

2025 NONPROFIT & DONOR BEHAVIOR SURVEY

**Donor Giving Shifts, Nonprofit
Adaptation, and LGBTQ+
Community Engagement in an
Era of Policy Change**



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2025 Nonprofit and Donor Behavior Survey reveals a philanthropic sector in active evolution. As federal policy shifts under the current administration continue to reshape the landscape for nonprofits, both donors and organizations are responding. Three major themes emerge from our research.

Theme 1: Donors Are Moving — But Not Unanimously

A significant majority of donors report heightened urgency to give in response to federal policy changes. Nearly three-quarters (73.57%) of donor respondents agreed or strongly agreed that their sense of urgency or responsibility to give had increased. Approximately half (54.02%) reported that their actual donation behavior had changed, and exactly half (50.57%) said they had redirected giving to specific causes. Among those redirecting funds, arts and culture (51.11%), LGBTQ+ causes (40.00%), and immigrant rights (35.56%) were the top destinations — categories that correlate directly with areas most affected by current federal policy.

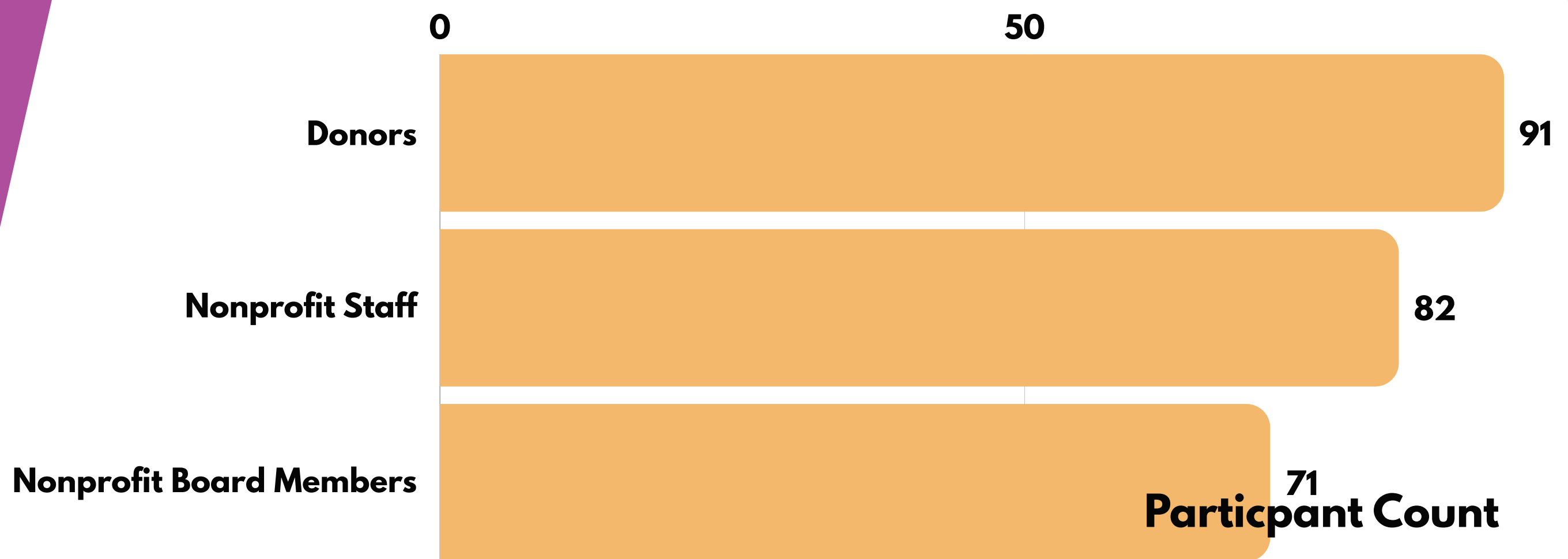
Theme 2: Nonprofits Are Adapting Under Pressure

The federal policy environment is putting measurable strain on nonprofit operations. Nearly 60% of nonprofit respondents (59.38%) reported that recent policy shifts have impacted their ability to access funding or apply for grants — a critical finding for sector sustainability. However, the adaptation response is more cautious than reactive: only 23.96% have changed their programming, and 24.02% have altered external communications around diversity, equity, and inclusion language. The most common organizational response has been internal: 52.08% report that conversations about public visibility have occurred with both staff and board. Despite the pressure, 65.63% of boards remain supportive of maintaining or increasing visibility for diverse constituencies.

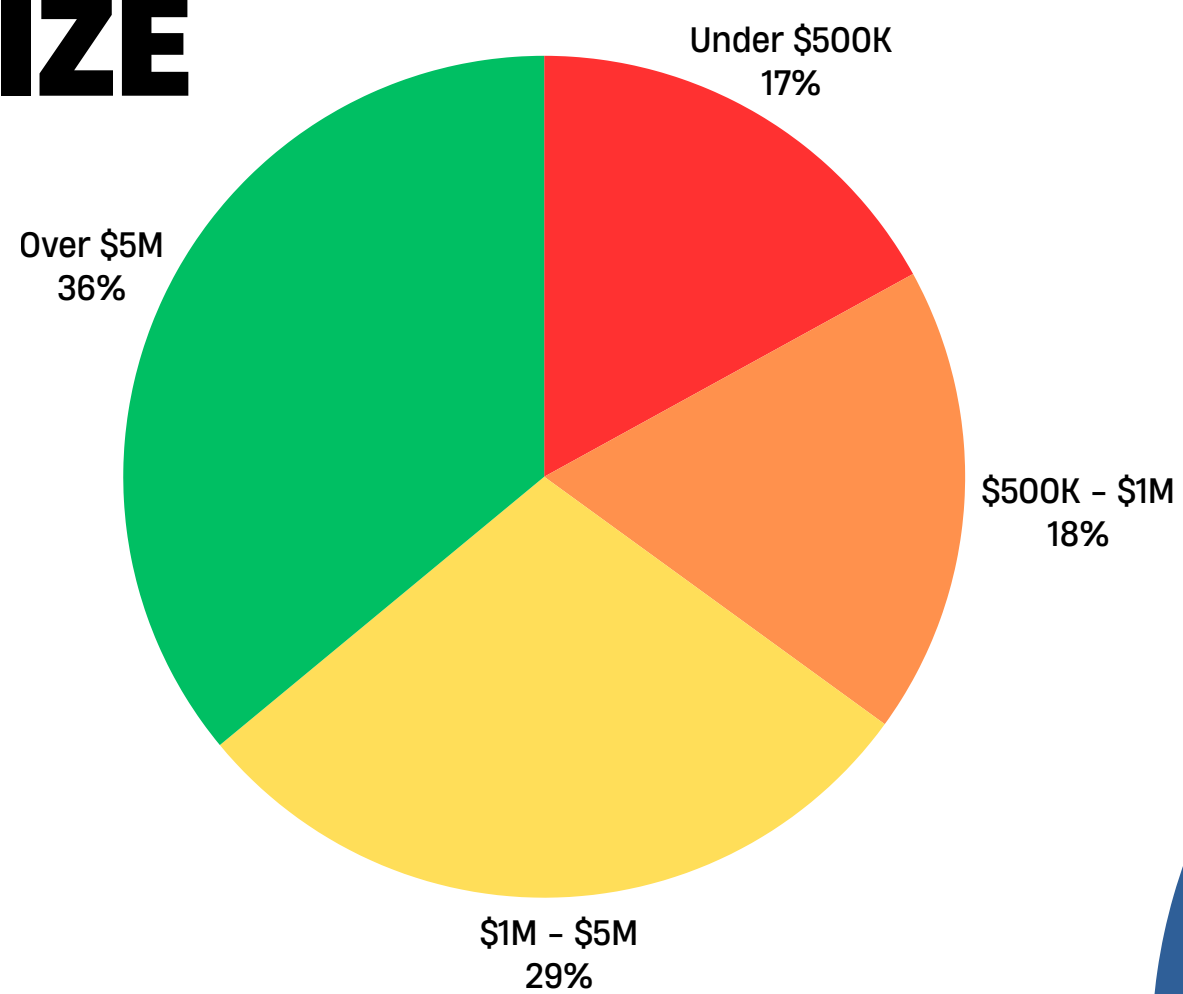
Theme 3: LGBTQ+ Engagement Is Widespread but Unstructured

Building on the 2024 Beyond the Pride Flag Survey, the 2025 data shows that most nonprofits have some level of LGBTQ+ engagement — but it remains largely informal. Only 13.33% have formal LGBTQ+ donor engagement strategies in place, while 51.11% engage informally. A striking 55.56% have no specific methods to recognize or value LGBTQ+ donors, and 47.78% have provided no LGBTQ+ inclusivity training to fundraising staff or board members. The top barriers cited are limited resources for targeted outreach (42.22%) and difficulty identifying LGBTQ+ donors (33.33%). At the same time, 33.33% of donors said they had increased giving to LGBTQ+ causes — a notable signal of demand that many organizations are not yet positioned to meet.

WHO PARTICIPATED?

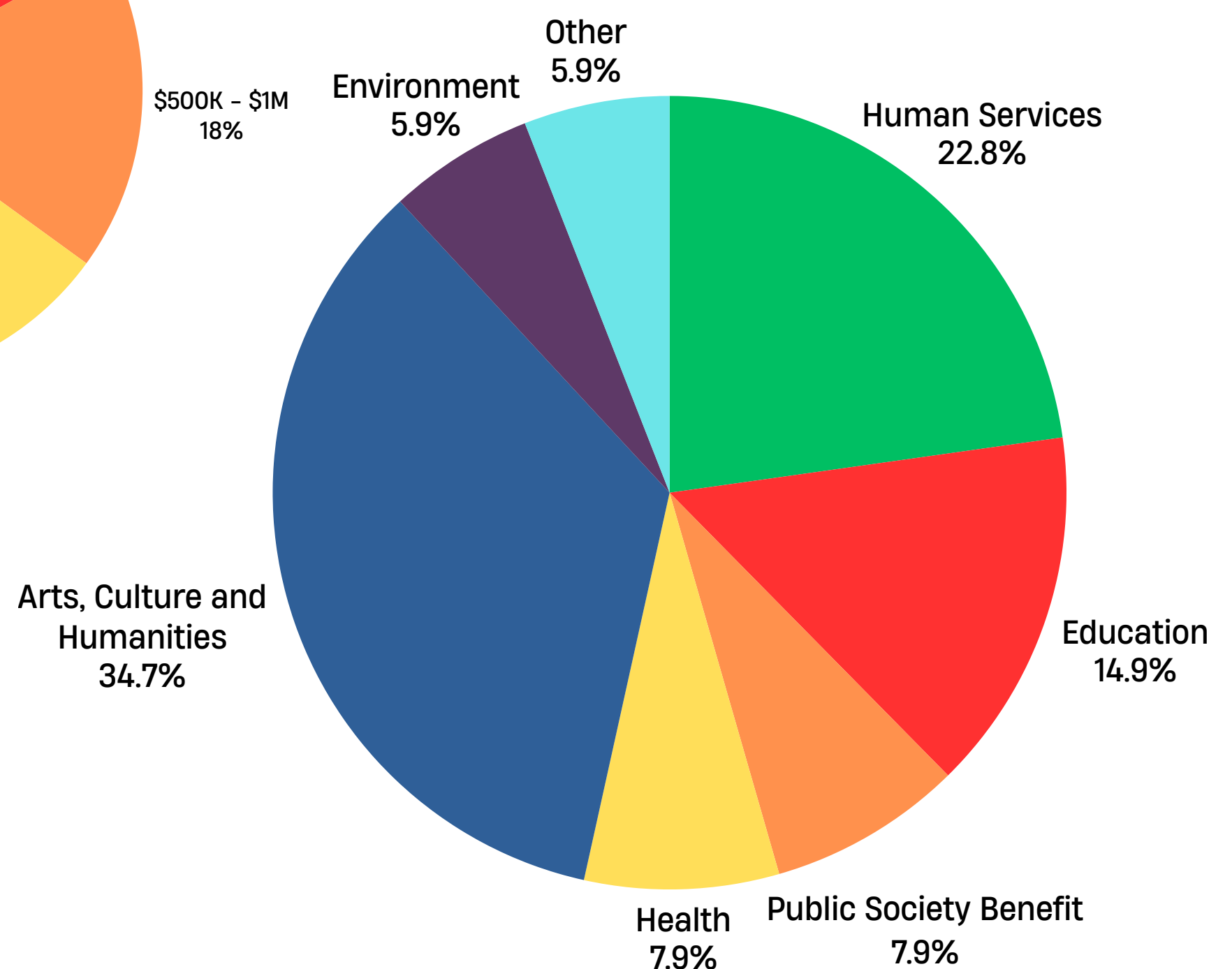


NONPROFIT BUDGET SIZE

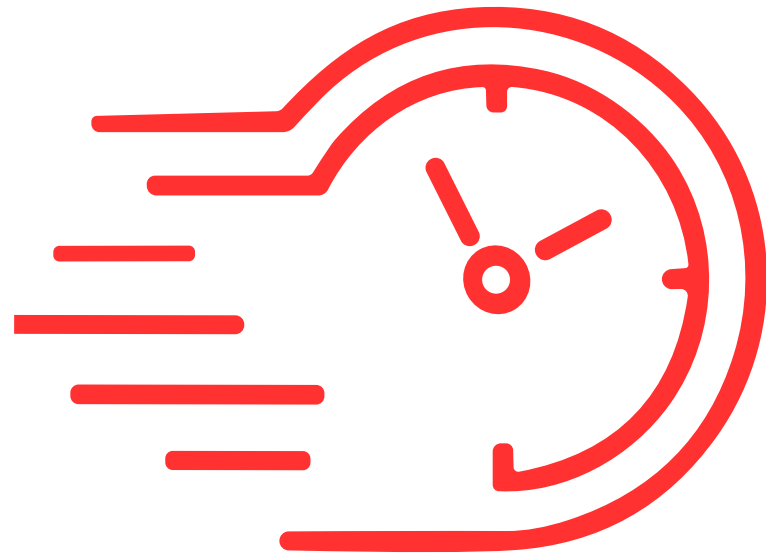


NONPROFIT SECTOR DISTRIBUTION*

*Religious and International Affairs sectors are not represented in the sample.

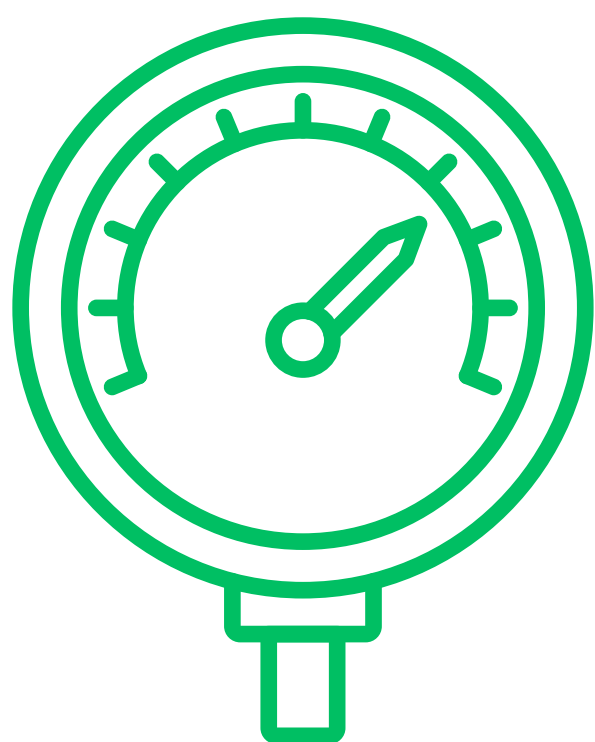
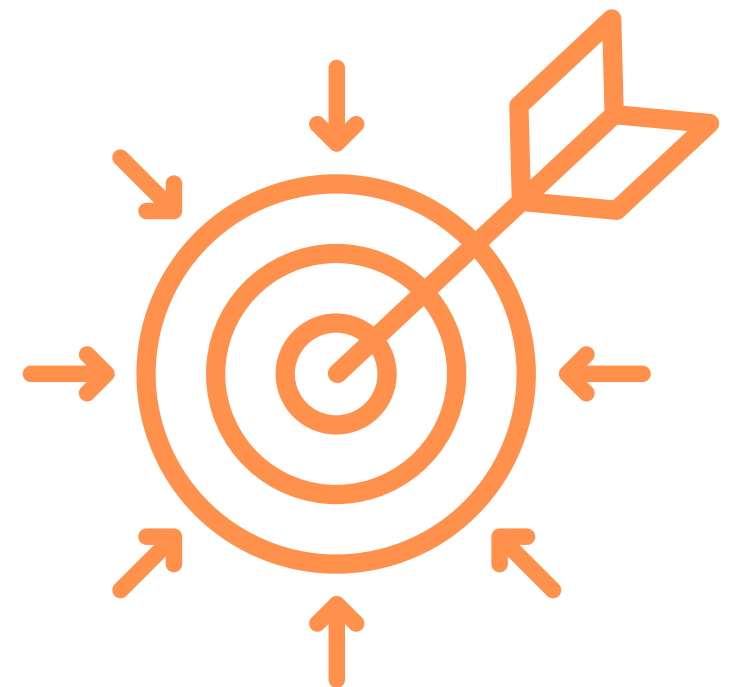


FIVE THINGS NONPROFIT LEADERS NEED TO KNOW



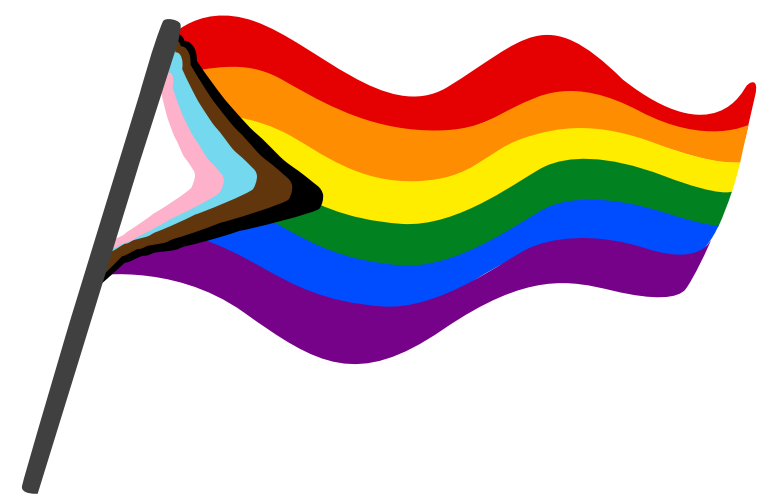
**DONORS FEEL
INCREASED
URGENCY TO GIVE.**

**GIVING IS GOING
TO SPECIFIC CAUSES.**



**NONPROFITS ARE
EXPERIENCING FUNDING
PRESSURE.**

**LGBTQ+ DONOR
ENGAGEMENT REMAINS
LARGELY INFORMAL.**

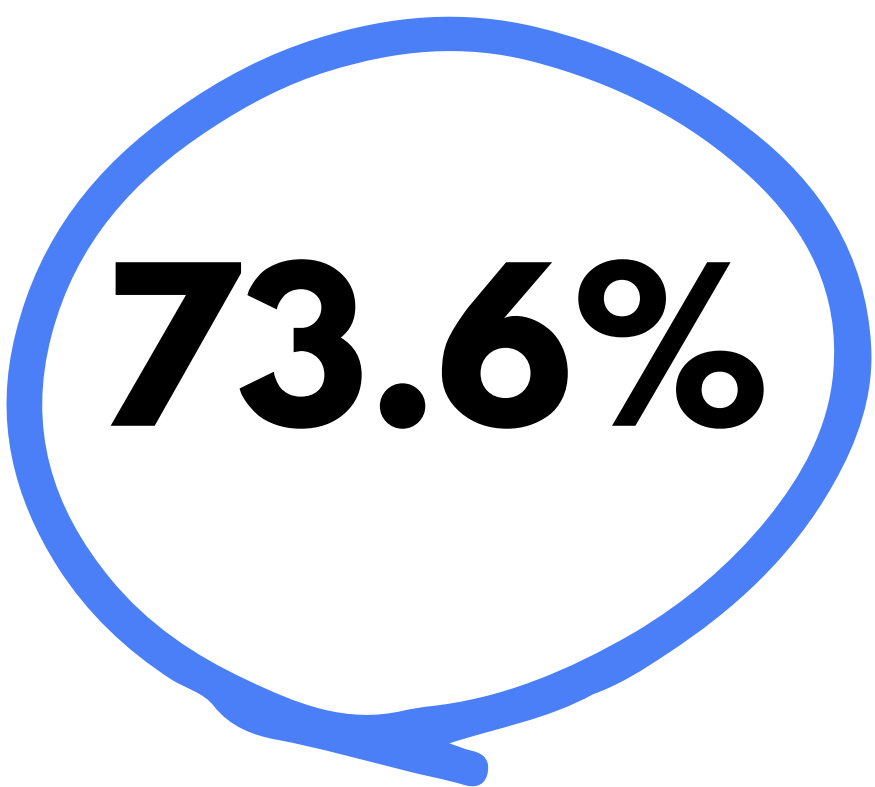


**ORGANIZATIONS HAVE AN
OPPORTUNITY TO
STRENGTHEN INDIVIDUAL
GIVING.**

DONORS ARE RESPONDING

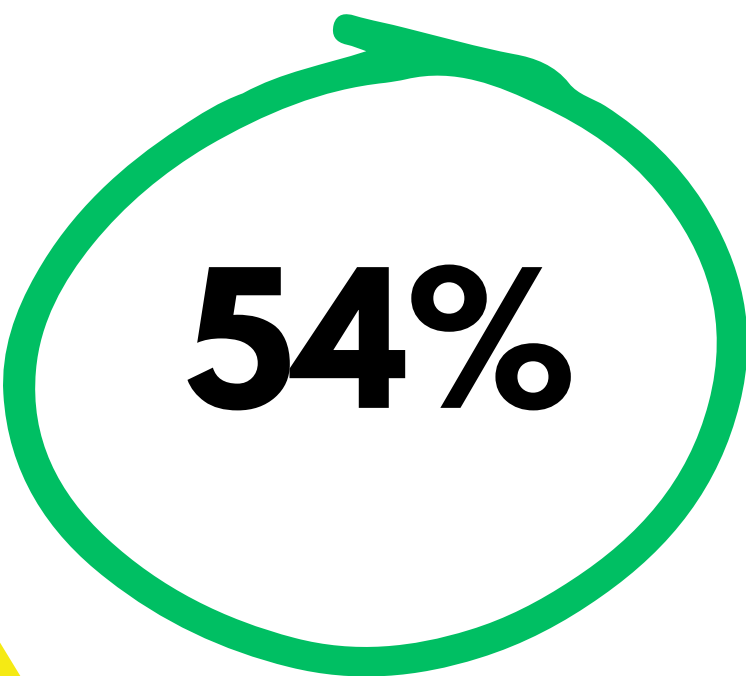
THEY ARE NOT STANDING STILL

INCREASED URGENCY TO GIVE



73.6%

The survey reveals that donors are responding actively to the current social and political environment rather than maintaining existing giving patterns. Nearly three-quarters of respondents reported feeling a greater urgency to support causes they care about, while more than half have already adjusted how or where they give. These shifts suggest that donors are paying close attention to policy changes and perceived threats to vulnerable communities. For nonprofits, this represents both a challenge and an opportunity: organizations that clearly communicate their impact and values may be well positioned to attract new support. The data indicates that donor behavior is becoming increasingly intentional and mission-driven.



54%

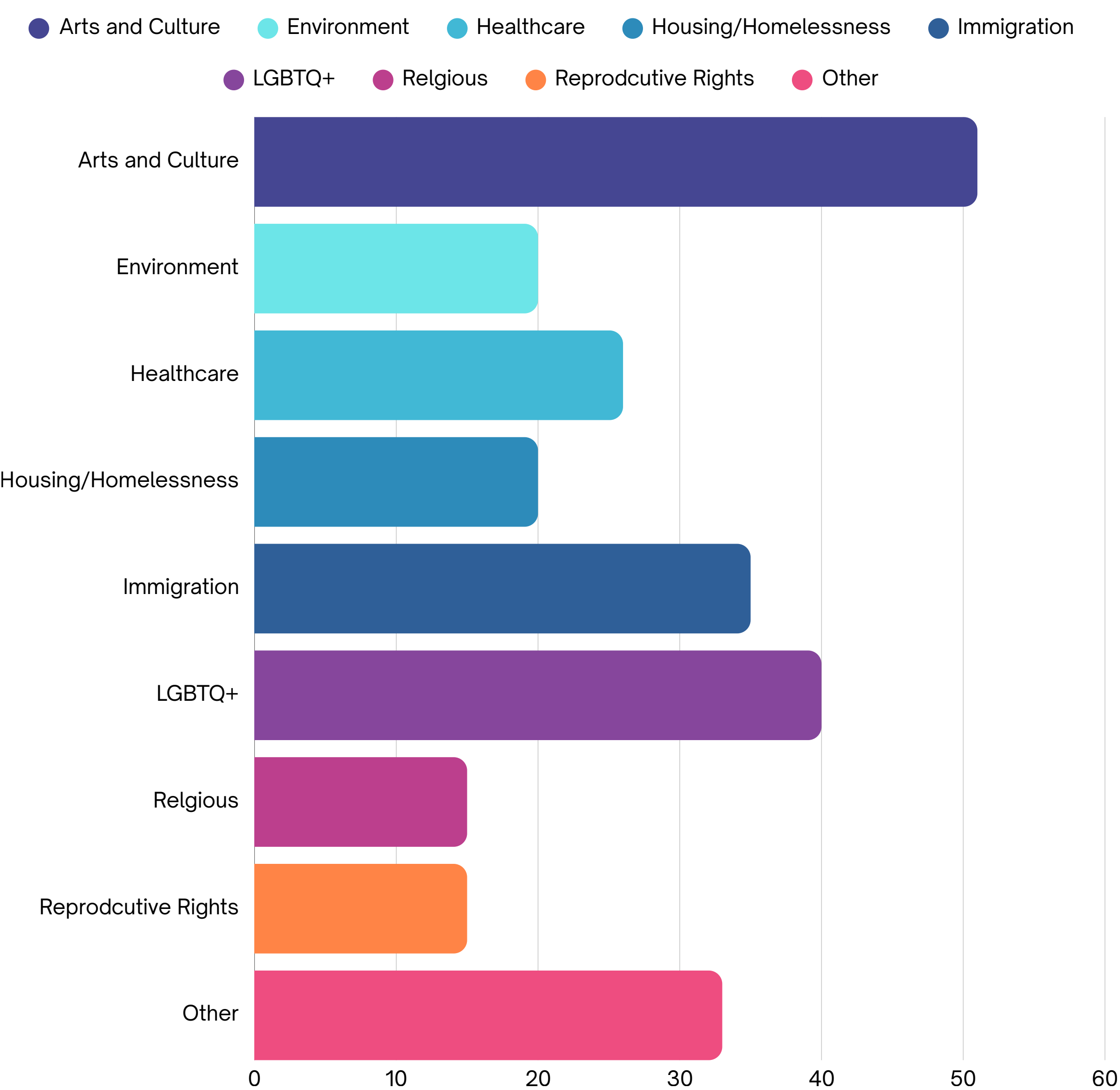
CHANGED GIVING BEHAVIOR

REDIRECTED GIVING



50.6%

WHERE DONORS ARE REDIRECTING THEIR GIVING

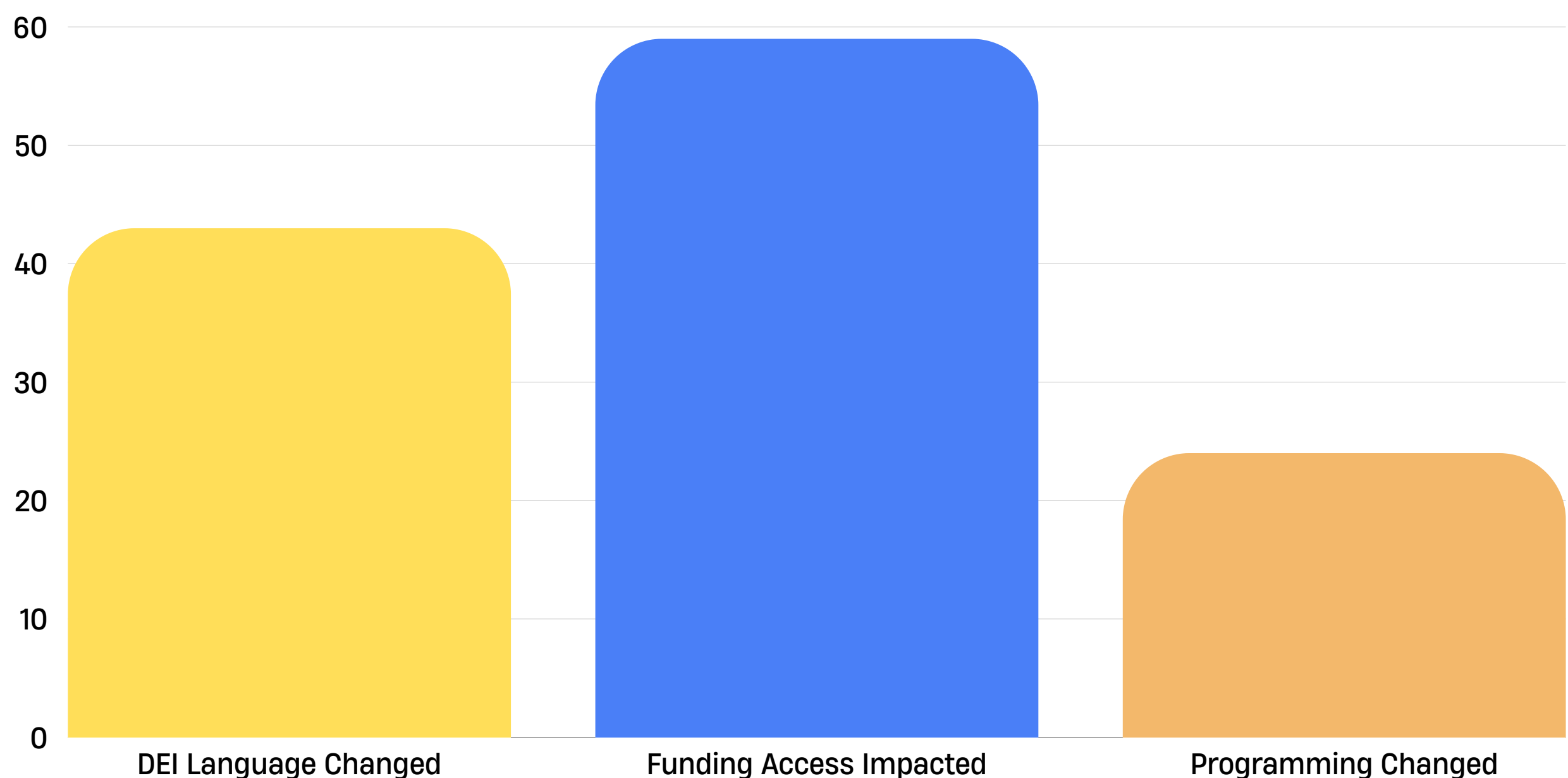


Among donors who changed their giving patterns, many redirected support toward causes they believe are facing heightened risk or reduced public funding. LGBTQ+ organizations, immigrant rights groups, and advocacy-focused nonprofits were among the most frequently cited beneficiaries of increased giving. This trend reflects a growing desire among donors to use philanthropy as a tool for protecting communities and advancing social change. Rather than reducing charitable contributions overall, many donors are reallocating resources to align more closely with their values and concerns.

NONPROFITS ARE ADAPTING UNDER PRESSURE

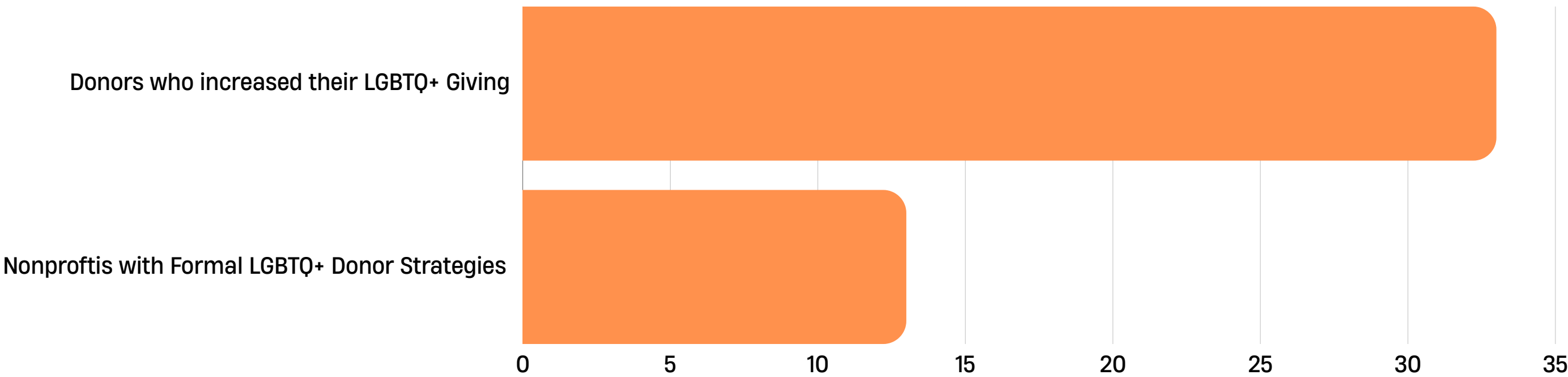
Nonprofits are navigating a rapidly changing funding and policy landscape. Nearly six in ten organizations reported challenges accessing funding, making it the most commonly cited impact in the survey. Many organizations have adjusted communications, grant language, or public messaging in response to external pressures, while fewer have made significant changes to programs or services. This suggests that organizations are working to preserve mission delivery even as they adapt operationally. The findings highlight both the resilience of the sector and the ongoing uncertainty many leaders face.

BEHAVIOR SHIFTS

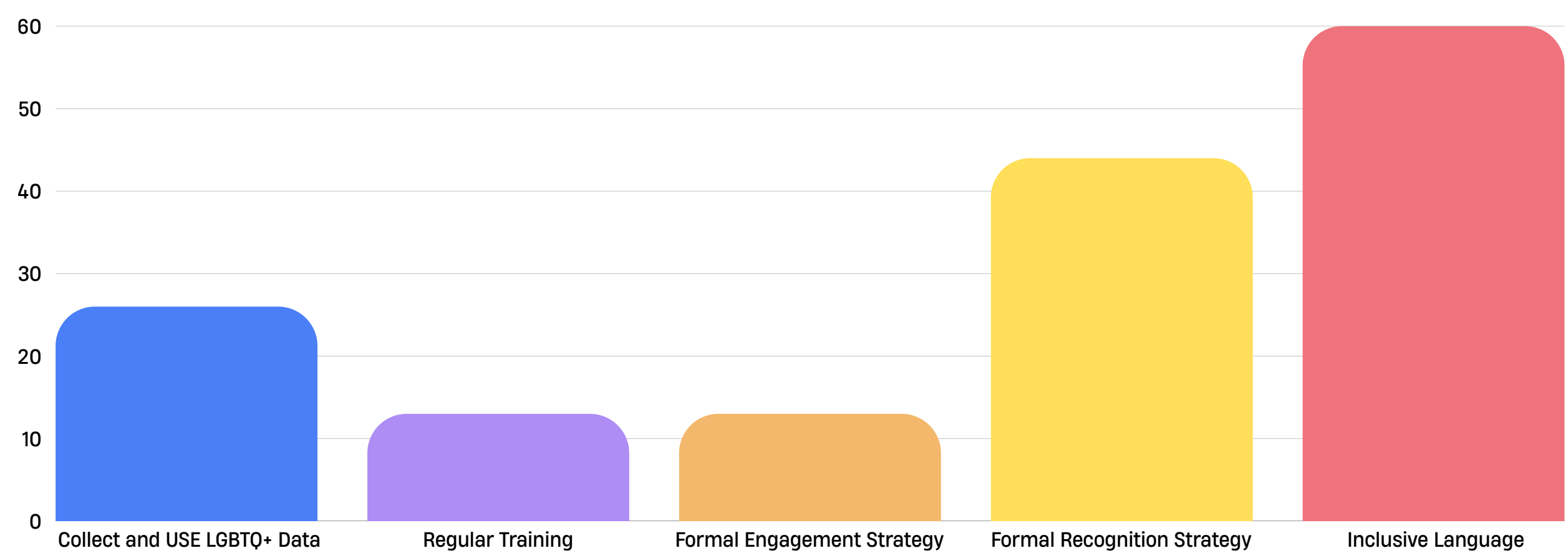


THE LGBTQ+ ENGAGEMENT GAP

One of the clearest findings from the survey is the disconnect between donor interest and organizational readiness. A significant share of donors reported increasing support for LGBTQ+ causes, yet relatively few nonprofits have formal strategies for engaging LGBTQ+ donors and supporters. This gap suggests that many organizations may be overlooking an important opportunity for relationship-building and fundraising growth. As donor expectations evolve, nonprofits that invest in intentional engagement practices may be better positioned to cultivate long-term support. The data points to a growing audience that is seeking meaningful connection and representation.



HOW PREPARED ARE NONPROFITS?



Many organizations have taken visible steps toward inclusion, such as using inclusive language and recognizing LGBTQ+ supporters in public-facing communications. However, far fewer have implemented the systems and practices needed to build sustained engagement. Only a small percentage collect demographic data, provide regular staff training, or maintain formal donor engagement strategies. These findings suggest that inclusion efforts often remain symbolic rather than integrated into fundraising and stewardship practices. Moving from visibility to strategy will require intentional investment in organizational capacity and relationship-building.

FROM VISIBILITY TO INVESTMENT

Donor engagement is built through a progression of experiences rather than a single action. Visibility helps supporters see themselves reflected in an organization, while representation demonstrates a commitment to inclusion. Over time, these experiences contribute to a sense of belonging and trust, which are essential foundations for sustained giving and advocacy. Organizations that intentionally cultivate these relationships are more likely to deepen donor commitment and strengthen long-term fundraising outcomes.





PRACTICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review your donor communications to ensure diverse communities are represented consistently throughout the year, not just during designated awareness months.
- Create meaningful opportunities for donors, volunteers, and community members to provide feedback and help shape organizational priorities.
- Equip staff and board members with the skills and confidence to engage diverse donors through inclusive fundraising and stewardship practices.
- Collect and use engagement and demographic data responsibly to better understand your supporters and identify opportunities for deeper connection.

WHAT THIS LOOKS LIKE IN PRACTICE

- Feature LGBTQ+ stories, supporters, and community impact throughout the year—not only during Pride Month.
- Use donor-centric and inclusive language in fundraising appeals, event registrations, and donor records, ensuring names, pronouns, and salutations are accurate and respected.
- Build leadership teams, boards, and committees that reflect the communities you seek to engage.
- Provide annual cultural competency and inclusive fundraising training for staff and board members.
- Develop stewardship strategies that recognize and respond to the unique motivations, values, and experiences of LGBTQ+ donors and other underrepresented communities.

TAKEAWAYS

What Has Changed since 2024:

- Donor motivation: One-third of donors have increased LGBTQ+ giving, driven by policy-motivated urgency.
- Internal organizational anxiety: More nonprofits are having conversations about public visibility and communications than in 2024, reflecting the heightened political stakes.
- DEI language rollback: The 42.71% who have altered DEI language reflects a new post-2024 dynamic — organizations recalibrating public messaging under political pressure.

What Has Remained Consistent:

- Data collection gaps persist: The failure to collect and use LGBTQ+ identity data has not improved from 2024 to 2025.
- Training deficits continue: Nearly half of organizations still offer no LGBTQ+ inclusivity training, unchanged from 2024 findings.
- Informal engagement dominates: The majority of LGBTQ+ engagement remains opportunistic rather than strategic — a pattern consistent across both years.
- Recognition gaps remain: The majority of nonprofits still have no specific methods to make LGBTQ+ donors feel valued.

Strategic Implication for the Current Federal Administration:

- The combination of activated donors (giving more, expecting more) and under-prepared organizations (less formal infrastructure, more communication caution) creates a widening gap that the sector must consciously address.
- Organizations that hold their commitment to LGBTQ+ inclusion — in both communications and operations — are positioned to build deeper loyalty with a motivated donor base.
- The current political environment, while challenging, may serve as a catalyst for formalizing what has been informal: investing in data systems, training programs, and intentional stewardship for LGBTQ+ donors.

THANK YOU

This research would not be possible without the time, support and effort of hundreds of nonprofit colleagues. This research was conducted in collaboration between Dandelion Consulting and Heart Strategy Impact.

The logo for Heart Strategy Impact is a solid orange square. Inside the square, the words "heart strategy impact" are written in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font, stacked vertically with "heart" on the top line, "strategy" on the middle line, and "impact" on the bottom line.

heart
strategy
impact

Heart Strategy Impact is a boutique consultancy supporting nonprofits eager to grow their individual giving and focus their board on fundraising.

www.heartstrategyimpact.com



Dandelion Consulting is a nonprofit consulting firm dedicated to building “cultures of philanthropy” that lead to increased fundraising and board engagement for arts and LGBTQ+ organizations.

www.dandelionconsulting.co