Nonprofit Experiences in 2026

This survey should take approximately 15-25 minutes to complete.
Please complete this survey **by Thursday, May 21.**

Introduction

Thank you for your participation in this research study conducted by the Center for Effective Philanthropy! We recognize you have a lot of responsibilities and appreciate you making time in your day to complete this survey. To thank you for your time, **you will receive a $30 gift card after the completion of the survey. Please ensure you reach the end and "submit" your responses to receive the gift card.**

In this survey, we will be asking you about your experiences leading a nonprofit and working with funders in today's context. Findings will be shared with nonprofits and funders to offer an understanding of the challenges and conditions nonprofit leaders are facing today. There are no right or wrong answers.

CEP takes the confidentiality of data very seriously. Your responses to this survey will be kept **completely confidential**. Although CEP will know the identity of survey respondents, when results of this survey are shared:

- CEP will not reveal the identity of organizations that did or did not participate in this survey.
- All numeric rating responses to this survey will be reported in aggregate (e.g., as averages and percentages), and no individual responses will be reported.
- If we quote part of your response to an open-ended question, we will mask all identifying information in the quote to thoroughly protect your anonymity.

If you have any questions about this survey or research project, please contact Caroline Gasparini, coordinator, at carolineg@cep.org.

Instructions

- **Please do not use the forward and back buttons on your browser's navigation bar** to move forward and back in the survey. Instead, use the directional buttons at the bottom of each screen.
- **To stop and continue the survey at a future time**, close your browser and use the survey link found in your email to resume the survey.
- **To receive your "thank you" gift card**, please make sure to hit "submit" at the very end. The gift card will be sent from "noreply@tangocard.com," so be sure to check spam and make sure there are no filters blocking messages from that address.

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ABOUT YOUR ORGANIZATION

1. How would you describe the geographical scope(s) of your organization? *(Please select all that apply)*
   - ❑ Local
   - ❑ State
   - ❑ Regional
   - ❑ National
   - ❑ Global

2. Do your organization's efforts include a direct service component?
   - ❑ No
   - ❑ Yes

3. What are your organization's key focus areas? *(Please select all that apply)*
   - ❑ Arts, culture, and humanities
   - ❑ Civic engagement and government
   - ❑ Education
   - ❑ Environment and animals
   - ❑ Health
   - ❑ Human services
   - ❑ International/foreign affairs
   - ❑ Mutual/membership benefit
   - ❑ Public, societal benefit
   - ❑ Religion
   - ❑ Social justice
   - ❑ Other (*please specify* _____*)*

4. Are any of the following populations the **primary** intended people and/or communities served by your organization? *(Please select all that apply)*
   - ❑ Individuals from lower-income communities
   - ❑ Individuals with disabilities
   - ❑ Immigrants and refugees
   - ❑ Veterans
   - ❑ People of color
   - ❑ Members of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community
   - ❑ Other (*please specify* _____)
   - ❑ None of the above (*Mutually exclusive*)

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THE MOMENT IN CONTEXT

DEFINING THE CURRENT CONTEXT

Beginning in 2025, many legislative actions, executive orders, and budget decisions from the U.S. federal government have gone into effect with the potential for wide-ranging effects on philanthropy and nonprofits. In the remainder of this survey, we refer to this set of events as the **"current context."**

5. How effective do you feel that the response to the current context has been from foundation funders?
   - ❑ Not at all effective
   - ❑ Slightly effective
   - ❑ Somewhat effective
   - ❑ Very effective

6. *(If respondent selects an option other than "Very effective" in the previous question)* What barriers or challenges do you believe have made it difficult for foundations to respond to the current context?

   _____
   _____

7. How effective do you feel that the response to the current context has been from your organization's own foundation funders?
   - ❑ Not at all effective
   - ❑ Slightly effective
   - ❑ Somewhat effective
   - ❑ Very effective
   - ❑ Don't know/Not sure

EFFECTS OF THE CURRENT CONTEXT ON COMMUNITIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

8. As a nonprofit leader, what, if anything, concerns you most about the current context?

   _____
   _____

9. To what degree is your organization **at risk of closing** in 2026 (excluding mergers with other organizations)?
   - ❑ No risk
   - ❑ Slight risk
   - ❑ Moderate risk
   - ❑ High risk

10. *(If respondent selected a response other than "No risk" in previous question)* If your organization were to close in 2026, what would be the contributing factors? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Direct government legal/regulatory action
    - ❑ Pressure from community members

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- ❑ Lack of staffing/capacity
- ❑ Lack of funding from government funders
- ❑ Lack of funding from institutional donors
- ❑ Lack of funding from individual donors
- ❑ Staff burnout
- ❑ Our organization's closure is pre-planned for strategic reasons
- ❑ Other (*please specify* _____*)*

11. Since January 2025, how has the amount of time you have spent on each of the following tasks changed, if at all?

	More time	About the same amount of time	Less time	Not sure
Board management/relationships	❑	❑	❑	❑
Funder management/relationships	❑	❑	❑	❑
Fundraising	❑	❑	❑	❑
Advocacy or policy-related work	❑	❑	❑	❑
Staff management/well-being	❑	❑	❑	❑
Direct service delivery/program implementation	❑	❑	❑	❑
Strategy planning	❑	❑	❑	❑
Community engagement	❑	❑	❑	❑
Grant reporting/compliance	❑	❑	❑	❑
Communications/marketing	❑	❑	❑	❑
Legal, regulatory, or compliance related work	❑	❑	❑	❑

12. Do you intend to leave your current role as the Executive Director, CEO, or equivalent of your organization in the next 12 months?
    - ❑ Yes, I plan to leave my role in the next 12 months
    - ❑ Maybe, I am considering leaving my role in the next 12 months
    - ❑ No, I plan to stay in my role at least through the next 12 months
    - ❑ I am not the Executive Director, CEO, or equivalent

GRANTMAKING AND RELATIONSHIPS WITH FUNDERS

13. Thinking of <u>one foundation funder</u> that your organization works with especially closely, what is the <u>most</u> helpful action this funder has taken to support your organization in response to the current context?

    _____

    _____

14. How effective do you feel that your **foundation funders have been at meeting your organization's needs** in each of the following areas in the first half of 2026?

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	Not at all effective	Slightly effective	Moderately effective	Very effective	Don't know	We do not need this from our foundation funders
Communication	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Responsiveness	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Willingness to take risks	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Understanding challenges that your organization faces	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Providing unrestricted support	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Providing multiyear support	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑
Providing emergency or rapid response grants	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑	❑

15. *(If respondent selected "Not at all effective", "Slightly effective", or "Moderately effective" to "Communication" in the previous question)* What feedback would you give to your foundation funders, if any, about their communication efforts in the first half of 2026?

    _____

    _____

16. To what extent do you believe that you can **communicate honestly with your foundation funders** about the challenges that your organization is facing in the current context?
    - ❑ Not at all
    - ❑ Slightly
    - ❑ Somewhat
    - ❑ Completely
    - ❑ Not applicable

17. *(If respondent selected a response other than "Completely" or "Not applicable" in previous question)* What are the reasons that you believe you **cannot communicate completely honestly** with your foundation funders about challenges that your organization is facing? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Limited opportunities to have these communications with our funders

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- ❑ Concern that communicating honestly will lead funders to reduce or withdraw funding
- ❑ Lack of interest from our funders in our organization's challenges
- ❑ Belief that our funders will not act to address our organization's challenges
- ❑ Fear of causing reputational harm to our organization
- ❑ Potential legal consequences for our organization
- ❑ Other (*please specify* _____*)*

18. Since January 2025, has your organization received any assistance beyond the grant from your foundation funders (e.g., coaching, training, operations)?
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ Don't know

19. *(If respondent selects "Yes" in the previous question)* How useful, if at all, was this assistance beyond the grant for your organization's work or operations?
    - ❑ Not at all useful
    - ❑ Slightly useful
    - ❑ Somewhat useful
    - ❑ Very useful

20. What types of **staffing and governance-related** assistance beyond the grant, if any, would be most useful for your organization right now? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Board development and governance support
    - ❑ Executive coaching or leadership development
    - ❑ Strategic planning support
    - ❑ Succession planning or interim leadership support
    - ❑ Human resources or talent management support
    - ❑ Support with diversity, equity, and inclusion practices
    - ❑ Staff wellness and mental health resources
    - ❑ Professional development and training
    - ❑ Volunteer management and engagement
    - ❑ Other (*please describe* _____*)*
    - ❑ None of the above *(Mutually exclusive)*

21. What types of **finances and operations-related** assistance beyond the grant, if any, would be most useful for your organization right now? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Communications, PR, or narrative strategy support
    - ❑ Financial management, accounting, or budgeting support
    - ❑ Cybersecurity and data protection
    - ❑ AI tools and digital transformation
    - ❑ Support with fundraising strategy or donor development
    - ❑ Advocacy, policy engagement, or organizing
    - ❑ Support with coalition or partnership building
    - ❑ Access to research, data, or sector-level intelligence
    - ❑ Other (*please describe* _____*)*
    - ❑ None of the above *(Mutually exclusive)*

22. What types of **risk and crisis planning-related** assistance beyond the grant, if any, would be most useful for your organization right now? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ General legal counsel
    - ❑ Federal policy, regulatory, or compliance guidance
    - ❑ Nonprofit governance or structural legal support
    - ❑ Assistance with mergers or other organizational consolidations
    - ❑ Guidance for the possibility of our organization closing
    - ❑ Support with crisis communications
    - ❑ Other (*please describe* _____*)*
    - ❑ None of the above *(Mutually exclusive)*

23. Which of the following best describes your organization's current ability to accept assistance beyond the grant?
    - ❑ We are stable and ready for new learning/support
    - ❑ We are managing but have limited bandwidth to build capacity
    - ❑ We are in survival mode/focused entirely on basic operations
    - ❑ We are in crisis/struggling with basic operations

24. In the current context, how important, if at all, is it to you that your foundation funders advocate and speak out publicly on issues affecting the community your organization serves?
    - ❑ Not at all important
    - ❑ Slightly important
    - ❑ Somewhat important
    - ❑ Very important

25. In the current context, what action(s) do you believe your foundation funders should prioritize most in their public advocacy? *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Advocating to government on policy issues affecting our organization
    - ❑ Defending nonprofits
    - ❑ Using their platforms to amplify grantees' advocacy
    - ❑ Signing/joining collective statements or coalitions
    - ❑ Taking a stance on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) issues
    - ❑ Other (*please specify* _____*)*
    - ❑ We do not want or expect our foundation funders to advocate publicly *(Mutually exclusive)*

26. If your foundation funders were to collectively adopt/prioritize ONE of the following practices now, which would be the most valuable to your organization?
    - ❑ Advocate to government on public policy
    - ❑ Increase grant sizes
    - ❑ Increase foundation payout
    - ❑ Provide more assistance beyond the grant
    - ❑ Provide more multiyear funding
    - ❑ Provide more unrestricted funding
    - ❑ Streamline grant application requirements
    - ❑ Streamline grant reporting requirements

- ❑ Speak out publicly on issues affecting nonprofits
- ❑ Other (*please specify* _____*)*

27. What is ONE practice your foundation funders could adopt that would be most valuable to your organization?

_____

_____

LOOKING AHEAD

28. Is your organization currently making major changes to its strategy in response to the current context?
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ No, but we are considering major changes
    - ❑ No, and we are not considering major changes

29. *(If respondent selects "Yes" or "No, but we are considering major changes in previous question)* Please describe the major changes your organization is making, or considering making, to its strategy in response to the current context.

_____

_____

ABOUT YOU

The following section asks some demographic questions about you (the person who completed most of the survey). This information will be used to describe the survey population in aggregate and to compare the experiences of different groups. **As with all the questions in this survey, this section is optional and responses will remain confidential.**

30. How many years have you been in your current role at your organization?
    - ❑ Less than 1 year
    - ❑ At least 1 year but fewer than 3 years
    - ❑ At least 3 years but fewer than 6 years
    - ❑ At least 6 years but fewer than 10 years
    - ❑ 10 years or longer

31. Please select the option that represents how you describe yourself: *(Please select all that apply)*
    - ❑ Gender non-conforming or non-binary
    - ❑ Man
    - ❑ Woman
    - ❑ Prefer to self-describe/identify (*optional, please describe* _____)
    - ❑ Prefer not to say *(Mutually exclusive)*

32. Are you transgender?
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Yes

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- ❑ Prefer not to say

33. Do you identify as a member of the LGBTQ+ (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer) community?
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ Prefer not to say

34. Do you have a disability?
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ Prefer not to say

35. How would you describe your race and/or ethnicity? (*Please select all that apply*)
    - ❑ African American or Black
    - ❑ American Indian, Alaska Native, or Indigenous
    - ❑ Asian or Asian American
    - ❑ Latina, Latino, Latinx or Hispanic
    - ❑ Middle Eastern or North African
    - ❑ Multiracial and/or Multi-ethnic
    - ❑ Pacific Islander or Native Hawaiian
    - ❑ White
    - ❑ Race and/or ethnicity not included above (*optional, please describe* _____)
    - ❑ Prefer not to say *(Mutually exclusive)*

36. Do you identify as a person of color?
    - ❑ No
    - ❑ Yes
    - ❑ Prefer not to say

37. Do you have any comments, questions, or feedback that you would like to share with CEP?
    _____
    _____

38. Thank you for completing our survey! Please confirm the email address we should send your gift card to and hit "Submit." You will be receiving two emails from "noreply@tangocard.com," one to choose your retailer and one to redeem your gift card. _____ (*Valid email addresses only.)*

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