FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

South Carolina nonprofit leaders still facing financial challenges and reduced staff, find silver linings a year into the pandemic.

Together SC Survey Findings Underscore Needs and Resilience in Nonprofit community

COLUMBIA, SC, March 24, 2021 — Last September, according to a survey coordinated by Together SC, nearly two-thirds (63 percent) of nonprofits surveyed indicated they could survive six months or less without additional funding. In March of this year, the percentage of those with the same answer about sustainability has only dropped slightly to 59 percent. Our state’s nonprofit organizations are still in need, despite their efforts to find silver linings from the pandemic.

As the pandemic and its impacts extend into 2021, Together SC, the state’s network of nonprofit organizations, with investors and supporters (listed below), aim to give voice to our state’s nonprofit businesses and the conditions under which they expect to operate by producing a second survey, conducted by Kahle Strategic Insights. The top-line survey findings convey the status of South Carolina’s nonprofit organizations one year into the COVID-19 health crisis.

The findings come from nearly 1,000 respondents, including those working in human services; arts, culture, and humanities; education; health; public/social benefit; religion; and, environment/animal welfare.

The data strongly suggests that Federal financial assistance, like the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the state’s (and Greenville County's) CARES Act-funded grant program, helped many nonprofits, but only for a period of time. As 45% of nonprofit respondents that received PPP loans still faced fiscal year operating losses.

“Hearing from so many leaders, nearly a quarter of those surveyed, gives great credence to the survey’s findings that nonprofits are still struggling. These insights will help inform our partners and state and local government about the degree of continuing need within the nonprofit industry. It is our aim to ensure that key community organizations across the state can continue to serve the people of South Carolina as we move into the summer and beyond.” said Madeleine McGee, president of Together SC.

Top line results detail the significant need still existing in the nonprofit industry, and the vital role of public and private sector support.

Key Findings Revealed by Responding Nonprofits:
● Two-thirds (63 percent) of nonprofit respondents to the Fall survey indicated they could only survive for six months or less without additional funding. With aid from the State and others, that percentage has dropped slightly to 59 percent.
There’s been no change in the percent of those who reported being out of funds, still 5 percent of respondents.

Cash, in support of programs and operations, is the single biggest need for these nonprofit organizations as they look to continue to operate through June 30, 2021. Specifically, the 927 respondents reported needing $54 million in total to offset lost revenue, meet increased demand, and restructure for a post-pandemic economy.

Human service organizations have the single biggest cash need for food, housing and assistance with basic human needs; a total of $23 million through June 30, 2021.

Employment within the nonprofit industry in South Carolina has taken a blow. Jobs dropped by 7.5 percent in the last year, the survey found, right on par with findings from a recent study by the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies that looked at nonprofit job losses nationally.

The surveyed nonprofits expect to add back about 425 jobs by the end of June, which would still leave employment down about 4.1 percent. It should be noted that in 2016, SC’s nonprofit industry employed nearly 90,000 South Carolinians.

Looking forward, 59%, or 470, of respondents need help with cash flow and navigating public and private grants processes; 38.9% seek help managing a return to in-person work/service delivery; 26.1% need supplies (e.g., disinfectants, PPE); and, 20.3% seek mental health support for clients / staff.

“Government assistance to the nonprofit sector has been, and continues to be, essential for these organizations to maintain key services, especially in helping provide for basic human needs.” Dr. Robert Kahle, Managing Director of Kahle Strategic Insights commented.

Silver Linings in Their Words:
When leaders were asked in September of 2020 about the impact the pandemic had on their organizations, the frustration and uncertainty they felt came through. Today, leaders seem to be finding silver linings with 68 percent seeing positive impacts, up from 60 percent in the fall.

- “Telehealth has been life changing for people with disabilities.”
- “Children see our dedication to serve them through our consistency even during the pandemic.”
- “We’ve benefited from increased engagement with our Board.”
- “There’s an increased atmosphere of teamwork.”
- “People are beginning to see the stigma surrounding mental health and opening up.”
- “We increased our focus, attention and commitment to racial and social equity.”
- “It enhanced our attention and commitment to advocacy.”
MEDIA ALERT - FOR REPORTING ON REGIONAL PERSPECTIVES

Regional partners and certain nonprofit respondents are available to share their insights and perspectives. Those interested in writing a regional or local story are invited to contact us. We will be delighted to connect you with regional contacts. Additional regional data will be available as further analysis is done.

- Respondents reporting only having three months or less left to operate without additional cash varied by region as follows:
  - Upstate - 27%
  - Lowcountry - 27%
  - Midlands - 36%
  - Pee Dee - 46%

- Respondents reporting loss of staff varied by region as well:
  - Lowcountry - 14%
  - Upstate - 8%
  - Midlands - 6.7%
  - Pee Dee - 1.6%

SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Kahle Strategic Insights conducted this survey from March 1-12, 2021, using Qualtrics, a professional survey platform. Kahle sent the survey to 3,782 unique emails compiled from lists of grantees of survey investors and supporters; the State’s SC Cares Nonprofit Relief Grant applicants and grantees; members of Together SC; and those surveyed in the Fall 2020 study.

- This research builds upon Together SC’s September survey with the Riley Center at the College of Charleston. For reference: Two-thirds of SC nonprofits say they’ll run out of cash within 6 months. Some already have, The Post and Courier, Sept. 2020.
- 927 nonprofit organizations responded, resulting in a 24.5% response rate that was significantly greater than the 566 respondents /19% seen with the Fall 2020 survey.
- 79% of respondents were CEOs or executive directors.
- 21.8% of responding organizations’ chief executives identify as Black / African American.
- All but two of the state’s 46 counties had at least one response, with Richland County, Charleston and Greenville counties having the greatest number, reflecting the fact that these three counties are home to the largest number of nonprofits.
- Participants were asked 35-questions designed to:
  a) Understand the financial health/well-being of nonprofits in total and by sub-sector and region;
  b) Determine the need for additional financial support;
  c) Understand the impact of the pandemic on people: clients and staff of nonprofits;
  d) Provide guidance for the road ahead for nonprofits, through June 30, 2021; and
  e) Identify “Silver Linings” or positive impacts on the sector, nonprofit organizations.
- For the full report summary, click here.

We bring together SC’s charitable nonprofits and their allies to advance the greater good.

www.togethersc.org
SURVEY INVESTORS AND PARTNERS
- SC Arts Commission
- SC Association of Habitat for Humanity
- SC Alliance of YMCAs
- Duke Energy Foundation
- Spartanburg Joint Funders
- Greenville Partnership for Philanthropy, with the NonProfit Alliance Greenville and The Jolley Foundation
- Community Foundation of Greenville
- Central Carolina Community Foundation
- United Way of the Midlands with United Way of Kershaw County and United Way of Sumter, Lee, and Clarendon Counties
- Eastern Carolina Community Foundation
- Community Foundation of the Lowcountry
- Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation
- Trident United Way
- Frances P. Bunnelle Foundation
- and others

ABOUT TOGETHER SC
Run by nonprofit leaders and their allies, for nonprofit leaders, Together SC serves our state’s nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. And, through its member organizations, aims to support and empower volunteer and professional leaders dedicated to community service, leadership and caring.

Together SC, which was known as SC Association of Nonprofit Organizations (SCANPO) for its first 20 years, began operating in 1997 with 67 charter member organizations. Today, its statewide network includes 800+ organizations, large and small, whose diverse leaders believe in Together SC’s vision for creating a world in which SC’s nonprofits and their allies are integral players in successfully building vibrant, equitable communities.

Learn more about Together SC at www.togethersc.org.
Facebook: https://www.facebook.com/TogetherSC
Twitter: https://twitter.com/TogetherSC
Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/togethersc/

ABOUT KAHLE STRATEGIC INSIGHTS
Bob Kahle, PhD, is a multi-talented sociologist who facilitates positive social change and helps organizations of all types succeed. With a proven track record conceptualizing and fostering multi-sector collaboration to address community needs, Bob’s diverse research and strategic planning background spans multiple sectors – with government, nonprofit, foundation, associations, higher education and corporate clients.
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