You choose a mobile application provider to be the point person for your donations.

You'll likely pay a setup fee ($350 - $500) and a monthly fee ($100 - $500).

They coordinate your campaign through a mobile giving foundation.

The mobile application provider sets you up with a short code and a keyword, which you publicize.

In the US, the donation amount must be either $5 or $10 – no more.

You need to reach a lot of people to make it worthwhile. A live event would work well.

Your annual revenue must be at least $500k to be eligible to run a campaign in the US.

You receive your donations from the cell phone company by way of your mobile giving foundation.

They could take two to three months to show up.
Mobile giving can be a valuable supplement to fundraising efforts for larger organizations, or those who can reach large numbers of potential donors at one time. It’s not for everyone, however.

Your organization must have annual revenues of at least $500k in order to qualify to accept mobile gifts, and you’ll likely need to pay several hundred dollars in setup fees. There will also be monthly fees (likely $100-$500 per month). However, most of these services allow you to pay month-to-month, so you could, for instance, pay only for two months for a single campaign, and then cancel.

With a maximum of five or ten dollars per gift (a limit imposed by the mobile carriers), you’ll need a substantial donation volume to recover your initial investment. Unless your organization is very large, or has access to advertise the campaign at a live event like a rally, sporting event, or concert, it may be hard to reach enough people to recoup your costs, let alone your time.

Is Mobile Giving For Your Organization?

Mobile Giving Campaign Example

1. The United Way sets up a mobile campaign to be advertised on the scoreboard at an Louisiana State football game.

2. About 94,600 people show up to the football game.

3. About 2% of the spectators (almost 2,000 people) donate $5 each by texting “give” to a keyword on their phone. Service providers take about 8% in fees.

4. The United Way raises $9,000 at the football game.

Text “GIVE” to 55545 to donate $5