Working Towards the Common Good:

Findings from the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey

Building Movement Project

About The Building Movement Project

For over a decade, the Building Movement Project (BMP) has worked at the national level to support and advance the potential for nonprofit organizations to be sites for progressive social change. We develop research, tools, and training materials that bolster the ability of nonprofit organizations to support the voice and power of the people they serve.

Over the past several years, the Building Movement Project has partnered with nonprofit organizations in New Mexico to support relationship building across organizing, advocacy and direct service groups by creating opportunities to convene, train and survey organizations in the state. Through this wide range of activities, BMP has endeavored to increase the number of nonprofit groups and leaders building a shared and united voice for New Mexico's vulnerable children, families and workers.
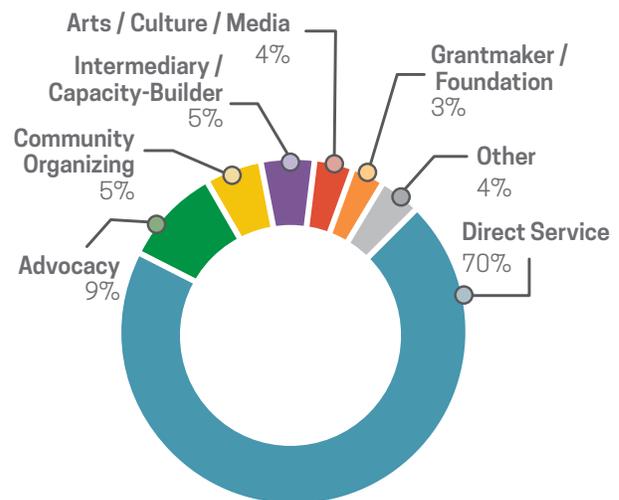
Contents

Executive Summary

For the third year, the Building Movement Project (BMP) and partner organizations in New Mexico surveyed the state's nonprofit organizations. This report analyzes the responses of 267 nonprofit organizations that participated in the survey effort in the fall of 2015. As with the 2014 survey, the results from 2015 reconfirmed that organizations in New Mexico engage in a wide range of activities to support the well-being of New Mexicans. Organizations that completed the survey reported doing everything from providing critical social services for children and families, to using art to teach about the environment. The survey results provide a snapshot of the work that nonprofits do to support New Mexico's communities, the key issues that organizations are working on, the opportunities and challenges they face, and how they work together to advocate for the common good.
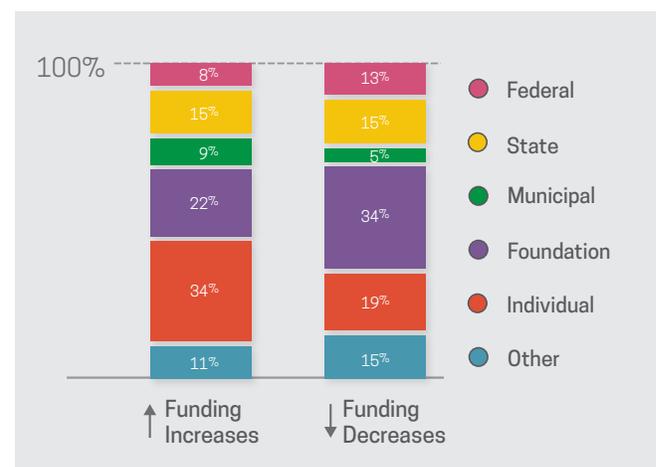
Key Findings

The nonprofits that participated in the 2015 survey effort represent a range of organizations across the state of New Mexico, but there were some important commonalities that emerged from the survey findings:

- **Diversity of Nonprofits.** The 2015 survey asked respondents to identify with one of five organizational categories; direct service groups are by far the majority of surveyed organizations, but many organizations focus on making social change through advocacy, community organizing, grant-making, capacity building, and art. Organizations tend to support a multi-racial client base and focus on the state's most vulnerable populations, such as individuals living near or below the poverty line and children, youth and families.

- **Budgets and Funding Concerns.** Regardless of an organization's size, the majority of nonprofits reported concerns about funding. Decreases in funding have direct impacts on the ability of organizations to meet the needs of their surrounding communities, with many direct service providers reporting having to turn away people looking for help.

- **Organizations are Collaborating.** The survey asked organizations about both their involvement in coalitions and their partnerships with specific organizations. The data revealed that a majority (72%) of organizations are involved in coalitions, and that groups generally rank their relationships with partner organizations as strong.

Arts / Culture / Media 4%
Intermediary / Capacity-Builder 5%
Community Organizing 5%
Grantmaker / Foundation 3%
Other 4%
Direct Service 70%
Advocacy 9%

Types of Nonprofits

Funding Increases: Federal 8%, State 15%, Municipal 9%, Foundation 22%, Individual 34%, Other 11%

Funding Decreases: Federal 13%, State 15%, Municipal 5%, Foundation 34%, Individual 19%, Other 15%

*Sources of Funding Increases and Decreases*

- **Engagement in Advocacy is Uneven.** A majority of survey respondents reported that their organizations had engaged in a broad definition of advocacy—ranging from direct contact with policymakers to helping community members have more voice and power—but the involvement in advocacy efforts differed dramatically by nonprofit type.

- **"The Common Good" Holds Opportunity as a Frame.** The 2015 survey included a new set of questions about the phrase "the common good." The responses showed that the term resonates with nonprofit organizations for varying—and in some cases contrasting—reasons.
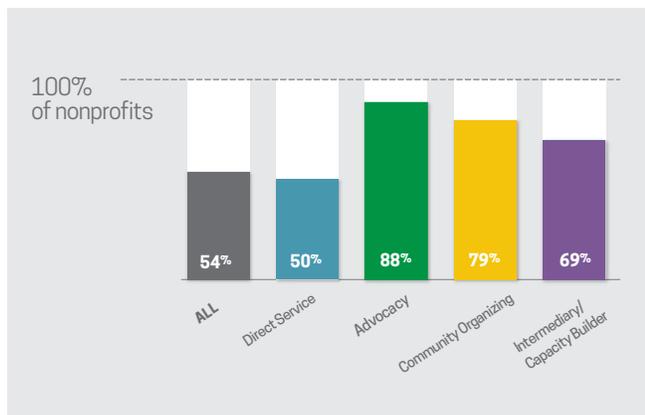
Advocacy Participation by Type of Nonprofit

Recommendations

To continue building on the strengths of nonprofit organizations in New Mexico, we offer three recommendations for continuing to strengthen the nonprofit sector in the state:

1. **Boost the Visibility of Collaboration.** The survey's social network analysis and maps help visualize the robust connections and relationships that already exist between nonprofit organizations in the state. New Mexico's nonprofits should embrace their status as "collaboration experts" and spread their models and knowledge to nonprofits in the state and around the country.

2. **Foster a Nonprofit Identity.** New Mexico's non-profits should build a collective identity, whether through embracing an umbrella narrative or investing in statewide infrastructure, like a state association of nonprofits.

3. **Promote—and Fund—Advocacy.** Advocacy is one important way to broaden the impact of the nonprofit sector. Many organizations work to achieve their missions by addressing policy issues that could help alleviate the struggles of many New Mexicans. But a substantial share of the nonprofits surveyed reported not engaging in any advocacy activities in the previous year. Foundations should do advocacy themselves, encourage their grantees to do the same, and fund advocacy on the ground.

INTRODUCTION

FOR THE THIRD YEAR, the Building Movement Project (BMP) and partner organizations in New Mexico collaborated on an effort to survey the state's nonprofit organizations. As with the previous years,[1] the survey's goal was to collect data about the work that nonprofits do to support their communities and to contribute to the awareness about the importance of the nonprofit sector in the state of New Mexico.

Overall, the survey had strong participation in both 2015 and 2014, and the consistency between the findings from both years, indicates that the survey offers a useful overview about the key issues that organizations are working on, the opportunities and challenges they face, and how they work together to advocate for the common good. This year's report includes an enhanced focus on the social network analysis that provided interesting findings and maps about the ways nonprofit organizations connect to each other. Also, the 2015 survey included a new set of questions geared to uncovering a common narrative that could resonate with nonprofit organizations doing critical work in communities, as well as policy-makers and the public at large.

This report consists of seven main sections:

1. **Meeting Needs in New Mexico** provides an overview of the diverse nonprofits that took part in the survey and the communities they serve;

2. **Making Ends Meet** shares key insights about the budgetary and funding challenges faced by nonprofits in New Mexico;

3. **Working in Coalitions** explores the reasons that nonprofits join—and how they engage in—coalitions;

4. **Networks and Partnerships** uses social network analysis methodologies to provide an in-depth look at the connections and relationships between nonprofits;

5. **Pushing for Broader Change** examines how nonprofits engage in advocacy;

6. **Creating A Unifying Narrative** discusses the responses to new questions about "the common good" as an overarching frame; and

7. **Growing A Stronger Nonprofit Community** offers recommendations for how to help New Mexico's nonprofits continue to increase their impact.

Methodology

From October to December, BMP and its partners distributed the *2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey* to email lists of individuals working in nonprofits, and through frequent promotion on social media. The short and confidential online survey asked one representative for each organization about the following: work and communities served; current challenges and supports needed; participation in advocacy activities; involvement in coalitions; and collaboration with other organizations. Respondents who identified as being part of a direct service, community organizing, or advocacy organization were asked additional questions tailored to their kind of work. The 2015 survey included a few minor changes from the previous year's tool. The survey included a pair of questions related to the concept of the common good and asked additional information about the strength of partnerships with other organizations. The report appendix provides a copy of the survey tool.[2]

While 373 individuals participated in the survey effort, this report focuses exclusively on 267 responses from representatives of nonprofit organizations. The remaining survey responses were disqualified due to respondents not completing the survey in full, or to eliminate duplicate responses from the same organization.

MEETING NEEDS IN NEW MEXICO

AS WITH THE 2014 SURVEY, the results from 2015 reconfirmed that organizations in New Mexico engage in a wide range of activities to promote the common good in New Mexico. Organizations that completed the survey reported doing everything from providing critical social services for children and families to using art to teach about the environment, from training shelter dogs to become service dogs for veterans to empowering victims to break the cycle of violence, from advocating for policy change at the state level to providing treatment for people struggling with addiction. The state's nonprofits are a diverse set of organizations; below are some of the key characteristics of the organizations that completed the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey.

Nonprofit type. The 2015 survey asked respondents to identify with one of five organizational categories; (1) direct services, (2) advocacy, (3) community organizing, (4) grantmaker / foundation, and (5) intermediary / capacity builder. *Figure 1* shows that the majority of organizations (70%) identified as direct service organizations, although this rate was somewhat lower than in 2014 when three-quarters of the respondents selected that nonprofit type. Of the remaining third of organizations, advocacy was the next most selected nonprofit type with 9%, and community organizing groups were 5%. The two additional categories of intermediary (5%) and grantmaker (3%) were added to the 2015 survey, based on the 5% of respondents to the 2014 survey who wrote-in those other nonprofit types. In the 2015 survey, there was a larger share of the responding organizations who wrote in another nonprofit type, and the most common other type of nonprofit added by respondents related to arts, culture and media (4%).

Geographic scope. New Mexico is the country's fifth largest state, comprising 121,298 square miles, and it is also one of the most rural states, with only 17.2 people per square mile.[3] So it is noteworthy that the surveyed organizations collectively work in all 33 New Mexican counties. Also, over half of the organizations (58%) describe their work as
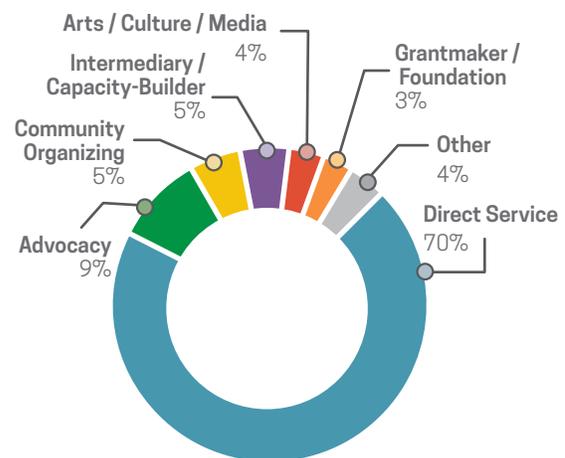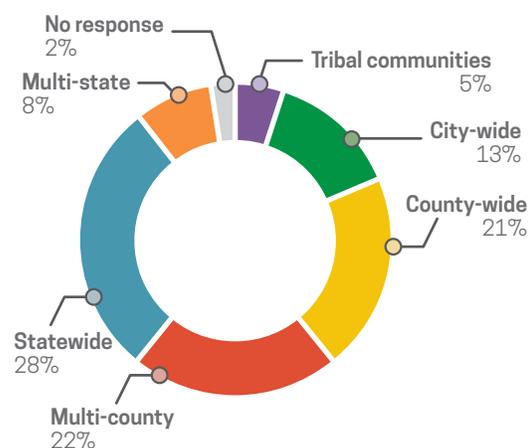

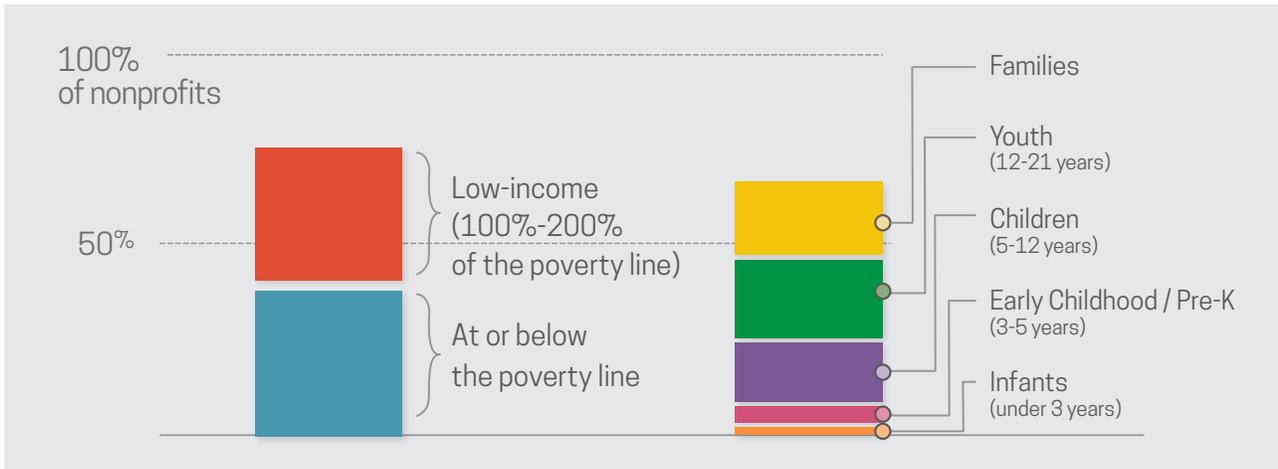**Figure 1.** *Types of Nonprofits*

Figure 2. *Geographic Scope of Work*

spanning multiple counties, the entire state of New Mexico, or even multiple states (*see Figure 2*).[4] Nonetheless, the organizations that participated in this survey effort most commonly serve Bernalillo County (62%) and tend to be located in the city of Albuquerque (50%), where roughly one-quarter of the state's population lives.

Populations served. *Figure 3* shows that the vast majority of surveyed organizations focus on the state's most vulnerable populations, serving individuals with low incomes and/or living below the poverty line (76%) and working with children, youth and/or families (62%). Direct service groups are more likely to work with populations struggling with poverty; a larger share of their constituents (42%) were living at or below the poverty line than advocacy and community organizing groups, where the larger share had incomes above the poverty line (40% and 41%, respectively). In addition, more than half of direct service groups (59%) indicated primarily working with any of the younger age groups (infants, pre-k aged kids, school-age children and/or youth), whereas advocacy and community organizing respondents indicated less focus on young people (38% and 33%, respectively).

Organizations also tend to support a multi-racial client base, with most (77%) serving two or more racial groups. Consistent with the state's demographic trends,[5] a majority of organizations report serving Hispanics/Latinos (85%) and whites (72%). Nearly half of organizations work with American Indians/Native Americans (48%); and organizations reported serving African Americans and Asian Americans at lower rates (19% and 5%, respectively). Serving diverse populations *within* racial groups is not uncommon, as American Indian/Native American-serving organizations identify working with more than 21 distinct nations and pueblos.

Issue areas. Organizations that took part in the survey were asked to identify up to three primary issue areas from a list of 30 options (including an "other" write-in), ranging from aging to violence prevention, from LGBT rights to land claims.

Most organizations (67%) were multi-issue, working on two or more issue areas, and nearly every issue option from the list was selected by at least one responding organization. *Figure 4* shows the issue areas selected by more than 10% of nonprofits; these top issues were education (selected by 32% of responding organizations), health (22%), youth development (20%), behavioral / mental health (13%) and food issues (12%). The nearly one-quarter (24%) of organizations indicated working on an "other" issue, and these nonprofits wrote in answers that ranged from "adult literacy" to "wildlife and conservation."

There were some differences in issue priorities by nonprofit types. The Venn diagram in *Figure 5* shows the issue overlaps between direct service, community organizing and advocacy groups. The issues selected by more than 10% of community organizing groups were largely distinct from those prioritized by direct service groups; however, health and food were the two issues where their priorities connected. Although health was the only issue prioritized by all three of these nonprofit types, advocacy groups had more issue overlaps with both direct service groups and community organizing groups. While issue priorities do not necessarily determine whether organizations work together and support each other, when common issue areas are shared among multiple types of organizations they tend to create more opportunities for collaboration and coordination to impact the issues facing New Mexicans.

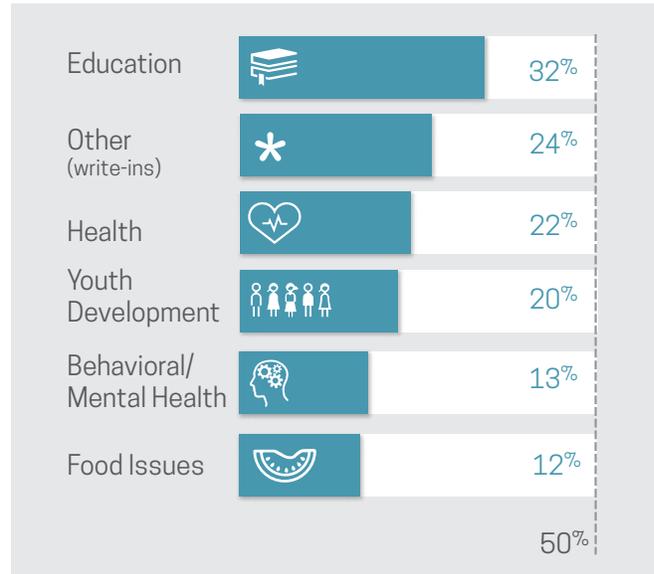|	
Education	32%
Other (write-ins)	24%
Health	22%
Youth Development	20%
Behavioral/ Mental Health	13%
Food Issues	12%
	50%

Figure 4. *Top Issue Areas*

Figure 5. *Top Issue Areas by Type of Nonprofits*
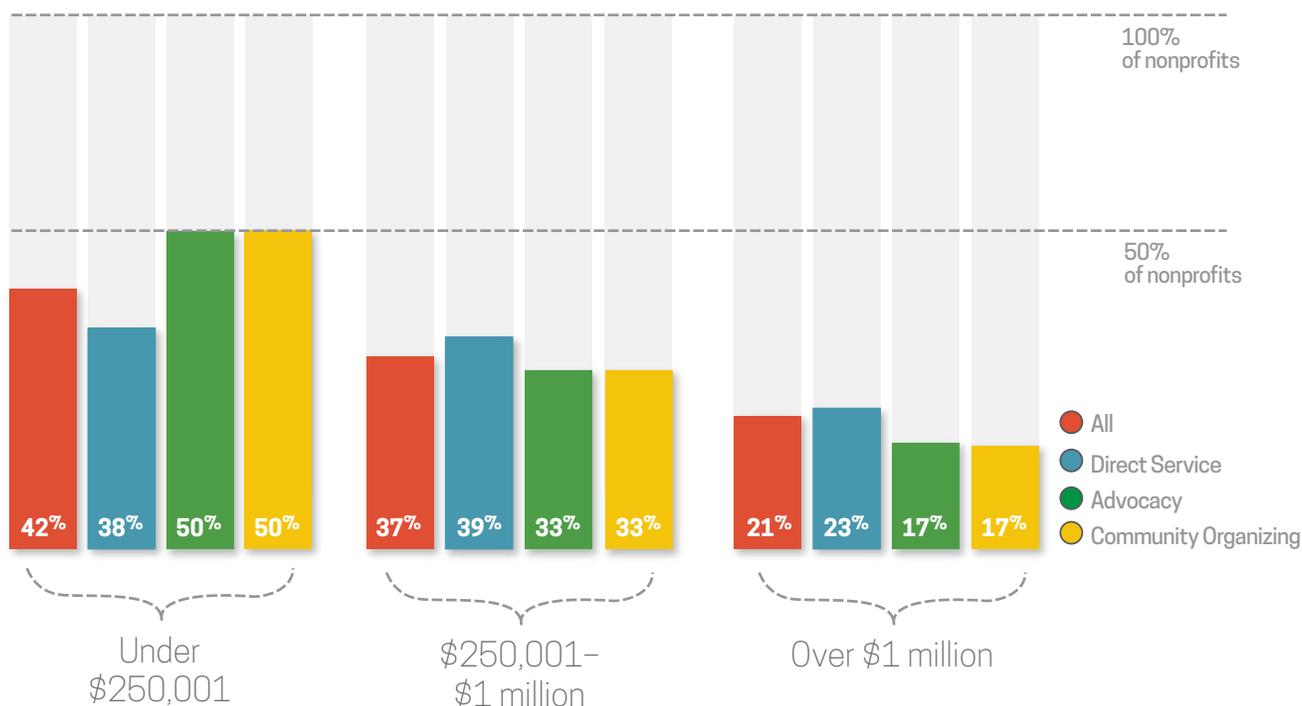
MAKING ENDS MEET

ORGANIZATIONS IN THE SURVEY were distributed across budget categories: 42% reported having budgets under $250,001; 37% reported budgets between $250,001 and $1 million; and 21% have budgets over $1 million. Notably, roughly one in eight organizations (13%) report budgets under $50,001.

As *Figure 6* shows, budgets also vary by nonprofit type: direct service providers had the largest budgets, while community organizing groups cluster towards the lowest range of under $250,001 and advocacy groups are more in the middle range of $250,001 to $1 million.

Nearly three-quarters (72%) of the survey's respondents reported that funding was one of their organization's top three challenges, and roughly half (49%) reported that their organizations had experienced

decreases in funding in the past year. At the same time, a similar share (46%) of the organizations had experienced funding increases. As seen in *Figure 7* (on the following page), organizations reporting funding increases mostly attributed the new dollars to individual support. By contrast, the biggest share of funding cuts were due to decreases in foundation dollars. The sources of budget decreases seemed to differ based on the size of an organization's budget; organizations with smaller budgets (under $250,000) attributed decreases to foundations and individuals,

Figure 6. *Budgets by Nonprofit Type*

Legend:
- All
- Direct Service
- Advocacy
- Community Organizing

Under $250,001: All 42%, Direct Service 38%, Advocacy 50%, Community Organizing 50%

$250,001–$1 million: All 37%, Direct Service 39%, Advocacy 33%, Community Organizing 33%

Over $1 million: All 21%, Direct Service 23%, Advocacy 17%, Community Organizing 17%
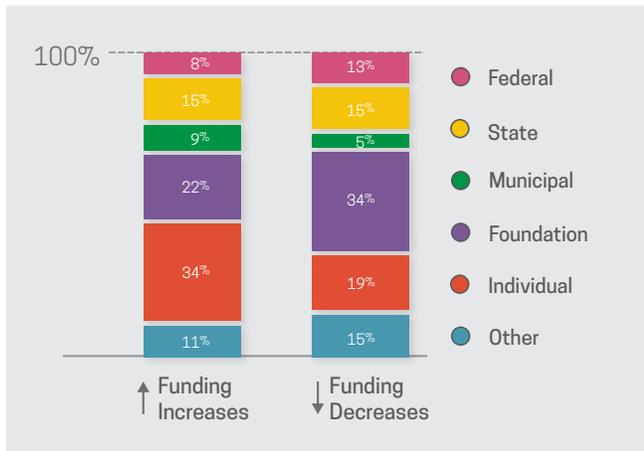
Figure 7. *Sources of Funding Increases and Decreases*

whereas groups with large budgets (over $1 million) attributed funding cuts to foundations and funding from the federal government. Although the budgets of direct service organizations were generally larger than other groups in the nonprofit sector, several of the write-in responses focused on the instability that some groups face due to their increased reliance on government funding (grants, reimbursements and contracts). For example, the CEO of a direct service organization provided a write-in response indicating that "at times lack of payment" from one of the state agencies has a significant impact on the organization's bottom line.

It is interesting to note that 15% of respondents indicated that their organizations experienced **both** decreases and increases in funding in the past year, which reflects the juggling act that organizations have to do; for instance, one program director at a direct service organization in Northern New Mexico wrote "It has been a wash between increases and decreases, so funding has been level." It may be hard for groups to grow, or meet increased community need, when organizations are constantly balancing increases from one funding source against cuts from another funder.

Over three fourths of the survey's respondents (79%) shared written reflections on the funding issues their organizations face. The executive director of a direct service group in Albuquerque wrote that "the fluctuations (in funding) are increasingly difficult to plan for. One month we don't know if we will survive, 6 months later, we are doubling in size." A service provider in Southern New Mexico reported that in spite of "drastic decreases in funding," their organization has "been able to weather [the storm] so far, due to savings; however, we are at the point where we will have to start cutting services." In fact, the survey found that a majority of direct service organizations reported having to turn people away and seeing increases in their waiting lists (see *Figure 8*).

As one CEO of a self-identified statewide "research" organization put it, "the funding environment in NM is challenging because resources are scarce and needs are great." Given the critical role that many nonprofit organizations play in communities, funding instability for nonprofits can have a direct impact on the services and benefits that organizations provide to communities that are often struggling economically themselves. Even the smallest of changes in funding can have large impacts on an organization's capacity to meet the growing need for support in many communities.
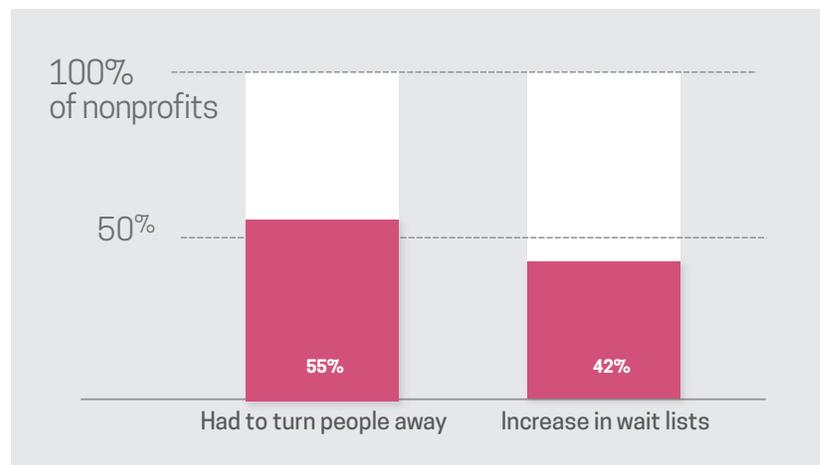

Figure 8. *Direct Service Providers Reporting Turning People Away and Growing Wait Lists in 2015*

WORKING IN COALITIONS

ONE WAY THAT NEW MEXICO NONPROFITS are addressing organizational challenges is by working in coalitions and alliances. The majority of surveyed organizations (63%) report participating in one or more coalitions in 2015 (this is the same rate as in 2014). In fact, organizations tend to be involved in five coalitions on average, with some participating in 20 or more different coalitions.

As seen in *Figure 9*, coalition participation also varies among different nonprofit types, as significantly greater proportions of advocacy, community organizing and intermediary groups take part in coalitions (80%, 79%, 77%, respectively).

Organizations tend to be involved in state-level coalitions (59%), though many are part of coalitions focused on issues at the county and local levels (38% and 37%, respectively). Organizations rank themselves as active coalition partners: 58% report being "highly" or "very highly" involved in their coalitions and 62% reported being coalition leaders. Given those high levels of coalition involvement, the fact that organizations reported being members of an average of five different coalitions could place some strains on organizational capacity when nonprofits are highly involved in all of the coalitions they join.

Organizations are working in coalitions to address more than 29 different issue areas. *Figure 10* (on the following page) shows the wide range of issues that animate the coalition work of nonprofit organizations; the most frequently noted issues (selected by more than 10% of respondents) were education and health (both at 28%), behavioral/mental health (17%), food (14%) and housing (11%). As the figure shows, the sheer multiplicity of issues is splitting the pie into very small slivers, which can create competing demands within coalitions and among organizations.

Organizations identify a range of purposes for their participation in coalitions. Most groups (61%), particularly direct service providers, take part to share information (i.e., best practices) with other organi-
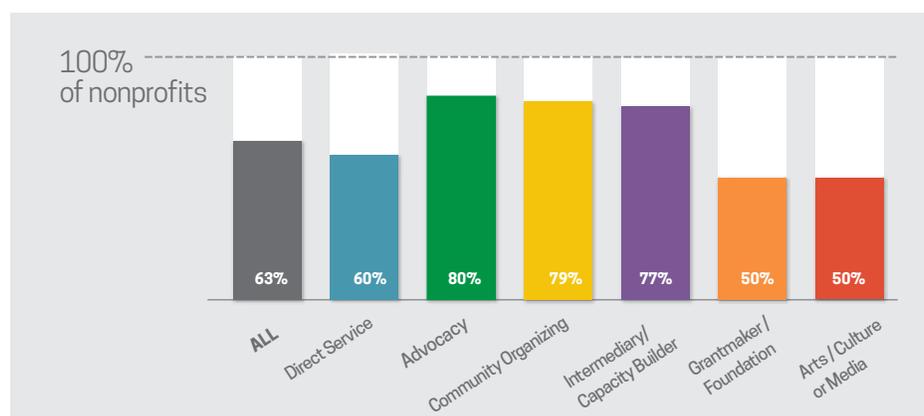

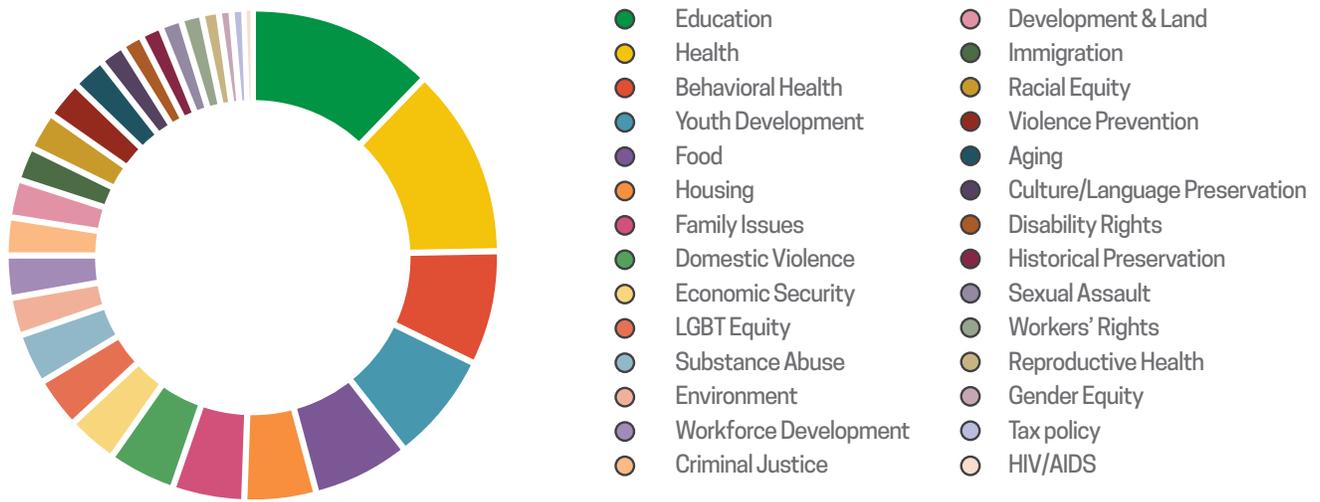**Figure 9.** *Coalition Participation by Type of Nonprofit*

Figure 10. *Issue Areas Addressed by Coalitions*

Legend:
- Education
- Health
- Behavioral Health
- Youth Development
- Food
- Housing
- Family Issues
- Domestic Violence
- Economic Security
- LGBT Equity
- Substance Abuse
- Environment
- Workforce Development
- Criminal Justice
- Development & Land
- Immigration
- Racial Equity
- Violence Prevention
- Aging
- Culture/Language Preservation
- Disability Rights
- Historical Preservation
- Sexual Assault
- Workers' Rights
- Reproductive Health
- Gender Equity
- Tax policy
- HIV/AIDS

zations. Many groups (56%) are also interested in coordinating services. For instance, one direct service organization in Central New Mexico wrote that "we work with other community groups and nonprofits to avoid duplication of services and identify / provide unmet needs." In addition, working together to "change existing policy or advocate for new policy" that would be beneficial to local communities makes coalitions attractive to nearly half of organizations (46%); this was an especially salient purpose for community organizing and advocacy groups where 64% of both these types of organizations chose this as their primary purpose for participating in coalitions. However, coalitions are not without their problems; the President of an organization providing services in Bernalillo County wrote that organizations "still act very territorial" in their work in coalitions and alliances.

Only one-quarter (26%) of organizations identify maintaining funding as a primary reason for their participation in coalitions. But funding issues—even when not a coalition's primary purpose—can both motivate participation and create tensions. The Executive Director of an organization that spans direct services, community organizing, and advocacy wrote that their organization has been limited in its partnerships, due to internal capacity, but "would like to do more (partnering) especially with opportunities to share resources like funding." In contrast, a service provider working in Albuquerque wrote that "The fight for funding creates situations which often place us at odd with members of coalitions." These comments highlight the complications of coalition-building, and may also impact other forms collaborations and networks among nonprofit organizations.

NETWORKS & PARTNERSHIPS

THE SURVEY NOT ONLY ASKED ABOUT INVOLVEMENT in coalitions, but also about the partnerships that respondents have with other organizations. Nonprofits build partnerships with other nonprofit organizations for a variety of reasons, which may include resource sharing, joint fundraising or advocacy, information or client sharing, among others.[6] Some of these collaborations require intensive interaction, such as joint programs or contracts, which generate strong relationships that tend to involve frequent interaction, trust, and attachment.[7]
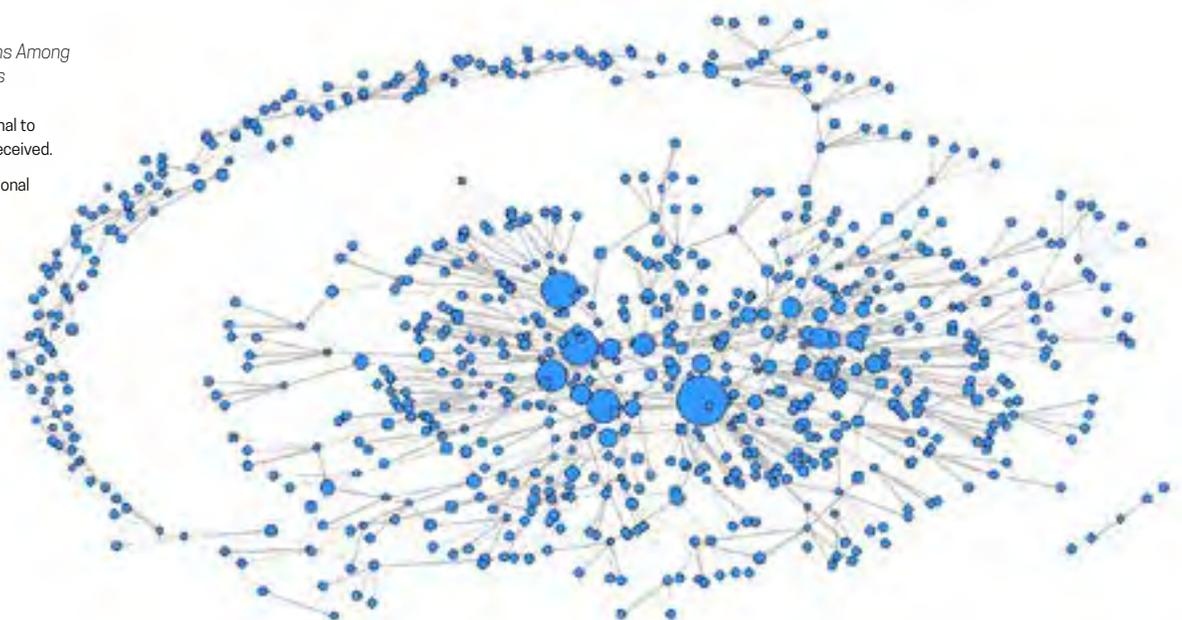
Other collaborations may only require low to moderate levels of interaction, such as information sharing, which tends to generate weak relationships.[8] It is healthy—and, in fact, important—for inter-organizational networks to have a mix of strong and weak relationships. Strong ties are often embedded in tight-knit clusters, which can limit members' exposure to new ideas and ways of doing things. Weak relationships connect different types of organizations, thus facilitating the exchange of novel ideas about best practices, and service innovations. Both types of relationships play important roles in a network.

Using social network analysis software (UCINET) we were able to visualize the network of organizations that responded to the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey.[9] *Figure 11* presents the "map" of this network, which is comprised of 753 organizations in total. Circle size represents the number of times an organization was nominated as a partner. Lines represent the partnership between the organizations, and the thickness of the line indicates the strength of partnership. This network graph demonstrates how New Mexico nonprofits are weaving together a strong and collaborative network to advance the common good

Figure 11. *Connections Among New Mexico Nonprofits*

Size of node is proportional to number of nominations received.

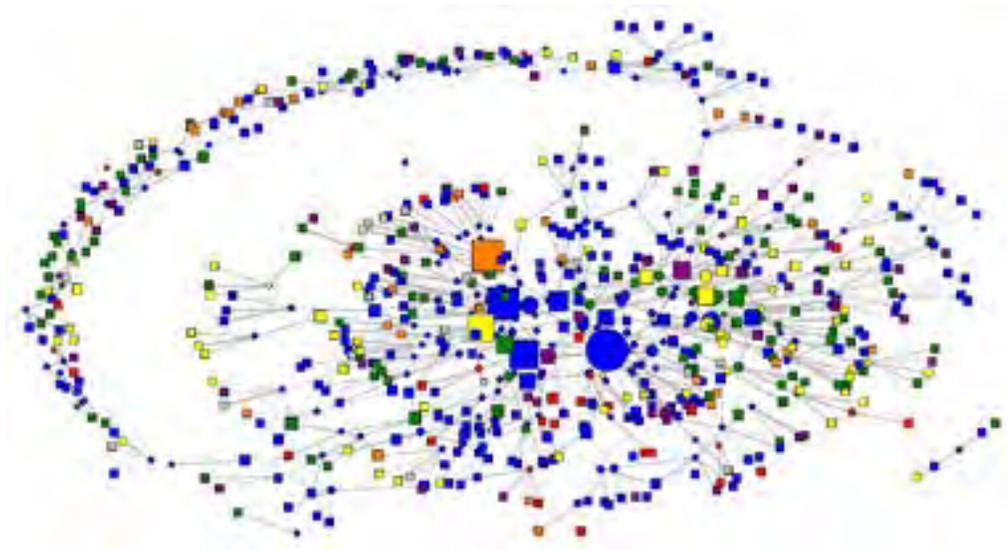Line thickness is proportional to strength of ties.

Figure 12. *Connections Among Nonprofits, with Organizational Detail*

● Survey Respondents   ■ Partner Organizations

- ■ Direct Service
- ■ Advocacy
- ■ Community Organizing
- ■ Intermediary
- ■ Grantmaker
- ■ Arts, Culture & Media

Size of node is proportional
to number of nominations received

in the state. There is a core group of highly connected organizations, as indicated by the clusters of large circles and squares (on the right side), compared to the arc of smaller linked organizations (on the left side). In fact, the analysis shows that 592 out of the total 753 organizations (79%) are connected to each other in the core cluster. It is possible that if the survey had asked organizations to provide information on more than five partner organizations, the network map would show an even more robust and interconnected network.

Organizations generally classified the relationships with their partners as strong; 43% of the partnerships were rated very strong, 32% were rated strong, 24% rated somewhat strong or not strong. These strong relationships do not just exist within nonprofit types; New Mexico nonprofits not only collaborate with similar groups, but also across different types of organizations. *Figure 12* presents the network graph of partnerships with the nodes colored to represent different types of nonprofit organizations, and the shapes of the nodes

Table 1. *E-I Index based on Types of Nonprofits (whole network)*

	Ties with Same Type of Nonprofits (Internal)	Ties with Other Types of Nonprofits (External)	Total Ties	External-Internal Index
Direct Services	654	334	988	-0.324
Advocacy	68	168	236	0.424
Community Organizing	44	112	156	0.436
Intermediary / Capacity-Builder	18	87	105	0.657
Grantmaker / Foundation	10	50	60	0.667
Arts / Culture / Media	24	47	71	0.324

Table 2. *Strong and Weak Ties within and across Organizational Types* (whole network)*

	Internal Strong Ties	Internal Weak Ties	External Strong Ties	External Weak Ties
Direct Services	50%	16%	25%	9%
Advocacy	26%	3%	56%	15%
Community Organizing	27%	1%	54%	17%
Intermediary / Capacity-Builder	11%	6%	58%	25%
Grantmaker / Foundation	10%	7%	63%	20%
Arts / Culture / Media	20%	14%	44%	23%

* Strong ties denote those that were rated as strong and very strong. Weak ties refer to those that were rated as weak and somewhat strong.

indicating whether the organization responded to the survey or was identified as a partner by a responding organization.

To gain a better understanding of the extent of collaboration across and within organizational types, we conducted a social network analysis of E-I (external-internal) index,[10] which examines the number of ties of group members to group outsiders relative to group insiders. The E-I index ranges from negative one (-1) which means all ties are internal to the group, to positive one (+1), meaning all ties are external to the group. An E-I index of 0 means equal amount of external and internal ties.[11]

Overall, the whole network created by the survey responses has an E-I index of -0.001, which indicates a slightly higher amount of internal ties than external ties.[12] However, *Table 1* (on previous the page) presents the counts of internal and external ties by nonprofit type, revealing that direct service nonprofits were the only nonprofit type that reported more internal ties than external ties (654 and 334, respectively).

This pattern of the other nonprofit types reporting more external ties makes sense in light of the kind of work those organizations do; for instance most intermediaries and grantmakers work with other types of organizations, whether to support their capacity needs or provide funding for their on-the-ground work. In addition, the small numbers of organizations in the other nonprofit types may also explain the larger number of external ties. If there are only a handful of community organizing groups in a city, it makes sense that those organizations would build relationships with other types of organizations, if only to leverage the larger numbers of organizations in the other categories.

As noted above, both weak and strong cross-boundary bridging ties are important for networks. Strong bridging ties could bind and unite different types of organizational communities in collective action. Weak bridging ties can be great for outreach or knowledge access, but they can also be fragile and easily broken when there are differences or tensions between clusters. *Table 2* reports strong and weak ties within and across organizational categories. Strong ties within a nonprofit type outnumbered weak ties, indicating robust connections among similar types of

organizations. Likewise, external strong ties outnumbered external weak ties, which indicate a healthy amount of bridging across organizational types.
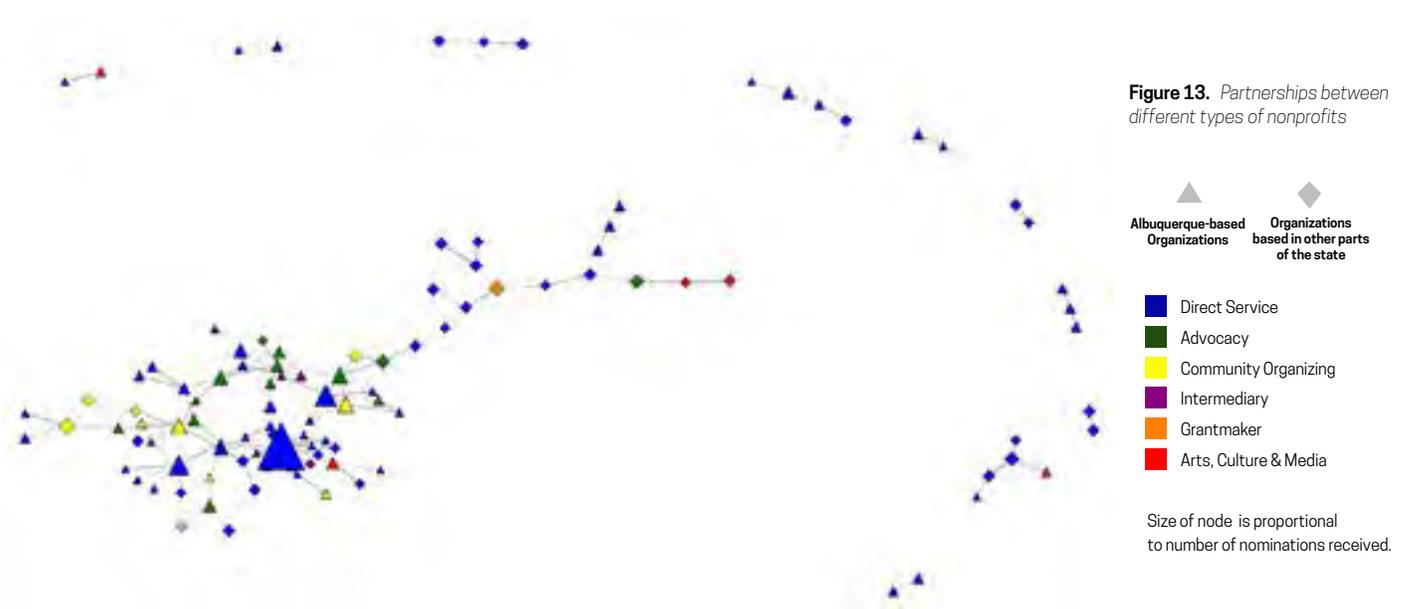
The last network graph shows the interconnections within the "closed network" of the 209 organizations that participated in the survey (see *Figure 13*). It is impressive that there are 125 connections among the 209 organizations that filled out this part of the survey. Examining the "closed network" of only the organizations that participated in the survey helps provide more insights about the core cluster of organizations in the overall network maps.

In *Figure 13*, the shape of the node indicates the location of the nonprofit, the size of a node represents the number of times the organization was nominated as partner, and the colors represent the types of organizations. The network map shows a distinct cluster (on the left corner) of mostly highly-connected Albuquerque-based nonprofits, some organizations from other parts of the state, and a periphery of siloed collaborations.

In the highly-connected cluster on the left, nonprofits appear to collaborate across organizational types, whereas the nonprofits located in the periphery of the network are mostly collaborating within organizational types and geographic boundaries. Not surprisingly, while there are some cross-location ties (i.e. groups based in Albuquerque reporting connections to groups in other parts of the state), nonprofit participants in the survey have a strong tendency to work with peers in the same location.[13] Long distances between New Mexico's urban and rural areas could be a barrier to greater collaboration across the state.

As with the open network, most of the relationship ties between organizations were strong (50% very strong, 31% strong, 16% somewhat strong, and 3% not strong). The number of strong relationships identified through the survey suggests that this network of New Mexico nonprofits has a solid stock of social capital. Supporting even greater connectivity among the network of nonprofits trying to address complex social and policy problems could be key to leveraging collective resources to tackle issues like mental health and housing, or criminal justice and violence prevention. Helping nonprofit organizations collaborate and network is an important way to advance the common good in New Mexico.

Figure 13. *Partnerships between different types of nonprofits*

▲ Albuquerque-based Organizations
◆ Organizations based in other parts of the state

■ Direct Service
■ Advocacy
■ Community Organizing
■ Intermediary
■ Grantmaker
■ Arts, Culture & Media

Size of node is proportional to number of nominations received.

PUSHING FOR BROADER CHANGE

NEW MEXICO NONPROFITS FORM COALITIONS and other kinds partnerships to respond to the needs of their surrounding communities, but organizations also do direct advocacy to advance broader social, policy and structural changes. A majority (57%) of respondents to the 2015 survey reported that their organizations had engaged in a broad definition of advocacy that ranged from direct contact with policymakers to helping community members have more voice and power over the decisions affecting their lives.

As *Figure 14* shows, the rate of participation in advocacy efforts varied across the organizational types. For instance, advocacy and community organizing groups, not surprisingly, reported much higher levels of advocacy (88% and 79%, respectively). The organizations who self-identified as intermediaries and capacity-builders also reported higher rates of advocacy (69%).

Exactly half of direct service organizations reported doing advocacy in the previous year, a rate that was roughly the same as the year before. The organizational types with the lowest rates of self-reported advocacy were grantmakers and arts/media organizations (38% and 20%, respectively). This data may point to a missed opportunity on the part of foundations to shape public policy and encourage grantees to engage in advocacy activities.[14]

One group that self-identified as a media organization wrote that they "cannot directly advocate." This perception that advocacy was not a permissible activity[15] for nonprofits was also expressed by 18% of the respondents who reported that their organizations did not do advocacy. More often, groups reported that they do not do advocacy because their organizations don't consider advocacy to be within their mission (60%) or that their organizations lack the funding and resources they need to adequately engage in advocacy activities (27%).

Those direct service organizations engaged in advocacy provided insightful and compelling explanations of their efforts. For instance, one director of an adult education group wrote about their efforts to promote advocacy and engagement through "letter writing campaigns, as well as visiting legislators at the

Figure 14. *Advocacy Participation by Type of Nonprofit*

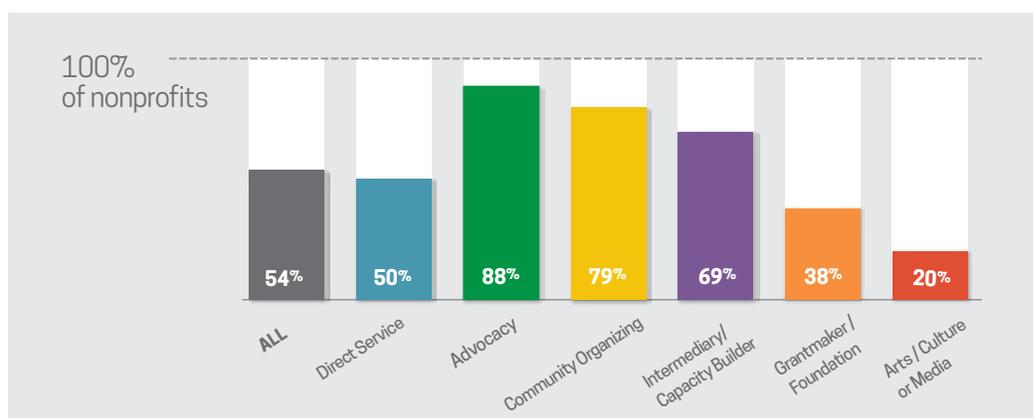| ALL	Direct Service	Advocacy	Community Organizing	Intermediary/ Capacity Builder	Grantmaker/ Foundation	Arts/Culture or Media
54%	50%	88%	79%	69%	38%	20%

Figure 15. *Types of Groups Engaged in Advocacy*

Roundhouse each year." Another service provider in a rural area of Southern New Mexico wrote that their organization's Executive Director moves to Santa Fe each legislative session to be present at the Round-

house, and that both the organization's board and staff attend the legislature once or twice a year.

As seen in *Figure 15*, most organizations focus on engaging staff and community members (56% and 55%, respectively) in their advocacy training efforts. There were differences across the nonprofit types in terms of who organizations tended to target their advocacy training efforts to; for instance, 82% of community organizing groups reported that "clients / participants / members" were most often engaged through their advocacy training, compared to 51% of direct service groups. But overall, organizations reported that their advocacy training and education efforts most-related to how to engage in advocacy (40%) and on the policies, laws, and other systemic factors contributing to the problems facing New Mexicans (50%).

The 2015 survey included a handful of questions that were tailored specifically to learning more about the work of advocacy and organizing groups in New Mexico.

Among the 9% of surveyed organizations that self-identified as advocacy groups, half reported that legislative advocacy was their organization's particular focus (compared to 30% administrative advocacy, and 15% for media advocacy). In addition, over half (56%) of advocacy organizations identified the "capacity to influence decision-makers" as one of the top three capacities needed to strengthen their organization's advocacy efforts; followed by "research and analysis capacity (40%), and both media and messaging capacity (36% each). It was interesting to note that the capacities selected least by advocacy groups were field (32%) and coalition-building (24%) capacities. The survey's other findings on coalition involvement and networking / partnerships across all organizations may indicate that the nonprofit sector in New Mexico already has robust field and coalition capacities, and that the advocacy capacities that need more investment relate to

the ability of organizations to persuade and convince the public and policy-makers.

The survey also asked the 5% of groups who identified community organizing as their primary nonprofit type to select up to three items from menus of a dozen "community outreach" activities and "public action tactics." More than half (57%) of community organizing groups identified "community workshops" as one of their top three outreach activities. The other outreach activities selected most often were "online outreach" (50%) and "community forums" (43%). Of the top three types of public action tactics, 64% of organizing groups selected "testimonies at legislative sessions and hearings," half (50%) chose "social media campaigns" and 43% indicated that "rallies, protests, marches." It was notable that modes of organizing that are typical of "membership-based" organizing groups—such as "popular education" and "leadership development" (selected at rates of 29% and 21%, respectively)—were selected less frequently.

CREATING A UNIFYING NARRATIVE

NEW MEXICO HAS MANY NONPROFITS working to support the well-being of children, families, communities and the state overall. The survey's findings show that many of the state's nonprofits are already working together toward common goals, through advocacy on policy issues, work in coalitions, and other forms of networks and partnerships between organizations. Over the past decade, social change strategies have increasingly paid attention to "framing" and "narrative strategies." Therefore, the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey included questions designed to test "the common good" as a potential overarching narrative for organizations in the state.

The common good frame has gained some traction with a group of organizations who have partnered with the Building Movement Project over the past few years, but this survey was the first effort to assess the resonance of the concept more broadly. *Figure 16* shows that more than two-thirds of respondents (69%) already had a "clear idea" of the meaning of the phrase. This level of recognition of the "common good" provides opportunities for nonprofits to tap into deeply held New Mexican values of sharing resources and working together, as exemplified by the tradition of stewardship of water through the state's acequia system.[16]
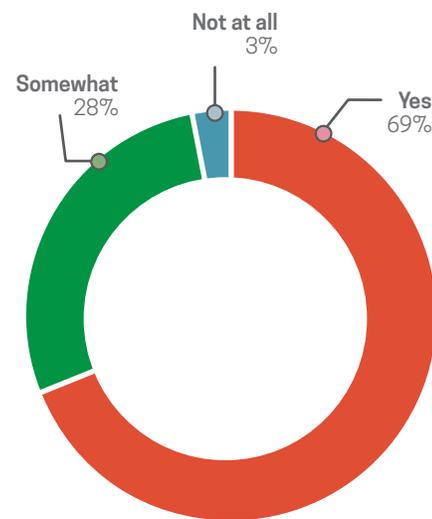
Not at all
3%

Somewhat
28%

Yes
69%

Figure 16. *Clear Idea of "The Common Good"*

The survey provided two different explanations / definitions for "the common good" and asked respondents to choose the one that most resonated. As *Figure 17* shows, roughly three-fifths (59%) of respondents preferred the definition "benefiting all living beings and the earth itself;" that line was referenced by more than a quarter of the survey respondents who wrote-in explanations of why they chose the definition. In contrast, one-third (34%) of the people surveyed picked the definition that explained that the common good "requires giving up some individual desires." As one respondent noted, the second definition was "more connected to the 'faith-based' idea of the common good [that] within the giving there is also sacrifice." Although the survey did not attribute the contrasting explanations of the common good, this second definition was adapted from Pope Francis' address to the U.S. Congress in September of 2015.[17]

Reasons varied among the 7% of survey respondents who found that neither explanation of "the common good" resonated. One direct service provider refuted the idea of the common good, writing that "Every man should be free to work for the greatest good he can achieve for himself by his own choice and by his own effort." In contrast, another Executive Director of a direct service group was concerned about the majoritarian overtones of the term and worried that the common good was "a way to justify ignoring minority groups." These differing critiques of the phrase mean that more narrative work will be needed to arrive at a shared understanding of what "the common good" means if that frame is used to galvanize nonprofit organizations around their work and impact on the state of New Mexico.
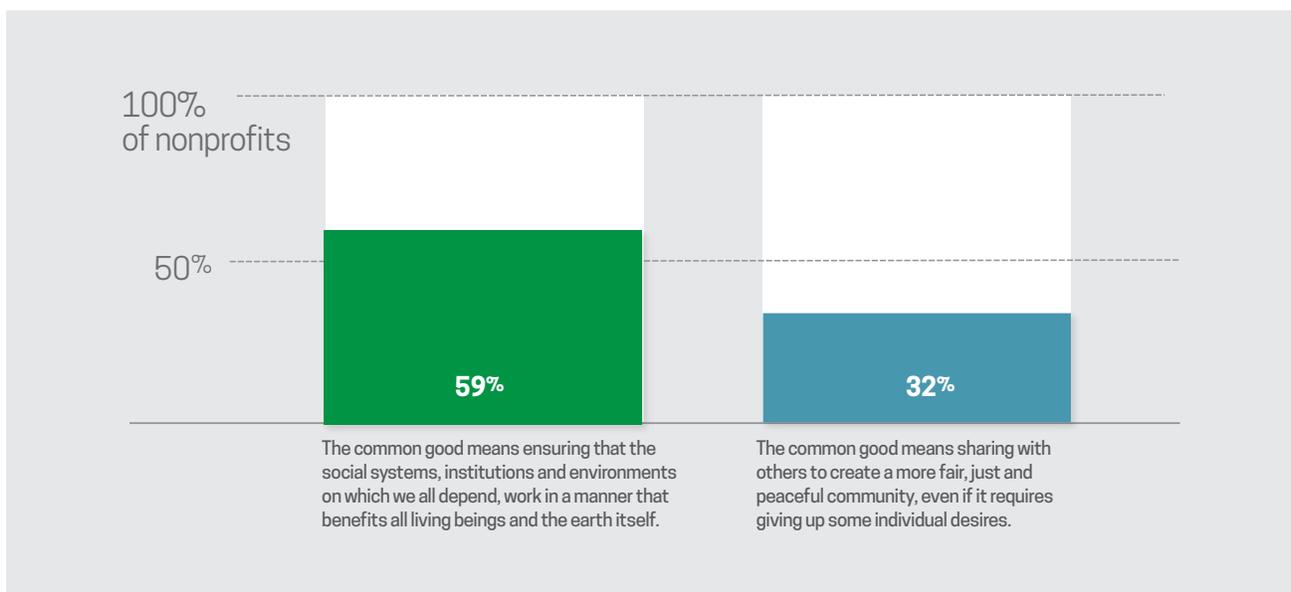

Figure 17. *Preferred Explanation for "The Common Good"*

GROWING A STRONGER NONPROFIT SECTOR

EVERY DAY, NEW MEXICO NONPROFITS WORK tirelessly on behalf of their communities. Organizations tackle complex social and policy issues, and serve the most vulnerable populations, particularly children and families struggling to overcome poverty and far too many structural barriers to well-being. Nonprofits also face many challenges—notably funding instability and community needs outpacing organizational capacity—but New Mexico's nonprofit sector is well connected, with strong relationships between groups that hold the promise to advance the common good.
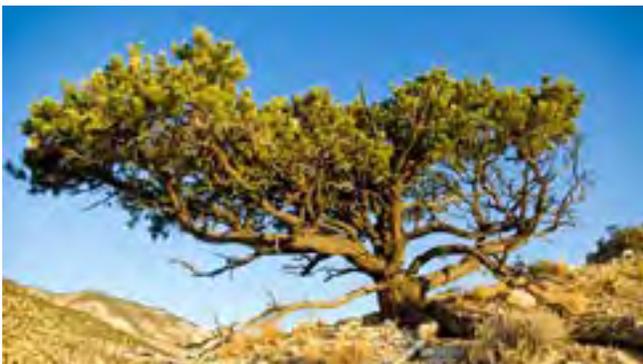
To continue building on the strengths of the organizations that were highlighted by the survey, we offer three recommendations for continuing to strengthen the nonprofit sector in New Mexico.

1. **Boost the Visibility of Collaboration.** In the nonprofit sector, there is more and more focus on the value and benefits of organizations working together—whether through co-location of services, coordinated action, policy coalitions, or collective impact—in order to achieve lasting impacts on the issues faced by communities, and the survey showed once again that nonprofits in New Mexico have a "collaborative mindset."[18] The social network analysis and maps visualizing the robust network of relationships between organizations in the state demonstrates that New Mexico's nonprofits have connections and relationships that bridge all kinds of differences, whether nonprofit type, issue focus or geography. Organizations who are already working in networks, collaborations and coalitions, should document their collaborative processes and share their insights across the state and on

a national level. Many survey respondents wrote comments about how "collaboration is a major pillar of what we do" and that working "with organizational partners is an essential part of our work." So there are many collaboration experts in the state of New Mexico, who could both demonstrate to other organizations in the state that collaboration is impactful and show the broader nonprofit sector that the state's nonprofits are on the cutting edge of this current collaboration boom.

2. **Foster a Nonprofit Identity.** It is important for nonprofit organizations to have a shared identity, particularly an identity that helps to align the values of organizations to be better partners in collaboration. This year's survey tested the potential for "the common good" to serve as an overarching frame or identity for nonprofits in the state. Whether or not organizations embrace the idea of nonprofits core value being to advance the common good, the important thing is for organizations to embrace the potential to build a united nonprofit sector in New Mexico. In commenting about the value of coali-

tions, one survey respondent wrote "We miss the New Mexico NGO Association." An umbrella organization may take time to build enough capacity to galvanize organizations across the state, but a unifying narrative could be the first step to forging a collective identity among the state's nonprofit organizations.

3. **Promote—and Fund—Advocacy.** A key finding from the survey was that 43% of respondents reported that their organization had not engaged in any advocacy activities in the previous year. This finding was similar to the year before, and shows that there is still a need to promote advocacy as a core value for nonprofit organizations. Despite acknowledgment from high profile books like *Forces for*

Good[19] that advocacy is a pivotal quality of "high-impact nonprofits," many groups have yet to fully embrace advocacy as a key driver of their mission. In fact, the leading reason that organizations gave for not doing advocacy was that it is not within their mission. Another factor preventing greater advocacy by nonprofits was that grantmakers had the second-lowest rate of engaging in advocacy (38%). If foundations avoid doing advocacy, they may also avoid funding advocacy. Furthermore, organizations may be slow to embrace advocacy if their funders don't demonstrate through their own actions that advocacy is valued.

Endnotes

1   See the previous reports: "Working Towards the Common Good: Findings from the 2014 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey," available at: http://buildingmovement.org/reports/entry/working_towards_the_common_good; and "Meeting Need, Making Change: 2013 Survey of Nonprofit Service Providers in New Mexico," available at: http://buildingmovement.org/reports/entry/meeting_need_making_change.

2   The report appendix is available at: http://www.buildingmovement.org/pdf/Appendix-2015_New_Mexico_Nonprofit_Survey.pdf.

3   New Mexico First. "New Mexico Progress Report: 2015 edition." Available at: http://nmfirst.org/library.htm.

4   The survey includes a number of multiple response questions. For instance, one question allowed respondents to select their organization's top three issues, and another provided a list of all of the counties in New Mexico and asked respondents to select any of the counties that the organizations works in. These types of questions are quite common in surveys, but can lead to some analytical confusion. For the purposes of reporting on multiple response questions, we based the calculations on the number of respondents to the question, providing the rate that a particular response was selected per organization. Therefore, in cases where questions allowed for multiple responses, the rates reported will not add to 100%.

5   According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the racial composition of New Mexico in 2013 consisted of: Hispanics/Latinos (47.3%), Whites (39.4%); American Indians/Native Americans (10.4%); African Americans (2.5%); and Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (1.8%).

6   Sowa, Jessica E. 2009. The Collaboration Decision in Nonprofit Organizations: Views from the Front Line. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(6): 1003-1025.

7   Kilduff, Martin and Brass, Daniel 2010. Organizational social network research: Core ideas and key debates. *The Academy of Management Annals*, 4(1): 317-357.

8   Learn more at: Provan, Keith G., and Robin H. Lemaire. 2012. Core concepts and key ideas for understanding public sector organizational networks: Using research to inform scholarship and practice. *Public Administration Review* 72(5): 638-648. & Huang, Kun. 2014. Knowledge sharing in a third-party governed health and human services network. *Public Administration Review*. 74(5): 587-599.

9   To assess inter-organizational partnerships and their strength, the 2015 New Mexico Nonprofit Survey asked survey participants to identify five organizational partners, rate the strength of their partnership with the other (using a scale of not strong, somewhat strong, strong and very strong), and identify the nonprofit type of their partners (using the same response options offered throughout the survey of direct services, advocacy, community organizing, grantmaker / foundation, intermediary / capacity-builder, or other). As with the overall sample, there were a number of "other" responses that were re-classified as "arts / culture / media" partner organizations.

10 Krackhardt and Stern (1988) developed E-I index as a useful measure of the extent to which a group's ties form a bridge across some organizational or social divide. The E-I index takes the number of ties of

group members to outsiders, subtracts the number of ties to other group members and divides by the total number of ties. The resulting index ranges from -1 (all ties are internal to the group) to +1 (all ties are external to the group). An E-I index of 0 means equal amount of external and internal ties.
Learn more at: Krackhardt, David, & Stern, Robert N. 1988. Informal networks and organizational crisis: An experimental simulation. *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 51: 123–140. & Bin, Chen & Krauskopf, James. 2013. Integrated or disconnected? Examing formal and informal networks in a merged nonprofit organization. *Nonprofit Management and Leadership*, 23(3): 325-345.

11 Hanneman, Robert A. & Riddle Mark, 2011. Concepts and Measures for Basic Network Analysis. pages 34—369. In Scott, John & Carrington Peter, J. (Eds). *The Sage Handbook of Social Network Analysis.*

12 This E-I index of -0.001 is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$).

13 The E-I index, based on location was -0.728 for Albuquerque-based nonprofits, indicating that most ties were internal to other groups in the state's biggest city. The E-I index for nonprofits based in the rest of the state was -0.333, also indicating that most ties were with other groups that were also not based in Albuquerque, although this E-I index is closer to 0, which would indicate an equal amount of external and internal ties. See footnote above explaining the E-I index.

14 Several philanthropic associations (The Council on Foundations, the National Committee for Responsive Philanthropy, etc.) encourage foundations to engage in advocacy, and Bolder Advocacy, an initiative of Alliance for Justice, has developed a Philanthropy Advocacy Playbook to help foundations understand how advocacy and lobbying leverages their grant dollars; download the playbook at http://bolderadvocacy.org/focus-on-foundations/philanthropy-advocacy-playbook.

15 Bolder Advocacy, an initiative of Alliance for Justice, provides a number of resources to support nonprofit organizations to navigate 501(c) status rules on advocacy. These resources are available at: http://www.bolderadvocacy.org.

16 Sandoval, Arturo. May 13, 2010. "Ancient Traditions Keep Desert Waters Flowing: New Mexico's acequias—communal irrigation canals—still function as a tool to preserve and share scarce desert water." *Yes! Magazine*. http://www.yesmagazine.org/issues/water-solutions/ancient-traditions-keep-desert-waters-flowing.

17 In the pontiff's address to the joint meeting of Congress on September 24, 2015, Pope Francis said: "Politics is, instead, an expression of our compelling need to live as one, in order to build as one the greatest common good: that of a community which sacrifices particular interests in order to share, in justice and peace, its goods, its interests, its social life." Full remarks are available at: http://www.vox.com/2015/9/24/9391549/pope-remarks-full-text.

18 Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. October 26, 2015. "Building Collaboration from the Inside Out." http://www.geofunders.org/resource-library/all/record/a066000000KW9DHAA1.

19 Leslie Crutchfield and Heather McLeod Grant spent four years surveying thousands of nonprofit CEOs, conducting hundreds of interviews, and studying a dozen high-impact nonprofits to uncover their secrets to success. The resulting book—Forces for Good, published in 2012—highlights advocacy for policy change as the first of six practices of high-impact nonprofits. See http://www.forcesforgood.net/findings.html.

Building Movement Project

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