



# GUIDESTAR®

## GuideStar Recommends that Nonprofits Take Six Simple Steps to Take Advantage of Giving Season

### *Focusing on Results is Key to Effective End-of-Year Fundraising*

Washington, D.C.—November 14, 2013—It's the [time of year](#) when many people donate hard-earned money to charities, and it's also the time when nonprofits increase their fundraising appeals to take advantage of the spirit of the season. The most effective way to capitalize on year-end giving is to focus on results.

"We [know](#) that donors don't do a lot of research before they give, but we also know that an overwhelming majority – 9 out of 10 donors – care deeply about the impact that their donations are having," said [Lindsay J.K. Nichols](#), GuideStar's communications director. "Focusing on results is a great way for nonprofits to fill this unmet need in the sector and bridge the information gap."

GuideStar, the leading source of nonprofit information, [offers the following tips](#) to help nonprofits get the most out of their end-of-year fundraising:

- 1. Update your [GuideStar Exchange](#) profile.** Keep your profile on GuideStar up to date and complete through the GuideStar Exchange. Not only are growing numbers of donors and advisors looking for this information, but GuideStar also powers other increasingly [influential portals](#) and is the basis for the internal research tools many philanthropic advisors and community foundations use today.
- 2. Chart your impact.** Overwhelmingly, donors have embraced initiatives like Charting Impact that provide them with answers to questions they care about in a consistent format. [Charting Impact](#) is now part of the GuideStar Exchange; participants who answer Charting Impact's five questions receive the Gold GuideStar Exchange logo. Answer the questions as possible, and then let people know about it. Include your Gold participant logo in your year-end mailing and on your home page. Include it in your e-mail signature. Promote it in your end-of-year appeals.
- 3. Focus on outcomes, not overhead.** Although some donors have been conditioned to care only about overhead ratios—the percent of charity expenses that goes to administrative costs rather than program costs—we know that the overhead ratio is a poor measure of a charity's performance. The [Overhead Myth](#) campaign can help you support your nonprofit's investments in sustainability and success:
  - [Print out the letter](#), which is under the [Attribution-NoDerivs Creative Commons license](#) and allows for it to be shared and distributed for any purpose so long as it remains unchanged. Include the letter in your donor solicitations and marketing materials.
  - Pledge your commitment to eradicating the Overhead Myth – you can make your support public at [www.overheadmyth.com](http://www.overheadmyth.com).
  - Spread the word to your own networks using our communications and social media tool kit: [www.overheadmyth.com/press](http://www.overheadmyth.com/press).
  - Share your data through GuideStar's free, one-of-a-kind [GuideStar Exchange](#) program.
- 4. Share accolades!** Seek reviews from the experts and from individuals, and share those accolades, especially if your organization is not yet a household name, including: [GuideStar Exchange](#) (participation levels/transparency), [Philanthropedia](#) (expert reviews), [GreatNonprofits](#) (user reviews), [Charity Navigator](#) (ratings), and [BBB Wise Giving Alliance](#) (seal of approval).
- 5. Connect the right way.** Even for donors taking a more critically informed approach, giving remains for the most part an emotional experience. It is therefore as important as ever for you to know and to understand the motivations of your donors. Our free guidebook, [More Money for More Good](#), offers a comprehensive examination of individual motivations and donor types.
- 6. Follow up.** Donors want to ensure that nonprofits are using their donations appropriately. Following up with them on how you have used the funds will help you continue to engage with donors and provide them useful information.

How do you go about doing all of this? GuideStar created a [Giving Season Resource Center](#) to help both donors and nonprofits make the most of the giving season: <http://www.guidestar.org/rxg/give-to-charity/giving-season.aspx>. Nonprofits can also check out GuideStar's [infographic](#) about what nonprofits can do to increase their fundraising, and join the [#Give4 photo campaign](#) to participate in the giving season conversation: <http://www.guidestar.org/rxg/give-to-charity/why-do-you-give-to-charity.aspx>.

"It's getting harder and harder for nonprofits to break through the giving season clutter, but organizations have a much better chance if they focus on what donors really care about: results," added Nichols. "By taking a moment to share how it's meeting its mission, a nonprofit can be confident that it is providing the best information to donors and funders."

###

**Media Contact:**

Lindsay J.K. Nichols

202-637-7614

[lnichols@guidestar.org](mailto:lnichols@guidestar.org)

**About GuideStar**

GuideStar, [www.guidestar.org](http://www.guidestar.org), connects people and organizations with information on the programs, finances, and impact of more than 1.8 million IRS-recognized nonprofits. GuideStar serves a wide audience inside and outside the nonprofit sector, including individual donors, nonprofit leaders, grantmakers, government officials, academic researchers, and the media.