

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR CONVENING RECAP

The purpose of convening nonprofit leaders, in northern Berkshire County, was to share, in community, the challenges of this turbulent time (including Federal policy changes and funding cuts) and discuss solutions to mitigate the impact on our community.

Key Challenges Identified:

- **Funding Instability:** Decreased and uncertain funding from multiple sources, including federal cuts. Limited support for core operations, scholarships, and program growth. Complex grant requirements increase administrative burden.
- **Operational Constraints:** Cash flow challenges, staff and volunteer shortages, and potential decline in donated goods strain capacity.
- **Rising Demand:** Service demand has nearly doubled, including both primary programs and wraparound supports.
- **Human Impact:** Increased emotional strain on staff and clients.

Possible Solutions:

- **Strengthen Partnerships:** Expand collaboration within and across sectors to increase impact and share resources.
- **Build Organizational Resilience:** Develop systems and strategies to improve adaptability and long-term stability.
- **Explore Financial Tools and Diversify Revenue Streams:** to manage cash flow and sustain operations.
- **Engage the Community:** Mobilize local supporters and encourage civic participation.
- **Increase Fundraising Efforts:** Host additional fundraisers to support sustainability.
- **Support Equitable Leadership:** Provide resources for leaders of color to strengthen inclusive leadership.

Date of Convening: 10.24.2025
Location: Hotel Downstreet, North Adams
In attendance: 38 people



Legislative and Funding Update (Summary)

- Rep. John Barrett noted the challenging times and emphasized Massachusetts' commitment to supporting residents. The state is working to offset federal funding losses—especially in healthcare—as Health Connector premiums rise. Barrett secured seven nonprofit-focused earmarks for food and heating assistance. The legislature also voted to release \$2 billion from rainy day funds for essential services, with possible use for SNAP if federal support lapses. Nonprofits were encouraged to thank the Governor for her continued backing.



Key Takeaways from Participants (Summary)

- **Stronger Collaboration:** Participants emphasized the importance of working together across organizations, meeting regularly, and creating safe, supportive spaces for sharing challenges and solutions.
- **Shared Resources:** There was strong interest in pooling staff, sharing services (like bookkeeping, communications, and grant writing), and collaborating on donation drives and operations to reduce costs and increase efficiency.
- **Collective Action:** Many expressed a desire to move from discussion to concrete next steps and collective initiatives that strengthen the nonprofit network.
- **Community Connection:** Hearing from peers offered relief and encouragement, reinforcing that organizations are not alone in facing challenges.
- **Funding Concerns:** Federal cuts and operational funding limitations continue to affect sustainability, prompting calls for advocacy and innovation in fundraising.
- **Human Impact:** Several noted the deep care, passion, and shared purpose driving their work, and the need to support both staff and community members through these difficult times.

