



## 2026 Public Policy Agenda for North Carolina's Nonprofit Sector

*The North Carolina Center for Nonprofits takes positions on state and federal public policy issues that affect most or all 501(c)(3) nonprofits in North Carolina. The Center generally does not take positions on issues that affect only one field – such as arts or early childhood – unless the issue sets a precedent that could affect all nonprofits. The Center also generally does not take positions on local public policy issues unless these would set a precedent that could affect all North Carolina nonprofits. When appropriate, the Center will work with state associations of local government officials to ensure that counties and cities across North Carolina have consistent rules and policies that facilitate a strong, vibrant nonprofit sector.*

### The Center's Top Policy Priorities for 2026

#### State policy

1. Support nonprofit sales tax exemption in place of sales tax refunds.
2. Oppose further limits on, or elimination of, nonprofit sales tax refunds or property tax exemption for any 501(c)(3) nonprofits.
3. Support policies that improve nonprofit-government contracting systems to address issues of late payments, late contracts, underpayment for indirect costs, and overly complex application and reporting requirements.
4. Support timely enactment of a state budget each year to ensure adequate state support of current community needs.
5. Support modernization of state laws governing nonprofits, including the nonprofit corporation and charitable solicitation statutes.

#### Federal policy

1. Oppose legislation or executive action that would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of any existing 501(c)(3) nonprofits for reasons other than unambiguous violations of federal tax laws.
2. Oppose repeal or limitation of the nonpartisanship provision in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
3. Oppose executive actions – including broad federal funding freezes, grant terminations, and changes in grant terms and policies – that create disruptions for nonprofits that receive federal grants.
4. Oppose policies that limit nonprofits' tax-exemption or ability to receiving government grants and contracts based on nonprofits' organizational policies.
5. Support policies that will ensure continuity of government services – especially services such as federal food assistance that complement programs and services provided by charitable nonprofits – in the future and the continued payment of nonprofits for the services they deliver on behalf of governments.

## [The Center's Full Public Policy Agenda](#)

### Tax Policy Affecting Nonprofits:

#### State and local policy

##### 1. Nonprofit tax exemption.

- Support conversion of the sales tax refund system to a sales tax *exemption* for all 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Under current law, nonprofits pay sales tax but can request semi-annual refunds of the taxes they pay.
- Oppose further limits on, or elimination of, nonprofit sales tax refunds or property tax exemption for *any* 501(c)(3) nonprofits.
- Support elimination of limits on nonprofit sales tax refunds based on amounts of refunds or National Taxonomy of Exempt Entity (NTEE) classifications. Under current law, 501(c)(3) nonprofits are ineligible for sales tax refunds if they are “properly classified” in the NTEE system as “community improvement and capacity building”, “public and societal benefit”, or “mutual and membership benefit” organizations.
- Support clarifications necessary to ensure that all 501(c)(3) nonprofits are exempt from paying property tax on property they own that is used for nonprofit purposes. The North Carolina constitution requires exemptions from property tax to be consistent in all parts of the state, but counties and municipalities are inconsistent in their interpretation of the standards for nonprofit property tax exemption that are part of the state tax code.
- Oppose unreasonable new taxes, fees, or payments in lieu of taxes (PILOTs) on any 501(c)(3) nonprofits.
- Oppose policies that condition state or local tax exemption for any 501(c)(3) nonprofits operating in North Carolina on criteria beyond those required of 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organizations under federal law.

##### 2. Incentives for charitable giving.

- Support broad state tax deductions or credits for charitable contributions that supplement federal charitable tax deductions to incentivize all North Carolinians to give more generously to the work of charitable nonprofits.
- Oppose limits on the charitable deduction on state income taxes.

##### 3. Sales tax on services.

- Encourage inclusion of nonprofits’ input on any expansion of sales tax to services, and generally oppose imposition of sales tax on services provided by nonprofits.
- Support clarification that nonprofits are not required to collect and remit sales tax on their fundraising events and educational events.

##### 4. Property tax.

- Support policies that would limit increased rental expenses due to property tax rate increases or reassessments for nonprofits that lease their property.

#### Federal policy

##### 1. Nonprofit nonpartisanship and advocacy.

- Oppose all efforts to repeal or weaken the provision in Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code that prohibits charitable nonprofits from supporting or opposing candidates for office or making campaign contributions (sometimes known as the Johnson Amendment), including legislation, litigation, or executive action to weaken or repeal the Johnson Amendment.
- Support tax law changes that protect and expand the ability of charitable nonprofits to lobby.

- Oppose proposals, including legislation, litigation, and executive action, that would limit the ability of any 501(c)(3) nonprofits to engage in nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, and/or get-out-the-vote activities.
  - Support policies that would enable houses of worship opt out of 501(c)(3) status for the purpose of engaging in partisan political speech that is not allowed under Section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code.
2. **Nonprofit tax exemption.**
    - Oppose legislation or executive action that would jeopardize the tax-exempt status of any existing 501(c)(3) nonprofits for reasons other than unambiguous violations of federal tax laws.
    - Oppose unreasonable new taxes on any 501(c)(3) nonprofits. Even taxes that only apply to certain types of charitable organizations can undermine nonprofits' missions and set precedents that can ultimately lead to burdensome taxes on all nonprofits.
    - Oppose efforts to give the executive branch of the federal government greater authority to revoke or suspend the tax-exempt status of legitimate charitable nonprofits without good cause and without adequate due process.
    - Support repeal of 2017 change to unrelated business income law that treats each revenue stream of a nonprofit as a separate trade or business. The impact of the new law has been a net increase in unrelated business income tax for some nonprofits with multiple revenue streams that are classified as unrelated business income (e.g., book sales, t-shirt sales, and rental of space in a nonprofit's building), since nonprofits can no longer use expenses from one revenue stream to offset income from a separate revenue stream.
  3. **Incentives for charitable giving.**
    - Support repeal of new limitations on tax deductions for charitable contributions by corporations and high-income taxpayers.
    - Support preservation of the new universal, non-itemizer deduction for charitable giving.
  4. **Disaster tax relief.**
    - Support provisions in federal disaster tax relief legislation that encourage donations to nonprofits responding to, or recovering from, disasters, that facilitate automatic extension of federal tax filing deadlines for nonprofits affected by disasters, and that treat nonprofits equitably with for-profit employers in temporary job-retention tax credits during and after disasters.
  5. **Clarifications to new tax laws.**
    - Support clear guidance from the Internal Revenue Service to prevent conflicts of interest in the administration of
  6. **Tax policy affecting people served by nonprofits.**
    - Support reinstatement and extension of the expanded and improved child tax credit, similar to the changes made by the American Rescue Plan Act for 2021. The temporary improvements to the child tax credit in 2021 significantly reduced child poverty in North Carolina during the year they were in effect, complementing the work of many nonprofit service providers and helping alleviate some of the heightened demand for nonprofit services.

## Nonprofit Operations:

### State policy

1. **Nonprofit governance.**
  - Support clarification and modernization of the state nonprofit corporation statute to ensure nonprofit organizations can operate efficiently, effectively, and in a manner consistent with best practices for the nonprofit sector.
  - Support state laws and policies that allow public officials to serve on nonprofit boards and work and volunteer for nonprofits, while also ensuring transparency of – and, where necessary, recusal from –

any situations that might create potential conflicts of interest between public officials' government duties and their service to nonprofits.

## 2. **Regulation of nonprofits.**

- Support clarification and modernization of the state charitable solicitation statute to ensure that licensing requirements and donor acknowledgment requirements are consistent with IRS filing requirements, nonprofit best practices, and modern technology.
- Support legislation or executive action to help minimize the compliance burden of review of nonprofit mergers, asset transfers, and other transactions – particularly those involving small and mid-sized organizations – by the NC Attorney General.
- Support legislation to create simple, low-cost annual reports for nonprofits.
- Support adequate funding for regulation of nonprofits by the NC Secretary of State.
- Support policies creating official or unofficial state agency liaisons with nonprofits.
- Oppose “mandatory volunteerism” requirements for recipients of government services, since these can create financial and administrative burdens for nonprofits.

## 3. **Laws affecting nonprofits as employers.**

- Support policies to address the workforce shortages that are creating challenges for many nonprofits. Such policies include including increased funding to support jobs in the nonprofit sector and investment in accessible and affordable child care.
- Support policies that enable nonprofits to provide affordable and high-quality benefits for their employees.
- Support policies that reduce unnecessary employment law red tape or expenses for nonprofits.
- Support policies that reduce unemployment expenses for nonprofits that elect to reimburse for unemployment rather than pay state unemployment tax.

## 4. **Nonprofit funding and fundraising.**

- Support legislation to expand opportunities for nonprofit fundraising events.
- Support legislation that promotes access to capital for nonprofits.
- Support legislation to minimize delays, administrative burdens, and privacy risks for nonprofits that receive charitable donations as bequests from individual retirement accounts.

## 5. **Donor privacy and donor secrecy.**

- Support policies that ensure that personal information about individual donors to 501(c)(3) nonprofits remains protected from public disclosure while also ensuring that state agencies that regulate 501(c)(3) nonprofits and other tax-exempt organizations have access to information they need to protect the public and the integrity of the nonprofit sector by providing oversight of nonprofits.
- Oppose policies that would limit the ability of state agencies to provide reasonable oversight of 501(c)(3) nonprofits or other tax-exempt organizations.

## 6. **Nonprofit independence and advocacy.**

- Oppose policies that limit nonprofits' governance as independent, nongovernmental corporations with control over their own organizational policies and practices.
- Oppose proposals to limit the ability of any 501(c)(3) nonprofit to engage in nonpartisan voter registration, voter education, or get-out-the-vote activities.

## 7. **Efficiency ratios.**

- Oppose policies that would rate nonprofits or condition government treatment of nonprofits on “efficiency ratios” related to nonprofits' administrative expenses, indirect costs, overhead, or fundraising expenses. The use of this type of “efficiency ratio”, while sometimes helpful in comparing the programs and services of similar nonprofits, can be misleading when comparing nonprofits that provide very different types of programs and services. Some types of nonprofits have inherently higher fundraising and administrative expenses than others.

## 8. **Lobbying and election laws.**

- Support changes such as fee reductions or waivers that ensure that cost is not a barrier to advocacy by nonprofits.

- Oppose election law changes that make it more difficult for people to vote, since these changes ultimately diminish nonprofits' policy influence by reducing the civic participation of people served by nonprofits, including low-income North Carolinians, seniors, and individuals with disabilities.
9. **Response to natural disasters, public health crises, and economic challenges.**
- Support state and local grant programs and state tax credits that treat nonprofits the same as for-profit businesses in providing economic relief to employers.
  - Support establishment of nonprofit relief and recovery funds to provide financial support to nonprofits impacted by natural disasters, public health crises, and economic challenges.
  - Support regulatory relief for nonprofits affected by natural disasters and public health crises.
  - Support policies that prioritize state support to nonprofits that are providing increased services during challenging times.
  - Support policies that would help nonprofits hire employees to offset reductions in volunteers or workforce shortages.
  - Support policies that hold harmless charitable nonprofits from unemployment insurance liability in the event of unexpected circumstances like natural disasters and public health crises and that ensure that employees of charitable nonprofits receive full and reasonable unemployment benefits in the event of these types of unexpected circumstances.

## Federal policy

### 1. Regulation of nonprofits.

- Support adequate funding for the IRS to provide reasonable regulation and oversight of tax-exempt organizations.
- Oppose executive action, legislation, or litigation that would enable the IRS to take adverse actions against some charitable nonprofits differently because of their missions, programs and services, legitimate advocacy activities, or organizational policies.

### 2. Laws affecting nonprofits as employers.

- Support policies to address the workforce shortages that are creating challenges for many nonprofits. Such policies include including increased funding to support jobs in the nonprofit sector and investment in accessible and affordable child care.
- Support policies that enable nonprofits to provide affordable and quality benefits for their employees.
- Support labor laws and regulations that treat nonprofits similarly to for-profit businesses and that provide adequate protections for nonprofit employees and clients while not creating unreasonable unexpected new costs for nonprofits operating in North Carolina. In particular, it is essential that any significant changes to labor laws and regulations provide adequate transition periods for nonprofits to absorb increased costs due to fixed reimbursement rates under government grants and contracts or through limits imposed by private funders. It is also important for federal labor regulations to provide clear guidance on job functions that are unique to the nonprofit sector, such as fundraising, volunteer management, and certain types of program service providers.
- Oppose legislation, executive action, or litigation that would fundamentally change common employment practices for some or all 501(c)(3) nonprofits.
- Oppose policies – such as elimination or limitation of student loan forgiveness programs – that would harm nonprofit employees.

### 3. Nonprofit independence and advocacy.

- Oppose new restrictions on nonprofit advocacy rights.
- Support policies that would limit the influence of political donors on policymaking. This would help level the playing field for advocacy by nonpartisan nonprofits.
- Oppose legislation, executive action, and litigation that would increase the influence of political donors on policymaking. This would further reduce the ability of nonpartisan nonprofits to engage in effective public policy advocacy.

- Oppose proposals to limit the advocacy rights of nonprofits that receive government funding through grants and contracts.
4. **Response to natural disasters, public health crises, and economic challenges.**
- Support federal grant programs and federal tax credits that treat nonprofits the same as for-profit businesses in providing economic relief to employers.
  - Support policies that prioritize federal support to nonprofits that are providing increased services during challenging times.
  - Support policies that would help nonprofits hire employees to offset reductions in volunteers or workforce shortages.
  - Support policies that hold harmless charitable nonprofits from unemployment insurance liability in the event of unexpected circumstances like natural disasters and public health crises and that ensure that employees of charitable nonprofits receive full and reasonable unemployment benefits in the event of these types of unexpected circumstances.

## Government Grants and Contracts with Nonprofits:

### State policy

1. **Prompt payment, red tape, and full payment for costs.**
- Support policies to ensure that state agencies: (a) deliver contracts to nonprofits in a timely manner; (b) avoid delays in paying nonprofits that deliver services; and (c) inform them in advance if a payment will be late.
  - Support policies that will help identify the sources of late contracts with, and late payments to, nonprofits and that improve transparency of the timeliness of state contracts with, and payments to, nonprofits.
  - Support the designation of nonprofit liaisons within state agencies, departments, and divisions that partner regularly with nonprofits to provide public services so that nonprofits have primary points of contact with relevant state agencies, departments, and divisions.
  - Support adequate funding for grants and contract management staff in all state agencies that collaborate with nonprofits to provide public services through grants and contracts and for the NC Office of State Budget and Management.
  - Support policies that provide for multi-year contracts with nonprofits with recurring state funds and automatic short-term contract extensions when contracts are not renewed on time to ensure continuity of services by nonprofits.
  - Support policies that will reduce overly complex application and reporting requirements for nonprofits with state grants and contracts. Examples of such policies may include the elimination of redundant reporting and audit requirements, the use of document vaults by state agencies to minimize redundant filings by nonprofits, and consistent use of electronic funds transfer by state agencies.
  - Support policies that prevent state agencies from unilaterally making changes to nonprofits' contracts after the execution of the contract, except in circumstances where such changes are absolutely necessary.
  - Support policies, appropriations, and executive actions that ensure that nonprofits with state grants and contracts have fair and reasonable indirect cost rates and that the state establishes a *de minimis* indirect cost rate on grants and contracts with nonprofit service providers that is consistent with the federal rate in the OMB Uniform Guidance (currently 15% of modified direct costs).
  - Support full and fair implementation of the 2024 improvements to the OMB Uniform Guidance in state and local contracts.

2. **Adequate and appropriate state support for public services provided by nonprofits.**
  - Support timely enactment of a state budget each year to ensure adequate state support of current community needs.
  - Support continued state investment in the work of nonprofits through appropriations and grants.
  - Oppose unfunded mandates for nonprofits in the state budget.
  - Oppose the elimination of, or defunding of, significant state and/local grant programs for nonprofits.
  - Support transparency in the state budget process, including the process for determining which nonprofits receive state funds.
  - Oppose government policies – including state budget provisions, separate legislation, and executive action – that limit nonprofits’ ability to receive government grants or contracts based on factors such as efficiency ratios or nonprofits’ organizational policies.

## Federal policy

1. **Disruptions to federal grants.**
  - Oppose executive actions – including broad federal funding freezes, grant terminations, and changes in grant terms and policies – that create disruptions for any nonprofits that receive federal grants.
2. **Prompt payment, red tape, and full payment for costs.**
  - Oppose any repeal or weakening of the recent improvements to the OMB Uniform Guidance, including changes to increase the *de minimis* indirect cost rate, increase the audit threshold, eliminate duplicative reporting requirements, and make the federal grantmaking process more user-friendly for a wide range of charitable nonprofits.
  - Support legislation and/or executive action to simplify grant searches and grant reporting requirements for nonprofits.
3. **Adequate and appropriate state support for public services provided by nonprofits.**
  - Support continued federal investment in nonprofits through appropriations and grants.
  - Oppose arbitrary, across-the-board cuts to federal government spending.  
Oppose government policies – including federal budget provisions, separate legislation, and executive action – that limit any or all nonprofits’ ability to receive government grants or contracts based on factors such as efficiency ratios or nonprofits’ organizational policies.

## Major State and Federal Policy Issues That Affect the Nonprofit Sector:

### State policy

1. **Health care policy.**
  - Support policies that enable nonprofits to provide affordable, high quality health insurance for their employees.
  - Oppose policies that would limit or rescind Medicaid expansion in North Carolina or increase forced assessments on nonprofit hospitals.
  - Support policies that ensure that any new work requirements for Medicaid recipients do not create undue burdens on nonprofits.
2. **Constitutional amendments.**
  - Oppose state constitutional amendments that could reduce future state revenue, including lowering the maximum income tax rate in the constitution or creating a “Taxpayer Bill of Rights” that limits growth of state spending. These types of constitutional amendments are likely to reduce state grants and contracts with nonprofits and to create more pressure on policymakers to impose new taxes, fees, and/or payments-in-lieu-of taxes on nonprofits.

- Oppose state constitutional amendments that could change election laws in a way that would disproportionately affect people who are served by nonprofits.
3. **Independent redistricting.**
- Support legislation and/or a constitutional amendment to establish an independent, nonpartisan legislative redistricting process in North Carolina. This would make our state legislators and members of Congress more accountable to nonprofits in their districts.
  - Support legislation and policy changes that improve the transparency of the legislative redistricting process.

## **Federal policy**

1. **Federal government shutdowns.**

- Support the position that federal policymakers should not use government shutdowns as a way to settle policy disputes, since government shutdowns hurt nonprofits and the communities they serve.
- Support policies that will ensure continuity of government services – especially services such as federal food assistance that complement programs and services provided by charitable nonprofits – in the future and the continued payment of nonprofits for the services they deliver on behalf of governments.

2. **Health care policy.**

- Support policies that enable nonprofits to provide affordable, high quality health insurance for their employees.
- Oppose policies that would make significant changes to the nation's health care system that could reduce health benefits and/or increase healthcare expenses for nonprofit employees and people who receive services from nonprofits.
- Oppose policies that would decrease federal Medicaid funding for North Carolina, including shifting state Medicaid funding to block grants or decreasing the federal match for Medicaid expansion.