



Giving Circles Action Guide



Starting Your Collective Giving Journey

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Foreword by Tony Soh, CEO of NVPC



The social challenges we face today are becoming increasingly complex and multifaceted, requiring innovative solutions and collaborative efforts. According to the Forward Singapore report, we must build upon our strong sense of personal responsibility with a greater sense of collective responsibility – where our community steps forward to do our part and contribute to build our shared future for a better Singapore.

NVPC introduced Giving Circles in 2023 to address the pressing challenges in society. With this initiative, we seek to tap on Singapore's diverse community assets to create collective impact by leveraging the strengths, talents and resources of the everyday Singaporean. We believe that impactful and transformative giving comes in the form of the **5Ts** and **3Es** – where **E**veryone can give **E**very Day and **E**verywhere, contributing their **T**ime, **T**alent, **T**reasure, **T**ies and **T**estimony.

The Giving Circles initiative embodies this essence of community-driven philanthropy. It gathers groups of like-minded individuals who come together to create a powerful network of support that addresses urgent needs and enables long-term change. This is done through the pooling of resources, sharing of ideas and joint decision-making on the ways they would like to support those in need.

NVPC aims to utilise the powerful Giving Circles concept to inspire givers and help them galvanise their own networks of friends, family, colleagues or neighbours to contribute, cultivating a multiplier effect that extends beyond their immediate Circle.

As part of the Giving Circles pilot in 2023, five Circles were formed to provide financial and social support to families for at least six months. These Circles consisted of friends or colleagues who came together to make a difference as a group. The six-month support and stability for the families created a long-term and meaningful impact in the families' lives.

We saw how the Giving Circles initiative has opened a gateway for deep relationships to be forged between the Circle members and the families. It is heart-warming that some of the Circles from the pilot programme in 2023 are still journeying with the families today.

This action guide provides a practical and step-by-step approach to starting and sustaining your own Giving Circle, with a special focus on supporting families facing challenges. We also had the privilege of collaborating with Philanthropy Together, whose expertise and commitment to advancing the Giving Circle movement globally has helped to shape key elements in this action guide.

I hope that you will be inspired to make a difference in the lives of others through the power of Giving Circles. Let us work together to transform Singapore into a City of Good, where everyone gives their best to build a more caring, inclusive and compassionate society.





Drawing from our two year journey of running Giving Circles, we have created this guide to equip you with the tools and knowledge to start your own. Whether you're looking to make a meaningful impact in the lives of a family or champion the causes closest to your heart, this guide will help you every step of the way.

→ **Ready to Start Your Own Giving Circle?**

Explore the section on "Starting a Giving Circle" to find the perfect model for you.

→ **Charities and Non-Profits: Elevate Your Impact!**

Learn how to transform your befriending program or adopt a giving circle model in the "Giving Circles for Charities" section.



To help you navigate the terms used in this guide, here's a quick glossary of key words and their meanings.

Glossary of Common Terms

- *Giving Circles*: Refers to the programme, sometimes also called the "Giving Circles initiative".
- *Giving Circle*: Used in reference to one giving circle.
- *Circle Members*: Volunteers who are part of a Giving Circle. They are also referred to as "members" or "givers" interchangeably.

What are Giving Circles?

Giving Circles are groups of people who come together to help others. They can be friends, family, colleagues, or even strangers who share the same values and want to make a difference. These circles pool their resources and make collective decisions to support families in need or causes they care about.



The Power of Collective Giving

According to [Philanthropy Together](#), a global initiative leading the Giving Circles movement, Collective Giving involves pooling resources, knowledge, and networks to support a group-chosen cause. It features shared decision-making, community connections, learning and engagement.¹

All this is aimed at amplifying impact and empowering communities. Combined with collective action and trust-building, Collective Giving enables communities to create change through the 5Ts of Giving: **T**ime, **T**alent, **T**reasure, **T**ies, and **T**estimony.¹

Since the 1990s, the Giving Circles movement has gained significant momentum in the United States.² Today, nearly 4,000 groups have mobilised 370,000 everyday givers, collectively raising over USD \$3.1 billion in donations between 2017 and 2023.¹



Collective Giving in Singapore

Did you know?

The idea of Collective Giving is not new in Singapore! Models like mutual aid have long played a crucial role in supporting those in need.

During the 2020 Covid-19 Circuit Breaker period, various mutual aid initiatives emerged to support individuals facing urgent needs when traditional channels were overwhelmed.³ These community-led efforts became a vital lifeline, bridging critical gaps and ensuring people received timely assistance when they had nowhere else to turn.



The Giving Circles movement in the US

Today, Nearly

4,000

Giving Circles
Mobilised for Change

During 2017-2023,

370K

Everyday Givers
Took Part

Raising Over

\$3.1B

in Donations
Between 2017-2023

1 Derived from *In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving in the U.S.* by Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and Philanthropy Together.

2 Derived from *More Giving Together: The Growth and Impact of Giving Circles and Shared Giving* by Jessica E. Bearman for the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers.

3 Derived from *At the Heart of Singapore's Mutual Aid Initiatives Lies Community* by RICE Media

Giving Circles in Singapore

In 2023, the National Volunteer and Philanthropy Centre (NVPC) piloted the Giving Circles initiative, bringing together small groups of four to eight individuals to provide direct financial assistance and social support to five families in need for a minimum of six months.

We partnered with SHINE Children and Youth Services and the Movement for the Intellectually Disabled of Singapore (MINDS) to identify families who would benefit from the support of a giving circle. Participating families shared their short-term needs and long-term aspirations, while circle members were recruited through giving.sg and matched based on the family they chose to support. During an onboarding session, members came together to determine how they wanted to contribute – whether through monthly financial assistance, social support, or both – guided by discussions with social workers.

Throughout the pilot, social workers from MINDS and SHINE played a vital role in supporting the giving circles. They accompanied circle members on initial family visits, coordinated follow-up meetups based on the family’s availability, communicated updates and evolving needs, and regularly checked in with both givers and families to track progress.

More than 20 givers took part in the pilot, collectively raising over \$36,000 for families within six months. Over the course of the pilot, the giving circle members and families formed genuine friendships, moving beyond a typical donor-recipient relationship.

The Giving Circles model helped dissolve traditional power dynamics, fostering a collaborative giving experience where both givers and families had the autonomy to decide how contributions were given and used. Additionally, despite the initial six-month commitment, several circles chose to continue their journey with the families, showcasing how collective giving inspires long-term, sustained support.

The pilot’s outcomes highlighted the immense potential of Giving Circles as a new approach to giving – benefiting not just families, but also volunteers. Families gained a strong support network and access to new resources without the complexities of navigating formal processes. For volunteers, the experience was more fulfilling and sustainable, as giving as a group allowed them to share responsibilities and choose how they contributed, making their involvement more flexible and manageable.

Building on the foundation of supporting families, we have expanded the Giving Circles initiative to include circles supporting causes, inspired by successful practices in U.S. This expansion allows individuals, regardless of where they are on their philanthropy journey, to engage in collective giving. With this guide, we aim to inspire more people to embrace this impactful approach to philanthropy, fostering ripples of change that extend far beyond what any single individual could accomplish alone.

Read on to discover more about Giving Circles and learn how you can be part of this initiative!

NVPC’s Giving Circle Pilot

Recruited Over

20  Givers

for the Pilot

Raised Over

\$36K

in 6 Months

That Went Towards Directly Supporting

5  Families in Need



Trust-based Giving

At the heart of every giving circle is a simple yet powerful notion: the idea of trust. But what does “trust-based giving” mean and why is it so important?

In traditional philanthropy, whether it’s donating to a charity or assisting a family in need, there are often conditions that must be met. Charities may be required to show how donations are being allocated, or they may be restricted to using funds for specific programmes or projects. Similarly, families seeking help might need to provide evidence of their need for support.

Taking a different approach, Giving Circles shift the decision-making power to those receiving the funds, allowing them to determine how and where the money will have the greatest impact. When donating to a charity, this means placing trust in the non-profit to identify where the funds are most needed – whether for programmes, staffing, or any other area they believe is essential to fulfilling their mission.

When it comes to helping families, trust-based giving means believing that the family understands their own needs best. There are no strings attached or expectations for the family to provide evidence of how the funds were used, unless they choose to share that information. The goal of the giving circle is to empower the family to use the resources they receive in a way that makes the biggest difference in their lives. It’s also about supporting the family without any expectations and without judgment – offering care and trust as they navigate their own journey.

By making trust the cornerstone of Giving Circles, we move away from restrictions and create more meaningful, flexible, and impactful support for both charities and those in need.





The 5Ts of Giving

The “5Ts of Giving” represent a holistic approach to philanthropy, acknowledging that giving extends beyond financial donations. Giving Circles embody this approach, allowing individuals to contribute their Time, Talent, Treasure, Ties, and Testimony, thereby amplifying their collective impact.



Ready to see trust-based giving and the 5Ts in action? Explore our two Giving Circle models in the next section – Giving Circles for Families in Need and Giving Circles for Causes.



Giving Circles for Families in Need

In this model, a group of individuals come together to pool their donations and offer social support to a family in need for *at least six months*, with the goal of creating a sustainable support system for the family.

Circle members can choose how they wish to contribute – either by pooling funds, providing various types of social support, or both.





Chang Family Giving Circle



One of the many families who have benefited from Giving Circles is Madam Chang and her family. She is the sole caregiver for her son, who has mild intellectual disability, ADHD, and autism. She also cares for her wheelchair-bound husband and 89-year-old mother.

The weight of these responsibilities became overwhelming for Madam Chang, leaving her feeling isolated and hopeless. The lack of social support and the stress of caregiving also took a toll on her mental health, leading to depression.

However, after being supported by a giving circle, Madam Chang's life changed drastically. Five members of her giving circle came together to raise over \$18,000 for her family by reaching out to their networks, friends, and family. This money has helped supplement her family's income, covering essentials like groceries, adult diapers, and utilities. One of the most significant outcomes of this support was the creation of a fund for Madam Chang's son, ensuring his future care after she and her husband are no longer around.

In addition to financial aid, the giving circle also secured donations of essential items, such as adult diapers and a hospital bed. The members visited her home regularly to engage her son in board games, offering Madam Chang much-needed respite. A few members even volunteered to repaint the family's house in preparation for Chinese New Year.

Madam Chang reflects, "I didn't expect I could feel this way. I have gained friends who care for me now. It's like someone catches you when you fall. I am really grateful to have them around. I am more hopeful and have fewer uncertainties for the future now."

* Photos used in this guide are published with consent from all individuals featured



Giving Circles for Causes

In this model, a group of individuals pool their resources, collectively select causes, engage in discussions about potential charity recipients and ultimately vote on where to allocate their collective resources.

This process is typically repeated on a regular basis, such as monthly or quarterly, over a period of six to twelve months, allowing the group to provide ongoing support to the causes they care about.





New Women Power Giving Circle (NWP)



The New Women Power (NWP) giving circle is a prime example of how collective giving can create meaningful change. Comprising eight women entrepreneurs, university educators, and philanthropists based in Singapore, this circle is bound by a shared passion for uplifting their community.

Their mission extends beyond financial contributions – they aim to make a hands-on difference by championing causes close to their hearts. Focused on children and youth, women’s empowerment, and the arts, the NWP Circle is currently raising funds to support local charities that align with these causes.



Beyond fundraising, the members are actively involved as volunteers, offering their time, talent (expertise), and ties (networks) to amplify the impact of the charities they support. Together, they embody the spirit of collective action, demonstrating that when like-minded individuals unite, they can spark transformative change and inspire others to join in.

Through their collective efforts, the NWP Circle is not just empowering charities – they are building a legacy of hope, resilience, and community-driven impact.

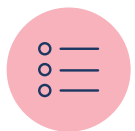
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Curious about how Giving Circles make a difference for both **recipients** and **givers**? Below, we highlight how families in need and charities benefit from the support of a giving circle, as well as the value this initiative brings to individuals and communities involved.

For Recipients

Families



Flexibility

Support comes in many forms – not just financial. Giving Circles offer befriending, monetary assistance or in-kind contributions, depending on what best meets a family’s needs at the time.



Accessibility

It’s easy for families to ask for and receive support. There are no complicated processes – families can simply share their needs with the Circle, and members can respond quickly and personally.



Autonomy

Families can decide how they want to use the support they receive from the Giving Circle.



Community

Circle members walk alongside families – not just give to them. Families build trusted relationships with Circle members who care, connect, and continue the journey with them and build a network of support.



Needs-Based Support

Families are not required to meet rigid eligibility criteria to benefit from Giving Circles. This flexible approach allows support to be offered based on real-life needs rather than limiting assistance to only those that meet certain qualifying conditions.

Charities⁴



Build and strengthen relationships

with new and existing donors.



Increase your access to **partnerships** and **resources**.



Raise **awareness** for your cause.

⁴ Adapted from *Evaluation of the Giving Circles at Work Pilot* by Good2Give and Centre for Social Impact Swinburne



For Givers



A Flexible Way of Giving

Giving Circles offer a framework that volunteers can adopt to transform how they give back, with the flexibility to choose how they wish to contribute – whether through Time, Talent, Treasure, Ties, or Testimony (5Ts).



Sustained Giving

Compared to individual volunteering, giving back in a group is more manageable as there is a shared responsibility among all members. This collaborative giving experience encourages people to be engaged, motivated and committed to giving over a longer period.



Collective Impact

The power of the collective creates a multiplying effect, transforming individual contributions into greater impact and achieving outcomes far beyond what isolated efforts could accomplish.



Strengthening Communities

Giving Circles expand the social networks of members enabling them to create meaningful connections not just within the circle but also with the families and charities they support.



Personal Growth

Giving Circles create opportunities for members to step into roles like Circle Champion where they can lead the group and guide the decision making processes of the circle, contributing to their personal growth.

For Corporates



Build A Culture of Giving

Giving Circles offer a powerful way for employees to align their actions with their purpose both within the company and in the broader community.



Starting a Giving Circle

It's time to create your own giving circle!

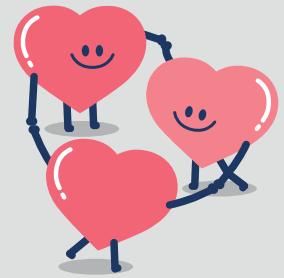
This section walks you through the essential steps to start & sustain own giving circle.

STEP 1



Identify Purpose

STEP 2



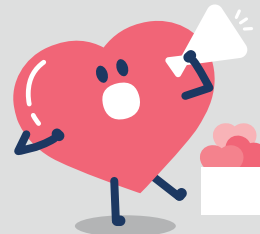
Create Your Circle

STEP 5



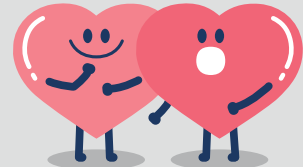
Take Action

STEP 4



Onboarding

STEP 3



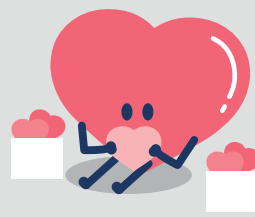
Discuss and Identify Model of Giving Circles

STEP 6



Charting Your Giving Circle Journey

STEP 7



Reflect and Evaluate

STEP 8



Closing Your Giving Circle

STEP 1

Identify Purpose

Start by asking yourself: WHY do you want to start a giving circle? No matter your motivation, it is essential to have a clear purpose for starting a giving circle. It will serve as the foundation of your circle's mission and a source of inspiration, guiding you through your giving circle journey.



Are you looking to join **like-minded individuals** in giving back and creating a greater sense of **community** in your volunteer journey?



Do you feel **passionate** about supporting families in need and want to make a meaningful **impact** together?



Do you have a **personal story** that inspires you to give back and help others in similar situations?

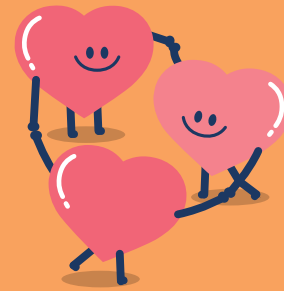




STEP 2

Create Your Circle

The second step to starting a giving circle is to convene the people who will be on this journey with you.



A giving circle can be formed with your friends, family members, colleagues or even strangers! The key thing is finding two or more people who can help you form and start the circle.

Examples of who you can approach to be part of your circle:

- Family members
- Neighbours
- Colleagues
- Inner circle of friends
- Professional networks
- Interest groups
- Social media connections

As you reach out to your networks to form your giving circle, it is also important to consider:

- What size aligns with your goals for the giving circle?
- How many people seems manageable for a start?

Here are some **pros** and **cons** of different giving circle sizes.

Small (5 ~ 10 people)

Recommended for circles supporting families

- Easy to communicate, coordinate and make decisions
- Recommended for circles that are just getting started
- Pooled donations may be lesser at the start

Medium (15 ~ 20 people)

- Gain the benefits of a larger group but can still maintain close connections with all members

Large (> 20 people)

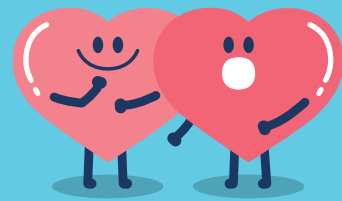
- Large multiplying effect
- Challenging to communicate, coordinate and make decisions



STEP 3

Discuss and Identify Model of Giving Circles

Once you have gathered the people who will join you on this journey, it's time to choose your giving circle model and decide whether you would like to support a family or a cause.



Giving Circles Supporting Families

Giving Circles Supporting Causes

OPTION 1 Identify a family in need through personal connections

Know a family in your community or neighbourhood who may benefit from the support of a giving circle? Reach out to them to understand their needs!

Remember that your efforts don't have to be limited to just families. Giving circles are flexible and can also be formed to support individuals, such as an elderly neighbour, a single parent or anyone navigating challenging circumstances.

As a circle, you can discuss to identify those who would benefit most, focusing on individuals or families facing urgent challenges like a health crisis, housing insecurity or other critical needs.

OPTION 2 Get matched with a family through NVPC

NVPC collaborates with various charity partners to identify families requiring support and can connect your circle with a family in need.

Drop us an email at givingcircles@nvpc.org.sg to start the matching process. If you're signing up as an individual, NVPC will also match you with others to form a circle so that you can begin your journey together.

If you are interested in supporting charities as a giving circle, you can visit giving.sg to select causes that align with your passion and areas of interest.

Alternatively, reach out to NVPC at givingcircles@nvpc.org.sg and we can help you get connected with non-profits that your giving circle can support.





STEP 4

Onboarding

The onboarding session is a crucial step to bring your giving circle together, align on shared goals, and design how your circle will operate. Think of this session as your launch pad – it’s where you establish your circle’s foundation for the journey ahead.



The first thing to do with your circle is to delegate the roles and responsibilities among your members. You’ll need a leader, otherwise known as a Circle Champion, to guide the group and keep things on track.

You can also consider other roles like a Treasurer to handle the finances and a Secretary to keep track of meetings and decisions. These roles can be shared or rotated among members to ensure everyone feels involved.



Roles

Giver

Responsibilities

- 1 Agrees to be part of a giving circle that meets regularly and pools their resources together
- 2 Commits for a period of six to twelve months, depending on your giving circle
- 3 Communicates regularly with the circle champion and other members
- 4 Fulfils commitments or provides timely notice if unable to do so
- 5 Actively participate in the giving circle’s meetings and activities
- 6 Leverages skills, networks and resources to contribute to the circle’s goals

Circle Champion

Responsibilities

- 1 Leads the giving circle
- 2 Schedules and organises meetings
- 3 Set up communication channels to facilitate discussions and provide updates
- 4 Guide and facilitate the decision-making process, ensuring that all members have equal opportunity to participate in discussions and contribute to final decisions
- 5 Ensure that all members contribute what they committed to
- 6 Remind circle members to update on their status or any issues faced
- 7 Solve any disputes within the circle and help members troubleshoot challenges
- 8 Help to onboard and integrate new members into the circle



Starting a Giving Circle

Decision Making Principles

Throughout your Giving Circle journey, you'll make many important decisions together. Below are two approaches your circle can consider:

- 1 **Consensus Discussion:** Everyone in the group engages in a discussion and the conversation is facilitated until the circle agrees. This works better for smaller circles as it might be more time-intensive.
- 2 **Voting:** Every circle member gets one vote and the majority wins.

Next, depending on whether your circle will be supporting **a family in need** or **a cause**, we recommend discussing the following points at your onboarding session.

Circles Supporting Families

Discuss the needs of the Family

- Urgent needs
- Long term aspirations
- Where you can come in as a giving circle to empower and support them
- Plan out how much finances you can pool together as a circle

If you lack any of the information, you can always check in with the family during your first meetup with them.

Circles Supporting Causes

Narrow down your cause of choice

- Share the causes each member is passionate about and the potential charities you want to support under the cause
- Decide on the cause(s) and respective charity your circle will support either by consensus discussion or voting

Type of Support

Decide how you would like to support the **family** or **cause** of your choice. You can support in more than one way by contributing either your time, talent, treasure, ties or testimony.

Contribution Structures

OPTION 1:

Every member contributes the same amount of funds

Examples

- **Dasra Giving Circle in India:** Each donor contributes INR 10 lakhs (≈15,000 SGD) a year for a period of 3 years totalling to a commitment of INR 30 lakhs (≈45,000 SGD) over three years.
- **100 Women Who Care:** 100 women donating USD \$100 each four times a year.

OPTION 2:

Every member contributes varying amounts based on their capacity and/or preference

Examples

- Income-based circle with a "pay what you can" model: **Radfund in New York City** – Each member gives at least 1% of their income and 0.1% of their wealth, annually.



Starting a Giving Circle



IMPORTANT NOTE ON FUND MANAGEMENT:

Regardless of the fund transfer option chosen, Giving Circle members must manage funds responsibly and with transparency. Ensure that contributions are tracked accurately, all transfers are accounted for, and the person handling the funds each month is held accountable. This is essential to maintain trust and integrity within the Circle.

Fund Contribution Method

Supporting Families

OPTION 1 : Circle Champion Handles Fund Transfer

Circle Champion will be responsible for collecting and transferring the funds.

- Agree on a set date each month for all members to transfer their contributions to the Circle Champion (e.g., the 29th of every month).
- Circle Champion transfers the collected funds to the family on a specified date (e.g., the 30th of every month).

OPTION 2 : Rotational Fund Transfer

Members take turns each month to collect contributions and transfer them to the family, ensuring shared responsibility.

Transfers can be made via PayNow or bank transfer. Members are encouraged to share a screenshot of the transaction with the group to confirm the transfer.

Location of Meetups

You can meet and coordinate your giving circle wherever is most convenient – at a cafe, at someone’s home, or over Zoom.

Supporting Causes

Using Giving.sg

OPTION 1 :

Donate to an existing fundraising campaign put up by the charity you are supporting – all members can donate individually or transfer to the circle champion who can donate the pooled funds.

OPTION 2 :

Create a fundraising campaign for the charity or charities that the circle has chosen – one member of the circle can create the campaign and all members can donate to that campaign.

Mode of Communication

Before you end the onboarding session, we recommend setting up a communication channel that all members have access to such as WhatsApp or Telegram to facilitate easy communication.

Frequency of Meetups

Monthly

Creates a regular cycle for giving but can be quite taxing for members

** Recommended for circles supporting families*

Quarterly

Ensures ongoing engagement and keeps members involved

** Recommended for circles supporting causes*

Half-yearly / Annually

Good for larger sized groups where it might be difficult to arrange meetups due to conflicting schedules

Other

Discuss what works best for your circle!



STEP 5

Take Action

After the onboarding session, it's time to put those plans into action.



Circles Supporting Families

Circles Supporting Causes

Set up your first meeting

The first meeting can take place in the family's home if they are comfortable. Alternatively, you can also schedule a time to meet the family online through a platform like Zoom.

To kick off the first meeting between the giving circle and the family, it's helpful to create an open and welcoming atmosphere. We recommend including some ice breaker questions to facilitate introductions and help both sides get to know one another.

At the end of the first meeting, it's good to end off with some plans on when the circle will meet again and share any necessary information with the family.

Make your first donation!

Make your first pooled contribution either by setting up a new fundraising campaign for the charity of your choice or donating to an existing one.





STEP 6

Charting Your Giving Circle Journey

Congratulations on bringing your giving circle to life!



Circles Supporting Families

Revisit your onboarding discussions to ensure your plans are still on track. Consider planning out a series of activities or engagements you intend to do with the family over the next 6 months.

Circles Supporting Causes

Continue the cycle of decision-making and contributions, whether monthly, quarterly, or annually. Map out your year of giving by identifying causes and potential volunteer opportunities.



STEP 7

Reflect and Evaluate

As you go through your giving circle journey, it's important that you come together as a circle to reflect on your experience and share your feedback. You can use the questions outlined below to guide this discussion and gain insights into what's working well and what could be improved.



Reflection Questions for Giving Circles

Purpose and Impact

- Are we staying true to our mission and the values we set out as a circle?
- What impact have we made with the family or causes we supported?
- How have our giving decisions aligned with the needs of the recipients?

Growth and Learning

- What have we learned as a circle since we started? How have we adapted our approach?
- Are there areas where we need to grow or improve?
- How can we deepen our relationships with the family or charities we support?

Trust and Decision-Making

- Have we embraced trust-based giving fully? How has it changed our approach to philanthropy?
- How well are we balancing the need for trust with the desire for accountability?
- Are we giving the family enough flexibility to meet their needs effectively?

Communication and Collaboration

- How open and transparent is our communication as a group? Do all members feel heard and valued?
- How have we managed disagreements or differences in opinion?
- How well have we worked together to reach collective decisions?

Sustainability and Longevity

- Are we achieving a balance between sustainability and meaningful impact?
- How can we ensure the longevity of our circle, in terms of both participation and giving?





Reflection Questions for Individual Members

Impact on Giving Behaviour

- Has being part of the circle influenced the amount I give? Do I find myself donating more money than I would have individually? Why or why not?
- How does the experience of giving as part of a group compare to donating individually?
- In what ways does it enhance or change the impact of my contributions?

Role within the Circle

- How have I contributed to the circle's mission and decision-making process? Do I feel that my voice and opinions are heard and respected within the group?
- Am I growing personally as a result of this experience, both in how I give and how I collaborate with others? What could improve my experience or contribution?

Value of Circle Activities and Community

- Beyond monetary donations, which activities or experiences have been most meaningful to me? (e.g., meeting families, connecting with fellow members or learning about new causes)
- How important is the sense of community within the circle, compared to giving on my own? What unique strengths does the circle have in fostering shared responsibility and creating deeper impact?

Personal Connection to Trust

- How has being part of this giving circle shaped my understanding of giving? What have I learned about the families or causes we support and how has that influenced my personal values?
- In what ways has trust-based giving challenged or reinforced my views on philanthropy? How has my understanding of trust changed through this process?

Emotional and Ethical Reflection

- How do I feel about the impact we've made as a circle? Does it align with my personal values and goals?
- Have I experienced any moments of doubt or discomfort in the giving process? How did I address these feelings, and what did I learn from them?

Looking Forward

- What do I hope to achieve or experience as part of this circle in the future? How can I further contribute to the circle's success and mission?
- What areas of growth or learning do I want to pursue to become a more thoughtful and effective giver?



STEP 8

Closing Your Giving Circle

Before closing your giving circle, it is useful to reflect on your journey, celebrate the impact you've made, and ensure a smooth transition for everyone involved. Here are some key aspects to think about:



Reflect on the progress your circle has made and whether your goals have been achieved.



Ensure everyone involved in the giving circle are informed and aligned on the decision to close the circle.



Plan for a meaningful closure by organising a farewell session to celebrate the connections formed and the collective impact you have made together. Consider staying in touch with the family or individual, offering continued support or friendship.



Explore next steps for your giving journey even as this chapter comes to an end.

If you had been supporting a family in need, you can consider supporting another family or a circle that supports causes.

If your giving circle was supporting causes but you would like to explore direct giving to families and have a deeper involvement, you can consider starting or joining a giving circle that supports a family or individual in need.





Giving Circles for Charities



Are you a non-profit organisation that does casework?



Is your non-profit interested in enhancing support for the clients you serve?



Does your non-profit have an existing befriending programme?



Is your non-profit exploring alternative models to engage new and existing volunteers?



If you answered **yes to any of the questions above, this section of the action guide is for you!**

Through our work with various charity partners, we understand that some organisations run programmes that include elements of Giving Circles or have initiatives that align well with this model. This guide was created to enhance your existing programmes through adopting or adapting Giving Circles, empowering your organisation to better support the clients you serve.

**STEP
1**

Assess the State of Your Current Programme(s)

Before deciding to adopt Giving Circles, you should evaluate your existing befriending programme to identify areas that could benefit from the integration of Giving Circles. Consider the following:



Current engagement levels of donors and volunteers

Giving Circles offer a flexible model that empowers members to give back in ways that work best for them – whether through financial contributions, volunteering their time, or offering other resources. If you are looking to provide a new and flexible model of giving back to your volunteers and donors, you can consider Giving Circles.



Resource allocation and management

Consider if your staff have enough bandwidth to take on additional responsibilities that may come with adopting Giving Circles. They will need to identify suitable families, recruit volunteers, conduct onboarding sessions, accompany the volunteers on befriending sessions, oversee the fund transfer and the engagements of the Circles.

STEP 2

Setting Up the Systems Needed to Run the Programme

Once you have assessed the feasibility of adopting Giving Circles and decided to evolve your programme or introduce it as a new initiative, it is important to set up the right systems that will enable you to run the programme smoothly.



A

Identify suitable families who may benefit from the support of a giving circle

It is important to consider that not all families may be ready for an initiative like giving circles where they are required to interact with strangers. It is also essential to keep in mind that some of these families have numerous touch points with multiple agencies offering support. Hence, the giving circle should complement the existing support they are receiving instead of adding on an additional burden for the family.

Guidelines on identifying families for giving circles:

- Assessed by social worker as requiring additional support, on top of other formal support they may already be receiving.
- Comfortable with welcoming strangers into their lives.
- Understand and are aware that the commitment from circle members is short term (six months).
- Understand and acknowledge that the circle might not be able to match the financial aid requested.
- Have the bandwidth to interact with strangers.
- Understand that the giving circle is a collaborative effort between families and volunteers. Families should be comfortable sharing their needs openly with the Circle, and play an active role in guiding how funds and support are directed.

Family Profile Template

The Family Profile Template was crafted for social workers and caseworkers to consolidate key information about the families such as their background, language preferences, challenges, dreams, aspirations, and needs.

Giving Circles Information Sheet for Families

To support your engagement with families, we have crafted a Information Sheet outlining the programme, expectations, and commitments involved for families participating in the Giving Circles initiative.

Check out these resources on page 33 of the Action Guide.

B

Recruitment of givers?

Start by engaging your existing volunteer database! You can also recruit givers online through the platforms your organisation is most active on. Check out Page 33 for ready-to-use templates, including EDMs, social media posts, and registration forms.





C

Matching givers to families in need

Here are some considerations when matching givers:

- 1 **Type of Support**
What type of support does the family need and what type of support is the giver willing to provide?
- 2 **Language Preference**
If the family has a language preference, it is crucial to have at least two members who can speak the same language to help bridge the gap between the circle and the family.
- 3 **Locale**
Matching givers to the family based on the geographical proximity to the neighbourhood that the family is residing in will make the volunteering experience less taxing on the givers by reducing travel time and expenses.
- 4 **Diversity**
Having diverse members in both age and race makes for a more cohesive giving circle experience.

D

Getting in touch with givers

NVPC recommends getting in touch with givers via an instant messaging platform such as WhatsApp or Telegram. You can also set up a chat group with all the members in the circle to coordinate a date and time for the onboarding session. It is also easier to share any crucial information to the circle via the chat group.



E

Onboarding Session

Once the recruitment phase is complete, you should convene the circle for an onboarding session. The purpose of an onboarding session is for the circle to meet one another, which is especially important if you have matched strangers into a circle.

The new members can also learn about their roles, the expectations of being a circle member, some Do's and Don'ts when interacting with the family, as well as co-design the details of the circle together during the session. The onboarding session can be a physical or online session, depending on the circle's preference.



<p>↘</p> <p>In-person Onboarding Session</p> <p>Easier to get to know your other circle members better, which is especially helpful if the circle is made up of strangers. It helps to build rapport among circle members.</p>	<p>↘</p> <p>Online Onboarding Session</p> <p>More flexible as the session can be recorded so that those who missed it can also rewatch it in their own time.</p>
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We recommend that the social worker working with the family joins this onboarding session to provide more in-depth information about the family to the circle.

If your organisation has a code of conduct for volunteers, the onboarding session is the perfect time to review it with them. This is also the ideal moment to have volunteers sign any indemnity forms, if required by your organisation.

Tips and Resources for the onboarding session:

- Not sure what information to share with giving circle members? Customise and use the onboarding session deck template under the “Resources” section.
- Use the giving circle planner to help the circle co-design the details of their circle. This can be found on page 35.
- Share the Giving Circle Activity Tracker template as a resource that the circle members can use to track fund collection process and meetups.



What is the Giving Circle Activity Tracker?

The Giving Circle Activity Tracker is a tool designed to assist giving circles with two main functions: monitoring monthly fund collection and transfers, and planning and coordinating meetups with the families.

Step 3

Executing the Programme

Once you have established the necessary systems, you’re ready to launch your programme! It’s advisable to start with a small pilot, as it will be easier for staff to manage and will provide valuable insights into what works well and what may need adjustment. This approach allows you to gather feedback from staff, members, and families, helping to streamline the process and enhance your impact.

Once your processes have been streamlined and you are ready to scale, NVPC recommends initiating Giving Circles in batches. This strategy simplifies tracking, managing, and recruiting, making it easier to refine the programme and expand its reach effectively.

If you need additional support in setting up Giving Circles within your organisation, reach out to us – we’re here to help guide you on your journey!



Collective Giving Starts with You

Giving Circles are a testament to what is possible when people come together with a common purpose. While this action guide outlines key principles and best practices, the journey of each Giving Circle is unique – shaped by the people, causes, and communities behind them.

Whether big or small, every Giving Circle contributes to something greater. We hope this guide has equipped you with the knowledge and confidence to take the first step, knowing that you are part of a growing movement of collective giving.

In the following pages, you'll find resources to support you as you bring your Giving Circle to life. The work of building a more caring, inclusive and compassionate society continues, and we look forward to seeing the impact you will create. We are here to support you on this journey and to work alongside you in creating lasting change.

Together, let's build a City of Good – one Giving Circle at a time!





Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

General Info on Giving Circles

Q: How many people are needed to make up one giving circle?

Your circle can be as small as three people or as big as 20 people. There is no fixed number, but we generally recommend a size that is easy to manage for circles just getting started and for circles supporting families – this can be anywhere from five to ten members.

Q: How long is the commitment?

To ensure sustained and impactful giving, the recommended duration for circles supporting families in need is at least six months, while for circles supporting causes, it's between six and twelve months. Ultimately, the duration of your circle will depend on your specific goals and objectives.

Specifics for Circles Supporting a Cause

Q: Do I have to support the same cause for six to twelve months?

No, you do not have to. The circle can choose to support different causes and charities depending on the circle's area of interest and collective goals.

Q: Can I volunteer with the charity I am supporting?

Yes, you are encouraged to volunteer with the charity and give expansively through the 5Ts of time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony.

Fund Collection Details

Q: How will the contributions from the giving circle be collected and given to the family or cause?

Circles Supporting Families

Members can either:

- Appoint a "Circle Champion" to collect and transfer the funds each month.
- Rotate the responsibility, with a different member collecting and transferring funds each month.

Transfers can be made via PayNow or bank transfer, and members should share a screenshot for confirmation.

Circles Supporting Causes

Members can:

- Donate individually to an existing campaign on Giving.sg, or pool funds and have the Circle Champion donate on behalf of the group.
- Create a new fundraising campaign for the chosen charity, where all members can contribute.

Q: How much do we have to give each month?

At the first circle meeting, all members will discuss and decide on how much money everyone is comfortable to give each month. It is preferable for everyone to give the same amount, but it is up to the group to decide.

Q: Is the donation frequency fixed?

For circles supporting families, we recommend monthly donations. For circles supporting causes, the circle can collectively decide if they would like to donate monthly, quarterly or even yearly.

Q: I am unable to give the amount of money I committed at the start. What should I do?

Let your circle champion and circle members know that you are unable to commit the amount. Share your alternative amount and communicate openly with your members. Remember that no amount is too big or small and you can offer your support in other ways!



Specifics for Circles Supporting a Family

Q: I don't have any valuable skills or resources to offer to the family. How else can I offer social support?

There are many ways to support the family, such as offering your time as a medical escort or providing in-kind donations. Here are some examples of how circle members have engaged with the families they support. This is not an exhaustive list as every family has unique needs, and you do not need special skills or resources to be able to help them!

- Playing board games
- Going for walks
- Cooking and sharing a meal
- In-kind donations such as groceries

Q: How will I know that the family is not misusing the money I donated?

Giving Circles is rooted in trust-based giving, which means knowing and trusting in the family's ability and autonomy to make sound decisions that are right for them. You can always have an open discussion with the family on their needs and areas of support.

Q: My giving circle wants to visit the family at their home, but we are not sure if they will be comfortable.

Always check-in with the family if they are comfortable with the circle visiting their home and set up a time and date with them. Please do not show up at their home suddenly without making prior plans as the family may feel flustered or even unprepared to welcome you.

Contact and Information

Q: Who can I contact for any queries or concerns?

For any immediate queries, you may reach out to your Circle Champion or visit the Giving Circles website (<https://nvpc.org.sg/cnpl/giving-circles/>). Alternatively, you may reach out to the Giving Circles team at NVPC via givingcircles@nvpc.org.sg.

Participation and Membership

Q: What is the purpose of the onboarding session?

The onboarding session will provide important information about the giving circle and what to expect during your giving circle journey. You will also get to meet your fellow circle members and co-design details of the circle together.

As one of the key traits of the giving circle is to build connections with other like-minded individuals, the onboarding session will help to facilitate this.

Q: I want to be a circle champion, but I am not sure if I am fit for the role.

For a detailed outline of the roles and responsibilities of a Circle Champion, please refer to page 18 of the guide. If you have organised a birthday party or hosted a team event at school, work, or for friends and family, you already have relevant experience! Being a circle champion requires no specific skills, just a willingness to empower and support your members and the family or cause of your choice. You can also propose a co-lead to guide the circle alongside you. Remember, all circle members share the responsibility of making the circle work and achieving its objectives.

If the role becomes overwhelming, discuss alternative ways to move forward with your circle members. Possible solutions include a rotational leadership system, where every member can take turns leading the activities of the giving circle.



Resources for Giving Circles

1. [Giving Circle Planner \(page 34\)](#)
2. [Giver Profile \(page 35\)](#)
3. [Family Profile Template](#)
4. [Onboarding Session Deck Template](#)
5. [Giving Circle Activity Tracker](#)
6. [Registration Form Template](#)
7. [EDM and Social Media Template](#)
8. [Giving Circles Information Sheet for Families](#)
9. [Giving Circles Website by NVPC](#)
<https://nvpc.org.sg/cnpl/giving-circles/>

References*

Source	Link
<i>In Abundance: An Analysis of the Thriving Landscape of Collective Giving in the U.S.</i> Dorothy A. by Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University and Philanthropy Together.	https://johnsoncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/in-abundance-an-analysis-of-the-thriving-landscape-of-collective-giving-in-the-u-s.pdf
<i>More Giving Together: The Growth and Impact of Giving Circles and Shared Giving</i> by Jessica E. Bearman for the Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers	https://www.philanthropycolorado.org/sites/default/files/resources/More%20Giving%20Together%20-%20The%20Growth%20and%20Impact%20of%20Giving%20Circles%20and%20Shared%20Giving.PDF
<i>At the Heart of Singapore’s Mutual Aid Initiatives Lies Community</i> by RICE Media	https://www.ricemedia.co/mutual-aid-initiatives-singapore/
<i>Evaluation of the Giving Circles at Work Pilot</i> by Good2Give and Centre for Social Impact Swinburne	https://good2give.ngo/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Final-Report-Giving-Circles-at-Work-Evaluation.pdf

*All links and references provided in this guide are accurate and accessible as of 26 June 2025.



Giver Profile

The giver profile is where circle members can write down information about themselves including their hobbies, languages spoken and the type of support they can provide. Just like how the circle members will get to learn more about the family, the giver profile is meant to help the families get to know the people supporting and journeying with them. Once all members of the circle have completed their profile, it can be shared with the family during your first meeting with them.

Giver Profile

Hi! My name is...



.....

About Me

Interests and hobbies



.....

Languages spoken



.....

What I can help with



.....



Giving Circle Planner

The giving circle planner is a tool to help giving circles plan, discuss and design the details of the circle.

GIVING CIRCLE PLANNER

These are the key six questions to answer when designing your giving circle and is a great discussion to have with your fellow circle members.

1

Why do you want to start a Giving Circle?

Share with your members why you want to start this Giving Circle and what you hope to achieve together.

[Dotted box for notes]

2

What is the size of your Giving Circle?

Consider how many members would be ideal to start with and what feels manageable for your goals.

[Dotted box for notes]

3

Discuss and identify the model of your Giving Circle

Select the model that best fits your group's vision – will your Giving Circle support a family in need or causes?

[Dotted box for notes]

4

How will members contribute?

Discuss how members can give through time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony. Set expectations for contributions (e.g., fixed amount, flexible giving, time commitment).

[Dotted box for notes]

5

When and where will your Giving Circle meet?

Decide on how often you'll meet (e.g., monthly, quarterly) and whether meetings will be in-person or online.

[Dotted box for notes]

6

What roles will members take on?

Assign roles to keep things running smoothly (e.g., circle champion, treasurer, secretary).

[Dotted box for notes]



Credits

Commissioned by

National Volunteer & Philanthropy Centre (NVPC)

NVPC is the national agency dedicated to driving a culture of volunteerism and philanthropy in Singapore. By engaging individuals, organisations, communities and leaders across the people, private and public sectors, we seek to create a more caring, inclusive, and compassionate society. Together, we envision Singapore as a City of Good, where everyone is able to give every day and everywhere (3Es), contributing their time, talent, treasure, ties and testimony (5Ts). Learn more at nvpc.org.sg.

Acknowledgements

We would like to extend our deepest gratitude to the following partners and stakeholders who have contributed to the development and publication of this action guide. Your commitment and collaboration has been instrumental in making a meaningful impact. Thank you for your dedication and for being an essential part of this journey with us.

Philanthropy Together

We would like to express our heartfelt thanks to **Sara Lomelin**, Founder & Chief Executive Officer, and **Isis Krause**, Chief Strategy Officer of Philanthropy Together, for their generosity in sharing insights, resources, and inspiration that have shaped our understanding of collective giving. Their pioneering work has played a key role in growing the global Giving Circles movement, and we are grateful for the opportunity to build on that momentum in our own context.

Pilot Partners

We are thankful to have worked alongside **MINDS**, **SHINE Children and Youth Services**, and the **Institute of Policy Studies** in piloting this new community-led approach to giving and we appreciate their invaluable support in bringing this initiative to life.

Giving Circles

A huge thank you to all the Giving Circle families and members who have been part of this journey with us. We are so grateful for your insights, support, feedback and contributions!

Stay Connected

Interested in starting your own giving circle but not sure where to begin? Or are you already part of a circle and want to join NVPC's community of giving circles? Drop us an email at givingcircles@nvpc.org.sg, and we'll help you get started!

How do you know you have made a difference?

We are in the process of developing an impact measurement tool to help you better understand the difference you're making through Giving Circles.

Stay tuned for updates!

