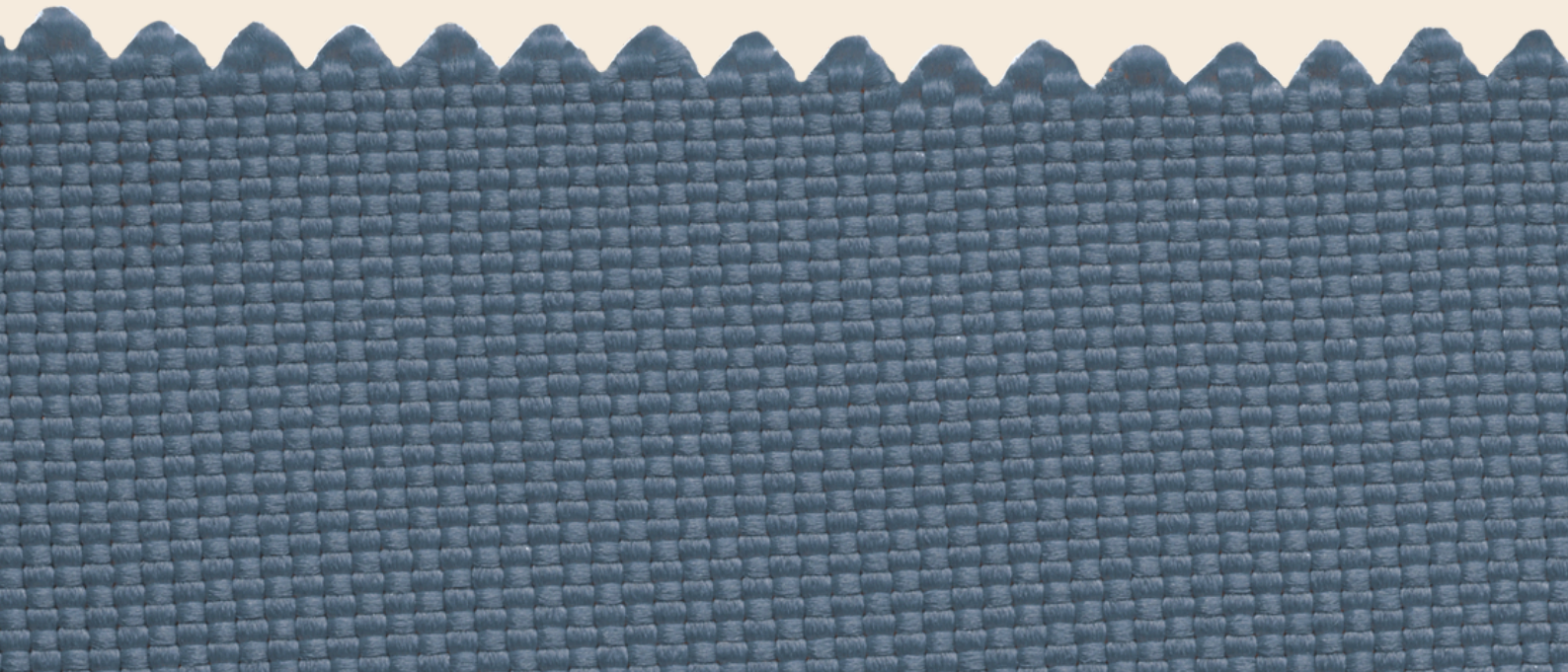
give to the max

november 19, 2026

The GiveMN Guide to

MATCHING FUNDS



WHY USE MATCHING FUNDS?

Have you ever heard phrases like, “give now and your donation will be matched dollar-for-dollar”? or, “donate today and your gift will be doubled”? These are both examples of matching fund strategies in fundraising campaigns!

Matching funds are one of the most effective ways to drive donations to your campaign. In fact, during Give to the Max Day 2025, organizations with matching funds raised an average of 2x-5x more than organizations without. Ready to learn more?

This guide will take you through the steps to setting up a matching fund, securing a match, and using GiveMN.org to track your fund’s progress!

WHY DO MATCHING FUNDS WORK?

Matching funds are similar to BOGO (buy-one-get-one) coupons in stores. Maybe there’s a t-shirt you were thinking about buying, but you hadn’t decided yet. Then, you see that if you buy one shirt, you get another one for free - for many of us, that would seal the deal. Two for the price of one? What a steal!

Matching gifts are similar because for donors who may already be thinking about giving to your cause, a matching fund can inspire them to take the step from thinking about their donation to actually making the donation.

TYPES OF MATCHES

While the most common matching fund uses language like, “donate now and your gift will be matched dollar-for-dollar,” there are a few different types of matches that organizations use.

ONE-TO-ONE MATCH

The one-to-one (1:1) match is the most common type of matching fund in fundraising. This match is straightforward - every dollar donated will be matched 100% by a matching fund.

This is where many fundraisers use language like “your donation will be doubled!” because a donor’s $25 gift suddenly becomes $50 when a 1:1 match is applied.

This matching fund type is great for those who are looking for a straightforward, easy to understand message to share with their audience!

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CHALLENGE MATCHES (CUMULATIVE THRESHOLD MATCHES)

Another way to structure your matching fund is using "challenge" language. For example, a challenge fund might sound like:

"When 100 donors support our campaign, our board of directors will unlock an additional $10,000!"

On GiveMN.org, there are a few different ways to set up a challenge fund (called cumulative threshold match on the platform):

1

Apply total match when total dollars raised equals the match value

- Matching funds will be applied once a certain number of dollars has been raised
  - i.e., "Help us raise $2,500 and unlock a $2,500 match thanks to the XYZ Company!"

2

Apply total match when a certain quantity of donations is received

- Matching funds will be applied once a set number of donations are given to the campaign
  - i.e., "When we reach 1,000 donations, ABC Foundation will unclock an additional $5,000!"

3

Apply total match when a certain number of unique donors is reached

- Matching funds will be applied once a set number of individual donors contribute to your campaign
  - i.e., "When 500 of our supporters make a gift, we'll receive an additional $50,000 from 123 Company!"

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SECURING A MATCHING FUND

We know why matching funds are effective in fundraising and now we know the different types. But, how do fundraisers secure the money to provide a matching fund?

Good news! There are a few different ways to raise the revenue for a matching fund. Let's dive in!

Corporate Sponsorships
Partnering with a mission-aligned local business is a great way to secure matching funds, support community causes, and boost goodwill and marketing for the company —like approaching an art supply store if you run a painting program, since donors often value businesses that share your cause.

Foundation Support
A foundation may be willing to provide matching funds for your campaign. Think of an institutional funder you have a strong relationship with. Consider having a one-on-one conversation with your program officer to discuss if part of a current grant (or a new grant!) could be used to provide a match.

Individual Giving
Is someone really passionate about your cause? Reach out and ask if they would be willing to provide a matching fund. You can also consider approaching a group of individuals to pool together a matching fund. Starting with your board shows donors that your leadership is financially committed to the cause.

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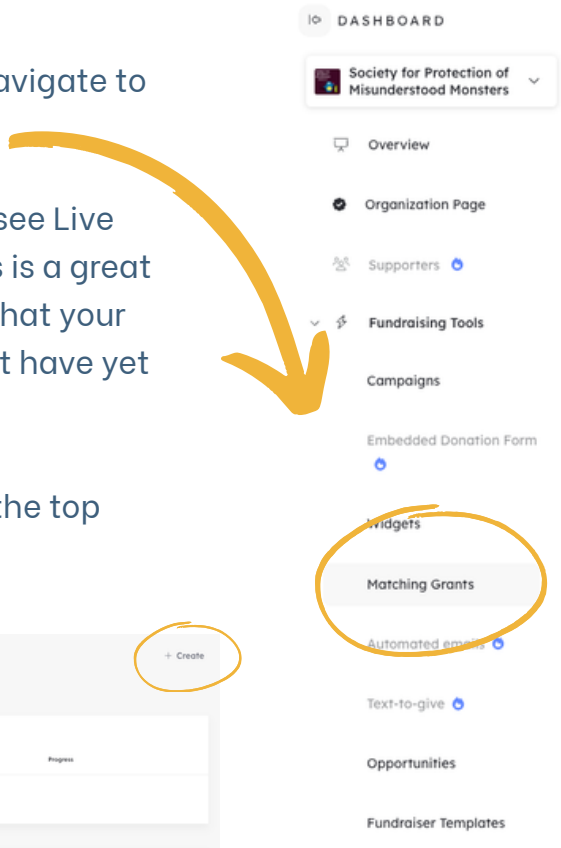
MATCHING FUND TOOL ON GIVEMN.ORG

Once you secure a matching fund for your campaign, it's time to spread the word with your audience! GiveMN.org offers a robust matching fund tool as part of your suite of tools on the platform. Keep reading to learn more about how to set up a matching fund on your GiveMN page.

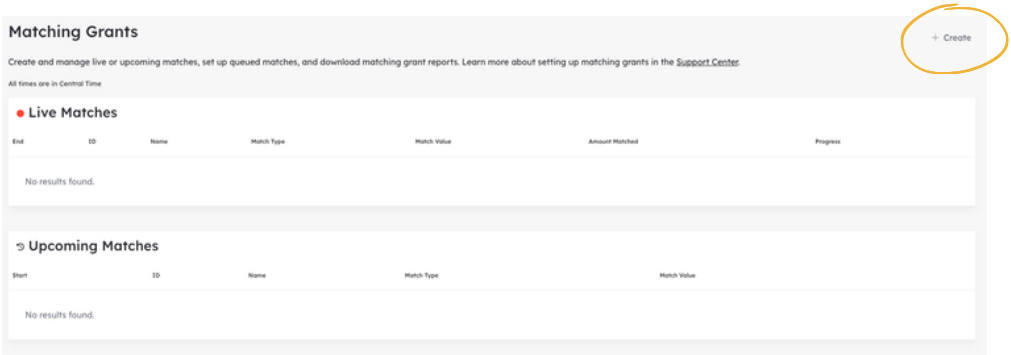
SETTING UP YOUR MATCHING FUND

After you've logged in to your GiveMN.org account, navigate to Dashboard > Fundraising Tools > Matching Grants



Once you're on the Matching Grants screen, you can see Live Matches, Upcoming Matches, and Past Matches. This is a great way to get a quick glance at all the matching funds that your organization has done in the past as well as ones that have yet to happen.

To create a new matching fund, select "+ Create" in the top right corner.



Adding a new matching fund will then take you to a form to fill out more information about your match. This will include who is sponsoring the match, what type of match it is, and more.

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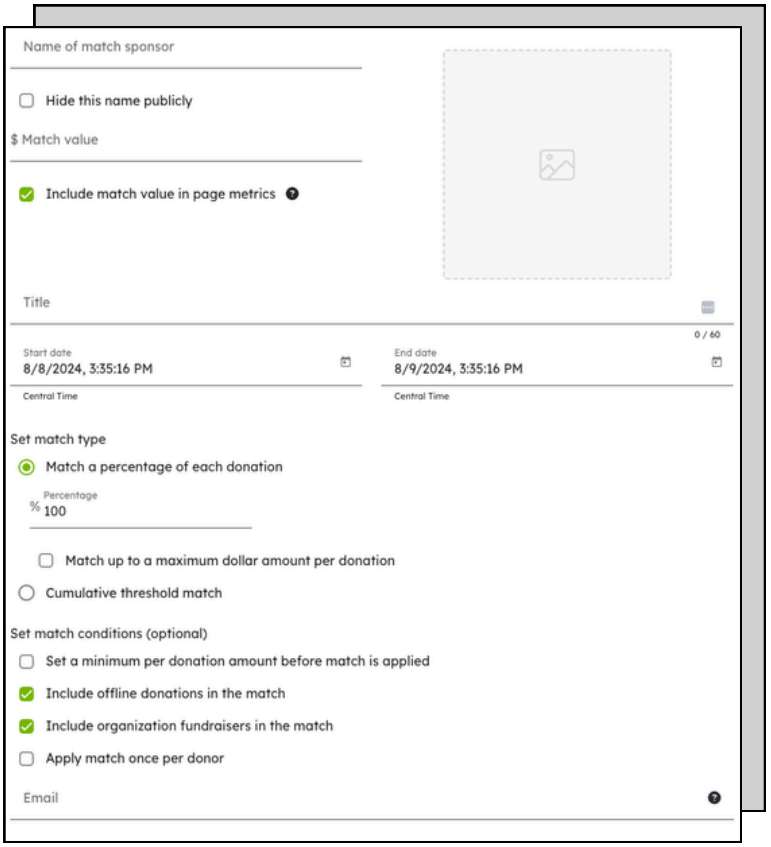
ADD IN THE DETAILS

Filling out the details for your matching fund is a quick process on GiveMN.org. Let's go over some of specific details and frequently asked questions about components of the form.



1 INCLUDING THE MATCH VALUE IN PAGE METRICS

By selecting "include match value in page metrics," you're basically saying, "**yes, I want the funds from my matching fund to show up as part of my goal tracker on my GiveMN.org page.**" This is a great option if the person or organization providing your matching dollars is going to write you a check, give you cash, donate on your website, or give over the phone.

Including the match value in your page metrics will automatically apply matching funds as donations are made.

However, if the person or organization that's providing your matching dollars plans to fulfill their gift by donating on GiveMN.org, you should de-select this option. Otherwise, the matching fund gift will be double counted - once as donations are made and again when the funder completes their donation on GiveMN.org.

2 SELECTING THE START AND END DATES

The great thing about using GiveMN's matching fund tracker is that you can pre-schedule your match for a future date! That way, when your campaign starts you don't have to worry about remembering to turn your match on.

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3 SETTING THE MATCH TYPE

When you're setting up the details of your match, there's a couple things to pay attention to: the percentage match, maximum dollar amount, and the option for cumulative threshold matches.

The form defaults to 100% of every donation will be matched. This is in line with the 1:1 match type. However, you could set your fund up to match 50% of every donation, etc. Our team recommends sticking with the 100% match for ease of messaging.

Next, there's the option to set a maximum dollar amount that can be matched by your fund. For example, if you want the match to apply dollar-for-dollar to donations up to $1,000, you could select the checkbox that says, "match up to a maximum dollar amount per donation."

Finally, you have the option to set a cumulative threshold match instead of a 1:1 match. Revisit the 1:1 match section of this workbook for more details on each type.

4 SETTING MATCH CONDITIONS

The final thing to notice when setting up your match is the section regarding match conditions. These are additional levers you can pull to customize your matching fund.

- **Setting a minimum donation amount:** the default minimum donation amount on GiveMN.org is $5. Our team typically recommends that organizations don't require a minimum donation amount above that threshold. A $10 donation to one person may be the equivalent of a major gift to them! We encourage you to be as inclusive as possible when it comes to fulfilling your match.
- **Including offline donations:** including offline gifts gives you the option to count any additional gifts you upload to GiveMN.org that may have been made via check, your website, or another form of payment. This is a great option if you plan to add offline gifts you've received outside of GiveMN.org.
- **Including organization fundraisers:** selecting this option will include donations made through fundraiser (peer-to-peer) pages that others set up on your behalf via GiveMN.org. To reflect all donations made to your cause in the match, our team recommends leaving this box checked.
- **Applying the match once per donor:** GiveMN.org tracks unique donors by email address used when completing a donation on the platform. By selecting to only apply the match once to each donor, you're ensuring that an individual cannot make two separate gifts during your campaign and have both counted towards the match. This is a good option to select if you're running a match that is based on number of unique donors contributing to your campaign.

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LAST MINUTE TIPS

- **Any match is better than no match at all!** Whether your matching fund is $250 or $100,000, offering a match of any amount can inspire your audience. Match messaging is more about creating urgency and encouraging collective giving than dollar amounts.
- **Talk about your match!** A match can only motivate donors if they know it exists. However you decide to set up your matching fund, highlight the match in your messaging – make it clear, compelling, and tied to a campaign goal that is aspirational but still achievable.
- **Don't forget to follow up with the group that funded your match!** In addition to stewarding your individual donors, make sure you report back the impact of the matching fund to the company, foundation, or people that made it happen.

NEED MORE CAMPAIGN HELP?

Reach out to our team of technology experts at Help@GiveMN.org anytime or visit the GTMD26 Resources Hub on GiveMN.org for more templates, guides, and tools to help make your campaign the best it can be.

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