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New survey finds Massachusetts nonprofits expect federal policies to devastate sector and vulnerable communities

MassINC Polling Group survey shows near-universal pessimism about impact of Trump policies

Boston—A survey of more than 500 Massachusetts nonprofit leaders and staff finds that nearly all expect that Trump administration policies will make work more difficult for their nonprofits and the communities they serve. The findings of the survey, which The MassINC Polling Group conducted for the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and the Boston Foundation, were released this afternoon in an event at TBF.

“As we talk about meeting the moment, this survey illustrates the unprecedented breadth and depth of the threat to our vital nonprofit sector,” said Lee Pelton, President and CEO of the Boston Foundation. “Across every community and area of need, large majorities of nonprofit leaders say their work is being made more difficult at a time when their services are more critical than ever. It is an unnecessarily exacerbated crisis, and we will use every tool we have – funding, convening, research, advocacy and more – to sound the alarm on behalf of all nonprofits.”

“These responses show a remarkable consistency across virtually every demographic—location, size, areas of focus, and communities served,” said Steve Koczela, President of the MassINC Polling Group. “They point to a near-universal expectation that organizations across the nonprofit spectrum will feel significant impact from federal actions even beyond funding.”

“The concerns in this survey must be met with an equal reaction from funders, nonprofit organizations, local and state officials, and advocates if we want to live up to our obligation

to serve our communities,” said Jim Klocke, Executive Director of the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network. “MNN will continue to play a key role in convening organizations and developing strategic solutions.”

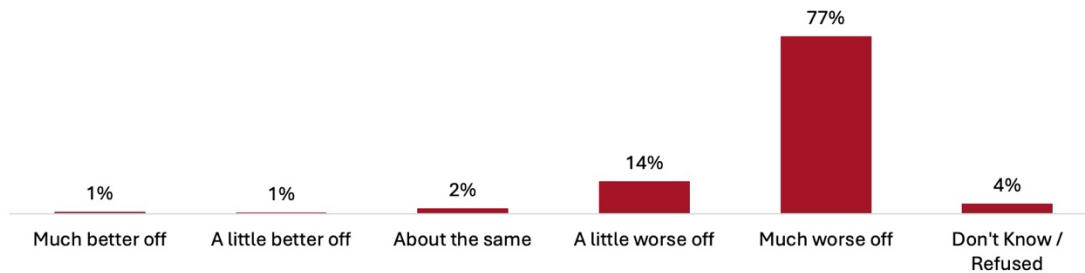
In all, 523 Massachusetts nonprofit leaders and staff members completed the survey between February 25 and March 24, with 79% of respondents serving in senior leadership roles in their organizations. Responding organizations served a wide range of vulnerable populations, including low-income people, immigrants, communities of color, youth/teens, seniors, and LGBTQ+ people. Nearly six in ten (58%) said they received federal funding.

Respondents were asked if they felt their organizations and the populations they serve would be better or worse off under the Trump administration. In both cases, more than 90 percent said they felt things would be worse off, with nearly three-quarters saying they would be “much worse off.”

How will Massachusetts fare under Trump?

- A large majority say the state will be “much worse off” under the new administration, with just 2% saying the state will be better off.

Nearly all think Massachusetts will be worse off, most say “much worse”
% who say MA will be ___ under the new administration



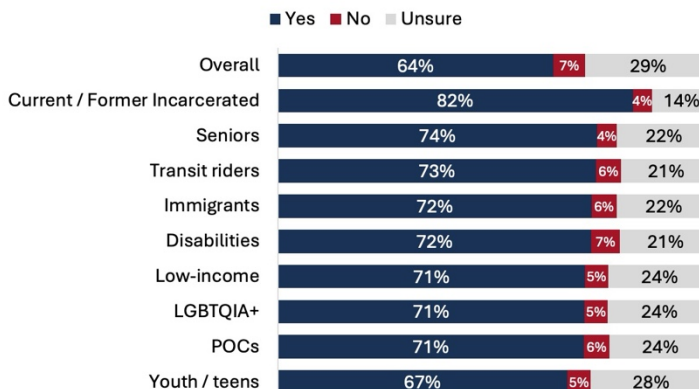
Q: Do you think Massachusetts will be better off or worse off under the new administration, or will it be about the same as before?

Organizations across focus areas expected demand for their services to rise, even as new policies and funding cuts make it more challenging to do their work, whether or not those nonprofits received federal funding. (Nearly 90% of organizations receiving federal funding expect it to decrease.)

Nonprofits expect increased demand...

- Overall, 64% expect demand for their nonprofit's service under Trump admin to increase; 29% are unsure.
- Demand is expected to increase even more among nonprofits serving vulnerable populations.

Most organizations expect demand for their services to rise
% who say they do/don't anticipate an increased demand for services



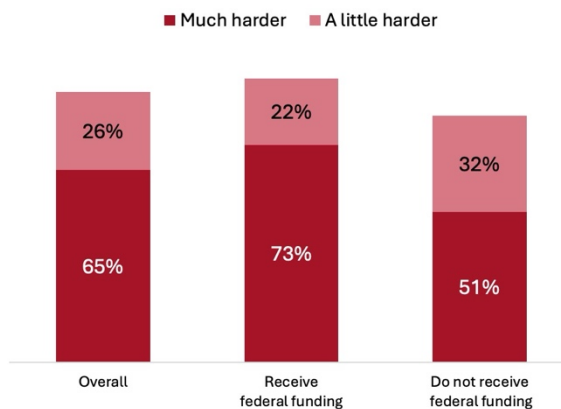
Q: Do you anticipate an increased demand for your nonprofit's programs or services under the Trump administration?

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... but more challenges doing their work.

- At the same time, 65% think the Trump administration will make it "much harder" to do their work.
- Nonprofits that get federal funds are particularly concerned, but even those that don't anticipate a negative impact on their work.

Most say Trump administration will make their job harder
% who say Trump admin. will make it _____ to do their work



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

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When asked about the challenges specific to their organizations and communities, hundreds of respondents shared their concerns in stark terms. Nonprofits expressed concerns about federal cuts and potential secondary impacts as philanthropy struggles to adapt to the new reality. Among the responses:

"Our current clients are already afraid to meet their volunteer tutors in public. They are canceling sessions more frequently due to fear. We fear our numbers of new clients will decline."

"We are primarily federally funded. We do not have reserves. Our

organization may no longer be viable as a result of current and future actions by the Trump Administration.”

“30% of our revenue is federally funded. The [government] claims that our program will continue, but we have seen no proof of that, and currently they owe us \$225K from services rendered in 2024. I have already had to lay off about 40% of my staff.”

“Farmers will have less markets for their goods, higher supply costs, reduced margins on sale of goods, reduced availability of labor, less financial means to start/grow their enterprises.”

“I believe we will lose all of [our] funding from philanthropy as they shift and respond to the federal executive orders. I believe that our fiscal sponsor may find us as too high risk to keep in their portfolio if we are unable to fundraise for anticipated loss of funding and are not yet able to diversify funding.”

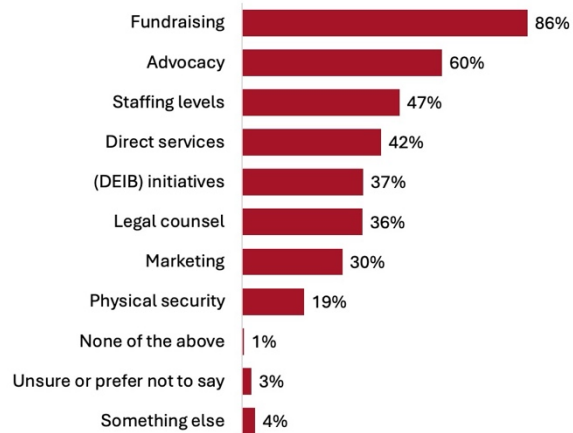
“We are bracing for a number of downstream potential impacts. If philanthropic dollars shift to fill the gaps of government funding, that would make the philanthropic landscape that we rely on more competitive.”

Replacing lost funding and meeting additional needs will mean increasing investments in fundraising and advocacy for a majority of survey respondents — not surprising, since 63% of respondents say individual donations are very important to their organization. In all, 86% of respondents anticipate increased fundraising needs, and 60% expect an increased need for advocacy. Staffing levels (47%) and direct services investments (42%) are also expected, and more than a third of respondents said threats to diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging initiatives would *increase* their need to invest in those areas.

Fundraising tops nonprofits list of future needs

- Fundraising is the clear top need nonprofits currently anticipate, cited by 86% of respondents.
- Organizations also anticipate increased needs in advocacy (60%), staffing (47%), direct services (42%).

Nonprofits see increased need for fundraising, advocacy
% who anticipate increased need in each aspect of their work



The slide presentation from today's survey release is appended to this press release. The survey [topline results are available here](#), and crosstabs can be [downloaded from MassINC Polling Group here](#). Slides are also available upon request.

About the Poll: *These results are based on a survey of 523 staff members of nonprofits operating in Massachusetts. Survey links were distributed to nonprofits by The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, The Boston Foundation, and other partner organizations. The survey and outreach language were translated into Chinese (simplified), Haitian Creole, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese. Responses were collected between February 25 and March 24, 2025. The poll was sponsored by the Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and The Boston Foundation.*

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The Boston Foundation is one of the nation's first and most impactful community foundations. Partnering with community members, donors, the public sector, businesses and nonprofits, we exist to close the gaps caused by our city's greatest disparities, to advance economic justice, and to help build a better Boston. We collect data, commission research, share knowledge, develop dynamic programs, fuel new ideas and fund change. Our work informs public policy, catalyzes conversations and advocates not only for change, but for repair of the historical harms of inequity. Ultimately, we aim to support, contribute and create well-being and opportunity within our communities. TBF is also one of New England's largest grantmakers, supporting nonprofits in Greater Boston through our endowment and working closely with our donors to support nonprofits locally, nationally and internationally.

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

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