

FUNDER SUPPORT DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC



METHODOLOGY

STUDY POPULATION

The *Grantee Voice* panel is a nationally representative group of nonprofits that CEP refreshes every two-three years to gather the perspectives of nonprofit leaders. Nonprofit leaders who opted into CEP's *Grantee Voice* panel in 2019 were included in this study. This panel was established in several steps. First, to create a list of nonprofits to invite, a dataset of almost 430,000 registered 501(c)(3) organizations that filed a Form 990 between 2013 and 2016 was obtained from the National Center for Charitable Statistics (NCCS). CEP kept nonprofits in the dataset only when they met all the following criteria:

- The organization filed a Form 990 between 2015 and 2016;
- The organization is located in the United States;
- The organization records annual expenses between \$100,000 and \$100 million;
- The organization has a positive contributed revenue;
- The organization has an identified area of work (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a mutual/membership benefit organization (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a religious-based organization (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a hospital or university (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a foundation (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a fundraising entity working specifically across issue area groups (based on NTEECC coding);
- The organization is not a supporting organization (based on NTEECC coding); and
- The organization is not flagged by NCCS as “out of scope” (i.e., the organization must be a 501(c)(3), non-foreign entity, or government entity).

After filtering for nonprofits that met the criteria described above, 142,582 nonprofits remained in the dataset. CEP then took the filtered dataset and randomly selected 14,000 nonprofits, ensuring that this selected sample contained representation across the full range of expenses mentioned above.

CEP worked with Candid to determine whether each nonprofit in this random sample had received any funding between 2015 and 2017 from foundations giving at least \$5 million annually in grants. Only nonprofits that had received such funding remained eligible for an invitation to join the panel. In total, 7,987 nonprofits met this criterion.

Only individuals leading eligible nonprofits were considered for inclusion. These individuals typically had titles such as executive director, president, or CEO. Ultimately, 4,643 nonprofit leaders were invited to join the *Grantee Voice* panel. While the invitation was open, over 200 more nonprofits were removed because of additional information that was received showing they were ineligible for our sample. In total, of 4,431 eligible nonprofit leaders, 629 accepted the invitation, resulting in an acceptance rate of 14.2 percent. We statistically tested for and saw slight differences in the annual expenses of the organizations that did and did not accept the invitation to join the panel.¹ Between the creation of the panel and the start of this research project, 21 nonprofit CEOs were removed because they or their organizations became ineligible.

SAMPLE

In May 2020, 608 nonprofit leaders who comprise the 2019 Grantee Voice panel were sent an invitation to complete the survey. While the survey was fielded, 13 nonprofit leaders were removed from the sample because of additional information that was received showing they were ineligible for our sample.

Completed surveys were received from 160 leaders. Partially completed surveys, defined as being at least 50 percent complete, were received from 12 leaders. Thus, our final survey sample included 172 of 595 potential respondents, for a response rate of 29 percent.

Survey Period	Number of Leaders Surveyed	Number of Responses	Survey Response Rate
May 2020	595	172	29%

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was fielded online for a two-week period in May 2020. Leaders were sent a brief email including a description of the purpose of the survey, a statement of confidentiality, and a link to the survey. Leaders were sent up to three reminder emails.

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey consisted of 39 open- and close-ended items and included questions about how nonprofits and the people and communities they serve have been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, how staffed foundation funders and major donors have responded in support of nonprofits during the COVID-19 pandemic, and what nonprofits most need from funders going forward.

RESPONSE BIAS

Nonprofits represented by leaders who responded to the survey did not differ significantly from non-respondent organizations by staff size, annual expenses, or region of the United States in which the nonprofit is located.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

To analyze the quantitative survey data from foundation program officers, descriptive statistics were examined and a combination of independent samples t-tests, paired samples t-tests, ANOVA tests, and chi-square analyses were conducted. An alpha level of 0.05 was used to determine statistical significance for all testing conducted for this research. Effect sizes were examined for all analyses. Only statistically significant findings of a medium or large effect size are presented in this report.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS

Thematic and content analyses were conducted on the responses to the following open-ended survey items:

As a result of COVID-19, what are the biggest challenges facing the people and communities your organization serves?

How is your organization listening to and gathering feedback from the people and communities you serve during the COVID-19 pandemic?

Please describe the ways in which your organization’s staffed foundation funders have been most helpful to your organization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Please describe the ways in which your organization’s major donors have been most helpful to your organization during the COVID-19 pandemic.

What do you most need from your organization’s staffed foundation funders to help your organization during this time?

A coding scheme was developed for these open-ended items by reading through all responses to recognize recurring ideas, creating categories, and then coding each respondent’s ideas according to the categories.

Codebooks were created to ensure that different coders would be coding for the same concepts rather than their individual interpretations of the concepts. One coder coded all responses to the questions, and a second coder coded 15 percent of those responses. For each question, at least an 80 percent level of interrater agreement was achieved for each code.

Selected quotations from the open-ended survey responses were included in this report. These quotations were selected to be representative of the themes seen in the data.

ⁱ A chi-square analysis of expense quartiles was conducted, finding a statistically significant difference of a small effect size. Nonprofits with annual expenses between \$1.7 and \$6.0 million were slightly more likely to accept the invitation to join the panel than nonprofits of other expense sizes, and nonprofits with annual expenses of \$6.0 million or more were slightly less likely than others to accept the invitation to join the panel.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT

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ABOUT THE CENTER FOR EFFECTIVE PHILANTHROPY

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