

The 4-Phase GivingTuesday Game Plan

Turn One Big Day into Year-End Success



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Welcome! 🙌

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How to use this guide

GivingTuesday is more than a day

It's the starting whistle for your strongest giving season yet.

Welcome to your GivingTuesday 4-Phase Game Plan!

This guide is designed to help you transform the excitement of GivingTuesday into lasting donor engagement and year-end success.

Inside, you'll find a week-by-week framework, email and social examples, and actionable tips to help you:

- ✓ Rally your board and community
- ✓ Engage donors before asking for a gift
- ✓ Run a high-impact, low-stress GivingTuesday campaign
- ✓ Keep your momentum rolling straight into December 31 and beyond

Whether you're a one-person team or part of a large development department, this plan helps you stay organized, inspired and ready to make every message count.

Why GivingTuesday still matters...

\$3.6 B

raised in the U.S. on
GivingTuesday in 2024

16%

increase from \$3.1B
GivingTuesday in 2023

10-12%

occurs in the last
3 days of the year

Meet Your Hosts

The team behind the playbook

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Amy Truong

Senior Account Manager, Growth

Amy builds meaningful connections with nonprofits, guiding them in the use of digital tools to strengthen equity and amplify their missions. She brings empathy, insight and a deep commitment to social good.



Mike Spadaro

Senior Account Manager, Memberships

A longtime advocate for nonprofit innovation, Mike helps organizations maximize their fundraising impact through technology and thoughtful support. He's passionate about empowering changemakers to do more good with fewer obstacles.

GivingTuesday Is a Launch Pad!

Think of GivingTuesday as the kickoff, not the final play



Not a one-off !!

Treat GivingTuesday as the kickoff to your entire year-end campaign.

Momentum matters



Up to 30% of annual giving takes place in December — and 10–12% in the final 3 days.

Set your intentions 🎯

Success = donor engagement + storytelling + clear asks + timely follow-up.

Key takeaways ✅

Start early, stay present and end strong.

Understanding Donor Psychology

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Maintain year-end momentum:
the three big motivators

1. Urgency

A time-sensitive goal creates action.

Make donors feel like their gift matters **right now**.

Examples:

- “We’re just \$2,500 away from unlocking our GivingTuesday match. Can you help us cross the finish line before midnight?”
- “Only 6 hours left to make your GivingTuesday gift count!”
- “Your gift today fuels the next chapter. The deadline is December 31st at midnight!”

Where to use it 🧐

- Countdown timers in emails
- Real-time progress bars
- Updates on social media
- End-of-day reminder emails (“Last chance to give!”)

2. Social proof

People give when they see others doing it.

Show that others are taking action. It normalizes giving and creates momentum.

Examples:

- “We’ve already had 73 donors join the movement. Will you be next?”
- “Our board is 100% in! Now we’re inviting our community to join them.”
- “Meet Maria: she gave \$50 to help feed local families. Join Maria and hundreds of others making an impact today.”

Where to use it 🧐

- Live displays during GivingTuesday
- Email headers (“Join 500+ supporters who’ve given today”)
- Donor shoutouts or tagged stories on social

3. Stewardship

Gratitude and follow-up build loyalty.

“GivingTuesday gets donors in the door. Stewardship keeps them coming back.”

Examples:

- “Because of you, 50 children received their first book this year. Thank you for making literacy possible.”
- “Your gift made an immediate impact. Here’s what we’ve already accomplished together.”
- “We couldn’t do this without you. Thank you for fueling hope, one donation at a time.”

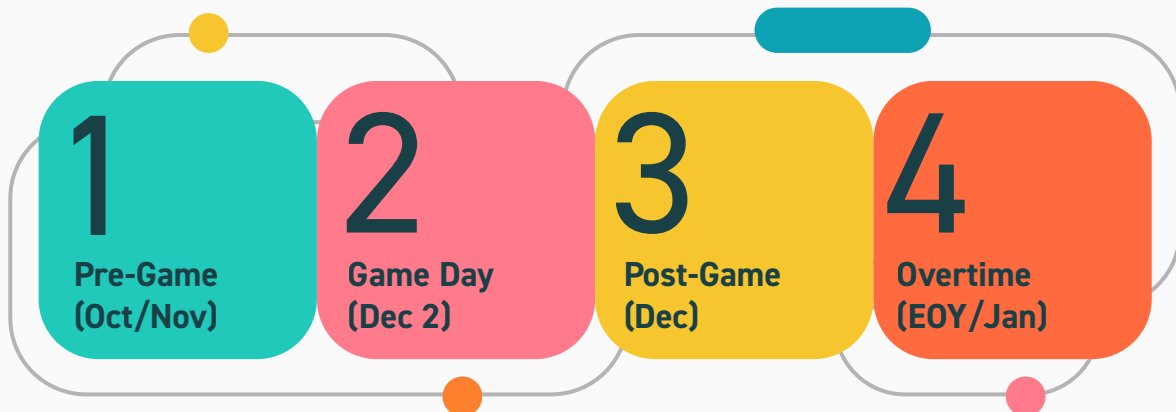
Where to use it 🧐

- Post-GivingTuesday thank-you email or video
- Mid-December “gratitude” email (no ask)
- Handwritten notes or social posts highlighting donor impact

The 4-Phase Game Plan

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Timelines to keep you focused



December 2nd
Goal: Activate your community through urgency + social proof.

Phase 2: Game Day!

Dec 10–31
Goal: Turn momentum into sustained support.

Phase 4: Overtime

Phase 1: Pre-Game

November 1–17
Goal: Build anticipation and warm up donors without asking for gifts yet.

Phase 3: Post-Game

24 hours after
Goal: Acknowledge, thank and reengage.

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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Preparation



October - November

Lay the groundwork before you ask for anything

It's the preparation before the whistle for your strongest giving season yet.

In the weeks leading up to GivingTuesday, focus on storytelling, gratitude and awareness — **not the ask.**

Key actions

- Send one email per week (Nov 6, Nov 14, Nov 24/25 and Thanksgiving).
- Share one clear story of impact and one simple call to action (CTA).
- Prep your board: have each member identify 3–5 people to personally ask.
- Segment your donor lists if possible (current, lapsed, LYBUNT/SYBUNT).

Example framework

1. **Stage:** Pre-GivingTuesday nurture
2. **Story (the “why”):** A child received their first book on the bookmobile.
3. **Framing (the “why now”):** “Because of you, kids like Leo are discovering the joy of reading.”
4. **CTA (the “what”):** “Save the date — GivingTuesday is Dec 2!”

Pro tip

Choose one anchor story for all GivingTuesday communications. This creates consistency across all emails and social.

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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 Warm-up
 October - November

Warm up your donors before you make an ask

Think of this as your team's warm-up lap. The goal isn't to raise money (yet), it's to consistently prime your audience with stories and gratitude so that when GivingTuesday hits, your community is ready to act.

Use this phase to nurture, educate and inspire. It's about momentum, not money.

Suggested email timeline

Date	Theme	Purpose
October 30-31st	Season kickoff	Introduce year-end campaign theme; start storytelling
November 6th	Impact story	Spotlight an individual or program win
November 14th	Save the date/give early	Invite early gifts + share your GivingTuesday goal
November 24-25th	Gratitude & update	"We're almost there!" nurture message
Nov 28th (Thanksgiving)	Pure gratitude	No ask — just thank donors
December 1st	Get ready!	Tease GivingTuesday: "Tomorrow's the big day!"

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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Add energy



October - November



Prime your donors

Email ideas & themes

- Impact stories ("Because of you..." moments)
- Donor spotlights (recurring donors, board members, in-kind partners)
- Behind-the-scenes peek at staff or volunteers
- Partnership wins or grant news
- Seasonal gratitude posts and holiday thank-yous



Did you know?

It takes an average of 7 touchpoints across all channels before a donor engages with a campaign. Repetition = recognition = results.



Outreach channels

Best practice

Use email + **1-2 social channels**. Don't spread thin — stay consistent.

Why social?

It amplifies your message where donors can already be found. Repurpose your emails into shorter, visual posts.

Quick tips

- ✓ Keep messaging consistent
- ✓ Use Give Lively templates
- ✓ Include your Give Lively Text-to-Donate code on Instagram stories or bios

Appeal Example

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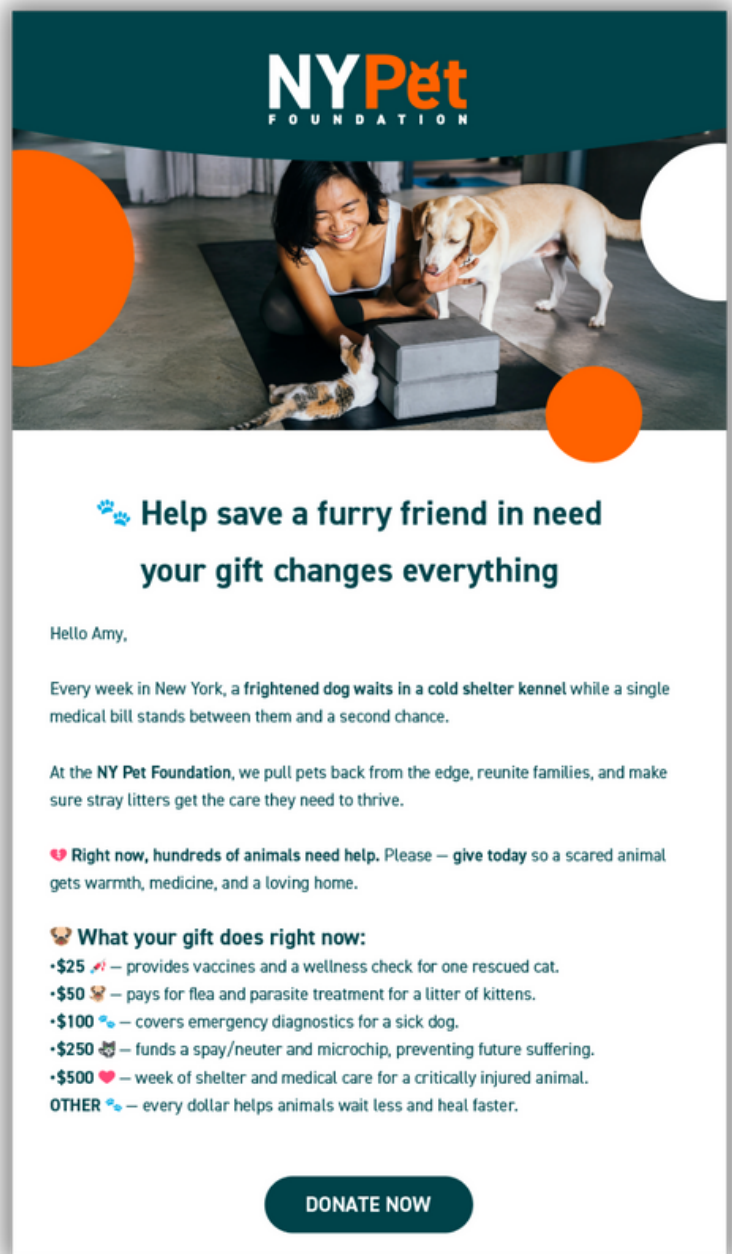
A whole greater than the sum of its parts, part 1

Prime your donors

- **Establish trust instantly:** Display your organization's logo prominently at the top of the email.
- **Create an emotional hook:** Include one visually appealing, high-quality photograph directly below the header.
 - *Tip:* Use photos showing the positive impact of your work. Images of people smiling or engaged in your mission are highly effective.
- **Keep it scannable:** Ensure the overall design is clean and easy to read on both desktop and mobile devices.

Content & call to action

- **Be concise and focused:** Keep the main letter copy short, followed by a few bullet points to highlight key takeaways or success metrics.
- **Illustrate impact with examples:** Include a list demonstrating what different donation amounts can achieve (e.g., "\$25 provides X"; "\$100 funds Y").
- **The direct ask:** Use powerful, direct language when asking for support. Avoid hedging.
 - *Example:* Instead of "Please consider donating," use "Donate today to make X possible."



Appeal Example

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A whole greater than the sum of its parts, part 2

DONATE NOW

💖 This is urgent.

Dogs and cats don't get second chances without you.
Please stand with us today.

★ Ways to Give Now:

1. **Donate Online** → fast, secure, tax-deductible.
2. **Become a Monthly Guardian** → – save lives all year long.
3. **Text "NYPET" to 44321** to give by phone.
4. **Mail a Check** – NY Pet Foundation, 123 Rescue Lane, New York, NY 10001

💡 Please make a gift of \$25 or more right now.

🐾 GIVE. Lives depend on it.

With grateful paws,

The NY Pet Foundation Team

💙 [Donate Now](#) | 💛 [Become a Guardian](#)

P.S. Want to see who you saved? 🐾 Reply to this email, and we'll send you the story and photo of a pet your gift helped rescue.

DONATE NOW



NYPet
FOUNDATION

♥ Connection & conversion

- **Emotional connection is key:** Show the impact of your work by using a powerful story that genuinely tugs at the heartstrings. Readers need to see the "why."
- **Maximize giving options:** Include buttons at the top of the email, in the middle and bottom with clear contrasting colors.
- **Flawless execution:** Ensure all donation methods use clear buttons and functional links. Make the conversion process seamless.

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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 Templates + toolkits
 October - November

Define success metrics

Success is about momentum, not just money.

What to track

- Number of new donors
- 100% board participation
- Percentage increase in average gift size
- Reactivated LYBUNT/SYBUNT donors

Plan messaging & CTAs

Step 1: Choose your focus

General/mission messaging or program-specific appeal

Type	When to use	Pros	Cons
General/mission	When you need flexible funds or your mission is broad	Shows full impact, flexible spending	Can feel less tangible without a clear story
Program-specific	When you want a tangible, emotional story	Easier for first-time donors to visualize	Can limit fund flexibility

Step 2: Keep it simple - 1 story, 1 CTA

Too many programs = confusion.

Your donors should walk away knowing:

- Who they helped
- How their gifts create change

Step 3: Use this messaging structure

- Because of you, [impact story/beneficiary + transformation].
- This GivingTuesday, [donor action → outcome].
- Will you give today to [clear ask + future transformation]?

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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Templates + toolkits

October - November

👁️ Focus on leading with transformation

Results are important. They become even more essential when paired with the transformational story of what happens when a donor gives.

Example 1

Program-specific (results-based): Good ✓

"Because of you, Mateo received his very first book from the bookmobile. This GivingTuesday, your gift will help 100 more children like Mateo. Will you give today to fuel the bookmobile?"

Program-specific (transformation-driven): Great 🎯

"Because of you, Mateo now reads with his mom every night! This GivingTuesday, your gift will help 100 more kids discover the joy of reading. Will you give today to keep the bookmobile rolling?"

Example 2

General mission (results-based): Good ✓

"Because of you, neighbors facing crisis found food and hope. This GivingTuesday, your generosity will help more families get back on their feet. Will you give today to support our mission of helping others?"

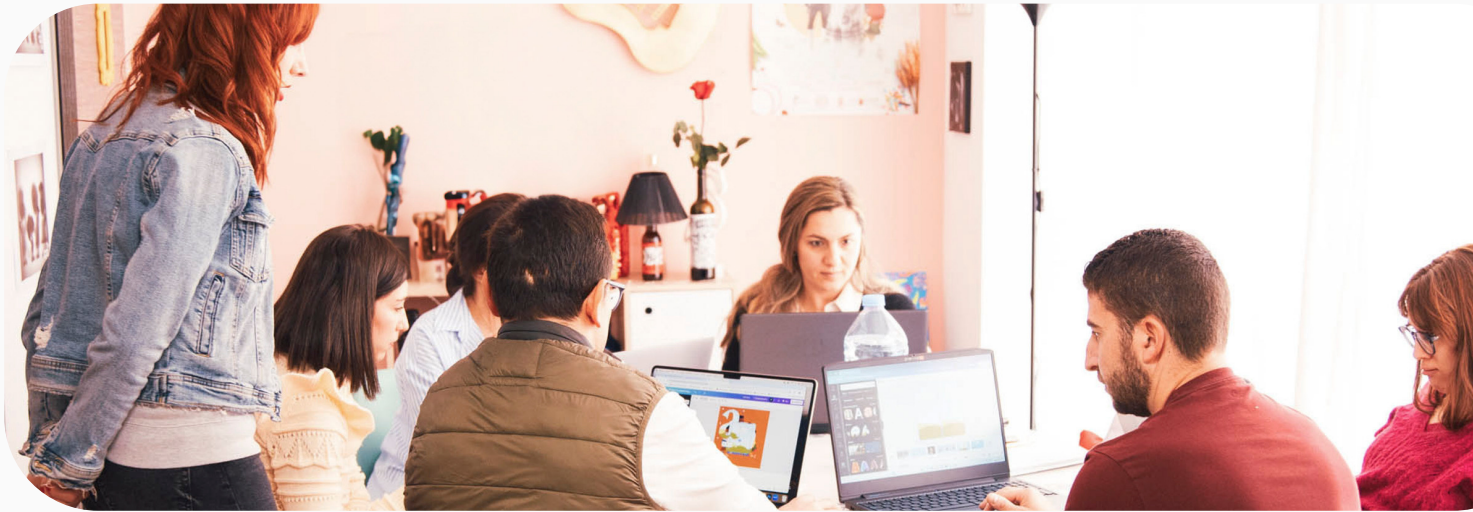
General mission (transformation-driven): Great 🎯

"Because of you, families like the Nguyens found meals, job training and a safe place for their kids. This GivingTuesday, your generosity will keep our doors open so no family faces hunger alone. Will you give today to power our mission?"

Phase 1: Pre-Game

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📁 Templates + toolkits
📅 October - November



👏 Mobilize your board members

Your board can be your secret weapon. Here's how to activate them:

1. **Set expectations:** All board members participate.
2. **Identify 3–5 contacts each:** Relatives, friends, colleagues, neighbors.
3. **Prime early:** Board lets contacts know a campaign is coming.
4. **Encourage early giving:** Board leads by example on your Give Lively fundraising page.
5. **Steward personally:** Once someone gives, board thanks them within 24 hours.
6. **Forward the appeal with a personal note:**

"Hi [Name], this is the campaign I mentioned. We're raising \$25K for [Cause]. It would mean the world if you could support or share it. Thank you!"

💡 **Pro Tip:** Board participation boosts trust and signals strength to other donors.

Phase 2: Game Day!

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🚩 Go time
📅 December 2

🕒 All systems go! Make your big day count

Today's the day your prep pays off. GivingTuesday is about visibility, energy and urgency. Every message, post and outreach should make donors feel part of something big and immediate.

Your game day checklist

Time	Action	Purpose
8 am ET	Send email #1 (launch)	Kick off the day with goal announcement + direct CTA
12 pm ET	Send email #2 (momentum check-in)	Share progress bar, midday update, social proof ("We've raised \$10K!")
5 pm ET	Post social reel + live update	Keep energy high, show real faces behind your mission
7–8 pm ET	Send email #3 (final push)	Leverage urgency: "Just a few hours left to make an impact!"
All day	Board + volunteer amplification	Have your team comment, share and tag donors on social posts

💬 Sample email structure

Subject line: We're halfway there. Can you help us cross the finish line?

Header: Your gift today helps 100 children discover the joy of reading.

Body copy: Because of you, our bookmobile is bringing stories to kids who've never owned a book. We're halfway to our \$25K goal. With your help, we can reach every child on our waitlist before midnight.

CTA: [Give Now →] or [Fuel the Bookmobile →]

Phase 2: Game Day!

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🏁 Go time
📅 December 2

+📱 Multi-channel activation ideas

- **Instagram stories:** Countdown stickers, Text-to-Donate code (“Text GIVE to 44321”)
- **Facebook + LinkedIn posts:** Impact quotes from donors or beneficiaries
- **Live Display:** Show a real-time donation feed of your Give Lively fundraising page
- **Board members:** Post personal videos or re-share main campaign posts

💡 **Pro Tip:** Create a two-sentence “boilerplate caption” you can reuse across social channels for consistency.

✍️ Best practices

- ✓ Lead with impact, not features.
- ✓ Keep paragraphs short and skimmable.
- ✓ Use high-quality photos of real people.
- ✓ Include multiple giving buttons and text links.
- ✓ Respond to donor comments in real time.

🔄 Real-time engagement & team coordination

Stay nimble. Stay connected.

Game day moves fast. Keep communication tight and celebrate progress as it happens.

Checklist

- ✓ Set up an internal Slack or text thread for quick updates (“We hit \$10K!”).
- ✓ Assign a social-media responder for comments + DMs.
- ✓ Track live donations using Give Lively dashboards and share milestones publicly.
- ✓ Post behind-the-scenes photos of your team celebrating each goal.

💡 **Pro Tip:** When supporters see your excitement, they mirror it. Energy attracts energy.

Phase 3: Post-Game

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- 🤝 Reflection time
- 📅 Within 24 hours after GT

🙏 Gratitude is your follow-up strategy

Your donors just gave their time, attention and resources — and they're still listening. The next 24–48 hours are when you cement that relationship.

🕒 Post-game timeline

Timing	Action	Example
Immediately	Automatic acknowledgment email	"Thank you for fueling the movement!" (sent via Give Lively automation)
Next morning	Personalized thank-you email or video	Short clip of staff member saying thank you with donor's first name & impact statistic
Day 2-3	"It's not too late to give" email to non-donors	"Missed GivingTuesday? There's still time to make an impact."
Week following	Gratitude social post + impact recap	"Together we raised \$27,340 — and counting!"

❤️ Thank-you email template

Subject: Because of you, we did it!

Body: Because of your generosity yesterday, 100 children will receive books through our Bookmobile program. From all of us at [Org Name], thank you for making GivingTuesday unforgettable. We're grateful for your trust and support. 💙

CTA: [See Your Impact → Link to Impact Page]

Phase 4: Overtime

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 Year-end continuity
 December 10-31

Keep the momentum going into new year success!

After the GivingTuesday rush, the real season of generosity begins. Now's your chance to reengage donors with impact updates and clear, time-bound year-end asks.

Recommended EOY communication cadence

Date	Theme	Purpose
Dec 10–12	GivingTuesday results + gratitude	Share impact story and total raised
Dec 17–20	Mission reminder / nurture email	Story-driven email, no ask — just thanks
Dec 27–28	“3 Days Left” countdown	Emphasize tax-deductible deadline + impact
Dec 29–31	Final EOY push	“Help us finish 2025 strong. Give before midnight!”

EOY messaging tips

- **Frame it as continuity:** “This isn't a new campaign, it's the next chapter of our GivingTuesday story.”
- **Use deadline language:** “Your tax-deductible gift must be made by December 31.”
- **Spotlight impact + future vision:** “Your gift today keeps the bookmobile rolling through 2026.”

EOY email template

Subject: Three days left to keep the Bookmobile running!

Body: We're \$5,000 away from fully funding our 2026 Bookmobile program. Your year-end gift today ensures children like Mateo keep discovering the joy of reading. The clock's ticking — make your tax-deductible donation before midnight on December 31.

CTA: [Give Before Midnight →]

The Spheres of Influence

Where to Ask for Support



Digital & Social Networks

Social media friends, online communities, and other digital connections.

Close Personal Circle

Friends, family, and neighbors – people who know you best.

Work & Professional Network

Coworkers, past colleagues, employers, professionals you know (lawyers, doctors, accountants), and business associates/vendors.

You

Board Members & Volunteers

Board members, volunteers, and their extended networks.

High-Capacity Donors

Successful people you know and past donors with giving history.

Community & Organizational Groups

Members of clubs, faith groups, volunteer organizations, or alumni networks.

Your Next Step

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What's next with Give Lively?

You've got the game plan, now let's bring it to life

Whether you're ready to take your GivingTuesday strategy further or just beginning your fundraising journey, Give Lively has free tools and support to help you make every campaign count.

If you're new to Give Lively

Apply today to start your fundraising account and begin raising money with Give Lively's powerful technology that's free for nonprofits.

You'll get free access to

- ✓ Fundraising pages, peer-to-peer and event tools
- ✓ Donation widgets and Text-to-Donate
- ✓ Hands-on onboarding and member support

[Apply Now](#)

[Get a Demo](#)

If you're already a Give Lively member

Join Give Lively Grow, our no-cost capacity-building program led by Amy Truong.

Get tailored, one-on-one support and practical resources designed to help your nonprofit grow sustainably.

You'll gain

- ✨ Personalized strategy sessions
- ✨ Actionable tools, templates and feedback
- ✨ A supportive community of nonprofit peers

[Learn More](#)

Explore more free resources

Visit our GivingTuesday Resource Hub for ready-to-use templates, campaign examples and best practices to supercharge your next fundraising push.

[Browse Resources →](#)

Together, we're making generosity simple, powerful and accessible to all.



Stay connected!