



As we head into December, we know you're gearing up for one of the most critical fundraising periods of the year. Nearly 30% of annual giving happens in December alone, with 10% arriving in just the final three days of the year (Giving USA). It's a busy time of year for all, but the return for a strong end-of-year fundraising push can be well worth the time and energy. The generosity is out there—the key is making sure your organization is ready to capture it.

Year End Giving Guide to Success

1

STORYTELLING THAT STANDS OUT

Identify Your Unique Value Proposition

In December's crowded landscape, donors need to understand what only your organization can do. Focus on outcome language—the specific impact that happens because you exist.

Lead with Impact

93% of donors say knowing their contribution's impact majorly influences their decision to give (Giving USA). Show concrete examples of change, not just activities.

Collect Stories Year-Round

Create a culture where every department identifies potential stories. Pose questions in newsletters and invite constituents to share photos and experiences.

Use Multiple Formats

People give to people, not organizations. Share video testimonials, photo essays, and personal narratives from those you serve, volunteers, and staff.

2

DONOR SEGMENTS TO FOCUS ON

Sustainer/Monthly Donors

They'll often make an additional year-end gift if personally invited.

Mid-Level Donors (typically \$1,000-\$9,999, depending on your development program)

Often overlooked but valuable. Mid-level donors (5% of your base) can provide 25% of revenue (Allegiance Group, 2024). Make specific asks to increase giving. Practice strong stewardship by making personal phone calls to thank them.

LYBUNT Donors (Last Year But Unfortunately Not This Year)

Re-engaging lapsed donors costs less than acquiring new ones. Reaching out in December with a compelling story, a phone call and/or a mailed personal note will go a long way.

Volunteers

They are twice as likely to donate as the general public (CharityEngine, 2024). Thank them specifically for their service, separate from any ask.



3

MULTI-CHANNEL CAMPAIGN ESSENTIALS

Email Best Practices

- Keep subject lines to 9 words or 60 characters
- Personalize with names and locations
- Focus on donors and the cause, not your organization
- Send a series of emails throughout December, increasing frequency toward December 31

Social Media

- Create a campaign-specific hashtag
- Share daily impact stories and donation milestones
- Go live on platforms to create urgency and connection

Text Messaging

Send donation forms directly to supporters' phones. Keep messages brief and urgent, especially Dec 29-31.

Direct Mail

Still highly effective for year-end appeals, coupled with other channels.

4

OPTIMIZE YOUR DONATION EXPERIENCE

Mobile-First Design

Over 40% of online giving happens on mobile devices (Meyer & Partners, 2024).

Test your entire donation process on a phone.

Simplify Forms

Only ask for essential information: name and payment details. Every additional field decreases conversion.

Add Smart Options

- "Cover processing fees" checkbox
- Suggested gift amounts based on impact
- Recurring giving is prominently featured
- Easy social sharing after donation

Fast Confirmation

Ensure donors receive immediate email confirmation and a clear thank you message.

Need help with your
annual appeal or year-
end giving strategies?
Drop us a note at
hola@cielostrategy.com

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STEWARDSHIP THAT BUILDS LOYALTY

Thank Quickly and Personally

Send acknowledgment within 24-48 hours. Make it personal, specific about their gift amount, and focused entirely on gratitude—no additional asks.

Show Impact

Within 30 days, follow up on how December gifts are being put to work. Use specific examples and stories.

Recognize Appropriately

Some donors appreciate public recognition; others prefer privacy.

Always ask permission before featuring them on social media or in publications.

Plan for January

Don't go silent after December 31. Continue the relationship with updates, invitations to engage, and expressions of gratitude throughout the year.