

Nonprofit Workforce Shortage Survey

In South Carolina

August 2023

In April 2023, more than 1,600 charitable nonprofit organizations throughout the United States completed the nonprofit workforce shortages survey designed to gauge whether job vacancies continue to be a problem for the missions of those organizations, how the vacancies impact communities, and what actions have been taken and are proposed for alleviating the challenges. More than seventy South Carolina nonprofits provided insights that provide the substance of this report.

Key Findings

- Nearly three out of five (58.9%) South Carolina nonprofits completing the survey reported experiencing job vacancies.
- More than one-third (34.2%) of nonprofits in the state responded that they have more vacancies compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 16.4% have longer waiting lists for services.
- 55.8% of respondents with vacancies identified program and service delivery as a category with vacancies.
- About three-quarters (72.6%) of responding organizations said budget constraints/insufficient funds affects their ability to recruit and retain employees, followed by salary competition (65.8%)
- Almost two-thirds (65.8%) of South Carolina respondents anticipate the amount of donations will decline or remain flat for 2023. Nearly three out of four (73.4%) nonprofits expect the number of donors to decline or remain the same this year.

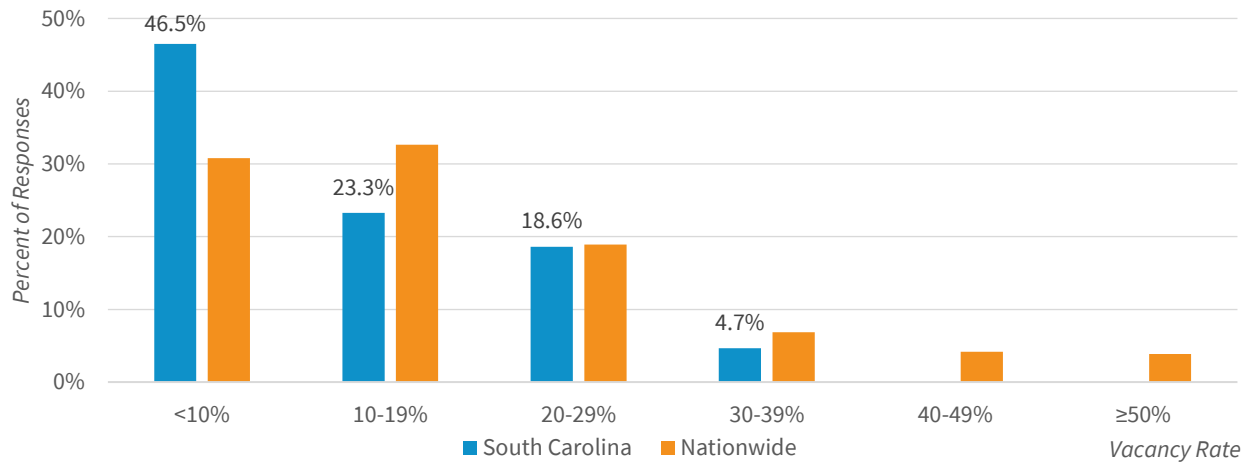
The Scope of The Problem

One of the key questions in the survey was, “What is your nonprofit’s current job vacancy rate?” Nearly half of nonprofits (46.5%) with vacancies shared rates fewer than 9%, while another 23.3% responded that their vacancy rates ranged between 10% and 19%. Nearly one out of four (23.3%)

nonprofits reported a job vacancy rate greater than 20%. It is good news that no nonprofit taking the survey pointed to vacancy rates more than 39%.

Figure 1: Nonprofits' Current Job Vacancy Rate in April 2023

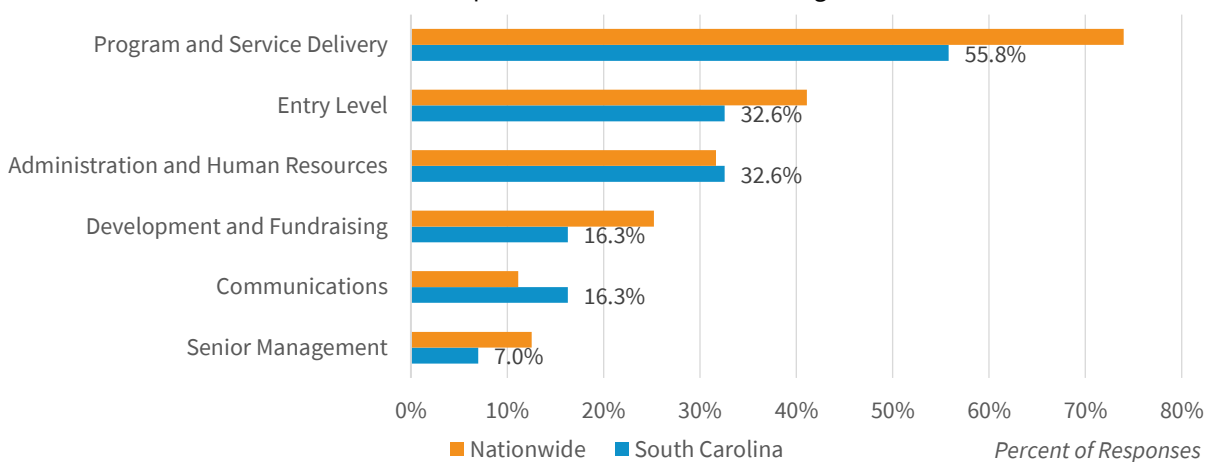
Number of Nonprofits that Provided a Vacancy Rate: 43



The job category with the most vacancies at South Carolina nonprofits is program and service delivery, which affects 55.8% of nonprofits that reported vacancies. Nearly a third (32.6%) of nonprofits also reported vacancies in entry level positions. Vacancies in administration and human resources also impact 32.6% of organizations, while 16.3% of nonprofits are having trouble filling development and fundraising and communications positions. Other categories reported are in project and event management, maintenance, and temporary positions for summer camp counselors.

Figure 2: Nonprofit Job Categories with Vacancies in April 2023

Number of Nonprofits that Identified Job Categories: 43

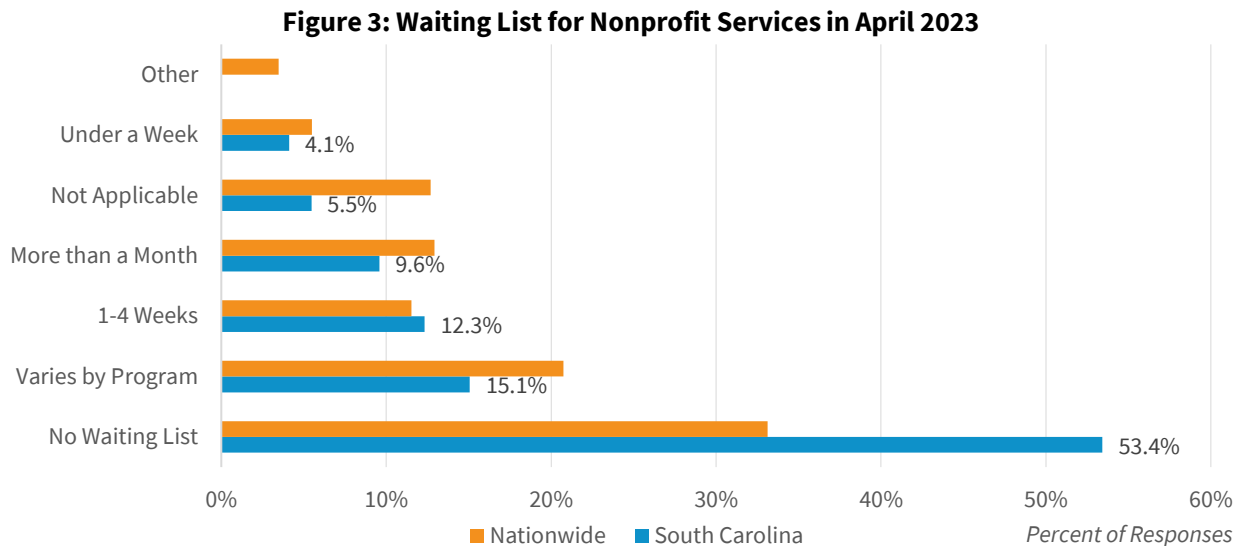


The impact of increased job vacancies is visible in South Carolina’s communities, as demonstrated in comments provided by survey participants. A human services provider can no longer offer weekend programming because they have an insufficient number of certified instructors. They have been able to move some participants to weekdays, but others can no longer participate at all. Another provider cannot serve as many clients and must turn people away because they are not operating at full

capacity. For a nonprofit respondent, vacancies mean that they have not always been as responsive as they want to be, and “have had to say no to events” because their staff is covering other things or refer clients to other programs.

Why It Matters: The Consequences to People, Communities, and Missions

The survey asked participants to share the extent they had been forced to resort to waiting lists or otherwise alter service delivery because of workforce shortages. More than half (53.4%) of nonprofit respondents to the survey indicated that they had no waiting lists for their services. Another 15.1% explained that they could not give a time frame for waiting lists because the duration for wait times varied by program. One in eight (12.3%) nonprofits have a waiting list 1-4 weeks long while nearly a tenth (9.6%) have a waiting list of longer than one month. Another 5.5% said that the question is not applicable to their operations.



The survey also asked nonprofits to compare their current challenges to prior experiences. More than a third (34.2%) of nonprofits in South Carolina responded that they have more vacancies compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic, and 16.4% have longer waiting lists for services.

Table 1: Vacancies and Waiting Lists in April 2023 Compared to March 2020

	Changes Observed April 2023 vs. March 2020	Percent of Responses in 2023
Vacancies	More vacancies	34.2%
	Fewer vacancies	4.1%
	No change to vacancies	15.1%
Waiting List	Longer waiting list for services	16.4%
	Shorter waiting list for services	1.4%
	No change to waiting list	19.2%

	Changes Observed April 2023 vs. March 2020	Percent of Responses in 2023
Other	Other	1.4%
	Did not select an option	41.1%

One nonprofit experiencing “severe” turnover and vacancies shared that their staff has worked “tirelessly to bridge the gap,” but the burnout they experience is real. A human services provider has most of its staff in programs that require specific credentialing; they pointed out that the credentialing progress can take up to two months, which causes delays in removing clients from the waiting lists. Each time a coworker leaves, one respondent shared, the waitlist is impacted, and programs must be adjusted until a new person is hired. This creates a “vicious” cycle, they remarked, if services no longer receive the attention they once had.

Barriers to Nonprofits Retaining and Recruiting Employees

The three leading factors affecting recruitment and retention for South Carolina charitable organizations are budget constraints/insufficient funds, salary competition, and stress/burnout. Respondents also stated that their applicant pool does not have the credentials to work at their organizations.

Table 2: Factors Affecting Nonprofit Recruitment and Retention

Factor Affecting Recruitment and Retention	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Budget constraints/insufficient funds	53	72.6%
Salary competition	48	65.8%
Stress/burnout	24	32.9%
Other	10	13.7%
Challenges caused by government grants/contracts	10	13.7%
Not Sure	7	9.6%
Lack of child care	2	2.7%
COVID-19 and vaccinations	1	1.4%

“We are unable to compete with the likes of Walmart, Target, and Starbucks,” one respondent shared, when explaining what salary competition means to their organization. This is especially a problem, they wrote, because their work is primarily serving children who survived abuse and neglect, making it harder for them to recruit and retain staff. A human services provider is program-based, so they have lost some staff who wanted to pursue remote work due to child care issues. A dilemma for another nonprofit is that they are primarily grant funded, and if they lose funding, they may also lose employees if they do not find other sources. Grants reports, one nonprofit wrote, are “too cumbersome, time consuming, and duplicative,” and often do not cover all expenses required to fulfill expectations.

Nonprofits in South Carolina are also facing staff burnout, but they don't see many options for addressing this while they have unfilled vacancies. A respondent found that many of their staff who recently graduated struggle a bit with "soft skills," which they credit to the staff missing out on collaborative projects and lack of internships over the last three years. Another nonprofit thinks there needs to be more "professional development opportunities for staff which is a challenge due to lack of funding for this service."

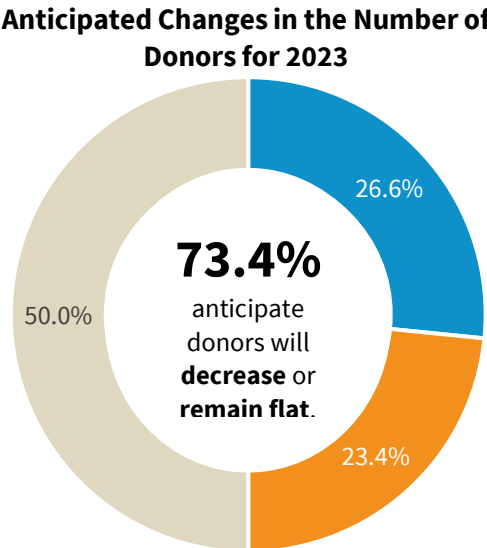
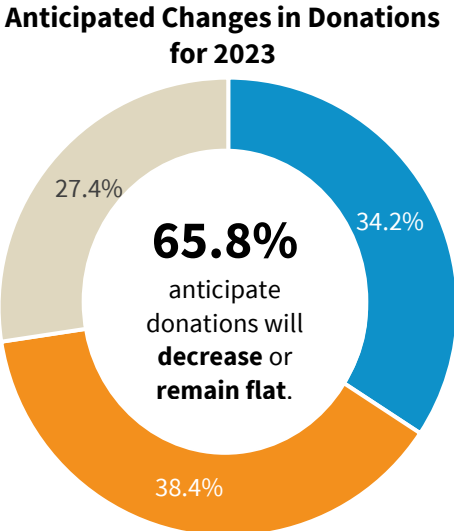
External Factors Impacting Nonprofits

Going beyond the scope of the earlier survey, the 2023 nonprofit survey sought to quantify how much three external factors have impacted nonprofit employment challenges: 1) charitable giving; 2) natural disasters; and 3) the end of enhanced benefits provided during the declared public health emergency. The results vary widely depending on, among other things, the respondent's subsector, geographic location, and demographics of people served.

Charitable Giving

Nearly two-thirds (65.8%) of South Carolina respondents anticipate the amount of donations will decline or remain flat for 2023. About three out of four (73.4%) nonprofits expect the number of donors to decline or remain the same this year.

Figure 4: Nonprofits' Anticipated Changes in Donations and Donors for 2023



■ Increase in donations ■ Decrease in donations ■ No change ■ Increase in donors ■ Decrease in donors ■ No changes

The anticipation by most South Carolina nonprofits that total giving and the number of donors will be either flat or declining in 2023 is troubling. Charitable giving declined by 10.5 percent in 2022

compared to 2021, according [Giving USA’s Annual Report](#). This comes at a time when [inflation](#) has caused higher costs for services and demand for those services continues to rise. According to the [Nonprofit Finance Fund](#), between FY2019 and FY2021, demand for services significantly increased for 52% of nonprofits. As a result, nonprofits expect giving to effectively decline while the needs of residents remain high and are going up.

Impact of Natural Disasters on Nonprofits

As communities suffering from natural disasters turn to charitable nonprofits, they are discovering that the nonprofits where they seek relief are themselves struggling to recover from the significantly added workloads they endured throughout the pandemic. Natural disasters impact nonprofits in many ways, and in South Carolina they have mainly led to increased demand for services, increased costs of providing services, and staff impacted by natural disasters.

Table 3: Impact of Natural Disasters on Nonprofits

Impact of Natural Disasters	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Not applicable	50	68.5%
Increased demand for services	15	20.5%
Increased costs of providing services/unbudgeted costs	14	19.2%
Staff impacted by natural disasters	3	4.1%
Building/office damage	3	4.1%
Other	3	4.1%

The End of the Public Health Emergency

With the expiration of many federal and state relief programs created under the COVID-19 public health emergency, some nonprofits in South Carolina expect this to impact their operations. For instance, one nonprofit anticipates that people in their program may not be able to afford medication or see their benefits terminated. However, most nonprofits in South Carolina are not expecting an impact.

Solutions and Recommendations

Recognizing that the people leading, working in, and volunteering for charitable nonprofits are, by nature, problem solvers, the 2023 survey invited participants to share the solutions they had already implemented or identified for addressing the nonprofit workforce shortages crisis. They provided practical solutions and proposed public policy solutions.

Practices Implemented by Nonprofits

South Carolina nonprofits have responded to the workforce shortages crisis by increasing salaries, providing remote work options and one-time bonuses. Many have also offered trainings in diversity, equity, and inclusion and in career advancement, as well as expanded benefits and promoted wellness programs, such as a four-day workweek and sabbaticals. An education nonprofit is developing a mentoring program for new, younger staff.

Table 4: Practical Solutions Implemented by Nonprofits

Implemented Practices	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Salary increases	40	54.8%
Remote work options (hybrid, full-time, etc.)	36	49.3%
One-time bonuses	20	27.4%
Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion trainings and strategies	20	27.4%
Benefits increased (health insurance, transportation, etc.)	18	24.7%
Wellness programs (4-day workweek, additional time off, retreats, sabbaticals, etc.)	18	24.7%
Career advancement opportunities (training, mentorship, etc.)	15	20.5%
Mental health (expanded benefits, counseling, etc.)	15	20.5%
Notified employees about their eligibility for Public Service Loan Forgiveness	12	16.4%
Not applicable	11	15.1%
Signing bonus	4	5.5%
Other	1	1.4%

Solutions Proposed by Nonprofits

Nonprofits on the frontlines in South Carolina shared solutions they think lawmakers, philanthropy, and others should consider. One respondent suggested that more governments or foundations should create grants to help nonprofits find summer interns and offer stipends. For a nonprofit professional, mentoring programs for more staff that help them reach a leadership role would encourage them to stay in the sector and demonstrate their skills and passion. Another proposed solution is for more donations to cover the financial strength of an organization: “If we strengthen accounting practices, raise funds through fundraising events we can generate unrestricted funds to hire additional essential staff.” A housing nonprofit wants to see more “encouragement of potential

donors - Individuals, churches, corporations and foundations” to give to nonprofits, and tax incentives for higher giving, which can help nonprofits provide better compensation.

Profiles of Nonprofits Completing the Survey

Although workforce shortages impact nonprofits from all sectors and budgets, smaller nonprofits feel the impact more. Nonprofits with annual operating budgets below \$500,000 made up 31.5% of South Carolina respondents to the workforce shortages survey. Those with budgets of between \$500,000 and \$1 million comprised 17.8% of nonprofits in the survey, and better than three out of ten (31.5%) survey participants had annual operating budgets that range from \$1 million to \$3 million. Another 19.1% of nonprofits had budgets greater than \$3 million.

Figure 5: Nonprofits' Annual Operating Budget

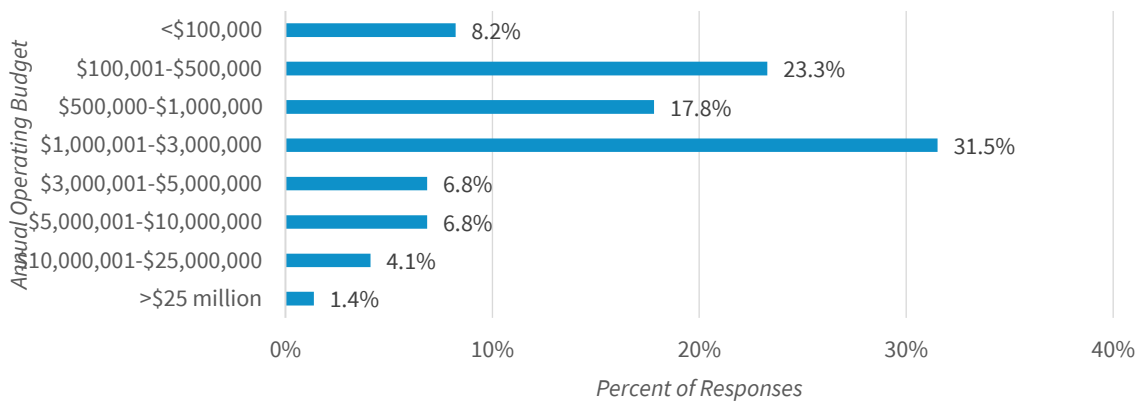


Table 5: Communities Served by Nonprofits

Communities Served	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Black, Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander, Middle Eastern/North African, Hispanic/Latino/Latina/Latinx, or multi-racial/multi-ethnic	28	38.4%
None of the above	24	32.9%
People living in rural communities	19	26.0%
People with disabilities	14	19.2%
People who identify as LGBTQ+	8	11.0%

Table 6: Responses to the Nonprofit Workforce Shortages Survey by Subsector

Subsector	Number of Responses	Percent of Responses
Human Services	24	32.9%
Other	11	15.1%
Education	10	13.7%
Housing	6	8.2%
Arts, Culture, and Humanities	5	6.8%
Healthcare	5	6.8%
Public/Societal Benefit	4	5.5%
Community/Civic Engagement	3	4.1%
Religion	2	2.7%
Child Care	1	1.4%
Mental Health	1	1.4%