



2026 NDIA Community Survey Summary of Results

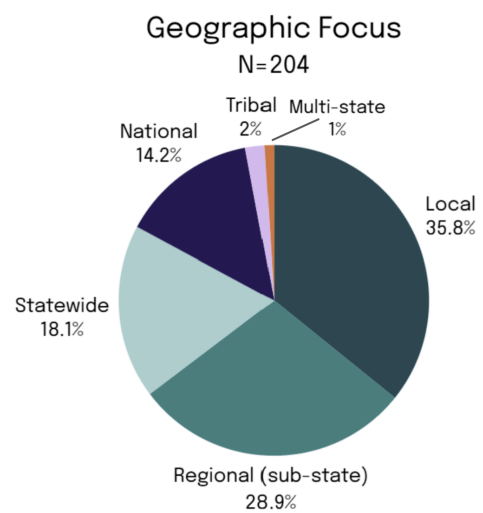
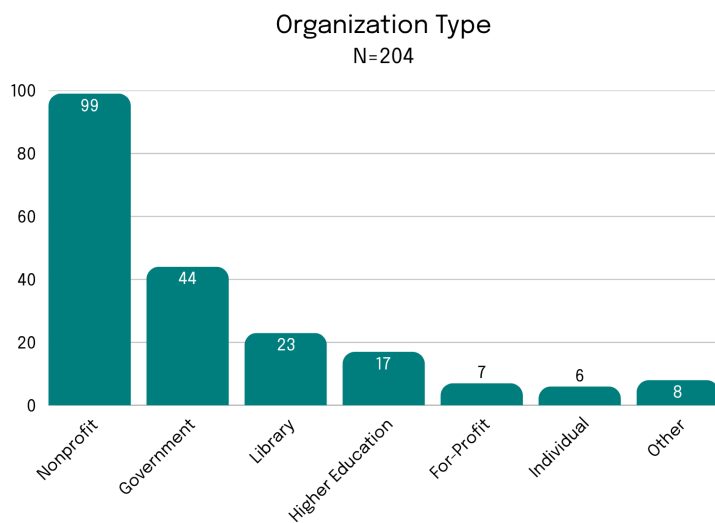
Introduction

This spring, we conducted the first-ever NDIA Community Survey to improve our understanding of how individuals and organizations working in the digital inclusion field engage with and perceive NDIA’s resources and support offerings, and to shed light on the current state of the digital inclusion field. The survey results will inform the direction of future NDIA work, shape the ways we communicate with and about our Affiliate community and the broader digital inclusion field, and help measure progress toward NDIA’s strategic priorities.

The Community Survey was distributed via email in March of 2026 to a wide range of NDIA contacts. Anyone who interacts with NDIA, or who has previously, was invited to complete the survey; and because perspectives differ by role, multiple responses from within the same organization were encouraged. Survey responses were anonymous unless participants chose to provide personal data for follow-up by NDIA.

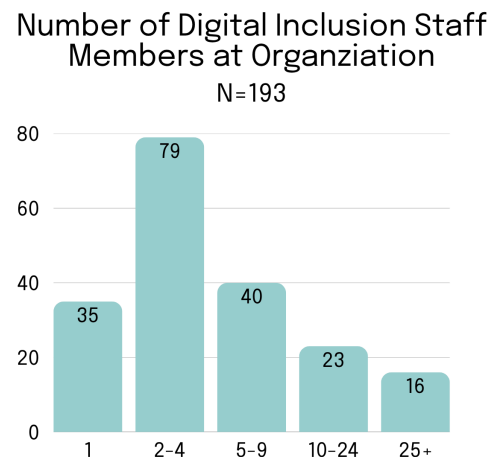
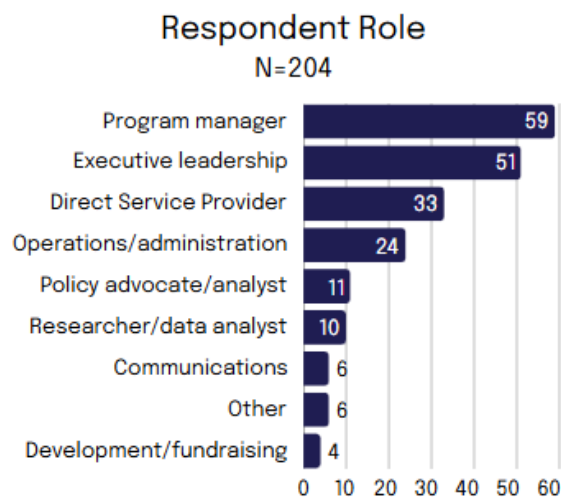
Who Responded to the Survey?

The 204 survey respondents comprise a diversity of perspectives in the digital inclusion field. By organization type and geographic focus, the responses closely mirror NDIA’s Affiliate community: about half of responses came from nonprofit organizations, about one-fifth from government, around 10% from libraries, 8% from



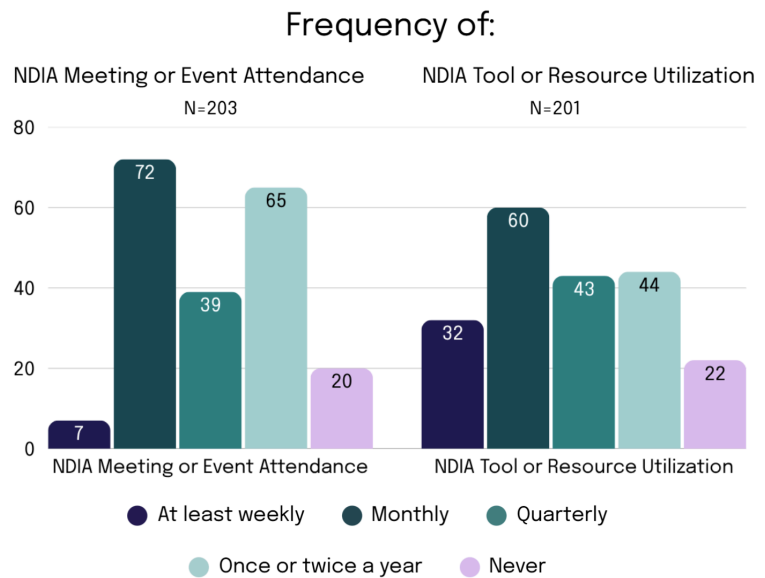
higher education, and the remainder spread across other organization types. Nearly two-thirds of respondents focus their work in local communities or regions within their state.

When asked what best describes their *primary* role at their organization, the most common choice among respondents was “program manager” (28.9%), which could encompass a wide range of responsibilities depending on an organization’s type and focus. This was followed by “executive leadership” (25%), “direct service provider” (16.2%), and “operations/administration” (11.8%). The remaining respondent roles tend to be more focused in scope and each constituted less than 6% of responses. However, considering that nearly 60% of organizations have fewer than five people engaged in digital inclusion work, including 18.1% with just one person, it is likely that many respondents are actually fulfilling multiple roles, a fact several participants confirmed later in the survey in answers discussing barriers to scaling impact. One noted, “It’s only me, I work with other [partners] but I do not have employees.”



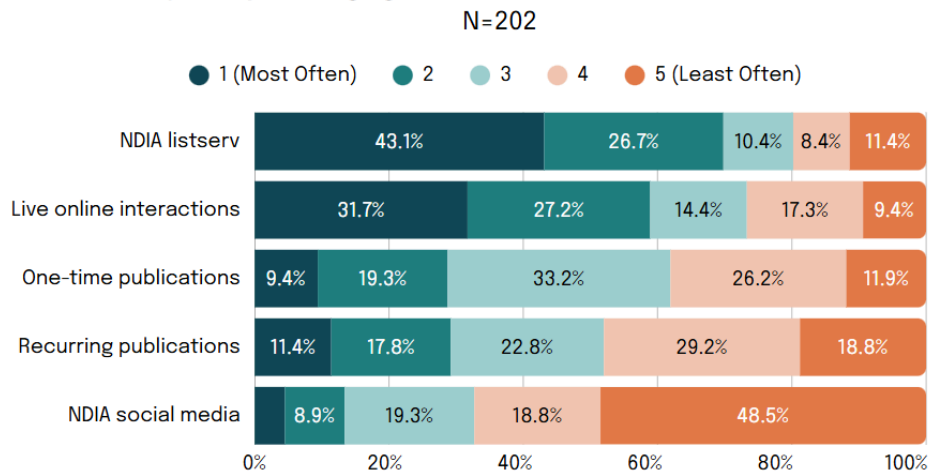
Engagement with NDIA

Understanding the frequency and ways that people engage with NDIA helps us better allocate staff resources and target services to be responsive to the needs of Affiliates. The largest number of respondents (72) indicated monthly participation in meetings or events, which aligns with the frequency of NDIA Community Calls, Affiliate+ calls, and several working groups. Those who participate in events once or twice a year (65) likely engage during NDIA's annual signature events, Net Inclusion or Digital Inclusion Week. Utilization of NDIA's online resources and tools was much more evenly distributed, although monthly was the most common frequency here as well with 60 responses, followed by once or twice a year (44) and quarterly (43).



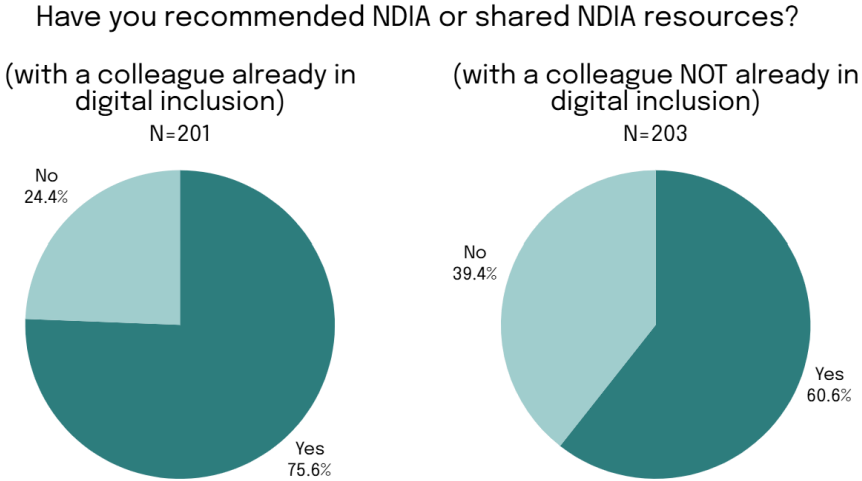
Respondents were also asked to rank different NDIA communications modes in order of those they engage with the most to the least. The NDIA Listserv continues to be the foundational communication tool for our community, with nearly 70% of respondents citing it as the first or second most frequent mode of communication they engage

Frequency of Engagement with NDIA Communications



with. “Live online interactions,” which includes Community Calls, working groups, and webinars, is the next most popular communication mode, with almost 60% of respondents ranking it first or second. At the other end of the spectrum, nearly half of respondents ranked NDIA social media accounts as the communication mode they interact with the least.

In addition to engaging with NDIA resources and staff directly, survey respondents are also talking about NDIA with their colleagues. Three-quarters of respondents found NDIA resources valuable enough to share them with others in the digital inclusion field. Even more encouraging, 60% of respondents shared about NDIA with colleagues outside of the digital inclusion field, which shows that 1) our community continues to grow the digital inclusion field, and 2) NDIA is seen as a valuable resource in doing so.

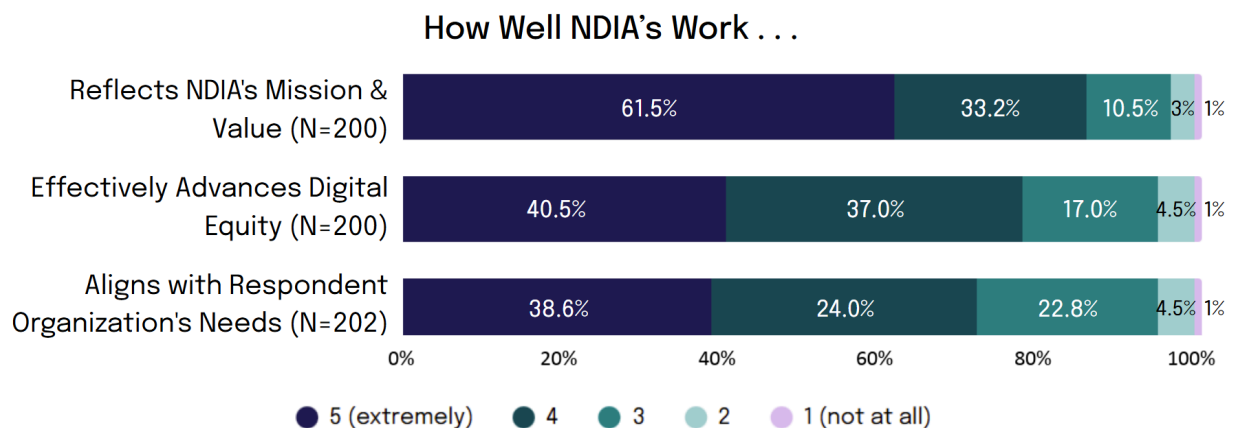


Perceptions of NDIA

Of the words that best describe NDIA, “advocate” was the overwhelming favorite, with more than half of respondents selecting it. This was followed by a cluster of four words all related to partnership – “collaborative,” “inclusive,” “community-centered,” and “convener.” A co-occurrence analysis illustrates just how central advocacy and partnership are to perceptions of NDIA. The four most common word pairs selected by respondents all included “advocate” plus one of the four partnership-related words listed above. Pairs of words related to partnership (e.g., “inclusive & community-centered”) also appeared together frequently.

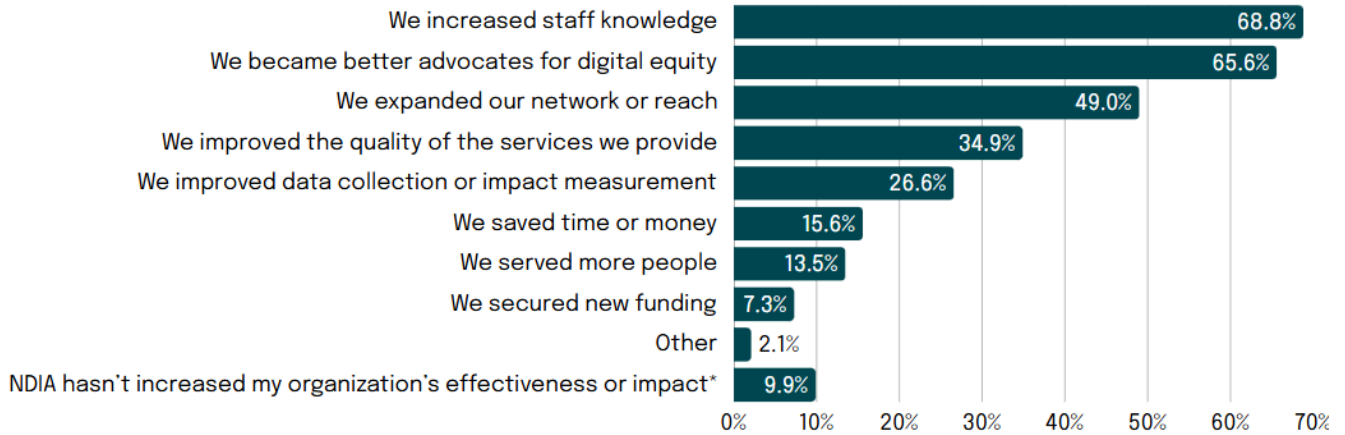
Respondents affirmed that NDIA is well aligned with the needs of the digital inclusion field and individual organizations. On a five-point scale, the average score was 4.4 for how well NDIA’s work reflects its own mission and vision, 4.1 for how effectively NDIA’s tools and resources advance digital equity, and 4.0 for how aligned NDIA’s work is to the respondent organization’s needs. Nearly all respondents also felt that NDIA has increased their organization’s effectiveness or impact in at least one way - the two most common ways being 1) we increased staff knowledge, and 2) we became better advocates for digital equity.

What Words Best Describe NDIA?	Number of Respondents
Advocate	118
Collaborative	75
Inclusive	66
Community-centered	63
Convener	58
Expert	44
Strategic	38
Essential	31
Values-driven	31
Innovative	21
Beginner-friendly	14
Over-stretched	8
Top-down	8
Reactive	6
Redundant	5



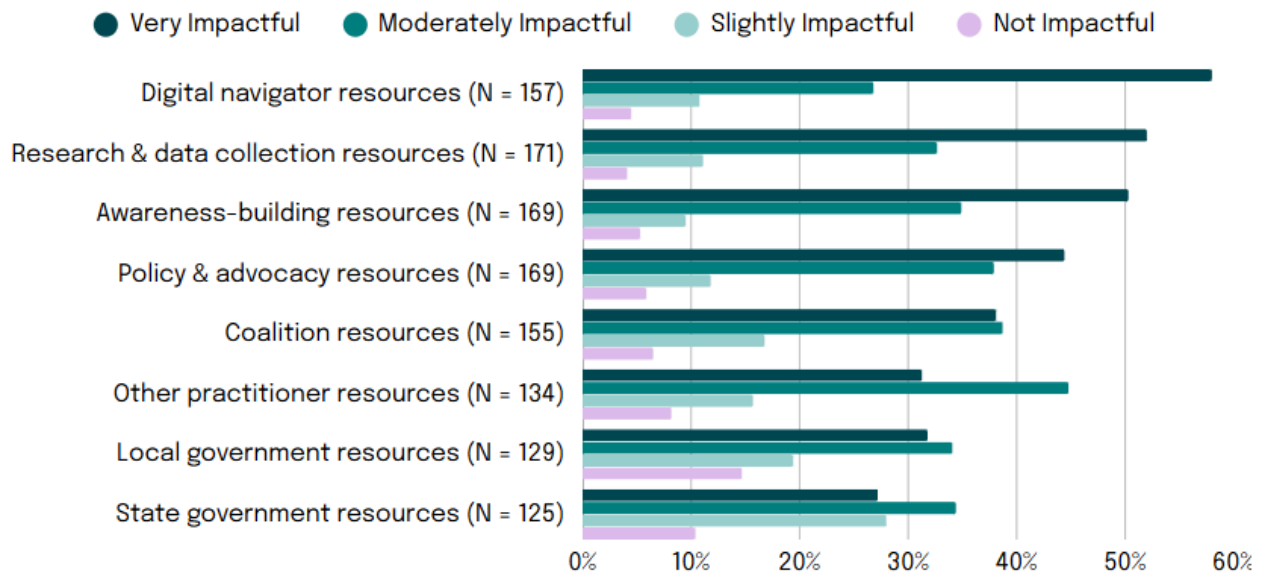
Impact of NDIA's Work

Respondents selected all that applied. (N=192)



When asked about the impact of specific types of NDIA resources over the past 12 months, three categories rose to the top with more than half of respondents saying they were “very impactful,” these were digital navigator resources, research and data collection resources, and awareness-building resources. While these three were identified as the most impactful, community members generally found value in all types of NDIA resources, with more than 50% of responses categorizing each resource type as moderately or very impactful.

Impact of NDIA Resources

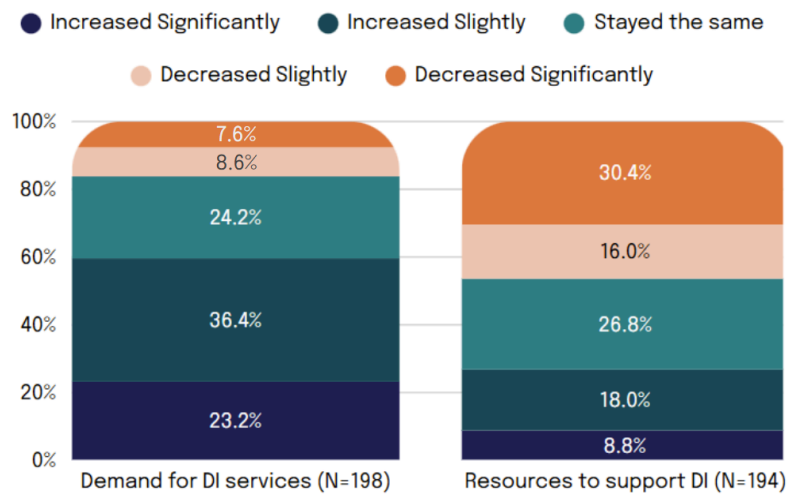


State of the Digital Inclusion Field

Over the past 12 months, demand for digital inclusion work and support for that work has shifted for many organizations, but often these shifts have been in opposite directions. Sixty percent of respondents said that demand for their digital inclusion work has increased compared to just 16% who reported a decrease in demand. Conversely, almost half of respondents said that

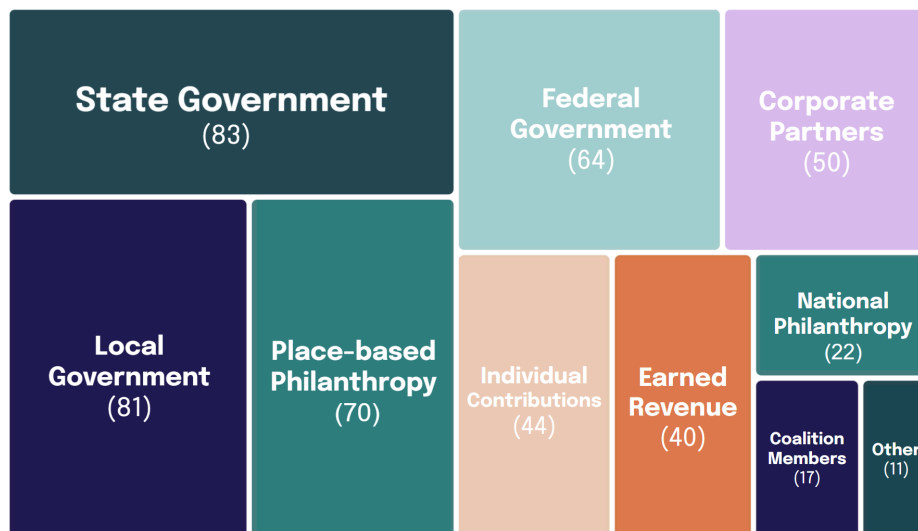
resources to support their work have decreased in the past year, compared to about one-quarter of respondents who saw an increase.

Change in Demand for Digital Inclusion Work vs. Resources to Support It Over Past 12 Months



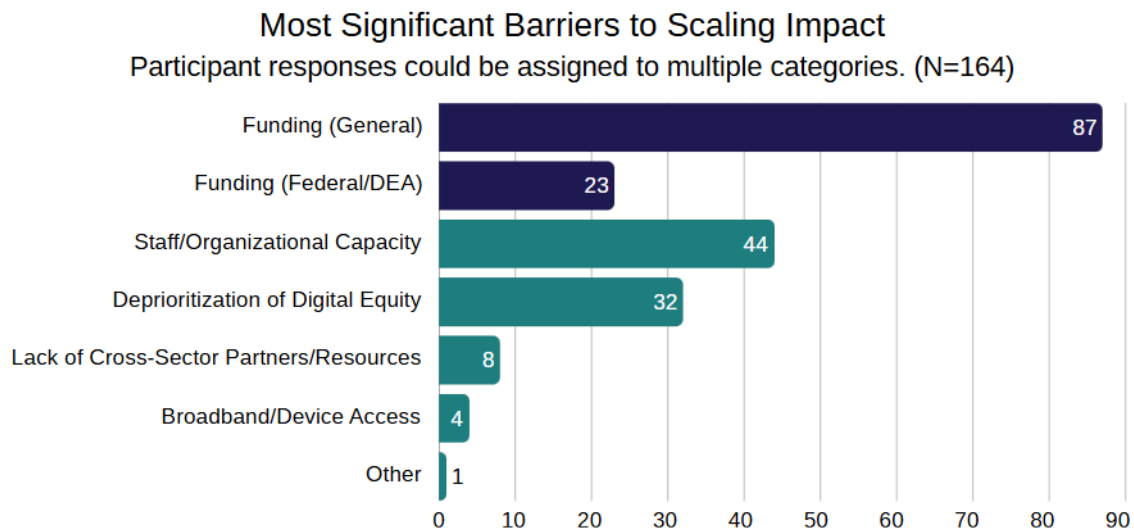
Three of the four most common sources of funding for digital inclusion organizations over the past year were state, local, and federal government agencies. Because this is a retrospective look, it is likely that American Rescue Plan Act and (to a lesser degree) Digital Equity Act (DEA) funds accounted for a considerable portion of

Funding Sources (N=192)

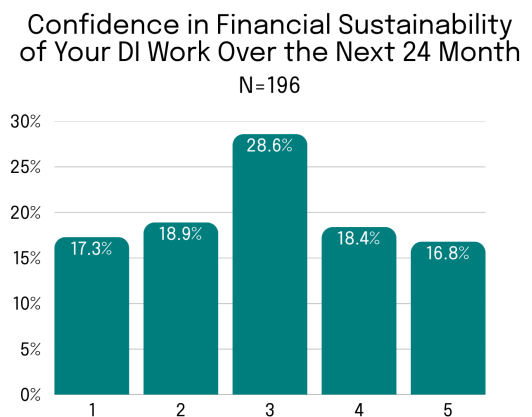


government funding at all levels. The loss of these funds and reductions to or elimination of other public funding sources (e.g., Lifeline, BEAD non-deployment funds, and local cable franchise fees) likely mean significant sustainability questions ahead for many organizations. About one-third of respondents receive support from place-based philanthropy. Two other sources of external partner funding included in the response options, corporate partners and national philanthropy, supported digital inclusion work at relatively fewer of the respondents' organizations.

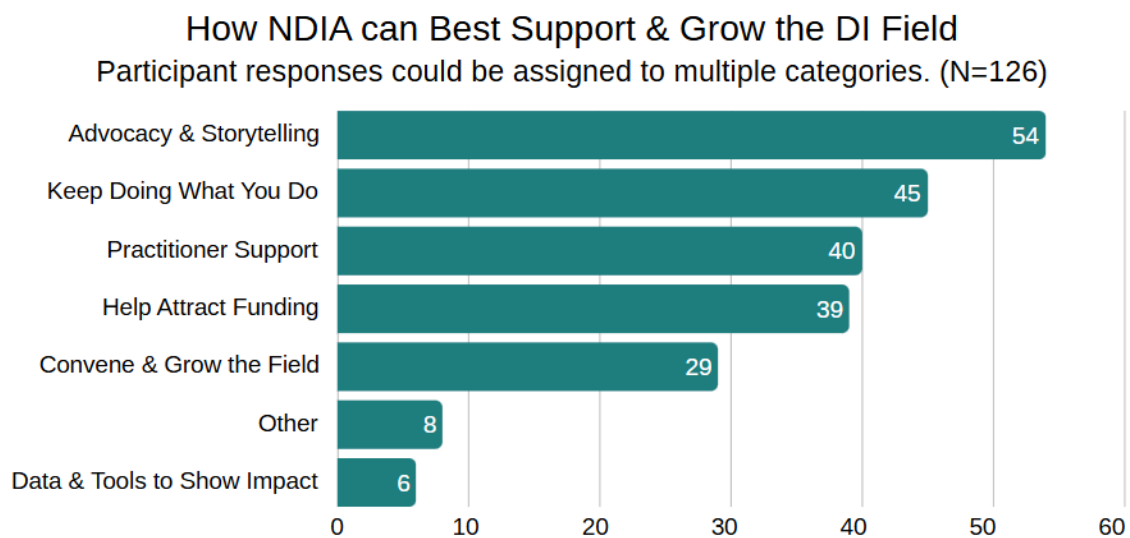
Unsurprisingly, funding was the top barrier to organizations scaling impact. Of the 110 responses that mentioned funding, 23 specifically mentioned DEA or federal funding, while the other 87 referenced funding more generally. The other two top barriers, "staff/organizational capacity" and "deprioritization of digital equity" are closely related to and were often mentioned along with funding concerns.



In light of increased demand for services and concerns about funding, confidence in the financial sustainability of digital inclusion work was remarkably balanced. About the same number of respondents reported feeling positive (35.2%) as reported feeling negative (36.2%). However, the largest number chose the middle option, which may suggest that the prevailing sentiment about future funding is uncertainty. When asked how NDIA can best support and grow the digital inclusion field in the coming year, most suggestions were



consistent with NDIA’s current roles and service offerings; in fact, several responses included some version of “keep doing what you do.” Suggestions related to advocacy and storytelling were the most prevalent, and while calls for help attracting funding are categorized separately, they were mentioned together with advocacy in many instances and should probably be considered in tandem. There were also many requests for additional resources, guidance, and strategies for practitioners, and for NDIA to continue convening and connecting those within and beyond the digital inclusion field.



Conclusion

The past year has presented significant challenges and uncertainties for digital inclusion organizations, a fact that is evident throughout the survey data. Despite reporting funding and capacity limitations and reduced focus on (or outright opposition to) digital equity, our community continues to deliver vital services; expand the field; and rely on NDIA for leadership, partnership, and expertise. We thank those who responded to the survey and hope that this information will inform your own work, messaging, and understanding of the digital inclusion field. It is NDIA’s intention to conduct the Community Survey on an annual basis going forward to track data on the perceptions and needs of our community over time. If you have questions or feedback about the Community Survey, please email data@digitalinclusion.org.