



2026 Stakeholder Survey Summary – Key Takeaways

Respondent Snapshot

- **173 total respondents**, with the largest segment age **65+ (84 respondents or 49%)**.
- **55% not fundholders or donors; 37% nonprofit organizations**
- Representation was broad and included:
 - Nonprofit organizations
 - Community members
 - Fundholders and donors
 - Government/education partners
 - Faith organizations
 - Businesses
 - SCF staff, trustees, and emeritus trustees

Overall Sentiment

The survey was **overwhelmingly positive**, with respondents frequently describing SCF as:

- Trusted
- Community-focused
- Collaborative
- Inclusive
- Professional
- Responsive
- Impactful

Many stakeholders view SCF as an **essential community institution** and a driving force behind philanthropy, nonprofit effectiveness, and community collaboration.

Top Strengths Identified

1. SCF is Viewed as the Community Convener

The strongest and most consistent theme was SCF's role as a:

- Connector
- Convener
- Community hub
- Neutral facilitator
- Catalyst for collective impact

Respondents repeatedly stated that SCF **brings together donors, nonprofits, businesses, government, and residents** in ways that no other organization does.

2. Nonprofit Capacity Building is Highly Valued

Stakeholders consistently praised:

- Training programs

- Nonprofit Boot Camps
- Leadership development
- Technical assistance
- Networking opportunities
- Nonprofit Connect events

Many said the Foundation's **educational offerings are just as valuable as its grantmaking.**

3. Trusted Stewardship of Philanthropic Resources

Fundholders and donors repeatedly highlighted:

- Professional fund management
- Trustworthiness
- Accountability
- Long-term investment stewardship
- Donor-advised fund services

Several respondents referred to SCF as the **community's philanthropic "bank" or trusted fiduciary.**

4. Broad Community Perspective

Respondents appreciate that SCF:

- Looks across all community sectors
- Identifies emerging needs
- Supports multiple issue areas
- Maintains a long-term perspective on community challenges

Areas of Greatest Impact

Stakeholders most frequently cited these areas where SCF creates meaningful impact:

1. **Nonprofit support and capacity building**
2. **Education and scholarships**
3. **Leadership development**
4. **Economic mobility**
5. **Affordable housing**
6. **Health and mental health**
7. **Youth programs**
8. **Food insecurity and poverty reduction**
9. **Disaster response and crisis relief**

Opportunities for Greater Impact

Increase Awareness and Visibility

The most common recommendation was simply:

"Tell the story better."

Many respondents believe residents, newcomers, and even potential donors do not fully understand:

- What SCF does
- How funds work
- Available programs and grants

- Community impact achieved

Suggested actions included:

- Stronger marketing
- More storytelling
- More public outreach
- School partnerships
- Community open houses

Expand Engagement with Underserved Populations

Respondents suggested additional emphasis on:

- Rural communities
- Minority populations
- Individuals with disabilities
- Youth and young adults
- Seniors
- Emerging community leaders

Strengthen Support for Small and Grassroots Nonprofits

Several nonprofit leaders requested:

- More operational support
- Sustained funding
- Capacity-building resources
- Simplified grant processes
- Additional mentorship opportunities

Key Concerns and Criticisms

While overall sentiment was strong, a few recurring concerns emerged:

Visibility and Transparency

Some respondents want:

- Clearer communication
- More reporting on impact
- Better understanding of grant decisions
- More transparency regarding donor-advised funds and community outcomes

Perceptions of Exclusivity

A small number of respondents described SCF as:

- Elite
- Exclusive
- Focused on established networks or major donors

These comments suggest an opportunity to broaden engagement and accessibility.

Fees and Fund Costs

A handful of fundholders mentioned concerns about:

- Fund management costs
- Fee structures compared with financial institutions

If SCF Disappeared Tomorrow...

The most common responses were:

The community would lose:

- A trusted community convener
- A nonprofit support system
- Leadership development programs
- Grant funding
- Community-wide collaboration
- Fund stewardship and philanthropy expertise
- Training and technical assistance resources

Many respondents felt there is **no other organization locally that could fully replace SCF's role** as both a philanthropic steward and community connector.

Executive Summary

The survey reveals that stakeholders view the Spartanburg County Foundation as an **indispensable community institution**. Its greatest strengths are its ability to **connect people, build nonprofit capacity, steward philanthropic resources, and convene diverse partners around community challenges**.

The primary opportunity is not a change in mission, but greater **visibility, outreach, inclusion, and storytelling** so more residents understand and engage with the Foundation's work.

Bottom line: Stakeholders overwhelmingly see SCF as a trusted, collaborative, and impactful organization whose absence would leave a significant gap in Spartanburg County's philanthropic and nonprofit ecosystem.

