



How to Power Your Sustaining Donor Program With Direct Payment.

Sustaining donations made through the Direct Payment provide uninterrupted support to your nonprofit organization at a lower cost. An established sustainer program will free up time, money and energy so you can focus on your mission, not fundraising.

With Direct Payment, funds are withdrawn from a donor's checking or savings account and transferred electronically to your organization. Converting one-time contributors to sustaining donors helps provide a more continuous and predictable flow of funds to your organization. Additionally by tapping into ACH, you avoid the hassle of updating sustaining donors' expired credit or debit cards.

Want to start a Direct Payment program? Check out these tips.

Gain Approval and Get Set Up

- Create a team within your organization and identify a lead. The team will establish program goals, set and manage the timeline and determine the budget.
 - Some organizations may require Board approval to modify their payment options.
- Check with your membership database provider and card processor to see if they accept Direct Payments.
 - If they do not, contact your bank or credit union to see if they can help.
- Once your organization can accept Direct Payments, update your website to include the option and set it as the default.
 - Update any offline donation forms as well.
 - Start communicating this new payment option.



Communicate with Sustaining Donors to Keep Them Engaged

- If your sustaining donor program is new, come up with a catchy name like *Gold Star* (for a religious organization) or *Vivace* (for a classical music station) — something memorable that will make donors feel appreciated and connected. Don't be afraid to have fun when coming up with a name! Use the name whenever you communicate about the program.
- Tell all donors the benefits of Direct Payments:
 - Uninterrupted support.
 - Fast, secure and reliable.
 - No credit or debit card fees for the organization — so more funds go to the mission.
- Celebrate the anniversary of the member becoming a sustaining donor. Encourage them to increase their contributions each year.
- Recognize and reward sustaining members who donate via Direct Payment by giving them chances to win rewards.
- Encourage or incent check, credit and debit card donors to switch to Direct Payment.
- Mention the Direct Payment option in all mailings, emails and newsletters and in on-air and phone membership campaigns.
- Measure your communications results.
Which messages and strategies worked best?
Which need tweaking?



Visit ACHGiving.org to learn more about how your organization can benefit from Direct Payment.