



Giving: Timing Your Gifts for Maximum Impact

So you have found a couple organizations and you love the work they are doing. What is the best way to support them? You can volunteer your time, which we hope you will (!), and you can give a cash gift...but what type of gift will have the most impact?

Year-end donations are by far the most popular way for individuals to give both because it comes at the end of the tax year and because winter is, for many, a time of reflection, gratitude, and generosity. End of the year giving is also a popular time for matching gifts so a gift made during a matching gift opportunity can have two or three times the impact of a single gift.

[One Source -Empowering Caregivers](#) reports, “The year-end gifts given to our organization help drive the strategic plan for the coming year.” [Acres of Hope](#) adds, “Year-end gifts are so vital because it sets [us] up to be on a great start entering the new year.”

Regular monthly giving offers a level of stability and predictability that can help organizations plan, budget, and grow. Monthly giving allows organizations a predictable stream of income that can be applied against ongoing monthly expenses, reducing the unpredictability that comes with waiting for year-end gift. For this reason, it is sometimes called sustainable giving. We talked yesterday about organizations’ reliance on diversified revenue streams. The value of diversification is not only in having different types of revenue but also to having different *timing* of revenue.

Some donors who wish to provide such an income stream simply divide their intended annual gift over twelve monthly payments. Others find that such planning actually allows them to give more than they otherwise would when being pushed to cover a range of expenses at the end of the year. Just think, if each of 100 donors committed to a monthly \$20 gift, that organization suddenly has a reliable and diversified income stream that is potentially sufficient to cover a substantial portion of its monthly overhead.

Several [CNL member organizations](#) share their thoughts around the importance of monthly gifts to their continued impact and success.

[Nevada County Citizens for Choice](#) shares, “Because most of our expenses are recurring operating and maintenance costs for our clinic facility, monthly gifts give us the ability to budget those costs.”

[Fire Safe Council](#) speaks to the need for that diversity of timing, “While [FSCNC](#) receives grant funding for various grant programs, monthly gifts of support allow continuous operation of our programs in months when grant funding may not be available; critical in the case of wildfire preparedness.”

And finally, the [South Yuba River Citizens League](#) shares what can be an added benefit of monthly giving, “Monthly members are [SYRCL](#)’s greenest donors who help sustain our daily activities. By signing up for automatic payments, monthly members are ensuring more resources go to protecting the Yuba because we’re not printing paper reminders, we’re not spending money on postage, and we’re reducing our carbon footprint by using less. We love our monthly members!”

If you are thinking about a donation this giving season, or perhaps have already decided to give, consider connecting with that organization(s) to help you decide the best way for your dollars to support that nonprofit and its constituents.

To share how you have been impacted by philanthropy, as a donor, volunteer, or recipient of services, email info@cnsierra.com, and you could be featured in a future article.

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