



BIGGER THAN BASEBALL

COVID-19 Grantee Needs Assessment

MAY 2020

At the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation (LADF), we know that we must be bigger than baseball, and today, that means taking a leadership role in not only helping “flatten the curve” of COVID-19 spreading throughout our communities, but by doubling down and expanding access to assistance so many of us need during this crisis.

Since our founding in 1995, we have invested more than \$30 million in programs and grants to area nonprofits, and our fundraising has increased by 1,000% since 2012. That growth has enabled us to do more. Our team has made the necessary accommodations to work remotely and we are not slowing down.

THUS FAR, OUR EFFORTS TO HELP OUR COMMUNITY DURING THIS TIME OF GREAT NEED HAVE INCLUDED:

- **A new emergency fund** to support Angelenos who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, lack of basic needs and significant anxiety during this uncertain time.
- **Grants** have been directed to the Los Angeles Regional Food Bank, My Friend’s Place, the Mayor’s Fund of Los Angeles, and Brotherhood Crusade.
- **Critical in-kind donations** of food and basic needs to local organizations serving as “grab and go’s” for children and adults, as well as those on the front lines of this crisis.
- **Educational virtual programs** to reinforce continuity of learning for our kids at home during this time, including the launch of key Dodgers RBI program components online – including virtual college prep programs, fitness activities, LA Reads’ Dodgers Reading Champion Challenge, Science of Baseball STEM lessons, Jr. Dodgers Program, Summer Slugger, and more.
- **A new bilingual website, Dodgers.com/Relief & LosDodgers.com/Ayuda**, that details our relief efforts and offers community and educational resources.

IN ADDITION TO THE RESPONSES OUTLINED, WE KNEW IT WAS CRITICAL TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPACT OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC ON OUR NONPROFIT GRANTEES AND SHIFT OUR APPROACH TO MEET THEIR NEEDS.

We conducted the LADF COVID-19 Grantee Needs Assessment to gain a more informed understanding of the financial and programmatic impact on our nonprofit partners, make informed programmatic and grantmaking decisions that help us transition from a time of relief work to recovery work, and to share with all of you.

In this report, we highlight seven learning areas from the survey including impact areas, our foundation’s response moving forward and recommendations. Today we’re calling on all major grantmaking organizations in Los Angeles to join us in offering clear and consistent communication, creative collaboration, basic needs support that includes technology, adjusting grant requirements, and sharing best practices.

The Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation envisions a city where every Angeleno, regardless of zip code, has the opportunity to thrive. And we believe that with our nonprofit partners this vision can be realized.

In partnership,



Nichol Whiteman
Chief Executive Officer



Chaitali Gala Mehta
Chief Operating Officer



GRANTMAKING PROGRAM

LADF Grantmaking is focused on the most pressing problems facing underserved communities today and seeks to invest in proven programs that help address Los Angeles' most pressing problems like health care, homelessness, education equity, and youth development; all while implementing a social justice lens.

Current emphasis areas include STEM activities, foster care support services, mental wellness programming, and addressing food insecurity.

Total 2019 giving included 43% of grants going to education and literacy programs, 26% to health and wellness initiatives, and 31% to sports and recreation programs. Grants impacted ten major school districts including Los Angeles, Compton, Inglewood, Glendale, Pasadena, Rialto, Fontana, Long Beach, Lynwood, and Chaffey Joint Union. Combined, funded programs are directly impacting nearly 240,000 youth. On average, 87% of those students qualify for free and reduced lunch

So far in 2020, LADF has awarded 68% of grants to organizations addressing homelessness and food insecurity, 20% to organizations improving education outcomes for youth, and 12% to improve access to health care for Angelenos.

These have been long standing issues in Los Angeles that have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.



METHODOLOGY

To learn more about the current impact of COVID-19 that its nonprofit partners have experienced thus far, LADF distributed a brief survey to 47 of its 2019 and 2020 grantees. The needs assessment excluded support for events and in-kind donations.

The survey was delivered to representatives of these 47 organizations. 30 organizations completed the survey, a response rate of 64%. The survey was completed via an online form created on SoGoSurvey.com. The response period was from April 17th-April 24th, 2020. No identifying information was collected, and all responses remained anonymous. Questions in the survey focused on the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on nonprofit programming, operations, and what assistance from funders would be most helpful during the crisis. Responses were aggregated to identify most common responses. Where appropriate, open-ended responses were also analyzed and grouped into thematic categories based on the details shared.

THE ASSESSMENT CONTAINED THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS AND RESPONSE OPTIONS:

	QUESTION	RESPONSE
1	Informed consent and participation agreement	Yes/Continue
2	If your organizations' programs are school based, what school district(s) are served by your organization. If your organization is not school based, simply type "N/A".	Open ended paragraph field
3	At this time, are your organization's programs still running?	Multiple Choice
4	In what ways has your organization adjusted programming, if any? Please check all that apply.	Multiple option check boxes with an "other" write-in option
5	If you are conducting online programming, check the top 3 barriers to youth participation. You may also use the "other" option to add your own response. If you are not conducting online programming, please skip.	Multiple option check boxes with an "other" write-in option
6	In what ways have your organization's operations been negatively affected by COVID-19? Please check all that apply.	Multiple option check boxes with an "other" write-in option
7	Please feel free to provide more information about how your organization has adjusted and is currently coping amidst the current crisis.	Open ended paragraph field
8	Please select the top 3 ways funders can assist your organization at this time. You may also use the "other" option to add your own response.	Multiple option check boxes with an "other" write-in option
9	What is going well amidst the crisis? Feel free to share positive stories and resiliency of your organization and the populations you serve.	Open ended paragraph field
10	What best practices (or innovations) have you learned and can share as your organization continues to provide services and fulfill your mission?	Open ended paragraph field
11	Anything else you would like us to know?	Open ended paragraph field



RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

School Districts Served

Disruption to Programming & Adjustments

Barriers to Online Participation

Organizational Challenges & New Priorities

Desired Support from Funders

Resilience & Best Practices

Summary

Recommendations and LADF Response

SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED

A vast majority of respondents serve the Los Angeles Unified School District and other local districts within greater Los Angeles.

53% OF RESPONDENTS SERVE YOUTH IN THE LOS ANGELES UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

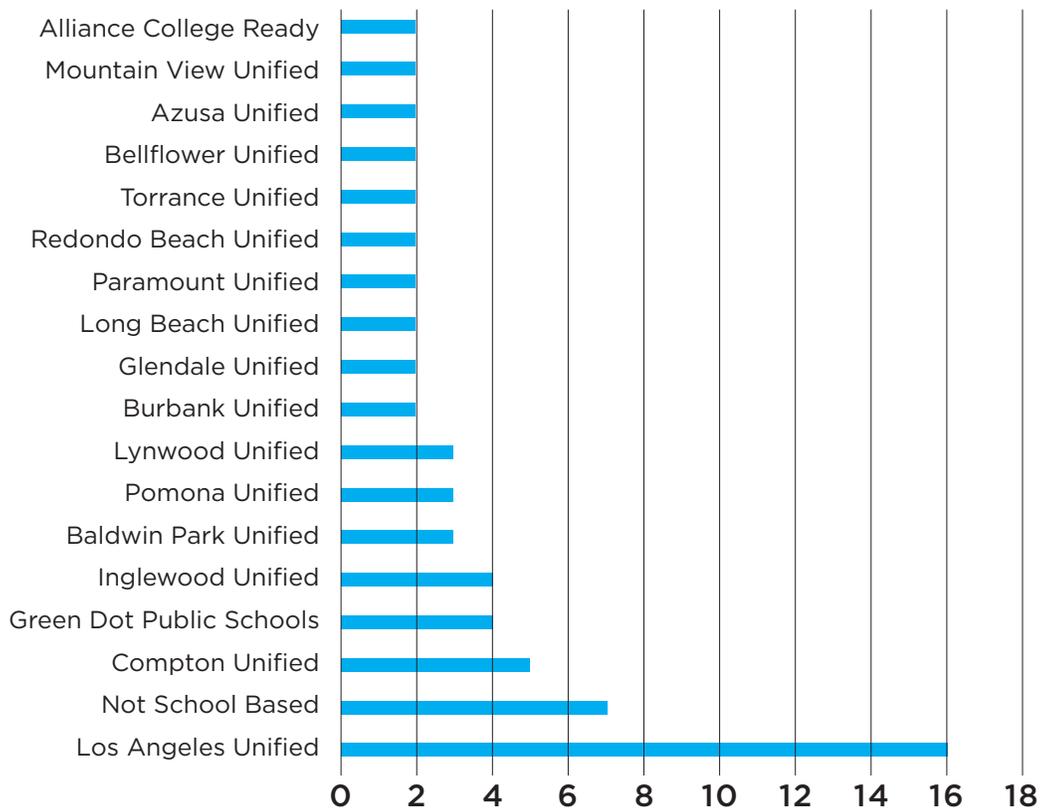
23% OF RESPONDENTS ARE NOT SCHOOL BASED PROGRAMS.

23% OF RESPONDENTS SERVE YOUTH IN THE COMPTON UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

13% OF RESPONDENTS SERVE YOUTH IN GREEN DOT PUBLIC SCHOOLS.

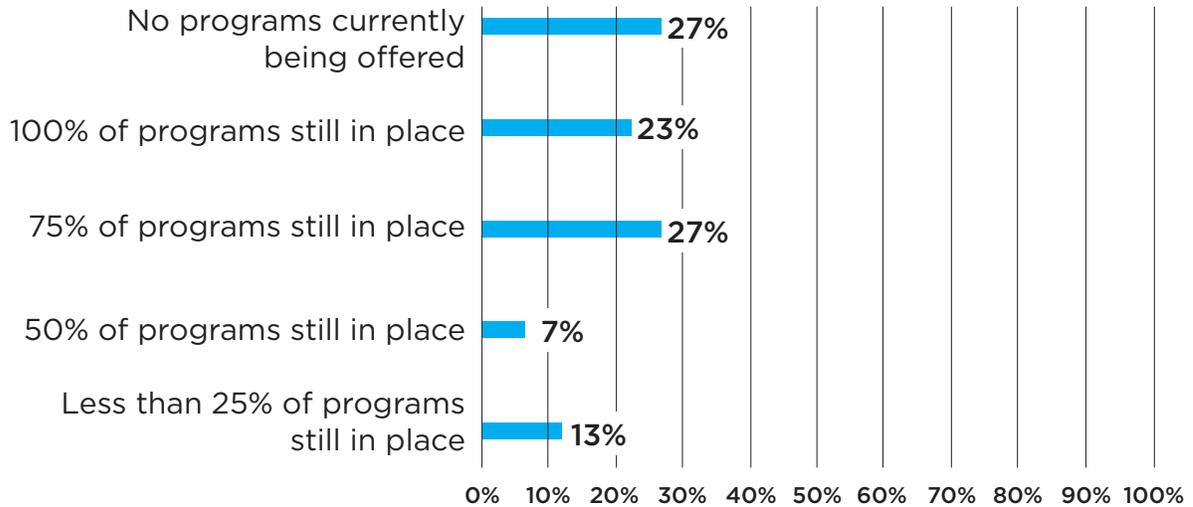
13% OF RESPONDENTS SERVE YOUTH IN THE INGLEWOOD UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT.

Q2: MOST COMMON SCHOOL DISTRICTS SERVED BY RESPONDENTS, INCLUDING "NOT SCHOOL BASED"



DISRUPTION TO PROGRAMMING & ADJUSTMENTS

Q3: AT THIS TIME, ARE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S PROGRAMS STILL RUNNING?



The COVID-19 crisis has severely impacted respondents' programs in the following ways:

OVER HALF (51%) OF RESPONDENTS HAVE INDICATED THAT 50% OR LESS OF THEIR PROGRAMS ARE STILL IN PLACE.

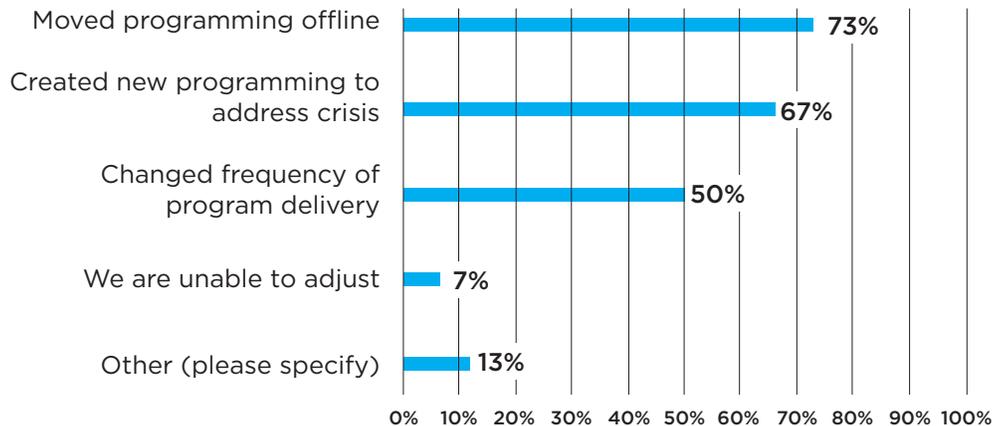
ROUGHLY 1 IN 4 OF RESPONDENTS (27%) ARE NOT OFFERING ANY PROGRAMMING DUE TO THE CRISIS.

ONLY 23% OF RESPONDENTS ARE CONTINUING TO DELIVER 100% OF THEIR PROGRAMS.

Although 27% of respondents indicated that they are not offering any programs, further analysis indicated that nearly all these respondents have stopped offering what they consider as their programs and have changed programming to address the crisis in their communities.

DISRUPTION TO PROGRAMMING & ADJUSTMENTS

Q4: IN WHAT WAYS HAS YOUR ORGANIZATION ADJUSTED PROGRAMMING, IF ANY?
PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY



Of the respondents that were able to adjust amid the crisis:

73% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE MOVED PROGRAMS TO AN ONLINE/VIRTUAL PLATFORM.

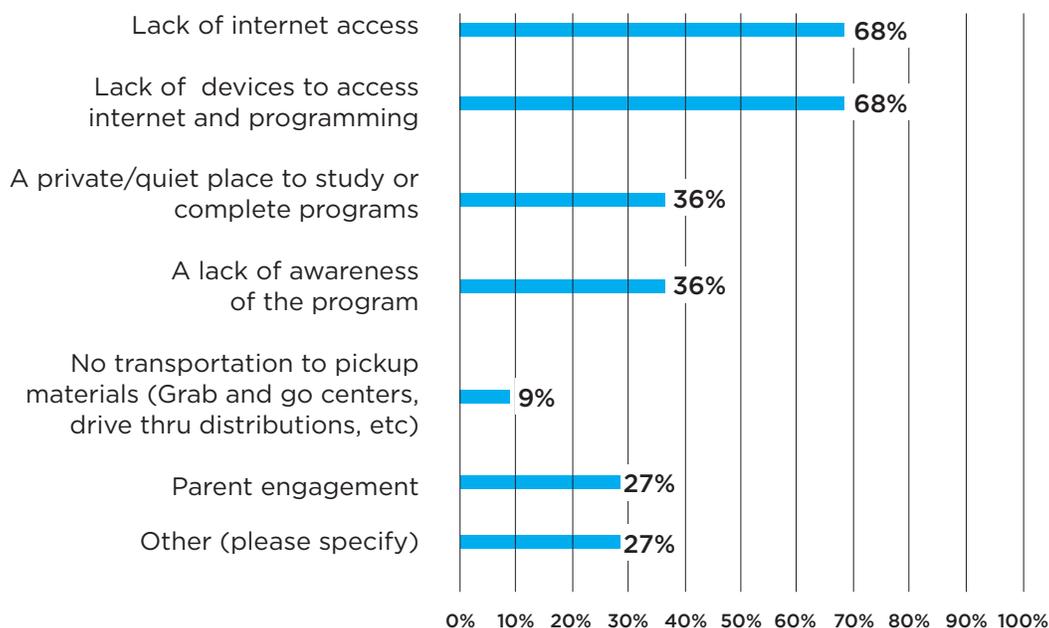
67% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE CREATED NEW PROGRAMMING TO ADDRESS THE NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY DURING THE CRISIS.

50% OF RESPONDENTS HAVE ALSO CHANGED THE FREQUENCY OF THEIR NORMAL PROGRAM DELIVERY.

“Our top priority is being as responsive as possible to our current school partners. We have been able to move some of our programming online for partners who want to continue service, and we are working as quickly as possible to increase the amount of content we can deliver remotely.”

BARRIERS TO ONLINE PARTICIPATION

Q5: IF YOU ARE CONDUCTING ONLINE PROGRAMMING, CHECK THE TOP 3 BARRIERS TO YOUTH PARTICIPATION. YOU MAY ALSO USE THE “OTHER” OPTION TO ADD YOUR OWN RESPONSE. IF YOU ARE NOT CONDUCTING ONLINE PROGRAMMING, PLEASE SKIP.



Although the most common response has been to move programs online, respondents have identified that a lack of internet access and the devices necessary to access the internet are the top barriers to youth participation in online programs.

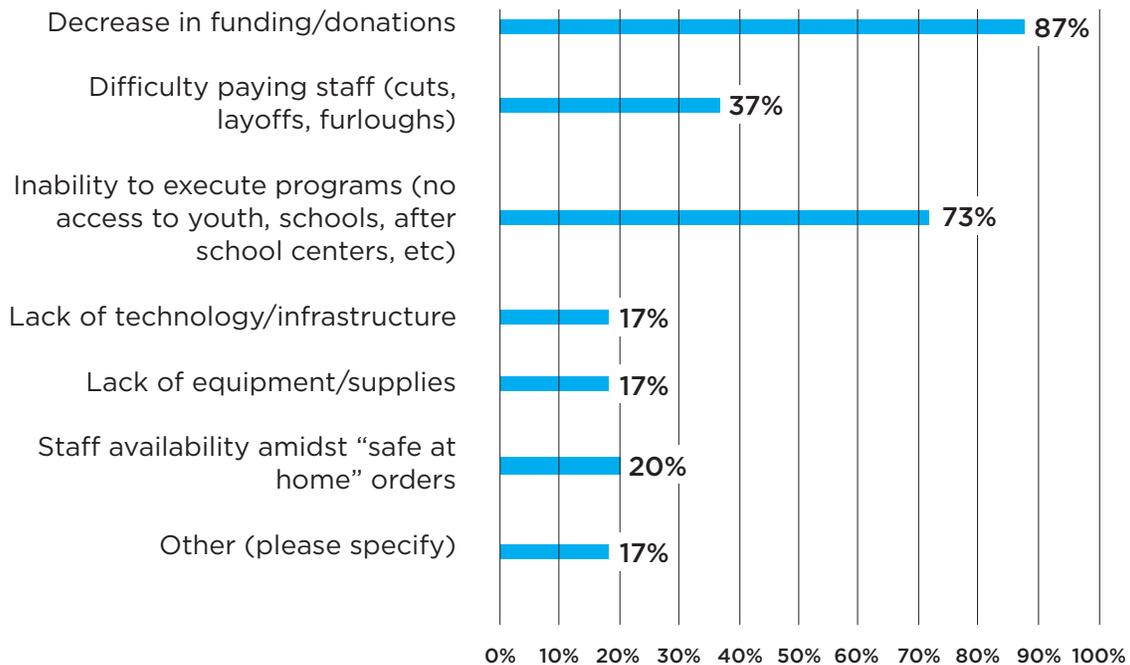
68% OF RESPONDENTS MARKED “LACK OF INTERNET ACCESS” AS A TOP BARRIER.

68% OF RESPONDENTS MARKED “LACK OF DEVICES TO ACCESS INTERNET AND PROGRAMMING” AS A TOP BARRIER.

As previously noted, 87% of youth served by LADF grantees qualified for free and reduced lunch in 2019. This means that the youth served by respondents are mostly low-income youth regardless of the school district they receive services in. The overwhelming indication of a need for technology and internet access assistance is notable.

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES & NEW PRIORITIES

Q6: IN WHAT WAYS HAVE YOUR ORGANIZATION'S OPERATIONS BEEN NEGATIVELY AFFECTED BY COVID-19? PLEASE CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.



The most common way that the crisis has negatively affected respondents' operations is a lack of funding and donations. A lack of funding will negatively impact all operations of the organizations, including service delivery and maintaining staff, not only during this relief phase but moving forward into a time of recovery.

87% OF RESPONDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING A DECREASE IN FUNDING/DONATIONS.

73% OF RESPONDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING AN INABILITY TO EXECUTE PROGRAMS (NO ACCESS TO YOUTH, SCHOOLS, AFTER SCHOOL CENTERS, ETC.).

37% OF RESPONDENTS ARE EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTY PAYING STAFF (CUTS, LAYOFFS, FURLOUGHS).

ORGANIZATIONAL CHALLENGES & NEW PRIORITIES

Q7: PLEASE FEEL FREE TO PROVIDE MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW YOUR ORGANIZATION HAS ADJUSTED AND IS CURRENTLY COPING AMIDST THE CURRENT CRISIS.
27 OUT OF 30 RESPONDENTS RESPONDED:

70% OF RESPONDENTS EXPANDED MORE ABOUT THEIR ADJUSTMENT TO ONLINE PROGRAMS.

10% OF RESPONDENTS EXPLAINED THAT THEY ARE CONDUCTING BOTH ONLINE PROGRAMMING BUT ALSO PROVIDING BASIC NEEDS TO THEIR COMMUNITY.

24% OF RESPONDENTS EXPANDED ON THEIR NEW PROGRAMS THAT FOCUS ON BASIC NEEDS.

10% OF RESPONDENTS EXPLAINED THAT THEY HAVE CHANGED TO A METHOD OF PROGRAM DELIVERY THAT IS NOT ONLINE.

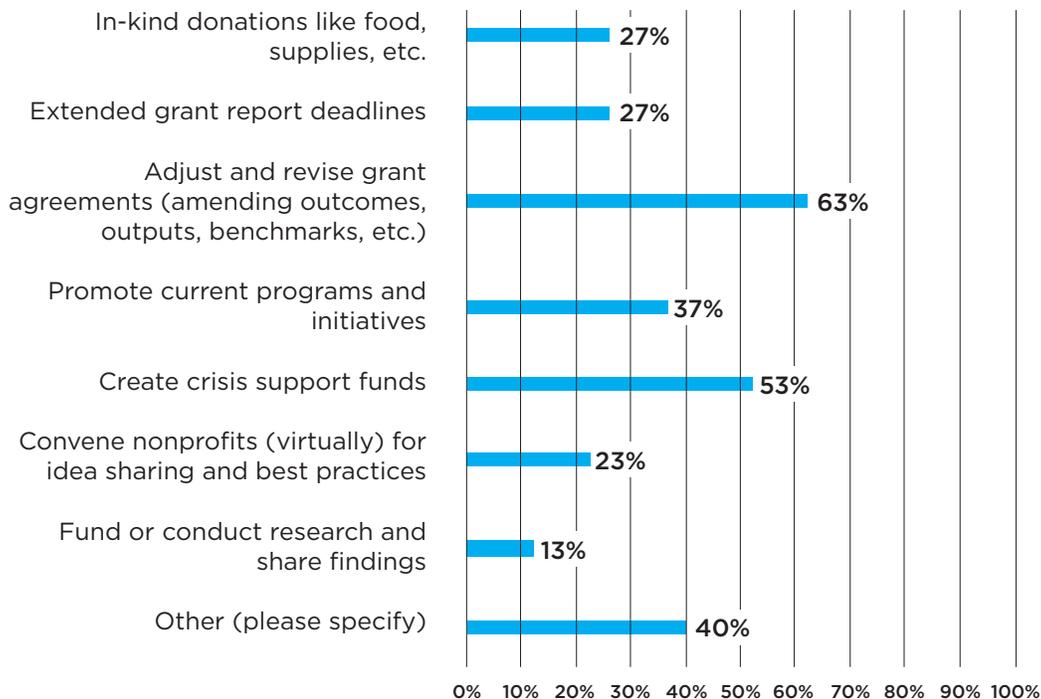
5% OF RESPONDENTS MENTIONED COMPLETE CANCELLATION OF PROGRAMMING, INCLUDING FUNDRAISING EVENTS.

“...we have converted the center to a food bank and are supporting over 110 families with meals. We have also fundraised support to help families meet basic needs.”



DESIRED SUPPORT FROM FUNDERS

Q8: PLEASE SELECT THE TOP 3 WAYS FUNDERS CAN ASSIST YOUR ORGANIZATION AT THIS TIME. YOU MAY ALSO USE THE “OTHER” OPTION TO ADD YOUR OWN RESPONSE.



DESIRED SUPPORT FROM FUNDERS

With increased demands and the rapid creation of new programs, respondents have identified the following as the top three ways funders can assist their organizations at this time:

63% OF RESPONDENTS MARKED “ADJUST AND REVISE GRANT AGREEMENTS (AMENDING OUTCOMES, OUTPUTS, BENCHMARKS, ETC.)” AS A TOP WAY THAT FUNDERS CAN ASSIST THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AT THIS TIME.

53% OF RESPONDENTS MARKED “CREATE CRISIS RESPONSE FUNDS” AS A TOP WAY THAT FUNDERS CAN ASSIST THEIR ORGANIZATIONS AT THIS TIME.

40% OF RESPONDENTS MARKED “OTHER” AND WROTE IN THEIR OWN RESPONSE.

- **50%** OF ALL “OTHER” RESPONSES MENTION ‘GENERAL OPERATING SUPPORT’ OR ‘UNRESTRICTED FUNDS’ AS THE BEST WAY TO ASSIST THEIR ORGANIZATION.

- **41%** OF ALL “OTHER” RESPONSES MENTION TYPES OF IN-KIND SUPPORT INCLUDING:

- FOOD
 - PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT FOR FRONT LINE WORKERS
 - FUEL FOR DELIVERY VEHICLES
 - SHOES
 - PORTABLE RESTROOMS FOR VOLUNTEERS
-

“Continued access to general operating funds is the area in which we have the most need. We have had to cancel our spring benefit and other donors have pulled back as well.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES

Q9: WHAT IS GOING WELL AMIDST THE CRISIS? FEEL FREE TO SHARE POSITIVE STORIES AND RESILIENCY OF YOUR ORGANIZATION AND THE POPULATIONS YOU SERVE.

Here are some of the positive themes and examples of resilience respondents listed:



“Students are starting to embrace the online learning and providing feedback on services.”

“Some of our teams launched the online connection between coaches and girls early to pilot the idea. It was a team of vulnerable girls who struggled to gain access to internet and it was challenging to get it up and running. But when one girl, who was having the hardest time, finally got into the Zoom meeting and saw her coaches faces, she burst into tears of joy. The idea of providing meaningful connections for girls who are isolated and struggling right now is what [our organization] is now focused on. We're working to ensure each girls' safety online and explore how to help those without internet or hardware to be able to connect and create community.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES



“We are using the crisis period as an opportunity to plan strategically for the future of the organization.”

“Our teachers and staff are working together to make our program more accessible for students with disabilities as we move it online. The silver lining is that we hope to emerge with a stronger, more accessible digital program on the other side of this crisis.”

“We are working on new partnerships to meet the emergency childcare, food insecurity, and other health needs of the healthcare community. The [organization] is also serving new populations, particularly those without access to showers and basic hygiene during this crisis.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES



“Sometimes, recognition of volunteers, setting up certain processes or taking time to measure certain outputs are put on the back burner when planning and executing events and programs. Right now, we are able to focus on these areas since we can’t do much on the other fronts.”

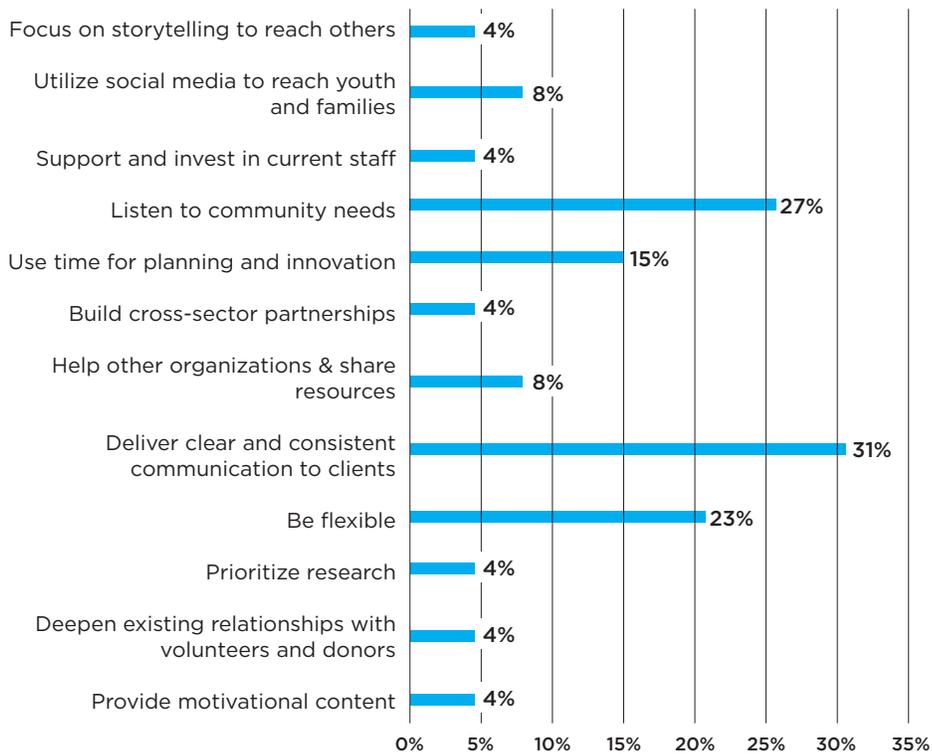
“Although some large grants have been put on hold, we have seen individual donors step up since they realize we are serving some of the most underserved students with a basic necessity. And we continue to be amazed by the resilience and ingenuity of teachers/districts who are committed to connecting with their students. The crisis has also given us an opportunity to check in with our supporters and teachers”

“There is a growing level of sympathy and understanding of the need for human connection during stressful times, and there is great innovation coming out of people being stuck at home that will translate to our programs moving forward.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES

Q10: WHAT BEST PRACTICES (OR INNOVATIONS) HAVE YOU LEARNED AND CAN SHARE AS YOUR ORGANIZATION CONTINUES TO PROVIDE SERVICES AND FULFILL YOUR MISSION?

The analysis of this question grouped the responses into twelve emerging themes.



What respondents consider as a best-practice or innovation during this time is good insight into what efforts they are prioritizing and what funders can potentially support.

31% OF RESPONDENTS EMPHASIZED CLEAR AND CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION WITH CLIENTS AND PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS AS A BEST PRACTICE.

27% OF RESPONDENTS EMPHASIZED LISTENING TO COMMUNITY NEEDS AS A BEST PRACTICE.

23% OF RESPONDENTS EMPHASIZED FLEXIBILITY AS A BEST PRACTICE.

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES

Here are examples of the responses:



“Flexibility is key to everything... We had to relocate our entire 12 year old program, redesigned our distribution process, train volunteers, recruit 35-40% additional volunteers, implement new cleaning procedures, increase program capacity, coordinate with city and state municipalities while writing grants, seeking donation funds, updating our website and trucking within 11 days. Flexibility is what helps us to live our mission especially in light of this crisis.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES

“Flexibility is key, using our existing resources in new ways enables us to keep serving the community, albeit in a much smaller capacity.”

“The best practice that we’ve learned through this is the importance of extra communication, clear communication and the opportunity for our community members to weigh in and make some decisions for themselves. Everyone is stressed and many are experiencing higher anxiety. We’ve implemented a communication calendar that increases frequency, relies on transparency, and when applicable, seeks input.”

“Think about what your community needs are, be positive and be nimble.”

“Consistent, simple messaging is key to reach and engage parents and they adjust to home schooling. We need our coaches more than ever to be the connector to families that are now learning at home.”

“Adapt and help other organizations during this time if you are able. Provide relief to your clients in form of payment postponing or provide food vouchers. Keep your staff informed via teleconferencing and keep up to date info on your website.”

RESILIENCE & BEST PRACTICES

“Virtual Weekly check-ins. We are sharing community resources: food, medical, and financial to a broader community network without assumptions that people may not need or want the resources. Collaborating with other or new organizations to support the community.”

“Adapt to the new normal and don’t be afraid to try new things during this time. Research virtual platforms or Learning Management Systems that can be your platform to still provide impactful programs throughout communities.”

“We are implementing a short-term focus on supporting our local communities’ immediate needs and refining our long-term commitment to create dramatic improvement in education to account for additional inequities our students will face heading into the new school year. We are embracing design thinking in reorganizing staff structures and deploying staff where they are best positioned to meet the current need.”

“We are in contact with our families on a regular basis to check on their basic needs and to ensure distance learning is taking place...Our key to continuing to positively impact the lives of our children, youth, and families during COVID-19 has been the ability to remain flexible.”

SUMMARY

Overall, the assessment helps paint a picture of what LADF grantees are experiencing, what their priorities are, and how they are looking to funders for support.

By using this data, LADF can understand how to best assist their current grantees during this relief stage and moving forward into a time of recovery. We will also consider this assessment as part of our decision making as we review grant applications and continue to pursue partnerships in 2020.

As nonprofits focus on consistent communication with their clients and organizational flexibility as a necessary best practice, they are also looking to LADF and other funders to be flexible with grant requirements and to consider unrestricted support. In addition, respondents have identified that decreases in funding is their largest operational barrier to their missions. Many have had to make the difficult decision to let go of staff and some are simply not operating any programs at all.

Nonprofits have also indicated that a desired response for their funders is to create crisis response funds to support their work at this time.

LADF grantees are implementing extremely fast-paced shifts to new programming including moving current programs to online platforms. New programming has also been created that focuses on providing basic needs for their communities.

Virtual programming helps maintain critical connections with youth, but respondents have identified that the lack of internet access and appropriate devices are the most significant barriers to youth participation at this time.

It is LADF's hope that the funding community can use this information to gain insight about what their grantees may be experiencing as well.



RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the themes emerging from this assessment, the following are considerations for the grantmaking community:



Consistent Communication: Provide ongoing updates about grantmaking adjustments and other COVID-19 related changes. Speak to grantees to gain a greater understanding of their specific responses and needs during this time. Every organization is unique and experiencing different barriers during this crisis.



Creative Collaboration: Being open to supporting grantees in unconventional ways – including in-kind donations, cross-promoting resources, virtual program partnership etc.



Basic Needs Include Access to Technology: Persistent income inequality has been intensely magnified amid school closures and ‘Safer at Home’ orders. Youth that are typically served by our grantees may not have equitable access to internet or appropriate devices in order to engage with distance learning and online programming. Funders should consider a strategy to close the ‘digital divide’ for low income families not only now but as distance learning continues into the fall and beyond. Especially as distance learning and online programming is being implemented as a best practice in 2020.



Adjusting Grant Requirements and Use of Grant Funds: Work closely with grantees to assess whether current reporting and grant expectations are still appropriate for the grantee organization. Assess if converting current grants to new/revised programming or unrestricting funds is appropriate for grantees.



Sharing Best Practices: Share findings and best practices among peers. We have encountered many assessments and learnings with peers via organizational meetups and professional associations. We can all help each other learn more about the nonprofits we serve and the specific social issues that are amplified, persisting, or emerging in greater Los Angeles.

LADF RESPONSE

Prior to the implementation of this assessment, LADF had already taken steps to support our nonprofit partners. LADF has established a COVID-19 relief fund to support vulnerable populations who are experiencing homelessness, food insecurity, lack of basic needs and significant anxiety during this uncertain time. Grants have been awarded to support transitional age youth experiencing homelessness, families facing food insecurity, and provide access to technology.

Responses include:

- Grant reporting deadlines were extended an additional 30 days to support organizations during the peak of transitions and responses to the pandemic. LADF will continue to monitor the need for additional extensions and grant report flexibility.
- The second LADF grant application cycle for the 2020 fiscal year has been extended by 30 days.
- All Cycle 1 grant applications (received by February 1) and Cycle 2 grant applications (received by May 1) will be reviewed between May and July, with decision notifications sent in August.
- Grantees' resources, online and virtual programming are currently being promoted via Dodgers.com/relief, mass email, and social media platforms.
- Monthly check-ins with active grantees are being conducted to continue to assess needs and opportunities for support.

Moving forward, LADF will also make the following grantmaking considerations:

- Where appropriate, reallocate grant funds to revised or new programs.
- Consider the emerging needs from this assessment, like inequitable access to technology, specific in-kind requests, and unrestricted funds.
- LADF will present findings to its board of directors and grant committee for consideration in future grant decisions and priorities.



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