

Trends, Resources & Research | Nonprofit & Philanthropy (2025)

Boards that stay informed about sector trends—and tap credible resources—position themselves for stronger strategy, fundraising, and risk management. Use this two-page guide to spark conversation and curate your learning agenda.

Top 10 Sector Trends to Watch

- **Trust-Based & Participatory Philanthropy** – <https://trustbasedphilanthropy.org>
- **Unrestricted & Flexible Funding Models** – <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/philanthropy/the-nonprofit-starvation-cycle>
- **Digital & AI-Driven Fundraising** – https://ssir.org/articles/entry/ai_for_social_good
- **Donor-Advised Funds & Generational Wealth Transfer** – <https://givingusa.org>
- **Impact Measurement 2.0 (SROI, SDG Alignment)** – <https://impactfrontiers.org>
- **Equity, DEI Trends & Backlash** – <https://www.councilofnonprofits.org/tools-resources/diversity-equity-and-inclusion>
- **Collaboration & Nonprofit Mergers** – <https://www.bridgespan.org/insights/library/mergers-and-acquisitions>
- **Talent Pipeline & Burnout Crisis** – <https://nonprofitquarterly.org/nonprofit-workforce-issues/>
- **ESG & Mission-Related Investing** – https://ssir.org/articles/entry/esg_and_the_future_of_impact_investing
- **Government & Corporate Partnership Models** – <https://independentsector.org/resource/partnering-for-good>

Quick-Hit Resources

Books & Guides

- **Lean Impact** – Ann Mei Chang – <https://leanimpact.org>
- **Just Giving** – Rob Reich – <https://www.justgivingbook.com>
- **Winners Take All** – Anand Giridharadas – <https://www.penguinrandomhouse.com/books/566595/winners-take-all-by-anand-giridharadas/>
- **The Smart Nonprofit** – Allison Fine & Beth Kanter – <https://bethkanter.org/smart-nonprofit/>

TED Talks / Videos

- **Dan Pallotta** – “The way we think about charity is dead wrong” (TED) – https://www.ted.com/talks/dan_pallotta_the_way_we_think_about_charity_is_dead_wrong
- **Darren Walker** – “A new vision for philanthropy” (TED) – https://www.ted.com/talks/darren_walker_a_new_vision_for_philanthropy
- **Ann Mei Chang** – “What if nonprofits ran like lean startups?” (TEDx) – https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_t7GzJ3Z7uM

Research & Dashboards

- **Giving USA 2025 Key Findings** – <https://givingusa.org>
- **CEP – “Donors: How Nonprofits Feel”** – <https://cep.org/publication/donors-how-nonprofits-feel/>
- **Independent Sector – “Value of Volunteer Time”** – <https://independentsector.org/value-of-volunteer-time-2025/>
- **Candid – Philanthropy Trends Dashboard** – <https://candid.org>

Board Reflection & Action Prompts

1. Which trend poses the greatest opportunity—or threat—to our mission in the next three years?
2. What partnership or merger conversations should we explore now, before pressure mounts?
3. Which resource (book, talk, or report) will we review as a board this quarter?
4. What data do we lack to gauge our readiness for these shifts?

Tip: Assign one trend to each committee for deeper study and report back at the next board meeting.