

Financial Transparency Builds Donor Trust & Increases Giving

A practical framework for turning clean numbers into confidence, stewardship, and stronger support for horses.

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If you donated \$100 today...

What would you want to know before making your next gift?

Money trail

Where did my money go?

Reach

How many horses did I help?

Impact

What changed because I gave?

Confidence

Can I trust the organization again?



Transparency is the bridge between “I care” and “I will give again.”

Donors see the horse. Transparency shows the care system.

In equine welfare, the most important costs are often the least visible.

Recurring care

Hay, feed, farrier, vet, medication, bedding, utilities, insurance.

Emergency timing

Intakes and medical needs rarely wait for the next campaign.

Complex outcomes

Success may be adoption, stabilization, safety, or lifetime care.



When care costs are not explained, donors may mistake complexity for inefficiency.

Equine rescues are stretched thin.

The market is raising more dollars overall, but donor participation is shrinking. For equine organizations, that pressure lands on full barns, lean teams, and recurring care costs.

Fundraising market

SECTOR DOLLARS

+5.0%

Giving dollars up

AFP / FEP Q4 2025

DONOR BASE

-3.6%

Donor count down

AFP / FEP Q4 2025

Equine welfare reality

CAPACITY

≈95%

Operating near capacity

UHC / EWDC 2023 data

BUDGET SIZE

53%

Budgets ≤ \$100K

Tufts + HHC 2023 data

Cost pressure: Median budget share spent on hay/feed: 40% • veterinary care: 20%

Tufts + HHC 2023 data

Bottom line: *Transparency turns invisible care costs into donor confidence — funding the next stall, vet visit, and safe landing.*

Sources shown on slide: AFP Fundraising Effectiveness Project Q4 2025; United Horse Coalition EWDC Seventh Report; Tufts + Homes for Horses Coalition National Survey of Equine Welfare Organizations.

Transparency does not mean oversharing.

It means choosing the financial information donors need to trust you.

Don't bury it

A formal PDF three clicks deep is technically public, but not donor-friendly.

Translate it

Add a plain-English summary that explains what changed and why.

Don't apologize

Admin costs are not a moral failure when they protect animals and people.

Explain the system

Show how finance, facilities, staff, and care work together.



Good transparency answers donor questions before silence turns them into doubt.

The TRUST transparency system

A five-part system built for equine nonprofits that need clarity without adding chaos.

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------------------|--|
| T | Tidy the books | Close monthly, reconcile, and clean up the categories. |
| R | Reveal the right numbers | Share a donor-friendly financial snapshot. |
| U | Use data in stories | Connect dollars to horse outcomes. |
| S | Share proof consistently | Build a rhythm of updates and credibility signals. |
| T | Tie every gift back | Close the loop with specific stewardship. |



Not prettier reports. Repeatable donor confidence.

Trust starts before the report.

If the numbers are messy internally, transparency will feel risky externally.

- ✓ Close bank and credit card reconciliations monthly.
- ✓ Separate unrestricted, donor-restricted, and board-designated funds.
- ✓ Classify program, admin, fundraising, facility, and care costs consistently.
- ✓ Track open questions before financials go to the board or donors.
- ✓ Create a clean “ready to explain” monthly finance packet.

High-value takeaway

A monthly close checklist is a donor-trust tool in disguise.



Make financials findable and readable.

Public disclosure is the floor. Donor-friendly explanation is the value-add.

- ✓ Post Form 990, audit/review, and current financial snapshot together.
- ✓ Show revenue mix, spending mix, reserves, and restricted funds.
- ✓ Explain major changes in plain language: what changed, why, and what comes next.
- ✓ Use the 60-second test: can a donor find the page from your homepage?
- ✓ Replace finance jargon with mission language.

***A useful snapshot answers: What came in? Where did it go?
What is still needed?***



Source: IRS public disclosure rules require Form 990/990-EZ returns to be available for public inspection for a three-year period.

The one-page financial snapshot

A board packet explains operations. This explains trust.

- 1

Revenue mix

Donations, sponsorships, events, grants, program/service revenue.
- 2

Spending mix

Care, facility, fundraising, administration, outreach.
- 3

Reserve position

How many months of essential care can you cover?
- 4

Restricted funds

What can only be used for a specific purpose?
- 5

Equine impact metric

Cost per horse cared for, rehabbed, adopted, or safely maintained.



Turn cost into care.

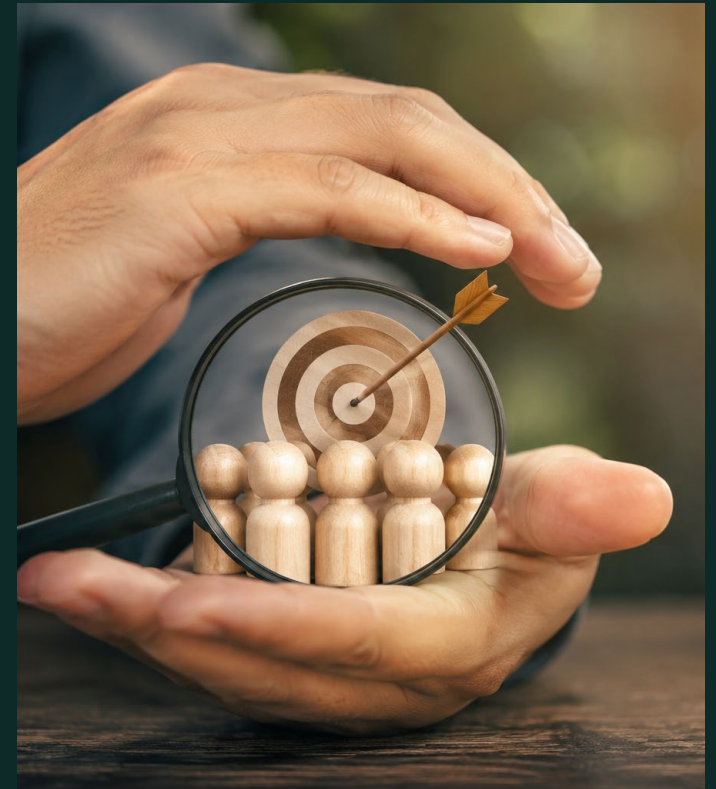
The best donor update connects a number to a horse, a need, and a next step.

Number → Meaning → Outcome → Next need

Example donor language

“This quarter, gifts helped cover farrier care, veterinary exams, and safe placements. That is what financial stewardship looks like in the barn.”

Data without story is a spreadsheet. Story without data is a promise. Together, they build trust.



Annual care cost per equine

This gives donors a realistic view of what responsible care actually requires.

$$(\text{direct care} + \text{allocated facility costs}) \div \text{average equines in care}$$

Direct care	Feed, hay, supplements, vet, dental, farrier.
Facility & safety	Bedding, fencing, utilities, insurance, repairs.
Rehab & training	Handling, enrichment, placement preparation.
Outcome	Healthy, safe, adopted, fostered, or lifetime care.

Use a range if precision is not ready. Honest ranges beat suspiciously perfect numbers.

Sample Annual Cost of Care

Illustrative donor-friendly calculation

Annual cost inputs

Direct care

Feed, hay, vet, farrier, supplement

\$126,000

Facility & safety

Bedding, fencing, utilities, repairs

\$54,000

Rehab & training

Handling, enrichment, placement preparation

\$20,000

Total annual care-related cost

\$200,000

Average equines in care

25

Calculation

Step 1

Add annual costs

\$126K + \$54K + \$20K

= \$200K

Step 2

Divide by average equines

\$200,000 ÷ 25

= \$8,000

Use with context

Clarify what is included.

Show ranges if needed.

Pair with horse outcomes.

Annual cost per equine

\$8,000

This is the number a donor can understand, compare, and support.

Example only — replace with your own numbers and plain-English assumptions.

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Trust grows on a schedule.

Donors should not wait for an appeal to hear what happened.

- 1

Per gift

Thank-you + intended use
+ next update date.
- 2

Quarterly

One care story + one financial
metric + current need.
- 3

Annually

Impact report + financial summary
+ board priorities.

Goal: donors never wonder, “Did my gift matter?”

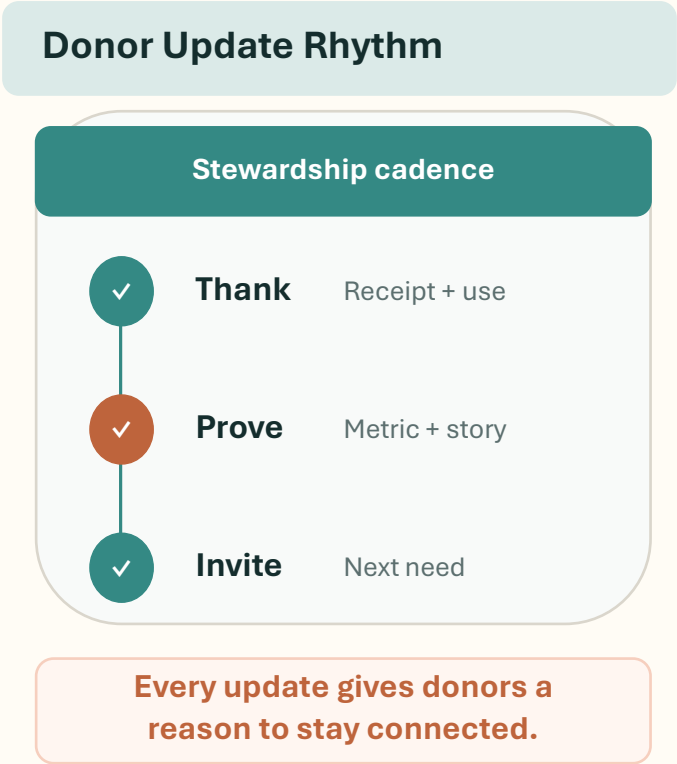
27%

of online revenue came
from monthly giving

71%

of monthly donors were
retained after one year

Source: M+R Benchmarks 2026; figures based on participating nonprofits’ 2025 online fundraising results.



Let third-party proof do some trust-building.

Do not make donors work harder than necessary to verify you.

62%

more donor contributions on average for Candid Seal holders vs. non-Seal organizations

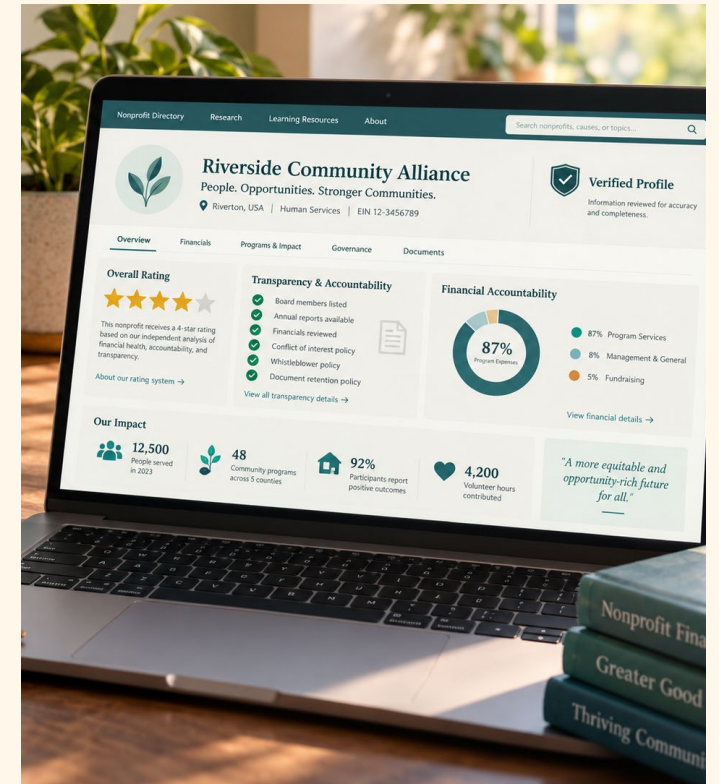
200+

charitable sites receive Candid nonprofit profile information

Practical credibility stack

Candid profile + Charity Navigator portal + BBB Wise Giving standards + audit/review + board-approved budget.

Place trust signals where donors decide: website footer, donation page, annual report, and donor follow-up.



Sources: Candid 2026 Seals of Transparency / claim profile guidance. “62%” is Candid’s reported average association, not a guarantee.

Close the loop with specificity.

The best stewardship tells donors what their gift did and why continued support matters.

Use this four-sentence donor update

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|---|
| 1 | Because of your gift... | Name what support made possible. |
| 2 | The need behind it... | Translate the cost in plain language. |
| 3 | The outcome was... | Show the change for the horse or community. |
| 4 | The next need is... | Give donors a clear reason to stay connected. |

Specific stewardship turns a receipt into a relationship.



Your 7-day transparency scorecard

Leave with one commitment—not a binder full of guilt. We have enough of those already.

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Website | Can donors find financials in 60 seconds? |
| Snapshot | Can leadership explain reserves, restrictions, and spending mix? |
| Metric | Have you chosen one equine care metric to track monthly? |
| Rhythm | Is there a quarterly donor update on the calendar? |
| Stewardship | Can every gift be tied back to a specific outcome or need? |



Best next step: pick the weakest “yes” and improve that first.

THANK YOU

Elevating equine welfare starts with elevating donor trust.

Clean numbers. Clear stories. Confident donors. Better care for horses.

Your 7-day starter plan

- ✓ Refresh your financial transparency page.
- ✓ Create a one-page donor financial snapshot.
- ✓ Draft one donor update using the template.
- ✓ Update your Candid / Charity Navigator profile.

Thank you — and here's to elevating equine welfare together.

Stay connected

Scan for resources or reach out after the session.



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