



LET'S GET BACK TOGETHER:
TURNING SUSTAINER BREAK-UPS
INTO MAKE-UPS

INTRODUCTIONS



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AGENDA

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

ACLU'S STORY

RED FLAGS: RELATIONSHIP METRICS
TO TRACK




WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

A photograph of a beach at sunset. In the foreground, there are green bushes. The middle ground shows a sandy beach with several people walking or sitting. In the background, a long wooden pier extends into the ocean, topped with a row of white buildings. The sky is a mix of blue, orange, and pink.

NO REALLY YOU SHOULD CARE

SUSTAINER GIVING IS GROWING IN
THE US AND FOR SOME
NONPROFITS, IS ALREADY
ACCOUNTING FOR THE MAJORITY OF
INDIVIDUAL GIVING DOLLARS.



WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

- Organizations are spending huge amounts of money finding new sustainers and not enough attention on keeping them AND convincing them to come back if they do fall off.
- The effort and cost to re-acquire and “win” them back is much less than acquiring a new sustainer.
- Make smart choices to spend your fundraising dollars the best possible way you can and back your strategies with data that tracks your investments.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

Each year programs like the ACLU lose about **20%** of their active Sustainers.
This group of donors is a highly valuable audience to invest in recapture efforts.

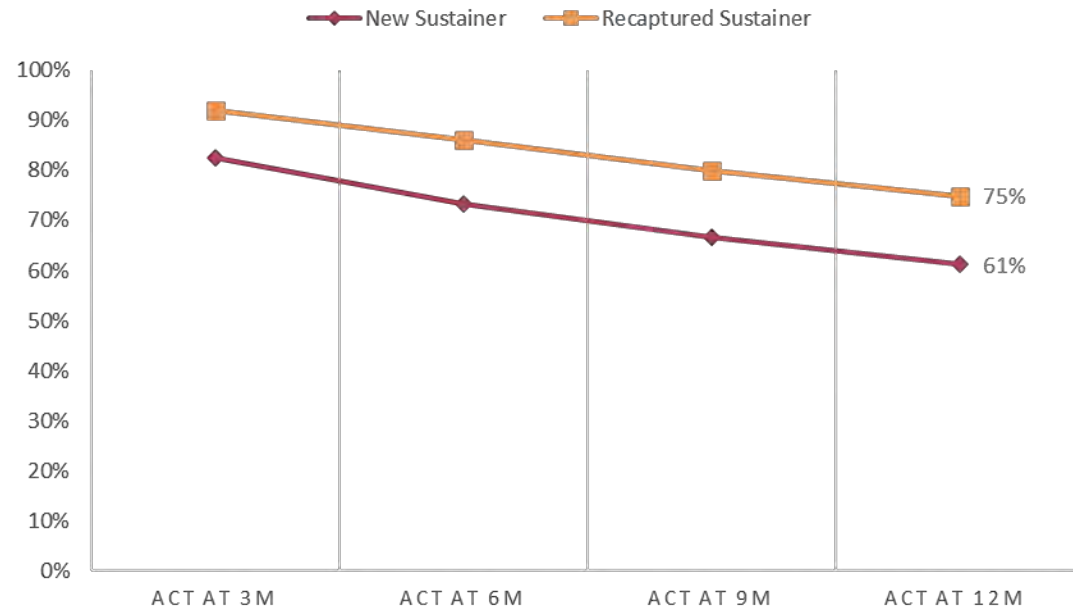
WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

\$5.3 million

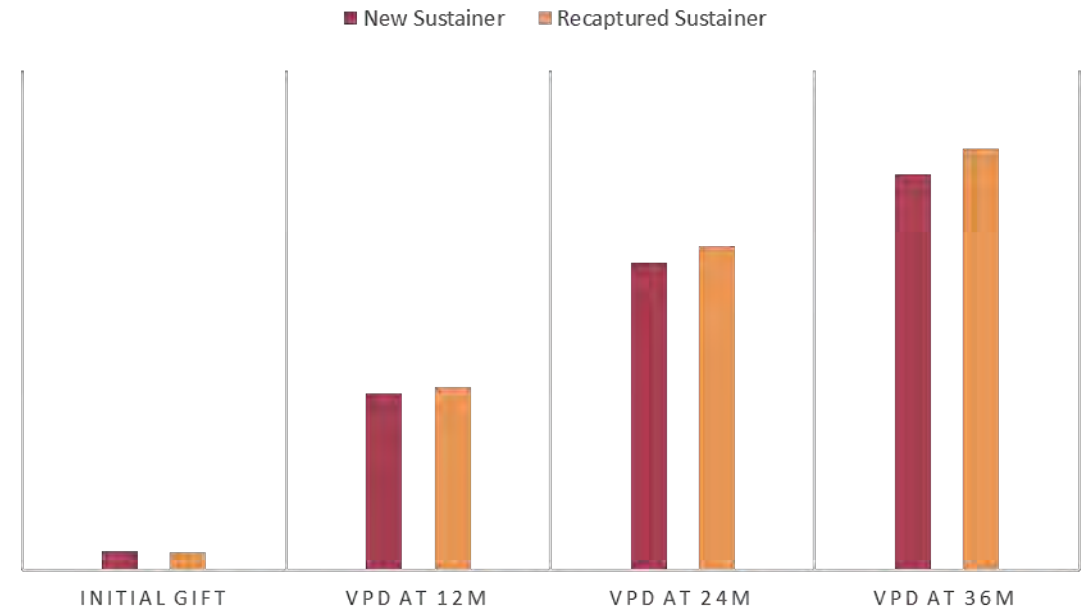
was generated from recaptured
Sustainers in the last 10 years.

WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

ACTIVATION

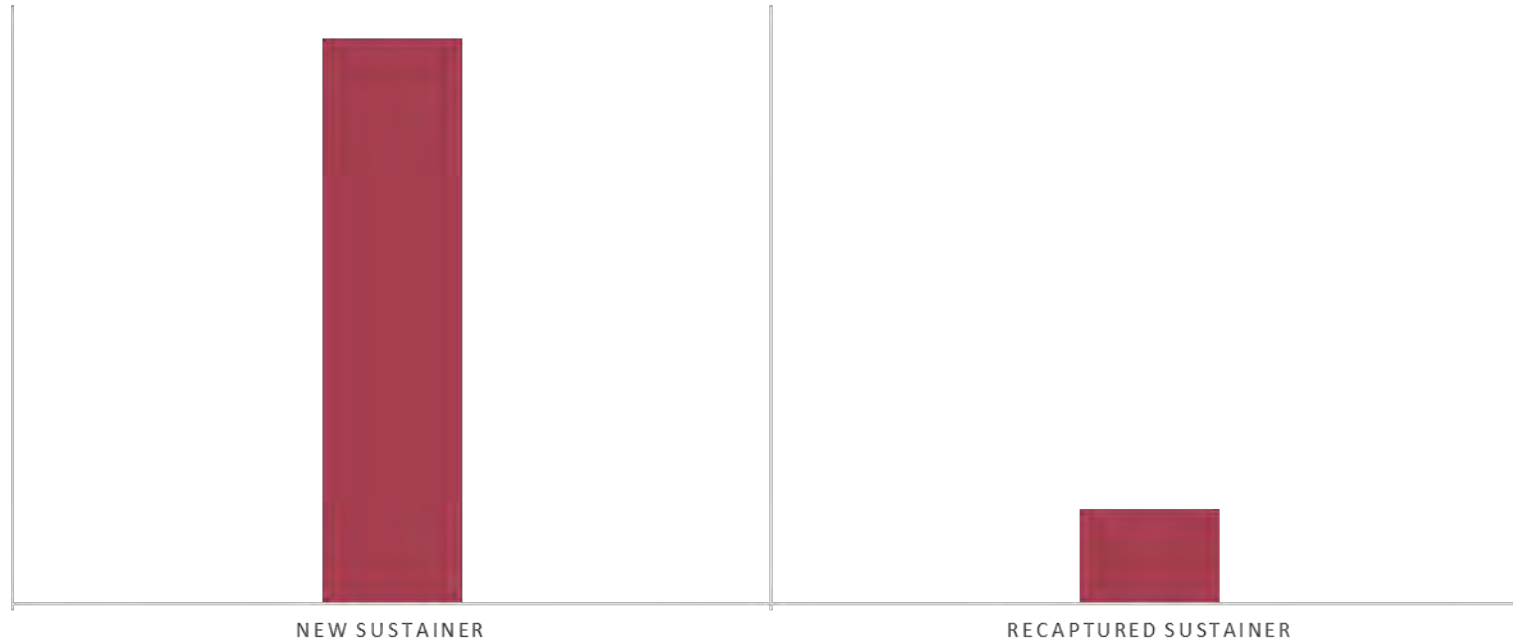


VALUE PER DONOR



WHY YOU SHOULD CARE

**AVERAGE COST TO (RE)ACQUIRE A SUSTAINER IS 1/8 OF THE
COST OF ACQUIRING A NEW SUSTAINER**



ACLU'S STORY



ACLU'S STORY

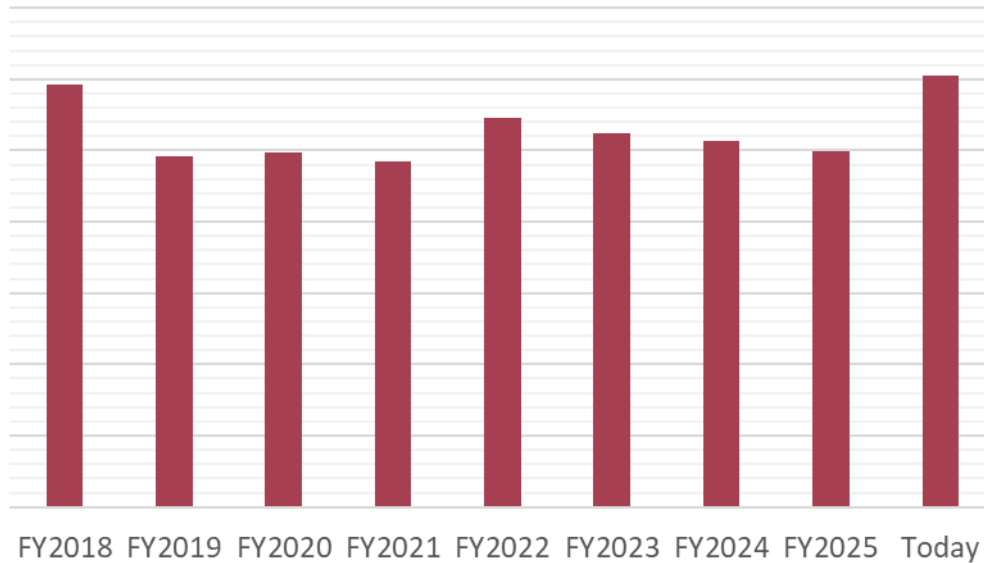
THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION
WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1920 AND HAS BEEN
AT THE CENTER OF NEARLY EVERY MAJOR
CIVIL LIBERTIES BATTLE IN THE U.S. FOR
OVER 100 YEARS.

WE FIGHT TO PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS AND
LIBERTIES FOR ALL.

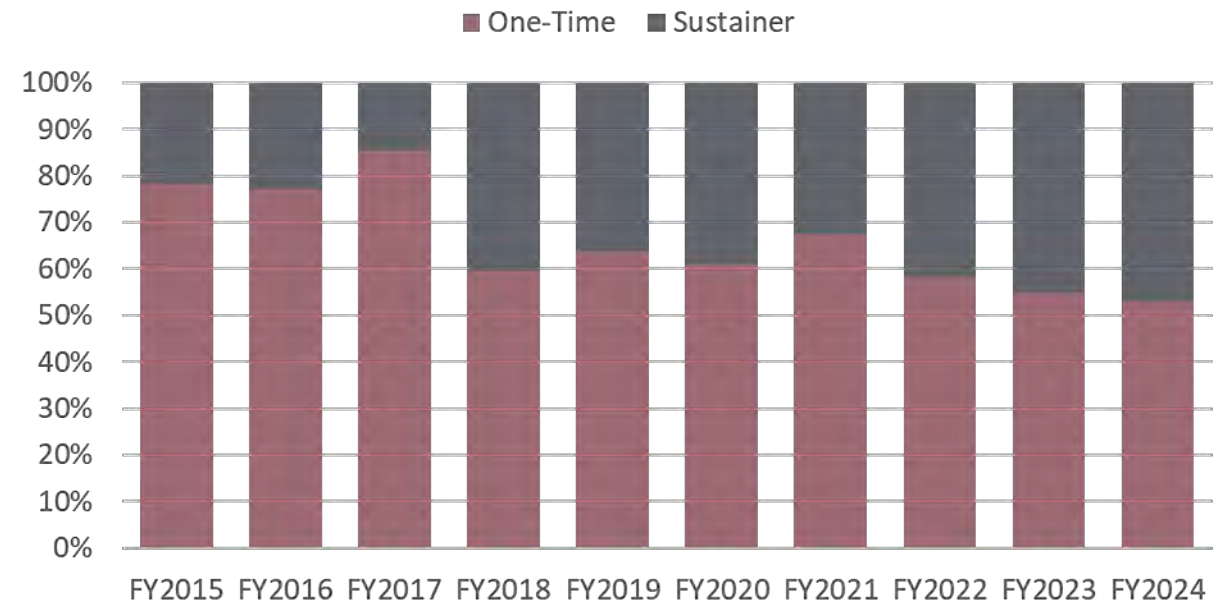


ACLU'S SUSTAINER PROGRAM

SUSTAINER COUNTS



COMPOSITION OF REVENUE



ACLU'S SUSTAINER PROGRAM

ACLU's sustainers are known as Guardians of Liberty (GOLs). Sustainers are acquired through numerous channels with campaigns running throughout the year.

The ACLU acquires both monthly and annual sustainers.



HOW ACLU PREVENTS THE BREAK-UP

A strong onboarding and consistent flow of informational touchpoints.

- GOLs get a GOL-specific member card and window sticker with their initial acknowledgement letter.
- Around the 3-month mark they receive a notecard and thank you email.
- Starting shortly after join, they get a monthly newsletter over email.
- They get the ACLU Magazine in the mail 2 times per year.
- GOLs are invited to our live-streamed town halls, which happen 3-4 times per year and in emergency response moments.
- Every January they get their new GOL member card, together with a letter focusing on our impact for the last year and our readiness for what's to come.
- Finally, when they hit a milestone anniversary in their giving (3 years, 5 years, 10 years, and so on) they receive a thank you notecard commemorating this.

HOW ACLU PREVENTS THE BREAK-UP

We ask Sustainers to actively participate beyond their monthly or annual gift.

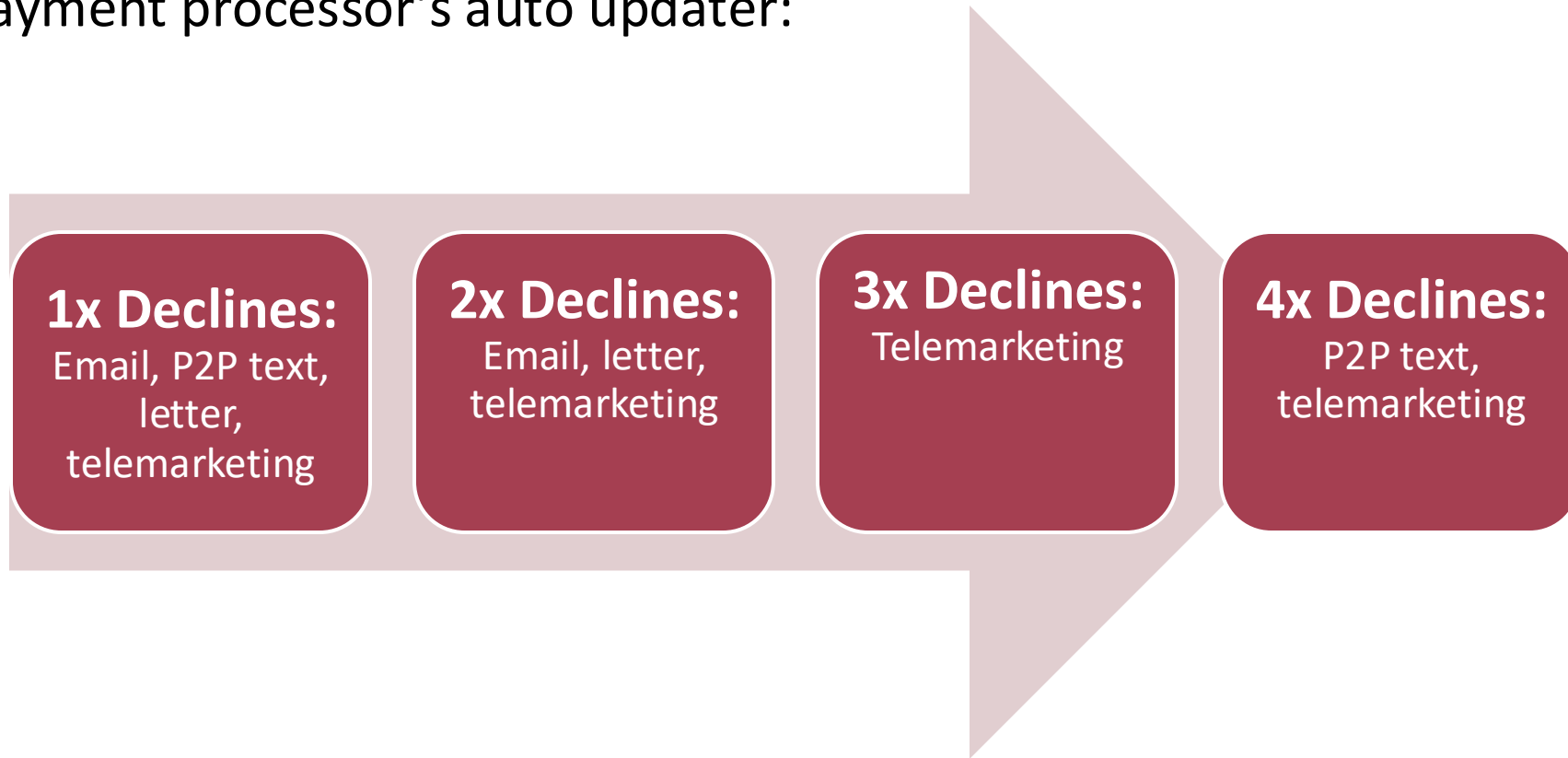
- While not specifically designed as cultivation, they get frequent information and action content on email, including asking them to sign petitions or take other actions, both from ACLU National and from their state Affiliate.
- They get asks on email with a reduced volume, typically included in end-of-year, Giving Tuesday and emergency appeals, at a lower cadence than the rest of file. In the mail, they are only included in one appeal at year-end.
- They also get asks to upgrade their gift, up to 4 times per year in telemarketing and P2P text, and 2-3 times per year on email, including during emergency moments.
- To prevent credit card declines, we send a reminder email to GOLs whose credit cards are about to expire, letting them know how to update their payment details.

ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

- We lose Sustainers either through a processing issue (declined card) or an individual actively canceling by calling or emailing Donor Services or submitting a contact form on the website.
- As alternatives to cancellation, we offer a lower gift amount or a three-month pause.
- When those offers do not work or credit cards are declined, the recapture plan is put into place.

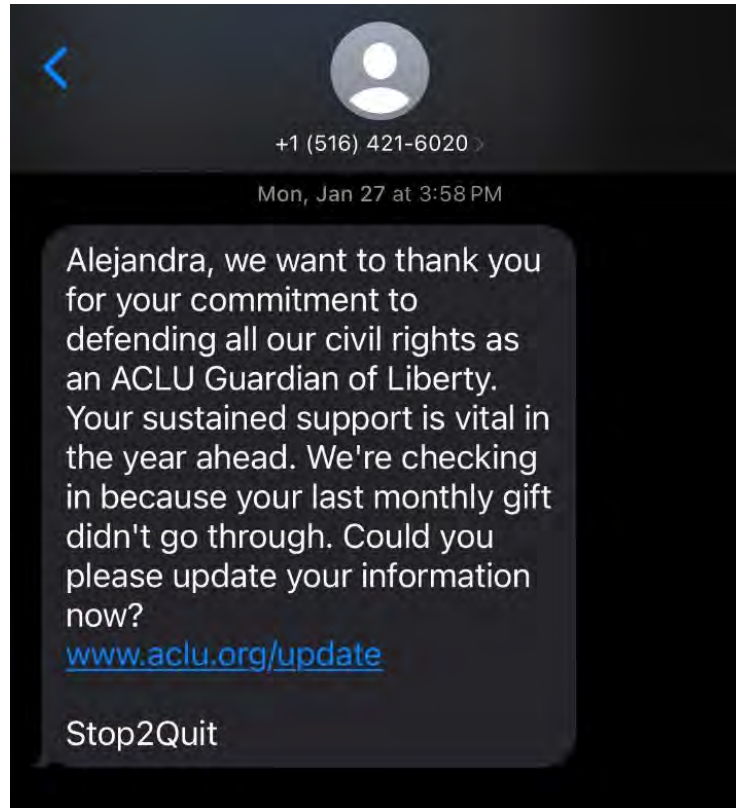
ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

When a sustainer's payment method is declining, we keep them on file for 6 months. During this time, we do the following to try to recapture them, in addition to our payment processor's auto updater:



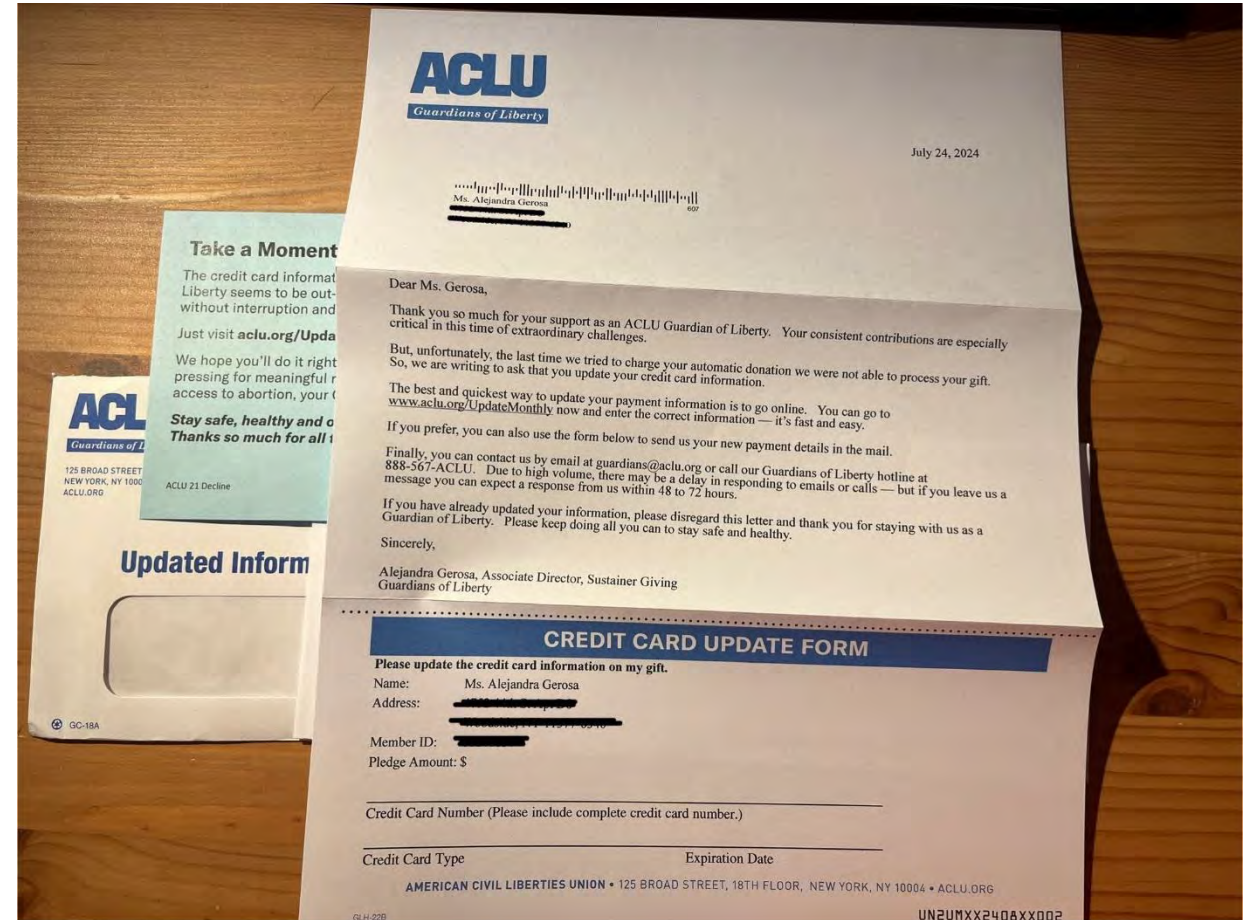
ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

Here is a recapture text.



ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

Here is an example of a recapture letter

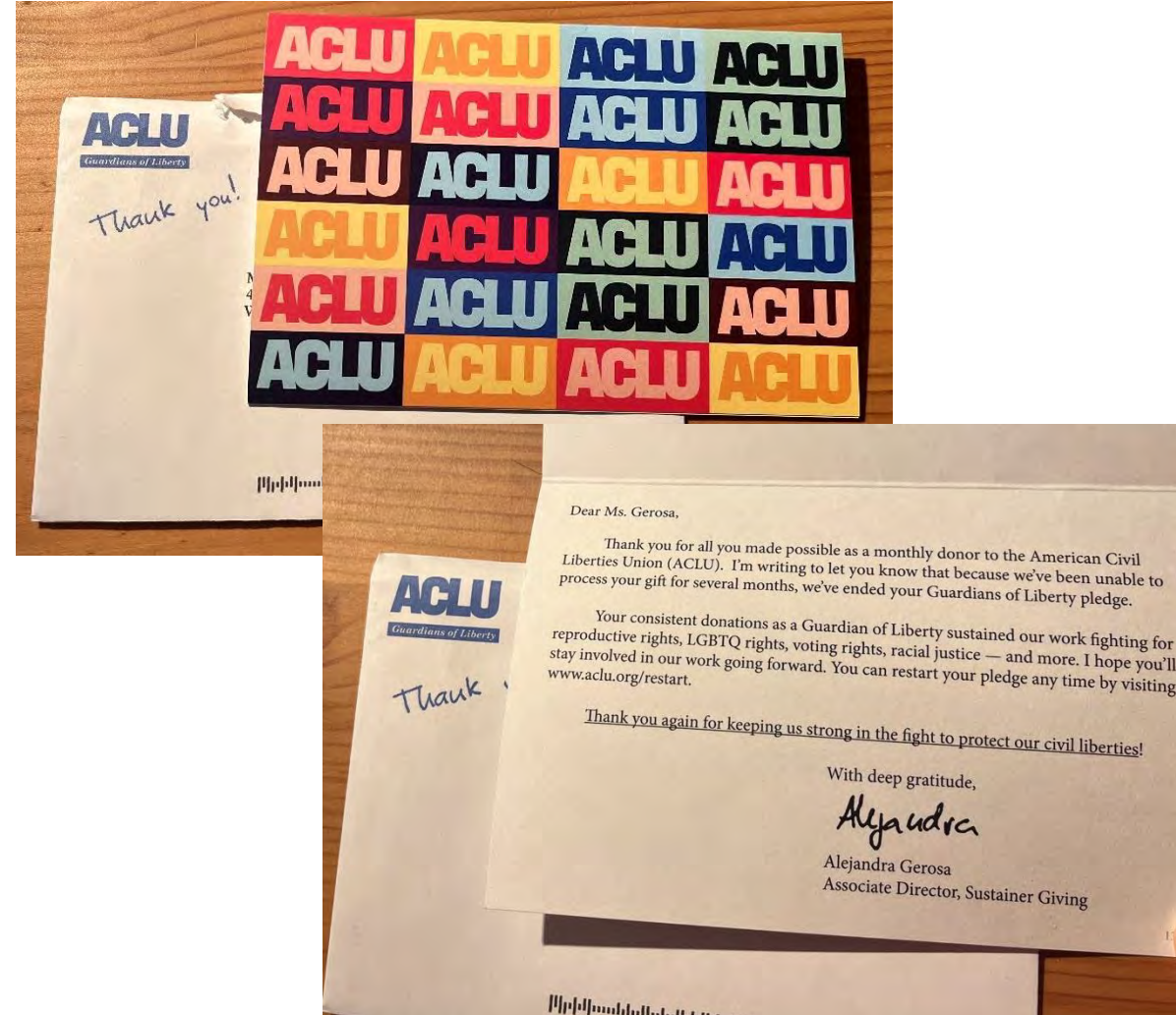


ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

After 6 months of unsuccessful attempts to bring them back, we lapse them out.

After they cancel/lapse out:

- We send them a notecard confirming the cancellation or letting them know we ended the pledge, respectively, and thanking them for their past support.
- This also includes a URL where they can restart their pledge whenever they are ready.



ACLU'S RECAPTURE STRATEGIES

- Canceled and lapsed out donors then feed into our sustainer conversion efforts, starting at 6 months post cancellation or 3 months post lapse.
- They get an adapted version of the GOL conversion email series, telemarketing and P2P text, inviting them to come back as GOLs.

PREVENT A “FAKE” BREAK-UP

- Declined Card
 - Is the credit card updater working? Do you have multiple updater partners running more than once a month?
 - Payment Attempts
 - After a credit card declines, what is the immediate retry schedule and frequency?
 - After the initial re-try, what is the timing and frequency of attempts before you stop – 3 months, 4 months?
 - Is it easy for the donor to provide an updated card number?
 - Link in email to online form or donor portal
 - Phone number or email to a devoted sustainer representative at a call center

PREVENT A “FAKE” BREAK-UP


- A People Problem?
 - Missed charged file at the processor
 - Missed upload from processor
 - Something is off in the merging of the data into the CRM
 - Is a key person on vacation who manually does a step?
 - Is a concern from your CC processor stuck in your junk folder or did you not update your vendors with a new contact after their previous point person left the organization?

RED FLAGS: RELATIONSHIP METRICS TO TRACK



RED FLAGS: RELATIONSHIP METRICS TO TRACK

WATCHING THE NUMBERS CAN BE A QUICK WAY TO SPOT ISSUES IN YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR SUSTAINERS. KNOWING WHAT TO LOOKOUT FOR, SETTING BENCHMARKS AND GOALS, CAN BE A WAY TO PREVENT LOSING DONORS AND REVENUE.



RED FLAGS



- Significant changes in activation/attrition rates.
- Spikes in declines related to specific decline reasons.
- Lack of recapture success from long-term delinquents.

RED FLAGS

Join Date	Month 1	Month 2	Month 3	Month 4	Month 5	Month 6	Month 7	Month 8	Month 9	Month 10	Month 11	Month 12	Month 13	Month 14	Month 15	Month 16	Month 17	Month 18	Month 19	Month 20	Month 21	Month 22	Month 23	Month 24
2020-01	100%	86%	80%	77%	74%	71%	69%	66%	64%	61%	59%	56%	55%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	48%	47%	46%	46%	45%	44%
2020-02	100%	89%	83%	78%	75%	72%	69%	67%	65%	63%	62%	60%	59%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%
2020-03	100%	89%	83%	78%	75%	72%	69%	67%	65%	63%	62%	60%	59%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%
2020-04	100%	88%	82%	78%	74%	71%	68%	66%	64%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%	48%
2020-05	100%	84%	79%	74%	71%	68%	65%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	56%	54%	53%	52%	51%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	47%	46%
2020-06	100%	88%	82%	78%	74%	71%	68%	66%	64%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%	48%
2020-07	100%	89%	83%	78%	75%	72%	69%	67%	65%	63%	62%	60%	59%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%
2020-08	100%	88%	82%	78%	74%	71%	68%	66%	64%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	50%	49%	48%
2020-09	100%	85%	80%	75%	71%	69%	66%	64%	62%	60%	59%	58%	56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	49%	48%	47%	47%
2020-10	100%	86%	80%	75%	72%	68%	67%	64%	62%	61%	58%	58%	57%	56%	54%	53%	52%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	48%	47%
2020-11	100%	85%	79%	75%	71%	Performance begins to decline							56%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	48%	47%	46%
2020-12	100%	84%	78%	74%	70%								55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	49%	48%	47%	46%	46%
2021-01	100%	82%	76%	72%	69%	66%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	48%	47%	46%	45%	45%
2021-02	100%	80%	74%	70%	67%	64%	62%	60%	58%	57%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	46%	46%	45%	44%	--
2021-03	100%	79%	74%	69%	66%	63%	61%	59%	57%	56%	55%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	47%	46%	45%	44%	--	--
2021-04	100%	79%	74%	69%	66%	Intervention Instituted						55%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	47%	46%	45%	--	--
2021-05	100%	80%	74%	70%	67%							55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	46%	--	--	--
2021-06	100%	79%	74%	69%	66%							55%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	47%	47%	--	--	--	--
2021-07	100%	78%	73%	68%	65%	63%	60%	58%	57%	55%	54%	53%	51%	50%	49%	48%	48%	47%	--	--	--	--	--	--
2021-08	100%	79%	74%	69%	66%	63%	61%	59%	57%	56%	55%	53%	52%	51%	50%	49%	48%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2021-09	100%	82%	76%	72%	69%	66%	63%	61%	60%	58%	57%	55%	54%	53%	52%	51%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2021-10	100%	83%	77%	73%	69%	67%	64%	62%	60%	59%	57%	56%	55%	54%	53%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2021-11	100%	84%	78%	74%	70%	67%	65%	63%	61%	59%	58%	57%	55%	54%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2021-12	100%	84%	78%	74%	70%	67%	65%	63%	61%	59%	58%	57%	55%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-01	100%	84%	78%	74%	70%	67%	65%	63%	61%	59%	58%	57%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-02	100%	83%	77%	73%	69%	66%	64%	62%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-03	100%	82%	76%	72%	69%	Performance returns to baseline								--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	
2022-04	100%	85%	79%	75%	71%									--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-05	100%	83%	77%	73%	69%	67%	64%	62%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-06	100%	84%	78%	74%	70%	67%	65%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-07	100%	85%	79%	75%	71%	68%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-08	100%	85%	79%	75%	71%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-09	100%	84%	78%	74%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-10	100%	83%	77%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-11	100%	84%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--
2022-12	100%	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

RED FLAGS

Monitoring post first-year drop-off is just as critical as monitoring those first few months.

August Attrition of 2+ Year Sustainers			
Credit Card Payment Method Monthly Frequency			
Channel	FY24	FY25	Change in Points
Canvassing	-3.00%	-3.06%	-0.06%
Digital Ads	-1.87%	-1.59%	0.28%
Email	-0.77%	-1.02%	-0.25%
Mail	-0.54%	-1.53%	-0.99%
TM	-0.63%	-1.06%	-0.43%
Text	-1.45%	-2.37%	-0.92%
Web	-1.13%	-1.27%	-0.14%



RED FLAGS

Decline reports can be a treasure trove of information, often validating what you are observing in other monitoring reports and provide you with actionable recapture opportunities.

Decline Reason/Note	Actions/Comments	Apr declines	May declines	Jun declines	Aug declines
Decline - Re-try Transaction		657	730	1,317	672
Decline CVV2/CID Fail	contact cardholder	416	416	1,282	586
Expired Card	Any issues with card account updater service?	638	709	1,112	494
Generic Decline		134	149	818	542
Insufficient Funds		356	395	181	359
Invalid Account Number		598	595	1,346	1,358
Invalid or expired card; contact cardholder to update	contact cardholder	1,210	1,204	648	287
Invalid Transaction	is CVV (card verification value) out of date?	526	523	889	1,379
Invalid transaction or card restriction; verify information and resubmit	Double-check the card details and billing information for accuracy, and then resubmit the transaction	190	211	1,293	661
Issuer Generated Error		992	987	1,304	1,323
Lost/Stolen Card		490	488	1,323	1,136
Pick Up Card		851	847	483	1,208
Restricted Card		647	644	1,184	980
Suspected Fraud		626	695	772	351

RED FLAGS

It can be easy to lose sight of recapture opportunities that may exist beyond what happens in the first few months after delinquency.

# of Months Delinquent	% of Recaptures			
	Sustainer Product 1	Sustainer Product 2	Grand Total	Cume%
1	72.696%	76.216%	76.2%	76.2%
2	20.819%	14.937%	14.9%	91.2%
3	3.754%	5.240%	5.2%	96.4%
4	1.024%	2.486%	2.5%	98.9%
5	1.706%	1.092%	1.1%	100.0%
6	0.000%	0.023%	0.0%	100.0%
7	0.000%	0.005%	0.0%	100.0%
8	0.000%	0.002%	0.0%	100.0%
9	0.000%	0.002%	0.0%	100.0%
10	0.000%	0.001%	0.0%	100.0%
11	0.000%	0.001%	0.0%	100.0%
12+	0.000%	0.000%	0.0%	100.0%
Grand Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

Of the recurring donors that eventually come back, this organization is recapturing 96% of them in their first 3 months of delinquency, which is great but...

Conversely, there was almost no reactivation happening after month 5.

MAKE RECAPTURE PART OF YOUR PLAN

- Add or shift investments from new sustainer acquisition to recapture efforts, or even from new 1x donor acquisition efforts to sustainer recapture efforts.
- Set recapture and performance targets by month and by channel and constantly measure.
- Track performance and work with partners to fix problems.
- Don't ignore longer-term sustainers who could find themselves in a new financial situation 2 years later.
- Take advantage of all the recapture services your vendor partners are offering, e.g. canvassers calling lapsed sustainers who they originally recruited.



THANK YOU

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