What is the SECC?

Thanks to legislation that created the State Employee Charitable Campaign in 1993, employees of state agencies, junior and community colleges, and universities throughout Texas enjoy the benefit of giving to many of their favorite charities through an annual workplace giving campaign which features the convenience of payroll deduction. We can be proud that the campaign has grown so much in 15 years, with donations exceeding $9.58 million for charitable organizations in 2008.

How does it work?

Each fall, we get the opportunity to learn about the charities in the SECC, choose which ones we want to help, and then fill out a pledge form to indicate how much we wish to donate to which groups. We can make a one-time gift by cash or check. Or, even better, our gift can be deducted from each paycheck beginning at the first of next year.

The campaign runs from September through October. During this time period, you can expect to attend an informational meeting or be approached by a co-worker with information and a pledge form. The directory you’re now holding provides information on all the charities in the campaign — a great resource not only for helping you make your choices, but also for finding help if you need it yourself.

What charities are involved?

One of the great benefits of the SECC is the wide variety of charities and causes represented — there’s something for everyone. They range from small local organizations to large and well-known national and international groups.

Those charities that wish to participate must meet stringent legal requirements, and then be scrutinized by teams of state employees to ensure:

- They are recognized by the IRS as 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations and registered with the Secretary of State.
- They are audited (or reviewed) annually by an accountant in accordance with generally-accepted auditing standards.
- They provide direct or indirect health and human services.
- They spend no more than 25 percent of funds raised on administration and fund raising unless they qualify for an exception due to special circumstances.

It’s not hard to see why employees of the Friendship State have responded so enthusiastically to the SECC:

- It’s an easy, effective and cost-efficient way to give to charities.
- Our contributions help improve the quality of life for people in communities locally, across the country and around the world.
- The campaign supports a wide variety of vital health and human services.
- All charities in the campaign must meet strict eligibility criteria.
Who governs and runs the SECC?

Committees of state employees govern the SECC at two levels — statewide and locally. They ensure the campaign is conducted fairly and equitably under a strict set of guidelines that give donors confidence in both the charities that benefit and the methods used to solicit.

At the state level, a committee of state employees called the State Policy Committee (SPC) provides governance and oversight. Four members are appointed by the Governor and three each by the Lieutenant Governor and the Comptroller of Public Accounts. They are responsible for a campaign plan, a budget and ensuring the eligibility of statewide organizations. The SPC also hires a State Campaign Manager to administer the campaign.

At the local level, Local Employee Committees (LECs) provide similar oversight. The SPC appoints the LEC chair, which then recruits a local committee of up to 10 members. They hire a local campaign manager to administer the campaign locally.

How are funds distributed?

Contributions made by state agency employees are distributed by the State Comptroller to participating federations, who then send the funds along to their members. Each university distributes funds to federations through its own payroll system. At the local level, the Local Campaign Managers distribute the funds the same way.

But because it is almost impossible to account for donations lost through such things as an employee leaving or transferring, a percentage method is used to distribute funds. At the end of each year's campaign, the percent of funds pledged to each charity is calculated. Each charity then receives that percentage of what is eventually collected. Undesignated pledges are shared with all participating charities using the same percentage.

Each charity also pays its share of the cost of running the campaign (printed materials, etc.) based on the same percentage.

Why should I give?

- To help those who are less fortunate through no fault of their own.
- To support a favorite cause or charity on a regular basis.
- It's the right thing to do.
- It will make you feel great.
- It's tax deductible.

How much should I give?

How much to give is totally up to you; your personal generosity is no one's business but your own and remains confidential. Still, many of us like to have some idea of what is appropriate to consider as a gift.

First, you might consider participating as a leadership giver — one of the many people who like to do a little more by donating at the leadership giving levels described later.

Second, you might consider one of the standards used in campaigns like this throughout the nation — giving one hour's pay per month, usually calculated as .006 of your annual salary.

Third, give what you feel is appropriate for you and your budget — any gift, no manner how large or small, can make all the difference in the world to the charities in this campaign.

With a low overhead of less than 10 percent statewide ... more of your contribution gets to the charities you select than in almost any similar fund-raising activity.
What will my gift provide?

$2 PER MONTH for one year:
> provides three days of parenting classes that teach effective discipline and stress/conflict management.
> provides vital cancer survivorship information and support to 80 cancer survivors.
> provides one day of food and shelter for a homeless person.
> provides prescription glasses for five people in a Third World country.
> covers the cost of planting of 100 tree saplings.
> provides meals for a homebound senior citizen for two weeks.

$5 PER MONTH for one year:
> provides 12 students with an interactive CD on college-age depression and suicide.
> covers the registration fee for one patient or family member to attend the National Organization for Rare Disorders Patient/Family Conference.
> provides adaptive aids for personal care to make life easier for ALS patients.
> will provide equipment and supplies for five people to spend a morning cleaning a beach or river bank.
> provides teaching materials for 30 at-risk students for one school year.

$10 PER MONTH for one year:
> enables three elementary school classes to tour a natural area.
> provides physical therapy exercise sessions for patients with Multiple Sclerosis and Muscular Dystrophy.
> will help a family in crisis with their monthly utility or grocery bills.
> provides 233 meals for hungry babies.
> will pay for preserving and distributing 120,000+ servings of nutritious produce.
> provides one mammogram for an uninsured woman.
> will help to pay the cost of testing for early signs of kidney disease for a low-income patient.

$20 PER MONTH for one year:
> provides a full year of groceries for a homebound AIDS patient.
> provides food for one guide dog in advanced training.
> covers the cost of training material and instruction for self-examinations for breast cancer and for awareness materials for prostate cancer.
> supports training in an environmental career for a person with a disability.
> provides scholarship assistance for inner city children to attend a nature camp in the Hill Country.

$45 PER MONTH for one year:
> provides 26 students with assistance in math and science.
> provides 11 days of food and shelter for a homeless person.
> ensures safety from cholera for 50 people.
> funds a volunteer on-line at a national AIDS treatment hotline for one week.
> provides two high schools with science curriculum materials about proper handling of chemicals found in the home.

Benefits of payroll deduction

Payroll deduction offers a special opportunity to do more and feel it less.

- It helps to minimize costs while maximizing your contribution.
- You can manage your own philanthropy — you know when deductions start and that you can end them at any time.
- It saves time and takes little effort.

Best of all, by donating a specific amount from each paycheck, you can make a much more significant impact on causes you wish to help.