

Step 2: Ask the Right Questions



Use [GivingMatters.com](https://givingmatters.com) to explore nonprofits, and go deeper when you're ready.

Once you've defined your giving mission, the next step is to explore how nonprofits in Middle Tennessee are making a difference. [GivingMatters.com](https://givingmatters.com) makes it easy to browse programs, funding needs, and impact stories, all without needing to reach out directly. That's the beauty of transparent, local data. *But if you're thinking about giving more significantly, volunteering, or forming a deeper connection, a conversation with a nonprofit leader can be incredibly insightful and rewarding for both sides.*

Where to begin

Click on the [Impact Map](#) to start exploring. You can use the search features to find nonprofits based on what matters to you.

Keyword Search – Enter terms like “housing,” “youth,” or “mental health”

Topics – Choose a focus area
(Ex: Arts & Humanities, Children/Youth, or Health & Safety)

Indicator – Once you've selected a topic, explore related community needs using data from the American Census Survey

Location – Look up a city or county

Geography Type – Adjust the map view by boundary type
(Ex: city, county, MSA, census tract, or zip code)

When something sparks your interest, click on an organization to visit their profile and begin your self-guided tour.

Where to Look on GivingMatters.com



As you review a nonprofit's profile, keep these core questions in mind:

What is the heart of their work?	About tab →	Mission Statement and Current Programs tiles on right side of profile.
What's their most successful program and why?	Organization main page →	Current Programs tiles on the right side of profile.
Where does most of their funding come from?	Financials →	Includes revenue breakdown and funding sources.
How do they measure and share their outcomes?	About tab →	Impact Statement fields (if completed) or on the Current Programs tiles on the right side
What impact are they making?	About tab →	Impact Statement
What are their current needs or goals?	About tab →	Needs Statement
How are they growing or evolving?	About tab →	Impact; Strategies Statement (Impact Capabilities, Progress Indicators, Goals, & Progress So Far)
How can supporters stay involved?	Organization main page →	or linked website/social media pages

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Tip: Profiles vary! Not every section will be filled out, and that's okay. Use what's available to guide your giving, and remember: some smaller or grassroots organizations may not have the same capacity to build out every section, but they're often doing powerful, community-rooted work. If something's missing and you're curious, it's always okay to reach out and learn more.

Go Beyond the Profile

If you're considering a larger gift, ongoing partnership, or deeper involvement (like volunteering or board service), you might choose to reach out directly. Below are conversation-ready questions to help guide a 15-20 minute phone call or email exchange.

Questions to Ask:

(in conversations or email)

Start with context:

"Hi, I've been exploring local nonprofits on [GivingMatters.com](https://givingmatters.com), and your organization stood out to me. I'd love to learn more about your work and how I might be able to support it. Could I speak to someone on your team for a few minutes?"

Learn about goals and successes:

1. What's your most successful program and why?
2. What are you most proud of as an organization right now?
3. Can you share an example of your work making a real difference?
4. What are some areas where you're growing or improving?
5. What are your top goals for the year ahead, and how did you decide on them?
6. What do you wish more people understood about your work?

Understanding resourcing and needs:

1. What are your most urgent needs this year?
2. What would help you grow your impact in the next year or two?
3. How can I get involved beyond a financial gift?

Go deeper

(for major donors or long-term partners)

1. What barriers make your work harder?
2. What would you do with a large surprise donation?
3. What's your staff especially good at, and what gaps are you working to fill?
4. How do you collaborate with others in your field?

Wrap Up with Gratitude

Whether you read a profile or have a conversation, every connection matters. If you do reach out, thank them for their time and for the impact they're making in our community.

Ready to Take Action?

Head to Step 3:

Create Your Giving Plan to map out how you'll give, connect, and grow your impact this year.

