

One Year In: Massachusetts Nonprofits Charting a Way Forward

Federal Impacts Survey Results

March 2026

How can nonprofits deliver on their missions amid chaos, uncertainty, and threats?

How can they meet rising community needs?

What do they need from supporters to thrive?

These are some things we hoped to learn in our second Federal Impacts Survey, which we invited nonprofit leaders in Massachusetts to complete in January 2026.

The first Federal Impacts Survey, issued in February 2025, gauged the sector's expectations for their organizations and communities under the incoming federal administration. The results, issued in May, revealed deep anxiety and concern, not just for cuts to needed federal funding and safety net programs, but also for the well-being of communities they serve. This second survey sought to determine whether reality met expectations.

Nearly 500 nonprofit leaders from across Massachusetts took the survey, sharing firsthand knowledge of the challenges and opportunities they, their colleagues, and their communities have faced over the past year.

While the results may not surprise those working tirelessly to meet community needs, we cannot allow their stories and strategies to get lost in the exhaustion and overwhelm. Leaders and organizations in immigration, disability justice, education, environment, the arts, the food system, community health, and other areas critical to a thriving and just Massachusetts are all impacted. Their experiences—and data—can inform reflection and root action in reality.

This brief reports on three common themes; more detailed results are available via the QR code and link on the last page. The Boston Foundation, MassINC Polling Group, and Massachusetts Nonprofit Network hope these results shed light on what changes and challenges are affecting communities and those working closest with them; guide scenario planning and strategy setting; and, above all, encourage all of us to support this critical sector.

- 1.** Overall, nonprofits say the first year of the Trump administration has left them and the communities they serve worse off, and that new policies have made it harder for them to do their work.
- 2.** The past year has brought most nonprofits a higher demand for services, but fundraising is a challenge, even beyond federal dollars.
- 3.** Most nonprofits say they are in worse financial shape now than a year ago, or treading water. Finances and people are strained, and they could really use general operating and capacity-building support from donors.

85%

SAY THE POPULATIONS THEY SERVE ARE WORSE OFF

92%

SAY IT'S HARDER OR MUCH HARDER TO DO THEIR WORK

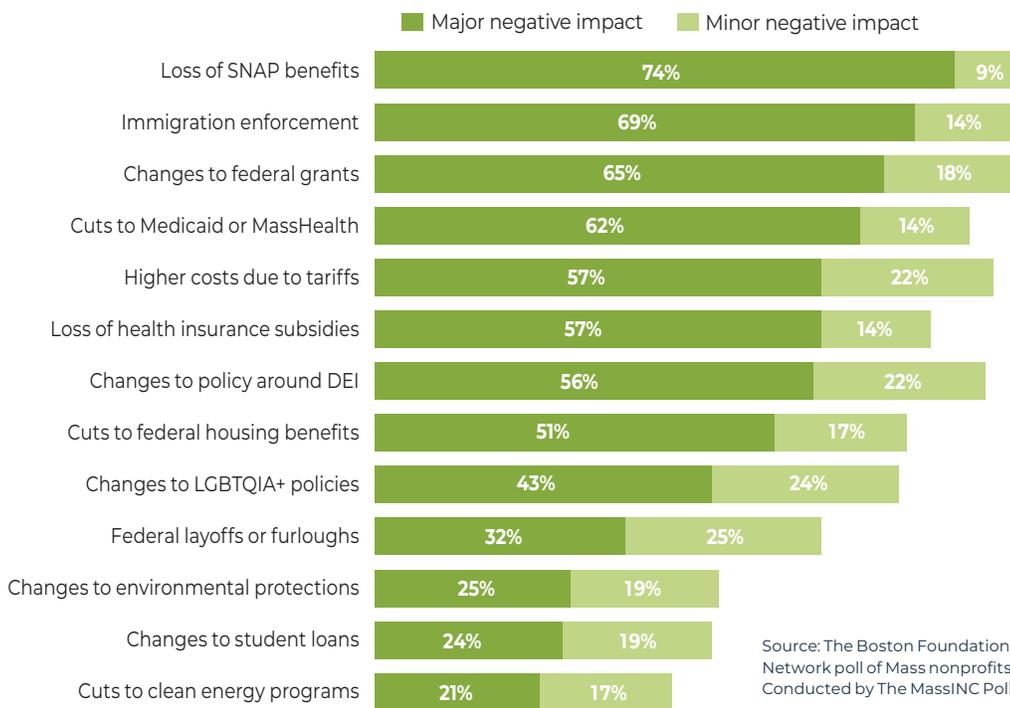
1 Overall, nonprofits say the first year of the Trump administration has left them and the communities they serve worse off, and that new policies have made it harder for them to do their work.

Nonprofits warned in the 2025 survey that they expected challenges, and federal actions have proven those fears justified. Wide majorities say that the state, the nation, and the populations they serve are worse off than they were a year ago due to federal actions. Five in six organizations say they are worse off and policies have made doing their work more difficult.

“Our immigrant neighbors are very fearful. As a result, we are taking our services out into the community more by creating partnerships with other trusted community organizations, like schools.”

Sweeping Negative Impacts Under Trump Policy Changes

% who say each has had a _____ on the populations they serve.



Source: The Boston Foundation & Mass. Nonprofit Network poll of Mass nonprofits, Jan 2026. Conducted by The MassINC Polling Group.

“We have seen ... increased demand in services, but far less funding. I have not seen a funding environment like this since 2008.”

2 The past year has brought most nonprofits a higher demand for services, but fundraising is a challenge, even beyond federal dollars.

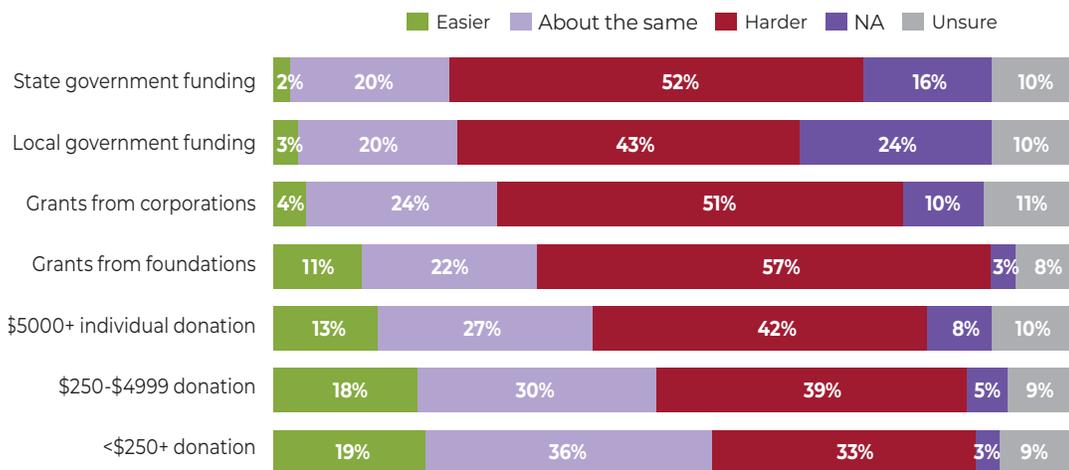
Two-thirds of surveyed nonprofits say they face increased demand for services, with many launching new programs to meet widening needs. At the same time, more than half say funding has become harder to get. The notion that the sector can just “make it work” is off base. Nearly 40% of respondents have considered partnering with other organizations to share and reduce costs. Almost 10% have considered merging with another organization.

70%

SAY THEIR ORG HAD RECEIVED SOME FORM OF FEDERAL FUNDING, MOST OFTEN GRANTS

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.



Source: The Boston Foundation & Mass. Nonprofit Network poll of Mass nonprofits, Jan 2026. Conducted by The MassINC Polling Group. Rounding may lead to totals >100%

“Individual donations are down due to tightened personal finances. Sponsorships are holding back.”

3 Most nonprofits say they are in worse financial shape now than a year ago, or treading water. Finances and people are strained, and they could really use general operating and capacity-building support from donors.

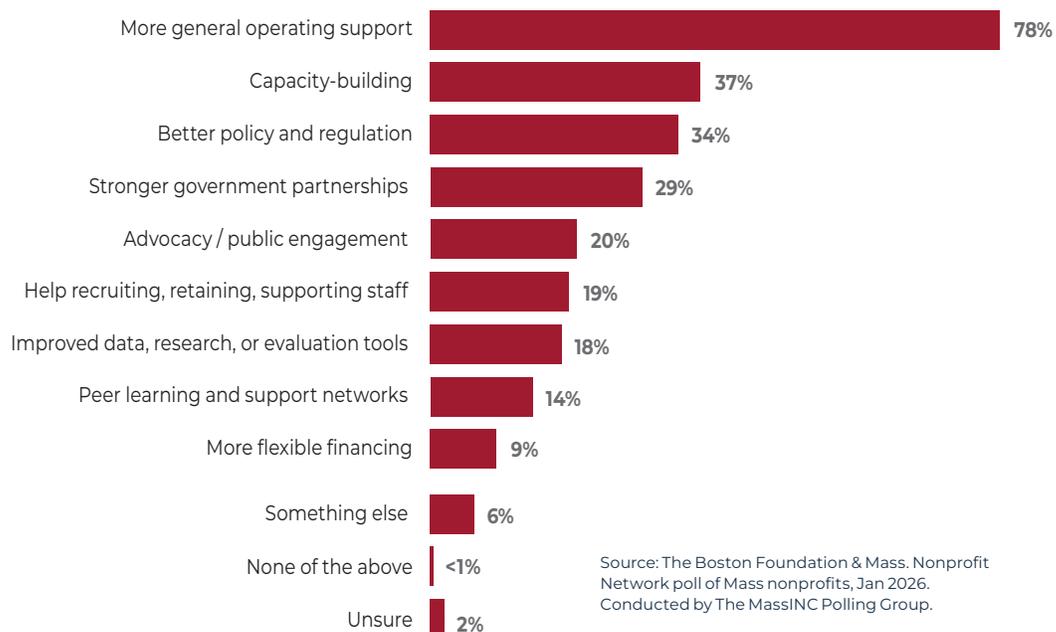
The past year has taken a financial and human toll on many Massachusetts nonprofits, and leaders are not confident of a turnaround. Only 22 percent of respondents say they are better off financially now

than a year ago; the majority say their organizations are weaker and expect further declines in the coming year. Pain is widespread but still uneven: 88 percent of respondents say federal actions have had negative impacts on their staff; that number reaches 95 percent for BIPOC-led organizations. What can combat these trends? Flexible, general operating support from donors, and resources to build capacity and advocate for policy-level solutions.

“The cost of doing business has driven up our costs at a time that our income is not increasing proportionally.”

Operating Support Most Helpful Resource Moving Forward

% who say _____ resource would be most helpful to their org.



Source: The Boston Foundation & Mass. Nonprofit Network poll of Mass nonprofits, Jan 2026. Conducted by The MassINC Polling Group.

Conclusion

Members of the extensive nonprofit community in Massachusetts work in the real world every day. We are grateful for the time respondents took to share that experience and help paint a broader picture in numbers. We hope this data will drive action in pursuit of remedies and durable change. Some nonprofits have been implementing suggestions that arose from the 2025 assessment of findings; namely, exploring shared services and collaborative financing, and strengthening the sector's advocacy chops. Some funders and donors as well have acted in response to last year's findings, with more flexible dollars and strategies such as funder collaborations and higher payout commitments.

This has been significant and welcome, but unfortunately the response and urgency have not matched the scale and scope of what's needed to protect, defend, and reimagine our social sector as it upholds essential community services and a thriving democracy. As nonprofits and funders work together through these challenges, we will continue to report on what works. And keep listening.



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<https://www.tbf.org/oneyearinrecap>



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The MassINC Polling Group is a nonpartisan public opinion research firm serving public, private, and social-sector clients. MPG elevates the public's voice with cutting-edge methods and rigorous analysis. Based in Boston, MPG serves a nationwide client base. Learn more at massincpolling.com.

The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network (MNN) is the voice of the nonprofit sector; a statewide organization that brings together all parts of the nonprofit ecosystem — from nonprofits to funders, community and business leaders, and elected officials — to help nonprofits grow and raise the sector's voice on critical issues. MNN understands that strong nonprofits build strong communities. It is MNN's mission to strengthen the nonprofit community through advocacy, public awareness, and capacity-building. Learn more at massnonprofitnet.org.