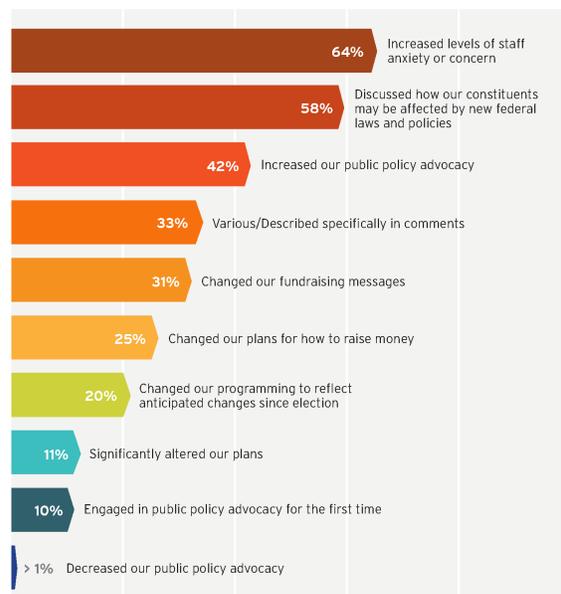


Nonprofits Rethinking Their Future Under Trump Administration, New Survey Reports

April 5, 2017 – [In a survey of over 800 nonprofits](#) conducted in March by the California Association of Nonprofits (CalNonprofits), “Government in Transition; Nonprofits in Transition,” the majority of respondents report significant changes in their organizations since the November 2016 election. When asked what specific changes they have made, 58% of respondents said they have discussed how their constituents may be affected by new federal laws and policies, and 42% said they are increasing their public policy advocacy work.

Since the November election, what has changed for your organization/what changes have you made?



Nearly two-thirds of respondents report increased levels of staff anxiety since the election; concern about the impact on immigrants served was voiced with particular urgency by respondents in more than 300 write-in comments on the subject. In total, the survey inspired more than 1,600 comments from respondents.

The survey obtained responses from 814 nonprofits in 47 California counties. Jan Masaoka, CEO of CalNonprofits stated: “We conducted this nonpartisan survey to listen to the California nonprofit community, amplifying their diverse and varied voices, and delivering their concerns to policymakers.”

Respondents represented California’s wide range of nonprofits in terms of budget size, number of staff, and geographical

locations, and covered many different sub-sectors. The largest numbers of responses came from those in human/social services and the arts/culture/humanities.

Changes reported in communities

When asked, “in the last four months, have you seen any changes in volume or intensity in how your constituencies engage with your organization?” nearly 300 respondents took the time to describe changes:

“We’ve experienced recipients asking to be removed from the [CalFresh] program, or withdrawing applications. Anecdotally Spanish speaking clients are seeking referrals to sites where they can receive food that are non-traditional food distribution sites, or not connected with other social services.”

“Our parents are asking for guidance on how to alleviate anxiety in their children regarding the ban on immigration.”

“People now want to see more politically charged art shows at our gallery.”

“Our shelter for domestic violence survivors is receiving fewer calls from Spanish speaking women.”

“Many parents report being fearful about immigration sweeps so they are scared to walk to and from their child’s school. Many say they’ve coordinated with a ‘documented’ friend or family member to walk their child to school for them.”

“The Hispanic/Middle Eastern children are being bullied more often and more viciously.”

Immigrant clients fearful of using services

Numerous respondents reported that clients are afraid to use their organizations’ services for fear of deportation -- perhaps their own or a family member.

“[We have experienced a] 25% drop in sexual assault calls and 10% drop in domestic violence calls - drop in U-Visa applications - fear of ICE.”

“Many students who are undocumented and qualify for the California Dream Act and/or DACA are scared to enroll in college.”

“Lower attendance at parent groups, parenting classes, parents keeping kids home from school and afterschool programs.”

Increased reports of bullying at school related to perceived immigration status.”

“Immigrants are scared to come to food distributions and apply for CalFresh.”

Although the greatest impact was voiced about immigrant populations, others also expressed opinions like this one:

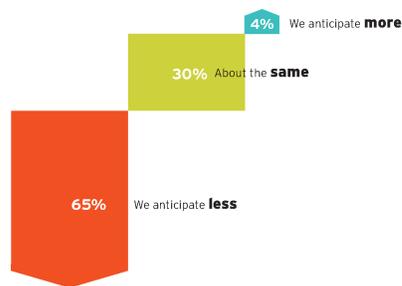
“LGBTQ people of color were especially vulnerable and unsafe before the election, the rise in hate crimes and draconian violent public policy like the Muslim ban only hurts us more.”

Note: This experience has extended to nonprofit convenings, where CalNonprofits has heard first hand reports of nonprofits looking at their constituents with different eyes, for example:

"We serve children with disabilities. We've never thought of ourselves as an immigrant-serving organizations. But now we've realized we have immigrants and Muslims among our families."

Uncertainty extends to funding sources

If you receive government funding, do you anticipate any changes?



Nearly two thirds of respondents (65%) who receive government funding say they anticipate less funding in the next 12 months. When it comes to individual donations, 35% anticipate more revenue in the next year. However, these increases may not be evenly distributed. And almost one-third report they are changing their fundraising messages.

"Concern that more people are donating to larger social causes, leaving smaller less known causes abandoned."

Arts-related organizations are particularly worried that their issues will be left behind, receding in importance in the minds of donors during this time.

"The arts move down the list."

"We are already seeing a drop-off in general unrestricted donations in the range of \$1-\$500. These were primarily coming from younger working professionals that may be feeling economic uncertainty and/or are re-routing their giving away from arts organizations like ours to other organizations like ACLU, Planned Parenthood, etc."

"While the arts are being hit, the individual donors feel the need to push the political agenda first."

Other sectors also expressed their concerns:

"Environmental organizations are horrified by the Trump/Republican agenda. It appears that much of the progressive work accomplished over the last several decades will be reversed and the protections in place systematically dismantled."

Increased policy advocacy planned

The high percentage of respondents -- 42% -- who said they were increasing public policy advocacy efforts echoed this sentiment in their open-ended comments:

"We are talking about engaging in advocacy work for the first time."

"We are training ourselves and our grantees in appropriate approaches to advocacy."

"We are trying to figure out how to support resistance efforts without it derailing our work. We want to think about concrete strategies that can be helpful beyond resistance efforts (i.e. looking increasing civic participation and voter turn out for the 2018 election)."

"Usually we focus on state and local public policy; we are now including federal policy in our focus."

Voices of support for the new Administration weigh in

Reflecting the diversity of thinking in California's nonprofit community, although outnumbered, there were several respondents who expressed positive, hopeful opinions about where the Trump Administration is going:

"Our people are excited about the changes the new Administration is bringing. It's long past time to clean things up."

"We believe this is the year of prosperity for our organization."

"We support our President, and have not made any changes since the election."

"A renewed sense of patriotism and pride in our country."

"Businesses now anticipate having more available funds to donate and sponsor our programs because they will not be under the excessive tax burdens they have been burdened with over the past several years. We anticipate increased numbers of sponsors for our fundraising programs."

"I hear Trump is going to be lowering taxes. ...the current taxes and workers comp prevent us from even being able to meet our current payroll..."

"...I believe that if the Trump Administration cuts corporate tax rate then you will see a rise in what nonprofits build in low income neighborhoods because business are more willing to give to non profits versus government agencies."

Others criticized the survey itself as *"one more Trump bashing the sky is falling email"* and an example of *"...the bandwagon of negativity towards the new Administration."*

Strong emotions and destabilizing uncertainty

Many nonprofits expressed very strong feelings, using terms such as "fear," "dread," "depression," "stress," "anxiety," "lower morale," "discouraged," "overwhelmed," and "needing emotional support." A high level of uncertainty and instability was expressed by many -- along with the need for information and assistance.

“Everything feels more urgent and less secure.”

“[We] don’t know which way the government is going.”

“People are afraid. Do not know what to expect. They are seeking information to plan their lives.”

“We feel we are in a ‘wait and see’ mode. We can plan for different scenarios, but re-drafting our 3-year plan has been full of uncertainty.”

“The uncertainty about changes from the government whether it's in healthcare, budget, immigration etc. are disruptive and somewhat paralyzing.”

“[People need] Information about how the future administration policies will impact them.”

“Immigration-related information, application assistance for immigration benefits, legal advice/support [is needed].”

“We are a nonprofit that supports other nonprofits through consulting services. We've seen a huge uptick in people asking for nonprofit management resources (strategic planning, executive coaching) to help them figure out how to lead their agencies through this time of transition.”

A call to come together

Many respondents spoke in their comments of the importance of the nonprofit community as a whole:

“We all recognize that everything is connected to everything (in terms of both issues and populations) and that we all need to work together across sectors, issues, geographic and organizational boundaries.”

“[The] budget...has everyone scrambling for their piece of the pie, instead of uniting...and preserving our infrastructure. I think CalNonprofits (and any national parent group or other state groups) should form a coalition and devise some messaging about the bigger picture, so we're not all fighting against each other....”

“As nonprofits, we feel a tremendous responsibility to be the moral and humane compass.”

“...Greater sense of weight and importance of the work that we do.”

Throughout the numerous write-in responses, the nonprofit community expressed gratitude for the opportunity to share experiences and looked forward to hearing what other organizations were reporting. Many respondents also noted the importance of CalNonprofits’ role as the policy advocacy voice for the nonprofit sector, with comments such as:

“Collective and forceful advocacy is urgently needed and we'd be thrilled to have your help with this over the coming months.”

CalNonprofits CEO Jan Masaoka concluded, “The hundreds of impassioned responses to this survey present a call to action. We plan to work together to promote policies that respond to our members’ concerns and best serve the people of California by protecting the values we as nonprofits stand for.”

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BACKGROUND: In 2014, CalNonprofits conducted “[Causes Count](#),” the first-ever report to examine the nonprofit sector’s scope, activities and economic impact in the state of California. This year, we intended to conduct an update of the “Causes Count” study. However, what we’ve heard from our membership since the 2016 election has convinced us that the overwhelming focus of nonprofit work in 2017 will be in reaction and response to the new Presidential administration. As a result, we determined that this year the research of most value to our constituency is to track how the California nonprofit community is responding in this time of transition – what they are experiencing, what they are doing, and what they need. This is the first of three surveys; our second survey coming in early summer will follow up on concerns, impacts and responses in this changing policy environment.

See also:

[Toward a Nonprofit Stance Under the Trump Administration](#)

[Nonprofits & the Trump Administration: Practical Tools for Protecting Our Immigrant Clients and Staff](#)

[CalNonprofits Legislation Tracker](#)