Fundraising in Federal Funding Uncertainty

Nonprofits in the United States are facing unprecedented financial hardship. Swift federal policy changes have left organizations in a state of urgency and confusion as the government grants and contracts they have regularly relied on have been canceled or held in limbo. How does the changing policy landscape impact nonprofits' ability to deliver their services? What can fundraisers do to ensure they can secure funding to continue to deliver their services?

How did we get here?

The federal government has used the nonprofit sector to provide services to address poverty and social issues since the Johnson administration. The sector has also seen tremendous growth over time, with the number of nonprofits increasing by 60% between 1998-2023. The government's investment in the sector is critical: as an Urban Institute report shows "[i]n every state, every congressional district, and more than 95% of counties in the United States, public charities receive government grants" which totals to $267B. As the Trump administration moves away from providing government grants to nonprofits, fundraisers are left with a huge gap to fill.

How can fundraisers address this moment?

While the sheer size of this funding gap is daunting, there are strategies leaders can take to educate their teams, engage existing supporters, and secure funding to maintain services:

- **Stay up to date**: Organizations like the National Council of Nonprofits regularly provide updates and resources on policy changes that impact nonprofits. By finding similar resources for your industry, fundraisers can keep abreast of changes without overwhelming themselves.
- **Mobilize your donor base**: If organizations are transparent with supporters about the financial risk they face, donors may step up to invest in your organization in new and meaningful ways. Consider how you can solicit your individual donors differently to fund programs or build up your corporate partnerships.
- **Connect with fellow fundraisers**: No individual or organization should address uncertainty in isolation. Find avenues to connect with professional development

groups and attend conferences to both learn from and support your peers.
- **Access emergency funding**: Foundations and philanthropists are providing emergency funding to nonprofits during this turbulent time. The Chronicle of Philanthropy is regularly updating its website with information on the different funds available to organizations

To learn more about how you can help your organization navigate financial uncertainty, register for the webinar Fundraising in a Time of Uncertainty on Wednesday, May 7, 2025, from 10-11AM ET. This webinar will feature Jessica Portis, Chief Client Officer at TIFF in conversation with Ebonie Johnson Cooper, Faculty Director, Do Good Institute at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy and Martin Sanders, Adjunct Faculty at the University of Maryland's School of Public Policy.

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