

Center *for Nonprofit* Management



2026

**One Year After  
the Fires:  
A Nonprofit  
Sector Snapshot**



**Dear Friends, Partners, and Supporters:**

A year ago, fires swept through Los Angeles and changed our community forever. The devastation was immediate — homes lost, families displaced, and communities fractured. As the nonprofit, for nonprofits, the Center for Nonprofit Management has witnessed firsthand the strength and resilience of our SoCal nonprofits despite their own struggles. We have also seen how recent shifts in federal funding policies have made the road to recovery longer and more difficult for nonprofits and the communities they serve.

In the year since, our team has worked tirelessly to meet growing needs of SoCal nonprofits — providing access to fire recovery resources; educating the philanthropic sector on the needs of nonprofit organizations post-fire; facilitating legal guidance regarding DEI, tax laws, and first amendment rights; creating safe spaces for nonprofit leaders to discuss the current state of affairs; sharing ways to amplify the voice of the sector; and synthesizing thoughts and strategies regarding a path forward.

Our partners at the Department of Angels have highlighted the ongoing need to support individuals and families in their fourth *Community Voices: LA Fire Recovery Report*<sup>1</sup>, and the Milken Institute has shared the impact of philanthropic giving across the sector in its report titled *Generosity After the LA Fires: Charitable Giving and the Road Ahead to Rebuilding*.<sup>2</sup> Our report serves to complement these findings as a snapshot of the ongoing challenges, resources, and supports needed by SoCal nonprofits to continue to aid survivors of the 2025 LA Fires.

CNM acknowledges the courage, resilience, and power of SoCal nonprofits that lead through crisis and act as frontline workers. This report serves to thread the needle of various perspectives and vantage points by focusing on an integral component of our ecosystem of support — the nonprofits. Costs are rising, and so is the emotional toll of bridging the gap to support our most vulnerable communities. We call on the collaborative efforts of philanthropy, corporate parties, and community members to build up and sustain the nonprofit infrastructure — the connective tissue between survivors' needs and critical resources.

CNM remains committed to listening to, advocating for, and protecting nonprofits because when nonprofits thrive, so do our communities.

In solidarity,

**Center for Nonprofit Management**



One year following the devastating 2025 fires, communities across Los Angeles continue to engage in the all-consuming process of recovery. While considerable investments and progress have been made from the Pacific Palisades to Eaton Canyon, critical challenges remain at both the individual and community level.

According to the Milken Institute, charitable contributions to fire relief and recovery efforts totaled between \$860 million to \$970 million across 2025, representing one of the largest fundraising efforts on record for wildfire recovery.<sup>3</sup> Despite this unprecedented philanthropic response, a substantial funding gap persists. Research from the Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation's Institute for Applied Economics estimates \$28 billion to \$54 billion in property damage losses<sup>4</sup>, while the University of California, Los Angeles Anderson School of Management projects \$76 billion to \$131 billion in combined property damage and capital losses.<sup>5</sup> Even when accounting for \$8 billion in federal, state, and local government funding, the Milken Institute conservatively estimates a funding gap of at least \$50 billion.

Beyond the unprecedented scale of physical destruction, the fires have disrupted countless lives, displacing families and fragmenting communities. Survivors continue to face compounding financial hurdles alongside growing mental health challenges as the stress of disaster recovery persists. According to the Department of Angels' *Community Voices: LA Fire Recovery Report* conducted in December, 83% of survivors reported worse mental health than before the fires, up from 73% in September.<sup>6</sup>

SoCal nonprofits and the broader social sector have served as the backbone of coordinated relief and recovery efforts, filling service gaps left behind by inadequate government responses. However, nonprofits have not been immune to the far-reaching devastation of the fires. Many organizations located in fire-impacted areas experienced the loss of offices and supplies, diminished operational capacity, and reduced workforces as they stepped up to meet the escalating need across their communities.

To better understand the recovery landscape and the lasting impact of fires, we sought perspectives from both nonprofit and philanthropic leaders.

# Background and Methodology

The goal of this report is to illustrate the ongoing impact of the 2025 Los Angeles Fires on the social impact sector. The report draws on data from a survey with nonprofit leaders and in-depth interviews with some of the leading fire recovery funders.

The survey was conducted between November 10, 2025 and January 5, 2026, receiving responses from 84 nonprofit leaders. Respondents were asked to report whether their organizations were directly impacted, indirectly impacted, or not impacted at all by the fires. Overall, 77.4% of responding organizations reported being either directly or indirectly impacted by the fires.

To ensure a focused analysis, we excluded organizations that reported no impact or did not complete the survey, bringing our sample size to 57. From this pool of respondents, 78.9% hold Executive Director/CEO or Senior manager roles. Of these organizations, 45.6% reported being directly impacted by the fires, and 54.4% reported being indirectly impacted. Three of the five most frequently reported organizational ZIP codes were located in Pasadena and Altadena, the areas impacted by the Eaton fire.

**We complemented our survey data by interviewing leaders from five philanthropic organizations directly involved in responding to the disasters through grantmaking.** We completed our interviews between November 24, 2025 and December 4, 2025 with three primary objectives:

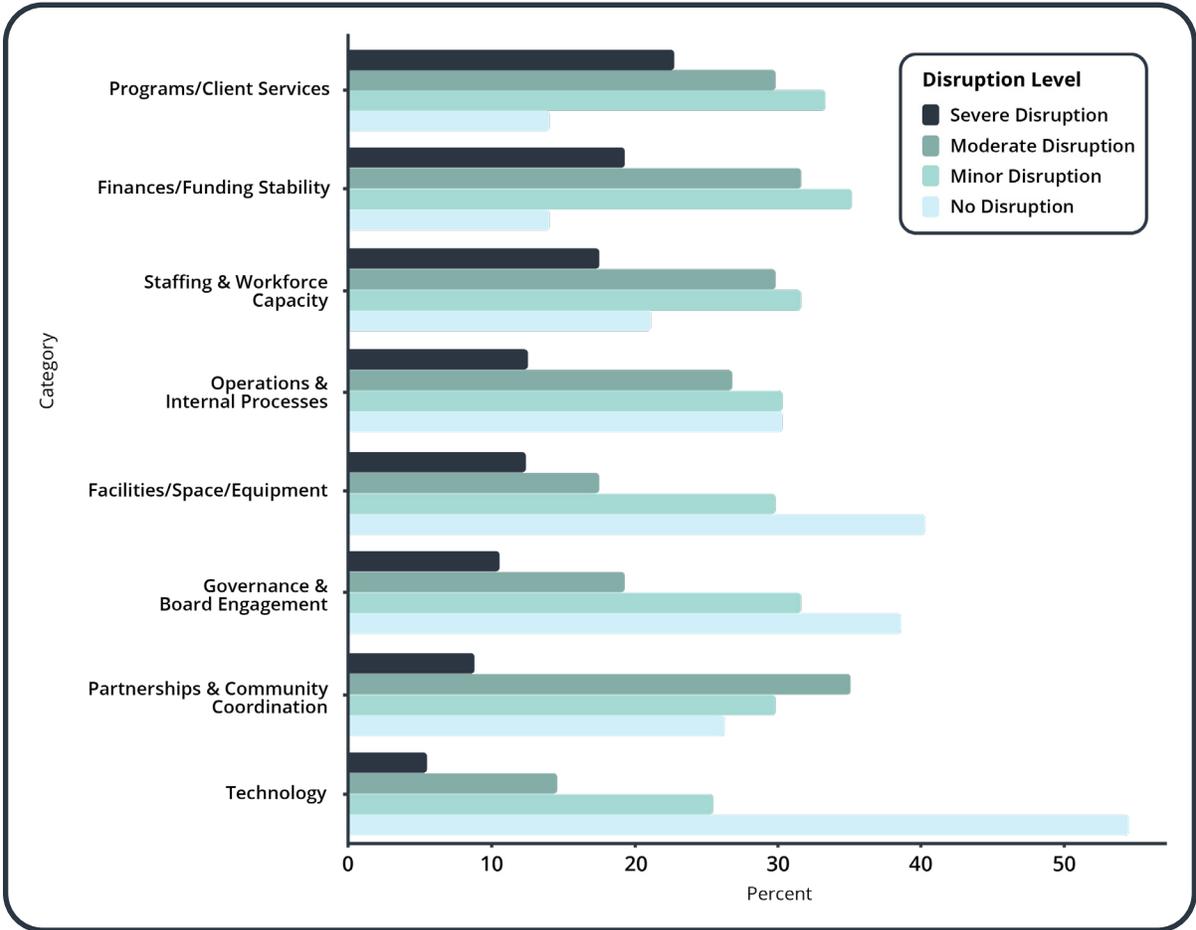
1. Document how philanthropic funds were mobilized, allocated, and distributed following the fires
2. Evaluate the extent to which funding distributions were equitable, transparent, and responsive to community needs, gathering reflections on accountability and public perception around trust
3. Identify lessons learned, best practices, and gaps in future preparedness in disaster response by philanthropy

Interview data was analyzed using thematic analysis to capture themes in alignment with our research goals and objectives.

# **PERSISTING NEED**

One year after the fires, significant needs persist for nonprofit organizations and their constituents. When asked how they would rate their organization's current recovery status across various categories, survey respondents indicated that programs, finances, and staffing are the three areas with the highest level of ongoing disruption. As indicated in Figure 1:

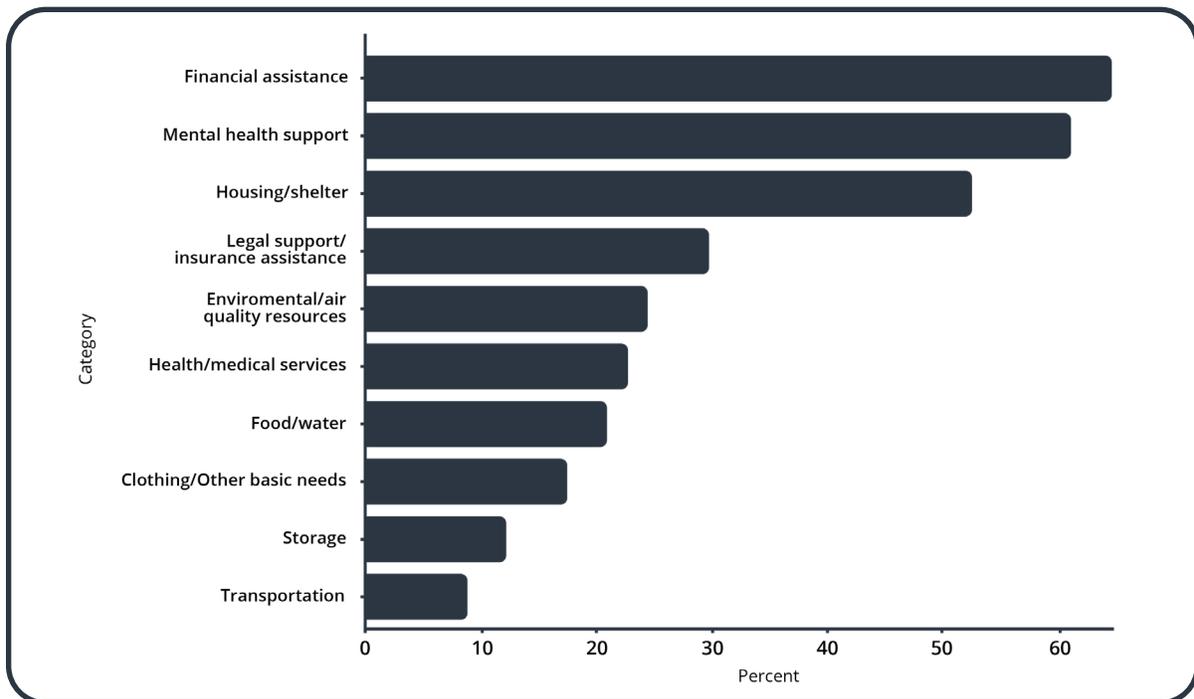
- 52.6% of respondents reported moderate to severe disruption to **programs/client services**
- 50.8% of respondents reported moderate to severe disruption to **finances/funding stability**
- 47.3% reported moderate to severe disruption to **staffing & workforce capacity**



**Figure 1. Current Level of Disruption**

Compared to findings from CNM's initial LA Fires survey in January and February of 2025, the percentage of organizations facing moderate to severe disruptions to programs/client services held steady even after a year of recovery.<sup>7</sup>

As for their constituents, organizations are hearing that the most urgent needs at this stage of the wildfire recovery are financial assistance, mental health support, and housing/shelter, as shown in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Urgent Client Needs**

**Financial assistance (64.9%), mental health support (61.4%), and housing/shelter (52.6%)** are the three most urgent client needs reported by respondents

These three client needs match the top three primary intermediate client needs from our initial LA Fires survey, albeit in a different order. In early 2025, housing/shelter was the most frequently chosen primary client need, followed by financial assistance and mental health support.<sup>8</sup>

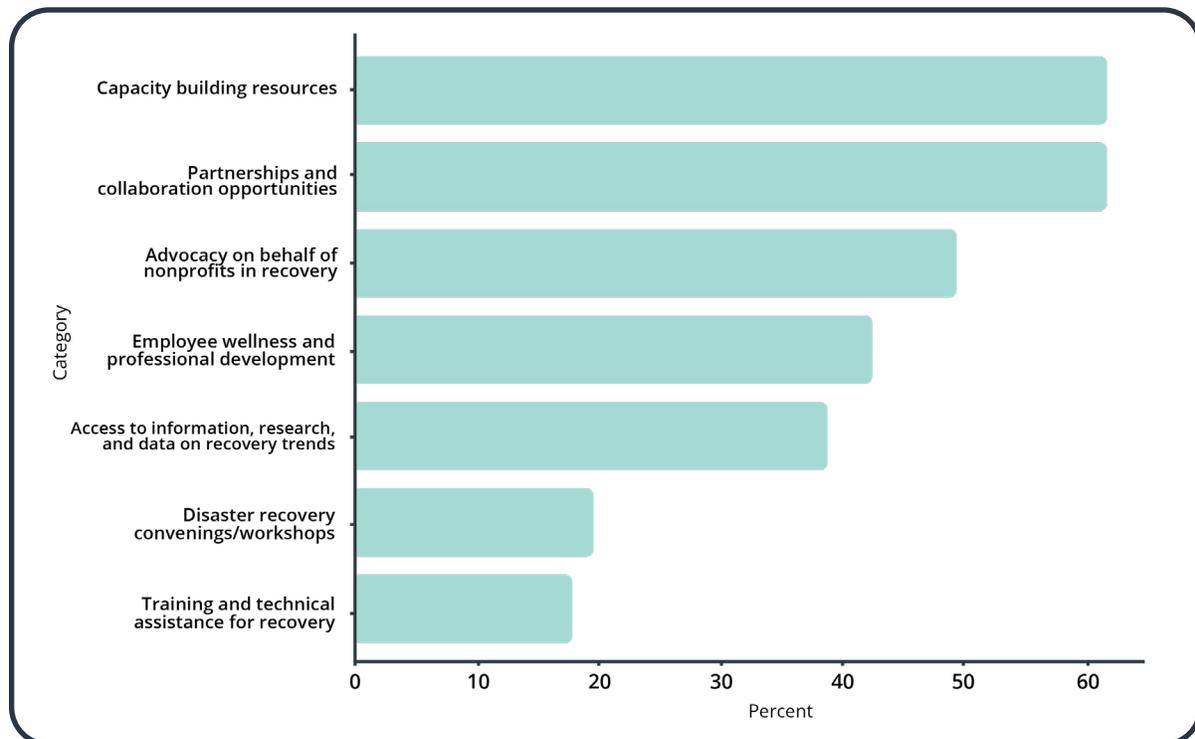
Even with tremendous progress in the past year to meet immediate relief needs, recovery does not unfold in discrete phases. Instead, short-term relief and long-term recovery efforts continue to overlap. One funder shared in an interview that they are still responding to significant immediate relief needs while simultaneously planning longer-term recovery investments. In their words:



“We get contacted now almost daily by folks who are on the verge of homelessness or living in their cars and that kind of thing. It is getting to the point where we do not have places that we can turn them to because there is such a lack of funding.”

Survey findings reinforce the notion that recovery strategies and resources should not divert entirely to long-term rebuilding while community members are still in search of support for basic needs and survival financing.

Moreover, we asked organizations what additional support would strengthen their recovery and resilience. As seen in Figure 3, respondents reported that additional support regarding capacity building resources (61.4%), partnerships and collaboration (61.4%), and advocacy on behalf of nonprofits in recovery (49.1%) would support their efforts.

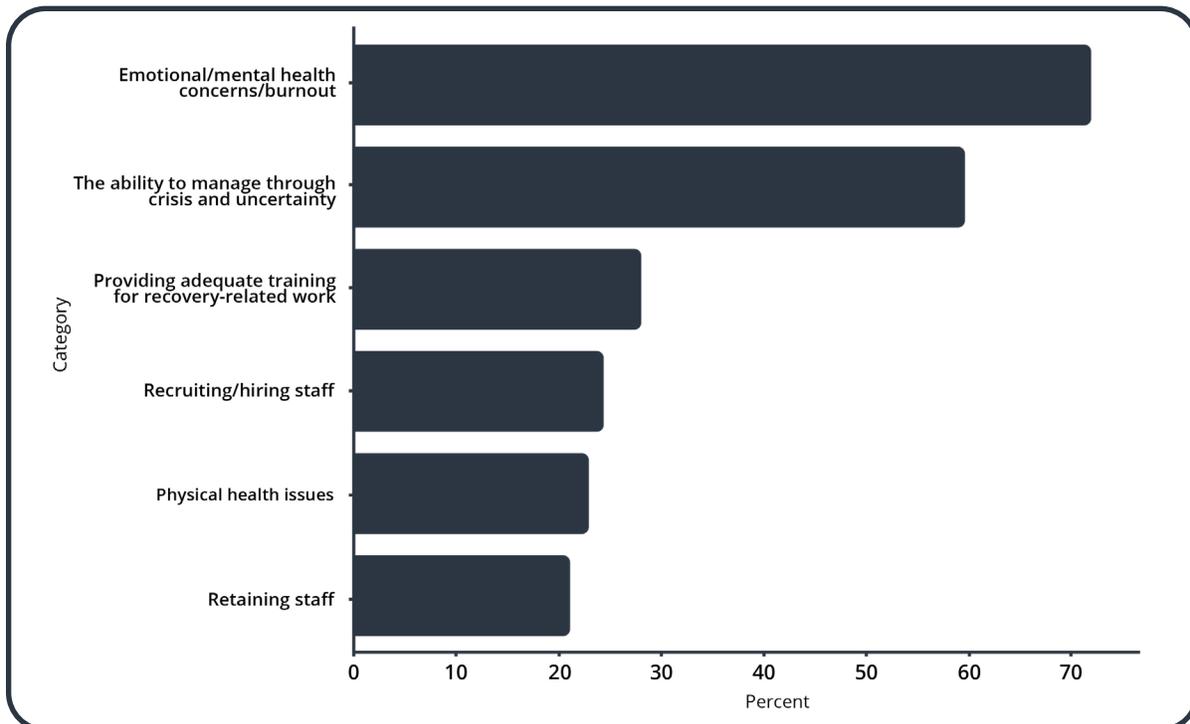


**Figure 3. Additional Support Needed for Nonprofit Recovery**

Surveyed organizations emphasized continued efforts to deepen existing partnerships and forge new partnerships to support disaster response and recovery. In many cases, organizations reimagined their roles within the ecosystem of supports to respond to community needs, and the rise of recovery-focused organizations opened pathways for new partnership models. All that said, respondents consistently expressed a strong appetite for deeper collaboration, signaling a sector-wide desire to better align overlapping efforts and a growing recognition of the amplifying effects of coordinated action.

# **IMPACT ON STAFFING & WORKFORCE**

While the physical devastation left behind by the fires has understandably served as a focal point of recovery efforts, the hidden scars and downstream effects of the fires must not be neglected. Findings from our survey indicate that both community members and nonprofit workers continue to experience significant mental health challenges. As shown in Figure 4, nonprofit organizations surveyed about workforce-related challenges reported that the biggest toll on their workforces are emotional/mental health concerns tied to burnout, as well as the ability to manage through crisis and uncertainty.



**Figure 4. Nonprofit Workforce-Related Challenges**

71% of respondents reported **emotional/mental health concerns/burnout** as a challenge impacting their organization’s workforce

Our philanthropic interviewees echoed the importance of prioritizing mental health, with one funder sharing:



“We learned from our disaster colleagues that the communities that bounce back best from disasters are the ones where community connections and social ties are strengthened during this recovery period.”

Nonprofit workers specifically have faced a confluence of adverse circumstances in recent years that have contributed to these mental health concerns. In addition to the 2025 fires, loss of federal funding for nonprofits, immigration raids and enforcement, and congressional scrutiny and executive actions have threatened the sustainability of the social sector and workers’ livelihoods.

# **DISASTER FUNDING STRATEGIES & SOURCES**

As pandemic-era relief programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) and the American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) sunset, funding sources for critical local initiatives are rapidly diminishing. Local budgets are shrinking under significant fiscal strain, leaving cities and counties with fewer resources to address growing needs.

**Our survey indicates nonprofits sought funding in the wake of the fires from a variety of diverse sources.** Grants and in-kind donations were the greatest type of support sought by organizations impacted by the fires. Insurance claims, cost reduction and lines of credit were less popular options of financial support.

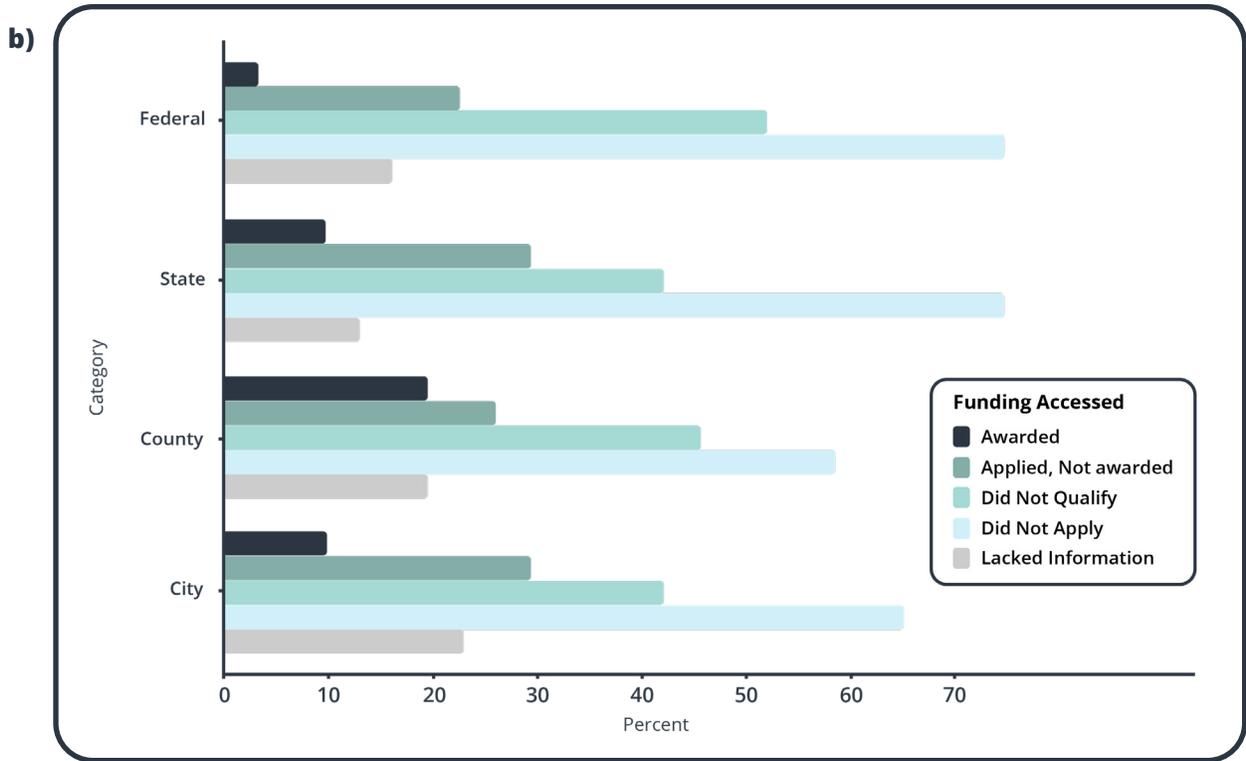
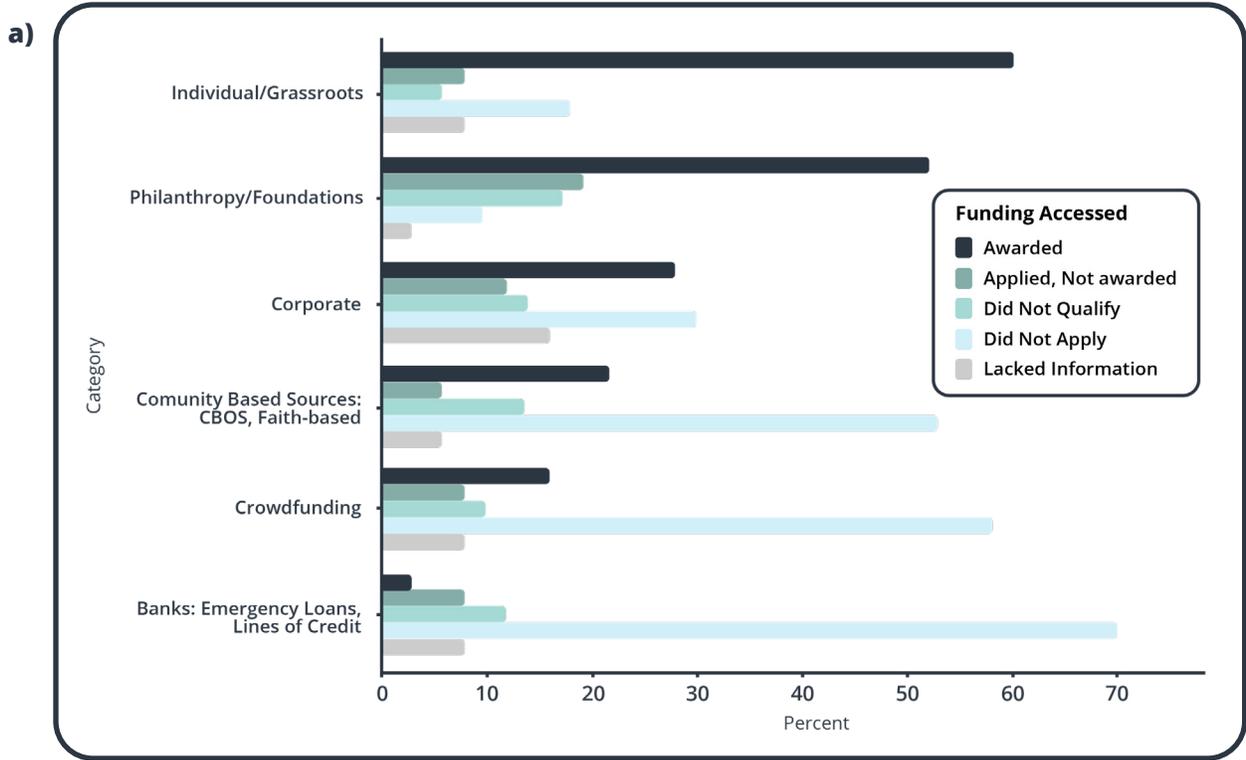
- 59.6% of respondents sought or received financial support from grants
- 49.1% of respondents sought or received financial support from in-kind donations
- 96.5% of respondents did not seek or received financial support through line of credit

**Overall, individual/grassroots and philanthropic funding sources were the most awarded to survey respondents, as seen in Figure 5.**

- More than half of respondents reported receiving funds from individual/grassroot sources (60%) and philanthropy/foundations (51.9%)
- 70% of respondents did not apply for banks/emergency loans/lines of credit

**When seeking government support, nonprofits relied most heavily on county funding opportunities. Respondents applied least frequently to federal funding opportunities out of government funding sources, also as seen in Figure 5.**

- Most government funds awarded came from County sources (11.5%)
- City and State funds were equally awarded to respondents (5.8%)
- 44.2% of respondents did not apply to Federal funding sources



**Figure 5. a) Non-Governmental Funding Sources Accessed by Nonprofits**  
**b) Governmental Funding Sources Accessed by Nonprofits**

**FUNDER  
LESSONS  
FOR  
FUTURE  
CRISES**

Tremendous energy and considerable funds exist in the local philanthropic sector to support disaster recovery efforts. Interviews with philanthropic leaders reveal both the strengths and limitations of the sector's response to the 2025 LA Fires, underscoring the need for greater coordination, proactive planning, and sustained investments as disasters become more frequent.

In the wake of the fires, our interviewed funders quickly identified major needs and disbursed funds for immediate relief while reserving additional funds for medium-to-long-term recovery needs. In many cases, they worked in close partnership with nonprofits to fill gaps that government agencies or community systems were unable to address.

At the same time, funders widely acknowledged that philanthropy alone cannot operate at the scale necessary to close the gaps in disaster response, which appear to be growing. Federal funding continues to stall, and the public safety net continues to contract. These constraints highlight the importance of learning from more recent disasters to maximize the effectiveness of limited philanthropic dollars, particularly as future crises inevitably occur.



**“Five communities have burned down in the past six years across California, and everyone seems to be starting from square one, and that just feels miserable... it doesn't feel like something that should have happened.”**

Our interviews indicate that the philanthropic sector feels only moderately prepared to respond to the next large-scale disaster. Moreover, recent history makes clear that such events are no longer rare or isolated; there appears to be an ever-growing preponderance of events that threaten the stability of our communities. In this context, funders emphasized the need for greater coordination across the philanthropic sector and stronger civic engagement to support communities more effectively before, during, and after disasters.

The philanthropic organizations reporting the strongest sense of preparedness have unsurprisingly been those operating from proven disaster response frameworks. Whether through connecting with communities across the country who are several years into the recovery process from fire-related disasters, consulting experts such as FEMA or Center for Disaster Philanthropy, or implementing expert-created strategies such as the National Disaster Recovery Framework, several funders were able to build on existing knowledge to shape their recovery strategies.

However, other funders were unaware of or unable to implement these frameworks and faced difficulties in articulating a clear strategy for disaster-related grantmaking. Interviewees noted that greater coordination across the sector could have provided more funders with access to essential connections, expertise, and frameworks to structure their work and amplify the impact of disbursed funds.



**“If we are asking nonprofit organizations to collaborate in meaningful ways, given the new reality of the fundraising landscape, so should funders.”**

Another lesson learned centered on the importance of proactive funding. As “once-in-a-lifetime” disasters occur with greater regularity, funders recognize the need to integrate disaster preparedness into their long-term funding strategies rather than react after a disaster has happened. By the time the next disaster hits, organizations are already behind in disaster response if they do not have a response framework and decision-making structures in place. Effective disaster response starts well in advance by investing in mission-aligned strategies, frameworks, and organizational capacity.

Finally, public scrutiny of major funders unearthed the need for clearer communication about how funds are distributed, as well as broader public education on how the social impact sector operates. In several cases, public mistrust contributed to a shift toward highly visible, program-specific grants at the expense of core operating support, leaving many nonprofit organizations operationally vulnerable.



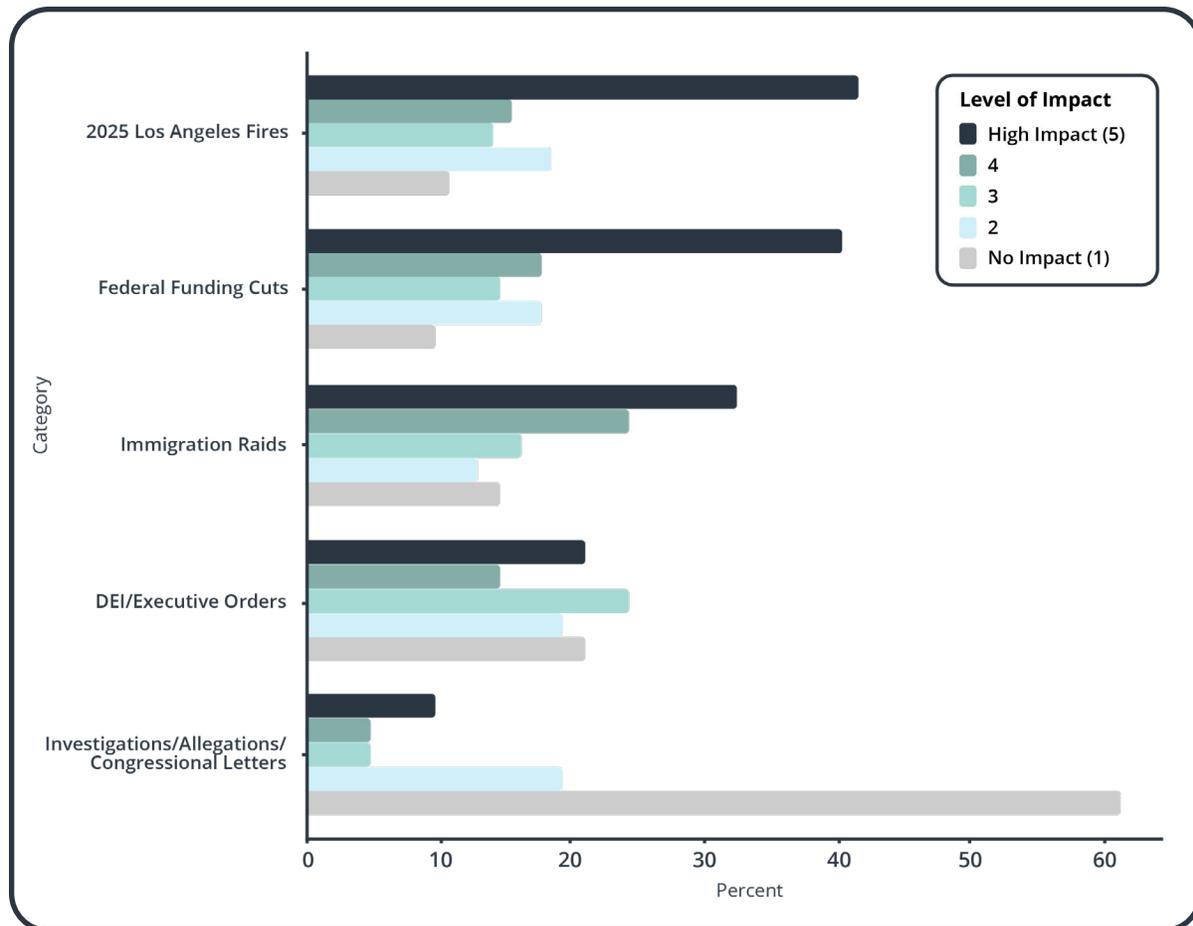
**“[The nonprofit community] has the knowledge of what needs to be done, but they don’t have the capacity to do it. And that’s because so few funders give operating grants anymore.”**

In our survey, nonprofits organizations also attributed this shift away from core operating support to the nature of disaster recovery funding, which tends to be limited in scope to specific recovery efforts.

It is no secret that we are still in the early stages of recovery. Yet as time has passed, giving has decreased and public mobilization has waned. We need bold, collective action across the social sector to not only ensure sustained recovery and rebuilding but also to prepare for what lies ahead.

**WHAT'S  
NEXT:  
MOVING  
*FORWARD*  
TOGETHER**

Southern California is experiencing an overlap in crises. In addition to the 2025 fires, loss of federal funding, immigration raids and enforcement, and congressional scrutiny and executive actions continue to threaten the sustainability of the social sector. As shown in Figure 6, when asked about various current events affecting organizations' operations, respondents reported significant impacts from multiple, overlapping current events.



**Figure 6. Impact of Current Events on Nonprofits**

As a leading voice for the sector, CNM seeks to sustain and strengthen these organizations, ensuring they can continue delivering vital services during a time of unprecedented financial and social pressure. We are currently building out our *ForwardTogether* initiative with goals to launch in Q1 of 2026. This initiative will create an “activation hub” that plays an integral role in sustaining, protecting, and strengthening the nonprofit sector.

In collaboration with Nonprofit GPS<sup>9</sup>, CNM is leveraging its abilities, resources, and partnerships to serve nonprofits and nonprofit leaders disparately impacted by the fires and federal actions. CNM will act locally, in addition to partnering nationally, to cross-promote trainings and peer learning opportunities that highlight successful models and strategies emerging across the country.

**Our objectives are to:**

1. Provide free learning, coaching, and technical assistance on critical topics
2. Inform the practices and investments of philanthropy and local government
3. Share the necessary skills, tools, and resources to support nonprofits in making informed decisions to lead, sustain, and protect their organizations

As part of this approach, CNM is partnering with subject matter experts across multiple industries to address the following four core operational areas: **financial management; business model resilience; legal guidance/assistance; and protecting human capital and managing change**, at no cost to nonprofit organizations.

It is CNM's belief that this initiative will strengthen nonprofits, unify our nonprofit leaders, and fortify the sector. Because when nonprofits thrive, so do our communities.



# RESOURCES

<sup>1</sup> Department of Angels, *One Year After the LA Fires: What Recovery Looks Like Now*, January 2026, [https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6792c245599ed84703227b1e/t/6959797a4c0de667333503fc/1767471494384/Department+of+Angels+LA+Fire+Recovery+Report\\_January+2026.pdf](https://static1.squarespace.com/static/6792c245599ed84703227b1e/t/6959797a4c0de667333503fc/1767471494384/Department+of+Angels+LA+Fire+Recovery+Report_January+2026.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Milken Institute, *Generosity After the LA Fires: Charitable Giving and the Road Ahead to Rebuilding*, January 2026, <https://milkeninstitute.org/sites/default/files/2026-01/MICharitableGivingAfterTheLAFiresDraftReport.pdf>.

<sup>3</sup> Milken Institute, *Generosity After the LA Fires: Charitable Giving and the Road Ahead to Rebuilding*.

<sup>4</sup> Los Angeles County Economic Development Corporation Institute for Applied Economics, *Impact of the 2025 Los Angeles Wildfires and Comparative Study*, February 2025, [laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/LAEDC\\_2025-LA-Wildfires-Study\\_final2.pdf](https://laedc.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/LAEDC_2025-LA-Wildfires-Study_final2.pdf).

<sup>5</sup> Zhiyun Li and William Yu, "Economic Impact of the Los Angeles Wildfires," UCLA Anderson School of Management, updated March 3, 2025, <https://www.anderson.ucla.edu/about/centers/ucla-anderson-forecast/economic-impact-los-angeles-wildfires>.

<sup>6</sup> Department of Angels, *One Year After the LA Fires: What Recovery Looks Like Now*.

<sup>7</sup> Center for Nonprofit Management, *How the 2025 LA Wildfires Reshaped the Social Impact Sector*, March 2025, <https://cnmsocal.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/CNM.LAwildfires-SurveyFindings.pdf>.

<sup>8</sup> Center for Nonprofit Management, *How the 2025 LA Wildfires Reshaped the Social Impact Sector*.

<sup>9</sup> NonprofitGPS, led jointly by Nonprofit Financial Commons, BDO Nonprofit & Grantmaker Advisory Services, and Philanthropy New York, strengthens how nonprofits adapt and plan for the future. More information is available at <https://npgps.org/about-us/>

