



2025 PHILANTHROPY

PULSE



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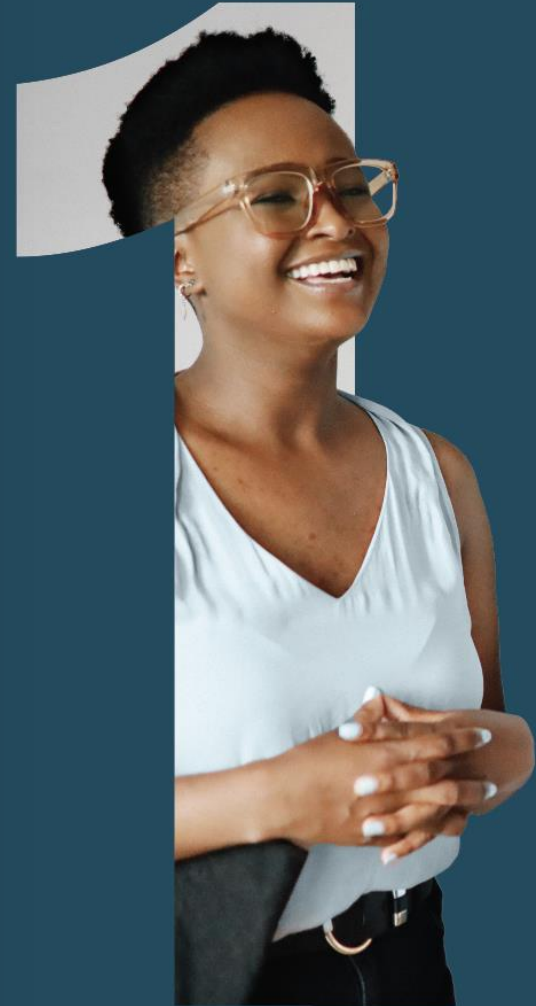
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Introduction

KEY INSIGHTS & BIG PICTURE CONTEXT



A Data-Driven Guide to Nonprofit Fundraising in 2025

As organizations reflect on the challenges and successes of the past year, they are entering 2025 with a renewed sense of optimism. Positive revenue growth experienced by many organizations in 2024 has reinforced the belief that nonprofit fundraising is on a resilient and upward trajectory. This outlook speaks to a thriving philanthropic landscape that is adapting to evolving donor behaviors, embracing new opportunities, and maintaining a strong commitment to its mission-driven goals.

This 4th edition *Philanthropy Pulse* report serves as a guide for nonprofit leaders, offering insights into the modern strategies successful organizations employ for development and highlighting avenues for fundraising success.

This report provides a window into the fundraising practices of nearly 650 organizations from 34 countries and across 46 US states, based on data collected via an online survey commissioned by CCS Fundraising between October 22 and November 27, 2024. While respondents self-identified and therefore may not accurately match the overall nonprofit sector, the findings offer insight into the diverse landscape of the nonprofit community.

CCS extends our gratitude to Elaine Tomlinson for her instrumental contributions in the execution and development of this report.



Executive Summary

Nearly two-thirds (62%) of organizations saw **revenue growth** in 2024, indicating sustained optimism for 2025.

Over half (53%) of organizations reported growth in **donor acquisition**, although fewer are acquiring new donors consistently year-over-year.

54% of surveyed organizations expect **growth in major and mid-level gifts** in 2025.

Nearly one-third (31%) of organizations **leveraging AI** report improved donor engagement and targeted fundraising.

Staff hiring has seen moderate year-over-year declines of 10%, citing budget limitations and qualification challenges.

7 out of 10 organizations that **expanded their fundraising teams** by 10% or more saw financial gains.

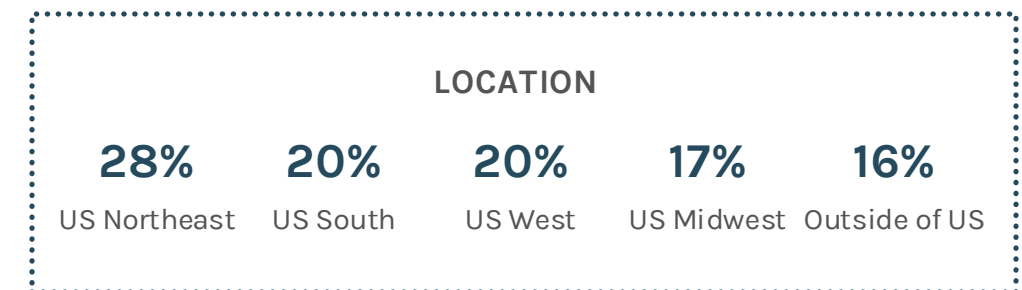
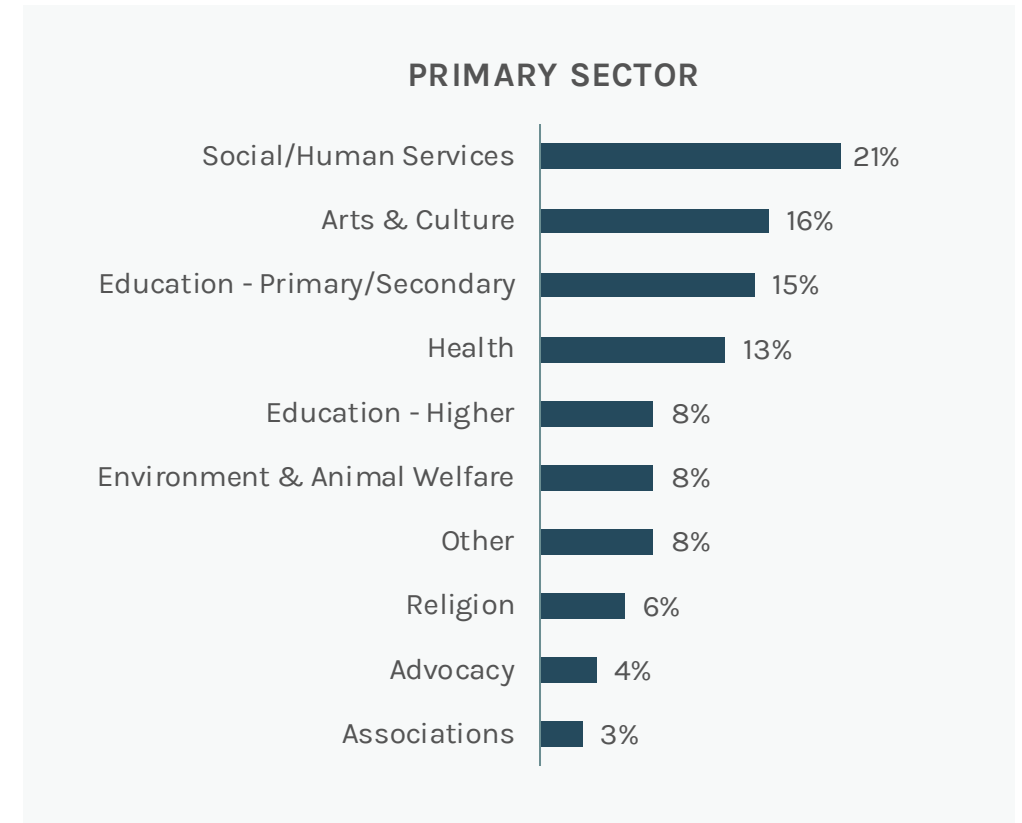
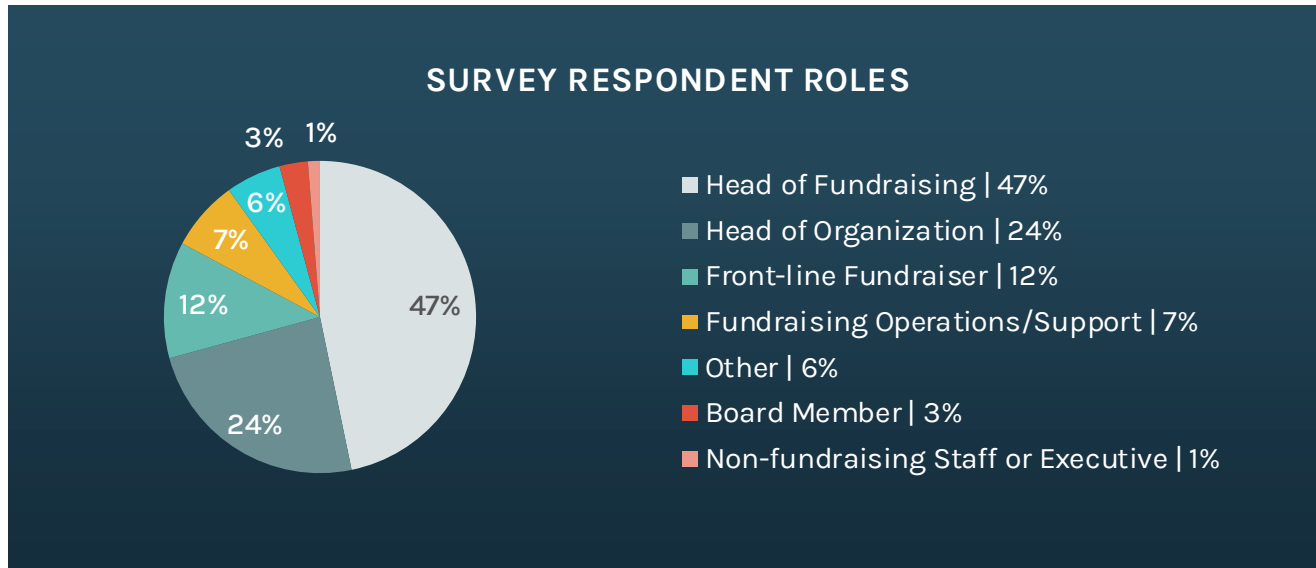
61% of organizations see DEIB as aligned with their values, but 47% face challenges **engaging diverse donor groups**.

94% of organizations are familiar with **Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs)** but few are actively targeting them.

More than half (57%) of all organizations are prioritizing **expanding revenue streams** to stay future-ready.

Fundraising & Organization Heads Comprised 71% of Respondents, Reflecting Sector-Wide Perspectives Across the Globe

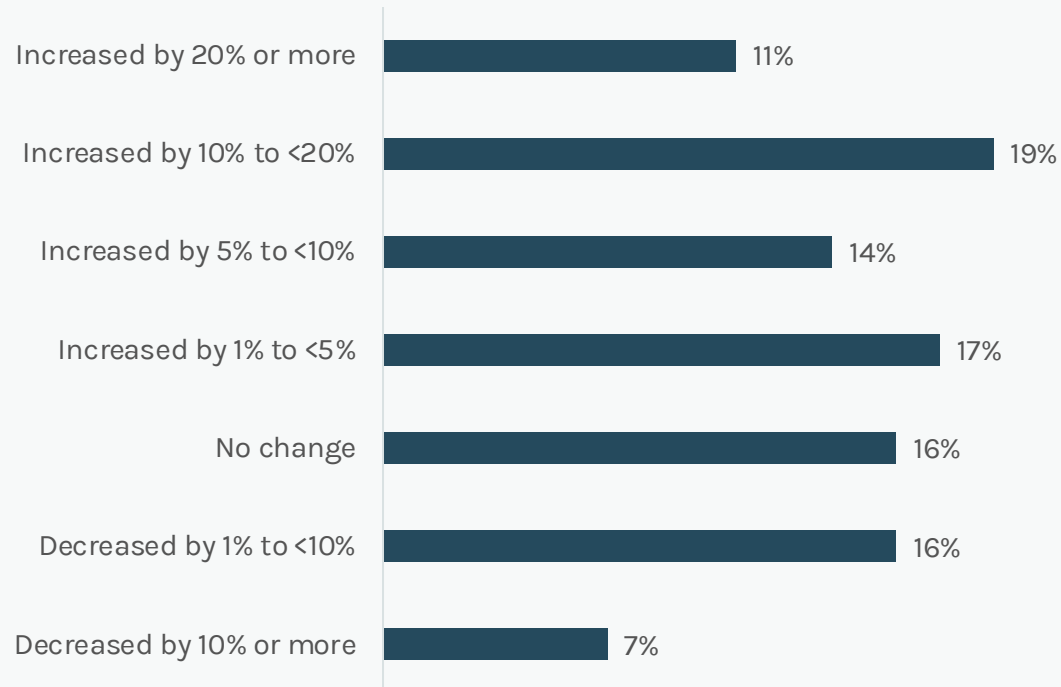
This year's report reflects a truly global perspective, with **165** organizations outside the US contributing insights. For the first time, this expanded participation highlights global differences in the challenges, trends, and opportunities shaping philanthropy. Fundraising and nonprofit leaders, representing **71%** of respondents, have made this 2025 edition report a uniquely comprehensive resource for professionals worldwide.



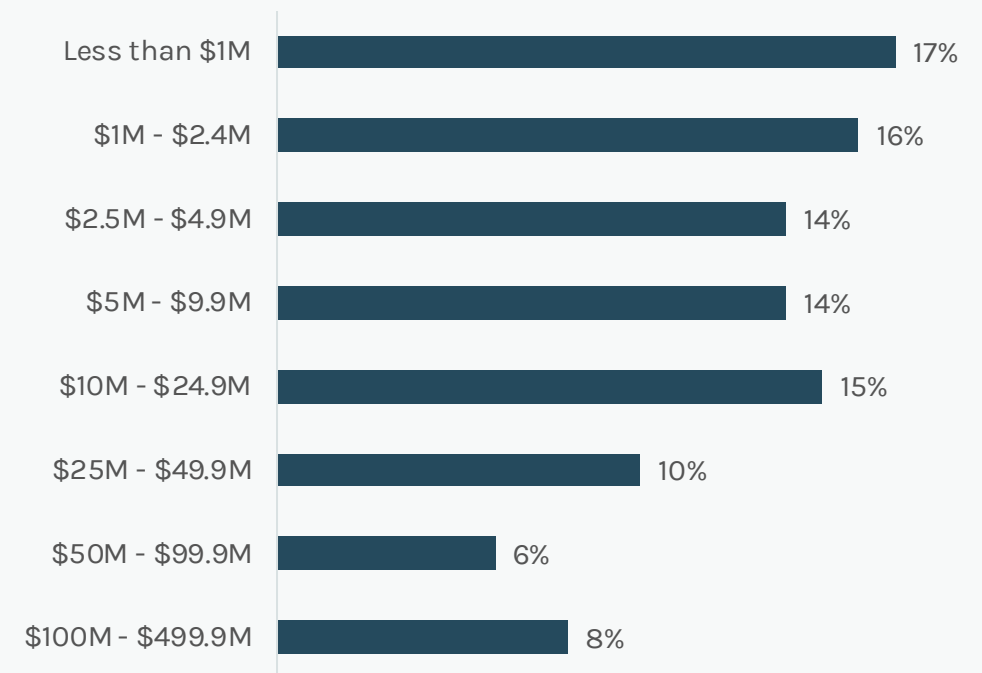
Philanthropy Remains Resilient and Optimistic, as Nearly Two-Thirds of Organizations Saw Revenue Growth in 2024

Sixty-two percent (62%) of organizations reported revenue growth in 2024 compared to the prior fiscal year, with 30% achieving increases of 10% or more.

CHANGE IN REVENUE FROM PRIOR FISCAL YEAR

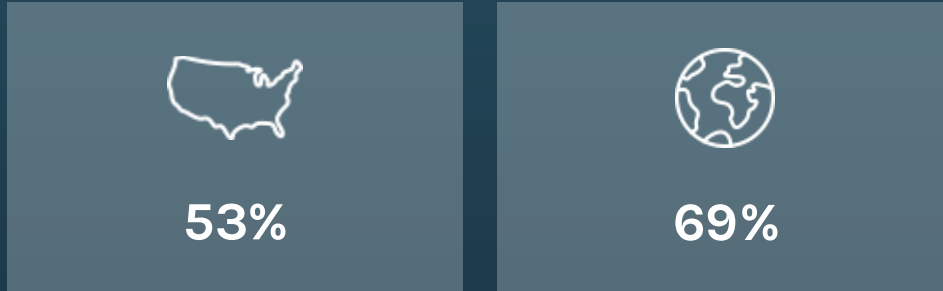


ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET



More Than Half of Organizations Are Driving Campaign Efforts

International organizations are **16% more likely** to be engaged in a capital campaign than US-based organizations.



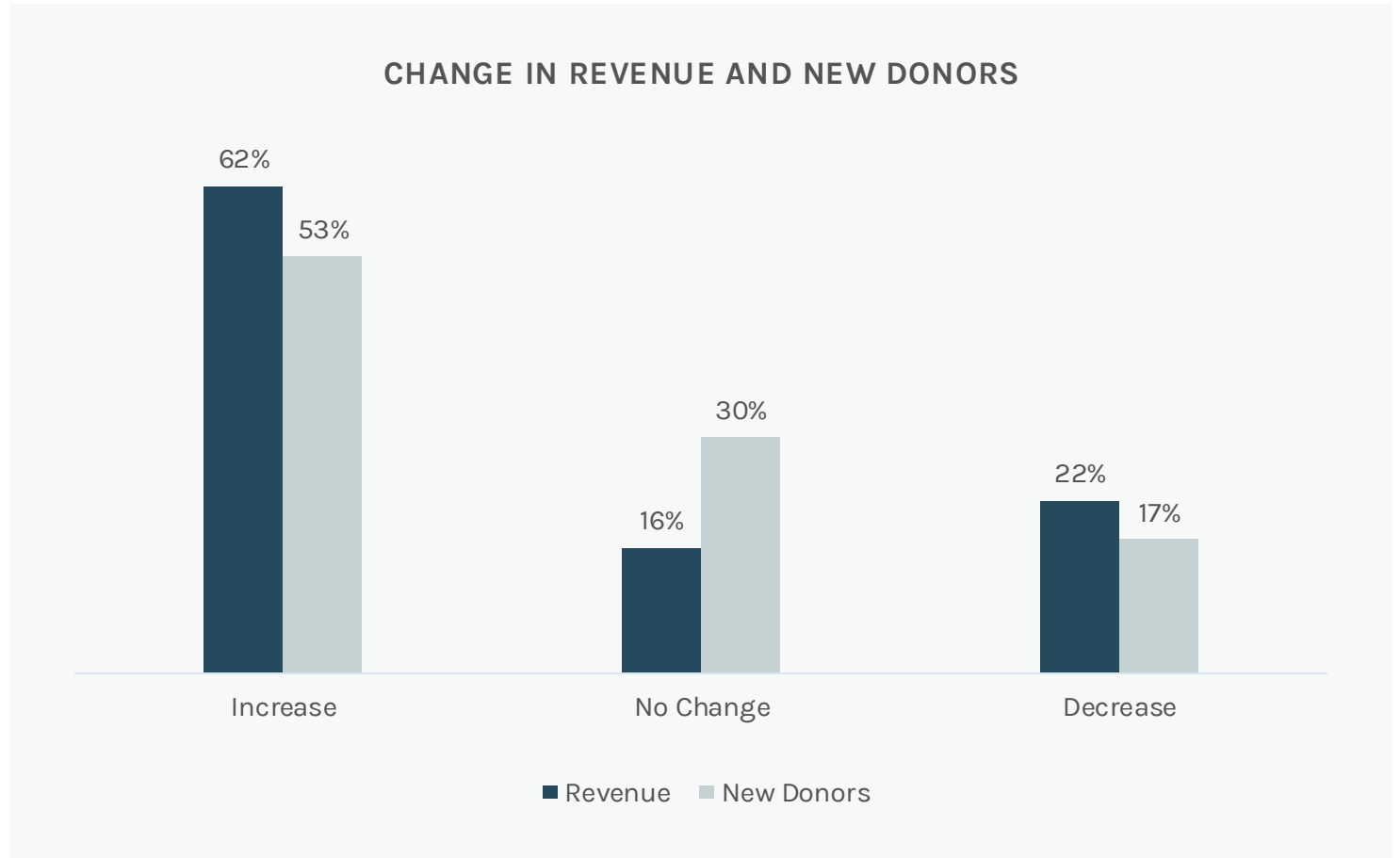
Whether you are wondering about [starting a campaign](#), looking to incorporate [innovations from political campaigns](#), grappling with [when to make your campaign public](#), or hoping to effectively [engage your board](#), CCS offers helpful online resources to meet you where you are and support your [fundraising journey](#).

56%
of all surveyed organizations are currently engaged in or planning for a campaign.



Nearly 3/4 of Organizations That Saw Growth in New Donors Also Achieved Revenue Growth in 2024

Over half of organizations (53%) reported increasing their new donor base last year. 72% of those organizations that increased their number of new donors also experienced a correlating increase in revenue—14% achieved revenue growth of 20% or more—compared to just 56% of organizations with stable donor numbers.



Fundraising Operations

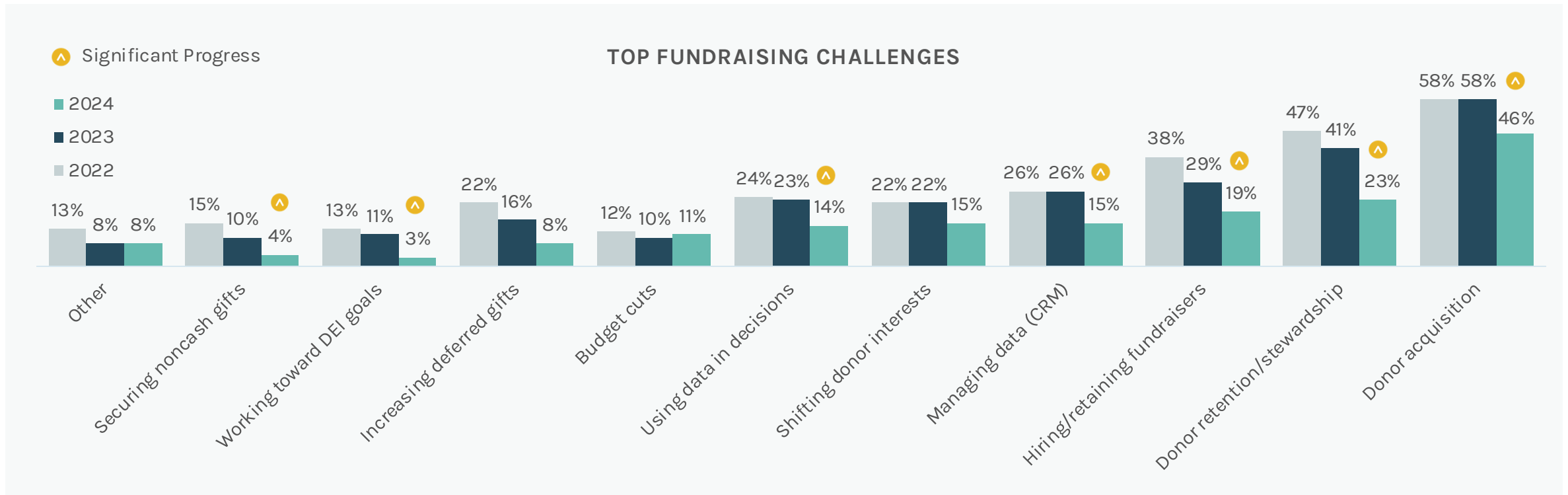
TRENDS AND EVOLUTION



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES FACED BY FUNDRAISERS?

Year-Over-Year Progress in Addressing Key Fundraising Challenges Indicates Improvements in Acquisition, Retention, & Data

While donor acquisition and retention remained key challenges for nonprofits in 2024, cited by 47% and 23% of organizations respectively, both have seen significant year-over-year improvement. Donor retention, in particular, has improved by an impressive 24% over the past two years, likely attributed to the rise in generative AI technology that allows organizations to more easily personalize and customize targeted communications.





HOW ENGAGED ARE BOARD MEMBERS IN FUNDRAISING PRACTICES?

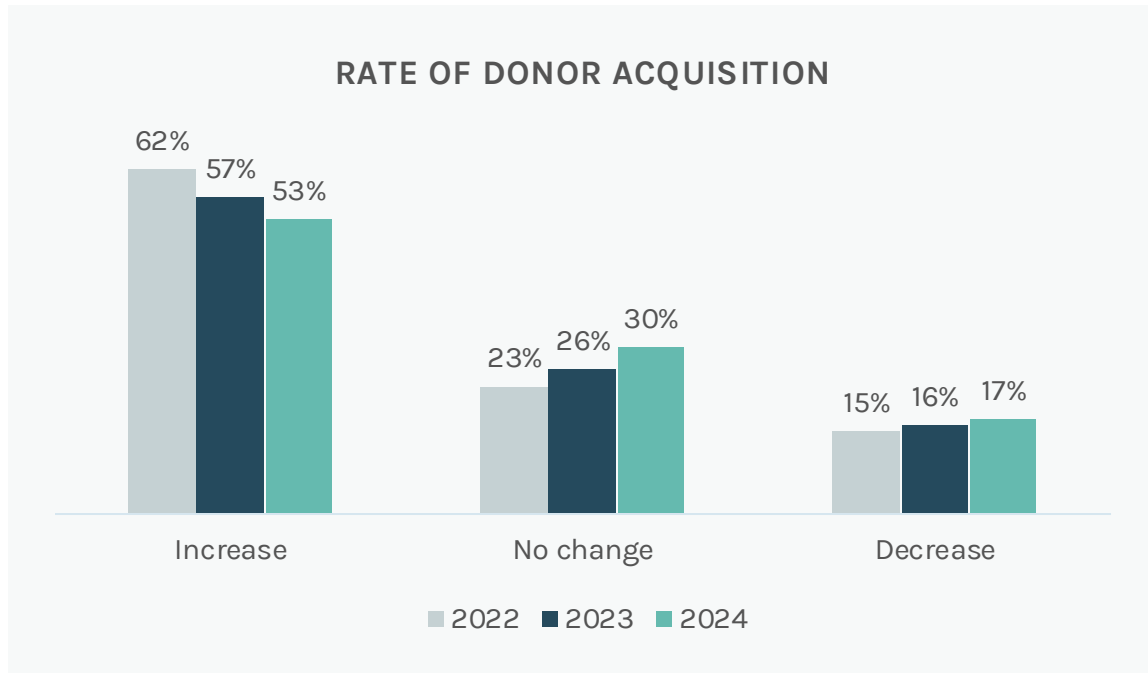
Nearly 1/4 of All Organizations Cite Board Leadership Involvement as a Top Challenge

While 72% of fundraisers report being mostly or completely knowledgeable in board relations, board member involvement in fundraising remains a challenge. Nearly 1 in 4 organizations (23%) cite board and leadership involvement as the second top challenge they face in today's philanthropic landscape.

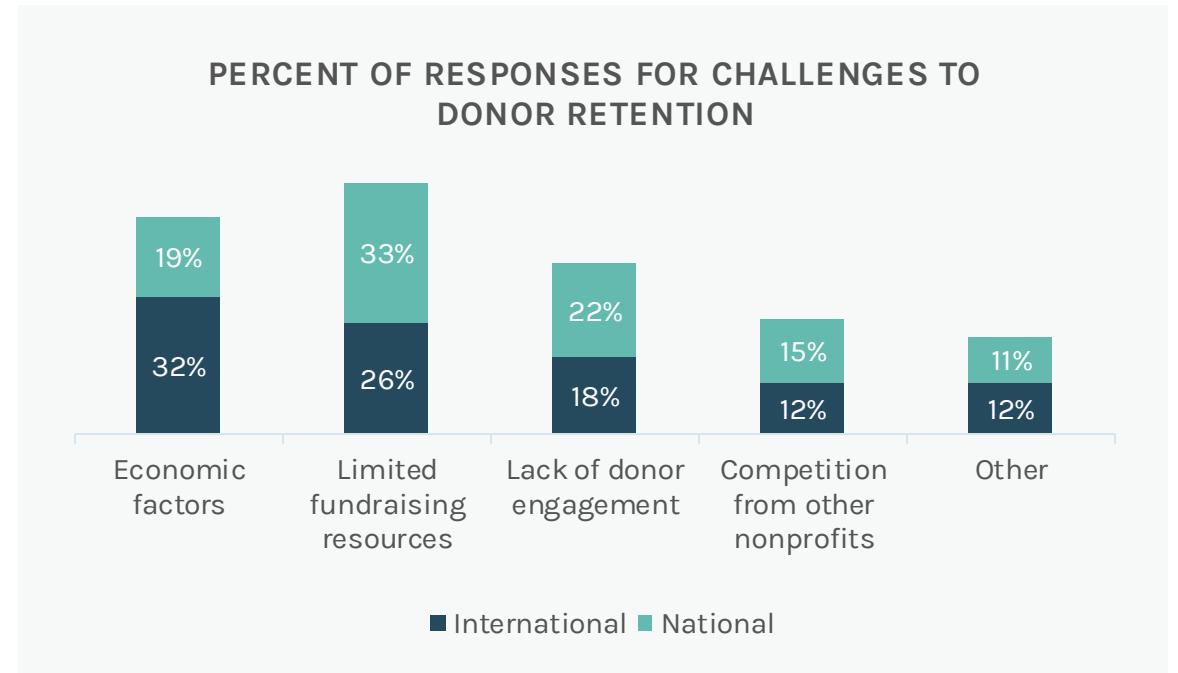
Board benchmarking is a powerful tool for nonprofits to enhance board engagement by comparing performance and trends with historical or peer data. Read our article, [*How and Why to Develop a Board Benchmarking Report*](#), to learn how this approach can guide decisions about your board of directors.

While Half of Organizations Report Donor Acquisition Growth, Fewer Are Acquiring New Donors Year-Over-Year

Fifty-three percent (53%) of organizations reported an increase in new donors in the past year. However, donor acquisition has seen less growth compared to the previous two years, with 57% growth in 2023 and 62% growth in 2022.

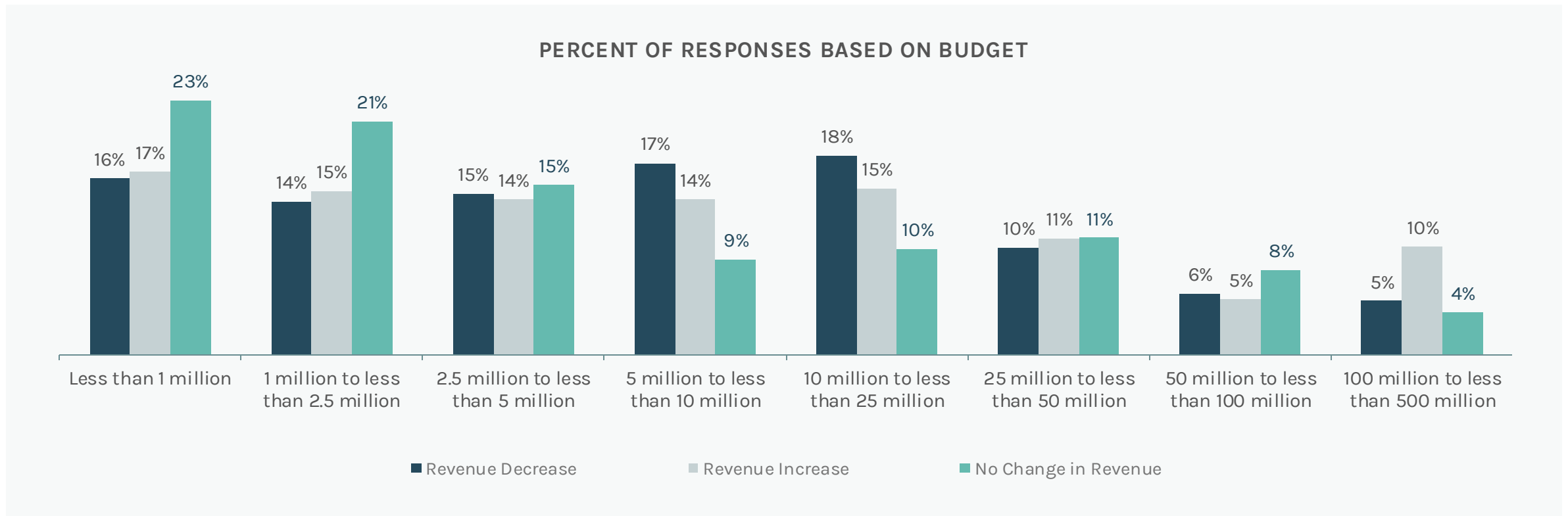


Economic uncertainties and limited fundraising staff/resources continue to be significant obstacles to donor retention, with international organizations reporting economic factors as a challenge 13% more frequently than their US-based counterparts.



78% of Large-Budget Organizations Grew Revenue in 2024, While Smaller-Budget Organizations Faced Declines

Nearly 8 out of 10 organizations with operating budgets between \$100 million and \$500 million reported revenue growth last year. In contrast, smaller organizations experienced a higher share of revenue declines compared to those with budgets of \$25 million or more.

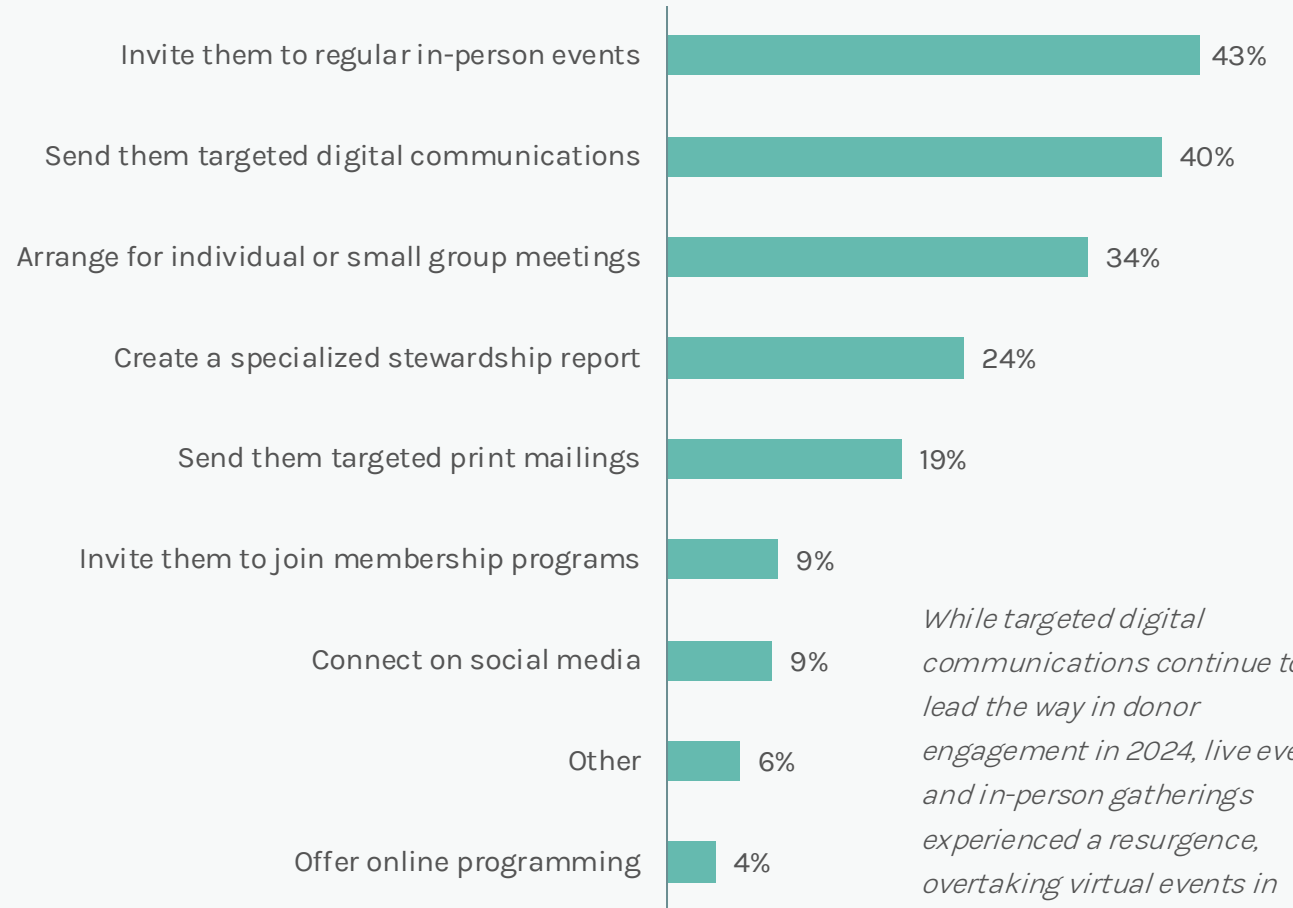


Over Half (53%) of Organizations Identify Donor Retention as a Top Success Metric, Second to Revenue at 88%

Additional metrics tracked by organizations include donor acquisition rates (23%) and engagement metrics like event attendance (20%).

Measuring key metrics is essential for strengthening your fundraising program and driving success. By tracking the right data, nonprofits can make informed decisions and improve their strategies. Check out [“If You Can’t Measure It, You Can’t Manage It”—Using Metrics to Strengthen Your Fundraising Program](#), to discover how the right metrics can enhance your fundraising efforts.

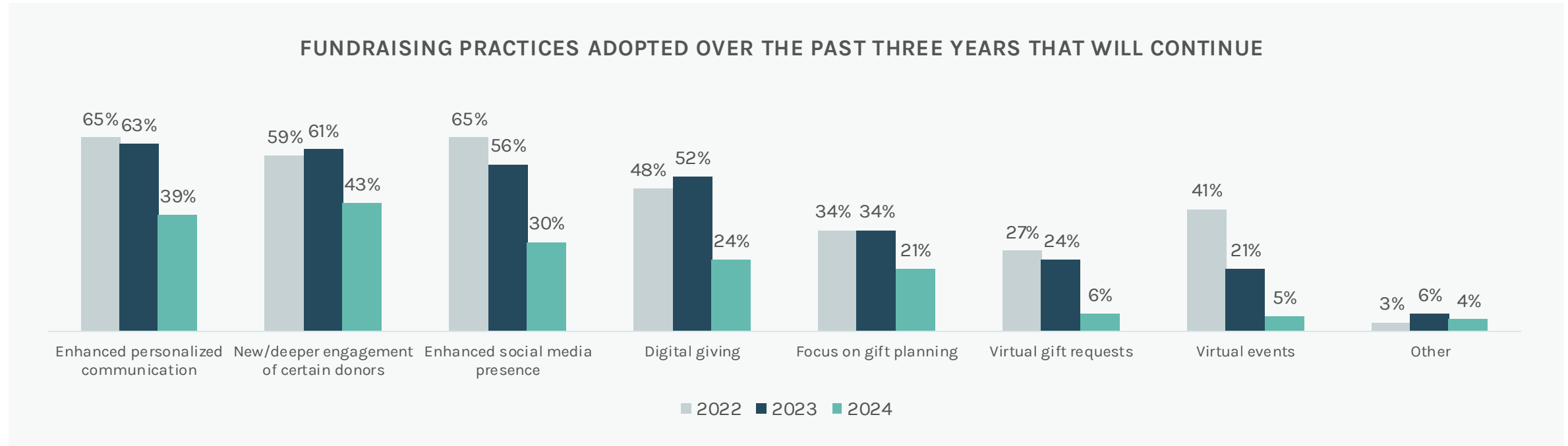
STRATEGIES FOR RETAINING NEW DONORS



While targeted digital communications continue to lead the way in donor engagement in 2024, live events and in-person gatherings experienced a resurgence, overtaking virtual events in popularity.

Targeted Engagements Drive Success as Post-Pandemic Era Fundraising Strategies Evolve

In 2024, nonprofits focused on deepening connections with specific donor groups (43%) and personalizing engagement strategies (39%). Although social media and digital innovation remain priorities for most nonprofits, digital giving saw a 28% decline compared to 2023, likely due to user experience challenges, donor fatigue, and growing concerns over trust in online charities. Meanwhile, virtual events and gift requests have declined—34% and 21%, respectively, since 2022—reflecting a post-pandemic shift back towards in-person engagement and more personalized donor strategies.



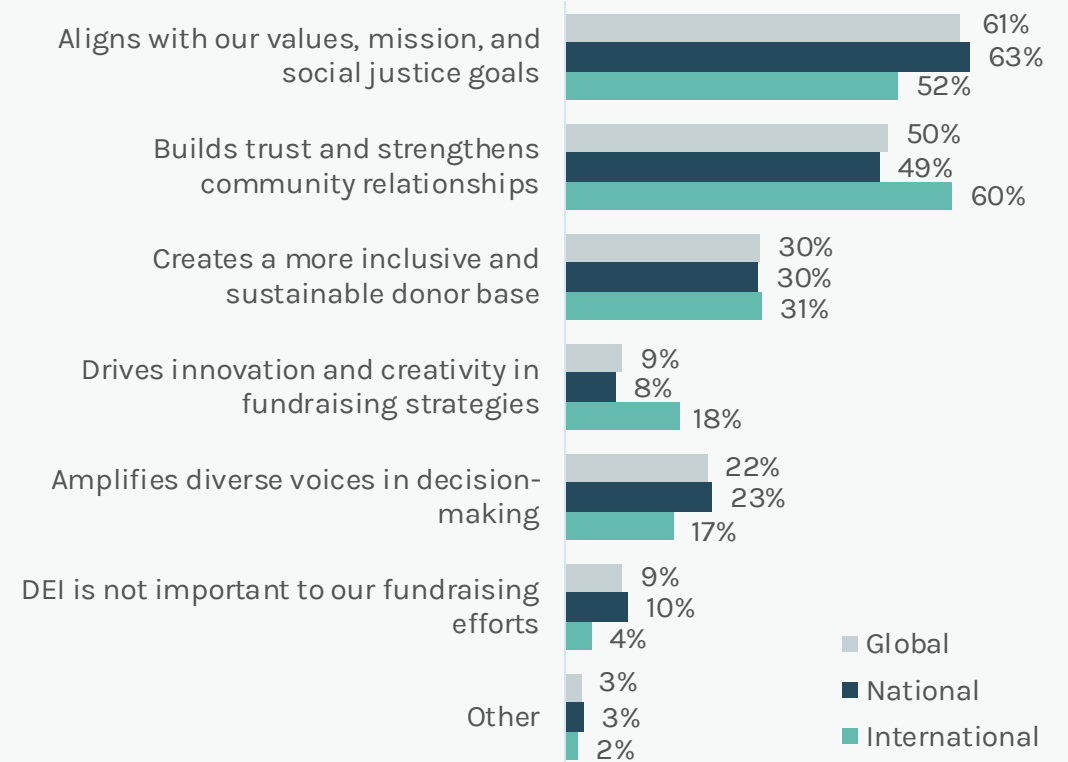
61% of Organizations See DEIB as Aligned with Their Values, But 49% Struggle to Reach Diverse Donors

Most organizations identified the benefits of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging (DEIB) in fundraising as building trust and strengthening community relationships. Over half (61%) said DEIB aligns with their values, mission, and social justice goals, while nearly one-third (30%) highlighted its role in creating a more inclusive donor base. Additionally, over one-fifth (22%) noted its ability to amplify diverse voices in decision-making. International organizations stood out, citing building trust 10% more often and recognizing DEIB’s role in driving innovation and creativity 9% more frequently than their US counterparts.

TOP BARRIERS TO INCORPORATING DEIB INTO FUNDRAISING PRACTICES

- About half (49%) struggle with reaching diverse donor groups.
- Nearly half (45%) are concerned about measuring DEIB’s impact or aligning it with fundraising goals.
- Nearly one-third (30%) cite a lack of internal buy-in or resistance to change as barriers.

TOP BENEFITS OF INCORPORATING DEIB INTO FUNDRAISING PRACTICES



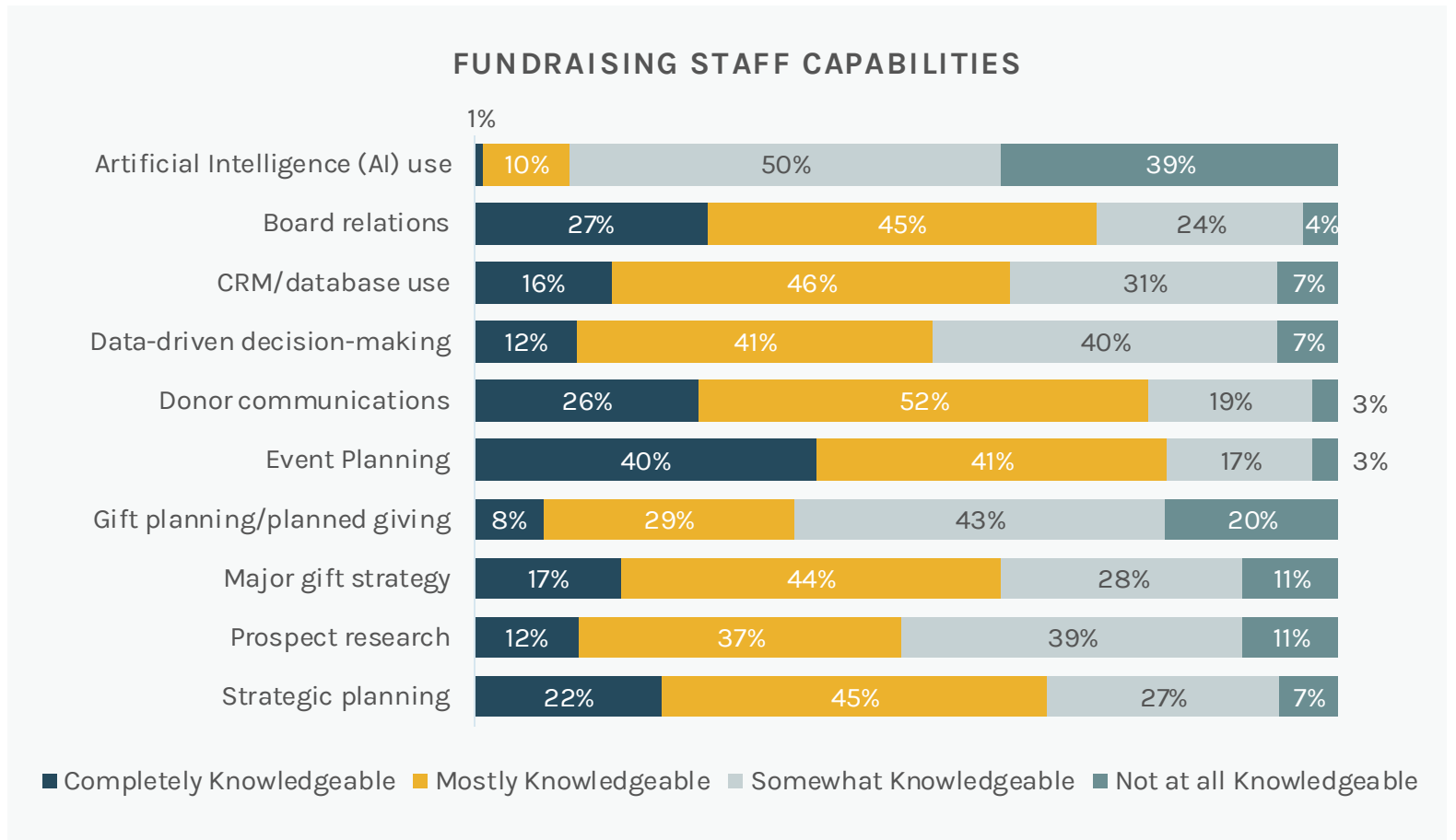
Staffing & Resourcing

SUCCESSSES AND CHALLENGES



While Organizations Prioritize Direct Fundraising Skills, Fundraisers Feel Most Competent in Event Planning and Donor Communications

While organizations emphasize direct fundraising skills in their hiring efforts, nearly all fundraisers report feeling most confident in event planning and donor communications, with 81% and 78%, respectively, claiming to be mostly or completely knowledgeable. The renewed focus on event planning reflects donor retention trends, underscoring the value of in-person engagement for fostering deeper connections. Leverage these [fundraising event tips](#) to execute meaningful and engaging gatherings.



Trending Fundraising Practices Shaping Fundraising Staff Competencies



EVENT PLANNING

- The resurgence of in-person events is driving a rise in competencies related to event logistics and donor engagement.
- Fundraisers are developing stronger skills in creating memorable experiences that deepen donor relationships.



DONOR COMMUNICATIONS

- There is an increasing focus on targeted, personalized communications with donors.
- The use of AI tools for segmentation and tailored messaging reflects growing proficiency in donor communications, enhancing engagement.



BOARD RELATIONS

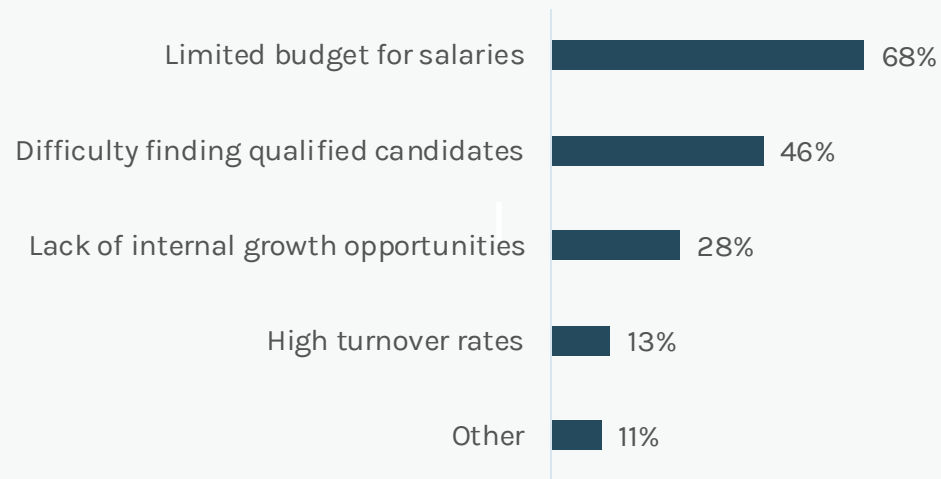
- Board members are crucial in providing strategic guidance, financial oversight, and networking opportunities.
- The growing competency in board relations underscores nonprofits' focus on leveraging board expertise to drive organizational strategy and fundraising efforts.



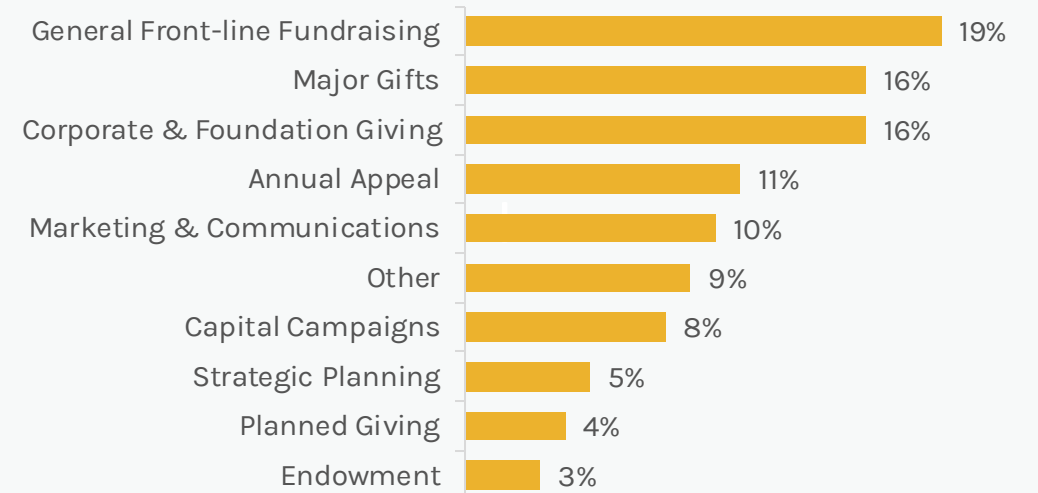
Staff Hiring Has Seen Moderate Declines, Pointing to Budget Limitations & Qualification Challenges

Fewer organizations (23%) increased their staffing in 2024 compared to 2023 (33%), with most organizations responding that fundraising staffing levels remained the same (59%). About one-fifth had fewer staff compared with the prior year. The rationale stems from limited salary budgets and difficulties in finding qualified candidates. This is further compounded by nearly one-third (28%) of organizations citing a lack of internal growth opportunities and high turnover rates, which have intensified hiring challenges.

TOP CHALLENGES IN STAFF HIRING



NEW HIRE FOCUS



Despite Challenges in Hiring, More than $\frac{3}{4}$ of Organizations Prioritized Investing In Their Fundraising Staff in The Past Year



Organizations rely most on professional development opportunities (44%) or remote and hybrid work schedules (41%). Others provide competitive compensation (25%), team-building activities (14%), or other non-salary benefits such as volunteer days (11%) to develop fundraising staff.

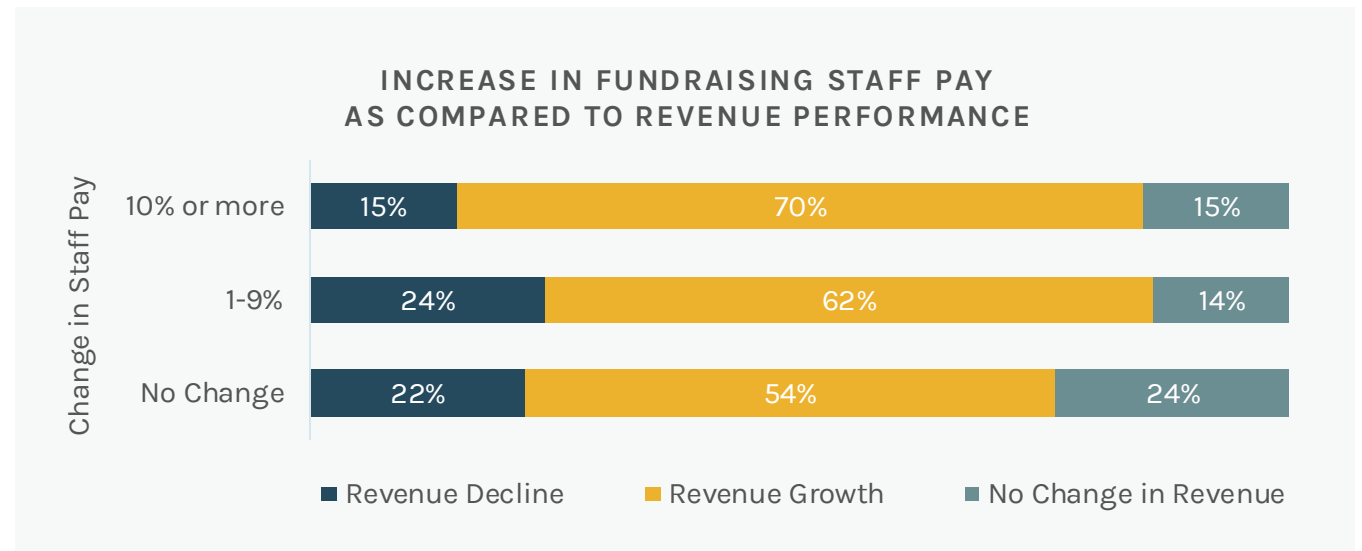
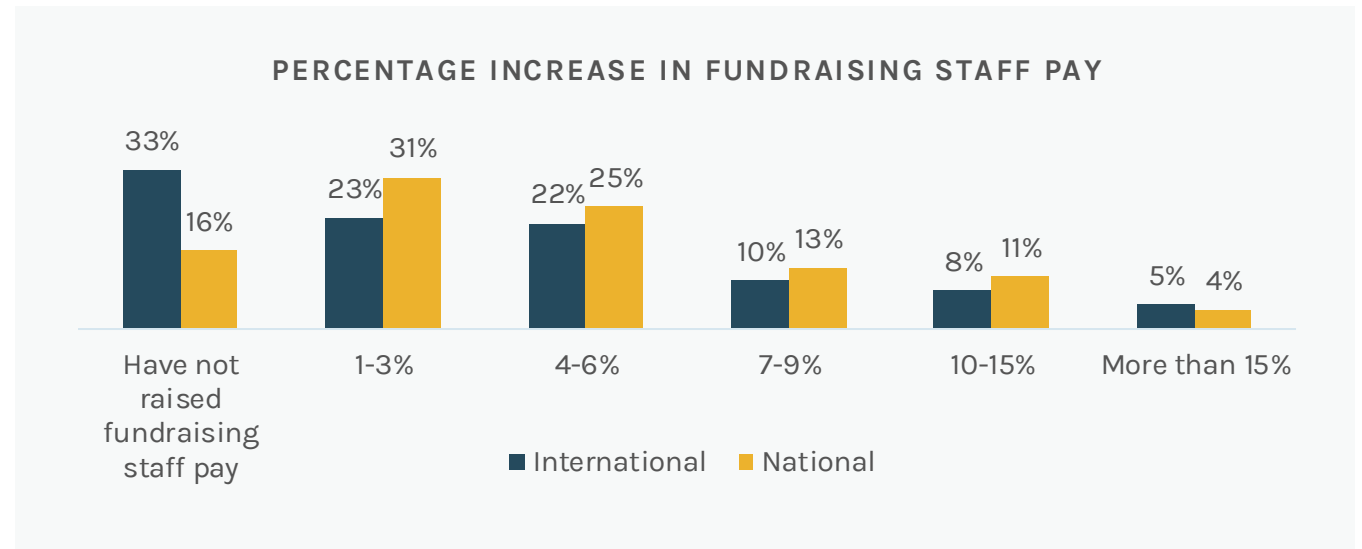
Ensure that your fundraising team thrives in the fast-paced and high-achieving fundraising environment with [these 10 tips](#), applicable to nonprofits across missions.



7 out of 10 Organizations That Expanded Their Fundraising Staff Pay by 10% or More Saw Financial Gains

Over the past three years, half of the organizations raised their fundraising staff pay by 4% or more, with 4% of them implementing raises of more than 15%. While many organizations opted for more modest increases, with the majority raising pay between 1% and 3%, 19% did not adjust their staff salaries at all. International organizations, however, were less likely to increase pay, with 17% more than their US-based counterparts reporting no raise in fundraising staff pay.

Organizations that experienced revenue growth in 2024 often found a direct link between investing in their fundraising teams and boosting financial results. Notably, 70% of organizations that increased their fundraising staff pay by 10% or more also saw an increase in revenue.



Donor Data, AI, & Innovation

OPPORTUNITIES FOR EFFICIENCY

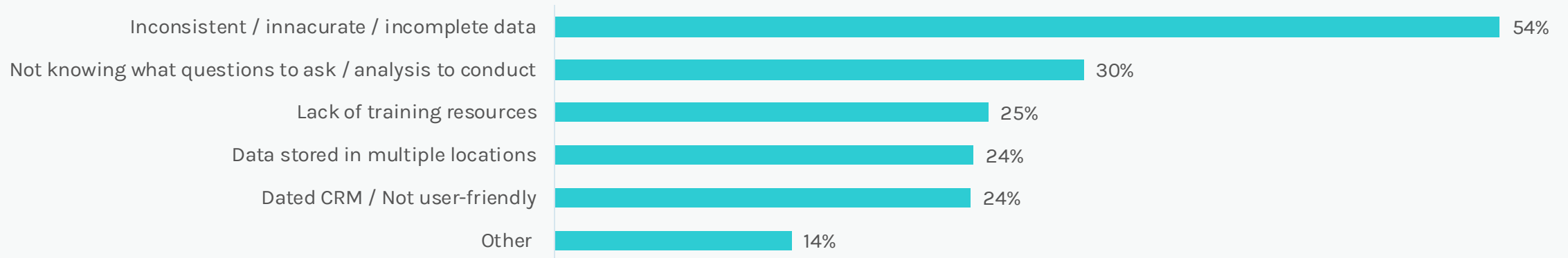


Majority (54%) of Organizations Report Messy Data As The Top Challenge for Leveraging Donor Data

While most organizations report that their fundraising staff is knowledgeable about data-driven decision-making and CRM/database use, many still face challenges with inaccurate or incomplete data. More than half (54%) of organization reported that inaccurate or incomplete data are key challenges to leveraging donor data. Similarly, 55% of organizations struggle to determine which analyses to conduct or face challenges due to insufficient training in data analysis. Addressing these challenges is key to maximizing fundraising effectiveness and donor engagement. Learn more about [data integrity](#) and tips on effective [data visualizations](#).

93%
of fundraising staff is knowledgeable about data-driven decision-making and CRM/database use

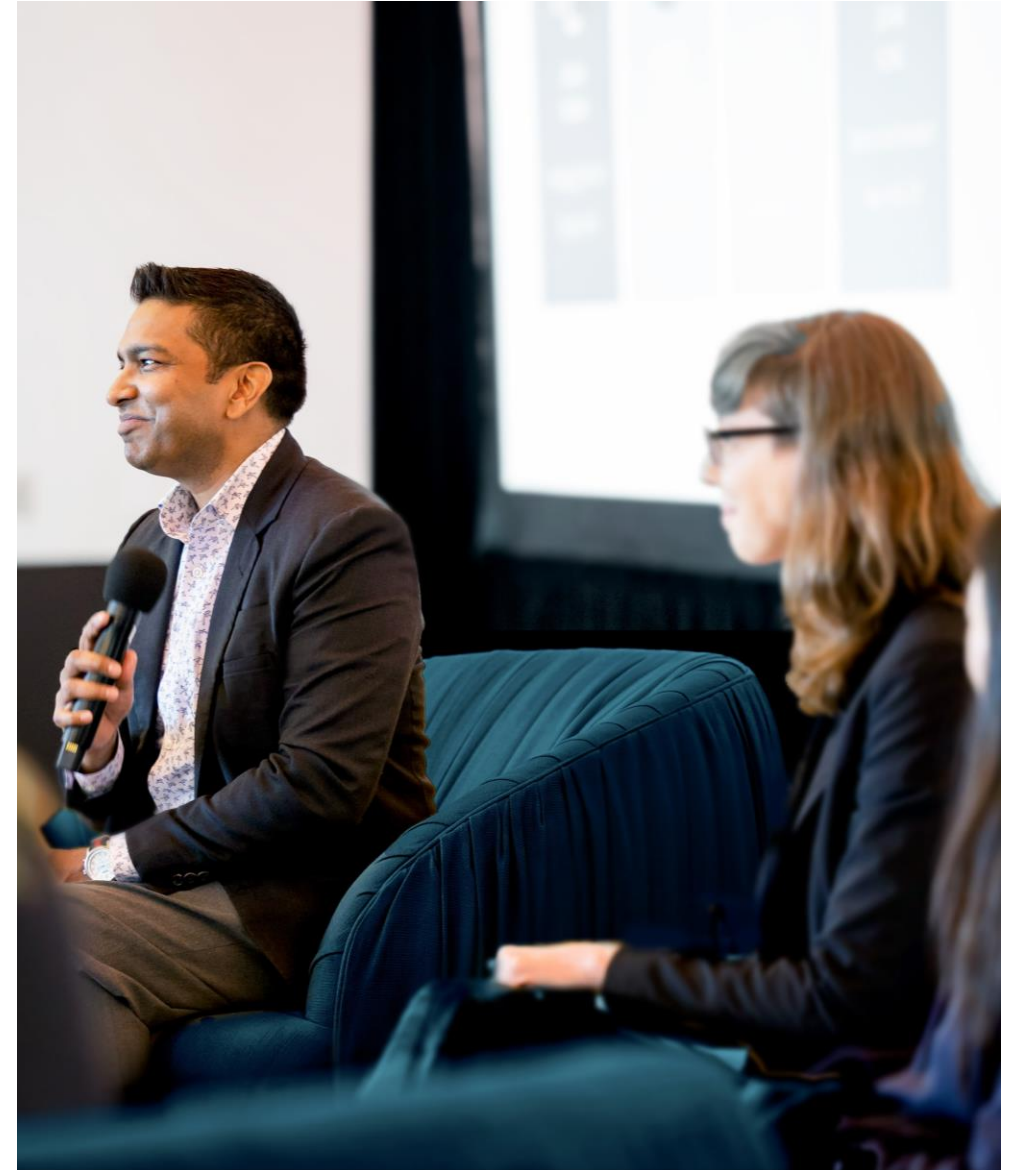
TOP CHALLENGES WITH DONOR DATA



“

Modern AI lowers barriers with easy-to-use interfaces, while traditional AI relies on data and expertise. The former enhances engagement and retention; the latter drives revenue and optimizes resources. Using both provides effortless AI-driven interactions while retaining the depth of AI-powered insights. To stay ahead, we must embrace both and keep learning.

ASHUTOSH NANDESHWAR
EVP DATA SCIENCE & ANALYTICS
CCS FUNDRAISING

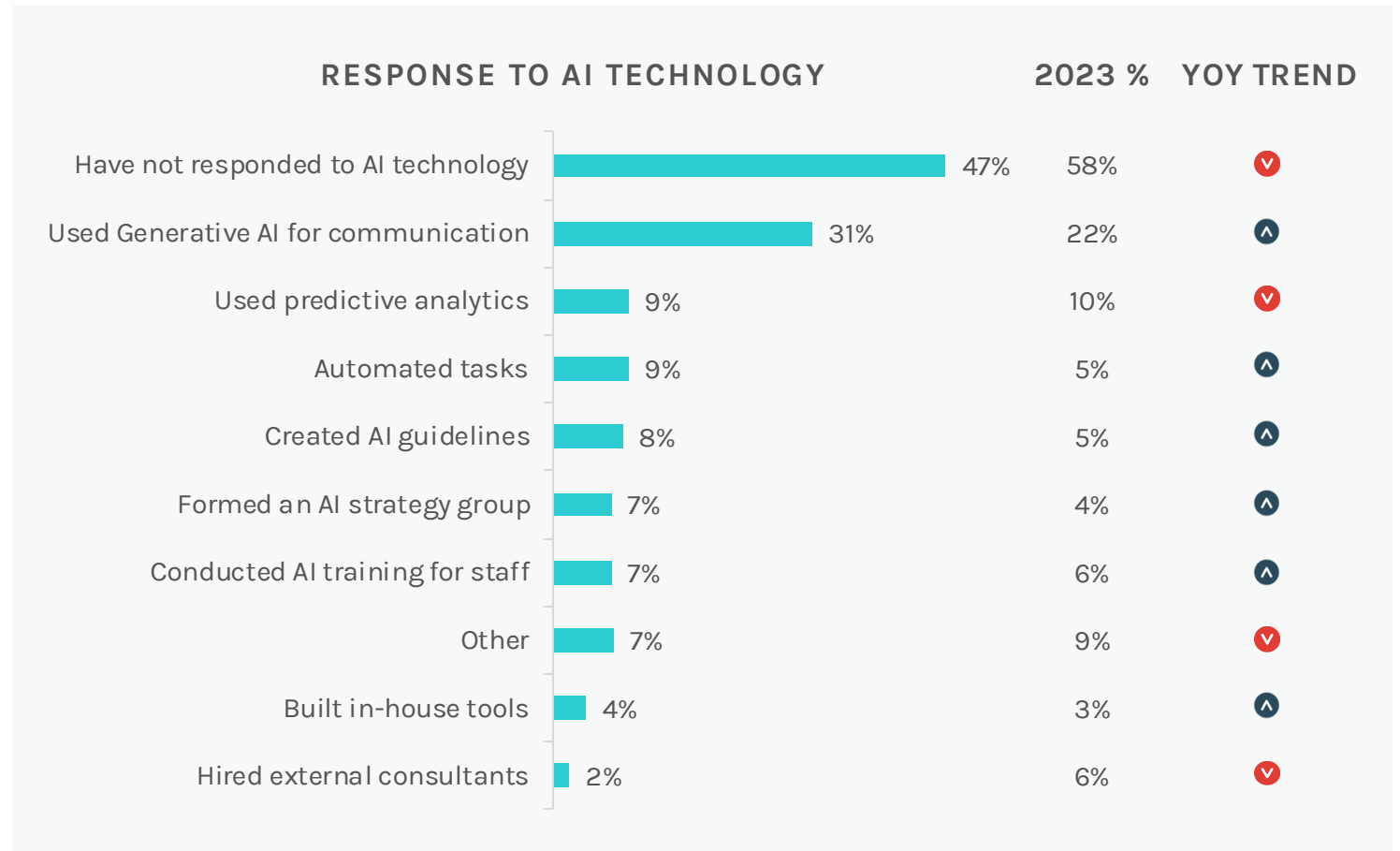


HOW ARE ORGANIZATIONS USING AI TO ENHANCE THEIR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS?

Nearly One-Third (31%) of Organizations Leveraging AI Report Improved Donor Engagement and Targeted Fundraising

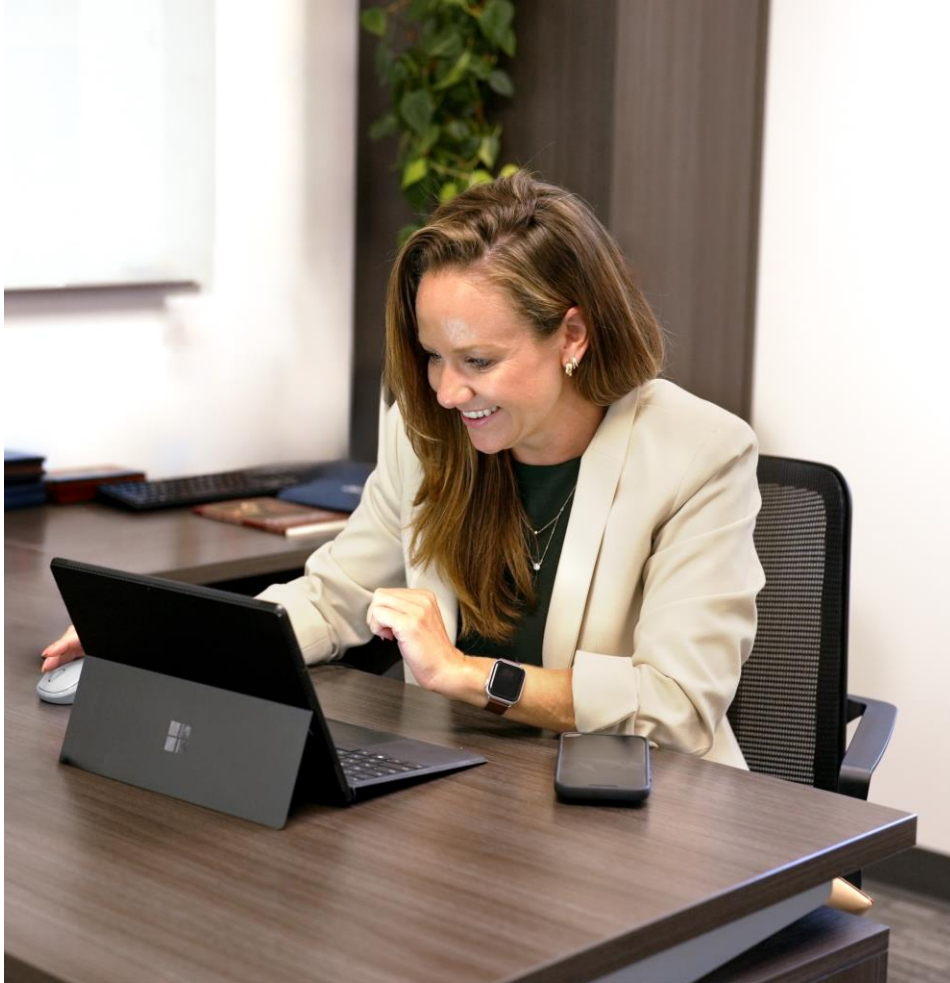
While 47% of survey respondents have not yet responded to AI, two-thirds (61%) of organizations report their fundraising staff has at least some knowledge of AI technologies. Among those utilizing data and AI, personalized donor engagement stands out as the key benefit—a central strategy for many organizations. Nearly one-third (31%) have achieved enhanced personalization of communications and improved campaign targeting through the use of AI, with many also noting advancements in operational efficiency.

While fewer organizations have adopted advanced AI applications like task automation (9%) or predictive analytics (9%), AI's growing potential to transform fundraising strategies highlights its critical role in helping nonprofits improve efficiency, engagement, and competitiveness.



WHAT HAVE ORGANIZATIONS ACHIEVED WITH AI TECHNOLOGY?

AI Technology Drives Targeted Engagement and Streamlined Operations

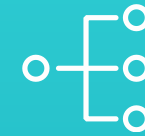


What Outcomes Have Organizations Achieved By Leveraging AI Technology?
(Percent of Respondents)



19%

Enhanced personalized
donor engagement



18%

Streamlined
fundraising operations



11%

More effective
campaign targeting

For more resources about how to apply AI to your organization,
check out our [AI in Fundraising](#) paper.

Looking Ahead

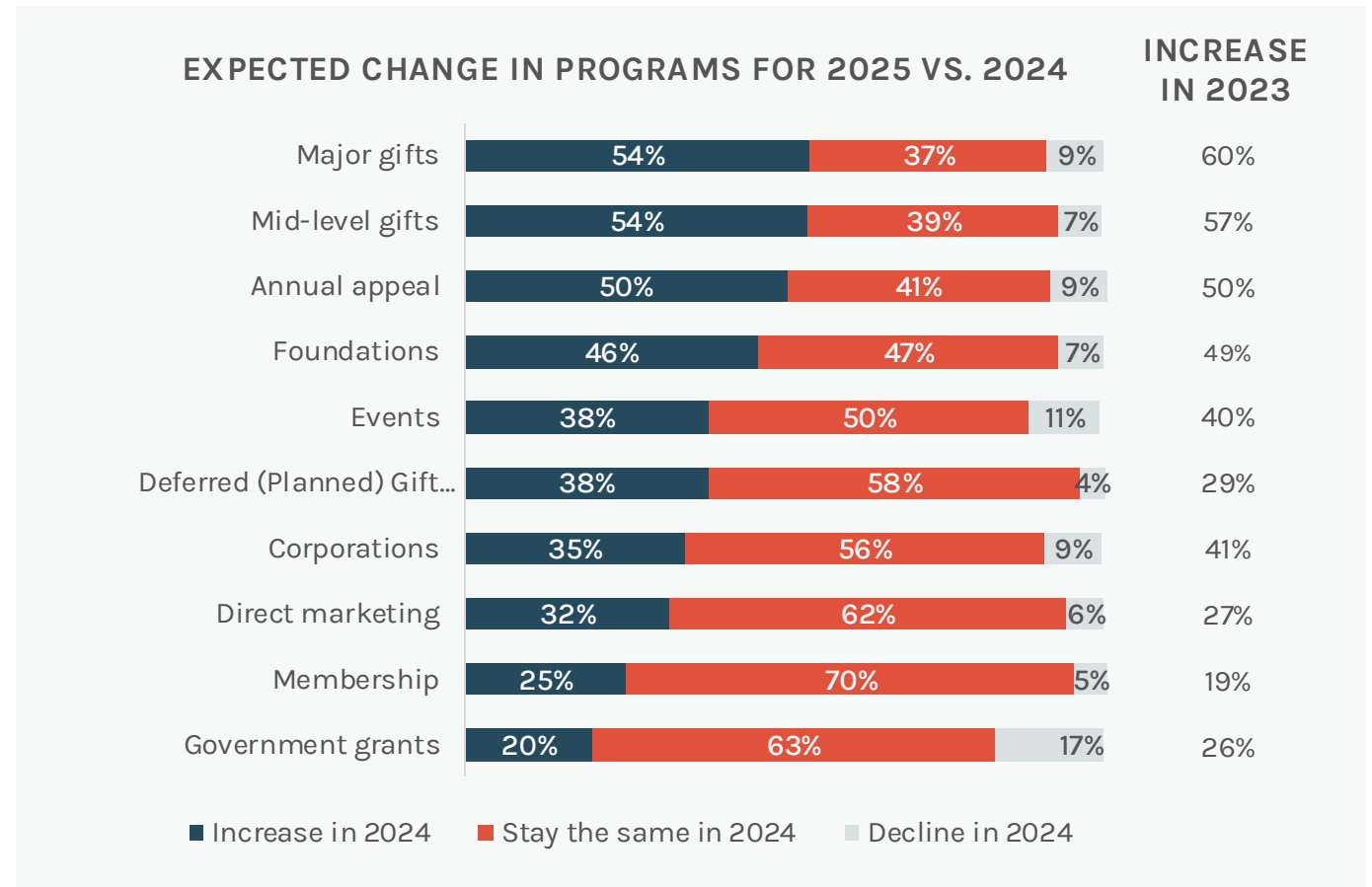
ENSURING A BRIGHT FUTURE



Continuing Year-Over-Year Trends, More Than Half of Organizations Expect Growth in Major and Mid-Level Gifts in 2025

Looking ahead to 2025, most organizations expect fundraising conditions to remain steady, with key shifts in focus. Over half (54%) anticipate growth in major and mid-level gifts, underscoring the importance of nurturing high-value donor relationships. Read more about what your organization can do in [How to Leverage Leadership Annual Giving to Build Your Major Gifts Pipeline](#). Around 50% expect increased annual appeals, and 46% predict growth in foundation giving, highlighting the continued reliance on diverse revenue streams for sustainability.

A shift is also seen in funding sources, with more organizations anticipating corporate support (35%) than government grants (20%)—a change from the post-COVID-19 pandemic landscape. This points to a strategic pivot towards [strategies for engaging corporate partnerships](#) to fill gaps left by fluctuating government aid. Additionally, expectations for membership growth (25%) are lower, as nonprofits prioritize individual and institutional support over less predictable funding models.



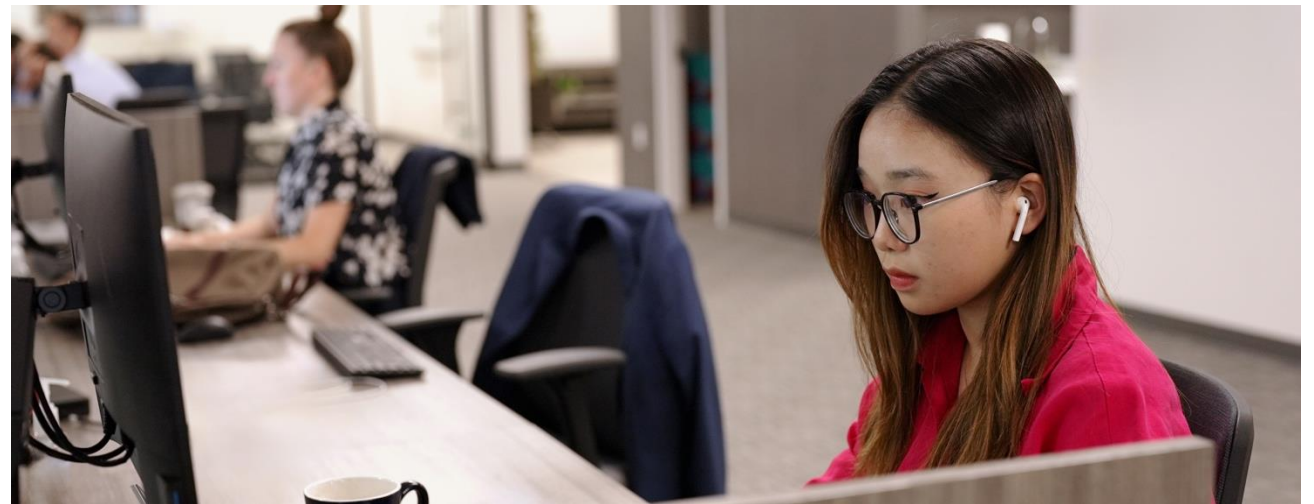
63% of Organizations Use Digital Campaigns to Engage the Next Generation of Philanthropists

To engage and inspire the next generation of philanthropists—Millennials (born 1981-1996), Generation Z (born 1997-2012), and Generation Alpha (born 2013-2025)—organizations are increasingly turning to digital strategies. Key tactics include sharing cause-based, impact-driven narratives and using personalized, targeted outreach to connect with these younger audiences. By aligning messaging with their values and preferences, nonprofits can foster deeper engagement and build lasting support.

To learn more about effective strategies for engaging and retaining the next generation of philanthropists, check out our article, [*Your Guide to Finding, Engaging, and Retaining the Next Donor Generation*](#).

Looking for an innovative way to engage your young leaders? Read about [Nashville Symphony Orchestra's Associate Board](#) approach.

How Are Organizations Targeting the Next Generation of Philanthropists?

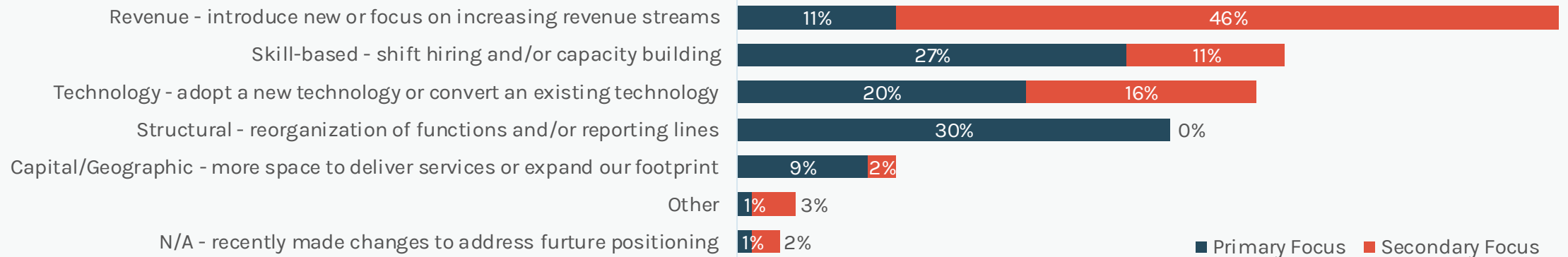


Over Half (57%) of Organizations Prioritize Expanding Revenue Streams to Stay Future-Ready

Nonprofits recognize the need for a variety of changes to remain competitive and effective in the future. The data highlights a focus on several key areas as organizations plan their next steps. Among the most commonly cited primary areas for improvement, 30% of respondents indicated that structural changes are key to positioning their organizations for future success. Additionally, 27% emphasized the importance of skill-based changes, while 20% saw technology adoption as critical.

However, a striking 57% of organizations identified increasing or introducing new revenue streams as of either primary or secondary importance. This points to a clear understanding of the need for financial sustainability and growth, even as other areas undergo transformation.

STRATEGIC SHIFTS ORGANIZATIONS PLAN TO MAKE FOR FUTURE SUCCESS

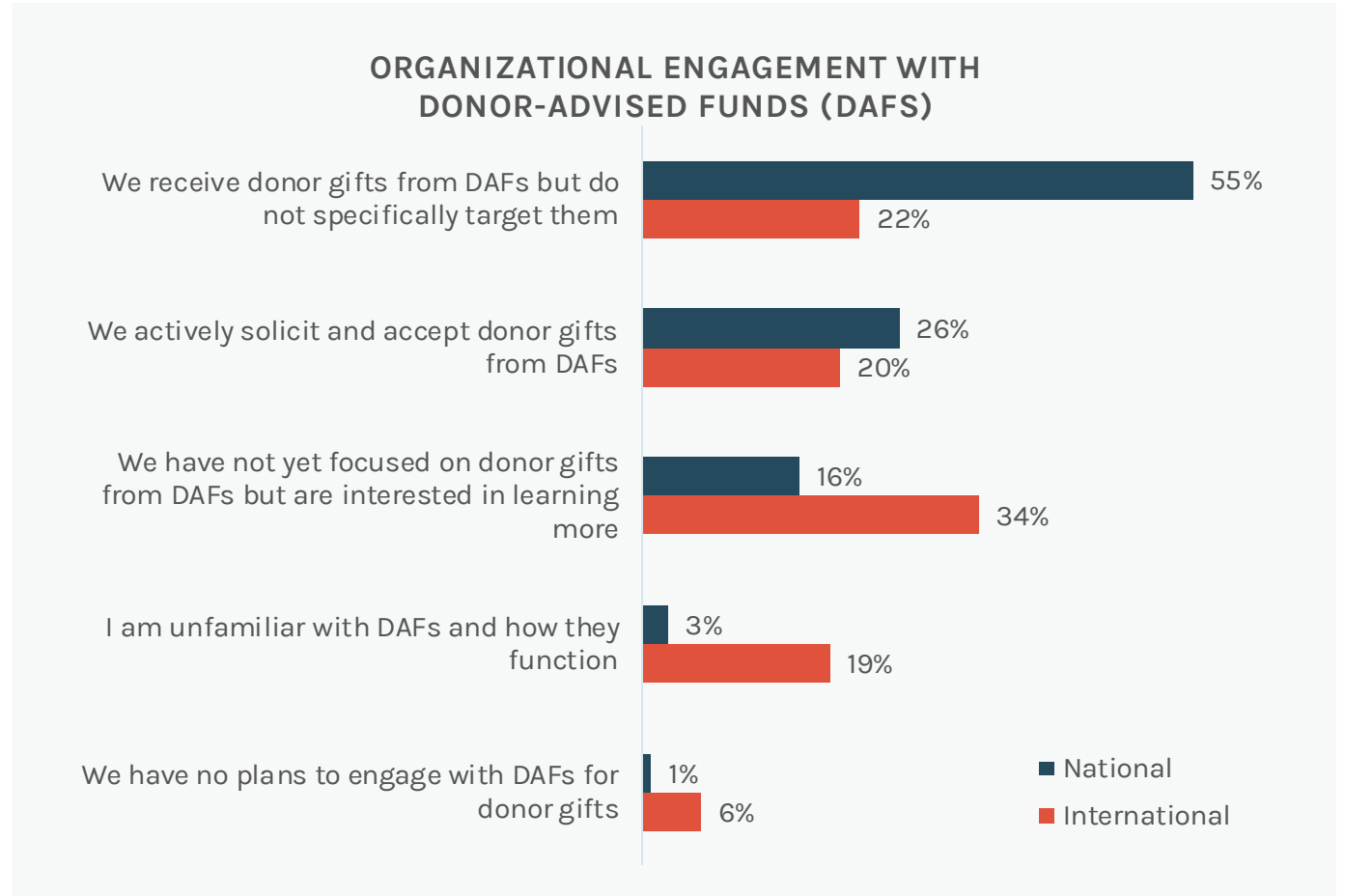


94% of Organizations Are Familiar with Donor-Advised Funds, But Active Engagement Remains Limited

Donor-Advised Funds (DAFs) present a significant opportunity for nonprofits to expand their charitable revenue, yet few organizations are fully leveraging their potential. While the vast majority of respondents (94%) are familiar with DAFs, only 25% actively solicit gifts from them as part of their fundraising strategy.

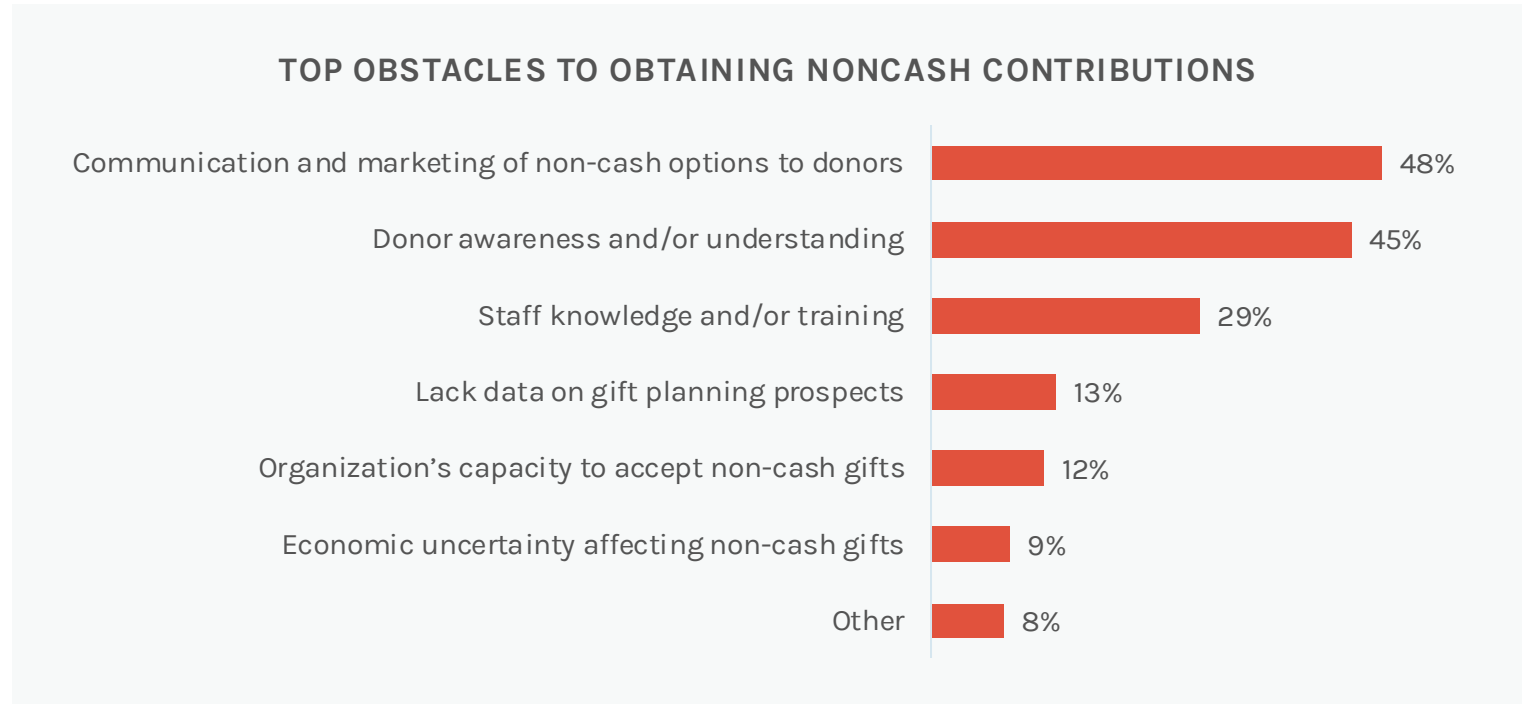
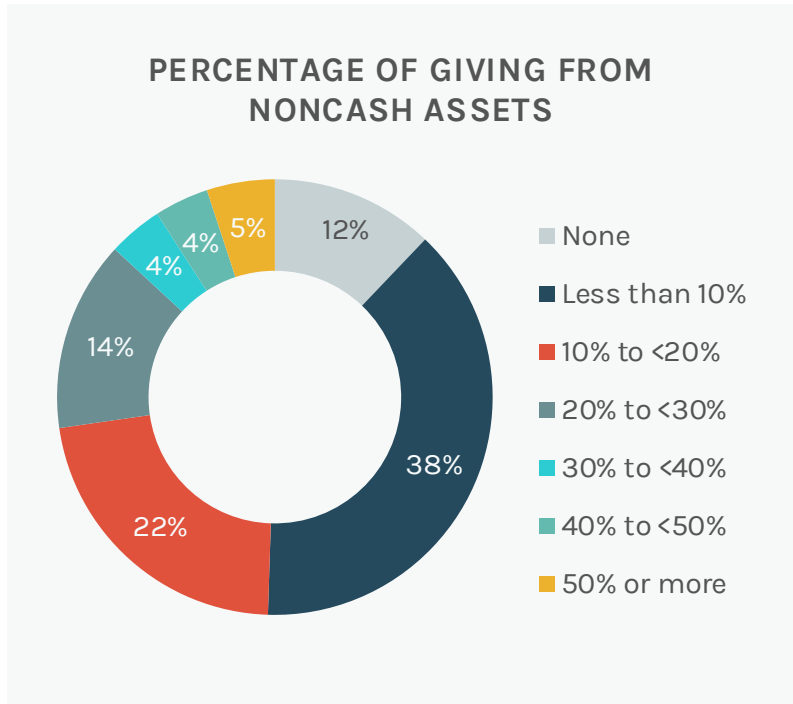
The gap in engagement is even more pronounced among organizations outside the US, where familiarity and activity with DAFs are significantly lower. Nearly 40% fewer international organizations report receiving gifts from DAFs compared to their US counterparts. However, interest in DAFs is growing globally, with 34% of international organizations expressing a desire to learn more and explore this avenue for fundraising.

By taking proactive steps to target and solicit gifts from DAFs, nonprofits stand to unlock a valuable source of funding and broaden their revenue streams.



Over a Quarter of Organizations Gain Significant Revenue from Noncash Assets

Over 1 in 4 nonprofits (27%) reported noncash assets as representing more than 20% of their total giving. However, a key obstacle to increasing noncash donations is donor unfamiliarity with these giving options, with 45% of organizations citing this as a challenge. Additionally, 48% struggle to effectively communicate noncash gift opportunities, while 29% point to insufficient staff expertise. Addressing these barriers through education, outreach, and training can unlock the full potential of non-cash contributions, including retirement assets, diversifying and expanding nonprofit revenue streams.



About CCS Fundraising

STRATEGIC CONSULTING EXCELLENCE



Strategic Fundraising Consulting

WE PARTNER WITH NONPROFITS FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL CHANGE.

For nearly 80 years, CCS Fundraising has empowered many of the world's greatest organizations to advance some of the most important causes in history. From local food banks to global charities, we are proud to partner with over 700 organizations annually in more than 250 cities around the world. As leading consultants in data-driven campaign and development strategy, we plan and implement fundraising initiatives so that nonprofits can make a bigger impact—locally, nationally, and globally.

OUR EXPERTISE

Our fundraising consultants have expertise in strategic planning, research, development, planned giving, and on-site campaign support. While results of our work are immediate, the impact of the strategies and tools we develop with clients endures to create lasting change.

OUR SERVICES

- Audits & Assessments
- Data Analytics
- Fundraising Campaigns
- Gift Planning
- Interim Development Management
- Specialized Development Projects
- Strategic Planning
- Systems & Change Management
- Training & Leadership Development

OUR SECTORS

- Advocacy
- Arts & Culture
- Associations
- Education (Primary, Secondary, Higher)
- Environment and Conservation
- Health
- Human Services
- Public-Society Benefit
- Religion



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