PUBLIC SQUARE RESOURCE

Equal Access to Company Charitable Giving

A model policy for including religious charities in corporate grants, donations, nonprofit discounts, and other company-funded programs.

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WHY IT MATTERS

Corporate giving and nonprofit-discount programs can expand the reach of charitable organizations. But when eligibility rules exclude religious nonprofits, limit funds to secular purposes, penalize lawful faith-based practices, or screen out religious advocacy, companies deny equal access to organizations that serve communities and speak from a religious perspective.

What the Standard Evaluates

The Index asks whether company-funded charitable programs treat religious nonprofits on the same terms as comparable secular organizations. The 2026 standard combines four forms of potential exclusion:

- **Religious status** — excluding a church, ministry, religious school, or other faith-based nonprofit because it is religious.
- **Religious use** — prohibiting company funds, grants, discounts, or donated products from supporting worship, ministry, evangelism, religious education, or other sectarian activity.
- **Religious practice** — requiring a nonprofit to abandon lawful faith-based employment, leadership, governance, membership, or service practices.
- **Religious advocacy** — excluding a nonprofit because it expresses a faith-based view on marriage, gender, abortion, or another matter of public concern.

SCOPE OF THE BENCHMARK

The standard applies to corporate grants, foundation giving, company-funded customer-directed programs, product or service donations and discounts, and related programs administered through third parties. It does not evaluate policies that apply solely to employee matching gifts, which are addressed separately.

What Equal Access Looks Like

A STRONG POLICY…	A RESTRICTIVE POLICY…
Includes religious nonprofits on the same terms as comparable secular charities.	Excludes “religious,” “sectarian,” or “faith-based” organizations.
Allows funds, grants, products, and discounts to support religious programs and activities.	Permits only secular or nonsectarian programs operated by religious nonprofits.
Respects lawful faith-based employment, governance, service, and advocacy.	Imposes broad nondiscrimination requirements that disregard lawful religious autonomy.

Applies the same standard to third-party administrators and validation partners.	Uses vague “controversial,” “hate,” or adverse-media screening to exclude faith-based advocacy.

Why Third-Party Platforms Matter

Companies often rely on TechSoup, Benevity, YourCause, Goodstack, PayPal Giving Fund, or another administrator to validate nonprofits, distribute grants, or provide product discounts. Delegation does not make the resulting program neutral. If the platform applies restrictive eligibility rules on the company’s behalf, religious nonprofits may still be excluded from a company-funded benefit.

Companies should review platform rules, customer-selected settings, validation criteria, watchlists, and appeal procedures. A company should also confirm whether it can override a platform decision or approve a religious organization that otherwise meets neutral legal and program requirements.

What the Evidence Shows

The examples below illustrate full inclusion and several common forms of exclusion. They are examples of policy language, not a complete list of companies evaluated by the Index.

Charitable Contribution programs that include faith-based nonprofits:

PROGRESSIVE – Standard fully met

Policy features: religious status and express inclusion

“Any qualified civic, cultural, educational, environmental, health care, human services, or religious 501(c)(3) public, tax-exempt charitable organization may be eligible.”

Why it matters: The policy ***expressly includes religious organizations*** rather than leaving their eligibility uncertain.

Source: *Community Involvement, “Progressive people lead the way”*
View evidence

VERIZON – Standard fully met

Policy features: church eligibility and tax-status neutrality

“Eligible organizations ... [include] Churches or an association of churches.”

Why it matters: The policy ***recognizes churches as eligible public charities*** and does not condition support on a secular use.

Source: *Grant Requirements, Guidelines, & Exemptions*
View evidence

Charitable Contribution programing excluding faith-based nonprofits:

AMERIPRISE FINANCIAL

Policy features: religious status and program exclusion

"Non-eligible programs and organizations ... [include] Religious organizations or programs as defined by the nonprofit's IRS coding and/or public language on websites."

Why it matters: The rule excludes organizations based on their religious identity, not on an objective program risk.

Source: *Grant Making Guidelines*
View evidence

META

Policy features: religious use, hiring practices, and advocacy

"Ineligible organizations include ... programs or projects operated exclusively for religious purposes or proselytizing; organizations that make hiring choices or provide goods or services based on ... faith; and organizations that promote or support specific political ideologies, doctrines, candidates or issues."

Why it matters: The policy combines restrictions on religious activity, faith-based employment or service decisions, and issue advocacy.

Source: *Data Center Community Action Grants*
View evidence

Third-party platform exclusion:

TECHSOUP

Policy features: employment practices, speech screening, and discretionary exclusion

"Organizations must be willing and able to attest that they do not discriminate ... External evidence, such as negative publicity or social media, that reveals such discrimination, hate speech, or disrespectful or bullying behavior, as determined by TechSoup in its sole discretion, may be taken into consideration."

Why it matters: A third-party eligibility rule can exclude religious nonprofits for lawful faith-based practices or contested public speech, even when the company's own webpage does not state the restriction.

Source: *TechSoup Anti-Discrimination Policy*
View evidence

Model Company Giving Policy

POLICY OBJECTIVE

Ensure that corporate grants, donations, nonprofit discounts, product or service contributions, and other company-funded charitable programs provide equal access to religious organizations.

1. Equal eligibility [Company Name] permits eligible religious charities to participate in corporate giving, grantmaking, nonprofit discount, product donation, volunteer-support, and other company-funded programs on the same terms as comparable secular organizations.

2. Religious status and use [Company Name] will not exclude, reduce support for, or limit a charity because it is religious or because funds, products, services, or other benefits support worship, ministry, evangelism, religious education, or another religious purpose.

3. Religious practices [Company Name] will not exclude a religious charity because it makes lawful employment, leadership, governance, membership, or service decisions based on sincere religious beliefs.

4. Faith-based advocacy [Company Name] will not exclude a religious charity because it holds or expresses religious views on matters of public concern. Neutral restrictions on unlawful conduct, fraud, genuine threats, or misuse of funds may remain.

5. Third-party administration Any third-party administrator, validation provider, or donation platform acting for [Company Name] must apply these standards. [Company Name] will review platform rules, certifications, screening criteria, watchlists, and appeal procedures before using the provider.

6. Notice and review When an organization is denied, restricted, or removed, [Company Name] or its administrator will provide the specific reason and a meaningful opportunity for review. Eligibility decisions will be based on clear, neutral, and consistently applied criteria.

How to Review the Program

1. **Map every company-funded program.** Identify foundation grants, direct donations, customer-directed corporate donations, nonprofit discounts, product or service donations, disaster campaigns, sponsorships, and volunteer-related corporate grants.
2. **Collect all eligibility rules.** Review company policies, program FAQs, foundation pages, application forms, platform terms, nonprofit certifications, and administrator agreements.
3. **Test the four-part standard.** Check religious status, use, practice, and advocacy separately. Permission for a food pantry does not establish that worship, ministry, faith-based hiring, or advocacy is eligible.
4. **Audit every administrator.** Determine who controls eligibility, which screening criteria and watchlists are used, whether restrictions are optional, and whether the company can approve an organization the platform would otherwise exclude.
5. **Create an appeal path.** Give nonprofits a clear way to request review, submit supporting information, and receive a written explanation.
6. **Publish and document the result.** Make current eligibility standards public, retain supporting policies and contracts, and complete every applicable survey question and follow-up.

Frequently Asked Questions

Does including a religious charity require the company to endorse its beliefs?

No. Equal eligibility means the company applies neutral standards to a charitable program. A grant, discount, or product donation does not require the company to adopt the recipient’s religious or policy positions.

Can a company focus its giving on particular issue areas or communities?

Yes. A company may define legitimate program priorities, geographic limits, grant sizes, and application requirements. The concern arises when otherwise eligible organizations are excluded because of religious status, religious activity, lawful faith-based practices, or advocacy.

Can a company limit grants to secular programs operated by religious charities?

It may choose to do so, but the Index does not treat that as equal access. A secular-use condition excludes worship, ministry, religious education, evangelism, and other activities central to many religious charities.

What about nonprofit discounts and donated products?

They are included when the company provides a discounted or donated product or service to nonprofits. Eligibility should not depend on abandoning religious identity, lawful religious practices, or faith-based advocacy.

What if a third-party platform makes the decision?

The company should review the platform's rules and confirm which restrictions apply to its program. When the administrator excludes a nonprofit from a company-funded benefit, the program remains restricted even if the exclusion is not written on the company's own website.

Benchmark basis: Viewpoint Diversity Score 2026, "All Charities Included, Regardless of Religious Status, Practice, or Advocacy." Company examples are cited within the evidence cards above.