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Donor-Advised Funds:

What Data Reveals — and What Charities Need to Know

July 9, 2026

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Session CPE Requirements

- You need to attend 50 minutes to receive the full 1 CPE credit.
- There will be 3 attendance markers and 1 polling question throughout the presentation. You must respond to a minimum of 3 to receive the full 1 CPE credit.
- **Both requirements must be met to receive CPE credit.**

Learning Objectives

01

Identify key trends shaping how and when charities are receiving DAF gifts

02

Discuss leading practices for tracking, reconciling, and properly acknowledging DAF contributions

03

Recall well-established ideas to reduce donor friction and unlock additional giving through DAFs

04

Identify the critical compliance considerations every organization should understand when accepting DAF funding

Agenda

Introductions

Donor-Advised Funds (DAF) – basic overview

DAF fundraising report highlights

Accounting and reporting considerations

Gift processing and financial operations

Key takeaways and action items

Q&A

Speakers

Kelsey Vatsaas, CPA, MBA
Managing Principal, Nonprofit Industry

Mary Kay Curtiss, CPA
Principal, Nonprofit Industry Assurance Leader

Mitch Stein
Head of Strategy
Chariot

Chariot for Nonprofits

Raise More Money, Save More Time

DAF pay

- Raise more money
- Get full donor data
- Improve donor experience

Fundraise

Gift Processing

- Gain Hours Weekly
- Automate Key Processes
- Improve Visibility & Security

Unify Enrich Sync

ACLU

INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE

American Heart Association

BOYS & GIRLS CLUBS OF AMERICA

unicef

WWF World Wildlife Fund

ALZHEIMER'S ASSOCIATION

American Cancer Society

Blood Cancer United

NO KID HUNGRY by SHARE OUR STRENGTH

THE MICHAEL J. FOX FOUNDATION

Recognized for Innovation & Leadership as the
Dedicated Fintech Company for Nonprofits

Time Magazine
Best Inventions 2025

BEST INVENTIONS 2025

TIME

Fast Company
Most Innovative Companies

Most Innovative Companies 2025

FAST COMPANY

DAFday
October 8th, 2026

DAFday

DAF Fundraising Report
Released annually

Creating Opportunities for Our Clients

Updated January 2026

14,800+
Nonprofit organizations served

7,700+
Clients engaged in global capabilities

4,400+
Government organizations served

5,600+
Clients engaging employee benefit plan capabilities

690+
Higher education organizations served

27,900+
Clients engaging outsourcing capabilities

255,700+
Active clients

6,900+
Financial institutions served

7,900+
Clients engaging wealth advisory capabilities

131,200+
Private households served

77,800+
Private businesses served

10,700+
Health care organizations served

- Donor → DAF = tax deduction
- Donor advises sponsor → Gifts to public charities
- No minimum distributions
- Donor has technically given up control and decision-making

3.56M DAF accounts
$326.5B in DAF assets
$64.9B granted out of DAFs to charities in 2024

DAF Basics

One Big Beautiful Bill Act → surge in donations to DAFs in Q4 2025

Q4 2025 account surge

- National Philanthropic Trust: +123% YoY
- *Vanguard Charitable: +99% YoY*
- *DAFgiving360 (Schwab Charitable): +50% YoY*
- *Fidelity Charitable: +13% YoY*

Sources: WSJ, Fidelity Charitable 2026 Annual Report; National Philanthropic Trust DAF Report (2014 vs. 2024)

DAF Fundraising Report

Highlights and key findings

The team behind the report.

Mitch Stein

Head of Strategy

Karin Kirchoff

Founder & President

Kate Hollandsworth

SVP of Strategy

Adam Rosenscruggs

Chief Data Officer

Five years.
54 organizations.
The most comprehensive view yet.

Scale of analysis · 2021–2025

$26.1B	147M	$3.3B	907K	54
Total revenue	Total gifts	Total DAF revenue	Total DAF gifts	Participating orgs
2.2x 2025	1.4x 2025	2.8x 2025	2.2x 2025	1.7x 2025

Participating organizations.

54 nonprofits across 7 sectors. Largest and most diverse cohort to date.

ANIMAL WELFARE

- Best Friends Animal Society
- Humane Colorado
- Humane World for Animals
- PETA

INTERNATIONAL RELIEF

- AFMDA
- CARE
- Catholic Medical Mission Board
- Global Giving
- International Rescue Committee
- Mercy Corps
- Project Hope
- Save the Children
- Seeds of Peace

ARTS & CULTURE

- Museum of the American Revolution
- Public Theater
- Smithsonian CM
- Smithsonian NASM
- Smithsonian NMAAHC
- Smithsonian NMAI

HEALTH

- Alzheimer's Association
- American Cancer Society
- American Kidney Fund
- BrightFocus Foundation
- Children's National Hospital
- Susan G. Komen
- New York-Presbyterian

ENVIRONMENTAL / CONSERVATION

- American Rivers
- Chesapeake Bay Foundation
- Defenders of Wildlife
- Environmental Defense Fund
- Food and Water Watch
- National Audubon Society
- NRDC
- Ocean Conservancy
- Save the Redwoods League
- Sierra Club
- The Nature Conservancy
- Trust for Public Land
- World Resources Institute
- World Wildlife Fund

SOCIAL ADVOCACY

- ACLU Foundation
- Center for Reproductive Rights
- Guttmacher Institute
- Planned Parenthood Federation

SOCIAL SERVICES

- Children's Hospital Colorado
- DePelchin Children's Center
- Food & Friends
- JSSA
- Make-A-Wish Foundation
- Operation Homefront
- SF-Marin Food Bank
- No Kid Hungry / Share Our Strength
- Wounded Warrior Project

Five things to take with you.

1

DAFs remain the fastest-growing giving vehicle.

+75%

Median DAF revenue growth vs. +12% for non-DAF (2021–2025).

2

DAFs increase individual giving.

10x

Average upgrade after switching to DAF giving across 50,000 instances.

3

DAFs are used at all donor levels.

67%

Of DAF gifts are under $1,000. Only 2% are $25K+.

4

DAF donors are loyal supporters.

+13 pp

Retention advantage over non-DAF donors.

5

DAF prominence varies by sector.

+99%

Health-sector DAF growth. International Relief: 23.7% of revenue.

III

ANALYSIS OF

DAF Giving Trends

DAF revenue is outpacing non-DAF revenue by every measure we track.

DAF revenue grew 75% over four years. Non-DAF grew 12%.

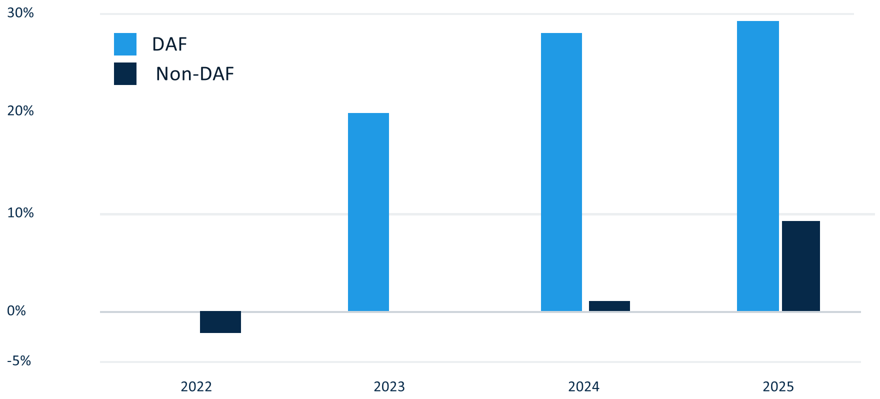
Annual percentage change in DAF vs. non-DAF revenue (median across participants).

OFFSET

10 of 12 organizations that saw overall revenue declines in 2025 had DAF growth that helped offset the losses.

Exhibit 5

Annual percentage change in DAF vs non-DAF revenue.



Distribution of 4-year change

Across 54 participants

PERCENTILE	DAF	NON-DAF
10th	−14%	−23%
25th	13%	−8%
Median	**75%**	**12%**
75th	187%	52%
90th	332%	82%

Median DAF share of revenue rose from 7% to 11% in four years.

The 90th percentile is now at 24% — and growing fastest.

> “We had 73% year-over-year growth in DAF giving in 2025.
> This was driven in part by some large gifts but also a DAF-specific mailing we did to a group of donors we deemed likely to have a DAF.”
>
> **Lisa Morgan** Sr. Director, Annual Giving · BrightFocus Foundation

11%

Median DAF share of revenue in 2025

24%

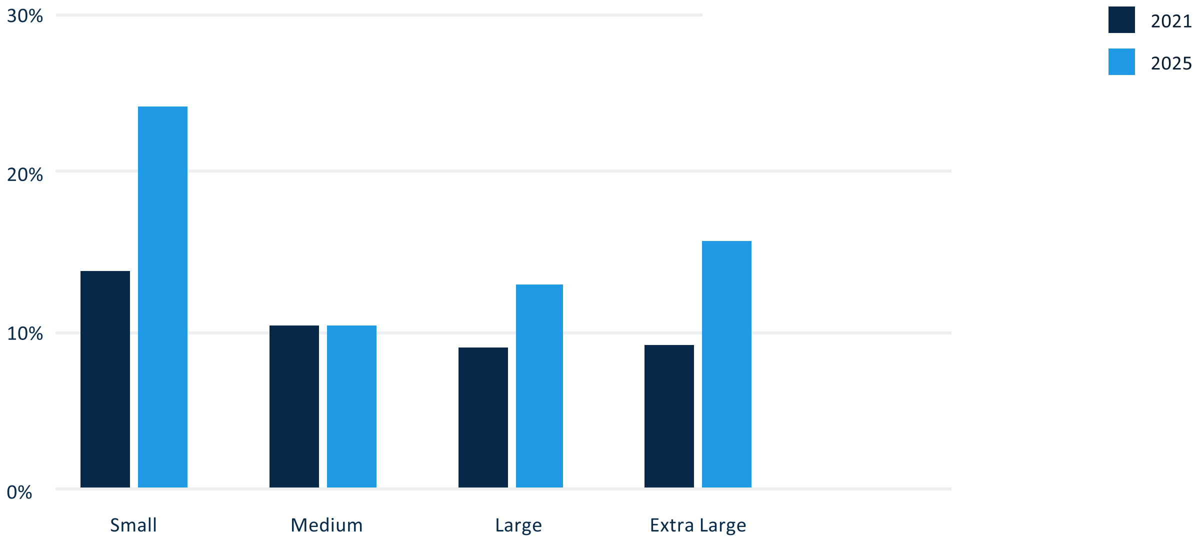
90th percentile DAF share, up from 17% four years ago

Growth is not uniform.

DAF prominence varies dramatically by organization size.

Exhibit 8

By organization size · DAF share of revenue, 2021 vs. 2025

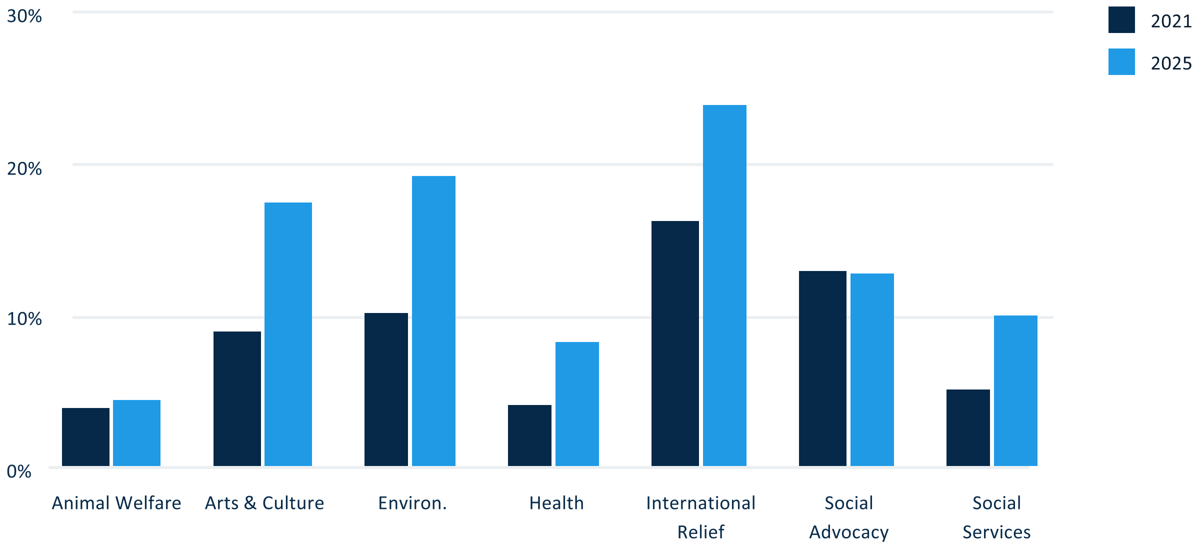


Growth is not uniform.

DAF prominence varies dramatically by sector.

Exhibit 9

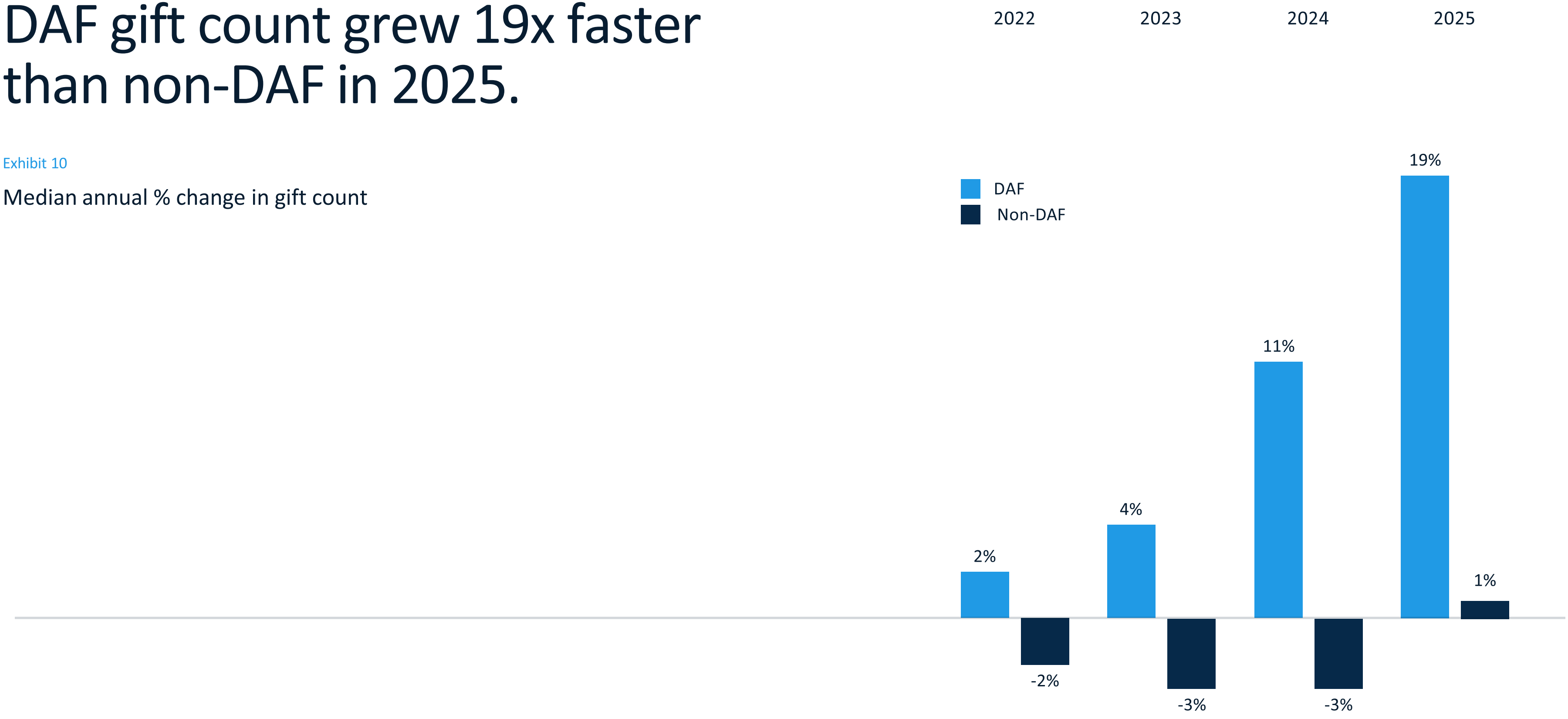
By sector · DAF share of revenue, 2021 vs. 2025



DAF gift count grew 19x faster than non-DAF in 2025.

Exhibit 10

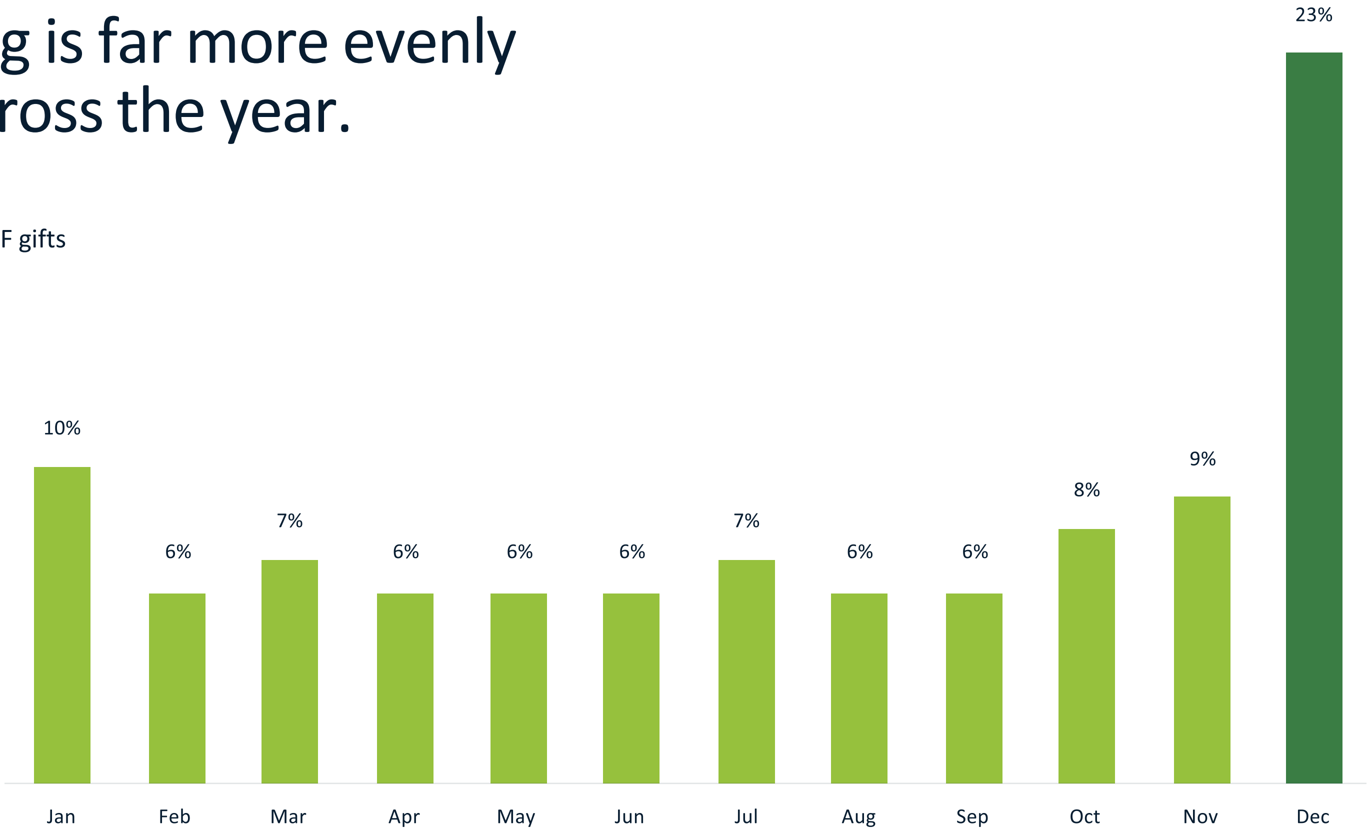
Median annual % change in gift count



And DAF giving is far more evenly distributed across the year.

Exhibit 12

Monthly share of total annual DAF gifts



IV

ANALYSIS OF

DAF Donor Trends

DAF donors give more, give more often, and stay longer.

24

23x larger on average.
12x larger at the median.
17x even excluding $25K+ gifts.

DAF gifts are structurally bigger than non-DAF gifts at every cut of the data.

Gift size by year

YEAR	DAF AVG	DAF MED	NON-DAF AVG	NON-DAF MED	AVG RATIO	MED RATIO
2021	$2,995	$250	$147	$21	20	12
2022	$3,373	$300	$148	$25	23	12
2023	$3,325	$300	$157	$25	21	12
2024	$4,033	$300	$154	$25	26	12
2025	$3,934	$300	$172	$25	23	12

Even when $25K+ gifts are removed, DAF gifts are still **17x larger** than non-DAF gifts on average.

DAFs are not limited to major-gifts. They show up everywhere.

67% of DAF gifts are under $1,000. Only 2% are above $25,000.

Exhibit 15

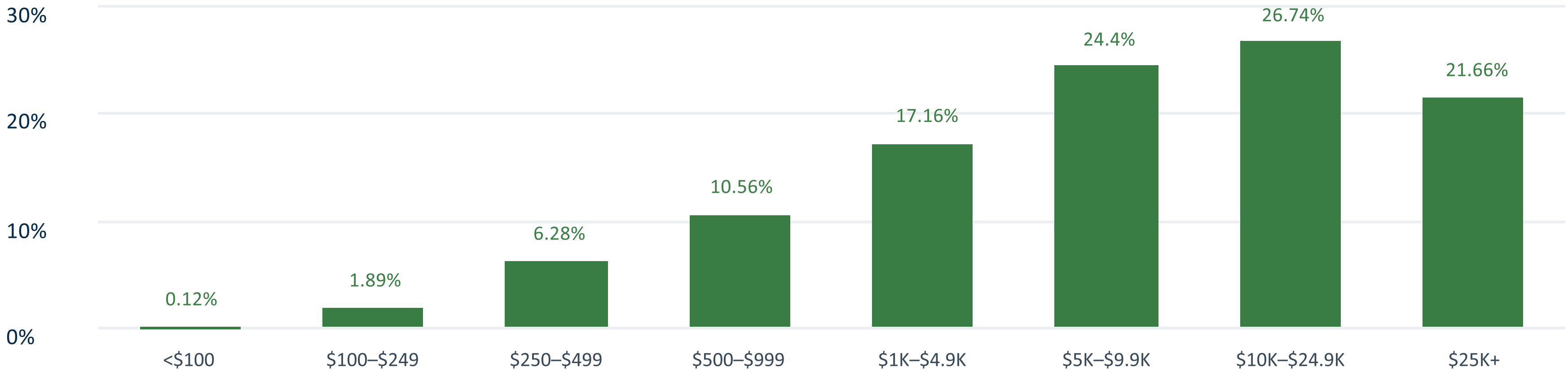
Distribution of DAF gifts by size.

Under $100	15%	$1K – $4.9K	23%
$100 – $249	25%	$5K – $9.9K	5%
$250 – $499	13%	$10K – $24.9K	3%
$500 – $999	14%	$25K and up	2%

Penetration of DAF giving is growing across the board.

Exhibit 16

Penetration of DAF giving by giving range in 2025.



	<$100	$100–$249	$250–$499	$500–$999	$1K–$4.9K	$5K–$9.9K	$10K–$24.9K	$25K+
Growth since 2021	+68%	+35%	+38%	+30%	+30%	+30%	+37%	+48%

DAF donors retain 13 percentage points higher than non-DAF donors. Every year.

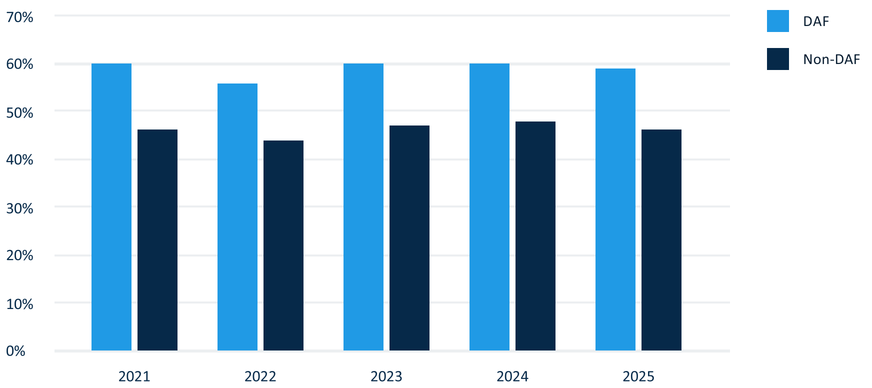
Retention rates by year, DAF vs. non-DAF donors.

13pp

DAF donor retention advantage in 2025, consistent across every year of the study

Exhibit 17

Comparing DAF & non-DAF donor retention rates by year



V

ANALYSIS OF

DAF Adoption's Impact

What happens when an existing donor switches to DAF giving.

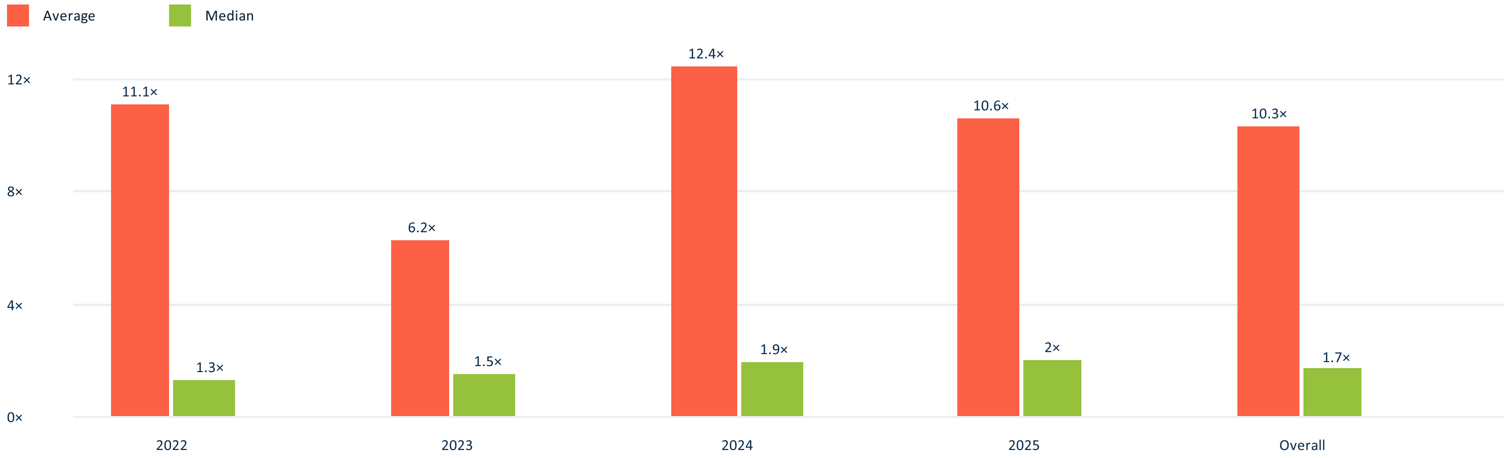
29

84% of switchers increased or maintained their giving.

Average impact in 2025: 10.6x upgrade. Median: 2x upgrade.

Exhibit 19

Percentage change in annual support after switching to DAF giving



Switching to DAF giving drives outsized impact.

25% of switchers upgrade by >5x, which means at least $850 more per donor per year.

PERCENTILE	RELATIVE CHANGE IN GIVING	DOLLAR CHANGE
10th	0.7x	-$50
25th	1.0x	$0
Median	**2.0x**	**+$152**
75th	4.9x	+$850
90th	12.5x	+$3,000

Accounting and Reporting Considerations

Receipting and Use

Donor tax receipt = YES from DAF sponsor

Recipient Charity to DAF sponsor acknowledgement = YES

Recipient charity to donor thank you = YES but should not be tax receipt

Unknown/anonymous recommended practice: reach out to DAF sponsor

Purchasing anything with benefit using DAF = NO

- Gala table: $1k; $500 of benefit, $500 contribution

"Can I use my DAF for that" resource: Can I Use My DAF for That? | NPTrust

Revenue Recognition

Using DAF to make payments on donor prior pledges

- IRS Notice 2017-73 says: Can be used as long as:
  - DAF sponsor makes no reference to existence of charitable pledge when making the grant (on check or in cover letter)
  - No donor/advisor will receive, directly or indirectly, any other benefit (eg: auction item, gala seat)
  - Donor/advisor does not attempt to claim a charitable contribution deduction for the grant
- If not followed, charity could write off existing pledge and recognize new revenue as DAF gifts are received (with adequate legal/governance/business considerations)

Intent to give (multi-year, plan to pay with DAF)

- See next slide for example pledge/commitment form

Example Commitment Form

Formal pledge

I/we commit a total of $________ to be paid by personal check, credit card, or appreciated stock. I understand this is an unconditional pledge and will be paid in full.

Total pledge amount: $_________________

Payment schedule:
- One-time payment of $____ enclosed today.
- I will pay in installments: $____
  [ ] Monthly [ ] Quarterly [ ] Annually
- Start date: ___________

Payment method:
- Check enclosed
- Charge my credit card:
  [ ] Visa [ ] MC [ ] Amex [ ] Discover
- Card Number: ___________________
- Exp: _______

I understand and agree to the terms of the personal pledge outlined above.

Signature: ____

Date: ____

Grant intention from a Donor-Advised Fund (DAF)

I/we intend to recommend a grant from my/our DAF or private foundation to fulfill this support. (Note: Due to IRS regulations, DAFs cannot be used to fulfill legally binding personal pledges.)

Intention amount: $_________________
Name of DAF and sponsor: _________________________
Expected grant date: ____________________________

For organizational planning purposes, if you intend to recommend additional grants in future periods, please outline your intent below:

Future Intention Amount (beyond listed above): $_________
Future Intention Frequency:
[ ] Monthly [ ] Quarterly [ ] Annually
Future Intention Total # of recommended grants: _________

Reporting

Audit – grouped in with contributions

990 – Schedule B

- DAF sponsor (not original donor) listed
- Multiple gifts from one DAF sponsor should be grouped together

Hint: watch slight naming differences on checks

- Fidelity Charitable vs. Fidelity Investments
- Fundholder at XYZ Community Foundation versus Community Foundation

Share Our Strength · No Kid Hungry

Karen Barr and Emily Palmer · Development Operations and Fundraising Data Management

100%
YoY DAF revenue in 2025.

86%
YoY DAF gift count.

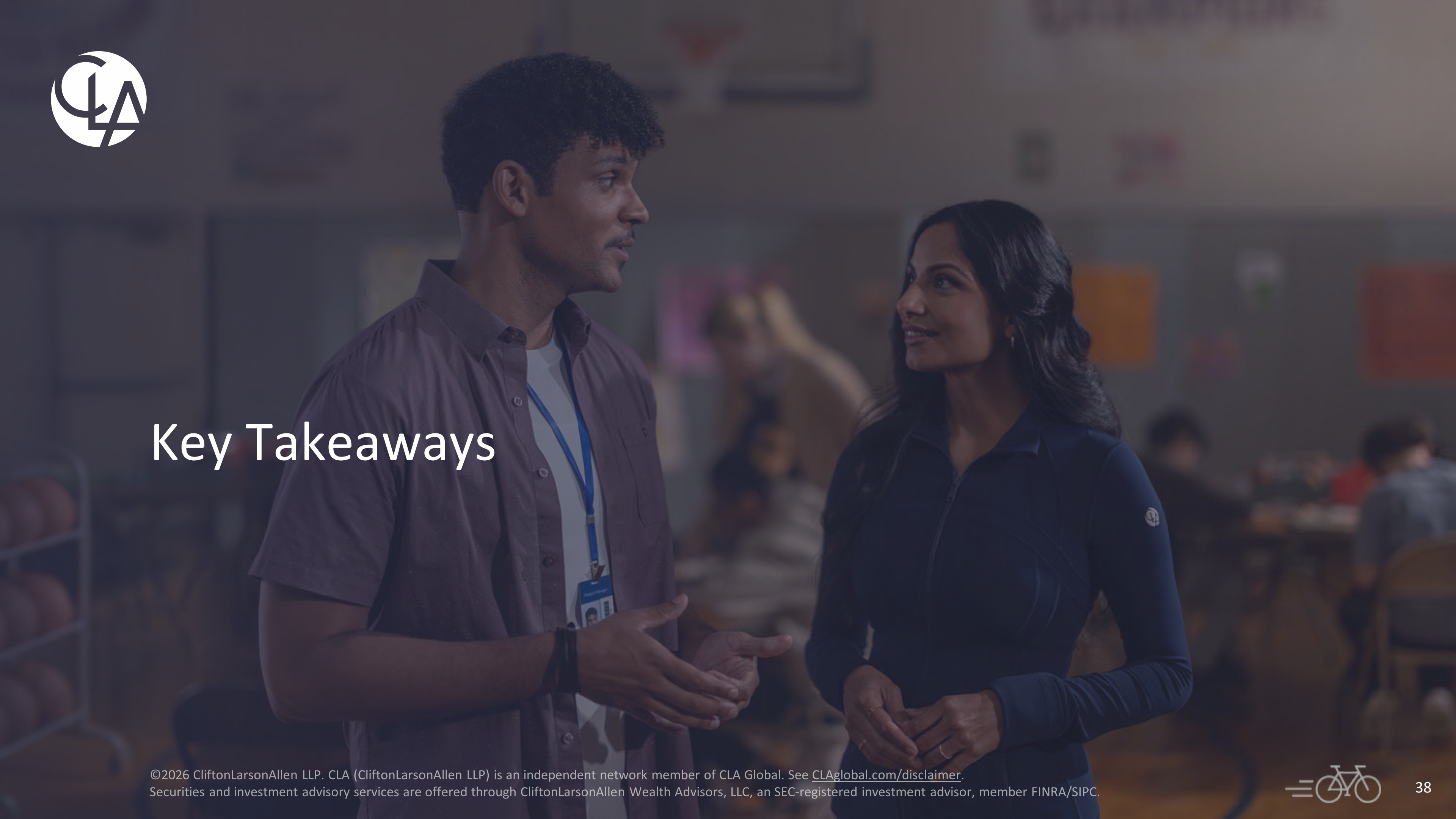
$250
Median dollar increase per switching donor.

"The surround-sound strategy lifted DAF giving not only for DAF Day, but for the full calendar year.
Pairing that growth with Chariot on the back end means we can keep absorbing volume without scaling staff at the same rate.”

Karen Barr
Share our Strength

STRATEGY

- Surround-sound DAF Day 2025: postcard + 3-part email series + paid digital + mobile + DAFpay.
- DAF identification inside existing programs: special letter version, reply-device markers.
- Gift processing automation through Chariot: 3 staff hand-keying replaced by 1 person, 30 min twice a month.
- Workplace giving (Benevity) data unified, surfaced to corporate partnerships team.



Key Takeaways

Key Takeaways and Action Items

Policies and procedures:

1. DAF gift acceptance policy (external)
2. Procedure, for example: how DAF gifts are captured, coded, reconciled, acknowledged (internal)

Budgeting

- Cash and accrual planning
- Team with with development to anticipate DAF versus multi-year impact

DAF donor strategy

- Identify donors with DAFs
- Clarify ask/plan to pay
- Simplify steps to give with DAF (clear EIN on website; DAFpay; etc.)

Thanks!

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