

A Study of Donor Retention



SURVEY

**Do you know your
donor retention rate?**

slido



Do you know your donor retention rate?

① Start presenting to display the poll results on this slide.

**Return Donors in
Year #2**



**All Donors in
Year #1**



**Donor
Retention
Rate**

Average Donor Retention Rates

As of Jan 2022



41.6%

Average
Donors



18.6%

First Time
Donors



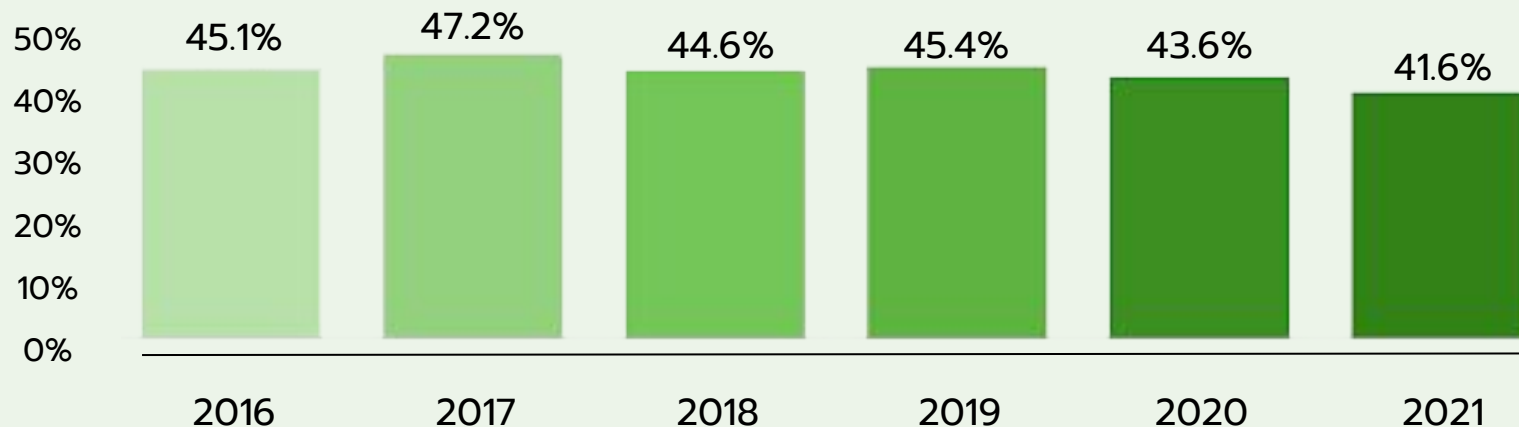
60.7%

Repeat
Donors



Average Donor Retention Rates

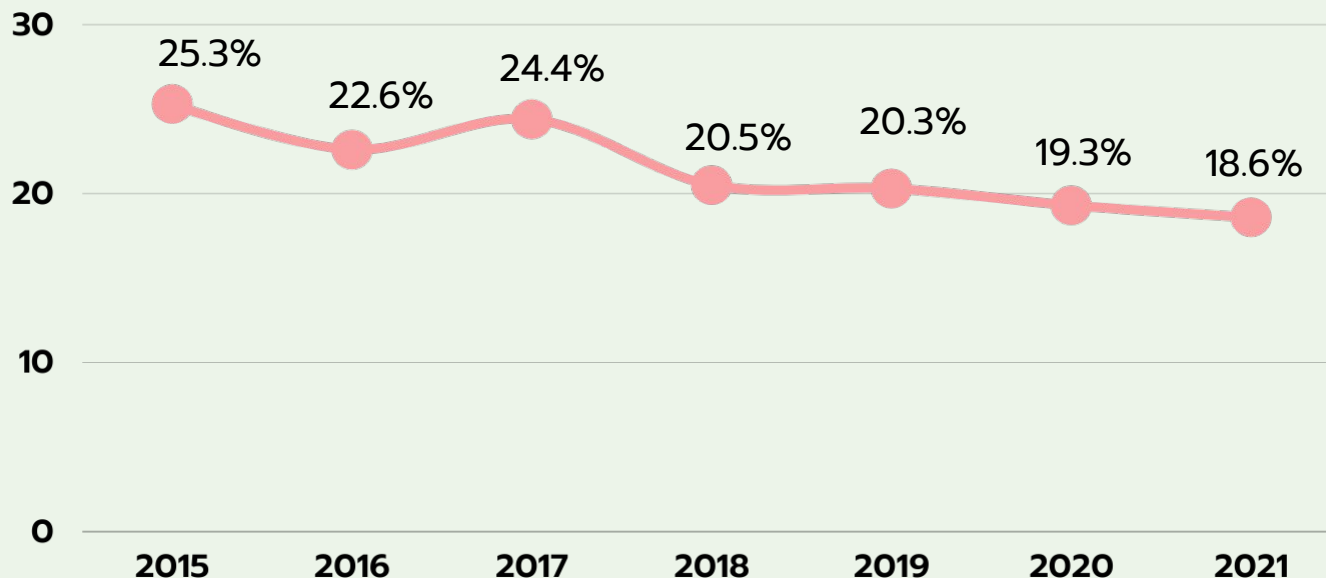
Over the past few years



Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project

First-Time Donor Retention Rates

Over the past few years

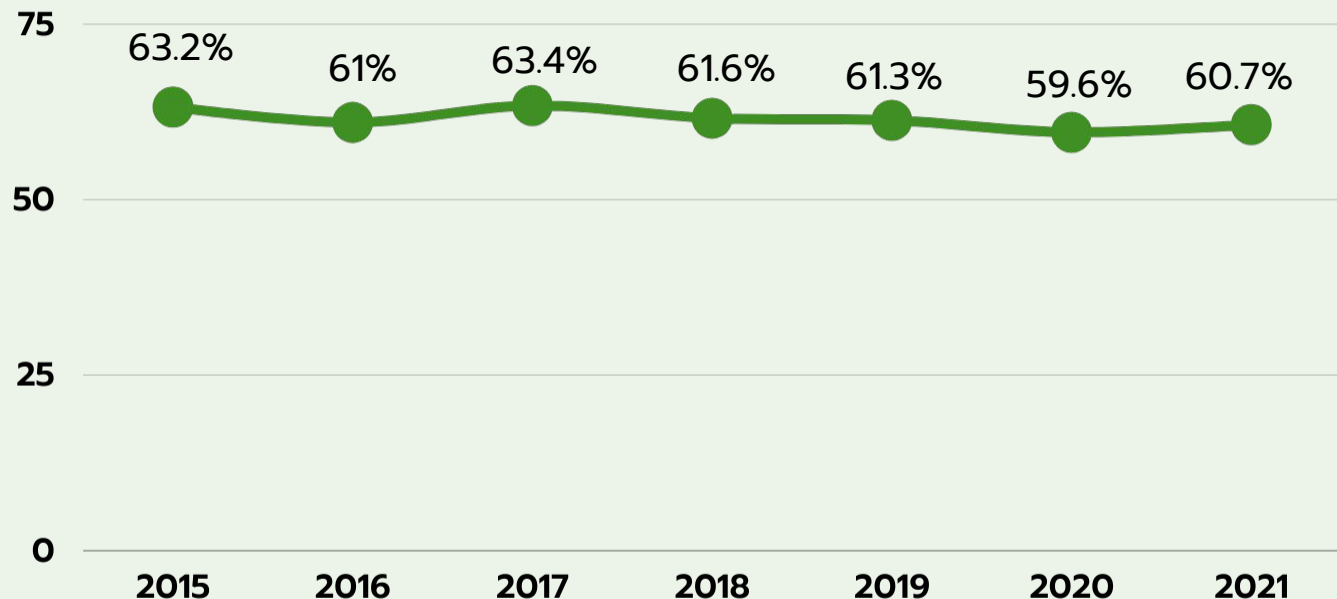


INSIGHT: If acquisition cost is higher than the initial gift, you are losing money. Stewardship is the key.

Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project

Repeat Donor Retention Rates

Over the past few years



INSIGHT: Once you get a 2nd gift, you're in much better shape!

Source: Fundraising Effectiveness Project

Why Donor Retention is Important

Higher lifetime value = higher revenue

Original Retention Rate: 41%

Year	Donors	Avg. Gift*	Total
Start	5,000	\$ 200.00	
2	2,050	\$ 220.00	\$ 451,000
3	841	\$ 242.00	\$ 203,401
4	345	\$ 266.20	\$ 91,734
5	141	\$ 292.82	\$ 41,372
6	58	\$ 322.10	\$ 18,659
7	24	\$ 354.31	\$ 8,415
8	10	\$ 389.74	\$ 3,795
9	4	\$ 428.72	\$ 1,712
10	2	\$ 471.59	\$ 772
11	—	—	—
12	—	—	—
13	—	—	—
14	—	—	—

Grand Total: \$820,859

Improved Retention Rate: 51%

Year	Donors	Avg. Gift*	Total
Start	5,000	\$ 200.00	
2	2,550	\$ 220.00	\$ 561,000
3	1,301	\$ 242.00	\$ 314,721
4	663	\$ 266.20	\$ 176,558
5	338	\$ 292.82	\$ 99,049
6	173	\$ 322.10	\$ 55,567
7	88	\$ 354.31	\$ 31,173
8	45	\$ 389.74	\$ 17,488
9	23	\$ 428.72	\$ 9,811
10	12	\$ 471.59	\$ 5,504
11	6	\$ 518.75	\$ 3,088
12	3	\$ 570.62	\$ 1,732
13	2	\$ 627.69	\$ 972
14	1	\$ 690.45	\$ 545

Grand Total: \$1,277,208

Total Savings: \$456,349

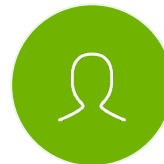
Cost of Donor Retention

It's **easier** and **cheaper** to retain a donor than it is to acquire one



Cost Per
Acquisition

5X
Cost per
renewal



Cost Per
Acquisition

2-3X
Initial donation
amount



Renewal Response
Rates

20-30X
Higher than
acquisition
response rates

Why Donors Lapse



Why Donors Stop Giving

2001 study by Adrian Sargeant

5% - Thought charity did not need them

8% - No info on how monies were used

9% - No memory of supporting

13% - Never got thanked for donating

16% - Death

18% - Poor service or communication

36% - Others more deserving

54% - Could no longer afford

INSIGHT: We can make
a meaningful impact
on the above reasons!



Why Donors Keep Giving

2011 study by DonorVoice

1. Donor perceives organization to be effective
2. Donor knows what to expect with each interaction
3. Donor receives a timely thank you
4. Donor receives opportunities to make views known
5. Donor feels like they're part of an important cause
6. Donor feels his or her involvement is appreciated
7. Donor receives info showing who is being helped

ACTION: What is your thank you turnaround time?



What Subscription- based Donors Tell Us

Source: IU Lilly School of Philanthropy

Preferred communication and content
from nonprofit organizations they
support

52% - Stories and experiences shared by the people
my gifts have helped

32% - Frequent updates about organization's
programs and services

32% - Emails with my donations impact and heartfelt
thank you(s)

25% - Educational and interactive webinar series
related to the organization's mission and impact areas

INSIGHT: Stories, heartfelt
thank yous and impact-based
communications lead the way!

How to Improve Donor Retention

ACTION: Pick one or two to start.

1. Thank quickly + personally
2. Illustrate that you know who the donor is
3. Segment communications
4. Tell them how gifts are used / will be used
5. Tell them what comes next
6. Be curious about donor motivation and solicit feedback
7. Prioritize monthly giving



What can we learn from 2020 and carry forward



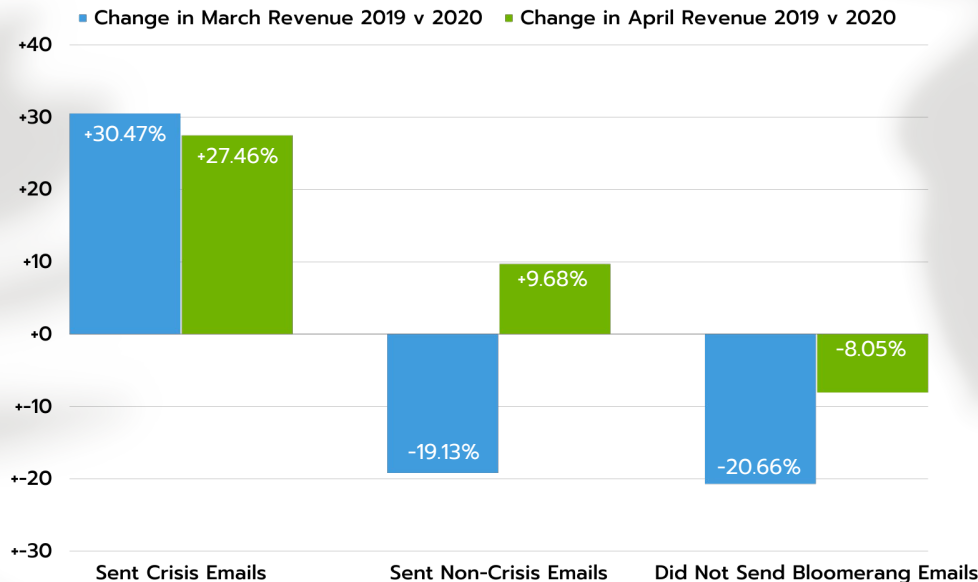
Success Factors

What we saw work
in 2020-2021



- 1.** Don't stop fundraising
- 2.** Double down on stewardship
- 3.** Segment your communications
- 4.** Employ the personal touch
- 5.** You don't need events to tell stories

Keep fundraising!



ACTION: Don't decide for donors - communicate how the crisis is impacting your organization and the people you serve

Double down on stewardship

Say thank you before/during/after
asking



Hi *{{Informal Name}}*,

I know everything feels upside down right now. We are all living in a state of uncertainty as we begin our journey through uncharted waters.

And yet, the strongest theme I see in communications and social posts is a message of hope.

I'm hearing "we'll get through this together" and it hits home every time, because I know we will.

How? Because **I know this world is full of people like you**. People who care and extend their love out to their community and its members, both furry and non.

On that note, I wanted to share something that I am grateful for right now.

Overhead costs are becoming financial hardships for a lot of nonprofits right now. And while we are *far* from a financial panic, I do know that as a monthly donor, you are the first line of defense against challenging social and economic times.

You remove that worry from Willamette Humane Society because together, **the 432 members of the Golden Hearts Club donate enough to cover all of the shelter's monthly utilities**.

You are **literally** keeping the lights on and the animals cared for as we navigate new shelter operation plans and a chaotic few months.

YOU, our Golden Hearts Club members, are what give us hope.

If you didn't see our email update yesterday, read about shelter changes and covid-19 updates [here](#).

From the animals, staff, and volunteers of Willamette Humane Society, **thank you** for always keeping us on solid ground. You have our hopes for a healthy and safe spring.



Segment your communications

Avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

Lapsed Donors

"We miss you... now is a great time to give."

Dear *{([Informal Name])},

Thank you for being a donor to Willamette Humane Society (WHS). It's inspiring to know you care about shelter pets and are committed to keeping them safe, especially during this difficult period we are all experiencing together.

It's true the future is uncertain. We are facing the potential of limited staff coping with a possible increase in need as we are unable to offer spay and neutering services for the time being. We may also be called to help more pets whose families are financially affected by closures and quarantines.

With people limiting their time in public, animals like Blue, Courage, Tyson, and Norma may have to stay with us a little longer, too, but we are committed to making sure they will continue to receive love, and shelter as long as they need to because you care!

We don't know what is headed our way, but we're working hard to prepare for whatever it is. And you can help!

[Give today.](#)

Costs are increasing as we adjust to different working routines, stock up on essentials, and respond to the rapidly changing needs of our shelter animals and the community we serve. We also moved to appointment-only pet adoption and animal intake appointments to ensure our staff, pets, and visitors stay safe while we continue towards our mission. You can find more information [here](#).

Thank you for caring. And know that we care about you too. Together, we will get through this! You have our best wishes for health and safety.



Sara Masser
Donor Programs Manager

P.S. We want to see how you and your pets are social distancing...together. Send your photo to happytails@whs4pets.org!

[Click Here to Donate](#)



Recent Donors

"Thank you, will you give again?"

Dear *{([Informal Name])},

Thank you for being a donor to Willamette Humane Society (WHS). It's inspiring to know you care about shelter pets and are committed to keeping them safe, especially during this difficult period we are all experiencing together.

It's true the future is uncertain. We are facing the potential of limited staff coping with a possible increase in need as we are unable to offer spay and neutering services for the time being. We may also be called to help more pets whose families are financially affected by closures and quarantines.

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Monthly Donors

"Thank you, consider increasing your gift?"

Dear *{([Informal Name])},

Thank you for being a monthly donor to Willamette Humane Society (WHS). It's inspiring to know you care about shelter pets and are committed to keeping them safe, especially during this difficult period we are all experiencing together.

It's true the future is uncertain. We are facing the potential of limited staff coping with a possible increase in need as we are unable to offer spay and neutering services for the time being. We may also be called to help more pets whose families are financially affected by closures and quarantines.

With people limiting their time in public, animals like Blue, Courage, Tyson, and Norma may have to stay with us a little longer, too, but we are committed to making sure they will continue to receive love, and shelter as long as they need to because you care!

We don't know what is headed our way, but we're working hard to prepare for whatever it is. And you can help!

Give, or increase your monthly giving amount, today.

Costs are increasing as we adjust to different working routines, stock up on essentials, and respond to the rapidly changing needs of our shelter animals and the community we serve. We also moved to appointment-only pet adoption and animal intake appointments to ensure our staff, pets, and visitors stay safe while we continue towards our mission. You can find more information [here](#).

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