



Checklist: Small Nonprofit Survival Strategies

Organizational Readiness & Infrastructure

- ☐ Create a 2–3 page **Capacity Snapshot** (impact metrics, systems, controls, partnerships).
- ☐ Keep financials clean, current, and grant-ready.
- ☐ Maintain a **grant packet** always ready for emergency opportunities.
- ☐ Develop a simple **data dashboard** for outcomes and client trends.

Positioning & Messaging

- ☐ Define your **unique value proposition** in one clear sentence.
- ☐ Develop a narrative of being **essential community infrastructure**, not “the small org.”
- ☐ Craft messaging that highlights **efficiency per dollar** and cultural/community relevance.

Partnerships & Coalitions

- ☐ Join or form a **coalition** of similar-sized nonprofits.
- ☐ Build **referral partnerships** with adjacent service providers.
- ☐ Explore **co-location** or shared staffing arrangements to strengthen capacity.
- ☐ Connect with universities for evaluation, interns, and research support.

Fundraising & Sustainability

- ☐ Establish or expand a **monthly giving program**.
- ☐ Prioritize **unrestricted revenue streams** (individual donors, peer-to-peer, small business sponsorships).
- ☐ Launch a **recurring micro-donor campaign** tailored to your community.
- ☐ Set (and enforce) **board giving expectations**.

Funder Relations

- ☐ Meet funders and ask directly, “**What would it take for our organization to be fundable at higher levels?**”
- ☐ Request introductions to program officers or local collaboratives.
- ☐ Ask about **capacity-building grants**, not just program grants.
- ☐ Share quarterly **impact briefs** with funders before they ask.

Crisis Positioning

- ☐ Prepare a rapid-response **emergency brief** for funders.
- ☐ Track crisis-specific data (demand surge, demographics, gaps larger orgs cannot fill).
- ☐ Collaborate with partners to submit **joint emergency proposals**.

Internal Leadership Practices

- ☐ Treat stewardship as part of organizational culture—not a Development job alone.
- ☐ Engage your board in **advocacy**, not just oversight.
- ☐ Document institutional knowledge to reduce burnout and turnover strain.
- ☐ Reevaluate your strategic plan twice a year—not annually.