

# Magic Cabinet Evaluation

## COVID-19 Funding Study

---

Prepared by Public Profit | May 2021

### Summary

In late 2020 and early 2021, the Public Profit evaluation team spoke with organizations funded by Magic Cabinet and those not funded by them; some in the Bay Area and some in Seattle; some whose work has grown as a result of the pandemic and some whose work has contracted. The organizations also represented a wide range in terms of issue area – from substance use recovery to food sustainability – and in their revenue mix – some organizations rely heavily on government contracts, others have a strong earned income arm, and others are mostly funded through foundations and private donors. Across this diverse group of nonprofits, several themes emerged:

Many of the organizations we spoke with are **proud of the ways they have adjusted their programming** to best meet the demands of the moment.



A handful of organizations, both engagement partners and grantees, specifically shared that they were **grateful for some pre-pandemic activities that helped them navigate the pandemic**. In fact, as of the time we spoke with them, only a few organizations had to reduce staff or work hours.



Engagement partners **wished that more of their funders had reached out** and many were worried about how their organizations would fare financially in 2021 and beyond.

Taken together, the nonprofits offered these three core recommendations for funders:

1. Organizations appreciate **transparency and flexibility**.
2. Organizations desire **personal, positive relationships** with funders.
3. Organizations called on funders to give more and to provide **longer-term funding commitments**.



# About the Study

## Purpose of Study

Magic Cabinet is interested in both supporting the communities it funds and advocating that other funders adopt its approach. As part of the evaluation, we investigated how other funders have responded to the COVID-19 pandemic and solicited feedback from nonprofit leaders about how funders could have improved their response.

The following pages summarize what we learned about these organizations' experience of the pandemic and their recommendations for how funders can improve their support in the future. Magic Cabinet hopes to use this information to inform its own grant-making approach to support grantees and to influence other funders.

## Study Design

We gathered information on grantees' pandemic experiences from in-depth interviews with nine Magic Cabinet grantees (those from the Mission District, Oakland, and Bayview Hunters Point Cohorts), conducted between August 2020 and January 2021.

We also reached out to Magic Cabinet's engagement partners: organizations that participated in Magic Cabinet's initial engagement process but were not, in the end, selected for a Cohort. From these engagement partners, we hoped to learn how their funders responded to the pandemic.

First, we fielded a short survey in fall 2020 to 35 nonprofit leaders; it was completed by individuals at 15 engagement partner organizations. The responding organizations included 11 from the Bay Area and 4 from the Seattle area. The purpose of this survey was to learn more about how organizations, similar to those in Magic Cabinet cohorts, are weathering the COVID-19 pandemic. The results can help the Foundation better understand how to support communities in the San Francisco Bay Area and Greater Seattle. The survey was made up of one multiple-choice question, two check-all-that-apply questions (Appendix A), and two open-ended response questions (Appendix B).

The Public Profit evaluation team then continued this investigation with four survey respondents in January 2021, who indicated that they were willing to do a follow-up interview. In keeping with the Foundation's and Public Profit's commitment to equity, we offered a small incentive for their time.

Public Profit used several qualitative approaches to inform the analysis of data from the open-ended survey questions and interviews included in this report. For the open-ended survey data,

we conducted a thematic analysis using a grounded-theory approach. Both types of interviews were semi-structured; we followed the themes of our planned protocols and engaged in spontaneous dialogue as the conversations developed. The grantee interview protocols were developed to continue inquiry into findings from earlier grantee and Foundation staff interviews. A two-person team conducted these interviews, with one member of the team taking detailed notes. The interview team created detailed summaries of each interview shortly after each was conducted. The engagement partner interview protocols were developed to explore emergent themes from the earlier survey. Each engagement partner interviewee's earlier survey responses were also reviewed and specific questions about their responses were included in the protocol. One person conducted these interviews, took notes during the interview and created summaries of the interview afterwards. Later, we created an automated transcript from the recording, and checked the notes and summaries against that transcript. All summaries were guided by their respective protocol topics, but also included emergent themes. Finally, as a team, we engaged in iterative meaning making to identify themes that emerged within and across data sources.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to the nonprofit leaders that shared their experiences with their funders during the COVID-19 pandemic and for being honest about your hopes for an improved philanthropy ecosystem. Your time is valued and appreciated.

Jessica Manta-Meyer, *Director*

Cimone Satele, *Research Consultant*

Taylor B. Anderson, *Research Assistant*



Christina Engel, *Executive Director*

Tiffany Johnson, *Program Director - Bay Area*



# Findings

---

## Nonprofits Agree on Three Core Recommendations

Over the course of 2020 and early 2021, we talked to a diverse group of organizations, yet their recommendations to funders were very aligned. The nonprofits shared a range of stories about funding during the pandemic, from supportive actions like immediate emergency funding and the loosening of restrictions on existing funding, to adverse actions such as cutting or delaying funding, or simply lack of transparency about timelines or decisions. Across this diverse group of the nonprofits, three core recommendations emerged. While none of these may be surprising – calls for such trust-based philanthropy have existed for a long time – it is still notable that feedback from a range of organizations converges on these three themes:

**Organizations appreciate transparency and flexibility.** Many organizations called on funders to be more flexible with their application and reporting requirements and to remain flexible with their expectations of grantees over the course of a grant regardless of the pandemic. Engagement partners also called on funders to be more transparent about their timelines and requirements with potential grantees. Some engagement partners highlighted the flexibility of some of their funders, while others shared that they wished their funders had been more transparent about their funding limitations.

*There were some big funders... and god bless them. They said, 'We're not going to waste any time. We'll send you the money now, use it any way you want and write the report whenever you can.' That was helpful! But that was the exception. – Engagement Partner Interview*

*It would be cool if funders would have reached out before the grant season to say, 'This year we're affected, too. We still want to see your applications. We value our funding relationships. But in all likelihood, we're not going to be able to fund at the levels we usually do.' So that we didn't have to reach back to them to say 'We noticed some changes' and then get a very cranky response. – Engagement Partner Interview*

Magic Cabinet grantees appreciated the Foundation's flexibility, noting that the Foundation allowed grantees to extend or renew grants whose original timelines could not go as planned. One grantee particularly praised the fact that Magic Cabinet does not require grantees to have a five-year plan, but rather that the model assumes that capacity building needs will emerge and shift over time.

*It's an investment over five years, but you're doing individual grants that are responsive to your infrastructural needs. You don't have to articulate your five-year plan [at the beginning] where you somehow are expected to pretend you know exactly what contextual changes you're*

*going to face and exactly what you're going to do to meet them. [It allows] responsiveness.  
- Grantee Interview*

**Organizations desire personal, positive relationships with funders.** Magic Cabinet grantees have consistently likened Magic Cabinet to their individual donors, noting that, like individual donors, Magic Cabinet staff take care to get to know the organization and connect personally with their mission. The fact that Magic Cabinet takes the time to connect personally with each grantee's mission may be even more notable given that Magic Cabinet funds organizations across a wide range of issue areas. Both engagement partners and Magic Cabinet grantees spoke fondly of other funders with whom they had a close relationship. And, when asked specifically for recommendations to share with funders, most of the organizations shared a variation on this theme: show up, demonstrate that you are willing to enter into partnership with us, take the time to get to know us to better understand who we are and what we do.

*I applaud [one of their large foundation supporters. They are] huge, but they gave me the time of the day, met with me several times, were accessible by phone. They established a great relationship. They don't have to do that. But they've got it figured out. - Engagement Partner Interview*

*I would like them to be able to look at us, not from how many people we serve, but from, our reputation, the quality of services we provide. - Engagement Partner Interview*

*Get in touch - this would be the most meaningful way to show that you are listening to organizational needs on the ground. - Engagement Partner Survey*

*I wish funders would dream with us! - Engagement Partner Interview*

**Finally, organizations called on funders to give more and to provide longer-term funding commitments.** Both engagement partners and Magic Cabinet grantees praised specific funders that had partnered with them long-term. Magic Cabinet grantees frequently referred to the long-term nature of the Magic Cabinet relationship as one of the highlights of their positive experience with the Foundation. Magic Cabinet grantees and engagement partners also shared other examples of long-term funding, including funders that partnered with them for several years. One engagement partner praised a foundation that helped her organization get started, who stayed with them for the organization's first four years before that foundation sunsetted. Several Magic Cabinet grantees made the explicit connection between foundations wanting impact and the need to make a long-term investment.

*All of these [funders] talk about wanting impact, [but] how much impact can you do if you go in and out in a year? We're fortunate. We have a few other [funders] with whom we have a long-term relationship. - Grantee Interview*

*Think longer term. - Engagement Partner Survey*

*Foundations - give away all your money. This is a huge crisis and communities need all the money that's locked up in foundations to flow, immediately, to people who are suffering and dying as a result of this pandemic. All funders - make all your grants multiyear, unrestricted grants. - Engagement Partner Survey*

## The Impact of COVID-19 on the Nonprofits

As context for the core recommendations above, the following summarizes how the pandemic has impacted finances, programming, staffing, fundraising, and relationships with clients and partners, pulled from both sets of interviews and the survey of engagement partners.

The pandemic has impacted the financial picture of different organizations differently. About half of the survey respondents noted that they were worse off financially (7 out of 15 organizations) compared to before the COVID-19 pandemic began. Most of the other organizations said they were about the same (6); only two said they were better off financially. In the follow-up interviews, two of the four engagement partners shared that they had received COVID-19 relief funding from a funder. One of these organizations had significantly reduced their budget deficit by the time of the interview, compared to the start of the pandemic. Another engagement partner also highlighted the importance of individual donor support during this time. Overall, the experience of the engagement partners mirrored the experience of Magic Cabinet grantees. While one Magic Cabinet grantee was better off financially because they experienced a pandemic-related surge in their earned income activities, other grantees experienced significant delays or cuts to government funding or a sharp drop in their earned income streams. Many, however, spoke positively about their individual donors' support during the pandemic.

*We have received a lot of pandemic related support. We've been able to get the PPP, we've been able to get money through [a local Foundation]. Our donors have stepped up in the most amazing way. So, for individual donors, we have had the best year ever. - Engagement Partner Interview*

Evidence from both sets of interviews suggests that for several organizations, government contracts have been a source of particular challenge during the pandemic. For one grantee, local government redirected general funds to COVID response, resulting in cuts to that organization's funding. Another organization is primarily funded through reimbursement contracts with local government. However, the public health guidelines mandating testing and the need for clients who test positive to quarantine have hindered potential clients from enrolling in their services, which means the organization doesn't get the reimbursement dollars they had budgeted.

Many organizations are proud of the ways they have adjusted their programming to best meet the demands of the moment. Nearly all of the organizations have changed their programming since the start of the pandemic, including some who have expanded programming. Through open-ended survey responses, organizations noted that they had to move some programming

online, cease some programming that could not be moved online, or start new online programming altogether. Through interviews, organizations shared specific examples of pandemic pivots, changes they made to adjust to a new way of doing their work. The most common pandemic pivot was to move programming online, although some organizations remained in person by necessity.

Perspectives about how the quality of their work has been impacted by the move online varied across organizations. In many cases, leaders viewed some of these changes as innovations that they hope to continue after the pandemic is over. However, other nonprofit leaders felt that the quality of their work or success of their events has suffered through the move online.

*I remain hopeful that we can have a greater [online] presence when all this is over, [that] we have set the stage for a greater presence because we were forced to go virtual and that just opens doors. – Engagement Partner Interview*

*[A positive change] is the deepened relationships we have with not only [our clients], but their whole teams, which might mean their case manager, it might mean their home staff, it might be their family members. We're much deeper into people's lives at home than we were before, and that's been a really positive thing. It's strengthened us. – Engagement Partner Interview*

*It has not been easy for us to develop a pattern of visiting folks in the community. It's allowed in terms of regulations for us to do outside activities with folks, but it hasn't worked for us... [So, it's been] hard because we really [have not been able to have] that, face to face, eye to eye, 'I see you' human connection that we thrive on. That has really presented its challenges. – Engagement Partner Interview*

A handful of organizations, both engagement partners and grantees, specifically shared that they were grateful for some pre-pandemic activities that helped them navigate the pandemic. As noted earlier, several Magic Cabinet grantees felt that their early capacity building grants were critical in their ability to respond well to their necessary pandemic pivots. Similarly, one engagement partner noted that they felt ready to face the challenges of the pandemic because they had just completed a rapid redesign a year before the pandemic with support from one of their primary partners. This redesign focused on building relationships with their constituents, so they were able to carry this forward as those relationships necessarily became virtual.

*Starting in the spring of 2019, we were approved for a complete program redesign and we just have been going through rapid change continually, and we were getting used to it... And then everything changed again... We reached into that recent experience [of redesign] and we were like, 'Oh, this is what we should do.' We should try to create the best possible program we can for what [clients] say they want and need, and we took [what we learned before] one step further. – Engagement Partner Interview*

Only a few organizations have had to reduce staff or work hours at the time we spoke with them. Through the survey, four engagement partners (out of 15) noted that they had to do so; on the

other hand, six had increased staff or staff time. Among the engagement partners interviewed, three of the four had not reduced staff. The fourth organization had restructured considerably at the start of the pandemic, which was also coincided with a leadership transition, greatly reducing staff at that time. This organization hoped to return to its former capacity. At the same time, this organization places the reduced size in the context of being proud about how they have managed in the face of the pandemic; their leader acknowledged that being smaller makes them more nimble and better able to pivot in this unusual time. During the interviews with Magic Cabinet grantees, none shared that they had to reduce staff because of the pandemic.

Both engagement partners and Magic Cabinet grantees reported that the response from funders had been mixed. Some funders, like Magic Cabinet, provided emergency relief funds, increased flexibility in their application and reporting requirements, allowed adjustments to original timelines, and otherwise stepped up to support organizations. On the other hand, other funders scaled back or delayed funding decisions. Several nonprofits wished more funders had distributed money immediately; some lamented the lack of transparency as some funders were not clear about their process or the timelines for decisions.

Through open-ended survey responses and during the interviews, engagement partners wished that more of their funders had reached out, such as offering to collaborate to solve problems and listening more holistically to their organizations' needs. One engagement partner specifically noted that she wanted to find funders that allowed her to be honest, to share what she is struggling with and get support, not just in the form of funding, but in thought partnership and connections to other nonprofit leaders who could help her figure out how to navigate challenges. Some organizations specifically noted that individual donors have been more supportive than institutional ones in this way. Only one-third of the organizations who responded to the survey (5 out of 15) said that their funders reached out to check on them.

*[I would like them to] allow us to be more open about our frustrations, about what we need for our organization, and to be willing to give us some suggestions or some insight on what we could do. Or if I needed to ask a question about how to shore up my infrastructure, they won't look at me as if I don't know what I'm doing, as a negative. I need that help because in order for me to sustain myself, I need to know what areas I am weak, and ways that I can strengthen that up. And that this won't be looked at as a negative, [that a funder won't say] 'I don't want to fund her because she doesn't have a strong infrastructure.' I want to be able to be comfortable enough to ask one of my funders, 'What do I need to do? How do I get another foundation to look at me? What would you suggest?' – Engagement Partner Interview*

*It would be nice if they actually reached out to the E.D. or the grant writer. I have very rarely talked with, let alone met, a funder. They don't have time, ...there is no human contact. It's through their [online] platform, 'Don't call us, don't bother us, we don't take questions, go to the FAQ.' Don't ghost me. Don't cancel me. Don't ignore me. Reach out or allow me to talk to you. – Engagement Partner Interview*



Several organizations talked about the care they have taken to maintain relationships with their constituents through one-on-one virtual check-ins, group events, or other asynchronous means. One organization shared that they had invested in an online event with their donors, but had focused the event on relationship building and staying connected over the actual fundraising itself. A few organizations specifically called for funders to use these as models for their relationships with grantees.

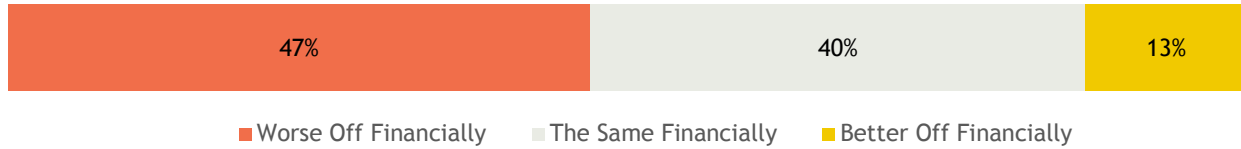
*[During this pandemic], we pivoted to doing different things with our donors. Like we had a special online donor event, just to check in with people and build community. And it wasn't an ask event, it was more like, 'How are you doing, what's coming up for you?' – Engagement Partner Interview*

*Some things that funders have done [is] reach out to say, 'We have an in-kind gift that we've been thinking about, and we'd really like it to go to you,' or foundations reach out... not about funding, but about, 'We're thinking about you.' That is really valuable. And I try to do the same, just keep folks informed, to reach out to [clients, partners, funders] and say, 'We're thinking about you. We hope you're okay.' You know, those sorts of casual interactions really mean a lot this year. – Engagement Partner Interview*

Among the engagement partners, many were worried about how their organizations would fare financially in 2021 and beyond. This heightened fear of scarcity took a few different forms. Some engagement partners worried that they could not outlast the economic downturn related to their earned income activities or the restrictions and requirements related to their government contracts. Other nonprofit leaders worried that funders would restrict funding in 2021 to counterbalance increased funding for COVID-19 response in 2020. On the other hand, while some Magic Cabinet grantees appeared worried about their future – mostly because of constraints on their earned income streams due to shelter-in-place restrictions – most Magic Cabinet grantees appeared confident about their future and grateful to have a long-term funding relationship with Magic Cabinet.

# Appendix A. COVID-19 Funding Survey Responses

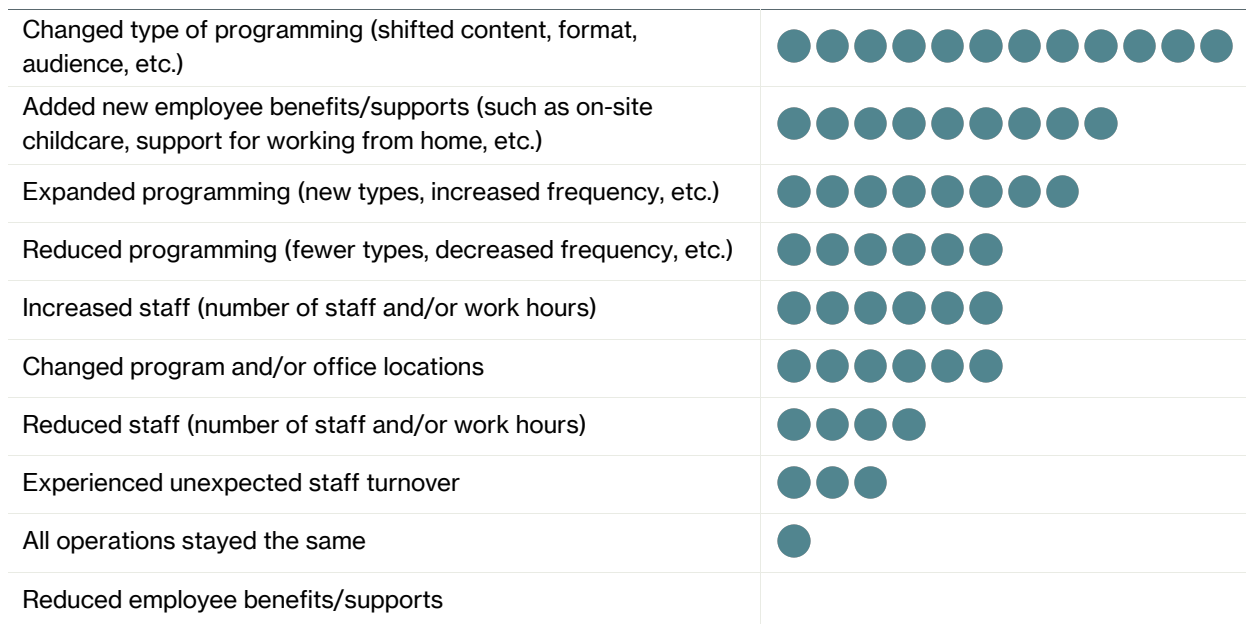
Figure 1. Nearly half of the responding organizations are financially worse off than the start of 2020.



Source: COVID-19 Funding Survey (N = 15), fielded in fall 2020 to nonprofit leaders from organizations that went through Magic Cabinet’s engagement process, but were not selected for a cohort.

Figure 2. Eighty percent of responding organizations changed up their programming during the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Since the start of 2020, how have your operations changed?



Source: COVID-19 Funding Survey (N = 15), fielded in fall 2020 to nonprofit leaders from organizations that went through Magic Cabinet’s engagement process, but were not selected for a cohort. Key: 1 dot = 1 respondent.

### Other (please specify):

Reduced number of participants.

To clarify why I selected both "Reduced programming" and "Expanded programming," we had to cut one of our programs that could only be done in-person, but we created new programs that could be done virtually.

*Between March 12 and March 23, [we] pivoted from a high-touch studio/community/exhibitions program for 70 artists to maintaining 1:1 contact and 5 hours of Virtual Studio programming daily. This has been joined by an entirely online Exhibitions Program. Since March, [we have] seen steady growth, with revenues increasing by 25%-45% depending on program. To coordinate activities, we have leaned into our organizational structure change, creating four new management positions including one new hire. We are currently looking at a (brief!) 2-week to 2-month sabbatical program to bring substitutes back into our programming and to build sustainability for our direct service staff.*

*We were unable to hire for a specific role, because our candidates were from out of the area and they were afraid to relocate during the pandemic. Additionally, our pace of program development has slowed. Key projects have been delayed.*

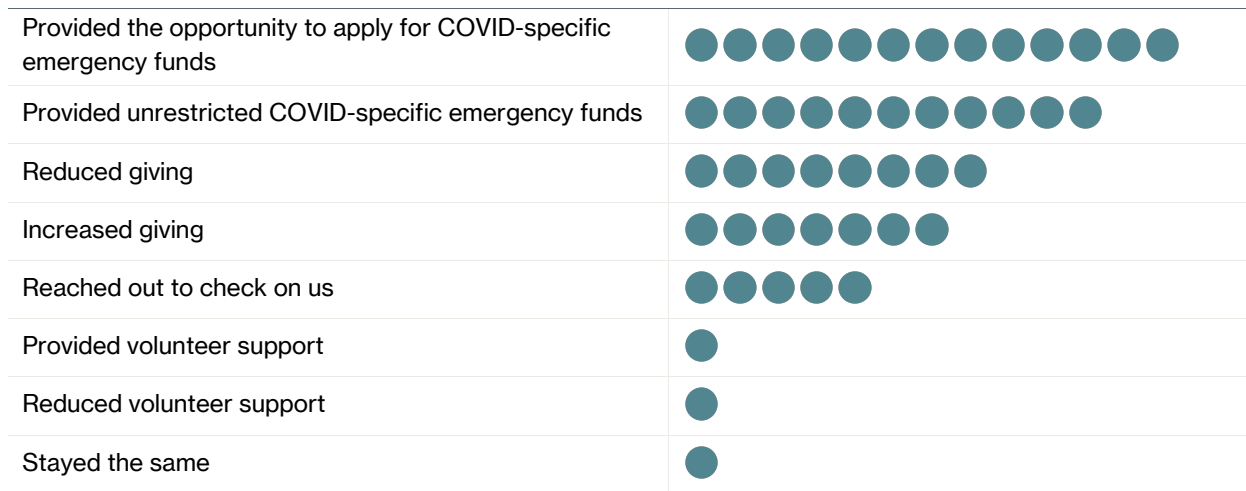
*We have been desperately trying to help panicked families ... during this pandemic get the computers and wi-fi service they need to be able to access our online services and other critical services. How do you help an 18-year-old pregnant mother of twins who has never had an email address or a computer get online services? How do you help a mother of three who is very sick with COVID-19 get help until she feels better? How do you help staff who are caring for their own children who have old lap tops and no printer/scanner be able to do work from home? How do you help staff teach programs from home when they do not have wi-fi service at home? How do you help families recovering from drug addiction stay clean during the highest stress year our families have ever seen? How do you help divorced families deal with intense conflict regarding opposing viewpoints regarding caring for their children during a pandemic? Families and staff are facing the most difficult times we have ever see.*

*Staff and teaching artists worked from diverse locations, communicating through Zoom and email.*

*Increased focus and efforts for EDI.*

Figure 3. Less than half of the responding organizations had a funder reach out to check on them since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Since the start of the pandemic, how have your funders responded?**



Source: COVID-19 Funding Survey (N = 15), fielded in fall 2020 to nonprofit leaders from organizations that went through Magic Cabinet’s engagement process, but were not selected for a cohort. Key: 1 dot = 1 respondent.

**Other (please specify):**

*We have had some foundations make COVID-specific relief funds available, but other foundations suspended their grantmaking this year due to the pandemic.*

*Individual donors have been more generous than institutional donors/foundations.*

*We saw a 42% increase in individual giving, as well as exceptional outreach and messages of support from individual donors, from our highest-dollar supporters to artists' families, who established a PPE bank for reopening. Volunteers and artists in the community have stepped forward with ideas for supporting our organization that we would have been unable to generate on our own, from construction help to A/V support!*

*Only one funder has provided COVID specific relief to us. Many of our traditional grant sources have been redirected to COVID rent relief and to BIPOC-led organizations.*

*Unfortunately, we had several funders delay funding due to the pandemic. Very difficult to get delayed funding at EXACTLY the same time you need it the most. We also had sponsors say they did not want to sponsor virtual fundraising events when that is the only kind of event we can have right now. We also had funders that increased the number of tasks that we had to complete to be able to receive funding at exactly the same time that our team was maxed.*

*Allowed us to convert current grants into emergency COVID funding.*

## What supports do you wish you had received from your funders?

*Unrestricted funds to help off-set administrative expenses (i.e., increase salaries for essential workers).*

*It would have been nice if they had reached out to check on us.*

*More flexibility with funds.*

*Worked with us to identify relevant pain points and help connect us to support and/or resources.*

*I have had some funders who have both switched to general support funding as well as increased their amounts to help us better navigate this pandemic. I do have other funders who have lessened their giving during this time when now is the most important time for giving.*

*QUICK general ops/COVID support funding. Some foundations have decisions date in December. Really?*

*I do wish that our foundation funders had reached out to learn what our needs are. We've been swamped with grant applications - many successful but not always - and are pushing hard to maintain open lines of communication, but it would be lovely for our long-term funders to reach out personally. These are the meaningful relationships we work to create from our end and it would be wonderful to feel the response in return. It has been terrific, by the way, to receive resources from Magic Cabinet! We are looking forward to the Evaluation seminars.*

*Increased awareness and recognition of the antiracist work we have been doing all along; increased operating and capital support to accelerate our work.*

*We had a couple of funders call us and ask how we were doing and if there was any way that they could help us. We had a SPECTACULAR funder call us and say that they wanted to give a large grant immediately and they wrote a significant check that we received within one week. We will love them FOREVER. They had our back during the Pandemic of 2020. As far as supports, if our two of our usual major funders knew that they are going to have to delay funding, it would have been great if they had contacted us and let us know that immediately so that we could have budgeted accordingly.*

*Many funders are cancelling 2021 grant-making rounds due to COVID-19 funding - very worried about 2021 funding.*

*More communication/outreach. More funding or at least messaging about increases in funding.*

*Multiyear funding, convening org leaders to share experiences.*

*Offering more unrestricted funds and support so that we can keep our staffing.*

*Funders have stepped up, but I fear for 2021. We still won't be back to full in-person programming and income will be sharply reduced, but extra support will have dried up.*

*I wish the numerous foundations who have moved away from supporting the arts would consider emergency arts funding for the next couple of years.*

## What do you recommend that funders do differently right now?

*Continue offering financial support that will help maintain staff.*

*I wish that all funders would switch to general operating support (preferably with multiyear commitments). It would also be great to see reporting requirements eased (which we have indeed seen from some funders). Finally, it is unthinkable to me that some foundations decided not to run grant cycles this year, given the increased needs.*

*Provide greater flexibility with funds and increase financial giving / commitments with current grantees.*

*Acknowledge the unique challenges we are facing to effectively uphold our mission.*

*The more general and easier funding can be obtained, the better. Nonprofits are just trying to stay afloat to best support their constituents to the best of their abilities and given their resources.*

*Allow repurposing funds, ease on reporting, ease on applying, approve quickly.*

*Get in touch - this would be the most meaningful way to show that you are listening to organizational needs on the ground. Whether via survey, email, or direct outreach - all the ways that funders are trying to learn about the needs on the ground make so much difference as we continue to craft and share the narratives that hopefully help you all make a difference in your work.*

*Recognize that the current nonprofit environment is a vulnerable ecosystem and that dramatic swings of funding do harm and create unintended consequences. Do not reprioritize ALL funding toward one issue or one constituency. Rather, conduct systems-level analysis of how work in sectors gets done, recognize the organizations that anchor "the work," and don't romanticize the notion that giving all funding to start-up organizations in a specific demographic group will solve the problem of systemic and institutional racism.*

*Please...if you usually fund an agency, just give us the funding. We had 2 funders who were just sitting on the funding saying that they were waiting to see what happened or waiting to meet with*

*their Board of Directors or waiting until the pandemic was over (?). If you have funded us in the past and you know that we do good work and you know that we are continuing to serve families during the pandemic, please give us the funding. And if you cannot give out all the funding, please give what you can. If you need to give half the funding now and half the funding later that is better than zero. Suddenly receiving ZERO from an ongoing funder is very hard on an agency budget. Please do not make assumptions about who is on the frontline during the pandemic. We had funders tell us, 'Well, we don't have any funding to give you because we gave all of our funding to COVID-19 emergency response.' Once we told funders what we had been doing since Day #1 of the pandemic, they were surprised and said, 'Oh -- I had no idea that you were helping so many families every day during the pandemic.' Please reach out and talk to us if you are considering not funding agencies you usually fund and find out what the consequences of that will be. Please be patient with us as we try to figure out how to offer services virtually, collect demographics virtually, collect outcomes evaluations virtually. Everything is having to be re-tooled at the same time our staff is facing their own personal stressors. Again, we will always love our funders who had our back during the Pandemic of 2020... important to say that.*

*Think longer term.*

*Foundations - give away all your money. This is a huge crisis and communities need all the money that's locked up in foundations to flow, immediately, to people who are suffering and dying as a result of this pandemic. All funders - make all your grants multiyear, unrestricted grants.*

*Remove restrictions from grants to allow maximum flexibility, as operations shift.*

*More unrestricted funding for overhead and staffing. Also, equipment grants to boost the ability to change programming offerings. Assistance with switching back and forth between in-person and virtual programming, assistance helping to pay artists.*

*The biggest challenge right now is funders who insist that their COVID relief funds be spent by Dec. 31st -- a particular issue with city funding. Flexibility with the timing our program delivery is essential as we respond to the evolving needs of our youth.*

*For performance related groups, consider making a commitment to funding for this year and next, so we know that funding is available until we can start earning revenue again.*

# Appendix B. COVID-19 Funding Interview Protocol

## The Pandemic

I want to start by understanding your experience of the pandemic.

- In what ways is your organization different now, than it was at the start of 2020?
- Which changes have been positive (fruitful, worthwhile)? Which have been the hardest (challenging, detrimental)?

## Funders' Support

Now, I want to ask some questions about your Funders' since the start of 2020.

- In what ways have your funders supported you or helped you weather the pandemic?
- In what ways have your funders fallen short or even hindered you?

## Looking ahead at 2021

- What are you most worried about in 2021?
  - In terms of your funders' support?
  - In terms of your organization's future more generally?
- What are you most hopeful about?
  - In terms of your funders' support?
  - In terms of your organization's future more generally?

## General Feedback for Funders

Now, I want to take a step back and think more generally about your experience with your funders over time.

- If there was one thing one of your funders could do to best support you, what would that be and why?
- What are some other ways that funders can build a positive relationship with the nonprofits they support?
- Anything else you want to add on the topics we have covered today?