

# NORP SURVEY SERIES #8

SPRING 2020



[NORPanel.org](http://NORPanel.org)

Nonprofit Organization Research Panel (NORP) Project  
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## About the Panel

The Nonprofit Organization Research Panel, NORPanel, is an online community of nonprofit leaders who were *invited* to sign up to participate in occasional web-based surveys and studies about the organizations they lead and the important work their organizations do.

Researchers using the NORP data apply sampling weights to take account of unequal sample selection probabilities and to frame coverage errors and nonresponses.

For more information, visit [www.norpanel.org](http://www.norpanel.org) or email [norpanel@gsu.edu](mailto:norpanel@gsu.edu).

# COVID-19 and Nonprofits

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The survey results are based on 614 valid responses between Monday, April 20, 2020 and Friday, May 8, 2020.<sup>1</sup> Of those 403 responses (65.6%) came from human services organizations, and the rest, 211 responses, came from arts and culture organizations.

The basic characteristics of participant organizations:

- The average years of operation is 29 years for both arts and culture organizations and human services organizations (ranges from 2 to 90).
- Responses came in from all 50 U.S. states.
- Organization size:
  - About 28.5% of human service organizations had annual incomes below 250K, approximately 35.7% had incomes between 250K and 10M and the rest (35.7%) had over 10 million dollars according to the 2017 990 tax returns.
  - About 42% of arts and culture organizations had annual incomes below 250K, approximately 27% had incomes between 250K and 10M and the rest (32%) had over 10 million dollars according to the 2017 990 tax returns.
- About 12% of the human service organization respondents are in the field related to viral outbreaks or health care assistance.
- About 4.5% of the arts & culture organization respondents are in the field related to viral outbreaks or health care assistance.

There were 16 questions asked in this survey. This report presents preliminary results for all questions except five questions that asked about the person and organization completing the response.

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<sup>1</sup> The initial invitation was sent out on Monday, April 20, 2020, followed by two reminders (April 27, and May 6, 2020). If you received the invitation but responded after May 8, please know that we will include your response in the final report of this project. The current report provides only summary statistics.

**[Human Services Organizations]**

**Which of the following impacts has your organization experienced already or do you anticipate experiencing due to the COVID-19? (Check all that apply, and/or share additional ways)**

The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item.

	Experienced already	Anticipate experiencing		Do not anticipate	
		Weighted	Weighted	Weighted	
				Weighted	Weighted
Cancellation of events (e.g., gala, walk-a-thon, and etc.)	82%	90%	11%	4%	3%
Suspending programs until further notice	69%	79%	6%	2%	21%
Changing the way programs are offered (e.g., offering services online)	79%	88%	13%	3%	3%
Reduced hours of operation	55%	77%	6%	1%	29%
Cancelled contract(s)	26%	52%	16%	2%	37%
Lower demand for services	35%	64%	11%	7%	45%
Higher demand for services	39%	15%	24%	46%	27%
Increased number of volunteers	12%	1%	8%	1%	56%
Decreased number of volunteers	42%	63%	14%	6%	25%
Increased donations	22%	16%	12%	9%	59%
Decreased donations	36%	30%	30%	50%	28%
Furlough or lay off of staff members	30%	26%	14%	4%	43%
Difficulty getting supplies for continued services	39%	22%	19%	46%	27%
Shortage of critical services provided by vendors/partners	24%	4%	23%	59%	37%
Major (private) donors have pulled funding	12%	3%	27%	29%	47%
Corporate sponsors or donors have pulled funding	14%	7%	30%	28%	39%
Other issues	45%	19%	13%	44%	6%
					8%

Notes: The results for the “not relevant” answer not included in this table. Weighted results are based on 2017 990 tax returns data for census region, organization’s age, annual income size, and organizational type. Types are categorized as “Crime & Legal related,” “Food, Agriculture & Nutrition,” “Housing & Shelter,” “Recreation & Sports” and “Youth Development,” “Human services.”

**[Arts & culture Organizations]**

**Which of the following impacts has your organization experienced already or do you anticipate experiencing due to the COVID-19? (Check all that apply, and/or share additional ways)**

The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item.

	Experienced already	Anticipate experiencing	Do not anticipate
Cancellation of events (e.g., gala, walk-a-thon, and etc.)	93%	5%	1%
Suspending programs until further notice	86%	8%	5%
Changing the way programs are offered (.e.g., offering services online)	72%	18%	6%
Reduced hours of operation	69%	10%	7%
Cancelled contract(s)	64%	14%	13%
Lower demand for services	55%	20%	16%
Higher demand for services	11%	11%	57%
Increased number of volunteers	1%	5%	63%
Decreased number of volunteers	28%	22%	24%
Increased donations	16%	15%	62%
Decreased donations	43%	35%	18%
Furlough or lay off of staff members	33%	22%	28%
Difficulty getting supplies for continued services	19%	13%	37%
Shortage of critical services provided by vendors/partners	10%	17%	40%
Major (private) donors have pulled funding	15%	33%	45%
Corporate sponsors or donors have pulled funding	18%	39%	29%
Other issues	31%	19%	0%

Notes: The results for the “not relevant” answer not included in this table.

### [Human Services Organizations]

#### What has been the impact of COVID-19 on staffing for your organization?

	Already done		Anticipate		No	
	Weighted	Weighted	Weighted	Weighted	Weighted	Weighted
Furlough staff	17%	11%	12%	16%	57%	52%
Laying off staff	13%	10%	10%	3%	64%	58%
Reduce staff work hours	29%	20%	18%	10%	45%	48%
Increase staff work hours	14%	8%	11%	10%	64%	60%
Hire additional workers to meet demand	7%	1%	8%	5%	71%	68%

Notes: The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item. The results for the "not relevant" answer not included in this table. Notes: The results for the "not relevant" answer not included in this table. Weighted results are based on 2017 990 tax returns data for census region, organization's age, annual income size, and organizational type. Types are categorized as "Crime & Legal related," "Food, Agriculture & Nutrition," "Housing & Shelter," "Recreation & Sports" and "Youth Development," "Human services."

### [Arts & culture Organizations]

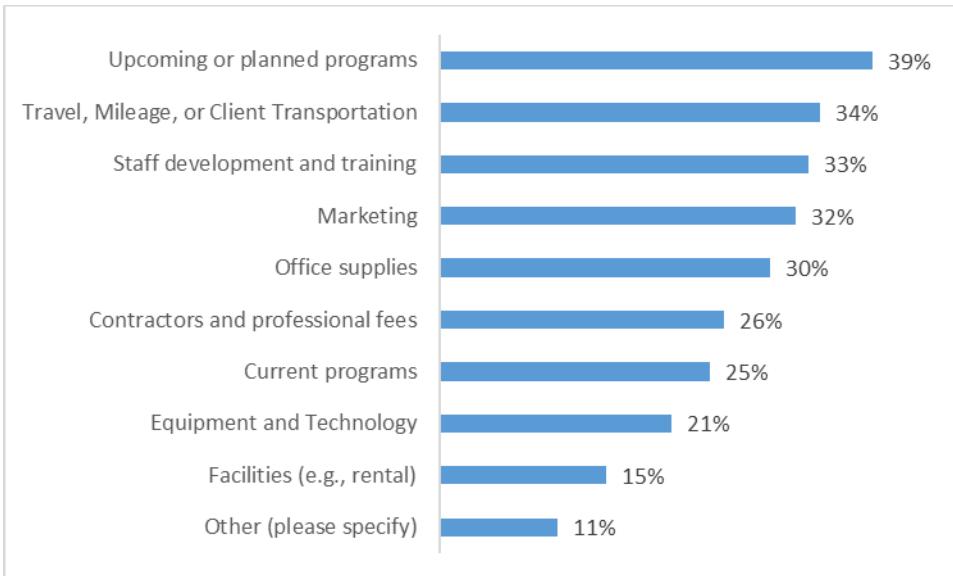
#### What has been the impact of COVID-19 on staffing for your organization?

	Already done	Anticipate	No
Furlough staff	26%	21%	36%
Laying off staff	11%	17%	56%
Reduce staff work hours	43%	19%	27%
Increase staff work hours	7%	7%	67%
Hire additional workers to meet demand	1%	2%	74%

Notes: The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item. The results for the "not relevant" answer not included in this table.

### [Human Services Organizations]

If you had to cut expenses other than salaries/wages for your employees, please let us the areas that had to be cut (check all that apply).



Notes: The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item. The order of items have been sorted by frequency.

### [Arts & Culture Organizations]

If you had to cut expenses other than salaries/wages for your employees, please let us the areas that had to be cut (check all that apply).



Notes: The numbers in the table indicate the percentage of respondents choosing each item. The order of items have been sorted by the frequency.



**What is the expected impact of COVID-19 on your organization's expenses for the next 6 months? Use your best estimates to indicate what percentage of the expenses is expected to either increase or decrease.**

**[Human Services Organizations]**

On average, 3.57% increase (weighed sample: 3.04% increase). The responses ranged from -90% (decrease) to 100% (increase). It's worth noting that half of the respondents answered their expenses are expected to decrease, while the other half said they expect increased expenses.

**[Arts & Culture Organizations]**

On average, -19% decrease. The responses ranged from -199% (decrease) to 43% (increase). Three out of four arts and culture organizations that responded to this question answered that the expected impact of COVID-19 on their expenses would be negative (i.e., decreased expenses)



**(Based on the best scenario) what is the expected impact of COVID-19 on your organization's revenue for the next 6 months? Use your best estimates to indicate what percentage of the revenue is expected to either increase or decrease.**

**[Human Services Organizations]** On average, -19.3% changes (decrease) expected. The responses ranged from -100% (decrease) to 100% (increase).

**[Arts & Culture Organizations]** On average, -29.5 changes (decrease) expected. The responses ranged from -90% (decrease) to 97% (increase).

**(Based on the worst scenario) what is the expected impact of COVID-19 on your organization's revenue for the next 6 months? Use your best estimates to indicate what percentage of the revenue is expected to either increase or decrease.**

**[Human Services Organizations]** On average, -37.3% changes (decrease) expected. The responses were ranged from -100% (decrease) to 100% (increase).

**[Arts & Culture Organizations]** On average, -48.5% changes (decrease) expected. The responses were ranged from -100% (decrease) to 100% (increase).



**Does your organization have operating reserves, rainy day funds? (Please choose 0 if none, and choose 13 if longer than 12 months)**

**[Human Services Organizations]**

On average, 5.75 months' expenses. (weighted sample: 6.22)

**[Arts & Culture Organizations]** On average, 6.1 months' expenses.

**Given the current financial situation, how long do you estimate that your organization could continue operating? (Please choose 0 if none, and choose 13 if longer than 12 months)**

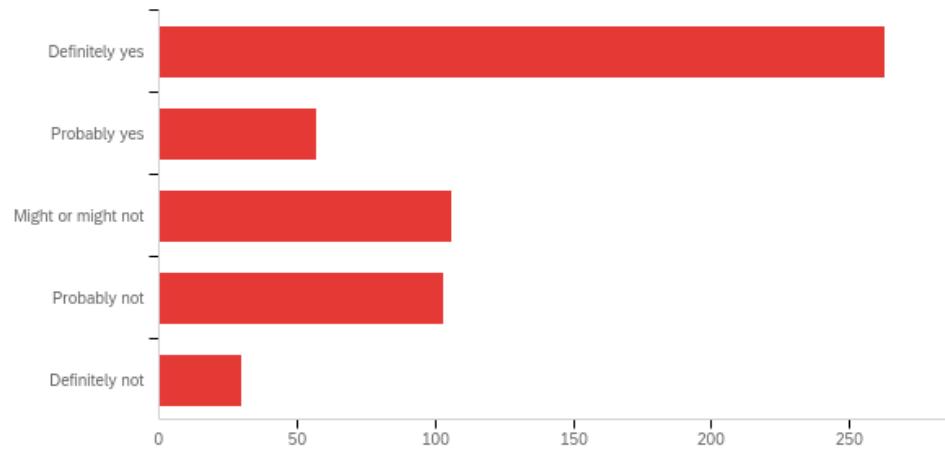
**[Human Services Organizations]**

On average 9.31 months (weighted: 9.77)

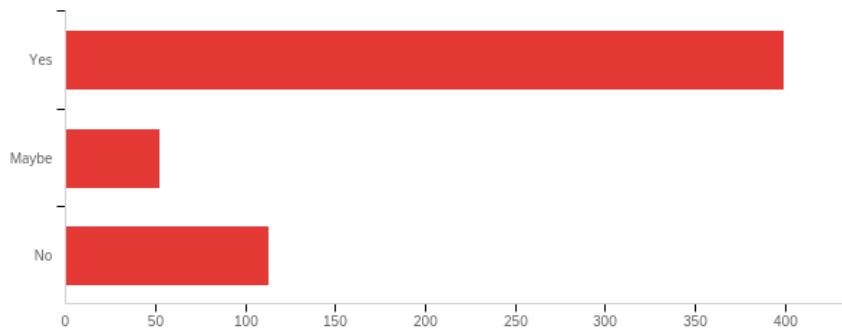
**[Arts & Culture Organizations]** On average 8.99 months.

[The following results present responses from both human service and arts and culture organizations.]

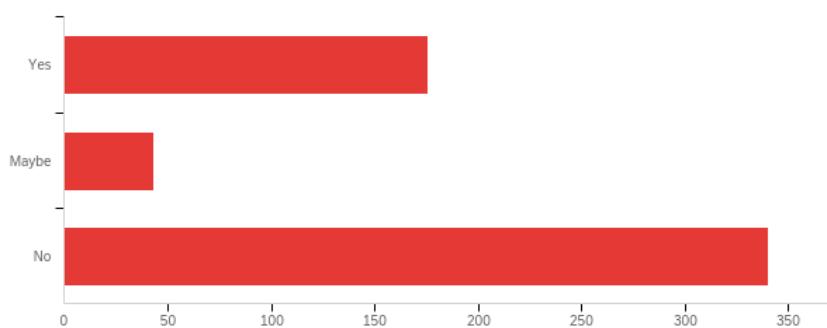
**Are you planning to apply for any philanthropic funds set up for COVID response? If yes, please describe.**



**Are you planning to apply for any federal, state, and local government funds set up for COVID response? If yes, please describe.**



**Is your organization participating in a local COVID task force or coordinated response? Please describe the nature/scope of it.**



## [Selected Comments from Participants]

### EXPECTED INCREASE IN THE NEED FOR SERVICES

"This has required us to rethink how we provide services and how to reach people in ways that we have not done so before. We are in a challenging situation in that we know domestic violence is going up but not everyone has a way to reach us for assistance due to being quarantined at home with their abusers. So we are working very closely with law enforcement and other service providers to find unique ways to reach those who are struggling. Very important that we have strong relationships that we can utilize. It has been very helpful in our region that the foundations have allowed us to change their dollars to general operating so that we can use the money where we need. They have also allowed us to change our provision of services and know that our outcomes may look different in these times. Everyone has been very helpful and very concerned about our clients and staff. I would love to see this flexibility continue."

"As a non-profit focused on child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, treatment, I know that one of the impacts of COVID-19 is likely increased child abuse and neglect. We are already seeing an increase in domestic violence and have seen more kids with severe injury due to child abuse. This often goes unreported when there are few eyes on a kid, which is true with social distancing. They don't have teachers, day care providers, and others around them to question an injury and make a report. I'm anticipating the need for our services will go up significantly once social distancing is over and/or schools resume. For that reason, I have to keep our agency strong during this period, provide the services we can through virtual means, and keep my staff in place so we can respond to the increase in reports that will happen."

"With a focus on elder justice issues, few if any funders even consider that topic worth consideration. In fact, the need for elder safety beyond food, medical and shelter, continues to rise exponentially due to the COVID-19 isolation requirements. Reducing the services dealing with this critical issue will only exacerbate the on-going epidemic of abuse of older adults."

### EXPECTED CUTS IN REVENUES & INTERRUPTED OPERATIONS

"Each year we typically get funding from municipalities and community grants as well as private donors. This year we have seen the majority of those funds disappear (go to COVID-19 charities). In addition, our fundraising events were cancelled because of COVID-19. Hard ship all away around!"

“COVID-19 has been disastrous for the nonprofit sector in many ways much more than regular for-profit businesses because we live and die dependent upon our donors and right now all of our donors are hurting.”

“As a museum, we have been closed since Mar 20. We lost our busy season of field trips and stand to lose our summer as well. The revenue generated during that time period is what keeps us going throughout the rest of the year. I’m not sure that we will survive.”

“We are a non-profit youth sports organization. COVID will cost our members due to expenses. If we were to offer 100% refunds our club would have to dig deep into our reserves. This has cost our league over \$30k which puts the league in a very bad place sadly. We are anticipating zero revenue over the next 12-months. We are a volunteer-based program so we do not have a lot of expenses if the kids are not playing. Sadly, we anticipate a ripple effect that will ultimately hurt our high school lacrosse program over the next 5-6 years.”

“Being a live performance classical music organization, the pandemic, because of health related concerns, has essentially brought us to a standstill, since we are not able to do any group activities like performances, rehearsals or fundraising events. Performing Arts organizations' survival will depend upon whether enough of the general public will be comfortable attending live group activities in the post pandemic world. I think it's likely that fear of attending live events will prevail for a longer than desirable time. Once virus testing becomes more widely available and accurate, these fears, I believe, will eventually dissipate and life as we once knew it will resume.”

“Through the generosity of our patrons and sponsors, we have accrued enough operating funds to survive most of 2020. However, without our productions, rentals, and fundraisers, 2021 could be rather bleak. I don't think we will feel this stoppage income for a few months, but it will all depend on how soon we can reopen. If we have to socially distance, our revenue from those events could be drastically effected. So the impact of the COVID-19 could be a long-term impact on our organization for several years in the future.”

“When moving services to virtual platforms, web cams were necessary! We needed 5 new computers/lap tops with web cams ASAP! These expenses were not part of our annual budget but needed due to the pandemic. We also anticipate the need for cleaning supplies, masks, hand sanitizer, etc. These items also were not budgeted and will be paid from using philanthropic donated dollars. Meaning, the dollars we depend on from donations and fundraisers will still be greatly affected and impact our annual budget.”