



# One year in: Nonprofits on the frontlines

## Results from a survey of nonprofits in Massachusetts

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# Survey Background

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- Survey of 488 leaders and employees of nonprofit organizations operating in Mass.
  - The survey was fielded online January 5 – February 1, 2026.
  - The questionnaire was offered into six languages: English, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- Survey links were distributed to nonprofits by The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, The Boston Foundation, and other partner organizations.
- This project was sponsored by The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and The Boston Foundation.
- Thank you to all the nonprofit leaders and employees who took the time to respond to the survey. We value your opinions and perspectives.

# Survey demographics

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- **Senior leaders:** Most hold senior leadership roles, including 48% serving as Executive Directors, Presidents, or CEOs, 31% as other senior leaders.
- **Total budgets:** 57% report annual budgets under \$2.5 million; 61% have 25 or fewer employees, including 41% with 10 employees or fewer.
- **Diverse respondents:** 73% identify as women, 15% as BIPOC, and 16% as LGBTQ+.
- **Diverse organizations:** 31% report their staff are majority BIPOC, 18% same of their senior leadership and board.
- **Federally funded:** 70% report their organizations receives some form of federal funding, either directly or indirectly.

# Key Findings

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- **Federal policy is hitting hard.** Immigration enforcement and cuts to federal grants, SNAP, health care and other safety net programs have created fear, stress, and uncertainty. Two-thirds of nonprofits report increased demand for their services, even as many immigrants are afraid to seek help.
- **Nonprofits are increasing advocacy and expanding services.** Organizations, especially larger ones, are increasing their activity in coalitions and government advocacy. Many have expanded services to fill policy gaps, particularly around food and SNAP support.
- **Conditions are worse from the national level down to individual organizations.** Most nonprofits view Massachusetts, the U.S., and populations served as worse off than a year ago. Nearly half report their own organizations are worse off.

# Key Findings

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- **Staff and organizational well-being are taking a hit.** Federal policy changes have heavily impacted staff well-being, especially in BIPOC-led organizations. More than two-thirds say the Trump administration has made it harder to carry out their work.
- **Finances under strain as funding is harder to find.** Most nonprofits report a weaker financial position than pre-2025 – and they expect that to continue in future years. They also report challenges seeking funding, especially from foundations and state government.
- **Operating support is the top need.** By far, operating support is the resource most desired, followed by capacity building and better policies to protect nonprofits.

# Better / worse off than 1 year ago

- Nonprofits report worsening conditions across the board compared to 1 year ago, with the greatest deterioration seen nationally and among the populations their organizations serve.

## Large majorities see the US, Massachusetts, and served populations as worse off

*% who say each is better / worse off than 1 year ago*

	United States	Massachusetts	Your organization	Populations your org serves
Better off	2%	2%	13%	3%
<b>Worse off</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>72%</b>	<b>48%</b>	<b>85%</b>
About the same	3%	21%	35%	11%
Unsure	2%	5%	4%	2%

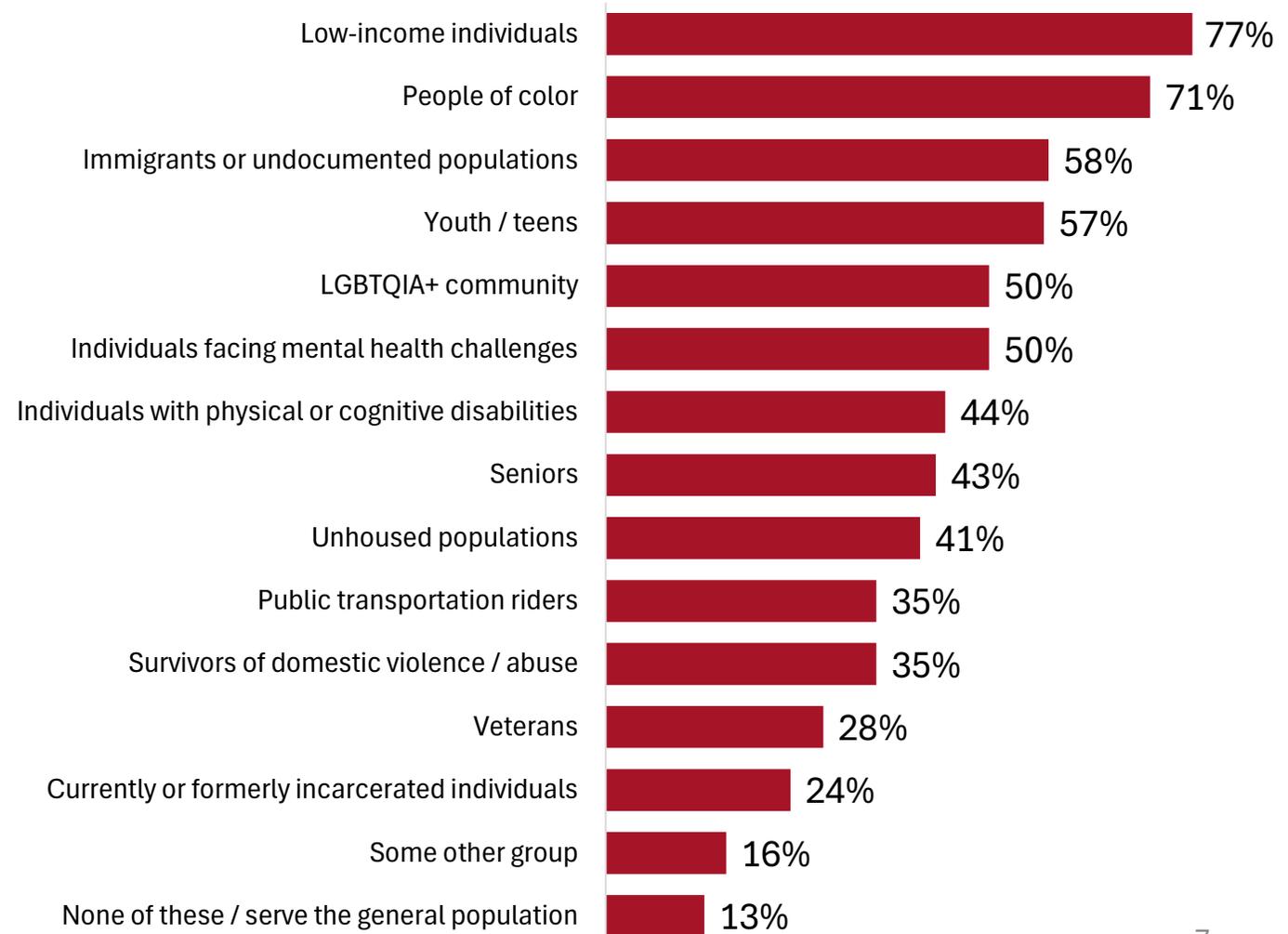
# Populations served

- Nonprofits serve a wide range of populations, with low-income individuals and people of color the most frequent.
- Half or more also serve immigrants or undocumented populations, youth and teens, LGBTQIA+ communities, and individuals facing mental health challenges.

*Q: Which of the following populations, if any, does your organization serve? Select all that apply.*

## Low-income and people of color most served populations

*% who say their organization serves \_\_\_\_\_ population*



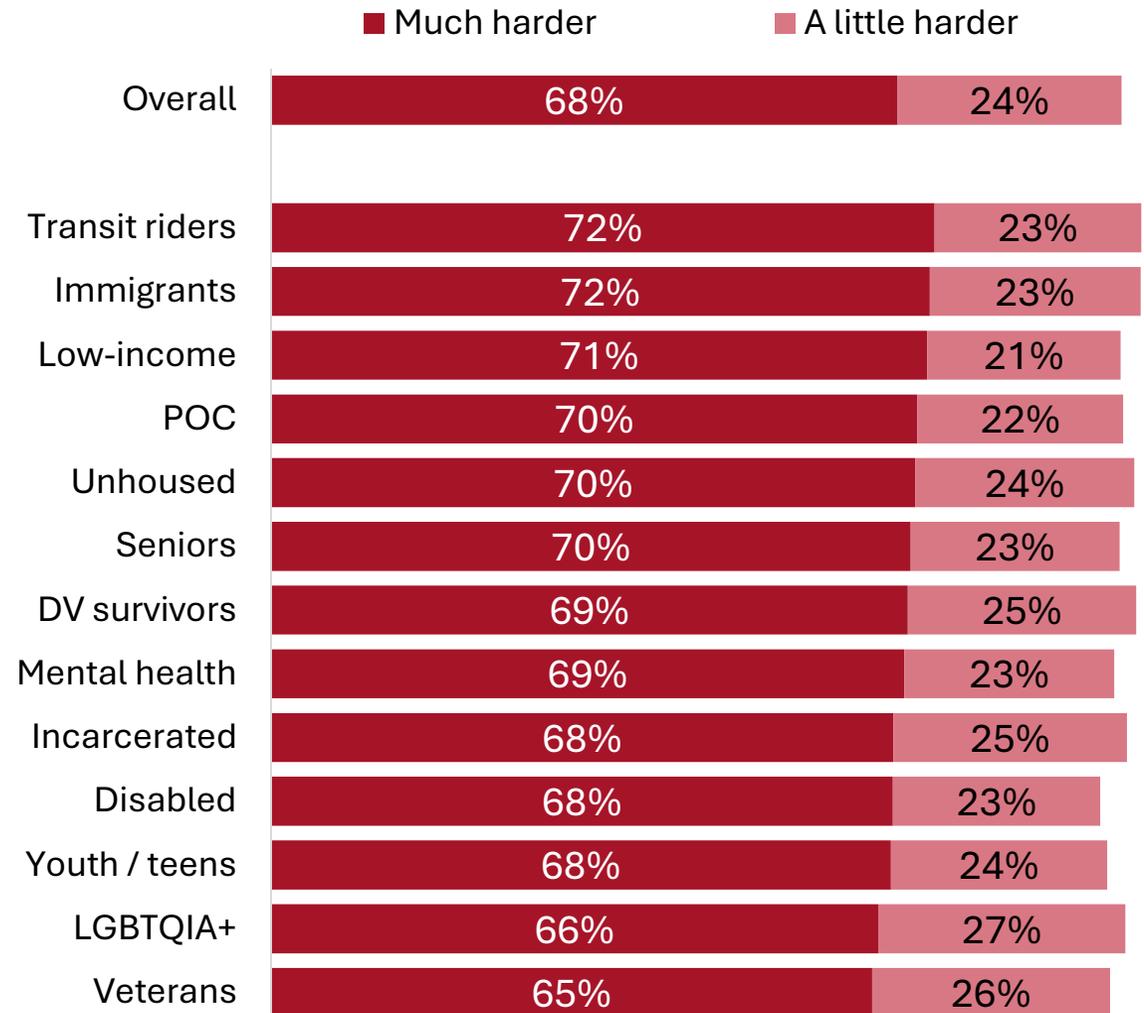
# Challenges carrying out the mission

- Nearly all nonprofit leaders, serving a wide variety of populations, say the Trump administration has made it harder to do their work.

Q: Which of the following populations, if any, does your organization serve? Select all that apply.

Q: And do you think that the Trump administration has made it harder or easier for your organization to do its work, or has it not made much of a difference?

**Nonprofits across populations report increased barriers under Trump**  
*% who serve each pop who say Trump admin has made it \_\_\_\_ for org to do work*



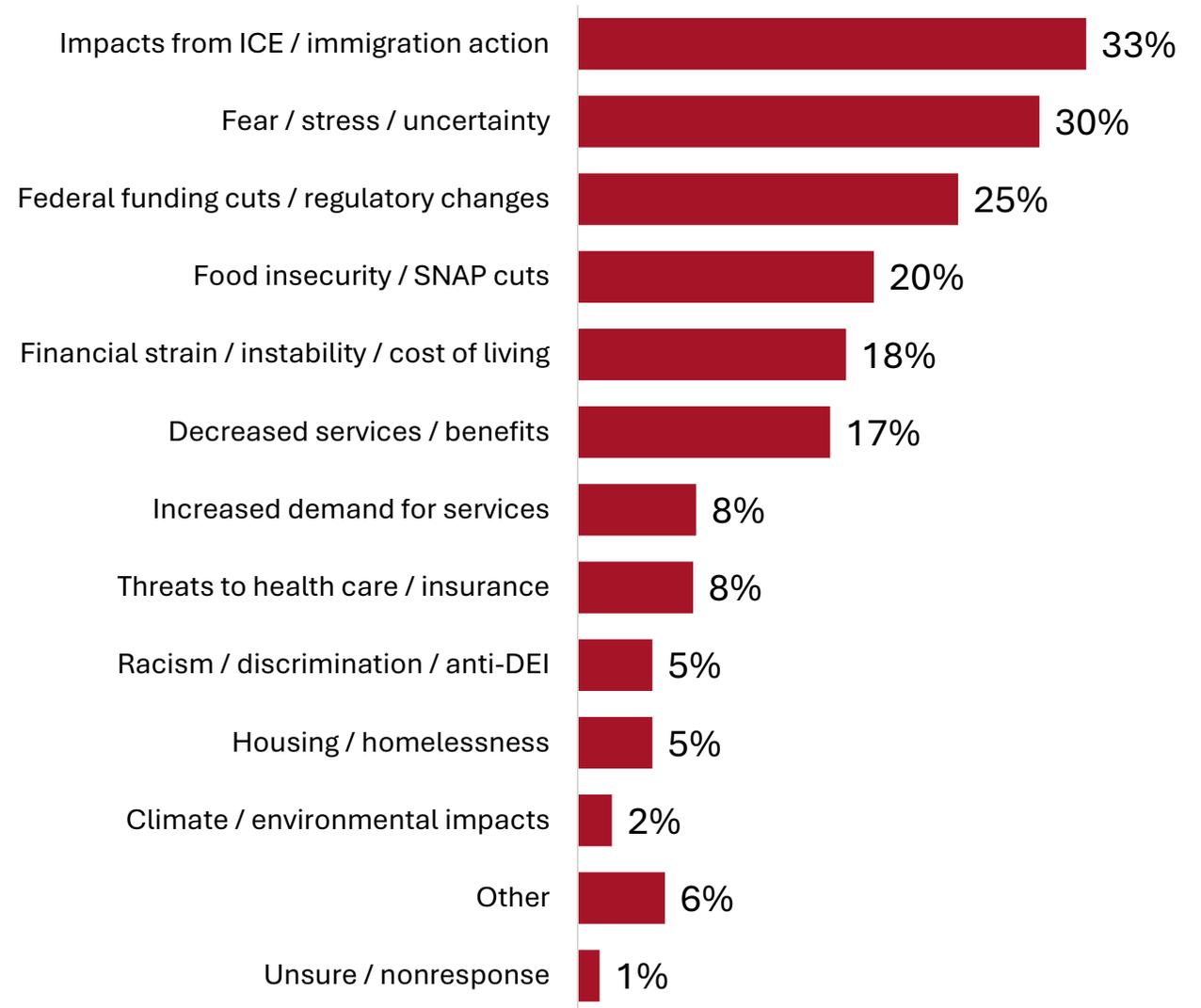
# Negative effects on populations served

- Nonprofits report a wide range of negative effects due to federal policy over the past year.
- Impacts from immigration enforcement, along with rising fear, stress, and uncertainty, are most common.

*Q: In a few words, how have the populations you serve been affected by changes in federal policy over the past year?*

## Nonprofits report a range of negative effects on populations served

*% who say populations served have been affected in each way*



# Populations affected, in their words

Decreased income, worse mental health, fear of violence.

We usually host a Naturalization Ceremony but we're afraid that will not continue.

Stressed, divested, starved.

Most directly by the disruption with SNAP benefits and local ICE raids.

We offer fewer services due to reduced or stagnant funding.

We are a diaper bank and clients are afraid to come to pickups because of ICE.

Less funding for their needs, confusing requirements, lack of support.

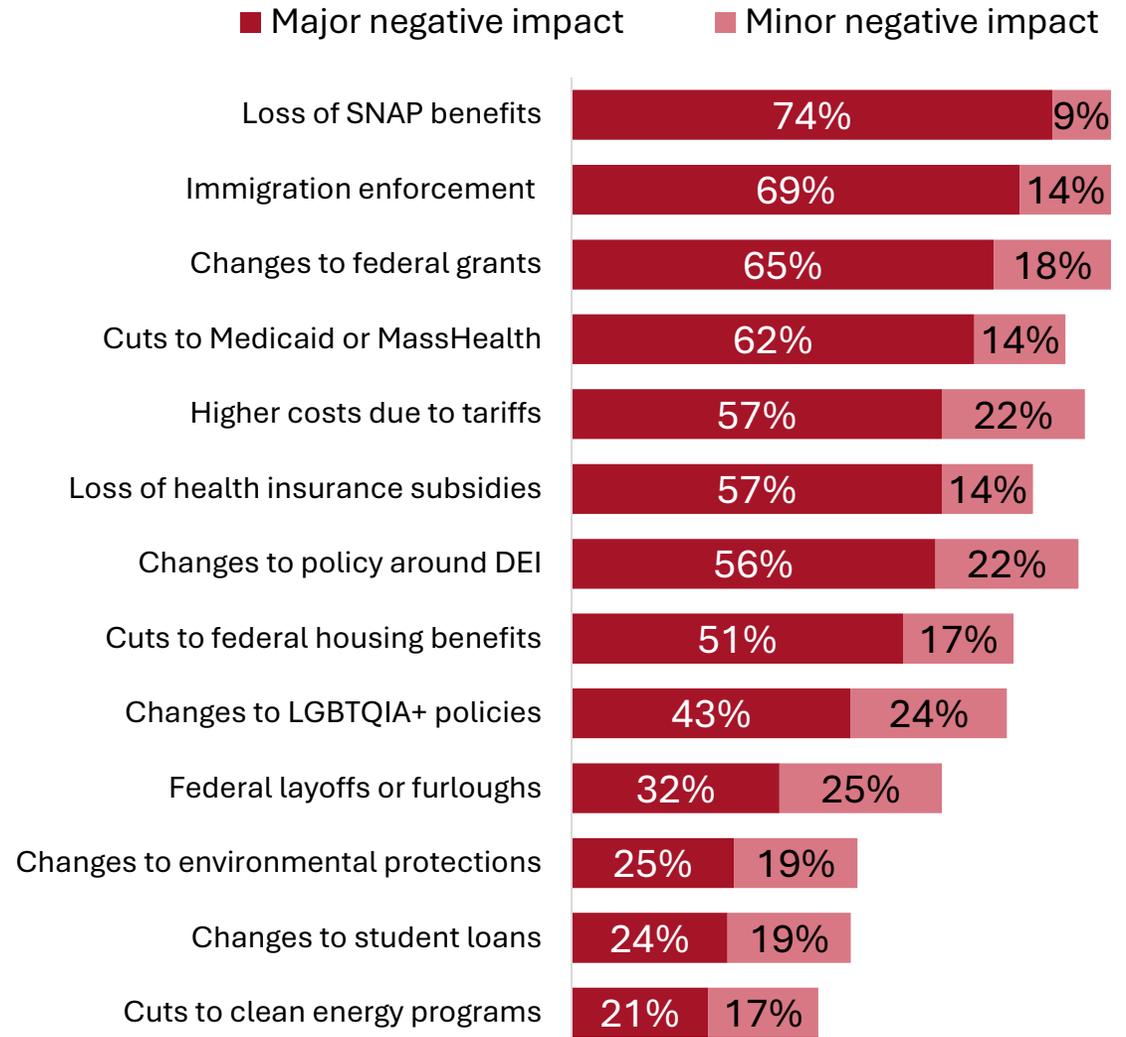
# What has had the biggest impacts?

- Changes to SNAP, immigration policy, grants policies, and MassHealth have had the biggest impacts on populations served by nonprofits in Massachusetts.

*Q: How have the populations you serve been impacted, if at all, by the following policy changes under the second Trump administration?*

## Sweeping negative impacts under Trump policy changes

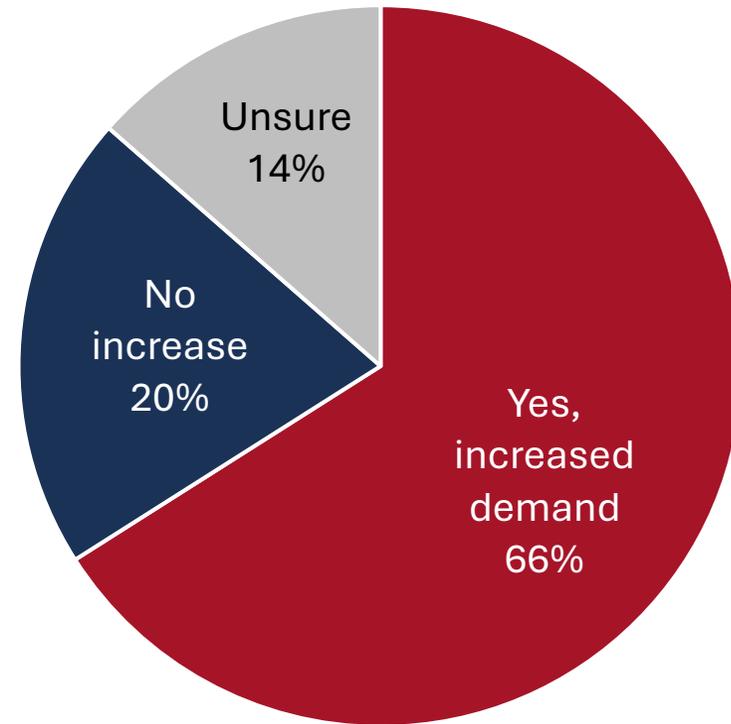
*% who say each has had a \_\_\_\_ on the populations they serve*



# Increased demand for services / programs

- Organizations say there is now more demand for their services than 1 year ago.
- Organizations serving currently or formerly incarcerated individuals, people who are unhoused, domestic violence survivors, and veterans are particularly likely to report increased demand for services.

**Federal changes bring more demand for services**  
*% who say they have / have not seen increased demand*

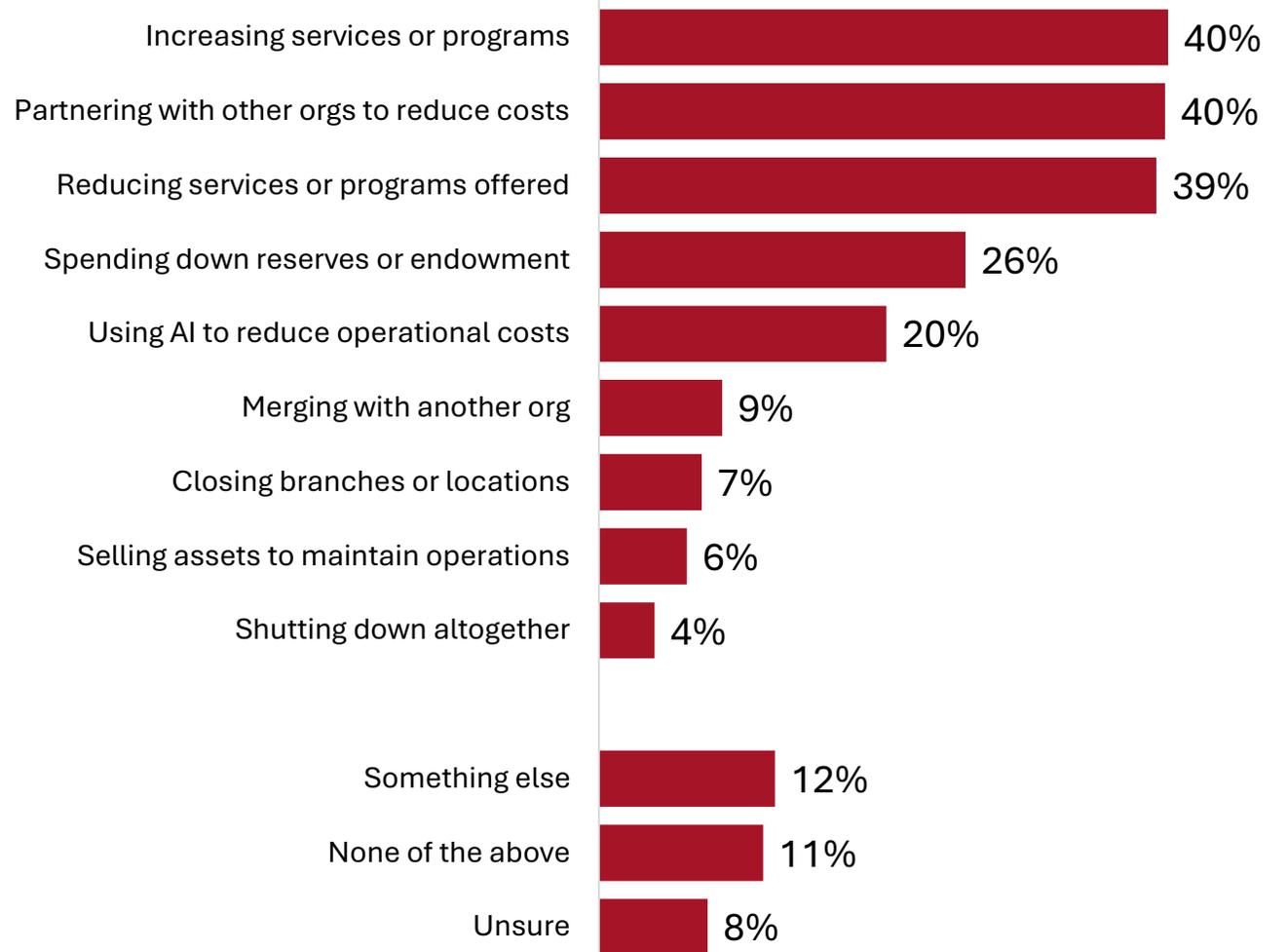


# How organizations are responding

- Organizations are at a crossroads, with about an equal number looking at reducing programs as are expanding their services to meet demand.
- A similar percentage are looking into partnering with other orgs to trim costs.

## Nonprofits considering strategies in response to fed govt changes

% who say their org considered pursuing each in response to fed govt changes



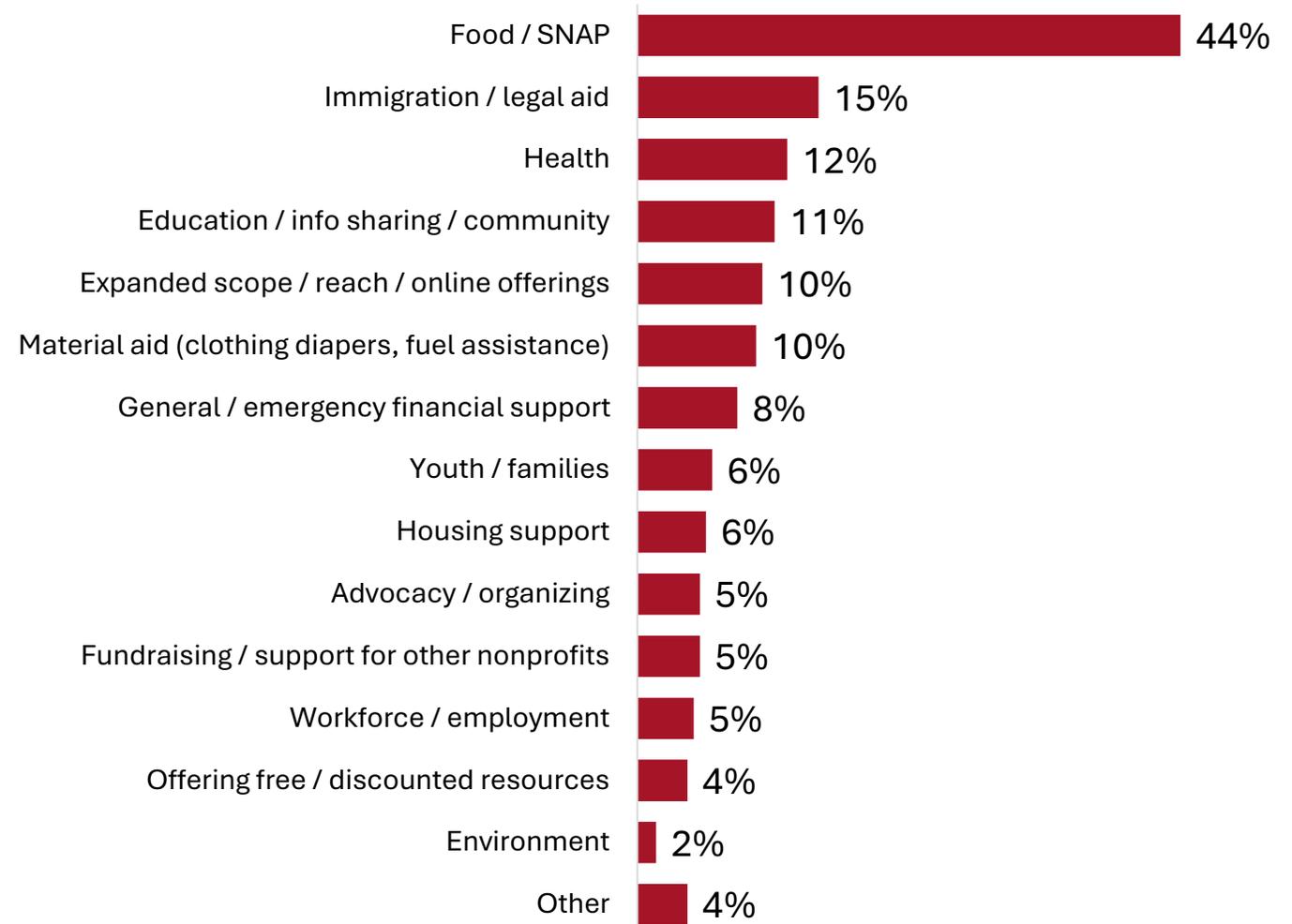
*Q: Since January 2025, has your organization considered pursuing any of the following strategies as a result of changes from the federal government? Select all that apply.*

# Expanded services to address demand

- Many (41%) nonprofits have expanded services in response to federal policy changes.
- The most widespread new service is food support to address SNAP benefit cuts.

## Most common new service is food support in response to SNAP cuts

*% offering new services who say they are offering each type of service*



*Q: Has your organization added any services or programs since January 2025 to help fill gaps left by changes in federal policy?*

*Q: What new programs or services are you offering?*

# New programs, in their words

Fuel assistance,  
Farmers Market.

Increased  
sponsored spots  
to programming  
and exhibits.

We paid SNAP  
benefits directly.

Legal English workshops,  
training on Know Your  
Rights and other  
immigration topics.

We are offering more  
online programming to  
increase access.

Spanish  
language  
mental health  
programming.

Similar programs  
provided pro-bono.

Broader geographic reach.

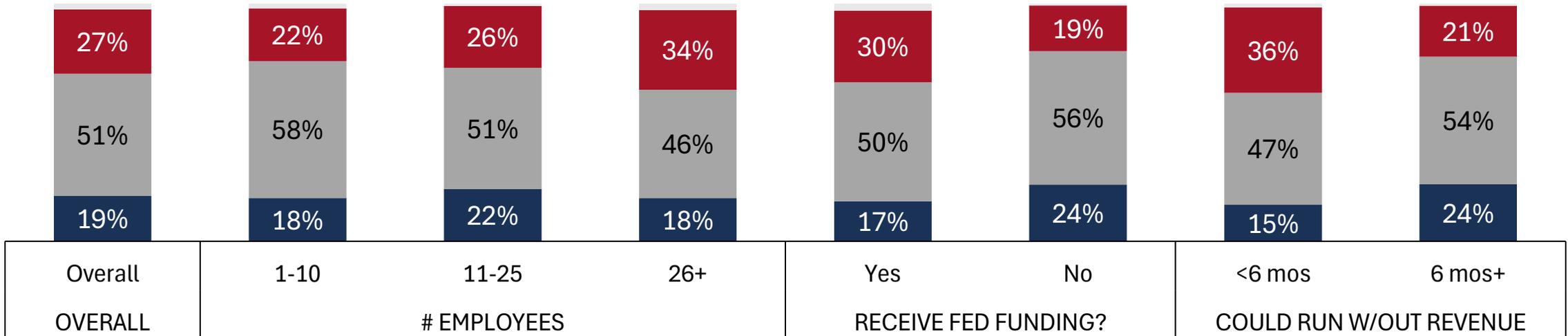
# Changes in staffing

- Overall, 51% say their staffing has stayed steady, but 27% have cut jobs.
- Larger nonprofits, those receiving federal funding, and those with less financial running room are more likely to report their staffing levels have declined.

## Staffing generally the same, larger declines among certain nonprofits

% who say staffing levels are \_\_\_ compared to 1 year ago by # of employees, received fed funding, time could run without revenue

■ Staffing up ■ About the same as before ■ Staffing down ■ Unsure



Q: How do staffing levels at your organization compare to January 2025?

Q: Including yourself, how many people are currently employed (full or part time) by your organization?

Q: Does your organization typically receive any of the following types of revenues from the federal government? Please include any federal funds that are passed through state or local agencies. Select all that apply.

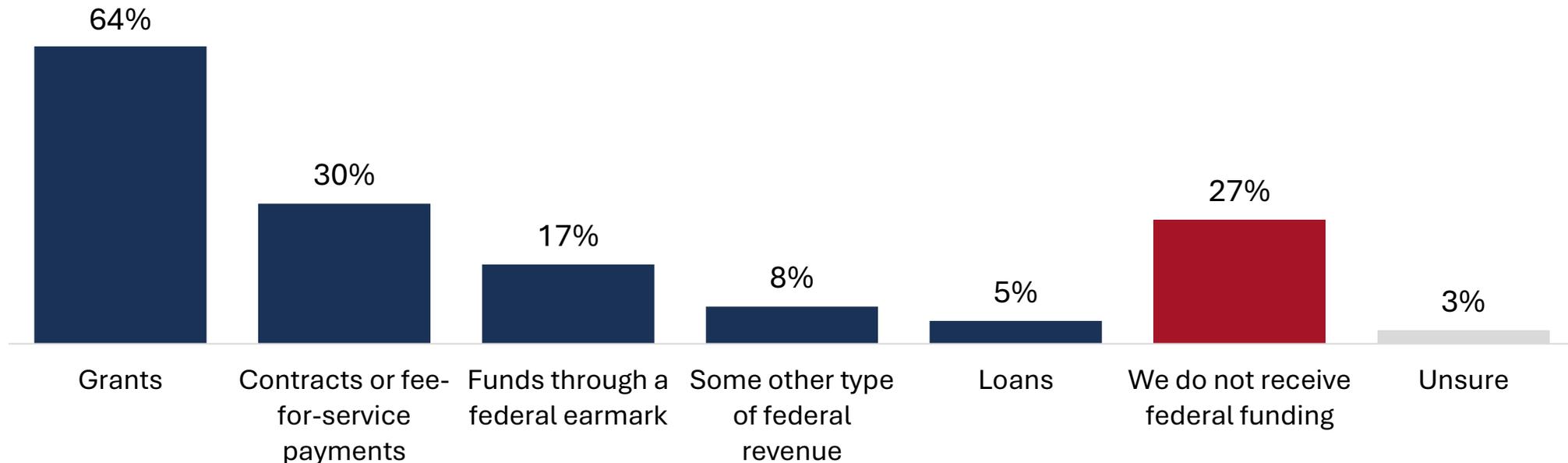
Q: Please estimate how long your organization would be able to maintain operations if you stopped receiving revenue.

# Receive federal funds of any kind

- Overall, 70% of nonprofits surveyed receive some form of federal funding, most commonly grants.

## Majority of nonprofits receive federal funding of some kind, grants most common

*% who say their organization typically receives \_\_\_\_\_ revenue from the federal government*

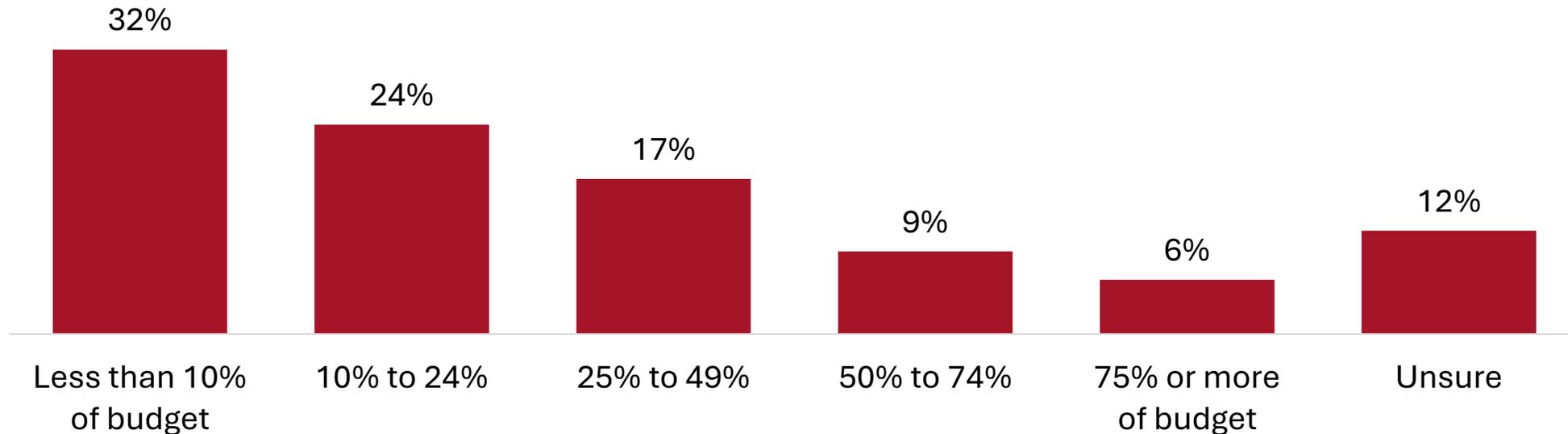


# Federal funds in nonprofit budgets

- For most nonprofits, federal funds were less than 25% of their budget before the second Trump administration.

## Most nonprofits had under 25% of revenue from federal funds before Trump's second term

*% who say \_\_\_\_\_ of their organization's revenue before Jan 2025 came from federal sources*



# Current and projected financial standing

- While not as bad as projected in the 2025 survey, nearly half of nonprofits have seen their finances weaken over the last year
- Looking ahead another year, 41% anticipate further weakening.

## Financial health has weakened and nonprofits anticipate it will weaken more

*% who say their orgs financial health is \_\_\_\_ 2025 projected for 2026, today vs 1 year ago, and anticipated 1 year from now*

	2025 projection for 2026	2026 compared to 2025	2026 projection for 2027
Much / a little stronger	6%	22%	21%
About the same	18%	25%	22%
<b>Much / a little weaker</b>	<b>59%</b>	<b>49%</b>	<b>41%</b>
Unsure	17%	4%	16%

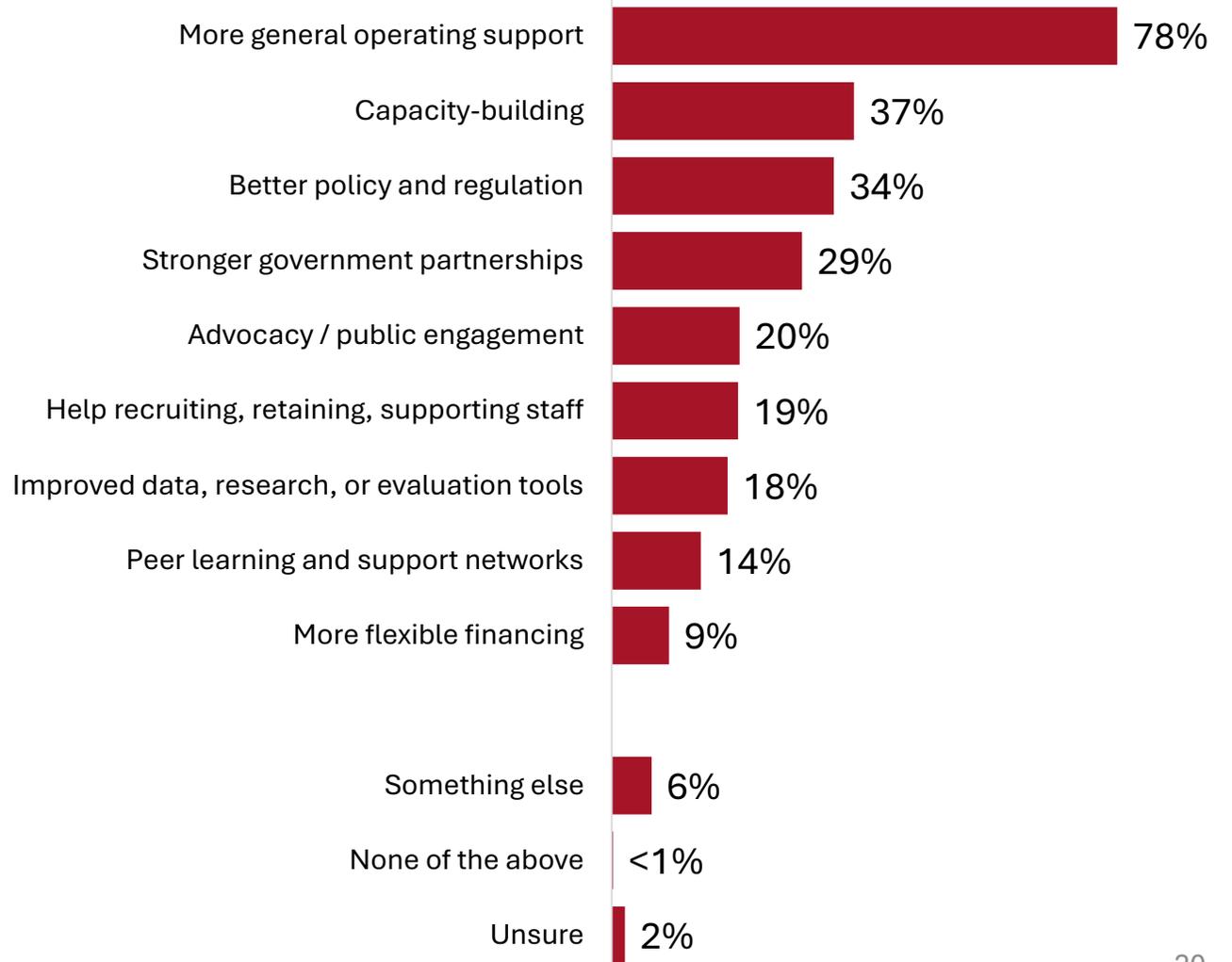
# What nonprofits want most

- Operating support is by far the greatest need identified by nonprofit leaders.
- Capacity building is second, with smaller nonprofits more likely to seek this assistance.

*Q: Which 3 resources or supports from the list below would be most helpful to your organization moving forward? Please select up to three.*

## Operating support most helpful resource moving forward

*% who say \_\_\_\_\_ resource would be most helpful for their org*

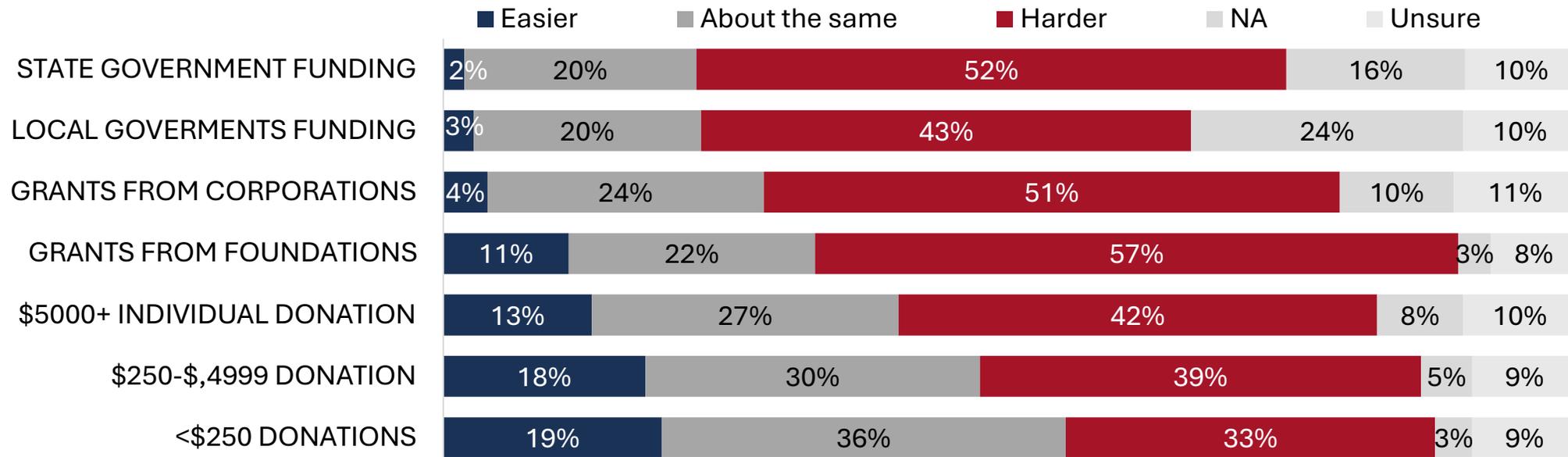


# Fundraising landscape

- Obtaining funding has become more challenging compared to prior years, particularly state government funding and grants from corporations, and foundations.

## More nonprofits say every category of funding has gotten harder to get compared to prior years

% who say each type of funding is \_\_\_\_\_ to get compared to prior years

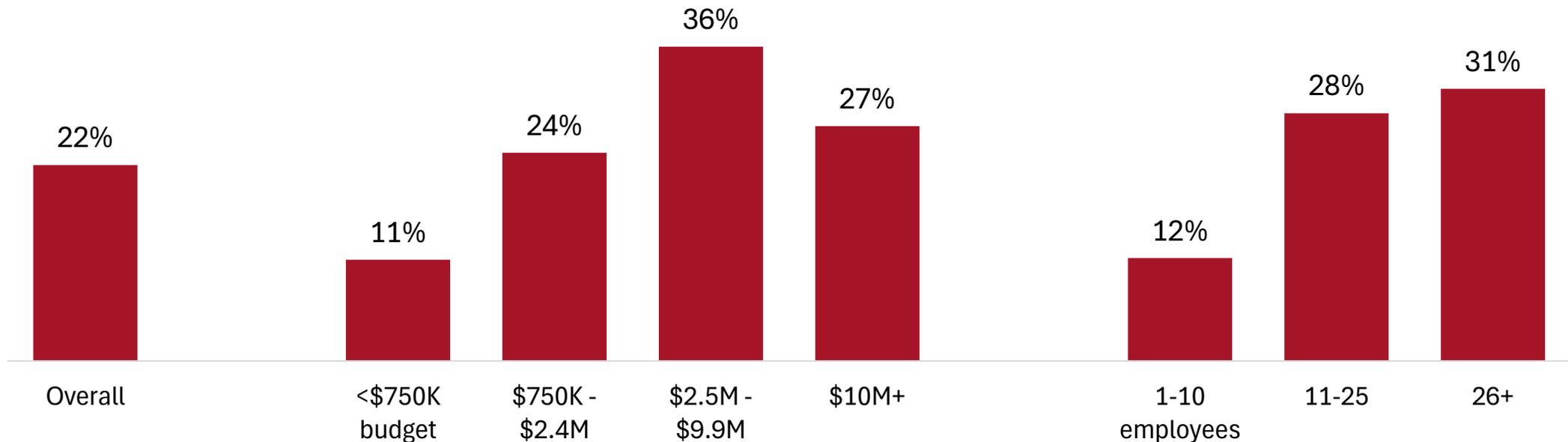


# More nonprofits are adding security

- Many nonprofits, particularly larger ones, say they have added security over the last year.

## Security has increased in the past year, particularly for larger organizations

*% who say their org has invested in additional security by org annual budget and number of employees*



# Advocacy on the rise

- Many organizations are taking on new advocacy activities, particularly those with the largest budgets.

## Nonprofits increase participation in policy advocacy, particularly larger organizations

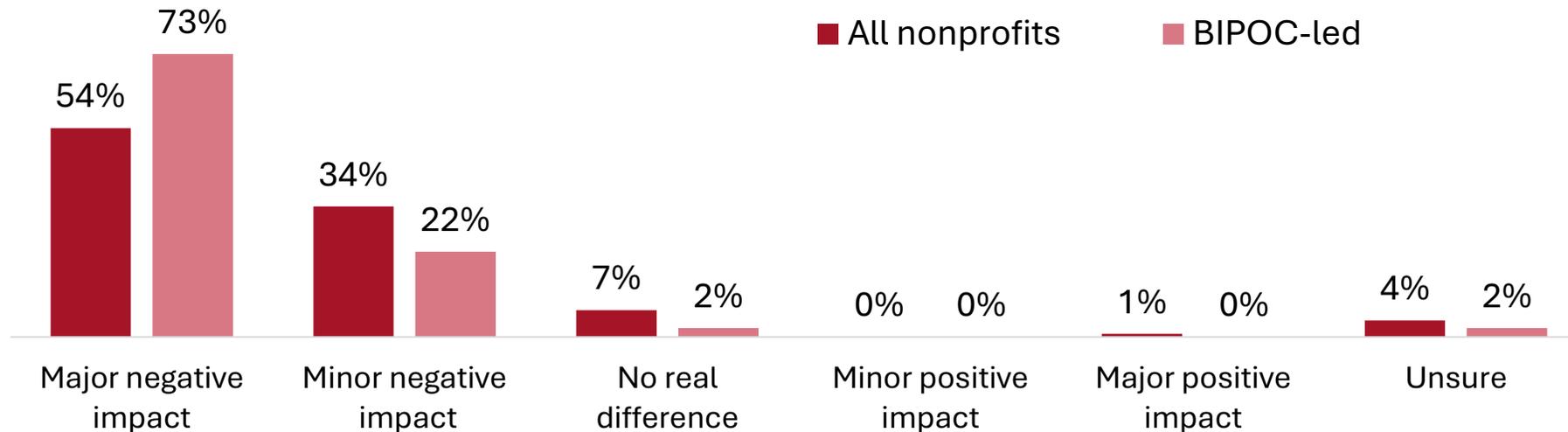
*% who say their org has done each to become more involved in policy advocacy by org annual budget*

	Overall	<\$750K	\$750K - \$2.4M	\$2.5M - \$9.9M	\$10M+
Engaged more with government officials	48%	34%	49%	53%	63%
Increased participation in coalitions	47%	42%	52%	49%	57%
Invested more in tracking and informing legislation	23%	11%	21%	29%	39%
Offered advocacy training for staff or board members	20%	14%	22%	20%	31%
Hired lobbyists	3%	2%	1%	7%	5%

# Impacts on nonprofit staff well-being

- Nonprofit leaders see negative impacts on their staff from federal actions; nearly no one reports a positive impact.
- BIPOC-led organizations feel particularly hard hit.

**Nonprofits report major negative impacts on well-being of staff, particularly BIPOC led orgs**  
*% who say federal actions since Jan 2025 have had a \_\_\_\_\_ impact on the well-being of org staff*

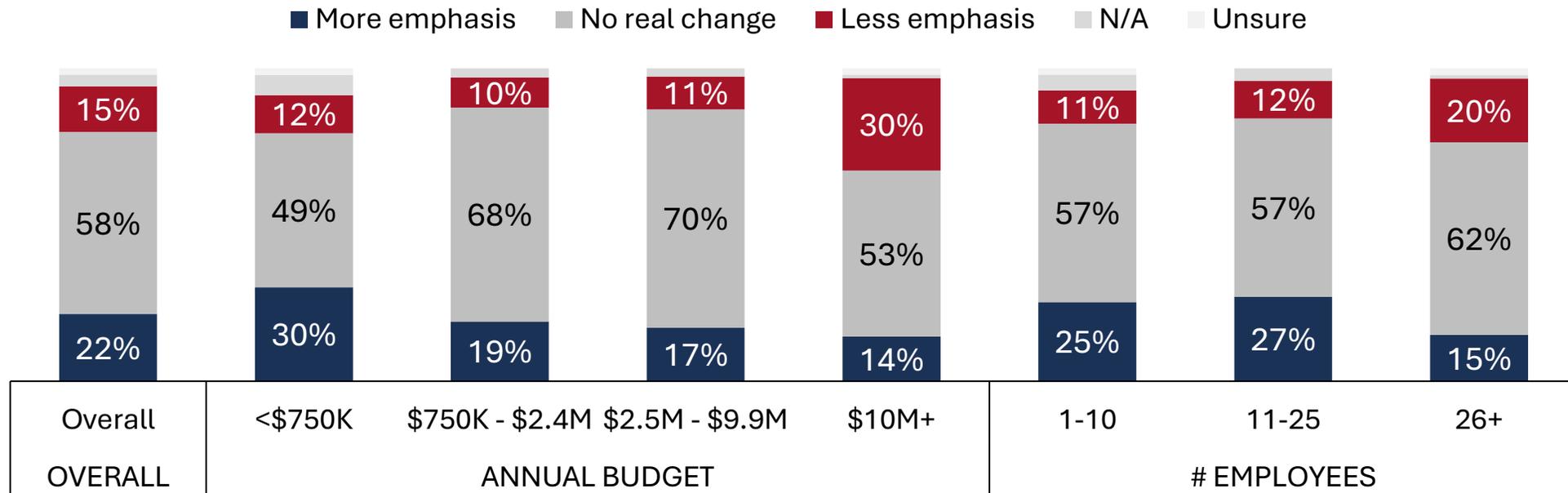


# Changes to DEI emphasis

- Overall, most nonprofits report “no real change” regarding their emphasis on DEI. Smaller organizations are more likely to say they are leaning into DEI, while more larger orgs are pulling back.

## Most nonprofits show little DEI change, smaller orgs emphasize it more

% who say their org has placed \_\_\_\_\_ on DEI since Jan 2025 by org annual budget and number of employees



# Key metrics: forecast vs actual

- In 2025, nonprofit leaders were fairly accurate in forecasting how bad things would be in Massachusetts. Very large majorities say demand for services is higher, Mass is worse off, and it's now harder to carry out their mission.

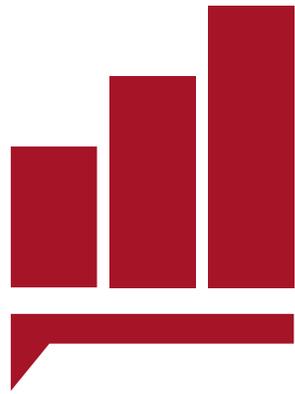
## Mass. nonprofits saw the writing on the wall, recognized how hard 2026 would be

*% who say each outcome ahead vs the % who say it has now taken place*

	2025 expected	2026 actual
You will / have seen increased demand for services	64%	66%
Massachusetts will be / is worse off	92%	72%
Populations served will be / are worse off	92%	85%
It will be / is harder to carry out mission	91%	93%

# 2025: Predictions versus reality

Prediction (2025 Survey)	Reality (2026 Survey)
Trump administration would be bad for Massachusetts, nonprofits, and populations served.	Most say past year has been bad in all these respects.
Increased demand for services amidst a more challenging environment.	This has occurred and some nonprofits have expanded services to fill the gaps.
Potential loss of federal funding would hit vulnerable populations and nonprofit budgets.	Loss of federal funds happened and had the expected impacts.
Even nonprofits that did not receive federal funding worried about downstream effects as philanthropic resources shift and become more competitive.	More say applying for funding from all sources has gotten harder.
Nonprofits foresaw a need to boost own fundraising to compensate, even while anticipating a worse financial position a year from now.	Few nonprofits say any type of fundraising has gotten easier or that their fundraising is better.
Nonprofits saw an increased role for philanthropy as the federal government makes life harder for Massachusetts nonprofits.	Nonprofits are reporting more challenges seeking funding, including from foundations.



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