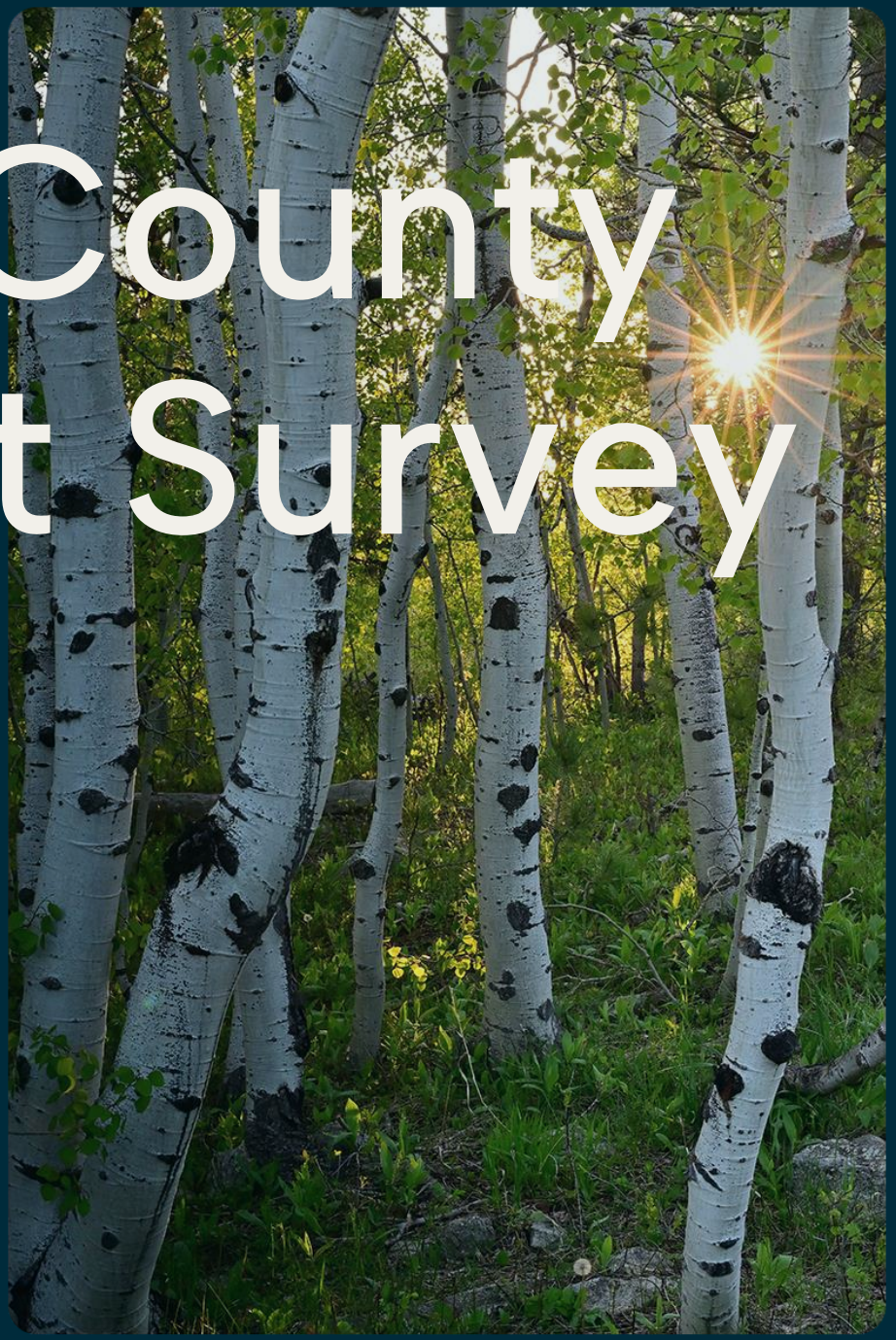
Boulder County Nonprofit Survey Report

2026



Community Foundation Boulder County

Summary

The 2026 Boulder County Nonprofit Survey is the second annual assessment conducted by Community Foundation Boulder County to understand the health, challenges, and needs of the local nonprofit sector. This year's survey drew 124 respondents spanning organizations of all sizes, missions, and service areas across Boulder County. The data reflects a sector that is resilient but under significant strain.

Five key themes arose throughout this year’s responses, including:

- The nonprofit sector is under compounding strain.
    - Funding disruptions and policy shifts are impacting programs, communication, and staffing.
    - 92% of leaders are more or equally concerned about sustainability compared to the start of 2025.
- Financial reserves at nonprofit organizations are thinning.
    - 71% of nonprofits have less than 6 months of financial runway and 36% have already drawn on reserves.
    - Operating costs have risen sharply, creating financial pressures.
- Individual giving can’t fill the gaps.
    - While 32% of nonprofits saw an increase in individual giving, 44% saw giving hold steady and 24% of organizations experienced a decrease in donations.
- Organizations reported slightly more board and financial preparedness compared to 2025.
- Outside of additional funding, fundraising capacity and development, board development, and grant writing were identified as the top three needs by nonprofit leaders.

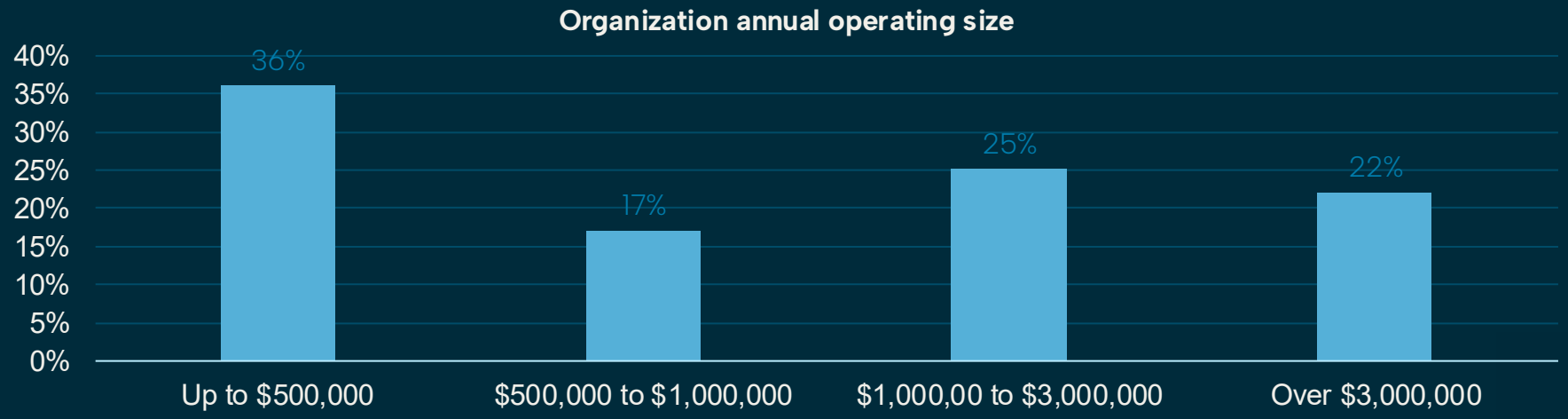
Survey and data analysis supported by Prismatic Consulting.

Methodology

The 2026 Boulder County Nonprofit Survey is the second annual assessment distributed online through the Community Foundation's nonprofit email distribution list of 1,227 individual emails. The list included organizations that have recently applied to the foundation for discretionary funding. The survey was available online for two weeks from April 28 to May 15, 2026.

124 nonprofit organizations participated in the survey, with 86 organizations completing the entire survey. This year's survey drew respondents spanning organizations of all sizes, missions, and service areas across Boulder County. A majority of the surveys (85%) were completed by senior leaders or board members. Responses were self-reported and represented a convenience sample of the Boulder County nonprofit sector.

Year-over-year comparisons should be interpreted with caution, given that only 33% of 2026 respondents confirmed completing the 2025 survey. Open-ended responses were reviewed thematically; illustrative quotes have been lightly edited for length and clarity. Data percentages were based on the number of submitted responses.

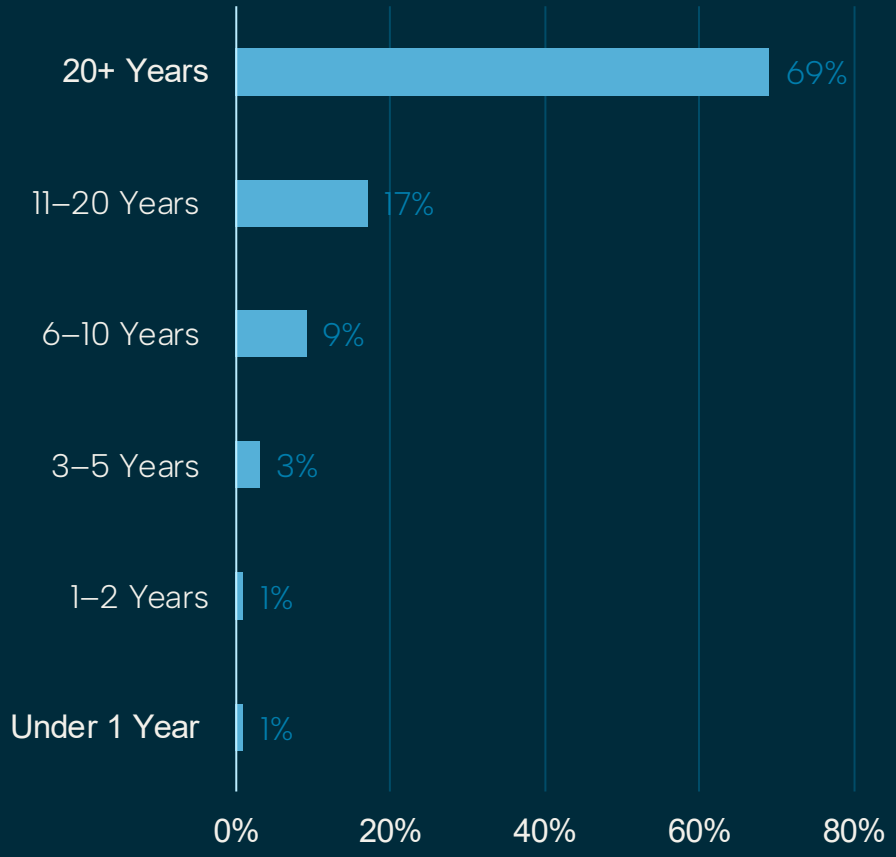


Methodology

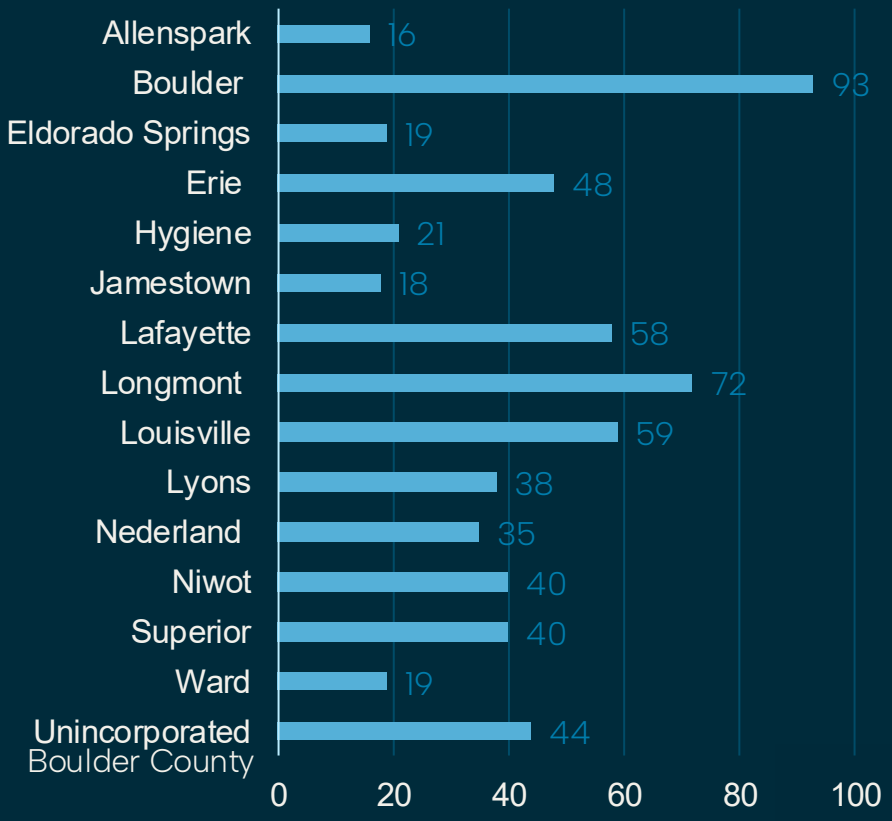
Survey Participation

Participants represented a diverse set of organizations by annual operating size, years in operation, geographic area served in Boulder County, and organizational mission or focus.

Organization years in operation



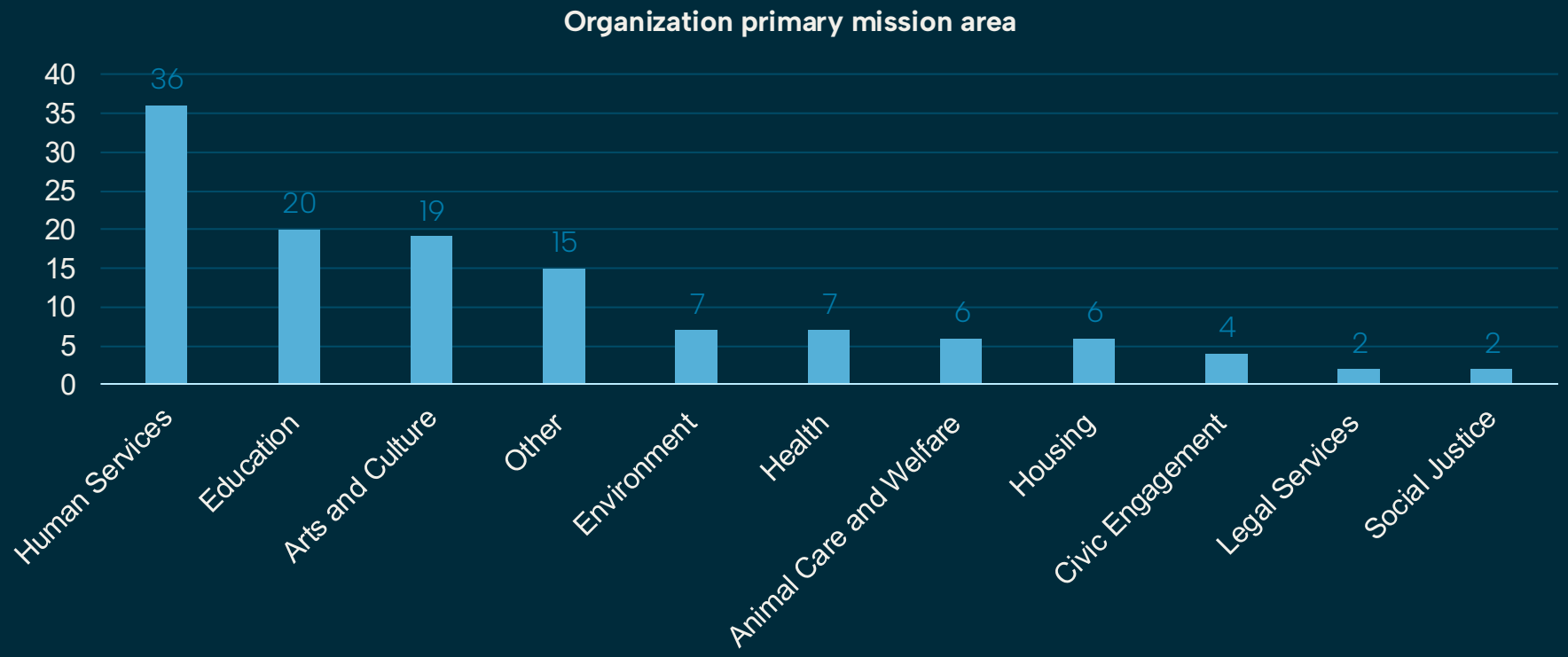
Organization primary geographic service area(s) in Boulder County



Methodology

Survey Participation

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Among the 36 human services organizations, basic needs/food (14 organizations) was the largest subcategory, followed by ‘other' within human services (11), and mental health (5). Among education organizations, K-12 education was the largest subcategory (12), followed by early childhood education (5) and higher education (3).

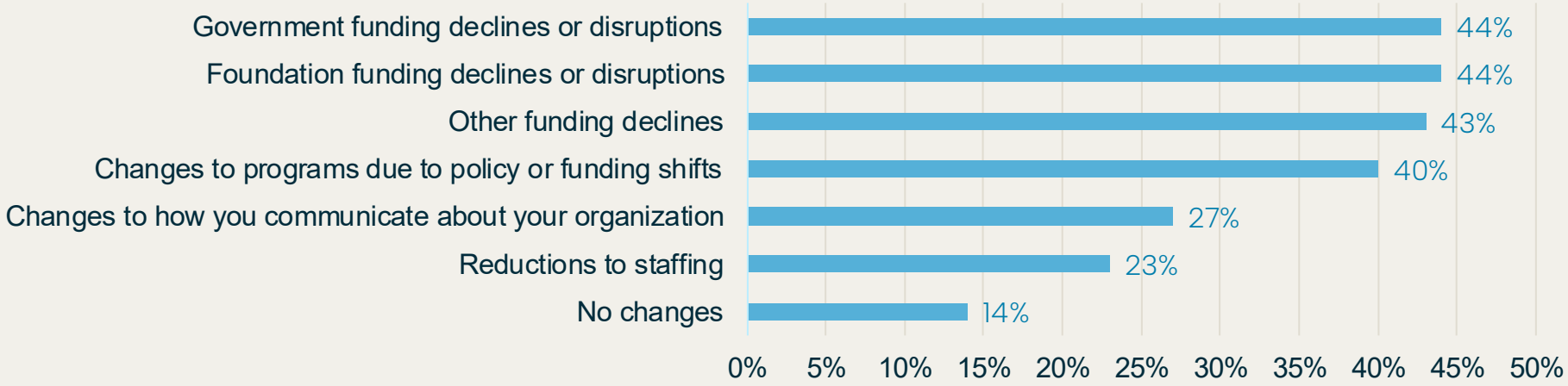
Current Landscape | Federal Shifts

Key Finding: Federal Policy and Funding Disruption is the Defining Challenge

40% of respondents reported that their work has already been directly impacted by federal executive orders or policy shifts, and an additional 13% said impacts are forthcoming.

Government and foundation funding disruptions were tied as the most common experience, each affecting 44% of respondents.

What other challenges has your organization faced because of federal action? (Select all that apply)



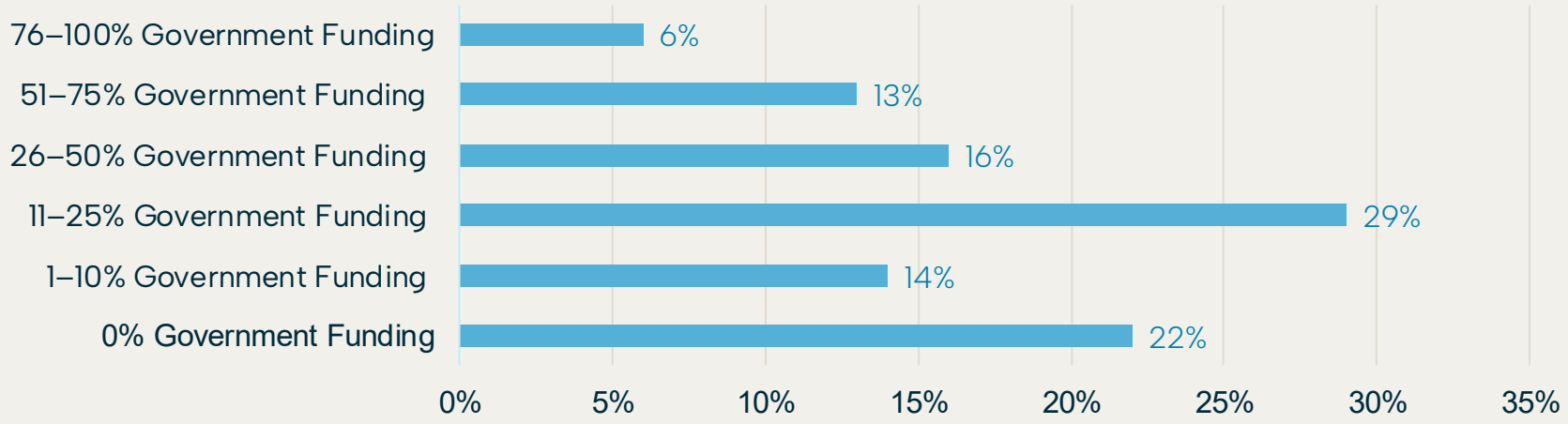
Foundation funding disruptions matching government disruptions in prevalence suggest a sector-wide funding contraction, not just a federal policy story. The results reveal widespread disruption across funding streams, programs, and staffing.

Current Landscape | Government Funding

Key Finding: Government Funding Remains an Important Resource

Among respondents, the average annual support from government sources is 25.5%, with a median of 16%. 25 organizations report zero government funding. At the high end, 7 organizations receive 76–100% of their funding from government sources, representing the greatest exposure to funding disruptions.

What estimated percentage of your annual support is from government sources?



"Even though we do not rely on federal funding, cuts to SNAP have impacted the population we serve, making our services more essential and increasing community reliance on our programs."

Current Landscape | Individual Giving

Key Finding: Individual Giving Provides Some Offset, but Not Enough

Last year's survey identified concerns that individual giving might shift in response to government funding reductions. This year's data provides an update on what actually happened. Analysis of the survey data found a promising development that 32% of organizations reported that individual giving increased in 2025, with average gains of approximately 21%. However, 24% reported a decrease in individual giving (averaging a 38% loss), and 44% reported no change.

Did your organization experience a change in individual giving in 2025?



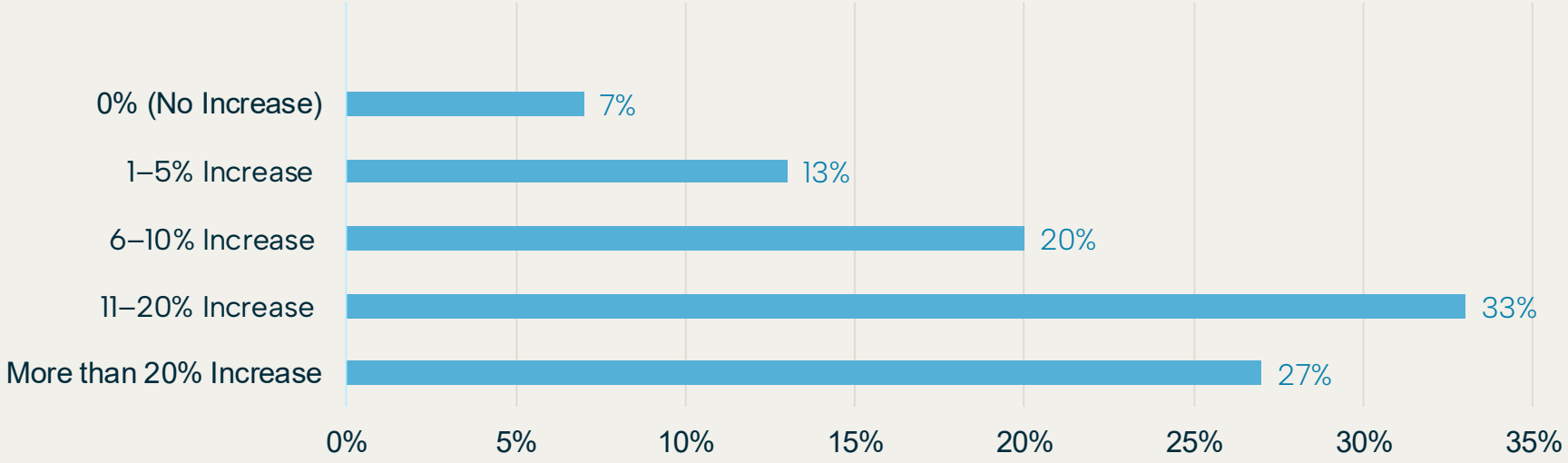
While more organizations saw individual giving increase than decrease, the magnitude of decreases outpaced the increases. Individual giving stepped in to fill funding gaps for some organizations, but the sector cannot plan on individual donors to replace significant funding losses.

Current Landscape | Rising Costs

Key Finding: Operating Costs Are Rising Sharply

Among the 95 organizations that provided estimates, operating costs increased by an average of 19% from 2024 to 2025, with a median increase of 15%. The vast majority of organizations reported increased costs, with over half reporting increases of 11% or more.

By what percentage would you estimate that your operating costs increased from 2024 to 2025?



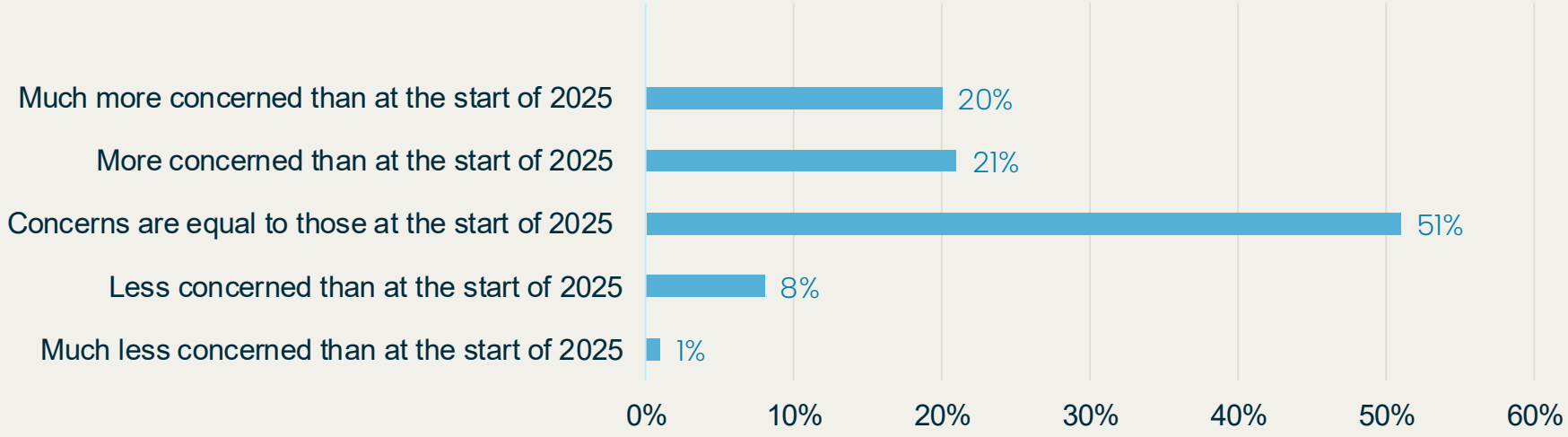
These cost pressures, driven by rising housing costs, food costs, staffing wages, utilities, and general inflation, represent a structural challenge that compounds funding uncertainty. Organizations cannot simply absorb these increases without either raising more funds or reducing services.

Current Landscape | Sustainability

Key Finding: Sustainability Concerns Are Elevated and Growing

A combined 41% of respondents say they are more or much more concerned about their organization's sustainability heading into 2026 and 2027 compared to the start of 2025. Only 8% report being less concerned. The most common posture is 'equal concern' (51%), which may represent organizations in sustained crisis, not stabilization. Those in human services, housing, and basic needs sectors are particularly stressed.

As you look forward to 2026 and 2027, are you more or less concerned about your organization's sustainability than you were a year ago?



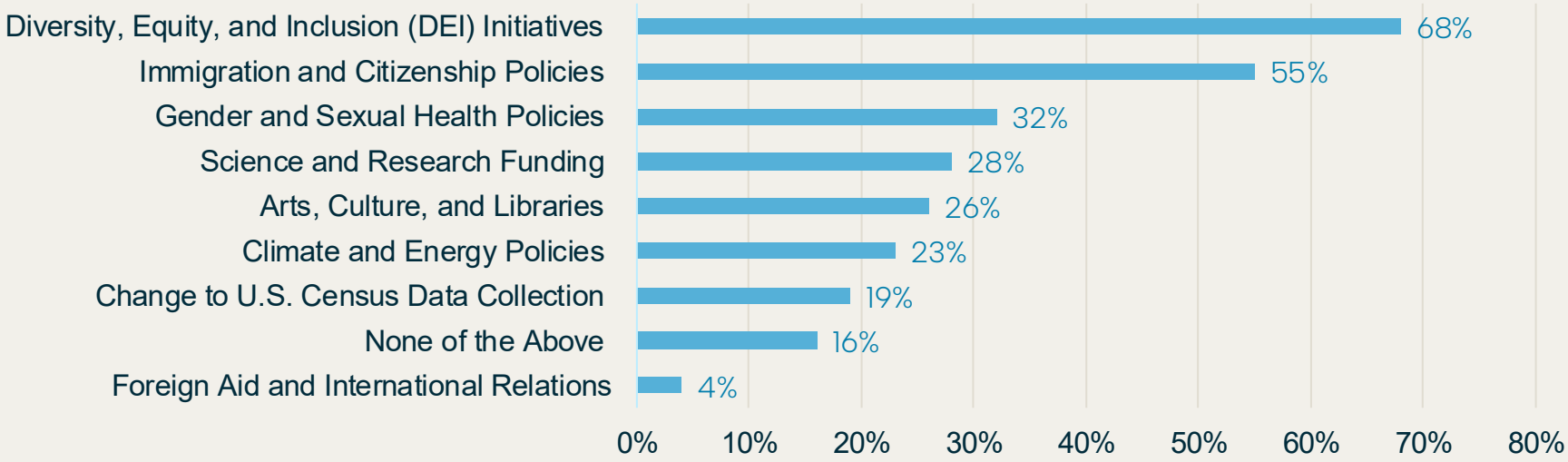
> *"If costs keep going up and donations/grants decline, we will not be able to run our programs at the same level. We may have to cut back our services."*

Current Landscape | Policy Concerns

Key Finding: DEI and Immigration Policies Are the Top Concerns

When asked which current policy discussions impact the people and causes they serve, nonprofit leaders identified DEI initiatives (68%) and immigration/citizenship policies (55%) most frequently, followed by gender and sexual health policies (32%).

Which, if any, of the current policy discussions impact the people and causes your organization serves? (Select all that apply)



The prominence of DEI Initiatives reflects how pervasive equity-focused work is across Boulder County nonprofits and how vulnerable that work feels in the current political environment. Immigration Policies reflect both service-delivery impacts (organizations working with immigrant populations) and operational concerns.

The top 3 responses mirrored the 2025 survey data. Climate and Energy Policies fell in the poll from 28% in 2025 down to 23%, being eclipsed by Science and Research Funding and Arts, Culture, and Libraries.

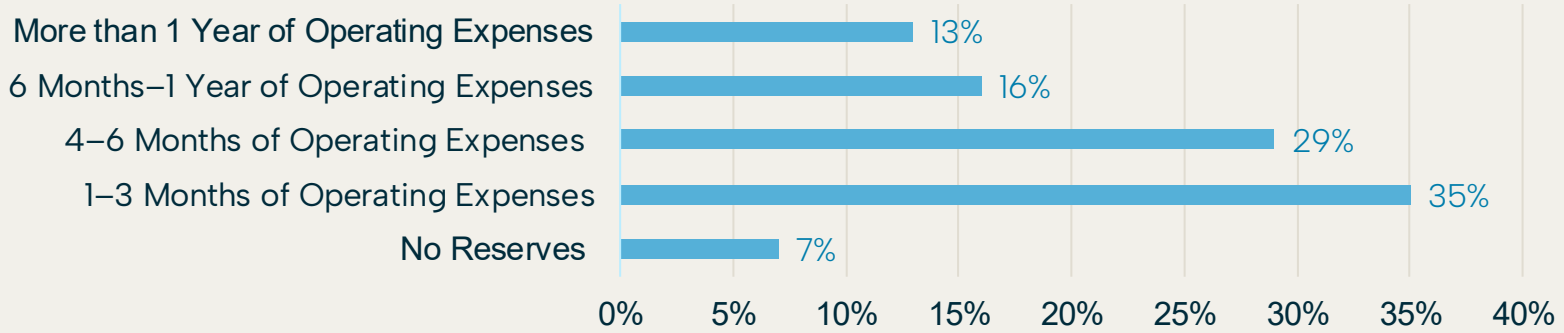
Organizational Preparedness

Key Finding: Reserve Buffers Are Thin

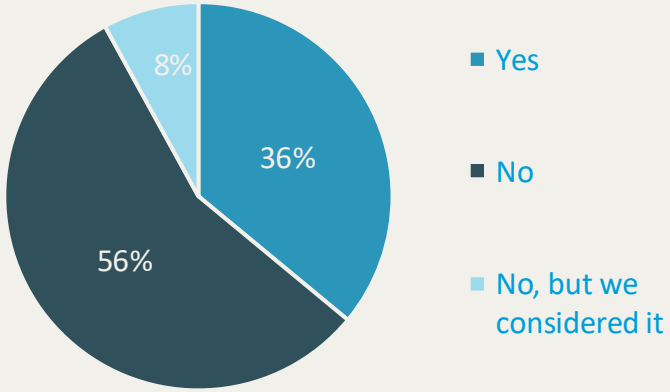
The depth of financial reserves varies considerably, but many organizations have a limited runway if funding disruptions continue. Among those with reserves, 71% are operating with less than six months of reserves. 36% of respondents have already drawn on financial reserves to support operations. An additional 8% considered doing so but ultimately did not.

Reserve use was consistent across budget sizes suggesting that even well-resourced organizations are feeling the strain.

What level of financial reserves does your organization have?



Have you used financial reserves since 2025 to support your organization's operations?



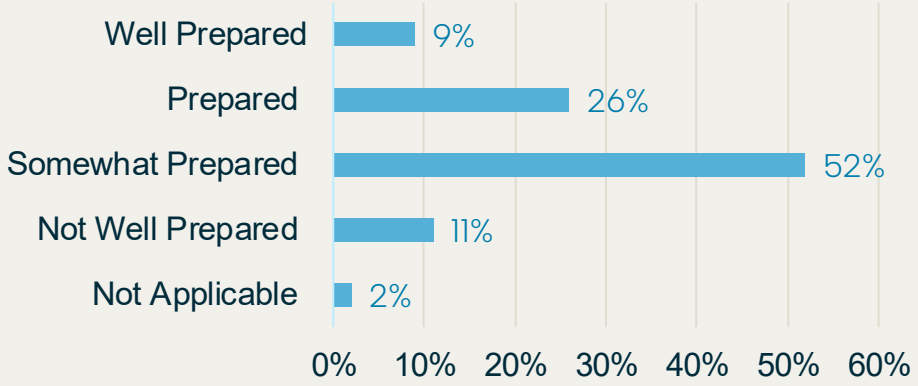
Organizational Preparedness

Key Finding: Boards and Organizations Are Striving To Be More Prepared

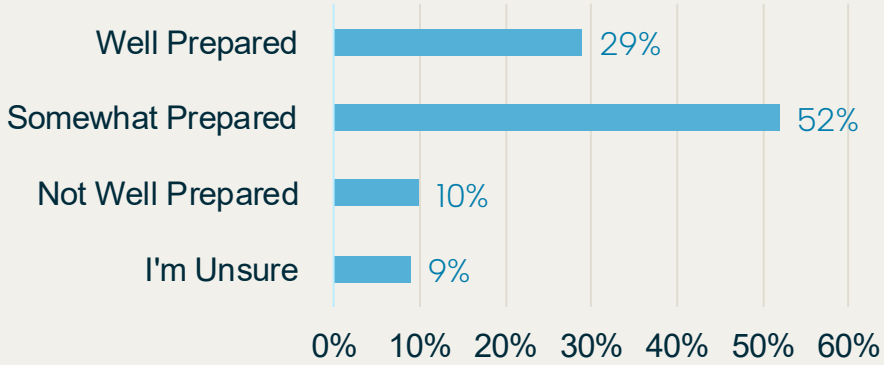
How prepared do you feel your organization is to address financial challenges or instability?

Financial Preparedness

9% of organizations rate themselves as 'well prepared' to address financial challenges, with 51% describing themselves as 'somewhat prepared' and 11% 'not well prepared.'



How prepared is your board to support your organization during this time of federal changes?



Board Preparedness

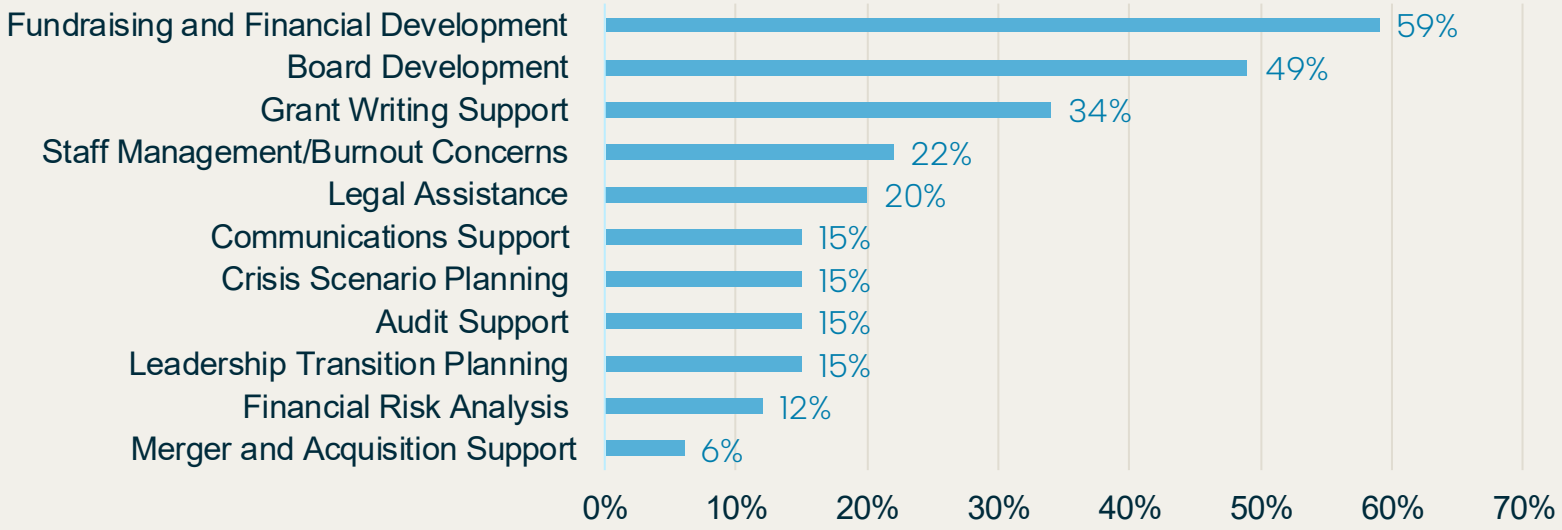
Board preparedness is slightly higher than organizational financial preparedness, with the majority of boards being ‘well prepared’ or 'somewhat prepared.' Open-ended responses indicate boards are actively engaged, convening more frequently, exploring scenario planning, and increasing fundraising activity, but often without formal plans or resources.

Organizational Preparedness

Key Finding: The Sector's Top Support Needs Are Fundraising and Board Development

When asked to select three priority support areas, fundraising and financial development (59%), board development (49%), and grant writing support (34%) ranked as the top three needs. Fundraising and financial development stands out as the sector's most pressing non-funding need. This reflects a need for strategic capacity — how to diversify revenue, make the case to individual donors, and build sustainable pipelines independent of government funding.

Beyond additional funding, which three areas of support or learning opportunities would be useful to your organization?



Staff management and burnout concerns are a significant signal — the human cost of navigating sustained uncertainty is mounting and leaders are seeking support that addresses organizational culture and staff well-being, not just financial sustainability.

Compared to 2025, crisis scenario planning, financial risk analysis, and communications support needs are lower, which suggests that the sector may have adapted to a new normal.