

Charity Evaluation Handbook

2023 Version | Updated June 2023



**ANIMAL CHARITY
EVALUATORS**

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FOREWORD

Animal Charity Evaluators is a nonprofit organization dedicated to finding and promoting the most effective ways to help animals. One of the ways we do this is by evaluating animal charities. We share our findings on our website and encourage donors to give to the charities that will do the most good with their donations.

We aim to secure a high level of participation in our evaluation process, and we've designed our process with the goal of maximizing benefits for the charities that participate. As you know, many donors are looking for independent reviews on charitable impact, and ACE is one of the resources they turn to for thorough reviews of animal charities. Having a review of your organization (or a summary review¹ if your organization does not end up being recommended) on our website will strengthen your current and potential donors' trust in your work because it indicates that you are interested in assessing your impact and effectiveness.

We are happy to compensate you for the time spent participating in our evaluation process. We will send participation grants of at least \$2,500 USD (or the equivalent amount in your local currency) to all charities that, in our judgment, make a "good faith effort" to work with us toward the publication of a review, regardless of the final result. Allowing us to publish a review or summary review of your organization is not a requirement to receive a participation grant.

In the fiscal year 2022–2023, we estimate that ACE's recommendations helped to influence approximately \$7.6 million in funding for our recommended charities. We provide our recommended charities with high-value donors; the average gift made via ACE in the past fiscal year was \$447.² In the fiscal year 2023–2024, we aim to influence \$9 million in funding for our recommended charities.

Our evaluation process runs from June to November and includes the following activities:

- We select charities and invite them to participate in the evaluation process.
- If the charity accepts the invitation:
 - We request written information about the charity's programs, financials, and policies, and we send an engagement survey to staff and volunteers that work 5+ hours per week on average.
 - We make a public announcement introducing them as one of the charities being evaluated this year.
 - We notify charities of their recommendation status and share a draft of their full review (for charities receiving a recommendation) or summary review (for charities not receiving a recommendation) for approval.
 - We publish our reviews, summary reviews, and charity recommendations.

¹ This year, we decided to no longer publish full reviews for charities that are not recommended. We will instead publish a summary review that will include highlights of each of the evaluation criteria, as well as information about why the charity was not recommended.

² Because some donors give more than once per year, this is less than the average from each donor.


- After publication, we send a survey to charities to solicit feedback on how we can improve the evaluation process.

This handbook details our [evaluation process](#) and [policies and procedures](#). Please read through each section thoroughly. If you have any questions not addressed in this handbook, please contact our Charity Liaison, Vince Mak, at charity-liaison@animalcharityevaluators.org.

OVERVIEW

TIMELINE

June	Invitation and eligibility checks <p>ACE selects charities to participate in evaluation process, sends invitations to those charities, and announces selected charities in a blog post.</p> <p>Charities review handbook for eligibility and, if interested in, accept invitation by returning signed handbook.</p>
July	Information request <p>ACE sends first (general) information request to charities.</p> <p>ACE sends engagement survey to charities to distribute to their staff.</p> <p>Charities complete first information request and distribute engagement survey to staff.</p>
August	Information request: follow-up questions <p>ACE sends follow-up questions to charities.</p> <p>Charities complete follow-up questions and submit any additional documents requested.</p>
September	ACE makes recommendation decisions <p>ACE uses information sent by charities to apply our evaluation criteria and make recommendation decisions</p>
	ACE drafts charity reviews and recommendation decisions <p>ACE drafts reviews based on information received from charities. In addition to the reviews, ACE collects and formats supplemental documents and designs graphics to publish alongside reviews.</p>
October	Drafts sent to charities for approval <p>ACE sends charities their review draft and formatted supplemental documents for approval for publication.</p> <p>Charities look over draft and supplemental documents to confirm information is accurate and to flag confidential information, if any, that needs redaction.</p> <p>ACE receives charity feedback and incorporates changes into draft.</p> <p>Charities give final approval for publication.</p>
November	Recommendations Announcement and publication (November 1) <p>ACE publishes charity reviews and recommendations in advance of #Giving Tuesday.</p> <p>Charities who receive a recommendation are sent additional guidance on next steps.</p>
December	Feedback & documents request <p>ACE distributes a post-evaluation feedback survey to all participating charities to gain insight into improvements for future evaluations.</p> <p>ACE may also request additional information that is required in order to send participation grants and other funds to charities.</p> <p>Charities submit feedback survey and any documents necessary to distribute funding.</p>
January +	Participation grants <p>Once ACE receives all documents necessary for processing:</p> <p>ACE sends participation grants to charities in the amount indicated in the charity handbook.</p> <p>Charity confirms receipt of participation grant.</p>

 For a full-size graphic, please refer to [this PDF](#).

KEY DATES

Below is a table of activities and deadlines for the 2023 charity evaluation process. These dates are tentative and subject to change because they are dependent on all charities meeting their deadlines throughout the evaluation process; the Charity Liaison will provide all final deadlines via email.

Activity	Deadline
<i>Charities accept or decline the invitation</i>	<i>June 23, 2023</i>
<i>ACE publishes a blog post announcing the charities being evaluated</i>	<i>Early July</i>
<i>Charities submit completed general information request</i>	<i>Mid July (three weeks from receipt)</i>
<i>Charities distribute engagement survey links to staff and volunteers that work 5+ hours a week on average and ensure all responses are submitted</i>	<i>Mid July (two weeks from receipt)</i>
<i>Charities submit completed follow-up questions</i>	<i>Mid August (one-and-a-half weeks from receipt)</i>
<i>ACE notifies participants of recommendation status</i>	<i>Late September</i>
<i>Charities review drafts for accuracy and give their approval for publication</i>	<i>October 13, 2023</i>
<i>ACE publishes reviews, summary reviews, and charity recommendations</i>	<i>November 1, 2023</i>
<i>Charities submit post-evaluation feedback survey</i>	<i>December 2023</i>
<i>ACE sends participation grants to charities</i>	<i>Early 2024</i>

EVALUATION PROCESS

INVITATION AND ELIGIBILITY (JUNE)

Background

Each year, ACE's evaluation committee considers our comprehensive list of charities and selects a small group of highly promising charities to invite to participate in our evaluation process.

We are happy to offer participation grants of at least \$2,500 USD to charities that accept our invitation and make a “good faith effort” to work with us toward the publication of a review.

What's expected of charities

- Read the invitation and attached documents.
- (Optional) Schedule an introductory call using the appointment scheduling link in the invitation email if you have any questions or would like more information.
- Confirm your organization meets the eligibility requirements outlined in this handbook.
- Accept or decline the invitation by **no later than June 23, 2023**.
 - Accept the invitation via email by returning signed charity handbook.
 - Decline the invitation via email; please include your reasoning for declining. (See [Reasons for declining invitation.](#))

Eligibility requirements

In order to maximize the likelihood of your organization receiving a recommendation, please check that your organization meets the following eligibility criteria³ before accepting our invitation to participate:

- Annual budget size of more than \$100,000 USD
- At least three staff members (including full-time, part-time, and contractors)
- At least two years since being founded
- Not working or based in a country that is comprehensively sanctioned by the U.S.⁴
- Ability to gather and send all financial documents required for ACE to distribute funds to your organization, either directly or through the use of a fiscal sponsor

³ACE uses these criteria as a way to identify that charities have enough room for more funding to receive a recommendation and enough historical data to assess their programs.

⁴ Countries and areas that are [comprehensively sanctioned](#) by the U.S. Government: Cuba, Iran, North Korea, Russia, Venezuela, Syria, and the Donetsk and Luhansk regions of Ukraine.

If your organization does not meet all of these criteria, we request that you decline our invitation, as it is unlikely that the organization will be recommended as an ACE Top or Standout Charity. That said, we invited your organization because we believe you are doing promising work in animal advocacy. As such, if you are ineligible to participate in the evaluation process, we encourage you to pursue a [Movement Grant](#) for early-stage projects. To discuss this option further, please reach out to our Programs Director, Elisabeth Ormandy, at elisabeth.ormandy@animalcharityevaluators.org.

Announcing charities under evaluation

By early July, ACE plans to publicly announce the charities that have passed the first stage of consideration and accepted their invitation to be evaluated. (We plan to check in with each charity and get their permission to be listed before making this announcement.) We aim to bring positive attention to participating organizations and the fact that they are interested in assessing their impact and effectiveness. Charities that ACE selects to participate all show evidence of running effective programs and engaging in highly impactful work; even those that are not ultimately recommended as a Top or Standout Charity are typically among the most effective charities in their space, so we are happy to spotlight their work.

Reasons for declining invitation

For some charities, deciding whether or not to participate in our evaluation process is a difficult decision. Here are some common reasons why some charities may decline to be evaluated:

- They do not meet the eligibility criteria required to participate in the evaluation process.
- They are too busy during Animal Charity Evaluators' evaluation season to participate in the evaluation process.
- They disagree with Animal Charity Evaluators' evaluation criteria, methodology, and/or philosophy.
- They do not support Animal Charity Evaluators' decision to evaluate charities relative to one another.
- They do not consider themselves an animal charity.
- They do not currently have a significant need for more funding.⁵
- They prefer to wait until the following year to be evaluated.
- They are in an exploratory or testing phase where there is significant uncertainty about which of their programs they prefer to scale.

In 2023, we expect to recommend about half of the charities under evaluation. This is to keep the bar for recommendation high, lead to more influenced funds for recommended charities, avoid overwhelming potential donors, and ensure that our team has the capacity to meaningfully promote all of our recommended charities. However, we make every effort to make evaluation worthwhile for charities that participate, outside of the exposure and financial incentive that comes from being recommended. The 2022 cohort of charities we evaluated [generally found](#)

⁵ Animal Charity Evaluators does not recommend charities that cannot absorb at least the expected funding that comes from being a Standout Charity. The threshold is still yet to be confirmed for 2023, but it will be at least \$100,000 USD.

participating in the evaluation process to be useful, regardless of their final recommendation status.

If you are unsure whether these (or similar) reasons apply to your organization or outweigh the benefits of participating in our evaluation process this year, please schedule a call with us using the appointment scheduling link provided in your invitation. We would be happy to discuss the decision with you further.

INFORMATION REQUESTS (JUNE – AUGUST)

Background

The first stage of our evaluation process consists of requesting information from each charity that has agreed to participate. This year, we will be requesting information using Qualtrics survey software. As defined below, information will be requested at least three times during this stage. We expect this period of evaluation to be the most demanding for charities.


We ask that you ensure that all information submitted to us is truthful and accurate to the best of your knowledge. Your ability to submit accurate data is vital to the outcome of our evaluations; submitting inaccurate information may result in us discontinuing our evaluation of your organization.

What's expected of charities

- Fill out the general information request **no later than three weeks after receipt.**
- Distribute engagement surveys to staff and volunteers that work 5+ hours per week on average, instructing them to submit their responses **no later than two weeks after receipt.**
- Submit a response to our follow-up questions **no later than one-and-a-half weeks after receipt.**

General information request

After accepting the invitation and returning the signed handbook, ACE's [Charity Liaison](#) will send a general information request for you to fill out via Qualtrics.

 The Charity Liaison will be your main point of contact for all matters related to your evaluation. Please direct all communications to: charity-liaison@animalcharityevaluators.org

To ensure that we have adequate time to draft all reviews, **we require that you submit the general information request no later than three weeks after receiving the request form.**

Our general information request helps us understand your organization's primary achievements over the past couple of years and the breakdown of your organizational budget by activity. The information we request at this point may include:

- Your organization's key achievements and expenditures on the key achievements over a 12-month period
- Proportion of expenses allocated to each country in which your organization operates, each intervention your organization pursues, and each animal group your organization targets
- Historical (January 2020 to May 2022) and projected (June 2023 to December 2025) revenue and expenditures
- Restricted donations
- Current full-time equivalents and details about hiring plans
- Current reserves held, reserves policy, and reserves target
- Unexpected funding (how you would allocate an influx of unexpected funds)
- A list of your organization's human resource policies and processes
- Information about your organization's governance and structure
- A list of current key staff members, including directors and board members

We will **publish all general information request responses** from charities we recommend so that we can easily cite them in our reviews.

If any information in your response is **confidential**, we require you to flag it for us somehow. (We recommend formatting such as ****CONFIDENTIAL: {confidential info}****.) This will ensure that we redact confidential information before publication.

We will send you the edited versions of your responses once they are formatted so you can approve the document before publication.

Engagement survey

As part of the evaluation process, we request that you distribute an anonymous engagement survey⁶ on ACE's behalf to your staff and volunteers who work 5+ hours per week on average. This year, engagement surveys will be administered via Qualtrics and translated into the languages that your staff or volunteers require. The Charity Liaison will send you links to survey(s) to share. We ask that you distribute the survey and **ensure all responses are submitted within two weeks of receiving the survey links**.

We encourage all of your employees and volunteers to be candid and thorough in their responses to the engagement survey, as this aids us in better understanding your organization from the vantage point of your staff rather than leadership. This can aid us in making our recommendation decisions. In order to ensure representative responses, we require at least 65% of the staff at your organization to respond to the survey. **This is an eligibility requirement to receive a recommendation from ACE.**

⁶ See the [2022 survey](#) as an example of questions included in previous surveys.

Engagement survey responses are used to produce a summary that identifies themes in respondents' comments and provides details on the average score and distribution of quantitative questions. Our staff will use this summary to draft each charity's final review, but **it will not be published** alongside the review or anywhere else on our website.

Follow-up questions

To help us verify your primary accomplishments and clarify any uncertainties about your organization's work or recent achievements, **we will send you some follow-up questions**. Please don't take these questions to reflect ACE's attitude about your organization; follow-up questions are simply part of our regular process for clarifying and verifying claims of all charities under review.

To ensure that we have adequate time to draft all of our reviews, **we require that you submit your response to our follow-up questions within one and a half weeks of receiving the request form**. Please ensure you have shared all relevant information with us by this point, as we cannot include any new information in charity reviews after making recommendation decisions.

Other sources of information

We may seek out other sources of information to verify claims made by leadership during the charity evaluation process. For instance, we may seek news reports and other publicly available information to corroborate information about events that your charity organized, or we may reach out to external experts or leaders at other charities who we think may be able to help confirm certain information.

Additionally, we may share anonymized, organization-level summaries of engagement survey responses with the organizational consultant [Scarlet Spark](#) to improve our processes for assessing leadership and organizational practices in future evaluations. Scarlet Spark will operate under a confidentiality agreement with ACE and will not share any information with any other party. If you prefer that ACE does not share an anonymized summary of responses with Scarlet Spark, please let the Charity Liaison know as soon as possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS AND REVIEW APPROVAL (SEPTEMBER – OCTOBER)

Background

After our evaluation committee makes recommendation decisions, we communicate those decisions to charities via the Charity Liaison. If we select your organization as a Top or Standout Charity, we will promote it for the duration of your recommendation. Your charity will be featured

on our website, in promotional materials, on social media, and in our presentations. We will also fundraise on your behalf, provide you with your donors' contact information every quarter, and distribute donations to you twice per year. We will send you ACE-approved badge graphics to use in your promotional materials, newsletters, websites, or wherever you see fit.

The Charity Liaison will also send you a draft of your review, instructions for requesting corrections, and the next steps. If your organization is not selected for recommendation, we will send you a shorter summary review. You will have an opportunity to flag inaccurate information and/or request that we remove confidential information from your review. If any changes are needed, you should note those changes as suggestions or comments in the document and contact ACE's Charity Liaison.

All charities will have three weeks to correct any factual errors and/or request that we remove confidential information from their review and supplemental documents.

As previously indicated, if you are not happy with our review or summary review of your organization for any reason, you may choose to [withdraw](#) it from publication.

What's expected of charities

- Thoroughly read through your review draft and note if any changes are needed.
- Approve supplemental documents for publication (if applicable).
- Submit your approval for publication (or request to withdraw) to the Charity Liaison **no later than October 13**. This is a strict deadline, and any delay in approval could jeopardize the publication of your review.
- Maintain strict confidentiality regarding your recommendation status; do not share this information with anyone before ACE publishes your review and announces this year's charity recommendations.


Recommendations notification

The Charity Liaison will notify all participating charities of ACE's recommendation decisions. If you received a recommendation, the Charity Liaison will send you additional information, including graphics and a best practices guide for promoting your recommendation.

Considerations when approving

When you receive the draft of your review or summary review, please bear in mind that *all* of our reviews, even reviews of our Top Charities, contain critical content. Our role is not to "sell" any particular organization to the community but rather to provide honest, detailed reviews. Your organization's review will have been written alongside many others, all of which were created using the same process and format. This format may or may not have changed significantly from those used in previous years, but we assure you that it will be consistent with all reviews written during the same year.

If you are not happy with our review or summary review of your organization for any reason, you may choose to [withdraw](#) it from publication.

 Please keep the contents of your review (along with your recommendation status) **confidential** until publication.

Publication

This year, we aim to announce our charity recommendations on **November 1, 2023**. This is the date that we will publish reviews for recommended charities and summary reviews for non-recommended charities.

FEEDBACK AND ADDITIONAL DOCUMENTS REQUEST (DECEMBER – JANUARY)

Background

After publishing reviews and recommendations, ACE distributes a post-evaluation feedback survey to all participating charities to gain insight on improvements for future evaluations. We may also request additional information that is required to send participation grants and other funds to charities.

What's expected of charities

- Submit feedback survey responses.
- Submit documents necessary for us to distribute funding (e.g., participation grants).

Post-evaluation feedback survey

Sometime after reviews and summary reviews are published, the Charity Liaison will send you a survey link. We request that you submit your survey responses **no later than 4 weeks after receipt**. We understand that this is a busy time of year for all charities, so please reach out to us if you need an extension for submitting the post-evaluation feedback form.

Additional documents request

If needed, the Charity Liaison will contact you to request additional documents needed in order to distribute funds—including participation grants—to your organization.

PARTICIPATION GRANTS (JANUARY – FEBRUARY)

Once you've submitted all required documents, ACE will send your charity's participation grant in early 2024.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

OUR CONTINUING RELATIONSHIP


We hope that each new evaluation sparks the beginning of a long working relationship with a charity. If we select your organization as a Top or Standout Charity, we will promote it for the next two years, featuring it on our website, in our promotional materials, on social media, and in presentations. We will encourage the public to donate to your organization as one of the most effective animal advocacy organizations in the world.

Even if your organization is *not* selected as a Top or Standout Charity, we may reach out to you to provide feedback on our research, apply for our [Movement Grants](#) program, or be featured in a [blog post](#). Occasionally, we even connect donors with charities that we have evaluated but not recommended if we feel they are an exceptionally good fit. We are always looking for new ways to support a broad range of charities in our work and promote a variety of ways to help animals.

If you'd like, contact our [communications team](#) throughout the year with updates on your accomplishments. We'd love to hear from you! We keep track of all of the information you send us, though we generally only [update](#) our charity reviews during our annual evaluation cycle.

ACE's Recommended Charity Fund

If we select your organization as a Top or Standout Charity, we will not only direct donors to your organization, but we will also actively fundraise on your behalf. In addition to collecting donations for our Top Charities through our website, we solicit donations to our [Recommended Charity Fund](#), which is distributed among our Top and Standout Charities. This fund is disbursed in January and July of each year; the amount distributed is based on each recommended charity's room for more funding and the amount of money in the fund.

 In order to distribute any funding, we require some [background information](#) from your organization.

Tracking ACE-influenced donations

If we select your organization as a Top or Standout Charity, we request that you help us track donations that are influenced on some level by ACE's recommendation of your organization. We appreciate your cooperation in helping us evaluate our own impact as a nonprofit in the animal advocacy movement. For more details, please review our donation tracking standard operating procedures for [Top Charities](#) and [Standout Charities](#).

Following up on your organization’s room for more funding

Twice a year, we follow up with our Top Charities and Standout Charities about their room for more funding. We will ask you for your best estimate of how much funding you have raised since our most recent check-in. We are only interested in your total revenue; there is no need for this update to distinguish ACE-influenced donations from other donations. If, based on your fundraising success, we’re concerned that your organization may have limited room for additional funding prior to our next recommendation update, we may reach out to discuss your current plans for growth.

Review and recommendation updates

We generally do not update our charity reviews or change our recommendations outside of our annual evaluation process. We do, however, reserve the right to remove parts of a review, archive a review, and/or rescind a recommendation in the event that (i) a major change occurs at one of the charities we’ve evaluated, or (ii) we discover highly relevant new information. We will make every effort to contact the charity in question to verify the relevant facts and notify them of our decision before making any such change.

Schedule of subsequent reviews

ACE’s charity recommendations last for two years. In the past, we have typically re-evaluated charities before this period ended to determine whether to continue their recommendation. However, we are considering changes to our re-evaluations policy and charity selection process, and in the future existing recommended charities may be subject to a similar charity selection process as charities being considered for the first time. We will announce these changes by early 2024 and contact our recommended charities about next steps once decided.

If we evaluate your organization but do not select it as a recommended charity in 2023, we may ask to evaluate it again in the future. Please let us know about any major changes at your organization that you think may contribute to the need for an update.

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Note: A complete description of [Animal Charity Evaluators’ policies](#) is available on our website. Here, we describe aspects of our policies and procedures that are relevant to our evaluation process.

Participation in the evaluation process

We’re always glad to hear that a charity has chosen to participate in our evaluation process. Please know that we will make every effort to evaluate your organization fairly and in line with our policies and procedures. To ensure consistency across reviews, we evaluate every charity according to the same criteria. Each criterion is thoroughly researched and supported by

evidence and reason. Prior to publication, we solicit feedback from other parties, including our Executive Director, board members, and you—the charity under evaluation. We understand that *you* are the expert on your own organization, and we value your input because it helps us draft a review that accurately reflects your work.

Declining evaluation

If you decline to participate in our evaluation process, we make a note that your organization declined to be evaluated. Because of our commitment to transparency, we would like to disclose the reasons why the organization has declined to be evaluated. Some reasons why charities decline are listed earlier in this handbook. (See [Reasons for declining invitation](#).)

If you do not respond to our invitation to be evaluated, we will simply note that your organization “did not respond to our invitation.”

Conflicts of interest

We maintain a strict conflict of interest policy for our charity evaluation committee, which is detailed on our [website](#). Serious conflicts of interest (e.g., previous employment, close personal friendships with members of an organization) disqualify the employee or board member in question from participating in any aspect of the evaluation of a particular organization. Minor conflicts of interest (e.g., volunteering, most donation histories) are publicly acknowledged, though in general, we expect these not to interfere with our standard evaluation procedures.

We also have a policy in place to prevent conflicts of interest that may arise from donations. Should ACE receive a donation from an individual strongly tied to a recommended charity, the donation will be returned and said individual will be directed to the section of our [website](#) that addresses this issue. ACE will not apply for grants from organizations that could be considered for future recommendations.

If you believe that your organization has a conflict of interest and do not see it reflected on our [disclosures](#) page, please [contact us](#).

Sensitive and confidential information

During the evaluation process, you may wish to share information with us that is not yet public and/or that you wish to remain confidential. There will be many opportunities for you to share such information and notify us of its confidential nature. We will never disclose information that we understand to be private, either in our reviews or in our conversations with donors. We will send you our review of your organization prior to publication so that you may flag any information you would like us to omit from the published version.

Our commitment to honoring confidentiality extends to most circumstances surrounding your participation in our evaluation process. For example, if at the start of this process, you choose not to participate for reasons that you prefer not to publicize, we will not disclose those reasons to third parties.

Approval of publication

We will not publish a review of your organization without your permission. By approving a review for publication, you agree to its use on our website and in our promotional materials. You also agree that we may share information that appears in the review in our conversations with donors, as well as in other materials.

If you wish, you may quote parts of the review or link to the review on your website or in your promotional materials. You may also publish a response to the review via your own materials.

Withdrawal from publication

All organizations are free to withdraw from our evaluation process at any time, for any reason. If your organization chooses to withdraw in a given year, we will not publish any information we acquired about your organization during that year's evaluation process.⁷ This includes the reason(s) for your withdrawal, should you wish for them to remain confidential.

We will, however, note the approximate stage of the evaluation process at which your organization withdrew from participation. For example, one of the following notes might appear on our website next to the names of withdrawn charities:

- Withdrew from evaluation before we began drafting our review
- Withdrew from evaluation before we completed our review
- Withdrew from evaluation after viewing a draft of our review

If you would like us to publish a reason for your withdrawal from publication, you may select one or more [reasons for declining invitation](#), or we can state that you believe our review “misrepresented and/or misvalued” your organization.

Mutual non-disparagement agreement

In choosing to participate in our evaluation process, you agree to enter a mutual non-disparagement agreement with Animal Charity Evaluators, even in the case of your withdrawal. We promise not to make public evaluative claims about your organization (outside of the scope of the review or summary review we publish with your permission), and we ask that you make a commitment to not make negative evaluative claims about our evaluation of your organization. This agreement is designed to protect our organization; because we maintain the confidentiality of all information gathered during withdrawn evaluations, we would not be able to respond if a charity made disparaging statements about us—even if those statements were false.

⁷ In early July, we plan to publish a blog post announcing the list of charities undergoing evaluation. If you withdraw from the evaluation process or from publishing your review or summary review, your charity name will remain on that blog post.

Your agreement to not disparage Animal Charity Evaluators means that you will not make any negative evaluative statements (written or verbal) about our evaluation of your organization. Examples of negative statements include (but are not limited to):

- Claims that our (published or unpublished) review or summary review of your organization was poorly conducted or poorly written
- Claims that our (published or unpublished) review or summary review of your organization would cause harm to the animal advocacy movement
- Claims that we lack expertise or are otherwise ill-equipped to do our jobs

While we ask that you do not make negative *evaluative* statements about our review or summary review of your organization, you are welcome to make *factual* statements about our evaluation process. For instance, you may state that you chose to withdraw from the evaluation process because you disagreed with our review or summary review or because you believe we misunderstood your work.

This agreement does not prevent you from making evaluative statements about *other areas* of our work, as long as those statements do not relate to our review or summary review of your organization or our charity evaluation process. For example, you would still be permitted to critique a piece of research that we publish or a grantmaking decision that we make through Movement Grants.

Donor privacy policy

ACE will distribute donations and share donor contact information with our recommended charities so long as they maintain strict adherence to our [donor privacy policy](#). **Charities are required not to share, sell, or rent a donor's information with any other entities without first obtaining the donor's permission.**

Participation grants

We administer participation grants to all organizations that make a “good faith effort” toward the publication of a review. Allowing us to publish a review or summary review of your organization is not a requirement for receiving a participation grant. Charities that successfully complete our evaluation process will receive a participation grant of at least \$2,500 USD (or the equivalent amount in your local currency).

Participation grants are administered by our Finance Director after the release of our charity reviews—sometime around early 2024. Organizations may choose to have their grant sent by check or bank transfer. For a check, we will need to know (i) who to make the check out to and (ii) your organization's mailing address. For a bank transfer to organizations in the U.S., we will need to know the routing number, account number, and account type of your organization's bank account. We will also need to know the name of the account, the organization's physical address, and a contact name and email address.

In order for ACE to distribute participation grants (or any funding) to your organization, we will need some [background information](#).

Grantee background information

For ACE to distribute any funding (including participation grants) to your organization, we require the following information:

- The organization's name, address, a contact name and email, a brief description of the organization in English, and a detailed description of the programs and/or activities that the grant will support
- Board, leadership, and key employees' names, titles, emails, phone numbers, and annual wages
- Most recent year's financial statements or tax return (this is needed each calendar year that ACE provides funding)
- A spreadsheet with your organization's current operating budget, including a breakdown of expenses and salaries by program (this is needed each calendar year that ACE provides funding)
- A written statement confirming that funds from a restricted grant from ACE will be exclusively used for the activities defined in that grant
- For organizations in the U.S.:
 - a copy of your bylaws, articles of incorporation, (if registered charity) tax exemption letter, (if applicable) Internal Revenue Code (IRC) section, and IRS Form W-9
- For non-U.S. charities:
 - a resource (e.g., government webpage) showing what a charity has to provide to be registered in your country, the documents listed in that resource, and a document showing you are registered as a charity in your region
- For other non-U.S. organizations:
 - a document showing you are registered as an organization in your country (e.g., could be similar to the articles of incorporation)

ACE will reach out to your organization via email to remind you to send this information and instruct you how to submit it. We are only providing this list in advance should your organization want to start preparing this information or have any questions/concerns regarding this requirement. **If you do not provide this required information, ACE will be unable to distribute funding to your organization.**

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

1. Where will ACE's review or summary review of our organization be published?

All of our reviews and summary reviews are published on our [website](#). We also promote our recommended charities on social media, in our newsletters, and in other promotional material.

2. How long does the evaluation process take? What deadlines will you have for our organization?

The evaluation process lasts from June through November. Most of that time, however, our team is doing the work—not yours! We require three basic stages of participation from the charities we evaluate. First, we ask you to send us some information via Qualtrics and distribute an engagement survey to your staff and volunteers that work 5+ hours per week on average. We will ask you to answer some follow-up questions, with a deadline of one-and-a-half weeks. You will have up to three weeks to request corrections or redactions and approve your review draft. Finally, around the time of [publication](#) (November 1, 2023), we may ask you to implement donation tracking and send us your contact details so that we can administer your participation grant.

According to our [most recent survey](#) of charities we have previously evaluated, participating in our evaluation process takes a median of **100 hours**. This is typically higher for larger organizations. If you find that your organization is spending more time than anticipated, please let us know so we can discuss ways to reduce your time commitment.

3. How does being evaluated help our work? Will we be compensated for our time?

Many donors are looking for independent reviews on charitable impact, and ACE is one of the resources they turn to for thorough reviews of animal charities. Having a review of your organization on our website will strengthen your current and potential donors' trust in your work because it indicates that you are interested in assessing your impact and effectiveness.

We are happy to compensate you for the time spent participating in our evaluation process. We will send participation grants of at least \$2,500 USD (or the equivalent amount in your local currency) to all charities that, in our judgment, make a "good faith effort" to work with us toward the publication of a review, regardless of the final result. Allowing us to publish a review of your organization is not a requirement to receive a participation grant.

4. My organization is very busy at this time of year. Can a certain aspect of the evaluation process be delayed a few weeks? Can it be delayed until spring?

We will make every effort to accommodate your organization's schedule, but there are certain deadlines that we are unable to move. We intend to publish all reviews on November 1, and they must be completed well in advance so that our communications team has time to format and publish them. If you'd like to request a deadline extension that would not interfere with our publication date, please email our [Charity Liaison](#).

5. Can my organization be evaluated next year instead of this year?

We would be happy to add you to our list of charities to consider next year. If we invited you to participate in our evaluation process this year and you [choose to wait](#), it's fairly likely that we will invite you to participate again next year. However, since there may be time constraints or other factors that we are unable to anticipate or control, we cannot guarantee that we will select your organization for evaluation next year.

6. Can my organization be evaluated both this year and next year?

Top Charities and Standout Charities retain their recommendation status for two years. For charities that are evaluated but not recommended, we generally wait for three years before inviting charities to be re-evaluated. You should always feel free to [keep us updated](#) on major changes at your organization, as we may choose to re-evaluate your organization sooner than scheduled.

7. Will Animal Charity Evaluators publish sensitive or confidential information about my organization?

We will never disclose any information about your organization without your permission. You will have an [opportunity](#) to approve our review or summary review of your organization before we publish it.

8. Can my organization withdraw from evaluation at any time?

Yes. The entire evaluation process is optional, and your organization may [withdraw](#) at any time. In line with our commitment to maintaining transparency with our donors, we list the status of all organizations we work with on our website. If your organization withdraws from the evaluation process, we may list it on our website with the note: "withdrew from the evaluation process." We may also list the approximate stage of the process that you withdrew, and since we will announce the list of charities under evaluation in early July, your charity name will remain on that announcement.

9. If we are selected as a Top or Standout Charity, how long does that status last?

Top and Standout Charity status last for two years. We reserve the right to revoke either status outside of that time frame in the event that we uncover significant new information about a Top or Standout Charity. In the past, we have typically re-evaluated charities before this period ended to determine whether to continue their recommendation. However, we are considering changes to our re-evaluation policy and charity selection process, and in the future existing recommended charities may be subject to a similar charity selection process as charities being considered for the first time.

10. Can my organization decline to be listed on Animal Charity Evaluators' website?

While charities [can decline](#) to be listed on our website, we will by default list all charities that have participated in the evaluation process on our "list of charities considered in 2023" archive page, along with information about whether the organization was evaluated, declined or withdrew from the evaluation process, or did not respond to our invitation. We will also include your reasons for declining. Publishing this information helps us maintain transparency about our process, and we feel it is immensely helpful for our donors. Of course, we respect charities' requests, so please contact the [Charity Liaison](#) if you do not want your organization to be listed on the website or on the blog post we plan to publish announcing charities that are under evaluation.



Animal Charity Evaluators

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I have read the contents of ACE’s Charity Evaluation Handbook in its entirety and, on behalf of my organization,

_____, I agree to participate in ACE’s 2023 evaluation process.

Signature

Date

If your organization chooses to participate in Animal Charity Evaluators’ 2023 evaluation process, please sign and return this form as soon as possible to our Charity Liaison at: charity-liaison@animalcharityevaluators.org.

If your staff and/or volunteers that work 5+ hours per week on average require language translation(s) in order to complete the engagement survey, please let the Charity Liaison know as soon as possible.