

Max My Gift Nonprofit Guide



Introduction

Matching and challenge gifts have long proved to be powerful tools for public fundraising campaigns. Via Gives Days across the country, nonprofit organizations have successfully leveraged the generosity of their partners to maximize donations.

In a recent study out of the University of Chicago, economists found that a challenge gift attracted 23% more donors and increased total dollar contributions by 18%. Other studies show that matching contributions have an immediate positive effect of gifts.

In recognition of the important role that matching and challenge funds play – Georgia Gives Day is launching the *Max My Gift* Challenge. The *Max My Gift* Challenge will support participating nonprofit organizations by:

- Promoting your match, or challenge gift, on the GAGives.org homepage
- Promoting all match and challenge opportunities, via Georgia Gives Day social media outlets and communications

The Challenge

By building incentives into your Georgia Gives Day campaign, potential donors are encouraged to give or even increase their giving. Two common giving patterns are challenge gifts and matching gifts.

- **A challenge gift** represent a non-contingent gift (not dependent on the gifts of other donors) with an accompanying "challenge" for other donors also to support the organization
- **Matching gifts** represent gifts that are contingent (dependent on the gifts of other donors) either in part or in whole

In both cases (challenge vs. match) gifts are typically:

- Raised for one or more specific projects (restricted giving) or for unrestricted purposes, and/or
- Raised during a specific period of time (such as during a Georgia Gives Day campaign)

To qualify for promotion via the *Max My Gift* Challenge:

- Gifts may be either a challenge or match (in any ration 1:1, 1:2, etc.) Challenge/matches must be a minimum of \$1,000
- Funds can be raised for specific projects, or unrestricted purposes

4 Steps to Establishing a Match, or Challenge Gift, for Georgia Gives Day

Establishing a match or challenge gift, in support of your Georgia Gives Day campaign involves finding the right individuals to take the lead, coming to agreement about procedure, and getting the word out:

I. **Create a Focused List of Prospective Match/Challenge Donors**

The primary prospects on your list should include current donors who truly understand your mission and work. Focus on a select group of top prospects, and solicit lead donors in person. Start with your board, major donors, and key corporate/foundation partners.

II. **Create an Agreement or Pledge Form**

To properly honor your donor's wishes, reduce the chances of misunderstanding, and clearly outline expectations, create a Memorandum of Understanding, or Match/Challenge agreement. The agreement should include:

- How much will the donor give in total? (For example, "\$_____ if no funds are received via the campaign and up to \$_____ if the goal is fully met.")
- What is the time frame within which the remaining funds are to be raised? (Only on Georgia Gives Day, or including the month leading up.)
- Will pledges count, or must the match/challenge be met with cash in hand?
- Can the match/challenge apply to granting foundations and corporations or just individuals donating via GAGives.org?
- Will the donor allow the challenge to be publicized and promoted, and agree to be named as the challenger? Or would they prefer to remain anonymous?

- If it is a matching gift, what is the match ratio? Will it be 1:1? 2:1? 1:2? Is there a financial cap? (For example, 1:1 up to \$5,000)
- What happens if you don't meet the entire challenge? Set clear expectations with your donor in advance.

III. **Complete a *challenge submission* form by November 3rd, 2016**

Complete a short Max My Gift submission form and we will help you promote your challenge/match via GAGives.org.

IV. ***Promote the challenge and its progress in all of your Georgia Gives Day communications***

Generate excitement by promoting the challenge/match amongst your audience. When pitching your Georgia Gives Day campaign to the media, be sure to mention the match/challenge - focus on what the funds will help your organization to accomplish.

Best Practices for Promoting your Challenge

When creating your Georgia Gives Day communication strategy, be sure to include language about the challenge or matching gift your organization will receive. Key messaging should:

Focus on the Impact

Share your campaign goal and what those dollars will help you to achieve. Be specific about the impact and why participating is a good idea.

Set a Deadline

A sense of urgency triggers timely responses. For example, "Just 10 days left to meet this marvelous Georgia Gives Day Challenge. Make your \$50 contribution by November 12, 2015 so your contribution can be doubled."

Be Specific about Both Amounts

Provide both the amount of the challenge gift and also what a donor's gift will mean. For example, "Your \$50 donation will be matched with an additional \$50, making a total of \$100 available to provide 50 meals for kids in need" or "Your \$10 gift will provide 5 meals, but thanks to our challenge gift, we can also provide that family XYZ."

Be clear and concise

Spell out the increased impact resulting from the challenge. The simpler and clearer your message, the more likely they are to respond. If your donors have to spend a lot of time figuring out what you mean, you run the risk of losing them.

Access more Georgia Gives Day resources at www.gcn.org/gagives/resources
Register your nonprofit at www.gagives.org