

5 ways to boost donor engagement with technology in 2025





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Table of contents

Introduction	1
The challenges of engaging and retaining donors	1
Why donors lapse	2
How technology can help	3
Streamline the donation process	3
Automate processes	4
Facilitate communication with donors	5
Simplify donor research	6
Keep donors' data secure	7
Conclusion	7

Introduction

Fundraising is a core part of nonprofit operations. But as any nonprofit will tell you, securing steady funding, especially through individual donations, can be a challenge.

On top of that, the United States is currently in [what some call a national “generosity crisis,”](#) with charitable donations and volunteer numbers in decline. In addition, nonprofit workforces [have been gradually](#) shrinking — while workloads have not. Add the uncertainty around federal funding created by a new presidential administration, and nonprofits are clearly in a tight spot.

This set of challenges requires some creative thinking to address. It’s more important than ever to develop more diverse, resilient fundraising strategies to weather the uncertainty.

Fortunately, digital tools can help tackle some aspects of funding challenges by saving you time and resources while maximizing your fundraising efforts. Using digital tools can help you automate and streamline time-consuming processes, freeing you up to focus on building lasting relationships with donors.

Here, we’ll explore some of the common fundraising challenges nonprofits experience and how you can face them head on — with the help of some easy-to-implement tech solutions.

The challenges of engaging and retaining donors

To fund their missions effectively, nonprofits have to focus on not only attracting new donors but also retaining them. And both can be challenging.

To begin with, there’s a lot of competition to capture donors’ attention in the first place. And economic issues like inflation mean that individual donors generally have less to give. According to one report, [about two-thirds of American households](#) donated to charities in 2000 — but that number dropped to a little under half by 2018.

While attracting new donors is important, it's not always the most efficient or effective way to securely fund your organization. Chasing one-time donations can be time-consuming and costly. [One study](#) found that getting new donors can cost up to \$1.50 per dollar raised, while the cost of retaining existing donors is closer to 20 cents or less per dollar raised.

In addition, [some research](#) found that reducing donor attrition by 10 percent can result in a 200 percent increase in value for your organization. Renewing donors ensure more steady funding, tend to increase their gifts over time, and contribute in other ways — not just financially.

Why donors lapse

Given the statistics above, it's clear that your nonprofit's donor attrition rate, or the rate at which past donors stop contributing over a period of time, can have a huge effect on its long-term financial sustainability.

So what causes donors to stop their support, and what can you do to keep them?

A [survey from Bloomerang](#) found that the majority of donors don't contribute again because they aren't financially able to do so. The second biggest reasons cited for lapsing were a lack of trust in the nonprofit and a lack of transparency about how their donations are being used.

The perceived lack of transparency can stem from a disconnect between what nonprofits communicate after someone donates and what donors expect. For example, donors might expect more than additional requests for one-time donations. The same [survey from Bloomerang found that 65 percent](#) of donors value frequent updates about the nonprofit's activities and the impact their donations are making.

Of course, a lack of staff and resources can get in the way of providing those kinds of updates. Without adequate staffing, it can be hard to properly engage donors over the long term and execute sustained fundraising campaigns.

That's where technological solutions can help.

How technology can help you gain donors — and keep them

Let's dive into some of the ways that nonprofits can use technology to overcome the challenges we've mentioned to get the most out of their fundraising efforts. Here are some simple ways to get started that can have a big impact.

1. Streamline the donation process

Adopting a digital-first donation process makes giving more convenient for donors. Digital donation processes also allow your staff to spend less time on rote tasks like manually entering contributions into a CRM program or sending acknowledgement notes. Here are just a few ways your nonprofit can modernize how you collect donations to remove roadblocks.



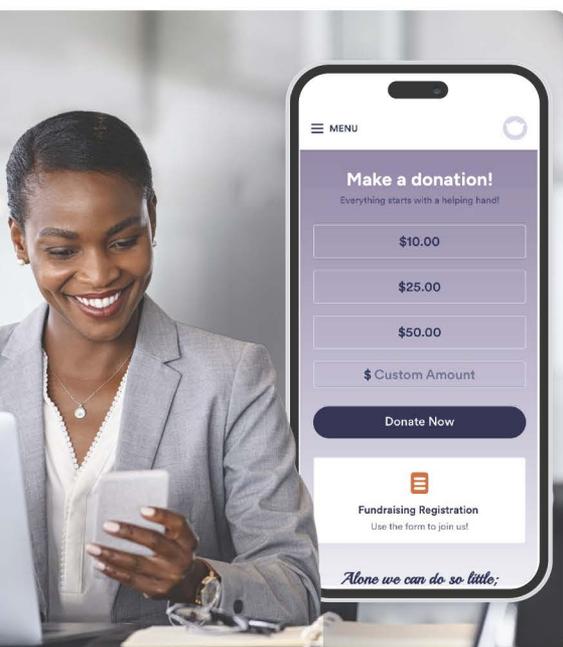
24% of donors would prefer to donate using digital wallets and mobile payment services

Source: [Bloomerang](#)

Use digital wallets. According to the Bloomerang survey, 24 percent of donors would prefer to donate using digital wallets and mobile payment services like PayPal, Venmo, Apple Pay, and Google Pay. Since the payment process is quicker with these methods, involving only a few taps, there are fewer barriers for donors. For example, if someone has to grab their credit card to input their payment information, it's easy for them to get distracted and navigate away from your site. By taking advantage of digital wallets, your nonprofit can meet donors wherever they are — including on their phones.

For example, [Tinley Park Public Library](#) uses a Jotform Enterprise integration with PayPal to collect fines and donations online. Says librarian Sarah Schroeder, "We've always wanted to accept donations in a way that's user-friendly. Before, we were only taking donations by check, so using the integration with Jotform Enterprise and PayPal was a great way to collect donations online."

The library staff can also use no-code conditional logic with their donation forms to set up customized autoresponder emails thanking donors for their contributions.



Take advantage of recurring donations. Once donors have contributed, they might simply forget to donate again. When you enable recurring donations, donors don't have to remember to donate month after month. Another advantage of this approach is that it's often more affordable for people to contribute a smaller monthly amount than a larger, one-time donation. This method also creates a steady stream of income, so you don't need to constantly reach out for one-time gifts.

Maximize social media accounts with link-in-bio tools. Link-in-bio solutions are another way to reach donors where they are — on social media. Tools like Instagram don't allow you to add URLs to posts, so you can't just paste in a link to a donation page. Instead, direct users to a page that collects all the relevant links for your organization, including your donation link, in your organization's bio.

Pro tip

You can use [Jotform Apps](#) as a link-in-bio tool.

Use data to personalize appeals and predict donor activity. You can optimize donor engagement by personalizing appeals and predicting giving capacity according to data on past contributions. Take advantage of CRM tools or other software that allow you to sort and segment your audience.

Request matching gifts. According to [Double the Donation](#), an estimated \$4–\$7 billion in matching gift funds goes unclaimed each year. Corporate gift matching programs can double donation amounts with little to no additional effort. Take advantage of digital tools that allow donors to see if their employer has a matching gift program at the point of donation, so they don't have to take the extra step of requesting the match from their company themselves.

2. Automate processes

Saving time on fundraising processes can allow your organization to instead focus on the bigger picture. Even doing a few tasks manually can add up to hours of time that could be better spent.

Using workflow automation can help. For example, if someone donates to your nonprofit, you'll want to send a thank-you note. But drafting and sending emails to each donor is time-consuming.

A [workflow](#) can automatically send these messages to donors immediately. The messages can even be customized with conditional logic and custom fields, such as the amount of the donation and the program it will support. That leaves staff with more time to spend on more important work, like developing strategies for better donor engagement and outreach.

One Jotform Enterprise customer, [United Way Roanoke Valley](#), used Jotform's Digest Emails feature to provide staff with automated summaries of registrations for the organization's annual charity golf event. That way, staff could plan event logistics accordingly, without having to constantly monitor the registration numbers themselves.

"The nice thing about Digest Emails is I can send all the information 'automagically.' I don't have to log in, nobody has to go to Google Sheets, and it's quick to set up," says Becky Dudley, database manager for United Way Roanoke Valley.



More than half of nonprofits use AI in some way.

Source: [Google.org](#)

3. Facilitate communication with donors

Open and regular communication with donors can help foster better relationships with them. And better relationships can lead to more loyalty. Here are a few ways that you can use technology to streamline regular communication with donors to ensure they feel connected to your cause.

Send regular updates. Provide your donors with updates about what your nonprofit has accomplished at regular intervals. For example, a nonprofit could send out biweekly updates about how many kids its volunteers have tutored or how many trees were planted. Demonstrate impact with concrete numbers as much as possible. You can integrate donation forms with email marketing [tools like Mailchimp](#), so your mailing lists stay up to date.



Conduct SMS outreach. With [91 percent of Americans](#) owning a smartphone, it makes sense to use SMS messages and [push notifications](#) to engage donors and stay in touch with them. Engage with donors through automated messages so they're aware of what you're working on.

Use autoresponders. You can [create autoresponder emails](#) to automatically thank donors and follow up with next steps without creating any extra work. Set up autoresponder messages to encourage people to sign up for newsletters, view additional content, volunteer, or generally stay involved. You can easily customize Jotform autoresponder messages for submissions to donation forms.

Get help from AI. According to a Google.org survey, [more than half of nonprofits use AI in some way](#). AI can help yours too. For instance, you can use AI agents — a type of chatbot that can be trained to function independently — to provide instant responses, anytime, anywhere, to donor inquiries.

[Jotform AI Agents](#) support multiple channels for AI-assisted support, including website chatbots, SMS support, and even phone agents. AI Agents can free up your staff, so they can spend less time and brainpower on answering frequently asked questions. You can also use AI tools to generate content for [campaigns](#), communications, and social media for your nonprofit.

4. Simplify donor research

Researching your donors is key to understanding their expectations. Get the information you need to inform your fundraising by creating both [quick polls and longer-form donor surveys](#). Then, analyze submission data to segment donors into different audiences and tailor content according to their interests, demographics, or other factors.

For example, you can use the filtering option in [Jotform Tables](#) to segment donors according to whatever data you collect about them. This way, you know who your donors are and what they're expecting, so your nonprofit can make more informed decisions about how to reach them.

5. Keep donors' data secure

Unsecured donation processes can severely damage the trust donors have in your organization. Reassure them that your organization uses software that complies with all relevant data privacy regulations, like HIPAA, and that their payment information is secured with the highest level of protection. For example, Jotform Enterprise offers features for [HIPAA compliance](#) as well as PCI DSS Level 1 certification, the highest level of protection for credit card transactions.

Donors may also hesitate if they have to visit a third-party site that they don't recognize to make a donation. They may wonder how secure the interface is and why your nonprofit doesn't have its own system. [White labeling](#), or customizing all the software you use with your own branding, promotes trust with donors and gives them a seamless experience.

Conclusion

With all of the uncertainty about fundraising in the nonprofit world right now, it's important to use every tool at your disposal to conserve resources and build lasting relationships with donors. Whether it's automating a donation workflow or using an AI agent to answer donor questions, using digital tools can help you stay focused on achieving your mission, whatever the future brings. 🚀

Learn more about how Jotform Enterprise helps
nonprofit organizations

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