



RAISING OUR CITY

# THE PANDEMIC REPORT

CONSIDERATIONS FOR A POST-PANDEMIC FUTURE  
FOR YOUTH DEVELOPMENT NONPROFITS

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# ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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**The Pandemic Report is a culmination of the hard work of many individuals who came together to share their experiences on the significant impact of the pandemic.**

We are foremost grateful to our Nonprofit Partners for their tireless dedication to New York City's youth. Their participation in the survey for this report provided valuable insights on the sector and the communities they serve.

A special thanks to the following Youth INC staff partners: Rehana Farrell, Executive Director, for her thoughtful leadership and guidance throughout the project. Lauren Elicks McCort, Chief Programs Officer, for her vision, oversight, and thoughtful facilitation of critical discussions, and for serving as the primary survey designer and one of the report's authors. Jaynellen Stokes-Walters, Associate, Research and Strategic Initiatives, for leading the data analysis and report development, and serving as one of the primary authors. Krystalle Shoy, Director, Marketing and Communications, and Jerrod MacFarlane who offered key insights and clarity to the formulation of the report and oversaw the execution of the report's design, thematic visualization, and precision of its copy.



There has been massive new COVID-era expense – time and attention spent by executive leaders on COVID-related issues. First, how to deal with a massive shortfall in revenue, then pivot, take care of our staff, message our status to our community, and engage our Board. I’m proud of our response – each time asking ourselves, ‘what do we have in front of us, and how can we make this situation work best for our long-term strategy and short-term needs.’ And, we’ve made our luck and created many new opportunities. But the amount of time, the increase in hours, and constant worry, especially in the early days, had a considerable cost to the organization and me personally. 16-hour days, endless spreadsheets modeling different scenarios, Board memos written and revised. But here we are, perhaps stronger and more cohesive than ever before.



**ANTHONY TASSI**  
Chief Executive Officer, Literacy Partners

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## A Message From Rehana Farrell

**March of 2020 brought a global health crisis unlike anything we have experienced in our lifetime. Communities and families across NYC were plunged into a period of uncertainty. Disruption to housing, food security, mental and physical health, and education left NYC communities scrambling to assess urgent needs and how best to adapt to meet them.**

Youth INC’s powerful network of over 80 Nonprofit Partners, who serve young people ages 0 to 24+ across all five boroughs, responded to the pandemic with unyielding dedication, agility, and perseverance. They shifted their focus, collaborated to add programs and services to tackle basic needs, and transitioned to virtual learning for the young people they champion.

New strategic partnerships added programs and services to tackle basic needs, and a transition to virtual learning extended organizational capacity.

Initial waves of pandemic relief funding like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and philanthropic grants helped nonprofits endure, but two years into the pandemic, the question of what remains echoes. What lingering and exacerbated challenges will continue to chase these organizations and the communities they serve in a post-pandemic future?

The research findings in this report highlight the tumult of the past two years, the lasting impact of this crisis, and the resilience of our Nonprofit Partners.

**ALTHOUGH COLLECTIVELY DOWN \$19M IN REVENUE BY 2021 & HAVING EXPERIENCED A LOSS OF 600 FULL AND PART-TIME EMPLOYEES,**

**60% LAUNCHED NEW PROGRAMS OR SERVICES, REACHING**

**250,000 YOUNG PEOPLE**

Outstripped resources and greater demand have worsened the strain on NYC’s nonprofits with only one-third of organizations reporting that they are able to fully meet the increased demand for their services.

Youth INC recognizes the lasting impact this crisis will continue to have on young people and the organizations that dedicate their missions to their success in life. We share this report with nonprofit professionals, capacity-builders, and funders to deepen our collective understanding of how the pandemic has affected nonprofit organizations, the actions these groups have taken, and the resources and tools we must mobilize as we look toward the future.

**REHANA FARRELL**  
Executive Director

# METHODOLOGY

Our COVID-19 impact survey was designed to capture the ongoing impact of the pandemic on several key areas of nonprofit operations including:

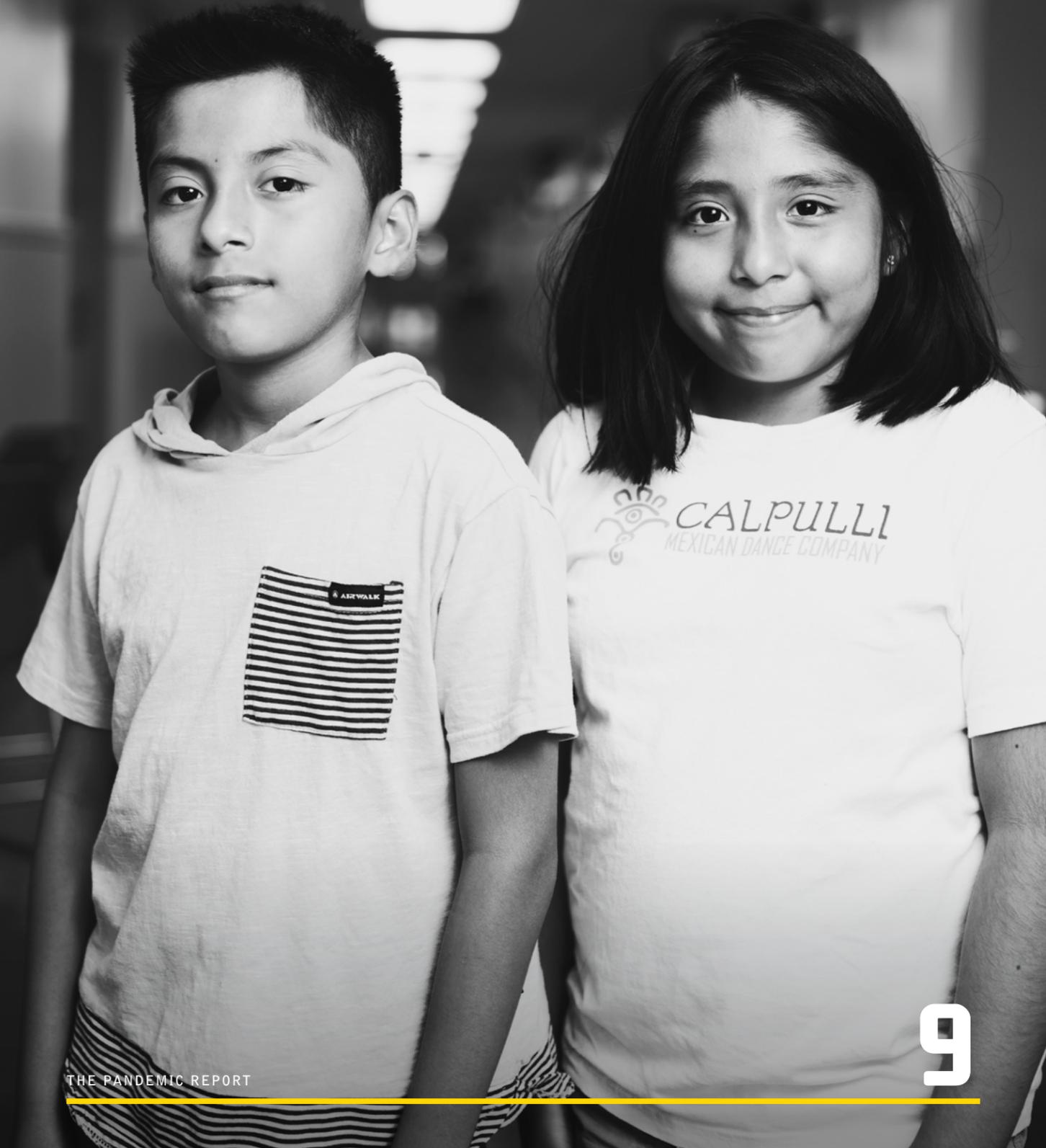
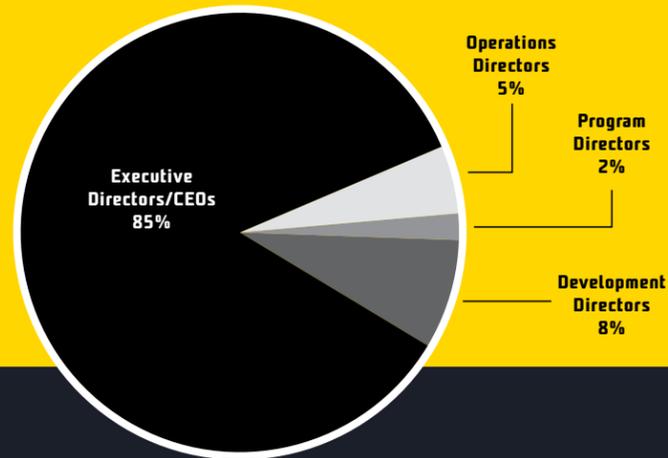
- Programming and Community Impact
- Funding and Finance
- Staffing and Operations

In February 2022, we contacted our Partner Network (a group of 81 New York City youth development nonprofits) and asked them to complete a 20-question survey to better understand the impact of the pandemic on their organizations, programs, and staff. Youth INC's partnership model provided an essential foundation for the open and rapid communication needed to mobilize information, resources and support to our Nonprofit Partners.

Of our 81 nonprofits, we received completed responses from 62 (a 77% response rate). 85% of surveys were completed by executive directors. Survey responses were paired with data from Youth INC's annual Partner Network application, which includes information on annual budgets, executive director demographics, and their service category.

77%  
RESPONSE RATE

## Response by Titles



# PROFILE OF SURVEY RESPONDENTS

To ensure that the survey responses were representative of the nonprofits in our Partner Network, we looked at four data points:

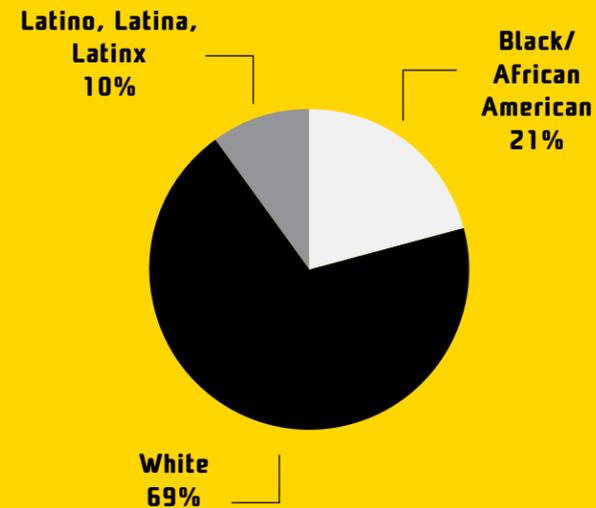
- The self-identified race of executive directors
- Whether the organization was led by its founder
- The organization's annual budget
- The organization's service category

**This report** presents the results of this examination. When compared with our overall Partner Network makeup (see Appendix for a full breakdown), we are confident that this report is representative of our Partner Network's experience navigating the pandemic.

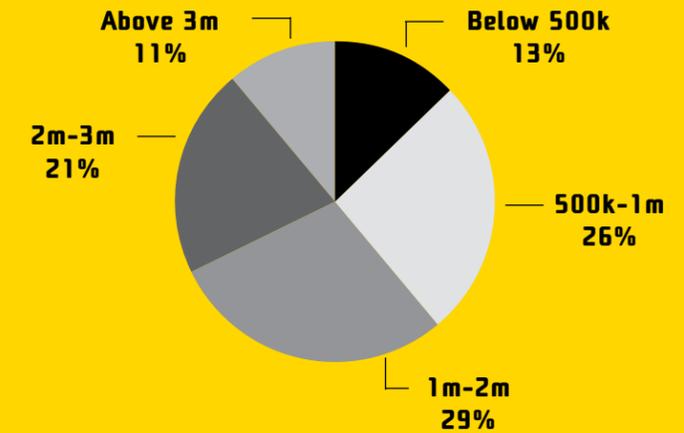
## Founder Led



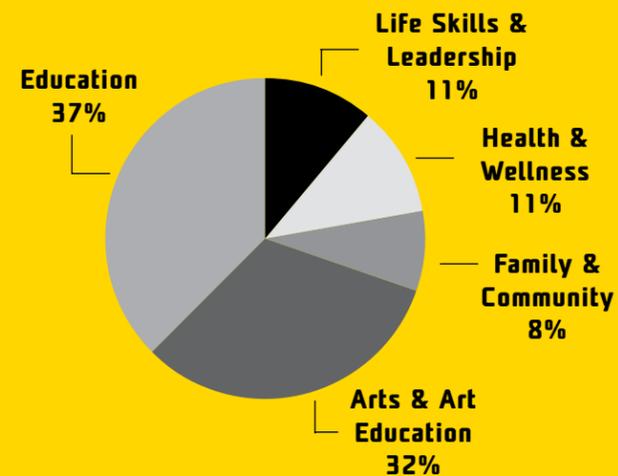
## Executive Leadership by Race



## Organization's Budget Size (\$USD)



## Organization's Service Category



Working across every age group, our Non-profit Partners employ a variety of vehicles for supporting young people and their healthy development. This ranges from robotics camps where young people use multidisciplinary STEM skills to collaboratively build massive installations to culturally responsive dance curricula that teach young people how to harness their minds and bodies to understand their experiences and transform them into art. Remarkably, despite all its challenges, the pandemic has led to growth for many in their programmatic offerings. Later in the report, we will elaborate on some of these novel developments as well as the forces in the communities our Nonprofit Partners serve that are driving them.

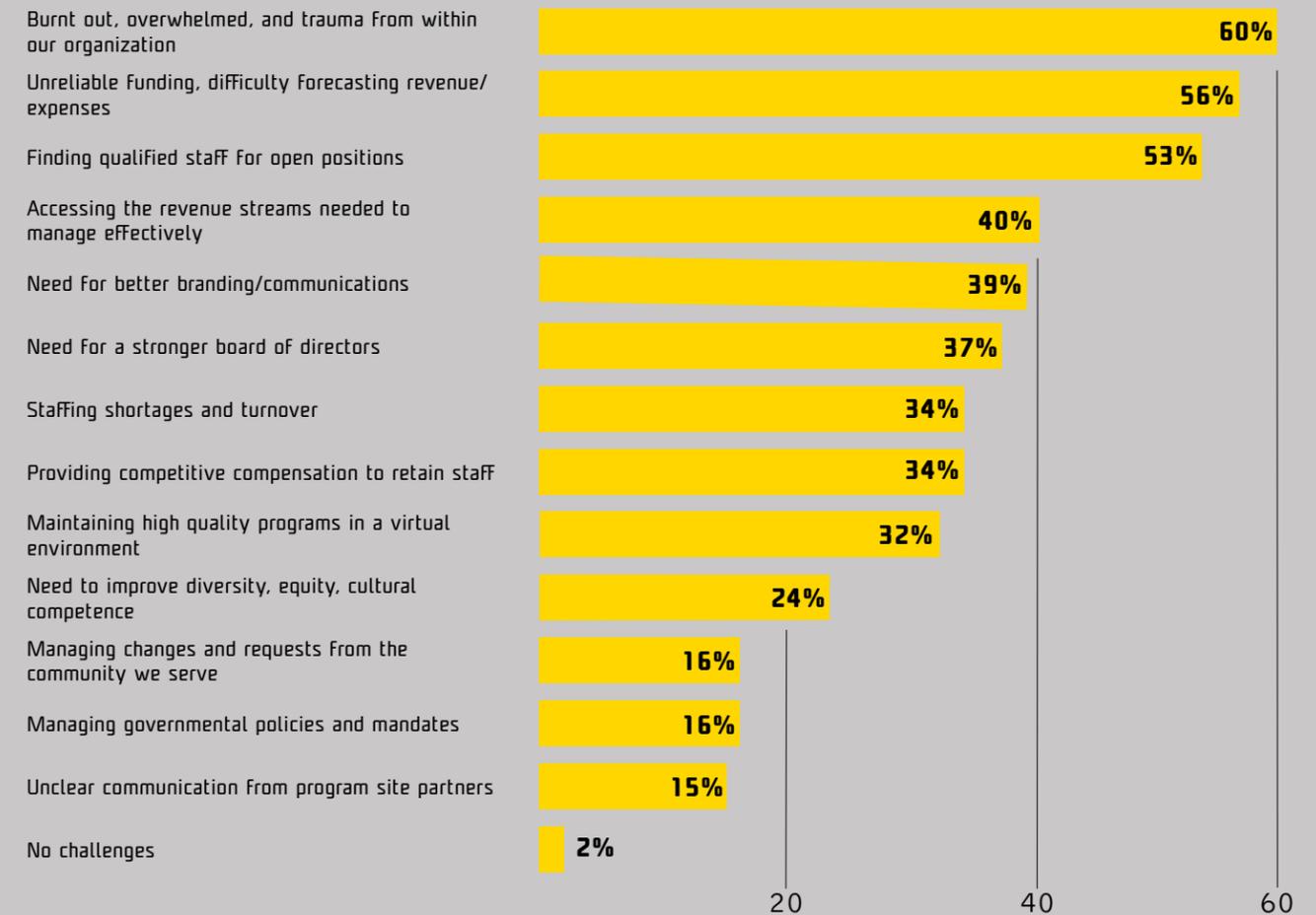
# ORGANIZATIONAL STRUGGLES & IMPLICATIONS

## While Navigating A Global Pandemic

After two years of navigating the COVID-19 pandemic, our Nonprofit Partners shared their ongoing challenges compounded by the already strained reality of community-based social impact organizations. Managing burnout and trauma from staff, navigating the great resignation and evolving hiring patterns, and difficulty forecasting their financial situation are among the top pandemic-related organizational challenges identified by our respondents.



## Top Pandemic-Related Challenges Cited by Respondents



## A Need For Better Branding & Communication

The need for enhanced branding and communications was a leading challenge to organizational viability for two important groups within Youth INC's Partner Network: organizations led by a person of color, and grassroots organizations with budgets below \$1M.

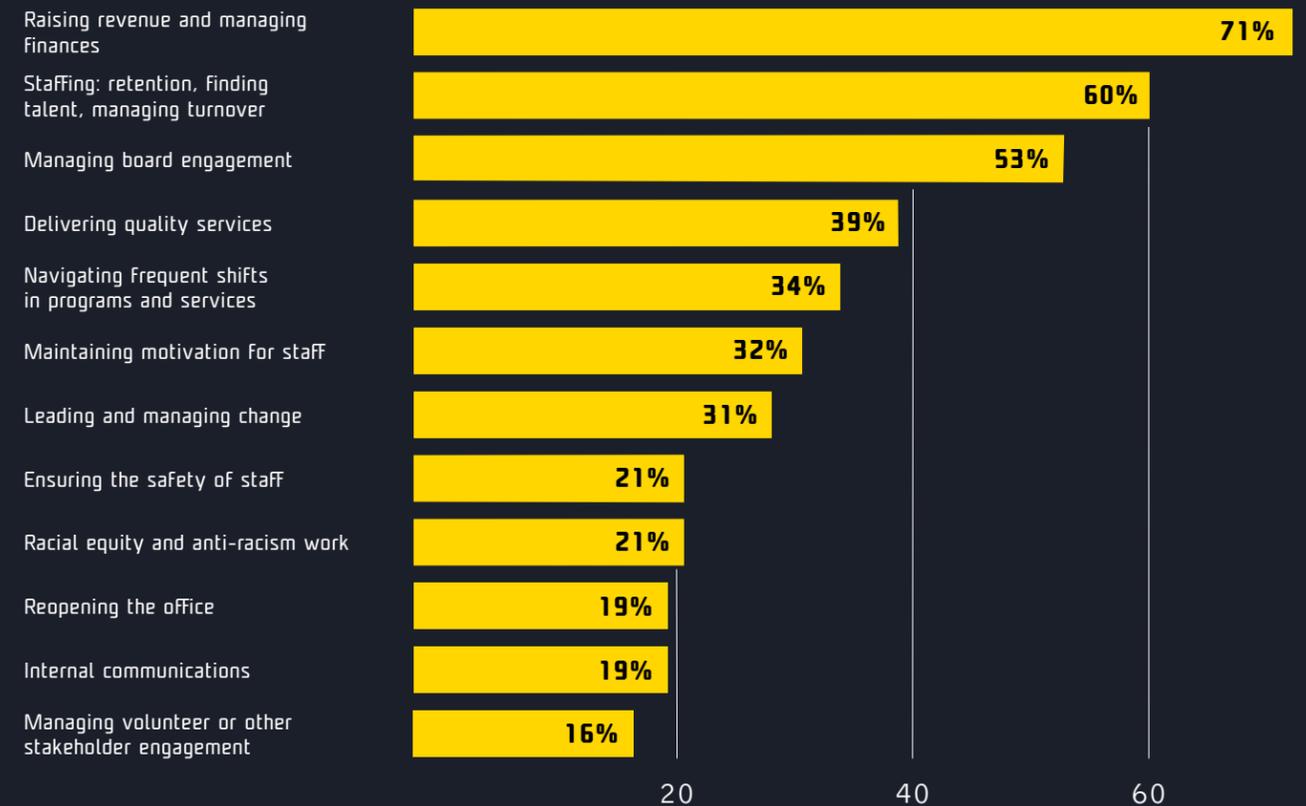
**53%** + **50%**  
 OF LEADERS OF COLOR OF GRASSROOTS ORGANIZATIONS

identified this need as one of their greatest current challenges



For nonprofit leaders, the past two years have tested their agility. Becoming crisis management experts, these leaders have created innovative program models, developed new partnerships, and rallied staff and volunteers to rise to the challenge of meeting emerging community needs. Two years in, nonprofit leaders have identified the following as their top leadership challenges:

## Biggest Challenges Facing Leaders Right Now



## Navigating Staffing Challenges Through a Global Crisis

Providing competitive compensation while managing staffing shortages and turnover are a significant challenge to organizational viability. Over one-third of Youth INC's Nonprofit Partners highlighted the difficulty of providing competitive compensation to retain staff at this time and managing staffing shortages, including turnover and furloughs. See page 33 for a deeper dive into staffing challenges.

Finding qualified staff for open positions was particularly challenging for organizations navigating the \$2M transition (budget sizes of \$1M-\$3M), with 64% saying that it is a major challenge compared to only 38% of organizations under \$1M reporting it as a challenge.

Already existing staffing challenges and management issues have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Organizations with larger staff sizes and more complex staffing models have felt the pain of the shifting labor market over the past two years. 75% of leaders with budgets over \$1M note that finding and retaining a qualified staff capable of achieving their organizational goals is a top leadership challenge.

## Managing Board Engagement: A Challenge For Grass-roots Organizations

While staffing was identified as the top leadership and organizational challenge for organizations over \$1M, board engagement was the top challenge for leaders of organizations with budgets below \$1M, with 78% of leaders of these organizations identifying this as a top challenge.

Boards play a critical role for organizations, providing vital thought-partnership and technical assistance, strategic insight, and fiduciary responsibility. In times of crisis, a tenacious board that can step into these crucial roles is essential to helping organizations manage and emerge stronger.

It's been extremely exhausting managing the change that has come as a result of the pandemic—on leadership and on staff. Keeping staff motivated and heading toward a new north star with constant external change has been challenging. It has been constant crisis management for two years, while driving programming forward in a new more impactful direction.

**KRISTEN BALDWIN**

Executive Director, Read Ahead

# PROGRAMMING & COMMUNITY IMPACT

## Impact of the Pandemic on the Communities Our Nonprofit Partners Serve

At the start of the pandemic, the needs of the young people and communities our Nonprofit Partners serve shifted dramatically. Food and housing insecurity, lack of access to educational technology, illness and family loss became pressing concerns for countless families.

The Citizens' Committee for Children of New York (CCC) estimates that 4,700 children under 18 lost a parent or caregiver to COVID-19 from March 2020 through December 2021. As the CCC notes in their "Keeping Track of New York City's Children: 2022" report, "the extent of grief and trauma experienced by children is unprecedented and comes at a time when other adversities and stressors to well-being have escalated for these children and countless others."<sup>1</sup>

Between March 2020 and June 2021, New York City schools were fully or partially engaged in remote learning. 36% of households report that their children had three days or less of live contact with teachers at school while 12% had zero. Food and digital inequities compounded educational barriers even further.<sup>1</sup>

Enrollment in NYC's Department of Youth and Community Development (DYCD) after-school programs (COMPASS, SONYC, Beacon, Cornerstone) declined by 42% during the pandemic (FY 21), with approximately 100,000 fewer youth served when compared to pre-pandemic numbers.<sup>1</sup> Approximately 40% of Youth INC's Nonprofit Partners are DYCD providers.

## Barriers To Child And Family Wellbeing During The Covid-19 Pandemic:

1 IN 2



HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN REPORTED DIFFICULTY MEETING THEIR WEEKLY EXPENSES

1 IN 2



YOUTH AGES 18 TO 24 REPORTED SYMPTOMS OF ANXIETY AND/OR DEPRESSION

1 IN 3



RENTER HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN REPORTED BEING BEHIND ON RENTAL PAYMENTS

1 IN 7



HOUSEHOLDS WITH CHILDREN REPORTED SOMETIMES OR OFTEN NOT HAVING ENOUGH TO EAT

**Source:** Keeping track of New York City's children: 2022. CCC New York. (2022, April 29). Retrieved June 3, 2022, from <https://cccnewyork.org/data-publications/keeping-track-of-nyc-children-2022/?section=Education>

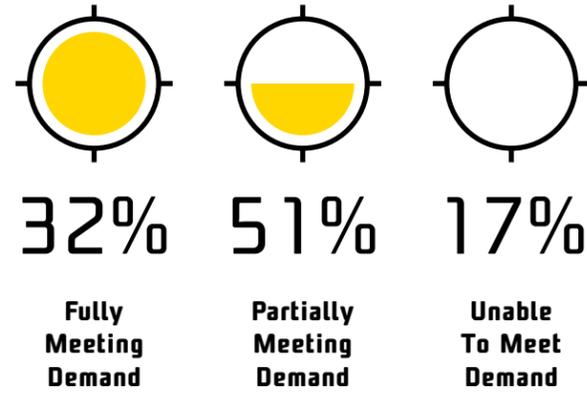
## Ongoing demand for services

Given the demonstrated gap in service outlined by the Citizen's Committee for Children of New York, we asked our Nonprofit Partners if they registered an increased demand for their services or programs. 65% reported an increased demand for their services or programs. Despite the need to shift how those services were delivered, they were still essential to the community.

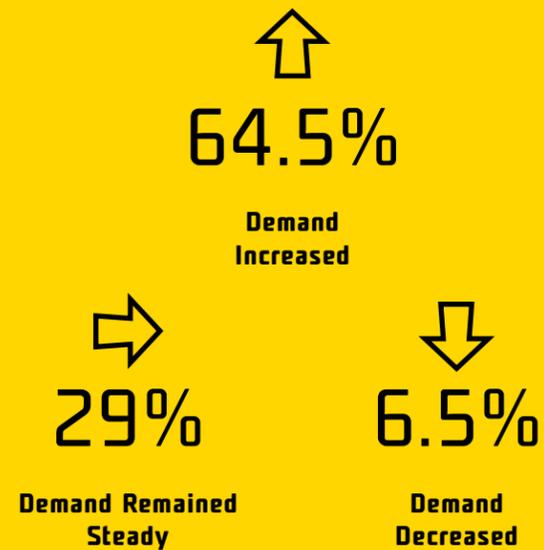
Of our Nonprofit Partners that experienced an increase in demand for their services, a little over half were able to at least meet some of the demand, but only a third were able to fully meet this increased need.

Organizations led by executive directors of color have experienced unique challenges in meeting their community's needs. Over 25% of executive directors of color report that they have not been able to meet demonstrated needs, compared with just 5% of their white counterparts. Youth INC, along with our peer funders and capacity-builders, has an obligation to explore this disparity further, understand the root causes and drivers, and activate resources to address inequities.

## Partners' Ability To Meet Increased Demand For Services



## Demand For Services Since The Start Of The Pandemic



## NONPROFIT PARTNERS' RESPONSE

Despite the shortage of several essential resources, such as staffing and funding, so many of our inspiring Partners continued to combat this crisis, doing everything possible to ensure services were offered to their communities.

To accommodate new and increased community needs, the majority of Youth INC's Nonprofit Partners adapted their program models to better respond to their communities. Partners formed new and vital relationships to tackle food insecurity, provided school supplies and technology (e.g., iPads, laptops) to allow students to continue to learn from home, and advocated for greater access to Wi-Fi at housing shelters to assist their communities.



**84%**  
CHANGED PROGRAM MODELS TO ACCOMMODATE NEW COMMUNITY NEEDS THAT AROSE DURING THE PANDEMIC

**60%**  
STARTED A NEW PROGRAM OR SERVICE

**60%**  
ENTERED A NEW PARTNERSHIP OR COLLABORATION

**53%**  
EXPANDED A PROGRAM OR SERVICE

Rather than reduce or cease operations, our Nonprofit Partners rose to the challenge, with a majority expanding programs, starting a new program, or entering new partnerships to bring greater service and support to their communities.

Partnerships were particularly important for grassroots organizations with budgets under \$1M. 70% of Nonprofit Partners with budgets under \$1M entered a new partnership or collaboration, in contrast to 40% of organizations with budgets over \$1M.

Despite many successes, not all of our Nonprofit Partners experienced growth. Almost a quarter were forced to close programs or services, and close to half had to downsize their existing programs. Fortunately, many organizations that were forced to close during the pandemic have since opened or offered new programs or services as the pandemic has persisted.

**26%**

**CLOSED A PROGRAM OR SERVICE**

**33%**

**CANCELLED OR GREATLY REDUCED FEES FOR SERVICE**

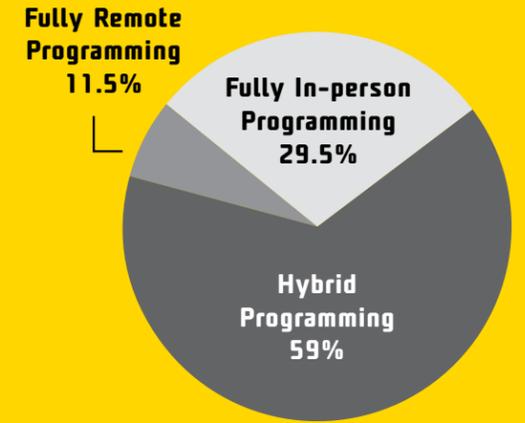
**45%**

**DOWNSIZED EXISTING PROGRAMS**

“ We are continuing to provide virtual programming for those communities who are not in-person, but we have stopped our essential needs efforts (Food, PPE, etc.). ”

**DAVINIA TROUGHTON**  
Director of Finance and Operations, Arts Ignite

## How Youth Programs are Currently Operating



“ Absolutely everything changed in our program delivery as we changed all our work to online. We made a big push to provide devices and, in some cases, hot spots to one of our four programs early on. We are not doing that anymore. We created a basic needs fund early on to distribute gift cards and - with a new funding source - we continue to do that. We created entirely new referral arrangements to source our students and those continue today. We rolled out a new emphasis on health literacy and access to care in one of our programs and that continues today as well. ”

**ANTHONY TASSI**  
Chief Executive Officer, Literacy Partners



# FUNDING & FINANCE

## A More Detailed Impact on Revenue

Nonprofit Partners experienced a variety of revenue related losses throughout the pandemic. Partners were asked about the extent to which they experienced major to inconsequential revenue losses in fee-for-service, event, government, institutional, individual, and other revenue streams.

Overall, there were three major drivers for pandemic-related revenue loss for our Nonprofit Partners.

# 63%

LOSS OF REVENUE FROM IN-PERSON EVENTS

# 40%

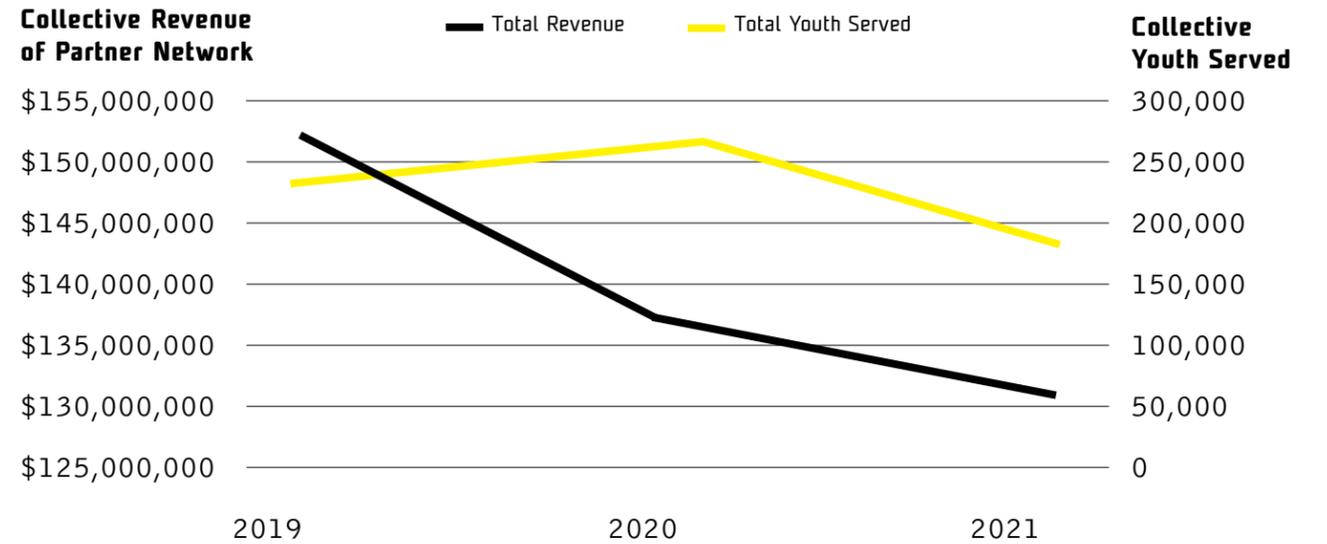
LOSS OF REVENUE DUE TO VIRTUAL EVENT MODELS PRODUCING LESS REVENUE RAISED

# 40%

FEE FOR-SERVICE REVENUES LOST DUE TO PROGRAM CANCELLATIONS



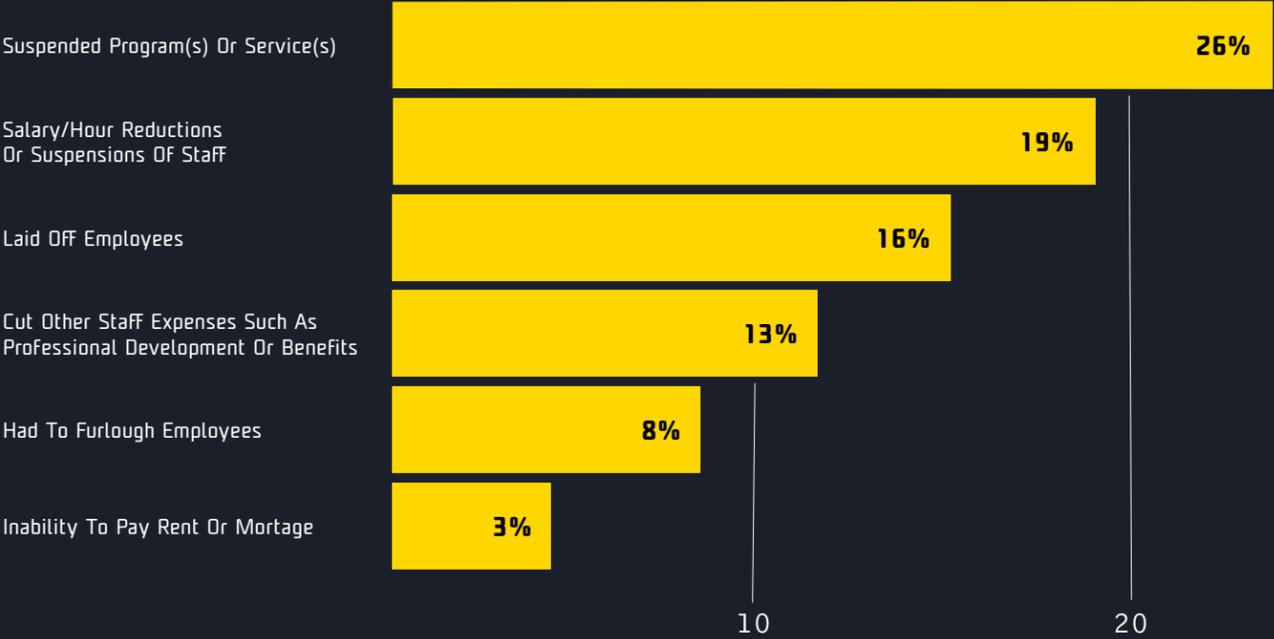
## Revenue Raised and Youth Served Through the Covid-19 Pandemic



### Impact on Revenue

Despite the uncertainty in funding, our Nonprofit Partners demonstrated strength and agility in the services provided and their commitment to the young people they serve. Though they experienced a collective loss of \$19M in revenue between 2019 and 2021, of the nearly 250,000 young people collectively served annually, there was only about 38K decrease in youth served. While individual, foundation, and government funding has rebounded, earned income has seen a continued decrease in revenue.

# Consequences of Pandemic Related Funding Issue



1 IN 4



NONPROFIT PARTNERS HAVE NOT EXPERIENCED SIGNIFICANT FINANCIAL ISSUES DUE TO THE PANDEMIC



37%

OF EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS OF COLOR REPORTED REDUCTIONS OR DELAYS IN NYC DOE OR DYCD FUNDING AS A MAJOR OR MODERATE ISSUE, COMPARED TO ONLY 19% OF THEIR WHITE COUNTERPARTS.



74%

OF PARTNERS REPORTED THAT THEY CANCELED A SPECIAL EVENT

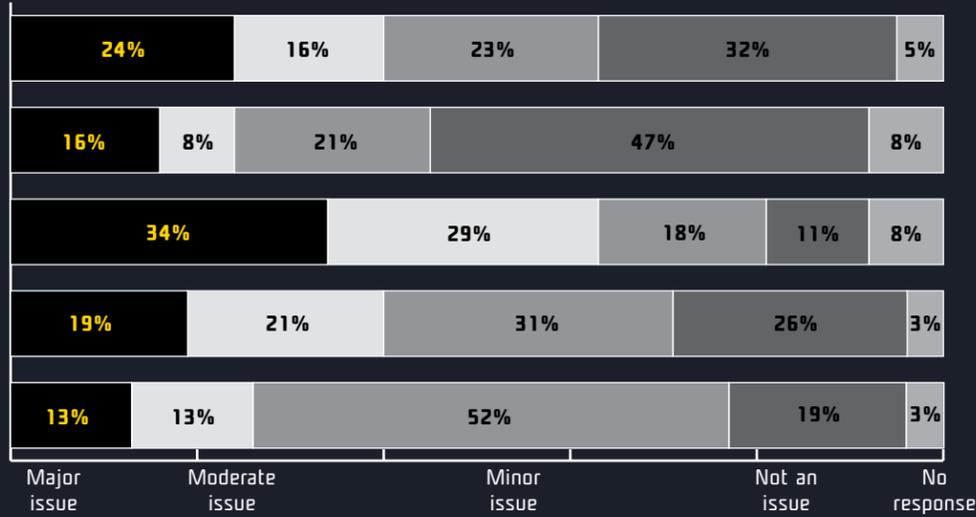


82%

OF PARTNERS REPORTED THAT THEY CONVERTED A MAJOR IN-PERSON EVENT TO VIRTUAL

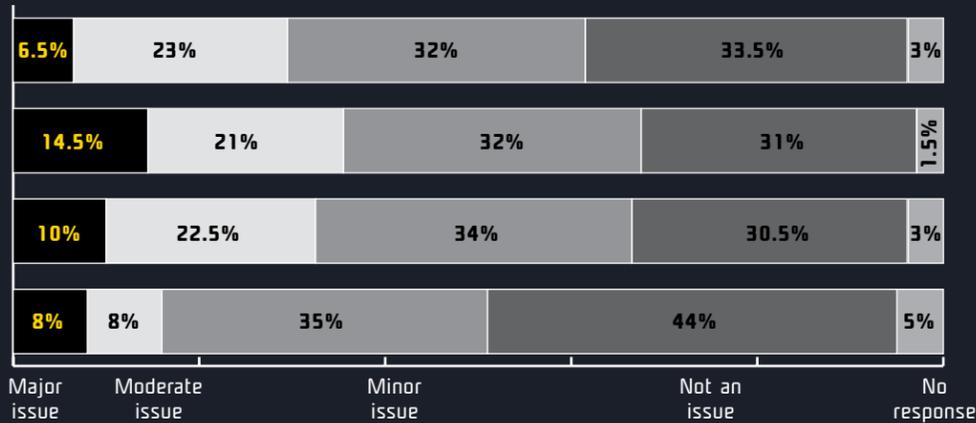
## Loss of Event & Service Related Revenue

Loss of fee-for-service revenues due to program/event cancellations



## Loss and Delay of Philanthropic Revenue

Loss of philanthropic support



## Loss & Reduction of Government Revenue

Reductions or delayed reimbursement in NYC Dept. of Education revenue

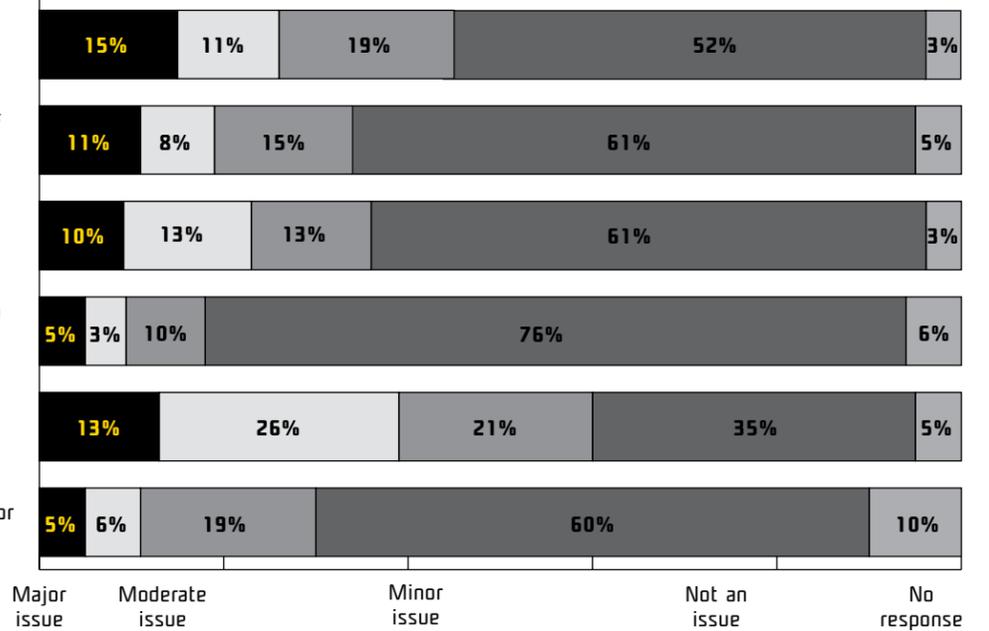
Suspension of NYC Department of Education revenue

Reductions or delayed reimbursement in NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Development revenue

Suspension of NYC Dept. of Youth and Community Development revenue

Reductions or delayed reimbursement of other government grants

Loss of other government grants or contracts



## The Impact of Unanticipated COVID Related Expenses

Along with the funding challenges during the pandemic, over 60% of our Nonprofit Partners incurred COVID-related expenses that were not budgeted for.

Unanticipated expenses included personal protective equipment (e.g. masks, face shields, gloves) and cleaning supplies and services, costs related to remote operations, paid time-off for employees absent due to COVID and hiring medical advisors to develop policies for limited-capacity in-person operations.



Those Partners reporting incurred COVID-related expenses also shared the amount incurred. On average, Partners incurred \$44,000, making up about 3.5% of their annual operating budget.

COVID-related expenses were more financially impactful for smaller organizations. On average expenses represented 6.5% of organizational budgets for Partners under \$1M vs. 2.5% for organizations with budgets over \$1M.

ON AVERAGE,  
PARTNERS INCURRED  
**\$44,000**  
MAKING UP ABOUT  
**3.5%**  
OF THEIR ANNUAL  
OPERATING BUDGET.

## A Call for Covid Related Relief Funding

In March 2020, the Small Business Administration (SBA) introduced the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) to “incentivize small businesses to keep workers on payroll and to rehire laid-off workers that lost wages due to COVID-19 disruptions.”<sup>1</sup> This provided an essential lifeline to Partners to keep programs and business running and retain most of their staff, while providing remote programming.

We asked our Partners about the impact of this funding on keeping their organizations open.

**60%** of partners said they would have experienced major disruptions without it

**27%** said that they would have closed or come close to closing without it

Notably, Partners expressed concern about not having the PPP loan available in 2023. While the initial rush of support was essential to keeping programs running, of equal concern is the rapid withdrawal of support, despite the pressing community need for organizations to fill these gaps in the absence of larger relief programs.

**85%**  
OF PARTNERS APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED PPP ROUND 1 FUNDING

**61%**  
OF PARTNERS APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED PPP ROUND 2 FUNDING

**53%**  
OF PARTNERS RECEIVED PHILANTHROPIC GRANTS SPECIFIC TO COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RELIEF, OTHER THAN YOUTH INC

**1. Source:** Ludwig, S. 23 Frequently Asked PPP Loan Questions, Answered. (2021, June 1). U.S. Chamber of Commerce.

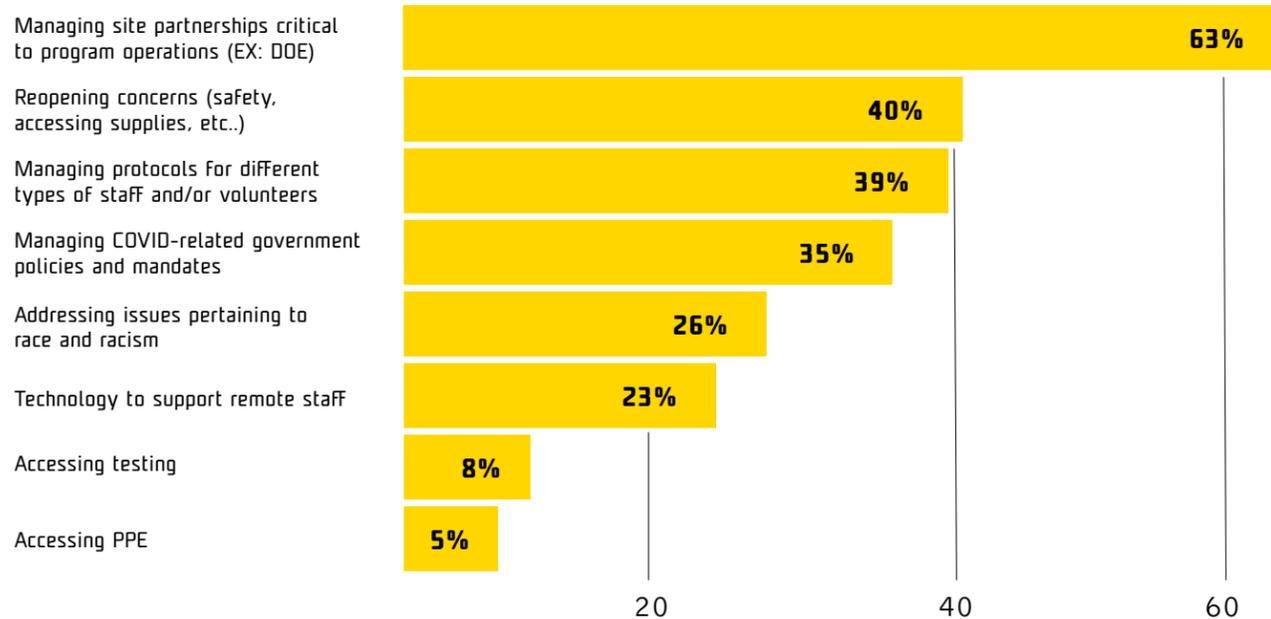
# PERSONNEL IMPACTS OF THE PANDEMIC

## The Most Pressing Operational Challenges

As our Nonprofit Partners continue to operate in an uncertain COVID environment, managing site partnerships as well as the various safety protocols required are top concerns.



## Pressing Operational Challenges Currently Faced by Our Partners



Finding time to think is the hardest thing right now. There is just too much to do. I guess one thing is the emotional impact this has had on the young people and the younger staff. I don't think we know the extent of this yet, but I do know that even our youth feel more overwhelmed with school and homework and have less time to work with us than they did pre-pandemic.

**JANINE NINA TREVENS**

Executive and Producing Artistic Director,  
TADA! Youth Theater

## Staffing Challenges

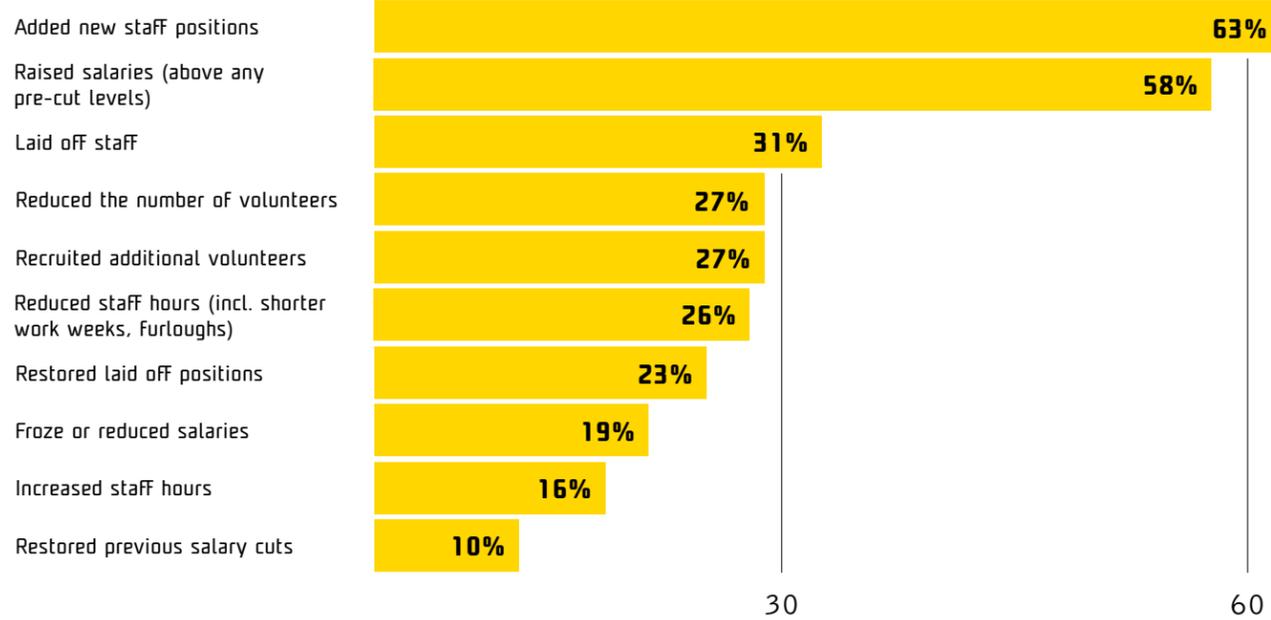
The COVID-19 pandemic has ushered in an unprecedented shift in the American workforce – between mass layoffs in the early days of the pandemic, to adapting to new work from home practices, uncertain and delayed “return to office” dates, and increasing mobility and worker empowerment, our Nonprofit Partners have faced previously unimaginable levels of anxiety and uncertainty. Despite these immense challenges, our Partners have seen tremendous accomplishments.

Almost a third of our Partners had to lay off staff during the pandemic and over a fourth had to reduce staff hours. However, Partners appear to be recovering or even growing, with almost all of previously laid off positions being rehired and 60% reporting the addition of new staff positions in the last two years.

Additionally, 34% of Partners reported increasing their employee benefits (health insurance, PTO, wellness initiatives, 401(k)) and about half added new professional development resources for their staff.

OUR PARTNERS REACHED  
**250,000**  
YOUNG PEOPLE THIS YEAR,  
WITH  
**60%**  
OF OUR NONPROFIT  
PARTNERS LAUNCHING  
NEW PROGRAMS OR  
SERVICES—ALL THIS  
DESPITE A COLLECTIVE  
LOSS OF APPROXIMATELY  
**600**  
FULL-TIME AND PART-TIME  
STAFF POSITIONS.

## Pandemic Implications for Staffing



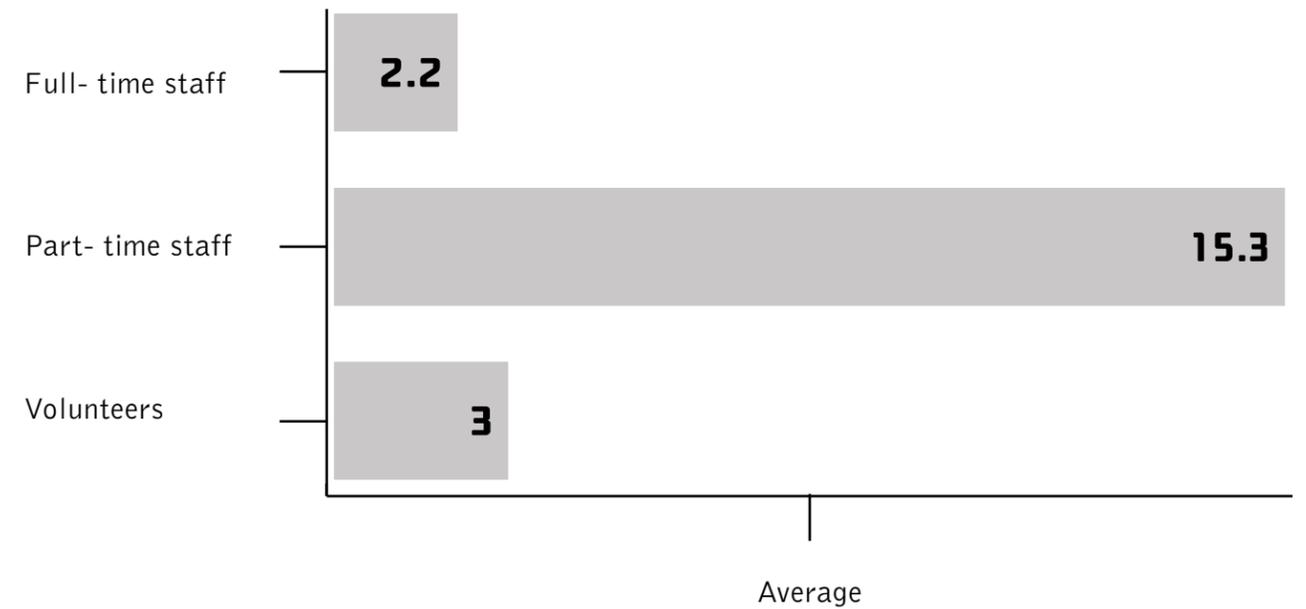
## Staffing Turnover

Across our network, Youth INC's Partners have experienced an 11% decrease in total full-time staff from pre-pandemic levels, 23% of part-time staff, and 27% of the total volunteer base, representing a loss of about 600 staff positions and over 3,400 volunteers across the portfolio since January 2020.

This turnover has had a disproportionate impact within our Partner Network. Partners led by executive directors of color reported the greatest turnover from front-line program staff, followed by senior program staff, with mid-level and junior development and operations positions equally represented.

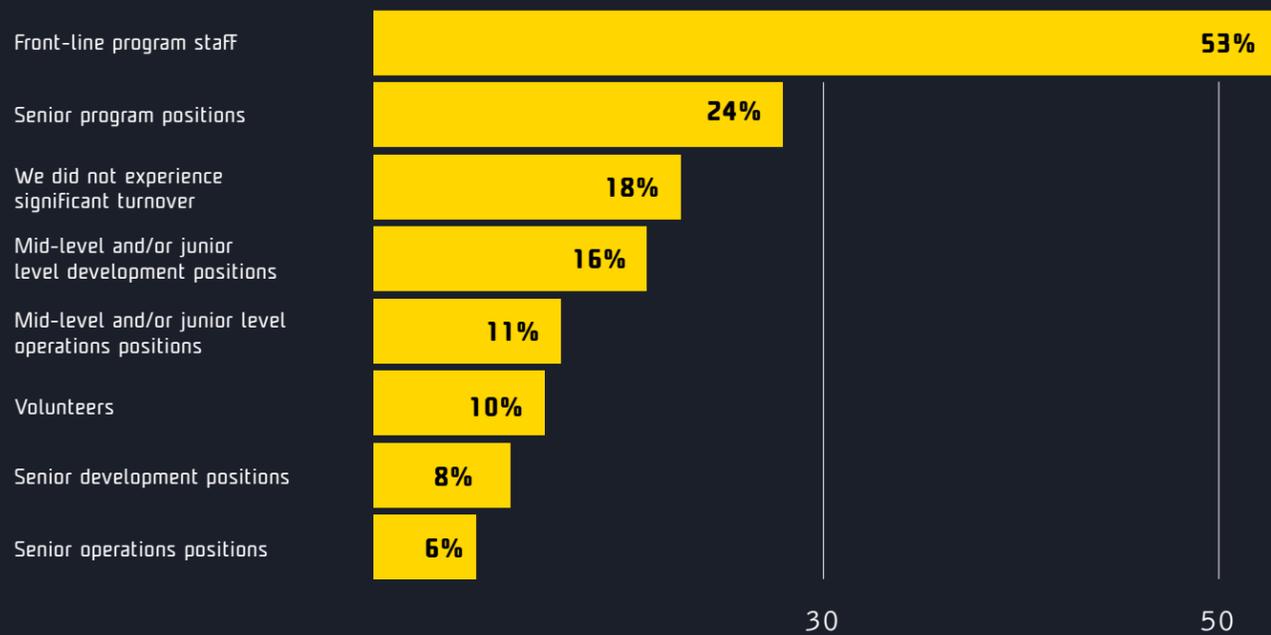
While front-line program staff turnover was also the top response selected for their white counterparts, no significant turnover was the second most reported, followed by senior program and mid-level or junior development positions. Pre-pandemic, Partners led by executive directors of color employed more part-time staff than their white counterparts and experienced a significantly greater loss of part-time positions throughout the pandemic.

## Pandemic-related Staff and Volunteer Turnover





## Turnover by Department and Roles



## Causes of Staff Turnover

Reasons for turnover differed by job types within our Nonprofit Partner Network. All Partners reported the highest level of turnover in their program staff when compared to operations or development personnel. The most cited reason for staff turnover among program staff was leaving the organization for a new position in the sector.

Of the organizations that had staff turnover, 30% of program staff and 15% of operations staff left the nonprofit sector entirely - a trend Youth INC have heard anecdotally from Nonprofit Partners during our work together. The third most frequent reason for program staff turnover was funding cuts or program cutbacks.

**51%**  
OF OUR PARTNERS HAVE REINSTATED

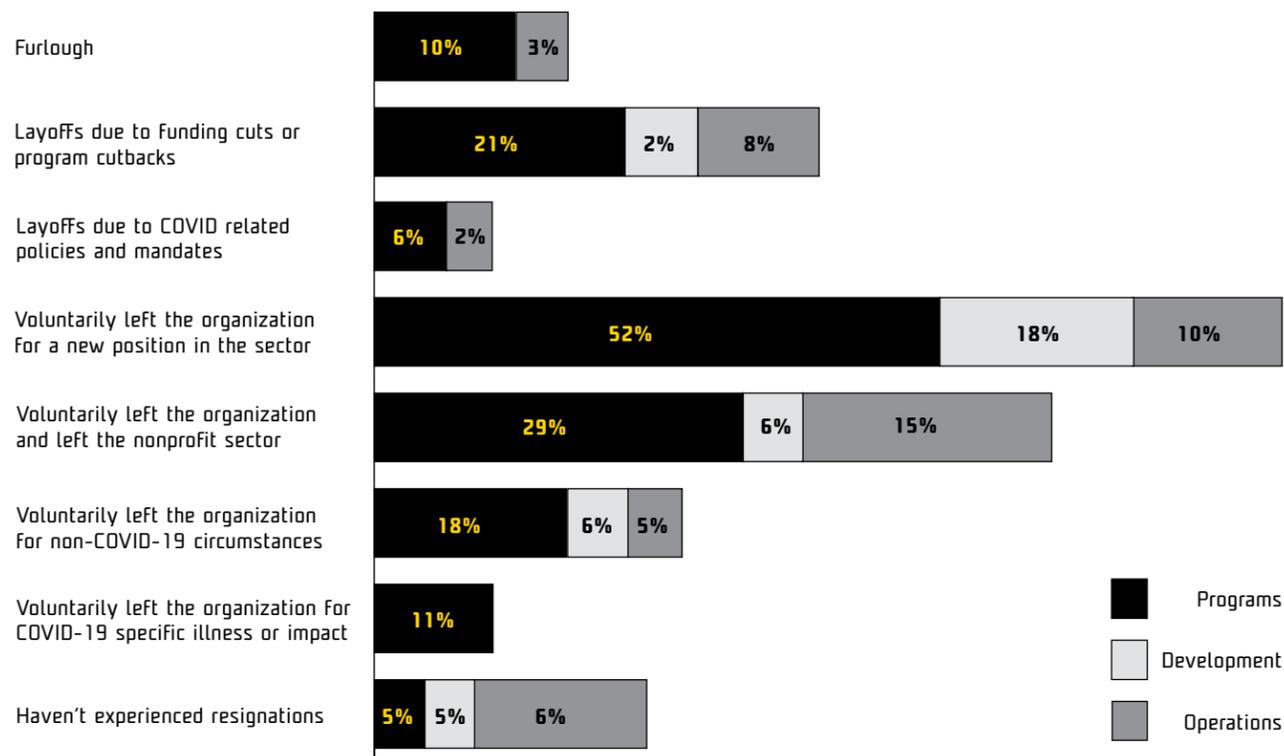
**95%**  
OF THE POSITIONS THAT THEY HAD PREVIOUSLY LAID OFF DURING THE PANDEMIC, WHILE LESS THAN

**1/3**  
HAD YET TO REINSTATE AT LEAST HALF OF THOSE LOST POSITIONS.

We have experienced significant funding issues, especially from programmatic contraction or discontinuance. But we haven't furloughed, laid off, or cut wages for any of our people. In fact we put something akin to a guaranteed income program in place. We didn't have the money to do this, per se, we just pursued other sources of funding such as the PPP (and Youth INC!) to help us fill the hole created by these funding issues

**CHAD COOPER**  
Executive Director, Brooklyn Conservatory of Music

## Reasons for Staff Turnover



## COVID-19 RESPONSE AND RECOVERY FUND

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Youth INC took organizational steps to help fill the unprecedented gaps by rapidly distributing unrestricted grants to our partners.

WE DISTRIBUTED MORE THAN  
**\$2 MILLION**  
 IN UNRESTRICTED GRANTS AND HELPED  
 MOBILIZE OUR SUPPORTERS TO RESOURCE  
 OUR NONPROFIT PARTNERS.

With seed capital from Blackstone Charitable Foundation, Nuveen, and PJT Partners, and a \$750K donation from Jack Dorsey's #StartSmall initiative, we launched our COVID-19 Response & Recovery Fund, issuing \$2 million in unrestricted grants to help our Partners continue to serve young people. We proudly shifted to a trust-based philanthropy approach in our grantmaking practices to limit hurdles and speed resources to our Nonprofit Partners.

\* Other sources of funding are self-reported by our Partner organizations.

We also took an expansive and holistic approach to address the myriad challenges nonprofits faced due to the pandemic. We created a vast array of online training modules in crisis communications, digital fundraising, virtual programming, employment law, human resources, and employee wellness and provided critical support with the 7(a) and PPP loan process, helping over 320 non-profit leaders in April – June. We also launched a Financial Analysis & Contingency Planning Program with over 150 volunteers from our corporate partners, helping our nonprofits analyze and mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on their organizations.

Our Partner Network sought out diverse sources of funding and support to meet the needs of their communities. Partners were most successful finding and securing COVID-19 relief funding from foundations. About 20% of Partners reported receiving relief funding from the New York Community Trust, with other cited foundations including the Brooklyn Community Foundation, the Meringoff Family Foundation, the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA), and the Robin Hood Foundation. \*

# RESILIENCE & LEARNING

## Lessons we take away from the Pandemic

**While the pandemic has brought challenges, loss, heartbreak, and burnout to us all, our Partners were also able to identify positive changes that came out of their pandemic experiences.**

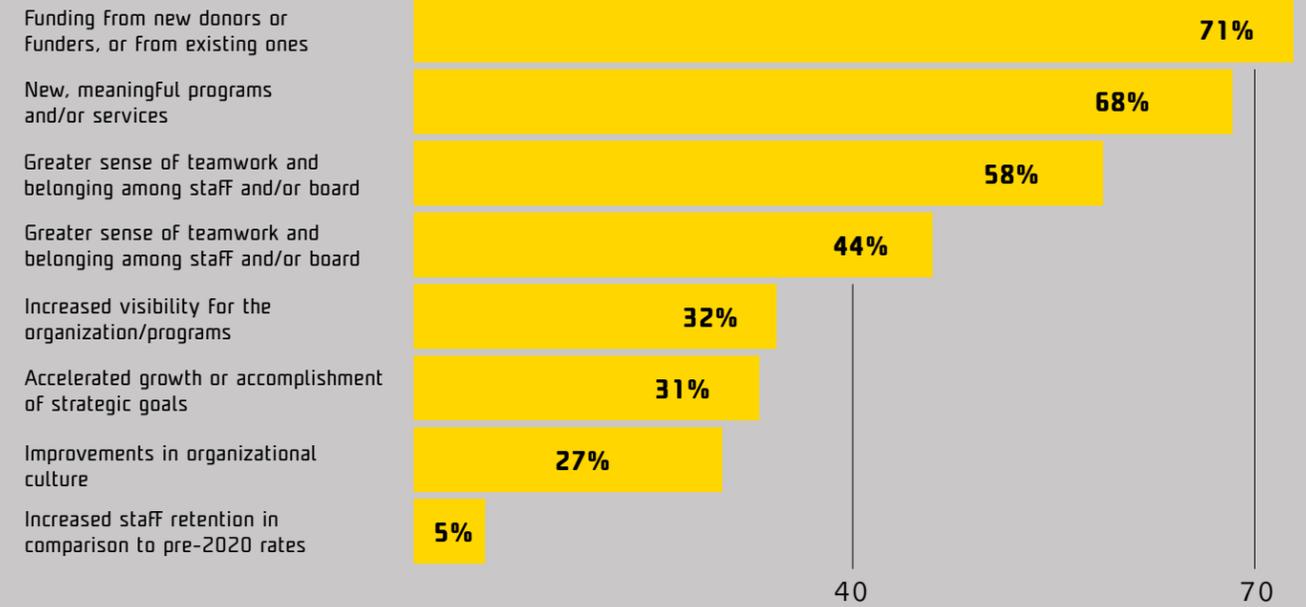
Nearly 70% of Partners shared that the initial challenges that led to shifting programs in turn led to more meaningful programs and services. While the leading challenge facing our Partners is securing funding, over two-thirds said that funding from new donors, and / or increased funding from existing funders, a notable positive outcome of the pandemic.



“ We’ve learned to be more flexible and open to new approaches, the benefits of remote and hybrid models, and to have a greater appreciation for achievements and connections. ”

**CHRISTINE CROWTHER**  
Executive Director, The New York Center for Children

## Positive Changes for Organizations since March 2020



## Spotlight Partner: Girls Write Now

Girls Write Now has been a member of Youth INC's partner network for about 11 years. During this time, we have seen the organization grow sustainably even in the face of strong headwinds. The deep, socially responsive relationships the organization has developed with the young people it serves as well as the infrastructure it has developed to support its staff and build flexible programming has deepened its ability to use the power of language to empower women-identifying, transgender and gender expansive youth and give them tools for expression and self-development.

When the COVID-19 pandemic arrived, Girls Write Now was well prepared to directly confront the myriad challenges it presented for its youth. The organization evolved its programs to meet the shifting needs of young people. These adaptations included a transition to virtual programming, the creation of a publishing platform and personalized pods to foster community and leadership. Critically, all of these evolutions in programming were undergirded and bolstered by intentional and consistent attention to wellness, diversity, equity, and inclusion.



Every day, mentees of the program met with their mentors and peers to share original multi-genre, multimedia meditations on growing up as BIPOC and LGBTQIA+ teens in New York City. These moments capture and reflect how the pandemic exacerbated already widening socioeconomic disparities and the underlying systemic inequality within the city.

Below is a brief testimonial from Kilhah St. Fort, a class of 2021 Girls Write Now mentee. Kilhah beautifully captures how the organization's community-based, therapeutic arts helped her channel her voice and ably navigate the challenges presented by the last few years.

When I was struggling to cope with the overwhelming racial violence in the media and a truckload of uncertainties about my senior year due to COVID-19, Girls Write Now was there for me. Most days, I was moving around my house listlessly. I was practically a zombie. Then, I attended a Girls Write Now Friday Night Salon on Spoken Word Poetry led by Mentor Cynthia Amoah, and I started to come alive. The environment of positivity, warmth, and encouragement helped me transfer all my negative emotions into rich lines of metaphors and imagery. I used sound and repetition to bring my poetry to life and call attention to topics that mattered to me. Through this salon, I learned to strengthen my voice and transform it into a weapon to defend myself and attack the systems that aim to harm me. I remembered that poetry is not confined to books. It does not strictly belong to a seventeenth-century British poet and his endless sonnets. Poetry is the ache of a single mother's back, the slight brush of your crush's hand against yours, the tears in your eyes when you kiss your old life goodbye and embrace your new one. Poetry is people, and more importantly, poetry is you.

**KILHAH ST. FORT**

2021 Girls Write Now mentee



## Four Key Areas where Youth INC could Offer the Most Support During Recovery

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Because our youth and their families are asking for more programming hours and play opportunities, additional funds would be helpful so we can continue to meet the increased demand for our services.

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## Grantmaking

Providing multi-year, general operating support and connections to new funding opportunities

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We have been able to benefit from both the Metrics program and grant dollars from Youth INC. There is so much that Youth INC offers that we are unable to utilize due to capacity constraints. As I share with many funders, larger multi-year, general operating funding commitments are rare and the most helpful.

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## Board Governance

Facilitating deeper board engagement as well as diverse governing board placements

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Board diversity and Board philanthropy.

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Building the board to increase financial capacity so we can continue to grow.

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Help re-building our board.

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As a thought partner through organizational and board structure and expansion.

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## Operational Effectiveness & HR Support

Managing staffing shortfalls, staff quality, and retention

“ Help us figure out how to fill staff positions. Where else can we post vacancies? What can we do to make our positions more attractive to candidates? ”

“ Support with retaining staff and attracting staff with competitive salaries ”

“ We are struggling to find staff to work our programs. We have the revenue and the needs from schools, but we are finding it hard to find quality staff. ”



## Professional Development

Offering more support and training for mid-level and frontline staff

“ I would really welcome more Professional Development for frontline staff. It is hard to support their professional growth when you are small. ”

“ Continued support around strategic development and increased professional development trainings for staff. ”

“ Funding always most helpful. Ongoing advice, support and technical assistance also very helpful. Access to group offerings such as trainings, workshops or convenings are also helpful. ”



Thank you for giving us a voice and always looking for ways to support our mission.

**LISA RECIO**

Executive Director, Roads to Success



## Opportunities For Action

Generosity from institutional and individual donors allowed us to respond with unprecedented swiftness and scope to the needs of our Nonprofit Partners during the crisis of the last two years.

These interventions have paid huge dividends, reflected in these organizations' continuing resilience in serving young people despite many challenges.

The data provided by our Nonprofit Partners in this report form a rich trove of insights and potential avenues for future action. It is more evident than ever that there remains a tremendous need within our network.

As we begin a new chapter and tackle the work of rebuilding, we hope you will join us in this work. Or if you are already a supporter, you will redouble your support for Youth INC and our Nonprofit Partners.

The 80+ grassroots organizations that comprise our Partner Network are essential to some of New York City's most vibrant but under-resourced communities. Our partners step into this context with young people every day to provide front-line services and carve out pathways for actualizing dreams. None of which is possible without strong, committed supporters. Thank you for reading, and we hope you will consider taking action with us today.



RAISING OUR CITY



# TAKE ACTION

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE LIVES OF NEW YORK CITY YOUTH.

We invite you to explore the many ways you and your organization can partner with us to make a difference.



[www.youthinc-usa.org](http://www.youthinc-usa.org)