



**COUNCIL OF AGENCY EXECUTIVES**  
together we're better

**2026**

# **ADVOCACY AGENDA**



together we're **better**



COUNCIL OF AGENCY EXECUTIVES

# ABOUT THE COAE

The Council of Agency Executives (COAE), established in 1999, is committed to strengthening nonprofit leadership and advancing excellence across the sector. Over the past 27 years, COAE has become a trusted, unified voice for Greater Rochester's nonprofit community, representing a broad spectrum of organizations that deliver essential services throughout the region. Collectively, our members invest over 1 billion dollars in the Greater Rochester area and employ more than 20,000 individuals. The services they provide help more than 1,000,000 people each year.

This Advocacy Agenda serves to identify critical concerns with public policies, funding, and administrative practices that prevent our members from most effectively caring for our community's most vulnerable residents; from helping families overcome hardships due to poverty and racism; and improving our community's overall quality of life through the arts, education and public service.

The Greater Rochester nonprofit sector cannot thrive without supportive government partners. It is our responsibility not only to shine a light on public policy barriers to our sector's effectiveness, but also to provide public policy solutions that would allow us to collectively better serve our community.





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# Progress from the 2025 Advocacy Agenda

COAE's 2025 Advocacy Agenda contributed to measurable progress on several priority issues affecting the nonprofit sector. While long-term solutions remain ongoing, the following developments reflect meaningful movement aligned with COAE's advocacy efforts:

## 1. Non-profit Capacity & Shared Services

COAE, in partnership with Causewave Community Partners and CCSI, advanced a shared services model to strengthen administrative capacity for small and mid-sized nonprofits. In 2025, \$200,000 in New York State funding was awarded to support early implementation and planning for this initiative.

## 2. Non-profit Contracting Reform

COAE continued to elevate concerns regarding delayed nonprofit contracting and reimbursement practices.

Legislation addressing state contracting accountability passed both houses of the New York State Legislature, though it was ultimately vetoed by the Governor, reinforcing the need for continued advocacy in this area.

## 3. Addressing the Benefits Cliff

COAE identified the fiscal “benefits cliff” as a barrier to workforce participation and economic mobility and recommended a Monroe County demonstration program to test mitigation strategies. A Monroe County-based benefits cliff demonstration initiative was included in the New York State Executive Budget and funded, reflecting policy movement aligned with this priority.





1.

**Support Legislation To Reform New York’s Prompt Contracting Law.** In December, Governor Hochul vetoed **A.7616/S.7001** – (Meyers/Paulin) which was passed with unanimous support in both the Senate and Assembly.

While in her veto message, the Governor pledged to address flaws with New York’s contracting system, we continue to support this legislation and encourage it to be adopted once again. It would:

- Improve consistency in contracting across all agencies.
- Streamline contract renewals and improve timeliness.
- Clarify when nonprofits can expect payment schedules and ensure interest on late payments.
- Ensure automatic contract advances so that nonprofits do not have to take on unsustainable debt to front costs for essential services.
- Recognize and reimburse the real cost of delivering services, including overhead.
- Ensure nonprofits are not being penalized for minor errors in vouchers.





2.

## Just Pay Campaign

Nonprofits provide critical services to those most vulnerable but state funding in no way keeps up with the needs. We support the Just Pay Campaign for non-profits.

- Fund a 2.7% targeted inflationary increase (TII) to bolster rates and contracts for human services workers.
- Pass S.1580/A2590 to include programs that have been left out of typical budget increases in the past to ensure all State-contracted human services programs receive this increase.
- Establish a “Blue Ribbon Commission” to examine the crucial role of nonprofit human services workers to New York’s economy and community health.

3.

## Fund the revolving loan fund.

Since 50% of non-profits in NYS experience delay in payments, we request that the Legislature fund the revolving loan fund so that non-profits can focus on the needs of NY residents. There are times when contracts are not paid for a year.

4.

## Support legislation for a human services wage board- A.5589/ S.3953 – (Bronson).

Addresses the pay disparity between nonprofit and public-sector human services workers. The bill would allow for more human-services workers to receive cost of living adjustments and create a wage board to address the pay disparity.





**5.**

## **Support the Health Insurance Consortium – S.8457/A.8763 (Cooney)**

This bill reduces the number of employees required to join a health care consortium from 100 to 50. This could have a huge impact on many non-profits which are struggling to provide health insurance to their employees.

**6.**

## **Support changes to non-profit lobbying rules – S.2224/A8933 – (co-sponsors Lunsford/Clark).**

This bill would make it easier for smaller non-profits to lobby/advocate without the expense of registering as a lobbyist. The smaller non-profits have critical information that legislators need but many are reluctant to advocate because of the lobbying restrictions.

**7.**

## **Continue to Fund Benefits Cliff Demonstration program**

Continue to fund the Benefits Cliff demonstration program so that people can continue to seek workforce opportunities without losing critical benefits until they are financially stable. We need to learn, overtime, if this is impactful.



## Top challenges New York State's Nonprofits face

The health of the nonprofit sector is critical for the health of the New York State economy and communities. But a survey of NYCON members, conducted December 2024-February 2025, found persistent and increasing challenges:

**65%** are concerned about funding their basic operations in 2025 (up from 62% in 2024)

**17%** anticipate they will use a line of credit to pay for basic operations in 2025 (up from 14% in 2024)



### TOP 10 CHALLENGES NEW YORK STATE NONPROFITS FACE (ranked)

1. Finding new revenue options
2. Funding of basic operations
3. Federal changes that could impact revenue
4. Long-term sustainability
5. Increasing community need
6. Federal changes that could impact programming
7. Maintaining competitive salary/benefits
8. Engaging board members
9. Finding board members
10. Grant writing

While federal government changes are now among nonprofits' biggest concerns, NYS government funding also remains a challenge:

