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Athens Nonprofit Economic Contributions Survey Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

ABOUT THE STUDY

What is this study about?

The Interdisciplinary Alliance for Nonprofit Organizations (IANP) at the University of Georgia is conducting a study to document the **economic contributions of nonprofit organizations in Athens–Clarke County**, including jobs, spending, and funding, and to understand how recent federal policy changes are affecting Athens nonprofits. For more information about the study, please view our explainer video ([click here](#)).

Why are you doing this study?

Athens nonprofits are doing essential work, but their economic contributions are often invisible in public conversations. This study emerged from direct conversations with local nonprofit leaders who asked for better data—data that reflects their work, their challenges, and their role in the local economy. By working collaboratively with the nonprofit community to design this survey, we aim to produce evidence nonprofits can use to advocate for their organizations, inform decision-makers, and plan for the future.

What will you do with the findings?

The findings will be shared in a public, community-facing report for nonprofit leaders, funders, policymakers, and advocates. The research team will also use the findings to produce academic publications.

ELIGIBILITY AND PARTICIPATION

How do I know if my organization can take the survey?

In general, your organization is eligible if it:

- Is a formally incorporated nonprofit
- Is a 501(c)(3) public charity (not a private foundation)
- Is located in Athens–Clarke County or primarily serves Athens-Clarke County residents
- Is not primarily a church or house of worship (religious ministries that primarily serve the public may participate)



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- Is not affiliated with the University of Georgia (see next question for more information)
- Does not have a mission related to international aid

At the beginning of the survey, you'll be asked a short set of eligibility questions to confirm that the study is a good fit for your organization. If your responses indicate that your organization falls outside the scope of this study, the survey will end automatically. If you believe this happened in error, you are welcome to try the survey again or contact us at for assistance at nonprofitalliance.uga.edu.

How do I know if my UGA-affiliated organization is included or excluded?

In general, UGA-affiliated organizations whose primary mission is to support the University of Georgia itself are excluded from this study. This includes organizations such as:

- University-affiliated foundations (for example, the University of Georgia Research Foundation)
- Booster clubs that primarily support a UGA sport, academic program, or student club
- Fraternities and sororities, which are typically classified under other sections of the tax code (not 501(c)(3) public charities)

However, some organizations with a formal connection to UGA may still be eligible. If your organization is affiliated with UGA *but its primary mission is to serve residents of Athens–Clarke County or the broader community*, not just the university (for example, providing public services, community programs, or direct support to local residents), you may take the survey.

If this applies to your organization, you should indicate “no” when asked whether your organization is UGA-affiliated during the eligibility questions.

What if my organization is a local chapter or affiliate of a larger organization?

We want local chapters and affiliates to complete the survey. If your organization is part of a larger regional or national organization, please answer all survey questions only as they relate to your Athens–Clarke County location or branch. This includes financial information, staffing, programs, and any policy impacts specific to your local operations.



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If your Athens location does not file its own IRS Form 990 and is included in a consolidated filing by a parent organization, the survey will ask you a set of more detailed financial questions instead of requesting a 990 upload. These questions allow us to collect comparable information, since other organizations will provide this data through their 990 forms.

The detailed questions focus on common expense categories (such as staffing, professional services, and operating costs) and are designed to reflect your local Athens operations only. Reasonable estimates are acceptable if exact figures are not available. If you are unsure how to answer a question as a chapter or affiliate, or need help determining what information to include, please contact us at nonprofitalliance@uga.edu. We are happy to help.

Why are some organizations excluded?

This study has a defined scope to ensure data consistency and feasibility. We have to exclude some organizations due to the vast differences across different types of nonprofits. Some organizations operate under different IRS rules or financial structures that make them difficult to include in this initial analysis. These exclusions are methodological, not value judgments. We recognize that excluded organizations make important contributions and hope to expand the scope in future studies.

Who should complete the survey?

The survey should be completed by **one person per organization**, ideally the Chief Executive or Board President or another individual who is knowledgeable about the organization's finances and policy impacts. We can only accept one response per organization. For some nonprofits, it might make sense for several members of the executive team to fill out the survey together.

INFORMATION COLLECTED ON THE SURVEY

How is the survey organized?

This survey is organized into six main sections, presented in a logical sequence. The survey begins with questions about your organization's **financial position in 2024** (including the option to upload your 2024 IRS 990 form), followed by a section where you will answer a few more detailed questions about your government and foundation funding. We focus on 2024 so that we have a financial baseline before the disruptions of 2025.



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From there, we ask two sets of questions about how your organization has been affected by the **policy changes and disruptions in 2025**. We ask about government funding losses in 2025 that occurred as a result of federal policy changes. This is followed by a section on other impacts of federal policy changes in 2025 beyond direct funding losses, such as effects on programs, staffing, administration, planning, or organizational capacity.

The next section looks ahead to **anticipated or projected impacts of federal policy changes in 2026**, including funding that may be at risk and how your organization is preparing.

The survey concludes with a short section asking what you would like the general public, funders, and policymakers to better understand about nonprofits, followed by basic background questions about your organization to help us compare experiences across different types of nonprofits.

What if the survey questions do not address all the aspects of my organization's situation?

At the end of each section, there is an open-ended question where you may explain your answers or provide additional context on why you answered the way you did. Feel free to use this space to provide us with any information that you think will be helpful. There is also an open-ended question at the end of the survey for you to share any remaining thoughts on the survey topic.

What financial information should I have ready before taking the survey?

Please have a **PDF or scanned copy of your 2024 Form 990 or 990-EZ**. We will ask you to upload this as part of the survey to reduce the number of questions that we have to ask you to fill out. If you do not have a 990 form, there are survey questions where you can fill in the information we need.

You will also need:

- A list of **government grants or contracts** received in FY 2024. This includes all federal, state, and local grants or contracts.
- A list of **foundation or United Way grants** received in FY 2024. This includes any grants from private or community foundations and United Ways or similar organizations.
- Amount of money your organization received in 2024 from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act (CARES Act).



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- An estimate of how much of your earned income in 2024 came from government reimbursements or payment programs (such as Medicare, Medicaid, or similar government funded services)?
- A list of the government grants or contracts **that you lost in 2025**.
- An estimate of how much money your organization lost indirectly as a result of federal policy changes in 2025, such as a partner organization no longer providing you with funding or other support because they lost federal funding

What financial information do I need to have ready if my organization cannot upload a 990 form?

Please be prepared to provide detailed expenditure information for your local Athens–Clarke County operations only for tax year 2024, such as:

- Staffing and compensation, such as number of employees, salaries and wages, benefits, and payroll taxes
- Professional and contracted services, such as management, legal, accounting, fundraising, lobbying, investment management, and other consulting fees
- Operating expenses, such as advertising, office and IT costs, occupancy, travel, conferences, insurance, and similar administrative expenses
- Other expenses, such as payments to affiliates, interest, depreciation or amortization, royalties (if any), and miscellaneous costs

In the survey, these expenses will be requested as individual line items rather than broad categories, and the questions are designed to correspond closely to IRS Form 990 expense categories (Part IX). If it is helpful, you may wish to refer to a sample Form 990, Part IX, when preparing your responses.

What other information do I need to know to fill out the survey?

The survey also asks about how **federal policy changes in 2025** may have affected your organization—**both directly and indirectly**. These questions are intended to capture a broad range of impacts, including changes to programs or services, shifts in who or how many people you were able to serve, effects on staffing, compensation, or benefits, and increases in administrative or compliance burden. We also ask about broader organizational impacts, such as financial strain, use of reserves, changes in planning or decision-making, and effects on staff or leadership workload, stress, or morale.

The survey also looks ahead to **2026**, asking organizations about anticipated impacts of potential federal policy changes. These questions focus on whether organizations expect government funding to be reduced or lost, how those losses might occur (such as non-



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renewal of grants, reduced funding amounts, or indirect losses through partner organizations), and how much of their government funding they consider to be at risk. We also ask organizations to describe how they are preparing for these possibilities, including any planning, budgeting, or program decisions being made in response.

Finally, the survey invites you to share what you think the **general public, funders, and policymakers** should better understand about nonprofits and the work you do.

You will also be asked to share some basic information about your organization:

- Full legal name of the organization
- Employer Identification Number (EIN)
- Primary mission or program area (selected from a short list of broad categories)
- Geographic focus of services, including the approximate share of services provided in Athens–Clarke County and nearby counties
- Workforce size currently, including estimated numbers of:
 - Full-time employees
 - Part-time employees
 - Contractors
 - Student interns
- Volunteer involvement, including:
 - Approximate number of volunteers in 2025
 - Estimated total volunteer hours in 2025

How long will it take me to fill out the survey?

The survey uses skip logic so that you only see those questions that are relevant to your organization. For example, if you tell us that your organization was not affected by federal policy changes in 2025, then you will skip several questions pertaining to the impact of policy change.

Small nonprofits (under \$50,000 in revenues/gross receipts in the 2024 tax year) will fill out a shorter version of the survey due to their less complicated structures and programs. This survey will take approximately 5-10 minutes.

All other nonprofits will take a longer version of the survey, which will take approximately 20-30 minutes to fill out. Those organizations that have been greatly affected by policy changes in 2025 may need even more time to explain how their



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organization has been affected in the open-ended survey questions, so the survey could take longer than 30 minutes.

If the survey is taking you longer than expected, you can save your progress and return to complete it later.

How is the small nonprofit survey different from the longer survey?

Organizations with very small budgets are routed to a shorter version of the survey designed to reduce time burden while still capturing essential information. The short survey asks for estimated overall spending in 2024, the organization's primary source of revenue, and a small number of open-ended questions about how federal policy changes in 2025 affected the organization. Finally, the survey invites you to share what you think the general public, funders, and policymakers should better understand about nonprofits and the work you do. Organizations completing the short survey are still asked to provide basic organizational information, including EIN, organization name, mission, number of volunteers, and estimated volunteer hours.

GIFT CARD INCENTIVE

Will we receive a gift card?

Yes. Participants who complete the survey will receive a prepaid Visa gift card (ClinCard):

- \$10 for the small nonprofit survey (\$50,000 or less in revenues/gross receipts)
- \$25 for the longer survey

How do I receive the gift card?

At the end of the survey, you will be directed to a separate link to provide required information for the gift card. This information is stored separately and cannot be linked to your survey responses.

To receive the gift card, we are required to collect:

- Your **full legal name**
- **Mailing address**
- **Date of birth (month, day, year)**
- **Email address**

This information is required because the gift card is considered compensation.



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If you have previously received a **ClinCard** for another UGA study, please let us know when completing the gift card form.

After we have received your name, address, date of birth, and email address, we will enter you into the ClinCard system. After the transaction has been approved, you will receive an email from ClinCard/Greenphire notifying you about your gift card.

When will I receive the gift card?

Please allow 3–5 business days after completing the survey to receive your gift card. The ClinCard will be sent by email from ClinCard/Greenphire. Please check your spam folder if you think you should have received your card and you have not yet gotten an email about it.

How do I access or use my ClinCard?

To access your ClinCard, click on the button “Access Your Card” in the email you received from ClinCard/Greenphire. Enter your four digit access code, which is your 4 digit birth year. After entering your access code, you can view your card information.

Please note that if you access your ClinCard immediately after getting the email, it might show \$0 balance. Just wait a day or two for the funds to be loaded to your gift card. The system sometimes needs time to update.

For more information about accessing and using your ClinCard, visit the UGA Bursar’s Office webpage: <https://busfin.uga.edu/wp-content/uploads/2024/09/FAQ.pdf>

CONFIDENTIALITY AND DATA PROTECTION

Will our organization be identified in the report?

No. All results will be reported only in aggregate. Individual organizations will not be named or identifiable in any report, publication, or public dataset. Findings will be presented for the nonprofit sector as a whole or for broad subgroups (such as by mission area), not by individual organization.

We ask for your organization’s Employer Identification Number (EIN) and name. The EIN is used internally as a study identifier to ensure that each organization is represented only once and to allow responses to be linked across future, related studies. The EIN will not appear in any reports or shared datasets.



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The survey does not collect personal identifying information about individuals. If you choose to receive a gift card, required contact information is collected through a separate form that is stored independently and cannot be linked to your survey responses.

How will our data be protected?

For more information about what data we will collect and how it will be protected, please view our explainer video ([click here](#)).

SURVEY SUPPORT

What if I need help completing the survey?

If you have questions as you fill out the survey, feel free to contact us as: nonprofitalliance@uga.edu

We will also be hosting an in-person survey support event on Tuesday, March 3rd from 9:00am to 5:00pm at the Athens Area Community Foundation's Living Room. The Community Foundation is located on the 2nd floor of Synovus Bank at 150 W. Hancock Ave in downtown Athens. Free parking is available in the bank's side lot or underground garage.

Members of the research team will be present all day to answer questions and provide assistance as you complete the survey. We will have laptops available if you need them to fill out the survey. You are welcome to stop by at any time during the day. Snacks and drinks will be available.

OTHER QUESTIONS

How long will the survey be open?

The survey will launch on February 16th and will close on March 16th.

What is the timeline for the project?

Survey data collection is planned for mid-February through mid-March. During March and April, the research team will clean and finalize the dataset and conduct preliminary analyses. We anticipate completing a public-facing report for the nonprofit community, funders, and policymakers in May or June.

How do I get a copy of the report?



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At the end of the survey, you'll be given the option to provide an email address (via a separate link) to receive the final Economic Contributions Report once it is released.

Will the results be presented anywhere?

When the report is complete, we will schedule a public presentation and release of the findings. This event will be open to the general public, and participating organizations will receive several weeks' advance notice of the date, time, and location. The presentation will provide an overview of key findings and an opportunity to engage with the results as they are released.

Still have questions?

If you're unsure whether your organization should participate, what to prepare, or how to answer a question, please reach out to nonprofitalliance@uga.edu. We're happy to help.