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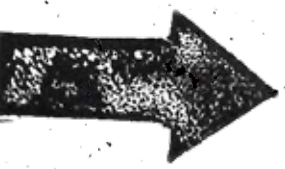
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26

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manifesto

Hi.

We are living through a time of disruption and dislocation. Institutions are wobbling, the pace of change is accelerating, the gyre is getting pretty dang wide, and people and organizations are left scrambling to keep up.

For nonprofit fundraisers and organizers, sudden shifts in the tools we use to reach audiences add further chaos and uncertainty. A shrinking number of providers control our ability to reach supporters through email, SMS, and other channels. Social media platforms continue to proliferate, subject to the whims of billionaires. The rapid adoption of AI tools is transforming the most basic functions of web marketing, including advertising and search.

It can be scary, so many changes coming so fast. But the truth is, very few nonprofits exist with the purpose of maintaining the status quo. Change is what we do.

In order to move their causes forward, nonprofits must adapt and respond with creativity, tenacity, and courage. It also helps if, amid the churning chaos, we can find some bits of solid ground to stand on.

Here's something solid, unshakeable: the commitment and passion of the people who work at nonprofits of every size, across every issue area, in the face of all adversity. Once again this year, we are honored to be joined by some of the smartest, bravest, most innovative nonprofit folks around. We are so grateful for the 180 M+R Benchmarks Study participants who contributed data and answered questions about how they are navigating this moment.

As you're about to see, there were some big swings in the data over the past year. And yes, those swings are in part a reflection of the unprecedented nature of this moment and the tireless work of nonprofit staff. They also represent something else, something extraordinary: the response of millions of individual activists, donors, and everyday people.

The clicks, donations, actions, and other data points we track are profound acts of hope and empathy. They are demands for a healthier world, a kinder world, a gentler world. They are whispers of compassion, and they are shouts of defiance.

This is solid ground, too. Friends, neighbors, and strangers holding together, contributing what they can, building a future worth believing in.

We can't help but feel inspired by these individual acts of engagement, from nonprofit staff and supporters alike. They are a reminder that for all the attention paid to those with the most power, true change in this world always comes down to people acting individually and collectively.

In that spirit, we are proud to share the 2026 M+R Benchmarks Study Zine — hands on, lovingly crafted, and personally meaningful to every one of us who worked on this project. Thank you for reading, and thanks again to the nonprofit staff who contributed data, answers, and inspiration.



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madeline stanionis sponsor & marketing



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tom giordano, website



bobby goldstein, website



eddie geller, video



WE ARE M+R

We believe that the rad nonprofits we work for are essential to advancing the cause of justice, alleviating suffering, and solving the greatest challenges we face.

We bring experience, talent, and unshakeable dedication to our clients to help good causes win — through fundraising and supporter engagement, movement building and issue advocacy, and message and brand development.

We have more resources, advice, tools, stickers, buttons, and other fun stuff waiting for you at mrss.com.

Find out more about working at M+R and join our crew at mrss.com/careers.

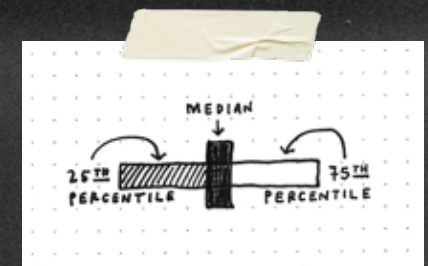
methodology

YOUR QUICK GUIDE to WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING AT WHEN YOU LOOK AT THESE CHARTS

- 1 Wherever possible, we have broken out the findings by sector. Each of our participants self-identified the appropriate sector (or, in some cases, fell outside of our defined sectors and selected “Other”). If you are not sure which sector represents your peer group, review the full list of participants on page 128 to find where you belong.
- 2 We also sort our participants by size. For our study:
 - “Small” refers to nonprofits with annual online revenue in 2025 below \$1,000,000;
 - “Medium” nonprofits reported 2025 online revenue between \$1,000,000 and \$5,000,000;
 - “Large” nonprofits reported 2025 online revenue between \$5,000,000 and \$10,000,000;
 - “Extra Large” nonprofits reported 2025 online revenue over \$10,000,000
- 3 The averages displayed in each chart and discussed throughout Benchmarks represent the median figure for a given metric for all participants who reported data. We do this to avoid having one or two outliers with extraordinary results from having too much influence, as might happen with a mean average.

- 4 Not all participants were able to provide data for every metric. If a chart does not include data for a certain sector or size, it’s because we were not able to collect enough results to report a reliable average.
- 5 In addition to the median figure, box-and-whisker charts display a range showing the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile. Half of all reported values fell within this range, which can be considered “normal” results for participants in our study.
- 6 Do not compare this year’s M+R Benchmarks findings to previous editions! Our participant pool changes each year, and a combination of inflation and some extremely successful programs have caused us to change how we break out nonprofits by size. We have also updated how we calculate some metrics. (See the sparkling discussion of home page and donation speed indices in our Website Performance section on page 104 for one example.)
- 7 A corollary to 6: Wherever we include year-over-year changes, we are including long-term data from this year’s participants.
- 8 If you have any more questions, please reach out to @mrcampaigns or email benchmarks@mrss.com.

how to read
the charts



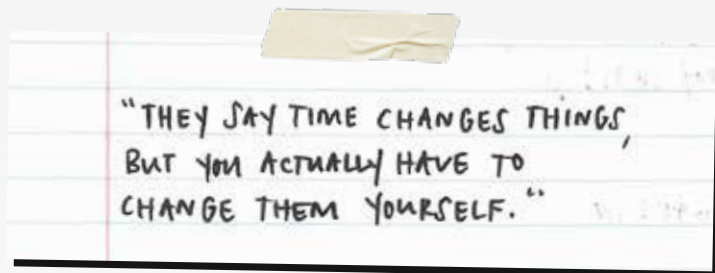
the big story



the big story

Supporters know there's a crisis

Andy Warhol may as well have been speaking directly to the heart of every nonprofit leader, organizer, fundraiser, marketer, activist, volunteer, rabble-rouser, and hell-raiser when he said:

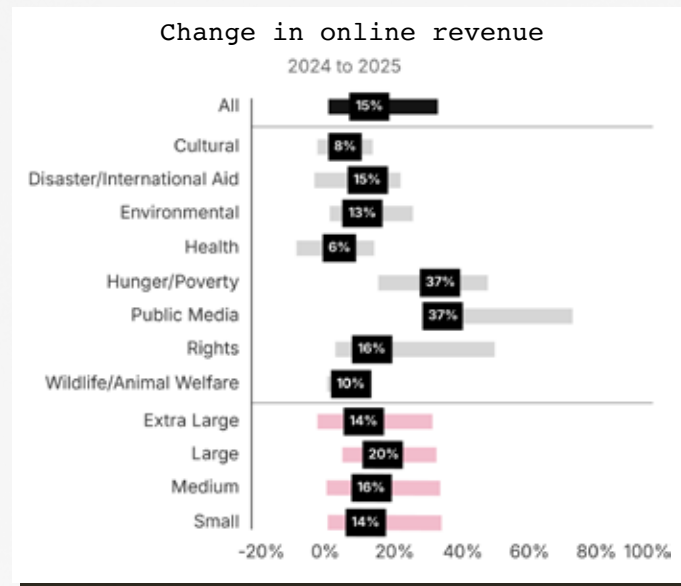


The results in this year's Benchmarks Study demonstrate that there are a lot of people out there — nonprofit staff and supporters alike — who refuse to wait for change.

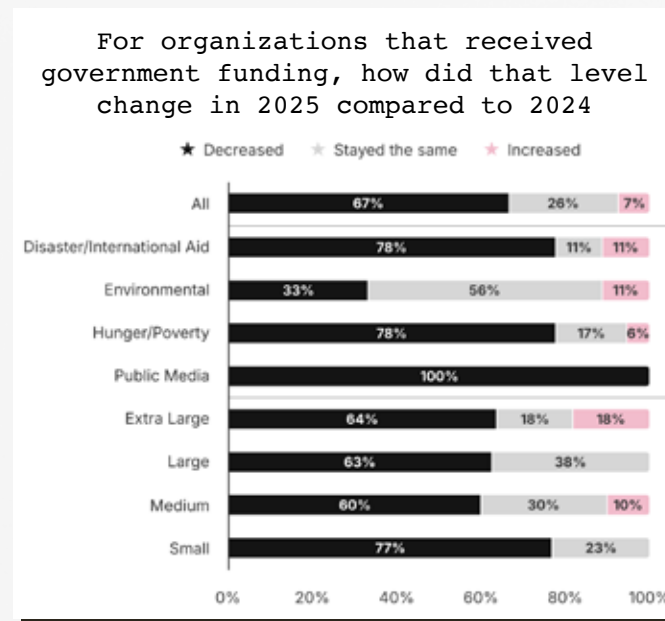
Average online revenue increased by 15% in 2025, with many nonprofits reporting that revenue was up by a third or more from the previous year.

These results would not be possible without the excellent creative, smart strategy, and extraordinary effort of nonprofit fundraising and marketing teams. We will have more to say about those folks in a moment. But the context is unavoidable: this is a crisis response from supporters who see nonprofits, causes, and communities they care about under threat.

The two sectors that reported the greatest year-over-year change were Hunger/Poverty and Public Media, where revenue increased by an average of 37%.



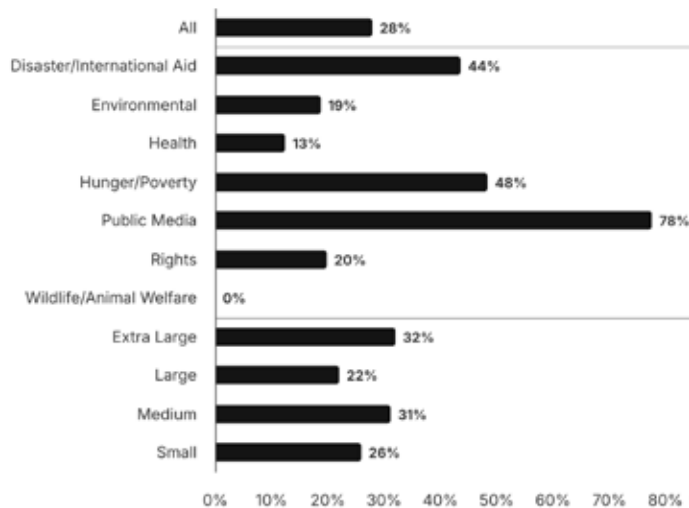
This response can't be separated from the high-profile cuts to federal funding for public broadcasting and food assistance. Among groups in our study that received government funding, two-thirds reported that they received less of it in 2025 than in 2024. Federal funding decreases affected every Public Media nonprofit in this cohort, along with 78% of Hunger/Poverty and Disaster/International Rights Aid nonprofits.



People have responded to funding cuts and other efforts to undermine important organizations with generosity and firm commitment (plus a lot of anxiety, anger, frustration, tears, yelling, marching, and, for some of us, stress baking). It is truly inspiring to see the resolve and resilience on display throughout the data this year.

But for many organizations, even a surge in individual donations may not be enough to make up for lost funding from other sources. In 2024, federal funding provided more than 10% of the operating budgets for 28% of the nonprofits in our study. The same sectors that were most likely to experience funding cuts — Public Media, Hunger/Poverty, and Disaster/International Aid nonprofits — were also the ones most likely to rely heavily on federal funding.

Did your organization receive 10% or more of its operating budget from the federal government in 2024?



KEY FINDING:
Nonprofit staff are actual superheroes

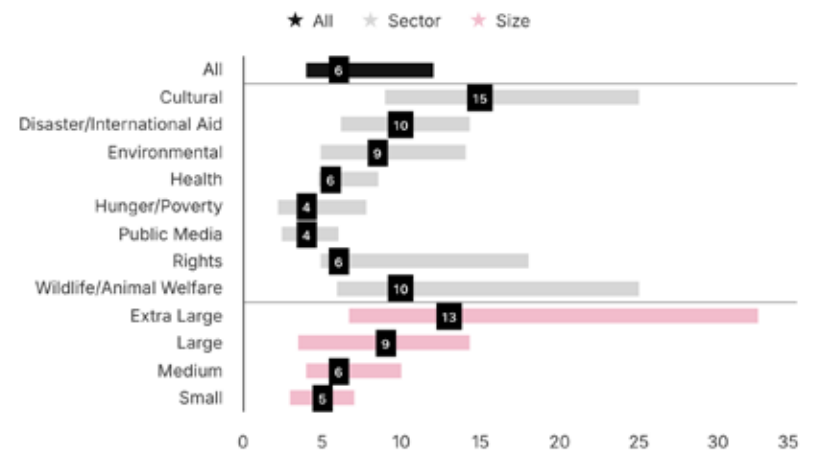


All those online donations don't just happen. Someone has to create marketing strategy, and draft emails, and post on social, and set up audiences, and build donation pages, and manage CRMs, and [insert the rest of your team's infinite tasklist].

We asked participants a few questions to shine a light on how that work gets done, and who is doing it. We defined that as “the staff who manage, produce, or report on marketing, fundraising, and/or advocacy across digital channels.”

The average digital team includes six people. Cultural nonprofits tended to have the largest digital teams, with an average of 15 staff, while Public Media and Hunger/Poverty nonprofits employed just 4 digital staff.

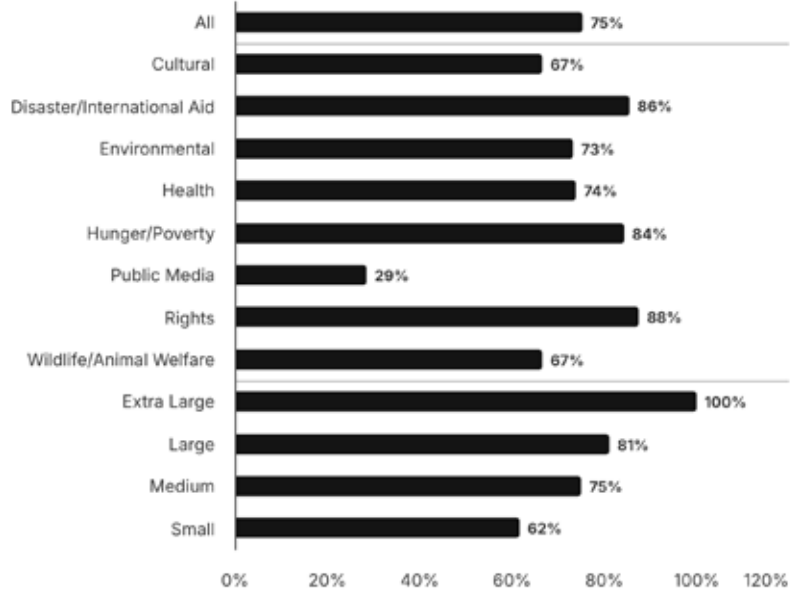
Digital team size



It's no shock that nonprofits with more online revenue and larger budgets also typically had larger digital teams. Extra Large nonprofits with more than \$10 million in annual online revenue had 13 digital staff on average, while Small nonprofits with online revenue under \$1 million had just 5.

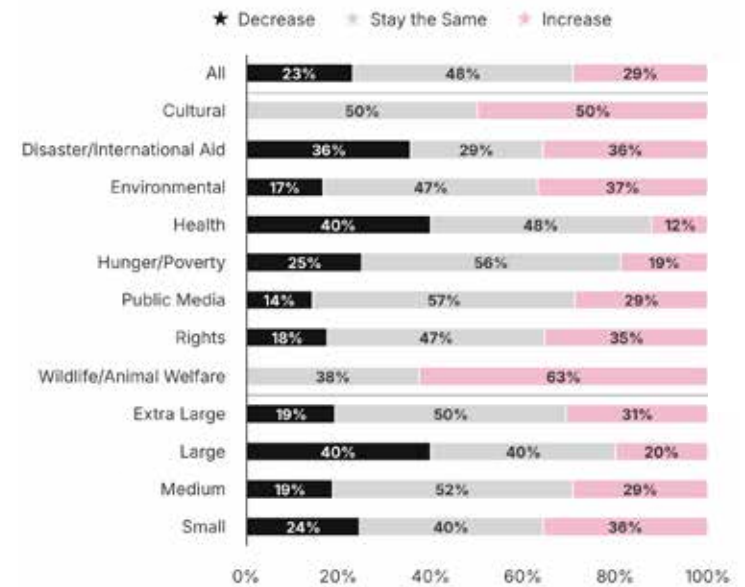
Those Small nonprofits were also less likely to work with a partner agency to support digital channels. Just 62% of Small nonprofits worked with an agency, compared to 75% of nonprofits overall.

Do you work with a partner agency to help with your digital work?



The rest of our results prove what a herculean task it is to run a digital program in this day and age, and at most nonprofits this is being done by just a few people. Amazing, hardworking, badass people. Even as revenue climbed, and as nonprofits produced more content across more channels, most digital teams either stayed the same size or shrank.

Did the number of people doing digital work at your organization increase, decrease or stay the same?



Doing so much within these limits, under the circumstances facing so many nonprofits, is astonishing. When we tell you that we love and cherish our Benchmarks participants, when we say that you are beautiful people who inspire us with your bottomless talent, smarts, and commitment, when we are so over the top with our flattery that it starts to actually get a little awkward... this is why.



Nonprofit digital team snapshot

We asked participants to tell us about “the team of individuals at your organization that manage, set up, report on, and/or produce creative for marketing, fundraising, and/or advocacy content across digital channels (including email, text messaging, advertising, social media, and website content).”

Small organizations

Typically have the smallest teams, but showed more team growth among all sizes.

Median Team Size: 5 people (half of orgs have 3 to 7 staff)

Primary Department: Communications (followed by Development)

2025 Staffing: Most saw staff levels stay the same (40%), but this group has a higher-than-average reported "Increase" trend (36%) compared to other sizes.

Partner Agencies: 62% work with partner agencies on this work

Medium organizations

While the median team size is only slightly larger than small organizations, the average is higher, indicating a wider range of team sizes (some reaching up to 40+ people).

Median Team Size: 6 people (half of orgs have 4 to 10 staff)

Primary Department: Development (followed by Marketing & Communications)

2025 Staffing: Most saw staff levels stay the same (52%) or decrease (29%).

Partner Agencies: 75% work with partner agencies on this work

Large organizations

Teams for large organizations mostly stayed the same or decreased.

Median Team Size: 9 people (half of orgs have 4 to 14 staff)

Primary Department: Development (followed by Advocacy and Digital Engagement)

2025 Staffing: Most saw staff levels stay the same (40%) or decrease (40%).

Partner Agencies: 81% work with partner agencies on this work

Extra large organizations

Largest and most specialized teams, often involving dedicated "Digital" or "Mass Market" fundraising roles. Despite their size, they remain relatively stable and all of them work with partner agencies.

Median Team Size: 13 people (half of orgs have 7 to 33 staff)

Primary Department: Marketing (followed by Digital Fundraising and Communications)

2025 Staffing: 50% stayed the same, while 31% saw an increase.

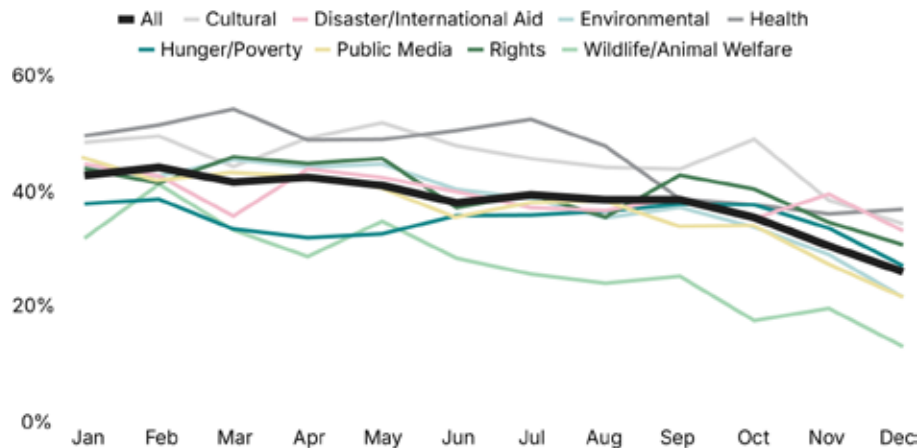
Partner Agencies: 100% work with partner agencies on this work

AI is making an impact, especially on search

AI search is fundamentally altering how users experience the web and how audiences learn about issues and causes. One of the most striking findings in our study this year was that **the proportion of nonprofit websites' organic traffic rapidly dropped month-by-month throughout 2025** — a trend we attribute to the rise of “zero-click” searches on Google and the increasing popularity of chatbot queries.

AI overviews are popping up in response to more and more Google queries. Many users have started bypassing Google entirely, typing queries in a Claude, ChatGPT, or Gemini app or window. Whether the answers are accurate or hallucinatory is beside the point; what matters is that these tools reduce the need to click through to your website.

Organic traffic volume by month



Despite that decline, a large portion of nonprofit audiences are still accessing web content, taking action, and donating via traditional organic search. These donors tend to be highly motivated, often driven to search by a marketing effort or news story, and proactively looking to engage or donate.

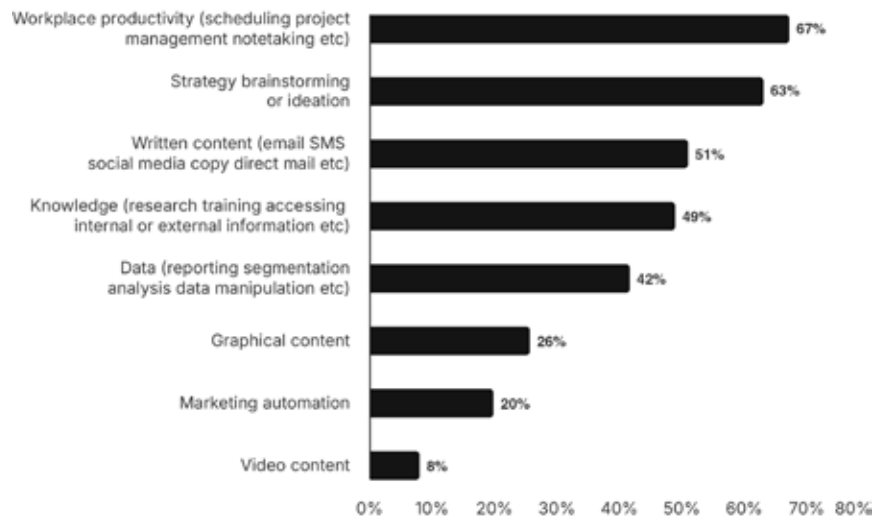
But the rise of AI search poses a real threat to nonprofits. Many people who would have previously landed on a nonprofit's website and discovered carefully crafted content are now seeing responses filtered through chatbots and AI summaries. Unless they have a strategy to optimize how they appear in these new mediums, organizations no longer have control over how their audience is introduced to their brand and cause.

In other words, nonprofits need an Answer Engine Optimization (AEO) strategy to complement their existing Search Engine Optimization (SEO) strategy, integrating with their website content, paid search, PR, organic social, and more.

Inside their own walls, nonprofits are continuing to adjust to emerging AI technology, with 69% of Benchmarks participants reporting that their organization has some policies, procedures, or guidelines in place around the use of generative AI.

The most common use of AI was for workplace productivity, including notetaking and project management. About half of nonprofits used generative AI tools to produce written content, and one in four used generative AI in graphics production.

Do staff at your organization currently use generative AI for any aspects of your marketing, fundraising, and/or advocacy?



The use of AI for research or data analysis increased significantly in 2025, as more organizations sought ways to leverage the ability to identify patterns in large data sets. “Identify Patterns In Large Data Sets” is our middle name, and M+R is excited to share a new platform called Scout AI.

We built Scout AI to answer questions nonprofit marketers are really wondering about, and to take it out for a spin, we used it to analyze five years of email content for 12 nonprofits in our Benchmarks study. Please see our accompanying white paper zine (or visit mrss.com/aiohmy) for the extremely interesting results. We promise it will give you plenty to chew on as you consider your own messaging.

As the ways we use AI — not just nonprofits, but activists, donors, government, and companies — continue to multiply and mutate, so will the threats and opportunities. The organizations that successfully adapt to the new landscape will keep doing everything possible to reach audiences in new and meaningful ways, no matter where they are.

It will take extraordinary people making extraordinary efforts to make that happen. Luckily, we know a few.



fundraising

top facts

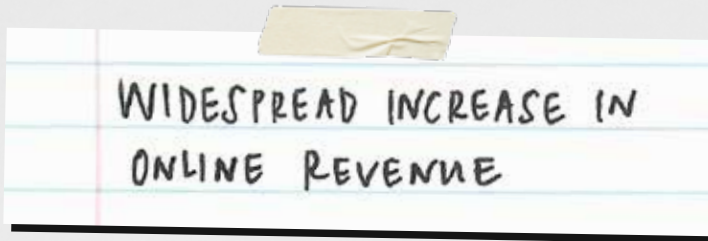
- Online revenue for the average nonprofit increased by 15% in 2025.

- Revenue from one-time giving increased by 17%, while monthly revenue increased by 12%. Monthly giving accounted for 27% of all online revenue in 2025.

- Revenue from donor-advised funds (DAF) increased by 44% from the previous year.

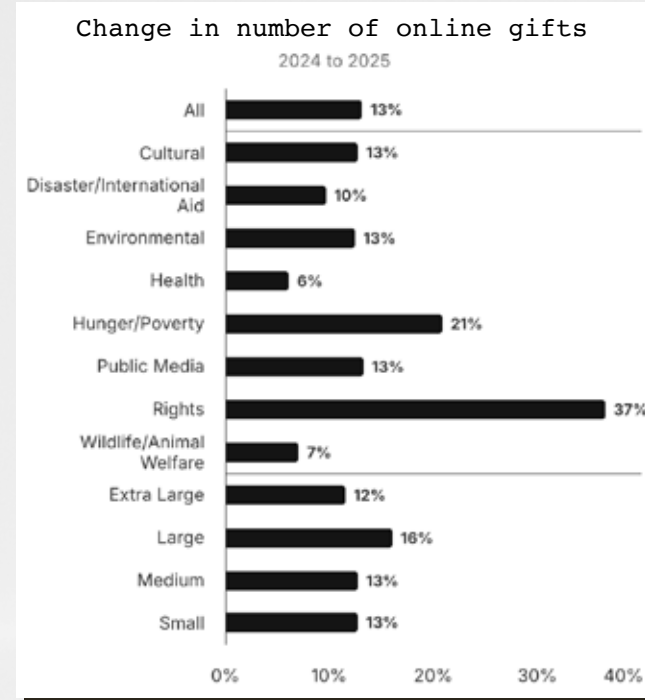
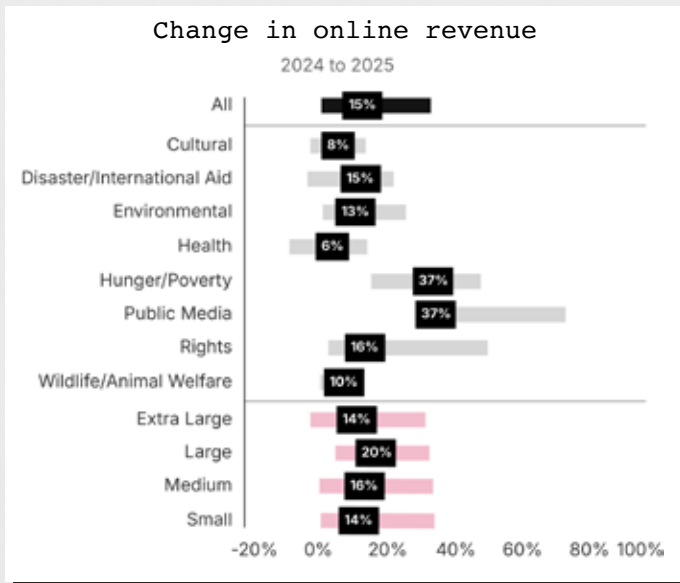
- Nonprofits received 37% of all 2025 online revenue in December. The last day of the year accounted for 4% of annual revenue.

fundraising



One of the few constants in online fundraising is that emergencies drive response. When a hurricane makes a devastating landfall somewhere in the world, frontline organizations see a surge of revenue. Spikes in unemployment tend to drive donors toward food banks. We've gotten used to seeing that impact show up in Benchmarks.

What we have not seen, at least since the first year of the COVID pandemic, is a sense of emergency so widespread that it sweeps across sectors. And we have never, ever reported numbers that indicate an uprising of emergency donor response for Public Media. Until now.



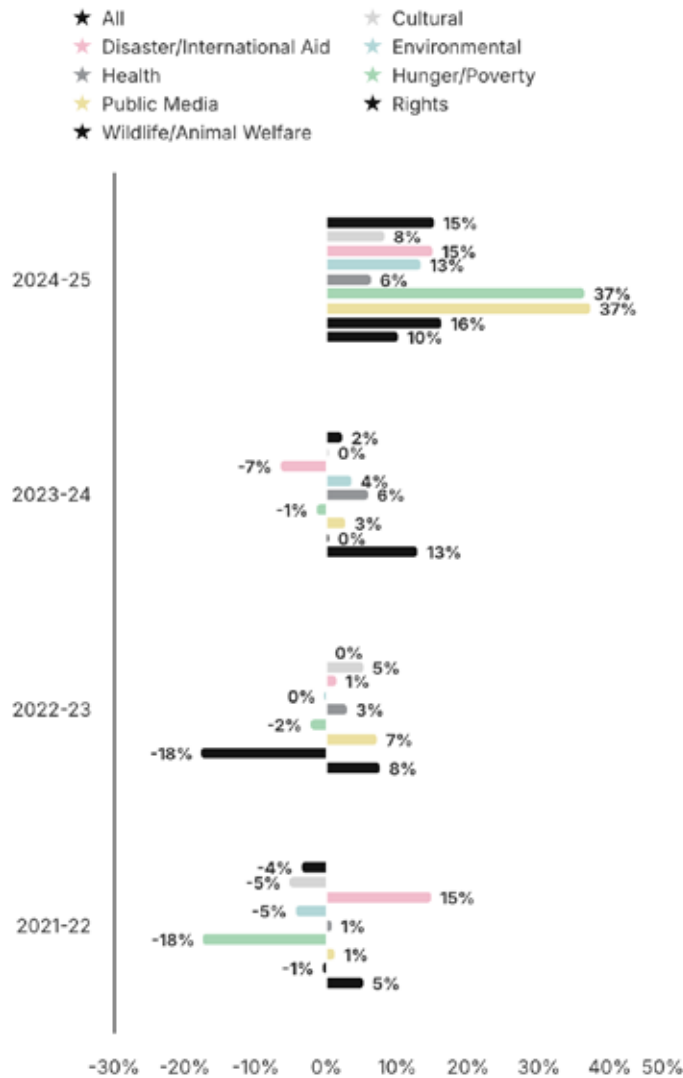
Online revenue increased by an average of 15% in 2025, following relatively flat changes the previous two years. Nearly every sector reported average revenue growth in the double digits. This revenue growth reached nonprofits of every size, with an increase of at least 14% for Small, Medium, Large, and Extra Large organizations.

While revenue growth was widespread, it wasn't spread evenly.

- Public Media nonprofits saw average online revenue increase by 37%, with revenue at the 75th percentile growing by 76%!
- Hunger/Poverty also saw a 37% average increase, with 50% growth at the 75th percentile!
- The median revenue increase for Rights nonprofits was 16%, and 53% at the 75th percentile!

In case all those breathless numbers and exclamation points don't make it clear: this is not normal! Looking at the last few years of revenue changes, we see a mixed bag. Some years, some sectors see a bit more growth, others may report a small decline. A spike in giving one year might presage a regression the following year.

Online revenue change year over year



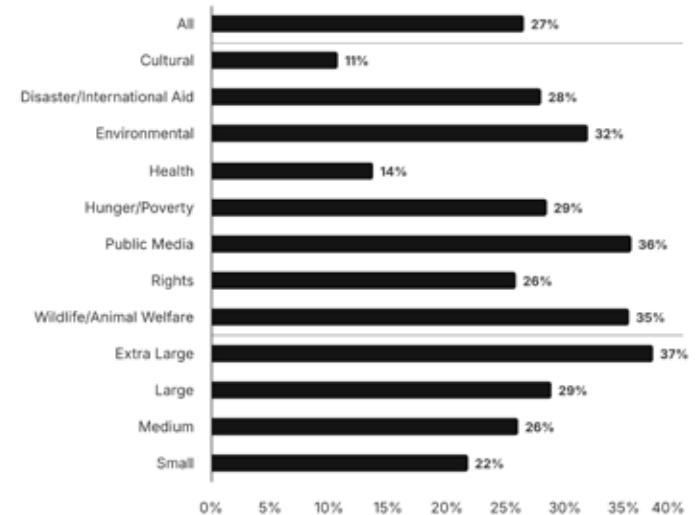
As we noted above, a hurricane might spur giving to nonprofits engaged in humanitarian relief. What kind of disaster sparks giving to Rights, Environmental, International Aid, Hunger/Poverty, and Public Media nonprofits all at once?

One answer: as we explore in our Big Story (page 10), two-thirds of nonprofits that receive federal funding reported a drop in that funding in 2025. When people see the causes and communities they care about under threat — whether the cause is natural or all-too-human — they step up.

One-time revenue growth outpaced monthly

Revenue from monthly giving accounted for 27% of all online revenue in 2025. **Many nonprofits received a third or more of revenue from monthly donors, with the importance of monthly giving scaling along with nonprofit size.**

Monthly giving as a percentage of online revenue



For the Small cohort (nonprofits with annual online revenue under \$1 million), monthly giving made up 22% of all revenue. For Extra Large nonprofits (annual online revenue over \$10 million), 37% of online revenue came from monthly donors.

With that sense of scale in mind, let's turn our attention to year-over-year change.

If we accept that nonprofit supporters experienced 2025 as a rolling series of disasters (relatable), then we should also expect donors to be focused on making an immediate impact.

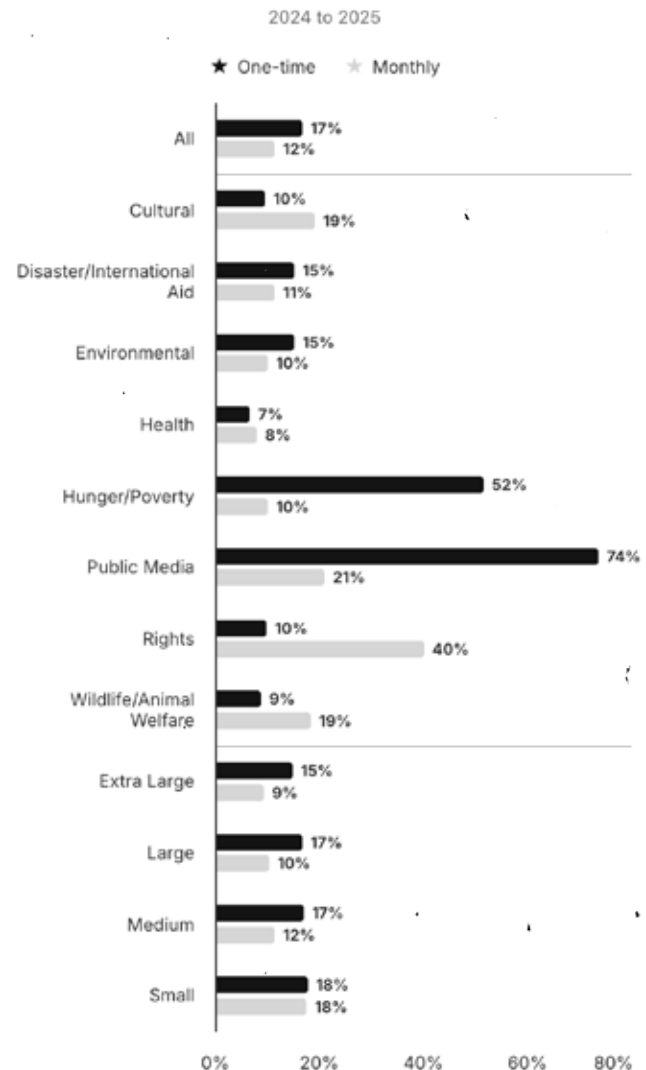
And so they were. **Average online revenue from one-time gifts increased by 17%, outpacing the 12% growth for monthly revenue.**

This is a clear break from the long-term trend. In just about every other edition of Benchmarks, we have reported a larger net change in monthly giving. Over time, more and more donors have embraced monthly giving, and nonprofits have increasingly optimized their donation experience to prioritize sustainer recruitment.

The divergence from this long-term trend was most notable for Public Media nonprofits, which have long been leaders in emphasizing monthly giving. That makes the 21% average increase in monthly revenue all the more impressive — and the 74% increase in one-time giving all the more dramatic. Hunger/Poverty nonprofits also saw a large spike in one-time giving, with revenue increasing by 52%.

Cultural and Rights nonprofits were the only sectors to see revenue from monthly gifts increase at a higher rate than revenue from one-time gifts; for Rights nonprofits, revenue from monthly gifts grew by 40%.

Change in online revenue by type



Given the challenges of one-time donor retention (especially among emergency donors) and the durability of sustaining donors, this shift may strengthen Rights nonprofits for a long time to come.

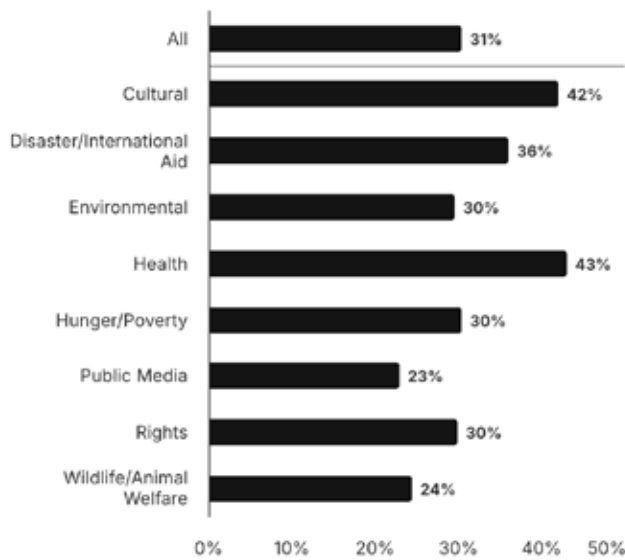
Did somebody say “retention”?

We did! But hold on, let’s talk about some terminology first.

When we refer to “new” online donors, we mean donors who made an online gift in 2025, and not in any of the previous three years. It’s possible some of these folks have given before in other channels, or further back in the past — but since not all Benchmarks participants are able to include detailed cross-channel or historical data, we keep things simple.

In 2025, new donors accounted for 31% of online revenue.

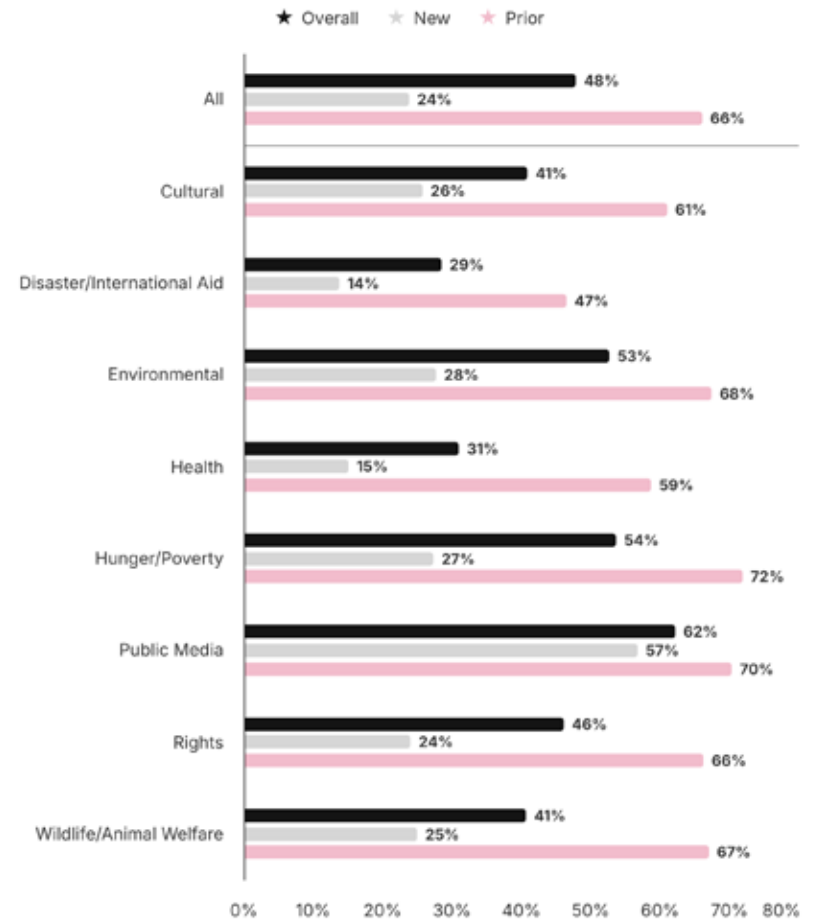
Share of online revenue from new donors



Of course, every year brings another cohort of new donors — there were a whole bunch of new donors in 2024 as well. Most of them did not return to make another gift; new donor retention was 24%.

We contrast new donors with “prior” donors: these are individuals who made an online gift in 2024, and also in at least one of the five previous years. These are donors with a proven capacity for retention, who have already made at least two one-time gifts. Retention among these supporters was 66% — far higher than for new donors.

Online one-time donor retention



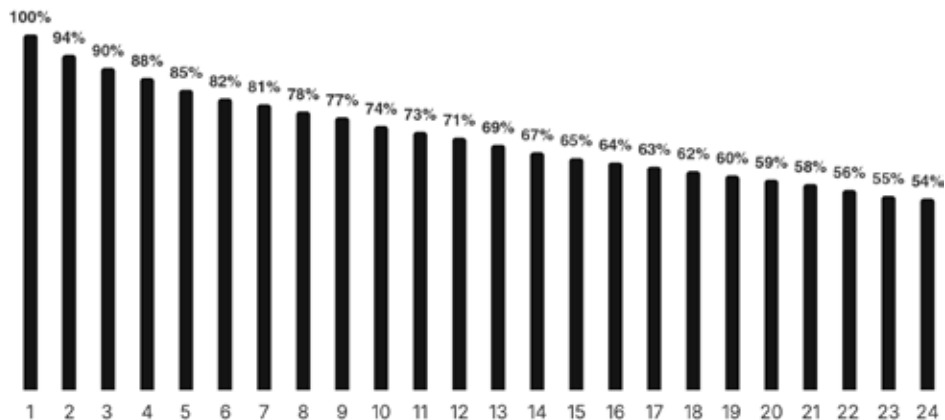
Overall retention, including both new and prior donors, was 48%. In other words, about half of all online one-time donors in 2024 returned to make an online one-time gift in 2025.

Tracking retention for monthly donors looks a little bit different, as the default is for gifts to continue until a donor actively cancels their support. Or until their credit card number gets stolen and they have to update their payment information across a couple dozen subscriptions, stores, and hopefully nonprofits.

(Not to nag, but have you taken a look recently at how easy you make this process for donors?)

In any case, rather than year-over-year retention, we calculate the percent of sustainers retained by month. Overall, 10% of sustainers stop giving within two months of setting up a new monthly gift. After 7 months, 81% of sustainers are still giving; after a full year, 71% of sustainers are still active.

Percent of sustainers retained by month



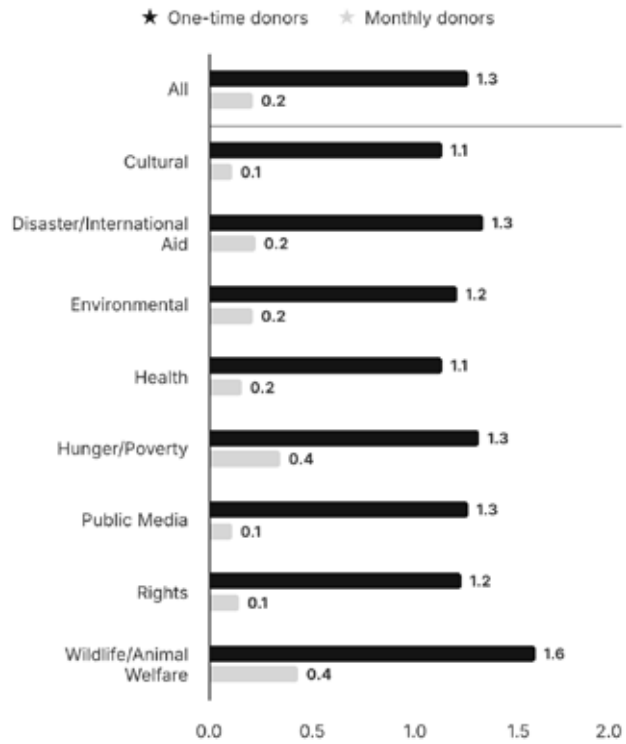
After a year, nonprofits can expect to lose one or two percent of sustainers each month. **A little more than half of all monthly gifts are still active after two full years of regular, reliable support.** This gradual decline is a key part of the long-term growth of monthly programs. As long as nonprofits are able to bring in new sustainers faster than the rate of attrition, monthly giving will continue to grow.

Another element that complicates the retention picture is the fact that many donors — both sustainers and those who made only one-time donations — gave more than once over the course of the year.

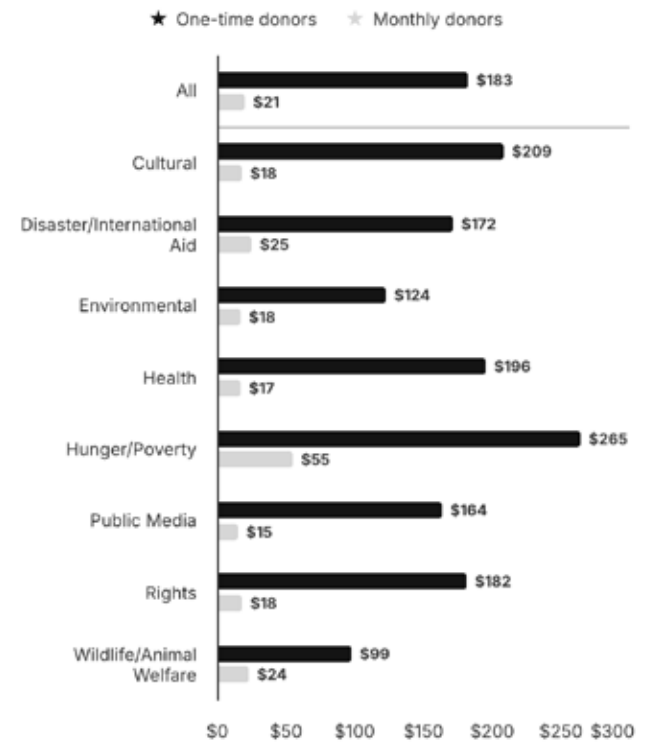
Donors who made only one-time gifts online gave an average of 1.3 times in 2025, with an average of \$183 in annual revenue per donor.

Monthly donors made an average of 0.2 one-time gifts in addition to their monthly donation(s), with average one-time giving of \$21. This includes contributions made before becoming monthly donors as well as one-time donations made by existing sustainers, but does *not* include the value of monthly gifts.

One-time gifts per donor per year



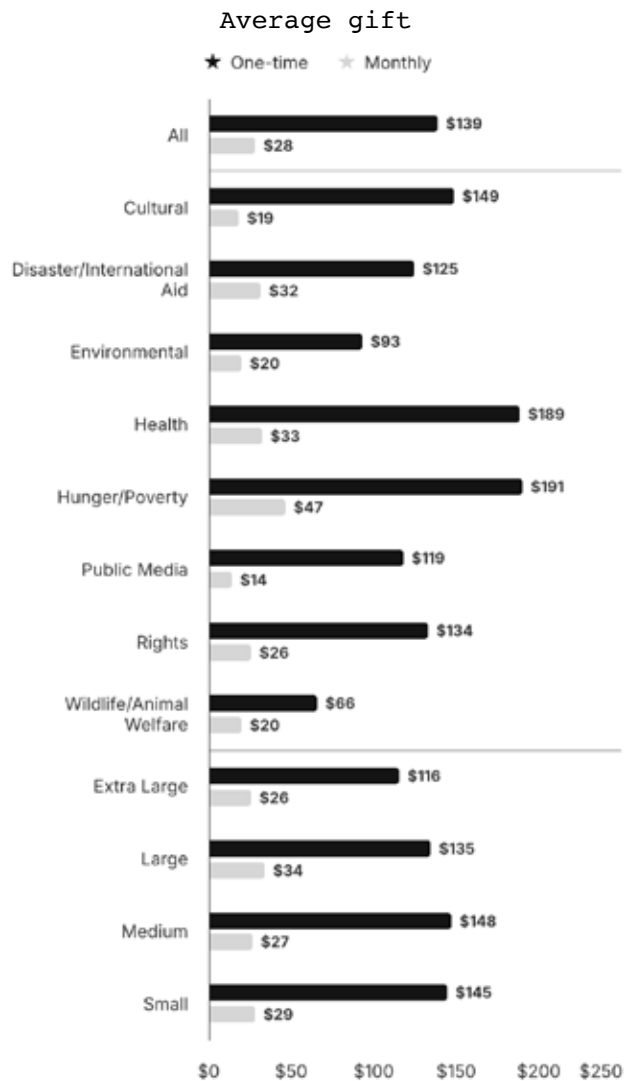
One-time revenue per donor per year



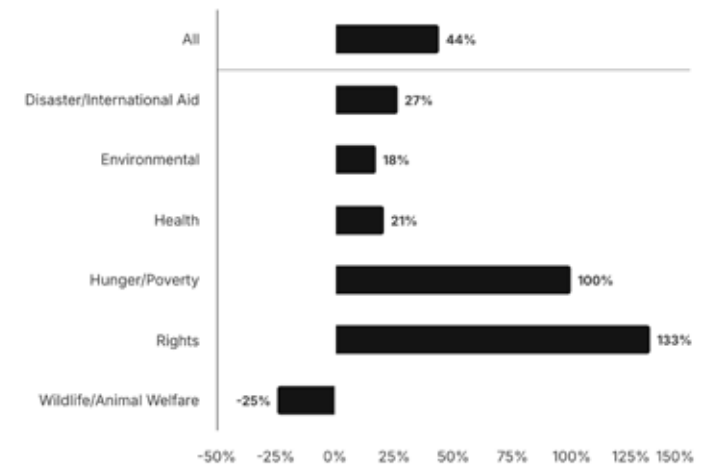
DAF-initely growing

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs) were one of the fastest-growing sources of revenue we tracked. These are investment accounts that allow donors to make tax-deductible contributions (including money, stocks, real estate, and other assets), and later have those funds along with any capital gains distributed to the organizations of their choice.

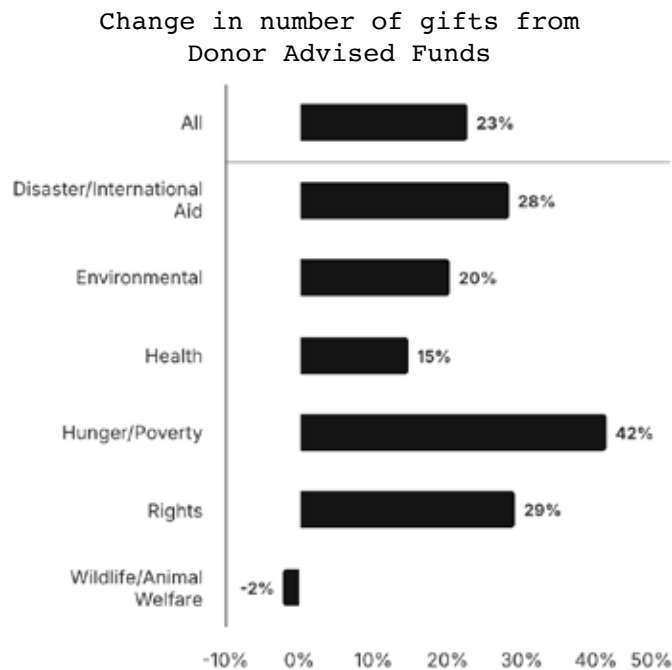
In 2025, revenue from Donor Advised Funds increased by a massive 44% overall, with significant variation between sectors. Average DAF revenue doubled for Hunger/Poverty nonprofits, and grew by 133% for Rights nonprofits.



Change in revenue from Donor Advised Funds



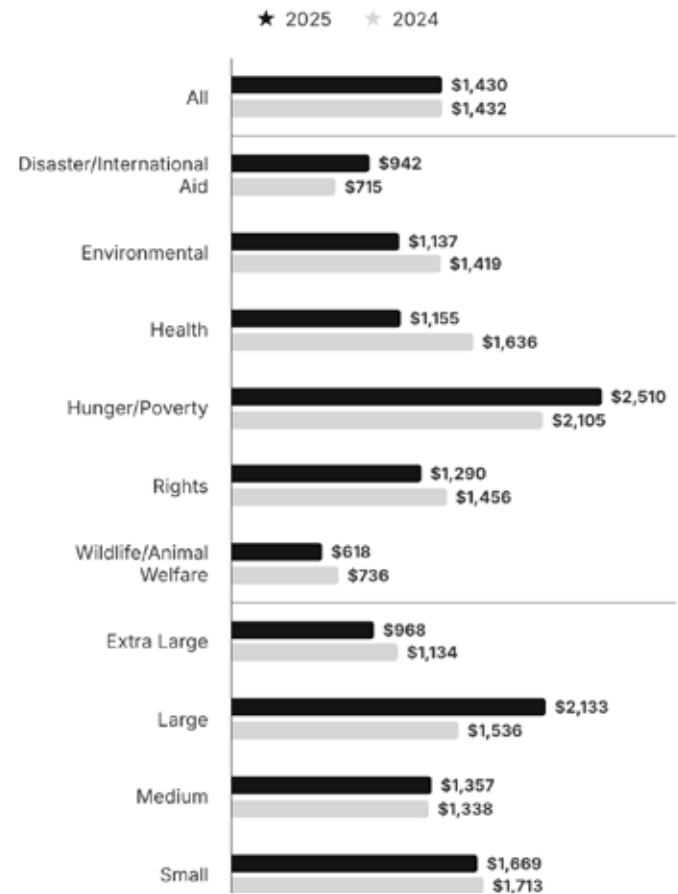
The number of DAF donations also increased significantly. Nonprofits received 23% more DAF gifts in 2025 than they did in 2024, and results were somewhat more consistent across sectors.



In addition to eye-popping year-over-year change, DAF giving stood out from other sources of revenue with an exceptionally large average gift. In 2025, the average DAF donation was \$1,430 (as a quick but unfair-for-several-reasons point of comparison, the average gift received via direct mail was \$120).

This was essentially the same as the average DAF gift the previous year, though some sectors did report more substantial year-over-year change. For example, the average DAF donation to Hunger/Poverty nonprofits increased from \$2,105 to \$2,510.

Average gift from Donor Advised Funds



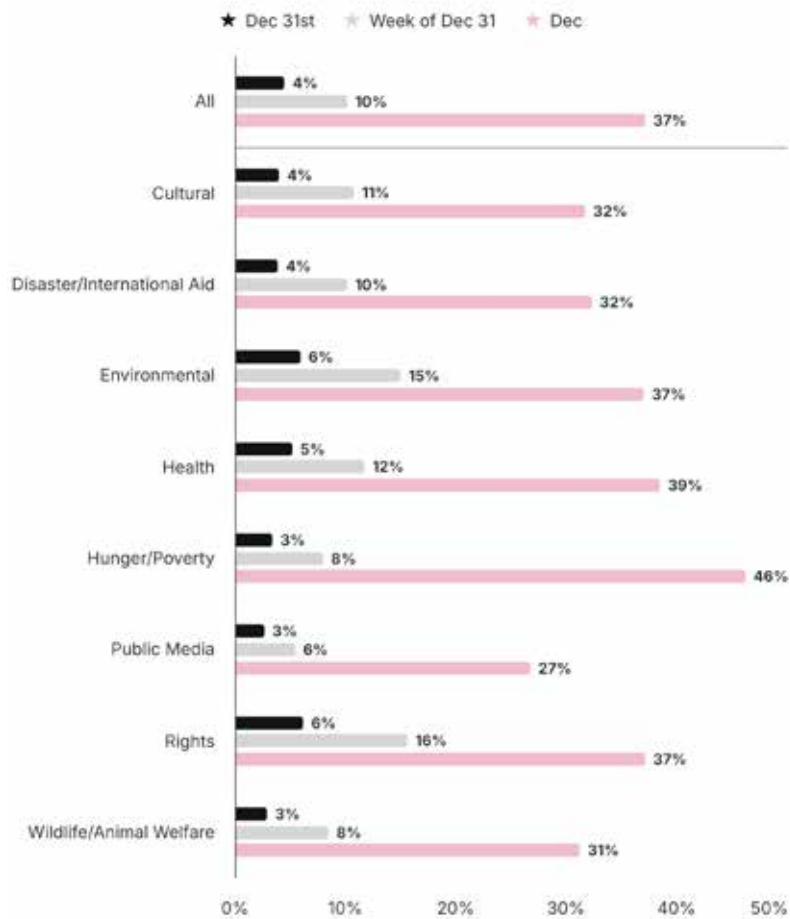
Giving Season keeps on giving

There are times, as a fundraiser, deep in the cold grasp of December, when daylight reaches a minimum and you are pulling reports and setting up your 12th email appeal and optimizing ad spends and managing all of the everything that keeps a modern end-of-year fundraising program running, there are times when you think to yourself:

Okay, this is hard work, but it is important and will be well worth it if we can manage to raise 37% of our annual revenue in this month alone.

Well guess what. **In 2025, nonprofits received 37% of all online revenue in December alone.** It's important to remember that Giving Tuesday fell in December, and as always, the closing days of the year were especially important for online fundraising. The last week of the year accounted for 10% of annual revenue; the last day of the year accounted for 4% of annual revenue.

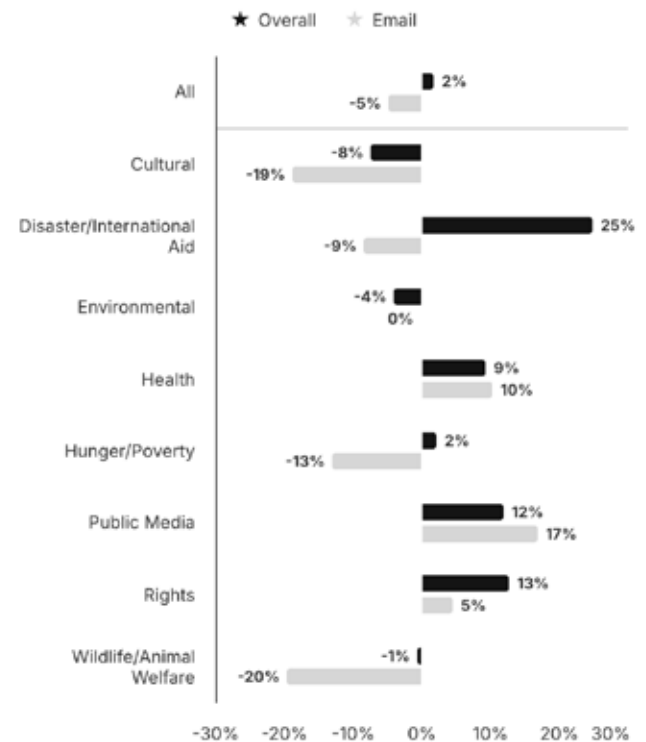
Share of annual online revenue raised in a time period



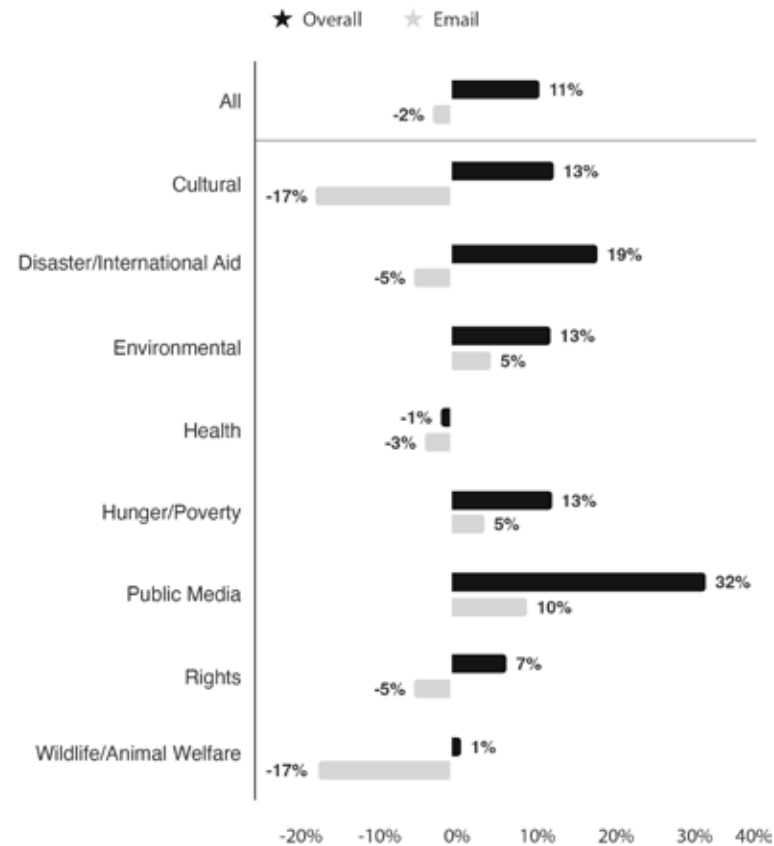
Hunger/Poverty nonprofits raised 46% of online revenue in December, the highest percentage of any sector. Interestingly, this giving was spread a bit more evenly across the month, with just 8% of annual revenue in the last week of the year.

The timing may be important here. Broadly, the period of time around Thanksgiving (including Giving Tuesday) has long been an important one for food banks and other organizations in this sector. In 2025, a high-profile fight over the withholding of federal food aid just before Giving Season began may have drawn increased attention and support.

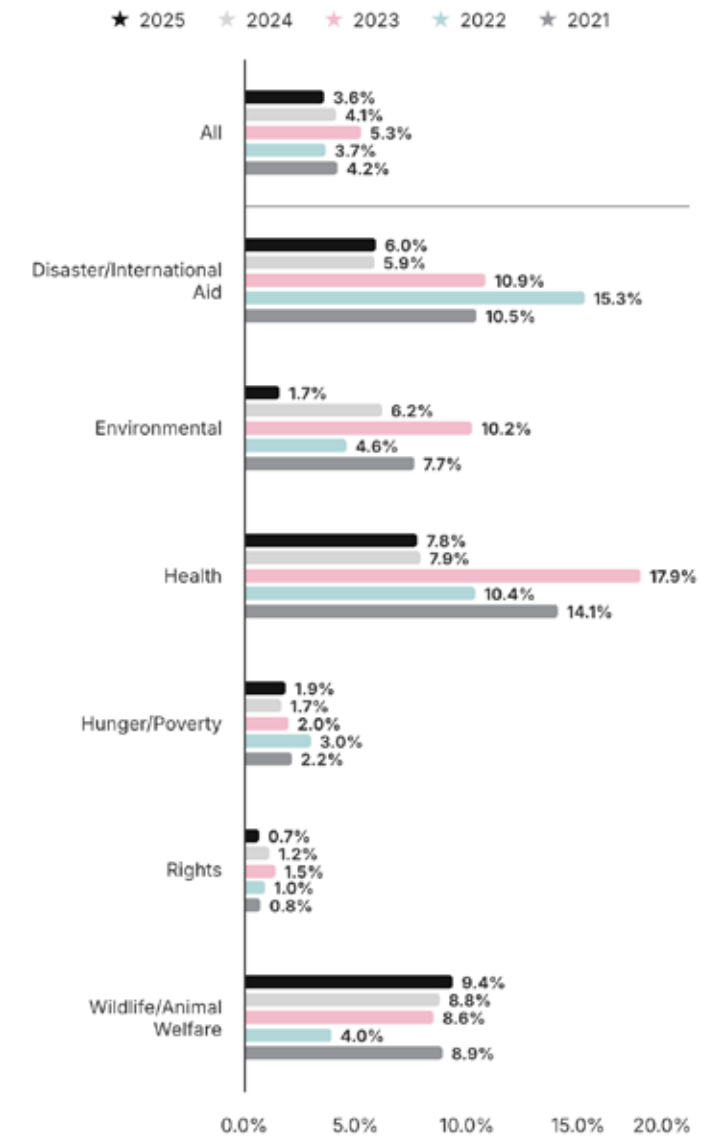
Change in revenue on Giving Tuesday



Change in revenue from 2024 to 2025 for December



Percent of online revenue that is restricted



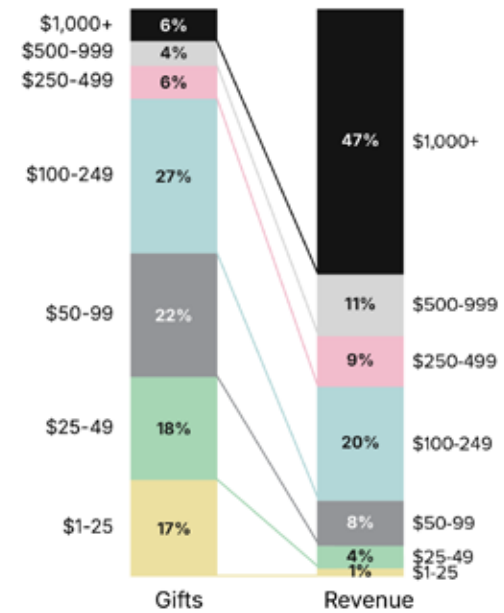
Similarly, at the close of a year in which federal funding for the Corporation for Public Broadcasting suddenly ended, Public Media nonprofits reported a 32% increase in December revenue, well above the overall average growth of 11% (which is, itself, fairly extraordinary).

For nonprofits facing unprecedented funding cuts, this surge in individual donor support may not be enough to close the gap — especially if retention proves difficult. But at a time when crisis response was an ongoing state of being for so many causes, supporters showed resilience, generosity, and an eagerness to help.

Percent of revenue raised by month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
All	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	6%	8%	32%
Cultural	5%	5%	6%	5%	6%	9%	6%	6%	5%	6%	7%	32%
Disaster/International Aid	4%	4%	6%	5%	5%	5%	7%	6%	6%	6%	8%	30%
Environmental	4%	5%	6%	6%	4%	5%	5%	4%	5%	5%	7%	39%
Health	5%	4%	5%	5%	5%	5%	4%	4%	6%	6%	8%	37%
Hunger/Poverty	2%	2%	3%	4%	3%	3%	3%	3%	3%	13%	27%	29%
Public Media	5%	4%	7%	4%	6%	5%	10%	7%	8%	8%	7%	19%
Rights	7%	6%	6%	5%	5%	6%	5%	4%	4%	5%	7%	36%
Wildlife/Animal Welfare	6%	4%	5%	6%	5%	6%	6%	6%	4%	7%	9%	28%

Proportion of gifts & revenue by donor level (one-time gifts only)



email messaging

top facts

- Email revenue increased by 16% on average. The share of all online revenue directly sourced to email was 11%.

- For every 1,000 fundraising messages sent, nonprofits raised \$54. This marks a 4% increase from 2024.

- Email list sizes increased by 5% in 2025, after 4% and 9% growth in the previous two years.

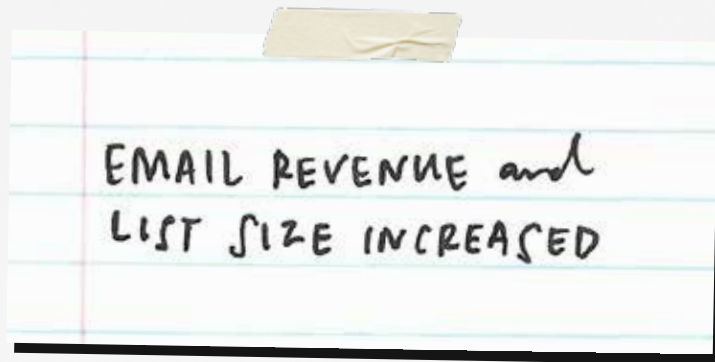
- Nonprofits sent an average of 50 email messages per subscriber in 2025, with fundraising comprising 31 email messages.

- Nonprofits raised an average of \$2.40 in email-sourced revenue per subscriber in 2025, a substantial increase from \$1.87 per email subscriber the previous year.

- Email messaging generated an average of 0.14 actions per subscriber over the course of the year.

- Public Media saw extraordinary growth in email fundraising. It was wild.

email messaging

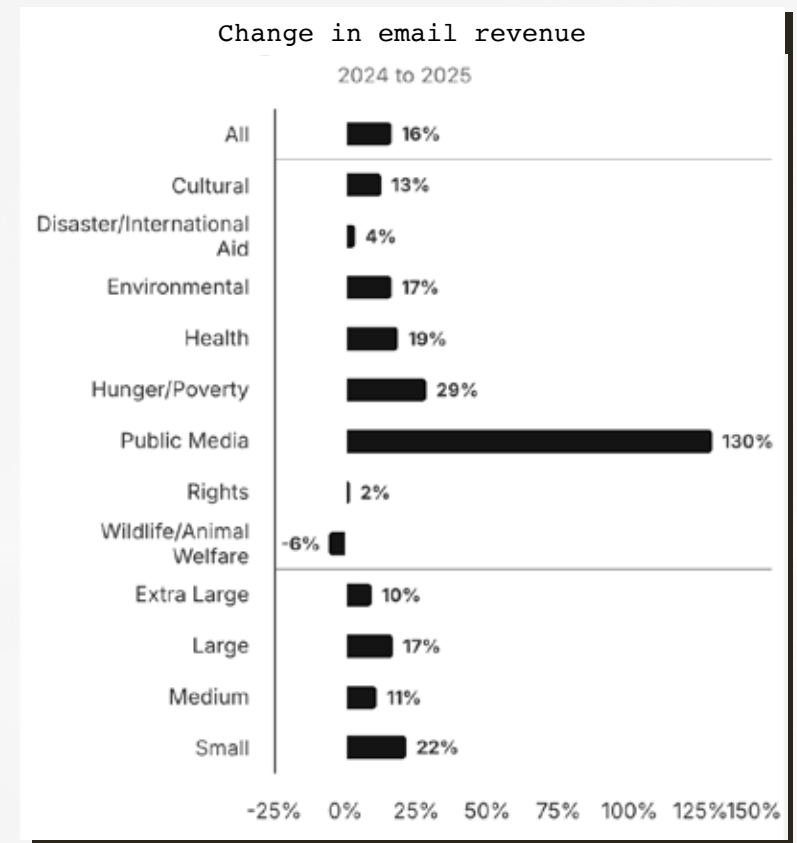


We're going to tell you a number that will hopefully make you smile. Then we are going to tell you a number that will make you chuckle in disbelief. Ready?

First, the smile. Last year, email revenue increased by an average of 16%, keeping pace with overall online revenue. That's solid growth, especially for a mature channel where continued growth can often be hard to come by.

And then: for Public Media, email revenue increased by 130%. What? That's ridiculous. From one year to the next, email revenue doubled, and then kept growing. One hundred and thirty percent.

Most sectors saw an increase in email revenue, and nonprofits of all sizes reported growth. The difference for Public Media nonprofits was due partly to list growth, as well as an extraordinary activation of existing email subscribers.

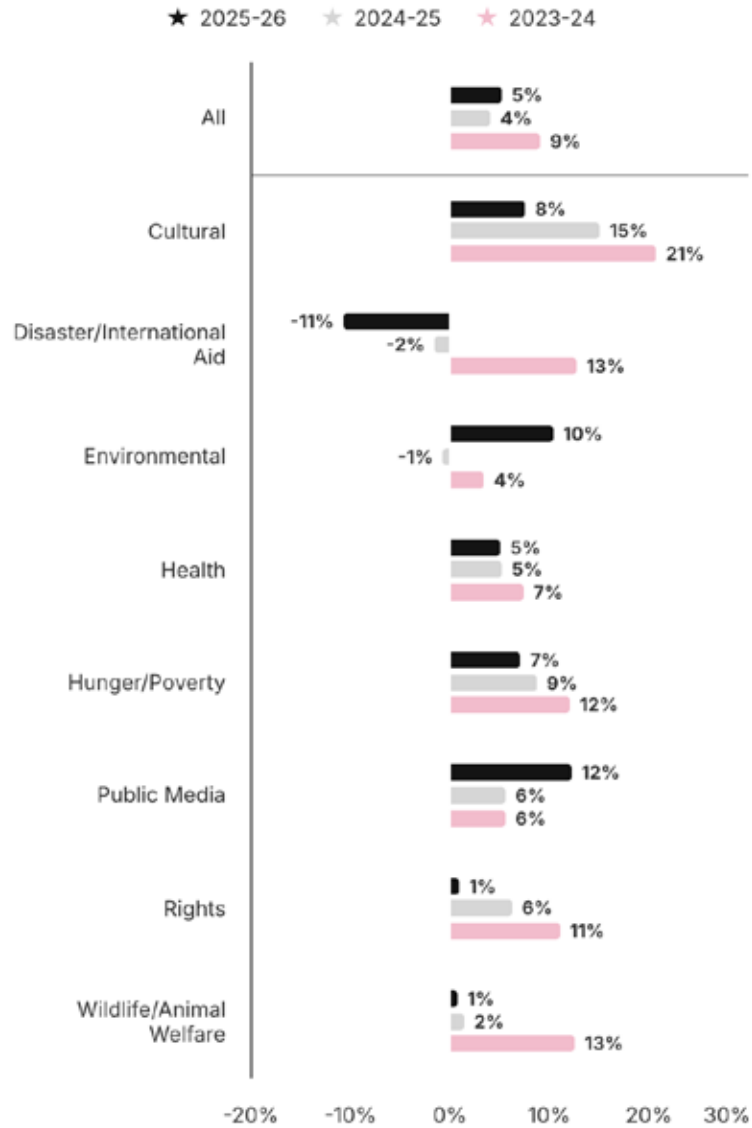


Nonprofits sent more email to more people

For the most part, list sizes increased in 2025, with an average net increase of 5% over the year. After modest growth the previous two years, Public Media email lists grew by 12% in 2025.

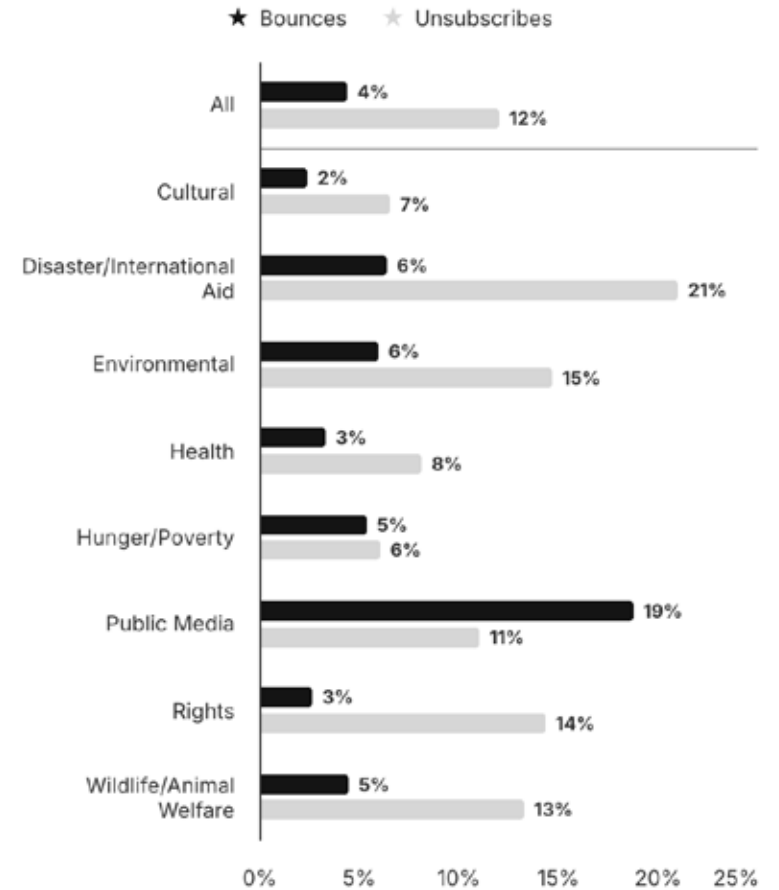


Email list growth



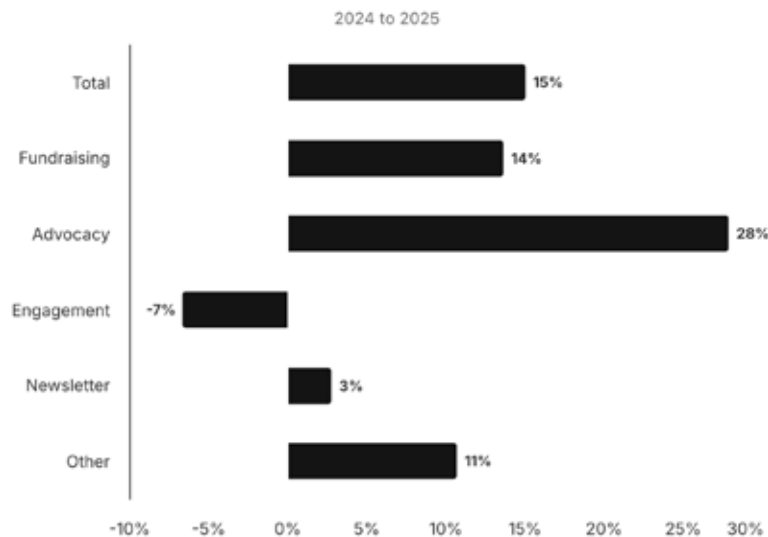
The only sector to report a decline in list size was Disaster/International Aid — which may be partly explained by a higher-than-average churn rate. Overall, 4% of email subscribers at the start of the year became unreachable due to bounces, and an additional 12% were lost to unsubscribes. Disaster/International Aid nonprofits reported a 6% bounce rate, and a 21% unsubscribe rate.

Bounces and unsubscribes



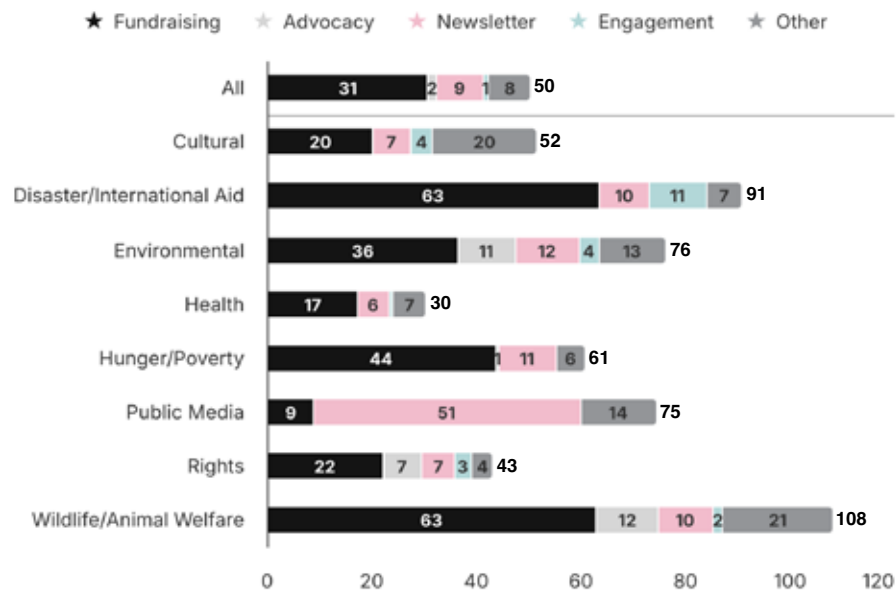
Nonprofits sent email to more people in 2025; they also sent more emails to those people. Email volume increased by 15% from the previous year, with growth in both fundraising and advocacy messaging.

Change in total email messages sent



An individual subscriber on a nonprofit email list could expect to receive 50 messages over the course of the year. Of those, 31 were fundraising appeals, 9 were newsletters, 2 included an advocacy call to action, and the rest were engagement or “other.”

Messages per year per subscriber



Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits sent the highest volume of email messages at 108 email messages per subscriber, more than twice the overall average. These organizations sent an average of 63 fundraising appeals and 12 advocacy alerts, along with a substantial volume of newsletters and other messaging without a direct call to action.

“Email” did great. What about “emails”?

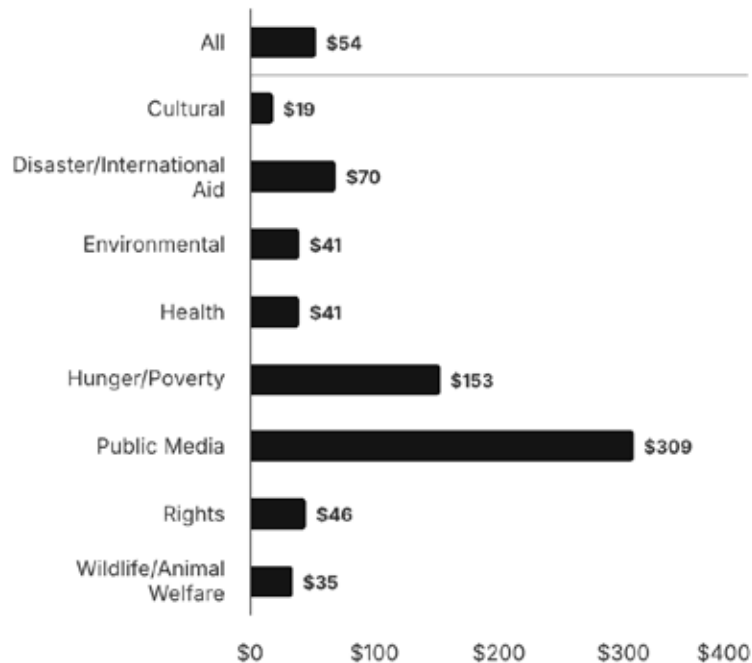
Since fundraising appeals make up the majority of email messaging, we'll begin there.

Email messaging rates

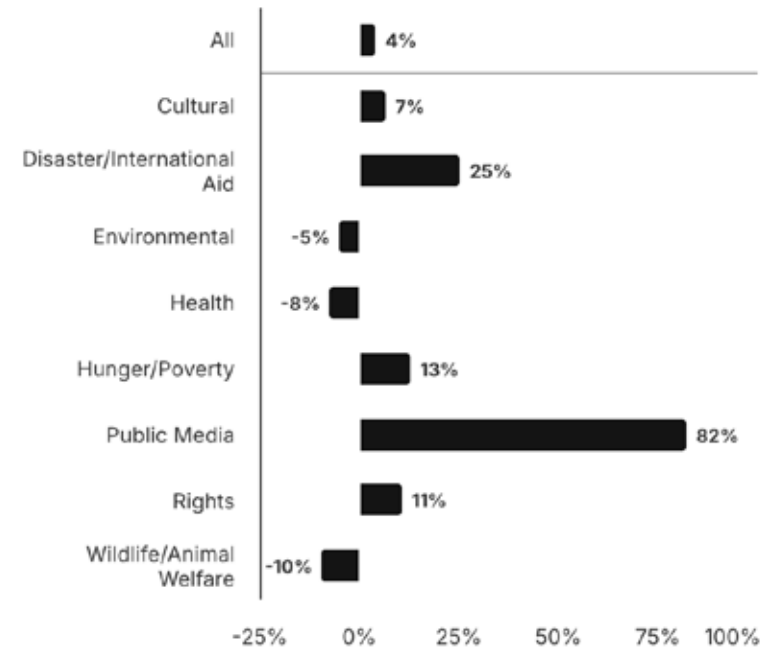
	Click Through Rate	Page Completion Rate	Response Rate	Unsubscribe Rate
Fundraising	0.59% (-8%)	10% (0%)	0.05% (0%)	0.23% (+25%)
Advocacy	2.3% (+4%)	65% (-2%)	1.4% (+3%)	0.23% (+43%)
Newsletter	1.2% (+3%)			0.23% (+42%)
Welcome Series	1.6% (-15%)			1.2% (+4%)
Engagement	1.1% (+4%)			0.26% (+37%)
All				0.23% (+25%)

On average, fundraising email generated a click-through rate of 0.59% and a response rate of 0.05%. Nonprofits received \$54 in revenue for every 1,000 fundraising emails sent, a 4% increase over the previous year.

Email revenue per 1,000 fundraising emails sent



Change in email revenue per 1,000 fundraising emails sent 2024 to 2025



The numbers don't add up cleanly because we calculate the median for each metric separately, but they can give us a general sense of what to expect. **A nonprofit sending a fundraising email to an audience of 100,000 recipients saw about 50 donations on average and revenue of about \$5,400.**

That's the average, and does not reflect the reality of many nonprofit programs (especially where audiences are segmented). Public Media nonprofits in 2025 saw \$309 in revenue per 1,000 fundraising emails, nearly six times the overall average. As always, the Benchmarks figures are a handy way to compare your performance to peer organizations, but the numbers that matter most are your own.

Response rates for advocacy email messages were orders of magnitude higher than for fundraising messages, which

is consistent with email metrics since the invention of email and metrics.

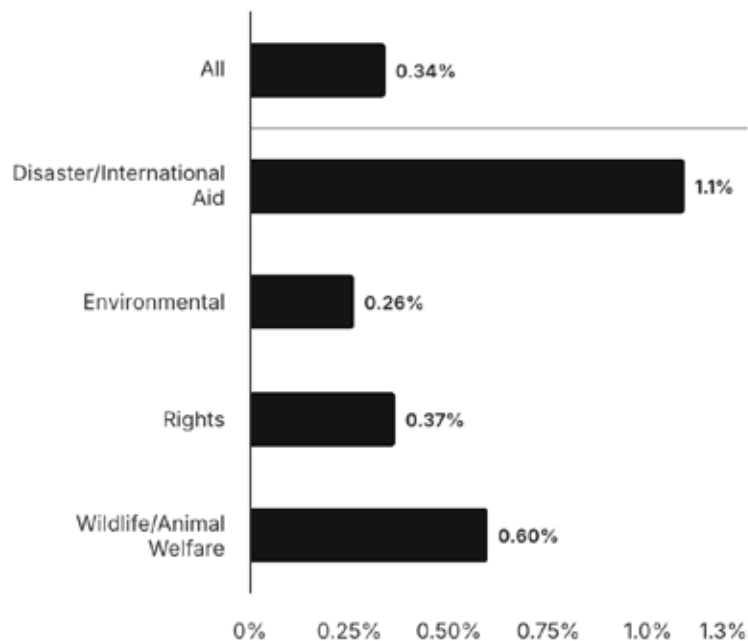
Advocacy email generated an average click-through rate of 2.3% and a response rate of 1.4%. Our imaginary nonprofit with a list of 100,000 subscribers could expect to generate about 1,400 advocacy actions from a single full-list email.

The right to petition our government for a redress of grievances is right there in the Constitution, and putting pressure on decision-makers is its own reward. But advocacy email has another benefit: giving highly-engaged audiences a chance to make a donation after completing the advocacy form.

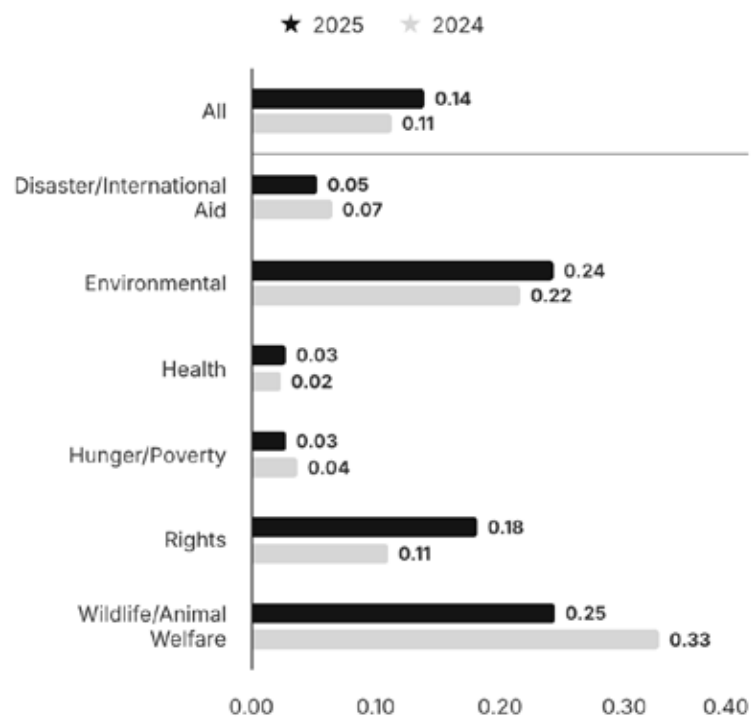
Overall, 0.34% of email subscribers who took action in response to an advocacy email completed a donation on a post-action landing page. Given the higher rate of engagement for advocacy email, and tiny volume relative to direct fundraising appeals, there may be important opportunities there for nonprofits looking to boost email revenue.

Adding it all together — the newsletters, the advocacy messages, the early bird offers, the deadline appeals, the deadline extensions, the welcomes and thank-yous and follow-ups — **nonprofits generated \$2.40 and 0.14 advocacy actions per email subscriber over the entirety of 2025.**

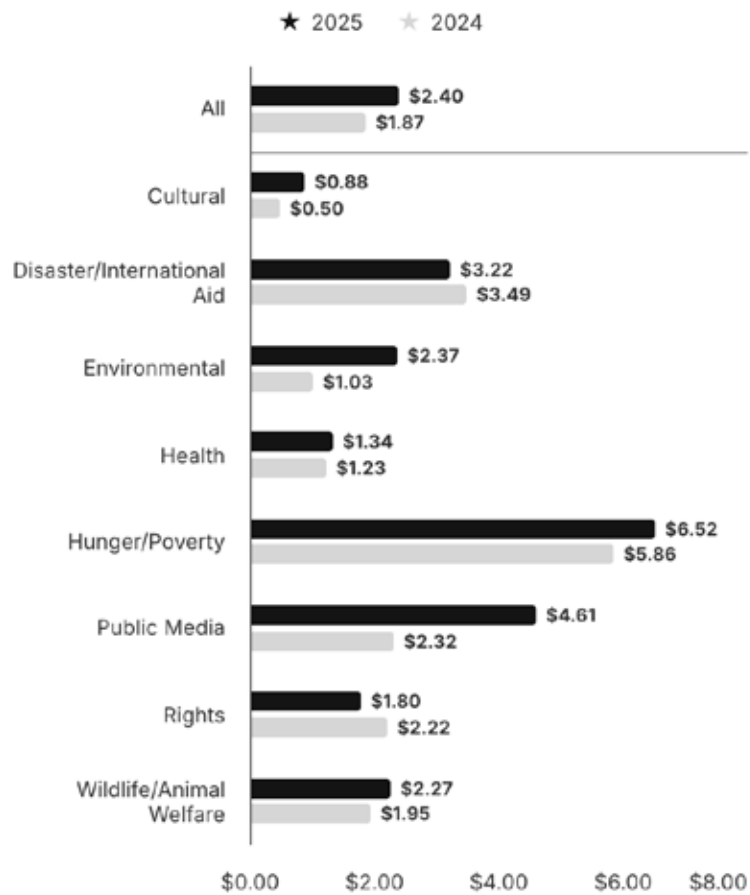
Post action donation conversion rate for advocacy emails



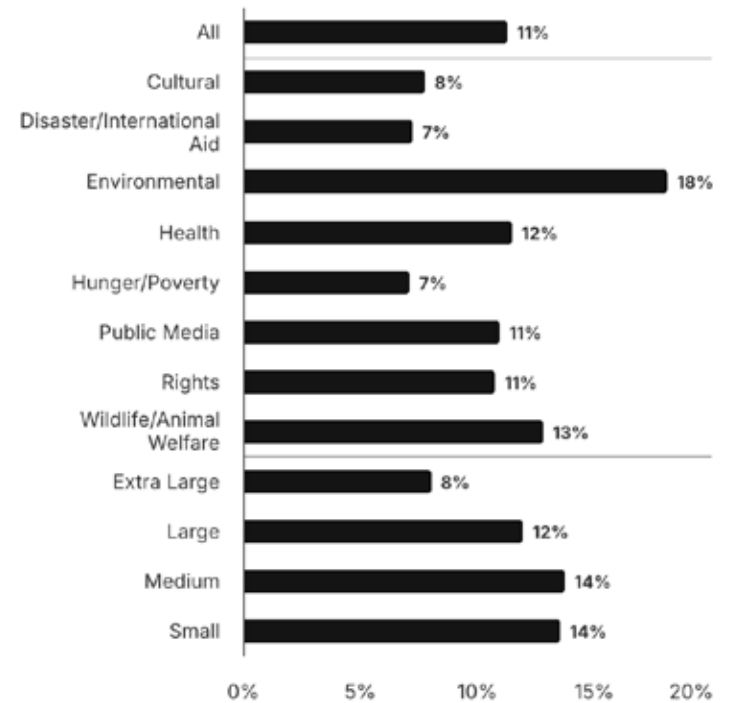
Email actions per subscriber



Email revenue per subscriber



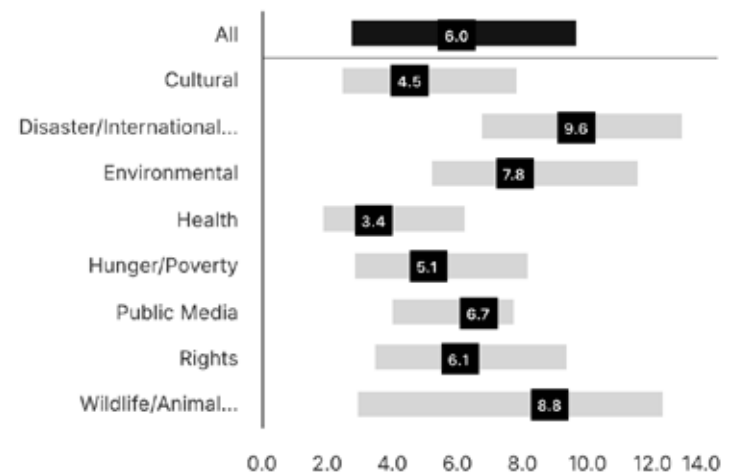
Share of online revenue from email



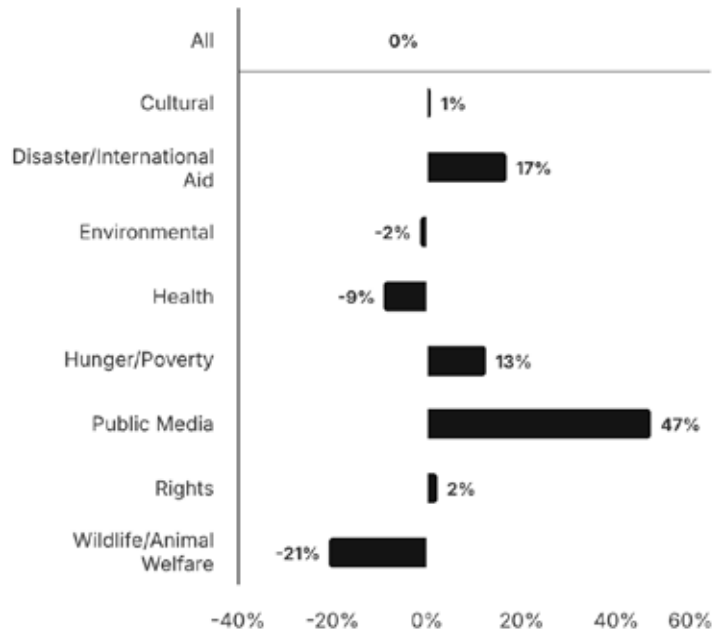
Both of those figures saw large differences between sectors and significant growth from the previous year. The \$2.40 raised per email subscriber was up from \$1.87. For Public Media nonprofits with their surge of email giving, revenue climbed from \$2.32 per email recipient to \$4.61.

All told, email accounted for 11% of online revenue, making it an important channel — and one that showed significant growth in 2025.

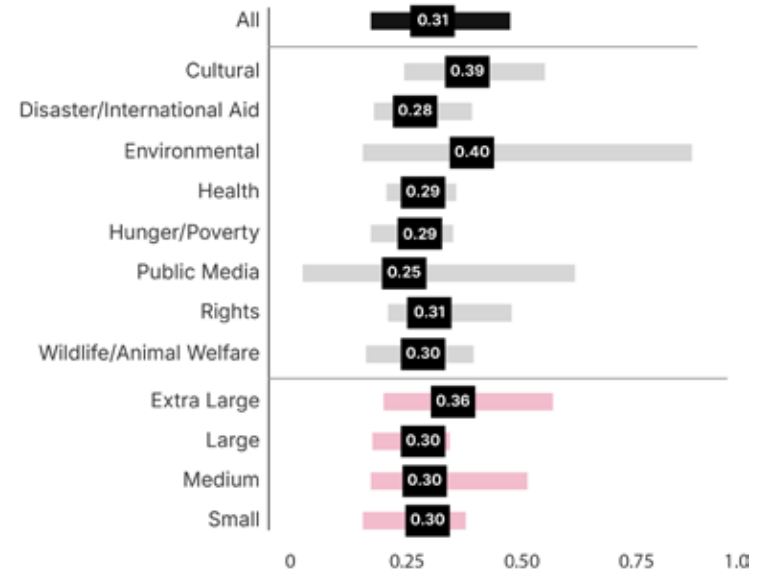
Email messages per month per subscriber



Change in fundraising response rate
2024 to 2025

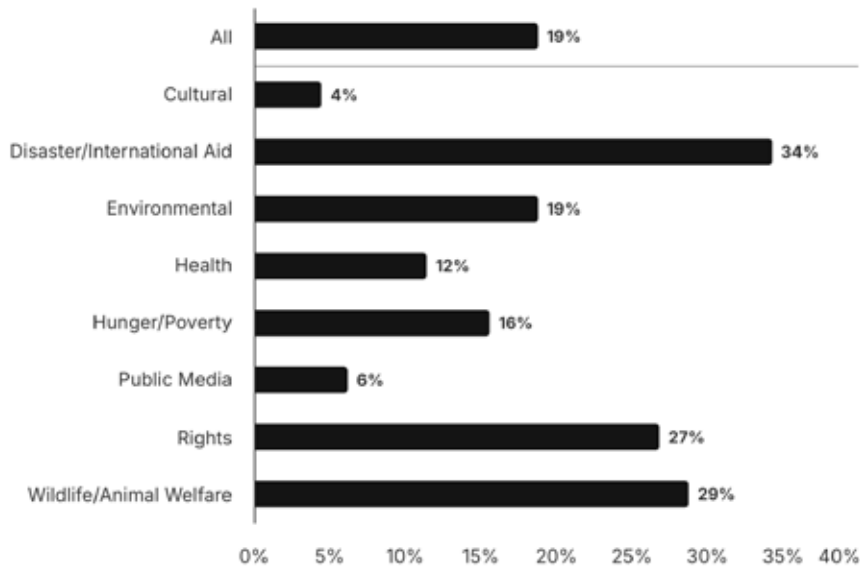


Ratio of new joins to start of year email list size



Total annual churn

Percent of email addresses that become undeliverable over the course of a year



Membership v fundraising email rates
(among groups who send membership messages)

	Click Through Rate	Page Completion Rate	Response Rate	Unsubscribe Rate
Membership	0.49% (+14%)	0.47% (+63%)	0.011% (+94%)	0.20% (+31%)
Fundraising	0.81% (+134%)	4.6%	0.056%	0.22% (+86%)

Email messaging rates by type and sector

	Click-through Rate					Page Completion Rate	
	Advocacy	Fundraising	Newsletter	Welcome Series	Engagement	Advocacy	Fundraising
All	2.3%	0.6%	1.2%	1.6%	1.1%	65%	10%
Cultural		0.2%	1.0%	1.1%	0.7%		7%
Disaster/International Aid	2.2%	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%	0.5%	73%	20%
Environmental	2.9%	0.5%	1.7%	1.9%	1.5%	71%	10%
Health	2.8%	0.6%	1.0%	2.5%	1.1%	49%	4%
Hunger/Poverty	1.6%	0.8%	1.0%	1.2%	1.3%	13%	12%
Public Media	1.9%	0.7%	2.0%		3.8%		19%
Rights	2.4%	0.6%	1.3%	3.8%	1.0%	64%	9%
Wildlife/Animal Welfare	2.0%	0.5%	1.4%	0.5%	0.8%	79%	12%

Response Rate		Unsubscribe Rate					
Advocacy	Fundraising	All	Advocacy	Engagement	Fundraising	Newsletter	Welcome Series
1.4%	0.05%	0.23%	0.23%	0.26%	0.23%	0.23%	1.16%
	0.01%	0.28%		0.37%	0.30%	0.26%	0.53%
1.8%	0.06%	0.23%	0.26%	0.21%	0.22%	0.29%	1.40%
1.5%	0.05%	0.25%	0.22%	0.27%	0.26%	0.24%	1.19%
1.0%	0.03%	0.22%	0.23%	0.27%	0.20%	0.24%	1.04%
0.3%	0.09%	0.15%	0.13%	0.20%	0.15%	0.17%	0.75%
	0.21%	0.22%	0.25%	0.31%	0.12%	0.19%	
1.1%	0.05%	0.31%	0.27%	0.28%	0.33%	0.27%	2.42%
1.9%	0.05%	0.23%	0.22%	0.18%	0.20%	0.19%	1.97%

Messages per subscriber per month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
All	4.3	5.0	5.7	5.4	5.2	5.5	5.6	3.8	5.6	4.8	5.4	13.6
Cultural	3.3	2.1	4.3	4.3	3.8	5.9	2.2	2.9	2.9	3.5	5.0	14.3
Disaster/International Aid	7.3	8.0	7.5	9.4	6.3	8.6	7.6	8.4	8.7	10.2	10.2	23.1
Environmental	5.5	5.3	6.9	7.4	7.0	7.2	7.5	6.6	7.5	5.8	7.1	15.6
Health	2.2	3.6	2.6	3.5	2.9	3.0	2.3	2.0	4.8	3.3	4.3	8.7
Hunger/Poverty	2.3	4.0	4.1	3.8	4.5	4.8	3.6	3.5	4.8	3.7	6.1	8.8
Public Media	6.0	6.6	10.1	5.3	6.3	6.5	7.5	6.5	5.4	6.3	5.4	10.4
Rights	5.9	5.9	6.5	5.7	5.9	5.6	4.9	4.3	4.5	6.1	4.3	13.7
Wildlife/Animal Welfare	7.1	6.8	7.0	9.4	8.8	8.4	7.1	8.4	7.1	4.8	9.7	15.5
Extra Large	6.4	6.1	8.2	7.2	8.0	10.0	7.4	7.9	8.7	8.2	10.2	21.2
Large	6.1	6.7	7.0	6.6	7.4	7.5	7.7	6.6	7.4	8.4	8.4	18.0
Medium	4.8	6.0	6.4	7.1	6.0	7.1	6.2	4.8	6.1	5.1	6.7	14.6
Small	2.0	2.2	2.0	2.9	2.8	2.1	2.5	2.0	3.3	3.1	3.3	6.5



mobile messaging

top facts

- Revenue sourced to mobile messages accounted for 0.9% of all online revenue in 2025.

- Mobile messaging (a.k.a. text messaging or SMS/MMS) subscriber list size increased by 4%, after double-digit growth the previous two years.

- Nonprofits had 176 mobile subscribers for every 1,000 email subscribers and raised \$0.09 through mobile messaging for every dollar in email revenue.

- The average response rate for mobile fundraising messages was 0.17%. The average response rate for mobile advocacy messages was 2.6%.

mobile messaging

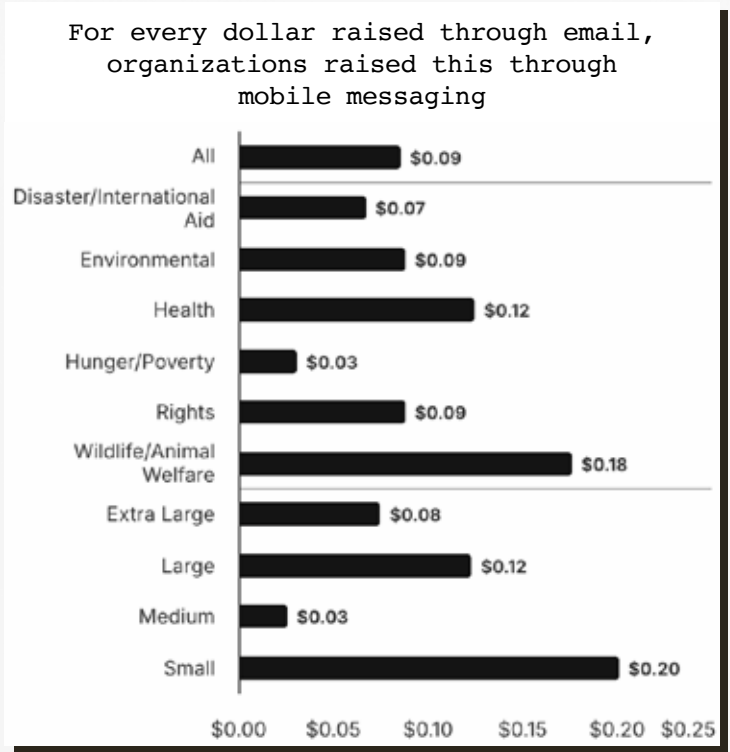
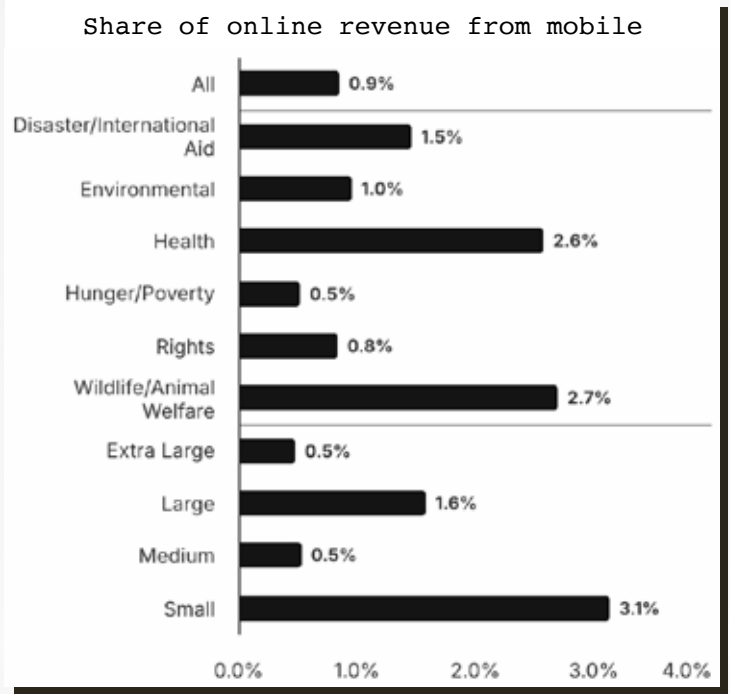
♥ We get excited about the data in Benchmarks every year, and you should not listen to the people who say it's because we are giant nerds who love graphs and have a secret crush on John Venn. (Talk about the intersection of "influential mathematician in the field of symbolic logic" and "dreamy"!)

No, we get excited for this data because we believe in the potential and collective power of countless individual people making a commitment to important causes. Big change comes from small actions added up over time.

That perspective is important to keep in mind as we examine mobile messaging. For many nonprofits, mobile messaging is a tiny part of the overall digital program — but there's a whole world of opportunity taking shape.

To ground ourselves with that sense of scale, **mobile messaging directly drove 0.9% of total online revenue in 2025**. Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits reported an average of 2.7% of revenue from mobile, and the average for Small nonprofits was 3.1%.

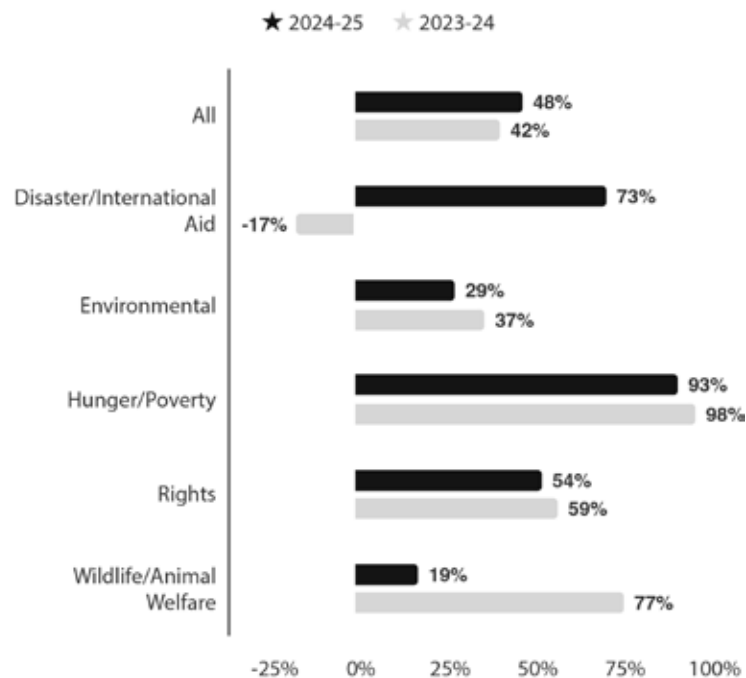
Mobile messaging drove far less revenue than email for most organizations. For every dollar raised through email, nonprofits raised \$0.09 through mobile messaging. Again, Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits saw stronger relative results for mobile, with 18 cents raised per dollar of email revenue. Small nonprofits brought in 20 cents via mobile per dollar of email revenue.



On the whole, on average, mobile messaging drove a relatively small amount of revenue, and our focus throughout Benchmarks is what happens on the whole, on average. But we can say, both from our own experience working with nonprofits that have invested in mobile growth and from the outliers in our data set, that dramatically different results are possible. (In fact, one participant in our pool raised more through text messaging than through email [we will never tell you which one].)

The rapid rate of change offers a glimpse of what is possible. As we've seen, **overall online revenue increased by an average of 15% in 2025; mobile revenue increased by 48%**. Mobile revenue growth was especially robust for Hunger/Poverty nonprofits, which reported a 93% increase in revenue for the channel.

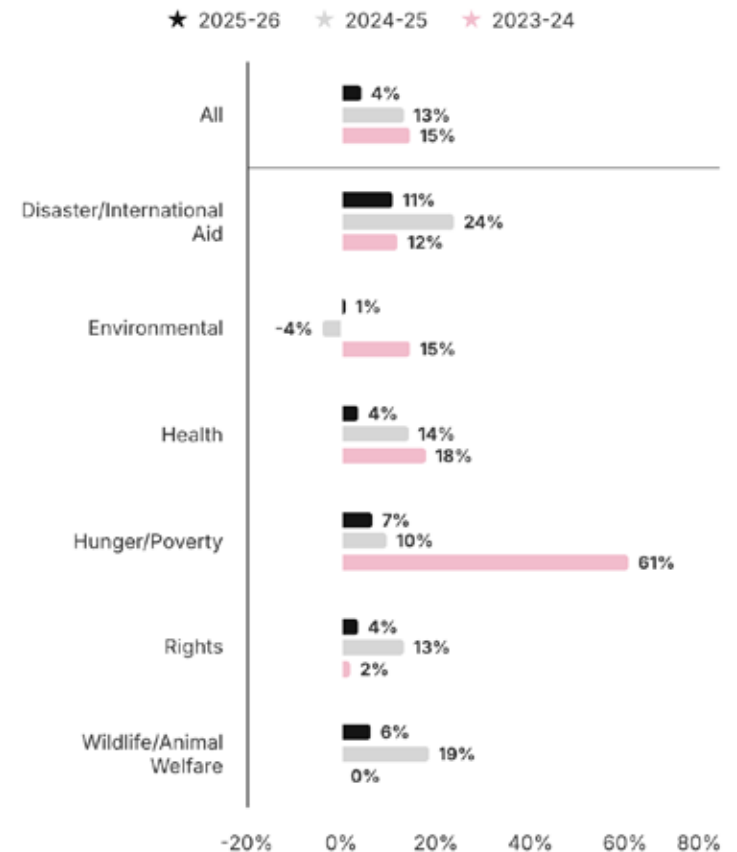
Change in mobile revenue



This growth was driven by changes in mobile list size, volume, and message performance. We'll take those one at a time.

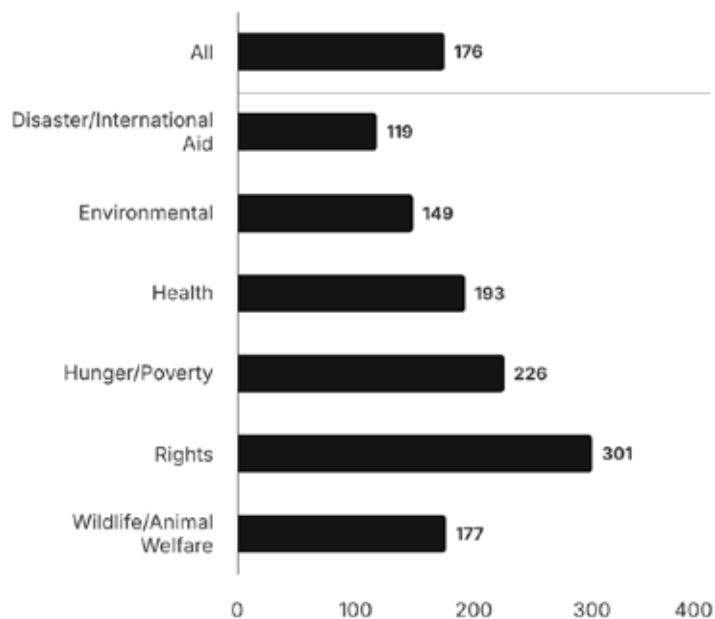
Mobile lists grew by 4% on average in 2025, slowing down from the 13% and 15% rates of growth in the previous two years.

Mobile list growth



It is not unusual to see fairly large swings in the number of mobile subscribers. Partly, that's because the baseline is low, so it doesn't take as many people being added or removed to show up as a major percentage change. Nonprofits had an average of just 176 mobile subscribers for every 1,000 email subscribers, so each new signup matters a lot more to the overall list size.

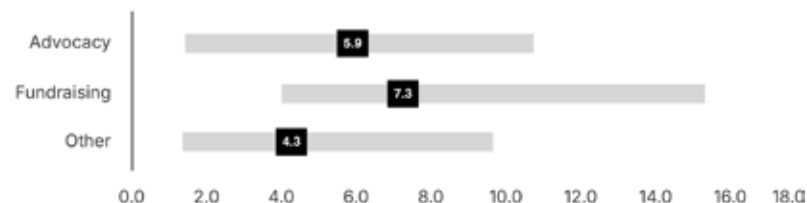
For every 1,000 email subscribers, groups have this many mobile subscribers...



It's also the case that mobile list changes can be highly dependent on differences in strategy and investment. Nonprofits can quickly alter the makeup and magnitude of their mobile lists through direct data uploads, investments in lead generation, web form optimization, or any number of efforts. For some nonprofits, a single in-person event might be a chance to add a meaningful number of new mobile subscribers.

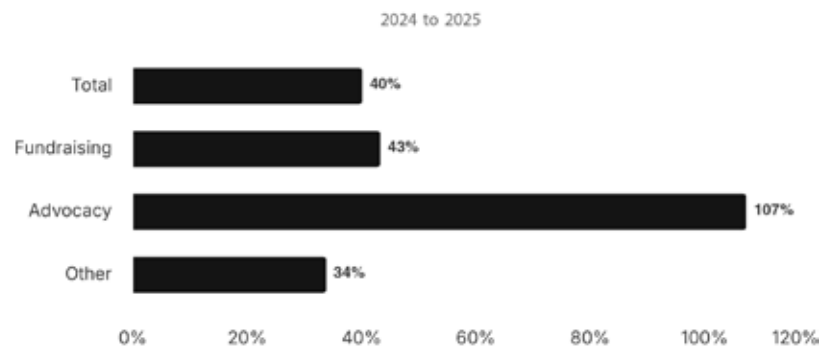
The median volume for mobile messaging in 2025 was 7.3 fundraising messages; 5.9 advocacy messages, and 4.3 "other" messages (which could include surveys, event invitations, thank-you messages, photos of cute puppies, etc.). Nonprofits at the 75th percentile had volume about twice this high; at the other end, some nonprofits sent just a handful of mobile messages all year.

Mobile messages per year per subscriber



Along with that substantial variation in the number of mobile messages sent, there was also a marked increase in total volume. Overall, nonprofits sent 40% more mobile messages in 2025 than they did in 2024. Advocacy messaging volume more than *doubled*, an increase that was not matched in email.

Change in total mobile messages sent





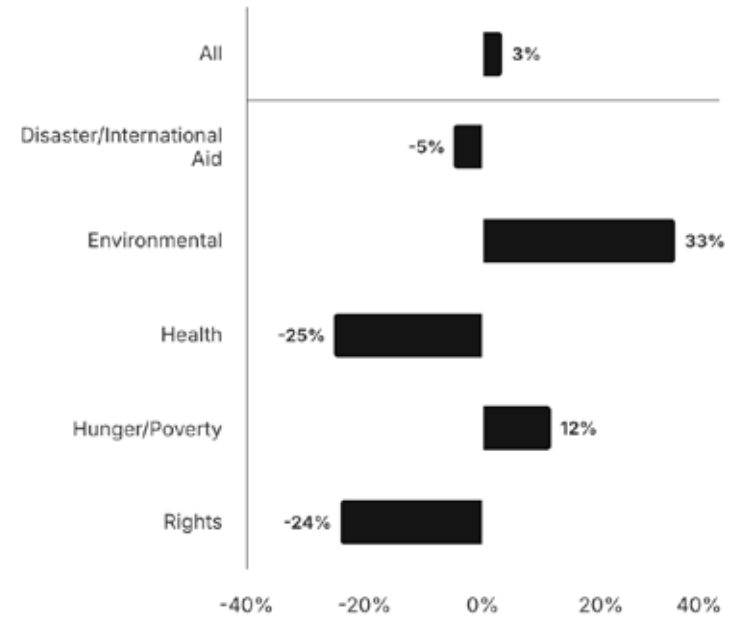
Mobile fundraising messages had an average click-through rate of 3.7%, and a page completion rate of 4.2%. In other words, a bit less than 4% of recipients clicked on the link, and a bit more than 4% of those people who clicked completed a gift. The average response rate for mobile fundraising messages was 0.17%, slightly below the previous year.

As with email, mobile advocacy messaging metrics were quite a bit higher than for fundraising. The average response rate for mobile advocacy messaging was 2.6%, which represents a 16% drop from the previous year.

Across nonprofits of all types, there was a 3% increase in revenue per 1,000 mobile fundraising messages sent — but that small change masks big changes by sector. Environmental and Hunger/Poverty nonprofits saw double-digit growth on average. On the other hand, Health and Rights nonprofits reported double-digit declines.

The way individuals use their mobile devices, and the way nonprofits use mobile messaging, continues to evolve swiftly and unpredictably. For some, that has made steady, reliable growth a challenge. For others, big swings mean big opportunities. Even if we have to start small.

Change in mobile revenue per 1,000 mobile fundraising messages sent 2024 to 2025



Mobile messages per subscriber per month

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
All	1.0	1.0	1.1	1.1	1.3	1.4	1.1	1.3	1.0	1.2	1.0	3.9
Disaster/International Aid	1.0	1.6	2.0	1.5	1.9	1.9	1.6	2.7	1.7	3.9	2.6	6.3
Environmental	1.0	1.0	1.3	1.4	1.7	1.5	1.2	1.5	1.6	1.0	1.3	3.8
Health	0.1	0.0	0.2	0.1	0.0	0.5	0.6	0.4	0.8	0.0	0.8	1.0
Hunger/Poverty	0.3	0.7	0.0	1.0	1.5	1.3	1.3	1.5	1.0	1.0	1.0	2.0
Rights	1.3	1.8	2.0	1.8	1.1	2.4	1.0	1.2	0.9	2.0	1.0	4.3
Wildlife/Animal Welfare	2.1	1.7	1.8	2.3	3.2	3.4	3.0	2.0	2.5	3.8	3.1	6.9
Extra Large	1.0	1.7	1.6	1.8	1.9	2.5	1.7	1.9	2.0	2.5	1.5	4.3
Large	1.0	1.2	1.2	1.1	1.7	1.5	1.7	1.6	1.3	1.9	1.2	6.6
Medium	0.8	0.9	1.0	1.0	1.2	1.0	1.0	1.1	0.9	1.0	1.0	3.1
Small	1.0	0.7	0.8	0.8	0.9	1.4	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.4	1.0	1.2

Mobile messaging statistics

	Click Through Rate		Page Completion Rate		Response Rate		Unsubscribe Rate	
All	5.7%	(+45%)	—	—	—	—	0.73%	(-21%)
Fundraising	3.7%	(+45%)	4.2%	(-40%)	0.17%	(-2%)	0.77%	(-17%)
Advocacy Click Messages	11%	(+25%)	27%	(-15%)	2.6%	(-16%)	0.44%	(-22%)

advertising

top facts

- Nonprofit digital ads spend increased by 18% in 2025, with nonprofits reinvesting \$0.10 in digital ads for every dollar of online revenue.

- Most ad spend went to direct fundraising (58%), though brand awareness was also a significant factor: Small organizations spent nearly as much on brand as fundraising, and 2/3 of organizations ran at least some brand ads.

- Search and multi-channel ad formats proved highly resilient to AI-driven industry shifts, while connected TV and digital audio are clear areas of opportunity. Display and video show some signs of weakness as traffic to traditional publishers suffers.

- For ads, Meta remains the most important social media platform: TikTok and Snapchat have struggled for both fundraising and lead gen.

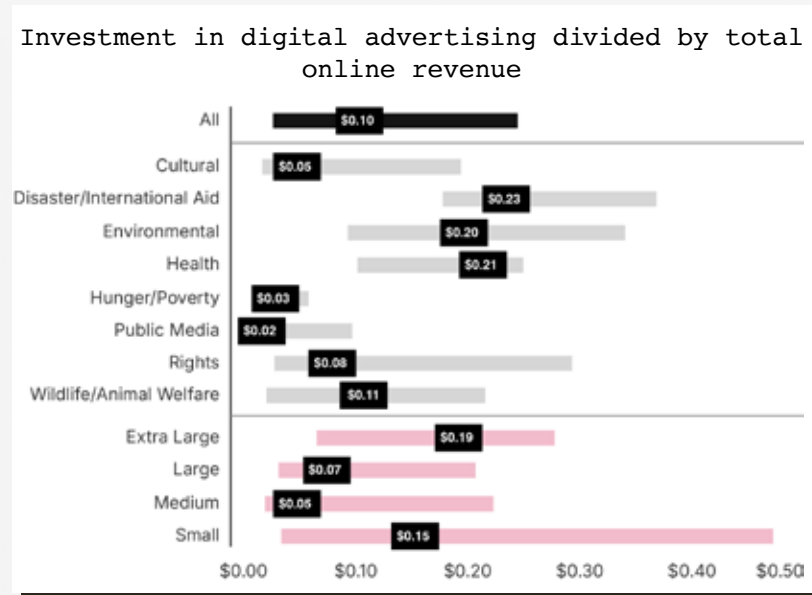
advertising

Working for a cause means there is always more to do.
 Reach more people. Change more minds. Save more lives.
 Help more families. Swing more votes. Fund more research.
 Protect more places. Spark more change.

MORE. MORE. MORE.

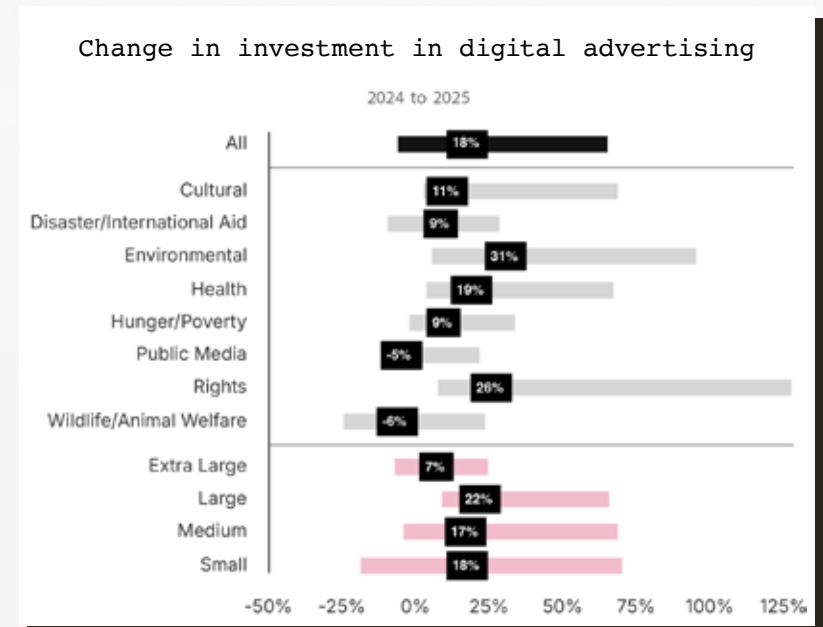
To meet these needs, organizations turn to ads. Advertising is an almost deceptively simple tool in the nonprofit toolkit: spend money and stuff will happen. You will reach new audiences, you will acquire new supporters, you will raise money.

In 2025, nonprofits spent a lot of money on ads: **they invested \$0.10 in digital advertising for every dollar raised online.** For Environmental, Health, and Disaster/International Aid groups, the investment was more than double the study-wide average (\$0.23 for Disaster/International Aid, \$0.20 for Environmental, \$0.21 for Health).



This figure does not measure effectiveness or return — it indicates the scale of digital advertising budgets relative to program size. It's one way of understanding how nonprofits are reinvesting today's revenue to safeguard future results.

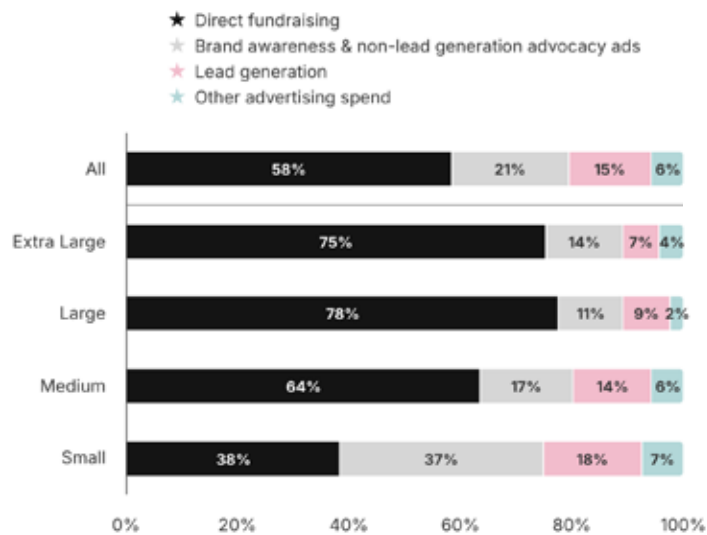
That investment isn't just big, it's growing. **Spend on digital advertising increased by an average of 18% in 2025.** Not all sectors increased spend — budgets declined on average for Public Media and Wildlife/Animal Welfare sectors — but most did.



The growth was especially pronounced for Environmental and Rights nonprofits. The average increase (31% for Environmental, 26% for Rights) is remarkable, but even that masks some massive individual moves. Multiple organizations in these sectors more than doubled their digital ads investments from 2024 to 2025.

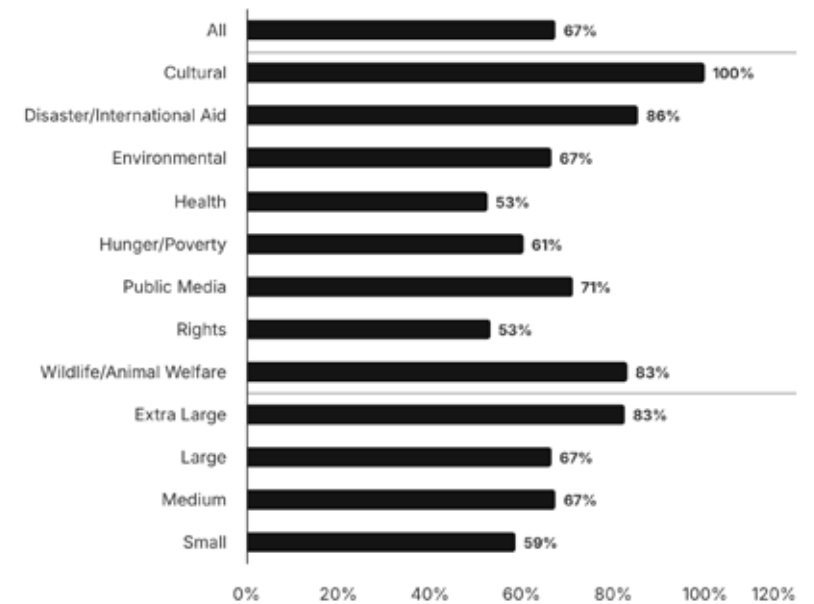
Where did all that money go? For the most part, fundraising: **58% of all digital ad spend went to direct fundraising, with brand awareness and lead generation accounting for most of the remainder.** This is especially true for Large and Extra Large organizations, which devoted 78% and 75% of their digital ads investments to direct fundraising (and less than 10% to lead generation).

Share of digital advertising budget by goal



Brand awareness was the second-largest category of digital advertising — in fact, for Small organizations, it nearly matched the size of direct fundraising (37% vs 38%). It was also incredibly widespread. While the size of brand investments varied, most organizations spent at least *something* on it. **Within the cultural sector, every single organization ran brand ads.**

Does your organization run brand awareness ads?



All of this matters because the why determines the where: the different goals for advertising (fundraising, brand, and lead gen) had wildly different channel mixes.

Lead generation campaigns are primarily run on social media, with 71% of spend going to that channel. Brand awareness and non-lead generation advocacy showed a bias toward social media (44%), but otherwise displayed a quite diverse media mix, with almost every channel contributing to varying degrees. Direct fundraising showed perhaps the clearest evidence of the Google-Meta duopoly, with search and social combining for more than 2/3 of all spend.

Share of digital advertising budget by goal and channel

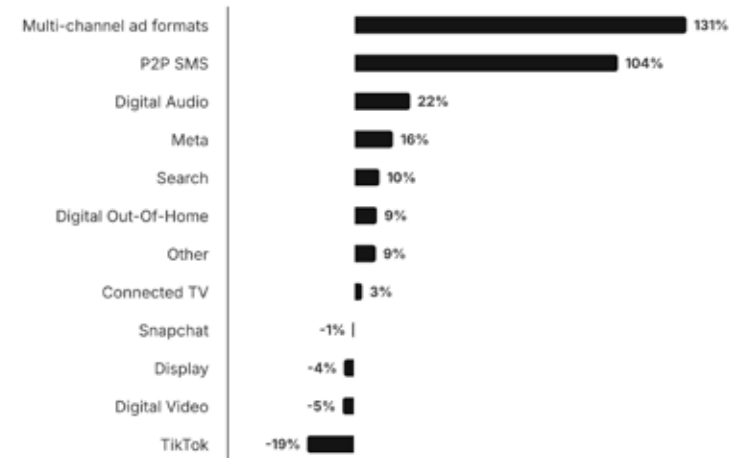
	Direct Fundraising	Non-lead Generation Advocacy Ads	Lead Generation	Other Advertising Spend
Social media	36%	44%	71%	71%
Search	31%	6%	2%	13%
P2P SMS	3%	1%	1%	0%
Digital Audio	1%	4%	0%	7%
Display	11%	12%	3%	3%
Connected TV	4%	11%	1%	0%
Multi-channel ad formats	10%	4%	2%	3%
Digital Video	1%	9%	0%	0%
Digital Out-Of-Home	1%	2%	0%	0%
Other	3%	8%	21%	2%

This breakout by channel is a snapshot of a single moment in time — but the industry changes quickly. Those shifts are often easiest to see in fundraising, both because of the scale of those budgets (again, 58% of all ad spend) and because the emphasis on immediate results creates pressure for nonprofits to run nimble programs. For all those reasons, we like to look extra-closely at shifts in the fundraising channel mix year to year.

There are AI-driven shockwaves rippling through this data. Conversational experiences are decimating traffic to traditional publishers. Many users don't see a reason to visit joesautomotiveblog.wordpress.com when they can just ask ChatGPT “why is my car making a weird noise?”

Fewer visits to those sites means less benefit to serving ads there — specifically, display and digital video ads, where spend declined by 4% and 5% year-to-year. Conversely, Google's vigilance in AI-proofing their ad product is almost

Change in investment in fundraising advertising channels 2024 to 2025



certainly a factor for Performance Max and Demand Gen (grouped here under Multi-channel ad formats), where nonprofits more than doubled their investments year-to-year (+131%).

Even channels that showed moderate growth (such as Digital Audio, at +22%) might appeal to nonprofits because of their relative immunity to these shifts. If you're listening to old episodes of Car Talk on Spotify, it's for the experience as much as the advice — and that's not something AI can replace.

While we group social media as a single channel in other parts of this study, you can also see a breakout here by platform — and, despite our collective loathing, Meta *still* leads the pack. Meta investments grew, while both Snapchat and TikTok declined (-1% and -19%). We do not report on Twitter (sorry — X!) because so few organizations spent there to begin with. Sucks to suck, Elon.

Results by advertising goal

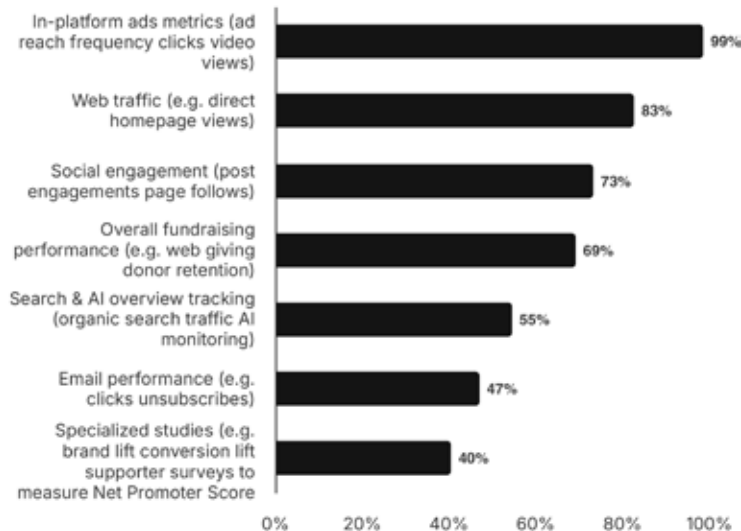
This whole time, we've assumed that nonprofits spend on ads because they work — but how do we actually know?

Attribution and measurement are core challenges for advertising, and that's especially true with brand-building campaigns, where success can't be measured by a single direct metric like donations or email sign-ups.

Nonprofits used an array of different (and sometimes overlapping) methods to assess the impact of brand ads.

Nearly all organizations reported using in-platform measures of reach and engagement (such as frequency, views, and clicks). The next most-common measures were all pointed at the halo of brand on other aspects of digital: web visits, social engagement, fundraising, search/AI, and email. The least-common measure was the most sophisticated (and often most expensive): specialized studies that use data science or targeted research to assess the impact of ads on brand health.

If you run brand awareness ads, which of these tools do you use to assess the effectiveness of those ads?



By contrast, assessing the impact of lead generation ads is relatively simple: the most common measure is cost per lead. Of course, that leaves out a lot of nuance. A supporter who was more expensive to reach up-front may turn out to be a more valuable donor — plus, there are plenty of reasons why a supporter may be valuable aside from their future fundraising potential! Still, as a quick rule of thumb, **the average cost per lead for digital advertising was \$2.81**. The average for most sectors fell within a dollar or so of the overall figure, though Health nonprofits reported a cost per lead of \$9.25.

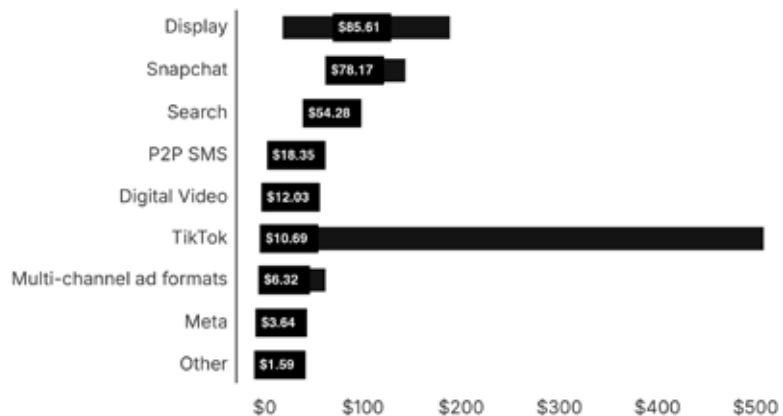
Cost per advertising lead



There is a lot of variation hiding behind those averages. Some of it is variation between platforms: while Meta and other channels (where we include fixed-cost vendors like Care2 and Civic Shout) report relatively low CPLs (\$3.64 for Meta, \$1.59 for Others), the averages on other channels could be higher by actual orders of magnitude — most notably, \$86 on display and \$78 on Snapchat. There's also

variation within platforms, especially on TikTok, Snapchat, and display. A wide range in results means that there's a lot of room for performance to improve (or suffer) based on creative, audiences, and other aspects of campaign execution.

Cost per advertising lead by platform



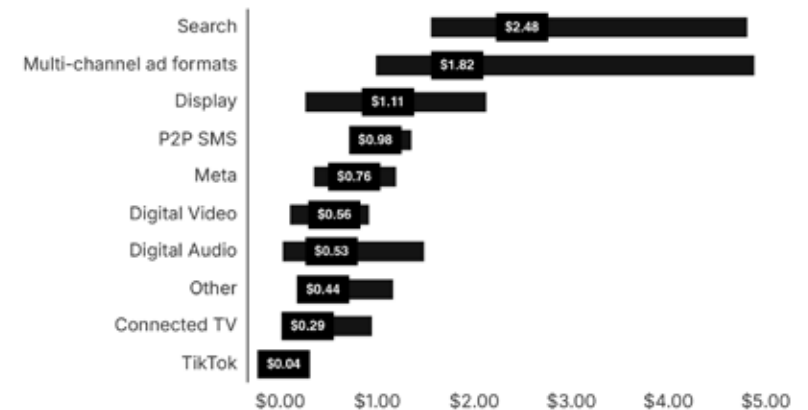
Finally, we turn to fundraising. We use return on advertising spend (ROAS) as a primary measure: money in versus money out. The standard for this metric has always been set by search, which had a ROAS of \$2.48.

We said it earlier in this section and also in our Big Story in book 1, but we'll say it again because it's important and because we want you to stay up late at night with us worrying about it: conversational AI is an existential threat to search.

Google (and Microsoft) know this, which is why they're putting such significant effort behind folding AI into search *and* folding search into more flexible AI-driven formats like Performance Max. (For the search nerds: in this study, AI Max is grouped under search, while Performance Max and Demand Gen are under multi-channel ad formats.) Those efforts are surely a factor in keeping the search ROAS so strong, and in enabling nonprofits to reap a healthy return (\$1.82) on multi-channel formats.

Return on ad spend (ROAS)

Ad revenue divided by ad spend

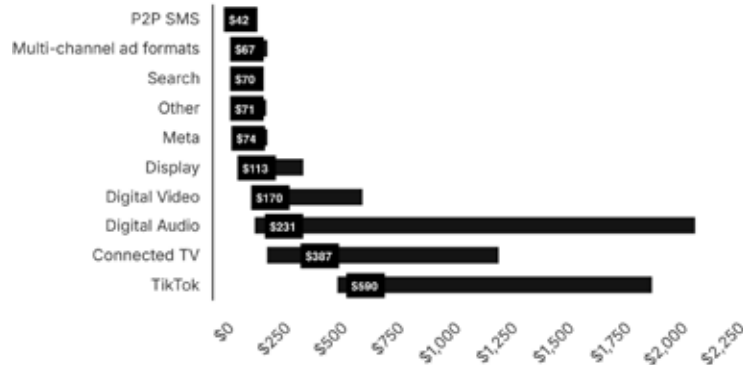


Display and digital video are another pair of channels actively battling the impacts of AI, but with far less success: display returns were just slightly above a break-even (\$1.11), while digital video came in at \$0.56. In both cases, the wide range of results show that a lot of programs are really struggling.

It's worth asking which channels could be less affected by AI-driven shifts in online behavior, and this is where digital audio and connected TV stand out. Those channels have lower average returns than many others, but the range of results shows clear opportunity for very strong returns if organizations can nail their creative, audiences, and other tactical decisions (easy, right?). The same is true of peer-to-peer SMS, which had a ROAS of \$0.98 driven largely by the lowest cost per donation of any channel.

Remember how, even though overall budgets grew and nonprofits increased spend on most channels, TikTok was down by a hefty margin? Well, that might be because it cost nonprofits \$590 to generate a donation, leading to a ROAS of \$0.04. This doesn't mean that TikTok isn't an important channel (see Social Media and Influencers on page 94 for more), but direct fundraising campaigns have clearly struggled on the platform.

Cost per donation



Digital advertising: return on ad spend (ROAS) by sector

	All	Disaster/International						Wildlife/Animal Welfare	
		Cultural	Aid	Environmental	Health	Hunger/Poverty	Rights	Welfare	
Search	\$2.48	\$2.83	\$2.21	\$2.06	\$2.10	\$7.00	\$3.10	\$1.52	
Multi-channel ad formats	\$1.85	\$1.36	\$0.81	\$1.27	\$3.32	\$6.39	\$1.21	\$1.75	
P2P SMS	\$0.98	—	\$0.87	\$1.08	—	\$1.19	\$0.56	—	
Display	\$1.11	\$0.85	\$0.95	\$0.60	\$1.54	\$3.93	\$0.41	\$0.39	
Meta	\$0.76	\$1.45	\$0.62	\$0.48	\$0.71	\$2.79	\$0.44	\$0.98	
Digital Audio	\$0.53	—	—	\$0.09	—	\$6.28	—	—	
Digital Video	\$0.56	—	\$0.38	\$0.19	\$0.57	\$0.63	—	—	
Other	\$0.44	—	\$0.44	\$0.76	\$0.21	—	\$0.68	\$1.19	
Connected TV	\$0.29	—	\$0.35	\$0.12	\$0.13	\$0.53	—	—	
TikTok	\$0.04	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

Digital advertising: cost per donation by sector

	All	Disaster/International						Wildlife/Animal Welfare	
		Cultural	Aid	Environmental	Health	Hunger/Poverty	Rights	Welfare	
P2P SMS	\$42	—	\$56	\$37	—	\$41	\$73	—	
Multi-channel ad formats	\$67	\$84	\$180	\$74	\$76	\$28	\$155	\$55	
Search	\$70	\$54	\$100	\$63	\$89	\$24	\$96	\$70	
Other	\$71	—	\$76	\$56	\$164	—	\$52	—	
Meta	\$74	\$48	\$91	\$69	\$115	\$44	\$93	\$41	
Display	\$113	\$127	\$191	\$115	\$135	\$37	\$236	\$260	
Digital Video	\$170	—	\$207	\$159	\$155	\$109	—	—	
Digital Audio	\$231	—	—	\$732	—	\$39	—	—	
Connected TV	\$387	—	\$216	\$696	\$883	\$507	—	—	
TikTok	\$590	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	

Google Grants results

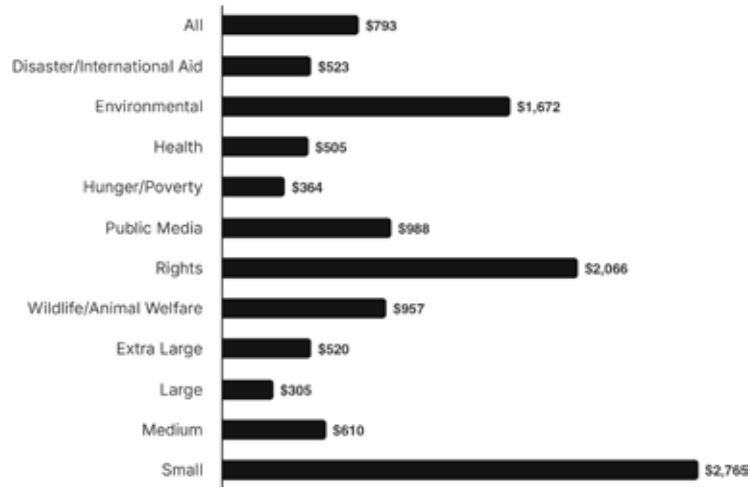
We've spent this whole section talking about spend, spend, spend — but nothing beats free. Google Grants placements don't work the same (or, frankly, as well) as paid search: there are limits on total budget and allowable search terms, and Grants placements appear below paid results. On the other hand, they cost ad credits... essentially, Monopoly money. So that's nice!

The average ROAS for Google Grants was \$0.17, well below the paid search ROAS of \$2.48. (But again, ROAS is a bit deceptive here, since you are not spending actual money.) The average cost per donation for Google Grants was correspondingly high at \$793. (Again, put giant air quotes on "cost.")

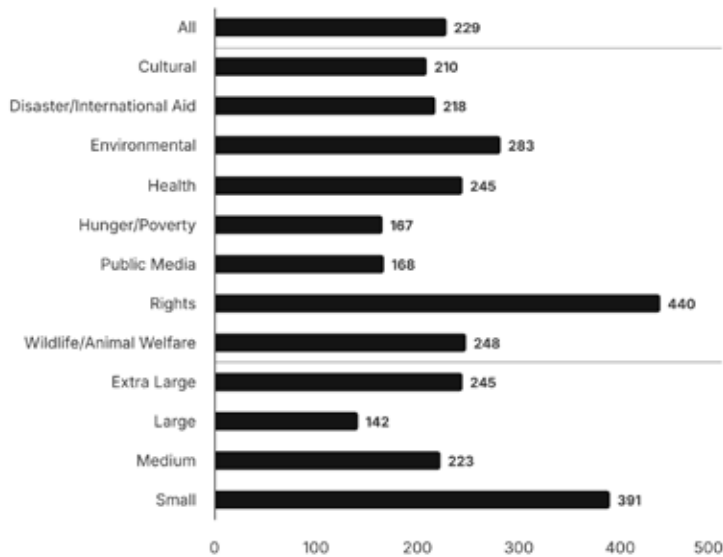
Google Grants: ROAS



Google Grants: cost per donation



Google Grants: site visits per \$1k



While Google Grants can't compete with paid search for direct fundraising, they can still help increase organizations' reach. Nonprofits received 229 site visits for every \$1k in Grant spend. With AI summaries affecting search (you really should take a look at the Big Story if you haven't already) and organic traffic seemingly in decline (oh, also the Website section on page 104), this can be a meaningful source of visitors.

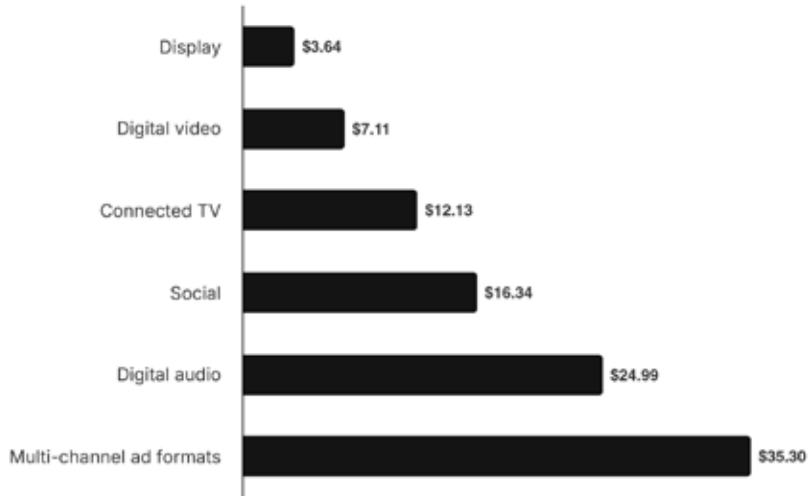
We'd like to close this discussion of ads with a personal reflection. As people who care about the future of our fragile world, it can feel really weird to spend so much time and money on these heinous companies run by the boy-kings of the tech brologarchy.

We do it because when ads work, they *work* — and the impact on the causes we care about is massive. Think of every dollar that we raise, every supporter we reach, every bystander who's moved to action by a connection with your mission. Those wins don't happen because some jabroni with half an Ivy League computer science degree built a creepily-effective ad platform. They happen because of people like you, people who log on every day and wrestle these platforms into doing some good for this world. So from the bottom of our hearts, thank you. And keep it up!



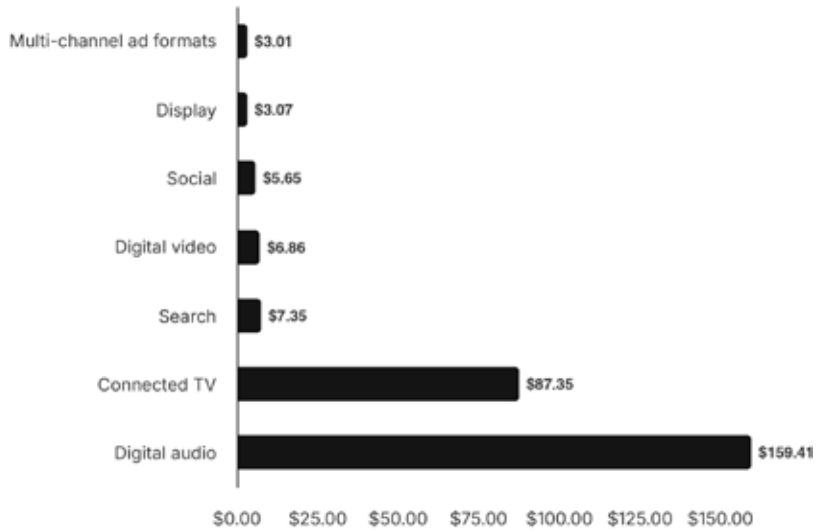
Cost per thousand impressions

(CPM) by channel

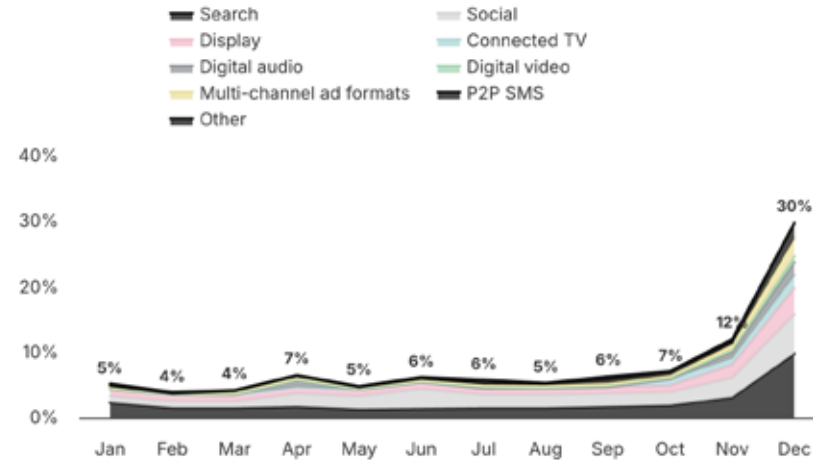


Cost per click

(CPC) by channel



Percent of digital advertising budget spent in each month



social media & influencers

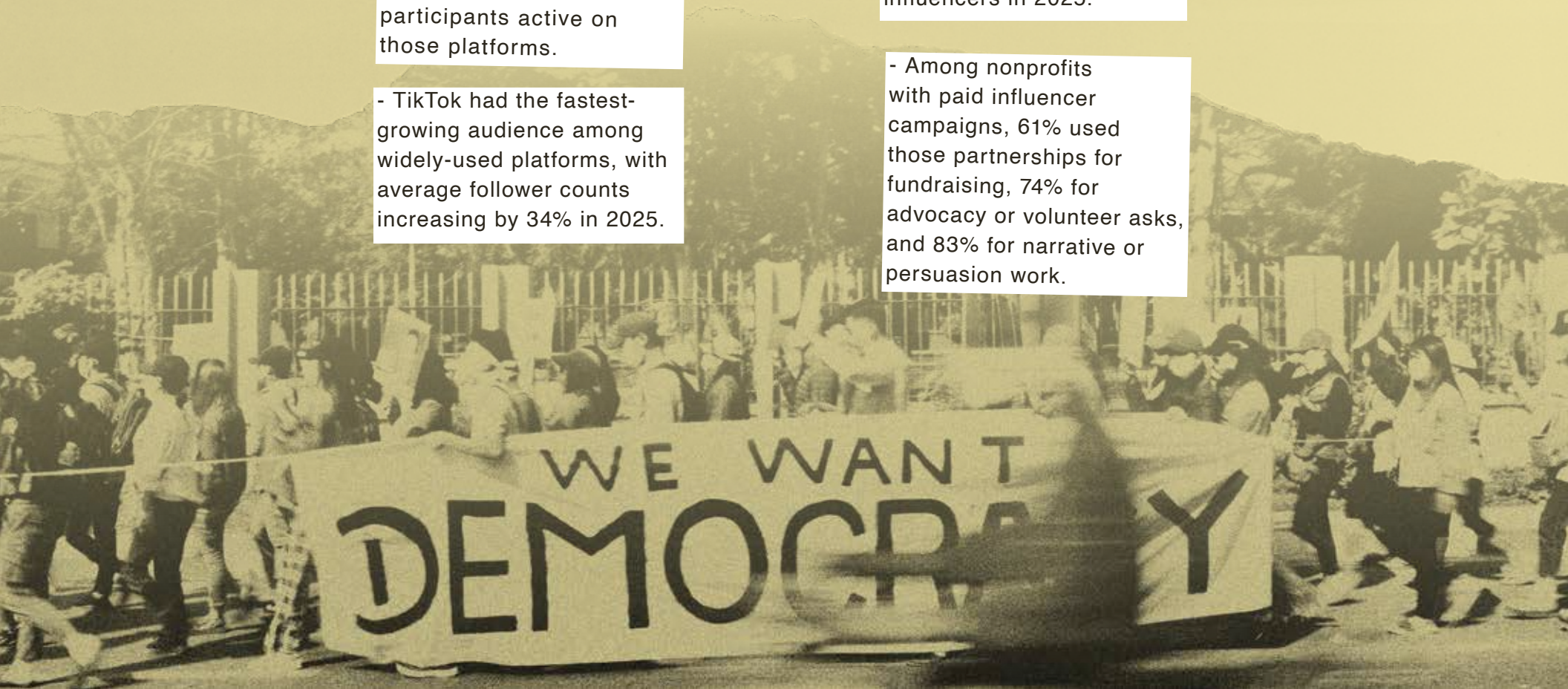
top facts

- Facebook and Instagram were the most widely-used social media platforms, with nearly all Benchmarks participants active on those platforms.

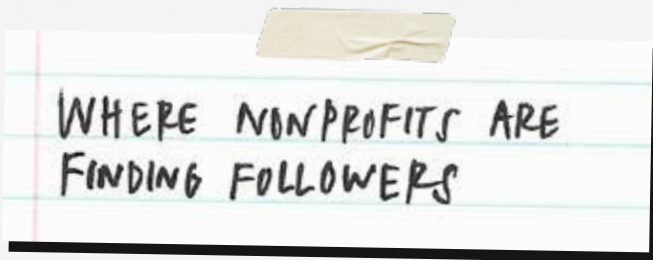
- TikTok had the fastest-growing audience among widely-used platforms, with average follower counts increasing by 34% in 2025.

- 58% of Benchmarks participants reported working with social media influencers in 2025.

- Among nonprofits with paid influencer campaigns, 61% used those partnerships for fundraising, 74% for advocacy or volunteer asks, and 83% for narrative or persuasion work.



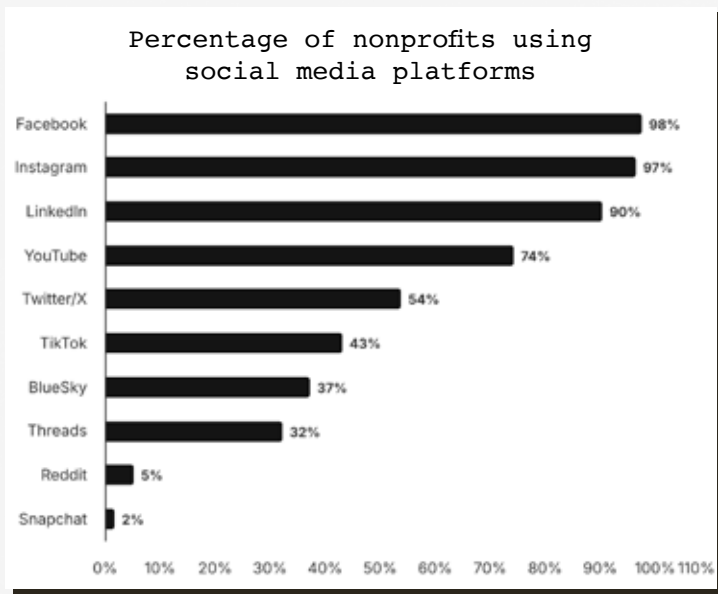
social media & influencers



The promise of social media for nonprofits is enchanting: the ability to reach engaged new audiences, spread your message, and shape the public narrative around your mission. All you have to do is get the right content in front of the right people at the right time.

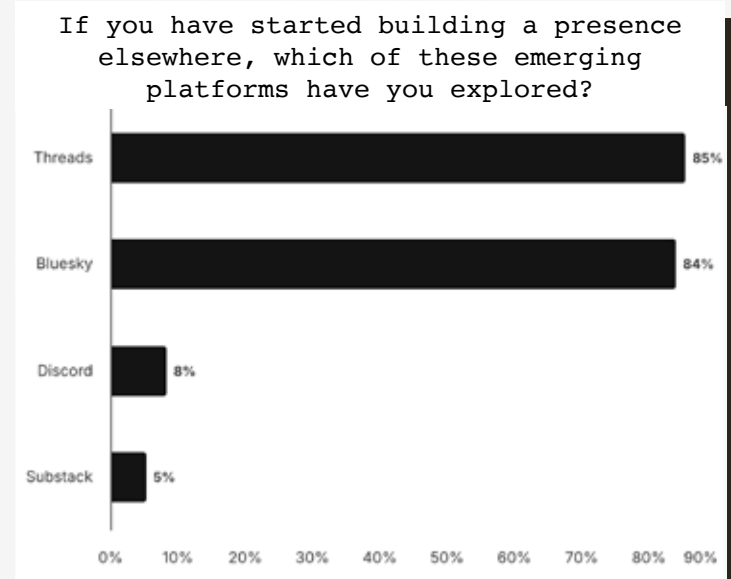
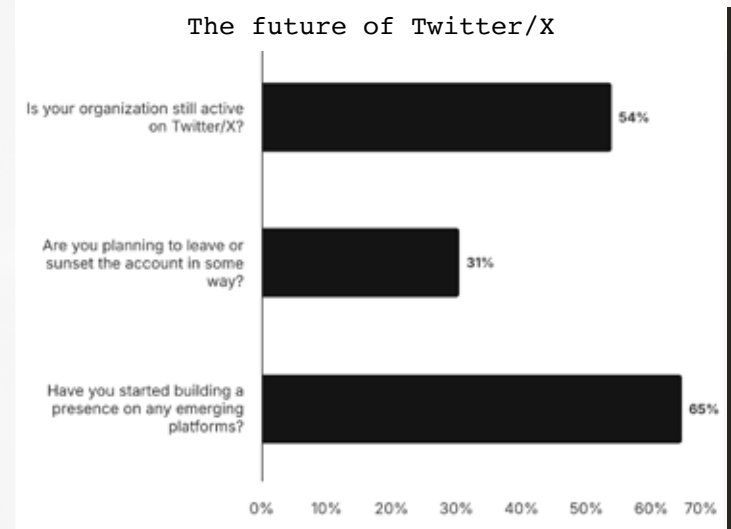
The reality is... slightly more complicated.

Almost every Benchmarks participant maintained a presence on Facebook and Instagram in 2025. YouTube was also widely used, with 74% of nonprofits maintaining a presence. Newer platforms had lower rates of adoption: 43% of nonprofits were on TikTok, 37% were on Bluesky, and 32% were on Threads.



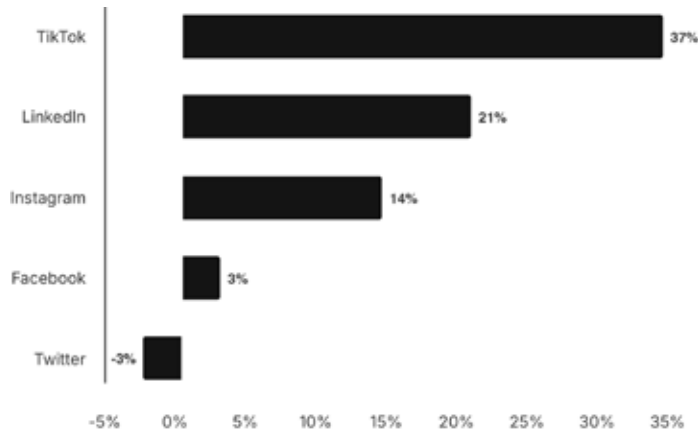
We don't make a habit of comparing the findings in different editions of Benchmarks, but the 54% of nonprofits that reported using Twitter/X in 2025 was a marked reduction from what we saw in previous years. It's also likely to fall lower.

Among nonprofits that did maintain a Twitter/X presence in 2025, 31% reported planning to leave or sunset the account, and 65% had started building a presence on emerging platforms (primarily Bluesky and Threads).



Nonprofits aren't the only ones who have departed Twitter/X since Elon Musk bought the platform and then kept being the way that he is. Nonprofits on the platform saw a 3% decline in their number of followers, the only platform to show a drop. TikTok audiences grew the fastest, with a 37% increase in 2025.

Change in number of fans/followers
2024 to 2025



(Note: We did not have enough two-year data for Threads, Bluesky, or other platforms to provide reliable growth figures.)

Though the average number of Facebook followers increased by just 3%, nonprofits had far more followers there than any other social platform. The average number of Facebook followers was 53k, compared to 18k on Instagram and 2k on YouTube. Among newer platforms, nonprofits had far more followers on Threads (13k) than TikTok (3k) or Bluesky (1k).

From these top-line audience numbers, it might appear that nonprofits are reaching many times more followers on incumbent platforms like Facebook or Twitter/X than relative newcomers TikTok or Bluesky.

The reality is... slightly more complicated.

Average number of followers on social media
and change year over year (by sector)

	All	Disaster/ International Aid	Environmental	Health	Hunger/Poverty	Public Media	Rights	Wildlife/ Animal Welfare
Facebook	53k (+3%)	165k (+1%)	184k (+1%)	82k (+6%)	18k (+7%)	16k (+11%)	144k (+3%)	145k (+5%)
Twitter	21k (-3%)	42k (-5%)	41k (-4%)	21k (-2%)	8k (-2%)	7k (-2%)	30k (-5%)	9k
Instagram	18k (+14%)	59k (+5%)	51k (+13%)	27k (+11%)	5k (+22%)	9k (+27%)	23k (+27%)	59k (+22%)
LinkedIn	11k (+21%)	58k (+17%)	21k (+21%)	20k (+19%)	4k (+18%)	1k (+28%)	20k (+24%)	16k (+21%)
TikTok	3k (+37%)	4k (+30%)	2k (+64%)	4k (+29%)	1k (+133%)		43k (+44%)	69k (+5%)
Threads	12k	34k	10k	4k	9k		19k	18k
Bluesky	1k	1k	1k	<1k	<1k		2k	1k
Youtube	2k	5k	2k	3k	<1k	26k	1k	6k

Average number of followers on social media
and change year over year (by size)

	Extra Large	Large	Medium	Small
Facebook	788k (+1%)	143k (+5%)	40k (+2%)	17k (+5%)
Twitter	171k (-3%)	23k (-3%)	22k (-3%)	10k (-3%)
Instagram	259k (+7%)	48k (+15%)	19k (+16%)	6k (+17%)
LinkedIn	95k (+20%)	18k (+20%)	9k (+20%)	5k (+30%)
TikTok	36k (+16%)	2k (+143%)	2k (+40%)	2k (+32%)
Threads	41k	22k	10k	1k
Bluesky	2k	7k	1k	<1k
Youtube	19k	4k	1k	<1k

For one thing, there were distinct differences in audience size between sectors. There's a lot of data packed into this table, so as an example, let's compare the follower counts across platforms for Rights and Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits.

The average number of Facebook followers was similar for these sectors: about 144k followers. The rate of change was also pretty similar, with year-over-year growth of 3% and 5%. Those similarities make the differences on other channels all the more striking.

On Instagram, a highly visual platform where we all want to see baby elephants being adorable, Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits had an average of 59k followers, compared to 23k for Rights groups. On Twitter/X, where political discourse is more common, the situation was reversed: Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits had 9k followers, compared to 39k for Rights groups.

And then there's TikTok, where Wildlife/Animal Welfare nonprofits had more followers (69k, compared to 43k for Rights nonprofits), but showed little growth. The average number of followers for Rights nonprofits shot up by 44%.

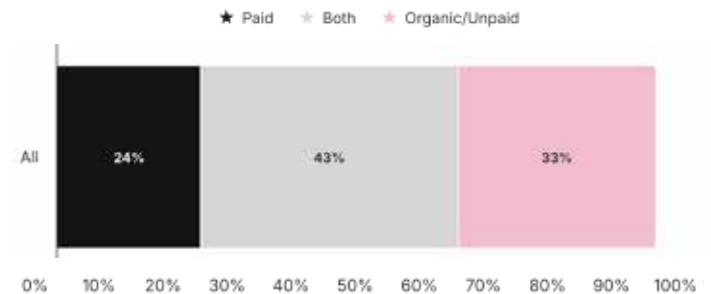
Even if you aren't part of either of these sectors, the point is: follower counts on a given platform are heavily dependent on the strategic choices nonprofits make, the kinds of content prioritized on the platform, and audience expectations.

The influence of influencers

If nonprofits can't be confident that their organic social content will reach enough people (or the right people), one sure way to expand that reach is by leveraging influencers.

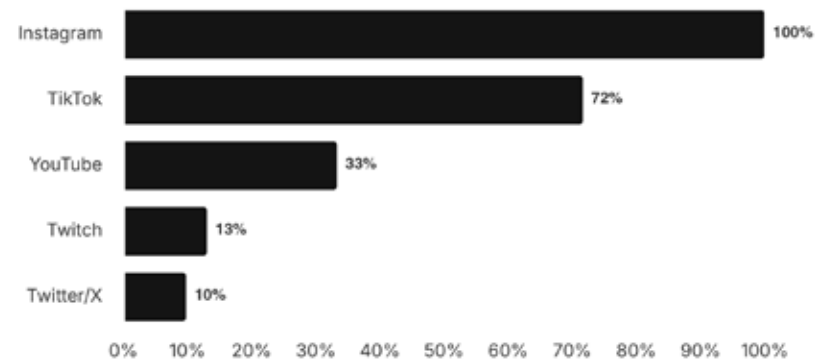
A majority (58%) of Benchmarks participants reported working with influencers outside their organization to promote social media content at least once in 2025. Of those, 24% worked solely with paid influencers; 33% promoted content solely through unpaid partnerships; and 43% used a mix of unpaid and paid influencer content. (For commentary on why we believe paying for influencer content and reach is important, see the note from Ankur Asthana on page 103.)

Of those who work with social influencers, these are the types of influencers they work with

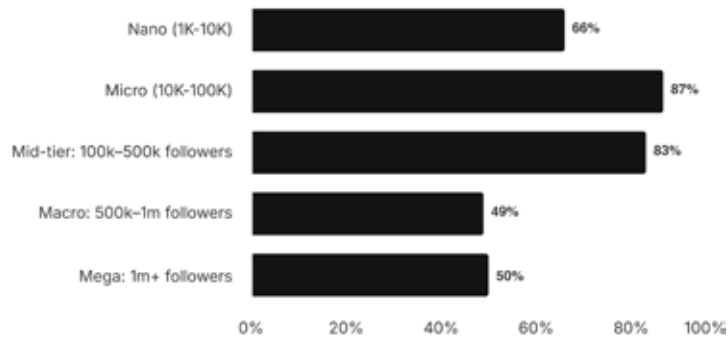


Every nonprofit that partnered with influencers included Instagram as part of that marketing strategy, and 72% worked with influencers on TikTok. Small and mid-size influencer accounts were most common — 87% of influencer programs included accounts with 10,000 to 100,000 followers, and 83% included accounts between 100,000 and 500,000 followers.

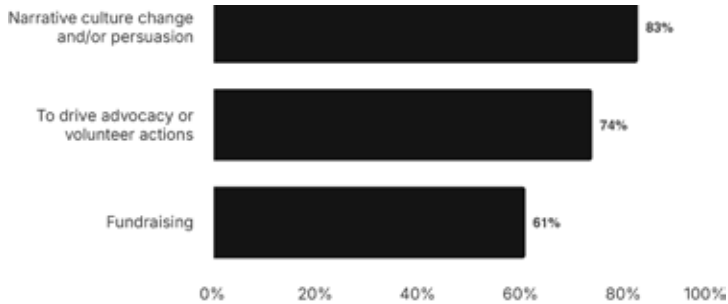
Which platform(s) did you activate influencer campaigns on?



What tier of influencers did you work with?



What do you use paid influencers for?



Direct fundraising asks were a part of content for 61% of influencer programs. Calls to action including advocacy or volunteering were part of 74% of influencer programs, and 83% included some type of narrative, culture change, and/or persuasion content.

Social media platforms attract vast audiences and give individual voices a means to reach and move the masses. Some of that can be done directly by nonprofits with their posts, videos, and photos of baby elephants being adorable. As the reality of social media becomes increasingly... slightly more complicated, outside influencers with authentic voices and distinct audiences may matter even more.

notes from ankur asthana

Hi, I'm Ankur Asthana, a vice president at M+R. As someone who works closely with influencers, I have a soap box to climb up on.

For years, it was easy to view social media as a free megaphone. But today, we all know that the digital town square belongs to influencers. Audiences are looking to individuals — not just organizations — for news, community, and a reason to care.

When we ask influencers to create content for free or amplify our message at severely reduced rates, we don't just undervalue their professional labor; we set ourselves up for low-impact partnerships that lack the very authenticity we're looking for. We're also seeing more and more reports of funders on the right offering influencers sometimes 10-fold what more progressive orgs are paying. If they want a more level playing field, nonprofits on the left will need to step up their game!

Taking social media seriously means taking influencers seriously, and that means compensating creators for their work by proactively budgeting for influencer partnerships the same way you would for paid ads or video production. By partnering with creators as the professional creative powerhouses they are, you'll unlock the kind of high-trust, high-impact content that can break through.

Respect your influencers! Love your influencers!
Pay your influencers!

Thanks, and I hope you are enjoying Benchmarks.

♥ Ankur

website performance

top facts

- Organic (non-paid) search traffic declined over the course of 2025, but still accounted for 39% of all visits.

- Nonprofits received donations from 1.6% of all website visitors, generating \$1.33 per visitor.

- More nonprofit website traffic came from users on mobile devices (including both phones and tablets) than desktop users. Mobile users represented 52% of all visits, with 48% of traffic from users on desktop devices.

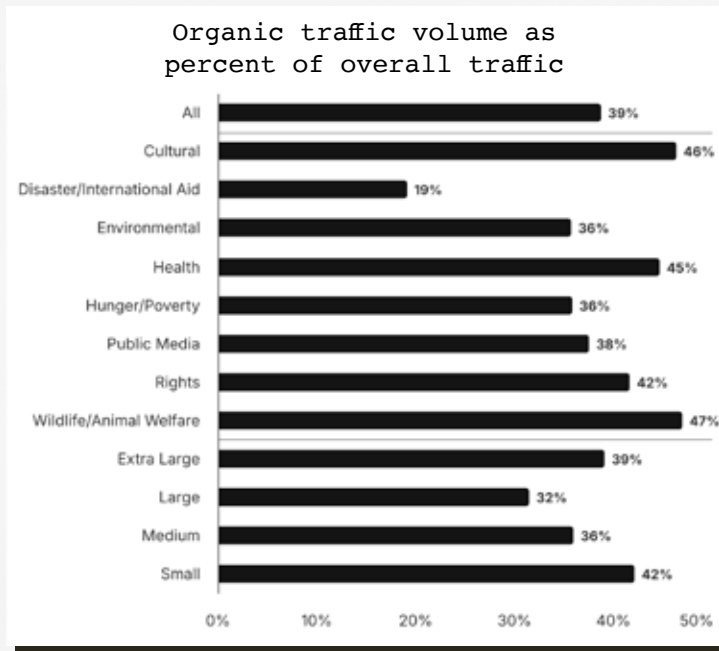
- Users on desktop devices made up the majority of donation transactions (57%) and revenue (72%).

- The average gift made on desktop devices was \$168; for mobile users, the average gift was \$88.

- PayPal was the most widely-used alternative payment method — 79% of nonprofits made this option available on donation pages. Google Pay (58%), Apple Pay (57%), and Venmo (44%) were also common.

website performance

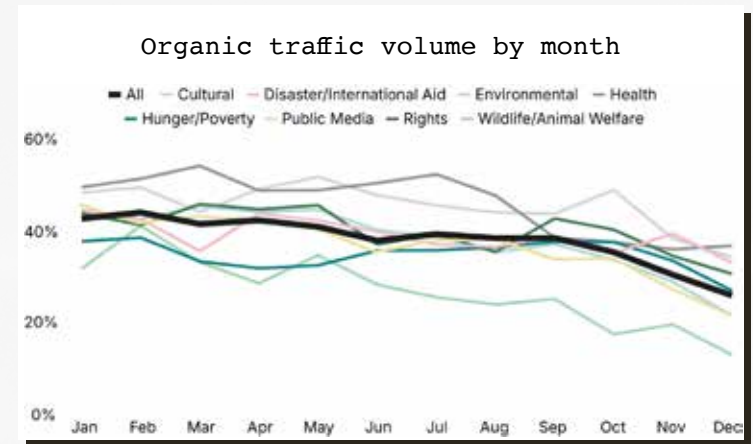
Last year, 39% of traffic to nonprofit websites was organic traffic. That means about two out of every five times someone visited a nonprofit website, it went like this: they entered a term into a search engine, possibly scrolling past an AI summary and some paid results, and clicked on a link to that website.



For many users, that's unremarkable. It's pretty much how the internet has worked for years and years, a perfectly normal way of finding your way to what you are looking for. For others, it's like riding a velocipede to the haberdashery, hopelessly out of date.

Internet traffic is increasingly mediated by AI summaries and social media, changing how (or whether) supporters encounter nonprofit websites. We have a lot more to say

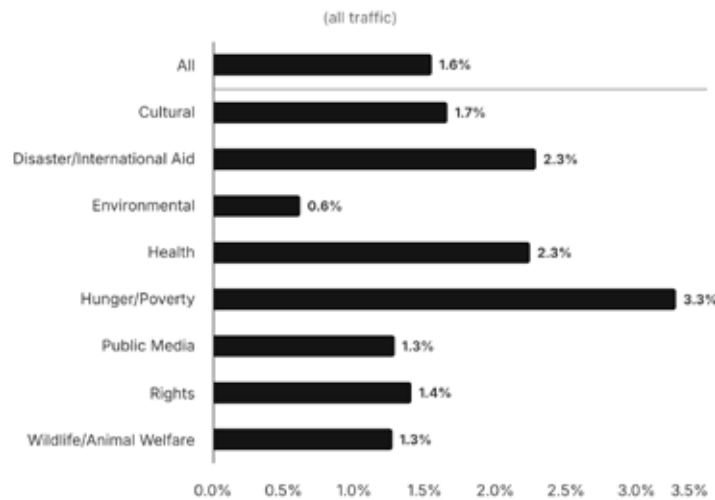
about how changes by providers, especially Google's implementation of Gemini AI summaries, are affecting the search landscape. See our discussion of answer engine optimization on page 20. For now, our focus is on organic traffic volume, which showed a clear decline over the course of 2025.



Search providers, nonprofits, and users are still adapting, so we don't know whether this trend will continue or how it will impact organizations. However, since organic traffic has been such a large portion of all visitors AND doesn't rely on paid promotion, any decline is worrying.

Among website visitors from all traffic sources, 1.6% made a donation, and nonprofits received an average of \$1.33 per visitor. Visitors to Hunger/Poverty nonprofit websites were especially likely to donate: 3.3% completed a gift, generating \$5.58 in revenue per visitor.

Percent of website visitors who make a donation

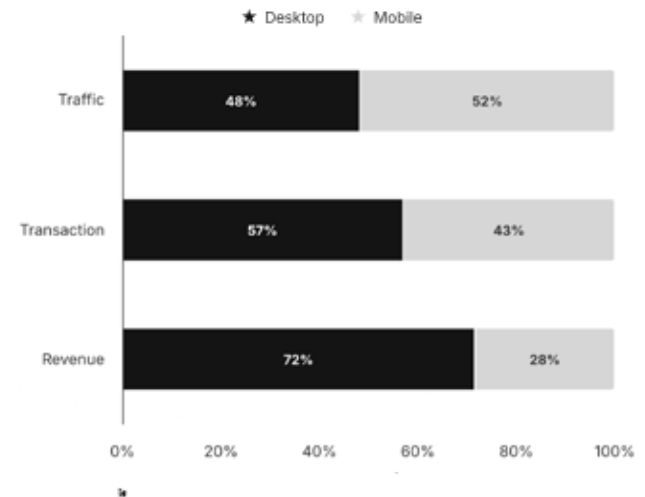


Revenue per website visitor



Those figures include all website visits, but there were clear differences depending on the type of device. Mobile users accounted for 52% of all traffic, but 43% of donation transactions and just 28% of revenue.

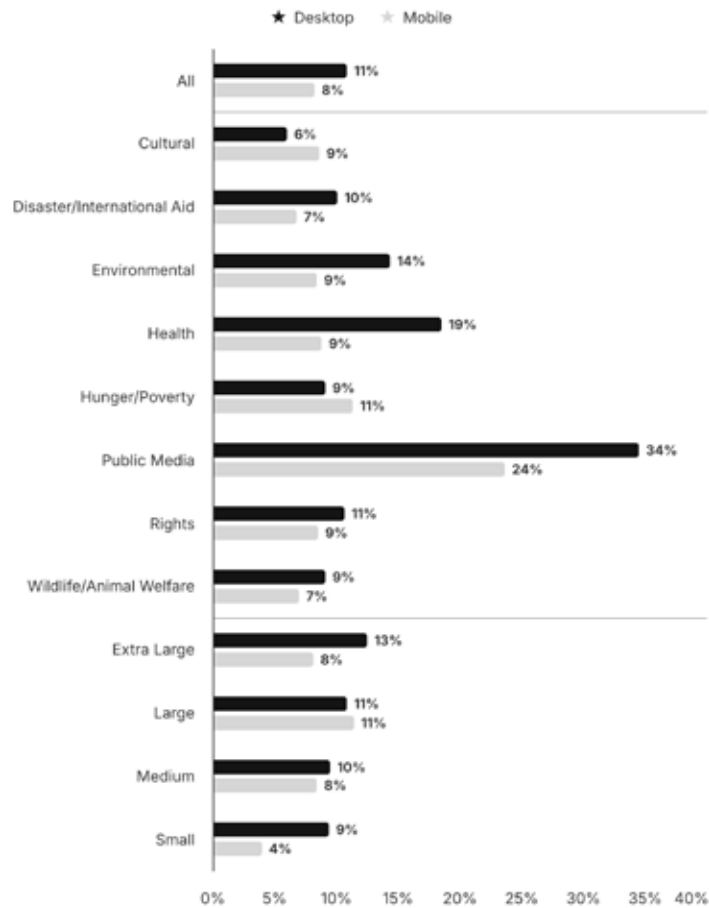
Website share by device



This fits the pattern we have reported on in Benchmarks year after year: **Desktop users were more likely to donate than mobile users, and had a higher average gift.**

Overall, 11% of desktop users who landed on a primary donation page completed a gift, compared to 8% for mobile users. Small nonprofits had especially low conversion rates for mobile users, just 4%.

Main donation page conversion rate



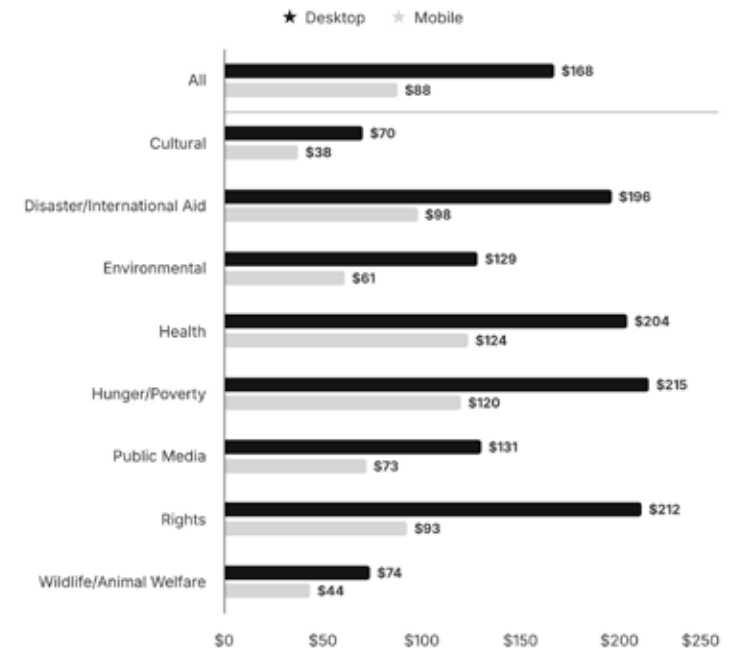
Percentage of nonprofits accepting payment types on main donation page



Adding more payment options is one of the most common ways for nonprofits to try to improve conversion rates, especially for mobile users. In addition to credit cards, 79% of nonprofits accepted PayPal, 58% accepted Google Pay, and 57% accepted Apple Pay.

As we noted above, the average gift for desktop users was significantly higher than for mobile users — \$168, compared to \$88. While average gift sizes varied between different sectors, in every sector desktop donors gave larger gifts than mobile donors.

Average gift by device



It should be obvious by now that we believe the details matter. Every bit of incremental progress we are able to wrangle out of every last interaction helps build toward larger goals. At the same time, we can't get so caught up in optimizing at the margins that we lose sight of the sea change happening all around.

Organic traffic numbers are one way we can clearly see how AI tools are reshaping online supporter engagement, but more subtle changes are happening as well. If many would-be site visitors are having their questions answered by an AI overview — what does that mean for the audience that still makes it through? Are they better informed, more motivated, demographically skewed? The answers to these questions may drive nonprofits to reconsider and reoptimize strategies that made sense in the old world (of a few months ago) but no longer match the current reality.

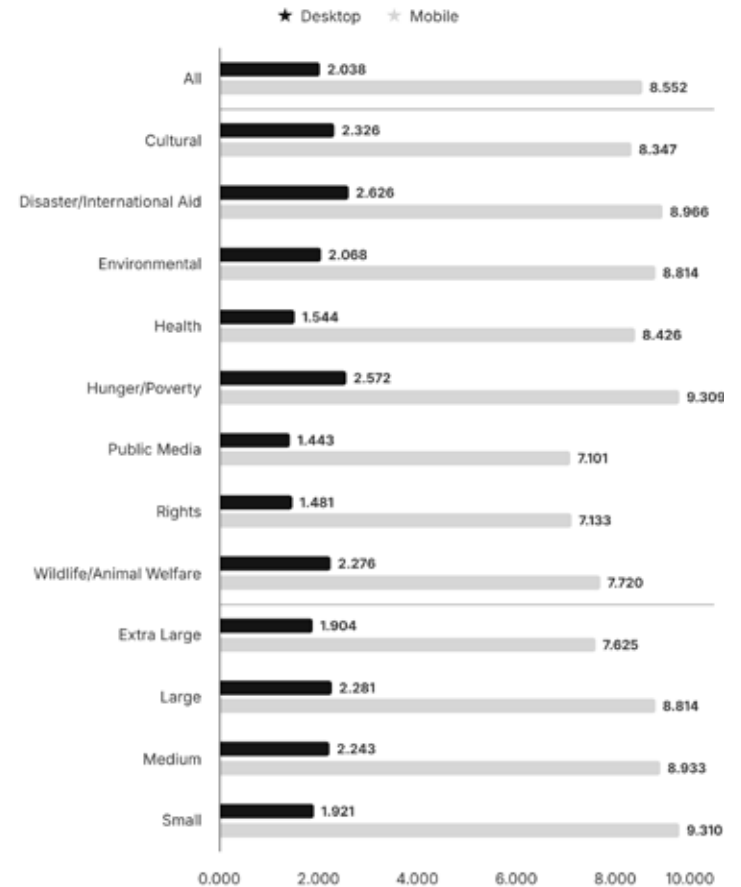
Homepage and donation page speed

Average load time for a nonprofit's homepage and primary donation page has been a standard metric in M+R Benchmarks for a long time. To be honest, we've tended not to dwell on it too much. After all, what is there to say other than "faster is better"?

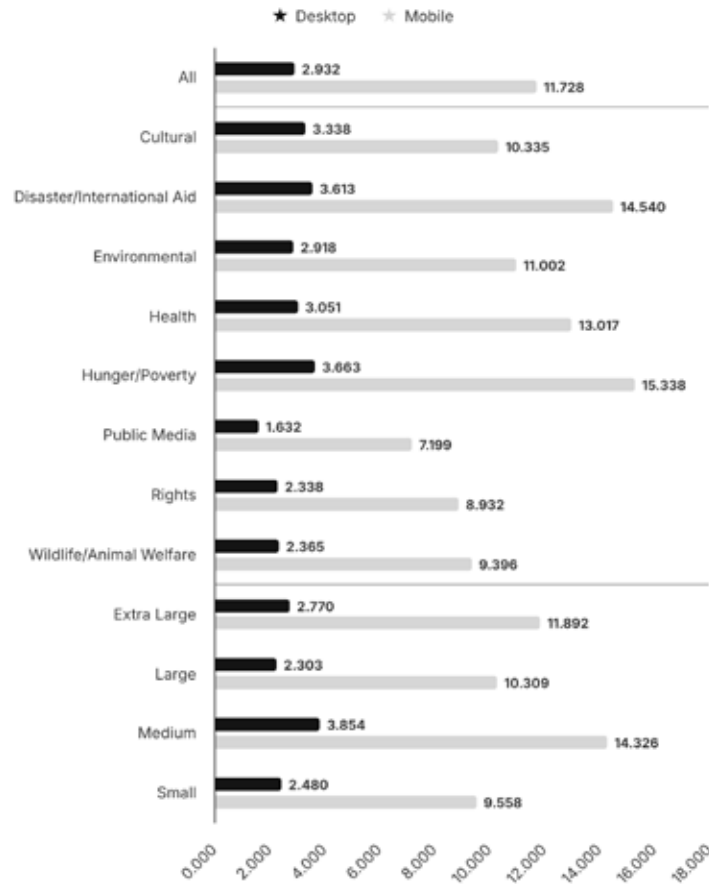
Well, for one thing, we always want to be working with the most accurate data we can, and that means accounting for real-world user experience.

This year, we've revised how we calculate load speed by switching to the "speed index" reported in Google PageSpeed Insights. This measures how quickly content is visibly populated above the fold during a page load. Our switch to PageSpeed Insights is due to its ability to calculate performance numbers by combining real-world user data along with virtualized testing. This means the new speed index we're calculating is much closer to what visitors actually experience, and not what is simulated in a lab environment.

Homepage speed index



Donation page speed index

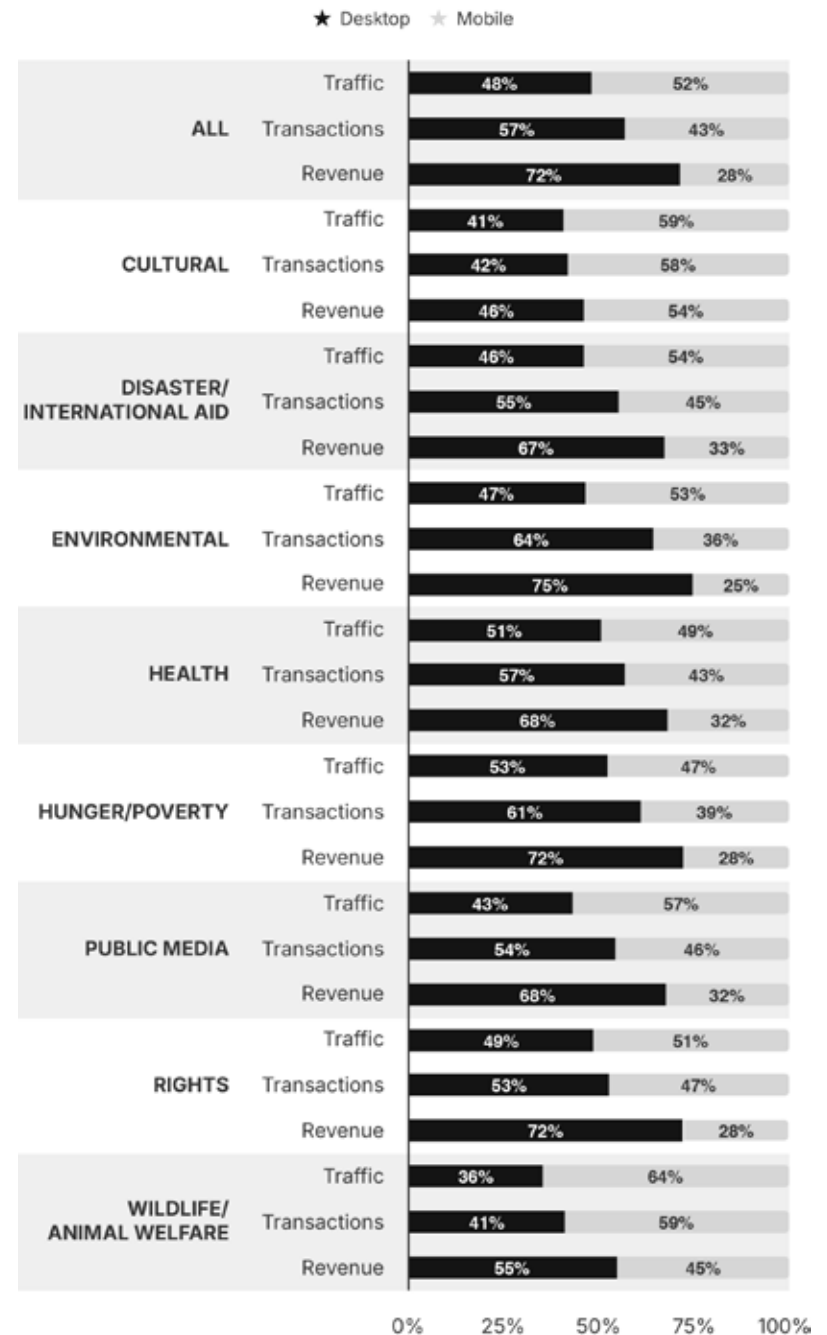


In any case, we just wanted to point out that we have changed how we calculate this metric for this year. As these numbers were drawn from Google's PageSpeed Insights tool, you can try it yourself at <https://pagespeed.web.dev>.

Give it a whirl and see how your pages measure up, if that sort of thing interests you. Which, given that you are reading all the way to the end here, seems like it might?

Website share by device

Traffic, transactions, and revenue



direct mail

top facts

- Direct mail revenue increased by 9% in 2025, and the number of direct mail gifts increased by 4%.

- For every \$1 received online, nonprofits in this study received an average of \$0.66 through direct mail.

- Nonprofits sent about 15 mailings to active donors in 2025; lapsed donors were sent 8; non-donor prospects were sent 6.

- The average gift size for direct mail donations was \$120.

- Fundraising mailings to active donor audiences had an average ROI of \$4.51; for lapsed audiences the ROI was \$0.90; for non-donor/prospecting, the ROI was \$0.41.

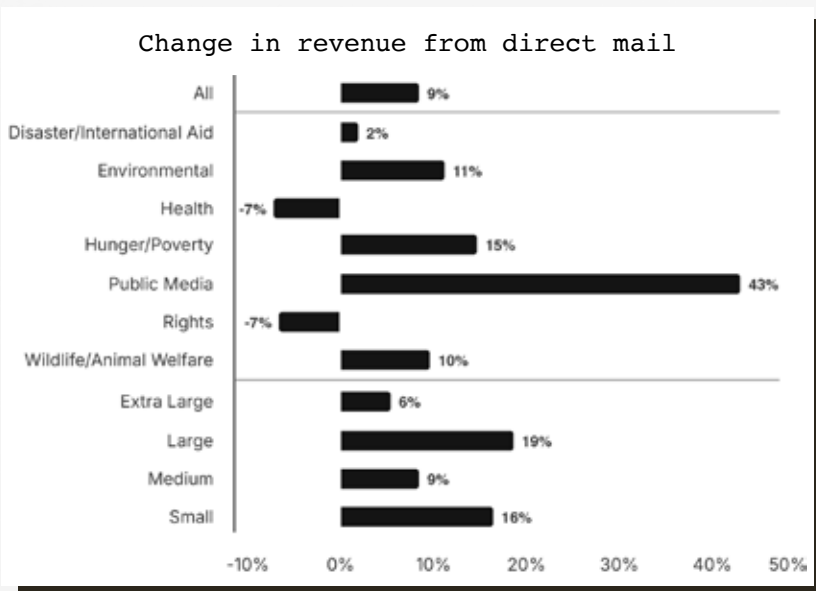
- Public Media saw extraordinary growth in direct mail fundraising. It was wild.

direct mail

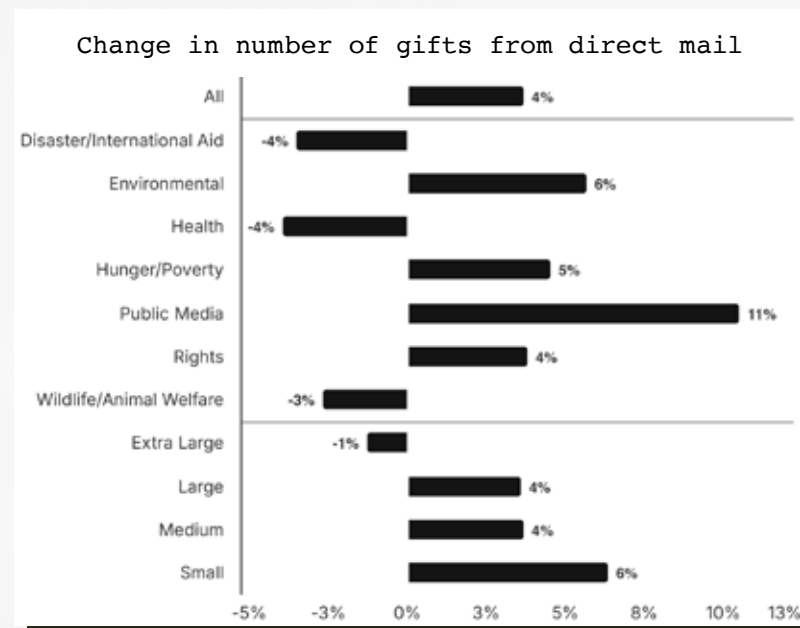
Our primary goal with the annual M+R Benchmarks Study is to create a clear, comprehensive, and useful guide to nonprofit digital programs. But why limit ourselves? Turns out, we're actually pretty interested in what happens offline as well.

After all, supporters don't exist in distinct silos, and most successful programs integrate closely across marketing channels. So this year, we have expanded our review of direct mail data. Let's dive in!

Direct mail revenue increased by 9% in 2025, not quite keeping pace with the 15% growth for online revenue or 16% for email revenue. As in those other channels, Public Media nonprofits reported a surge in giving in response to federal budget cuts. **Average direct mail revenue for the Public Media sector increased by 43% year over year.**

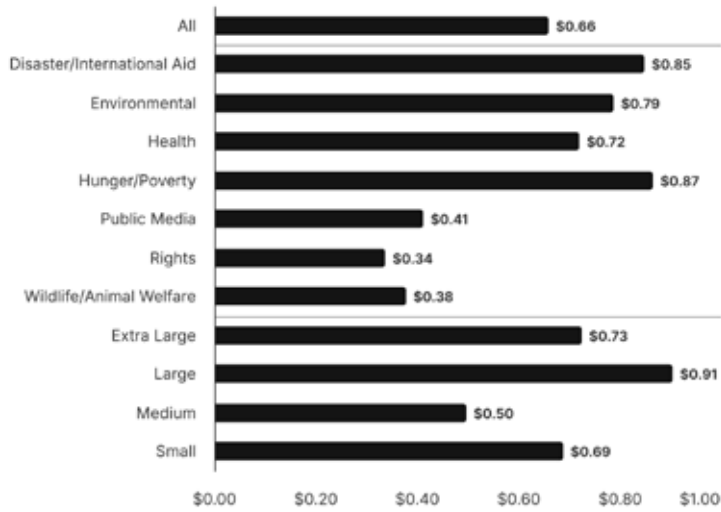


The number of gifts from direct mail also increased, but not quite as much as revenue. Nonprofits received 4% more gifts via direct mail than the previous year, with an 11% average increase for Public Media.



On average, organizations raised about two-thirds as much revenue through direct mail as they did through all online sources combined. For every dollar raised online, nonprofits raised \$0.66 through direct mail. There were distinct differences between sectors in the relative amount of direct mail and online revenue; Rights groups raised just \$0.34 through direct mail per dollar raised online, while Hunger/Poverty nonprofits raised \$0.87 through direct mail per dollar raised online.

For every dollar raised online, organizations raised this through direct mail

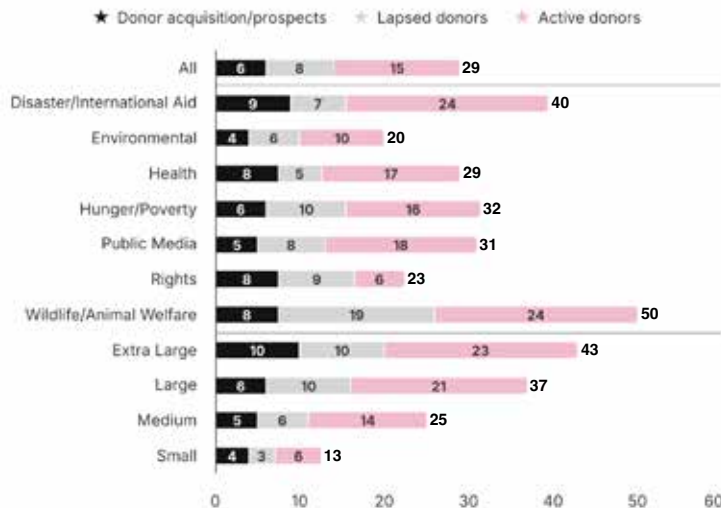


Perhaps unsurprisingly given the cost of production and mailing (not to mention staff time), organizations with larger budgets sent more mail. Small nonprofits send just 6 mailings to active donors, 3 to lapsed donors, and 4 to prospects, far below their larger peers.

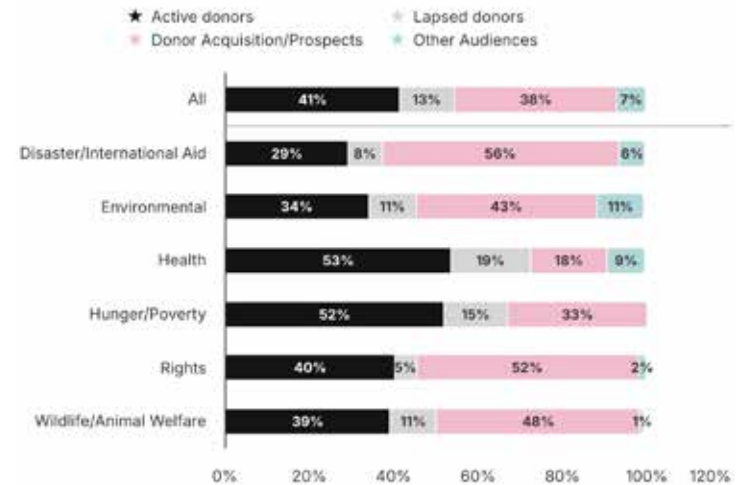
Given that there are 8.3 billion people in the world and most of them do not donate to your organization, there are usually a lot more prospects than active donors. So although individual active donors received a lot more mail, nonprofits allocated nearly as much budget to reach prospect audiences. Overall, 41% of direct mail budget was spent to reach active donors, and 38% was spent to reach prospects.

How much mail an individual received from a nonprofit depended heavily on the state of their donor relationship. Groups in our study sent active donors the highest volume of mail at about 15 pieces per year. They sent about 8 lapsed donor mailings per year (organizations define “lapsed” differently, most often as someone who has not donated in 24 months or more), and about 6 mailings targeting non-donors/prospects.

Direct mail mailings per year



Percent of budget spent per direct mail audience

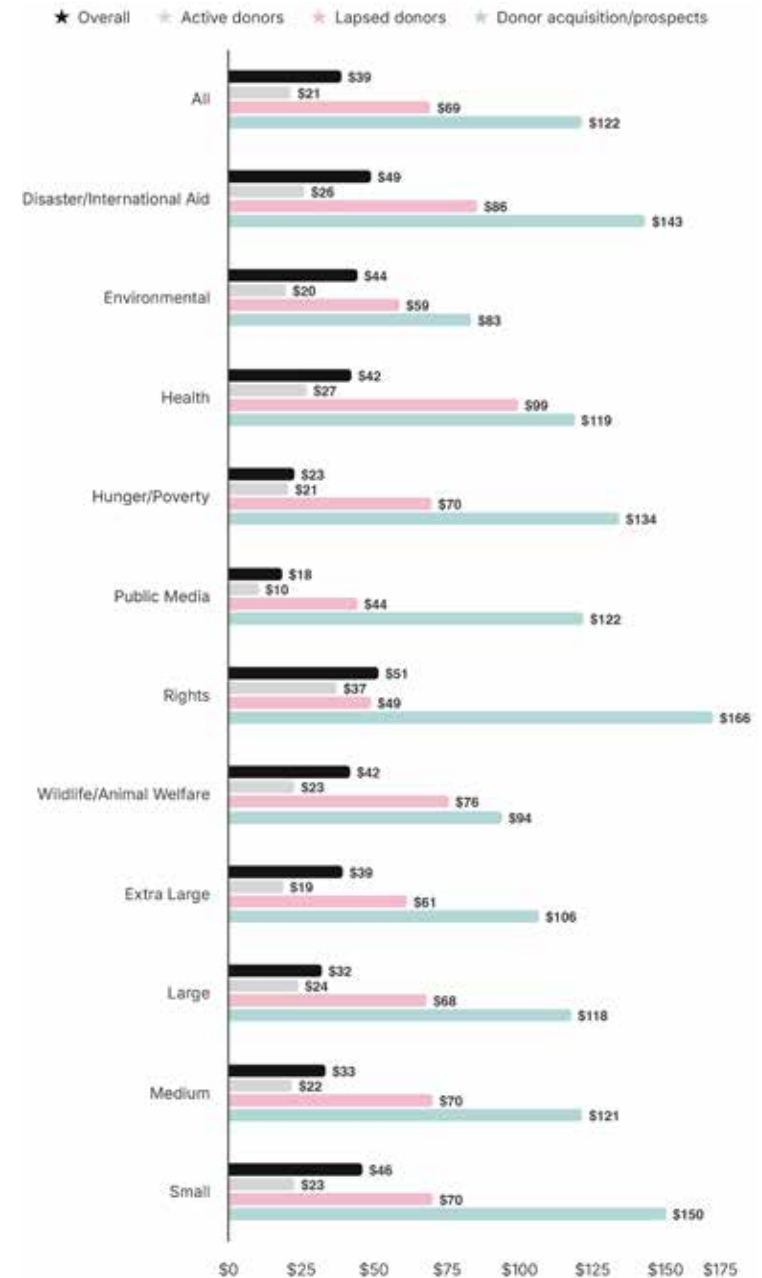


It's a tricky balancing act. The truest truism in fundraising is that donors donate — a solicitation that reaches someone with a known giving history is more likely to generate a gift than a prospect mailing. On the other hand, growth and the reality of attrition demand that nonprofits reach new audiences and recruit new supporters.

The cost to generate a donation from an active donor audience was \$21, and for lapsed donors \$69. These averages were remarkably consistent regardless of nonprofit size, with only slightly higher efficiency for nonprofits with the largest budgets.

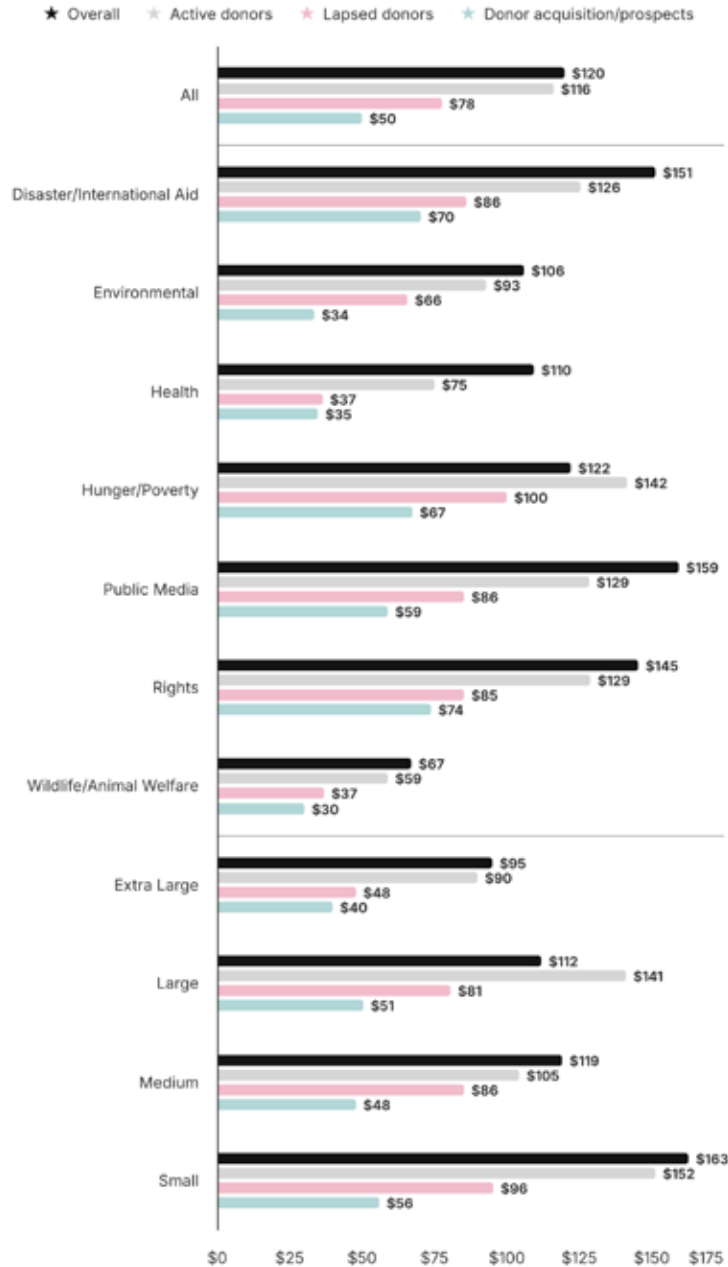
For prospect audiences, things looked a little different. Small nonprofits spent more to acquire new donors than their larger peers. Larger nonprofits (with, presumably, more brand recognition) may find prospect audiences are more familiar with their work and more receptive to their case for giving. It may also be that they have access to improved data and targeting for prospect audiences.

Direct mail cost per donation



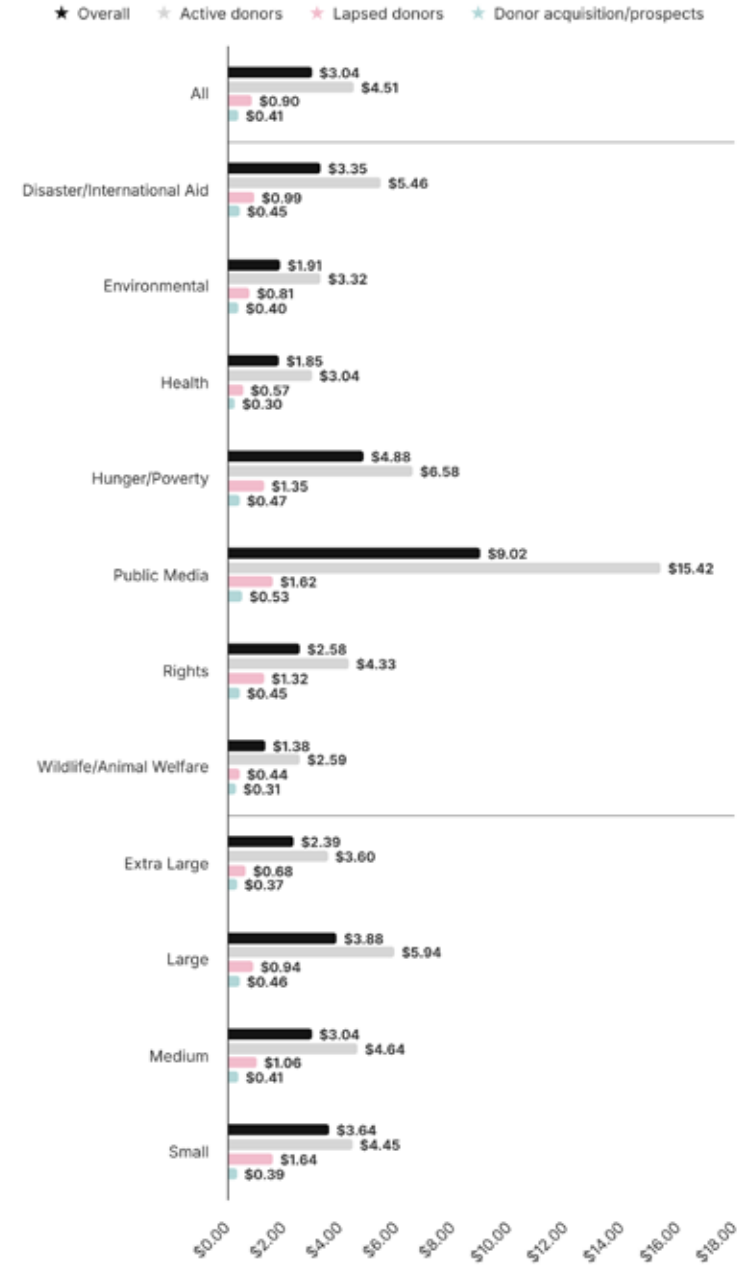
While Small organizations paid more to acquire donors, they had an advantage on average gift size for every audience type. The average direct mail gift to Small nonprofits was \$163, well above the overall average of \$120.

Average gift for direct mail



In general, active donors made larger gifts than lapsed donors, and lapsed donors made larger average gifts than prospects. Combined with a lower cost per donation, that means that active donors had a much higher ROI than other audiences.

Direct mail ROI



Direct mail cost per dollar raised



A dollar spent on a mailing to acquisition audiences generated an average of \$0.41 in revenue. For lapsed donors, the average direct mail ROI was \$0.90. And because donors donate, the average ROI for active donor mailings was \$4.51.

It's worth pointing out one last time just what an outlier Public Media nonprofits were in 2025. They reported an average ROI of \$9.02 across mailings of all types, and raised \$15.42 per dollar spent mailing active donors.

That is an impressive indication of donor loyalty, at a time when federal cuts threaten the future of public media. We saw a similar surge in support for Public Media in email and other channels as well. Another reminder that offline or online, we are all in this together.



participants

thank you! THANK YOU! thank you! THANK YOU! thank you!

thank you! THANK YOU! thank you! THANK YOU! thank you!



participants

thank you! THANK You! thank you! THANK You! thank you!



Cultural

American Museum of Natural History
California Academy of Sciences
Central Park Conservancy
Discovery Place
Monterey Bay Aquarium
National Trust for Historic Preservation
The Obama Foundation

Disaster/ International Aid

Action Against Hunger USA
American Red Cross
Americares
Anera
Canadian Red Cross
CARE USA
charity: water
CMMB - Healthier Lives Worldwide
FINCA International
HIAS
International Fellowship of Christians and Jews
International Rescue Committee US
Oxfam America
Right To Play

Save the Children Action Network
Save the Children USA
USA for UNHCR
World Food Program USA

Environmental

Alliance for the Great Lakes
Appalachian Mountain Club
Australian Marine Conservation Society
Central Oregon LandWatch
ClientEarth
Conservation Colorado
Conservation Law Foundation
Earthjustice
Food & Water Watch
Friends of the Earth
Greenpeace Canada
Land Trust Alliance
League of Conservation Voters
Mystic River Watershed Association
National Audubon Society
National Park Foundation
National Parks Conservation Association
National Wildlife Federation
Natural Resources Defense Council
Nature Conservancy of Canada
NRDC Action Fund



participants

Oceana
Overton Park Conservancy
Potomac Conservancy
Rails-to-Trails Conservancy
Rare
Save The Redwoods League
Sierra Club
The Trust for Public Land
The Wilderness Society
Union of Concerned Scientists
Washington Trails Association
World Wildlife Fund

Health

Action on Smoking and Health
Alzheimer's Association
American Cancer Society
American Cancer Society
Cancer Action Network
American Heart Association
American Kidney Fund
American Lung Association
Boston Children's Hospital
Trust
Breast Cancer Research
Foundation
Breastcancer.org
Chef Ann Foundation
Children's Hospice South West
Children's Hospital Los Angeles
Colorectal Cancer Alliance

Cystic Fibrosis Foundation
EngenderHealth
Holland Bloorview Kids
Rehabilitation Hospital
Foundation
LSU Health Sciences Foundation
Lucile Packard Foundation for
Children's Health
Muscular Dystrophy Association
National Kidney Foundation
RESOLVE: The National
Infertility Association
Ronald McDonald House
Charities of Chicagoland &
Northwest Indiana
Safe Shores - The DC
Children's Advocacy Center
Special Olympics
Special Olympics Canada
Voices for Healthy Kids
Young Lives vs Cancer

Hunger / Poverty

Akron-Canton Regional
Foodbank
Alameda County Community
Food Bank
Atlanta Community Food Bank
Community Food Bank of
New Jersey

Feeding America
Feeding America Riverside
San Bernardino
Feeding South Dakota
Food Bank of Central and
Eastern North Carolina
Food Bank of Eastern Michigan
Food Bank of the Rockies
Food Bank of Western
Massachusetts
Food Finders Food Bank
Foodbank of Santa Barbara
County
Freestore Foodbank
Gleaners Food Bank of Indiana
God's Pantry Food Bank, Inc.
Golden State Opportunity
Foundation
Good Shepherd Food Bank
Great Plains Food Bank
Greater Cleveland Food Bank
Harvesters - The Community
Food Network
Hawaii Foodbank
High Plains Food Bank
Island Harvest
Northeast Iowa Food Bank
Oregon Food Bank
San Francisco-Marín Food
Bank
Second Harvest Food Bank of
East Central Indiana

Second Harvest Food Bank of
East Tennessee
Second Harvest Food Bank
of Greater New Orleans and
Acadiana
Second Harvest Foodbank of
Southern Wisconsin
Second Harvest Heartland
Second Harvest of South Georgia
Tarrant Area Food Bank
The Food Bank of Contra
Costa and Solano
The Salvation Army National
Corporation
Union Gospel Mission
(Vancouver)

Public Media

Blue Ridge Public Radio
Cascade Public Media
KAWC
KUER
Nebraska Public Media
PBS Utah
Prairie Public
Utah Public Radio
WETA
WRTI-FM



participants

Rights

ACLU
American Jewish World Service
Americans United for the
Separation of Church & State
Amnesty International UK
Amplify Georgia Collaborative
Arc of the United States
Ayuda
Barnardos Ireland
Center for Reproductive Rights
Fight for a Union
Fòs Feminista
GLBTQ Legal Advocates &
Defenders (GLAD Law)
Kids in Need of Defense (KIND)
National Women's Law Center
National Women's Law Center
Action Fund
New Israel Fund
Planned Parenthood Action Fund
Planned Parenthood
Federation of America
RAICES
Southern Poverty Law Center
Survival International

Wildlife/Animal Welfare

BC SPCA
Best Friends Animal Society
Center for Biological Diversity
Compassion in World Farming
Defenders of Wildlife
Humane World for Animals
Europe
Humane World for Animals US
International Fund for Animal
Welfare
Joybound People & Pets
People for the Ethical
Treatment of Animals
RedRover
Ruff Start Rescue
The International Wildlife
Rehabilitation Council
Wildlife Preservation Canada

Other

American Friends Service
Committee
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
ChangeLab Solutions
Council on Criminal Justice
GlobalGiving
Indspire
Non-Profit Housing Association
of Northern California
Project On Government
Oversight
True Patriot Love Foundation
United States Olympic &
Paralympic Committee



glossary

advocacy message

An email or SMS message that asks recipients to sign an online petition, send an email to a decision-maker, or take a similar online action. For the purposes of this study, advocacy response rates do not factor in higher-bar actions like making a phone call or attending an event, largely because tracking offline response is inconsistent across organizations. Advocacy email rates were calculated from advocacy emails with a simple action sent to either the full file or a random sample of the full file.

click-through rate

Calculated as the number of people who clicked on any trackable link in an email or text message divided by the number of delivered emails or text messages. People who clicked multiple times in one email were only counted once. In other words, if a subscriber clicked on every link in a message 10 times, this was counted the same as if the subscriber had clicked once on a single link.

connected tv advertising

Digital television delivered to a smart television or “over-the-top” device like Roku or Fire stick (or a TiVo if you still have one of those?). Does not include streaming on a PC or mobile phone.

deliverable emails

Only the emails that were delivered, not including the emails that are considered inactive or emails that were sent and bounced. “Delivered” email messages may land in a user’s inbox, spam folder, promotions tab, or custom folder.

device type, desktop

We use the definitions provided by Google Analytics to separate traffic data by device type. The “desktop” category includes any desktop or laptop computer with a screen larger than 7” in diagonal.

device type, mobile

We use the definitions provided by Google Analytics to separate traffic data by device type. Mobile devices are hand-held devices that include a phone or a tablet.

digital audio advertising

Streaming music or podcast service, delivered via a website or app. Not traditional or satellite radio.

digital organizing

Recruiting, engaging and organizing members, activists, and/or volunteers toward advocacy outcomes.

donor-advised funds

A donor-advised fund (or DAF) is an investment account that a donor can make tax-deductible contributions to, and later have those funds distributed to charities.

* * glossary

full file

All of an organization's deliverable email addresses, not including unsubscribed email addresses or email addresses to which an organization no longer sends email messages.

fundraising message

An email or SMS message that only asks for a donation, as opposed to an email newsletter, which might ask for a donation and include other links. For the purposes of this study, fundraising email only includes one-time donation asks; it does not include monthly gift asks. Fundraising email rates were calculated from all fundraising emails, regardless of whether the email went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

google grants

A distinct Google Ads account where nonprofits can buy up to \$10,000/mo in search ads using free credits. Subject to restrictions (such as caps on certain bidding strategies): think of it as a giant coupon with a lot of fine print!

influencers

Social media influencers are people who have an established presence on one or more social media platforms, with a reputation for being knowledgeable about a certain topic. Influencers regularly post content around that topic for their established, engaged follower base. These audiences, ranging from thousands to millions, follow influencers for their authentic views on their area of expertise.

linear television advertising

Traditional television, with content delivered via satellite or cable. Not connected tv.

list churn

Calculated as the number of subscribers who became unreachable in a 12-month period divided by the sum of the number of deliverable email addresses at the end of that period plus the number of subscribers who became unreachable during that period. Study participants were required to track the number of subscribers who became unreachable each month to account for subscribers both joining and leaving an email list during the 12-month period who would otherwise go uncounted.

monthly gift

A donation where the donor signs up once to donate on a regular schedule, typically by pledging a regular gift amount on a credit card each month. Also known as a sustaining gift.

multi-channel ad formats

Ads which are built with AI using an approved set of creative assets including images, video, and text, which are then served across a variety of media channels as part of a single campaign.



glossary

newsletters, email

An email with multiple links or asks, which can include fundraising or advocacy asks. Email newsletter rates were calculated from all email newsletters, regardless of whether the newsletter went to the full file, a random sample of the file, or a targeted portion of the file.

online retention, new donor

Of the donors that made their first-ever online gift in the previous calendar year, the percent that made an online gift in the current calendar year. Note that we count someone as “new” in 2024 if they have no online donations reported between the start of 2021 and the end of 2023.

online retention, prior donor

Of the donors that made an online gift in the previous calendar year that wasn’t their first online gift, the percent that made an online gift in the current calendar year.

page completion rate

Calculated as the number of people who completed a form divided by the number of people who clicked on the link to get to that form. For the purposes of this study, it was not always possible to use the number of people who clicked on a link to a specific form, so we used the number of unique clicks in the message.

peer-to-peer text messaging

Unlike a single mass message to a full list, these SMS messages connect volunteers and staff to individuals, enabling one-on-one conversations. Also known as P2P SMS.

percentile

The percentage of observed values below the named data point. 25% of the observations are below the 25th percentile; 75% of the observations are below the 75th percentile. Our box-and-whisker charts display a range showing the 25th percentile to the 75th percentile. Half of all reported values fell within this range, which can be considered “normal” results for participants in our study.

response rate

Calculated as the number of people who took the main action requested by an email or text message divided by the number of delivered messages.

unique clicks

The number of people who clicked on any trackable link in an email message, as opposed to the number of times the links in an email were clicked. If a subscriber clicked on every link in a message 10 times, this is counted as 1 unique click. It is also counted as 1 unique person.

unsubscribe rate

Calculated as the number of individuals who unsubscribed in response to an email message divided by the number of delivered emails.

view-through revenue

Revenue from donors who made a donation (typically within 30 days) of seeing, but not clicking on, an ad. For example, a supporter who sees a banner ad and later goes directly to the nonprofit’s website to make a gift.

glossary

website donation page conversion rate

Calculated from the number of donations to a participant's main donation page, divided by the number of pageviews of that page. We included only pageviews for the one-time donation page, if a separate donation page existed for monthly gifts.

website speed index

Measures how quickly content is visibly populated above the fold during a page load, as measured by Google PageSpeed Insights.

website revenue per visitor

Calculated as the total revenue from one-time online gifts, plus the value of initial monthly gifts, divided by the total number of website visitors for the year. Depending on retention, the long-term value of monthly gifts may be substantially higher.

website visitors per month

The number of monthly unique visitors to a participant's main website.

zine

A lil magazine produced independently, often photocopied and hand-assembled in small print runs. Check out Zines: A mini history tucked inside our infographic for more!



notes & doodles
go here



Every zine ever produced is a labor of love (for more on the history of zines, look inside the infographic). Zines are what you get when you care about something SO MUCH you can't keep it to yourself.

So we asked participants to tell us about their passions, hobbies, and areas of expertise. Here are the answers — hopefully coming soon to a xerox machine near you.

AI ethics * AI training * air fryers * ancient history (specifically the antiquity period) * analytics * animal facts * animals at the national zoo * anime * arts & crafts * baking (esp. for kids with food allergies) * birds & bugs * blowing bubbles off my tongue * books * bravo/ reality tv * broadway shows * ceramics * children's entertainment (magic, balloon animals, etc.) * collecting funkopops * cooking * crafting * crochet * crosscut saws * data management * disney * dogs & dog training * environmental conservation * finding parking in a busy city * folding fitted sheets * food insecurity in alameda county * french * gardening * the great molasses flood of 1919 * guitar * herbal medicine * hiking * hockey * ice hockey goaltending techniques * indigenous peoples rights * interior design * jigsaw puzzles * jon bon jovi * knitting * kpop * large-scale group travel logistics * live concerts * lyrics to the entire beastie boys licensed to ill album * makeup * mar-tech & marketing analytics * model rockets * movies * music * musical theater * national parks * ocean animal fun facts * painting landscapes * plants * pottery * raising kids who grow up and don't hate you * reading * the real housewives of beverly hills * rock music * running * soccer * social posts * space travel * tennis * trails * travel planning (maximizing time, budget, and experience) * vegan baking * video games * video production * the wreck of the edmund fitzgerald * willow casket weaving * web strategy * written content



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TAKE CARE
to
GIVE CARE