

THE

STATE

OF
THE

SECTOR

Saskatchewan Nonprofit Sector Study 2025

A Landscape of the nonprofit sector in Saskatchewan

A sector deeply rooted in communities

Nonprofit organizations continue to play a vital role in communities across Saskatchewan. Many organizations have been operating for decades and serve a wide range of populations, including children and youth, Indigenous individuals and families, seniors, and people facing economic or social challenges.

A sector built largely on small organizations

While the sector collectively represents billions in economic activity, most nonprofits operate with modest resources. Many organizations run small operations supported by limited staff teams and volunteers.

Financial sustainability remains the sector's most pressing challenge

Organizations consistently report difficulty securing stable and predictable funding, particularly for core operations. At the same time, rising costs for wages, rent, insurance, and supplies are placing increasing pressure on already constrained budgets.

Workforce capacity is under strain

Recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers remains a challenge. Organizations report growing gaps in specialized skills such as technology, marketing, grant writing, and fundraising, which are essential for long term sustainability.

Volunteer engagement is shifting

Compared with 2017, fewer organizations report increases in volunteer numbers and volunteer hours. While volunteers remain central to the sector, sustaining long term volunteer participation is becoming more difficult.

Costs are rising while capacity remains stable

Wages and salaries have increased for many organizations, reflecting broader economic pressures. However, staffing levels, volunteer engagement, and program capacity have remained relatively stable or declined slightly, suggesting organizations are managing rising costs without corresponding growth in capacity.

A resilient sector facing increasing pressure

Despite these challenges, nonprofit organizations continue to adapt through fundraising, partnerships, operational efficiencies, and new revenue strategies. However, many of these adjustments involve stretching limited resources rather than resolving underlying financial pressures.

Objectives

- 1 Develop a profile of the sector overall and by specific indicators (employees, charities, category of activity, clients served, etc.)
- 2 Understand top challenges facing organizations
- 3 Gain insight into employee and volunteer workforce
- 4 Understanding the current state of nonprofits, their funding sources, and financial sustainability.
- 5 Identify workforce development needs and strategies for recruitment and retention
- 6 Assess perceptions of leadership stability, governance, and succession planning
- 7 Analyze recent organizational changes and anticipated future outlook

Fieldwork

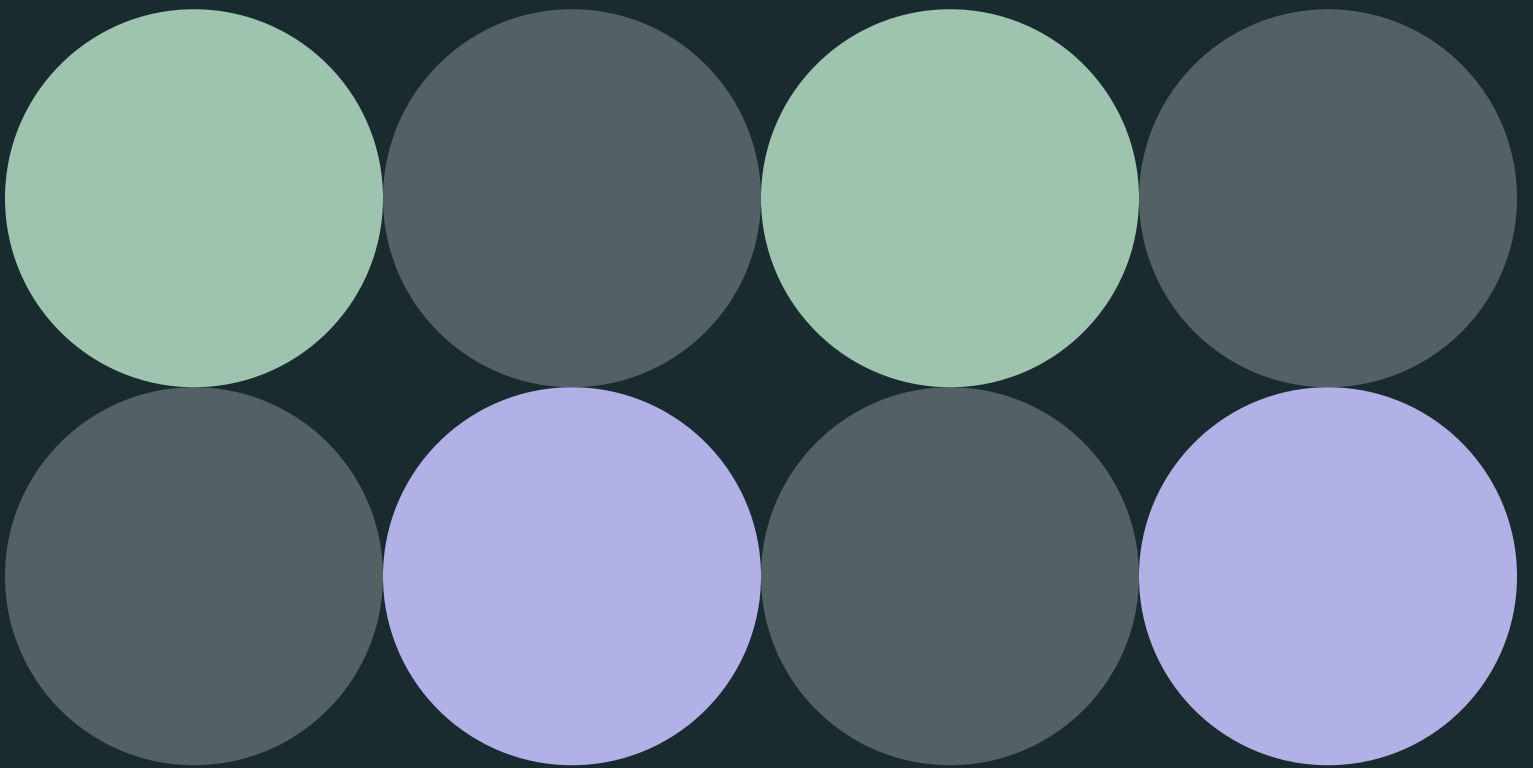
The survey data was collected between August 6th and October 20th, 2025.

Total responses: n=1,168

- Method: Online (n=1,137), Telephone (n=8), Open link (n=23).
- Margin of error: ± 2.7 percentage points, 19 times out of 20.

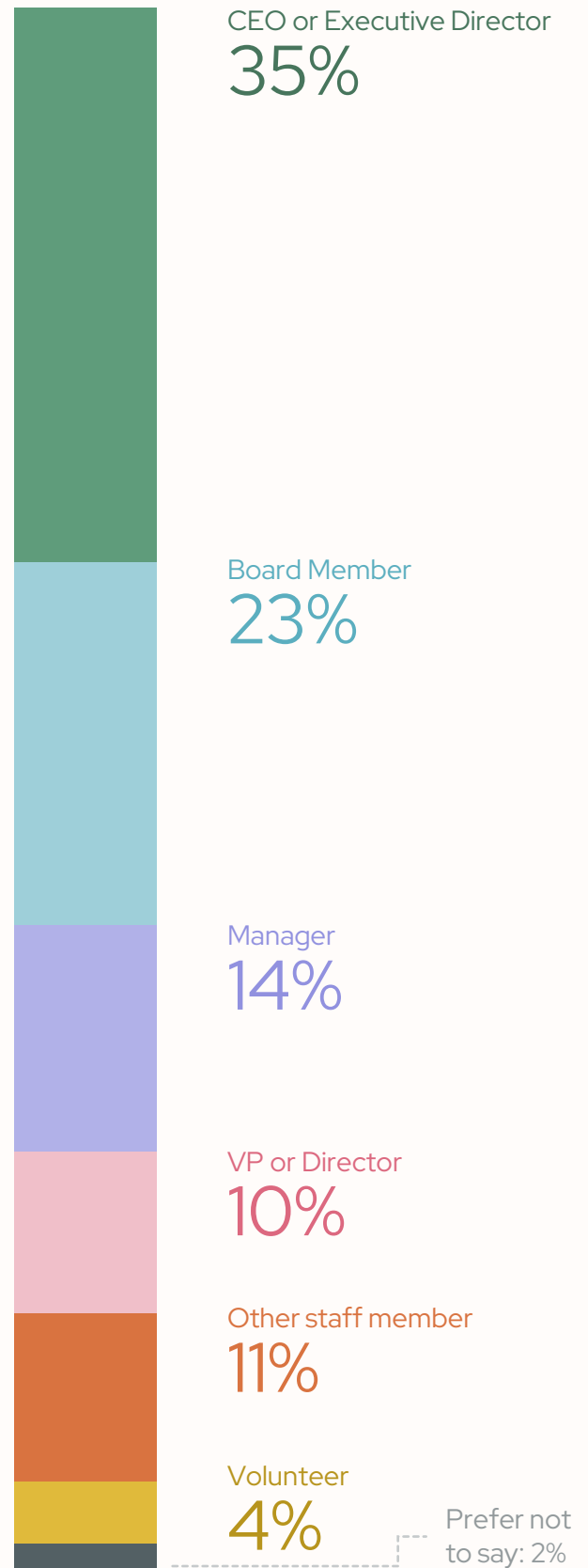


Who responded to the survey



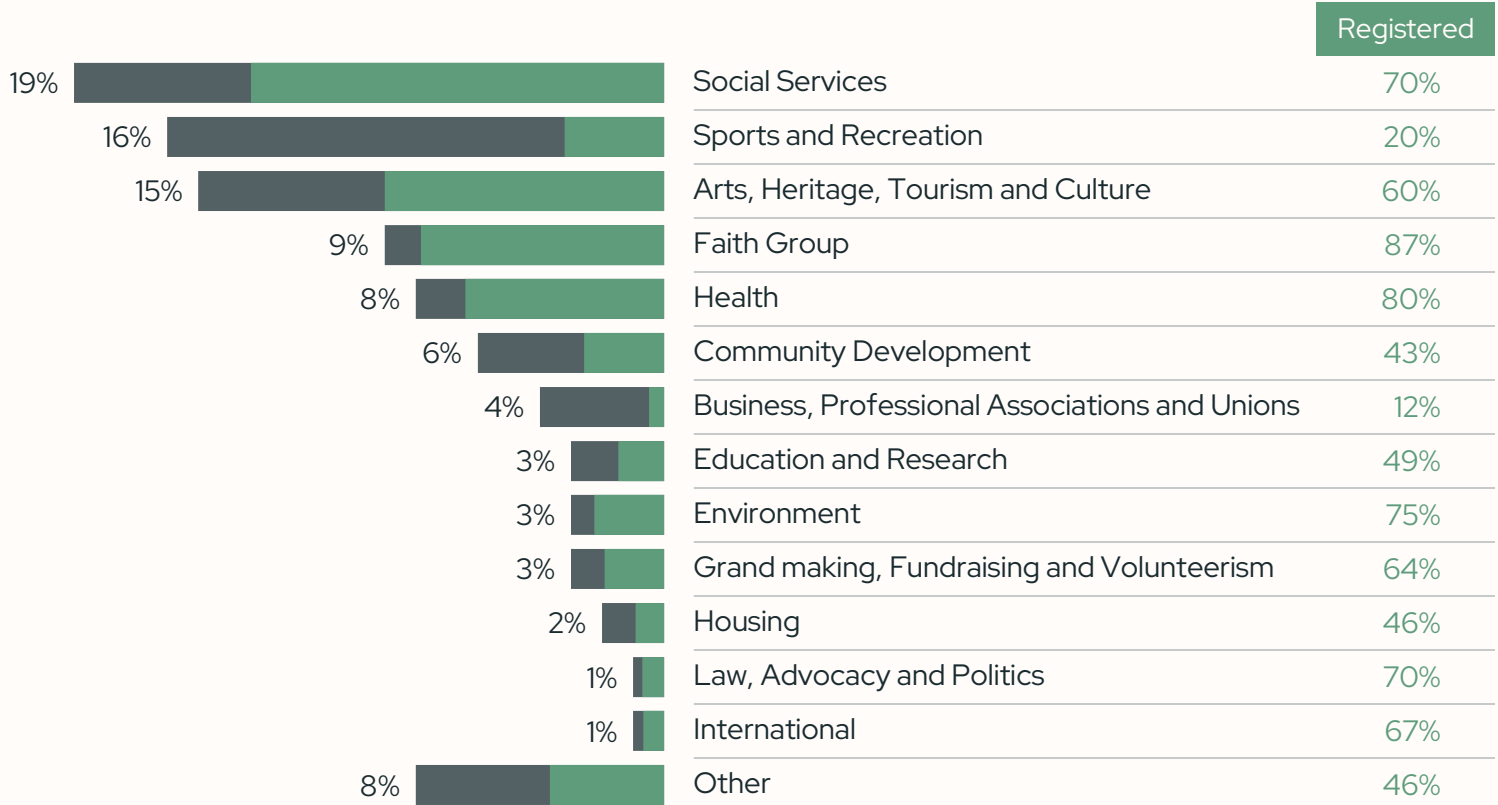
Respondent roles within their organization

Over one-third of respondents are the nonprofit organization's CEO or Executive Director, with many of the remaining respondents being other senior-ranking members such as Board members and Managers or Directors.



10. What is your role within your organization? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Sectors Represented



Social services, sport and recreation, and arts and culture represent the largest segments of Saskatchewan’s nonprofit sector. Over half of Saskatchewan nonprofits are registered charities, most commonly those in faith-based, health, environment, social services, and arts and culture sectors.



4. Which of the following areas does your organization work in? (Single select) Base: All respondents, n=1168.
7. Is your organization a registered charity? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

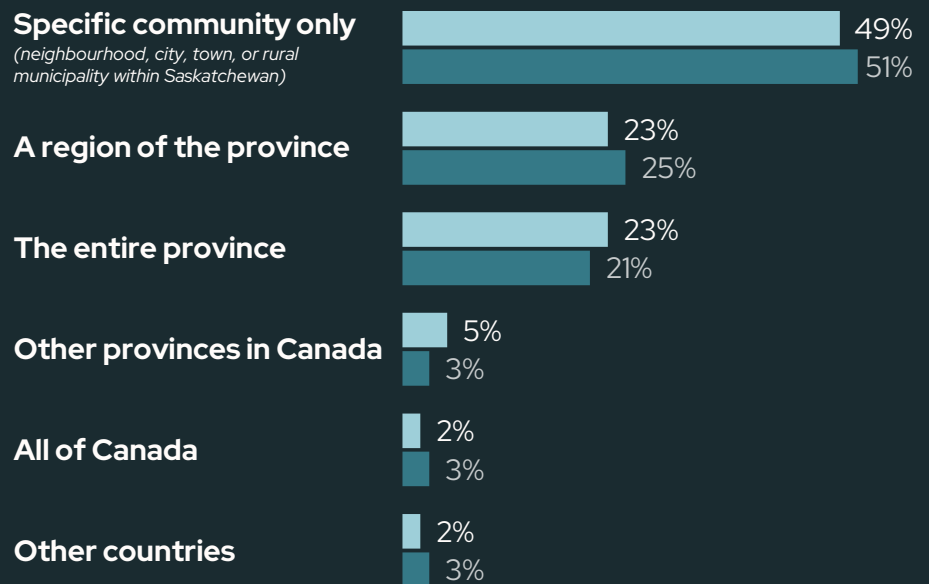
Where they serve



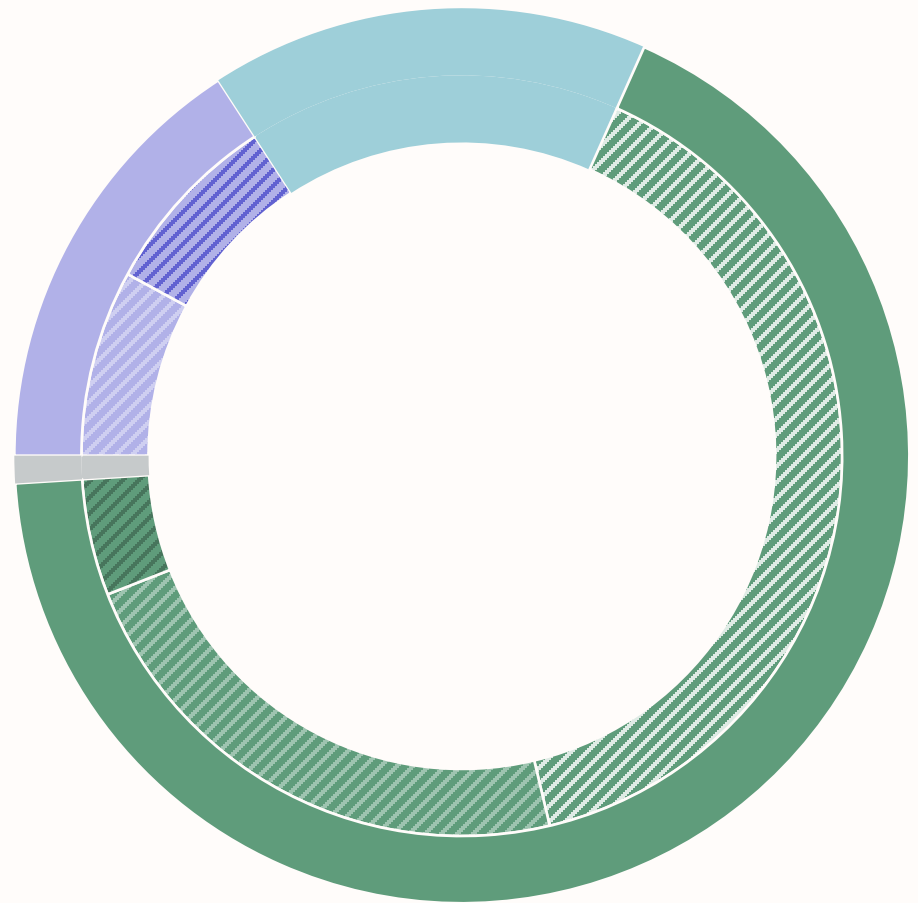
* Includes Prince Albert (5%), Moose Jaw (5%), North Battleford (3%), Estevan (2%), Swift Current (2%), Weyburn (2%), and Yorkton (2%).
 1. In which of the following communities does your organization have an office? (Single select) Base: All respondents, n=1168.
 3. Which of the following best describes the geographic area that your organization primarily serves? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Reach of Service

2025 2017



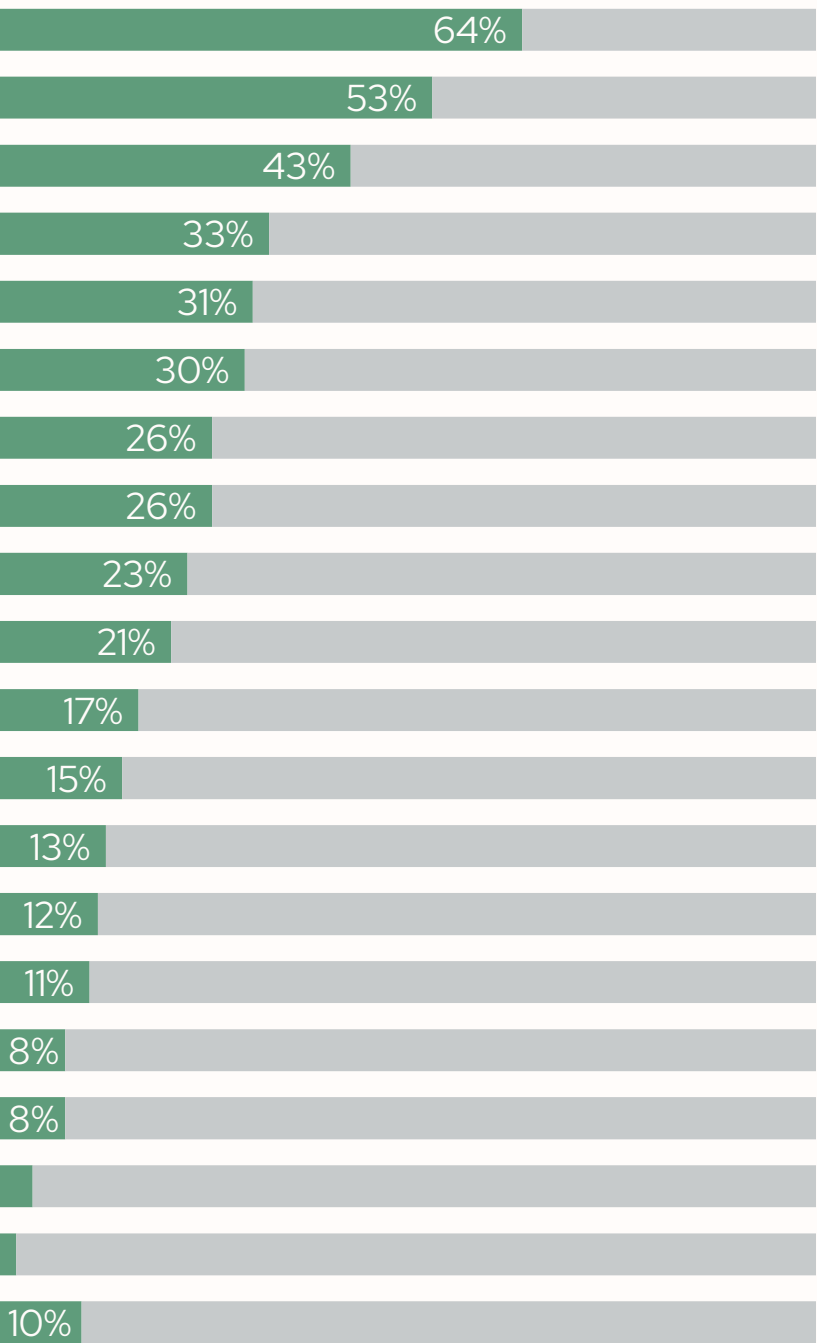
Years of Operation



Over two-thirds of nonprofit organizations have been in operation for more than 20 years, while only a small proportion are relatively new, having been established within the past decade.

	Under 10 years	16%
	Less than 5 years	8%
	5 to just under 10 years	8%
	10 to just under 20 years	16%
	20 years or longer	68%
	20 to just under 50 years	40%
	50 to just under 100 years	23%
	100 years or longer	5%
	Not sure	1%

9. For how many years has your organization been operating? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

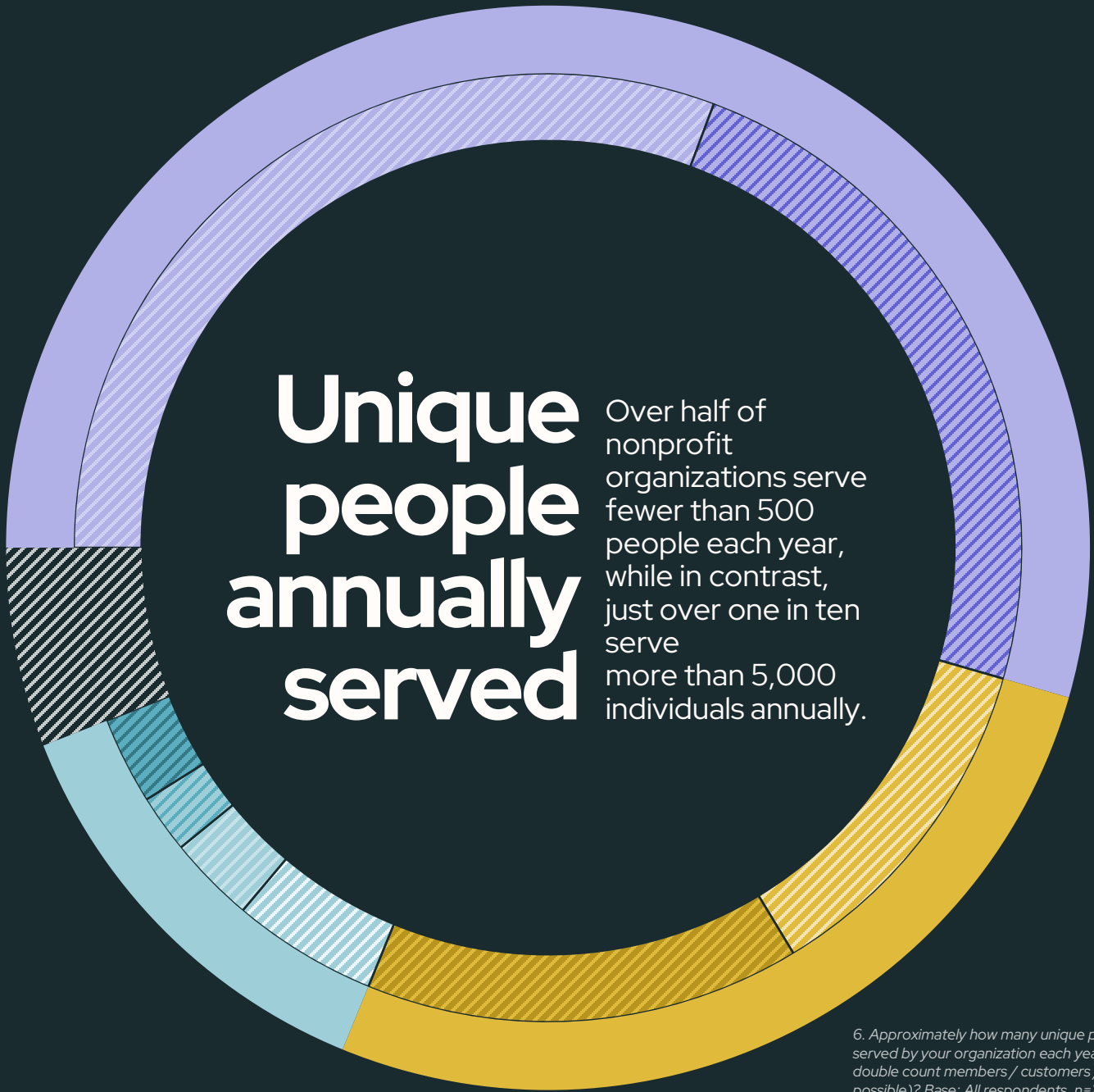


- General public
- Children and youth
- Indigenous individuals and families
- Seniors
- Low income
- People with disabilities
- Single parents
- People in rural, remote, or Northern communities
- Immigrants or refugees
- LGBTQ2S+
- Mental health issues
- Addiction-affected individuals
- Faith-based segment(s) of the general population
- Specific ethnic or cultural origin, visible minorities
- Individuals experiencing homelessness
- Chronic illnesses
- Gender-based violence victims
- Women only 4%
- Men only 2%
- Other

Who nonprofits serve

Nonprofits in Saskatchewan serve a wide range of populations, most commonly the general public, children and youth, and Indigenous individuals and families. Many also support seniors, low-income populations, and people with disabilities, reflecting the sector’s broad focus on community well-being and inclusion.

5. What type of individuals or businesses does your organization primarily work with? (Select all that apply)
 Base: All respondents, n=1168.

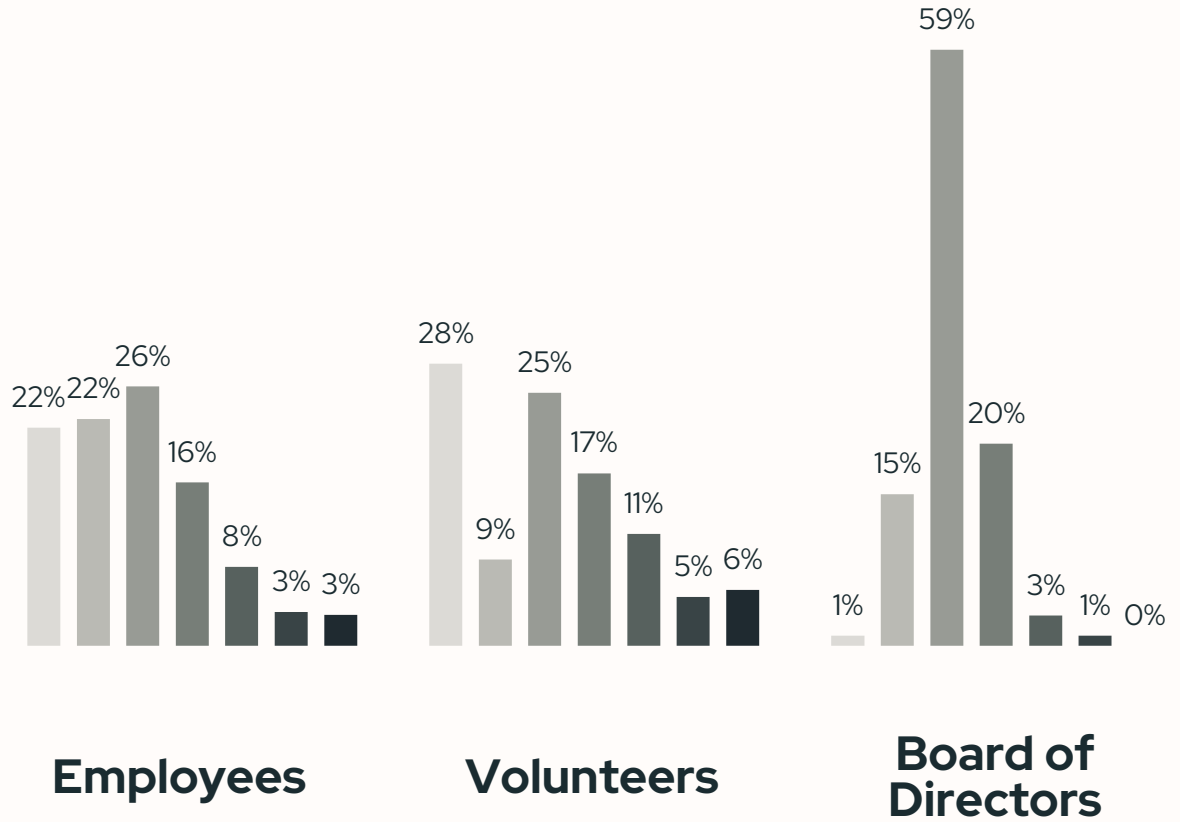
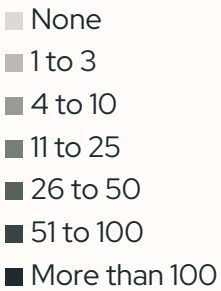


6. Approximately how many unique people are served by your organization each year (i.e. do not double count members / customers / clients if possible)? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

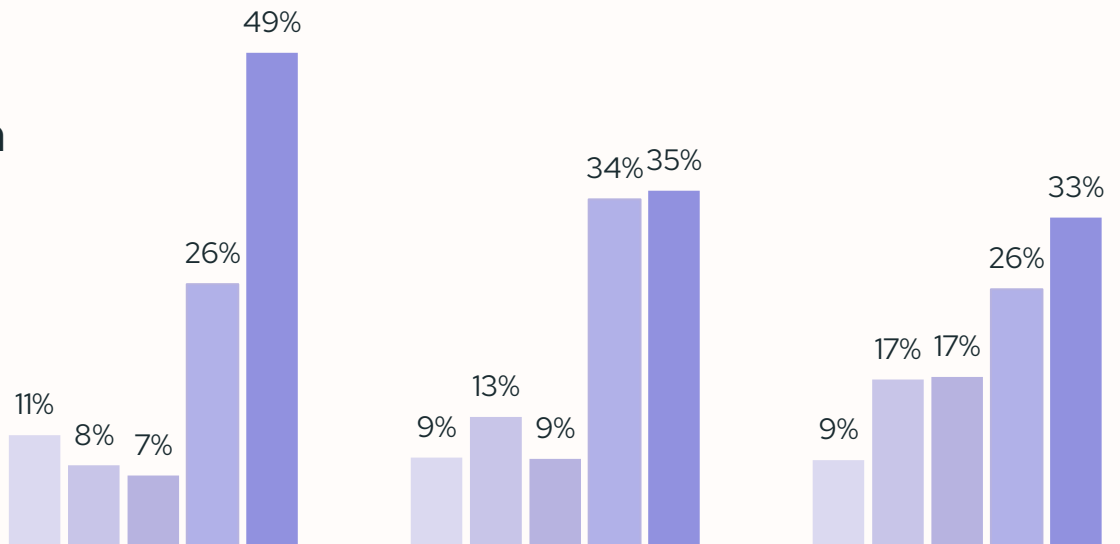
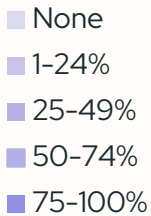
<p>Up to 500</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less than 100 ● 100 to just under 500 	<p>55%</p> <p>31%</p> <p>24%</p>	<p>5000+</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 5,000 to just under 10,000 ● 10,000 to just under 20,000 ● 20,000 to just under 50,000 ● 50,000 or more 	<p>13%</p> <p>5%</p> <p>3%</p> <p>2%</p> <p>3%</p>
<p>500 to 4,999</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 500 to just under 1,000 ● 1,000 to just under 5,000 	<p>27%</p> <p>12%</p> <p>15%</p>	<p>Not sure</p>	<p>6%</p>

Organizational Structure

Unique Count per Year



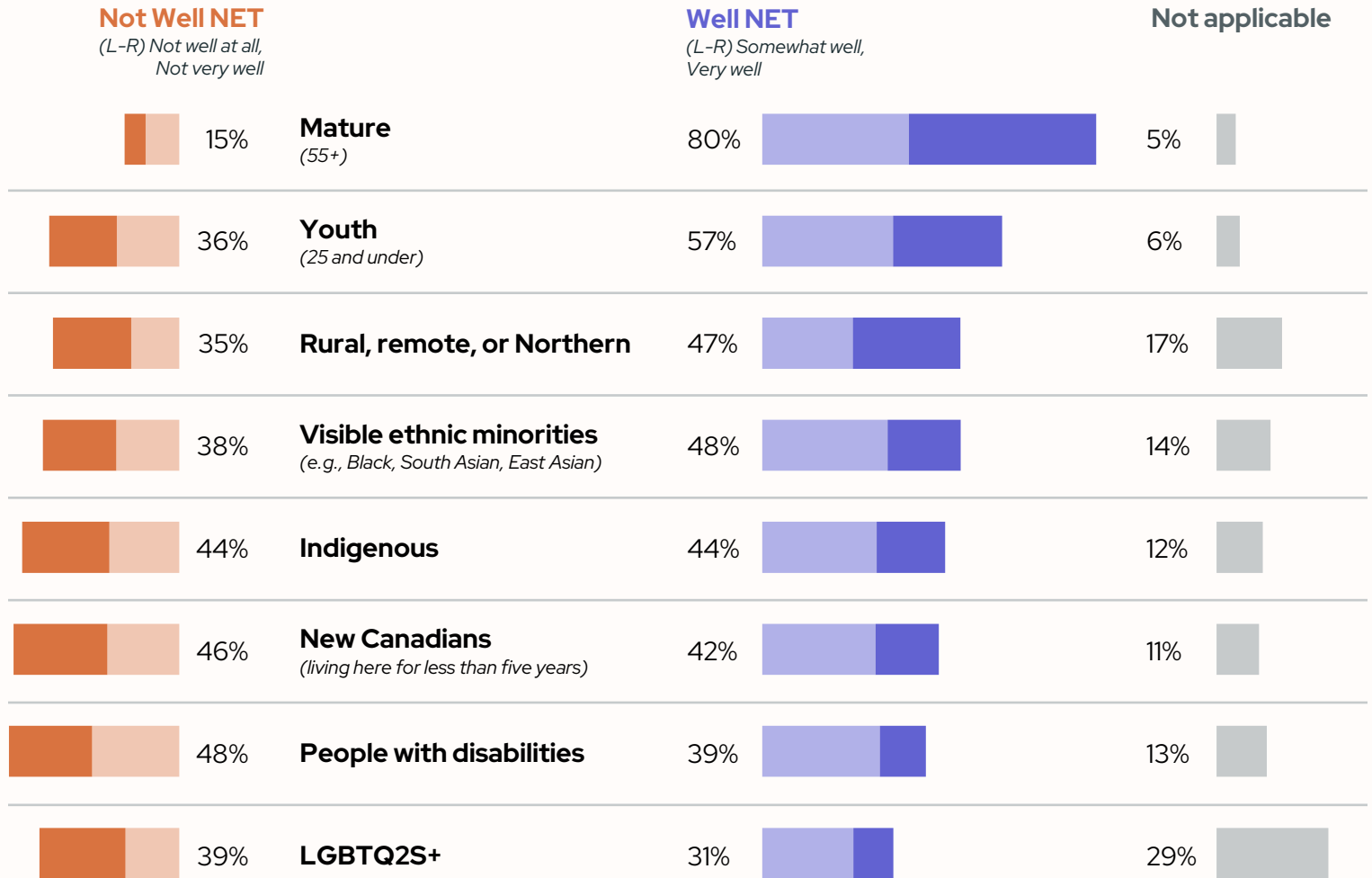
Female Representation



14. How many people does your organization typically have in the following categories within a one year period? Please make your best estimate and answer all questions based on your Saskatchewan operation only. Base: All respondents that provided a number (outliers removed and MUSH organizations removed), n=1,052.

14.1. About what percentage of people in each of the following groups identify as female in your organization? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880; volunteers, n=717; and board of directors, n=1113.

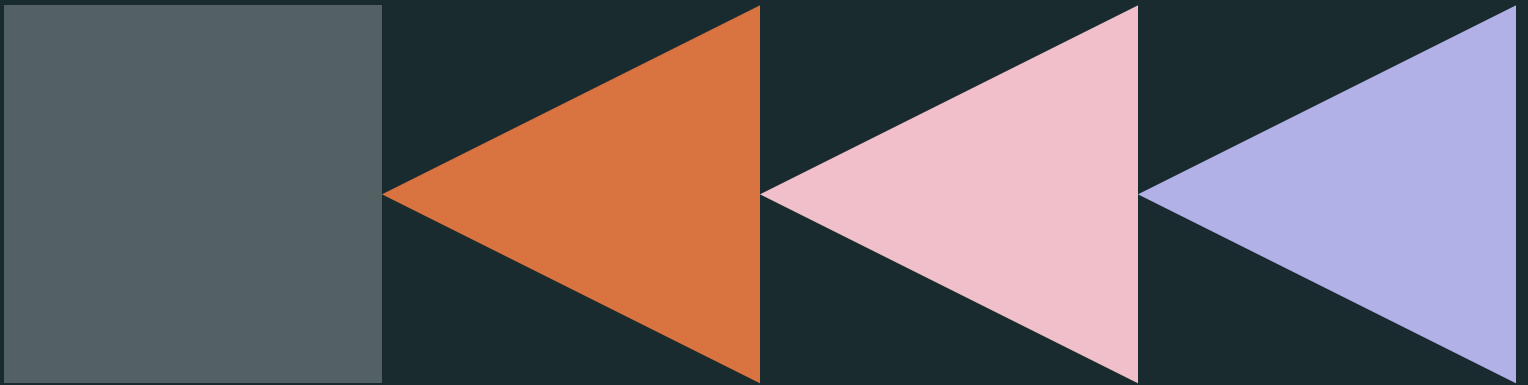
Perceived representation of minority groups



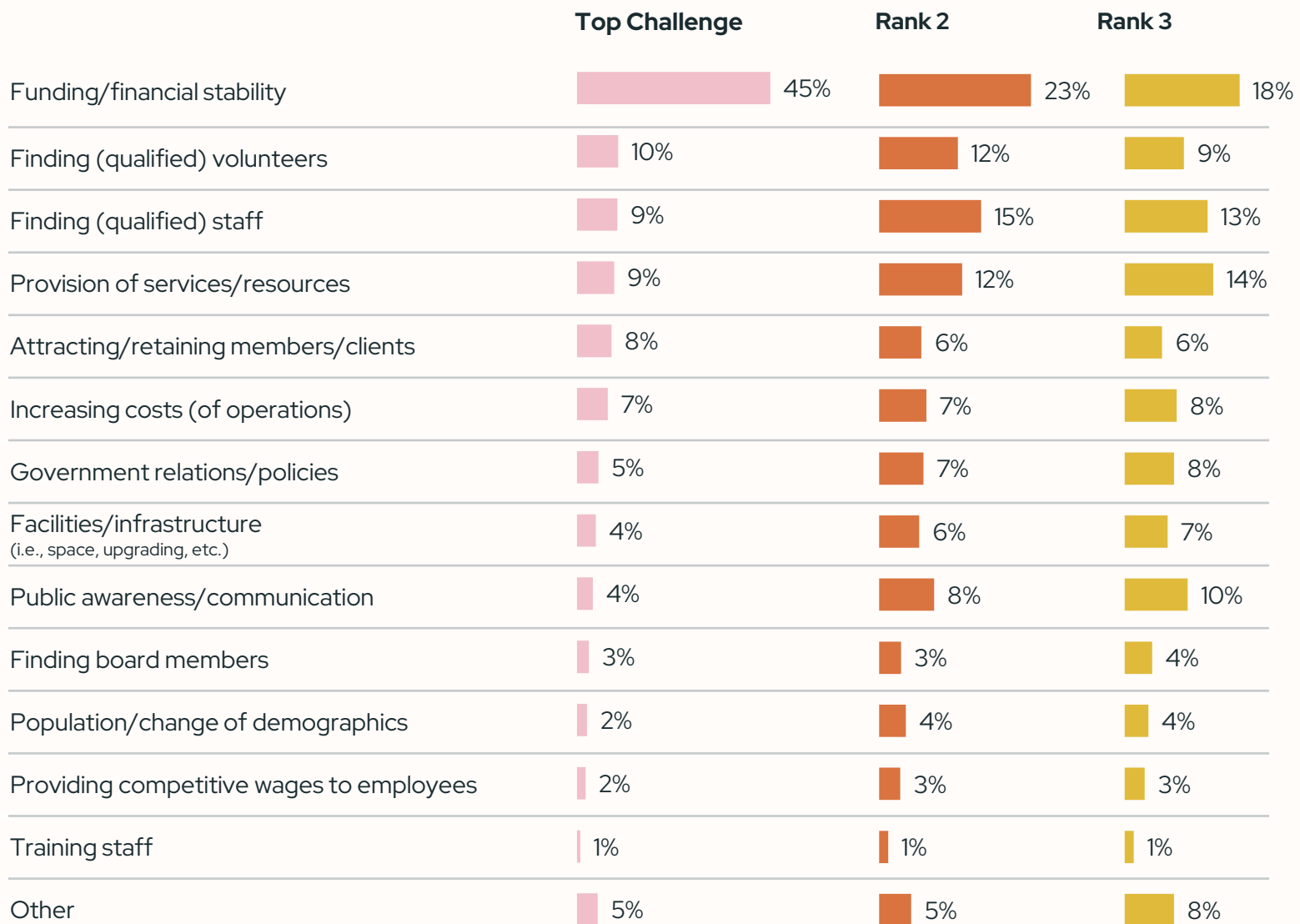
Older adults (55+) are perceived to be the most well-represented minority group within nonprofit organizations, while people with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, and LGBTQ2S+ groups are thought to be underrepresented.

18.1. How well do you feel each of the following minority groups are represented within your organization? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

What challenges Nonprofits face



Top Mentioned 3 Critical Challenges for Organizations



Funding and financial stability stand out as the most significant challenge facing organizations, far surpassing other issues.

11. Broadly speaking, what would you say are the greatest challenges facing your general organization? Base: All Respondents, n=1168.

Financial Challenges facing Nonprofits

Many nonprofit organizations report significant financial pressures that are affecting their ability to operate and deliver services. The most common challenge is securing stable and predictable funding, particularly funding that supports core operations rather than short term projects. Organizations frequently note that grant funding is inconsistent and difficult to plan around, making long term financial planning challenging.

At the same time, operating costs are rising across the sector. Organizations report increasing expenses related to staffing, food, rent, utilities, insurance, and program supplies.

These rising costs are often not matched by increases in government funding or donations, creating ongoing budget pressures.

Many nonprofits also highlight the difficulty of keeping programs affordable for the communities they serve, particularly as the cost-of-living increases. Balancing accessibility with financial sustainability is a growing challenge.

Overall, organizations describe a sector that is experiencing growing financial strain, where rising costs, funding uncertainty, and increasing demand for services are placing pressure on already limited resources.

Inflation and increasing costs for labour, services, and materials have greatly outpaced funding growth, forcing us to make difficult decisions about programming.

Our organization operates on very tight margins, and unexpected costs can quickly create financial strain.

Funding opportunities are unpredictable. Calls for proposals do not follow a consistent schedule, making it difficult to plan projects, allocate staff time, or forecast funding for the next fiscal year.

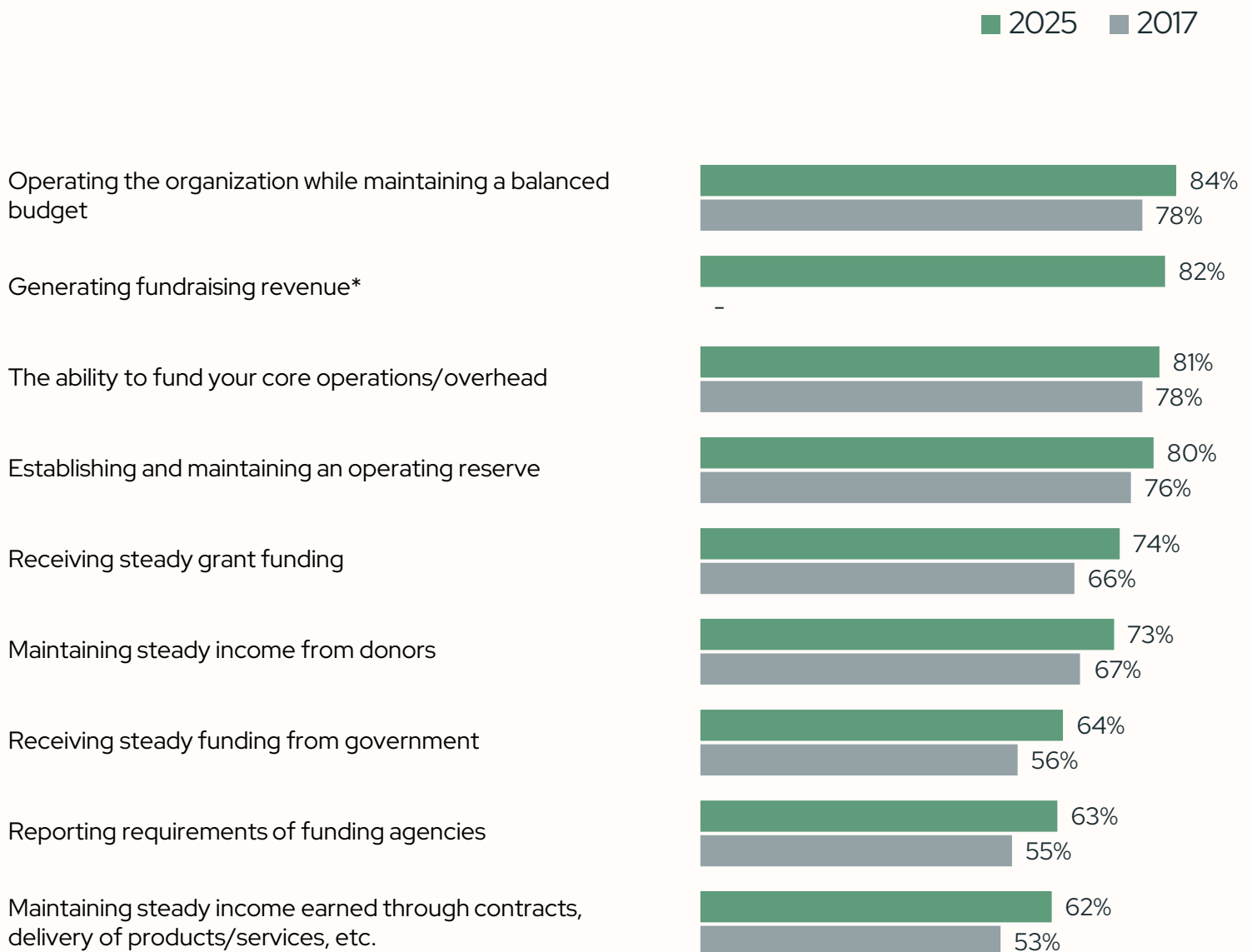
Funding for core operations is extremely limited. Most funding is project based, which makes it difficult to sustain staff and ongoing services.

Securing stable, multi year funding is one of our biggest challenges. Reliance on short term project grants makes it difficult to plan staffing and long-term programs.

Securing consistent and sustainable multi year funding remains one of the greatest challenges. Reliance on project-based grants, wage subsidies, sponsorships, and unpredictable donor contributions creates significant challenges for long-term planning.

Maintaining financial sustainability while keeping programs affordable for our community is an ongoing challenge.

Changes in financial challenges over time



12. How much of a challenge would you say each of the following are within your organization? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

*Added in 2025

68% of organizations face human resource challenges

Recruiting and retaining qualified staff remains a persistent challenge across the sector. Around eight in ten organizations report difficulty finding qualified employees and volunteers, highlighting the strain many teams face in maintaining the people needed to deliver programs and services. Challenges also extend to engaging and retaining both staff and volunteers, suggesting workforce pressures go beyond recruitment alone.

Compensation and capacity pressures further contribute to these challenges. Roughly three quarters of organizations indicate challenges providing competitive wages and retaining employees. Operating within limited funding structures makes it difficult for nonprofits to offer salaries and benefits that compete with opportunities in the government or private sector, which can make it harder to attract experienced candidates and sustain stable

teams over time.

Workforce challenges are also reflected in gaps in staff skills and expertise. The most commonly report gaps are in areas such as technology, marketing and communications, grant writing, and fund development. These functions are critical to organizational growth and long-term sustainability, yet they can be difficult to maintain within small teams and limited budgets.

Additional workforce pressures include succession planning, training and mentorship, and access to specialized expertise. Together, these findings suggest that workforce challenges are not only about recruiting enough people, but also about ensuring organizations have the right mix of skills and capacity needed to sustain programs and respond to evolving community needs.

Volunteers are essential to our organization, but it has become harder to recruit and retain them.

Many organizations rely heavily on volunteers, yet fewer people have the time or capacity to commit.

Volunteer burnout is becoming more common as fewer people are taking on more responsibilities.

Recruiting qualified staff is increasingly difficult, particularly when we cannot offer competitive wages compared to other sectors.

Nonprofits often struggle to find staff with specialized skills such as fundraising, administration, or program development.

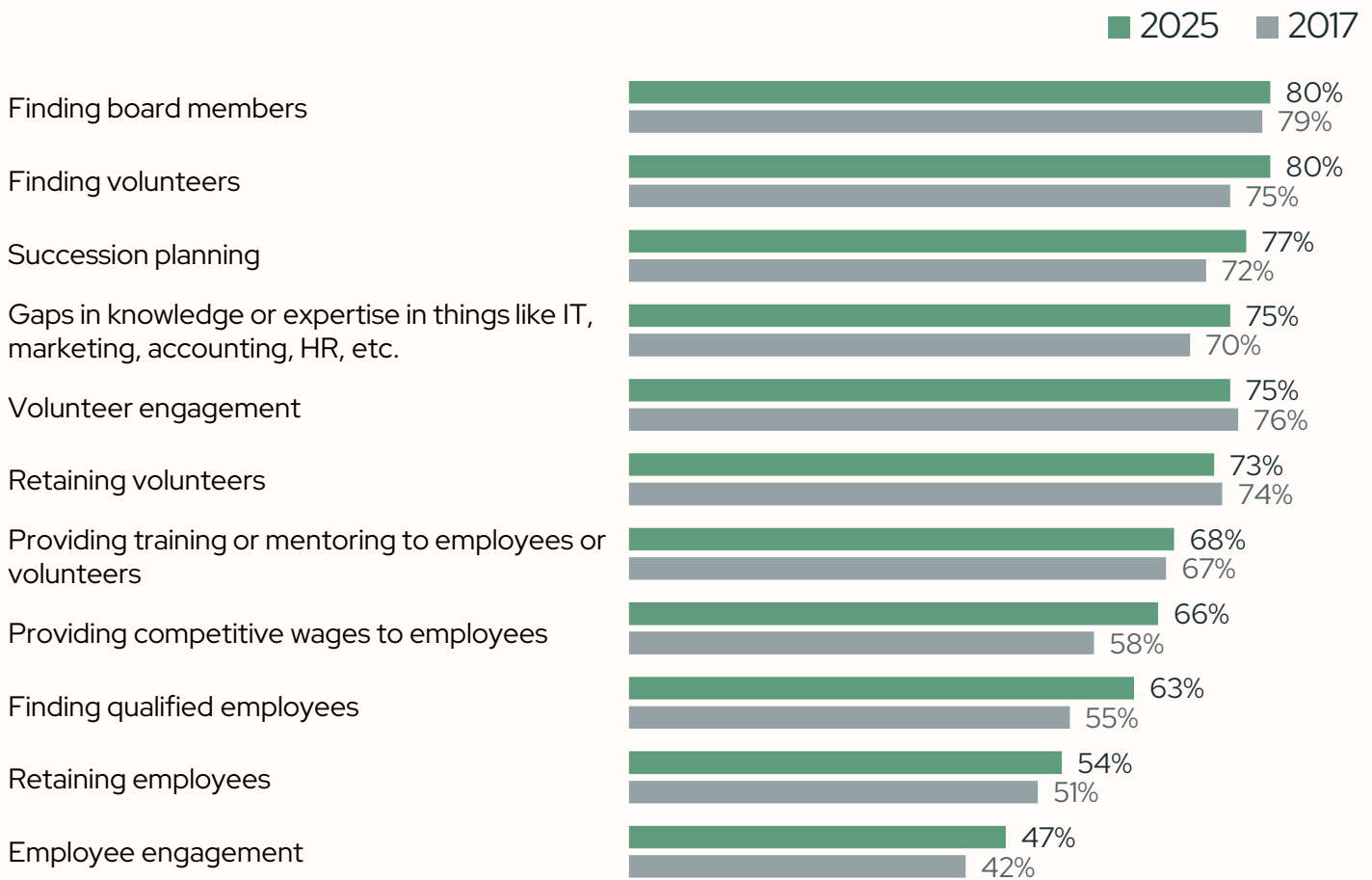
Finding people with the right skills and experience has become one of our biggest operational challenges.

Limited resources make it difficult to hire staff with expertise in areas like communications, finance, or technology.

20.1. If any, which of the following challenges are currently affecting your organization's ability to recruit or retain staff? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880.

15.1. Has your organization introduced any of the following strategies to recruit and retain staff? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880.

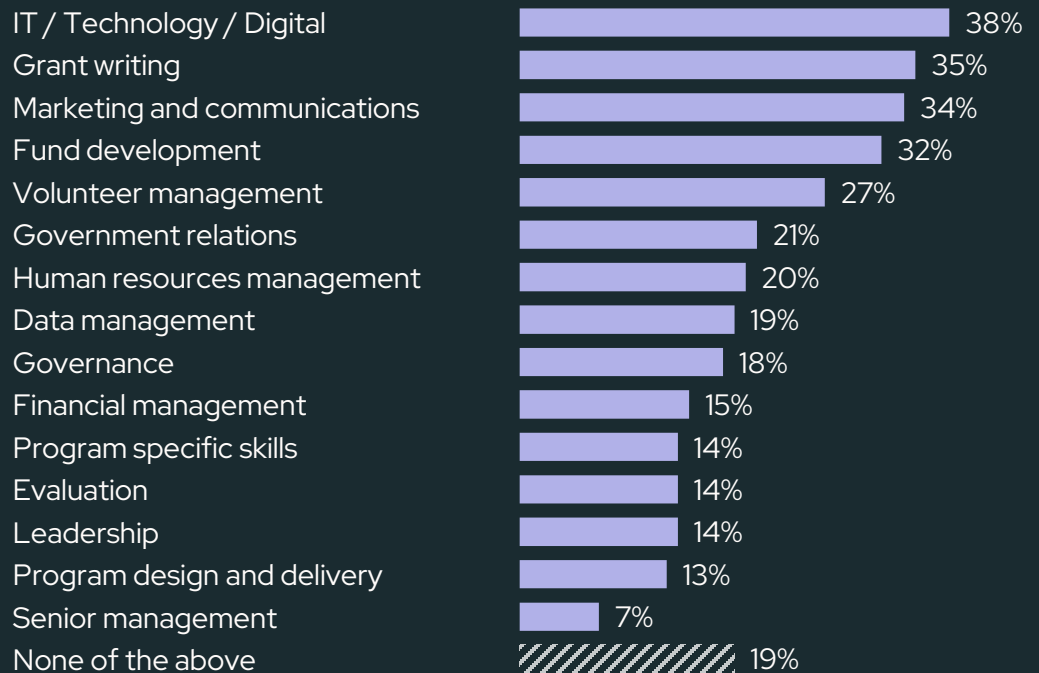
Human resource challenges over time



12. How much of a challenge would you say each of the following are within your organization? Base: all respondents, n=1168.

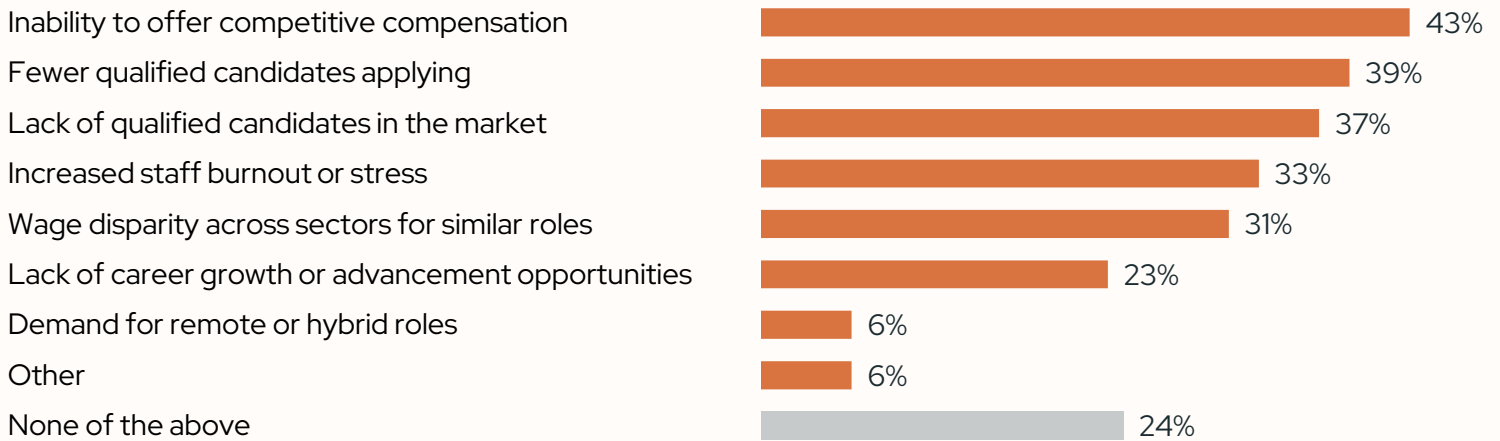
13. In which of the following areas does your organization currently lack sufficient staff skills or expertise? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Gaps in expertise and skills amongst organizations



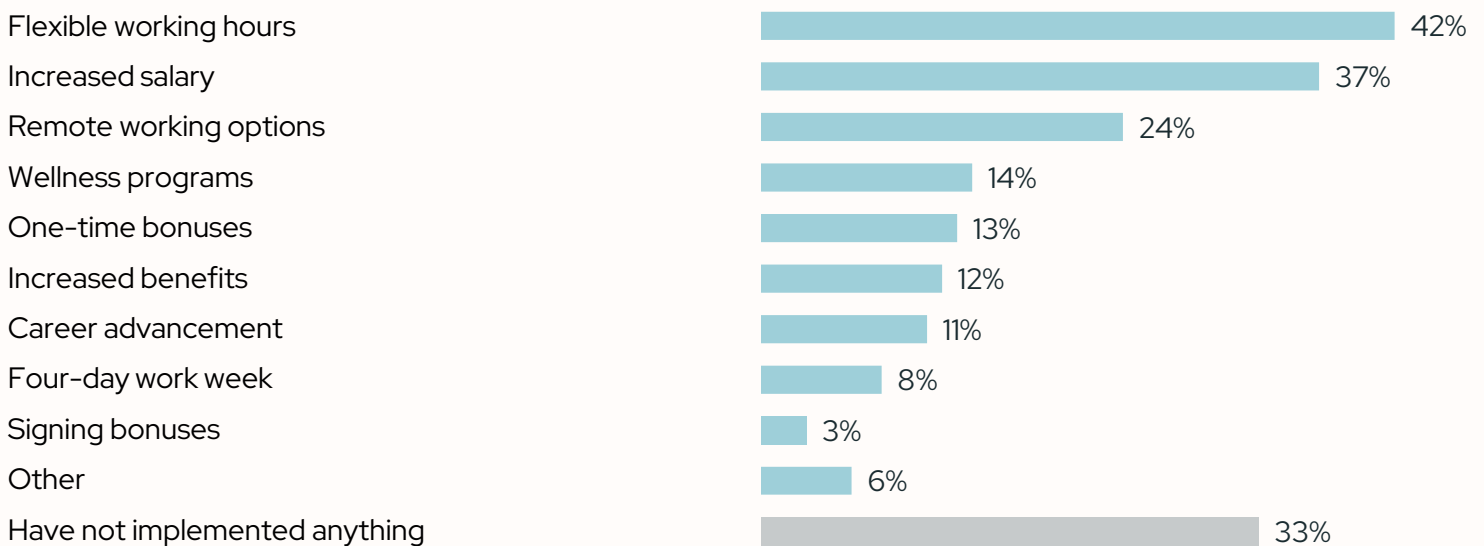
Challenges affecting the recruitment and retention of staff

Nonprofits face significant recruitment and retention challenges, particularly the inability to offer competitive compensation and a shortage of qualified candidates. Burnout, wage disparities across sectors, and limited career advancement opportunities further compound staffing difficulties across the sector.



Strategies implemented to recruit & retain staff

Flexible hours and salary increases are the most common retention strategies, while about one-third of organizations have not implemented any new measures.

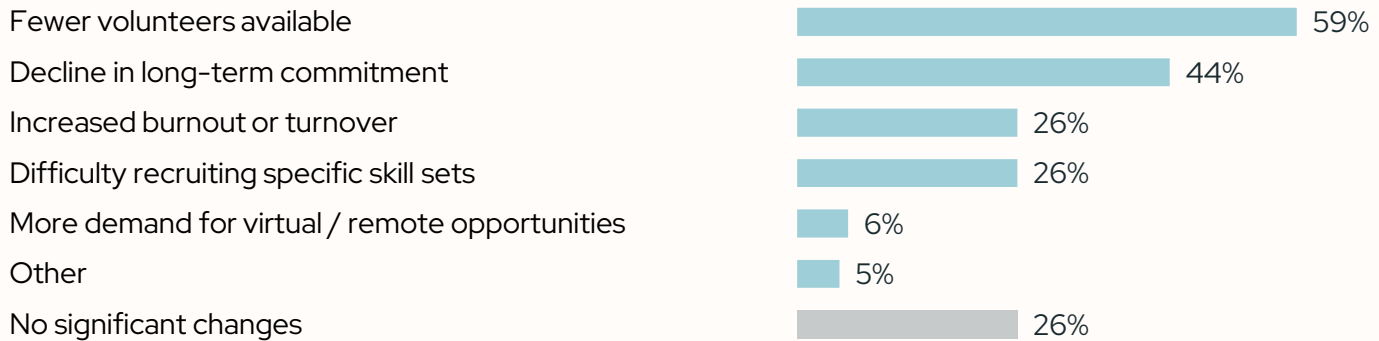


20.1. If any, which of the following challenges are currently affecting your organization's ability to recruit or retain staff? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880.

15.1. Has your organization introduced any of the following strategies to recruit and retain staff? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880.

Shifts in volunteer engagement over the past three years

Most nonprofits report having fewer volunteers available and a noticeable decline in long-term commitment. Increased burnout and difficulty recruiting specific skill sets have also emerged as growing challenges in volunteer engagement.



20.2. If any, which of the following shifts in volunteer engagement have you observed within the past three years? Base: Organizations who have volunteers, n=717.

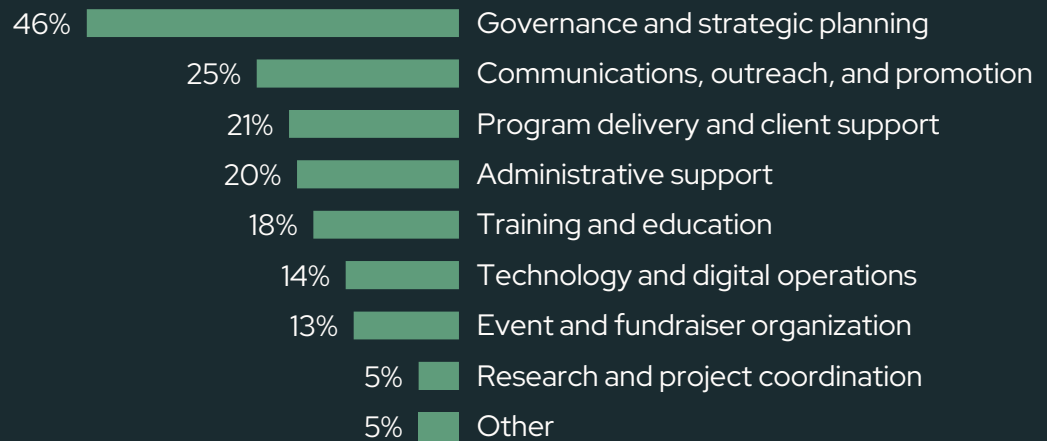
20.3. Do you currently offer virtual or remote volunteer opportunities? Base: Organizations who have volunteers, n=717.

20.4. What types of tasks or duties do you offer to virtual or remote volunteers? Base: Organizations who offer virtual or remote volunteer opportunities excl. "Don't know", n=147.

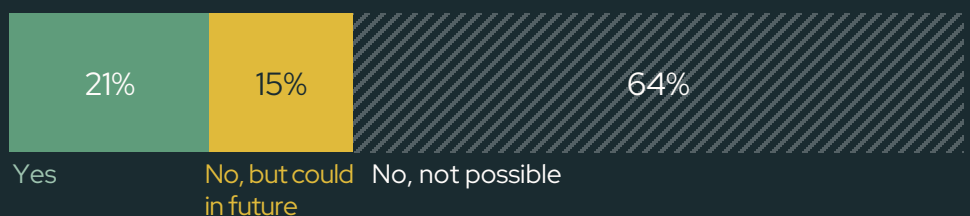
Offering remote volunteering roles

Most nonprofits are unable to offer remote volunteer opportunities due to the nature of their work, though some indicate potential to do so in the future. Among those offering virtual roles, volunteers most often support governance, communications, program delivery, and administrative functions.

Types of tasks offered remotely



Offering remote opportunities



Other Operational Challenges Facing Nonprofits

Despite financial and workforce pressures, organizations also face challenges related to **participation and community engagement**. Engaging certain demographic groups, particularly teens and adults under 30, can be difficult and may affect participation in programs, memberships, and volunteer roles. Lower engagement among younger audiences can make it harder to sustain long term

involvement in some organizations.

Maintaining participation while **managing program delivery and day to day operations** also presents ongoing challenges. Organizations often balance program responsibilities with administrative demands while trying to respond to changing community needs.

Community needs are becoming more complex, particularly in areas such as mental health, housing, and social supports.

Threats to critical imports posed by potential tariffs, security threats to shipping lanes

Small teams and limited resources make it difficult to expand programs or respond to emerging needs.

Misunderstanding about the role of nonprofit organizations can make it harder to build support and partnerships.

Organizations often struggle to manage operations, reporting requirements, and program delivery with limited capacity.

Lack of health professionals within the region to support the families we serve.

Greater collaboration across organizations could strengthen the impact of the sector.

Many organizations are working toward similar goals but lack the time or resources to coordinate efforts effectively.

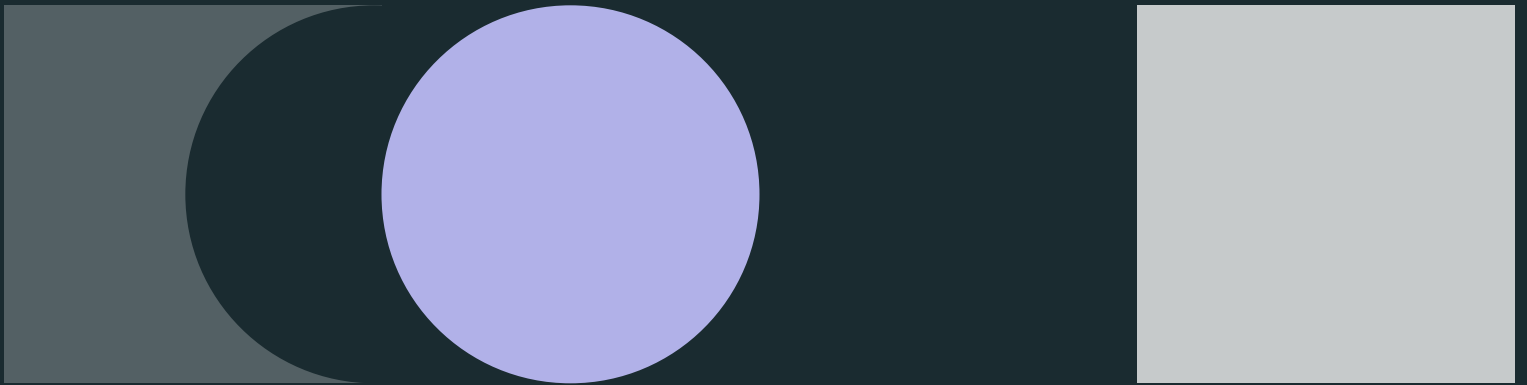
Getting the word out about our organization without utilizing a lot of staff time

Having the appropriate Ministry's ongoing support within our community.

Engaging certain demographics, particularly teens and adults under 30, remains an ongoing challenge.

25. Please indicate the proportion of your Saskatchewan revenue that comes from each of the following sources. Please provide estimates if you are unsure of the exact amount for each category. Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Overall Financial Health



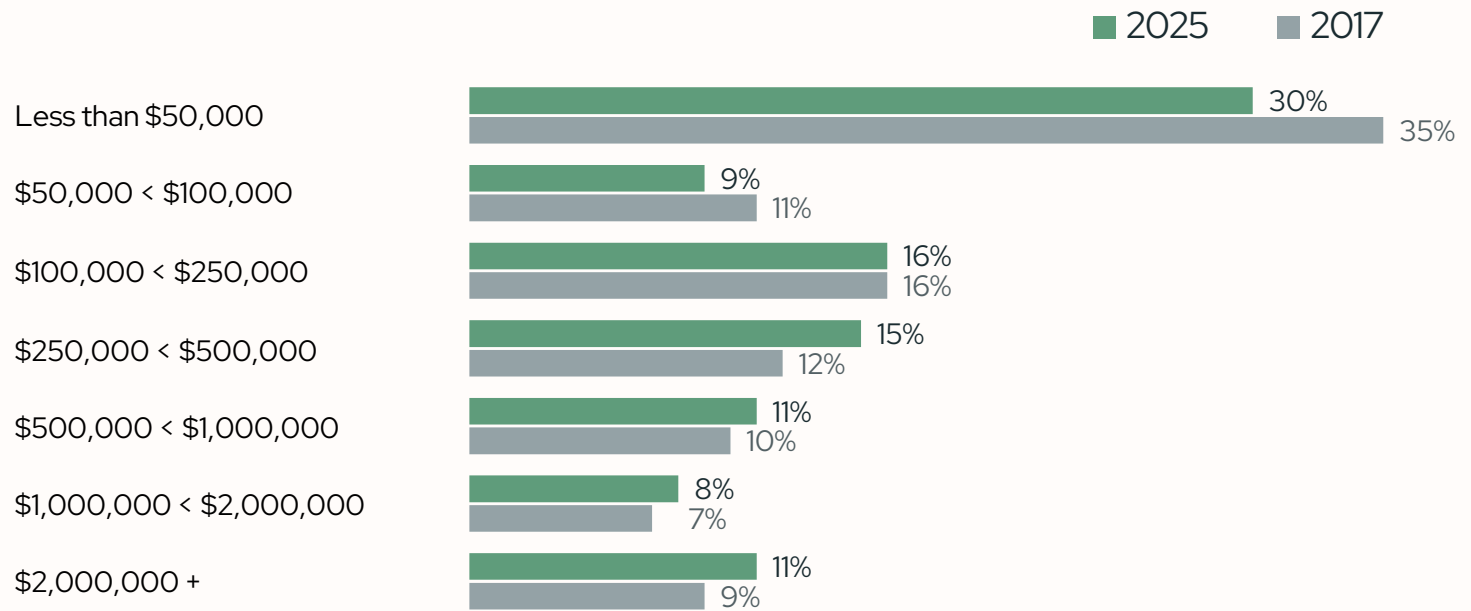
Operating budgets

The majority of nonprofits operate with modest budgets, nearly one-third report annual operating budgets under \$50,000, while about one in ten manage budgets exceeding \$2 million.

In total, the estimated combined operating budget across the sector amounts to approximately \$8.24 billion.

Compared with 2017, the overall distribution

of budgets remains largely consistent, though there are signs of modest financial growth. The share of organizations with budgets under \$50,000 has declined slightly (from 35% to 30%), while there are modest increases among organizations with mid-range budgets, suggesting gradual growth in the financial capacity of some nonprofits.



Annual Operating Budget	Est. Mean	Est. Median	Est. Total (Province)
2025	\$1,029,905	\$180,000	\$8,239,242,000
2017	\$720,965	\$120,000	\$4,677,623,896

23. Please complete the following fields about your organization's finances based on the most recent financial year. Base: Respondents that entered a number for annual operating budget (Outliers and MUSH organizations removed), n=800.

24. Would you be willing to indicate into which of the following categories does organization's annual operating budget falls (excluding capital budgets)? Base: Respondents that did not enter a number in question 23, excluding "prefer not to say" (Outliers and MUSH organizations removed), n=190.

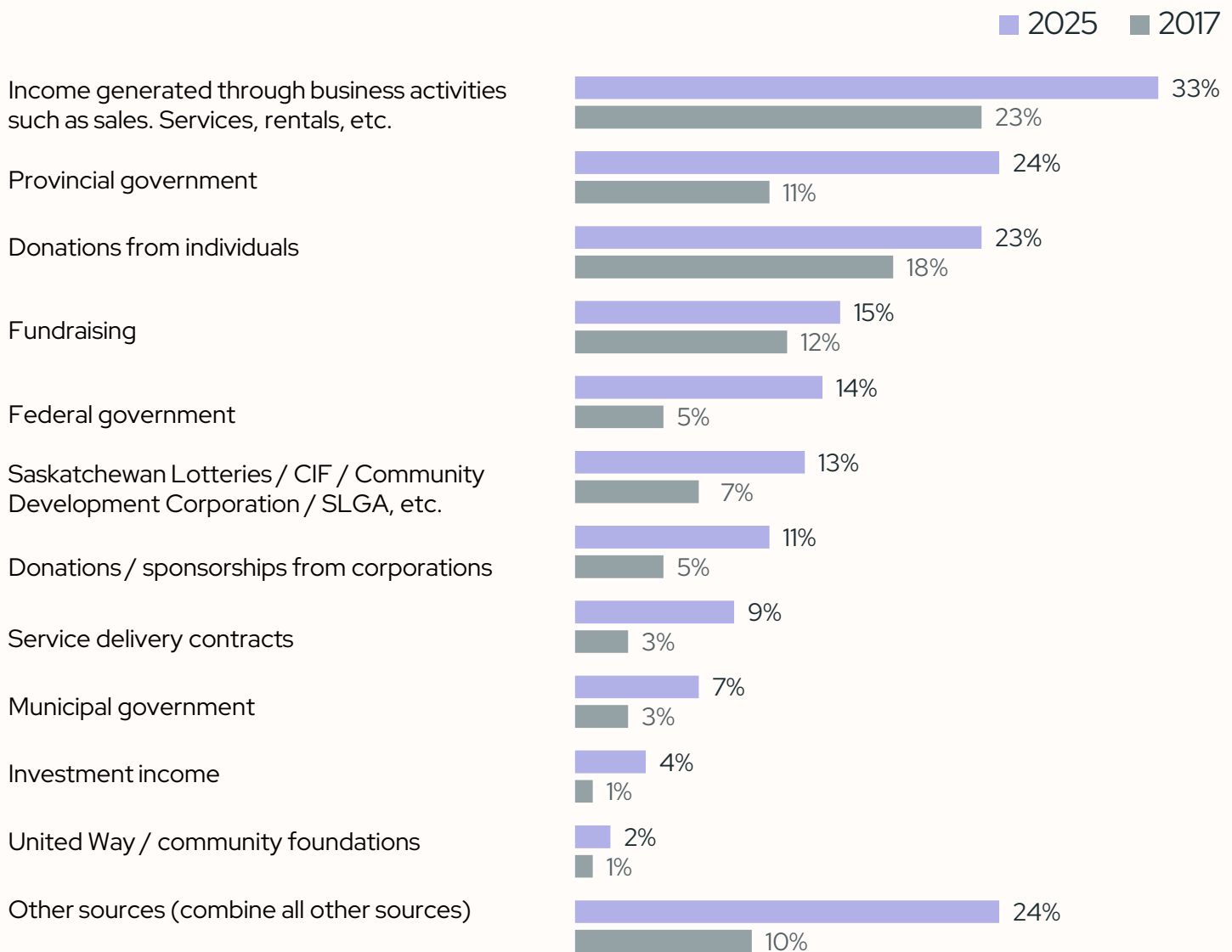
*Estimated mean, median, and sample total is calculated from the sample created by combining open-ended numeric input from question 23 with the range midpoint of close-ended responses provided in question 24 for those who did not specify an exact amount.

**Estimated Saskatchewan total = average annual operating budget × 8,000 nonprofits in Saskatchewan (SaskToday.ca, 2024).

Average proportion of revenue sources

Nonprofits in Saskatchewan rely on a diverse mix of revenue sources, with the largest share coming from earned income through sales and services.

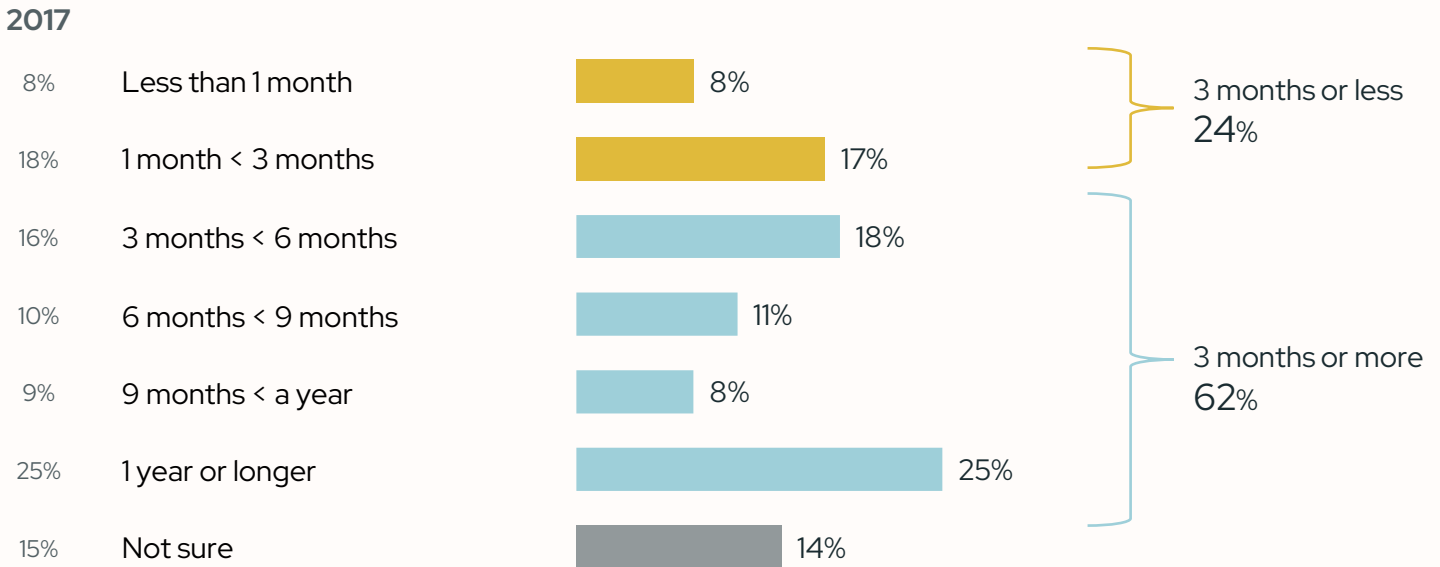
Government funding—particularly from the province—along with individual donations and fundraising, also play key roles, while corporate and community foundation support represent smaller portions of overall revenue.



25. Please indicate the proportion of your Saskatchewan revenue that comes from each of the following sources. Please provide estimates if you are unsure of the exact amount for each category. Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Potential duration of cash reserves

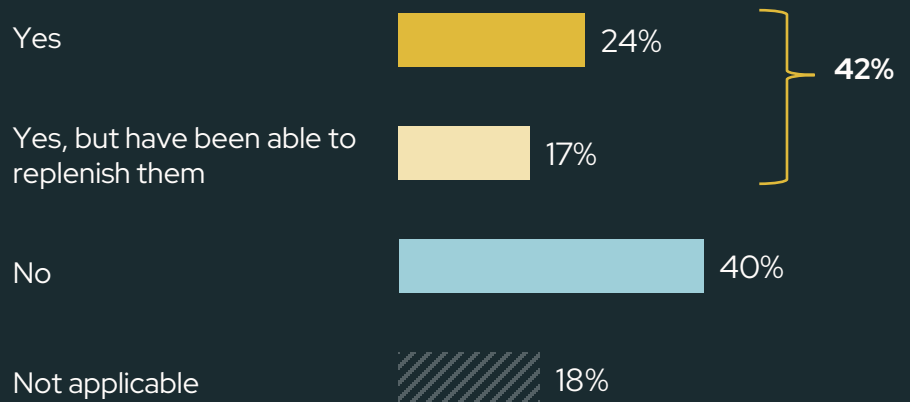
Six out of ten organizations report having cash reserves that could sustain operations for three months or more, while about one quarter could operate for less than three months if revenue were to stop.



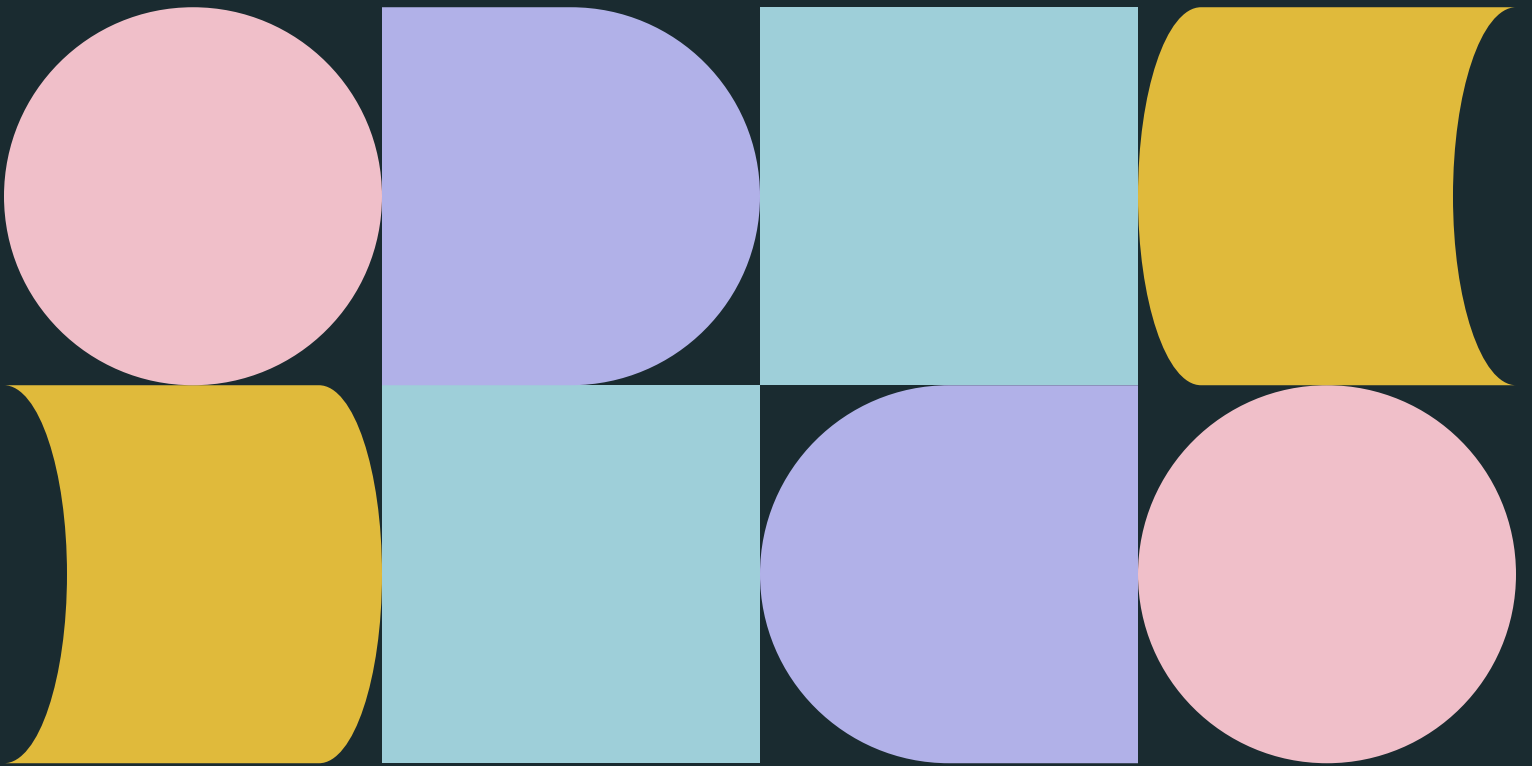
27. For how many months would your organization's cash reserve carry your organization assuming that all incoming revenue were to stop as of today? Base: All respondents, n=1168.
 27.1. Have you had to access your cash reserves in the last 3 years? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

Accessed cash reserves in the past three years

About one in four nonprofits have accessed their cash reserves in the past three years, with some able to replenish them.

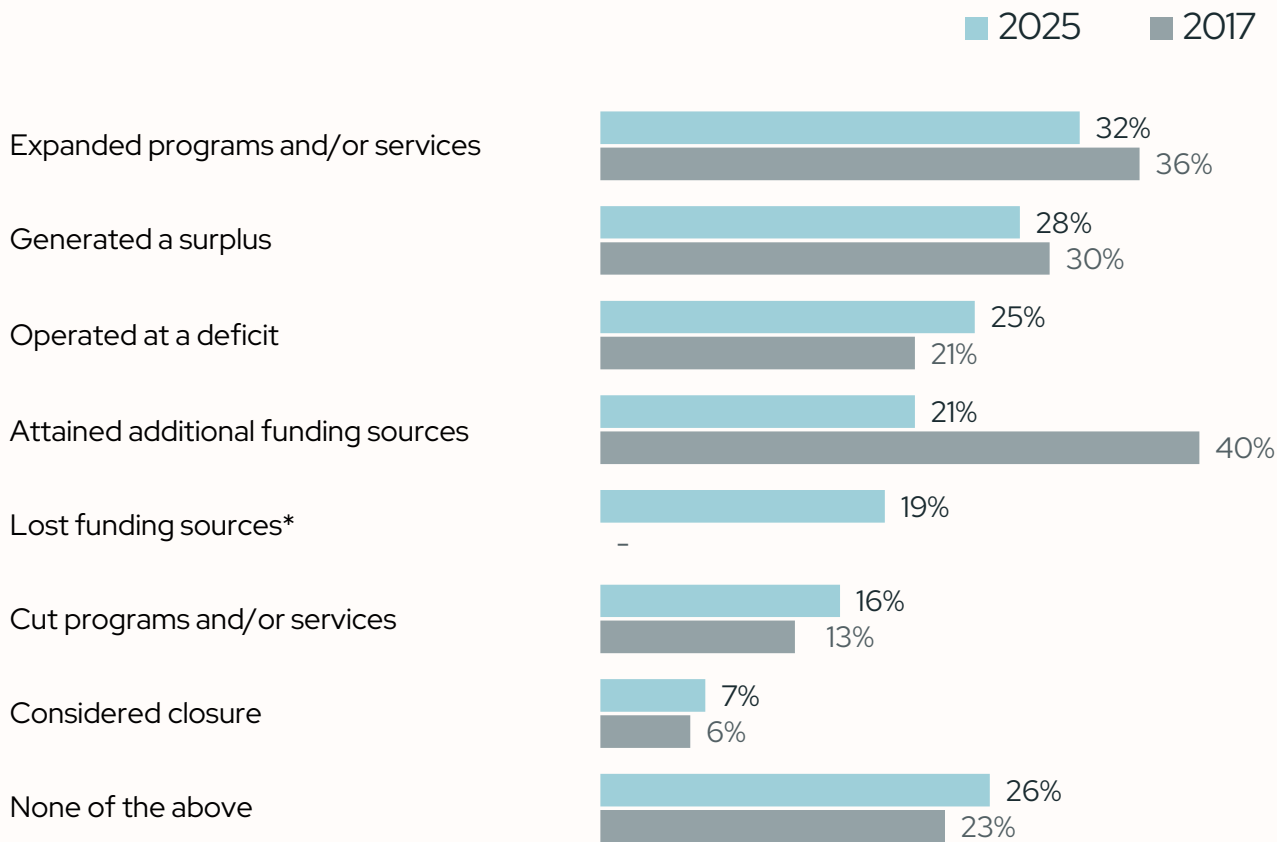


Changing Circumstances



Success, challenges, and actions over the past 12 months

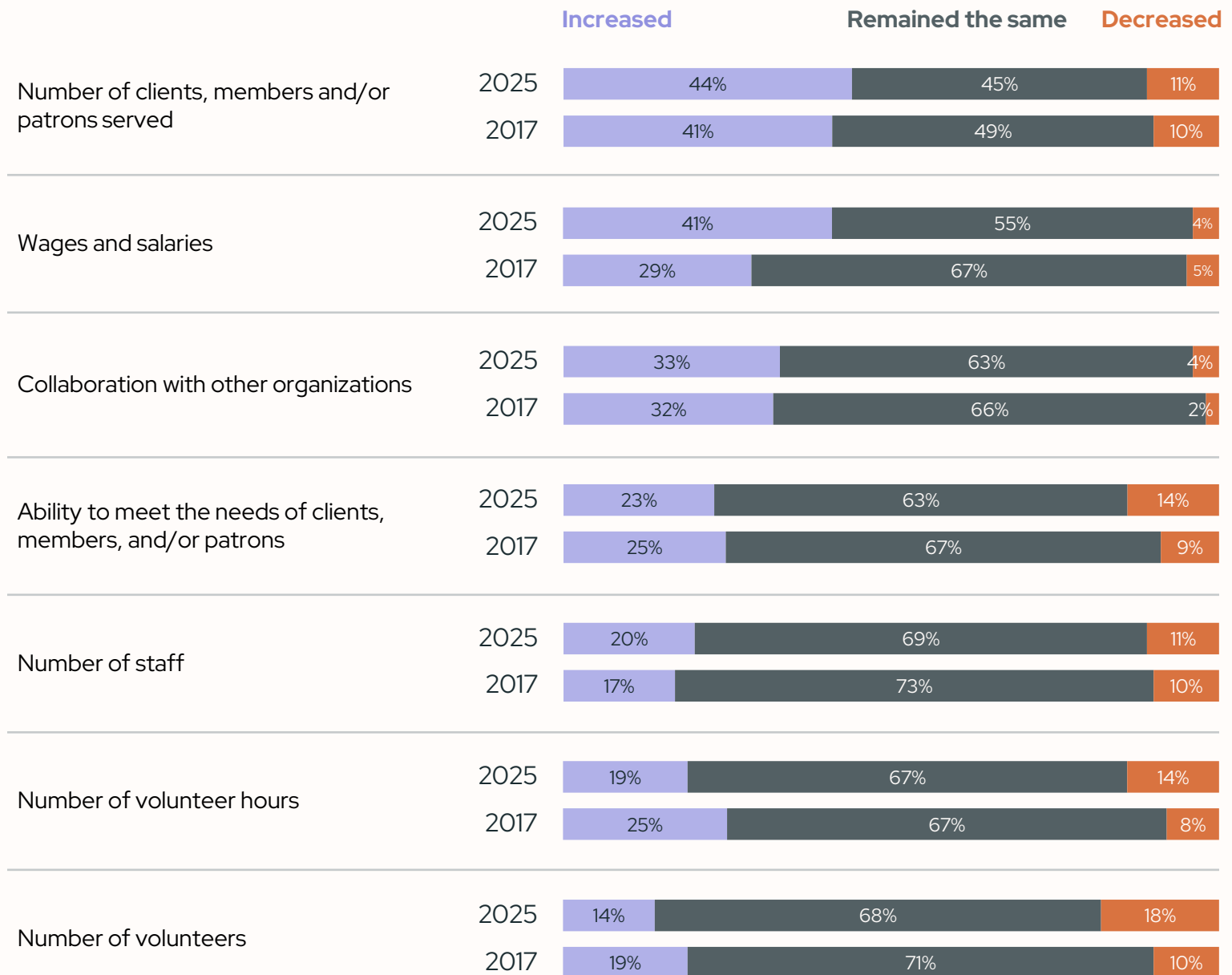
Compared to 2017, fewer nonprofits report expanding programs or securing new funding sources, suggesting a more cautious operating environment. At the same time, more organizations have experienced deficits or lost funding, reflecting ongoing financial pressures across the sector.



32. Within the past 12 months has your organization... Base: All respondents, n=1168.
 *Added in 2025

Changes over the past 12 months

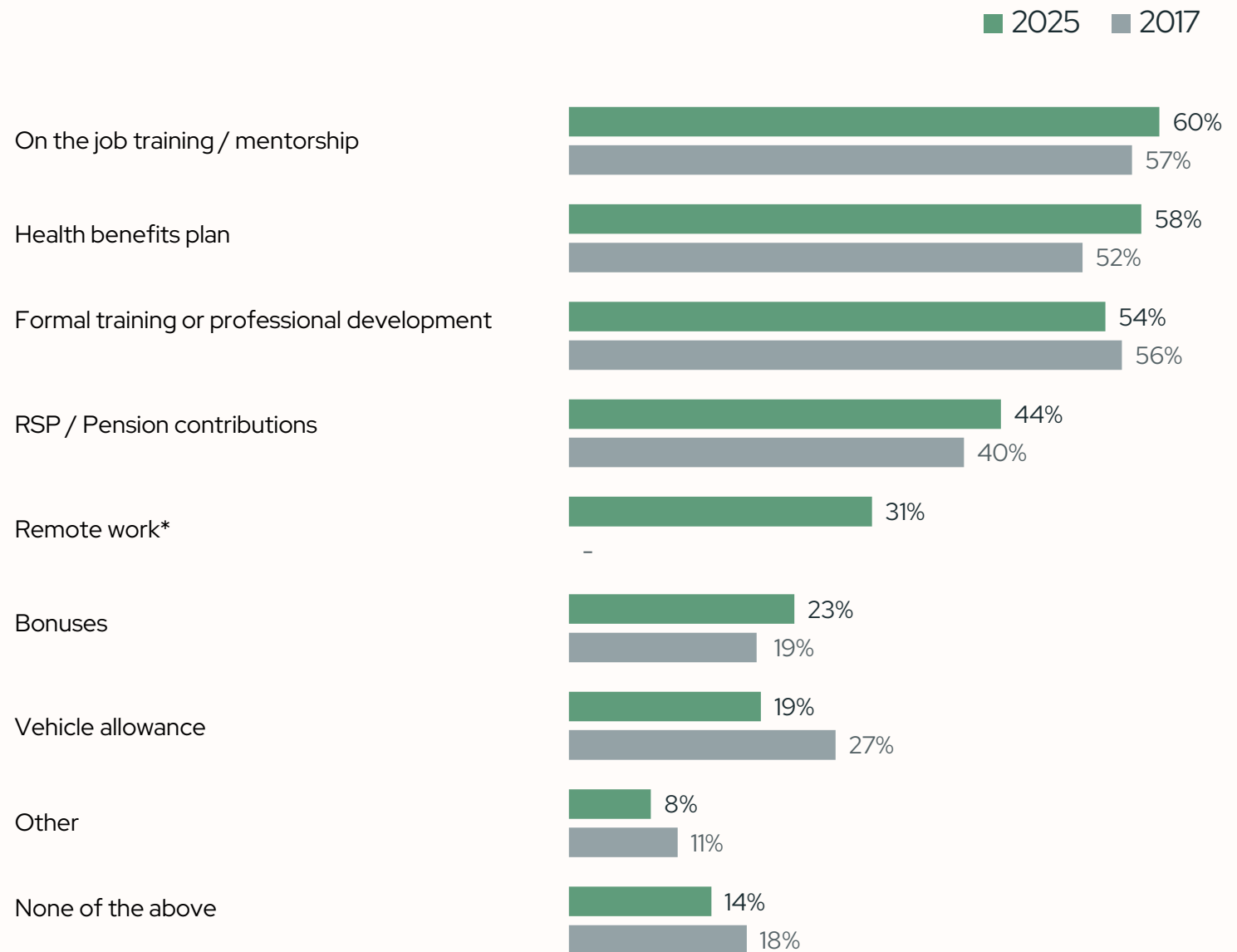
Compared to 2017, fewer nonprofits report expanding programs or securing new funding sources, suggesting a more cautious operating environment. At the same time, more organizations have experienced deficits or lost funding, reflecting ongoing financial pressures across the sector.



27.1. Have you had to access your cash reserves in the last 3 years? Base: All respondents, n=1168. "Not applicable" responses not shown.

Employee benefits

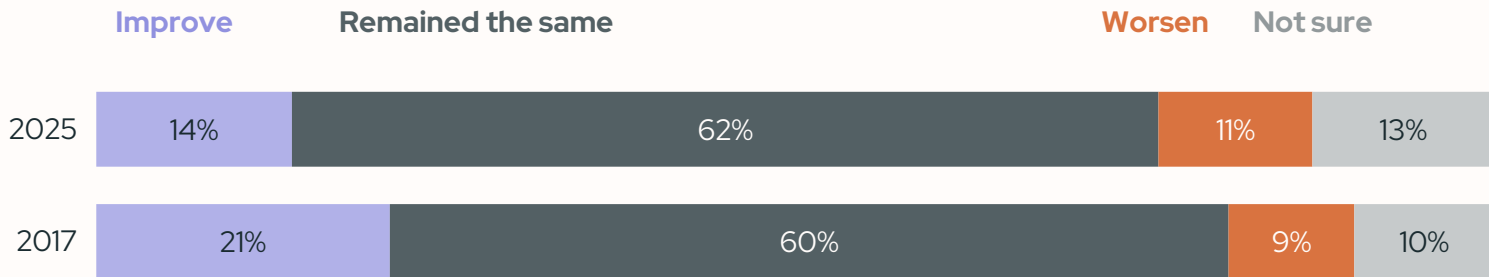
Compared to 2017, more organizations now offer health benefits, pensions, and bonuses, alongside the introduction of remote work options as a new staff benefit.



15. What benefits does your organization provide to at least some of the paid staff? Base: Organizations with paid staff, n=880.
 *Added in 2025

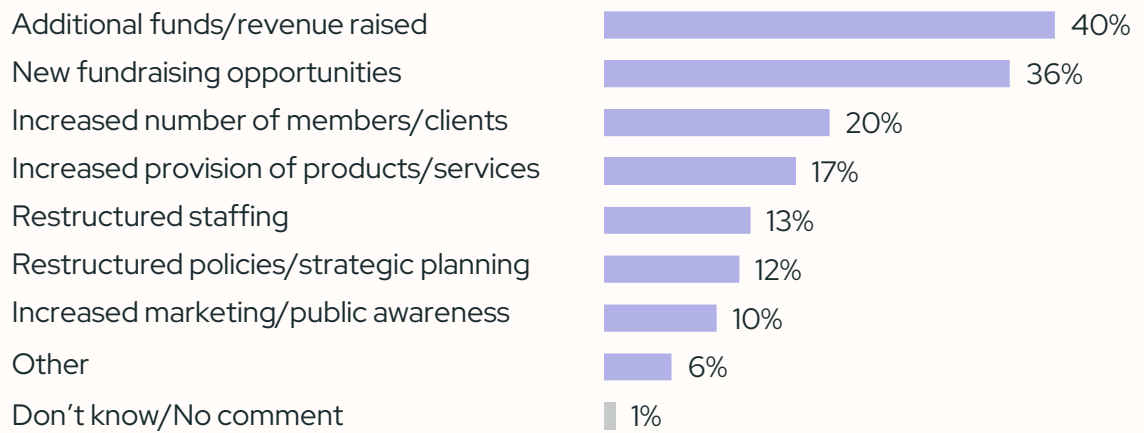
Anticipated financial situation over the next 12 months, and reasons for anticipating change

Most nonprofits expect their financial situation to remain stable over the next year, though expectations for improvement have declined since 2017.

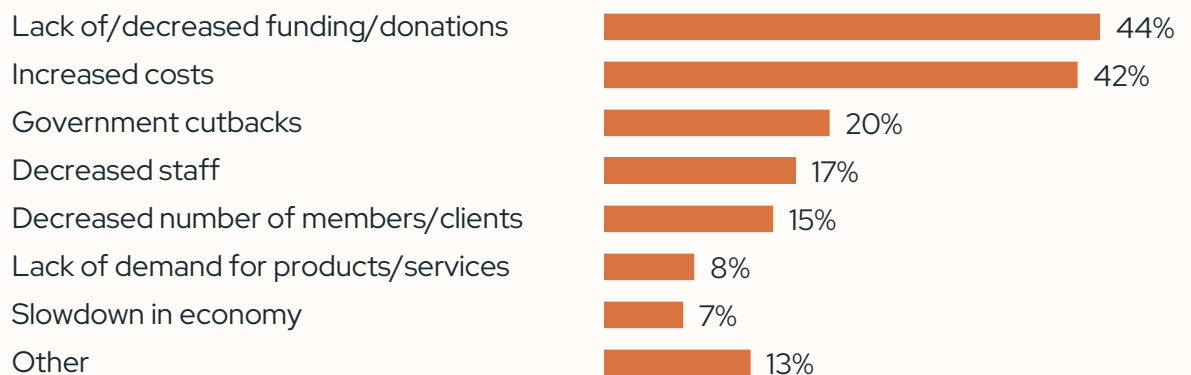


Organizations that expect their financial situation to improve most often attribute this to increased fundraising success, new revenue opportunities, and growth in membership or service delivery. Conversely, those anticipating a decline cite reduced funding or donations, rising operational costs, and government cutbacks as key contributing factors.

Reasons it will Improve



Reasons it will Worsen

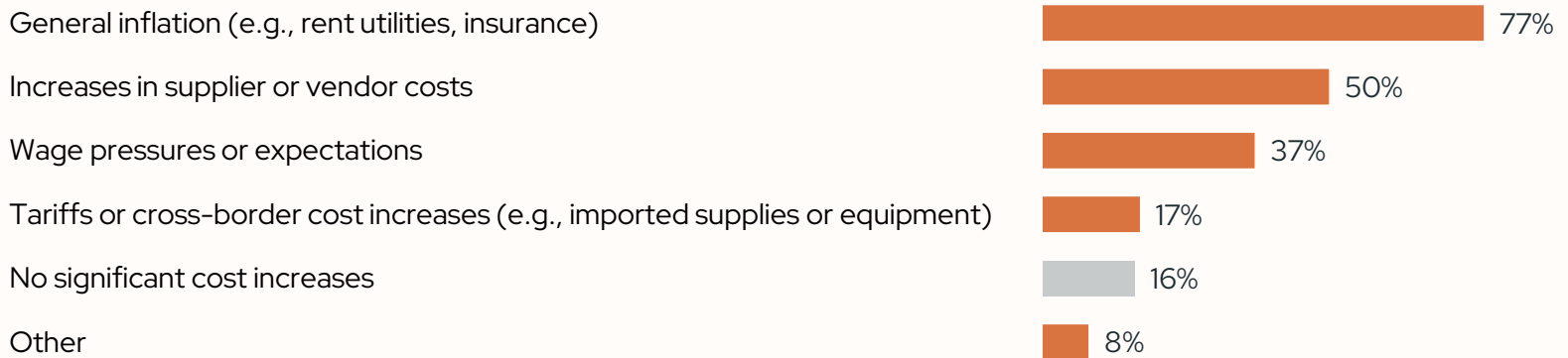


34. Within the next 12 months, do you anticipate that your organization's financial situation will... Base: All respondents, n=1168.

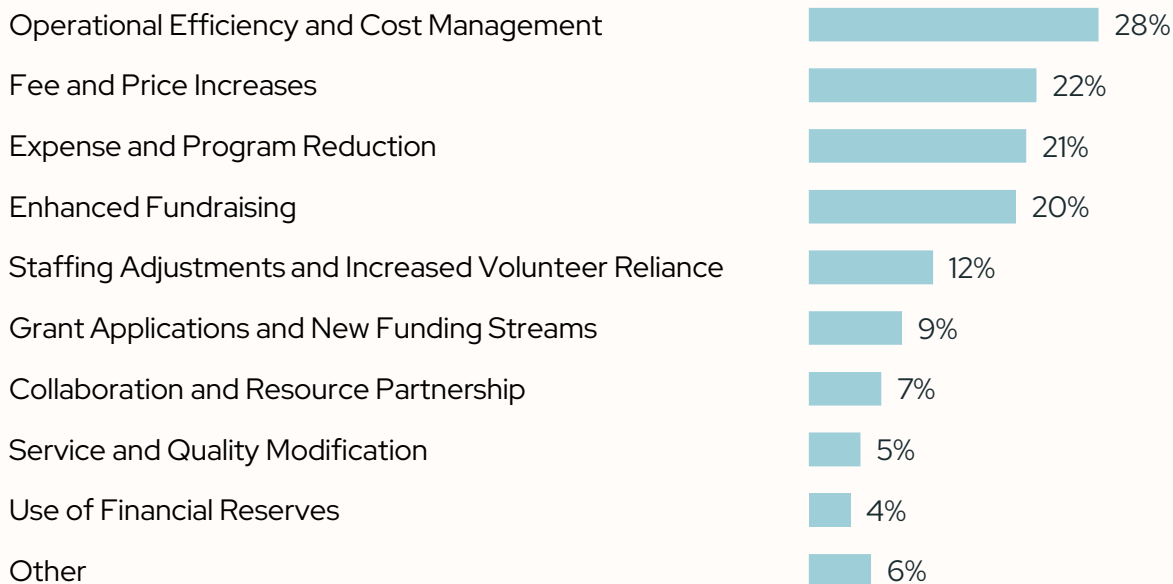
35. Why do you feel your organization's financial situation will improve/worsen within the next 12 months? Base: Respondents who anticipate their organization's financial situation will improve, n=162 or worsen, n=132.

Sources of Increased Organizational Costs in the Past 12 Months

Most nonprofits experienced rising costs over the past year, primarily driven by general inflation and higher supplier or vendor expenses. Wage pressures also contributed to increased financial strain, while few organizations reported no significant cost increases.



Ways organizations have adapted to rising costs or economic pressures



35.1. Has your organization experienced increased costs in the past 12 months due to any of the following? Base: All respondents, n=1168.

35.2: Please describe one way your organization has adapted to rising costs or economic pressures. Base: Respondents excl. "Don't know", n=739.

Adapting to Rising Costs or Economic Pressures

Organizations are adapting to rising costs through a mix of **revenue generation, cost containment, and service adjustments**. Common responses include increasing **fees, rents, and registration costs**, expanding **fundraising efforts**, applying for more **grants**, and seeking new **sponsorships or income streams**. At the same time, many are trying to control expenses through **tighter budgeting, bulk purchasing, reduced travel, online meetings, and closer review of discretionary spending**.

These adjustments often come with trade-offs. Some organizations report **cutting or scaling back programs**, delaying **repairs or capital purchases**, reducing **staff hours or positions**, or relying more heavily on **volunteers and board members** to maintain operations. Others describe drawing on **reserve funds** or operating with little margin for error, suggesting that not all adaptations are sustainable over the long term.

A smaller but important set of responses points to more strategic adaptations, such as **sharing resources with partner organizations**, moving some services **online**, improving **energy efficiency**, or developing **new earned revenue opportunities**. Overall, the findings suggest that organizations are working hard to remain responsive and resourceful, but in many cases are doing so by stretching limited capacity rather than resolving the underlying financial pressure.

By co-hosting events, sharing venues, and pooling volunteer support, we have been able to lower overhead costs while still delivering high quality programs.

Trying to look for funding from programs ran by the federal government.

More virtual events to save on rental, mileage and meals. This has allowed us to decrease fees for participants.

We have responded to rising costs by tightening our spending practices, seeking the most cost-effective suppliers, and adjusting staffing levels as needed to stay within budget.

We have moved to a four-day work week to help with staff retention; there have been little to no increases to our sustainable core funding which means staff wages have not increased anywhere close to cost of living.

We have had to increase our fundraising efforts which is a challenge since all others are doing the same thing. We have also had to go to temporary office space for the summer and using a board member's home as office during the other 8 months.

We will eventually have to increase the entry fee for the participants of the masterclass. Also, we try to save on costs for our adjudicator by bringing someone that lives close to the city as much as possible. (Less travel costs for us.)

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