

# ACCP Pulse Survey

---

Survey Fielded: January 8 - February 3, 2025  
141 respondents

Embargoed until March 27, 2025 at 9:00 am ET

Media Contact: Jeanne Metzger, 202-796-5881, [jeanne@accp.org](mailto:jeanne@accp.org)

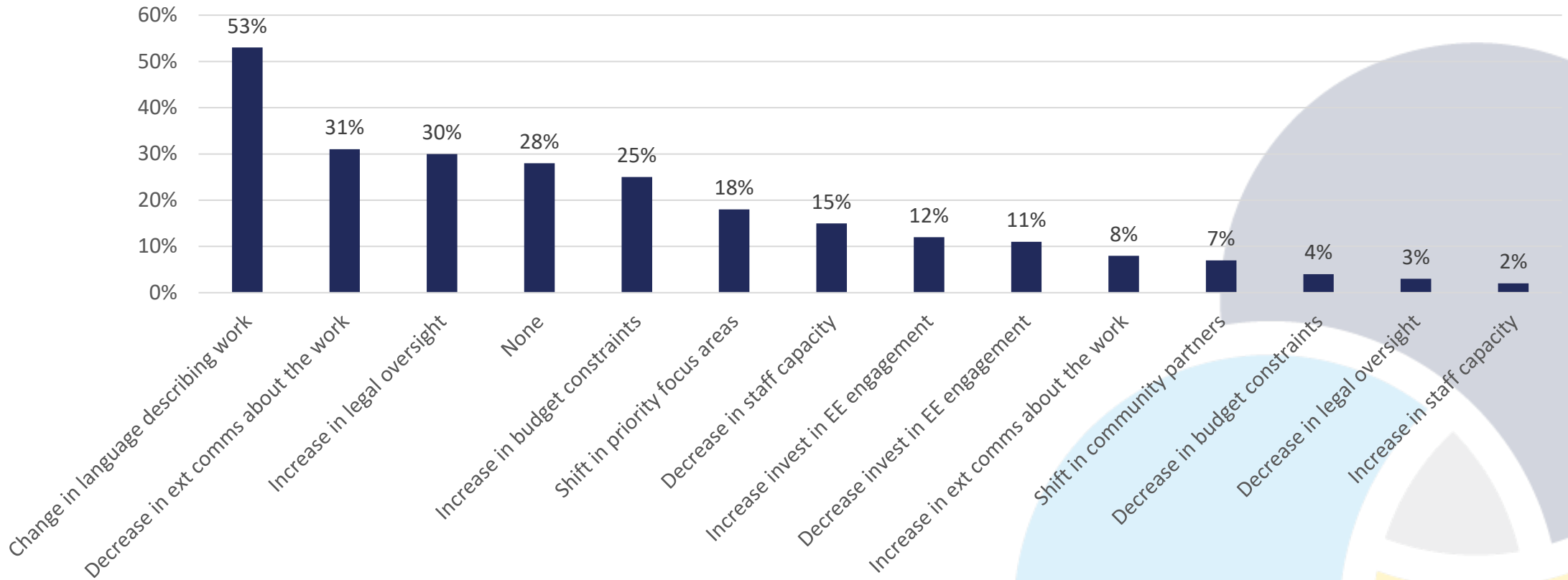
# Key Takeaways

**PRIMARY TAKEAWAY:** Corporations remain committed to corporate social responsibility programs and initiatives with 90% of respondents indicating they anticipate their company's commitment will stay the same or increase under the new Presidential administration because there are strong business benefits of these programs including improved recruitment and retention, revenue growth and strengthening trust and brand loyalty.

## **SECONDARY TAKEAWAYS:**

- CSR professionals anticipate their programs will be impacted mostly through changes to communications and legal oversight.
- CSR professionals anticipate shifts that move away from DEI focused programs and a move to more non-partisan and neutral issues, as well as initiatives that are aligned to overall business strategy.

# Q1: How do you anticipate your company's corporate social impact programs and initiatives being impacted under a new Presidential administration? (select all that apply)



# Key Themes From Q1

- 1. Shifts in Communication & Messaging** - 53% of respondents anticipate a change in language describing their work. 31% expect to decrease external communications. Some respondents noted that the Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action in 2023 had already influenced these trends, independent of the new federal administration.
- 2. Increase in Legal Oversight** - 30% of respondents expect increased legal oversight of their programs, likely due to shifting regulations, shifts in public sentiment, and the political demonization of DEI. This trend started after the 2023 Supreme Court ruling on affirmative action.
- 3. Financial and Budget Considerations** - 25% anticipate increased budget constraints, while only 4% expect an increase in funding. Some companies made 2025 budgetary decisions months ago and are now evaluating future financial commitments. Financial performance from 2024 is driving budget decisions more than the political landscape.
- 4. Adjustments to Program Priorities & Partnerships** - 18% of respondents expect a shift in priority focus areas, indicating that some companies may reallocate resources toward initiatives that better align with business objectives. 7% foresee changes in community partners, possibly reflecting a reassessment of nonprofit relationships in response to policy changes or funding constraints. Some expect increased requests from nonprofits for corporate funding as federal support for certain programs may decline.

# Q2: If you chose “Shift in Priority Focus Area” in previous question please explain.

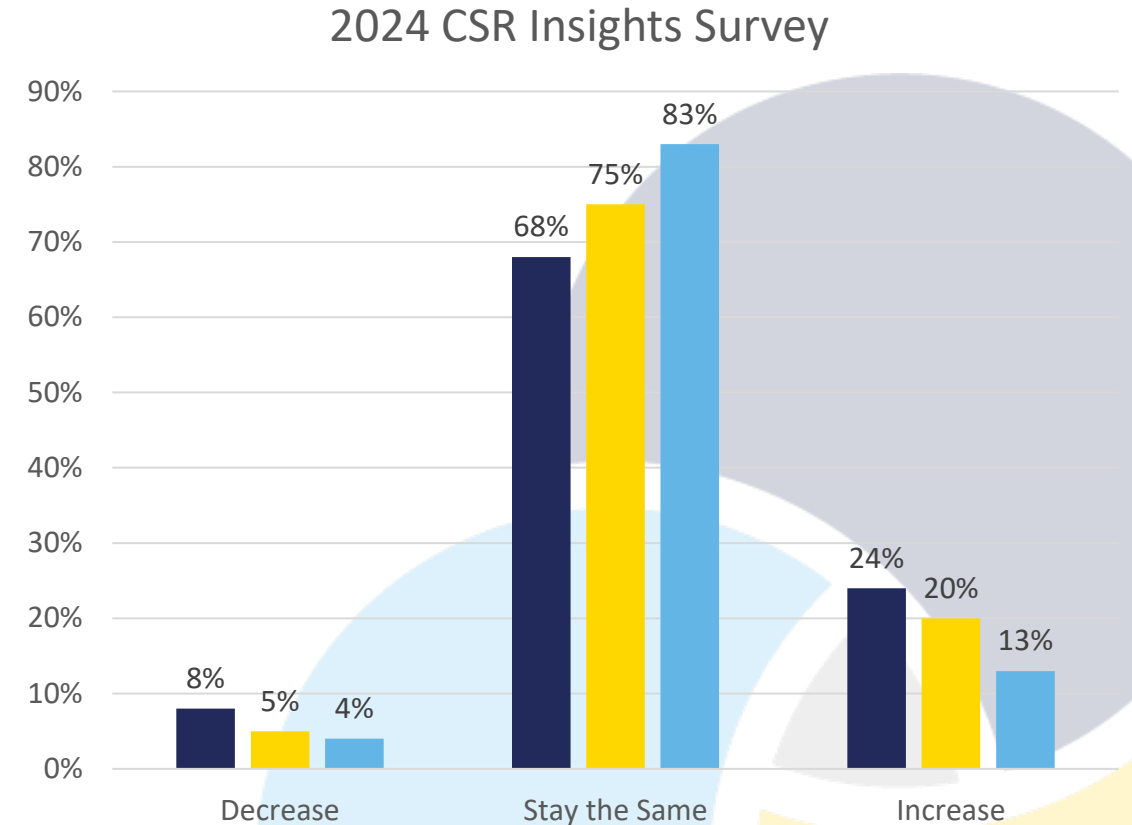
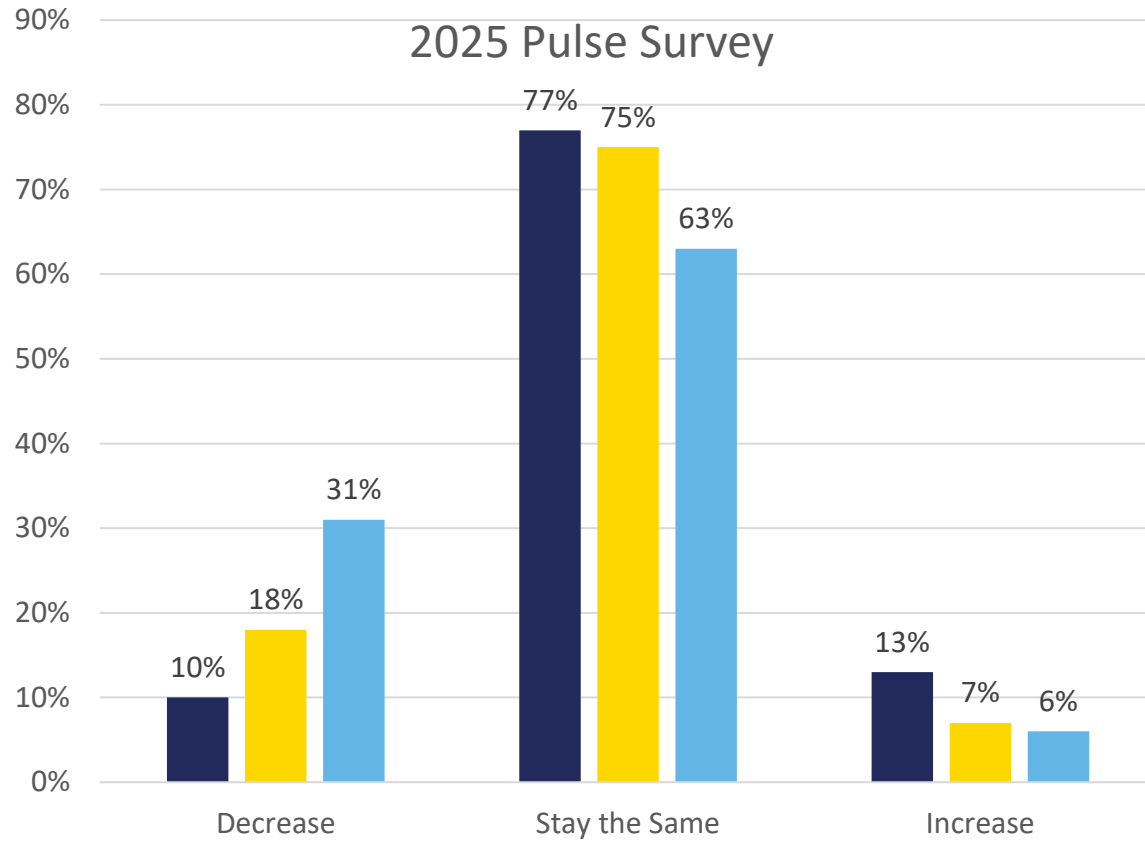
## KEY THEMES:

- 1. Moving Away from DEI-Focused Initiatives** - Some companies are shifting away from explicit equity-focused work, particularly LGBTQIA+ initiatives, racial equity funding, and supplier diversity programs. DEI efforts may continue internally, but public messaging and external communications will likely be reduced or rebranded.
- 2. Shifting to More "Neutral" or Bipartisan Issues** - Several respondents noted a shift towards more bipartisan or non-controversial issues, such as affordable housing and small business support instead of identity-based initiatives. More companies will frame social impact efforts in a way that aligns with business priorities, rather than explicitly linking them to DEI or ESG-related language.
- 3. Reevaluating Nonprofit Partnerships & Funding Priorities** - Companies are reassessing partnerships with nonprofits that focus on underrepresented communities. Some anticipate redirecting grants from DEI-driven organizations to larger, more established nonprofits or broader social impact programs. Some responses indicated a plan to increase funding in areas affected by new policies (e.g., immigration and food insecurity).
- 4. Potential Reduction in Environmental & Climate-Focused Messaging** - Some respondents mentioned less emphasis on climate action and sustainability initiatives.
- 5. Adapting to the Political Landscape & Business Priorities** - Organizations are anticipating policy shifts and are proactively building relationships with nonprofits to prepare for policy changes. Some expect corporate social impact focus areas to align more closely with corporate strategic priorities, ensuring business relevance and reducing perceived risk.

# Q3: If you chose “Change in language describing the work” in Q1, please explain.

- 1. Reducing or Reframing DEI and ESG Language** - Many respondents stated they are removing or softening language related to DEI and ESG. Some mentioned reducing storytelling around DEI initiatives and shifting to fact-based, business-aligned reporting. Some companies are avoiding explicit references to DEI and ESG. Instead, they are using neutral terms like:
  - "Belonging" instead of DEI
  - "Sustainability" instead of ESG
  - "Inclusion" instead of "Diversity and Equity"
  - "Corporate Citizenship" or "Social Impact" instead of ESG/DEI
- 2. Softening or Eliminating Race- and Identity-Based Language** - Some companies are moving away from explicitly race-based DEI efforts and instead framing initiatives under economic mobility, opportunity, and accessibility. A few respondents noted that "for all" and "inclusion" will replace references to specific demographics.
- 3. Moving Toward More Neutral and Business-Aligned Framing** - Some respondents expect more scrutiny from legal teams when reviewing DEI & ESG-related language, ensuring alignment with business priorities. Several companies are shifting focus toward "bipartisan" or "neutral" issues, such as:
  1. Small business support instead of supplier diversity
  2. STEM education instead of underserved communities' education
  3. Community engagement instead of targeted DEI initiatives
  4. Job training and workforce development instead of equity programs.

# How do you anticipate your company's commitment to CSR, ESG and DEI will change under the new Presidential Administration?



# Commitment to CSR, ESG & DEI Trends

- 1. Commitment to Corporate Social Responsibility Remains Strong** – 90% of respondents expect their company's CSR commitments to stay the same or increase. This compares to 92% in 2024. This suggests that CSR programs are viewed as valuable business initiatives and are less likely to be perceived as a potential liability in the current political environment.
- 2. ESG Commitments remain strong but declined compared to previous year**- 82% of respondents expect their company's commitment to ESG to remain the same or increase. That's an 11% decline compared to 2024 when 92% of respondents expected their company's commitment to ESG to stay the same or increase. The biggest change was in the percent of respondents that thought their company's commitment to ESG would increase (7% in 2025 compared to 21% in 2024). This reflects the growing regulatory and political scrutiny around ESG in the U.S., particularly in relation to environmental sustainability and governance policies.
- 3. DEI Commitments Decreasing** – 69% of respondents expect their company's commitment to DEI to stay the same or increase. That is a 28% decrease compared to 2024 when 96% of respondents expected their company's commitment to DEI to stay the same or increase. Despite political pressure and shifts in public sentiment, a majority of respondents indicated that their company's commitment to DEI is steadfast, albeit with changes to communications and programs, because of the positive impacts such initiatives have on the business and in communities.