The Network for Public Health Law

The 2025 Federal Executive Orders: Documenting Impacts on and Resilience of Community-Based Organizations in the Southeast

Funders Briefing

October 28, 2026



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Network for Public Health Law

About the Network for Public Health Law

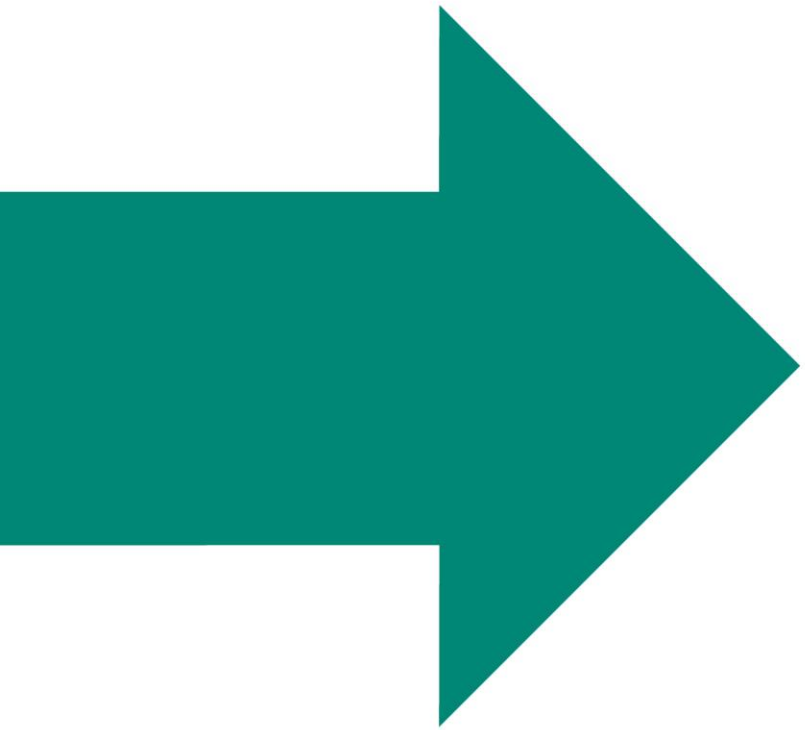
The Network advances health equity and improves health outcomes by providing guidance on the effective use of laws and policies.

We work with:

- Community and advocacy organizations
- Public health agencies
- Policymakers
- Philanthropic organizations

We provide:

- Research and analysis
- Strategic consultation and guidance
- Knowledge-building and training



Poll Question 1

Have you or a grantee/funded partner been **negatively** affected by a federal executive order since January 2025?

Poll Question 2

Has a grantee/funded partner conveyed to you that the executive orders put them in a position where they **do not know how to respond**?

"Whether a nonprofit receives federal funding or not, it seems like we've all been affected by these executive orders and changes coming from the federal government. Nonprofit organizations have long been who communities and individuals look to for help when the government can't help them, but now our hands are being tied as well leaving the American people as the victim in a situation they have no control over."

-Survey Respondent

UAB The University of Alabama at Birmingham

SEAP
SOUTHERN ECONOMIC ADVANCEMENT PROJECT

The Network for Public Health Law



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Agenda

- Partner Introductions
- Executive Orders and the Attack on Social Services
- Survey Introduction and Background
- Data Analysis
- How We Can Use This Work
- What's Next?
- Discussion and Q&A





Liza Crichton
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About the Southern Economic Advancement Project

SEAP works to help our partners bridge gaps between progressive policy and the South to broaden economic security, health access, and climate resilience.

We work with:

- Community and advocacy organizations
- Local, state and federal partners
- Policymakers

We provide:

- Research and data
- Technical assistance
- Field-building and convening



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About the Research Team, UAB

- Dr. Annie Glover, Assistant Professor, Department of Health Policy and Organization, UAB
- Dr. Peter Jones, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science and Public Administration, UAB
- Dr. Andrea Daviera, Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Wichita State University
- Dr. Travis Moore, Assistant Professor, Department of Epidemiology, University of Pittsburgh
- Three graduate students at UAB



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Executive Orders and the Attack on Social Services



Executive Orders: In General

"[D]irectives issued by the president to officers of the executive branch, requiring them to take an action, stop a certain type of activity, alter policy, change management practices, or accept a delegation of authority under which they will be responsible for the implementation of law."

Phillip J. Cooper, By Order of the President: The Use and Abuse of Executive Direct Action, 2nd ed. (Lawerence: University Press of Kansas, 2014), 21.

Project 2025

PRESIDENTIAL TRANSITION PROJECT

Mrs. Smith, and Ms. Smith—to come to Washington or support those who can. Our goal is to assemble an army of aligned, vetted, trained, and prepared conservatives to go to work on Day One to deconstruct the Administrative State.

PROMISE #2: DISMANTLE THE ADMINISTRATIVE STATE AND RETURN SELF-GOVERNANCE TO THE AMERICAN PEOPLE.

Of course, the surest way to put the federal government back to work for the

Nonprofit organizations are a major part of the administrative state.

“Nonprofits are indispensable partners in delivering essential services in communities across the country, and an estimated 30% of U.S. nonprofits rely on governmental grants and contracts to support that work.”

Diane Yentel,
President and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits

Select 2025 Executive Orders

"Vague prohibitions inhibit freedom of speech when individuals do not know whether their speech is permitted and choose not to exercise their rights for fear of the consequences."

***San Francisco AIDS Foundation et al v. Trump* (N.D. Cal.)**

EO 14151 **Ending Radical and Wasteful DEI Programs and Preferencing**

Directive to terminate all federal Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) activities, mandates, policies, programs, and preferences

EO 14168 **Defending Women from Gender Ideology Extremism and Restoring Biological Truth to the Federal Government**

States that there are only two sexes – male and female – that the United States will recognize and mandates federal agencies to take steps to eliminate federal funding promoting "gender ideology."

EO 14173 **Ending Illegal Discrimination and Restoring Merit-Based Opportunity**

Revokes EO 11246 "Equal Employment Opportunity" issued in 1965 that generally prohibited certain types of employment discrimination by federal contractors and required affirmative action to provide equal opportunity in employment. Also requires every federal contract or award to include a term for recipients to certify they are not promoting DEI in violation of applicable federal laws.

An attack on the administrative state is an attack on nonprofits and the backbone of the American social safety net.

“This order is a potential five-alarm fire for nonprofit organizations and the people and communities they serve. From pausing research on cures for childhood cancer to halting food assistance, safety from domestic violence, and closing suicide hotlines, the impact of even a short pause in funding could be devastating and cost lives. This order could decimate thousands of organizations and leave neighbors without the services they need.”

Diane Yentel,
President and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits

Project Motivation

- Extremely limited empirical research on the impacts of executive orders
- Documenting impacts is important for the historical record, to understand EOs' consequences
- Did EOs create new organizational and community needs? What were these?
- How did organizations respond and build resilience?

Complementary Team; Limited Pilot Funding

- The Network, SEAP, and research team have complementary perspectives and strengths
  - NPHL: legal expertise, EO tracking
  - SEAP: community based, familiar with impacts, research to action
  - Academics: research expertise

- $10k in pilot funding
- SEAP, the Network, and faculty all contributing unpaid effort

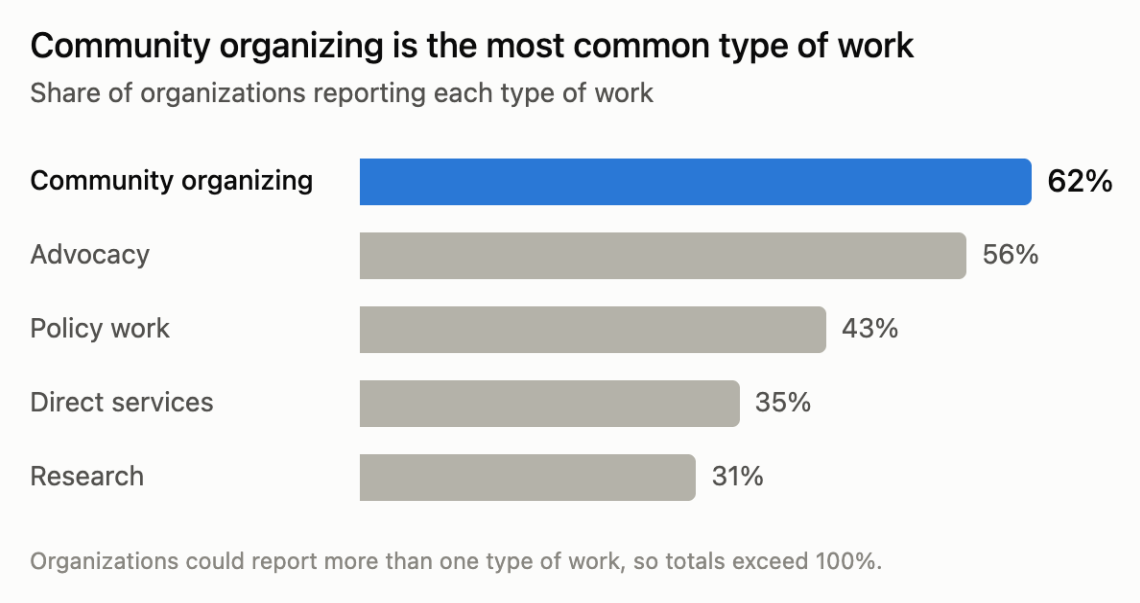
Pilot Study Overview

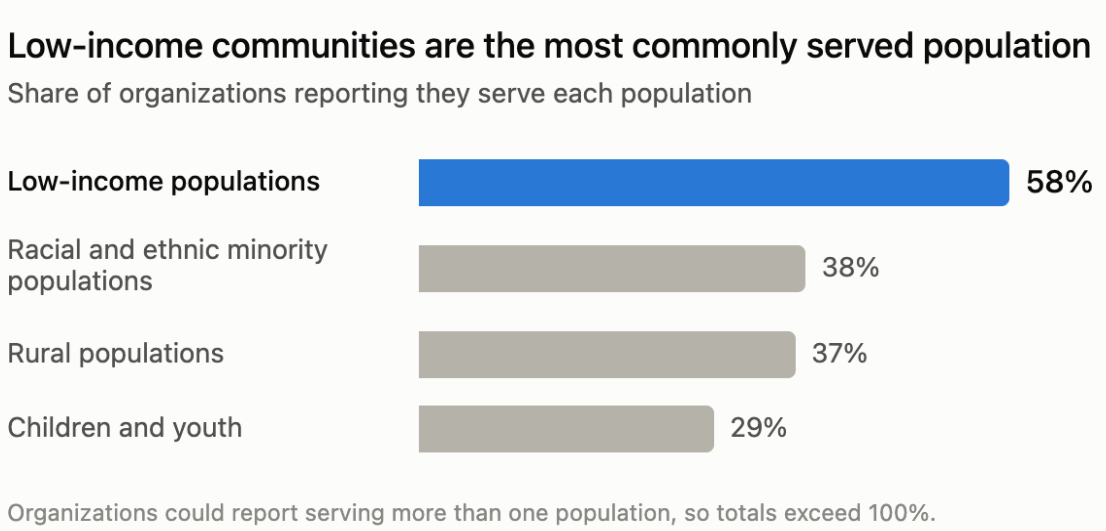
- Survey of Southeast nonprofits completed; 100+ respondents
- In-depth interviews launching early November
- Theoretical grounding:
  - Structural Violence
  - Policy Feedback Theory
  - Advocacy Coalition Framework

Survey Respondents Represented Diverse Community-Based Organizations

Who responded?

- 110 organizations from across the U.S. Southeast participated in the survey
- 76% were 501(c)(3) organizations





**Multiple responses possible, may not add up to 100%*

Funding Disruptions Were Widespread

Among organizations receiving each type of funding:

77%

77% of organizations reported reductions in federal government funding.

(33 of 43)

61%

61% reported reductions in state or local government funding.

(27 of 43)

69%

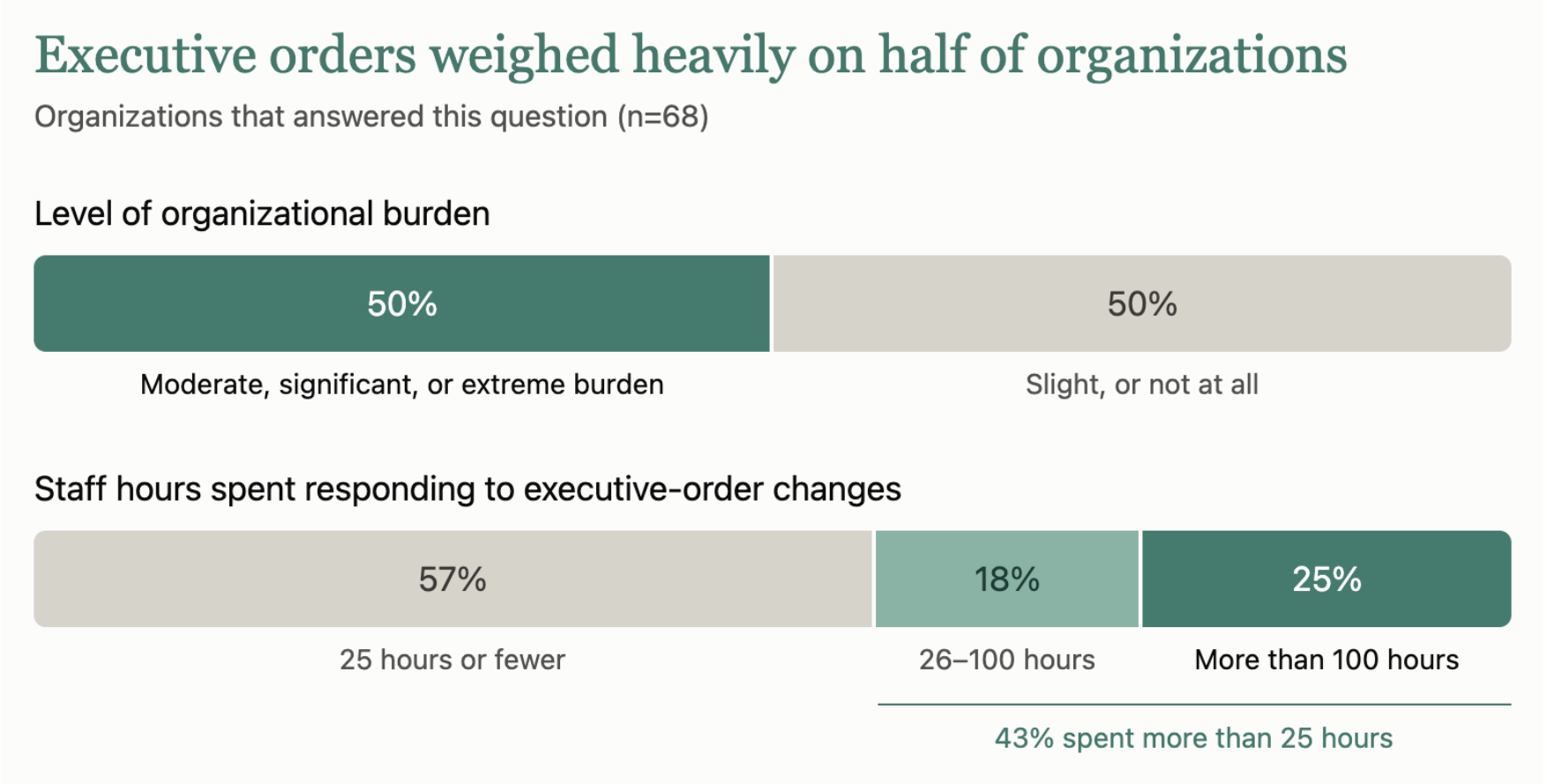
69% reported reductions in private philanthropic funding.

(48 of 70)

"I would just want to be clear that there is something about the disruptions and chaos of HOW the Executive Orders were rolled out that meant lack of clarity and a lot of holding on work by our partners because of what was unknown about how to implement it. This has a cost and takes a toll on people and organizations ." - Survey Respondent

Organizational Capacity was Reduced

Among organizations who answered this question:



Community Impacts Extended Beyond Organizations

71%

71% reported at least some impact on the communities they serve.

(41 of 58)

52%

52% reported moderate, significant, or extreme community impacts.

(30 of 58)

Reported impacts included:

- Food insecurity and reliance on emergency food assistance
- Housing instability and reduced housing support
- Reduced access to services for low-income households
- Increased vulnerability among immigrant communities
- Growing demand for services paired with reduced organizational capacity

Organizations Adapted through Advocacy, Collaboration and Mutual Aid

Organizations reported many adaptation strategies, including:

66%

66% undertook new advocacy activities in response to the EOs.

(43 of 65)

57%

57% collaborated with other organizations or coalitions.

(37 of 65)

49%

49% participated in mutual aid activities.

(32 of 65)

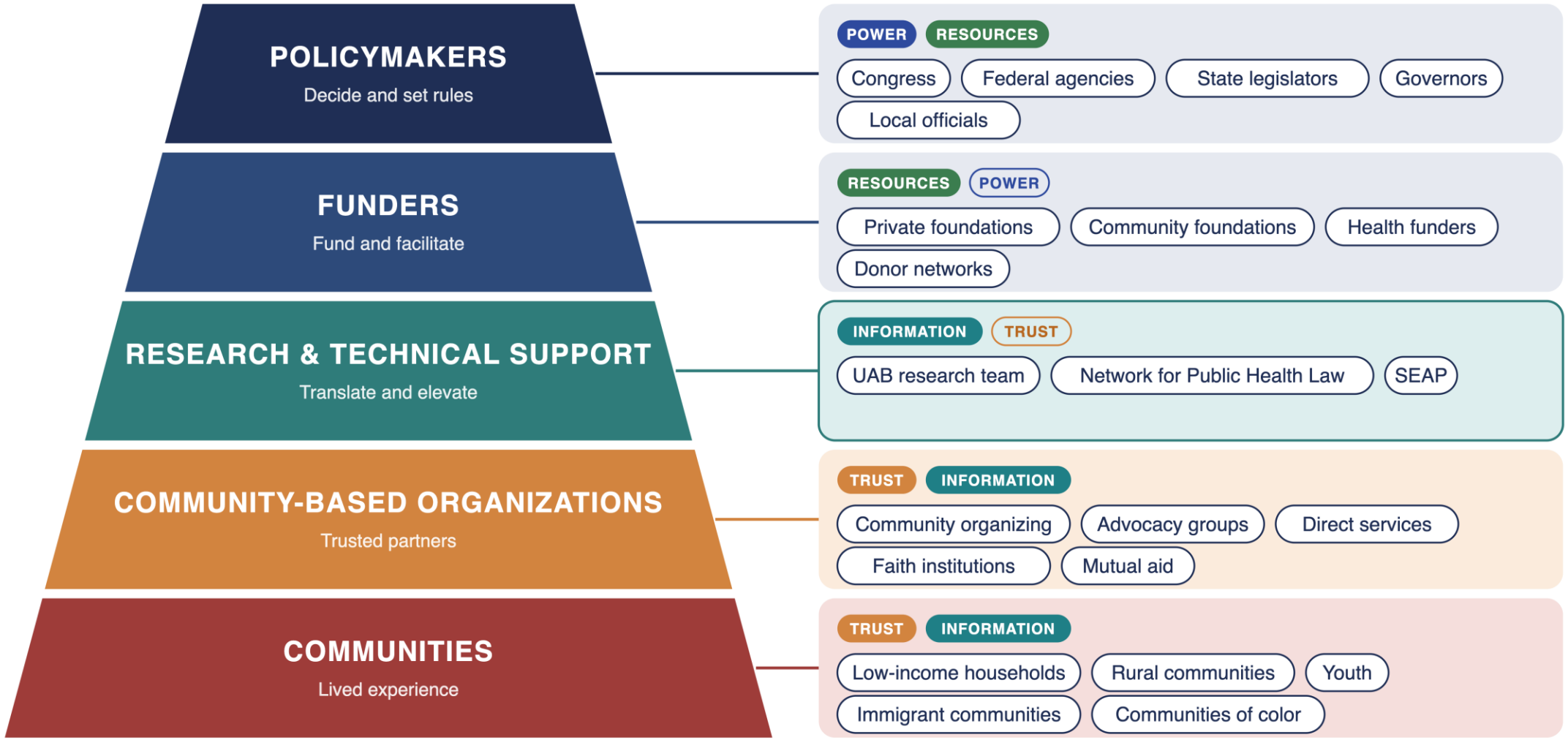
"We reworked our programming model and added a whole new area around community empowerment and advocacy." - Survey Respondent

Additional Findings and Future Research Opportunities

The survey captured substantially more than we were able to cover today, including:

- Workforce impacts, i.e., staff morale, well-being, burnout
- Language and policy changes, i.e., organizational self-censorship, policy and procedural changes, drivers of change
- Information environments, i.e., how organizations track policy changes, reliance on federal data
- Variation across organizations and communities

Leveraging Research for Advocacy and Capacity-Building



"As the South goes...



so goes the nation."

W. E. B. Du Bois

The Importance of this Work

Building the Historical Record

- Memory fades and narratives harden fast
- Reconstructed records lead to weaker evidence
- There's an urgency to the work

The Importance of this Work

Research is the First Step of Advocacy

- Federal grant status is not a stable predictor of harm
- Research captures other ripple effects like loss in private funding
- Much of the harms can be invisible in aggregate data
- Leaders can't separate EO impacts from wider political and economic shocks

The Importance of this Work

Nonprofits Anchor the Safety Net

- Direct evidence of capacity losses translating into decline of services
- More nonprofit budgets going to administration and compliance

The Importance of this Work

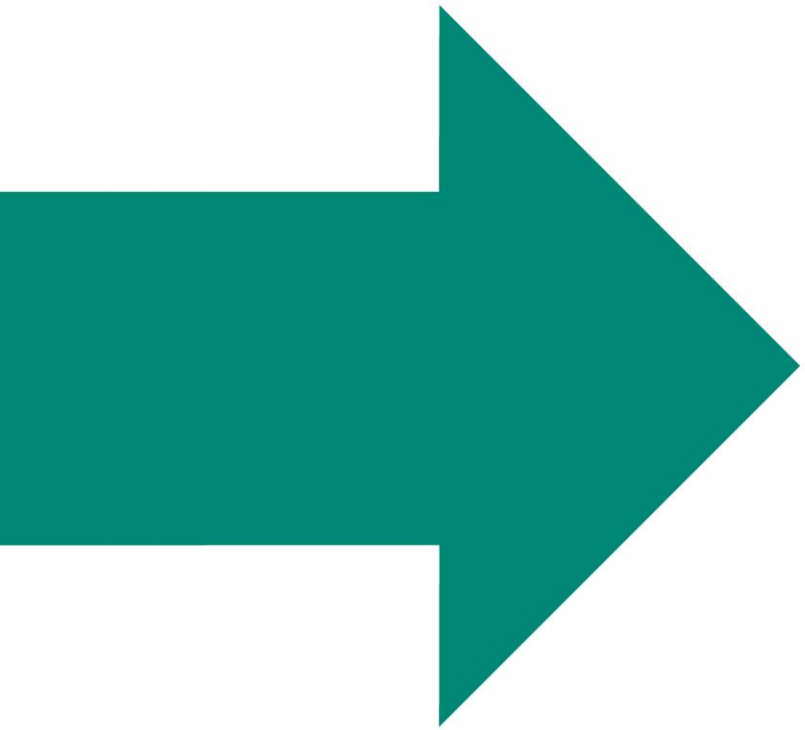
Opportunity to Expand Research to Inform Future Policy-Making

- Public health and equity officers, government workers and educators
- Community members
- How have people's trust and understanding of the role nonprofits play changed and do they still trust them to deliver services?

The Importance of this Work

We Don’t Know What Will Work Yet

- A policy response (at any level of government)
- Anticipatory overcompliance
- Indirect exposure
- Community effects
- What Helps



What's Next?

- Webinar and white papers in the works
- Potential project expansion opportunities
  - Policy briefs for lawmakers and national groups
  - Creating a toolkit to be used for days of action
  - Expanding the survey to other impacted groups and other regions
- Continued collaboration
- How can this work help the communities you serve?

Discussion

Since January 2025 have you had discussions with grantees about EOs?

What aspects of what we have shared today were the most surprising to you?

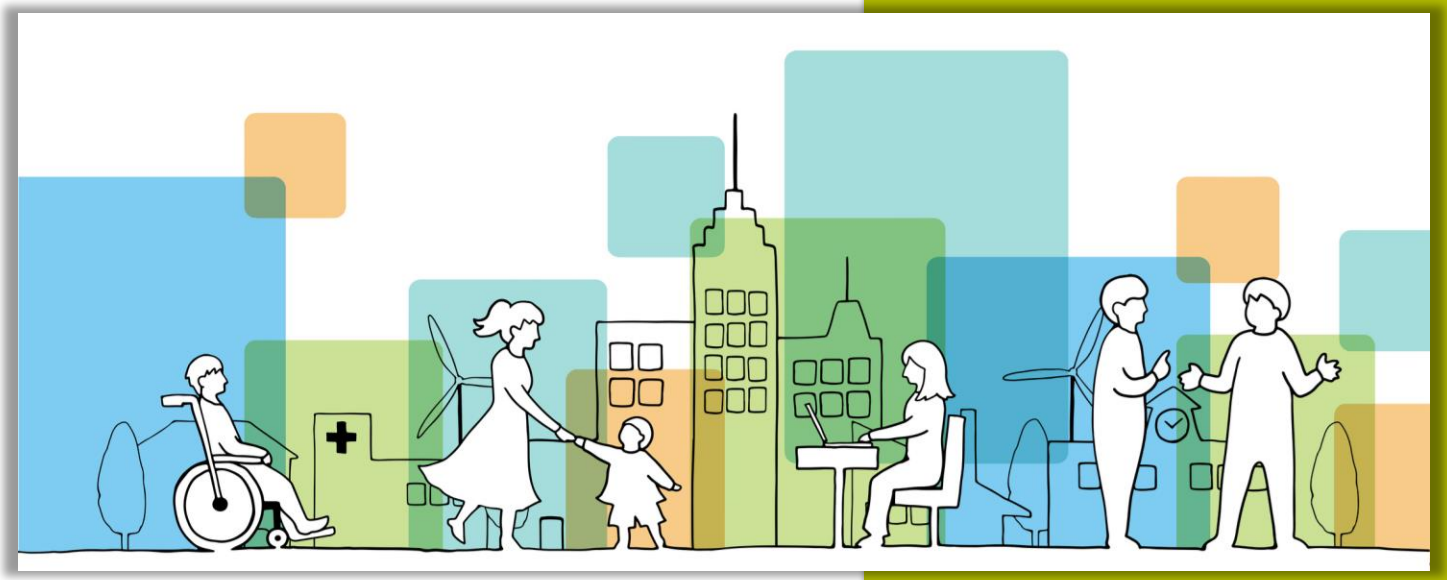
Of the potential next steps, which do you think would be the most useful?

Q&A

February 2027:
Health & Democracy Funders Briefing

Collaborating to:

- Earn community **trust**
- Improve the evidence base **for action**
- Accelerate strategic alignment toward **shared goals for systems change**



Thank you!

Contact us with any questions or to discuss this project further.

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