



2025 Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Study

Industry Insights and Trends

Written by Noel Beebe
June 2025



TABLE OF CONTENTS

2025 Nuclavis P2P Fundraising Study.....	01
Note from the Author.....	03
Introduction.....	04
Methodology and Respondents.....	05
Spring 2025 Trends.....	06
Key Challenges.....	08
Rising to Meet the Challenge.....	10
Conclusion & Key Takeaways.....	12
About Nuclavis.....	14

NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

The first half of 2025 has tested the resilience of nonprofit organizations in the United States and beyond. Governmental funding cuts and economic instability have rocked an industry still struggling to recover from the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The result: fewer resources to invest in mission delivery and even more staffing cuts to already-lean teams struggling to do more with less.

We at Nuclavis wanted to know how these challenges are impacting our friends and colleagues leading peer-to-peer (P2P) fundraising programs.

As the so-called “front porch” inviting new supporters into an organization, P2P programs are vital to nonprofits large and small.

Are these programs in danger due to staff turnover, loss of institutional knowledge, and lack of resources? And if so, can we mitigate the impact of these challenges before they do irreversible damage?

This report is designed to deepen our collective understanding of how P2P programs are performing in the face of adversity and highlight opportunities and solutions to mitigate impact.



Noel Beebe

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Introduction

In May of 2025, we conducted a survey of P2P fundraising professionals to better understand the current landscape, challenges, and opportunities within P2P fundraising. This study draws from responses submitted by professionals across the nonprofit sector, as well as observations from our day-to-day work, offering valuable insights into how organizations are evolving their P2P strategies, technologies, and programs to meet shifting participant and donor expectations.

The findings reveal key trends in fundraising behavior and participation patterns, and highlight both optimism and caution as the sector navigates post-pandemic recovery and economic headwinds.



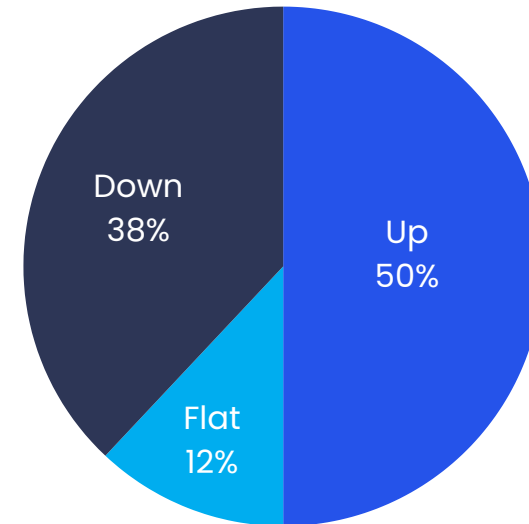
Survey Responses & Research

We received responses from 23 nonprofit organizations representing a wide range of mission areas and program types. Roles varied from senior executives in development, marketing, and digital fundraising to local P2P event managers. Programs included DIY Campaigns (10), Walk/Run Events (9), Endurance Programs (8), Cycling Events (5), Social Media Fundraising (5), Champion/Influencer Fundraising (5), and Livestream Fundraising (3) campaigns.

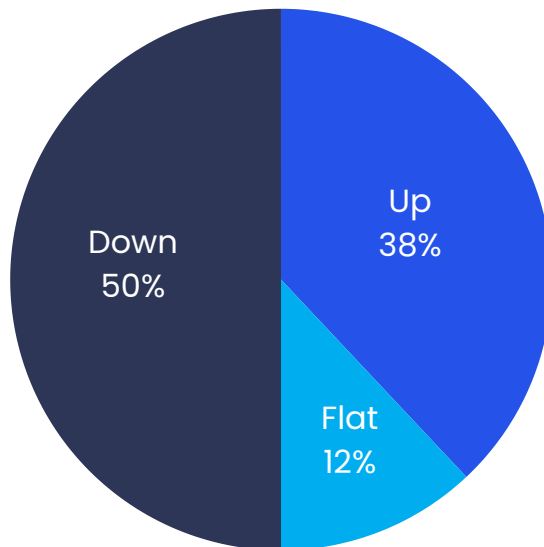
Spring 2025 Trends: Participation is strong, but fewer are fundraising.

16 respondents reported having campaigns or events culminating in the spring of 2025. According to the survey data, **half of those with spring programs reported an increase in participation** during the spring season compared to the previous year. Meanwhile, 12% reported flat participation levels, and 38% saw a decline.

Spring 2025 Participation Trends



Spring 2025 Fundraising Trends



When asked about participant fundraising, **50% reported declines in fundraising revenue**, 12% remained flat year over year, and 38% reported an increase in revenue.

At Nuclavis, we're seeing that **walk programs are enjoying steady, modest growth**. This is a milestone to be celebrated, as most walks suffered major declines during the COVID-19 pandemic. The work organizations have done to rebuild their walk programs is paying off.

As one respondent said, *"[Our walk] remains our strongest entry point for engaging new families and our largest fundraising event series. After a challenging few years, it's clear the walk program has regained its momentum."*

Cycling, endurance, and DIY programs are struggling to achieve last year's levels. These programs almost always have higher fundraising expectations and/or minimums for participants to achieve. While they were less impacted by COVID-19 due to being outdoors or physically distanced, new challenges (outlined in the section below) may be impacting these programs this year.

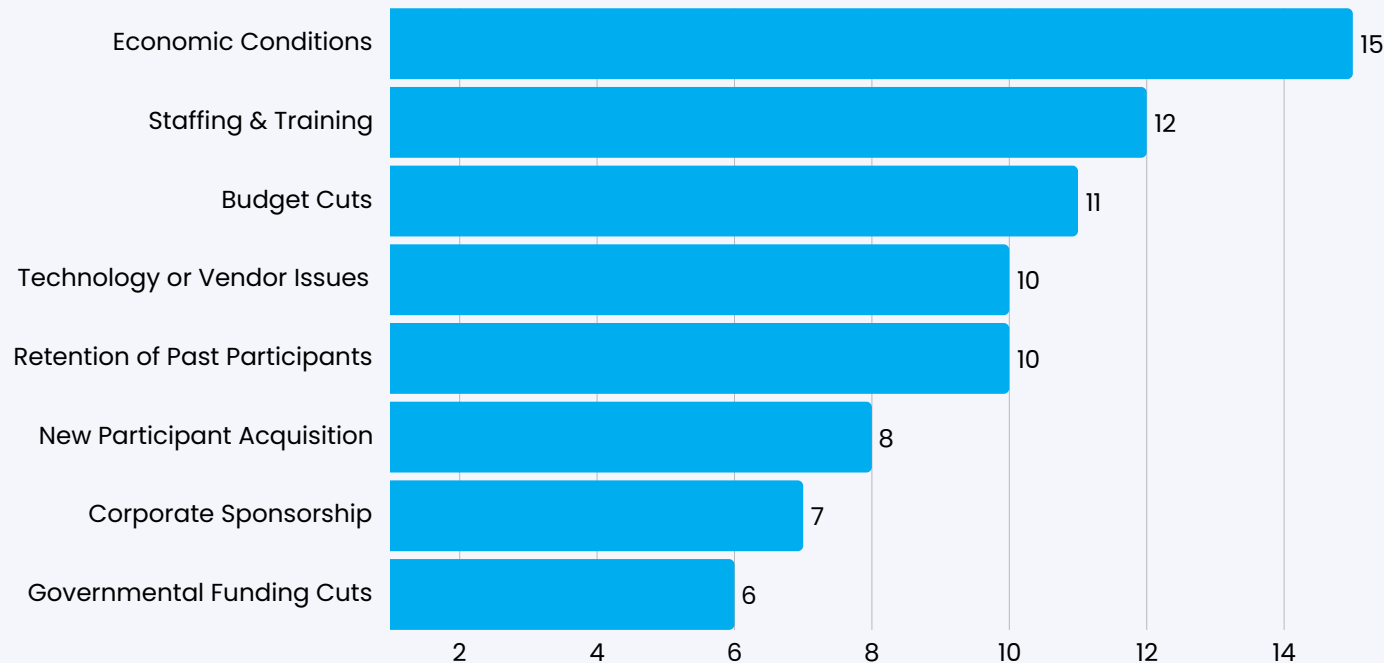
Programs undergoing transformation such as rebrands, format changes, or major organizational change **are outliers where we are seeing larger declines**. However, these organizations are putting in the work and maintenance needed to set the stage for strong performance in 2026 and beyond.

On a hopeful note, **programs centered around more niche activities like indoor cycling, hockey, pickleball and hiking are experiencing much greater success so far this year**. Events that engage people in the activities and communities where they already spend their time are more likely to grow despite the challenges nonprofits are currently facing.

As one respondent put it, *"With so much competition for time, space, and resources, events with unique experiences, influencer campaigns, or DIY events may be the fresh take needed to bring P2P revenue back up."*

Challenges Impacting P2P Fundraising

Survey responses revealed that the most pressing challenges currently facing P2P programs are tied to **economic concerns, staffing limitations, and budget cuts.**



Uncertainty around the economy was cited as a key challenge by 65% of respondents, with organizations noting increased difficulty securing new fundraisers and sponsorships. One respondent wrote, *"We have heard many anecdotal comments suggesting that **economic and social uncertainty is giving many fundraisers pause.** Everyone wants to be successful; even the risk of simply setting a goal and missing it is a factor for some."*

Staffing and training also emerged as a top concern for 52% of respondents. Respondents highlighted both workforce reductions and a lack of time or resources as having a negative impact on their P2P programs. *"Our team is stretched too thin,"* one nonprofit professional shared. **"We don't have the bandwidth to support participants the way we want to."**

Closely related is the impact of ongoing **budget cuts**. Reduced budgets have forced many organizations to scale back marketing efforts, technology upgrades, or support resources that are critical to campaign success. As one respondent put it, **"We're operating with fewer dollars and higher expectations—it's not sustainable long-term."**

These top challenges—economic instability, internal capacity constraints, and resource limitations—underscore the need for both innovation and strategic investment.

With the Chronicle of Philanthropy reporting over 20,000 nonprofit jobs lost in the first five months of the year, it's no surprise that **human capacity is now one of the most pressing threats to P2P fundraising.**

At their core, peer-to-peer programs are powered by **human connection**. Without the staff to build relationships—or the volunteers to extend their reach—fundraising momentum will stall, and the top of the new supporter funnel will dry up.

Rising to Meet the Challenge

While we can't wave a magic wand to restore funding or staff capacity, here are three practical steps to explore to help reduce the impact of these challenges:



Make volunteers a top priority. Without staff to share the workload, it is crucial to invest time and energy on recruiting and training a strong volunteer committee to support your work. Volunteers can help amplify recruitment and retention efforts without adding overhead.



Focus your outreach efforts. Prioritize 1:1 outreach and relationship-building with participants who have the potential to make the most impact: team captains, company coordinators, past top fundraisers, and so on. You may not be able to reach out to every single participant, but you can lean on participant leaders to help get your message out.



Invest in the right tools. Having the right technology solutions in place can help lighten your load and increase your impact. Smart tools that leverage AI and automation can reduce the manpower needed to effectively recruit and coach participants. By personalizing your participants' communication journeys, you can ensure you're getting the right messages out to the right fundraisers at the right time to make the biggest impact.

Organizations that make strategic investments in the right technology and the right people will be best positioned to adapt and grow their impact.

Insights from the Experts

How are P2P practitioners responding to these challenges? By going back to the basics and looking for opportunities to grow, evolve, and continue to shine a light on the communities they serve.



TRY NEW THINGS

"Peer-to-peer fundraising remains a vital part of our special events strategy—and while our events may evolve, the need for them is stronger than ever.

*We're **expanding our reach with a new national marathon program**, drawing incredible interest both within and beyond the Cystic Fibrosis community."*

– Robin Paterson
Cystic Fibrosis Foundation



LEVERAGE MOBILE TECH

*"Mass market email is 'in the can' with poor inbox placement, low open rates, deliverability issues, and ever-evolving obscure rules from ESPs. **Our fundraising mobile app and text outreach are the shining lights in our P2P program this year.** We are seeing excellent results engaging participants with mobile-first strategies and tools."*

– Eric Oyler
Alzheimer's Association



LIFT UP COMMUNITY VOICES

*"P2P fundraising requires **constant innovation and intentional inclusion of the voices most impacted by the cause.** Constituent experiences should serve as a constant informer of strategy, especially in times of economic and political uncertainty. Now more than ever, we need to seek to create, honor, and enhance the community through and across our P2P events."*

– Shannon Greene
Shatterproof

Conclusion: A Time to Evolve

P2P programs remain a vital component of nonprofit philanthropy. In addition to raising funds and awareness for your mission, these programs invite new supporters into your organization, inspire community members to become advocates, and help cultivate constituent relationships. The 2025 P2P Fundraising Study both underscores the resilience of P2P fundraising and reveals a need to evolve strategies and tactics to meet ever-growing participants expectations.

With new generations of fundraisers emerging and technology reshaping what's possible, organizations must adapt by embracing innovation, focusing on participant experience, and diversifying their engagement strategies. By doing so, nonprofits can not only sustain but grow their fundraising efforts in a challenging and uncertain environment.

For organizations looking to future-proof their P2P programs, the roadmap is clear: prioritize mobile-first tools, experiment with new engagement models, and invest in technology that supports agility, personalization, and scale. The future of P2P fundraising is bright—but only for those ready to evolve with it.

Key Takeaways

- Despite the challenges nonprofits are facing with economic uncertainty and limited resources, many P2P programs are growing.
- Walk programs are enjoying steady, modest growth, while Endurance, Cycling, and DIY programs are more likely to struggle.
- Programs centered around niche activities with built-in audiences are more likely to experience growth this year.
- Concerns about the economy, budget cuts, and staffing limitations are the top challenges impacting P2P programs in the first half of 2025.
- While the tenets of P2P fundraising remain the same, organizations must evolve and embrace new technologies and strategies to stay relevant and meet participants and donor expectations.
- Mobile-first tools and communication strategies are a bright spot as legacy platforms and email communication cause problems and lose relevance.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Noel Beebe began her career in digital peer-to-peer fundraising at Convio, Inc., where she authored Convio's first two Peer-to-Peer Fundraising Benchmark Reports. She joined the Alzheimer's Association from 2012 to 2021, managing the digital fundraising team that supports the Association's peer-to-peer fundraising programs. After serving in a consulting capacity for organizations seeking to grow their traditional, DIY, and livestream peer-to-peer fundraising programs, Noel joined the Nuclavis team in 2023 as the VP of Strategy & Client Success.

ABOUT NUCLAVIS

Founded in 2022, Nuclavis is a mobile technology and services company serving nonprofit organizations of all sizes. We develop digital strategies, mobile fundraising tools, and custom software solutions to support peer-to-peer (P2P) fundraising programs. Learn more: nuclavis.com.