



# SUSTAINABLE GIVING REPORT

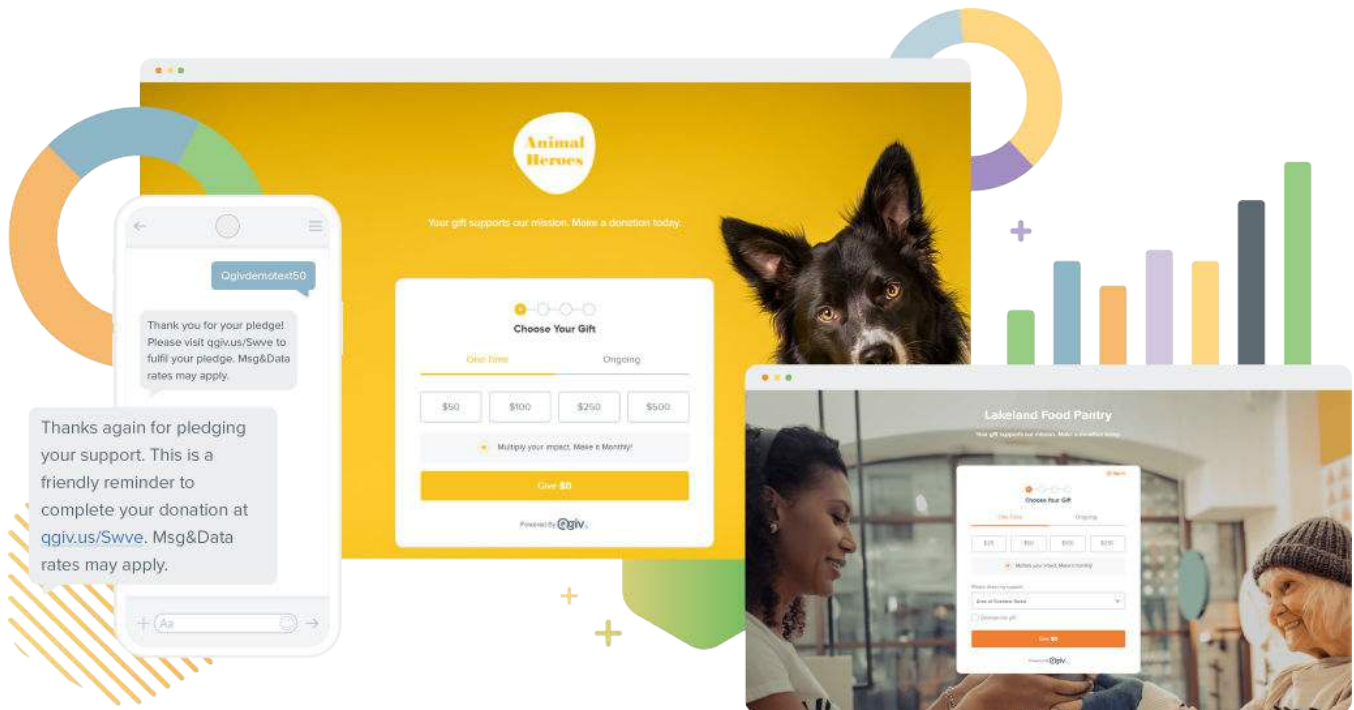
# A Guide to Healthy Fundraising<sup>+</sup>



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Qgiv by Bloomerang is an online fundraising solution, empowering nonprofits with the tools they need to retain, engage, and grow their supporter base. Qgiv joined Bloomerang in 2024 to help create the sector's first all-in-one giving platform.



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Report



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Guide



Auction  
Planner



Ultimate  
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## THE STUDY

You might have heard the phrase, “Do more with less,” once or twice before, and if you work in the nonprofit sector, you’ve likely heard that phrase dozens of times. It’s a fundraising professional’s mantra! With rising costs, the Great Resignation shaking up nonprofit teams, and individual donor numbers declining, fundraisers face increased pressure to raise more money with even fewer resources. When you’re in “survival mode,” it can be hard to make time to fine-tune your fundraising campaigns and raise more money—not just for your mission, but for the administrative costs associated with your organization as well.

This pressure (that often feels like a rice cooker ready to burst) can impact your job satisfaction and lead to high turnover rates within your organization, affecting your overall well-being as a change-maker and your nonprofit’s bottom line. So, what can you do to address the increased pressures fundraising professionals are facing? Are fundraisers like you being given the tools they need to meet their goals? Are donors still willing to financially support their favorite causes despite inflation? How can nonprofits retain their fundraising staff and build more scalable programs?

**This research study aims to answer those questions and more!**

To check up on the wellness of the nonprofit sector, we surveyed over 290 nonprofits and more than 2,000 donors to learn how fundraising professionals like you can realistically raise more for their organization with fewer resources. We also reached out to donors to see if they were aware of the increased pressures fundraising professionals are facing and to gauge how willing they are to support the causes they care about during times of economic pressure. To better understand the donor’s point of view, we asked questions about their giving patterns, the effect inflation has had on their charitable giving, their opinion on virtual and in-person fundraising events, and more.

*Our hope is that this study will help you accomplish three things:*

We hope this study’s findings will **encourage you and inspire confidence**—even with rising costs, donors still want to support your work!

We hope that the results of this study will **spark reflection and action** among nonprofit leaders that yields higher job satisfaction for change-makers.

We hope the results and tactics shared in this study will help you implement sustainable fundraising strategies that **yield higher donor retention rates**.

## UNDERSTANDING THE METHODOLOGY

*We believe it is important that you know how this data came to be!*

Two separate surveys were conducted in March of 2023. One survey was sent out to Qgiv clients and fundraisers and received over 290 responses. Another survey was sent to over 4,628 individuals who don't work as a fundraiser or for a nonprofit. Around 43% (over 2,000) of those surveyed had made a charitable gift in the last twelve months and went on to complete the remaining questions in the survey on which the donor findings in this study are based.

### **Interpreting the Data**

In many cases, survey respondents were given the opportunity to add their own answers. If we noticed a disproportionate number of people choosing the "Other: Please Specify" option, we looked to find patterns in their individual responses. Otherwise, we looked simply at the patterns in donor preferences and opinions. If a group of respondents had a tie (or even if two answers only had a small difference between them), we included both answers in the donor profiles.

# **Who Responded?**

We received completed surveys from 292 fundraisers. The majority of our nonprofit respondents fundraise between \$1 million and \$5 million each year, work for small to medium-sized organizations, and support youth development or human services missions. Almost 40% of the nonprofits who responded employ between 1 and 10 people, and close to a third employ between 11 to 50 staff.

## **The Fundraisers Who Responded**

It's important to understand how we collected the data we used and who the data represents so you know how the data relates to your own experiences. The first set of data we examined came from nonprofits who use the Qgiv platform.



So, as you read through this study, know that you're looking at data from a variety of nonprofits with a variety of annual revenue levels.



- 27.8% \$1-\$5 million
- 16.8% \$500,000-\$1 million
- 13.7% \$250,000-\$499,999
- 13.1% \$10,000-\$99,999
- 13.1% \$100,000-\$249,999
- 6.9% \$1-\$9,999
- 6.2% \$5.1-\$10 million
- 1.4% \$50.1 million +



- 23.7% Youth Development
- 22% Human Services
- 12.5% Health Services
- 5.9% Arts, Culture, Humanities
- 4.2% Environmental
- 3.8% Human Rights
- 3.8% Animal Welfare
- 3.5% Community Development
- 3.1% Religious
- 1% Public Policy
- 16.4% Other



- 38.4% 1-10 employees
- 29.1% 11-50 employees
- 16.4% 100+ employees
- 5.8% 51-75 employees
- 5.1% 76-99 employees
- 5.1% 100% volunteer-run

**A Quick Note:**

When we reviewed the responses from nonprofits who chose "other," we found that a large number of them were with organizations that focus on education.

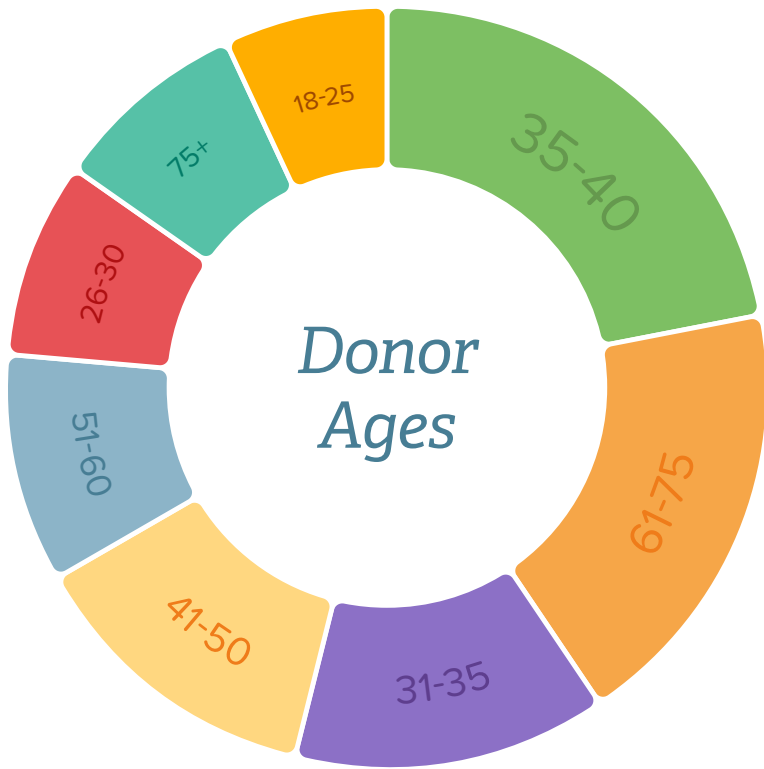
# **Who Responded?**

In our donor pool, 2,007 respondents made a charitable contribution in the last twelve months. The majority of the donors surveyed were between 35 and 40 years old, their average individual gift was between \$5 and \$55, their average annual contribution was between \$100 and \$499, and human service organizations received the most support.

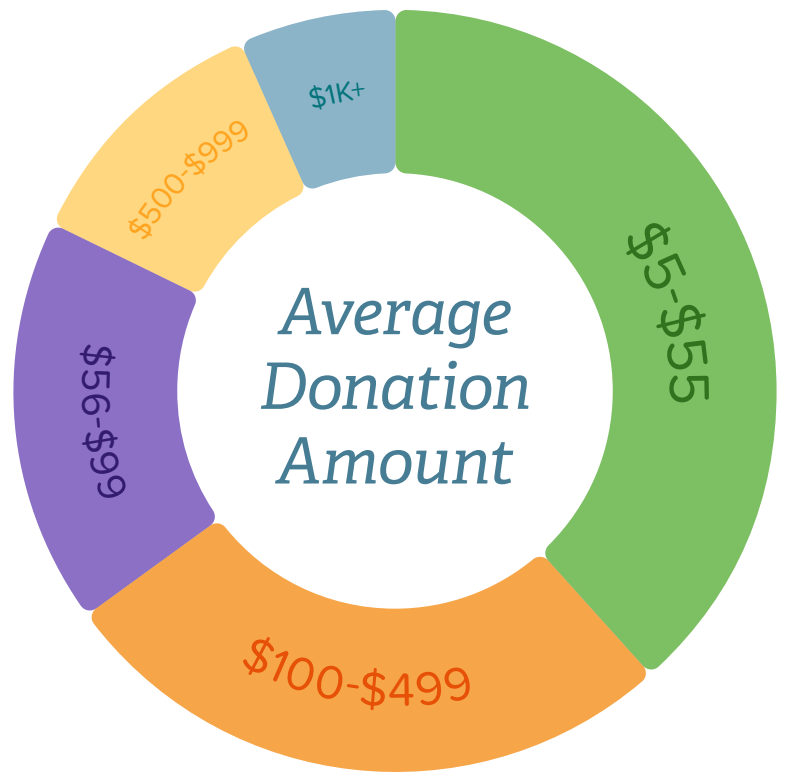
## **The Donors Who Responded**

To interview donors, we launched a survey through a market research company.





22.2%	35-40
18.4%	61-75
13.3%	31-35
13%	41-50
9.6%	51-60
8.4%	26-30
8.2%	75+
6.9%	18-25



38.4%	\$5-\$55
26.8%	\$100-\$499
17.1%	\$56-\$99
11.3%	\$500-\$999
6.5%	\$1K+



24.9%	\$100-\$499
15.8%	\$1K-\$4,999
15.2%	\$5-\$55
14.1%	\$500-\$999
11.1%	\$56-\$99

18.6%	Human Services
11.8%	Health Services
11.7%	Animal Welfare
11.6%	Religious
8.6%	Environmental
8.5%	Human Rights
7.6%	Youth Development
6.6%	Community Development
5.1%	Arts, Culture, Humanities
4%	International
3.2%	Public Policy
2.8%	Other





# ***How Has the Economy Impacted Philanthropy?***



## FUNDRAISERS' RESPONSE

If you look at your grocery bill today and compare it to your bill three or four years ago, you'll likely notice some big differences. It's no secret that since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, costs for everyday items have drastically increased (we're looking at you, egg prices!). Since 2020, inflation in the United States has increased an average of 5.26% per year—that's right, PER YEAR—producing a cumulative price increase of 16.62% over three years. Inflation, global events, the supply chain crisis, product shortages, and climbing interest rates have all contributed to a climate of economic uncertainty in North America.

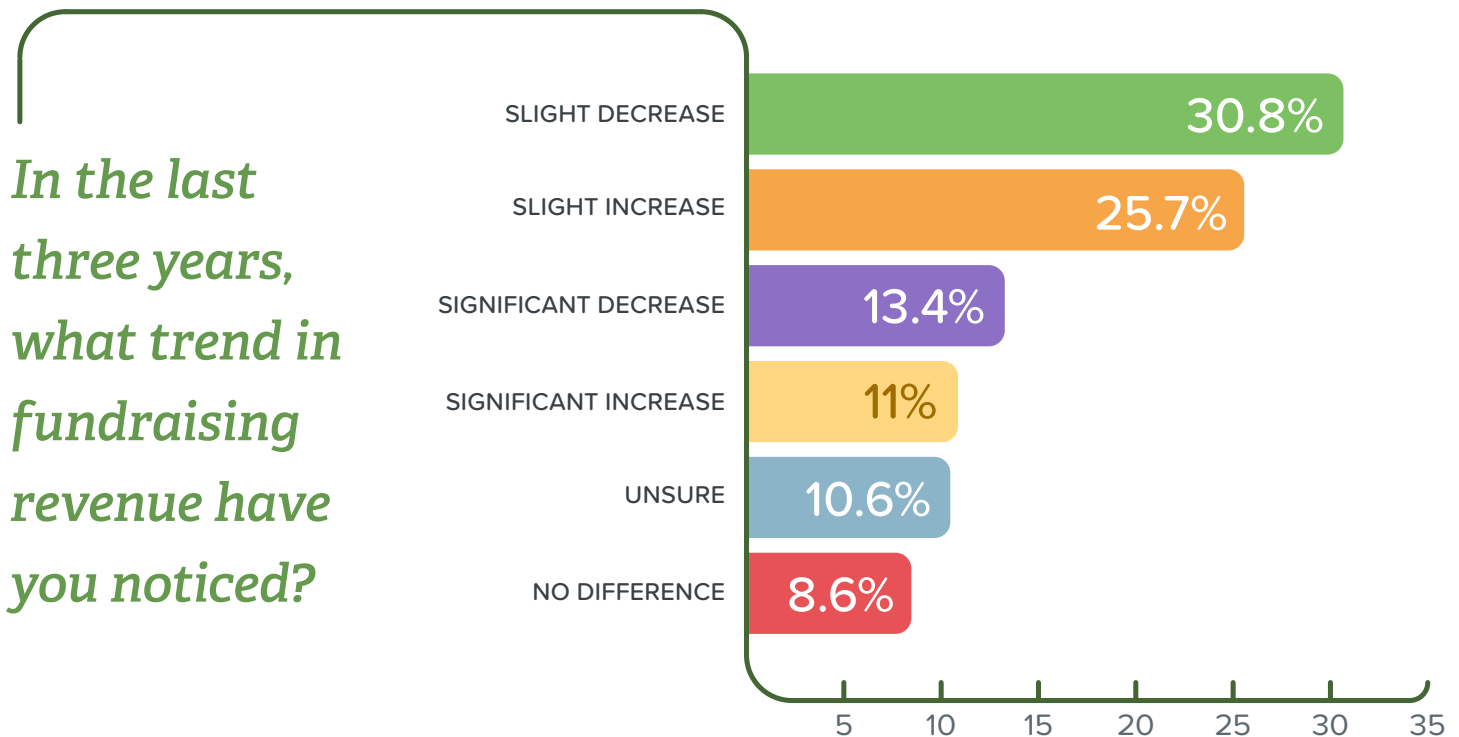


So, how has inflation and economic instability\*, or uncertainty, impacted fundraisers?

*Fundraising revenue has decreased.*

At the height of the pandemic, nonprofits that were able to adapt to online and virtual fundraising methods performed well. According to Qgiv’s Navigating the Unknown Report, overall donation amounts slightly increased from 2019 to 2020, and 68% of surveyed nonprofits increased their donor base. Since then, nonprofits have experienced a downward trend. Of our respondents, 44.2% have noticed a decrease in fundraising revenue over the last three years, while 36.7% have noticed an increase in fundraising revenue.

These results align with the latest data from The Fundraising Effectiveness Project (FEP). The FEP’s 2022 fourth-quarter report shows that donor counts continue to steadily decline (-10% since 2021) along with total dollars raised by nonprofits (-1.7% since 2021).

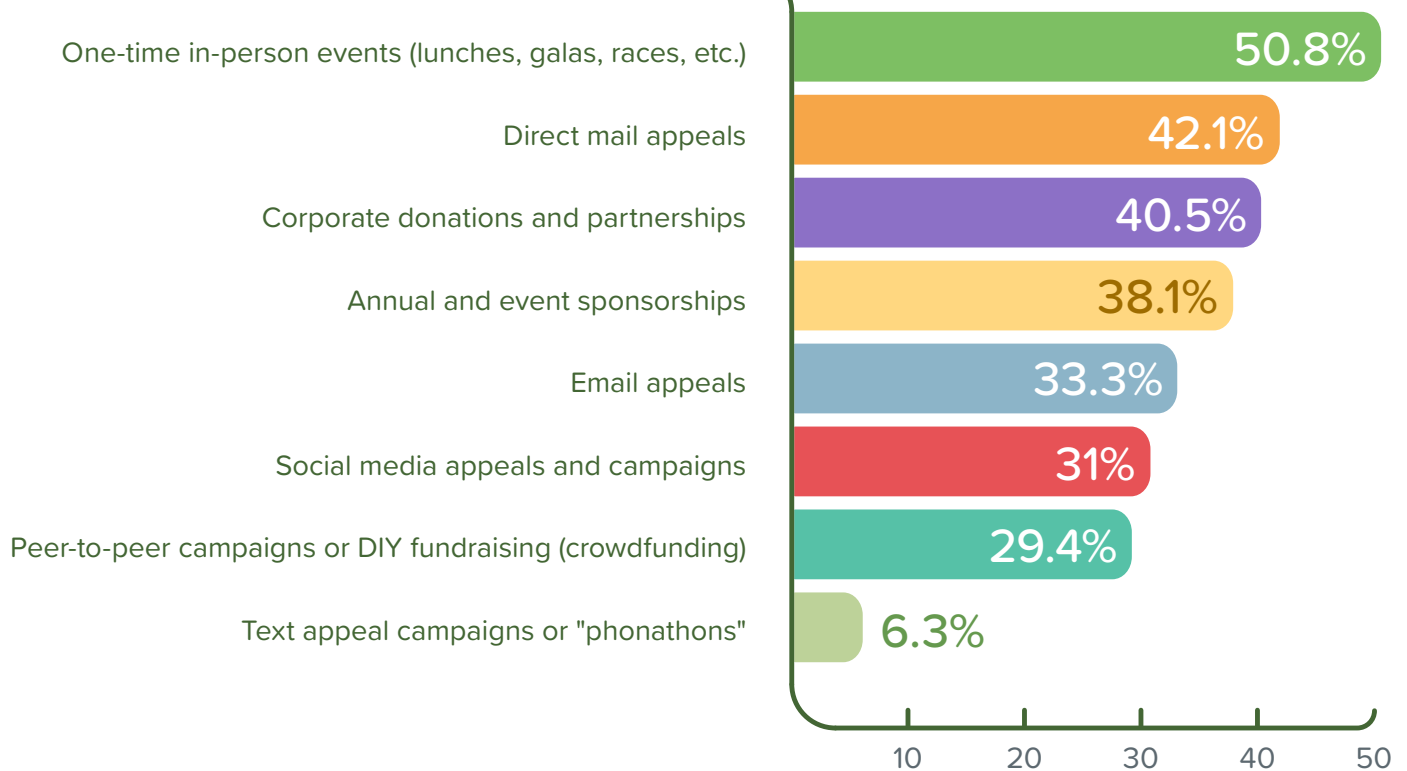


\*A Quick Note: When referring to “economic instability” in this survey, we are referring to the state of the economy in the United States and Canada since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes rising costs and overall apprehension about the global and national economy.

*In-person events have taken the hardest performance hit, followed by direct mail appeals.*

Over half of the fundraisers who responded to our survey noted that their one-time in-person events, such as galas and luncheons, did not perform as well as in previous years. Forty-two percent noticed a decrease in revenue from their direct mail appeals, and 40% noted that corporate donations and partnerships declined from years prior.

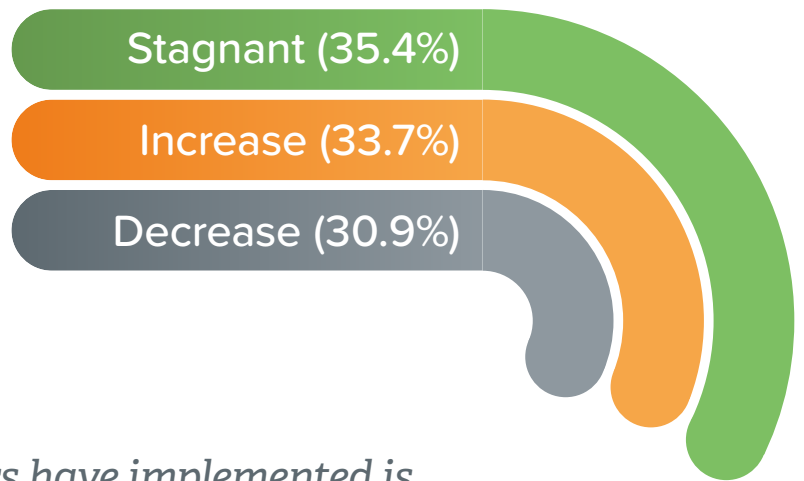
### *What fundraising initiatives didn't perform as well as they did in years prior?*



*Fundraising professionals are split on changes in donor behavior impacted by the economy.*

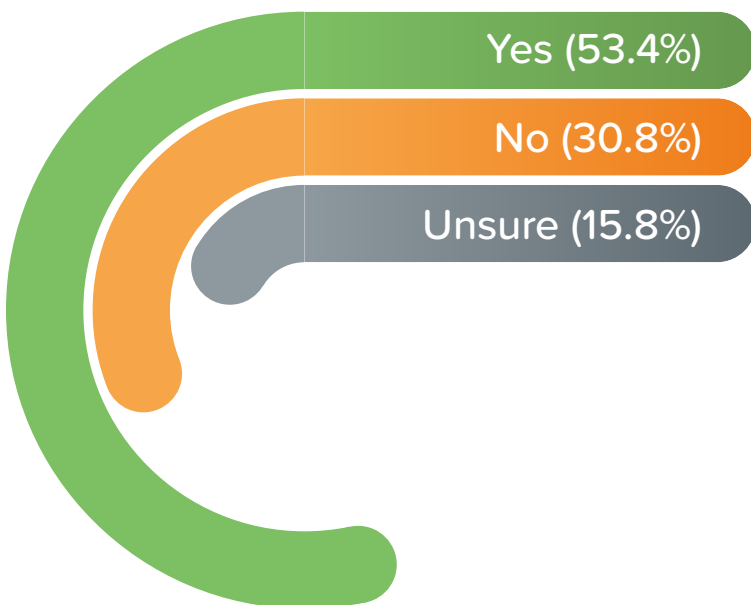
When asked about a change in donor behavior during economic instability, responses were split almost completely into thirds.

*Has your organization noticed a change in donor behavior during economic instability?*



*The biggest change fundraisers have implemented is seeking more grants and corporate funding. Donor outreach has been largely unchanged.*

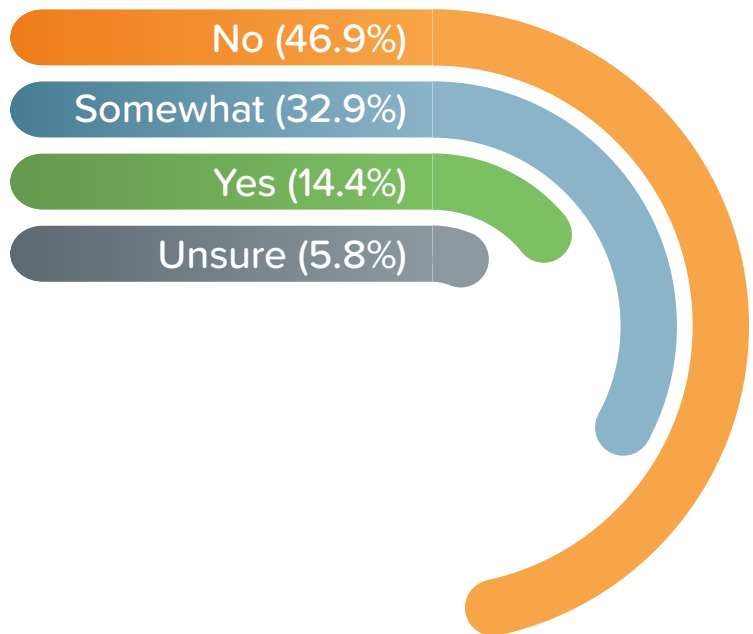
More than half of fundraisers have changed paths from their original fundraising strategies due to economic instability, while 30% did not. When asked if organizations had altered their ask pattern due to inflation, over 42% of respondents increased their asks to corporate funders, and 43.1% of fundraisers chose to not increase asks to their donors.



*Has your organization changed fundraising strategies during the last three years due to economic instability or to combat rising costs?*

Over 46% of respondents reported that a period of economic struggle has not impacted their organization's quality of service, and over 75% have not needed to lay off any staff during the last three years.

Has a period of economic struggle impacted your organization's quality of service?





# ***How Has the Economy Impacted Philanthropy?***

## DONORS' RESPONSE



Unsurprisingly, inflation hasn't gone unnoticed by donors. What might surprise you, however, is how donors prioritize their charitable giving.

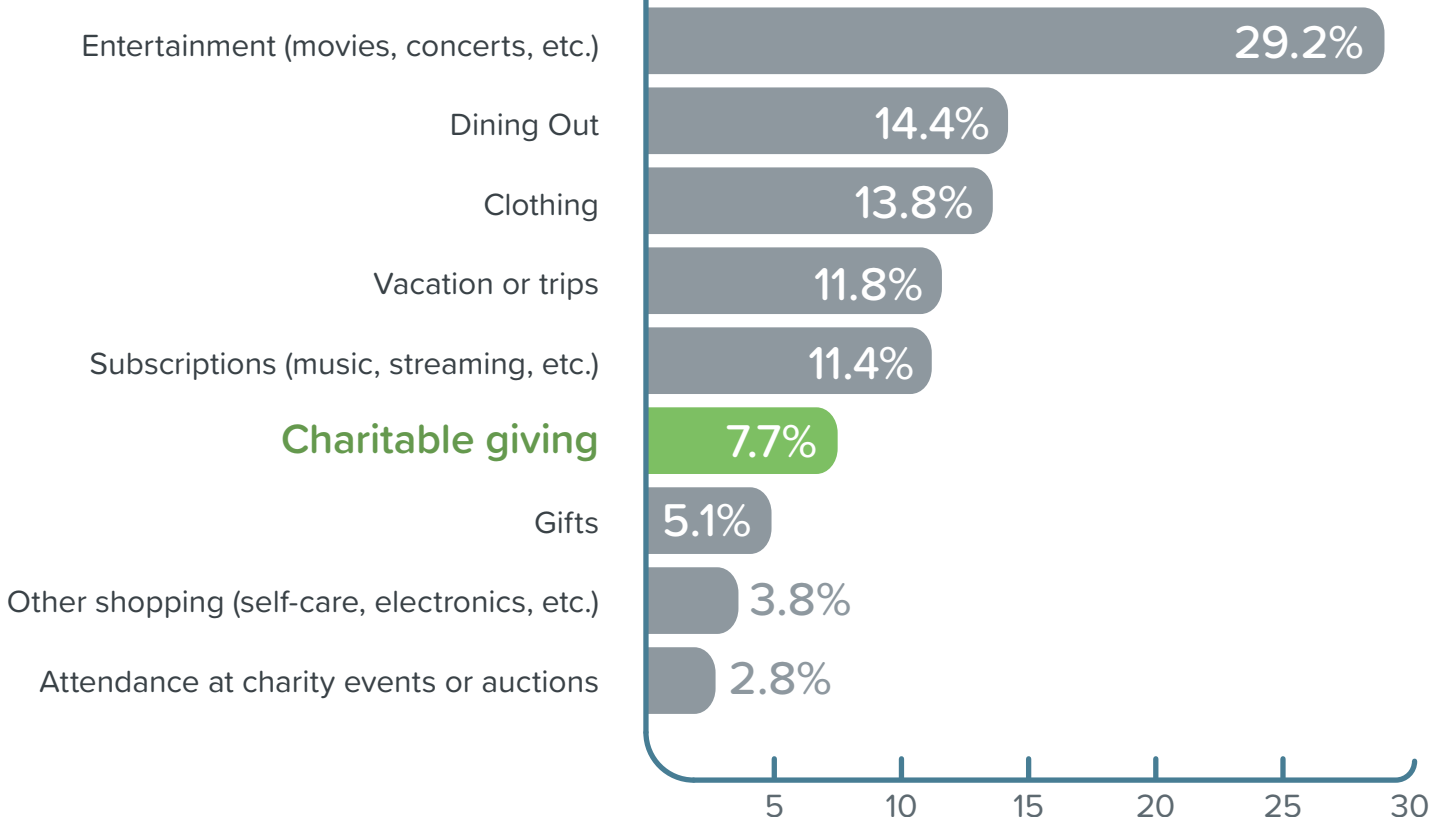
Forty-five percent of our donor respondents answered that inflation has severely impacted their finances, and 31% said that inflation has negatively impacted their finances.



*The majority of donors will cut money spent on entertainment or dining out before changing their charitable giving.*

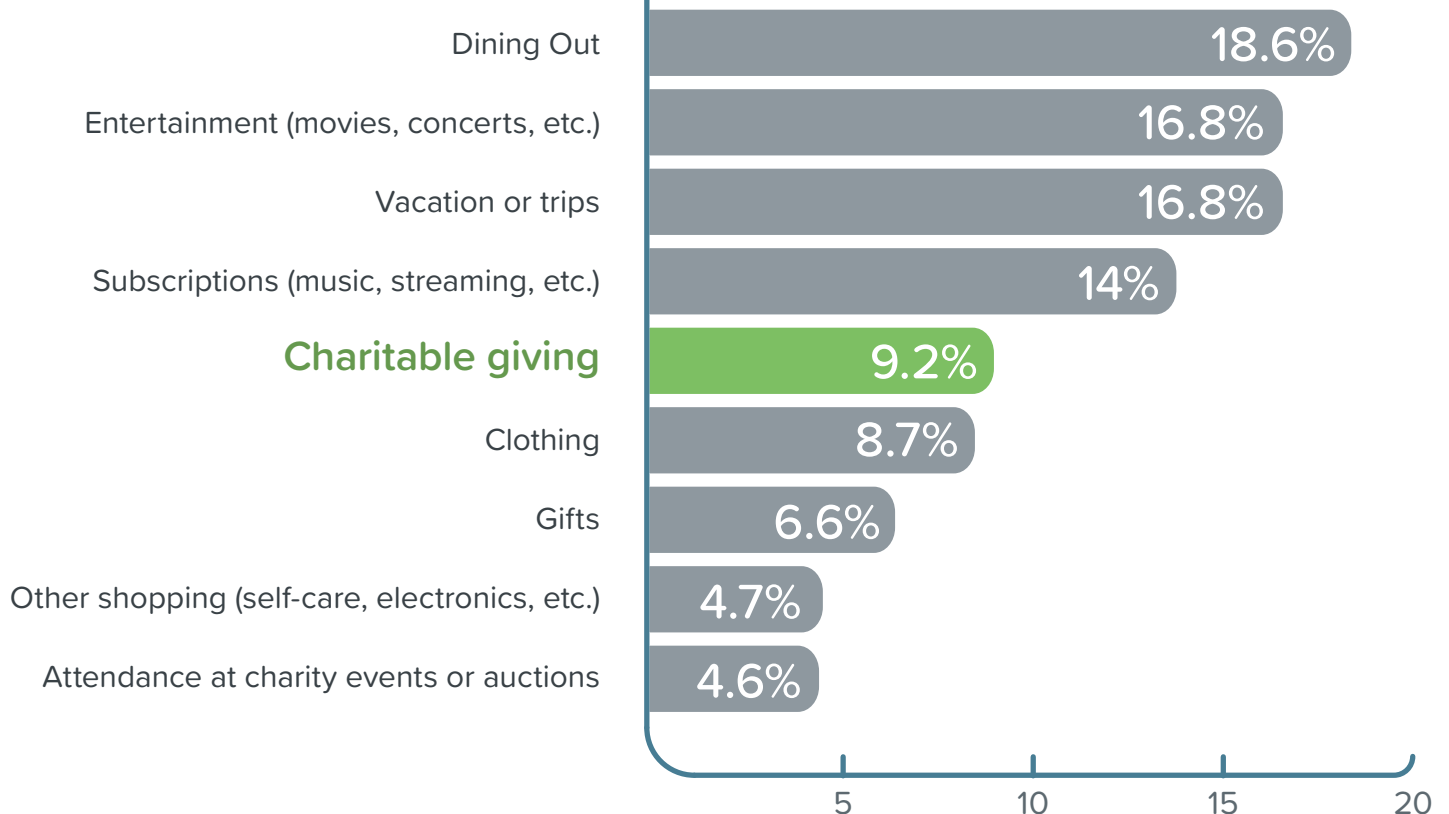
When finances get tight and a budget needs to be adjusted, entertainment, dining out, and clothing are the first areas donors make spending cuts. Cuts to charitable giving were only ranked as the first area of spending someone would cut by 7% of respondents.

### *If your budget is tight, what's the first area of discretionary spending you cut?*



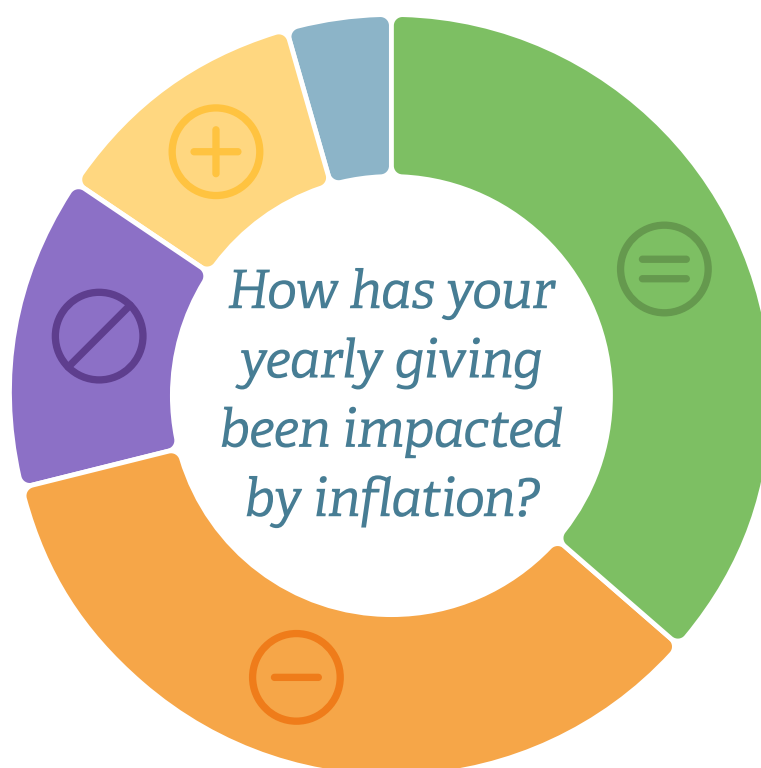
The second area that donors selected for budget adjustments was dining out, entertainment, vacations, and subscriptions. Cuts to charitable giving were only ranked as the second area of spending someone would cut by 9% of respondents.

### *If your budget is tight, what's the second area of discretionary spending you cut?*



*Inflation has negatively impacted the charitable giving of almost half of all donors.*

When asked how inflation has impacted their giving, 36% of survey respondents said they'd been able to keep their charitable giving the same. On the other hand, 34% of donors had decreased their yearly giving total. Adding in people who have stopped giving to charity altogether, 48.23% of respondents have had their charitable giving negatively impacted by inflation.

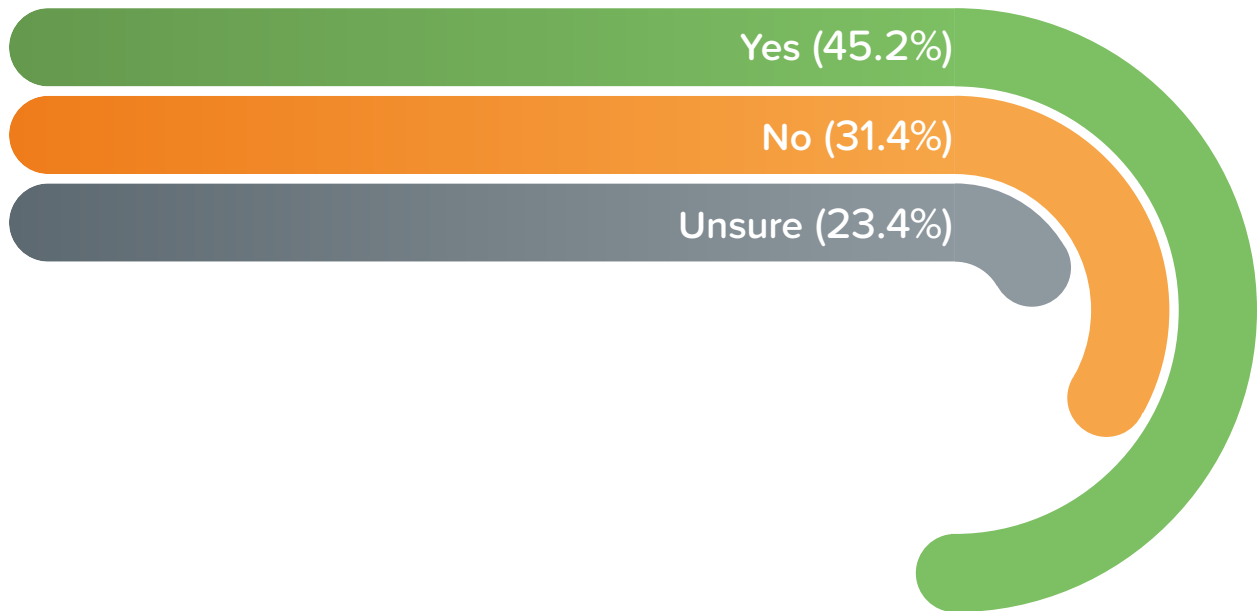


- 36.4% My giving has remained the same
- 34.9% My giving has decreased
- 13.3% My giving has stopped altogether
- 11.2% My giving has increased
- 4.2% Instead of donating money, I have given my time or made in-kind donations

*Nonprofits are sharing the impact inflation has had on their organization.*

Over half of the donors we surveyed said that the nonprofits they support have mentioned inflation and its impact on their work. Thirty-two percent said the nonprofits they support hadn't mentioned inflation or rising costs this year.

*Have the nonprofit(s) you've supported this year mentioned rising costs or inflation's impact on their work?*





# ***How Has the Economy Impacted Philanthropy?***

## TAKEAWAYS

Inflation and economic uncertainty have impacted donors and, by extension, nonprofits. Since 2020, inflation in the United States has increased by a total of 16.62%! Almost half of the donors we surveyed have had their charitable giving negatively impacted by inflation, and 44.2% of nonprofits have noticed a decrease in fundraising revenue over the last three years.

Despite this, only 30% of nonprofits have noticed a decrease in donor engagement and giving. In addition, nonprofit supporters will cut discretionary spending in five other areas before they choose to alter their giving. What does all of this mean?



## Takeaways for Your Organization

Based on the data shared in this report, here are our top recommendations for your organization:

### **When financial times are tough, know your donors want to support you!**

Communicate with your donors regularly and reiterate the impact their donations have. Your donors will cut several other spending areas before they choose to modify their charitable giving, so it's important that you don't assume your donors have reached their capacity to give. Your organization and the work you do is a priority to your supporters. Over 80% of the donors we surveyed continued making monetary gifts to different nonprofits despite inflation and the state of the economy.

**Remember to keep the focus on your mission.** Data from Qgiv's Navigating the Unknown report shows that donors are most inspired to give to organizations that continue to emphasize their mission in times of crisis. In that research study, we found that a majority of donors (59.6%) were motivated to give in response to appeals that focused on the organization's mission, not the emergency at hand. Over half of the donors we surveyed for this report, the Sustainable Giving Report: A Guide to Healthy Fundraising, said that the nonprofits they support have mentioned inflation and the state of the economy in their communications. While it's important to acknowledge what's going on in the world and how current events are impacting your nonprofit—don't forget—it's your mission that inspires giving!

**Offer giving plans for your supporters.** Offering recurring giving plans (such as monthly or quarterly giving plans) during periods of economic instability is a win-win for both donors and nonprofits! Supporters who give to an organization on a scheduled basis prove to have the highest retention rates and provide reliable revenue. Being able to break a donation into smaller recurring chunks can help donors who are having to cut back their spending continue to support your organization.

**Change your donor outreach. As donor numbers have declined over the last year, one fundraising strategy has remained unchanged by the majority of fundraisers—donor outreach!** Communication strategies and best practices are continuously evolving, so it's important to make sure your donor outreach strategy evolves year after year as well. Has your nonprofit embraced text communications? Are your print and digital communications highly visual? How often do you send mail that isn't a direct mail appeal? Use these questions to begin reviewing your current donor outreach and modifying your approach.

**Be willing to alter your fundraising plans.** A top skill of nonprofit professionals is often adaptability. When times are tough and the economy is volatile, be agile enough to pivot away from your intended plans and supplement your fundraising with different tactics.

*More than half of fundraiser respondents mentioned that their one-time in-person events did not perform as well as in prior years. Fundraising events that brought in a large crowd before the COVID-19 pandemic may look different now.*

**Consider offering an extra special immersive experience for guests, a text campaign, or a virtual and/or hybrid option.** Donors are engaging differently with fundraising events and may be more inclined to stay home due to social or physical limitations. It is important to acknowledge, understand, and plan for their preferences so they can continue to support your mission!

**Understand the importance of 'Thank You.'** All gift sizes deserve a personalized and meaningful 'Thank You,' and this rings especially true during times of economic instability. The number of donors and total dollars raised has been decreasing year over year, and one of the top ways fundraisers can combat this negative trend is to increase their appreciation and recognition of donors and get back to the fundamentals of strong donor retention practices. Donors who downgraded their gift, new donors with an entry-level gift, and previous donors who provided in-kind support for your organization all deserve acknowledgment and recognition for their generosity. A \$5 donation may be all a donor can afford to give, and they should be appreciated for it just as a \$500 donor would be. Understanding the importance of all types of giving is crucial for your organization's long-term donor retention.

## Here are some extra resources you can use to help combat the effects of inflation on your organization:

Consider hiring a grant-writing consultant or purchasing a grant-seeking software to acquire additional revenue for your organization. Established foundations feel less of the effects of economic instability and can provide the needed funds for your mission. Knowing where to look for grant opportunities and having the time to complete a long and tedious application can be challenging for a busy fundraiser! If you're looking for help with the grant writing process, Qgiv proudly partners with and recommends Grants Plus!

Since 2007, Grants Plus has assisted nonprofit leaders across the country to secure \$300 million in grant funding from private, corporate, and government funders. The team at Grants Plus is deeply experienced in helping an organization identify its strongest grant funding prospects and take the right steps to pursue them. As a firm, they specialize in providing holistic grant support to US-based 501c(3) entities with at least three years of operations that can demonstrate an annual operating budget of \$1 million or more.

Ready to get started? Get in touch with Grants Plus today by clicking the link below.

[Contact Grants Plus](#)

**Learn more about scarcity mindset and develop strategies for your organization to implement strength-based communications.** Focusing on lack and the idea that there are not enough resources for all to thrive creates a sense of desperation, stress, and competition. Nonprofits that exist in a mindset of scarcity are only providing short-term solutions to the challenges they are facing. During periods of economic instability, it is important for fundraisers to communicate their organization's sincere needs and to focus on their strengths. Nonprofit leaders who practice a positive, strengths-based approach to their work will be more likely to invest in additional resources and cultivate an exciting culture of philanthropy.

For more information on moving past the scarcity mindset, read the article from Nonprofit Quarterly linked below.

[Learn More About Scarcity Mindset](#)

# ***The Wellness of Nonprofit Teams, The Fundraiser's View***

FUNDRAISER FINDINGS



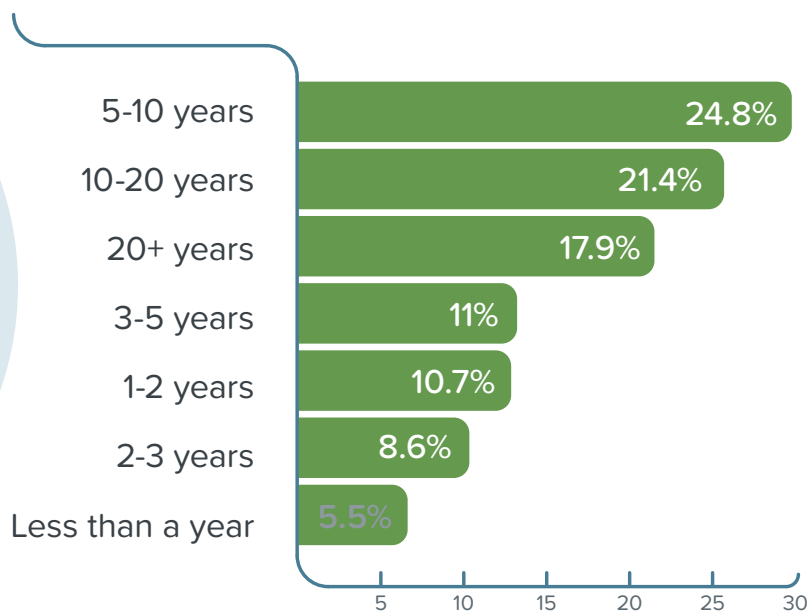
## **Job Tenure and Staff Retention**

Understanding if nonprofit staff feel satisfied with their current fundraising position is an incredibly important metric we sought to measure. Fundraising professionals play a critical role in sustaining mission-driven organizations since they are responsible for raising the vital funds that support operations, programs, and much more within a nonprofit. The questions asked in this section were intended to gauge fundraisers' overall job satisfaction, workload, average tenure, career goals, and whether they plan to remain in a development position long term.

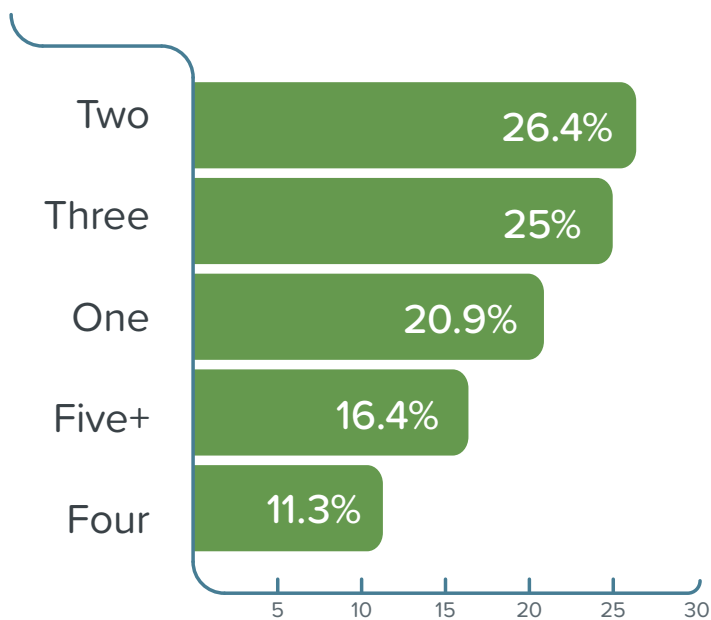


*The average fundraising respondent has worked in the nonprofit sector between five and ten years, with 10 to 20 years and 20+ years trailing not too far behind.*

**How long have you worked in the nonprofit sector?**



**How many positions have you held within the nonprofit sector?**

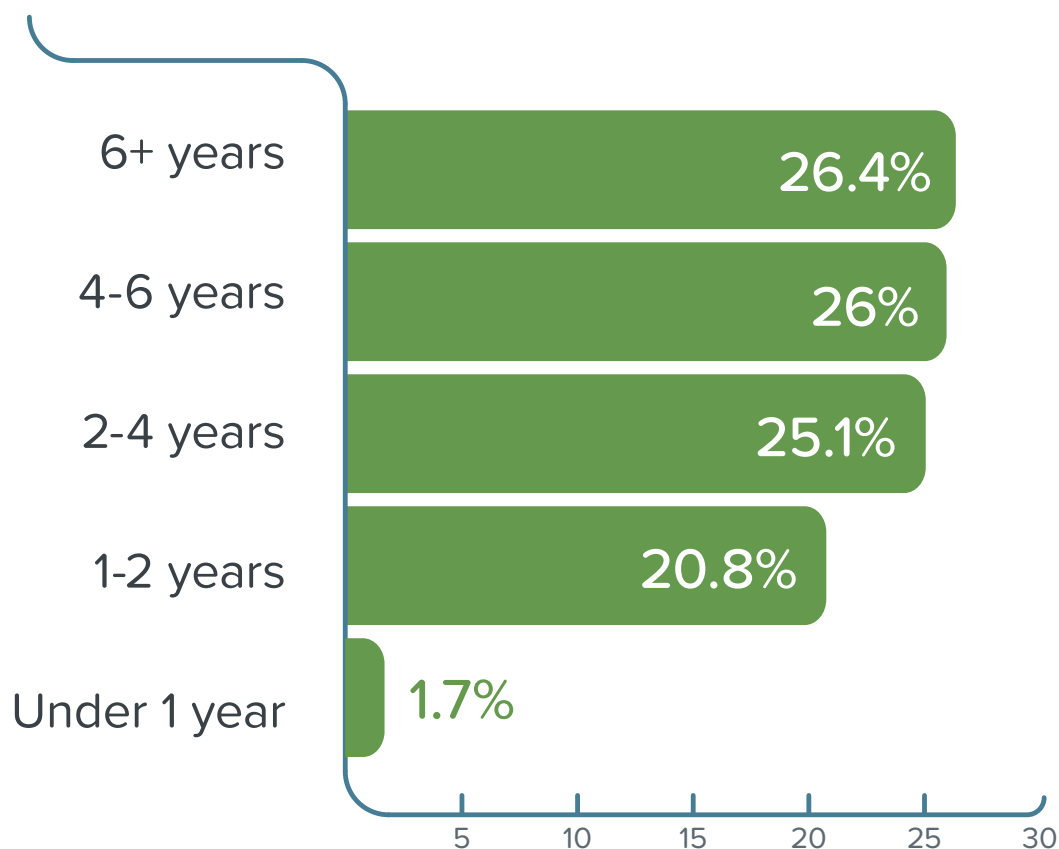


*Over 70% of respondents have held between one and three fundraising positions in the nonprofit sector, two being the most popular response.*

*Fundraisers answered that their average tenure lay between two to six years or more.*

It's important to note that the tenure of our respondents was higher than the national average. Data from the Lilly School of Philanthropy shows that the average tenure for a fundraising professional in the United States is 3.6 years. In this study, 26.4% had an average tenure of six years or more. Twenty-six percent had an average tenure of four to six years, and 25.1% of respondents had an average tenure of between two and four years.

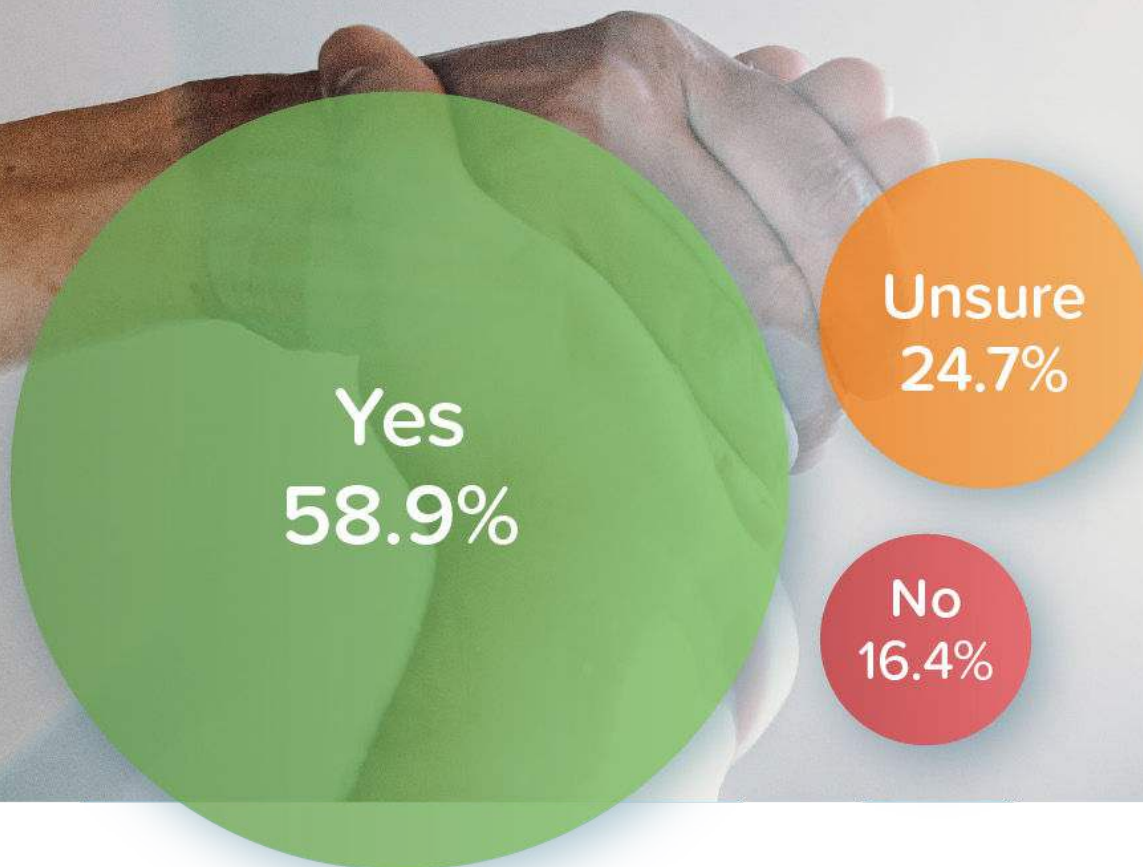
### *Has long has your average job tenure been?*



*Over half of nonprofit respondents plan to remain in the fundraising profession.*

When asked if fundraisers planned on remaining in the profession long term, almost 60% responded yes. Sixteen percent do not plan on remaining in a fundraising career for the duration of their career, and 24% were undecided.

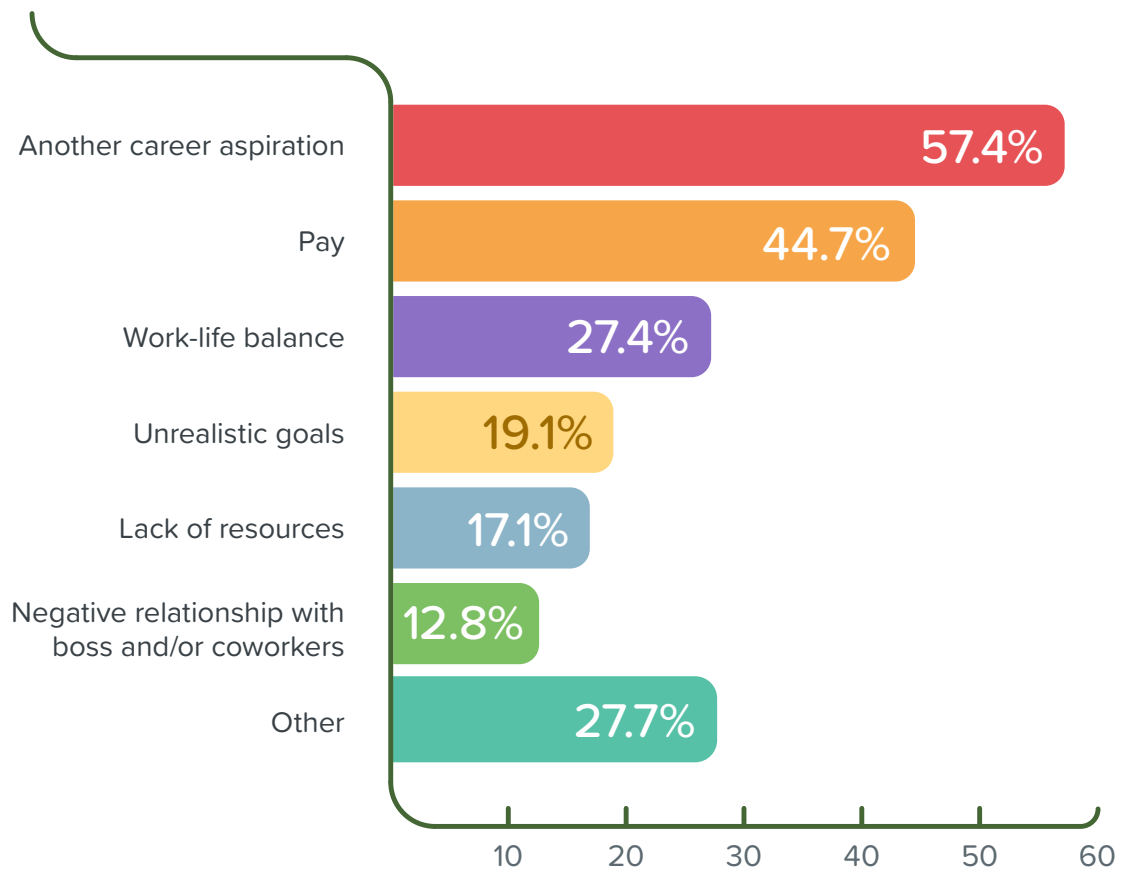
*Do you foresee yourself remaining in the fundraising profession long-term?*



*For fundraisers who plan to leave the profession, another career aspiration and pay were the top reasons for choosing to depart.*

For those who said they weren't planning to stay in fundraising long-term, 57% plan to leave for another career aspiration, 44% because of pay, and 27% because of work/life balance. Twenty-seven percent of respondents also selected "Other" and wrote in reasons for departing the career, including retirement, burnout, and being tired of fighting negative assumptions about working for a nonprofit.

### *If you don't foresee yourself remaining in the fundraising profession long-term, why not?*





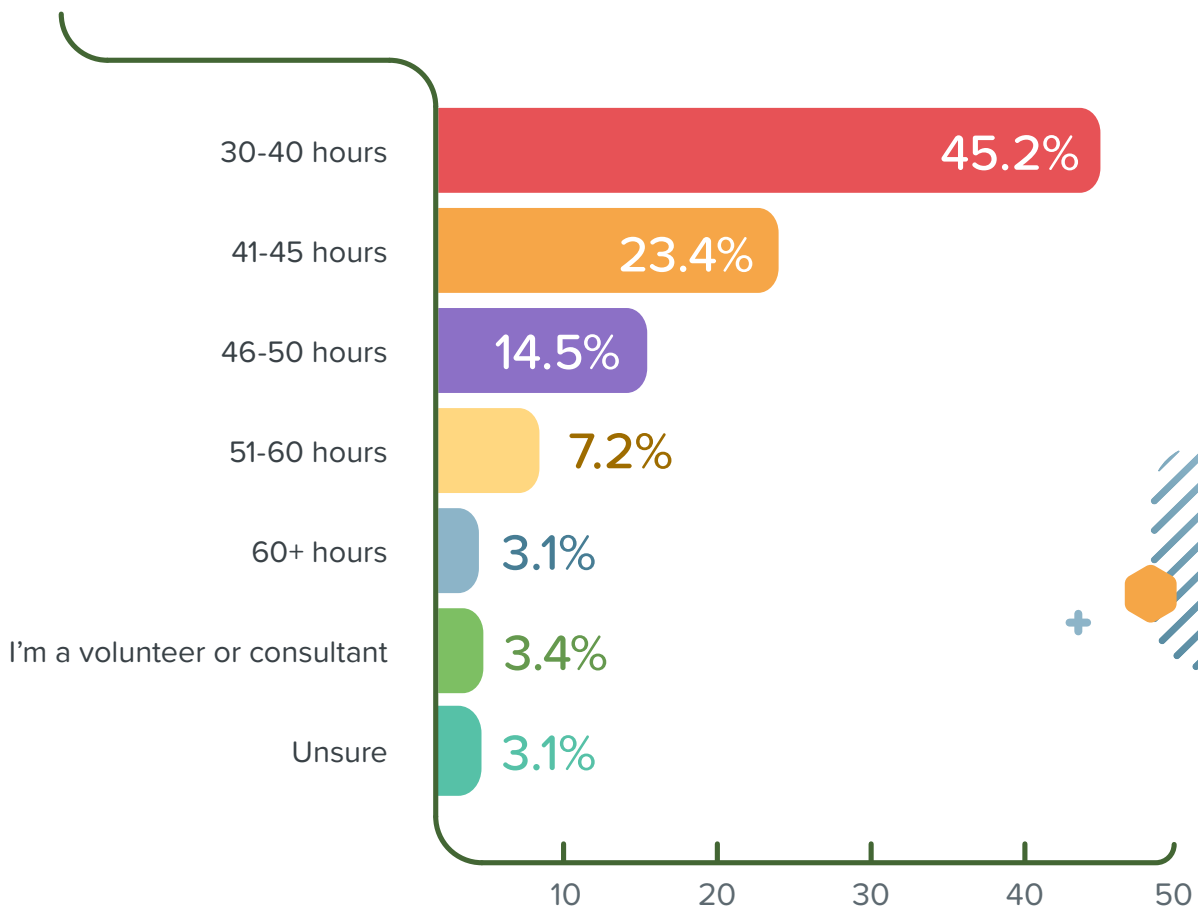
## FUNDRAISER FINDINGS

### Workload

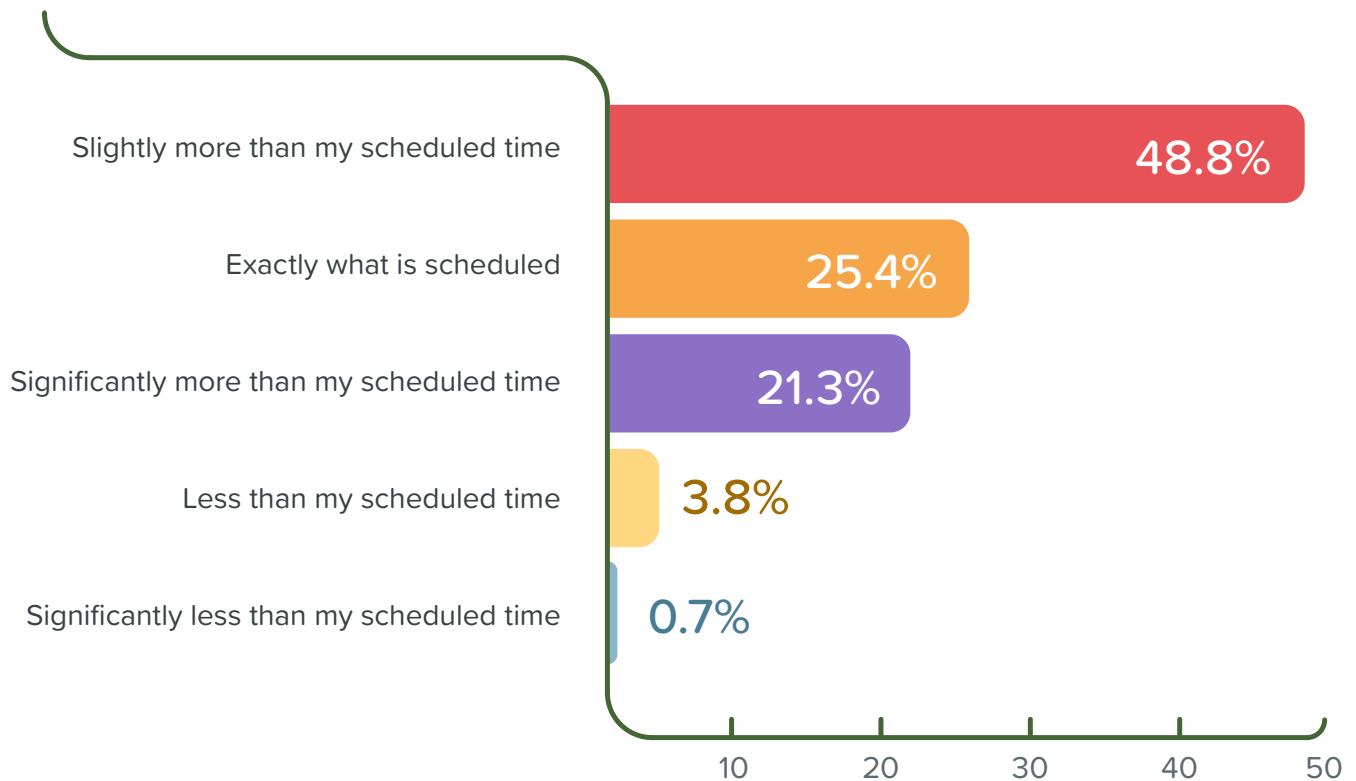
*A quarter of fundraising professionals work over 45 hours per week.*

When asked how many hours they work per week, most fundraisers (45.2%) responded that they put in between 30 and 40 hours a week. In addition to the traditional 40-hour work week, 23.4% responded that they work 41 to 45 hours weekly, 14.5% answered that they work 46 to 50 hours per week, 7.2% work 51-60 hours per week, and 3.1% work over 60 hours per week. Almost half of respondents (48.8%) answered that they work slightly more than their scheduled time, and 21.3% will work significantly more than their scheduled hours.

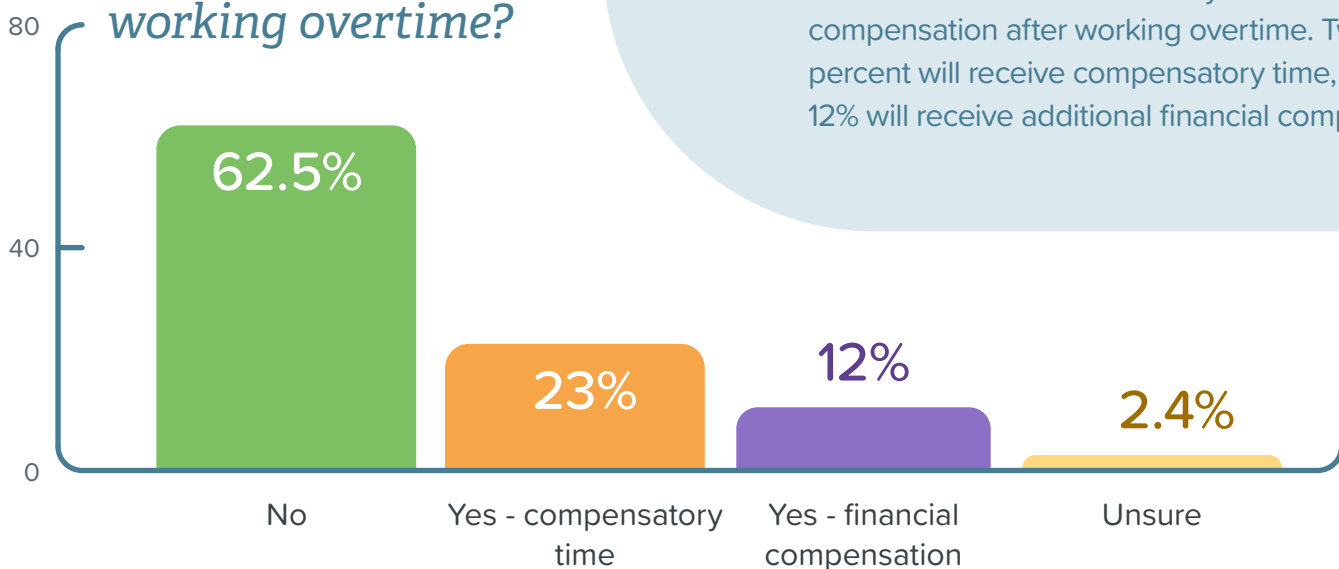
### *How many hours do you work per week?*



## On average, how many hours do you work per week in comparison to your scheduled time?



## Do you receive additional compensation for working overtime?



When asked if they work nights and weekends, over 50% responded that they rarely will work nights or weekends, while almost 40% will often work on nights and weekends. Over 60% of fundraisers answered that they do not receive any compensation after working overtime. Twenty-three percent will receive compensatory time, and only 12% will receive additional financial compensation.



## FUNDRAISER FINDINGS

### Burnout

*Most fundraising respondents feel overwhelmed with their workload.*

When asked to describe their workload, over 45% of respondents answered that they felt overwhelmed. Thirty-five percent answered that their workload felt just right, and 11% answered that they felt consistently overwhelmed. Over 40% of respondents believe that their development department is properly staffed on occasion, and over 30% believe that their development department is never properly staffed.



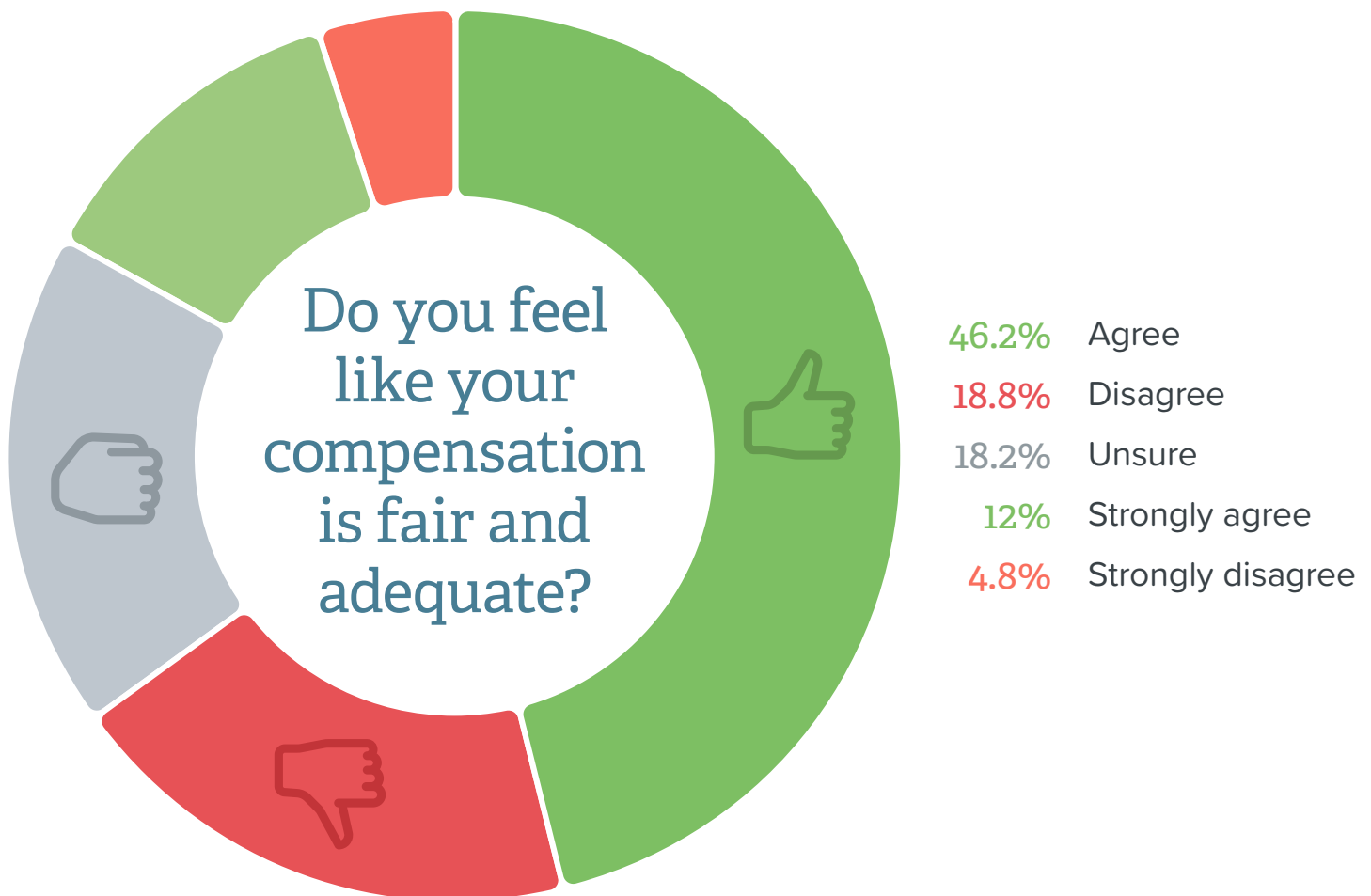
- 45.9% Overwhelmed
- 35.2% Just right
- 11% Consistently overwhelmed
- 7.6% Occasionally busy-still a minimal workload
- 0.3% Minimal workload-not busy

- 41.4% Occasionally
- 31.5% Never
- 16.8% Always
- 10.3% Unsure



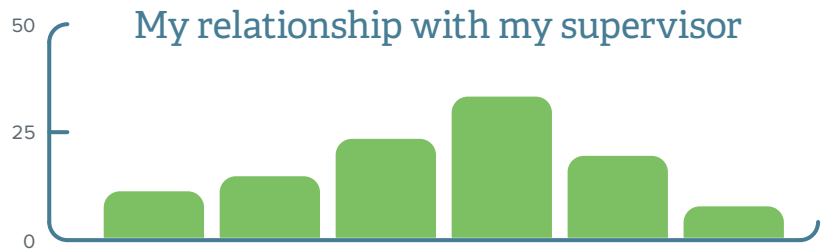
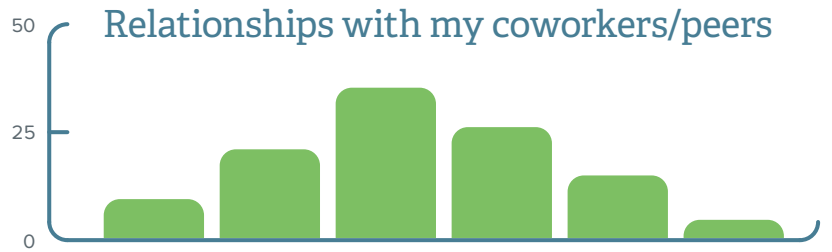
*Most of our fundraising respondents feel their compensation is fair and adequate.*

When asked if they felt their compensation was fair and adequate, fundraisers responded with 46% agreeing and 18% disagreeing. **However, it is important to note that earlier in the study, when asked what prompted fundraisers who were leaving the profession to make a career shift, the majority said pay.**



When asked to rank the factors that contribute to their job satisfaction from one to six, fundraisers answered:

The impact the fundraiser believes they are making and their organization's mission are the top factors for job satisfaction.





## FUNDRAISER FINDINGS

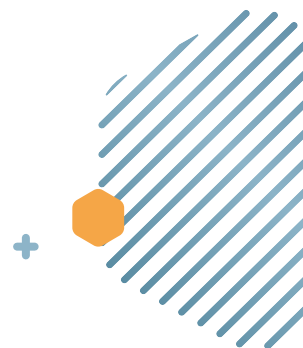
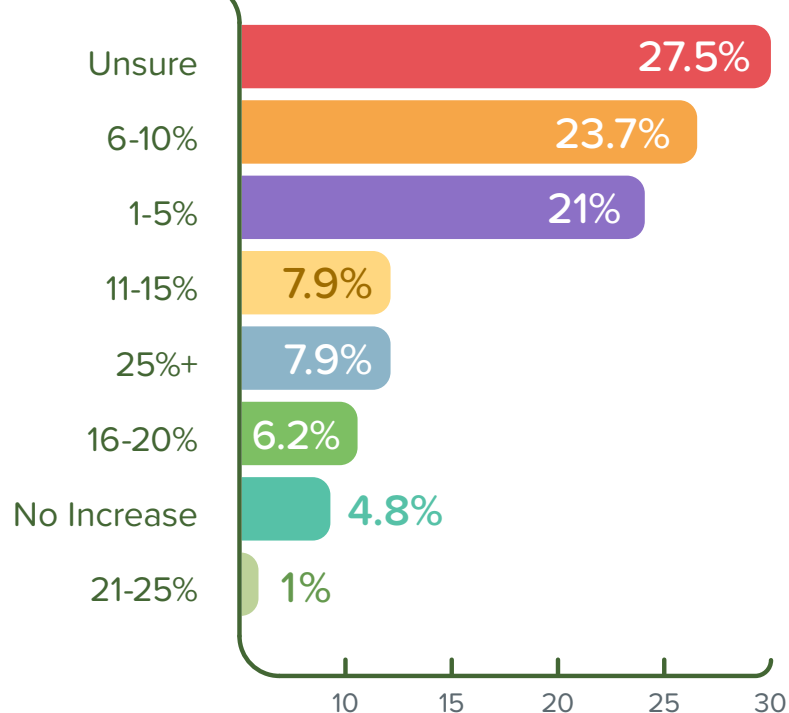
### Fundraising Goals and Leadership Support

Growing a development department by setting obtainable and realistic goals is crucial to ensure fundraising is expanding at a sustainable scale. Obtainable goals can also be used to keep fundraising staff motivated and help fundraisers create their annual fundraising plan. Having the necessary resources and leadership support lined up for development efforts will help prevent fundraiser burnout and make reaching goals attainable.

*Goal expectations are unclear for a quarter of fundraisers.*

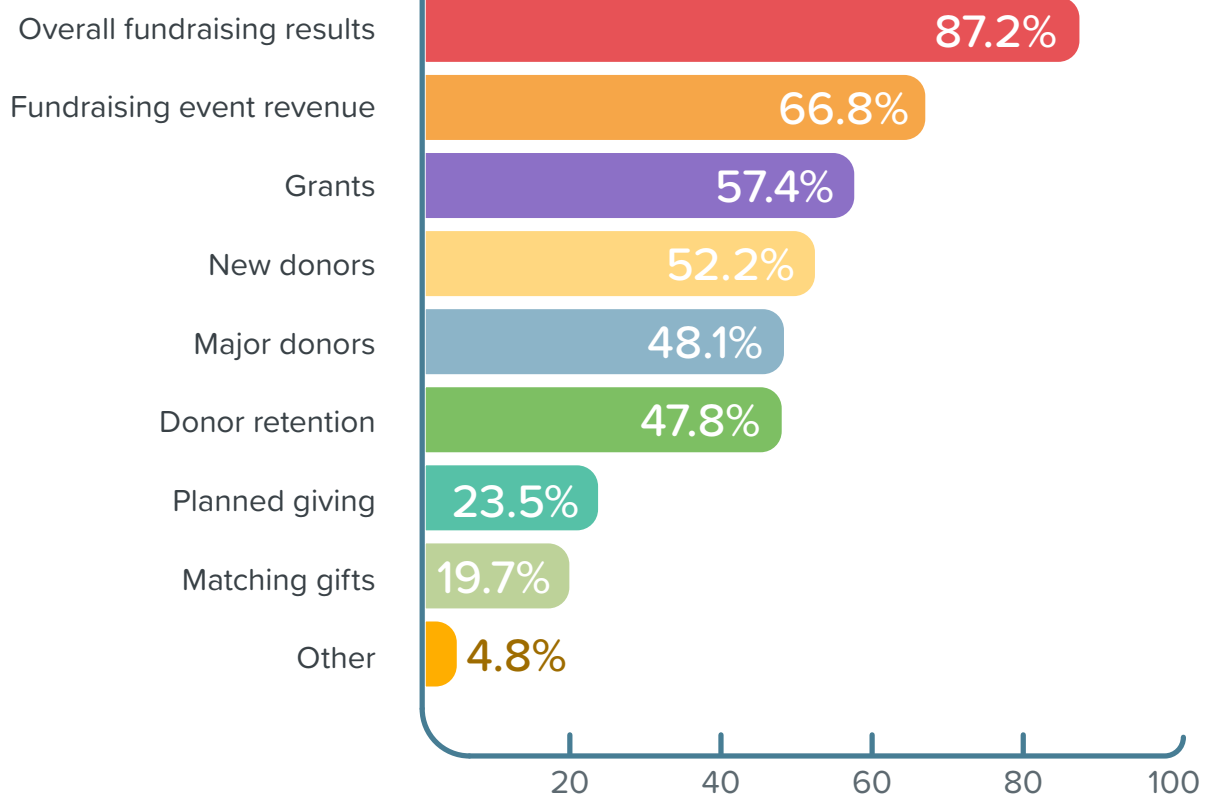
Of the fundraisers surveyed, 27.5% were unsure of the amount they were expected to increase their fundraising results each year.

### *How much are you expected to increase your fundraising results by each year?*



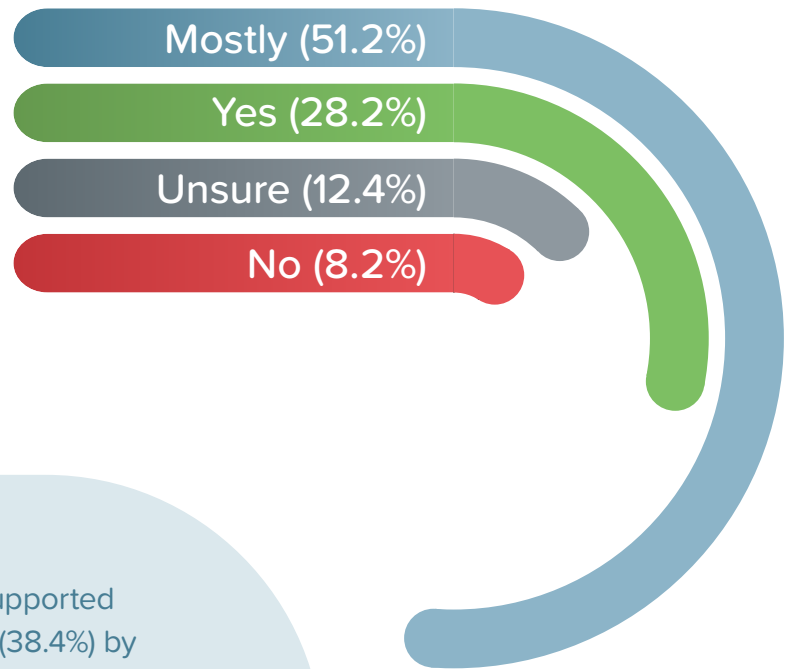
*Metrics used for fundraising goals included overall fundraising results, event revenue, grant funding, and more.*

### *What type of annual goals do you set each year?*



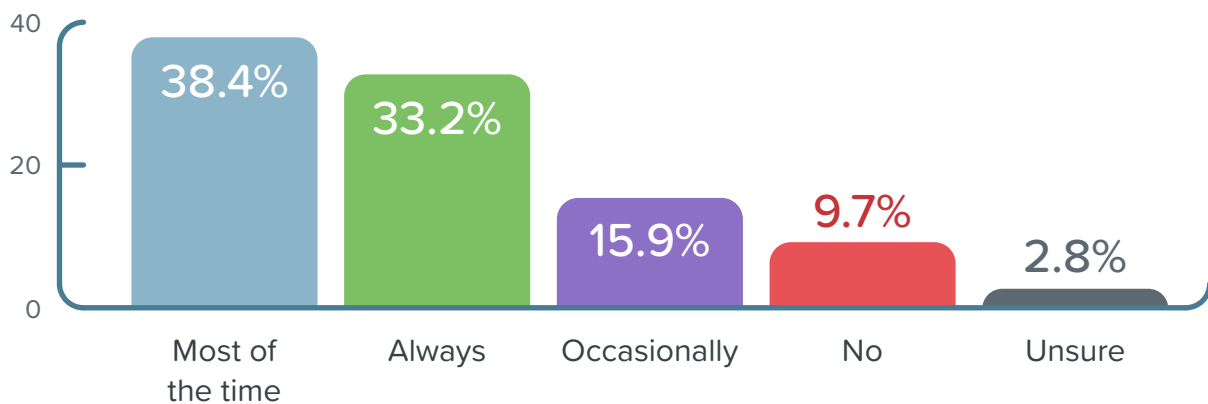
Fundraising goals feel 'mostly' obtainable by over 50% of survey respondents.

Do your fundraising goals feel obtainable?



*Fundraisers need additional resources to meet their goals!*

Fundraisers feel supported "most of the time" (38.4%) by their organization's leadership to meet their fundraising goals. On the other hand, individuals who felt only occasionally supported and not supported totaled 25.6%.



# ***The Wellness of Nonprofit Teams, The Donor's View***

## DONOR PERCEPTIONS

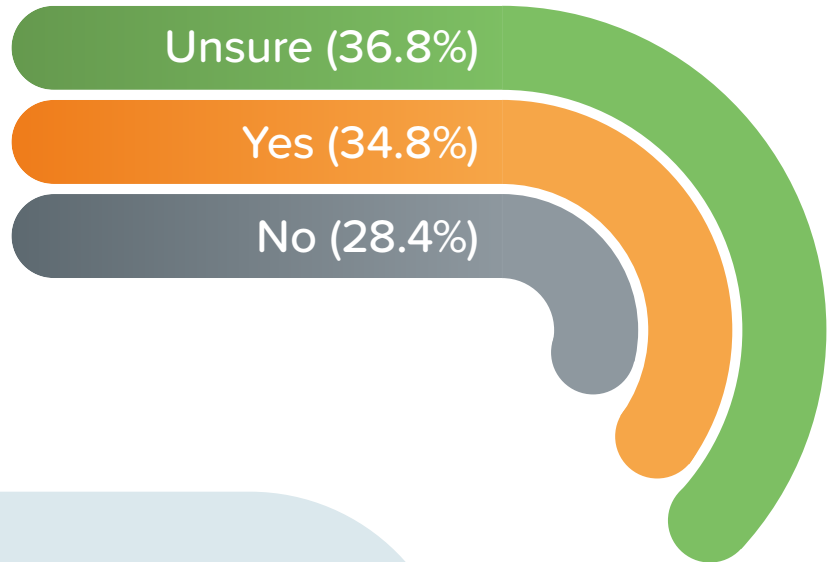


Since most fundraisers feel overwhelmed with their workload and have indicated they could use more support to reach their goals, we wanted to determine if donors are aware of these challenges. Questions asked to donors about development staffing were intended to better understand if donors are concerned with the resignation of key staff members and their willingness to potentially fund administrative costs.

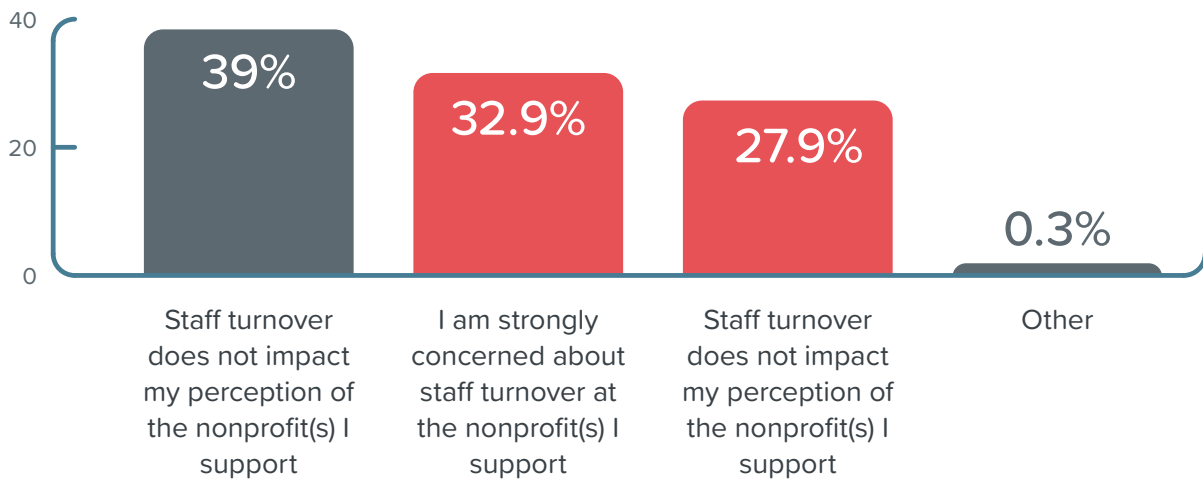


*34% of donors have noticed turnover at the nonprofits they support.*

*Have you noticed staff turnover at the nonprofits you support?*

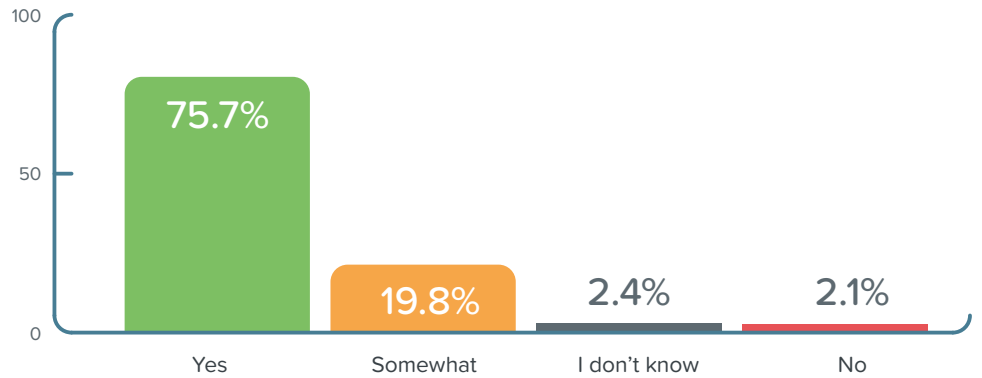


*Of those who answered yes, over 60% responded that they were slightly or strongly concerned about staff turnover.*



Over 80% of supporters believe the nonprofits they contribute to are trustworthy, and three-quarters of survey respondents believe that their donation is used responsibly by the charities they donate to.

Do you believe that your donation(s) is used responsibly by the nonprofit(s) you support?



Donors feel less trust in the overall nonprofit sector. The feeling of trust in the overall nonprofit sector drops significantly. Only 58% of donors believe the sector is trustworthy.

- 58.6% Yes
- 34% Somewhat
- 4.7% No
- 2.7% I don't know



Over half of respondents believe nonprofit staff should receive average compensation

Followed by 35% of donors who believe that nonprofit staff should receive above-average compensation.



- 56.2% They should receive average compensation
- 17% They should receive above-average compensation
- 15.7% They should receive below-average compensation
- 11.1% They should not receive compensation



- 36.1% Yes
- 34.8% Probably
- 18.7% Unsure
- 10.4% No

### Donors are open to covering administrative costs.

Despite 26% of donors thinking nonprofit professionals should receive below-average or no pay, most are willing to cover administrative costs (a disconnect we will address a little later in the takeaways section). Thirty-six percent of donors have a willingness to cover costs associated with administration. Thirty-four percent were undecided.



# ***The Wellness of Nonprofit Teams***

## TAKEAWAYS

Nonprofit organizations are the front-line supporters for making sure our communities are more inclusive, supportive, and an overall better place to live for everyone. Ensuring that the best and most qualified staff are at the helm of this change is crucial. Compensation and poor work-life balance can result in fundraising staff choosing to leave their career, creating an even busier environment for those left behind. Over a quarter of fundraising professionals need significantly more resources to meet their goals, and over 45% feel overwhelmed with their workload. So, what can be done to retain fundraising staff, reduce burnout, and ensure donors understand how important these individuals are?

The turnover of development staff can cause a loss of donor relationships, months of effort and cost to rehire and train, and an overall loss of fundraising revenue.



## Takeaways for Your Organization


Based on the data shared in this report, here are our top recommendations for your organization:

**Educate your supporters on the roles and responsibilities of different staff at your nonprofit.** Regular employee spotlights on social, in your e-newsletter, or in different mailers can help your supporters understand who the “doers” are behind the incredible work they support. Over 25% of donors believe nonprofit staff should receive below-average or no compensation for their work. To help overcome this perception, it’s crucial to talk about your staff and the important work they do. This isn’t something that needs to be added to every fundraising appeal but is something that you can do periodically to increase supporter engagement and subtly convey how important you and your staff are.

**Consider asking your donors to contribute to the cost of administrative salaries.** This is a decision that may be met with resistance from leadership and board members. The second most selected response for departing a fundraising position or career was compensation. Nonprofit staff members are working against the expectation that being underpaid is standard practice.

Implementing more competitive wages will boost staff retention and satisfaction, which in turn produces a better quality of service for your donors. It also increases the trustworthiness of your organization and donor retention. Your donors are more likely to remain loyal to your organization if they feel like they are a part of it, and there’s no better way to nurture a donor relationship than through a member of your staff that they recognize year after year. Remember, 34% of donors have noticed staff turnover at the nonprofits they support, and 60% are concerned about it.

Thirty-six percent of donors have a willingness to cover costs associated with administration. Fifty-two percent are open to it or undecided, and only 10% are firmly opposed. The decision to ask donors to cover administrative costs should not be taken lightly and only implemented with serious A/B testing over an extended period of time to truly gauge your donors’ engagement with the concept.



**Promote a mission-forward culture.** Fundraisers selected that their nonprofit's mission is the top factor that affects their job satisfaction. It is crucial that all nonprofit staff feel connected to the organization's mission. Finding ways to engage staff with the organization's strategic planning process creates a culture of shared goals and excitement for the mission's future. Recognizing employees when they win a new grant, successfully plan a large gala, and achieve other milestones shows them they are valued and appreciated.

**Allow for team-building opportunities to connect staff members.** The bonds and relationships with coworkers and peers were among the top three factors that led fundraisers to feel more satisfied with their careers. Allow staff members to connect with fellow peers and deepen those relationships. Allocate funds for professional development, staff retreats, and team-building opportunities to have staff members advance their professional knowledge and connect with their coworkers.

**Advocate for additional fundraising resources and staff.** Over 70% of fundraising staff responded that their development department is never or only occasionally staffed properly. Changing the world is not easy! Let alone without a support system. Fundraisers are often expected to make the impossible happen, and without the proper number of development staff or fundraising resources, raising large amounts of funds will be exhausting and lead to staff burnout quickly.

*Close to half of fundraisers answered that they feel overwhelmed with their workload, and 11% answered that they feel consistently overwhelmed. Plain and simple, fundraisers need help!*

Adding additional team members will not only help them avoid burnout but will also increase job satisfaction based on coworker and peer relationships being among the top three factors for job satisfaction.

# + + **Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue**

## Fundraising Events

### THE FUNDRAISER'S PERSPECTIVE



Fundraising events are an important tactic for nonprofits to help drive funds and awareness to different causes. However, hosting fundraising events can be time consuming, depending on the event's size. If a fundraising team is already feeling overwhelmed, taking on a new event can be challenging. Questions about events were intended to gauge the sustainability of an organization's event plans and identify if events were helping diversify their revenue.



*Of our respondents, 27.8% host 5 or more fundraising events per year.*

5+	27.8%
3	23%
2	22.3%
1	14.1%
4	7.6%
0	5.2%



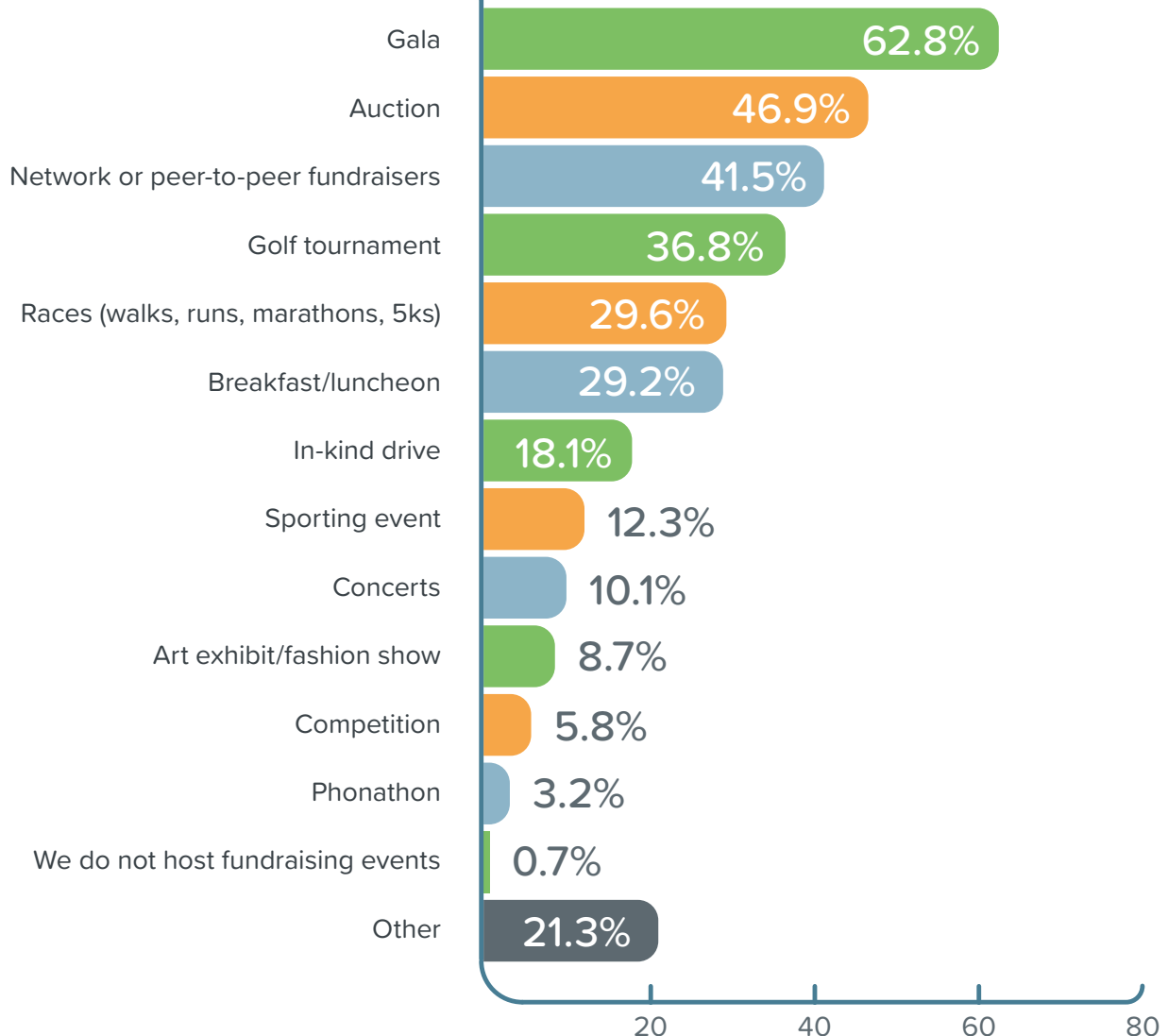
*Almost all fundraisers solicit for sponsorships to support their fundraising event efforts.*

It is exciting to see that over 95% of fundraisers that host fundraising events solicit for sponsorships at some or all of their fundraising events.

*Galas, auctions, and peer-to-peer fundraising events are the most popular event styles.*

The most popular forms of fundraising events among respondents were galas, followed by auctions, network or peer-to-peer fundraisers, golf tournaments, then races. Twenty-one percent of respondents selected “other” and wrote in exciting fundraising events such as comedy shows, bowl-a-thons, wine and beer festivals, and stewardship events.

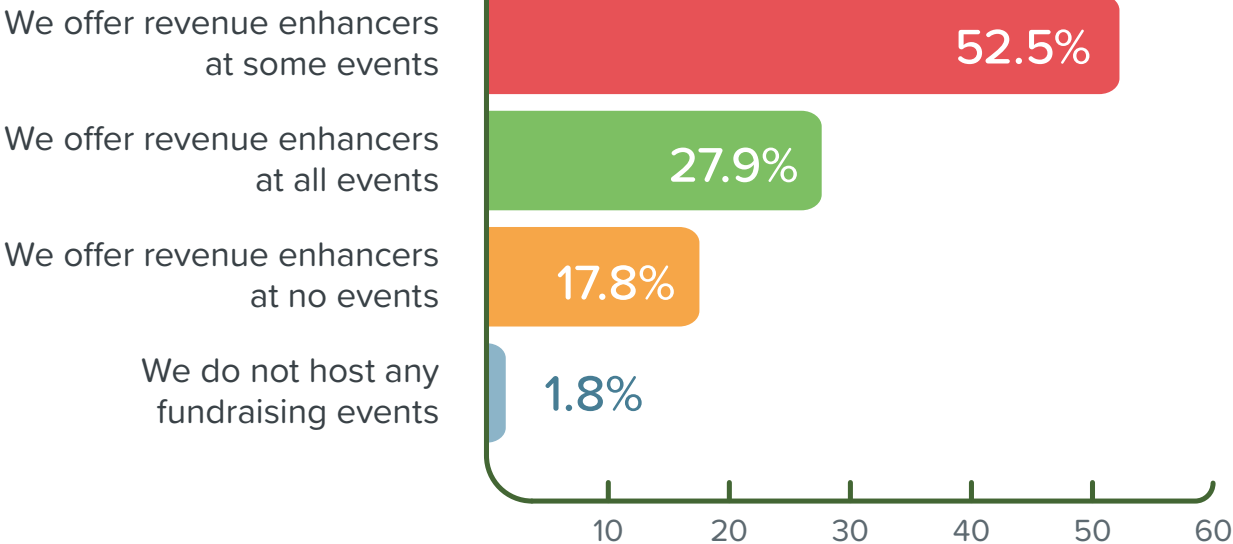
### *What type of fundraising event does your organization host?*



*Revenue enhancers are a popular fundraising event practice.*

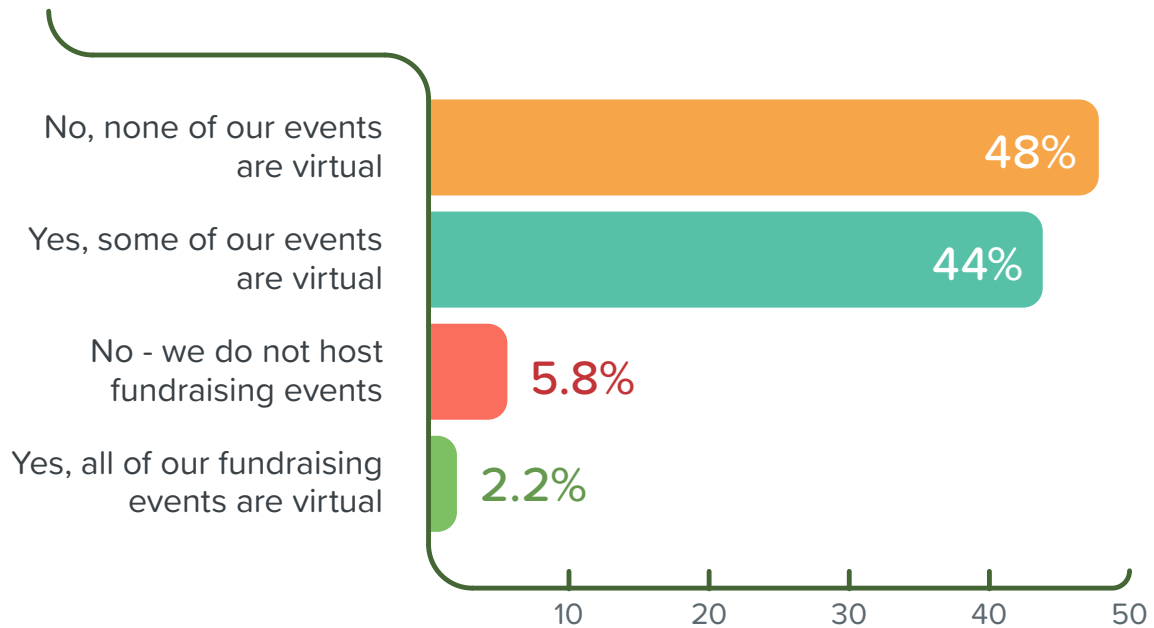
Over 75% of respondents offered some form of revenue enhancers at their fundraising events. Revenue enhancers could include raffles, games of chance, wine pulls, and more. Revenue enhancers are a great way to encourage additional donations from event attendees.

***Does your organization offer revenue enhancers at fundraising events?  
(Raffles, games of chance, wine pulls, etc.)***

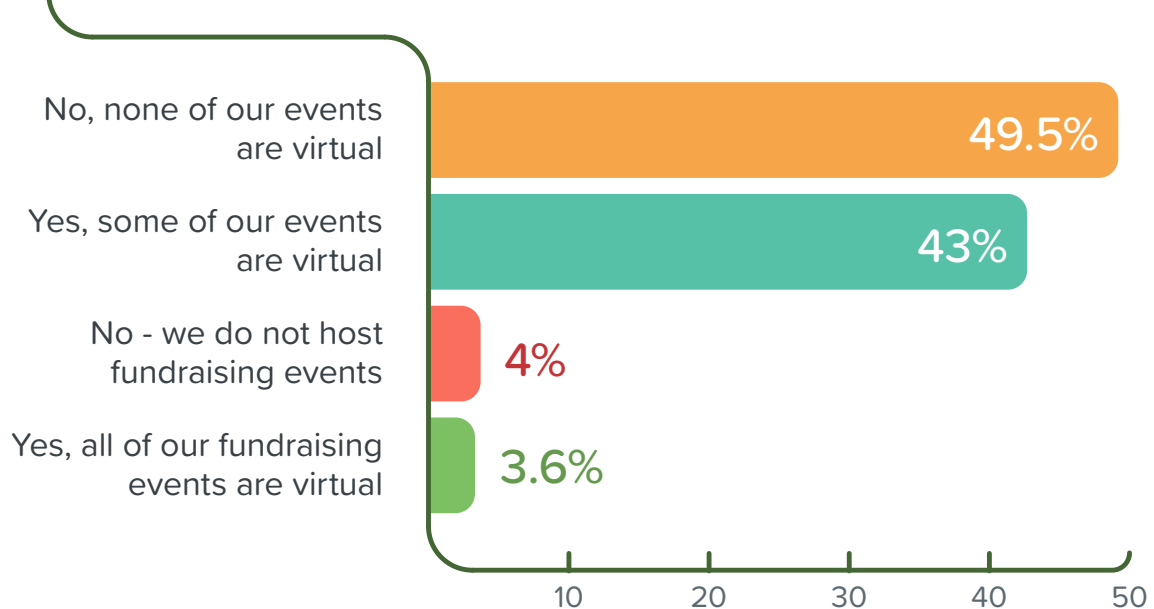


*Fundraisers were split regarding virtual and hybrid events. Almost half of respondents do not offer any virtual or hybrid fundraising events.*

***Does your organization host completely virtual events?***



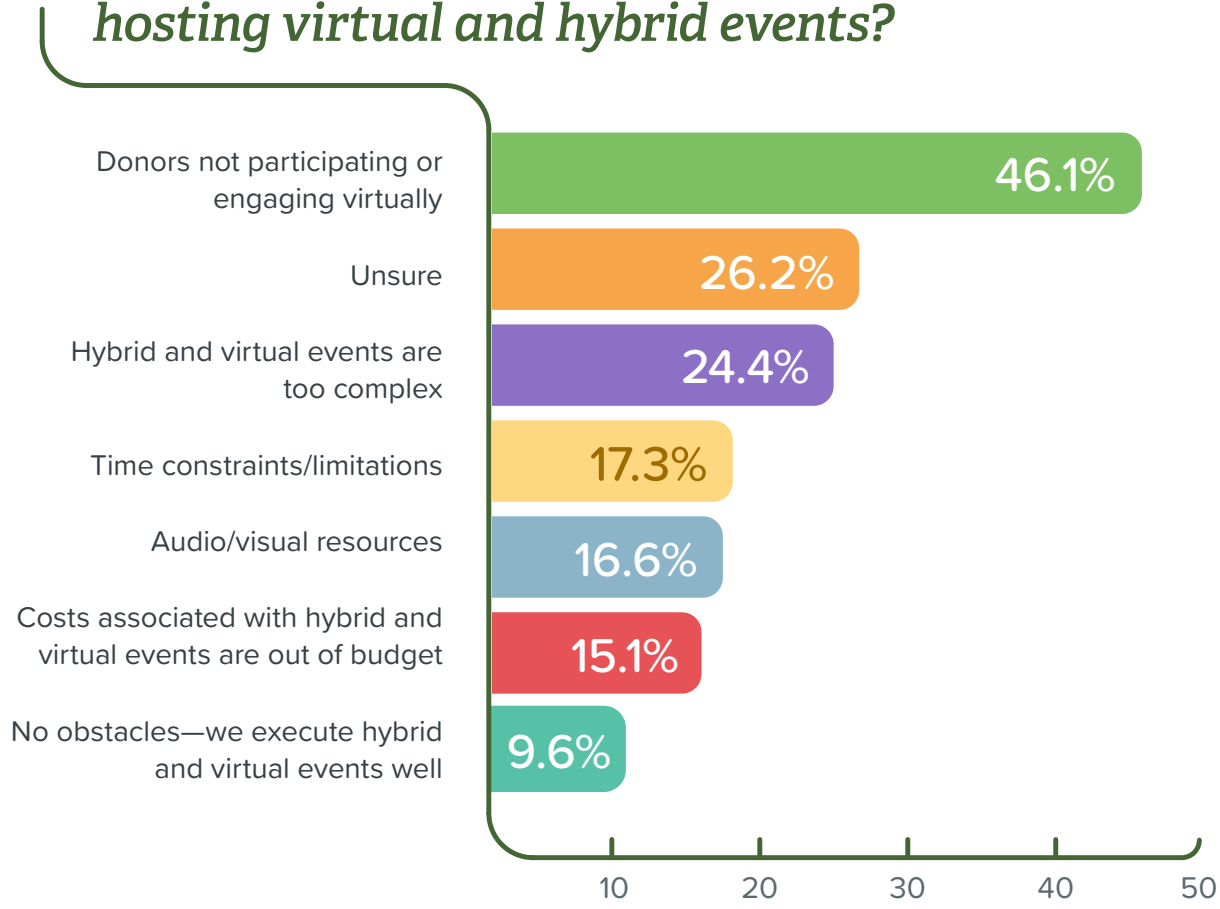
***Does your organization offer hybrid additions to your fundraising events?***



*Fundraisers believe their biggest obstacle to hosting successful virtual and hybrid fundraising events is that their donors do not engage virtually.*

Over a quarter of respondents were unsure, and a separate quarter of fundraisers believe hybrid and virtual events are too complex. Many folks who selected “other,” wrote in that additional staff and staff training was needed to execute virtual events. Only 9.6% of survey responders believe they do not face any obstacles when executing virtual and hybrid events.

### *What is your organization's biggest obstacle when hosting virtual and hybrid events?*



# ***Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue***

## *Fundraising Events*

### THE DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE



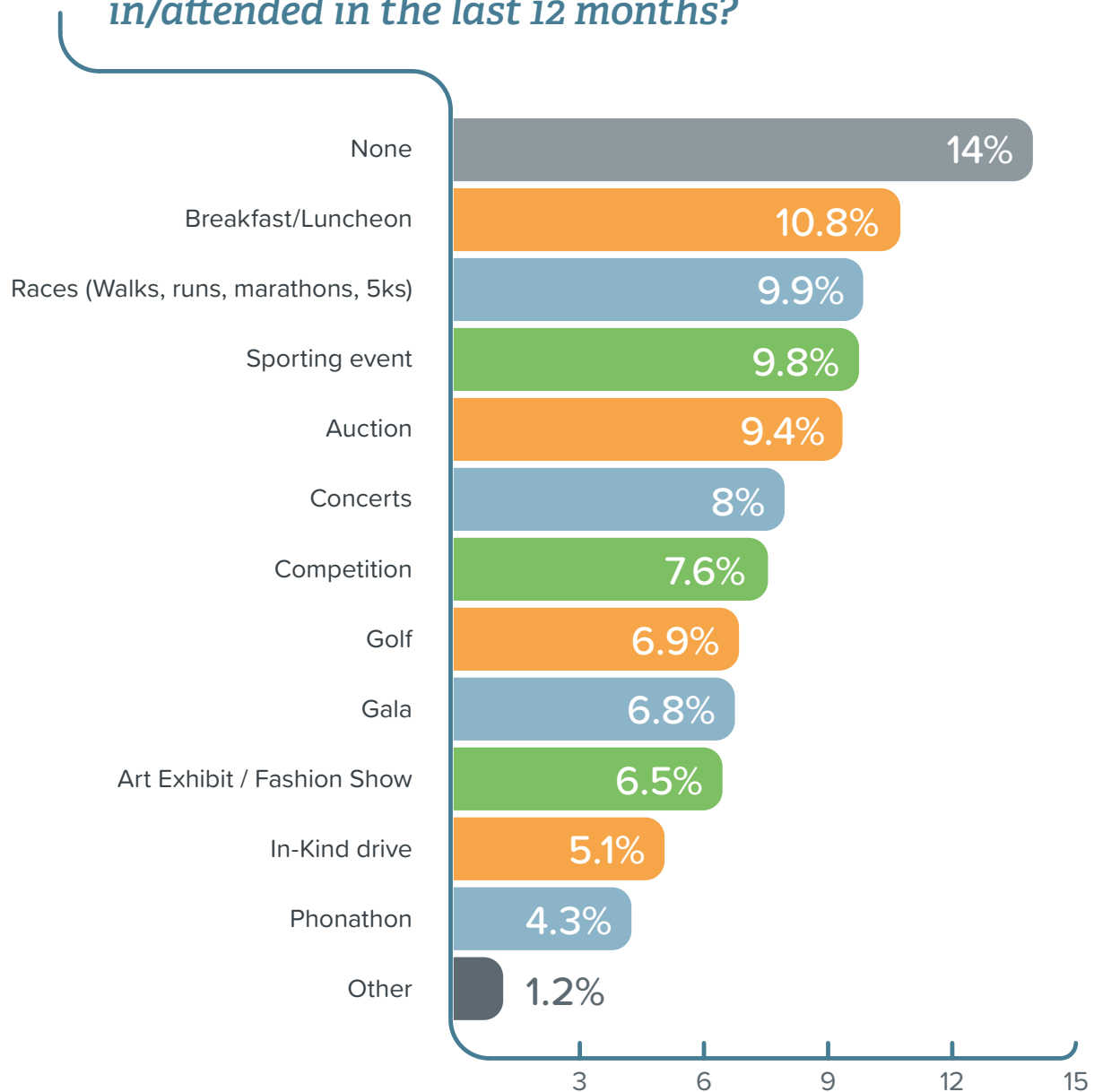
Fundraising events can be an opportunity for your nonprofit to increase awareness and brand recognition while raising crucial funds for your important mission. However, understanding how donors engage with fundraising events and their event preferences is important to ensure you're creating events your supporters want to attend! The questions we asked donors were intended to see what events are best received and measure donor preferences with hybrid and virtual fundraising events.



*The most popular event formats among respondents were breakfast/luncheons, races, sporting events, and auctions.*

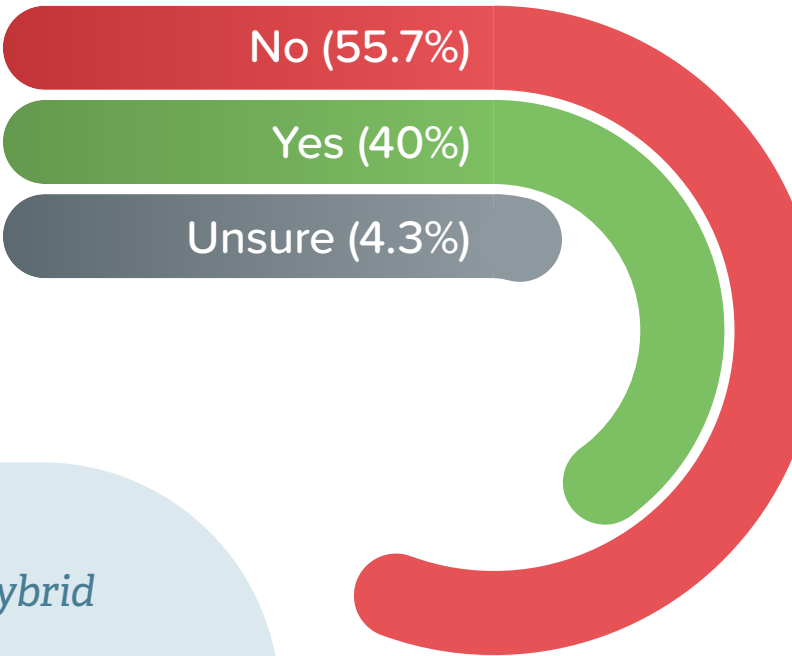
Fourteen percent of respondents did not attend a fundraising event in the last twelve months.

### *What kind of fundraising event have you participated in/attended in the last 12 months?*



Over half, 55%, of the donors we surveyed have not participated in a hybrid or virtual fundraising event in the last twelve months, but 40% have.

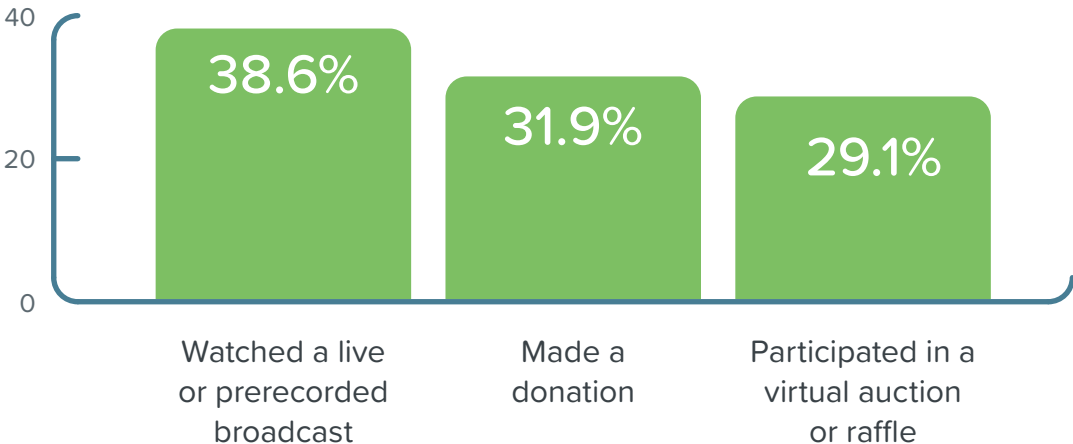
If yes, did you participate in a virtual/hybrid event?



A majority who attended a virtual or hybrid event participated in a live broadcast.

Of those who did attend a virtual or hybrid event, 38% participated in a live broadcast, 28% in a virtual auction, and 31% made a donation.

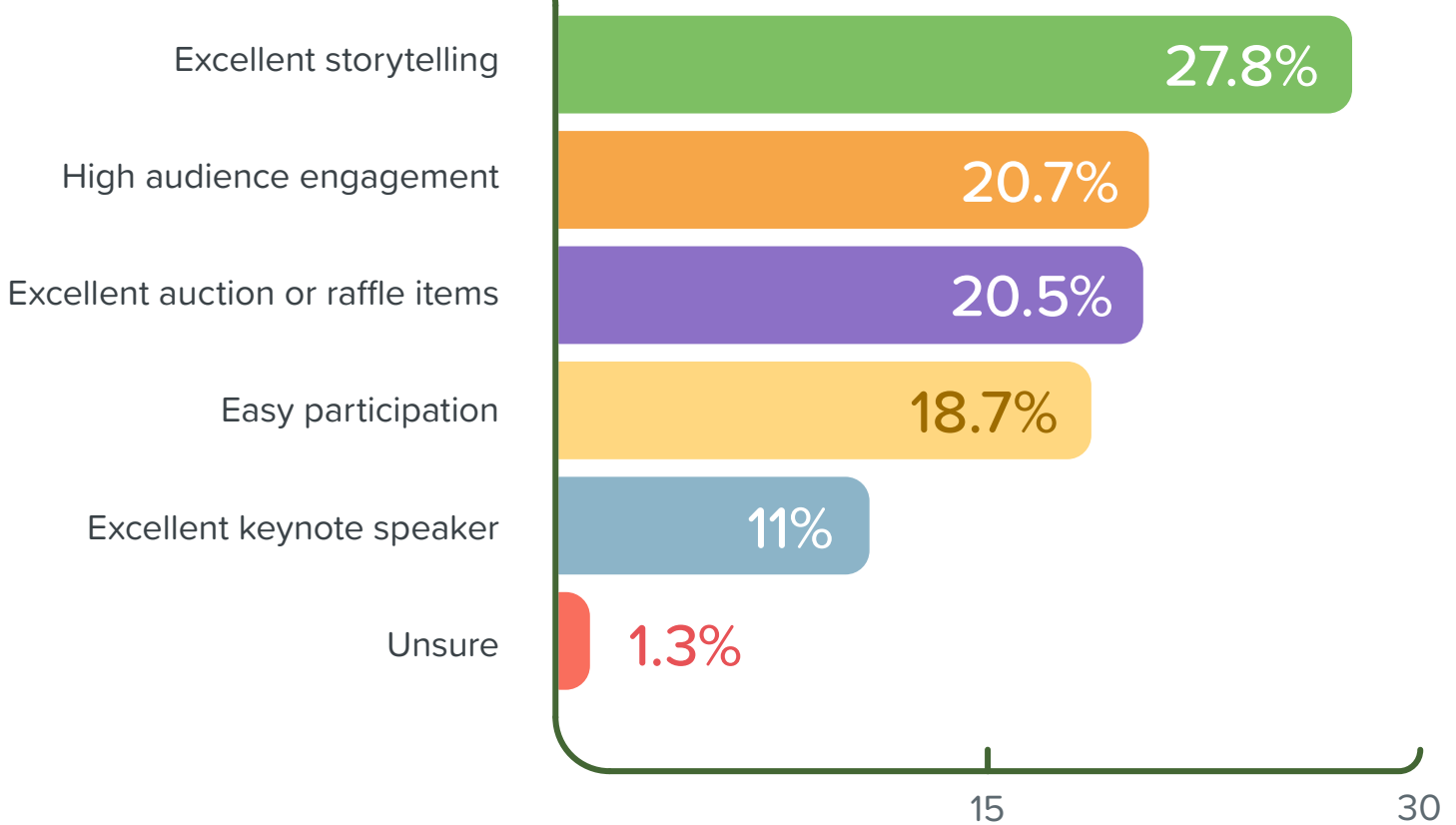
If you attended a virtual or hybrid event, how did you participate?



*Most attendees enjoyed participating in virtual or hybrid fundraising events.*

Fifty-six percent answered that the event exceeded their expectations. The top reasons for expectations being met or exceeded included excellent storytelling, engaging content, and an excellent auction or raffle.

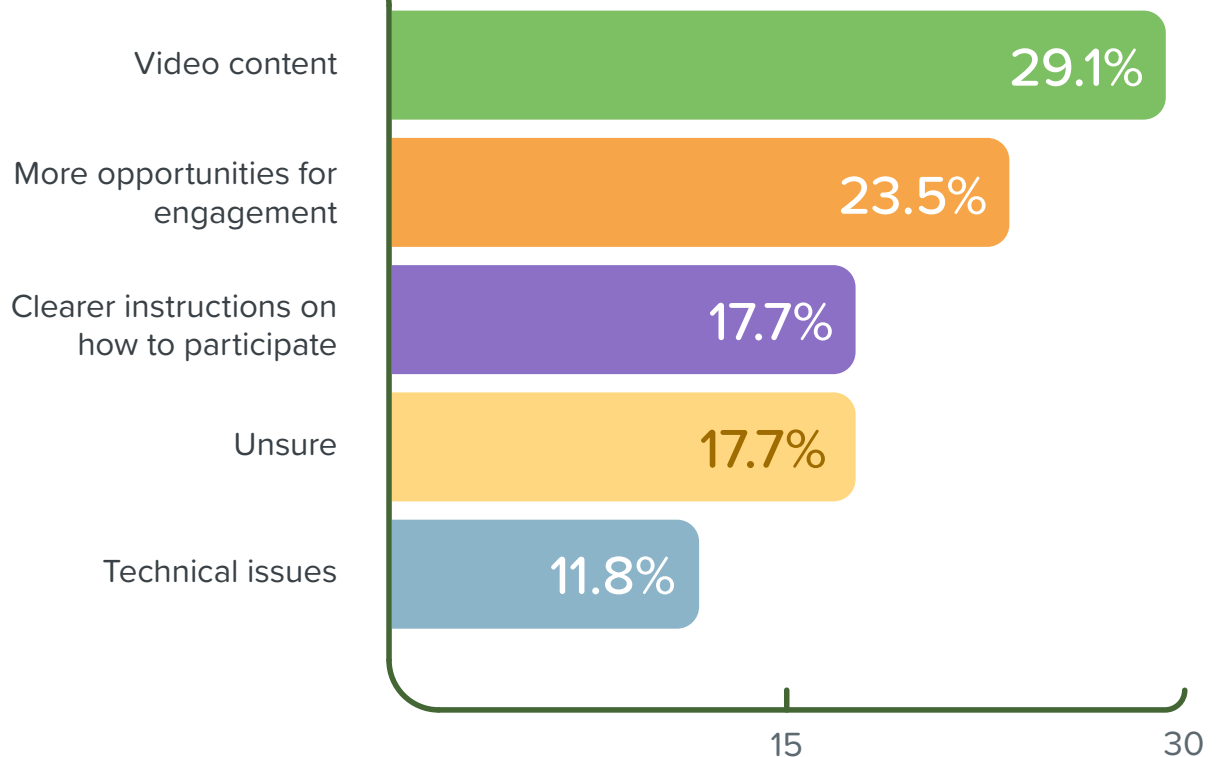
**What are the top reasons why a virtual/hybrid event exceeded your expectations?**



*Additional or improved upon video content was the top area attendees felt could have been improved.*

For supporters whose expectations weren't met by the virtual fundraising event, 29% believe that video content could have been added or improved upon, and 25% hoped for additional opportunities for participant engagement.

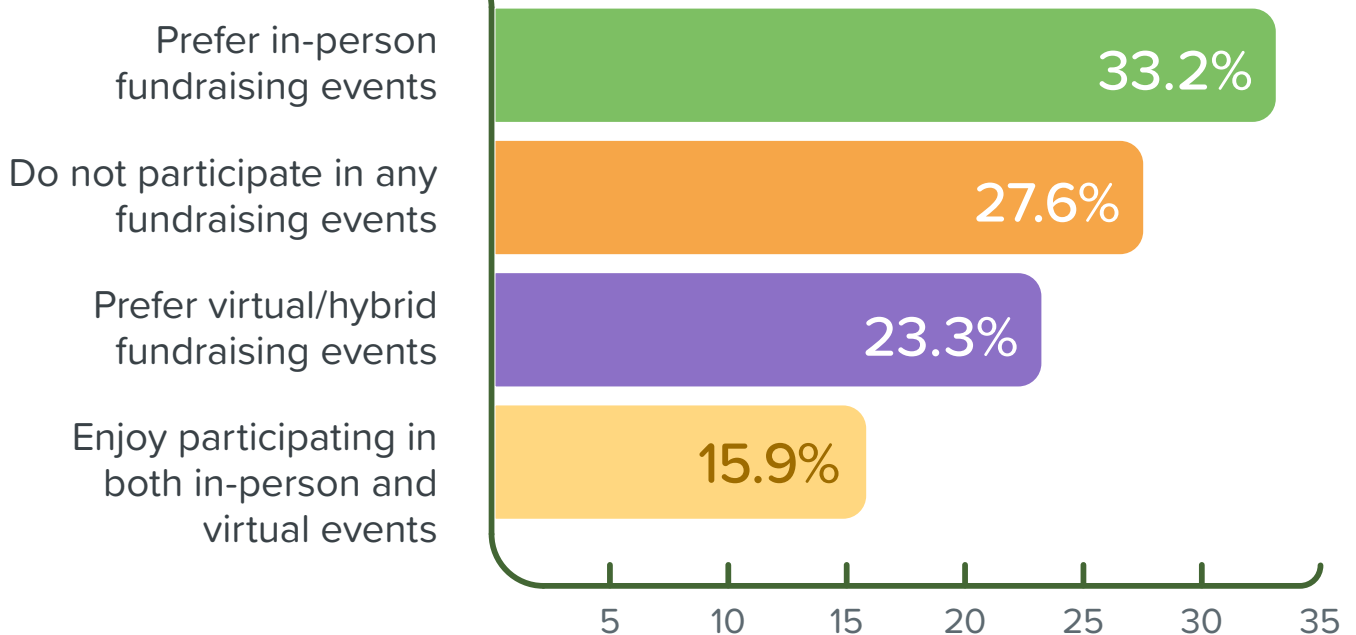
***If the virtual/hybrid didn't meet your expectations, what could have been improved?***



*Donors are almost evenly split on the types of events they prefer.*

Thirty-three percent of donors prefer in-person fundraising events, 23% prefer virtual, 15% like both in-person and virtual events, and 27% answered that they do not participate in any fundraising events.

*Do you prefer to participate in virtual/hybrid events or in-person fundraising events?*




# + + **Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue**

## *Fundraising Events*

### TAKEAWAYS

Having a better knowledge of what fundraising events perform well, what events donors engage with, and strategies to mitigate risk and burnout can lead to more successful fundraising events.

Even though fundraising events can be a lot of work, they allow your nonprofit the chance to tell your story en masse, connect with your constituent base, and market to a larger audience.



## Takeaways for Your Organization

### **Now is the time to elevate your annual in-person event.**

It is no surprise that donors are excited to attend fundraising events in person to connect with your organization and staff firsthand! One-third of the donors we surveyed answered that they prefer in-person events, **but over half of the fundraising professionals we surveyed said that their annual events have not performed as well as they did in years past.** With donor numbers declining and annual event performance decreasing, now is the time to change your annual event.

The pandemic changed event experiences and expectations. Your donors are looking for immersive, engaging, and entertaining fundraising events they can participate in in a variety of ways. To make your events “exit-the-house-worthy,” focus on the following areas to build an unforgettable experience:

- Individuality – What is the individual’s experience? How are you making them feel special?
- Authenticity – How does this event reflect the values of your organization? Is it genuine?
- Connection – Do all the interactions and activities link to your overarching experience?
- Multisensory perception – Does the event offer an experience that can be appreciated through as many senses as possible?
- Contrast – Does the event contrast or align with the attendees’ expectations? Is there a surprise factor?
- Interaction – How does this event connect the relationship between donors, your nonprofit, the beneficiary, and other relevant stakeholders?

**Continue to solicit sponsorships and provide revenue enhancers to attendees.** Sustainable fundraising events have multiple strong revenue streams. Over 95% of nonprofits surveyed solicit sponsorships at some or all of their fundraising events, and over 75% of respondents offer revenue enhancers, such as wine pulls and raffles, at their fundraising events. Consider other revenue streams such as merchandise sales, fund-a-need auctions, or a giving tree wish list for attendees to participate in. It is crucial to offer these additional revenue resources to reduce your dependency on one or two funding sources.

**Focus on storytelling.** Powerful and engaging storytelling was the top reason that a hybrid or virtual fundraising event exceeded expectations for attendees. Telling an impactful and powerful story of a client or beneficiary will capture your audience, prompting them to participate in your event and attend for years to come. They'll understand the importance of your mission and the impact their donation will make firsthand.

**Consider offering virtual or hybrid events.**

*Your donors are interested in a variety of event types—not just in-person events! 23% of donor respondents answered that they prefer virtual and hybrid fundraising events.*

These event formats give your organization the opportunity to reach out to a significant portion of your audience based on their preferences. A large portion of your untapped donor base may be unable to attend your event due to physical, social, or schedule-based limitations. Hosting virtual and hybrid events makes your organization more accessible to all potential donors!

Close to half of fundraisers answered that they do not have any virtual/hybrid event or virtual/hybrid event additions. The largest hiccups to successfully implementing a virtual or hybrid event strategy are that donors do not participate virtually, and hybrid events are too complex to execute. Your hybrid or virtual event doesn't need to be complex! The great news about hybrid and virtual events is that this format can be scaled down or up much more easily than an in-person event. To make hosting a virtual or hybrid event easier, check out these free Qgiv resources:



### [Virtual Event Planner](#)

This eBook includes tips and questions to guide your planning, event planning checklists, virtual event examples and ideas from other nonprofits, and more!



### [The Big Book of Virtual and Hybrid Event Ideas](#)

This eBook explains what makes hybrid and virtual fundraising events worth hosting, provides tips for how to host successful hybrid and virtual fundraisers, and includes several examples of amazing hybrid and virtual events from Qgiv clients!

# + + **Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue**

*Recurring donations  
& Retention* 

THE FUNDRAISER'S PERSPECTIVE



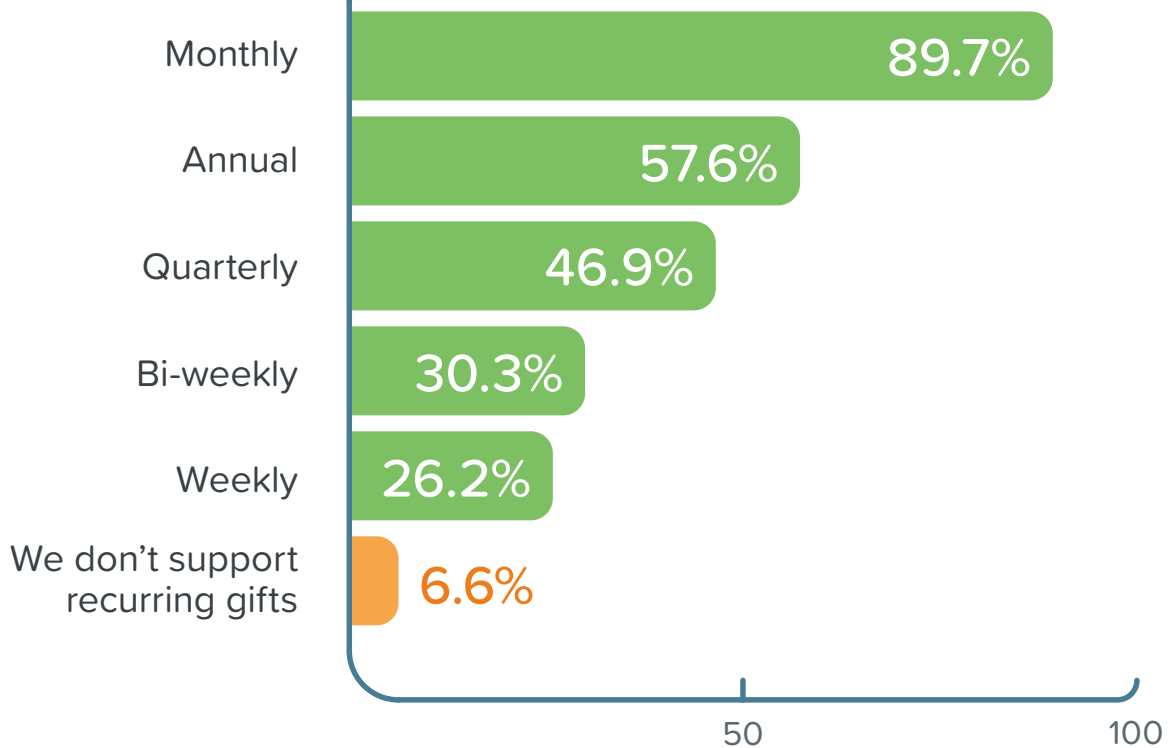
## Recurring Donations

“Sustaining” and “recurring” are often used interchangeably when talking about generous donors who give on a regular basis. Recurring donors have the highest donor retention rate of any demographic—first-time donors have a retention rate of 23%, but repeat donors have a retention rate of 60%! Once a donor gets into the habit of giving and makes their second gift to your organization, the odds that they will continue to support your organization drastically increase. It is critical for an organization to have this foundation of ongoing supporters to ensure sustainable fundraising practices.



*Close to 90% of survey responders answered that they support monthly gifts. Six percent do not support recurring gifts.*

### *What types of recurring donations does your organization support?*



*A fundraiser's goal for recurring gifts includes gaining additional recurring donors and retaining their current recurring donors.*

Over 70% of the nonprofit organizations surveyed have goals to gain additional recurring donors, while 54% have goals regarding the retention of their recurring donors. Twelve percent do not currently have goals around recurring gifts.

Gain additional recurring donors	72.9%
Retain current recurring donors	54.8%
No goals	12.3%
Unsure	10.3%
Other	0.3%



*Most fundraisers have a small push for recurring gifts*

Of the fundraisers surveyed, over 50% have some additional fundraising strategies in their annual fundraising plan to obtain recurring donors.



Some additional recurring giving strategies 52.2%

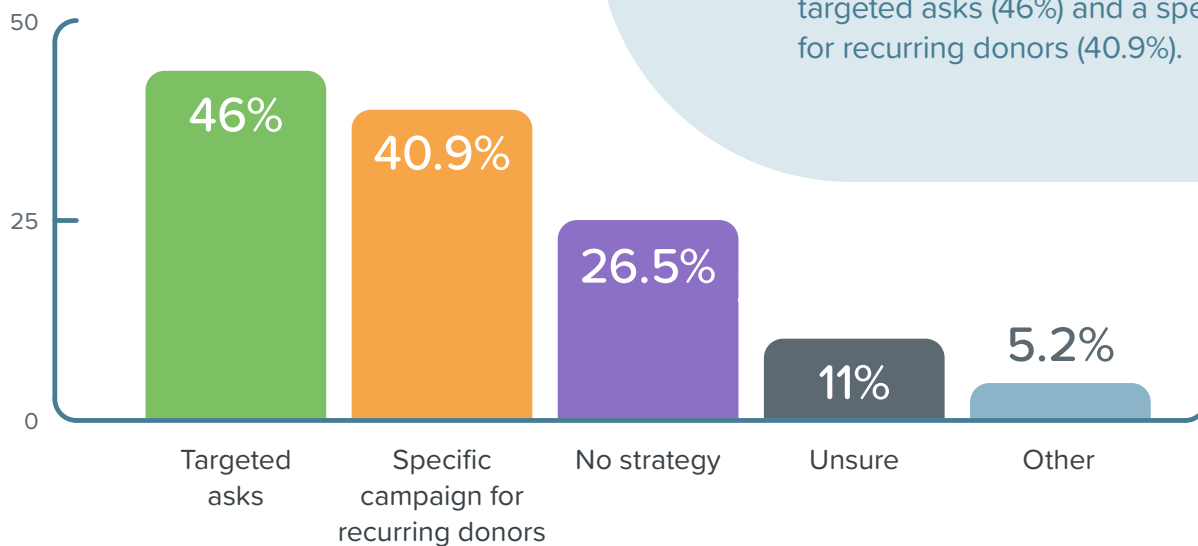
Unsure 18.7%

Many additional recurring giving strategies 12.8%

No additional recurring giving strategies - recurring gifts are not on our radar 10%

No additional recurring giving strategies - we're content with our recurring giving results 6.2%

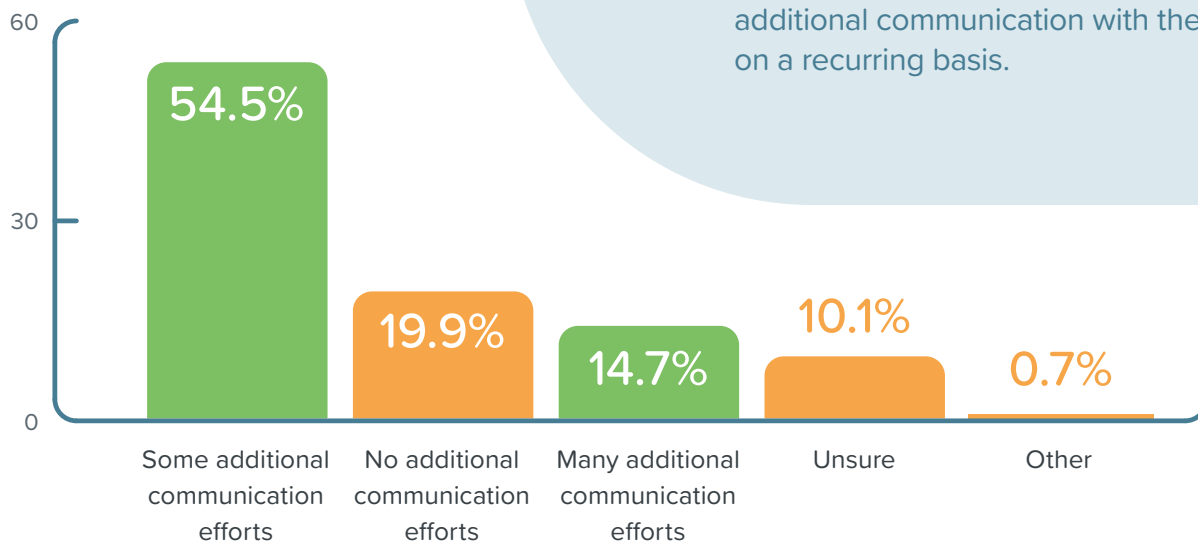
## What is your strategy to obtain recurring donors?



*Targeted asks and a specific campaign for recurring donors are the most popular tactics to obtain sustaining donors.*

Strategies to obtain recurring donors include targeted asks (46%) and a specific campaign just for recurring donors (40.9%).

## If you have recurring donors, what are your retention and communication strategies for them?



*Most fundraisers provide additional updates and communication to their recurring donors.*

For the respondents who do have sustaining-level donors, close to 55% implement some additional communication efforts with their recurring donors. Twenty percent of fundraisers do not implement any additional communication with their donors that give on a recurring basis.

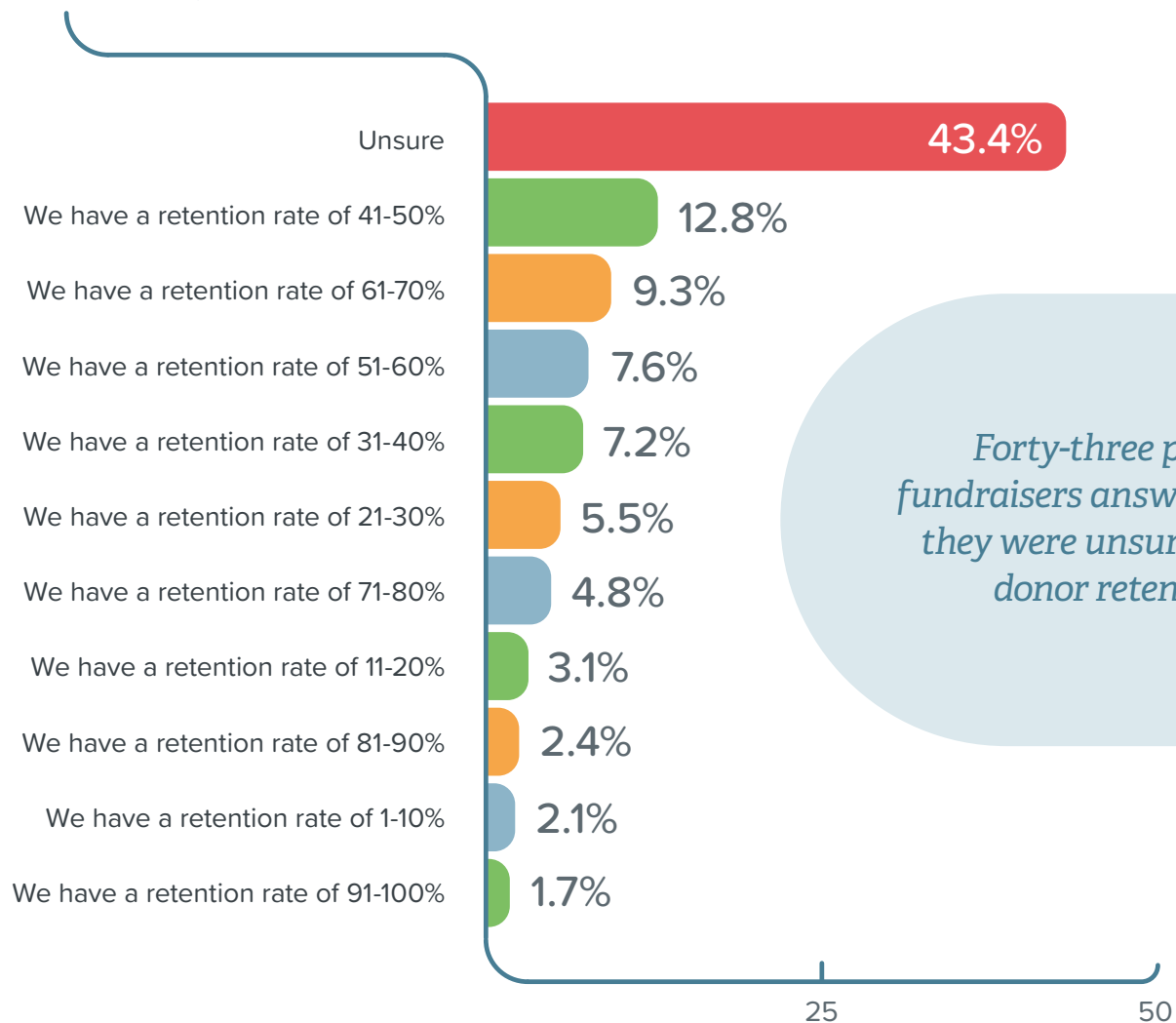


## Donor Retention

Retaining and stewarding donors is crucial to ensure the future success of all fundraising efforts. The cost associated with obtaining a new donor is 10-20 times more expensive than retaining an existing donor! Donor retention strategies can not only cut down your organization's acquisition costs, but they can also help you build a reliable source of revenue which is invaluable during periods of economic instability.

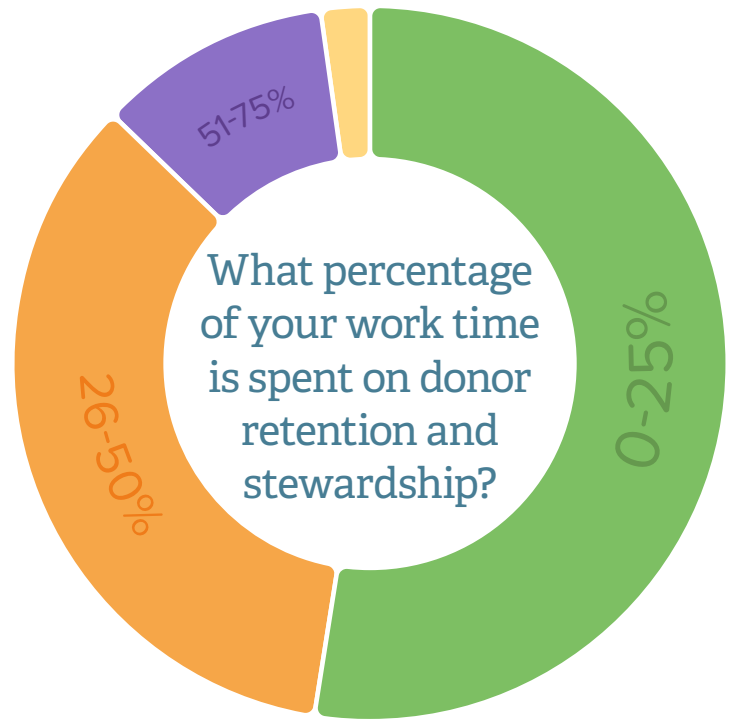
*Donor retention rate is unknown by many fundraisers.*

### What is your donor retention rate?

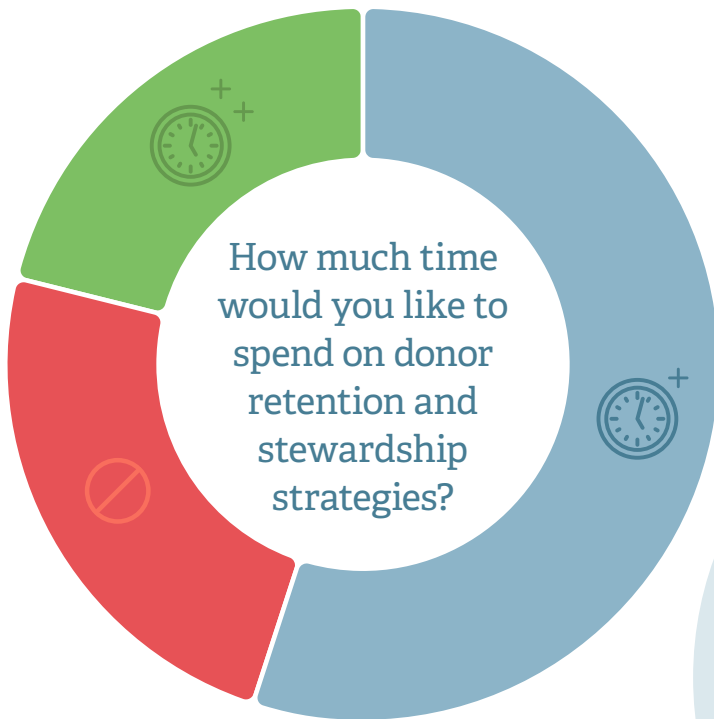


*Forty-three percent of fundraisers answered that they were unsure of their donor retention rate.*

Over 50% of respondents answered that they spend between 0% and 25% of their work time on donor retention and stewardship strategies.



- 52.6% 0-25%
- 34.8% 26-50%
- 10.5% 51-75%
- 2.1% 76-100%

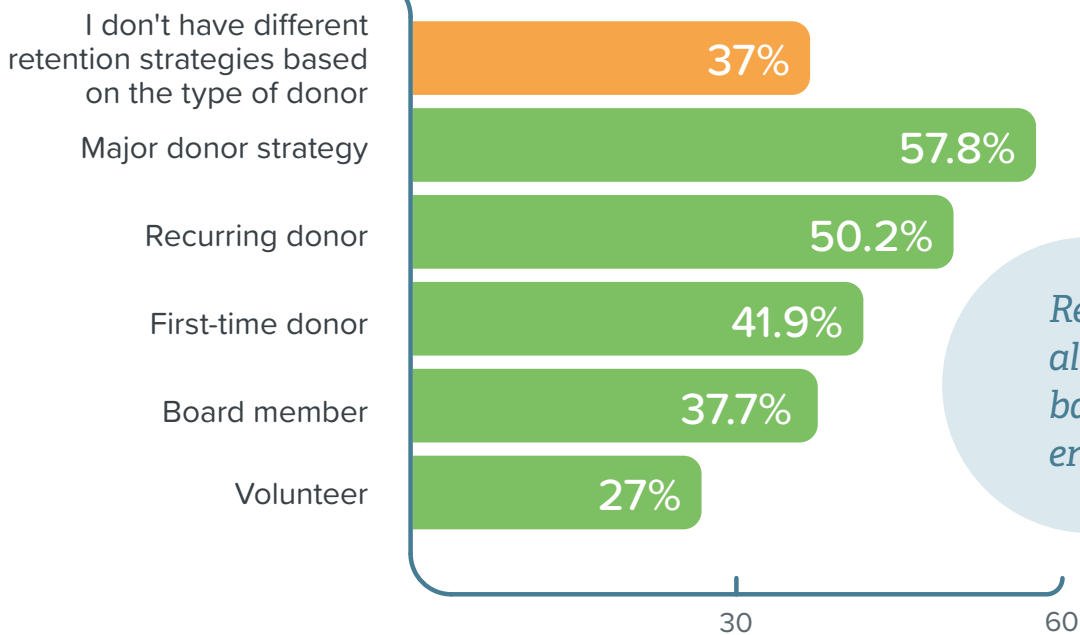


- 55.2% Some additional time
- 23.8% No additional time
- 21% Much more additional time

Most fundraisers would like to spend additional time focusing on donor retention and stewardship strategies.

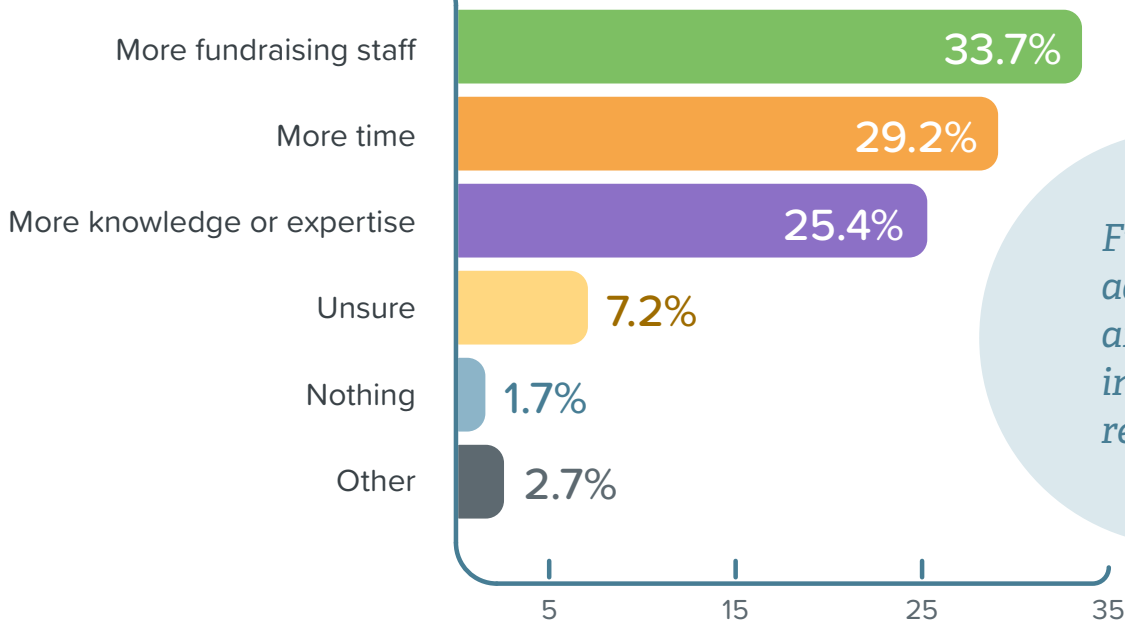
When asked how much additional time they would like to spend on donor retention and stewardship strategies, over 55% would like to spend some additional time. Twenty-three percent responded no additional time, and 21% answered much more additional time.

## Does your organization have different retention strategies based on the type of donor?



Retention strategies for all respondents differed based on the donor's engagement level.

## What factors do you think could increase your donor retention rate?



Fundraisers believe additional resources and knowledge would increase their donor retention rate.

Fundraisers believe that their donor retention rate would increase based on a multitude of factors, including more fundraising staff, more time, and more knowledge on the topic.

# + + **Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue**

*Recurring donations  
& Retention* 

## THE DONOR'S PERSPECTIVE



### Donor Retention

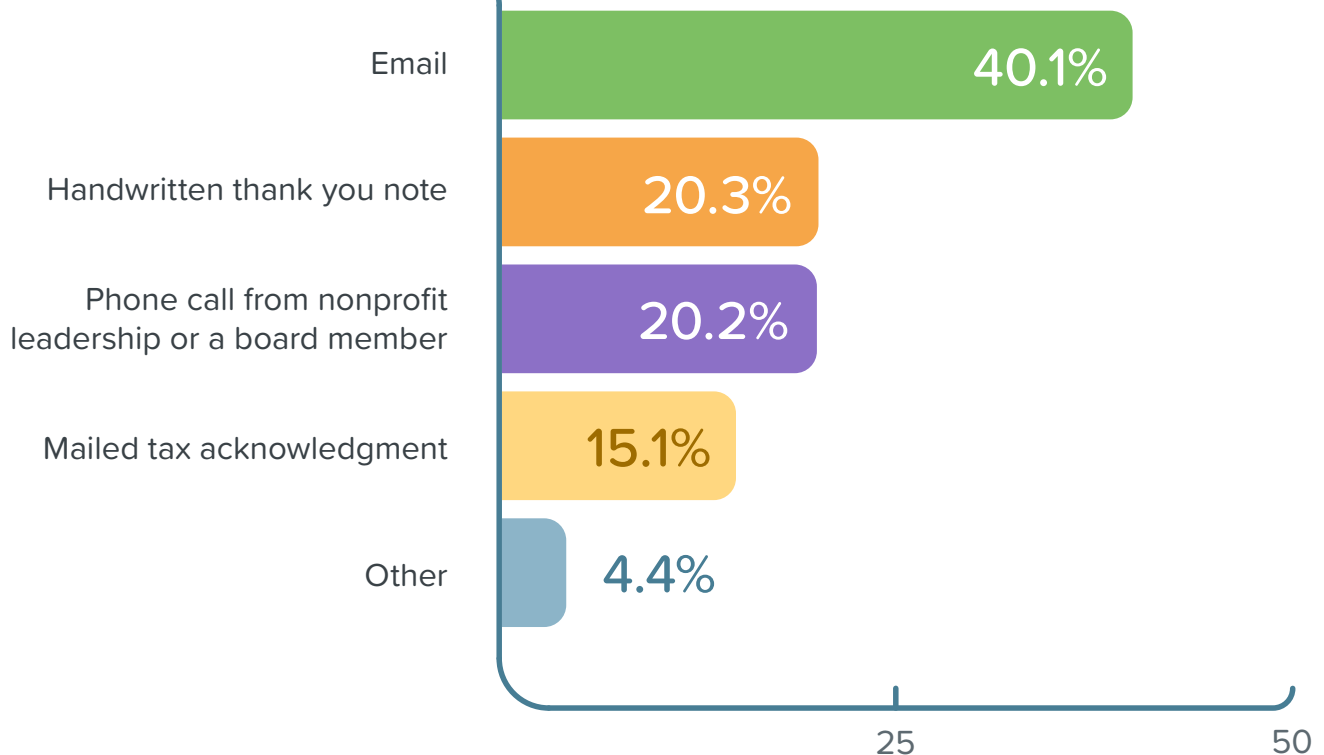
Understanding why donors continue to support organizations and what their preferred communication methods are gives fundraisers information to start building an effective retention strategy. Questions asked about donor retention were intended to better understand donor motivations for making repeat gifts.



*Email is a powerful method of communication for many donors*

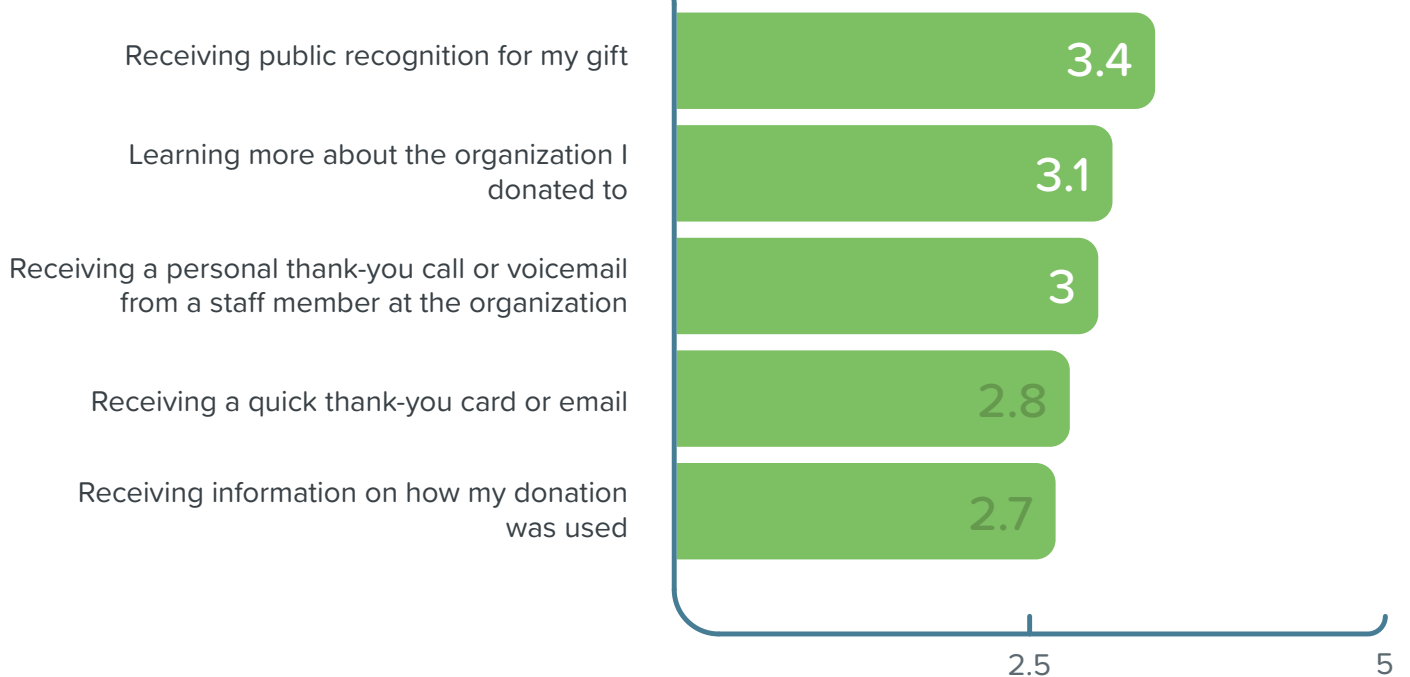
After making a first-time gift, the preferred thank-you method for over 40% of donors was email. Twenty percent answered a handwritten thank you note, and 20% responded that they would appreciate a phone call from a member of the board or the organization's leadership team.

*After you make a first-time donation to an organization, what is your preferred thank-you method?*



*Receiving recognition for their donation and learning more about the organization they gave to are the top factors that would encourage a donor to make a second gift.*

*Rank from most impactful (5) to least impactful (1) the factors that would convince you to make a second donation to the nonprofit your support.*

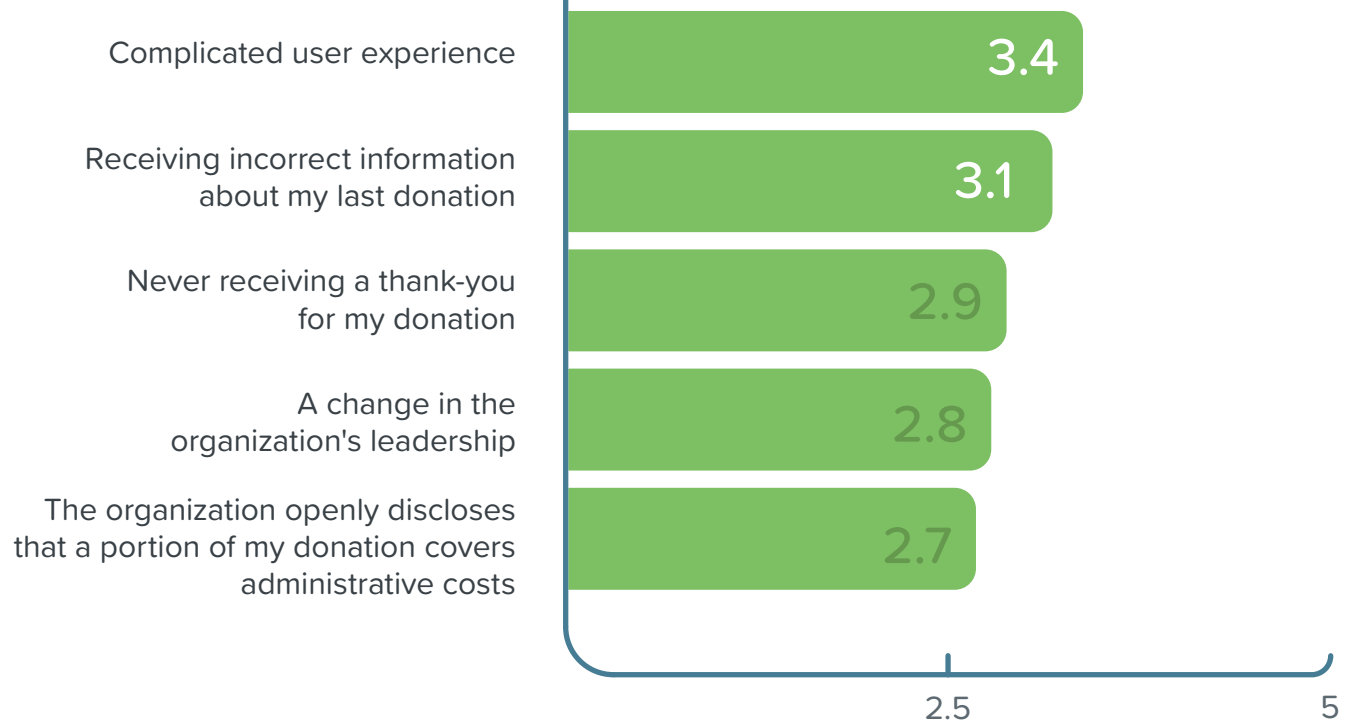


*Personalized acknowledgments are an effective donor retention tactic.*

**Over 80% of donors** who responded to the survey would be highly or somewhat likely to make a second gift to an organization after receiving a personalized acknowledgment.

*A complicated user experience tops the list for donors stopping their support.*

*What is the most impactful factor that would convince you to not support or give again to an organization you've previously donated to?*



# + + **Building Sustainable Streams of Revenue**

*Recurring donations  
& Retention* 

## TAKEAWAYS

When done right, donor retention leads to increased revenue for your nonprofit to grow your programs and achieve your mission. Poor donor retention leads to more resources spent on capturing new donors, decreasing your ROI and affecting your bottom line. In fact, the cost of acquiring new donors can be 50-100% more than their initial donation to your organization!



## Takeaways for Your Organization

With declining donor numbers and donor retention rates at a historic low, it's never been more important for nonprofit organizations to invest time and energy in their donor retention! To help you boost your donor retention rate and devote more time to recurring programs, here are our takeaways:

**Know your donor retention rate.** Forty-three percent of fundraisers who responded to our survey were unsure of their donor retention rate! When you're busy trying to acquire new donors, it can be easy to lose sight of the importance of donor retention and measure its immediate return. Knowing your donor retention rate will help you measure the effectiveness of your fundraising programs, measure the return of donor retention efforts, and learn how many of the donors you work hard to acquire give again to your mission.

To measure your retention rate, identify a group of donors from Year 1. Then, look at the same group of donors in Year 2. How many of those donors donated again in Year 2?

To calculate your donor retention rate:

$$\frac{\text{\# of Returning Donors (Year 2)}}{\text{\# of Previous Year Donors (Year 1)}} = \text{Retention Rate (\%)}$$

**Offer multiple recurring giving frequencies.** To make it easy for your supporters to make recurring gifts, offer different giving plans or frequencies on your online donation form and in your direct mail appeals. If a donor agrees to break up a larger donation into different recurring gifts, you've helped instill a habit of giving in them, which will have significant returns in the long run. Remember, supporters who give to an organization on a scheduled basis prove to have the highest retention rates, making them a great source of reliable revenue!

It's important to note that not all donors who are looking to donate on a recurring basis will donate monthly. Allow your supporters the ability to customize their gift and offer additional frequencies such as weekly, bi-weekly, monthly, quarterly, annually, and semi-annually.

**Implement strategies to cultivate recurring donors.** Recurring donors are key to the sustainability of your fundraising program. But it can be a struggle to know where to begin! Create a strong communication strategy that outlines why giving on a recurring basis is advantageous to the donor and how their impact will be amplified. Examples we love include sponsoring a child in a classroom for the month, providing the essentials for a shelter pup, or meals to an elderly community member for the frequency of the donor's gift.

Another important tip is to ensure that giving on a recurring basis is clear and easy to do on your donation form and website.

**Provide additional updates to recurring donors.** Your recurring donors want to hear updates on the impact their gifts have made. Report back to your recurring supporters regularly and celebrate the wins they've helped make possible through their support!

**Allocate resources for fundraisers to focus more time on retention.** Over 50% of fundraisers that responded said they spend 0-25% of their work time on donor retention. The efforts of a fundraising team can all be for nothing if, at the end of the day, donor retention efforts are not in place. It can be easy to chase new donors, the next big fundraising event, or the random "other duties as assigned" that come with a fundraising position. However, without a focus on donor retention, you're building a castle out of sand instead of bricks. It's not sustainable or built to last.

Organizations should consider hiring additional fundraising staff to allow for additional donor retention efforts or invest in additional process improvements to free up the time of established fundraising staff.



Need some extra help in the meantime to boost your retention rate?

Download Qgiv's free eBook, [Cultivating Donor Retention to Grow Your Giving Garden](#). This eBook takes a deep dive into:

- The current state of donor retention
- What drives donor retention
- How to improve donor retention at your nonprofit

## CONCLUSION

We hope this research study report will equip you and your fundraising team to assess your existing fundraising efforts and create an action plan to ensure the long-term financial success of your nonprofit.

Are you in need of fundraising software to support your sustainable and future-proofed fundraising plan? [Give Qgiv a try!](#) Qgiv offers the needed functions to offer wrap-around fundraising support for your organization, including donation forms, peer-to-peer fundraising, event registration, text fundraising, and auction management.

We hope you enjoyed reading this report as much as we enjoyed writing it. We are excited to support you and your fundraising efforts now, in the future, and during all the challenges that lie ahead!





# SUSTAINABLE GIVING REPORT

# A Guide to Healthy Fundraising