



Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward

ADVOCACY ♦ COLLABORATION ♦ EDUCATION

COVID-19 The Impact on Broward County Nonprofit Organizations Part II

December 2021

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I. Executive Summary

The Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward (NEAB) published its first COVID-19 Impact on Nonprofits report in July 2020. The results of that report showed concerns and trepidation relating to organizational solvency, the impact of the pandemic on employees and clients, and uncertainty for the future. COVID-19 magnified the disparate effects that the economic and health crisis were having on low-income households, especially among vulnerable populations. The pandemic also highlighted the ability for many of our organizations to pivot, innovate, and adapt to the changing situation.

Eighteen months after COVID-19 upended everything and despite progress made with vaccinations and treatments, pandemic variants continue to amplify the uncertainty. Political disagreement regarding mask and vaccine mandates perpetuates cultural divisions that impact the ability to move forward. In our initial member survey last year, most nonprofits polled shared trepidation regarding their ability to continue to provide a quality continuum of care, citing funding and Human Resources as top concerns. However, a most recent survey indicated nearly 40% of organizations have managed better than expected.

The purpose of the updated COVID Nonprofit Impact report, published a year and a half after the inaugural, is to reflect on the impact of the pandemic, to better understand whether assumptions made last year were correct, and to determine the impact the pandemic is currently having. The federal government offered programs such as the Paycheck Protection Program, which proved to be a vital lifeline for many organizations. Vaccines and treatments for COVID-19 are now widely available, though rampant sharing of falsehoods, a distrust of the medical establishment, and other barriers to access threaten disadvantaged populations. However, it is noteworthy that nonprofits have become widely accepted as trusted voices that have worked within the communities they serve to address concerns related to COVID-19, including access and vaccine hesitancy. Perhaps the most relevant silver lining in the update was the formidable support from the local funding community, which provided welcome relief and support to nonprofits. This financial assistance was paramount to many organizations not only being able to keep their doors open, but also to increase program offerings, expand services to additional households, and develop services complimentary to existing programs at a time of heightened need.

This updated COVID report shows a shift in the top concerns of nonprofit leaders. The first report was focused more on financial uncertainty and additional expenses incurred due to pandemic procedures. Conversely, this report reflected a much greater concern around staffing, including employee recruitment, engagement and retention. As with the initial report, many factors were considered, from a programmatic, financial, and human resource standpoint. Though the road ahead is still filled with concern and uncertainty, the resiliency of the sector and its leaders is reassuring. Working together, our community proved its strength and resiliency.

To collect the data and responses for this report, the NEAB surveyed its membership on the continued impact of COVID on their organizations and those they serve over the last 18

months. In addition to the survey, there were follow up conversations and feedback/input requested of the membership. Special thanks to the Independent Sector, Broward County, Jorge M. Perez FIU Metropolitan Center, the Sun-Sentinel, United Way of Broward, 211 Broward, the Department of Children and Families, Broward County Public Schools and the Funders' Forum for sharing data that contributed to the COVID Part II report.

II. The Importance of the Nonprofit Sector

According to the Independent Sector, a nationally recognized nonprofit publication, the U.S. nonprofit sector is the underpinning of our society. Nonprofits provide a significant portion of the nation's health care, higher education, human services, arts and culture, conservation, and other vital services. They make up a vital part of our humanity — fueled largely by income from fees and service charges, government payments for services, and philanthropy. Nonprofits also have been the primary catalyst for major social change over the past 150 years. The nonprofit sector's economic recovery lagged slightly behind the growth in overall economy as measured by the gross domestic product (GDP) in the first quarter of 2021. Charitable giving typically correlates with economic activity. In Q1 2021, giving to Human Services, Environment, and Animals increased. Other causes experienced substantial decreases compared to previous years including those in cultural arts. More people gave in Q1 2021, compared to the same period last year. However, donations of \$500 or less increased, while giving above \$500 significantly decreased. There was an increase in small donations to social causes such as those centered around race equity.

A coalition of local funders known as The Funders' Forum, which includes the United Way, Children's Services Council, the Frederick A. DeLuca Foundation, and Broward County, has been tracking COVID-19 funding awards that have been provided to local nonprofits since the onset of the pandemic. These funders have provided over \$14,000,000 to support the nonprofit continuum. Nearly 58% of funding was for emergency assistance to support payment of rent and utilities. Over \$2,000,000 was spent to support efforts to address food insecurity and 11% of total funding was for direct organizational support. Additional funding efforts have helped employment efforts, purchasing of PPE, COVID testing and other health related services.

III. Broward 2020 Census Data

The total population for Broward County, Florida is 1,952,778, an 11.2% overall increase from 2010. Broward is a majority, minority county.

- 29.6% decrease in residents identifying as white, now representing 33% of Broward residents.
- 13.8% increase identifying as Black or African American, now 30% of Broward residents.
- 38.9% increase identifying as Latino or Hispanic, now 31% of Broward residents
- Median Household Income in Broward County, Florida is \$61,502, an increase from \$51,694 in 2010.

IV. Impact Upon the Populations Served by Members of the NEAB

The United Way recently published their ALICE COVID-19 Impact report. ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained and Employed) represents more than half of Broward's households and many of these families relied on the nonprofit safety net of services to help support them during the pandemic. These families live above the poverty line; but struggled to make ends meet even before mandatory stay at home orders, interruptions of business and schools, and conflicting guidance from government. COVID has threatened economic stability, disrupted finances, and negatively impacted well-being for these households.

The number one apprehension of ALICE families during the pandemic has been catching the virus. The second most prevalent concern, impacting nearly two thirds (63%) of ALICE households, was paying household expenses during the pandemic. Additionally, nearly half (49%), reported concerns about paying off debt, 45% about job loss, 43% about providing enough food for all members of their household, and over a third experienced a reduction of hours or wages. These changes to employment had a significant impact on a household's ability to manage childcare responsibilities, which in turn exacerbated mental and emotional health. Housing instability also plagued many of these families with worries over the threat of eviction and the inability to pay household expenses without financial aid. Gaps in access to technology, critical throughout the pandemic, also increased distress for many ALICE families. The pandemic saw record numbers needing assistance with food needs, including 32% experiencing food insecurity during the pandemic. Of respondents with children under the age of 18, 74% said that they had experienced issues or concerns related to childcare and education during the pandemic.

Additional factors that impacted ALICE households included a disruption to public transportation schedules and the inability to meet health care needs. Sixty (60%) of ALICE households rely on at least one hourly paid worker for income and a third were working less hours during the pandemic. Reduction of wages due to COVID protocol such as mandatory quarantine and a hesitancy to seek medical attention due to the virus further threatened household stability. These concerns were exacerbated when the household included vulnerable populations such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.

Issues related to seniors were intensified. Many suffered from social isolation before the pandemic began and forced these older adults to be secluded as a precaution to the virus. This resulted in skyrocketing needs. Over 9,400 elderly clients were served through an emergency meal program led by the local Area Agency on Aging, serving more than 4.6 million meals, many that had to be delivered individually to clients. Broward also led the state in implementation of senior technology programs, providing over 500 elders with technology based support that allowed them to connect with loved ones and services. Call to the Senior Helpline have also considerably increased from 4,200 in February 2020 to more than 8,600 in May. Calls in 2021 average 20-25% more each month since before the pandemic began.

According to data from the Jorge M. Perez FIU Metropolitan Center, recovering from the pandemic recession has had strikingly different impacts for low wage workers, those earning

less than \$27,000 annually and whose employment levels are still down 30% nationally from February 2020. In contrast, high earners, with an income of \$60,000 or more, have fully regained lost jobs from the shutdowns of last year and have increased the labor force by more than 7%. Middle wage jobs, including many ALICE households, have been down more than 6% since the beginning of the pandemic. Wages and salaries grew by 2.9% in South Florida between June 2020 and June 2021, compared with 3.5% nationally, according to the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Most organizations (60%) shared that many more clients suffered through the pandemic than originally expected, while 30% suggested that their clients fared better than anticipated. Organizations widely recognized the resiliency of their clients but acknowledged that many were already facing threats to their financial, emotional, and physical health before the pandemic. COVID-19 has also taken a human toll as many organizations have shared the pain and anguish of losing clients and employees who fell victim to the virus.

211, Broward's first call for helpline, has seen a startling increase for food assistance, financial assistance, mental health, and suicide related calls during the pandemic. Calls for food assistance skyrocketed during the stay-at-home order in March 2020, rising to an astounding 2,300 calls in the month of April, remaining higher than average throughout the summer and slowly declining for the next several months of 2020. 2021 has seen much lower call volume, averaging around 300 calls per month. Calls for financial assistance were also significantly higher than normal in 2020, double and triple the monthly average, with calls not seeing a decrease until 2021.

a. Health and Behaviors

Health disparities persist and have continued to plague racial and ethnic minorities. New areas of concern, such as vaccine hesitancy among minorities, are due to mistrust of the system. The barrier to access threatens to continue the pandemic length and severity in many communities. Food and financial insecurity coupled with COVID uncertainty has added additional stressors on physical and mental health. Organizations are continuing to provide food and other basic needs, services that were not being provided to clients before COVID, to keep families as stable as possible. Mental and behavioral concerns such as depression, isolation and anxiety have increased in all populations with concerning trends for youth and seniors. Calls to 211 for mental health referrals and suicide related needs have both remained alarmingly high throughout the pandemic. Mental health related calls have been up on average nearly 40% since the pandemic began.

Still a prevalent theme and concern among providers is abuse in all forms; physical, emotional, sexual and substance. Stay at home orders during the beginning of the pandemic forced victims to be home with their abusers. While calls of abuse were down during the lockdown, there was a staggering increase in verifiable abuse cases. In April of 2020 Broward County had 765 calls that had a follow up for suspicion of abuse. That number alarmingly swelled to 1,290 by May 2021. Domestic violence requests for injunctions for protection have increased 60% month over month, despite a temporary dip when the pandemic began as

victims were stuck at home with their abuser. Continued isolation was also a major concern for organizations that serve seniors. Isolation and uncertainty have exacerbated issues for many who struggle.

People struggling with substance abuse addiction have also increased during the pandemic. According to the United Way of Broward County Commission on Behavioral Health & Drug Prevention, national and state-level reports show an increased prevalence of prescription and illicit drug use during the pandemic in 2020. Compared to national-level data, Florida reports a higher prevalence of the use of all drug categories except for marijuana, including opioids, sedatives, stimulants, and other illicit drugs. Notably, data indicates that while the use of prescription drugs is declining, overdoses and deaths continue to increase. However, non-fatal opioid-involved emergency department visits in Broward declined in 2020 from 615 during the first quarter to 479 in the fourth quarter. Though numbers increased during the six months of 2021, they remained lower than what was recorded during the same time the previous year. Broward County recorded 3,208 emergency 911 calls for opioid related overdoses during 2020 and 1,816 administrations of naloxone. Data from the first half of 2021 are just about half of the totals recorded in 2020, suggesting calls will remain flat or slightly increase.

Persons with disabilities also suffered greatly through the pandemic. Many nonprofits who serve this population noted that due to the lack of in-person programming many of their clients experienced physical and cognitive declines. While many sought to implement virtual programming, the approach did not have the same outcome and it left providers concerned for the future. Many are frustrated by the loss of the gains that they worked so hard for with their clients.

b. Housing and Homelessness

Housing instability continues to plague ALICE households. While the eviction moratorium and several rounds of rental assistance funds have been made available throughout the pandemic, there is no concrete evidence to quantify how many households are on the brink of eviction and/or homelessness. Before the pandemic nearly half of Broward's households were considered cost burdened, spending more than 30% of monthly household income on housing expenses. Rental rates and median home sale prices have skyrocketed, further intensifying the crisis. Rents in Fort Lauderdale have increased more than 17% in the last year, and the average price of a home has gone up by more than \$100,000 since the beginning of the pandemic. These increased housing costs have detrimental impacts on the working class in Broward and ultimately threaten economic stability for most households. As wages are unable to keep up with the increases, many are forced to move out abruptly rather than being forced to be evicted, a permanent blemish on their financial records. Rental assistance programs have struggled with challenges that include bureaucratic barriers to access, landlords choosing not to participate, and vulnerable populations such as those who are undocumented fearful to apply for funding. Meanwhile, the consumer price index for housing in the area rose by 3.5%, making South Florida once again the most cost burdened region in the nation.

The pandemic has continued to present great challenges for the homeless system of care. In March 2020 when lockdowns were initiated in Broward County, street outreach activities ceased, and all of the shelters stopped new intakes. In late April 2020, the shelters brought in a limited number of new intakes made up of patients discharged from hospitals with COVID negative test results. In June 2020, street outreach activities resumed as the County launched a non-congregate shelter, located in a motel. New intakes were tested and quarantined, and then released to shelters once negative test results were obtained. During this time, the overall shelter census in Broward dropped to a staggering all-time low of approximately 25%. In October 2020, routine on-site testing was implemented in the shelters allowing the overall census to increase to a “COVID capacity” of approximately 65%. To date, the shelters continue to operate at “COVID capacity.”

c. Youth and Families

Due to the pandemic, children and families have been deprived of their education, work, and sport activities. Suddenly parents had to manage with their children at home from school, struggling to transition to online learning, while simultaneously working from home. Many parents also had to manage difficulties and pain related to having sick or dead relatives, wages reductions, or in some cases, loss of employment.

Families with school age children have also suffered in several ways. In addition to the struggle of managing employment and childcare, student performance has suffered greatly. Known as the COVID slide, school systems have lost educational gains it had made since the Florida Standards Assessments began in 2015. Formal school grades were not given in 2021 due to the pandemic. However, across Broward 24 schools would receive A’s if they were graded, down from 104 two years ago. Ds would increase from 13 two years ago to 82 in 2021 and Fs would increase from one to 58.

Additional results from 2021 show dramatic declines in math, with the proficiency rates for third to eighth graders declining from 63% in 2019 to 45% in 2021. It was the second largest decrease in the state. Language arts (grades 3 through 10) scores saw a smaller decrease, from 58% two years ago to 52% in 2021. Broward also had the lowest in person student rate at 40%, which impacted scores since in-person learning is indisputably more efficient than virtual learning in most cases.

Individual student grades suffered significantly as well. Records found that the combined percentage of F’s for middle and high school students was 11% in Broward, up from 4% a year ago. About 20,570 secondary students got two or more F’s during the first quarter of 2021, more than twice as many as last year during the first quarter of 2020. Broward County Public Schools also have battled increased absenteeism with 8,208 students missing 15 days or more of school in the first quarter, up from 1,754 a year ago. There is also saw a sizable dip in fourth and fifth grade math scores, though reading scores increased slightly, a small silver lining.

Family dynamics were also impacted by COVID. For children and families who have experienced prior trauma, the pandemic caused additional stress and trauma, compounding the impact of previous traumatic experiences. Children who were already receiving services from nonprofits saw reduced access to care and behavior regression. Although children are less likely than adults to be affected by the severe physical symptoms of COVID-19, the far-reaching impact of the pandemic may have lasting adverse effects on their physical, mental, and socio-emotional development.

V. COVID's Impact on NEAB member organizations

a. Financial

Thanks to a robust system of care and generous local community funding one-third of survey respondents noted that while they had their ups and downs, 50% felt their organizations fared better than initially anticipated. Less than 5% suggested no or very little impact. Responses were far more optimistic overall than from a year ago, though noted with growing concerns and threats. Many acknowledged the importance of being an active and engaged member of the Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward (NEAB) and the opportunity to connect with colleagues and share resources. Less than 7% of respondents suffered more than initially anticipated. However, the length of the pandemic has organizations concerned that funders and financial supporters might begin to feel fatigue and stop donating additional dollars, which are still needed to cover costly, unexpected COVID related expenses such as PPE and technology. The Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward (NEAB) provided several opportunities for nonprofits to receive PPE, and is reported to have relieved some of the burden. Some nonprofits noted an acceptance of current conditions and recognize that encouraging social distancing, online programming and hybrid work environments will continue. Others hope to return to pre COVID conditions in the next 12 months. Changing protocols and conflicting information led to leaders questioning their decisions and struggling to manage risks that change daily. Overall, the uncertainty and prolonged pandemic is what weighs heaviest on the minds of our CEO respondents.

Thanks to assistance such as Payment Protection Program (PPP), nearly 80% of those who completed the survey did better than expected financially or exceeded budget expectations and were able to increase staff or expand programs. Twenty percent experienced significant funding challenges resulting in layoffs and/or impacting their ability to deliver programming. Art and cultural organizations were impacted more than those in direct human services. Several noted a stronger than anticipated 2020 but have not seen that sustained in 2021. Future concerns include lack of continuity in funding to meet the increased need for services. As an example, one organization saw a 300% increase in need for services. They received funding to meet that need in the first several months of the pandemic, but that funding has dried up, though the increased demand has not waned. Others noted that while donations and revenue increased it did not match the pace of increased need and costs associated to meet demand.

More than 75% applied for and received the first round of the (PPP) funds while 42% also received the second round of PPP funds. Ten (10%) of organizations did not apply for any type of government aid, though most of those were volunteer run groups with no paid staff. Sixteen percent of respondents applied for Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL), and several members received allocations of CARES Act funding and/or anticipate receiving ARP (American Rescue Plan) dollars. While these lifelines were dire in the first several months of the pandemic, the regulations and conflicting rules were difficult to manage and added an extra layer of stress for organizations who already balance multiple funding streams. Many sources of funds did not have considerations for expenses related to increased need that were not considered direct program expenses, such as the need to rent temporary space and technology investments. Budget planning has also been upended as financial forecasts vary on several unreliable factors associated with the pandemic.

Fundraising for nonprofits continued to be upended. More than 70% of organizations have cancelled events, a critical source of unencumbered revenue for nonprofits that covers administrative and other expenses typically not funded by grants. Half of the respondents moved events online and 44% increased their overall online presence. Individual giving decreased for more organizations (27%) than those who had an increase (20%), though many noted that last year had an increase but this year did not, reinforcing the donor fatigue effect of the pandemic. Last year's survey noted that all organizations anticipated a return to in person events in 2021, though many still have not. There has been varied success in producing online events, but development staff recognize that virtual is not sustainable for the long term. Successful online revenue generating ideas have ranged from online events and auctions as well as book clubs, mindfulness seminars and smaller online groups. One organization held an online ugly sweater party during the holiday season, and several had online happy hour and food pairings events where food was dropped off to the homes of event attendees ahead of time. Another creative idea was to partner with local artists to create face masks, with proceeds from the sales benefitting the nonprofit. An entire mission driven campaign was implemented to support the fundraising effort called "Let's Face It". Some of these strategies provided an opportunity for nonprofits to engage their volunteers.

Boards and event committees are often split on whether to remain online or return to in person events. Arts and cultural organization have suffered more as have organizations that rely on in person revenue and have fee for service models. The period of time between vaccine availability and the Delta variant provided a window of what some hoped would be the return to normal for events and other in person functions, but the threat of new variants has renewed a cause for caution.

More than half of organizations increased their number of grant submissions and amount of funding requested. More than a quarter found new revenue streams to support their mission. A concern among organizations was funders pivoting some of their dollars to support immediate COVID needs, which left less dollars for programs that were not COVID related.

The inability to resume many in person donor engagement opportunities is another growing worry. Many donors are still hesitant to perform site visits or even meet in person. Facility tours have not resumed and even those organizations that are open to public are doing so at a limited capacity. Cultural organizations that rely on in person engagements continue to be impacted by pandemic protocol despite pivoting to provide online programming. Providers of summer camps that received little to no revenue in 2020 did better in 2021, but were still unable to achieve pre COVID revenue expectations.

b. Outlook

More than 50% of respondents have a positive outlook for the next 12 months, reiterating that they did better in 2020 than anticipated and hope to continue to do so. Twenty eight percent noted that last year was difficult and they expect challenges will continue for at least the next 12 months. It should be noted that earlier in the year, before the Delta variant once again wreaked havoc on our health systems, organizations were more hopeful for the future. Only 15% of respondents felt like things will get worse before it gets better, a bright optimistic light. Organizations feel better prepared for the unknown but are concerned that there are no new funding streams available to nonprofits such as PPP, a critical lifeline at the beginning of the pandemic. Agencies who receive public funds for programs shared frustration with the complexity of funding shifts, changing qualification mandates, and conflicting guidance from government. While nonprofits are eligible for CARES and ARP Act funds, local government has not provided ample guidance in how to apply for funding. COVID fatigue also threatens future stability. The urgency, cooperation and other government interventions have recently ended while the need is still high. Funders who previously pivoted to provide emergency relief are considering the long-term impacts of funding changes. Many nonprofits also note less concern about financials and more concerns about staff being burnt out, a common theme among responses throughout the report. Another common theme is the hyper politicization of the pandemic, which made it more difficult to make decisions without fear of alienating those with strong differing opinions. This stress was felt with staff, board members, volunteers, as well as consumers.

As one respondent noted “At this point, it feels like we're going backwards and are almost starting at square one. I'm beginning to sense more frustration and less sense of hope among our team in the past couple months as cases exploded again. If vaccinations don't increase and masks aren't worn, I don't see things improving any time soon. There will be a negative financial impact on our organization if we are not able to hold any fundraising events again this year. The mental health impact on our community has increased steadily over the past year, which I'm afraid will explode and become catastrophic if COVID cases, hospitalizations, and deaths continue to go in the wrong direction. If a variant emerges that is completely resistant to vaccines, we truly are back to square one. People at this point are feeling anxious and defeated.”

c. Employment Practices

When asked a year ago how COVID has impacted their organization, nearly all respondents (86%) indicated changes in employee work habits and revenue streams, while nearly 89% reported changes in their service delivery model. A year later, most organizations anticipate permanent changes in their service delivery model (71%) while more than half anticipate keeping their updated HR policies such as flexible personnel schedules. More than 20% anticipate keeping their updated fundraising model by utilizing technology and online events, while 19% plan on making permanent the changes made to the physical location of their organization.

Health and human service organizations served more people than in years past, with many providing services to more than ever before. Art and culture organizations served less than in previous years. All organizations expect that trend to continue for 2021 and are working to adjust their infrastructure to meet the increased need for services. Organizations who provide mental or behavioral services saw the largest increase in demand. Organizations also noted that in addition to the increase in requests for assistance, needs are more complex and require extra time to provide services, which intensifies staffing challenges.

Unchanged from last year was how organizations were able to adapt. Organizations that rely on in person programming have struggled the most, finding it challenging to convert to a virtual model of program delivery and consider the needs of staff, many of whom were balancing childcare issues throughout the pandemic. The issue is widespread among those who provide services to persons with special needs, seniors and those experiencing homelessness. These populations rely on in person services and struggle more with access and ability to navigate technology.

d. Human Resources (HR) Challenges

Nearly 60% of agencies have updated their HR policies to include more flexible work policies. This was the most prevalent strategy to recruit and retain staff. Nonprofits have experienced a shortage of qualified, available staff. Half of organizations responding to the survey cited this as their greatest challenge. While the inability to recruit and retain staff was an issue before COVID, it has magnified the issue considerably. Throughout the survey this was a common theme, emphasized by many as having implications in all other areas of operations. Twenty five percent had no changes in staffing, while 27% increased their staff during the pandemic and 29% decreased staff through layoffs, resignations, or voluntary absences. Less than 10% decreased hours or pay and only one respondent had to reduce benefits. Ten percent increased volunteer, unpaid staff and others did not hire for open positions. Staffing challenges were amplified by agencies looking for employees that are currently in demand, such as nurses and licensed mental health providers who can earn significantly more income in the private sector than working for a nonprofit. Many organizations observed an increase in turnover and the impact of not having volunteer labor had a substantial impact on several nonprofits.

Vaccine hesitation also remains a top concern among organizations. Nearly 70% reported staff hesitancy to the vaccine, while more than half are also dealing with vaccine hesitant clients. Organizations who served clients who are predominately low income were

more likely to resist masks and/or vaccines. Less than 15% of organizations indicated vaccine hesitancy among volunteers or board members, though many also noted they weren't asking this question directly to this group of stakeholders. Some organizations, especially those who maintain group homes and/or work closely with vulnerable populations, have mandated vaccines despite the threat of exacerbating challenges in recruitment of skilled employees. The political nature of vaccines has also stressed organizations. This challenge was magnified in agencies working with small children, seniors, and those with immunocompromised clients, where a mandate that would potentially keep clients safer might conflict with personal belief of staff.

Employee burnout and fatigue also ranked as a top challenge for CEOs. Balancing workloads from home has been a persistent challenge for many, especially in homes where children are trying to learn virtually. Other employees struggled with working from home, especially baby-boomers and older employees that are not comfortable with online platforms. COVID protocols such as quarantining which happen suddenly, have implications for the employee and the workplace, especially when the employee is needed on-site. COVID outbreaks and extended quarantines at agencies, especially those managing group homes and those with onsite services, have created additional challenges. Some staff have refused to come into the office at all due to COVID, which has impacted HR protocol and left some nonprofits in a bind.

CEOs indicate a feeling of being overwhelmed in having to balance the changing and often conflicting directions from government and being forced to make decisions that impact them and their staff and then having to frequently change course. Acknowledging staff stress, listening, and providing a safe space to vent while balancing workloads has also been a challenge.

In contrast, many organizations also acknowledged a tremendous amount of resiliency within their work culture. Transitioning to an online workforce that has transferable skills and employees willing to adapt consistently ranked high among accolades that CEOs shared about their teams. Creativity was in abundance as organizations found unique ways to engage staff and clients. Organizations noted that passion for the cause in many cases promoted a culture that went above and beyond for the team and clients, even at the risk of their own self-care.

e. Programmatic Changes

Seventy percent (70%) of nonprofits have changed their program delivery model. However, the top programmatic challenge is the lack of qualified staff. This is plaguing nonprofits across the system. Equally as important were changes in delivering services, which include challenges with virtually operating programs. Half of the organizations were impacted by the increased need in services and the demand for additional programs. Several noted challenges with supply chain and vendor issues.

The top additional services that organizations continue to provide are food and financial assistance. Additionally, many have worked to increase the number of times they engage with a

client, especially those who provide mental and behavioral services. This is to balance any challenges with engagement online or delivering programming differently than pre COVID times. Decreased access to clients has created concerns about eroding the progress that has been made in previous years relative to household stability. Nonprofits expressed unease about the pandemic's impact on clients they serve and its effect on outcomes that are tied to funding, such as those in education and behavioral health. Organizations that rely on public funding have also experienced frustration with the lack of communication coming from government partners as well as conflicting information and delays in funding.

VI. Stakeholder Engagement

Most organizations (60%) have found creative ways to maintain their culture by engaging staff online and in new ways, though about 20% noted struggles to keep up morale. Board dynamics was mostly the same, with an equal number reporting that their board is more engaged since the onset of the pandemic than less. However, as the pandemic drags on many CEOs note board fatigue with organizations that have had an increase of engagement.

Volunteer engagement has seen dramatic changes. Organizations who rely on in-person volunteer engagement that does not allow for social distancing suffered the most. Just above 10% of organizations are unsure how to engage volunteers with pandemic protocols in place while 21% of organizations have put all volunteer opportunities on hold indefinitely. However, 36% have found new ways to engage. Thirty percent of groups saw a decrease in volunteers while 15% saw an increase. Organizations who relied on volunteers for food distribution and hands on activities had the biggest impact, as did those organizations who rely on volunteers to be active on site. One time engagement increased in many organizations, particularly at the beginning of the pandemic. Those engagements have waned as the pandemic drags on. Several organizations relied on vulnerable populations such as the elderly for regularly scheduled volunteer assignments, which has been nearly eliminated. Many note concerns about being able to re-engage their volunteers and keeping them active despite not being able to host them on-site. The absence of volunteers means increased expenses and limited program availability. The inability to do in person outreach also persists as an issue for many nonprofit organizations, such as for those who work with persons experiencing homelessness.

Nonprofits continue to leverage this pandemic as an opportunity to deepen their impact with the families they serve and support additional unmet needs. Being creative with engagement of stakeholders continues to be key. Some recognized that going virtual was a benefit in being able to provide telehealth and mental health services. When the digital divide did not hinder the effort, they have been able to eliminate other barriers to access, such as transportation, timing of programs and childcare. However, online programming has not been as successful for education service providers, who noted the struggles that people of all ages had with remote learning.

VII. Conclusion

While the prolonged effects of the pandemic continue to reverberate in all aspects of the nonprofit continuum, the sector in Broward has consistently shown a level of commitment that has been defined by resiliency and passion to serve. Organizations went above and beyond to balance the needs of their staff and clients and many survived thanks to community partnerships and government aid.

As one member noted “The pandemic has shown our community how resilient we are in terms of forging forward, building new relationships, pivoting into a new way of achieving our goals- thereby confronting a challenge and turning it into a success.”

About the Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward

The Nonprofit Executive Alliance of Broward’s mission is to promote health and human service organizations in Broward County through a network of nonprofit CEOs that work together to promote advocacy, education and collaboration. Our focus is on improving the business of nonprofit work and changing the way the community views the sector.

Special thanks to our sponsors:

