

# The State of Youth Philanthropy: 2020-2021

August 10, 2021

# The Sillerman Center

The Sillerman Center, founded in 2008, aims to inform and advance social justice philanthropy.

We aspire to be a helpful, collaborative, forward-looking and trusted partner in this necessary work. As a part of this work, we are committed to **engaging both young people and adult constituents** in youth philanthropy.

*"From Beneficiary to Active Agent: How Youth-Led Grantmaking Benefits Young People, Their Communities, and the Philanthropic Sector"*

*"Community-Centric Youth Philanthropy: A Case Study of Greater Worcester Community Foundation's Youth for Community Improvement Program"*



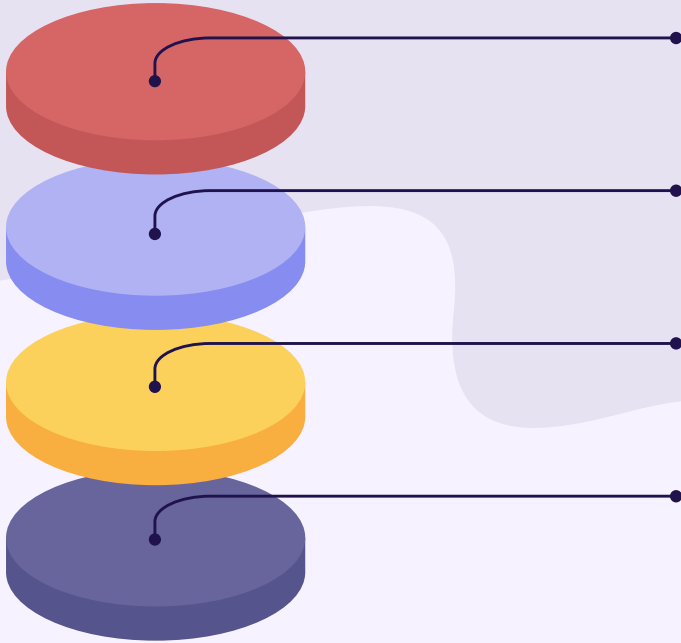
**Youth philanthropy programs support young people making grants directly to nonprofit organizations and projects, while also mentoring and supporting the youth grantmakers.**

# Why this research is important

In collaboration with Foundation for MetroWest, we crafted research questions:

- (1) To what extent and how have youth philanthropy programs, youth grantmakers, and their adult supporters adapted to a virtual environment throughout COVID-19?
- (2) How do participants in and supporters of youth philanthropy programs describe the challenges and benefits programs are facing during this time?
- (3) What practices and structures could make virtual programming more accessible?
- (4) How do we consider our institutional and organizational memory as we navigate uncertainty?

# Framing the Research



1

Priorities shifting due to the pandemic

2

Transition to virtual programming

3

Youth Unemployment rising

4

Mental Health issues and awareness rising



## Survey: Basics

- California, Indiana, Massachusetts, Michigan, New York, North Carolina, Pennsylvania
  - Represent over 32% of youth across the US ages 10-24,
- Sent to 244 programs and received back 86 survey responses
- Internet access and computer access: 83% and 90% respectively

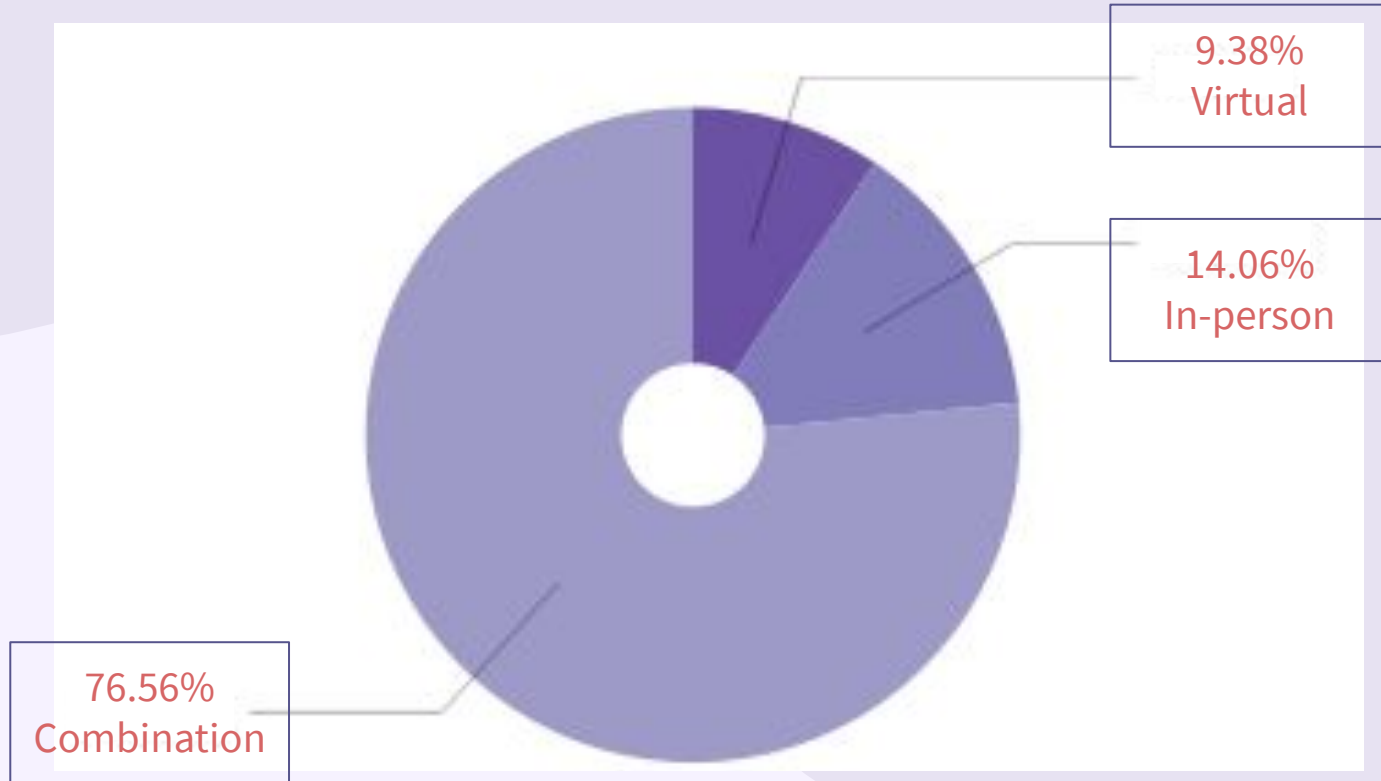
# Findings: Barriers due to COVID

- **Technology (access and training)**
- Curriculum adaptation
- Recruitment
- Virtual team building & engagement
- **Staff time**
- **Young people's interest, availability, access**



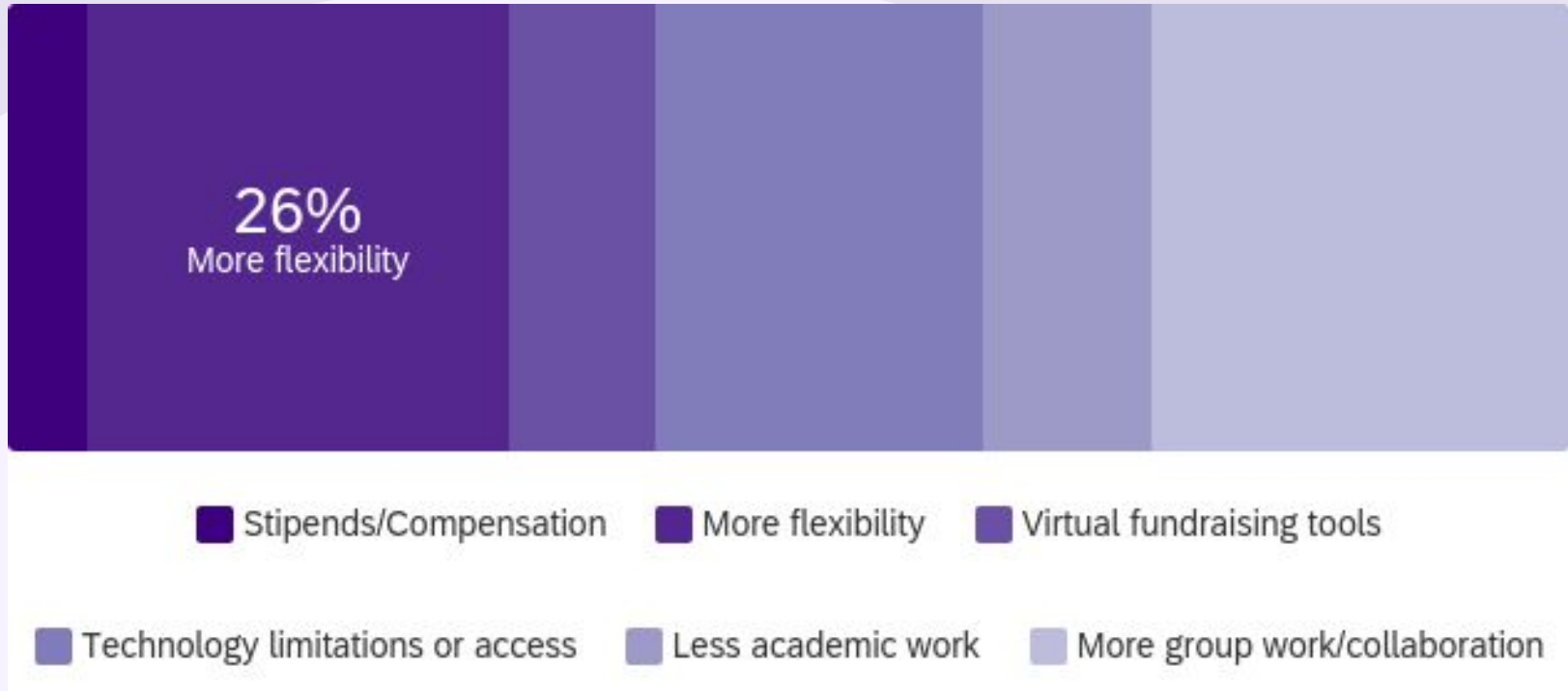
Photo courtesy Jewish Community Federation & Endowment Fund, Jewish Teen Foundation

# Hybrid programming is here to stay





## Findings: Support Young People's Needs



# Parent/Guardian Engagement



## Heinz Endowments

“I think it’s really hard to educate people about what you do as a funder. Because it’s not like, whenever you’re telling people that oh they’re like charity, but it’s NOT charity. That’s my experience.”



## Youth for Community Improvement

“YCI also provides student and parent orientations. When explaining the program’s mission, Shugrue uses words like ‘service,’ or ‘benefitting community’ instead of ‘philanthropy’ or ‘grants.’”



## Jewish Teen Foundation

“We wanted to keep open lines of communications. After each meeting I would send a recap to all of the parents about what we did.”

# Putting changes into practice: YOUTHadelphia

## Safe Space

Dialogue  
Emotional Support

## Accountability

Practice what we preach  
1:1 check-ins

## Zoom success

100% retention rate

## Moving Forward

Hybrid



# Application

*How does this affect community foundations? Why is this important to you?*



**Data**

Midland  
Community  
Foundation

Michigan and  
Indiana leading  
the way



**Community  
Foundations**



**Youth  
as Donors**

Diversifying the  
field, future  
leaders in the  
field

# Recommendations

- Be flexible
- Increase accessibility
- Be patient
- Provide technology and training
- Be creative
- Be inclusive
- Provide professional development
- Engaging a supportive adult is crucial
- Know that young people are dependable and will step up!



Photo courtesy Midland Area Community Foundation, Midland AREA Youth Action Council

# Conclusions

*Young people are adaptable, flexible, and dedicated to youth philanthropy*

“While our students are definitely experiencing Zoom fatigue and are eager to get back to meeting in-person, they have been **very flexible, patient, and willing to try new things over the last year**. They are making the best of the situation and have impressed us with their dedication.”

# THANKS!

## Questions?

Sheryl Seller

[sheryl89@brandeis.edu](mailto:sheryl89@brandeis.edu)

Katherine Ponce

[katherineponce@brandeis.edu](mailto:katherineponce@brandeis.edu)

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, and infographics & images by **Freepik**

**Please keep this slide for attribution**

