

The Urgent Case for *Mid-Level Giving*

Building Food Bank Stability in
Uncertain Times



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Introduction

You're at the helm, navigating the *choppy waters of economic instability, donor fatigue, and an ever-shifting fundraising landscape*. In recent years legislation passed by Congress and signed into law signals sweeping changes to the funds and programs food banks rely on to fight hunger.

As federal spending is restructured, Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) cuts of up to \$186B over the next decade, 75% loss of administrative expenses, more stringent Medicaid and work requirements, and the added mandate that states pick up 15-25% of SNAP benefits forecast turbulent times in the fight against hunger. And as fewer people qualify for SNAP, food banks will continue to see record-high demands — in most communities, even surpassing pandemic levels.

The pressure to keep funds flowing to ensure people in our communities don't face food insecurity can feel overwhelming. The future may be uncertain, but you are not alone. AGP is here to listen and support you. Our team has partnered with food insecurity organizations across the U.S. to chart a course toward stable, sustainable fundraising.

Mid-level donors, most defined as those who give between \$1,000 and \$10,000 annually, are your beacon in this storm. They offer a path to maintaining a resilient and growing donor base, even when the seas are rough. This resource isn't just an exploration; it's a roadmap: the kind of consistent, reliable support that mid-level donors can provide. **Let's dive deep into the current economic climate, unpack the latest fundraising data, and discover actionable strategies to turn the tide in your favor.**

SECTION 1

Economic Uncertainty: Why Now is the Time to Double Down on Mid-Level Giving

TARIFFS, STOCK MARKET VOLATILITY, AND THE NONPROFIT SECTOR

The U.S. economy is feeling the *strain of global and domestic pressures*. From tariffs to geopolitical tensions, these forces have led to significant market volatility. Recent market volatility and economic uncertainty have *shaken confidence*, creating a more unstable environment for donors and the organizations that rely on them.

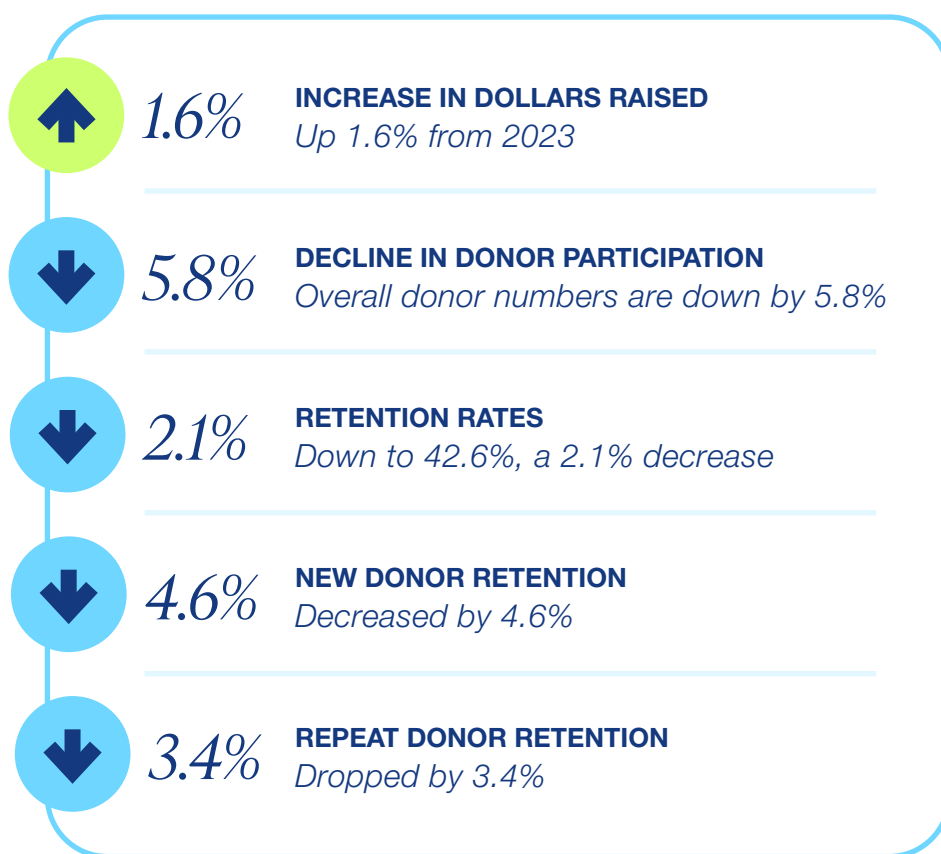
For food banks, the repercussions are immediate. High-net-worth donors may tighten their purse strings as their portfolio values fluctuate, leading to a noticeable decline in major gifts. It's in these moments that mid-level donors become invaluable. Less swayed by stock market shifts and more committed to your cause, they offer a lifeline of steady support when you need it most.



SECTION 2

Fundraising Effectiveness Project: A Stark Warning for Nonprofits

The latest *Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP)*¹ report paints a sobering picture:



Taken together, these trends underscore an urgent need: **focusing on mid-level donors who can bridge the gap left by declining participation elsewhere.**

SECTION 3

The Mid-Level Donor Advantage

Mid-level donors are the *steady force* nonprofits need. They provide:

- ▶ **Steady Revenue Stream:** Consistent contributions that buffer against economic fluctuations and mitigate federal funding loss.
- ▶ **Potential for Growth:** Many are just steps away from major giving with the right cultivation.
- ▶ **Engagement Opportunities:** Mid-level donors respond well to personalized, values-driven outreach.

In short, mid-level donors are not just a financial resource — they are a strategic asset.



SECTION 4

AGP Survey Insights: Nonprofits Seek Growth in Mid-Level Giving

The good news? The sector is recognizing this opportunity. Our recent *Pulse Survey*² reveals a shift in strategy:

- ▶ Over 60% of nonprofits are boosting their focus on mid-level giving in 2025.
- ▶ Nearly half expect tougher economic times ahead.
- ▶ Strong belief in mid-level potential remains resilient.

Organizations are clearly pivoting to prioritize donors who can offer stability during an otherwise unpredictable time.



Outlook for Food Security

The Giving USA Annual Report on Philanthropy highlights opportunities for giving.³ Cumulatively, current-dollar giving to human services, including food banks, increased 7.6 percent from 2022 to 2024. In 2024, *food assistance was the third most requested service, yet donor support lags behind other charitable sectors.*

- ▶ Fundraising increases for food banks and other human services were 8% lower than the 62% average increase across all sectors.
- ▶ A growing number of natural disasters brought renewed focus and urgency to food insecurity.
- ▶ **Acquisition:** While the majority of food banks and human service organizations experienced year-over-year increases in fundraising, the rate of donor acquisition remains lower than that of other charitable giving.
- ▶ **Retention:** Only 36% of human services retained half their donors (compared with 49% in other sectors).

This highlights the importance of prioritizing retention for fundraising stability. Amid rising inflation and budget cuts, there is an ever-widening gap between the increasing demand for food assistance and donor support.

Loyal, mid-level donors offer a revenue stream that food banks can grow to fulfill their mission.

SECTION 6

Why Mid-Level Donors Are Your Key to Stability and Growth

When you step back and look at the bigger picture, *mid-level donors emerge as essential* to your long-term health. Here are some reasons why:



PREDICTABILITY

Mid-level donors offer critical regularity in giving.



DONOR LOYALTY

They often maintain support for five years or more.



UPGRADE POTENTIAL

With the right care, they can move into major donor categories.



ORGANIC ADVOCACY

They help spread the word about your mission.

A strong mid-level program isn't just about today's revenue; it's about laying the groundwork for future major gifts and sustainable growth for hunger relief.

SECTION 7

Building a Strong Mid-Level Giving Program: 5 Key Strategies

Recognizing the opportunity is just the first step. Building a strong mid-level program requires *deliberate strategy*, *thoughtful segmentation*, and *differentiated engagement*.

1. Use Data to Segment and Prioritize

Advanced platforms like GivingDNA can help identify and prioritize donors with mid-level potential. Segment your mid-level file into tiers based on giving history, engagement level, and capacity. Align outreach with donors' social perspectives and personal values. Hunger cuts across all demographics, and strategic outreach can yield support across the political spectrum. Create separate tracks to appeal to conservative, progressive, centrist, and faith-driven donors. Tailor your cultivation and stewardship efforts accordingly.

2. Personalize Donor Engagement

Not all mid-level donors want the same experience. Customize:

- ▶ **Thank-you notes** referencing how their donation filled shelves, supported volunteers, or fed families in need.
- ▶ **Exclusive content** offering behind-the-scenes insights.
- ▶ **Leadership engagement opportunities** such as webinars, volunteer appreciation events, or intimate donor briefings.

Help donors understand the scale of lost funding and the impact of their gift.

3. Create a Tiered Mid-Level Giving Strategy

Develop structured tiers within your program, such as:

- ▶ **Emerging Mid-Level Donors (\$1,000 - \$2,499):** Focus on welcoming touches and demonstrating impact.
- ▶ **Core Mid-Level Donors (\$2,500 - \$4,999):** Provide more personalized updates and engagement.
- ▶ **Accelerating Mid-Level Donors (\$5,000+):** Offer opportunities for strategy discussions, insider events, and one-on-one relationship building.

Encourage donors to commit to recurring donations to provide a steady stream of support. Each tier should have its own engagement cadence, stewardship plan, and upgrade pathway.

4. Stewardship and Recognition

Strong stewardship deepens loyalty. Use:

- ▶ **Tailored impact reports** aligned with donor interests, including nutrition education, local food sourcing, rural and senior access, and food for schools.
- ▶ **Personal milestone recognitions** (anniversaries, birthdays, giving anniversaries).
- ▶ **Public acknowledgment** in donor communications when appropriate.

5. Invest in Technology

Platforms like [GivingDNA](#) help automate segmentation, track behaviors, and personalize communications at scale, making it easier to manage a growing mid-level program effectively.

Each of these strategies strengthens donor relationships and helps maximize the long-term potential of your mid-level file.



SECTION 8

AGP's Expertise in Mid-Level Giving: Proven Success Stories

At AGP, we've seen firsthand how targeted mid-level strategies *deliver results* for hunger relief.

Fulfill Food Bank Case Study⁴

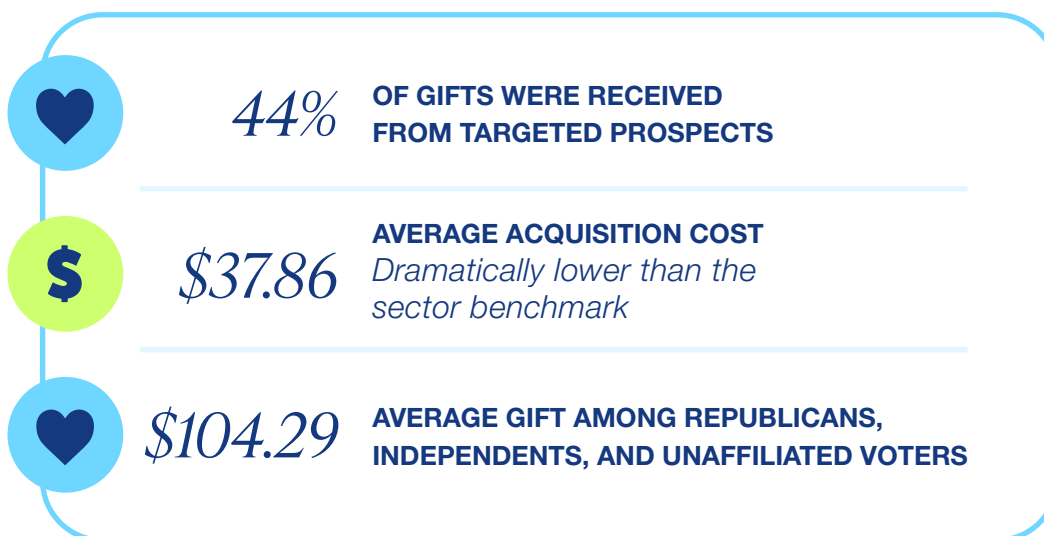
Strained by federal funding cuts, reduced Department of Agriculture (USDA) program support, and looming cuts to SNAP and Medicaid, Fulfill needed to act quickly to help donors understand the severe impact on community members struggling with food insecurity. The food bank had lost 150,000 pounds of food.



The team recognized they could drive higher response rates by engaging donors around their deeply held beliefs.

Leveraging GivingDNA, they segmented donors based on their political beliefs and created lookalike donor files to increase mid-level giving. Rather than driving a singularly bipartisan campaign, Fulfill targeted donors with hyper-personalized campaigns that aligned with their political ideologies — Democratic, Republican, Independent, and unaffiliated.

The tailored messaging strategies resonated deeply and efficiently with donors.



Smart segmentation coupled with value-based messaging did more than help meet immediate needs. It put in place an omni-channel, mid-level strategy for sustainable growth.

47 million people struggle with hunger, including nearly 14 million children and millions of seniors. Whether your mission is focused on ensuring children don't go to school hungry, supporting seniors, eliminating food deserts, providing disaster relief, or facilitating rural access, our expertise in digital insights, donor strategy, cultivation, and stewardship can create dynamic mid-level giving opportunities.

AGP has worked with many Feeding America affiliates. **We're a proud partner in our clients' fight to end hunger for good.** These case studies are not outliers; they are proof that investing in mid-level donors can lead to transformational growth.





SECTION 9

The Bottom Line: Mid-Level Giving is a Non-Negotiable Priority in Fighting Hunger

Despite reduced federal funding, rising food insecurity, and increasingly polarizing perspectives on support for food programs, *mid-level giving can provide hunger relief organizations a safe harbor* from economic instability and shifting donor behaviors.

Mid-level giving represents a goldmine for nonprofit growth. In addition to a broad suite of services that span fundraising and marketing across multiple channels, AGP has decades of experience helping food banks build thriving mid-level donor programs through strategic planning, personalized engagement, and data-driven insights.

**READY TO SCALE YOUR MID-LEVEL PROGRAM
WITH CONFIDENCE?**

Explore our customizable solutions at
teamallegiance.com/mid-level-accelerator

SOURCES

- 1 Fundraising Effectiveness Project, “2024 Fourth Quarter Report,” AFP Global.
- 2 Allegiance Group + Pursuant, “Q3-Q4 2024 Pulse Survey,” Internal Research.
- 3 Giving USA, “The Annual Report on Philanthropy for the Year 2024,” 2025.
- 4 AGP, “Fulfill Food Bank’s Urgent Response Campaign Case Study,” 2025.



MORE ABOUT AGP

Turning Missions Into Movements

At AGP, we help nonprofits turn *missions into movements* — and *supporters into passionate champions*.

We're a strategic partner to mission-driven teams who want more than short-term wins. Our work blends insight and creativity to strengthen what matters most: deeper connection, lasting loyalty, and the resources to power your mission.

We've walked in your shoes. We understand the complexity nonprofits face—because we've lived it. That experience grounds our approach in authenticity, humility, and deep respect for your work.

From donor journeys to brand storytelling, direct mail to digital engagement, and data to design—we bring both intelligence and heart to help you grow what matters. Whether you're looking to inspire action, modernize your strategy, or simply cut through the noise—we will meet you where you are and build from there.

This isn't just fundraising. It's not just marketing.

It's how powerful missions take root, gain momentum, and grow.

Choose AGP for Advertising & Media, Analytics & Performance Measurement, Audience Experience & Research, Brand & Creative, Data Management, Direct Mail, Email & Automation, Mid-level & Major Gifts, SEO & AI Optimization, Voice & Mobile Marketing, Web, App & AI Development, and more. Our clients feed the hungry, heal the sick, nourish souls, enrich lives, care for animals, and build minds. You have an important goal, and we're thrilled to leverage our blend of data, technology, and award-winning creative to get you there.



Contact Us

We'd love to connect *to learn more about your mission and the goals we can help you achieve.*

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