



Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Denver Increases Online Giving By Switching from PayPal to Qgiv

Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Denver has been serving Northern Colorado since 1927. They serve thousands of people each year in three interlocking areas: Women's Services, Family and Child Care Services, and Housing and Shelter Services.

The members of the resource development team of Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Denver have a lot on their plates. They're responsible for securing funding for the agency's myriad programs, which do everything from providing meals to the hungry to serving senior citizens to offering pregnancy counseling. The small, dedicated team of fundraisers began accepting online donations years ago, using a simple PayPal form to accept gifts from their supporters. The agency quickly outgrew PayPal's basic features and decided to upgrade to a more functional platform. They signed up for Qgiv, an online payment platform for nonprofit and faith-based charities, and have experienced exceptional growth ever since.

Tricia Erickson, part of the Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Denver's Financial Analysis team, explained that the agency's fundraisers needed an online donation platform that offered diverse fundraising methods and was easy to use. "We were looking for something that could do more," she said. The agency appreciated that Qgiv offered fundraising methods like in-person kiosks, mobile options, social fundraising, and more. Erickson also mentioned that Qgiv "is easier for our resource department to use" — an important consideration for the agency, which relies on their resource department for such a large part of their funding.

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The resource department certainly had their work cut out for them under their old system; they didn't accept donations online and relied on more traditional fundraising methods. "We did not have an online giving system set up. Everything was manual input," said Erickson. They used the old system when donors called or visited their facilities with a credit card. Other donations were manually entered when people mailed their credit card information to the agency for a one-time or recurring payment.

Switching to Qgiv has proven to be a good choice for the agency. Aside from saving the resource development team time and effort, the agency's online forms succeeded in raising a significant amount of funds right away. In 2014, their first year accepting online donations, the Catholic Charities Archdiocese of Denver used Qgiv's platforms to raise more than \$1,158,000 in online donations alone.

The flood of online donations the agency experienced when they switched to Qgiv in 2014 is still going strong, and the agency is still experiencing growth in online donations. Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Denver raised about \$180,000 from January 1 to May 7, 2014. During the same time period in 2015, they raised around \$206,000. That 14.4% increase is far higher than the average growth of online donations in the wider nonprofit industry, and the agency expects that trend to continue.

The agency's base of sustaining donors is growing, too, thanks to Qgiv's ability to set up recurring donations. "We have some donors who still like to send in checks every month," Erickson said. "Others like to set up a credit card and make donations that way." The agency started accepting recurring donations in 2014, and the amount of recurring gifts has increased 102%. Recurring donations now account for more than 30% of the online donations the agency collects each month.

One of the most remarkable examples of growth is the agency's participation in the annual bike tour known as Ride the Rockies. To raise money for the agency's Samaritan House homeless shelter, a team of bicyclists tackles a week-long bike ride — of more than 400 miles — through the Rocky Mountains. When the agency migrated to Qgiv's platforms, they moved their event to Hobnob, Qgiv's social fundraising platform. When the event was run on their previous system, donors could make a gift to the event, but had to specify which rider they were supporting in a memo field. Hobnob allowed each rider to build a personal fundraising page, which they could then use to raise money through customized e-mail appeals, social posts, and personal outreach.

Moving their fundraising to Hobnob for the Ride the Rockies event made a huge impact on the fundraiser's success. In 2013, the event used their previous system to raise around \$20,000. The next year, the event raised over \$40,000 on the Hobnob system —an increase of over 100% -- and \$115,000 in 2015. In those three years, the agency saw a 500% increase in donations for that event because of the enthusiasm of the fundraisers, the creativity of the organization's resource development department, and their familiarity with the Hobnob system.

The resource development team at the Catholic Charities in the Archdiocese of Denver is a small, innovative, and fiercely dedicated team that raises the money necessary for the agency to run its various ministries. Their experiences with Qgiv prove that teams like theirs can succeed in every circumstance, especially when they are equipped with the right set of tools. Whether they're raising money for pregnancy counseling or biking across mountain ranges to support homeless shelters, the team knows their fundraising tools will help meet and surpass any goals they set for their agency.

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