



# **The Shifting Federal Landscape: Massachusetts Nonprofits Raise the Alarm**

**Results from a survey of nonprofits in Massachusetts**

---

**May 5, 2025**

**Steve Koczela**

President, The MassINC Polling Group

**Zayna Basma-Doyle**

Research Director, The MassINC Polling Group

[info@massincpolling.com](mailto:info@massincpolling.com)   [MassINCPolling.com](http://MassINCPolling.com)   [@MassINCPolling](https://twitter.com/MassINCPolling)

11 Beacon St Ste 500 | Boston, MA 02108 | Phone: (617) 224-1647



# Survey Background

---

- Survey of 523 employees and leaders of nonprofit organizations operating in Mass.
  - The survey was fielded online from February 25 through March 24, 2025.
  - The questionnaire was translated into six languages: English, Haitian Creole, Mandarin, Portuguese, Spanish, and Vietnamese.
- Survey links were distributed to nonprofits by The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network, The Boston Foundation, and other partner organizations.
- This project was sponsored by The Massachusetts Nonprofit Network and the Boston Foundation.
- Thank you to all the nonprofit leaders and employees who took the time to respond to the survey. We value your opinions and perspectives.

# Survey demographics

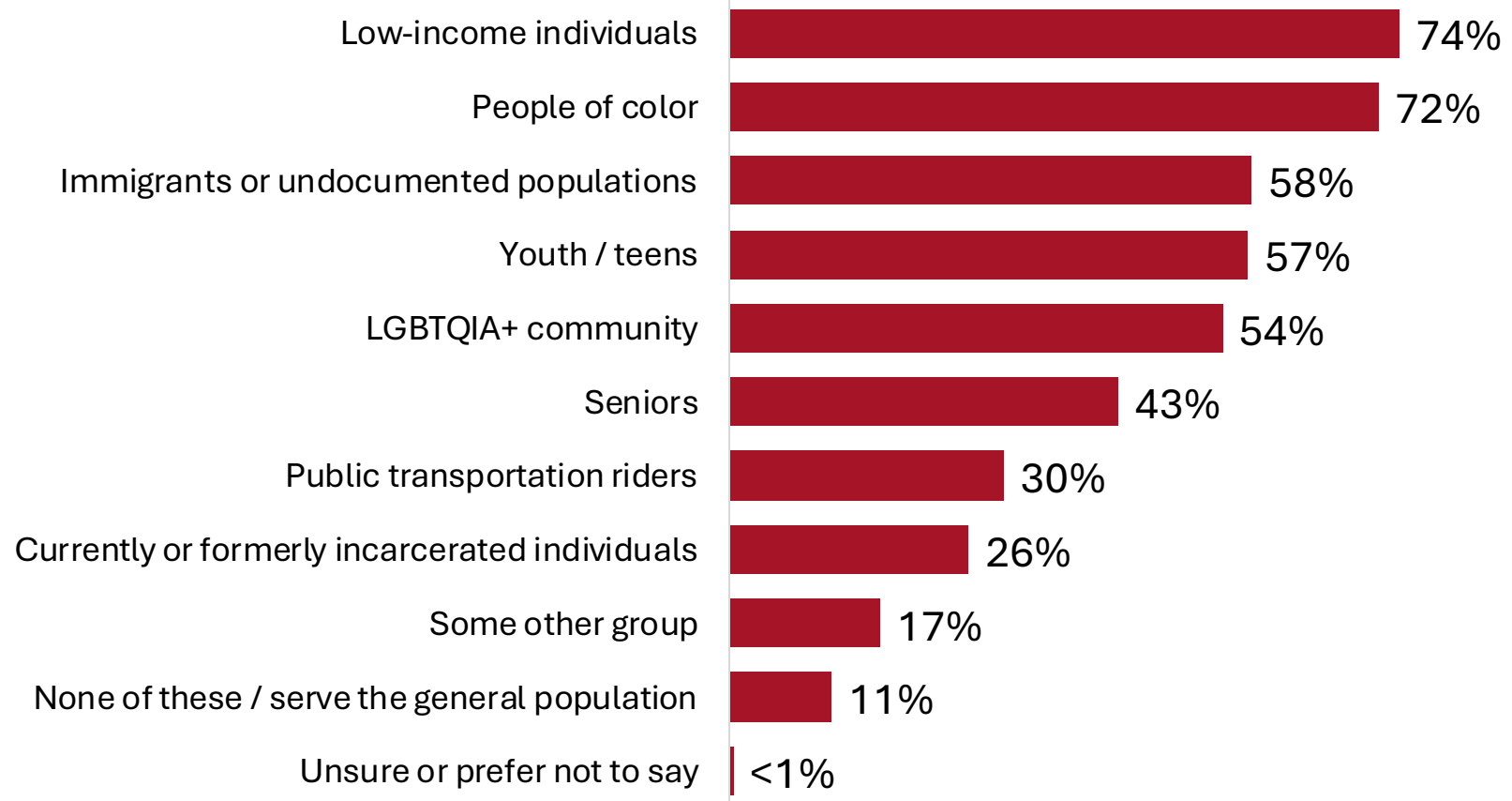
---

- **Senior leaders:** 79% hold senior leadership roles, including 51% serving as Executive Directors, Presidents, or CEOs.
- **Total budgets:** 55% report annual budgets under \$2.5 million; 62% have 25 or fewer employees, including 39% with 10 employees or fewer.
- **Diverse respondents:** 72% identify as women, 20% as BIPOC, and 16% as LGBTQ+.
- **Diverse organizations:** 35% report their staff are majority BIPOC; a quarter say same of their senior leadership (26%) and board (25%).
- **Federally funded:** 58% report their organization receives federal funding.

# Populations served by nonprofits

- Most respondents report serving a combination of vulnerable populations.
- Three-quarters are working with low-income individuals (74%) and/or people of color (72%).
- Majorities work with immigrants, youth, and the LGBTQ+ community.

## Responding orgs mainly serve a combination of vulnerable populations *% who say their organization serves \_\_\_\_\_*

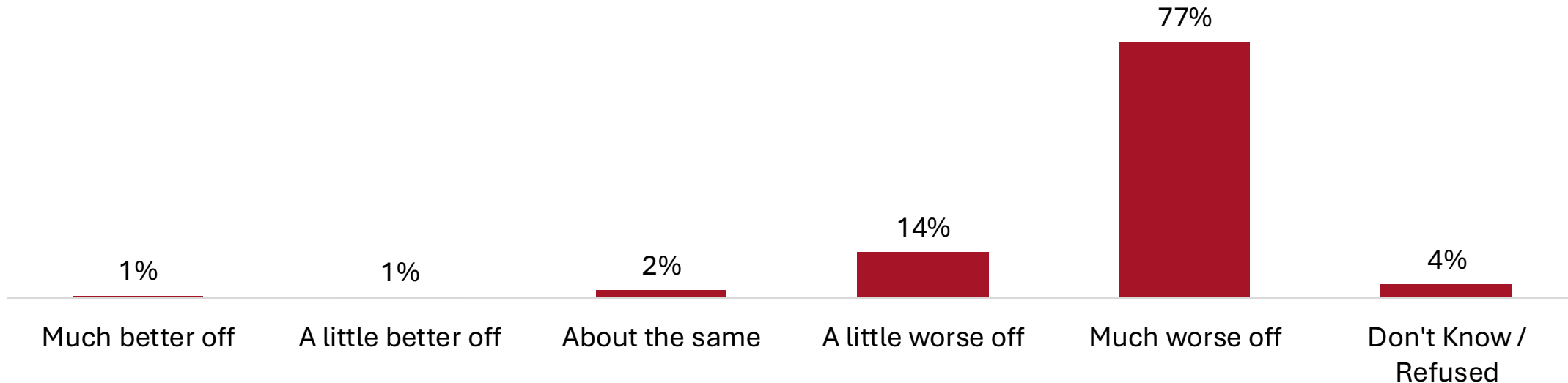


# How will Massachusetts fare under Trump?

- A large majority say the state will be “much worse off” under the new administration, with just 2% saying the state will be better off.

## Nearly all think Massachusetts will be worse off, most say “much worse”

*% who say MA will be \_\_\_\_ under the new administration*

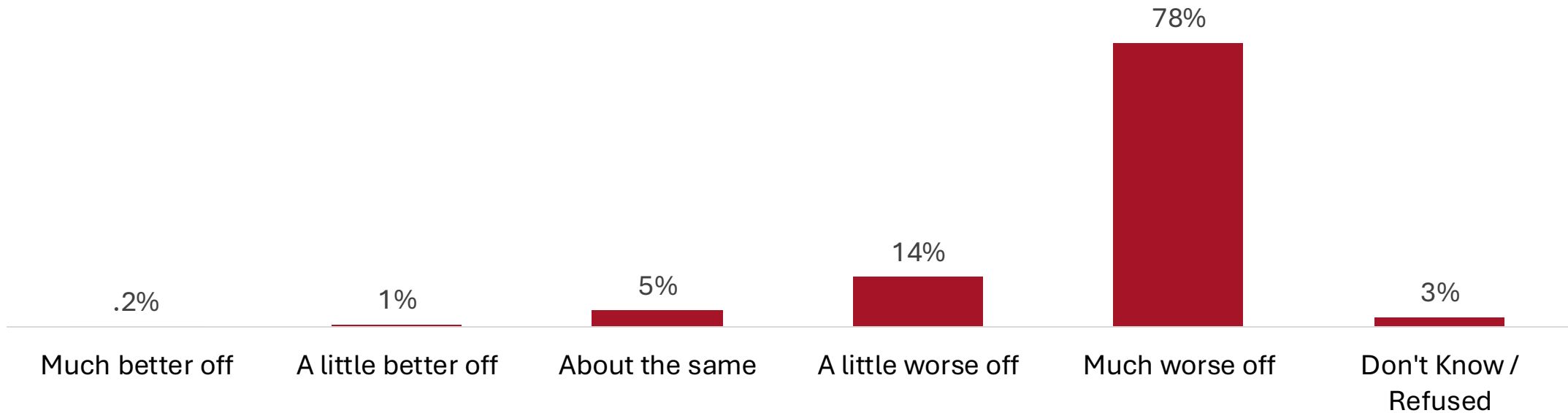


# How will served populations fare under Trump?

- Large majorities of orgs think the populations they serve will be “much worse off”. This extends across nonprofits serving different groups.

## Most say their served populations will be much worse off under the Trump administration

*% who say the populations they serve will be \_\_\_\_ under the new administration*

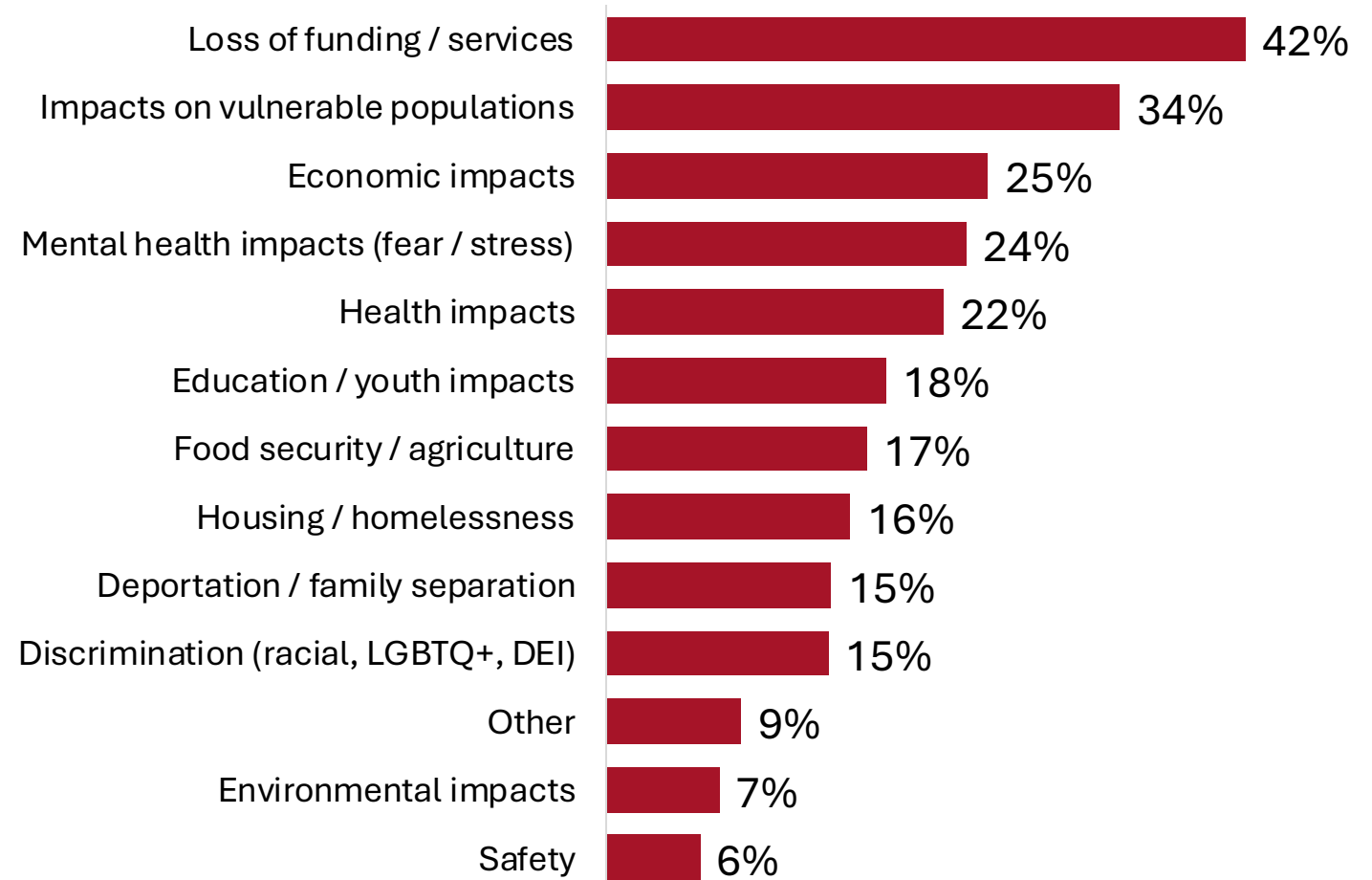


# Impacts on populations served

- Respondents are worried that their clients will suffer from a loss of funding and services.
- They also worry about the impacts on vulnerable populations, including economic, health, and mental impacts stemming from immigration enforcement.

## Populations served could lose services & face direct impact

*% of open-ended responses citing each impact*



# In their own words...

“Federal cuts to (and attacks on) basic civil rights and liberties impact everyone in the populations we serve, but especially the most vulnerable (BIPOC, queer and trans folks, recent immigrants, among others). The new administration is also making it harder to talk about the fact that they're making it harder.”

“The level of fear in the community we serve has increased, impacting the mental health of children and adults. The impacts to social services will also negatively affect their lives.”

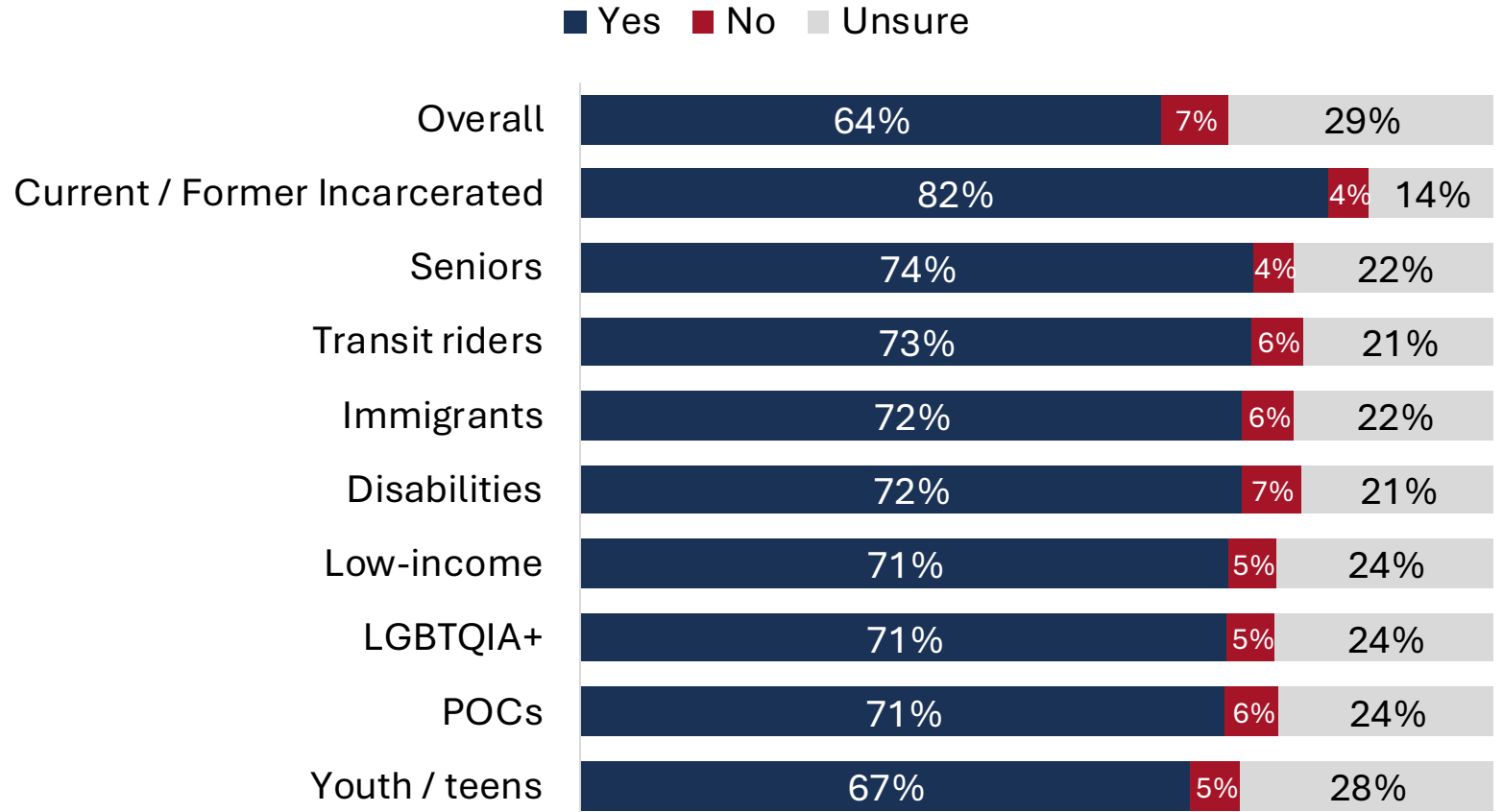


# Nonprofits expect increased demand...

- Overall, 64% expect demand for their nonprofit's service under Trump admin to increase; 29% are unsure.
- Demand is expected to increase even more among nonprofits serving vulnerable populations.

## Most organizations expect demand for their services to rise

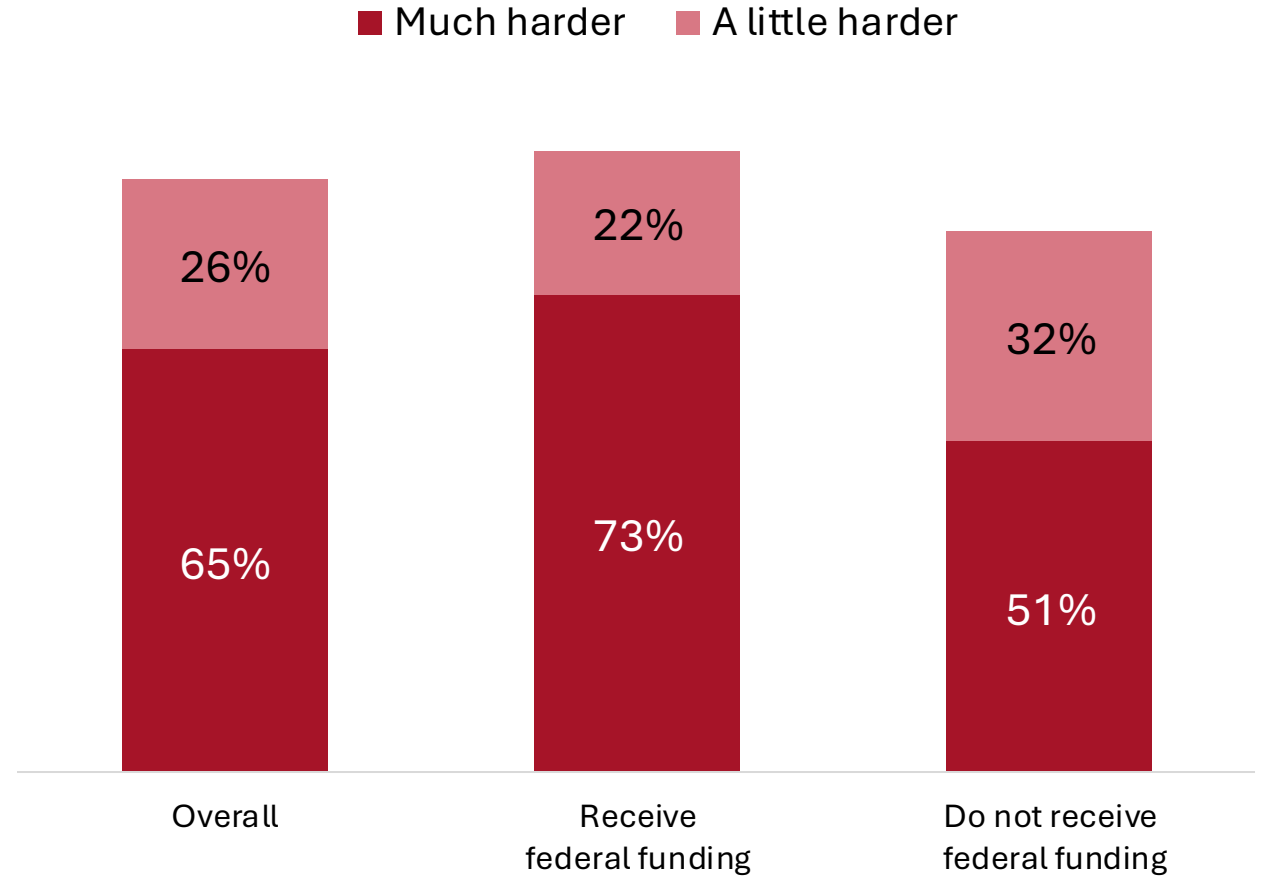
*% who say they do/don't anticipate an increased demand for services*



# ... but more challenges doing their work.

- At the same time, 65% think the Trump administration will make it “much harder” to do their work.
- Nonprofits that get federal funds are particularly concerned, but even those that don’t anticipate a negative impact on their work.

**Most say Trump administration will make their job harder**  
*% who say Trump admin. will make it \_\_\_\_\_ to do their work*



# In their own words...

“We serve the immigrant community, most of our clients are undocumented. Our current clients are already afraid to meet their volunteer tutors in public. They are canceling sessions more frequently due to fear. We fear our numbers of new clients will decline.”

“We are primarily federally funded. We do not have reserves. Our organization may no longer be viable as a result of current and future actions by the Trump Administration.”

# Loss of funding is top of mind for nonprofits

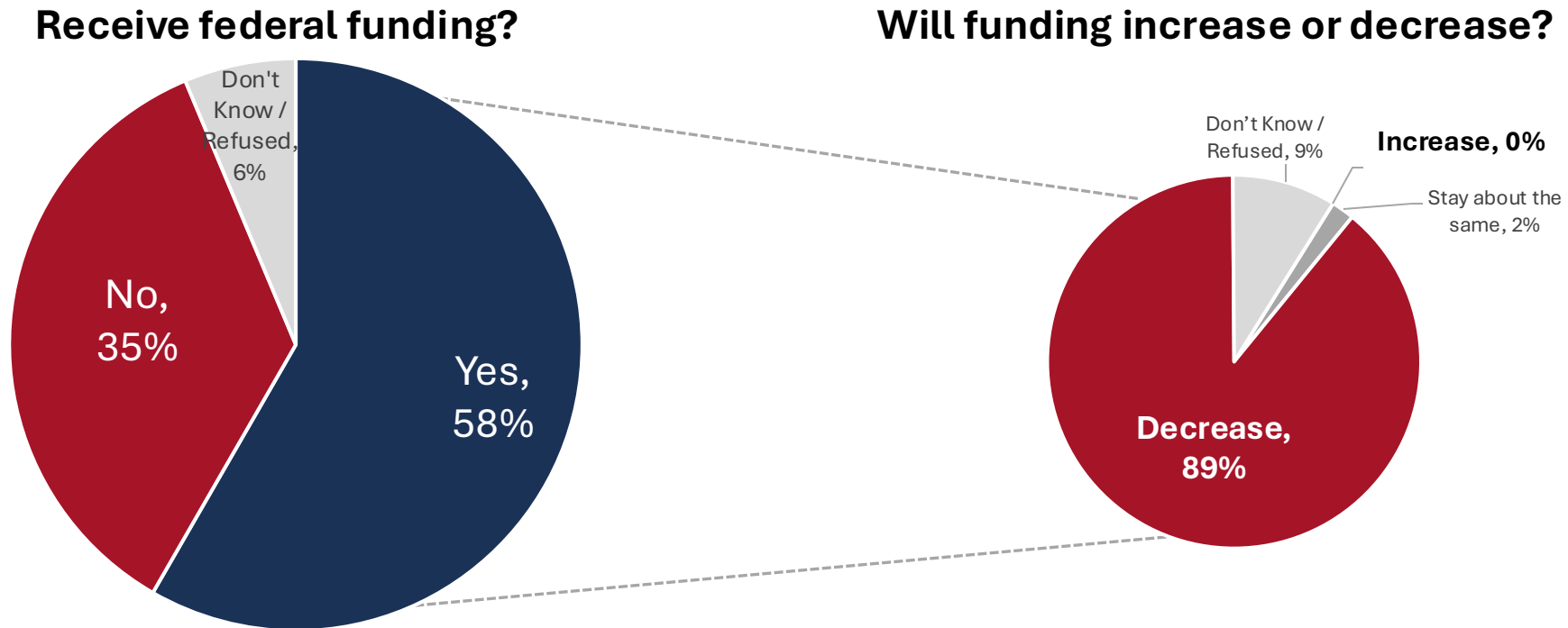
- A majority (58%) of respondents anticipate funding cuts under the new administration; 8% have already lost funding.
- This is a very high level of agreement for an open-ended question, demonstrating consistent concern.

## Most orgs anticipate funding cuts, impact on populations served *% of open-ended comments that cite each impact*



# Nearly all federal funding recipients expect cuts

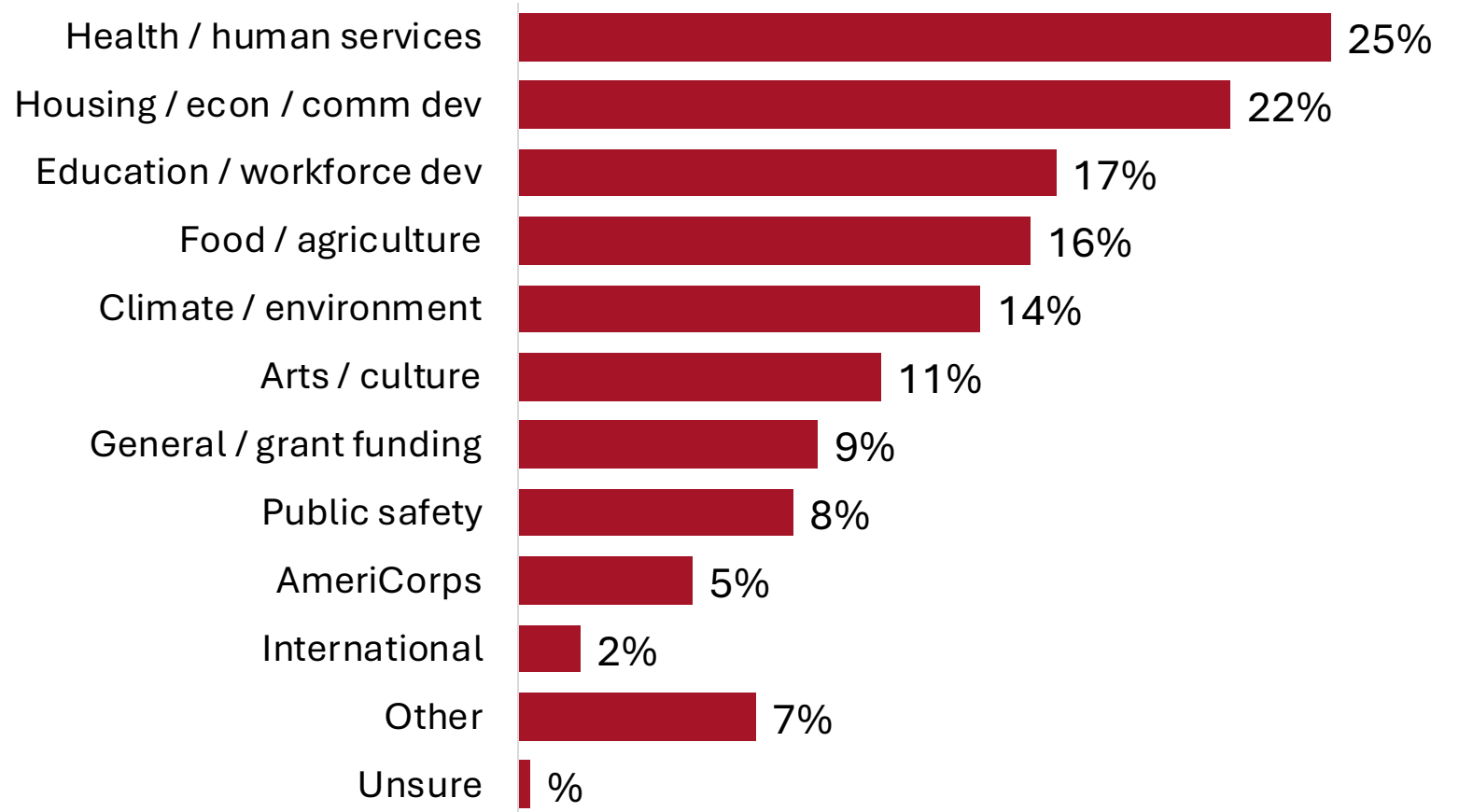
- Among those who receive federal funding (58%), nearly all (89%) expect their federal funding to decrease.



# Types of funding expected to be cut

- Most expect cuts to funds for health services (25%), housing (22%), and education (17%).
- Respondents also anticipate reductions in food (16%), climate (14%), and arts funding (11%).

## Health, housing, education among top anticipated funding to decrease *% of open-ended response that mention each type of funding*



# In their own words...

“30% of our revenue is federally funded. The gov claims that our program will continue, but we have seen no proof of that, and currently they owe us \$225K from services rendered in 2024. I have already had to lay off about 40% of my staff.”

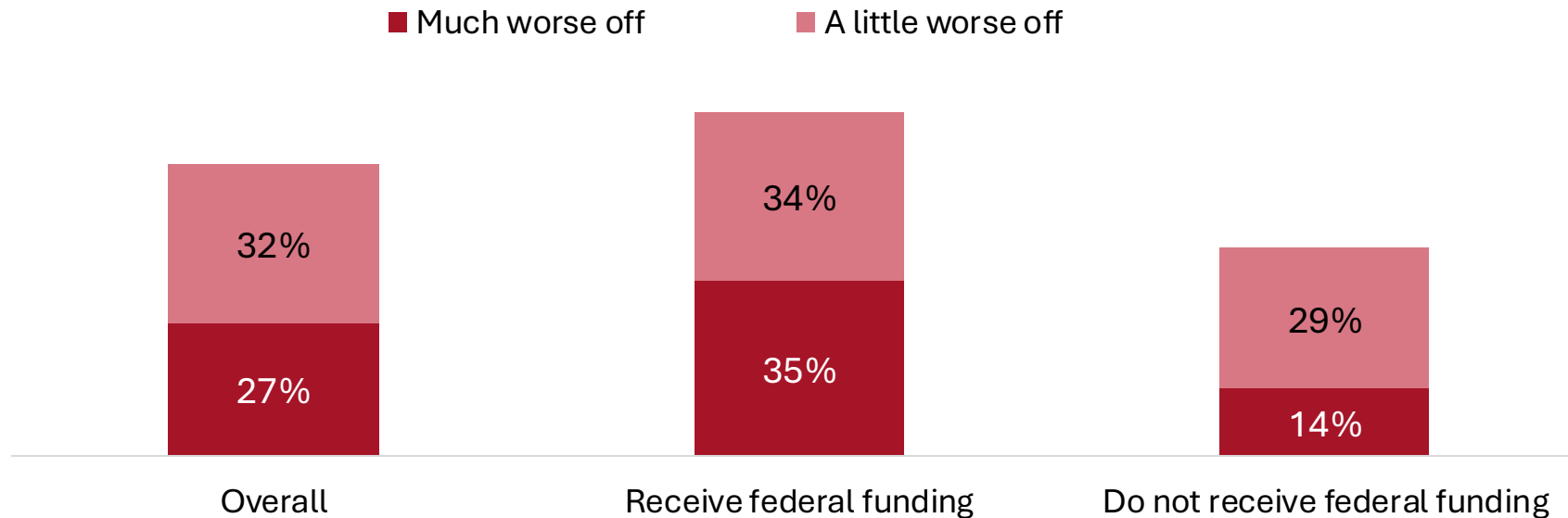
“Farmers will have less markets for their goods, higher supply costs, reduced margins on sale of goods, reduced availability of labor, less financial means to start/grow their enterprises.”

# Most anticipate a financial decline in the next year

- A majority (59%) believe their org's financial condition will be worse off in a year from now, with orgs that receive federal funding more pessimistic.
- Just 43% say they could continue operations more than 6 months if revenue were cut off.

## Most nonprofits anticipate a financial decline over the next year

*% who say their organization's financial condition will be \_\_\_\_\_ in a year from now*



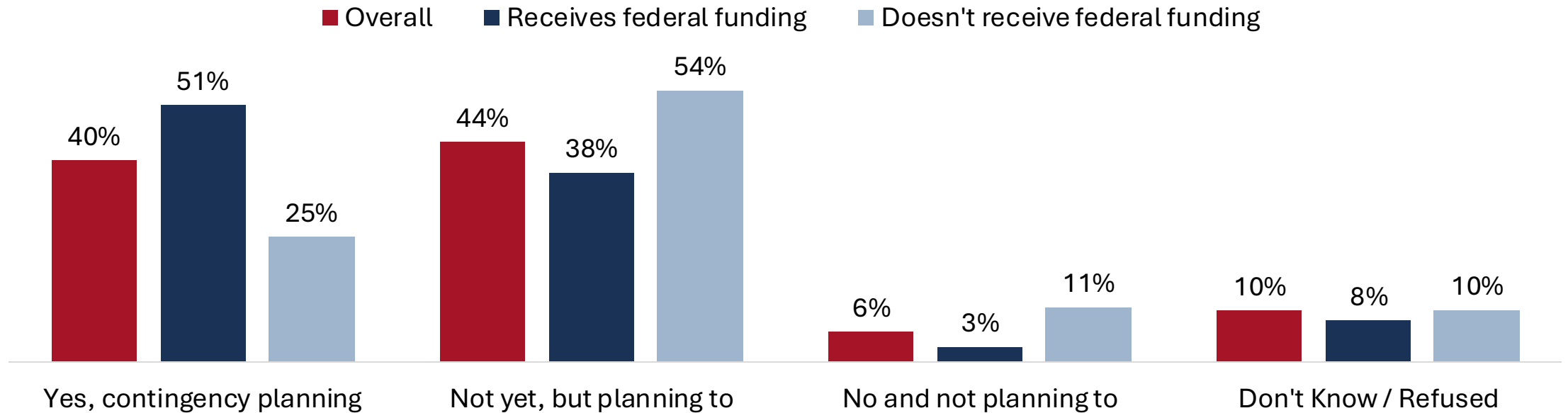


# Contingency planning for federal impacts

- While 40% of nonprofits are already contingency planning, another 44% say they will including a higher number of orgs who receive federal funds.

## Most nonprofits are doing contingency plans or say they will do so soon

*% who say their organization is doing contingency planning or not, overall and by federal funding status*

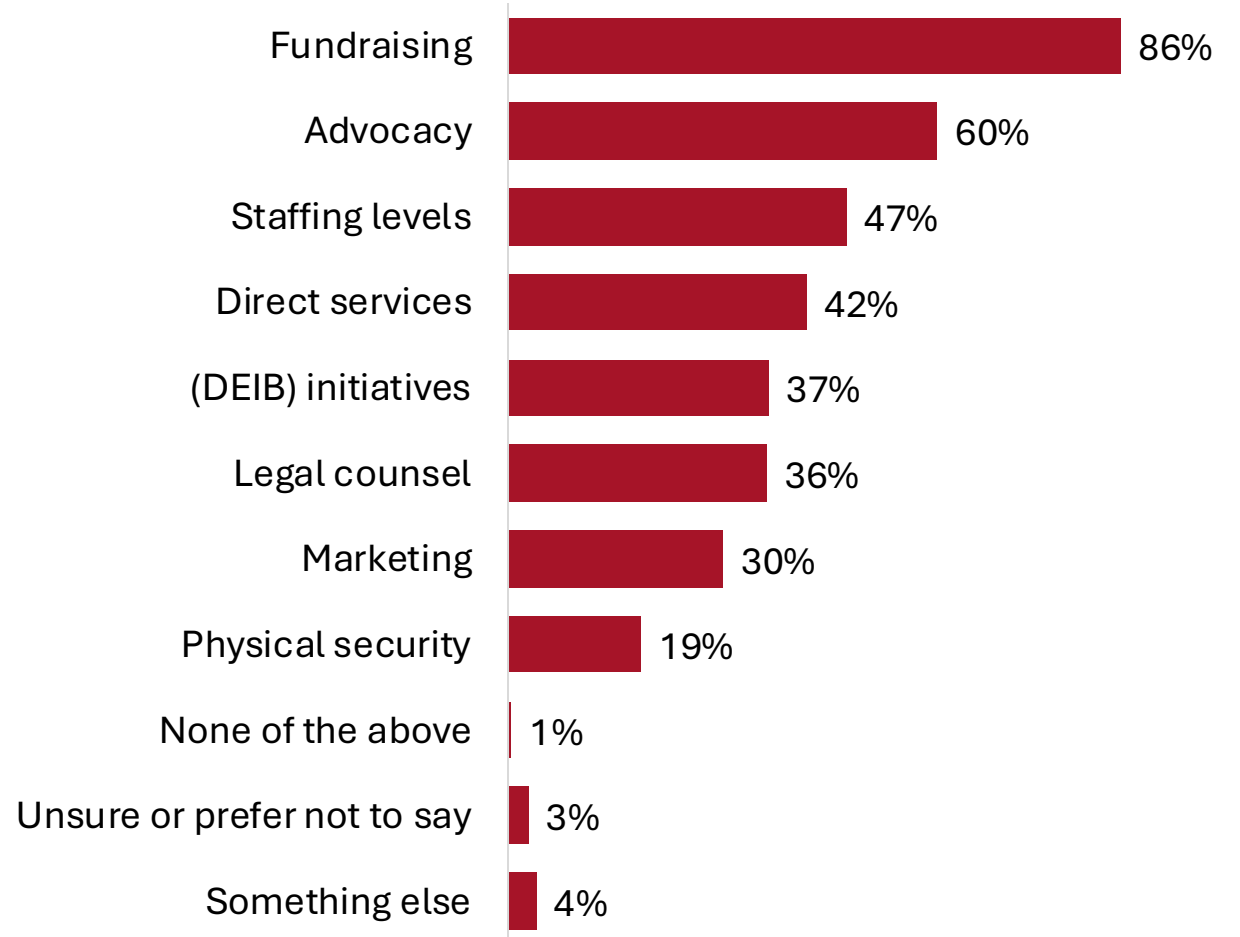


# Fundraising tops nonprofits list of future needs

- Fundraising is the clear top need nonprofits currently anticipate, cited by 86% of respondents.
- Organizations also anticipate increased needs in advocacy (60%), staffing (47%), direct services (42%), (DEIB) initiatives (37%), legal counsel (36%), marketing (30%), physical security (19%), none of the above (1%), unsure or prefer not to say (3%), and something else (4%).

## Nonprofits see increased need for fundraising, advocacy

*% who anticipate increased need in each aspect of their work*

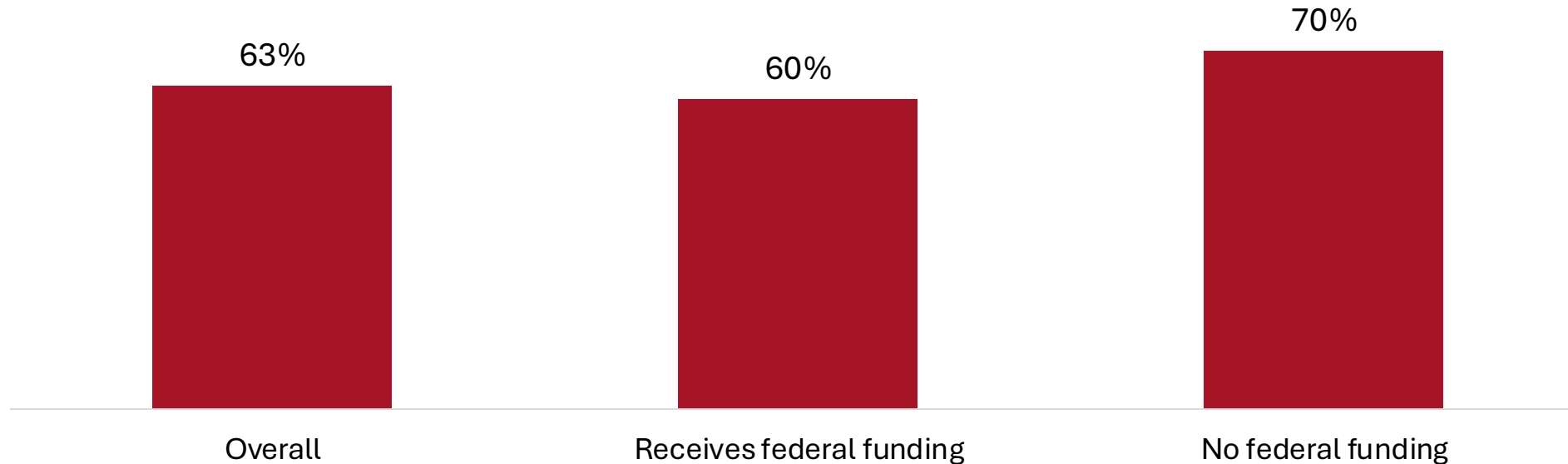


# Individual donations are key to most nonprofits

- As nonprofits foresee increased fundraising needs, majorities say individual donations are “very” (63%) or “somewhat” (24%) important to their budgets. Individual donations are more likely to be very important for those who do not receive federal funding.

## Individual donations are “very important” for most nonprofits

*% who say individual donations are very important to their budget, overall and by federal funding status*



# In their own words...

“I believe we will lose all of funding from philanthropy as they shift and respond to the federal executive orders. I believe that our fiscal sponsor may find us as too high of a risk to keep their portfolio if we are unable to fundraise for anticipated loss of funding and not yet able to diversify funding.”

“We are bracing for a number of downstream potential impacts. If philanthropic dollars shift to fill the gaps of government funding, that would make the philanthropic landscape that we rely on more competitive.”

# Conclusion: bracing for impact

---

- Nearly universally, nonprofits think the Trump administration will be bad for Massachusetts, for nonprofits, and for the populations they serve.
- Nonprofits simultaneously anticipate increased demand for their services and a more challenging environment to operate in.
- The loss of federal funding is top of mind, both in terms of impacts on vulnerable populations and nonprofit budgets.
- Even nonprofits that do not receive federal funding worry about downstream effects as philanthropic resources shift and become more competitive.
- Nonprofits see a need to invest in their own fundraising to compensate, even as they anticipate being in a worse financial position a year from now.
- The role of philanthropy will be even more important as the federal government turns its back on nonprofits in Massachusetts.



[info@massincpolling.com](mailto:info@massincpolling.com)   [MassINCPolling.com](http://MassINCPolling.com)   [@MassINCPolling](https://twitter.com/MassINCPolling)

11 Beacon St, Suite 500 | Boston, MA 02108 | Phone: (617) 224-1647

