



Unlocking the Power of Seasonal Holidays for Nonprofit Success



HUMAN SERVICES

Introduction

Human service organizations play a vital role in our society, providing a voice, safe haven, healing, rehabilitation, and resources to those in need. Sustaining your impactful work requires substantial planning and fundraising efforts, engaging volunteer support, and soliciting donor contributions. One often-overlooked strategy is to align your appeals and agenda with the various holidays and observance days throughout the year. Doing so can maximize your efforts and create meaningful connections with your supporters.

Each season of the year presents a unique set of challenges and opportunities. Taking advantage of these seasonal shifts—by tailoring holidays and observance days to meet the objectives of your mission and integrating them into your annual plans—can help you strategize effectively, engage your constituents, and optimize your fundraising efforts. And because [more than 70% of donors](#) say they are motivated by a personal connection to the cause, connecting stories with the theme of the observance day can also help boost your appeals.



Using this calendar



Before we delve into the list of holidays and observance days, here are some strategies you can use to align these days with your mission.

1. Connect your cause to the holiday

Find the common ground between the holiday or observance day and your nonprofit's mission. Highlight how your work relates to that date's values, themes, or causes.

2. Create themed campaigns

Develop specific fundraising or awareness campaigns tailored to the holiday. Craft compelling messaging that resonates with your audience's emotions and motivations.

3. Launch volunteer opportunities

Organize volunteer projects or service events related to the holiday's theme. Encourage your community to contribute their time and skills to make a difference.

4. Share impactful stories

[Almost 60% of donors](#) say they are motivated by a passion for the cause. Take this opportunity to share stories about the individuals or communities your organization has positively impacted. Use these narratives to demonstrate the tangible outcomes of your work and how it aligns with the holiday's spirit.

5. Host educational events

Organize workshops, webinars, or seminars that educate the public about issues or topics related to the holiday. Position your nonprofit as a thought leader in your field. For example, an organization that [provides services that work to raise the status of women through education, awareness, literacy, and training](#) can share the historical significance of Women's History Month in March.

6. Empower advocacy

Encourage supporters to take action in a way that aligns with the holiday's goals. Provide resources and guidance to help them advocate for your cause or relevant social issues.

7. Launch targeted fundraising appeals

Clearly articulate how contributions will directly contribute to advancing your organization's mission in line with the holiday's significance.

8. Engage with your community on social media

Share stories, quotes, and visual content that resonate with your audience. Use relevant hashtags and encourage user-generated content.

9. Amplify the impact by collaborating with other nonprofits

Partner with other nonprofits, community organizations, or local businesses to create a collective impact around the holiday. Joint efforts can expand your reach and engage more supporters.

10. Engage your donors

Engage your existing donor base with communications around specific holidays, birthdays or anniversaries, and other significant dates. Use these [important dates](#) as opportunities to check in, engage with, and express appreciation for donors' ongoing support.

11. Introduce unique giving opportunities

Create time-limited giving opportunities, donation matching campaigns, or challenges specifically for the holiday. Encourage your supporters to contribute in celebration or honor of the occasion.

12. Follow-up and stewardship

After the holiday, continue to engage with those who participated in your activities or campaigns. Share updates on the impact of their efforts and contributions. Cultivate these relationships throughout the year.

By following this approach, your organization can effectively harness the power of holidays and observance days to build a sense of community, foster support, and advance your mission. Whether it's Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Earth Day, or any other significant date, integrating these strategies into [your yearly calendar](#) can help you build long-lasting connections with your audience and drive positive change in your community.



Understanding seasonal impact

Nonprofit organizations experience a distinct rhythm throughout the year, with each season offering a set of challenges and opportunities. Let's look at how you can take advantage of holidays and observance days to navigate these seasonal shifts.



New Year

Preparing for the year ahead

The new year is the time to build your foundation for the year ahead. It's a month to take stock of your achievements and challenges—past and future—and set the stage for the coming months. By analyzing past performance and acknowledging donors' generosity, you demonstrate transparency and accountability to your constituents.

JANUARY

New Year's Day | January 1

Start the year by setting goals and resolutions for your organization and sharing them with your supporters.

Martin Luther King Jr. Day | Third Monday

Martin Luther King Jr. Day offers the opportunity to infuse your New Year tasks with a sense of purpose and social responsibility, and connect the principles of social justice, civil rights, and equality that Dr. King stood for with your nonprofit's mission. Emphasizing community involvement and social justice may align well with your nonprofit's values. To that end, encourage volunteer sign-ups and highlight community service initiatives.

FEBRUARY

Black History Month | February

Black History Month offers an opportunity to promote diversity and inclusion, celebrate the achievements of Black leaders and community members, and raise awareness about the unique challenges faced by the Black community.

Valentine's Day | February 14

Valentine's Day is often associated with love, affection, and expressions of care for one another. While it may not seem directly related to the work of human services nonprofits, this holiday presents a unique opportunity to prepare for the year ahead by [showering your supporters with love](#).

Random Acts of Kindness Day |

February 17

Encourage individuals to perform acts of kindness and consider launching a related campaign to promote your mission.



Spring

Mobilizing volunteers

Engaging volunteers not only strengthens their connection to your organization but can also lead to increased financial support as they become more deeply invested in the cause. A national study by the [Fidelity Charitable Gift Fund found that volunteers' donations average 10 times that of non-volunteers.](#)

MARCH

National Social Work Month

National Social Work Month offers a unique opportunity to not only celebrate the contributions of social workers but also to mobilize volunteers effectively by showcasing the impact of social work on individuals and communities.

International Women's Day | March 8

Consider hosting events that empower and support women in your community, especially if your nonprofit addresses [issues that impact women](#).

APRIL

National Volunteer Week |

Third week in April

Recognize and thank your volunteers this week! Consider hosting appreciation events or sharing volunteer success stories to inspire more people to advance your mission. Check out some of our [volunteer appreciation ideas](#).

Earth Day | April 21

Emphasize your organization's commitment to sustainability and [environmental stewardship](#). Encourage volunteers to join eco-friendly initiatives, like clean-up events. Highlight your organization's commitment to sustainability.

MAY

Mental Health Awareness Month

[Highlight the importance of mental well-being](#) and offer support to those in the community who may be struggling. Channel this message into fundraising efforts and educational events.

Mother's Day | Second Sunday in May

Set up or participate in fundraising campaigns or events [celebrating parents and caregivers](#). For instance, you could organize a brunch, a walkathon, or a donation drive to support families in need.



Summer

Planning upcoming fundraising

Summer vacation vibes may be in the air, but now's the time to take a [mid-year check-in](#), strategize, and plan your fundraising efforts for the rest of the year.

JUNE

Pride Month

[Nonprofits that support LGBTQ+ communities](#) can participate in Pride Month events, offer resources, and promote inclusivity and equality.

World Elder Abuse Awareness Day |

June 15

[Organizations focused on elder care and protection](#) can use this day to raise awareness about elder abuse and advocate for the rights and well-being of older adults.

Father's Day | Third Sunday in June

Set up or participate in fundraising campaigns or events celebrating parents and caregivers. For instance, you could organize a brunch, a walkathon, or a donation drive to support families in need.

JULY

National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Organizations addressing mental health disparities among minority populations can use this month to raise awareness, provide resources, and reduce stigma.

Independence Day | July 4

Emphasize the principles of freedom, equality, and community support, and celebrate these values while serving and empowering vulnerable populations in need of assistance and independence.

World Population Day | July 11

Nonprofits focused on global health, family planning, and poverty alleviation can use this day to advocate for global population issues and sustainable development.

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Anniversary | July 26

Disability-focused nonprofits can commemorate this day by advocating for equal rights and accessibility for individuals with disabilities.

National Day of the Cowboy |

Fourth Saturday in July

Organizations working with rural and agricultural communities can celebrate and raise awareness of the cowboy heritage and its contributions to society.



Autumn

Priming for end-of-year giving

Fall ushers in a season of giving as nonprofits encourage their supporters to make end-of-year contributions to finish the year on a solid financial note.

SEPTEMBER

Labor Day | First Monday

Acknowledge the hard work of your team and supporters. Recognize workers' contributions and advocate for labor rights if those align with your organization's goals.

International Day of Charity |

September 5

Promote your organization's charitable work and encourage donations and volunteerism.

OCTOBER

National Disability Awareness Month

Raise awareness about the challenges faced by individuals with disabilities and promote inclusion.

National Do Something Nice Day |

October 5

Create campaigns or events that inspire people to do something kind for others, aligning with the spirit of your organization's mission.

National Make a Difference Day |

Fourth Saturday

Encourage community service and volunteerism on this day by organizing or participating in service projects.



Year-End

Hosting gala and fundraising events

The year-end giving season is often a festive time in the nonprofit world. Galas, fundraising dinners, or themed parties generate excitement and funds. Significant funds. Year-end giving accounts for a substantial portion of nonprofit revenue, often exceeding 30% of total donations.

NOVEMBER

International Volunteer

Managers' Day | November 5

Recognize and appreciate the significant contributions of volunteer managers, and how your organization can enhance the quality and impact of their services to vulnerable populations.

Veterans Day | November 11

[If your organization serves veterans](#) or military families, Veterans Day offers an opportunity to honor and support them through events or campaigns.

National Philanthropy Day |

November 15

Highlight the importance of philanthropy and engage with donors and supporters to express gratitude for their contributions.

Thanksgiving | Third Thursday

Express gratitude to donors, sharing stories of how their contributions have made a difference. Consider organizing a Thanksgiving meal or food drive for those in need.

National Hunger and Homelessness Awareness Week |

Week before Thanksgiving

For organizations focused on homelessness and hunger, this week provides an opportunity to educate the public and engage in advocacy efforts. Consider organizing a meal or food drive for those in need around Thanksgiving time.

GivingTuesday |

Tuesday after Thanksgiving

A global day of giving. [Launch GivingTuesday campaigns and appeals](#), emphasizing the urgency of giving during this time.

DECEMBER

Holiday Season

Leverage the festive spirit to engage supporters with heartwarming stories and [launch year-end giving appeals](#).

International Human Rights Day |

December 10

Highlight the importance of human rights and the work your organization does to promote them.

New Year's Eve | December 31st

Encourage last-minute donations to [boost year-end gifts](#).

By following the seasonal ebbs and flows, you can plan activities strategically and capitalize on each season's unique opportunities. This ensures that you meet immediate needs while setting yourself up for long-term success in fulfilling your mission and making a meaningful impact.

Remember to choose holidays and occasions that align with your organization's mission and values, as well as the needs of your community. Whether they are major or minor holidays, these events provide opportunities to connect with your community, engage donors and volunteers, and promote the work of your Human Services nonprofit.



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