

Campaign Chronicle



The weekly newsletter of the Cincinnati Metro Area CFC

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Online pledges early, some campaigns report

By **Stephen Losey**
Federal Times

Some Combined Federal Campaigns say online donations are becoming more popular this year and are helping them collect and tally donations faster, easier and more accurately.

"We're ahead because of electronic pledging," said Linda Siegle, chairwoman of the committee that is coordinating the Chesapeake Bay Area campaign in Maryland. "People pledge earlier because it's a little bit easier for them."

The Chesapeake Bay Area campaign raised about \$2.3 million by Nov. 18—about half a million dollars ahead of where it was at the same point a year ago. Siegle doesn't expect that difference to stay so big, though she still expects to raise \$6.4 million and beat last year's tally by about \$200,000.

Online pledging systems allow donors to use their computer to search for charities instead of leafing through a paper catalog. The systems also automatically enter the five-digit code for selected charities, which helps avoid mistakes that arise when campaign officials have to manually key in codes and read sometimes-sloppy handwriting.

Siegle said as many as 30 agencies in the Chesapeake area are using some form of electronic pledging, and employees have so far donated nearly \$300,000 online. Last year — the first year online pledging was offered in the Chesapeake campaign — employees at 10 agencies donated a total of roughly \$220,000 using electronic pledging, she said.

"This year it's all about electronic pledging," Siegle said.

Ann Canela, a spokeswoman for Global Impact, which runs the National Capital Area and Overseas CFCs, said those cam-

paigns have also noticed more people going online to donate, though she did not have statistics on the use of electronic pledging.

Canela said soldiers and federal stationed overseas — especially those in war zones who don't have easy access to CFC charity lists and donor forms — especially find electronic pledging useful.

"It's a very simple process," Canela said. "Service people don't carry a lot of paper with them, so it's very beneficial."

Though most of the larger say they're well on their way to meeting their goals, the Hawaii CFC is reporting a somewhat slow start.

CFC Director Nita Yates said that Office of Personnel Management delays in delivering charity lists pushed back the production of printed materials, which caused the Hawaii campaign to start about 10 days later than expected. Yates did not have figures on how much had been raised so far.

"I don't think we're doing badly or anything like that," Yates said. "It's just going slower than I had thought"

Yates said the economy may be slightly depressing donations in her area, but she could not say how much the recession is affecting CFC. "While federal employees still have their jobs, they still read the same papers the rest of us do," Yates said. "I'm sure that's impacted their thinking."

Tony Leverett, director of the San Antonio CFC, said his campaign has so far raised about as much as it did at this point last year. He said he hasn't seen the economy hurt donations much so far.

"They haven't let that stop them," Leverett said. "I'm very pleased at what I see our people doing. We started off with talk of hard economic times, but individuals and organizations have stepped up."

Going for the Goal



The Cincinnati Metro Area CFC would like to thank the following for their sponsorship of the 2009 Campaign:

**Government Employee
Insurance Company
(GEICO)**

**Greater Cincinnati
Federal Executive Board**

How CFC Charities Stack Up

The following is an article published by Charity Navigator, a nonprofit organization with the mission to advance a more efficient and responsive philanthropic marketplace by evaluating the financial health of over 5,400 of America's largest charities. This article can be found on its website, www.charitynavigator.org.

The government's charity drive, known as the Combined Federal Campaign (CFC), encourages federal civilian employees, members of the military, and U.S. Postal Service to pledge their financial support to charity. The CFC is the largest annual workplace giving campaign. Launched in 1961, the CFC has channeled billions of dollars in contributions to tens of thousands of charities.

[The 2008 drive raised over \$275 million, an increase over the previous year.] The three prior years [also] saw positive growth in the level of donations -- from \$268 million in 2005, to \$271 million in 2006 and \$273 million in 2007. But we also know that total giving in America was down almost 6% in 2008 (adjusted for inflation). As the recession lingers, we surmise that CFC funds may have also constricted. That makes it all the more critical that those who can afford to contribute, do their homework before making their pledges.

Charity Navigator's database of 5,500 charities includes about 850 of the national and international charities in the government's campaign. So, how do they stack up? Our investigation shows that many are financially healthy.

- 359 of these charities have a 4-star, 'exceptional' rating.
- 243 have received at least two consecutive 4-star ratings.
- 12 have earned 8 consecutive 4-star ratings and 14 have earned 7 consecutive 4-star ratings.

On the flip side, as we've noted previously, not all of our findings are so rosy. There remain several charities in poor financial health that are participating in the drive.

- Over 200 charities fail to earn higher than a 2-star rating.

- Specifically, 149 charities have a 2-star 'needs improvement' rating, 58 have a 1-star, 'poor' rating and 5 have a 0-star, 'exceptionally poor' rating.
- 5 charities actually spend less than half of their budgets on their programs and services.
- Over 40% either have an opt-out donor privacy policy, which requires that the donor take action to avoid having personal information shared with other entities, or no policy at all.

If you are a federal employee and you haven't yet made your pledge (the campaign runs from September to mid December), then we encourage you to use our free ratings to help guide your charitable choices. In addition, we also recommend that you go to the charity's web site and look for evidence that their service provides meaningful and long lasting results for the people and communities that they serve (we intend to include this kind of information our web site soon). Although we do not offer a rating for every charity in the campaign, our advanced search tool will enable you to browse our analysis for about 850 of the national and international CFC charities. You can also quickly search for a specific charity by entering its CFC number in the search box.

Need CFC information?

Locate a Coordinator

Get CFC materials

Find charity info

Provide comment

Contact the CFC Office to get all your CFC information. You can write, email, call, or FAX:

CFC

John Weld Peck Federal Building

550 Main Street, Ste. 1-116

Cincinnati, OH 45202

Phone: (513) 684-2515

FAX: (513) 684-2103

cincycfc@gmail.com

CFC charities wanted

Each year, Federal employees ask why their favorite charity isn't included on the CFC list. While there may be several reasons, the most common is that the charity doesn't know to apply. You can help us to get your charity on the list: simply send us its contact information.

Charities included in the CFC are organizations with status as tax-exempt charities as determined by the Internal Revenue Service under Section 501(c)(3) of Title 26 of the United States Code that provide health and human services, and that are determined to be eligible for participation in the CFC. Organizations may apply and be listed in the CFC brochure as either a local, national, or an international unaffiliated organization, or as a member of a local, national, or international federation. Charities that apply to receive funds through the CFC are required to submit to extensive review of their financial and governance practices prior to acceptance. This eligibility review has helped set standards for participation in giving initiatives that transcend the community.

The Combined Federal Campaign annually reviews charities wishing to participate, applying strict criteria designed to ensure that donated money truly reaches those in need. The OCFCO reviews applications for the national and international lists; the individual campaigns review applications for the local listings. To be listed as an eligible CFC charity, an organization must, among other requirements:

- Be tax exempt under IRS Code 501(c)3.
- Account for its funds in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and be audited by an independent certified public accountant in accordance with Generally Accepted Auditing Standards (GAAS).
- Produce and make available to the public an annual report that describes its activities and identifies its directors/governing body and chief administrative personnel.
- Provide information on how much of its revenue is spent on administration and fundraising. (Organizations were capped at 25 percent until the 2006 campaign, but are now allowed to spend more)
- Be governed by a board or other similar body that is active and responsible and whose members have no material conflict of interest. A majority of this governing body must also serve without compensation.
- Prohibit the sale or lease of CFC donor names.