

New Survey Shows Community-Based Organizations Face Substantial Funding and Resource Gaps

Findings provide roadmap to strengthening CBOs and their role in community health

WASHINGTON, D.C., December 2, 2025 – Today the [National Collaborative for Health Equity](#) (NCHE) released results from a new national survey showing substantial financial instability among community-based organizations (CBOs), a persistent trust gap between CBOs and policymakers, and opportunities for capacity-building support. The survey, conducted in summer 2025 among nearly 500 health-focused CBOs in the U.S., including Puerto Rico and tribal nations, shows that despite playing a vital role in community health and wellbeing, 37% of CBO respondents lack funding for programming over the next 12 months and 36% are concerned about financial stability over the next 3-4 years.

“Community-based organizations are the lifeblood of healthy communities, and these results demonstrate the urgent need for greater, more reliable and long-term funding sources to help shore up and sustain their impact into the future,” said Gail C. Christopher, DN, Executive Director, NCHE. “At a time when federal funding is shrinking and healthcare costs are rising, without increased investment in CBOs, the health and wellbeing of millions of people is at risk, further eroding progress toward health equity.”

Organizational Resilience

While larger CBOs receive a higher proportion of government funding and have been impacted more significantly by recent budget cuts, smaller CBOs expressed the greatest concern about their long-term financial stability overall. Among the top funding barriers identified by CBOs, 75% reported difficulty reaching high net-worth donors, historically an important source for unrestricted funding, 61% said limited staff time to devote to fundraising and 53% reported burdensome grant application processes. These obstacles disproportionately impact smaller CBOs, which often lack needed capacity.

Public Policy Influence and Engagement

The survey also explored CBOs’ role in policy-related activities. While 79% said policy engagement is very important to their work and 85% of CBOs reported collaborating with policymakers, only 40% said they believed policymakers trust CBO input and expertise.

“Community-based organizations are experts in fostering community trust and cultural understanding, yet too often their role is overlooked or undervalued,” said Juliet K. Choi, JD, President and Chief Executive Officer, Asian & Pacific Islander American Health Forum (APIAHF). “We need to provide CBOs with a seat at the table and a role in decision-making to help ensure public policy better reflects community priorities and ultimately is effective at achieving change.”

Capacity and Tools

In addition to identifying barriers, CBOs cited the top resources, skills and tools needed to help build their capacity and strengthen operations and impact—75% said new data collection and analysis tools, 75% reported greater monitoring and evaluation training, 73% said practical tools and trainings for story collection, 68% reported grant writing and fundraising skill building and 68% said greater collaboration opportunities.

“The findings demonstrate the universal challenges many community-based organizations face and identify what’s needed to help strengthen their impact and ensure their future success,” said Melissa Bishop-Murphy, Co-Chair, Pfizer Multicultural Health Equity Collective. “Our hope is this research will help open the door to critical, timely discussions, providing the foundation for CBOs, donors and other stakeholders to come together around shared solutions.”

Summary of Recommendations and Opportunities

The survey report details several opportunities for donors, policymakers and other collaborators including:

- Provide more reliable and flexible funding to help CBOs strengthen operations, including shoring individual donations and unrestricted grants, and creating more equitable funding structures and processes that ensure greater equity and access for smaller CBOs.
- Support capacity building as an investment strategy, leveraging monetary gifts, in-kind support, and alternative collaboration models to strengthen CBOs and close resource and skill gaps.
- Invite CBOs into the policymaking process from the start, ensuring a bi-directional dialogue between policymakers and CBOs to foster transparency and trust.

To learn more and read the full report [click here](#).

About the survey

The survey was conducted in partnership with NORC at the University of Chicago (NORC) and with support from The Pfizer Multicultural Health Equity Collective. To help inform and shape the survey, NORC conducted an environment landscape analysis among health-focused CBOs and engaged a Community Advisory Board of health equity leaders representing a wide range of nonprofit organizations. The survey was conducted between June and August 2025 and includes responses from 491 CBO representatives serving diverse populations across urban, suburban, rural, island and remote areas. The full survey report and recommendations for funders, policymakers, and collaborators are available at www.nationalcollaborative.org.

About NCHE

The mission of the National Collaborative for Health Equity is to promote racial and health equity by supporting community leaders, harnessing data, and catalyzing partnerships across the many different sectors that share responsibility for creating a more equitable and just society.

About NORC at the University of Chicago

NORC at the University of Chicago is an independent, nonpartisan research organization that conducts scientifically rigorous studies to inform decision-making and advance understanding of critical issues. Since 1941, NORC has been a trusted source of objective data and analysis, serving public and private sector clients with research that adheres to the highest standards of methodological integrity. Guided by a commitment to transparency, accuracy, and ethical research practices, NORC supports evidence-based policymaking and public discourse. Its work is rooted in the belief that reliable data and impartial inquiry are essential to addressing complex societal challenges and fostering informed civic engagement.

###