



YORK COUNTY
COMMUNITY
FOUNDATION

Engaging Insights

A Comprehensive
Review of York
County's Nonprofit
Landscape

Prepared by:

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Strategy

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Executive Summary

The York County Community Foundation initiated this project, receiving additional support from the Powder Mill Foundation and the J. William Warehime Foundation. Additionally, a temporary advisory group, called the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group, comprised of local foundations and nonprofits guided the process. This collaborative partnered with Sangfroid Strategy to gain a comprehensive understanding of the York County nonprofit sector's strengths, challenges, needs, priorities, and opportunities.

York County's nonprofits are a vital economic force, comprising 16% of the local workforce and contributing approximately \$6 billion each year to the economy. The insights derived from this initiative are crucial for guiding future investment in programs aimed at enhancing the capacity and resilience of the nonprofit sector. This assessment included a comprehensive survey, both in-person and virtual discussions with nonprofit leaders, consultations with capacity-building experts, and an analysis of financial information from York County's nonprofits, employing both qualitative and quantitative statistical techniques.

The assessment revealed several key themes, including outstanding capacity-building needs, desired characteristics of capacity-building programming, and the relationships and support desired between nonprofits and funders. Along with the ever-present need to fund operations expenses, the **top capacity-building needs** identified were **Fundraising and Grant-writing, Board Development, and Strategic/Long-term Planning**.

Specifically, in the survey and the engagement group sessions, **unrestricted multi-year funding** was the top capacity-building need identified. A deeper exploration of needs revealed that the **major underlying issues were time, staff retention, leadership development among newer and manager-level staff that may become executives, and a lack of time and dedicated staff to take on fundraising activities** such as grant writing.

The survey revealed the preference among York nonprofits for **capacity-building programs** presented in **virtual formats** and **half-day in-person sessions specific to the needs of their organization's board and staff**. Nonprofits also named value and tangible benefit in **learning from local and national subject matter experts**. Furthermore, nonprofits expressed high interest for more informal **peer-to-peer networking and knowledge sharing in both virtual and in-person formats**.

Based on the findings, Sangfroid Strategy team developed a set of actionable recommendations to enhance support for nonprofits in York County in partnership with the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group. The seven recommendations cover **leadership development, nonprofit operational resources, policy and advocacy**, and **easy access to information**.

This research is crucial to helping the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group understand the existing landscape, including York County nonprofits' current state, needs, and aspirations. In addition to this preliminary report of qualitative findings, survey and engagement session findings will be reported in aggregate form at the county level, with breakouts for some data points by size, issue area, and demographic of leadership. The York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group will use these results to **develop a recommended strategy** for how the York County funding community should **invest in capacity and resilience-building programming** for local nonprofits.

This study will guide funders and nonprofits, alike, toward a thriving and resilient future for York County—one that places the voice of nonprofits as a central piece of this process.

Nonprofit Organizations are tax-exempt organizations whose mission is dedicated towards collective, public, or social benefit. These organizations do not give their surplus income to owners or shareholders. For the purpose of this report, nonprofit organizations refer specifically to organizations with tax-exempt status or 501(c) 3, 501(c) 4, and 501(c) 6 categorization by the IRS.

Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

Introduction

Background and Purpose

Over 1.8 million nonprofits across the country work to further social causes and provide benefits to the public. Understanding the size and scope of the nonprofit sector regionally is critical to setting community-wide strategies to affect change. This analysis is intended to do just that—provide insights into York County's nonprofit sector. York County is home to over 450,000 people, with approximately 1,389 nonprofits, or **1 nonprofit for every 329 people**, providing human services, education, community and economic development, philanthropic, and health support to residents, including children, youth, older adults, and those who are socially and economically disadvantaged. These organizations, often known as the third sector, support businesses, schools, families, and the broader community.

The York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group is a group of foundations and nonprofits who have come together to answer the question: **How can funders in York County best support the long-term resiliency of the local nonprofit sector through capacity-building programming?** This group was tasked by the York County Community Foundation's Nonprofit Management Assistance Committee, along with the Powder Mill Foundation and the Warehime Foundation, with conducting a comprehensive review of the sector and developing a recommended strategy for funders to invest in the resilience of nonprofits in York County. As part of that goal, members of the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group started with **listening and learning** from nonprofits through **a survey and a set of engagement groups**, in addition to deep quantitative analysis of the field through the **review of IRS 990 filings** from nonprofits within York County.

The core purpose of this research project is to gain a deeper understanding of the **gaps and opportunities associated with capacity and resiliency building** of nonprofits in York County, to build a bird's eye view of the nonprofit sector as a whole, to identify disparities in access to capacity-building and resources, to uncover opportunities for funders to align support to needs better, and ultimately, to **position the voices of both nonprofits and capacity-building service providers at the center of this work**. To contribute to this analysis, nonprofit leaders and capacity providers were invited to participate in a survey and set of engagement sessions to share their experiences with non-monetary capacity-building programming, how it is delivered, what's working and what's not, and what such programming could look like in the future.

This report begins with a snapshot of the sector as a whole, followed by **five topic-specific sections** that call out **nine key themes**. Together, these sections summarize the data gathered through this project:

1. Financial Health and Sustainability
2. Board and Workforce Challenges
3. Capacity and Resilience Building Opportunities
4. Policy and Advocacy
5. Collaboration and Partnerships

The report ends with **eight recommendations** from the consulting team about how the philanthropic community in York County can best advance resilience across the sector. In addition to this report, an interactive web-based report allows users to interact with this data by sorting and filtering the data by industry, size of nonprofit, demographics of leadership, and more.

Why This Matters

This research project holds significant importance in the context of resilience building among nonprofits in York County. By conducting this analysis, the project aims to **address crucial questions** regarding **access to high-quality capacity-building programming for nonprofits**. This project contributes to understanding existing gaps and opportunities, intends to identify actionable and meaningful strategies for funders to support capacity-building efforts, and centers the voices of nonprofits and capacity-building service providers in shaping the future of such programming.

The results of this assessment should be used to **align the topics, delivery, relevance, and content of currently available and new capacity-building programming** to what works best for nonprofits. Additionally, the results can be used to ensure that nonprofits, regardless of the racial demographic of leadership, have **equitable access** to programming.

Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

Methods

This report draws data from IRS 990 forms from nonprofits in York County, combined with self-reported data collected through the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey and engagement sessions. The IRS 990 data, provided in partnership with [Candid](#), details nonprofits' financial information, workforce, leadership, and population served. The York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey was open for York County nonprofits between October and November 2023 (n=168). It collected data about board and workforce challenges, capacity and resiliency-building opportunities, collaborations and partnerships, and nonprofit leadership and staff demographics. Several engagement sessions with local nonprofit leaders augmented this survey.

IRS Form 990 Data

Data used in this assessment include the most recent IRS Form 990 data from nonprofits who filed their taxes in fiscal years ending in 2019-2023, based on [their tax filing requirements](#). Nonprofits included in this report were located and funded in York County and had tax-exempt statuses of 501(c)(2), 501(c)(3), 501(c)(4) or 501(c)6. Sororities, fraternities, alumni groups, parent-teacher associations/organizations, labor unions, religious institutions without additional social impact, and organizations with revenues below \$25,000 were excluded.

Survey and Interview Data

In addition to the 1,389 nonprofits' financial data from IRS 990 forms used to establish a birds-eye view of York County's nonprofit sector, Sangfroid Strategy partnered with foundations and nonprofit organizations through the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group to recruit nonprofit participants for both the survey and engagement sessions through email, social media, and direct invitations. The York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey (n=168) and associated ten engagement sessions (n=58) were conducted in Fall 2023 to center the voices of York County's nonprofit leaders in this project. Descriptive statistics were obtained for the quantitative survey data and used to describe the demographic composition and scope of work for participating nonprofit organizations and providers. Qualitative data during the engagement sessions were recorded, transcribed, and analyzed by a single coder using a [grounded theory approach](#), during which common themes describing participant responses and relationships between them were identified. See Appendix I for a full list of limitations of this approach.

168 nonprofits responded to the survey, representing **16 issue areas** across the sector. A majority of responding organizations identified themselves as either **Human Services** (28%), **Arts, Culture and Humanities** (16%), or **Education and Youth Services** (15%), in alignment with the largest impact areas for York's nonprofit sector.

10%

168 nonprofits participated in the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey, representing 10% of the local nonprofit sector.

58 nonprofit organizations, or 4% of the York's nonprofit sector, participated in engagement sessions held in person and virtually in October and November 2023.

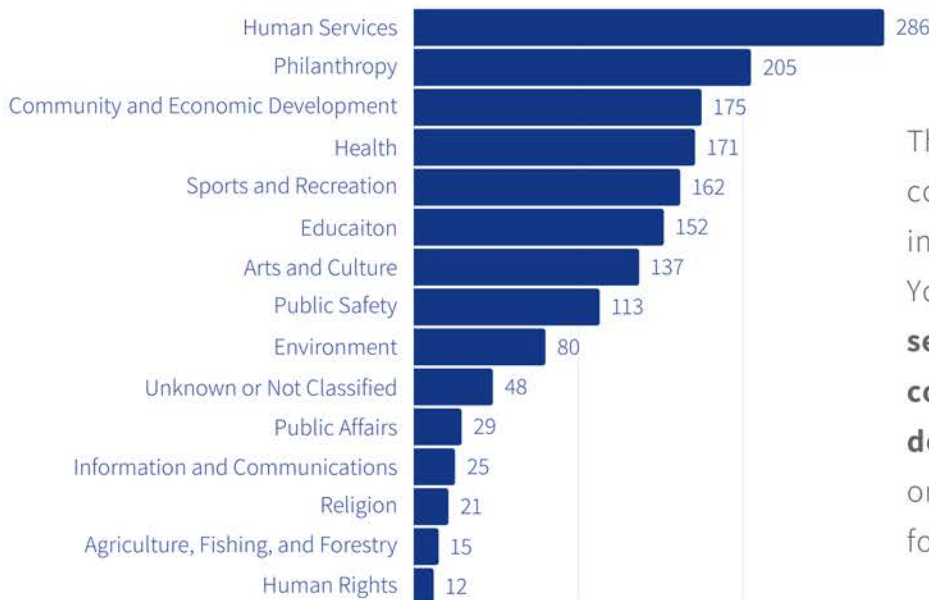
4%

A Snapshot of the Sector

1,389

There are at least 1,389 nonprofits furthering social causes and providing a public benefit in York County.

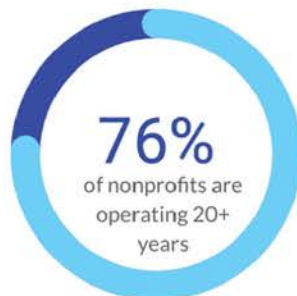
Which issue are nonprofits focused on?¹



The nonprofit sector as a whole consists of several different industries, with the largest in York County being the **human service, philanthropy, and community and economic development**. Many of these organizations have been around for generations.

How old is York County's nonprofit sector?

Average Age
49



1. Organizational classifications are based on [Candid's taxonomy](#).

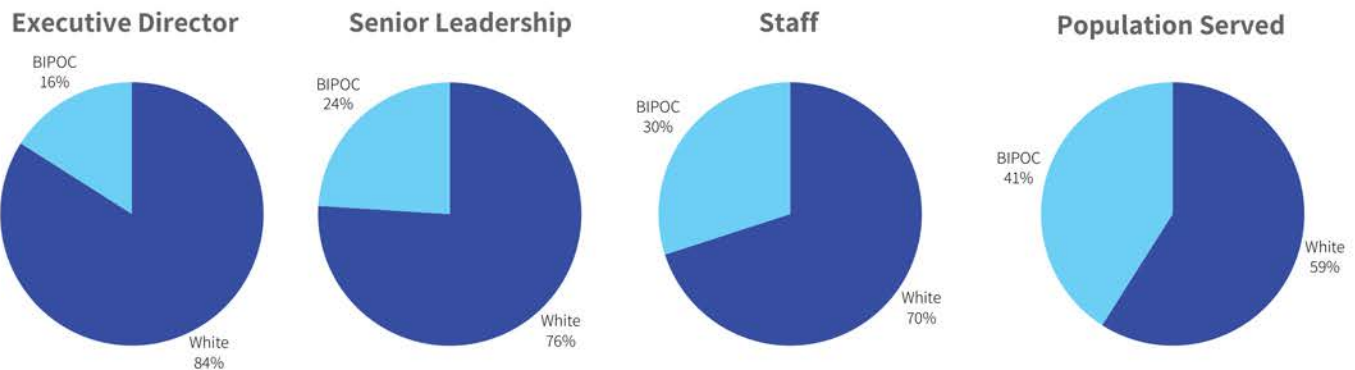
Who is working in York County nonprofits?

York County nonprofits have a combined **37,818 staff members**, representing **16% of the total workforce in York County**.

In addition to the 37,818 staff members working on York County nonprofits, there are almost just as many people serving as volunteers (37,373). On average, nonprofits in York County have a **volunteer count of 129 each**, however, the **median volunteer count is 30**. Board members also play an important part in advancing the missions of nonprofits. In York County, there are **4,843 board seats** filled across the sector, with an **average board size of ten** members per organization.

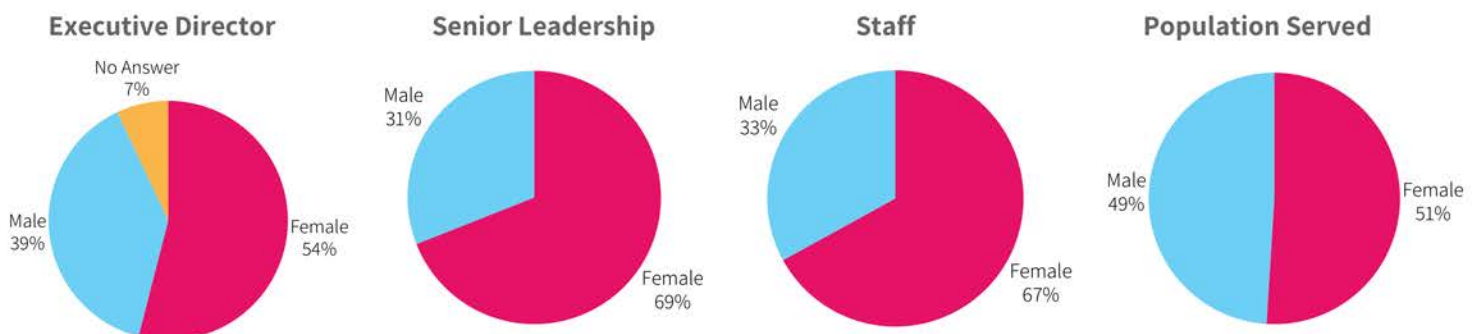
Race of York County Nonprofit Leadership, Staff, and Population Served

Based on the data collected through the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey in fall 2023, 41% of the people served by York County nonprofits are Black, Indigenous, or other people of color (BIPOC), and 59% are White. York County nonprofits' **staff and senior leadership more closely reflect the population served** than those currently serving as Executive Directors.



Gender of York County Nonprofit Leadership, Staff, and Population Served

Based on the data collected through the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey in fall 2023, about half the people served by York County nonprofits are male, and the other half are female. The **majority** of senior leadership and staff across the sector are **female**, with a **greater number of males** serving in the role of **executive director**.



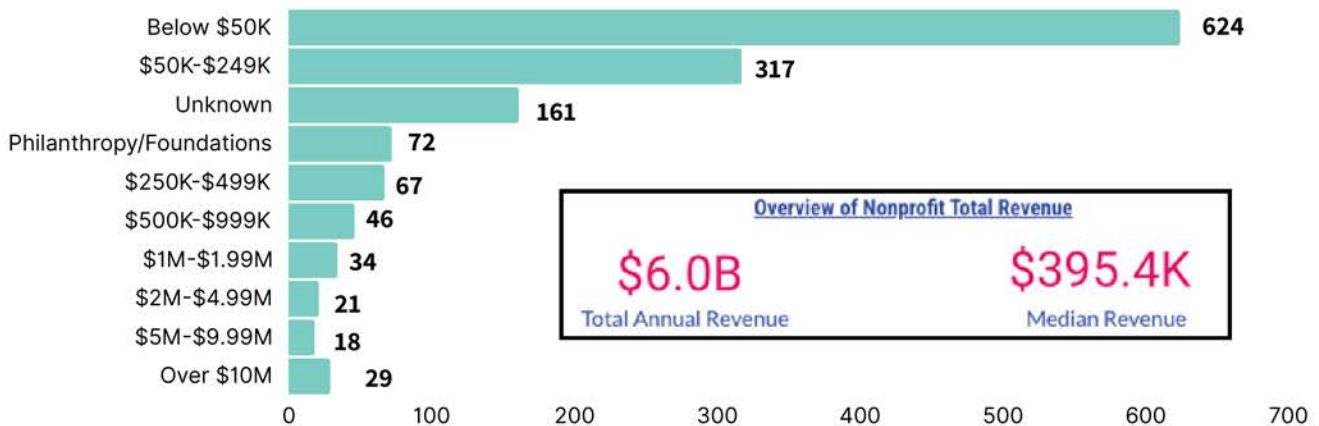
What size are York County nonprofits?

A majority of York County nonprofits are small, with 45% having annual revenues less than \$50,000, and 41% of them having no paid employees at all.

When considering the social impact of nonprofits, many people think of the larger, well-resourced organizations, however, **45% of the sector comprises small nonprofits with annual revenues of less than \$50,000**, with approximately **68% of all nonprofits having annual revenues less than \$200,000**. About half are led by two or fewer staff, with **41% having no paid employees at all**.

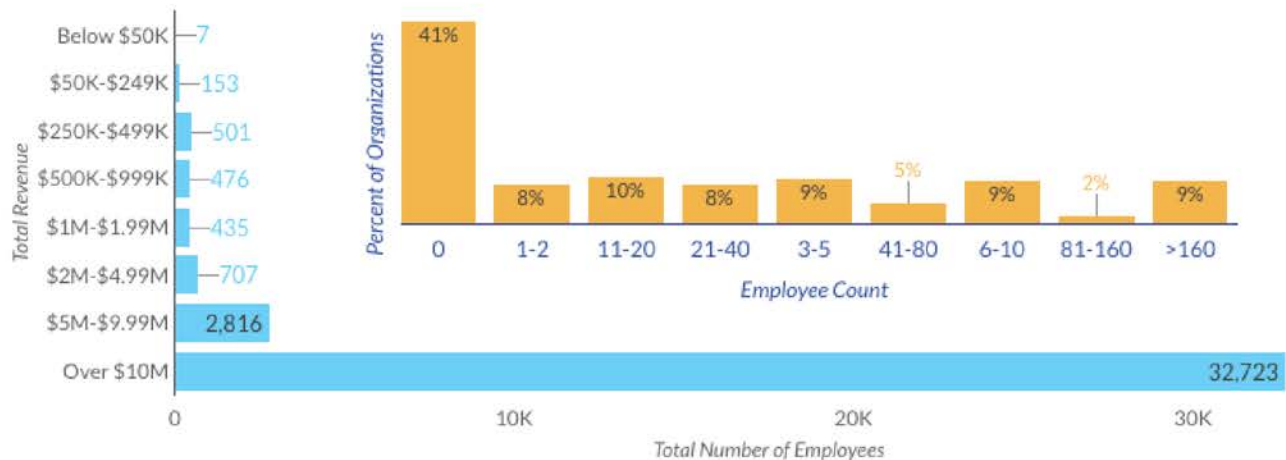
Revenue Sizes of York County Nonprofits

Together, York County nonprofits bring \$6B in annual revenues into the region, with a **median revenue size of \$395K** across the region. Most York County nonprofits have revenues less than \$250,000, with just a small subset with revenues above \$1M.



Staff Sizes of York County Nonprofits by Total Revenue and Percent of Organizations

Since many York County nonprofits have smaller revenues, it makes sense that nearly half of them also have less than 2 staff members. Most staff working in paid positions in the sector work in organizations with greater than \$2M in annual revenue.



Key Research Themes

This section of the report provides key themes from the research organized within five major topics explored through the IRS 990 data combined with self-reported data from nonprofits through the survey and engagement groups. The five topics are:

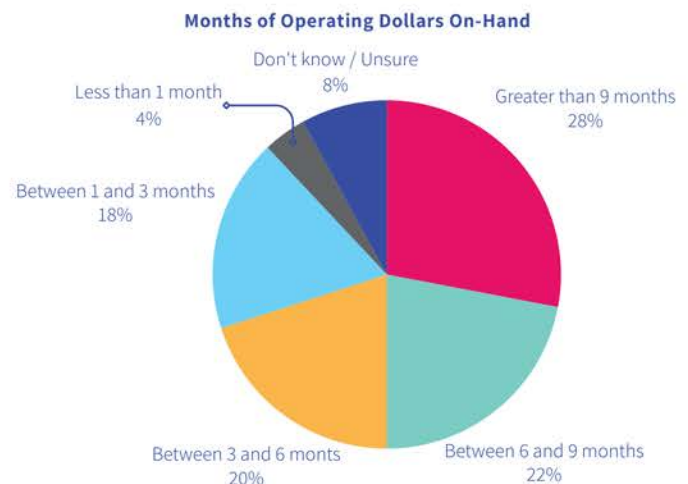
1. Financial Health and Sustainability
2. Board and Workforce Challenges
3. Capacity and Resilience Building Opportunities
4. Policy and Advocacy
5. Collaboration and Partnerships

Financial Health and Sustainability

In the survey, respondents were asked a set of questions regarding annual revenue, fiscal agency roles, and financial reserves to understand the financial and operational health of York County's nonprofit organizations as a whole. This section provides an overview of the key findings through the survey, as well as information gathered from the engagement groups to augment these findings.

Operating Dollars On-Hand: The survey asked nonprofits about the amount of operating dollars in the bank as of October 2023. **Only 4% of York County's nonprofits have less than a month's** worth of operating dollars available. Conversely, **70% of nonprofits have 3 months or more** of operating dollars in the bank, indicating a great deal of fiscal health across York County's nonprofit sector.

Organizations with less than three months of operating dollars in the bank are considered in the high-risk category according to accounting standards², meaning they are at risk of closing. About 1 in 5 (~22%) of York County's nonprofits fall into this category. Notably, a slightly greater proportion of White-led nonprofits have more than 3 months of operating reserves in the bank (73%) than BIPOC-led nonprofits.



2. From the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission, SEC Concept Release: International Accounting Standards

Fiscal Agency: The survey asked nonprofits to report whether or not they were acting as a fiscal agent to other groups, signifying the volume of community-based efforts happening outside of nonprofits in York County. Of the survey respondents, **15% reported operating as fiscal agents** for other nonprofits. Of those operating as fiscal agents, 88% reported serving as a fiscal agent to five or fewer nonprofits, and 100% reported serving as fiscal agents to less than ten organizations. Human Services and Arts, Culture, and Humanities nonprofits presented as more likely to operate as fiscal agents than other nonprofit industries.

Revenue Sources: Nonprofits, like all businesses, rely on revenue to provide services. Typically, this revenue falls into four categories: program service revenue; contributions, gifts, and grants; investment income; and other revenues. Revenue mix varies by organizational type and program model.

York County Nonprofit Revenue Sources



88% of York’s nonprofit revenue comes from direct services or government reimbursements for services like Medicaid, while government grants contribute 5.3%, primarily to Health and Human Services industries (\$118M annually). Foundation grants comprise just 2.3% of annual revenues, aligning with the national average (2.9%).

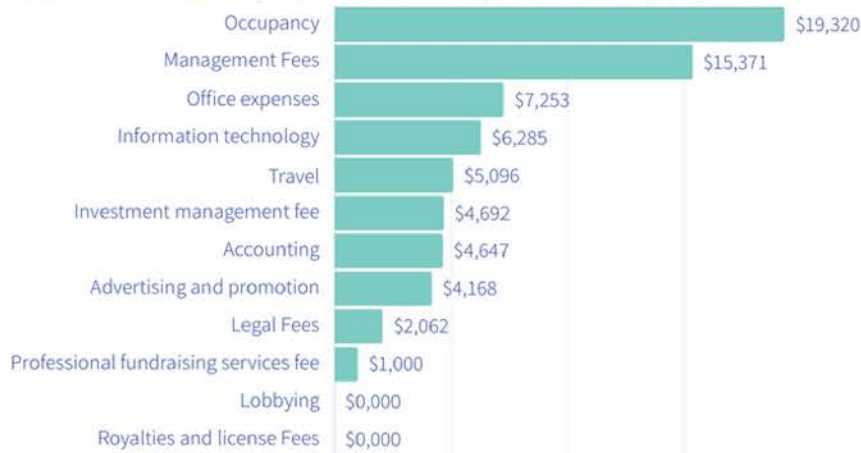
When excluding large nonprofits (over \$10M annual revenue), which are 2% of the sector yet account for 95% of revenue, the dynamics change: for the remaining **98% of nonprofits**, program service revenue drops to 36%, while **foundation and government grants jump to 29% and 22%** respectively. Reliance on government and foundation grants varies across the industry; for example, smaller sports and recreation nonprofits get 45% of their revenue from foundation grants, whereas large human service organizations rely on government grants for 81% of their revenue.

Expenses: York County nonprofits spend \$5.7B annually to provide services that are critical to the community. With the median expenses of \$112.3K, even the small organizations that make up the vast majority of the landscape are putting money back into the local economy. In addition to the material costs required to provide services, these expenses include the cost of staffing (compensation and benefits) and other operational expenses like fees for contractors, travel, insurance, and rent.

Total Functional / Operational Expenses by Type, in US Dollars



Median Functional / Operational Expenses by Type, in US Dollars



Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

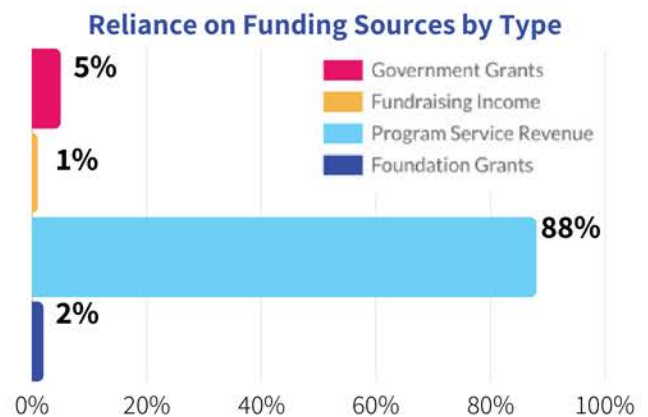
Overall Financial Sustainability: For nonprofits, “sustainability” refers to the ability of a nonprofit to sustain itself over the long term. Depending on the industry, size, and type of organization, what it means to be financially sustainable shifts. Typically, a good mix of reliable and stable funding sources indicates financial health. This section takes a deeper dive into three key indicators that together provide a better understanding of the financial health of nonprofits in York County: Self-Sufficiency, Earned Income, and Assets to Liabilities ratio.



A **self-sufficiency score** measures how much a nonprofit can cover its operating expenses through earned income. Nonprofits who receive most of their income through program service fees and government reimbursement revenues tend to be more self-sufficient. York County NPOs have a self-sufficiency score of 0.9, well above the national self-sufficiency score average of .4.

In York County, Education, Sports and Recreation, and Health nonprofits are the most self-sufficient. Environment, Public Safety, and Religion nonprofits have lower self-sufficiency scores—indicating an opportunity to rethink revenue streams for those industries.

Reliance ratings assess a nonprofit’s dependence on specific funding sources by comparing different revenue sources to the total revenue. Nearly 87% of York County’s nonprofits have a **budget of less than \$1M**, and those organizations are relying on **foundation grants** for 1/3 of their revenue, making them **15x more likely to rely on foundations** than the sector as a whole.



Comparing what an organization owes (liabilities) to what they have (assets) measures the overall **liquidity** of a nonprofit organization. The higher the ratio, the more liquid the organization. As a rule of thumb, organizations should strive for a liquidity score of 1.0 or higher—meaning they don’t owe more money than they have. York County’s NPO sector as a whole has a liquidity score of 2.1.



Nonprofits with annual revenues less than \$1M are significantly **more liquid** than the sector as a whole, **indicating more assets and/or fewer debts than larger nonprofits on average**. While higher liquidity is generally a good thing, it does indicate that these organizations are not accessing funds to invest in growth, facilities, or other resources. Across the sector, the top liabilities nonprofits hold are tax-exempt bonds, unsecured notes and loans, and secured mortgages and notes.

Key Themes: Financial Health

Most nonprofits in York County are not at great financial risk.

Nearly 70% of York County nonprofits have more than three months of operating expenses in reserves, a best practice for organizations. Additionally, the entire sector has more assets than liabilities on average. These numbers fluctuate to a small degree when considering annual revenue levels. Though, the largest nonprofits in the county are those that have less cash on hand and are considered less liquid because of a lower asset-to-debt ratio. However, there is heavy dependence on program service revenue for these large nonprofits, which is the most stable type of income for a nonprofit and thus can be relied upon to eliminate most deficits incurred.

The smaller the nonprofit, reliance on foundation grants increases and access to government grants or reimbursements decreases.

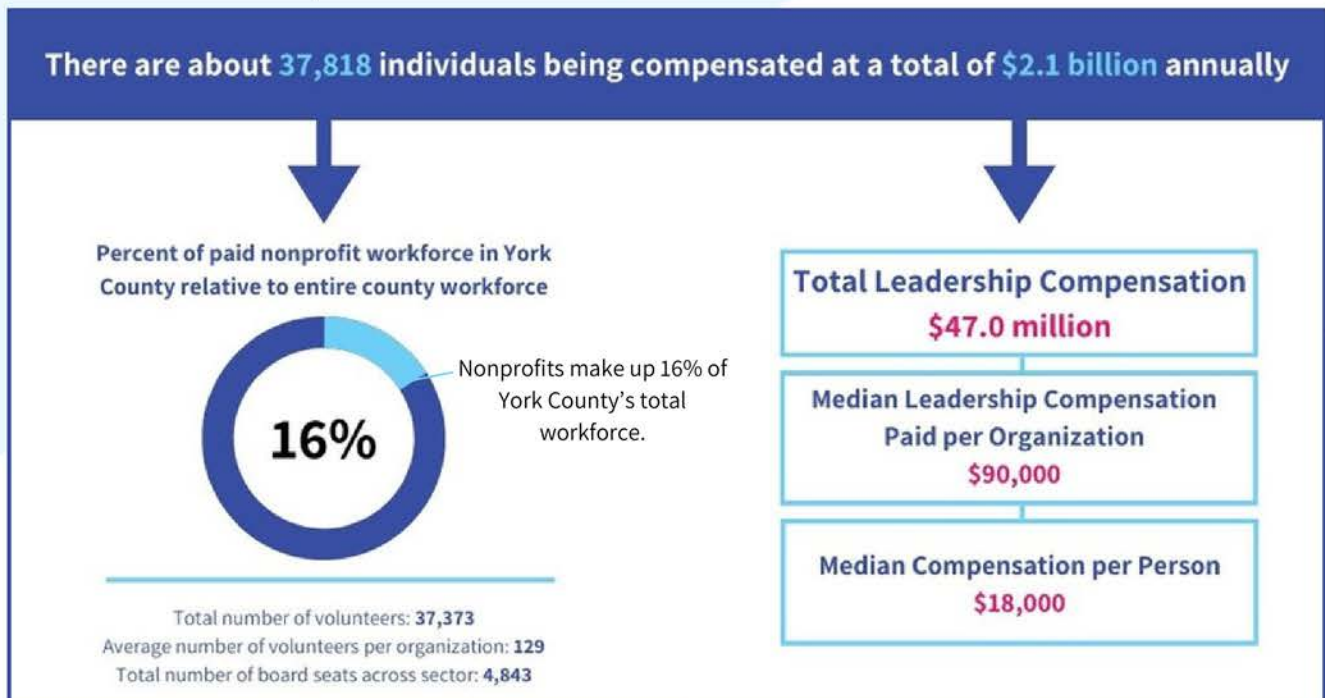
Taken as a whole, the nonprofit sector in York County appears self-sustaining. Program service revenues constitute nearly 90% of income, indicating that the sector is self-sufficient, and fluctuations in fundraising revenues, government grants, and philanthropic funds are not significant to organizational bottom lines.

However, the image quickly shifts when considering nonprofits that make **less than \$10 million in annual revenue**, representing 98% of York's nonprofit organizations. These organizations **are almost 15x more likely to rely on foundation grants**, and generally rely on income mixes where fundraising (3% of revenue), government grants (22% of revenue), and philanthropy (29% of revenue) represent almost two-thirds of the funds coming in.

The smaller the organization gets, reliance on fundraising and foundation grants increases and program service revenue decreases significantly. Nearly **87%** of York County's **nonprofits** have a **budget of less than \$1M**. Those organizations are relying on **foundation grants for 1/3 of their revenue**, and are **27% less likely to access** government grants than all organizations less than \$10M in annual revenue. While these nonprofits are more heavily relying on philanthropic funding, this revenue stream can be impacted by several external factors such as economic fluctuations, shifting donor preferences, competitive landscapes, government policies, global events, donor relationships, grant cycles, and public perception.

Board and Workforce Challenges and Opportunities

Boards: York County has over 4,800 nonprofit board positions, which translates to an average of about ten board members per organization. Boards play a crucial role in guiding the direction and ensuring the accountability of nonprofits, with members providing oversight and expertise in various areas such as governance, fundraising, and community engagement. Diversity in expertise and experience is part of the reason that nonprofit boards are sometimes nearly as large or larger than the nonprofits that they guide. Effective boards contribute to the organization's sustainability by fostering financial stewardship and aligning their oversight methods with the nonprofit's mission and values.

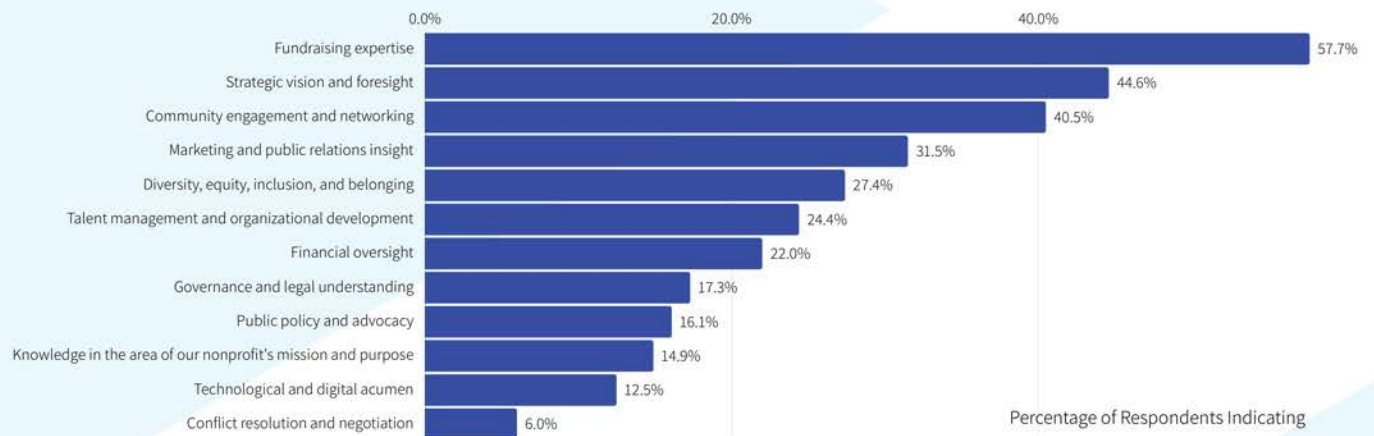


Staff: By contrast, there are 37,818 paid York County nonprofit staff members and 37,373 volunteers. More than 85% of the paid nonprofit staff work for large nonprofits that make more than \$10 million in revenue each year. However, those organizations make up only 2% of the total number of nonprofits in the county. Only 5,095 individuals staff the remaining 98% of nonprofits for an average of **under four staff members per organization**.

Volunteers: Conversely, **77% of the volunteers** who offer their time for York County nonprofits do so **for organizations with less than \$10 million in annual revenue**. Moreover, the average number of volunteers across the sector is 129 per organization, whereas the median number is 30 per organization. This illustrates the fact that at least half of York nonprofits rely on 30 or fewer volunteers and a smaller group, likely hospitals or other very large nonprofits, rely on much larger groups of volunteers.

Board Development Needs

4,843 people are volunteering in board roles in York County nonprofits. When asked about the **skills** that are the **most pressing for boards** to develop in the next 3-5 years, 58% of the respondents identified **fundraising** expertise was needed and 45% identified needed competencies in **strategic visioning** and **community engagement**. Notably, fewer than a quarter of the responses from York County nonprofits indicated that their boards needed development in the legally-required areas of financial oversight and governance.



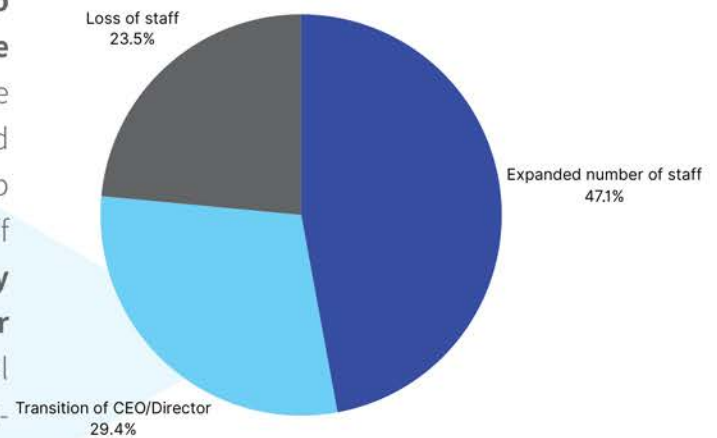
Workforce and Staffing Needs

The nonprofit sector itself is not quite considered an “industry” but rather a distinctive set of organizations and institutions that operate within and across many different industries—such as health, education, and social services. In looking at the scale of the nonprofit workforce nationally, U.S. nonprofits employ [the third largest workforce of any U.S. industry](#), behind only retail and food service. There are 12.5 million paid workers in U.S. nonprofits, representing more than twice as many as the nation’s finance and insurance industry, 81% more than the nation’s construction industry, and nearly 100,000 more workers than the nation’s manufacturing industry.

Given the size and scope of the nonprofit sector, the data presented in this section is incredibly important in comprehending the vital role that the nonprofit sector plays in the region’s workforce. In the survey, nonprofits were asked about leadership transitions, staff expansions, turnovers, and significant challenges their staff faces to identify the issues and trends prevalent across the sector. These trends can help to develop targeted strategies to bolster the sector’s human capital, enhance organizational effectiveness, and ensure sustained impact within the community.

Changes in Staff and/or Leadership During the Last 12 Months

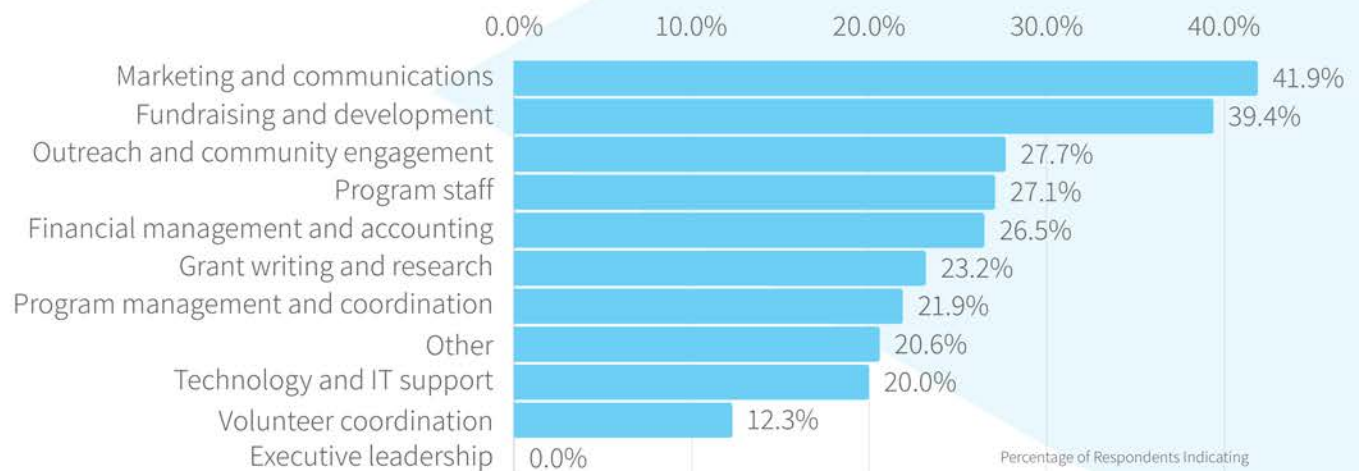
53% of York County nonprofits have had to endure losing staff or the transition of the head executive in the past year. These events tend to place a drag on capacity and resiliency as resources are shifted to make up for them. When asked if this was more staff transition than expected, **17% of survey respondents reported that this was greater than expected.** This is in line with a national trend where nonprofits experienced an all-time high of 19% turnover in 2022 versus the total labor market average of 12%.



With 1 out of every 10 employees working for a nonprofit, a large portion of the nation’s workforce is feeling overworked, under-resourced, and disengaged. 60% of nonprofit leaders reported feeling “used up” at the end of the workday, according to DDI World’s Global Leadership Forecast for 2021.³ In York County, 31% of organizations reported burnout due to work stress as a primary challenge.

Though there has been an increased number of leaders that have departed their organization, **47% of York County nonprofits reported an expansion of staff within the last 12 months.** However, when it comes to key roles within the organization, **42% of York County nonprofits are most concerned about their ability to recruit, retain, or ensure the adequate performance of marketing and communications positions** and **39% have the same concerns for fundraising and development positions.**

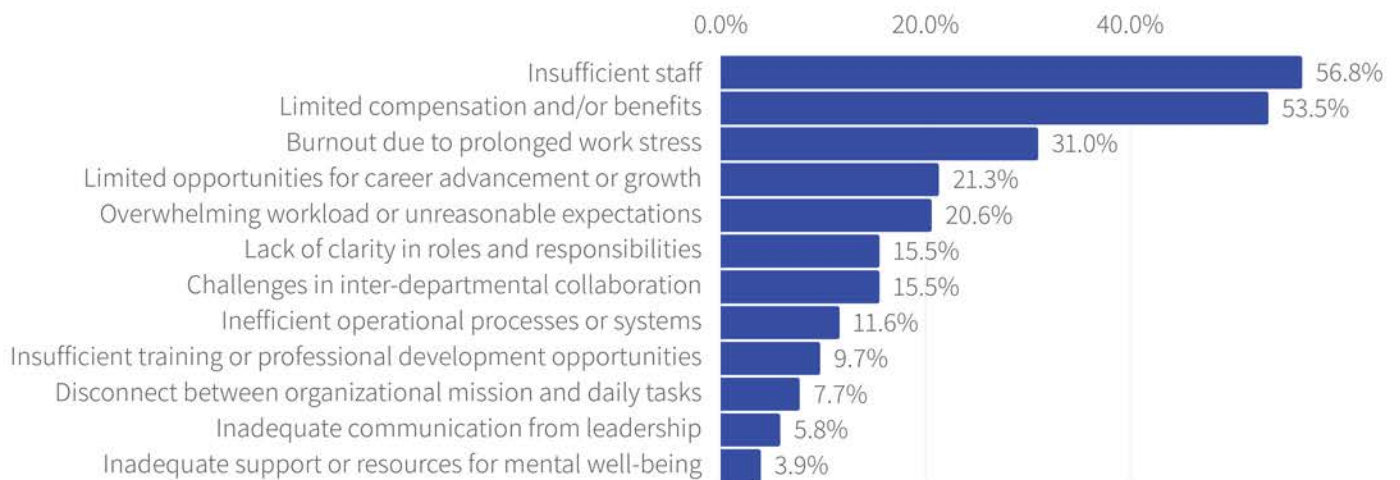
Recruitment, Retention, and Performance Concerns



3. Smith, S. Why Employee Turnover Should be a Key Metric for the Social Sector – Our Collective Canary in the Coal Mine. Social Impact Architects. August 23, 2023. <https://socialimpactarchitects.com/nonprofit-turnover/>

Primary Challenges Facing Nonprofit Staff

When asked to identify the top three challenges facing their staff, more than half of all York County nonprofits surveyed indicated that **short-staffing and limited compensation and benefits** fell into that designation. These challenges are likely the result of lower base pay for the median nonprofit staff member. **Median annual compensation per person in the county is \$18,400, amounting to an average hourly wage of \$8.84 per hour.** To contrast, the Bureau of Labor Statistics found that the average wage across the entire workforce in York County was \$57,304 annually or \$27.55 per hour.⁴



When asked about training or professional development opportunities, only 10% of York County nonprofits said that the current programming offered was insufficient.

Key Themes: Board and Workforce

Fundraising and development skills among board and staff members is a concern for York County nonprofits.

Fundraising skills are crucial for nonprofits to maintain operations, diversify revenue streams, and ensure financial stability against economic or donor changes. In York, **98% of nonprofits** rely on a combination of **private donations, foundation grants, and government grants**. The lack of fundraising expertise among board members, typically more affluent and connected, shifts the fundraising responsibility to staff. Nonprofit leaders worry about the inadequate number of qualified fundraising staff, poor performance of existing staff, or difficulty retaining high performers.

4. "Table 1. Covered Establishments, Employment, and Wages in the 361 Largest Counties, Second Quarter 2023 - 2023 Q02 Results," U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, November 21, 2023, <https://www.bls.gov/news.release/cewqtr.t01.htm>.

York County nonprofits struggle to find and retain sufficient external affairs staff.

The top three types of positions that York County nonprofits feel that they do not have enough of or perform poorly if they do are all external-facing: **marketing and communications, fundraising and development, and outreach and community engagement**. The roles for each of these categories are as multifaceted as they are intertwined. External affairs activities such as those listed above impact the amount of influence nonprofits have with their external stakeholders. This ultimately can **affect their ability to foster partnerships** and **maintain relationships** with **donors, volunteers, government agencies**, community leaders, and other nonprofits. Further, the potential impact of marketing and communications capabilities include the level of awareness each of those groups, plus the public, have of an organization's message and overall impact on the community.

External-facing interactions lay the groundwork for successful fundraising efforts by educating, inspiring, and mobilizing support for a nonprofit's cause. Through targeted outreach, storytelling, skilled grant writing, and relationship-building efforts, nonprofits can effectively engage donors and inspire philanthropic giving, ultimately fueling the organization's growth and sustainability. The alignment of external affairs and fundraising efforts strengthens the overall effectiveness and impact of nonprofits. By integrating messaging, branding, and storytelling across external affairs and fundraising platforms, nonprofits can present a cohesive and compelling narrative that resonates with stakeholders and reinforces the organization's mission and values. This synergy fosters trust, credibility, and transparency, building stronger connections with donors and stakeholders and increasing their willingness to invest in the organization's work.

Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

Capacity and Resiliency Building Opportunities

Nonprofit organizations are fundamental to a thriving community. The information presented in this section will be pivotal in shaping future investments into capacity and resilience-building programs for the local nonprofit ecosystem. Currently, capacity-building programming across York County includes engagement between nonprofit leaders and external support resources such as guest speakers, facilitators, trainers, and consultants intended to provide professional development, leadership training, or direct support to organizations. This programming takes place both in-person and in virtual settings across different formats that include within cohorts and collaboratives, through 1:1 consulting services, workshops, and training opportunities.

Current Capacity Building Needs Over the Next One to Three Years



Consistent with the national landscape, nonprofits in York County named **fundraising/grant writing, facilities/operations costs, and board development** as their top capacity-building needs, with **strategic and long-term planning, maintaining and developing collaborations, and financial management** following closely. This is consistent with nonprofit needs [nationally](#).

Additionally, nonprofits identified **program evaluation and data collection**, and **information technology** as the **least needed**, with 50% of nonprofit survey respondents indicating they have some data collection capacity and 44% indicating they have considerable or full data collection capacity.

Predictably, nonprofit survey respondents identified operating grants (67%) as the most impactful grant type to help them build capacity, with 25% identifying programmatic grants as important and a small subset (7%) identifying start-up support as critical. Engagement groups confirmed that most York nonprofits prefer capacity-building efforts to take the form of **unrestricted, multi-year grants** that could be used for operational expenses. Additionally, those who were in favor of programmatic grants indicated that they preferred that those grants largely focus on **multi-year funding for programming that is already underway** and that **some portion** of that funding be usable to **support the organization's general operations**.

When discussing needs deeper with nonprofit leaders through the engagement sessions, participants emphasized that **time**, or a seeming lack thereof, was their **greatest capacity-building challenge**. Additionally, nonprofit leaders expressed that **low staffing levels** were a **leading cause of the lack of staffing available** for **grant writing** and other **operations** activities, meaning **existing nonprofit staff skilled in these areas are spending their time filling staffing shortages elsewhere** in the organization.

Preferred Capacity-building Program Formats

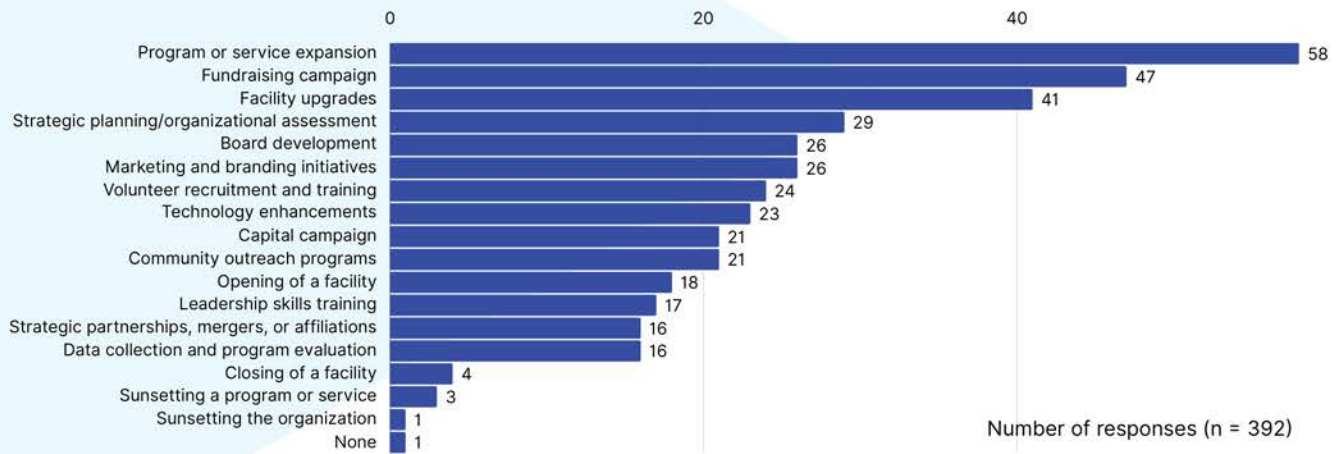
In both the survey and engagement groups, nonprofits expressed that a **mix of in-person and virtual options** for capacity building and technical assistance programming would be beneficial. This mix of responses is due to varying levels of **time availability** among nonprofits to attend these sessions. However, it was noted numerous times that **in-person formats are more impactful** because participants are more engaged due to fewer distractions. Time was also a factor in most survey respondents **preferring half-day training** instead of full-day sessions. Regardless of how the sessions are delivered, it was nearly universally agreed upon that **materials such as toolkits should be provided** as leave-behinds to be referenced later.

Additionally, nonprofit leaders addressed the strain of time on the ability to access capacity-building programming. For programming during normal business hours, **offering nonprofits a stipend to cover the cost of their employees' time** would be helpful. Alternatively, leaders discussed the possibility of offering leadership development **programming on the evenings and weekends** and, as part of that, **offering stipends or incentives directly to nonprofit employees** to participate in developing their skills outside of work hours.

Major Strategic Initiatives

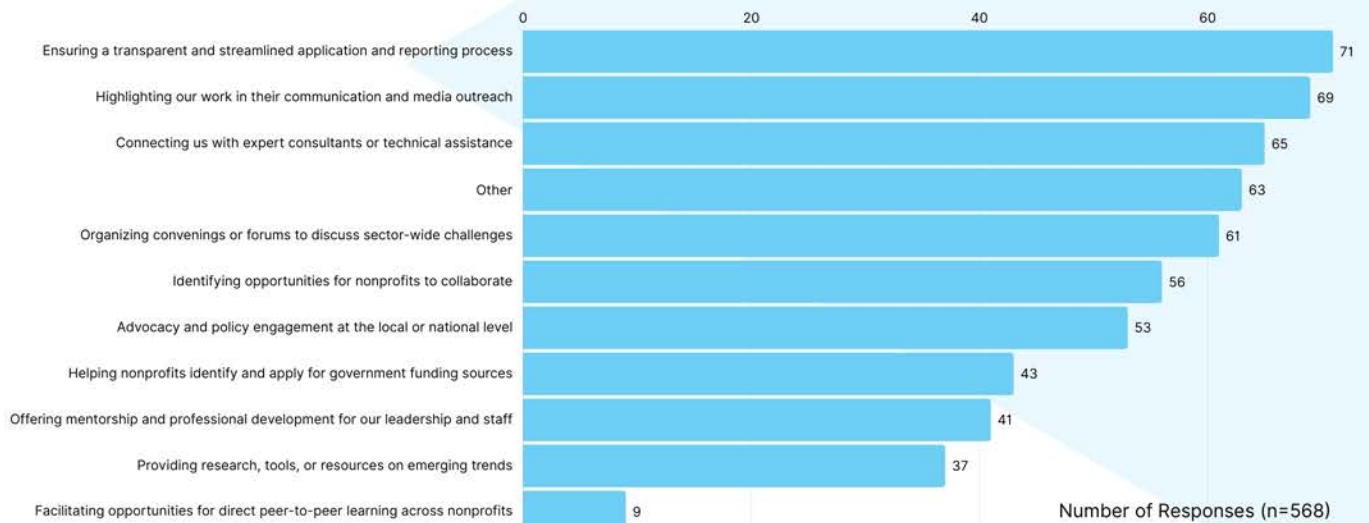
Nearly **all surveyed nonprofits plan to undertake major strategic initiatives soon**, with program expansions being the most common. Additionally, **49% anticipate launching a capital campaign** or major capital expenditures, such as **facility openings, upgrades, or technology enhancements**, within the **next two years**.

Major Strategic Initiatives or Capital Improvements Planned (Next 1-2 years)



Most Impactful Initiatives

When asked what the most impactful types of initiatives philanthropy can support outside of grant funding, nonprofits indicated their collective desire for a **transparent and streamlined application and reporting process, connecting nonprofits with consultants or technical assistance, and highlighting the importance of their work through media and communications**. Notably, **31% of responses regarding non-monetary support emphasized “time-saving” items** such as streamlined applications, finding the right consultant or technical assistance, and helping them **identify and apply for government funding**.



What Gaps Can Funders Fill?

When asked what the single most important gap for funders to fill in this space in the survey and engagement groups, nonprofits identified three key categories that would be helpful for philanthropy to lean into: operational support and funding, long-term sustainability, and finding and connecting them to human capital.

Operational Support and Funding: Nonprofits named operational support several times in both the survey and engagement groups as the most important gap philanthropy can fill, specifically **multi-year unrestricted support** they can use to fill gaps from other available funding sources. For those foundations that cannot offer operating support, nonprofits suggested allowing the **inclusion of the true cost of a program's delivery**, which includes some operations expenses, within a program's budget.

Long-term Sustainability: From helping nonprofits develop a **clear vision and strategic plan**, to helping **identify other funding sources, seeding endowments, and providing lending for start-ups**, nonprofits think that philanthropy has a role to play in helping nonprofits keep an eye on what they need for long-term sustainability.

Finding Human Capital: Several nonprofits named the need for support for the sector through the **identification of board members, volunteers, and even staff members** and connecting them to nonprofits. The connections that foundations have to academic and private institutions place them in a unique position to provide pipelines of both potential staff and board members to York County nonprofits.

“Funding to make our salaries competitive and our benefits meaningful to provide livable wages for our staff to thrive. As we take care of our community, we want to ensure we start by providing for our staff so they can do their best work and be passionate about the mission we serve.”

“We don't have a grant writer or a marketing person. Or a fund development person. I think that's a reality for the vast majority of nonprofits. It's challenging.”

“We have great momentum and need more staff, board, volunteers—people to support our efforts.”

“Operational support - we saw the huge impact that operations funding from CARES and ARPA had on our non-profit community.”

Key Themes: Capacity Building and Resiliency

Time is the scarcest resource for York County nonprofits.

Of the many experiences shared by representatives of York’s nonprofit sector in the engagement sessions, a **lack of “time”** was the most often surfaced **issue when it came to capacity**. Even considering the time it takes to engage in necessary operations tasks, there is not enough of it for nonprofit leaders. The most **time-consuming task**, and therefore the most pressing capacity-building need, is for **grant writing and fundraising**.

The amount of time required to plan a significant fundraiser (4% of the revenue for small nonprofits), the process of discovering, applying for, and providing reports for grants (philanthropic or government), is daunting. The process of determining which funding sources are appropriate given the service a nonprofit provides and then submitting an application, and reporting on a subsequent grant, both of which oftentimes ask for similar, but not identical, information to other applications, is onerous. This is especially true for organizations without dedicated development staff with grant-writing competencies. **York County funders can help nonprofits most by finding ways to augment their time.**

Building board-level capacity for fundraising, development, and financial management can save the organization time and provide stability.

Given the lack of, or insufficiencies of, dedicated development staff for many York County nonprofits, **sufficiently skilled board members** can provide critical assistance in the areas of **fundraising, development, and financial management**. However, many boards lack individuals with these areas of expertise and, as a result, must rely on the capabilities of staff who are pressed for time. This may lead to a decrease in program service provision if the nonprofit is small, missed funding opportunities, and more—all which can have negative impacts on the organization and its mission.

Hastening the **identification** of board members who are already experts in these areas or **training** board members in these areas has the potential to provide time-savings to overworked nonprofit leadership, can spot areas for improvement in financial management, and, thus, stabilize the organization through increased revenues and fiscal strength.

Appetite for Engaging in Policy and Advocacy Change

Over 80% of all monies coming into the nonprofit sector nationally can be attributable to a government source.⁵ People may perceive reduced government funding because of the devastating and often public impacts of reductions in particular services, or because of increases in what nonprofits are expected to accomplish with each dollar. Yet, national data show that government funding of the nonprofit sector is growing faster than the nation's GDP.⁶

In fact, private foundations are only responsible for about 2.9% of funds coming into the nonprofit sector nationwide, with individuals, foundation, and corporate donors accounting for less than 20% of money to the sector each year.⁷ In York County, 88% of all monies coming into the sector come from program service revenue (majority reimbursements) and 5% from government grants. Philanthropic grants account for just 2.3% of the dollars coming to nonprofits locally. The **importance of government funding to the sector highlights the need for strong policy and advocacy** from the sector at the local, state, and federal levels.

When asked through the survey about their appetite for engaging in policy and advocacy, surprisingly **two-thirds of York nonprofits** reported that they **do not engage in issue-based policy and advocacy**. Of that group, only 9% plan to in the future.

When government funding came up in the engagement sessions, participants recalled that state funding had previously been awarded to nonprofits in York while a governor from the county was in office. However, they expressed current doubts in the legislature's knowledge of the sector's needs, especially in York. They asserted a **desire for Philanthropy to work together to advocate on behalf of the nonprofits** in York in issue advocacy, in favor of or against **specific legislation or administrative rules** that might impact the sector, and during **annual budget negotiations** that determine where state funding flows.

5. Hrywna, M. "80% Of Nonprofits' Revenue Is From Government, Fee For Service," The NonProfit Times, September 19, 2019, <https://www.thenonprofitimes.com/news/80-of-nonprofits-revenue-is-from-government-fee-for-service/>

6. Moody, M. (2022). Philanthropy 1992–2022: What difference can 30 years make? Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy at Grand Valley State University. <https://johnsoncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Philanthropy-1992-2022-1.pdf>

7. National Council of Nonprofits (2019). Nonprofit Impact Matters: How America's Charitable Nonprofits Strengthen Communities and Improve Lives. www.nonprofitimpactmatters.org/site/assets/files/1/nonprofit-impact-matters-sept-2019-1.pdf

Key Themes: Appetite for Engaging in Policy and Advocacy Change

Nonprofits understand the importance of policy and advocacy but are unsure who they should engage and how.

Only **38% of York County nonprofits report they are currently engaging in policy and advocacy** work or plan to in the future. This is alarming given that **policy and advocacy are critical to the social and economic well-being of people**, most **funding** to the sector **comes from government sources**, and **nonprofits together** can **represent a significant voice** in those efforts.

Human Services and **Community and Economic Development**-related nonprofits are **more inclined to engage** with policy and advocacy than other industries (52% and 47%, respectively), while **Arts and Culture-related nonprofits** are **much less likely** to engage (12%). Interestingly, **only 41% of Health nonprofits engage**, or plan to engage, in policy and advocacy activities even though the government is by far the largest funder of health care in any state in the U.S.

Additionally, **only 28% of Education nonprofits reported engaging or wanting to engage** with policy and advocacy in the future. This is **significant because education is largely driven** by **State and Federal policy** and across the industry there are large disparities for populations such as immigrants and refugees, English language learners, people with low incomes, BIPOC-youth, and more. Now more than ever, there is a greater need for advocacy efforts to address issues such as digital equity, social-emotional learning, and access to higher educational opportunities. There is significant opportunity for Education nonprofits to engage in policy and advocacy activities alongside their public and private institutional peers.

Collaboration and Partnerships

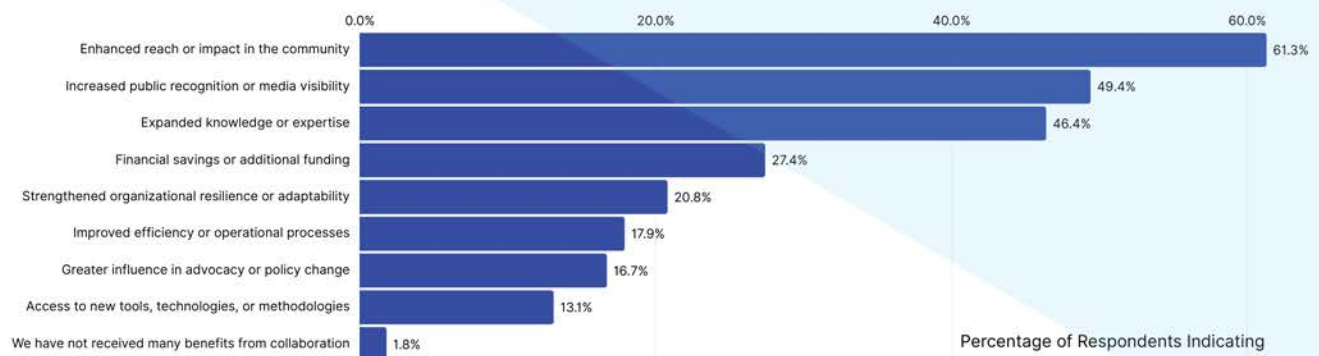
Collaboration and partnerships among nonprofits are characterized by a shared commitment to addressing common challenges, leveraging collective resources and expertise, and maximizing impact within the communities they serve. These collaborations can take various forms, including formal partnerships, coalitions, networks, alliances, and joint initiatives. These may involve nonprofits working together across sectors, geographic regions, or issue areas. Included in the nonprofit survey was a set of questions that explored the collaborations of York County's nonprofits. These questions focused on their nature, benefits, and challenges.

Challenges and Benefits of Collaboration

More than half of York County nonprofits who responded to the survey indicated that in the last year, they collaborated with another nonprofit informally for **networking or knowledge sharing (61%)** or on **events or public outreach programs (55%)**. At least 1 in 4 nonprofits indicated they are collaborating on **joint fundraising campaigns or grant applications (26%)**, **shared resources or services (e.g., office space, staff, technology) (29%)**. Around 20% or less of York County nonprofits collaborate on policy and advocacy, joint research or data collection initiatives, or co-development of products, services, or interventions.

1 in 3 nonprofits identified communication and coordination issues as primary challenges in collaboration—these challenges may ultimately lead to issues in unclear partnership parameters, uneven resource allocations, and differing expectations which together constituted 38% of the identified challenges. Alternatively, **nearly half or more nonprofits see enhanced reach or impact in the community, expanded knowledge or expertise, or increased public recognition or media visibility** as primary benefits of collaboration.

Benefits of Collaboration



Shared Services

In addition to the challenges and benefits of collaboration, the survey asked York nonprofits about shared services. While 1 in 4 York County nonprofits do not believe shared services would benefit their organization, many nonprofits see **significant potential in sharing services** around **grant writing, fundraising, marketing, public relations, group purchasing, and research and data analysis**.

During the engagement sessions, York County's nonprofit leaders dug deeper into shared services and collaboration, specifically what would work and what wouldn't regarding philanthropy's support of both a shared services model and nonprofit collaboratives. There was considerable support for shared grant writing and fundraising services since these take up the majority of nonprofits' time and capacity. However, there was some concern about who would ensure fair distribution of these resources, especially to smaller nonprofits that do not already have grant-writing or fundraising staff. Other functions outside of operations like human resources, information technology, and accounting that were seen as needs that could be met through a shared services model were marketing, especially social media marketing, and facilities maintenance such as plumbing and electrical work.

The engagement sessions also surfaced a common refrain that **peer-to-peer interactions between nonprofits were beneficial in building capacity** to some degree. While several participants noted that having someone with more experience or a different perspective that one could reach out to when they had a question or needed some other kind of technical assistance, others stated that they preferred trainings provided by peers rather than experts because they were more familiar with York County and the nonprofits there. Further, there was also a sentiment expressed multiple times that a co-working space, where nonprofit leaders could work in close proximity to other nonprofit leaders and also near to available resources like those providing shared services, would likely spur more collaboration and partnership in addition to making access to capacity-building resources easier.

Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

Key Themes: Collaboration and Partnerships

Avenues for peer-to-peer learning would increase beneficial collaboration.

Among the most prevalent benefits York nonprofits have gleaned from collaboration and partnerships is the **facilitation of knowledge sharing and peer learning among nonprofits**. Repeatedly noted in the engagement sessions with nonprofit leaders was the notion that there was a peer with more, or similar, experience that one could call to ask questions about an issue they were experiencing. While this informal arrangement is not available to nonprofit leaders without connections elsewhere in the sector, **more formal avenues for learning can be established** in the community.

By participating in networking events, in shared-service networks, or in partnerships and collaborations, organizations can **exchange best practices, tools, and resources**, allowing them to learn from each other's experiences and innovations. This collaborative approach not only reduces the burden of time-intensive activities but also fosters a culture of continuous improvement and innovation within the nonprofit sector.

Shared services are seen as a way to help reduce burden of time-intensive activities.

A quarter of the nonprofits in York County are already engaging in shared services of some kind. In the engagement groups, many nonprofits said that they would take advantage of shared services if they were available. Shared services allow nonprofits to streamline and optimize **operations by pooling resources, expertise, and infrastructure** to address time-intensive activities collectively. By collaborating with other organizations or having a separate entity take over time-consuming functions, nonprofits can access **specialized services and expertise** that they do not have in-house, **reducing the burden of tasks** such as **administration, finance, human resources, and technology management**.

Further, shared services can alleviate time-intensive activities by **centralizing certain functions, such as accounting, payroll, or IT support, within a shared service center**. By consolidating these services, nonprofits can benefit from **economies of scale, lower administrative overhead, and increased efficiency**. For example, rather than each organization maintaining its own accounting department, nonprofits can outsource these functions to a shared service provider, reducing duplicative efforts and freeing up staff time to focus on mission-critical activities.

Actionable Recommendations

This section provides a set of recommendations, built in partnership between the consulting team and the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Advisory Group, that together identify places where philanthropy can make the most impact related to building resilience in the sector. It is organized into three sections, each containing a set of recommendations related to the corresponding topic:

1. Leadership Development
2. Operational Resources
3. Policy Advocacy and Access to Funding Information

Leadership Development

1. Provide leadership training for the next generation of York's nonprofit leadership.

National trends mirror concerns among York nonprofits that there is significant turnover in the nonprofit sector due to both low wages and leaders retiring or moving out of the sector. While wages have been a long-standing issue facing nonprofits and one that will take many decades to resolve, the development of the next generation of leadership in preparation for future turnover at the leadership level is an issue that philanthropy can meaningfully affect in the shorter term. Leadership development can both prepare those individuals to lead as well as help retain staff by demonstrating investment in them. York's philanthropic institutions can work with current leadership training providers to help nonprofits offset the problem of decreasing overall staff capacity by training key managers who will one day succeed current nonprofit leadership.

During engagement sessions, there were competing sentiments regarding leadership training. The first was that there was enough training for senior-level leadership through local capacity-building providers such as Leadership York and the White Rose Leadership Institute and that this programming was effective and well-received. The survey confirmed this, as only 18 percent of respondents indicated that leadership and management training were seen as capacity-building needs in the next one-to-three years. Although, many nonprofits expressed through the engagement sessions thought that there was little to no training available for key staff that might one day ascend to senior leadership roles which made succession planning difficult when executive directors made plans to move on.

While York County nonprofit leaders did express that training up-and-coming leaders was important, they also named the financial and time burden to the organization from not having key staff fulfilling their duties while they are being trained difficult to overcome.

Nonprofit leaders agree that providing leadership training to the next generation of York County nonprofit leaders will require a two-fold effort. First, funders should work with those York County capacity-building providers that are already providing leadership training to ensure that key, non-leadership staff also have opportunities available to them. Second, resources should be provided to either the individuals seeking the training, the organization at which the individual works or both to offset the impact of time away from the work that is needed to be trained.

These resources could potentially take the shape of stipends for individuals to seek training in the evenings or weekends or funding to the nonprofit organization to make up for the absence of that individual if they are completing leadership courses during the work day.

2. Strengthen York's nonprofit boards by recruiting and training the next generation of board members, and focusing existing training on governance, fiduciary responsibility, fundraising, and strategic planning for all board members.

Philanthropic organizations occupy a space between nonprofits, local businesses, and academic institutions that presents a lot of board development opportunities. In York County, local funders can use this positioning and their resources to help identify and, more importantly, attract and train a pool of available board members to the nonprofit sector.

To increase the number of individuals willing to seek board membership in York County, funders could incentivize board service from members of the private sector through recognition programs or networking opportunities. Recognizing the contributions of board members and providing opportunities for them to connect with other community and industry leaders can help build a pipeline of engaged and committed board leadership. In return, nonprofits will be provided with additional avenues for fundraising and capacity relief by enlisting board members who do not serve elsewhere and have skills and expertise that the organization can utilize.

Further, partnerships with academic institutions and local business networks could provide opportunities for board members to gain valuable skills and perspectives related to the key functions of a nonprofit board:

governance, fiduciary responsibility, fundraising, and strategic visioning. This specific cross-sector collaboration not only enriches the talent pool for nonprofit boards but also provides the opportunity to foster a deeper understanding of the needs of the nonprofit community around them. This would be in addition to the local philanthropic organizations supporting training workshops or seminars focused on board governance best practices, financial management, and fundraising techniques by local capacity-building providers that are well-versed in the nonprofit community's needs and known best practices.

Operational Resources

3. Align application questions across local foundations, and identify the potential for single-source applications and reports for common funding areas.

While funders' grant applications are largely driven by foundation type, funding priorities, and donor intent, many tend to ask similar questions on applications and grant reports in slightly different ways. Through a set of common questions across funders' grant applications, funders can decrease the amount of time spent on grant writing by nonprofits. York nonprofits expressed that aligned application questions, upload requirements, upload formats, and word counts would significantly impact one of York County nonprofits' scarcest resources: time.

This approach standardizes application and reporting questions across local foundations, saving nonprofits time and resources by reducing the need for customized responses for various funders. It streamlines the application process, especially benefiting smaller organizations without dedicated fundraising teams, and encourages thoughtful consideration of key topics like organizational strengths, weaknesses, and growth opportunities.

Additionally, a subset of funders with aligned priorities or those that form partnerships to address community-specific issues may be able to create single-source applications and reporting methods to further decrease the burden of these activities on area nonprofits.

4. Facilitate the creation of a shared-services model, focused on providing technical and operational services that nonprofits cannot hire full-time staff to support.

Over 40% of York nonprofits have no paid staff members and nearly 60 percent have five or less. These nonprofits do not have the staff capacity to support functions such as technology, human resources, accounting, marketing/communications, facilities maintenance, and more.

As a result, these activities usually fall to the few staff these organizations do have, taking time away from providing mission-critical services. A shared services model can help alleviate this issue by utilizing professionals skilled in various areas like finance, marketing, grant writing, facilities maintenance, technology and more.

York funders can help provide these resources and save nonprofits time by creating a model where organizations can receive assistance through third-party professionals who work on behalf of many nonprofits. Shared service models can happen in many ways, from a brick-and-mortar nonprofit set up to help other nonprofits, to a web-based system modeled after private-sector software companies such as Taskrabbit or Upwork where nonprofits can request support for a specific ‘job’ and receive reimbursement through pooled funding.

5. Facilitate learning exchanges, peer-to-peer networking, and organic partnerships among nonprofits and funders.

Along with having access to expertise in specialized areas such as fundraising, marketing, technology, and others, York nonprofit leaders indicated during the engagement sessions that one of the most important external resources they have are their peers. Nonprofit leaders lean on their peers when dealing with new issues, developing strategies, applying for new opportunities, and any other circumstance they are unfamiliar with. In the private sector, many business leaders and professionals belong to formal peer-to-peer networks where they receive the same benefits.

York funders could amplify the capacity-building impact of peer-to-peer exchanges by intentionally creating spaces for networking, co-working, sharing best practices and lessons learned, building relationships, and developing organic partnerships for York County nonprofit professionals.

The facilitation of these spaces could be relatively nimble—hosting regular meetups, funding quarterly breakfasts or happy hours, or hosting roundtables. These opportunities can facilitate learning between nonprofits themselves, between funders and nonprofits, and even among just funders, with the potential added benefit of sparking increased partnership and collaboration in the sector.

6. Convene conversations among funders and nonprofits on how to address low wages across the sector and the projected influx in capital campaigns in the coming years.

Two pressing issues came to the forefront in this study. The first, is that staff working in small-to-medium-sized nonprofits experience incredibly low wages. The second, is that 50% of York County nonprofits surveyed stated that within the next one to two years they were planning a capital campaign.

Low wages across the nonprofit sector is not unique to York County, it is a national issue that many communities are grappling with. Communities have piloted several different ways to increase wages across the sector, including launching policy initiatives to create government-funding pools to augment wages in specific areas of the sector, asking nonprofits to disclose the difference between their highest and lowest-paid employees and provide rationales in philanthropic funding applications, and favoring funding for nonprofits who have managed to reorganize their operations and staffing structure to ensure their minimum paid wage amounts to at least \$15/hour or \$20/hour. This is a complex issue, and not one that funders or nonprofits can resolve on their own. Opening up this conversation between York County funders and nonprofits will be a valuable first step in identifying ways to address it.

The primary function of a capital campaign is to engage donors in an effort to strengthen organizational capacity by raising significant funds for major projects such as purchasing or expanding buildings or land, hiring new staff, launching new programs, or building an endowment. They also build community support, provide a platform to demonstrate impact, and, ultimately, lay the foundation for long-term sustainability. While these are beneficial to nonprofits in York County, there is a limit to the number of capital campaigns a community can sustain. A projected influx of capital campaigns in the coming years would likely not be sustainable for donors and philanthropic institutions in York County.

Beginning an open conversation between funders and nonprofits around these issues, can help ensure York County has a long-term strategy to address both the need for increased wages across the sector as well as the need for capital investments by many nonprofits.

Policy, Advocacy, and Access to Funding Information

7. Develop a collective policy and advocacy structure to raise awareness of critical issues affecting York residents and attract more public funding into the local sector.

By combining the collective influence of philanthropy in York County, direct policy and advocacy can educate and inform local and state policymakers about the challenges facing the nonprofit sector and create an opportunity for York nonprofits to receive funding that is available through local, state, and federal sources.

While not a significant priority for York nonprofits as indicated by the survey, policy and advocacy is a function that many underestimate as a way to build capacity in the nonprofit sector. One of the misconceptions about the use of direct advocacy to legislatures and executives at various levels is that it is only useful when there is a specific issue before a government body that one would either support or oppose. However, one of the primary functions of state and local government is also to provide an operating budget for their constituent area, whether that be a state, county, or city. Those budgets often provide ample opportunity to appeal to both the legislatures and the executives for funding toward a specific sector or issue.

An example of how effective policy and advocacy could work for York County nonprofits would be to raise awareness among state policymakers about the issue of low wages in the nonprofit sector across the state. With assistance from skilled lobbyists, many of whom routinely work for nonprofits of all sizes, and a statewide organization like the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations, key officials could be educated and prompted to create a fund to help support an increase in wages across the nonprofit sector statewide. Another example could be to directly advocate for project or infrastructure support for a select group of nonprofits from a particular state agency's annual budget.

8. Create a clearinghouse of information on government funding, philanthropic funding (local and regional), and York nonprofits.

By providing a source for information about application requirements, funding priorities, deadlines, and other important information across both philanthropic and government funding opportunities, York County funders can reduce the time and other resource burdens on nonprofits used to search for this information, increasing the likelihood of nonprofits accessing additional funding sources.

Access to key funding information is crucial for nonprofits for two main reasons. First, organizations without specialized fundraising staff often spend too much time searching for funding opportunities, details about funder deadlines and priorities, and potential partners for grant applications, diverting attention from their core missions. Second, the high costs of accessing such information, particularly about government funds, or the need to visit a library for free access, are significant barriers.

To address these challenges, establishing information clearinghouses can be beneficial. These clearinghouses would compile and regularly update funding information from various sources, including local, state, and government entities. They would also provide details on funders' project preferences, deadlines, and contact information, offering nonprofits considerable time savings in seeking and applying for funding.

Moreover, York nonprofit leaders are interested in understanding the local nonprofit landscape to identify service gaps, assess the adequacy of existing services for specific needs, and find potential collaboration partners for addressing particular issues.

By making funding information, insights into the nonprofit sector, and partnership opportunities readily available, nonprofits can better spot opportunities, allocate resources wisely, plan effectively, develop strong proposals, and enhance collaboration. Investing in systems that improve access to this information will help York County's nonprofits increase their fundraising success and sustainability, supporting their mission-driven work.

Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the following limitations and consider them when interpreting the findings of this qualitative analysis:

Missing Data based on 990 Tax Data Limitations: The use of 990 tax data presents its own set of limitations, including the exclusion of nonprofits funded outside York County and those headquartered outside the county, variations in detail on 990 Forms due to IRS requirements, data availability for tax years 2020-2022, exclusion of community-based efforts that do not have a nonprofit tax status, and IRS exemptions for certain tax-exempt organizations like churches. Nonprofit information was available for tax years ending in 2019-2023, therefore information is not available for newly incorporated nonprofits and some nonprofit data may have shifted since their most recent filing year. For example, a nonprofit under the \$200,000 revenue mark may have filed a 990EZ in 2022, but could have grown their revenue to be \$200,000 or more in 2023; therefore, that organization will submit more comprehensive data on their next 990 form.

To that point, 990 Form reporting requirements are based on an organization's annual revenue level at the time of filing, thus not all organizations include the same level of detail on their 990 Forms. Therefore, limited financial information is available for the ~30% of the nonprofits in York County that are smaller (<\$200,000 annual revenue). Due to these reporting limitations, organizations with smaller revenues may be left out of the median and expenses analysis throughout the financial section of this report unless they have voluntarily provided additional information. To address this limitation, organizations with comprehensive financial data have been used throughout this report, and the percentage of all organizations reporting is provided where applicable.

Religious Institutions: Some tax-exempt organizations are not required to submit any 990 forms. These organizations typically identify as churches or religious institutions. To read more about organizations that are not required to file, [click here](#). Churches and religious organizations included in this report were those who self-identified as fulfilling at least one other issue area need in addition to religion.

Small Sample Size: 168 organizations completed the York County Nonprofit Resiliency Survey, representing 11% of the sector as a whole; only 75 organizations provided race data, and 76 organizations provided gender data. Due to limited race and gender data, only high-level disaggregation could be performed (i.e., categorizing race as "White" and "BIPOC" and gender as "Male" and "Female") to preserve confidentiality. Depending on the issue area of respondents, demographic data throughout the assessment may not be fully representative of the experiences of each and every organization in the sector. In addition, researchers were unable to survey charitable organizations without an official nonprofit status. Several grassroots organizations in York County are doing charitable work that is not captured in this report.

Issue Areas: The issue area attributed to each organization was based on data provided by Candid; issue areas were originally self-selected by each organization and therefore may not fully or accurately represent each area of the sector, depending on how each area of the sector is defined. Furthermore, organizations were allowed to self-select up to 12 primary issue areas, so the total number of issue areas represented in this report will exceed the total number of organizations; organizations could also opt to NOT identify issue areas, and therefore a portion of organizations in this report will be defined as "Unknown or not classified."

Coder Bias: A single coder was used to analyze the transcriptions of the focus groups that augmented survey findings; therefore, inherent researcher bias is present.

Lack of Historical or Longitudinal Context: While descriptive statistics were obtained from the survey data, the focus of the analysis primarily relied on data from the engagement sessions and survey combined, where questions focused primarily on the current perceptions, experiences, and future desires of participants.

Interacting with the Engaging Insights Data

In addition to this report, the data used to create this analysis is publicly available through an interactive web-based report that allows users to interact with the data on the local nonprofit landscape. Users can sort and filter the data by industry, nonprofit size, and nonprofit leadership demographics. Please visit <https://yccf.org/nonprofit-dashboard/> to view the full interactive web-based report.

Definitions and Key Terms

BIPOC-led: BIPOC stands for Black, Indigenous and People of Color. Organizations or initiatives that are primarily led by individuals from non-white communities. These leaders are typically from African, African-American, Latino, Hispanic, Asian, or Indigenous backgrounds.

Capacity-building: Candid.org states: “Capacity-building can help make an organization more focused, efficient, and productive,” and this, “makes it easier to attract the money, leadership, and visibility that nonprofits need to thrive.” The Free Management Library describes a host of capacity-building activities, including:

- Board development
- Business planning
- Evaluation
- Facilities planning
- Financial management
- Fundraising
- Information technology
- Leadership development
- Legal services
- Management development
- Marketing
- Program design
- Quality management
- Staff Salaries
- Strategic planning

Capacity-building provider: Organizations, programs, subject matter experts, and consultants, who provide capacity-building programming and technical assistance.

Nonprofit leader: A person who helps direct a nonprofit toward meeting its organizational goals while inspiring staff and volunteers to effectively take on the challenges they encounter at work.

Cohort-based Programming: A collaborative learning approach where a group of similar nonprofits or professionals engage in structured activities about a specific topic(s) over a period of time.

Collaborative or collaboration: A strategic partnership or joint effort between two or more nonprofit organizations to achieve a shared mission or goal.

Resilience: An encompassing culture and leadership based on innovation, financial sustainability, community connection, collaborative vision and action, a professional image, and solution-oriented thought partnership and collaboration. Within these components of resilience, the role of funders in building resilience may include engaging in internal reflection and action, providing an eagle’s eye view of the sector, cultivating reciprocal voice, building leadership capacity, strategically fostering collaboration and connection, and engaging in policy and advocacy in support of nonprofit sustainability.

Participating Organizations

Affordable Housing Advocates
Appell Center
Bell Socialization Services, Inc.
Black Ministers Association
York Fresh Food Farms
Byrnes Health Education Center
Catholic Harvest Food Pantry
Children's Aid Society
City of York-Bureau of Health
Cleft Clinic
Community Connections for Children
Community Progress Council, Inc.
Consultant-York Fresh Food Farms
CORE CARES
Crispus Attucks York
Downtown Inc
Family First Health
Friends & Neighbors of Pennsylvania Inc
Give Local York
House Of Hope York
Junior League of York
Keystone Kidspace
Logos Academy
LogosWorks Partners
New Hope Ministries
PIRC
Positive Energy Arts Foundation
Rabbitt Transit
Re-Source York
Red Land Senior Center
RKL
School District of the City of York
Servants
Shadowfax
Susquehanna Hertiage
The Caring Ministry
The Movement
Theatre Arts for Everyone
TrueNorth Wellness Services
Upstart Arts
Volunteer- York Fresh Food Farms
Watershed Alliance of York (WAY)
Windy Hill Senior Center, Inc
Womens Giving Circle
YMCA of the Roses/ Latinos Unidos of York
York Art Association
York College of Pennsylvania
York County Bar Association
York County Childrens Advocacy Center
York County Economic Alliance
York County Farm Trust
York County SPCA
York County Village
York Day Early Learning
York Literacy
York Symphony
YWCA Hanover
YWCA York