ASSESSMENT OF NONPROFIT NEEDS 2025

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

MICHIGAN COMMUNITY RESOURCES

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Acknowledgments

Thank you to our nonprofit clients who took our survey and participated in interviews. Because participation was anonymous, we cannot thank you by name – but please know the sector will benefit from the input and personal experiences you shared.

Thank you to the nonprofit and community leaders who came before us, whose work often goes unacknowledged, but lays the groundwork for all of the benefit to individuals, families, and communities our nonprofit sector supports today.

Thank you to the Michigan Community Resources team, who worked tirelessly to plan for, collect, and analyze this data, and the many hours and weeks that went into developing this report.

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MCR program director Matthew Schmitt talks with a participant in the inaugural Advancing Macomb cohort at a volunteer management panel in May 2025.

Introduction

Letter From MCR Leadership

Thank you for reading this assessment of nonprofit needs in Southeast Michigan. We believe in the importance of this report and its relevance to social impact work in Detroit and beyond, and we're eager to share our findings with you.

Since our organization's founding in 1998, Michigan Community Resources has been committed to fostering grassroots leadership in response to emergent community needs. Detroiters, and Michiganders, are no stranger to scrappy, resident-led solutions to systemic problems that manifest in a lack of equitable access to resources across diverse communities. Despite shifts in our programs over time, our charge has remained the same—to foster equipped grassroots leadership in response to emerging needs. Our clients continually rise to meet the moment with whatever knowledge, resources, time, and skills they have on-hand to support their neighbors and their families. They reach into their own pockets to fund programs and projects. They bring, in force, a deep passion and commitment to their communities and unmatched proximity and understanding of the issues at hand. We believe that it doesn't have to be this way—that access to resources to solve community concerns shouldn't be limited to the privileged few. Community leaders shouldn't have to operate in scarcity, constantly petitioning for a seat at decision-making tables alongside philanthropic and government leaders. It is in this spirit that we have undertaken this needs assessment effort.

Our team—leveraging their backgrounds in social work, anthropology, community organizing and engagement, project management, program evaluation, nonprofit executive leadership, marketing and storytelling, fundraising, and more—lovingly collected the information in this report about the joys and challenges of nonprofit work over the course of several months from late 2024 into 2025.

Though we conducted our survey and the interviews that informed this report prior to the inauguration of President Trump's second term, our findings remain top of mind in driving MCR's programs and strategic direction in this moment and beyond. We know that the needs and challenges identified in this report will become even more acutely important given the recent focus on the activities of 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations by the presidential administration. It is our perspective that the needs identified in this report remain evergreen, and are true within and beyond the context of both the new and unique and the longstanding threats facing nonprofits.

With continued gratitude,

Alisha Butler & Shamyle Dobbs
Co-Chief Executive Officers
Michigan Community Resources

Executive Summary

Executive Summary

Beginning late 2024 through early 2025, Michigan Community Resources conducted a comprehensive needs assessment to better understand the strengths, challenges, and resource gaps facing nonprofit organizations across Michigan, with a particular focus on Detroit and Southeast Michigan. The assessment—driven by a multidisciplinary team and informed by surveys and interviews with 104 nonprofit representatives—reveals both persistent and emerging sector-wide needs, especially as nonprofit organizations navigate increased political scrutiny and funding instability.

Key Findings Include:

- **Program Confidence:** Programs were consistently identified as the top organizational strength, with 93% of survey respondents and 85% of interviewees naming them among their top three areas of excellence. Nonprofits reported confidence in identifying community needs, developing program scope, and implementing services, though many struggle to sustain, scale, or evaluate these efforts due to resource constraints.
- **Fund Development Challenges:** Fundraising remains the most cited challenge, despite being a success area for some. Participants were proud of the strides they had made in fundraising, but were worried about sustaining this success into the future. Seventy-two percent of survey participants and 91% of interviewees identified fundraising as a top barrier. Notably, only 28% of survey respondents reported having a formal fund development plan.
- **Human Resources and Capacity Constraints:** Organizations expressed pride in their staff and leadership but overwhelmingly lack the capacity to grow their teams.
- **Governance:** Many nonprofits struggle with board development. Governance concerns focused on board recruitment and skills gaps.
- **Marketing:** While many organizations report having clear missions that their staff plays a role in communicating and up-to-date websites that reflect their mission and programs, nearly half identified marketing as a challenge.
- **Wellness and Workplace Practices:** Though many organizations promote positive workplace culture and hybrid work models, access to mental wellness support, sabbaticals, and fringe benefits remains limited.
- **Systemic and Structural Inequities:** The data highlights how funding and staffing disparities intersect with race. Black-led organizations are more likely to be volunteer-run and to operate with notably lower annual revenue than their white-led counterparts. This reinforces the urgent need for equitable investment strategies.
- **Geographic Trends:** While Detroit organizations across neighborhoods consistently reported programs as a strength and fundraising as a challenge, regional needs vary. Downtown groups reported the greatest revenue increases; Eastside and Southwest groups cited human resources and capacity as pressing needs; Midtown/North End organizations identified program support as a gap.

Call to Action

This assessment underscores the resilience, creativity, and dedication of Michigan's nonprofit sector—especially grassroots and BIPOC-led organizations—despite persistent systemic barriers.

MCR is committed to using this data to inform our services, advocate for equitable investment, and catalyze sector-wide improvements.

We invite funders, policymakers, and partners to join us in creating a thriving, well-resourced nonprofit ecosystem where community advocates can lead from a place of abundance, not scarcity.

Methodology

Methodology

To support our commitment to maintaining excellent services, Michigan Community Resources regularly conducts a needs assessment as part of our broader evaluation efforts. Based on our understanding of nonprofit life cycles and organizational health, we developed an assets-based needs assessment survey to collect quantitative data. We followed the survey with interviews to collect in-depth and qualitative data that would increase our understanding of survey responses.

While we regularly conduct analyses of client needs, this report marks the first instance of the organization publishing the results of our latest needs assessment and publicly documenting our analysis. Given our calls for more collaborative approaches to systemic barriers felt across the sector, as well as this year's sweeping attacks on nonprofit organizations from the federal government, we felt it was important to make our findings publicly accessible and encourage others to use this data to inform their work.

Project Timeline

The Michigan Community Resources staff carried out this assessment of nonprofit needs over the course of several months. This team was made up of a combination of operations staff, who work behind the scenes to ensure programs can be carried out smoothly and effectively, and program staff, who work directly with clients and provide client services.

This team began discussing and planning for the assessment in May 2024. We worked together to develop the project framework and to create a comprehensive survey we felt would gather the right information to inform our understanding of the needs of nonprofits.

Our data collection began in October 2024 and finished in January 2025. Evaluation of collected data was carried out by MCR staff and took place between January and May 2025. This report was published in July 2025.

Due to the timing of our data collection, which took place prior to the shifts in policy following the January 2025 inauguration of President Trump, we wanted to ensure what we had learned from our assessment was still accurate and true following the inauguration.

Throughout the first half of 2025, MCR staff carried out intentional conversations and check-ins with nonprofit leaders that demonstrated that needs conveyed in our assessment are still present post-inauguration, and in many cases, have been exacerbated by the late-breaking executive orders and resulting funding austerity impacting both nonprofits and foundations.

MCR hosted a focus group in June 2025 composed of organizations who completed the needs assessment to share our analysis findings and get direct feedback from nonprofit leaders in this new context under President Trump. All focus group participants affirmed that the top strengths and challenges found in our analysis were still accurate for their organizations, and in some instances, had been exasperated by the current administration's attacks on nonprofits.

While this data reflects much of what we already knew to be true about the joys and challenges facing nonprofit organizations of all sizes, it represents a point-in-time analysis of the state of the nonprofit ecosystem in Southeast Michigan. As such, we are committed to reevaluating our constituent needs regularly.

Outreach

The assessment included two methods for collecting input: online surveys administered through Survey Monkey, and one-on-one interviews primarily completed in-person between an MCR staff member or intern with a nonprofit representative; some interviews were also completed virtually via Zoom. Our findings were affirmed with a small number of participants in our June 2025 focus group.

The opportunity to submit responses to the online survey was promoted widely and publicly on MCR's social media and through our email newsletter. Emails reached over 1,500 newsletter subscribers representing different stakeholder groups, including nonprofit leaders and staff, funders, intermediary partners, and other MCR stakeholders. MCR staff also included the survey link in their email signatures while the survey was active.

Survey respondents elected to complete the survey based on their own interest. Responses were not incentivized in any way. The survey was 25 questions long and took an average of 8 minutes and 50 seconds for respondents to complete.

While the survey was tailored to nonprofit leaders and other representatives (staff, board members, volunteers), the survey link was accessible to the public and anyone who came across the link could opt to complete the survey.

Assessment Participants

This needs assessment gathered input from individuals representing a variety of nonprofit organizations located across Michigan. The majority of survey respondents work in Southeast Michigan, with the largest concentration of participants operating in Wayne County.

Over half of survey respondents had organizational revenues under $250,000, with the rest spread out in the $250,000 to $5 million+ range. Almost all (93%) of survey respondents' organizations have 501(c)(3) or similar tax-exempt status. The staffing structure of the organizations is evenly split between all paid staff, mostly paid staff with some volunteers, mostly volunteers with some paid staff, and all volunteers.

Of the 104 assessment participants, 64 had an executive leader that identified as Black, African American, or Caribbean American; 25 had an executive leader that identified as White. Of the other 19 responses, leadership identified as either American Indian or Alaskan Native; Asian; Hispanic or Latinx; and Middle Eastern or North African, Other, or preferred not to answer.

From the 104 responses to the online survey, MCR staff selected 33 (about one in three) survey respondents to interview to build on their survey responses and more deeply understand their needs.

Lessons Learned

This report presents a snapshot of nonprofit needs among MCR's client organizations. It was not a scientific study and did not include testing for statistical significance. Nevertheless, we believe the patterns we observed are still notable and worth further data collection.

Additional limitations to our analysis include:

- Survey participants and those who attended follow-up interviews both self-selected to participate.
- Survey respondents were not provided with definitions or examples of some key concepts and were asked to self-select based on their own interpretations. (For example, we asked about the legal implications of an organization's programmatic and fundraising activities.)
- Our sample size was limited and may not fully reflect all demographics within the city of Detroit and in greater Southeast Michigan. Most survey respondents were from the Detroit area.
- Survey respondents represented organizations led by Black or white executives at a rate greater than the prevalence of both Black and white leaders in the greater Southeast Michigan area.

Strengths & Challenges

Strengths & Challenges

As part of this needs assessment, participants in both the survey and interviews were asked to identify the top strengths and challenges for their nonprofit organization.

From the data, Programs was the number one strength, with Community Engagement and Partnerships as other top strengths. Fund Development was the number one challenge, but also named as a strength for several participants. Human Resources & Capacity and Governance were other top challenges.

Top Named Strengths:

- **Programs** (93% in survey and 85% in interviews)
- **Community Engagement** (33% in interviews)
- **Partnerships** (24% in interviews)
- **Fund Development** (22% in survey and 36% in interviews)

Top Named Challenges:

- **Fund Development** (72% in survey and 91% in interviews)
- **Human Resources & Capacity** (35% in survey and 27% in interviews)
- **Governance** (19% in survey and 15% in interviews)

Programs

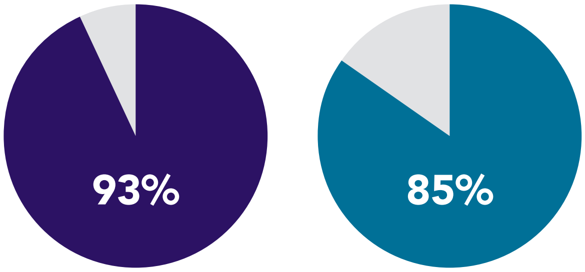
Overall, participants reported feeling most confident about their programs; 93% of survey participants named Programs as one of their greatest strengths. In interviews, 85% of participants named Programs as one of the top three areas they excelled in. Additionally, 52% of interviewees rated their programs as "excellent," and 33% rated them "moderate."

Many respondents named similar sentiments about seeing returns from investing time and energy into creating quality programming for their clients.

Survey respondents were most confident in having resources and capacity to manage these aspects of programming:

- 84% reported confidence in identifying a need in their community.
- 82% reported confidence in implementing programs.
- 85% reported confidence in creating a program scope.

Named Programs a Top Strength



SURVEY PARTICIPANTS
97 of 104

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS
28 of 33

While participants felt confident in their ability to implement quality programming, they also faced challenges with accessing resources and capacity to complete the following:

- 57% reported ability to ensure program sustainability.
- 51% reported ability to scale or grow a program.
- 52% reported ability to execute program evaluation.

These numbers are not surprising when taking into consideration the number of participants that named a need for additional funds; 79% of survey participants named they had an increase in expenses over the last two years, while only 57% identified an increase in revenue. An additional 17% saw a decrease in revenue, but only 4% saw a decrease in expenses.

The lack of adequate funding makes growing, evaluating, and fundraising for programs difficult. Due to funding and capacity constraints, many nonprofits live in the moment, utilizing their limited funds to meet the needs of their clients as they arise rather than investing into building out their programmatic infrastructure.

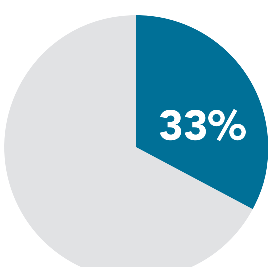
Community Engagement & Partnerships

Organizations are working to overcome capacity challenges by leveraging Community Engagement and Partnerships, both of which were named as top strengths. Cross-organization collaboration on specific projects or strategies can be a mutually beneficial way to augment limited capacity and share complementary skillsets.

Additionally, as more funders call for a collaborative, community-driven approach to projects, organizations are partnering with each other and the communities they serve to meet the need.

- 88% of survey participants reported that they have the resources and capacity to collaborate with partners.
- 68% of survey participants reported that they have the resources and capacity to gather community feedback.
- 33% of interview participants named Community Engagement as one of the top three areas they excelled in.
- 24% of interview participants named Partnerships as one of the top three areas they excelled in.

Named Community Engagement a Top Strength



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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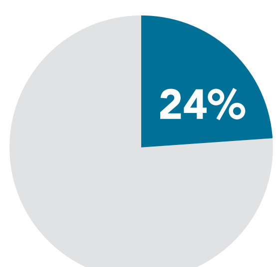
Named Partnerships a Top Strength



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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Fund Development

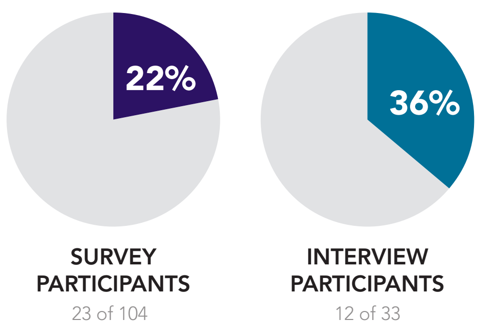
Fund Development was named the top challenge organizations are facing, but several organizations also named it their top strength. Organizations are proud of the efforts and success they have had in the past year, but are intimidated by the prospect of sustaining funding as can be seen in the direct quote below.

In surveys, 72% of participants named Fundraising as one of their greatest challenges. In interviews, 91% named Fundraising as one of their top challenges. Additionally, 58% of interview participants rated their fundraising as "needs support."

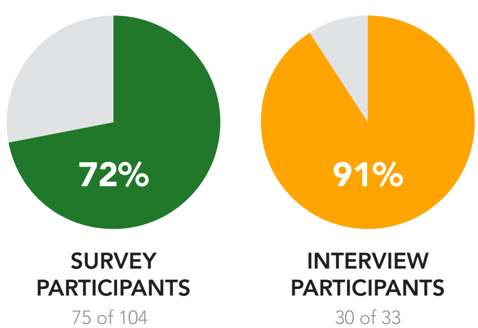
While some organizations have seen success in fundraising over the past 12 months,

- Only 28% of survey participants reported that they have a fund development plan for the next 1-3 years.
- 33% of interview participants named Fundraising as both one of their greatest successes and top challenges.
- 9% of survey participants selected Fundraising as one of their biggest strengths and biggest challenges.

Named Fundraising a Top Strength



Named Fundraising a Top Challenge



INTERVIEW INSIGHT

"We hit our annual fundraising goal. Fundraising has been going well. It's very diverse. We have funding from corporations, foundations, individuals, sponsorships… so not having the capacity to do everything that we want to do as it relates to staffing (is challenging).

"(I'm concerned about) the sustainability of the organization financially. Like, although we're doing good, I don't know if that will continue, so not having continuous or multi-year funding keeps me from hiring. I want to make sure that I am taking care of people."

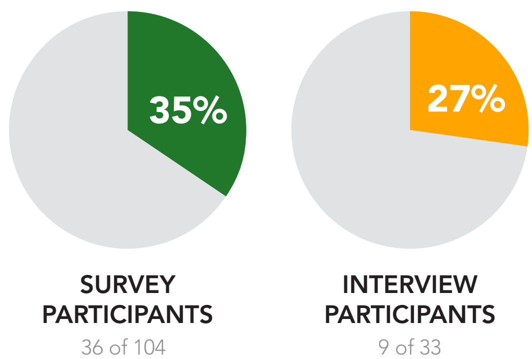
Human Resources & Capacity

Human Resources and Capacity were named as top challenges for organizations. An increase in capacity typically requires an increase in continuous, sustained funding for organizations, both to pay staff and to manage staff-related operations.

- 35% of survey participants named Human Resources as a top challenge.
- 27% of interview participants named Human Resources and 18% named Capacity as one of the top three areas in which they faced barriers.
- 58% of interview participants rated their Human Resources as "needs support."

Interestingly, 18% of interview participants named Human Resources as their top strength. They named how proud they are of their leadership, volunteers, and staff, indicating that the quality of staff hired is not a challenge, but rather the quantity.

Named Human Resources & Capacity a Top Challenge



INTERVIEW INSIGHT

"Overall, our leadership really excels. We have really good quality leadership at (our organization). They really care about the staff and about the families that we serve and it really shows up in the culture."

Marketing

Marketing was named as both a strength and a challenge for organizations. Marketing brings value to organizations working toward a variety of goals, from promoting programs and gaining new clients, to fundraising, partnership development, and outreach. Our assessment did not differentiate whether strengths and challenges were in the area of program marketing versus fund development marketing, etc.; but rather, marketing the organization's identity as a whole using basic tactics like maintaining an up-to-date website and equipping staff with talking points to act as ambassadors for the organization.

- 15% of survey participants named Marketing as a top strength; 30% named Marketing as a top challenge.
- 21% of interview participants named Marketing as one of the top areas they excelled in; 18% as one of the top areas they faced barriers in.

- Only 9% of interview participants rated their Marketing as "excellent"; 45% rated it as "moderate," and 45% rated it as "needs support."

When looking at more specific data, we can begin to understand which aspects of Marketing clients feel confident in. Organizations express feeling most confident in communicating their mission and identity.

- 82% of survey participants reported that their organization has a clear mission and identity that staff and volunteers understand and play a role in communicating.
- 42% of survey participants reported that their website is up to date and reflects their programs, missions, and brand identity.
- 36% said their website is slightly out of date and only somewhat accurately reflects their programs, missions, and brand identity.
- 13% of survey participants reported that their website was not up to date and does not reflect current programs, mission, or identity.
- 8% reported they do not have a website but would like one.

In our exploration of how to gauge an organization's excellence in the wide field of nonprofit marketing for the purposes of this assessment, our team opted to use an organization's website as an indicator of overall marketing health. While nonprofits feel confident in their brand and identity and most survey participants reported updated or mostly updated websites, many still shared Marketing as a top challenge.

Marketing is a nuanced and often ongoing challenge for nonprofits. Maintaining social media, attracting the attention of potential clients and funders, and having a presence in the community are other important aspects of nonprofit marketing that all require continuous engagement and planning. While organizations feel confident about the established aspects of their marketing—funding, staffing, and finding skilled staff, volunteers, and contractors to create and implement a broader marketing strategy still presents challenges.

INTERVIEW INSIGHT

"I am probably going to say marketing (is a challenge) until I die. I don't think (our organization) does a very good job of getting the word out about what we do and who we are. We have our highs and lows, but overall. Sometimes, I still think we're the best kept secret in Detroit… What audience are we trying to reach, for what… it is very multifaceted."

Governance

Participants reported facing barriers recruiting board members with the skills their organizations need. In response to the question, "What do you need to thrive?" some survey participants asked for:

> ***"More training for board members"***

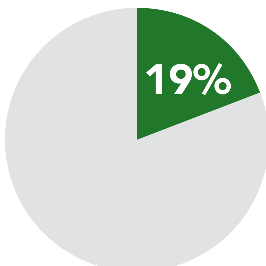
> ***"Board members that have connections to help the organization thrive"***

> ***"Board members with stronger fundraising capabilities"***

From the survey participants:

- 23% named Governance as one of their top strengths; 19% as one of their top challenges.
- 37% said that their organization has a clear and effective board recruitment plan.
- Only 50% said that their organization has board members with the skills they need.
- 75% reported that their organization has written board policies.
- 77% reported that their organization has a positive board culture.

Named Governance a Top Challenge



SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

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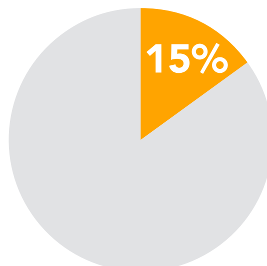

INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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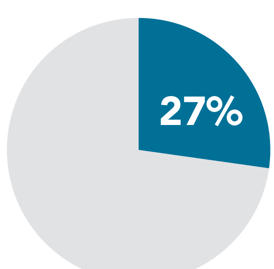
Physical Development & Systemic Barriers

In interviews, Physical Development was named by nine of 33 organizations interviewed as one of the areas they excelled in. Organizations were proud of projects that ranged from vacant lot cleanup and blight removal to real estate, construction, and rehab of commercial buildings, to housing.

Additionally, six of 33 named Physical Development as one of the areas in which they faced barriers. These organizations cited issues including lack of adequate space, safety concerns, instability of the real estate market, lack of funds, and high costs.

Related to Physical Development, nine of 33 interview participants named "systemic barriers" as one of their top barriers. This included city processes, larger government policies, current political landscape, disinvestment, and gentrification.

Named Physical Development a Top Strength



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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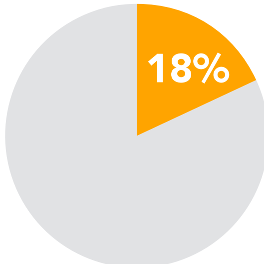
Named Physical Development a Top Challenge



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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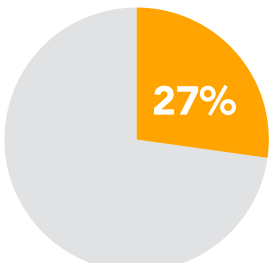
Named Systemic Barriers a Top Challenge



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

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> **Orgs run by unpaid volunteers or mostly volunteers have lower annual revenues than orgs with paid staff.**

Annual Revenue & Staffing Structure

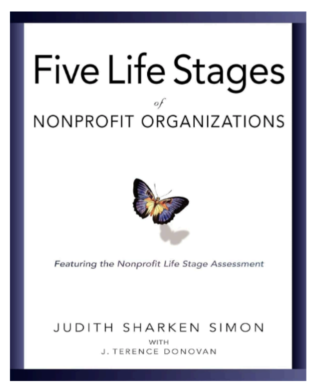
In working to understand some of the common expectations and challenges true of nonprofit organizations from the concept stage through incorporation and in different stages of organizational development, the Michigan Community Resources team often references the Five Life Stages of Nonprofit Organizations, a model discussed in the book of the same name by Judith Sharken Simon with J. Terence Donovan, first published in 2001.

For many nonprofits, annual revenue grows as the organization ages. The nonprofit life cycle (depicted in FIGURE A) is not directly tied to an organization's growth in the same way as increasing revenue. A nonprofit's life stage can be tied to the organization's longevity, meaning that both volunteer-run, small-budget organizations and million-dollar budget organizations go through periods of growth and decline over time.

Additionally, the nonprofit life cycle often aligns with staffing structure. Organizations start as volunteer-run, grassroots groups and move over time toward hiring staff as the demand for programming and access to resources and funds increases.

A finding of this needs assessment was that organizations with all paid staff and with mostly paid staff often had much higher confidence in their ability to accomplish tasks when compared to volunteer-run organizations. This discrepancy is likely reflective of their increased access to funds and resources to accomplish their missions.

Our needs assessment compared staffing structure to annual revenue to better understand the relationship between funding and staffing. We found that organizations run by unpaid volunteers or mostly volunteers

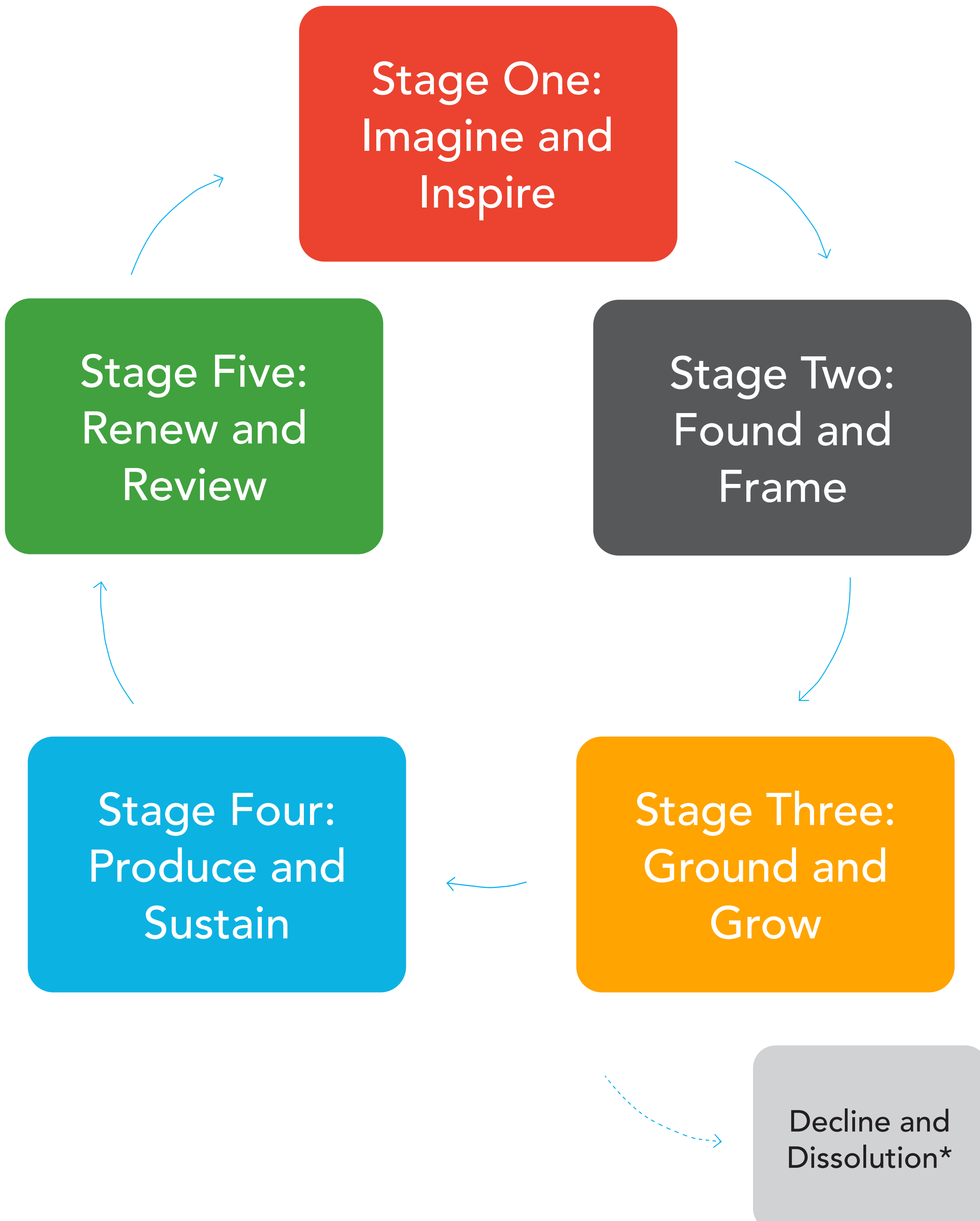


The MCR team often turns to the Five Life Stages of Nonprofit Organizations, a model published in the book by Judith Sharken Simon with J. Terence Donovan, to contextualize the experiences of nonprofits and different stages of development.

FIGURE A.

The Five Life Stages of Nonprofit Organizations

From The Five Life Stages of Nonprofit Organizations, by Judith Sharken Simon with J. Terence Donovan (2001)



*Can come from any stage

tend to have lower annual revenues than organizations with paid staff or mostly paid staff.

- For organizations with all volunteers and no paid staff, 100% (26 of 26) had annual revenues under $250,000, with 77% (20 of 26) having an annual revenue below $50,000.
- For organizations with mostly volunteers and some paid staff, 90% (27 of 30) had annual revenues under $250,000, with 40% (12 of 30) having an annual revenue below $50,000.
- For organizations with mostly paid staff and some volunteers, 87% (20 of 23) had annual revenues over $250,000, with 70% (16 of 23) having annual revenues over $1 million.
- For organizations with all paid staff, 84% (21 of 25) had annual revenues over $250,000, with 40% (10 of 25) having annual revenues over $1 million.

Our analysis found that nonprofits' ability to access resources or complete certain tasks, such as creating a fund development plan or following financial best practices, were reflective of that organization's stage in the nonprofit life cycle. Some trends, especially those that relate to financial strength and compliance, were correlated positively with an organization's annual revenue, meaning that as their annual revenue increased, finance and accounting confidence also increased.

Programs, Annual Revenue & Staffing Structure

Organizations identified Programs as one of their biggest strengths in the prior year. The needs assessment survey asked participants if they had the resources and capacity to support their programs with community engagement, planning, implementation, partner collaboration, sustainability, growth, and evaluation.

When we compared the greatest strength with the staffing structure of responding organizations, organizations who had been able to hire some staff but are mostly volunteer-run and organizations that are all paid staff are both in periods of growth, which is reflected in the surge in confidence seen on the graph.

Survey Participants' Greatest Strength: Programs

FIGURE 1.

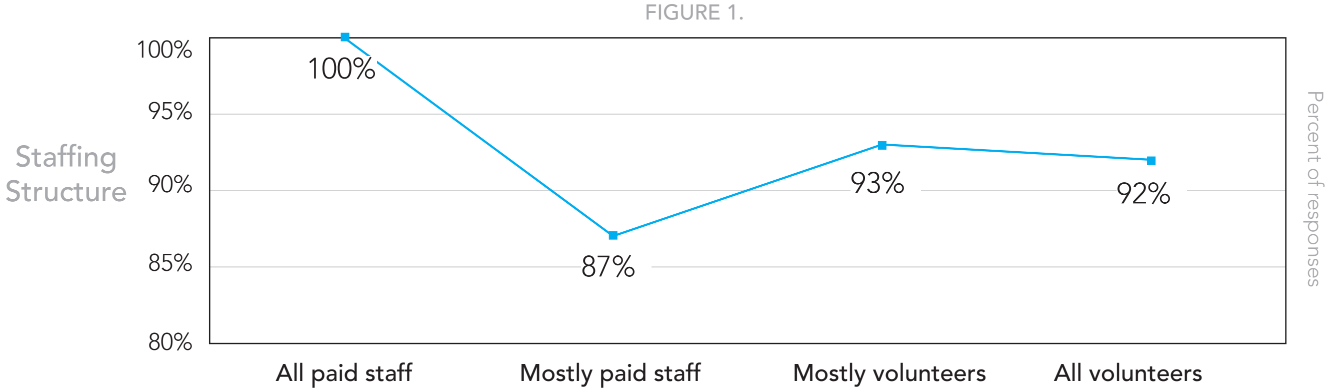
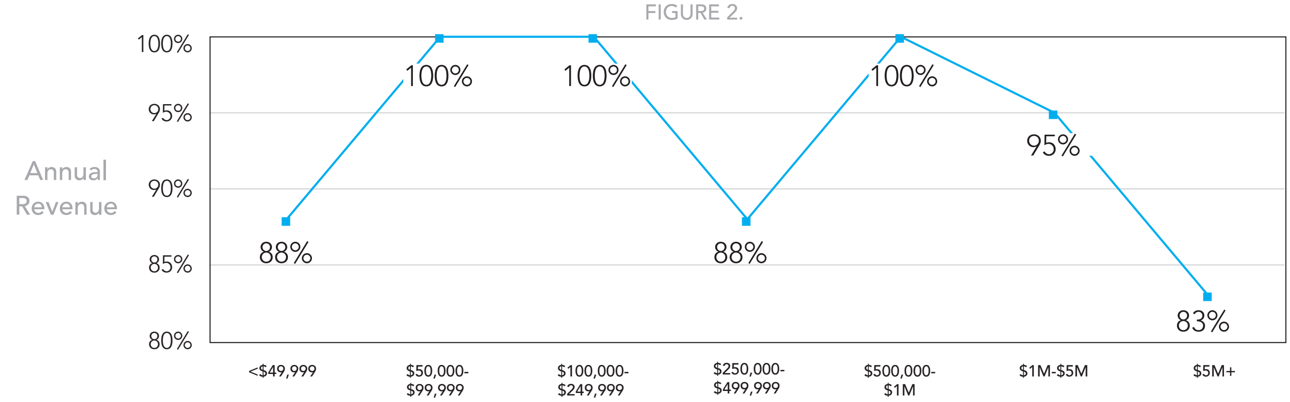


FIGURE 2.



We analyzed the greatest strength in comparison to organizational annual revenue and found a bimodal distribution trend[3]. The bimodal distribution of confidence in programs—where participants were most confident in their programs when their organization's annual revenue was between $50,000 and $249,999 and between $500,000 and $1 million—can be explained using the nonprofit life cycle.

Over time, organizations' revenue grows and they experience periods of growth and decline that are reflective of these changes in revenue. Organizations with higher confidence in their programming are in periods of growth, whereas organizations with lower percentages of confidence are in periods of decline. Since the nonprofit life cycle occurs regardless of the revenue amount, but rather is affected by how the revenue changes over time, organizations with large budgets can struggle with their confidence in programming the same as smaller organizations.

> **Organizations with lowest and highest annual revenues had the least confidence in their ability to identify a need in their community.**

Identifying a Need in the Community

When compared to annual revenue, survey participants' ability to identify a need in their community trended toward a bell curve[4]. Participants with the lowest and highest annual revenues had the least confidence in this ability. Those with lower annual revenues lacked confidence, which is likely connected to limited funding and access to resources. Organizations with the highest revenues may be more disconnected from the communities they serve and likely stick with their established programming. Alternatively, they could see an increase in funds for non-programming related activities such as physical development projects. Organizations with all paid staff and those with mostly volunteers were the most confident in their abilities to identify a need in the community. Those organizations are likely in a growth period as it relates to the nonprofit life cycle.

Confidence in Identifying a Need in the Community

FIGURE 3.

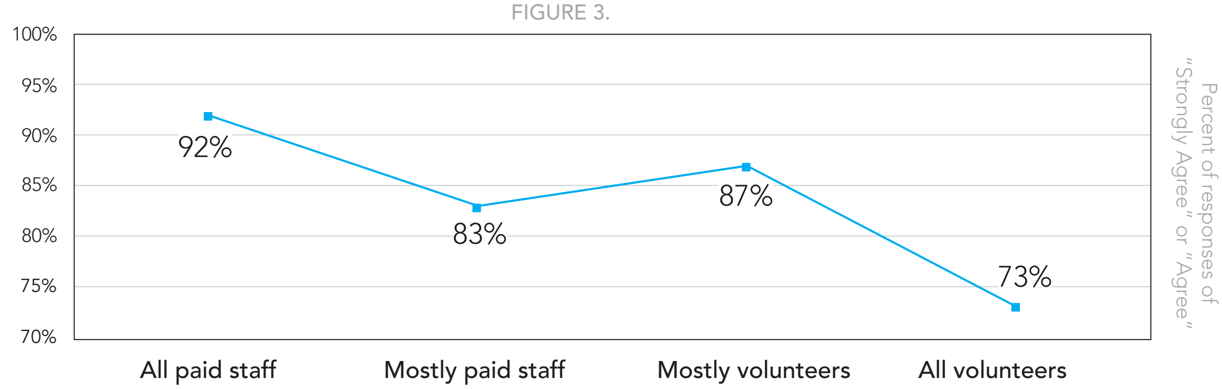
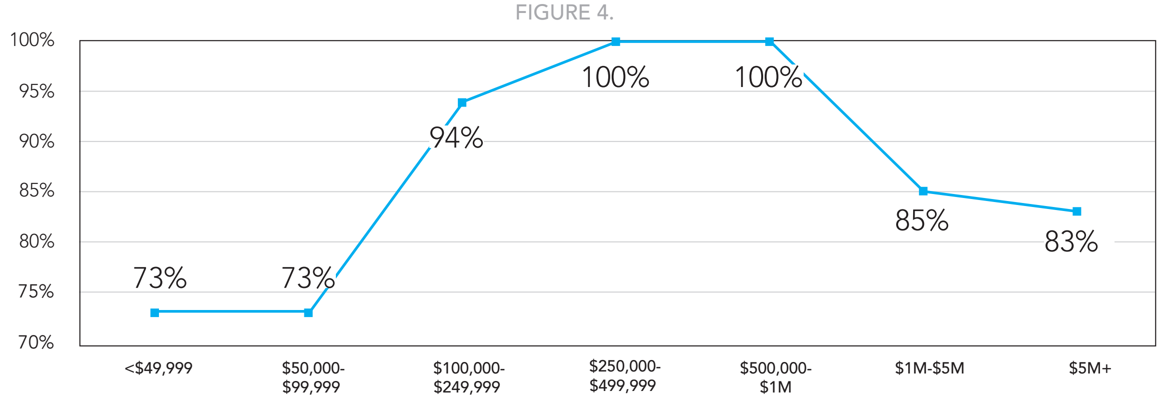


FIGURE 4.



3 A data set is bimodal if it has two numbers that appear more often than the others.

4 A bell curve is the distribution of data where most values cluster around the middle and taper off toward the extremes.

Gathering and Incorporating Community Feedback

FIGURE 5 shows that survey participants were most confident in being able to gather community feedback when they had all paid staff or mostly volunteers with some paid staff. Participants were less confident with all volunteers. While the difference is slight and more data is needed to confirm this theory, this trend relates to the growth periods of the nonprofit life cycle.

FIGURE 6 shows that survey participants were most confident in their ability to gather community feedback when they had an annual revenue of $100,000 to $249,999 and $500,000 to $1 million. Interestingly, we also see a spike in confidence for organizations with annual revenues of $5 million or higher.

In a typical bimodal distribution, we would expect organizations with a $5 million or higher revenue to have a lower occurrence of confidence. This inconsistency may be explained either by the small participant pool of this assessment, by larger revenue nonprofits being able to pay community engagement participants, or by these organizations being able to pay consultants to support.

Confidence in Gathering and Incorporating Community Feedback

FIGURE 5.

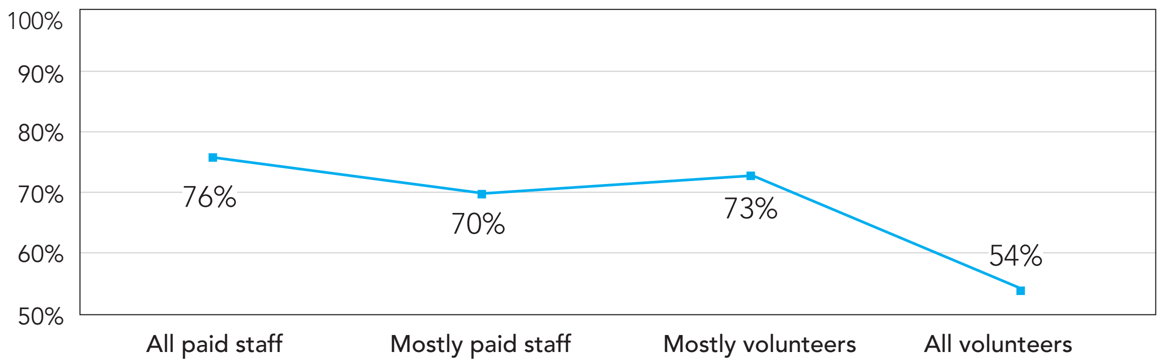
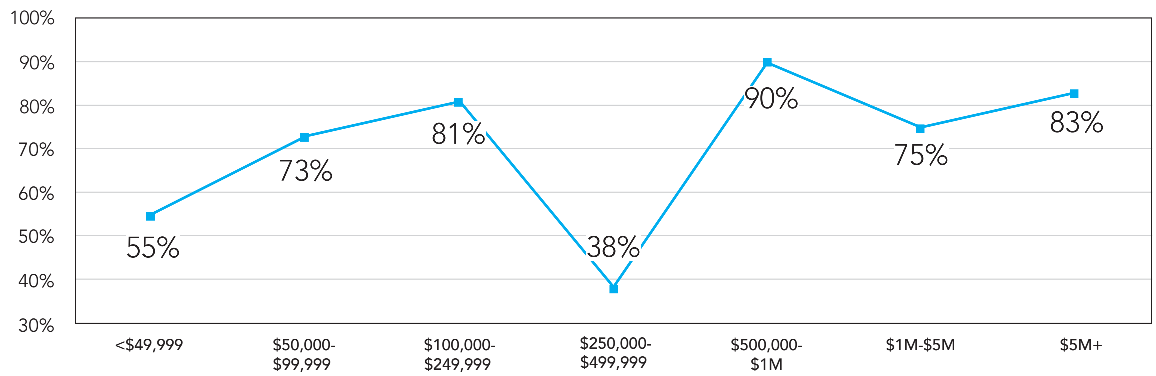


FIGURE 6.



Creating a Program Scope

Generally, participants were relatively confident in their ability to create a program scope. Ability to create a program scope has a weak trend towards bimodal distribution. Without additional data, it is difficult to be definitive.

FIGURE 8 demonstrates that organizations with annual revenues of $50,000 to $99,999 and $250,000 to $499,999 have the lowest percentage of participants that agree they can create a program scope.

Interestingly, participants with annual revenue of $500,000 to $1 million were the most confident in their ability to access resources and capacity to create a program scope. We need more data to determine the reasoning behind this surge in confidence.

FIGURE 7 shows a general decline in organizations' confidence in their ability to create a program scope between organizations with all paid staff and those with only some paid staff. However, we then see a peak at "all volunteers," which may be reflective of how focused on programs smaller grassroots organizations can be.

Confidence in Creating a Program Scope

FIGURE 7.

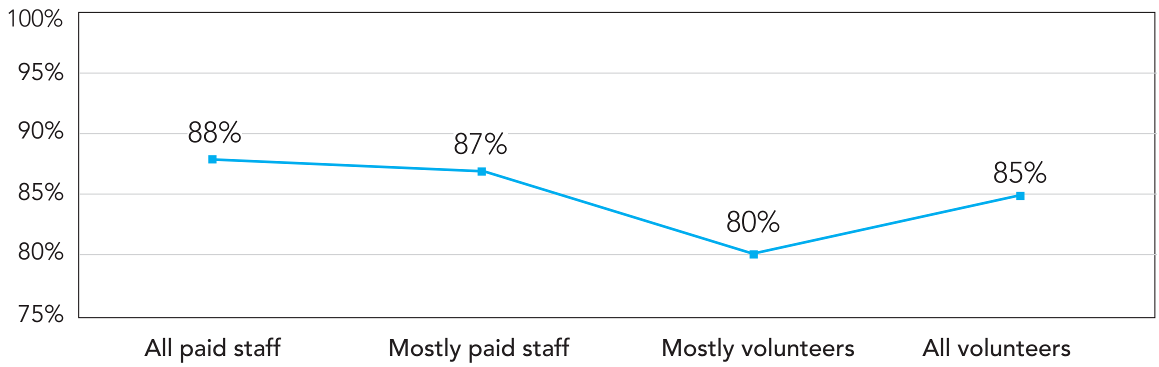
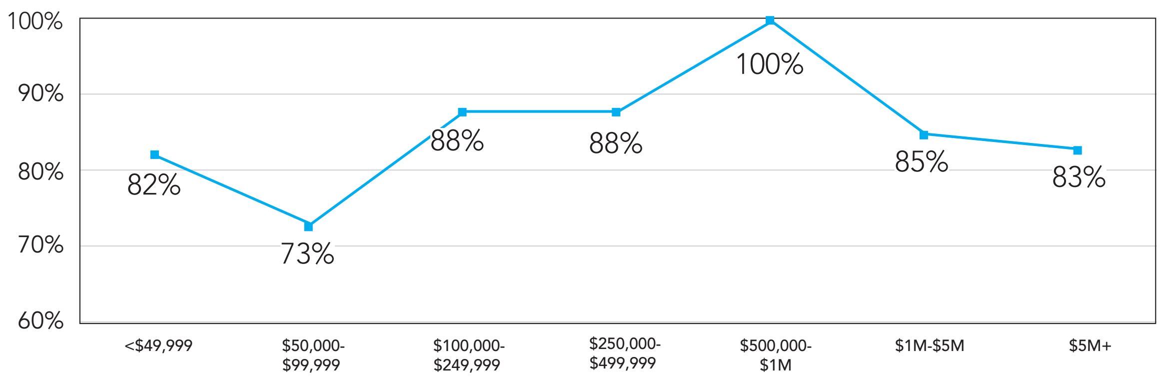


FIGURE 8.



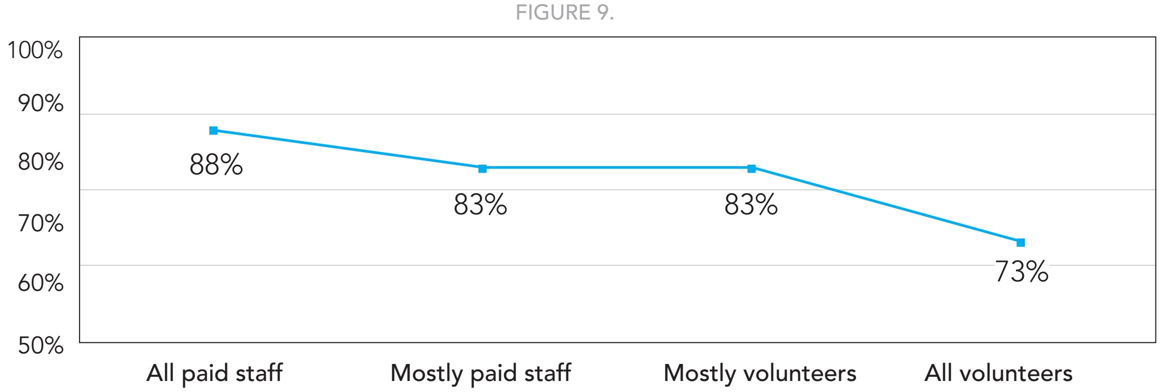
Implementing Programs

Organizations' ability to implement programming compared with organization revenue size follows a typical bimodal distribution trend. Organizations with annual revenues from $100,000 to $249,999 and $500,000 to $1 million are the most confident, meaning they are likely in a period of growth demonstrated in the nonprofit life cycle. SEE FIGURE 10.

Similarly, organizations with all paid staff and those with mostly volunteers and some paid staff were the most confident in their ability to implement programming.

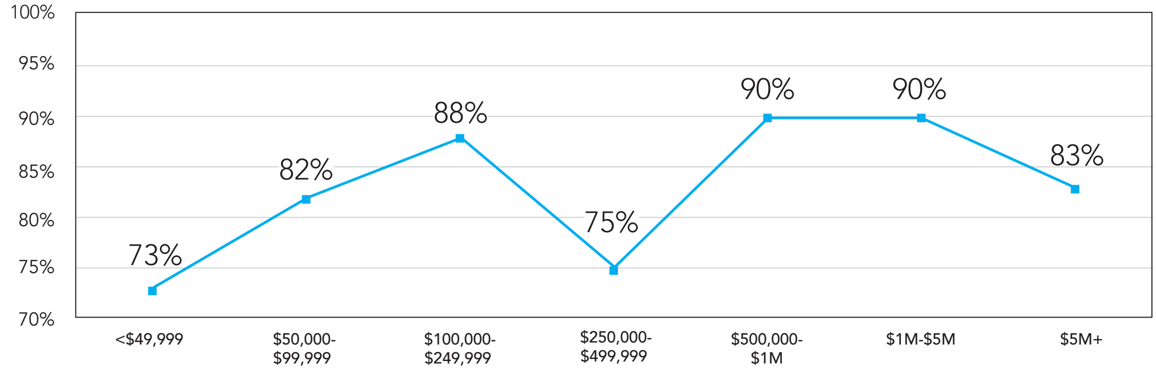
Confidence in Implementing Programs

FIGURE 9.



Confidence in Implementing Programs

FIGURE 10.



Collaborating with Partners

Generally, participants were confident in their ability to collaborate with partners. Responses around collaborating with partners followed a typical bimodal distribution trend. Organizations with annual revenues from $100,000 to $249,999 and $500,000 to $1 million are the most confident, as shown in **FIGURE 12**, meaning they are likely in a period of growth demonstrated in the nonprofit life cycle.

In **FIGURE 11**, we see a general decline in organizations' confidence in their ability to collaborate with partners between organizations with paid staff and those with some paid staff. However, we then see a peak with volunteer-run organizations, which may be reflective of the community-rootedness of grassroots organizations. Volunteers often leverage their personal relationships and passion for the mission to make connections for the organization, creating confidence within the organization to collaborate with key stakeholders even with fewer resources.

Confidence in Collaborating with Partners

FIGURE 11.

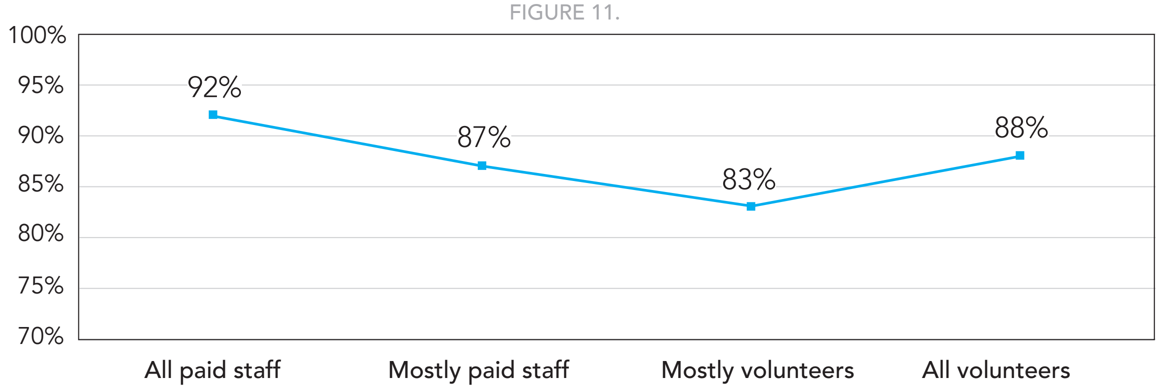
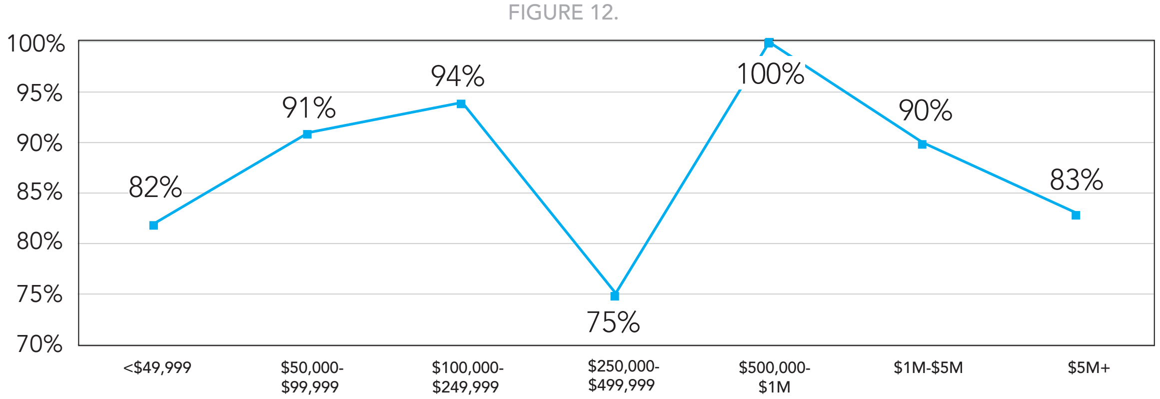


FIGURE 12.



Ensuring Program Sustainability

Survey participants' ability to ensure program sustainability is trending towards bimodal distribution, but displays some irregularities. The most obvious irregularity is the plateaus for those with annual revenues between below $50,000, from $50,000 to $99,999, from $250,00 to $499,999, and from $500,000 to $1 million. These plateaus could be because building program sustainability takes more resources than other programmatic endeavors; it requires a significant increase in revenue and time to create.

Interestingly, organizations with mostly paid staff and some volunteers felt the most confident in creating program sustainability. As discussed earlier, creating program sustainability may require a significant increase in revenue and time, which is why we do not see another peak at organizations with all volunteers.

It is important to note that confidence in organizations' ability to ensure program sustainability is lower than confidence in other aspects of carrying out nonprofit programs. This is true when responses are considered in relation to both organization revenue and staffing structure. This is not surprising to those of us who work closely with nonprofits. Ideating and launching a program with or without an initial grant investment can be easy compared to sustaining the program with consistent, reliable staff and/or volunteers and ensuring the financial resources are there to cover the cost of the program beyond the initial launch.

"Organizations with mostly paid staff and some volunteers felt the most confident in creating program sustainability.

Confidence in Ensuring Program Sustainability

FIGURE 13.

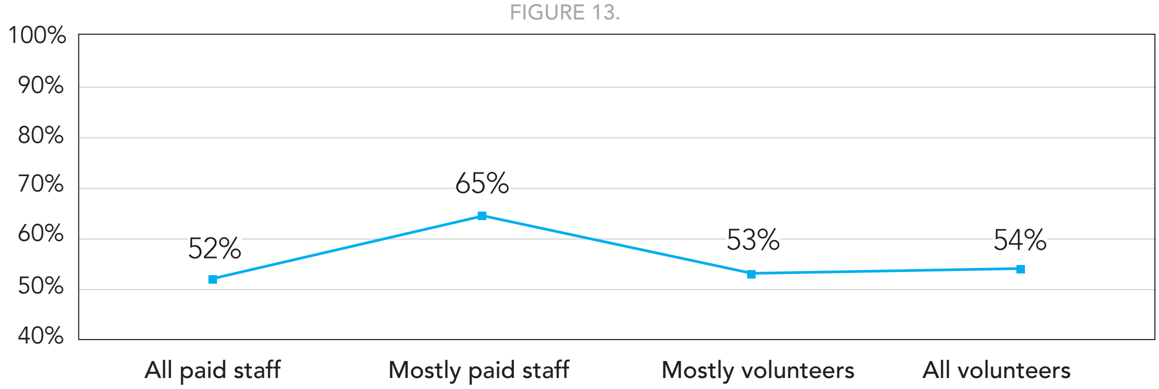
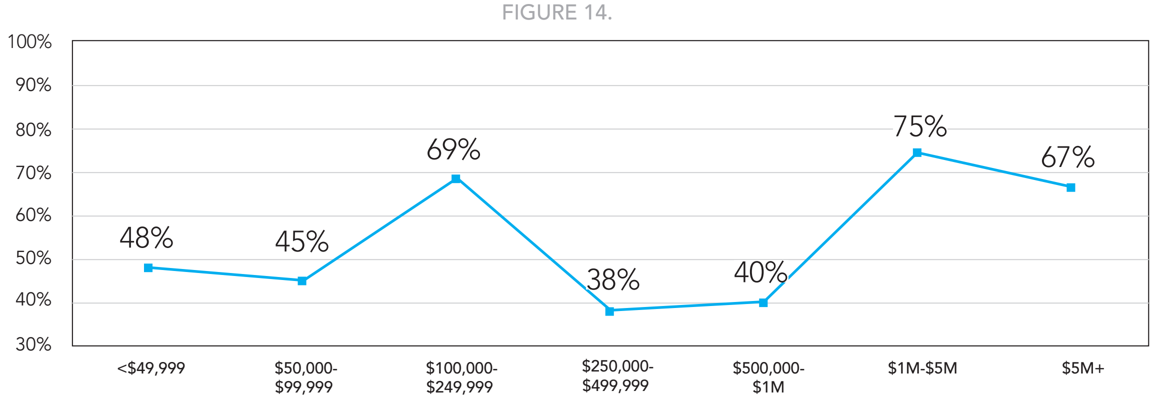


FIGURE 14.



Scaling or Growing a Program

The ability to scale or grow a program compared with annual revenue is trending towards bimodal distribution. Organizations with larger annual revenues were more confident than organizations with lower annual revenues within the bimodal distribution. This is reflective of the increased access to funds and resources that organizations with larger annual revenues inherently have. While they still experience periods of decline in regard to scaling and growing their programming, the decline is not as pronounced as organizations with smaller budgets. Similarly, organizations with all paid staff or mostly paid staff were more confident in their ability to scale or grow a program than organizations with mostly volunteers or all volunteers.

Confidence in Scaling or Growing a Program

FIGURE 15.

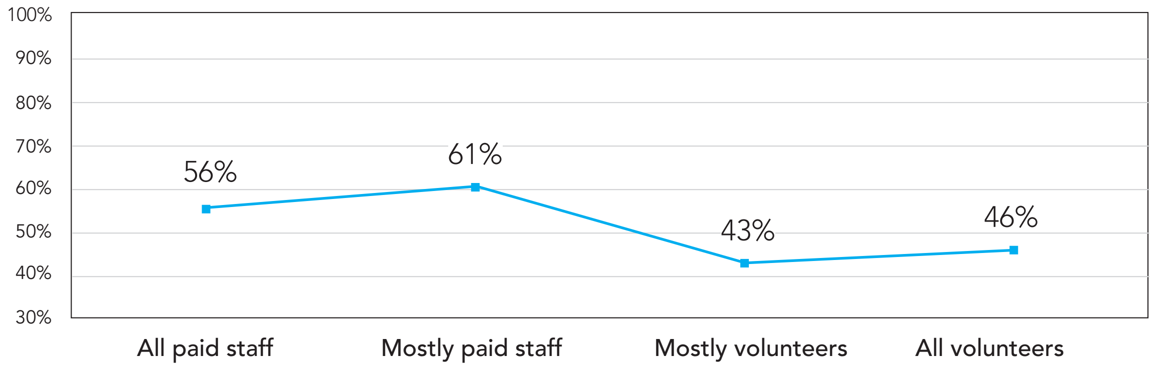
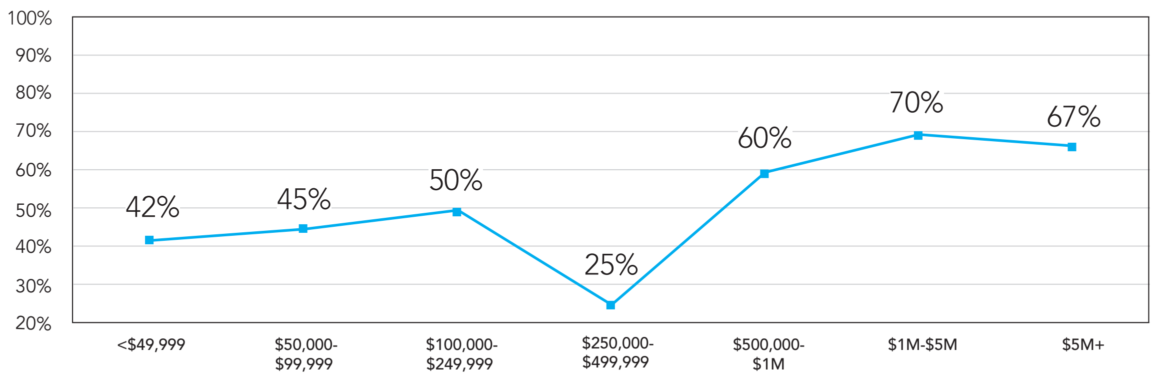


FIGURE 16.



Executing Program Evaluation

Generally, participants' confidence in their ability to execute program evaluation is relatively low compared to the other elements of executing programs included in our survey. Survey participants' ability to execute program evaluation is trending towards bimodal distribution for annual revenues from $100,000 to $249,999 and higher, where confidence is higher in these revenue categories. The plateau before organizations between $100,000 and $249,999 indicates that those with smaller revenues may not have access to the resources to execute program evaluation. **SEE FIGURE 18.** Organizations with smaller revenues may not have the funds to hire skilled staff members or professional service providers to execute program evaluation.

Organizations across all staffing structures had minimal confidence (all less than 57%) in their ability to execute program evaluation. **SEE FIGURE 17.** This demonstrates that there is a need across all staffing structures for program evaluation resources and training.

Confidence in Executing Program Evaluation

FIGURE 17.

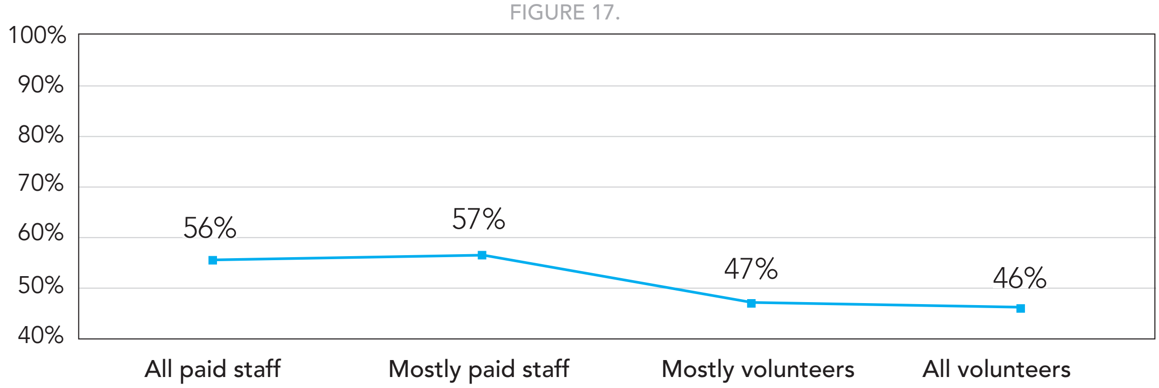
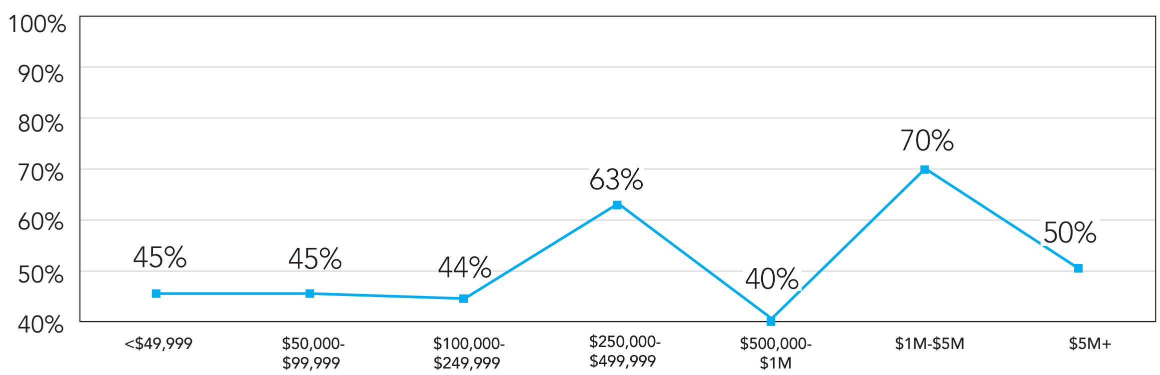


FIGURE 18.



Fundraising, Annual Revenue & Staffing Structure

Organizations consistently identified Fundraising as one of their biggest challenges in the prior year. When we compare those who selected Fundraising as their greatest challenge to the corresponding organization's annual revenue, we see fewer organizations with larger revenues naming Fundraising a challenge, with a few small peaks among organizations with revenues between $100,000 and $249,999 and between $500,000 and $1 million. **SEE FIGURE 19.**

The trend of general decline in organizations naming Fundraising as their greatest challenge when organization revenue is larger can be explained in part by organizations with higher revenues being more likely to meet fundraising goals and less likely to face challenges with fundraising. Other factors such as established relationships with funders and longevity of existence can also reduce barriers to fundraising.

The two small peaks where organizations more frequently named Fundraising as a challenge ($100,000 to $249,999 and $500,000 to $1 million) can be explained using the nonprofit life cycle. During periods of growth, fundraising becomes more of a challenge for nonprofits, because growth involves hiring staff, expanding programs, or scaling infrastructure; however, donor revenue doesn't always scale at the same pace, creating a funding gap.

In the survey, participants were asked if they had a fund development plan for the next 1-3 years. When this data was compared with organizations' annual revenue, we see a general increase in the frequency of organizations having a fund development plan for 1-3 years when organizations' revenues are larger, except for the troughs at $250,000-$499,999 and $1 million-$5 million. **SEE FIGURE 19.**

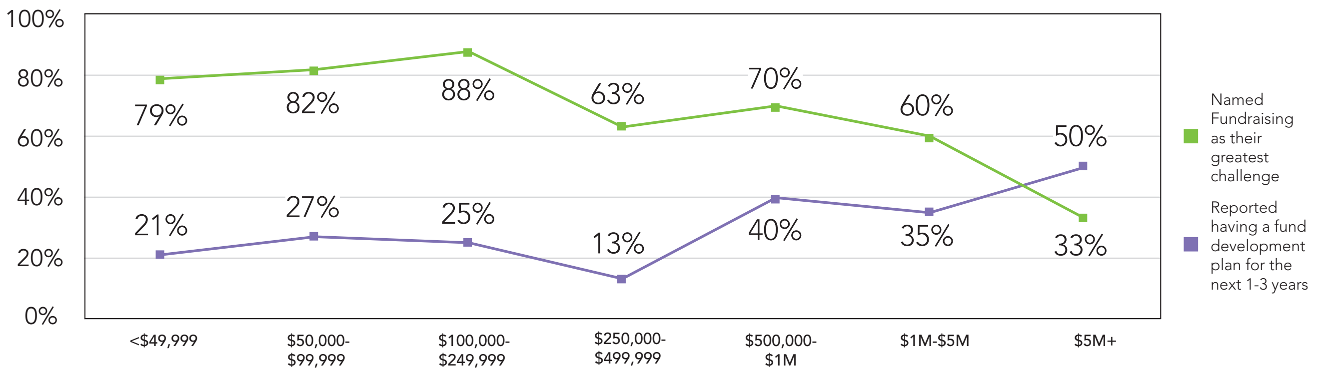
Nonprofits with larger revenue sizes likely have better access to resources and to skilled individuals who can be engaged to create a fund development plan, which would explain the general increase in occurrence of fund development plans when revenue size is greater. Nonprofits with larger revenue sizes also typically have a stronger financial position with a longer track record, allowing them to better predict financial trends for their organization. The troughs at $250,000-$499,999 and $1 million-$5 million could be related to the nonprofit life cycle. Organizations in decline may be more uncertain about the future of their funding and how to access the funding they need for growth.

Organizations whose staffing structure is mostly volunteers with some paid staff had the highest percentage of participants that named Fundraising as a top challenge. This is likely reflective of the difficulty of securing operating and unrestricted funds that enable organizations to cross the threshold into mostly paid staff with some volunteers. It is also likely that in a mostly volunteer organization, it is not one person's dedicated role to focus on fund development, which can limit fundraising success.

Similar to trends named above, mostly-volunteer and all-volunteer organizations with smaller annual revenues may not have access to resources or skills needed to create a fund development plan.

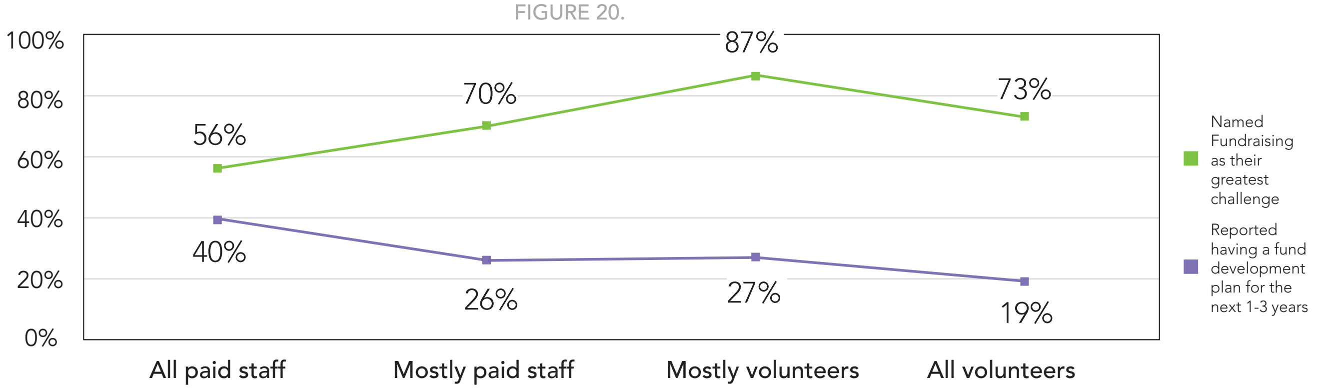
Fundraising & Annual Revenue

FIGURE 19.



Fundraising & Staffing Structure

FIGURE 20.



Website as an Indicator for Marketing

As stated previously, for the purposes of this assessment, our team opted to use an organization's website as an indicator of overall marketing health. Marketing is important for all nonprofits to have at least a basic understanding and mastery of, as the organization being able to effectively tell its story through a variety of mediums can help advance goals in fundraising, partnership development, program promotion and client recruitment, and more.

We analyzed participant responses that reported whether organizations had websites that were up to date and accurately reflected the organizations' missions, programs, and brand identities. We compared these responses with responding organizations' annual revenue and staffing structure.

A nonprofit's ability to access resources and skills that support keeping their website updated and accurate reflects where the organization is in their overall marketing strategy, and is related to the nonprofit's life stage (as depicted in **FIGURE A**). Nonprofits experiencing periods of growth are likely to be less advanced in their marketing strategy and less likely to report that their website is accurate and reflective of their work, as demonstrated in these graphs.

Organizations with all paid staff and with mostly paid staff had higher percentages of reporting up-to-date and accurate websites than volunteer-led organizations. This is likely because organizations with all paid staff and mostly paid staff have access to resources and funds that allow them to hire or train skilled providers to maintain their websites.

In general, not 100% of organizations in any category—including the highest revenue organizations and organizations with all paid staff—reported their website was up to date and reflected their programs, mission, and brand identity. This suggests that website maintenance and/or marketing in general continue to be challenges for nonprofit organizations.

Website as an Indicator for Marketing

"My website is up to date and accurately reflects my programs, mission, and brand identity."

FIGURE 21.

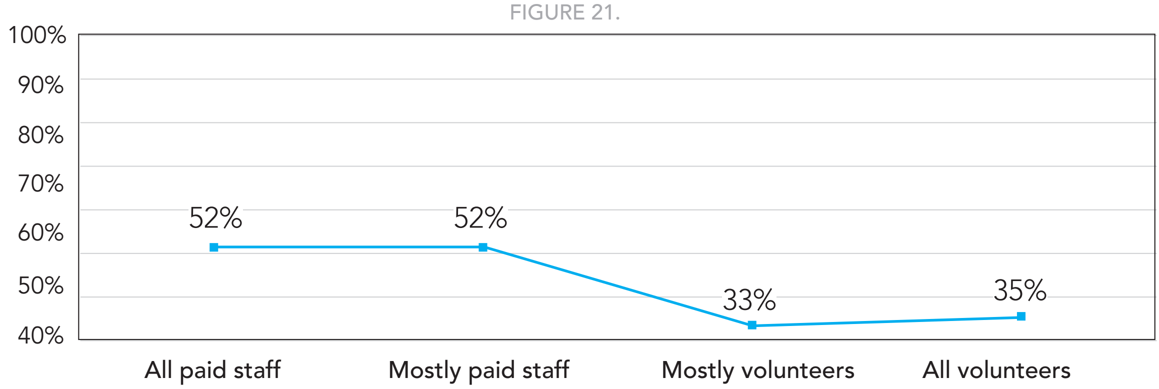
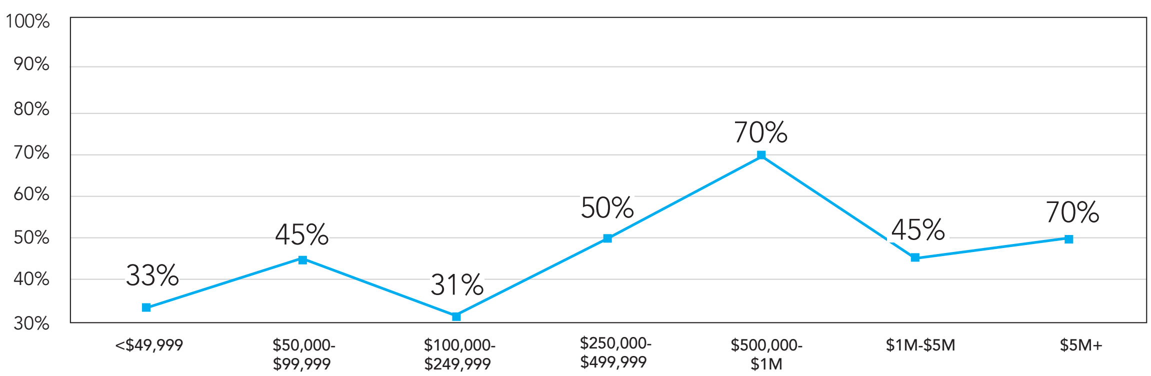


FIGURE 22.



Wellness Practices

Participants were asked about their organizations' wellness practices in both the survey and interviews.

During the pandemic, MCR experienced firsthand the effects of long-deferred mental and physical wellness care for nonprofit and community leaders. Nonprofit leaders are underpaid and undervalued. Nonprofit organizations are underfunded and are continually asked to do more with fewer resources. Burnout is endemic among nonprofit leaders, who in Detroit, are often women and people of color—groups who already face barriers to receiving equitable compensation and access to mental and physical wellness resources in their lives outside of work.

In 2023, MCR—alongside intermediary partners Co.act Detroit, Community Development Advocates of Detroit, and NEW—published *The Rest and Liberation Initiative Report*, which outlined our research about the prevalence of burnout among leaders in the nonprofit sector in Southeast Michigan, and outlined strategies individuals and organizations can take on to combat burnout and promote wellness.

Survey participants reported their organizations observing several wellness practices consistent with strategies suggested in *The Rest and Liberation Initiative Report* (mi-community.org/rest-and-liberation). These included flexible work schedules, hybrid working environments, flexible or unlimited paid time off, scheduled organizational closures to promote rest (such as regular mental health days), and a positive workplace culture.

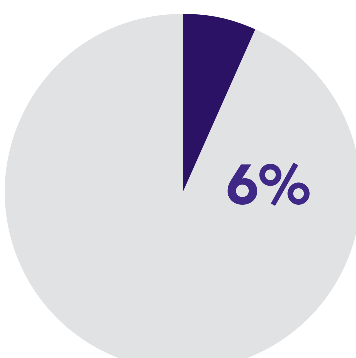
Other emergent practices named in *The Rest and Liberation Initiative Report* that promote employee and organizational wellness as well as leadership development and succession planning were reported less frequently by a number of participants. These included sabbatical programs or policies, positive relationships with board members, intentional efforts to promote relationship building across the organization or with clients, and specific mental or physical wellness activities during the workday.

Twenty-six percent of survey participants reported that their organization did not offer any of these benefits or activities.

WHAT IS A SABBATICAL?

In the nonprofit sector, sabbaticals are sometimes offered to nonprofit employees in leadership positions and/or who have achieved a certain amount of tenure with the organization. Sabbaticals can help restore and revitalize leaders and prevent burnout, which is extremely valuable in a sector that is notoriously undervalued and underresourced. For example, in 2024, in line with Rest and Liberation Initiative principles, Michigan Community Resources adopted a sabbatical policy to offer one month of paid time off as a sabbatical to employees who had worked for the organization for five years.

Organizations That Offer a Sabbatical Opportunity



SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

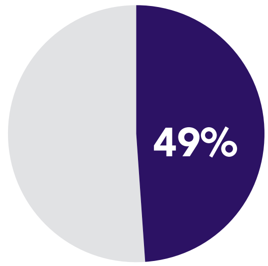
7 of 104

- **6% of survey participants (7 of 104) responded their organization offered a sabbatical opportunity.** Sabbaticals offer paid opportunities for staff to rest, reflect, and dream, returning to work refreshed and less susceptible to burnout.

The Rest and Liberation Initiative Report provides a multifaceted understanding of "wellness" in relation to the needs of nonprofit leaders, including prioritizing workplace practices that are human-centered, free from burnout and overwork, and supported by structural and organizational culture and policy.

Nearly 100 nonprofit and community leaders participated in Michigan Community Resources' 2024 Rest Forum, demonstrating their interest in deepening their relationship to rest and wellness in their organizations.

Organizations That Have a Flexible, Hybrid Work Environment

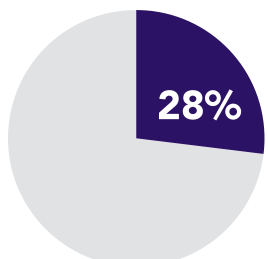


SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

51 of 104

- **49% of survey participants (51 of 104) responded that their organization had a flexible, hybrid work environment (meaning a balance of virtual and in-person engagements).** Hybrid work offers team members flexibility and freedom to balance work with other responsibilities, like family care.

Organizations That Offer Flexible or Unlimited Paid Time Off

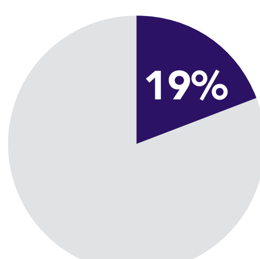


SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

29 of 104

- **28% of survey participants (29 of 104) responded that they had flexible or unlimited paid time off.** Flexible or unlimited PTO gives team members autonomy to balance work with free time and prevents burnout. Team members feel trusted and valued when given the opportunity to manage their own time away from work.

Organizations That Offer Mental Health Days

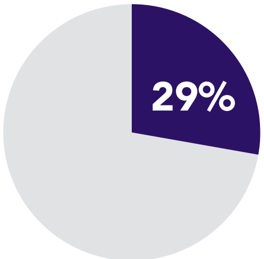


SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

20 of 104

- **19% of survey participants (20 of 104) responded that their organization offered mental health days.** Paid mental health days offer regular, dedicated opportunities for team members to step away from work and prioritize their health and well-being.

Organizations That Have a Non-Traditional Office Space

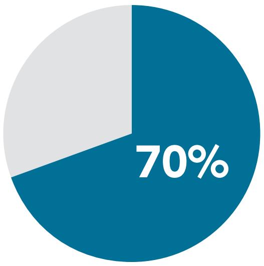


SURVEY PARTICIPANTS

30 of 104

- **29% of survey participants (30 of 104) responded that they had a non-traditional office space.** A non-traditional office—perhaps featuring comfortable chairs and couches, adjustable height desks, original art, and space for movement or meditation—helps team members feel at home, at ease, and creative in the organization's shared work space.

Organizations That Have a Positive Workplace Culture

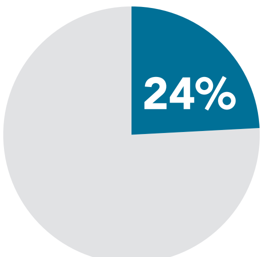


INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

23 of 33

- **70% of interview participants (23 of 33) responded that their organization had a positive workplace culture.** A positive workplace culture helps team members feel supported and valued in their roles.

Organizations That Have a Supportive Board



INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

8 of 33

- **69% of interview participants (23 of 33) responded that their organization had a supportive board of directors,** including board members that fulfill their roles and convey confidence in the abilities of staff and leadership.

Demographics of Executive Leaders

Demographics of Executive Leaders

As part of collected demographic data, participants of the needs assessment were asked how their organization's executive leader (CEO/ED, board chair, or block club leader) identified.

Most survey participants had leaders that identified as Black, African American, or Caribbean American (64 of 104, or 62%) or White (25 of 104, or 24%). Four executive leaders identified as Hispanic or Latinx (4%), with one leader identifying as American Indian/Alaskan Native, one as Asian, and one as Middle Eastern/North African (less than 1% each). No leaders identified as Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islander. Four participants selected Other (4%). Four participants said that they preferred not to answer (4%).

Race/Ethnicity of Executive Leaders of Surveyed Organizations (104 total)

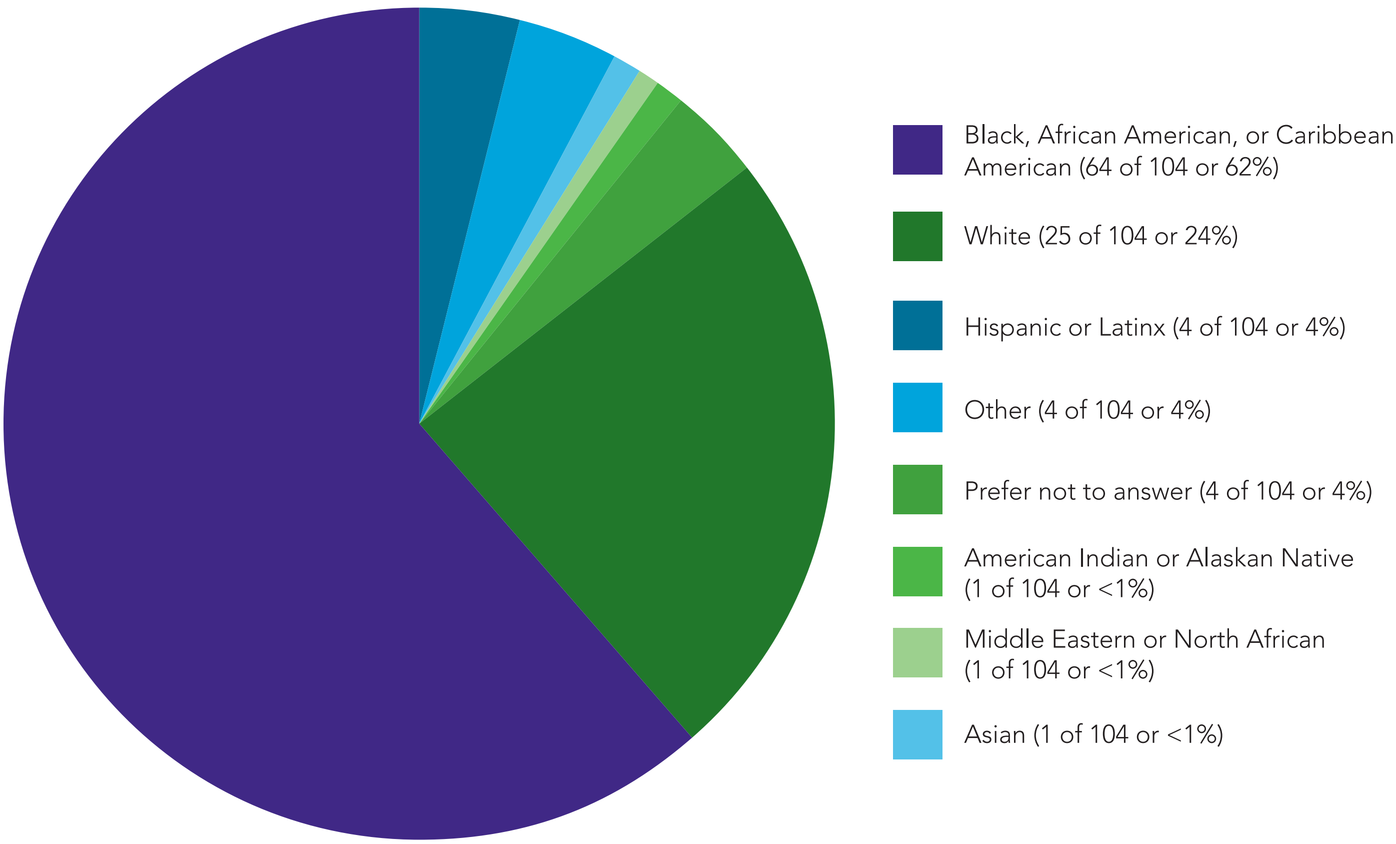


FIGURE 23.

It is important to understand that an organization's access to resources contribute to the organization's annual revenue and staffing structure. To give more context to this data, we compared executive leader demographic data with annual revenue and staffing structure data from the survey.

Our results show a higher percentage of organizations that are volunteer-run or mostly volunteers that have leaders that identify as Black, African American, or Caribbean American than White. FIGURE 26 shows that 61% of Black-led organizations are volunteer-run or mostly volunteers (39 out of 64 responding Black-led organizations). FIGURE 27 shows that 36% of White-led organizations are volunteer-run or mostly volunteers (9 out of 25 responding White-led organizations).

Additionally, there is a higher percentage of organizations with leaders that identify as Black, African American, or Caribbean American (66%) that have an annual revenue of $250,000 or less than organizations with leaders that identify as White (40%) that have annual revenues below that threshold.

Staffing Structure of Participating Organizations Whose Leaders Identified as Black, African American, or Caribbean American (64 total)

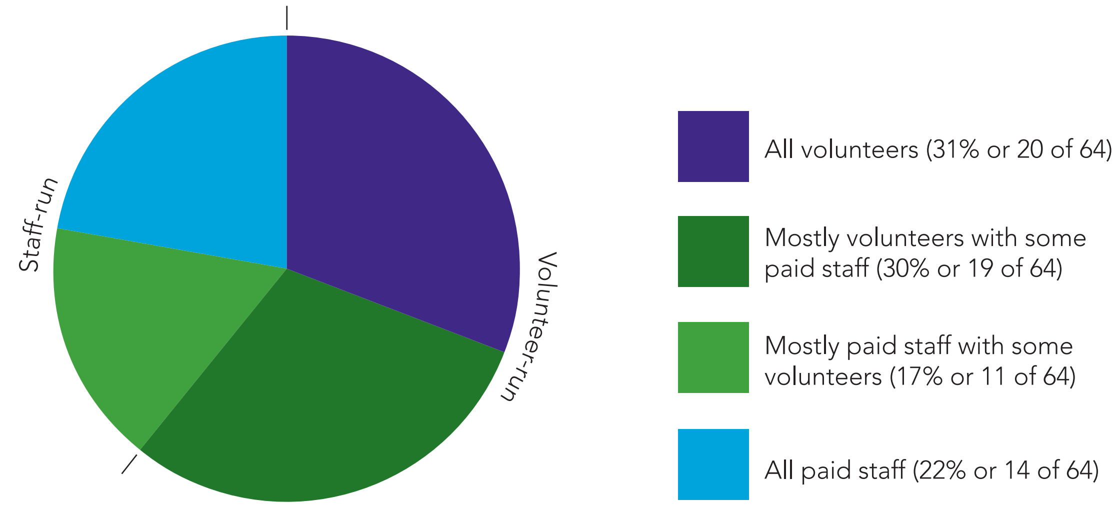


FIGURE 26.

Staffing Structure of Participating Organizations Whose Leaders Identified as White (25 total)

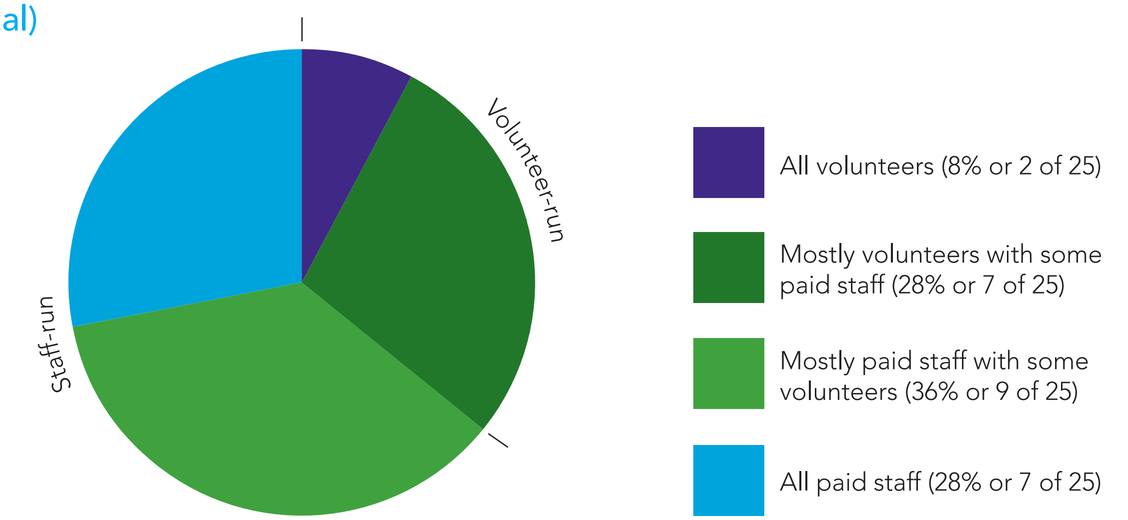


FIGURE 27.

According to the Detroit Nonprofit Leadership Census[3] (dovetaildetroit.org/resources/leadership-census), "White-led organizations appear to have more human and capital resources than BIPOC-led organizations, in terms of numbers of the average board members, average staff members, owned assets, and earned revenues."

This disparity is reflected in our needs assessment data. Equitable investment in Black-led organizations is crucial for addressing historical inequities and strengthening communities, particularly in Detroit, where a majority of residents identify as Black.[4]

3 The Detroit Nonprofit Leadership Census was conducted in 2021 in partnership between Co.act Detroit and Michigan Community Resources.

4 In an article published in the Detroit Metro Times dated June 17, 2025, the U.S. Census Bureau estimated Detroit's total population rose to 645,705 in 2024. The same article reported racial demographics of the city of Detroit, according to the World Population Review: 77% Black or African American, 12% White, 8% Hispanic or Latino, and small percentages of other racial groups.

Annual Revenue of Participating Organizations Whose Leaders Identified as Black, African American, or Caribbean American (64 total)

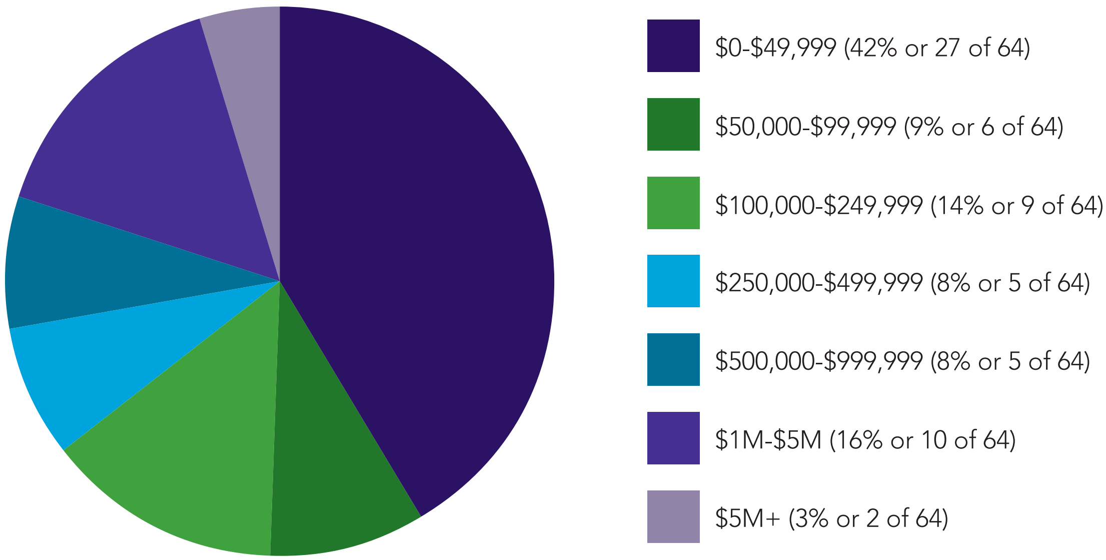


FIGURE 28.

Annual Revenue of Participating Organizations Whose Leaders Identified as White (25 total)

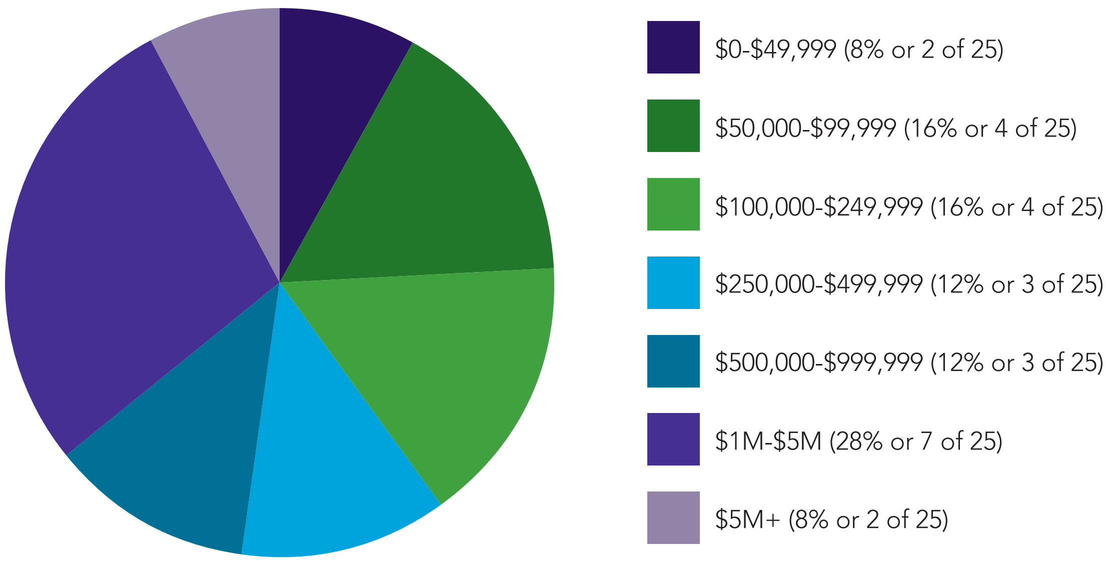


FIGURE 29.

Legal Requirements & Compliance

Legal Requirements & Compliance

When asked about accessing resources that help organizations understand their legal and other compliance requirements, we found that all participating organizations could use support.

To further examine the data, we compared these results to CEO demographics to analyze any discrepancies between organizations' access to resources.

A note we made after the survey closed was our oversight into not defining "obligations," "implications," or "duties." By these, we meant organizations' legal requirements with the IRS and state bodies as well as best practices for nonprofit governance and compliance.

Given that respondents may have understood these terms differently, we are unsure of the confidence in these numbers. However, this is data directly tied to the support and programming MCR provides—and the breadth of need demonstrated in these outcomes aligns with our expectations and findings from other anecdotal data.

Of the survey participants whose leaders identified as Black, African American, or Caribbean American:

- 45% (29 of 64) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help their board understand its fiduciary duties.
- 59% (38 of 64) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help them understand how to govern their nonprofit organization.
- 59% (38 of 64) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help them understand their annual obligations as nonprofit organizations to the State of Michigan and to the IRS.
- 50% (32 of 64) reported that they understand the legal implications of their organizations' programmatic and fundraising activities.
- In response to the question, "What do you need to thrive?" one organization said, "updated financial procedures" and a "strategic plan for the direction of the organization over the next five years."

Of the survey participants whose leaders identified as White:

- 72% (18 of 25) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help their board understand its fiduciary duties.
- 72% (18 of 25) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help them understand how to govern their nonprofit organization.
- 88% (22 of 25) reported that they had access to the resources they need to help them understand their annual obligations as a nonprofit organization to the State of Michigan and to the IRS.
- 76% (19 of 25) reported that they understand the legal implications of their organization's programmatic and fundraising activities.
- 44% (11 of 25) reported that they have a clear and effective board recruitment plan.
- 84% (21 of 25) reported that they have written board policies.
- 80% (20 of 25) reported that they have a positive board culture.
- 24% (6 of 25) named Governance as a top strength.
- 8% (2 of 25) also named Governance as a top challenge.

Geography

Geography

Participants of the survey shared their organizational zip code as part of the demographic data collected. MCR divided the zip codes by county and by broad Detroit communities (see Appendix Chart 1).

All survey participants were located in Michigan. Eighty-seven of the 104 survey participants were located in Wayne County. Of the 87 in Wayne County, 81 were located in Detroit.

Across all geographic areas, programming was named as a top strength and fund development was a top challenge for participating organizations. The majority of participants in 7 of 8 counties listed Programs most frequently as their greatest strength and Fund Development as their greatest challenge. All five Detroit communities listed Programs as their greatest strength and Fund Development as their greatest challenge. In Wayne County, 82 of 87 participants (94%) listed Programs as one of their greatest strengths, and 61 of 87 participants (70%) listed Fund Development as one of their greatest challenges.

Detroit

We analyzed five Detroit communities defined by us as Downtown, Eastside, Midtown-North End, Southwest, and Westside (see Appendix Chart 1) to identify the most prominent needs across the city and which areas were excelling in different organizational operations. We also compared changes in annual revenue to changes in annual expenses over the past two years for each community.

Needs Assessment Regions: City of Detroit

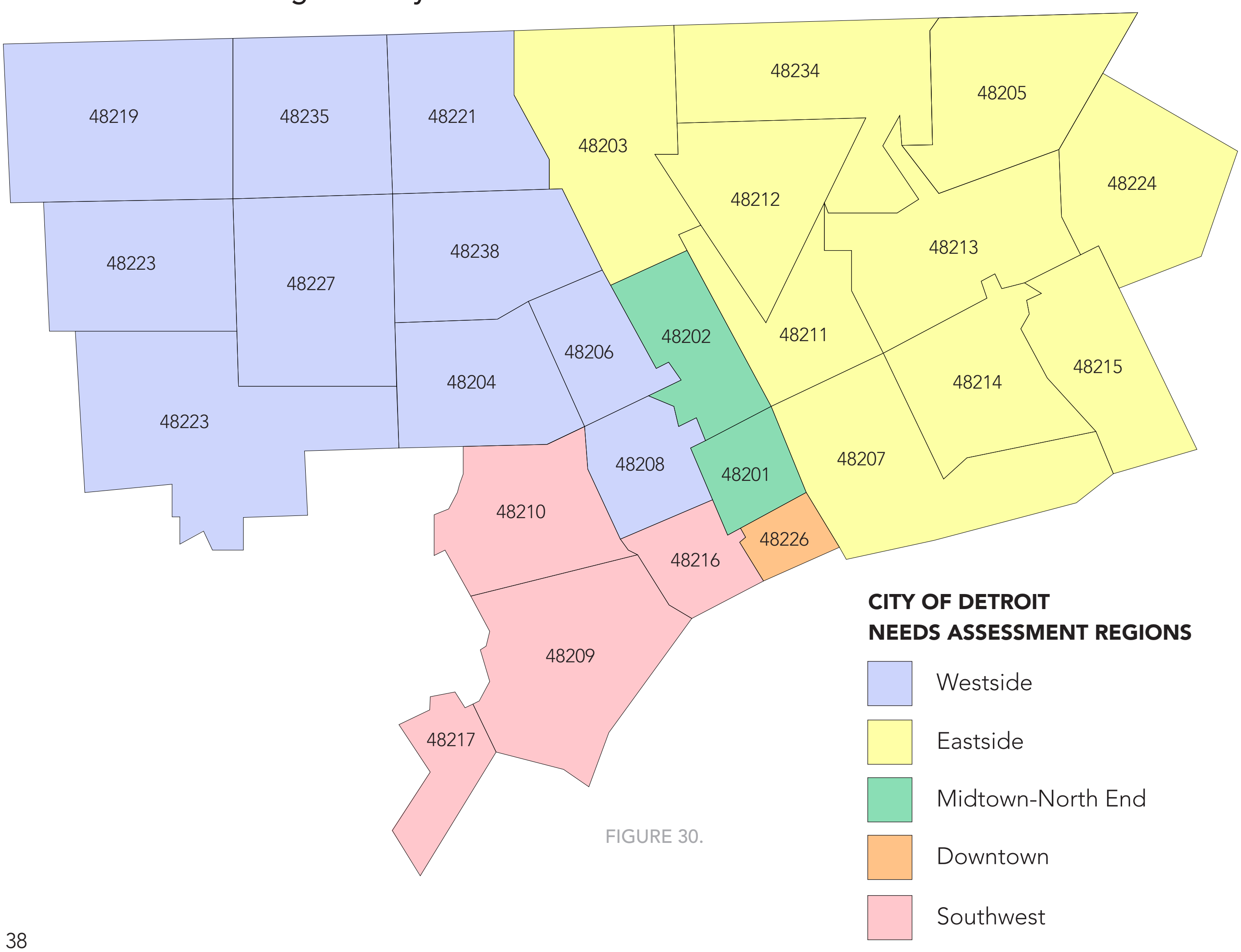


FIGURE 30.

Downtown

Six survey respondents and one interviewee were located in Downtown Detroit. The majority of Downtown participants reported having a fund development plan in place and having the resources necessary to implement programming. All Downtown organizations reported fundraising as a challenge, and only half had a board recruitment plan. Downtown Detroit reported the highest percentage of increases in revenue and expenses in the last two years.

- 100% (6 of 6) of respondents reported an increase in revenue.
- 83% (5 of 6) reported an increase in expenses.
- 17% (1 of 6) named there had been no change in their expenses.

Eastside

Twenty-nine survey respondents and nine interviewees were located on Detroit's Eastside. More than half of these reported they were adequately resourced to understand governance and to have boards with the necessary skills. Eastside organizations reported needing support with fund development and fundraising. One of three of the organizations reported lacking capacity to engage in program evaluation.

- 69% (20 of 29) reported an increase in revenue.
- 21% (6 of 29) reported a decrease in revenue.
- 10% (3 of 29) reported no change in their revenue.
- 90% (26 of 29) reported an increase in expenses.
- 3% (1 of 29) reported a decrease in expenses.
- 7% (2 of 29) reported no change in expenses.

Midtown-North End

Eleven survey respondents and four interviewees were located in Midtown or the North End. A little over half reported having the resources needed to implement programming, gather community feedback, and recruit board members. The majority reported fundraising as their top challenge.

- 18% (2 of 11) reported an increase in revenue.
- 27% (3 of 11) reported a decrease in revenue.
- 55% (6 of 11) reported no change in revenue.
- 64% (7 of 11) reported an increase in expenses.
- 0% (0 of 11) reported a decrease in expenses.
- 36% (4 of 11) reported no change in expenses.

Southwest

Fourteen survey respondents and three interviewees were located in Southwest Detroit. A majority reported having the resources they need to implement programming, gather community feedback and implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA) in the workplace. They named fund development planning and HR services as top needs. Southwest Detroit had the second highest percentage of increases in revenue.

- 71% (10 of 14) reported an increase in revenue.
- 29% (4 of 14) reporting a decrease in revenue.
- 0% (0 of 14) reported no change in revenue.
- 93% (13 of 14) reported an increase in expenses.
- 0% (0 of 14) reported a decrease in expenses.
- 7% (1 of 14) reported no change in expenses.

Westside

Twenty-one survey respondents and ten interviewees were located on the Westside. Over half reported having the capacity to follow financial best practices and being able to implement diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA). Half reported fundraising and board recruitment as a challenge.

- 67% (14 of 21) reported an increase in revenue.
- 24% (5 of 21) reported a decrease in revenue.
- 10% (2 of 21) reported no change in revenue.
- 67% (14 of 21) reported an increase in expenses.
- 14% (3 of 21) reported a decrease in expenses.
- 19% (4 of 21) reported no change in expenses

Conclusion

Our findings demonstrate that all five Detroit communities named Fund Development as their top area of need. When digging deeper, Downtown and the Westside need more support with governance and board culture; Eastside and Southwest need Human Resources and Capacity support; Midtown and North End could use Program support. Downtown and Midtown-North End all claimed high confidence in their access to resources for legal compliance needs, whereas Eastside and Westside had lower confidence.

Overall, 65% (52 of 81) of organizations in Detroit reported that they had an increase in revenue over the past year.

Of the survey participants in Detroit:

- 25% (20 of 81) reported a significant increase in revenue.
- 40% (32 of 81) reported a slight increase.
- 14% (11 of 81) reported no change.
- 22% (18 of 81) reported slight or significant decrease.

Overall, 80% of organizations in Detroit also experienced an increase in expenses. Of the survey participants in Detroit:

- 38% (31 of 81 reported a significant increase in expenses.
- 42% (34 of 81) reported a slight increase.
- 15% (12 of 81) reported no change.
- 5% (4 of 81) reported slight or significant decrease.

This data allows MCR to better understand where there may be gaps or lack of resources available to certain geographic areas and where we may need to do targeted outreach of our services.

Appendix 1.

Zip Codes Defining Needs Assessment Regions

Location	Zip Code(s)	Total Participants (N=)
Wayne County	All Detroit zip codes listed in Detroit regions, as well as: 48203, 48192, 48225, 48128, 48146, 48239, 48112	87
Detroit: Downtown	48226	*6**
Detroit: Eastside	48224, 48207, 48234, 48215, 48205, 48214, 48212, 48213, 48211, 48203	*29**
Detroit: Midtown-North End	48201, 48202	*11**
Detroit: Southwest	48210, 48216, 48217, 48209	*14**
Detroit: Westside	48204, 48206, 48208, 48238, 48221, 48223, 48228, 48235, 48219, 48227	*21**
Genesee County	48504, 48519	2
Grand Traverse County	49686	1
Macomb County	48021	2
Marquette County	49849	1
Oakland County	48034, 48332, 48375, 48025, 48304, 48072, 48043	8
Otsego County	49735	2
Washtenaw County	48103	1
	Total Assessment Participants:	104

*Counted in above Wayne County total

Conclusion

Conclusion

At Michigan Community Resources, we believe that a thriving nonprofit sector is essential to community well-being and long-term systems change. We undertook this needs assessment to deepen our understanding of what nonprofit organizations—particularly grassroots and Black- and brown-led community groups—need most to fulfill their missions, support their teams, and sustain their work in the face of increasing scrutiny, complexity, and inequity.

Several key insights emerged from our assessment. Programs remain the strongest area across organizations, with high confidence in implementation and impact. Community engagement and cross-sector partnerships are also widely seen as assets, helping organizations stretch their limited capacity. At the same time, fund development stands out as the most significant challenge, despite being a source of pride for some. Human resources, staffing capacity, and governance—including board recruitment—also present persistent barriers.

Our analysis affirms that an organization's place in the nonprofit life cycle heavily influences its access to the resources required for program sustainability, marketing, and fund development. In Detroit in particular, nonprofits are seeing expenses rise faster than revenue—especially those led by Black or brown leaders and operating with minimal paid staff.

Organizations are requesting targeted support in navigating legal requirements, building effective boards, and developing actionable fundraising strategies. At the same time, many expressed confidences in their mission, brand identity, and the dedication of their staff—further proof of the resilience and expertise already embedded within the sector. Encouragingly, most organizations reported already having implemented some wellness practices to support staff, even as gaps in benefits and organizational sustainability persist.

Our Response

This data confirms what we've heard anecdotally for years—and gives us a clearer map to act on. Michigan Community Resources will use these findings to strengthen our programmatic offerings for nonprofits and the sector, increase access to high-quality support for under-resourced organizations, and advocate for more equitable investment across the sector.

We invite funders, public sector partners, and fellow intermediaries to use this data to sharpen their strategies, adjust their expectations, and champion solutions that meet organizations where they are.

Together, we can co-create a nonprofit ecosystem defined not by scarcity, but by abundance, care, and collective power.

Kresge Innovative Projects: Detroit Plus (KIP:D+) cohort organizations discuss collective challenges in a May 2025 cohort gathering.

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Citation Guide

The team at Michigan Community Resources has worked diligently over the past year to gather data, write, publish, and circulate this report at no cost to the reader.

In turn, we kindly ask that you use this guide to credit Michigan Community Resources when using the data, information, or language shared in this report.

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