

FAMILY PHILANTHROPY START-UP CHECKLIST

Before selecting a donor-advised fund, foundation, or trust, take time to establish a framework for your family's philanthropic vision.



Identify Your Core Values

What principles have guided your family's success? What causes reflect those values?



Define Your Desired Impact

What change would you like to see? Focus on the organizations and communities you support now, or expand outward. Are there specific problems you want to solve?



Bring in the Next Generation

Get children and grandchildren involved early. Let them surface causes that matter to them. This becomes a conversation, not a lecture.



Establish Giving Priorities

Decide whether your focus will be local, national, global or mixed. Then pick your approach: do you prefer to fund immediate needs, long-term solutions, or both.



Map Your Resources

How does giving fit into your overall wealth, tax, and estate planning strategies. Consider gifts of cash, appreciated securities, business interests, or other assets.



Choose the Right Giving Vehicle

Explore whether a donor-advised fund, family foundation, charitable trust, or direct giving strategy best aligns with your goals.



Write a Family Mission Statement

Develop a brief statement that captures why your family gives and what matters most. This keeps everyone aligned.



Develop a Process for Decision-Making

How will grants get approved? Who votes? What's expected from family members. Spell it out now to avoid friction later.



Define Success

How will you know this is working? Focus on real outcomes, not just dollars moved. Decide how you will measure that.



Annual Review

Each year, revisit priorities and goals. Celebrate wins, look at what didn't work, adjust as family interests shift.



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