

Great work! After reading our last two posts to learn more about workplace giving and why you should participate, you've opened up your workplace giving packet and you're ready to make a pledge.

So the final question that's probably on your mind is the most important one: how much should I give?

Financial decisions are always personal, so there's no one answer that's right for everyone. Only you know your financial situation. Decisions about giving are also deeply values-driven, so only you know what feels right. Plus, every dollar helps, so you can't go wrong.

But those aren't very helpful answers, are they? So this blog post will give you a rule of thumb you can use to calibrate the amount you decide to give. We'll also give you several examples of how every level of giving makes a difference.

Start with One Hour of Salary Per Month

If you're looking for a ballpark amount to give, think in terms of your hourly salary. We recommend starting your giving at one hour of salary per month. Since this is a rule of thumb, you should adjust it to your personal circumstances. If you work part-time, for example, 1 hour is a larger percentage, so you can adjust down. But if you're making a good full-time salary, you can think about giving more.

Use the helpful chart below to find your giving amount (full-time workers can also divide their annual salary by 2080). For each salary level, we've included the giving amount per paycheck for monthly and biweekly pay schedules.

\$ Salary	Monthly Gift Amount	Biweekly Gift Amount
20,800	10	5
41,600	20	10
52,000	25	12.50
62,400	30	15
83,200	40	20
104,000	50	25
208,000	100	50

If you're looking at your giving amount and thinking, "that can't possibly make a difference!" then you would be surprised by how far your donations can go! And remember, you're making this pledge for the whole year, so it will add up! Here are some examples.

\$10/Month Makes an Impact

If you can afford \$10 per month, you are providing:

- Craft materials for one children's activity every month at our Food For All program's Kids' Greenhouse. That gives groups of children the chance to learn about gardening, nutrition and leading healthy lifestyles.

- One night of shelter for a family at St. Margaret's Shelter. Spread over a year, your donations give families experiencing homelessness the rare opportunity to sleep under the same roof in a safe, warm and comfortable environment.

One family that benefitted from shelter at St. Margaret's was Jarica and Aaron. The couple lost their housing just after their baby boy was born. They moved between friends' apartments and shelters, but they weren't able to stay in most shelters as a family. The instability also made it hard to move forward. Jarica went to job interviews, but bringing her bags did not help make a good impression. It was also challenging to complete their application for Section 8 housing assistance.

The family was thankful when they eventually qualified for St. Margaret's Shelter. "We have our own space and don't have to sign up to use the bathroom," said Jarica. And the shelter allowed them to improve their situation. "It's so much easier getting a full night's rest." Their time at the shelter helped them get their son a regular schedule and allowed them to finish their Section 8 voucher to move into their own permanent housing.

\$25/Month Makes an Impact

If you can afford \$25 per month, you are providing:

- one dozen diapers each for 5 families at CAPA/PREPARES. Your donation helps low-income families stretch their incomes to feed, clothe and care for their children.
- 1 month of art supplies for children at the Rising Strong program. Your gift provides enriching activities for children to do in daycare while their parents attend treatment for substance use disorders.
- \$100 worth of farmers market produce to low-income families through the Food For All Fresh Bucks program. Fresh Bucks leverages government food assistance programs to boost the buying power of SNAP/EBT benefits.

The Fresh Bucks program makes a powerful impact in rural communities where grocery stores are less accessible. Through Fresh Bucks, shoppers who pay for their produce using a SNAP/EBT card receive a \$2 bonus for every \$5 they spend.

Last year, Catholic Charities established the Fresh Bucks program at the Newport Farmers Market in Pend Oreille County. This farmers market had not always attracted families that use SNAP/EBT, but with the 40 percent premium they earned through Fresh Bucks, the farmers market began to make more economic sense than the grocery store. Since the arrival of Fresh Bucks, the number of children participating in the farmers market has increased.

\$50/Month Makes an Impact

If you can afford \$50 per month, you are providing:

- Four crates of produce that will be delivered to homebound senior citizens through Food For All's Produce Delivery program. That means more seniors are getting the help they need to continue living in their own homes.
- 1 month's worth of snacks for the Rising Strong child care room. Your gift provides nutritious snacks to feed children in daycare while their parents attend treatment for substance use disorders.
- 8 weeks — one full course — of Circle of Security Parenting (COSP) in the CAPA/PREPARES program. That's one set of parents who will get the tools they need to pass on healthy socioemotional habits to their children, helping them grow up feeling secure and confident.

When Shawna* and her husband separated, her kids got so mad at her she couldn't even take them on errands anymore. When Shawna explained the situation to a staff member at CAPA/PREPARES, she was invited to join a COSP group to learn how to connect with her kids in this emotionally difficult time.

Through the 8-week group, Shawna learned that "I need to acknowledge and 'be with' my kids in their anger," she said. She also realized "that's hard for me because I'm still angry with my mom for when she split with my dad." COSP helped Shawna see the patterns of her childhood so she could avoid passing unhealthy emotional habits to her children.

"It actually gave me hope because I knew I could go back and talk to them later," Shawna said. Even though her kids still get mad about the divorce, Shawna no longer feels overwhelmed by the conversation and can "be with" her children to process their anger.

*Shawna's story is a composite of real clients' experiences. Her story illustrates the experiences typical in a COSP group.

\$100/Month Makes an Impact

If you can afford \$100 per month, you are providing:

- 1 month of meals for CAPA/PREPARES' weekly fatherhood group. That gives dads a supportive space where they can learn from each other about the joys and challenges of fatherhood.
- 12 garden tool sets for children to use at a Head Start garden. Your donation gives children the chance to learn about gardening, nutrition and leading healthy lifestyles.
- A new bed for a child in the Rising Strong program. That gives that child their own space where they can feel secure, develop a routine and enjoy the comfort of family life with their parents.

Two of the children who benefit from having their own beds at Rising Strong are Tiffany's two daughters, A and B. Tiffany entered Rising Strong with them after a series of emotionally abusive relationships that deepened her substance use disorder. Substance use caused Tiffany to lose custody of A and B, but was reunified through Rising Strong.

Commented [BRS1]: Do they have names? It makes the story feel more full...I can make up if need be.

Her daughters share a room and each have new beds, an arrangement that has helped Tiffany establish regular routines for her daughters. That routine, plus family therapy, has helped her daughters respond with resilience to their family's situation.

"My kids are amazing," said Tiffany. "They make me so proud."

Your Gift Makes an Impact

If you can afford a gift at any amount, you are providing hope and stability to clients at Catholic Charities. For more information about how to give, check out our [workplace giving](#) webpage.