



## Why nonprofits might want to revisit the Donor Bill of Rights

The Donor Bill of Rights was designed about 25 years ago as a blueprint of best practices for not-for-profits. Some critics have since asserted that the rights are out of date or not comprehensive enough. However, revisiting the list's basic principles can help you build solid relationships with donors — and even boost fundraising.

### 10 rights

Here are the rights and what they might mean for your nonprofit:

- 1. To be informed of the organization's mission, how it intends to use donated resources and its capacity to use donations effectively for their intended purposes.** This information is the bedrock of your outreach efforts and should be clear to your board, staff and anyone reading your organization's materials.
- 2. To be informed of who's serving on the organization's governing board, and to expect the board to exercise prudent judgment in its stewardship responsibilities.** You must be transparent about who serves on your board, their responsibilities and the decisions they're making.
- 3. To have access to the organization's most recent financial statements.** Make your nonprofit's financial data easily accessible to constituents, potential donors and charitable watchdog groups.
- 4. To be assured gifts will be used for the purposes for which they were given.** Donors expect that you'll minimize administrative expenses so their funds are available for programming and that you'll honor any restrictions they've placed on gifts.

**5. To receive appropriate acknowledgment and recognition.** In addition to thanking donors, provide them with the substantiation required for a federal tax deduction and information about the charitable deduction rules and limits.

**6. To be assured that donation information is handled with respect and confidentiality to the extent provided by law.** Post your organization's privacy policy on your website and be clear about what information you're gathering about donors and how that information will be used.

**7. To expect that relationships between individuals representing organizations and donors will be professional.** Staff and board members should be trained in proper donor interaction — both off- and online.

**8. To be informed whether fundraisers are volunteers, employees of the organization or hired solicitors.** Again, transparency about your operations is critical.

**9. To have the opportunity for donors' names to be deleted from mailing lists that an organization may intend to share.** Donors, not your nonprofit, get to decide whether their information can be shared. Make it easy for donors to opt out of email and other lists.

**10. To feel free to ask questions and receive prompt, truthful and forthright answers.** Open dialogue between your nonprofit and your donors fosters respect and deepens relationships.

Contact us for help implementing these 10 tenets or developing a customized donor bill of rights.

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