

# Giving Suggestions: Using Quantity Requests to Increase Donations

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Across seven studies ( $N=9,028$ ), we provide evidence that quantity requests, wherein people consider multiple choice options of how much to donate (e.g., \$5, \$10, or \$15), increase contributions compared to open-ended requests. Specifically, quantity requests encourage greater donations (study 1), even when respondents can passively choose not to donate (study 2) and even when the donation is directed toward a less popular cause (study 3). This increase in donations holds for quantity requests that start with both lower (e.g., \$1) or higher (e.g., \$10) donation amount options (study 4). Quantity requests also outperform other requests with multiple nonquantity donation options (e.g., multiple options of *when* to donate or to *which charity branch* to direct a donation; study 5). We offer evidence that quantity requests are effective because they simplify donation decisions by communicating normative donation magnitudes (studies 6 and 7). This clarified norm of donation magnitude boosts donation rates, which in turn leads to greater total donations. Our findings offer new conceptual insights into how quantity requests increase contributions as well as practical implications for charitable organizations to optimize contributions by leveraging the use of quantity requests.

**Keywords:** charitable giving, prosocial behavior, framing effects, donation rates

Individual donors constitute an essential part of most fundraising efforts. In 2020, individuals gave over \$324

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billion to philanthropic causes, consisting of around 69% of all charitable giving done in the USA ([Giving USA 2021](#)). Given this important source of funding, what is the best way to ask individual consumers for contributions? The current research investigates how to structure donation requests to maximize their effectiveness. In particular, we demonstrate that *quantity requests*<sup>1</sup>—those that provide multiple choice options of the amount one will give (e.g., \$5, \$10, \$15)—are uniquely effective at soliciting contributions.

Donation requests can be presented in a variety of ways. For instance, most organizations' websites, such as those for Direct Relief or Feeding America, provide a button that individuals can click to "Donate" before being transferred to a page where they choose a donation amount. Furthermore, many requests ask respondents to make additional decisions, such as which payment method to use ([Baggio and Motterlini 2019](#); [Soeteven 2011](#)), whether to

<sup>1</sup> For monetary donations, these options are often referred to as ask strings or appeals scales. We instead use the phrase "quantity requests" to differentiate from requests that provide multiple nonquantity choice options (e.g., branches of charities; study 5).

FIGURE 1

## DONATION REQUESTS IN THE REAL WORLD

**A**

**Your impact: \$1 = 10 meals**

Every dollar you give can provide at least 10 meals to families in need through the Feeding America network of food banks.

**Gift Amount (Required)**

**One-Time** Monthly

*Giving monthly is the most effective way to help feed kids and families year-round.*

\$1000 \$500 \$250

\$100 \$50 \$25

\$ other

**B**

**Direct Relief**

**Giving is good medicine.**

Everything Direct Relief does, every person whose life is saved or improved, stems from an act of generosity that's purely voluntary. You don't have to donate. That's why it's so extraordinary when you do.

For other ways to donate, including mailing a check or making a stock donation, please [click here](#).

**Donate once** Donate monthly Donate in tribute

US \$

NOTE.—A quantity request used by Feeding America with donation choice options ranging from \$25 to \$1,000 (A) and an open-ended request used by Direct Relief (B).

direct their donation to a particular recipient or cause (Eingar, Levontin, and Kogut 2021; Schulz, Thiemann, and Thöni 2018), or whether to make a one-time or recurring donation (Anik, Norton, and Ariely 2014; Atlas and Bartels 2018).

One of the most popular approaches taken by charitable organizations, however, is to employ quantity requests. For example, a donation request made by the charity Feeding America may give visitors the option of donating \$25, \$50, \$100, \$250, \$500, \$1,000, or other (figure 1A). Past research on fundraising appeals provides mixed evidence as to how and when quantity requests successfully recruit donations (supplemental table A in the web appendix provides a summary of relevant literature). Much of the past literature that concerns quantity requests has focused on comparing different ranges of suggested donation amounts (e.g., a menu of options that ranges from \$2 to \$6 vs. a menu of options ranging from \$4 to \$8; Altmann et al. 2019; De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013; Desmet and Feinberg 2003; Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Reiley and Samek 2019; Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995). However, the few papers comparing quantity requests to a baseline condition like an open-ended request—one that does not provide donation amount choice options (figure 1B)—often feature campaigns that suffered from very low response rates (Doob and McLaughlin 1989; Weyant and Smith 1987) that may have been underpowered to detect any effects, or feature campaigns that embedded their request manipulations in large packets of information intended to encourage giving (e.g., showing children's photos and stories;

Baggio and Motterlini 2019), possibly obscuring the impact of quantity requests on donation likelihood.

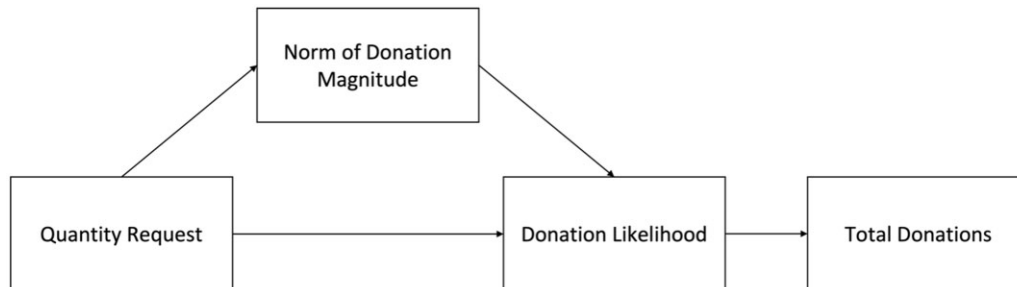
In the present work, we leverage experimental paradigms to better understand why quantity requests might increase donations. We present evidence that quantity requests increase total donations by uniquely raising donation rates. Because quantity requests implicitly convey norms about gift magnitude—helping potential donors decide how much to give—these requests increase the likelihood of giving. To our knowledge, we are the first to identify implicit norms about gift magnitude as a mechanism that explains why quantity requests tend to promote donation likelihood. We first provide a conceptual background to introduce our proposed account. We then present evidence from seven experiments ( $N = 9,028$ ) to support our effect and its mechanism, ruling out plausible alternative explanations along the way. Finally, we highlight important theoretical and practical implications of the present research and offer directions for future research, including potential boundary conditions of quantity requests.

## CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

When individuals consider a donation, they are faced with a tradeoff between their resources (e.g., money) and other aims, such as helping other people, maintaining one's identity as a moral person, and appearing prosocial to others (Berman and Small 2012; Gneezy et al. 2012). Though some people are consistently generous or consistently self-interested, most people want to give the “right”

FIGURE 2

## CONCEPTUAL MODEL



NOTE.—Quantity requests facilitate donation likelihood by conveying norms of donation magnitude (e.g., what amounts are typically given). In so doing, quantity requests boost total donations.

amount (Grant 2013). But determining what amount is “right” is cognitively taxing (Reiley and Samek 2019). Giving too much is financially costly, whereas giving too little can feel stingy, somewhat defeating the purpose of giving at all. It is no wonder then that people often avoid prosocial requests altogether—for instance, crossing the street to dodge a charitable worker collecting donations—to opt out of making these decisions (Andreoni, Rao, and Trachtman 2017; Cain, Dana, and Newman 2014; Dana, Cain, and Dawes 2006; DellaVigna, List, and Malmendier 2012; Gneezy et al. 2010; Lin, Schaumberg, and Reich 2016; Pancer et al. 1979). This highlights an important point: The two core considerations of a donation decision—*whether* to give and *how much* to give (Dickert, Sagara, and Slovic 2011; Fajardo, Townsend, and Bolander 2018)—are tightly linked.

Given the centrality of the “how much” decision to donations, we argue that helping potential donors make this decision about donation magnitude should lead donors to be more likely to donate, which in turn can boost total contributions. How, then, do individuals determine what is appropriate to give? Research suggests that people search for cues that signal appropriate donation behaviors. One critical contributing factor of this determination is perceived norms. People often look to others to figure out what to do themselves (Goldstein, Cialdini, and Griskevicius 2008). It stands to reason, then, that people might be more likely to give when they believe that giving is the norm. And indeed, in the domain of charitable giving, people are more likely to donate when they think others are donating (Agerström et al. 2016; Frey and Meier 2004; Reingen 1982), donate more when past donations are observable (e.g., in a glass donation box; Martin and Randal 2008), and often adjust the size of their donations toward the amount that they believe others are giving (Agerström et al. 2016; Croson, Handy, and Shang 2009).

These beliefs about norms can also be shaped by requesters to intentionally affect donation behavior. For instance, when small donation options are added or when messaging legitimizes small donations (e.g., “even a penny will help”), these small amounts appear more normative or appropriate, and consequently, donation rates tend to increase (Brockner et al. 1984; Cialdini and Schroeder 1976; Fraser, Hite, and Sauer 1988; Goswami and Urmitsky 2016; Reeves, Macolini, and Martin 1987; Reingen 1978; Weyant 1984; Weyant and Smith 1987). More broadly, information about others’ donations can influence perceived social norms about what is appropriate to give and, in turn, increase donation behavior (van Teunenbroek, Bekkers, and Beersma 2020; see also Smith, Windmeijer, and Wright 2015).

Taken together, this research indicates that to maximize donation likelihood, requesters would benefit from providing potential donors with guidance about the appropriate amount to give. Requesters can, of course, communicate this information directly by suggesting a donation amount (Brockner et al. 1984; Edwards and List 2014; Fraser et al. 1988; Verhaert and Van den Poel 2011), by providing a default donation amount (Altmann et al. 2019; Goswami and Urmitsky 2016), or by explicitly conveying what amount others are giving (Agerström et al. 2016; Croson and Shang 2013; Klinowski 2021). However, even when donation requests do not explicitly label donation options as “appropriate” or “suggested,” the use of particular options can leak information about what is preferred or normative (Schwarz et al. 1991, 1985; Sher and McKenzie 2006). That is, the options presented can leak relevant information about what is expected of respondents.

Importantly, this implied information can be quite influential on actual behaviors. For instance, donation amounts are typically drawn to values on a provided scale (Desmet and Feinberg 2003), suggesting that people do not

TABLE 1  
DONATION RATES ACROSS STUDIES

| Study                         | Condition                               |                                                |                                                 |                                            |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| <b>Study 1</b><br>(N = 902)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>67.5% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>79.4% <sup>b</sup>    |                                                 |                                            |
| <b>Study 2</b><br>(N = 808)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>54.9% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>74.6% <sup>b</sup>    |                                                 |                                            |
| <b>Study 3</b><br>(N = 1,503) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>19.8% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$0.50)</b><br>28.5% <sup>b</sup> |                                                 |                                            |
| <b>Study 4</b><br>(N = 1,005) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>69.5% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity \$1</b><br>80.4% <sup>b</sup>      | <b>Quantity \$5</b><br>84.9% <sup>b</sup>       | <b>Quantity \$10</b><br>80.3% <sup>b</sup> |
| <b>Study 5</b><br>(N = 1,404) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>62.0% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>69.1% <sup>b</sup>    | <b>When</b><br>57.8% <sup>a</sup>               | <b>Which cause</b><br>60.9% <sup>a</sup>   |
| <b>Study 6</b><br>(N = 1,603) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>53.7% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>63.6% <sup>b</sup>    | <b>Open-ended + norms</b><br>60.8% <sup>b</sup> |                                            |
| <b>Study 7</b><br>(N = 1,803) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>58.7% <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$10)</b><br>68.1% <sup>b</sup>   |                                                 |                                            |

NOTE.—Different superscripts within a row (i.e., for each study) refer to significant pairwise differences between conditions at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level. For clarity, we also indicate what the lowest donation option is for each quantity request.

generally deviate from potentially appropriate donation amounts. Given that a key signal of appropriate behaviors is the behavior of others, interventions that can shift norms about others’ behaviors may be a promising avenue for influencing donation decisions. By providing donation amount options, quantity requests provide implicit norms of donation magnitude—specifically, those amounts suggested by the given choice options. In doing so, quantity requests facilitate the actual donation decision, promoting donation rates and subsequently increasing overall giving (see [figure 2](#) for a depiction of this conceptual model).

Of course, when constructing a quantity request, organizations also must determine what amounts to request. Though explicit requests for a single given amount can increase donations, they can also backfire in important ways. An ask that is too low can elicit smaller donations from those who might have given more ([Goswami and Urminsky 2016](#); [Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995](#)), but an ask that is too high can deter donations from those who might have given a smaller amount ([Altmann et al. 2019](#); [De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013](#); [Klinowski 2021](#); [Reiley and Samek 2019](#); [Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995](#)). By providing both higher and lower donation options, quantity requests decrease the drawbacks associated with committing to a singular, potentially miscalibrated donation suggestion.<sup>2</sup>

In sum, prior research indicates that to maximize donation likelihood, requesters would benefit from providing potential donors with guidance about the amount to give. By providing a set of donation amount options, quantity requests make giving more likely, promoting donation rates and subsequently increasing overall giving.

<sup>2</sup> In fact, we find evidence that asking for a specific amount can reduce total contributions relative to a quantity request ([supplemental study E](#) in the [web appendix](#)).

## THE PRESENT RESEARCH

Across seven studies, we demonstrate the effectiveness of quantity requests using incentive-compatible donation decisions (see [tables 1–3](#) for a summary of results across all studies). We first establish that quantity requests increase donation rates and thereby increase overall donations compared to open-ended requests (study 1), including when the decision not to donate is passive (study 2) and when respondents consider a donation to a less popular cause (study 3). This effect holds even when the donation amount options exceed the average donation amount from an open-ended request (study 4). We rule out the possibility that quantity requests increase donations merely because these requests presume individuals will donate (study 5), demonstrating that requests featuring multiple donation options unrelated to donation size do not increase donations. We argue that quantity requests raise contributions because they offer normative guidelines of how much to donate (studies 6 and 7), and we provide evidence for the serial mediation process we propose (study 7).

All studies were preregistered. Throughout this article, we report main effects for donation rates, average nonzero donations, and total donations. [Supplemental table B](#) in the [web appendix](#) also provides additional details about each of the donation amounts chosen for all studies. We note that, consistent with the goal of this project at earlier stages, several of our preregistrations recorded that our primary analyses only concerned donation rates, whereas analyses with nonzero donations and total donations were indicated as exploratory. In [supplemental material C](#) in the [web appendix](#), we report any deviations from preregistered analyses as well as details concerning any exploratory

**TABLE 2**  
AVERAGE NONZERO DONATIONS ACROSS STUDIES

| Study                                 | Condition                                          |                                                          |                                                           |                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Study 1</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 902)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$10.32 (\$6.94)              | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$10.95 (\$7.12)                |                                                           |                                                       |
| <b>Study 2</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 808)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$10.24 (\$6.20)              | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$9.44 (\$6.49)                 |                                                           |                                                       |
| <b>Study 3</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,503) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$0.60 (\$0.41)               | <b>Quantity (\$0.50)</b><br>\$0.59 (\$0.32)              |                                                           |                                                       |
| <b>Study 4</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,005) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$12.10 (\$7.47) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity \$1</b><br>\$12.90 (\$8.70) <sup>a</sup>     | <b>Quantity \$5</b><br>\$13.45 (\$8.33) <sup>a</sup>      | <b>Quantity \$10</b><br>\$15.05 (\$7.77) <sup>b</sup> |
| <b>Study 5</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,404) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$11.10 (\$7.24)              | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$12.13 (\$7.41)                | <b>When</b><br>\$12.14 (\$7.16)                           | <b>Which cause</b><br>\$12.19 (\$6.94)                |
| <b>Study 6</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,603) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$10.31 (\$6.29) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$9.53 (\$6.64) <sup>a, b</sup> | <b>Open-ended + norms</b><br>\$8.73 (\$5.94) <sup>b</sup> |                                                       |
| <b>Study 7</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,803) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$12.05 (\$7.36)              | <b>Quantity (\$10)</b><br>\$11.97 (\$5.75)               |                                                           |                                                       |

NOTE.—Standard deviations in parentheses. Different superscripts within a row (i.e., for each study) refer to significant pairwise differences between conditions at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level; all other differences were not significant. For clarity, we also indicate what the lowest donation option is for each quantity request.

**TABLE 3**  
AVERAGE TOTAL DONATIONS (INCLUDING NON-DONORS) ACROSS STUDIES

| Study                                 | Condition                                         |                                                          |                                                         |                                                       |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Study 1</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 902)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$6.77 (\$7.46) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$8.70 (\$7.74) <sup>b</sup>    |                                                         |                                                       |
| <b>Study 2</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 808)   | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$5.62 (\$6.86) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$7.04 (\$6.95) <sup>b</sup>    |                                                         |                                                       |
| <b>Study 3</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,503) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$0.12 (\$0.30) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$0.50)</b><br>\$0.17 (\$0.32) <sup>b</sup> |                                                         |                                                       |
| <b>Study 4</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,005) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$8.41 (\$8.36) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity \$1</b><br>\$10.38 (\$9.33) <sup>b</sup>     | <b>Quantity \$5</b><br>\$11.42 (\$9.06) <sup>b, c</sup> | <b>Quantity \$10</b><br>\$12.09 (\$9.18) <sup>c</sup> |
| <b>Study 5</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,404) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$6.88 (\$7.85) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$8.38 (\$8.33) <sup>b</sup>    | <b>When</b><br>\$7.02 (\$8.10) <sup>a</sup>             | <b>Which cause</b><br>\$7.43 (\$8.05) <sup>a, b</sup> |
| <b>Study 6</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,603) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$5.53 (\$6.91)              | <b>Quantity (\$5)</b><br>\$6.07 (\$7.01)                 | <b>Open-ended + norms</b><br>\$5.31 (\$6.29)            |                                                       |
| <b>Study 7</b><br>( <i>N</i> = 1,803) | <b>Open-ended</b><br>\$7.07 (\$8.19) <sup>a</sup> | <b>Quantity (\$10)</b><br>\$8.16 (\$7.32) <sup>b</sup>   |                                                         |                                                       |

NOTE.—Standard deviations in parentheses. Different superscripts within a row (i.e., for each study) refer to significant pairwise differences between conditions at  $\alpha = 0.05$  level; all other differences were not significant. For clarity, we also indicate what the lowest donation option is for each quantity request.

analyses. We provide all data, materials, and preregistrations here: <https://researchbox.org/54>.

## STUDY 1: QUANTITY REQUESTS INCREASE DONATIONS

Study 1 was our initial test of whether quantity requests increased charitable donations compared to an open-ended request. We compared a baseline open-ended request that included two radio buttons (“Yes: \$\_\_\_” or “No”) to a quantity request that provided the same radio buttons along with additional radio buttons of possible donation amounts

(e.g., “Yes, \$5,” “Yes, \$10,” “Yes, \$15,” . . . , etc.). This design allowed all participants to complete their donation in one fell swoop (i.e., on a single page). The only difference between the quantity request and the open-ended request, then, was that the quantity request additionally provided multiple donation amount options.

## Method

Participants (*N* = 902) completed an online study on Amazon’s Mechanical Turk (MTurk) for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were

**FIGURE 3**  
SAMPLE DONATION REQUESTS IN STUDY 1

**A** If you were to win the \$25 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of the winnings to St. Jude's Research Hospital?

☐ Yes. (Enter amount here.) \$

☐ No.

**B** If you were to win the \$25 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of the winnings to St. Jude's Research Hospital?

☐ Yes, \$5

☐ Yes, \$10

☐ Yes, \$15

☐ Yes, \$20

☐ Yes, \$25

☐ Yes, but I would like to choose another amount. (Enter amount here.) \$

☐ No

NOTE.—Participants were randomly assigned to see either an *open-ended request* (A) or a *quantity request* (B). The organization was determined individually by the participant.

redirected to the current study. First, all participants were asked to indicate a charitable organization that they most supported. Participants could choose from a dropdown list of 55 organizations or type in their own charitable organization. On the subsequent page, participants were told that they would be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$25 bonuses and that they could donate to the charitable organization that they indicated. That is, if they won the \$25 bonus drawing, a portion of the \$25 could be donated to the charity of their choice in their honor. Consistent with past work (Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Freeman, Aquino, and McFerran 2009; Kaikati et al. 2017), this lottery-based incentive design allowed for us to ask for larger charitable donations. The drawings were held after all participants had completed the study, and bonuses and donations were awarded according to chosen participants' decisions. Participants were then randomly assigned to one of two conditions: (a) open-ended ( $n = 439$ ) or (b) quantity ( $n = 463$ ).

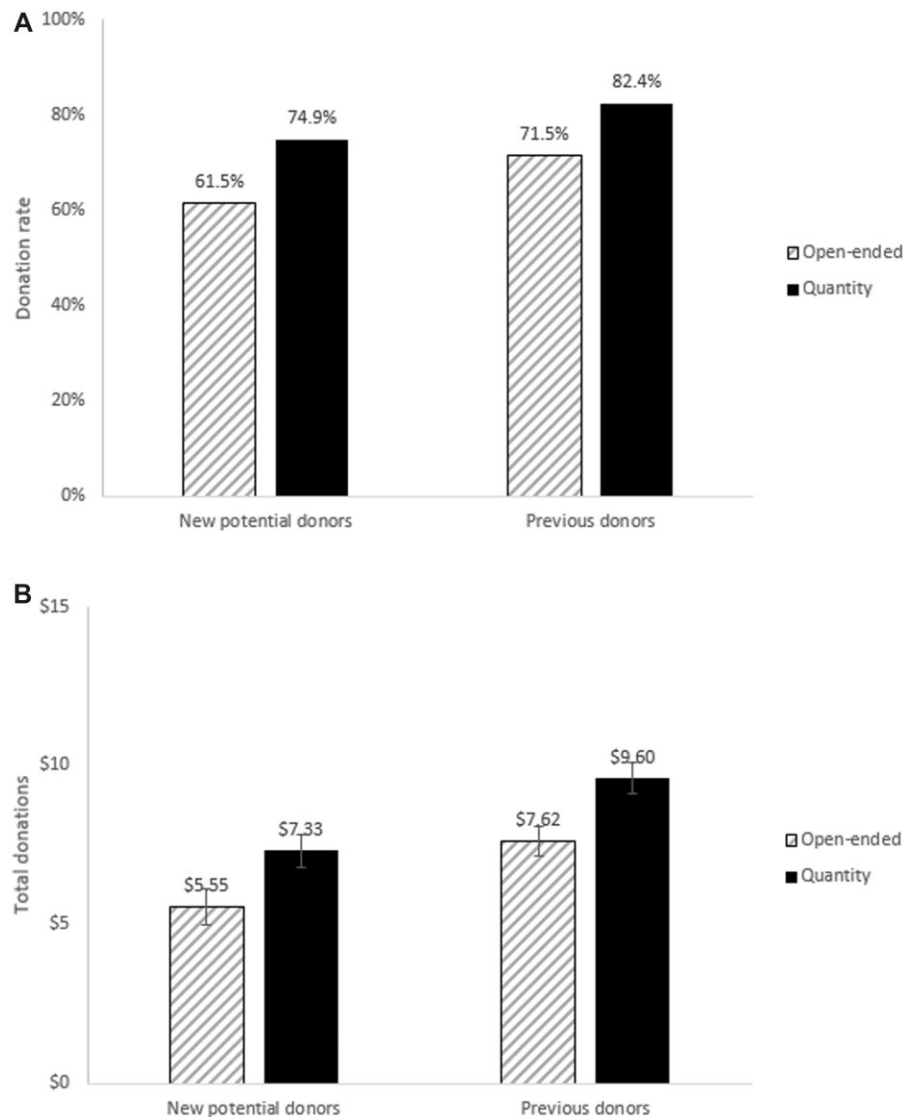
After these initial instructions, participants were asked: "If you were to win the \$25 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of the winnings to [charity indicated by the participant]?" Therefore, the same range of donations (\$0–\$25) was emphasized to all participants. Participants in the open-ended condition saw a request with two choice options ("Yes: \$\_\_\_\_" or "No"), whereas participants in the quantity condition saw a request with seven choice options ("Yes, \$5," "Yes, \$10," "Yes, \$15," "Yes, \$20," "Yes, \$25," "Yes, but I would like to choose

another amount: \$\_\_\_\_," or "No"). Participants who chose to donate in the open-ended condition and participants in the quantity condition who chose to donate "another amount" indicated what amount they would like to donate in the text box next to the corresponding response (see figure 3 for sample requests). Nine participants (<1%) misunderstood the instructions and indicated that they would like to donate more than \$25. For the analyses below, we exclude these participants. Excluding these participants did not affect the pattern nor the significance level of the analyses. Throughout this article, we refer to three measures: (a) donation rate (the percentage of people who decided to donate any amount), (b) nonzero donations (the average donation amount among donors only), and (c) total donations (the average donation amount among everyone who saw the request, including non-donors as \$0).

As exploratory measures, we also asked participants whether they had donated to their chosen organization before and, if so, how often they had donated to that organization (in an open-ended text box). To that question, 59.8% of participants indicated that they had previously donated to their chosen organization (one participant did not respond). We included these items to explore whether quantity requests might be differentially effective for previous donors who might already know whether or how much they would like to give (De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013; Doob and McLaughlin 1989; Shang and Croson 2009).

FIGURE 4

## DONATION RATES AND TOTAL DONATIONS IN STUDY 1



Note.—Compared to open-ended requests, quantity requests in study 1 increased donation rates (A) and total donations (B) both for new potential donors (those who had never donated to the organization before) and for previous donors (those who had donated to the organization before).

## Results and Discussion

**Donation Rates.** Providing initial evidence for the effectiveness of quantity requests, participants in the quantity condition were significantly more likely to donate (79.4%) than participants in the open-ended condition (67.5%),  $\chi^2(1) = 16.34$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.14$  (see [table 1](#) for a summary of donation rates across studies).<sup>3</sup>

This effect was robust to whether participants had never donated to the chosen organization before (open-ended: 61.5% vs. quantity: 74.9%),  $\chi^2(1) = 7.37$ ,  $p = .007$ ,  $\phi = 0.14$ , or whether participants had previously donated to the chosen organization (open-ended: 71.5% vs. quantity: 82.4%),  $\chi^2(1) = 9.10$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $\phi = 0.13$  ([figure 4A](#)).

<sup>3</sup> Twenty-four participants indicated that they would donate but did not indicate a donation amount. When excluding those participants,

the effect of quantity requests on donation likelihood was even larger,  $\chi^2(1) = 20.99$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.16$ .

*Nonzero Donations.* On average, participants who chose to donate in the quantity condition donated nonsignificantly more ( $M = \$10.95$ ,  $SD = \$7.12$ ) than participants who chose to donate in the open-ended condition ( $M = \$10.32$ ,  $SD = \$6.94$ ),  $t(632) = 1.11$ ,  $p = .27$ ,  $d = 0.09$  (see [table 2](#) for a summary of nonzero donations across studies).

*Total Donations.* Reflecting the increased donation rates, total donations in the quantity condition significantly increased ( $M = \$8.70$ ,  $SD = \$7.74$ ) compared to total donations in the open-ended condition ( $M = \$6.77$ ,  $SD = \$7.46$ ),  $t(867) = 3.73$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.25$  (see [table 3](#) for a summary of total donations across studies). This was true both for those who had never donated to the chosen organization before ( $M_{\text{open-ended}} = \$5.55$ ,  $SD_{\text{open-ended}} = \$7.29$  vs.  $M_{\text{quantity}} = \$7.33$ ,  $SD_{\text{quantity}} = \$7.11$ ),  $t(349) = 2.31$ ,  $p = .021$ ,  $d = 0.25$ , and for those who had previously donated to the chosen organization ( $M_{\text{open-ended}} = \$7.62$ ,  $SD_{\text{open-ended}} = \$7.49$  vs.  $M_{\text{quantity}} = \$9.60$ ,  $SD_{\text{quantity}} = \$8.01$ ),  $t(515) = 2.89$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $d = 0.25$  ([figure 4B](#)).

This result is promising: quantity requests increased donation rates and total donations both for new and previous donors, suggesting that quantity requests can boost giving across both donation request contexts.

## STUDY 2: PASSIVE CHOICE

Study 1 established that quantity requests can increase donations compared to open-ended requests. Study 2 aimed to determine the robustness of this effect in three ways. First, unlike study 1 in which participants indicated a charity they supported, in study 2, we chose the charitable organization for which participants considered their donation. This was to test whether quantity requests could increase contributions even when the requestee supported. Second, and more importantly, we aimed to determine whether our effect was robust to a passive choice context. That is, rather than forcing participants to actively choose a non-donation option ([Keller et al. 2011](#)), in study 2, participants could simply click the next button if they did not wish to donate. This ensured that the easiest choice option for both the quantity and open-ended requests was the “no donation” option. Finally, in study 2, the text of choice options was changed to remove “yes” and “no” phrasing. By doing this, we aimed to rule out the possibility that our effect was purely driven by the quantity request conveying multiple “yes” choice options.

## Method

Participants ( $N = 808$ ) completed an online study on Prolific Academic for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study in which participants were told that they would be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$25 bonuses and

that they could donate a portion of their bonus (should they win) to The NAACP Legal Defense & Educational Fund (LDF). Participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: open-ended ( $n = 410$ ) or quantity ( $n = 398$ ).

On the next page, participants were asked “If you were to win the \$25 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of the winnings to Legal Defense Fund?” They were additionally told, “If you would not like to donate, simply click next to receive your completion code.” Participants in the open-ended condition saw one checkbox option: “I would like to donate: \$ \_\_\_\_” with a blank text box next to it in which participants could indicate what amount they would like to donate. The checkbox was selected automatically if they indicated any amount in the text box. Participants in the quantity condition saw four checkbox options: (a) “I would like to donate \$5”; (b) “I would like to donate \$15”; (c) “I would like to donate \$25”; and (d) “I would like to donate another amount: \$ \_\_\_\_” with a blank text box next to it in which participants could indicate what other amount they would like to donate. The checkbox was selected automatically if they indicated any amount in the text box. In both conditions, participants could simply proceed to the next page to donate \$0. Participants could also uncheck any checkboxes and remove any amount written in the text box if they did not want to donate. If participants indicated an amount greater than \$25, an error message indicated that they should enter an amount between \$0 and \$25. Twelve participants indicated \$0 as their donation amount (3 in the open-ended condition and 9 in the quantity condition); these participants were coded as non-donations for donation rate and included as \$0 for total donations.

## Results and Discussion

*Donation Rates.* Replicating study 1, the quantity condition increased donation rates (74.6%) compared to the open-ended condition (54.9%),  $\chi^2(1) = 34.43$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.21$ .

*Nonzero Donations.* The quantity condition nonsignificantly decreased the average donation size ( $M = \$9.44$ ,  $SD = \$6.49$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$10.24$ ,  $SD = \$6.20$ ),  $t(520) = -1.43$ ,  $p = .15$ ,  $d = -0.13$ .

*Total Donations.* Replicating study 1, the quantity condition increased total donations ( $M = \$7.04$ ,  $SD = \$6.95$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$5.62$ ,  $SD = \$6.86$ ),  $t(806) = 2.93$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $d = 0.21$ .

These results provide substantial evidence that quantity requests are effective even when the “opt-out” option is passive (i.e., simply clicking next to avoid donating) rather than active (i.e., actively stating that they do not want to donate). Furthermore, these results show that quantity requests outperformed open-ended requests even when the charitable cause is not one that participants selected for themselves. This suggests that charities can use quantity requests widely, regardless of preexisting support for the charity.

### STUDY 3: LESS POPULAR CHARITY

Study 3 attempted to demonstrate the robustness of quantity requests in two ways. First, it is possible that by providing a probabilistic (i.e., lottery-based) bonus in studies 1 and 2, participants viewed their donation decision to be inconsequential. Therefore, instead of using the lottery paradigm as before, we provided *all* participants with a bonus from which they considered a donation decision. Second, we chose a charitable organization that we pre-tested to be dramatically less popular (a wine and food festival). Given the relatively high donation rates in studies 1 and 2, we examined whether quantity effects outperformed open-ended requests even in contexts for which we expected much lower donation rates.

#### Method

Participants ( $N = 1,503$ ) completed an online study on Prolific Academic for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study in which they were told that they would receive a \$1.50 bonus. Participants then considered a donation from their bonus to Charleston Wine + Food, an organization that “aims to produce experiences that celebrate, educate, and promote the Lowcountry’s diverse culinary + hospital-ity community.”

After these initial instructions, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: (a) open-ended ( $n = 775$ ) or (b) quantity ( $n = 728$ ). Participants were asked “Would you like to donate a portion of your \$1.50 bonus to Charleston Wine + Food?” Participants in the open-ended condition saw a request with two choice options (“Yes: \$\_\_\_” or “No”), whereas participants in the quantity condition saw a request with six choice options (“Yes, \$0.50,” “Yes, \$0.75,” “Yes, \$1,” “Yes, \$1.50,” “Yes, but I would like to choose another amount: \$\_\_\_,” or “No”). Participants who chose to donate in the open-ended condition and participants in the quantity condition who chose to donate “another amount” indicated what amount they would like to donate in the text box next to the corresponding response. Three participants (<1%) misunderstood the instructions and indicated that they would like to donate more than \$1.50 or less than \$0. For the analyses below, we exclude these participants. Excluding these participants did not affect the pattern nor the significance level of the analyses. Two participants in the open-ended condition indicated \$0 as their donation amount; these participants were coded as non-donations for donation rate and included as \$0 for total donations.

As an exploratory measure, we also included an attention check question in which participants were asked about the bonus they received. To this question, 95.4% of participants answered correctly. Examining only those who answered the attention check correctly did not affect the pattern nor the significance level of the analyses.

### Results and Discussion

**Donation Rates.** Replicating studies 1 and 2, the quantity condition increased donation rates (28.5%) compared to the open-ended condition (19.8%),  $\chi^2(1) = 15.48$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.10$ .

**Nonzero Donations.** Examining nonzero donations, the quantity condition did not differ ( $M = \$0.59$ ,  $SD = \$0.32$ ) from the open-ended condition ( $M = \$0.60$ ,  $SD = \$0.41$ ),  $t(358) = -0.24$ ,  $p = .81$ ,  $d = -0.03$ .

**Total Donations.** Examining total donations, the quantity condition increased total donations ( $M = \$0.17$ ,  $SD = \$0.32$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$0.12$ ,  $SD = \$0.30$ ),  $t(1498) = 3.11$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $d = 0.16$ .

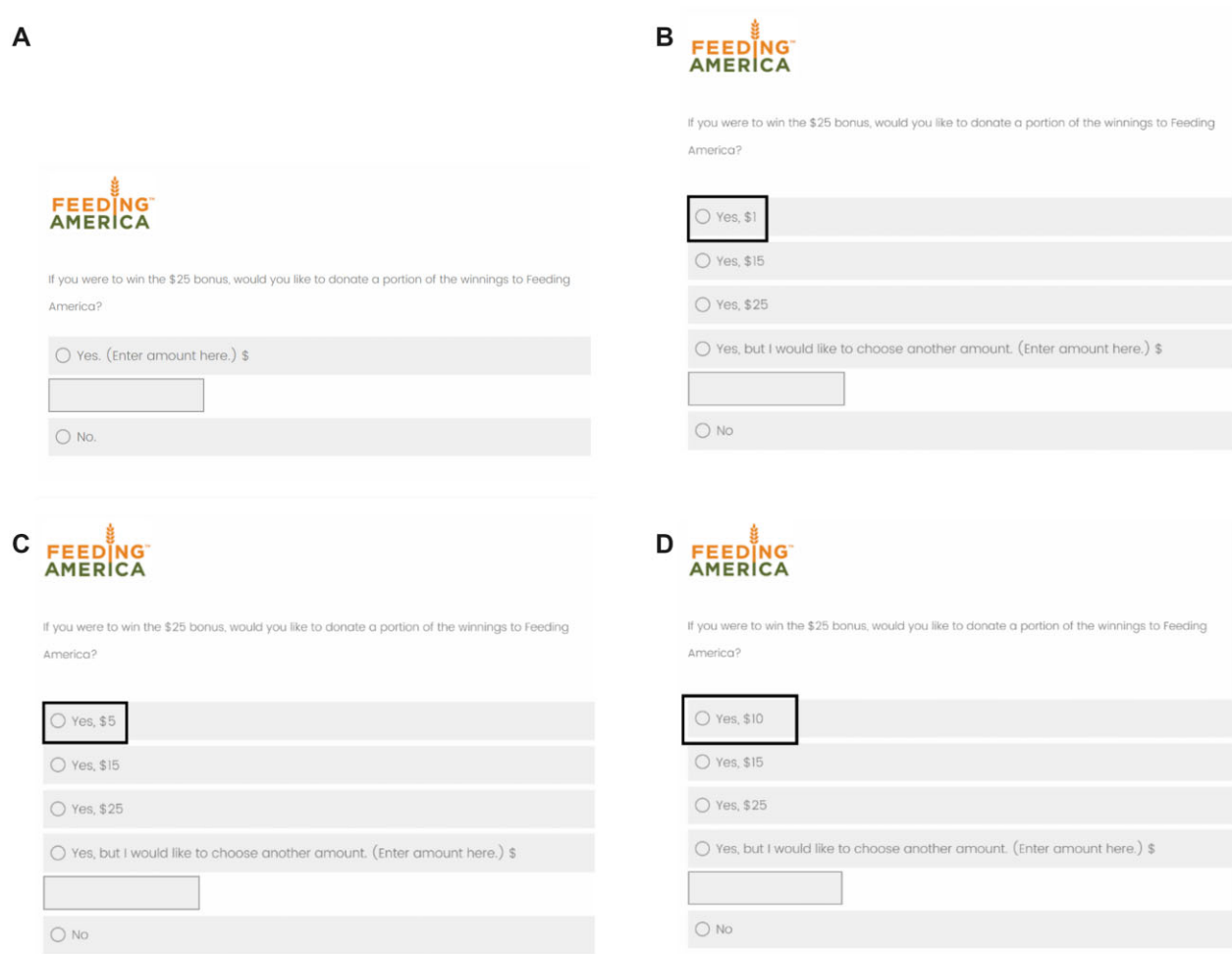
Thus, the effect of quantity requests replicated with a smaller certain bonus, demonstrating that quantity requests do not rely on larger probabilistic bonuses. Moreover, even in the context of lower donation rates (where donations were directed to a less popular cause), quantity requests still outperformed open-ended requests.

### STUDY 4: VARYING LOWEST DONATION OPTIONS

Studies 1–3 provided robust evidence of the effectiveness of quantity requests. Study 4 investigated how varying the lowest donation option might affect contributions. It is possible that the lowest donation option in a quantity request might signal the smallest contribution that is acceptable. If the lowest donation option in the quantity request we used in the previous studies was set too low, this may have increased donation rates merely by signaling that a very small contribution was acceptable, whereas our open-ended requests did not provide such a signal (De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013; Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Reiley and Samek 2019). Such an explanation would suggest that our effect would diminish for quantity requests with lowest donation options that were higher than the amount typically donated in response to an open-ended request.

Study 4 tested this possibility by comparing an open-ended request to different quantity requests in which we vary the lowest donation option while keeping the other donation options constant. For the lowest donation options, we compared a quantity request with \$5 as the lowest donation option (as in studies 1 and 2) to quantity requests with \$1 or with \$10 as the lowest donation option. The \$10 option was an amount about equal to the average nonzero donation size of studies 1 and 2 and was intended to be a conservative test of whether quantity requests more generally increased donations. We also included a condition with the \$1 option to investigate whether decreasing the lowest donation option might further increase donation rates but at the cost of donation size (Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995).

FIGURE 5  
DONATION REQUESTS IN STUDY 4



NOTE.—Participants saw either an open-ended (A), quantity \$1 (B), quantity \$5 (C), or quantity \$10 (D) request. Black boxes are used to emphasize the manipulation for the figure but were not present in the actual study.

Method

Participants ( $N = 1,005$ ) completed an online study on MTurk for payment. Study 4 followed the same basic procedure as studies 1 and 2. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study in which participants were told that they would be entered into a drawing to win one of two \$25 bonuses and that they additionally had the opportunity to consider a donation to Feeding America.

After these initial instructions, participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions: (a) open-ended ( $n = 243$ ), (b) quantity \$1 ( $n = 273$ ), (c) quantity \$5 ( $n = 245$ ), or (d) quantity \$10 ( $n = 244$ ). All participants

were asked if they would like to donate a portion of their \$25 bonus to Feeding America should they win. The same range of donations (\$0–\$25) was emphasized to all participants. Participants in the open-ended condition were provided two choice options (“Yes: \$ \_\_\_\_” or “No”) and could indicate the amount they would donate in a text box next to the “Yes” option. For each of the quantity conditions, participants chose among four “Yes” options with only the lowest amount manipulated across conditions (\$1, \$5, or \$10 as the lowest option, and \$15, \$25, and “another amount” as the other three “Yes” options) and a single “No” option (see figure 5 for request stimuli). Nine participants (<1%) misunderstood the instructions and indicated

that they would like to donate more than \$25. For the analyses below, we exclude these participants. Excluding these participants did not affect the pattern nor the significance level of the analyses.

## Results and Discussion

**Donation Rates.** Demonstrating the robustness of the effect of quantity requests on donations, all three quantity requests outperformed the open-ended request. That is, participants in the quantity \$1 (80.4%), quantity \$5 (84.9%), and quantity \$10 (80.3%) conditions were all significantly more likely to donate than participants in the open-ended condition (69.5%), versus quantity \$1:  $\chi^2(1) = 8.14$ ,  $p = .004$ ,  $\phi = 0.13$ , versus quantity \$5:  $\chi^2(1) = 16.28$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.18$ , and versus quantity \$10:  $\chi^2(1) = 7.51$ ,  $p = .006$ ,  $\phi = 0.13$ , respectively (figure 6A). The three quantity conditions did not significantly differ from each other in donation likelihood, all  $p$ s  $> 0.18$ .

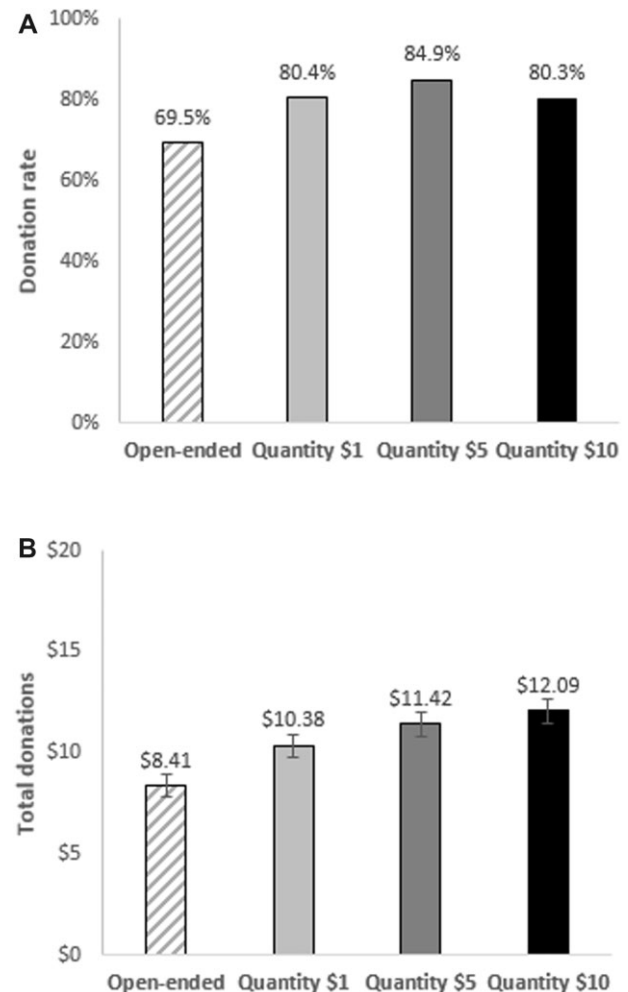
**Nonzero Donations.** Examining nonzero donations, there appeared to be a linear pattern in the quantity conditions: The quantity \$10 condition had a significantly greater average donation ( $M = \$15.05$ ,  $SD = \$7.77$ ) than the quantity \$5 condition ( $M = \$13.45$ ,  $SD = \$8.33$ ),  $t(402) = 2.00$ ,  $p = .047$ ,  $d = 0.20$ , which had a nonsignificantly greater average donation than the quantity \$1 condition ( $M = \$12.90$ ,  $SD = \$8.70$ ),  $t(424) = 0.67$ ,  $p = .51$ ,  $d = 0.06$ . That is, the lowest donation options provided did appear to influence how much people give. Comparing the quantity requests to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$12.10$ ,  $SD = \$7.47$ ), the average nonzero donation in the quantity \$1 condition was about the same as the open-ended condition,  $t(380) = 0.95$ ,  $p = .34$ ,  $d = 0.10$ , the average nonzero donation in the quantity \$5 condition was nonsignificantly greater than the open-ended condition,  $t(370) = 1.63$ ,  $p = .10$ ,  $d = 0.17$ , and the average nonzero donation in the quantity \$10 condition was significantly greater than the open-ended condition,  $t(358) = 3.66$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.39$ .

**Total Donations.** Mirroring the pattern with donation rates, all of the quantity conditions ( $M_{\text{quantity } \$1} = \$10.38$ ,  $SD_{\text{quantity } \$1} = \$9.33$ ;  $M_{\text{quantity } \$5} = \$11.42$ ,  $SD_{\text{quantity } \$5} = \$9.06$ ;  $M_{\text{quantity } \$10} = \$12.09$ ,  $SD_{\text{quantity } \$10} = \$9.18$ ) led to greater total contributions than the open-ended condition ( $M = \$8.41$ ,  $SD = \$8.36$ ), versus quantity \$1:  $t(505) = 2.49$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $d = 0.22$ , versus quantity \$5:  $t(479) = 3.79$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.35$ , and versus quantity \$10:  $t(478) = 4.59$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.42$  (figure 6B). There again appeared to be a linear pattern among the quantity conditions, but only the quantity \$1 and quantity \$10 conditions significantly differed from each other,  $t(513) = 2.10$ ,  $p = .037$ ,  $d = 0.19$ .

Study 4 demonstrated that, regardless of the lowest donation option featured in the quantity request, participants were more likely to donate to quantity requests than the open-ended request. This suggests that the effectiveness of

FIGURE 6

DONATION RATES AND TOTAL DONATIONS IN STUDY 4



NOTE.—Compared to open-ended requests, each version of quantity requests increased donation rates (A) and total donations (B).

quantity requests does not rely on providing a particularly small “lower bar” for donations. Furthermore, quantity requests with differing lowest options all increased total donations relative to an open-ended request. Study 4 also provided initial evidence that increasing the lowest donation amount option could further boost total donations, both by increasing donation rate and by increasing average nonzero donations.

## STUDY 5: DO QUANTITY REQUESTS MERELY PRESUME GIVING?

One alternative explanation for these effects is that quantity requests presume that the respondent will give and

that this mere act of presumption increases donations. By this account, the presence of multiple donation options may indicate that the requester assumes that the respondent will opt to give *some* amount (Grice 1975; Sher and McKenzie 2006), which then increases donations.

If a *presumption of giving* account were driving our effect, other presumptive requests (i.e., those involving multiple nonquantity donation options) should also increase donations compared to open-ended requests. For instance, a request that asks respondents to consider *when* to give strongly presumes that the respondent will give at some time. Similarly, a request that asks respondents to consider *which cause* within a charity to give to (e.g., the disaster relief division or the home fires division of the American Red Cross) presumes that the respondent will give to some division of the charity. We argue that mere presumption is insufficient to promote giving; rather, quantity requests uniquely help the potential donor to resolve the critical question of *how much* to give, which facilitates greater donation likelihood. By contrast, other presumptive requests, which involve additional non-central decisions (e.g., a donation could still be made without specifying when or which cause), should not encourage donations.

Study 5 aimed to test whether other multiple donation option requests also increase donations as argued by the *presumption of giving* account or, as we argue, whether quantity requests are unique in promoting donations. Specifically, we compared quantity requests with two different presumptive requests: a *when to give* request and a *which cause* request.

## Method

Participants ( $N = 1,404$ ) completed an online study on Prolific Academic for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study. Participants were entered into a \$25 drawing and offered a donation opportunity similar to those in studies 1, 2, and 4. The charitable organization was the NAACP LDF. Participants were told that donations would be made to the branch of the charity chosen by the winner and made at the time that was selected by the winners. After these initial instructions, participants were randomly assigned to one of four different conditions: open-ended ( $n = 363$ ), quantity ( $n = 359$ ), when ( $n = 339$ ), or which cause ( $n = 343$ ).

All participants were asked, "If you were to win the bonus, would you like to donate a portion of the \$25 bonus to The NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund (LDF)?" Therefore, the same range of donations (\$0–\$25) was emphasized to all participants. Participants in the open-ended condition saw a request with two choice options ("Yes: \$\_\_\_\_" or "No"), whereas participants in the quantity condition saw a request with six "Yes" options ("Yes, \$5," "Yes, \$10," "Yes, \$15," "Yes, \$20," "Yes, \$25," "Yes, but I would like to choose another amount:

\$\_\_\_\_") and a single "No" option. As in the quantity condition, the when and which cause conditions each provided six "Yes" options and a single "No" option. In the when condition, the six "Yes" options indicated six days on which the donation would be processed (Tuesday [the day the study was run], Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday). In the which cause condition, the six "Yes" options indicated six branches of the LDF to which they could direct their support (police reform and death penalty, voting rights, education, economic equity, affirmative action, and the scholarship program). If participants chose to donate in any of the conditions, they were directed to the next page to complete the other remaining donation decisions (e.g., for the when condition, participants then chose how much they would donate and to which branch). Thus, all participants who chose to donate completed all decisions (how much, when, and which cause) and the manipulation varied which decision they completed first.

Again, we hypothesized that the quantity request would increase donation rates compared to both the open-ended request and the two other presumptive requests (when and which cause conditions).

## Results and Discussion

**Donation Rates.** Replicating our previous studies, the quantity condition increased donation rates (69.1%) compared to the open-ended condition (62.0%),  $\chi^2(1) = 4.02$ ,  $p = .045$ ,  $\phi = 0.07$ . Importantly, the quantity condition also increased donation rates compared to both the when condition (57.8%) and the which cause condition (60.9%),  $\chi^2(1) = 9.56$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $\phi = 0.12$  and  $\chi^2(1) = 5.13$ ,  $p = .024$ ,  $\phi = 0.09$ , respectively. Moreover, both the when and which cause conditions did not differ in donation rates compared to the open-ended condition,  $\chi^2(1) = 1.27$ ,  $p = .26$ ,  $\phi = 0.04$  and  $\chi^2(1) = 0.08$ ,  $p = .77$ ,  $\phi = 0.01$ , respectively.

**Nonzero Donations.** Examining nonzero donations, the quantity condition nonsignificantly increased the average nonzero donation size ( $M = \$12.13$ ,  $SD = \$7.41$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$11.10$ ,  $SD = \$7.24$ ),  $t(471) = 1.53$ ,  $p = .13$ ,  $d = 0.14$ . The average nonzero donation size in the when and which cause conditions ( $M_{\text{when}} = \$12.14$ ,  $SD_{\text{when}} = \$7.16$ ;  $M_{\text{which}} = \$12.19$ ,  $SD_{\text{which}} = \$6.94$ ) did not differ from either the open-ended condition,  $t(419) = 1.48$ ,  $p = .14$ ,  $d = 0.14$  and  $t(432) = 1.61$ ,  $p = .11$ ,  $d = 0.15$ , respectively, nor the quantity condition,  $p > .92$ .

**Total Donations.** When examining total donations, only the quantity condition increased total donations ( $M = \$8.38$ ,  $SD = \$8.33$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$6.88$ ,  $SD = \$7.85$ ),  $t(720) = 2.49$ ,  $p = .013$ ,  $d = 0.19$ . The when condition was significantly lower ( $M = \$7.02$ ,  $SD = \$8.10$ ) than the quantity condition,  $t(696) = 2.19$ ,  $p = .029$ ,  $d = 0.17$ , and about the same as the open-

ended condition,  $t(700) = 0.23$ ,  $p = .82$ ,  $d = 0.02$ . The which cause condition was nonsignificantly lower ( $M = \$7.43$ ,  $SD = \$8.05$ ) than the quantity condition,  $t(700) = 1.54$ ,  $p = .12$ ,  $d = 0.12$ , and about the same as the open-ended condition,  $t(704) = 0.92$ ,  $p = .36$ ,  $d = 0.07$ .

Study 5 demonstrated that presuming a respondent will give does not increase donation rates or total donations on its own. Rather, quantity requests are unique in producing this increase in donations.

## STUDIES 6 AND 7: THE ROLE OF NORMS

We previously argued that the effect of quantity requests is attributable to providing a clearer norm of how much to give. More specifically, by providing multiple donation amount choice options, quantity requests implicitly convey a norm of donation magnitude—that the amounts highlighted within the quantity request are the amounts people typically give—to respondents. In so doing, this clarified norm promotes donation likelihood, and, ultimately, total donations. We sought to test this proposed mechanism in a pair of studies that focuses on how norms influence donation decisions.

### STUDY 6: EXPERIMENTAL MANIPULATION OF NORMS

In study 6, we compared our typical quantity and open-ended requests to an open-ended request that additionally stated normative information about the most common donation amounts given: those used as choice options in the quantity request. This *open-ended + norms* condition enables us to test the impact of norms of donation magnitude on donation rates. We expected that the *open-ended + norms* request and the *quantity* request would each lead to greater donation rates than the *open-ended* condition because each helps to facilitate the decision of how much to give by communicating what amounts are typically given.

#### Method

Participants ( $N = 1,603$ ) completed an online study on Prolific Academic for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study. Participants were entered into a \$25 drawing and offered an opportunity to donate any potential winnings to Direct Relief, a humanitarian aid organization. After these initial instructions, participants were randomly assigned to one of three conditions: open-ended ( $n = 533$ ), open-ended + norms ( $n = 523$ ), or quantity ( $n = 547$ ).

All participants were asked, "If you were to win the \$25 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of winnings to Direct Relief?" Participants in the open-ended condition were given two choice options: "Yes, \$\_\_\_\_" or "No."

Participants in the open-ended + norms condition were given the same choice options but the request also stated, "The most common donation amounts are:" and depicted three boxes with "\$5," "\$15," and "\$25." Participants in the quantity condition chose among four "Yes" options (\$5, \$15, \$25, or "another amount") and a single "No" option. Two participants (one in the open-ended condition and one in the quantity condition) indicated \$0 as their donation amount; these participants were coded as non-donations for donation rate and included as \$0 for total donations.

#### Results and Discussion

**Donation Rates.** As in prior studies, the quantity condition (63.6%) significantly increased donation rates relative to the open-ended condition (53.7%),  $\chi^2(1) = 11.05$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.10$ . Importantly, the open-ended + norms condition (60.8%) also increased donation rates compared to the open-ended condition,  $\chi^2(1) = 5.50$ ,  $p = .019$ ,  $\phi = 0.07$ . The difference between the quantity and the open-ended + norms conditions was not statistically significant,  $\chi^2(1) = 0.90$ ,  $p = .34$ ,  $\phi = 0.03$ . That is, information about the norm of donation magnitude—either through the quantity request or through explicit communication in the open-ended + norms condition—increased the likelihood that participants donated.

**Nonzero Donations.** On average, participants who chose to donate in the quantity condition donated nonsignificantly less ( $M = \$9.53$ ,  $SD = \$6.64$ ) than those who chose to donate in the open-ended condition ( $M = \$10.31$ ,  $SD = \$6.29$ ),  $t(632) = -1.50$ ,  $p = .134$ ,  $d = -0.12$ , and marginally more than those who chose to donate in the open-ended + norms condition ( $M = \$8.73$ ,  $SD = \$5.94$ ),  $t(664) = 1.65$ ,  $p = .100$ ,  $d = 0.13$ . Participants who chose to donate in the open-ended + norms condition donated significantly less than those who chose to donate in the open-ended condition,  $t(602) = -3.18$ ,  $p = .002$ ,  $d = -0.26$ .

**Total Donations.** The quantity condition nonsignificantly increased total donations ( $M = \$6.07$ ,  $SD = \$7.01$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$5.53$ ,  $SD = \$6.91$ ),  $t(1078) = 1.26$ ,  $p = .209$ ,  $d = 0.08$ , and marginally significantly increased total donations compared to the open-ended + norms condition ( $M = \$5.31$ ,  $SD = \$6.29$ ),  $t(1068) = 1.86$ ,  $p = .063$ ,  $d = 0.11$ . The open-ended + norms condition and the open-ended condition did not significantly differ from each other,  $t(1054) = 0.56$ ,  $p = .579$ ,  $d = 0.03$ .

Notably, consistent with our norms account, the addition of explicit norm information to an open-ended request increased donation rates to a level similar to the quantity request. Moreover, the quantity request directionally

increased total donations, consistent with our prior studies, though nonsignificantly in this study.

One intriguing finding is that while adding information about the most common donation amounts (open-ended + norms condition) increased donation rates, the amounts donated tended to be lower, thus eliminating any effect on total donations. Any attempt to explain this effect would be purely speculative on our part; however, this result seems to suggest that simply stating the most common donation amounts might introduce a tradeoff between donation rate and donation amount in a way that quantity requests do not.

We next turn to directly measuring norms of donation magnitude in study 7.

## STUDY 7: MEASURING NORMS OF DONATION MAGNITUDE

Study 7 sought to demonstrate the influence of norms as a mediator of our main effect. In particular, we again provided participants an opportunity to donate from a potential bonus of \$30. Participants saw either an open-ended or a quantity request that specified \$10, \$15, and \$20 choice options. After participants made their donation decision, we measured norms of donation magnitude. We expected that participants would perceive a donation between \$10 and \$20 as more normative in the quantity request condition than in the open-ended request condition because this range included the amounts laid out in the quantity request. We also hypothesized that this clarified norm would mediate the effect of quantity requests on donation rates and lead to increased total donations.

### Method

Participants ( $N = 1,803$ ) completed an online study on Prolific Academic for payment. After completing an unrelated study, participants were redirected to the current study. Participants were entered into a \$30 drawing and offered a donation opportunity similar to the previous studies, wherein they could make a donation to Direct Relief. After these initial instructions, participants were randomly assigned to one of two conditions: open-ended ( $n = 918$ ) or quantity ( $n = 885$ ).

All participants were asked, "If you were to win the \$30 bonus, would you like to donate a portion of winnings to Direct Relief?" Therefore, the same range of donations (\$0–\$30) was emphasized to all participants. Participants in the open-ended condition saw a request with two choice options ("Yes: \$\_\_\_\_" or "No"), whereas participants in the quantity condition saw a request with five choice options ("Yes, \$10," "Yes, \$15," "Yes, \$20," "Yes, but I would like to choose another amount: \$\_\_\_\_," or "No"). Participants who chose to donate in the open-ended condition and participants in the quantity condition who chose to

donate "another amount" indicated what amount they would like to donate in the text box next to the corresponding response.

After completing their donation decision, participants were directed to the next page on which they were asked to consider a sample of other Prolific Academic participants who were shown the same request they saw. They estimated the percentage of other participants who would donate each of the following amounts in response to this request: \$0, \$1–\$9, \$10–\$20, and \$21–\$30. The total of these estimated percentages was required to be 100%. Our measure of norms was the percentage allocated to the \$10–\$20 bin (the range including the donation amounts communicated by the quantity request). This was intended to be a measure that was relatively easy to understand and complete (rather than outlining all possible donation amounts); however, we note that this is a conservative measure, given that the range also includes amounts not communicated by the donation request (\$11, \$12, etc.).

We hypothesized that compared to the open-ended request, the quantity request would: (a) increase donation rates, (b) increase total donations, and (c) increase norms of donating between \$10 and \$20 (i.e., the percentage of other participants estimated to have donated \$10–\$20). Furthermore, we predicted a serial mediation in which quantity requests (relative to open-ended requests) would increase norms of donating \$10–\$20 (those specified in the quantity request), which would lead to an increase in donation rates and, consequently, lead to an increase in total donations.

### Results and Discussion

*Donation Rates.* Replicating our previous studies, the quantity condition increased donation rates (68.1%) compared to the open-ended condition (58.7%),  $\chi^2(1) = 17.22$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $\phi = 0.10$ .

*Nonzero Donations.* On average, participants who chose to donate in the quantity condition donated about the same amount ( $M = \$11.97$ ,  $SD = \$5.75$ ) as participants who chose to donate in the open-ended condition ( $M = \$12.05$ ,  $SD = \$7.36$ ),  $t(1140) = 0.20$ ,  $p = .84$ .

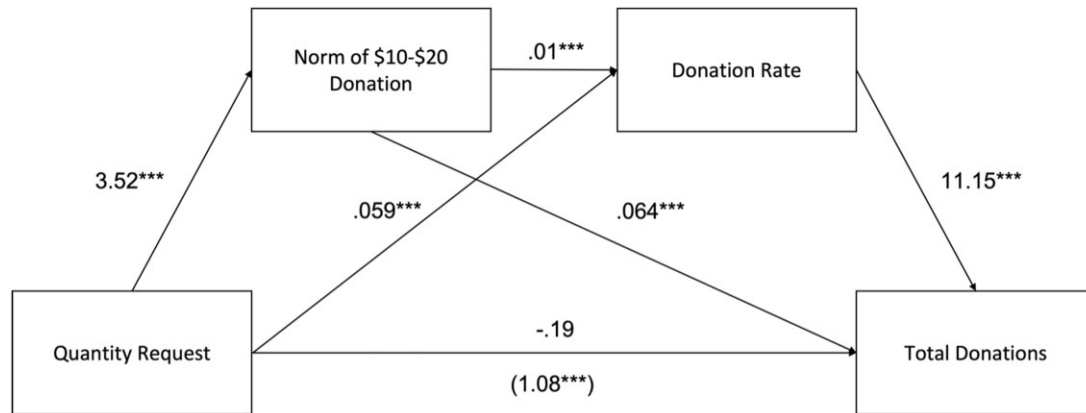
*Total Donations.* Reflecting the increase in donation rates, the quantity condition also increased total donations ( $M = \$8.16$ ,  $SD = \$7.32$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = \$7.07$ ,  $SD = \$8.19$ ),  $t(1801) = 2.96$ ,  $p = .003$ ,  $d = 0.14$ .

*Norm of Donation Magnitude.* Consistent with our hypotheses, the quantity condition increased perceived norms of donating \$10–\$20 ( $M = 22.06\%$ ,  $SD = 18.38\%$ ) compared to the open-ended condition ( $M = 18.55\%$ ,  $SD = 16.82\%$ ),  $t(1801) = 4.24$ ,  $p < .001$ ,  $d = 0.20$ .

Of course, it is possible that when responding to the norms measure, participants simply relied on their own

FIGURE 7

SERIAL MEDIATION MODEL IN STUDY 7



NOTE.—Quantity requests, compared to open-ended requests, increased the perceived norms of \$10–\$20 donations, which then increased the donation rates and subsequently, total donations, 95% CI for the indirect effect: [0.2054, 0.5823],  $p < .001$ .

donation decision to infer what others typically gave. To rule out this possibility, supplemental study F asked participants to complete the norm measure without making a donation decision. Consistent with our theorizing, the quantity request still more strongly communicated the norms of donating \$10–\$20 compared to the open-ended request,  $p = .002$  (see [web appendix](#) for additional details).

**Serial Mediation.** First, we tested whether there was a significant mediation from quantity request  $\rightarrow$  norms of donating \$10–\$20  $\rightarrow$  donation rate. The indirect pathway of the effect of quantity request on donation rate via norms of donating \$10–\$20 was significant (95% CI for the indirect effect: [0.0185, 0.0521]),  $B = 0.04$ ,  $SE = 0.01$ ,  $z = 4.12$ ,  $p < .001$ .

Then, we tested whether there was a significant serial mediation from quantity request  $\rightarrow$  norms of donating \$10–\$20  $\rightarrow$  donation rate  $\rightarrow$  total donations. Norms of donating \$10–\$20 was the proximal mediator (M1) and donation rate was the distal mediator (M2). The indirect pathway of the effect of quantity request on total donations via norms of donating \$10–\$20 and donation rate was significant (95% CI for the indirect effect: [0.2054, 0.5823]),  $B = 0.39$ ,  $SE = 0.10$ ,  $z = 4.10$ ,  $p < .001$  (see [figure 7](#) for the full serial mediation model). These pathways fully mediated the overall impact of quantity request on total donations, with the direct effect no longer being significant when taking these pathways into account,  $B = -0.19$ ,  $SE = 0.24$ ,  $z = -0.79$ ,  $p = .43$ , though we note that this is likely due to the inclusion of donation rates in the full model.

Overall, we found significant support for our proposed mechanism in explaining the effects of quantity requests

on donations. Quantity requests affected the perceived norms of donation amounts (those included in the request), which increased donation rates and, ultimately, total donations.

One alternative explanation is that quantity requests convey a stronger norm of donating in general—that is, a norm of donating *any* amount—relative to open-ended requests. In [supplemental material D](#) in the [web appendix](#), we conducted a robustness check to test whether quantity requests instead increased donations because they conveyed a greater norm of making any donation. We found that the norm of donating \$10–\$20 explained the effect of quantity requests on donation likelihood *over and above* the norm of donating (i.e., that others donated any amount). This result gives us greater confidence that the norm of donation magnitude indeed significantly contributes to the effect of quantity requests on donation rates, and thereby, on total donations.

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

How can organizations increase donations to prosocial causes? Across seven studies (total  $N = 9,028$ ), we provided evidence that relative to other requests, quantity requests—requests providing multiple contribution amount choice options—nudged people to donate to charitable organizations, which in turn increased total contributions to charity. Quantity requests effectively increased donations (study 1), even when potential donors can passively decide not to donate (study 2) and when the donation was directed toward a less popular cause (study 3). This increase in donations held for quantity requests that started

with both lower (e.g., \$1) and higher (e.g., \$10) donation amount options (study 4). This effect seems to be unique to quantity requests rather than extending to any request that presumes that the respondent will contribute (study 5). This is because quantity requests uniquely provide normative information to help donors determine donation magnitude (studies 6 and 7).

## Contributions of the Present Research

*Norms of Donation Magnitude as a Driver of Donation Likelihood.* Previous work investigating the role of social information about donation magnitude on donation likelihood has typically focused on the impact of normalizing small donations (Brockner et al. 1984; Fraser et al. 1988; Martin and Randal 2008; Weyant 1984) or explicit mentions of past donor behavior (Croson and Shang 2013; Klinowski 2021; see also supplemental table A in the web appendix). Our research provides compelling evidence that norms of donation magnitude can be implicitly communicated by the choice options included in a request. Whereas some past research has explored the effects of quantity requests, we are the first to identify this novel mechanism, which helps to explain why donation requests featuring multiple suggested donation amounts increase donation rates.

Intuitively, it might seem that the most relevant normative information for a potential donor to consider is whether or not others gave to a charitable request (Agerström et al. 2016; Frey and Meier 2004). Indeed, in study 7, we do find that perceptions of whether others donated help drive donation likelihood (see supplemental material D in web appendix for details). However, in studies 6 and 7, we also provide evidence consistent with our argument that quantity requests provide normative information about donation magnitude and that this in turn promotes donation likelihood. Quantity requests help individuals figure out *how much* to give, and because this decision is central to the donation decision as a whole, quantity requests encourage people to make donations.

One question that arises is whether this norm of donation magnitude is injunctive (signaling to respondents that they should donate particular amounts) or descriptive (signaling to respondents that others are giving particular amounts). Both our manipulation of norms in study 6 (stating the most common donation amounts) and our measure of norms in study 7 (asking participants what they thought others would donate to the request) are clearly descriptive. Nevertheless, injunctive and descriptive norms often go hand in hand. After all, ideas about what one should do are often informed by what others actually do, and how others behave can be informed by socially agreed-upon standards of behavior. Therefore, it is possible that both types of norms are activated by quantity requests or that our evidence for a descriptive norm mechanism was actually

picking up on what participants thought they (and others) *should* donate. Future research could examine contexts in which injunctive and descriptive norms conflict (what people ought to donate diverges from what people typically donate) to more clearly determine the relative contributions of injunctive and descriptive norms in driving the effect of quantity requests.

*Quantity versus Nonquantity Requests.* The distinction we draw between quantity requests and nonquantity requests provides a novel contribution that is both theoretically and practically important. Theoretically, our findings establish that a presumption of giving can be insufficient to nudge giving. Several other accounts would predict that any reasonable request that implies an expectation of giving would be effective in encouraging giving. We provide strong evidence that not all presumptive requests are created equal. Namely, unlike nonquantity requests, quantity requests provide normative information about the crucial consideration of how much to give, which leads to greater donation rates and, consequently, greater total contributions. This distinction also offers a practical lesson for charitable organizations on how to best present their requests. Study 5 suggests that one solution is to *lead* with a quantity request so that people might already commit to donating some amount (a decision made easier by the quantity request format) and then follow up with other requests (such as selecting a specific cause within a charity).

*Ordinal versus Nominal Partitions.* Past research reveals that people tend to diversify allocation decisions across all available options (Read and Loewenstein 1995; Benartzi and Thaler 2001). Therefore, the categorization of options influences the allocation of choices, producing a phenomenon described as “partition dependence” (Fox, Ratner, and Lieb 2005). This tendency to diversify has even been demonstrated for single choices (Tannenbaum et al. 2015; Tannenbaum, Fox, and Goldstein 2013). That is, in the aggregate, people’s one-shot choices tend to spread across the choice options available, even though each individual only chooses a single option. Therefore, in theory, providing multiple donation options and only one non-donation option should increase the odds that people will give by including more options in the “to donate” category. However, study 5 reveals that nonquantity requests featuring multiple donation options (e.g., asking which charitable program one might support or when the donation should be made) do *not* increase donation likelihood, signifying that providing multiple contribution options is insufficient to explain our effect. This is consistent with recent evidence that suggests that nonquantity multiple option requests may, at times, adversely affect donation rates (Ein-Gar et al. 2021).

One intriguing possibility is that our research points to a conceptual distinction regarding partition dependence. In

particular, there may be an important yet underappreciated distinction between *ordinal* partitions (those that divide the decision space into ordered options, such as the donation amounts in *quantity* requests) and *nominal* partitions (those that divide the decision space into non-ordered categories, such as the charitable recipients in *which charity* requests). When considering whether or not to engage in an action, ordinal partitions direct the decision to a singular consideration of what level of action one might want to take. By contrast, nominal partitions require respondents to make tradeoffs between the different choice options. In so doing, ordinal partitions may uniquely heighten the likelihood of engaging in the action by making decisions easier for consumers in a way that nominal partitions do not. Similar to this argument, Liu, McFerran, and Haws (2020) suggest that people are more likely to match others' behavior on ordinal attributes (as with donation amounts) than on nominal attributes (as with donation causes). If this possibility proved true, this could indicate that even in contexts that already show evidence of partition dependence, framing partitions as ordinal could further increase rates of choosing to act. For instance, individuals may be even more likely to make an investment when considering potential fund options if funds are reasonably ordered (e.g., in order from lowest to highest fee). Future research would benefit from exploring this distinction between ordinal and nominal partitions.

## Supplementary Explanations

*Increasing Ease.* One explanation for why quantity requests outperform open-ended requests is that quantity requests simply make donating easier compared to having to generate one's own amount. Though there is intuitive appeal for this part of the process, an ease mechanism is difficult to capture empirically. Part of the intuitive appeal relies on a joint comparison of open-ended and quantity requests. But, given that potential donors only experience one type of request, we have thus far been unable to provide evidence that those exposed to a quantity request report greater ease in making their decision than those considering an open-ended request in our explorations.

Of course, the effect is likely multiply determined, and in theory, ease could still be part of the process. After all, norms of donation magnitude *should* make the donation easier (knowing how much to donate should make it easier to determine whether to donate). Given the robust support for our norms of donation magnitude account (studies 6 and 7), we focused on the process via norms. Though ease could be one of the contributing factors, we note that ease cannot—as a separate mechanism—explain why norms of donation magnitude mediates the effects we observe.

*Decreasing Choice Conflict.* Deciding how much to give can be a tricky endeavor, as even those inclined

toward giving may not want to donate too much or too little. In the domain of pay-what-you-want pricing, Gneezy et al. (2010) find that when a portion of the profits is donated to charity, fewer people make a purchase, even though the amounts they pay on average are much higher. This seems to demonstrate that while people may want to purchase a product, the charitable element of the decision creates a context in which people feel that *if* they are to purchase the product, they should pay more. In a similar vein, when faced with a donation context, people may feel that *if* they are to donate, they should donate an acceptably large amount. With an open-ended request, an “acceptably large amount” might be more difficult to ascertain; however, with a quantity request, this is more spelled out. Therefore, perhaps quantity requests reduce the level of choice conflict for deciding how much to donate. This is not inconsistent with our account and may very well be why—like ease—norms of donation magnitude help to explain the increase in donation rates. That is, people may turn to others' behavior to figure out how much to donate, and this perception may facilitate donations.

## Potential Boundary Conditions

*Susceptibility to Social Influence.* Given that quantity requests rely on perceived norms to increase donations, this effect might depend on whether or not respondents care about the norms conveyed. If people are indifferent to the perceived norm, they may be resistant to change and uninfluenced by quantity requests. As one example, if a Democrat were asked to consider a donation request from a conservative political action committee, the type of request—quantity or otherwise—is unlikely to influence donation decisions. Consistent with that idea, some research suggests that donors are less influenced by others' donation behaviors when those others are outgroup members (Agerström et al. 2016; Hysenbelli, Rubaltelli, and Rumiat 2013; Shang, Reed, and Croson 2008). In a different vein, existing donors—who may already have established norms of how much they should give—may be less susceptible to the effect of quantity requests. Though we did not find evidence for this possibility in study 1 (previous donors and new donors were both more likely to give in response to a quantity request), it is possible that in field settings—which often use personalized quantity requests based on a donor's previous gifts—these established norms may be particularly salient and drown out the effect of quantity requests. Beyond group membership, individuals who tend to be less susceptible to social influence (Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel 1989) or more skeptical of marketing efforts (Campbell and Kirmani 2000) in general may not be affected by the norms conveyed by quantity requests. Our theorizing suggests that quantity requests may be especially promising in domains in which normative behaviors are important, and future research should

explore whether these possible boundary conditions influence the effectiveness of quantity requests.

*Higher and Lower Donation Options.* To examine donations in an experimental setting, we provided all participants a bonus (study 3) or a possible bonus (studies 1 and 2 and 4–7) from which to donate. By doing so, we restricted the maximum donation amount for these studies. Within this context, we tested whether various lowest donation options influenced donations. In study 4, setting a higher range of donation options did not decrease donation rates, and setting a lower range of donation options did not decrease total donations. Still, it is possible that outside of this experimental context, the size of donation options offered in a quantity request (e.g., \$0.50 or \$100) could present a boundary condition of the effects we see here.

Prior work offers mixed evidence regarding whether higher suggested donations might come at the cost of donation rates (Altmann et al. 2019; De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013; Doob and McLaughlin 1989; Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Reiley and Samek 2019; Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995). According to our conceptual framework, quantity requests encourage greater donation rates because they communicate norms about how much (ostensibly similar) others are likely to give. If the donation amount options are too high, however, the choice set may implicitly communicate that the request is meant for a different type of respondent, such as higher-income individuals or those who are particularly invested in the request's cause. In other words, the normative information communicated by the request may instead discourage most respondents. Indeed, De Bruyn and Prokopec (2013) found that among previous donors, providing a lowest donation option that exceeded a donor's previous gift *dampened* donations, while Baggio and Motterlini (2019) found that lowest donation options that exceeded the contribution size of a charity's typical donor left donation rates unchanged. On the other hand, some research considering lower donation options suggests that requests featuring very small donation amount options (though beneficial for donation rates) can decrease total contributions (Goswami and Urminsky 2016; Schibrowsky and Peltier 1995).

As a preliminary test of whether higher or lower suggested amount sizes serve as potential boundary conditions of quantity requests, we conducted [supplemental study G](#) in the [web appendix](#). Using two hypothetical scenarios (a flyer in the mail or a charity gala), we compared responses to an open-ended request with a lower quantity request (starting at \$1) and a higher quantity request (starting at \$50). In these scenarios, lower quantity requests boosted donation rates but decreased total contributions. Higher quantity requests tended to increase total contributions but donation rates appeared to be context dependent, directionally increasing for the gala scenario but not for the flyer scenario. This study provides preliminary evidence that the

donation options in a quantity request can matter, but also that the norms of the context may shift what donation amounts compel respondents to donate. Though past research has explored the impact of quantity requests that use differing donation options (e.g., those starting at higher amounts, such as \$100, or those starting at lower than typical amounts, such as \$0.50), future research should more systematically test how these differing quantity requests compare to open-ended requests to fully map the extent of the effects observed here.

## Questions for Future Research

*How Do the Options in a Quantity Request Affect Donation Behavior?* Our studies primarily tested the effectiveness of quantity requests compared to other types of requests. One promising avenue for future research is to more thoroughly investigate how varying the donation options in a quantity request influences donations. For instance, one unanswered question is whether the number of donation options in a quantity request matters. A quantity request that includes more (rather than fewer) donation options might increase the likelihood that an option matches one's preferences, thereby increasing donation rates. At the same time, too many options could intimidate potential donors who might then opt out of donating altogether.

Another open question is whether the arrangement or spacing of the donation options influences donations (De Bruyn and Prokopec 2013; Reiley and Samek 2019). Take, for instance, the quantity \$1 request in study 4, which included \$1, \$15, and \$25 options. It is possible that in this request, the \$1 option looked especially stingy in the context of much larger options, perhaps pushing more people toward the next available option (\$15). This might have made donors more likely to donate \$15 than they would for a request with a more proximate smaller option, possibly increasing average donation size. If, on the other hand, a request included additional options closer to the \$1 amount (e.g., \$5), then the \$1 option would appear less stingy and more appropriate, possibly attracting more donors to this option. Assuming that the average donation size is greater than \$1, this could decrease the average nonzero donations. Future research should systematically investigate how the inclusion of different donation options influences donation rates and magnitudes.

*How Do Quantity Requests Affect Decisions in the Absence of a Financial Windfall?* To measure donations in incentive-compatible studies with online participants, we asked participants in each of our studies to consider donation opportunities using funds either from potential lottery bonus payments (e.g., a chance to win \$25) or from small bonus payments received at the time of the study (i.e., an immediate \$1.50 bonus). While this design feature

was important for creating actual donation opportunities, it could have influenced decisions to donate in ways unique to this experimental setting. Indeed, overall donation rates were quite high across most of our studies, possibly because people were more likely to give away money that was not already theirs (“easy come, easy go”). Though there is likely to be a main effect of a windfall financial gain on donation likelihood (Li et al. 2019), we have reason to believe that the effect of quantity requests is robust to a financial windfall paradigm. Specifically, in supplemental study H, we demonstrated that online participants were more willing to engage in volunteer efforts in response to quantity requests. The time used to complete these tasks was not included in the description of the initial study, so this time should not have been conceptualized as a windfall. And yet, participants sacrificed additional time that they were not previously planning to commit to the study to complete these extra tasks. Given that the effect of quantity requests extends to donations of time, we have greater confidence that the effect of quantity requests on donations is not restricted to receiving financial windfalls.

*Can Quantity Requests Nudge Future Giving?* The consistent increase in contribution rates for quantity requests could also benefit charitable organizations beyond shifting a single choice. Namely, it is also possible that these quantity requests influence *subsequent* giving. Research on self-consistency and the foot-in-the-door effect (Freedman and Fraser 1966; Burger 1999) has demonstrated that when people make a choice, their subsequent choices tend to be consistent with that choice. Specifically, once someone has agreed to a small request, the same person will be more likely to agree with a larger request out of a desire for self-consistency. Thus, it stands to reason that if an individual were nudged to donate via a quantity request, that individual might be more likely to acquiesce to future donation requests from the same charity. As a matter of fact, previous research suggests that a single instance of giving can lead to a habit of giving (Meer 2013). Future research should investigate whether the effectiveness of quantity requests endures for subsequent donation behavior.

One alternative approach that may yield practical benefits for charities would be to present quantity requests that target the frequency of donations rather than the size of a donation. That is, many organizations are interested in persuading donors to become monthly or annual donors, rather than to make one-time gifts. Future research could examine whether quantity requests focused on the frequency of gifts would also increase donations, similar to how framing deposits as smaller daily amounts can increase participation in a financial savings program (Hershfield, Shu, and Benartzi 2020).

*Can Quantity Requests Encourage Behavior Beyond Donations?* Though our studies focused on monetary donations, it is possible that quantity requests would foster action in other domains as well. For instance, quantity requests could increase the likelihood of exercise by providing choice options that focus on how much time they might spend exercising. As one exploration of quantity requests in other domains, research illustrates a similar effect with product purchase behavior, finding that requests that ask *how many* products consumers would like to purchase (e.g., how many sodas to add to a pizza order or how many discounted lottery tickets to buy) can increase purchase rates compared to other requests (Duke and Amir 2022; Tavassoli and Visentin 2021). Future research should explore the effects of quantity requests in other domains.

## Conclusion

How much should I donate? Our research demonstrates that the simple yet effective nudge of quantity requests can increase potential donors' likelihood of giving and total contributions by presenting normative answers to this question (i.e., the suggested donation amounts). This previously unidentified mechanism offers an explanation for why quantity requests can be more successful than other requests, including those that provide multiple donation options unrelated to the size of a donation. Our findings offer clear recommendations for policymakers and charitable organizations by illuminating the distinctive benefits of quantity requests for charitable giving.

## DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

The first and second authors jointly collected these data via Prolific Academic and Amazon's Mechanical Turk (MTurk) platforms between September 2017 and June 2022. The first and second authors jointly analyzed the data. All data, materials, preregistrations, and R code can be found here: <https://researchbox.org/54>.

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