



Giving Options That Make a Difference

A great donation page can encourage people to give, but the right options—properly positioned—can encourage donors to give more.

Why You Need Recurring Giving

Simply put, not offering a recurring gift option means you're missing out on donations. Recurring gifts help donors fit giving into their budgets and allows you to collect more money over time. Sometimes, if donors feel like they can't give enough to make a difference, they may not give at all.

Make sure your donation form offers a recurring giving option. When reaching out to donors, remind them that they can sign up for monthly giving—and make it easy for them to do.

Make it a priority in your appeals. Recurring giving should stand out in your appeals, website, and (of course) donation form. It's a win-win situation: monthly donations for you, convenience and budgeting help for your donors.

Make recurring giving something special. Offer exclusive perks or a special status to monthly gift tiers to make recurring giving a more attractive option.

Make it tangible. Frame your recurring gift options in a way that lets donors know how their regular support will help. Tie monthly giving levels to real impact. If regular activities or outreach can be tied to donation frequency, make that connection. For example, some organizations have an ambassador program or a monthly sponsor-a-child program.

Fact: On average, recurring donors who give through Donate Now pages give 42% more per year than one-time donors.

How to Construct a Gift String

In addition to letting donors fill in their own donation amount, give them a shortcut by offering suggested giving amounts. This makes it easier for your donors—and can motivate them to give more.

Why is this? The answer is “anchoring.”

Donors want cues for how much to donate. They might have a number in mind but aren't sure what level will make an impact. Presenting defined choices gives context—an anchor—for what might be considered a “low” amount vs. a higher-end contribution.

Simply adjusting how you position your suggested giving amounts can increase the average gift by 25% or more! Here's how:

To create your suggested giving amounts—or gift string—use your average gift as a starting point for calculation. Set the lowest donation choice slightly below the average and the second choice slightly higher. People are more likely to choose one of the middle amounts—and most likely the second option.

For instance, if your average online gift is \$40, you might set your first donation amount at \$30 and your second amount at \$50 or \$60. Then, add a few higher donation amounts. (Unless you have a good reason to do so, don't add a number so high that it's unrealistic, like \$25,000.)

Here's a reasonable starter gift string:

\$25 \$50 \$100 \$250 \$500

As you gain experience with your donors' giving patterns and average gifts, you can adjust these amounts. Note: Make your anchor points realistic for your target audience.

Consider using impact labels.

Tying giving amounts to specific impact levels helps donors understand how their support will matter

to those you serve. Illustrate what each gift level could provide to help donors visualize the result of their donation.

Add descriptions next to each giving level if:

- You can concretely say how each giving level will make a difference: "\$100 provides supplies for one student."
- Significant benefits come with each level: free museum admission, special gifts.

Good descriptions can inspire giving and increase giving levels. Boring or complicated descriptions add clutter and have the opposite effect. Don't force it if you have nothing to say.

★ Tip: If you mention your gift string in email appeals, make sure it matches what the donor sees when they reach your donation page.

Other Common Giving Options to Consider

Donation Premiums

If you offer thank you gifts, including them on your donation form is convenient for you and the donor. For best results, these gifts should be clearly tied to your mission and further the emotional bond with your organization. Research shows these types of thank you gifts can encourage giving.

Honorary Gifts

Many donors are moved to give—and to give more—in honor or memory of a loved one. Offer donors the choice to give in someone's name; not doing so may send the message that this isn't possible—and cause people to give elsewhere.

Donation "Tips"

Give donors the opportunity to cover your transaction processing costs. People understand that credit card transactions cost money; most are happy to defray these costs so that more money goes to your mission.