



Charity Fairs and Speaking Engagements Frequently Asked Questions

What are charity fairs and speaking engagements?

Charity fairs are scheduled events of various sizes (the biggest tend to see several hundred attendees, though we've occasionally seen events with over 1,000) hosted by employers around the country who participate in workplace giving campaigns. For the most part, the employer hosting the event will be a federal or state/local government agency, but it may also be a for-profit organization. Charity fairs are designed to give nonprofits the opportunity to meet workplace giving donors face to face in a setting that encourages giving through their respective workplace giving program. Most fairs allow nonprofits the opportunity to man a display table and distribute giveaway items in order to educate employees on their mission.

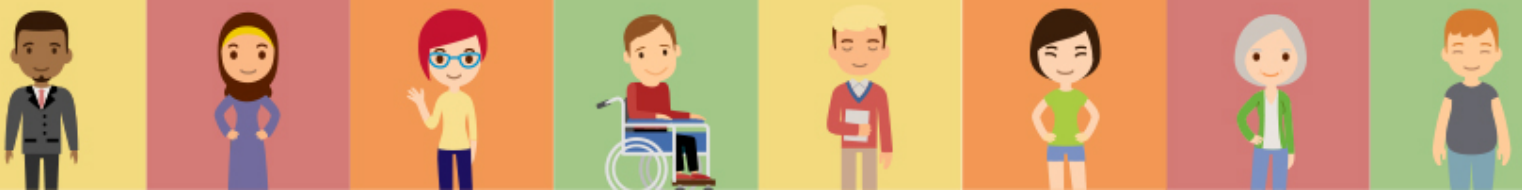
Speaking engagements are scheduled opportunities for charities to speak in front of an audience comprised of potential and/or current donors, to educate prospective donors on their mission, vision and programs and to encourage participation in their workplace giving program. Most of the time, you'll be there with a few other charities and each one will have a few minutes to speak. The requested content of a nonprofit's presentation may change depending on the employer hosting the event.

What role does America's Charities play in fulfilling event requests?

Representatives from various federal, state/local government and private sector workplaces reach out to us with event notifications and invitations on an annual basis. Typically, we receive these invitations between June and December, with September and October being the more in-demand months, as this is the time that most employers begin their annual giving campaign with a kick-off event for employees. We receive hundreds of invitations during this time frame, and our staff takes the time to reviews each one, clarifying any items that are missing from the invitation such as the exact address, the estimated number of attendees, parking information and security protocols. Our team then distributes the invitation to our member nonprofits via summarized email that makes it easy for our members to determine if the event suits their schedule and staffing availability. Your selections in the events survey will help us determine exactly what events to send to your attention, based on the geographical locations throughout the United States where you are able/willing to send representatives.

In addition, there are instances in which we attend events on behalf of our members, providing information to employees about your organization and distributing giveaway items. Please send any giveaway items you wish for us to distribute to the following address:

America's Charities
Attn: Campaign Events
14150 Newbrook Drive, Suite 110
Chantilly, VA 20151



What impact will attending events have on our donations?

While we cannot prove that charities who attend more events see an increase in their donations as a result, we have witnessed the correlative value of attending events and increasing brand recognition. Our members who make an effort to attend events each fall and provide us with giveaway items for distribution are casting a wider net for gaining the attention of prospective donors. While an employee who meets a nonprofit representative at a charity fair may not remember all of the details about your organization, they will certainly remember the connection they made with you and how you made them feel. Further, we have been told by industry experts that brand recognition is increased when an individual receives a promotional item that is both useful and impactful in their daily life.

Do we need to have actual staff attending the events?

No, you are more than welcome to send any individual you feel is qualified to represent your organization to prospective donors; volunteers, board members, constituents, and chapter/affiliate staff are all perfectly acceptable. However, please note that if you plan to send representatives from your chapters/affiliates, they will need to represent your organization at the event and not their individual chapter, since your organization is the one that has been vetted and accepted into the campaign.

Is there a cost associated with attending events?

Our events fulfillment program is a free member benefit – there is no additional cost to participate beyond the membership fees that you already pay to America's Charities. The only cost to your organization will be staff time and travel expenses associated with attending events, if applicable. Very rarely, the employer hosting the event will charge an entrance fee, however if that is the case, we will make it very clear that there's an additional cost to attend in the email invitation we distribute.

How quickly do events 'sell out'?

Depending on the size and location of the event, some can close their registration incredibly quickly, as nearly all event invitations are handled on a first-come, first-served basis. New York City and Washington, DC events in particular are incredibly popular and have been known to fill within a few hours of the notice going out. In order to ensure you are able to respond to invitations as quickly as possible, it is our recommendation that our member charities have multiple "events representatives" designated, so that if one representative is out of office, another can respond on their behalf. In addition, if you are fairly confident that your organization will be able to attend an event, but aren't 100% sure who will attend on your behalf, it is our recommendation that you RSVP regardless stating that you will attend. We can always follow up with details later, but we need to know as quickly as possible whether you plan to attend to ensure your organization gets a spot. Finally, we ask that if your organization is fairly confident you are not able to attend a particular event, please do not RSVP stating that you are able to attend, as this may cause another eligible charity to not get a spot.

How much notice are we generally given?

It depends entirely on the campaign manager and how far in advance they plan events. Some event notifications are sent weeks in advance, some are sent within 24 hours of when the event is held. That being said, we typically see at least 5-7 business days' lead time.



What happens if I want to attend an event that's full?

Most events – especially the bigger ones – have a wait list in case nonprofits need to change their RSVP. We will make clear whether your nonprofit is on a wait list in our correspondence surrounding the event.

Are there any restrictions? Things we shouldn't do?

For charity fairs: There will be some campaigns with restrictions on what you can or cannot do at events, such as not allowing giveaways or materials that specifically ask for donations. Other times, if it's a federal (CFC) event, you might need to go through some security prior or participate in a training. When there are restrictions in place, we will make sure to alert you to them in the event invitation.

For speaking engagements: It is always a good idea to remember that, while you're there as a representative of your organization, you are also representing America's Charities and the particular campaign. While we encourage you to talk about your organization, the most important message will be about choice in the campaign and the positive impact of the campaign has on all nonprofits that participate.

We're interested in Private Sector fairs – are they as common as CFC and State/Local campaigns?

Private Sector fairs are, unfortunately, not as plentiful as events put on by other types of campaigns. Because private sector campaigns are run by individual organizations, they are entirely unique in how they handle their invitations. Occasionally, they simply pick specific charities whose mission is in line with the overall goals of their corporate social responsibility initiative to come in and speak to employees rather than release an open invitation. In other cases, we might just receive a request from a company to provide promotional items/giveaways to distribute to their employees in lieu of a formal charity fair or speaking opportunity. Regardless, we will be sure to let you know of any and all private sector opportunities we come across.

