



**GrantStation**

# Navigating Federal Funding Uncertainty

Alice Ruhnke





# Agenda

- Background and where we are now
- How funders are responding
- The ripple effects on organizations and their communities
- Navigating the evolving landscape
- Resources
- Regulate, restore, reframe
- Questions and answers

GrantStation  
Membership  
1 year \$199  
2 years \$299



Your Key to  
Grantseeking  
Success!

# I'm Dizzy...



- Executive orders
- Funding freeze
- Layoffs
- Department dismantling
- Economy
- Tariffs
- Stock market





**However...**



# Funding Freeze Updates



<https://grantstation.com/gs-insights/tracking-federal-actions-impacting-nonprofit-sector>

# Timeline

**January 27, 2025**

## **OMB Memo**

- Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies to Temporary Pause of Agency Grant, Loan, and Other Financial Assistance Programs
- OMB M-25-13



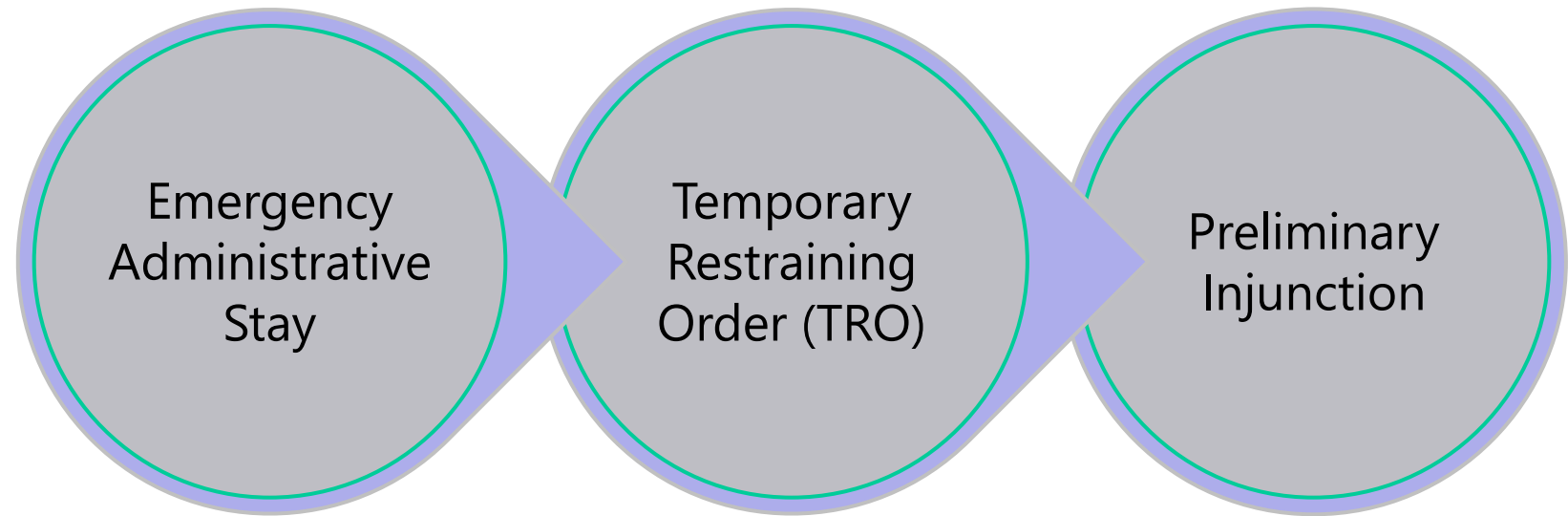




# OMB M-25-13

- This memorandum requires Federal agencies to identify and review all Federal financial assistance programs and supporting activities consistent with the President's policies and requirements.
- To implement these orders, each agency must complete a comprehensive analysis of all of their Federal financial assistance programs to identify programs, projects, and activities that may be implicated by any of the President's executive orders.
- In the interim, to the extent permissible under applicable law, Federal agencies **must temporarily pause** all activities related to obligation or disbursement of all Federal financial assistance, and other relevant agency activities that may be implicated by the executive orders, including, but not limited to, financial assistance for foreign aid, nongovernmental organizations, DEI, woke gender ideology, and the green new deal.

# Generalized Process



A preliminary injunction **lasts until a further order of the court, which could happen while the case is still ongoing, or after a trial on the merits**





# Waiting on the Courts...

## Some movement:

On March 26, 2025, the 1st U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals declined to pause an injunction that prevents government agencies from freezing billions of dollars in federal funding. A panel of three judges ruled that the federal government did not demonstrate it would suffer irreparable harm by complying with the injunction, which requires the continued flow of funds to states.

On April 4, 2025, the Supreme Court cleared the way for the Trump administration to cancel millions of dollars in federal education grants because it said they funded programs that involve diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives.





# Response From Funders

Center for Effective Philanthropy Report (Challenging Times: How U.S. Nonprofit Leaders are Experiencing the Political Context)

- Majority of nonprofits are saying the current political climate is negatively affecting their organizations
- Nonprofit leaders are seeking more communication from their foundation funders

Funder response has been slow and varied

- Some increasing payouts
- Some setting up emergency funds
- Some backing down to comply with the EOs
- Some are stepping up to confront challenges to DEI, climate funding, etc.





# Ripple Effects and Action

The Facts About Charitable Nonprofits, Federal Funding  
& Why It Matters to You: An Impact Report on What's at  
Risk for Kentuckians

[https://kynonprofits.org/wp-  
content/uploads/2025/04/FINAL-Impact-Report-  
040225.pdf](https://kynonprofits.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/04/FINAL-Impact-Report-040225.pdf)



# Highlights of Report

- **Kentuckians Trust Nonprofits:** Charitable nonprofits provide essential services that enhance quality of life. 81% of all voters report trusting them to engage in nonpartisan advocacy and address needs that government cannot or should not provide.
- **Critical Service Delivery:** Nonprofits are providing services on the government's behalf with 66% at financial risk due to funding pauses and cuts, impacting vital services across the Commonwealth.





# Highlights of Report

- **Effects on Employment & the Economy:** Charitable nonprofits are a major economic force, employing one in ten Kentuckians and generating \$27.4 billion in annual expenditures and payroll. Federal funding cuts impact nonprofits directly, as well as significantly impact workforce participation in the Commonwealth fueled by nonprofit services, as well as the bottom line of businesses where nonprofits buy goods and services.
- **Nonprofit Accountability & Transparency:** Charitable nonprofits are committed to the public good and reliant on public trust. Oversight of these organizations includes regulations and reporting requirements to ensure accountability, transparency, and responsible use of public and donor funding.



# Mobilize Stakeholders

**THE RALLYS LAST WEEKEND—Bottle the energy with your messaging!**







# Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

- DEI is not political, it has been politicized
- DEI is often at the core of nonprofits' missions
- DEI is good for business
- Need to continue
  - Maintain regulatory compliance without compromising your core values
  - Statistics on how DEI has helped you carry out your mission

# Engage in Advocacy

- Locate your **U.S. Senators and Representatives**
- Identify state and local officials who influence funding and budget decisions
- Research **committee assignments** (e.g., Appropriations, Health, Education) to find relevant policymakers







# Advocacy and Policy

- **Best option: Face-to-face time**
  - Local events, town halls, local offices, DC offices
- **Calls**
  - You should make 6 calls per day:
  - 2 each (DC office and your local office) to your 2 Senators and your 1 Representative



# Craft Your Message

- **Introduction:** Identify yourself and your nonprofit (who you serve, what you do)
- **Problem Statement:** Explain how the funding freeze is affecting your organization and the communities you support
- **Data and Impact:** Provide numbers, stories, or case studies to illustrate the consequences. Paint that picture.
- **Call to Action:** Request specific support (e.g., urge Congress to lift the freeze, restore funding to specific programs, etc.)
- **Thank You and Follow-Up:** Express gratitude and request a meeting or response



# Pro Tip



Focus on your solutions and the impact if you are not providing services more than your organizational needs



# Best Practice in Calling

- When calling the DC office, ask for the staff member in charge of whatever you're calling about (*"Hi, I'd like to speak with the staffer in charge of healthcare, please."*)
- Local offices won't always have specific staff members.
- If you get transferred to that person, awesome. If you don't, that's ok — ask for that person's name, and then just keep talking to whoever answered the phone.
- Don't leave a message (unless the office doesn't pick up at all)



# Best Practice in Calling

- Give them your zip code. They won't always ask for it, but make sure you give it to them, so they can mark it down.
- Extra points if you live in a zip code that traditionally votes for them, since they'll want to make sure they get/keep your vote.





# Best Practice in Calling

- If you can make it personal, make it personal. "I voted for you in the last election and I'm worried/happy/whatever"
- Pick 1-2 specific things per day to focus on. Ideally something that will be voted on/taken up in the next few days, but the most important thing is that they just keep getting calls.





# Best Practice in Calling

- Be clear on what you want ("I'm disappointed that the Senator..." or "I want to thank the Senator for their vote on..." or "I want the Senator to know that voting in \_\_\_\_ way is the wrong decision for our state because..."). Don't leave any ambiguity.
- Don't worry that they will get tired of taking your calls. They will still take them.



# Additional Coalitions

- National Council on Nonprofits
- State Nonprofit Associations
- Fellow grantees
- Other partnerships, coalitions, associations, etc.
- Community education: Write an op-ed or letter to the editor in your local newspaper. Reach out to journalists covering government, policy, or community issues.





# Resources

- [Executive Orders Affecting Charitable Nonprofits](#): A National Council of Nonprofits resource with updated information on which executive orders directly and indirectly impact charitable nonprofits.
- [General FAQs on Executive Actions Impacting Nonprofits](#): A National Council of Nonprofits guide answering pressing questions from the nonprofit sector.
- [The Impact Map](#): Created by The Impact Project, The Impact Map provides timely data on policy, funding, and workforce changes and their localized effect.



## **TargetED Series: Shifting Perspectives to Enhance Your Grant Competitiveness**

Funders are shifting expectations—seeking strategic alignment, scalable programs, and sustained impact. Our new series will explore the adjustments you must make to stay competitive. Over 6 sessions you'll learn how to realign your strategies—from partnerships to program design—to meet today's requirements and unlock new opportunities. Throughout the series, you'll learn how to:

- align your proposals with emerging funding trends and strategic priorities (free);
- communicate economic impact effectively to strengthen your case for support;
- craft strength-based narratives that highlight resilience and community assets;
- design innovative, scalable programs that demonstrate long-term sustainability;
- develop strategic accountability frameworks to showcase measurable impact; and,
- use compelling storytelling to create memorable and persuasive grant applications.

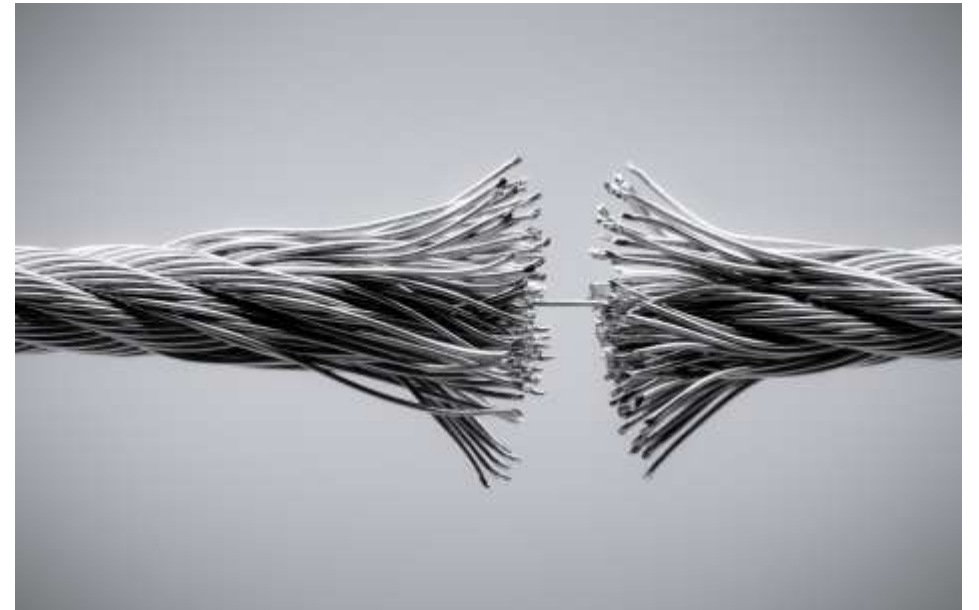
The series begins April 14th. [Register Today](#)



# The Ultimate Coping-With-Uncertainty Toolkit

## Key points:

- Political and economic uncertainty can rewire our brains through chronic stress and cortisol overload.
- We can undo this wiring by tending to our nervous systems through regulation and restoration practices.
- Mindfulness movement and meditation help tone the vagus nerve, offering both acute and long-term resilience.



# The Ultimate Coping-With-Uncertainty Toolkit



## Outlines:

- Ways to **regulate** (get the nervous system back to a calm, receptive, and regulated state)
- Ways to **restore** (options to heal your nervous system, tend to your mental and emotional health, and create an internal sense of safety and stability)
- Ways to **reframe** (find meaning in your struggle)



# Questions?



## GrantStation

Alice Ruhnke

President of Education and Outreach

[www.grantstation.com](http://www.grantstation.com)

[alice@grantstation.com](mailto:alice@grantstation.com)

[info@grantstation.com](mailto:info@grantstation.com)

877.784.7268

Navigate the  
Grantseeking  
Process With GS!



GrantStation  
Membership:  
as little as  
41 cents a day.