



2026 Growth Report for Pennsylvania Nonprofits

New Strategies, New Tools & New Resources for
Modern Fundraising in the Keystone State

Introduction

Pennsylvania's nonprofit sector is one of the most established and diverse in the country, supporting communities across major cities, small towns, and rural regions. With more than 70,000 registered nonprofits, organizations from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, Harrisburg to Allentown, and Erie to Scranton operate in a competitive and evolving fundraising environment.

In 2026, Pennsylvania nonprofits are navigating:

Rising demand for services (housing stability, food access, healthcare, education, workforce development)

Increased competition for individual, corporate, and foundation funding

Donor fatigue amid economic uncertainty

Difficulty hiring and retaining development staff

High expectations for transparency and measurable impact

Yet opportunity remains strong.

Pennsylvania has a deeply rooted culture of philanthropy, strong family foundations, engaged corporate partners, and loyal community donors. Organizations that modernize fundraising while honoring local identity can grow sustainably.

This report outlines the strategies, tools, and resourcing models shaping nonprofit growth in Pennsylvania in 2026.

The Best Fundraising Strategies for Pennsylvania Nonprofits in 2026

Multi-Channel Fundraising Is Now Essential

Pennsylvania donors include urban professionals, suburban families, union households, students, retirees, and long-time community supporters — each engaging differently.

High-performing Pennsylvania nonprofits combine:

- Email
- SMS
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn)
- Peer-to-peer fundraising
- Community and corporate events
- Strong donation pages and localized landing pages

Pennsylvania example:

A Philadelphia-based education nonprofit increased donations by coordinating email, SMS, and social campaigns tied to student success stories.

Recurring Giving Is Pennsylvania's Most Reliable Revenue Stream

Recurring giving offers predictable funding for nonprofits and flexible support for donors.

Effective Pennsylvania recurring programs emphasize:

- Local impact (“Your monthly gift supports families across Allegheny County”)
- Stability during economic uncertainty
- Clear giving levels tied to outcomes
- Consistent communication and appreciation

Pennsylvania example:

A Pittsburgh hunger-relief organization grew monthly donors after launching a “Neighbors Helping Neighbors” recurring giving program.

Localized Storytelling Builds Trust and Drives Conversion

Pennsylvania donors respond strongly to community-rooted, place-based storytelling.

What works best:

- City- and county-specific results
- Stories from real families, students, and frontline workers
- Seasonal needs (winter heating, back-to-school, workforce cycles)
- Partnerships with local schools, hospitals, and employers

Pennsylvania example:

A Scranton housing nonprofit increased conversion after sharing stories from families transitioning into permanent housing.

Campaign Timing Must Align With Pennsylvania's Seasonal Patterns

Pennsylvania's fundraising calendar is shaped by weather, school schedules, and community traditions.

Key fundraising windows:

Winter (Dec–Feb):

Heating assistance, housing stability

Spring (Mar–May):

Events, peer-to-peer, and volunteer campaigns

Summer:

Engagement and relationship-building

Back-to-school (Aug–Sept):

Youth and education initiatives

Year-end (Nov–Dec):

Peak giving season

Digital Fundraising Best Practices for Pennsylvania Nonprofits

Fast, Mobile-First Giving Is Increasingly Important

Pennsylvania donors are steadily shifting toward mobile giving.

High-performing Pennsylvania donation pages:

- Load in under 3 seconds
- Support Apple Pay / Google Pay
- Feature 3–5 suggested giving amounts
- Use local imagery and clear messaging
- Minimize friction

Pennsylvania example:

A Lancaster-based family services nonprofit reported that over 70% of donations now come from mobile device

Short-Form Video Drives Engagement

Pennsylvania nonprofits see strong engagement from authentic video.

Top-performing content includes:

- Program highlights
- Staff and volunteer stories
- Before-and-after transformations
- Event recaps
- Community thank-you messages

Facebook Reels and Instagram perform especially well statewide.

Email Remains the Top Revenue Channel

Despite growth in social and SMS, email still drives the most revenue.

Best practices:

- Segment by region (Eastern PA, Central PA, Western PA, Northeast PA)
- Automate follow-ups
- Keep messaging emotional and concise
- Balance urgency with gratitude

AI Is Becoming a Powerful Efficiency Tool

Pennsylvania nonprofits are increasingly using AI to extend staff capacity.

AI supports:

- Email and SMS drafting
- Grant outline development
- Donor journey creation
- Social media copy
- Video scripting
- Donor engagement analysis

Early adopters are producing more campaigns without increasing staff.

How to Retain Pennsylvania Donors in 2026

Retention challenges include:

Economic pressure on donors

High nonprofit density

Staff capacity limitations

Donor fatigue

What works best:

New Donor Journeys Increase Retention

Automated 30-, 60-, and 90-day welcome journeys significantly improve second-gift rates.

Strong Pennsylvania welcome journeys include:

- A timely thank-you
- One local impact story
- A clear mission overview
- Volunteer or site-visit opportunities
- A recurring giving invitation

Pennsylvania example:

An Allentown nonprofit increased donor retention after launching a personalized welcome email series.

Personalized Thank-Yous Strengthen Relationships

Pennsylvania donors value sincerity and personal recognition.

High-impact thank-yous include:

- Personal emails
- Short thank-you videos
- Handwritten notes
- Updates tied to specific programs

Community Updates Build Long-Term Loyalty

Effective updates include:

- Seasonal impact reports
- Program milestones
- Workforce and education outcomes
- Neighborhood-level success stories

Transparency Builds Trust

Pennsylvania donors expect clear communication regarding:

- Use of funds
- Program outcomes
- Challenges and needs

Organizations that communicate openly retain donors at higher rates.

New Tools & Technology for 2026

Pennsylvania nonprofits are adopting tools that are:

Easy to use

Affordable

Mobile-friendly

Fast to deploy

Supported by real people

Commonly adopted tools include:

- Donor CRMs
- Integrated email + fundraising platforms
- Peer-to-peer systems
- AI-assisted content creation
- SMS fundraising
- Optimized donation pages

New Resourcing Options for Growth & Efficiency

Due to staffing challenges, Pennsylvania nonprofits are rethinking how they resource fundraising.

Done-For-You Fundraising Support Is Growing

Organizations are outsourcing:

- Email campaigns
- Donor journeys
- SMS outreach
- Creative and video production
- Grant writing support

This reduces burnout and increases consistency.

Fractional and Shared Staff Are Becoming Common

Pennsylvania nonprofits are turning to:

- Fractional development directors
- Shared grant writers
- Outsourced digital fundraising teams

This provides senior expertise without full-time cost.

Automation as a Workforce Multiplier

Small teams automate:

- Receipts
- Thank-you workflows
- Lapsed donor outreach
- Recurring donor updates
- Event communications

Automation frees staff to focus on relationships.

Local Collaboration Continues to Grow

Pennsylvania communities respond strongly to collaboration.

Examples include:

- Regional food bank coalitions
- Housing and homelessness partnerships
- Education and workforce alliances
- Health and human services networks

Collaborative fundraising will continue expanding in 2026.

Conclusion

Pennsylvania nonprofits face real challenges — but also strong opportunity.

The organizations that grow in 2026 will:

Embrace multi-channel fundraising

Improve donor retention

Localize storytelling

Modernize technology

Automate operations

Leverage fractional staffing

Move quickly with efficient fundraising solutions

Harness helps Pennsylvania nonprofits do all of this — without hiring a development director

Harness provides:

- A full-service fundraising team
- Modern tools and automation
- Creative and donor journey support
- Campaign execution and reporting

All for a fraction of the cost of even one part-time hire.

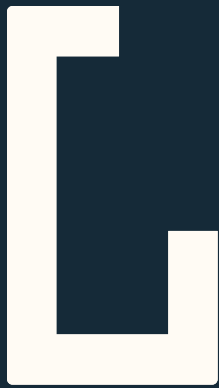


Visit goharness.com

or



Schedule a meeting [here](#)



 Harness

