



A Survey of the COVID-19 Pandemic's Impact  
on Biomedical Research Funding Organizations

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## List of Acronyms

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CY	Calendar Year
FGD	Focus Group Discussion
FY	Fiscal Year
HRA	Health Research Alliance
NCE	No Cost Extension
PPP	Paycheck Protection Program
RFA	Request for Application
SC	Steering Committee
WFH	Work From Home
YOY	Year-over-Year

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## Executive Summary

The Health Research Alliance (HRA) is a collaborative member organization of nonprofit research funders that is committed to maximizing the impact of biomedical research to improve human health. The 90+ member organizations include voluntary health agencies, private foundations, and operating foundations that are funders of health research. All member organizations share a common interest in speeding the translation of biomedical science discoveries into applications that improve health, and in identifying and adopting best practices in funding health research.<sup>1</sup>

HRA engaged external consultants to survey its members to better understand impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on the organizations that fund medical research. This report is intended to present the survey results, and to communicate the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on member organizations. Specific organizational impacts of interest explored included:

- Revenues (e.g., fundraising/endorsement performance, revenue diversification).
- Operations (e.g., staff changes, restructuring, impact of remote work other bottom-line adaptations).
- Research grant awards (e.g., number of awards, extensions, diversity of awards); and
- Programming (e.g., conversion to virtual, cancelling, introducing new programming).

The survey was developed based on the following key objectives:

- Document top-line, bottom-line, and net impacts on funding streams.
- Document operational adaptations.
- Document impacts-to date on fundraising, research grant awards, and programming.
- Document key pain points among member organizations.
- Illustrate key impacts using qualitative data.

## KEY FINDINGS

### Overall, the Switch to Remote / Telework had the Biggest Reported Impact Across all Organization Types

Across organization types, the switch to remote work and/or telework had the biggest reported impact on HRA members. However, most members reported that remote work did not adversely impact organizational or individual performance. The largest organizational impact from the shift to work from home (WFH) has been on organizational culture.

### Impacts Varied by Organization Type

Organizations that rely on fundraising reported more significant negative impacts than organizations that operate through an endowment. For this reason, results are most often disaggregated by organization type. Declining revenues from fundraising was the top reported impact among fundraising members with 50% of fundraising organizations reporting that the total amount of funds raised in calendar year (CY) 2020 decreased compared to CY 2019. The average reported decline in total revenues was 35% year-over-year (YOY). Conversely, 59% of endowment-based organizations reported that their organization's endowment grew in 2020.

### Research/Grant Awards Spend and Procedures were Impacted

Sixty percent (60%) of survey respondents reported that COVID-19 impacted the way their organization awards and administers research awards and/or grants. The impact on annual spend on research/grant award and associated activities differs by organization type, with fundraising organization reported the most significant decline in YoY spend. However, all organization types indicated that organizational flexibility was required (shifting deadlines, moving to virtual methods, no-cost extensions, etc.) to meet the needs of researchers.

### Impacts Were Both Positive and Negative

The most consistently reported negative impact was the decrease in funds raised by fundraising organizations. Corresponding decreases in research grants awarded were also reported. Additional negative impacts reported included isolation and negative impacts on employees. However, unexpected positive impacts including new partnerships, as well as positive shifts in organizational culture because of the shift to WFH were also reported. Respondents struggled to assign an overall characterization of the pandemic as either overwhelmingly positive or negative.

## Survey Methodology

The final evaluation examined the following dimensions of the COVID-19 pandemic on HRA members:

- Revenues (e.g., fundraising/endowment performance, revenue diversification);
- Operations (e.g., staff changes, restructuring, impact of remote work other bottom-line adaptations);
- Research grant awards (e.g., number of awards, extensions, diversity of awards); and
- Programming (e.g., conversion to virtual, cancelling, introducing new programming).

The research team conducted a series of key informant interviews (KIIs) with a Steering Committee (SC) of HRA senior leadership and HRA members. The researchers also conducted three remote (Zoom) Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) with HRA members to further understand the impacts of COVID-19 on members, and the differences in impacts based on organization type (Fundraising, Endowment, Society/Other)

- FGD 1: January 20, 2021; Fundraising Members [six participants]
- FGD 2: January 21, 2021; Endowment Members [five participants]
- FGD 3: January 21, 2021; Society/Other Members [three participants]

**Pilot Survey:** The research team piloted the online survey (Survey Monkey) in February and March 2021 and received eight (8) responses including feedback on the survey itself. These pilot results were analyzed by the research team and reviewed with the Steering Committee. These results and feedback informed changes to the final survey instrument.

**Census Member Survey:** A survey (SurveyMonkey) was administered to HRA’s entire membership (excluding organizations who participated in the pilot survey) in March 2021. Results were collected through April 2021. Inclusive of the pilot responses, 62 organizations partially or completely filled out the survey.

Primary Data Collection	
Steering Committee Key Informant Interviews (KIIs)	2 HRA Leadership 4 HRA Members
Focus Group Discussions (FGDs)	3 Separate FGDs <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fundraising Organizations (6 participants)</li> <li>• Societies (3 participants)</li> <li>• Endowments (5 participants)</li> </ul>
Survey Responses (Fully or Partially Complete)	36 Fundraising Organizations 9 Societies/Other Models 17 Endowments

## ANALYSIS & VALIDATION

**Quantitative Analysis:** Quantitative survey data were analyzed in Microsoft Excel. Given the nature of the data, the results are primarily in the form of simple descriptive statistics.

**Grounded Theory Method:** Information obtained from Steering Committee discussions, FGDs, and qualitative survey data were analyzed using the Grounded Theory Method. The team derived theories about the impacts of COVID-19 based on the data collected. This was done to avoid preconceived theories about the impacts of COVID-19 and to focus on the data only. Key findings were shared with HRA membership during a webinar on July 22, 2021.

## LIMITATIONS

**Response Rate:** Analysis is limited to the 62 partial and complete responses received. Not all members completed the survey as it was voluntary and not compulsory. In addition, all questions within the survey were voluntary.

**Social Desirability Bias:** Much of the data was collected from organizational leaders. Therefore, we consider that there was a potential social desirability bias. This can lead participants to report more positive outcomes to demonstrate their capabilities as leaders.

**Timing of the Fiscal Year:** 22 respondents reported that their fiscal year is different than the calendar year. It is likely that the full impacts of COVID-19 on some organizations had not been felt or captured at the time of this survey. Due to the nature of COVID-19 occurring during the same calendar timeframe for all organizations, the researchers, in collaboration with the Steering Committee, determined that it was best for the sake of consistency to collect all data based on calendar year.

## Key Findings

### OVERALL IMPACTS

From the FGDs and KIs, the following organizational impacts of COVID-19 on HRA members were hypothesized and tested:

- Impact on fundraising revenues
- Endowment performance
- Organizational reorganization and/or restructuring (including layoffs and furloughs)
- Remote / telework
- Research/grant awards and associated activities (review meetings, disbursement, extension, use, etc.)
- Non-research programming
- Uncertainty impacting our ability to plan for the future

Survey respondents were asked to rank the top impacts of COVID-19 from the list above (with an option to indicate an “other” impact). Overall, the biggest self-reported impact across organization types was the switch to remote and/or tele-work. The second biggest reported impact across organization types was the impact on research/grant awards and associated activities. However, Fundraising organizations reported significant negative impacts to their fundraising revenues. In contrast, endowment-based organizations reported improved endowment performance in 2020.

The sections that follow will address these top three impacts in more detail. The full set of survey results addressing the full set of hypothesized impacts can be found in Appendix 5.

### Top 3 Biggest Impacts of COVID19 by Organization Type

	Fundraising	Endowment	Society/Other
#1	Fundraising Revenues	Remote / Telework	Research/grant awards and associated activities
#2	Remote / Telework	Research/grant awards and associated activities	Remote / Telework
#3	Research/grant awards and associated activities	Endowment Performance	Uncertainty impacting our ability to plan for the future



## 1. Remote and Telework

The switch to remote and telework was the top reported organizational impact of COVID-19 across organization types. Both the number of employees working from home and the average days per week employees worked from home significantly increased year-over-year for all organization types. Some organizations had already started to make this shift, but others were less prepared. In 2019, across organizations, teleworking (located in the same city as the office but working from home) and remote working (working from a different location) was not common for the majority of employees.

**Teleworking.** What percentage of your employees were teleworking at least some of the time?

	December 2020	December 2019
91-100%	29	5
81-90%	1	3
71-80%	1	1
61-70%	2	0
51-60%	1	3
41-50%	1	4
31-40%	1	1
21-30%	0	5
11-20%	1	4
<10%	2	9

72%

Percentage of organizations that agree or strongly agree with the statement "Remote work / telework has had almost no detrimental impact on organizational performance."

68%

Percentage of organizations that agree or strongly agree with the statement "Remote work / telework has had almost no detrimental impact on individual performance."

62%

Percentage of organizations that had 91-100% of their staff working remotely as of December 2020.

7%

Percentage of organizations that had 91-100% of their staff working remotely as of December 2019.

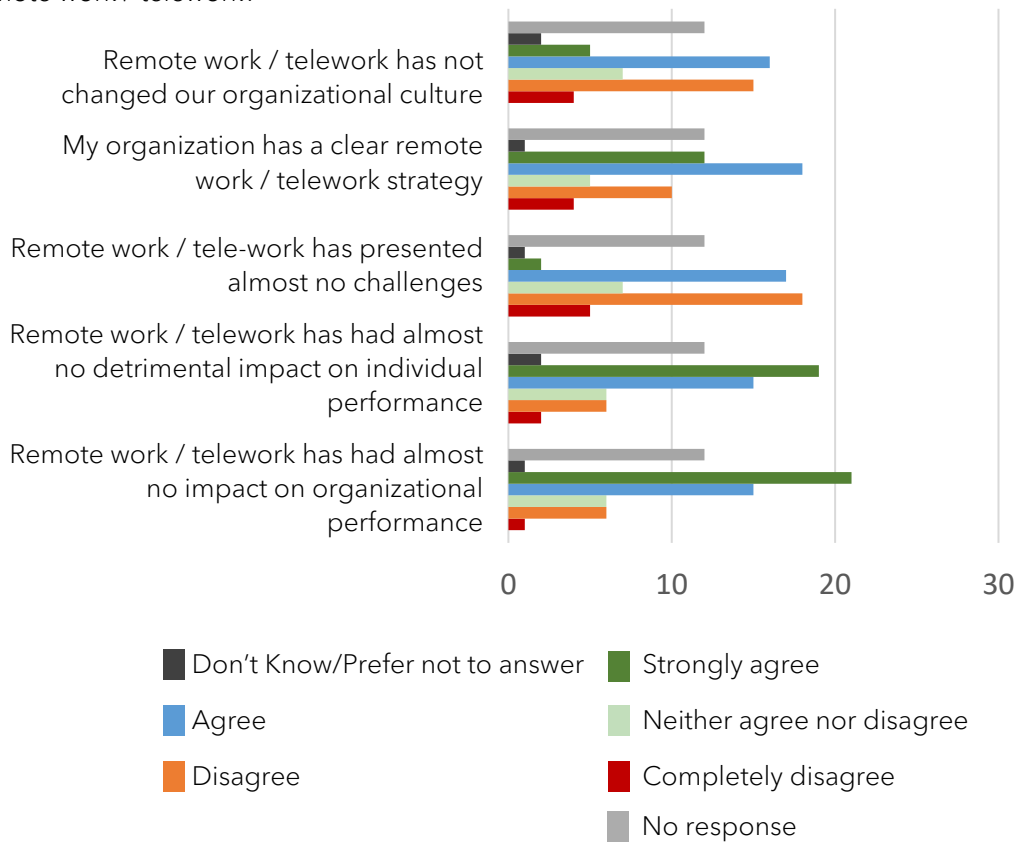
For those who did have teleworking arrangements in 2019, most teleworking employees worked from home 1-2 days per week. This increased to 4-5 days per week by December 2020

**Telecommuting.** On average, how many days per week did teleworking employees telecommute (work from home)?

	Fundraising	Societies	Endowments
December 2020 Average	4.65	4.60	4.50
December 2019 Average	1.62	1.50	1.40

Members were asked about specific dimensions of telework and remote work to unpack what aspects of remote and telework were most challenging. Notably, only 38% of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, “Remote work / telework has presented almost no challenges.” Surprisingly, 72% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “Remote work / telework has had almost no detrimental impact on organizational performance.” Furthermore, 68% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “Remote work / telework has had almost no detrimental impact on individual performance.” 60% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement, “My organization has a clear remote work / telework strategy.” The biggest impact appears to be on organizational culture, with only 42% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with the statement that “Remote work / telework has not changed our organizational culture.” 38% of respondents disagreed or completely disagreed with that statement

**Perspective on Telework.** To what extent do you agree with the following statements about remote work / telework?



“100% of staff has been working remotely 100% of the time. We've been technologically well-equipped, and staff has been extremely, if not more so, productive. Culture and job satisfaction has suffered, largely due to burnout due to staff decreases.” *HRA member*

## VIRTUAL EVENTS

In addition to day-to-day work, members have shifted major events including conferences, scientific review committees, and fundraising activities to virtual formats. While there has been a learning curve and other expected pain points associated with these shifts, this shift has also allowed for greater inclusion and diversity. There have also been cost savings associated with the shift to virtual events. An example of a financially costly event that was canceled during the pandemic included a tradition of flying new grantees out to the organization's headquarters for an award ceremony. While respondents maintain that face-to-face interactions are invaluable in many respects, they have come to recognize and reflect on the positive impacts of virtual convenings and outreach, and plan to make more permanent shifts to host more hybrid or entirely virtual events. They are interested in how other organizations have managed external virtual engagement and how they plan to continue to integrate virtual engagement in their outreach moving forward. The impacts of migrating to virtual and hybrid fundraising events are addressed more in-depth later in this report.

## DIFFERING EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF THE IMPACT OF TELEWORK

While most organizations agree that organizational productivity (72%) and individual productivity (68%) did not suffer because of the switch to remote and telework, organizations reported different levels of preparedness, and differing expectations for the long-term changes to WFH policies. The focus groups conducted prior to the survey suggest that some of these differences in perception may be driven by one's position in the organization, with Senior Management having a different view than mid-level and junior employees. Further discussion and exploration are needed to confirm whether there are significant differences by level of seniority.

- "Some of us are working as hard and making it work, others just are using it as **an excuse not to be available** when they should be."
- "Major issue has been being able to get technical support when needed. During full closure of office, we were not able to access files remotely so had to download necessary files to flash drives which was cumbersome."
- "We were **not prepared** for remote/telework."
- "Once conditions allow, the foundation will provide a 30-day notice period at the end of **which all staff will resume working from the offices.**"

- "We've been technologically well-equipped, and **staff has been extremely, if not more so, productive.** Culture and job satisfaction has suffered, largely due to burnout due to staff decreases."
- "Complete turnaround. Before COVID, leadership was very much against people working from home. Now they see that it can be done, and **staff can be very productive**"
- "Organization is office based but had many teleworkers before, the pandemic accelerated that trend."
- "As a result of the pandemic we have fully embrace a "work from anywhere" approach. Even after the pandemic, we anticipate that **most staff will NOT return to the office full time.**"

Members were asked to provide advice for their peer organizations. The most common topics of advice were around flexibility and adaptability and actively managing organizational culture. The long-term impacts of COVID-19 on organizational culture merits further discussion and research.

### Advice on Flexibility and Adaptability

- “Be realistic about changes required and make them sooner rather than later”
- “Adapt, be flexible, try new things - our virtual events turned out to be more successful than we originally thought they could be. Our productivity has increased, in my opinion, from working from home.”
- “Be as flexible as you are able and keep your finger on the pulse of what your constituents are challenged by and try to respond.”
- “Be flexible and creative, and think carefully about how to support remote workers to maintain their enthusiasm and the culture of the org.”
- “Be flexible and listen to your staff and your grantees about what they need.”

### Advice on Organizational Culture

- “Be intentional about org culture.”
- “Check in frequently with your staff members to see how they are doing personally.”
- “Clear, honest communication, even when it must be ambiguous.”
- “Embrace change and communicate transparently & frequently.”
- “Have understanding senior leadership.”
- “Increase communication among team members and within your research community to better understand the challenges and address them as you can.”
- “The people of the organization are the most valuable asset. Taking care of the people that work for the organization has a direct impact on the quality of work and well-being of the organization.”

## 2. Research & Grant Awards

In 2020, research and grant awards were impacted in terms of the total funds available to spend on awards, increased flexibility within existing awards, and funding directed toward new COVID-19 specific activities. Roughly a quarter of members (24%) reported that they allowed existing awards to be used in new ways in 2020.

### DECLINE IN YEAR-OVER-YEAR SPEND

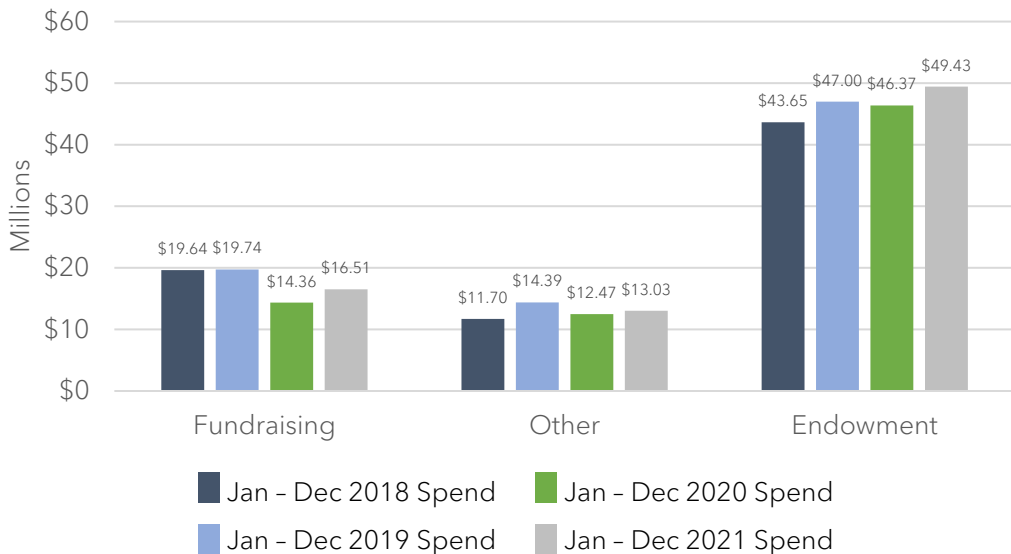
On average, all organization types decreased their spend on research awards/grants in calendar year 2020. The magnitude of the decrease varied significantly by organization type. Fundraising organizations report the biggest decline in year-over-year (YOY) spend on both an absolute and percentage basis. Fundraising organizations reported a decrease of \$5.4M in annual spend on average (27.3% of 2019 average annual spend). Societies and other organization types reported a decrease of \$1.9 million in annual spend on average (13.3% of 2019 average annual spend). Endowment-based organizations reported a decrease of \$633k in annual spend on average (1.35% of 2019 average annual spend).

**27.3%**  
Percent decline in year-over-year grant award spend among fundraising organizations.

**48%**  
Percent of organizations reporting that they have not allowed grant funds to be used in new ways.

**43%**  
Percentage of organizations that funded new COVID-19 specific activities.

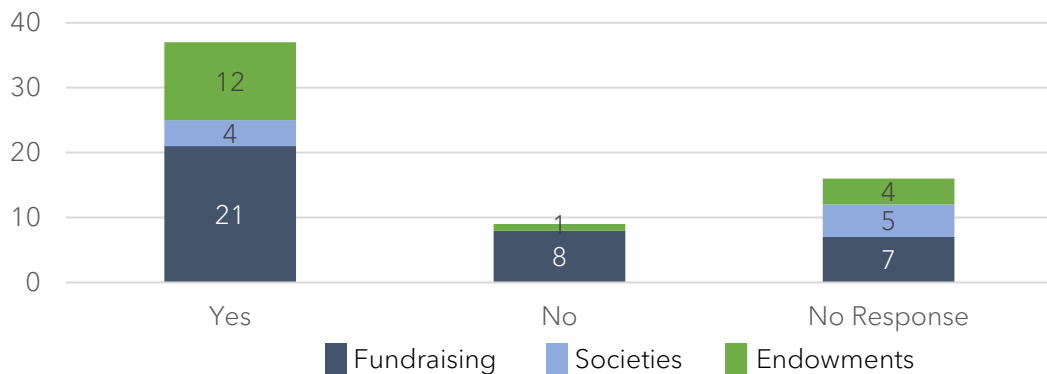
**Spend on Research Awards/Grants.** How much did your organization spend on research awards/grants in each of the last 3 calendar years? And how much do you anticipate spending in 2021? (Average by Organization Type)



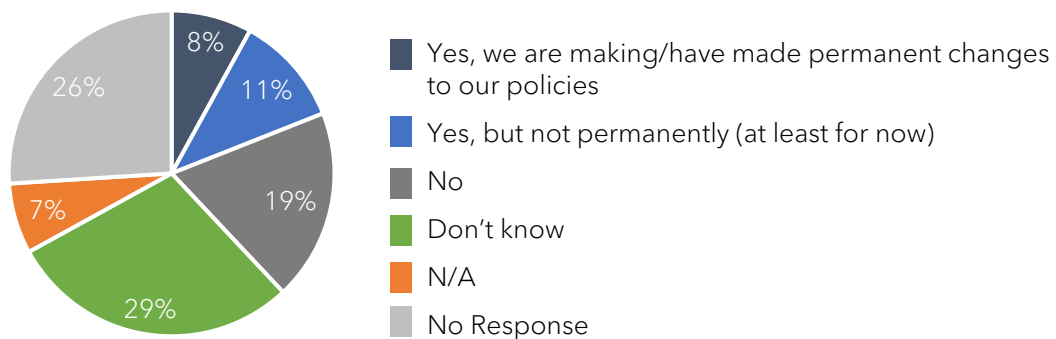
### FLEXIBLE AWARD ADMINISTRATION

Most organizations who responded to the question about award/grant administration (37/46) report that COVID-19 impacted the way that their organization awards and administers research awards and/or grants. The fact that many researchers could not access their labs was a driving force for many of the adaptations made. The most reported change was the provision of no-cost extensions (NCEs), including the automatic application of NCEs. Other changes include allowing for electronic signatures, e-payments, and other paperless administrative functions. Many also reported flexibility in shifting timelines, including application deadlines and grant terms. Due to the decline in available funds, some organizations reported reducing the number of new awards, and even cancelling an entire request for application (RFA).

**Research Awards/Grants Process.** Will any of the changes to your organization’s research award/grant process as a result of COVID-19 continue beyond the pandemic?



**Spend on Research Awards/Grants.** Did COVID-19 impact the way your organization awards and administers research and/or grants? (e.g., moving to more paperless options, adjusting application deadlines, or applying automatic no-cost extensions)

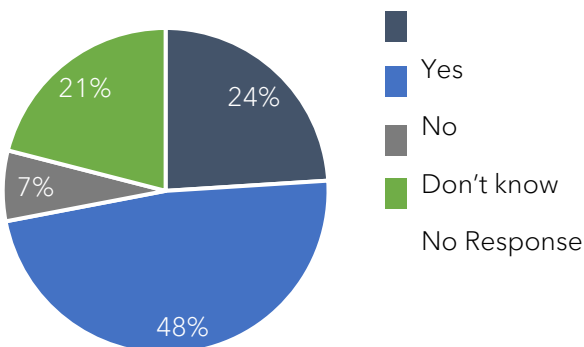


“One item we changed after seeing another HRA member comment on it was to have researchers sign off when they were able to get into the labs and resume work, holding funding until they were able to continue work. More communication with the researchers to see how they were doing. A survey was implemented to track.” *HRA Member*

At the time of this survey, only 8% of organizations reported that COVID-19 related changes or adaptations would remain permanently. Most respondents reported that the changes either would not continue beyond the pandemic, or that they did not know if the changes would continue.

Less than a quarter of respondents (24%) reported that their organization allowed grant funds to be used in new ways in 2020. 48% reported that their organization has not allowed grant funds to be used in new ways. Of the 24% who reported that funds were allowed to be in new ways, the most common change was allocating funds toward COVID related expenses and research activities. Other changes included reallocating travel funds, shifting funds toward salary support, and for childcare.

**Use of Grant Funds.** Has your organization allowed grant funds to be used in new ways during COVID-19?

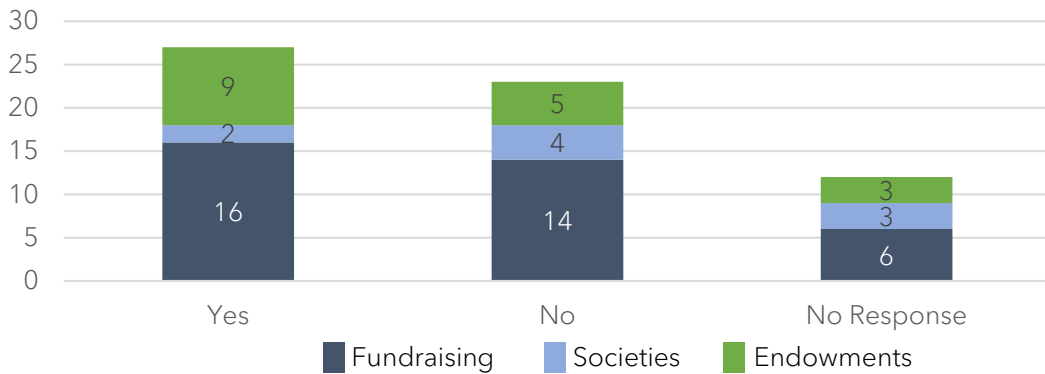


“Our organization has allowed grant funds to be used in new ways during COVID-19 but only on a limited basis. Supplemental funding was offered to active grantees with the purpose of filling budgetary gaps resulting from the research slow down or shutdowns. A small number of grantees had the opportunity to add COVID-19 related work so we allowed using of a small part of the grant toward that purpose.” *HRA Member*

### NEW COVID-19 PROGRAMS

43% of organizations surveyed report that they have funded new COVID-19 specific research. This includes donations as well as grants. Some organizations allocated additional, separate funds for COVID-19-related activities, and issued separate RFAs. Fewer organizations reported expansions to existing awards related to COVID-19. Among those who did not allocate new funds to COVID-19, a desire to not stray from the organization’s core mission was cited.

**New Programs.** Has your organization allocated funds to new programs (e.g., COVID-19 specific research) during COVID-19?



“Our organization did not launch a COVID-19 research program but offered supplemental funding to current grantees as a result of COVID-19. The purpose of the supplement was to make up for lost time or to cover budgetary gaps resulting from the pause in research activities. The scope of Data Sharing grants, already offered before the pandemic, was broadened so grantees could use the funds to share COVID-19 relevant data in addition to research data from their funded project.” *HRA Member*

## ALLOCATION OF FUNDS TO RESEARCH

**Endowments.** Only one endowment organization reported that the percentage of funds allocated to research decreased. Others report that while initial budget amounts were decreased or reallocated, after the stock market recovered budget amounts were restored, or even increased.

“At first, budget was decreased. As the stock market recovered, each program is allowed normal pre-pandemic number of grant allocations.” *HRA member*

“When the markets fell, we were conservative and cut some grant funding to ensure the endowments did not go in the red.” *HRA member*

**Fundraising.** 58% of fundraising organizations reported that the percentage of funds allocated to research either increased (2) or stayed the same (16). 29% of respondents (9) reported a decrease in the percentage of funds allocated to research.

“Temporarily decreased percentage of funds for grants until fundraising activity recovers” *HRA member*

“Even if we did not change the percentage of funds allocated, we ended up spending less money on grants. This was because we received fewer applications and proposals. Some labs were not able to submit proposals, all of them required a longer timeline to activate their grants.” *HRA member*

**Societies/Other.** 77% of respondents reported that their percentage allocation of funds to research did not change.



### 3. Fundraising Revenues

The top organizational impact of COVID-19 reported by fundraising organizations was the impact on fundraising revenues. 50% of fundraising organizations surveyed reported that the total amount of funds raised in calendar year (CY) 2020 decreased compared to CY 2019. The average reported decline in total revenues was 35% YOY. This amount is inclusive of Paycheck Protection Plan (PPP) loans received. 61% of fundraising organizations reported that they had applied for and received a PPP loan in the first round in 2020. Of these, 55% already had their loan forgiven at the time of this survey. Another 27% expect their loan to be forgiven. A few (4) organizations reported that their fundraising revenues increased, due to large gifts or other one-off events such as the sale of assets.

**50%**

Percentage of fundraising organizations surveyed who report a decrease in year-over-year total funds raised.

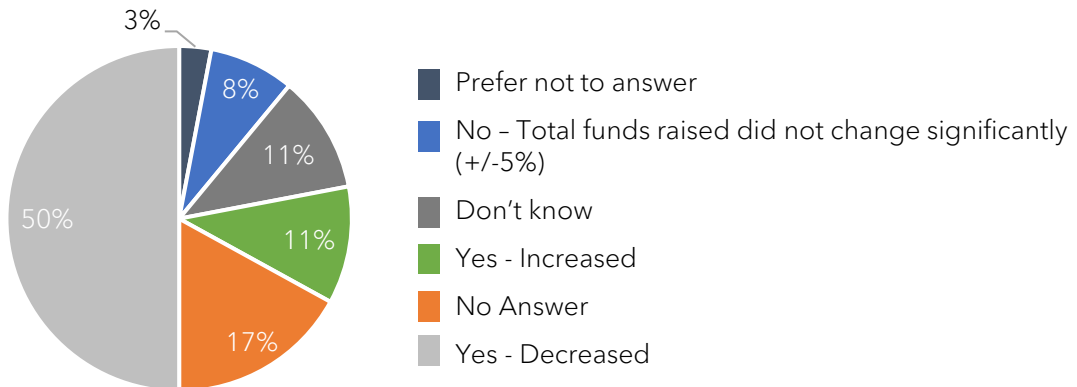
**35%**

Average reported year-over-year (2019 to 2020) decrease in funds among fundraising organizations (n=19).

**94%**

Percentage of fundraising respondents who cite a lack of in-person events as the primary cause for their decline in 2020 fundraising revenue.

**Spend on Research Awards/Grants.** Did the total amount of funds raised by your organization in calendar year 2020 change compared to calendar year 2019 (inclusive of PPP loans or other COVID-19 related grant or loan income)?



### CAUSES OF DECREASED REVENUE

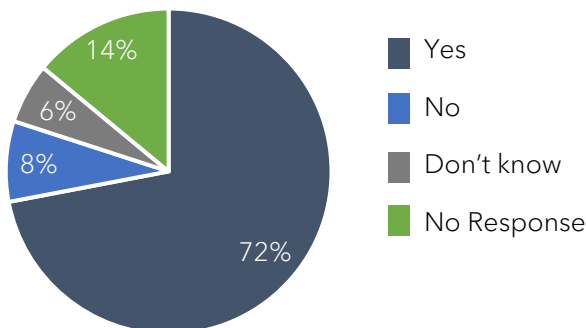
94% of fundraising organizations who experienced a significant (>5%) decrease in funds cited the cancellation of in-person events as the primary cause. 84% of Fundraising organizations report that they implemented new fundraising tactics because of COVID-19 (i.e., use of new digital platforms, strategies or activities that had not been previously planned).

“All in-person run/walk events, team endurance events and most in-person third party events were canceled or moved to a virtual platform. This resulted in a 60% decrease in events related revenue.” *HRA Member*

### MITIGATION STRATEGIES

72% of respondents report that their organization implemented new fundraising tactics because of COVID-19. However, new activities were largely focused on shifting previously in-person activities to a virtual format. The overall fundraising mix (relative contributions from each fundraising strategy/platform) did not shift significantly for most organizations. Members leveraged online platforms to host virtual events including virtual walks, galas, and online auctions. Members also report increasing their use of social media platforms such as Facebook and using gift apps for online donations.

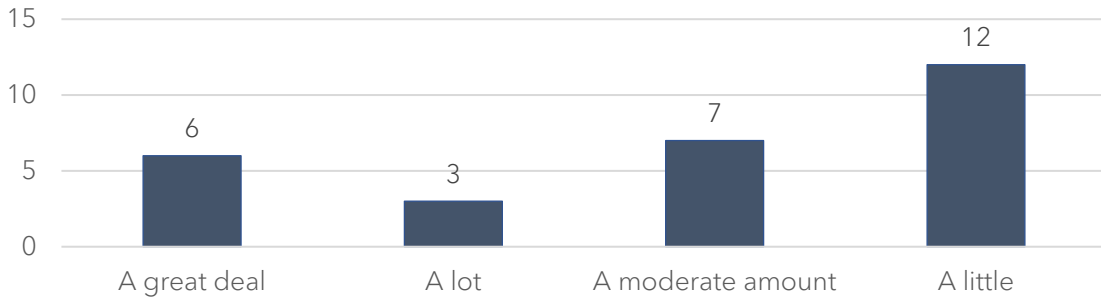
**New Fundraising Tactics.** Did your organization implement any new fundraising tactics as a result of COVID-19? (i.e., platforms, strategies or activities that you had not planned to implement)



“Not much change other than shifting to virtual events and relative increase in industry grants, mostly for COVID related education.” *HRA Member*

“We went virtual with all our in-person fundraising events, including walks and galas.” *HRA Member*

**Fundraising Mix.** To what extent did your fundraising mix change in 2020 compared to 2019? (Fundraising mix refers to the relative contributions of each fundraising strategy/platform)

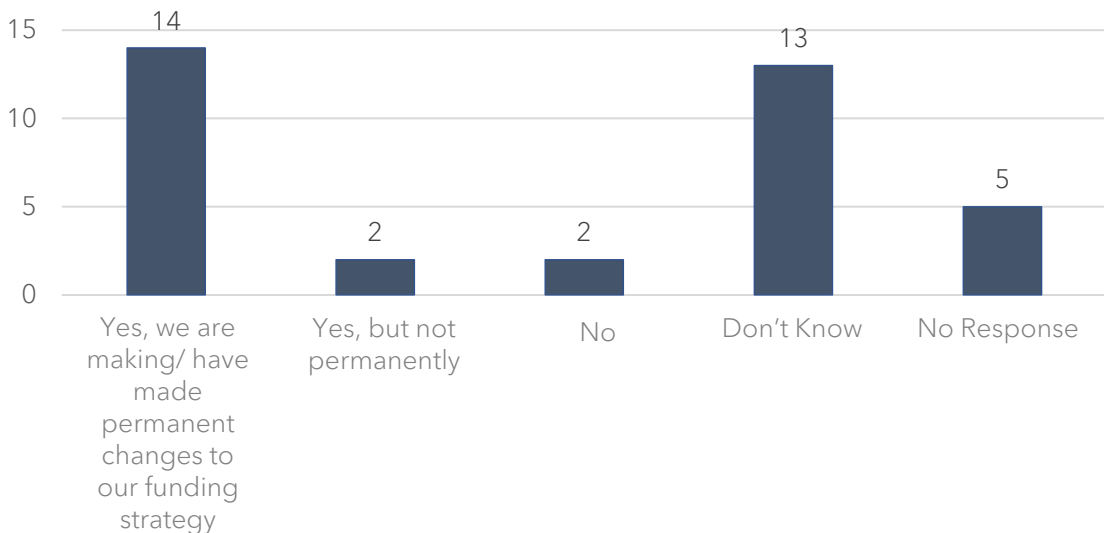


**SHIFTS TO ONLINE STRATEGIES ARE EXPECTED TO EXTEND BEYOND COVID-19**

39% of organizations reported that they are making/have made permanent changes to their funding strategy. Changes that will persist beyond the pandemic mostly center on leveraging virtual platforms include including adding virtual options for in-person fundraising activities to draw a larger audience; virtual meetings with donors; and more digital engagement.

“Virtual events will be available moving forward so more people can attend regardless of location (hybrid in-person and virtual).” *HRA Member*


**Fundraising Changes.** Will these changes to your fundraising strategy be maintained beyond the pandemic?



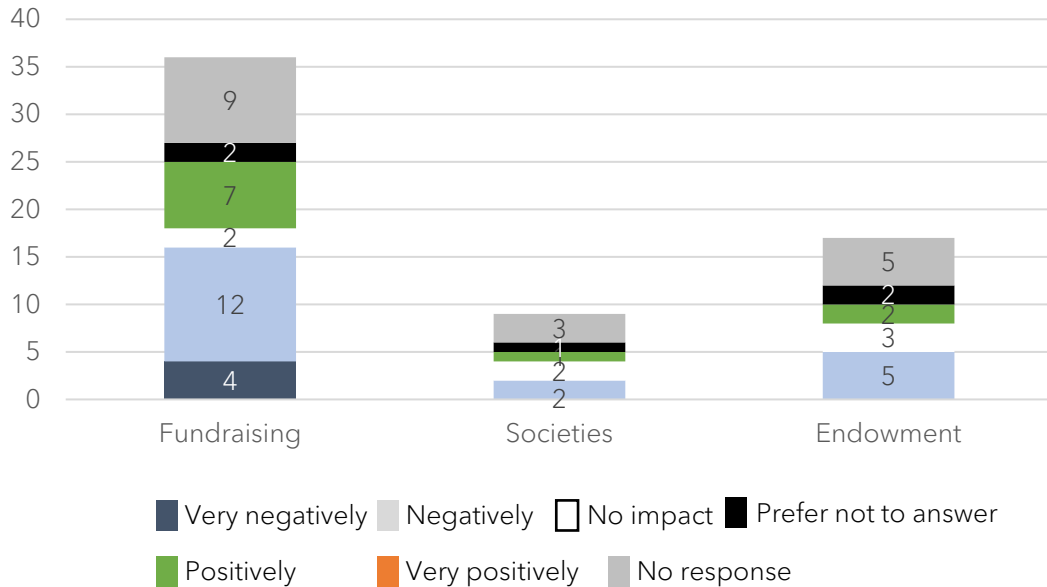
## Conclusions

Based on the findings and lessons learned from this evaluation, we offer the following set of recommendations:

1. **Flexibility is Most Important.** At the end of the survey, respondents were asked to give advice to their peers. The most common advice (41%) was around the importance of organizational adaptation and flexibility. Flexibility in how grants/awards are administered, in WFH arrangements, and in fundraising strategies have all been of critical importance.
2. **Widespread Changes to Staffing and Organizational Structures were not Reported.**
  - Reorganization: The research team and steering committee had hypothesized that members may have undergone a reorganization (e.g., shutting down or selling divisions, replacing management, cutting budgets, and laying off workers) because of COVID-19. However, only eight (8) organizations out of 62 reported that they had gone through a reorganization. Of these seven (7) were fundraising organizations. The reorganizations consisted mostly of staff layoffs and budget cuts across the board.
  - Restructuring: The research team and steering committee had hypothesized that members may have undergone a restructuring (e.g., a change in the structure or ownership through a merger or consolidation, spinoff acquisition, transfer, recapitalization, a change in name, or a change in management) because of COVID-19. Only one organization (fundraising) reported that this had occurred. 74% of survey respondents report that this was never discussed.
3. **The Impact of COVID-19 was not Overwhelmingly Negative (nor Positive).** Despite the significant impacts on fundraising revenues, only four (4) fundraising organizations characterized the overall impact of COVID-19 on their organization as "Very negative." 31% of organizations characterized the impact as negative, 11% as having a neutral impact, and 16% reported that COVID-19 had an overall positive impact on their organization. Respondents noted that this question was particularly difficult to answer as some aspects of COVID-19 were negative (decrease in funds raised, staff cuts) while others were positive (embracing more flexible work arrangements, endowment growth, and innovations that are likely to benefit the organization beyond the pandemic).

 "Having patience and understanding is key. Research might slow due to COVID restrictions, and the overall landscape may look slightly different. Use this as an opportunity to think differently about past paradigms and come up with novel solutions."  
*HRA Member*

COVID-19 Impact. Overall, how has COVID-19 impacted your organization?



- Different Experience for Fundraising vs. Endowment.** While the reported impact of remote and teleworking was consistent across organization types, for most other impacts results differed significantly based on funding model. Organizations that rely on fundraising reported more significant negative impacts than organizations that operate through an endowment. The cancellation of in-person fundraising events resulted in a significant loss of fundraising revenues in 2020. Conversely, the stock market performed well (achieving record highs) at the end of 2020, benefitting endowment organizations. However, the full extent of these impacts has not been fully realized across HRA’s membership as 45% of members (n=49) report that they operate on a fiscal year that differs from the calendar year.

## Next Steps

### TRACK PROGRESS OVER TIME

98% of members are open to repeating the survey, and most wish for it to be repeated in one year. This timeframe should elucidate adaptations that have become permanent, and account for different fiscal years to allow HRA to see the full impact of COVID-19 across its membership. The next survey would benefit from surveying at two levels within member organizations. Surveying at both the executive level and mid/junior level will support or refute the hypothesis that many opinions (especially around the impact of WFH and workplace culture) are driven by level of seniority. Given the widely reported impacts on women during the pandemic, it would also be useful to disaggregate responses by gender and/or to ask questions specific to employee impacts by gender.

### ANSWER MEMBERS' QUESTIONS

At the end of the survey, members were asked what questions they have for their peer organizations. The top four categories and illustrative questions are listed below.

<p>Work From Home</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are they handling return to work in post-covid era?</li> <li>• How are you managing employees who are just not as productive or are just not handling tele-commuting?</li> <li>• How they are navigating discussions about potential return to work, and dealing with continued uncertainty?</li> <li>• What are effective strategies for onboarding new staff and introducing them to your organizational culture?</li> <li>• How many organizations that were forced to remote working plan to maintain a remote or hybrid work environment and what changes they have or plan to make to mitigate many of the challenges in communications and workplace dynamics that we faced during the pandemic.</li> <li>• What does a long-term hybrid in-person and remote solution look like for you for both office work and collaboration meetings?</li> <li>• Will other funders go back to in person review meetings (some or all), or have they found the expense and burden on reviewers is not worth the added benefits?</li> </ul>
<p>Strategic Planning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you revisiting your strategic plan due to the crisis?</li> <li>• How are you approaching planning for the coming FY and beyond?</li> <li>• What assumptions are you making about travel and in-person events?</li> <li>• How do you deal with grantees who needed to pause research but continue to pay staff in order to keep them for when in-lab research resumed?</li> <li>• No-cost extensions are one thing, but what about extra cost extensions?</li> </ul>
<p>Virtual Fundraising</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Can organization survive with only virtual fundraising?</li> <li>• What are some success stories of converting from in-person to virtual events?</li> <li>• Will all events need to be hybrid going forward?</li> </ul>
<p>Mental Health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are you worried about the mental well-being of your funded scientists and, if so, what are you doing about it?</li> <li>• How they have been intentional about fostering positive organizational culture during the pandemic?</li> </ul>