

SOLICITATION vs PASSIVE DONATIONS (GOOGLE)

For religious groups, the main difference between passive donations and active solicitation lies in the presence of a direct, intentional appeal for funds. Solicitation is an active request for a contribution, while passive donations are given without a direct ask. This distinction has important implications for legal compliance and donor relationships.

Active Solicitation

Active solicitation is any direct request for financial contributions. For religious groups, this includes traditional fundraising methods and modern, tech-enabled campaigns.

Examples of active solicitation

- **Fundraising events:** Dinners, auctions, and concerts held to raise money.
- **Campaigns:** Direct mailings, email blasts, and social media campaigns asking for donations for a specific project.
- **Verbal requests:** Announcements during a service or at a meeting specifically asking for contributions.
- **Online giving with active promotion:** A website with a prominent "Donate Now" button that the organization promotes through other channels.

Key characteristics of active solicitation

- **Direct ask:** There is a clear and direct request to the donor.
- **Intentionality:** The organization actively takes steps to acquire financial support.
- **Potential legal requirements:** Because they involve active fundraising, some solicitations may trigger state-level registration and reporting requirements, even for religious organizations.

Passive Donations

Passive donations occur without a direct or explicit ask from the religious organization. They are often a secondary effect of other member activities.

Examples of passive donations

- **Contribution plates:** Passing an offering plate or basket during a worship service is a traditional, passive method. While the action facilitates giving, it is not a direct, verbal appeal.
- **Automated giving:** Regular tithes or offerings made by members through automated bank transfers or online giving systems.
- **Website "Donate" button:** A simple "Donate" button on an organization's website is typically considered passive, especially if the organization does not actively drive traffic to the site for the purpose of solicitation.
- **Donations with dues or ticket sales:** When a donation is included with a membership fee or event ticket purchase.

Key characteristics of passive donations

- **Indirect ask:** There is no specific call to action; the opportunity to donate is available but not prompted.
- **Donor-driven:** The donor initiates the gift, often as a matter of habit or convenience.
- **Lower regulatory risk:** Passive fundraising activities are less likely to trigger state-level charitable solicitation registration requirements.