



In recent communications, GEO emphasized the importance of [remaining grounded in our values](#) and [taking concrete steps to support grantees](#). As federal funding threats and attacks on equity efforts continue to [harm nonprofits](#), grantmakers have a responsibility to step up. **Dominant narratives suggest that philanthropy may be retreating, but we're witnessing many tangible ways the GEO community is responding.** If you share our commitment to thriving nonprofits and communities and are wondering if your organization is doing enough to support them in this moment, or if you want to do more but aren't sure how, consider the range of ways we're seeing funders put their values into action right now.

Communicating and Aligning

Across our network, funders are staying true to their missions:

- **Grounding in values:** Foundations are having honest conversations with staff and board about staying true to equity commitments and community-centered approaches
- **Maintaining focus:** Boards and leadership teams are working to resist what one member called "the gravitational pull of chaos" and stay focused on supporting thriving nonprofits and communities
- **Thoughtful risk assessment:** Rather than avoiding all risk, grantmakers are considering where they can absorb risk on behalf of their nonprofit partners. Further, foundations are working to resist fear-based decision making and maintain strategic, values-based decision making
- **Reaching out to grantees:** Foundations are proactively communicating their continued commitments and listening deeply to what partners need most

- **Speaking publicly:** Despite pressures to pull back, many funders are [using their voices to express solidarity](#) with affected communities, refusing to scrub websites of mentions of racial equity, and refusing to engage in “anticipatory compliance”

Moving Money

Financial resources remain funders’ most direct tool for impact. Foundation staff are engaging their boards in strategic conversations about shifts to their grantmaking strategies.

- **Increasing payout:** Institutions like the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Woods Fund Chicago and Freedom Together Foundation are publicly [increasing their payout percentage](#) and encouraging others to do that same
- **Enhancing flexibility:** GEO members are amending grants to give nonprofits greater adaptability and help grantees avoid being targeted by keyword searches and audits. Funders are also eliminating or modifying application and reporting requirements to ensure nonprofits can focus more time on doing the work
- **Embracing general operating support:** Unrestricted funding offers both flexibility and a buffer against targeted attacks on specific programs
- **Building stability through multi-year grants:** Longer-term commitments create breathing room and confidence in the future
- **Creating rapid response mechanisms:** Funders are creating new funding streams that allow grantees to address urgent needs as they arise
- **Accelerating payments:** Early release of funds helps stabilize cash flow during uncertain times
- **Supporting infrastructure:** Recognizing the importance of investing in sector-wide capacity and supporting non-profit serving organizations (NSOs) and philanthropy serving organizations (PSOs) who are well positioned to defend the nonprofit sector and bring individual organizations together to learn and act
- **Working with intermediaries:** Trusted partners are helping move resources closer to communities with less delay

Collaborating with Other Funders

Learning and working in community strengthens our impact:

- **Pooled funds:** Joint initiatives distribute risk and amplify impact

- **Ecosystem awareness:** Funders are clarifying their unique roles within issue areas and regions. We are hearing from foundations that are working together to assess when it is best to move money behind the scenes and when it is best to speak out
- **Network participation:** Participation in regional funder associations creates increased understanding of context and nuance
- **Learning exchanges:** Intimate spaces for sharing strategies and insights are forming organically and existing structures, like [GEO's peer communities](#) and [peer learning programs](#), continue to offer community and support
- **Solidarity structures:** Across the sector we are preparing to defend attacks on philanthropy and nonprofits. A united front to defend our sector, even as we constantly seek to improve it, will help ensure that funders stand together if and when our colleagues are targeted

Building Capacity

Grantmaker support extends beyond funding:

- **Creating community:** Safe spaces for grantees to connect and support each other
- **Legal assistance:** Resources for legal defense and compliance navigation, as well as support for litigation efforts
- **Security support:** Digital, organizational, and personal security for vulnerable leaders
- **Critical services:** Scenario planning, communications assistance, and financial management support
- **Wellness resources:** Psychosocial support programs recognize the toll on nonprofit leaders
- **Policy advocacy and support for organizing:** New emphasis on state and local policy work given shifting federal landscape
- **Media investment:** Support for independent local journalism to maintain information flow

Looking for Creative Opportunities

Even in challenging times, our community maintains hope:

- **Building anew:** GEO members are identifying opportunities to create systems and approaches that serve communities and are less vulnerable to politically motivated attacks
- **Finding unexpected allies:** Cross-sector collaborations are forming around shared values
- **Reimagining practice:** This moment is spurring innovation in how we approach our work, strengthen our relationships, and support our communities

We are heartened to see many in the GEO community deepening our collective commitment to thriving nonprofits and communities. The examples shared here reflect a summary of what we are hearing from our members who are navigating these challenges with creativity and resolve. This is a time to take action, and we hope these examples inspire other grantmakers to do more. There is no “one size fits all” approach, but now is the time for your staff and board to have brave conversations about what’s possible and what’s necessary to achieve your missions and live out your values.

We find strength in knowing we're part of a community that's rising to meet this moment. At GEO, we'll continue to create spaces for collective learning, strategy sharing, and mutual support. **Let us know how we can be a resource to you, and please [share what you're doing](#) so that we can continue to amplify how philanthropy can act in service of nonprofits and communities.**



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Stronger nonprofits.
Better results.