

The Center for Nonprofit Management issued a needs assessment survey to the nonprofit community in March of 2020, after devastating tornadoes hit Middle TN, followed by a world-wide pandemic of COVID-19. 239 individuals responded, representing a variety of service areas, each expressing their unique concerns and challenges facing the issues at hand.

Respondents

Respondents hold an array of positions, the top three including:

- Executive/Senior Leadership - 63.18%
- Management Supervisory Staff - 15.48%
- Direct Service/Front-line staff – 5.44%

Survey respondents represent a wide spectrum of clients, needs, and interests. Below (*Table 1*) is representation of the top five service areas of organizations that responded, with consideration organizations could select all types that applied.

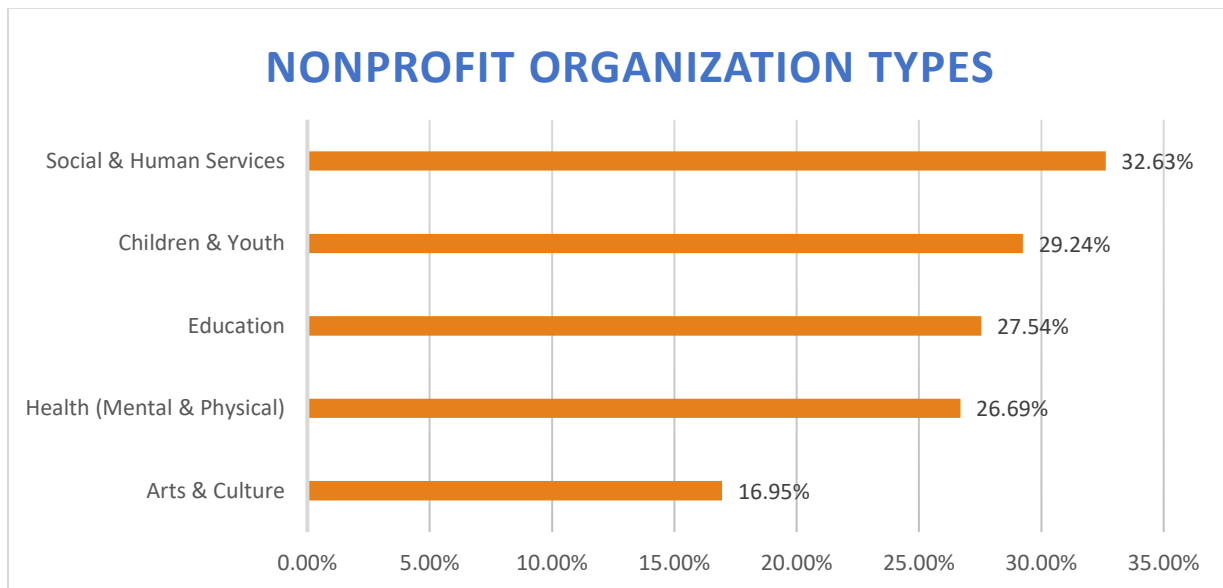


Table 1

Areas of Concern

When asked to provide feedback on the organization’s current outlook for specific areas of operation, ranking on a scale of *not concerned*, *slightly concerned*, *concerned*, to *very concerned* respondents cited the following as areas where they were “very concerned.”

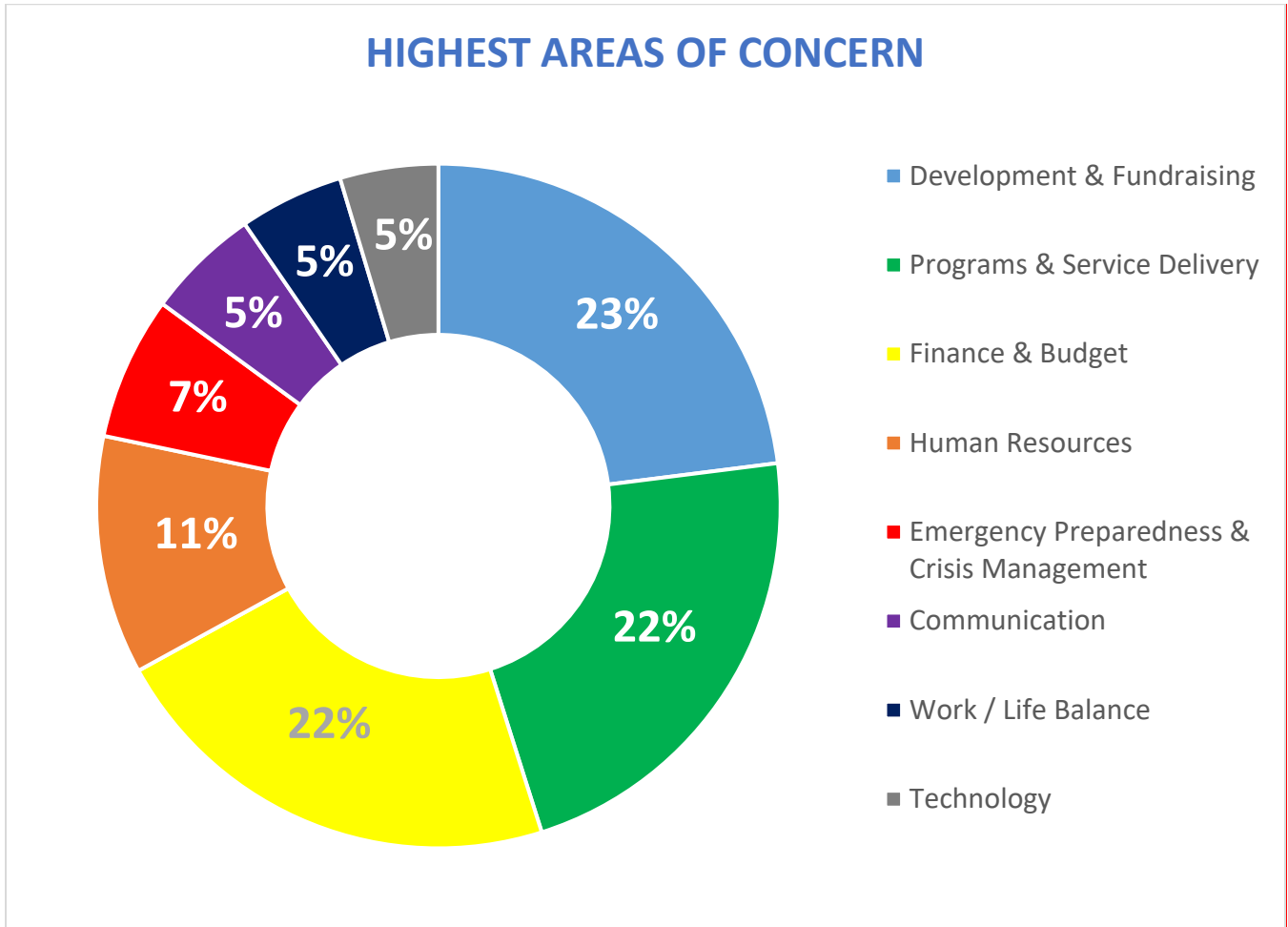


Table 2

The top three areas of concern included: Development & Fundraising, Finance & Budget, and Program and Service Delivery.

Communication

Communication preference questions indicated respondents desired to receive communication during this time of crisis via the following methods (from top selection to last): online resources (articles, templates, etc.), newsletters, webinars, social media, pop-up Zoom conversations.

Testimonials

The following is a selection of respondent's open-ended feedback when asked the question: *The month of March has been filled with challenges for nonprofits in Middle Tennessee. Is there anything else you want to share with us about your experience?*

Overall

"We're worried about staying open and risking the health of everyone. We're worried about closing and denying care to those who must work outside the home (healthcare or essential functions such as grocery). We worry about not affording to pay our staff during closure, but hurting them and losing them if we don't. We worry about our financial health and not charging families while we are closed. And how hard it would be for them to pay if we did charge. It's a lot."

"Exhausting last few weeks! We have not had time to complete inspections and estimates of the damage we sustained in the tornado due to contractors being very busy with other major projects and then the attention (daily and even hourly changes) I have had to devote to develop, write and implement plans for the COVID-19 virus along with the everyday work has been challenging."

Programming

"Assessing and planning for organizational events from June onward has become a major concern. The uncertainty associated with how long/how severely COVID-19 will affect our members makes planning ahead very difficult."

"Crisis on top of crisis. . . Our entire strategic plan is rendered irrelevant it seems (at this moment) and our meaningful inclusion of volunteer support is something we don't know if we will ever be able to resume. . . I am worried about our fundraising this year, as well as our ability to keep earning money as so many of our partners are shutting down. What a crazy time."

Fundraising

"The greatest impact of Covid-19 for us is financial. March through June is a critical fundraising time for us, bringing in almost 30% of our budget. With our largest fundraiser postponed until the fall and third party events being cancelled, and the stock market impacting donors, we are looking at going through all of our reserves by August 2020 unless we reduce salaries or staffing. Salaries, benefits, and taxes make up 78% of our annual budget."

"We've canceled our largest fund raiser, class trips, graduation is up in the air, and it impacts enrollment work."

Finance

"We are concerned for our hourly staff who depend on fee for service to make ends meet. Our margins are already tight and we're looking for ways to keep everyone afloat."

"It has just been a hard time to be a non-profit and be a leader in a non-profit. Funding all depends on the economy and we have no assurance right now that we can survive. Leaders are having to make really tough choices that not everyone will support or understand. It's a lonely time."