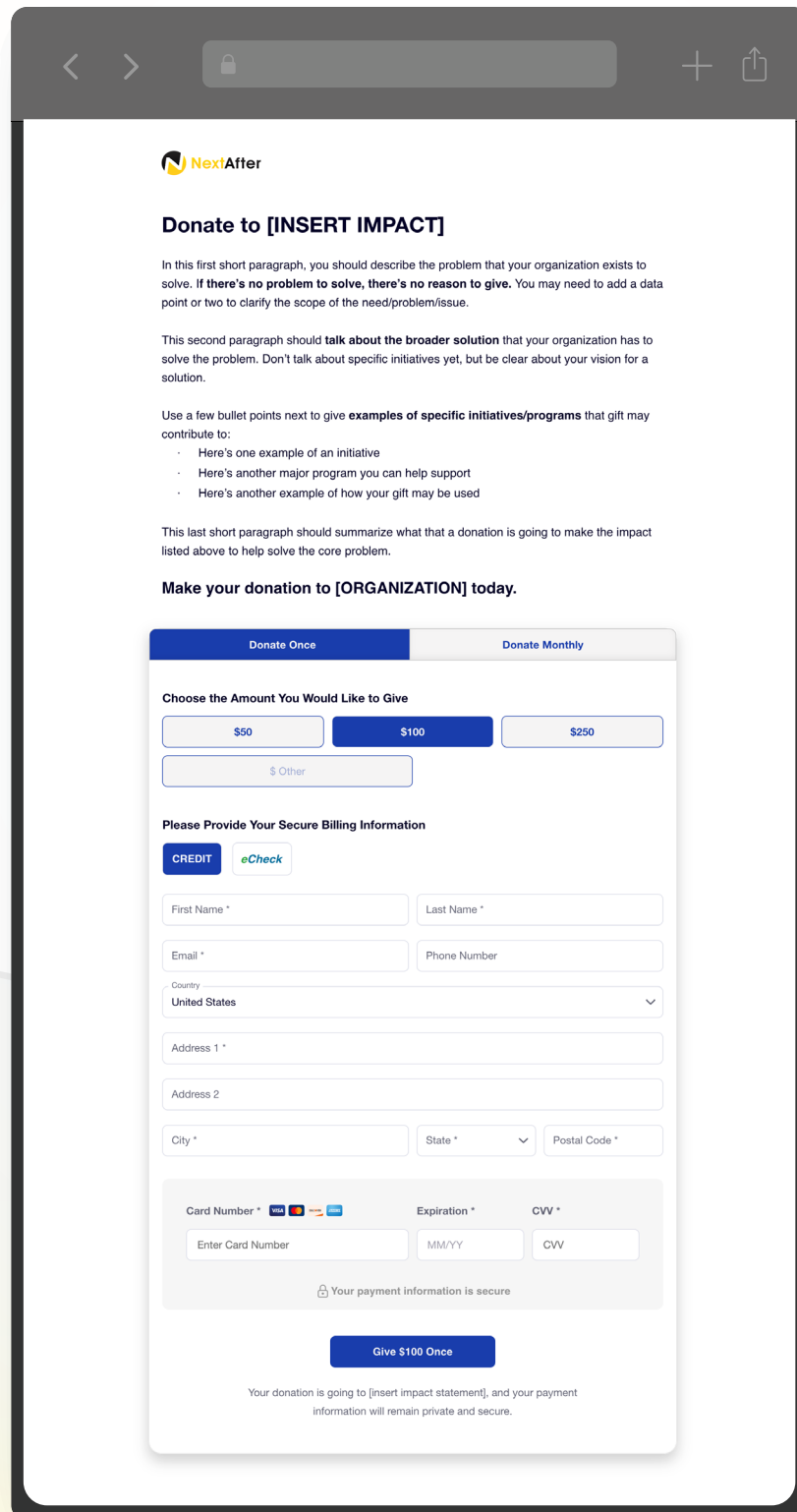



Donation Page Template

A Comprehensive Guide to Proven Donation Page Optimization Tactics
Based on Learnings from 6,750+ Fundraising Experiments



The image shows a mobile browser view of a donation page template. The browser's address bar is empty. The page header features the NextAfter logo. The main heading is "Donate to [INSERT IMPACT]". Below this, there are three paragraphs of placeholder text. The first paragraph explains the importance of stating the problem and the impact. The second paragraph explains the importance of stating the broader solution. The third paragraph explains the importance of providing examples of specific initiatives/programs. Below the paragraphs, there is a section titled "Make your donation to [ORGANIZATION] today." which contains two tabs: "Donate Once" and "Donate Monthly". The "Donate Once" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there is a section titled "Choose the Amount You Would Like to Give" which contains four buttons: "\$50", "\$100", "\$250", and "\$ Other". The "\$100" button is selected. Below this, there is a section titled "Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information" which contains two tabs: "CREDIT" and "eCheck". The "CREDIT" tab is selected. Below the tabs, there are several input fields: "First Name *", "Last Name *", "Email *", "Phone Number", "Country" (a dropdown menu with "United States" selected), "Address 1 *", "Address 2", "City *", "State *" (a dropdown menu), and "Postal Code *". Below these fields, there is a section for card payment information which includes "Card Number *" (with a field for "Enter Card Number"), "Expiration *" (with a field for "MM/YY"), and "CVV *" (with a field for "CVV"). Below the card payment section, there is a security notice: "Your payment information is secure". At the bottom of the form, there is a button labeled "Give \$100 Once". Below the button, there is a disclaimer: "Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure."

< > [lock icon] + [share icon]

 NextAfter

Donate to [INSERT IMPACT]

In this first short paragraph, you should describe the problem that your organization exists to solve. If **there's no problem to solve, there's no reason to give**. You may need to add a data point or two to clarify the scope of the need/problem/issue.

This second paragraph should **talk about the broader solution** that your organization has to solve the problem. Don't talk about specific initiatives yet, but be clear about your vision for a solution.

Use a few bullet points next to give **examples of specific initiatives/programs** that gift may contribute to:

- Here's one example of an initiative
- Here's another major program you can help support
- Here's another example of how your gift may be used

This last short paragraph should summarize what that a donation is going to make the impact listed above to help solve the core problem.

Make your donation to [ORGANIZATION] today.

Donate Once

Donate Monthly

Choose the Amount You Would Like to Give

\$50

\$100

\$250

\$ Other

Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information

CREDIT

eCheck

First Name *

Last Name *

Email *

Phone Number

Country
United States

Address 1 *

Address 2

City *


State *

Postal Code *

Card Number *
Enter Card Number

Expiration *
MM/YY

CVV *
CVV

 Your payment information is secure

Give \$100 Once

Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure.

Page Layout & Design

1

Remove the navigation and all other distracting calls-to-action.

Experiment:
#11743

When someone lands on your donation page, the primary goal is to get them to give. Any other links or calls-to-action on the page can distract from the primary goal and lead potential donors down a different path.

Be sure to hide your primary website navigation and remove any other forms of ads, promotions, and calls-to-action on the donation page.

2

Include copy on the page explaining why someone should give—typically 4 or more sentences in length.

Experiment:
#2724

Many donation pages suffer from a lack of copy. Just because someone lands on your page does not mean they are fully motivated to give. Make sure to include copy on your page that explains why someone should donate.

See the section on *Value Proposition & Messaging* for more specific tips.

3

Do not use a video on your page to explain why someone should give.

Experiment:
#61736

Videos are incredibly powerful tools to tell a compelling story. On a donation page, however, they often kill conversion rates. The time to tell a compelling story with a video is often earlier in a campaign, on social media, or in other places on your website.

We have found time and time again that it is far more effective to take the value proposition that you would normally communicate in a video and turn it into text on the page.

4

Order your page like a logical conversation: put your copy first followed by the donation form.

Experiment:
#100222

Every digital interaction should be treated like a logical conversation. After all, the potential donors on the other end are just people. In a conversation with a donor, you wouldn't start by asking them to give. You would explain why their gift is needed, help them understand the impact they can make, and then ask for the donation.

Likewise, our donation pages should explain to donors why they should give first before we show them the donation form. Don't worry—it's okay if your donors have to scroll a little bit before they see the form.

1 NextAfter

Donate to [INSERT IMPACT]

In this first short paragraph, you should describe the problem that your organization exists to solve. If there's no problem to solve, there's no reason to give. You may need to add a data point or two to clarify the scope of the need/problem/issue.

2 This second paragraph should talk about the broader solution that your organization has to solve the problem. Don't talk about specific initiatives yet, but be clear about your vision for a solution.

Use a few bullet points next to give examples of specific initiatives/programs that gift may contribute to:

- Here's one example of an initiative
- Here's another major program you can help support
- Here's another example of how your gift may be used

3 This last short paragraph should summarize what that a donation is going to make the impact listed above to help solve the core problem.

Make your donation to [ORGANIZATION] today.

4

Donate Once Donate Monthly

Choose the Amount You Would Like to Give

\$50 \$100 \$250

\$ Other

Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information

CREDIT eCheck

First Name * Last Name *

Email * Phone Number

Country United States

Address 1 *

Address 2

City * State * Postal Code *

Card Number * Expiration * CVV *

Enter Card Number MM/YY CW

Your payment information is secure

Give \$100 Once

Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure.

5

Use a single-column donation page layout.

Experiment:
#87480

When your page is split into two columns, it's very hard to predict how someone will engage with the content. They often will move from side to side, occasionally back up the page to catch something they missed, and likely will not read the page in the order you intended.

For this reason, we should use a single column page layout to control the order that the user processes copy and other elements on the page.

6

Use large, mobile-friendly buttons instead of radio buttons.

Experiment:
#11611

Most donation platforms have this one covered for you already. But the occasional tool still uses radio buttons for gift amounts and other selections by default.

Tiny radio buttons are very hard to click on a mobile device and can present a key point of friction in the donation experience. Be sure your buttons are large, clear, and mobile-friendly.

7

Address anxiety about the security of payment details with your design.

Experiment:
#11129

"Anxiety doesn't live on the page, it lives in the mind." This great quote from Flint McLaughlin of Meclabs is often best demonstrated around the payment information on a donation form.

Most donation pages use secure forms and have minimal security risk when processing a payment. But donors can often have anxiety when entering their payment information anyway—wondering if it's secure.

Wrap the payment information in a box with a differentiated color, add a padlock, and add some security reinforcement language to address this anxiety as soon as it starts.

8

Reinforce the privacy and value of a gift right below the 'Donate' button.

Experiment:
#153299

Anxiety can also creep in at the final decision point on the page: the 'Donate' button. This is the point of no return—after clicking the button, the donor's gift will be processed.

Use the space below the 'Donate' button to remind donors of the privacy of their information, the security of the transaction, and the impact of their gift.

The image shows a mobile app interface for NextAfter. The form is titled "Donate to [INSERT IMPACT]". It includes a section for choosing the amount to give, with options for \$50, \$100, and \$250, and a "Give Other" button. Below this is a section for providing secure billing information, including fields for first and last name, email, phone number, address, city, state, and postal code. There is also a section for card details, including card number, expiration date, and CVV. A large blue button labeled "Give \$100 Once" is at the bottom. The interface is annotated with yellow circles and numbers 5 through 8, corresponding to the design principles listed on the left.

Form Fields

1

Ask someone to choose their gift frequency before their gift amount.

Experiment:
#55555

If you ask someone to choose their gift amount first, they already have an idea in mind of how frequently they're planning to give. Asking for frequency after the amount could be introducing a point of friction into the process.

But if you ask for gift frequency first, it sets the appropriate context for choosing the gift amount.

Order the gift array from low to high.

Ordering your gift array from high to low, you can unintentionally communicate that smaller donations are not valuable—decreasing overall conversions. It might increase your average gift size by a small amount, but it often harms overall revenue.

By ordering your gift array from low to high, you communicate that a smaller gift is valuable and can often see an increase in overall donations and revenue.

2

Experiment:
#3935

3

Set a default gift amount.

Defaulting or pre-selecting a gift amount can help new donors understand what level of giving is valuable and impactful. Especially if you're asking for a specific amount in your copy, defaulting to the same amount in your gift array reinforces the message and can help streamline the decision process for potential donors.

Experiments:
#162516

4

Test using only an open gift amount field if you have lots of repeat donors and/or a high average gift size.

If you have lots of repeat donors on your donation page or a high average gift size (\$150 or above), test removing the gift array and only using an open gift amount field. This approach has been known to lift average gift and overall revenue without harming conversion.

Experiment:
#2594

Do not try this if you have a lot of new donors on your donation page. They often need the gift array to help set expectations for how much to give.

The form is titled "Donate Once" and "Donate Monthly". It has a section "Choose the Amount You Would Like to Give" with buttons for "\$50", "\$100" (selected), "\$250", and "\$ Other". Below this is a section "Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information" with "CREDIT" and "eCheck" buttons. The form includes fields for "First Name", "Last Name", "Email", "Phone Number", "Country" (set to "United States"), "Address 1", "Address 2", "City", "State", and "Postal Code". At the bottom is a section for "Card Number", "Expiration", and "CVV". A "Give \$100 Once" button is at the bottom. A footer note states: "Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure."

1 Donate Once Donate Monthly

Choose the Amount You Would Like to Give

2 \$50 \$100 3 \$250

\$ Other 4 5

Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information

CREDIT eCheck

7 First Name * Last Name *

Email * Phone Number

Country United States

Address 1 *

Address 2

City * State * Postal Code * 8

9 Card Number * Expiration * CVV *

Enter Card Number MM/YY CVV

Your payment information is secure

Give \$100 Once 6

Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure.

5**Limit your gift array options to 4. Test your way into more or less options.****Experiment:**
#131735

There's no universal rule about how many options is the ideal number of gift array options. But we've often seen that reducing the options can increase conversions. Start your donation form at 4 gift array options (including the "Other" field).

Then test your way into more or less options.

6**Use a single-step donation form unless you've tested otherwise.****Experiment:**
#153409

At NextAfter, we have never tested a multi-step donation form that has outperformed a well-optimized single-step donation form. Many of these tests, however, have shown no difference in performance.

We would recommend starting with a single-step form. And if you're looking to move to a multi-step, make sure you test it against your existing form to ensure that it won't harm donations.

7**Limit your form fields to the essentials.****Experiment:**
#32781

Asking for unexpected information in the giving process can stop donors in their tracks. "Why do you need my phone number?" "Do you really need my middle name?" "I'm not sure how to choose a gift designation."

Limit your donation form to only the essential fields needed to process the donation. If you're looking to ask for additional information, ask for it on the confirmation page or in a follow-up email.

8**Group related fields to reduce the perception of work.****Experiment:**
#2629

Stacking all your fields one-on-top of the other makes your donation form appear to be a lot more work than it really is. Be sure to utilize the horizontal space on your page to reduce the perceived length of the form.

Group related fields onto the same line including:

First Name & Last Name • City, State, & Zip Code • Email & Phone Number

9**Ask for payment info after you've captured their personal info.****Experiment:**
#38386

A good rule of thumb is to put the hardest-to-answer questions at the end of the form. That way the donor builds up a sense of momentum as they answer the simple questions like their name, email, and address.

This may play into the "Sunk Cost Fallacy." They're less likely to turn back at the very end of the process because they've already filled out 80% of the form—even if the last questions are the harder ones to answer.

Value Proposition & Messaging

1 Donate to [INSERT IMPACT]

2 In this first short paragraph, you should describe the problem that your organization exists to solve. **If there's no problem to solve, there's no reason to give.** You may need to add a data point or two to clarify the scope of the need/problem/issue.

4 This second paragraph should **talk about the broader solution** that your organization has to solve the problem. Don't talk about specific initiatives yet, but be clear about your vision for a solution.

5 Use a few bullet points next to give **examples of specific initiatives/programs** that gift may contribute to:

- Here's one example of an initiative
- 8 · Here's another major program you can help support
- Here's another example of how your gift may be used

This last short paragraph should summarize what that a donation is going to make the impact listed above to help solve the core problem.

6 Make your donation to [ORGANIZATION] today.

1 Include a headline that emphasizes the impact of a donation.

Experiment:
#2609

Too often, donation pages simply say "Donate Today." This headline confirms that the donor is in the right place to give, but it assumes that they're already fully motivated to complete the transaction.

Craft a headline that begins to communicate why someone should give and helps them see the impact they can make when they donate.

2 Use copy to communicate why someone should give, not just the fact that they can.

Experiment:
#88489

When you write copy for your donation page, don't simply discuss the fact that your organization runs on donations and that the donor can make a tax-deductible gift here. Every other nonprofit can make the same claims.

Instead, write copy that answers this one critical value proposition question: *"Why should I give to you, rather than to some other organization, or even at all?"*

3 Clearly articulate the problem that you and your donors would like to see solved.

Experiment:
#74998

If there's no problem to solve, then there is no reason to give. Make sure your value proposition copy leads with identifying what the problem is that both you and your donor are hoping to see solved in the world.

4 Cast a vision for the solution that your organization is implementing.

Experiment:
#116803

Defining a problem isn't enough. Your donor needs to believe that your organization is doing something meaningful to solve it.

Craft copy that casts a vision—however big or small—for a solution to the problem that you and your donor want to see solved in the world.

5

Communicate how a donor's gift can make a meaningful impact.

Experiment:
#142459

Oftentimes it may be hard for a donor to see how their donation can make a meaningful impact. After you've discussed the problem to solve and your vision for a solution, be sure to bring it down to a practical level.

How can a donation make a real impact? What kinds of programs or initiatives does it support? How many people might it help?

6

Provide a clear call-to-action to give.

Experiment:
#2765

One of the easiest lines of copy to forget on your donation page is your call-to-action. Make sure that you end the copy on your page with a clear sentence that asks the donor to give.

7

Write copy that is inclusive of the wide variety of donor motivations on your main donation page.

Experiment:
#2968

Your main donation page is often the catch-all page for a wide variety of donors and website visitors. Some may have just attended an event. Others volunteered with your organization just this morning. Still, others may have seen an ad or article about your organization and decided that they're interested in giving.

Make sure that your main donation page copy doesn't get too specific to a program, initiative, or campaign. Keep the messaging broad enough that the wide variety of visitors can read their motivations into the copy.

8

Format your copy to be scannable and easy to read.

Experiment:
#90184

The formatting of your copy is critical to help donors quickly and easily understand it. Consider using shorter paragraph stanzas, limiting the width of your copy so it breaks to a new line every 60-80 characters, and using bullet points & bolding to quickly highlight important points.

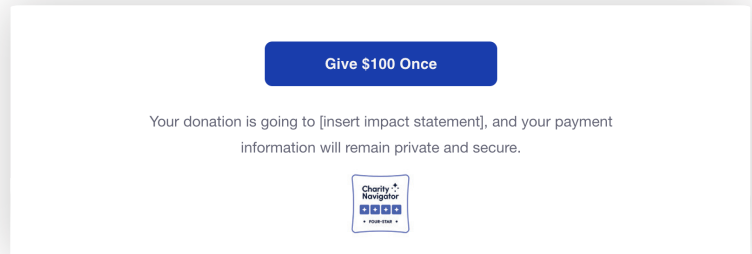
Add-Ons & Other Tactics

1

Add 3rd party seals near your 'Donate' button to increase credibility (i.e. Guidestar/Candid, Charity Navigator, etc.)

Experiment:
#58276

Credibility is one of the most essential factors of your value proposition. Adding a 3rd party credibility seal near your donation button can help donors have a greater sense of trust when choosing to donate.



A screenshot of a donation page. At the top, there is a blue button that says "Give \$100 Once". Below the button, text reads: "Your donation is going to [insert impact statement], and your payment information will remain private and secure." Below this text is a small square seal for "Charity Navigator" with a star and the text "FOUR STAR".

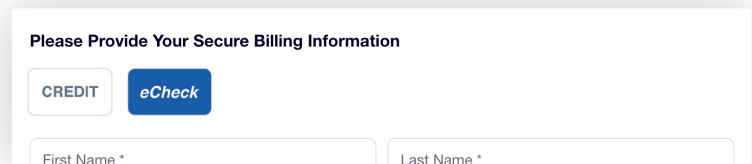
2

Default your payment type to eCheck/ACH/Bank for recurring donations.

Experiment:
#69236

For many organizations, donors who give a recurring gift via their bank have a greater lifetime value. This is often due to the fact that people change their bank accounts far less frequently than they change credit cards.

Test defaulting to a bank payment option when a donor has chosen a recurring gift. Testing has shown that it is unlikely to harm conversions, but can lead to more people choosing the more valuable payment method.



A screenshot of a form titled "Please Provide Your Secure Billing Information". There are two buttons: "CREDIT" and "eCheck", with "eCheck" being selected. Below the buttons are two input fields labeled "First Name *" and "Last Name *".

3

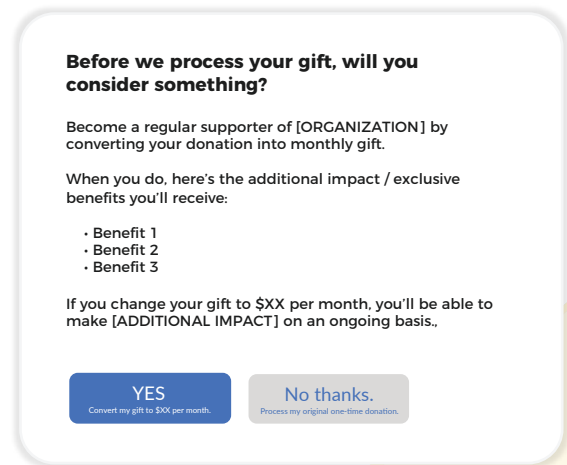
Prompt one-time donors to convert their gift to monthly as soon as they hit the 'Donate' button.

Experiment:
#116219

When a one-time donor hits the final 'Donate' button, test triggering a pop-up that asks them to convert their gift to a recurring donation.

If you deploy this tactic, keep a few things in mind:

- Remind them that their gift has not been processed yet.
- Give them clear reasons why converting their gift to monthly is more impactful.
- Ask for a specific monthly donation amount (usually a smaller percentage of their one-time donation).



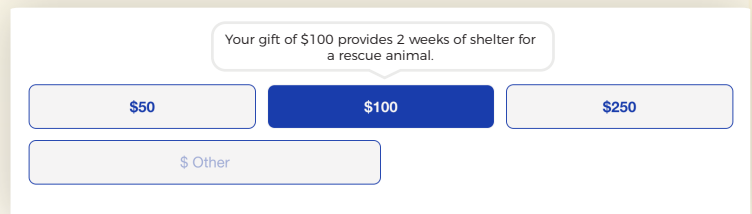
A screenshot of a pop-up window. The title is "Before we process your gift, will you consider something?". The text says: "Become a regular supporter of [ORGANIZATION] by converting your donation into monthly gift." Below this, it says: "When you do, here's the additional impact / exclusive benefits you'll receive:". There is a list of three benefits: "Benefit 1", "Benefit 2", and "Benefit 3". Below the list, it says: "If you change your gift to \$XX per month, you'll be able to make [ADDITIONAL IMPACT] on an ongoing basis." At the bottom, there are two buttons: "YES" (with subtext "Convert my gift to \$XX per month.") and "No thanks." (with subtext "Process my original one-time donation.")

4

Test adding an "Impact Call-Out" on a specific level of giving.

Experiment:
#172510

Add a call-out pointing to a specific giving level communicating the unique impact of that donation amount. For example: "Your gift of \$100 provides 2 weeks of shelter for a rescue animal."



A screenshot of a donation form. At the top, there is a call-out box that says: "Your gift of \$100 provides 2 weeks of shelter for a rescue animal." Below this, there are four buttons: "\$50", "\$100", "\$250", and "\$ Other". The "\$100" button is highlighted.

5

Test adding a “Recurring Gift Call-Out” to promote monthly giving.**Experiment:**
#109367

Don't just assume that donors know they should make a recurring gift. Test adding a call-out that visually points to the opportunity to give monthly. Add some copy that articulates the greater impact of a monthly gift.

For example: “A monthly donation helps save lives 365 days per year.”

A mockup of a donation form. At the top right, a call-out box contains the text: "A monthly donation helps save lives 365 days per year." Below this, there are two buttons: "Donate Once" (highlighted in blue) and "Donate Monthly" (in grey).

6

Test adding headers to walk users through each step of the form.**Experiment:**
#31465

Break up your donation form fields with headers that define what type of information you're looking for next. Test adding step numbers to show their progress.

For example:

- Step 1: Choose Your Gift Amount
- Step 2: Enter Your Personal Info and Address
- Step 3: Enter Your Payment Information

A mockup of a donation form with step headers. At the top, there are two buttons: "Donate Once" (highlighted in blue) and "Donate Monthly" (in grey). Below this, the form is divided into two sections. The first section is titled "Step 1: Choose Your Gift Amount" and contains three buttons: "\$50", "\$100" (highlighted in blue), and "\$250". Below these is a text input field labeled "\$ Other". The second section is titled "Step 2: Choose Your Payment Method" and contains two buttons: "CREDIT" (highlighted in blue) and "eCheck" (in grey).