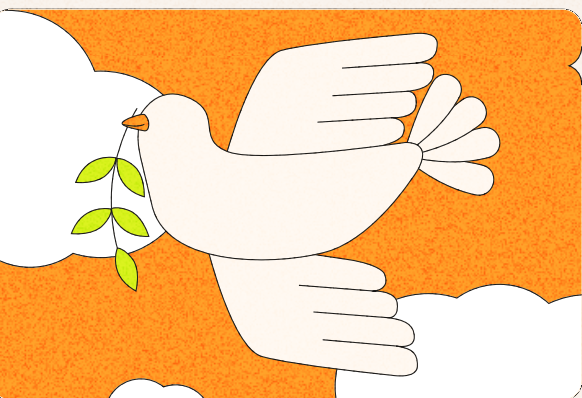
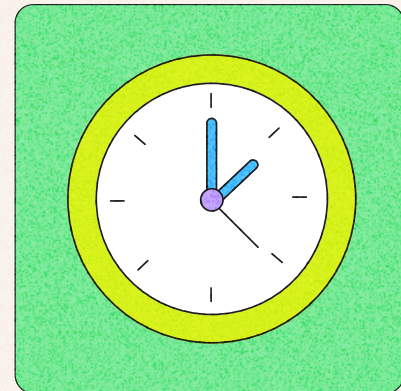
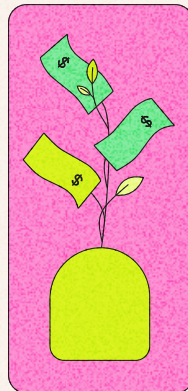
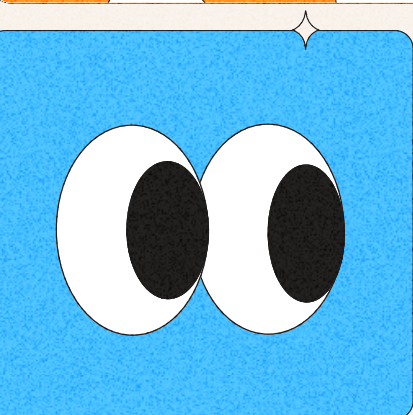


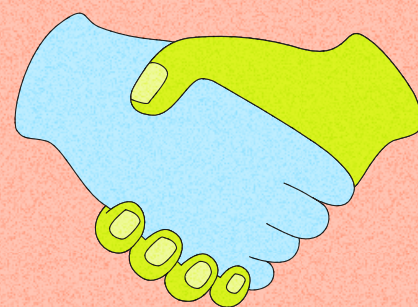
HAPPY



MONEY



GIVING



GUIDE

2022

COMMUNITY IMPACT 101

Five Steps to Take Before You Start Giving Back

1

Find a cause or organization that aligns with your values

A big part of giving back to your community is benefiting from the boost of endorphins and connectedness that it provides to you in return. Another factor is seeing things you believe in come to life in tangible ways. From helping people experiencing homelessness or mentoring youth in your community, finding a cause that resonates with you is a vital part of the giving experience.

Whether you're donating monetarily or giving of your time, it's always important to find a charitable outlet that is in alignment with your personal values. There are so many wonderful, credible organizations that you're bound to find one that is a perfect fit for you.

2

Check out the details on your favorite charities

Once you've picked out a few organizations that you'd like to support, be sure to do your research. Don't be swayed by marketing campaigns or social ads alone. Reputable charities and non-profits will be transparent about their practices, their funding, and their beliefs.

Be sure that you're wisely investing your time and money with a cause that is credible. Some resources to help with this are websites like [Charity Navigator](#) or [Guidestar](#).

3

Decide what you want your impact to be

You've done your research, and you're ready to give back! But before you start collecting cans or hitting submit on that donation – decide what you'd like your long and short-term impact to be. Are you wanting to get more involved at a local chapter of the Boys & Girls Club to give back to a community that impacted you growing up? Are you wanting to make a monetary difference at a local food bank that's understaffed?

In our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey, we asked people who recently donated money or time what they thought the biggest impact was.



For those who donated money, they considered the most important impact to be:

23%
Monetary

30%
Volunteering time

47%
Both money and time
are equally impactful

For those who donated time, they considered the most important impact to be:

14%
Monetary

44%
Volunteering time

42%
Both money and time
are equally impactful

All giving matters regardless of what form it may take. By taking time to assess the type of giving that will be the most impactful and bring you the most satisfaction, you will be set up for success to have a longer, and more fulfilling, experience on your giving journey.

4

Find a way to give that suits your lifestyle and budget

Charity? Found it. Research? Done. Goals? Check! Now it's time to align your goals with your reality. Aspiring to donate \$5,000 this year to a charity close to your heart is incredible but may not be realistic for your budget right now. Or maybe you'd love to volunteer at the soup kitchen three times a week, but your personal obligations would make that unsustainable.



In our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey, we asked people if they had the option to donate time or money, how would they choose? 55% of respondents said – it depends. Among these folks, there were five factors that impacted their decision:

26%
Availability

18%
Finances

17%
What the charity /
cause needs/ wants

6%
My physical
limitations

3%
Distance / location

By identifying your goals up front, you can decide how to take small steps towards those over time. Plus, seeing how your contributions are ultimately making progress on your charitable goals will encourage you to keep going.

5

See if your impact can be doubled

Now that you're all set to start making an impact in your community, see if your efforts can be easily doubled. You could see if a friend or family member would like to join you once a month to volunteer or if they'd be willing to match your financial donation. Also, some employers offer charitable matching incentives. Be sure to check with your company to see if this is something they offer.

6 Questions to Ask Before You Donate Money to a Charity

1.

Do your research

Like we discussed in Community Impact 101, be sure you know all the details before you hand over your money. With the rise in popularity in recent years for sites like [GoFundMe](#), [Givebuttr](#), and [Donorbox](#), it's never been easier to instantly give to causes that matter to you. Many organizations also use text messages or QR codes as a quick way to donate too. But all of these innovations invite scammers to try and take your money and run – without a charitable thought in mind.

Below are a few tips from the [FTC](#) to avoid scammers.

- Find out who's behind the crowdfunding request.
- Do a reverse image search of the photos used on the crowdfunding campaign page.
- Do your own vetting.
- Find out what happens to your money if the project doesn't get off the ground.
- Check where the donation link goes.

You can learn more at their full articles, including: [Donating Through Crowdfunding, Social Media, and Fundraising Platforms](#) and [How to Donate Wisely and Avoid Charity Scams](#).

2.

Read their annual reports

Every charitable organization should be transparent with their volunteers and supporters. While some organizations with larger budgets may share their annual progress on dedicated websites or downloadable fancy documents, all charities, even local ones, should be able to provide the information.

According to our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey, people ranked these five reasons as most important when considering what charities or causes to donate money toward.

- Belief in the social cause's overall goals/purpose
- Works with other organizations I care about
- A good social reputation
- Impacts my local community
- I can see first-hand proof of its impact

5.

Check out their online reviews

Not all "charities" are created equal when it comes to how the IRS views them. If being able to deduct your charitable contributions on your taxes is important to you, then read the fine print.

According to [TurboTax](#):

- Religious and charitable organizations typically fall under section 501(c)(3) and can receive tax-deductible donations.
- Not every section allows these deductions. For instance, social welfare and civic organizations registered under section 501(c)(4) don't qualify.

There are lots of nuances when it comes to what you can and cannot claim on your taxes. Do your research for your specific needs, and check out info from the IRS like this article on [Charitable Contribution Deductions](#). And when in doubt, reach out to a tax professional.

3.

See how much of each \$1 goes to the cause vs. the organization

At a minimum, every charity should be able to tell you how every dollar was spent. But some organizations will also indicate what portion of each dollar goes directly to the cause.

For example, the [American Red Cross](#) states they are, "proud that an average of 90 cents of every dollar we spend is invested in delivering care and comfort to those in need." While organizations like [The Nature Conservancy](#) share in their 2021 Annual Report that their "programmatic efficiency" is 69.2% which means 30.8% of every dollar is spent on things like administrative expenses and fundraising. Websites like [Charity Navigator](#) also provide a "Give with Confidence" score that breaks down each charity's financial ranking along with a rating for accountability and transparency.

Different organizations have different expenses based on their cause, so it's up to you to decide what is a good investment of your money based on your values and goals.

4.

Check out their online reviews

Definitely check out charity specific websites but also use everyday tools like Google Reviews. This can give you a sense of the experiences other people in your community have with the particular charity. This can be especially helpful with large or nationwide organizations that may have different reputations or experiences based on your location.

6.

Ask how you can track progress toward the project

Some monetary donations will be general gifts to help the entity complete their mission. But others will have a specific goal in mind. Be sure to ask how you can track the project. If it's an initiative to create ten community gardens by 2025, find out where you can learn about progress updates on a regular basis.

For example, [Charity: Water](#) provides a map to see all of their clean water projects along with [sensor data](#) to see each well in action. Not all charities will be this high-tech, but even a monthly newsletter is a great way to stay up-to-date on your giving impact.

According to our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey, of the 59% of people that donated money – these were their top 3 social causes:

31%
Human services

14%
Animals & Wildlife conservation

13%
Health & Wellness

6 Questions to Ask Before You Donate Money to a Charity

HOW TO CREATE YOUR GIVING STRATEGY

First: Identify the social issues you want to support through your giving.

Ex: Climate change, poverty, civil rights, or education

NEXT UP: Find a few causes or organizations that support the issues you’ve just identified.

Do the causes and organizations align with your values?

☐ YES ☐ NO ☐ MAYBE / UNSURE

Get the facts before you donate:

Be sure to thoroughly research a charity or organization before making a donation. Your donation is an investment in this cause. Find out what impact your money will have and evaluate how efficiently the organization operates.

Name of Organization	Research

Decide what you want your impact to be

Are you going to give your time, money, or both?

- ☐ I THINK I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER
- ☐ I THINK I'D LIKE TO DONATE MONEY
- ☐ I THINK I'D LIKE TO DO BOTH

Find a way to give that suits your lifestyle and budget

Now that you know:

- What social issues you’re most interested in supporting
- The organizations that align with your values
- The details on your favorite charities
- What you want your impact to be

Create a 3 step action plan to start giving back to your chosen organization(s)

Be specific when making your plan to make it as easy as possible to start and follow through.

- Ex: 1. Contact the organization I'd like to volunteer with and find out their guidelines
2. Volunteer every Tuesday from 4:00 - 5:00
3. Set aside \$20 each week to donate to my charity at the end of the month

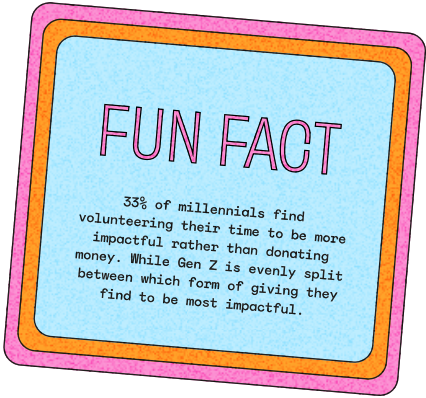
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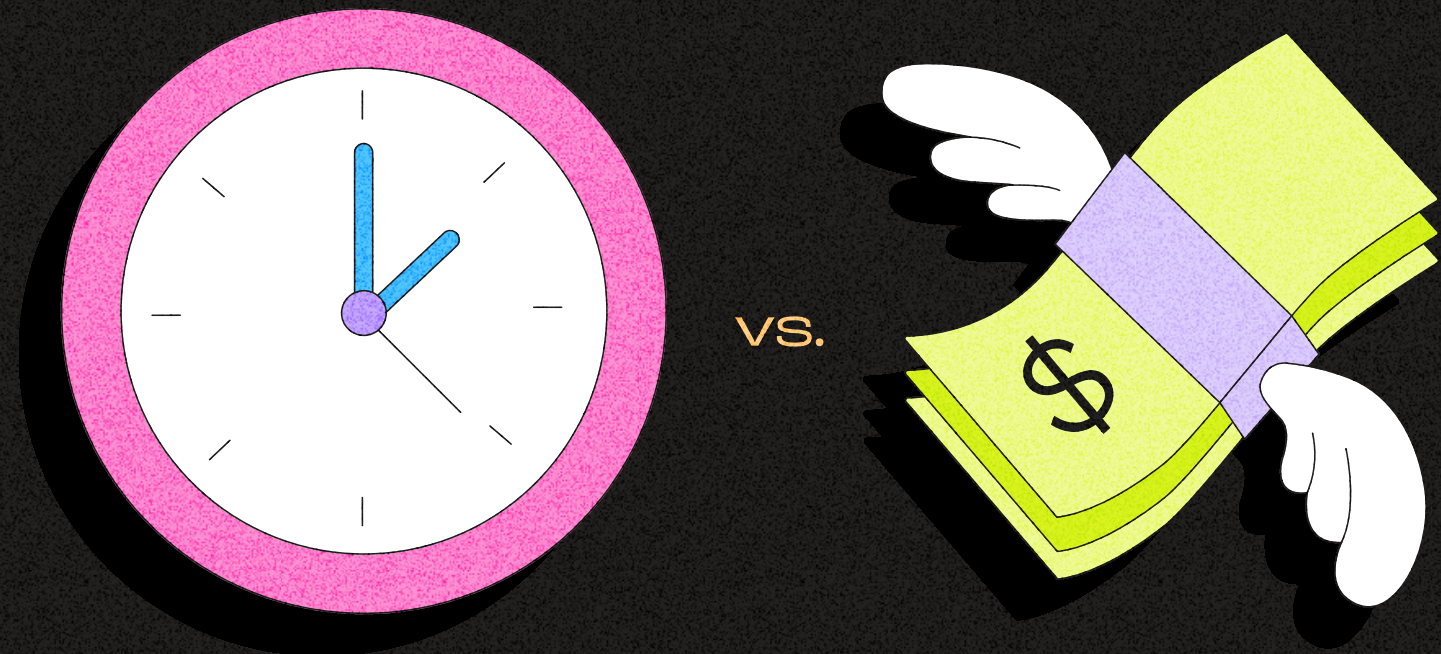
3.

LAST STEP: See if your impact can be doubled

Can you bring a friend to volunteer with you? Does your employer match donations? Can you share more about the organization on social media? Jot down a few ways you could potentially double your impact.



Donating



How To Determine Your Social Impact

When deciding whether to open up your wallet or your calendar for a good cause, there are factors to consider for both yourself and the organization.

First up, how will your volunteerism or money make an impact? Here's a few factors to think about.

What is the immediacy of your impact?

If a charity needs someone to stuff backpacks for a back to school drive, your impact could be felt pretty immediately. But if an organization needs monetary gifts to fund a new community playground, it may take longer to see the fruits of your gift.

What is the longevity of your impact?

While all giving – whether time or money – is valuable, some efforts will have more long-term value than others. And that's ok. Just take this into consideration when choosing time vs. money to ensure that the impact aligns with your giving goals.

What is the organization able to accept?

You may want to donate diapers and other physical goods (also known as an example of "in-kind" donations) to your local shelter, but some organizations may not be logistically set-up to receive these types of gifts. Be sure to check that your desired method of giving is accepted by the organization before donating.

We found out that these were the five most important factors when people were considering what causes to volunteer their time to:

Belief in the social cause's overall goals/purpose

First hand proof of impact

Affects local community

Allows me to volunteer for any amount of time I choose

It lets me choose how I volunteer my time

Now, let's take a look at how your giving will impact you. Here are three more factors to evaluate.

What will provide you with the most personal satisfaction?

While giving can be viewed as purely altruistic, there's nothing wrong with walking away with some warm fuzzies for your time or money well spent on a good cause. Making sure that the method of your giving will align to what you're looking for is vital. A positive experience will spur you on to more giving, while a mismatched expectation could lead to a negative experience for everyone involved.

2022 Happy Money Giving Survey Insight

We found that people are 2x more likely to donate money to human-service social causes like food banks than any other cause.

What will the financial impact be on you?

Most of us wish that we could do more for the causes that are near and dear to our hearts. However, we also have to make sure our selfless motives line up with our budgets. Having the best of intentions is great but if it leaves you scrambling at the end of the month to cover your necessities – you should reassess what giving should look like right now.

What will the impact be on your lifestyle?

They say time is money, but some of us have more time to spare than others. If time is your main currency at this stage of life, then volunteering your time may be the best fit. If your time is already strained as it is though, signing up to give 4 hours every weekend may become a burden of guilt that isn't necessary. You could instead consider cutting back on one dining out experience per week and putting those funds to your favorite cause instead. According to our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey, 28% of people say they set aside a specific amount of money from their paycheck to donate to causes they care about.

Those are things to consider on your giving journey, but here's what people had to say about donating time vs. money in our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey.



GIVING TIME

- 43%** of people volunteered in the past 12 months
- 72%** of people's most recent volunteer experience was a repeat experience
- 37%** of people stated volunteering was most impactful way to give back

GIVING MONEY

- 62%** of people donated money in the past 12 months
- 38%** donated money to more than one charity
- 18%** of people believe making monetary donations is the most impactful way to give back

GIVING TIME & MONEY

45% of people feel volunteering and donating money are both equally impactful

41% of those who donated money to a cause or charity also volunteered their time with the same organization

3 WAYS TO GIVE THE GIFT OF EXPERIENCE

We're big believers in buying experiences and also investing in others. According to our Chief Science Officer, Dr. Dunn, "Happiness research shows that material things turn out to provide less happiness than experiential purchases... and research has shown that spending money on others provides a bigger happiness boost than spending money on yourself." That sounds like a win-win.

Here are three ways to give the gift of experiences this holiday season (or year-round, if you ask us!).

1 GIFT MEMORIES, NOT THINGS:

It's easy to wrap up a sweater as a gift, but the sentiment is often fleeting. Things are nice, but they don't impact us the way that shared experiences do. Think about how you could repurpose your gifting budget this year to give memorable experiences as gifts instead of physical things.

In our 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey we asked people to share what experiences meant the most to them, and here's what they had to say.

"I enjoy spending my money traveling with my family. I enjoy making lasting memories with them."

"Traveling to different states or countries and learning about new cultures."

"Going on a trip with friends and/or family because spending money on memories is a better investment than just buying clothes."

2 POOL YOUR RESOURCES FOR MAXIMUM IMPACT:

Flying your entire family to a remote location for an excursion may not be in the budget, but consider connecting with friends and family to see if they'd be willing to choose an experience over physical gifts this year too. You could all chip in to go see an event or take a trip to a location that everyone can vote on. With the power of everyone involved, you may all get to experience something together that you never could have with individual gift budgets.

3 PAY IT FORWARD:

While giving experiences to friends and family is great, also consider how you can give experiences to your favorite causes too. Organizations like Kiva enable you to crowdfund microloans, "as a force for good." This means that your monetary gift can help a family in a different country plant crops for the next year or provide transportation for their children to get to a school. Plus, once your microloan is repaid you can keep paying it forward to other folks too.

BONUS TIP:

A platform like Kiva is another great gift-giving option for family and friends. You could set aside a certain amount to give and choose your cause together.

GIVING ON A BUDGET:

3 TIPS FOR DONATING WHEN MONEY IS TIGHT

When money is tight, giving to charities can often be at the bottom of the list. But we want you to reap the benefits of investing in others even when there's no room in the budget. Here are three tips to consider for giving on a budget.



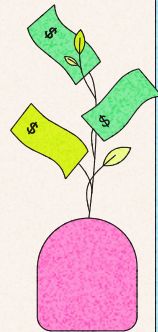
SWAP IT OUT

- If there's a cause that you'd really like to give to, take a look at your weekly expenses. Is there a recurring splurge or nice-to-have that you could cut out once a week or even once a month? If so, you could put this money towards your favorite charity instead. A little sacrifice on your part could be a big impact for your favorite charity because small things add up.



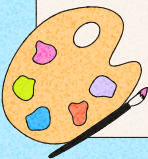
GROW YOUR GIFT

- Don't donate alone. You can give your gift a boost by taking the money that you'd be donating to your favorite charity each month and tuck it away into a high-yield savings account. The little bit that you intended to give monthly can now grow into an even larger annual donation with no additional impact to your budget.
- Another way to grow your gift is to ask friends or family to match (or exceed!) your gift. Using events like your birthday or holidays is a great way to pool money to put towards your favorite causes. Plus, you can share it on your social platform too. Some apps even let you use your birthday as a fundraiser. Regardless of how many followers you have, the ripple effect can have a big impact.



GIFT YOUR TALENT

- If money is just not an option, that's ok! Because your time and talents are priceless to many organizations. Do you have a specialty or niche that a local organization could benefit from? Would you love to mentor a local teen? Or read to a group of wide-eyed toddlers? There are lots of ways to turn your talents into gifts that many charities would receive with open arms.



2022 Happy Money Giving Survey Insight

36% of people said they prefer to volunteer time and here's their top 4 reasons why.

14%

No money to spare in my budget

2%

I don't trust where monetary donations actually go

7%

Makes me feel good

7%

Volunteering has a higher impact

Of the 56% of people who choose to volunteer their time, these are their top 3 social causes.

36%

Human services

12%

Education

9%

Religion

GIFTING ON A BUDGET:

5 TIPS FOR STRETCHING YOUR DOLLAR WHEN HOLIDAY SHOPPING

Holiday shopping can be an exciting experience filled with twinkling lights and deep discounts, but if you're on a budget it can feel like an expensive obligation wrapped up with a red bow. Whether you have a long list of gifts that you can't wait to buy or the dread of the season is weighing you down, here are five tips to help stretch your budget when holiday shopping this year.

START WITH THE PEOPLE, NOT THE PRESENTS

- It's tempting to set out on foot (or your phone) in search of the best present for those special people in your life. But before you know it, you can blow your budget in one afternoon. Instead of letting sales, window shopping, or the perfect gift sway your savvy decision making, start with the people. Write down everyone – yes, everyone. If you plan on buying your dog walker a gift, then add them to the list. Once you have the who, add how much you'd like to spend on each person. Now, add it up. If you have a \$500 gift budget for everyone but the list adds up to over \$900, you'll have to start either cutting folks from the list or making some adjustments to your per-person budget. It's better to prepare this now than regret your purchases later.



START SHOPPING EARLY AND SET ALERTS

- When shopping on a budget, don't set out with the goal of finding everything you need at one store. And don't set unrealistic expectations that Black Friday or Cyber Monday sales are going to be the best bargains. By having your per-person budget in hand, you can start to plan for what you're getting them. With this info you can do your research and get the best deal. You can use comparison shopping tools like [Google Shopping](#) or [camelcamelcamel](#) to make sure you're getting the best deal, and you can even set up alerts for price drops. The earlier you start, the more time you have to make informed decisions (vs. last minute impulse buys).



GET FRIENDS AND FAMILY INVOLVED IN A GIFT EXCHANGE

- If you're not the only one in your group on a tight budget, consider sharing the idea of a gift exchange. You can keep it simple and have everyone draw a name. This way everyone only has to purchase one gift at a set price limit, while ensuring that everyone in the group receives an item. But there are lots of ways to get creative with a gift exchange too. You can have a theme, like an ornament or craft exchange. If you have a group with a shared hobby or passion, you could also all go in together on a shared item like a subscription to a wine of the month club that you could all enjoy together. Make it fun and focus on the act of giving instead of the price tag.



STACK YOUR SAVINGS

- In addition to shopping sales or finding discounted items, you can also get money back on your gifts in multiple ways. From the basics like cash back on credit cards, there are lots of apps that allow you to cash in on shopping through their site versus going directly to the retailer. A few options include [Dosh](#), [Ibotta](#), [Rakuten](#), [Honey](#), and [RetailMeNot](#). Another way to get more bang for your buck is gift card deals. Many retailers will have promotions like, "buy \$50, get \$20 free" – this means you can either regift that extra card as an additional gift or use it as savings. Whether it's a discount code, a paper coupon, or a cashback app – using a combo of savings methods can really add up in your favor.



ADD A PERSONAL TOUCH

- When giving a gift, the recipient will always appreciate that extra dose of thoughtfulness that went into it. If your spending limit for holiday gifts is super tight this year, consider how to pair smaller budget items with a hefty amount of DIY love. Here are a few examples. If your best friend loves hiking, you could purchase a new backpack on sale and then fill it with less expensive items like trail mix, sunscreen, and a journal. If your sister loves baking, you could get her a fancy new apron and box it up with five of your favorite recipes that you'd like to try together. These little (often free) extras can really turn a less expensive gift into a holiday showstopper.



Social Impact Action Plan

A big goal for many of us is to leave the world a little better than we found it. We can achieve this goal by focusing on our social impact. Social change takes time, goal setting, and requires planning. To ensure you're on a path to be as impactful as possible, let's start here!

1 Asking the foundational questions

What are you looking to achieve? Ask yourself these questions periodically to make sure that your actions connected to your end goals.

What issues do I believe could bring about positive social change?

How do those social causes address people's needs?

What major roadblocks are related to this specific cause?

What have I been doing to help this social cause progress forward?

In a perfect world if I could, I would want to do the following to support this cause:

2 Goal setting

Think about how you can invest your energy. Choose one social issue to actively support in a way that is authentic to you. Look back at your giving strategy for support! Write your goal below using the social impact purpose statement template.

I will invest _____ every _____ in _____
(amt of money or amt of time) (period of time) (social cause)

because I believe _____
(your core values / reasons for supporting this cause)

Short Term Outcome
(what is a short term positive outcome you are hoping to help this social cause achieve in the next 0-12 months):

Long Term Outcome
(what is a long term positive outcome you are hoping to help this social cause achieve in the next 1-5 years):

3 Measuring Your impact

Keeping track of your progress will help serve as a reminder and motivator as you continue to support your social cause.

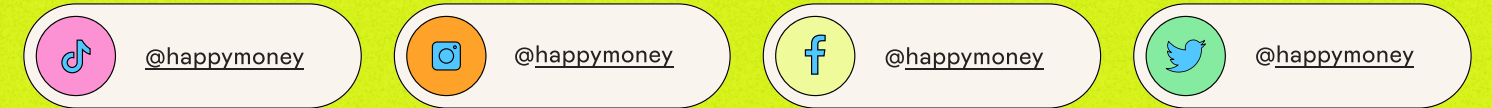
Date	Social Cause/ Organization	Activity (ex: volunteered 2 hours at a Soup Kitchen OR shared fundraiser on social media)	Outcome (ex: Provided 50 meals to those in need OR 10 people learned about the fundraiser from my post)

Why did we create the 2022 Happy Money Giving Guide?

We're always helping our members put their best foot forward on their financial journey with financial education and wellness content. That's why we launched the 2022 Happy Money Giving Survey to find out how our members were paying it forward in their lives. And now we're sharing that with you.

Our goals for creating this giving guide are:

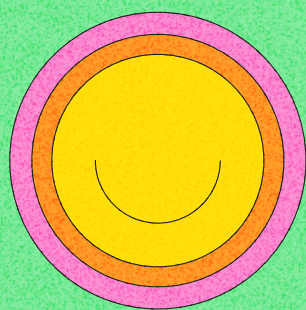
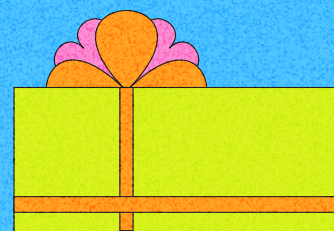
- Helping you be safe as you donate your money
- Hoping you can reap some happiness rewards when giving to causes you care about
- Ensure that your money is making the most impact with causes you care about
- Help you pay it forward by providing info to start - or continue - your giving journey



At Happy Money, we believe money doesn't buy happiness. But with us, money can be a tool for happiness. We also believe that giving is one of the happiest spends and best ways to pay it forward. Based on those beliefs & principles, we work with mission-aligned partners that give back to their communities.

For even more content to help you on your financial journey, be sure to check out HappyMoney.com/articles.

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