

Building a Foundation for Growth with Chicago State University

BACKGROUND

Chicago State University is a Predominantly Black Institution (PBI) committed to equity, excellence, and community impact. After nearly closing in 2016 due to state budget cuts, the university has worked hard to rebuild. But with a small advancement team and limited time, resources, and expertise, they struggled to reengage alumni and build a more sustainable future.

OPPORTUNITY

With limited capacity and growing goals, the team needed to think and work differently. They looked to a strategic partner who could scale and improve their annual giving efforts—running more sophisticated campaigns than they could manage alone. This would allow them to deepen alumni connections, grow the donor pipeline, and free up staff to focus on major gifts, donor relationships, and campus engagement.

OUTCOME

In year one, CSU has built a more consistent and strategic annual giving program—expanding alumni reach, increasing donor participation, and improving visibility. Digital outreach helped reconnect lapsed donors and engage new ones. With that foundation in place, the team is now planning its first giving day and expanding stewardship to support long-term growth.

IMPACT HIGHLIGHTS

FY25

25.4%

Increase in overall revenue

27.4%

Of donors were sourced from EAB campaigns

Doing More With a Small Team

With a team operating at just **67% capacity**, CSU needed a smarter way to manage annual giving. Partnering with EAB helped them reach more donors and focus their time on strategic priorities.

Before partnership

One person responsible for both alumni engagement and annual giving

Little time for cultivation, strategy, or long-term pipeline development

Manual mailings with minimal personalization and no digital outreach

Limited access to or use of donor data



With partnership

Dedicated support for full-scale annual giving campaigns execution

More time to focus on donor relationships and long-term strategy

Omni-channel outreach with personalized messaging at scale

Campaign reporting and insights to optimize donor engagement

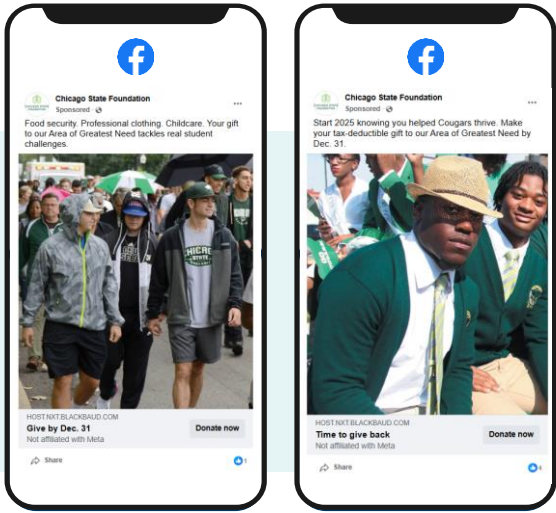
Stronger, Smarter Alumni Outreach



CSU transformed their alumni outreach from fragmented and infrequent to consistent and strategic. With stronger tools and support, the team now runs more personalized, scalable campaigns—reaching alumni they hadn’t connected with before and building stronger relationships over time.

56.7% of donors in FY25 were **first-time donors**

41.1% of those first-time donors were **alumni**



The Digital Boost

For the first time, CSU used digital ads as part of their year-end campaign, resulting in a powerful boost in visibility, reach, and engagement across their donor and alumni community.

110.4% Increase in **reach** via digital ads

41.1% Increase in link **clicks**

The Groundwork for What’s Next

In year one of partnership, Chicago State University put systems and strategies in place to build the foundation for growth, deeper engagement, and long-term success.

See how your team can grow with the right partner.

Learn how EAB’s Advancement Marketing Services can help at eab.com/ams.



Launching a signature **Day of Giving**

Planning is underway for CSU’s first giving day—a chance to engage their community, raise visibility, and build a lasting tradition.



Building a **stronger stewardship** strategy

Through EAB’s pilot, CSU is designing a smarter approach to donor retention that supports long-term pipeline growth.



Strengthening CSU’s brand and culture of giving

Consistent, professional outreach is helping CSU raise its profile, build trust, and reinforce philanthropy as part of campus identity.