



# **2026 Growth Report for Indiana Nonprofits**

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

# Introduction

Indiana is home to a strong, community-centered nonprofit sector, with more than 30,000 registered nonprofits serving urban, suburban, and rural communities across the state. From Indianapolis and Fort Wayne to Evansville, South Bend, Bloomington, and Lafayette, Indiana nonprofits operate in a pragmatic, relationship-driven environment that values trust, stewardship, and measurable impact.

In 2026, Indiana nonprofits are navigating:

- Rising demand for essential services (food security, housing stability, healthcare access, education, workforce development)
- Persistent funding challenges in rural and post-industrial communities
- Competition for individual and foundation support
- Lean fundraising teams and staffing constraints
- Growing donor expectations for transparency and digital convenience
- Rapid technology change with limited internal capacity

Yet opportunity remains strong.

Indiana benefits from deep civic engagement, strong faith-based and family philanthropy, major healthcare and corporate foundations, and a culture of long-term donor loyalty. Nonprofits that modernize fundraising while maintaining clear impact and fiscal discipline are well positioned for growth in 2026.

This report outlines the strategies, tools, and resourcing models that will define nonprofit growth across Indiana in the coming year.

# The Best Fundraising Strategies for Indiana Nonprofits in 2026

## Multi-Channel Fundraising Is Now Standard

Indiana donors engage across multiple touchpoints and expect consistency and clarity.

Top-performing Indiana nonprofits combine:

- Email & SMS
- Social media (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, TikTok)
- Peer-to-peer fundraising
- Community and faith-based events
- Corporate and employee-giving programs
- Simple, high-performing donation pages

### Indiana example:

A Central Indiana housing nonprofit increased donor reactivation by coordinating email, Facebook, and peer-to-peer campaigns tied to affordable housing initiatives.

## Recurring Giving Supports Predictable Growth

Recurring giving provides stability in an environment where large gifts may be limited.

Successful Indiana recurring programs emphasize:

- Practical, easy-to-understand impact (“\$30/month helps keep a family housed in Indiana”)
- Accessible giving levels
- Consistent communication
- Stewardship and accountability

### Indiana example:

A Fort Wayne youth mentoring nonprofit grew monthly donors through a “Hoosiers Helping Hoosiers” recurring giving program.

## Community-Based Storytelling Builds Credibility

Indiana donors respond best to stories that feel real, local, and measurable.

High-performing storytelling includes:

- City- and county-level impact
- Stories featuring families, students, and neighbors
- Regional challenges (manufacturing transitions, workforce readiness, rural access to care)
- Partnerships with schools, employers, and community groups

### Indiana example:

A Northwest Indiana workforce nonprofit saw increased giving after sharing graduate success stories tied to local employers.

## Campaign Timing Should Match Indiana's Community Calendar

Aligning fundraising with local rhythms improves results.

Key fundraising windows:

- January–March: New-year giving and program updates
- Spring: Events, peer-to-peer, and community campaigns
- Summer: Youth programs and food access initiatives
- Back-to-school (Aug–Sept): Education and family support campaigns
- Year-end (Nov–Dec): Peak giving season

# Digital Fundraising Best Practices for Indiana Nonprofits

## Mobile-Optimized Giving Is Expected

Indiana donors increasingly give online and via mobile.

High-performing donation pages:

- Load quickly
- Support Apple Pay / Google Pay
- Offer clear giving options
- Use straightforward language and local imagery
- Avoid unnecessary steps

### Indiana example:

An Indianapolis nonprofit reported that over 70% of online donations now come from mobile devices.

## Short-Form Video Builds Trust

Indiana nonprofits are using video to:

- Highlight programs and outcomes
- Share testimonials from participants and volunteers
- Showcase community events
- Build familiarity and transparency

## Email Remains the Highest-Revenue Channel

Email continues to drive the majority of online donations. Best practices include:

- Regional segmentation (Central IN, Northern IN, Southern IN)
- Automated follow-ups
- Clear, mission-driven messaging
- Personalization by donor behavior

## AI Is Increasing Capacity for Indiana Nonprofits

AI adoption is accelerating as organizations seek efficiency.

Common use cases include:

- Drafting email and SMS content
- Supporting grant writing
- Donor segmentation and insights
- Social and video content creation
- Website and donation page optimization

AI helps small teams operate at higher capacity.

# How to Retain Indiana Donors in 2026

Retention remains one of the biggest growth levers.

## New Donor Journeys Increase Lifetime Value

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

Effective Indiana welcome journeys include:

- Prompt thank-yous
- One clear local impact story
- Mission clarity and outcomes
- Volunteer or event invitations
- A recurring giving invitation

### Indiana example:

A Bloomington nonprofit increased donor retention after implementing a localized onboarding journey.

## Personal Thank-Yous Reinforce Trust

Indiana donors value authenticity and follow-through.

Effective recognition includes:

- Personal emails from leadership
- Short thank-you videos
- Handwritten notes for key supporters
- Impact updates tied to outcomes

## **Regular Impact Updates Matter**

High-performing updates include:

- Program milestones
- Community-level outcomes
- Success stories
- Photos and short videos

## **Transparency Builds Long-Term Loyalty**

Donors expect clarity around:

- How funds are used
- Program effectiveness
- Challenges and lessons learned
- Long-term plans

Clear communication increases retention.

# New Tools & Technology for 2026

Indiana nonprofits are adopting tools that are:

**Organizations expect tools that are:**

Easy to use

Affordable

Secure

Scalable

Supported by experts

**Commonly adopted tools include:**

Modern donor CRMs

Email and fundraising automation platforms

Peer-to-peer fundraising tools

AI-powered analytics and creative tools

Optimized donation pages

SMS engagement platforms

Unified donor growth ecosystems

# New Resourcing Options for Growth & Efficiency

With limited budgets, Indiana nonprofits are evolving how fundraising is resourced.

## Done-For-You Fundraising Is Growing

Organizations are outsourcing:

- Campaign strategy and execution
- Email and SMS
- Donor onboarding and retention journeys
- Creative and video production
- Grant support

This increases results without staff burnout.

## Fractional Expertise Is Becoming Common

Indiana nonprofits are embracing:

- Fractional development directors
- Fractional grant writers
- Shared marketing and digital teams

This provides experience without full-time cost.

## **Automation Multiplies Capacity**

Teams automate:

- Receipts and acknowledgements
- Thank-you workflows
- Lapsed donor reactivation
- Recurring donor communications
- Event confirmations

Automation frees staff to focus on relationships.

## **Collaboration Continues to Expand**

Cross-organization collaboration is increasing, including:

- Food access coalitions
- Workforce and education partnerships
- Healthcare and housing initiatives
- Regional nonprofit networks

Collaborative fundraising will continue expanding in 2026.

# Conclusion

Indiana nonprofits operate in a practical, trust-based, and opportunity-rich environment.

The organizations that thrive in 2026 will:

Fundraise across multiple channels

Prioritize donor retention and lifetime value

Tell authentic local stories

Embrace modern digital tools

Automate repetitive work

Leverage fractional and outsourced expertise

Move quickly with fast-launch fundraising solutions

**Harness helps Indiana nonprofits do all of this—without hiring a development director.**

Harness provides:

- A full-service fundraising team
- AI-powered tools
- Creative, campaigns, and donor journeys
- Automation and reporting

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

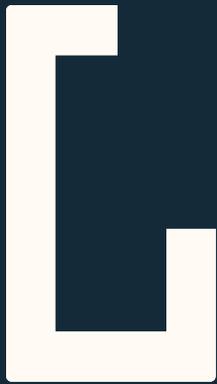


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