



2026

Nonprofit Sector Support

Strengthening the Organizations that Help Our Communities Thrive

Santa Barbara County's 885 active nonprofits are essential to the social and economic fabric of our communities. They do the work many never see, anchoring a community-wide system that delivers housing, food security, health care, education, disaster response, and more.

Structural Challenges



Organizational Fragility

Limited reserves, lean staffing, and underfunded infrastructure leave nonprofits exposed when funding shifts or demand surges.



Leadership Capacity

Professional development remains difficult to fund, even though strong leadership is core to organizational health.



Coordination Without Resources

Collaboration is happening, but without dedicated funding, its impact is limited.



Volunteers Needed

88% of nonprofits rely on volunteers, yet many struggle to recruit and retain the help they need.

Our Approach

The Santa Barbara Foundation's Collaboration for Social Impact supports nonprofits through grants, professional development trainings, and gatherings that foster coordination to achieve outcomes for our community that no single organization could achieve alone.

GRANT RECIPIENT SPOTLIGHT

Mental Wellness Center is the only provider of structured day-use services for individuals with severe mental illness in South County. Many clients arrive at intake feeling overwhelmed or uncertain whether support will make a difference. A 2025 SBF Small Capacity Building Grant funded staff training, helping frontline workers turn that first interaction into a doorway to care.

Photo: Veronica Slavin

Photo: Mental Wellness Center

2020-2025 Impact

Stronger Organizations

Over five years, SBF invested \$2.6M in capacity building grants to help nonprofits strengthen the core systems, skills, and structures that support their work. An evaluation found that 97% completed the work identified in their grant proposals. Organizations reported stronger operations, better-trained staff, and increased ability to grow and sustain their work.

Agile, Skilled Leaders

600+ staff and board members trained across 250+ organizations

"The Diversifying Revenue and Strengthening Your Fundraising Efforts workshop was one of the most productive and insightful workshops I've ever attended. I've already started implementing strategies I learned and have shared key takeaways with our development team."

— Melissa Ha-Navarro, Donor Relations Manager,
Santa Barbara Botanic Garden



Photo: Veronica Slavin

Powerful Partnerships

Sector-wide convenings and publications like our *State of the Nonprofits in Santa Barbara County* report help align organizations, funders, and public agencies around shared challenges and opportunities.



Join Us

Strong nonprofits move communities forward. Partner with us to strengthen leadership, collaboration, and impact countywide.



Give Now

Contact information

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