



**What every nonprofit in
Georgia must know to win the
giving season & build 2026**

Introduction

The fourth quarter is make-or-break for nonprofit fundraising. A disproportionate share of annual giving happens in December, and successful year-end campaigns often determine whether nonprofits hit their budget targets. For Georgia nonprofits, capturing every possible donation in this “giving season” is essential — but it’s only half the story.

As donor expectations evolve, laws shift, and resources remain tight, Q4 must also serve as your springboard into 2026.

This report helps Georgia nonprofits:



Maximize giving-season potential today



Lay a strategic foundation for 2026



Stay compliant with Georgia-specific laws and regulations



Understand where outsourcing or expert support (e.g. from Harness) can multiply impact without blowing your budget

Maximizing the giving season

Why Q4 is critical?

Gift concentration

Many donors delay gifts until year-end, often aiming for tax-year deduction timing.

Momentum and urgency

Giving Tuesday, holiday spirit, and annual appeals heighten donor responsiveness.

Resource leverage

With limited staff time, focusing on high-impact Q4 opportunities yields better ROI.

Key tactics & best practices

Year-end giving appeal

- Lead with mission-driven storytelling.
- Include clear, simple giving options (online, check, text).
- Use deadlines (e.g. “must give by Dec 31”) to drive urgency.

Giving Tuesday campaign

- Plan a 10- to 14-day window around the date.
- Use donor matches, incremental challenges (“\$1 for \$1”), and live updates to show momentum.

Drive recurring giving

- Position monthly gifts as sustainable impact.
- Offer a low-barrier entry (e.g. “just \$5 / month”).
- Highlight how recurring support stabilizes your mission year-round.

Major donor & mid-level donor engagement

- Conduct personalized outreach (calls, handwritten notes).
- Use Q4 as an opportunity to deepen connection and set up future major gifts.

Donor retention & stewardship

- Immediately acknowledge gifts (especially large ones) with tailored thank-you messages.
- Provide impact reports showing what current giving has funded.

Digital & process optimization

- Audit donation pages: remove friction, shorten forms, test mobile flows.
- Ensure page load speed, SSL, trust badges, clear messaging.
- Segment your email/social lists in advance to tailor appeals.

Engagement events & community touchpoints

- Host small donor events (in-person or virtual) to energize your base.
- Use these as opportunities to collect updated contact info, testimonials, and social proof.

Common pitfalls to avoid

- Launching campaigns too late (leaving insufficient runway).
- Relying on outdated or clunky donation platforms.
- Understaffing cause urgency overload.
- Lack of follow-up on soft leads (people who opened email or clicked but didn't donate).
- Ignoring compliance or registration risks, which may lead to blocking or downtime.



Where Harness adds value: With on-demand strategic, technical, and execution support, Georgia nonprofits don't need to scramble last minute. We fill talent gaps, run optimized campaigns, and ensure no opportunity slips by.

Planning for 2026: building your roadmap

Q4 isn't just about closing strong — it's reset season. Use this period to build a resilient, scalable plan for next year.

Strategic planning considerations

Define growth goals	e.g. donor base expansion, geographic reach, new program lines, revenue targets.
Diversify funding streams	major gifts, recurring, grants, corporate/CSR, events, cause-marketing.
Operational readiness	assess staffing, systems, CRM, marketing support, vendor partnerships.
Budget vs. capacity balance	avoid overcommitting without the people or processes to support it.
Flexibility	embed review cycles so you can pivot mid-year if a tactic underperforms.

Sample yearly roadmap

Q1**Review & reset**

Analyze year-end results, segment donors, launch stewardship + interest-building campaigns

Q2**Growth experiments**

Test acquisition channels, run themed campaigns, start corporate or foundation outreach

Q3**Retention & warm-up**

Deepen relationships, share mid-year stories, preview year-end campaigns

Q4**Fundraising execution**

Deploy giving season appeals, matching challenges, multi-channel campaigns

Pitfalls to avoid

- Starting January without a clear calendar
- Overextending staff or overloading one channel
- Neglecting donor retention in favor of new acquisition
- Holding on to legacy systems slowing execution
- Delaying compliance, legal, or registration updates until too late



How Harness helps: We partner with nonprofits to co-design your 2026 playbook, fill critical roles (campaign manager, digital specialist, content lead) and deliver execution muscle — all with lower overhead than hiring full-time.

Georgia-specific compliance, tax & regulatory considerations

To make this guide truly useful for Georgia nonprofits, here are key state-level regulations and nuances that must inform your Q4 and 2026 planning.

Charitable solicitation & registration

- Georgia's Charitable Solicitation Act (O.C.G.A. Title 43, Chapter 17) requires most nonprofits soliciting contributions in Georgia to register with the Secretary of State.
- Registration is typically valid for 24 months and must be renewed before expiration.
- Solicitors (paid or contract) must also register as paid solicitors, especially if they collect contributions or handle fundraising.
- Failure to comply may lead to revocation of registration or denial of fundraising rights.
- Solicitation materials must include disclosures (organization name, address, statement offering to provide financials upon request).

Action Points for Q4 / 2026:

- Confirm your registration is current and renewed ahead of expiration.
- If you work with third-party fundraisers or vendors, ensure they are properly registered as paid solicitors under Georgia law.
- Update all fundraising materials to include required disclosures.

Georgia sales & use tax & purchases

- Generally, Georgia does not grant a blanket sales tax exemption to typical nonprofits, including churches, charitable or civic organizations.
- There are limited exemptions for certain types of nonprofits (e.g. licensed orphanages, adoption agencies, certain health clinics, nonprofits serving the developmentally disabled) for purchases of tangible personal property.
- If a nonprofit sells taxable goods (merchandise, event tickets, etc.), they may have to collect and remit sales tax under Georgia law.

Strategic implication

Always vet before launching any merchandise, auction, or ticketed event — these may trigger Georgia sales tax liability.

Donor intent & restricted gifts

- Georgia Code § 14-3-192 prohibits charities from violating donor-imposed restrictions in endowment or restricted contributions. If violated, donors (or their legal representatives) may file civil action within four years of discovery.
- In 2024, Georgia passed the Donor Intent Protection Act, which gives donors recourse if a nonprofit departs from stipulated gift terms — strengthening stewardship and accountability.

Strategic implication

When accepting restricted or endowed gifts, ensure policies, reporting, and transparency are crystal clear. Any deviations must be handled legally.

Tort protection for food donations

- Under Georgia law (O.C.G.A. § 51-1-31), donors and nonprofits who accept canned or perishable food in good faith are protected from liability for food condition, unless harm arises out of recklessness or intentional misconduct.
- This law is especially relevant for food banks, meal programs, and similar organizations.

Georgia tax credit for law enforcement donations

- Georgia allows a tax credit under O.C.G.A. § 48-7-29.25 for donations made to qualified law enforcement foundations (as approved by the state) for taxpayers.
- To claim the credit, donors (or foundations) must submit preapproval forms and proper certification.

Opportunity

If your nonprofit mission aligns — or you can partner with or become a certified law enforcement foundation — leveraging this credit can be a compelling donor incentive in Georgia.

Conclusion

The stakes in Q4 are high — for both your current fundraising performance and your 2026 trajectory. For Georgia nonprofits, success means more than sending emails or launching appeals; it means executing with compliance, strategy, and scale. New rules around donor restrictions, tax credits, and solicitation registration mean that “winging it” is no longer an option.

Harness exists to help Georgia nonprofits bridge the gap. We bring strategy, technical infrastructure, compliance guidance, and campaign execution — without the cost or risk of hiring full-time teams. With the right support, no opportunity is lost, no compliance is skipped, and your organization can step confidently into 2026.

Time is running out. The choices you make now will shape your giving season success and your long-term trajectory. Let’s make them count.

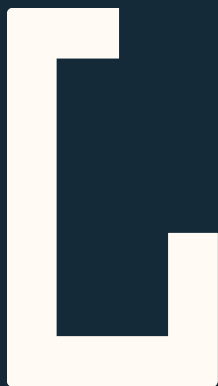


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