



October 13, 2020

## Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund

### LETTER TO THE COMMUNITY

In March 2020, COVID-19 sent a shockwave through the world. As COVID-19 became a widespread global disease, in what feels like overnight, communities across the world were thrust into crisis mode. Within one week of the first reported case in Ohio, the local philanthropic community came together and established the [Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund](#) (GCCRRF). This fund was set up to complement the public sector pandemic response and help meet the needs of the community. In a few short months, \$8.9 million was raised through nearly 80 fund partners and over 2,300 individual donors. Between March and July 2020, more than \$8.6 million was [awarded to nonprofit groups and organizations](#) in Cuyahoga, Lake, and Geauga counties. As we approached the end of the first phase of funding, and our region continued to be deeply impacted by COVID-19, we knew it was necessary to explore how to continue to work together.

#### Exploring Phase II

In June, GCCRRF brought on Heather Lenz, Founder of Sangfroid Strategy and Monique Williams Kelly, Founder and CEO of The Engagement Group to co-facilitate an exploration for a Phase II collaboration. The process included an [analysis of Phase I](#), a [national scan of COVID-19 rapid response funds](#), and [community engagement](#) in order to inform the focus and structure of a continued collaboration.

#### Community Voice

Through surveys and focus groups, we heard from approximately 750 of you, including nonprofits (both GCCRRF grantees and non-grantees), community residents, and systems-level leaders across various sectors. Three areas stood out as critical factors that must be addressed in order to recover from COVID-19 and strengthen our region:

1. **COVID-19 Response:** Continue to respond to the needs of COVID-19, including ensuring there is PPE, testing, and tracing to keep people safe; support families; and make sure basic needs are being met.
2. **Systemic Racism + Racial Justice:** Address systemic racism and develop a racial justice agenda that disrupts and dismantles racist policies, practices, and procedures that negatively impact people of color.
3. **Economic Well-being + Mobility:** Prioritize economic well-being and economic mobility for Cleveland's residents.

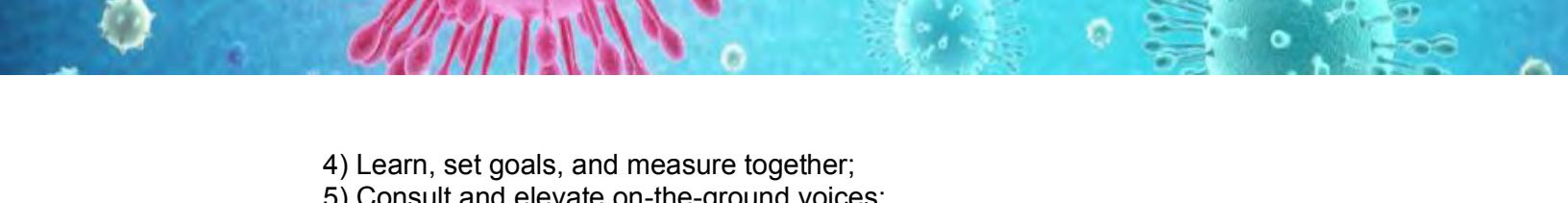
#### Phase II Collaboration

The Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund partners grappled with our role as philanthropy and where we can make a true difference in our region. We recognize our unique position, power, and resources and have decided to continue to broaden our collaboration. The second phase of this work will focus on a continuum of needs related to COVID-19: response, adaptation, and recovery and will be built on six fundamental principles.

#### *Six Fundamental Principles Guiding our Continued Collaboration*

Throughout the community engagement process, we learned that in order to do this work successfully there are principles that must be the foundation of the work. The six fundamental that we have adopted are:

- 1) Collaborate across sectors;
- 2) Commit to racial equity;
- 3) Influence through advocacy;

- 
- 4) Learn, set goals, and measure together;
  - 5) Consult and elevate on-the-ground voices;
  - 6) Ask nonprofits for innovative ideas to address these issues.

Phase II includes a continuation of the COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund, focused on advocating for PPE, testing, and contract tracing to keep people safe; supporting families through the upcoming school year; and making sure the basic needs of our residents are being met.

In addition to the COVID Fund, there will be a broader collaboration developed that focuses on coordinating and convening partners across sectors, with specific goals related to:

- ensuring that Greater Cleveland residents can vote safely in November;
- helping the nonprofit sector adapt its services and programming to be able to meet the increased needs of the community;
- advocating for changes to racist policies, processes and practices in government, nonprofit, and philanthropy;
- advancing economic well-being and stability for all residents; and
- leveraging philanthropic power and capital to spur greater collaboration and better leadership.

#### *Structure*

A broader collaboration is in the process of being defined. The final structure will include:

- a commitment to shared learning, data and measurement;
- coordination and convening across sectors;
- creation of a multi-sector community advisory council that:
  - consists of program staff within nonprofits, community organizers, and resident leaders that represent the diversity of Cleveland's communities;
  - provides an on-the-ground perspective into the decision-making and funding process; and has influence in priority setting and decision-making of funding

For more information see the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Phase II Focus Matrix. <<link>>

#### **Call to Action**

We are committed to continuing the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund and building a broader collaboration to address issues related to COVID-19, structural racism, and economic well-being and mobility. While we have made a bold step that will lead to greater impact, this is not work that philanthropy can do alone. Strengthening our region requires all sectors, systems, institutions, and community members to work in tandem. We must dismantle the policies and practices that perpetuate racism. We must do it differently and do it now. Together let's align our resources and build back stronger. There's a place for each of us in realizing a better future for Greater Cleveland.

Sincerely,  
The Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund

#### **Links to Resources Referenced**

<<[Link to GCCRRF Website](#)>>

<<[Link to Phase I Analysis](#)>>

<<[Link to National Scan](#)>>

<<[Link to Stakeholder Engagement](#)>>

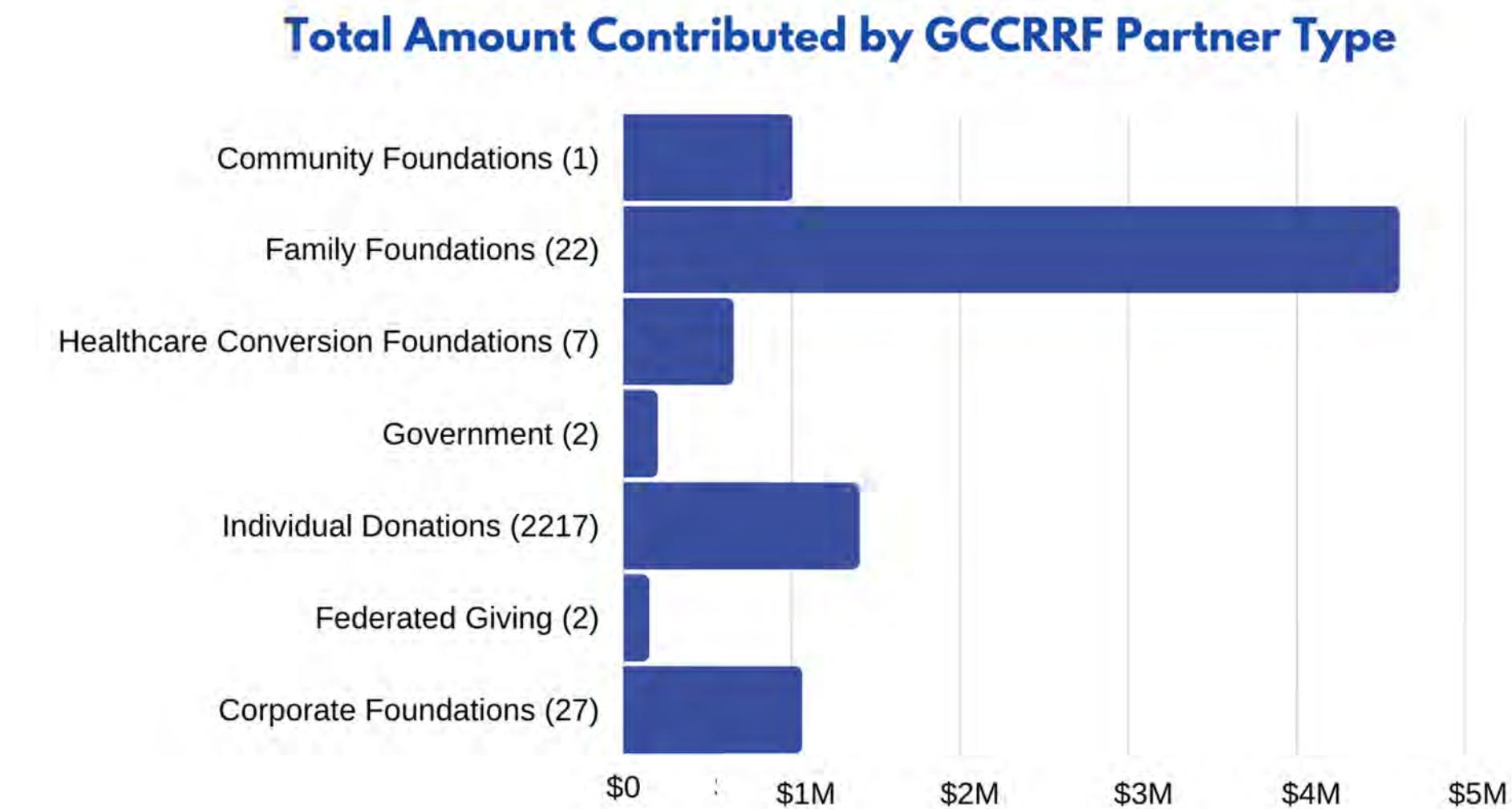


## Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund

In March 2020, COVID-19, which had been increasing in severity in several Asian and European countries, found its way to our shores. As COVID-19 became a widespread global disease, communities across the world were thrust into crisis mode. Within one week of the first reported case in Ohio, the local philanthropic community came together and established the [Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund \(GCCRRF\)](#).

## Who Contributed?

In just a few short months,  
**\$8.9M was raised**  
through  
**80+ Fund Partners**  
and  
**2,300+ Individual Donors**



**Thank you to the foundations, corporations, and individuals who supported the Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Response Fund.**

## Who Received Funding?

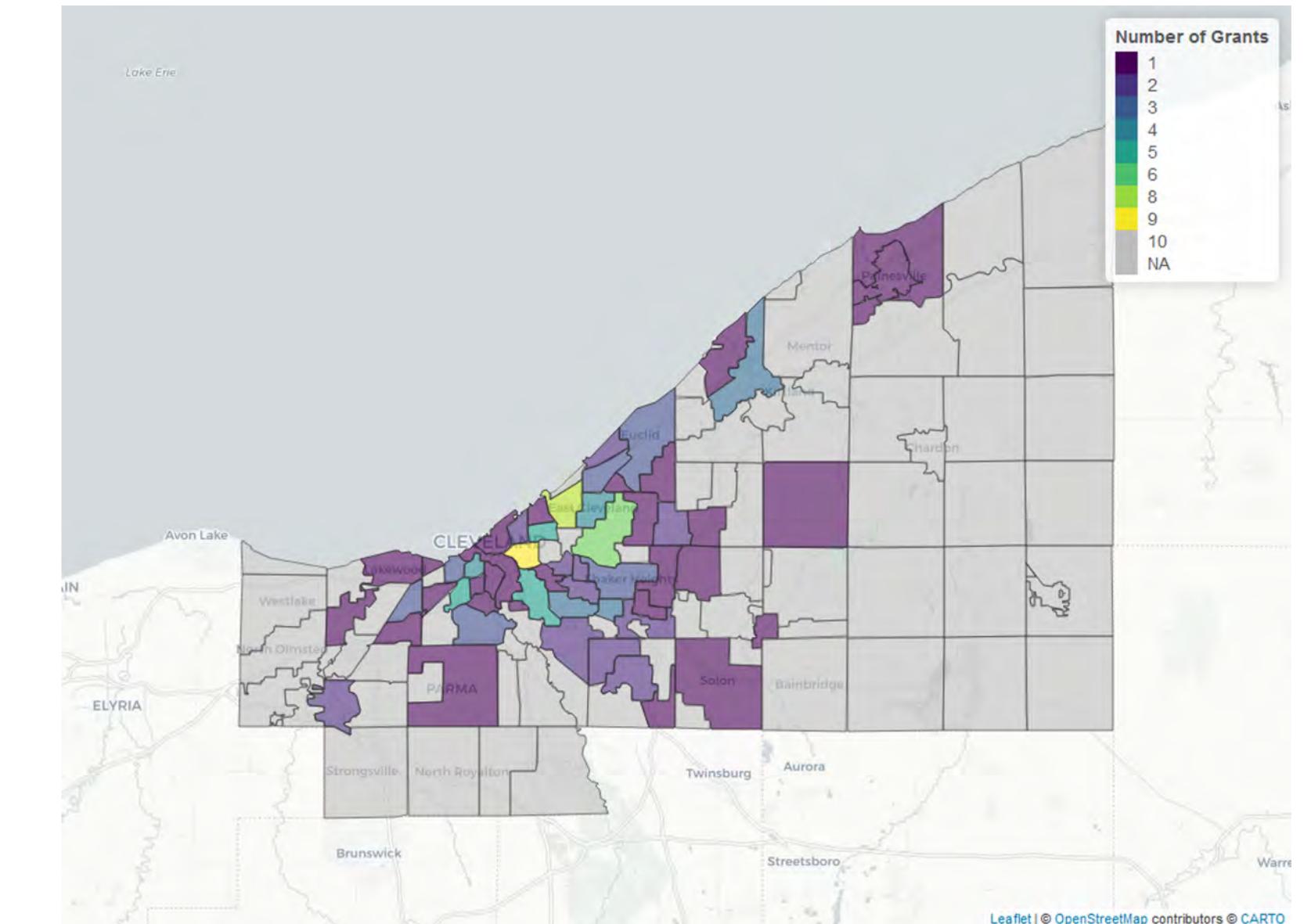
**161** nonprofits  
funded



**130+** small community  
grants

funded through a partnership with  
Neighborhood Connections (less than  
\$5,000/ea)

### Small community grants by Neighborhood



# Exploring a Continued Partnership

In June, GCCRRF began exploring a possible second phase of the collaboration. The process included an analysis of Phase 1, a national scan of COVID-19 rapid response funds, and community engagement in order to inform the focus and structure of a continued collaboration.

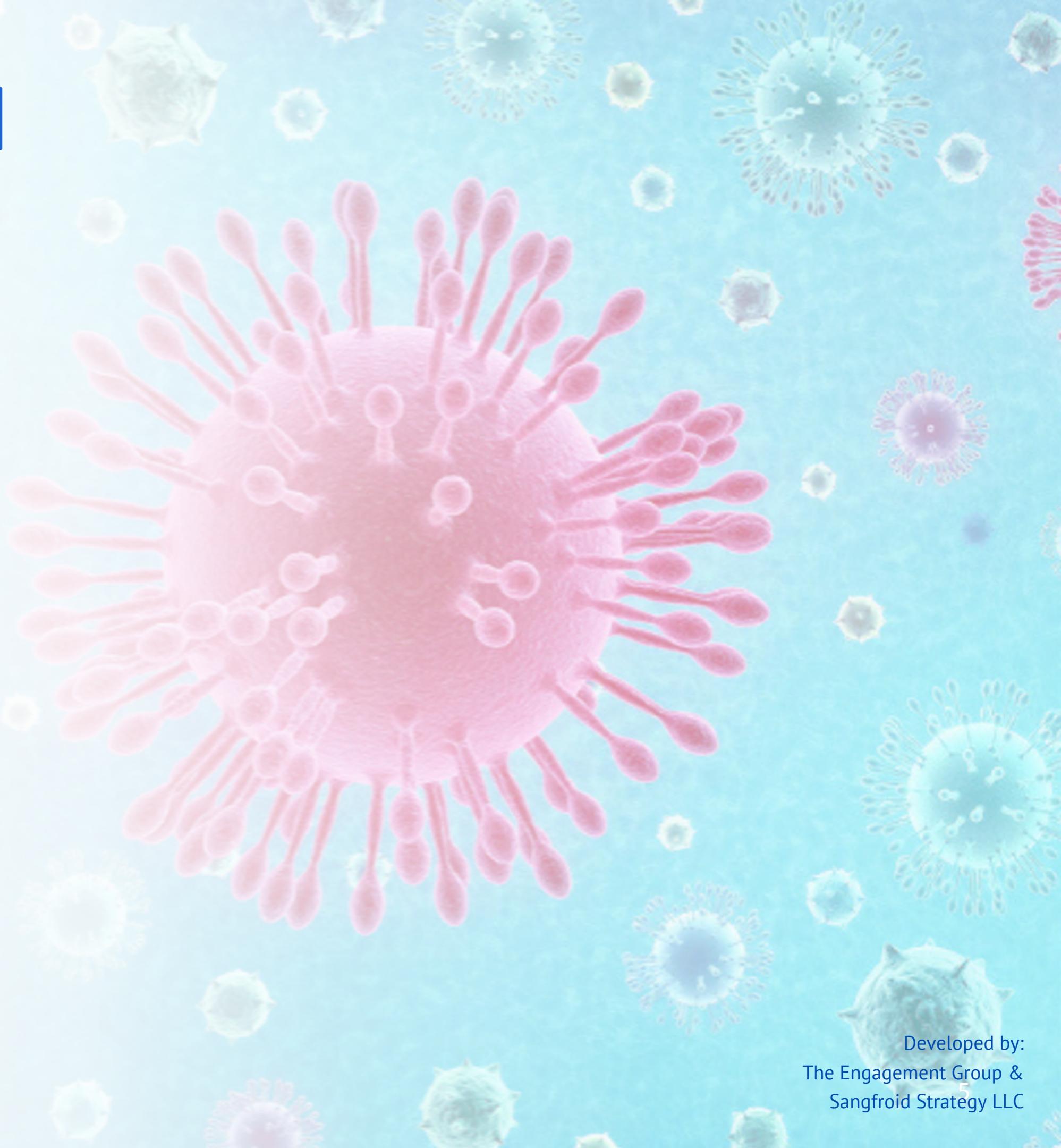
**~750 voices of Greater Clevelanders contributed to this process.**

Developed by:

The Engagement Group &  
Sangfroid Strategy LLC

# What We Learned

From 300+ Greater  
Cleveland  
**Nonprofit  
Organizations**

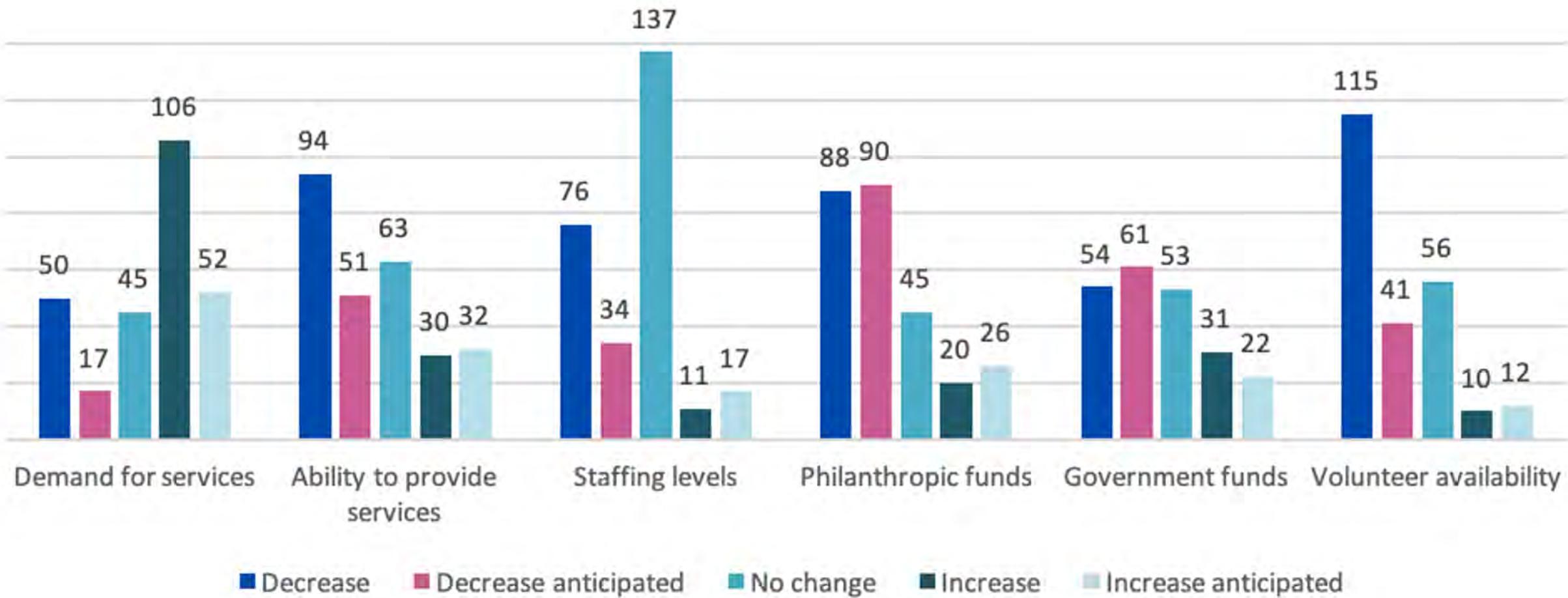


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# What We Learned: From 300+ Nonprofits

## Impact of COVID-19 on Services, Staffing, Funding, and Volunteer Availability



## Needs of Nonprofits

- Flexibility of funding (operating support)
- More funding to meet basic needs of clients
- Technical assistance (policy, planning, management, restructuring, leadership, program development, etc.)
- Meeting staff needs (childcare, easing fears, workspace, ensuring safety)
- Ability to offer in-person services
- Technology (for staff and clients)
- Capacity to engage their clients differently

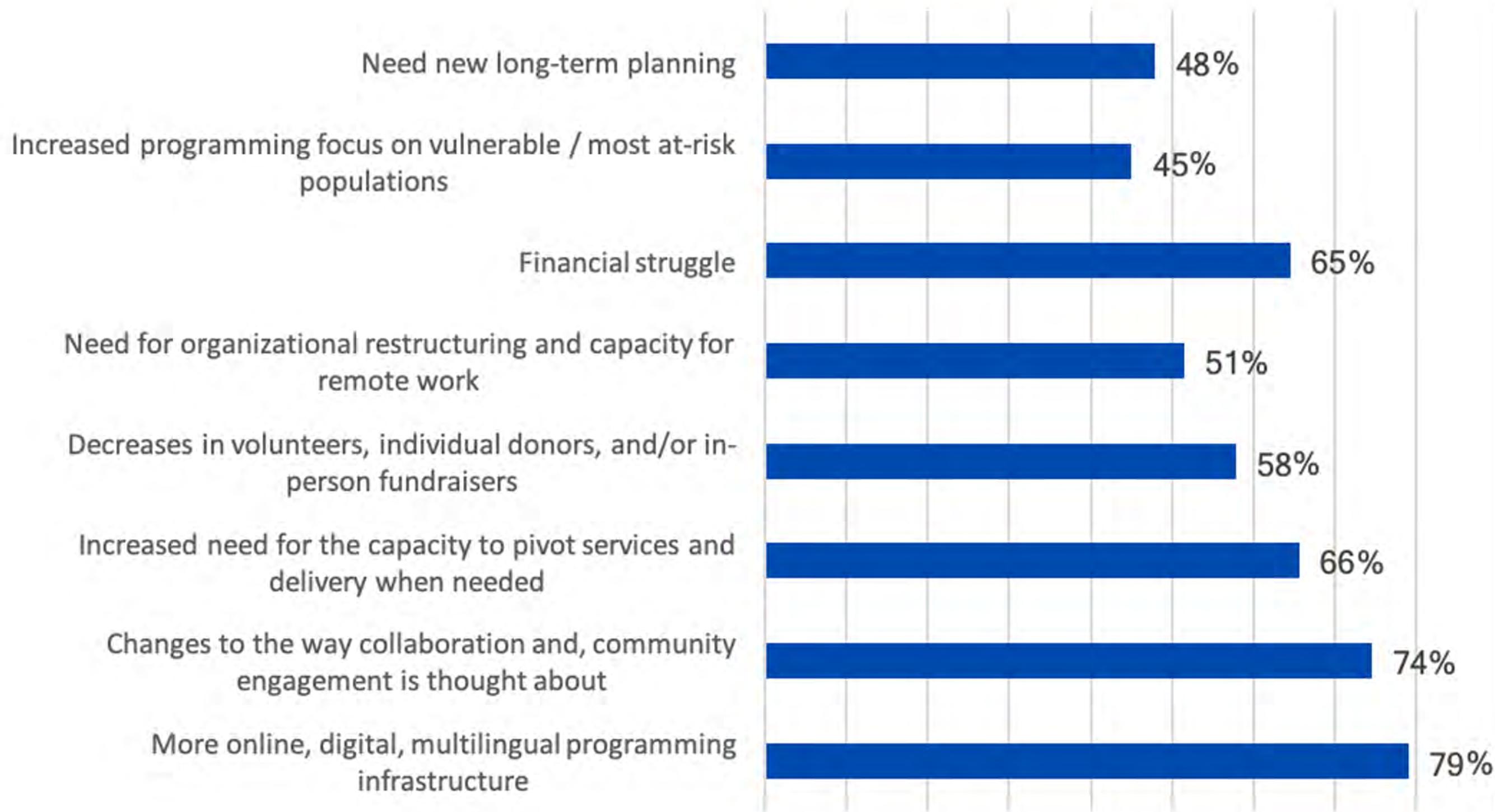
*Only 4% identified PPE as an immediate need*

## Key Findings

- 50%+ nonprofits are **seeing or projecting a decrease in the ability to provide services**.
- 2/3 of nonprofits **have seen or are projecting a decrease in philanthropic support** and 1/2 for government support.
- 60% of nonprofits **anticipate no change or an increase in staffing levels** even though there is an anticipation of funding loss, while 40% are seeing or anticipating a decrease.
- While nonprofits have an increased demand for services, **budgetary constraints and uncertainty are forcing them to decrease the services that they provide**. This dynamic is disproportionately impacting minority-led nonprofits.

# What We Learned: From 300+ Nonprofits

## Expected Impact of COVID-19 in the Next 3-5 years



## Key Findings

- Based on the short-term needs of nonprofits and the expected impact, **it is clear that (in addition to funding) nonprofits need help navigating through both the short and long-term impacts of COVID-19**. This includes planning, staffing, operations & safety, program adaptation, and sustainability through recovery.

# — What We Learned

From 300+ Greater  
Cleveland  
**Residents**

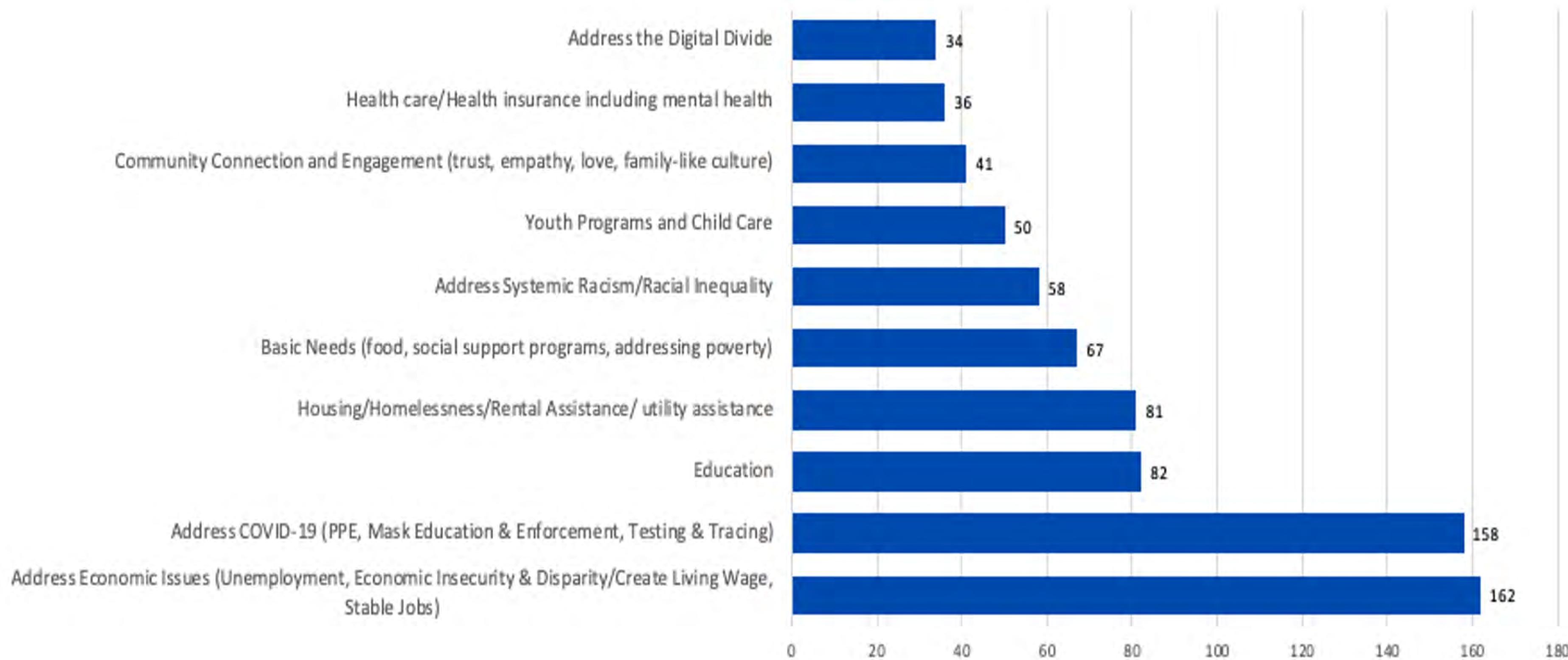
A background illustration featuring several stylized COVID-19 virus particles against a light blue gradient. One large, central, semi-transparent red virus particle is prominent, surrounded by smaller, semi-transparent green and white virus particles.

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# What We Learned: From 300+ Greater Clevelanders

Top 10 Most Pressing Needs + Areas to Focus



# What We Learned: From 300+ Greater Clevelanders

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“  
When we think about wealth disparity between blacks and whites, we have to reimagine what investment means to advance these systemic issues.

“  
Block by block, neighborhood by neighborhood, there's an innate, organic responsiveness that speaks to what people will do in moments of scarcity.

“  
[Philanthropy has] a huge role like no one else can in putting the dollars into defining the problem - the research, the data, the stories, and putting the initial money into bringing the solution to bear.

“  
Invest more in justice issues rather than charity, and they have to invest more directly in people rather than programs.

“  
Really look at not doing business as usual but having these multi-sector responses that actually get to the root of the problem. Really do it with a racial equity focus. We have an opportunity to do it right now. We haven't had that opportunity the way we have it now in the past 50 years.

“  
Definite separation between haves and have nots. In most cases it's around race.

# Putting it All Together

- 1. COVID-19 Response:** The need for continued response to the immediate needs of community residents grappling with the health and economic fallout from the pandemic, including support for PPE, testing, and contact tracing to keep people safe; supporting families; and making sure basic needs are met.
- 2. Systemic Racism + Racial Justice:** The urgency of addressing systemic racism and developing a racial justice agenda that disrupts and dismantles racist policies, practices, and procedures that negatively impact people of color.
- 3. Economic Well-being + Mobility:** The fundamental priority of economic well-being and economic mobility for all of Cleveland's residents, including those who have been historically marginalized.



Greater Cleveland will recover from COVID-19 and come back stronger if we focus on these three things.

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# Continued Collaboration

The Greater Cleveland COVID-19 Rapid Response Fund is dedicated to continuing its work. Through the development of a broader collaboration focused on coordinating and convening partners across sectors, with specific goals related to Greater Cleveland's response to, adaptation within, and recovery from COVID-19, the collaboration hopes to address immediate and long-term needs of the Greater Cleveland community.

- 1. Response:** A continuation of the Rapid Response Fund that will provide resources to help prevent the transmission of the coronavirus by meeting basic needs; supporting families during this school year; and PPE, testing, and tracing.
- 2. Adaptation:** An aligned fund partnership focused on helping the nonprofit sector adapt its services and programming to be able to meet the increased needs of the community.
- 3. Recovery:** An aligned fund partnership focused on advocating for changes to racist policies, processes and practices in government, nonprofit, and philanthropy; leveraging philanthropic power and capital to spur greater collaboration and better leadership; and advance economic well-being for our residents.

# A Focus on Doing it Differently



**Six  
fundamental  
Principles to  
Guide our  
Collaboration**



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