

Organizational Wellness and Community Needs Survey



SIERRA HEALTH
FOUNDATION



THE CENTER
at Sierra Health Foundation

“The current environment is challenging, [while] our work is deeply necessary. Our communities are facing heightened levels of fear due to ongoing persecution, anti-immigrant policies and attacks on the rights of Trans, Gender non-conforming, and Intersex people.

*These conditions create barriers to safety, stability and access to resources, which makes our work more urgent than ever. At the same time, there is a profound sense of resilience and unity within the community we serve. **Despite the challenges, our people continue to show courage, determination and a belief in their right to live fully and authentically. This spirit inspires and strengthens our organization's commitment to meet the moment.**”*

Community Partner of The Center

A **community partner** is an organization that Sierra Health Foundation and The Center at Sierra Health Foundation invests in to advance health, racial equity and community well-being across California.

01

The Situation and Setting

Community based organizations are navigating unprecedented shifts in the nonprofit sector. This survey was conducted during a critical moment marked by federal policy changes, funding uncertainty, emotional strain, and heightened community need.

In 2025, President Trump signed several Executive Orders that created operation, financial, and legal challenges for non-profit organizations.

Before 2025

EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

- Stable or consistent funding streams
- Support for DEI-focused initiatives
- Ability to meet mission and goals
- Appropriate administrative oversight and accountability

After 2025

EXECUTIVE ORDERS:

- Reduced or delayed federal funding
- Eliminated and scrutinized funding for DEI
- Disproportionate impact on organizations serving marginalized and underinvested communities
- Increased administrative oversight and accountability

Investments are distributed through two separate nonprofit organizations: [Sierra Health Foundation \(SHF\)](#) and [The Center at Sierra Health Foundation \(The Center\)](#).

ORGANIZATION	NON-PROFIT TYPE	FUNDING GEOGRAPHY	INVESTMENTS
SHF	Private health conversion foundation	Northern California and San Joaquin Valley	Flexible funding grants
The Center	Intermediary that leverages public, donor and philanthropic funding	California	Funds primarily direct services Support funded partners with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical assistance • Capacity building • Power building

Why We Conducted the Wellness Survey

Community-based organizations **funded by SHF and The Center** were surveyed to understand and learn about:



How the shifting federal climate is affecting their organization



Their staff's wellbeing and additional investments needed



What they are hearing from their community partners

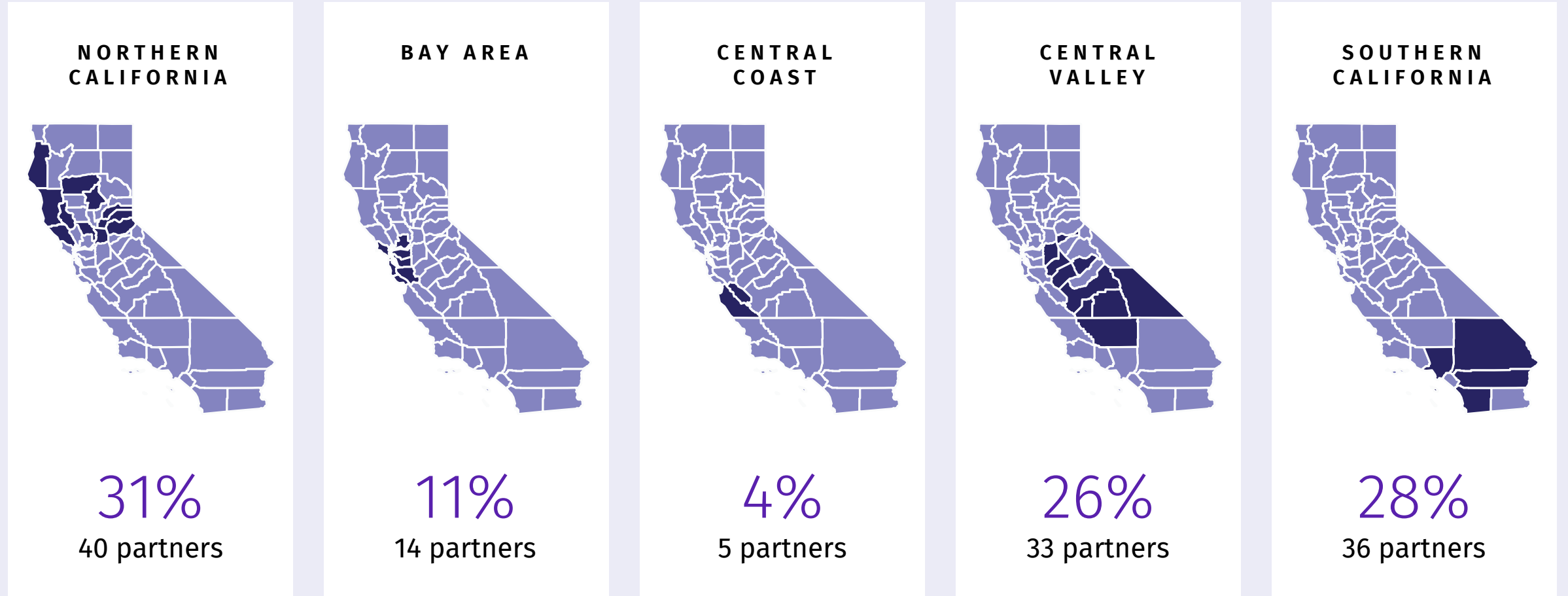
It is our hope that what we have learned may be used by other nonprofits and funders to navigate this challenging time for the charitable and nonprofit sectors.

Data Provided by Community Partners

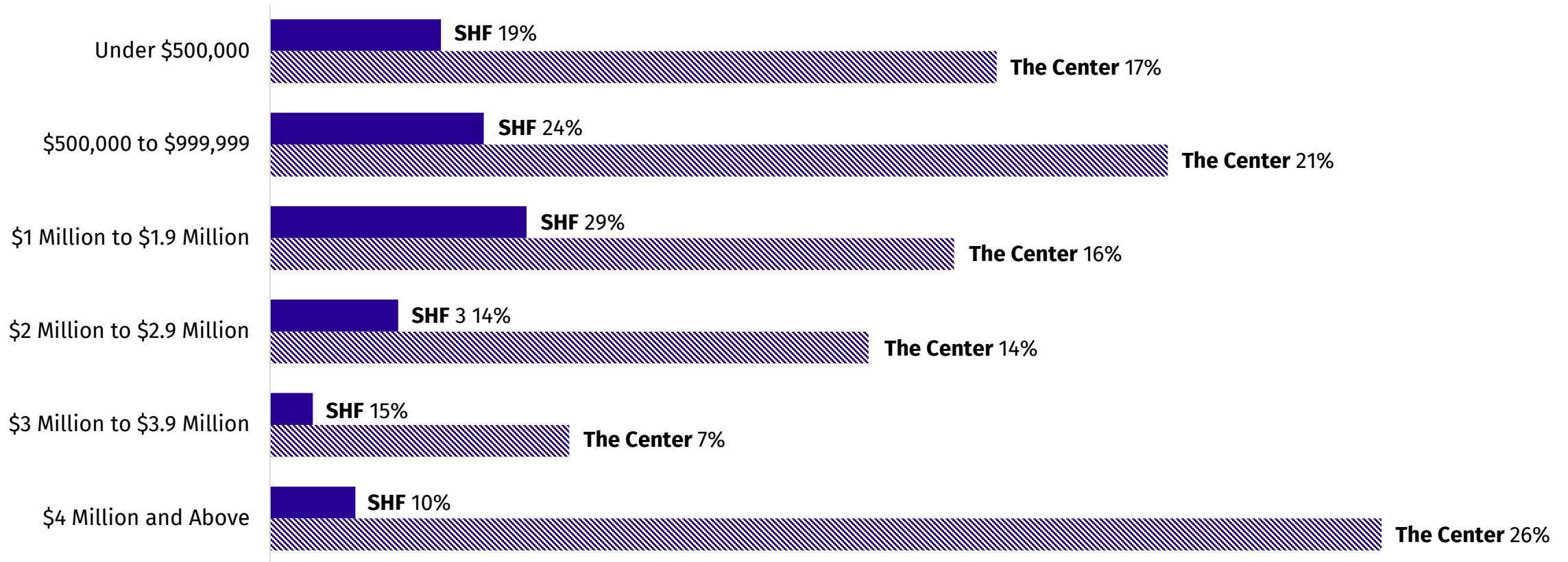
	SHF	The Center
Invited	131	274
Completed	21	108
Response Rate	17%	42%
Completion Rate	95%	94%

Respondent: Geography of Organizations

Community Based Organizations from **across California** responded to this survey.



Budget of Respondent Organizations



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Note: 7 respondents from The Center survey chose not to answer this question.

*“We operate in a landscape marked by heightened emotional and political tensions, economic strain and safety concerns that directly affect both staff and community members. **This reality requires heightened awareness, strong safety protocols and trauma-informed engagement strategies.**”*

*At the same time, we are seeing increased openness from community members and partners who want to be part of real change. **The work is challenging, but our commitment to kindness, consistency and community trust allows us to move forward with both caution and courage.**”*

Community Partner of The Center

02

Hope Persisted, While Organizations Experienced Heightened Risk and Direct Hostility¹

Organizations remained deeply committed to mission-driven work, refusing to back down despite heightened stress levels among staff and declining morale. At the same time, they are facing direct and significant consequences stemming from the current federal climate.

¹The percentages represent agreement, unless noted.

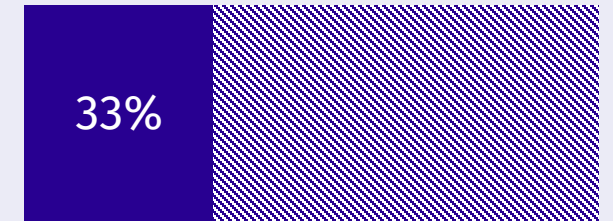
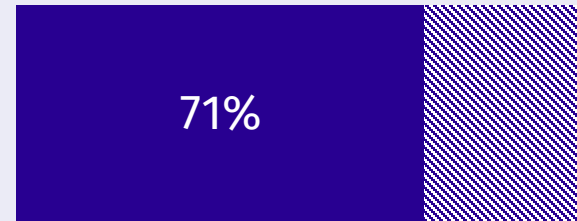
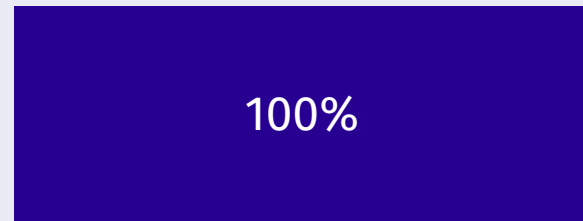
Organizations Remain Committed in a Difficult Climate

Almost all organizations remain hopeful about making a difference in their community.

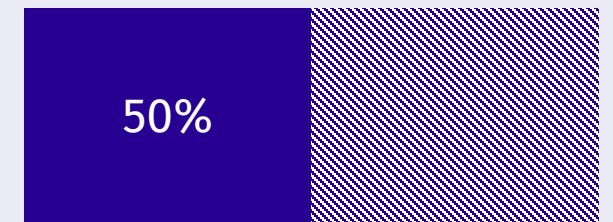
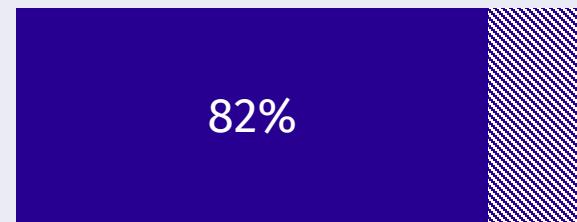
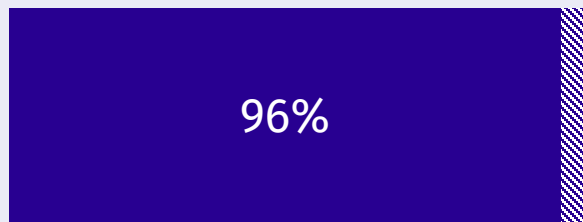
The political context strengthened most organizations' commitment to their mission.

Some organizations saw decreased morale in their staff because of the federal climate.

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“With the chaos of ICE and racial profiling, as well as threats to free speech, everything feels a little risky right now.

Speaking up and advocating for kindness and compassion feels risky, but we continue to do it in a respectful manner.

We will not back down.”

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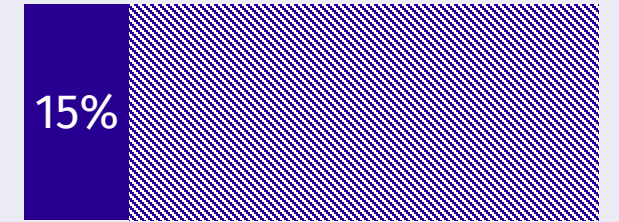
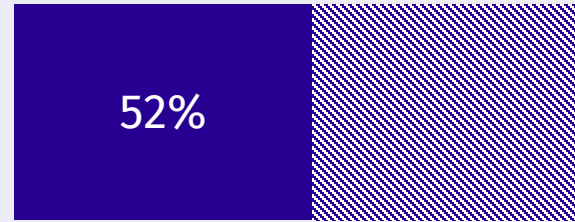
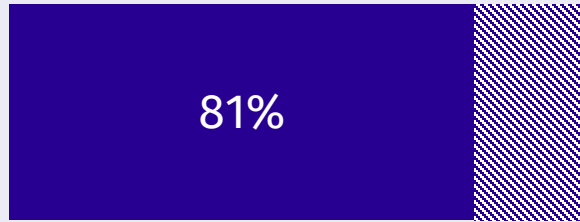
Working Under Pressure: Increased Stress and Hostility

The current federal climate has increased stress levels among most organizations.

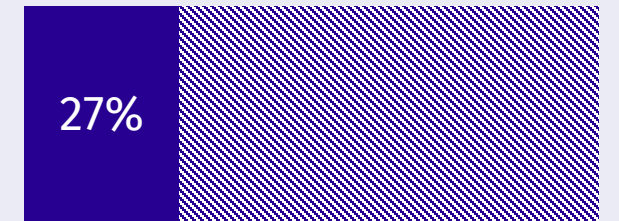
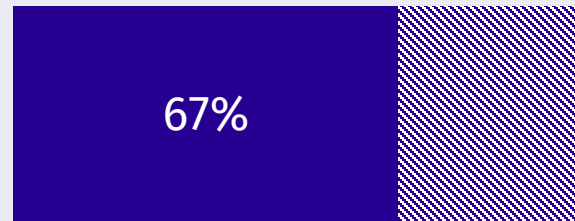
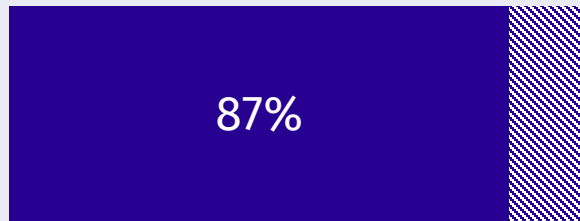
The current federal context has made most organizations' work feel more risky or contentious.

Only some organizations have received threats, backlashes, or hostility due to the nature of their work.

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*“The current environment for doing our work in the community has been challenging. **Our staff have faced intimidation, including individuals coming by their homes, threatening messages and targeted attacks on social media.***

Most recently, our CEO was advised by another organization to consider 'laying low' after learning we had been placed on a list of 'problem' organizations. Even so, we remain steadfast in our mission.

These experiences underscore the importance of the work we do, and they have only deepened our commitment to stand with and serve our community with courage and integrity.”

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03

Organizations are Focused on Staff Well-Being and Collaborating with Peers

Organizations are navigating significant emotional fatigue by strengthening their internal support systems and relying on external networks.

Re-Centering Staff

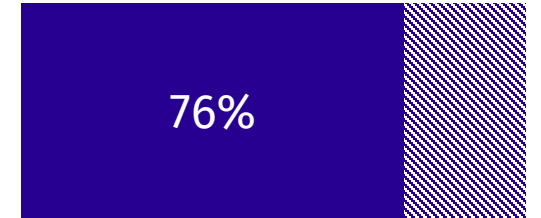
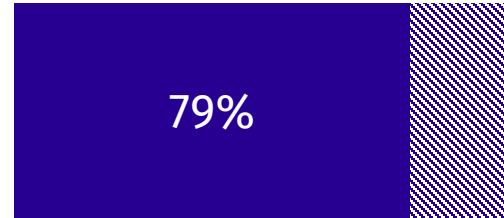
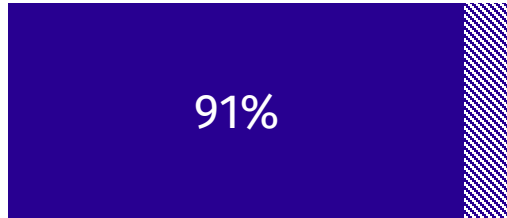
Most organizations have:

Experienced increased emotional fatigue.

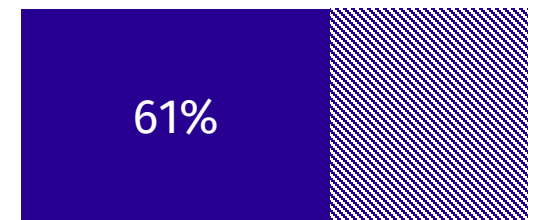
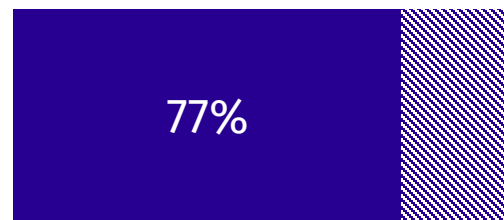
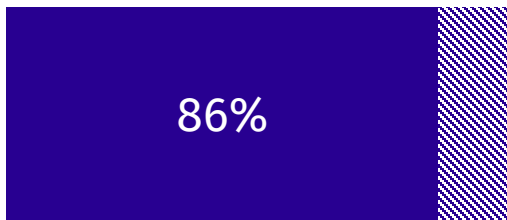
Strong emotional support systems for staff.

Intentionally created space for staff to process changes in the current climate.

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*“We are **re-centering staff** in the cultural and community purpose of the work. This has helped to **offset some of the anxiety** stirred up by federal changes.*

*When people feel their **daily efforts are tied to something bigger** and rooted in community resilience, it **softens the destabilizing effect** of outside forces.”*

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Collaborative Structures Have Emerged

The current federal response to nonprofits has deepened peer collaboration for most organizations.

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*“We have **built new relationships with other community [based] organizations to help strengthen our funding opportunities**, including applying for grants in a collaborative way with community partners.*

*This also includes **building new programs jointly** with community partners.”*

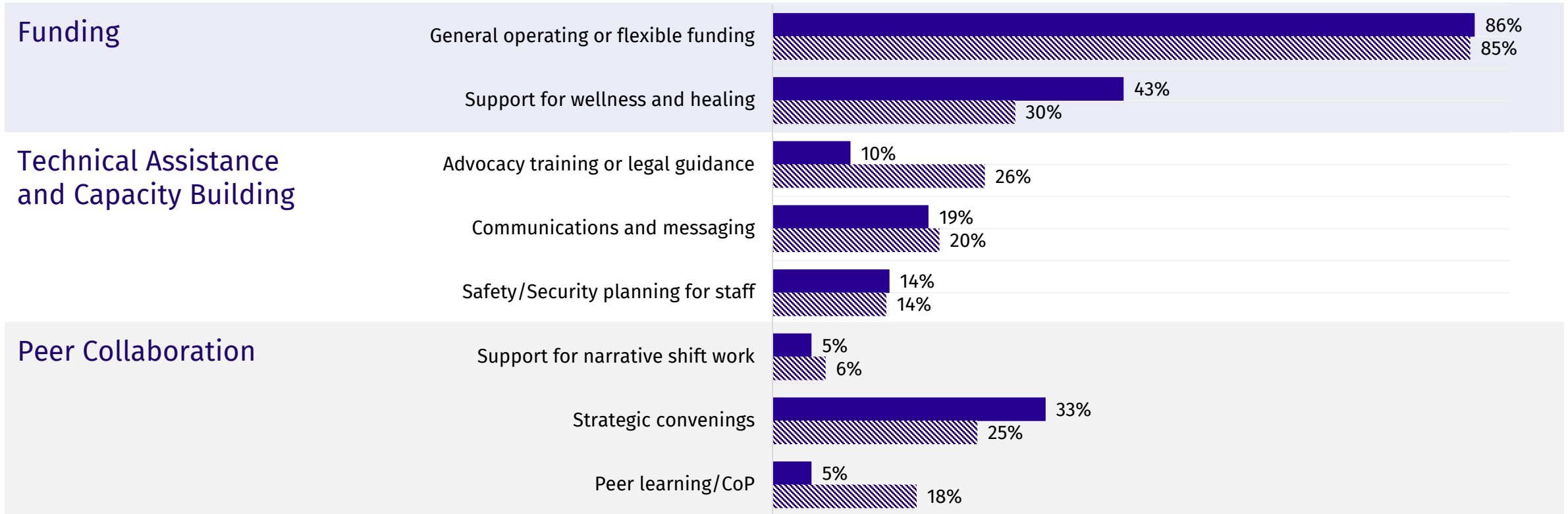
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04

Investments Needed by Organizations

Consistent investments are needed to navigate the current federal climate effectively. Organizations requested three types of primary investment: flexible funding, technical assistance and capacity building, and peer connection.

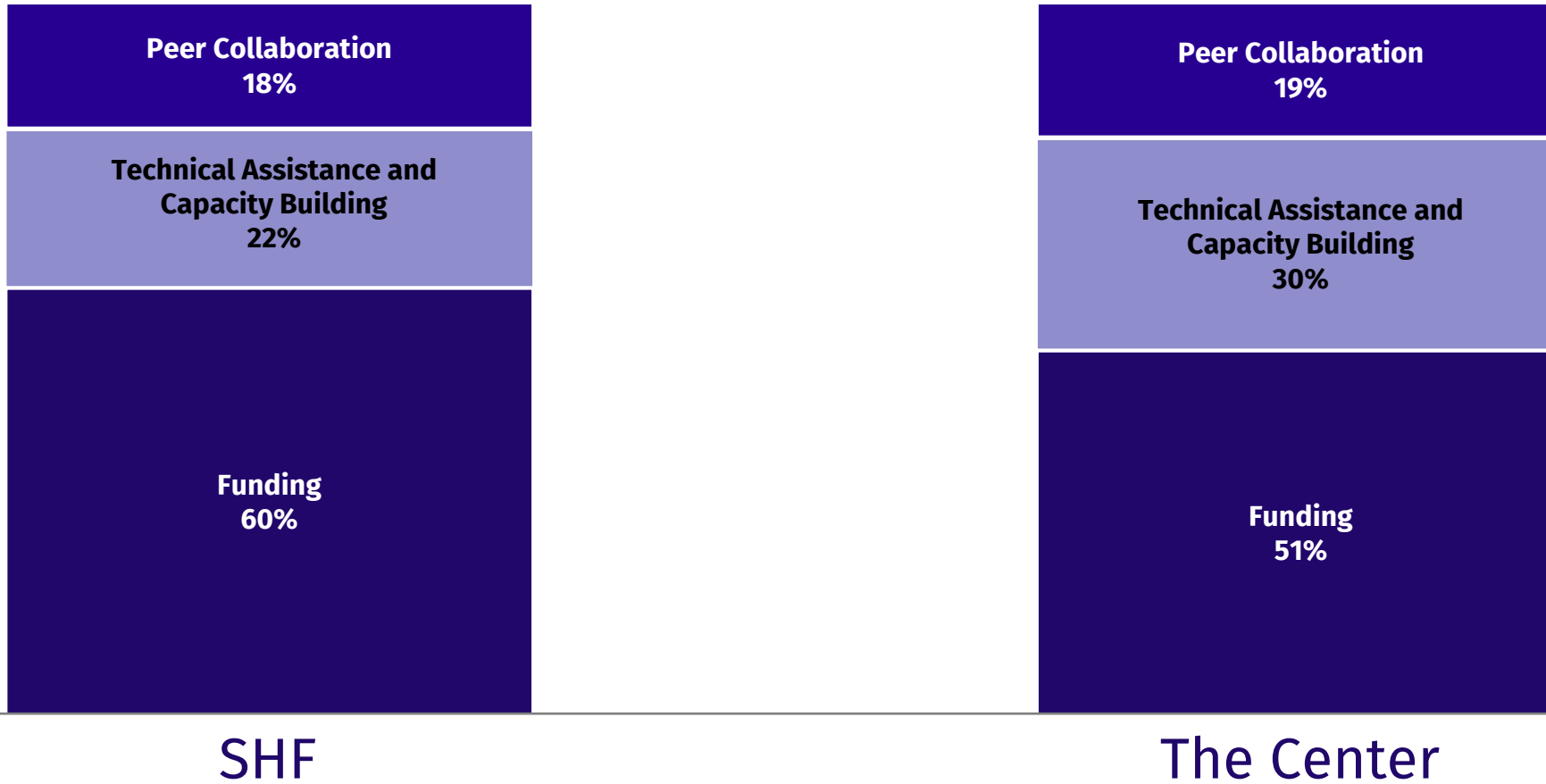
Over 80% of respondents from both **the Foundation** and **The Center** stated that **general operating or flexible funding** would be **most supportive** during this time.



■ SHF ■ The Center

Note: Respondents were asked to select up to three responses.

For respondents from **both the SHF and The Center**, supports related to **funding** were **selected the most**.



05

Organizations are Anchors During Times of Instability

Organizations have become trusted safe spaces during a time of uncertainty, facing surging demand for both current and new services, yet many lack the financial reserves and capacity to sustain this expansion.

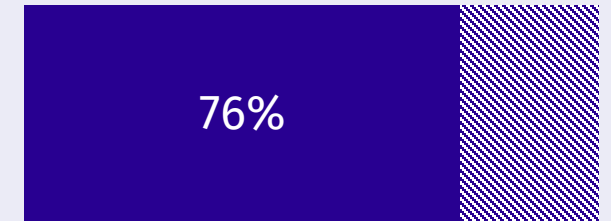
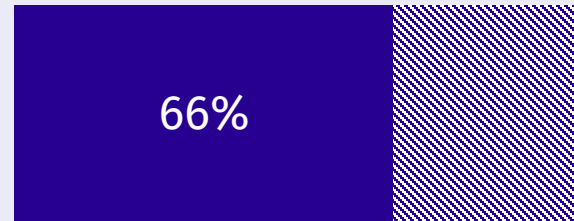
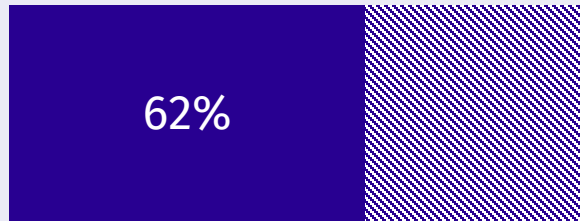
Community Trust and Demand

Most communities have expressed concerns about their safety or status.

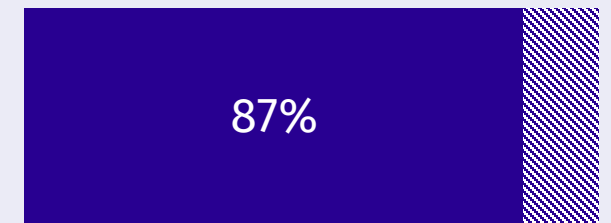
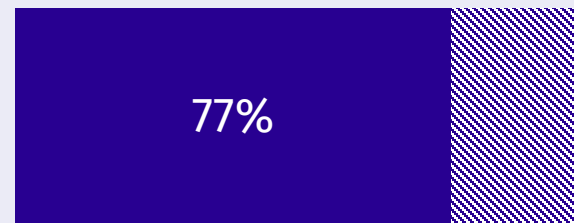
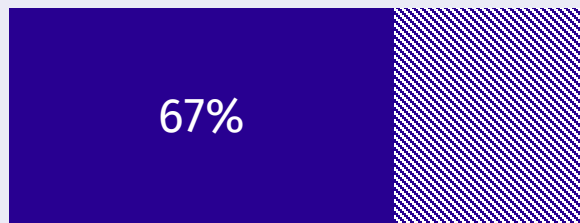
Most communities have increased trust in our organization as a safe space.

Many individuals and families have increased demand for services.

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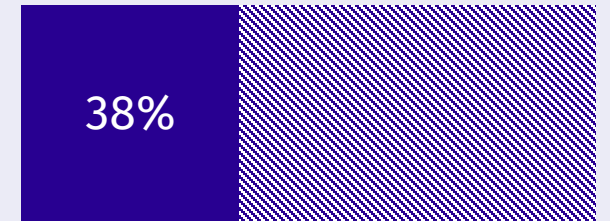
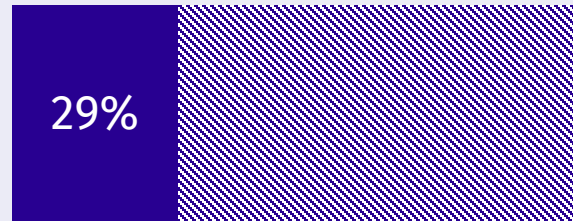
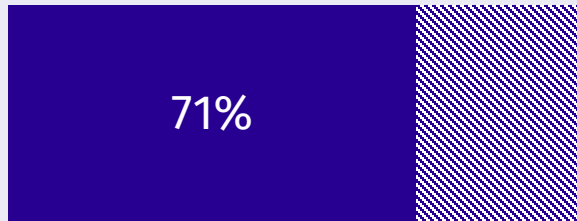
Serving Community

Most organizations are providing new types of support and services.

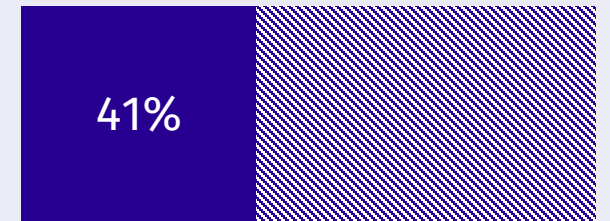
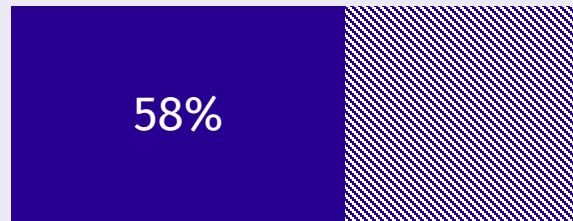
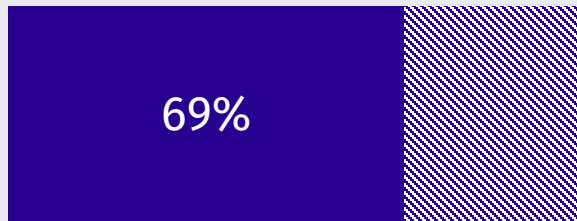
Some organizations feel well positioned to expand their services.

Some organizations have at least six months of reserves for operating expenses.

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06

Where Communities Need Support

Strategic funding can help organizations meet immediate needs such as legal and safety services, mental health and healing, and safe spaces, while also building long-term community health through investments in prevention services, community power and systems change.

“Investment made in prevention-focused services—like early mental health intervention, restorative programs and vocational training—will be key to moving upstream.

In short, our community is looking for hope with follow-through: tangible, sustained support that reflects both compassion and strategy.”

Community Partner of The Center

“Immigrant and mixed-status families need to understand what coming from Washington and what they can do to change their situation.

*[They need to know] **how to advocate, how to vote, how to protect themselves.**”*

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*“Community members consistently voice the need for support in three key areas: **housing stability, mental health care and economic opportunity.**”*

*The message is clear: **people want holistic, relational support** that responds to the interconnected challenges they’re facing.”*

Community Partner of The Center

Snapshot of Community Needs

As Reported by Organizations



“Community members express frustration with how DEI has become performative and reduced to buzzwords that do not reflect lived realities.

They are asking for support to reframe equity language in ways that honor Indigenous sovereignty, queer identity, land-based justice and cultural specificity.

Rather than generic DEI statements, they want tools and training to write authentically and decolonize their language—not just to check a box, but to genuinely transform relationships.”

Community Partner of The Center

Many Thanks to the Community Based Organizations that completed this Survey.



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