



NONPROFIT NEEDS DURING COVID-19

Given the widespread and diverse impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, Forefront and our partners committed to learning more about the immediate and mid-term impacts COVID-19 is having on 501(c)(3) organizations in Illinois, including frontline service providers. Forefront has summarized the data in this detailed report.

To learn about how you can join Forefront in supporting the social impact sector and get essential resources during the COVID-19 outbreak, go to [MyForefront.org/COVID-19](https://myforefront.org/covid-19).

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

On Monday, March 16, Forefront administered a survey open to all Illinois nonprofits inquiring about their staff, programmatic, and organizational needs in light of the COVID-19 outbreak. More than 1,300 nonprofits from across the state submitted responses. Organization responses ranged from staff sizes of less than 5 to 100+ staff, with annual operational budgets from less than \$100,000 to \$20+ million.

We heard one consistent message from across the nonprofit community: Organizations and communities need flexible financial resources right now.

Based on the survey results, Forefront makes the following recommendations for funders and the public sector.

501(c)(3) organizations in Illinois need:

- **General operating support**
- **Funding extensions**
- **Restricted grants changed to unrestricted**
- **Eased reporting and application rules for grants**

KEY FINDINGS FOR PHILANTHROPY

- 1** Focus on supporting individuals in need, especially elderly and undocumented people, and people experiencing homelessness, poverty, mental illness, and chronic health conditions. Invest resources directly into communities as well as direct service providers.
- 2** Deepen efforts to coordinate with fellow funders as well as local and federal governments.
- 3** Limit the number and complexity of surveys, grant reports, application questions, or other data collection requests made of organizations that are already overtaxed by increased demand for services and decreased capacity.
- 4** Leverage your advocacy influence. Nonprofits need clarity and direction about how they may support their clients, compensate their staff, maintain staff health (physical and mental), and provide services (especially health) remotely.
- 5** Provide technical support as well as flexible grant funding. Nonprofits are looking for support to create teleconferencing/ telecommuting/telehealth structures. They need investment in software and hardware for staff and clients.

GENERAL NOTES

Overall, respondents are gravely concerned about their ability to support staff, clients, and communities safely and effectively in an environment that has drastically altered access to many of their traditional methods of contact as well as revenue sources. **Small or nonexistent financial reserves coupled with a long history of under-investment in organizational infrastructure has left most survey respondents ill-equipped to weather a crisis.**

Responding organizations are already experiencing significant impact to their programs, services, and general operations, and they anticipate that these impacts will continue to intensify. Specifically, organizations are experiencing high levels of disruption to their ability to provide services and to generate revenue. **Many are also experiencing increased demand for services, increased and sustained staff and volunteer absences, and disruptions to supplies/services provided by partners.**

The constantly changing nature of the situation and policies related to their services also contribute to a sense of feeling overwhelmed and a request for clear, concise, and coordinated communication from government and philanthropy.

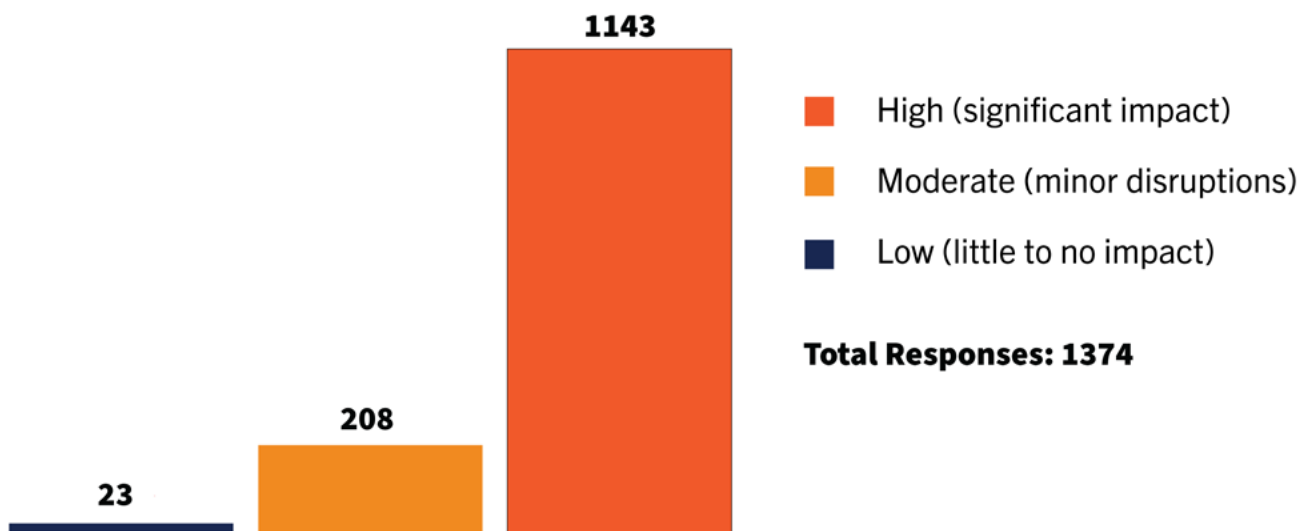
Respondents expressed great concern across the board regarding the needs of vulnerable populations, specifically the elderly, people who are undocumented, and people experiencing homelessness, poverty, chronic health conditions, and mental illness.



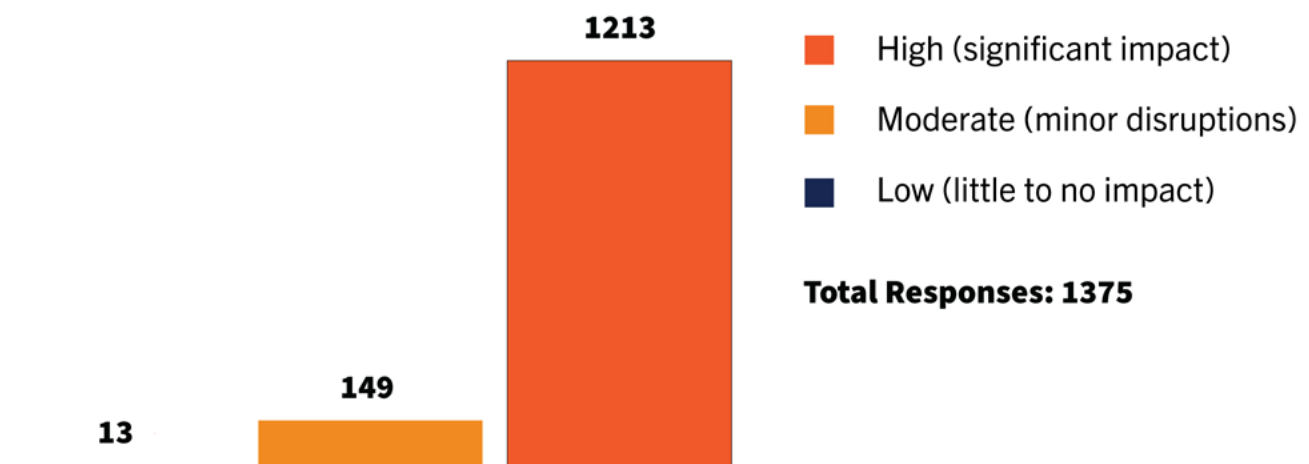
SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

The following pages provide detailed summaries of responses to each question of the survey.

QUESTION 1 Please estimate the level of impact COVID-19 is having currently on the programs, services, or general operations of your organization.



QUESTION 2 Please estimate the level of impact COVID-19 is anticipated to have on the programs, services, or general operations of your organization.





SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 3 Which of the following impacts has your organization experienced or do you anticipate experiencing?

93.67%	Cancellation of programs or events
77.82%	Disruption of services to clients and communities
41.02%	Disruption of supplies or services provided by partners
60.36%	Increased and sustained staff and volunteer absences
44.87%	Increased demand for services/support from clients and communities
79.27%	Budgetary implications related to strains on the economy
20.51%	Other (see content summary on next page)



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 3 Which of the following impacts has your organization experienced or do you anticipate experiencing? (continued)

In addition to the previous concerns, respondents shared the following impacts that they are currently or anticipate experiencing:

- **Increased need for mental health and wellness services due to generalized fear and anxiety among clients, employees, board members, and volunteers.**
- **Inability to meet increased demand for services due to sustained employee and volunteer absences or because the organization has closed completely.**
 - Many organizations rely on seniors, who are at high risk from COVID-19 exposure and are therefore not volunteering in person. Other organizations rely heavily on college students, who are no longer in school and therefore not able to volunteer their time.
 - The current increase in demand does not reflect layoffs or other ripple effects of this crisis on the working poor, and individuals who work in food service and retail. Respondents expressed particular concern that undocumented individuals who work in these industries will be left without a government-provided social safety net.
- **Loss of revenue, particularly general operating dollars.**
 - Spring is a major fundraising season for many nonprofits ranging from races, galas and other in-person events, rather than mail appeals.
 - Loss of program/service/admission fee revenue. Arts and cultural organizations who depend on ticket sales are no longer receiving needed revenue. Clients can't come in for services and therefore organizations are not getting that revenue or revenue reimbursements from insurance or Medicaid.
 - Many health service providers lack clarity about if and how to bill insurance and Medicaid for telehealth services.
- **Fear of repercussions due to inability to fulfill grant requirements.**
- **Lack of infrastructure, resources, and capacity to work remotely and provide remote services.** Many respondents indicated they lack the infrastructure to work remotely, and their clients lack access and capacity to connect to services virtually as well. Some services, such as congregate meals, can no longer be provided at all.



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 4 **Please comment on how the spread of COVID-19 across Illinois is affecting or may affect your revenue and/or expenses. Please provide specific revenue loss or expense increases.**

Additional **expenses** were anticipated due to increased need for:

- Organizations' core services
- Cleaning supplies and services
- Protective equipment
- Disposable containers
- Garbage removal
- Hardware and software to support staff working remotely

Regarding **revenue loss**:

36%

mentioned **not being able to fundraise**, having to **cancel large upcoming fundraising events**, and/or **regular donors and funders curtailing their giving** due to job losses and market instability.

31%

reported loss of income due to lack of clients, patients, patrons, or students, and/or having to close their places of business.

30%

mentioned **general funding losses**, or said they were not yet sure how their revenue or expenses would be impacted. Many expressed fear that reliable sources of funding would redirect their giving away from the arts, social services, and other causes to instead address COVID-19-related needs.

Respondents estimated a wide range of funds lost or anticipated to be at serious risk over the coming weeks and months: **from \$400 to \$20 million.**



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 5 Is your organization prepared for a widespread outbreak or quarantine in Illinois?

More than half of respondents indicated they are somewhat prepared and/or are actively working to prepare for a widespread outbreak. Many expressed that while they were prepared or preparing for immediate shifts, they **doubted their organization's ability** to respond to or survive a long-term crisis. Many also indicated they were unsure as to what preparedness would look like for their organizations given the type of services they provide and their reliance on in-person interactions. **Roughly 20% of respondents indicated they are not prepared for a widespread outbreak or quarantine. Another 20% indicated their organizations are prepared**, though for a number of those, preparing simply meant shutting down operations.

QUESTION 6 What resources, information, and trainings are needed?

Organizations need money, supplies, advocacy on their behalf, current and coherent information, and training to help them adjust to new ways of working. Respondents also emphasized their strong need for coordinated and consistent practices amongst government agencies and funders. Many indicated they feel overwhelmed and, while appreciative of outreach from funders, unable to keep pace with the varying demands for information.

FUNDING

- General operations funding, including released restrictions on current restricted grants
- Release of funds now that were scheduled for later
- Increased levels of support that will sustain beyond the immediate crisis
- Centralized information on how philanthropy is responding & what resources are available

SUPPLIES

- Cleaning supplies, especially disinfectants
- Personal protective equipment
- Food
- Technology (hardware and software) to support remote work and service provision for both employees and clients



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 6 What resources, information, and trainings are needed? (continued)

ADVOCACY

- Relaxation of standards for delivery of remote services, especially telehealth
- Clarity on & streamlining of billing practices for telehealth services with both Medicaid and private insurers

INFORMATION

- Centralized information on other local services and supports to enable effective client referrals
- Centralized information and accurate recommendations on virus containment practices, especially for organizations working with high-risk populations.
 - This information should be available in multiple languages.
- How philanthropy is responding & what resources are available to organizations in need of additional funding
- Up-to-date guidance on policy changes, including:
 - Changes in service provision requirements
 - Current info on tenants' and workers' rights

TRAININGS

Fundraising

- Keeping donors engaged virtually
- Hosting virtual fundraisers

Remote and virtual service delivery

- Serving populations without broadband
- Compliance issues for remote service provision, including HIPPA

Working remotely

- Managing staff remotely
- What technical tools are available, how to assess and choose the right ones for the job

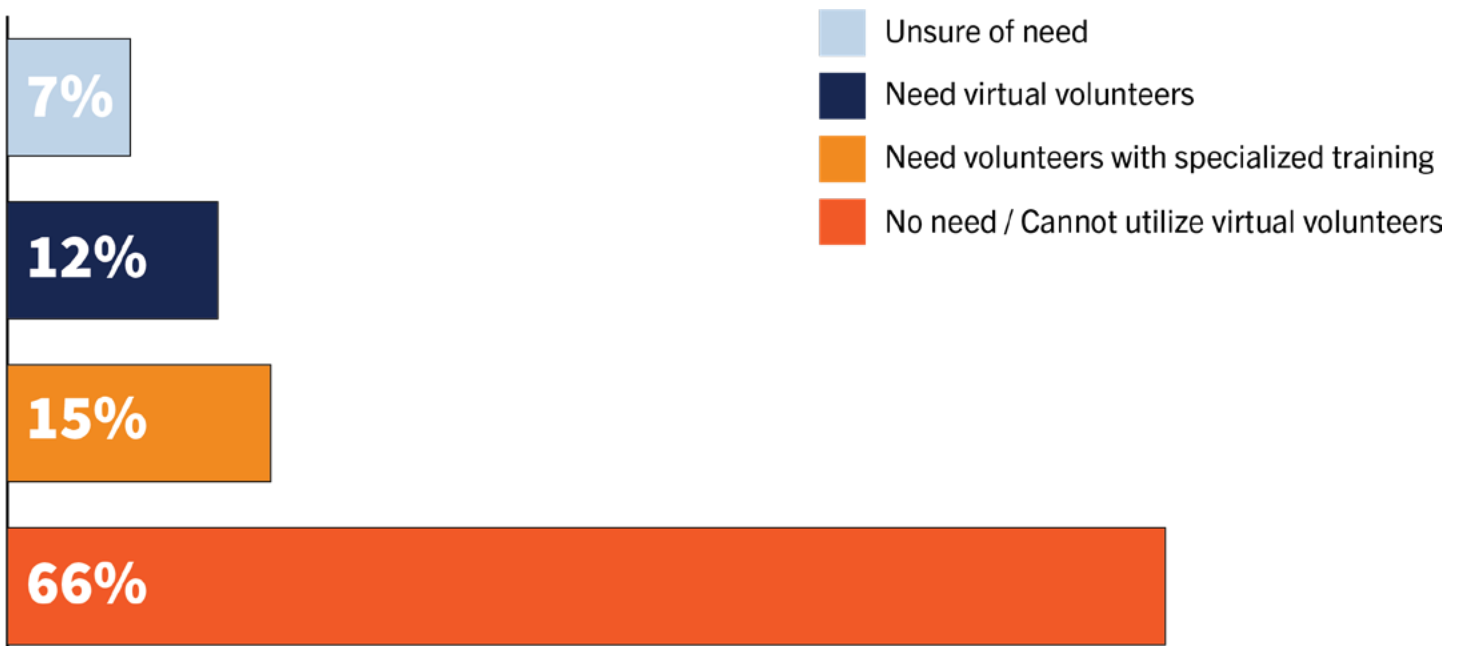
People management

- Handling layoffs and furloughs
 - How to support staff
 - What resources are available for former employees
 - Unemployment Insurance options for nonprofits that self-insure
- Managing remote teams
- Supporting teams during a crisis
- Supporting part-time and hourly staff when remote work is required



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 7 Do you have a need for virtual volunteer opportunities to help sustain your organization?



More than half (66%) of respondents indicated they do not need or could not utilize virtual volunteers. Of the remaining respondents, 15% indicated they do need virtual volunteers, with many requests for assistance with fundraising. Another 12% indicated they might have use for virtual volunteers with very specific training or skills related to the organization's services, and the remaining 7% were unsure whether they needed or could utilize virtual volunteers.



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 8 **As the spread of COVID-19 intensifies, what are your immediate concerns for carrying out your mission/caring for the people you serve?**

Respondents were primarily concerned with issues of public health and safety, supporting staff, caring for the community, and providing adequate testing, especially among vulnerable populations.

STAFF-SPECIFIC CONCERNS

- Ability to coordinate and continue services in general
- Capacity to orchestrate day-to-day operations without compromising the health of staff, board members, volunteers, and clients
- Financial sustainability for staff and their families
- Provision of technical resources and support for workers who primarily provide in-person services or programming

COMMUNITY AND CLIENT-BASED CONCERNS

- Dealing with disruptions in service provision, especially adequate housing, food, healthcare, and mental health services
- Potential increase in crimes, substance abuse, violence, and neglect
- Effectively supporting individuals and families impacted by inactivity and isolation
- Provision of assistance to support E-learning for students with limited resources required to stay home



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 9 If additional government or foundation funding to combat COVID-19 becomes available, where would you want to see those resources directed?

More than one-third of respondents (37%) requested unrestricted funding for general operations. The overwhelming majority referred to their need to pay staff and keep people employed. Many also referenced the severity of income loss felt by cultural organizations (museums, theatres, and art galleries) whose income is largely derived from social activities.

Respondents also suggested that additional funding should be directed to:

- Organizations on the “front lines” and those providing direct community services, such as food pantries, shelters, housing organizations, and health and mental health services. Direct relief to individuals in need, many noting vulnerable populations (the elderly, youth, communities of color, service industry workers, and gig economy workers) as a priority.
- Additional funding for critical medical response needs: patient testing, emergency health services, personal protective equipment (PPE), and vaccine research and development.

Additional requests were also made for access to technology or software that would allow organizations and communities to adapt to the restrictions of social distancing and continue to fulfill their missions virtually.



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 10 **What other measures should grantmakers implement during this crisis to sustain your organization?**

The most frequently mentioned recommendation was provision of additional funding, specifically:

- Provide more general operating support
- Maintain or increase support for current grantees
- Release restricted funds for general operations use
- Extend, suspend, or remove report deadlines and grant deliverable requirements

Additional suggestions related to funding included:

- Simplify instructions and requirements for new funding opportunities
- Turn around grant decisions quickly (especially for emergency funds)
- Increase sustainability, matching, and multi-year grants to help replace lost revenue streams
- Increase options for low- or no-cost loans (especially ones geared toward supporting staff who may not be able to perform their roles remotely)
- Increased support for smaller and newer organizations, including partnership opportunities

Many organizations are also requested assistance with access to important goods and services. Specific requests included:

- Protective sanitation gear such as gloves, masks, and/or services to disinfect offices or other spaces
- Tests and access to testing, especially in medically underserved communities
- Support for rent/utilities/other essential needs of the community
- Supplies needed for childcare such as diapers and formula
- Volunteers
- Guidance on safe in-person volunteering practices and ways to engage volunteers virtually
- Equipment to support staff working from home, including video conferencing subscriptions



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 10 **What other measures should grantmakers implement during this crisis to sustain your organization? (continued)**

Respondents requested clear information, guidance, coordination, and advocacy on their behalf:

Information:

- Assistance in locating funding, especially emergency funds and assistance communicating their needs clearly to funders
- Opportunities to share back office functions, collaborations for pooled supply purchasing
- Support and sample policies for staff that are losing time or working from home.

Guidance and other non-financial supports:

- Access to HR and financial expertise
- Funding, advice, or training on long-term planning, how to adapt to this situation as it stretches out
- Templates or examples of communications, policies, and effective practices
- Training in telehealth provision and how to provide services and programs virtually
- General IT support
- Access to services for nonprofit staff coping with the new stresses, including working from home for an extended period

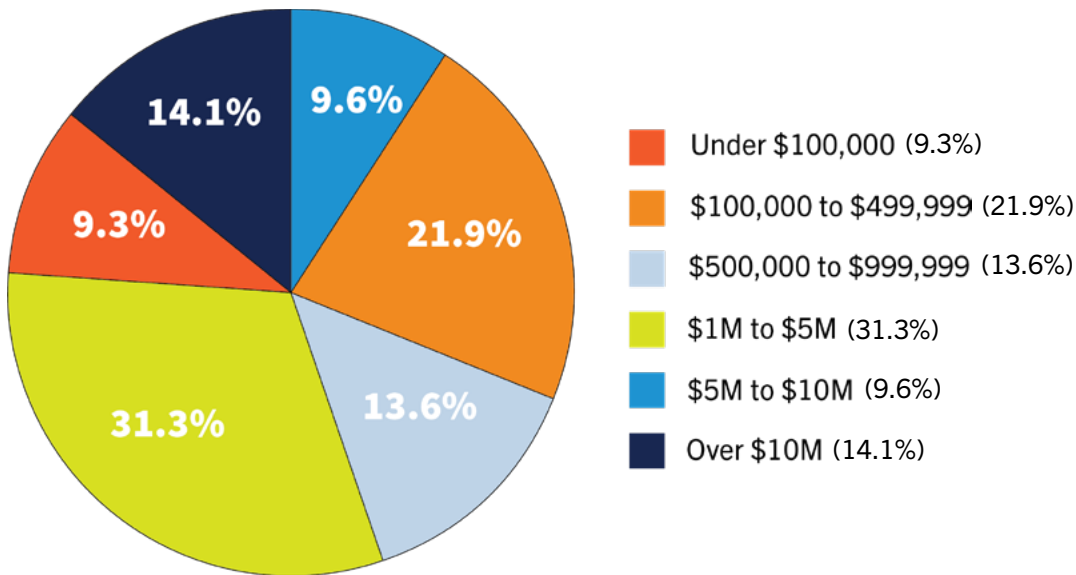
Coordination amongst funders, as well as with government agencies and businesses:

- Coordinated advocacy on behalf of nonprofits and vulnerable communities
- Coordination on data collection efforts to avoid overloading nonprofits with calls or surveys

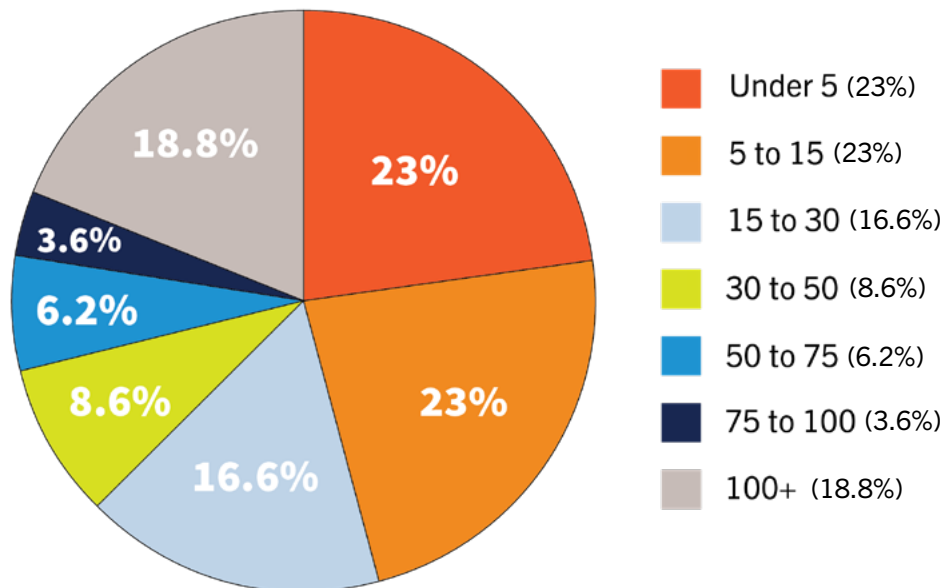


SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 11 What is your organization's budget size?



QUESTION 12 What is your organization's staff size?





SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 13 Is your organization part of a national network such as United Way, Red Cross, YMCA, PBS, etc.?

Seventy-five percent of respondents indicated they do not belong to any national networks. The remaining 25% named the following networks to which they belonged:

- | | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 100 Black Men of America, Inc. | Consortium of Asian American | Street | Illinois Food Bank |
| A.A.M | Theatres and Artists | Maternal and Child Health Bureau | NeighborWorks America |
| Actors Equity | Cristo Rey Network | Meals on Wheels America | North American Baptist Conference |
| Affordable Housing Network | Dance/USA | Middle Eastern North African | Office of Head Start |
| Aging Network | Detention Watch Network | Theatre Makers Alliance | Peoples Action |
| AIDS Healthcare Foundation | Easterseals | Midland Institute for Education | Points of Light |
| All of us or None | ELCA | Mijente | ProLiteracy |
| Alliance for Strong Families and | Enterprise Community Partners | Moose International | Red Cross International |
| Communities | Evangelical Free Church of America | Movement for Black Lives | Retail Merchants Association |
| AllianceChicago | Feeding America | NAACP | Rotary |
| American Alliance of Museums | FICPFM | NACHC | Senior Corp |
| American Cancer Society | FIRST INSPIRES | National American Legion | Service Nation |
| American Hospital Association | Forest Preserves | National Association of Community | Solihten Institute |
| American Job Center | GAL | Economic Development | Sothern Baptist convention |
| American Legion & Auxiliary | Gamaliel | Associations | Teach For America |
| American Red Cross | Girl Scouts of the USA | National Association of Free and | The Arc |
| Americans for the Arts | Girls on the Run | Chartable Clinics | The Calvinist Cadet Corps |
| Amita Health | Girls on the Run International | National Audubon Society | The Conservative Congregational |
| AMVETS | Habitat for Humanity International | National CASA Association | Christian Conference of Churches |
| ANCOR | (HFHI) | National Center for Women's Equity | The Majority |
| Area Agencies on Aging | Hands On Network with Points of | in Apprenticeship and Employment | The Salvation Army |
| ArtPlace America | Light | National Children's Alliance | Theatre Communications Group |
| Association of Chamber of | Head Start | National Community Reinvestment | UMCOR |
| Commerce Executives | HOIUW | Coalition | UnidosUS |
| Association of Children's Museums | HUD | National Council on Independent | United Cerebral Palsy |
| Association of Fundraising | Illinois Coalition for Immigrant and | Living | United Church of Christ |
| Professionals | Refugee Rights (ICIRR) | National Domestic Workers Alliance | United Methodist Church |
| Association of Jesuit Universities | ICNA Relief USA. | National Day Laborer Organizing | United Way |
| Baby2Baby | Illinois Chamber of Commerce | Network | US Chamber of Commerce |
| Big Brothers Big Sisters of America | Illinois Main Street | National Immigrant Project | VFW |
| Black Freedom Collective | Illinois Network of Charter Schools | National Low Income Housing | Village to Village Network |
| Boy Scouts of America | Institute for Nonprofit News | Coalition | VVA |
| Boys & Girls Clubs of America | Interfaith Power & Light | National Main Street Center | Welcoming America |
| Care Net | International Association of Fairs | National Network for Arab American | World Relief |
| Catholic Charities USA | and Exhibitions | Communities | YMCA |
| Catholic Church | IOTSI | National Network of Public Health | Young Audiences |
| CBHA | IPHCA | Institutes | YouthBuild USA |
| CCDA | Kiwanis International | National New Play Network | YWC |
| CC-USA | Land Trust Alliance | National Taskforce on | |
| CDC | LCMS | Tradeswomen's Issues | |
| Center for Popular Democracy | League of American Orchestras | National Trust for Historic | |
| Children's Advocacy Center of | Lions International | Preservation | |
| Illinois | LISC | National Urban Indian Family | |
| Citygate Network | Love in the Name of Christ | Coalition | |
| Coalition of Irish Immigration | Lutheran Church Missouri Synod | National Urban League | |
| Centers | Main Street America/National Main | Nazarene Denomination | |



SUMMARY OF SURVEY RESPONSES

QUESTION 14 Which counties does your organization serve?

Responses were received from organizations serving the entire state as well as the following 102 counties in Illinois:

Adams	DeKalb	Henderson	Livingston	Moultrie	Shelby
Alexander	DeWitt	Henry	Logan	Muscatine	St. Clair
Bond	Douglas	Iroquois	Macon	Ogle	Stark
Boone	DuPage	Jackson	Macoupin	Peoria	Stephenson
Brown	Edgar	Jasper	Madison	Perry	Tazewell
Bureau	Edwards	Jefferson	Marion	Piatt	Union
Calhoun	Effingham	Jersey	Marshall	Pike	Vermilion
Carroll	Fayette	Jo Daviess	Mason	Pope	Wabash
Cass	Ford	Johnson	Massac	Porter	Warren
Champaign	Franklin	Kane	McDonough	Pulaski	Washington
Christian	Fulton	Kankakee	McHenry	Putnam	Wayne
Clark	Gallatin	Kendall	McLean	Randolph	White
Clinton	Greene	Knox	Menard	Rock Island	Whiteside
Coles	Grundy	Koch	Mercer	Saline	Will
Cook	Hamilton	Lake	Monroe	Sangamon	Williamson
Crawford	Hancock	LaSalle	Montgomery	Schuyler	Winnebago
Cumberland	Hardin	Lee	Morgan	Scott	Woodford

GET INVOLVED

To learn about how you can join Forefront in supporting the social impact sector and access many of the resources requested by nonprofits throughout this survey, go to MyForefront.org/COVID-19.