

COVER STORY • PHILANTHROPY & NONPROFITS

# NONPROFIT DOLLARS DISSOLVE

A special report on the region's nonprofit and philanthropic landscape


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Local nonprofits are seeing demand for their services skyrocket, with some reporting increases of up to 30% since the start of the year.

WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL



By [Caitlin Lyons](#) – Special Projects Editor, Washington Business Journal  
Jun 5, 2025 **Updated** Jun 5, 2025 4:08pm EDT

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## Story Highlights

- Federal government dismantling increases nonprofit demand while reducing funds.
- \$303 billion in federal grants to nonprofits dissolved due to cancellations.
- Nonprofits prepare for higher demand amid potential SNAP, Medicaid changes.

*President Donald Trump's efforts to dismantle the federal government have created a cascading effect on nonprofits, simultaneously generating more need while reducing funds.*

*Already, some of the roughly \$303 billion — the amount awarded nationwide to nonprofits in federal grants, according to nonprofit research organization Candid — has been dissolved from the sector due to a wide range of grant cancellations. The slashes come as Greater Washington navigates a [wave of government-related layoffs](#) and household budgets feel the strain of the rising cost of goods. Mounting economic pressure not only increases demand at nonprofits, but also makes dollars even harder to come by as [individuals and corporations clamp down on donations](#).*

*It's a brewing crisis similar to the pandemic for much of the sector, according to the 10 nonprofit leaders surveyed in this section. But this time, there's no government infusion of cash coming and things may get worse before they get better. The sector is now preparing for even higher demand in the coming*

*months and even years, especially if changes to **SNAP, Medicaid and Medicare** are upheld in the proposed budget reconciliation bill.*

*Read on to learn what nonprofits are up against across the DMV — and what they need now more than ever. Responses have been edited for clarity and length.*

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## **Culmore Clinic**

Lynette Sappe Watkins executive director of the Culmore Clinic.

LYNETTE SAPPE WATKINS

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**Description:** Provides free, compassionate, respectful and inclusive medical care, counseling, and specialty referrals to uninsured adults

**Location:** Falls Church

**Clients served annually:** 1,052

**Demand:** Our Clinic currently has just over 1,000 registered patients. There continues to be demand for our services. Our new patient registrations are holding steady. For the last year we have averaged about 30 new patients a month. If there are changes to Virginia Medicaid it may result in more people meeting our eligibility requirements and therefore an even greater demand to register for our safety net health care services. Meeting that demand could prove challenging, not only for our clinic, but for the safety net programs operating around us.

**Need:** There will always be a need for funding to support our more than 1,000 patients. We work to provide barrier-free healthcare. It costs us about \$1,300 to support a patient with a full year of healthcare appointments, patient care services, and medications. We can care for patients at this very modest rate because we depend upon volunteer healthcare providers. That brings us to our second need, volunteers. We care for our patients with an outstanding staff of volunteer physicians, nurse practitioners, PAs and nurses. Finally, we have a short-term need for temporary space. We will need to vacate our current location in December of this year. We are working to identify about 3,000 square feet of donated space to use for 18-20 months for our medical practice.

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## AfriThrive



Truphena M. Choti is the founder and CEO of AfriThrive.

AFRITHRIVE

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**Description:** Creates access to nutritious, culturally appropriate food, skills development, and economic opportunity for African immigrant and minority families with farming opportunities.

**Location:** Silver Spring

**Clients served annually:** 60,880

**Demand:** We have seen a surge of nearly 30% in demand for our food access programs since January 2025. With ongoing federal cuts to programs like SNAP, TEFAP, and school meal subsidies, food insecurity will deepen among

families already struggling to make ends meet. What we're likely to witness is not just hunger, but a rise in unhealthy eating habits, families resorting to whatever is cheap and available, often highly processed foods with little nutritional value. This will inevitably worsen health outcomes, especially among children, seniors, and those managing chronic conditions

**Need:** Right now, what we need most is flexible, multi-year funding to invest in infrastructure and people, the backbone of sustainable impact. This includes resources for land, cold storage, staffing, delivery vehicles, and data systems that will allow us to meet rising demand efficiently and equitably. We also need strategic partners such as funders, policy advocates, and cross-sector collaborators, who share our long-term vision for food equity, economic mobility, and culturally grounded health solutions.

## Homes Not Borders



Image: Homes Not Borders.

Laura Osuri is the executive director of Homes Not Borders

HOMES NOT BOARDERS

**Description:** Supplies furniture, home goods, job and financial support to refugee and forced migrants in the D.C. region.

**Location:** Landover

**Clients served annually:** 1,614

**Demand:** While the Executive Order halting the refugee resettlement program and foreign aid stopped nearly all new arrivals, slowing down our homestay program, we saw increases in other areas. Because of the foreign aid stoppage, many newly arrived refugees faced eviction so we saw a huge demand for rental assistance. The federal government normally gives each refugee 90 days of support, including money for rent. That support abruptly stopped after the EO and almost 400 people were in fear of eviction. We have 145 applications for rent relief and were able to pay 54 of them and connect the others with resources to help assist them. There was also a demand for casework as the resettlement agencies fired most of their caseworkers for reception and placement. So we started offering casework and have so far helped 68 new refugee families.

**Need:** Donations to continue to fill in the gaps left by the federal government's unfriendly policies towards refugees and forced migrants.

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## The Greater DC Diaper Bank



Liz Schurgin is the executive director of the Greater DC Diaper Bank.

LIZ SCHURGIN

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**Description:** Distributes diapers and other hygiene essentials to families through vast network of service organizations across 375 DMV zip codes. These organizations include local governments, religious institutions, mutual aid groups, and nonprofits.

**Location:** D.C.

**Clients served annually:** 46,000

**Demand:** 88% of our network has reported an increase in demand for diapers and hygiene essentials since the New Year. We currently distribute 11 million diapers annually, and there is a great need for us to do more.

**Need:** Financial support. For every \$1 you spend on a diaper in the store, we can purchase and distribute two. Babies need diapers to go to daycare, and parents need daycare to go to work. For every \$1 Greater DC Diaper Bank spends on providing diapers to families, over \$2 in savings is realized to the health care system for treating diaper related illness and to families in the form of lost wages.

### Capital Area Food Bank



Image: Capital Area Food Bank

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Radha Muthiah is the CEO of the president and CEO of the Capital Area Food Bank  
CAPITAL AREA FOOD BANK

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**Description:** Sources and distributes the food for more than 60 million meals annually in Greater Washington.

**Location:** D.C.

**Clients served annually:** We distributed the food for 64 million meals last year, which reached many of the 1.5 million people in our region facing food insecurity.

**Demand:** We're seeing elevated need appear in a few indicators. Anecdotally, many of the organizations that make up our network of nearly 400 nonprofit partners are reporting more people coming through their doors. Additionally, the food bank's annual distribution is on track to hit nearly 60 million meals-worth of food – 25% higher than our original fiscal year target.

**Need:** With our region's economy poised to make a fundamental shift away from longstanding reliance on the federal government, working together will be absolutely essential: both to address the immediate challenges before us today and to start to building the groundwork for a re-envisioned economic future for the DMV. Together, we will need to develop new drivers of economic growth. And as we do, we must fully embrace the chance this presents to help more of our neighbors enhance their skills so that they can more fully participate in, and benefit from, the coming economic transformation.

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## Aspire Afterschool Learning



Paula Fynboh is the executive director of Aspire Afterschool Learning.

PAULA FYNBOH

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**Description:** Expands learning opportunities for historically underserved students through afterschool and summer learning programs

**Location:** Arlington

**Demand:** Aspire is currently serving a record 150 students, double the number of students we were serving just three years ago. Despite this unprecedented growth, we have the largest waitlist in our organization's 30-year history. We have also seen an increase in demand for specific program elements. For example, there's been significant demand for our parent programming and resources. Many of our families have expressed concerns and anxieties about their ability to provide for their children during this time of economic uncertainty. We have also experienced an increase in mental health needs within our students and families. Also, we've seen additional interest in STEM-related programming because there are limited resources for STEM enrichment

for lower-income students.

**Need:** Financial support, especially multi-year funding and trust-based giving from individuals, corporations, local government and the school system, and private philanthropy is needed in the short-term. It is up to the entire community – schools, nonprofits, companies, other institutions, individuals, and the local government – to step up to support our community (especially those facing the biggest challenges with the fewest resources) and speak up about the impact of cuts like these. There is plenty to go around, but our fear, apathy, and overwhelm can get in the way.

### **Northern Virginia Family Service**



Stephanie Berkowitz is the president and CEO of Northern Virginia Family Service.

TASHA DOOLEY FOR THE WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

**Description:** Works to address early childhood development, homelessness and housing, health and well-being and provides immigration legal services, mental health support, youth initiatives and workforce development.

**Location:** Falls Church

**Demand:** Any time there is uncertainty or change, we tend to see an increased need for our services. This includes housing assistance, mental health services, food access, and workforce development. Our current environment is similar to the pandemic in some ways. Many in our community continue to struggle with the high cost of living in Northern Virginia and there's a high demand for the support and programs we provide.

**Need:** NVFS remains fully operational, and our programs and services continue as usual. We are closely monitoring policy and funding developments to ensure we continue to serve our region and adapt our services as needed. Supporting and expanding our programs is essential to our mission, and we continue to welcome individuals and partners passionate about making a lasting difference in the Northern Virginia community.

## Shepherd's Table

**Description:** Provides fresh meals and works to address food insecurity, homelessness and poverty

**Location:** Silver Spring

**Clients served annually:** 1,800 unique clients in 2024

**Demand:** We saw a 22% increase in meal attendance in the first quarter of this year compared to last year. In the first quarter of 2025 alone, we served 33,205 meals at Shepherd's Table. With food costs climbing and homelessness in Montgomery County increasing by 30%, we do expect to see the demand continue to grow in the second half of the year.

**Need:** Right now, we need our community's continued partnership and support more than ever. Whether you volunteer your time, organize a donation drive, attend an event, or start a fundraiser, every effort helps us meet the growing needs of our neighbors. If you have the capacity to lean in—even just a little—it can make a big difference.

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## Nourishing Bethesda



John Ross is the executive director and founder of Nourishing Bethesda.

JOHN ROSS

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**Description:** Fights food insecurity. Distributed 570,000 pounds of food at 10 locations in 26,816 packages in 2024.

**Location:** Bethesda

**Demand:** Since December we have seen a 17% increase in household visitation. While need hit new highs during the pandemic, our numbers are now exceeding those spikes.

**Need:** Always financial donations. Volunteers. Donated food.

## United Community



Unite Leah Fraley is the CEO of United Community. LEAH FRALEY

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**Description:** Provides early childhood education, family services, food access and community engagement

**Location:** Alexandria

**Demand:** Since January, we've seen a noticeable uptick in demand across nearly all of our service areas. For example, requests for food assistance are up nearly 30%, and our early childhood programs have a growing waitlist. We've also seen more families reaching out for help with housing stability, workforce development, and mental health supports.

**Need:** Flexible funding. Unrestricted dollars help us respond quickly to emerging needs, fill service gaps, and invest in the staff and infrastructure that make our work possible. We also need strong partners who understand that community transformation takes time, trust, and long-term commitment.