



ORANGE COUNTY NONPROFIT NEEDS ASSESSMENT

To ensure the
Orange County
nonprofit sector
thrives, we must
identify critical
actions TODAY.

THIS REPORT
WAS CREATED IN
PARTNERSHIP WITH:



On Behalf of the Samueli Foundation

Over the last three years, the Samueli Foundation has substantially increased its annual philanthropic payout and shows no signs of slowing down. Our grants payout, as reported in our 2022 990 form, was \$18.9M. Two short years later in 2024, we granted \$80.6M with \$45.8M invested in Orange County-based nonprofit organizations. I am humbled by Henry, Susan, and my other Samueli Foundation board colleagues' trust that my team and I will use these resources to deliver on our mission of creating well-being and opportunity for all in Orange County.

Our program team has a strong sense of our partners' needs as we pride ourselves on listening to and constantly learning from them. But these organic listening sessions and intuition are not enough when you are investing upwards of \$100M a year. We need the most comprehensive data and evidence from which we can be astute, informed investors in community betterment. We must constantly challenge our assumptions and never get stuck in a rut based on past giving practices.

We also appreciate we are not unique in wanting our work to be data-informed; all philanthropists want to invest with confidence in the things that create the greatest impact. This need for better data was the primary driver behind our decision to pilot this first-of-its-kind needs assessment, and to partner with Orange County Community Foundation so their leadership and donor base might also benefit from this knowledge.

I worked in federal health policy consulting in the early 2000s. Billions of dollars in healthcare legislation were influenced by powerful lobbyists representing insurance companies, hospitals, and care providers. Patients were routinely boxed out of the legislative process. I was deeply moved when I saw a cancer patient group outside a Capitol Hill briefing chanting "nothing about us without us."

That saying stuck with me for the last 25 years and heavily influenced the design of this assessment. It observes the social sector from the inside out, versus from the outside looking in. Everything you read captures the experiences and needs of the social sector as told to us by those who run it, live it, and are determined to see it deliver for our community.

"This report observes the social sector from the inside out, versus from the outside looking in."

LINDSEY SPINDLE

We are carefully studying this assessment, looking for opportunities to reengineer our giving where it makes sense. We look forward to working with others to ensure Orange County can be the model American county for delivering on well-being and opportunity for all.

Lindsey Spindle

President, Samueli Family Philanthropies

Transforming Orange County's Nonprofit Future Happens Together

The nonprofit sector in Orange County plays a critical role in meeting the diverse needs of our communities, often serving as the cornerstone of pragmatism, business creativity, and hope in times of challenge. Today, these challenges are more pronounced than ever. As federal COVID-era funding diminishes, nonprofits are navigating an economy that is experienced unevenly and inequitably. Soaring costs of living and financial instability put painful pressure on Orange County residents, who then turn toward the social sector for enhanced support.

Nonprofits are more than service providers; they are essential businesses delivering vital solutions to our communities. They prevent homelessness, strengthen families, and expand access to healthcare by rethinking traditional delivery systems. However, they often operate within constrained funding models that undervalue the true cost of impact and true benefit of their contribution. To achieve their missions, nonprofits require strategic investments in infrastructure, systems, and talent—not just to maintain services, but to innovate and thrive.

From my experience in the nonprofit sector and now working in the philanthropic space with the Samueli Foundation, I have seen nonprofits continuously rise to these challenges. Delivering high-quality services requires significant investments—not just in programs, but in the people, spaces, and structures that support them.

EMERGING THEMES FROM THE REPORT

Investing in Staff and Leadership

Nonprofits need competitive salaries to recruit and retain skilled staff, along with ample professional development opportunities to build leadership and operational capacity. For instance, training in best practices for a population and ethical storytelling can transform a board into strategic ambassadors for an organization's mission. Similarly, equipping staff with skills in evolving areas like government contracting, employment law, and nonprofit trends ensures organizations remain compliant, innovative, and effective in navigating a complex landscape.

“Nonprofits are more than service providers; they are essential businesses delivering vital solutions to our communities.”

DR. SHAUNTINA SORRELLS

Strengthening Systems and Structures

Nonprofits require crucial infrastructure to deliver services effectively, yet many face chronic underfunding in this area. Investments in systems and technology can unlock efficiency, enabling organizations to better measure impact, identify service gaps, and adapt to changing community needs. For example, funding for advanced data systems allows

nonprofits to share information across sectors, fostering collaboration and creating a clearer picture of the challenges facing our communities.

Physical spaces, too, are more than just places—they are tools for impact. Transforming environments to be purpose-built for the populations they serve ensures that nonprofits can meet people where they are. Whether it's designing spaces for those who have experienced trauma, creating youth-friendly resource hubs, or equipping multipurpose facilities to foster collaboration, these investments ensure nonprofits have the resources they need to drive meaningful outcomes and work well with others.

Building Trust and Collaboration

Collaboration among nonprofits, funders, and government agencies is vital to addressing systemic challenges. A recent partnership between nonprofits, a city housing authority, and a county agency demonstrated this power by housing over 100 youth exiting foster care. However, collaboration doesn't happen without deliberate investment in the infrastructure and trust-building processes that sustain these partnerships. Strong collaboration can lead to faster, more durable solutions, reducing redundancies and increasing efficiency across the social sector.

This report highlights the voices of nonprofit leaders who have shared these challenges and opportunities. It underscores the importance of trust-based philanthropy—not just as a concept, but as a practice

that empowers nonprofits to make decisions based on their expertise and knowledge of community needs. It calls on funders to invest boldly and strategically in the sector's sustainability, resilience, and impact. We plan on sharing the findings and recommendations with our community at all levels.

This effort would not have been possible without the incredible partnerships that brought it to life. I want to acknowledge Charitable Ventures, including Anne Olin, Limor Zimskind, Jacqueline Tran, and Robin Glover, for their leadership and dedication. My thanks also go to Jack Toan of JT Consulting Group and Adelante Partners, including James Alva, Francisco Barajas, Nina Torres, and Maria Morales, for their expertise and commitment. We are grateful for the insights and contributions of our academic partners at UC Irvine's School of Social Ecology, including Dr. Jon Gould, Dr. Jodi Quas, and Dr. Dara Sorkin, and for the strategic partnership of Lauren Shaughnessy from The Bridgespan Group, Shelley Hoss and Cathleen Otero from the Orange County Community Foundation.

To the nonprofit leaders who trusted us with their stories: Thank you. Your voices have guided this process and will continue to guide the investments and actions needed to elevate our sector. This report is not the end of the journey but the beginning of a critical conversation. Together, we can act on these findings, build strategic partnerships, and create a thriving social sector that serves all communities in Orange County.

With gratitude and commitment,

Dr. Shauntina Sorrells

Chief Program Officer, Samueli Foundation

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The Vital Role of Nonprofits in Orange County

Orange County, California — home to nearly 3.2 million residents¹ — embodies a vibrant and diverse community with evolving needs. Yet, beneath its iconic beaches and affluent enclaves lies a complex tapestry of needs that are as varied as the county’s population. Like many metropolitan areas in the nation, those needs are primarily met by a local ecosystem of government, nonprofit, and philanthropic stakeholders dedicated to the health and well-being of their surrounding communities and populations. This ecosystem is essential, yet it operates in an era of intense polarization marked by political, economic, and social uncertainty making it more challenging to predict and address policy impacts at the local level. In this context, strengthening the local network of nonprofit services is becoming even more critical to our communities.

The Orange County region is home to more than 15,000 registered nonprofit organizations²; only about 5,000 of these nonprofits, however, actively file Form 990. Far fewer are even considered “visible” nonprofits, staffed to provide essential services, driving employment and addressing workforce development, meeting critical public health needs,

and addressing the impacts of economic insecurity, among many other supports. Nonprofits fill service gaps that are not covered by government programs, provide culturally responsive services to meet the needs of Orange County’s diverse communities, and are a critical economic engine, employing tens of thousands of residents.

Compared to other areas of the nation, Orange County is a “young” metropolitan service area, which can be seen in both its foundations and its nonprofits. Few institutions have celebrated their 100th birthday here. The larger percentage of younger, smaller nonprofit organizations can also be seen in the underdeveloped nature of the regional social sector, which in turn brings challenges in leadership, governance, management, and accessing funding, and ultimately, the stability of the social sector network. Despite the numbers and the needs, there remains a limited understanding of the capacities of these nonprofit organizations and what types of investment could best strengthen the nonprofit sector in Orange County.

The 2024–2025 Orange County Community Indicators Report reveals pressing challenges that underline the essential roles nonprofits play in the region.³

For example:

- **Economic Inequity:** Nearly 10% of Orange County residents live below the federal poverty line, with many more hovering just above it, especially in communities of color.
- **Housing Instability:** With a median home price exceeding \$1M, Orange County faces a severe housing affordability crisis, contributing to homelessness and displacement.
- **Public Health Concerns:** Disparities in health outcomes persist, particularly for low-income residents and communities of color, as demonstrated by higher rates of chronic diseases and continued challenges with timely and quality access to healthcare.

Without adequately resourced nonprofits, these challenges will grow more severe – communities left without vital support, families pushed further into poverty, and a social safety net at risk of unraveling. In addition, if left under-resourced, the repercussions will extend beyond those directly affected. Nonprofits are a critical part of the local economy, not only as service providers but also as employers. They contribute to workforce development and stimulate economic activity. A weakened nonprofit sector would exacerbate the region’s challenges, increasing reliance on overburdened public systems and jeopardizing community well-being.

Acknowledging these gaps, the Samueli Foundation, whose philanthropy in large part centers around the Orange County community, commissioned a nonprofit needs assessment of the Orange County region. Partnering with Charitable Ventures, a regional nonprofit and consulting firm, the research effort was designed to identify both the strengths and organizational capacity needs of local organizations that, if bolstered and addressed, could support long-term sustainability of critical social sector services.

The overarching goal of this effort, and the guiding question of the research project was this: What is needed TODAY to ensure the Orange County nonprofit sector thrives and grows? What follows are the results of the assessment and a road map for action not only for the Orange County region, but with potential relevance for other regions as well.

1 U.S. Census Bureau, 2022 American Community Survey, Table P-1

2 IRS Exempt Organization Business Master File, 2023

3 2024–2025 Orange County Community Indicators, 25th Anniversary Report (<https://ocbc.org/2024-2025-community-indicators-report/>)

Key Insight

01

Investing in Staff and Leadership

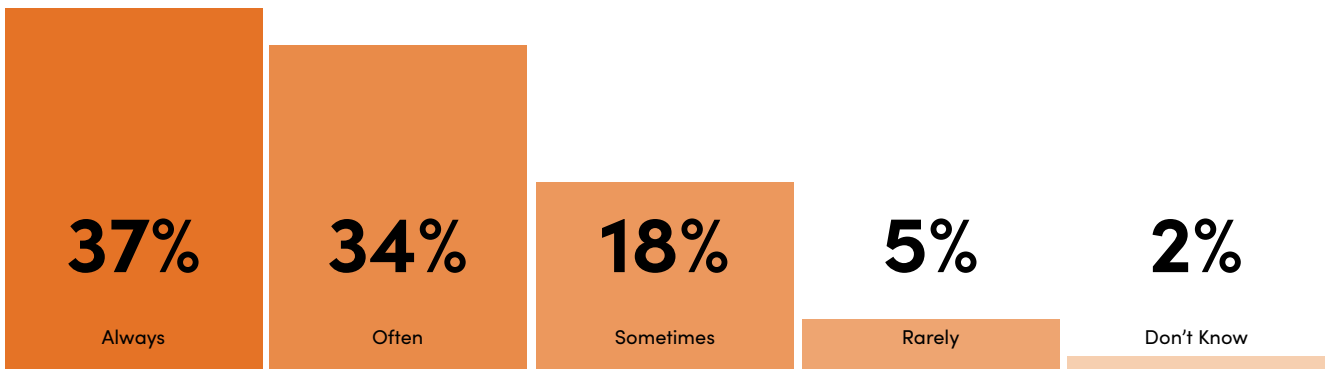
A significant challenge facing nonprofits is staffing limitations, which directly impact their ability to achieve long-term impact. Many organizations operate with lean teams, requiring employees to take on multiple roles, often leading to burnout and diminished efficiency.

Staffing Gaps and Overextension

Survey results highlight the widespread reliance on staff to perform multiple functions, stretching resources thin and affecting operational effectiveness.

Reliance on Existing Staff for Multiple Roles

How often do nonprofit employees take on multiple roles?

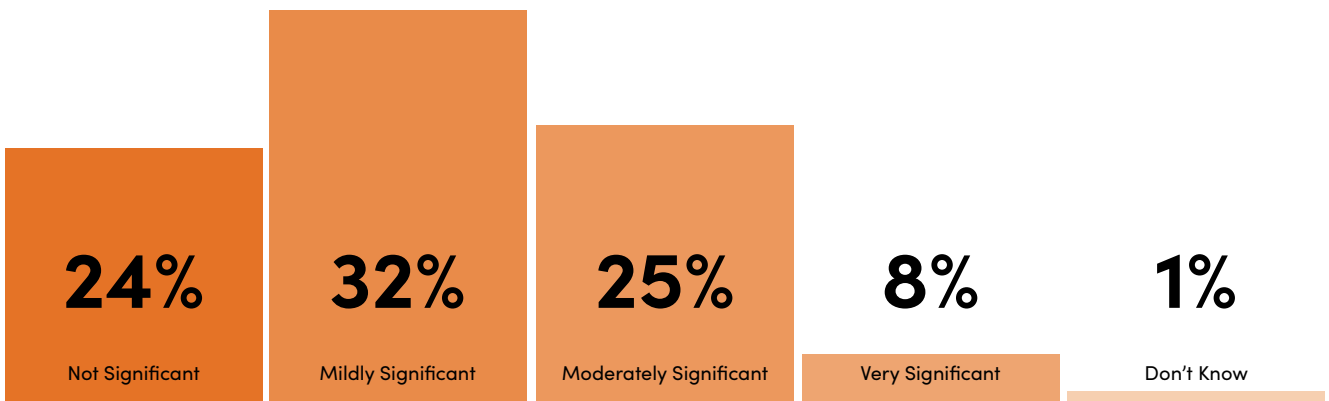


Appendix 1A, Figure 15

Over 70% of survey respondents reported depending on staff to take on multiple roles, with 37% always and 34% often doing so.

Impact of Staff Turnover

How significant is staff turnover for nonprofits?



Appendix 1A, Figure 17

33% of survey respondents identified staff turnover as a “very” or “moderately” significant problem.

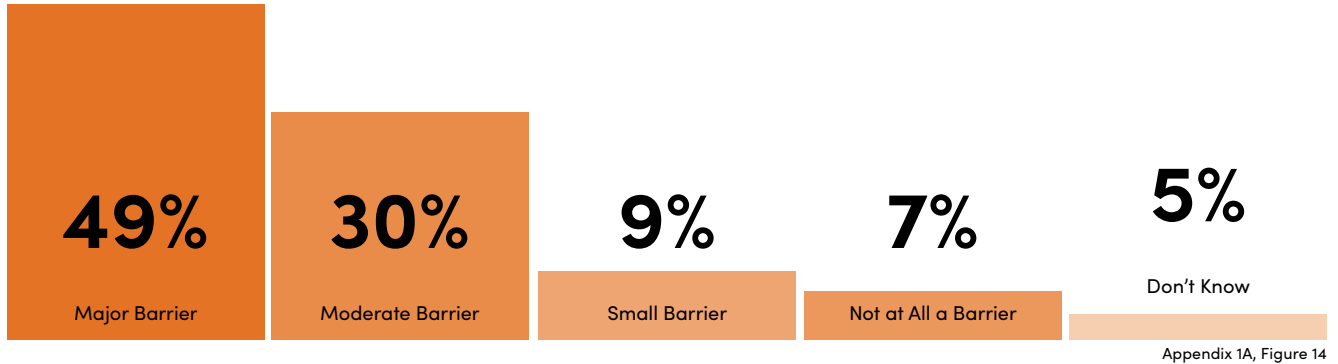
Focus group participants frequently cited an overreliance on volunteers to fill operational gaps, further exacerbating instability.

Attracting and Retaining Talent

Recruiting and retaining staff with the skills necessary to meet nonprofit missions is a pressing challenge. Many organizations struggle to provide competitive compensation and benefits, limiting their ability to attract and retain experienced professionals.

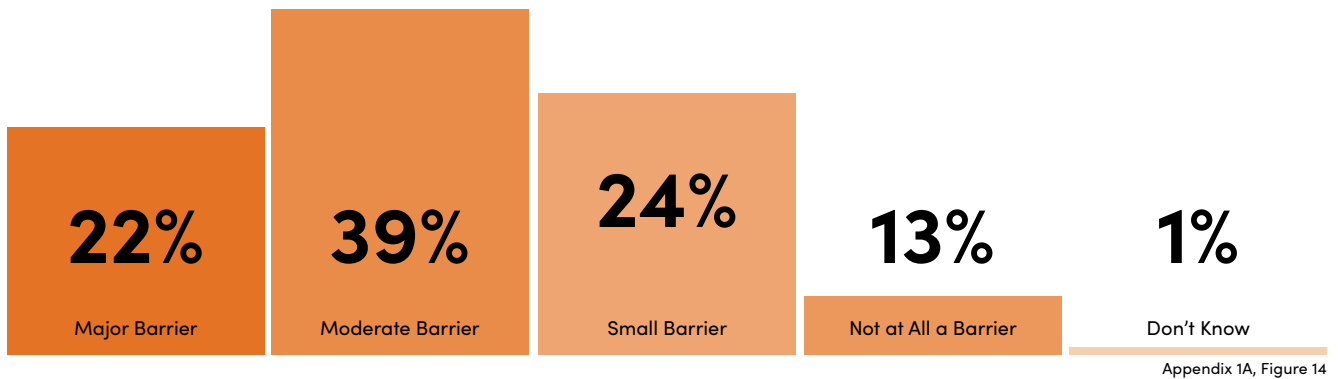
Barriers to Offering Competitive Salaries

To what extent is offering competitive salaries a challenge for nonprofits?



49% of survey respondents stated that not being able to offer competitive salaries is a “major barrier” to securing and maintaining required skills and knowledge.

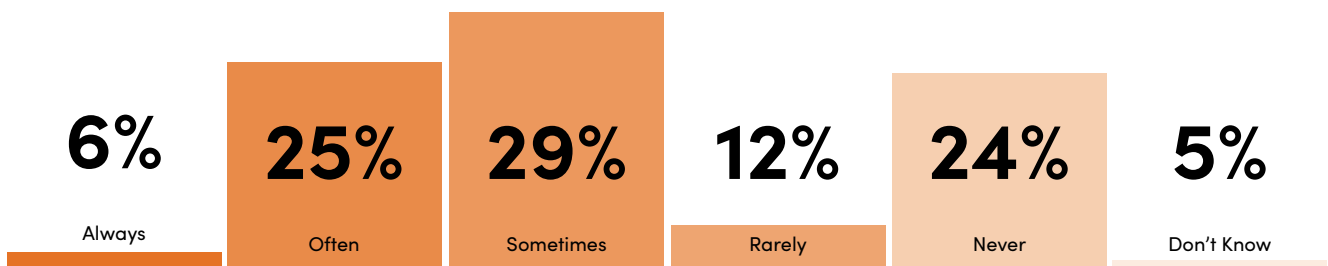
Finding Talent to Fill Key Roles



61% of survey respondents reported difficulty in attracting qualified talent to fill key roles.

Focus group discussions highlighted that specialized roles in finance, HR, and fundraising are particularly difficult to recruit, leading to inefficiencies.

Staff Leaving for Better Opportunities



The most common reason nonprofits lose talent is for a promotion or education, with 60% of respondents reporting that staff leave "often" or "sometimes," compared to lower occurrences of personal reasons, remote work, or relocation.

Reliance on External Expertise

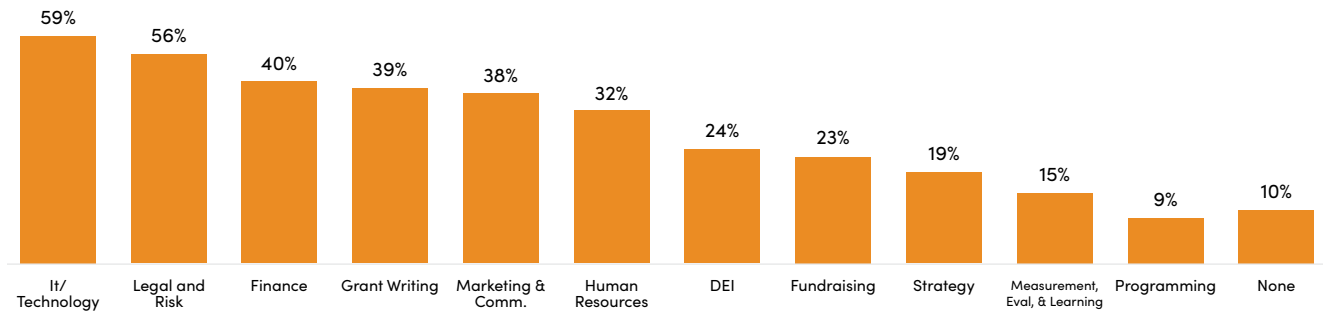
A significant number of organizations lack the internal resources necessary to manage key operational functions and rely on external consultants for critical support, especially in IT and legal services. While external support can be invaluable, it comes at a cost and requires oversight from already overburdened staff.

NONPROFIT VOICES

Our team is stretched thin...most of us juggle multiple responsibilities that affect our efficiency and ability to innovate.

Use of External Expertise for Key Priorities

Which areas do nonprofits rely on external consultants for?

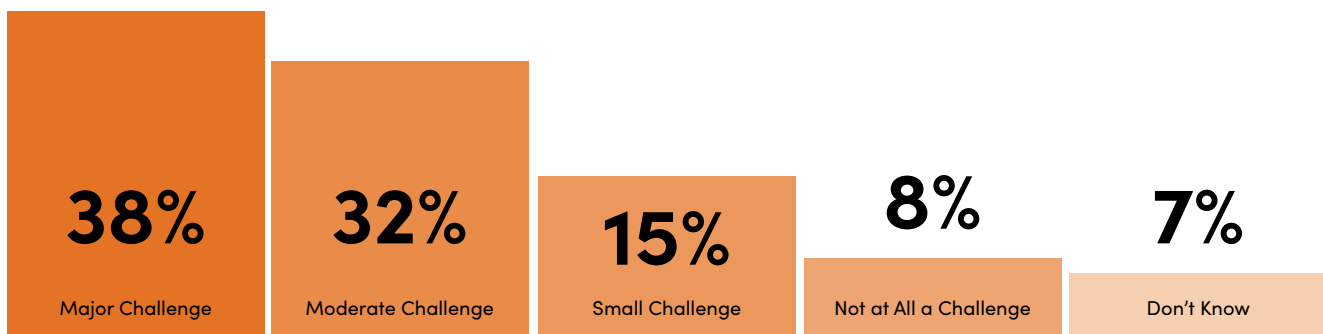


Appendix 1A, Figure 24

59% of survey respondents rely on external personnel for IT/Technology needs, and 56% for legal and risk support.

Challenges in Securing External Personnel Resources

How difficult is it for nonprofits to afford and find external professional services (IT, legal, finance, etc.)?



Appendix 1A, Figure 25

70% of survey respondents cited costs as a "major" or "moderate" challenge in accessing these external services.

Focus group participants expressed frustration over the difficulty of finding reliable consultants, further increasing operational strain.

Key Insight

02

Infrastructure and Financial Sustainability

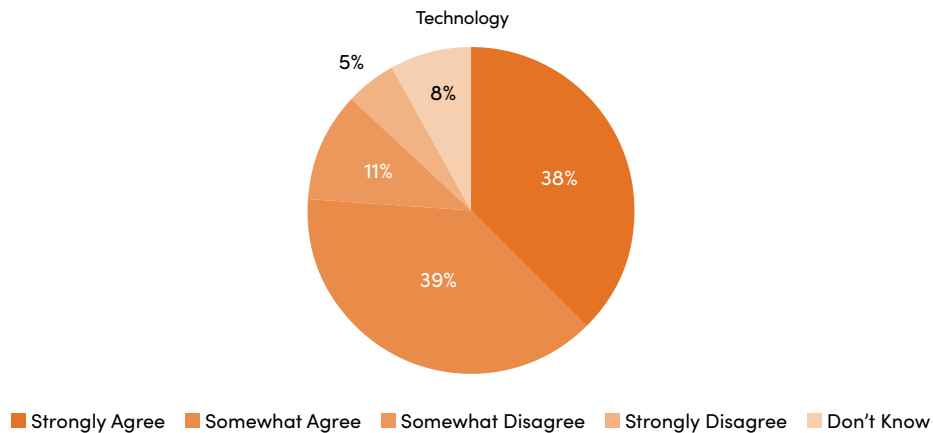
Many nonprofits struggle with outdated infrastructure and financial instability, limiting their ability to scale and adapt. The assessment highlighted key concerns around access to updated technology, financial capital, and sustainable governance structures.

Outdated Technology and Systems

Technology is increasingly critical to nonprofit operations, yet many organizations lack the necessary tools to track performance, engage with stakeholders, and manage data efficiently. Many organizations continue to rely on outdated CRMs, performance tracking, and program data systems, limiting their ability to scale services.

Investment Needs in Technology, Systems, and Infrastructure

Would investments in technology help nonprofits better achieve their goals?



Appendix 1A, Figure 33

Capacity investments such as upgrading technology and shared data systems were consistently cited as key needs.

Marketing and digital presence also surfaced as areas requiring investment to improve fundraising and community engagement.

NONPROFIT VOICES

Without flexible funding, we're stuck in a cycle of survival, unable to plan ahead or build the capacity needed to truly thrive.

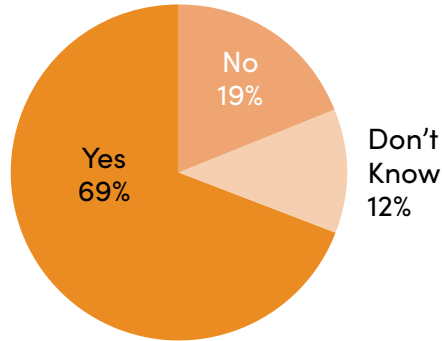
Insufficient Financial Capital

Financial constraints continue to pose challenges for nonprofit growth and sustainability.

Many organizations operate with limited cash reserves and have difficulty securing financing or credit.

Availability of Cash Reserves

Do nonprofits have financial reserves?

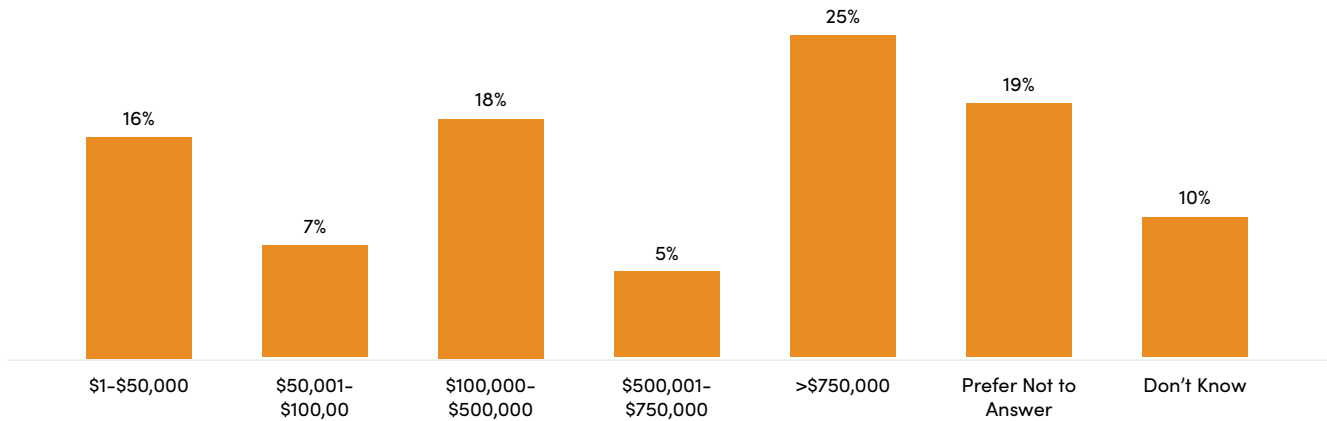


Appendix 1A, Figure 20 & 21

69% of respondents reported having a cash reserve, but 19% did not, and 12% were unsure.

Nonprofit Cash Reserve Amounts

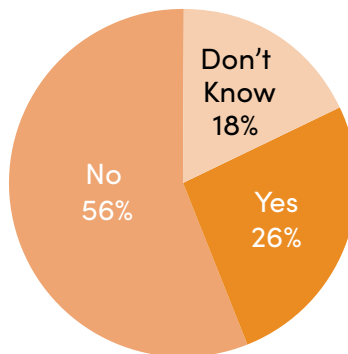
If yes, on average, how much do they typically hold?



Appendix 1A, Figure 21

Access to Credit or Loans

How many nonprofits have access to credit or loans for financial stability?



Appendix 1A, Figure 22

56% of respondents do not have access to credit or loans, severely limiting their ability to manage cash flow volatility.

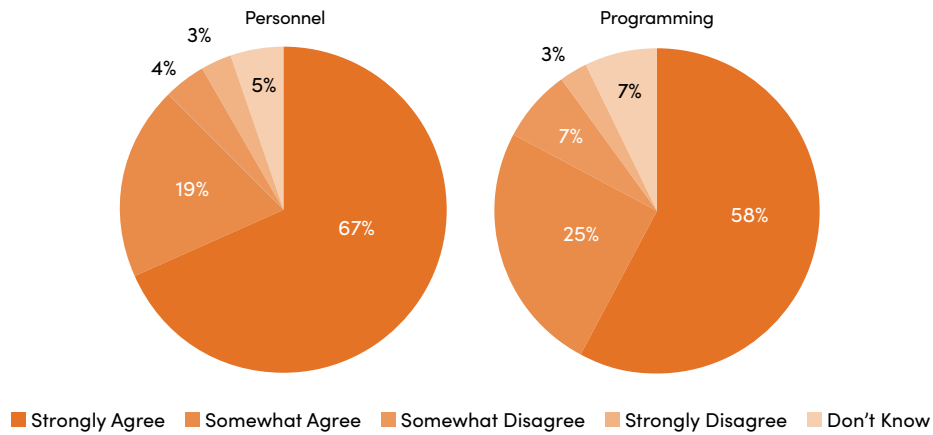
Flexible Capital to Invest in Operations

Focus group discussions revealed that nonprofits continue to struggle with securing funding for operations, leading to undercapitalization of infrastructure and systems.

At the same time, survey and focus group data indicate that nonprofit leaders prioritize unrestricted funding for personnel and programming over infrastructure and systems, reflecting the immediate operational demands they face.

Personnel and Programming Are Priorities for Nonprofit Funding

Where do nonprofits prioritize unrestricted funding?



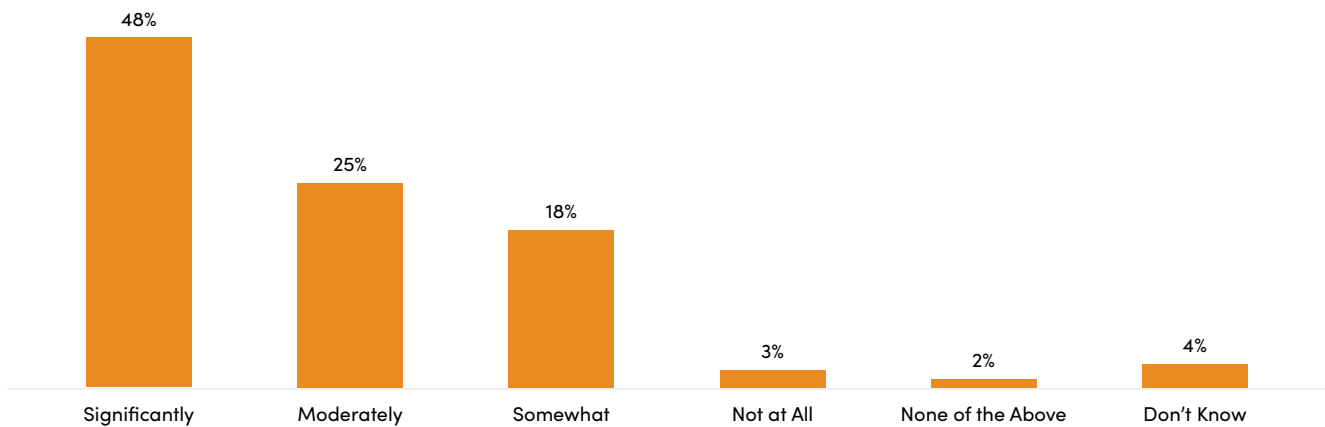
Appendix 1A, Figure 33

Governance Challenges

A well-functioning board is essential for strategic decision-making and long-term stability. However, nonprofits expressed challenges related to board engagement, training, and governance practices.

Board Contribution to Strategic Direction

How actively do nonprofit boards shape organizational strategy?



Appendix 1A, Figure 27

48% of respondents reported that their boards significantly contribute to strategic decision-making yet focus group discussions highlighted gaps in board engagement and training.

During focus groups, participants surfaced issues that create barriers to growth and innovation such as Founder Syndrome, the need for clarity on roles and responsibilities, and term limits, which also foster diversity.

Key Insight

03

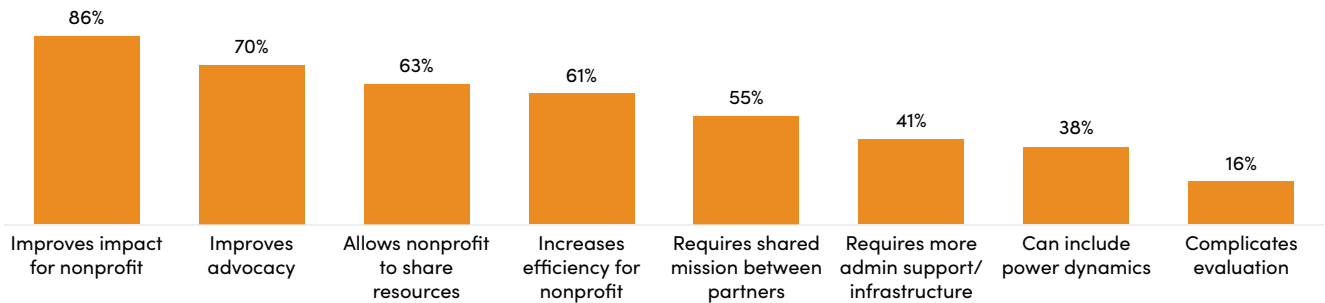
Collaboration

Collaboration among nonprofits can improve service delivery, increase efficiency, and strengthen community impact. While many organizations see collaboration as a powerful tool, significant barriers prevent deeper, more sustained partnerships.

Benefits of Collaboration

Many nonprofits recognize the value of collaboration and actively seek opportunities to partner with other organizations.

How can collaboration benefit nonprofits?



Appendix 1A, Figure 31

86% of respondents agreed that collaboration enhances impact, while 70% said it improves advocacy.

Participants in focus groups and Town Hall highlighted that collaboration enhances resource sharing, expands funding opportunities, and improves community outcomes.



NONPROFIT VOICES

Without dedicated funding or structured opportunities for collaboration, partnerships often feel like an additional burden rather than a solution.



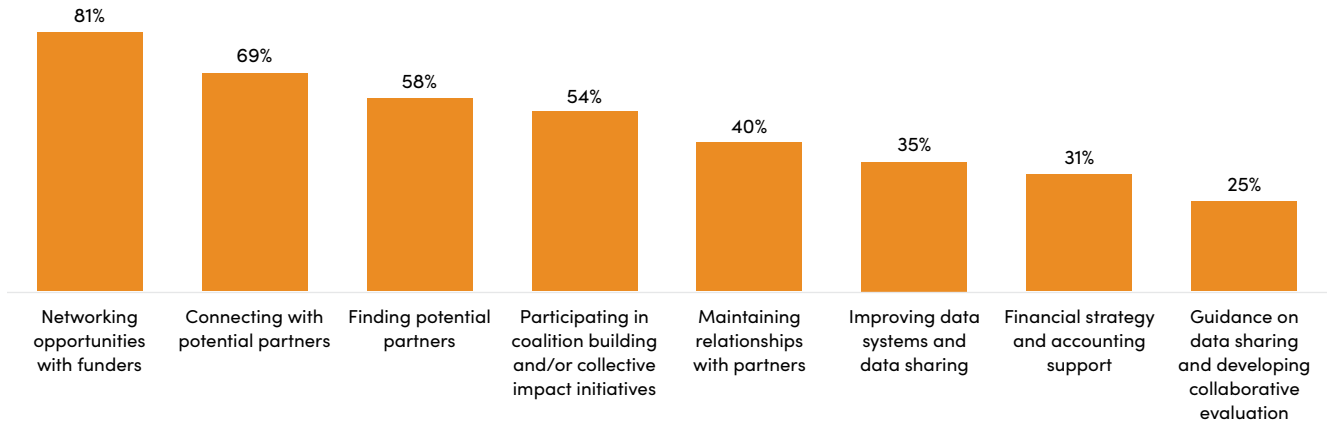
Barriers to Collaboration

Despite widespread agreement that collaboration strengthens nonprofit impact, significant structural and financial barriers limit deeper partnerships.

Focus group and Town Hall participants emphasized that effective collaboration requires leadership commitment, dedicated staff time, and structured coordination—resources that many nonprofits struggle to secure.

Collaboration Opportunities to Strengthen Organizations

What types of collaborations would most benefit nonprofits?



Appendix 1A, Figure 19

Focus group discussions confirmed that opportunities for collaboration are limited due to competitive funding and a “scarcity mindset” in the sector.

Participants noted that many organizations find it difficult to allocate staff capacity for partnership-building, often treating it as secondary to immediate service delivery.



NONPROFIT VOICES

Funders often focus on shiny new projects, but what we need are resources to sustain what’s already working and make it better.



According to participants, competitive grant structures compel nonprofits to prioritize direct service delivery over building long-term partnerships.

Limited financial support for collaborative efforts was identified as a barrier preventing organizations from investing in shared initiatives.

Key Insight

04

Orange County Funding Practices

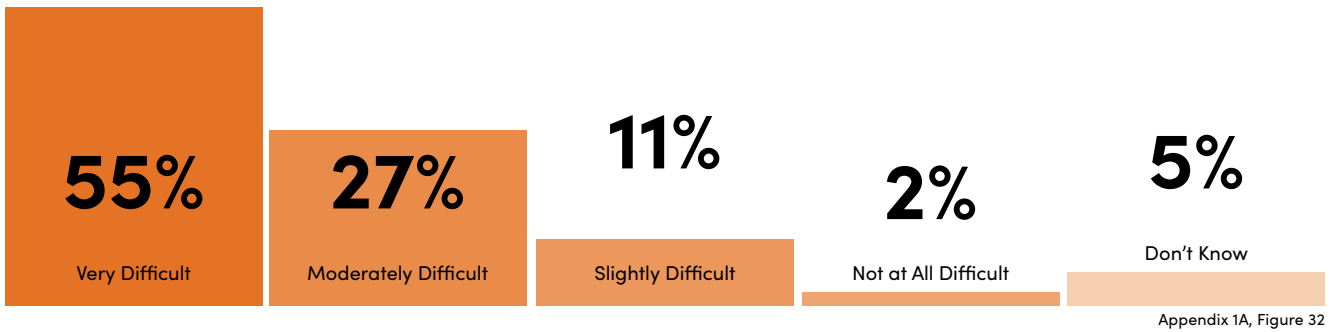
Nonprofits in Orange County operate under restrictive funding models that make it difficult to invest in long-term sustainability. The assessment revealed that organizations struggle to secure multi-year, unrestricted funding, limiting their ability to plan, retain staff, and invest in infrastructure.

Restricted and Short-Term Funding Models

Nonprofits expressed that the limitations of short-term, program-specific funding make it difficult to invest in essential infrastructure and long-term planning.

Gaining Access to Multi-year Funding

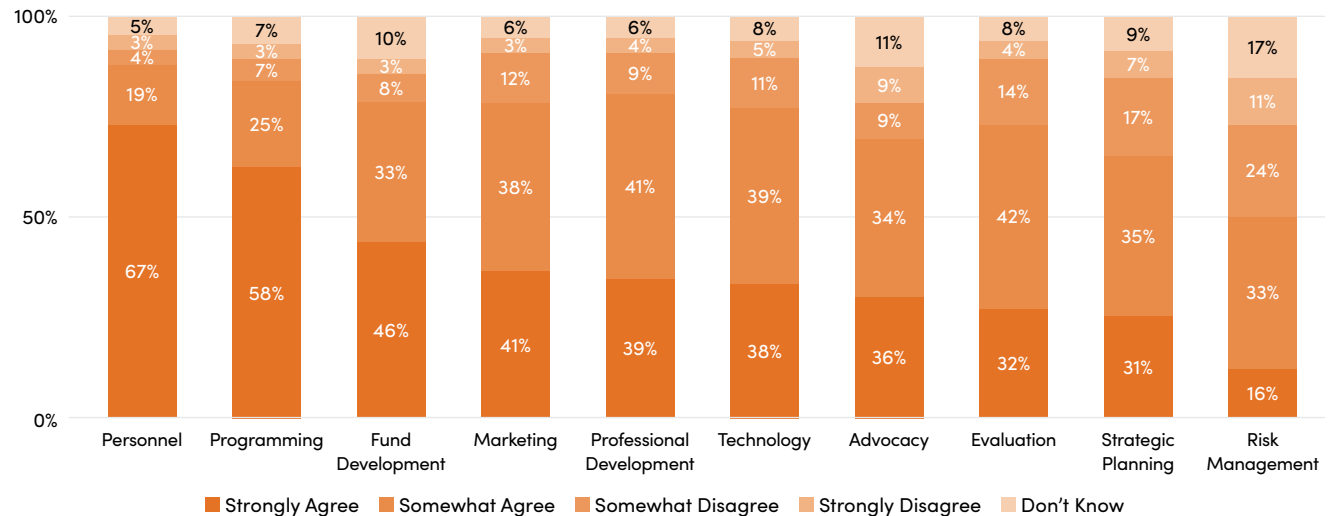
How challenging is it for nonprofits to secure multi-year funding?



82% of nonprofits found accessing multi-year funding "very" to "moderately" difficult.

Key Areas That Would Benefit from Unrestricted Funding

Where would unrestricted funding have the greatest impact?



Beyond personnel and programming, nonprofits would leverage unrestricted funding to gain access to specific expertise, with over two-thirds citing fund development and marketing as critical areas.

Focus group participants described short-term, program-specific grants as a major constraint that forces nonprofits to focus on immediate service delivery rather than long-term planning.

Nonprofits struggle with unpredictable funding, limiting their ability to retain talent and sustain operations beyond grant periods.

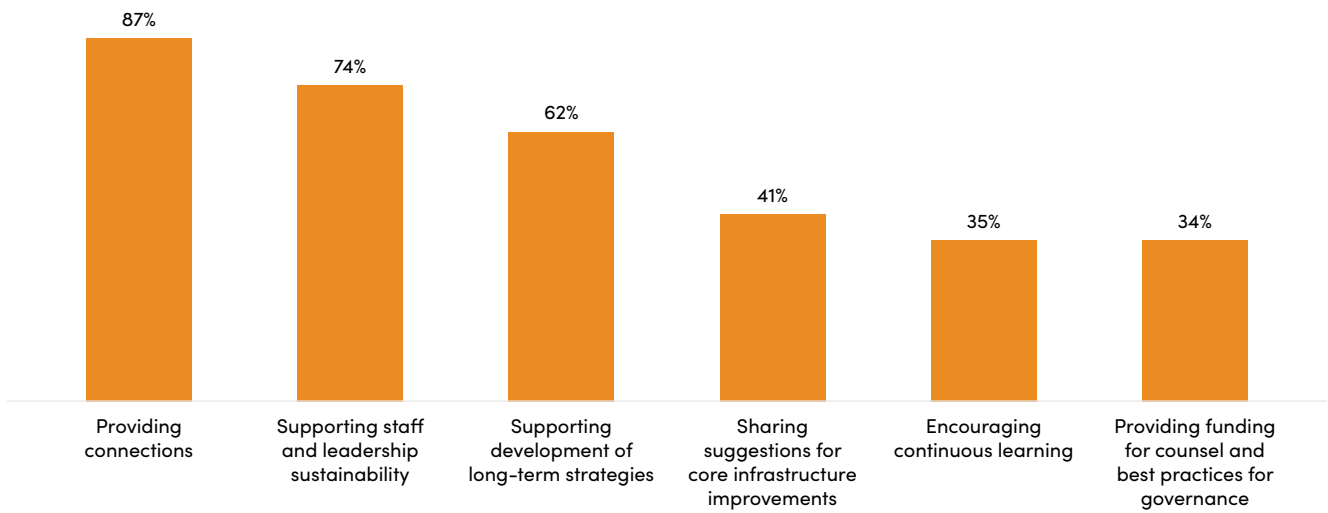
Some organizations reported that fundraising cycles and delayed government payments force them into short-term survival mode rather than allowing for strategic investment.

Role of Funders Beyond Investment

Beyond financial support, nonprofits expressed a need for funders to act as partners in strengthening the sector. Organizations would benefit from greater flexibility, strategic networking, and access to diverse funding sources.

Funder Support of Nonprofits Is Needed Beyond Financial Giving

How can local funders support nonprofits beyond providing additional funding?



Appendix 1A, Figure 34

87% of nonprofits see value in funders facilitating networking opportunities.

74% want more support for staff and leadership sustainability, and 69% desire connections to potential partners.

Nonprofit leaders expressed a need for funders to be fully invested partners, offering flexible practices, strategic introductions to other funders, and connections to capacity-building resources.



NONPROFIT VOICES

Unrestricted funding is the difference between just getting by and being able to actually grow and meet the community’s needs.



The background features a repeating pattern of orange and white geometric shapes, resembling a stylized floral or starburst design. The text is centered and presented in white, bold, sans-serif font, with each line of text contained within a yellow rectangular box.

**Coming together
around a shared
set of priorities to
shift behavior and
practice will benefit
Orange County
communities.**

CONCLUSION

Key Priorities to Advance Orange County's Social Sector

This assessment unearthed rich data about the current state of the Orange County nonprofit sector. Across the data collection efforts – via survey, focus groups, and a Town Hall – a consensus emerged on how practitioners and funders can work together to strengthen individual nonprofits and address structural challenges needed in the sector.

Across the data a clear message came through that working in isolation limits impact and coming together around a shared set of priorities to shift behavior and practice will benefit Orange County communities. A scarcity mindset has long constrained the sector, resulting in underdeveloped nonprofit capacity relative to what is needed. The findings from this research reveal a strong appetite for deeper partnerships and a willingness to work together.

Funders who are interested in driving toward enduring systemic change should consider beyond short-term, fragmented investments and commit to multi-year, flexible funding for both individual organizations and the collective capacity of the sector. This would allow nonprofits to prioritize investing in their people and systems that power their ability to serve communities and embrace collaboration to contribute to overall systemic change. Challenging outdated assumptions

and strengthening relationships via open dialogue, shared initiatives, and coordinated systems will transform regional collaboration from aspiration to reality.

By listening to the many voices in this research initiative and pairing the response with best practices in the sector, we identified a set of priorities that are needed to strengthen the Orange County social sector at both the organizational level and the collective level. Investments in both will allow the social sector in Orange County to be stronger, more resilient, and better positioned to serve the communities that depend on it.

What follows are practical and tangible ideas emerging from the assessment that deserve further exploration from regional stakeholders dedicated to strengthening the Orange County social sector through philanthropy and engagement.

Investments in Individual Organizations

The strength of the social sector lies in its people. Yet, underinvestment in talent has led to chronic challenges in staffing, recruitment, and turnover for Orange County's nonprofits. To build a resilient and effective nonprofit workforce, organizations and funders must prioritize skill development, market-based compensation, and board leadership that strengthen the effectiveness of individual nonprofits serving our communities.

Beyond talent investments, nonprofits must also invest in foundational infrastructure to operate effectively. While program funding is critical, and must be maintained, sustained investment in systems, technology, and operational support is essential for long-term stability and efficiency. Strengthening infrastructure allows organizations to manage resources effectively, scale impact, and enhance service delivery.

PRIORITIES

COMMIT TO SUPPORTING TRANSPARENT PAY STRUCTURES AND BENEFITS

Establish clear, standardized salary frameworks to promote pay equity and retention across the sector.

Advocate for and provide comprehensive benefits, including health insurance stipends, retirement contributions, and flexible work policies that support employee well-being in high burnout fields.

IDENTIFY OPPORTUNITIES TO CONNECT STAFF TO TRAINING, COACHING, AND MENTORSHIP

Expand access to leadership development programs, emphasizing financial management, strategic planning, and operational efficiency.

Invest in structured coaching and mentorship programs, particularly for emerging community leaders and professionals, to cultivate a strong and diverse leadership pipeline.

EMBRACE INNOVATIVE STAFFING MODELS TO INCREASE BOTH EFFICIENCY AND WELLNESS

Adopt shared or consultant leadership models, leveraging specialized expertise in areas like finance, HR, and IT through part-time or shared roles.

Expand participation in shared services programs that leverage shared systems such as shared staff, back-office functions, and insurance policies to reduce operational costs and enhance efficiency.

**INVEST IN SYSTEMS
AND TECHNOLOGY FOR
EFFICIENCY**

Promote awareness of the power of technology in achieving mission impact to encourage broader adoption across the sector.

Provide targeted grants specifically for investment in CRM systems, technology, and data tools to improve impact measurement and reporting.

**INVEST IN BOARD
DEVELOPMENT TO DEEPEN
UNDERSTANDING OF
NONPROFIT CHALLENGES**

Provide regular and ongoing board training on governance, compliance, best practices, fundraising, and role-specific skills needed to clarify role expectations and better stewardship of the organization's mission.

Assess board composition for skill and expertise gaps to help boards better support the nonprofits' mission and create board mobility opportunities.

Investments in Orange County's Social Sector Ecosystem

A thriving nonprofit sector requires more than individual organizational success—it demands a strong, interconnected ecosystem. Investing in the collective strength of Orange County's social sector means addressing some of the pervasive barriers that have uniquely prevented the sector from thriving. In Orange County, this includes shifting funder behavior and investing in support systems that can accelerate impact ranging from technical assistance, to research, to innovative financing mechanisms.

PRIORITIES

**COMMIT TO FUNDING
BEST PRACTICES**

Where possible, streamline application and reporting processes to increase accessibility to funding opportunities and minimize nonprofit burden.

Offer flexible funding criteria and provide multi-year grants that allow nonprofits to alleviate the pressures of short-term funding cycles and allow for longer range strategic planning.

Identify opportunities to support nonprofits "beyond the grant" – facilitating introductions and connections to resources that may otherwise be hard to access.

PRIORITIES

**IDENTIFY AND CATALYZE
SECTOR-WIDE INITIATIVES
DESIGNED TO BOLSTER
REGIONAL CAPACITY**

Support the development and growth of regional consultants and intermediaries that provide tailored support for nonprofits, especially those with lived experience to guide and support nonprofit initiatives.

Enhance connections and awareness to existing regional management service organizations, incubators, and capacity building hubs.

Invest to bring in additional training capacity that does not currently exist in Orange County to ensure nonprofit practitioners have access to sector best practices.

**INVEST IN CREATING BODIES
OF RESEARCH AND DATA THAT
WILL BENEFIT THE COLLECTIVE**

Invest behind research that can allow the sector to work from a shared understanding of data that would strengthen their work. This could range from competitive compensation and benefits research to understanding the key drivers of burnout to field-specific research – all at no cost to nonprofits.

**CREATE SPACE FOR AND
INCENTIVIZE COLLABORATION**

Create dedicated funding streams to incentivize bold, cross-sector collaboration on complex challenges such as homelessness, mental health, and workforce development. These grants should prioritize innovative, integrated solutions by supporting the infrastructure, staffing, and coordination necessary to sustain long-term partnerships. Funding should reward multi-organization efforts that drive systemic change and amplify collective impact.

Funders can invest in convening regular, meaningful forums for nonprofit stakeholders with a focus on fostering trust, encouraging alignment around regional priorities, and building a shared understanding of trends and challenges.

Create public-private funding collaborations that leverage government resources alongside philanthropic investments to increase the scale and sustainability of nonprofit services.

**CREATE INNOVATIVE
FINANCING MECHANISMS THAT
COUNTERACT RESTRICTIVE
FUNDING PRACTICES**

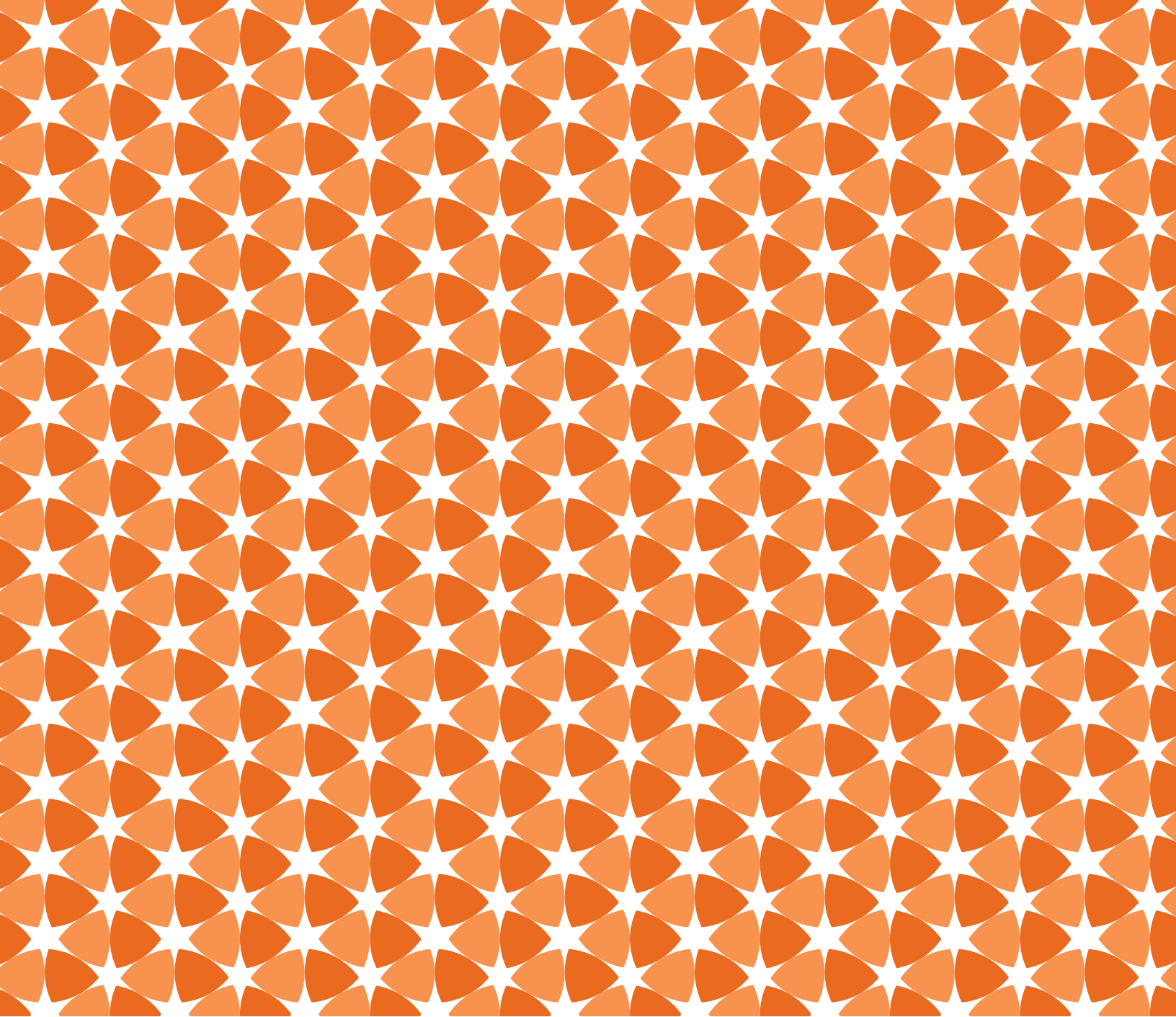
Develop a nonprofit revolving loan fund tailored to nonprofits' needs, using modified business lending models. These funds can provide access to working capital to secure government grants and reimbursable contracts more effectively.

Establish an unrestricted funding pool specifically for capacity-building activities such as technology upgrades, leadership development, and staff retention strategies.

Provide nonprofits with opportunities to apply for rolling capital grants that enable them to build equity, strengthen their financial positions, and support sustainable growth. Allow for flexible access that aligns with the nonprofit's unique operational cycles.

“Together, we can act on these findings, build strategic partnerships, and create a thriving social sector that serves all communities in Orange County.”

DR. SHAUNTINA SORRELLS



APPENDIX 1A

Detailed Survey Findings

Appendix 1A presents detailed findings from the survey analysis. Also presented are some of the statistically significant findings based on the staff size of the nonprofit, including:

- Small nonprofits: less than 10 staff
- Medium nonprofits: 10 to 99 staff
- Large nonprofits: 100 or more staff

See Appendix 1B: Survey Findings by Organization Size for the full survey findings by the size of the nonprofit organization along with significance testing.

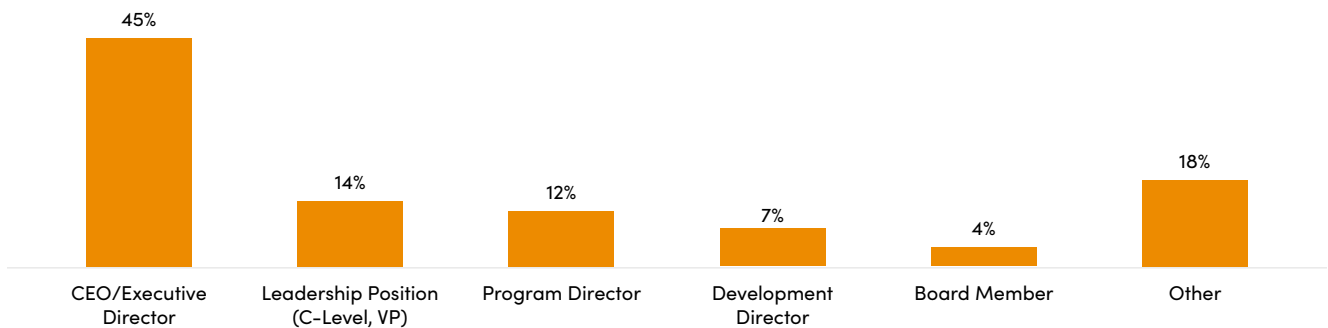
Background and Demographics

There were 607 respondents with a valid survey, representing 404 organizations.

Role in organization

Nearly half (45%) of respondents were CEO/Executive Directors of their organization. Another 14% indicated that they held C-Level or VP leadership positions.

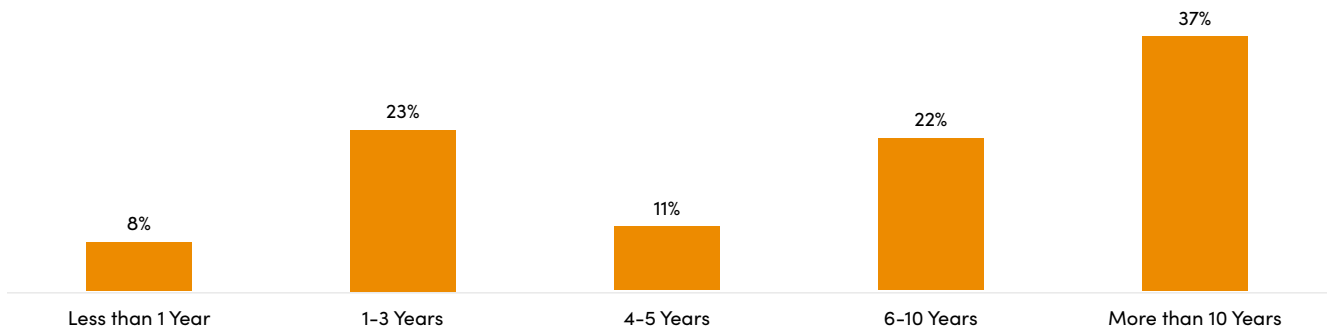
APX 1A: Figure 1. Role in Nonprofit Organization (n=607)



Time at nonprofit

Over one-third (37%) of respondents have been with their nonprofit organization for more than 10 years, while 8% have been with their organization for less than 1 year.

APX 1A: Figure 2. Time at organization (n=607)



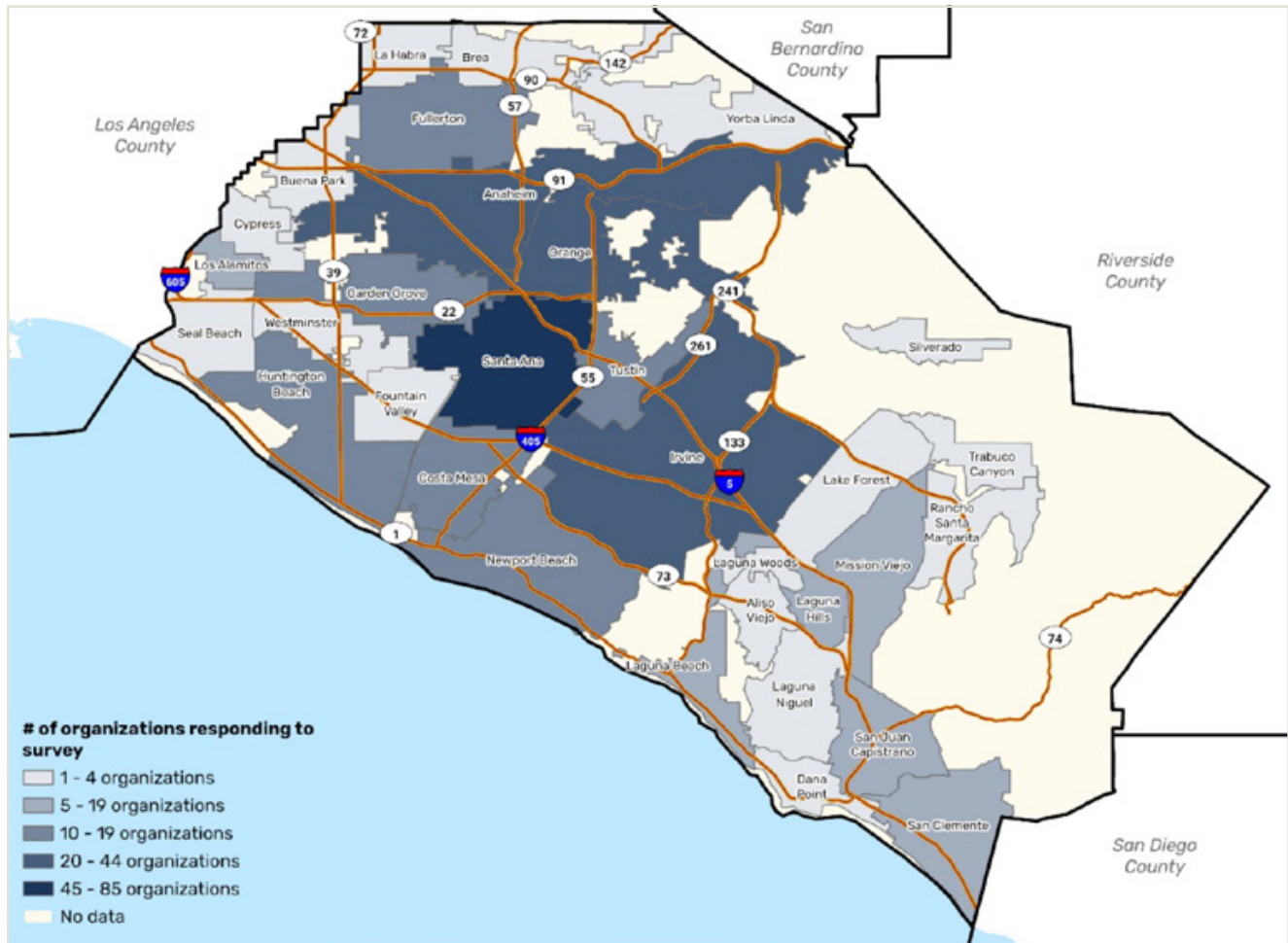
Key Organizational Characteristics

For the key organizational characteristics, only one response was included from each nonprofit organization that submitted a survey. Thus, if three respondents from the same organization replied to the survey, only one organization was included in the key organizational characteristics analysis.¹²

Physical location of nonprofits

Most of the nonprofits were physically located in central Orange County, with a plurality in Santa Ana.

APX 1A: Figure 3. Organizations Responding to Survey, by City Physically Located



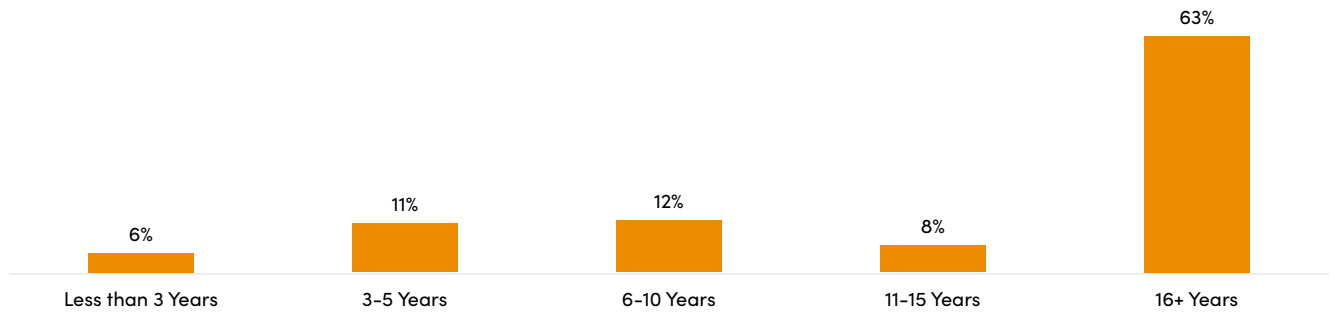
Years serving community

Almost two-thirds (63%) of the respondents indicated that their nonprofit has been serving its community for 16 or more years, while only 6% have been serving their community for less than three years.

While 46% of small nonprofits have been serving the community for 16 or more years, 74% of medium and 90% of large nonprofits have been serving the community for 16 or more years.

¹² Criteria for identifying which survey response to include: response with the most complete survey, followed by rank in respondent's role, and tenure at the organization.

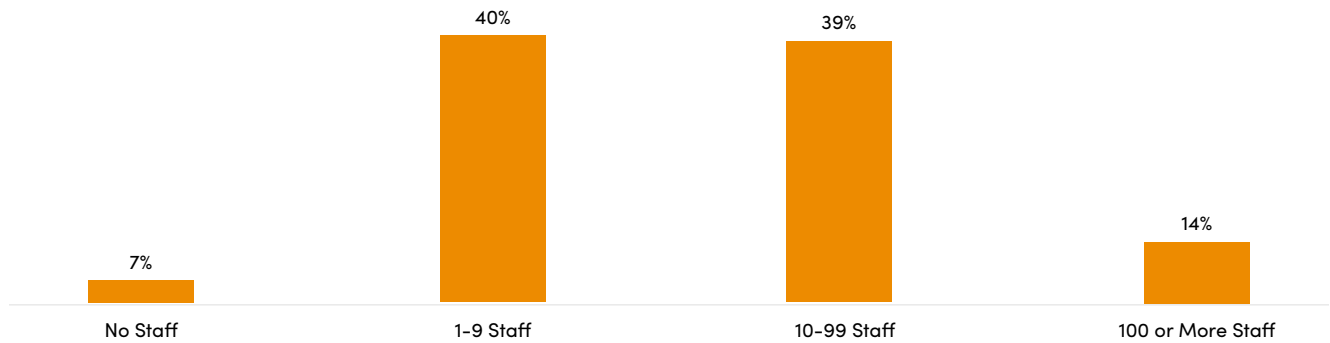
APX 1A: Figure 4. Years Nonprofit has Served its Community (n=404)



Number of staff employed

A plurality of organizations have one to nine staff employed, while 14% have 100 or more staff employed. Fully 7% of nonprofits have no staff.¹³

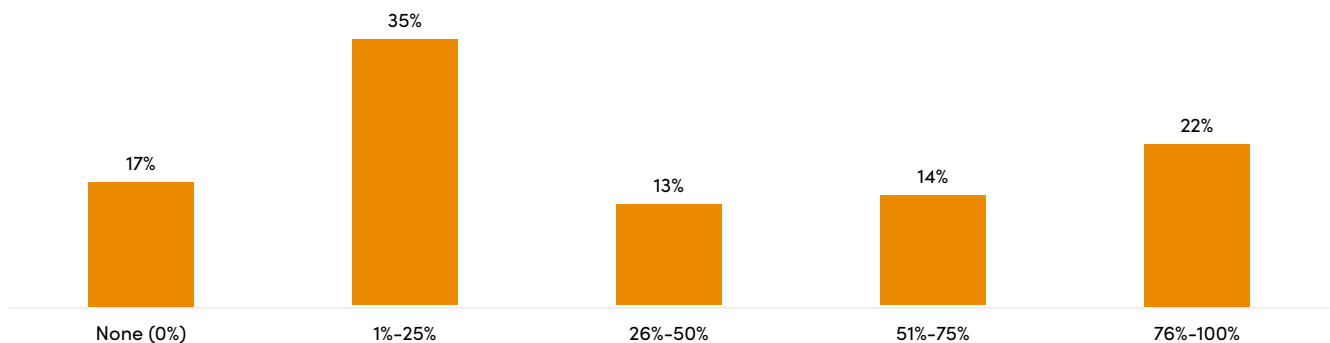
APX 1A: Figure 5. Number of Staff Employed by Organization (n=404)



Part-time staff

Almost two in five organizations (17%) do not have part-time staff and a plurality (35%) have 1% to 25% of their staff who are part-time.

APX 1A: Figure 6. Percentage of Organizations' Staff who are Part-Time (n=404)

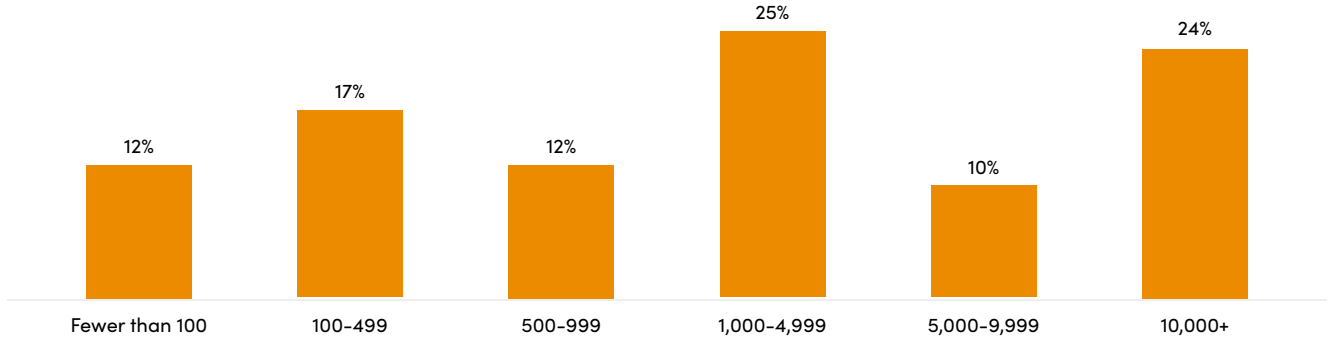


¹³ For the crosstab analysis, data for "no staff" and "1-9 staff" are combined in order to have sufficient sample sizes.

Individuals served

A plurality of organizations served between 1,000 and 4,999 individuals in calendar year 2023 (January to December 2023) and another 24% served 10,000 or more individuals during that time period.

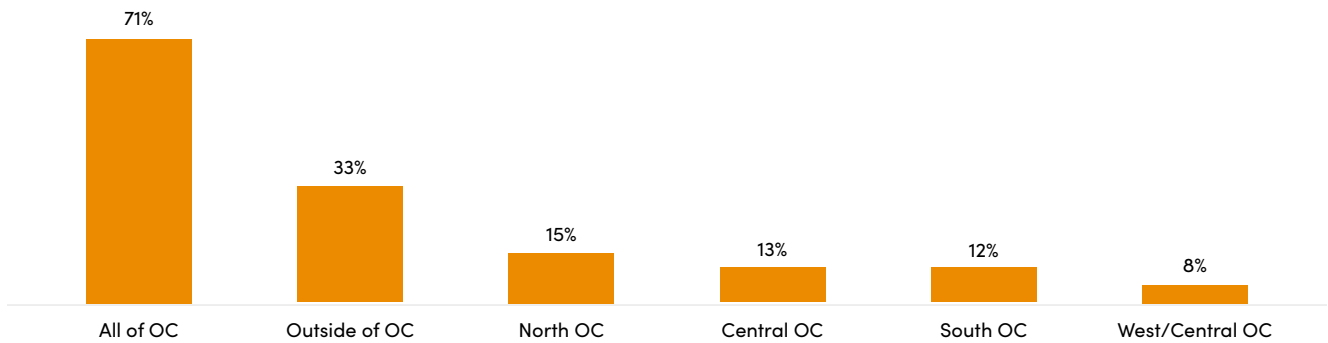
APX 1A: Figure 7. Number of Individuals Organizations Served in Calendar Year 2023 (n=404)



Geographic area of services

The majority of organizations surveyed stated that they serve all of Orange County (71%).

APX 1A: Figure 8. Organizations' Geographic Area of Service (n=404)

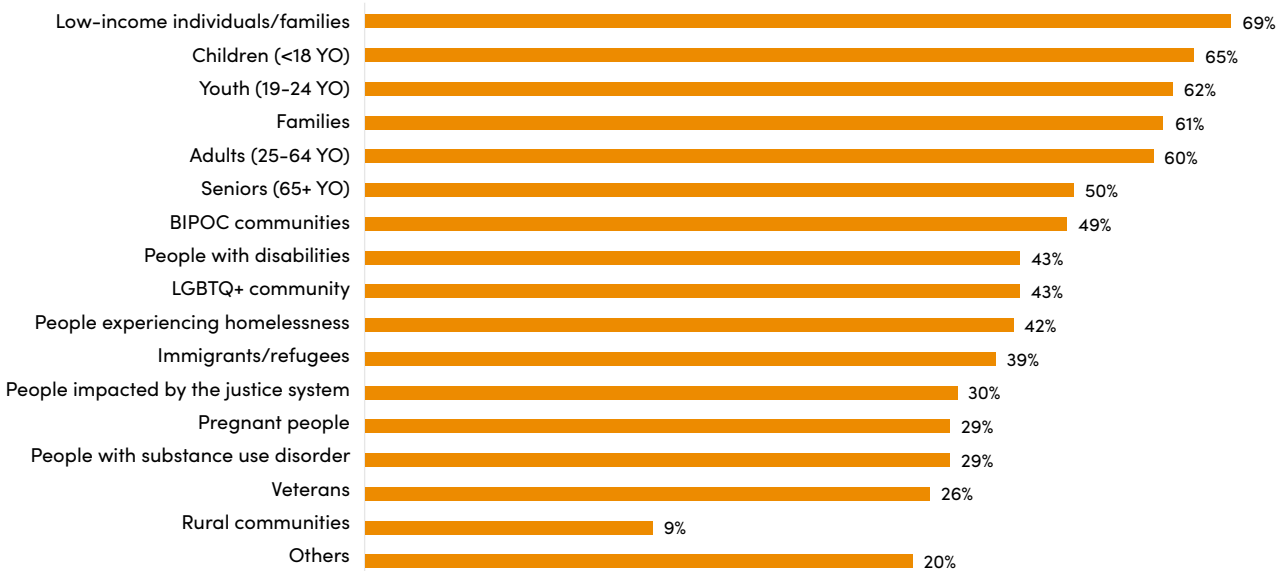


Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

Populations served

Most of the organizations indicated that they serve low-income individuals/families, children and families. Less than 10% of organizations serve rural communities.

APX 1A: Figure 9. Populations Organizations Serve (n=404)

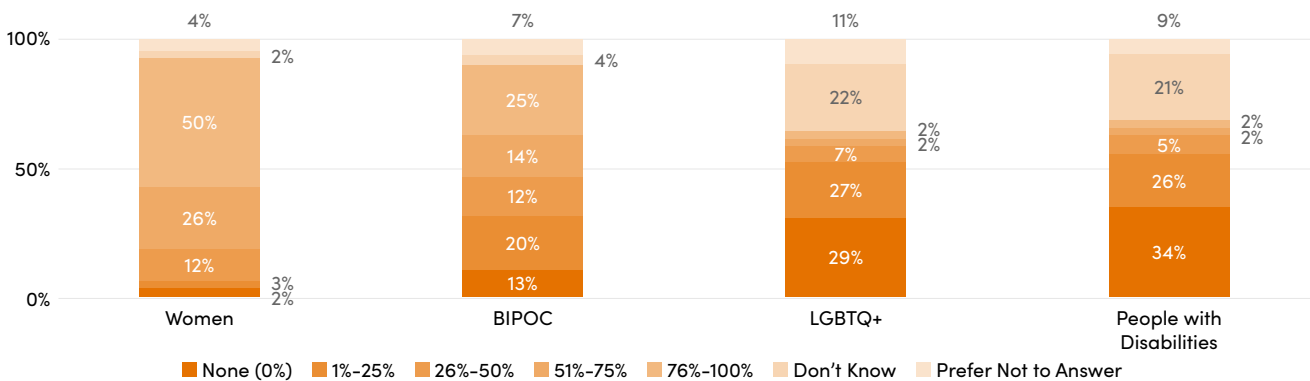


Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

Leadership diversity

Almost all of the organizations had at least some women in their top leadership positions (includes Executive Director/ CEO/President; Vice-president(s), C-Level positions, directors (not board), and other key decision makers in the organization). A plurality of organizations did not have any top leadership with a disability, though fully 30% of respondents did not know this figure or preferred not to answer. More than three-quarters (76%) of organizations had top leadership who were Black, Indigenous, People of Color (BIPOC). One-third of respondents did not know or preferred not to answer whether their top leadership included people in the LGBTQ+ community.

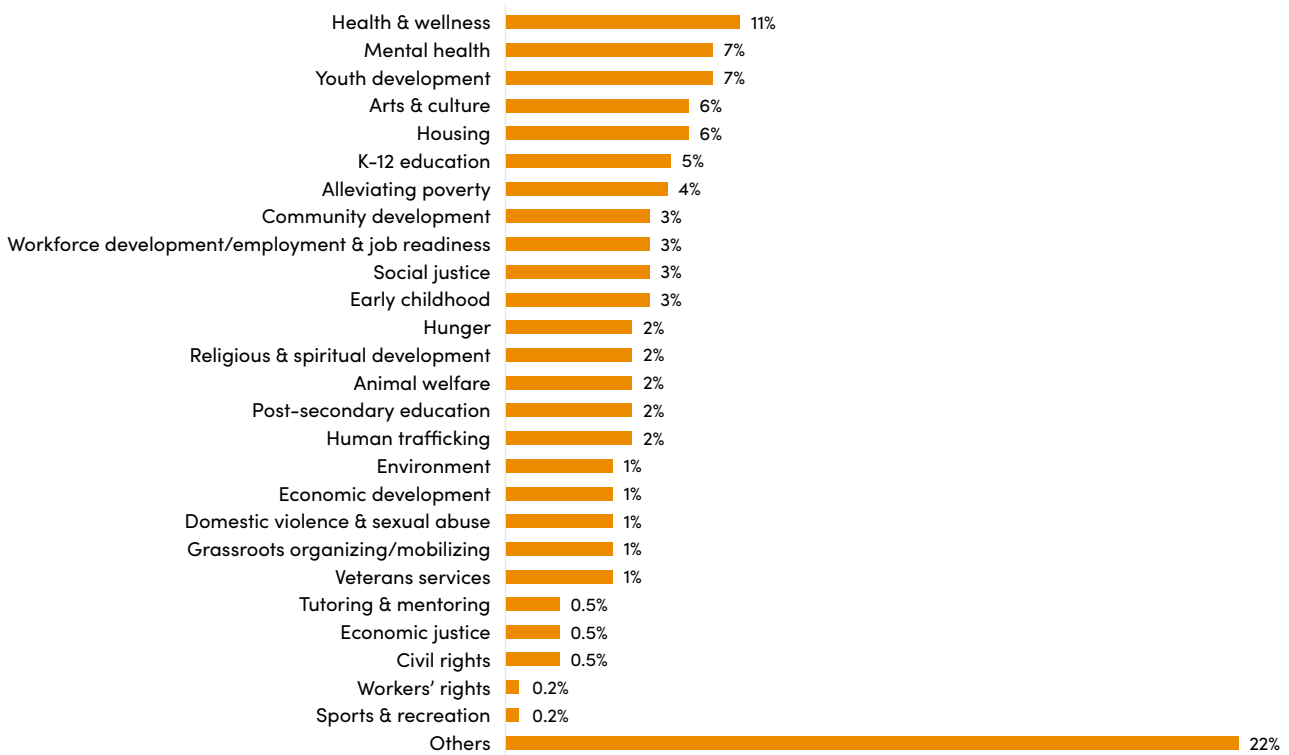
APX 1A: Figure 10. Proportion of organizations' top leadership that are (n=404)



Focus area

A plurality of organizations had a focus area of their mission around health and wellness, while 7% each had a focus on mental health and youth development.¹⁴

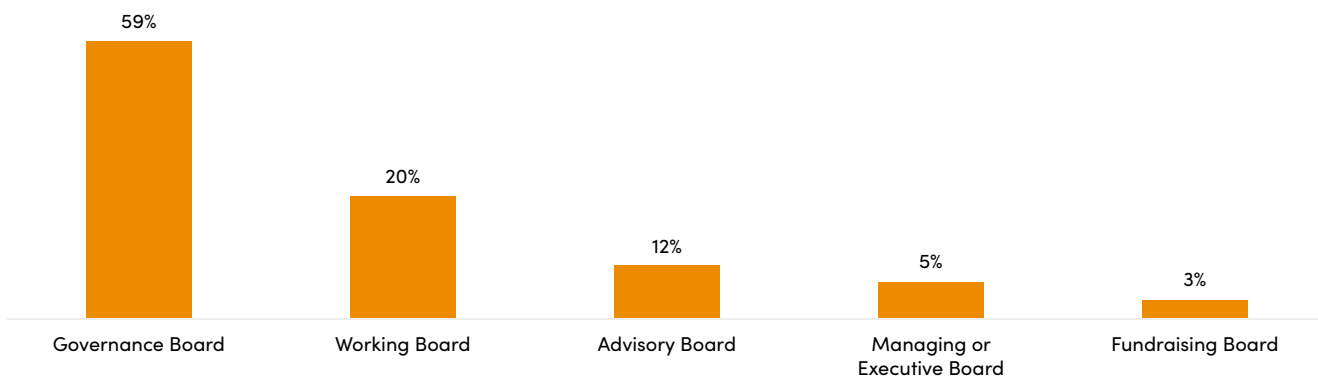
APX 1A: Figure 11. Organizations' Focus Area (n=404)



Board structure

Most organizations (59%) had a governance board, which was composed of individuals who provide guidance to the nonprofit director on the organization's best interests and future goals. Only 3% had a fundraising board.

APX 1A: Figure 12. Type of Board Structure (n=404)



¹⁴ Survey respondents were asked to select only one focus area.

Understanding Existing Organizational Capacity and Needs

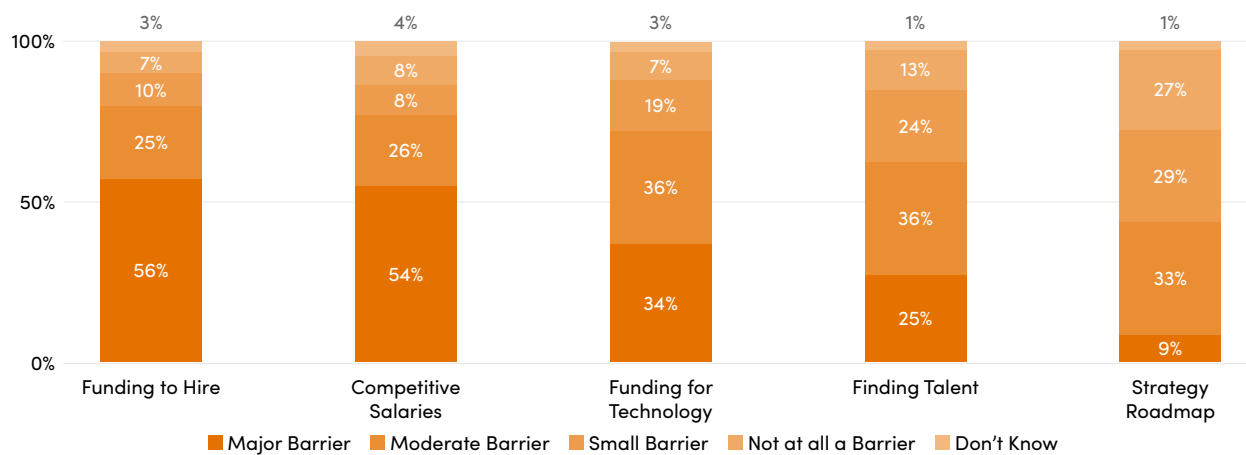
A nonprofit organization’s capacity—its ability to achieve goals with the resources, skills, and people they have—is key to accomplishing their mission. By understanding the strengths and challenges nonprofits face in building capacity, we can better identify the types of support and resources that will be most impactful.

Barriers to building capacity

Survey respondents were asked about barriers to building the required capacity for their nonprofit. Most respondents indicated that securing funding to hire staff and paying competitive salaries for key staff were a “major barrier” (56% and 54% respectively) to building the required capacity. In addition, 56% indicated that developing a strategic roadmap and vision for sustainable growth was “not at all” a barrier (27%) to building capacity.

Small nonprofits were more likely to indicate that securing funding to hire staff was a “major barrier” (66% of small nonprofits, compared to 58% of medium nonprofits and 41% of large nonprofits).

APX 1A: Figure 13. Barriers to building required capacity (n=607)



The survey included an open-ended question to solicit additional barriers to building nonprofits’ required capacity. The data highlight several key challenges faced by organizations. For instance, funding remains a significant barrier, with organizations struggling to secure general operating funds, long-term commitments, and unrestricted financial support. Facility issues are also prevalent, as many organizations lack adequate space and face high rental costs in Orange County. Staffing challenges are compounded by low salaries, high turnover rates, and a reliance on volunteer efforts, which limits capacity. There is a notable need for investment in administrative infrastructure and capacity building to enhance program implementation.

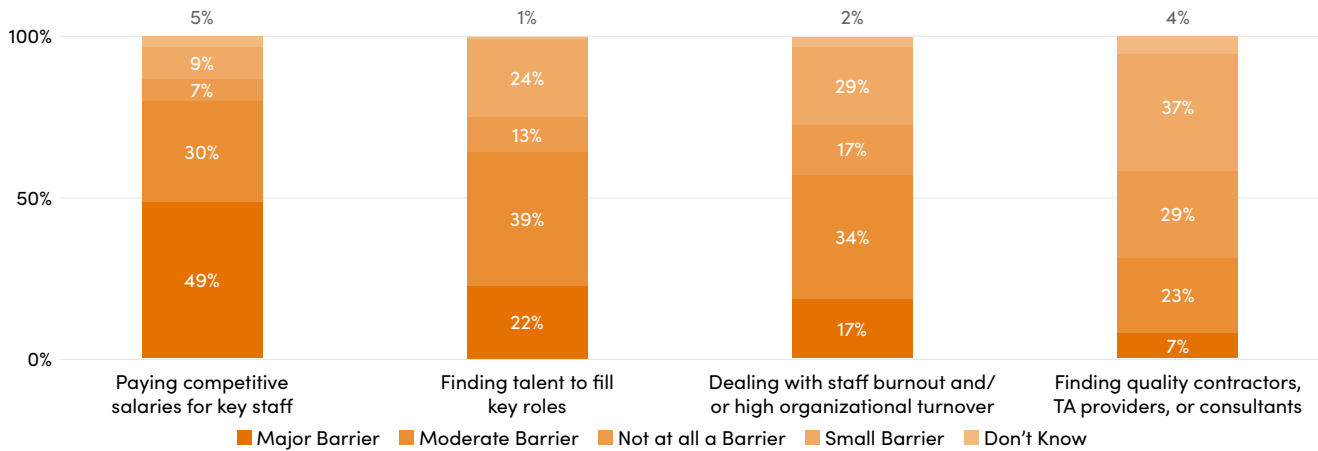
In addition, awareness and marketing efforts are hindered by limited resources, with organizations seeking better visibility and digital marketing training. Equity concerns arise around resource distribution and collaboration among organizations. Additionally, programmatic challenges, such as securing funding for specific initiatives and adapting to community needs, persist. Community engagement efforts are needed to involve parents and historically marginalized groups, while board and leadership development face obstacles due to a lack of diversity and resources. Finally, ongoing training and professional development opportunities are essential for staff and volunteers to maintain their skills.

Barriers to securing and maintaining required skills and knowledge

Nearly half (49%) of respondents indicated that paying competitive salaries for key staff is a “major barrier” to securing and maintaining required skills and knowledge, while 22% say finding talent to fill key roles is a “major barrier.”

Dealing with staff burnout and/or high organizational turnover was a “major” or “moderate” barrier for large nonprofits at a much higher rate than for small nonprofits (64% and 40%, respectively).

APX 1A: Figure 14. Barriers to securing and maintaining required skills and knowledge (n=607)



The survey included an open-ended question to solicit additional barriers to securing and maintaining nonprofits’ required skills and knowledge. The data highlight several key challenges faced by organizations. Funding is identified as the foremost barrier, with many organizations struggling to secure grants and financial support. This financial strain affects their ability to compensate staff adequately, resulting in high turnover and difficulty attracting qualified personnel, particularly for specialized roles.

Organizations often depend heavily on volunteers, which can lead to instability in service delivery and management challenges due to turnover.

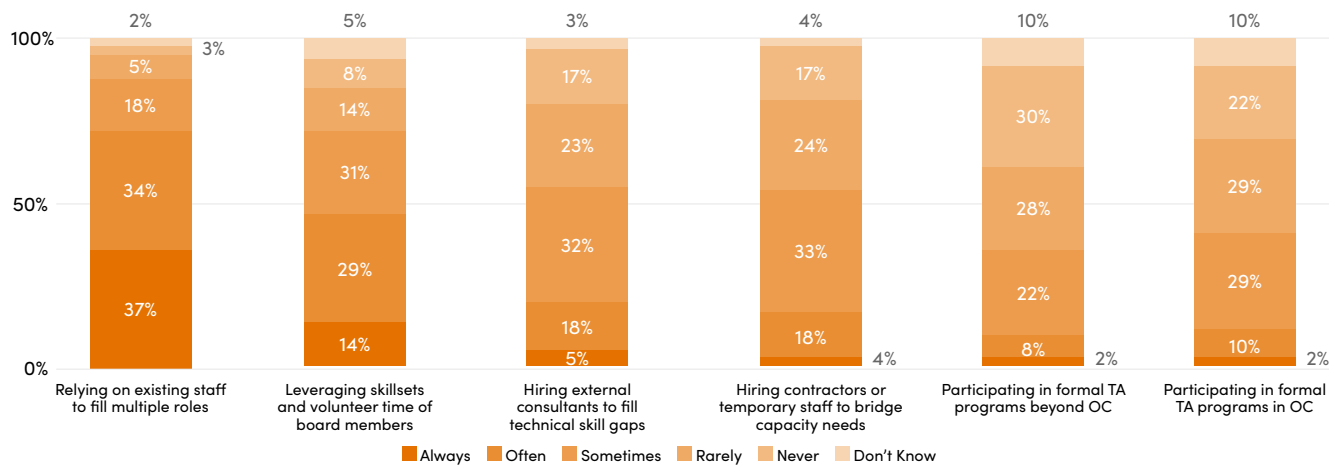
Additionally, there are significant limitations in professional development opportunities, largely due to a lack of funding. Operationally, organizations face constraints from regulations and inadequate infrastructure, including aging technology, which further complicates their ability to function effectively. Community engagement efforts are hampered by challenges in explaining funding needs, while high living costs in areas like Orange County create additional burdens for staff. Finally, there are obstacles to board and leadership development, with a need for a greater recognition of the importance of paid staff to sustain organizational capacity and prevent burnout.

Frequency of using specific resources to address barriers

Over 70 percent of respondents rely on existing staff to fill multiple roles “always” (37%) or “often” (34%).

Responses vary by organization size, with 48% of small nonprofits “always” relying on existing staff to fill multiple roles, compared to 36% of medium and 19% of large nonprofits. Similarly, 25% of small nonprofits “always” leverage skillsets and volunteer time of board members, compared to 9% of medium and 8% of large nonprofits.

APX 1A: Figure 15. Frequency of using resources to address barriers (n=607)

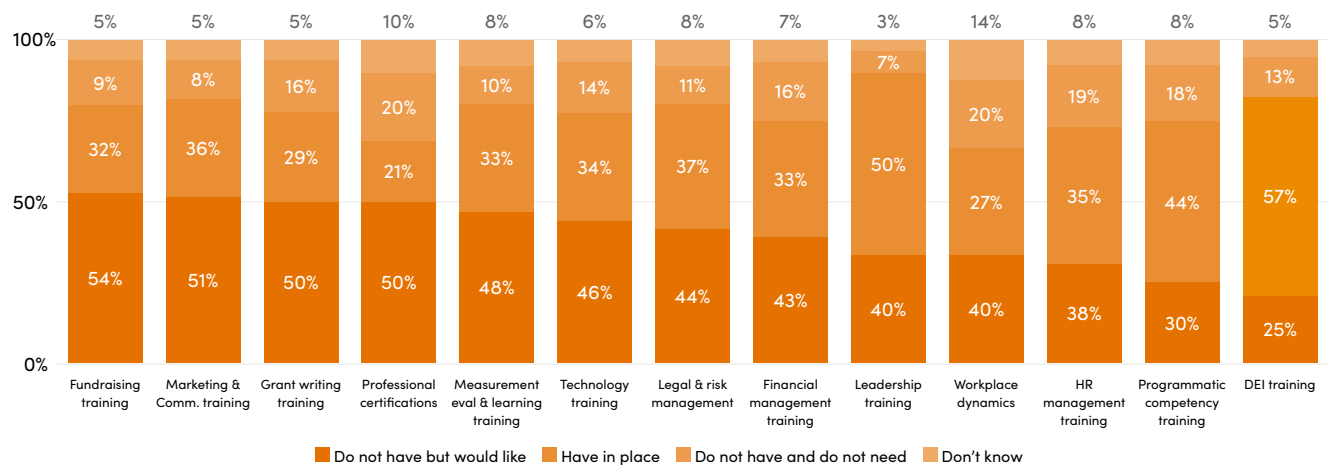


Professional development nonprofits offer

A majority of respondents indicated they “have in place” DEI training (57%) and/or leadership training (50%). However, a majority also indicated they “do not have but would like” fundraising training (54%), marketing and communications training (51%), grant writing training (50%), and/or professional certifications (50%).

Forty-four percent of small nonprofits have DEI training in place, compared with 64% of medium and 75% of large nonprofits. In addition, while 42% of small and medium nonprofits “do not have but would like” human resources management training, only 26% of large nonprofits would like this training.

APX 1A: Figure 16. Professional development organizations offer (n=592)



Survey respondents had the chance to provide specifics on other professional development opportunities that would be helpful to their nonprofit. Their responses included wanting technical skills (IT, graphic design, social media), fundraising strategies, leadership and management development, and essential soft skills. However, funding constraints hinder their ability to provide or access such training. Many organizations also face staffing challenges, operating with limited personnel or relying heavily on volunteers, which impacts their capacity to participate in training effectively. Additionally, there is a desire for tailored training that meets specific organizational needs rather than generic solutions, alongside

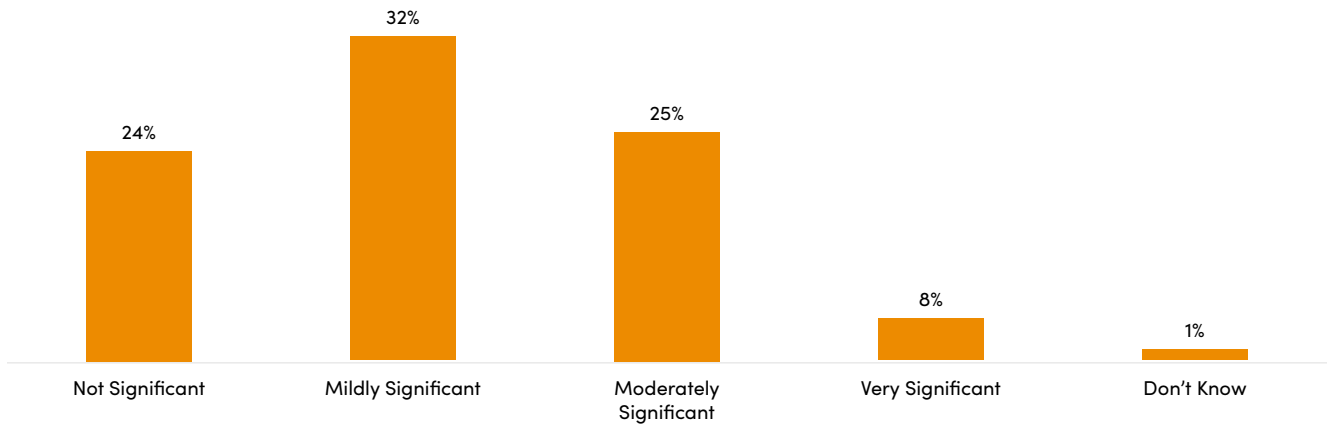
a call for more locally available nonprofit training opportunities. Overall, the findings underscore the need for targeted support to enhance organizational capacity and effective utilization of technology.

Staff turnover

Forty-three percent of respondents said staff turnover is a “very” or “moderately” significant problem (18% and 25%, respectively).

While 28% of small nonprofits indicated that staff turnover is a “very” or “moderately” significant problem, 47% of medium and 59% of large nonprofits indicated the same.

APX 1A: Figure 17. Staff turnover is an issue (n=577)

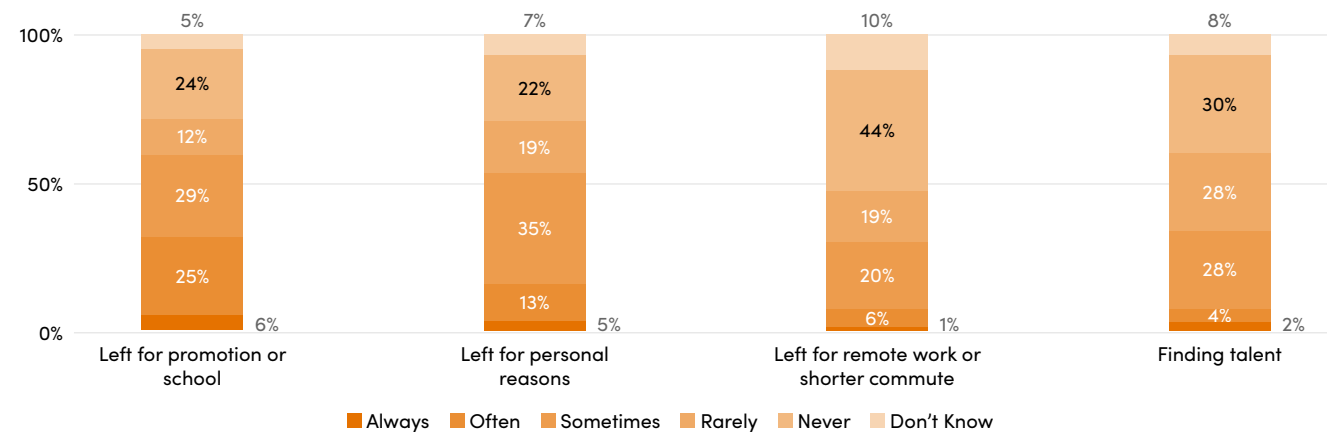


Reasons staff leave

Forty-four percent of respondents indicated that staff “never” leave for remote work or shorter commute. On the other hand, 54% indicated that staff “often” (25%) or “sometimes” (29%) leave for a promotion or school.

While only 10% of respondents from small nonprofits indicated that staff members “often” leave for promotion, growth opportunities, or to return to school, 28% of medium and 51% of large nonprofits indicated that this is “often” or “sometimes” the reason.

APX 1A: Figure 18. Reasons for voluntary staff departures (n=577)

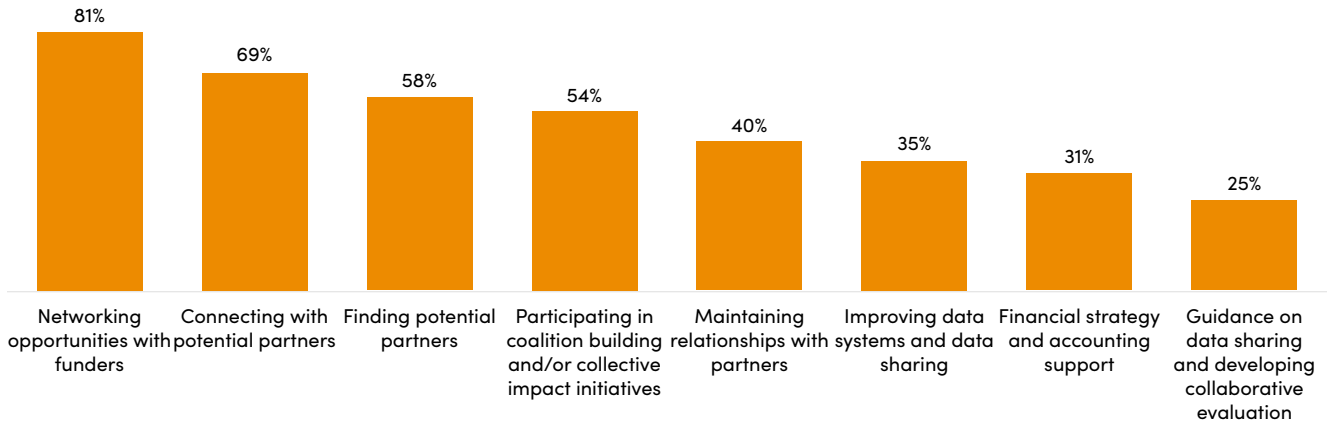


Resources to help organization thrive

Eighty-one percent of respondents said networking opportunities with funders would help them thrive, followed by connecting with (69%) and finding (58%) potential partners.

While 28% of small nonprofits indicated investments in improving data systems and data sharing would help their organization thrive, 42% of medium and 41% of large nonprofits indicated as such.

APX 1A: Figure 19. Resources/Investments that would help organizations thrive (n=577)



Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

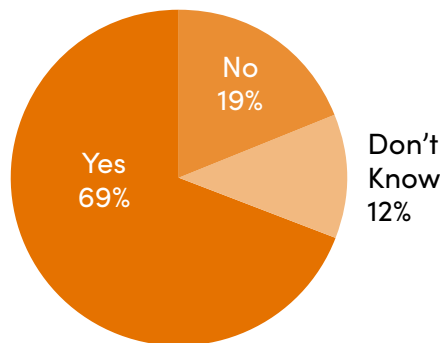
Respondents were given an opportunity to provide input about additional resources/investments in organizational knowledge that would be helpful to their organization. The overarching needs of the organizations reflect a strong emphasis on securing diverse funding sources and improving financial management to support operations. Leadership and board development are also critical, alongside a focus on staff wellness and retention. Lastly, community engagement and collaboration are seen as essential for growth, while operational improvements and marketing efforts are necessary for better outreach and efficiency.

Cash reserve

Sixty-nine percent of respondents indicated their organization has a cash reserve, while 19% indicated that they had no cash reserves and 12% did not know.

Results varied by nonprofit size, with 66% of small, 74% of medium, and 82% of large nonprofits having a cash reserve.

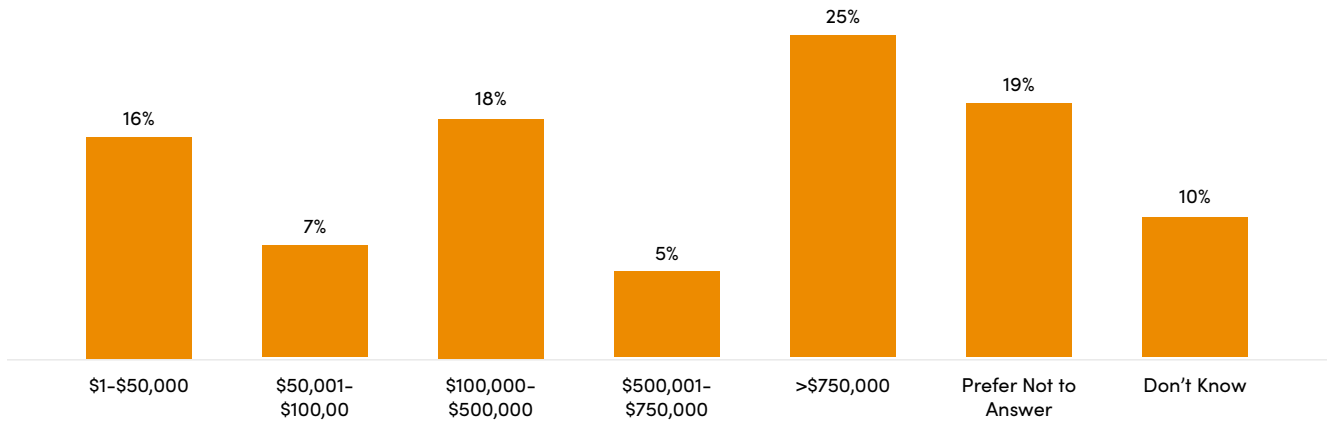
APX 1A: Figure 20. Organizations have cash reserve (n=573)



One-quarter of respondents indicated that their nonprofit had a cash reserve of more than \$750,000 on average, while 16% had less than \$50,000 cash on hand, and almost one-third did not know.

Results varied by nonprofit size, with 7% of small, 34% of medium, and 51% of large nonprofits having more than \$750,000 in cash reserve.

APX 1A: Figure 21. Average size of cash reserve (n=398)

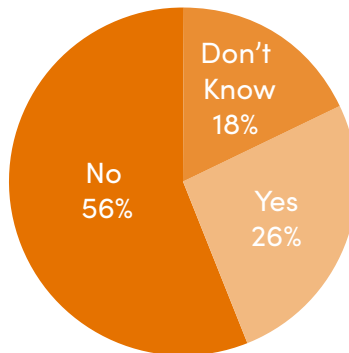


Line of credit or loan

Well over half (56%) of respondents said their nonprofit organization does not have access to credit or a loan, while 26% said they do have access.

While only 13% of small nonprofits have a line of credit or loan, 31% of medium and 52% of large nonprofits have this in place.

APX 1A: Figure 22. Organization has line of credit or loan (n=558)

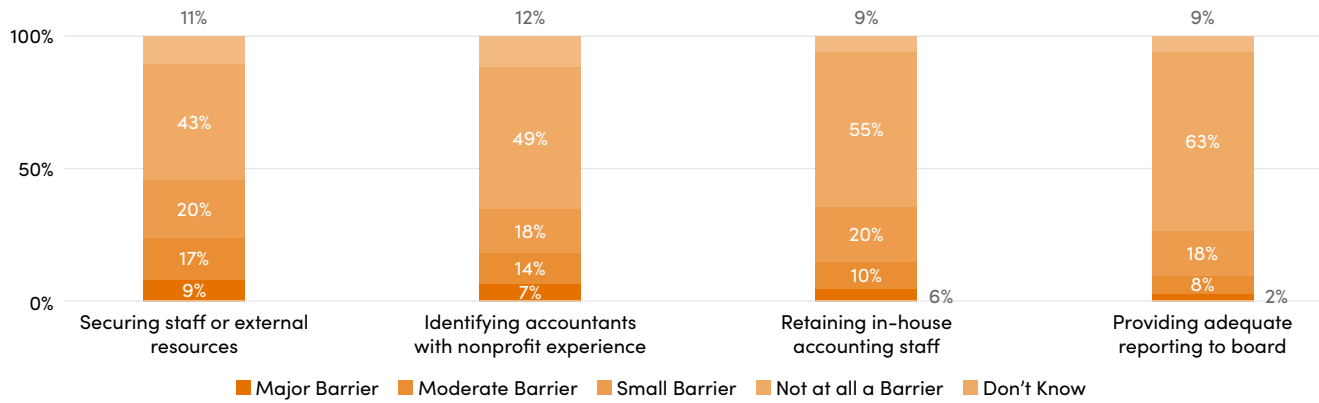


Barriers to managing capacity

Survey respondents were asked about barriers to managing capacity and health of their organization. Twenty-six percent of respondents indicated that securing staff or external resources to support budgeting, forecasting, and cash management was a “major” or “moderate” barrier to managing capacity.

Retaining in-house accounting staff was a “major” barrier for 8% and 7% of small and medium nonprofits, respectively, compared to 1% of large nonprofits.

APX 1A: Figure 23. Barriers to managing capacity (n=558)



Understanding the Uses of External Resources

Many organizations rely on external support, such as consultants or contractors, to fill gaps in expertise or capacity. Knowing how and why nonprofits use these resources can help us understand where additional investments or improved options might be needed in the local service provider landscape.

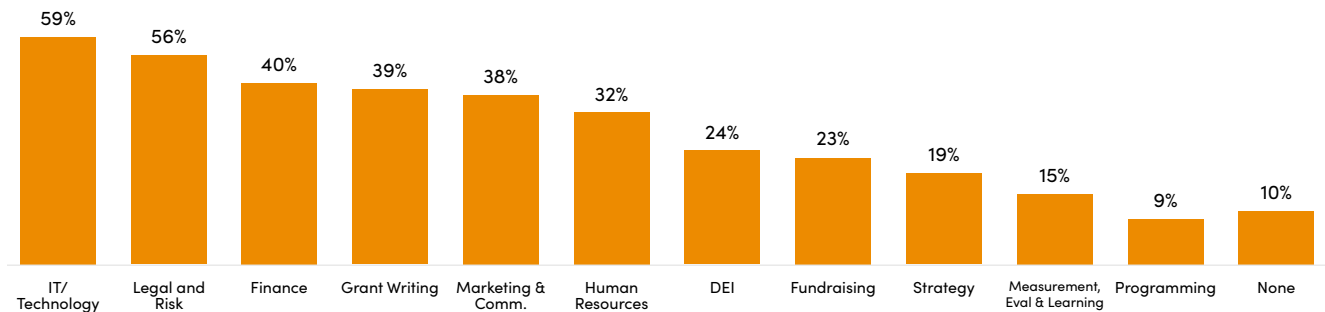
Use external personnel resources for business priorities

Fifty-nine percent of respondents said IT/Technology (59%) and Legal and risk (56%) are business priorities for which their nonprofit organizations use external personnel resources (such as consultants, contractors, temporary staff, or other service providers).

Overall, the data reveal a diverse array of needs across organizations, focusing on financial management, staff training, media production, and operational support, while also highlighting the importance of external partnerships and resources.

While 45% of small and 55% of large nonprofits use external personnel for IT/Technology, more than three-quarters (76%) of medium nonprofits do so.

PX 1A: Figure 24. Business priorities for which organizations use external personnel resources (n=485)



Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

Reasons nonprofits use external personnel resources/consultants

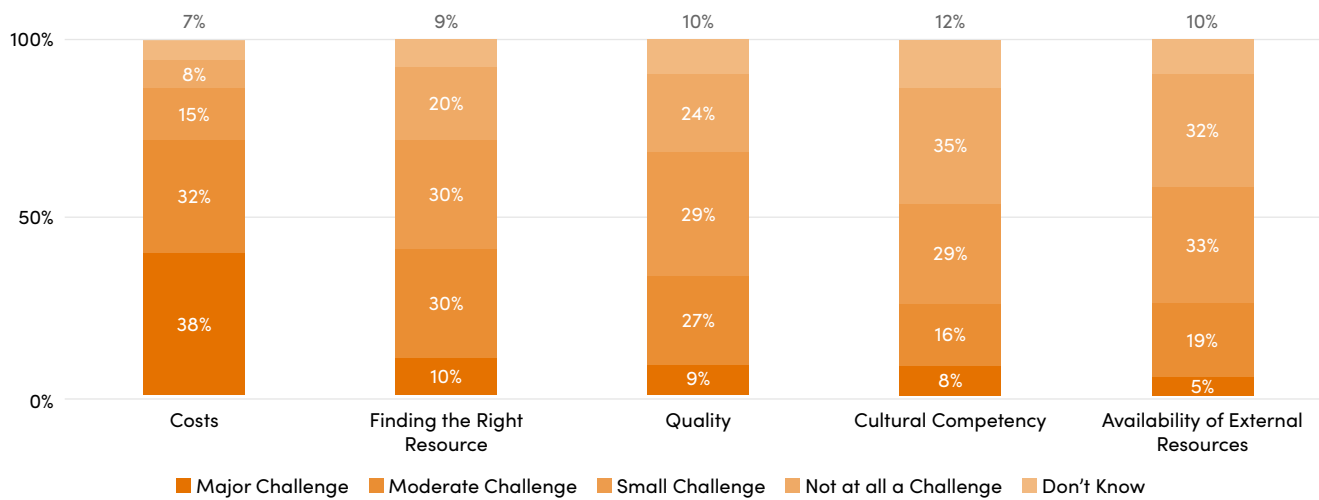
An open-ended question asked about reasons organizations use external personnel resources and consultants. Respondents indicated that they often rely on external personnel and consultants for various functions due to limited internal capacity, expertise, and budget constraints. This approach allows them to access specialized skills without the need for full-time staff, providing flexibility and cost savings, while enhancing their operational effectiveness. Overall, the use of external resources and consultants is a strategic approach for organizations to enhance their capabilities, drive efficiencies, and ensure that they can focus on their core mission without being hindered by resource limitations. This model allows for effective management of specific needs while maintaining a lean operational structure.

Degree of challenges in finding external personnel resources

Seventy percent of nonprofit organizations said costs are a “major” (38%) or “moderate” (32%) challenge to finding external personnel resources.

Forty-four percent of small nonprofits indicated that finding external personnel resources that had cultural competency was “not at all a challenge”, compared with 30% of medium and 25% of large nonprofits.

APX 1A: Figure 25. Degree of challenge to finding the right resources (n=533)



Other challenges in identifying external personnel resources include finding qualified and affordable consultants and dedicated volunteers. Economic constraints and limited local support further complicate this issue while regulatory limitations hinder the use of external consultants, prompting a focus on internal staff development, which is often seen as a more sustainable approach. Funding remains a significant challenge, with difficulties in securing necessary financial resources and concerns over potential misuse of funds. Specific needs include assistance with grant writing tailored to unique missions and providing culturally appropriate support that mainstream channels often overlook.

Organizational Leadership and Strategic Alignment

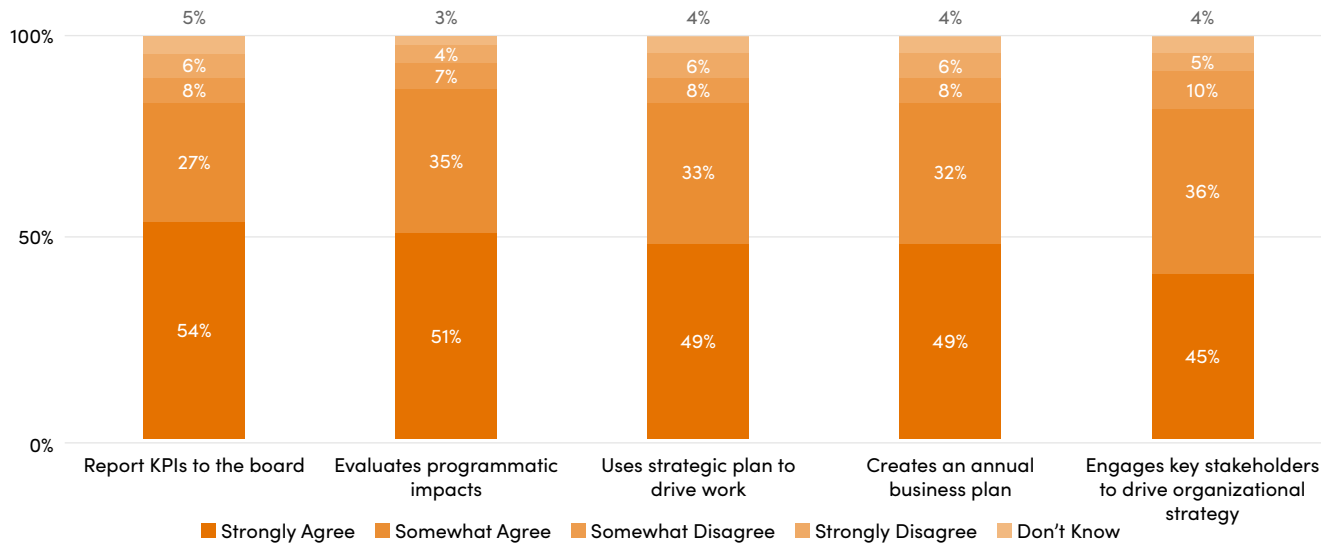
Effective leadership and strategic planning are essential to guiding an organization toward long-term success. Assessing how nonprofit leadership is supported and where additional resources could enhance strategic decision-making, alignment, and overall impact, is an important part of supporting nonprofits’ strategic alignment.

Organizational accountability

Over half of organizations “strongly agree” that they report Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to their board (54%), and/or that they evaluate programmatic impacts (51%).

While 10% of small nonprofits “strongly disagreed” that they report KPIs to their board, only 2% of medium and large nonprofits indicated the same.

APX 1A: Figure 26. Agreement that organization (n=510)

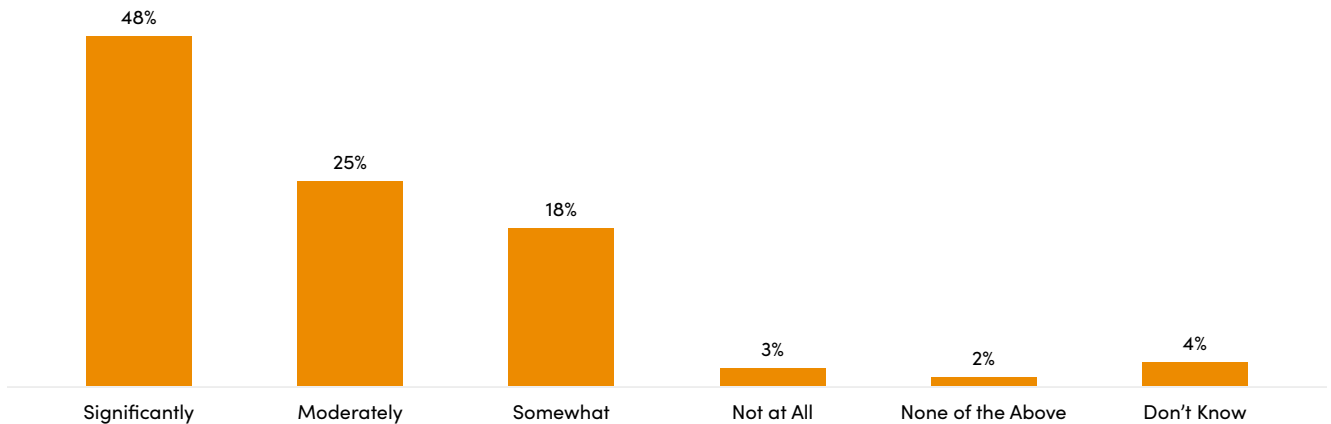


Board contribution to strategic direction

Forty-eight percent of respondents indicated that their boards contribute significantly to the strategic direction of their organizations, while 3% said the board does not contribute at all.

While 45% of small nonprofits indicated that their boards significantly contribute to the strategic direction, this proportion was significantly higher for medium and large nonprofits (49% and 56%, respectively).

APX 1A: Figure 27. Degree to which board contributes to strategic direction (n=510)

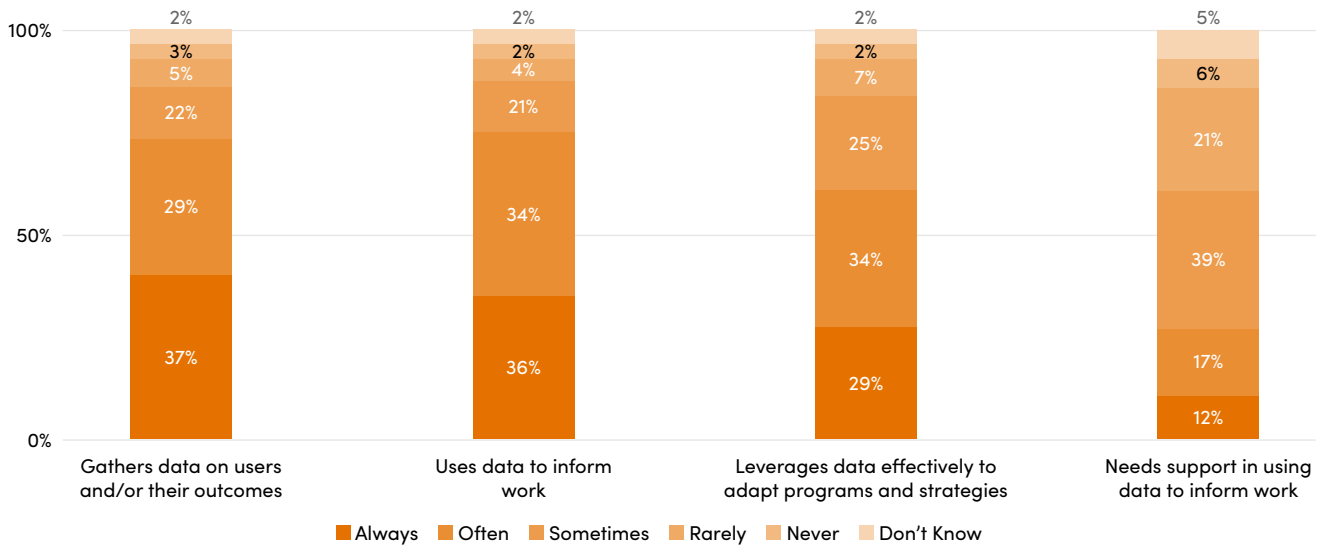


Data and outcomes

Two-thirds of respondents indicated that their nonprofit “always” (37%) or “often” (29%) gathers data on users and/or their outcomes, while 70% said they “always” (36%) or “often” (34%) use data to inform work. On the other hand, 29% said they “always” leverage data effectively, while 34% said they “sometimes” leverage data effectively.

Almost one-third (29%) of small nonprofits “always” gather data on users and/or their outcomes, while 40% of medium and 53% of large nonprofits do so.

APX 1A: Figure 28. Organizations data and outcomes: Degree to which organization (n=510)



Skills/knowledge gaps that exist

The survey included an open-ended question that asked about what skills or knowledge gaps exist within organizations and how addressing these gaps could enhance teams’ performance. Key themes that emerged included:

Training and professional development: There was an emphasis on the need for effective management training for new managers. There was also a desire for affordable, ongoing professional development opportunities for nonprofit staff around topics like advocacy, communications, marketing and strategy, and management training. Respondents mentioned the need for more skilled and trained board members.

Funding and financial support: The importance of unrestricted funding to support infrastructure, cash reserves, and program expansion was raised, as was advocacy for funding that supports capacity building and general operations rather than just specific programs.

Community engagement and communication: The need for better communication with the community about the organization’s mission and services, and encouragement of community involvement through board participation and volunteer roles.

Networking and collaboration: Suggestions included strengthening the network of nonprofits in the area for greater collective impact and involvement of local funders in program delivery and advocacy, creating a deeper understanding of the organization’s work.

Infrastructure and resources: There was a call for support in building infrastructure, including technology and physical space, and an interest in in-kind donations and skill-based gifts to bolster organizational capabilities.

Sustainability and growth: Respondents had a focus on sustainable growth, especially in outreach to underrepresented populations, such as seniors and at-risk youth. Promotion of advocacy efforts and community visibility to enhance organizational impact was also raised.

Volunteering and community service: There was strong encouragement for community members to volunteer in various capacities, from board service to direct program support.

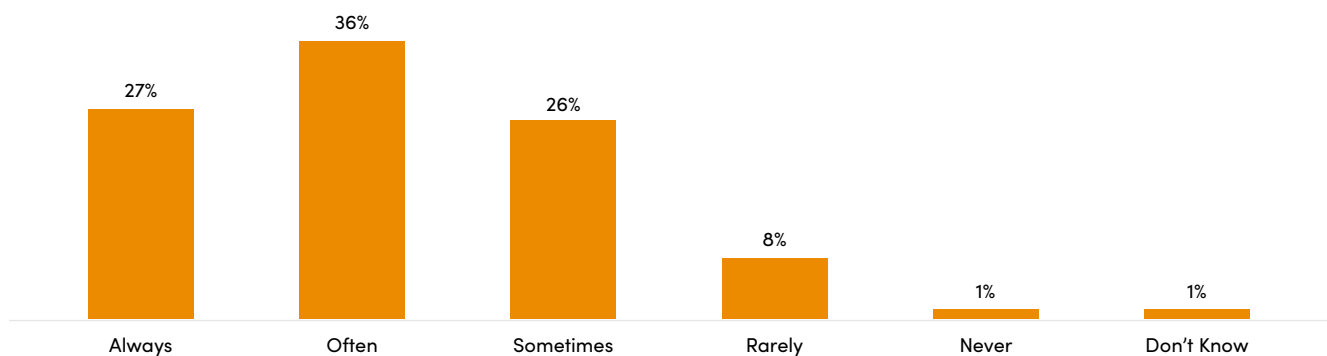
Visibility and awareness: Respondents highlighted the importance of increasing awareness of the organization’s impact within the community.

Partnerships/Collaborations

Twenty-seven percent of respondents “always” engage in partnerships or collaborations with other nonprofits. Eight percent said they “rarely” and 1% said they “never” engage in partnerships or collaborations.

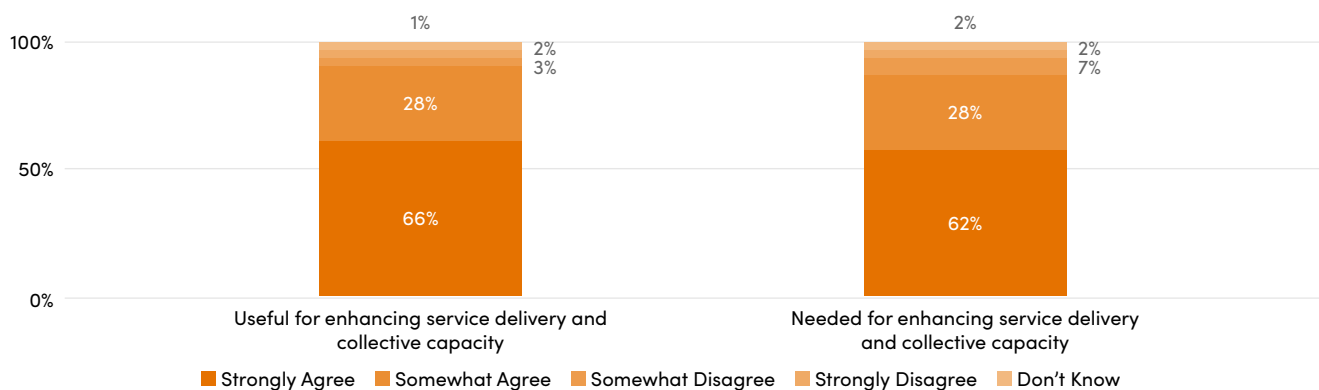
While 33% of small and 36% of medium nonprofits “often” engage in partnerships / collaborations, 49% of large nonprofits do so.

APX 1A: Figure 29. Frequency organizations engage in partnerships/collaborations with other nonprofits to enhance service delivery and/or improve collective capacity (n=510)



For those respondents who indicated that their organization “sometimes”, “often”, or “always” engages in partnerships/ collaborations, 66% “strongly agree” that partnerships/collaboratives are useful for enhancing service delivery and collective capacity, while 62% “strongly agree” that partnerships/ collaboratives are needed for enhancing service delivery and capacity.

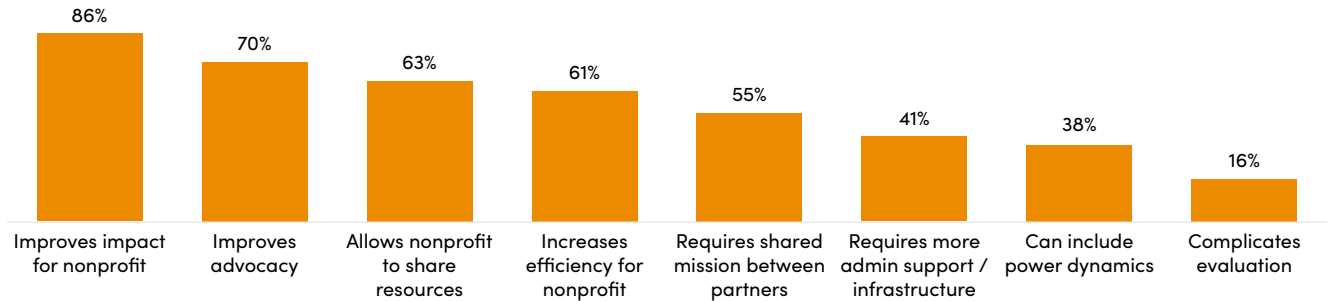
APX 1A: Figure 30. Extent to which partnerships/collaboratives are (n=456)



Eighty-six percent of respondents agree that partnership/collaboration improves impact, while 70% said it improves advocacy.

Eighty-four percent of respondents from small nonprofits indicated that partnerships/collaborations improve impact for their nonprofits, compared with 89% of medium and 90% of large nonprofits.

APX 1A: Figure 31. Agree that partnership/collaboration (n=457)



Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

Understanding How Philanthropy Can Be Better Utilized to Benefit Orange County Nonprofits

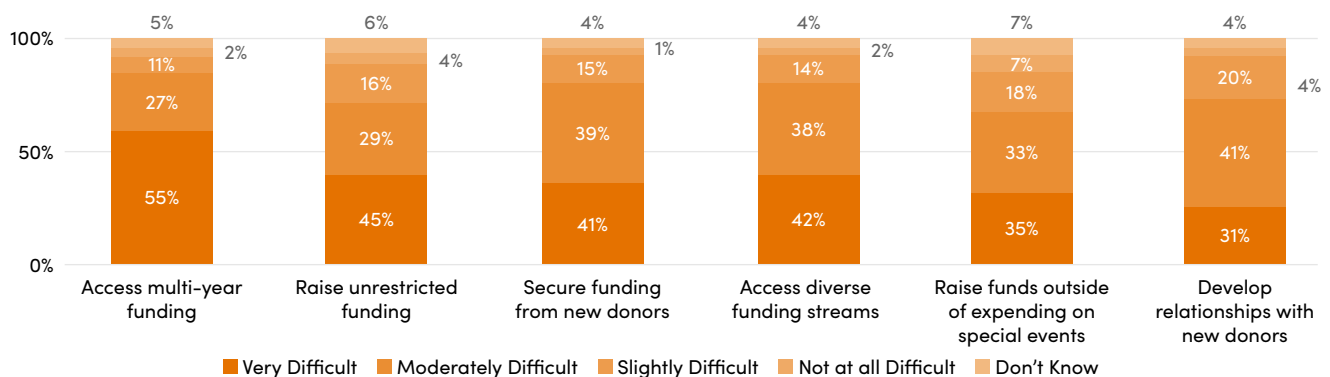
Funding is just one aspect of how philanthropy can help nonprofits thrive. There are other forms of support, such as capacity-building, networking, and strategic advice, that could make a meaningful difference for nonprofit organizations.

Difficulty in accessing funds by type

Fifty-five percent of respondents said it is “very” difficult to access multi-year funding, with 27% saying it is “moderately” difficult to access. In addition, 45% of respondents indicated that it was “very” difficult to raise unrestricted funding, and 29% said it is “moderately” difficult.

Small nonprofits are finding it more difficult to access multi-year funding, with 62% of small nonprofits indicating that it is “very” difficult to access multi-year funding, compared with 55% of medium and 39% of large nonprofits.

APX 1A: Figure 32. Difficult to (n=495)

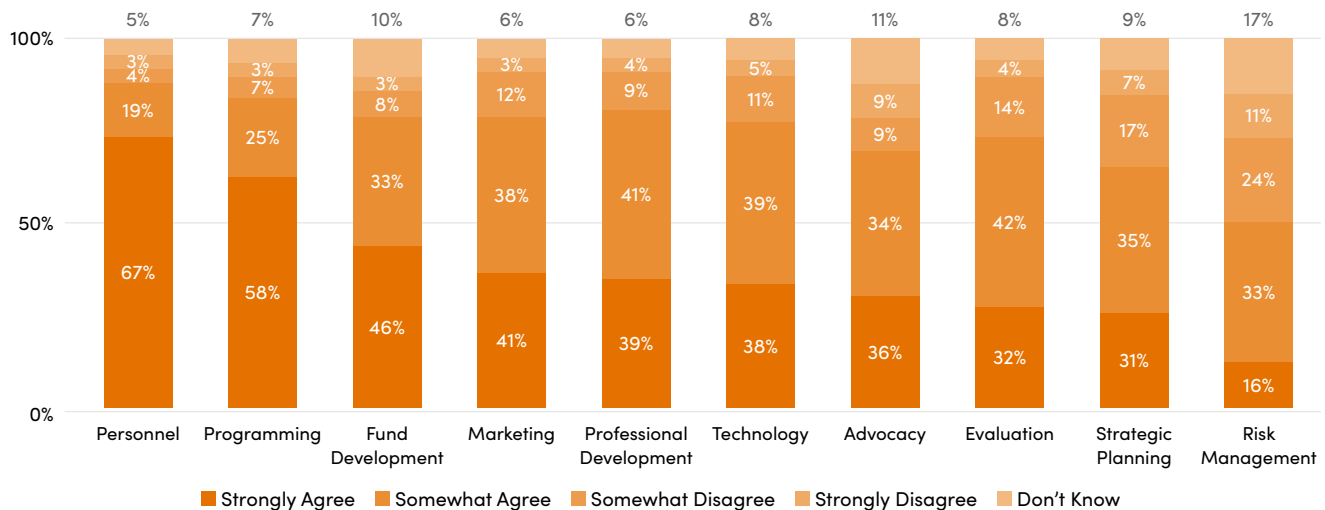


Unrestricted funds

Over two-thirds of respondents (67%) “strongly agree” that additional unrestricted funding would be beneficial for personnel; another 19% “somewhat agree.” In addition, 58% “strongly agree” that unrestricted funding would be beneficial for programming and another 25% “somewhat agree.”

While 17% of small nonprofits “strongly agree” that additional funding would be beneficial for HR/Wellness, about one-third of medium and large nonprofits indicated it would be beneficial (30% and 33%, respectively).

APX 1A: Figure 33. Agree that additional unrestricted funding would be beneficial for (n=495)



Other areas that unrestricted funding would benefit organizations include **funding and financial support**, with a strong desire for additional unrestricted funding and assistance in grant writing to ensure sustainability and operational costs, as well as requests for increased staff compensation. There was an emphasis on **program expansion** and development, particularly for culturally appropriate services and grassroots community engagement initiatives. Infrastructure issues were raised, including inadequate office space and rising maintenance costs, alongside a pressing need for **technological improvements** to enhance operations and implement CRM systems for better relationship management. The importance of **volunteer engagement** was underscored, with plans for a robust volunteer program and expanded outreach efforts.

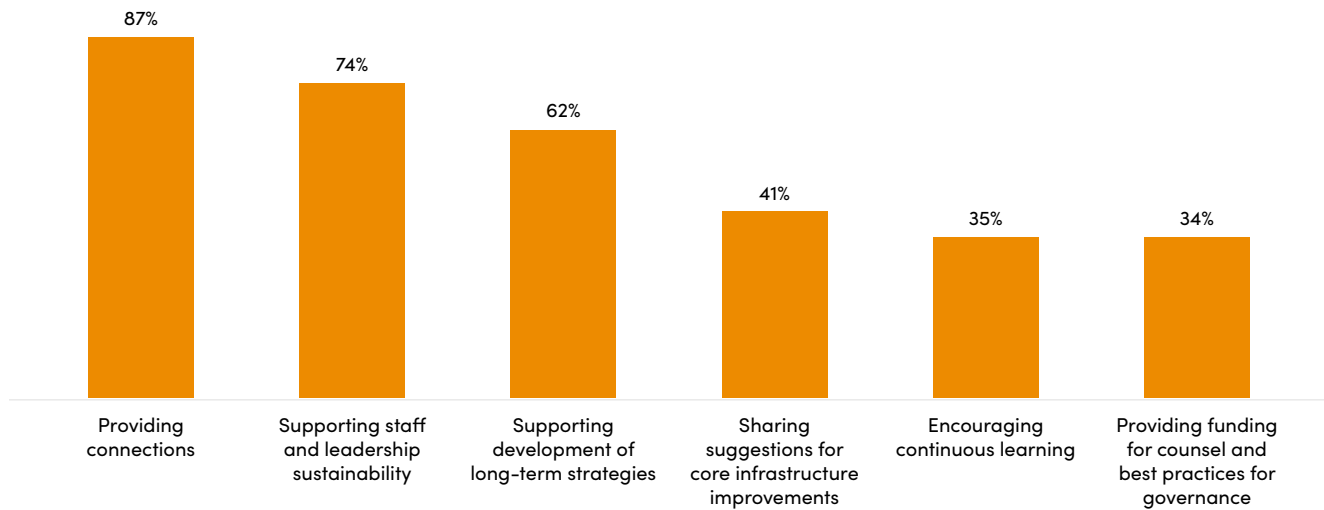
There was a call for more direct support programs for marginalized groups and a commitment to **advocacy** for elevating marginalized voices, particularly in educational settings, as well as integrating DEI initiatives within the organization. Additionally, data stressed the need for **emergency and crisis support**, including legal resources and preparedness systems, while also encouraging innovative solutions and succession planning to cultivate future leaders within the organization.

Role of local funders

Eighty-seven percent of respondents said local funders could be helpful providing connections, while 74% said supporting staff and leadership sustainability would be helpful.

While 66% of small nonprofits indicated that local funders could support organizations by supporting staff and leadership sustainability, 79% of medium and 85% of large nonprofits indicated so.

APX 1A: Figure 34. Besides providing additional funding, ways local funders can support organizations (n=495)



Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.

Respondents provided other ways that local funders can support organizations beyond funding, with data highlighting several key themes for organizations aiming to strengthen their operations and community engagement. There is a pressing need for affordable **professional development** and training opportunities, particularly for new managers, along with a call for unrestricted funding to support overall operations and capacity building. Organizations seek **improved communication** with the community, emphasizing the importance of raising visibility. Strengthening the **local nonprofit network** and encouraging funder participation in program delivery are vital for collaborative success. **Volunteer support** is crucial, with a focus on engaging community members and securing in-kind donations. Additionally, **advocacy** for organizational missions and supportive practices is emphasized. There is a need for robust **infrastructure** and technological support, alongside a willingness to explore diverse forms of assistance, including work opportunities for at-risk youth and inviting skilled professionals to contribute their expertise on boards. Overall, these themes reflect a comprehensive approach to enhancing organizational effectiveness and community impact.

Closing Thoughts from Nonprofits

Finally, the survey included three open-ended questions to solicit additional feedback for supports nonprofits need, as well as questions about what keeps respondents up at night and what brings them joy when it comes to their work.

Activities not supported by local funders

The survey asked about what organizations were doing that is not supported by local funders. The data reveal significant challenges faced by various organizations in securing local funding and support for their initiatives. Key areas of concern include the struggle for **sustainable funding**. **Awareness campaigns** and community events are seen as essential strategies for engaging the public and raising awareness, but many organizations struggle with insufficient local funding, particularly for comprehensive and culturally tailored programs. There is a strong emphasis on the need for **collaboration and partnerships**, along with **advocacy** for policy changes that can better support underserved populations. Organizations are also advocating for more **flexible funding** models that recognize the complexities of their work and the administrative costs associated with running comprehensive programs.

What Keeps Respondents Up at Night

As can be expected, findings varied, but in terms of what keeps respondents **up at night** included financial sustainability, staffing issues, program capacity, leadership and succession planning and other capacity issues laid out below.

Financial sustainability issues include **funding gaps**, with many nonprofits struggling with inconsistent funding, particularly between grants or after grants expire. **Rising costs** are also an issue, including increased operational costs (insurance, wages, etc.) and the need for sustainable funding sources. **Revenue diversification** is also keeping nonprofit respondents up at night, as there is a pressing need for nonprofits to diversify their funding streams to avoid reliance on single sources.

Staffing issues include **burnout and wellbeing of staff**, with high levels of burnout among staff due to emotional demands and caregiving roles. Another staffing issue is that of compensation and the difficulty in providing **competitive salaries**, which leads to high turnover rates, especially when staff leave for better-paying government jobs. **Staff development** is also an issue, with concerns about training and retaining qualified staff while managing a small team.

Program capacity and quality issues keeping respondents up at night include **addressing unmet needs**, with many organizations reporting that they are unable to meet the growing demands of their communities due to limited resources. **Quality of services** is also an issue as there is constant worry about maintaining or improving service quality amidst financial constraints.

Leadership and succession planning, as leaders worry about **succession** and who will take over their organizations and how to ensure continuity and stability. Volunteer **engagement** was brought up and the challenges in attracting and managing volunteers, particularly as many current volunteers are aging.

Community impact and visibility with **raising awareness** as nonprofits need to stay relevant and visible to the public, especially as issues like food insecurity grow. **Advocacy** was also brought up as an issue with the pressure to advocate effectively for clients while managing internal challenges.

Administrative burden such as **grant management** and the excessive administrative workload required to manage grants and contracts, which takes time away from strategic planning and fundraising. Leaders also raised the issue of **day-to-day operations** and being overwhelmed by routine tasks, which hinders their ability to focus on larger goals.

External factors, including the **political climate**, which can negatively impact funding and community perception. Another issue is that of other nonprofits **competing** for the same resources and donor dollars, which adds pressure.

Long-term goals such as the need to build a **sustainable** model that can adapt to changing community needs and funding landscapes. And having the **infrastructure**, with many organizations at a crossroads—needing facilities and support systems to expand their reach.

Client needs including concerns about the most **vulnerable populations** (youth, homeless, victims of trafficking) not receiving adequate support. **Mental health and housing** was also brought up as an issue with the rising mental health needs and the lack of affordable housing being critical issues impacting service delivery.

What Brings Respondents Joy

The sentiments expressed by survey respondents reflect a profound dedication to community service and a recognition of the impact that such work has on individuals and society as a whole. The passion and commitment of the people involved shines through, showcasing not only the challenges faced but also the joys and victories that make the effort worthwhile.

Key themes about what brings respondents joy around their work is summarized below.

Joy in service and the smiles and successes of clients, especially children and families, are major motivators. Witnessing transformation and happiness brings immense joy to those working in these organizations.

Community building and the sense of community among clients, staff, and volunteers fosters a supportive environment. Many mentioned the importance of building relationships and creating spaces where voices, especially from marginalized groups, can be heard.

Empowerment and growth, with many highlighting the transformative journeys of individuals, particularly young people, as they gain confidence, skills, and independence. The impact on education and career trajectories is frequently celebrated.

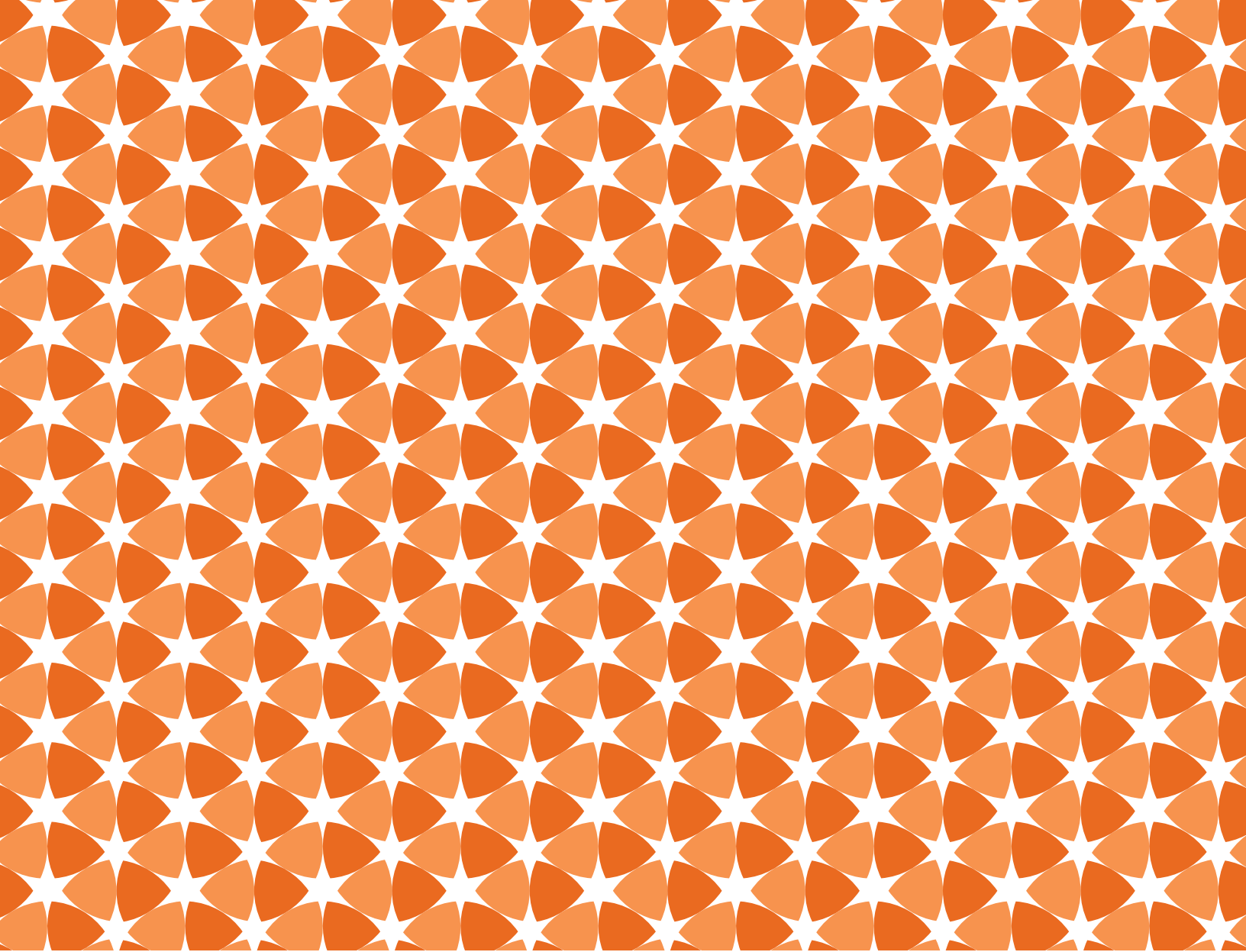
Collaborative efforts such as partnerships and collaboration with community members and organizations that play a crucial role in achieving goals and fostering change. The power of working together for a common cause is a recurring sentiment.

Resilience and hope and the stories of overcoming challenges are central to the narratives shared. Many expressed fulfillment in helping clients navigate difficult circumstances and achieve stability.

Cultural representation was also brought up and the importance of amplifying the voices of BIPOC and other marginalized communities, with a focus on creating inclusive spaces that celebrate diverse narratives.

Immediate and tangible impact and the direct results of the work, such as families receiving housing or individuals finding jobs, provides a clear sense of accomplishment. These moments are deeply cherished by those involved.

Sustained engagement and the long-term relationships with clients and communities are valued, with many expressing joy in witnessing the continued growth and success of those they serve, including alumni of programs.



APPENDIX 1B

Survey Findings by Organizational Size

Appendix 1B provides detailed findings, by organizations' staffing size. We define a small nonprofit as having zero to nine staff; medium nonprofits having 10 to 99 staff; and large nonprofits having 100 or more staff. A Chi-square test was conducted with the survey questions to examine the relationship between group membership (staff size) and response. Note that in some cases, the test may be unreliable due to the small sample size and low expected cell counts.

Demographics

Years nonprofit has served the community

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Less than 2 years	12%	1%	2%	6%
3-5 years	16%	8%	2%	11%
6-10 years	17%	8%	7%	12%
11-15 years	9%	8%	0%	8%
16+ years	46%	74%	90%	63%
Number of responses	190	156	58	404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Percentage of organizations' staff who are full-time

	Small	Medium	Large	All
None (0%)	25%	9%	9%	17%
1%-25%	13%	49%	66%	35%
26%-50%	13%	15%	9%	13%
51%-75%	13%	17%	10%	14%
76%-100%	36%	10%	7%	22%
Number of responses	190	156	58	404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Leadership Diversity

BIPOC

	Small	Medium	Large	All
None (0%)	19%	7%	5%	13%
1%-25%	17%	23%	22%	20%
26%-50%	12%	19%	29%	17%
51%-75%	12%	16%	16%	14%
76%-100%	27%	27%	16%	25%
Don't Know	3%	4%	7%	4%
Prefer Not to Answer	9%	4%	5%	7%
Number of responses	190	156	58	404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

LGBTQ+

	Small	Medium	Large	All
None (0%)	35%	26%	16%	29%
1%-25%	21%	29%	43%	27%
26%-50%	4%	10%	7%	7%
51%-75%	3%	1%	0%	2%
76%-100%	4%	2%	0%	2%
Don't Know	21%	24%	22%	22%
Prefer Not to Answer	13%	8%	12%	11%
Number of responses	190	156	58	404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.010

Number of individuals organizations served in calendar year 2023

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Fewer than 100	17%	12%	0%	12%
100-499	24%	13%	2%	17%
500-999	13%	15%	3%	12%
1,000-4,999	24%	26%	21%	25%
5,000-9,999	8%	11%	16%	10%
10,000+	14%	23%	59%	24%

Number of responses 190 156 58 404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

People with disabilities

	Small	Medium	Large	All
None (0%)	38%	33%	22%	34%
1%-25%	24%	27%	33%	26%
26%-50%	6%	3%	5%	5%
51%-75%	3%	3%	0%	2%
76%-100%	3%	3%	2%	2%
Don't Know	16%	25%	28%	21%
Prefer Not to Answer	11%	6%	10%	9%

Number of responses 190 156 58 404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.255

Women

	Small	Medium	Large	All
None (0%)	4%	0%	0%	2%
1%-25%	4%	4%	0%	3%
26%-50%	13%	10%	14%	12%
51%-75%	25%	26%	31%	26%
76%-100%	47%	54%	47%	50%
Don't Know	2%	1%	3%	2%
Prefer Not to Answer	6%	4%	5%	5%

Number of responses 190 156 58 404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.228

Type of board structure

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Governance board	45%	61%	60%	59%
Working board	32%	13%	3%	20%
Advisory board	18%	7%	8%	12%
Managing or executive board	8%	3%	0%	5%
Fundraising board	2%	5%	3%	3%
Number of responses	190	156	58	404

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Understanding Existing Organizational Capacity and Needs

Barriers to building required capacity

Developing a strategic roadmap and vision for sustainable growth

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	23%	25%	44%	27%
Small Barrier	29%	32%	32%	29%
Moderate Barrier	38%	34%	19%	33%
Major Barrier	10%	9%	6%	9%
Don't Know	0%	1%	0%	2%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.013

Finding talent to fill roles

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	22%	7%	4%	13%
Small Barrier	29%	20%	25%	24%
Moderate Barrier	29%	44%	41%	36%
Major Barrier	19%	28%	31%	25%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	1%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Securing funding to hire staff

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	9%	3%	5%	7%
Small Barrier	8%	9%	16%	10%
Moderate Barrier	15%	29%	38%	25%
Major Barrier	66%	58%	41%	56%
Don't Know	2%	2%	0%	3%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Paying competitive salaries for key staff

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	13%	4%	4%	8%
Small Barrier	9%	6%	11%	8%
Moderate Barrier	22%	27%	35%	26%
Major Barrier	52%	60%	49%	54%
Don't Know	5%	3%	1%	4%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.002

Securing funding to implement critical technology improvements

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	9%	5%	8%	7%
Small Barrier	17%	20%	19%	19%
Moderate Barrier	34%	39%	42%	36%
Major Barrier	38%	33%	29%	34%
Don't Know	2%	2%	1%	3%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.669

Barriers to securing and maintaining required skills and knowledge

Dealing with staff burnout and/or high organizational turnover

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	25%	14%	7%	17%
Small Barrier	33%	33%	28%	29%
Moderate Barrier	26%	34%	44%	34%
Major Barrier	14%	18%	20%	17%
Don't Know	2%	1%	1%	2%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.003

Finding quality contractors, TA providers, or consultants

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	30%	27%	31%	29%
Small Barrier	35%	36%	51%	38%
Moderate Barrier	23%	27%	14%	23%
Major Barrier	9%	6%	5%	7%
Don't Know	3%	4%	0%	4%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.067

Finding talent to fill key roles

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	20%	10%	6%	13%
Small Barrier	27%	21%	20%	24%
Moderate Barrier	32%	43%	55%	39%
Major Barrier	20%	26%	19%	22%
Don't Know	1%	1%	0%	1%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.001

Paying competitive salaries for key staff

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	13%	3%	2%	7%
Small Barrier	9%	9%	11%	9%
Moderate Barrier	27%	27%	44%	30%
Major Barrier	45%	57%	42%	49%
Don't Know	6%	4%	1%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Frequency of using resources to address barriers

Hiring contractors or temporary staff to bridge capacity needs

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	21%	12%	12%	17%
Rarely	18%	32%	21%	24%
Sometimes	33%	32%	44%	33%
Often	21%	18%	16%	18%
Always	5%	4%	4%	4%
Don't Know	1%	2%	4%	4%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.036

Hiring external consultants to fill technical skills gaps

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	22%	13%	7%	17%
Rarely	18%	28%	24%	23%
Sometimes	34%	32%	46%	32%
Often	18%	20%	18%	18%
Always	6%	5%	4%	5%
Don't Know	1%	3%	2%	3%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.038

Leveraging skillsets and volunteer time of board members

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	7%	8%	2%	8%
Rarely	13%	12%	20%	14%
Sometimes	22%	36%	40%	31%
Often	32%	33%	25%	29%
Always	25%	9%	8%	14%
Don't Know	2%	3%	5%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Participating in formal technical assistance programs in OC

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	26%	17%	14%	22%
Rarely	29%	32%	26%	28%
Sometimes	25%	33%	40%	29%
Often	13%	10%	5%	10%
Always	2%	2%	1%	1%
Don't Know	6%	7%	14%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.017

Participating in formal technical assistance programs beyond OC

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	35%	27%	19%	30%
Rarely	28%	32%	33%	28%
Sometimes	19%	25%	26%	22%
Often	8%	8%	6%	8%
Always	4%	2%	4%	2%
Don't Know	6%	6%	13%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.109

Relying on existing staff to fill multiple roles

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	3%	2%	2%	3%
Rarely	3%	4%	7%	5%
Sometimes	14%	20%	24%	18%
Often	29%	36%	47%	34%
Always	48%	36%	19%	37%
Don't Know	1%	2%	1%	2%
Number of responses	207	187	85	607

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.006

Professional development organizations offer

Diversity, equity, and inclusion training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	44%	64%	75%	57%
Do not have and do not need	21%	9%	2%	13%
Do not have but would like	30%	24%	20%	25%
Don't know	5%	4%	2%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Financial management training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	31%	32%	46%	33%
Do not have and do not need	23%	14%	11%	16%
Do not have but would like	42%	49%	38%	43%
Don't know	3%	5%	6%	7%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.028

Fundraising training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	24%	36%	42%	32%
Do not have and do not need	10%	7%	7%	9%
Do not have but would like	61%	55%	42%	54%
Don't know	4%	2%	8%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.003

Grant writing training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	24%	31%	39%	29%
Do not have and do not need	14%	19%	11%	16%
Do not have but would like	58%	48%	40%	50%
Don't know	3%	2%	11%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Human resources management training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	24%	39%	56%	35%
Do not have and do not need	29%	13%	9%	19%
Do not have but would like	42%	42%	26%	38%
Don't know	5%	6%	8%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Leadership training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	36%	58%	69%	50%
Do not have and do not need	14%	3%	0%	7%
Do not have but would like	47%	39%	31%	40%
Don't know	3%	1%	0%	3%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Legal and risk management

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	36%	31%	52%	37%
Do not have and do not need				
Do not have but would like	14%	11%	6%	11%
Don't know	44%	53%	34%	44%
	6%	5%	8%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.012

Measurement, evaluation, and learning training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	27%	33%	47%	33%
Do not have and do not need	14%	9%	5%	10%
Do not have but would like	53%	51%	35%	48%
Don't know	6%	6%	13%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.001

Programmatic competency training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	29%	52%	66%	44%
Do not have and do not need	31%	10%	5%	18%
Do not have but would like	32%	32%	26%	30%
Don't know	8%	6%	4%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Workplace dynamics

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	20%	27%	42%	27%
Do not have and do not need	29%	16%	8%	20%
Do not have but would like	37%	47%	41%	40%
Don't know	14%	11%	8%	14%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Staff turnover is an issue

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not significant	38%	18%	7%	24%
Mildly significant	32%	34%	34%	32%
Moderately significant	15%	26%	39%	25%
Very significant	13%	21%	20%	18%
Don't know	2%	1%	0%	1%
Number of responses	207	187	85	577

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Marketing and communications training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	29%	39%	42%	36%
Do not have and do not need	9%	9%	11%	8%
Do not have but would like	60%	51%	36%	51%
Don't know	2%	2%	11%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Professional certifications

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	17%	24%	24%	21%
Do not have and do not need	28%	17%	8%	20%
Do not have but would like	47%	54%	56%	50%
Don't know	8%	6%	12%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.004

Technology training

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Have in place	28%	36%	52%	34%
Do not have and do not need	21%	10%	2%	14%
Do not have but would like	47%	51%	39%	46%
Don't know	4%	3%	7%	6%
Number of responses	207	187	85	592

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Reasons for voluntary staff departures

Left for personal reasons

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	40%	14%	2%	22%
Rarely	14%	24%	21%	19%
Sometimes	21%	41%	56%	35%
Often	10%	14%	14%	13%
Always	9%	4%	0%	5%
Don't Know	6%	4%	6%	7%
Number of responses	207	187	85	577

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Left for remote work or to reduce commute time/distance

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	68%	40%	12%	44%
Rarely	12%	25%	27%	19%
Sometimes	6%	22%	36%	20%
Often	1%	5%	14%	6%
Always	1%	1%	0%	1%
Don't Know	11%	7%	11%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	577

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Left for promotion/growth opportunity or to return to school

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	45%	15%	0%	24%
Rarely	14%	13%	5%	12%
Sometimes	18%	36%	36%	29%
Often	10%	28%	51%	25%
Always	8%	5%	5%	6%
Don't Know	6%	3%	4%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	577

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Moved out of the area

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	48%	24%	7%	30%
Rarely	17%	37%	38%	28%
Sometimes	22%	27%	41%	28%
Often	3%	4%	7%	4%
Always	2%	2%	0%	2%
Don't Know	8%	6%	7%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	577

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Resources / Investments that would help organizations thrive

	Small	Medium	Large	All	p*
Networking opportunities with funders	84%	84%	79%	81%	0.546
Connecting with potential partners	75%	67%	75%	69%	0.130
Finding potential partners	68%	58%	54%	58%	0.131
Participating in coalition building and/or collective impact initiatives	53%	56%	71%	54%	0.721
Maintaining relationships with partners	41%	40%	45%	40%	0.721
Improving data systems and data sharing	28%	42%	41%	35%	0.006
Financial strategy and accounting support	34%	36%	22%	31%	0.078
Guidance on data sharing and developing collaborative evaluation	22%	30%	28%	25%	0.131
Number of responses	207	187	85	577	

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). Probabilities ≤0.05 are bolded

Organizations have cash reserve

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Yes	66%	74%	82%	69%
No	27%	17%	7%	19%
Don't know	7%	10%	11%	12%
Number of responses	207	187	85	573

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.002

Average size of cash reserve

	Small	Medium	Large	All
\$0-\$50,000	34%	8%	0%	16%
\$50,001-\$100,000	10%	8%	0%	7%
\$100,001-\$500,000	22%	20%	4%	18%
\$500,001-\$750,000	4%	8%	1%	5%
>\$750,000	7%	34%	51%	25%
Don't know	6%	7%	16%	10%
Prefer not to answer	17%	16%	27%	19%
Number of responses	138	138	70	398

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Currently have line of credit

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Don't know	9%	19%	26%	18%
No	78%	50%	22%	56%
Yes	13%	31%	52%	26%
Number of responses	207	187	85	558

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Barriers to managing capacity and health of organization

Identifying accountants with nonprofit fund accounting experience

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	51%	50%	58%	49%
Small Barrier	14%	22%	12%	18%
Moderate Barrier	17%	11%	13%	14%
Major Barrier	7%	8%	5%	7%
Don't Know	10%	9%	13%	12%
Number of responses	207	187	85	558

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.258

Retaining in-house accounting staff

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	54%	56%	62%	55%
Small Barrier	19%	26%	15%	20%
Moderate Barrier	9%	9%	13%	10%
Major Barrier	8%	7%	1%	6%
Don't Know	10%	3%	8%	9%
Number of responses	207	187	85	558

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.031

Providing adequate reporting to the board

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	66%	61%	73%	63%
Small Barrier	17%	24%	9%	18%
Moderate Barrier	7%	7%	6%	8%
Major Barrier	3%	1%	0%	2%
Don't Know	6%	7%	12%	9%
Number of responses	207	187	85	558

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.046

Securing staff or external resources to support budgeting, forecasting and cash management

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Barrier	44%	42%	52%	43%
Small Barrier	22%	22%	15%	20%
Moderate Barrier	14%	21%	15%	17%
Major Barrier	13%	7%	5%	9%
Don't Know	8%	7%	13%	11%
Number of responses	207	187	85	558

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.089

Business priorities for which organizations use external personnel resources

	Small	Medium	Large	All	p*
IT/Technology	45%	76%	55%	59%	0.000
Legal and risk	49%	61%	74%	56%	0.000
Finance	50%	41%	23%	40%	0.002
Grant writing	34%	45%	31%	39%	0.020
Marketing and communications	38%	37%	48%	38%	0.168
Human resources	25%	43%	23%	32%	0.000
Diversity, equity, and inclusion	18%	26%	31%	24%	0.019
Fundraising	22%	21%	26%	23%	0.560
Strategy	17%	17%	38%	19%	0.000
Measurement, evaluation, and learning	13%	18%	20%	15%	0.128
None	14%	6%	6%	10%	0.038
Programming	11%	8%	8%	9%	0.659
Number of responses	181	176	80	485	

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). Probabilities ≤0.05 are bolded

Degree of challenge to finding the right resources

Availability of external resources

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Challenge	33%	35%	27%	32%
Small Challenge	32%	33%	42%	33%
Moderate Challenge	19%	18%	20%	19%
Major Challenge	7%	5%	2%	5%
Don't Know	9%	9%	8%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	533

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.603

Cultural competency

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Challenge	44%	30%	25%	35%
Small Challenge	23%	33%	39%	29%
Moderate Challenge	14%	18%	19%	16%
Major Challenge	7%	8%	8%	8%
Don't Know	12%	11%	9%	12%
Number of responses	207	187	85	533

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.035

Quality

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Challenge	29%	19%	21%	24%
Small Challenge	30%	29%	33%	29%
Moderate Challenge	23%	32%	27%	27%
Major Challenge	9%	11%	9%	9%
Don't Know	8%	9%	9%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	533

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.428

Costs

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Challenge	10%	8%	6%	8%
Small Challenge	14%	15%	16%	15%
Moderate Challenge	28%	33%	42%	32%
Major Challenge	42%	40%	28%	38%
Don't Know	7%	4%	7%	7%
Number of responses	207	187	85	533

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.294

Finding the right resource

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all a Challenge	24%	19%	16%	20%
Small Challenge	32%	26%	40%	30%
Moderate Challenge	25%	35%	29%	30%
Major Challenge	11%	12%	7%	10%
Don't Know	8%	8%	7%	9%
Number of responses	207	187	85	533

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.209

Organization Leadership and Strategic Alignment

Agreement that organization

Creates an annual business plan

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	45%	51%	58%	49%
Somewhat Agree	32%	32%	29%	32%
Somewhat Disagree	10%	8%	5%	8%
Strongly Disagree	8%	5%	5%	6%
Don't Know	5%	4%	4%	4%
Number of responses	207	187	85	510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.619

Engages key stakeholders to drive organizational strategy

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	41%	43%	59%	45%
Somewhat Agree	36%	38%	31%	36%
Somewhat Disagree	13%	10%	6%	10%
Strongly Disagree	5%	5%	4%	5%
Don't Know	5%	4%	1%	4%
Number of responses	207	187	85	510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.196

Evaluates its programmatic impacts

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	46%	52%	61%	51%
Somewhat Agree	37%	37%	29%	35%
Somewhat Disagree	8%	5%	6%	7%
Strongly Disagree	4%	3%	2%	4%
Don't Know	4%	3%	1%	3%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.406

Uses its strategic plan to drive work

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	44%	53%	58%	50%
Somewhat Agree	37%	29%	33%	33%
Somewhat Disagree	9%	8%	6%	8%
Strongly Disagree	6%	5%	2%	5%
Don't Know	4%	5%	1%	4%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.366

Degree to which board contributes to strategic direction

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all	4%	2%	2%	3%
Somewhat	20%	18%	14%	18%
Moderately	26%	26%	22%	25%
Significantly	45%	49%	56%	48%
Don't know	1%	6%	5%	4%
None of the above	4%	0%	0%	2%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.010

Reports KPIs/metrics to its board

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	48%	59%	62%	55%
Somewhat Agree	28%	26%	28%	27%
Somewhat Disagree	10%	7%	6%	8%
Strongly Disagree	10%	2%	2%	5%
Don't Know	4%	6%	1%	4%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.008

Organizations' data and outcomes—degree to which organization

Gathers data on users and/or their outcomes

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	3%	3%	2%	3%
Rarely	8%	4%	0%	5%
Sometimes	26%	22%	12%	22%
Often	32%	29%	31%	29%
Always	29%	40%	53%	37%
Don't Know	3%	2%	2%	2%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.006

Uses data to inform work

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	3%	2%	1%	2%
Rarely	6%	3%	0%	4%
Sometimes	22%	21%	13%	21%
Often	36%	33%	36%	34%
Always	30%	40%	48%	36%
Don't Know	3%	2%	1%	2%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.057

Leverages data effectively to adapt programs and strategies

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	2%	2%	1%	2%
Rarely	10%	8%	0%	7%
Sometimes	27%	22%	22%	25%
Often	30%	36%	39%	34%
Always	27%	29%	36%	29%
Don't Know	4%	2%	1%	3%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.103

Needs support in using data to inform work

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Never	9%	5%	4%	6%
Rarely	19%	20%	27%	21%
Sometimes	34%	45%	40%	39%
Often	20%	15%	14%	17%
Always	10%	12%	13%	12%
Don't Know	8%	3%	2%	5%

Number of responses 207 187 85 510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.032

Frequency organizations engage in partnerships/collaborations with other nonprofits to enhance service delivery and/or improve collective capacity

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Always	25%	30%	28%	27%
Often	33%	36%	49%	36%
Sometimes	29%	26%	15%	26%
Rarely	12%	6%	5%	8%
Never	0%	2%	1%	1%
Don't Know	1%	0%	1%	1%
Number of responses	207	187	85	510

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.037

Extent to which partnerships/collaboratives are

Useful for enhancing service delivery and collective capacity

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	66%	68%	66%	66%
Somewhat Agree	27%	27%	25%	28%
Somewhat Disagree	3%	2%	4%	3%
Strongly Disagree	1%	2%	4%	2%
Don't Know	2%	1%	1%	1%
Number of responses	179	173	79	456

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.898

Needed for enhancing service delivery and collective capacity

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	62%	65%	61%	62%
Somewhat Agree	25%	27%	32%	28%
Somewhat Disagree	10%	5%	4%	7%
Strongly Disagree	1%	3%	3%	2%
Don't Know	3%	1%	1%	2%
Number of responses	179	173	79	456

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.159

Which of the following statement(s) related to partnership/collaboration apply to your organization?

	Small	Medium	Large	All	p*
Improves impact for nonprofit	84%	89%	90%	86%	0.035
Improves advocacy	71%	67%	77%	70%	0.203
Allows nonprofit to share resources	63%	68%	58%	63%	0.174
Increases efficiency for nonprofit	61%	61%	66%	61%	0.390
Requires shared mission between partners	55%	56%	54%	55%	0.718
Requires more admin support / infrastructure	34%	42%	51%	41%	0.011
Can include power dynamics	35%	34%	53%	38%	0.004
Complicates evaluation	12%	15%	25%	16%	0.016
Number of responses	179	173	79	457	

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). Probabilities ≤0.05 are bolded

Understanding How Philanthropy Can Be Better Utilized to Benefit Orange County Nonprofits

In general, how difficult is it to

Access diverse funding streams, including unrestricted funds, individual donations, and grants

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	1%	3%	4%	2%
Slightly Difficult	12%	14%	16%	14%
Moderately Difficult	33%	38%	48%	38%
Very Difficult	51%	42%	26%	42%
Don't Know	3%	3%	6%	4%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.898

Develop relationships with new donors and/or funders

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	4%	4%	4%	4%
Slightly Difficult	18%	19%	28%	20%
Moderately Difficult	40%	42%	42%	41%
Very Difficult	36%	31%	19%	31%
Don't Know	2%	4%	7%	4%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.087

Raise funds outside of expending on special events

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	6%	6%	12%	7%
Slightly Difficult	16%	18%	19%	18%
Moderately Difficult	23%	40%	42%	33%
Very Difficult	46%	30%	19%	35%
Don't Know	8%	6%	8%	7%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.000

Access multi-year funding

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	2%	2%	2%	2%
Slightly Difficult	12%	8%	15%	11%
Moderately Difficult	19%	32%	38%	27%
Very Difficult	62%	55%	39%	55%
Don't Know	5%	3%	6%	5%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.013

Raise unrestricted funding

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	5%	5%	1%	4%
Slightly Difficult	17%	17%	13%	16%
Moderately Difficult	22%	31%	42%	29%
Very Difficult	51%	42%	36%	45%
Don't Know	4%	6%	7%	6%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.040

Secure funding from new donors and/or funders

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Not at all Difficult	2%	2%	1%	2%
Slightly Difficult	12%	17%	20%	15%
Moderately Difficult	33%	41%	49%	39%
Very Difficult	51%	37%	22%	41%
Don't Know	2%	4%	7%	4%

Number of responses 207 187 85 495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.002

Agree that additional unrestricted funding would be beneficial for

Advocacy

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	39%	31%	41%	36%
Somewhat Agree	29%	40%	32%	34%
Somewhat Disagree	9%	10%	9%	9%
Strongly Disagree	10%	9%	9%	9%
Don't Know	13%	11%	8%	11%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.512

HR/Wellness

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	17%	30%	33%	25%
Somewhat Agree	33%	35%	40%	35%
Somewhat Disagree	18%	17%	15%	17%
Strongly Disagree	14%	7%	4%	10%
Don't Know	17%	10%	8%	13%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.002

Measurement, evaluation, and learning

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	26%	40%	28%	32%
Somewhat Agree	43%	40%	46%	42%
Somewhat Disagree	16%	11%	14%	14%
Strongly Disagree	5%	4%	5%	4%
Don't Know	10%	6%	7%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.161

Professional development

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	29%	49%	38%	39%
Somewhat Agree	45%	33%	47%	41%
Somewhat Disagree	13%	6%	9%	9%
Strongly Disagree	5%	4%	4%	4%
Don't Know	8%	7%	2%	6%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.004

Fund development

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	43%	52%	42%	46%
Somewhat Agree	35%	26%	39%	33%
Somewhat Disagree	6%	11%	8%	8%
Strongly Disagree	4%	3%	2%	3%
Don't Know	12%	8%	8%	10%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.143

Marketing and communication

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	45%	41%	33%	41%
Somewhat Agree	34%	40%	42%	38%
Somewhat Disagree	12%	12%	14%	12%
Strongly Disagree	4%	3%	2%	3%
Don't Know	5%	5%	8%	6%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.594

Personnel/Staff

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	65%	68%	69%	67%
Somewhat Agree	14%	22%	24%	19%
Somewhat Disagree	7%	3%	4%	4%
Strongly Disagree	6%	2%	1%	3%
Don't Know	8%	4%	2%	5%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.024

Programming

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	57%	59%	59%	58%
Somewhat Agree	23%	24%	29%	25%
Somewhat Disagree	7%	7%	6%	7%
Strongly Disagree	5%	3%	1%	3%
Don't Know	8%	6%	5%	7%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.738

Risk management

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	13%	18%	19%	16%
Somewhat Agree	28%	37%	32%	33%
Somewhat Disagree	24%	25%	28%	24%
Strongly Disagree	14%	9%	6%	11%
Don't Know	22%	11%	15%	17%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.018

Strategic planning

	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	32%	33%	27%	31%
Somewhat Agree	34%	35%	34%	35%
Somewhat Disagree	16%	17%	20%	17%
Strongly Disagree	8%	7%	7%	7%
Don't Know	10%	9%	12%	9%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.985

Technology

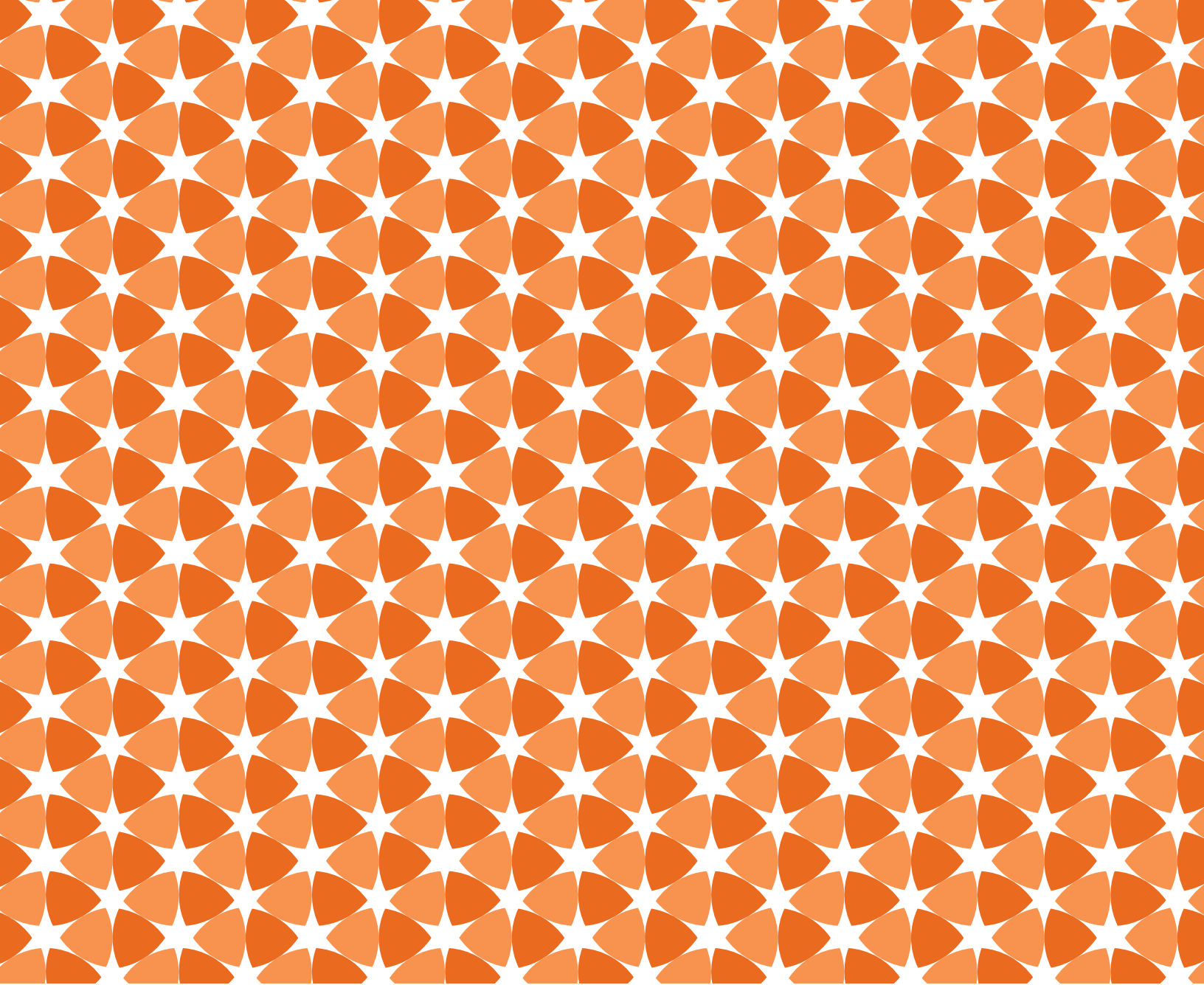
	Small	Medium	Large	All
Strongly Agree	35%	40%	46%	38%
Somewhat Agree	38%	40%	34%	39%
Somewhat Disagree	12%	10%	8%	11%
Strongly Disagree	5%	4%	6%	5%
Don't Know	10%	6%	6%	8%
Number of responses	207	187	85	495

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). P=0.642

Besides providing additional funding, ways local funders can support organizations

	Small	Medium	Large	All	p*
Providing connections	88%	84%	91%	87%	0.238
Supporting staff and leadership sustainability	66%	79%	85%	74%	0.001
Supporting development of long-term strategies	63%	64%	56%	62%	0.483
Sharing suggestions for core infrastructure improvements	43%	42%	36%	41%	0.603
Encouraging continuous learning	34%	36%	40%	35%	0.605
Providing funding for counsel and best practices for governance	35%	36%	28%	34%	0.414
Number of responses	207	187	85	495	

*Significance of Pearson Chi-Square (2-tailed). Probabilities ≤0.05 are bolded



APPENDIX 1C

Practical Strategies and Solutions from the Field

Despite limited resources, Orange County nonprofits have demonstrated resilience and innovation. Solutions shared by nonprofit leaders during the town hall and focus groups include:

Staffing Strategies

- Leveraging volunteers and interns through partnerships with local universities.
- Cross-training staff to increase flexibility and reduce burnout.
- Offering hybrid and remote work options to improve retention and work-life balance.
- Investing in leadership development programs to prepare mid-level staff for senior roles.

Infrastructure and Financial Sustainability Strategies

- Developing shared service models for IT, legal, and HR support.
- Increasing access to financial literacy training for nonprofit leaders.
- Exploring regional loan pools to provide nonprofits with access to credit.

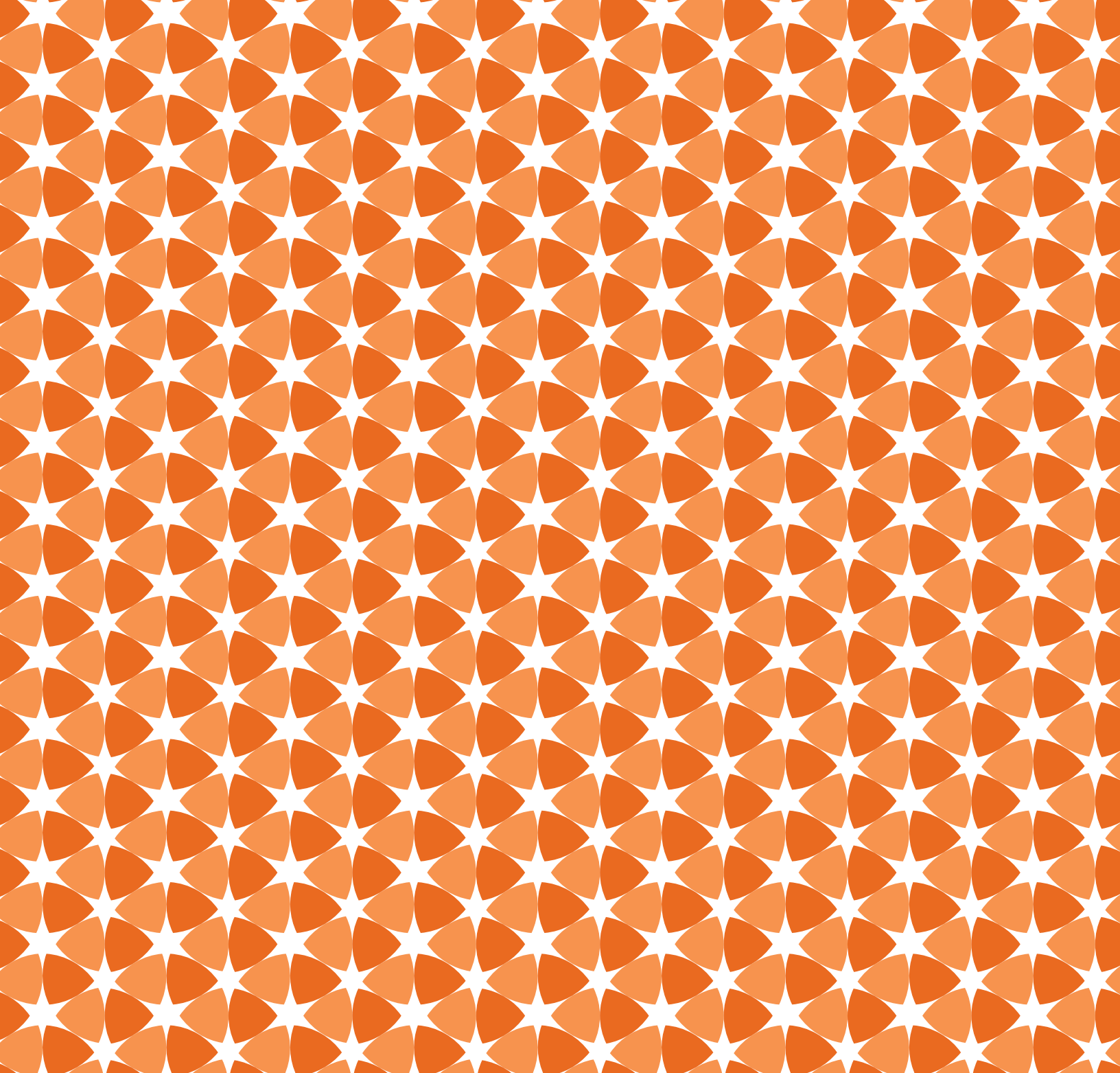
Collaboration Strategies

- Creating structured peer learning networks to exchange best practices.
- Establishing collaborative funding opportunities to support joint initiatives.
- Investing in regional infrastructure to facilitate long-term partnerships.

Funding Practices

- Expanding multi-year, unrestricted funding to enable long-term planning.
- Encouraging funders to provide networking opportunities and connect grantees with additional funding sources.
- Advocating for shifts in grantmaking that prioritize sustainability over short-term program funding.

These practical strategies illustrate how nonprofits are innovating to meet community needs despite structural challenges. However, they also highlight the need for significant investment to ensure long-term sustainability and impact.



APPENDIX 1D

Report Snapshot

1

Need for Investment in Staff and Leadership

Data point to prevalent staffing gaps, difficulty recruiting talent, overuse of existing staff, and unmet needs for governance and professional development.

2

Need for Investment in Structure and Systems

Challenges with staffing and service delivery, compounded by restricted funding, make investment in systems almost impossible. This in turn perpetuates overreliance on manual processes and people.

3

Need to Build Trust and Relationships

Service efforts and impact measurement remain mostly siloed, with efforts carried out individually. Funders and nonprofits continue to have different conversations about regional needs. While nonprofit leaders recognize the value of collaboration and coalition-building, trust issues and competition for limited resources often hinder these efforts, with little time or investment allotted to fostering meaningful partnerships.

4

Need to Challenge Investment Paradigms

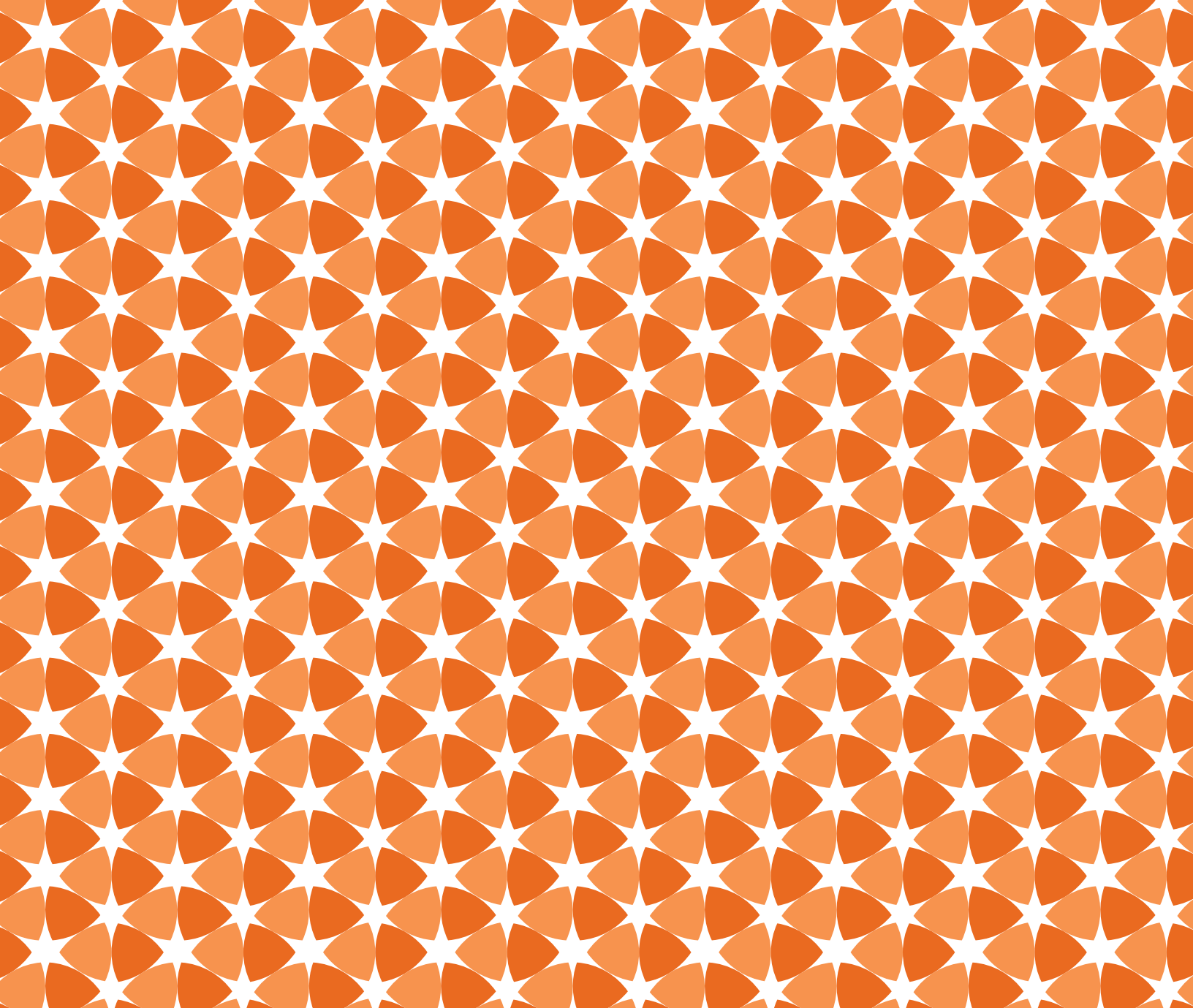
Nonprofits typically pursue funding for their annual budgets in small, one-year increments, frequently receive program grants over operational support, and seldom receive loans or lines of credit from banks or CDFIs (community development fund institutions). While nonprofits continue to serve the community in spite of this investment paradigm, to stabilize the industry, this must change.

Organizational/Participant Profile

The following chart describes the individuals and organizations that participated in the Nonprofit Assessment, which included an online survey and focus groups. Data collection took place in September 2024.

	Survey Participants	Focus Group Participants
Responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 607 valid responses from individuals representing • 404 organizations • Online survey open for 3 weeks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 97 participants representing 92 organizations • 13 focus groups were conducted, both in-person (3) and virtually (10)
Years in Operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=404 • 6% have been in operations less than 3 years • 11% have been in operations 3-5 years • 12% have been in operations 6-10 years • 8% have been in operations 11-15 years • 63% have been in operation for more than 16 years 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=66 • 8% have been in operations less than 3 years • 12% have been in operations 3-5 years • 12% have been in operations 6-10 years • 15% have been in operations 11-15 years • 53% have been in operations for more than 16 years
Staff Size	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=404 • 40% have one to nine staff employed • 39% have 10-99 staff employed • 14% have 100 or more staff employed • 7% of nonprofits have no staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=66 • 50% have one to nine staff employed • 31% have 10-99 staff employed • 14% have 100 or more staff employed • 5% of nonprofits have no staff
Geographic Area of Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=404 (select all that apply) • 15% North Orange County • 13% Central Orange County • 12% South Orange County • 8% West/Central Orange County • 71% all of Orange County • 33% outside of Orange County 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • n=66 (select all that apply) • 11% North Orange County • 15% Central Orange County • 5% South Orange County • 14% West/Central Orange County • 71% all of Orange County • 26% outside of Orange County

Note: Respondents could select all that apply, hence totals equal more than 100%.



APPENDIX 2A

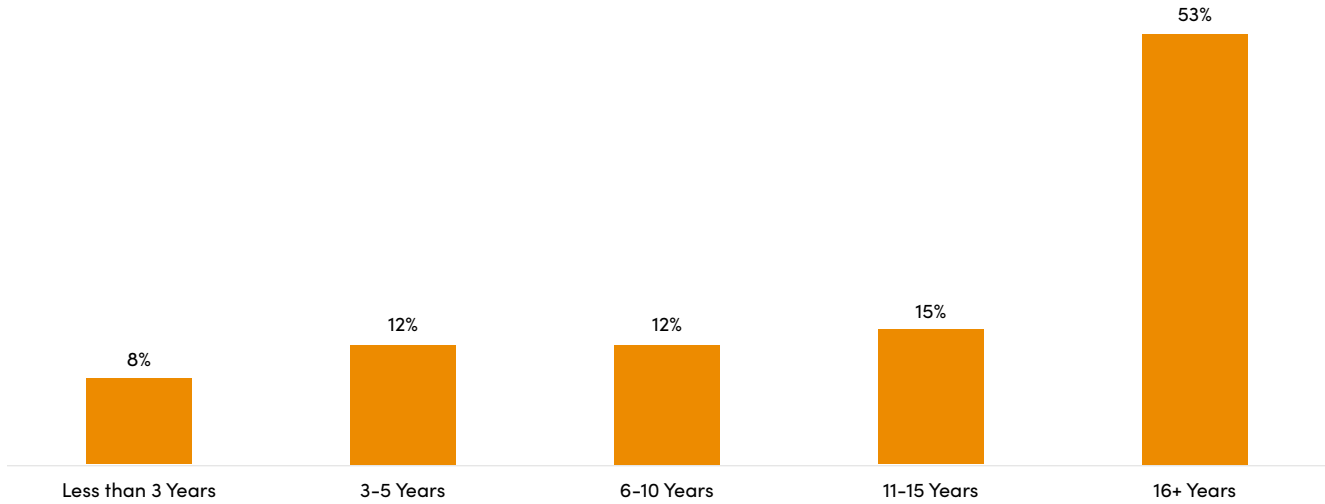
Focus Groups Characteristics

There were 13 focus groups, with 97 participants representing 92 nonprofits.

Number of years nonprofit has served community

More than half of the nonprofits represented at the focus groups have been serving the community for 16 or more years. Only 8% have been serving the community for less than 3 years.

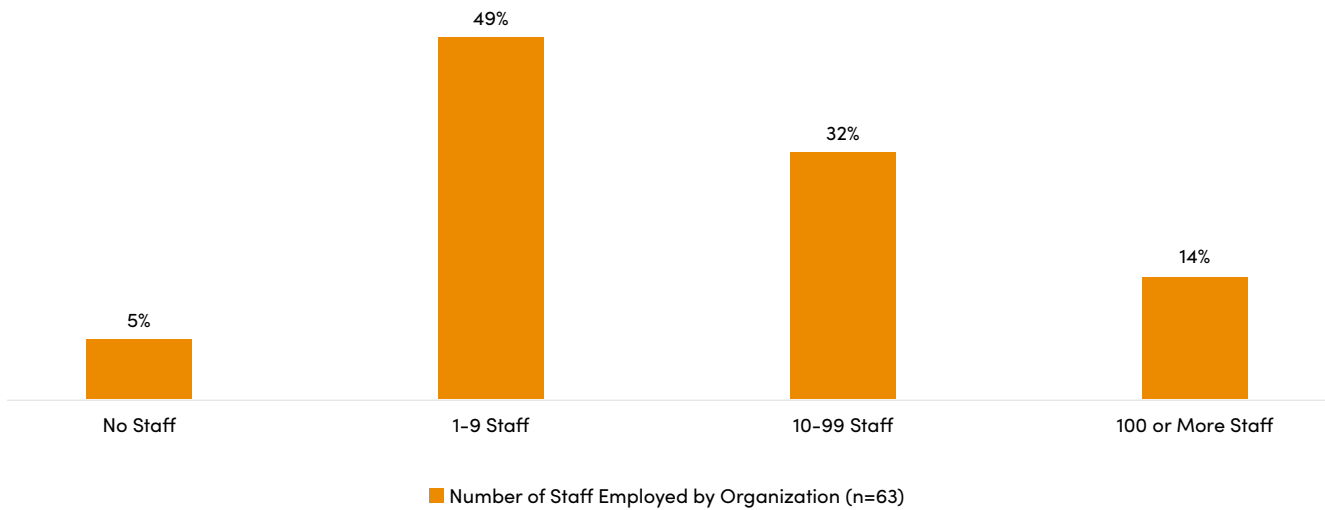
APX 2A: Figure 1. Years Nonprofit has Served its Community (n=66)



Number of staff members employed

Almost half (49%) of the organizations at the focus groups had between one and nine staff members, while 14% had 100 or more staff.

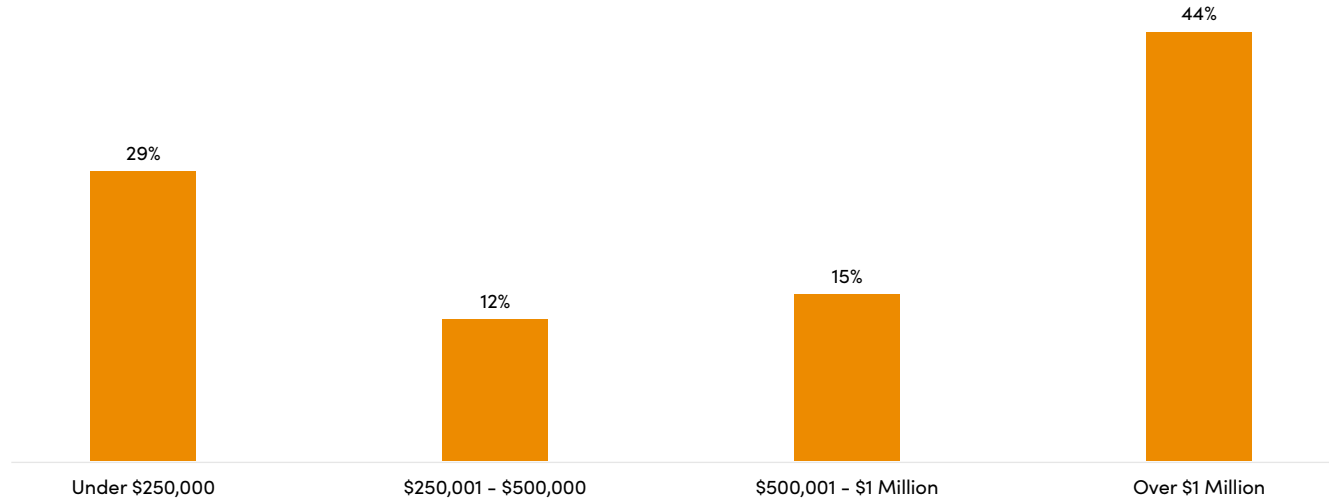
APX 2A: Figure 2. Number of Staff Employed by Organization (n=63)



Annual budget

A plurality of organizations participating in the nonprofits had organizations with an annual budget of more than \$250,000, while almost one out of three nonprofits had annual budgets under \$250,000.

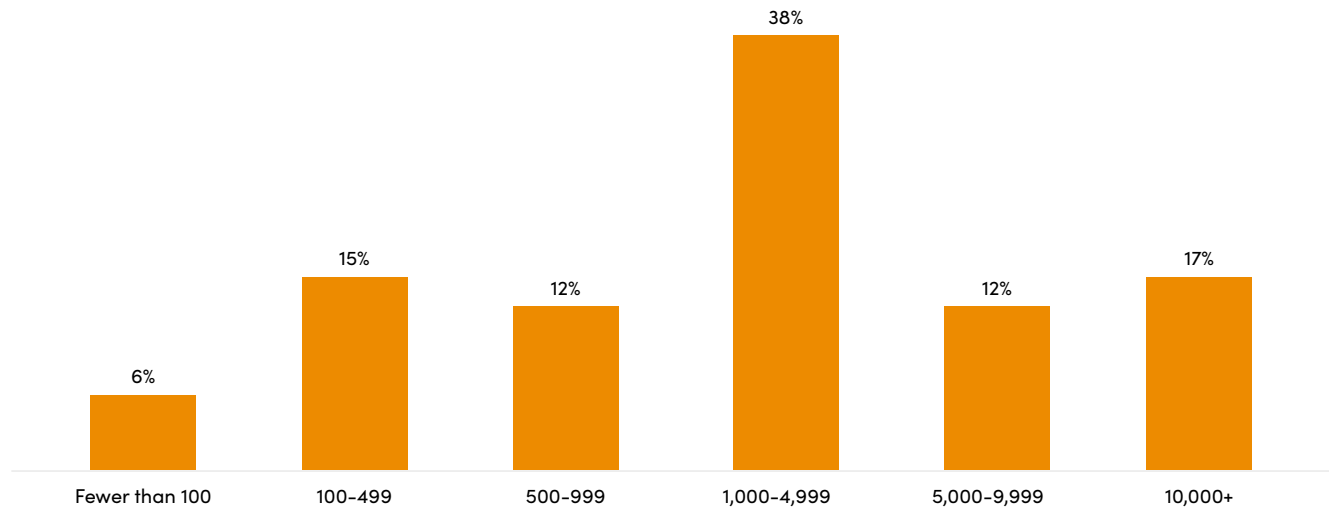
APX 2A: Figure 3. Annual Budget (n=66)



Approximate number of individuals served in prior year

A plurality of nonprofits represented at focus groups served between 1,000 and 4,999 individuals in calendar year 2023. Almost one in five (17%) served 10,000 or more individuals.

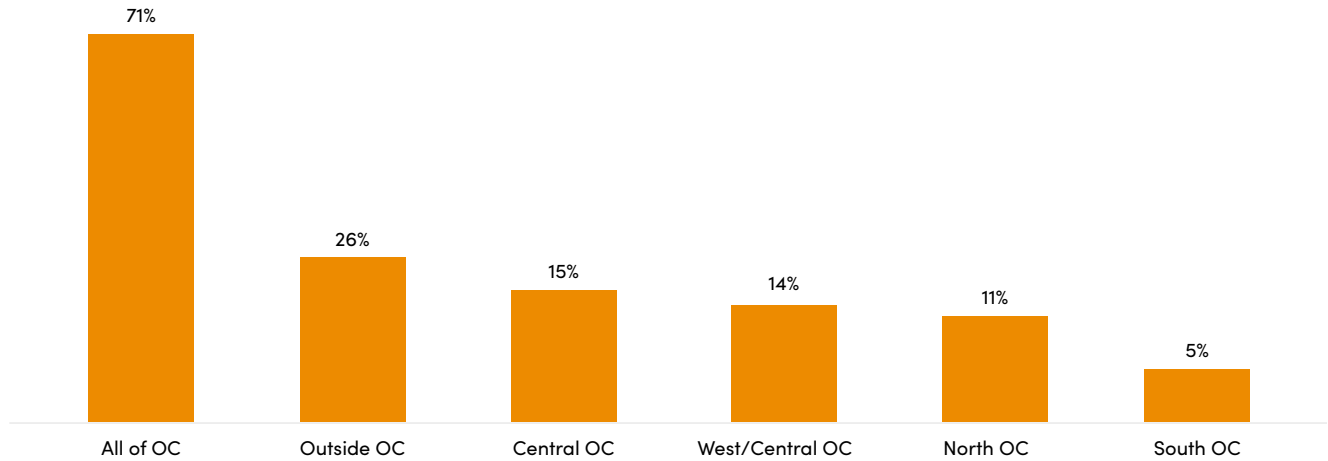
APX 2A: Figure 4. Number of Individuals Organizations Served in Calendar Year 2023 (n=66)



Organizations’ geographic area of service

Seventy-one percent had a nonprofit that served all of Orange County.

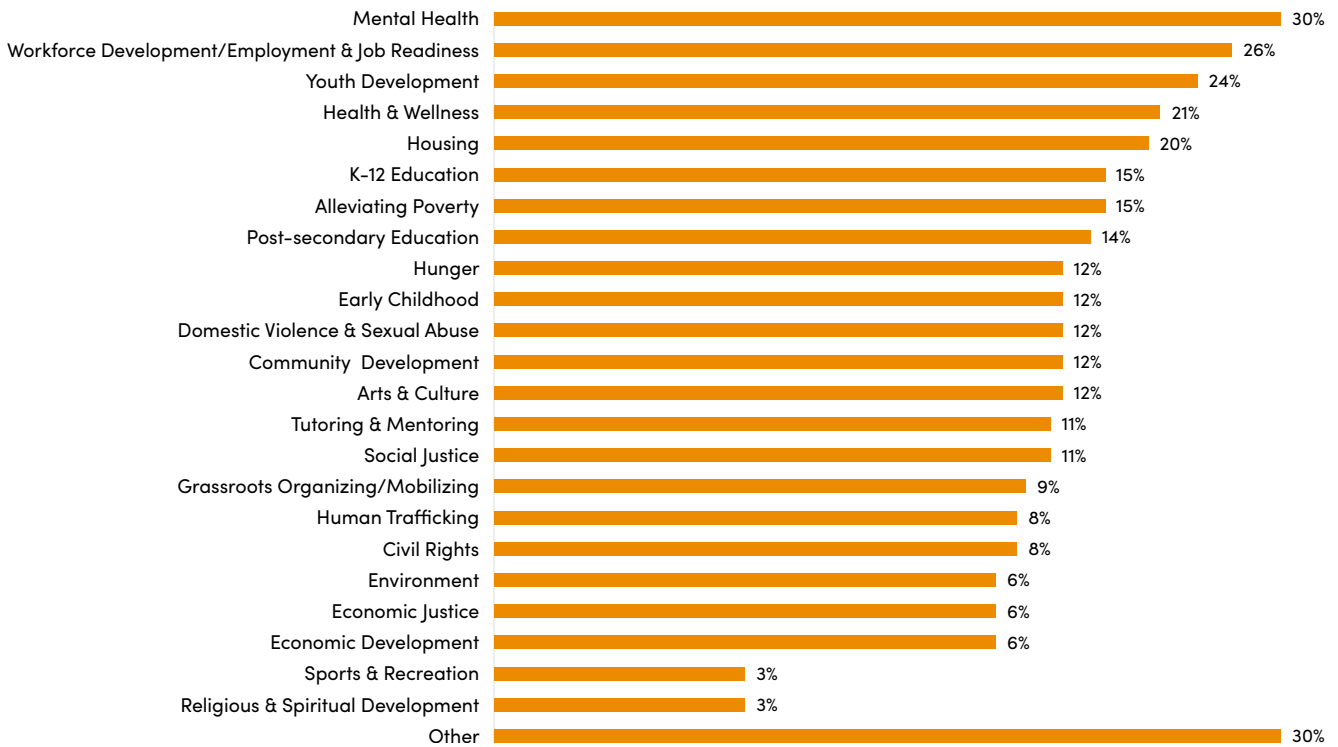
APX 2A: Figure 5. Organizations’ Geographic Area of Service (n=66)



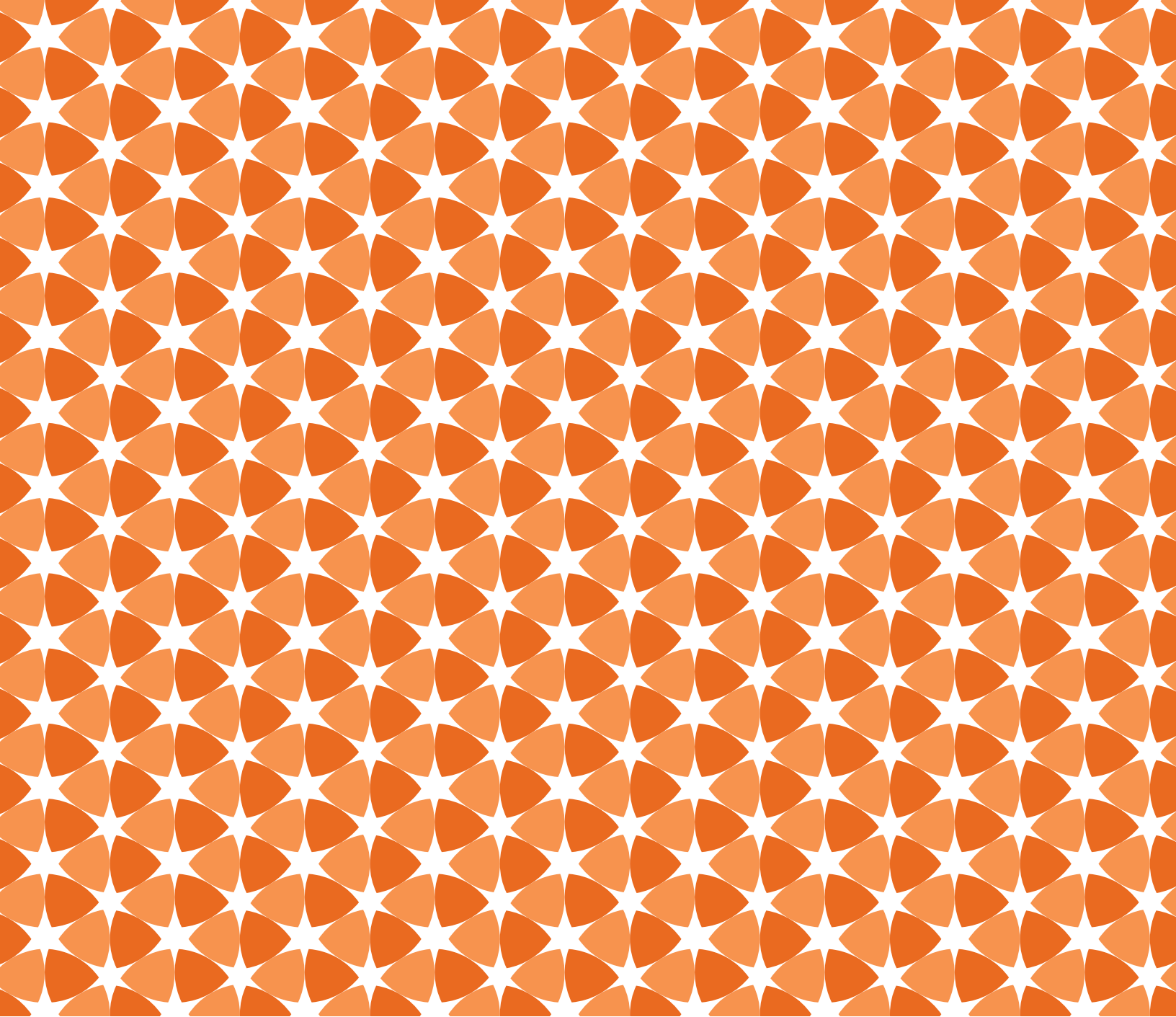
Organizations’ focus areas

Organizations were asked to select up to three focus areas that best describe their nonprofit’s mission.¹⁵ One in three selected mental health and 26% said workforce development.

APX 2A: Figure 6. Organizations’ Focus Area (n=66)



¹⁵ This is different than the survey question, which asked respondents to select only one focus area.



APPENDIX 2B

Detailed Focus Groups Findings

There were 13 focus groups held—three in-person and 10 virtual—between September 16th and October 1st. A total of 97 individuals attended the focus groups, representing 92 nonprofit organizations. This appendix provides the discussion questions asked as well as detailed summary of the focus group findings.

Organizational Capacity and Gaps

Thinking about leadership, governance, strategic planning, and operational systems, in which areas do you see the greatest need for improvement or growth?

Many nonprofit members brought up the area of governance as the greatest need for improvement. Their concerns include the long tenures of board members, which leads to lack of innovation and new fundraising. Having a set term for board members and sticking to those terms is preferred. Attendees also mentioned the time commitment to engage with board members. Some experience low levels of engagement with board members while others are working with boards that have a large number of members, making it challenging to engage meaningfully. Attendees brought up that board members need to have clear expectations set of them. Understanding board members' strengths and talents can maximize their benefit to the organization. Attendees mentioned the need for diversity in skills and demographics of the board that some organizations do not have currently.

The next area of need that was mentioned frequently was leadership. Attendees mentioned that salaries at nonprofit organizations are well below industry levels, making it hard to recruit qualified leaders. It is difficult to hire and retain talent, and there is high burnout and exhaustion in the nonprofit sector, and leaders leave for better work-life balance. There is a need to invest in up and coming leaders as people retire and need

to transfer knowledge to the next leader and focus on succession planning.

A few focus group attendees mentioned the area of strategic planning as being an area of improvement. Strategic planning is needed to maintain the mission and keep the organization on track. However, some attendees felt so mired in daily operations that strategic planning took a back seat.

Attendees also mentioned the difficulty of following a long-term strategic plan since they were managing to an annual budget and funding. The unpredictability of funding from year to year made it difficult to focus on strategic planning.

A few attendees mentioned operational systems as the area of greatest need. Some organizations experienced rapid growth while infrastructure had not kept up, such as HR and marketing. A few organizations mentioned the lack of technology and systems to grow the organization. The attendees were hopeful that AI can help with capacity building and that organizations can serve more people with limited resources.

Leadership and Governance

What, if any, are the biggest barriers to cultivating strong leadership within your team?

Many challenges were brought up in cultivating strong leadership within the nonprofits' teams. The area most frequently brought up was lack of resources for leadership development. A lot of nonprofits have home-grown leaders from the community who are not professionally trained. They would greatly benefit from training to unlock their full potential.

Many attendees mentioned that it is hard to retain talent as they leave for better wages and benefits. The high cost of living in Orange County makes it challenging

to recruit talent. Since most funding goes towards programming, it is hard to pay competitive wages for skilled leaders. In addition, providing benefits that are competitive with the private sector is challenging.

What governance challenges does your organization encounter, and what support could help improve board engagement or effectiveness?

Attendees mentioned the challenge of volunteer board members who do not have training in the area of board development. They are looking for training tools for board members, e.g. culturally appropriate training, how to lead, and how to advise.

Attendees discussed that building trust with board members is time consuming. Also, working with board members who are assigned specific tasks takes a lot of follow-ups since most board members have day jobs as well.

Ideally, board members would have specific skillsets that organizations are looking for and that they would open up their networks to provide new sources of funding and specific skillsets.

Attendees mentioned the challenge of having board members with very long terms. Ideally, there should be set terms for fresh ideas and funding opportunities to emerge from board members.

Strategy and Collaboration

What strategies have been most successful in driving your organization's impact?

Few attendees mentioned finding and partnering with other nonprofit organizations that they trust has been most successful in driving their organization's impact

and expanding outreach. Attendees mentioned that they had success applying for grant funding with other organizations that provide complementary services (e.g., housing with education outreach).

Some of the focus group attendees had success collaborating with the city to expand outreach. However, they mentioned that there is bureaucracy and that meaningful action take time.

Similarly, a few of the participants mentioned approaching elected officials and attending council meetings in their local area to expand outreach or to find avenues for new funding.

Attendees suggested avoiding dependency on single stream funding. Diversifying funding is key to sustainability. Attendees mentioned looking to county, state, and federal funding sources as well as private grants.

Attendees emphasized the importance of staying true to the organization's mission while expanding into new services. They mentioned the importance of everyone being on the same page related to the mission – from the Board down to the volunteers.

Some attendees have had success with developing a strategic plan with metrics and marching towards achieving those. They mention having Board engagement on the strategic plan leads to success as Board members are aligned with the strategy and everyone has clear direction.

Few attendees mentioned having success through digital fundraising with storytelling via videos or emails. Digital fundraising is less involved than planning fundraising events and provides greater impact.

Where do you see room for improvement?

A few of the attendees mentioned that collaborating with other nonprofit organizations was challenging as they were competing for resources or for engagement. There was agreement about a need for a more

collaborative environment within the nonprofit sector.

Attendees agreed that institutional funding is a challenge, and it is hard to make inroads. They had better success with government funding.

Attendees mentioned fundraising is hard work and very time-consuming. Having tools in this space, such as newsletter software to keep funders apprised of progress would be helpful for organizations.

Attendees mentioned the dependency on relationships for fundraising. It is challenging when the leader who has the relationships with funders ends up leaving the organization, creating a void in that space.

Attendees mentioned that most organizations have small staff teams. It is important to prioritize achievable goals or risk burnout of staff.

Resource Utilization and Needs

What types of support or resources (beyond technical assistance) would most significantly enhance your organization's capacity?

Nonprofits are looking for a more collaborative environment with other organizations to more effectively meet community needs. Collaborative grants that support multiple organizations with complementary services (e.g., grant for youth in Orange County with education, mentorship, and housing components) would be meaningful to the community and less resource intensive.

Nonprofits need investment in data analysis to make informed decisions. External consultancy and staff training are valuable but require unrestricted funding, which is hard to come by.

Multi-year funding and longer-term grants are desired to avoid annual fundraising struggles. Access to wider

networks for fundraising are also desired.

The following resources would enhance nonprofits' capacity:

- Communications through storytelling can bring in more clients and funders
- Marketing to maintain mission-aligned advertising efforts
- Staff development to enhance workforce skillset and avoid staff burnout
- Consultancy resources on how to create a strategic plan
- Board development to better serve the organization
- Training on fundraising and finding grants to apply for
- Training on capacity building
- Resources for social media and website management

Operational Systems and Processes

How do operational challenges impact your organization's ability to deliver on its mission, and what types of solutions or support would be most beneficial?

There is widespread concern among nonprofits around retaining staff due to low compensation, especially in Orange County, which has very high housing costs. As organizations grow, there is a need to transition from a volunteer-based to a staffed model. This requires financial sustainability to keep up with staffing costs.

In addition, nonprofit leaders take on multiple roles such as HR, accounting, fundraising, which creates sustainability challenges if leaders leave the organization.

Many nonprofits struggle to secure operating support. There is a push to educate funders on the importance

of unrestricted funding for long-term sustainability. Restricted funding is typically for programming only and does not help with operating costs.

Attendees mentioned that their organizations have grown over the years, but the infrastructure of the organization has not kept up. They need to invest in operating support functions, such as HR and marketing.

Some nonprofits face difficulties in meeting grant deadlines or navigating complicated grant submission processes. Streamlined grant applications will greatly help applying for grant funding.

Generative

How can nonprofit organizations work more effectively together within the nonprofit sector? What strategies or approaches could foster better collaboration, and how might a more collaborative environment impact your work and relationships with other organizations?

Nonprofits need to collaborate more effectively, but they face challenges of competition and trust with other nonprofits when missions across organizations are similar. They fear competition for resources, clients, and staff. Nonprofits need to move from a scarcity mindset to a resource-sharing mindset.

Finding nonprofits, such as universities, to work with has been beneficial for some. Also, partnering with cities has brought about more visibility in the community for some.

Many nonprofits feel like they are competing for limited funds, especially from government or larger institutional funders. There is a call for better matchmaking between funders and nonprofits to ensure that funding is allocated effectively to support collective community efforts.

Nonprofits benefit from structured, focused networking events and partnerships that help them connect with others who have similar goals and missions. They are looking for shared spaces where they can network in a smaller, more intimate setting.

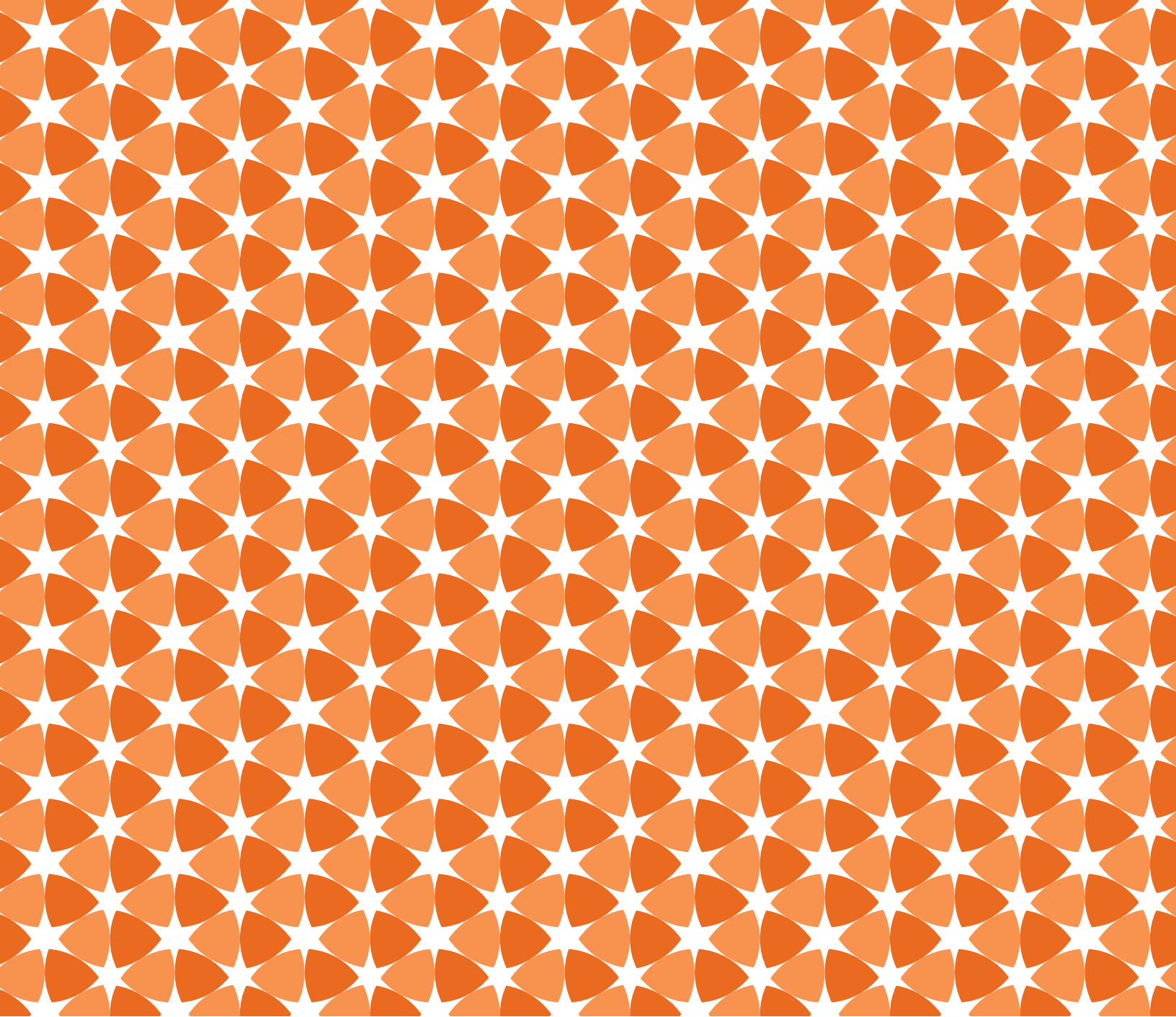
What barriers are preventing your team from working at its full potential, and what support would help overcome these barriers?

There is a recognition that the next generation of nonprofit leaders is emerging, with many CEOs in their late 30s and early 40s. This new generation brings fresh perspectives and energy, but they need development support to unlock their full potential. Also, nonprofits need a learning environment for staff with a pathway to progress professionally.

There is a desire for a nonprofit hub, a centralized space where multiple organizations can come together, collaborate, share ideas, and even pool resources. This hub could foster a greater sense of community and streamline efforts for nonprofits with common goals.

Many organizations struggle with limited resources and staffing. Volunteer reliance can be unreliable. This lack of staffing can hinder the ability to develop and execute larger initiatives effectively. Successful collaborations require cross-sector collaboration (e.g., combining efforts of housing, health, and education sectors) that can yield more impactful outcomes for the community.

Overall, the focus group attendees were very appreciative of having a forum where they could share their challenges and needs. They would like to continue dialogue with other nonprofits in the area to carry on their mission for the benefit of the communities they serve.

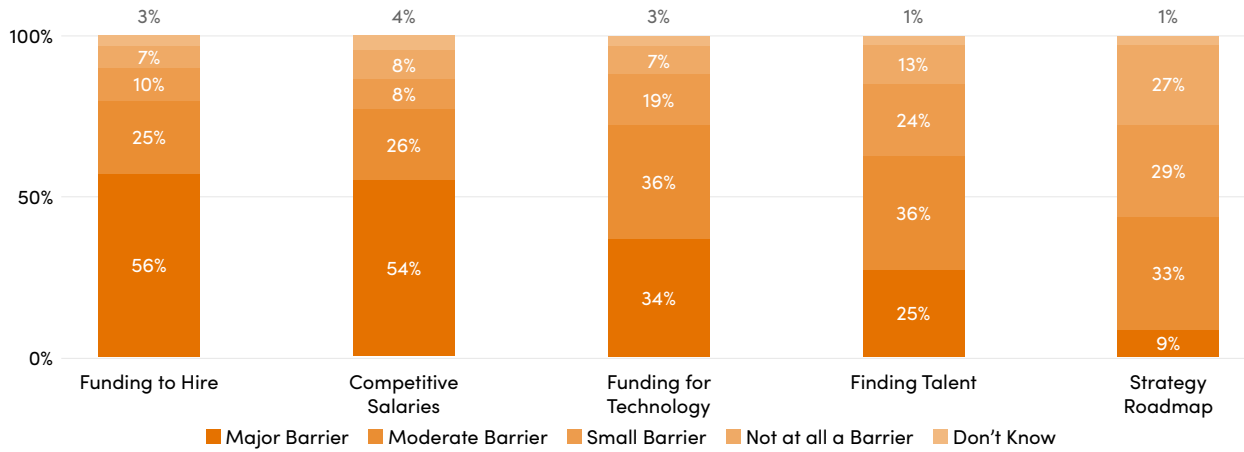


APPENDIX 3A

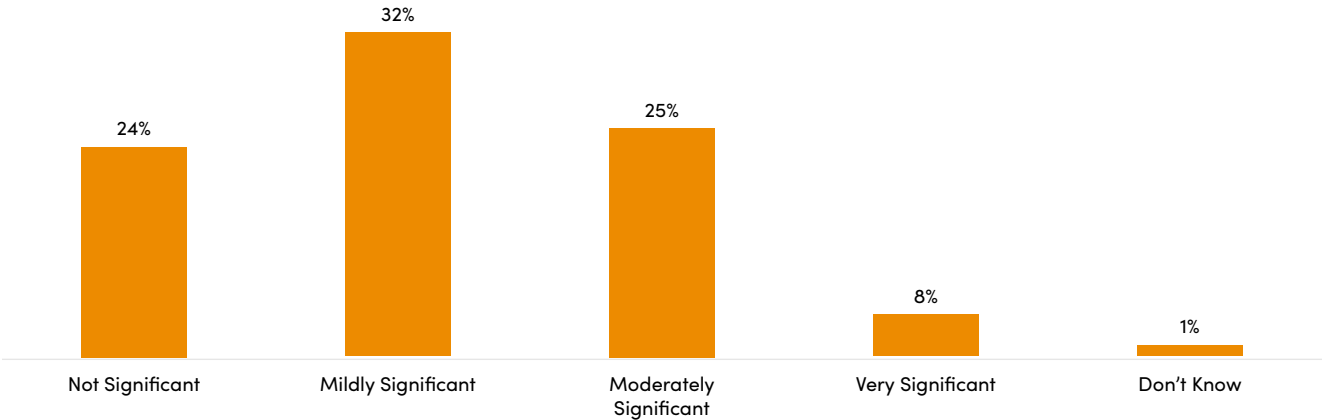
Town Hall Data Exploration Posters

1 Staffing Challenges

Having funding to hire and providing competitive salaries is a major barrier for most nonprofits to build required capacity



Staff turnover is a very significant issue for almost one out of five nonprofits



Strategies Noted for Addressing Barriers

71% often or always rely on existing staff to fill multiple roles.

43% always or often leverage skillsets and volunteer time of board members.

Data Highlights

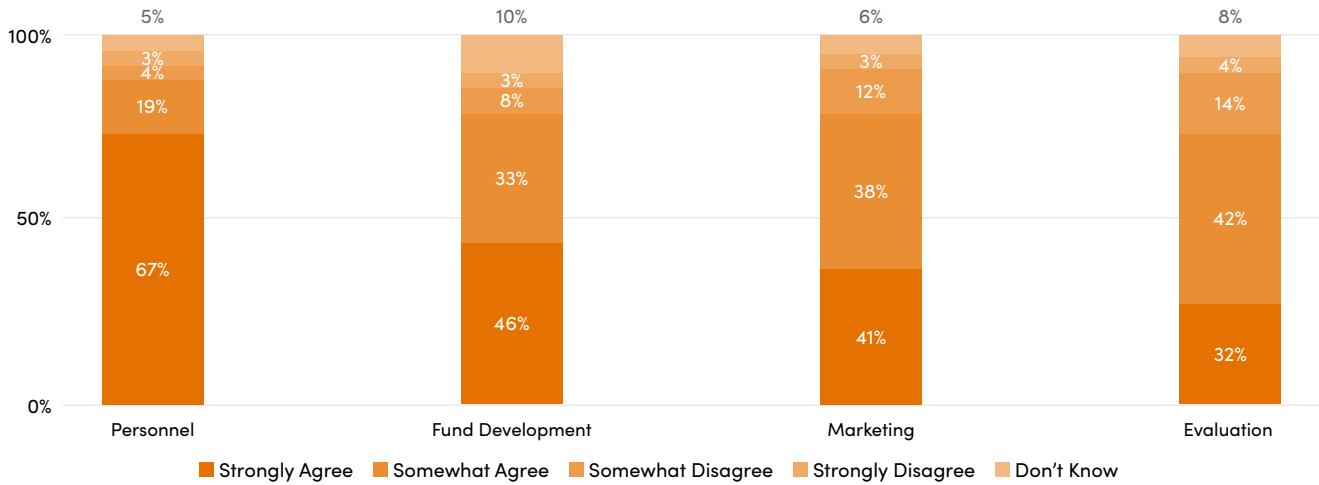
- Not enough resources to competitively compensate people in the nonprofit industry.
- Turnover challenges tied to compensation and other factors.
- Talent recruitment is a challenge.

Prompt Questions

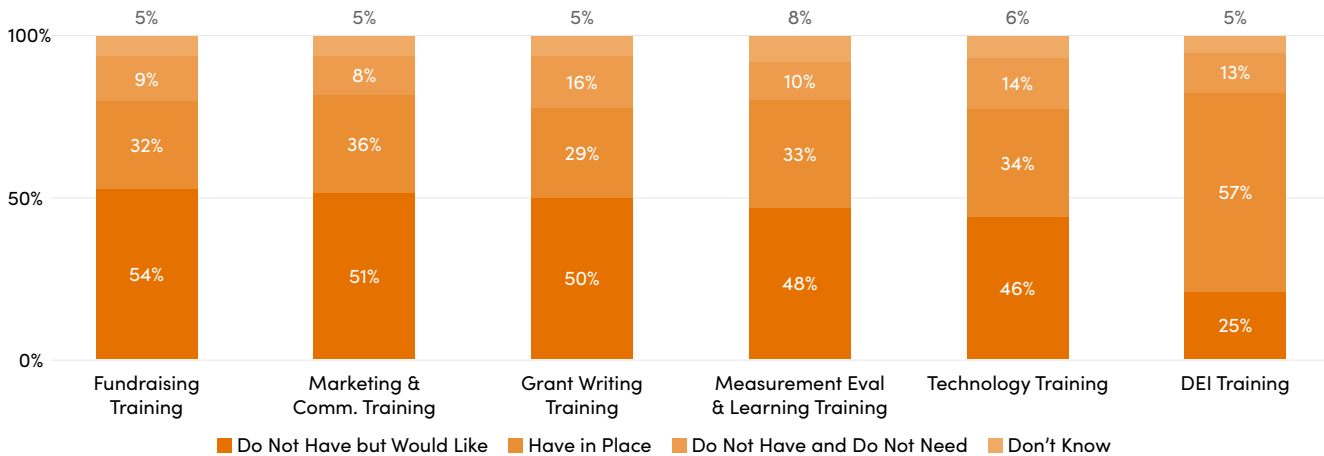
1. What strategies have you used to navigate through nonprofits' scarcity issue?
2. What are innovative things that can be done to mitigate turnover rates and find quality talent?

2 Operational Investments

Most respondents lack resources that could most directly affect revenue potential



More than half of respondents said that their nonprofits do not have but would like training on fundraising, marketing & communications, and grant writing



Data Highlights

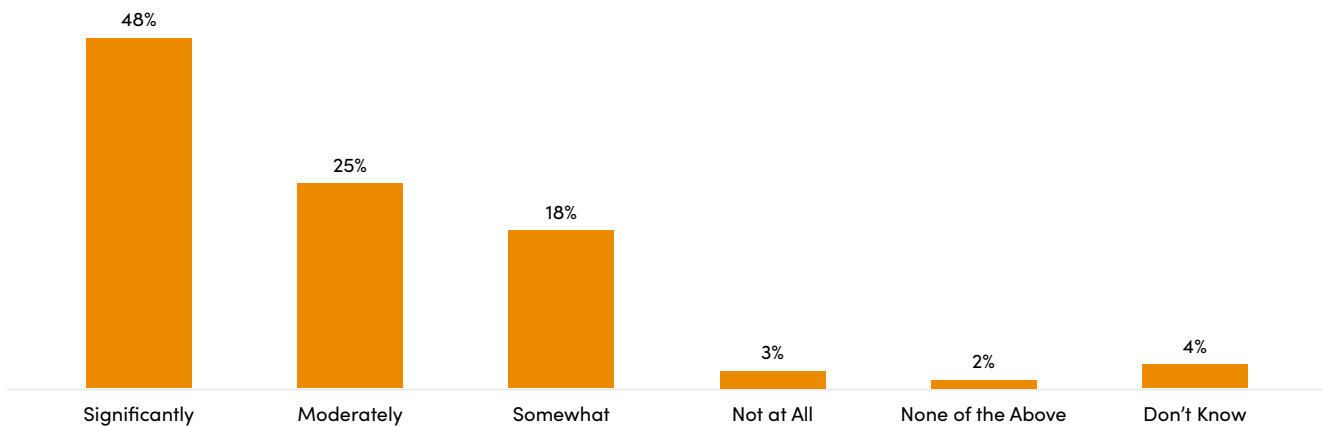
There is tension between what nonprofits identify as capacity needs compared to where they would spend additional funds if received.

Prompt Questions

1. If you had additional resources, would you build the capacity of your current team, or hire new staff?
2. Beyond filling staff positions, what capacity investments do you believe are most catalytic for nonprofits to make?

3 Board Engagement

Almost half of respondents indicated that their board significantly contributes to the strategic direction of their nonprofit



Focus Group Highlights

- Nonprofits struggle with weak or disengaged boards. Many cited challenges such as “Founder Syndrome,” where long-serving board members were resistant to change, as well as a lack of diversity, term limits, and board training.
- Poor board governance and a lack of leadership development prevent nonprofits from scaling effectively or responding to emerging challenges.

Data Highlights

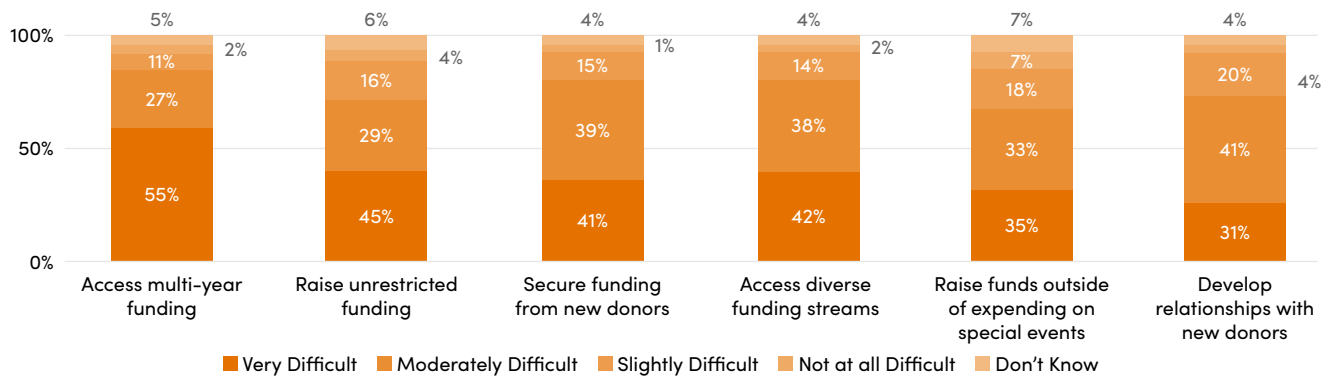
- While survey reflects significant and moderate board contribution to strategic direction, the focus groups raised the issue of boards that are either disengaged or obstacles to change, and that block leadership from addressing organizational challenges.

Prompt Questions

1. How, if at all, does the focus group input align with your experience and/or that of the nonprofit industry in Orange County?
2. What recommendations do you have for improving board/nonprofit collaboration?

4 Philanthropic Opportunities

Most respondents indicated that accessing multi-year funding was very difficult



Data Highlights

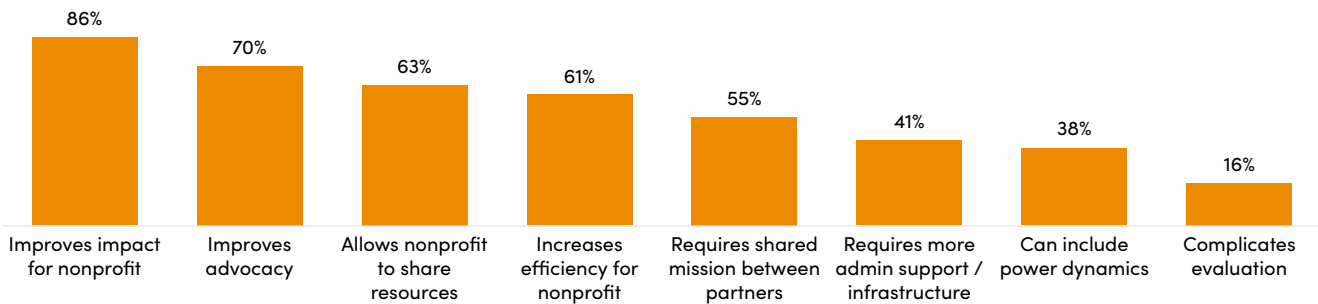
- Accessing new donor relationships, multi-year funding, unrestricted dollars, and diverse sources of revenue are very difficult for nonprofits.

Prompt Questions

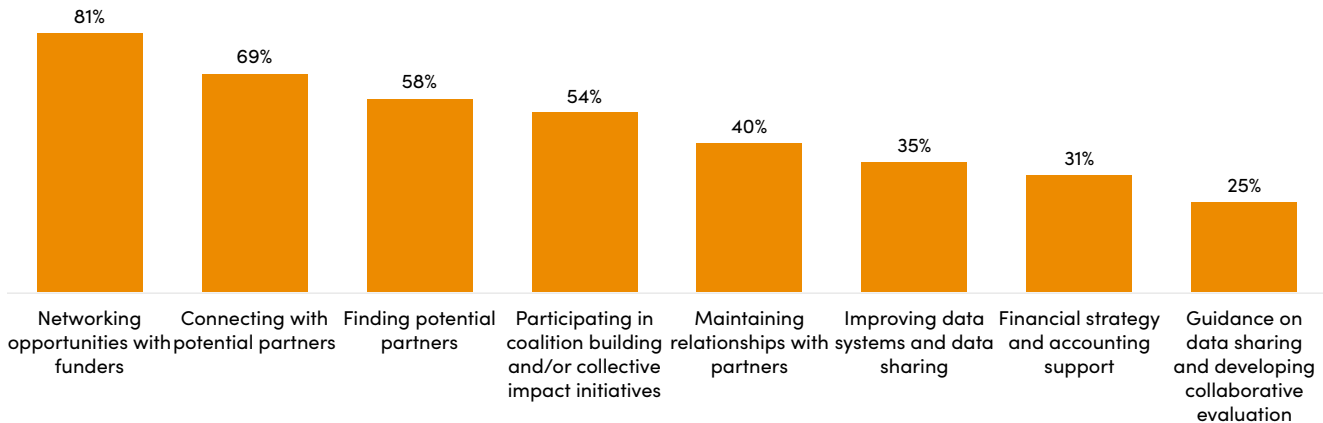
1. What innovative approaches or philanthropic support might help reduce or eliminate these challenges?
2. What realistic, actionable goals could we collectively work towards that would help pave the way for a future where multi-year, unrestricted funding becomes the norm?

5 The Power of Collaboration

Partnerships/collaborations improves impact for nonprofits as well as improves advocacy



Resources that would help organizations thrive include networking opportunities and connecting with potential partners



Focus Group Highlights

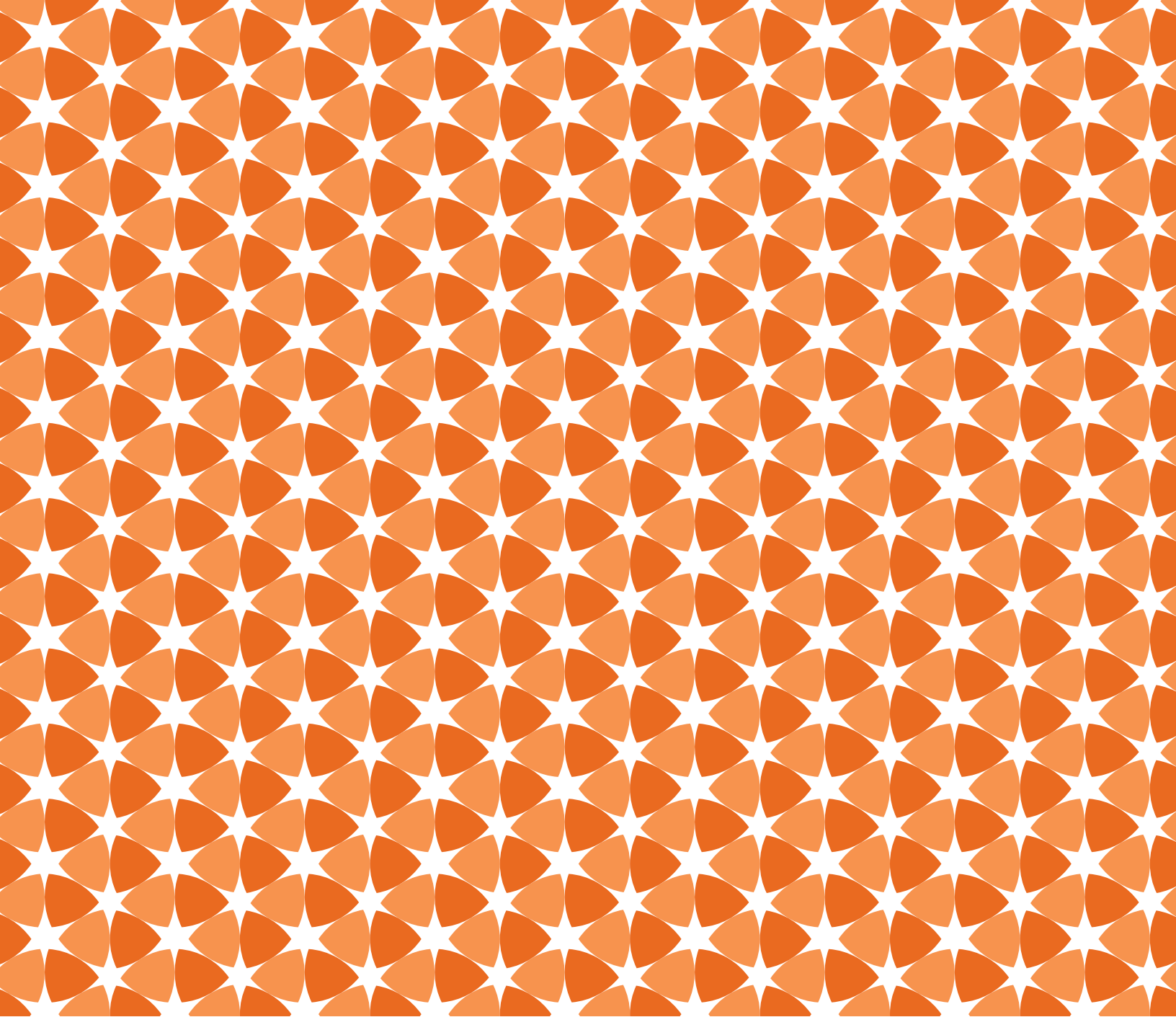
- Nonprofits identified collaboration as key strategy for overcoming challenges related to capacity and resource scarcity.
- While there is a desire to collaborate, opportunities to do so are limited by competition for the same funds, lack of coordination, and a general scarcity mindset that permeates the sector.

Data Highlights

- Desire for collaboration, but issue of trust and a scarcity mindset.

Prompt Questions

1. Describe a partnership that worked well and what made it work well.
2. What can we do to facilitate more and better partnerships?



APPENDIX 3B

Town Hall Findings Write Up

Town Hall Event Background

Charitable Ventures held a community convening, referred to as the Town Hall. This event was intended to share some preliminary findings and to further engage the nonprofit sector around some key data findings that reflected tensions. Invitations were sent out to approximately 600 nonprofits, funders, and local stakeholders to participate in the in-person event.

The event was held on **Wednesday, October 23, 2024**, at the Honda Center in Anaheim. A total of about 90 attended the event representing local nonprofits, local funders, and local county government. The event commenced with a presentation that provided the goals and purpose of the regional needs assessment, followed by a presentation of key preliminary findings from the surveys and focus groups. Thereafter, participants were asked to participate in a round robin activity, where they moved around the room to review data posters on five key areas, participating in three stations. The five topical areas were staffing challenges, operational investments, board engagement, philanthropic opportunities and the power of collaboration (see **Appendix 3A: Town Hall Data Exploration Posters** for copies of the posters). After reviewing the information via a data poster at each station, participants were asked to share whether/or not their experiences aligned with the data and to provide recommendations on how to address the issues and tensions. Participants were provided post-it notes to share their written thoughts, as well as invited to verbally discuss the topic and data.

Each station had a facilitator that moderated the discussion and helped to summarize the ideas and discussion points. Participants were allotted about 10 minutes at each station. Participants were randomly assigned to three stations, with efforts to not duplicate multiple attendees from an organization from overlapping at each station. While participants were assigned stations, they were welcome to participate in any group that they felt was of greatest interest to them. Groups ranged in size from 15-25 participants for each round. After three rounds of discussion,

participants were reconvened for a group share back and discussion. Each facilitator summarized their three discussion rounds, and everyone engaged in a dialogue around what was heard. Written and verbal feedback (summarized by moderators) from the engagement exercise were typed up and analyzed.

Town Hall Data Engagement Activity Write-up

Each of the bullets below represents a different post-it note or thought included with the given question from the data engagement activity at the Town Hall. Comments are grouped by like statements.

#1 Staffing Challenges

Q.1-1: What strategies have you used to navigate through nonprofits' scarcity issues?

- **Volunteer engagement and internships/relying on volunteers:**
 - Volunteers to support on staffing topics (ex. Marketing, PR, Web); looking to hire people who can do multiple roles.
 - In our organization, we rely and work with volunteers and interns, allowing us to delegate some tasks while providing professional experience.
 - We've hired interns for specific projects (paid and unpaid); allowed staff the flexibility to grow into other departments in the org.
 - Internships (paid and unpaid); tapping into work-study programs.
 - Internships through several colleges; high school volunteers from local high schools. Stuff filling multiple roles; building a large pool of volunteers.
 - Recruit more volunteer subject matter experts; tap into internships; rely on grants that start/stop contracts during different parts of the year.

- **Staff retention and recruitment strategies:**

- We have a staff retention and recruitment task force—did internal focus groups to address why people stay with us vs. why they leave.
- Positive conversations with existing staff to keep them and encourage them so they don't leave or burn out.
- Capacity Limitations—Focus on culture management tied to strategy and performance metrics; celebrate often and reward high performers; we are a Best Place to Work awardee with an 8-year average retention of staff.
- Part-time employment to help fill the biggest, most immediate holes.
- Asking staff what additional tasks they'd be willing to support the org in unfulfilled roles/duties.
- Building staff momentum through group activities to appreciate their hard work.

- **Training staff and cross-training:**

- Train staff to recruit and train volunteers.
- Cross-training existing staff; have a relief staff list; flexible schedules; internship programs; increase volunteer base.

- **Diversifying funding sources and managing resources:**

- Increase funding by securing more grants; delegate tasks to staff so they are not burnt out.
- Diversify funding sources; revenue-generating strategy; training/other org support "consulting."
- We use temp labor, which is expensive, but we have to meet licensing ratios.
- Hired a consultant.
- Host more social fundraising events.
- Donated services, but with that comes less oversight and ability to make demands/additional requests of the donor giving their services.

- **Managing organizational capacity:**

- Reprioritization of projects, consulting/out sourcing, shifting workloads.

- Engage coalition partners to perform tasks beyond our current capacity.
- Remote work/flexible time.
- Leveraging passion to combat less competitive salaries; part-time hires to fill gaps; lots of little (and fun) perks.
- Hire as local as possible; working to be more intentional in keeping staff in the role they were hired for; scaled up salaries; work with universities and colleges to hire.
- Do peer exchanges with other organizations to build the capacity of staff; invest in volunteer engagement.

Q.1-2: What are innovative things that can be done to mitigate turnover rates and find quality talent?

- **Employee Engagement and well-being: Addressing burnout and supporting staff:**

- Have weekly and/or monthly development meetings with staff to identify challenges and intervene before burnout.
- Address burnout by focusing on self-care; provide training and development opportunities; clear opportunities for growth.
- Connect with fellow nonprofits, we can help each other build; show you care for staff by treating them with dignity, including making sure staff is content so they can work in excellence.
- Positive and supportive work culture that treats employees as HUMANS first; flexibility for schedules; maintain hybrid schedules.
- Staff appreciation; culture building; flexible schedules.
- Lean into the intangibles; flexible schedules and time-off; unique culture; atypical events and programming (but this only goes so far).

- **Compensation and benefits strategies:**

- Pay more.
- Give annual raises; reward certifications and additional education in our industry.
- We unionized the nonprofit: offering Roth IRA, fixed raises, wellness stipend, professional development stipend.
- We pay the very few staff we have decently; we forgo adding staff that does not have a multi-year funding stream to support it; we try to keep staff happy with flexible schedules and WFH—quality of life.
- Explore expanding benefits available to employees (403B match, FSA's, PFL, bonus).
- Increase pay/benefits; provide more team building opportunities; offering other training opportunities.

- **Flexible work arrangements:**

- Don't overwhelm employees with new projects; offer competitive benefits; offer hybrid work situation.
- Remote work and flexible work schedules.
- Go to a 9–80 schedule; hybrid/flexible schedule.
- 9–80 work schedule; remote/hybrid days.
- Flexible work schedules; unlimited time off; other benefits.
- Flexible schedules; shift some programs/services to virtual to reduce travel time and costs; increase internship and volunteer opportunities.

- **Training and development: Professional growth opportunities:**

- Offer trainings and classwork to enhance professional development.
- Train our people (PD); salary scale transparency; more flat structure; shorter work week; self-care PTO in addition to VAC/SICK; family leave policy that is more expansive; raise to aspirational salary not just existing salaries.
- Supervisor–training aligned to connection with team building; set specific goals for supervisors for staff retention; CEO's role is very important to

ensure all staff are supported and feel connected to the mission.

- Provide management/leadership mentorship; recognizing achievements of staff.
- Turnover: Trainings to develop staff skills; providing staff with additional benefits besides funding such as connections, resources, and workforce development.

- **Recruitment strategies:**

- Engage public school stakeholders to identify quality people.
- Positive recruitment; identify needs in the community (matching resources); hire new people who are a good fit, as a lot of people need a job.
- Recruitment: College fairs; partnerships with junior and 4-year colleges; partnerships with local city employment offices; hiring interns after their internship.
- Internships with HS and college; apprenticeships and stipends from DOL.

- **Culture and recognition:**

- Reward and recognition; open for promotion, make them feel valued.
- Board members' appreciation of staff.
- Great culture—lots of little and fun perks to mitigate less competitive salary; create a system of praise—people want to be told they are doing a good job.
- Internal community engagement committee; donations/grants that allow for innovative programs, hiring stipends, bonuses, etc.; trainings to help staff supplement income with entrepreneurial potential—self-practice, student loan forgiveness.

- **Funding strategies:**

- Seeking funders who will provide unrestricted funds for staffing; program funding is more prevalent and easier to raise.

#2 Operational Investments

Q. 2-1: If you had additional resources, would you build the capacity of your current team, or hire new staff?

- **Building capacity of existing staff:**

- Build capacity—especially since restricted funding means short-term hires are not sustainable and can't support long-term strategies.
- Investment in culture management training; leadership training; capacity building.
- Build the capacity of current staff focusing on those with potential and skills; also invest in new staff who can bring values and skills to the team.
- Build the capacity of our existing team.
- Train current staff and hire more because staff are too overloaded; train up the current staff because we hire entry-level to train up.
- Ongoing professional development for existing staff (do their jobs better, work smarter, not harder, new ideas/approaches).
- It depends on how current staff align to the goals of the strategic plan. Invest in current staff if they can help you accomplish goals in the plan. New staff if they are needed for growth.

- **Need for new staff:**

- Hire additional staff to fulfill roles currently being juggled by existing staff.
- Hire new staff—our staff is already spread too thin; Jacks of all trades vs. experts in their area.
- New staff to build out in-house skill capacity.
- Hire new staff to expand services we are currently unable to offer due to staffing issues.
- Begin with new staff to fill gaps; filling gaps will provide greater immediate benefit to over-taxed staff.
- Hire new/more staff; we like to offer our staff

opportunities to learn new skills in addition to current job responsibilities (i.e., grant writing, social media, marketing, evaluation).

- We're a team of 10-15 members serving 30,000+ students; I would use funds to hire more team members.
- Hire marketing director to promote our mission to the community and donors; major gifts officer to secure and sustain the organization.

- **Balancing investment in staff (new hires and current staff):**

- Spend on current staff, but if current staff need additional hiring, we will go with that after assessing the needs.
- Resources should be spent on both new staff and current staff at the nonprofit. The current funding model forces organizations to compete against each other.
- Both have value—coming from a small organization, we want to raise up the team we have while also filling necessary operational gaps.
- Yes to both—increased funding would allow us to increase current staff salaries to be more competitive, reduce turnover, and hire new staff to meet increased needs.
- Both!
- Both—funding (or lack thereof) means we hire part-time for things that could be full-time; hiring new staff would allow current staff to wear fewer hats.
- Both—hire new staff to broaden program reach in a larger geographic region.
- Both—we have one full-time employee and one part-time employee. Need to hire more and develop current staff.

- **Funding for staff and capacity building:**

- Unrestricted funding to use where needed to better serve the mission; reserve or gap funding to allow for "calm" between grants or funding sources.
- Hire new staff with unrestricted funds.
- Due to heavy workload, would invest in new staff

if funding is available; without this funding, it's important to invest in professional development for current team members.

- A little of both—most of our staff are part-time due to grant funding or program funding (usually restricted). Increasing capacity would allow us to move part-time staff towards full-time.
- Small nonprofit—add part-time staff but also implement technologies that would alleviate the burden on current staff.

Q. 2-2: Beyond filling staff positions, what capacity investments do you believe are most catalytic for nonprofits to make?

• Technology investments and improvements:

- CRM; Performance Data Tool (KPI's).
- IT needs website.
- AI investment; CRM investment; Social enterprise automation.
- Technology improvements (staff benefit); Marketing resources; Greater awareness leading to more resources.
- Better technology & devices for running operations; Bigger office; Better laptops; Better conferences; More supplies for programs.
- IT upgrades/systems; Develop income-generating projects for nonprofits.
- Systems: ensuring that all systems are up to date and efficient to hold vital data.
- Communications & ability to grow our program offerings.
- Consultant funds for infrastructure development (IT, program & agency evaluation); Website updates to improve communication & engagement.

• Capacity and operational investments:

- Capacity/operational investments; foundation support to build nonprofit collaboration around: agency insurance (e.g., D&O & liability group

rates); agency efforts to secure pro bono services (e.g., legal, accounting, asset assessment).

- Leadership training; Management training; Infrastructure (IT, Data, other systems).
 - Staff development/training; Training that builds skills is crucial to making even a small staff productive.
 - Systems that enable efficiencies of scale; Trainings that best enable growth, practice, or efficiency gains amongst staff.
 - Bringing in 1099 contractors for tech management, accounting, fund development, grants management; this has been more cost-effective for our organization (17 employees, \$2 million budget).
 - Support organization with executive leadership coaching; Build capacity for training of admin & development.
 - Operational investments; evaluation funding; AI training for staff.
 - Technology; Financial systems & grants management.
 - Technology investments allow us to mine & extrapolate data gold.
- ### • Marketing and outreach strategies:
- Leadership development & Marketing (so many people don't even know we exist).
 - Greater professional marketing to provide our mission to a greater audience—individuals, grantees, government.
 - Capacity—marketing, storytelling, getting the word out about impact.
 - Marketing strategies; Donor relations: greater capacity to foster long-term donor relationships for recurring donations.
 - Communications & marketing tools/training to amplify shared initiatives (long-term).
- ### • Infrastructure and beautification projects:
- Beautification (internal + external); Building upgrades.
 - Improve office space; Buy company vehicles.

- **Hiring needs and staff development:**
 - Hire new staff; Need additional staff to expand current programs and address community needs; New staff with expertise in areas that our current team lacks.
 - Most of our hard costs are staffing for programs; we need more staff to add more services.
 - Mid-level career sabbaticals.
 - Training that builds skills is crucial to making even a small staff productive.
 - Fundraising training, especially with respect to government RFPs/NOFOs.

#3 Board Engagement

Q. 3-1: How, if at all, does the focus group input align with your experience and/or that of the nonprofit industry in Orange County?

- **Challenges in board engagement:**
 - Board engagement can be an issue. Some board members are eager to participate and contribute while others are not; finding new board members can be a challenge.
 - Staff board engagement impact; board development training; clarity of roles; pipeline of board members; directory/resource to connect potential board members; thoughtful recruitment/let go.
 - Our board is engaged in strategy but less on development and accomplishing those goals.
 - Our board currently does not have board limits, and we could benefit from board training on roles and responsibilities.
 - My board does not challenge me at all as an ED, and they are super disengaged.
 - Our board is small so we are very engaged. We dream of building it, but fear of a takeover or

losing control.

- **Recruitment and diversity issues:**
 - Recruitment overlap—mentorship on the board for younger generations.
 - Lack of diversity, but experience in program; good governance.
 - Our board lacks business acumen. They have lived experience, but they are not “well-connected.”
 - The board of the organization that I work for is wonderful. More local board member recruitment would be great.
 - Founder syndrome and lack of diversity—we are still stuck in doing things like we’ve always done when it comes to power sharing and board structure/ways of operating.
- **Governance vs. management and leadership issues:**
 - Governance vs. management.
 - Alignment with both data points; strategic but no other roles; passive—not engaged; no term limits—that’s the way we’ve always done it.
 - Findings align with our experience: Board contributes significantly to vision/mission/direction.
- **Adverse to change:**
 - While some members have embraced change, others remain set in their ways and hesitant to change.
 - Our organization’s experience with founder’s syndrome is quite challenging. One major hurdle is how to innovate while taking along those who resist change.
- **Challenges with board fundraising and development:**
 - Challenge—board member fundraising: how to implement and how to follow up with.
 - Our board is engaged in strategy but less on development and accomplishing those goals.
 - Board engagement has been increasing through new members and engagement with strategic planning. Increasing ownership of agency future instead of fully relying on staff is an area of growth.

Q. 3-2: What recommendations do you have for improving board/nonprofit collaboration?

• Engagement and involvement strategies:

- Board engagement best practices—101 vs. everything; board term limits; clear mandate and purpose should be established.
- Continuous and consistent communications that share the impact the organization is making and how the board's service contributes; invite board to see impact in action.
- Better communication at the outset of board tenure regarding expectations; we have board members who contribute when asked but lack initiative beyond that.
- Encourage staff to sit in on board meetings; extend opportunities to staff of all levels to participate in board meetings.
- Individual engagement between board members and CEO.
- More engagement with staff; free board training; help with director recruitment.

• Recruitment practices and diversity:

- Skills & diversity audit of current board to understand gaps and focus on bringing in those skills.
- Strategic recruitment of board members on an annual basis.
- Be constantly on the lookout for new or additional board members; add new members periodically.
- Bring in board members suggested/recruited by nonprofit employees; strategy sessions involving board and employees.
- Board recruitment events.
- Develop a "Board Hub" where interested individuals can sign up and nonprofits can recruit.

• Training and professional development:

- Board development and strength; requirements for board involvement.
- Get buy-in from current board for strategic

recruitment and provide coaching and training.

- Board training and facilitating opportunities where potential future board members can connect with nonprofits.
- Engage corporate partners to train/send board members; board 101 training.
- CEOs/EDs need to spend 30% of their time managing their board; budget for training and mentorship.

• Governance practices and structure:

- Clear distinction & guidelines between governance vs. management to protect against founder syndrome.
- No founders on board/definitely not as chair; term limits; board scorecard (governance) & expectations agreement.
- Review board bylaws every year at the annual board retreat; bring in an outside consultant to create a board matrix to grow your board.
- Exit interviews for staff that can inform governance committee.
- Facilitating board member-hosted events to fundraise and engage.

• Collaboration with other nonprofits and networking:

- Invite other nonprofits to your meetings to gain a better understanding of your work; have brainstorming meetings with compatible nonprofits for funding opportunities.
- Networking is important; board participation at events.

• Activities for engagement and relationship building:

- Provide opportunities for board members to engage with clients; board team building activities.
- Retreats with staff and board; recommendations for annual or quarterly retreats to showcase work, bond, and create relationships.
- Site visits of programs in action; board volunteering at events in the community; roundtables with staff and board.

#4 Philanthropic Opportunities

Q. 4-1: What innovative approaches or philanthropic support might help reduce or eliminate these challenges?

- **Organizational clarity and collaboration:**
 - Organizations can be clearer around their specific comparative advantage (what makes you unique and how are you collaborating with others in your space); be open about your challenges and ask for support.
 - Relationship building; leverage what we are doing already; creating a common grant application (SF/Bay Area has this); should support mergers; elevating where you fit/partnering with orgs; transparency with philanthropy.
- **Fundraising and grantmaking initiatives:**
 - Mergers in nonprofits; social enterprise; heavier focus on planned giving; presenting data to funder networks/groups like Orange County (OC) Grantmakers; forming trust-based philanthropy alliance among NGOs in OC.
 - Marketing budgets—lift profiles; funders database; educating funders of the smaller orgs; education of the collaborative efforts/partnerships; educating the importance of unrestricted funding (“trust us”); consulting marketing (share a consultant among nonprofits).
- **Capacity building and staff development:**
 - Introduction to AI; capacity building/staff development; best practices.
 - Social enterprise (diversify funding); connecting founders and partners (making it targeted); building network; actively in the community.

Q. 4-2: What realistic, actionable goals could we collectively work towards that would help pave the way for a future where multi-year, unrestricted funding becomes the norm?

- Taking a risk (philanthropists need to take a risk); Have the founder introduce you to the other funders; Best way to tell our stories; Funders– back to site visits; Funder Collaboration; Corporate sponsorship (creative thinking)
- Transparency with funding (ex. county); figure out local support

#5 Power of Collaboration

Q. 5-1: Describe a partnership that worked well and what made it work well?

- **Trust and relationship building:**
 - Trust; willingness of partners to commit and devote resources; synergy with work we were pursuing; the partner had funding.
 - Trust; Outcomes = greater impact and more funding.
 - Trust and Trustworthiness.
- **Collaboration and shared goals:**
 - Common objective.
 - Common goals and trust.
 - Shared goal; alignment; focus on strengths area and what each partner can bring to the table.
 - Similar missions.
 - Collaborating with orgs in a similar space.
- **Funding for collaboration:**
 - Funding for collaboration.
 - Flexible funding.
 - \$ + T.A. + Passion = Launching a Social Enterprise.

- **Clear roles and responsibilities:**

- Clear roles and responsibilities; hold each other accountable.
- Play to the partner's unique strengths.
- Alignment of Executive Directors and boards.

- **Focus on outcomes:**

- Outcomes: diversifying funding and increased impact.
- Using data to identify priorities.
- Mental Focus: "Not competition" = How can we support our community? Not compete with one another.
- Similar space does not equal competition, but instead collaboration; clear sense of roles and responsibilities; funding.
- Partnerships that work; issue-focused groups with intersectionality looking for expertise in our area.
- Intersectionality + additive to goals.
- Shared Experience + Opportunities for amplification.
- Leveraging existing resources.

Q. 5-2: What can we do to facilitate more and better partnerships?

- **Collaboration and partnership challenges:**

- Ways to come together to solve similar challenges.
- Opportunity: Engage leadership of orgs, not just front line.
- Training on how to partner using strength-based collaboration.
- Infrastructure of collaboration.
- Need for a backbone org or staff person to facilitate.
- Offer opportunities for collaboration focused on: agency challenges securing insurance and agency challenges securing pro bono services.
- Partnership Challenge - We don't have an org in OC, not gov-funded sector in OC, Gov-funding training.

- **Trust and communication:**

- Build trust; share resources; break down barriers to streamline city and county; sustainability.
- Managing expectations and navigating structure.
- Lack of follow-through; the partners who failed to decline crippled our ability to deliver on contracted deliverables.
- Lack of follow-through.
- Feedback two ways; outsourced need to effectively maximize our own resources.

- **Leadership and ownership:**

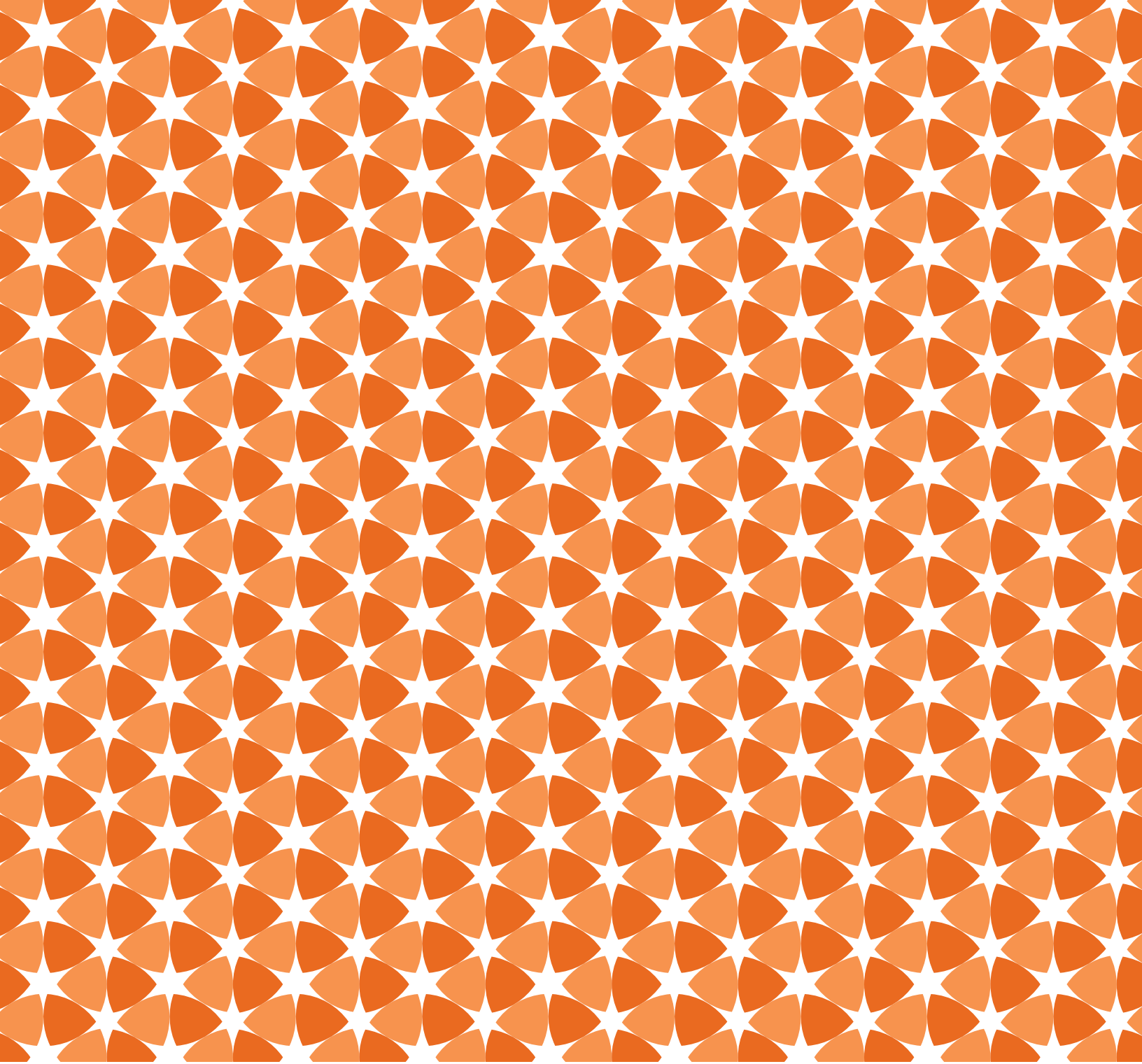
- Engage leadership of orgs, not just front line.
- Leadership/Ownership of work.
- More community nonprofit organization (leadership) meetings keeping each other in the loop of all events taking place, so we can build all of our communities.

- **Funding and sustainability issues:**

- Staff turnover is a challenge and barrier to continuity.
- Lack of funding/split funding.
- Challenges: 1) Funding - no multi-year, no follow-on, not enough, too restrictive, creates scarcity mindset; 2) Infrastructure - create time/calendar, note taker, action items; 3) Municipal Infrastructure - lack of transparency, survival of the fittest.
- Model of funding needs to be changed, creating an indirect challenge to collaboration.
- Sustainable funding for multi-year collaboration; follow-on funding.

- **Values and professionalism in partnerships:**

- Partnership Success: values aligned to our own; professionalism of staff; high quality like our own expectations.
- County not philanthropic; no training in govt funding.
- Municipal structure of OC



APPENDIX 4A

Methodology

Research Context

By engaging directly with nonprofits, this assessment provides real-time insights into the sector's specific needs, allowing for a more precise understanding of areas requiring support and investment. While previous studies of nonprofit needs have been informative, they have often focused primarily on general metrics like revenue and assets, offering only a surface-level view of nonprofit needs. Without direct input from nonprofit leaders, these studies missed capturing the nuanced operational and leadership challenges nonprofits face, the assumptions driving current investment paradigms, as well as the specific types of support nonprofits require to thrive.^{4,5}

Similar studies have been conducted in neighboring regions, such as the 2009 Los Angeles County project funded by the Weingart Foundation⁶ and the 2023 State of Nonprofits in San Diego,⁷ but comprehensive nonprofit assessments in Orange County remain limited. For example, a 2007 study included focus groups with only 11 nonprofit leaders, a small representation given the scale of Orange County's nonprofit sector.⁸

Notable reports like the 2022 Hewlett Packard assessment focused on organizational effectiveness, but relied primarily on a literature review of 50 articles and interviews with 15 peer funders and capacity-building organizations, rather than the nonprofits themselves.⁹ The 2024 State of Nonprofits, which surveyed nonprofits nationally, was able to collect data from 463 organizations, yielding a 52% response rate through a 45-item survey covering finances, staffing, and funding outlooks for the coming year.¹⁰ However, the study did not include focus groups.

Although many local organizations have completed capacity assessment tools like the Organizational Mapping Tool and Core Capacity Assessment Tool (CCAT), these are often conducted individually or with small cohorts, with few taking a holistic view of the entire nonprofit sector.

Data Collection Methods

To gain an understanding of the Orange County nonprofit sector from multiple angles, a variety of data collection methods were used, including:

- **Survey** of nonprofit leaders and senior staff to capture the strengths, existing organizational capacity, and needs of the nonprofits in Orange County. The survey was conducted between September 5th and 27th. There were 607 respondents who submitted valid surveys, representing 404 unique nonprofit organizations. As an incentive to complete the survey, respondents could choose to enter an opportunity drawing for a chance to win one of 15 mini-grants of \$1,000 for their organization.¹¹
- **Focus Groups** with nonprofit leaders and senior staff to delve deeper into the topics covered in the survey. There were 13 focus groups held—three in-person and 10 virtual—between September 16th and October 1st. A total of 97 individuals attended the focus groups, representing 92 nonprofit organizations. As an incentive to participate, each of the 13 focus groups concluded with an opportunity drawing, awarding one organization a \$1,000 mini-grant.
- In addition to collecting primary data through surveys and focus groups, Charitable Ventures held a community convening on October 23, 2024, referred to as the Town Hall. What was intended to be a data-sharing convening became something far more profound—a moment of connection, validation, and unity for nonprofit leaders. This gathering brought together over 90 individuals representing local nonprofits, funders, and county representatives. For many, this was not just about data, it was an opportunity to feel truly seen, heard, and understood.

Limitations

Using a mixed-methods approach—combining and triangulating quantitative and qualitative data—helps support findings, as well as discover new evidence that one method could not on its own identify. However,

there remain inherent limitations to the approaches used in this needs assessment, which are laid out below.

- **Survey:** The online survey was open for a brief, three-week period, which may have limited the number of people able to respond. Respondent contacts were sourced through several distribution lists but were not guaranteed to reach all nonprofits in Orange County.
- **Focus Groups:** Given the project's expedited timeline, focus groups were scheduled with less than two weeks' notice, which may have impacted participant availability.
- **Town Hall:** The in-person convening was another opportunity to engage and solicit input from some of the region's nonprofit sector leaders. However, attendance was limited, and participants were a convenience sample, representing those who were available to attend based on the time and date of the event.

Therefore, the insights gathered may not be fully representative of all nonprofits in the region. For a copy of the tools used, **see Appendix 4A: Nonprofit Survey Questions, Appendix 4B: Focus Group Methodology and Protocols, Appendix 3A Town Hall Data Exploration Posters.**

⁴ *Orange County Profiles: Revealing Orange County's Nonprofit Sector, from the Center for Demographic Research at CSUF, March 2006, Volume 11, Number 1*

⁵ *Orange County Nonprofit Regional Profile from Causes Count, USD School of Leadership and Education Sciences Caster Family Center for Nonprofit and Philanthropic Research, 2014*

⁶ *Fortifying Las Nonprofit Organizations: Capacity Building Needs and Services in Los Angeles County. A Study by TCC Group, September 2010, the Weingart Foundation*

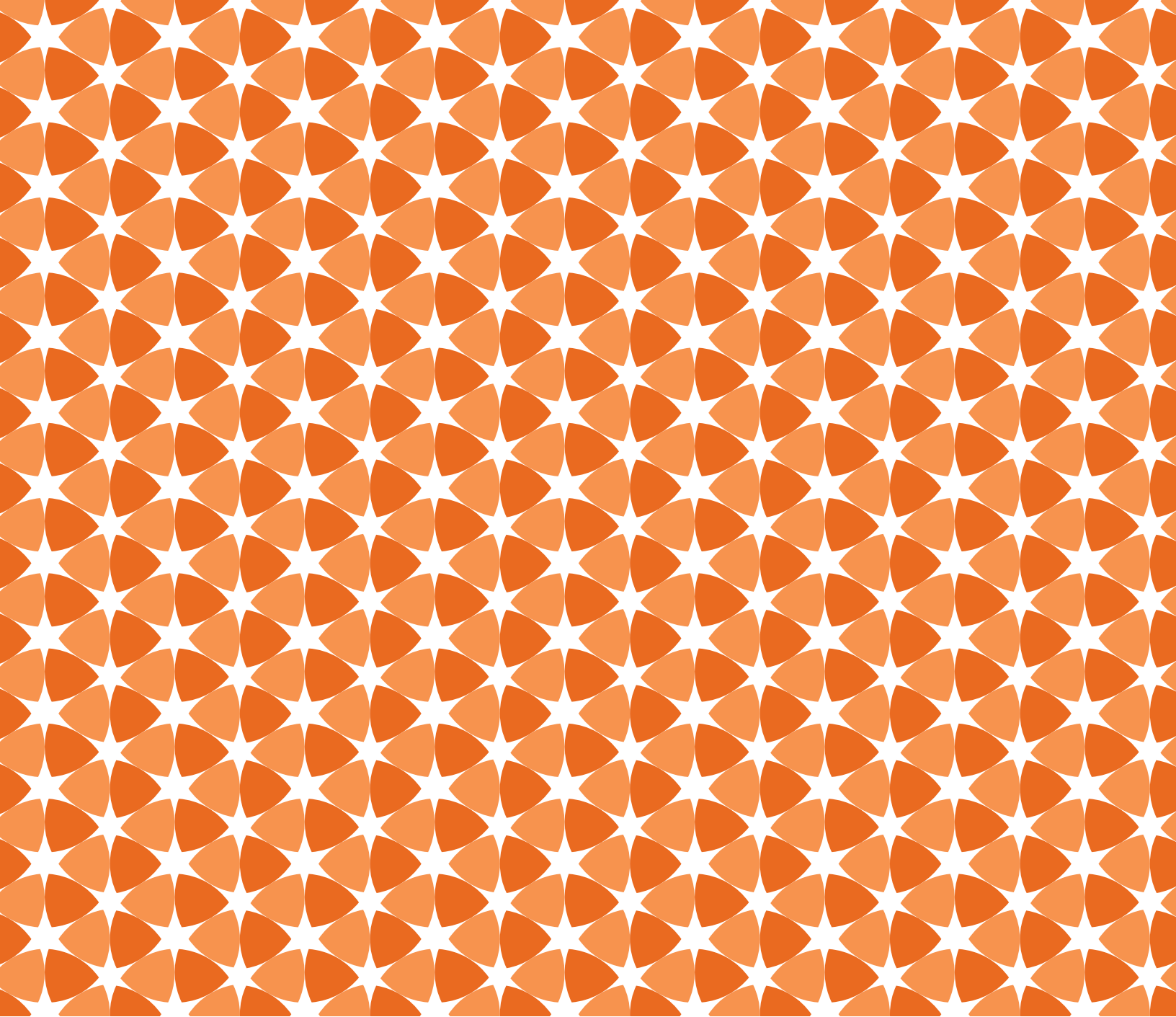
⁷ *Tinkler, Tessa; Meschen, Connelly; Durnford, Jon; Dietrick, Laura and Young, Emily. 2023 State of Nonprofits and Philanthropy Annual Report (2023), State of Nonprofits in San Diego. Available at <https://digital.sandiego.edu/npi-stateofnp/20>*

⁸ *The Nonprofit Sector, Philanthropy and Civic Engagement in Orange County, Anheier HK, Nguyen A, and Kil HJ. Center for Civil Society, UCLA School of Public Affairs, February 2007*

⁹ *Schied Patricia and Hele Kris. How Funders are Strengthening Nonprofit Capacity: Findings from a Field Scan. March 2022 The William and Flora Hewlett Packard Foundation*

¹⁰ *Arrillaga ES, Buteau E, Grundhoefer S, Im C and Yang E. State of Nonprofits 2024: What Funders Need to Know Nonprofit Voice Project, The Center for Effective Philanthropy*

¹¹ *Only one email address from each organization was entered into this opportunity drawing.*



APPENDIX 4B

Nonprofit Survey Questions

Dear Nonprofit Leader,

Your leadership and the essential role your organization plays in our community are deeply valued. As partners in this collective work, the Samueli Foundation and the Orange County Community Foundation are commissioning an assessment to build a foundational understanding of the strengths, existing capacity, and needs of Orange County's social sector. The assessment is being conducted by evaluators from regional nonprofit Charitable Ventures, with support from UC Irvine School of Social Ecology and The Bridgespan Group.

We recognize that as a leader in your organization, you are often faced with tradeoffs between investing in core organizational strength and serving your communities, resulting in a more strained and less resilient social sector. We hope the findings from this assessment will guide future investments and build a shared understanding for funders and service providers across the county on what is needed to ensure our social sector is strong and fully capable of meeting the community's need.

The following survey is designed to get your honest assessment of assets to be leveraged and barriers

facing the nonprofit community. The survey should take about 15 minutes to complete, and your responses will remain confidential in the presentation of findings. Feel free to share the survey with others on your leadership team who may want the opportunity to share their insights. Please complete this survey no later than September 27, 2024. As a small gesture of appreciation for your time, you'll have the option at the end of the survey to enter a drawing for a chance to win one of 15 mini-grants of \$1,000 for your organization.

We thank you for contributing your voice to this important effort. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to **Robin Glover** at robin.glover@charitableventuresoc.org.

Background

***1. Name of organization**

***2. Name of respondent (optional)**

***3. Role in organization**

- CEO/Executive director
- Leadership position (C-Level, VP)
- Program director
- Development director
- Board member
- Other (please specify)

Section 1: Understanding existing organizational capacity and needs

Your organization’s capacity—your ability to achieve your goals with the resources, skills, and people you have—is key to your mission. By understanding the strengths and challenges you face in building capacity, we can better identify the types of support and resources that will be most impactful.

***4. How long have you been with your organization?**

- Less than 1 year
- 1-3 years
- 4-5 years
- 6-10 years
- More than 10 years

***5. How much of a barrier are the following activities to building the required capacity for your organization?**

Note: we are defining capacity as an organization’s present ability to implement, measure, and manage its intended results, using its resources, capabilities, and talent.

	Not at all a Barrier	Small Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Major Barrier	Don’t Know
Developing a strategic roadmap and vision for sustainable growth					
Finding talent to fill roles					
Securing funding to hire staff					
Paying competitive salaries for key staff					
Securing funding to implement critical technology improvements					

If there are other barriers to building the required capacity, please provide here.

***6. How much of a barrier are the following activities to securing and maintaining your organization's required skills and knowledge?**

Note: we are defining skills and knowledge as the essential expertise and competencies needed to work towards your organization's mission.

	Not at all a Barrier	Small Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Major Barrier	Don't Know
Dealing with staff burnout and/or high organizational turnover					
Finding quality contractors, technical assistance providers, or consultants					
Finding talent to fill key roles					

Paying competitive salaries for key staff

If there are other barriers to securing and maintaining your organization's required skills and knowledge, please provide here

***7. Please review the following methods for addressing barriers in capacity, skills, and/or knowledge and indicate the frequency that your organization currently uses these methods.**

	Never	Rarely	Sometimes	Often	Always	Don't Know
Hiring contractors or temporary staff to bridge capacity needs						
Hiring external consultants to fill technical skills gaps						
Leveraging skillsets and volunteer time of Board members						
Participating in formal technical assistance programs in Orange County						
Participating in formal technical assistance programs beyond Orange County						
Relying on existing staff to fill multiple roles						

***8. What types of professional development does your organization currently offer staff?**

Have in place Do not have Do not have but Don't Know
 and do not need would like

Diversity, equity, and inclusion training				
Financial management training (e.g., budgeting, forecasting, analysis)				
Fundraising training				
Grant writing training				
Human resources management training				
Leadership training				
Legal and risk management				
Marketing and communications training				
Measurement, evaluation, and learning training				
Professional certifications (e.g., project management, fundraising)				
Programmatic competency training (e.g., trauma informed care, case management, crisis management)				
Technology training				
Workplace dynamics (e.g., DISC, Myers-Briggs)				

If there are other technical skills that would be helpful to your organization, please provide here.

***9. How significant of an issue is staff turnover to achieving your organization’s mission?**

- Not significant
- Mildly significant
- Moderately significant
- Very significant
- Don’t know

***10. Review the following reasons for voluntary staff departure(s) during the past 12 months, and indicate how much each reason contributed to staff leaving.**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always Don’t Know

Staff member left for personal reasons (e.g., health, family obligations, lack of child care, etc.)

Staff member left for promotion/growth opportunity or to return to school

Staff member left for remote work or to reduce commute time/distance

Staff member moved out of the area

***11. Which of the following resources and/or investments would help your organization thrive?**

Note: for this survey, “partner” refers to any organization or group that you work with through formal or informal agreements to achieve shared goals. This can include joint programs, shared resources, strategic alliances, or even informal collaborations like information-sharing or mutual referrals.

- Connecting with potential partners
- Improving data systems and data sharing
- Financial strategy and accounting support
- Finding potential partners
- Guidance on data sharing and developing collaborative evaluation
- Maintaining relationships with partners
- Networking opportunities with funders
- Participating in coalition building and/or collective impact initiatives
- Prefer not to answer

If there are other resources/investments in organization knowledge that would be helpful to your organization, please provide here.

***12. Does your organization currently have a cash reserve?**

- Yes
- No
- Don’t Know

***13. How much do you keep in the cash reserve on average?**

- | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| \$0-\$50,000 | >\$750,000 |
| \$50,001-\$100,000 | Don't know |
| \$101,000-\$500,000 | Prefer not to answer |
| \$501,000-\$750,000 | |

***14. Does your organization currently have a line of credit or loan?**

- Yes
- No
- Don't Know

***15. How much of a barrier are the following activities in managing capacity and health of your organization?**

	Not at all a Barrier	Small Barrier	Moderate Barrier	Major Barrier	Don't Know
Identifying accountants with nonprofit fund accounting experience					
Providing adequate reporting to the Board					
Retaining in-house accounting staff					
Securing staff or external resources to support budgeting, forecasting and cash management					

Section 2: Understanding the uses of external resources

Many organizations rely on external support, such as consultants or contractors, to fill gaps in expertise or capacity. Knowing how and why your organization uses these resources can help us understand where additional investments or improved options might be needed in the local service provider landscape.

***16. For which of the following business priorities does your organization use external personnel resources (e.g., consultants, contractors, temporary staff, or other service providers)?**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Diversity, equity, and inclusion | Measurement, evaluation, and learning |
| Finance | Programming |
| Fundraising | Strategy |
| Grant writing | Other (please specify) |
| Human resources | |
| IT/Technology | |
| Legal and risk | None |
| Marketing and communications | |

***17. Please explain the reasons why your organization uses external personnel resources/consultants.**

***18. How much of a barrier are the following activities in managing capacity and health of your organization?**

	Not at all a Challenge	Small Challenge	Moderate Challenge	Major Challenge	Don't Know
Availability of external resources					
Costs					
Cultural competency					
Finding the right resource					
Quality					
Other					

Section 3: Organization leadership and strategic alignment

Effective leadership and strategic planning are essential to guiding an organization toward long-term success. Your responses will help us assess how nonprofit leadership is supported and where additional resources could enhance strategic decision-making, alignment, and overall impact.

***19. Please review the following statements and indicate how much you agree that your organization**

	Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
Creates an annual business plan					
Engages key stakeholders to drive organizational strategy					
Evaluates your programmatic impacts					
Reports key performance indicators (KPIs)/ metrics to your board					
Uses its strategic plan to drive your work					

***20. How much does your board contribute to the strategic direction of the organization?**

- Not at all
- Somewhat
- Moderately
- Significantly
- Don't know
- None of the above

***21. Please respond to the following questions around data and outcomes. Our organization**

Never Rarely Sometimes Often Always Don't Know

Gathers data on users and/or their outcomes

Uses data to inform our work

Leverages data effectively to adapt programs and strategies

Needs support in using data to inform our work

***22. What skills or knowledge gaps exist within your organization, and how could addressing these gaps enhance your team's performance?**

***23. How often does your organization engage in partnerships/collaboration with other nonprofits to enhance service delivery and/or improve collective capacity?**

- Never
- Rarely
- Sometimes
- Often
- Always
- Don't know

***24. To what extent do you agree that these partnerships/collaborations are**

Strongly Agree Somewhat Agree Somewhat Disagree Strongly Disagree Don't Know

Useful for enhancing service delivery and collective capacity

Needed for enhancing service delivery and collective capacity

***25. Which of the following statement(s) related to partnership/collaboration apply to your organization?**

- Partnership improves impact for my nonprofit
- Partnership increases efficiency for my nonprofit
- Partnership allows my nonprofit to share resources (e.g., funding, staff, expertise, infrastructure)
- Partnership requires more administrative support/infrastructure
- Partnership requires a shared mission between partners
- Partnership improves advocacy
- Partnership complicates evaluation
- Partnership can include power dynamics
- Don't know

Section 4: Understanding how philanthropy can be better utilized to benefit Orange County nonprofits

Funding is just one aspect of how philanthropy can help nonprofits thrive. This section explores other forms of support, such as capacity-building, networking, and strategic advice, that could make a meaningful difference for your organization.

***26. In general, how difficult is it to**

	Not at all Difficult	Slightly Difficult	Moderately Difficult	Very Difficult	Don't Know
Access diverse funding streams, including unrestricted funds, individual donations and grants.					
Access multi-year funding					
Develop relationships with new donors and/or funders					
Raise unrestricted funding					
Raise funds outside of expending on special events (galas, golf tournaments etc.)					
Secure funding from new donors and/or funders.					

***27. If your organization received additional unrestricted funding, please indicate the degree to which you agree that the additional funding would be beneficial in the following areas:**

Strongly Agree	Somewhat Agree	Somewhat Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know
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Advocacy

Fund development

HR/Wellness

Marketing and communication

Measurement, evaluation, and learning

Personnel/Staff

Professional development

Programming

Risk management

Strategic planning

Technology

If there are other areas that unrestricted funding would benefit your organization, please provide here:

***28. How can local funders support your organization beyond providing additional funding?**

- Encouraging continuous learning
- Providing connections
- Providing funding for counsel and best practices for governance
- Sharing suggestions for core infrastructure improvements
- Supporting development of long-term strategies
- Supporting staff and leadership sustainability
- Other (please specify)

None of the above

***29. What is your organization doing that is not supported by local funders?**

Section 5: Key organizational characteristics

To better understand the diversity of organizations in our community and ensure that our findings reflect the unique needs of different groups, this section gathers key facts about your organization’s structure, mission, and the communities you serve.

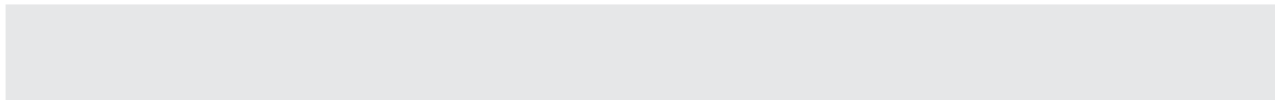
***30. How many years has your nonprofit served the community?**

- Less than 2 years
- 3-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-15 years
- 16+ years

***31. Approximately how many staff members does your organization employ?**

***32. Approximately what percent of your organization’s staff are part-time?**

None (0%) 1%-25% 26%-50% 51%-75% 76%-100%



***33. Approximately how many individuals did your organization serve in the past calendar year?
(Jan 1 – Dec 31, 2023)**

- | | |
|----------------|-------------|
| Fewer than 100 | 1,000-4,999 |
| 100-499 | 5,000-9,999 |
| 500-999 | 10,000+ |

***34. In what city is your organization’s main office physically located?**

Central Orange County
 North Orange County
 South Orange County

West/Central Orange County
 All of Orange County
 Outside Orange County

***36. Which population(s) does your organization serve?**

Children (0-18 years old)
 Youth (19-24 years old)
 Adults (25-64 years old)
 Seniors (65+ years old)
 Families
 Pregnant people
 BIPOC communities (Black, Indigenous, People of Color)
 LGBTQ+ community
 Low-income individuals/families
 Immigrants/refugees

People experiencing homelessness
 People with disabilities
 People with substance use disorder
 People impacted by the justice system
 Rural communities
 Veterans
 We do not serve specific populations
 Other (please specify)

 None of the above

***37. Approximately what proportion of your organization’s top leadership is from the following identified groups?**

Note: leadership may include people in the following positions: Executive director/CEO/president; Vice-president(s), C-level positions, directors (not board), and other key decision makers in this organization.

	None (0%)	1%-25%	26%-50%	51%-75%	76%-100%	Don’t Know	Prefer Not to Answer
American Indian/Alaskan Native, Asian, Black/African American, Latino/Hispanic, Middle Eastern/North African, Pacific Islander, Multiracial							
LGBTQ+							
People with disabilities							
Women							

***38. Which type of board structure does your organization have?**

- Advisory board (purely advisory role)
- Working board (simultaneously work as the board of directors and the staff of the organization)
- Managing or executive board (board runs everything, making decisions on the organization’s day-to-day operations together, without having a CEO)
- Governance board (the board is composed of individuals who provide guidance to the nonprofit director on the organization’s best interests and future goals)
- Fundraising board

***39. Which one focus area best describes your nonprofit mission?**

- | | |
|----------------------------------|--|
| Alleviating poverty | K-12 education |
| Animal welfare | Mental health |
| Arts & culture | Post-secondary education |
| Civil rights | Religious & spiritual development |
| Community development | Social justice |
| Domestic violence & sexual abuse | Sports and recreation |
| Early childhood | Tutoring & mentoring |
| Economic development | Veterans services |
| Economic justice | Workers’ rights |
| Environment | Workforce development/employment & job readiness |
| Grassroots organizing/mobilizing | Youth development |
| Health & wellness | Other (please specify) |
| Housing | |
| Human trafficking | |
| Hunger | |

***40. Please list any additional feedback you have for the types of supports your organization needs.**

***41. What keeps you up at night when it comes to your work?**

We know that nonprofit leaders face unique challenges that can be both rewarding and overwhelming. Please share what concerns or challenges weigh heaviest on your mind.

***42. What brings you the most joy in your work?**

Amid all the hard work, we know there are moments that make it all worthwhile. Please share what lights you up and keeps you motivated in this work.

If you would like to be entered into an opportunity drawing for a chance for your organization to win one of 15 mini grants of \$1,000, please provide your email address. Only one email address from each organization will be entered into the opportunity drawing.

***43. Name**

First name

Last name

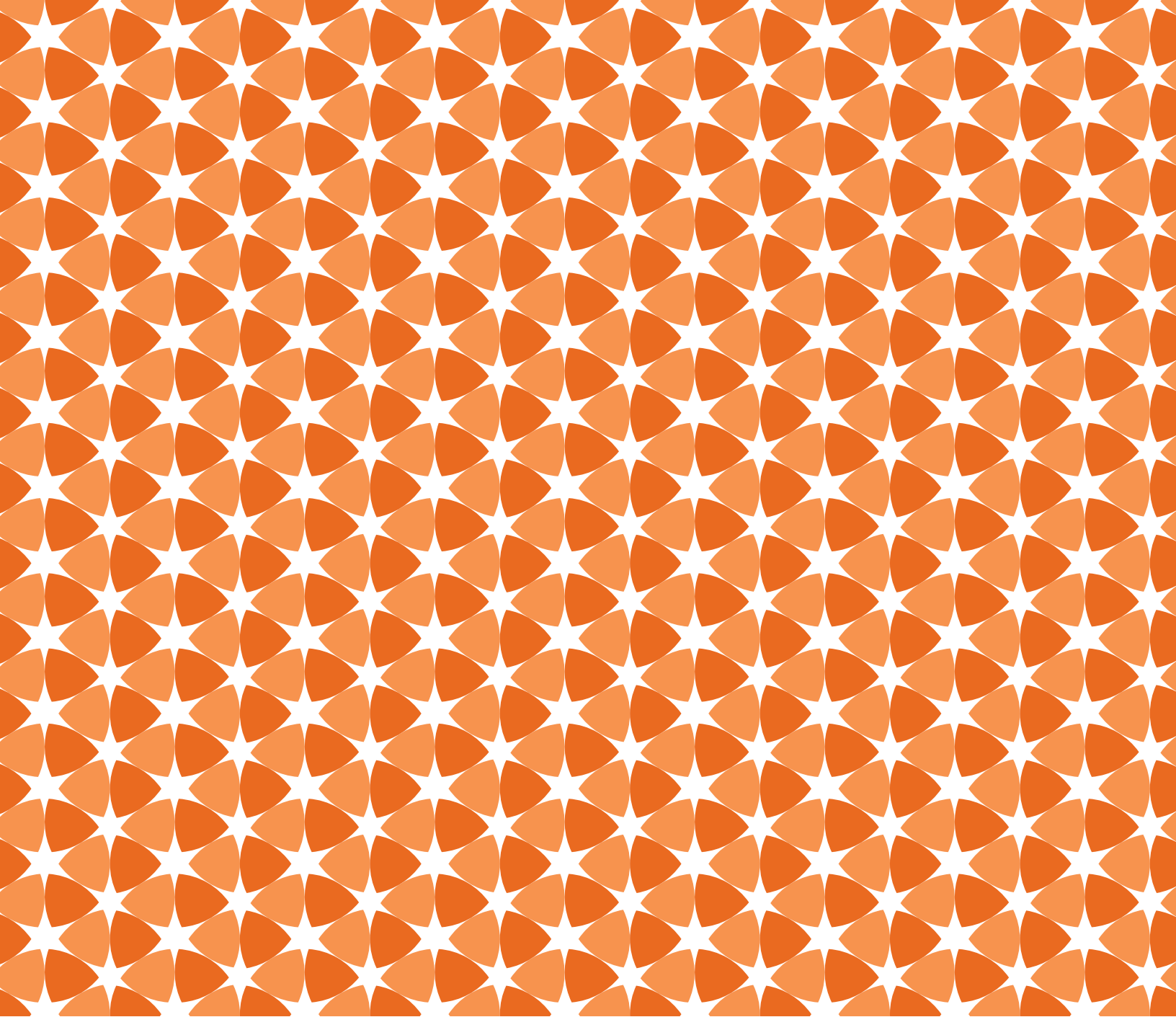
***44. Phone Number**

Country Code

Phone Number

***45. Email**

Email Address



APPENDIX 4C

Focus Groups Questions

Appendix 4C outlines the questions asked in the focus groups as part of the Orange County nonprofit organizational needs assessment.

Discussion Questions for Nonprofits

Organizational Capacity and Gaps

1. Thinking about leadership, governance, strategic planning, and operational systems, in which areas do you see the greatest need for improvement or growth?

Leadership and Governance

1. What, if any, are the biggest barriers to cultivating strong leadership within your team?
2. What governance challenges does your organization encounter, and what support could help improve board engagement or effectiveness?

Strategy and Collaboration

1. What strategies have been most successful in driving your organization's impact, and where do you see room for improvement?

Resource Utilization and Needs

1. What types of support or resources (beyond technical assistance) would most significantly enhance your organization's capacity?

Operational Systems and Processes

1. How do operational challenges impact your organization's ability to deliver on its mission, and what types of solutions or support would be most beneficial?

Generative

1. How can nonprofit organizations work more effectively together within the nonprofit sector? What strategies or approaches could foster better collaboration, and how might a more collaborative environment impact your work and relationships with other organizations?
2. What barriers are preventing your team from working at its full potential, and what support would help overcome these barriers?



THANK YOU