twellow ([twellow.com](http://twellow.com)) to identify these users. To draw more attention to your Challenge cause, ask your followers to re-tweet your messages to their own followers.

#### Video and Image sharing

- According to the old adage, "a picture is worth a thousand words." You may want to consider using pictures and video to tell people why your cause is important to you. A couple of the most popular platforms are Youtube ([youtube.com](http://youtube.com)) for video and Flickr ([flickr.com](http://flickr.com)) for images. Add "tags" (short key words that relate to your cause) to your photos and videos. This will ensure that people who are interested in your cause can search and locate your information. Once you have a video or image, use methods above to share it! Don't forget to add videos and images to your cause as well—your members can view the videos and easily invite their friends to watch too. It can be a great recruiting and fundraising tool for your cause.

**Don't have a video for your cause? Here are some quick resources to help you get one —fast.**

- Check out Youtube's Video Volunteers program ([youtube.com/videovolunteers](http://youtube.com/videovolunteers)) to team up with a skilled video-maker.
- Sign up for the Flip Video Spotlight program ([flipvideospotlight.com](http://flipvideospotlight.com)) to order hugely discounted Flip Cams for your nonprofit.
- Leverage someone else's great work. Search existing documentaries relevant to your cause at Snag Films ([snagfilms.com](http://snagfilms.com)).

To draw more attention to your Challenge cause, ask your followers to re-tweet your messages to their own followers.

Add "tags" to your photos and videos. This will ensure that people who are interested in your cause can search and locate your information.

### What to do on a daily basis to promote your cause.

Each day of the Challenge presents an opportunity to win one of the two daily awards (\$1,000 and \$500). A \$1,000 award goes to the cause with the highest number of unique donations for that 24-hour period, and a \$500 award goes to the cause with the second highest number of unique donations for that 24-hour period (3:00pm ET to 3:00pm ET). To be eligible for the award, the cause must have a minimum of 10 unique donations for that day. Regularly remind your supporters why you care and why they should too.

UPDATE: For the last seven days of the Challenge we will have three daily awards; \$1,500 for the cause with the highest number of unique donations, \$1,000 to the cause with the second highest, and \$500 to the cause with the third highest.

### Here are some things you can do on Facebook and in the Causes application:

- Use the “Announcement” and “Media Board” features within your cause to post new information daily, and to share relevant videos and articles. Show compelling reasons why your member’s donations matter.
- Thank your supporters after they have donated by sending them a message.
- Reply to comments posted on the “Wall” and encourage dialogue.
- Experiment with other Facebook features—including “Video”, “Events” “Ads,” and “Photos”—to get out the word. By using these features to post items to your profile and sharing them, a notification will appear in your friends’ newsfeeds.

### How to track your progress in the Challenge

It’s easy to track your progress in the Challenge. The Giving Challenge homepage ([americasgivingchallenge.com](http://americasgivingchallenge.com)) features real-time feeds of the day’s leaders, the overall leaders, and a list of the daily award recipients. Your own Cause page will tell you exactly how many donations you need for your Cause to gain the lead in both the daily and overall Challenges.

- Check the leader-board and inform your cause members of their progress. Thank them and let them know what else they can do to help.
- Use specific metrics to encourage your cause members (i.e., “We only need ten more donors to receive today’s \$1000 Challenge award!).
- Think strategically. You may not want to overload your cause members with information as each day’s award comes to a close if you want to save the big push for when the overall Challenge approaches its end and the major awards are at stake.

Regularly remind your supporters why you care and why they should too.

Thank your supporters after they have donated by sending them a message.

The Giving Challenge homepage features real-time feeds of the day’s leaders, the overall leaders, and a list of the daily award recipients.

- Check the Numbers. If you are a cause administrator, go to the cause and click “Admin Center” and then the “Stats” tab. This tab is packed with data about membership and donations to your cause so you can see what’s working and what’s not.

If you work for a nonprofit, go to [nonprofits.causes.com](https://nonprofits.causes.com) and sign-in to your Nonprofit Partner Center. This is your hub for your organization’s presence on Causes and can give you tools and information about how you’re doing across the platform.

### **Additional resources that are waiting for YOU!**

While the official Survival Guide ends here, expert advice, great online resources and customizable marketing materials to help you plan and execute a successful Challenge are just a click away. Here’s what you can expect to find:

#### **Additional resources from the Case Foundation**

- [casefoundation.org/agc/nonprofits](https://casefoundation.org/agc/nonprofits)—Find banner ads, sample newsletter copy, logos, a PR toolkit and other materials to help you spread the word about your participation in America’s Giving Challenge!
- [casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials/gurus](https://casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials/gurus)—Online tutorials about the Giving Challenge and archived videos from “Gear Up for Giving”, a month long series of free tutorials led by some of the best-known names in social media marketing for non-profits
- [www.casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials](https://www.casefoundation.org/social-media-tutorials)—The Case Foundation’s compilation of our favorite resources on some of the most popular social media tools.

#### **Additional resources from Causes**

- [exchange.causes.com](https://exchange.causes.com)—Causes’ Blog and Resource Center will answer all your questions about how to use Causes including best practices, success stories, and important updates about the platform and its tools
- [http://apps.facebook.com/causes/help](https://apps.facebook.com/causes/help)—The Help Center and Frequently Asked Questions about the Causes application on Facebook. Wondering how your donations get to the nonprofit or how Causes works? Here are the answers.