METHODOLOGY: INDIVIDUAL DONORS RESPOND TO CRISIS

The findings presented in these blog posts are based on data collected, analyzed, and interpreted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy (CEP). In total, 163 nonprofit leaders completed surveys and 32 nonprofits participated in in-depth interviews. Information detailing the process for collecting and analyzing the data is below.

Survey Methodology

SURVEY POPULATION

The *Grantee Voice* panel is a national 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 February 2021, 52 nonprofit CEOs were removed because they or their organizations became ineligible.

SURVEY SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

In February 2021, 577 nonprofit leaders who comprised the 2019 *Grantee Voice* panel were sent an invitation to complete the survey. While the survey was fielded, 21 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 158 leaders. Partially completed surveys, defined as being at least 50 percent complete, were received from five leaders. Thus, our final survey sample included 163 of 556 potential respondents, for a response rate of 29 percent (Table 1).

TABLE 1. Survey Sample Response Rates

Survey Period	Number of Leaders Surveyed	Number of Responses	Survey Response Rate
February 2021	556	163	29%

SURVEY ADMINISTRATION

The survey was fielded online for a four-week period in February 2021. 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 seven reminder emails.

SURVEY RESPONDENT CHARACTERISTICS

Nonprofit leaders who responded to the survey represented organizations that varied in expenses and staff size (Table 2).

TABLE 2. Survey Respondent Sample—Nonprofit Characteristics

Nonprofit Characteristics	Range	Median Value
Expenses	~$100K to ~$77M	~$1.5M
Staff	1 FTE to ~500 FTE	12 FTE

SURVEY INSTRUMENT

The survey consisted of 71 open- and close-ended items and included questions about how nonprofits and the people and communities they serve have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, how 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 nonrespondent organizations by annual expenses, staff size, or geographic region of the United States in which the nonprofit is located.

QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

To analyze the quantitative survey data from nonprofit leaders, descriptive statistics were examined and a combination of independent samples t-tests, paired samples t-tests, ANOVA tests, chi-square analyses, and regressions 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. Unless otherwise noted, only statistically significant findings of a medium or large effect size are presented in these blog posts.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF SURVEY DATA

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

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 these blog posts. These quotations were selected to be representative of the themes seen in the data.

Interview Methodology

INTERVIEW POPULATION

Nonprofit interviewees were drawn from CEP's *Grantee Voice* panel. Our goal was to interview about 30 nonprofit leaders. We randomly selected half of the 556 members of the panel and invited them to indicate their interest in participating in an interview by completing a brief demographic form. Few of the members' demographic forms indicated that they identify as people of color. To ensure that our interview group contained several leaders who identify as people of color, we invited another quarter of the panel to indicate their interest in

participating in an interview. Sixty-one leaders indicated interest, either by completing the form or responding to the email. We invited all of the leaders whose demographic forms indicated they identify as people of color to participate in interviews. We then invited other leaders in the order in which they expressed interest.

Ultimately, 34 individuals at 32 nonprofits participated in interviews.

Nonprofit CEOs were invited to include other staff members from the foundation with relevant knowledge in their interviews. Of the 32 interviews, 27 were with only the nonprofit CEO, one was with the CEO and two other staff members, and four were with other staff members interviewing in the CEO's stead. Before the interviews, 28 interviewees provided information about their demographic characteristics by completing an online survey (Table 3).

TABLE 3: Interviewee Characteristics

INTERVIEWEE CHARACTERISTIC	PERCENTAGE
Current role at the nonprofit (N=27)	
CEO/Executive Director	92%
Finance Director	4%
Development Director	0%
Other	4%
Years in current role at the nonprofit (N=27)	
Less than 1 year	15%
At least 1 year but fewer than 3 years	4%
At least 3 years but fewer than 6 years	37%
At least 6 years but fewer than 10 years	11%
10 years or longer	33%
Race or ethnicity (N=27)*	
Asian or Asian American	7%
Black or African American	7%
Hispanic, Latino, Latina, Latinx, or Latin American	11%
Middle Eastern or North African	0%
Multiracial or Multi-ethnic	0%
Native American, Native Alaskan, or Indigenous	0%
Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander	0%
White	74%
Different race or ethnicity	0%
Prefer not to say	0%
Identifies as a person of color (N=28)	
Yes	25%
No	75%
Prefer not to say	0%

Gender* (N=28)	
Woman (Cisgender or Transgender)	61%
Man (Cisgender or Transgender)	36%
Gender non-conforming	0%
Non-binary	0%
Different identity	0%
Prefer not to say	3%

*Interviewees were allowed to select multiple racial or ethnic and gender identities, so those categories are not mutually exclusive.

INTERVIEW SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

Nonprofit interviewees represented organizations that varied in expenses and staff size (Table 4).

TABLE 4. Nonprofit Characteristics

NONPROFIT CHARACTERISTIC	INTERVIEW SAMPLE
Expenses (N=33)	
Range	~$140K to ~$34M
Median value	~$1.7M
Staff (N=32)	
Range	1 FTE to 400 FTE
Median value	21FTE

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

After the interview protocol was developed, three pilot interviews with nonprofit leaders were conducted to test it. It was edited based on the feedback from the pilot interviewees. Pilot interviews were excluded from the analysis.

The interview protocol began with an introductory script describing the purpose of the study and the confidentiality of the conversation. At the start of the conversation, interviewees were asked to provide permission for the interview to be recorded and transcribed.

The interview protocol consisted of 19 questions for the interviewee(s) about what changes, if any, nonprofits have experienced in their work with foundations and individual donors, what effect these changes have had on their organizations, and what kinds of conversations, if any, nonprofits have had with their foundation funders and individual donors about their future grantmaking practices.

INTERVIEW DATA COLLECTION

In April and May 2021, 32 interviews were conducted by two CEP staff members. Interviewers discussed the interview process and worked together to establish consistency in style. Interviews lasted approximately one hour. All interviewees were promised confidentiality.

QUALITATIVE ANALYSIS OF INTERVIEW DATA

Interview recordings were professionally transcribed and thematically coded by members of CEP's research team. Several transcripts were reviewed by three coders, and common themes were identified and used to create codebooks. The codebooks were used to code all subsequent transcripts and ensure consistency across all coders. Substantial pairwise interrater reliability agreement was achieved for all codes.

Descriptive statistics were conducted to examine the prevalence of common themes in each interview. Quotes that were representative of these themes are included throughout the blog posts.

Endnotes

[1] 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.