

# SECURING MONTHLY GIFTS: A QUICK-START GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE GIVING

Maximize your fundraising results and acquire more loyal donors with monthly donations



# Who needs sustainable gifts?

Do you have certain seasons, or months in the year, with low cash flow? Do you struggle to meet basic organizational needs more often than not? Do you find yourself rationing dollars from the year-end giving or spring appeal campaign like a mom doling out Halloween candy - hoping to make it last?

Do you have concrete program elements that individually cost very little, but on your operational scale are significant expenses? *Think: Diapers for a new mom's program or a one-hour yoga class for victims of trauma.*

## **Then you need a sustainable giving program!**

Imagine, instead, a steady cash flow that helps cover mundane, but necessary, expenses. Picture a steady influx of low level gifts boosting your monthly revenue stream - without you needing to double, or triple, your efforts.

Monthly donors often

- Give more over time.
- Remain loyal donors longer than annual donors.
- Stay more engaged, giving additional gifts and actively volunteering.
- Donate at higher levels.

## **In this guide, you'll learn:**

- Why monthly gifts can make a big difference
- How to convert one-time donors into monthly givers
- Tips for retaining your monthly donors

# Show Me the Money

Let's do the math:

The average monthly recurring gift is \$52.  
That's \$624 a year!



Even lower level gifts make a difference:

A monthly gift of \$10 becomes \$120 in just a year.

More importantly:

Monthly gifts help donors fit giving into their budgets and allow them to see that being more generous is possible. If donors feel like they can't give enough to make a difference, they may not give at all.

**Bonus: A compelling monthly giving campaign gives your nonprofit a new offer to promote and can become a signature program for your organization.**



On average, donations are 43% larger on a branded online giving page that includes suggested donation amounts.

Donors are 31% more likely to initiate a recurring gift on a branded page versus unbranded page.

# Secure Monthly Donors

Back in the 1980s, before home computers and the internet, a small nonprofit established a dollar-a-month club. Each December they prepared and mailed 12 return envelopes to hundreds of supporters who dutifully returned each with a dollar on the first of every month. Of course, with the occasional rogue donor who sent all \$12 in January.

Consider how much simpler monthly giving is today - especially if you implement these steps to put a successful program in place:

## Lay the ground work.

First, let's make sure the whole experience is as easy as possible for your donors (and your staff). Here's a quick checklist to make sure you have what you need to get a campaign launched

- Create an online monthly giving campaign page.
- Brand your monthly giving page to coordinate with your nonprofit's website and campaign materials.
- Set up automatic receipts.
- Allow donors to easily update their information.
- Add impact labels to share what a donation provides.
- Track your progress, and offer real-time reporting of gifts
- Use a reputable email marketing service to send email appeals, newsletters, and impact reports.
- Segment your appeals and updates to tailor your message
- Feature monthly giving options in a prominent place on your website
- Make sure website visitors can easily find your donation button so they can quickly give.

### Before you begin:

Map out how your organization will interact with recurring donors. Communicating more frequently is easier if you're following a thoughtful strategy and process. Set aside some time before you begin to plot this out.

# Get More Monthly Gifts

## Frame your campaign.

Once the infrastructure is in place, other questions arise: When should I start? How often should I ask? What if no one joins?

### LAUNCH

You can start any time -- but often launching with a particular theme or program start date can help to provide a 'rationale' for getting it off the ground. Refocus your ask to encourage donors to set up recurring donations.

And, don't be afraid to ask for one-time donors to convert to a monthly gift.

### INFORM

Share why smaller monthly gifts are a win-win! Smaller, automatic gifts do not impact a donor's monthly budget as critically as a one-time donation and with many monthly donors, your organizational needs can be met more consistently.

Let donors know that recurring donations give your cause a steady stream of support that can lead to better budgeting, increased efficiency, and more help for other year-round programs. This means their dollars can go even further!

### REMIND

Sending out one email or letter at launch-time will not create a program. Once you've made the first move, make it a habit to ask for a monthly pledge. Send reminders. Include a P.S. in all your communications. Think of a monthly giving program as a marathon, not a sprint.

**Want more monthly giving tips? [See all our monthly giving resources.](#)**

# Get More Monthly Gifts

## Write compelling stories.

Invite donors to impact the lives of individuals by sharing stories that describe a tangible tie to the idea of giving every month.

Show how much more recurring gifts can do. Give concrete examples that illustrate how these donations add up and what they could provide versus a one-time gift.

[See how Network for Good customers leveraged stories](#) for their monthly giving campaigns.

Network for Good customer, Growing Power, dedicates a fundraising campaign page for monthly donations. They also add a layer of urgency of setting a 100 day window to hit their goal.

**Donate \$5 per Month today to become an Investor in Growing Power.**

Growing Power needs to raise \$100,000 in monthly donations in 100 days. Commit to a monthly donation of at least \$5 today and make an impact in the work we do.

Donation Amount

**\$1**  
Helps us create youth jobs

**\$5**  
Become an Investor in Growing Po...

**\$25**  
Helps provide supplies

**\$50**  
Become a Sustainer

**\$1,000**  
Farm to City Training Cost

\$

\* Donation Frequency: Monthly

Ending (Optional):

Your Note for the Donor Scroll  
*Write a public note about why you're choosing to give!*

## Simplify the process.

Online giving makes it easy for donors to make a monthly gift, and collecting monthly gifts online cuts down on your administrative efforts.

When your donor chooses recurring giving, your online fundraising software should allow them to automatically give each month without returning to your page.

Set up a dedicated online donation page focused on recurring options just for this campaign! Donors will think more seriously about becoming regular contributors.

# Get More Monthly Gifts

## Recognize and thank donors profusely.

Make your donors feel good about giving! Help them recognize they are part of something bigger than themselves. Make supporters wonder why they *wouldn't* become monthly sustainers.

People like to belong. Naming your monthly giving program, creating a club, and offering simple perks can encourage donors to join. You could post a weekly social media shout out of individual donors, give them first dibs on event tickets, or invite them to behind-the-scenes exclusive events.

Keep your donors involved with frequent email updates, but pepper in personal touches. Take your recurring donors to coffee, write them a quick email, hold special events for them, and ask them for their feedback. Giving is highly personal, so make sure you understand what inspires your donors to give.

Make sure any thank you or engagement plans allow you to achieve success. Don't promise you'll send hand-written thank you notes to each donor if you don't have the resources. Instead, strive toward a signed letter from your executive director within 24 hours.

Here are some ways other nonprofits have recognized their most loyal donors:

- Each month, Sacramento Food Bank & Family Services features a different volunteer. Highlight the people you support, along with the people who support you, to keep your mission front and center.
- The Barter Theatre in Abingdon, Virginia hosts recurring donors for a quarterly luncheon and discussion series, as well as special tours.

**Bonus:** A compelling monthly giving campaign gives your nonprofit a new offer to promote and can become a signature program for your organization.

# Retaining Your Monthly Donors

## Start small.

A small, monthly recurring gift can be an easy entry point for donors.

A gift of \$10 or \$15 a month is easier to work into a budget than a one-time gift of \$100. And with [your Network for Good donation page](#), those donations are processed automatically—no extra effort for you or your donors.

Plus, these donors are likely to make additional one-time gifts throughout the year, attend events, and encourage their networks to support and donate if you launch a peer-to-peer campaign. In short, these recurring donors are the most active and generous supporters over time.

## Make small but regular progress.

By making a habit of doing something small every day to improve either the number or loyalty of your recurring donors, you'll create a habit that allows you to be more effective and successful over time.

Keeping donors engaged can be tough.

70%

one-time donors who never return to make a second gift

Monthly donors are usually an organization's most loyal and most engaged donors.

80%

monthly donors who give again!



# Create a Monthly Giving Program

Now that you know how valuable monthly giving can be for your organization, it's time to get going! Set up your recurring giving program with these key steps.

- Customize your online giving page to reflect your monthly giving program. (Remember, your supporters should feel like donors, not shoppers.)
- Make the giving process obvious, easy, and transparent.
- Feature your donate button prominently on your website and include a link in all of your online outreach.
- Provide the option to choose monthly giving in every ask, appeal, and campaign to help donors realize giving more is possible.
- Add impact labels to monthly giving levels to illustrate what a gift can do.
- Create a special membership program to foster a sense of belonging.
- Celebrate sustainers (and their impact) by including updates on your monthly giving program in your annual report, newsletters, and on your organization's website.
- Design a special thank you and stewardship program for monthly donors.
- Plan a dedicated monthly giving campaign to target donors who may be more likely to give on a monthly basis.
- Develop ways to upgrade monthly donors to new giving levels over time.
- Track your progress and measure which methods result in the most new monthly donors.
- Share results, stories, and updates on the impact of your recurring donors.