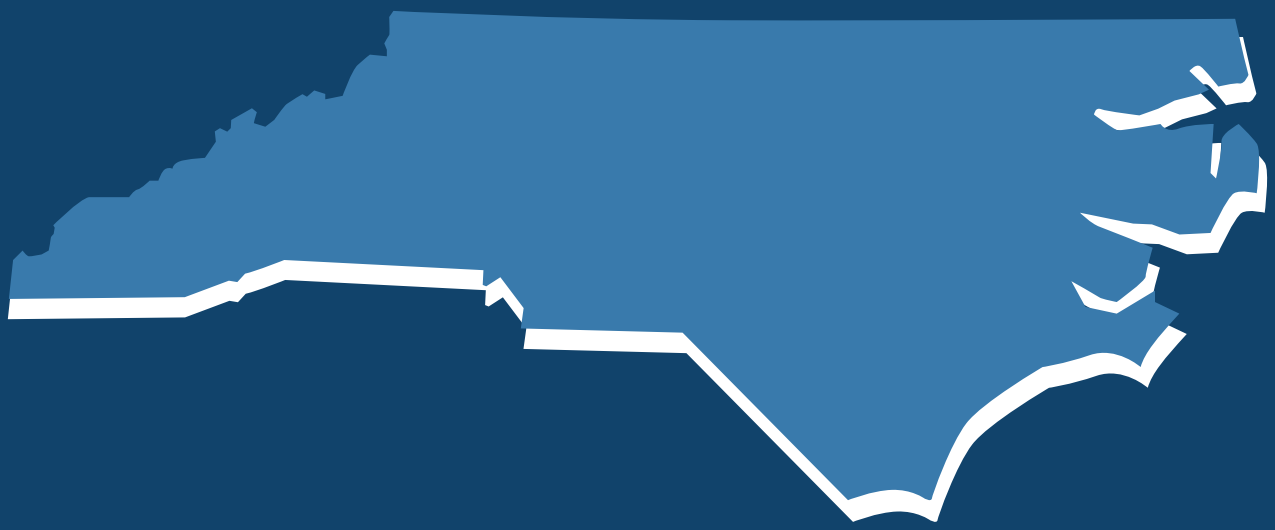
North Carolina nonprofit organizations and the impacts of COVID-19

Insights from a statewide survey and creation of a publicly available dataset

Prepared by the North Carolina Office of Strategic Partnerships and The Policy Lab

September 2020



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Citing this document:

When citing this document or data from the associated data file, please refer to the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships and NC Center *for* Nonprofits 2020 statewide survey of COVID-19 impact on nonprofits. Below are the suggested citations in APA format.

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About the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships:

The NC Office of Strategic Partnerships enhances partnerships between state government and North Carolina's renowned research and philanthropic sectors. This includes elevating the State's internal capacity to use and generate evidence in its policy and programmatic functions.

We do this in part by building and enhancing collaborative networks of public officials, research partners, and partners from philanthropy and the nonprofit sector broadly. We prioritize partnerships that are scalable, sustainable, and develop public, open-source resources. Strategic Partnerships is housed in the North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, which includes data-driven and evidence-based decision making among its priorities.

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I. Overview

North Carolina philanthropies began responding to COVID-19 almost as soon as the pandemic began. State and local governments were also involved immediately, assessing needs and working to identify the most appropriate responses. Unlike many disasters, however, COVID-19 has no boundaries. It presented—and continues to present—seemingly endless challenges and needs, many without clear precedent. There was an urgent need for information about how the nonprofit community was experiencing the pandemic, which could in turn inform short- and long-term decisions related to COVID-19 by government, philanthropy, and nonprofit organizations themselves.

On May 20, 2020, a statewide survey of North Carolina nonprofits was launched by North Carolina's Office of Strategic Partnerships and the North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits, with support from The Policy Lab at Brown University. Thanks to over 2,000 people who took time to respond to the survey, we now have a nuanced picture of North Carolina's nonprofit sector during COVID-19—including experiences, needs, gaps, and opportunities.

We highlight many results in this report.[1] We also invite and encourage readers to further engage with the underlying dataset. The file is searchable by numerous attributes such as counties served and type of need. You can also search for specific nonprofits to learn if they responded and what information they shared. The dataset includes thousands of written responses to open-ended questions. Users can search responses to learn about organizations' particular circumstances and needs. You can conduct additional analysis to learn about aspects of the survey responses not addressed here. Throughout this document, we provide examples of how readers can use the information and insights from the survey to inform decisions and action related to COVID-19 response efforts.

II. Methodology

A statewide survey of North Carolina nonprofit organizations was launched on May 20, 2020, jointly administered by North Carolina's Office of Strategic Partnerships and the North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits. The survey included over thirty questions about a range of topics, such as size of staff and budget, challenges related to COVID-19, and areas of need.

The complete survey is found in Appendix A.

To promote the survey, the Office of Strategic Partnerships emailed 18,189 nonprofits registered with the North Carolina Secretary of State and for whom an email address was on file; see Appendix B for an example email invitation. There were also more targeted efforts including outreach phone calls and emails to partner organizations that in turn shared the survey with their networks, as well as promotion by the NC Center *for* Nonprofits and others.

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[1] This project would not have been possible without contributions from many people (see Acknowledgements). This report is prepared by the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships and The Policy Lab—the "we" of this sentence.

To increase the likelihood that responses to this survey would come from a large and highly diverse group of organizations—a group that would represent the NC nonprofit sector as a whole—we used multiple strategies to reach people and organizations.

See Appendix C for full details on our sampling and recruitment method.

III. Responses and Data File

We received 2,010 responses to the survey between May 20 and July 31, 2020. When the same nonprofit organization submitted more than one response, we used only the most recent, complete response. The resultant data file, which we use in the analyses reported below, represents 1,772 nonprofit organizations. The nonprofits that responded are similar to the larger nonprofit community of North Carolina in terms of location and budget (which we compared to IRS statistics), which increases our confidence that the sample is representative.

Download the dataset. Read the responses!

The complete dataset—including all 2,010 responses—can be downloaded at bit.ly/2020-nc-nonprofit-survey.

You can explore the file to learn about individual nonprofits, types of nonprofits, or nonprofits from particular areas of the state. You also can read and learn from nonprofit organizations' written descriptions and explanations of their experiences, challenges, and needs during COVID-19. Below we highlight statistical analyses that reflect some of the areas of interest expressed by philanthropic and government organizations in the context of COVID-19 response efforts. The file allows analysis of a range of other items to create other statistics.

IV. Results

We summarize below high-level results, focusing mostly on descriptive statistics.

We also explore whether responses differed meaningfully based on select characteristics of the nonprofit organization. In particular, we report results conditional on: the size of operating budget; how many years in existence; how many staff; and whether they serve rural counties only, urban/suburban counties only, or rural and urban/suburban counties. We also examined whether being led by a woman or person of color was correlated with response differences. While organizations' circumstances may have changed since the date that they submitted responses, we report the findings in the present tense (e.g., how many staff organizations "have") unless the meaning of the survey suggests otherwise (e.g., people served *in last 12 months).*

We encourage additional uses of the data file, which is why we are making the complete dataset publicly available at the link provided above in Responses and Data File. We have heard from individuals and organizations that are considering using the data to conduct additional analyses, to provide technical assistance to nonprofits, to convene groups of nonprofit organizations with similar challenges, to inform philanthropies' funding decisions, for policy decisions, and for other purposes. Many respondents requested the survey results and commented on their interest in learning what efforts stem from the results.

To further information sharing , we encourage you to share any new analyses and learnings by emailing partnerships@osbm.nc.gov.

A. Profile of Responding Organizations

Table 1 describes the 1,772 nonprofit organizations along several characteristics:

- **Annual Operating Budget**: 9% of nonprofits have no annual operating budget; 25% have less than $100,000; 38% have between $100,000 and $1,000,000; and 23% have $1,000,000or more. 2% did not know their budget.
- **Number of Staff:** 47% of respondents have 5 or more staff members, 25% have between 1 and 4 staff, and 21% have no staff. 7% did not respond.
- **Age of Organization:** Most nonprofits (66%) have been in operation for more than 10 years and about 25% have operated for 10 years or less. Of those, 9% have operated between 1 and 3 years and 17% have operated between 4 and 10 years. Only 2% (43 nonprofits) are less than 1 year old.
- **501(c)(3) Specified Purpose**: The most common organizational purposes included "human services" (30%), "community improvement, public/societal benefit" (27%), "education" (27%), "health care/mental health" (18%), and "arts, culture, humanities" (17%); purpose categories selected by fewer than 1 in 10 nonprofits included "environment/animal related" (9%), "religion related, spiritual development" (6%), "higher education (3%), "research: science, technology, social science" (3%), and "hospitals" (1%). Note the percentages add to a combined total of more than 100% because a respondent could select more than one purpose. These are the "specified purpose" categories that the NC Center *for* Nonprofits uses.
- **Population Focus:** Respondents elaborated on which population or populations (e.g., "veterans" or "immigrants") are the focus of their direct services, if any. Of those serving specific populations, age was the most commonly used attribute, with commonly chosen categories including children 6 through 17 (30%), young adults (18-25 years old) (26%), elderly 65+ (20%), and children birth to 5 (6%). Other categories with 20% or higher selections include people in poverty (29%) and communities of color (23%). About one third (34%) indicated their "services are available to everyone" and a small subset of respondents (8%) did not select a population as they do not provide direct services. The percentages add to a combined total of more than 100% because a respondent could select more than one population focus.

- **Number of Individuals Served in Last 12 Months:** Over one third of respondents served fewer than 500 people and 25% served 1,000 to 9,999 people. Only 5% of nonprofits served 50,000 or more people, and 3% did not provide direct services to people.
- **Led by a Woman:** The majority of responding nonprofits (63%) are led by a woman. Of the nearly one quarter (23%) with an annual operating budget of $1,000,000 or more, 56% are led by a woman.
- **Led by a Person of Color**: 20% of responding nonprofits are led by a person of color. Of those with budgets of $1,000,000 or more, 17% are led by a person of color.

Table 1. Characteristics of the responding nonprofit organizations (*N* = 1,772).

Analyses rely on the most recent, complete responses from 1,772 nonprofit organizations. Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding. For questions with an asterisk—about purpose and population focus—percentages sum to more than 100% since more than one option could be selected. The 501(c)(3) Specified Purpose categories are those used by the NC Center *for* Nonprofits.

	n	%
Annual Operating Budget		
No budget	161	9%
Less than $100,000	427	24%
$100,000 to $249,999	250	14%
$250,000 to $499,999	255	14%
$500,000 to $999,999	184	10%
$1,000,000 to $4,999,999	307	17%
$5,000,000 to $9,999,999	55	3%
$10,000,000 or greater	52	3%
I'm not sure	37	2%
Missing	44	3%
Number of Staff		
No staff	367	21%
1 - 4	438	25%
5 and above	836	47%
Missing	131	7%
Age of Organization		
Less than 1 year	43	2%
1 to 3 years	165	9%
4 to 10 years	310	17%
More than 10 years	1178	66%
I'm not sure / Other	63	4%
Missing	13	1%
501(c)(3) Specified Purpose *		
Arts, Culture, Humanities	300	17%
Community Improvement, Public/Societal Benefit	485	27%
Education	478	27%
Environment/Animal Related	156	9%
Health Care/Mental Health	325	18%
Higher Education	58	3%
Hospitals	16	1%
Human Services	534	30%
Religion related, Spiritual Development	107	6%
Research: Science, Tech, Social Sci	60	3%
All others	188	11%
Counties Served		
Rural only	390	22%
Urban/Suburban only	516	29%
Rural and Urban/Suburban	615	35%
Not serving any counties in NC	54	3%
I don't know	14	1%
Missing	183	10%

	n	%
Population Focus? *		
No direct service to people	142	8%
Our services are available to everyone	608	34%
Pregnant people	105	6%
Children birth to 5	282	16%
Children 6 through 17	536	30%
Young adults (18-25)	454	26%
Elderly (65+)	356	20%
Children in foster care & their families	154	9%
Immigrants	169	10%
People at risk/been human trafficking	113	6%
People experiencing homelessness/housing insecurity	287	16%
People experiencing domestic violence	158	9%
People in poverty	509	29%
People returning from incarceration	123	7%
People who identify as LGBTQ+	160	9%
People w/ chronic medical conditions	0	0%
People w/ cognitive disabilities	189	11%
People w/ physical disabilities	229	13%
Refugees	60	3%
Veterans	194	11%
Led by a Woman		
Yes	1112	63%
No	554	31%
I'm not sure	6	0%
Other	76	4%
Led by a Person of Color		
Yes	363	20%
No	1361	77%
I'm not sure	24	1%
Number People Served in Last 12 Mos.		
Less than 10	32	2%
10 to 99	235	13%
100 to 499	347	20%
500 to 999	173	10%
1,000 to 9,999	437	25%
10,000 to 49,999	154	9%
50,000 to 99,999	39	2%
100,000 or more	58	3%
I don't know	53	3%
Not serving people	59	3%
Missing	184	10%

B. The Geography of the Nonprofit Community

The widespread impact of COVID-19 has highlighted interest in (and concerns about) how experiences with the pandemic differ across geographic areas. Of particular interest has been examining differential impacts in North Carolina's rural and urban/suburban areas and the resources needed to respond. This was one reason for asking respondents how many and which counties they serve and analyzing responses by rural and urban/suburban.

We begin with the observation (see Figure 1 below) that although about 250 of the 1,772 responding nonprofits (14%) serve all 100 North Carolina counties, the large majority (75%) serve five or fewer counties; indeed, the most commonly served number of counties is one (42%).

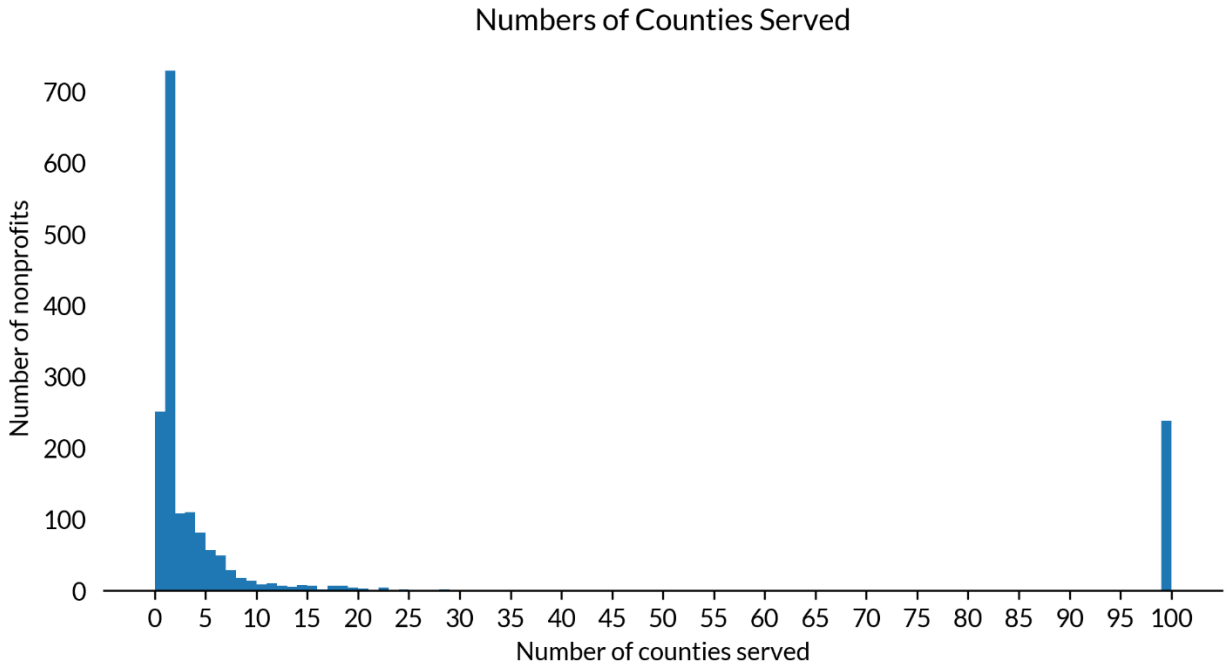

Figure 1. How many counties do nonprofit organizations serve?

This plot shows how many counties each of the respondents serve, ranging from one county to the entire state (100 counties). The plurality (about 750, or 42%) serve only one county; about 250 (or 14%) serve all 100 counties. Most organizations (1,521 or about 75%) serve five or fewer counties. Note that 183 respondents did not indicate any served county, 54 indicated that they did not serve any county in NC, and 14 were unsure, which is why the bars in this figure do not sum to 1,772.

As seen in Figure 2, nonprofits from every county submitted the survey. 244 is the lowest number of nonprofits that submitted from any county and 435 is the highest number from any one county.

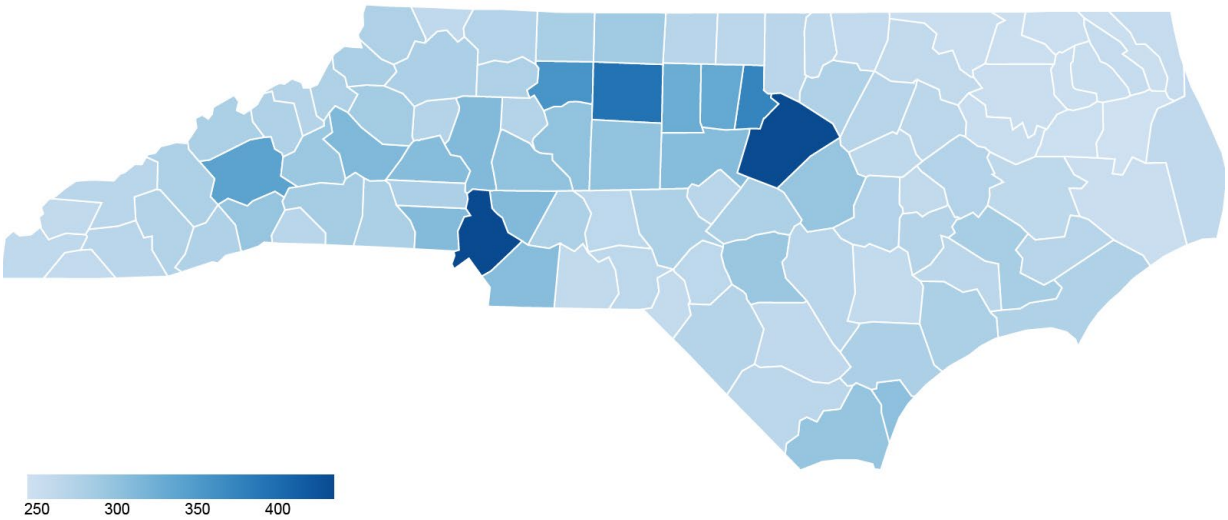

Figure 2. The number of nonprofit organizations serving each county.

This figure plots how many of the responding nonprofits are operational inside a county, with darker colors indicating more nonprofits. North Carolina's most populous counties—Wake, Mecklenburg, and Guilford—have the most nonprofits operating within their borders. Recall these data are based on the responding nonprofits—and we map to give a sense of geographic distribution—as opposed to this being a map of how many nonprofits actually exist throughout the state.

Rather than reporting statistics county-by-county, we examined all analyses in this report as a function of whether respondents served only rural, only urban/suburban, or both rural and urban/suburban counties. Our categorization relies on the NC Rural Center's classification, which considers a county "rural" if it has 250 people or less per square mile (see Appendix D). The Rural Center further distinguishes "regional city and suburban" (250-750 people per square mile) from "urban" (more than 750 people per square mile), although in this report, for simplicity, we merge these categories into a single "urban/suburban" category. By this method each of the 1,772 respondents was classified as serving rural only, urban/suburban only, or a combination of both rural and urban/suburban. Of the 1,772 responding organizations, 390 (22%) serve rural only; 516 (29%) urban/suburban only; and 615 (35%) a combination. 14% did not indicate serving any North Carolina counties.

Table 2 compares select nonprofit characteristics as a function of the type of counties they serve.

Table 2. Nonprofit characteristics by rural, urban, and suburban classification.

Nonprofits are classified as "serving rural only" if all counties they serve have 250 people or fewer per square mile, as "serving urban/suburban only" if all counties they serve have more than 250 people per square mile, or as "serving both" if they serve counties of both fewer and more than 250 people per square mile. This table explores whether such nonprofits meaningfully differ in terms of their annual operating budget, how many years they have been in operation, and their number of staff. Note that the marginal totals are not always equal because a nonprofit might not have answered a particular question.

	Serving rural only		Serving urban/ suburban only		Serving both		Total	
	n	%	*n*	%	*n*	%	*n*	%
Annual Operating Budget								
< 100k	145	38%	211	41%	174	29%	530	35%
100k - 1m	186	49%	200	39%	237	39%	623	42%
> 1m	52	14%	102	20%	192	32%	346	23%
Total	383	100%	513	100%	603	100%	1499	100%
Age of Organization								
< 10 Years	101	26%	211	41%	175	29%	487	32%
≥ 10 Years	289	74%	301	59%	439	71%	1029	68%
Total	390	100%	512	100%	614	100%	1516	100%
Number of Staff								
No staff	91	23%	136	26%	116	19%	343	23%
1-4	120	31%	133	26%	156	25%	409	27%
5+	179	46%	247	48%	343	56%	769	51%
Total	390	100%	516	100%	615	100%	1521	100%

- **Annual Operating Budget**: Nonprofits serving only rural counties are less likely to have $1,000,000 or larger budgets (only 14% relative to 20% for those serving urban/suburban and 32% for those serving both rural and urban/suburban).
- **Age of Organization**: 26% of organizations serving rural counties are under 10 years old, while 41% of organizations serving urban/suburban counties are less than 10 years old.
- **Number of Staff**: About half of nonprofits of each type have five or more staff (46%, 48%, and 56% for rural only, urban/suburban only, and both, respectively); and about a quarter of each nonprofit type have no paid staff (23%, 26%, and 19% for rural only, urban/suburban only, and both, respectively).

C. The Impact of COVID-19

Organizations were asked to rate agreement with six statements about their operations during COVID-19 (see Figure 3). Nearly all (94%) agreed that COVID-19 had affected their operations. This was the case regardless of annual operating budget, age of organization, number of staff, whether serving rural, urban/suburban, or rural and urban/suburban counties, or any other characteristic examined (see also Appendix E.)

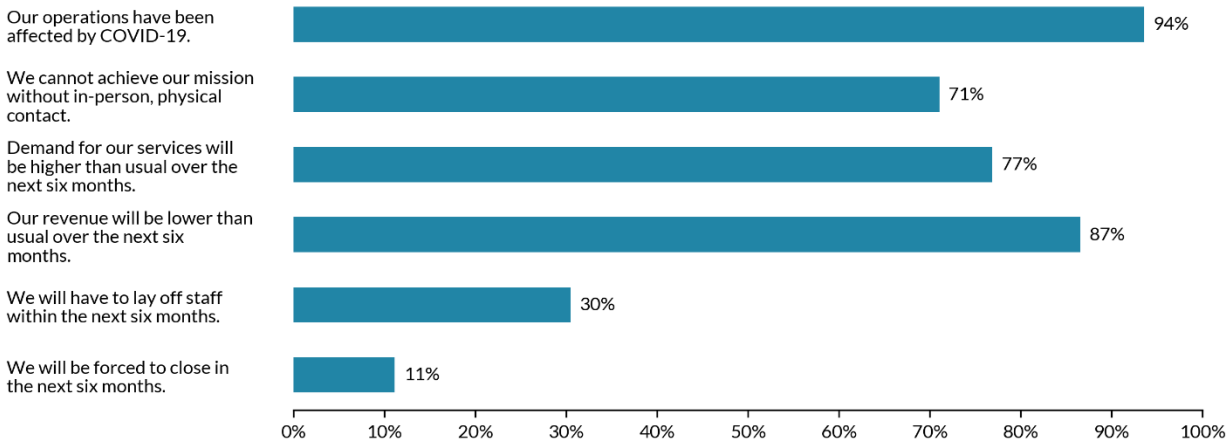

Figure 3. How has COVID-19 impacted the operations of nonprofit organizations?

Respondents rated statements about how COVID-19 has impacted their operations. This figure plots how many organizations "slightly agree[d]," "agree[d]," or "strongly agree[d]" with each statement, on a 6-point Likert scale from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree."

Notable results (see Figure 3 as well as Appendix E) include:

- A large majority (87%) said that their revenue would be lower than usual over the next six months, while at the same time demand for their services would be higher than usual (77%).
- 71% of nonprofits agreed that they could not achieve their mission without in-person, physical contact.
- 11% of nonprofits indicated at least slight agreement that they "will be forced to close in the next six months."
- Younger organizations (less than 10 years) were twice as likely to indicate they may be forced to close within the next six months (16% vs. 9%).
- Organizations with budgets of less than $100,000 are the least likely to think they will need to lay off staff within the next six months, but most likely to expect to have to close altogether as compared with organizations with budgets of more than $100,000.

- In addition, 404 (23%) respondents also wrote open-ended answers to the question "If you're at all concerned you might be forced to close, feel free to explain why and what is needed to avoid closure." Respondents often indicated lack of funding/donations and COVID-related restrictions as the main reasons for their challenges.

The rapidly changing circumstances brought by COVID-19 highlight the importance of learning what nonprofits experienced in early months as well as what they anticipate experiencing in later months. To that end, respondents were also provided seven issues to consider ("lost revenue," "staffing challenges," "supply problems," "venue challenges," "increased demand for services," "demand for new services," "service and programming disruption") as well as the options of "none of the above" or to provide a written response ("other (please specify)"). They selected which have been "experienced in the past three months" as well as which they "anticipate experiencing over the next six months." As seen in Figure 4:

- The most commonly experienced challenges include lost revenue and service/program disruption. For example, about 75% of nonprofits have already experienced lost revenue in the first three months of COVID-19, and 80% of nonprofits projected lower than usual revenue over the next six months.
- Overall, respondents expected each of the seven challenges to stay the same or worsen over the next six months. An exception is service/program disruption, which was selected by about 75% of nonprofits as already experienced while only about 60% anticipated the problem over the next six months.
- The largest projected change over time was demand for services, which 40% of respondents indicated they were already experiencing, while nearly 60% projected increased demand for services over the next six months.

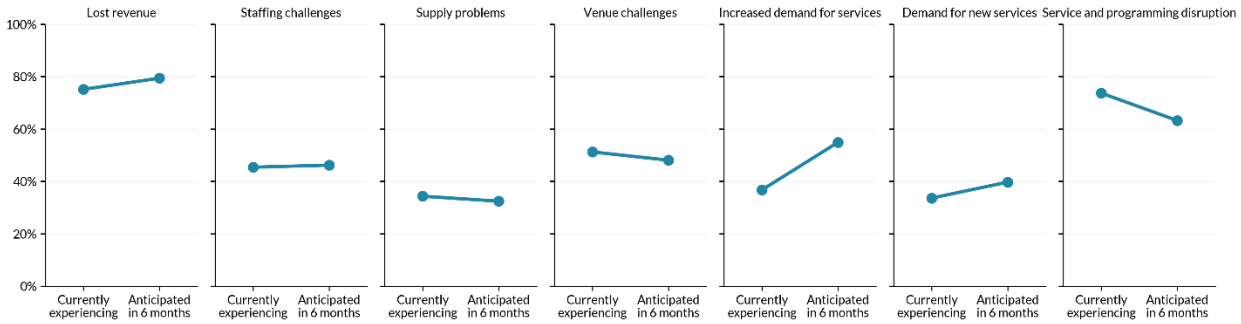

Figure 4. Current and Anticipated Challenges.

Respondents were asked to select one or more issues from a menu of nine options (including "none of the above" or "other (please specify)"), which they had "experienced in the past three months" or "anticipate[d] experiencing over the next six months." This figure plots the percentage selecting each of seven issues, both experienced in the past three months and anticipate experiencing over the next six months.

The patterns described above are similar for nonprofits regardless of their annual operating budget, age of organization, number of staff, or whether serving rural, urban/suburban, or rural and urban/suburban counties. There are, however, a few notable exceptions meriting closer scrutiny (see Appendix F):

- **Nonprofits serving only rural counties** were more likely to report supply problems, both already experienced and anticipated.
- **Younger organizations (10 years or less)** were more likely to indicate staffing challenges, both already experienced and anticipated.
- **Organizations with annual operating budgets over $1,000,000** were more likely to report current and anticipated staffing challenges and supply problems.

Note that respondents also wrote in 1,197 open-ended responses, either experienced (736) or anticipated (461), providing more details to these challenges and describing additional issues. It was rare (39 and 29 responses for each question, both amounting to only about 2%) for "none of the above" to be selected.

D. Needed Supports

Several survey items explored what supports might be most helpful to each nonprofit. Figure 5 shows how many organizations rated each of five types of support as helpful over the next six months.

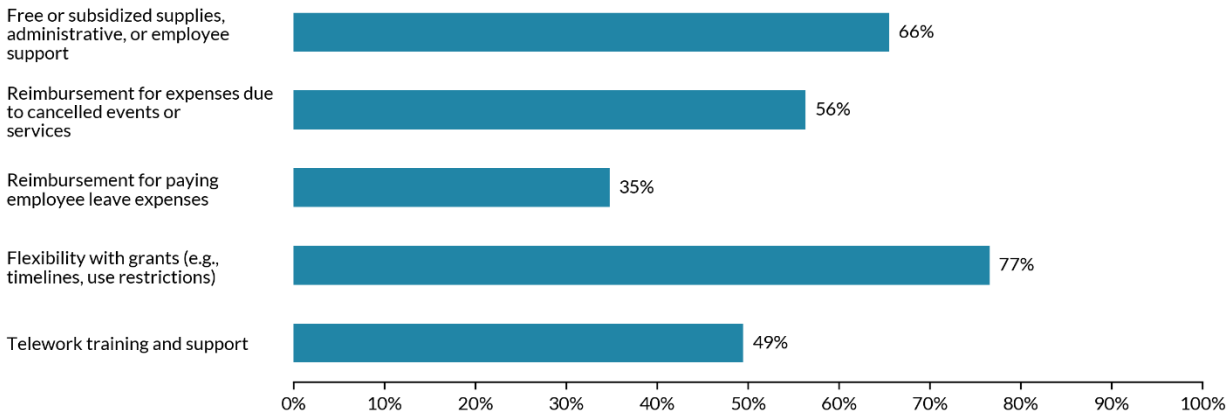

Figure 5. Which supports did nonprofit organizations say would be important over the next six months?

Respondents rated how important are each of five types of support. This figure plots how many organizations rated a support as "moderately important," "very important," or "extremely important" on a 6-point Likert scale from "not at all important" to "extremely important."

The most commonly valued support, selected by 77% of nonprofits, was flexibility with grants (e.g., timelines, use restrictions). Two in three (66%) nonprofits also indicated that free or subsidized supplies, administrative, or employee support would be important. The least commonly selected support was reimbursement for paying employee leave expenses (35%), but note this rating is driven downward by organizations with no staff, who have no need to select the support; in contrast, half of organizations with 5+ staff said reimbursement support was important.

Examining results by budget, age, staff, and counties served (see Appendix G), we also note that:

- Responses are generally similar for nonprofits serving rural and urban/suburban areas.
- Nonprofits with larger staffs and budgets were more likely to say any given support was important. Organizations with 5+ relative to 1-4 staff, for example, more frequently rated as important "free or subsidized supplies, administrative, or employee support" (71% vs. 64%), "reimbursement for expenses due to cancelled events or services" (65% vs. 55%), "reimbursement for paying employee leave expenses" (51% vs. 31%), "flexibility with grants (e.g., timelines, use restrictions)" (85% vs. 75%), and "telework training and support" (58% vs. 45%).

Over 300 respondents offered written comments elaborating on what supports would be helpful (see Appendix K), with requests ranging from help on grant writing to assistance with water bills. Recall these responses can be read in the publicly available datafile.

A related question asked respondents whether they agreed it would be helpful for someone else to provide each of nine types of support or guidance (see Figure 6).

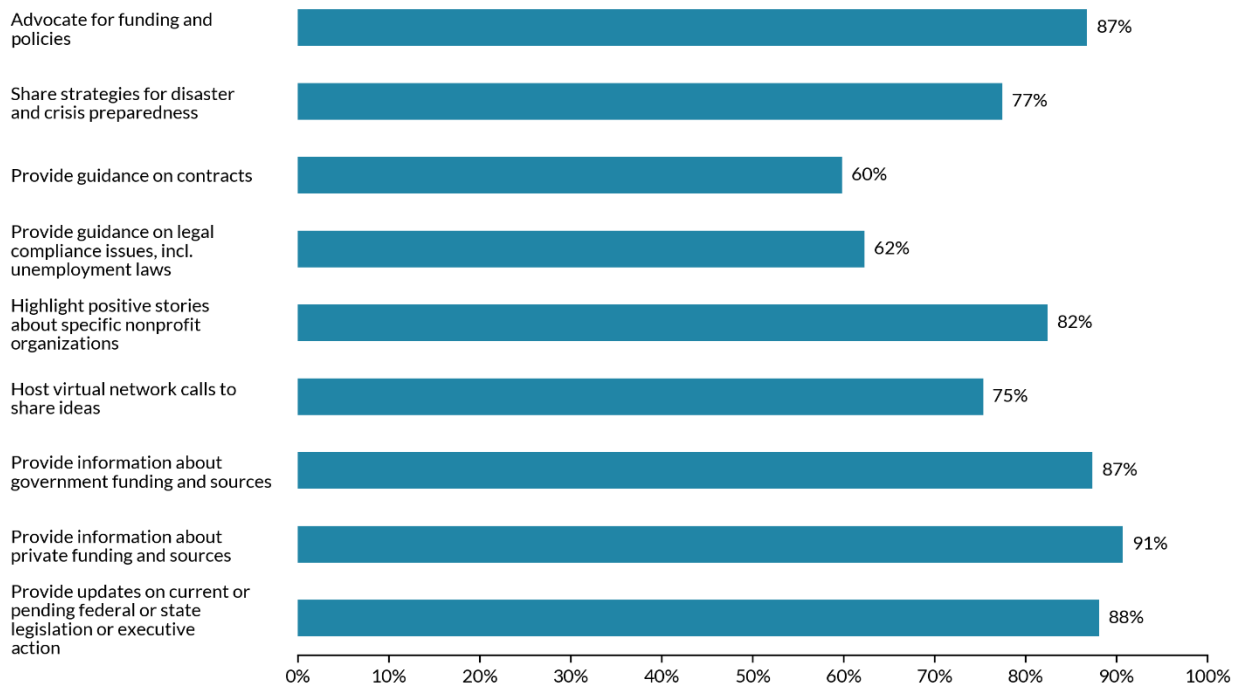

Figure 6. Would it be helpful for someone else to provide each of the following supports or guidance?

Respondents rated how much they agreed or disagreed that it would be helpful for someone else to provide various types of support or guidance. This figure plots how many organizations "somewhat agree[d]," "agree[d]," or "strongly agree[d]" the support or guidance would be helpful.

A majority of respondents agreed that each of the nine supports or guidance would be helpful. Relatively speaking, guidance on contracts and legal compliance were least frequently chosen (60% and 62%, respectively), followed by hosting virtual network calls to share ideas (75%). Support with funding was the predominant call for help, with nearly 90% of nonprofits selecting any statement mentioning funding as important.

Examining results by budget, age, staff, and counties served (see Appendix H), we also note that:

- Responses are generally similar for nonprofits serving rural and urban/suburban areas.
- Nonprofits with larger staffs and budgets tended to be more likely to select a support or guidance as helpful.
- Organizations without staff are less likely to find most supports helpful, with particularly larger differences for providing guidance on contracts (39% versus about 65% for those with staff) or other legal compliance issues (29% versus about 70% for those with staff).

E. Requests for Interns

Respondents were asked whether a student intern would be helpful for the next three to six months. Nearly one thousand (982) respondents said that it would be helpful.

As an example of how these survey data can be directly used to support operational decisions and COVID-19 response broadly, the Office of Strategic Partnerships followed up with the nonprofits who expressed interest in an intern, inviting them to submit a formal request as part of the newly established NC COVID-19 Student Response Corps. The Response Corps is a partnership developed in the midst of COVID-19 in recognition of two complementary challenges and needs: one was students from colleges and universities across the state who found themselves unexpectedly without internships and jobs; the second was nonprofit and local government organizations who found themselves suddenly required to move their operations to remote status while simultaneously needing increased capacity to respond to COVID-19.

The survey responses provide important information and insight into the extent to which nonprofits needed additional capacity to carry out their COVID-19 response efforts. As the link to the database of internship requests indicates, organizations face a wide range of general and specific challenges that even temporary assistance would help to address.

As of late August, 112 interns had been placed with over 80 nonprofit and local government organizations in counties and municipalities across the state.

F. Paycheck Protection Program

The Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) is a loan program originating from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act.[2] Administered by the U.S. Small Business Administration, the program aims to provide small businesses with cash-flow assistance that helps avoid closure or laying off employees.[3] Applications were accepted between April 3 and

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[2] H.R. 748 – CARES Act (passed 03/27/2020).

[3] *See generally*, https://www.sba.gov/funding-programs/loans/coronavirus-relief-options/paycheck-protection-program (last accessed 09/07/2020).

August 8, 2020. (This survey was fielded within that window, between April 28 and July 31, 2020.) Early reports suggested that nonprofits had challenges obtaining a PPP loan.[4]

To gauge how North Carolina nonprofits fared, we asked respondents to select which of seven statements best described their engagement with the PPP (see Figure 7).

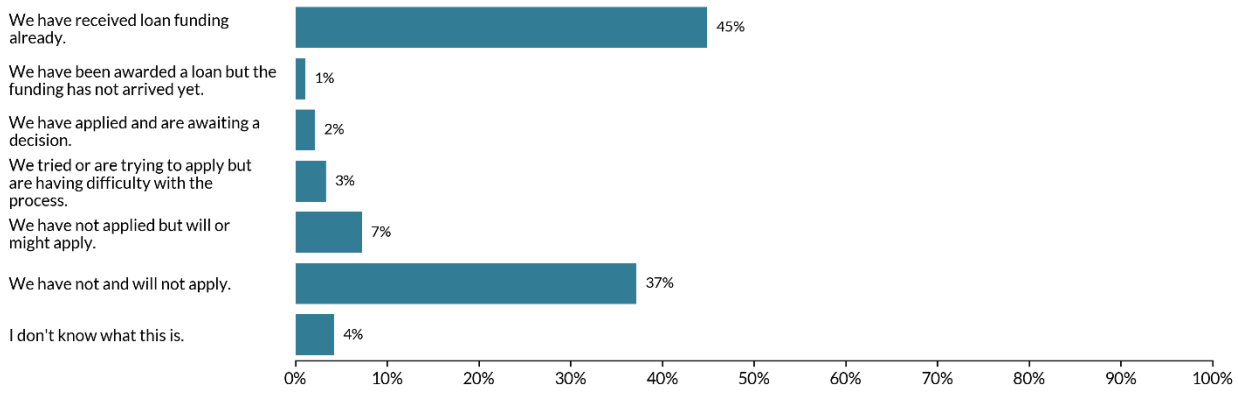

Figure 7. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Paycheck Protection Program?

Respondents selected which of seven statements best described their engagement with the PPP. For example, 45% had received a PPP loan, whereas 37% did not intend to apply.

At the time they completed the survey, 4% of respondents had not heard of the PPP, while 37% had no intention of applying. 7% indicated they will or might apply but had not yet initiated an application. The remainder, about half of nonprofits, actively sought PPP support. Most successfully obtained funding. But notice that 5% of respondents said they were either having difficulty with the process or were awaiting a decision.

Examining results by budget, age, staff, and counties served (see Appendix I), several differences are notable:

- Nonprofits with no staff and budgets below $100,000 were much less likely to apply for PPP, which may reflect the fact that they would be ineligible.
- Nonprofits with larger budgets and staff sizes were more likely to have already received PPP funding.
- Older nonprofits (10+ years) were much more likely to have already received PPP funding.

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[4] *See e.g.*, Danielle Kurtzleben, "With survival at stake, small business owners frustrated by aid delays" (April 7, 2020), NPR All Things Considered; or https://insidecharity.org/2020/05/22/nonprofit-ppp-forgiveness-may-be-harder-to-receive-than-original-loan/.

- Nonprofits serving rural only were less likely to have already received loan funding (37%), compared to those serving urban/suburban only (42%) or both (52%). This may be due to the fact that rural only nonprofits also tend to have fewer staff and smaller annual operating budgets (recall Table 2).
- Among those nonprofits actively seeking PPP, an organization is much more likely to report difficulty with the process if younger than 10 years (20% vs. 3%), a budget less than $100,000 (31% vs. about 3%), or no staff (50% vs. about 8%).

G. Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program

The Economic Injury Disaster Loan Program (EIDL), like the PPP, aims to provide economic relief to businesses and nonprofits experiencing a temporary loss of revenue.[5] It differs from PPP in a variety of ways, including a smaller award cap and the fact that loans must be repaid. Similar to the PPP question, respondents were asked to describe their engagement with the program (see Figure 8). As of September 8, 2020, the U.S. Small Business Administration was still accepting EIDL applications.

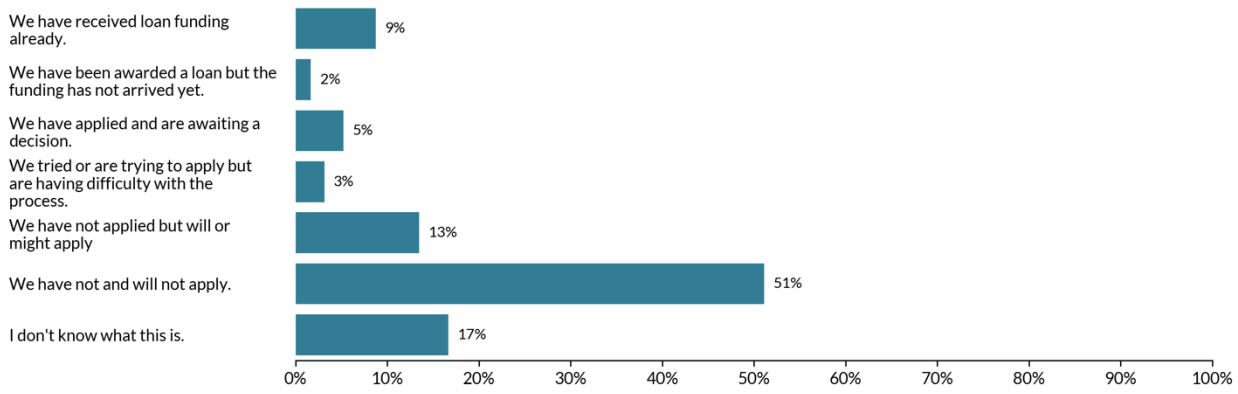


Figure 8. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Emergency Advance program?

Respondents selected which of seven statements best described their engagement with the EIDL. For example, 9% had already received an EIDL loan, whereas 51% did not intend to apply.

Whereas 96% of respondents knew of PPP, only 83% of respondents knew about the EIDL. Half of nonprofits knew of EIDL but did not intend to apply. 9% of respondents had already received an EIDL loan. The application period for EIDL with respect to the timing of the survey may have affected these numbers.

[5] *See generally*, https://www.sba.gov/page/disaster-loan-applications.

Examining results by budget, age, staff, and counties served (see Appendix J), we note that:

- Nonprofits with no staff were less likely to apply for, or receive, EIDL funding than those with staff.
- Nonprofits only serving rural areas, as well as those younger than 10 years or with budgets less than $100,000, were all more likely to know what is the EIDL.
- Nonprofits of all types were about equally likely to be experiencing difficulties with the process.

H. Open-ended Responses

The survey invited respondents to share open-ended input on the seven items listed below. There are thousands of written responses, which are available by viewing the datafile; see the URL above in Responses and Data File.

Following are some of the main themes expressed in the input received. Each of the open-ended items received hundreds of responses, many of them detailed. The responses are from organizations in each of North Carolina's 100 counties and are diverse with respect to staff and budget size, age, purpose and focus, and other characteristics. We encourage reading the responses to gain a more thorough appreciation for and understanding of the experiences, challenges, requests, and recommendations shared by nonprofit organizations from across the state.

The following examples of the type of input received for each of the open-ended items highlight some of the most frequently shared themes of input.

- **Possible closure**
  - Comments similar to "if X happens, we will be forced to close"
  - Requests for help with finding funding

- **Experience of last three months**
  - Accounts of inability to reach people the organization typically serves (e.g., incarcerated people) or benefit from volunteers (e.g., organizations that rely largely on elderly volunteers)

- **Anticipated challenges of next six months**
  - Expressions of uncertainty related to many aspects of organizations such as scope of services provided, operations, annual events, and funding
  - Specific requests (e.g., consider a 1 year extension of *all* Charitable Solicitation License fees and technical assistance in areas such as moving to or expanding capacity for remote communication and operations)

- **Most helpful support for next six months**
  - Wide range of requests for specific and general resources
  - Financial support
  - Clarity about COVID-19 rules/guidance

- **Assistance already received**
    - Ranges from funding to technical assistance to hardware and software to food and supplies; largely similar to the same categories noted in assistance currently needed or anticipated
- **Additional resources needed**
    - Wide variety of areas of need (e.g., supplies, information, funding)
    - Requests for guidance of various kinds including assistance with grant writing; best practices for "reopening;" and compliance with federal, state, and local COVID-19 restrictions and requirements
- **Anything else to share**
    - Requests to receive the results of this survey (all respondents who requested the results will receive this document via email to the email address provided)
    - Requests for information about resources available and how to use them

The quantity and diversity of responses to the open-ended survey items demonstrate the seemingly endless challenges nonprofits face due to COVID-19, the wide range of broad and specific needs they identified in the first few months of the pandemic, and the long-term challenges they expect to face. These responses also highlight the work of nonprofits across the state to contribute to North Carolina's response to COVID-19.

In the interest of sharing overarching learnings, this document does not analyze the open-ended responses. We encourage others to do so and to share the findings. A few of the many potential areas for further analyses include: the extent to which organizations provided similar Likert responses to a survey question but different open-ended responses about the same question; a comparison of responses within and across counties, municipalities, or regions of the state; and an examination of the types of needs expressed based on type of nonprofit respondent (e.g., education, environment, human services). We reiterate the value of reading these responses directly, in addition to the learnings shared throughout this analysis.

V. Conclusion

North Carolina has a large, strong, diverse, and dedicated nonprofit sector. Due to COVID-19, nonprofit organizations from across the state—like those across the nation and world—are contending with unprecedented disruptions of all types and for an undetermined length of time.

The results from this first-ever statewide survey of North Carolina's nonprofits reinforce how hard COVID-19 has hit the sector and how essential the sector is to North Carolina's immediate, short-, and long-term needs and recovery.

The wealth of information provided by nearly 1,800 organizations provides critical data and context for understanding the conditions nonprofits are facing, differences and similarities among nonprofits across a range of characteristics, and requested assistance, support, and action related to addressing the challenges and opportunities presented by COVID-19.

In this document, we focus on several areas of survey responses that are ripe for learning among philanthropic organizations, government, and nonprofit organizations themselves. Given the diversity of experiences, needs, and capacity to meet those needs, we do not offer recommendations for action. Rather, we hope the information provided here and the additional analyses that others conduct will inspire ongoing learning from the results and strategizing for lasting and impactful COVID-19 response in North Carolina and beyond.

VI. Acknowledgements

Thank you to the many partners who contributed to this effort in various ways, including survey design and piloting, Spanish translation, nonprofit contact information, outreach and follow-up, data analyses, and writing and reviewing this report.

Respondents from nonprofit organizations across North Carolina
Mike Arnold, NC Secretary of State's Office
Ret Boney, NC Network of Grantmakers
Emily Carmody, North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness
Eliza Edwards, NC Office of Strategic Partnerships
Gail Eluwa, NC Secretary of State's Office
Isabel Geffner, Book Harvest
David Glick, The Policy Lab @ Brown University
Ben Guhin, The Policy Lab @ Brown University
David Heinen, NC Center *for* Nonprofits
Aidan Hudson-Lapore, The Policy Lab @ Brown University
Tamika Howard, NC Center *for* Nonprofits
Iheoma Iruka, HighScope
Leslie Ann Jackson, North Carolina Community Foundation
Adis Liy, HighScope
Liam Miranda, NC Office of Strategic Partnerships
Jenni Owen, NC Office of Strategic Partnerships
Pilar Rocha-Goldberg, El Centro Hispano
Amy Sawyer, North Carolina Coalition to End Homelessness
Sorien Schmidt, Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation
Jeanne Tedrow, NC Center *for* Nonprofits
Jennifer Tolle-Whiteside, North Carolina Community Foundation
Bill Toole, NC Secretary of State's Office
Liz Winer, Winer Family Foundation
Paul Xu, The Policy Lab @ Brown University
David Yokum, The Policy Lab @ Brown University
Ginger Young, Book Harvest
Others not listed here

VII. Appendices

A. The Survey

Haga clic para español / Click to redirect to a Spanish version

This 15-minute survey asks about your nonprofit organization's operations during COVID-19.

Your responses will be used to inform government, philanthropy, and other nonprofits about what COVID-19 related needs are most pressing in North Carolina. The survey is a joint effort of the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, the NC Secretary of State, and the Strategic Partnerships office at the NC Office of State Budget and Management.

To increase the impact of this survey, responses will be made publicly available. If you have questions about this survey, send an email to nonprofitsurvey@osbm.nc.gov.

Thank you for completing this survey and encouraging other nonprofits to do so.

_____

1. **What is your name?**
2. **Email**
3. **Phone Number (numbers only)**
4. **Job Title**
5. **What is the name of your organization?**
6. **Link to organization website: _____**
7. **How long has your organization been a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) entity?**

   ☐ Less than 1 year
   ☐ 1 to 3 years
   ☐ 4 to 10 years
   ☐ More than 10 years
   ☐ We are not a 501(c)(3)
   ☐ I'm not sure

8. Is your organization led by a woman?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure
- ☐ Other (please specify)

9. Is your organization led by a person of color?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I'm not sure

10. Which of the following best describes your annual operating budget?

- ☐ No budget / all volunteer
- ☐ Less than $100,000
- ☐ $100,000 to $249,999
- ☐ $250,000 to $499,999
- ☐ $500,000 to $999,999
- ☐ $1,000,000 to $4,999,999
- ☐ $5,000,000 to $9,999,999
- ☐ $10,000,000 or greater
- ☐ I'm not sure

11. Which of the following best describes the 501(c)(3) specified purpose of your nonprofit? Please select all that apply.

- ☐ Arts, Culture, Humanities
- ☐ Community Improvement, Public/Societal Benefit
- ☐ Education
- ☐ Environment/Animal Related
- ☐ Health Care/Mental Health
- ☐ Higher Education
- ☐ Hospitals
- ☐ Human Services
- ☐ Religion Related, Spiritual Development
- ☐ Research: Science, Technology, Social Science
- ☐ All others

12. What is your best estimate of how many of the following work for your nonprofit? (Please enter a number in the field that applies)

- Before COVID-19, paid staff (full-time, part-time, contract): _____
- As of today, paid staff (full- time, part-time, contract): _____
- Before COVID-19, volunteers: _____
- As of today, volunteers: _____

13. **What is the 5-digit ZIP code of your organization's primary location?** (If your organization has addresses outside of NC, provide the zip code for the primary NC location.)

14. **Which North Carolina county(ies) does your nonprofit serve? Please select all that apply.**

    clickable list of all 100 North Carolina counties

15. **About how many people did you serve or engage in the past 12 months?**

- ☐ Less than 10
- ☐ 10 to 99
- ☐ 100 to 499
- ☐ 500 to 999
- ☐ 1,000 to 9,999
- ☐ 10,000 to 49,999
- ☐ 50,000 to 99,999
- ☐ 100,000 or more
- ☐ I don't know.
- ☐ Not applicable. Our organization doesn't serve people.

16. **Which of the following best describes your nonprofit's focus? You can select more than one.**

- ☐ Not applicable. Our organization does not provide direct services to people.
- ☐ Pregnant people
- ☐ Children birth to 5
- ☐ Children 6 through 17
- ☐ Young adults (18-25)
- ☐ Elderly (65+)
- ☐ Children in foster care and their families Immigrants
- ☐ Communities of color
- ☐ People at risk of human trafficking or have been trafficked
- ☐ People experiencing homelessness or housing insecurity
- ☐ People experiencing domestic violence
- ☐ People in poverty
- ☐ People returning from incarceration
- ☐ People who are incarcerated
- ☐ People who identify as LGBTQ+
- ☐ People with chronic medical conditions (cancer, diabetes, Alzheimer's, etc.)
- ☐ People with cognitive disabilities
- ☐ People with physical disabilities Refugees
- ☐ Veterans
- ☐ Our services are available to everyone.
- ☐ Other

17. How much do you disagree or agree with the following questions?
[6-point Likert: “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “slightly agree,” “agree,” and “strongly agree”]

- Our operations have been affected by COVID-19.
- We cannot achieve our mission without in-person, physical contact.
- Our revenue will be lower than usual over the next six months.
- We will be forced to close in the next six months.

18. If you're at all concerned you might be forced to close, feel free to explain why and what is needed to avoid closure.

19. Which of the following has your organization experienced in the past three months? Please select any that apply.

- ☐ Lost revenue
- ☐ Staffing challenges
- ☐ Supply problems
- ☐ Venue challenges
- ☐ Increased demand for services
- ☐ Demand for new services
- ☐ Services and programming disruption
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

20. If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what you have experienced in the past three months.

21. Which of the following do you anticipate experiencing over the next six months? Please select any that apply.

- ☐ Lost revenue
- ☐ Staffing challenges
- ☐ Supply problems
- ☐ Venue challenges
- ☐ Increased demand for services
- ☐ Demand for new services
- ☐ Services and programming disruption
- ☐ None of the above
- ☐ Other (please specify): _____

22. If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what you anticipate experiencing over the next six months.

23. How important are each of the following in supporting your nonprofit over the next six months?

[6-point Likert: “not at all important,” “low importance,” “slightly important,” “moderately important,” “very important,” “extremely important,” or “N/A”]

- Free or subsidized supplies, administrative, or employee support
- Reimbursement for expenses due to cancelled events or services
- Reimbursement for paying employee leave expenses
- Flexibility with grants (e.g., timelines, use restrictions)
- Telework training and support

24. If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what support would be most helpful.

25. How much do you agree or disagree that it would be helpful for someone else to provide each of the following supports or guidance?

[6-point Likert: “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “slightly agree,” “agree,” and “strongly agree”]

- ☐ Advocate for funding and policies
- ☐ Share strategies for disaster and crisis preparedness
- ☐ Provide guidance on contracts
- ☐ Provide guidance on legal compliance issues, including unemployment laws
- ☐ Highlight positive stories about specific nonprofit organizations
- ☐ Host virtual network calls to share ideas
- ☐ Provide information about government funding and sources
- ☐ Provide information about private funding and sources
- ☐ Provide updates on current or pending federal or state legislation or executive action

26. Do you agree or disagree that a student intern would be helpful for your organization for the next three to six months?

[6-point Likert: “strongly disagree,” “disagree,” “slightly disagree,” “slightly agree,” “agree,” and “strongly agree”]

27. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Paycheck Protection Program?

- ☐ We have not and will not apply.
- ☐ We have not applied but will or might apply.
- ☐ We tried or are trying to apply but are having difficulty with the process.
- ☐ We have applied and are awaiting a decision.
- ☐ We have been awarded a loan but the funding has not arrived yet.
- ☐ We have received loan funding already.
- ☐ I don't know what this is.

28. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Emergency Advance program?

- ☐ We have not and will not apply.
- ☐ We have not applied but will or might apply.
- ☐ We tried or are trying to apply but are having difficulty with the process.
- ☐ We have applied and are awaiting a decision.
- ☐ We have been awarded a loan but the funding has not arrived yet.
- ☐ We have received loan funding already.
- ☐ I don't know what this is.

29. What COVID-19 related assistance has your nonprofit received already?

30. What, if any, additional resources or guidance would help your operations during COVID-19?

31. How likely are you to recommend to your nonprofit colleagues that they take this survey?

[7-point Likert: “not at all likely,” “not so likely,” “not likely,” “unsure,” “somewhat likely,” “very likely,” or “extremely likely”]

32. Would you like to receive the survey results?

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

33. Do you have any recommendations for how to improve this survey?

34. Is there anything else you would like to share?

B. Recruitment Email

Dear North Carolina nonprofit organizations,

We invite you to complete a survey of your organization's operations and needs during COVID-19 and what you anticipate in coming months. As nonprofit leaders, you know best how COVID-19 is affecting your work.

Will you share your perspectives with us by completing this survey?

Your responses will inform government, philanthropy, and others about what COVID-19 related needs are most pressing in North Carolina. To maximize the benefits and value of this survey, responses will be publicly available.

Click here to begin the survey. To complete the survey in Spanish, click here.

This is a joint effort of the North Carolina Center for Nonprofits, the Office of the NC Secretary of State, and the Strategic Partnerships office at the NC Office of State Budget and Management.

Thank you for completing the survey.

Estimadas organizaciones sin fines de lucro de Carolina del Norte:

Les invitamos a completar una encuesta acerca de las operaciones y necesidades de su organización durante COVID-19 y lo que usted o su organización anticipa en los próximos meses. Como líderes de organizaciones sin fines de lucro, ustedes saben mejor cómo COVID-19 está afectando su trabajo.

¿Compartiría usted sus perspectivas con nosotros completando esta encuesta?

Sus respuestas informarán al gobierno, organizaciones filantrópicas y a otros sobre las necesidades relacionadas con COVID-19 que más urgen en Carolina del Norte. Para maximizar los beneficios y el valor de esta encuesta, las respuestas estarán disponibles públicamente.

Haga clic aquí para comenzar la encuesta en español o si prefiere, haga clic aquí para comenzar la encuesta en inglés.

Este es un esfuerzo conjunto del Centro para Organizaciones sin Fines de Lucro de Carolina del Norte, la Oficina del Secretario de Estado de Carolina del Norte y la Oficina de Alianzas Estratégicas en la Oficina de Presupuesto y Administracion del Estado de Carolina del Norte.

Gracias por completar la encuesta.

C. Methodological Details

The survey was intended for all nonprofits in North Carolina.

As it happens, there is no single, definitive registry of all nonprofit organizations in the state, much less a comprehensive list with contact information as well. This presented challenges for how to invite all nonprofits to participate. Here was our approach, which we describe in detail, since others may also struggle to figure out how best to contact all nonprofits:

We operationalize "nonprofit" to mean a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt entity. An organization, with the exception of religious congregations, must file Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Form 1023 to obtain 501(c)(3) status and must annually file Form 990, 990-PF, 990-EZ, or 990-N with the IRS to maintain 501(c)(3) status. The IRS's Business Master Files (BMF) of 501(c)(3) Exempt Entities, therefore, provides a window into the universe of 501(c)(3) nonprofits in the state. The Center *for* Nonprofits has used this approach to estimate that, in 2018, there were 28,087 North Carolina organizations who filed the 990 or one of its variants. Another 11,907 organizations had filed in the prior two years—but not 2018—which could be interpreted as no longer operating as a nonprofit, although in reality an unknown number of those 11,907 are presumably failures to submit the due 990 paperwork. (The IRS does not have authority to revoke 501(c)(3) status unless an entity fails to file for three consecutive years.) Note that religious congregations are exempt from 990 filing, so that is also an unknown number. A survey from 2006—the most recent we could find—estimated about 18,000 religious congregations in the state. Altogether then, our best estimate is that there are at least 28,000 nonprofits in North Carolina, with the actual number higher by some amount that cannot be clearly counted from available administrative records.

The IRS 501(c)(3) BMF data helps us understand the universe of nonprofits, but we did not have access to contact information via that file. Thus, for contact information we had to turn to different sources.

First, the NC Secretary of State's office shared a list of email addresses on April 28, 2020. This list reflected all persons and entities soliciting contributions in North Carolina that were registered with the Charitable Solicitation Licensing (CSL) division on that date and for which CSL had email addresses.[6] 2,667 of these entries had invalid, blank, or duplicative emails and therefore did not receive the survey. The remainder (*N* = 18,189) were sent an email inviting survey participation (see Appendix B). Strategic Partnerships sent an initial email to each address over the course of four business days (May 21, 22, 26, 27). 1,733 email addresses bounced back, leaving *N* = 16,456 as the number of survey invitations sent to a valid address. To increase response rates, Strategic Partnerships sent three reminder emails to the full list (June 3, 17, and 26 of 2020). We also A/B tested different subject lines to optimize response rates.

Second, starting on June 17, Strategic Partnerships staff, interns, and partners began making approximately 20 phone calls a day to ask organizations to complete the survey. We offered to

[6] *See generally* https://www.sosnc.gov/divisions/charities. Not all 501(c)(3) entities register with the CSL, and not all entities in the CSL are 501(c)(3) entities; but there is substantial overlap.

verbally record answers, if helpful. Some of these calls were to nonprofits who had also been emailed; some were to organizations for which we had phone numbers but no emails.

Third, to reach more nonprofits not in the CSL file, we leveraged additional email listservs and newsletter promotions, for example: the NC Center *for* Nonprofits sent targeted emails to numerous statewide nonprofit organization leaders and included the survey in its newsletter; the NC Network of Grantmakers included information about the survey in its weekly updates; the NC Office of Strategic Partnerships included the survey in its monthly Strategic Partnerships Highlights; the Governor's Office of Volunteerism and Community Service included the survey in the North Carolina Voluntary Organizations Active in Disaster (NC VOAD) newsletter; and NC VOAD sent the survey directly to member organizations.

We collected 2,010 total survey responses by midnight July 31, 2020. Where there were multiple responses from the same organization, we employed the following deduplication process (so as not to double count responses from the same nonprofit). First, we kept the most complete responses; then, if multiple responses still existed, we kept the most recent one. This process removed 238 duplicate responses from 198 organizations. The final dataset, used for analysis in this report, therefore has 1,772 unique nonprofit organizations.

For simplicity we do not report margins of error alongside all numbers but bear in mind that—as a statistical sample—these are estimates of what would be found if literally every nonprofit in the state had responded.

The **NC Department of the Secretary of State** developed the following statement to explain the need for and potential benefits of statewide registry of nonprofits.

In addition, the **North Carolina Center *for* Nonprofits** agrees with the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State that a comprehensive statewide registry would strengthen North Carolina's nonprofit sector and the communities they serve.

Statement from the NC Department of the Secretary of State: Lack of a comprehensive registry of North Carolina nonprofit organizations

No comprehensive registry of North Carolina nonprofit organizations currently exists. The lack of a comprehensive database of viable, operating nonprofits has limited North Carolina's ability to quickly identify and engage such organizations during times of emergency, conduct policy research, or make broadly informed decisions about the allocation of charitable contributions. As we have learned through recent hurricane seasons and now during the COVID pandemic, it is important to be able to identify promptly those charities able to address the needs of North Carolinians that can suddenly develop. Without a comprehensive registry, it is not possible to accurately calculate the beneficial impact and activities resulting from the charitable activity of North Carolina contributors. Access to accurate information can also help charities make better decisions in support of their eleemosynary missions.

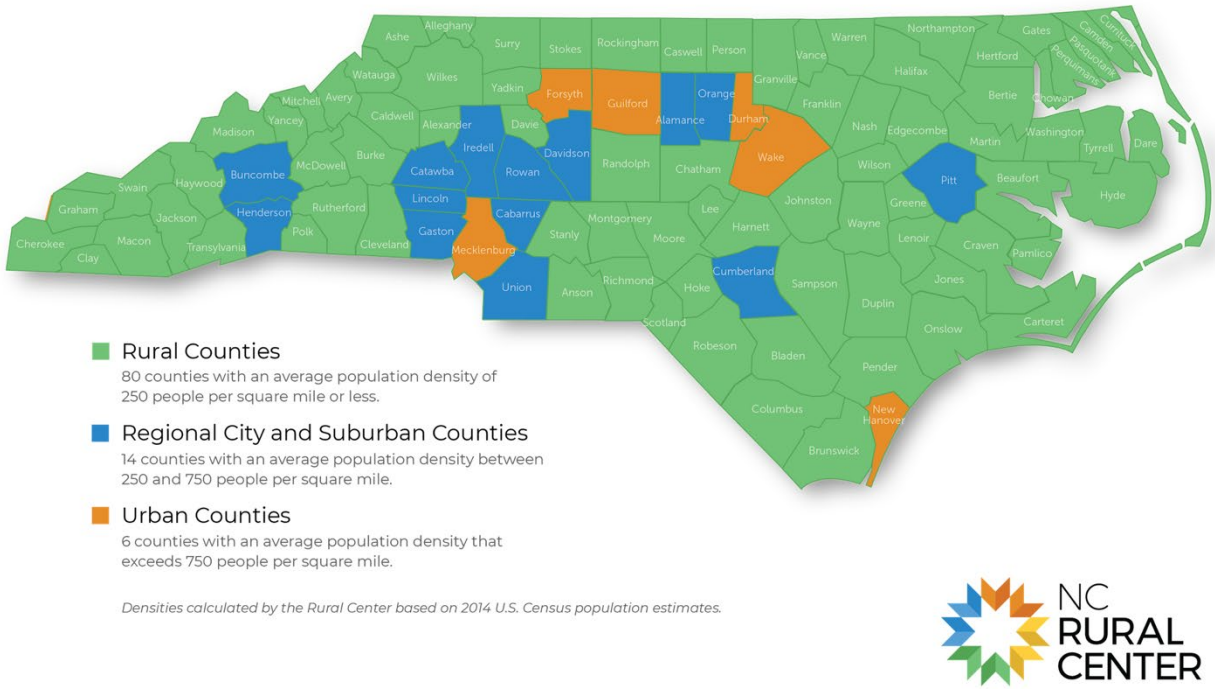
Under North Carolina's Charitable Solicitations Act (N.C.G.S. § 131F-1 *et seq.*), those who solicit contributions in North Carolina are required to register and obtain a license from the

CSL Division of the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State. Confounding reasonable expectations, the Act does not neatly apply to organizations with a 501(c)(3) nonprofit designation from the Internal Revenue Service. Nonprofit organizations that are not engaged in soliciting contributions, for example, have no obligation to register. Furthermore, even if a nonprofit entity is soliciting contributions, North Carolina specifically excludes from registration requirements religious institutions, accredited schools and colleges, hospitals, community trusts, and continuing care facilities, among others. The Act *does* apply even if the solicitor is not a nonprofit organization, or is based in another state, or is some other 501(c) nonprofit entity, so long as it is soliciting contributions within this state. The existing registry is also incomplete because there are a number of solicitors who should obtain a license but are unaware that they are required to do so.

In addition to the obligation to obtain a solicitation license, upon formation or first conducting business in North Carolina a nonprofit organization is required to file with the separate Business Registration Division (BRD) of the North Carolina Department of the Secretary of State. Unlike for-profit business entities operating in North Carolina and nonprofit corporations in most other states, however, nonprofit organizations have no obligation to submit annual reports of continued operation with the BRD. Without an annual reporting requirement, it has not been possible to identify entities that are continuing to operate in order to purge nonviable nonprofit entities from the existing Secretary of State CSL and BRD registries.

Without a comprehensive statewide registry, there is no way to coordinate nonprofit organizations and charitable solicitations during times of emergency. Not having an inclusive registry of North Carolina nonprofit organizations slows North Carolina's economic development. Likewise, it frustrates efficient response to those social, civic, and other eleemosynary needs for which contributions are solicited. Without an accurate registry, contributors do not have an efficient way to assess how to allocate their charitable capital. Collected data would be available to the public in a searchable and interactive format that would allow academics, policy makers, and the public to conduct their own inquiries. By increasing transparency, reducing transactional frictions, and increasing confidence in the authenticity of that information, an up-to-date, comprehensive state registry would promote beneficial nonprofit activity to North Carolina's advantage in a way not currently experienced.

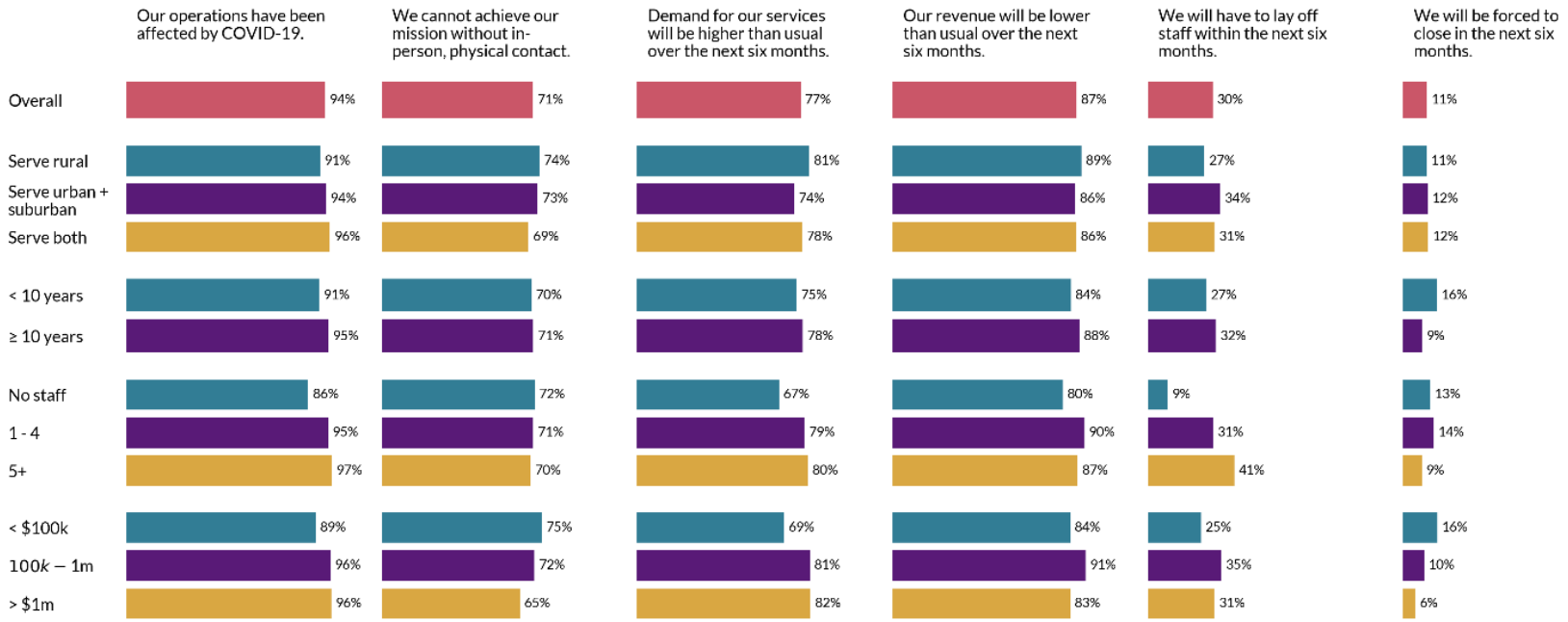
D. Classification of Counties Based on Population Density



In this report, we examine responses as a function of whether a nonprofit serves only rural, only urban/suburban, or a combination of rural and urban/suburban. Our categorization relies on the NC Rural Center's classification, which classifies a county based on people per square mile, in particular: rural (250 people per square mile or less); regional city and suburban (250-750 people per square mile); or urban (more than 750 people per square mile). For simplicity, we merge the latter categories into a single category we call "urban/suburban."

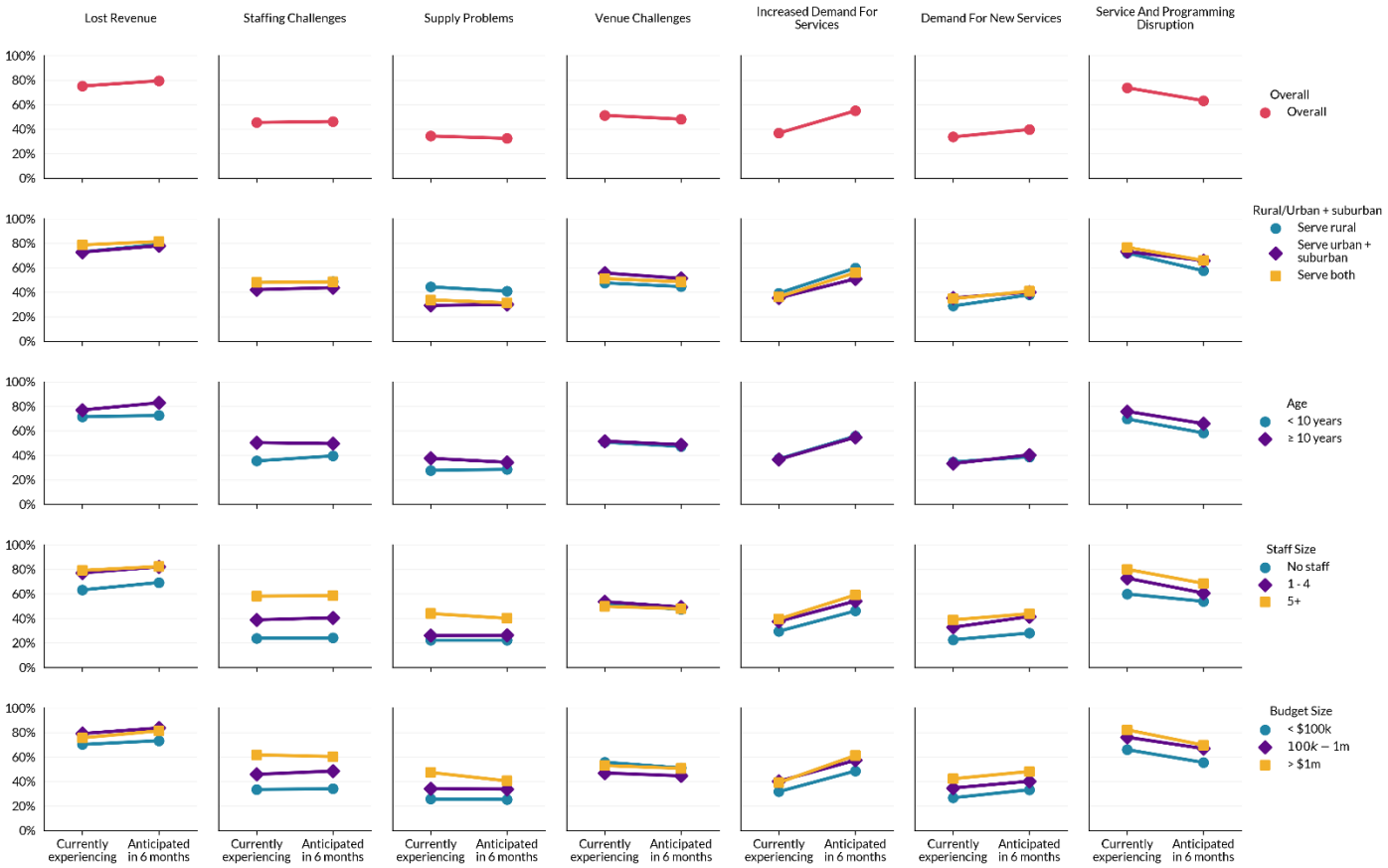
E. How has COVID-19 impacted the operations of nonprofit organizations?

Respondents rated statements about how COVID-19 has impacted their operations. The following figures explore responses overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000. For example, 30% of nonprofit organizations overall agreed they will have to lay off staff within the next six months; agreement was slightly less for nonprofits serving rural only (27%) than urban/suburban only (34%).



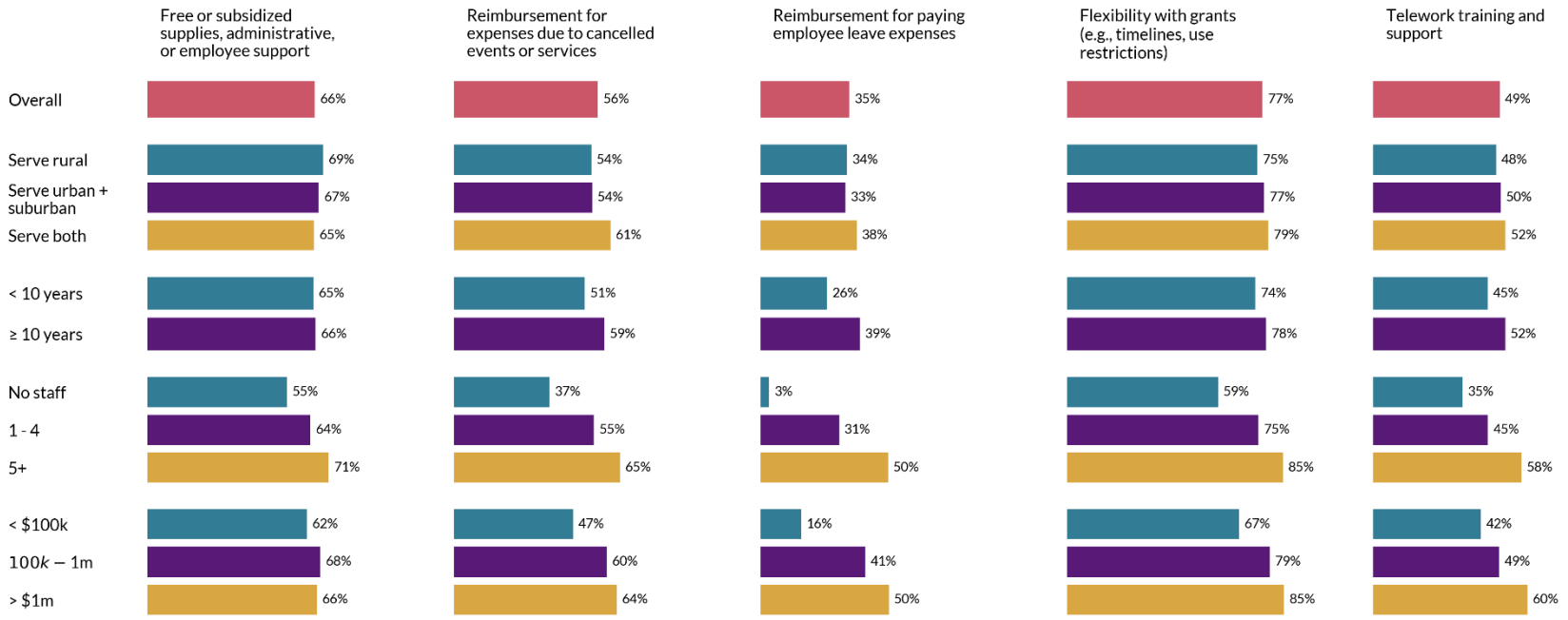
F. What are current and anticipated challenges stemming from COVID-19?

Respondents were asked to select one or more issues from a menu of nine options (including “none of the above” or “other (please specify)”), which they had “experienced in the past three months” or “anticipate[d] experiencing over the next six months.” The following figures explore how many selected each issue overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000.



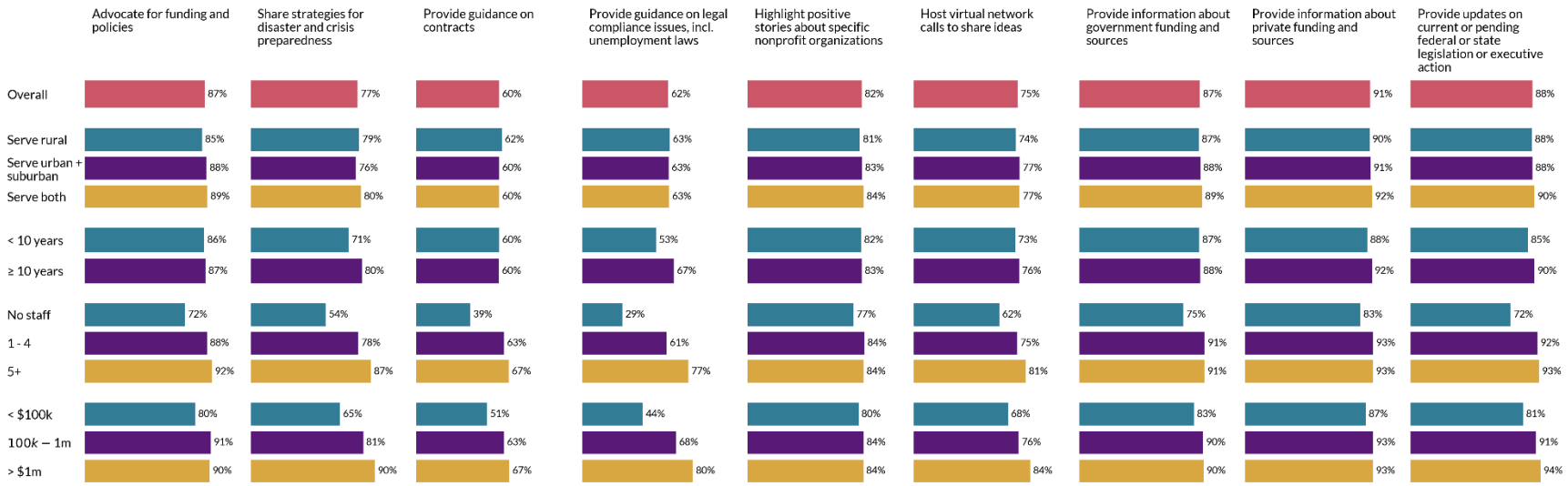
G. Which supports did nonprofit organizations say would be important over the next six months?

Respondents rated how important are each of five types of support. This figure plots how many organizations rated a support as “moderately important,” “very important,” or “extremely important” on a 6-point Likert scale from “not at all important” to “extremely important.” The following figures explore responses overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000.



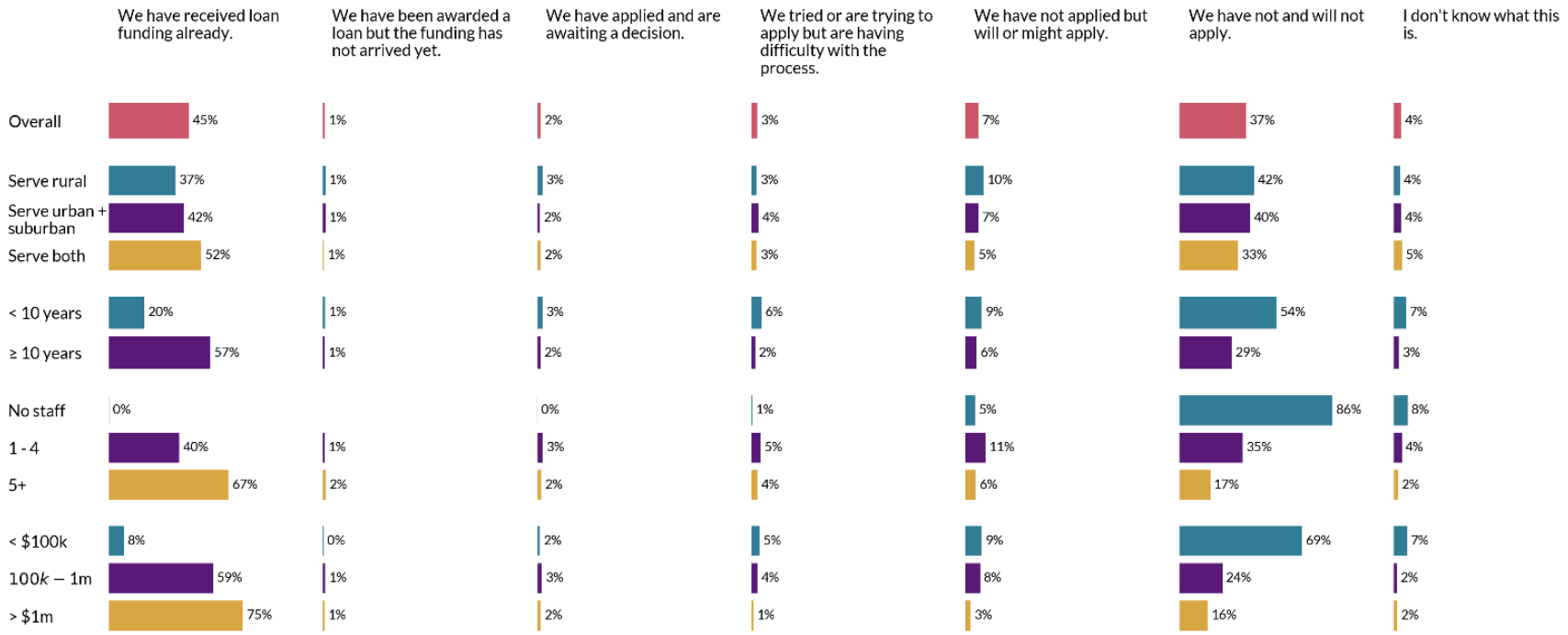
H. Would it be helpful for someone else to provide each of the following supports or guidance?

Respondents rated how much they agreed or disagreed that it would be helpful for someone else to provide various types of support or guidance. This figure plots how many organizations “somewhat agree[d],” “agree[d],” or “strongly agree[d]” the support or guidance would be helpful. The following figures explore responses overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000.



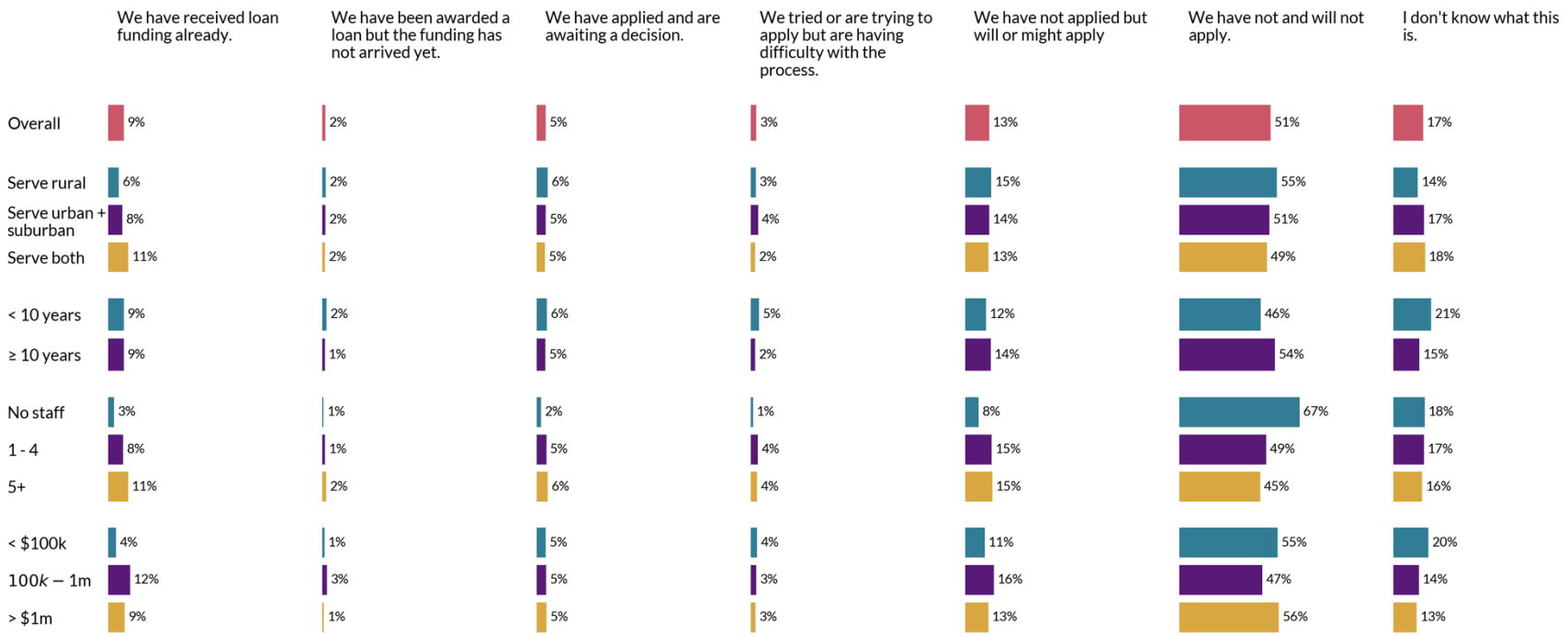
I. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Paycheck Protection Program?

Respondents selected which of seven statements best described their engagement with the PPP. The following figures explore responses overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000.



J. Which of the following best describes your engagement with the Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) Emergency Advance program?

Respondents selected which of seven statements best described their engagement with the EIDL. The following figures explore responses overall as well as split by whether the organization: serves rural, serves urban and suburban, or serves rural, urban, and suburban counties; has existed for fewer or more than 10 years; has no, 1-4, or 5 or more staff; and has a budget less than $100,000, between $100,000 and $1,000,000, or more than $1,000,000.



K. Responses to Open-Ended Questions

While many North Carolina nonprofit organizations responded to multiple surveys related to COVID-19 early in the pandemic, some organizations have not had the opportunity to do so for reasons such as lack of access to information, not being part of networks of communication that are sharing such opportunities, and challenges with technology and remote operations that limit ability to know about and contribute to discussions about COVID-19 impact, needs, and response. As a result, there is concern that the experiences and input of certain types of nonprofits were un- or under-represented, among them small organizations (with respect to budget and/or staff size), and organizations based in rural areas of North Carolina.

As one respondent shared, "...thank you for asking for our input. Thank you for checking with us. Small nonprofits are an important part of the fabric of our communities and of local economies."

The chart below lists the open-ended questions that respondents had the opportunity to answer in written form. These counts are based on the datafile of most recent, complete responses (*N* = 1,772). Many people responded to multiple open-ended questions. We reiterate the value of reading through the questions directly—the datafile URL can be found above in Responses and Data File.

To further illustrate the diversity of responses, following the chart is a sample of the more than 3,000 written responses received.

Survey Question	Question	# Written Answers	% of Respondents
18	If you're at all concerned you might be forced to close, feel free to explain why and what is needed to avoid closure.	404	23%
20	If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what you have experienced in the past three months.	736	46%
22	If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what you anticipate experiencing over the next six months.	461	26%
24	If you would like, please use the following textbox to describe in more detail what support would be most helpful.	292	16%
29	What COVID-19 related assistance has your nonprofit received already?	930	52%
30	What, if any, additional resources or guidance would help your operations during COVID-19?	791	45%
33	Do you have any recommendations for how to improve this survey?	120	7%
34	Is there anything else you would like to share?	207	12%

The following statements are unedited responses to the open-ended survey questions. They are a small sample of the thousands of replies, highlighting the range of needs, concerns, and care from across North Carolina's nonprofit sector.

- Our agency is a mental health provider and we provide outpatient therapy to Medicaid beneficiaries. If there is another wave of the coronavirus, and we are unable to provide services using clinically prescribed best practices, our agency will be in jeopardy of closing.
- We are all volunteer, all donations and dependent upon ticket sales. We purchased a building last year to house the theatre and have a loan that we make monthly payments on. Loss of ticket revenue will cause our funds to dwindle significantly. Further restrictions may force us into financial crisis.
- Counseling was primarily face to face especially group financial education. We have had to rely on phone call and some virtual training.

- Prisons are closed to volunteers, so we are unable to reach those we serve. More inmates are being released due to COVID-19, so we are launching new services to support them as they transition back into society.
- We are a policy advocacy organization for children and families and are working on COVID19 issues at the federal and state levels. The amount of issues we are having to cover, while trying to revise/change/pursue pre-pandemic grant deliverables is a lot. And everything is in crisis in terms of state and federal funding/policy for child hunger, early education, Medicaid, K-12 education, etc. Our staff are stretched thin right now.
- With the arrival of this health crisis on our country and our community, we have moved all operations outdoors into our parking area, under tents. The pantry is no longer open. All operations are now pre-boxed and drive up only. No clients exit their vehicles and we have a zero contact policy in place. We are also serving all meals to-go only. To facilitate that in a sanitary manner, we made an emergency purchase of a meal packing machine and 6400 trays. These prepacked meals are more sanitary, can be frozen for up to 3 months, and can safely reheated in a microwave or oven.
- We are learning to use Zoom but many of the groups we work with do not have internet access.
- Mostly we need to replace the funds lost because of cancelled events. We fear we won't be able to offer any scholarships this year without these funds.
- La falta de recursos economicos hace que nuestra operatividad se vea afectada.
- Our success in the future is totally dependent on access to WiFi, training for current literacy tutors, and acquiring more IPADS to use with students
- We need access to masks, thermometers, and gloves for our interns and farmworkers.
- [We have received] caring calls, addressing food insecurity issues, delivery of food/medications, staying in contact with vulnerable, isolated survivors, handing out Food Lion Gift Cards
- [We have received] Financial assistance along with management guidance.
- [We have received] Materials and information from our local Chamber of Commerce, Economic Development Commission, and Visitors and Tourism Bureau.
- Most of our foundation partners have eased reporting and application requirements. Some have provided general operating minigrants with no reporting required.
- Recommend having a summary of topics to be covered on the intro page (i.e. prior to starting the survey). That would have been helpful in determining who at our organization would be best informed to complete the survey.

- …consumers will need our services and funding is vital to ensuring our agency is here to meet those demands. We anticipate periods of working on-site interrupted by COVID work-from-home mandates. As the crisis continues, more people will face housing crisis (like 2008 - 2011 recession) and will need foreclosure prevention counseling. We hope there will be a national assistance program for both homeowners and renters. If so, OnTrack can provide the counseling services (if funding is available for program support) as we did in the previous foreclosure crisis.
- Please consider there are other IRS recognized nonprofit organizations besides 501(c)3s.
- Would like to receive an action plan based on the survey results
- [The survey is] very thorough. I appreciate your concern for nonprofits that serve your state. This is the only survey I've received so far and we're registered in almost all states that require registration.
- What lessons have you learned from this experience? Are there elements (policies/procedures or service delivery) that you have made during the shut down that you will use after the pandemic is over?
- [The survey was] very much to the point, easy to understand and navigate. Thank you for allowing agencies to participate and share their needs, experiences and suggestions.
- It would be useful to know how you will use the information. Otherwise, it's a good exercise, not too long or cumbersome. Thanks for asking!
- Provide more quantification of the demand increase across service providers in various regions of our state.
- [The survey is] very thorough. I appreciate your concern for nonprofits that serve your state. This is the only survey I've received so far and we're registered in almost all states that require registration.
- Thanks for reaching out. This has made me more curious about what sort of aid might be available to help our organization at this time and in the future.