



IMPACT REPORT

A LOOK AT YEAR ONE

LOWCOUNTRY COMMUNITY COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

cf-lowcountry.org

CONTENTS



1

ABOUT OUR RESPONSE

3

ABOUT OUR FINDINGS

4

RESPONSE FUND DONORS

9

RESPONSE FUND
GRANT RECIPIENTS

13

COMMUNITY IMPACT

18

CONTINUING NEED

20

LIST OF GRANTEES



ABOUT OUR RESPONSE

THE HISTORY OF THE LOWCOUNTRY COMMUNITY COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

When COVID-19 was declared a pandemic, the fallout was sudden for many of our neighbors. Community Foundation of the Lowcountry immediately mobilized to aid the community. On March 20, 2020, we established the **Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund**.

At the beginning, we pledged to match the first \$200,000 in donations, and we invited the community to join in. At the one-year mark, we were pleased to announce that generous donors throughout the Lowcountry had donated more than half a million dollars since the start of the fund. During this time, **we were able to take the combined contributions and grant nearly \$700,000 to area nonprofits** that are serving residents impacted by the pandemic.

This deployment of funds **benefited 43 agencies and supported efforts in all four counties of our service area:** Beaufort County, Colleton County, Hampton County and Jasper County.

To learn more about the response fund grant recipients and their efforts to help those struggling through the pandemic, visit the "How We're Addressing the COVID-19 Pandemic" page on our website at cf-lowcountry.org.

LOWCOUNTRY COMMUNITY COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND

BY THE NUMBERS

365

March 20, 2021, marked **1 year**, or 365 days, since we launched the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund.

\$200,000

At the start of the fund, we pledged to **match the first \$200,000**, which was quickly exceeded by our generous donors.

\$700,000

With our initial match, and half a million in donations from the community, we've **granted nearly \$700,000** to local nonprofits.

43

We've granted funds to **43 frontline nonprofits** across the Lowcountry.

4

Through grants to local nonprofits, we've been able to serve **citizens of four counties**: Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton & Jasper.

995

To date, **995 individuals, groups, businesses and funds** have made gifts to the response fund.

\$16,000

We **raised over \$16,000** for the fund with our virtual concert fundraiser, performed by Deas-Guyz.

823

The estimated average number of Lowcountry **lives touched each month by a response fund grant recipient is 823**. This is based on the client numbers reported to us by the nonprofits who responded to our survey.

Numbers current 03/20/21



ABOUT OUR FINDINGS

SURVEY METHOD & RESULTS

To better understand the effects of the pandemic on the Lowcountry - and the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund's impact in response - we reached out to the fund's donors and grant recipients in two separate surveys.

March 10-17, 2021, we emailed a survey to 274 of the response fund donors. The questions were related to the donors' experiences and perceptions of the pandemic, and their motivations to give to the fund. In all, 52 donors took our survey.

Likewise, 41 grant recipients were asked compatible questions about their operations, challenges and needs during the pandemic, as well as specific questions about the response fund. Thirty-six of the organizations we surveyed responded.

Keep reading to learn more about our findings. You can also read our impact story on our website at cf-lowcountry.org.

A GLOBAL CHALLENGE.

A LOWCOUNTRY RESPONSE.

A COMMUNITY IMPACT.

The COVID-19 pandemic has caused suffering and loss worldwide. Our community is not alone in the unprecedented challenges it has faced over the past year.

But the ways in which we have experienced the pandemic and risen to its challenges are characteristic of our region. Yet all of the categories that make us unique on paper boil down to one reality: people helping their neighbors.

This is what we've seen as we've reviewed our survey. Warm generosity and fearless support are what have motivated our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund donors and grant recipients. And as a result, the impact on our community has been significant.

RESPONSE FUND DONORS

DONORS MOTIVATED BY SENSE OF COMMUNITY, PERSONAL EXPERIENCES & DESIRE TO ADDRESS INEQUITIES

We wanted to know why our donors chose to donate to pandemic relief generally - and why they chose to give to our fund, in particular.

Their responses painted a picture of generous people who saw the seriousness of the situation, the pre-existing disparities in our region, and, in some cases, a personal connection to the challenge - either through their own experiences or those of others they knew.

They also felt Community Foundation of the Lowcountry was best equipped to address the fallout from the pandemic. When asked what motivated them to donate to the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund, they provided the following reasons in order of priority:

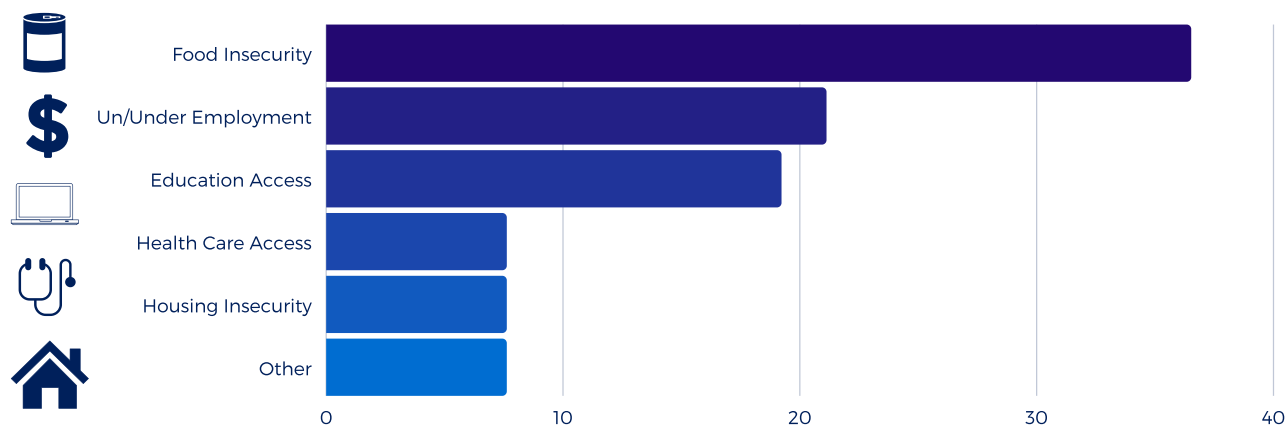
- The COVID-19 pandemic is an urgent and serious issue
- Community Foundation of the Lowcountry's knowledge of community needs
- A desire to help as many people as possible
- The knowledge that their donation would help people across the Lowcountry region
- The Community Foundation's reputation in the community
- The Community Foundation's response to other disasters, like Hurricane Matthew

Additionally, **71 percent** of the respondents told us they continue to keep up with the response fund updates on an occasional or frequent basis. This would include updates on grants given from the fund, the grant recipients and the projects the funds are going to. This information is found on our website at cf-lowcountry.org, or shared through press releases, email communications and social media.



TOP PANDEMIC-RELATED CONCERNS OF DONORS

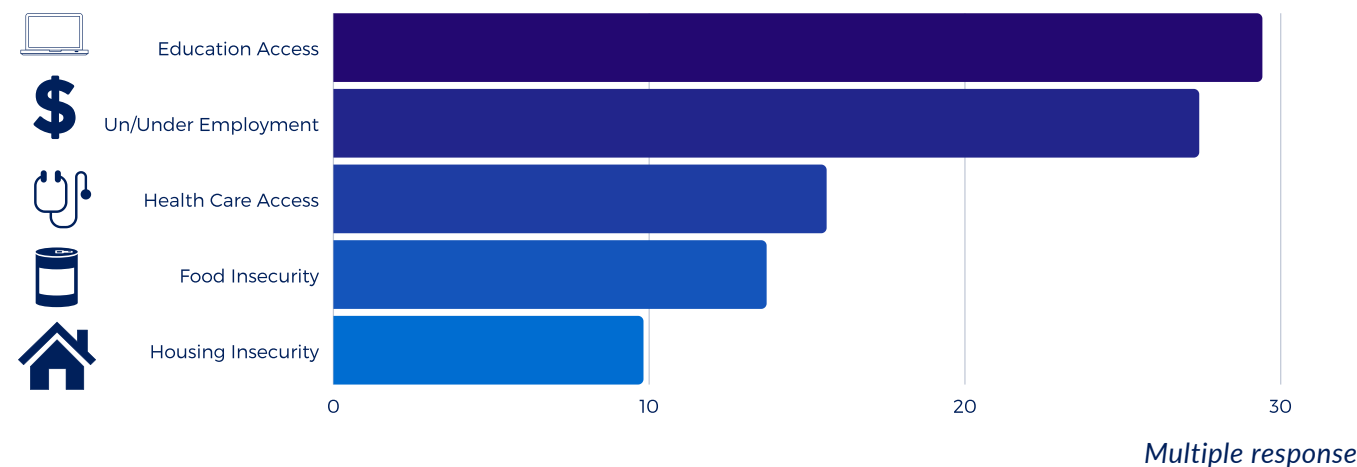
We asked our response fund donors to tell us which challenges of the pandemic concerned them most. Here is how they prioritized them:



If you're interested in seeing how these concerns match up with the on-the-ground needs our grant recipients have dealt with during the pandemic, turn to page 10 to see how the nonprofits ranked pandemic challenges.

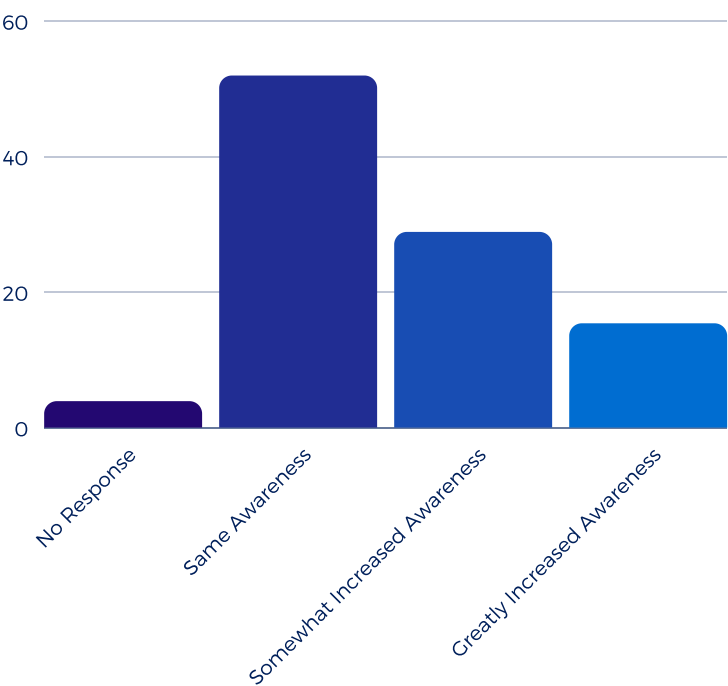
PANDEMIC-RELATED ISSUES CLOSE TO HOME FOR DONORS

Many people are driven to address issues that impact themselves or someone they know. This is why our response fund donors ended up representing nearly every demographic and county in the Lowcountry. People felt personally affected by this crisis. When we asked our response fund donors if they knew of anyone touched by the following core concerns, **45 percent of them said "yes."** This is how the issues stacked up when we asked the donors about specific challenges affecting people they personally know:



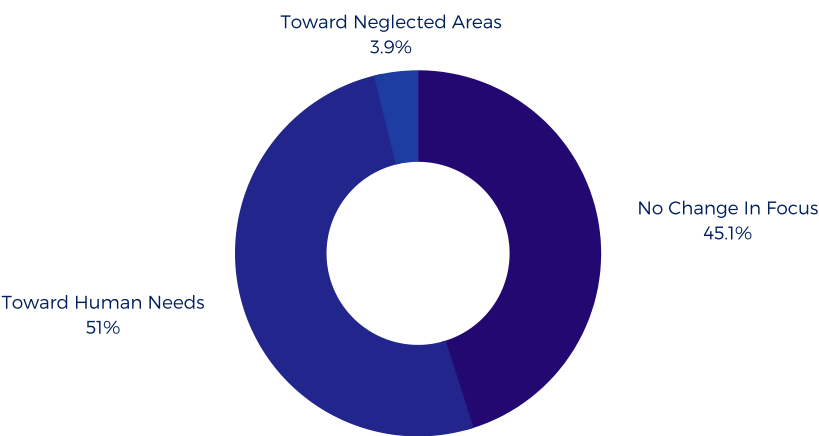
INCREASED AWARENESS OF LOCAL NONPROFITS AMONG MANY DONORS

The purpose of our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund was to support local nonprofits that are directly assisting Lowcountry residents impacted by the pandemic. Through web content, press releases, local media coverage and social media we shared not only the names of the nonprofits we granted to through the fund, but also the frontline work these organizations have been doing. We wanted to know from the response fund donors if their involvement with our response fund made them more aware of these nonprofit agencies. We found that more than 44 percent of donors had either somewhat or greatly increased knowledge of these nonprofits.



SHIFTS IN ANNUAL GIVING FOCUS

Our survey revealed that our response fund donors have not only become more aware of local nonprofits, but that they have also started to view issues differently in light of the pandemic - so much so that more than half changed the focus of their annual giving, at least for the short term. Some donors shifted their focus to organizations providing basic human needs, while others moved their money to organizations more neglected during the pandemic, like arts organizations. Many had no focus shift. As one donor put it, their area of giving didn't change, but the amount they gave increased. Here are the ways in which they reported their giving did or did not change.



RESPONSE FUND DONORS

"The Community Foundation deserves highest kudos. Thank you for bringing the community together to help in every area of need."

"[The pandemic] has heightened my awareness of local nonprofits and increased my desire to give."

"I trust the Community Foundation to get the money to those in need. And thank you so much for always doing so."

"The need is great here [Hilton Head Island] ... it is greater west of here, especially Jasper County. We have quadrupled our donations in 2020."

"Thank you for the good work you do!."

IN THEIR OWN WORDS

"This pandemic has made me more aware of the inequities in the Lowcountry and the need for us to support our community more."

"The Community Foundation plays such an important role in our community. I'm grateful for the objective view you take to assist nonprofits and am extremely glad you serve some of the poorest counties in SC."

"I'm fully aware of the Community Foundation and plan to send more money this year for the relief effort."

"I trust Community Foundation of the Lowcountry to know the needs, address the needs in an impartial way and always try to best meet the needs in the four-county area."



RESPONSE FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

NONPROFITS HAVE PIVOTED, EXPANDED AND EVOLVED TO MEET COMMUNITY NEEDS IN OUR FOUR-COUNTY REGION

The second group we surveyed about their experience with the pandemic and our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund was our response fund grant recipients. These are nonprofits throughout our four-county region that used the grant awards to fund programs and services that helped and supported Lowcountry residents who have been impacted by the pandemic and require critical and immediate support, such as food, housing, medical and educational needs.

Through the survey, we found that these nonprofits have been highly adaptive, even as many of them expanded to meet dramatic increases in clientele. Some of these nonprofits partnered with other organizations - nonprofit and for-profit - to better serve their communities. Many also expanded their service areas and offerings. The grant recipient respondents told us these changes are expected to last for a while - some have said they're permanent.

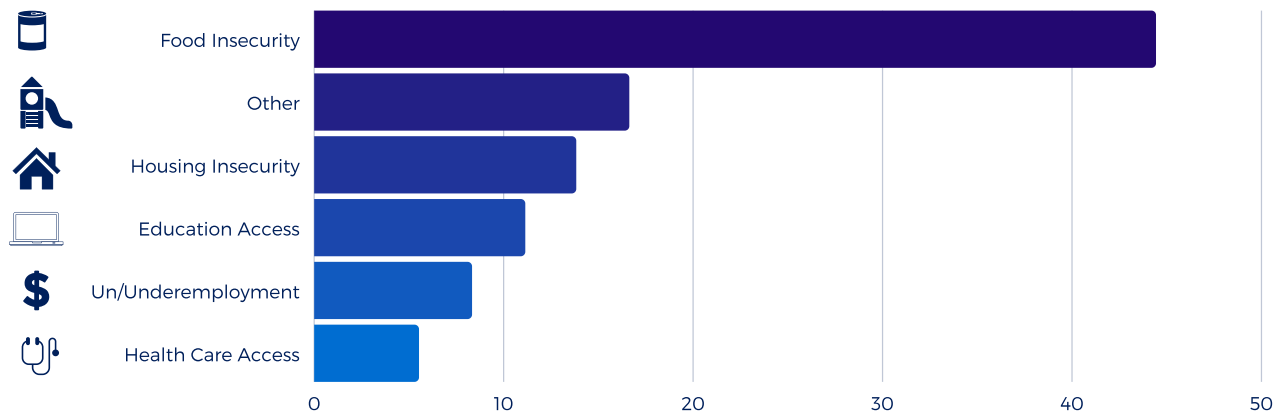
You can view the list full list of Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund grant recipients, the amounts they were awarded, the areas they serve and the programs that were funded by visiting our website page, "How We're Addressing the Pandemic" at cf-lowcountry.org.



88%
RESPONSE
RATE

TOP PANDEMIC-RELATED CHALLENGES IN COMMUNITIES SERVED BY LOCAL NONPROFITS

We asked our response fund grant recipients a question that corresponds with the one we asked our donors about what they identified as the most serious issues to address (see page 5). The grant recipients gave us an even closer look at the struggles being faced in Lowcountry communities by sharing which challenges have impacted their clientele the most.



For the "Other" category, grant recipients listed issues like after-school access, mental health care and loan application assistance.

PARTNERSHIPS FORMED TO MEET COMPLEMENTARY NEEDS

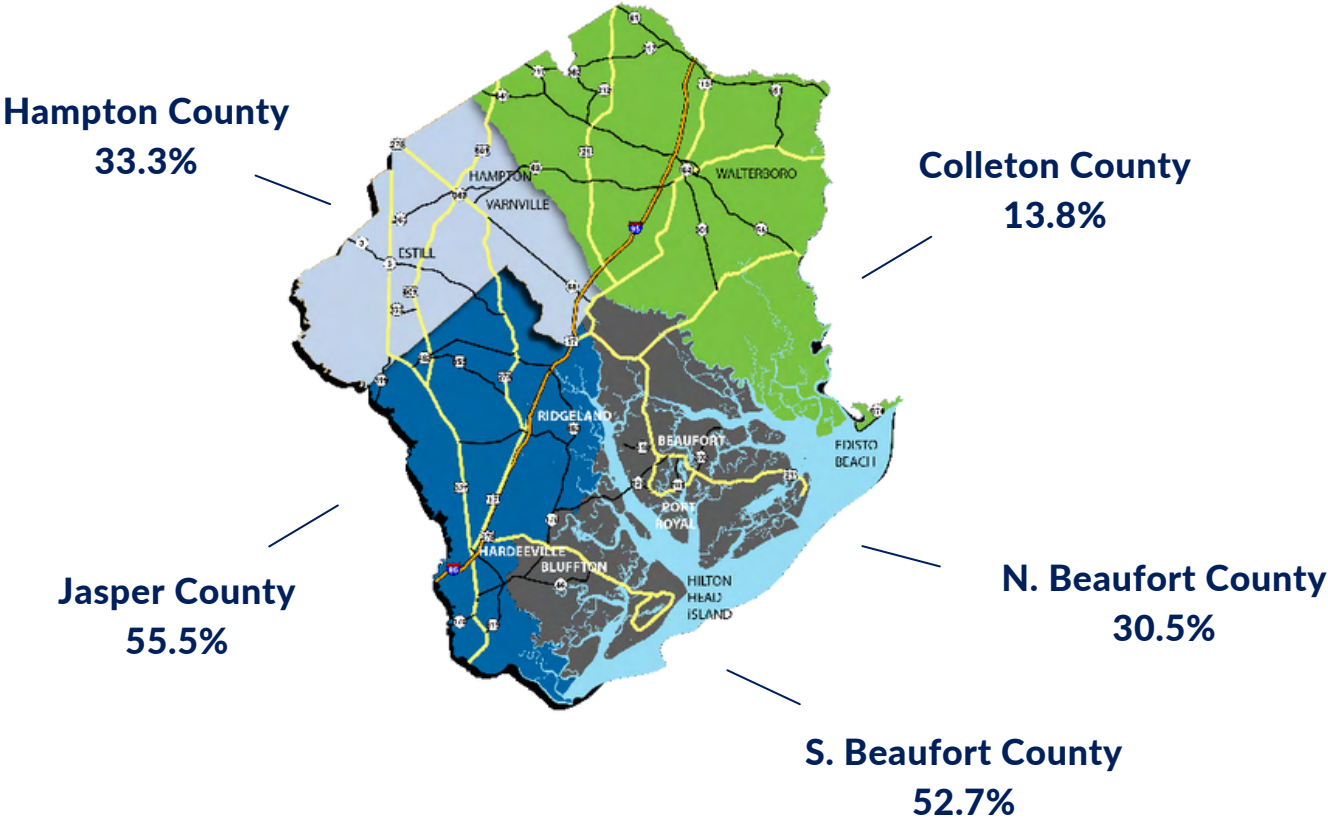
Because of the influx of clients and needs, many nonprofits formed partnerships to better serve their communities during the pandemic. When we asked our response fund grant recipients if they had collaborated with other agencies and organizations to provide similar or complementary needs, an overwhelming percentage of them said "yes."

80.5% Yes

19.4% No

LOWCOUNTRY COUNTIES SERVED BY GRANT RECIPIENTS DURING PANDEMIC

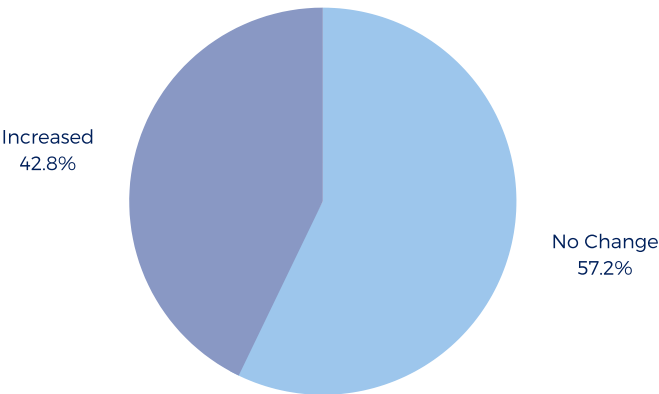
Our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund was designed to deploy funds to Lowcountry nonprofits already on the ground throughout our four-county service area. Donors indicated this was important to them as well, with a desire to reach neighbors throughout the region. Because many of these nonprofits serve multiple counties in the Lowcountry, we asked them to indicate the areas they primarily serve. The following percentages show the areas of heaviest focus by these nonprofits as a whole.



Multiple response

EXPANSION OF SERVICE AREA

More Lowcountry communities were reached because many of the nonprofits that received grants from the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund expanded their service area to reach more individuals and families in need. When we asked the nonprofits if their service area had increased or decreased, not one told us their reach had decreased.



RESPONSE FUND IMPACT ON GRANT RECIPIENTS

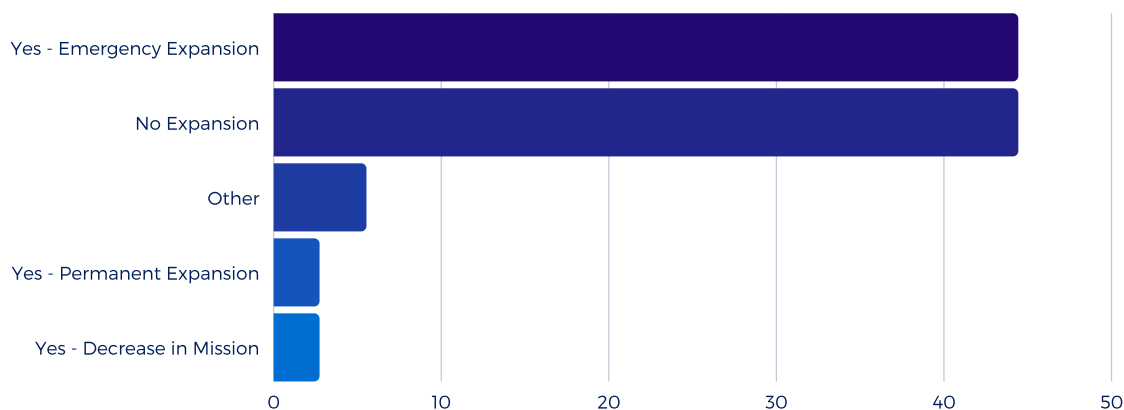
Our response fund grant recipients found that the grant money and related local exposure associated with our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund impacted their organization in numerous ways. In our survey, we asked them to identify any of the following ways in which they have been impacted:

IMPACT	PERCENTAGE
"We've been able to help more families and individuals than we would have."	97.2%
"We've seen more people interested in volunteering with our organization."	30.5%
"More donors in the community have become aware of our organization and have donated to us directly."	27.7%
"We've expanded our service area."	19.4%

Multiple response

EXPANSION OF MISSION

Many nonprofit agencies pivoted during the pandemic - some temporarily and some for good. Here's what we found when we asked our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund grant recipients whether they've had to expand their mission - and how:





COMMUNITY IMPACT

FAMILIES & INDIVIDUALS IMPACTED THROUGHOUT THE FOUR-COUNTY REGION

During the first year of our Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund, we made grants to 43 nonprofit agencies serving families and individuals in need in Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper counties. While these grants boosted the work of these organizations, the most important impact came in the form of lives touched.

In our survey to the response fund grant recipients, we asked these agencies if they had stories they wanted to share of how their clients were helped. Story after story came in. You can read more of these stories on our website at cf-lowcountry.org.

In the following pages, you will also read reports we received from nonprofits on the work that was being done through the fund.

***823**
LOWCOUNTRY LIVES
TOUCHED EACH
MONTH

We were also stunned by the sheer numbers of people assisted by these agencies:

- 20 of the agencies serve up to 500 clients per month, each
- 13 response fund grant recipients serve between 500 - 6,000 clients per month, each
- 1 nonprofit serves more than 21,000 clients per month - although not all of those clients reside in our four-county service area

**Estimated average, per agency, in our four-county service area, based on self-reporting of grant recipients. See page 2. You may also turn to page 17 for more information on clients served by our response fund grant recipients.*

"Our grant funds were used to help families make their mortgage payments due to income losses from COVID. Mortgage payments are usually a family's biggest monthly payment, so it's difficult to recover from even one month's missed payment. This grant relieved that stress. They were able to keep up with their mortgage payments and put their reduced income towards food and health care." - *Grant Recipient*



"Parents who bring their children to our center do not have employment options that allow them to work from home, forcing them to choose between their child's education and a roof over their head. The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund ensured these children had a safe, supportive location where they could connect to their teachers and classrooms. Nearly 50 parents were able to retain employment and support their families." - *Grant Recipient*

"Prior to receiving the generous Community Foundation of the Lowcountry grants, we occasionally provided key nutritional items such as meat, fish, produce and dairy products. *With* the grants, our food pantry has been able to provide all these items each week. This has led to a tremendous esprit de corps among our underserved client population, which largely consists of Gullah and Hispanic families. These families tell us each week how special they feel that the community has provide the funds to enable them to serve nutritional meals to their loved ones. The grants have provided a real sense of dignity to our clients that they are not forgotten by their neighbors." - *Grant Recipient*



"Your grant was our first COVID-relief funding received, providing immediate support when our COVID expenses were at their peak. As a frontline provider of food/emergency housing needs that did not miss one day of service throughout the pandemic, the publicity we received from the grant helped springboard additional grant opportunities, as well as encouraged wonderful individual/direct gifts."
- Grant Recipient



"The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund came to our rescue when we needed support the most. The pandemic really hit our community hard, especially our senior citizens and other vulnerable groups. We had to suspend many of our planned services and events in order to respond to an urgent community need. With the grant we were able to provide hot meals, delivered to their doors, at a time when they had to be shut in to reduce exposure. Plus, many didn't have enough food to eat or were unable to cook for themselves. This really was a lifeline to the persons served, Many thanks for thinking about our community."
- Grant Recipient

"In 2020, we saw a dramatic increase in requests for emergency domestic violence shelter. The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund helped us meet that need. Thanks in part to the support of this fund, we provided 5,363 nights of safe shelter to a record 215 women and children. This represents a 50% increase in the number of people served in 2019 and is the most people we have sheltered in a single year in our 30-plus year history." - Grant Recipient



"We have been able to increase our clientele base by 35%-40%, give out a more robust bag of groceries to each individual in need and install a much-needed commercial upgraded refrigerator, which helps keep items donated from local grocery stores fresh longer. We would not be able to keep up with the demand of our clientele during the COVID-19 pandemic if it were not for the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund." - *Grant Recipient*



"The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund enabled us to expand our mission into serving underserved senior populations in Colleton County, especially those outside the central hub of Walterboro. There were 5-6 community hubs created from where we would distribute hot food items freshly prepared inside the Colleton Commercial Kitchen." - *Grant Recipient*

"Our program operates on a calendar fiscal year. The operating budget, including income projections, had already been set prior to the onset of COVID-19 in our community. Less than three months into the budget year, the program was forced to suspend services due to the Governor's executive order. In suspending services, the accounts receivable side of our general ledger was essentially shut off. Meanwhile, every other expense remained the same. When reopening became a reality, we were required to purchase unbudgeted supplies. The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund provided a lifeline." - *Grant Recipient*



CLIENTS SERVED BY GRANT RECIPIENTS



approximately 100 clients

SIX response fund grant recipients reported they serve up to 100 clients, each, per month



SIX response fund grant recipients reported they serve between 500-999 clients, each, per month



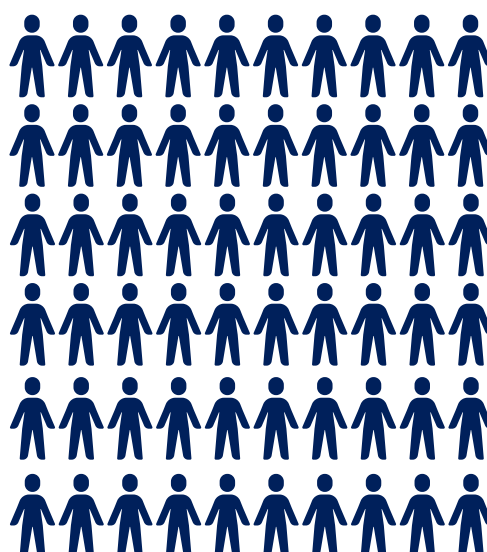
TWO response fund grant recipients reported they serve more than 6,000 clients, each, per month



FOURTEEN response fund grant recipients reported they serve between 100-499 clients, each, per month



SIX response fund grant recipients reported they serve between 1,000-5,999 clients, each, per month



Note that there is overlap in the clients some of these agencies serve.



A CONTINUING NEED

NONPROFITS SEE THE FALLOUT FROM THE PANDEMIC CONTINUING INTO THE NEAR FUTURE

In the spring of 2021, our community is making great strides in moving past the pandemic. In many areas vaccination rates are high. Additionally, local governments and private businesses are loosening guidelines and restrictions, leading to increased business, tourism and job opportunities.

But not everyone is able to start afresh with a clean slate. Many in the Lowcountry are still struggling from the effects of the pandemic:

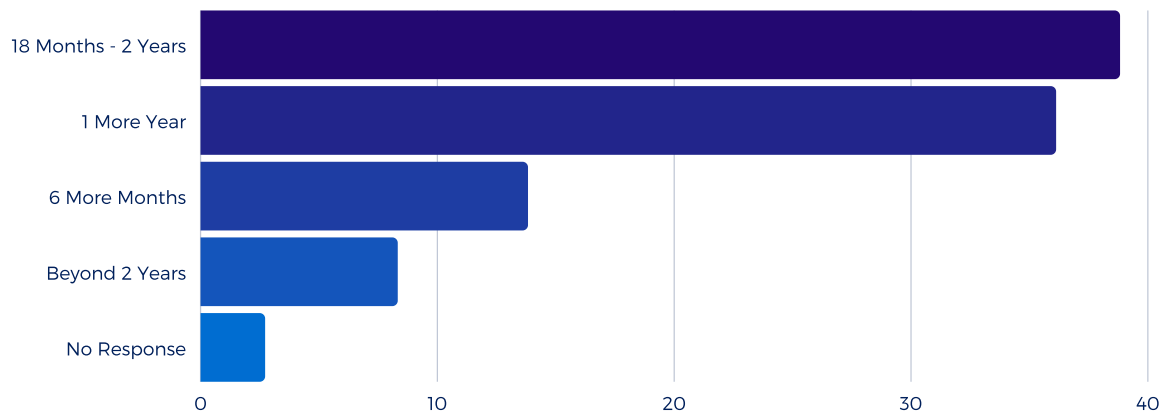
- Waivers for utility payments, rent and other necessities are expiring.
- Bills that have accumulated over many months are now coming due.
- Shortages, rising gas prices and supply chain disruptions are raising the price of food and other essential items.
- The rates of those needing mental health services and grief support are rising.
- Many are struggling from the long-term health effects of having had COVID-19.

Because many in our community are still coping, a number of nonprofits are seeing more need now than they did during the worst of the pandemic. In our survey, many of our response fund grant recipients indicated **they expect to be addressing pandemic-related needs for another one-to-two years**. Some expected to be dealing with the impact longer than that.

UP TO
(OR BEYOND)
2 yrs.

HOW LONG NONPROFITS EXPECT TO BE ADDRESSING PANDEMIC-RELATED NEEDS

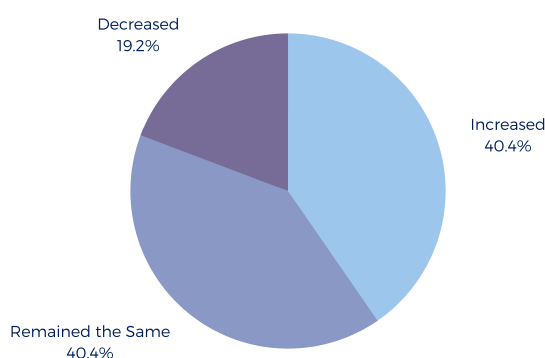
We had already heard from several nonprofits that, as the pandemic began to die down, they were seeing more need than ever among their clientele. So in our survey, we asked our response fund grant recipients how far into the future they expect to still be addressing the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. Here is what they told us:



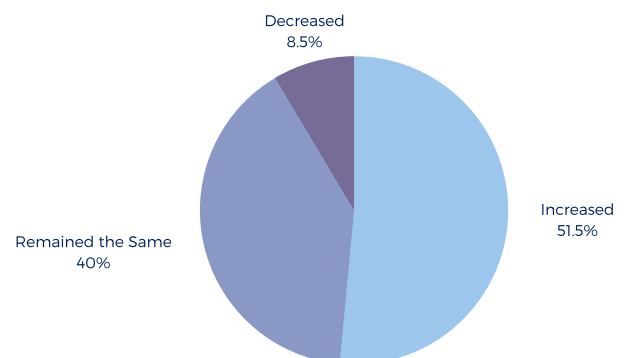
DONOR PERCEPTIONS OF ONGOING NEEDS VS. NONPROFITS' ON-THE-GROUND OBSERVATIONS

To compare how an informed public viewed pandemic-related needs in 2021 versus the needs that frontline nonprofits are seeing in their day-to-day operations, we asked both our response fund donors *and* our response fund grant recipients whether they believe pandemic-related needs are increasing or decreasing. This is how they responded:

Donor Beliefs about Increase/Decrease of Pandemic-Related Needs in the Community



Grant Recipient Beliefs about Increase/Decrease of Pandemic-Related Needs in the Community



LOWCOUNTRY COMMUNITY COVID-19 RESPONSE FUND GRANT RECIPIENTS

Agape Family Life Center (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)	Hopeful Horizons (Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties)
Antioch Education Center (Jasper County)	Huspah Missionary Baptist Church (Hampton County)
Beaufort-Jasper YMCA of the Lowcountry (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)	The LEGACY Foundation of SC (Jasper County)
Bluffton Community Soup Kitchen (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)	Love Abound CDC (The Joseph Storehouse) (Hampton County)
Bluffton-Jasper Volunteers in Medicine (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)	Lowcountry Food Bank (Beaufort, Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties)
Bluffton Self Help (Beaufort County)	Lowcountry Strong Foundation (Beaufort County)
Boys & Girls Club of the Lowcountry – Bluffton (Beaufort County)	The Margaret F. Curtis Food Pantry (Colleton, Hampton and Jasper Counties)
Boys & Girls Club of Lowcountry - Hilton Head Island (Beaufort County)	Marshview Community Organic Farm (Beaufort County)
CCEDC Two, Inc. (Colleton Commercial Kitchen) (Colleton County)	Meals-on-Wheels, Bluffton-Hilton Head (Beaufort County)
Campbell Chapel Community Development Ministry (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)	Mental Health America of Beaufort/Jasper (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)
The Children’s Center, Inc. (Beaufort County)	Neighborhood Outreach Connection (Beaufort County)
Christ Lutheran Church (Beaufort County)	New Destiny Center (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)
Edisto Indian Free Clinic (Colleton County)	Partners in Transition, Inc. (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)
First Estill Baptist Church (Hampton County)	Programs for Exceptional People (PEP) (Beaufort County)
Greater Faith International Ministries (Hampton County)	Real Champions, Inc. (Jasper County)
Gullah Geechee Initiative Foundation, Inc. (Beaufort County)	St. Stephens Outreach Foodbank (Jasper County)
Hampton United Methodist Church (Hampton County)	Sandalwood Community Food Pantry (Beaufort County)
HELP of Beaufort (Beaufort County)	Second Helpings (Beaufort, Hampton and Jasper Counties)
Healing Waters Mission & Wellness Center (Jasper County)	Society of St. Vincent de Paul Holy Family Conference (Beaufort County)
The Hilton Head Island Deep Well Project (Beaufort County)	Volunteers in Medicine (Beaufort County)
Hilton Head Regional Habitat for Humanity (Beaufort County)	Women of Faith and Power Ministries (Beaufort and Jasper Counties)

"We sincerely thank all in the community who stepped up to help their neighbors during such an unprecedented time. Through the Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund, donors found a vehicle to support those on the front line - our community's hardworking nonprofits - that have touched lives every day of the pandemic. By connecting people, resources and needs in this way, we have had a front seat to the generosity and ingenuity of our community. We're gratified to have been part of this response."



***Scott Wierman, President and CEO,
Community Foundation of the Lowcountry***

"The Lowcountry Community COVID-19 Response Fund gave us a chance to see this community spring into action once again. Whether it was the generosity of donors who reached out to help their Lowcountry neighbors, or the dedication of local nonprofits that have been assisting those in our communities who were hardest hit by the pandemic, support for this community was evident. We're grateful to all those who continue to demonstrate why the Lowcountry is such a special place to us all."



***Jackie Rosswurm, PhD, Board Chair,
Community Foundation of the Lowcountry***



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