

## Donor Advised Fund Q&A

### OVERVIEW & BENEFITS

#### Q1. What is a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)?

**A1.** A donor-advised fund (DAF) provides donors with a centralized charitable account. It allows inclined individuals, families and businesses to make an irrevocable gift to a public charity that sponsors a DAF and take an immediate tax deduction. Most DAFs accept cash equivalents, securities, and other assets.

#### Q2. How does a Donor Advised Fund work?

**A2.** Donors make an irrevocable, tax-deductible contribution of cash, long-term appreciated securities or other assets to a charity that sponsors a DAF program, which then establishes an account in the donor's name. DAF donors may choose from a variety of investment options and proceeds are put into an account from which donors may make grant recommendations.

#### Q3. Why do donors choose to have a Donor-Advised Fund?

**A3.** Donor Advised Funds offer donors a way to plan, manage and potentially grow their charitable giving. See below for others:

- *Simplicity* – The DAF sponsor handles all record-keeping, disbursements, and tax receipts.
- *Flexibility*– Timing of your tax deduction can be separate from your charitable decision making.
- *Tax-efficiency*– Contributions are immediately tax-deductible and any investment growth in the DAF is tax-free. It is also easy to donate long term appreciated securities, eliminating capital gains taxes and allowing you to support multiple charities from one block of stock.
- *Family legacy*– A DAF is a powerful way to build or continue a tradition of family philanthropy.
- *No start-up costs*– There is no cost to establish a donor-advised fund. However, there are often minimum initial charitable contributions to establish the DAF (typically \$5,000 or more).
- *No transaction fees*– Once approved, 100% of your recommended grant goes to your qualified public charity of choice.<sup>1</sup>
- *Privacy if desired*– Donors may choose to remain anonymous to the grant recipient.

#### Q4. How are sponsoring DAF organizations structured?

**A4.** The sponsoring organizations of donor-advised funds are organized as 501(c)(3) public charities.

#### Q5. How are Donor-Advised Funds able to provide grants to nonprofits without charging a transaction fee?

**A5.** Donor-advised funds generally charge donors a small administrative fee that goes toward operating expenses.

### HOW DAFS WORK

#### Q6: How does a nonprofit get into a sponsoring organization's database to be considered by a donor?

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<sup>1</sup>Sponsoring organizations generally assess an administrative fee on the assets in a DAF. These fees vary by organization



**A6:** Sponsoring organizations of DAFs get the list of qualified public charities directly from the IRS database. Donations from a donor-advised fund can be made to charitable organizations that are listed as tax-exempt under Internal Revenue Code (IRC) Section 501(c)(3) and public charities under IRS Section 509(a). Grants can also be made to private operating foundations or state or local government organizations qualified to receive tax-deductible charitable contributions, such as state colleges or universities as defined in Internal Revenue Code Section 170(c)(1).

**Q7. How are grant recommendations reviewed and paid?**

**A7.** A charity that sponsors a DAF program reviews grant recommendations to ensure that the recommendation is in accordance to donor-advised fund guidelines. Once approved, the funds are paid by check in first class mail or transferred electronically depending on the DAF.

**Q8. Should nonprofits send tax receipts when receiving a DAF grant?**

**A8.** There is no need for you to send tax receipts as the DAF donor already received a tax receipt from the charity that sponsors the DAF.

**Q9. Do sponsors of donor-advised funds accept nonprofit requests for proposals?**

**A9.** No. DAF donors are self-directed in their charitable giving and therefore do not look to the sponsors of the DAF programs for recommendations on where to give, but to help them donate more effectively and efficiently.

**Q10. Do most of the donors share their contact information? Where can I find their information?**

**A10.** Although donors may request for Fidelity Charitable to not share their contact information with a grantee, the vast majority choose to disclose their names and addresses.

**Q11. How long does the approval process take prior to the money being sent?**

**Q11.** The approval process varies for each of the sponsoring organizations. However, grant recommendations are decided upon as soon as possible.

**Q12. Is there a minimum donation a donor must make from a DAF?**

**A12.** The minimum grant recommendation amount varies by plan sponsor.

## **FUNDRAISING SUPPORT**

**Q13. How can I target my fundraising efforts to connect with DAF donors?**

**A13:** The good news is that fundraising from our donors likely does not require a significant departure from your current fundraising efforts. So, the fundraising tips we offer focus on welcoming gifts from DAF donors through your current fundraising efforts.

Three activities that can positively influence your fundraising from DAF donors are:

1. *Talk to your donors about how they give* - Today's donors have a variety of giving vehicles to choose from – private foundations, donor-advised funds, trusts, and more – and they are sometimes using multiple vehicles to support their philanthropy. When meeting with donors, ask them how they give, why they chose that method, and how your organization can make it easier for them to support you.

2. *Recognize your DAF donors* – It’s likely that some of your existing donors and your prospects are using DAFs to support their philanthropy. One way to find out if your organization receives grants from DAFs is to review incoming checks or electronic transfers. When a donor recommends a grant from their DAF, the funds come from the charity that sponsors the DAF program. Included with the funds are the account and address information if the donor discloses. As a guideline, Fidelity Charitable, the largest DAF in the country, reports that approximately 91% of their donors disclose their full contact information to be acknowledged.

One suggestion is to add “donor-advised fund” as a giving option on your table cards at events or in your other fundraising materials. Then, as a follow up, acknowledge the donor’s gift.

3. *Simplify giving for your DAF donors* – DAF Direct is a free and easy-to-use online application that can be added to nonprofit websites alongside credit cards or other giving options. The application enables DAF donors to initiate a grant recommendation from your website, making it easier for them to give from their DAF. Visit the [DAF Direct website](#) for more information.

**Q14. What DAF Direct option, the widget or the link, is best for me?**

**A14** Both DAF Direct options will allow DAF donors to initiate grant recommendations from their donor-advised funds directly from your website. However, depending on how you plan to incorporate DAF Direct into your fundraising activities, either the Widget or the Link may be more appropriate.

	DAF Direct Widget	DAF Direct Link
Highlighted on your website	✓	
Listed as part of your payment flow		✓
Included in your email and other digital fundraising campaigns		✓

**Q15. What resources can I access and review to learn more about DAF donors and their giving trends?**

**A15:** [National Philanthropic Trust](#)®, [Vanguard Charitable](#)® and [Fidelity Charitable](#)® all publish annual reports that can be found on their website.