

June's edition of FundWell is curated by [Rusty Stahl](#) from [Fund the People](#)

Welcome to FundWell Nightly News! I'm your guest weatherman, Rusty Stahl, regular anchor at [Fund the People](#), where our mission is to maximize investment in the nonprofit workforce.

We've had punishing, historic heat waves in the United States and Europe in recent weeks, so we'll start today with the AccuCharity Weather Report.

In the United States, burnout conditions in the nonprofit sector remain dangerously high — and show no signs of letting up. In 2026, a political low-pressure system moved into the area. In 2020, the pandemic added even more intense pressure. By 2025, it had grown into a full hurricane cycle, which is still bearing down on the sector today. Meanwhile, community needs have surged, adding further strain on nonprofit workers and their institutions.

What makes these conditions especially dangerous is what's happening beneath the surface. Grantmaking practices intended to help the helpers sometimes unintentionally hurt them. Project support, capacity support — even the much-beloved general operating support — none of these are structured to enable nonprofits to invest heartily in the economic, mental, or physical wellbeing of their staff. This underinvestment is like quicksand beneath the feet of nonprofit leaders — a chronic pre-existing condition that makes it harder to weather every new storm.

So ask yourself: are you distributing quicksand or stable soil?

At [Fund the People](#), we don't offer critique without an alternative. In a January Nonprofit Quarterly piece, we proposed Staff Operating Support (SOS) funding — primary, dedicated funding for grantee people and people-systems, used in a trust-based, flexible, and responsive way. Whether it goes toward staff wellbeing, an administrative hire, improved volunteer management, or something else entirely — as long as it boosts a grantee's staff stability or people-power, it fits within the talent-investment zone.

Thank you for all your good work. Stay cool and dry and, as I say on the [Fund the People Podcast](#): **Keep your tank full, take care of yourself, and take care of one another.**



Photo Credits: Shutterstock
Photo Description: A dramatic storm cloud looms over a dry grassland with rays of sunlight breaking through.

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FundWell Essentials

- [S.O.S. - Nonprofits Need Funding for Staff Operating Support](#). By Rusty Stahl, Fund the People, *Nonprofit Quarterly*, January 2026. *“S.O.S. funding is dedicated to investing in the grantee’s team members and the systems that support that team. Within this zone, it can be used in a flexible, responsive, and trust-based manner.”*
- [State of Nonprofit 2026: What Funders Need to Know](#). By Seara Grundhoefer; Elisha Smith Arrillaga, Ph.D; and Ellie Buteau, Ph.D., Center for Effective Philanthropy, March 2026. *“The proportion of nonprofit CEOs who report that their own burnout is very much a concern jumped to 46% in 2026, up from just under 30% in 2025.”*
- [Nonprofit Workers Are In Crisis. Funders And Policymakers Have The Tools To Fix It](#). By Apama Rae, *Forbes*, March 2026. *“The workers who built America’s third-largest employer are asking for the dignity they have spent careers demanding for others. That is not a radical request.”*
- “From 7% to 107%: Investing in Organizers Supercharges Impact.” Guests Geraldine Alcid (Filipino Advocates for Justice) and Rebecca Gorena (All Due Respect). Fund the People Podcast S9:E16, May 2026. [ApplePodcasts](#) | [YouTube](#)
- “The Guru of Burnout.” Guest Dr. Christina Maslach (University of California Berkeley). Fund the People S1:E10, December 2020. [ApplePodcasts](#)

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Talking Points

- 💬 Is your foundation doing anything with your funding to enable grantees to address key workforce issues such as compensation, workload, recruitment, retention, and executive transitions? Is what you are doing adequate, given the scale of the challenge? What more could you be doing? How do you know what your grantees need or want with regard to support for their staff?
- 💬 Have you ever had an internal conversation at the c-suite or board level about the crisis in the nonprofit workforce, and how your foundation is or is not helping or hurting?
 - 💬 How do your foundation's board members, executives, lawyers, grants managers, or other stakeholders reinforce the “overhead” and “indirect cost” myths in your grantmaking practices? How do grantees reinforce these myths?

Words from the Field

“There are times when general operating support may not be the most effective capacity-building strategy... Executive directors...find it difficult to prioritize long-term staff development when confronted with short-term program and budget needs. The ‘selfless’ culture of nonprofits discourages leaders from dedicating resources to their own development. Some executive directors fear that choosing to invest general support in leadership development could be perceived as a sign of weakness.”
- Linda Wood, [It Takes Dedicated Funding to Do Leadership Development Right](#), Haas Jr. Fund Blog, October 2012.